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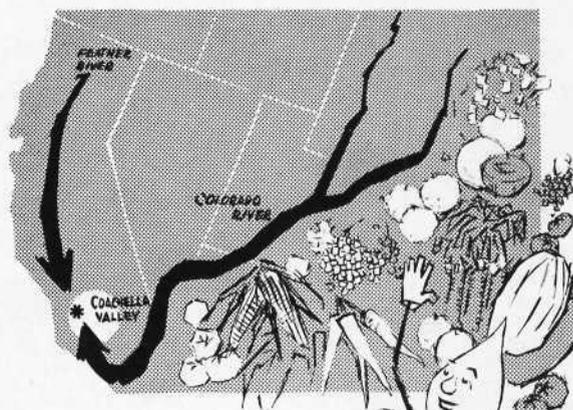
Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, Calif. 92260 Telephone 346-8144

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## March Peppercorns . . . by Jack Pepper

**DURING THE SEASON**, hundreds of visitors come to our office in Palm Desert and ask, "What is there to do and see around here other than date trees and golf courses?" As a result, we decided to put some of our answers into a SPECIAL SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DESERT EDITION dedicated to revealing the exciting backcountry that surrounds the cosmopolitan community of Palm Springs. Although the geographical area in this particular edition is confined, what is true of Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley is true of all growing desert areas in the West. Each community is endowed with its own lore, history, and distinctive type of desert scenery. We hope this special issue will inspire readers in other areas to look beyond their own cities and highways and capture the great, free spirit that prevails throughout all desert regions of the West.

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**THE NORTH AMERICAN DESERTS** by **Edmund C. Jaeger**. A long-time authority on all phases of desert areas and life, Dr. Jaeger's book on the North American Deserts should be carried wherever you travel. It not only describes each of the individual desert areas, but has illustrated sections on desert insects, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants. 315 pages, illustrated photographs, line drawings and maps. Hard Cover. \$5.95.

**THE DESERT IS YOURS** by **Erle Stanley Gardner**. In his latest book on the desert areas of the West, the author again takes his reader with him as he uses every means of transportation to explore the wilderness areas and sift the facts and rumors about such famous legends as the Lost Arch, Lost Dutchman and Lost Dutch Oven mines. 256 pages, illustrated. Hard cover. \$7.50.

**ANZA-BORREGO DESERT GUIDE** by **Horace Parker**. Second edition of this well-illustrated and documented book is enlarged considerably. Tops among guidebooks, it is equally recommended for research material in an area that was crossed by Anza, Kit Carson, the Mormon Battalion, '49ers, Railroad Survey parties, Pegleg Smith, the Jackass Mail, Butterfield Stage, and today's adventurous tourists. 139 pages, cardboard cover. \$2.95. May be ordered from *DESERT Magazine Book Dept.*

**THE OREGON DESERT** by **E. R. Jackman and R. A. Long**. This book is a hard one to define. A single paragraph may be a mixture of geology, history, biography and rich desert lore. The only complete book about the Oregon desert, the material applies equally well to other deserts of the West. The humor and fascinating anecdotes coupled with factual background and unusual photos, including color, make it excellent reading material even for those who may never visit Oregon. 407 pages, illustrated. Hard Cover. Third printing, \$5.50.

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**THE GREAT CALIFORNIA DESERTS** by **W. Storrs Lee** is rich in folklore, drama and history of desert regions from Death Valley to Imperial Valley and from the Spanish explorers up to the present. Good reading. Hardcover, 306 pages, \$5.95.

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## *New Books for Desert Readers*

### DESERT ANIMALS IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

By **Alden H. Miller** and  
**Robert C. Stebbins**

with illustrations by **Gene Christman**

Here is a book we've been waiting for, and we aren't disappointed. Written by naturalists as a result of 15 years of continuous observation, its colored illustrations and fine photos make it one of the most outstanding of desert nature books—and the only one pertaining to this particularly rich area.

As the authors point out, desert animal life is often overlooked by the casual visitor because he hasn't developed his powers of observation. This isn't hard to do, however, once you are acquainted with the habits of desert wild life. Then you know to look after dark for kangaroo rats, to expect bats near water sources where they make their evening flights, and to watch for snakes absorbing body heat from warm pavements. Coyotes frequent roadsides after dark because they are addicted to chasing rodents attracted to the highways by the lights of your cars. Birds are early risers and the Joshua Tree area boasts a varied supply. Loon, grebe, heron, egret, hawks, eagles, quail, doves, road-runners, owls, poorwills, and hummingbirds are only a few of those described and illustrated in this wonderful book. Chapters on mammals, amphibians, and reptiles are also included, with their identifying tracks, breeding habits, and racial affinities fully discussed.

Hardcover 451 pages, this book should be owned both for reference and pleasure by every lover of wild life on the desert. \$10.00.

### THE WORLD OF WATER

By **Erle Stanley Gardner**

After exploring the desert, backcountry of Baja California, and crime with Perry Mason, Erle Stanley Gardner—whose books have outsold those of any other writer alive today—has taken to the water. This new book, written aboard Gardner's houseboat on the Sacramento River Delta, tells of his new-found hobby of relaxation . . . a state he has never been able to achieve anywhere else.

Threaded with 1000 miles of rambling waterways, the delta country is rich with lore, sport fishing,

and life afloat. Gardner has found his houseboat the water's answer to campers and trailers—maneuverable, roomy and comfortably isolated from traffic problems and noise. For the past two summers he has moved his office staff to a fleet of vessels on the delta where business mixes with cat fishing, visiting, and relaxing.

Anyone who overworks or has trouble unwinding will relax just reading this book and, no doubt, the way of life it portrays will find a number of converts among desert dwellers seeking a new way to escape summer heat. It's a lazy, restful sort of book, lacking the electric vitality we associate with Erle Stanley Gardner's desert and Baja adventures, but the great Gardner warmth comes through strong—especially in his description of the croaking catfish that won liberation for its species forevermore, as far as the Gardner crew is concerned. This you must read to believe, but it's true!

Hardcover, packed with exciting photos, and 160 pages. \$5.00.

Books reviewed may be ordered from the **DESERT Magazine Book Order Department, Palm Desert, California 92260**. Please include 25c for handling. California residents must add 4% sales tax. Enclose payment with order.

### DOGS ON THE FRONTIER

By **John E. Baur**

Dogs played an astonishing part in the winning and settling of the West. They were the only domestic animals owned by Indians when Cabeza de Vaca and Coronado arrived, bringing their own. Some tribes ate dogs, others considered them poison. Some sacrificed them in rituals.

Dogs accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition, as well as every wagon train, prairie schooner, and gold rusher to travel west of the Mississippi. These pioneer dogs encountered grizzlies, mountain lion, and jaguars. They accompanied white men hunting for deer, antelope, javelinas and wild turkeys. They carried mail, warned of Indian raids, and herded cattle. And always the courage and loyalty of this beloved animal proved its usefulness.

Although the dog was found here

## New This Month

"PowerBoating the West Coast of Mexico" by Spencer Murray & Ralph Poole.

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with the Indian, archeologists have not found its bones among the very earliest remains. Among those known to the New World when the Spanish arrived were 17 varieties; of those, the Eskimo dog, the Plains dog, the Siouxan, the long haired Pueblo dog, the wooly Klamath, the Mexican hairless, and the common dog were of the Far West.

This is an entertaining book about a popular subject and it covers it well. Hardcover, 238 pages. \$5.95.

## DOWN THE COLORADO

By Robert Brewster Stanton

Edited and with an introduction by Dwight L. Smith, this is a hair-raising factual record of Stanton's 1889 survey of the Colorado River to determine the engineering feasibility of a railroad along its course.

Hitherto unpublished, the report traces the party from Green River Station in Utah to the mouth of the Colorado River below Yuma, California. As the party passed from the Green River through Cataract Canyon, Marble Canyon and the Grand Canyon, its number dwindled from 16 to eight. Three men lost their lives, the photographer broke his leg, boats were smashed, supplies lost and food drastically rationed.

Stanton describes the fear felt by these men, and their bravery in face of it, so vividly that you get knots in your stomach reading about it.

Illustrated with fine photos, this hardcover, 237-page book sells for \$5.00.

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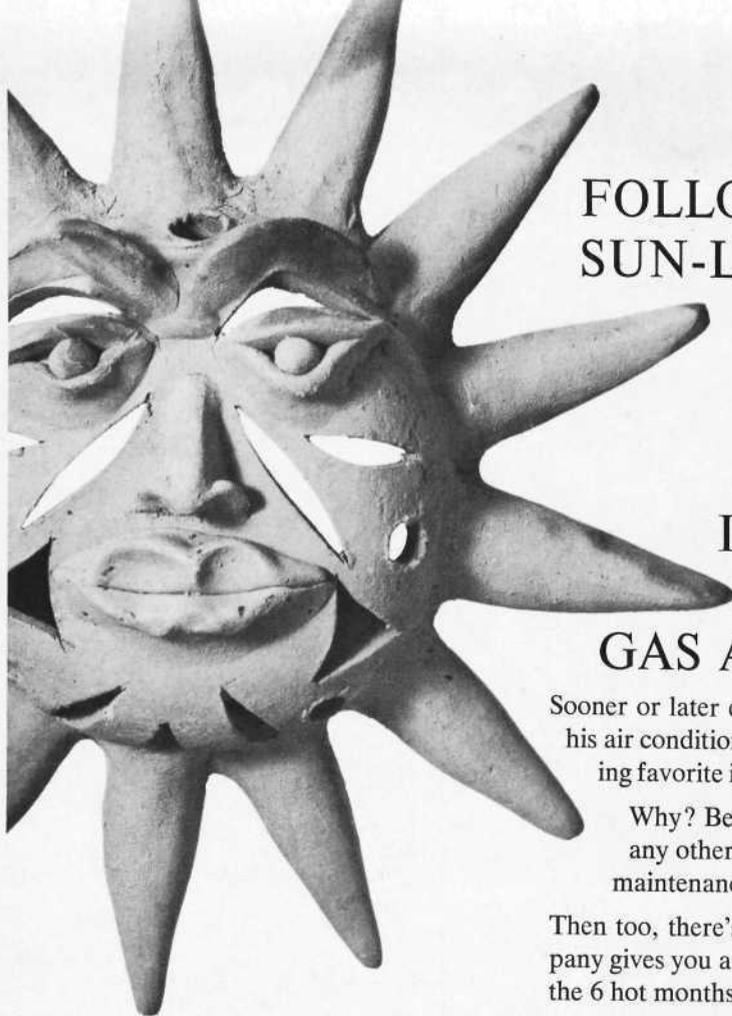
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# Follow the Wind



1



2



3



4



5



6

*Blow fiercely, desert wind,  
Sift the dune sands well tonight;  
Then tomorrow whisper softly  
Over treasures brought to light.*

**BY EUGENE McALLISTER**  
whose fine collection of arrowheads  
found near Salton Sea are on loan  
to the Palm Springs Desert Museum.

**T**HE WIDE distribution of Indian arrowpoints throughout the United States, is matched only by that of the social security check.

For centuries these historic missiles were sent flying in the direction of birds and beasts. Pioneers, cavalrymen, cowboys and rival tribesmen have served as targets. Millions shared the graves and funeral pyres of the departed. Millions more were simply discarded in favor of the rifle.

People react to them in a variety of ways. The archeologist wants to know where, when and by whom they were used. His great-great grandfather may have this information, acquired the hard way. Modern boys and girls, young and old, influenced no doubt by studies of the American Indian in the classroom, and further conditioned by TV Westerns, look longingly at museum collections and wish they could find some of these fascinating relics of the past.

The extent to which they have been scattered over one small segment of the desert Southwest, has been of particular interest to me. During the past fifteen years I have spent hundreds of vacation hours exploring a comparatively narrow ribbon of land which marks the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla, the remnant of which has long been known as California's Salton Sea.

Starting in the vicinity of Travertine Rock, where the markings of this ancient shoreline are strikingly etched on nearby hills, I have followed its winding path as it roughly parallels Highway 99, and swings west to eventually cross Highway 78, in the Lower Borrego

Valley. There, near the confluence of San Felipe and Fish Creeks, torrential rains and violent winds have erased long stretches of this ancient landmark. It is there that for centuries the relentless winds have scoured a broad barren plain, created huge sand dunes and then destroyed or remodeled them and created others. In the long process, artifacts left by the ancient ones have been alternately hidden and revealed.

The Antiquities Laws forbid the disturbance of prehistoric sites. I have profound respect for these laws. It has been my privilege to rescue and preserve approximately 150 arrowpoints in the area described. They are, without exception, what the archeologist refers to as "surface finds." All were exposed by wind and water erosion. They will eventually be placed on display in a California museum. I do not buy, sell or exchange.

On a recent trip to the desert I made the following observations: A large gravel pit now marks the spot where point #1 was found near Travertine Rock. Another such plant is in operation in close proximity to the place where point #2 lay undisturbed for generations. Near Truck Haven, an arrow's flight from Highway 99, marks the scene of #3's discovery. Here too the ancient shoreline is being threatened by the march of civilization. A large, flat boulder with a very deep mortar in its center remains to indicate long occupancy of the site in some remote age.

Just beyond Salton City, an airfield blocks access to the spot where point #4 lay surrounded by the resting remnants of shell casings on a World War II bombing range. To the north of Highway 78, near San Felipe



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Wash, #5 and #6 lay in an area torn up by haphazard digging and the deep tracks of dune buggies.

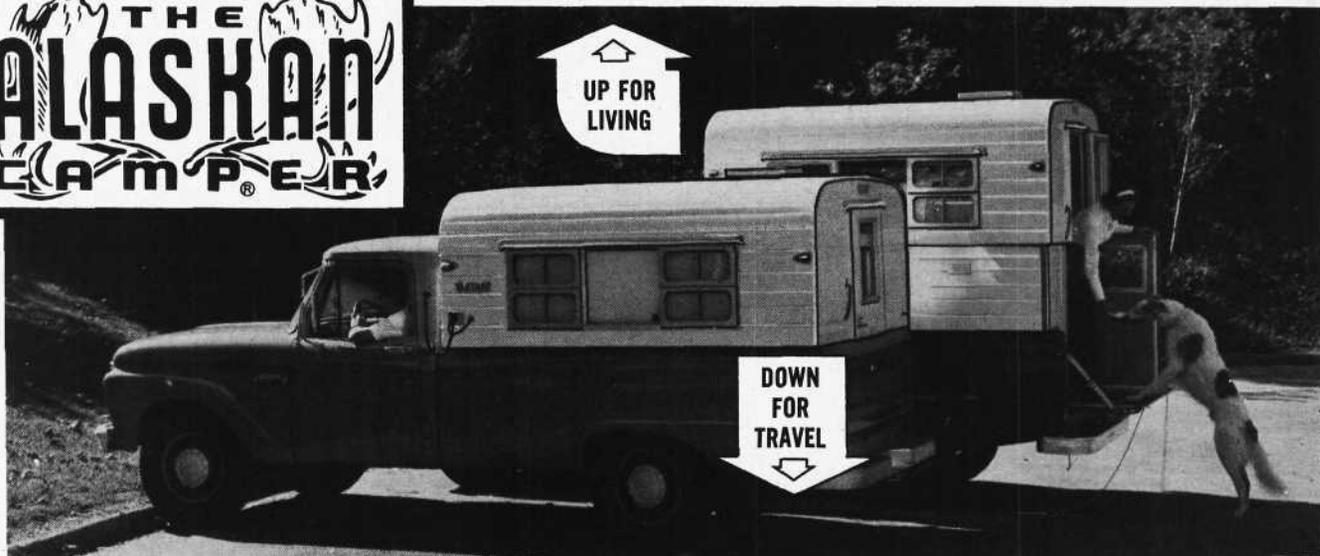
Friends frequently ask, "How do you know where to look for these things?" and "Are they all this perfect?"

I discovered my first point in the area at a site along the ancient shoreline bisected by a dry wash. When the waves of Lake Calhulla lapped this shore, the dry wash was one of the many streams that flowed into the lake. Potsherds and stone chippings marked it as a former place of habitation. After my first discovery I acquired topographic maps of the region. From then on it was a simple matter to estimate distances, fill my canteen, park and start walking.

For each perfect or near-perfect point in my collection, I have found five broken ones. This has been a rather consistent average for all my trips.

I deeply admire the people who, with crude tools at their disposal, fashioned such artistic gems. When I wander in remote areas and enjoy the solitude and nearness to nature that blessed their lives, I experience a strong feeling of kinship with them.

And that is why I continue to search. And that is why I tread lightly as I follow the wind. ///



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# Clues to Desert Living from a Lizard

by Weldon D. Woodson

**S**HOULD KING Solomon be alive today and vacation in Palm Springs, California, he might well advise, "Go to the chuckwalla, thou sluggard."

This lizard, whose habitat includes the Palm Springs area, has adapted himself to the rigors of the desert in a marvelous manner. There's a lot we can learn about the manner in which he copes with aridity and heat.

Cloaked in a rough, baggy skin, the adult chuckwalla reaches a length of 18 inches, a width of four inches. Of this country's lizards, he is exceeded in size only by the Gila monster. He abounds in southeastern California, southern Nevada, southwestern Utah, western Arizona, northern half of Baja California and northwestern Sonora.

During the 100 or more degree heat of summer, many desert shopkeepers padlock their stores until October, when the days grow cooler and winter residents return. Likewise the chuckwalla's appearance also is seasonal, although not corresponding with that of man. After hibernating in rock fissures throughout the winter, the chuckwalla emerges with the desert flowers in the Spring. When he makes his debut, his hide is shriveled from days of fasting. Each tidbit, however, pumps nourishment into his almost lifeless carcass, and shortly it expands to its normal girth.

He remains fat as long as there is vegetation. But once the heat burns

up green life, he resembles a man huddled in an oversized overcoat. Then he skulks to his winter quarters to stay until Spring.

In the world of man, color plays a paramount role concerning his well-being. To keep him warm, he wears clothing that is black, for black absorbs heat. So that he may be cool he dons garments of white, since white reflects heat. Psychologically, the temperature of a room can be raised up to 10° by painting a wall a warm color. Color also has a bearing on the chuckwalla. Like the chameleon, his color changes in response to variations in light, temperature and movements. A dark brown lizard asleep at night may turn a lemon yellow by high noon. Because he assumes the color of his surroundings, it is difficult for his enemies to detect him among the rocks where he generally makes his home. Often he is blackish, but his color may be purple, dull, rusty brown or other somber hues. The female is frequently a gray-white. The tail of the chuckwalla is usually lighter than the rest of the body and girdled by broad black bands.

In Southern California he has been called "alderman lizard" the Mormons of Utah call him "alligator," and in the Colorado Desert his name has been perpetuated in the Chuckwalla Mountains, "chuckawalla" being an older spelling of "chuckwalla."

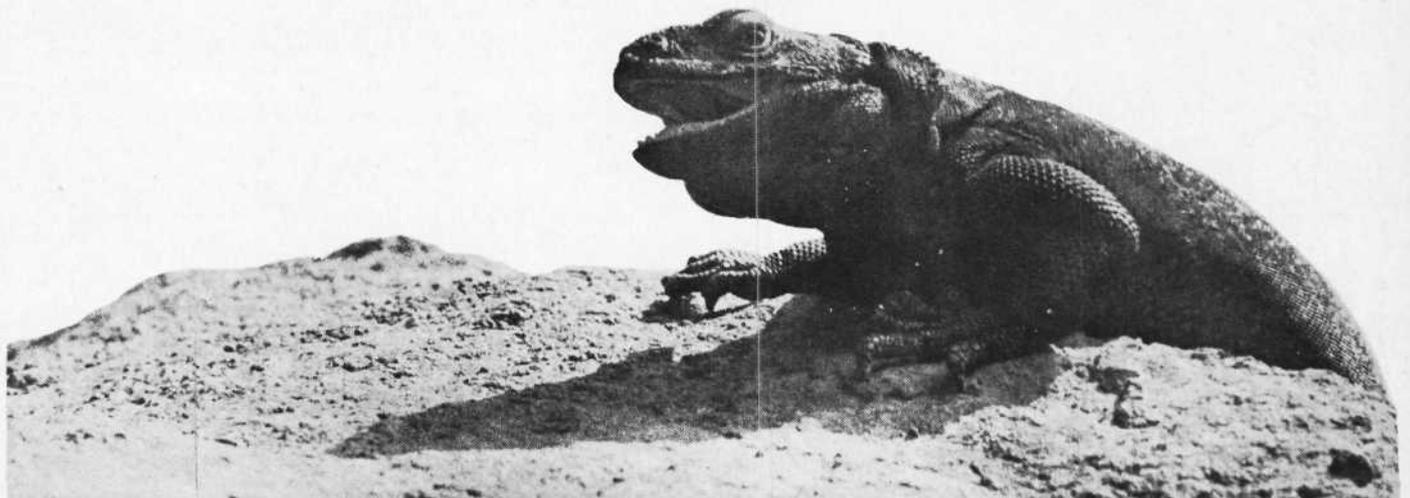
His natural enemies include the

coyote, fox, eagles and hawks. A half-eaten body of a large female was discovered in a prairie falcon's nest. When maimed, as from the loss of two feet, the creature still manages to survive because he does not have to fight for his food.

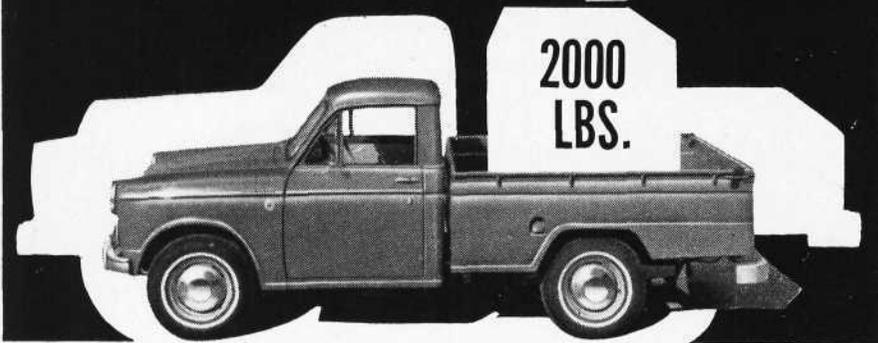
More typical defense stratagem, however, begins with his fleeing and ensconcing himself in his rock fissure home or, if too closely pursued, wriggling into the nearest convenient crack. When entering, his hide is loose, but once safe, he inflates himself like a balloon. Should you try to extract him, his larger size bars him from being hauled out of the opening which he so easily entered.

To merely say that he swells up, of course, does not explain how this is accomplished. For this, we must consult scientist G. W. Salt, who technically but revealingly described the intricate procedures involved: "When inflating, the chuckwalla appears to inhale to the normal point. The animal then makes a series of swallowing motions during which it appears to force air down the trachea with the tongue. During the swallowing, it appears that the tongue is held over the internal nares, sealing the mouth cavity.

"At the end of each swallow, the animal presses the end of the glottis between the tongue and the roof of the mouth to prevent deflation. With the lungs thus closed, he takes on an-



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As with many other creatures, the chuckwalla's most dangerous enemy

is man. Harmless, he nevertheless has had his numbers decimated. One report stated:

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bleached skeletons of the creatures revealed to what extent mankind will go to appease his lust for thrills."

The Shoshones, Cahuillas and their near cousins, the Paiutes, regarded the chuckwalla not as an enticing animal whose habits are worthy of observation, but as an item of food. Roasted over hot coals, his tender, white flesh tastes like chicken.

Mating of the chuckwalla occurs from May to July. When a male, the larger of the sexes, chooses a female and a rival male encroaches, or basks too closely, a battle takes place. Approaching each other and employing the tail as a weapon, they throw it from side to side with an audible "thump" against the other's body until one of the two weakens and retreats.

After the nuptials, the female deposits the eggs, six or seven, in a rock crevice. The hatchlings are miniatures of their mother, except for their color, which is a splashy olive marbled with black on the back.

The very presence of the chuckwalla in certain parts of our Southwest and Mexico attests that nature equipped him splendidly. He has survived through untold ages, and survival, whether it pertains to lizard, man or any other form of life, is the supreme achievement. **///**

**T**HE MOST paradoxical body of water in the Southwest is that of the Salton Sea. Here is a lake in which fish eat grass and have gizzards like birds (mullet), where wood sinks (ironwood), rocks float (pumice), and where, when the temperature is 120 degrees in the shade, CO<sup>2</sup> gas at a minus zero temperature bubbles up through the warm water.

Originally called the Salton Sink, it was also once known as Blake Lake in honor of Professor William Blake who in 1853 surveyed the area. Approximately 35 miles long and varying from 8 to 17 miles wide, it rests 235 feet below sea level. A sportsman's bonanza, it is stocked by the Fish and Game Division with corvina, sargo, perch and forage fish. The mullet were already there. Recently a corvina was caught that weighed 13 pounds and 12 ounces. The happy fisherman was presented with a nice prize at the Fisherman's Derby held in the summer.

Part of Salton Sea is reserved for a bird refuge. The sea lies directly

in the flight pattern of the migratory birds and each year thousands of ducks, geese, doves and quail make the Salton Sea a hunters' haven. Nearby is an artesian well so hot it has to be collected in huge catch basins before it is cool enough for bathing. Its mineral water is beneficial to arthritis sufferers and a spa is planned on the premises.

Because of the wonderful fertile soil around the sea and the mild climate, crops may be harvested several times annually. This has made Salton Sea's Imperial Valley famous as America's Salad Bowl. Fresh water brought from the All-American Canal irrigates far-reaching fields of lettuce, celery, tomatoes, beans, oranges, lemons, grapefruit, avocados and grapes. Anything and everything grows there, including cotton and alfalfa. The annual value of the agricultural crop is over \$160 million.

On the heavier side, the weather can change from calm to a churning, howling dust storm in minutes. Usually the roads are closed when it gets

too bad, but sometimes the wind comes up so fast this is impossible. It's like going through a sandblasting machine—and awfully hard on insurance companies that cover autos. Summers are hot and algae that collects along the shoreline of the lake grows hideously fragrant, but it doesn't seem to bother the water skiers, fishermen and boaters who zip across its surface every month of the year. The Salton Sea regatta is held there and often records are broken. Due to lack of altitude, boats can make better time.

Barnacles were brought in on the sea-planes during the war. Up to that time the water was clear, but now barnacles cover every rock and twig. Examine a handful of sand along the shore and you will see millions of tiny sea shells smaller than the head of a pin. These came from the gulf during one of the ancient floods and add to the curious beauty of the place.

Distances in the clear air are deceiving, especially from the water. A

## The Sea Below the Sea

by Jeanette Caskey

*Mudpots of the Salton Sea were covered, but their towers are beginning to rebuild*



swimmer can be pretty disturbed when he discovers he is making little headway while swimming for the shore, although it is easier to stay afloat in the salt water.

There are many artesian wells around the valley, some cool and some hot mineral water. At the southern end at Niland there was a plant commercially producing "dry ice" during the war. This pure carbon dioxide still comes shooting out of the mud pots. This is an area of boiling mud craters and geysers

where mineral springs release jets of steam and sulphurous gases. As Salton Sea filled, it gradually covered them, but the silt continues to build the mud columns and they are becoming visible again.

Some million years ago, geologists tell us, the Gulf of California came up to what is now San Gorgonio Pass just north of Palm Springs. The Colorado River, which carved out the Grand Canyon, washed down silt which built up a dam, cutting off the upper end of the gulf and forming

a lake without an outlet. Time and time again this happened. Flash floods washed the sand away and let the gulf back into the lake, then the silt dam reformed to cut off the salt sea and refill the lake with fresh water. This prehistoric lake was called Lake Cahuilla. Fossil deposits have been found as high as 1000 feet above the floor of the desert and light streaks on the sides of the mountains show ancient shorelines. Even today fossil beds with petrified oyster shells, sharks teeth, and fragile conch shells glisten in the sun. Conch shells were so numerous that the valley was originally called Conchilla Valley, but due to an error in spelling it is now called Coachella Valley. There are other explanations for its name, but this is the popular one.

Cahuilla Indians once gathered and held pow-wows on its shores. Their fish traps, an ingenious device to trap the fish and keep them alive until wanted, may still be seen.

The present depth of the sea is kept approximately constant, despite evaporation which occurs during summer months, when water draining from the irrigation ditches and the New and Alamo River empties into the southern end.

Before 1905, a 25-foot thick slab of salt was mined for commercial purposes. This salt crust was the reason for the name "Salton Basin." Then water from the flood of 1907 covered everything, including the salt works. On a clear day old timers could row their boats over their flooded village and point down, saying "That's where we used to live before the sea came back. That's where the salt works were."

Today, travelers come from miles around to see the display of spring wildflowers which bloom earlier than elsewhere and a stream of boat trailers and campers line the freeways leading to it each month of the year. Salton Sea is a true mecca for artists, boat and ski enthusiasts, swimmers, campers, rockhounds, geologists, fishermen, hunters, golfers and treasure hunters. There are still rumors of buried treasure in its mountains. Or, it is a place just to laze and rest and soak up sunshine.

A golden dream of men 50 years ago made this agricultural valley possible. Did they envision sea-planes and motor boats on their beloved sea? Did they dream that one day it would become a desert playground?

Only a short time ago, it seems, tourists inquiring for directions to Salton Sea were usually told, "You can't get there from here." ///

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# DESERT DAZZLES DUDES

by Raye Price

COME TO Palm Springs for golf. Come for tennis, swimming, or just to escape cold weather. Come for any reason at all, but whatever you do, don't leave without treating yourself to a real look at the desert.

It wasn't long ago that my husband, Dick, and I considered the desert tolerable only for speeding through toward the coast in an air-conditioned car. When passing small settlements, we wondered how anyone could stand the desolate view and lack of activity. We sighed over the monotony of cacti, which all looked alike. Then DESERT's Choral and Jack Pepper tossed us the keys to their 4-wheel drive vehicle and things changed; we were going to follow them in their Volkswagen into the Anza-Borrego desert.

Winding up the Pines-to-Palms Highway where towering agave mingle with spiny ocotillo and deceptively fluffy cholla, we apprecia-



ted for the first time the variety among cacti. Then, with increased elevation, greasewood, manzanita and sage took over and finally, higher in the Santa Rosas, oak and pine. At



State Highway 71 junction, we drove to the Terwilliger turnoff and then threaded back down to the desert, watching for a dirt road marked Coyote Canyon.

Up until now, we wondered why the fuss about 4-wheel drive. The Coyote Canyon truck road wasn't bad, considering the weather was dry, and we rode comfortably as we marveled at brilliantly colored rock formations along the way. (There *was* color in the desert after all, we admitted.) We came to a gate that barred the road, but a local rancher assured us it was permissible to pass through as long as we closed it afterward to protect grazing cattle. As we pushed deep into Coyote Canyon, it became obvious why passenger cars are impractical here. Rocks tumbled across the faint trail with the abandon of an earthquake and several times we had to pull the Peppers out of deep sand.

Luckily we'd tucked a copy of Horace Parker's *Anza-Borrego Desert Guide Book* into our pocket before leaving, so when we came upon a monument dedicated to the first white child born in California, we were able to read about her mother and other colonists led by Anza through this canyon in 1775. That this was California's first white child has been refuted, but the courage of those early travelers remains irrefutable. Checking further into the guide book, we learned that the canyon was a popular haven for Indians and a pioneer trail route because of its year-round water supply. We questioned the existence of such a miracle, but, before we knew it, we were driving hub-deep in the stream. A jungle of willows and salt brush shaded us while we stopped to refresh

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ourselves. From that point on, the stream bed became our road, sometimes running with water, other times suddenly disappearing to return again. Driving became tricky, but we enjoyed the challenge.

Although the area was primitive, we weren't alone. Meeting a jeep-ful of explorers, we heard that there were Indian caves and grinding holes called metates up ahead. "Follow us," they said, and we toured into a mountain of boulders to spend lunchtime picking up cherts and quartz crystals, exploring caves for ollas, and examining metates worn into blocks of stone. By then, desert lore had captured us. We visualized Indians huddled in caves or sitting atop boulders grinding their food. Someone mentioned lost gold mines and Dick and I believed we'd found one in an out-cropping of quartz under a huge boulder split like a whale with its mouth open. The gold turned out to be mica, but at least we'd experienced a flash of discovery.

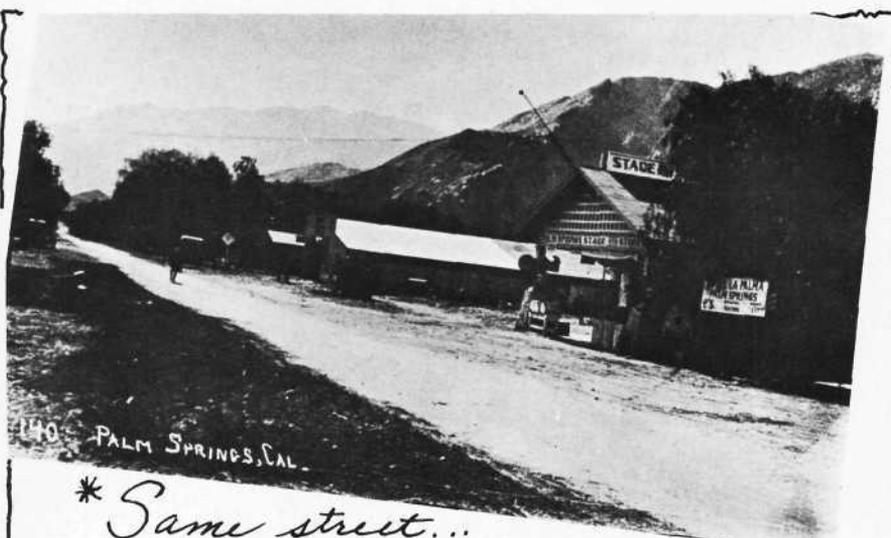
As shadows lengthened, we charged ahead until our trail bogged deep with sand. Reading the guide book, we learned that this vast area was once a sea. In our imaginations the dead ocotillo became giant squid and tangled roots turned into driftwood. It was eerie in the sunset, with the sand burning pink like an ocean of fire.

Tales of the ever-changing desert are quite real. We'd been hooked. Already we were talking about a trip in the spring to see cactus abloom and the desert wild with flowers. Having experienced the variety of desert changes in only one day, we could hardly wait to see what two months would do.

Returning to the highway at Borrego Springs, we located the Borrego Valley Jeep Rental service. Next trip, we'll rent one of their seven lavender jeeps and do a bit of exploring on our own. Anyone over 21 may rent jeeps at \$3.00 per hour plus gas, \$20.00 a day, or \$35.00 for two days. Located on the Borrego Valley Road, the service is operated by Mae and Dick Turpin, who leave their home in Alaska and head for the desert each fall. They will suggest points of interest and even give tips on driving through river bottoms if you're uneasy away from paved roads.

So, when you come to the desert on your next vacation, don't be fooled by a mirage of dun-colored sand. Rough-it a bit and take a second look. You'll go home part desert rat, too!

///



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*The Estudillo mansion*

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*by Marie Valore*



## *Of Mansions and Myths*

**A**LTHOUGH NESTLED under Southern California's second highest mountain range, San Jacinto's white frame buildings and tree-fringed streets remind New Englanders of home. Why this influence should have happened to the oldest town in Riverside County—and one established by a Russian exile at that—is a paradox. Somewhere along the line a Yankee must have drifted in.

Perhaps he was an early member of the Lockwood family who in 1886 built the Pioneer Hotel which still does business today. Or, more likely, he was an ancestor of the Vosburgs, whose charming New England-style hotel has been owned and operated by the Vosburgs since it was established in 1885. Whatever, this serene, dignified town, within an hour's drive from Los Angeles to its west or Palm Springs to its east has a character distinctly its own.

Apart from freeway traffic and unfettered by smog and over-population, San Jacinto lies amid countless miles of grazing dairy cows, truck farms and nursery plants. Because of its mild climate and nearby hot springs, it's an ideal retirement town—one with its golf course still unpillaged and back country still unpillaged of treasure.

The town was officially founded

in 1870 by Procco Akimo, a Russian exiled from his native land during the Tsarist terrors of the 1800s. Prior to that it was the site of Jusipah Village, one of the seven Indian rancherias of the San Jacinto Valley, and, later, an outpost and stock rancho of the vast San Luis Rey Mission.

Probably the town's most illustrious early citizens were members of the José Antonio Estudillo family whose Spanish land grant of 1842 covered an area now occupied by both San Jacinto and Hemet, a town several miles to the south. Don Jose Estudillo lived in San Diego's old town himself, but he built several adobe mansions in San Jacinto for members of his family. These were later destroyed in an earthquake, but local lore holds their locations responsible for the peculiar layout of the cities' streets. A number of Estudillos resided there and when they went home, they went in different directions. It was their diverse trails that directed the thoroughfares of the town!

Francisco Estudillo became the first mayor and postmaster. Generous and well-liked, he donated many acres of his holdings to the Santa Fe Railroad and sold other family holdings to the San Jacinto Land Company for a few

dollars an acre. These latter transactions are reputed to have been negotiated to raise money to subsidize lavish parties the family loved to throw.

After the earthquake, a pair of twin mansions were built by two of the Estudillos which were—and still are—the showplaces of San Jacinto. There is a rumor that a third existed which was destroyed by fire, but visitors today may still drive by two of the two-storied red brick houses with sprawling gardens, wide balconies and cupolas on their roofs.

One is located across the street from the San Jacinto Packing Company and is presently owned by the McLeods who live in quarters in the rear. A greenhouse and white barn are contained within the fenced estate and the house is almost hidden by mulberry trees, flowering fruit and palms. Although the house is impressive from the exterior, it is a disappointment inside and totally lacking in its promise of charm. The parlors are so small and the number of rooms so surprisingly few that the gay Estudillos must have done their large-scale entertaining in the garden.

The other mansion is located between the Soboda Hot Springs Resort and the Soboda Indian Reservation. It is called the "Althouse Ran-



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chita—Old San Jacinto Viejo," but is secluded from the street by an olive grove. None of the original land grant in this area is held by an Estudillo today, which seems rather a pity. They contributed a great deal of color to an era when California's economic and social life revolved around its famous ranchos.

In spite of its white frame Victorian houses and broad lawns, not all of the town is reminiscent of New England. The San Jacinto High School with its ivy-covered bell tower and courtyard surrounded by aged stucco buildings is typical of the California Mission period. Built in 1910, it was modeled after the old

Pala Mission and is the oldest high school in use in Riverside County. Another influence is seen along Main Street where the museum, theatre and John Bainbridge's curio shop were constructed to resemble Indian cave dwellings.

Many of the communities' streets were named after characters from Helen Hunt Jackson's famous novel, *Ramona*. Sheriff Street was named for Mary Sheriff, the first teacher to come to the valley to teach Indians and in whose house Miss Jackson lived. Sent to San Jacinto as a Special Investigator to find out the truth about the condition of the Soboda Indians, Miss Jackson was appalled by what she encountered. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had not been respected and the life of these Indians was one of sordid deprivation. Had the Soboda Indians not been naturally peaceful, San Jacinto could have supported a bloody battle field.

Back country exploration in this region is bound to turn up artifacts. In addition to early Indian occupation, De Anza and his men marched through the valley in 1775 and early Spaniards operated a lime kiln near the popular Gilman Hot Springs resort located on the outskirts of San Jacinto. Land for a new branch of the University of California has been allotted near here also and construction is underway. Again, typical of its New England influence, it would be hard to find a nicer campus atmosphere than in this lush valley so rich with history and old world charm. ///

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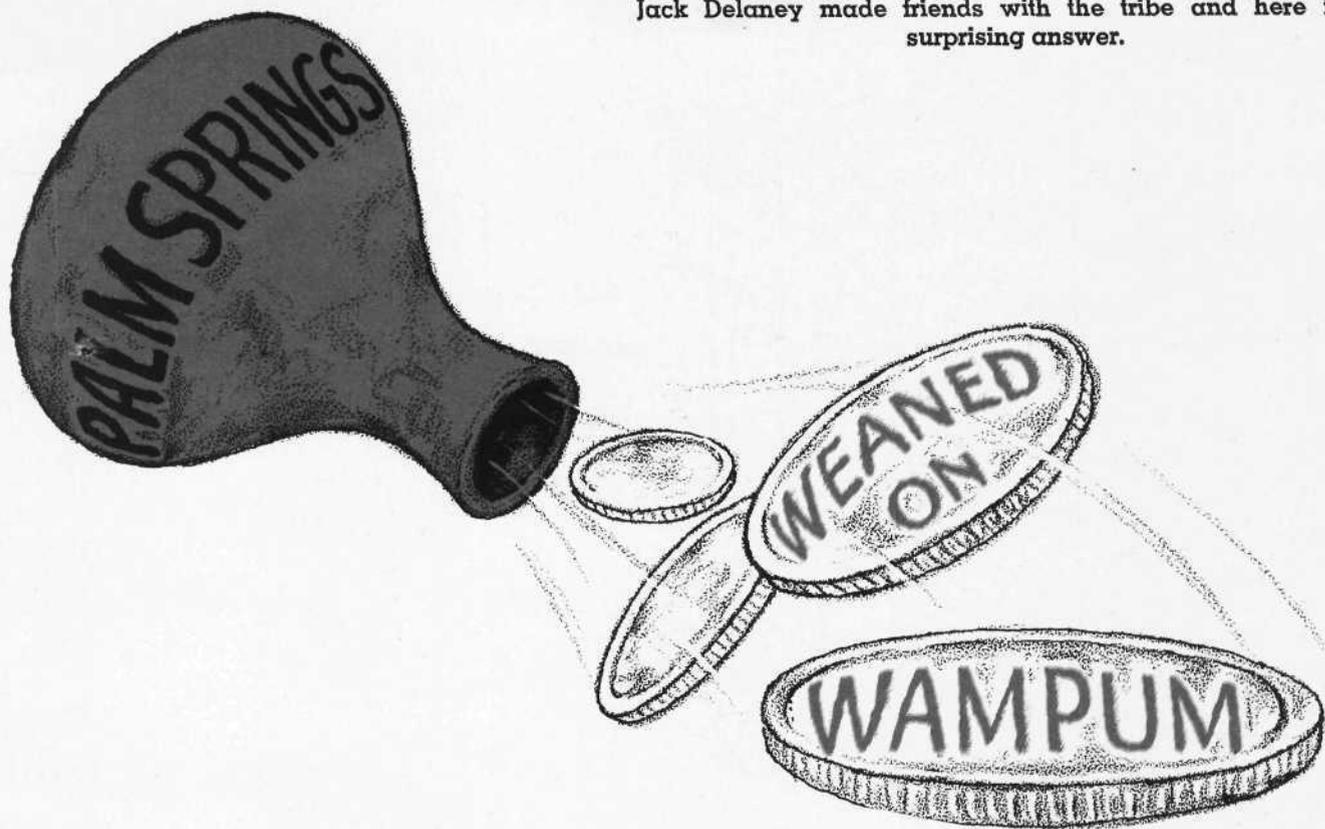


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The Agua Caliente Indians who own much of Palm Springs' valuable land have come a long way since white man moved in on their happy spa. So what do they do with their money? Jack Delaney made friends with the tribe and here is his surprising answer.



BY JACK DELANEY

THE INDIANS were on the war-path—they had reached the breaking point! This was an all-out battle for the right to convert their winning tickets into wampum. The red men were fed up with red tape—too many pow-wows and too little action. They were tired of the greeting: "How." They knew *how*—the question they wanted answered was *when*! A hundred redskins bit the dust and came up with enough loot to make them one of the wealthiest tribes in the United States.

Every brave, squaw, and papoose received \$335,000 in land. Some already held property appraised as high as \$1,000,000. This was the exciting story that tempted me to investigate the unbelievable modern day Indian Reservation in the Coachella Valley (Colorado Desert) of Southern California. To reach this Indian country, all I had to do was to drive east from Los Angeles approximately 105 miles along a fast Freeway (Interstate 10), then a few miles on Highway 111 to the village of Palm Springs.

Anyone planning an expedition into the land of the Agua Caliente band of Mission Indians, for the purpose of exploring this fabulous area, should

prepare properly before attempting the trek. Forget about the arrow-proof vest and the tomahawk-deflecting helmet. They won't be needed in this Indian stronghold. However, a few other items are absolute necessities to the success and safety of the adventure. These include suntan lotion, swim suits, sports clothes, golf clubs, and what is perhaps the most important item — the old reliable check-book!

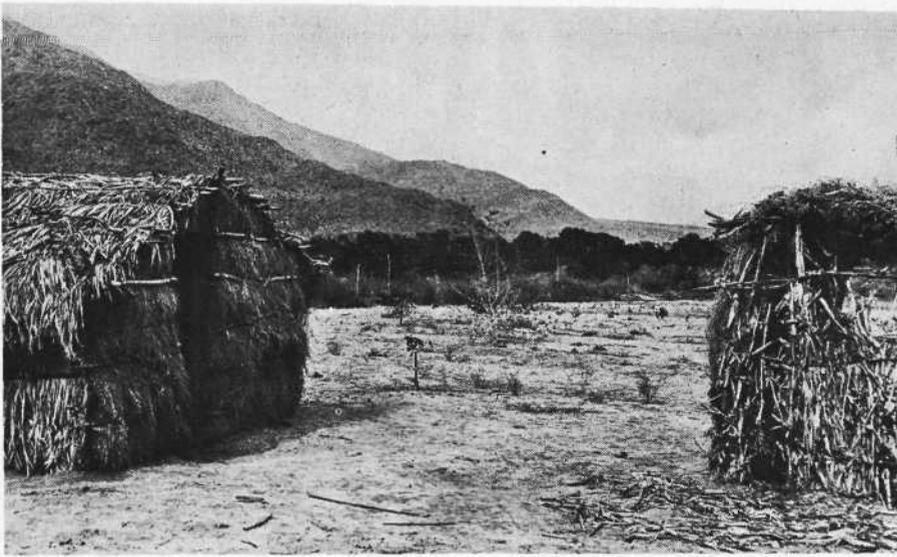
I found that the present day Indians of the Agua Caliente tribe are a far cry from those of many moons ago—but the same can be said of the white people. Historic pictures of life before automobiles, airplanes, motion pictures, radio, television, etc. show us in a different light also. A group of Indians sitting around a campfire silently smoking their pipes might have been likened to a group of men sitting around in the old country store, occasionally spitting pellets of chewing tobacco at the pot-bellied stove. All that was missing in the red man's circle was the pickle barrel.

Actually, the descriptive labels "red men" and "white men" are meaningless. They are used here for identification purposes only. The red man is not red and, in Palm Springs at least, the white man is not white.

Both enjoy a golden tan from the desert sunshine. The red men hold the moon in deep respect because, according to an Indian legend, the "Moon Maiden" brought the tribe great joy. The white man worships the sun in this land of the original "hot foot," and it is no legend that it sometimes brings him great sunburn!

One might ask if the Indians, accustomed to the simple way of life, are overwhelmed by this "Jewel Box of the Desert," which is known as the playground of millionaires, the mecca of Presidents, the haven of Hollywood celebrities, and the winter golf capital of the world. The answer is that, in many cases, they are the landlords to the millionaires, the Presidents, the celebrities, and the golfers—and who ever heard of a landlord being overwhelmed by anything! They just drive around in their air-conditioned Cadillacs, stopping occasionally for a "money break" at their favorite bank.

"In order to really appreciate the significance of the Indian situation in the Palm Springs area today, I searched the historic records of these personable and industrious people. From Harry C. James, an acknowledged authority on the Indians of the Southwest, and author of the very in-



*From tule huts to Palm Springs estates in less than 100 years!*

formative book, *The Cahuilla Indians*, I learned that scientists, using the language root theory, include the Agua Caliente tribe in the Cahuilla clan. Also, that the same system of classification relates the Cahuilla Indians to the Aztecs of Mexico, the Hopi of Arizona, and the Ute of Colorado and Utah.

The Cahuilla Indians of Southern California were under Spanish domination from 1769 until 1845, when California became part of the United States. When the Spaniards came, there were about 200,000 Indians in the area. Some of them became subjects of the Missions of the Franciscan Fathers and, as such, received mixed blessings. They were taught the arts of agriculture, house building, and stock raising; but suffered cruelties and indignities at the hands of the Spaniards, the Mexicans, and the early American pioneers. Since the Agua Caliente tribe was at one time under the influence of the Californian Missions, it is frequently referred to as a band of the Mission Indians.

According to Harry James, the earliest records of the Cahuilla show them broken up into a multitude of small village groups, established around springs or beside streams in the mountains and in desert canyons. One such group set up house-keeping at the base of Mount San Jacinto because they discovered warm waters bubbling from the earth. Their spot was named Agua Caliente by the Indians and this group became known as the Agua Caliente tribe. Every village had set boundaries, and disputes over these boundaries sometimes became very bitter. They were a peace loving people, but it was imperative to their survival that they protect their scant food supply.

I learned from Elizabeth W. Richards, in her interesting booklet, *A Look Into Palm Springs' Past*, that cactus, palm nuts, mesquite pods and seeds, and acorns made up the staples in their diet. The barrel cactus, after being cooked for several hours, tasted like artichoke. Yucca stalk tasted like asparagus. Mesquite pods (about 25% plant sugar), palm nuts, and acorns were ground into meal and stored for future use. Their meat supply consisted principally of deer and rabbit—with an occasional chuck-walla lizard. The Indians lured rabbits by making certain noises during their mating season, and killed them with rocks or arrows when they came close to investigate.

The Agua Caliente tribe was fortunate in that their contact with the white man was relatively limited until mid-19th century. Other Indians did not fare nearly as well, because first under Spain, then under Mexican rule, and later under American colonial domination, they were exploited and subjected to conditions closely akin to slavery. This was particularly true of Indians living near white settlements. By subterfuge, their land was taken over and "homesteaded," especially if it contained features that were desired by the early settlers.

The most interesting moments of my "expedition" were spent mingling with tribal members. Realizing that nothing can beat the people-to-people approach, I visited with several of these Indians in their homes. Through informal conversation I was successful in bringing out many facts not generally covered in the skimpy literature about them.

Elizabeth Monk, a definitely friendly Indian, has served on the Tribal Council for many years. (This governing body, composed of a chairman and four members, has been in existence since 1955.) Her father, Marcus Pete, represented his Chief in a Washington, D.C. conference and was noted as an interpreter for the tribe. He spoke fluent English. Never happy with his original name, Pete Marcus, he changed it to Marcus Pete. When I asked Elizabeth what she thought of Westerns on television



*Joe Patencio, Chief of the Agua Caliente tribe, greets visitors at the door of his luxurious Palm Springs home.*

her answer was, "Oh, I can take 'em or leave 'em alone. The Indian scenes do nothing for me!"

Chief Joe Patencio, a fine Indian specimen, received me in his home and sat around chatting with me while his family watched color television at the other end of a spacious living room. The whole atmosphere was one of contentment, but Joe pointed out philosophically that a fight was necessary to attain their present position, and that their children will have to fight all through life to retain it. I learned from other Indians that he was the last of the hereditary Chiefs when their system of government was changed nine years ago, but he was too modest to admit this. However, he was proud of his uncle, Francisco Patencio, who preceded him as Chief, and was the author of a book entitled, *Stories and Legends of the Palm Springs Indians*.

It was interesting to learn that Chief Francisco Patencio wrote this book mainly for the younger generation whom he felt was drifting away from their own people, "so that when the Indian customs are forgotten, they may read and know, and remember in their hearts the ways and thoughts of their ancestors." He pointed out that the Indians kept records of their people, but that they did not keep records of time. A story, involving the activities of a certain group of characters, might cover a span of 1000 or even 5000 years—they had no way of knowing.

To clarify frequent mention of *songs* and stories in his book the Chief says, "When I speak of *songs* of the people it means that songs were the laws. When anyone did something that was not in the law, the Indian people would say that the *song* is against them. Their own people would not recognize them if the *songs* were against them. That was our law. The Great Spirit gave our people power, but they lost it because they had it so long that they began making their own songs. The power became less and less, until only a very little remains to a few of the medicine men today."

Joe Patencio told me, "It's all in the book," and his pride in his uncle's word picture of the Indians of yesterday is understandable. I was informed that the Indians never copied, never had to borrow customs of other people. They had their own music, their own medicine, their own dances. They wove their own blankets—blankets that would hold water. The Indian obeyed his *songs*. No man ever raised his hand against his wife. No woman was ever unfaithful to her

husband. "Always the Indian obeyed his *songs*—always until now. Now they learn different ways from other people."

Going back to the old days with the Chief (Francisco), there was a belief that no tribe was ever wiped out. "The *Power* always saved at least two of them. If all were killed, it would turn out that some were away visiting and would be saved to preserve the tribe." The Indian people always helped each other. No family had food when another had nothing. They divided—and then they starved together.

An interesting legend tells us that "giant flies were taught to twist the stick to make the fire." It is explained that "the flies have never

citizenship because we have already been citizens in this country always."

In defense of the Mission Fathers he said that they were not cruel to the Indians. They were kind, but they took on as assistants Indians who learned Spanish easily. These men went around everywhere and, even though they were of the same race, many of them were mean and cruel to their own people. It was they who worked the Indians hard, punished them, and even stole their children to make Christians out of them.

My visits with a number of the Agua Caliente Indians, for the purpose of learning more about them, produced gratifying results and were quite enjoyable. I found that most of them lean toward the modest side,



Two million dollar spa built on land leased from the Indians.

forgotten this, because today you can see even the common house flies rubbing their hands together, remembering it yet."

As in the Christian religion, these people worshipped a good spirit, Um Naw—the God of the Indians, and feared a bad one, Tahquitz—a real devil! "He had great power but he became a very bad spirit. He killed the people and animals. He caused the wrecks of trains and automobiles, and delighted in everything that made misery for people." Tahquitz was a real heel who caused these good folks a heap of anxiety.

Francisco Patencio, Chief of the Agua Caliente Tribe, never went to school, but in later life he could read and write English, Spanish, French and speak seven Indian dialects. He attended the American Indian Society convention in Minneapolis (1919) and stood before all of the delegates from other tribes and said, "I hear that you want citizenship. I and my people, we do not want

are hesitant to volunteer information, but will talk with a little prompting. The younger ones could recall nothing of importance about the past, nor remember anything that might have been passed on to them by their parents or grandparents. This appears to point up the wisdom of Chief Patencio in preparing a written record for those who are drifting. It was inevitable, with the coming of the white people and the rapid growth of the area in recent years, that they should drift—or perhaps a better word would be *adjust*.

The transition of this locality from a peaceful Indian village to a white, or mixed, town started with the arrival of Judge John G. McCallum in 1884. He was the first permanent white resident of Agua Caliente, as it was known at the time. Edward Ainsworth tells us in his book, *The Beckoning Desert*, that Judge McCallum was a member of the Legislature and, at the time, Superintendent

*Continued on Page 42*

This manuscript, with the letter below, arrived too close to DESERT's deadline to have a complete assay made of the nuggets. However, they have passed the scratch test and the nitric acid test. It's a good yarn. The writer asks nothing. Moreover, as he is anonymous, he is not seeking publicity. Whether his nuggets are Pegleg's or not, is for you to decide. They may be examined in the office of DESERT Magazine.—Editor.

Dear Choral Pepper

Although the enclosed story has no byline, I believe it and the photographs will be of interest to you. After you have read the story you will understand why the reasons for my remaining anonymous are too obvious to enumerate.

You have my full permission to publish the story and this letter if you wish. They may be of minor interest to the readers of Desert magazine.

More important, I am also enclosing two of the Pegleg nuggets. One is still black, exactly as found and the other has had the black copper oxides removed by the process mentioned in the story and is now native "gold" in color. You will have these nuggets to show one and all who have doubted the story of Pegleg's black nuggets. You may keep them with my compliments for Desert magazine's collection of desert artifacts---in this case you can start a new collection of items from lost mines that have been found.

Very sincerely yours

The man who found Pegleg's black gold

P.S. If the story is printed, undoubtedly there will be some questions from the readers. As mentioned, I'm a subscriber to Desert magazine, and although I will remain anonymous, I will answer any question or letter that is printed in Desert magazine.

# I FOUND PEGLEG'S BLACK GOLD

**I**T IS TIME once and for all to end the mystery, the speculation and the controversy. Almost 10 years ago I found what has been known since 1852 as the "burned black gold of the Pegleg."

Without pinpointing the discovery on a map for reasons that are obvious, I will say only that it is less than 30 miles from Salton Sea and within the confines of the map on page 10 of the November 1946 issue of *Desert Magazine*.

I've gone back to the location an average of twice a year since the first discovery and, according to my records, I've brought out and sold a total of \$314,650 worth of Pegleg's black gold nuggets. This amount is not the "millions" usually associated with lost mines and treasures, but it is a fortune to me. The money has been wisely and quietly invested. Within a year after first discovering the gold, I retired from the work I was doing and have been enjoying life ever since.

Why, then, should I break a 10-year silence and write about the discovery now? Perhaps the answer lies in a remark made by a former editor of *DESERT Magazine*. In describing the men who came to *DESERT*'s office looking for information about lost mines and treasures of the desert, his parting words to all of them were, "Good luck—and if you find it, be sure to write a story for *DESERT*. So far we haven't had such an article, but there's always a first time."

For all these years I've intended to keep the discovery an absolute secret for the rest of my life, but those words "so far we haven't had such an article" and "there's always a first time" kept going around and around in my mind. Somehow I'd always assumed that more than one lost mine or desert treasure had been re-discovered and the riches claimed. Apparently this is not true, unless someone has found something and kept it as quiet as I have.

Perhaps it is time also to give hope to those hardy souls who have spent months and years of their lives searching for lost bonanzas. There have

always been doubting Thomases who claimed that lost mines and treasures of the desert were nothing but figments of somebody's imagination. Well, now it is time to prove that at least one lost desert bonanza has been discovered—and not lost again, for I know exactly where it is.

At this point let me qualify myself. First, I've lived most of my life in the Southwest and have always loved the desert. I've been a subscriber to *DESERT Magazine* for many years and although I've enjoyed reading the various stories and articles about the lost mines and treasures, I never had any burning urge to search for them. A story on where to find a field of desert wild flowers in the spring or a map showing where to collect mineral specimens was just as interesting to me as a story about lost gold.

Secondly, now that almost 10 years have passed since I first found the Pegleg gold and I am retired for life with a comfortable income to do as I please, the passion for secrecy is no longer important.

Finally, I've already found all of the gold that can be easily collected without actual mining operations. With the surface gold gone, I don't think anyone else is going to find the Pegleg for the simple reason that whatever gold is left is well underground.

Before going into my own story, *Dime shows comparative size of nuggets. Here are 7 exactly as found and 10 with the black oxide removed.*



let's go back to the beginning for a brief resume of the Pegleg story and quote Henry E. W. Wilson from his story *Lost Pegleg Gold Is Not a Myth* from the November 1946 issue of *DESERT Magazine*:

"About the year 1852, John O. Smith, known as Pegleg Smith, journeying from Yuma to Los Angeles by way of Warner's ranch, attempted a short-cut across the desert. He was familiar with this part of the Southwest, having been a horse-trader and guide.

Somewhere in this desolate region he climbed one of three hills, on the top of which lay a quantity of black lumps of metal which Smith took to be copper. He picked up a few for his collection of curiosities. Arriving in Los Angeles, he showed his "native copper" to a mining friend who pronounced it pure gold. Though coated with black desert varnish, the nuggets were the real thing beneath the surface."

Pegleg Smith disappeared during a subsequent search for the black nuggets and in the years that followed several others found them, but either could not go back to the location or died or were killed. The last discovery was made about 1880 by a half-breed who was later knifed in a brawl. More than \$4000 worth of coarse gold was found in his bunk.

Although none of the black nuggets have shown up in the 80-odd years since the half-breed was knifed, probably no "lost gold" story has created as much mystery, legend and excitement or led as many men to search for it as the Pegleg.

Whether the black nuggets found by Pegleg and the others are the same as those I discovered, I can't be sure. But I am sure of one thing. I found the black gold and I've got the proof in the form of photographs as well as the black nuggets themselves.

My own story starts in the month of March, 1955. Let me reiterate, I was a simple rock hound, not a treasure hunter or a searcher for lost mines.

I'd driven to that part of the low

desert in my Jeep for a weekend of fresh air, good weather, some exercise and a bit of rock hunting. Fortunately, in view of what transpired, I was alone on the trip. Saturday afternoon I drove the Jeep as far as I could go up a sandy wash and camped for the evening. Sunday morning, after a leisurely breakfast, I took off for a long hike, carrying only a canteen, a rock hammer and a small sack to bring back specimens, intending to come back to the jeep for lunch. I walked about two miles through uneven terrain, stopping now and then to pick up rock samples, none of which as I remember were of any particular interest. About 11:00 A.M. I sat down on top of a small hill to take a drink from the canteen and rest a bit before starting back. The hill I was sitting on was covered with a crust of smooth water-worn pebbles, the sand and dirt having been partly blown from them by the wind. After drinking, I leaned over on my left elbow and idly began to flip the smooth pebbles down the slope with my right hand as I would shoot marbles, hardly paying attention to what I was doing. The 8th or 10th pebble I picked up was heavy—so heavy I retained it in my hand and sat up to examine it closely. It was black and rounded on the edges and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in diameter. Hefting it two or three times, I quickly realized that for the weight of its small size it must be metal—and heavy metal. Quickly I brought out my pocket knife and scraped the surface of the pebble with the edge of the blade. When I saw the yellow glitter I dropped it—then picked it up again with a trembling hand. I'll never know how long I sat there paralyzed with that first black gold nugget in my hand. I'd read the Pegleg story in *DESERT Magazine* some years before, but had forgotten all about it. As my numbed brain started to function again it all came back to me and I realized the area I was in was part of the Pegleg country described in the story. This was it! I'd found the black Pegleg gold!

The next thing I remember was scrambling wildly on my knees among the pebbles, picking them up by the handfuls and hefting for heavy ones. In the next two hours I found seven more nuggets, which later weighed out from a half ounce on up to one that went nearly two ounces.

My hands were getting raw from handling the pebbles so I sat down for a while to gather my wits and to do some thinking. The first thing was to make sure that I knew where I was and could come back to the same

place again. If the black nuggets of metal in my pockets really were gold, then I was damned if I was going to rush back to the Jeep half-cocked and end up not being able to find my way back like so many others have.

Forcing myself to stay calm, I retraced my route to the Jeep by placing stone markers every 50 feet or so. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at the Jeep, but without even realizing my acute hunger, I rolled up my sleeping bag, snatched a couple cans of food, and headed back to what I already had named "Pegleg Hill." It was there, exactly as I had left it. I unrolled my sleeping bag on top of the hill, cut open the cans and ate the cold food.

tance to the next road and the main highway and draw myself a map and mark the distances on it. (3) I would go home and find out if the black nuggets really were gold.

At first light in the morning I sorted more pebbles with my tender hands, more slowly this time, and added two more black nuggets to the seven already in my pocket. Then I rolled up my sleeping bag and headed back to the Jeep.

There were many questions churning in my mind. Should I announce the discovery—provided the nuggets turned out to be gold? Should I call a newspaper and tell them about it? Should I confide in my friends? The



*DESERT's editor, Choral Pepper, examines nuggets in sunlight.*

It wouldn't be fair to say that I slept that night, for I didn't. I lay there wide awake, my mind racing. During that sleepless night I arrived at three absolute decisions. (1) I would go back to the Jeep a second time and be positive that I could find my way back to the hill again. (2) I would mark the spot where the Jeep was, turn it around and measure exactly by the speedometer the dis-

first obvious answer to these questions was a resounding NO! The best thing to do, I decided, was to keep the whole business absolutely secret and tell no one and do nothing until I'd had a lot more time to think things over.

On the drive home another thought occurred to me. The story of Pegleg's

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# Where Wild Palms Grow

According to DESERT Magazine's founder, Randall Henderson, there are approximately 11,000 native palm trees growing in the canyons and foothills of the Southern California desert. Whence came these trees to this arid land? Well, the author has an interesting theory as to their origin.

BY RANDALL HENDERSON

THERE ARE nine species of trees indigenous to the Southern California desert, and if I were asked to name the one which I regard as the most ornate, I would reply without hesitation: "The wild palm—*Washingtonia filifera*."

My acquaintance with this stately tree growing in its native habitat was in 1921. My prospector friend, Gus Lederer, had invited me to visit his little cabin at Corn Springs in the Chuckawalla Mountains. Following his directions, I took a rock road from the floor of Chuckawalla Valley up a canyon where he and his burros made their home.

Rounding a bend in the canyon, immediately in front of me, was a picture one would never expect to find in an arid desert—a majestic group of palm trees encircling a spring of flowing water. Later I counted 82 trees ranging in height from 30 to 50 feet, green fronds at their crowns, and skirts of dead fronds reaching almost to the ground. Obviously, this oasis had once been the camping ground of prehistoric desert tribesmen, for the rocks surrounding the spring were adorned with the petroglyphic art of Indians and there were deep mortar holes in some of the boulders.

Since then, the exploration of desert canyons in quest of wild palm groups has been a hobby, and during the intervening years I have logged 87 separate oases in the desert canyons and foothills of Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Imperial counties. My estimate is that there are at least 11,000 native palms on the Southern California desert, approximately half of them in Riverside county.

There are 34 of these palm groups in the canyons and foothills around the perimeter of Coachella valley, the highest elevation at which they are

found being at Dos Palmas near Pinyon Crest at an elevation of 3200 feet.

The greatest concentration of the wild palms is in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains adjacent to Palm Springs and Palm Desert. With the cooperation of the Agua Caliente band of Mission Indians, Palm Springs has provided access roads and picnicking facilities in lower Palm and Andreas canyons. Many thousands of motorists visit these canyons annually between October 15 and May 15 when the toll gate which the Indians maintain on South Palm Canyon Drive is open. The admission charge is 50c for adults and 25c for children. The receipts go into a tribal fund and part of it is used for maintaining and policing the lower sectors of these canyons.

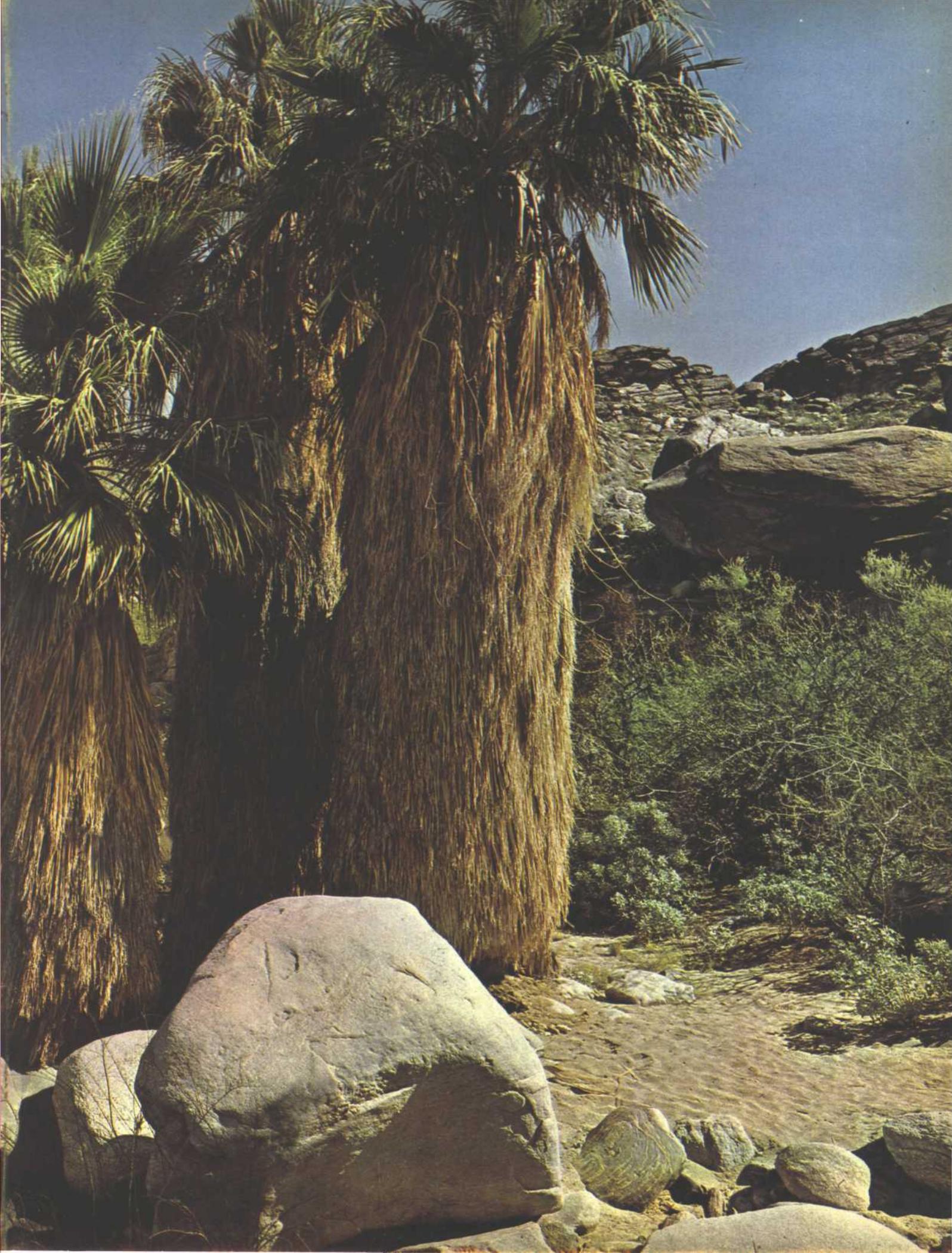
Palm Canyon is the daddy of all the wild palm oases in Southern California. It is estimated there are 3000 native trees along a 7-mile sector of the lower gorge, growing on the banks of a stream which rises in springs higher up in the Santa Rosa mountains and gradually disappears in the sand as it approaches the floor of the desert.

The partly paved road into the lower canyons passes the toll gate and ends on a high earthen dike where there is parking space for cars and a little trading post where souvenirs are sold. From the top of this dike, visitors—with lunch boxes if it is a picnic party—hike down a short trail to the creekbed and into a veritable forest of Washingtonias. There are good trails winding among the palms, many of which are 50 and 60 feet in height.

The skirts of dry fronds on the older trees are highly inflammable and visitors are cautioned against building campfires and smoking among the trees. Several years ago a fire swept through the lower end







of the canyon and burned the dead fronds, but the trees survived. Sap from the roots of the tree flows to the green crown top through a porous trunk. Hence fire never penetrates deeply, and while it leaves scars on the outside, the trees continue to throw out new leaves.

Seven miles up the canyon from the parking area, which is known as The Bench, is a 60-foot ribbon waterfall and this marks the upper limit of the native palms. I discovered this waterfall in 1940 while hiking the 15 miles from the headwaters of the creek at Ribbonwood on Highway 74 to Palm Springs. My botanist companions and I were following the creekbed when we came to a precipice where water was pouring over the rim. We detoured out of the gorge and returned to the creek downstream. This was late afternoon and the falls were in sha-

dows, making it impossible to get sharp pictures. Later I returned and hiked up the canyon from The Bench and slept on a sandbar along the creek so I could get an early morning exposure. The story with pictures was published in the *DESERT* Magazine issue of January, 1941.

The historic old Vandeventer trail which parallels the creek at a higher contour, passes within 100 yards of the falls, but they are not visible from the foot path. Hence very few visitors to Palm Canyon, including the riders who follow this trail, have ever seen this waterfall.

Andreas Canyon, one of the lower tributaries of the Palm Canyon drainage system, also is accessible from South Palm Canyon Drive, and here the visitor will find picnicking space in the shade of one of the most majestic native palm forests in the desert.

Near the trees is a cave beneath a jumble of rocks which still bears the smoke charring of ancient Indian fires.

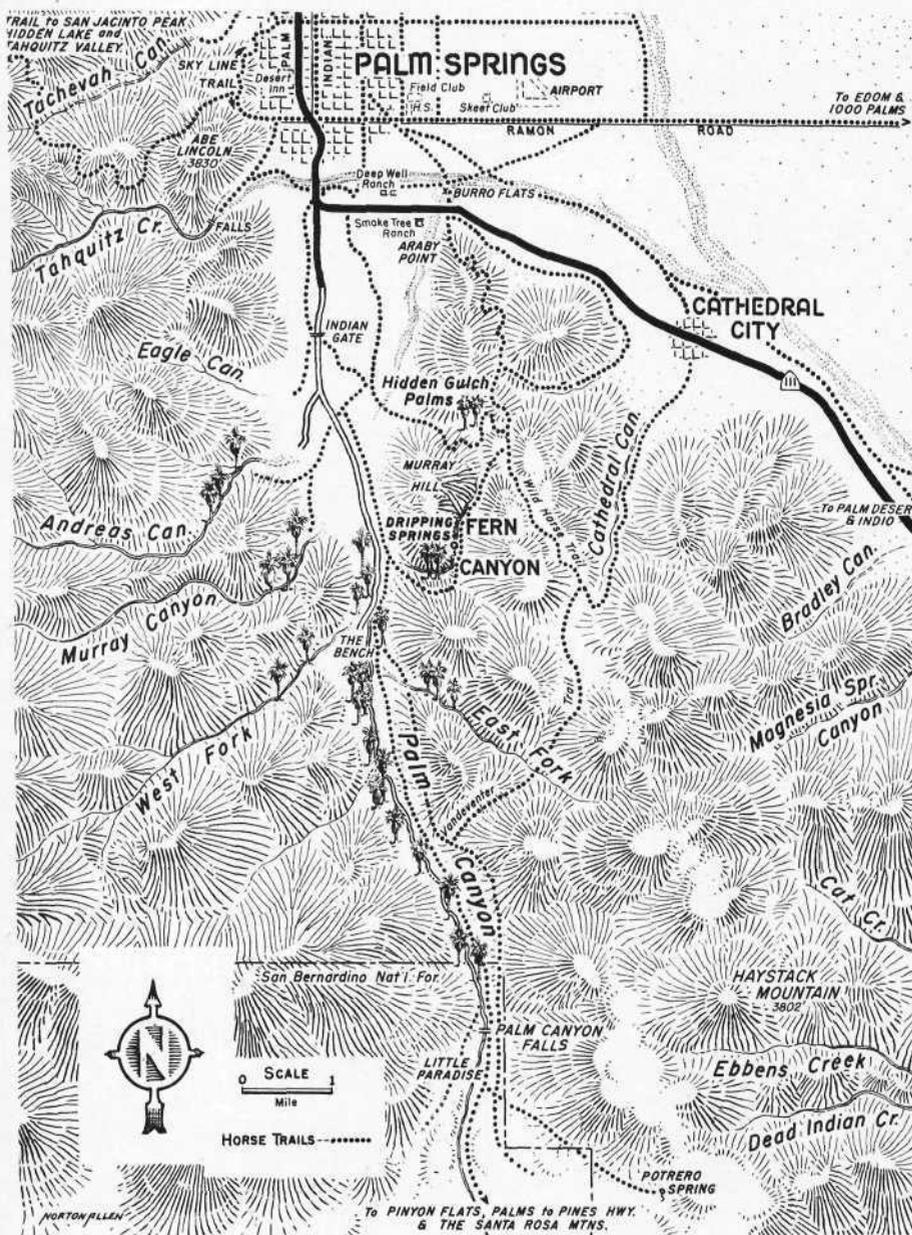
Murray Canyon, another of the Palm Canyon tributaries, has a creek lined with palms and a flowing stream part of the year—with an occasional pool for a swim. But the unimproved trail which follows the floor of the canyon is only for rugged hikers.

This also is true of West Fork and East Fork of Palm Canyon, shown on the accompanying map. There are many stately members of the Washingtonia family in both these tributaries, but like Murray, they are for hiking shoes and clothing resistant to the catsclaw and other thorny shrubs along the way.

Fern Canyon, sometimes known as Dripping Springs Creek, is a tributary which takes off on the east side of the south Palm Canyon Drive just below The Bench. This also is the home of the native palm, and near the upper trees is a gorgeous bank of maidenhair ferns—green only when there has been generous seasonal rain to provide ample water. It is this bank of ferns which gives the creek its alternative name of Dripping Springs.

Palm Desert also has its palm canyons, although none of these have so far been made accessible to motorists seeking nature trails for hiking or picnic spots. Following the perimeter of the Palm Desert cove from west to east, the first and most scenic palm canyon is Cat Creek, which rises on the eastern slope of Haystack Mountain and flows into and across the Cahuilla Hills jackrabbit homestead colony area—although its little stream sinks into the sand before reaching the floor of the desert. This is in the Bighorn Sheep Refuge, and the palm-bordered pools along this creek are often the watering places of these animals. On one trip up the canyon I saw two fine bucks silhouetted against the sky near the headwaters of the creek.

Continuing anti-clockwise around the perimeter of the cove, the next canyon is Dead Indian. The motorist crosses this dry arroyo on a bridge on Highway 74 just before the winding road starts its climb up the slope of the Santa Rosa Mountains. A half-mile upstream from the bridge is a pretty palm oasis. Here the canyon forks, and a brisk climb up a precipitous rock face on the right leads into Ebbens Creek. The mainstream of Dead Indian is the left fork at this



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# Artist Reveals Desert's Real Treasure

Henry R. Mockel



Self portrait of artist at work.

AFTER A FEW balmy days in January, there begins the forming of a hardly detectable ground cover over the desert floor. A close inspection reveals myriads of tiny rosettes, the humble first appearance of our wild flowers. Some will be green, others purple or a reddish brown, blending with the dead vegetation of the previous year and with the perennials.

As each desert valley has its own climate, some hotter, some windier, some colder, the flowering seasons differ. Rainfall is generally spotty so that one locality might have flowers in profusion whereas another has to wait another year. Seeds of desert plants are equipped with an inhibitor which keeps the seed from germinating unless sufficient moisture at a suitable temperature is present for the necessary length of time to dissolve it. Because of this characteristic some blooms will appear in the spring and some in the fall. However, what with these varying conditions and varying demands of the plants, something is flowering in the desert all year long.

I'd like to give some advice concerning a phase of desert wildflowers. Don't pick them. During the last flower season quite a few people broke out in skin rashes after picking and handling them—some even developing welts that required medical treatment. All my flower portraits are done from the living plant and I never break their stems.

Several short trips may be taken to enjoy the indigenous flora. One can go by way of Mecca through Box Canyon, cross U.S. 60-70, and proceed through the Joshua National Monument to Twentynine Palms. This takes in elevations from below

sea-level to 3500 feet. About 20 miles east of 29 Palms are dunes that generally have a good stand of lilies, further east, past the Coxcomb Mountains, is an exceptionally early area for primroses and brittle bush. From Desert Center the highway offers a quick return to Indio.

A left turn at the Pinto Wye in the Joshua National Monument gives access to higher elevations and a different zone. In some years these high valleys receive a belated snowfall which results in more abundant growth of all types of vegetation. The down grade from the exit of the Monument to Joshua Tree is usually lined with flowers of many kinds during this season.

The drive may be continued north of Joshua Tree to the Landers area which again, at a lower elevation, has its own time-table for flower display. Whitewater Canyon offers rewarding sights when its season is on. Borrego State Park presents ocotillos in profusion along with agave or century plants. A conversation with the Park Rangers will be highly profitable.

We have found the desert to be very gratifying in all its aspects, whether in full bloom or past it when annuals remain preserved in the dry desert air.

The desert wildflowers described below and illustrated on these pages by Henry Mockel are from his famous watercolor collection now in the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh.

Palmate-leaved Gourd, (*cucurbita palmata*) also known as Coyote Melon, has a showy, intensely yellow blossom, 3-4 inches across, grows in

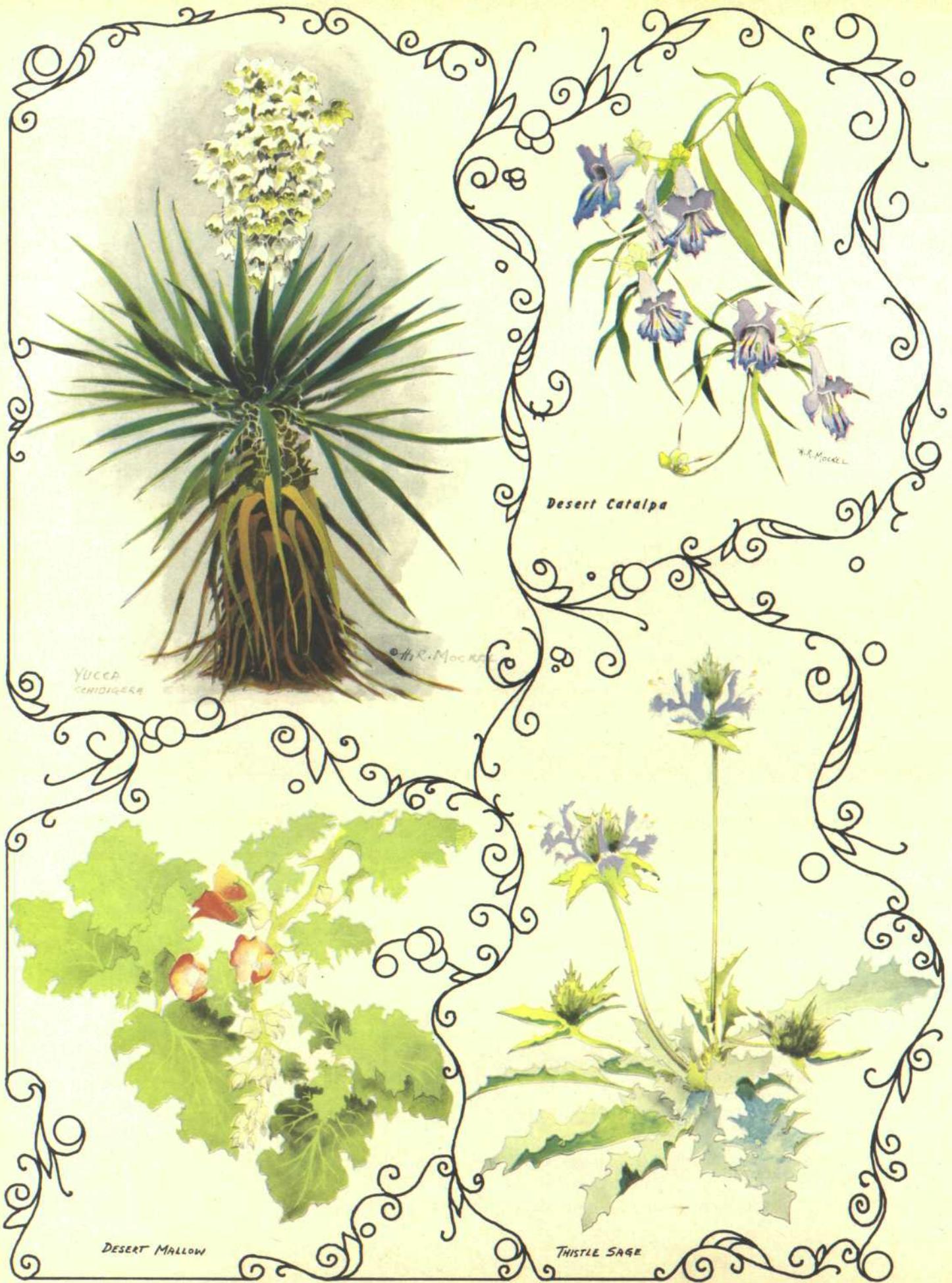
a sprawling fashion close to the ground. The leaves have a distinctive two-tone design. It prefers sandy locations in the Mojave and the Colorado deserts.

Palo Verde (*cercidium floridum*) is as common along road sides in the Colorado desert as it is in dry washes. It has small leaves, growing in compound fashion, 4-8 on a central petiole. Its trunk is a smooth green. Another Palo Verde is frequently seen. The Parkinsonia has long fronds of compound leaves, the trunk and limbs look like patinated bronze. The uppermost petal of the yellow corolla has a strong red coloration. It is often used as an ornamental plant around houses and stores.

Thistle Sage (*salvia carduacea*). This plant abounds along road sides where scrapers have shaped the shoulders of the highways. The mechanics of scraping out other species and stirring the soil seems to have a beneficial result. Easily observed from an automobile, this plant is one of several whose characteristic is to project its central stem directly through a fully-formed blossom and grow another on top of it, and after that a third. The corolla is lavender and the stamen terminate in bright red anthers.

Desert Mallow (*sphaeralcea ambigua*). Several varieties of mallow may be recognized by their crinkly leaves, the size of which might differ slightly. This species, the most common, has deep orange to vermilion blossoms. Other species have flowers ranging from white to pink to scarlet. As it is a perennial, it generally grows in the form of a small shrub.

Text Continued on Page 36  
Illustrations on following pages



YUCCA  
SCHOTTLANDII

© H. R. Moseley

Desert Catalpa

H. R. Moseley

DESERT MALLOW

THISTLE SAGE



DESERT LILY

H.R. MCKEL

Paloverde

H.R. MCKEL

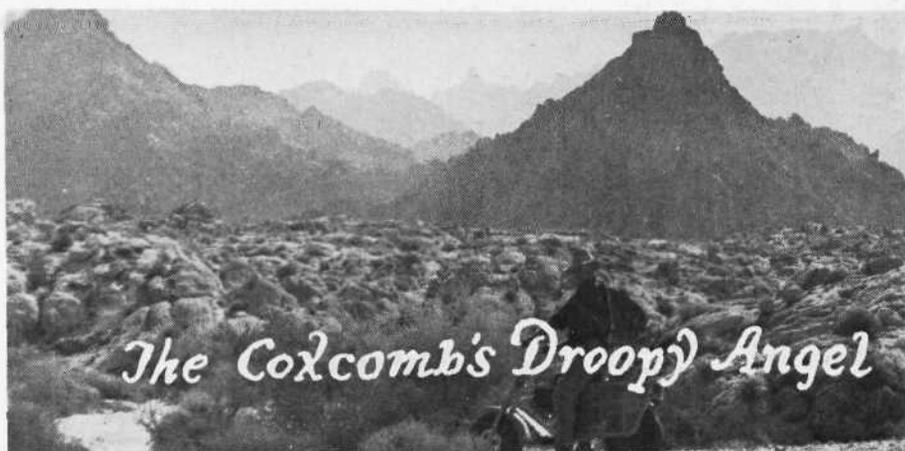
PALMATE-LEAVED GOURD

H.R. MCKEL

a.m.

OCOTILLO

H.R. MCKEL



**KENNETH MARQUISS gives us another authentic lost mine saga with all of the clues from his own "little black book."**

**T**HE LOST MINE mania (remember to call it "a hobby" if there are any psychiatrists in your crowd) has all the tantalizing—and few of the bitter—elements of a hefty gambling jag in Nevada. The odds against you are Keno size, but prospecting's redeeming difference is fresh air, silent solitude and exercise. About all you can lose are a couple of notches on your belt, a little boot leather, and some city brand inhibitions.

On the other hand, *if* you ever do hit a strike, then your take would make a casino's win ticket look like a green trading stamp.

I first heard of the lost ledge of yellow speckled rose quartz known as "The Lost Droopy Angel" over 30 years ago. It was also called the "Lost Gull" or the "Lost White Star" ledge, depending on the interpretation of the teller. But they were all in the same general location with a similar background.

About the time the slogan "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself" was new and shiny, I got my first underground hardrock job in a hole known as the Blue Bell Mine. It was near what is known as the Cholla Cactus Garden in today's Joshua Tree National Monument. I understand it is now called the Gold-Bell Claim, and is not being worked.

In trying to join up with the group, I foolishly mentioned a between-semester kitchen job at a resort hotel. They promptly elected me chief cook and dishwasher. This was in addition to my duties as hoist man, part-time driller, and general machinery coddler. So, as the cook tent-house was the social center, I was exposed to all the lost mine truths, half-truths, and lies that made the rounds of our

crew and those from visiting hard-rockers as well.

The two men who did most to keep the operation on an even keel were Clovis Benito and Matt Rogers. Clovis (who still lives in 29 Palms) had a little store that supplied groceries at a price we could afford, and he also trucked our ore to Mojave.

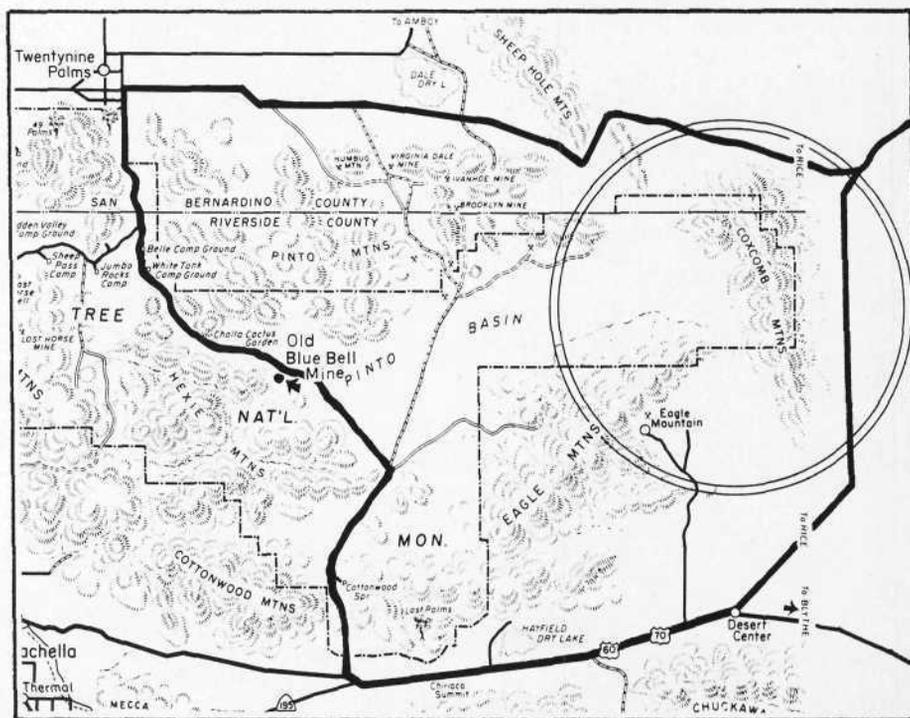
After I finished hoisting ore and muck from the lower level, I would go back to the face of the collar level drift to help Matt. In the welcome stillness between jack-hammer roars, he told me the story of the "Droopy Angel." We made tentative plans to go look for it, but somehow the day and the necessary grubstake never

arrived. Matt's been gone many years now, so here is the story as I heard it—sorted and patched from his and other versions.

About 1902 there was a wrangler-guide-camp tender working with a survey crew "over in the big range south-easterly from the Dale dry lake area." This presumably meant the Coxcomb range. It could have included the north end of the Eagle Mountain flange also, but this doesn't seem likely to me. I was never able to find out if this crew were running lines and corners for the U.S. Land Office, or were making topographic maps for the U.S.G.S., but it was probably the latter as some local topos came out about 1904.

Looking like painted sets for an H. Rider Haggard amateur theatrical, the Coxcombs rise abruptly and broodingly from the desert floor. When the survey crew found it rough going in the main part of the range, transportation slowed down and the camp wrangler had more time to check mule shoes, pack gear, explore for wood and water, and pick up an occasional diet change of "fast veal."

It was on one of these hunting trips that he followed a desert big-horn along a narrow trail upwards into a vertical canyon that split the crags in roughly N.W. to S.E. fashion. The sheep had disappeared by the time he had worked his way around the corner, so he followed the ledge for several hundred yards to see where his quarry had gone. The shelf pinch-



ed down to a bare two inches as it went around the next bend. The wrangler knew it would be folly to follow; he barely had room to turn around as it was.

As he inched around and slid his gun to the other hand, he faced the wall. A vein of "dark rose quartz, speckled with gold" hit him right in the nose. It was about 6 or 8 inches wide, he reported, and cut the wall above him at a 45° dip. Because the vein was flush with the wall and he had no tools or safety rigging, the wrangler spent a long time prying off a small sample with a rock wedge.

As he put the sample in his pocket, he noticed a white blotch, or outcropping, on the opposite wall of the canyon. He later said it "sort of looked like a 10-foot high white angel, tilted at an angle, with one drooping wing." This could mean anything—too much sun, out in the hills too long, a faulted pegmatite, or a vivid imagination. But it is, at least, a clue:

That night in camp, around the fire, he told the crew about his discovery. The general consensus of opinion was that, at best, it would have to be a cable tram and bucket operation—you can't mine ore hanging by one foot! Much talk followed, but nothing serious came of it. They had a survey to finish first.

This course of action seems strange in today's environment, but conditions were different then. There were no paved roads nor diesel trucks and "big money" was hard-headed and wanted cinch bets.

Matt indicated to me that his version of the story came second hand from a survey crew member who heard the wrangler tell about it. Some years later, however, I again heard the story—this time from the niece of the man who found it—and I actually saw the one little piece of ore that is the only evidence of the lost lode's existence.

My Dad and I made a few trips to look for the rose quartz vein, but that was in pre-Jeep days when the roads were rough and the sand around the Coxcombs a formidable obstacle. We covered as much as we could on foot, but without success. Later, the lure of lost mine stories with better directions set our course on a different cant.

You can now circle the whole of this area in a passenger car on an easy Sunday's drive and, if you only knew where to look, you could probably see "The Droopy Angel" or the canyon that contains it from the pavement. Seeing the place from the road and getting there, however, are

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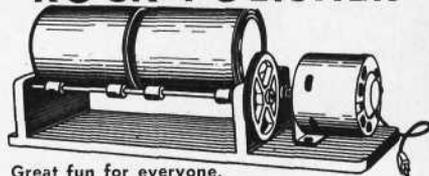
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two different matters. The approaches to the mountains are long, sandy alluvial fans. The skirts of the peaks are giant rock piles that defy even power bikes.

Much of the formation is a vertical, light-colored granite upthrust, almost exactly like the Joshua Tree Monument area between Key's Ranch and the White Tanks. The granite itself is probably sterile, but the pegmatite dyke pointers, the zones of contact with the intruded rock, and

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certain batholithic necks offer interesting possibilities.

The clues are sketchy and the area rough. Dad summed it up pretty well the last time we were there together. As I cooked supper and he doctored a blistered foot, I overheard him mutter, "Th' divil hissill must have hidden the Droopy Angel in this hellish rockpatch, but she's one angel it would be heaven to find!"

I can't add much to that. ///



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## THE TRAIL ABOVE THE TRAM

by Elwyn C. Pollack

**WE PURCHASED** our tickets and boarded the Palm Springs Tramway at 8:00 in the morning. Having made a previous ascent we knew what to expect as we ascended toward the 8516-foot level, but our projected hike from the tram's upper station to the apex of San Jacinto peak some 1300 feet loftier was to be a new—and rare—experience. Rare, because without the tram to carry us above the sheer walls on the desert

side of Mt. San Jacinto, the peak could only be reached after a long, arduous hike from Idyllwild, on its opposite side.

With 80 passengers standing in the relatively small tramcar, it was difficult to obtain an unobstructed view, but during certain interludes when the suspended car passed at a 45° angle within inches of the mountainside, there were those who were happy to have the view obstructed! Nevertheless, glimpses of rugged escarpment rising into spires and turrets above granite walls penetrated by roots of almost every species of pine known to man was overwhelmingly impressive.

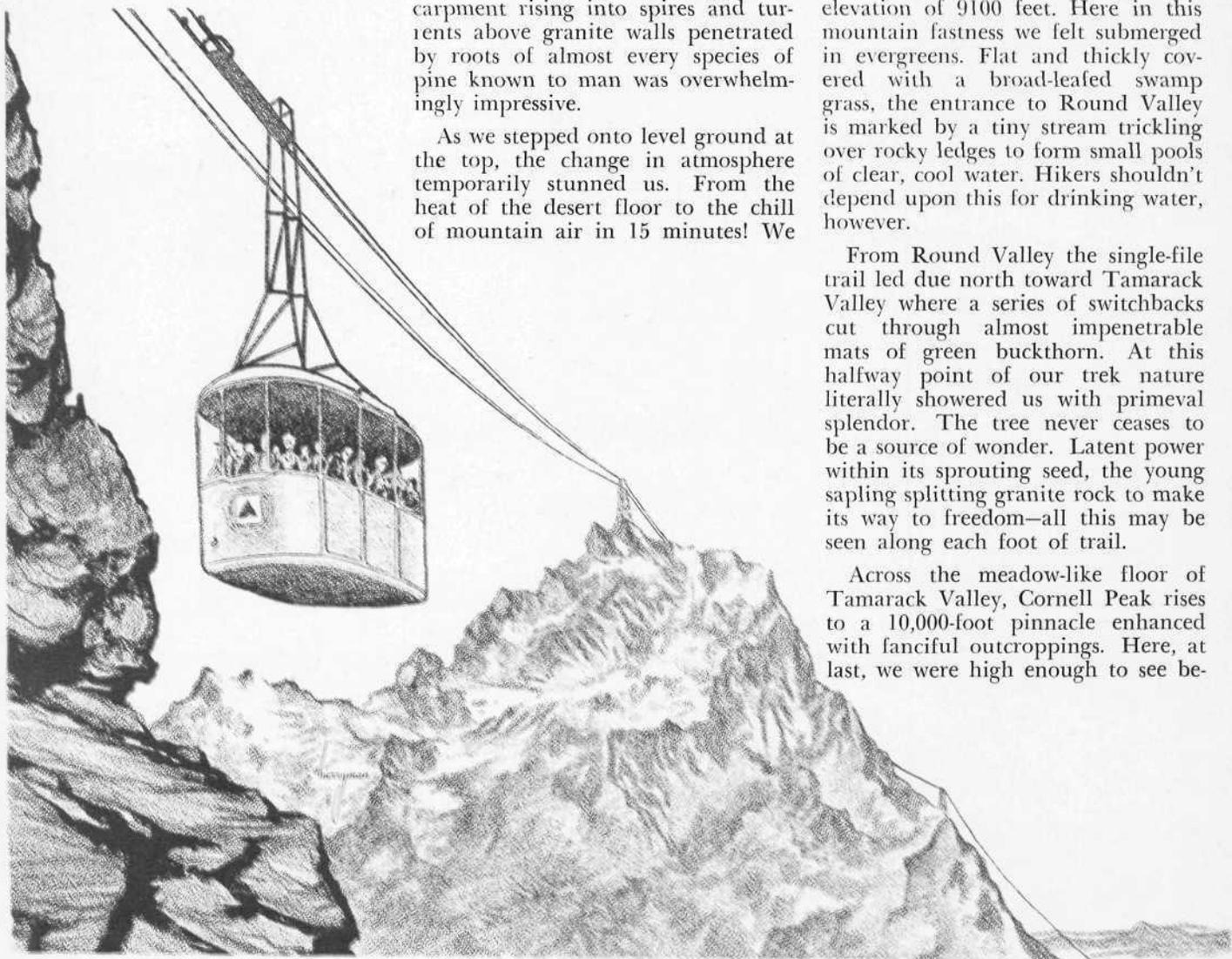
As we stepped onto level ground at the top, the change in atmosphere temporarily stunned us. From the heat of the desert floor to the chill of mountain air in 15 minutes! We

zipped up our parkas and set out at once. Neither my wife nor I were conditioned hikers, but the gigantic proportions of Mt. San Jacinto had been tantalizing us from a window of our Morongo Valley house for a long time. After months of threatening to climb it "someday," we finally shamed ourselves into accepting the challenge.

Our first stop along the way to the peak was Round Valley Camp, two miles from the tramway, at an elevation of 9100 feet. Here in this mountain fastness we felt submerged in evergreens. Flat and thickly covered with a broad-leaved swamp grass, the entrance to Round Valley is marked by a tiny stream trickling over rocky ledges to form small pools of clear, cool water. Hikers shouldn't depend upon this for drinking water, however.

From Round Valley the single-file trail led due north toward Tamarack Valley where a series of switchbacks cut through almost impenetrable mats of green buckthorn. At this halfway point of our trek nature literally showered us with primeval splendor. The tree never ceases to be a source of wonder. Latent power within its sprouting seed, the young sapling splitting granite rock to make its way to freedom—all this may be seen along each foot of trail.

Across the meadow-like floor of Tamarack Valley, Cornell Peak rises to a 10,000-foot pinnacle enhanced with fanciful outcroppings. Here, at last, we were high enough to see be-



yond the trees. Distant ranges loomed up in the south, fading one into the other like the wavy rep of taffeta, and glimpses of desert floor framed by deep canyon walls caused us to pause as we inched along the trail.

A striking spread of stark white granite near the summit interested us—a visible indication that the top of San Jacinto once consisted of solid granite, but at some unrecorded time shook with such violence that the rock dissembled and tumbled in grand confusion down canyon walls. This, of course, did not prevent pine, fir and spruce from pushing through, around and over the broken structures to produce one of Nature's most creative spectacles.

At last we turned onto the final bend of the trail. Shelter Cabin, half-hidden among the trees, marked the end. We had arrived! This stone cabin equipped with wooden bunks, fireplace, and grate for cooking was in such filthy condition that weary and exhausted as we were, one look repelled us. If each hiker to reach it would leave it clean for the next occupant, it would serve its purpose as a well-earned hiker's retreat.

Finding a place in the sun, we ate our lunch of apples and bananas and drank our allotted half-pint each of water. The clean, rough granite sand felt good to our tired bodies, but my goal was not yet quite reached. Above the sinewy fingers of giant dunes far below, the green patch-work of date gardens and golf courses, the architectural wonder of the upper tram station . . . yes, even above Shelter Cabin where we rested, jutted the true apex of San Jacinto. Noted on the map as Folly Peak, this spot is marked with a sign posted by the forestry service which reads "Mt. San Jacinto Peak, elevation: 10,831 feet."

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Adjacent to this is a wooden stand built by the Sierra Club in the shape of a tower, under which is a metal box containing pencils and a diary inviting comments from the few who conquer this lofty incline. Looking about the 360° panorama of unending serenity and splendor, I found myself filling an entire page with impressions. Perhaps they were overly effusive—perhaps even giddy. At that altitude you are apt to lose earth-bound equilibrium—both emotionally and physically.

The rest of the hike was somewhat routine. My wife, who had rested while I ascended to Folly's Peak, accomplished our goal with supreme effort and, I must admit, I'd reached my limit. Fortunately, the descent was easier than the ascent.

Back at the tram station we'd left exactly nine hours earlier, we had to wait two more hours to acquire room in a car going down. Our muscles ached and we were tired beyond belief, but somehow that wait was good for us. Watching visitors arrive and depart we enjoyed a wondrous sense of superiority. Only *we* knew the splendors that existed above the platform they approached as if it were the top of the world. In comparison, you might say we'd hiked to heaven!

///



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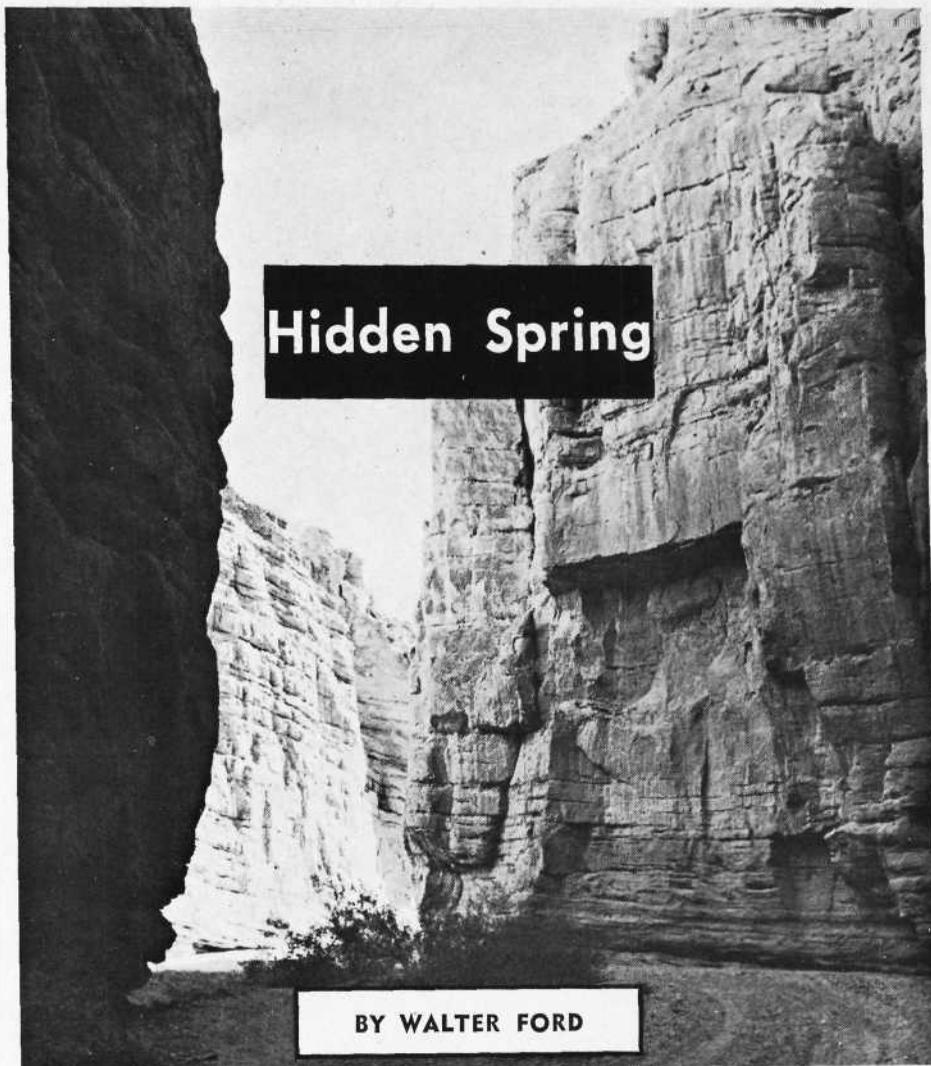
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## Hidden Spring

BY WALTER FORD

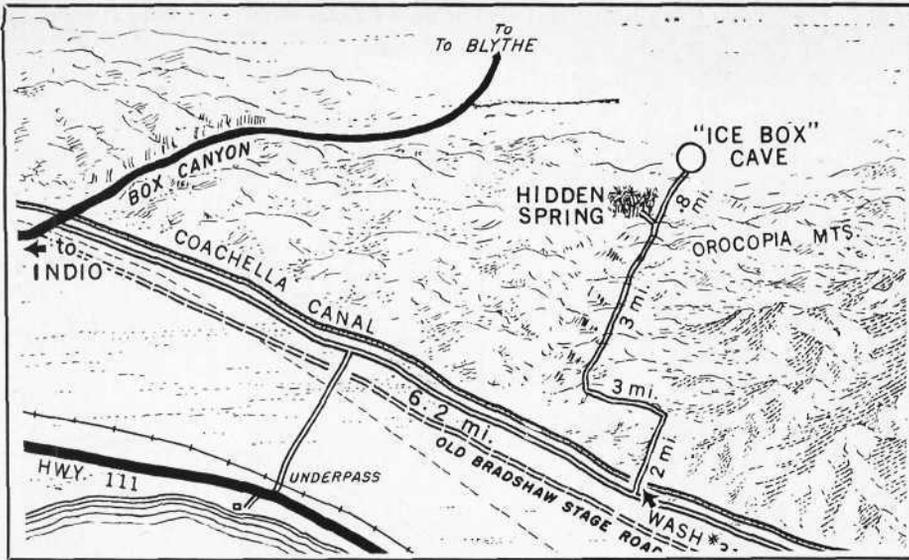
**T**UCKED AWAY in a canyon offshoot near the Salton Sea lies a palm-ringed oasis appropriately named Hidden Spring. Once this spot was a playground for venturesome desert travelers, but then came the All-American Canal and the canyon entrance to the spring was blocked.

Many a desert dweller who had lounged in this haven cooled by canyon breezes rushing up from Salton Sea resented the infringement of progress upon tranquility, especially when summer temperatures soared well over a 100 degrees. My own regret abated, however, when some years later I came upon a new entrance to the spring. Erosion had created changes, but the quiet charm was still there and, to me, it was like meeting an old friend.

The Orocochia Mountains, in which Hidden Spring is located, extend eastward from the Coachella Canal for about 25 miles. The name of the range means "abundant gold," a name taken from a mining company of the same name which operated in the area around the beginning of the present century.

In a U.S.G.S. Water Supply paper published in 1909, Walter R. Mendenhall mentions the pumping of water from Dos Palmas Springs to the Orocochia Mine, 12 miles to the north. The purpose of this report was to furnish accurate information on watering places along regularly traveled trails. Hidden Spring's location did not qualify it for an official listing, but Mendenhall did make a passing reference to it. He had been describing a nearby spring which has since disappeared, then, referring to Hidden Spring, he continued, ". . . up another canyon in a little side glen is a beautiful clump of palms with a spring of pure water beneath them."

Last May, accompanied by some San Diego friends, I set out to re-discover my circuitous route to this little known retreat. It was to be a trip for relaxation and shedding tensions built up by metropolitan living, but as we descended into the desert on Highway 78, it began to seem like a foolhardy venture. Thermometer readings edged over the 100 degree mark until we reached Hidden



Spring's canyon and fell under the spell of its unexpected breeze and spreading ironwood trees. One of the compensations for the late spring heat was the brilliant floral display—as though a master gardener had gathered specimens from the desert at large to present them in one splendid showing. Palo verde, ironwood, smoke tree — all burst in radiant bloom. Even the usually drab creosote bush sported yellow blossoms and tufts of snowy white.

As dusk approached, a series of high-pitched squeaks echoed from a canyon cave. Investigation with a flashlight revealed tiny bats hanging like clothespins from the ceiling. Later in the evening, as we sat around a gas lantern which substituted for a campfire, a pair of kit foxes warily circled the outer rim of light, but no amount of food tossed in their direction could lure them closer. Less aware of our intrusion



were families of spiny haired pocket mice who performed a sort of dance around our improvised fire, picking up crumbs along the way. Sounds did not disturb them, but quick motions on our part finally sent them scurrying with kangaroo-like hops into the darkness.

The serene environment at Hidden Spring seems to suggest nothing more strenuous than stretching out in the

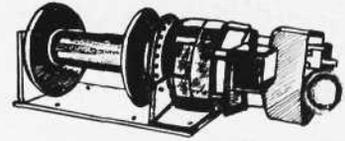
sun or shade, depending upon the time of year. However, if physical activity is desired, there are steep ridges to climb, caves to explore, and maze-like passages rarely reached by sunlight. And, as a pleasant climax, there is an unusual cave where the temperature is many degrees lower than the outside air. Our group named it "The Ice Box."

Ever since the automobile acquired a low-slung chassis off-trail locales such as Hidden Spring have been available only to 4-wheel drive vehicles. Now, however, new car buyers are discovering that an inexpensive option known as a "locking differential" can open new horizons for desert travel! While a car so equipped cannot compete with a 4-wheel drive in all situations, it can enter desert areas inaccessible for standard vehicles. On two recent trips to Hidden Spring, a large station wagon with a locking differential kept pace with three 4-wheelers as if it were built for the job, winding in and out of the sandy washes with no hint of bogging down.

To reach Hidden Spring, follow the Box Canyon road out of Mecca to the dirt road that extends southward just west of the Coachella Canal. Continue on this road for about six miles to wash number 31, then proceed up the wash for two miles, where a branch road leads to the left over a ridge and down into a large wash for about three miles. Turn to the right where the road winds around a large tree, then continue up the wash for another three miles, which should bring you close to the entrance of Hidden Spring. This opening has been blasted in solid black rock and is easily identified. The numbering of the washes along the canal route is for the purpose of marking the locations where canal water is diverted beneath the washes. ///

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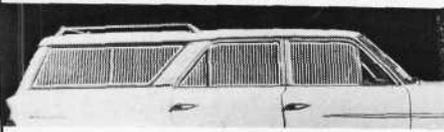
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## REAL TREASURE

Continued from Page 27

Desert Lily (*hesperocallis undulata*) usually grows on dunes or other loose sandy soil. New basal leaves may be seen early in the year, but the plant does not develop its main stalk until mild weather. The bulb from which it grows served as a food item to Indian tribes and early Spanish settlers who used it like garlic and named it Ajo.

Ocotillo (*fouquieria spendens*). Although this plant is spiny, it is not a cactus. It looks like a bundle of thorny canes, 1-15 feet high. At times it appears dead, but a little rain changes not only the color of the bark to a vivid green, but leaves will cover the stems and at the end of each a brilliant cluster of small tubular blossoms presents itself. The spectacle endures while moisture is available.

Desert Catalpa (*chilopsis linearis*) is also known as Desert Willow. The tree may be 15 feet high in the flowering season, is profusely covered with orchid-like blossoms ranging from pale pink to blue-purple. I have seen three growing close together, each having it's own distinctly colored blooms. It is found in dry washes in both upper and lower deserts.

Mojave Yucca (*yucca schidigera*). To find one of these large lilies in full bloom is an unusual experience. They grow in elevations above 3000 feet where they are often subjected to late frosts severe enough to kill the blossom. The duration of efflorescence is about one month, in which time not only weather conditions might have an untoward effect, but the fleshy, creamy white flowers become a food item to birds and small mammals. Gophers eat out the inside of the trunk, leaving it totally hollow and killing the plant. ///



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## PEGLEG

Continued from Page 22

black nuggets was well enough known that it wouldn't be a good idea to show anybody a black nugget while trying to find out what it was. I'd scraped through the black varnish or coating with my pocket knife, so maybe there was a way to remove it so I could show something that wasn't black. After some trouble I finally removed the black coating from one nugget and took it to an assay laboratory. They ran a spectroscopic assay and it was, indeed, gold.

I later learned that the so-called black desert varnish, or coating, on the nuggets was simply copper oxide. Most gold found in its native state, particularly in California, is usually alloyed with silver which averages 10 to 20%. The Pegleg black nuggets contain about 70% gold, 20% silver and 10% copper. It was the copper molecules that oxidized and gave the nuggets their black color. Later I will explain my theory of the origin of the Pegleg gold, but at one time or another all of the nuggets were either uncovered by the elements and exposed to the heat of the sun and the oxygen in the air for long periods of time which allowed the copper to form into black oxides or, at some time, perhaps millions of years ago, after the nuggets were alluviated, i.e. had their sharp edges worn off by abrasive action of sand and water, they were exposed to either volcanic heat or the internal heat of the earth's crust which caused the copper molecules to oxidize and turn black.

Let me say here that I am neither a mining engineer nor a geologist, and there may be a more precise, sci-

entific explanation of the black nuggets, but during the past 10 years I have read a great deal about gold and gold mining and do have a fair knowledge of the subject.

Had these nuggets been in a running stream all these years, like those found in California's mother lode country, then the action of the water and sand would have kept them clean and shiny with perhaps some oxidation in the pits or cavities in the nuggets.

The point is this: pure 1000 fine gold, or even gold with 10 to 15% silver alloy, will not tarnish and will stay golden in color under almost any circumstances. It is possible that a coating of some kind may build up on the outside surface, but in the case of the Pegleg nuggets it is the copper that turned them black.

As to the origin of the Pegleg gold, my theory is that millions of years ago gold was present in a lode or vein that was embedded in a mountain. As the mountain slowly eroded away, the gold, being heavier than the surrounding material, gradually worked its way down into the lower areas. It is known that the Salton Sea basin was part of the Gulf of California and probably at one time received quantities of rain. The action of the water and sand on the nuggets alluviated or rounded the sharp edges off of them and ultimately most of the gold in the lode or vein made it's way to the bottom of the watercourse. Undoubtedly there was shifting of the earth's crust and probably what was once a stream bed was lifted up or possibly buried completely. The original mountain carrying the lode was totally eroded

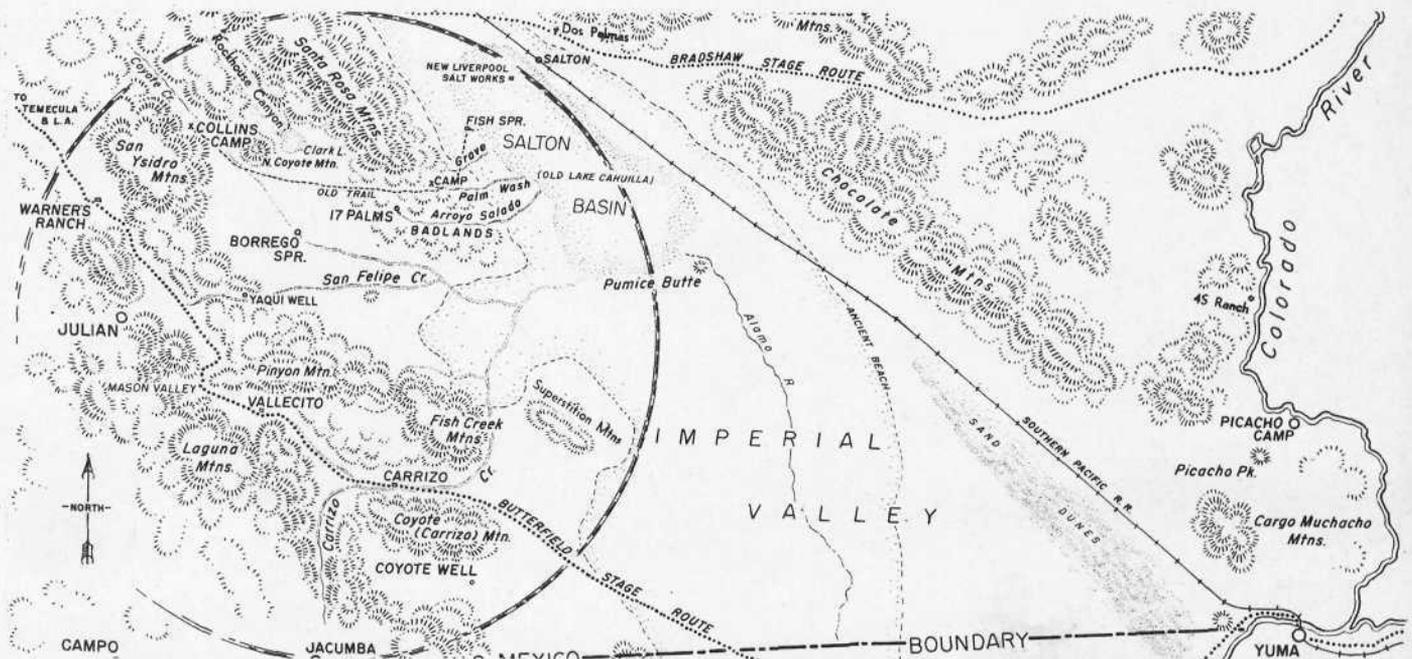
away, so the gold was simply buried in a pocket of what had once been a stream bed.

In the case of the Pegleg nuggets, I believe the continuing erosion of land that finally turned into a desert, exposed the nuggets again on the surface.

Within 10 days of the first discovery I was back at Pegleg Hill, this time with a metal detector and a small shovel. I stayed there six days and brought out 720 ounces of nuggets that later netted me a little over \$20,000.00.

Now that I knew exactly how to get there, the problem became one of hiding or concealing my trail so that no one could follow me. This is the main reason why I went there only two or three times a year. I was very careful to fill up all the holes I dug to recover nuggets located with the metal detector and to replace the pebbles and make the surface look as undisturbed as possible.

There were other questions that came up. I thought seriously of going in to file a claim, but after careful thought I discarded the idea. The minute I filed a claim, then at least one other person would know the location. Obviously I wasn't going to mention the gold, but the very fact that I filed a claim on a particular spot in the desert might just make somebody curious enough to talk and someone else curious enough to go snooping around. The worst fear here was the fact that the nuggets could be found on the surface or close to the surface, and even if I filed a legal claim I couldn't spend the rest of my life standing guard over it with a double-barrelled shotgun. Or, if I



hired someone to guard the claim, what was to prevent him from picking up nuggets or telling someone else? Once the word got out, nothing on earth could ever have prevented a stampede of people from over-running the claim. Nothing could have come out of it except trouble in one form or another. No, the gold had been there all those years. I decided to take my chances and play it alone and in secrecy. Time has proven me right.

The next most important thing was how to sell or dispose of the nuggets. The thing that bothered me most was the fact that black gold nuggets would arouse or provoke curiosity anywhere and talk would be rampant. Sooner or later the cat would be out of the bag, especially, if I tried to sell any sizable quantity of black gold nuggets at one time. The first problem, therefore, was the matter of removing the black color.

After serious study and a good deal of experimentation, I finally devised a method to accomplish what I wanted. By dipping the nuggets into a hot chemical bath, all the copper oxide was dissolved and stripped off, leaving the bright yellow gold nuggets. Certain solutions, I discovered, would strip off most of the copper, but still leave the nuggets with a reddish tint which was quite natural.

This was desirable in view of the plan I had to dispose of them.

The first thing I decided was to never sell or display any of the nuggets anywhere in the Southwest. What I did that first summer was to fly up to Nome, Alaska, taking the nuggets with me. The gold dredges were still operating there and gold nuggets were rather plentiful around town in the various curio and jewelry stores. I soon got on friendly terms with some of the prospectors hanging around, learned the jargon of placer mining and went up the creeks myself to "prospect." Actually I just camped out, did a bit of hunting and fishing, enjoyed my vacation thoroughly, did some "panning" with my gold pan and generally went through the motions of placer mining. Back in Nome I let it be known that I had worked hard, had found a little "color," but nothing to get excited about. I then sold the gold a few ounces at a time to various stores, jewelry makers, private parties and anyone else that was interested, but never more than 15 ounces at one time.

Why all the secrecy? Well, the strategy worked in that I've kept the discovery of the Pegleg a secret these 10 years, and undoubtedly could for 10 more.

Actually, there were two areas at

Pegleg Hill that contained nuggets. The hill itself and a large mound about 60 yards to the west. During the six days of the second trip I covered the whole countryside for several miles in all directions, searching carefully for nuggets and using the metal detector everywhere. It was the detector that located the nuggets in the mound, as all of them were underground from about four inches down to two feet, where I discovered some of the largest nuggets. *The three hills of the original Pegleg story were not in evidence.*

In any event, I've covered the ground so thoroughly that I believe I've found every nugget both on the surface and underground within range of the most powerful and sensitive detector. In short, I've found all the easy gold. I've got my share of the Pegleg black nuggets and then some.

I've wondered whether I should reveal the location now that I've cleaned out all of the easy gold, but if I did there would still be a wild stampede and I would always feel some sense of responsibility for all the hardship and struggle of those who failed to find the gold.

I'm sure there are more nuggets underground, probably great quantities of them along the ancient watercourse into which they were washed ages ago. They may be anywhere from four feet to thousands of feet underground, or wherever the twisting and faulting of the earth's crust has exposed or buried them. There may even be other places where they can be found on the surface as I found them on Pegleg Hill and the mound, and it may be miles away.

I've also thought about going in to file the claim now, but again I discarded the idea. Why? To go after more of Pegleg's black nuggets would require the expense of forming a mining company, taking in partners or associates, the purchase of expensive equipment, the expense of moving it to the site and the bother of a thousand and one other problems that would arise. I'm happy now and I've got all I can spend in a lifetime. My time is my own with no problems of any kind. I'm healthy and there really isn't anything else I want.

Besides, I'm reminded of the stories the Alaskan prospectors told me about the men who found a rich pocket of gold and after having cleaned it out they still were not satisfied and spent it all digging deeper trying to find more. Greed is one of man's weaknesses.

No, I'll say it again. I've got my share of the black gold and I'm satisfied. *///*

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by Sam Hicks

# DESERT DISPENSARY

THE PERSON who has never stretched out on the ground and pillowed his head against the trunk of a Cottonwood tree for a summer siesta, has missed one of life's most gratifying experiences.

The Cottonwoods of Southern California's desert lands provide the nicest settings of all for pleasant siestas. For 30 years I've been dozing delightfully under Cottonwoods from Wyoming to Mexico, and few people are better qualified to comment on this enervating pastime than I. To fully appreciate the fine art of taking summer siestas, strangers and newcomers to afternoon napping out of doors might profit by pondering a few authoritative words on the subject.

First, they should realize that California's Cottonwoods are especially friendly and that they grow in the most comfortable places. They require more water than native trees like pines and oaks, so therefore are usually found near springs or growing along the banks of clean streambeds which run water, at least periodically, each year.

To go about a summer siesta properly you must lie quietly on your back so you can look up through the leaves at the sky. Next, you begin to concentrate on the message that one branch of rustling leaves is sending to a reciprocating cluster of quivering foliage on the far side of the tree. Cottonwood leaves are always chattering, even though the air is still, and their gossipy visits go on and on. They whisper in soothing tones about abstract matters like the care and feeding of the newly hatched birds on a certain limb, or the silently changing cloud formation high above.

Select a position under the tree where you will have constant shade during the timeless period of your siesta, and one where your presence does not detract measurably from the ants' urgent business matters. Ants always have a main thoroughfare over which they travel across the ground and up and down the trunks of Cottonwoods. If a person takes the time to avoid this mainstream of activity, especially if he's a beginner, he can usually sleep longer and sounder.

With just the least amount of effort anyone can soon determine that a Cottonwood siesta is equally as relaxing as a sauna, and it's so much less trouble.

Besides inducing a joyful sleep at

siesta time, Cottonwoods also have definite medicinal values. Indian and Mexican people of the Southwest boil a strong disinfectant tea from its leaves and branch tips with which they cure ulcerated lesions and infected wounds.

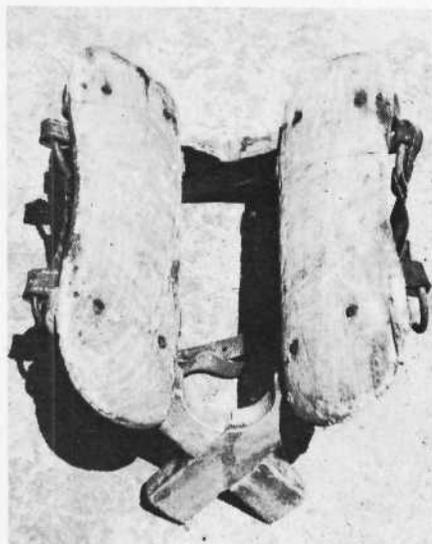
The wood has other uses besides that of fuel. Because of its extremely light weight when dry, it was once used extensively for ox-yokes (not to be confused with the hardwood *bows* which encircled the oxen's necks and held the yokes in place) and, among saddlemakers, it is still a popular wood for making blades for the trees of pack and riding saddles.

The U.S. Cavalry barracks of old Fort Cady on the Mojave River east of Yermo, California, are made of Cottonwood logs. The Cavalry moved out of Fort Cady in 1882 after the government decided that wagon train immigrants were no longer in danger of Indian attacks, but the buildings there are intact and useable. One end of the barracks, after having been occupied for as far back as anyone can recall, is still being lived in at this writing by a bachelor who works on the Cady Ranch.

The frequent occurrence of the Spanish words Alamo, Los Alamos and Alamitos on maps of the Southwest is by no means coincidental. Cottonwoods thrive naturally in nearly all our States, but where they find water in the warmer climes of the Southwest they grow to giants of tremendous size and beauty, live for at least a century, and well deserve the honor of having so many canyons, mountains, springs, ranches and villages named for them.

Cottonwoods were regularly planted by early Californians for shade around ranch dwellings, or to shade livestock near windmills or barnyards. The old timers, as a matter of convenience, used fence posts made of Cottonwood and, in bottom lands where the earth was moist, an unbelievable percentage of them would sprout, take root and grow into huge leafy shelters along the fence lines where many still remain.

The chief enemy of Southern California's Cottonwoods is mistletoe. Whenever the parasitic plant is allowed to grow unchecked through the branches of these stately trees it quickly sucks the life out of them. Then their grotesque skeletons topple and the picturesque landmarks turn full cycle by settling back into the earth. ///



Cottonwood-constructed pack saddle.

A cottonwood tree in an advanced stage of being killed by mistletoe.



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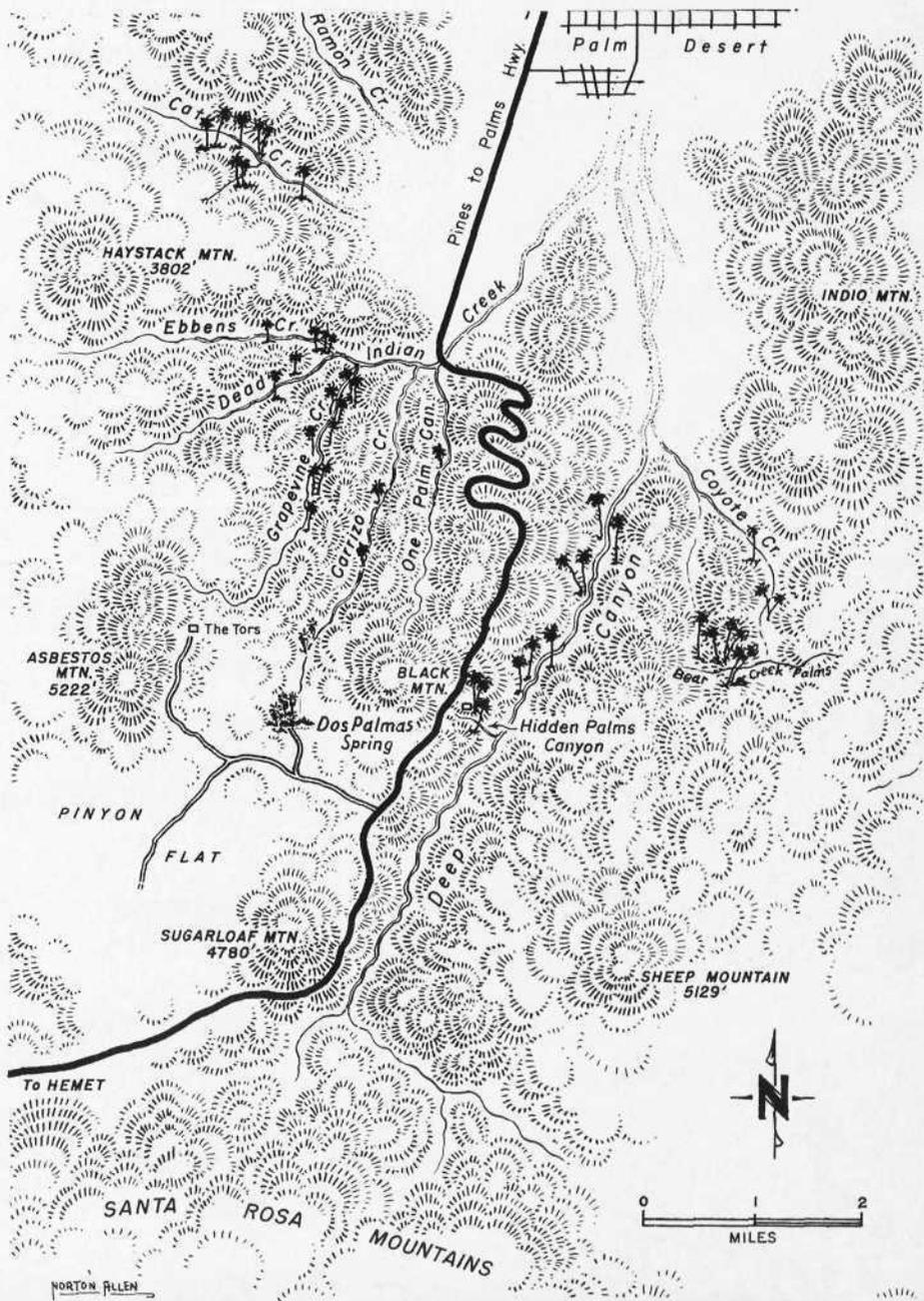
*Continued from Page 26*

oasis. There are many palms in both these forks, and occasional pools of water where the bighorns come.

Other tributaries of lower Dead Indian are Grapevine and Carrizo creeks which drain the Santa Rosa slopes on the south—and there are wild palms in both these canyons, but only occasional pools of water, depending on the season's rainfall. The headwater of Carrizo is the little oasis known as Dos Palmas—one of the historic water holes for prospectors ranging over these mountains in the early days. More recently the spring has been dry, but the palms—there are now three of them—appear healthy, indicating there is still plenty of water at their roots. There are several springs along the floor of Car-

rizo Creek, but no flowing water and only an occasional palm tree. I would advise hikers against a traverse of this canyon without ropes, for there is one dry waterfall where the descent would be hazardous without proper equipment.

One of the most delightful palm oases in this area is Hidden Palms, a tributary of Deep Canyon. Visitors can view this oasis from above by parking the car at the little cabin on the east side of the road about half way up the Palms-to-Pines grade. From the parking space at the cabin it is only a short hike to the top of a low hill back of the cabin. From this point, the palms in the creekbed below present a surprising picture. Descent into the canyon involves some hand and toe climbing down a rather steep rock pitch, and is recommended only for those who are shod for such



an adventure. Rubber soles is the rule for dry rock climbing.

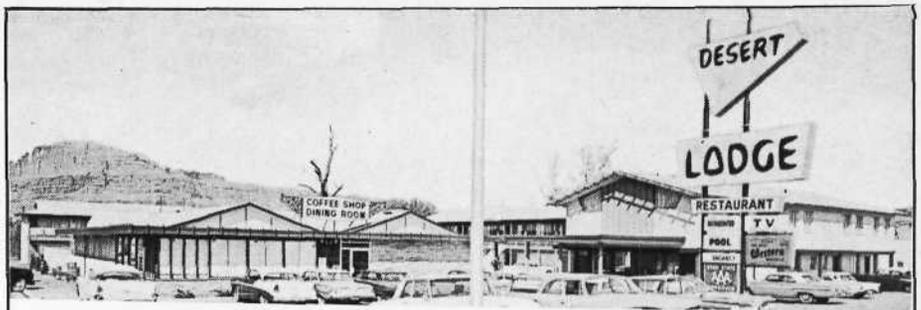
Deep Canyon, the great gorge which parallels the Palms-to-Pines road on the east, has many palm groups and frequent pools of water, but is hardly accessible to hikers because there are three 50 to 100-foot waterfalls which require roping. The lower entrance to Deep Canyon has been reserved by the University of California as the site of its Desert Research laboratory and is closed to the public.

Two other palm canyons in this general area should be mentioned. Bear Creek palms are reached by a fine 3-mile trail which climbs the south slope of La Quinta, and Magnesia Falls canyon, with a pretty little amphitheater at its entrance, is the pride of Rancho Mirage where residents are making a valiant effort to have it set aside as a county park.

Whence came these palms in an arid land, for abundant water is necessary for their growth and health? No one knows the answer to this question. But it is generally believed they are the descendants of a fringe of wild palms which grew along the shoreline of the Gulf of California which long ago covered the entire below sea-level basin now known as Imperial and Coachella valleys. Occasional survivors in their original habitat may be seen along the old shoreline on the north side of Coachella valley and in the Borrego Badlands.

But this theory does not explain the greater number of palms growing in the canyons up to 3200 feet. Perhaps prehistoric Indians, who ground and used the seeds for food, carried them up creekbeds to their present habitat. My own conclusion—and it is only a theory—is that the lowly coyote deserves much of the credit for transporting the seeds into the canyons where the palms now grow. The coyotes eat the fruit, but digest only the sweet skin which covers the seed. During many years of traversing these canyons I have frequently observed undigested seeds of the Washingtonias in the dung of coyotes along the creekbeds. This has been true both on the California desert and in Baja California where palm canyons are found on much of the length of the peninsula.

True, the coyote is a chicken thief and a camp-robber—but he also has his virtues. Unwittingly, of course, but nevertheless I believe it is true that Don Coyote, more than any other agent, brought the majestic wild palm to the canyons of our desert land. *///*



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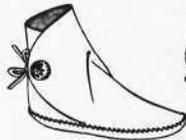
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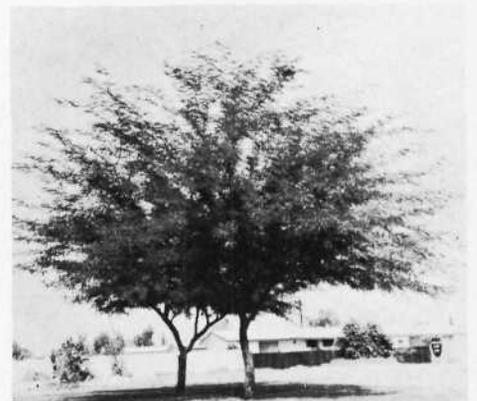
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## INDIANS TODAY

Continued from Page 19

of the Indian tribes in Southern California. Not long after his arrival he acquired 320 acres from the Southern Pacific Railroad for \$800, a tract now incalculably valuable, in the center of Palm Springs.

The Southern Pacific had been given many sections of land in a checkerboard pattern (every other section) by the U. S. government, in payment for construction of a railway through the area. The government, considering the remainder of the checkerboard land almost worthless, turned it into a reservation for the Agua Caliente Indians. Years later this tribe discovered that their supposedly worthless land had become immensely valuable.

After a long fight the Indians won the right to lease some of their land,

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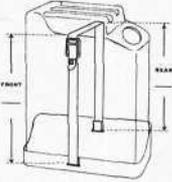
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but the government limited the leases to short term only. More legal battles brought a victory in the form of authorization to negotiate long term (up to 99 years) leases. Still another victory was won recently when a government policy of equal allotments of land to individuals became effective. This means that many Indian men, women, and babes in arms, now own a fortune in Palm Springs property which can be leased for 99 years or sold, under government supervision.

When one wants statistics he should go to the "front office," so I went to the local office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and talked with the Chairman, Paul W. Hand. I learned from Mr. Hand that there are approximately 122 living Agua Caliente Indians at present (an exact count was not available because of the population explosion). Also, the size of this reservation as of May 31, 1964 was 28,356.2 acres, of which 26,300.4 acres have been allotted to individuals and the remaining 2,055.8 acres are being held in common by the tribe.

Now the members of the Agua Caliente tribe are in a position to balance the books for a shellacking some of their brothers took over 300 years ago when the sale of Manhattan Island was consummated with a \$24 payment to the Manhattan Indians. For example, a transaction transpired a few years ago whereby a group of Chicago businessmen leased eight acres of tribal land for the construction of the magnificent \$2,000,000 Palm Springs Spa, on the site of the original hot water oasis from which the Agua Caliente Indians took their name.

Another example of what all of this good fortune means to the younger generation is provided by the following fact. The Palm Springs Airport was constructed originally on leased Indian land, with short term limitations. Recently, the city acquired title to three 40-acre parcels from three minor Indians. Acquisi-

tion of the first portion made a five-year old child wealthy, and settlement of negotiations for the other two parcels gave two six-year-old Indian owners \$350,000 and 50 acres of city land.

The land being reserved for the Indians as a tribe (not allotted) includes several of the beautiful canyons that served them so well in the early days. Palm Canyon is a 15-mile long desert gorge through which courses a stream of icy snow water running off the mountains through 3000 wild towering Washingtonia palm trees.

Some other cities, with active Chambers of Commerce, might challenge the claim of this desert resort that it offers the "mostest of the bestest," but one thing is certain, no other city in the world has the fabulous Agua Caliente Indians. On this reservation of theirs, I found a friendly tribe who, through the years, have suffered the hostilities of nature on the desert, scooped out shallow wells with their bare hands, eaten grasshoppers when their food supply ran out and even faced the possibility of extinction at one time.

I felt happy and proud that, with their determination, and the understanding of the great white father in Washington, these Americans have now attained a position of respect and human dignity. They really are heap big Indians—big in spirit, big in ambition, big in courage, and heap big in bank accounts. //

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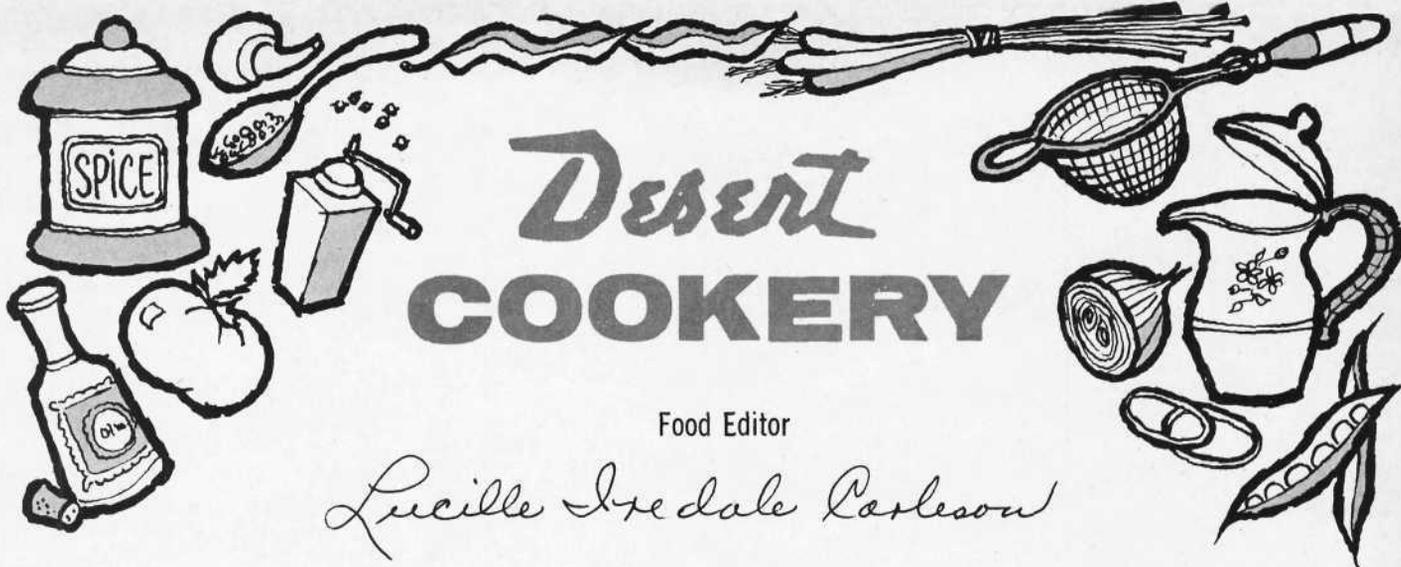
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# Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

*Lucille Iredale Carlsson*

## SWISS CASSEROLE

3 tablespoons butter  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 green pepper, chopped  
 1 clove garlic, chopped, or you may use garlic powder  
 1½ lbs. lean ground beef

Saute onion, pepper and garlic in butter. Add beef and brown slightly. To this mixture add:

1 No. 2 can tomatoes  
 ¾ cup sharp cheese, cubed

Season with 1 teaspoon salt, ¾ teaspoon pepper, 1 teaspoon celery salt and 1 teaspoon paprika. Cook 1½ 8 oz. packages spaghetti in boiling water until almost tender. Drain but do not rinse. Add to meat mixture. Place in large covered casserole and bake. Stir occasionally. Pass grated cheese to top. Bake for 1 hour at 300 degrees.

## SCALLOPS AU GRATIN

Defrost 1 package frozen scallops

1 tablespoon finely cut onion  
 1 green pepper, finely cut  
 1 cup chopped celery  
 1 small can mushrooms, drained  
 2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
 1 teaspoon lemon juice  
 ½ can mushroom soup

Salt, pepper and paprika.  
 Grated Swiss or American cheese

Cook onion, pepper, celery and mushrooms until tender in the butter. Add scallops and cook gently for about 5 minutes. Heat mushroom soup with seasonings and lemon juice. Mix gently with scallop mixture. Pour into a shallow casserole or baking dish and cover with a layer of grated cheese. Bake for ½ hour in 350 degree oven. 4 to 6 servings.

## BARBECUED BEEF RIBS

In heavy pan or Dutch oven, brown 4 large beef ribs, about 3 lbs., in 2 tablespoons shortening. Turn to brown on all sides.

Combine ¼ cup vinegar  
 2 tablespoons brown sugar.  
 1 cup catsup  
 ½ cup water  
 1 package onion soup mix  
 1 teaspoon prepared mustard  
 ½ cup diced celery  
 1 teaspoon salt

After meat is browned, pour off excess grease. Pour the mixture over meat, cover and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours, turning occasionally. 4 servings.

## ROUND STEAK CASSEROLE

1 round steak cut 1 inch thick. Pound in flour with edge of saucer. Brown in cooking oil. Place in casserole and pour over 1 can undiluted onion soup. Cover with sliced potatoes and carrots. Salt and pepper. Bake covered for 1½ hours at 350 degrees. You may uncover the last 15 minutes to brown.

## MEAT LOAF

2 lbs. round steak, trim well and grind. Either 3 loin pork chops, ground, or a few slices of good pork sausage.

1½ heaping tablespoons cornstarch  
 Salt and pepper to taste

Roll 6 small soda crackers fine. Mix all together well. Add about a pint of milk, mix. Shape into loaf. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in loaf pan. Place meat loaf in buttered pan and cook slowly at 300 degrees for 1½ to 2 hours.

## MALAYSIAN CHICKEN

In electric skillet, heat 4 tablespoons peanut oil with 1 clove crushed garlic.

Set control at 375 and brown four chicken breasts.  
 Pour off excess oil.  
 Add 1 cup chicken broth or broth made from chicken bouillon cubes, ½ cup sherry, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon powdered ginger.  
 Bring to a boil.  
 Add 1 can water chestnuts, drained and sliced, and 1 small can pitted ripe olives, drained and sliced.  
 Cover and simmer for about a half hour or until chicken is tender. If dish begins to dry, add water. Remove the chicken and keep warm. Stir into the sauce 2 tablespoons cornstarch which has been made into a paste with 2 tablespoons cold water. Cook about 1 minute or until clear. Serve sauce over chicken.

## RICE WITH MUSHROOMS

1 cup rice  
 1 cup chopped tomato  
 1 lb. mushrooms, sliced  
 ½ cup chopped onion  
 ½ cup butter or margarine  
 3 cups chicken broth  
 ½ cup red wine  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 Pepper to taste  
 1 cup cooked green peas  
 ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

In a large skillet, cook rice, tomatoes, mushrooms and onions in the butter for about 10 minutes, stirring often. Add broth, wine and seasonings, mix well. Cover. Simmer for about 45 minutes, or until rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed. Stir in peas. Heat, sprinkle with cheese. 6 portions.

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## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

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### The Gran Desierto . . .

*To the Editor:* I read with interest the article on James Powell's search for the Laguna Prieto and the possible lost mission in the Gran Desierto area of Mexico which was printed in the December '64 issue of DESERT Magazine. I studied this area on an old Mexican map and in the general vicinity where he was searching (but not on the hike he took) is shown the "Cerro Prieto," which means "Dark Hill," and close by is the "Lago de los Volcanes" which means "Lake of the Pits." This is shown surrounded on four sides by tributaries of the Colorado River and not far away from both the Lake and the Dark Hill is shown the "Colonia Lerdo," which means "Colony of the Dull Witted." The small map accompanying your article and others currently available do not show the three places I mention above, so it may well be that the Dark Hill and Lake of Pits (possible fresh water seepage) could indicate the Dark or Black Lagoon and the Colony Lerdo is where the tower has been seen from the air.

JOHN BRUORTON,  
Glendale, California

### No Damper on This Camper . . .

*To the Editor:* Having very recently purchased a camper and finding your magazine at the same time, I expect to enjoy the countryside very much in the future. Your Nov. issue was responsible for a very wonderful 4-day Thanksgiving trip to Death Valley. Thank you for publishing a unique magazine like DESERT.

ORIK SEARS,  
Wilmington, California.

### Man, I Dig Those Clams! . . .

*To the Editor:* I am an amateur paleontologist specializing in invertebrate fossils. I was very interested in a letter to the editor in the January '64 issue of DESERT. It told about fossil shells north of Thousand Palms, Calif. Recently my wife and I, armed with the magazine and a geological map of the area, located the fossil beds. The letter was right in every respect. The Fossils are in the Imperial formation and are of lower Pliocene age. This the same formation as that in Alverson canyon in Imperial County. We found dosina clams (*Turritella imperialis*), Spiral turret shells, and perfect barnacle shells of the (*Balanus*) genus.

To get to the location, go east on Ramon Rd. from U.S. 99, 5.5 miles to the location. You will see two bright yellow houses just north of the road. About 300 feet of the road to the yellow houses is the yellow patch on the hill. This is the fossil location. The Indio hills are very close to the road here and a 2 minute walk will bring you to the fossils. This is a great advantage to the non-four wheel drive owner. It should be stressed here that if any vertebrate bones are discovered by the fossil hunter, DO NOT REMOVE THEM! Call the Los Angeles County Museum for advise. Otherwise, you might wreck an important scientific find.

ROY A. SALLS,  
Los Angeles, California.

### Authority Questioned . . .

*To the Editor:* In reference to the article by Retta Ewers about Lee's Lost Lode in the Jan. '65 issue, there are certain mis-statements that should be corrected in regard to former California governor Robert Waterman. He was a highly respected man, honest beyond any doubt.

If any of the things Mrs. Ewers says had happened, my grandfather could not have been elected Lt. Governor, let alone received over 10,000 more votes than Gov. Bartlett, whom he succeeded.

I am in my 76th year, retired, and not too active.

R. W. WATERMAN,  
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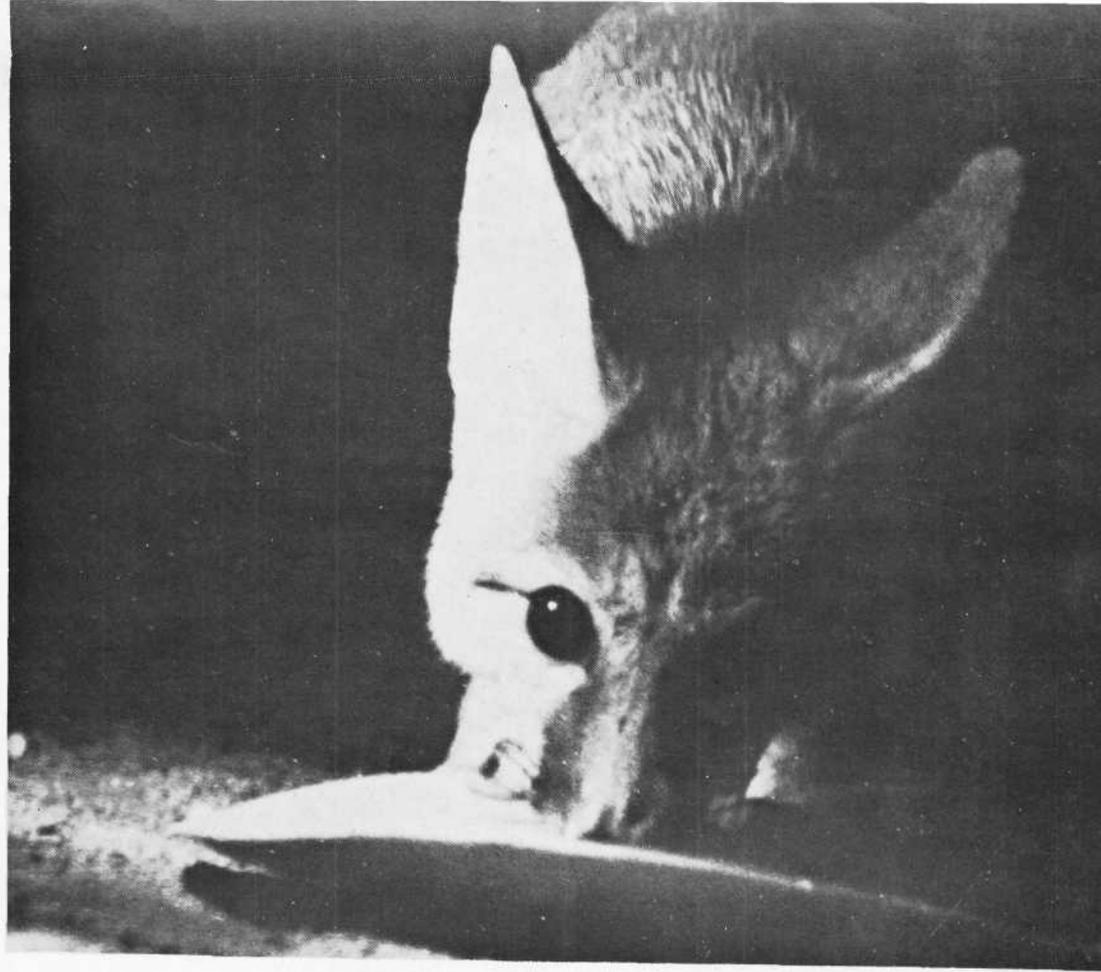
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While camping in Death Valley Christmas Eve Richard Sykes saw a Kit Fox dart between the Mesquite. With only a Coleman Lantern as a light source "I spent three hours baiting the fox with filet and my next day's lunch. Each time he came up I clicked the shutter, guessing at exposure, then he would dart away." DATA: Old Exacta with 2.8 lens, Plus X, Coleman Lantern, 1/25th at f2.8. Printed on No. 6 paper.

**First Prize**

**Second Prize**

**OWACHOMO BRIDGE**

Mel Lewis  
Salt Lake City, Utah

A twisted tree and a natural arch graphically illustrate how the elements have changed the earth through millions of years. Taken in the Natural Bridges Monument, Utah. DATA: 4x5 Korona, Kodak Ektar lens, Super XX film, 1/100th at f32.

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- 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 ONLY 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.
- 6—FIRST PRIZE will be \$15; SECOND PRIZE, 8. For non-winning pictures accepted for publication \$3 each will be paid. Although not part of the contest, Desert is also interested in viewing 4x5 color transparencies for possible front cover use. We pay \$25 per transparency.



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