

SLAVIN GULCH

SLAVIN GULCH: Slavin Gulch is located on the west side of the Dragoon Mountains. The trailhead for the access trail into the gulch is located 2.8 miles north of Middle March Road on FR-687 at the intersection with decommissioned Forest Road 687A. The trail follows the old haul road that was used to haul ore out from the Abril Mine, also known as the Dos Hermanos or Two Brothers Mine that was located in the upper regions of Slavin Gulch. The canyon is home to some really spectacular scenery. One example is the rock formation that we refer to as “Old Conehead”. When the light is just right, the facial features of “Old Conehead” become readily apparent.



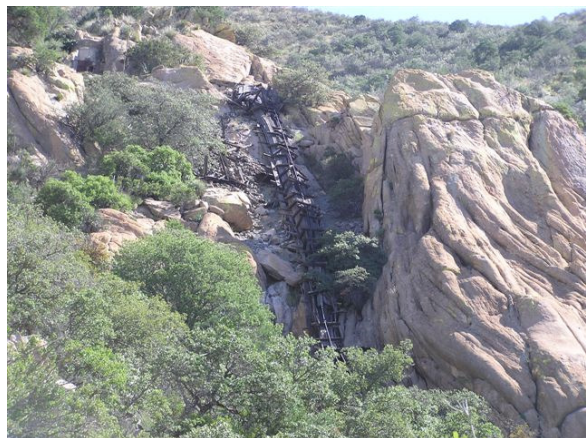
Photo by Dick Paige

ABRIL MINE: The mine was named after the Abril brothers, Manuel and J. S. Abril of Tombstone and was mined intermittently from 1914 to 1952. During that period the mine produced some 30,000 tons of ore, primarily zinc and copper but also including lead, silver and gold with traces of molybdenum, bismuth, and lithium. The higher-grade ore assayed out at 49% zinc and 4 1/2 % copper. The majority of the ore was produced between 1945 and 1952. In 1947, production was some 9,900 tons of ore, which in addition to the zinc yielded 188,162 pounds of copper, 12,725 pounds of lead, 3,508 ounces of silver and 26 ounces of gold. By 1953 the mine was abandoned with the exception of a few small workings.

The mine was operated at two main levels on the hillside. The five adits were located at the upper level and were accessed by a separate road off of Middle March Road. The ore was transported down slope to the haul road by a series of wooden chutes and a cable car system, remnants of which can still be seen.



One of the five Abril Mine adits



Wood ore chute used to transport ore to the loading dock



Remains of a pylon used to support the cable car system



Remains of the control shack that kept track of the ore shipments

A rare mineral was also found at the Abril Mine. Eclarite $\{(Cu,Fe)Pb_9Bi_{12}S_{28}\}$, which has been found in only two other mines in the world was found here.

COCHISE – HOWARD MEETINGS: An analysis of General Howard's report on his mission to the Apaches indicates that he may have stopped for the night in Slavin Gulch on his way to his second meeting with Cochise at Council Rocks. General Howard's first meeting with Cochise had been held on 1 October 1872 at Council Rocks near the entrance to the West Stronghold and Howard had made a quick trip to Fort Bowie to order the Army to stop active operations against the Apaches while the treaty negotiations were in progress and to obtain additional supplies. He was returning to the meeting place by crossing the Dragoon Mountains via what is currently called the Middle March pass and then traveling up the west side of the mountains when the party was stopped short of the Council Rocks area by Captain Sladen and Tom Jeffords who had stayed back with the Apaches. The Apaches had relocated their camp in a canyon to the south of Council Rocks out of fear of a possible military attack. From General Howard's description, this was probably Slavin Gulch. The following morning, 4 October, the party traveled on to the Council Rocks area for the second meeting with Cochise. The result of these two meetings and a subsequent meeting at Dragoon Springs on 12 October was the establishment of a reservation for the Chiricahua Apaches that included the Chiricahua Mountains, Sulfur Valley and the Dragoon Mountains.

Summary by T. Johnson from various web sites, the *Account of Gen'l Howard's Mission to the Apaches and Navajos* published 10 November 1872 and the book *Cochise* by Edwin R. Sweeney. Updated by T. Johnson in August 2012. Abril Mine photos by T. Johnson