



Gates Pass stone hut built in CCC era as a scenic-view point

## Tucson Oddity: Look up, down, all around

**Doug Kreutz Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Monday, January 30, 2012 12:00 am**

No, it's not an ancient outhouse.

People who stop at scenic Gates Pass west of Tucson often peer up at a small stone hut perched on a steep slope above the pass - wondering about its origin and purpose.

Some have speculated that it might have been a refuge, a military lookout or perhaps just a no-frills restroom in days long gone by.

Well, it is a historical structure, built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps - but it was neither a watchtower nor a primitive potty.

"It was built somewhere between 1933 and 1935, and was built to be a scenic-view point," said Philip Brown, a seasonal ranger at Saguaro National Park and an expert on CCC-era buildings. "It has had repair work and been re-roofed over the years as needed."

Visitors who make their way up a short, rocky, unmaintained route from the Gates Pass parking lot to the hut will notice something else: lots of graffiti inside and outside the building.

While the hut apparently wasn't built as a bathroom, there is a now-closed CCC-era "comfort station" in the Gates Pass area.

"Structures in the area include a stone restroom building and a stone speaker's podium that was once part of an amphitheater," Brown said, noting that restrooms in use today at the site are of newer origin.

To reach Gates Pass, drive west out of Tucson on Speedway, which becomes Gates Pass Road, and follow the road to the top.

Got an oddity?

Is there something you've noticed while driving through Tucson that has piqued your curiosity? Or is there some piece of Old Pueblo history you've wondered about? Drop us a line, and we'll look into it.

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