

# Desert

JULY, 1953 . . . . . 35 Cents



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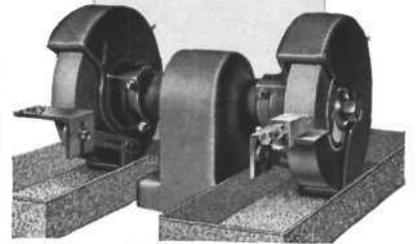
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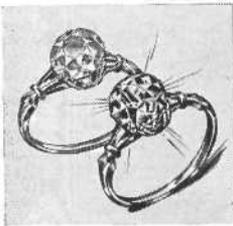
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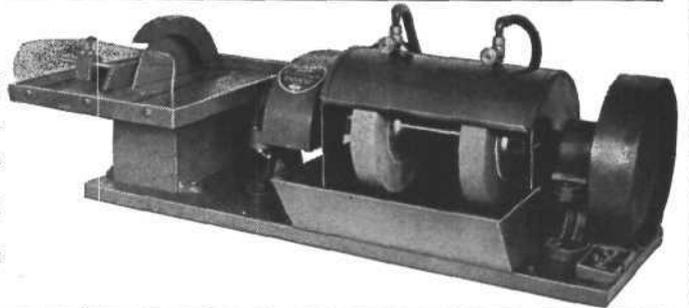
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## DESERT CALENDAR

- July 2-4—Annual Fiesta and Devil Dance, Mescalero Apache Reservation Agency, U. S. Highway 70, New Mexico.
- July 2-5 — 20th Annual exhibition of the pottery, weaving, basketry, embroidery and silver of Hopi craftsmen. Indian demonstrators. Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff.
- July 3-4—Annual Bit and Spur Rodeo, Tooele, Utah.
- July 3-4—Rabbit Ear Roundup and Rodeo, Clayton, New Mexico.
- July 3-5—Southwest All-Indian Pow-Wow, Flagstaff, Arizona.
- July 3-5 — Frontier Days Rodeo, Prescott, Arizona.
- July 3-5—Spanish Fiesta, Old Town section, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
- July 3-5—Fiesta celebrating Gadsden Purchase, La Mesilla, New Mexico.
- July 3-5—Reno Rodeo, Reno, Nev.
- July 4 — Fourth of July Fireworks display, White Sands National Monument, Alamogordo, N. M.
- July 4—Rodeo, Cimarron, N. M.
- July 4-5 — Round Valley Rodeo, Springerville, Arizona.
- July 4-5—Southern California Chapter, Sierra Club, climb of Lone Pine Peak (El. 12,951 ft.) in the High Sierra overlooking Owens Valley. Camp Saturday night on desert at Coso Junction; climb Sunday from Lone Pine, California.
- July 4-5—Sixth Annual Rodeo, Austin, Nevada.
- July 4-6 — Desert Peaks Section, Southern California Chapter, Sierra Club climb of Boundary Peak (El. 13,465 ft.), highest point in Nevada. Trailless climb from base camp at head of Trail Canyon.
- July 9-11 — Ute Stampede, Nephi, Utah.
- July 9-12—Rodeo de Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- July 10-12—Fifth Biennial Convention, Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Arcadia, California.
- July 14 — Annual Fiesta and Corn Dance, Cochiti Indian Pueblo, New Mexico.
- July 17-25 — Pioneer Days celebration, Ogden, Utah.
- July 21-25 — Days of '47 Pioneer Celebration, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- July 22-24 — Rodeo, Spanish Fork, Utah.
- July 24—Pioneer Day, Tooele, Utah.
- July 24 — Pioneer Day celebration, barbecue and program, Mesa, Arizona.
- July 25-26 — Spanish Fiesta, Taos, New Mexico.
- July 25-26 — Corn Dance, Taos Pueblo, New Mexico.
- July 26—Indian Fiesta and dances, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.
- July 30-August 1 — Black Diamond Stampede, Rodeo Grounds, Price, Utah.



Volume 16

JULY, 1953

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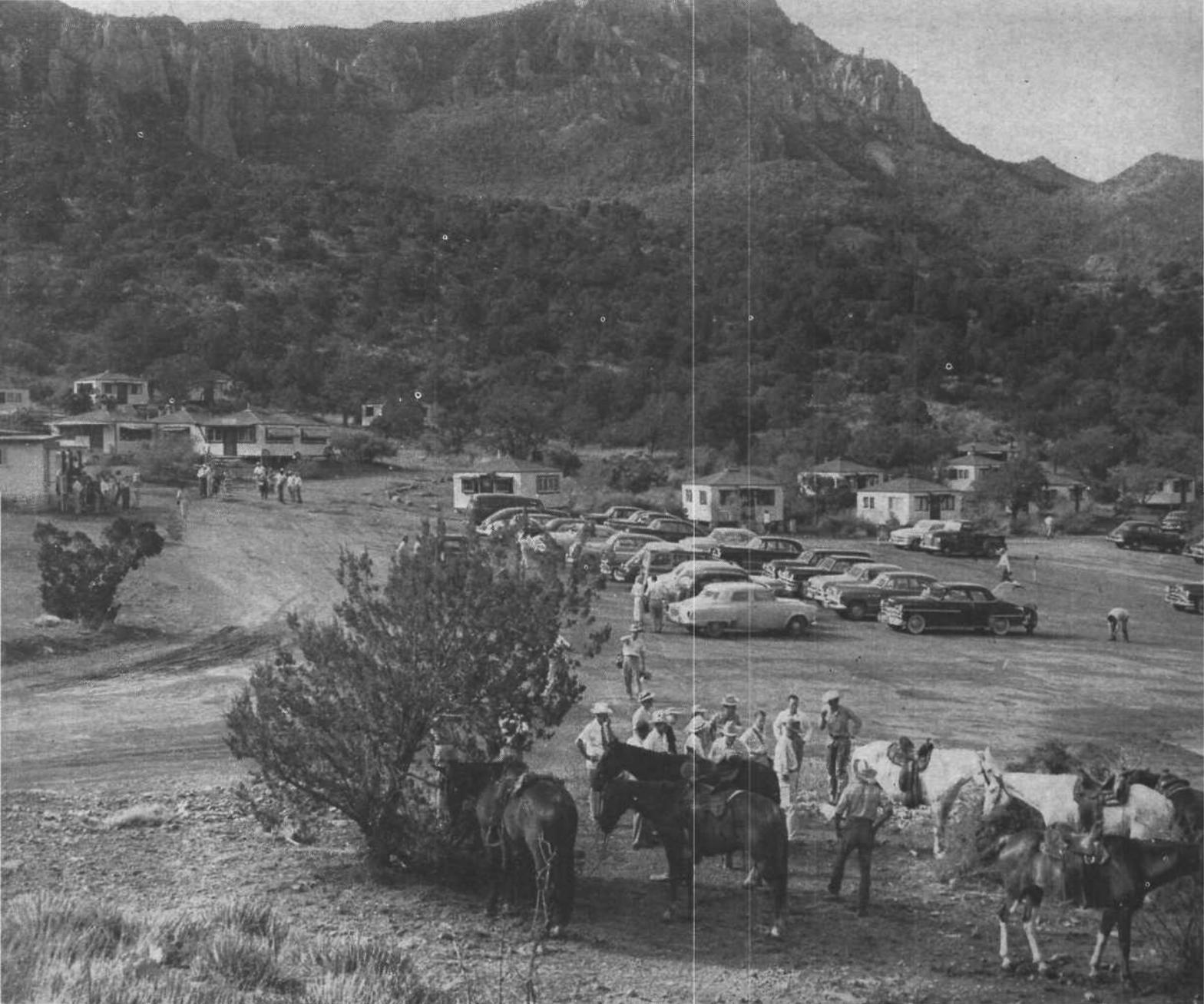
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"The Basin" in Big Bend National Park. This is the concession area where visitors find lodging, food, saddle ponies and camera supplies. The area is rimmed by the Chisos Mountains.

## Boat Ride on the Big Bend...

Nine years ago Congress set aside over 700,000 acres of arid land in the Big Bend country of West Texas as a national park and last year 93,000 motorists visited the area. Here is the story about a great North American desert region which has not previously been covered by *Desert Magazine's* staff—and a strange fraternity of outlaws who operate in this region.

**I**T WAS Monte Warner's idea. Monte is a Texan who has made and lost two or three fortunes in oil leases, and who finds time between deals to pursue his hobby of boating on the fast water rivers of the West.

"You think your California desert with its Death Valley and palm canyons and Joshua tree forests is quite a place," he said to me a few months ago when he stopped at the *Desert*

By RANDALL HENDERSON  
Map by Norton Allen

*Magazine* office for a chat. "But you really don't know your deserts until you see what Texas has."

That sounded like a Texan. Because their state is the biggest in the union they think it also is superior to the rest of the states in nearly every other respect. But that is as it should

be. An Arizonan thinks the same way about Arizona. And I have heard Californians do a lot of bragging about the Golden Bear state.

Monte went on: "In West Texas there is such a fantastic desert that Uncle Sam made a park of it—the Big Bend National Park. The Big Bend country has everything — timbered mountains, mesas where the biggest yuccas on earth grow, gem stones,

mineral hot springs, wildlife, and the Rio Grande where you can take a boat ride through canyons that make you think you are on the Colorado River."

I was interested in all this, for I have long felt that *Desert Magazine* should tell its readers about the Big Bend desert in Texas. Before our conversation ended, I had a date with Monte to visit the new Texas national park and perhaps take a boat ride through one of its canyons.

It was the last of February when Cyria and I headed down the road toward the Lone Star state to keep our date. The late winter season is ideal for motoring on Highway 80 across southern Arizona and New Mexico, and in many places the desert wildflowers already were in blossom.

We met Monte Warner at Marfa, Texas, and immediately started making plans for a two-week visit in the 707,895-acre Big Bend National Park. There are two entrances to the park, one of them from Alpine by way of the old Terlingua quicksilver mines. Only part of the 110-mile road from Alpine to park headquarters is paved. The other route into the park from Marathon, Texas, a distance of 80 miles, is paved all the way.

It was Monte's idea that we should become acquainted with both entrances, and so we drove in by way of Alpine and Terlingua. As our winding road led over the Texas hills to the south the landscape became more and more barren, and by the time we reached the old ghost town of Terlingua we were in a terrain as arid as Death Valley in California. Cinnabar, the ore from which quicksilver is derived, was discovered here in 1893, and between that date and 1930 when the principal mine finally was closed, many millions in flask silver were shipped from the mill here.

The original pioneers who furnished place names for the maps of this region called their terrain as they saw it. We passed Eggshell Mountain, Nine Points Mountain, Steamboat Mountain, Elephant Mountain, Butcher Knife Hill, Calamity Creek and Smuggler's Pass.

As we drove along the road to the park Monte told us about the long legislative struggle which preceded the dedication of this great desert region as a national park in June, 1944.

The man generally credited as being the original sponsor of the project was Everett E. Townsend, often spoken of as the "Father of the Big Bend National Park." As a member of the Texas state legislature in 1933, Townsend and a colleague, R. M. Wagstaff, introduced a bill establishing the Texas Canyons State Park, composed of 15 sections of school land. Later the same

year the state park was enlarged to include all unsold school lands and all delinquent tax lands in southern Brewster county.

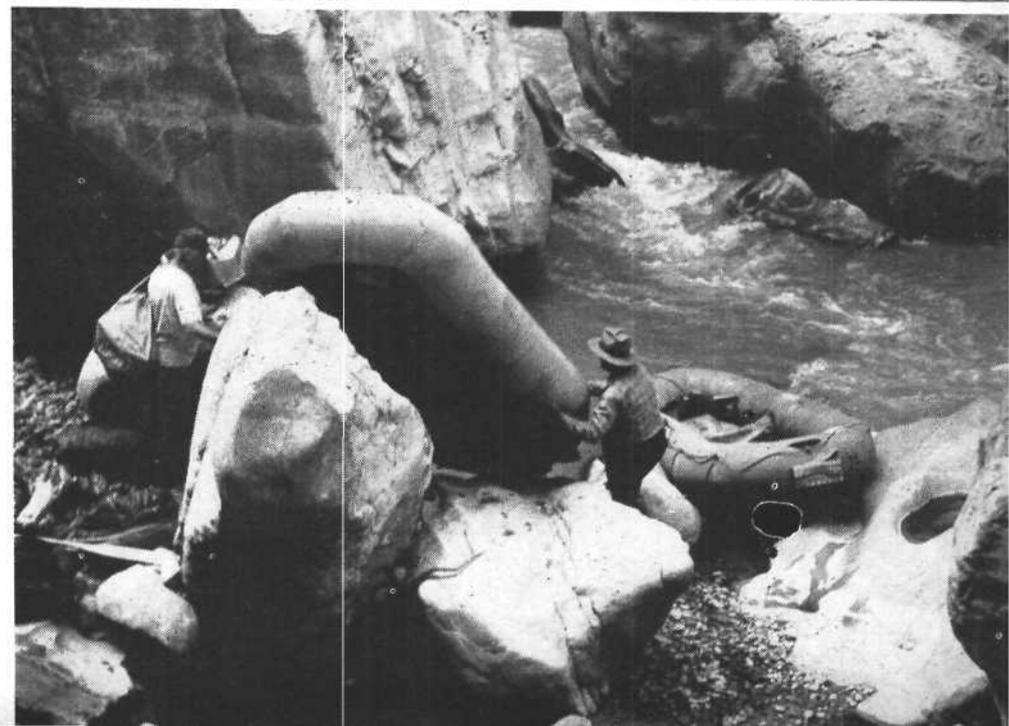
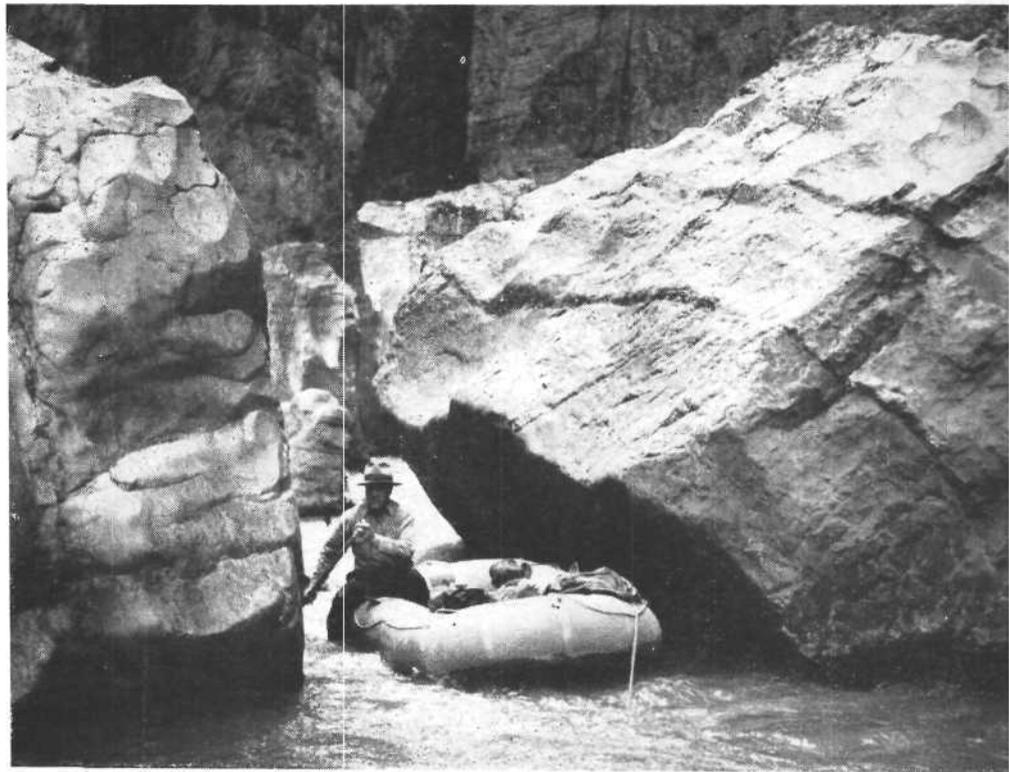
In 1934 a Civilian Conservation Corps camp was set up in the Chisos Mountains in the heart of the Big Bend country. That same year Congressman R. E. Thomason introduced in the United States Congress a bill authorizing the establishment of a national park in that part of West Texas which derives its name from a great semi-circular bend in the Rio Grande. The proposal was approved by Secretary Ickes of the Interior department in

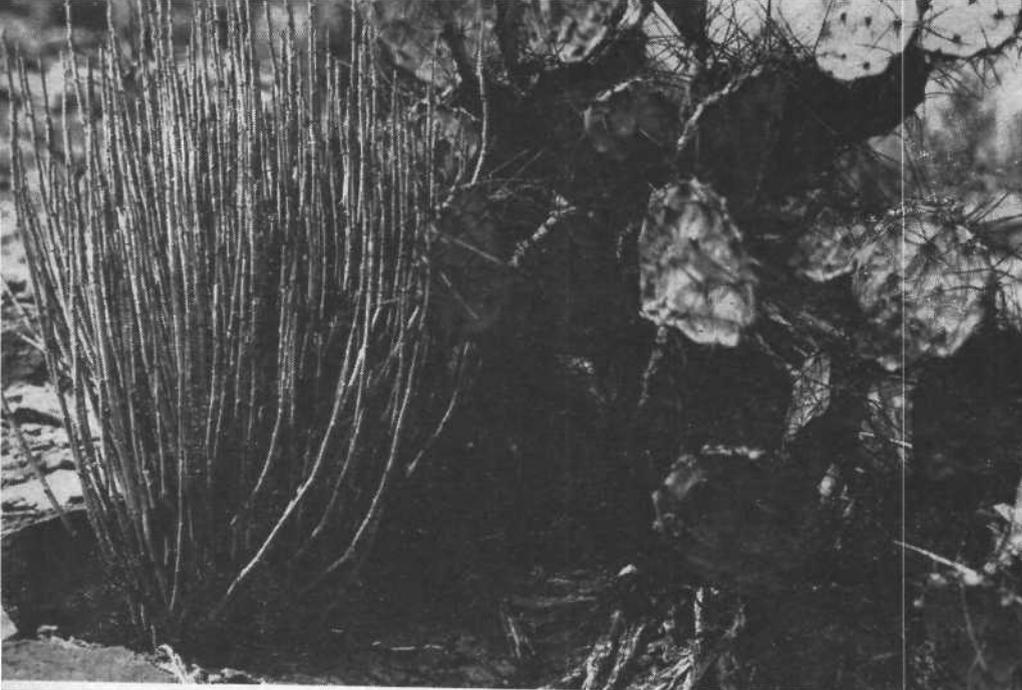
1935. The bill was approved by Congress but it was not until nine years later that all preliminary details had been worked out and the park actually established.

In the meantime the Texas legislature had appropriated \$1,500,000 for the purchase of private land in the Big Bend and this gave the park sufficient area to make it sixth in size among the parks administered by the National Park Service.

First superintendent of the park was Dr. Ross A. Maxwell who had majored in geology at Northwestern University. Within the last year Dr.

*It was necessary to wrangle the rubber boats over the boulders which blocked the passage at the rock slide. Supplies and equipment were portaged about 100 feet.*





*Above — To the left of the prickly pear cactus is a bush of Candelilla, an Euphorbia which is the source of a valuable type of commercial wax. Below — To obtain the wax, the plant is boiled in water containing sulphuric acid. Picture shows the vat at ground level. There is a fire pit beneath. The wax comes to the surface and is skimmed off at intervals when the brush lid is lifted.*

Later that same day we drove to park headquarters which is just off the main highway from Marathon. I wanted to congratulate Lon Garrison on his promotion to the superintendency of this desert park. I have known Lon for many years. He was one of *Desert Magazine's* first contributors in 1937 and I have followed his career since then, and felt that he was especially well qualified for the pioneering job to be done in the Big Bend Park. Although he had been on the new job only three months, Lon already has made a fine impression on his Texas neighbors, and his associates both in and outside of the park.

Lon mentioned a few of the tasks which lay ahead. "The Big Bend," he said, "is just emerging from its 'access stage' and is entering its 'use stage.' Until now the main problem has been the building of access roads and trails which will enable visitors to enjoy this great recreational area. The Big Bend country has a rather amazing range of plant life and wildlife.

"Within the next few months," Lon told me, "we expect to complete the paving of the two main roads into the park, and many miles of gravel roads within the park.

"And now that the access problem is about solved, our next step is to sign-post the trails and places of interest and to improve the accommodations. The plans for the future include a lodge and camp at a site near the Rio Grande. The Basin camp will serve for summer guests, the river camp, at a much lower elevation, will be for winter visitors."

Lon drove us to the river where we could look across the shallow Rio Grande to the Mexican settlement of Boquillas. Trucks were fording the stream, bringing fluorspar ore across from mines in Mexico—3000 tons of it a month for the Atomic Energy Commission. The mining concern pays the Park Service \$1.00 a ton for use of the park roads, and this income is an important factor in the maintenance of the park highways.

The park organization at Big Bend, in addition to Garrison, includes Leon Evans, formerly of Yellowstone, assistant superintendent; George Sholly, chief ranger, four other rangers, five clerks and a construction and maintenance foreman with a crew of 20 men.

One of the clerks at headquarters is Mrs. Etta Koch, whose husband, Peter, has the photograph concession in the park. Back in the Basin that evening we met Pete, who was scheduled to play an important role in our visit to the Big Bend.

Maxwell has resigned his post, and Lon Garrison, assistant superintendent of the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, was named to take his place.

Our destination in the park was The Basin, a natural amphitheater in the Chisos Mountains where National Parks Concessions, Inc., has built cabins and provides dining and other services for visitors. The rates are moderate. The facilities are still limited, however, because Big Bend is a comparatively new park.

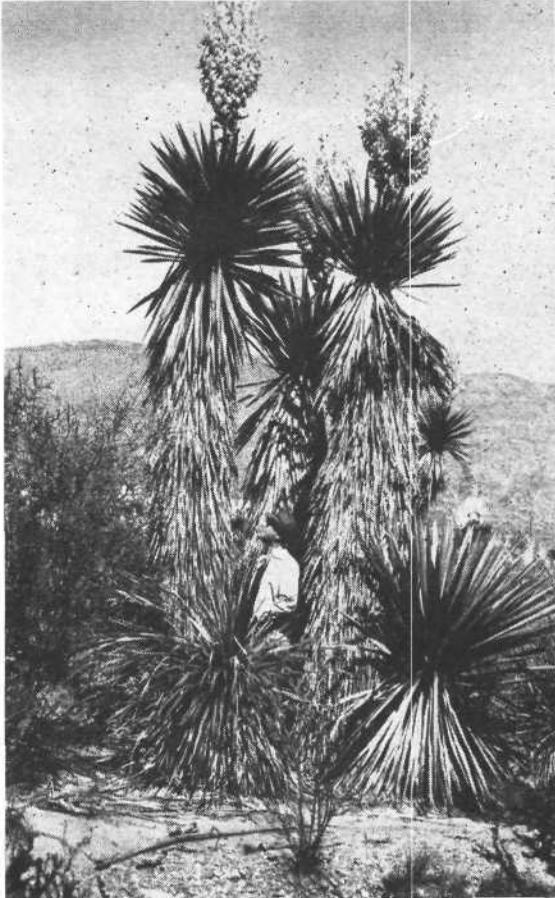
Situated at the base of a great stone

massif known as Casa Grande, The Basin is rimmed with mountains, the highest being Emory Peak with an elevation of 7,835, highest point in the park. The campsite is in the zone of juniper and pinyon and a luxurious garden of Upper Sonoran vegetation.

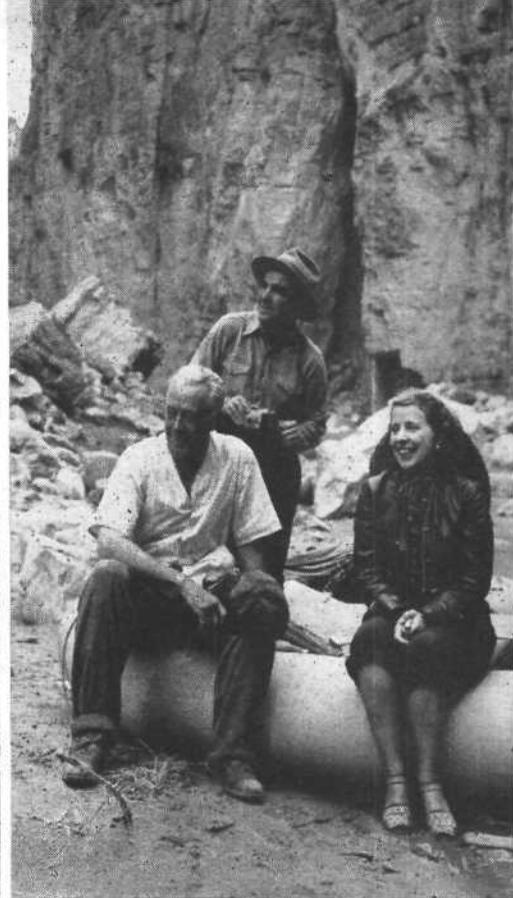
We were lodged in comfortable quarters in a cement block cabin and from our veranda in the late afternoon we could see the native white-tail deer browsing in the shrubbery on the mountain slope.



*Lon Garrison, newly appointed superintendent of Big Bend National Park.*



*The Giant Dagger — a species of Yucca found only in the Big Bend area.*



*Pete Koch standing, Monte Warner and Cyria Henderson—members of river party.*

Monte Warner and Pete had been busy during the afternoon arranging for a boat trip through Santa Elena Canyon, the longest of the three scenic Rio Grande gorges within the park.

The 25-mile voyage through Santa Elena normally requires two days and is one of the high spots of a visit to the Big Bend. Monte had two five-man Air Corps rubber life rafts, which are ideal for this trip because of their shallow draught and light weight.

The next day was spent in getting together our supplies for the trip, and early in the morning of March 5 the four of us—Monte, Pete, Cyria and myself took off from our cabin in The Basin for the little trading post at Lajitas, located on the bank of the Rio Grande just outside the western Park boundary.

First we drove to the lower end of Santa Elena and left one of our cars there so we would have transportation back to camp when we had completed our two-day run through the canyon. Then we followed a road up the river to Lajitas.

Rex Ivey and his wife have an adobe trading post here, their customers being the cattlemen who run stock along the river, and Mexicans on both sides of the river. Also, there is some mining activity nearby and this is a postoffice and provision point for a wide range of desert domain.

As we were inflating the boats a

fisherman came up from the river with a 5-pound channel catfish, and we were told that this was good fishing water.

Pete Koch has been through Santa Elena five times, twice alone. His first trip was made on a raft he had improvised from dry agave stalks. It wasn't much of a craft, but there are no bad rapids in this part of the Rio Grande and Pete's only problem was to keep his food and bedding and camera equipment dry. Many others had made the run through this canyon before Pete came here eight years ago.

Robert T. Hill of the U. S. Geological Survey organized a boat party to run the canyon in 1899, and sold the story to *Century Magazine*. Hill wrote: "This region is infested with thieves and murderers . . . our loaded rifles lay beside our oars and every bush and stone was scanned for a possible ambush."

There are still law-breakers along the Rio Grande, as we learned before our journey was ended, but they have ceased to be a hazard to visitors in this region.

The river was low, generally not more than waist deep. Our rubber rafts dragged bottom frequently in passing over the stony riffles, and occasionally it was necessary for one of us to go overboard and pull or push the rafts for a short distance. But the weather was mild and these brief tow-

ing experiences were no hardship.

In crossing the Rio Grande at El Paso we had noted that the river there was almost dry. We had wondered then if it would be possible to make a boat trip. But while the *Norte Americanos* have utilized almost every drop of water that comes down the Rio Grande from New Mexico, the Mexicans have not yet appropriated all the water in the Rio Conchas, a tributary which comes into the Rio Grande from Mexico near Presidio, Texas. So, while our boat ride was on the international boundary, we were grateful to the Mexicans for the water in which we were voyaging.

For some distance below Lajitas the river flows between low hills and the current is sluggish, not over 1½ miles an hour. At five o'clock we came to a grassy bank about seven miles from our starting point, and Pete announced this would be our night camp.

That evening, around a campfire of driftwood, we became better acquainted with the companions who made this trip possible for us.

Monte Warner, whose office is in Dallas, had planned to be a politician. He went through law school at the University of Wyoming, working as a newspaper reporter to help pay his way. Law, he thought, was the best preparation for a political career. Members of his wife's family, how-

ever, were heavily interested in South-western oil, and they induced him to turn to the oil fields for his livelihood. He served as an air pilot in World War I.

Peter Koch was born in Yugoslavia of German parents. His family came to the United States when he was six. He went through school in Cincinnati, Ohio, and became a photographer on the Taft newspaper *Times-Star*.

Pete was never entirely happy in the city, and eight years ago he and his wife decided to go West. He left his newspaper job and planned to go to Arizona or California. But an acquaintance told him about the Big Bend country which was then in the process of becoming a national park. The Kochs decided to look the new park over. They went to Alpine, Texas, and thence into the Big Bend—and have remained there ever since. They have a trailer equipped as a photo shop, and with their three daughters reside in one of the barracks originally erected in The Basin by the CCC.

When bedtime came that evening Monte emptied the rubber rafts and turned them upside down. "These make the most comfortable beds you ever saw," he explained, and generously offered to let Cyria and me sleep on them.

We told him we would much prefer our air mattresses on the ground, so Monte and Pete used the up-turned boats. As we turned in, Monte was mumbling something about those "dumb Californians who didn't know comfortable beds when they see them."

But Monte learned something that night—a lesson that every camper must learn sooner or later. On a cold night, the warmest place is close to the ground, not at an elevation where cold air can circulate beneath the bed. At daybreak our host was red-eyed and disconsolate. He had been cold all night.

After a leisurely breakfast we shoved off toward the narrow slot which the Rio Grande has carved for itself through the Mesa de Anguila. Ahead was the most spectacular sector of Santa Elena Canyon.

This was the day we made the acquaintance of an amazing fraternity of outlaws—the Candelilla wax makers of the Rio Grande country. At several places as we proceeded downstream the previous day Pete had pointed out what he called "Candelilla camps." A camp consisted merely of a hole in the ground where a fire had once burned, with a stack of candelilla straw beside it.

Candelilla, I learned, is one of the most useful plants on the North

American desert, but its habitat is limited to a narrow zone in Texas along the Rio Grande, and to Northern Mexico. Scientifically, it is *Euphorbia antispyhilitica*. Like other members of the Spurge family it has a milky juice with some rubber in it. But its chief value is the thin film of wax that grows on its leafless stems.

This wax has great commercial value in the making of candles, phonograph records, shoe polish, floor and car wax, for the making of smudgeless carbon paper, and as a rust-proof coating for machinery. The navy has learned that this wax in solution is the best protection for the big deck guns which are exposed to the corrosive action of damp salt air.

We had gone less than a mile down the river on this second day when we saw Mexicans a short distance ahead wading across the stream to their own side of the river. "Now you'll see a Candelilla camp in operation," Monte told me. A thin wisp of smoke was curling upward from a fire on the American side.

Pete's boat was in the lead, and he was soon engaged in conversation with eight or ten Mexicans who were lined up on the shore. Monte and I landed on the opposite bank. I wanted to see the Candelilla wax making process. What I learned then and in conversation with park officials later was this:

The equipment for wax recovery in this remote region consists of a string of burros to bring in the Candelilla plants, a huge metal vat for cooking the stems, a container of sulphuric acid, and a skimmer and container for the wax.

The Mexicans usually work in companies of from six to a dozen members. They go out with their burros and return with the burro-train loaded with Candelilla plants. Two men in an hour can harvest the 125-pound pack which one animal carries. The plants are pulled up by the roots, but fortunately a few broken roots remain in the ground from which a new crop of Candelilla springs up and is ready for another harvest in about six years. A burro train loaded with Candelilla plants looks like a parade of miniature haystacks coming down the trail.

In outlaw operation such as we witnessed, the vat is limited to a size which can be moved by pack animal from one site to another, and those we saw were about 2½ by 5 feet, with a depth of 2 to 3 feet.

This vat was set in a pit-furnace at ground level and the plants forked into it to boil in water containing sulphuric acid. The acid cuts the wax off the stems, it floats to the surface and is skimmed off. As it turns cool it hard-

ens to about the consistency of bee's wax.

A ton of Candelilla plants produces about 60 pounds of wax, and the market for the product was 52 cents a pound when we were there. A company of six or eight Mexicans can harvest and process about 60 pounds of wax worth \$31.50 in a week.

Along the Rio Grande in the Big Bend Park it is an outlaw industry, for the Mexicans are violating park regulations when they denude the landscape of its vegetation. Also, they are breaking another park rule when they operate a commercial enterprise without a concession.

On the Mexican side, the law regards them as bootleggers because they are not marketing their product through a central union agency at Monterrey. There is an embargo on Candelilla wax sold through other channels. And so they are hunted men—hunted by the Park Rangers on the American side and by the Rurales on the Mexican side. Their best protection is the remote and inaccessible region in which they operate. Their camps can be reached only by a boat coming down the Rio Grande.

At first they were frightened by our approach. But when they saw a woman in the lead boat it allayed their fears and they were willing to talk with us. When I wanted to buy a little of the wax, I learned it was concealed in a cache back in the hills, but after a little delay they produced a small chunk for me. Their product generally is sold to Americans who have trading posts along the river. While the Mexican who transports his wax across the stream and sells to an American is violating his own laws, there is no legal breach on the part of the trader who buys it outside the park limits on the American side of the Rio Grande.

Later that same day we found another Candelilla camp in operation, this time on the Mexican side. The Mexicans operating this one on a sandbar, saw our boats come around a bend a half mile upstream and on the assumption that we might be officers they hurried back into the hills. When we reached the camp the Candelilla vat was boiling, but the only living thing we saw was a burro tied to a tree. It was always easy to spot a camp on the shore, for there was the tell-tale stack of Candelilla straw and the odor of wax being cooked in sulphuric acid. As we continued down the river we saw Mexican heads bob up from behind the rocks up on the shore, and before we were out of sight the operators were heading back to their cooking vat again.



*Lower Santa Elena Canyon with wall rising 1500 feet above the slow flowing Rio Grande.*



*Pete Koch in his first trip through Santa Elena Canyon on a raft made of Agave stalks.*

I must confess that my sympathies were on the side of the Mexicans. When the economic status of humans is such that they feel impelled to live as hunted men in a desert wilderness and run the risk of imprisonment in order to gain a bare subsistence in frijoles and cornmeal and flour for tortillas, then they should not be censured too critically.

After we had passed the Mexican wax makers the canyon walls began to close in and we were soon paddling downstream in a gorge so narrow we were in the shade much of the time.

It was near lunch time when we came to what the Rio Grande rivermen call the "rock slide." Here a great block of rhyolite had broken away from the canyon wall above and had fallen into the stream. In his 1899 report Robert Hill wrote that the pile of debris blocking the canyon was 180 feet high and a half mile long. It took his party three days to portage their boats and equipment over the barrier. The experience was so unpleasant Hill referred to their site here as Camp Misery.

During the 54 years which have elapsed since the Hill party went through Santa Elena the forces of ero-

sion have made the navigation of the canyon much easier. We had to portage the rafts about 100 feet, but since they weigh less than 75 pounds each it was not a difficult operation. We wrangled the boats over the boulders and carried our food and bedrolls to a point below, and then ate our lunch on the rocks. The midday temperature was 82 degrees.

In mid-afternoon Pete pulled in and landed on a bar, and when Monte and I joined him he told us about a pretty tributary canyon which came in from the Mexican side at this point. The entrance to the tributary was a narrow slot in the sidewall, but after entering it we found a pretty paradise of clear-water pools and hanging banks of maidenhair fern. On a previous trip Pete had explored the tributary for some distance, and had named it Fern Canyon. I was sorry we lacked the time and supplies to remain in this lovely spot for another day.

Below Fern Canyon we passed through the most spectacular portion of Santa Elena. Here the walls rise almost perpendicular to a height of 1500 feet and the current is so sluggish one could easily imagine himself paddling on a lake deep in the heart of a great mountain fastness. The

Park Service is building a trail along a narrow bench in this sector of the canyon so visitors to the Big Bend may get an inside glimpse of Santa Elena gorge without the expense of bringing a boat here.

Down-river from Santa Elena are two other canyons. One of them is Mariscal where the river cuts through the Mariscal Mountains for a distance of eight miles. The other is Boquillas Canyon where the Rio Grande has hewn a channel for a distance of 14 miles through the Sierra del Carmen.

At several points in Santa Elena we saw lovely green banks of bermuda grass. The prevailing vegetation is catsclaw, mesquite, river cane, creosote, sotol and lechuguilla. There were a few lupines, which the Texans call bluebonnets, in blossom. Tamarisk, the invader from overseas which is now crowding mesquite and willow along the banks of many of the western streams, has not yet come to Santa Elena Canyon.

Our voyage ended at dusk, and I can hardly imagine a more delightful two-day outing than this leisurely 25-mile trip through Santa Elena, paddling when we felt like it and the rest of the time just floating along with a lazy current that would inevitably

carry us through the majestic gorge without hazard or discomfort.

During our remaining days in the park we found many interesting side trips. One day we motored down to the Hot Springs where mineral water bubbles from the shore of the Rio Grande. For many years this was maintained as a health resort because of the curative value of the water, but more recently it has been abandoned and neglected. Some of the men in the Park Service believe that eventually it will be restored and leased to a concessionaire who will build a health clinic here.

Over 800 species of plant life are included in a botanical check list compiled within the Big Bend Park. One of these is the Drooping Juniper, *J. flaccida*, which is found only in the Chisos Mountains. It resembles an ordinary Juniper which has wilted for lack of water.

Another botanical rarity found only in the Big Bend is the Giant Dagger, *Yucca carnerosana*, which flourishes

on a mesa called Dagger Flat, and grows to a height of 15 feet.

In the late years of the 19th century and early in the present century the cattlemen moved in with great herds of stock. What they did to the land in the period between 1915 and 1925 is best described by J. O. Langford, a homesteader who once owned the Hot Springs. In his book, *Big Bend, A Homesteader's Story*, he described what he found after an absence of several years from his homestead. He wrote:

"During the war, cattle prices and the prices of goats and sheep soared. And to take advantage of these prices, ranchers poured livestock into that vast region as fast as they could buy the animals. And now, where once I thought there was more grass than could ever be eaten off, I found no grass at all. Just the bare, rain-eroded ground. And where once beautiful pools of clear cold water had stood in Tornillo Creek, now I found only great bars of sun-baked gravel . . . aban-

doned dugouts, with the roofs fallen in, were all that was left of the dwellings that once housed a happy and prosperous family . . . all of them starved out by the blind greed and ignorance of men who had changed their paradise into a desert wasteland."

In West Texas, there are old-timers who will tell you that the movement to establish a national park in the Big Bend was prompted to some extent by a desire to "bail out" a lot of cattlemen who had found their once luxurious range made worthless by overgrazing. But the authorities differ as to this viewpoint. Some of the cattlemen are said to have opposed vigorously the effort to establish a national park here.

But all that is history now. A park has been established. And Americans may be sure that under the far-sighted policies of the U. S. Park Service the Big Bend in the future will be protected and developed for the enlightenment and enjoyment of all those who care to come here.



# Roaming Reporter of the Desert

In 1945 Nell Murbarger quit her job as editor of the weekly newspaper at Newport Beach, California. "The next day," she writes, "I headed back to the desert. I was glad to find it was the same old desert I had left 10 years before. I built a campfire and cooked my supper . . . and then I sat in the soft darkness and looked at the sky and the stars. Every once in a while I had to remind myself that this was all mine again, not just for that night, but for all the nights to come. I had been living in exile for 10 years, and now I had been repatriated."

By JEFF ADAMS

ANYONE WHO frequents the dim byroads of the desert is almost certain eventually to cross trails with Nell Murbarger, roving reporter of the Southwest. Driving 12,000 miles a year in a battered sedan, this versatile writer covers the ghost towns, mining camps, and cattle country — her beat extending from California to West Texas and Colorado.

Like many readers of *Desert Magazine* I had enjoyed Nell's stories of places far from the beaten track; but only recently did I learn that most of her rambling is done without any companion, and wherever night overtakes her, she unrolls her sleeping bag and makes camp.

That any woman should choose so lonely a career was hard to understand, and I felt that back of her choice there must be a story. I decided to find out.

When I called at Nell's home in Costa Mesa, California, I was shown to her cabin—a small frame building set under a large walnut tree in the backyard. Flanking its portico on either side were cactus plants and mineral specimens, and over the entrance hung a weathered pair of desert sheep horns.

Rapping on the door, I mentally braced myself for a whirlwind encounter with some muscle-bound "Cattle Kate" who shot from the hip and broke wild horses as a pastime.

But it wasn't that sort of woman who came forward to greet me with outstretched hand and a smile as warm and genuine as all outdoors! This was a brown-haired woman, slender and girlish in appearance, with merry brown eyes that sparkled mischievously when she spoke. She was wearing faded levis and a man's red plaid shirt; and hanging from a peg beside her desk was a battered gray stetson with two holes in the crown.

Indian rugs covered floor and chairs and benches; burlap drapes framed the windows. Decorating the knotty pine walls were enough pioneer relics for a small museum—everything from

ox shoes to prehistoric pottery. Sandwiched between the relics were a couple of cases of ore specimens, and numerous reproductions of early Western

paintings, chiefly by Charles M. Russell. Every remaining foot of wall space was occupied by filing cabinets and bookcases stacked with Southwestern volumes.

That I should be curious about her manner of living did not seem especially surprising to Nell.

"I suppose it does seem strange that a woman should choose the sort of work I am doing, but I don't think I could endure the prospect of living in any other manner. I'm doing exactly what I have dreamed of doing ever

*Nell Murbarger—roving reporter of the desert country.*



since I was ten years old. Not many folks," she added significantly, "are that fortunate!"

For one whose life would be dedicated to the pursuit of Western history, Nell showed good judgment in choosing as her birthplace a sod homestead shanty on the plains of western South Dakota. The date: a stormy October night in 1909.

Over those same plains, in the memories of men then living, had thundered great herds of buffalo. There had sounded the war drums of the Sioux, and the blast of outlaw gunfire. One of the greatest joys of Nell's childhood lay in listening to the exciting, firsthand stories of men who had helped make frontier history in the Black Hills; men who had known personally Custer and Sitting Bull, and Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. Bisecting her parents' homestead were the grass-grown ruts of the old Deadwood-Sidney stagecoach trail, and one of her earliest recollections is of scouting that trail in search of relics.

"As I was an only child, and no other youngsters lived nearby, I moved through a strange big world peopled only by adults and animals, and birds, and dreams," said Nell. "Some folks thought it deplorable that I should have to grow up in loneliness, without child playmates — but if I was ever lonely, I was never conscious of it. I had my books and saddle pony and my dogs; and I had the whole, wide plains for a playground!"

Western Dakota, at that time, was still wild and isolated, with no roads worthy of the name, no automobiles, no telephones. Winters were long and severe, and six months might pass that Nell and her mother would see no other woman. Schools, consequently, were few and far between.

When Nell became of school age, her parents were faced with a major decision. Rather than ship her off to some distant town to live with strangers, they decided to teach her at home. Both were well educated, and with all their scholastic attention focussed on one small pupil, she progressed rapidly. At the age of twelve years she completed the eighth grade, took her final exams under the county superintendent of schools, and finished with the highest averages and second youngest of any student in the county for that year.

Feeling that their daughter should have an opportunity to complete her higher education in a manner more orthodox, her parents sold the homestead and moved to Southern California in 1923.

"I don't know which one of us most heartily detested the noise and conges-

tion of city life!" laughed Nell. "I only know that we could scarcely wait, each spring, for school to close. We would have everything packed and ready. As soon as we could get away, we would head north—into the Mother Lode country, sometimes on to Oregon and Idaho. Dad learned to placer mine for gold, and we would camp for weeks at a time on some fishing stream, washing the gravel and salvaging the yellow dust.

"We gathered natural history specimens and sold them to museums and biological laboratories. We cut redwood burls, and cured starfish, and sold them to curio dealers. Sometimes we even worked in the fruit harvest—picking apricots and hops, and peaches and apples and oranges. It didn't matter to us what we did, so long as it was out in the open air, and so long as we were free to come and go as we chose."

Even before leaving the homestead, Nell had chosen writing as a career. At the age of 10 she had made her first sale of non-fiction, which had brought her a two dollar check from *Bird Lore* magazine. Other sales had followed, chiefly to *Dakota Farmer*, *National Sportsman*, and *Sports and Hobbies* magazine, of Los Angeles. So frequent were her contributions to this last-named medium that by 1930 they had won her a position as assistant editor.

"That really put me to walking on the clouds!" she declared. "The job had only one drawback. In order to realize a living from it, I had to collect my salary in advertising space—and then sell the space!"

With the coming of the depression in the early '30s *Sports and Hobbies* folded up and its assistant editor went back to gold mining and freelancing.

Realizing her need of practical writing experience, Nell eventually turned her back on the gypsy life and accepted a position as general reporter on the Costa Mesa (California) *Globe-Herald*, a weekly newspaper. This was followed by reportorial jobs on several dailies, including the Los Angeles *Examiner*. In 1937, she became managing editor of the *Globe-Herald*, remaining in this position until 1940, when she accepted a higher-paid position as editor of *Newport-Balboa Press*, of Newport Beach, California.

Up to this point she had been combining her newspaper work with freelancing and was selling to a number of nationally-known publications. But the *Press* was a young and lively news medium. From six pages it increased to twenty-four pages. The editor's duties and salary increased accordingly, and Nell was soon working al-

most night and day to keep pace with the demands of her job. No longer was there any spare time for freelancing.

With realization that her lifelong dream of traveling and writing was being sacrificed to a weekly paycheck, Nell notified her employers that her services would terminate with the close of 1945.

"The knowledge that I was free again, was the greatest thrill I have ever known," she said. "After spending all my young life in God's out-of-doors, I had been shackled to an editor's desk for 10 long years—six days a week, and sometimes as much as 18 hours in a single day! And now, once again, I was free!"

"I headed back to the desert. I was glad to find it still the same old desert I had left, 10 years before. I built a campfire and cooked my supper—and then I sat in the soft darkness and looked at the sky and the stars. Every once in a while I had to remind myself that this was all mine, again; not just for that night, but for all nights to come. Had I been living in exile for 10 years and then been repatriated, I couldn't have felt more thankful!"

Since that momentous decision, Nell has driven nearly 100,000 miles over the Southwest. She has traveled and camped in every county in California, Nevada, Utah and Arizona, and all but a few counties in New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming.

Her equipment is simple. Built into the trunk compartment of her 1946 Mercury sedan is a redwood cupboard holding all her food and utensils. The lid lowers to form her table, and a canvas campstool provides a seat. She carries no tent. While her car is equipped for inside sleeping, she prefers to sleep on the ground, using an eiderdown sleeping bag with waterproof tarpaulin for ground cloth and cover. Only in case of inclement weather does she use the car bed.

Except for a 30-day period each autumn, which she and her parents spend camping in Arizona and New Mexico, she travels alone, without even a dog for company.

"It's not that I'm hopelessly anti-social," she laughed. "It's just that not many women are interested in traveling and living as I do. I can't blame them," she added. "I'm sure it would be boresome to wait in some little jerkwater town while I spent two or three days running down a story, or with my head buried in a musty old newspaper file! I find I always do a more thorough job of research when I'm alone, as there's no feeling that someone is waiting impatiently for me to finish."

Although she carries a gun and is a good marksman, she has never been obliged to use it for any purpose more lethal than target shooting.

"I don't go in much for killing," she explained quietly. "I don't kill even rattlesnakes, unless they are dangerously close to places of habitation, or along an established trail. I sort of feel that the desert belongs to them as much as it does to me."

Knowing that her travels frequently take her on lonely byroads, dozens of miles removed from any point of habitation, I asked if this wasn't dangerous practice for a woman traveling alone. What about breakdowns, or getting stuck?

"That's just one of the risks of the job," she replied. "I do all I can to avoid trouble by keeping my car in top mechanical condition. In case of minor motor trouble, I can generally locate and fix it; and, of course, I can change a tire, or get out of a sandtrap as well as most men. So far, I have been very fortunate. Sometime, I presume, I'll fall into some predicament beyond my ability to solve. But, when that time comes, I'll just make camp beside my car and wait for someone to come along. I always carry sufficient food and water for ten days or two weeks; and it's almost impossible, these days, to find a traversible road so remote that at least one vehicle a week doesn't pass over it."

As you might guess, her hobby is ghost towns! Having visited and photographed practically all of the better known ghost towns between Denver and the coast, she is now working on the smaller, less spectacular camps. In Nevada, alone, she has mapped the locations of 200 former boom camps and abandoned stations on railroads no longer operative.

Beginning in 1921, Nell has kept a daily record of her experiences and observations—not the trivia common to most diaries, but thoughtful notes concerning the land and its natural history, the people she meets along the way, and the stories they tell her. On her field trips she averages 3000 words per day in such observations—her record grist having been collected last year on a six-week jaunt through Utah and Nevada, when she typed 126,000 words of notes—an amount equal to two full-sized volumes of fiction!

Notes hand-jotted during the day are typed each evening, in duplicate, on letterhead size manifold paper. At the end of each trip, these sheets are paged, bound in pamphlet form, and all subjects cross-indexed on filing cards, thereby enabling the immediate location of any information included.

By operating in this manner, nothing is left to the uncertainty of memory—a safeguard which has won her a reputation for accuracy almost unparalleled among contemporary Western historians.

In the past 32 years, her daily journal entries have totaled close to 5,000,000 words.

Further evidence of her meticulous attention to detail is found in the battery of filing cabinets lining the walls of her office. Methodically segregated by county and subject are an estimated million news clippings spanning the entire history of Western development from prehistoric inhabitants to atom bomb tests. She also owns a large library of Southwestern magazines—their contents minutely cross-indexed on filing cards—scores of reference books dealing with pertinent subjects,

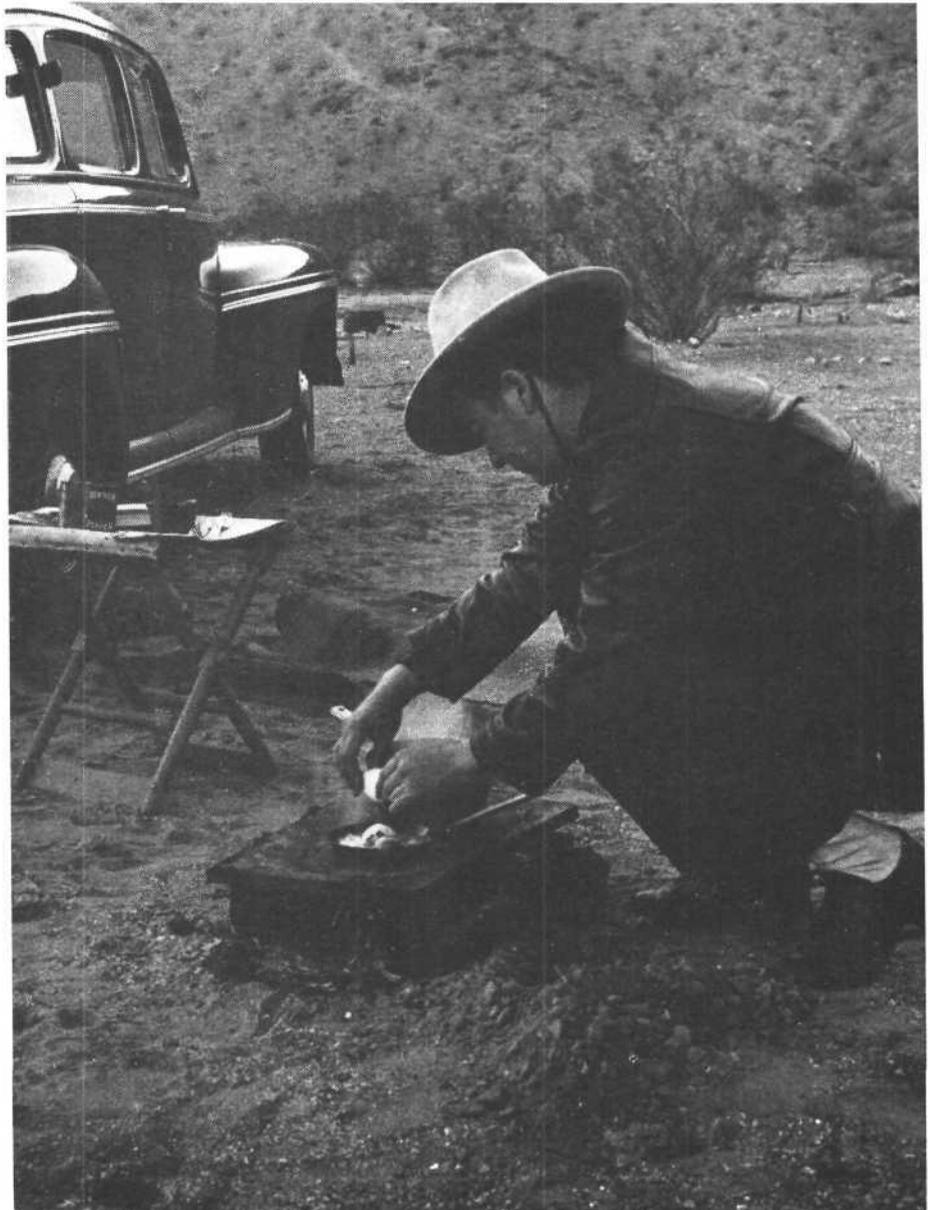
and nearly 10,000 photographic negatives of Western subjects.

Shaking my head in bewilderment, I rose to leave. Nell laughed.

"I'm afraid I haven't made too good a case for myself," she said. "If you're still convinced that mine is an odd sort of occupation, maybe you'd better just put me down as an odd sort of woman!"

"I wish I could explain it, so you could understand—but I'm not quite sure I understand it myself! It's just that I'd rather watch the moon rising over the desert than see the best musical on Broadway; and while this business of following dim trails and seeking out forgotten history is a hard, demanding life, there's something about it that gives me more joy and satisfaction than anything else on earth!"

*Miss Murbarger generally camps alone—and unrolls her sleeping bag wherever she happens to be when night comes.*



# Man Who Bought a Ghost Town

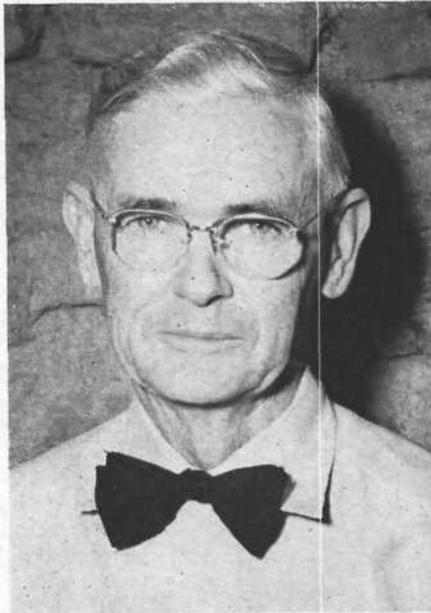
Two years ago, just after he had bought the ghost silver camp at Calico, California, Walter Knott told the Desert Magazine staff that as soon as his plans were completed for restoring the old town and work actually started, he would give Desert's readers a glimpse of the project as he visualized it. While the program undertaken by Knott will require 10 or 15 years for completion, work has now progressed to the point when the full story can be told—and Harold Weight has told it well in the accompanying text, based on an interview with Walter Knott.

By HAROLD O. WEIGHT

Photographs by the author

Map by Norton Allen

**S**OME SATURDAY night 10 or 12 years from now—the exact date is still uncertain—Lucile and I hope to be keeping an important date way out on the Mojave Desert. We'll leave Highway 91 at Yermo and head north past the dusty silver platter



of the dry lake and up the bajada, following the road that winds above the graveyard and into the jagged and colorful volcanics of the Calico Mountains. Then that last steep little pitch

onto the narrow plateau, and we'll be at the ghost town of Calico.

But it will not be the familiar ghost we've visited so often in the past—stark and silent and crumbly under the moonlight, with a lonely light or two but accentuating its long abandonment. Not if Walter Knott's plans are carried to completion. For our appointment with the future is really a date with the past; with the day when old Calico comes back to life.

And then it will be a lively ghost indeed. There will be booted and bearded prospectors and miners on Main Street, and girls in calico and in satin. There will be food at Yung Hen's restaurant and general merchandise in Lane's Mercantile Store, and "Calico Strike" and root beer and sarsaparilla and maybe even hard cider in Joe's Saloon and Cook's and the Oasis. There'll be dances in Diamond Lil's, and maybe entertainment at Calico Town Hall. Visitors wishing lodging for the night will find it at Mrs. Cook's Pioneer House ("Tables furnished with the best the market af-

*Old Calico as it looked at the time it was purchased for reconstruction by Walter Knott. Wall Street Canyon in the foreground, Main Street on the little plateau, center. Calico reached the height of its boom in the middle 1880s.*





Calico Ghost Town as it will look when restored by Walter Knott, from painting by Paul V. Klieben of Buena Park. Knott's Berry Farm photo.

fords"), or H. B. Stevens' Calico House ("First class in every respect"), or perhaps even at the Hyena House. And of course there will be guided trips through a reconstructed silver mine, and gift shops and rock shops in reconstructed Calico buildings.

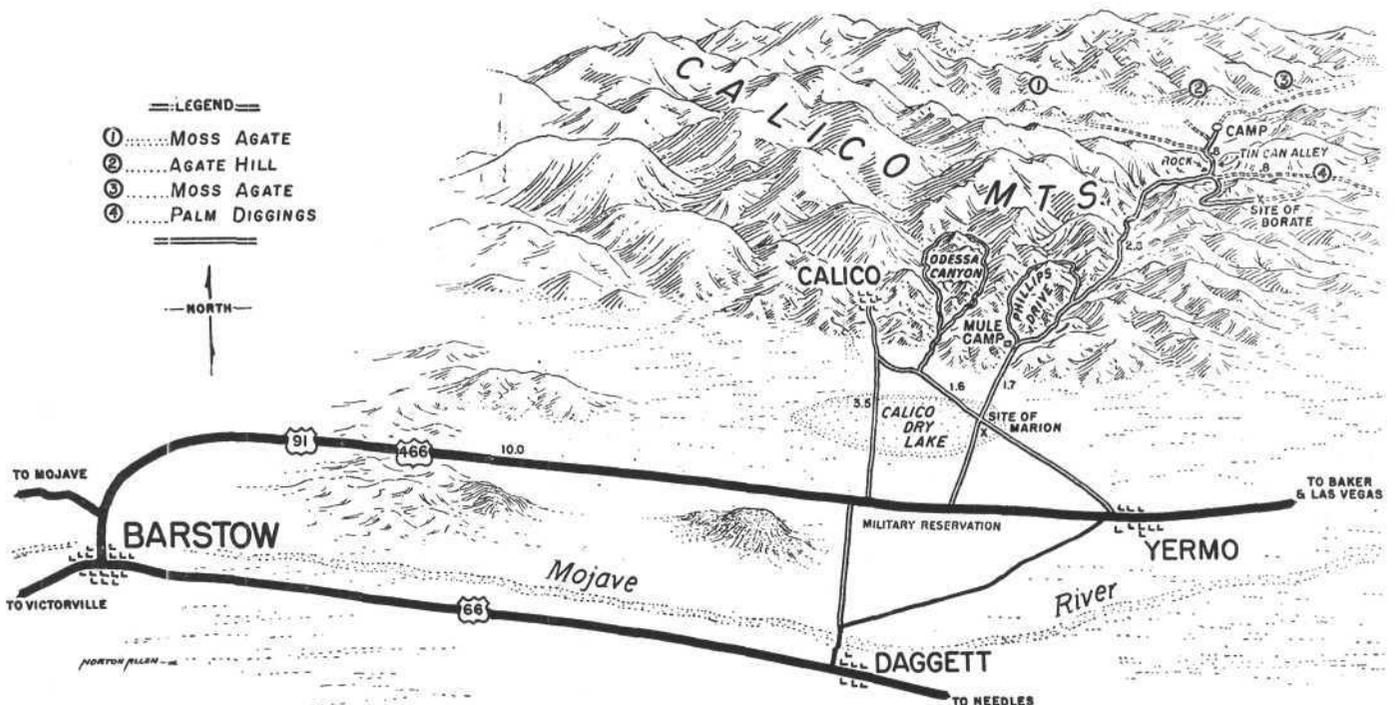
That's the way Walter Knott has planned it. And it's a man-sized dream and a worthy one, this preservation of the remaining ruins of Calico and the reconstruction around them, of the greatest Southern California silver

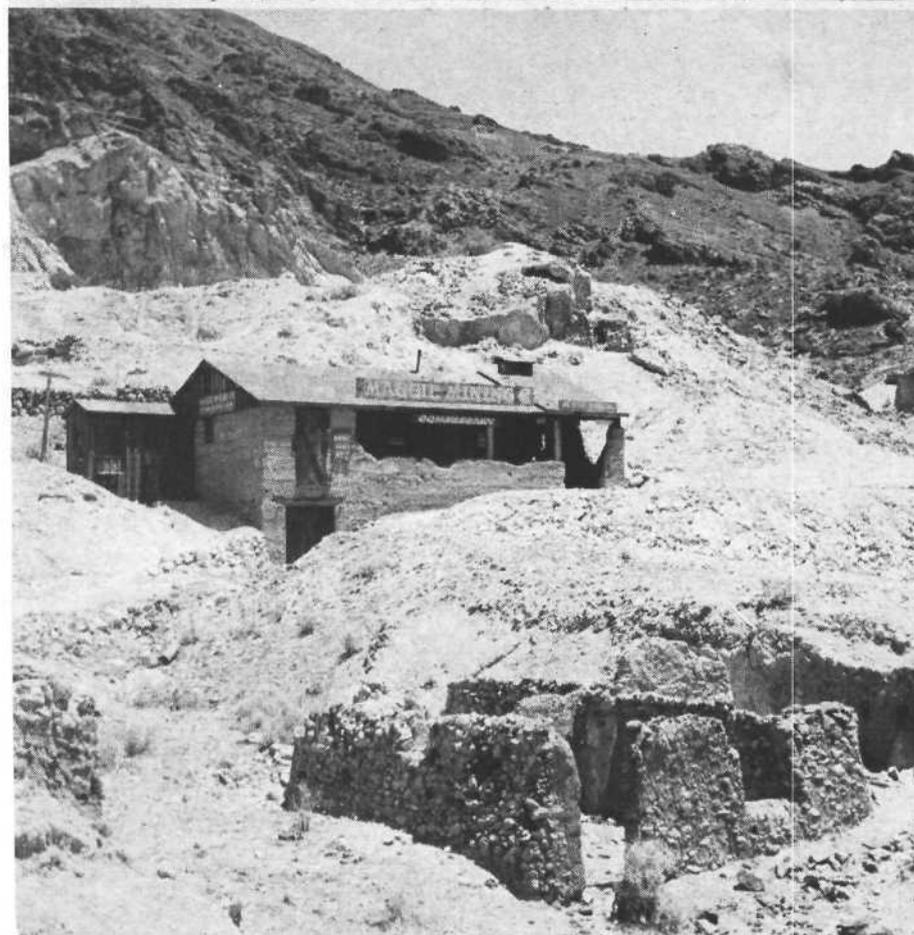
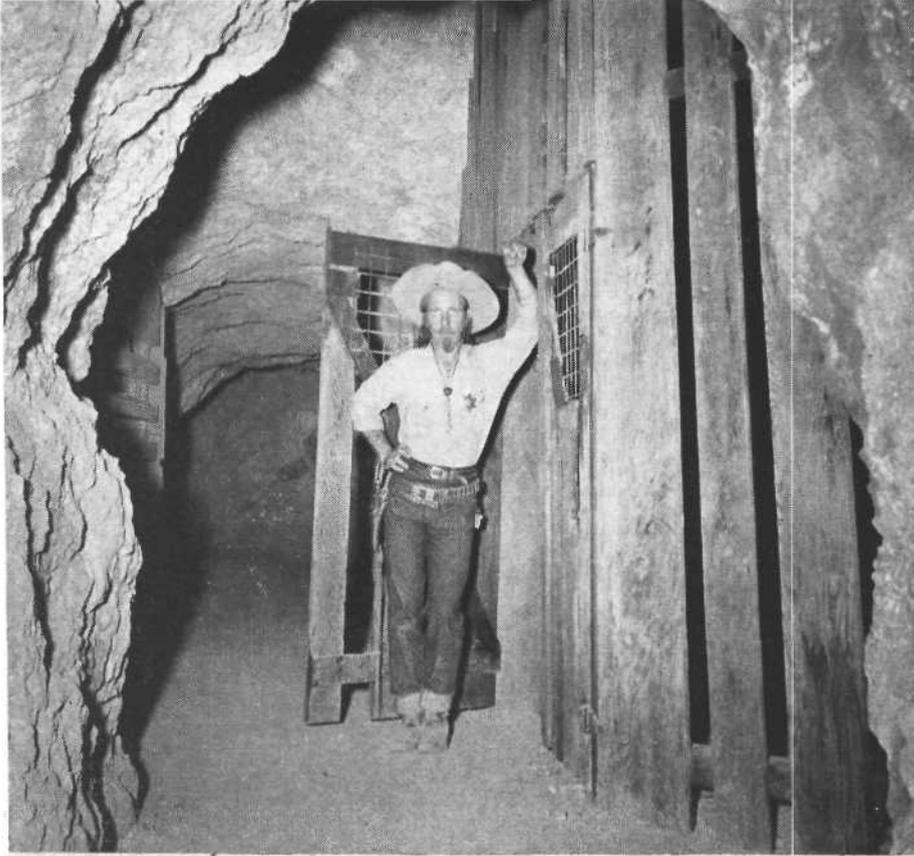
camp as it was in the heyday of its 1880s boom. But Knott has shown the ability to make dreams into realities. And he and his staff are not amateurs in the building of ghost towns. Those who want a foretaste of what Calico will be like a decade from now might well visit the Ghost Town at Knott's Berry Farm at Buena Park, California, constructed in part from relics Knott and his associates have assembled from all over the West, ranging in variety from ladies' hat pins

to narrow-gauge railroad trains.

All this talk about the future does not mean that nothing is being done at Calico now or that visitors are unwelcome there or that they would not enjoy a visit. Knott plans the restoration of Calico as a long range project stretching over a period of 10 to 15 years and costing \$200,000 or more. But work has been under way now nearly two years, under the direct charge of Calico Fred Noller with Artist Paul von Klieben the designer.

This map by Norton Allen shows the areas where some of the gem material in the Calico Mountains is found.





*Calico Fred at the entrance to the \$65,000 glory hole in the Maggie Mine. Tunnels in the old mine have been improved and indirectly lighted, and tourists are guided through them.*

*The Shaft House of the Maggie Mine is the first building of Calico to be reconstructed by Knott. Walls in the foreground also have been dug out, and the surrounding areas cleared of the debris of 60 years. Visitors today are conducted through a tunnel which starts in the Maggie Shaft house and penetrates the hills behind it.*

As much as \$5000 a week has been spent in this work. A great deal of it went for cleaning up the debris around the old camp—but earlier visitors to Calico can appreciate the great improvement here. Besides this, and the excavation and strengthening of old walls and the improvement of paths and trails, a shaft house has been constructed at the Maggie Mine, the Maggie Tunnel and its \$65,000 glory hole cleared out and lighted for tours, and the old Assay Office recovered from Yermo, where it had been moved, and set up again as a rock shop on Calico's Main Street. In the Maggie Shaft House visitors can obtain soft drinks, some basic food items, old fashioned candies and tobaccos.

Walter Knott did not buy Calico ghost town with no personal knowledge of what the great old camp and the desert around it were like. In fact, if I had experienced his introduction to Calico, I don't know whether or not I would be so anxious to preserve it. That was during the summer of 1915, as he remembers it. There was a scheme on to work the tailings at Calico and he was hired as the company's carpenter.

Day after day he worked on the shadeless bottoms of the big redwood cyaniding tanks, with the temperature at 116 degrees. "If you would lay down a hammer, you couldn't pick it up," he recalls. "If you put down any tool, you had to stand it on end to pick it up, it became so hot." Then, in August of the same year, he laid the galvanized iron roof over the two-story mill building, with the metal so hot he could not touch it with bare hands.

But long before his first visit, Knott had a sentimental interest in Calico. His uncle, John C. King, early sheriff of San Bernardino County, had grubstaked the prospectors who discovered what became the Silver King Mine, one of the camp's richest, credited with a \$10,000,000 production.

In the first issue of the town's newspaper, the *Calico Print*, dated July 12, 1882, a brief history of the camp was carried. Before any strike in the Calico Mountains had been made, silver was discovered about eight miles away in what is now the Waterman Mine. That was in the fall of 1880. In the spring of 1881, according to this story, Lowery Silver made the first strike at present Calico. Later accounts give his name as Larry Silvia and say he was accompanied by Charlie Meacham and Johnny McBride. The discovery of the King Mine, according to the newspaper, was made by Undersheriff Tom Warden, Hues Thomas and others, and it was "the wonder of the



*Larry and Lucille Coke moved into a roofless ruin in Calico in the 1930s, when the camp was entirely uninhabited, and restored a number of buildings, created a museum of local relics, and made the name of Calico Ghost Town known all over the United States. In 1947, the Cokes sold their interest to W. E. "Doc" Smith, lifetime Mojave Desert miner, and his sister, Mrs. Irene Wolfe, who in turn sold to Knott's Berry Farm. On the porch of the old Calico Museum, left to right: Doc Smith, Mrs. Irene Wolfe, Lucille and Larry Coke.*

age, the richest and biggest mine in the state of California."

In July of 1881 there was only one tent at Calico—in Wall Street Canyon—and James Parker and Ellie Miller were the only inhabitants. But from that time, despite fires and epidemics, the camp never ceased growing until it reached its peak population—estimated variously between 800 and 3500. It was probably largest at the time of the September 1887 fire, which nearly burned the town out. The heavy losses were reflected in decreased mining expansion.

But the blow which destroyed Calico's future—with its ore still far from exhausted—was the fall in the price

of silver to a low of between 50 and 60 cents an ounce, far less than half its value when the camp first boomed.

Silver never came back, nor did Calico. Oh, the camp was not abandoned all at once. Some of its people never did abandon it, moving at last from the plateau to the little graveyard below. And at intervals attempts on large or small scale were made to open the mines or to rework the tailings.

But no one was living in Calico toward the end of the depression of the 1930s, when Larry and Lucille Coke moved into the town to try their luck at making the mine tailings pay. There wasn't even a roof on the ruined

adobe in which they lived, until they put one on.

Through the next ten years, the Cokes made the mine tailings pay, but their prime interest shifted to the old town of Calico itself. As they built and excavated and repaired, they found relic after relic of the life of those who had lived in Calico in the 1880s. It really seemed to them that there should be a museum to house their findings, so that the occasional visitor to the old mining camp could see them and appreciate more deeply the romance of Calico. So they built a museum.

The visitors spread the fame of Calico, and other visitors came in increasing numbers. Then the rock-

hound hobby, exploding into popularity, brought more and more collectors into the Calico Mountains which are a storehouse of semi-precious cutting material, minerals and cabinet specimens. During World War II, Lucille kept the camp and the museum open, and it was visited by thousands and thousands of young men and women training in the camps of the Mojave Desert. After the war, the Cokes' interest in Calico was sold to a desert oldtimer, the late Doc (W. E.) Smith and his sister, Mrs. Irene Wolfe, who maintained the museum until Walter Knott took over the whole camp.

It was about the end of the war, too, when many of us who were awed by the spectacular beauty of the canyons in the Calico Mountains and who did not want to see the historically important ruins of old Calico weather entirely away, attempted to promote the creation of a state or national park in the Calicos. For a time it seemed that the move would succeed. Then it struck an unsurmountable obstacle.

That obstacle was, of all things, money. The same government which was, apparently, willing at that time to use tax millions for any fantastic project so long as it was outside the boundaries of the United States did not have a cent to purchase or restore a monument to the American spirit which made possible the millions they were squandering. If the land were given to them, then they might be willing to see what they could do about it. And the state, which was spending millions for highways to take its people places could not afford the money to give them something to see when they arrived.

That was the way the matter stood early in 1951 when the Knotts bought the Calico townsite and some of the surrounding mining claims. And perhaps it is more fitting that Knott should restore Calico than that the federal government should. For as Calico is a symbol of the American drive and spirit which made our nation so strong and so rich, so is Walter Knott a proof of the American dream that a man can rise as high as his own abilities and his own willingness to work will carry him.

When Walter Knott worked that summer in Calico, it was during a bitter struggle to survive on the desert. He had homesteaded in the Mojave near Newberry in 1913 and found that it was impossible to live without outside work. So he labored in Calico and in other mines. And from the mines he went to work on the highway between Newberry and Needles. He helped spread the first oil upon it, walking the whole distance between

those points several times in doing it.

From Newberry — with the money earned on the highway—Knott was enabled to move his wife and children by wagon to a farm in San Luis Obispo County, rented on shares. In three years there he made enough money to enable him to move down to Buena Park where his present Berry Farm and Ghost Town are world famous.

At Buena Park he rented the property for seven years, living, the first part of the period, in an \$8-a-month shack which had been occupied by a Mexican family. There they grew berries and sold them from the little roadside stand which was the genesis of the present tremendous enterprise.

When Knott bought Calico ghost town a lot of people who figure there must be some personal "gimmick" behind every man's every action tried to figure out what Knott was going to get out of the deal. They still are wondering and asking, and this exasperates even a man with Knott's gentle and equable temperament.

"We have no business playing around with Calico, at all," he declares. "We don't expect to make any money there, and we have all we can do right here. But all of Southern California is filling up so rapidly—from Los Angeles and the south — that I feel in time the desert will become more and more a playground for the people who live here. With future faster transportation, more and more people will be going out there. And since the public has paid us money here and we have made a degree of success, we feel that we owe an obligation to the public and this is one way of meeting it."

In the booklet on Calico which Knott's Berry Farm has published, the matter is stated a little more formally:

"It is with a deep sense of responsibility that Knott's Berry Farm having purchased Calico Ghost Town, has assumed a protectorate over it and its future welfare. Suddenly to become custodian of an heirloom — valuable by reason of its historical importance, and priceless, because it is irreplaceable, creates a sacred trust, and the acquisition of Calico Ruins is so regarded by Walter Knott, a direct descendant of early day western pioneers, and an outstanding pioneer in his own right . . .

"To restore merely the physical aspects of the town without the lusty and swaggering spirit that gave Calico its singular reputation, would be ignoring its character, influenced and determined by the 3500 human beings who lived, loved, and labored there. These must also be portrayed, to make old Calico live again."

Reading that, and listening to Walter

Knott, I am satisfied old Calico is in good hands. That is why Lucille and I are looking forward eagerly to that visit to a living ghost town a decade from now. We are certain Walter Knott is going to do his part to keep that date.

## *Jerome a Ghost --and Proud of it!*

The Jerome, Arizona, City Council has voted to go into the ghost business.

Sensitive for years to such adjectives as "dead," "dying" and "ghostly," Jeromites, with the enthusiastic backing of their municipal officers, have agreed to capitalize on their fallen status by turning their town into "the Williamsburg of the West."

At a recent meeting, 50 townspeople formally launched the Jerome Historical Society to preserve all things of historic interest and to carry on an intensive publicity campaign.

Electing Johnnie O. Moore as president and Jim Brewer as chairman of the executive council, the society announced it would establish a museum on the town plaza. Associate memberships in the society, at \$1.00, would entitle holders to free admission to the museum. Three-dollar active memberships would be good for museum admission and all society publications.

Brewer was credited with fathering the whole idea. He explained that tourists at nearby Tuzigoot National Monument, where he is superintendent, had forced him into an interest in old Jerome by their thousands of questions about it.

"Are we officially dead now?" asked Mrs. Henry Clark at the end of the meeting.

"Well," declared Mayor John McMillan, an undertaker, "the death certificate hasn't been issued yet."

Jerome is to be no mere ghost town, however. A place that bustled once with 15,000 people, Brewer insisted, must be a ghost city. Signs at both end of town, he said, would make this clear.

Most members and town councilmen alike seemed to feel that proclamation of official ghost status would not discourage interest in the town for other reasons.

The state legislature has expressed interest in establishment of a tuberculosis hospital there and the Indian Service is known to be considering it as the site for a Navajo school.

Brewer suggested the museum include displays carefully tracing the growth of Jerome as a fabulous mining camp.

# Night On The Desert

By MILDRED BREEDLOVE  
Las Vegas, Nevada

On summer nights when stars look down  
Upon these silent desert sands,  
The cactus wears a silver gown,  
And yucca leaves wave slender strands  
Of gossamer to taunt the breeze;  
While angels, seeing light subdued,  
Must view with satisfaction these  
Unsullied miles of solitude.  
The desert noonday's savage sun  
Has spent itself, and slipped from sight,  
Not knowing it has dearly won  
Perfection for the desert night.

## THE DESERT SONG

By GRACE BARKER WILSON  
Kirtland, New Mexico

The desert sings a haunting song  
As long, blue shadows fall,  
And wondrous, strange adventures  
From out the darkness call.

The desert sings a mournful song  
As winds are howling high,  
And marching ghosts with measured tread  
Moan low as they pass by.

The desert sings a peaceful song  
In moonlight calm and white,  
And restless spirits quietly  
Sleep through the silent night.

## DESERT TEMPLE

By PAUL WILHELM  
Thousand Palms, California

Build you a temple in the glow  
Of Desert hills, and in your breast  
Wake hunger's death will never know—  
A dream, a courage, and a quest.

## DESERT BLOSSOM

By JEAN ANDERSON  
Seattle, Washington  
Tawny mesa spreading far  
At noonday, dawn or starry night,  
Holds this blossom of the desert,  
This miracle of young delight.

Lovely maiden of her tribe  
Moves with swift, elusive grace—  
Strangers may but rarely glimpse  
The radiant shyness of her face.

Quiet beauty of the mesa  
Hovers gently where she goes—  
Only native folk are certain  
How a desert blossom grows.

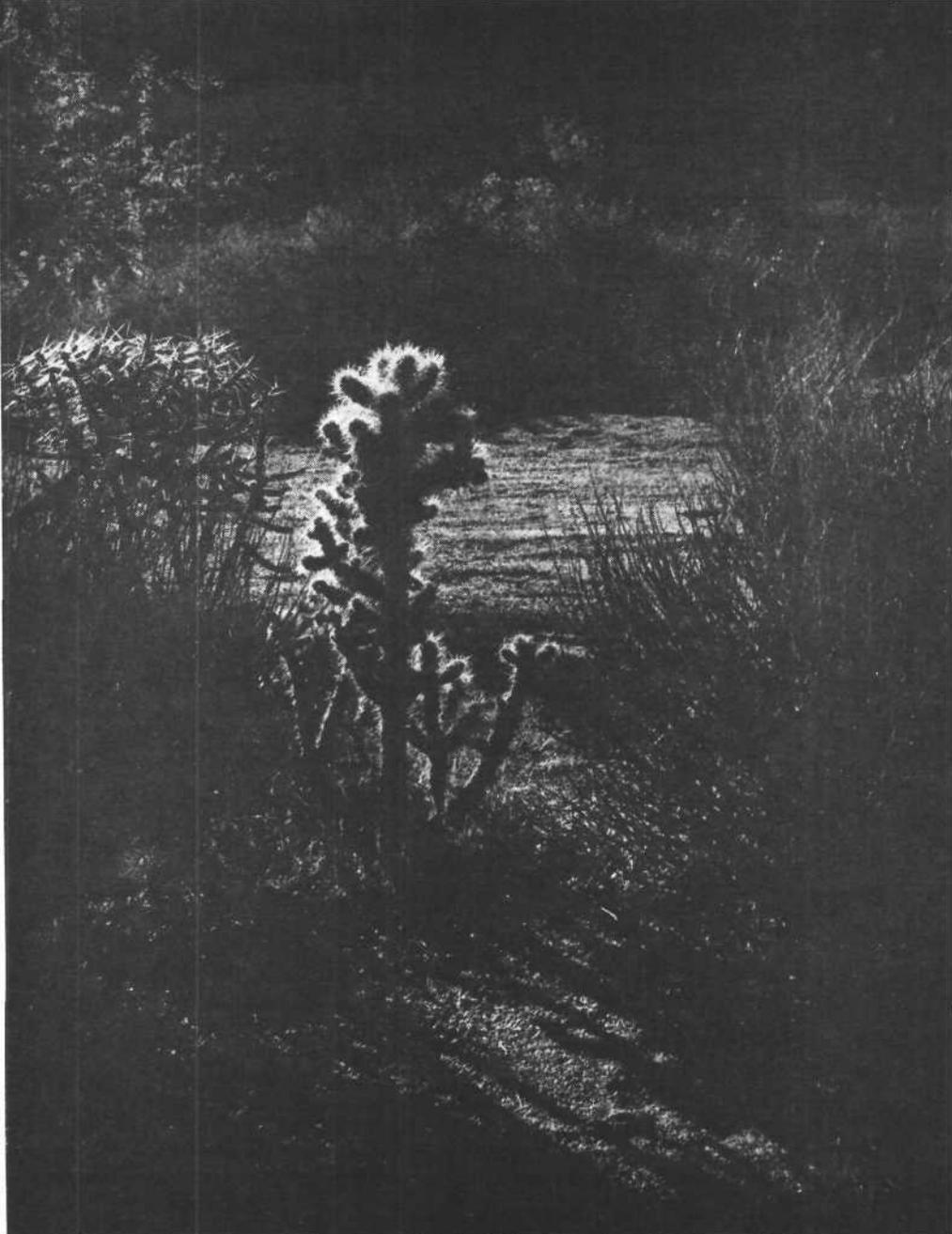
## Opportunity

By TANYA SOUTH

Weep not for opportunity.  
The very air you breathe is rife  
With seed for all that you would be  
And glean and learn and hold in  
life.

Weep not, but rouse your forces now,  
And choose the way that you would  
go.

Working with eager sweat of brow,  
Thus do you grow!



Photograph by Fred H. Ragsdale.

## DESERT'S CHALLENGE

By MARGARET SHELTON  
Vista, California

Far from the dazzling cities,  
Beyond sound of the mighty seas,  
Far from the grandeur of mountains,  
Lies a land that's different from these.

This land, like a great spreading canvas,  
Flung down in a challenge to man,  
To paint with his brush and his palette,  
His life, if he dare, if he can.

What man sees in the waiting desert  
Was born out of his own long days;  
Thus the timid dab with a pastel brush  
Evening star and a purple haze.

Lusty the man who strews the sand,  
With poppies red-flaming and bold,  
While the dreamer's mirage flows side  
by side,  
With the miser's vein of gold.

The murderer cuts with a red-torn slash  
A gulch through the sage and sands,  
But the empty soul with a heart that is  
dead,  
Will cover his face with his hands.

## COMRADES

By SARAH FOSS WOLVERTON  
Hollywood, California

They too have pitched their low brown  
tent  
Beneath a palo verde tree in bloom—  
A tree which like a high-flung fountain  
seeking earth again,

Drips down long pliant strands of tuffed  
palest gold  
Within the silver spindrift of the moon.  
Beyond, the valley cupped in dusty dim  
Sierras

Lies filled with floating moonlight like a  
fog.  
The dull glow of their campfire's almost  
smothered  
By drifts of wind-flung sand from out the  
nearer dark.

Their quiet comradeship needs no jazz  
titillation.

Far from insistent voices of the noisy mart.  
Not even the town's most worthy dissipation  
Can win from them a single yearning  
thought

To turn each from companionship of other,  
Or break the magic of the desert's brooding  
heart.

# FIRST PRIZE WINNING STORY IN DESERT'S 1953 LIFE-ON-THE-DESERT CONTEST

## LIFE ON THE DESERT

By OLGA WRIGHT SMITH

**M**Y HUSBAND and I were prospecting in the Copper Mountains on the Lechuguilla Desert in southwestern Arizona. He was loading the empty water cans into the truck, making ready for the weekly trip across the desert to town.

"I'll bring out a house cat," he said. "A house cat will soon rid us of these packrats and mice that are eating us out of camp."

We had to haul our water and supplies from Wellton, over a long waterless trail crossed by treacherous sandwashes. Loss of supplies was serious. It was difficult to replace them. Yet no sooner did we lay in fresh supplies than packrats gnawed into packing box cupboards and appropriated beans, rice and oatmeal; skunks and ring-tails dug up potatoes, carrots and beets we cached in the sand; mice ruined the flour.

The wild creatures weren't furtive about their depredations. Alone in camp, while my husband searched the mountains for mineral, I was often entertained by desert dwellers who came boldly into camp. Ike and Mike, the twin whiptail lizards, always crept under my feet on the sandy floor of the cook shade, snatching flies I swatted and tossed, lapping crumbs dropped from the plank table. Perky, the kangaroo rat, was so at home in my tent that once in my presence he sat up on his oversized haunches and washed his tail, playing it out like a rope with tiny pink hands as he cleaned it meticulously to its tasseled tip. Cochise, the intrepid chipmunk, chief of his tribe, ran all his family off the field when he chose to prospect our premises. And Lily, the shy little skunk, who nightly left dainty hand-like tracks in the damp sand under the olla, eyed me inquisitively, but quite unalarmed, when at dawn I interrupted her explorations.

Because of the confidence of these friendly invaders, traps were unthinkable. Yet something had to be done if we continued to eat. I was not in favor of a house cat, but better a house cat than this, I thought, as I threw out a fresh sack of corn meal already peppered through with mouse specks. A sissy house cat could not be much of a menace to tough desert folk but his presence should at least discourage their pilfering.

The only available cat in Wellton

turned out to be a gray tiger kitten. My husband brought him to camp in a gunny sack. We named him Kitty Tom.

Released from the bag, our new camp policeman lapped canned milk greedily, took one quick look around, and fled to the rocks. We called and we hunted. We were still without a cat.

Twenty-four hours later the kitten slunk back. This time he might have stayed, for after devouring some oatmeal he began to wash his face. But Cochise the chipmunk popped out of his rock crevice with such hysterical shrieking at sight of him that Kitty Tom fluffed his tail in fright and streaked away again. For days the kitten slipped into camp for food, only to scoot away. We despaired of taming him. Then one night a bobcat screamed. From then on Kitty Tom slept on the brush kitchen shade and seldom wandered far from camp.

Just when our camp policeman assumed his official duties we hardly knew, but there came a day when wild creatures no longer cavorted about the camp. Kitty Tom showed up mornings with his face spiked with cholla thorns, proving he'd been inspecting a packrat's fortress. Rats and mice no longer stole our supplies. But before we know it chipmunks and birds had thinned out too, and there wasn't a lizard in the canyon with tail intact.

We really hadn't intended that our cat should exterminate our neighbors. We merely wanted him to frighten them away from our tent. It was pitiful to see Ike and Mike shamefacedly dragging stumps around instead of the long graceful tails Nature had given them. It was disturbing to see once gay chipmunks dodging from crevice to crevice, too terrified to snatch the food they needed. I began to hate that cat.

Then came the hot summer and with it the snakes. To give the devil his due, Kitty Tom at that time did us many a favor by tormenting diamondbacks and sidewinders until their frenzied rattling announced their presence. He stirred up 27 rattlers in our camp that season. Nothing that moved escaped him.

But by fall he'd become insufferable. By then he was strutting around the canyon, rolling his muscular shoulders and making chests as if he had the

whole desert licked. Worst of all, he had. He'd challenge anything short of a bobcat.

Sometimes on moonlight nights, when the cat was hunting in the rocks, we caught glimpses of Lily's little spotted back as she played around camp. One evening we heard a scrambling under the boulders behind the fireplace, but when we peered into the chinks with a flashlight, we could see nothing. My husband dropped a piece of burning paper down a crevice. We smelled burned hair, spied a fluffy tail, and hastily backed away. Was it luck that nothing more devastating than the smell of singed hair was wafted out that crevice? Or was the shy little Lily only being polite?

Most prospectors are wary of "hydrophy" skunks, holding to the belief that if one bites you, you'll bark like a dog. But we were never afraid of Lily. Perhaps we felt flattered at her consideration; she was immaculate around our camp. We left the little lady undisturbed, even making it a point to leave citrus rinds and potato parings handy. What she thought of the cat we didn't know, but she kept discreetly out of his way.

Cochise was of a different stripe. Sole survivor of his species around camp, he stubbornly clung to his stronghold in the rocks beside the cook shade, coming boldly out on forays. Kitty Tom, grown to enormous size and complacency, stalked Cochise constantly. Night and day, despite my slaps, the tiger cat watched that crevice in the rocks that was the chipmunks' entrance and exit. But Cochise, wily, cunning, quick at concealment, darted provocatively in and out right under Kitty Tom's frustrated nose, with no apparent reason but to prove it could be done. He just flicked his impudent tail at his enemy and went on leading his charmed life.

But even a doughty little chipmunk can't flirt with death forever. One day Kitty Tom pounced; Cochise was just a hair's breadth too slow. I ran to the rescue, but Kitty Tom fled up the canyon wall, the shrieking Cochise clamped in his jaws. There was only Lily left.

That same night Kitty Tom and I were alone in camp. Cap had not yet returned from town. It was chill December now, and wrapped in a blanket, flashlight at hand, I sat by the rock

fireplace behind the brush cook shade, the cat crouched at my feet. Because a cold wind moved up from the desert floor, at our backs I had draped a canvas tarp over a line between two posts of the shade.

The firelight burned only a small hole in the dark around us, but above, black peaks were etched against a sky of brilliant stars. The wind carried desert smells, the odor of dust, the spicy scent of creosote, and just a hint of skunk—this last an outdoor smell, not unpleasant, that often hangs on the desert air.

I studied the cat with distaste as he sat smug and complacent beside me, fireglow highlighting his glossy coat. He was a giant of a cat now, gaunt, but with the muscular frame of a fighter. As I watched him, he sniffed the air and growled at something in the darkness.

The warmth of the fire felt good. The smell of smoldering mesquite and ironwood and the silence were as comforting as the soft woolen blanket that enveloped me. Time passed. I dozed.

The next thing I knew, Kitty Tom was screaming behind the canvas curtain. I fumbled for the flashlight, found it, stumbled to my feet, and,

tingling with dread, peered around the curtain. Skunk fumes almost knocked me down.

Tremblingly I played the flashlight on the kitchen floor. There, groveling in the dust, spitting, yowling, clawing, rubbing his face on his arms in a frenzy of agony, was Kitty Tom, the Terror of the Canyon! He had caught Lily's gas attack squarely in the face!

Badly shaken I set fire to a pile of brush in an open space near the cook shade. The flames shot high. They lit up the canyon and brought the truck galloping at break-neck speed over the last stretch of sandwashes. The victorious Lily had modestly withdrawn.

The subdued behavior of our perfumed camp policeman furnished us with considerable merriment. But the real pay-off came several evenings later when Lily surprised the cat on the trail into camp. With superb self-confidence the skunk stamped her foot and swung her rear threateningly toward her enemy. Kitty Tom did not argue. Ignominously, he took to the rocks in long leaps.

What became of that house cat we never knew. That he left the vicinity soon became evident. Life settled back

to normal in our quiet desert canyon. Lily and her family prospected camp unmolested, thwarted only by the wooden boxes we turned upside down over fresh vegetables we buried in the sand. Packrats and mice raided our cupboards freely as of old, still boring into supplies we were foolish enough to leave unstored in lard buckets. Chipmunks snatched biscuit crumbs and bacon rinds around the cook shade. Flocks of Gambel's quail sometimes stopped to call. And even the bob-tailed lizards seemed happy again.

## Hard Rock Shorty

### of Death Valley



"Yep! They's plenty o' mineral springs in this part o' the desert," Hard Rock Shorty was saying to the little group of tourists who had stopped at the Inferno store for cold drinks.

"Some of them's good, an' some's bad. There's that Soda spring up in Eight Ball crick. No good to drink unless yu put a little vaniller or sarspariller in it. An' up in the Funerals is an arsenic spring. Better keep away from that one.

"Up in Fried Egg Canyon they's that alum spring. Ol' Doc Hostetter usta have a sanitarium up there. Warn't much of a place fer livin'—jest a brush shack, but he had a lot o' customers fer a while. He advertised it as a reducin' sanitarium—where fat people'd get thin without dietin' or takin' pills.

"Fat people come flockin' in there by the dozen and Doc wuz doin' all right fer a while. He'd make 'em drink that alum water and rub a lot of it on their fat tummys to shrivel 'em up. Grub wuzn't very plentiful, and doc really wuz takin' 'em down with that treatment o' his.

"But hot weather come and the durn spring dried up. Seems like that water wuz gittin' stronger all the time, an' it got to doin' sech a good job o' shrinkin' things that it shrunk itself right out o' existence."

## Prizes Each Month for Pictures...

Generally there are not as many entries in Desert's Picture-of-the-Month contest during the summer as in winter, but the contest will be continued through the hot season nevertheless, for nearly every photographer has good negatives which were taken on previous trips into the desert country. With competition not so keen in summer, the odds in favor of your winning a prize are greater than during the cool season. Any desert subject is suitable—cloud effects, sunsets, rock formations desert people including the Indians, wildlife and rare botanical specimens—unusual pictures of any kind as long as they are essentially of the desert.

**Entries for the July contest must be in the Desert Magazine office, Palm Desert, California, by July 20, and the winning prints will appear in the September issue. Pictures which arrive too late for one contest are held over for the next month. First prize is \$10; second prize \$5.00. For non-winning pictures accepted for publication \$3.00 each will be paid.**

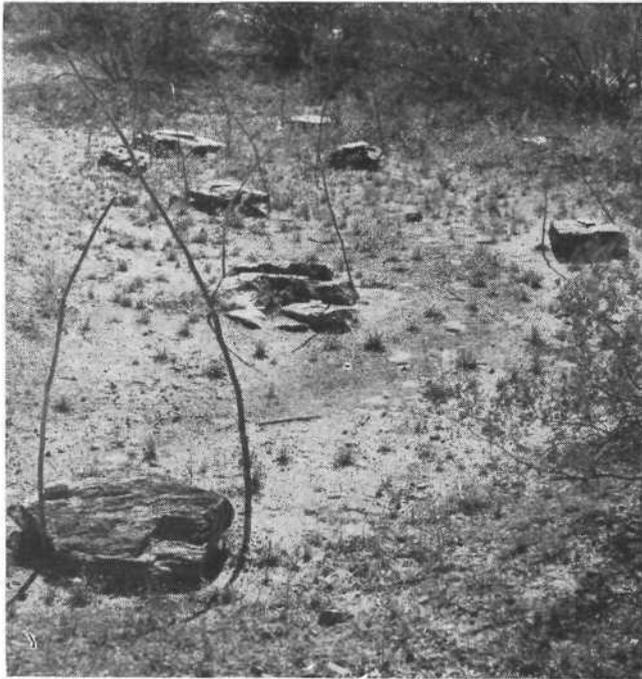
### HERE ARE THE RULES

- 1—Prints for monthly contests must be black and white, 5x7 or larger, printed on glossy paper.
- 2—Each photograph submitted should be fully labeled as to subject, time and place. Also technical data: camera, shutter speed, hour of day, etc.
- 3—PRINTS WILL BE RETURNED WHEN RETURN POSTAGE IS ENCLOSED.
- 4—All entries must be in the Desert Magazine office by the 20th of the contest month.
- 5—Contests are open to both amateur and professional photographers. Desert Magazine requires first publication rights only of prize winning pictures.
- 6—Time and place of photograph are immaterial, except that it must be from the desert Southwest.
- 7—Judges will be selected from Desert's editorial staff, and awards will be made immediately after the close of the contest each month.

Address All Entries to Photo Editor

*The Desert Magazine*

PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Eight piles of rock still mark the place where the ancient chiefs held night-long council to save their villages from flood.



Dead ocotillo stalks fence the sacrificial well of the Papagos. According to legend, four children died here to appease primitive gods.

# Papago Well of Sacrifice . . .

By CHUCK ABBOTT and ESTHER HENDERSON

Photographs by the authors

**I**N A lonely spot on the Papago Indian reservation, where the desert rolls away to nowhere and the greasewood bends with the wind whipping over the desert flats, a pile of granite slabs sparkles in the sun, surrounded by a fence of dead ocotillo stalks, hardened and whitened like old bones. It is the shrine of *Alihiani*, Cemetery of the Dead Child, and the site of the Well of Sacrifice.

According to Papago legend, in prehistoric times a hunter was trailing a badger when the animal, seeking escape, dug into the earth and disappeared. The hunter, loathe to lose his prey, attempted to follow. Suddenly a torrent of water gushed from the badger hole, flooded the ground and increased in volume until four nearby villages were inundated.

The terrified inhabitants called a council of their chiefs. Two came from each village to debate an emergency measure. After a solemn all-night conference, the chiefs decreed that human sacrifices were necessary to appease the angry gods.

Accordingly, from each village one child was taken—two girls and two boys. They were robed in their finest ceremonial garments and told they

were to go to a beautiful land where all their wishes would be fulfilled. The children then were thrown alive into the well, and earth and heavy stones were heaped upon them.

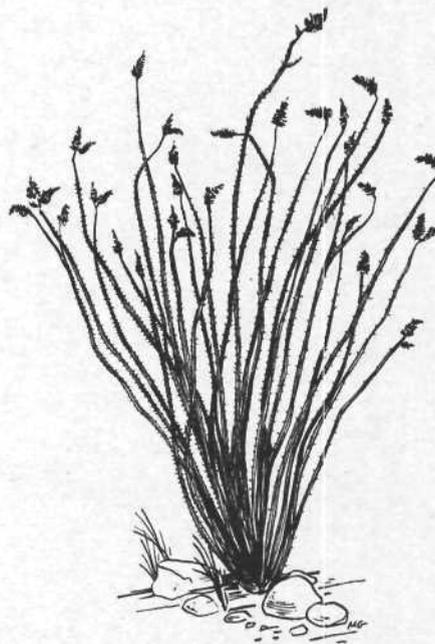
Today the eight stone seats where

the chiefs sat during their night of council still may be seen. Close by, a mound of heavy granite slabs three feet high, surrounded by ocotillo stalks thrust into the ground, marks the site of the sacrificial well. Openings in each of the four corners of the square fence afford exit to the soul of each child when it wishes to escape.

Each year the stalks are pulled up, laid aside, and a new fence is formed. The old branches are never destroyed; the stalks at the bottom of the pile of discards are so withered they seem to have been there hundreds of years. There are two great piles of discarded branches lying in two semi-circles, one on each side of the well. Each pile is at least five feet high and 30 feet long.

Ocotillo branches when cut usually either rot or sprout in time if stuck into the earth. Those at the well have done neither; they are sand-blasted to a smooth, gray, spineless finish as hard as ivory.

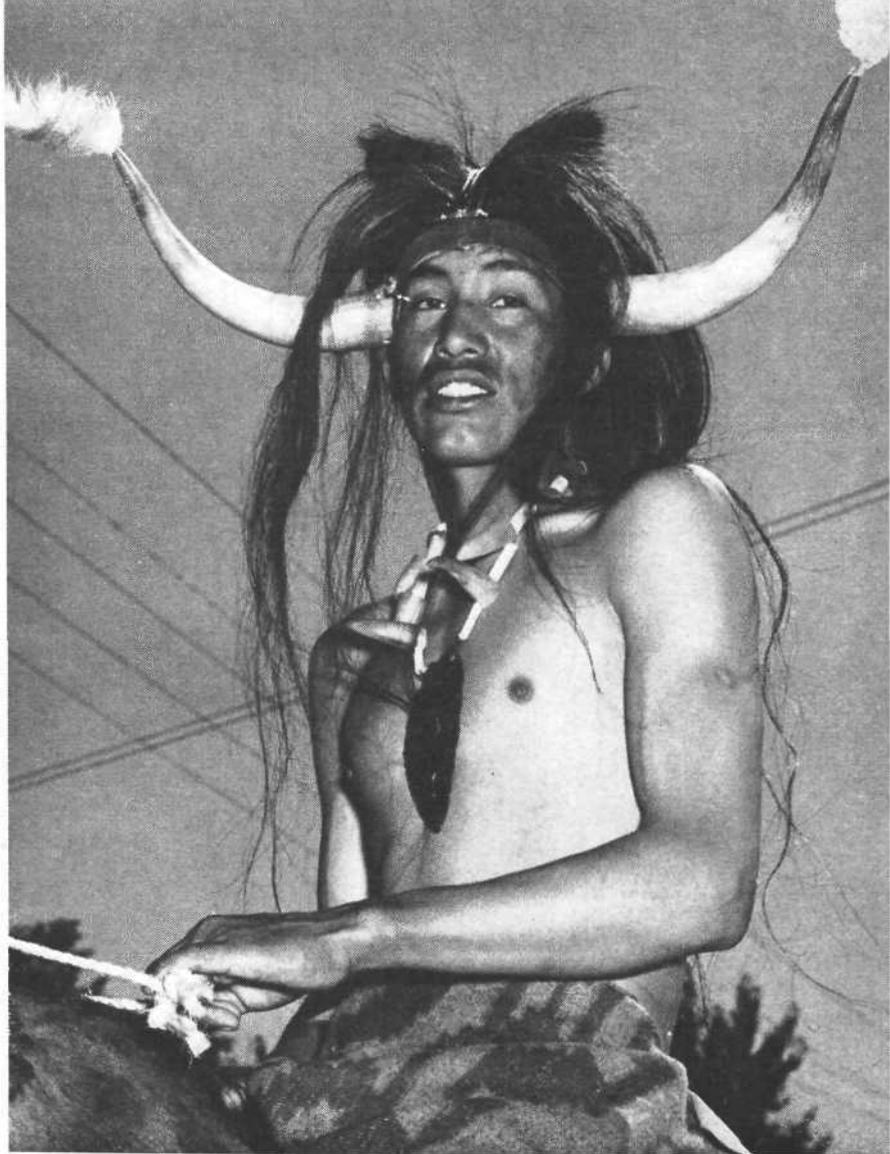
White people living on the reservation have persistently tried to pry from the Papagos the date and time of the yearly fencing ceremony—to no avail. To the Papago it is a secret and solemn occasion which no white man may witness. He would not understand.



# Pictures of the Month

## *Dance Regalia . . .*

Andrew Crofut of Reno, Nevada, was awarded first prize in the May contest for this photograph of a young Indian, dressed in tribal costume for a dance celebration or parade. The picture was made with a 4x5 Speed Graphic camera, super panchromatic press film and flash equipment.



## *Ghost Town . . .*

This dramatic study of the ruins at Rhyolite, Nevada, won second prize in the May contest for Adrian Atwater of Carson City, Nevada. He used a 4x5 Speed Graphic camera, K2 filter, 1/50 second at f. 22.



Mrs. Olga Wright Smith, first prize winner in *Desert's* 1953 Life-on-the-Desert contest, is a native Iowan. Mrs. Smith's story of the animals which shared the Smith's prospecting camp in Arizona appears in this issue.

Mrs. Smith, a former Des Moines school teacher, was born and raised in Iowa. She received her education at Des Moines and Drake universities, the University of California in Berkeley and Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio.

Mr. Smith is a civil engineer. A native of Clifton, Arizona, he introduced his bride to the Arizona desert soon after their marriage. "Though his work has taken us to various places," Mrs. Smith writes, "neither of us is happy to be away from Arizona. We still own mining claims on the Lechuguilla Desert southeast of Yuma and return to them as often as we can.

"Those mines and the camp mentioned in my Life-on-the-Desert story are located within sight of *El Camino del Diablo*, the Devil's Highway, marked by hundreds of graves of those who perished there of thirst during gold rush days. My one claim to distinction is that I am one of the few white women who have made their homes in that area through the terrific summer heat."

In addition to prospecting and studying Southwest flora and fauna, the Smiths' hobbies include photography and collecting books of Southwest Americana. They make their home in Des Moines.

Leland Quick, editor-publisher of *The Lapidary Journal*, and author of the *Desert Magazine* lapidary department, "Amateur Gem Cutter" recently was awarded life membership in the Los Angeles Lapidary Society. Quick was one of the organizers of the Los Angeles group.

Weldon Heald, frequent contributor to *Desert Magazine*, is crusading for the protection of portions of the Coronado National Forest in the Chiricahua Mountains of southern Arizona. Recently the U. S. Forest Service announced plans for opening portions of the area to lumbering, additional roads, and cabin sites. Heald's story, "Protecting the Chiricahuas," appears in the spring edition of *The Living Wilderness*.

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK POOR FOR COLORADO BASIN

Little change is noted in water supply forecasts issued May 1 by the U. S. Weather Bureau and Soil Conservation Service, the outlook remaining unfavorable. Specific reports are as follows:

*Colorado River above Cisco* — Streamflow will be deficient over the entire area but to the greatest degree in the Dolores and Uncompahgre basins where the water-year run-off is expected to be approximately half of the 1941-50 average.

*Green River Basin* — Current predictions for the Green River Basin are not encouraging. Flows of 80 percent of average are expected for the Green

River above Warren Bridge, for the White River in Colorado and for the Price River and Huntington Creek in Utah. For the other streams in the basin the outlook is less favorable. The median forecast for the Green River at Green River, Utah, is for only 58 percent of average.

*San Juan River Basin* — As a result of the heavy precipitation during the past month, slight increases may be noted in this month's forecasts as compared with those of a month ago. However, the water-supply outlook for the basin is still not good; median forecasts for the tributaries range from only 55 percent to 63 percent of average. The water-year runoff of the main stream at Rosa is forecast to be only 57 percent of average.

## TRUE OR FALSE

Here's another lesson for those who would like to become better acquainted with the Great American Desert. This test includes geography, history, botany, mineralogy and the general lore of the desert country. Twelve to 14 correct answers is fair, 15 to 17 is good, 18 or over is excellent. The answers are on page 40.

- 1—Papago Indian children climb the Saguaro cactus to gather the fruit. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 2—A sidewinder has a rattle on the end of its tail like a rattlesnake. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 3—Gas and volcanic disturbances make it hazardous to climb down into Ubehebe crater in Death Valley. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 4—Most of the mineral wealth which came from the Calico Mountains in California during their boom days was silver. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 5—Shiprock, famed landmark in New Mexico, is on the Navajo reservation. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 6—Thousands of white pelicans find refuge on Pyramid Lake in Nevada. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 7—Alamogordo, near the White Sands National Monument in New Mexico is on Highway 66. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 8—General Kearny's Army of the West on its westward trek to California crossed the Colorado River near Yuma. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 9—Woodpeckers sometimes drill holes and make their nests in the giant Saguaro cactus of Arizona. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 10—Panamint Range forms the eastern rim of Death Valley in California. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 11—Mark Twain once worked on a newspaper at Virginia City, Nevada. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 12—The ancestral home of the Chemehuevi Indians is along the Rio Grande. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 13—Color of the copper ore Chrysocolla is blue-green. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 14—The Natural Bridges National Monument is in northwestern Utah. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 15—La Paz was the name of a once rich placer gold field in Arizona. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 16—Flower of the Ironwood tree is yellow. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 17—In Tucson, Arizona, it is possible to look to the north and see the San Francisco peaks. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 18—Most of the Navajo silverwork is done by the women of the tribe. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 19—There are now seven dams in the Colorado River below Grand Canyon. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .
- 20—The famous Mormon Battalion was organized to protect the Utah settlers from warlike Indians. True \_\_\_\_ . False \_\_\_\_ .

# Letters

## Mules Can't Count . . .

Ramona, California

Desert:

My wife and I love the desert, but because of illness we have not been able to spend as much time there as we would like. So we read *Desert* and travel the desert trails with its writers. Once in a while one of them makes a mistake.

In the April "Life on the Desert" story, E. K. Allen says the old-time 20-mule team driver "told the leaders which way to go by the number of jerks he gave on the jerk line."

I will admit mules are smart—but not smart enough to distinguish a certain number of jerks for gee or another certain number for haw. The driver uses a series of jerks for gee, to the right, and a steady pull for haw, to the left.

I, too, have handled jerk line teams many miles and also have trained jerk line leaders.

OSCAR L. CONAWAY

## Rtseed Zqiu Complaint . . .

Seattle, Washington

Desert:

What have you done to my favorite magazine? When I turned to the Desert Quiz in the May issue and found a scrambled word teaser instead of the usual multiple choice, I was bitterly disappointed.

My husband is a busy executive, but he used to find time to take the quiz with me. It was such fun—relaxing as well as educational. But when he saw the scrambled words quiz, he threw up his hands and said: "After a hard day of work, who wants to figure those things out."

I hope you change back to the old type of puzzle.

JANE McLEAN

## Jade Window Statistics . . .

Elkhart, Indiana

Desert:

We read the article in the April 1953 issue of *Desert Magazine* concerning the jade window which we made for Mr. J. L. Kraft and which he donated to the North Shore Baptist Church in Chicago. Most of the articles we have read about this window have been in error as to the number of pieces it contains.

There are 433 individual pieces of jade, instead of 288 as quoted in most of the articles. The smallest section is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. The largest is  $5\frac{1}{8}$  inches by  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches. The 433

pieces of finished jade, before leading, weighed a total of 39 pounds and three ounces.

We thought your readers might be interested in these facts.

MR. AND MRS. E. A. WILLIAMS

## Canned Water Sources . . .

San Francisco, California

Desert:

Thank you for publishing my inquiry regarding canned water. It has brought results already!

Charlie Reed, artist for the San Francisco Water Company and a good friend of ours, saw the letter and called me to say that Weeks, Howe, Emerson and Company, 255 Mission Street, San Francisco, sells canned water at the rate of \$2.50 per dozen. There are 24 cans to the case,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ounces to the can, three cans make a quart.

We also have heard that canned water can be purchased through most any ship's chandler, as it is a law that each lifeboat must carry three cans per person.

MRS. LOUISE LAWRENCE

*Quite a few Desert readers had the answer to this one and listed a number of companies which prepare or retail canned water rations.*

## Why Canned Water? . . .

San Jose, California

Desert:

I saw the article in the May issue of *Desert Magazine* about canned water. What I'd like to find out is, why canned water? What is the purpose of canned water?

As far as I can see, all you have to do is get an empty can and fill it with water.

ANTHONY LA ROSE

*Water must be carefully canned to remain fresh. Canning plants pour sterilized water into cans, then seal and pressure-cook the cans. As all U. S. lifeboats carry emergency water supplies, the navy was a big buyer during World War II. A statute of International Law soon will make it mandatory for every merchant vessel to carry three quarts of emergency water ration for each man.—R.H.*

## Challenges Hardrock Shorty . . .

Puyallup, Washington

Desert:

Why can't Hard Rock Shorty get off those far-fetched, unbelievable imaginings of his and recount some of the things that actually happened to us old timers in the early days?

There was, for instance, the time—it must have been about 1910 or '12—when Charlie Brown and I started from Mecca to Chuckawalla Well in his old Locomobile. We got

about half way to Dos Palmas when a sandstorm caught us. And was that a storm! It covered the road in no time and we were stuck—couldn't move an inch either way. So we holed up in the car to wait it out. But in less than five minutes the wind and sand cut the curtains to shreds and we were at the mercy of the storm. We had to leave the car and try to make it on foot.

We hadn't gone far when—I guess we must have stepped out over some canyon—we found ourselves walking in that dust cloud. Yes sir, it was so thick that we were up in it and supported by it, much like a swimmer treading water. Then we got real scared. What if that storm should slack off and drop us before we could find solid ground and get our feet down? But we found that by stretching out flat, sort of spread-eagle like, and not movin', we could float quite comfortably.

What we didn't know was that that storm was traveling too—and how it was movin'! Although we couldn't see where we were going, we finally learned that that dern storm had carried us clear up to the Feather River country! It suddenly slackened and we found ourselves falling, right into the Feather River.

Well sir, we landed right in the middle of the feathers—nearly suffocated before we could paw our way out. But we didn't get a scratch—and were we tickled!

Trouble then was, we were both broke. It took us two weeks to bum our way home.

GEORGE M. AMES

## Yes, Scotty's 81! . . .

Buffalo, New York

Desert:

My wife and I recently took a trip to the West. While in Death Valley, we stopped off at Scotty's Castle and met Scotty. He claimed he was 81 years old.

Is this the real Scotty, or someone posing as Scotty? He doesn't look to be 81 years of age, and it has been on my mind that he is posing and telling this story for publicity sake.

W. J. IRWIN

*Death Valley Scotty is still living, and is 81, as he says. He is not well, and his time is divided between the Castle and the Las Vegas hospital. If you were at the Castle, I presume you met the real Walter Scott—rather heavy and somewhat crippled by a foot ailment. His eyes are bright, his complexion ruddy, and his mind remarkably clear for his years.—R.H.*

# YOU MAY NOW COMPLETE YOUR FILES OF DESERT MAGAZINE

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We suggest you check through your back copies without delay, and order the missing numbers while they are available.

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THE *Desert* MAGAZINE

Palm Desert, California

# Desert Cousins of Candytuft and Cauliflower

By MARY BEAL

**7**HOSE WHO frequent the Mojave Desert in early spring no doubt remember the rather tall herbs topped by a long cluster of lemon-yellow flowers, standing conspicuously a foot or two above the low annuals just beginning to spread their tapestries of color. A closer look labels them the Desert Wallflower, belonging to the large and versatile Mustard Family, which is wide-spread throughout the world. The common name, Wallflower, originated in Europe, where the genus is abundant and often establishes itself in crannies of the old stone walls.

Among its close kinfolk are many familiar garden flowers, such as Sweet Alyssum, Candytuft, Stock and Rockets, and it claims relationship to our common vegetables, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Radishes, Turnips and Water Cress, as well as ordinary Mustard and Horseradish to add spice to our diet. And as in many families it fathers some black sheep, noxious weeds that are on the black list of weed pests, but these are far outnumbered by the relatives that confer benefits upon us.

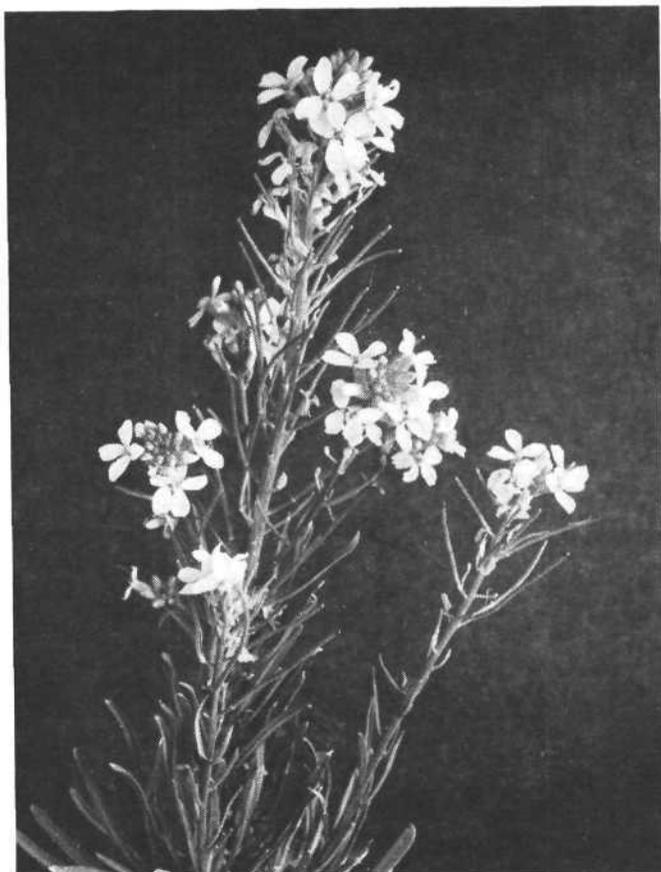
Recognition of the family relationship is easily made by the four-clawed petals, their blades spread flat in the form of a cross, giving rise to the scientific name, *Cruciferae*. The pungent peppery taste of its herbage also indicates its mustard kinship.

Botanically the Desert Wallflower is listed by Jepson as *Erysimum asperum* variety *bealianum*

Its status as a variety is due to the yellow color of the flower instead of the usual orange of the Western Wallflower, and to the shorter, broader pods. Generally biennial, though now and then a perennial, its stout erect stem lifts the showy raceme to a height of one or two feet, rarely to nearly three feet. It may be simple or branched above the base, is ridged, and leafy especially on the lower part, and rises from a dense rosette of narrow leaves, 1 to 5 or even 6 inches long, the margins entirely or very shallowly toothed. Stiff hairs cover the stems and leaves, pressed flat against the surface. The upper leaves are gradually smaller than those of the basal tuft and the margins without teeth. The yellow flowers have a spread of about three-fourths inch and are arranged in a terminal raceme, at first crowded, but lengthening as the buds unfold, until those at the dense tip have opened, often stretching up much more than a foot.

One of its charms sure to attract attention is the delightful fragrance, quite spicy and exhilarating, of its radiant blossoms. The slender pods are four-sided, from two to three inches long, ascending as a rule but occasionally inclined to spread widely. The numerous oblong seeds are somewhat inflated often with a bit of a wing at one end, and are lined up all in one row.

This highly ornamental plant flourishes on mesas, slopes, ridges, and washes of the western and central Mojave Desert and in the Panamint Mountains bordering Death Valley. If you don't already know it, I hope you'll make its acquaintance and be glad to add it to your group



Desert Wallflower—*Erysimum asperum*, var. *bealianum*.

of botanical friends. Throughout much of Arizona you'll find a similar species, with a noticeable resemblance to the cultivated Wallflower,

### *Erysimum capitatum*

The handsome raceme of bright yellow flowers is shorter than the preceding species, more head-like, and lacks its exquisite aroma. Infrequently the corollas are creamy instead of golden-yellow. The pods are usually straight and ascending or erect. An adaptable plant, it accommodates itself to a wide range of elevation, from 2500 to 9500 feet.

Another immigrant from Europe, *Erysimum repandum*, followed the trail to our Far West and some of these wayfarers settled in Arizona's desert areas, particularly along the Gila River. An annual, more-or-less branched and usually less than a foot high, it has small pale-yellow flowers and wavy-margined leaves. The rigid pods, about two inches long, are widely divergent and spine-like. It becomes a tumbleweed, especially troublesome in alfalfa fields and has been miscalled Russian Thistle, an easy epithet for such pests.

## Study Old Indian Remedy

An old Indian remedy, which medicine men used for afflictions ranging from influenza to battle wounds, someday may prove its worth in modern medicine.

Leptonin, a substance made from desert parsley, called "bitter root" by the Indians, has shown promise in controlling one of the disease-causing fungi in preliminary studies at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine.

The Indians used a brew of the desert herb to ward off various diseases and made an ointment from the plant to treat wounds.

# Mines and Mining

## **Tonopah, Nevada . . .**

Incorporated as Argentite Development Corporation, a new mining company has been formed to develop five claims in the Argentite district of Esmeralda County. The claims, known as the Bumblebee Group are owned by Walter Ball, Thomas E. Murphy and Howard Scott. Officials of the company are A. A. Wardle, president; Carroll Humphrey, vice president, and Ray Hines, secretary-treasurer. Other directors are Frank Murnane and Walter Ball.—*Battle Mountain Scout*.

## **Wenden, Arizona . . .**

The manganese sampling and purchasing depot established by the government here recently received over 15,000 tons in one month's operation. About 44 truckloads of ore arrive in Wenden daily according to an official of the Emergency Procurement Service. Most of the ore received runs over 15 percent manganese. — *Palo Verde Times*.

## **Virginia City, Nevada . . .**

Jim Turner, leasing claims near the original Fred Hess strike in Virginia City, reports a recent assay on ore that ran \$2564.61 in gold and silver. Working northward from the Hess deposit Turner has high hopes that the vein which he is developing will yield a substantial tonnage of high value ore.—*Territorial Enterprise*.

## **Holbrook, Arizona . . .**

A uranium boom has come to the area where the Petrified Forest National Monument is located. P. M. Coston and Hugh Barton have staked out six claims west of the Monument boundary and report having processed 717 pounds of uranium and 973 pounds of vanadium. Nearby two other uranium mining projects have been started by W. Dean Nutting, Holbrook attorney, and J. R. McEvoy. They have leased 160 acres of land from the New Mexico and Arizona Land and Cattle Co. A third digging has been started by three other Holbrook men who have cleared a site in another close-by section. The trio—Jack Hunt, Mel W. Young, and Stan Owens—plans to start work soon. The Coston-Barton project is the most advanced of the group to date. Barton is a licensed manufacturer of Indian jewelry. Coston works for the Santa Fe Railroad.—*Phoenix Gazette*.

## **Silver City, New Mexico . . .**

After being shut down for 30 years, rumors are current that the Phelps Dodge Corporation may resume operations at the huge open-pit copper mines near Tyrone, New Mexico. Louis Cates, chairman of the board of the corporation, while unwilling to confirm the reports, stated that his company is "giving serious consideration" to the project. Although closed down for many years, the mine has never been abandoned and during World War II leaching operations were carried on. During the past two years extensive diamond drilling operations have been conducted. Many miners, thrown out of work by the shutdown of the zinc-lead mines in Grant County, are hopefully awaiting news that there will be new jobs in the copper pit.—*Battle Mountain Scout*.

## **Gallup, New Mexico . . .**

An advisory committee of Navajo Indians is considering a proposal by the Kerr-McGee Oil Industries to erect a 3½-million dollar uranium processing plant on the reservation. Dean McGee, representing the company, stated that plans called for a plant to process 73,000 tons of ore a year. His company now has leases on 2500 acres for uranium ore production, but as the mill would require a larger tonnage than is available from this property it was requested that the company be given permission to prospect the Chuska and Lukachukai Mountains for additional deposits. It was stated that about 300 Navajos would be employed in the processing plant. The Indians were reported to be favorable to the lease.—*Phoenix Gazette*.

## **Carson City, Nevada . . .**

Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada has called attention to the fact that men entering the armed forces are still exempt from doing annual assessment work on any claims they may hold. Under the provisions of Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940, men in the service may gain exemption by filing a notice with the county recorder where the claims are located setting forth the fact that they are entering into military service and wish to hold their claims free from the \$100 annual labor requirement. The exemption continues through the period of service, including hospitalization, plus six months after discharge.

## **Fallon, Nevada . . .**

Claims containing a large volume of low grade copper ore are being explored by Charlie McKay of Eureka and A. D. Drumm of Fallon, the owners. The claims are located about three miles east of the Consolidated Copper mine holdings in Dixie Valley. There are six patented claims in the area showing copper. A 100-foot shaft is said to show from 1 to 1½ percent copper from the collar to the bottom.—*Fallon Standard*.

## **Tooele, Utah . . .**

After being shut down since January 1, work was resumed in May at the International Smelting and Refining Company's plant here. According to F. A. Wardlaw Jr., general manager, the accumulated stockpile plus the additional ore expected to come in will keep the plant busy for a year. The plant will operate on a five-day-week basis with a daily payroll of approximately 450 names.—*Salt Lake Tribune*.

## **Johannesburg, California . . .**

After being shut down for more than 12 years, the Telegraph mine in the Halloran District is reported by Judge James Nosser to have been leased to T. L. and Dick Bright of Lone Pine, California. Three shipments of hand picked ore shipped to a mill at Rosamond, California, have assayed 5.19, 3.64 and 7.70 ounces of gold to the ton. — *Randsburg Times-Herald*.

## **Reno, Nevada . . .**

After being shut down for the winter due to snow, work was to be resumed by the Blue Ridge Gold Mining Company on its tungsten claims, according to Gerald B. Hartley, president of the company. Last year the company produced 3,302,564 pounds of crude tungsten with a gross value after milling of \$32,466.64. The claims are located near Bishop, California, at an elevation between 10,000 and 10,500 feet.—*Mining Record*.

## **Tonopah, Nevada . . .**

After several months of exploratory work, the Sunshine Mining Company is reported to have taken over the management of the Mohawk silver mine near Silver Peak, with an option to buy the property. The Mohawk was discovered 33 years ago by E. J. Shirley. Home office of the Sunshine Mining Co., is at Yakima, Washington, with the mine office at Kellogg, Idaho, near where the company operates the Sunshine mine, one of the leading silver producers with an estimated reserve of 997,000 tons. — *Tonopah Times-Bonanza*.

# Here and There—on the Desert

## ARIZONA

### Indian Population Growing . . .

PHOENIX—Census figures recently released by the U. S. Department of Commerce show the tremendous gains made by Indian population during the last 50 years. The report for 1900 listed 106,214 tribesmen in the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam, and this had increased to 343,410 in 1950. In Arizona alone the number increased from 26,480 to 65,761. Fifty years ago the Indians generally were regarded as a dying race of people. Now they are increasing more rapidly than the whites.

### Museum to Be Enlarged . . .

FLAGSTAFF—Observing the 25th anniversary of the institution, Dr. Harold S. Colton, director of the Museum of Northern Arizona announced in May that a contract had been awarded for the construction of a new building at the museum site to house the library and a collection of 70,000 artifacts and other items which have accumulated. The new building, to be constructed of native cinder blocks, will have 12,000 square feet of floor space. Funds for the project were contributed by two unidentified friends of the institution.—*Coconino Sun*.

### Beware of Swimming Rattlers . . .

MESA—Swimming rattlesnakes are dangerous, and Ray Salhay, foreman of the Smith-Basabe Farms north of Glendale, learned this lesson the hard way. Salhay was bitten by a 4-foot rattler recently when he tried to lift the snake out of the waters of Canyon Lake when he was on a fishing trip there. Bitten on the hand, he was rushed to the Southside Mesa hospital after being given first aid by a companion. Doctors said that unless complications developed he would recover.—*Yuma Daily Sun*.

### Many Visitors to U. S. Forests . . .

PHOENIX — Arizona's national forests provided recreation facilities for 1,252,611 during 1952, according to a report of the U. S. Forest Service. Of the total, 161,671 used camping facilities and 458,030 used picnic facilities. Other visitors were those who patronized resorts within the national forest areas or who used organization camps set up in the forests. There are 11,689 persons who have built homes on leased land within the forests.—*Phoenix Gazette*.

### Indians May Hit Oil Jackpot . . .

WINDOW ROCK — Oil and gas leases covering 314,602 acres of reservation land were made on behalf of the Navajo Indian tribe in April and early May, yielding the Indian tribal fund approximately \$4,000,000. Additional lands were to be offered for leases later. In addition to the initial cash bonus paid by the successful bidders, the Indians will receive an annual rental, and royalties if oil is discovered.

### Fight to Keep Train Running . . .

SAFFORD—Action of the Arizona Corporation Commission in granting the Southern Pacific permission to discontinue its once-a-day train between Bowie and Globe has stirred a vigorous protest on the part of the communities involved. Chamber of commerce officers and business leaders have formed a 10-community committee to take the matter to the courts if necessary. Known as the Gila Tomahawk, the train is said to perform a service essential to the well-being of the communities involved.

### Range Grasses Are Described . . .

TUCSON—There are 54 species of range grass in Arizona, according to a new bulletin issued by the Agricultural Experiment Station at the state university. The book, *Common Arizona Range Grasses*, is co-authored by Dr. Robert R. Humphrey, Albert L. Brown and A. C. Everson. Drawings of each of the grasses described were made by Mrs. Lucretia Hamilton.

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## Navajos Seldom Have Cancer . . .

**PHOENIX** — Navajo Indians seldom have cancer. Dr. Clarence G. Salisbury who spent 23 years doctoring these Indians at Ganado where he built the Sage Memorial Hospital, reports that during all his years there he recalls only 66 cases of malignancy and none of cancer of the breast. Dr. Salisbury, now director of the state department of public health in Arizona, believes that a study of the Indians' immunity to cancer may help reveal the answer to the white man's increasing susceptibility to the disease. At the doctor's request the United States Public Health Service has appropriated funds for a study of the Indian hospital records in an effort to find out if possible the reason for the immunity of the Indians. — *Phoenix Gazette*.

## New Colorado Bridge at Yuma . . .

**YUMA** — Arizona and California highway departments have agreed that a new motor traffic bridge should be built across the Colorado River at this point, and soundings are now being made as a basis for engineering the structure. The river is approximately 500 feet wide here and a tentative agreement has been reached by the two state road departments that the new structure should be a prolongation of Yuma's 4th avenue. The new project actually will include three bridges, for it will be necessary at the proposed new site to span irrigation canals on both sides of the Colorado. — *Yuma Daily Sun*.

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## CALIFORNIA

### Indian Lands to Be Sold . . .

PALM SPRINGS—Nine parcels of reservation land owned by the Agua Caliente Band of Mission Indians amounting to 285 acres and appraised at \$323,000 were scheduled to be sold to the highest bidder at the Sacramento office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs June 16. This is part of the program to liquidate the reservation and give the Indians the status of full-fledged American citizens. Recently the Indians refused an offer of nine million dollars for their entire holdings amounting to about 33,000 acres. There are 83 Indians in the tribe.—*Coachella Valley Sun.*

### Can Men Make Rain? . . .

SACRAMENTO — Cloud seeding has "almost invariably" increased the rainfall from one type of storm, but has cut the precipitation from an opposite type, a state expert said yesterday. But the expert, Robin Reynolds of the Division of Water Resources said his studies still could not determine whether this was the result of chance. There is still no definite answer as to whether man has made rain," Reynolds told the state Water Resources Board in reporting the preliminary conclusions of a 20-month statistical study.—*Yuma Daily Sun.*

### Horde of Wetbacks Increases . . .

CALEXICO—"Wetback" Mexicans are entering United States in greater numbers than ever before, according to the report of border patrol officers here. This report is confirmed by District Director Herman R. Landon of the U. S. Immigration Service. He said 42,000 Mexicans were picked up and returned to their own country in March and 56,000 in April. The highest number returned in any previous month was 30,000 in 1951.

"Unless something happens we can't foresee," Landon told an interviewer, "the number of wetbacks returned to Mexico in 1953 will be at least 50 per cent greater than in 1951."

The unlawful immigrants got their nickname in Texas, where illegal crossers of the Rio Grande could be identified by their wet clothes. In California they work on cotton, vegetable, and other crops in the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Imperial valleys.

Landon said 200 border patrolmen can't stop "this tremendous mass influx." He believes more are needed, plus more prosecution of offenders, particularly repeaters. Also, said Landon, a policy of returning wetbacks to their homes should be restored. Formerly they were taken by train or plane to Guadalajara, where Mexican authorities took them home. Last fall,

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the U. S. congress cut out appropriations for this. Wetbacks now are taken just across the border.

### Trona Newspaper Suspended . . .

TRONA — The Trona Argonaut, published here by the American Potash & Chemical Corporation for 30 years, was discontinued on May 29. In the future this community will be served by a Trona edition of the San Bernardino Sun. Harold F. Hurlocker, editor of the Argonaut, was transferred to another position in the big Potash organization.—*Trona Argonaut.*

## COUNTY MAPS

Many New Issues

Utmost details—for offices, realtors, Lumbermen, sportsmen, Miners, etc. With Townships, rng, Sec. Mines, all roads, trails, strms. R.R., Elevations, Ntl. Frsts. etc.

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San Luis Obispo	38x24	1.00
San Mateo	20x32	1.00
Santa Barbara	36x38	1.50
Santa Barbara	33x23	1.00
Santa Clara	25x33	1.00
Santa Cruz	19x24	1.00
Shasta	34x49	3.00
Shasta	33x24	1.00
Sierra	16x31	1.00
Siskiyou	39x62	4.00
Siskiyou	26x43	2.00
Siskiyou	20x32	1.00
Solano	22x25	1.00
Sonoma	29x36	1.00
Stanislaus	34x36	1.00
Sutter	21x24	1.00
Tehama	26x48	2.00
Tehama	17x32	1.00
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Most maps are drawn to scale of 1/2 inch to the mile. Maps obtainable flat or folded.

**WORLD'S MINERALS**

2417 San Pablo Ave., Oakland 12, Calif.

### Protest Federal Land Grab . . .

LONE PINE—Protesting what they term a "federal land grab," civic groups in Bishop, Independence and Lone Pine are seeking to block the effort of federal agencies to withdraw the vast acreage in Saline Valley and establish it as an aerial gunnery range. It is pointed out that area contains valuable mineral lands, and that its closing to the public would end all prospecting in this region and would close roads which serve other mining interests. State Senator Charles Brown has given assurance that the California State Lands Commission would not approve the federal withdrawal until interested citizens have been given a hearing.—*Inyo Independent.*

### Scotty Plans Plane Ride . . .

LOS ANGELES—According to a letter received by Sheriff Biscailuz of Los Angeles County, Death Valley Scotty is planning to make one more trip to Los Angeles, "and this time I am going to fly." The letter was in response to an invitation to be present at the annual peace officers' rodeo in August. Scotty wrote:

"Dear Sheriff. Barring the acts of God I will be there. This time I'm going to fly.

"It used to take me and my mules seven days to get across this desert to Mojave or Barstow and grab a train into Los Angeles, but this time I'm gonna fly it in an hour. It will be my first plane ride."—*Salt Lake Tribune.*

## Winners Selected in 1953 Life on the Desert Contest

After careful consideration of the more than 50 entries in the 1953 "Life on the Desert" writing contest, judges from the *Desert Magazine* staff selected 15 manuscripts for the new story series which begins in this issue.

First prize of \$25 was awarded to Olga Wright Smith of Des Moines, Iowa, for "Desert Goliath." Delightfully written, this story tells of the giant housecat Mrs. Smith and her husband brought to their prospecting camp to solve the mice problem. How "Kitty Tom" became king of the camp and how he was eventually dethroned by Lily the skunk makes delightful reading. Mrs. Smith's story will be found in this issue.

*Desert's* judges so liked Rich Gifford's story of "Indian Charley" the rainmaker that they awarded the Hesperus, Colorado, entrant a second prize of \$20. Gifford's story will appear next month.

Winners of honorable mention and cash awards of \$15 each were:

Dorothy Douglas Aylward of Memphis, Missouri, for her experience chaperoning a group of Navajo basketball players from the Indian school at Toadlena, New Mexico.

Robert N. Carlile of Menlo Park, California, for the account of his difficulties homesteading in the Twentynine Palms area, and the eventual destruction of all his efforts when the navy decided it needed his five acres for a gunnery range.

Adell H. Jones of Fallon, Nevada, for a true tale of the hardships of Mormon pioneers and their crossing at Hole-in-the-Rock, Utah.

Ella Brison Joy of Riverside, California, for her memories of life in a

small Panamint Mountain mining camp in 1908.

Jessie Kennedy of Douglas, Arizona, for her story of *Las Posadas*, the Mexican Christmas procession, as she witnessed it one year in the Arizona border town.

Helen Pratt of Victorville, California, for her careful observation of the growth and habits of a family of baby collared lizards born near her ranch.

Carita Selvas of La Habra, California, for her story of early days on the Mojave Desert.

Lee Strobel of San Jacinto, California, for his adventures homesteading in 1916 on the desert a few miles west of Mojave, California.

Louise Switzer Thompson of San Diego, California, for her amusing recollection of life with the Arizona Indians in the 1880s.

Rae Von Dornum of Pittman, Nevada, for "Kehama, the Land Accursed," a mining story from a desolate region in Utah.

Ina M. Wells of Spring Valley, California, for the personality study of Rodolfo, a Mexican laborer who found work and friendship at the Wells' ranch.

Seward White of Santa Paula, California, for his first-hand account of the Lost Ebner Mine.

Grace M. Wilton of Douglas, Arizona, for her warmly personal story of her conversion from desert-hater to enthusiastic desert-lover.

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all others who entered this year's contest. *Desert's* editors were pleased at the response and at the fine variety of subject matter in the winning manuscripts. These stories will appear regularly in the months to come.

## NEVADA

### Nevada Needs Rain . . .

RENO — Due to a severe spring drouth, range conditions over most of Nevada were not bright for Nevada cattle and sheepmen according to a forecast made by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in May. Livestock came through the winter in good shape generally because of mild weather, but unless rains come soon feed will be very short during the late spring and early summer.—*Humboldt Star*.

### Nevada May Join River Pact . . .

CARSON CITY—Nevada will be included in the state compact providing for the diversion and appropriation of waters of the Columbia River and its tributaries if a bill introduced in the United States Senate is passed. Nevada's claim to a voice in the allocation of these waters stems from the fact that the Owyhee River in northern Nevada drains into the Snake River which in turn is a tributary of the Columbia. The original states in the compact are Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana and Wyoming. Sen. Malone's bill would amend Public Law 572 enacted by the 82nd Congress, which excluded both Nevada and Utah from the five-state pact. According to Hugh Shamberger, state engineer, the other five states have invited Nevada to become a party to the pact.—*Pioche Record*.

### Donation for Mackay School . . .

RENO—Thanks to a \$30,000 donation from the Kennecott Copper Corporation, Nevada's Mackay School of Mines will be able to purchase badly needed laboratory and scientific equipment.

### 49ers Name Encampment Chairmen

BOULDER CITY—At a meeting of the Death Valley 49ers held here early in May, the following committee chairmen were named for the staging of the 1953 Encampment to be held November 14-15 in Death Valley: Paul Gruendyke, production, community singing and square dancing; Mrs. Neva Goodwin, reception; John J. Fluck, firearms exhibit; Floyd Evans, photographic exhibit; John Hilton, fine arts exhibit; John Henderson, authors' and artists' breakfasts; George Savage, sunrise services; Jim Mosser, mineral exhibits. The 49er directors met with Conrad L. Wirth, director of the National Park Service, and were given the promise of his cooperation in securing an ambulance for the Death Valley National Monument. Ralph Fear of Lone Pine, Ralph Merritt and William G. Belknap Jr., were elected additional directors of the 49ers.

### Plan Lodge on Lake Lahontan . . .

FALLON—While no stock has yet been offered for sale, according to the sponsors, plans are going ahead for the building of a five million dollar resort on the shore of Lake Lahontan. The program includes a hunting and fishing lodge with other facilities along the north shore of the lake east of Silver Springs. George and Osborn Bosserman of Pasadena, California, are president and secretary of the company planning the project.—*Fallon Standard*.

### Huge Sum for Nevada Indians . . .

WASHINGTON—The new budget of the department of interior includes \$1,723,000 for Nevada Indians according to Senator Pat McCarran. Secretary McKay has approved the appropriation which provides \$1,060,000 for health, education and welfare work during the 1954 fiscal year, \$497,000 for development of natural resources and \$175,000 for irrigation system improvements at Pyramid Lake, Walker River, Duck Valley and Fort McDermitt reservations.—*Pioche Record*.

### Nevada Buys Arizona Power . . .

LAS VEGAS — Governor Charles Russell of Nevada has signed a contract with the Arizona power authority to purchase firm power from the Arizona Public Utility as soon as the Saguaro stream plant is completed, probably in June, 1954. The contract calls for purchase of 11,000 kilowatts in October, and 16,000 kilowatts monthly in November through February at an estimated cost of between 5½ and 7 mills per kilowatt hour.—*Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

## NEW MEXICO

### Crops Damaged in New Mexico . . .

ALBUQUERQUE — Prospects for a good fruit and wheat harvest in New Mexico this year have been dimmed by killing winds and frost during the late spring, according to Cyril Luker, regional chief of the Soil Conservation Service. Many farmers in eastern New Mexico already have given up hope of a wheat crop and have turned cattle into the beaten grain fields. It is estimated that two-thirds of the peach crop in the lower San Juan Valley have been killed by frosts.—*New Mexican*.

### To Appoint Indian Commissioner . . .

SANTA FE—Glenn L. Emmons, Gallup banker, and Alva Simpson, director of the New Mexico department of public welfare, are both reported to be under consideration by Secretary Douglas McKay of the Interior Department for appointment as Indian

Commissioner to succeed Dillon S. Myer, who has resigned.

Others under consideration are Horace N. Albright, president of the United States Potash Co., New York; Edward L. Rogers, Walker, Minn., attorney, and Ernest L. Newton, Lander, Wyo., attorney.

There also are Indian candidates but selection of an Indian is considered very doubtful. Interior Department officials point out that an Indian would be expected by the tribes to do much more for them than he possibly could do—or that Congress would appropriate funds to do. Such an appointment also might stir up controversy among the various tribes.

### Indians Sign Protests . . .

AZTEC—Petitions of protest have been signed by many Indians farming on allotment lands east of the reservation following notice from the Bureau of Land Management that livestock must be reduced to comply with regulations.

Not only were the Indians angered by the orders to reduce but they had other grievances and were not bashful about expressing their complaints. They charge they are being mistreated by some of the traders, that men in charge of oil and gas explorations use water from their water holes without getting permission or paying for the water, that white stockmen trespass on their range lands and that the Indian Administration fails to provide matrons for their schools.

After one petition bearing 1200 names was received, the Department of Interior promised to make a thorough investigation and to report on its findings.—*Aztec Independent-Review*.

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### Taos to Have Art Gallery . . .

TAOS—To provide this community with a combined museum, art gallery and community center, the Taos Artists Association recently voted to acquire the Thorne House and pledged its membership to raise an initial \$5000 as a down payment on the \$45,000 property. Annual payments of \$3000 are to be made, and the interest rate on the unpaid balance is one-half of one percent annually. The house will be devoted to museum purposes, and the stable rebuilt and converted for a permanent art exhibit where local artists will display their work.—*El Crespuculo*.

### Socorro Wants to Secede . . .

SOCORRO — Because this community has never been given recognition to which it feels it is entitled in connection with the original A-Bomb blast, community leaders have voted to set up the Socorro Free State, an independent republic, and are asking that it be recognized as such by the United States and the United Nations. Although the first A-Bomb test took place only 30 miles from Socorro, all the news of the event was date-lined



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at Alamogordo which was 70 miles away. Socorro has erected a monument dedicated to the bomb blast. The chamber of commerce has received a letter from Tom Peesaw, secretary of the Pan-American League of Indian Tribes, stating that since his tribe does not like the way the United States is being run, the Indians want to buy land and move to the new "Free State."—*Socorro Chieftain*.

### Burro for the National Zoo . . .

SANTA FE—The Belgian government offered to furnish an elephant for the National Zoo in Washington, but congress, in the midst of a Republican economy drive, was unwilling to pay the \$1200 transportation bill.

Some congressmen, remembering the symbolic meaning of the elephant to the Republican party, have been chipping in to raise the fare for the animal. According to Columnist Drew Pearson, New Mexico's Jack Dempsey has cut across party lines and has contributed to the fund.

The Santa Feans agree that it's fine to have a Republican elephant in the Washington zoo but, in strict adherence to the American two-party system, they hold that a Democratic donkey should also be a denizen of the same zoo. That's right; these Santa Feans are Democrats.

What better than a New Mexico burro to be the representative donkey in the Washington zoo? Nothing, they say; so the drive is on to procure a fine specimen of the genus, curry him up and whiz him off to Washington.—*New Mexican*.

### UTAH

#### Utah to Seek Tourists . . .

SALT LAKE CITY — Gov. J. Bracken Lee has named the following Tourist and Publicity Council to administer a \$100,000 fund created by the last legislature to promote tourist travel in Utah: Conley Watts, Logan; Darrel Greenwell, Ogden; Gus P. Backman, Salt Lake City; Kenneth Sowards, Vernal; Andrew Pace, St. George; Homer Bandle, Richfield, and J. W. Corbin, Moab.—*Salt Lake Tribune*.

#### Wild Partridges Increasing . . .

VERNAL—Utah's Fish and Game department expects to have 8000 young chukars available for planting in various areas of the state during the coming year. The birds will be raised from brood stocks at the state game farm at Price. In recent months 386 birds were brought in from Turkey and released in Sevier County. The department reports that of 200 birds planted last year at Willow Creek, 66 percent are still alive, and this is regarded as a favorable showing. Four-

teen sites have been stocked with birds since the department started its program of releasing chukar partridges two years ago.—*Vernal Express*.

### Projects Not Jeopardized . . .

SALT LAKE CITY — Fears that Utah's Dixie Reclamation and Central Utah irrigation projects might be disqualified by the rigid feasibility requirements set up by the U. S. Budget office, were allayed recently when Budget Director Joseph M. Dodge advised Utah Senator Arthur V. Watkins that Circular A-47 setting up standards and requirements was designed as a yardstick rather than as a rigid set of requirements.—*Salt Lake Tribune*.

### Fire Threatens Zion Canyon . . .

CEDAR CITY — A smoldering campfire at the top of the historic rim of Cable Mountain was blamed by Zion Park officials for a spectacular blaze which threatened to sweep through the main canyon of this scenic and recreational area. Firefighters recruited from Springdale brought the flames under control after a hazardous five-hour fight on the slopes 1400 feet above the floor of the canyon. An investigation disclosed a still smoldering campfire evidently built by picnickers or hikers. About two acres of oak brush and timber were destroyed according to Paul R. Franke, superintendent of Zion and Bryce National Parks.—*Washington County News*.

### New Museum Open at Kanab . . .

KANAB — Andrew Johnson has been collecting Indian artifacts and other items for 17 years, and now he has a museum in which to display them. Johnson has been named director and curator of the new Museum of Southern Utah which was formally opened here in May. Located in a new stucco building on Highway 89 in the northern part of Kanab, the new museum will be open seven days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from May 15 until October 30. —*Kane County Standard*.

### Many Sheep Die in Storm . . .

MILFORD—Thousands of newly-sheared sheep were killed in a late spring blizzard which struck southern Utah late in April. Many of the animals died when they piled up in a ravine during the storm. In Uintah county, which was outside the path of the storm, it was reported that the shearing of 174,000 sheep had been completed. Range sheep owners paid from 40 to 44 cents per sheep for shearing, and buyers were paying from 57 to 60 cents a pound for the wool.—*Vernal Express*.

# Amateur Gem Cutter

By LELANDE QUICK, Editor of The Lapidary Journal

We don't suppose that those who read it attached any particular significance to an item that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* last April; an item about an "institute on leisure."

That hobbies have become very important in the lives of our people is indicated in the fact that 300 leaders from California alone could hold a convention to discuss methods of leading people in the use of their leisure time. The meeting was called the Second Annual Institute on Professional Leadership for Leisure. Its importance was indicated in the fact that the leading address was given by Dr. Raymond B. Allen, Chancellor of the University of California at Los Angeles. Dr. Allen spoke on the significant topic, "Leisure; Why It Is Important."

The needs of the hobbyist have developed the business of supplying him to the point where the hobby business is now big business with scores of publications and thousands of dealers of all kinds. We see that picture at close range since we publish a magazine catering to the needs and interests of the rockhounds and to America's fastest growing hobby. However we see magazines in other fields growing apace and reaching circulation figures over the million mark. This is particularly true of the "how to do" group of mechanical magazines.

However we must confess that we were a little amazed that a convention of leaders in training people in the use of leisure could draw 300 of those leaders from California alone. If 300 came, many hundreds stayed home and on that basis it is safe to assume that we already possess in America a large trained group of many thousands of people whose main purpose in life is to educate people in the ways and means of avoiding boredom.

It happens that we live in an area where we witness daily evidence of the national shame of large groups of our citizens retiring from something but retiring to nothing. Palm Desert is a resort area and the permanent residents are in the main retired people who have almost nothing to do. They are typical of the great hordes of people all over the land whose only reaction to the phrase of "doing something with your hands" is to think of a canasta hand filled with jokers.

However we think we make a mistake sometimes in thinking only of old folks as a leisure problem. This is written just before the Memorial Day weekend and we know that thousands of people will be driving past our door in the next few days, heading for the Chuckawalla Mountains for geodes, fire agate and other rocks. Few in the caravans will be among the really aged.

We suppose that nothing in our national living indicates the success of our system so much as the fact that while the number of citizens gainfully employed exceeds the total of any other nation it is still a problem of those citizens how to handle their leisure time. For while it is true that almost no one works more than 40 hours a week today it is a problem that we shall have to face soon that the 30 hour week is coming. And that just about doubles the leisure problem.

In our talk on "America's Third Largest Hobby" we often present the fact that in

1900 the average American family consisted of 3 children, had an income of only \$750 a year and only 24 leisure hours a week—barely enough to read the paper and attend church. This average American then worked 60 hours a week but now he works 40 hours and has jumped to an average income of \$3000 a year with paid vacations and reduced the size of his family to 2 children. This release to leisure time has come about with the invention of labor saving devices. When Columbus discovered America there was a record of only 33 inventions in the entire world of labor saving devices. Between the years 1920 to 1930 there were 435,000 patents taken out in the United States alone for labor saving machines and gadgets.

We now come back to hobbies as a relief from ennui and the profitable and therapeutic use of available time. We have never seen a definition of the word hobby that is as good as the one we devised years ago. Here it is—a hobby is a thing that one looks to for recreation, pleasure and escape from care.

All of this leads to the urging upon people of an investigation of the rock-hounding hobby. It is not the perfect answer for all but it certainly is for many. It is one of the few hobbies that fit all of the eight characteristics of the perfect hobby as devised by Gordon Hendrickson of the University of Cincinnati. Hendrickson claims that a good hobby should involve a tangible product that can be admired by others as well as the hobbyist; fit his age and circumstances and have a group of devotees in whom can be found social contacts, recognition and acceptance. The hobby should be difficult enough to challenge the skill but not interfere with one's vocation; it should be the hobbyist's servant and not his master, and it should have possibilities for growth and continued interest through the years.

The rock hobby fulfills all of these requirements but in addition it has many facets not possessed by other hobbies. It usually promotes travel and adventure that the hobbyist might not otherwise undertake. It inevitably brings to the hobbyist a keener appreciation of Nature's handiwork and a contact with the outdoors that far exceeds anything he ever enjoyed before. Through reading and study of books on minerals, geology and crafts he enjoys his hobby in the quiet of his home and even during enforced periods of idleness because of illness. It develops latent talent for the perception of beauty in line, form and color. It enables each individual to become an amateur scientist with a background for interesting conversation in almost any group. And, if the hobbyist becomes a gem cutter, it satisfies the one unfulfilled longing that is deep within the breast of every American—it enables every man to become an artist. If the sensible use of your leisure time is a problem to you then you should be considering the acquisition of a hobby. If you begin to look about we suggest that you examine the rockhounding hobby with its associated gem cutting and jewelcraft angles. Three million people are reportedly interested in some phase of rock interest and that's a lot of people to be wrong about a thing—which they are not.

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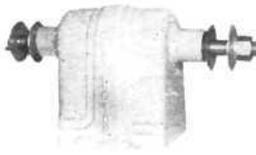
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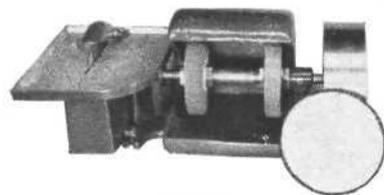
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# Gems and Minerals

## FIRST ANNUAL GEM SHOW OF LAPIDARY ASSOCIATION

First annual gem show of the Lapidary Association will be held August 14, 15 and 16 at the Long Beach, California, Auditorium. The show is sponsored by the 12 member clubs of the association, with four groups acting as hosts. This year host clubs will be the Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society, Delvers Gem and Mineral Society of Downey, San Pedro Lapidary and Mineral Society and Compton Gem and Mineral Club.

Theme of this first show is "Lapidary Art Through the Ages." Already promised for display are an outstanding collection of Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Gnostic, Saracen and Renaissance gems prepared by Dr. Richard A. Swift; two cases of cut gems from the William E. Phillips collection; two cases of Chinese lapidary work; a display of pre-Columbian art from the collection of Colonel Fain White King; cases of modern and pre-Columbian Mexican art loaned by Dr. Ralph Mueller of Phoenix, and two cases of North American Indian lapidary art from Southwest Museum.

Daily admission to the show will be 75 cents. Special 3-day tickets will be issued for \$1.00. Plans are being made for pre-show registration, to avoid confusion during the show.

## GEM, MINERAL EXHIBIT PLANNED IN SAN DIEGO

California and American Federations of Mineralogical Societies will stage a gem and mineral show July 17 to 19 in the Electric Building in Balboa Park, San Diego, California. The show will include displays of semi-precious stones by commercial and amateur exhibitors and demonstrations of gem cutting and appraising. The Balboa Park meeting will be followed by two days of field trips in San Diego County, one of the world's leading semi-precious stone deposit areas. Gem and Mineral societies from throughout the United States will be represented.

## Spring Elections Seat New Officers

Spring brings elections to many gem and mineral societies, and new officers have been elected and installed by a number of groups.

Byron S. Phillips of Indio, California, was elected in May to head activities of Shadow Mountain Gem and Mineral Society, Palm Desert, for the coming year. Assisting him will be Joe Hughes of Palm Desert, vice-president; Ruth Wright of Desert Hot Springs, secretary; C. Grier Darlington of Palm Springs, business manager; Emily Hiatt of Rancho Mirage, treasurer; Bernice Kiefer of Indio, corresponding secretary. Henry Hiatt, Maurice Wright and Margaret Ward were elected to serve on the Board of Directors. Continuing director terms are Esther Edixon, Jack Lizer, Ray Purves, Mary Ann Wahrer, James Carpenter and Donald Butterworth.

Gulf coast Gem and Mineral Society of Corpus Christi, Texas, elected its first-year officers at its second meeting. The Society was organized February 17 and now has a paid membership of 32 rockhounds. First president is Rex Hardaway. Other charter officers are A. L. Mooney, vice-president; Mrs. Harold R. Gingerich, secretary; G. J. Malherbe, treasurer, and Robert Gault, M. H. Ivey, Joe Gier and C. C. Miller, directors.

Elected at the April meeting of Santa Monica Gemological Society, Santa Monica, California, and installed in May were the following new officers: Miss Elizabeth Tamblin, president; C. E. Hamilton, first vice-president; Mrs. Margaret Iams, second vice-president; Mrs. Grace Walker, recording secretary; Mrs. Robert E. Day, corresponding secretary, and Victor E. Linderholm, treasurer.

Glenn Vargas, president, heads the new board of Coachella Valley Mineral Society, Indio, California. He will direct this year's activities aided by Clifton Carney, vice-president, Mrs. Dorothy Faulhaber, secretary and Glenn Thornbaugh, Jr., treasurer. Jerry Jorstad was elected to the board of directors for a three-year term. Other directors continuing terms are David MacKay and George Smith. Installation of new officers was scheduled for the June meeting.

Lelah Brown, new secretary of Rio Grande Rock Club, Monte Vista, Colorado, announces that Gene Sutherland has been elected president of the group for this year. Other officer serving with Sutherland and Miss Brown is George Richardson, vice-president.

At the 1953 convention of the Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies, held in Houston, Texas, in May, new officers were elected as follows: Charles W. Lockerbie, president; William T. Rogers, vice-president; Mrs. Elliot Bird, secretary-treasurer. During the convention, it was voted that the 1954 meet be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, sometime in June. All of this year's officers are residents of Salt Lake City.

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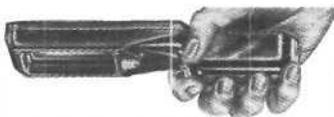
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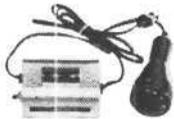
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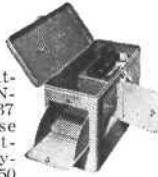
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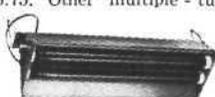
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## AMONG THE ROCK HUNTERS

Members of Shadow Mountain Gem and Mineral Society, Palm Desert, California, looked forward with anticipation to the May field trip. Chairman Omar Kerschner planned a trip into the San Diego Mountains. Ralph Potter gave permission for members to work the Mesa Grande mine dump for tourmaline crystals.

Member Tom Morgan was scheduled to discuss pseudomorphs at the May meeting of Tacoma Agate Club.

Katy Trapnell composed a theme song for the Mineralogical Society of Arizona and presented it at a recent meeting. Members were invited to supply new stanzas.

The craft shop fund of Evansville Lapidary Society, Evansville, Indiana, was richer by \$150 after the group's first auction sale. The fund will purchase new workshop equipment.

Spring issue of the Georgia Mineral Society appeared in a new printed cover, on heavy coated stock and bearing a photograph of the new geology building at Emory University. A new printing process gave a neat and highly readable reproduction to the geological papers, drawings, cartoons and halftone illustrations the issue contained.

Marquette Geologists Association was invited to join the Chicago Rocks and Minerals Society on a May field trip to Aurora, Illinois.

"Bonus" field trips are an innovation of Colorado Mineral Society. The group plans to have a monthly summer trip plus "extras" as they are suggested by members. The Denver group is hampered by snow during winter months.

M. D. Taylor of the Stockton, California, city school department, spoke to Sacramento Mineral Society members on faceting. He gave practical demonstrations of his techniques, finishing two stones while his audience watched.

"Iris Agate Is Where You Find It," iris expert Erna Clark told members of Shadow Mountain Gem and Mineral Society, Palm Desert, California. But she listed some particularly good California hunting grounds, including Mint Canyon near Los Angeles; Nipomo north of Santa Maria; Fish Ranch Road in the Berkeley Hills; Twentynine Palms and Chuckawalla Springs, in the Chocolate Mountains.

"When soldering on polished silver, the polish may be preserved by coating it with boric acid dissolved in alcohol," advised the lapidary editor of *Rocks and Gems* in the May issue of the San Fernando Valley Mineral and Gem Society bulletin.

Two films on natural resources—one on Arizona and one on Oregon—were shown at a recent meeting of San Fernando Valley Mineral and Gem Society.

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## LONG BEACH SOCIETIES ESTABLISH NATURE MUSEUM

Long Beach Museum, which opened its doors to the public March 22, now has a membership of more than 300, many of whom are active participants in specific research groups. Temporary quarters have been donated for one year by Mrs. Lenore White, member of the Agassiz Nature Club, one of the sponsoring organizations. Other sponsors are the Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society, Long Beach Shell Club and Long Beach Geological Association. Dr. Rose Hardy is president; Mrs. Orin Purvis serves as corresponding secretary.

Among specimens on display are sea-shells and other marine life from more than a half-billion years ago; a collection of ammonites that died in their shells approximately 70,000,000 years ago; small animals from local mountain and desert areas; corals, birds, Indian artifacts, rocks and minerals. A complete display of lapidary materials, equipment and finished gems was donated by the Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society.

Membership in the museum is \$1.00 per year; admission is free. Visiting hours are from 2 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Fridays doors are open from 7 to 9 p.m. Regular meetings are held at Alomitas Branch Library, 1836 East Third Street, the second Tuesday of each month. The public is invited.

Crystallography, especially as related to quartz minerals, was discussed by Ralph Dietz at the May meeting of the NOTS Rockhounds at China Lake, California. He displayed choice specimens.

First summer field trip for Minnesota Mineral Club was kept a secret by Nathan Stuvetro, tour director. All the advance information he would give members was that a picnic lunch and some fine hunting were in store.

Thirty-five members and guests of Compton Gem and Mineral Club met in Compton, California, for a field trip to Mule Canyon. Searchers found palm root and silver onyx, some sagenite. Hank Henninger found a large piece of palm root weighing about 20 pounds, and Art Melonas came up with a good piece of sagenite.

One of the exhibitors at the Wyoming State Convention of Mineral and Gem Societies was Western Nebraska Mineral Society of Chappell, Nebraska.

## L. A. LAPIDARY HONORS THREE EARLY PRESIDENTS

Archie B. Meiklejohn, Leland Quick and Harry Ringwald, organizers and early presidents of the Los Angeles Lapidary Society recently were awarded life memberships in the organization. Each received a bronze plaque inscribed with his name, the date and the award "for outstanding work."

## OREGONIANS' SCHEDULE AGATE SHOW JULY 25, 26

Eleventh annual agate show of the North Lincoln Agate Society will be held July 25 and 26. Exhibits will be arranged in classrooms of the Delake Grade School on Highway 101, Delake, Oregon.

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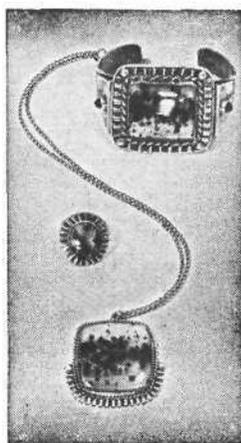
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## TRUE OR FALSE ANSWERS

Questions are on page 24

- 1—False. The fruit is knocked down with long poles.
- 2—True.
- 3—False. Ubehebe is a dead crater.
- 4—True. 5—True. 6—True.
- 7—False. Alamogordo is on U. S. 70.
- 8—True. 9—True.
- 10—False. The Panamints form the western rim of Death Valley.
- 11—True.
- 12—False. The Chemehuevis have lived along the Colorado since white men came to this region.
- 13—True.
- 14—False. Natural Bridges National Monument is in southeastern Utah.
- 15—True.
- 16—False. The Ironwood blossom is pinkish-lavender.
- 17—False. San Francisco peaks are northwest of Flagstaff.
- 18—False. The Navajo men do most of the silverwork.
- 19—True.
- 20—False. The Mormon Battalion was formed to help take California from Mexico.

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Slabs, per square inch .....	.80
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4 diff. genuine Tourmaline, 8 to 10 mm.....	4.90
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1/4 lb. Garnet (deep rich color).....	4.00
1/4 lb. Peridot (small).....	4.00
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1/4 lb. Mexican Topaz .....	2.25

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# Working With Border Officials, Brawley Stages Mexican Field Trip

More than 150 rockhounds in 42 cars took part in the rockhunting trip to Mexico which climaxed the three-day Rock Fair and Trade Days held in Brawley, California, in May. At the show itself, sponsored by the Brawley Gem and Mineral Society, almost 2000 persons viewed exhibits of desert gems and minerals displayed outdoors in the Brawley plaza.

The post-show motorcade to Pinto Mountain, about 40 miles west of Mexicali, was escorted through the capital city of the Mexican state of Baja California by a police motorcycle escort headed by the secretary-manager of the Mexicali chamber of commerce, William McAlpin.

This fine collecting area has been out-of-bounds for most American rockhounds who were penalized by the few who earlier defied immigration regulations to sneak across the border in search of specimens. The Brawley-sponsored trip was well organized, and it enjoyed cooperation from immigration officers and officials from the Mexican town.

Three motorcycle policemen remained with the rockhounds and escorted them right up to the mountain where the police served as official guards for the cars while the party was shuttled over the remaining 4 1/2 miles to the hunting grounds by desert-worthy jeeps and command cars.

About 15 cars full of rockhounds from the coastal areas met the motorcade in Calexico and still other cars of rockhounds joined up at a cutoff 35 miles west of Mexicali.

Glendora Barfell, secretary of the Brawley Gem and Mineral Society, expressed the club's complete satisfaction with the show and trip. "The experiment of having an outdoor show—where amateurs could trade, adding to their collections and dis-

posing of surplus items, and where professionals could replenish their stocks of locally plentiful material, was a complete success," she writes. So pleased, in fact, were members with this new type of show, that they plan to make it an annual affair.

## SPEAKER SUGGESTS NEW SNAKEBITE TREATMENT

Members of Delvers Gem and Mineral Society, Downey, California, learned about animal life of the desert when Lloyd C. Hall, instructor in botany and biology at Long Beach City College, spoke at an evening meeting. "Most desert animals and reptiles, although living in a hot and dry climate, spend most of their lives in relatively cool surroundings—under rocks or bushes or burrowed in the earth," Hall pointed out. Hall also rejected as best the old method of treating snakebite by slashing through the bite and sucking out the poison. He advocated packing the injured member in ice and applying a tourniquet above the bite. It was pointed out, however, that the ice treatment is generally useless on the desert, where ice is rarely available.

The Sherry Ann Mine was visited by a field trip group from the mineralogy division of San Diego Mineral and Gem Society. The mine, opened as a potential source of manganese, is a contact metamorphic deposit. Minerals found are massive quartz; rhodonite, the watermelon pink silicate of manganese in bands or layers through the silica; grossularite, the calcium-aluminum garnet; and minor amounts of tremolite, chalcopyrite and pyrite.

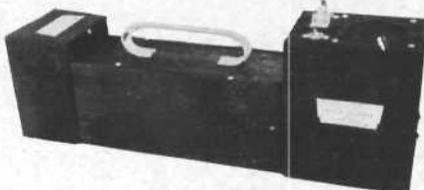
A two-part feature story relating the history of El Paso Mineral and Gem Society began in May in *The Voice*, monthly bulletin of the society. The society was organized January 22, 1947, in El Paso, Texas, with 38 charter members. *Voice* Editor H. L. Zollars is the chronicler.

Slides of many interesting geological formations in national parks and monuments in Northwestern United States were shown by Dr. William Powers at a meeting of Chicago Rocks and Minerals Society. Dr. Powers told about his extended trip through the West and parts of Canada.

Earliest residents of the plains and plateaus of Wyoming were described by Louis Steege when he spoke to Cheyenne Mineral and Gem Society about the Indian tribes of the region. He told of the Spanish Diggings, Medicine Creek caves, Dinwoody Camp and other sites, showing artifacts found there and reading excerpts from archeological reports of excavations.

A visit to agate and petrified wood fields in Horse Canyon, California, was scheduled for May by the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, Pasadena.

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### MINERALS UNLIMITED

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Hal Straight of Adel, Iowa, discussed the origin, collection and identification of petrified wood at a meeting of the Chicago Rocks and Minerals Society. Among specimens he displayed were polished slabs of cypress, white oak, sequoia, grape, persimmon, hackberry, cherry, willow, hickory, sweet gum, sycamore and manzanita. He explained where the trees had probably grown, where the specimens were found and what minerals they contained. He showed slides, reproductions of photographs of wood fibers as viewed under the microscope, both in transverse and longitudinal sections.

For those members of the Gem and Mineral Society of San Mateo County who had visited Guadalupe to collect myrickite, Edgar H. Bailey's recent talk held particular interest. Bailey spoke on "Quicksilver and Its Sources." Besides myrickite, Bailey discussed cinnabar, the chief mercury ore, and other sources.

Meral Hinshaw of Torrance, California, told of his personal experiences while diamond mining in Africa when he appeared as speaker for Southwest Mineralogists, Los Angeles.

*The Stone Age* is the new name of the Santa Fe Gem and Mineral Society's monthly bulletin. May issue announced that John Haber would be that month's guest speaker, talking on the Great Western mine at Mora, New Mexico. The weekend following the meeting a field trip was planned to the mica mine.

"Modern Gem Cutting" was the title of a movie shown at a recent meeting of San Gabriel Valley Lapidary Society.

Stan Hill was speaker at the May meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California. His topic was "Beginning of Mineralogy in America."

Eight members and guests of the San Jacinto-Hemet Rockhound Club made a recent trip to Agate Valley to collect iris agate and chalcedony roses.

Henry Dupks of Palm Desert won the annual "braggin' rock" contest of Shadow Mountain Gem and Mineral Society, Palm Desert, California. In the competition, 22 member rockhounds offered their best pocket rocks for display.

Orlin Bell, first president of East Bay Mineral Society, Oakland, California, was named chairman for the group's 15th anniversary party. Bell announced several speakers for the occasion; Bob Lamberson, explorer and mining man, who would give mineral hunting tips; Bill Hansen who would tell of his vacation trip to southwestern Utah; and Bell himself, who planned a colored slide travelogue.

Fresno Gem and Mineral Society members brought back some fine cutting material from a field trip to Horse Canyon, California.

Scheduled for May by the Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society was a field trip to Owl Hole Springs, California.

Coachella Valley Mineral Society members planned to escape the heat of Indio for a summer jaunt into the nearby Santa Rosa Mountains. They would search for black tourmaline crystals, rose quartz, garnets and beryl crystals.

An illustrated lecture on "The Origin of Coal" entertained members of Wasatch Gem Society at a recent meeting. Thomas O'Neal was the speaker.

Two films—one on silversmithing and the other on Chilean copper mines—were scheduled by Pasadena Lapidary Society for its May meeting.

Guest speaker at the May meeting of San Jacinto-Hemet Rockhounds was Orsino C. Smith of Bell, California, author of *Identification and Qualitative Chemical Analysis of Minerals*. He spoke on "Identification of Minerals," illustrating methods of analyzing chemical properties of minerals by blow pipe and bead tests.

More than 700 persons visited the first exhibit of the Central Illinois Rockhounds at Decatur, Illinois. The two-day show featured displays of rocks, slabs, gemstones, jewelry, fossils and Indian relics.

Juanita Lasley was winner of Compton Gem and Mineral Club's May cover contest for *Rockhounds Call*. Her drawing reminded members of the club's snapshot contest.

In the "Lapidary Corner" department of the *Rock Rustlers News*, Ray Lulling told Minnesota Mineral Club members how to make a diamond saw blade.

At a work party, 16 members of San Diego Lapidary Society gathered and sacked 2000 bags of rocks for grab-bag sale at the San Diego County Fair. It was estimated that 1000 pounds of rocks went into the collection. Again as many bags are planned and will be filled at a similar "bee." Special prizes of cabochons were included in some of the bags.

An overnight field trip to Foster Canyon proved productive for members of Dona Ana County Rockhound Club, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Interesting specimens of opal and petrified wood, and some good geodes were found. Prize find was a large piece of petrified palm discovered by Shilo Smith.

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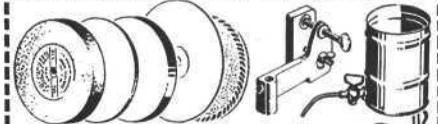
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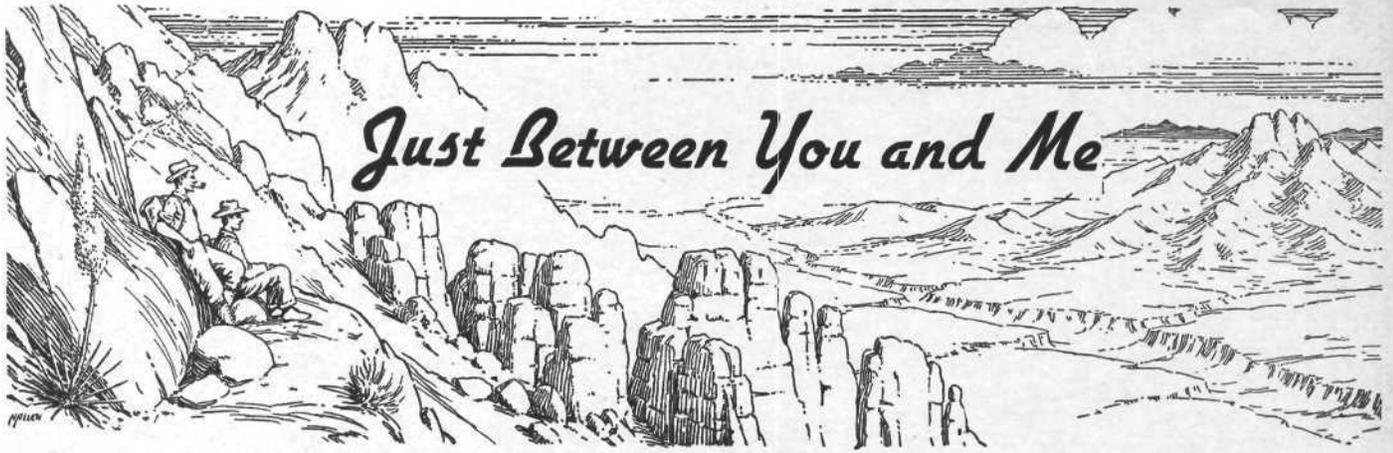
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## Just Between You and Me

By RANDALL HENDERSON

**I** HAVE NOT forgotten that nearly two years ago I promised to write an article for *Desert Magazine* readers about the building of a desert home—an article which would contain the things I have learned about the art of comfortable living during the 42 years I have spent on the Great American Desert.

It was my intention, and still is, to write the story in connection with the actual construction of a home which Cyria and I are planning—a house that has been postponed from month to month because of continued rising building costs. It appears now that before many months we will have the masons and carpenters at work—and then I will pass along to those who are interested not only the lessons I have learned about desert home construction, but also some comment on the current problems of building in general.

\* \* \*

Between editions of *Desert Magazine* our editorial staff is working on a book—a revised edition of John D. Mitchell's *Lost Mines and Buried Treasures of the Southwest* which has long been out of print. The new volume is scheduled to come off the press in early fall and will contain 51 of the lost mine and buried treasure stories John has been collecting during a lifetime on the desert.

Are these lost mines worth looking for? I do not know. I doubt if anyone will ever grow rich looking for a lost mine, and yet for those who have the time and can afford that kind of recreation I believe they are worth while. As a hobby, yes! For a livelihood, no!

It is good for humans to have goals. And that is true even if the goal is merely a fanciful dream—if the effort brings physical effort, clean air and mental alertness. As I have said many times on this page: it is better to have faith in the wrong thing than to have no faith at all.

\* \* \*

In the years immediately ahead it appears that California will have an important new jackpot—the income that will accrue from royalties from tideland oil wells to be drilled under authority recently granted by Congress. Chairman Joe Knowland of the travel and recreation committee of the California chamber of commerce already has suggested that some of these tideland oil funds be used for the building of little roadside rest parks such as they have in Texas and other states.

I would like to second Joe Knowland's motion. Not only because the little parkways along the highways would be a great convenience for picnic parties and motorists in general, but because they would help solve

the litterbug problem. In Texas the roadside accommodations include a ramada for shade, a picnic table, and a big incinerator made of native rock. Into those incinerators go many of the beercans which in California find a resting place in the roadside gutter.

\* \* \*

California's wild burros were given a new lease on life recently when the state legislature passed a bill fixing a maximum fine of \$1000 or a year in jail, or both, for killing one of the animals. The bill is an experimental measure—effective for two years.

Probably the legislators were wise in putting a time limit on the measure, for much as you and I may like these little beasts, we must recognize that if they are allowed to multiply without limitation they could in time become a menace to many forms of plant and animal life which also are important to us.

When left to her own resources, Nature has a way of keeping life in balance. But Man, not Nature, brought the burro to the American desert, and it is Man's problem to keep this newcomer to the wildlife of the desert country in balance with his environment.

\* \* \*

My sympathies are all on the side of the folks in Bishop, Lone Pine and Independence in Inyo County, California, who are fighting to prevent federal agencies from withdrawing a huge acreage in Saline Valley for a gunnery range.

The armed forces already have closed two great areas in the Mojave desert of California, and their proposal to take over Saline Valley is going too far. As a former pilot in the U. S. Air Force I am unwilling to believe that Uncle Sam's gunners have become such bad marksmen they need all the desert outdoors for targets.

During many months of the year Saline Valley is dry and arid and hot. But there are valuable minerals there, and roads which lead to remote waterholes and lovely canyons.

You and I must insist that some of these secluded desert canyons be preserved as sanctuaries where human beings may go and for a little while get away from newspapers and television and the everlasting pressures of business and social life.

To many of us the crowded city would become an unbearable place if it were not for the opportunity occasionally to get out where the air is pure and where close contact with the good earth as God created it helps restore our sense of values.

# Books of the Southwest

## RICHES AND TRAGEDY CAME TO EILLEY ORRUM

Eilley Orrum, Queen of the Comstock, was one of the strangest and most colorful characters of that fabulous period when California's gold strikes ushered in a mad rush to the gold fields of the west. Swift Paine tells Eilley's story, stressing particularly the part played by her famous "peepstone," the crystal globe to which Eilley looked for guidance in her search for the miraculous destiny which she firmly believed should be hers.

As a young girl, living in Scotland on the farm where she was born, working and drudging as her forebears had done for centuries, Eilley met a band of Mormons who had come to her native land to recruit converts to go to America, the land of golden promise. Eilley's quicksilver imagination was fired by the visions of the power and riches which were waiting for her in that far off magical land. Nothing should stop her, she determined. So she joined the Mormon group and trekked over sea and the vast spaces of the undeveloped America of a century ago.

Strangely, it was not gold that Eilley saw in the "peepstone" she acquired in America, but silver — silver from that 10-foot claim she had staked. Next to it was the claim of Sandy Bowers, a gentle, pliable little man who became her third husband. Wealth began to pour in upon them and they embarked on a triumphal tour of Europe where they took their miraculous silver stream to spend on luxury — gowns for Eilley's attempted audience with Queen Victoria and other important people and rich furnishings for the mansion she was having built near Carson City. On their return trip on the S.S. Persia, a woman died in giving birth to a daughter. Eilley learned that she had seemingly no one in the world who would claim the baby, so it was not too difficult for Eilley to adopt her and return to the West where she hoped to give the impression that little Persia, as she called her, was really her own.

Her mansion was all that she could have wished but tragedy had not finished with Eilley. Sandy passed away with tuberculosis and Persia succumbed to scarlet fever when but five years old. Eilley was left alone, losing her mine and eventually her beloved mansion. She died at 76 and her body

was buried near those of Sandy and the child.

The author has drawn a character one will not forget. Through the story of this strange, determined woman one meets also the men who gained wealth and fame, or notoriety, in the heyday of the Comstock Lode—Mackay, Fair, Flood, O'Brien, Sutro, Sharon. *Eilley Orrum* is a page in the history of the Golden West of a century ago.

Published by Pacific Books, Palo Alto, California. 309 pp. \$3.50.

Books reviewed on this page are available at  
Desert Crafts Shop, Palm Desert

## GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA'S IMPERIAL, COACHELLA VALLEYS

Written for the guidance of visitors, possible settlers and for those who just want to know more about the desert before and after irrigation is *Coachella and Imperial Valleys: An Illustrated Guide* by Collis H. Steere.

This newest in the Stanford University Press illustrated guide series emphasizes the importance of water development in the valleys, the overflow of the Salton Sea and the fight to put the Colorado back in its bed, the tremendous productivity of valley farms. The botany of the region is well defined and illustrated with excellent photographs. Two maps and numerous pictures also serve as illustration of the concise and factual text.

Published by Stanford University Press, 90 pages, paperbound, index, mileage charts. \$1.50.

## Have you met. . . GEOCOCCYX CALIFORNIANUS? \*



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Here are books which will help you become familiar with these bird companions who share your desert trails. Their friendship will enrich your travel and bring a new understanding of the wild creatures who have chosen to live in this arid desert land and have adapted their habits to its hardships.

### FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS by Roger Tory Peterson.

Method of field identification especially helpful to the layman. Profusely illustrated with drawings—some in color—showing characteristic markings observed in flight. Field-marks, size, manner of flight, voice range. . . . . \$3.50

### OUR DESERT NEIGHBORS by Edmund C. Jaeger. A fascinating

book of a naturalist's experiences with desert birds and animals. Excellent chapters on desert sparrows, wrens, orioles, the shrike, prairie falcon, road runner and other desert birds. Illustrated. . . . . \$5.00

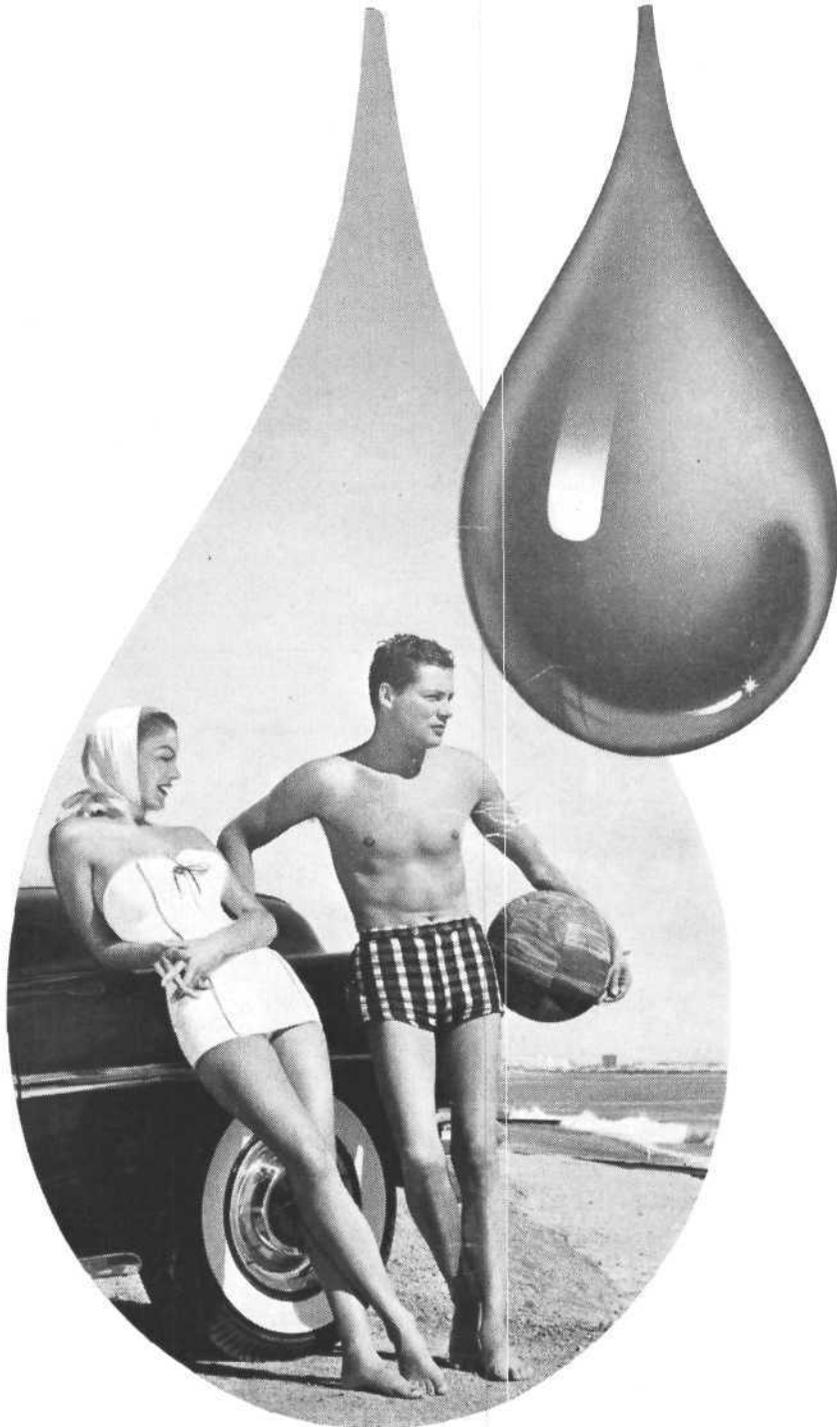
### WILDLIFE IN COLOR by Roger Tory Peterson. A few desert birds

are included in this informative manual for wildlife lovers. Over 450 pictures in full color of birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles, trees and flowers of the United States. Divided geographically. . . . . \$3.00

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