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Where in the World is Matt Parker?

by Sharon Doddroe



Last month, the Corral featured Matt Parker and his quest to be the first person to travel across the United States over the American Discovery Trail (ADT) on horseback. At the time he had traveled 1,500 miles of the 5,000 mile-trip and was in Gateway, Colorado, getting ready to cross the Rocky Mountains.

"The Rockies were treacherous," said Matt, relieved that his horse Little Face and pack mule, Danny Boy, had made it across the most difficult parts of the mountain range — most of the duration in heavy rain. Memories of Schofield Pass were fresh in his mind. They always will be.

The trail, if you can call it that, is actually a shale shelf no wider than a sidewalk with a drop of more than 1,000 feet. "It has claimed dozens of lives," said Matt, relaxing in Tin Cup, Colorado, a town which got its name from a prospector who carried gold dust in a tin cup during the time of the gold rush. It's located on the western flank of the Continental Divide just west of Buena Vista, Matt's next stop.

Most people call Tin Cup a ghost town. It looks like one — most residents live in the original cabins which have been restored and there are only a couple of businesses in town. Matt is staying dry in one of the cabins at a horsecamp, a spur-of-the-moment invitation from someone who heard he was coming to the area. He was able to shower and sleep on a bed, a luxury compared to his normal accommodations on the trail. He rarely slept in the Rockies because he constantly had to be aware of a possible bear attack, he said.

Little Face, his Missouri Fox Trotter, and Danny are also a little more relaxed, settled in the horsecamp within Matt's view.

Matt had already completed 1,500 miles of the ADT from California to Utah last year. He resumed his journey in May but had to take a break in Redstone, Colorado, when Danny went lame due to an abscess on his foot. A generous woman named Dixie opened her home to the trio and Danny received two front shoes, but Matt is still taking it easy on his 16-plus hand friend. "He's the smartest mule I have ever encountered and I have learned how to negotiate with him, but I am worried about pushing his physical limits," said Matt. While confident that he can complete the ADT this year, he said the future is uncertain if Danny goes lame again.

If all has gone well, Matt is in Kansas right now, heading closer to the Delaware shores that will welcome him into the history

books as the first person to cross the ADT on horseback. To follow his journey, visit www.rideofpassage.com or visit www.discoverytrail.org to learn more about the American Discovery Trail. The Corral will continue to update you monthly on Matt Parker's historic ride.

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