

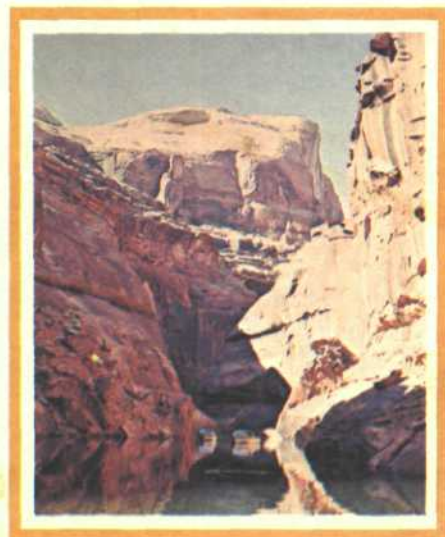
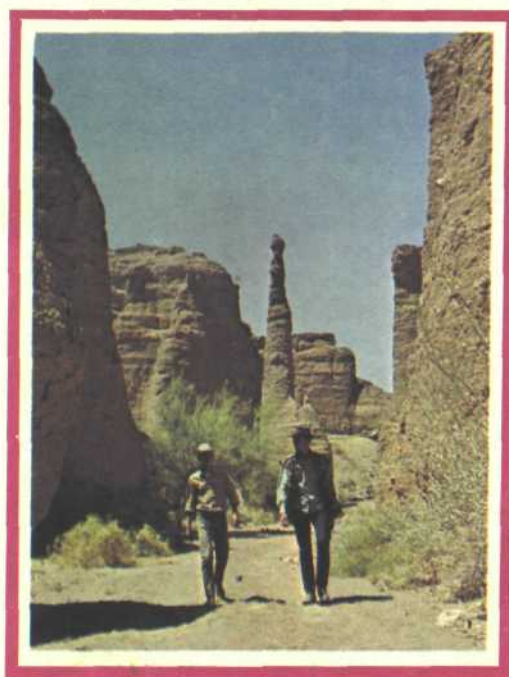
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AUGUST / SEPTEMBER
double issue

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Our Largest Edition in 28 Years

This month marks two important DESERT events. One, we have moved into our new home (see story on Page 20) and, two, we are publishing the largest issue in our 28-year-old history. A few months after purchasing DESERT MAGAZINE two years ago I made a survey of our readers to determine if they would like a combined two-month issue to aid them in selecting areas to visit during their summer vacations. As a result of this survey we decided to publish a combined August-September edition. This SPECIAL VACATION ISSUE is the result of a year's editorial research and planning. Although it incorporates two issues, it actually contains more articles than last year's August and September issues combined. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did in preparing the material and that it will enrich and guide you during your summer vacation. As they say south of the border, "Hasta luego!"

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New Books for Desert Readers

WARRIORS OF THE COLORADO

By Jack Forbes

The Colorado River has been a crucial factor in the history of the Quechans. Without the river and its floods, these American natives would have been typical desert Indians. Instead, they developed a distinctive culture with a non-materialistic way of life and a strong tradition for democracy and individual liberty. "They loved to do great things," the author writes, "and their undertakings — as traders, explorers, guides, statesmen and warriors — possess an intrinsic interest for all who are intrigued by human behavior."

The history of the West was vitally affected by these people. In making it tough for the Spanish and Mexicans to take over the West, they ultimately—and inadvertently—paved the way for later occupation by U.S. forces.

"Quechan" is a less familiar name for the tribes of the Colorado than "Yuman," the name of the linguistic grouping to which the Quechans belong. This book is intensely interesting to anyone pursuing the early history of Southern California and Arizona. Readers will find a number of startling facts brought out by Jack Forbe's research which will change their ideas both about the appearance of these people and the geological changes that have come about in the lower regions of the Colorado. It is a splendid, readable book and we recommend it highly.

Well-illustrated with historic photo reproductions, indexed, 393 pages, \$5.95.

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THE OLD ONES

By Robert Silverberg

This is a good up-to-date book on the history of the *Anasazi*, or "Old Ones," who were the ancestors of the Pueblo Indians who built cliff dwellings and danced snake and rain dances in beautiful country now known as Arizona and New Mexico.

Books published prior to 1940 are misleading in describing these prehistoric people. It wasn't until later archeologists found evidence that the long-headed people and the round-headed people were one and the same. It was the fashion that had changed, not the race.

The author presents a good overall picture of the entry of the Spaniards, the people of the Four Corner country, the apartment-house builders, cliff-dwellers and the living Pueblo Indians of today. An appendix gives information as to where Anasazi ruins may be seen.

Photos and illustrations are fine and the book is easy to read. The author writes that those first to arrive in North America filtered across the Bering Strait land bridge some 20-30,000 years ago. Many archeologists now believe it was considerably earlier than that and there is some evidence that earlier tribes may have filtered north, rather than south, long before the land bridge existed. If and when those facts are nailed down, this book, along with most current books on the subject, will be outdated. But *The Old Ones* is still a good book for travelers to the Southwest to read in order to better understand the strange country they are about to see.

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THE LAME CAPTAIN

By Sardis W. Templeton

"To call him a horsethief is to ignore the times and conditions along an always uneasy and sometimes turbulent frontier," says the author, in explaining Pegleg Smith's skill in "capturing" Spanish horses in California. Nevertheless, Pegleg was one of the wildest, canniest and colorful of early mountainmen who broke the West's great frontier. He plunders, loves and jovially boasts his way through 239 pages of this adventurous book.

Historically correct, no doubt, the author has sacrificed excitement he might have created in the narrative by making the reader conscious of his laborious research, but for the records, it's a good sound account of unsound times and anyone who collects Western Americana should have this book.

Pegleg gold hunters will be disappointed. The famed lost mine that keeps Thomas L. Smith's name alive today is rarely mentioned. Instead, the author dramatizes the lusty mountaineer as one who opened the way to the West. And there his name is linked with those of Jedediah Smith and Louis Roubidoux.

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GOLD!

By Gina Allen

All the gold ever mined from the beginning of human history to the present would fit neatly into a baseball diamond 90 feet in any direction—in dollars it would be worth \$112 billion—an ounce of gold ordinarily covers an area of 100-square feet at a cost of 35c per square foot—the world's first prospectors were Stone Age men.

In her new book Gina Allen has blended fascinating facts and figures into the paramount part gold has played in the history of man. Although highly informative, her romantic history reads like fiction and you will find it hard to put aside.

How gold since the caveman days has incited murder and war, inspired poets and artists, lured explorers and adventurers, and borne the commerce of the world are highlights of this (Continued on Page 60)



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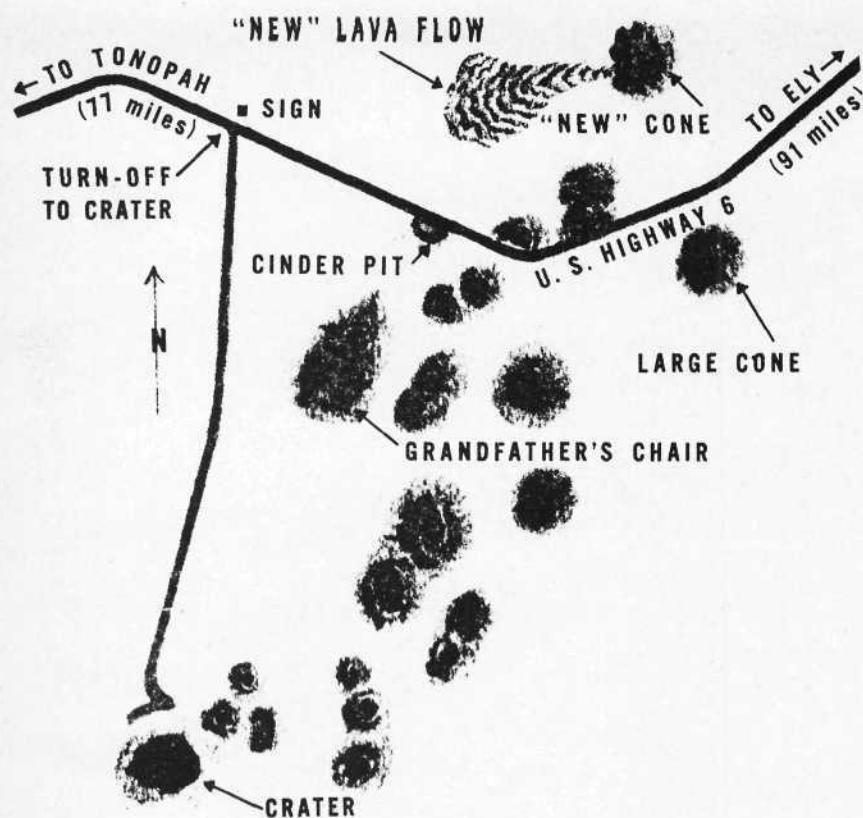
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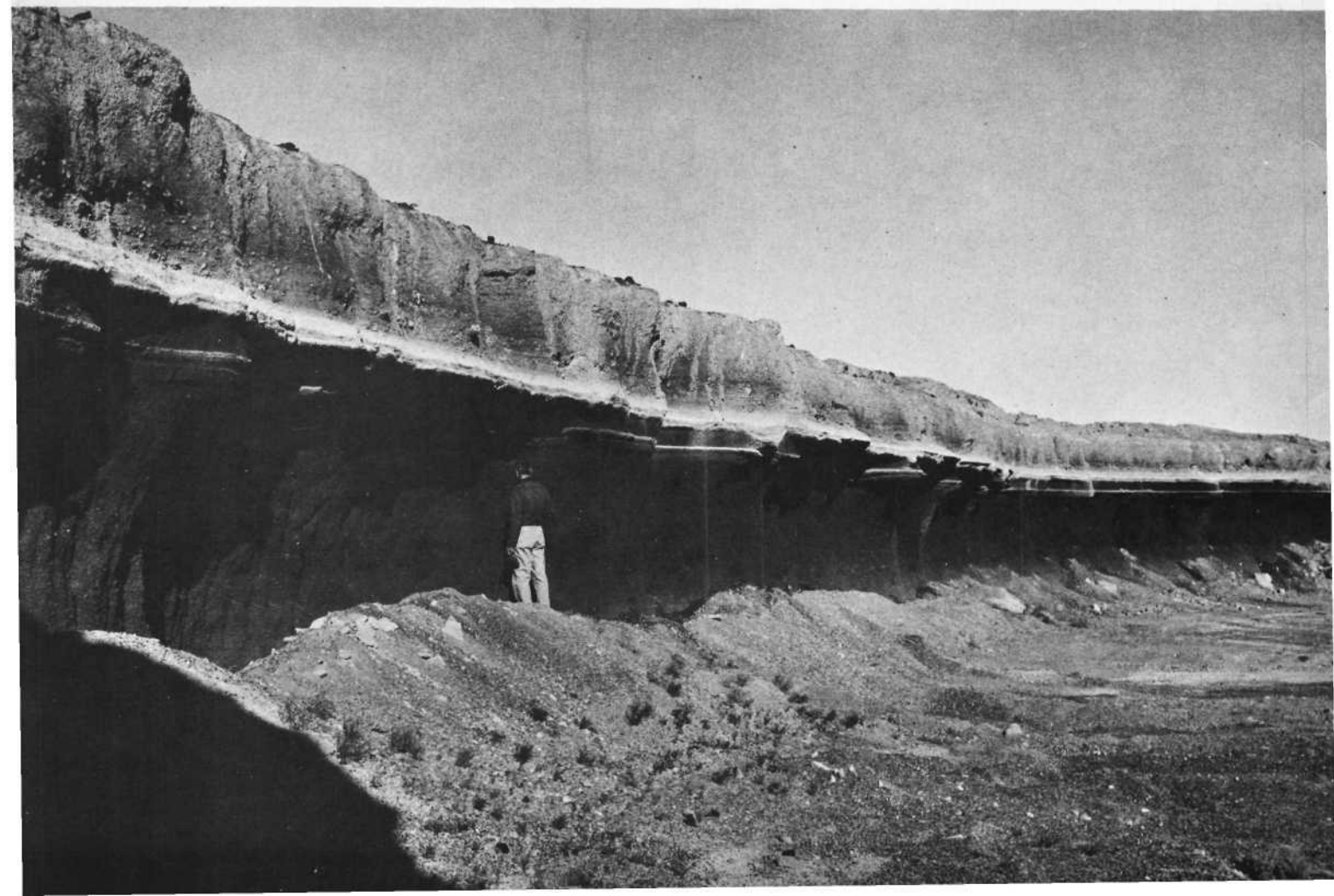
LUNAR CRATER

by Doris Cerveri

NO MATTER where you travel in the desert there is always something to see which is odd, outstanding, or unbelievable.

One of the most unusual manifestations of Nature's many whims may be observed in central Nevada a few miles south of present Highway U.S. 6, which passes through a long stretch of isolated desert lying between Tonopah and Ely.

In this strange, volcanic landscape lies an immense steep-walled pit 400 feet deep and measuring three quarters of a mile across named Lunar Crater. Many thousands of years ago during one of Nevada's turbulent periods, the earth boiled, belched, and burped, and then spewed out tons of blistering hot lava in one gigantic upheaval. Numerous other vomits of rock, cinder, and red hot ashes sent skyward again and again in rhythmic waves presented a magnificent, terrifying display of fire and smoke. It is believed Lunar Crater was formed by cinder cones being widened and dis-



In 1939 Nevada park officials erected a sign on the main highway indicating a dirt road leading to the crater. Although this unusual area is not

Although the entire area is now silent, such silence is fearful. Standing in the hot sun in the crater's rim, it's too easy to imagine these extinct craters reawakening with a slight tremble, a deep rumble, and a mighty roar. *///*

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Where the Mountain Turned to Glass

by betty lee reed

BET YOU NEVER thought of it, but the first glass blower was Nature, and Nature has blown some pretty fantastic objects on the earth's surface. For instance, near Bishop, California, a black dome of solid glass thrusts its huge head over 400 feet into the blue sky.

Driving north on California Highway 395 about 45 miles north of Bishop, you climb Deadman Summit. Near the top is a sign: VOLCANIC GLASS FLOWS—1 MILE. Hit the good dirt road that turns west through a gap in a snow fence and you come to the spot Nature chose for a masterpiece of the glass blower's art.

Obsidian (true glass) is sometimes pure shiny black, or it may be black dotted through with little white crystals, as it is at Glass Mountain. This type is named "snowflake obsidian,"

and is formed when lava reaches the earth's surface and then cools quickly.

The most exciting thing about this enormous crag is the illusion of motion in the hard lava—molten rock seems to bubble up and flow down the sides of the mountain to your very feet. Huge blocks of obsidian have cracked off the cliff-like sides and crashed onto the flat land at the base, breaking into small chunks as they hit. These make for easy climbing and from the top of the dome you receive a bonus—not only do you see fountains where the hot rock surged up and cooled, you are awarded a tremendous view of pine-covered hills and valleys and even peacock-blue Mono Lake (25 miles north) winks at you across the sage flats. A fine stand of pines at the base of Glass Mountain makes a perfect spot



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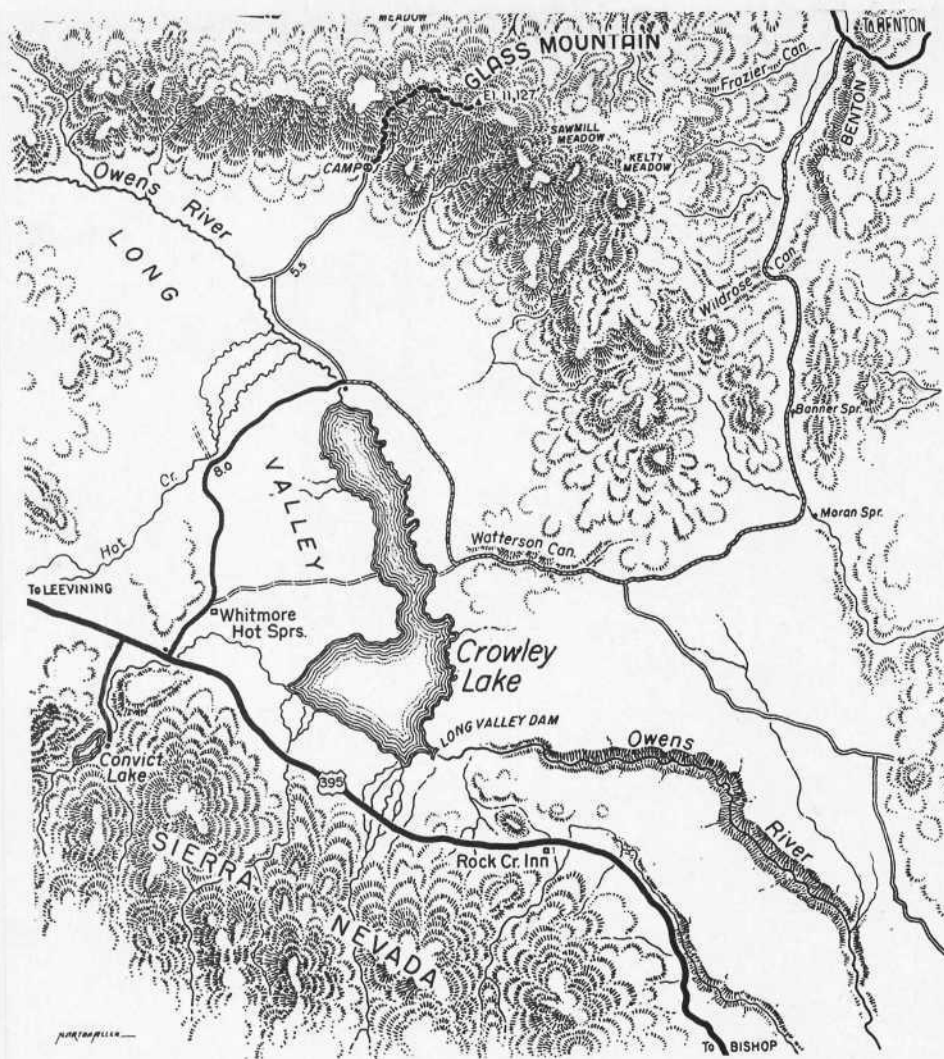
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to picnic and so few people have discovered this choice spot that you may have it all to yourselves.

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new and this brings to mind the fact that our world is never really finished. Under our feet forces are moving, shifting, busy at work on that unfinished project — planet earth. But Mother Nature did complete a *Mountain of Glass* at the base of our Sierras and you will enjoy photographing and climbing on her work of art. ///

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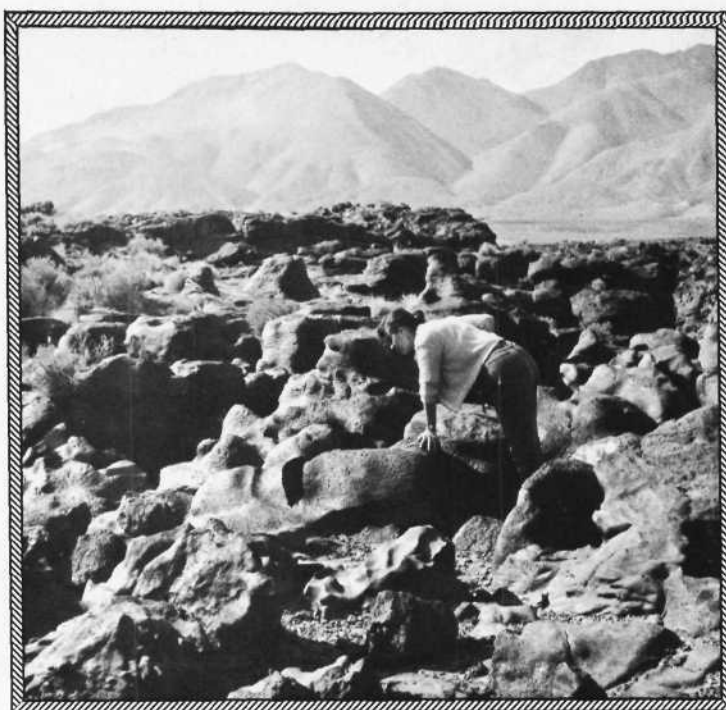
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Where the Falls Turned to Stone

by roger mitchell

AS SUMMER approaches, more and more desert enthusiasts will be turning towards California's High Sierras for their vacations and weekend trips. Many of these mountain bound travelers will be from Southern California and their route will take them north on highways 6 and 395, across the Mojave Desert. At Little Lake they will leave the vast expanse of the Indian Wells Valley and enter the Owens Valley. It is here, at the gateway to this gigantic graben, that one of nature's oddities is preserved in stone.

During the most recent ice age, less than 50,000 years ago, the Owens Valley was somewhat different than it is today. Glaciers covered many of the Sierra peaks to the west and the

runoff from these vast icefields made the Owens Valley considerably more humid. Pleistocene inhabitants of the valley included bison, bear, dire wolves, giant ground sloths and even an occasional sabre tooth tiger and mastodon. These animals lived along the banks of what is now called the Owens River, which in those days was a sizable body of water. The river started far to the north in the vicinity of what is now Glass and Deadman Creeks. Gathering in size it flowed into the Lake Crowley basin, then continued south cutting a gorge in the volcanic tableland north of Bishop. Entering Owens Valley, the river decreased in velocity as it spread out forming lakes and shallow marshland. The largest of these lakes was

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the Owens Lake; its semi-dry bed remains today. Lava fields once again thwarted the flow of the river as it left the valley to the south. The basaltic lava proved to be no great obstacle, however, and the river found a course across it. Where the lava flows terminated, the river left the valley in a series of what must have been spectacular waterfalls.

Evidence indicates this river was a popular attraction for primitive Indians who lived in the area. The Southwest Museum has uncovered, near Little Lake, house sites and artifacts belonging to the ancient "Pinto Man" of some 5,000 years ago. Most of the glaciers had melted about 6,000 years before the coming of Pinto Man, but it seems likely that falls were still flowing.

Today the glaciers have shrunk to a tiny remnant of their original selves, and with them the once mighty Owens River. What meager flow the Owens River now has, is all but taken by the insatiable thirst of the City of Los Angeles. The falls remain, nevertheless — dry perhaps — but today's visitor need not exercise his imagination much to hear their roar and feel their mist. For the traveler bound up the Owens Valley, Fossil Falls offers an interesting geologic interlude requiring no more than an hour's time.

As you drive north on highways 6 and 395, the divided road now bypasses Little Lake (DESERT, June '65). About 3.2 miles beyond, a volcanic cinder cone sits conspicuously in the middle of the valley floor. Just before reaching the southwest base of the cone, a wide graded road crosses the highway. As indicated by a county road sign, this is Cinder Road, built by a firm who quarries the reddish-brown ash for use in cinder blocks.

Turn east here and after 0.5 miles turn right again on the old road leading back in a westerly direction. Follow this road 0.6 miles to its end at the Fossil Falls parking area. From here it is less than a mile by good trail to the top of Fossil Falls.

As you hike along the trail, notice the rocks around you. The dark ones, most prevalent, are basalt lava which flowed from vents and fissures in the Coso Mountains to the east. The reddish-brown material is cinder thrown from Red Hill, the crater behind you. Also seen occasionally are pieces of lightweight gray pumice and shiny black obsidian, further testimony of this region's violent volcanic past.

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At the falls the lava flow seems to have cooled and stopped, forming a high bluff. It is here the ancient Owens River plunged downward in a series of steps to the valley below. Notice how the water has smoothed the coarse basalt and eroded weird

shapes at the top of the falls. Notice too, the numerous pot-holes ground by the action of boulders swirling in the once turbulent water.

This, then, is Fossil Falls, a geologic curiosity left high and dry in a world of constant change. ///

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HEARST'S ENCHANTED HILL

BY MARY A. CRISTY

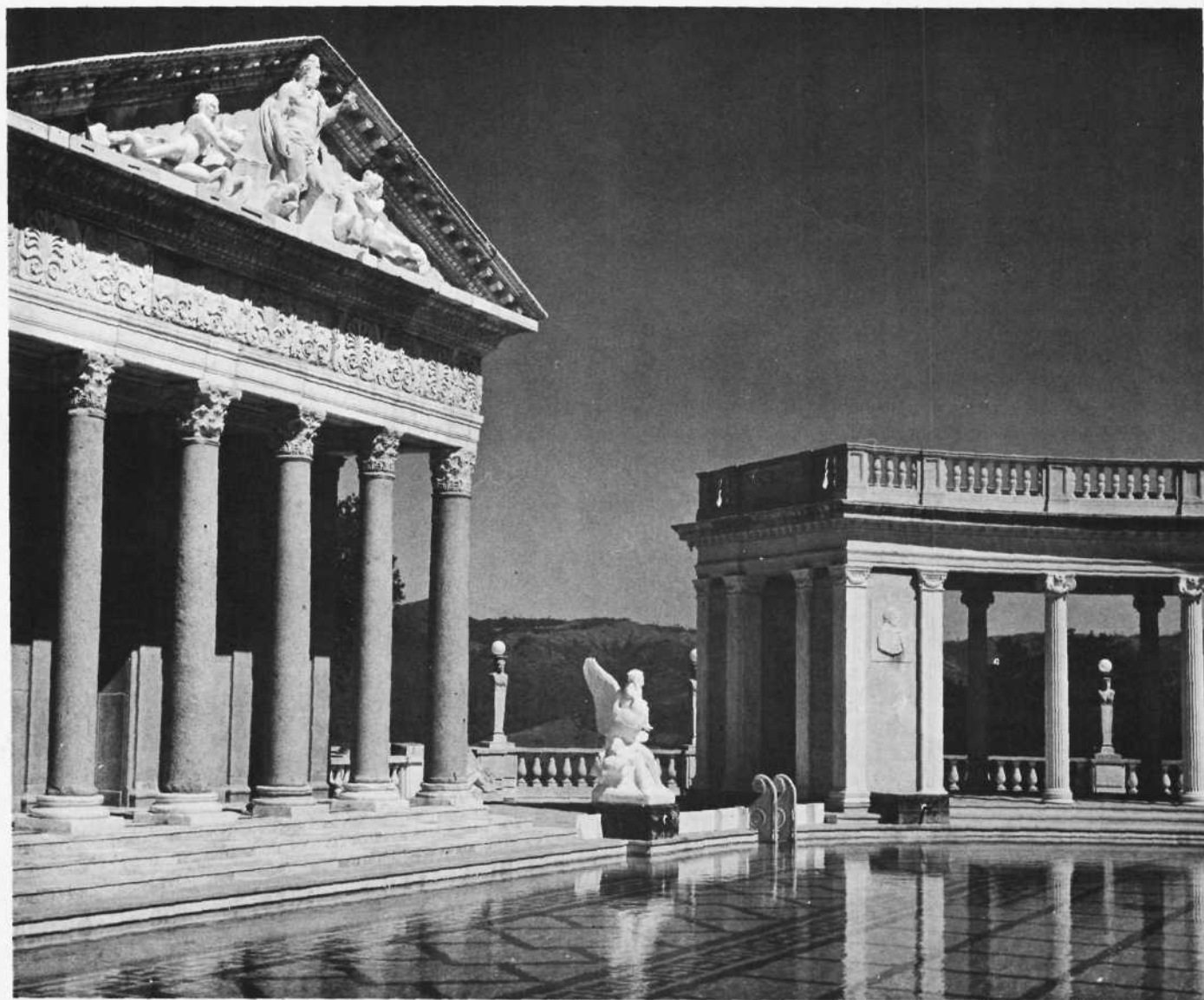
ALONG THE golden coast of California's Highway 1, on one of the original Mission trails established by Spanish Explorers, lies the placid, seaside village of San Simeon, established in 1872.

Above its flat expanse of beach, a hilltop castle is visible. This is the castle that William Randolph Hearst built for his family. It is difficult to conceive of this as a 20th century project. Its splendor seems incon-

gruously romantic in a setting where cattle wander and feed. Heidelberg, or the Black Forest would seem a more appropriate place—or the mists of Brigadoon.

Buses leave the terminal at the base of the hill every 20 minutes, carrying about 50 sight-seers up the winding, five mile drive to the summit. Enchantment increases as you reach the crest of the Santa Lucias, a gleaming range christened *piedras*

blancas (white rock) by the roving Spaniards, and look upon the glitter of mosaics that sparkle from castle towers through the lush groves of citrus, pomegranate, oleander, acacia, eucalyptus and Italian cypress. Paralleling the entrance drive is a mile-long pergola constructed of concrete piers and redwood beams, and espaliered with grape vines and fruit trees vibrant with color and redolent of fragrance.



Spacious terraced patios lead to a guest house harboring, among other treasures, a hand-carved bed believed to have belonged to Cardinal Richelieu. Corbels on the guest house feature the faces of the five Hearst children. The originals were cast by their mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, noted patroness of arts and an artist in her own right. It was from Phoebe that William Randolph Hearst acquired his love for art and beauty. Construction of the three palatial guest houses was begun in 1919. Outstanding as they are, their grandeur is subordinate to the magnificence of La Casa Grande, Hearst's own residence, begun in 1922. All materials had to be hauled up the mountain. Many were brought into the cove of San Simeon by boat. European craftsmen and artists were imported, along with artifacts and marble, to create masterful copies of classic sculptures. Statuary is an integral part of the overall plan and the various figures seem at home in their settings. A 3000-year old Egyptian diorite sculpture is placed in proximity to a classic Three Fates, and each is exactly right for the space it fills.

On the first floor of the castle the tour begins in an imposing vestibule over a Pompeian tile mosaic floor dating to 60 B.C. The refectory, an art-lovers treasure trove, is a long room with hand-carved ceiling panels depicting life-sized saints. Wall-hung tapestries are flanked by carved choir stalls brought from European monasteries. In this room, with its massive, elongated tables, more than 50 guests at a sitting were wine and dined in baronial splendor.

The castle boasts a second-floor library of rare books, one of which was autographed by Queen Victoria. On this floor, too, is the fabulous Gothic Study from whence Hearst conducted much of the work essential to his career as one of America's best-known publishers.

Here, at San Simeon, may be seen some of the rare art objects of the world—a lion-faced deity sculptured on the banks of the Nile in a time before Christ; artifacts of pottery, crystal, silver, gold, terra cotta; icons, oils and marbles encompassing the creativity of man through five centuries and more. In all, the Casa Grande numbers 100 rooms—38 bedrooms, 31 bathrooms and 14 sitting rooms. Hearst channeled an estimated million dollars a year over a period of 50 years to manifest his dream of this shrine to beauty.

Today the castle and its 123-acre estate, which encompasses a zoo (only zebras remain) and a cattle operation begun in 1865 by Senator George Hearst who purchased the original tract, belong to the State of California, a gift from the family in memory of William Randolph Hearst and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. Castle grounds and buildings are open to the public every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. A Roman pool, tennis courts, a theatre seating 100 guests, and the billiard room with its renowned early-Renaissance "Hunt" tapestry are among

attractions that draw eager visitors. But there's another, deeper motive for making a pilgrimage to this enchanted castle. Deep within every human being lies a need to look upon pure beauty and to share in the creativity of great minds. Because William Randolph Hearst, one of the West's greatest patrons of the arts, saw fit to gather beauty from every corner of the globe and house it tastefully within the confines of his fabulous estate, this need may be fulfilled for travelers taking a cool, summer trip along an old mission trail today. *///*



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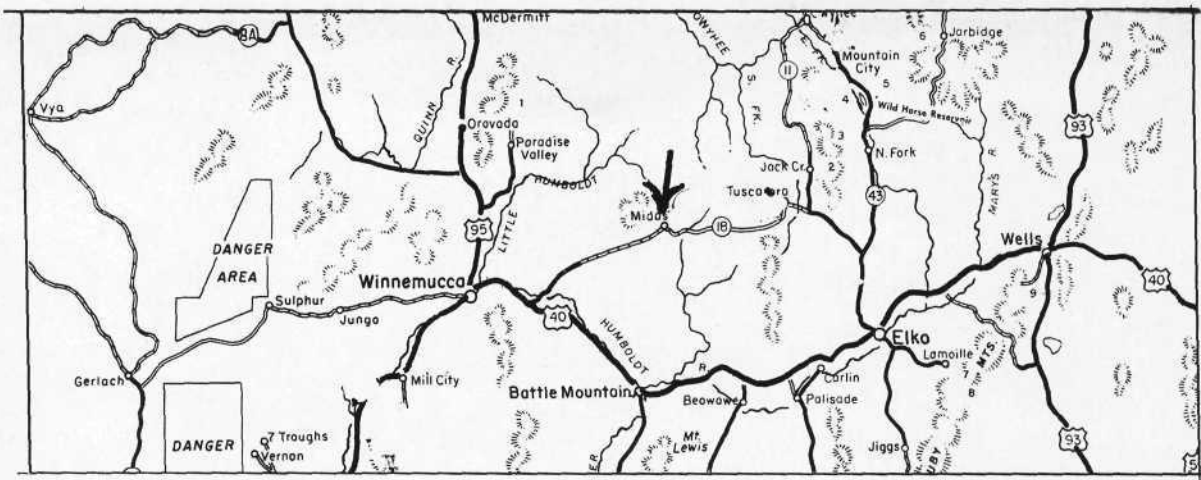
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Midas Had a Mistress - her name was Gold

by Jim Martin

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Author's wife examines old bellow.



Midas as it looks today.

SO EXTOLLED the promoters of Midas in Elko County, Nevada during the boom days of the 1920s. "Fortune Beckons to the Wealth-Laden Hills of Gold Circle," proclaimed a Chamber of Commerce brochure which urged fortune hunters to cross Nevada on the Victory Highway (US 40) and gather riches. Hundreds answered the summons and flocked into the mountains northwest of Winnemucca in search of gold and silver.

Midas, or Gold Circle as the town was officially named when approved by the Board of County Commissioners on November 4, 1907, became the trading center for the area. It blossomed

into a hustling-bustling mining community that proved up on the promised bonanzas for many. More than a dozen mines honeycombed the hills. Many were backed by such prominent names as Charles A. Stoneham, millionaire mining broker and one time owner of the New York Giants; Noble H. Getchel, former Nevada state senator; and the Manassas Mauler himself, Jack Dempsey. The mines wore colorful names—the Rex, Elko Prince, King Midas, Esmeralda, and the Sleeping Beauty. Over \$8 million in ore was removed from their depths and shipped away.

During its hey-day, the town boasted

ed of a postoffice, newspaper, waterworks, several stores, hotels, boarding houses, saloons, a community hall, and the inevitable "chicken ranch" within a discrete distance up the canyon. Streets and blocks were laid out in symmetrical patterns and trees planted to bring shade. By any standards, Midas was a sizable and prosperous settlement.

Travel to Midas today and you will find the same buildings, but with changes. The town hall stands empty, but ready for a meeting. The yellowed keys of a rinky-tink piano inside eagerly await the caress of lively fingers. A well battered ballot box

awaits duty should someone come to call for an election.

Long deserted residences await absentee owners. Stately trees spread branches toward heaven and sweet spring water still gushes through the water system's pipes. In the center of town stands a modern telephone booth, but few are present to hear it ring.

Like many mining communities, Midas bloomed with a flourish, then faded fast. Only a handful of persons now call it home. Fewer still live here the year around. Business life has dwindled to a pair of colorful saloons where friendly barkeeps outdo themselves to bid you welcome. Times grow lively when buckaroos from surrounding cattle ranches drop by on holidays, or when tourists come to explore, but there are also long lonely hours. Solitude and scenic splendor are the bounties of today. And so are abundant opportunities for poking into by-gone times, exploring surrounding terrain, or sharing hospitality with ghosts.

Tourism has yet to tap the area. Commercialism vanished with the departure of the promoters of the . . . Now hills and valleys are despoiled by those who collect. Relics of the early mine alongside arrowheads and Indian artifacts, for this was part of the man's vast domain long before gold seekers came. Squaw Valley, by, was so titled because the wealthy left loved ones hidden in its core when they rode off to fight elsewhere. The lure of golden riches still persists, however, as evidenced by corner markers of modern prospectors which dot the hillsides. "Paper hangers," they are called by the locals, who look with amusement upon the practice of posting the area with claim notices. Yet, should you wish to come visit, hunt for rocks, or hang paper, a warm handclasp awaits you.

To reach Midas, turn north at Golconda on US 40, and follow state route 18 towards the mountains. The road is paved to the Getchel Mine junction (17 miles from the turn-off); the remaining 30 miles are graded and graveled. Check road and weather conditions if you plan a winter visit, for snow occasionally blankets the land. No overnight accommodations are available in Midas so plan accordingly.

This western portion of Elko County is a wild, wonderful land of enchantment; a country richly endowed with natural wealth and beauty. After once sampling its goodness, you'll know why the touch of Midas still persists. ///



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something for everyone...

by jordan detzer

TUCKED INTO a side pocket of long California's pant leg is a curvy little valley that winds between round top mountains. Pine Valley is its name.

Pine Valley is picturesque and historic. Weather-wise, it's tricky. Snow has been known to fall in May, to the delight of parched Southern-Californians, and even in August you'd better carry a sweater for night.

I often look out the bay window of my cabin here and ponder the dynamics of this valley where the des-

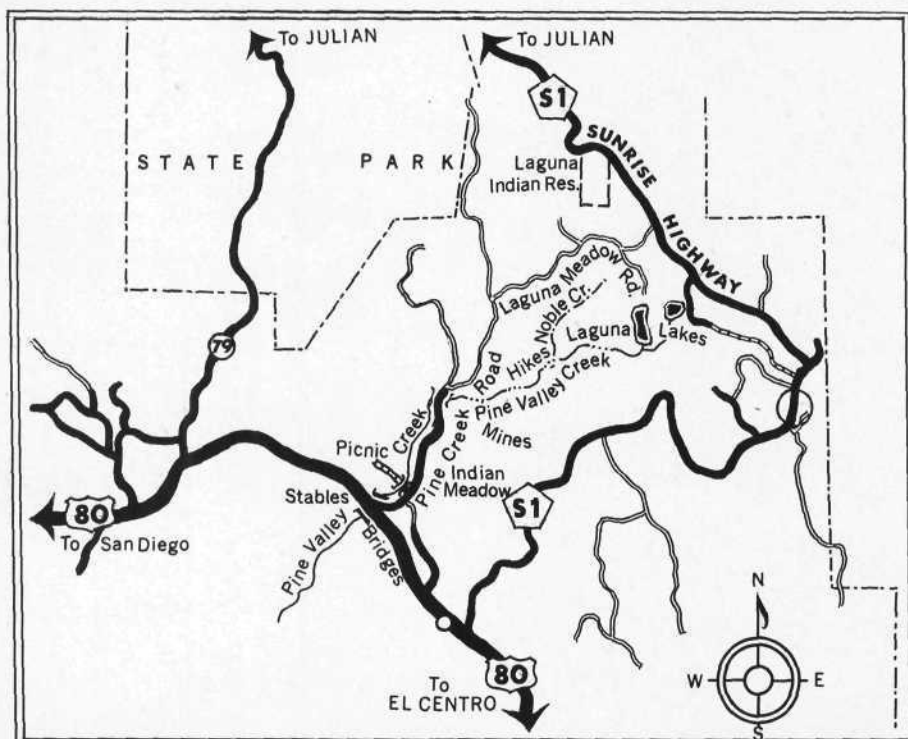
ert meets the mountains. Pine Valley is 3900 feet high with a population of 291. Most people whiz through it while traveling between San Diego and Phoenix, but some stop for a delicious meal at the Hobart house or Major's Coffee Shop. The town has several proud civic buildings, fire and sheriff stations, a Dairy Queen, a quaint grocery store, and an Indian lore building. Sort of a "guest-house" suburb of San Diego, the freeway extends each year and the journey from San Diego, at present, is 40 minutes by state speed laws. Visitors and cab-

in owners zoom up from Calexico and El Centro in nearly the same time.

An enjoyable hiking trail has just been opened along Noble Canyon north of Pine Valley. It is passable with a high center car, but the walk is one of the best in America. Along the creek are beaver dams with chewed tree stumps. Bull frogs bugle, trout dart in the reedy pools and with luck you might spot a four-point deer. All two miles of the rich-veined trail bend through solid granite walls dotted with gold prospect holes.

Into this valley came gold seekers in the early 1800s, leaving an historic trail of broken wooden ore boxes, rusted ore grinders, Spanish stone crushers, old shacks and ancient debris. Before the 1860s Donald Manuel Machado had a ranch in the valley. It was then called "El Valle De los Pinos." An early stage route ran through it and Cocopah and Coyote Indians frequently ran off the cattle and frightened travelers. Finally, Charles Emery of Techate came into the valley with John Ross, a Canadian. They traded one elderly, unidentified man the entire valley for a horse. This included the 11,000 acres of heavily wooded land now within Cleveland National forest.

On the back of the Hobart House menu is the romantic story of G. E. Hobart, who pioneered a control camp in the valley after the war in California ended. He set up a house where travelers could stop for meals and gained a reputation for fine hospitality. When the gold bonanza brought miners into the area, ban-



dits followed. Among the latter were the notorious Murietta Brothers who robbed and pillaged the Valley of the Pines. Hobart, with a two-man posse, set out to capture them and never returned.

Today the valley stands at the end of ancient sea-bed geology, ancient man-made history and the inundation of our suburban civilization. Soon bull-dozers will open up new scenic trails and more picnic tables will appear, like those under the spreading oaks behind the Ranger's home on Highway 80, but there will still be room enough for those who like to walk alone.

The beauty of the valley lies in the contrasting charm of its location between desert terrain and mountain majesty. By moonlight it glows within walls of shining limestone and granite. By daylight you're surprised to find yuccas parading up the slopes. We're thankful for our yet unbesmirched valley where summer climates get confused with fall. But you're welcome any time of year. We're happy to share our wealth of clean air, fragrant pine and country so quiet it gives you a place to visit with yourself. This is something the world could use more of today.

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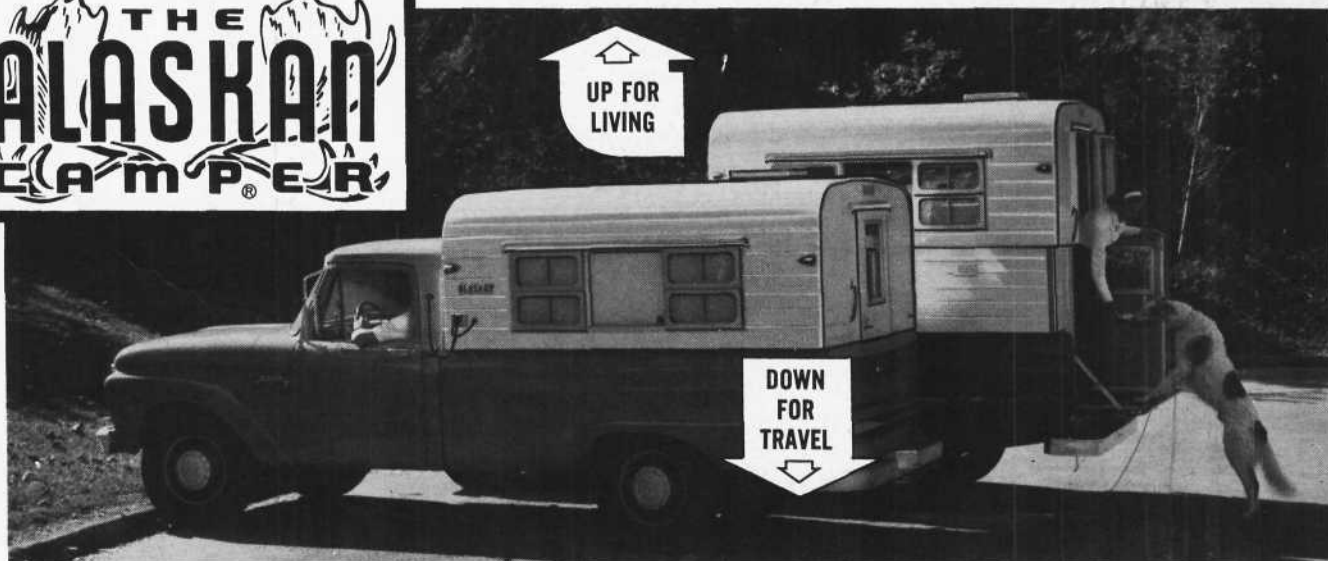
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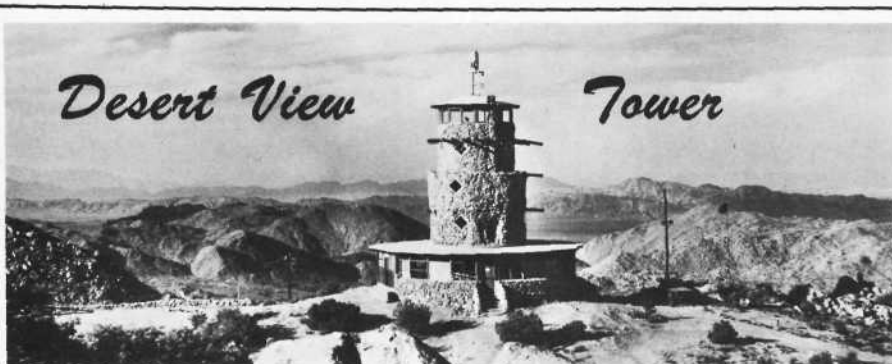
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GOING EAST OR WEST ON CALIFORNIA'S HIGHWAY 80 BETWEEN SAN
DIEGO AND EL CENTRO STOP AT THE DESERT VIEW TOWER, JUST 5
MILES FROM JACUMBA.

The mysterious stone carvings created by prehistoric races may be recorded and preserved by modern collectors without marring the original petroglyph. The Chinese introduced stone rubbing as an art. Here's a way for you to do it yourself with simple, available materials.

Preserving Prehistoric Art

by Georgean Lucas

ALL ALONG the basalt walls of the Columbia River, prehistoric Indians pecked into the stone, with infinite patience, their own distinctive petroglyphs. The circled eye and mouth and the exposed rib design are, I believe, unique to this area. Progress in the form of railways, highways and dams destroyed many of these sites, but, fortunately, some of the petroglyphs were saved and moved to museums and parks. The area above the site of the John Day Dam is one of the last natural river level areas left for the petroglyph hunter today, although in three years it, too, will be under water.

Hunting stone carvings with a camera is exciting, but once you try taking stone rubbings, it becomes an obsession. While working on a stone you are standing where a prehistoric artist stood and your hand is following his. Only a river of time flows between his "then" and your "now."

The stone rubbing process is simple. Basic equipment includes a soft rubber brayer, a palette, (I use a plastic plate), a soft fabric (old sheets work beautifully), freezer tape and oil paints. Tear the material to a suitable size, tape it securely over the carving so it won't shift and prepare your paint by working it to a thin

A brayer, or printer's roller, is rolled into paint on a plastic plate palette and then rolled over sheeting taped with freezer tape to cover stone petroglyph. Finished rubbings are hung up to dry.



This is Tsagagal, "He who watches." According to legend, before people were real people, she was chief. When Coyote came he turned her to stone and commanded her to stay there forever watching over her people. She still overlooks the Mixluidix site, now flooded by The Dalles Dam.

even coating across the palette. Then run the roller over the fabric-covered petroglyph design. Experimenting with color combinations and brayer pressure will help you achieve the effect you wish. Too much paint on the palette and brayer will not only result in a blob on your work, but may soak through to the stone and leave a permanent stain. Roll finished rubbings gently onto a cardboard tube to carry home. I hang mine to dry for about a week, depending upon the paint, and then press them lightly on the back with a steam iron. They are then ready for mounting. When you finish, if you've been careful, you have an actual reproduction of the original in it's true size and texture. And you also have an intriguing, distinctive work of primitive art.

The Winquat Museum at The Dalles, Oregon, displays several dozen petroglyphs which were rescued from the rising lake behind the Dalles Dam. There are also three small samples at The Dalles Chamber of Commerce rest area and they are obliging about permitting you to take rubbings. In the Administration Building at the dam there is an excellent example of the exposed rib motif, although I think it's displayed upside down. They, also, do not object to your taking a rubbing. Immediate-

ly past Roosevelt, Washington, there is a new park devoted to petroglyphs which were moved—as was the town—to escape inundation from water held back by new John Day Dam. This park is primitive, but there are many interesting carvings and several conducive to good rubbings. Other carvings may be found along the river at Roosevelt, some unique in that they are carved on the horizontal surface rather than the vertical. If you will go to the old town of Roosevelt on the ferry road, turn left to the river at the old gas station, and pick your way along the low basalt wall, you can discover them for yourself. This flat field was a fishing campsite for thousands of years in prehistoric times and in many places the stones are rounded and polished by human feet going back and forth to the river.

Along the Deschutes River at Sherer's Bridge, Oregon, on the west side there is still another site. This area is particularly interesting in the spring and fall when the Indians fish for salmon by casting their nets from platforms over the wild river.

Directly west from Tygh Valley in the Badger Cliffs, I've heard there are more carvings, which means I'll be off very shortly on an unexplored trail!

///

Rogue River Valley

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The color of Desert Magazine's new home in Palm Desert, California is called "Desert Sunset". In addition to the editorial offices, the new home of Desert Magazine has a Book Shop and a display of desert treasures.

by Jack Pepper
Publisher, Desert Magazine

JUST BEFORE this issue of Desert Magazine went to press I received a telephone call from our printer in Los Angeles.

"I've looked all through our color combination ink book," he said, "and I can't match the color of this photograph of your new building. What do you call it and how do you get it?"

"It's very simple," I explained. "You go out into the desert where the air is fresh and clean. At dawn you set up your camera—you wait until the sunrise accentuates the morning shadows, and then you shoot your picture.

"After that you go back to your camp, give your wife a hearty kiss—like you forget to do when you're rushing off to the office—rustle your kid's hair, flex your muscles, and yell, 'Whose ready for bacon and eggs!'

"Next you get in your car and drive along at 10 miles an hour or less. This way you can see a chuck-walla warm its belly on a hot rock, see tiny wild flowers pop from the

earth, watch a floppy-eared jack rabbit lope through the brush or, if you're alert, maybe catch sight of a wild burro.

"And, at 10-miles an hour you have time to watch for places to hunt purple bottles or sites of ghost towns where unhurried men claimed they were looking for gold, but who were really just looking for solitude. You can also stop to look for gemstones and rocks which may be worthless to others, but are priceless to you because later they bring back the good feeling and smell of the outdoors. Then, again, you might find Pegleg's Lost Gold . . . or the Seven Cities of Cibola . . . or at least learn that all that glitters is not gold."

I was interrupted by a slightly dazed printer, "Yeah," he said, "but what do you call the color . . . ?"

"I was trying to explain . . . it's not a color, it's a mood, a feeling . . . at DESERT Magazine we call it 'Desert Sunset,' but you could just as well call it 'Desert Sunrise,' or maybe . . ."



Desert Magazine's new Book Shop and Mail Order Department offers the world's largest selection of books on the West.

New Home of *Desert*



The telephone went dead! I guess the operator cut us off—or maybe the printer did. You can see from the reproduction, he didn't quite capture the real color. And, although we tried, we too didn't quite capture the mood. You just can't do it with man-made paint or ink or film . . . but there's still the challenge.

Which is exactly what *DESERT* Magazine has been for the past 28 years. A challenge to use your imaginations and feelings. A challenge to assert your individualities and achieve self-reliance in country where the rules you follow are your own. *DESERT* knows that by getting out under the open sky you can attain this satisfaction. And if you can't do it physically, you can do it with us through our articles.

For the third time in its 28-years of publication, *DESERT* has moved to a new location. Each move has been an advancement to bigger and better quarters. The new home is located only a block from the old building.

We now have a Book Shop featuring the West's most outstanding authors. These books are displayed among artifacts and unusual gift items gathered as we make our trips through the West.

Although we have been in our new quarters only a few weeks, visiting readers are so enthused with the atmosphere they have loaned us valuable items to add to our display. Only today Charles Barros of Indio, California, brought in a Yaqui Indian Deer Dance belt which has been in his family for three generations. It is now displayed alongside Pegleg's gold nuggets, Ken Marquiss' antique insulator, some original stock certificates from the Yellow Aster Mine contributed by Carl Macur, a petrified log from Carl McCoy of Blythe, and on of Juanita's famous pine needle baskets given to us by Sam Hicks.

The new quarters provide ample room for our editorial, art, advertis-

ing, circulation and promotion offices and we have an additional lot at the rear for expansion. In the past two years *DESERT*'s circulation has increased from 36,000 to 48,000 and is rising steadily each month. As circulation and advertising increase, we will continue to add color and pages to your *DESERT* magazine.

As I stated in my column this month, we are combining the August and September editions into one issue, the largest ever published in our history, so readers will have a wider selection of interesting places to see during their summer vacations. Our next issue will be the October issue in which we will again feature trips and living in southern desert areas.

Whether your vacation is on the open road, or simply sitting at home reading *DESERT* Magazine, we hope this issue brings you an escape from regimentation and the strong, silent song of desert, mountain, and back-country adventure. ///

Less than one hour from Los Angeles lies this fascinating old mining town and a famous bird sanctuary open to the public.



WHERE MODJESKA LIVED

by John DeSha Davis

A REQUEST THAT the young actress be given a chance to perform came directly from the governor of the state. Fantastic? Not a bit. Just such a request was made by the governor of California in 1877. The actress? None other than a Polish immigrant with the impossible name of Helenie Modrzejewskiej Chlapowska, who for years was to thrill American

theatregoers as Madame Helena Modjeska. The occasion was the famed tragedienne's debut in *Adrienne Lecouvreur* at the Old California Theatre in San Francisco, a performance carried out over the heads of producers reluctant to favor the then almost unknown little girl from Europe.

The outcome of Helena Modjeska's

Silverado was once the home of Mark Twain's "Colonel Sellers."



appearance that night in San Francisco is now history. From that day forward she enchanted audiences from coast to coast as Camille, as Cleopatra, as Mary Stuart.

Perhaps a lesser known facet of the renowned actress's life was her love for California's countryside, in particular that still untrammelled bit of Southern California known today as Modjeska Canyon, safely secluded within the confines of Cleveland National Forest and just a few miles east of Santa Ana.

In the canyon named for her, not far south of the once prosperous mining town of Silverado, Helena Modjeska built her home in the Forest of Arden.

For motorists who have an interest in California's colorful history, a trip to Modjeska Canyon is recommended. The house today is in private hands and not open to the public, but there are compensations. A number of interesting attractions are found along the scenic canyon road approaching Modjeska's retreat—not the least of which is the old mining town of Silverado.

Thirty minutes south from Los Angeles on the Santa Ana Freeway is the eastbound Chapman Avenue turnoff. Five miles farther to the east, after passing through bustling Orange and newly-awakened El Modeno, Chapman Avenue winds into the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains, majestically presided over by Old Saddleback, one of whose twin 5000-foot peaks is named for Madame Modjeska.

Four miles after turning south on Santiago Canyon Road is Irvine Lake. Formed by Santiago Dam, this pleasant expanse of blue-green water is full of trout, bass, bluegill, and catfish. Fees for boat rentals are reasonable and refreshments are available from early March until mid-September.

Down the road, Santiago Creek trickles a meandering path among trees right up to the gate of the Modjeska home. Seven miles from Chapman Avenue and about four miles before entering Modjeska Canyon, Silverado Canyon Road wanders off to the left. Set deep within its canyon, lies the little community of Silverado. During its heyday in the 70s, the town boasted three hotels and no less than seven saloons, along with the inevitable Wells Fargo office. Here, too, dwelled Mark Twain's "Colonel Sellers."

Off the pavement, in remote regions of the canyon, a half-dozen mine workings lie dormant. The bits of silver that once forecast a shining

future for Silverado soon gave way to a poor grade of coal—coal which did manage, nevertheless, to sustain the little town during the days of the steam locomotive.

A half-mile south of the Silverado turnoff lies Silverado School. The country now becomes more rugged and soon oaks crowd the road. About two miles beyond the school, "Hangman's Sycamore Tree," recalls a distant day when a legendary hill bandit, Flores, and two of his henchmen met an untimely end.

Where Santiago Canyon Road meets Modjeska Road, in a triangle dominated by a great multi-branched tree, the past truly meets today. A left turn from S18 onto Modjeska Road leads to the Sweden Inn. Here, after walking across a little wooden bridge east of the inn, you may look through a gate over the spacious lawns of Modjeska's forest garden. With a little imagination, you can almost hear the tinkle of a distant piano and the laughter of bygone days when Paderewski, Henryk Sienkiewicz and other great artists gathered at Modjeska's old gabled ranch house designed by famed architect Stanford White.

After your imagination has had its play, you might stop at Sweden Inn for coffee and a slice of old-world applet cake topped with whipped cream.

At the very end of Modjeska Canyon is the Tucker Bird Sanctuary. More than 140 species of birds common to this part of America, not the least of which are hummingbirds, have brought fame to this sanctuary. No admission is charged and guests may sit comfortably on a glassed-in porch and watch the little "hummers" feed from special feeders developed by the California Audubon Society. Free lectures are given every day throughout the year and a sanctuary garden established by Madame Modjeska's English gardener may also be visited.

A return to the throbbing freeway may be negotiated via two routes. One, retrace your route into the area. The other is a continuation of S18 along Modjeska Road to its junction with Santiago Canyon Road. From this point, the road ascends rapidly via several hairpin turns to a promontory forming the southwest wall of Modjeska Canyon. Following a tortuous descent, the road becomes more friendly as it gently unwinds toward the sea off to the southwest. At an intersection with S19 at Cook's Corner, proceed straight ahead via El Toro Road to the Santa Ana Freeway. ///



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The Secret of A Man Named Schmidt

by Slim Randles

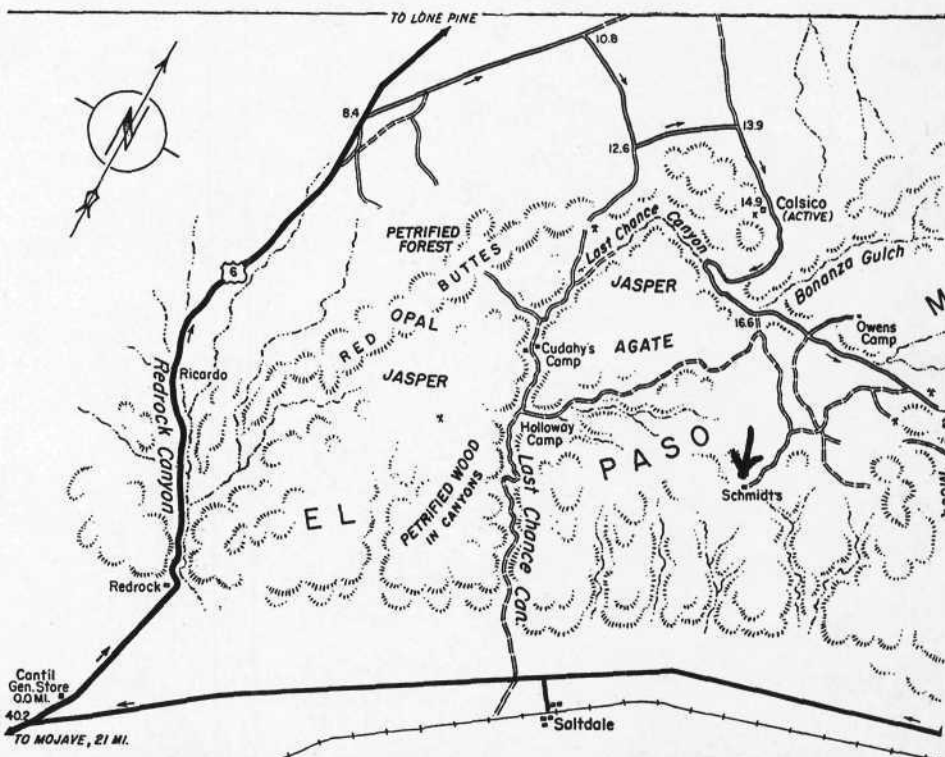
HISTORIANS ESTIMATE it took 100,000 men over 30 years to complete the great pyramid of Khufu in ancient Egypt, but a lone prospector in the high El Paso Mountains of California spent 38 years fashioning a monument to himself that will outlast the ancient tomb. This monument is the hand-drilled tunnel of "Burro" Schmidt, estimated to last 500,000 years, some 250,000 years after the pyramids of Egypt are leveled.

This excavation, little known beyond its area, is a source of both pride and wonder to local residents. Why a man would spend half his lifetime drilling a hole through a mountain of solid rock is a question often contemplated.

We arrived at the entrance to the tunnel, some 4000 feet above sea level north of Mojave, late in the afternoon. High elevation and cooling winds make it a pleasant desert trip even in summer. Near the tunnel's entrance is the old prospector's cabin which stands next to the modest dwelling of the camp's sole inhabitant, Mrs. Tonie Seger. As we were anxious to see the tunnel before dark,

Mrs. Seger furnished us with lanterns and we began the long walk through the heart of Copper Mountain. The tunnel runs straight for 1600 feet, then makes a right-angle turn to emerge on the south side of the mountain, affording a breathtaking view of the Saltdale district 2000 feet below and the high Sierra crest above. Carved out of solid granite, the long shaft has no shoring, save for a few timbers at either entrance. Averaging five feet wide and seven feet high, it gives way to larger alcoves at times, shot through with veins of copper and gold. The inside of the tunnel varies less than 5 degrees in temperature, providing shelter from cold winds in winter and hot sun in summer. Our most appalling thought as we moved through the tunnel was that in less than 2000 feet we had walked through half a man's lifetime!

William Henry Schmidt, fated to be known as the "Human Mole" in Ripley's *Believe it or Not* some 68 years later, was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, in 1871. The Schmidt family was cursed with tuberculosis, three sisters and three brothers dying





before the age of 30. At 24, urged by his doctor to go to the desert to fight the disease, young Schmidt went to work for the Kern County Land Company. In 1906 he located several claims on Copper Mountain near the present tunnel, but no one will know how good they were, as none was ever worked. First, miles of road had to be built to transport ore to the smelter. Schmidt figured that by drilling a tunnel through the heart of Copper Mountain, he could transport his ore to the Borax road that connected Death Valley with Mojave, thus saving money and time. Immediately he began drilling his tunnel, with only a hand drill and a four-pound hammer. To pay expenses, he worked on ranches in Kern Valley during summer months, but always returned in the fall to his cabin built of scrap lumber. Jack and Jenny, two faithful burros who remained with him for 25 years, hauled his supplies from Randsburg. It was because of their constant presence that Schmidt acquired the nickname of "Burro."

Until the tunnel was half finished, his goal of access to roads for his ore drove him deeper and deeper into the mountain. Then the tunnel's purpose became obsolete. A railroad was put through Indian Wells Valley and a good road to nearby Dutch Cleanser mine made the drilling of the tunnel a waste of time. But instead of working his claims and using the roads, Burro persisted in drilling his half-completed shaft. Some people considered this a sure sign of insanity. Others, more romantic, spread rumors of a lost lode of gold known as the Crystal Room, where Schmidt had supposedly found a fortune and used the tunnel as an excuse to stay on the mountain.

Living and working alone, he shunned company and spent most of his daylight hours working on his hole. He laid a small track in the

tunnel and bought a hand car to transport muck from within the mountain to the pile of tailings at the north entrance of the shaft. Mrs. Seger said he quit buying kerosene for lanterns when the price jumped from 5c to 10c per gallon, preferring to use small candles which cost only 5c for three. After drilling in 1700 feet, he found the candles wouldn't burn due to lack of oxygen. Many times he worked in the dark—this for a man with tuberculosis!

In his wooden shack, now a museum, are displayed relics of his 38 years in the tunnel. On the walls are hand drills and in the center of the room is an iron cookstove he purchased for \$4.00. It was estimated he cooked nearly 25,000 meals on it—chiefly beans and flapjacks, accompanied with large quantities of whiskey.

Finally, after 38 years of hard work with hammer, jack and dynamite, he broke through to the south side of the mountain and completed what is probably the greatest example of one man's persistence on a single project. A brief glow of fame included an article in *Time* magazine and an offer from Robert Ripley to appear on a New York radio program. Geologists from all over the country arrived to view the tunnel and in a short time it became a tourist attraction.

Burro Schmidt was 68 at the time he completed his tunnel. Following that he operated it as a tourist attraction until his death in 1962 at the age of 83. Tonie Seger, the present owner of the camp and tunnel, bought the place after a tax sale, not knowing the story of the tunnel at the time. Today you may walk through it at no charge. Good roads lead to the camp either from Hart's Place on Highway 6 or through Last Chance Canyon from Cantil. Mrs. Seger, who has become an authority on the history of the area, is a charming hostess.

In 38 years of drilling, Schmidt was known to have sold only 20 tons of ore from the estimated 2600 cubic yards of rock he took from the shaft. The ore, sold at \$60 per ton, brought him \$1200 for the \$44,000 worth of labor he estimated he contributed to the tunnel. Yet, when the old man died \$2700 cash was found under the windowsill of his cabin and caches of gold nuggets have turned up here and there in his camp. Perhaps the story of a lost Crystal Room is true. Who can say? Several people yet alive claim to have seen the room which he, reportedly, blasted shut upon completion of the tunnel. ///

Was this strange
man's project a mania
— or did he have
something valuable
to hide? It's up to
you, the reader, to
decide.



The Staff of Life

by Bruce Barron

Astonishing as it may seem, the saintly torch called Our Lord's Candle (*Yucca Whipplei*), once fulfilled a great number of basic needs in its spiny package. In early spring when young stalks emerged like huge asparagus tips, primitive Indians roasted them in rock-lined fire pits similar to those we dig for clam bakes today. The result was a sticky mass of juicy pulp eaten like thick pudding, pressed into patties, or dried in hot desert sun and stored for lean winter months. By diluting pulp with water, these Indians concocted a sweet beverage and by grinding the seeds of mature plants with stone utensils, they made a flour that could be mixed with other foods.

These marvelous plants contain saponin, a soap-like substance which lathers in the hardest water. What a blessing it must have been for washing fingers gooey with roasted agave! Referred to as *amole* by Spanish settlers, this soap was also used by Indians to treat certain skin ailments.

Yucca stalks attain considerable rigidity as they grow tall. In many areas they grow over 10 feet high. Stalks were used by early Indians to reinforce the adobe ceilings of hogans and cliff dwellings and to provide framework for temporary "wickiups" that were then covered with mats woven of fibre obtained from the plant's leaves.

These fibres were extracted by a process of soaking and beating to separate the fibre from the pulp. Then they were rolled against the hips of hefty squaws to form long strands that could be woven into clothing, sandals, mats, blankets or

thread to sew hides and furs. Sharp spines on the ends of the leaves furnished needles to facilitate the sewing.

But, along with all of its practical applications, yucca combines beauty with practicality. An intricately patterned planter may be created by kicking away the plant's dried leaf spikes where they join the dead flower stalk, sawing the stalk to the height you wish the bowl to be, and hollowing out the center with fire and a knife, leaving two or three inches of unburned material at the base. You may then insert a tin can or container and steady it by pouring dry sand into the crevices between it and the inner walls of the yucca. Various sized bowls may also be employed to hold magazines, knitting, or to provide unusual waste baskets.

On a recent trip to Baja, where the yucca is plentiful, we found ourselves short on containers to carry our rapidly accumulating mementos of the trip. One evening we chanced upon a camping spot amid a large group of agaves which had died and were bleaching in the sun. Immediately we went to work and soon had a number of lightweight baskets in which we could carry our ore samples, fossils, sea shells, fresh clams, and other treasures.

If man must someday re-emerge from cave dwellings as a result of his indiscretions in the use of nuclear warfare (or some other diastrophic force), it would be comforting to find that these hardy plants had survived and were again available to sustain human life while civilization re-established itself. ///





This wild, rip-roarin' mining camp
of the 1800s is today considered an
educational sojourn into Western
America's past!

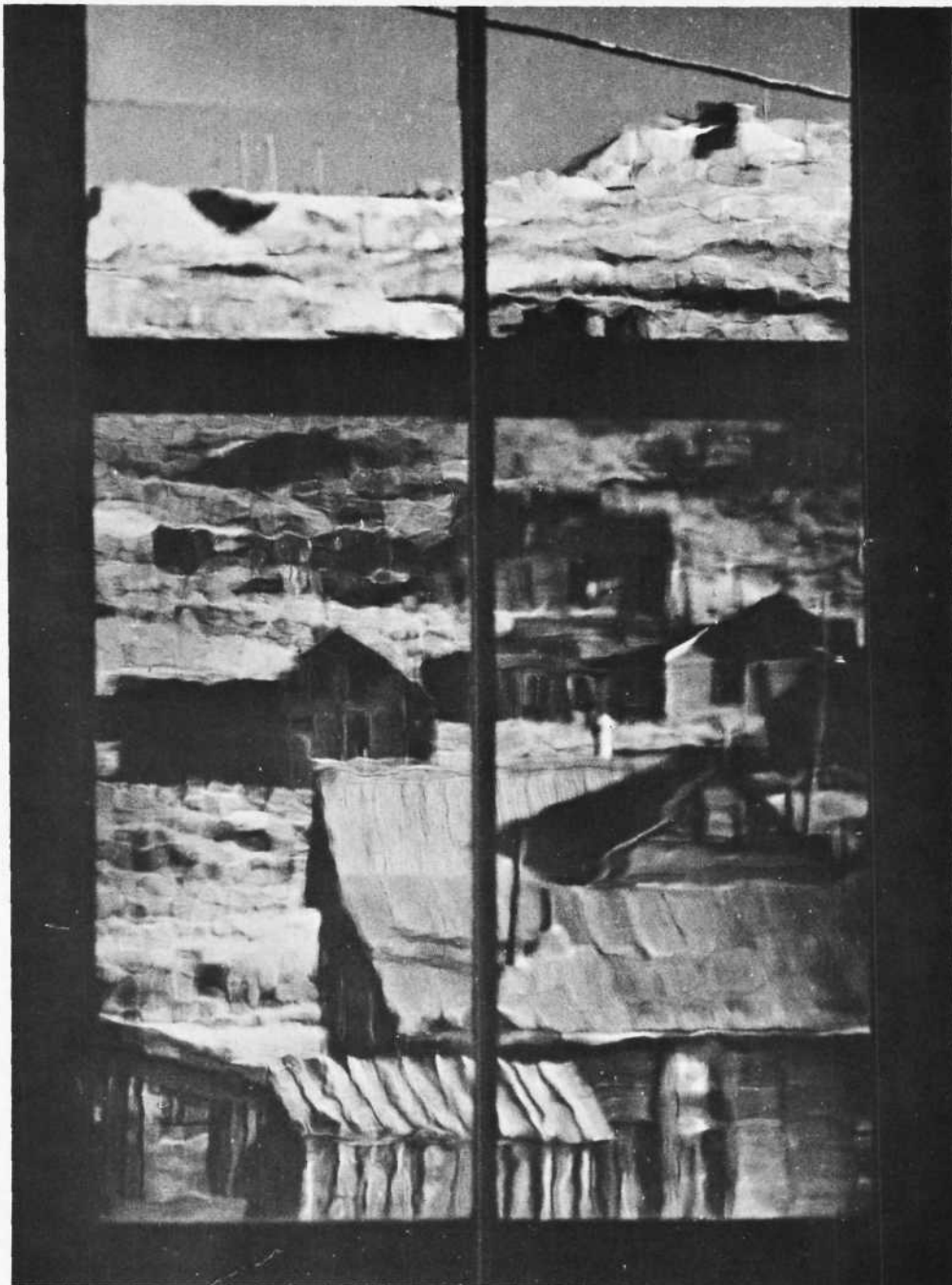


Photo by Tom Meyers

NO MORE sin IN BODIE

by marie forker

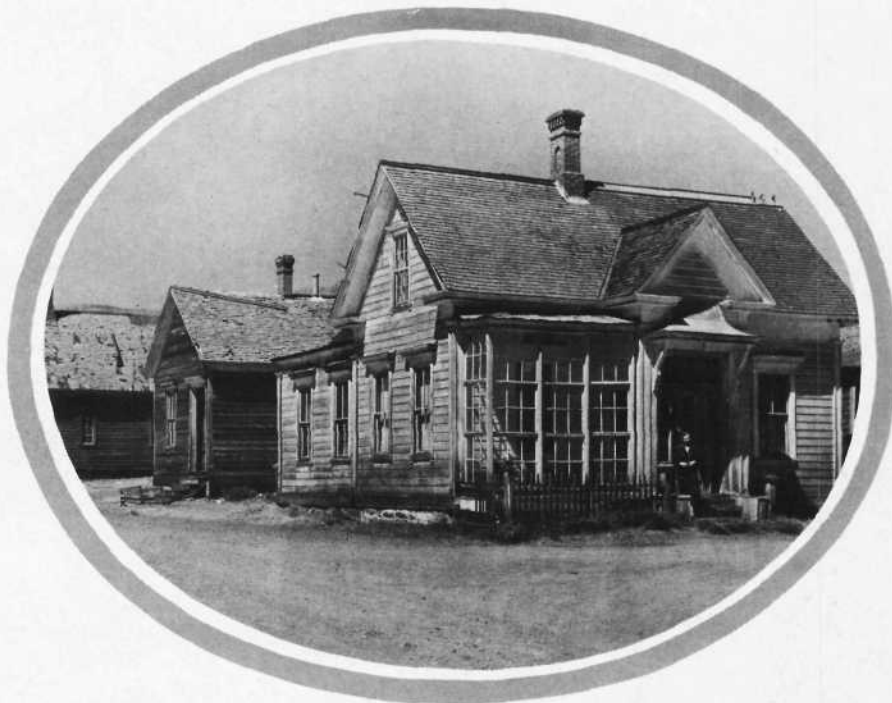
"GOOD-BYE, GOD! I'm going to Bodie," was supposedly added to the end of a prayer said by a small child whose parents were, like thousands of others, rushing to the big, rich, gold strike at Bodie, California. The editor of a Bodie paper allowed that the child's words were misquoted, that what she really said was, "Good! By God, I'm going to Bodie." It takes both versions of the words to describe the feelings of all the Bodieites of that time; the bold and venturesome would go along with the editor, while the more serious must have known, as did the little girl, that it might be a one-way trip. This was more than a century ago, and even today, this two-way phrase serves to accentuate the fact that Bodie "was and rightly deserved its reputation as the most lawless, the wildest, and the toughest mining town the West has ever seen."

The old miner's legend that says

"where God puts gold, He seldom puts much else" was evident to us as we rounded the last curve and came upon our first view of the old ghost town silhouetted against the Bodie hills. Later, walking about the buildings, closed mines, and tumbling tombstones on Boot Hill, I could not help but know that for each ounce of precious gold taken from those barren hills, that same earth took its dole in human tragedies. The untimely death of William S. Bodey, the 45-year-old New York Dutchman who discovered gold here, was the initial installment. He lost his life in a blizzard during his first winter. When his companions found him after the spring thaws, only naked bones and a few personal articles indicated it was Bodey. They buried him there on the bluff where he'd been covered so long under the snow and soon his grave became unknown. But in 1879 his remains were

found and re-interred with a fitting ceremony in Bodie's "Boot Hill." Speeches were made and everyone allowed that the man for whom the town was named, although incorrectly spelled, should rest in peace in Bodie's own soil. Citizens subscribed a fund for a monument carved from granite brought down from Bodie Bluff, but the tired bones of Bodey remained unmarked. Upon the news of Garfield's death, the monument was inscribed instead to the memory of the martyred president. In a grave further up the hill, overgrown with bunchgrass and unmarked until a few years ago, rest the remains of William S. Bodey. Today, however, a bronze plate on the grave proclaims him the discoverer of Bodie's gold with these appropriate words: "Let him repose in peace amid these everlasting hills." It is dated 1957.

Ironically, this is almost a century



The Cain residence in Bodie. This colorful mining camp is mentioned often in the writings of Mark Twain. Its mines yielded over \$80 million in gold.

after that day in 1959 when William S. Bodey trudged over that hill, pulled his burro to a sudden stop, panned a few scoops of dirt, and yelled, "Gold! Gold! Gold!" His nuggets and the *Veta Madre*, as the Mexicans call a mother vein, were enough to make anyone yell, and Bodey felt he was going to be well rewarded for that "hell of a long distance he had come to find it." But that distance was only a modicum to the distance those words of his were to travel, for no words ever spoken echoed and reverberated so far. People came from everywhere, even from across the seas, to therip-roarin', gun barkin', hell-camp called Bodie.

Today, the crumbling, neglected graveyard attests to the fact that Bodie dealt its people a hard life. Cold winters, sickness, shootings, and accidents kept grave diggers busy and etched plates on the tombstones indicate that life spans were short.

Colorful, raucous Bodie with its shootings, brawls and stabbings was known as a "Shooting Town." One episode, involving a fast-draw artist and a quick-firing Pete, ended in a duel with a double funeral the next day. By-standers called it a tie!

Pages of history can be read from the weather-worn buildings and bric-a-brac left behind by the lusty miners when the town boasted a population of over 10,000 people. In the museum there is a horse-drawn hearse, ornate with etched silver and embellishments used by Bodie's notorious undertakers who fell to robbing graves and taking coffins to brazenly resell.

The brick building near the one-room school house was the sub-station power house. The line came 13 miles from Green Creek, and was the first instance where electric power was transmitted over wires for any distance anywhere in the world. The line ran straight, regardless of obstacles, as it was believed then that the voltage would bounce off the wire at the turns.

In spite of fires that almost leveled the town several times many relics have been saved by the Cain family who lived in Bodie during its great days when the mines produced over \$80,000,000 worth of gold.

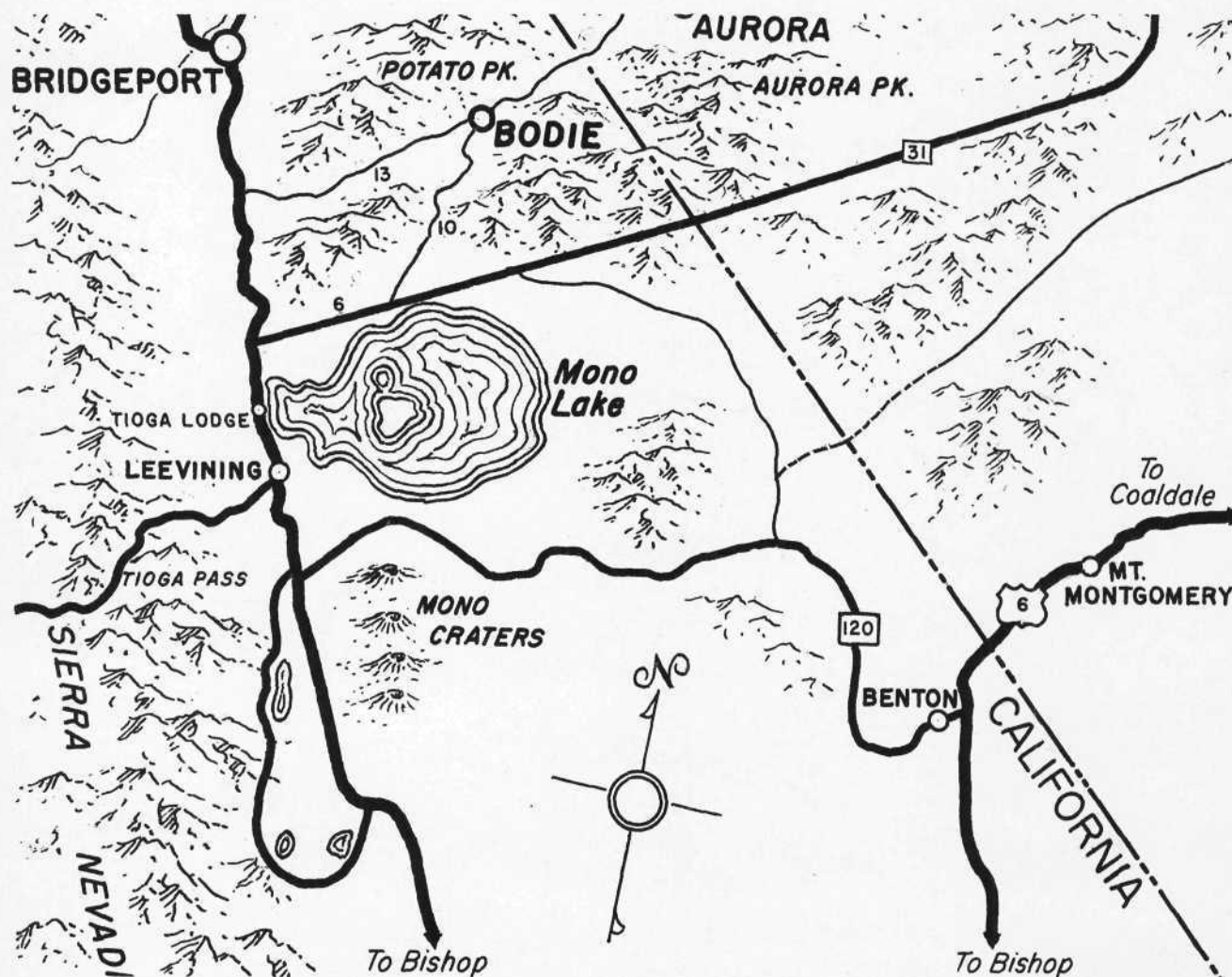
Though Bodie once boasted 60 saloons, seven breweries, and many lodging and gambling houses, today you will find no accommodations although food, motels, and campsites

may be had by going back to U. S. Highway 395 and driving back north to Bridgeport, Carson City, or Reno, south to Lee Vining, Bishop, and the various passes into Yosemite and the other National Parks. If headed East into Nevada, then Hawthorne on U.S. Highway 95 is only 40 miles to the east. Even in mid-summer, it is cool here.

Mrs. Cain, Bodie's chief biographer, has recently managed to breathe Bodie back to life. She was born and raised there and married the son of a prominent resident. Because of this family's devotion to the spot, they fought hard to turn the old ghost of Bodie into a state park — a status achieved in the Fall of 1964.

Plans for development are many, but foremost will be its preservation with no commercialization. In all of our trips in search of interesting, out-of-the-way places, we have seldom come upon a place as educational as this where old landmarks are not ruthlessly demolished or covered with superhighways. How invigorating it was to stumble upon this old spot, filled with memories of the past, yet untouched by the hands of progress and transition!

///



EXPLORING ARIZONA FOR GEMS

by Justine Lancaster

TALK TO a gem collector about Arizona and he will paint a picture of a vast cornucopia of precious and and semi-precious gems, petrified wood, amethyst, garnet, gold, silver, turquoise, peridots — just waiting to be gathered. It helps if you have a 4-wheel drive vehicle to hit the back-country bonanzas, but a surprising number of good gem fields lie right along paved roads. Following are a number of locations visited *recently* by this writer.

Superior - Apache Tears

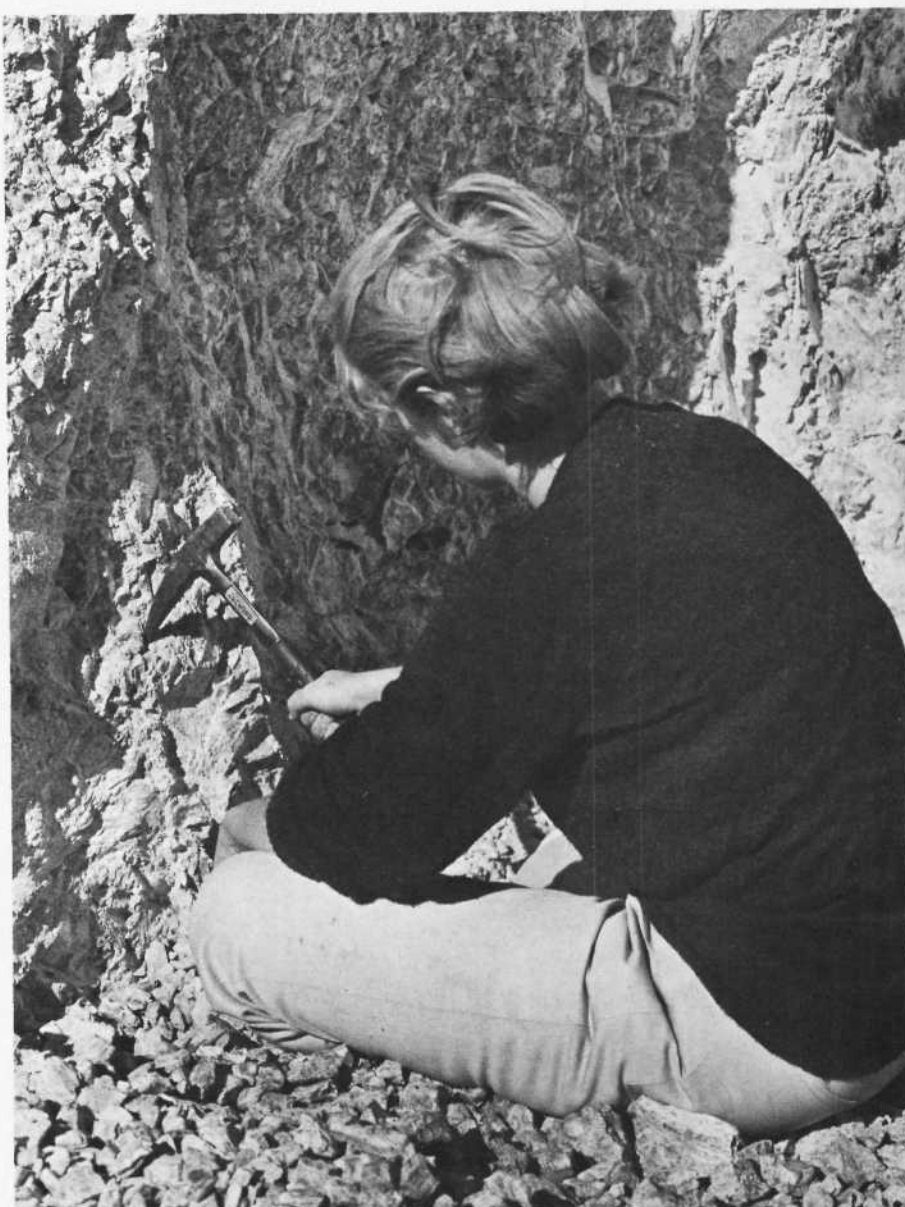
Beside Pickett's Mountain just outside of Superior, lies a vast Apache Tear field. Apache tears are small globules of volcanic glass, or obsidian. Usually a dark smokey grey and transparent, they may have dark black bands or striations through them. When banded, the tears form beautiful patterns with which the lapidarian can form a cat's eye. This type is sometimes incorrectly called smokey topaz.

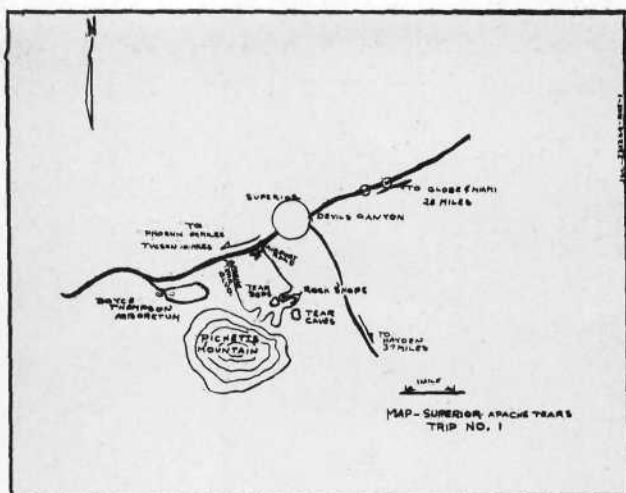
The most popular Arizona source is in the desert west of Superior. Three miles west of Superior on Highway 60-70 is the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, at the foot of Pickett's Mountain. A picnic area and colorful trails make the arboretum an excellent stop.

Driving toward Superior from the arboretum, the top of the hill on 60-70 has a road leading off to the right (south) called Apache Tear Road. You can also take the next right (south) at the Superior Airport. Both roads are dirt, but easily traveled. Either road will put you in the middle of the Apache tear beds in about one mile.

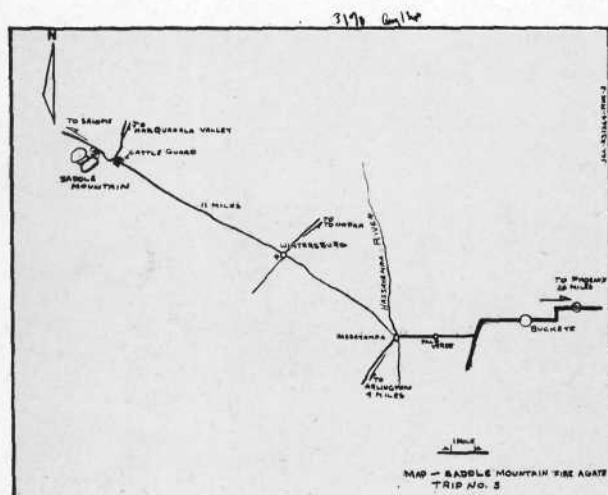
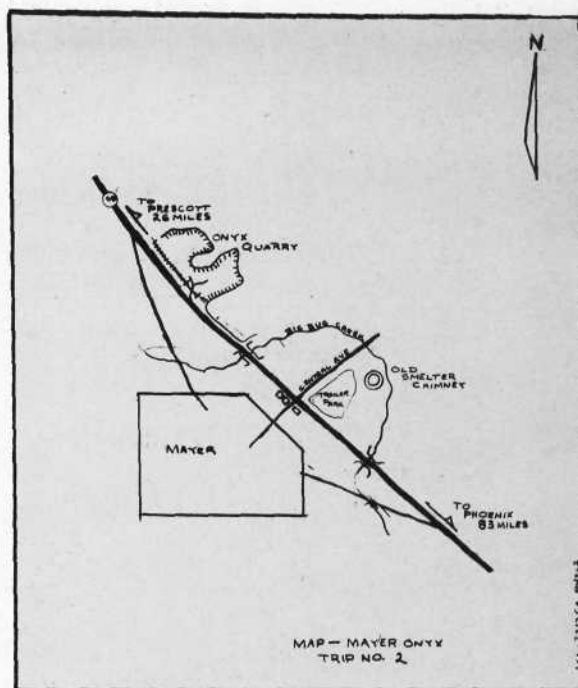
Various signs will lead you to small rock shops at the tear beds. Al-

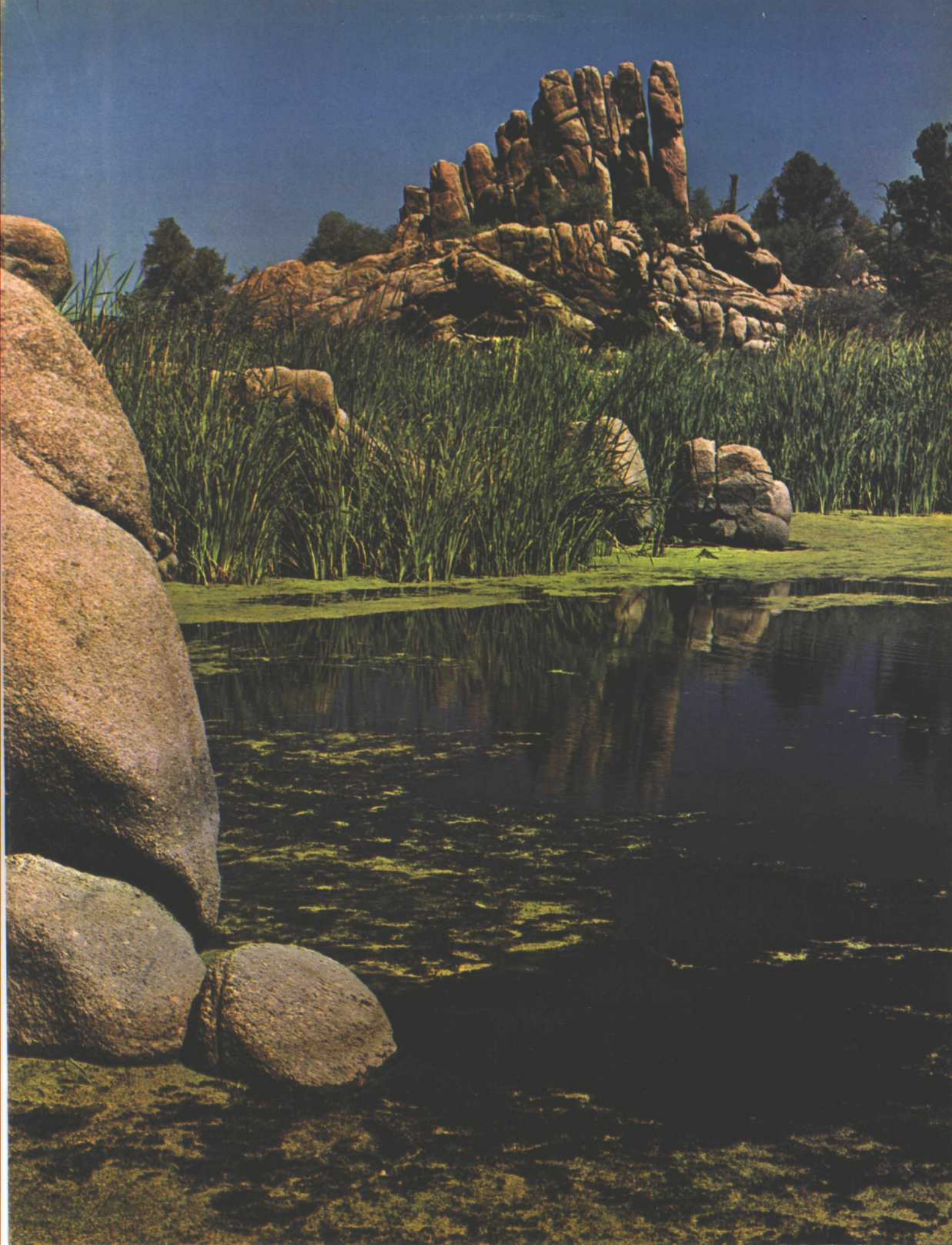
DESERT Magazine hesitates to publish field trips to gem fields because such articles are too often written by authors without current information. In this issue we are pleased to make an exception. The conscientious author has personally and currently visited each of the fields discussed in her article.

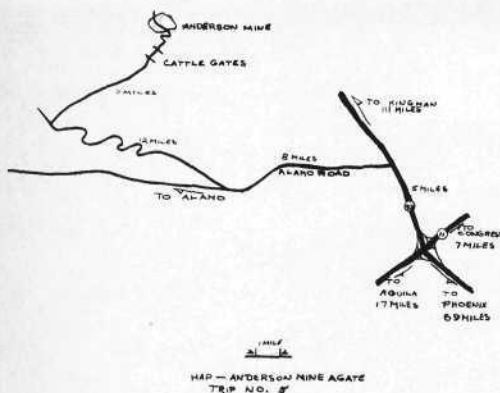




Most of these trips are near pleasant campsites, such as the Giant Dells of Prescott photographed on opposite page by Darwin Van Campen.







front of a light. Because of difference in hardness between fire agate and the chalcedony in which it is imbedded, it is difficult to tumble, but hand-finishes nicely. Chalcedony may be found in odd-shaped pieces called desert roses. It is a waxy, molten-appearing rock and often includes quartz crystals.

Saddle Mountain is located about 35 miles west of Buckeye, or about 50 miles west of Phoenix. About 2 miles west of Buckeye a paved road cuts off Highway 80 to the right (west). This road is the old Highway 80 and, as the sign indicates, leads to Palo Verde, Hassayampa, Arlington and other small farm communities. Take old Highway 80 through the town of Palo Verde and across the Hassayampa River by the gas station of the same name. At this point a paved road leads north to Wintersburg. When you are 10 miles past the town of Wintersburg, you

pass through a cattle guard and the road immediately forks. Continue on the left road for about a ½ mile, or until the mountain is directly beside you. This is a vast gem field, but due to its popularity, few specimens still remain near the road. The closer you go to the mountain, the better and larger the specimens will be. Mountain climbers will find complete ledges of agate, but fine specimens are everywhere and no climbing is really necessary.

Brenda — Jasper

One mile east of Brenda on Highway 60-70 lies a large jasper field. Slightly harder than agate, it is excellent for tumbling or lapidary work. Beautiful pieces of paisley jasper, for which this field is famous, are abundant. High-quality jasper is identified by its hardness, its glass-like appearance and its slippery or soapy feel. It is always opaque, but in this field many specimens have tiny splotches of light blue vein-agate. These inclusions form the most beautiful and best specimens of this area.

Shortly before you reach Brenda, going west on Highway 60-70, you come to a roadside rest (check your speedometer at Hope; the rest area is 13 miles west). You will see a statue a short distance west; another is directly behind it on a low hill further west. The jasper field is located just past the second statue, where the highway has wide graded shoulders suitable for parking. (About 200 yards past the roadside rest.) The jasper field is on the other side of the fence on the north side of the road.

Anderson Mine — Agate

An old uranium mine is the site of this adventure in Arizona gem collecting. The Anderson mine is so abundant in agate that it is stacked in piles throughout the area. Agate in this area is predominately red and blue with occasional green banding. Glass-like in appearance, it will ring a rock hammer. Much of the stone in this field has a burnt or "bubbly" appearance on the outside.

To reach this field, turn west on the Alamo Road, which is four miles northwest of the intersection of Highways 93 and 71 (north of Wickenburg). Do not try any of the side roads as they quickly become "jeep only" trails. At eight miles, the road forms a clearly marked "Y." Take the right branch. Portions of this road follow a ridge; slow speed is the only precaution required, for road width and clearance is more than adequate for any car. Exactly 12 miles past the

junction the road forms a "T." This is the only good dirt road leading off to the right anywhere near this point. Follow it seven miles to the mine.

The mine is one mile past the second cattle gate. (Please close gates after you pass through.) Because the road deteriorates badly from here, you may want to leave your car and walk to the mine. The best gem starting places are either the lowest point in the road just before the mine, or the concrete slab that once was the mine office.

Quartzsite — Quartz Crystals

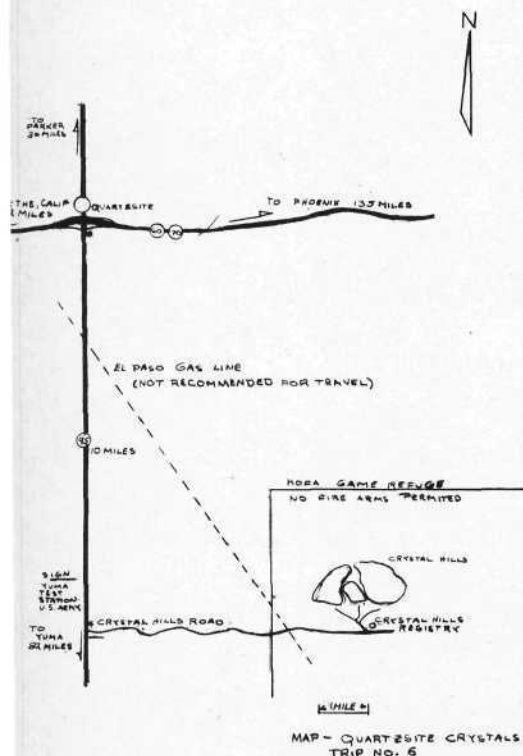
Quartz crystals are formed as molten pools of mineral (silicon dioxide) gradually cool. If there are no impurities and cooling is slow enough, large clear crystals are formed. The largest crystal we have ever seen at Quartzsite was over 8" long and 3" in diameter and perfectly clear. You must dig eight feet or more for large ones, but there are perfect small ones 2" long on the surface. A source of crystals lies within the confines of Kofa Game Refuge about 50 miles north of Yuma. This region is noted for its abruptly changing scenery and its beautiful panoramas. It also contains the mysterious Wild Palm Canyon and the King of Arizona Mine ghost town, one of the most remarkably preserved in the state.

Heading south nine miles on Highway 95 out of Quartzsite a large sign marks the U. S. Army Yuma Test Station. One mile beyond the sign look for a single dirt road heading due east. A very small sign here points to Crystal Hills. Follow this road for seven miles. The road is crossed by occasional washes which require driving caution. At a large mail box, "Crystal Hills Registry," turn left. In about one-quarter mile you cross a large dry wash. Here is a good place to park. The large Sycamore trees make this region a favorite winter camping area.

The three ridges in front of you are crystal hills. If you are only here for an afternoon, the best method for locating crystals is simply to sift through rockpiles or tailings located at any one of the many holes which pockmark the hills. A dirt sifter and whisk broom are great aids. Three hours work should give you a bucket full of crystals and a small handful of perfect specimens, some perhaps larger than your thumb.

These are only a few of Arizona's rock fields. As you become addicted to this fascinating hobby, you will find it leading you all over the Western deserts in quest of gem stones native to other areas.

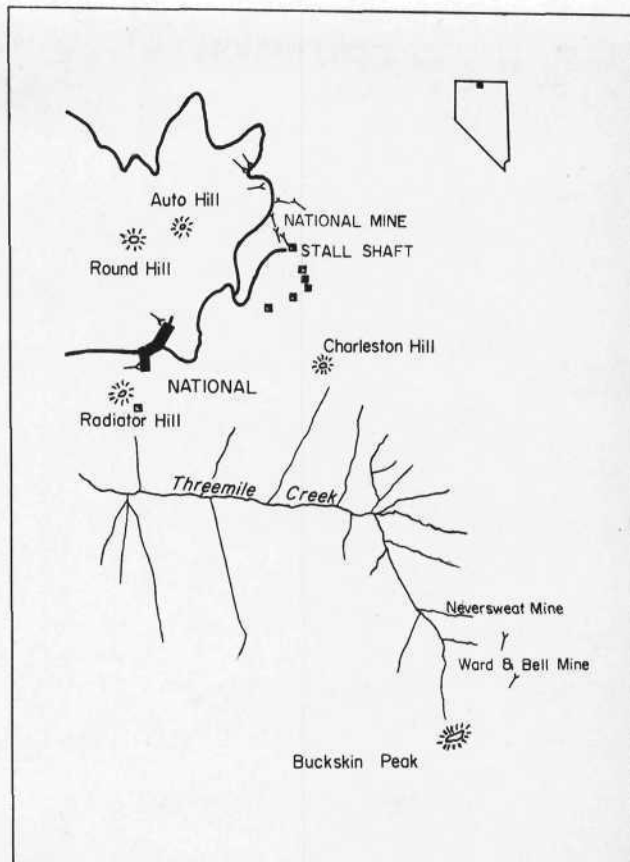
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On the Nevada-Oregon border a horse strayed, a gold ledge appeared, and natives of this isolated country have been trying to find it ever since. Maybe a stranger will show them the way!

THE LOST BUCKSKIN MINE

BY DEN GALBRAITH



General view of National mining camp in 1911. Two-story frame building — is National Hotel.

SOMWHERE NEAR the southern end of Buckskin Peak, hidden in an obscure way, is a tremendously rich vein of gold-silver or electrum. Old-timers searched for the vein and failed, yet during the quest they discovered outcrops in what became the National district.

Two miners started out from Silver City, Idaho, with saddle horses and pack animals, heading for the mining camp of Tuscarora, Nevada. Their route carried them across the southeast corner of Oregon and along the broad Quinn River Valley in

Humboldt County. Instead of continuing to Winnemucca, they tried a shortcut across the Santa Rosa Range in the vicinity of Threemile Creek, camping at a spring on the southern side of Buckskin Peak.

Prospectors had spent little time in the northern Santa Rosas in the early days, stopping when they encountered the thick lava flows. The Santa Rosas are a typical desert range, drab and barren at first, yet they grow on you. Willows along the streams contrast with the dark-brown country rock. Gray-green sagebrush thrives

on the valley floors and covers the mountain slopes. The peaks are essentially bare, but on Buckskin Peak a few, small stands of fir persist in the isolated ravines.

At that time, prospectors didn't consider the northern Santa Rosas as favorable for mineralization. The partners did no prospecting, their only thought was to get on to Tuscarora. After breakfast the next morning, one miner rounded up the horses while the other broke camp. In rounding up the strays, the miner noted a peculiar ledge of rock and, picking off a slab, he carried it back to camp. Neither of the partners recognized this type of rock, so they put a specimen in a saddle bag to have it assayed in Tuscarora. When they arrived there, they dropped off their specimen at a blacksmith shop and forgot about it. Several months later the smithie reminded them of it, so the miners took it to the assayer. Results gave the rock a value of \$16,000 per ton of electrum.

Excited over the high return, the partners put together an outfit and struck out again for the Santa Rosas. They had no trouble locating the mountain, for Buckskin is the highest peak in that part of the range, not far from the Oregon line, and they thought they recognized the spring where they'd camped or, at least, it looked like the same spring.

For several days they searched



without luck. Everything seemed changed, except the mountain itself. Then they became uncertain about the spring, for they discovered other springs. Naturally, they had spent little time there on their first trip, coming in at dusk and leaving at daybreak. Disappointed, they finally shoved off for Tuscarora. Several other times they made trips to Buckskin Peak, but never with success.

After one of the partners died, the other determined to quit "rainbow running," so imparted the story to

several cronies. Other parties outfitted for trips into the area, but these also failed to find the ledge which carried the rich electrum. Eventually it became a "lost" mine.

In making the trips from Tuscarora to Buckskin Peak, some of the parties stayed overnight at Spring City, at that time a thriving mining camp, according to George W. Rose, who told the story in the *Salt Lake Mining Review* of February 15, 1925. Spring City lay south of Spring Peak, 8 miles north of Paradise.

At this point we can possibly narrow the time element down a bit. Waldemar Lindgren, in U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 601, writes that the Spring City district was discovered about 1868, organized in 1873, and produced several million dollars worth of metal from narrow, high-grade, gold-and-silver seams during the '80s. The district was active again in 1891 and 1892. So it would seem that the stopovers by the search parties could be no later than 1893. Again, Lindgren suggests that the veins on Buckskin Peak were located several years prior to the discovery of the National district. The first claims staked around National were located in 1907. So a date in the early '90s shouldn't be far off.

Actually, the time makes no difference, but we must bring W. J. Bell into the picture. Bell, later to become a county commissioner for Humboldt County, was the proprietor of the hotel at Spring City. Gleaning bits of information from parties who passed through, he started putting pieces of the story together from third and fourth-hand sources. With visions of \$16,000 per ton ore dancing through his head, he became so infatuated that he managed to interest a friend, George Ward, in making a trip with him. Their opportunity came about one winter when prospectors, miners, gamblers, and promoters "pulled stakes" and left Spring City virtually deserted.

In the northern Santa Rosas, the winters are cruel, start early and last late, and fierce blizzards blanket the sage-covered slopes with heavy snow. There was nothing they could do but sit and wait for the summer. Heading out for Buckskin Peak, they set-up camp and began prospecting. One day they noted what Rose called "a large vein of quartz or a dike of porphyry," which traversed the mountainside for several hundred feet. Although there was little evidence of mineral, they staked some claims.

Everyone decided the lost mine had been found, but the Bell & Ward property never developed into much more than a prospect. Minor silver values were found and a few small lots of hand-sorted ore were shipped. Bell and Ward puttered with their mine for several seasons. Just a half mile to the north, ruby, horn and native silver were found on the Neversweat claim (the name ironically describing the climate) and a few shipments of ore were made. Still further north, the Martin prospect also proved disappointing.



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Since the area had been prospected heavily with no bonanzas found, old-timers "opined" that the Lost Buckskin Peak Mine hadn't been found after all. For one thing, the ledge stumbled upon by the itinerant miner had been on the south side of Buckskin. Bell, Ward and others had made their locations on the north flank. The Bell and Ward prospect was situated high on the mountain, just shy of 8,000 feet, yet the two miners had made camp near a spring at the base. Most important, that rich assay came from electrum, and the low-grade veins on the north side carried silver only.

Other prospectors invaded the area looking for the Lost Buckskin Peak Mine. One, J. L. Workman, chugged into the area by auto. His "tin lizzie" couldn't reach the area of interest, so he concentrated on tributaries of Threemile Creek, with-in sight of his car.

In his wanderings, Workman named many prominent topographic features after parts of his car, Radiator Hill, Auto Hill, Fender Gulch, and the like. That year, 1907, he made about 40 locations, which became the basis for a rush to the National district, of which Buckskin Peak is a part. He leased most of his claims. On one claim, the Stall brothers sank a shaft and at 40 feet struck bonanza ore. Later this property became the basis for the National Mine, which produced the sort of ore every prospector dreams about.

George Stall reported that one ton yielded \$135,000. S. Taylor, superintendent in 1911, stated that the National Mines Co. made \$70,000 from a slab which measured 3 by 6 feet and only a few inches wide. Another superintendent, P. G. Harrison, shipped 4,500 pounds which netted \$81.20 a pound, or a total of \$365,400 for the electrum. You can imagine the rush this news created and you can imagine the highgrading that went on, and the thefts. The town of National, like most rush camps, had a checkered history.

Rainbow runners forgot about the Lost Buckskin Peak Mine in the flurry of excitement around nearby National. Prospectors who searched for this *ignis fatuus* in the early '90s died or moved to other parts, and that rich, obscure vein has never yet been found.

Some day, some lucky fellow will stumble across that rich ledge of electrum. But it had better be in the summer. In the winter he'd be liable to stumble and break his neck!

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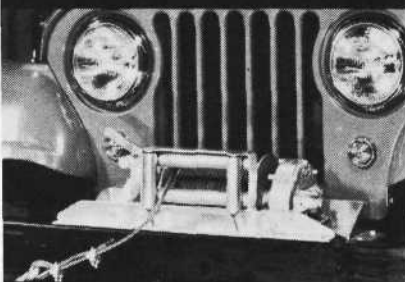
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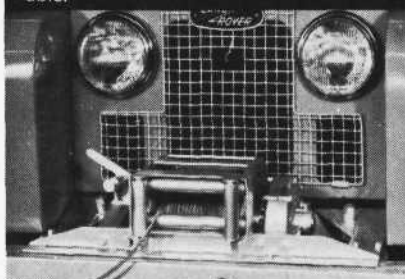
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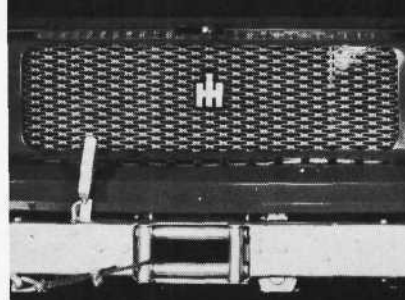
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While representing DESERT Magazine
in a Utah sponsored tour of new
Canyonlands National Park, the writer
found that a "once over lightly"
approach isn't enough. Here she tells you
how to plan your own trip.

Angel Arch
photo by
Oldendorph.

How to Travel Like a Travel Writer

by Raye Price

THERE ARE two ways to tell about my recent trip to Canyonlands National Park; What I did . . . and what I *wish* I could have done. As for the former, I represented DESERT on a Travel Writers' Tour sponsored by the Utah Tourist Council . . . a weekend of fabulous touring crammed into every daylight hour. The latter? That's for you to do on a longer visit!

But, what's "long enough" in this southeastern Utah wonderland? Resisting a peek around the next bend of this park's 257,640 acres is about as easy as stopping at one peanut. The only answer is in scheduling as many days as you possibly can, and covering one area at a time, leaving those left uncovered for subsequent trips.

Canyonlands might be divided into three areas; the northern Islands in the Sky (Deadhorse and Grandview Points), The Needles, and southernmost Lake Powell. Chamber of Commerce members and business leaders from Moab, Monticello, Blanding, and Bluff housed, entertained, fed and enabled our travel-writers' tour to get a flash view of the entire Park by chauffeuring us in everything from four wheelers, small planes, boats and pick-ups to the Monticello School bus. The same preferential treatment is available to you through local concessionaires.

When it takes two hours to jog 13 miles, you're in rugged country! Twenty-five vehicles cavalcaded into the Needles on the first day of our trip. Primary target — Angel Arch. There was great camera activity at the viewpoint for us, but when you go, take time to hike to the huge

sandstone amphitheatre behind it and to ramble over slickrock domes counting wildflowers.

Well-marked trails took us past Tower ruins and Paul Bunyon's Chamber Pot to Squaw Springs picnic-camp grounds for a pit barbecue. Those with more time should investigate the colorfully named rock formations and Indian ruins, camp in one of the primitive sites designated by the Park Service (check in at Squaw Springs Ranger Station and bring your own water and firewood).

We were thankful to have experienced drivers on the crazy quilt ride up Elephant Hill where a short hike to the canyon rim gave us our best view of the Needles and grabens (parallel flats between the standing rocks). Under dry road conditions, it's possible for a passenger car to get as far as Elephant Hill, but the climb to the Viewpoint must be on foot. Licensed touring agencies offer back country trips of several hours or days. Investigate Druid Arch and other areas not mentioned here.

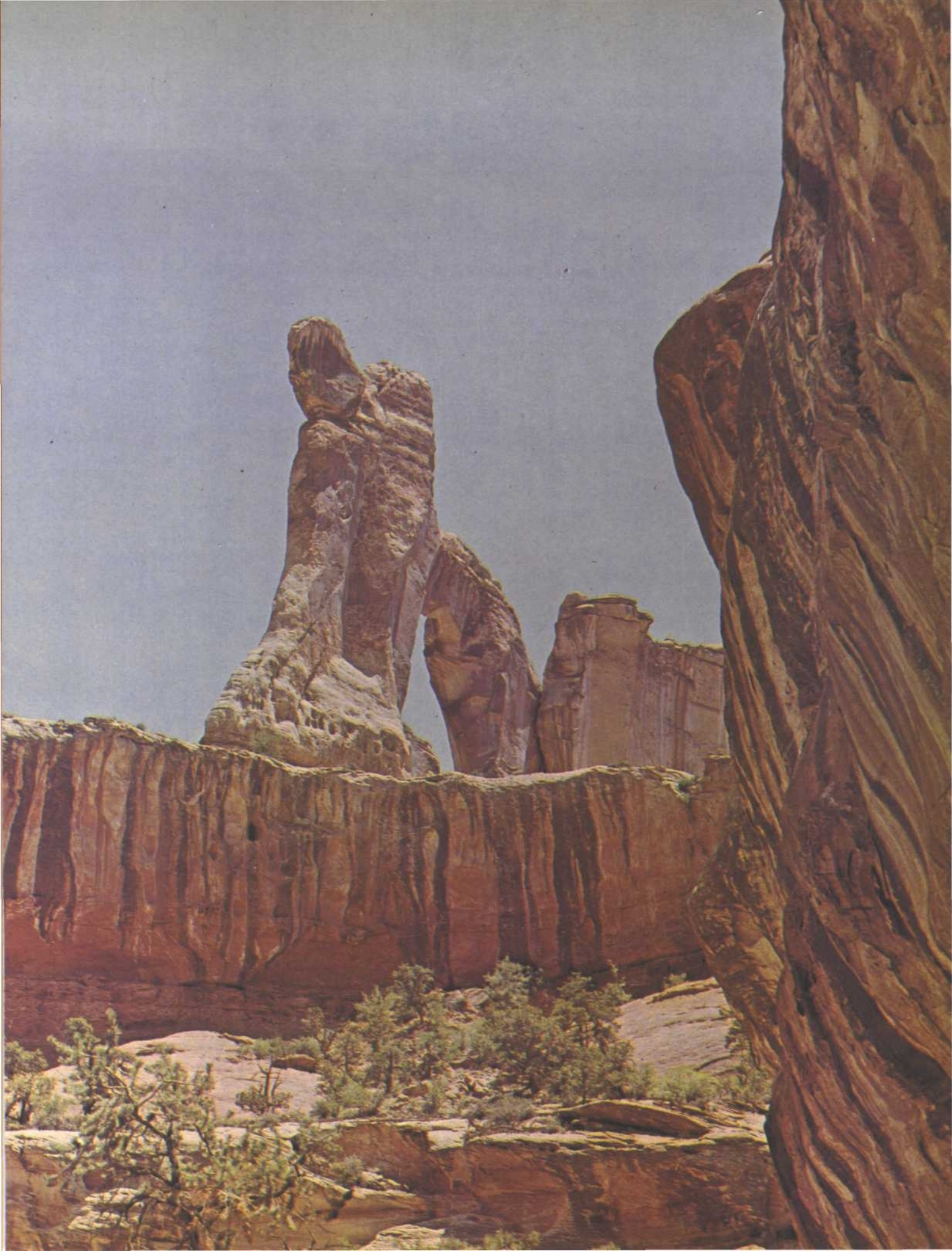
With time at a minimum, a flight to Hite was necessary the next day, but it added depth to our picture. We circled Owachomo Bridge at National Bridges Monument, flew close to landmarks such as the Bear's Ears and Jacob's Chair and reminisced over Fry Canyon's uranium mines that were so heatedly discussed 10 years ago. On your trip, you might arrange an aerial tour with one of the charter agencies located at Moab, Monticello or Blanding; then fly over the Needles or the Islands in the Sky for a graphic idea of rugged terrain. (The Islands in the Sky may be

reached by car on a graded, dry-weather road north of Moab. This is the north entrance to the Park.)

At Hite, our party distributed itself into several motor launches for a look at prehistoric Moki ruins, the sheer Tapestry Rock, and brief explorations of meandering canyons with overhanging rock coves, hidden dunes of pink sand and cottonwood groves. We stopped at the Olympia Bar for some instant rockhounding (handful of petrified wood, jasper, and moss agate). We were only able to see that part of Lake Powell between Hite and Hall's Crossing, but took a quick look at Bullfrog Basin, which is being developed and is scheduled to be linked by ferry to Hall's Crossing in the near future. Road access to these upper marinas is improving, though limited; Highway 95 from Blanding to Hite is nearing completion, but, as one resident put it, it's 93 miles from Blanding to Hall's Crossing . . . all but 80 miles paved! Both tours and boat rentals are available at Hite, Hall's Crossing, Wahweap, and Lee's Ferry at the present time.

Whether your trip is brief, like ours, or of a longer duration, it would take years to cover all of Canyonlands. As I see it, it must be a succession of trips—each visit different due to the rising lake levels and road improvements—with endless possibilities through various transportation media.

Undoubtedly, few places have the varied challenges of Canyonlands. But don't try to absorb it all at once. It is better to divide the area into three sections, as suggested in the beginning of this article, and enjoy each one on a separate vacation. ///



**It's always good to believe a little bit in everything.
Here's a startling example in which the tragic legend
of a lovelorn maiden proved true.**

EXPLORATIONS OF the innumerable caves of California have led to exciting discoveries of life in the millenia past. It is evident that early animals sought sanctuary from the discomforts of the elements and enemy predators. Later, Indians used the caves for similar reasons. Geological formations and fauna fossil finds have contributed substantially to present day knowledge of the ages past. Sometimes a slender thread of information has lead to great discoveries.

One of the explorations of caves, in the early part of this century (1902-1904), was concentrated in the area of the McCloud River in northern California. Part of the McCloud River is now an arm of Shasta Lake where today's fishermen and water-

skiers ripple the water, unaware that underneath lie remains of the settlement of Baird and the site of an old U. S. fish hatchery.

Before white men arrived, the Wintun Indians inhabited the region, fishing its streams and hunting in its jagged, wooded mountains. Some of their prey found sanctuary in caves, until the Wintuns found the entrances and turned the caves into traps.

It was natural, then, that exploring cavers seeking information would turn to the Indians for locations and legends. They were not disappointed. One story of the Wintuns led to their most important find.

In the Wintun language it was called the "Samwel" cave. The leg-

end was that the cave contained a pool that possessed magic properties. It was said that whoever bathed in the pool would be granted his wish. Three Wintun maidens, apparently disappointed in the power of the water, were told by an old woman that deeper in the cave was a second pool with more potent water. Armed with this new information they probed the depths of the cave until they found a steep passageway leading to the edge of a pit. One of the maidens slipped on the damp rocks and though her companions tried to save her, she descended, screaming, into the darkness. They heard her "strike and strike again—and all was still." A rescue party, composed of Wintun braves, was unable to reach the bottom with grass ropes.



LAND OF THE WINTUNS

by Arthur Rouleau

The exploration of the Potter Creek cave, at the mouth of the McCloud, was proceeding with good results. But the legend of "Samwel" cave had been repeated so frequently that a small party was dispatched 16 miles up the McCloud to see what could be found there.

The first party reported that "considering that it was in a wild and wooded section there was surprisingly little difficulty in finding the cave. An extensive series of galleries opened on the face of a limestone bluff about 335 feet above the river. There was no difficulty in locating the pool in the third chamber."

An extensive search of the galleries, passageways and pits neither revealed the second pool in the cave nor the pit into which the Wintun maiden was reported to have fallen. When three expeditions failed, Mr. E. L. Furlong remained at "Samwel" cave to process fossils found there. The others returned to Potter Creek cave.

The following day, word came to Potter Creek that Furlong had found a deep pit that had exciting possibilities and requested the party return with all of the rope available. While awaiting the party, Furlong busied himself drilling two holes in the rock at the edge of the pit so that the protruding drill shafts could hold the ends of the rope ladder.

A returning party, headed by Dr. John C. Merriam, later president of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, D.C., brought 50 feet of rope ladder and all the rope they could find. They spent the evening and the morning of the next day fashioning an additional 50 feet of ladder. Then they transported the latter over the precarious route to the edge of the pit and the end of the ladder was firmly tied to the drill shafts. Bits of lighted paper were dropped into the pit to test the air. Furlong drew the longest straw and elected to go first into the pit.

"It widens as I go down, from a diameter of 10 feet at the top to a great chamber below. And here as the ladder begins to hang free of the wall is a sharp projecting spine of rock that thrusts itself between the ropes and makes climbing difficult," Furlong reported, as he examined the pit in the flickering light of his candle.

The critical moment arrived. The party heard the hobnails of Furlong's boots scrape on the stone floor of the pit. Would the legend of the Indian maiden prove fact or fiction?

"There's a mountain lion at the

foot of the ladder!" was his first excited cry.

For a split second Merriam considered descending the ladder to engage the mountain lion in mortal combat. Then from the depths came a comforting shout, "It's a fossil mountain lion embedded in the cave floor. And here on the floor below the opening is the skeleton of the Indian maiden."

The story was true. Huddled on the floor were the skeletal remains of the Wintun maiden—a thin black mould her shroud. Examination of the structure and contents of the cavern revealed lime-encrusted walls, a floor studded with sparkling stalagmites and at the lower portion of the cave floor was a layer of soft brownish clay. But more important, the trail to the Wintun maiden led to fossil fragments of mammalia encrusted with lime. The remains of the maiden were given to the Wintun who gave her a ceremonial burial.

If the find solved the mystery of the maiden, it posed a greater mystery. The fossil specimens gave evidence of 52 species of fauna—21 of them extinct. Among those extinct were a short-faced bear, a ground-sloth common to Brazil, a type of horse and a giant condor. How did these animals find their way into the cavern? It was virtually impossible for them to enter by the route of the Wintun maiden and no entrance was discovered through the walls of the cavern until the following year. Then new excavations revealed a passageway and the mystery was solved.

In May of 1964 Shasta Caverns was opened to the public, and now, from mid-May to mid-September, they may be visited. Shasta Caverns is reached by traveling north from Redding, California 15 miles on U.S. 99. Turn right at the O'Brien Recreation Area marker. A two-mile drive through rugged, mountain splendor leads to a parking area and a short walk to the catamaran dock. Then you sail across the blue waters of Lake Shasta to the other side of the lake where a specially equipped bus carries passengers to the cave entrance 800 feet above the level of the lake. An experienced guide leads you through the caverns, pointing out its wonders and geological structures. The temperature is a comfortable 58° and passageways pass through 32 connected rooms.

For sheer sparkling beauty, the domain of the Wintun's cave-spirits rivals the beauty of the cathedrals of man. ///

Samwel Cave is reached by boat from Shasta Lake.



Water from Airwells

BY HELEN BROWN

THAT DRY old desert you love so much may not be as dry as you think. In Israeli on the Negev Desert a scientist, Dr. S. Duvdevani, discovered that every clear night in summer 1/25th of an inch of moisture condensed on his dew gauge. If, as happens in many deserts, every night for a year was clear, almost 15 inches of water could be collected annually—if there were a way to collect it.

What's more, according to science writers Dorus and Margery Milne, dew was heaviest in the hot summer when rain rarely fell. Curiously, the amount of dew that formed seemed about the same regardless of the relative humidity of the air.

Just how do we go about capturing all that nice water? History tells us those simple, uneducated fellows in our past knew more than we do about seizing the mists of the morning and conserving them for domestic and farm use by a process of "squeezing" the air.

Several archeologists have written of strange little piles of pebbles and rocks, some as small as three feet high, in the Negev Desert where rainfall in the history of man has probably always ranged from 1" to 4" a year. There was no other source of water except the mists and a rare flash flood. But from those rock piles were dug the roots of ancient grapevines and other plants. As one writer said, "Who heaps stones for the fun of it?" Although there is some doubt about the purpose of these rock piles, one theory is they were used to capture the condensing moisture for thirsty plants.

More important than these simple dew catchers were the really ingenious "air wells" of Theodosia in Crimea, which the early Greek geographer Strabo called the wheat capital of the Roman Empire. Here were built huge mounds or pyramids of loose rocks with cisterns beneath out of which ran the sandstone pipes to the city fountains. Though the climate has not changed on the peninsula to this day, the air wells have fallen into ruin, the principle by which they

operated apparently forgotten. Instead of growing wheat there today, the region is a resort area.

So what is the principle we need to know? It is a simple one known to most students of physics. An air flow loses temperature as it increases in velocity. This is what happens when misty breezes are forced through the small openings in the rock piles, not only getting cooler in the process, but getting dryer as the water vapor carried partly condenses in the cooler passages. Instead of the condensed water evaporating with the first hot rays of the sun, it drips into a catchment basin and is saved for human use.

In the Milne's new and excellent book, *Water and Life*, they wrote: "When an honest dew gauge is invented it might be worth trying. And now that we look at the piles of pebbles in the Negev Desert, and make the appropriate calculations, we reach the final stage; it's too simple to be called an invention. But the real test is still ahead. On a large scale, no one has yet constructed a device to improve on the piles of pebbles. We need an installation costing very little more, but capable of gathering in all 15 inches of dew from every acre of arid land, and putting it to work . . ."

Although the principle of the air well has fallen into disuse for obtaining water, it has not actually been lost sight of. Paul Jacques Grillo, formerly professor of architecture at Notre Dame and Rice Universities, has designed just such an air well and states these wells occasionally occur naturally in heaped up rocks and particularly where the range in temperature from day to night is great. For instance, he saw one in Puerta Penasco, Sonora, right inside the city limits, east of the highway and near a gravel pit. If you want to take a look at it the next time you visit Penasco, it is the only hill there, is made up of lava blocks, is about 300 feet high and is easily accessible. Grillo wrote: "In the early morning hours, condensation water was flow-

ing freely within the interstices of the blocks, feeding a luscious rock garden of wild flowers." It is altogether possible any desert wanderer can find an occasional natural air well, at least near the coast.

Professor Grillo states the air well can be in the shape of a pyramid or huge domed mound of natural rock, preferably lava because of its high specific heat. He thinks the first experiment should be carried out in a desert spot near the sea, such as in Baja California, and that to be most effective it should be large enough to produce a substantial amount of water.

A number of French and Algerian scientists have built air wells and have produced water, but because of the small size of the rock pyramids they built their findings were not too conclusive. Grillo thought the Theodosian wells may have each produced as much as 1,000 gallons of water.

In his lectures and presentation to the United Nations Conference he described the proper construction of an air well: "Reinforced concrete is laid on one acre of land in the form of an enormous pan. This is then filled with a close-packing of standard size, triangular, prismatic tiles piled up in such a way as to constitute an extremely strong light-weight structure, based upon the tetrahedral principle. This pan acts as a reservoir for potable and irrigation water condensed through the air well.

"It also serves as a cistern for gathering water during the desert flash rain storms, which are generally considered a nuisance in all other solar-still types of installations. Gravity only is used to carry water into the irrigation canals, no other auxiliary power being necessary."

He even suggests that the land around an air well could be made into several farms with boundaries slab-shaped like the pieces of a pie with the points touching the well. The lodging could be built under the edge of the pyramid, providing for air-conditioning, and in the back could

be stored food. The water would be sufficient to supply families and livestock and be used for irrigation, too.

One of the characteristics of deserts that makes air wells possible is the extremes in day and night temperatures. In the Sahara Desert the temperature has been known to shift from 130° in the daytime to so cold at night rocks cracked and sounded like artillery barrages.

Some areas would be more favorable for this enterprise. Coastal areas of dry lands with high daily evaporation, such as in Baja California and the Mexican shores on the east side of the Gulf of California, would have ideal conditions. In Puerta Penasco even the lava blocks would be available. Better than distilled water, this condensed bounty would dissolve the minerals in the stones and be as healthy as spring water.

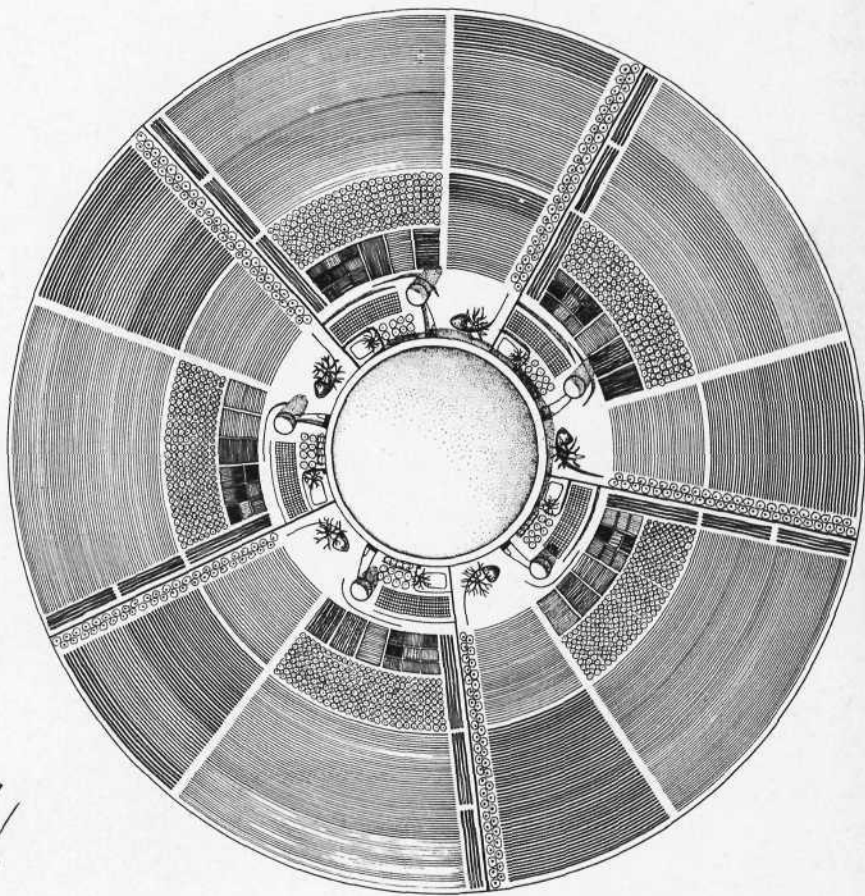
Professor Grillo sums up his conclusions by saying if such a well proved to be successful "... we would then have created a *permanent* solution to the water problem in many semi-arid regions of the earth. This new 'machine' would possess the most sought-after qualities in any solar project: *maintenance-free* operation and *eternal* life."

So let's garner the dews and mists before they evaporate with the dawn!

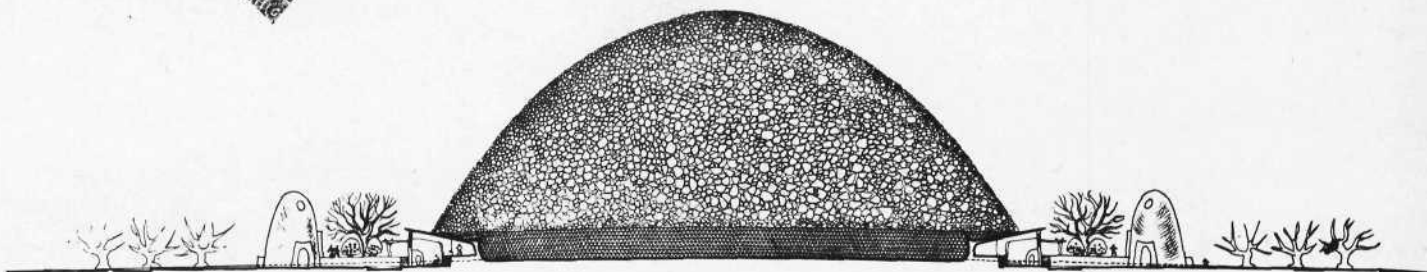
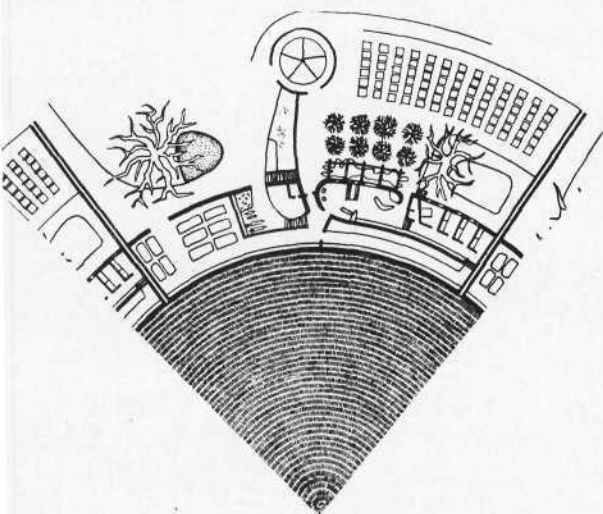
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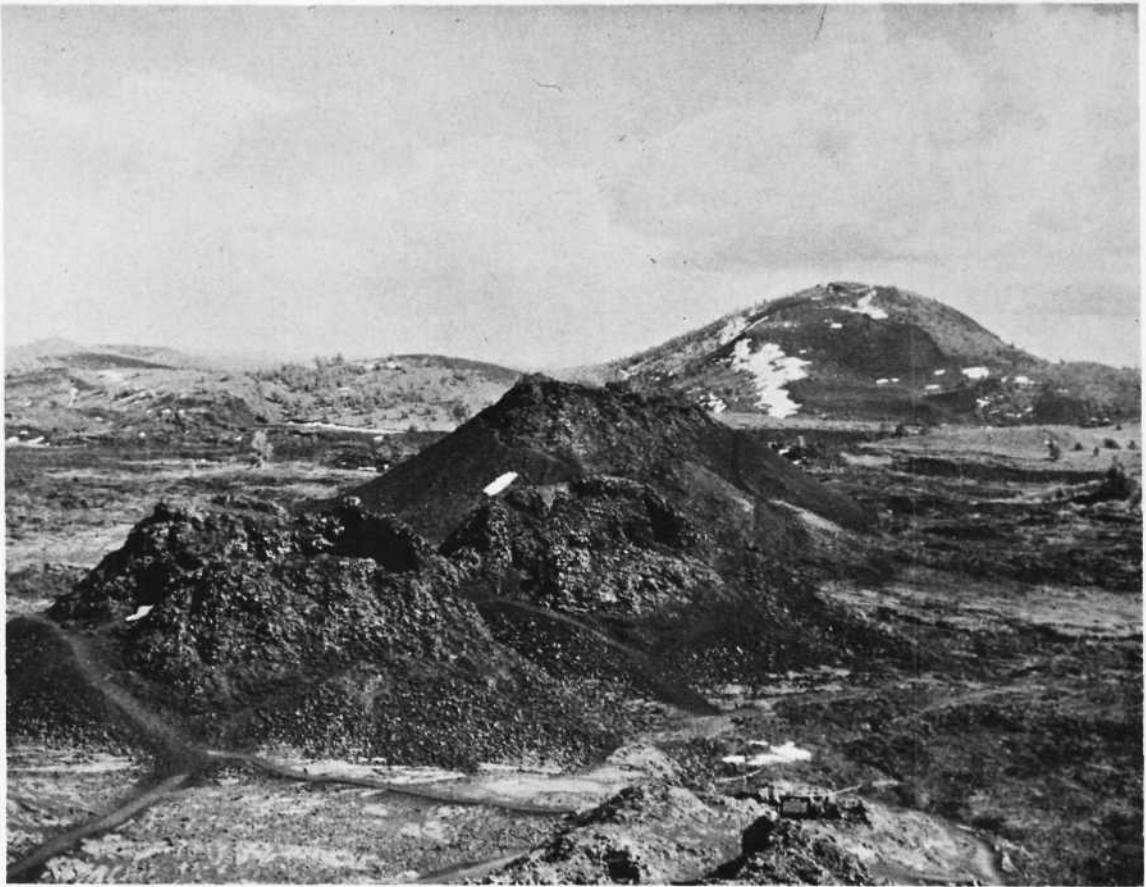
If you have acreage on waterless, worthless desert land and if you're enough of a believer to take a chance, here's a brilliant theory gleaned from an ancient civilization that could turn your waterless, worthless desert land into a productive farm.

Drawings by Paul Jaques Grillo



Five slab-shaped farms surround a central air well. Lodgings could be built under overhangs of stone pyramid, which would provide for air-conditioning. Left, enlarged diagram shows living quarters, orchard and garden. Farms stretch out beyond, as in upper illustration. Below is exterior view of airwell showing entrances to two of the residences.





Land of Fire and Ice

by James Powell

ALIGHIERI DANTI, in his hell of hells, united the torments of fire and ice in a fiendish apogee of suffering. A pity the Tuscan poet never saw Idaho's Great Rift! For within the Craters of the Moon National Monument volcanic fire has but recently cooled, while the ice is still there, though you may have to spelunk for it. The suffering is gratis to anyone who, like myself, tries to hike the 10-mile length of the Rift, from monument headquarters to Two Point Butte.

The northern end of the monument is the civilized part. Here volcanism is freshest, and here trails give access to the science-fiction landscape of craters and spatter cones. Here, too, are the incredible lava caves, subterranean refrigerators whose insulated netherworld stores winter air the year around. Best known is Boy Scout Cave. Sonja Heinie Cave would be a better name, for in one of its chambers a frozen lake forms a natural, if cramped, skating rink.

Diagonalizing southeastward across the Monument, a queue of buttes and cindercones marks the course of the Great Rift, a tender scar on the much-operated-on belly of the earth. From the roadhead south of Inferno Cone a jeep trail leads past Big Cinder Butte, from whose summit, the highest on the Rift, one may look east across 25 miles of lava flows to 7,576-foot Big Southern Butte, classic landmark of the Snake River Plain. According to the map the trail, after crossing Trench Mortar Flat, ends shortly beyond, between Crescent Butte and Coyote Butte. In reality it continues on around the west side of Echo Crater to terminate abruptly west on the low northern spur of The Sentinel.

Across that spur the easy going through soft cinders gives way to lava, and the Rift becomes a route for masochists only. The beginning is pahoehoe. But let not the hiker rejoice! Aa is on its way.

For there are two kinds of lava, one smooth and rope-like, the other shattered into glass-sharp fragments.

To the volcanologist these are "pahoe-hoe" and "aa"; to the hiker they are difficult and hell. Pahoe-hoe may not be for tenderfeet, but it is possible. Aa is something else again. Walking over aa is like—walking over aa. There exists no simile this side of the Pit. I am not a stranger to difficult terrain: I have inched my way to the top of the Matterhorn and hacked my way through the Quintana Roo jungles; I have floundered across the swamps of Surinam and Sonora's marching sands. But for sheer ungodliness I award my Oscar to these lunar slab heaps on the Snake River Plain.

Sheep Trail Butte lies only a little over a mile from Two Point Butte, the final objective, and as it contains a water hole it is the traditional campsite for a few who enter this remote section of the Monument. I remember a cold and comfortless night at Sheep Trail Butte. To reduce the weight of my pack, I had left behind my air mattress. O false economy! Intent on lightness I had not thought of aa. But alone in the deepening night I thought of nothing else. At no time were my meditations interrupted by sleep.

Nowadays, when I wish to curse an enemy, I do not call for brimstone or pestilence; I merely mutter: "May there be aa in your bed!"

The final mile is the most difficult of all. Even after my night's respite, I passed two hours of unrelenting aa and unrelenting profanity before I stood on the summit of Two Point Butte and tried to catch enough breath to gasp at the desolation before me. Southeast and west a charred infinity of aa stretched to the horizon. For the Craters of the Moon are but one small corner of the 12,000,000-acre lava plain of the Snake River, which is in turn only a part of the vaster volcanic region of the Columbia Plateau.

Here is the ultimate challenge of the Great Rift: to cross what lies beyond. In 1921 R. W. Limbert scrambled for days among the aa on the first expedition into this then-unexplored region. Few have followed him, yet I see no reason why one could not. Water supply would be a problem, but problems are made for solving. We may speak of "iron men," but these iron men of history were flesh and blood, as are men today. Their nerve endings could feel pain and their minds know fear. If Limbert could do it, why not the modern hiker?

Soon, I hope to return and see. ///



Opulent Oregon

by Jordan E. Detzer

RUMBLING LOGGING trucks, taut fishing lines—splashy swims—hell-raising river trips—enticing package of Oregon.

Perched atop California, squeezed under Washington and nudged near the ocean by Idaho, Oregon squats with unleashed potential! It's a young state with a vigorous past, varied climates and tremendous future.

Geographically, Oregon tops a wobbly crescent-shaped desert which extends from Mexico through New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Utah to Oregon. These western deserts show an interesting terminal pattern up north. The coastal and northern regions of Oregon are jungles of big trees, flowing rivers and lush vegetation while the desert, which covers 35% of the state, stretches across lower central and western areas.

Never having camped in Oregon, we wrote for information and received voluminous folders and booklets. After digesting the material we camped at Union Creek Campground near Crater Lake. After returning home, I wrote to Governor Mark Hatfield to thank him for the grand vacation and he replied by sending material for this story and his best wishes to readers of DESERT.

Oregon's history is rich and vigorous from Indian and ancient explorers to modern campers. In the 20th Century Oregon has developed into a great agricultural and industrial state, leading the nation in lumber production. For geography, temperature and resources, Oregon outdoes them all.

There is a 400-mile scenic coastline incomparable with beauty in cut cliffs and rock mounds off-shore. The valley regions are fertile, rugged and abound in desert flora, fauna, artifacts and fossils.

A good place for desert lovers to begin a vacation is at majestic Crater Lake in the south central region. This beautiful natural park is located on top of Mt. Mazama, a mountain that "blew its top" years ago. Water collected in the crater and re-

flects the deep jewel blue of the heavens. It is a lake with a background of curving rock walls and towering fir and hemlock. Facilities are available for boating, fishing and hiking. The lodge and housekeeping cabins are ample, but when the snow melts off the picnic tables in July, there's abundant space for tenting, sleepers and trailers. After a few days of hiking and lectures a journey down the Rogue River in the heart of the Kikiiyou Mountains is a natural desire. We mosied down the Rogue River to Union Creek Campground and found the climate perfect for outdoor living.

The Rogue River is challenging and riding its rapids and falls in a rubber raft is as exciting as it is dangerous. We took a number of trips in our rubber raft and found each segment of the river a different adventure. After cascading madly over riffles and falls, we portaged when the going got too tough and fallen pines and violent troughs of rock made a swirling saucer of our yellow raft.

When we pulled our drenched bodies from the river before the Mammouth Sugar Pine Camp Falls, a lady camper asked, "Just how do you know where the cataracts are?" I replied, "We listen carefully, paddle like fury and usually make out all right." To shoot one of these rapids, especially if a fallen tree is jammed across the funnel, is disastrous. We chatted with fishermen and hikers along the route and visited a few lumber towns between rapids.

At Grants Pass you can take professional excursion trips offering 25 miles of adventure from Grants Pass to Galice through famous Hellgate Canyon. Trips take from one to four days, depending on your time, schedule and finances. This river is a challenging experience and, for us, provided a veritable clothesline of wet memories.

Oregon is a desert state grown green with marvels and, like graceful fingers, its towering trees are beckoning to you. ///

Why are mountains and deserts full of deserted mines instead of booming mining camps? This writer tells you why, but only Uncle Sam can tell you for how long.

Gold Again?

by Helen Young

GEORGE VALENTINE King sank down on a big rock to eat his lunch—cold flapjacks, the story goes, because he was at the end of his grubstake. In disgust, he kicked the rock. A chunk broke off. He glanced at it idly, then let out a whoop. He knew what gold looked like, and this was gold.

Today, if you take the rough dirt road which turns off California State Highway 78 in San Diego County, as it twists down the grade from Julian to the Anza-Borrego desert, you can see where George Valentine King's discovery started a gold rush in 1869.

George's first words are not on record, but they could have been, "Howlin' snakes! Whoever thought I'd be the guy to find the Golden Chariot mine!" For that is what they named the mine which was developed from George's prospect in what is now called Chariot Canyon. By 1870 the mine was producing such quantities of gold that 20-mule teams were borrowed from Death Valley to haul the ore to San Diego.

George was only one of the prospectors who came to California, sure that the desert meant gold. For over 100 years men had known it, lived

to find it, and often died in the search. We still know that the desert means gold, but today there are reasons for idle mines, empty stacks, and rusted stamp mills.

The picture of a grizzled prospector kneeling by a mountain stream to wash his gold never applied to desert mines. Theirs were "dry diggin's" where the gold had to be blasted out of the rock and worked with a pick. A typical hardrock mine started with a main shaft about four by six feet, from which gold-bearing rock was loaded into a bucket and hoisted to the surface. It was not until the '90s that the invention of an air-drill made horizontal tunneling possible.

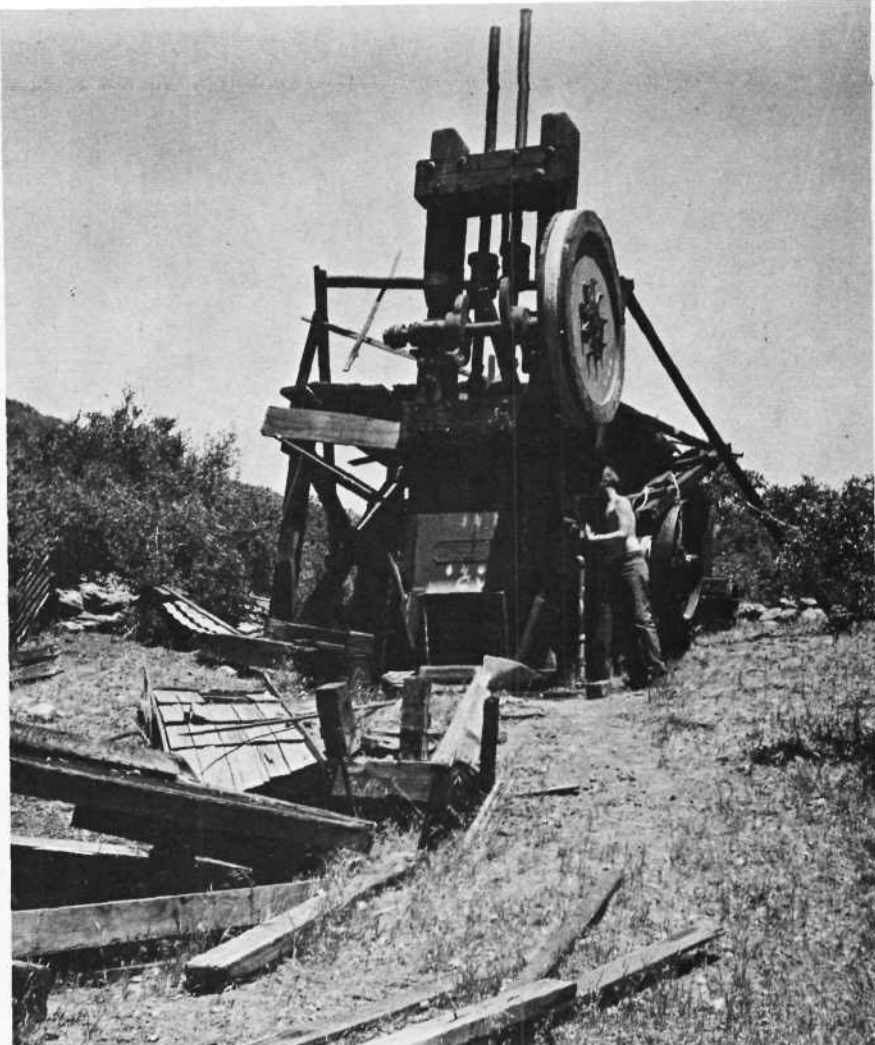
All through the desert mountains of California you can see reminders of the kind of life George Valentine King lived—deserted cabins, yawning mine shafts, abandoned stamp mills. At the peak of the 1870 gold rush there was a stamp mill in Chariot Canyon for every mine, some with only two batteries, some with five, 10 or more. The stamp mills broke up the ore with stamps, each weighing 800-900 pounds, and each stamp making from 100 to 200 strokes a

minute with a beat that shook the earth like stampeding horses.

Ore, blasted from the ground and hauled to the mill, was dumped into a rock crusher and broken into pieces no larger than hen's eggs, then fed to the stamps. Small streams of water ran into the stamp boxes and mixed the crushed ore to a sludge, then splashed it against a screen. The sandy water passed through the screen and down a 10 to 20-foot sluice covered with copper and spread with a thin coating of mercury. The mercury picked up the gold from the sludge and held it, while the residue of mud and sand washed away to the dump of tailings.

The mixture of gold and mercury scraped from the copper-covered sluice was then heated in a retort, as mercury fumes are highly poisonous. This re-condensed the mercury so it could be used again. The gold which remained was mixed with cream of tartar, borax, and saltpeter, then heated until it became liquid. Then it was poured into greased iron molds to harden into ingots.

Stamp mills were usually housed in wooden buildings, sometimes back-



Above is all that remains of a stamp mill in Chariot Canyon

ed into the side of a bare mountain, with a narrow-gauge track for running the ore cars to the road in front.

George's mine was a rich one, but when the shaft led into sulphide and arsenical ores, the digging ended. These compounds are not held by mercury, so most of the gold was lost in the sluice and ended in the dump. There was then no way known to recover it, so the heaps of tailings, worth millions of dollars, were abandoned as refuse.

By the end of 1880, when the area was almost worked out, a big new boom burst in Arizona. Miners packed up and moved their machinery from the Golden Chariot to Tombstone. If old George Valentine King was still alive, he probably left first. Prospectors are that way.

But the tailings are still there—there, and in thousands of other mine dumps in California mountains and deserts. The story of gold has added new chapters through the years, but the end is not yet in sight. Today, with new type dredges, power shovels, compressed air drills, and especially with the discovery of the flotation and cyanide processes of gold recovery, the story could go on to a thrilling climax. Now it is pos-

A prospector's desert shack.



sible to recover 90% or more of the gold in those once-worthless sulphides. Now mills can handle lower grade ores than mine operators bothered with in the old days. It has been estimated that at least five million dollar's worth of gold lies waiting in Chariot Canyon—waiting for recovery. What of all the dumps of all the West! The reclamation of tailings could be carried on as a solid busi-

ness operation without blasting out another ton of ore.

Why isn't this happening?

Why isn't every dump of tailings being re-worked?

Why are mountains and deserts full of deserted mines, instead of booming new mining towns?

Because in 1934 the United States went off the gold standard and the price was pegged at \$35 an ounce. With mining and refining costs still rising, along with the cost of labor, materials, and transportation, it is no longer profitable to operate a gold mine.

Uncle Sam is the old gentleman who sits back and looks mysterious when someone whispers—as someone often does—"Hang onto your mines. The price of gold's going up to \$50, \$60, \$80."

Miners, proverbially looking for the big strike on the other side of the mountain, dream of another '49 when the price of gold finally does rise, and they can see all the deserts and mountains of the West again swarming with prospectors ready to gamble their lives on a strike—a strike which came true for men as lucky as George Valentine King.

///

Where Are They...?



Where are those men of yesteryear . . . those adventurous men with a conquering spirit . . . those men whose lust for riches gnawed at their very souls? They rode off into history to find their fate or their pot of gold, but where are they now? How can we trace their ghostly path . . . How can we find them, in the midst of all their treasures? How do we follow their trails blazed only by their rusting sword and armor, and their sun-bleached bones?

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Nine Bridges Has Toiyabe

TOIYABE CITY looked interesting on a tattered 1881 map of Nevada. The settlement was the location of the Murphy Mine, once considered the best developed and most important silver mine in central Nevada. In 1886 there was quite a community there clustered around a huge and much admired 20-stamp mill, costing over \$183,000.

It was early August when we drove up Smoky Valley and saw the barren crests of the Toiyabes rising in the west. Finally, about 100 miles from Tonopah, we came to a sign reading Ophir and Wisconsin canyons. We followed the road until it became too rough for our passenger car, when we left it near an old cemetery.

We had only hiked a few minutes when canyon walls closed in on the rocky road, forcing it from one side of the canyon to the other. No wonder a visitor to Ophir Canyon nearly 100 years ago wrote, "On entering the canyon from Smoky Valley, one feels almost forbidden to advance, so towering and precipitous are the rocks . . ." It is true! Walls of the narrow canyon tower nearly 100 feet. From many points on the trail, all

we could see were its jagged walls of volcanic slate and granite. Woodchoppers, cutting fuel for the Murphy Mine, once dragged pinon pines to the brink of these precipices and sent them crashing down into the valley.

The steep road wound on and on up the canyon, criss-crossing Ophir Creek on nine short, wooden bridges, each more splintered and rotted than the last. This was the original wagon road to the settlement, constructed in 1865 at a cost of over \$5,000. The 10° grades described by one writer in 1870 nearly discouraged us from continuing. It seemed impossible that a sizable village could exist in such a narrow canyon, but the walls gradually became less sheer and the valley floor grew broader. Soon the apex of a brick smelter stack rose above a rocky spur and we knew our steep three-mile hike was almost at an end. After a short distance we came to the crumbling walls of several cabins. This was the site of one of the smaller mines in Ophir Canyon.

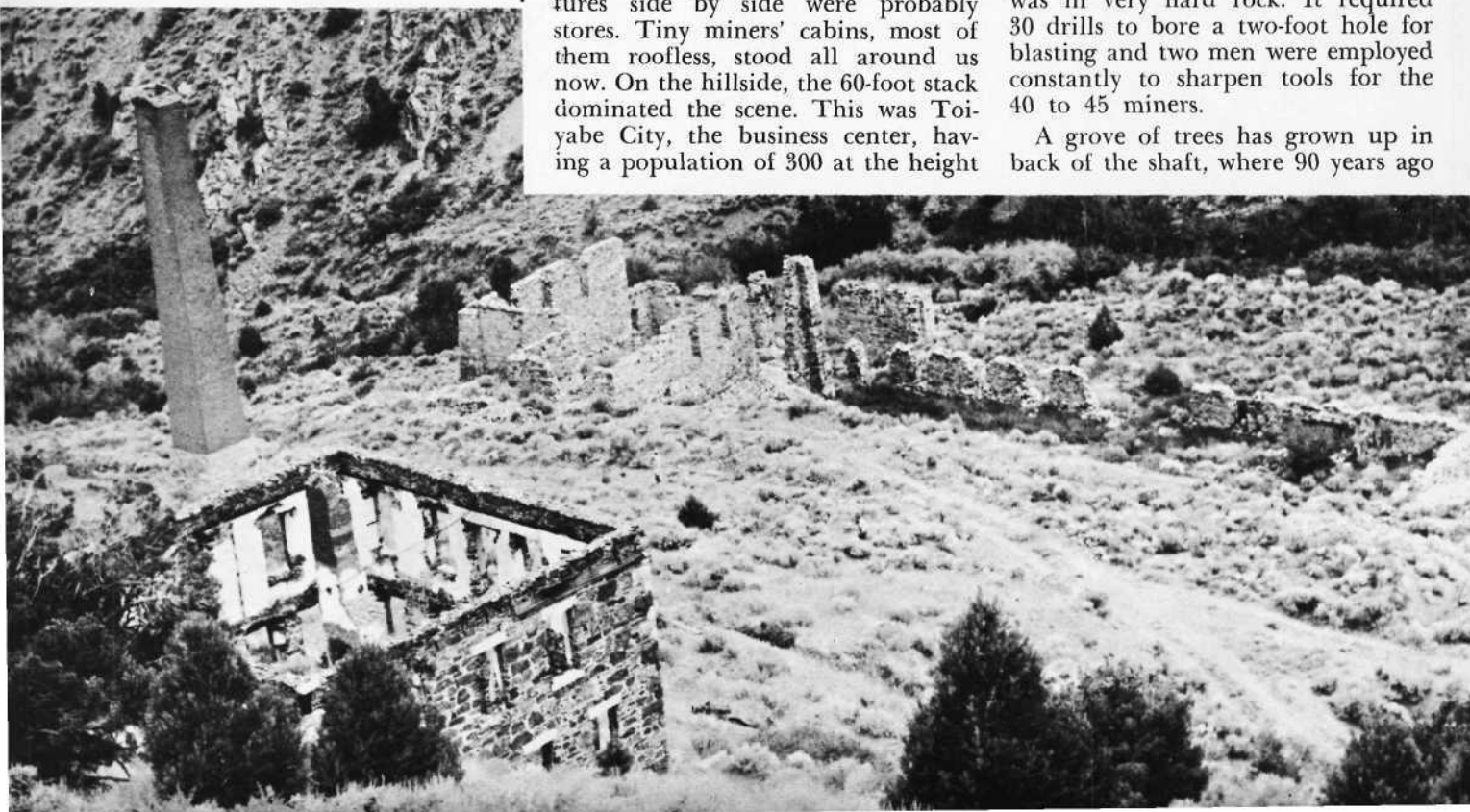
Continuing on, we came to an impressive row of crumbling stone buildings. A pair of two-story structures side by side were probably stores. Tiny miners' cabins, most of them roofless, stood all around us now. On the hillside, the 60-foot stack dominated the scene. This was Toiyabe City, the business center, having a population of 300 at the height

of activity in 1868. A tri-weekly stage left here for Austin, 55 miles away, reaching the city in nine hours.

After a picnic lunch in the yard of an abandoned cabin, we moved on to the high buttressed walls of the large mill building. Once its gaunt walls echoed with the din of a 20-stamp mill and its rooms, now open to the sky, were kept warm with heat from huge boilers and eight roasting furnaces. But that was back in 1866. Today only heaps of broken brick and rusted iron lay scattered about the floors of the splendidly equipped mill. The Twin River Mining Company spent \$183,000 constructing this reduction plant. When running at full capacity, it processed 16 tons of ore, yielding an average of \$111 in silver per ton.

A rock strewn cut led a short distance up the canyon from the mill. This was the route of ore cars to the hoist house and shaft. Below the carway, part of the collapsed incline shaft is still visible. This once plunged into the earth 240 feet to four working levels. Rich silver ore was taken from these workings, the best worth \$300 per ton, but the ore was in very hard rock. It required 30 drills to bore a two-foot hole for blasting and two men were employed constantly to sharpen tools for the 40 to 45 miners.

A grove of trees has grown up in back of the shaft, where 90 years ago



by Raymond Hillman

Warning:

For 4-wheel drive vehicles only

there was nothing but a pile of cordwood. We refreshed ourselves with ice cold water running out of a pipe and rested in the shade before hiking up a side road to a large ruin above the mill. From here the view



Toiyabe City is strictly for 4-wheel vehicles or hikers.

encompassed all that remained of Toiyabe City.

Its end came in the summer of 1868, after the mill had produced \$750,000 in bullion. The reason was not that the Murphy Mine was worked out, but rather, it was not managed economically. The mine could not keep up with the ore demands of the mill. As a result, the mill was not running at full capacity. Many months only 10 or 15 of the 20 stamps were at work. To correct this, plans were made to exploit the mine further. However, stockholders failed to meet demands for necessary funds. Some reports say this was due to misunderstandings; others believed

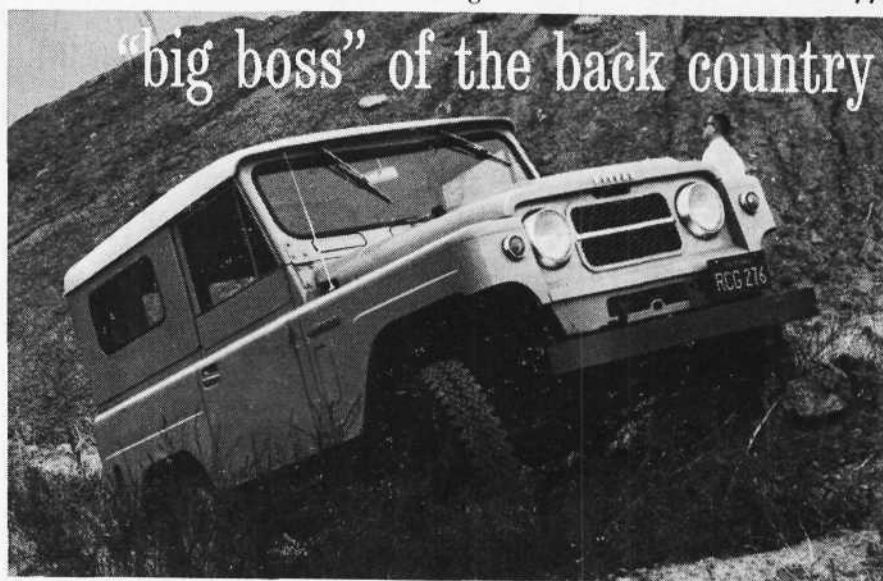
financial aid was not given because stockholders had not received a dividend in two years. It is regrettable that the stockholders did not realize that a great initial outlay had to be made to develop the mine and mill, and that no profits could be realized until this work was done. Without funds, the Twin River Mining Company went bankrupt in the fall of 1868.

The property was sold in the summer of 1869 to the Cambridge Mining Company. This was the first of a long series of owners who did little toward redeveloping the property. In 1876 the Nevada State Mineralogist considered the area still a good potential, but believed the mine had seen its best days. No further activity is reported on Ophir Canyon until the Nevada Ophir Mining Company acquired the property in 1917. The mill was reactivated and a sem-

blance of the old days grew up once again in the canyon.

From our hillside vantage point, we could see that this company, too, had left Ophir Canyon to its stillness. There are no signs of recent activity. In back of us rose stone walls that had seen many a mining company come and go. It was probably the center of activity during the original operations and subsequent rebirths of activity. A fire has reduced this fine building to a shell, but its red brick chimney still stands—a monument to emptiness.

As the waning sun ducked in and out of rolling clouds we started down the steep grade that led us over Toiyabe's nine old bridges. Some ghost towns seem to promise a rebirth, but, somehow, Toiyabe City doesn't leave an impression that it will ever live again. ///



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The Lazy BL Ranch

BOX 3232Z CHEYENNE, WYOMING

Idaho's Silent City *by gary ferrier*

IDAHO'S SILENT City provides a dramatic link to the frontier West. Scattered among towering granite pillars, from which the area takes its name, is one of the greatest pioneer registers of dates and names ever found. Written in wagon grease, often while under siege, these names and dates stand out in relief against their weathered backgrounds.

Here, approximately 38 miles south of Burley, raged some of the fiercest Indian battles on record when Chief Pocatello with his warring Bannocks raided the Silent City. In the summer of 1861, five people escaped on the fourth night their wagon train was under siege. Crawling on their hands and knees for several miles, one woman carried her baby by clenching its clothes between her teeth. Somehow they made it safely to the Mormon settlement of Brigham City, Utah, over 100 miles away, from where a rescue party was dispatched to help the others.

When the rescue party arrived at the scene of the siege, they found over 300 dead and mutilated bodies within the blackened ring of ashes that had once been their protection. The bodies were buried in a well that had been dug in a desperate attempt to get water.

Once three main trails met nearby, and the Silent City was the hub of east-west travel. The old Fort Hall route followed the Oregon Trail from the north along the Snake River, and crossed over to the City of Rocks through the Raft River country. James Hudspeth blazed his famous "Hudspeth Cut-off" from Soda

Springs, Idaho directly to the Silent City in 1849. He hadn't counted on the extremely rugged terrain though, and actually saved few, if any, miles in his attempt to cut 100 miles off the trail to California.

The Pony Express ran a third route through to the Silent City in the early 1800s, and paved the way for establishment of the Ben Holladay stage coach station in 1869. This trail entered Idaho from Utah over Kelton Pass, followed the California Trail a short distance, and then went through "the narrows" in the City of Rocks to connect with the Oregon Trail at Rock Creek.

In 1878 an overland stage bound for Boise, Idaho from Kelton, Utah, was waylaid in the Silent City. Two bandits robbed the stage of \$90,000 in gold, and started a lost treasure legend three quarters of a century old.

One of the bandits was shot and killed during the holdup, but the other escaped into the towering pillars and cliffs. He was caught several days later by a posse, but the gold had vanished.

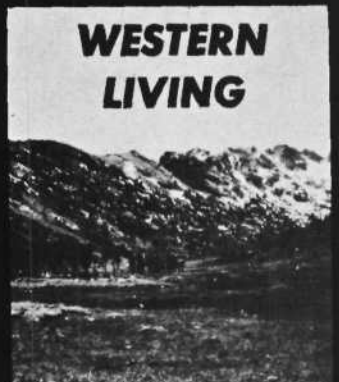
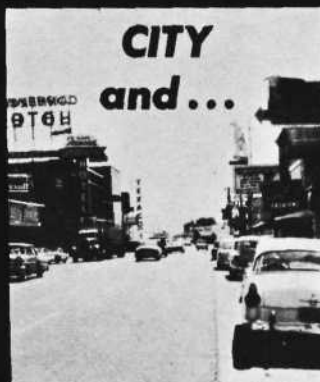
According to legend, just before he died in prison he confessed that he had buried the gold under a group of five cedars in the Silent City of Rocks. Several people began an immediate search to recover the hidden loot, but they never found it. A few groups of five cedars have been located by local people, but, as far as is known, the treasure remains hidden. Perhaps an ambitious explorer will yet discover the right group of trees and unlock the secret of the lost \$90,000 gold cache. ///



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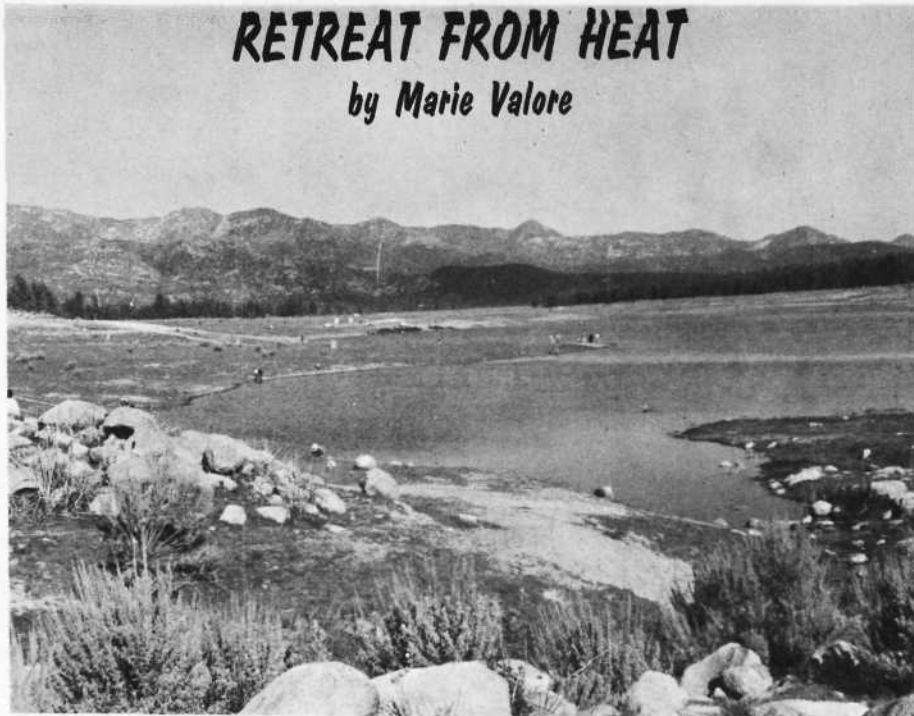
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WHENEVER WE hear about California's giant San Jacinto Mountains, memories of pleasant experiences come into focus. One is of fishing on the turquoise waters of Lake Hemet; another is of hiking along pine-edged trails or pitching a tent on the lake's grassy banks. Now that summer is in full fury, the mountain's far away, but when the weekend rolls around we will pack the stationwagon and leave our jaundiced valley. Ahead, in the pine-scented upper regions, lies our own particular haven, Lake Hemet. We can almost smell trout frying over an open fire and old-fashioned boiled coffee as we ascend the Palms to Pines Highway that rises above Palm Desert's floor.

In about a half hour we reach the cool waters of Lake Hemet. Velvety grass creeps from the pines to the water's edge and sunbleached boulders perch like watching sentries along the banks. Crystal springs ripple toward the lake, the aftermath of late spring snows.

Lake Hemet lies quietly in an oblong bowl away from the cares and woes of modern suburbia. Cattle graze nearby and bushy-tailed squirrels scamper among the trees in search of pine nuts. The lake is more



RETREAT FROM HEAT

by Marie Valore

than 90 feet deep, filling on the average of three inches each day. This year is the highest since 1961.

In the southwestern area is Lake Hemet Dam, built in 1895. Rock used to construct it was quarried from adjacent ravines and the cement was carried by boat around the

Horn from England, then hauled up the steep mountain slopes by wagon.

Both the State of California and the Lake Hemet Water Company maintain public picnic and camping facilities. The Lake Hemet Water Company Park has trailer and tent spaces for 200 and the manager, John Somerville, claims to have never turned anyone away.

The park, open from March to late October, enjoys a reputation for fun and relaxation. It lies approximately 40 miles from sun-shrouded Palm Springs in Riverside County and 90 miles from smog-filled Los Angeles.

After unpacking our equipment and setting up camp, we rented a boat for a small fee and drifted lazily over the lake, fishing tackle and worms tucked between us. Sometimes we caught glimpses of rainbow trout near the surface, their marble-like eyes as curious as our own. There are small-mouthed bass and catfish as well and last season a boy caught a German Brown 14 inches long! The State keeps the lake well stocked.

With plenty of trout in our iced cool-can, we rented horses and rode to high regions overlooking green meadows and glistening pine tips.

The promise of a rewarding day had come true. We fried our trout over an open fire and then lay back to wait for the moon to rise. Tomorrow we will again fish on the lake, hike the back trails, and rent horses for more hours of enjoyment. But tomorrow is another day. Now we find peace listening to a comforting concert of sounds peculiar to nights underneath star-speckled skies. ///

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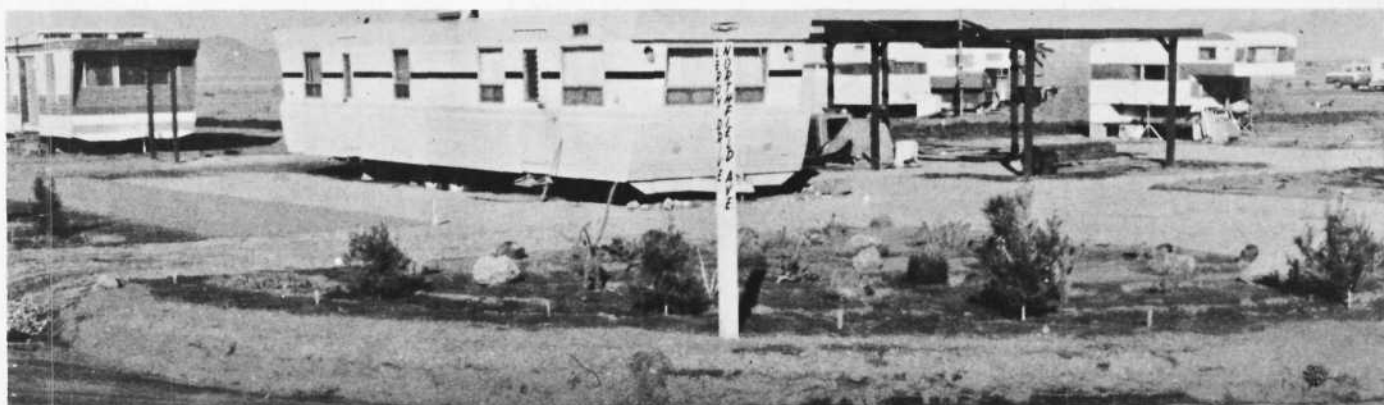
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Horn Coral, New Utah Gem

by shirley chatwin

UTAH HAS yielded a good share of unusual rocks, but collectors are now pillaging its escarpment for a new one—red horn coral. This agatized stone from the replacement of animal tissue is found in the Kamas District of Wasatch National Forest, in what is known as Riley's Canyon. About ½-mile off Utah Highway 35, Riley's Canyon is between Camp KilKare and Woodland, about 48 miles east of Salt Lake City. The canyon runs in a northerly direction to an elevation of about 6,800 feet.

Discovered in 1961 as a result of the filing of three mining claims in the area, law officers of the U.S. Forest Service recently classified horn coral as a precious stone.

The coral is found in the type of soil designated by the Forest Service as limestone scarp lands. The stone varies in size and resembles the horn of a small cow. The area where it is found seems to run in a belt. The

ancient animal from which it derived lived at the bottom of water and was possibly a huge shrimp. A fairly rare stone, it polishes to a high gloss and is being used for jewelry and display pieces. Its color ranges from a coral red to reddish grey.

You can drive to the location, but pickups or 4-wheel drive vehicles are recommended. The road is steep and in rainy weather, slick. Hikers can leave their cars on the highway and walk ½-mile into the area. Some stones are found on the surface, others underneath; a variability that suggests the corals lived from shallow near-shore waters down to great depths.

This part of the forest is mostly brush, but nearby Provo river provides camp sites as well as good fishing. Within five miles are heavily timbered forests with additional camp and picnic sites with facilities.

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Hornitos, California

BY LAMBERT FLORIN

HORNITOS, INCLUDED in the fascinating roster of California's Mother Lode town, is unique in that the town was there long before the gold rush started. This had a violent impact upon it. Although its origin is clouded in doubt, its Mexican heritage is evident in the central plaza plan and adobe buildings built in Spanish style. Prior to the discovery of gold in the flume at Sutter's Mill, the town dozed quietly.

Then came hordes of miners, not to Hornitos at first, but to found neighboring camps — Mariposa, Mount Bullion, Bear Valley and closer still, Quartzburg. None of the early gold camps was a model of propriety, but Quartzburg took first place for lawlessness. But even a mining town had to preserve some sort of law. So when Quartzburg's undesirables were forcibly ejected, they simply moved over to adjoining Hornitos. The old plaza now became a scene of alternating fiesta and murder.

Then, after a few years, came another change. The shallow placer deposits at Quartzburg gave out. Miners prospecting neighboring creek-beds found gold at Hornitos even richer. So again they ejected the harlots, Chinese opium den operators and gamblers. At last children played safely in the streets and ended was Hornitos' reputation as the "Bloodiest Town in the Mother Lode."

However, numerous outlaws, horse-thieves and shady ladies left their mark. Prominent among them were Joaquin Murietta, Cherokee Bill and the singing star of the dancehalls, La Patricia. Not too well authenticated is Joaquin's story. Certain it is that he was a Mexican sufficiently outraged at white men's atrocities against his countrymen to take up a career of banditry and murder in reprisal. Confusing is the fact that there were several Muriettas roaming the Mother Lode, mostly small time robbers. When Captain Love and his

Rangers ambushed and slew a Joaquin Murietta, the officer wanted the reward offered. To prove he had the right bandit, so the story goes, he cut off Joaquin's head and placed it in a pickle jar. Then he canvassed his command, obtaining from every man a flask of whiskey which was poured into the jar. Now he headed for Hornitos with the grisly memento. There he summoned the populace to the central plaza, reached into the pickle-jar, grasped the head by the long black hair and held it aloft. "Is this the head of Joaquin Murietta?" he asked. Several erstwhile cronies of the bandit agreed that it was. Presumably, Love then collected his reward!

Presumably, also, Cherokee Bill met his end in this same plaza, as the following notice appeared in the *Hornitos Times* office: PUBLIC NOTICE—All citizens of Hornitos are respectfully invited to attend the hanging of Cherokee Bill, horse thief. Meeting at Rattlesnake Ikes Saloon. Miners Court. May 12, 1851.

La Patricia, then only 16 years old but already a singer in Quartzburg's bordellos, was one of those ejected from that town. Settling in Hornitos, she saw the town expand to a metropolis of 34 saloons and many foul oriental opium dens.

The most interesting feature contributing to Hornitos' uniqueness is found in the old cemetery. Because the ground was too hard to dig a proper grave, mourners merely scraped away enough surface dirt to form a shallow depression for the board coffin, stacked flat stones to a height sufficient to top the coffin by a foot or so, and topped the whole thing with a slab roof. Because the resulting structures so closely resembled small versions of a popular outdoor bakeoven called "horno," citizens added the diminutive "itos" and both graves and town acquired the name "Hornitos." A group of these novel above-ground graves exists in original condition in the Catholic Cemetery behind the church. These are shown in part in our photo. ///



A monthly series featuring the
age-old uses of desert plants by
primitive people everywhere.

DESERT DISPENSARY

by Sam Hicks



Musaro may be purchased in any Baja California market.

FROM THE sparsely settled mountain regions to the east, Indian women herb vendors arrive daily in the city of Navajoa, Sonora, Mexico. In the market place they spread out their displays of curative plants and edible herbs gathered from the canyons of the Rio Mayo and await their regular customers. Other women balance heavily laden baskets of organic medicines on their heads and proceed through the streets, selling door to door. Among the strange variety of medicinal leaves, barks and roots which fill the women's baskets, thick stalks of green cactus are more abundant than any other type of plant. This cactus is called Musaro and a highly concentrated tea cooked from the sliced stalks is a well-known cure for ulcerated stomachs. These dark, auburn-haired, blue-eyed Mayo women first introduced Musaro to the Mexican people as a curative plant.

Dr. Xavier Mandonado of Navajoa is now retired after a long and active career as a surgeon and general practitioner. He is in good health, is 66 years old and presently leases his clinic to a group of young medical doctors in Navajoa. In 1958 Dr. Mandonado had a severe case of stomach ulcers and after a great deal of medication and suffering he came

to the United States in search of relief. He was examined by specialists in three major American cities and was summarily told his case was hopeless.

Dr. Mandonado returned to Mexico, first to the doctors of Guadalajara, then on to Mexico City. In every clinic or hospital in which he was examined he received the same report. His condition, he was told, had progressed to the point of being incurable.

Back home in Navajoa, he was told by the Mayo *curanderas* that they could cure him with Musaro. He decided to give it a try.

Curative Musaro tea is made by slicing 15 or 20 cross-sections about two inches in length from the stalks of cactus. These are then placed in a container large enough to hold five gallons of water, then it is boiled for 8 or 10 hours, until the liquid is reduced to approximately one gallon.

For a period of four months Dr. Mandonado drank no other liquid. He was never out of reach of a container of Musaro tea and he forced himself to drink it in quantity. The treatment completely cured his con-

dition and he is still enjoying a happy, healthful life.

Throughout the State of Sonora, on both ranches and in villages, Musaro plants are raised in vegetable and flower gardens for medicinal use in homes. Gathered from the desert the cactus sells in Navajoa and Ciudad Obregon at the rate of four or five stalks, each from one to two feet, for \$1.

In Tijuana, where America's high cost of living is reflected across the border, Musaro presently sells for 50c a slice. It may be purchased in some fruit and vegetable stores on First Street and also at a herb vendor's stand in El Mercado Municipal, the principal market in downtown Tijuana.

Musaro is bright green and grows somewhat like Pitahaya. Its stalks may have either three, five or six ridges and be identified by the evenly spaced, star-shaped clusters of spines which grow only on the crests of the ridges. It is found along most of the Baja California peninsula. ///

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Letter from Man who Found Pegleg's Gold

A highlight of DESERT's March issue was an article by an anonymous author who claimed to have found the legendary lost Pegleg mine, removed the black oxidation from the nuggets and disposed of them in Alaska for over \$300,000. Mr. Pegleg, as we refer to him, volunteered to answer letters published on DESERT's Letters From Our Readers page. Five of the nuggets are on display at our new DESERT Magazine Building in Palm Desert. Below is his answer to letters that appeared in the June issue.

Dear Choral Pepper:

Some of the questions from readers in the June issue were answered, even before they were printed, by my letter in the July issue. Robert Buck's comment about the number of buyers was partly answered then. I suppose the nit-picking could go on forever even if I wrote a nugget by nugget account of the sale disposition of each of them, but to be completely truthful I *did* have trouble finding enough buyers with ready cash to buy all the nuggets I had for sale. I was determined not to sell or display any quantity over about 15 ounces at one time so as not to focus too much attention on myself and this was why—as mentioned in my July letter—on several occasions I had nuggets smelted down and refined in Canada, then later sold the bullion when I discovered it would be illegal to possess bullion in the United States.

Continuing on to Choral Pepper and Jordan Stephens' letters, the most expert legal counsel and interpretation of the federal gold regulations boils down to this: Native placer gold may be owned, possessed, bought and sold, made into jewelry, etc. without violating any part of the regulations. If it were illegal to have placer gold, then nobody would ever hunt for it, otherwise the minute a miner or prospector lifted a flake of gold out of his gold pan he would be in violation of the law. On the other hand—and this is the odd twist to the law—should a placer miner or anyone else for that matter, melt his gold dust or nuggets in a crucible or a mould, then at that moment he has created bullion and is in violation of the law. Gold taken from a mine that is recovered by milling or by other processes, and the end product of which is gold bullion, can only be sold to the government. Records must be kept, forms filled out, and even jewelers, artists, dentists and others who use refined gold must have certain licenses and fill out government forms.

Jordan Stephens is right when he says that most native or "free" gold found in nature is usually a higher concentration than the assay of the Pegleg nuggets. I pointed out in my original story that most of the known California gold was around 80% gold and about 20% alloy, usually silver. However, there are deposits of free gold known that go all the way down to a few percent of gold. Actually, they aren't considered gold, but some other metal with a small percentage of gold as an alloy. For example, some silver mines have contained silver nuggets with, say, 10% gold alloyed with the silver etc. The Pegleg nuggets just happened to be a bit lower concentration of gold than some of the other high-grade deposits from central and northern California. Also in regards to Mr. Stephens comment about gold dealers, at no time did I ever consider myself a "dealer" in gold. I was simply an individual who found gold nuggets and sold them, just as prospectors and miners have done for the last 150 years.

I made it very clear in my story why I didn't file a claim or engage in mining operations and the way Mr. Stephens has phrased his question, it is a bit tricky. If I answered it fully then I would eliminate certain areas and pinpoint others so I will just ask him to read the original story again. Frankly, I don't know how many other facts I can substantiate my story with unless it would be to have a public gathering, announce the exact location, lead whoever would want to go there and dig for nuggets on the spot—after removing some overburden. Anyone who will read my letter in the July issue will know why I won't do this.

Now then, regarding Ed Kirkland's letter. He is right in that undoubtedly a lot of people will be looking for the gold and all of them won't be amateurs. I presumed this even before I sent the story in to DESERT. Although I was an amateur myself when I first discovered the Pegleg nuggets, I didn't remain one. I meant it when I said I found every nugget on the surface and underground within range of the most sensitive detector. Ten years was a lot of time to get educated and learn a lot about gold, detectors and a lot of other things. I also made it plain a couple of times that while I thought there were more nuggets underground at my location and possibly at other surface outcroppings—maybe far away, I was satisfied with the gold I found and wasn't greedy for more. Maybe there are some who just won't believe it, but the possibility of \$30 million more in gold as mentioned by Mr. Kirkland that I may have passed up doesn't bother me in the slightest. I'm going to say this one final time: I got my share of the Pegleg gold and I'm satisfied!

I appreciate Mr. Gardner's kind words and, in fact, am quite flattered by them. But while he may have made the right guess in a thousand mysteries, this time he guessed wrong. I'd never written a story in my life until I wrote about finding the Pegleg gold. Then I simply picked up a copy of a writer's magazine that told how to lay out a manuscript—and followed the directions.

This time I'm sending a nugget from a batch that I tumbled. Besides using a number of cleaning agents and solutions, I also mentioned tumbling some of them, which removed the black oxidation from the surface, but left it down in the cavities. This process gave the nuggets their most natural appearance. I didn't mention it before, but probably 80% or more of the nuggets I sold looked like this one, i.e. a slight reddish color instead of the lighter "chemically cleaned" appearance of the first one I sent in. There must be a lot of Pegleg nuggets around that I sold that look just like this one, undoubtedly bought in Alaska and Canada by tourists or in the form of jewelry and brought back home.

Yours very sincerely,

The Man Who Found Pegleg's Black Gold.

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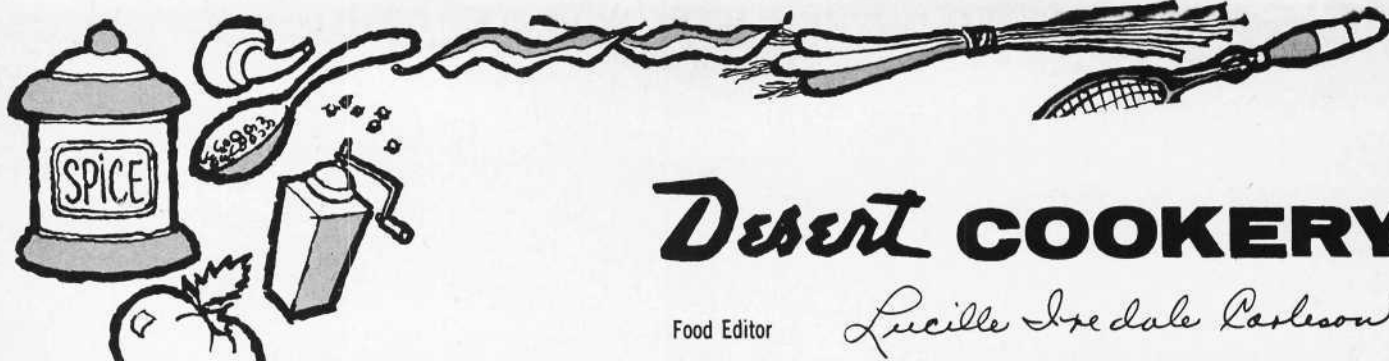
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Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

Lucille Inedale Carlson

GRAPE AND SALMON MOLD

2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
Soak in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water for 5 minutes. Stir into 1 cup boiling water and dissolve. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Oil a 5-cup mold lightly. Pour in $\frac{1}{3}$ of the gelatin and refrigerate. Keep remaining gelatin at room temperature. When first layer is almost firm arrange $\frac{1}{2}$ cup seedless grapes over top and place back in refrigerator. To the remaining gelatin add:

- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup seedless grapes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced celery
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise

$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt

Drain 2 cans ($7\frac{3}{4}$ oz. each) salmon and break into small pieces. Fold salmon into gelatin mixture carefully. Pour into mold and refrigerate. Garnish with grapes and deviled eggs.

BLACK CHERRY SALAD

- 1 can pitted black cherries
- 1 cup cherry juice
- 1 cup Port wine
- 1 package black cherry Jello

Drain cherries, reserving juice. If necessary, add water to juice to make 1 cup. Bring to boil and add Jello, stirring until dissolved. Cool and add wine. Chill until thickened and add cherries. Arrange 1 cup pecan halves in bottom of mold. Fill with Jello and chill. Fold $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whipped cream into $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise for dressing.

GRAPEFRUIT AND SHRIMP SALAD

- 1 package Royal Pink Grapefruit Gelatin
- 1 can frozen grapefruit sections
- 1 can shrimp, medium

Dissolve gelatin in 1 cup boiling water. Add juice from canned grapefruit to make 1 cup, adding as much cold water as necessary. When mixture begins to set, add grapefruit cut into pieces and whole shrimp. This makes a pretty delicate pink salad ring with bowl of mayonnaise set in center.

Two cups of cooked rice were inadvertently left out of the Rice Loaf recipe which appeared on this page in the July issue. It is an especially good recipe so, if you save them, be sure to make the correction. L.I.

GRAPEFRUIT SHRIMP MOUSSE

- $2/3$ cup finely chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped green pepper
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
- 2 cups water, divided
- 2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 6 tablespoons frozen grapefruit juice concentrate, thawed, undiluted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
- 2 cups deveined medium-size shrimp, cut in halves
- 1 cup heavy cream or 1 cup IMO

In small saucepan combine celery, pepper, onion and 1 cup water. Let simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and drain liquid into bowl. Chill vegetables. Sprinkle gelatin over remaining cup of water in saucepan. Place over low heat, stirring until gelatin is dissolved. Remove from heat. Pour into bowl with vegetable liquid, stir in grapefruit concentrate and salt. Cool slightly and beat in mayonnaise with rotary beater. If you use IMO, beat in with mayonnaise. Chill until mixture is consistency of egg white. Mix in chilled vegetables and shrimp. If you are using cream, whip it stiff and fold in. Decorate inside of mold with whole shrimp and if you wish, some sliced stuffed olives. Pour gelatin into mold and chill until firm. You may garnish plate with whole grapefruit sections. Serve on lettuce. Serves about 10.

BLUE CHEESE DRESSING

- 4 ounces blue cheese
 - 1 carton sour cream
 - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Mash cheese until smooth. Blend well with sour cream and add lemon juice. Makes 2 cups of dressing.

SHRIMP AND VEGETABLE SALAD

- 1 lb. fresh shrimp
- Cook, shell and vein
Season with salt
Arrange $\frac{1}{2}$ shrimp on bottom of 1 quart mold. Soften 1 tablespoon gelatin in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water for 5 minutes. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons sugar
 - $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons salt, pepper
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- To this add 1 cup boiling water, stir until gelatin is dissolved. Chill until thickened. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ of gelatin over shrimp in mold. Chill until firm. Arrange 1 cup cooked peas over first layer. Cover with $\frac{1}{4}$ of gelatin. Chill until firm. Add a layer of finely chopped carrots and 1 tablespoon chopped onion. Cover with $\frac{1}{4}$ of gelatin. Chill until firm. Add remaining shrimp and gelatin.

GINGER PEAR SALAD

- 1 package lemon Jello
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 cup pear juice
- 8 pear halves
- 1 tablespoon chopped candied ginger
- 1 3-oz. package cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon chopped or slivered almonds

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water, add pear juice. Mix cheese, ginger, almonds, honey and mayonnaise and form into small balls. Place a cheese ball in cavity of each pear half. Place pears, rounded side down, in square pan. Pour a little of the gelatin over and place in refrigerator to harden. When the rest of the gelatin becomes syrupy, pour over pears. Cut in squares and serve and top with mayonnaise.

BEEF AND ORANGE SALAD

- 1 package lime-lemon Jello
 - 1 cup boiling water
- Dissolve Jello in boiling water
Add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup salad dressing or mayonnaise and beat until creamy. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water. When mixture gets syrupy, add 1 teaspoon shaved onion. 1 cup diced beets and 1 cup diced oranges. Serve with a dollop of mayonnaise on top.

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New Books

(Continued from Page 5)

well-illustrated, 275-page, hardcover volume. Gina Allen, who has had other articles and books published, grew up in Lead, South Dakota and began learning about gold along with with her ABC's. I strongly recommend this book for both adults and students who will find it a fascinating history of the world. You will be enriched a hundred times the cost of \$5.95. J.P.

FIELD GUIDE TO GEMS AND MINERALS OF MEXICO

By Paul Willard Johnson

The information in this paperback book is so good that if you aren't already a gem collector, you'll want to become one. A trip is always more adventurous with an objective to be gained—particularly if the objective is broad in aspect. Gem collecting is a fascinating hobby in itself, but when combined with an automobile trip to Mexico, it's almost irresistible.

The author tantalizes you with the fact that deposits of real jade have never been discovered in Mexico, even though the Aztecs prized it above all other stones and artifacts fashioned of it now rest in museums. So where did it come from? No one knows, but Cortes received jade tributes from the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero, Puebla and Vera Cruz, so there might be the place to start looking.

Baja California, incidentally, is not included in this book. Maps and photographs are excellent and its 97 pages include an English-Spanish glossary. \$2.00.

THE HISTORIC VALLEY OF TEMECULA

By Horace Parker

For nearly 40 years the author has collected material on the historic valley of Temecula, most of which has never been published. To prevent this wealth of material from falling into oblivion, Dr. Parker is introducing it in a series of "little books" he calls "libritos." This is the first of the series and concerns the early Indians of Temecula. Their origin, taboos, foods, baskets, pottery, ceremonies, and implements are all revealingly discussed.

Those readers familiar with Dr. Parker's fine Anza/Borrego Guide Book will look forward to his coverage of another fascinating area. Well-illustrated with drawings by Leverage Parker, this 34-page paperback sells for \$1.00.

LETTERS

FROM OUR READERS

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.

How to Lose a Mine . . .

To the Editor: The craziest things can happen to a prospector. I should have known better than to do what I did, but several months ago I lost a rich strike. It was February 22nd, to be exact, and I didn't have much to do at our desert mining office, so I decided to take a 25-mile run over to one of my pumice claims and see if the markers were in place. As is customary with prospectors, I picked up a few specimens en route and threw them in the truck. Then, on my way back—since it was only 1:00 and I had until 5:00—I decided to go up high in the mountains where I'd never known any vehicles to go. Back in 1890 some pure silver and also copper and gold were found in that rugged area, but I'd never been there myself. So I bounced the truck up and over more sharp rocks than I thought existed, stopping every now and then to take some samples. Along about 3:00 I realized I was a long way from camp, so I figured out a short cut so I wouldn't have to back track and maybe miss a "big strike."

At 5:00 I rolled the truck into camp, carried out the samples, and drove my "town car" to San Bernardino where I was scheduled to go to a Washington Birthday party. I took the samples along so I'd have something to keep me from getting bored until I returned to camp the following week.

Well, on the 23rd I went out to unload my samples. By golly, I had one with shiny metal in it. I took a power glass and examined it closely. Good gosh, it was shot full of yellow stuff in fine gray quartz with lots of fractures. I tried to remember where I'd picked it up, but couldn't even come close. Anyway, I proceeded to the assayer and asked, "What would you pay for a mountain of this?"

Cliff, the assayer, pulled out his 60 power and looked it over. "Nope," he says, "this isn't pure gold, but," he continued, "it's about 70% and 30% silver. Where in the devil did you locate it? How much have you got?"

"Well," I says, "that's all I have and I don't know where it came from, but I can retrace my steps and find out, for sure."

"Beat it out there, locate it, and bring me 2 # for analysis," he ordered, "I'll test this in the meantime and see what you've got."

I didn't get back to camp for a week; not until after he'd called to report the stuff assayed at \$1800 per ton! You can bet I hustled then. And I'm still looking. I've retraced every step, looked at 5000 rocks, and haven't found a trace of that \$1800 per ton stuff. However, in the losing and looking I've found other valuable minerals that are now blocked out and tested, so it turned out good anyway. But, if you ever wonder how a mine is lost, here's how. And this is a true story. I can prove it.

HAM SAUNDERS,
San Bernardino, California

No Tigers in My Tree

To the Editor: I read the poem in Jack Pepper's July column which he said was written by DESERT's editor. All I've got to say is that I don't see how such a nutty dame can edit such a great magazine!

ED MARSHALL
Santa Ana, California

Take A Safari

To the overworked Editor: If you're seeing tigers in your trees in Palm Desert, what you need is a vacation!

ELLEN LAWRENCE
Dallas, Texas

Success is a Tiger

To the Editor and Publisher:

That's no TIGER in the tree
It's just SUCCESS looking at thee
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Through DESERT.

It won't jump, never fear
It will grow greater year after year
Through DESERT, folks,
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Congratulations on the move to your own new building and may the "Tiger" of "Success" be with you always.

MARY CRITOR
La Crescenta, California

More Six-toed Men . . .

To the Editor: In reference to the article in the June issue regarding pictographs and petroglyphs depicting six-toed footprints, I know of others. Besides one in the Valley of Fire, there's a six-toed figure in Red Rock Canyon west of Las Vegas. Also, there's a painted red six-toed figure at the Erskine Creek site on Kern River just below Lake Isabella. In addition to the polydactylism as described in the article, there are also figures throughout central New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, and California depicting four-toed characters, also three-fingered hand prints. A number of hand prints I have seen indicate at least one or two joints of one or more fingers have been amputated; this particularly in central New Mexico and northern Arizona. Your article was interesting and I expect more work will be done on this subject eventually.

JOHN J. CAWLEY, M.D.
Bakersfield, California

Retiring In the Desert

To the Editor: My husband and I plan to retire to the desert in about five years. In the meantime, we are anxious to learn all we can about it.

While in Palm Springs last winter we discovered DESERT Magazine. Please start our subscription with my husband's birthday this month. And thank you for publishing such an interesting, informative magazine.

MRS. A. R. RODITE
Park Ridge, Illinois

New York Mts. are West . . .

To the Editor: I enjoyed Royce Rollins article about Searchlight, Nevada, in the June issue. I lived there for many years. The last big strike was at the Old Blossom mine in 1937. Gaines and Kirkley found the ore there when they were in their late 70s. It's sad to think that they, Bert Calkin, the assayer, Ollie Thompson, the mill man at the Cyrus Noble where the Quartette ore was milled, and James Cashman (later a Las Vegas automobile dealer) who brought the telephone line to Eldorado Canyon and did so much to develop Searchlight in its early days before Las Vegas even was a town, are now all dead.

But please don't let Mr. Rollins place the New York Mts. east of Searchlight. I prospected in them from 1905 to 1908 and I'd say they're as directly west of Searchlight as can be.

JAMES FREEMAN
Long Beach, California.

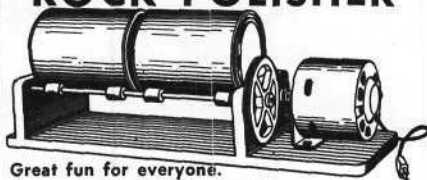
Expert Opinion on Pegleg's Gold

To our Readers: The following letter was written at the request of DESERT Magazine. In our files we came across an article written in a 1956 copy of the California Mining Journal. This article protested a move at that time to acquire the western half of San Diego County and part of Imperial County for a half-million acre state park (Anza/Borrego) because the writer believed the area both rich in valuable mineral deposits and capable, due to a shallow water level, of producing early, disease-free fruits and vegetables. He lamented the agricultural and mining opportunities that would be denied by prohibiting the development of such an enormous amount of potentially productive land. Since then, of course, the area has been acquired by the California Department of Parks and Beaches, so his protests were in vain. However, this mining engineer's brilliance and knowledge of the Anza/Borrego desert area so impressed us that we obtained his address, sent him the March, May and July issues of DESERT containing letters from "The Man Who Found Pegleg's Black Gold" and asked his opinion as to where such a lode might exist. The gentleman is Mr. Harry J. Phillips of El Cajon, California, and below is his answer for DESERT readers. C.P.

To the Editor: Pegleg black gold does exist along the Elsinore fault in the Julian district. The same slaty phyllite shist existing in the California Mother Lode was very productive in gold. The last uplift caused ice-age erosion to a depth of 2500 ft., or more, of this gold-bearing shist. A U.S.G.S. report estimated that, at \$20 per oz., a 1000 million in gold eroded from Volcan Mt. near Julian through Coleman Creek westerly onto Ramona flat, where an estimated 100 million in gold, difficult to recover, reposes in cemented young conglomerate gravel.

East of Ramona, \$2 nuggets were dug out of an exposed bedrock. However, most of this goldbearing shist, as eroded, moved

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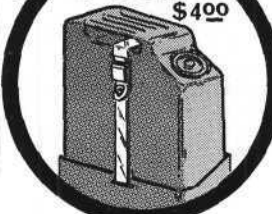
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easterly onto what is now a desert area embraced by the State Park. During the ice-age, when most erosion occurred, this area was covered with forests and great rivers provided the milling and assorting action to produce gold placer deposits. It is possible that remnants of ancient old-channel placers exist, which may be detected by a marked red color due to the heavy black iron associated with placer gold. Where much lime exists, the red iron oxide would change to gray carbonate of iron. All old-channel gold is coated black. Much of the gold could be locked up in young conglomerate and caliche. Secondary erosion would produce bright gold.

In the Oatman District no sample is taken above the 60 ft. level because the fine gold is certain to be leached. Sulphuric acid (from sulphides in vein), desert chlorides (salt) and manganese yield chlorine which dissolves gold. In the higher Julian area I milled gold from surface ore, but no gold could be panned in the eroded vein matter a short distance away from the outcropping vein. With no stream action, no recent gold placer deposits exist in the Southwest desert area.

May I warn that no gold mining can succeed now? With our gold currency cover reduced to 15% Feb. 18, we will soon have a 15c dollar. We cannot, in effect, mine gold for \$8.75 per oz. and silver for 32c per oz.

With a life time experience in managing gold mines I assert that \$105 per oz. gold is needed with \$4 per oz. silver, to reopen a few large low-cost mines and \$140 per oz. gold (the French price) and \$5 per oz. for silver, to reopen all mines. Others concur. At our traditional price of 16 to 1 with respect to gold, silver should be about \$9 per oz. The world production ratio of silver to gold is 6 to 1, indicating a silver price of \$23.33 per oz.

In my 1956 article I gave positive evidence of black gold obtained from old-channel placers in the Anza Park area. Warner Indians told these facts to a tubercular doctor friend who, while living at Warners for health reasons, gave medical help to them. "Nigger Jim" (I didn't give him this handle) rode into the small trading post on the east side of Volcan Mt. on a road leading from San Felipe Valley to Warners. He quenched the thirst of an Indian with some 'Johnny Walker,' bought some nuggets from him and offered to buy more. The Indian left on horseback and returned in two hours with gold which he sold for \$200. After more liquid refreshment, the Indian agreed, for a larger sum, to show his host the location of the gold. It is a matter of record that 'Nigger Jim' rode into San Bernardino County and sold \$40,000 worth of black gold from his saddle-bags. Various accounts infer that he couldn't remember the location. The Indians finished the story. He returned for more gold, but was met by a delegation with rifles who told him never to return.

An Indian, indebted to the doctor for saving his skin, asked how he could pay the doctor. The doctor asked to see the location of the black gold. The Indian took him upon Pinon Mt., pointed easterly and said, "When wind blow, Indian pick up gold." This makes sense and this wind has sandblasted the paint off many cars. The Indian said that a white man who found the gold was chased by the Indians to Borrego Springs. The Indians then concealed their gold diggings. The Indian dared tell the doctor no more. The doctor described an ample pottery jar filled with this gold left by a dying Indian woman to her son.

The best proof of the existence of black gold in this area was the fact that an Italian merchant and banker in Yuma bought \$12 to 20-thousand worth of black gold from Pegg (not Peg-leg) who spent one month on the desert each year, using pack animals. I saw the map made by Pegg and left with his wife, last living in San Diego and financially well off. She had loaned the map to two prospectors who promised her a half-interest in the gold when they located it. They failed and showed me the map at my mine, thinking I could help them. Starting at the old Vallecito Stage Station, you go 6 miles along the Warners road to where you can see 3 hills, thence 6 miles farther to the red hill. At the time a short-cut trail to Warners existed also. The map was not oriented. I believe that the hills would be low table-mountains or hog-backs. A fireman on the gypsum railroad, extending from Plaster City on Highway 8 to the Gypsum mine, found Pegg dying of thirst. He poured the water to him too fast and he died, but not before pointing westerly when asked where he got the poke of gold he carried.

I would be remiss in these instructions if I did not warn that the summer temperature of the low desert is 115° and that grinning skeletons prove the existing danger. The account of Pegg and the Indians was verified by personal contacts.

A National City man claimed pleasing results from crevassing bed rock on week ends in the Sentenac-Canyon Stream which drains San Felipe Basin east of Julian and flows into San Felipe Wash. The Vallecito Wash joins the San Felipe Wash just east of the Fish Creek Mts. Various wells, sunk in the lower San Felipe Wash, revealed placer gold. A friend told me how he used to let his peg-legged grandfather (whose name was not Smith) out at Harper's Well, a short distance west of Kane Springs on highway 99. He would walk up the wash with a dry-wash machine under his arm, using his shovel as a cane. This is below the junction of Vallecito and San Felipe Creeks. In the Fish Creek Mts., within the Park, lies a roof pendant of Julian shist on the Elsinore fault. A prospector had picked up pieces of fresh-broken quartz with solid faces of gold on them, which I saw, on both sides of the shist ridge. On a vein at the foot of this shist hill he did \$50,000 worth of development work. He milled ore and showed bullion from clean-ups. At the request of the 'Beaches and Parks' boys, BLM took his property without compensation, although his title was valid and he located it long before it became a park.

Having prospected, discovered and managed mines in the wide open spaces of the Rockies, Alaska and elsewhere, I need plenty of rope. I was corralled only long enough for about six years of College work in Mining Engineering and Metallurgy. I confess that I spend many happy week-ends on the desert. In winter we do assessment and development work on several acres of powellite (tungsten and molybdenum). Lying on the footwall side of a huge limestone mountain, this deposit shows many exposures of scheelite, Hubnerite (chocolate) Tungsten and beautiful tungstite. Interesting garnets, some almost ruby red, occur in the metamorphic lime stone. Lying 5 miles south of Ocotillo on Highway 8, this prospect is so barren that no mesquite beans, chuckawalla lizards or sidewinders exist. Food must be packed in. Four wheel drive transportation is used. We welcome the new Peg-leg to our land of desert legends and dreams.

HARRY J. PHILLIPS, Mine Manager



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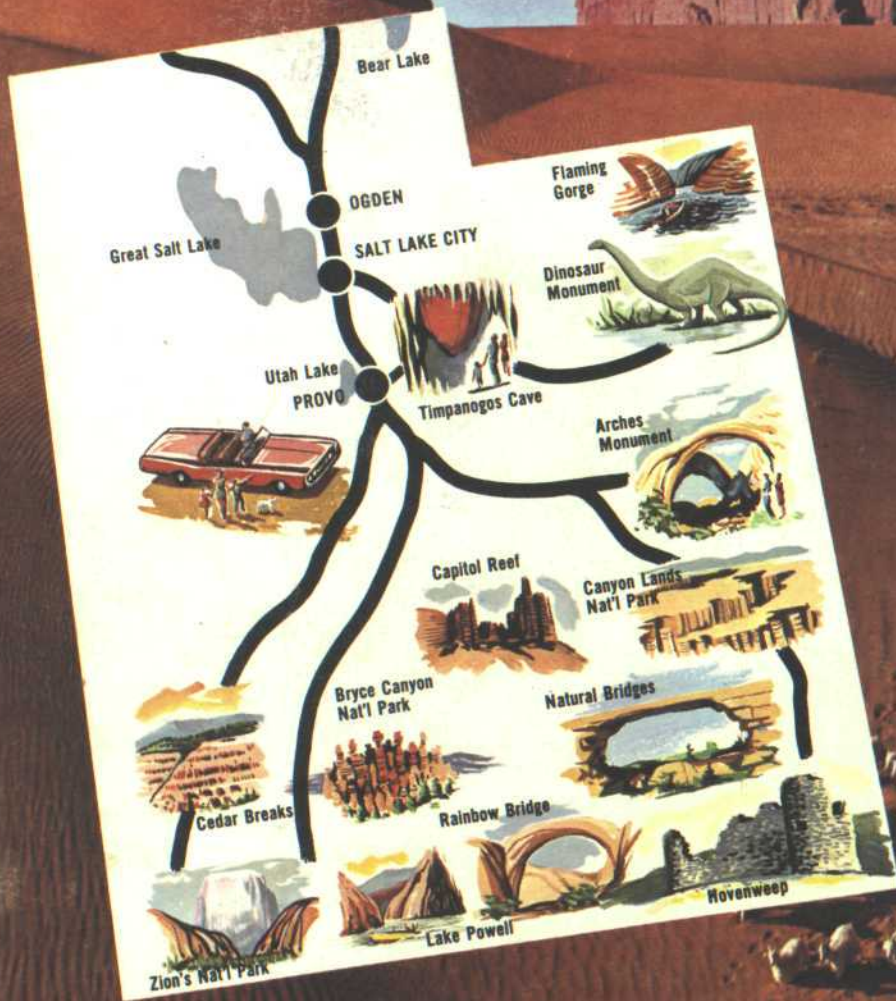
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