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# Desert

WESTERN TRAVEL / ADVENTURE / LIVING

JULY 1966

50c



**MAGIC OF BAJA**

**GHOST POST BONANZA**

**NEW DISNEY RESORTLAND**

# Read these Reviews!

Choral Pepper and her husband, Jack, edit the "Desert Magazine" and from time to time they turn out a book about the sandy, flowered areas to which they swear eternal allegiance. "Cooking and Camping on the Desert" is such a book and it is a good one. With a foreword by Erle Stanley Gardner, a friend of the Peppers and a long-time desert rat himself, the book offers a goodly number of recipes . . . in addition, it offers an excellent basic text for the amateur apprentice desert rat. **DR. FREDERICK SHROYER, Los Angeles Herald-Examiner Literary Editor.**

"Cooking and Camping on the Desert" is more than just a book on preparing for a desert outing or making meals that will appeal while in camp. This book is a brief manual on how to survive in the desert . . . the book is a must for anyone making a trip to the desert, whether it is his first or fiftieth. **BILL HILTON, Santa Barbara News-Press.**

Now a recognized wizard at camp cookery, none other than Choral Pepper, who edits Desert Magazine, has written a new book, "Cooking and Camping on the Desert" which needs to be in everyone's camp kit, and above all needs to be read while desert safaris are yet in the planning stage. **L. BURR BELDON, San Bernardino Sun-Telegram.**

Those who've done even limited camping know what (Erle Stanley) Gardner is talking about—and will probably enjoy what Choral and her husband, Jack, talk about in the book . . . This reporter, sometime camper-fisherman is neither gourmet nor cook—but Choral's handy book makes me enthusiastic enough to want to be. **REX NEVINS, Riverside Daily Enterprise.**

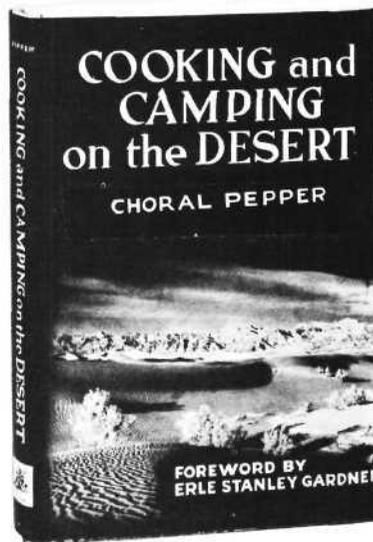
Special Chapter by  
**JACK PEPPER**

Driving and Surviving on the Desert



Foreword  
by

**ERLE STANLEY GARDNER**



## Cooking and Camping on the Desert

**By Choral Pepper, Editor Desert Magazine**

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# Calendar of Events

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**JULY FEATURES** Utah's Pioneer Days celebrations for most of the month. This is the time of Utah's biggest festivals and celebrations. July 5th celebrations are featured in Provo, Manti, Logan, Lewiston, and Hyrum City, complete with pageants, fireworks and family entertainment July 24 commemorates the first permanent settlement of Utah on July 24, 1847, by Brigham Young and his advance party of Mormon Pioneers. Many communities celebrate the week with rodeos, parades, pageants, and other special events. Among the largest celebrations are those at Salt Lake City (Days of '47) and Ogden (Pioneer Days). Fourth of July Celebrations at Holbrook, Flagstaff, Williams, Winslow, Arizona. San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society Annual Fair at Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, July 30 and 31.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Some dates are subject to change. If you plan a trip to attend a specific event, we suggest checking first with the local Chamber of Commerce.

**EVENTS DEADLINE:** Information relative to forthcoming events in the West must be received **TWO MONTHS** prior to the event. Address envelopes to Events Editor, Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, California 92260.

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**EXPLORATIONS IN LOWER CALIFORNIA** by Browne and Murray. Spencer Murray has compared Baja California landmarks of today with those sketched and described by writer J. Ross Browne in 1866. Limited to 1000 copies. \$8.95.

**HOW TO RETIRE IN MEXICO on \$2.47 a Day** by Eugene Woods. Presents an enticing pre-retirement plan that's workable. Also, good travel information. Paperback, 95c.

**BAJA CALIFORNIA OVERLAND** by L. Burr Belden. Practical guide to Lower California as far as La Paz by auto with material gleaned from extension study trip sponsored by Univ. of Calif. Includes things to see and accommodations. Paperback. \$1.95.

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## New Books for Desert Readers

### CLOSEUPS OF THE HIGH SIERRA

By Norman Clyde

Here, for the first time, is presented a collection of the famous mountaineering writings of Norman Clyde. At the time the articles were first published, around 1928, they were the first reliable guides to the High Sierra ranges and have since been considered collector's items. A former schoolteacher and high school principal, Norman Clyde has been a prolific writer on alpine matters, although he is better known for his fabulous ascents, many of them firsts. Included in the 79-page paperback is the only authorized biographical sketch about Norman Clyde, written by Walt Wheelock, who also edited the book. Illustrated by Ruth Daly's maps and drawings and some fine photographs, the cost is \$2.50.

### THE RESURRECTION OF DEATH VALLEY

By E. L. Marcy

Like a science thriller of conquest in strange, new worlds, this book projects a scheme for making Death Valley into a valley of resurrection. In this highly readable paperback, one of the most fantastic, yet feasible and practical solutions to our future water problems is presented. Instead of a one-way water system wherein water is used along its way to the sea where it then becomes useless through the intrusion of salt, the author proposes a cyclic system in which water would not drain into the sea, but into a vast inland sink where it could be purified and used for irrigation and the regeneration of pure rain water. The vast inland sink he suggests is none other than below-sea level Death Valley!

The advantages to such a project are so exciting and make so much sense, to this reviewer, at least, that you must read the well-illustrated 47-page book to come to your own conclusions. Mr. Marcy, an engineer, presents a vision of a great desert park revitalized with wild life, water sheds, year 'round temperatures and underground transportation from Los Angeles through the tunnel which would also transport waste water from metropolitan disposal plants. Paperback, \$2.00.

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

### RARE MAP REPRODUCTIONS

Ghost town chasers, bottle collectors and history buffs will be happy to find these fine reprints of 1886 maps of Nevada, Arizona and California. Remarkably free of the usual dark marginal areas and finely detailed, they show the locations of many settlements and mining camps now extinct as well as ranges, rivers, and old springs. The maps are reproduced on fine paper and contained in a dust cover-mailer. Series II will cover New Mexico, Colorado and Utah and series III Texas, the Indian Territory and Kansas. All are of the year 1886. The latter two sets will be available in about a month. Each set of three maps is \$3.75.

### POSTMARKED ARIZONA

By Jack Way

As a new resident of Arizona, the author became fascinated with the magnitude of his adopted state, the sixth largest in the nation, and decided to explore it all in person. A stamp collector, it occurred to him it would be interesting to obtain a postmark from all localities having post-offices by addressing a letter to himself from each stop. The cancellations, complete with date and name of town, would be a lasting souvenir of places visited and, together with photographs and a short write up about the history and geography of the area, would provide a good excuse for seeking out-of-the-way places beyond highways.

After "postmarking" Arizona for a full five years, the author found he and his wife had visited 240 of an approximate 270 postoffices and picked up some fascinating tid-bits of local lore which wound up in this little book. Illustrated with maps, photos and the author's recommendations to others who might be tempted to pursue such a hobby in their own states, it's paperback, 39 pages and \$1.00.

## ABOVE THE CIVIL WAR

By Eugene B. Block

This is the story of Thaddeus Lowe, the balloonist, inventor, railway builder who became fascinated with the mysterious regions of the upper air and built larger and larger balloons until he had one large enough to cross the Atlantic.

Then came the Civil War. President Lincoln engaged Lowe's services to organize the first U.S. Military aeronautic unit, the Balloon Corps. For this purpose, Lowe invented portable gas generators, communication systems, and launching boats.

Following the war, Lowe devised a way to make artificial ice and build a refrigerated ship. This led to other industrial successes and soon he was able to retire to Pasadena, California. Here he met the challenge of rugged surrounding mountains by building a railway from Altadena to a mile-high mountain subsequently named Mount Lowe. For 40 years Southern Californians enjoyed outings on this narrow gauge trolley to Ye Alpine Tavern at Mount Lowe Springs.

The book is illustrated with fine old steel engravings and historical photographs of early balloon activity and Pasadena citizens. Hardcover, 188 pages, \$4.50.

## PLACE NAMES OF SHASTA COUNTY

By Gertrude A. Steger

The original of this book, published in 1945, has long been out of print. Now an entirely new edition almost doubles the half hundred entries of the original. Mrs. Steger began work on this edition, but did not live to see it completed, so Helen Hinckley Jones, noted writer and historian, has completed the unfinished work. Place names fascinate students of history because there is no other key so revealing as to the nature, the life and the romance

that went on at the time a place name was acquired. This is particularly true of Shasta County where Indians lived, Spanish explored, Russian fur traders passed by, British trappers roamed, Mexican land grants were made, Mountain Men explored and miners and settlers laid claims. Place names arose from ancient Indian legends as well as everyday events both tragic and comic. This little paperback of 71 pages costs \$2.00.

## EARLY USES OF CALIFORNIA PLANTS

By Edwards K. Balls

This is the second printing of a book first published in 1962. Information on the use to which native California Indians and early white settlers put the plants they found growing around them is gathered into one fine concise reference with this book. Chapters are divided into plants used for food, for drink, for basketry, medicine, soap, fish poison, dye, gum and tobacco and present day uses. It is illustrated with line drawings and there is a check list containing both common and scientific names. Paperback, 103 pages, \$1.75.

## A BOTTLE COLLECTOR'S BOOK

By Pat and Bob Ferraro

Newest book in the fascinating and rapidly growing hobby of bottle collecting is by the authors of *The Past In Glass*. Their new book gives an interesting history of how, why and when bottles were made and traces the evolution of glass containers. Other features are the "Glossary of Bottle Collectors' Terms" and a price list comparing the prices of individual bottles in 1950, 1960 and 1965.

Whether for laymen or veteran bottle collectors, this profusely illustrated, slick paper 107-page volume is excellent for a first book or one to augment your present collection. Paperback, \$3.00.

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## *Lilliputian Lemonade*

*by Babs Kobaly*

**I**T WAS JULY when old Redbeard introduced us to sugarbushes. A war scare was at its peak and dried foods, flashlight batteries, bullets and powdered milk were being stored in bomb shelters. Not having one close to our high desert home, we decided to cram our heads with survival knowledge instead.

Our first stop on a planned course of nature study was at old Redbeard's "cabin," an abandoned trailer that had been dumped into a rugged desert canyon. Inviting us in, he passed a bowl of fuzzy "desert almonds" and poured us fragrant cups of wild tea. He refused to touch the frozen cans of lemonade we offered. "Never use it!" he spat. "Gathering lemonade in a pushcart's no fun. Gather mine in m'hat, m'gloves or m'pockets—if they're mended!" He picked up a jug of water and slung it over his stooped shoulder. "Come on, I'll show you what you're missing!"

His eyes twinkled as he took off toward a green clump ornamenting the drab hillside, a single ancient sugarbush abuzz with drunken insects!

This insectile excitement meant, of course, that the sugar had begun "worming" out all over the sticky little fruits. So thick were these worms of sugar that the fine crimson down of each tiny berry was white with thready "moss." Pro-

tested with long sleeves and a jug of water to rinse the acid and sugar from our hands, we too were soon absorbed with stripping clusters of the velvet berries. Their smallness, about the size of a flattened pea, was made up for by their fantastic abundance. Often there were a hundred berries to one cluster.

This bush was used by Indians as a beverage, a vegetable, for cough medicine and as sugar, though how they suffered through it, Redbeard could never understand, for he had tried them all. When boiled, the buds, or flowers, taste impossibly bitter. To gather them, Indians shook the bush and let the berries fall on a cloth spread underneath the branches.

Nowadays, only birds, insects and old Redbeard himself appreciate the sugarbush and, "gardeners," he added, for no matter how good a wild specimen is, none compares to a cultivated one.

From San Francisco to San Diego, *Rhus ovata* is one of the most attractive of all native Californian shrubs. Its glossy evergreen foliage, its clusters of fat little flowers, and its royal-velvet fruits excite year 'round notice. Remarkably free of pests under cultivation, it adapts well to varying soils and climatic conditions and its spreading habit of growth makes it desirable for back-

grounds, screens, hedges, banks and roadsides.

But to thrifty naturelovers or connoisseurs of the "wild taste" who live near sites landscaped with sugarbushes, Red passes out this advice: Stake out the most healthy old sugarbush you can find and when it begins to "worm" sugar, pounce on it. According to Red, nothing quite compares with the satisfaction of stripping "soak-berries," as he calls these lilliputian lemons. He urged new tasters to drink their "soakins" long enough to acquire a taste for the peculiar wild essence, and once you do, you'll have a real conversation piece in the beverage department.

When out camping, Red proved to us, how—just soaked, sugared and sieved—these lemonade berries made a perfect instant beverage. Unlike domestic lemons, throwing these wild ones around a camp doesn't invoke the displeasure of a forest ranger. Instead they attract birds and small animals. When only a few berries are available, at the beginning or end of a season, Red simmers them instead of soaking to achieve a stronger, more dilutable brew.

As novice pickers, we were leery about

a few bugs in the brew, but they didn't bother Red. He spread both feast and fliers on a shallow tray in the sunshine and in a short time the winged "chaff" had flown.

At home he proceeds somewhat differently. Here is his recipe for about 2½ quarts of Soak-berry Lemonade:

Place 2 cups sugarberries in a saucepan. Pour over them 6 cups boiling water. Soak 30 minutes. Strain equally into 2 pitchers. Add 1 cup sugar into each pitcher. Add 1 tray of ice cubes to each pitcher. Stir furiously!

"Be sure it's exquisitely cold," he said. "Crush your ice, garnish with a berry sprig, and serve it in sun-purpled glasses, if you have them!"

Unlike most desert-dwellers, we began to look forward to July when we pick enough and freeze them to last all year. There are few things in these sophisticated times as rewarding as the harvesting of a room-sized, sugar-fledged lemonade bush. Though we have plucked them in all stages of fruiting, we still prefer Red's way—when they have reached the peak of perfection and become the local pub for thousands of minute tasters on-the-wing!

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# Close the Door on Hank Brandt



## DESERT NOTES by JOHN HILTON

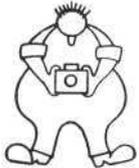
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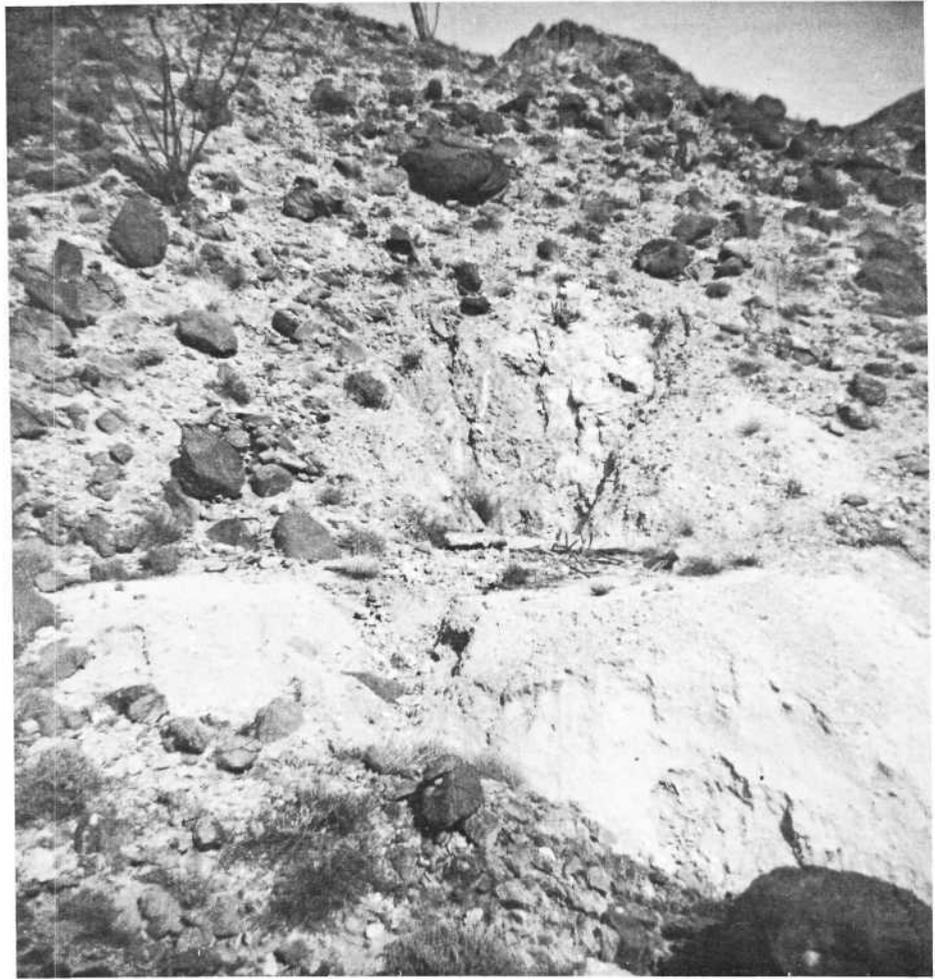
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Hank Brandt's mine and tailings.

**T**HIS IS AN answer to a DESERT Magazine article published in October, 1964, written by Victor Stoyanow. My husband and I have found the Secret Canyon of Hank Brandt.

We found it accidentally. What we were really searching for in the Anza-Borrego desert were Pegleg's black gold nuggets.

However, on several occasions we'd talked of searching for the Hank Brandt lost mine and had informed ourselves of the basic facts concerning it.

We also were well acquainted with the Carrizo and its mysterious, dangerous and treacherous badlands and had a fair knowledge of the country around Split Mountain.

On this particular trip, we had eight days to spend so, towing our 4-wheel drive vehicle behind our camper, we turned off Highway 78 at Ocotillo Wells and followed the road around the Gypsum mine railroad track to the northern end of

Fish Mountains. Here we located a base camp under a sheltering tree at the foot of the mountain. The view was magnificent, the silence peaceful and serene. The sun burned down on us deliciously and we were light in spirit as we headed our 4-wheeler into the Superstition Hills first to satisfy ourselves whether or not the black gold was there. After plodding over its sand-slippery hills and canyons, though, we determined, with our limited knowledge of geology, that the rocks of the Superstitions held no gold. The area is undependable, with sand covering dangerous pitfalls, so a word of caution to those who visit the Superstitions: watch your step.

It was late when we made our way back to camp and we had hardly cooked our dinner before darkness fell. The next few days we searched the canyons of Fish Creek Mountains, starting with the northern end and working our way east. On the fifth day, we headed around the eastern slopes and drove as far as possi-

by Myrtle Teague

ble before continuing into a big canyon on foot.

Near the mouth of the canyon on our left, we noticed a dim path. Deciding to follow it, we ascended the mountain to a small canyon which appeared to abruptly end. We could see for miles across the barren land. The Superstition Hills loomed in a distance, veiled with puffy clouds, and the breeze gently stirred the shimmering sand. Sometimes we lost the vague trail, then found it again. At last we came to a narrow canyon framed on two sides with steep walls. High up on the left one, we saw a double-decked cave! This, we recalled, was a clue to Hank Brandt's mine.

Now we hurried faster, anxious to see where the path would lead. After two miles of strenuous walking, we reached a small mesa surrounded by reddish brown sandstones and this really stopped us. For here, carved of sandstone, was a perfect replica of a ship. The ship was another Hank Brandt clue. Ahead, another canyon led to our right, a third clue. This was too much. Had we accidentally stumbled onto the 80-year old legend of Hank Brandt's lost gold?

It was hot and we were tired, so resting in the shade of an overhanging rock, we drank from our canteen and gathered a "second wind." But we could just as well have continued. Around the next bend, there it was—a one-man digging.

A pile of tailings sat beside a hole about 30-feet deep. Was this really it? All the signs seemed to fit.

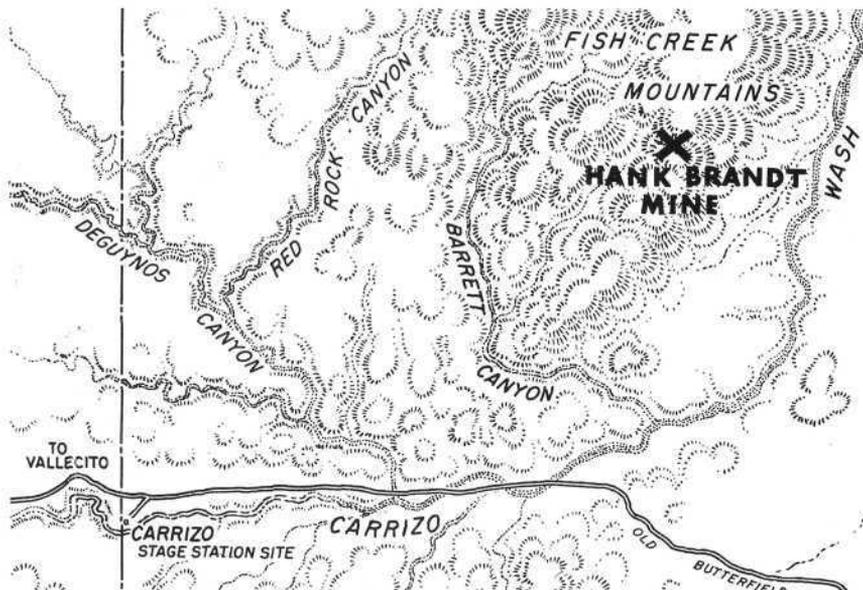
After two days of exploring, we found

an exit over a ridge which cut through into Barrett Canyon from where the trail led over the mountain to the pass in Split Mountain. Here was the route Hank Brandt took through Split Mountain on his yearly trip to Riverside to ship his gold, and the path we had followed first was his exit to Kane Springs.

From our conclusions, it would take about three hours to walk from the shack of Hank's in the Carrizo slot to the spot where his mine was. But let me add that, unknowingly, we had stumbled into the Naval Reservation which is *still* closed and there is *still* danger from unexploded bombs and shells. However, there were no restricted signs from the direction we arrived, so we had no way of knowing we were on the reservation.

I'm afraid we can't take credit for discovering it first, however, for within a few feet of the mine we found a cairn with a claim notice in a tin can. Excitedly, we opened it and drew forth an old piece of paper scribed in green ink. It read, "Hank's Lost Mine," and was dated February 1951. It wasn't signed, so undoubtedly whoever found Brandt's Mine first got the gold, but for reasons of his own kept the discovery secret. Stoyanow was right about his convictions. The mine is in the Naval Reservation and there's an entrance through Barrett Canyon.

Although we found it 15 years too late, we still had the pleasure and adventure of finding the elusive lost mine of Hank Brandt and that was gold enough for us! □



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# BLACK MOUNTAIN MAGI

by Dorothy Robertson

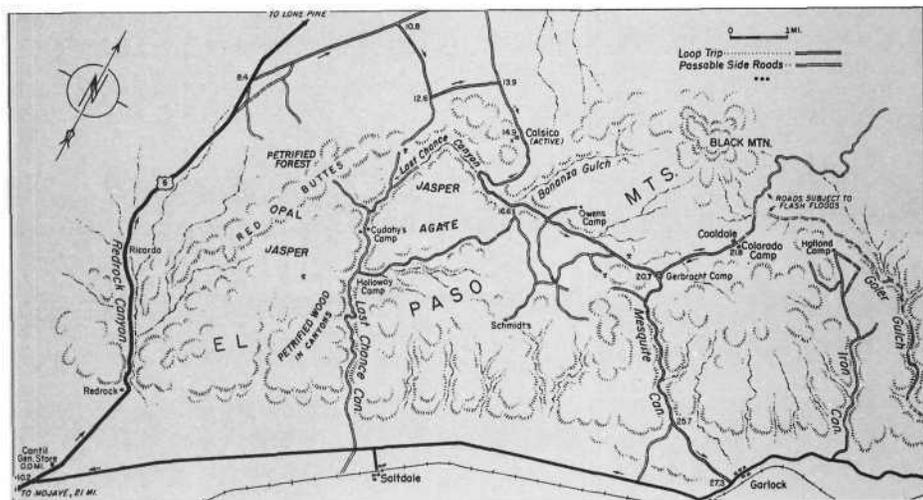
WE LEFT U. S. 395 where it crossed the railroad tracks south of Inyo-kern and continued up a wide, bladed road bisecting the El Paso Range in the area known as Sheep Springs. Here the road deteriorated into a rough trail leading to collecting sites for jasper, moss agate, opalite, and petrified wood. Outlined in all its frowning, forbidding ma-

Black Mountain herself glowered, her tumbled boulders of desert varnished basalt threatening to bound down and crush us.

Yellow buckwheat, feathery bunchgrass, tiny yellow and white dwarf daisies, twisted greasewoods, peeping splashes of Indian paintbrush, purple lupine and wee blue-eyes scattered prodigally about, for

there had been several good rains lately. Facing us, on the sheer east side, Black Mountain showed a creamy yellow "bib" under her chin where enormous black boulders had scoured a downward path through ages of storms. This is wild and rugged country, and the deeper we penetrated, the more intriguing it became. Quail called; chukars chuk-chucked deep in their throats, safely out of sight. We saw the swift flirt of vanishing powder-puffs as little cottontails made for holes, and lizards and tortoise went sedately about their business. There were also signs of burro, coyote and bobcat!

Despite Black Mountain's inhospitable appearance, the recent rains had opened hospitable arms to the wildlife. Hitherto dry springs showed bubbly gleams beneath matted growth, and tiny pools still remained in rocky basins. Where the trail now made a sharp left turn around the base of the great mountain, we turned abruptly west into the southern flank. Then we crossed a narrow little canyon and ran the vehicles up as far as they



jesty against a cloudless sky, Black Mountain dominated the northwest end of the burned, dry, bare range. But the El Pasos keep their secrets well. Once into the range, desert verdure appears in surprising places.

Along the western rim rose large basalt boulders inscribed with petroglyphs of great variety. We stopped to examine them, then explored the flat house-rings huddling companionably along the rim overlooking an old spring. Trails led everywhere, but Black Mountain lured us onward into a smoothly eroded region carved from yellow sandstone conglomerate by eons of wind and rain. Features of this area are the smooth "cannonballs" and other exotically shaped rocks used in landscaping.

From here the road turns into a trail fit only for 4-wheel drive vehicles. This is where adventure really begins. The road twists and climbs and claws its way along the steep hillsides, always angling toward Black Mountain's surly flanks. Above us



would go. The drivers turned them facing the down-trail and we all piled out. We had come as far as we could on wheels.

We'd made so many stops, exploring places of interest, that it was long past lunchtime. We decided to eat, then begin the climb.

Strung out along the three or four hog-backs that stairstep to the peak, we had a view of the surrounding country. Far below to the south we saw the Colorado Camp's buildings, and the black outcrop that points up the rubbled site of old Coaldale. In the late 1890s the hopeful rushed to what they believed an extensive deposit of coal, but tests proved that it was actually asphaltum tar, which smoked badly when ignited. After six months' operation, Coaldale folded and today its remains are faded into the landscape.

Speaking of asphaltum, the geological formation of this region is most interesting. In the upper Miocene or Lower Pliocene era, this region was a green paradise. Fan palm, oak and locust flourished in that long-ago. There was abundant water and animal life. Today, however, only petrified bones and trees which "break out" of the lower canyon walls through erosive action are left to prove it. Petrified palm root has been found in abundance, but these days you must dig for it.

A few miles to the south and west, famous Last Chance Canyon with its Joshuas and scenic campsites humps north to east. This area is famous, too, for Red Buttes, Roaring Ridge and Dry Falls—all well-known gemstone fields. A number of miners in this region allow opal collecting from their claims for a token fee. These beautiful iridescent stones must be handled carefully, however, for they fracture easily.

Flora and fauna of this ground surface is classified as belonging to the Rosamond formation. This range consists of layer upon layer of decomposed volcanic ash. Eventually the released silica had resulted in petrification, so volcanic ash was converted into clay-like rock called bentonite. Rare benotite is creamy white, but the less-pure rosy shades are so much more beautiful!

In the canyons, the dark walls are patched with brilliant white and pink bentonite, but here in the Black Mountain region, bentonite also appears as salmon pink to rose; yellow, orange-to-red, and even bluish-brown because of iron ore-bodies in the clay.

The higher we climbed the more unsuspected mining camps appeared. Tucked away between Last Chance Canyon and Mesquite Canyon, to the south, Burro

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Schmidt's tunnel bores its way through Copper Mountain. (DESERT, Aug-Sept, '65). As we neared the yawning chasm of Black Mountain's crater, we noticed that, in spite of buffeting wind, all was singularly silent. Gigantic black boulders tumbled about the lip of the crater;

others spilled inside. We experienced a strange feeling—as though unfriendly eyes watched us. Superstition! Yet, as though to foster this eerie idea, waist-high circles of carefully stacked boulders surrounded us. What a strange place for

*Continued on page 33*



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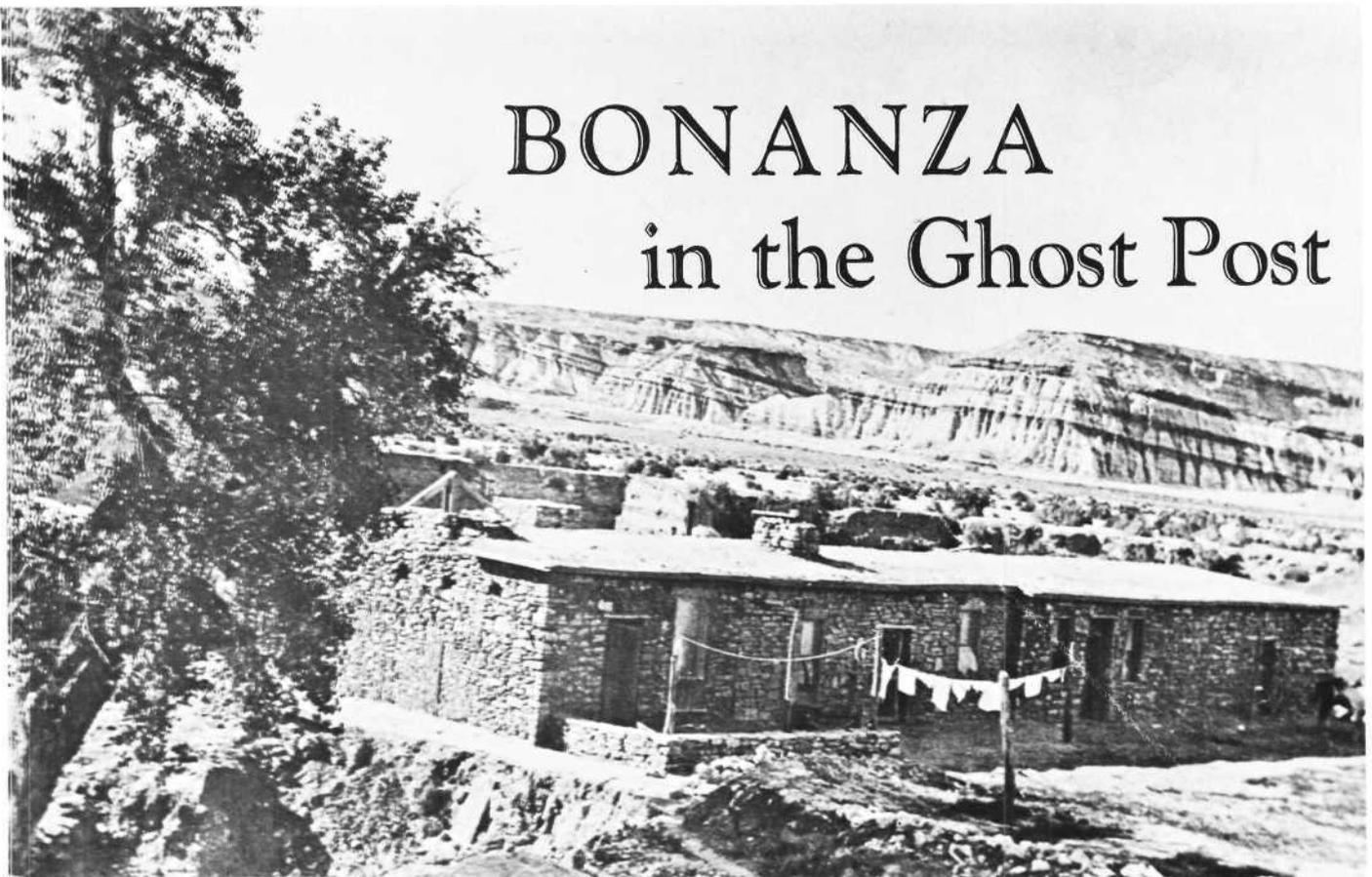
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# BONANZA in the Ghost Post



*Blue Canyon as it appeared in 1908. Today not even walls remain.*

by Gladwell Richardson

**I**N THE western Navajo country are nearly 50 "ghost" Indian trading posts. The life of some were temporary, but others continued in business for many years.

Today their old sites are marked by a pile of stones, perhaps a rotted cedar pole, or nothing more than drifted sand. They were of two types of construction. The earliest, depending on wood available, was of logs set upright in a trench and called a picket post, or stockade. The side walls and pole roof were covered with clay. Others were of stone set in mud mortar. The inside walls and sometimes the ceiling of both types were plastered with a mixture of clay and sand, whitened with alkali.

These posts were far from civilization, constantly battling boredom and the elements. As highways often follow ancient trails, though, many may now be found adjacent to or along U.S. Highway 89 north of Flagstaff, Arizona. The first, Halfway House, is within 15 miles of Cameron. Established on the old Tanner Trail about 1880, it served travelers, freighters and mail carriers as well as Indians. About half the distance between Flagstaff and Tuba City, it lasted until

1910. For many years afterward the squat stone building was visible from old Highway 89.

At Cameron where the present state highway camp stands, Mrs. Laura Preston (now Mrs. Walter Runke) ran a trading post in a sheet iron building during construction of the first bridge in 1910-1911. Her first husband, Samuel Scott Preston had the materials freighting contract for the bridge. He also was an Indian trader at Tuba City.

Up the Little Colorado River from Cameron, on the north side at Black Falls, Preston had put up a stone post in 1888. It lasted less than two years in its desolate setting. From 1891 to 1893, Fred W. Volz conducted business in the same small building. Near this site in 1935, Jack and Glenn Taylor, sons of trader Johnny Taylor at Tonalea, traded in a wooden building until 1941.

Twenty one miles north from Cameron, at Willow Springs, a trading post was established in 1876 by John Bigelow. After several years of indifferent success it folded. In 1885 George W. McAdams, in partnership with Babbitt Brothers Trading Company at Flagstaff, erected a second stone trading post a short distance away in what afterwards became known as Powder House Canyon. In 1890 McAdams, no longer associated with the

Babbitt Brothers, with C. H. Algert built a third stone post closer to the wash and not far from Clan Rocks. It was known as Echo Cliffs, the same name as the high escarpment extending from there to the Colorado River. It remained in business until 1920.

Ten miles further, at The Gap (named for the wide break in Echo Cliffs), a mining company established a store in a wooden building on Hamblin Wash. It also served as a stopping place for motorized vehicles hauling ore from distant Copper Mine to a railhead north of Flagstaff.

In 1941, C. D. Richardson put in a post a little below The Gap in a rock building leased from a Navajo. Buck Lowrey managed the business. In 1916 Richardson bought the mining company's building at a sheriff's sale and moved his stock into it. He sold the post in 1923. The following year it was sold to Joe Lee and J. C. Brown. When the highway was rerouted and paved, they constructed a stone building across the road from the present Gap store and remained in business until 1938, when flour dust blew up, and burned out the interior.

The present Cedar Ridge trading post seven miles further north is the third in the vicinity. The first, established in 1881 by C. H. Algert, stood west on Bodeway

Mesa about three miles, a cedar pole picket building. In 1895 it came into possession of Babbitt Brothers and John Kerley. They moved it, in 1912, to the wash below Cedar Ridge where it handled Indian business until 1918.

At Lee Ferry where the ferry went in, in 1869, the dell became a hideout for John D. Lee of the infamous Meadow Mountain massacre. He set up a trading post in the forepart of a red sandstone building in which one of his several families lived. In 1872 the Leather Stocking of the Southwest, Jacob Hamblin traded there and reported that the post enjoyed a good business with Navajo and Piute Indians.

This post closed in 1877 when the Mormon Church bought the ferry from Lee's widow. Several men traded there sporadically before the church sold the ferry to the Grand Cattle Company in 1909. Coconino County took ownership of the ferry in 1916, but established no store. The remnant of buildings there today are claimed to have been built by Lee. No part of his old stone cabins and their flat roofs have existed for at least 50 years.

In 1928 Buck Lowrey constructed an oblong trading post beside the present highway at the south end of Navajo Bridge, then under construction. His son, Dave, managed it until the stock of goods and the interior burned in 1933. The Colorado River posts were the northwestern limit of those which have faded away.

The old dirt road leaving Highway 89, 11 miles north of Cameron, passed completely across the Western Navajo Indian

Hubbell's 1871 post beside road to Moencopi Village. Second story was added in 1900.



Reservation to Kayenta, giving access to most of the long ago abandoned trading posts.

In and around Tuba City there are no less than 10 such sites. The oldest of these was the stone structure of Thomas S. Hubbell (no relation to the Ganado Hubbells), in 1871, on the rim overlooking Moencopi Hopi Village. It is the only ghost post with the walls still intact and its second story is now being occupied. In 1879 he sold to Ed Stone and his wife and moved northeast onto Rabbit Mesa where he went into business again. This stockade faced the great valley towards Blue Canyon. When Mormon col-

onists settled Tuba City their leader, Lott Smith, is supposed to have seized the Stone trading post by force in 1887 and removed their stock of goods to the store of the United Order, a cooperative enterprise. It was in the red sandstone building in the center of the village that later became offices of the Western Navajo Indian Agency.

C. H. Alvert, in 1880, began trading out of a large hogan near Musha Spring which lasted about two years, until sand blowing over a cliff buried the hogan. By 1898 a great sandhill covered the spot. Alvert built a second one about half-way between the spring and Moencopi where he remained another two years. He then built the rear half of today's Tuba City trading post.

Hopi Indians started trading out of a Moencopi village pueblo at a very early date, assuredly in the 1880s. It passed through several hands, but the James Brothers operated it from 1910 to 1940.

After Mormon colonists put in their irrigation works, about 1879, Joe Tanner entered the trading business in Reservoir Canyon. His small picket post didn't close its doors until 1914.

Up Tuba City's main street, within a stones throw of Alvert's Tuba City store, George McAdams constructed another post in 1896, putting his younger brother in to run it until the brother enlisted in the Rough Riders for the Spanish American War and closed the post.

At the upper end of main street, near the present day school, C. D. Richardson built a two story post of white sandstone



This 1880 photo shows Joe Tanner's post in Reservoir Canyon, established in 1879.

in 1925. Nothing remains to mark the spot today. The government bought the building from later owners and demolished it in 1947.

When George McAdams first entered the trading business, in 1879, he put together the usual picket-post-stockade type. It stood near the old road that crossed Sheep Dip Wash, on Rabbit Mesa about three miles from where Hubbell established himself that same year. They were too close to each other to make much profit so McAdams went on north to Red Lake in 1881. Building his post during the dry summer season, he supposed the lake never filled. A couple of years later he awoke one morning to find himself surrounded by water. He removed to the southeast side of the lake and reconstructed his stockade post into an elongated building containing four rooms. The site was under the mesa wall less than a mile from what is now Red Lake Trading Post, Tonalea. He sold to "Dit" Dittenhoffer in 1888. Dittenhoffer went to Flagstaff where he bought a yellow wheeled buggy and acquired a handsome woman, but her husband followed them and shot him dead in the post. It then came into possession of Babbitt Brothers and McAdams rejoined them as a working partner in several area posts. The present Tonalea store was built in 1891 by S. S. Preston.

In 1890 Sam Smith, son of Lott Smith,

set himself up in business a mile up Red-lake Wash in a lumber shack having a canvas roof. When the business didn't pay off, he quit and turned outlaw.

East of Tonalea on Tokesjhay Wash, Joseph Hyrum Lee, Sr., built a stone post in 1881. Trouble with two renegade Navajos forced him out of business the following year. He removed his merchandise to the United Order at Tuba City, running that store for the colony. The Tokesjhay building stood intact until 1930; then a government stockman hauled its rocks to Tonalea to build himself a residence.

Farther east at Blue Canyon, J. P. Williams, a gold miner from Oregon via California, took a homestead in 1882 (the reservation was not extended west until 1884) and ran a trading post while he searched regional rivers and canyons for gold. In 1897, he moved his family to Winslow and sold his improvement to the government for a vocational school.

C. H. Algert set up a post under the vari-colored rim beyond the school and turned it over to his brother-in-law. When the school moved to Tuba City in 1904, the buildings stood empty until 1913 when C. D. and Hubert Richardson leased them from the government. The post operated until 1921. A few years later Lorenzo Hubbell, Jr., opened a seasonal post at Blue Canyon Crossing, but due to a jurisdictional dispute between Hopi and



*Ruins of Willow Springs post. No store has been here since 1910.*

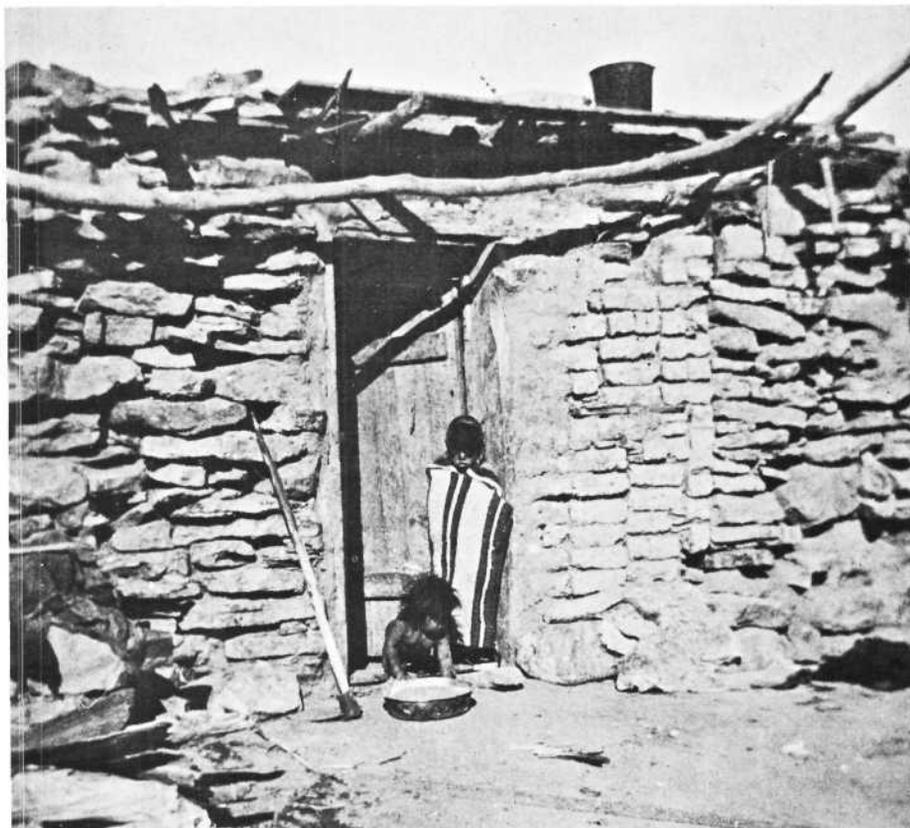
Navajo Indian Agents, it had to be abandoned.

From 1895 to 1898 Ben Williams, son of J. P. Williams, did business in a small stone building up Cowspring Canyon from the present place of that name beyond Tonalea on the Kayenta road. Joe Lee hauled his goods by wagon from Ganado, as Don Lorenzo Hubbell had an interest in the business. Across a small lake from him in the canyon, Fred Volz ran a post during 1894-1896.

From the Kayenta road a spur takes off northwest to Shonto. There, in 1912, Joe Lee and John Wetherill put in a one room stone structure beside a spring at the base of the canyon wall. Lee ran it until they sold out to C. D. Richardson in 1914, who built most of the present day post.

Up the Kayenta road the son of John Wetherill, Benjamin Wade, put in a small post on the west side of Marsh Pass. Not only to benefit the Indians, but for summer-time archaeologists as well. It existed from 1921 to 1923. The following year Ben went farther west onto Piute Mesa, setting himself up in another stone and mud building. It folded in the fall of 1926.

*First trading post in Moencopi Village. Photo taken in 1880.*



At Kayenta, John Wetherill came over from Oljeto to put in a rock and mud post after the San Juan River was bridged in 1910. In connection with it, he operated a guest ranch and pack trains for "dudes" into the wild canyon country. He went out of business completely in 1935. None of his buildings exist today. His trading partner at Oljeto, Clyde Colville, came to Kayenta, trading from a small wooden building Reuben Heflin demolished to erect a more substantial post in 1957.

Lee Bradley, whose Scotch father ran trading posts and freighted for many years, owned his own store on the outskirts of Kayenta from 1923 until 1928.

There are five other sites of trading posts deep in the Navajo country west of the Kayenta road. Probably the most noted was that at Rat Springs at the base of Wild Cat Peak. Constructed of lumber in 1925 by John Kerley, his brother Joe ran it until 1931. That year Babbitt Brothers bought the stock of goods, removing it to their Tonalea Redlake store, and hired Joe as resident manager.

Three miles from Kaibeto in a red dirt flat Bert Tso, Navajo, built a rock house in which he conducted a trading business from 1924 to 1929. Down in Navajo Canyon seven miles from Inscription House another Navajo, Paul Begay, had a small rock trading post during the years 1924-1927. It was a precarious business, never well stocked because merchandise had to be packed in by horse or mule.

Ben Wetherill, who always seemed to be establishing stores that didn't pan out, put in another near the Utah border at Navajo Mountain. Located at Cottonwood Springs, he traded from a small stone hut with the room dug back under a dirt bank. From 1927 to 1930 he operated there only during summer and fall months of the year.

Earlier, Hubert and S. I. Richardson, after making the first road from Tonalea to Willow Springs on Navajo Mountain, established Rainbow Lodge trading post. Operated in connection with packing guests to Rainbow Natural Bridge, it burned in 1951. It was then owned by Senator Barry Goldwater and W. W. Wilson, who managed the business.

History hunters chase down ghost towns to search for antique bottles and domestic or mining relics in their dumps, but abandoned trading post locations suggest a relatively unexplored treasure trove haunted with ghosts who traded in supplies. Coin collectors with metal detectors might also find bonanza in the ground around these old sites. □

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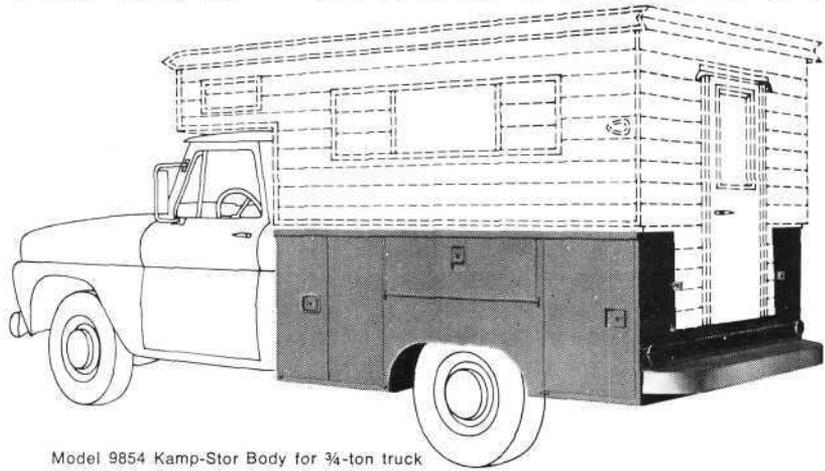
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# Mineral King's Hidden "Paylode"

by Charles R. Grizzle

**N**INETY-THREE years ago, Wiley Watson, one of the earliest mayors of Visalia, California, had a dollar-sign twinkle in his eye and a promotion scheme up his sleeve which has earned for him the distinctive title, "prophet of Mineral King." Up until recently, that monicker didn't mean tiddle-de-winks to anyone. But the name Mineral King is now beginning an ascension in fame which could surpass almost any mountain area in the world, Zermatt, Garmisch, Interlaken, Sun Valley and Aspen included.

Back in 1873, Wiley Watson first promoted the building of a road from his hometown of Visalia in the San Joaquin Valley to the Mineral King District, a high valley in the Sierra Nevada Mountains rich in wildlife, timber, beauty and, much to Watson's delight, minerals. The Mineral King Silver Rush had begun and Watson concluded that his road would greatly benefit local merchants and farmers who ship their produce to the mines if a large settlement should develop there. A wise investor, our good man wasn't placing all his silver ingots into one bread basket. If the silver played out and the boom was a bust, Watson argued that a road could be used to capitalize on the beautiful scenery which would draw sightseers to Mineral King. The valley is surrounded by half a dozen majestic peaks approaching an elevation of 12,000 feet.

Watson himself never did completely finish his road. The magnificent yet awful mountains around the 8,000-foot Mineral King Valley have, for decades, resisted man's efforts to develop the area. But Watson was undoubtedly the first to gaze past the glitter of silver that blinded every clodhopper and mucker in the state in those days to see profit in the awesome beauty of the jagged, granite peaks.

When California's own Walt Disney, a "bonanza" king in his own right, first

stared in amazement at Mineral King's panorama of sawtooth peaks and timber covered slopes, he envisioned a project that would permit you and me and little Johnny Gitalong next door to behold and savor this wonderful sight.

In late December of 1965, Mr. Disney was notified that his plans for the development of a \$35,000,000 summer and winter recreational facility at Mineral King had been accepted by the Department of Agriculture and the United States Forestry Service. So, the claim for Mineral King's second and biggest payload has finally been staked out and, after all these years, Wiley Watson's comments about tourist trade in the Sierras is remembered.

The project which conservation-minded Mr. Disney (he is honorary president of the National Wildlife Federation and honorary member of the Izaak Walton League, among others) is now beginning has the populace of San Joaquin as well as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento about as excited as the hill-and-gully-thumping miners of old Porterville were when James A. Crabtree revealed his find at Mineral King.

Something of a spiritualist, Crabtree told a tale of discovery involving a White Indian Chief who appeared to him in a dream and pointed out the path to follow for riches. Upon awakening, he and a friend left at once for the mountains. When they returned to Porterville in the foothills, they jointly filed claim to The White Chief Lode. The old sourdoughs in town may have laughed at Crabtree's tall story, but not too loudly. He had a reputation as a successful prospector and the ore samples he carried in his poke helped to spread the fever that started Mineral King booming.

During the first winter of the rush when snow kept the miners from working their claims, Tulare County spirits were mighty high. Every discussion embraced the Mineral King mines. Potential

millionaires roamed the streets of Porterville and Visalia boasting of the richness of their claims and dreaming of silver, mansions and servants. Rumors rolled freely as they always did in a mining community and there was considerable counting of silvery chickens, so to speak, before the eggs were even laid.

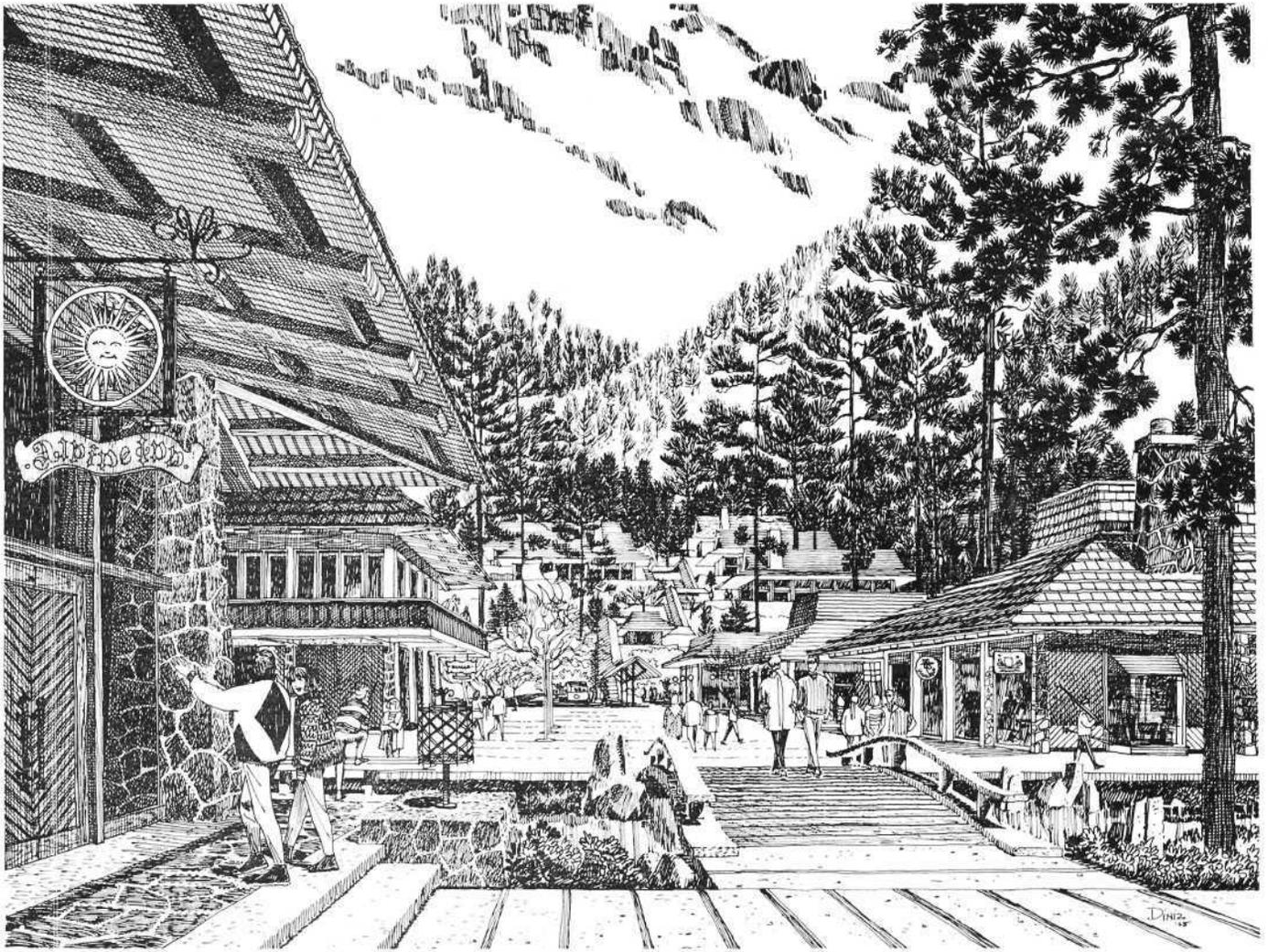
A town which included saloons, mill sites, boarding houses, general stores and a livery stable was eventually built in the high valley and named Beulah, meaning the land of promise. It was a typical boom town, but the lack of violence in the district was something of an oddity for those days. There were fist fights, a shooting, a suicide, a couple of mob hanging threats and a few dynamite accidents, but all in all the boom town was a pleasant place to work.

Although work was pushed twenty-four hours a day and explosions echoed around the peaks every few minutes, progress was slow. Mineral King was and is an extremely difficult place to reach. Twenty-five miles of precipitous trail through country that has been compared only to the Swiss Alps by top ski champions and geologists presented an overwhelming problem to the miners. Today, before Disney can proceed with full development, an all weather road expected to cost some three million dollars must be constructed for easy access.

One of the major problems for the miner in the early days was his lack of adequate drilling tools. But they used good ol' American ingenuity and started busting rocks with heat. Huge bonfires were built on the rock and kept going all night. When cold water was thrown on the hot rocks, they would crack and split open. Powder was then packed into the cracks and touched off to shatter the rock.

Residents of Beulah had to be alert for they lived in a veritable bowling alley with tenpins anything in sight. With careless miners blasting the steep-sloped

## New area opens up for resort



granite mountains, rocks and boulders careened into the valley and tumbled right through town. In the writings of one Orlando Barton, a law "requiring miners to keep their rocks on their own land," is mentioned, but evidently it wasn't enforced. The rolling stone menace became so severe that the flats of Monarch Creek were finally abandoned as a place to do business.

For 10 years Mineral King popped and boomed with ups and downs of enthusiasm that broke hearts, bankrupted rich men and brought a touch of wealth to just a few. In late summer of 1879 some

500 people were permanent residents there (a fair size for a boom town with mines yet unproven). Once the reasonable facsimile of a toll road was finished, construction increased and still more people came to scour the hills and work in the mines. To feed them, the local butchers obtained bear meat and venison by none other than a Kentucky sharpshooter named George Washington Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone. The town was even fortunate enough to have a full-time physician, Dr. T. F. Pegg.

The first forms of recreation in this future playground were old-fashioned

hoe-downs with the miners themselves providing the music. Hob-nail boots pounded the floors and the few wives who lived in town had a wonderful, if treacherous, time high-stepping with everyone. Organized Sunday baseball became so popular that the *Tulare Times* newspaper claimed, "politics and baseball together with silver excitement make Mineral King the liveliest place on the coast."

Mineral King flourished mainly through the energy, finances and ambition of one Tom Fowler who was convinced that these craggy mountains were

going to yield the biggest "paylode" in history. He poured money into the town, building the first stamping mill, fostering construction of a tramway to the Empire Mine and providing needed backing to finish the very narrow and dangerous wagon road that Watson had promoted.

Rumors of great wealth tumbled out of the caverns of the Empire Mine and down into central California. One report stated that the huge walls of the natural and man made caves were "one solid mass of rich silver rock." How these tales began has never been known, but the simple fact that Fowler died a sick, broke, and exhausted man lead some to believe he had risked all on a magnificent fairy-

communities in this high valley were ghost towns. Gradually the winter snows crushed the buildings until today only the old butcher house remains.

In later years, various explorations and assays further discredited the wild declarations of the "silver fever" era in Visalia and Porterville.

Amid all of this commotion over silver, no one heard Wiley Watson's comment regarding tourists and these remarkable mountains. But now, at long last, Walt Disney has picked up this train of thought and turned it into a thrilling project.

Today, the Mineral King district is bordered on three sides by Sequoia Na-

2. A centralized village will be located at the lower end of the Mineral King valley. It will be convenient to all visitors entering the area, architecturally blending in with the terrain but with a minimum of interference with ski development.

3. A dominant goal is to preserve one of the nation's most scenic Alpine and outdoor recreational areas in its natural state while making it available for more than a limited few to enjoy.

4. The natural attractions of the entire area and certain facilities, such as warming huts, ski lounges, picnic areas, trails, etc., will be enjoyed by the public *without charge*.

5. Clean, healthful fun and entertainment for all age levels, compatible with an outdoor recreational area, will be provided in the village area.

6. A pricing structure will be maintained whereby such basic needs as food and lodging will be relatively inexpensive, particularly for families and summer tourists.

7. Development will facilitate enjoyment of Mineral King's wilderness and such outstanding natural features of the area as its mountain peaks and snowfields, hot springs and other mineralized springs, lakes, natural limestone caverns, waterfalls, cool summer temperatures, etc.

8. Mineral King can become the nation's outstanding winter sports area. Skiers will have a variety of terrain, ski runs, and facilities unequalled in the northern hemisphere. Other winter visitors will have their own area to engage in a variety of snow play activities.

9. No development is needed for summer visitors to enjoy Mineral King except to provide basic facilities such as food, lodging if desired, hiking trails, picnic grounds, campgrounds, etc.

10. By day visitors will be able to spread out over the miles of forests, mountains, and snowfields without crowding any area. By night Mineral King must be able to accommodate thousands of people in a cluster of essential buildings and facilities, leaving the forests and mountains to the wildlife.

Never before has such an ambitious recreational project been attempted in the High Sierras. Now, almost a century after its founding, Mineral King's hidden paylode has been discovered and claimed by Walt Disney. And certainly there is no one who would do more to maintain the reverence of the wilderness while opening the area to nature lovers from everywhere. □



An artist's rendering of proposed ski lifts and trails in the new Walt Disney resort. To preserve alpine setting, automobiles will not be allowed in Mineral King district.

tales and then failed to make it come true.

Mineral King reached its zenith in 1879. Hundreds of people were coming and going and at the close of the year, when the snow began to fly, the miners were more hopeful than ever before. But in the following summer, dreams faded. The mountains didn't glitter as they had previously. Inadequate smelting processes prevented the mines from paying off. The zinc blends in the limestone would not yield galena in rich enough proportions. Fowler went bankrupt and other investors tightened their purse strings, considering the area too great a risk. The ore was not as rich as had been supposed. The blends of minerals made smelting too difficult to pay.

The boom town died quickly. By 1882, the Beulah, Silver City and Mineral King

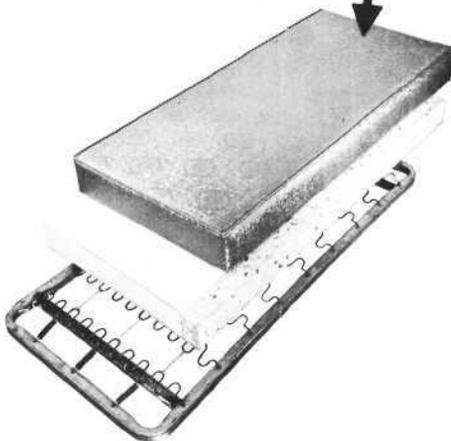
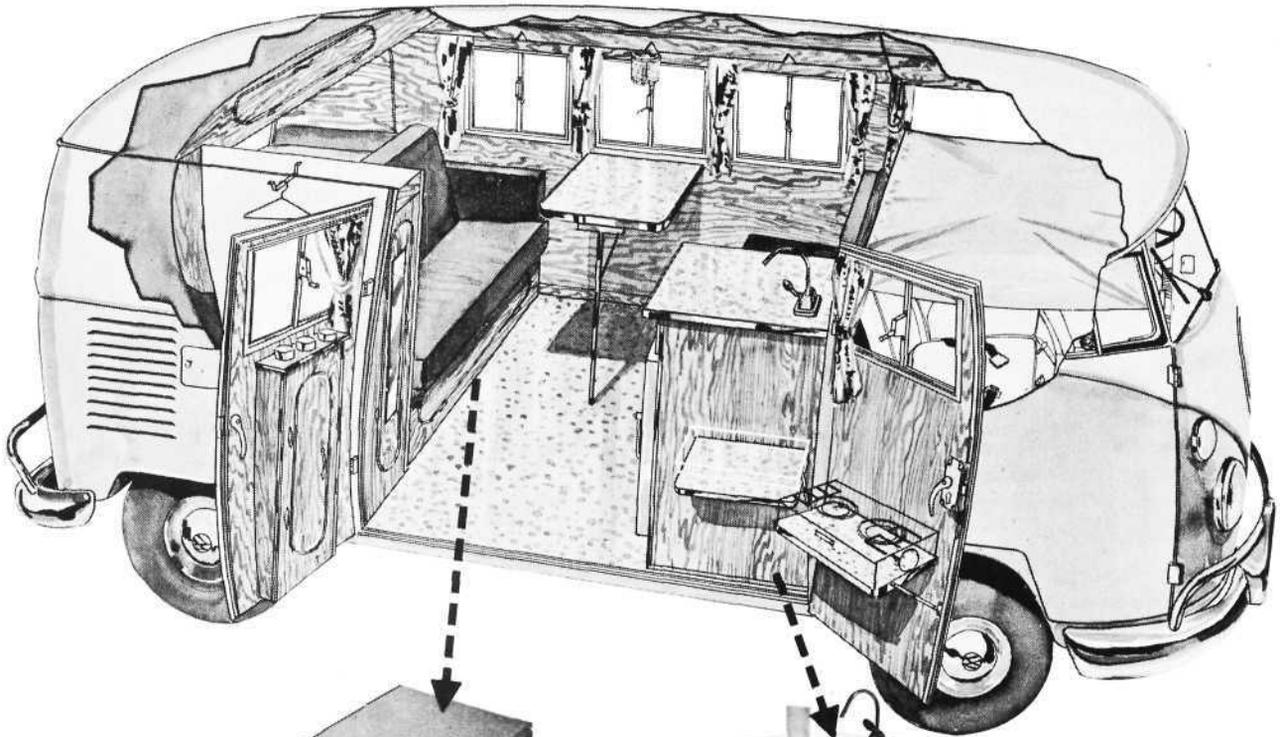
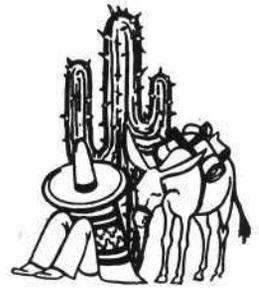
tional Forest. "Its high ridges, uniform snow conditions and breathtaking vistas make it potentially the finest ski area in the United States," says Disney. Careful and imaginative planning will preserve the natural atmosphere of this wilderness while opening it to the growing population that is increasingly seeking opportunities for outdoor recreation. Included in this planning are ten basic guidelines which Mr. Disney and his staff intend to follow in the development. They are:

1. Visitor automobiles will not enter the valley floor, but will park at the valley entry. Otherwise Mineral King's unique flavor could be destroyed. Continuous transportation on the valley floor will be by a new conveyance system aesthetically compatible with the Alpine setting.

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# The Magic of Baja

by Choral Pepper

Editor of DESERT Magazine



*The only tracks along Cardon Boulevard were our own. Never before have wheels crossed this land.*

**WE WERE** floating across sand dunes in J. W. Black's Chapulino. Fields of verberna stretched as far as we could see. The air was still, the purple dunes endless, time non-existent.

The French have a word for it. No other language says it quite so well. The word is *le moment*. It's spelled the same as in English, but it isn't pronounced the same, nor does it have the same connotation. *Le Moment* stands alone, isolated in Time. It's a spell of extraordinary awareness when each sense vibrates to its purest intensity.

My life has been blessed with splendid

moments . . . not too many, or they wouldn't hold the magic they do, but, perhaps, more than most because I live it so hard. I remember a moment on the Isle of Crete when I stood transfixed beside a palace wall of the Knossos ruins. The Greeks say their air is magic. I believe this. The warmth of the sun on my skin, the silence of 4000 years underfoot, the cerulean sky, the hum of a bee, the mystic clarity of the air—this created *Le Moment*. Now, wherever or whenever I stand in warm sunlight and hear the buzz of a bee, I'm transported to that moment in Crete.

I don't know what makes such mo-

ments. They contain nothing relevant, really, unless being ecstatically in tune with your environment is relevant, but whatever it is, Baja, like Crete, is a creator of moments. I think Baja's air is magic, too.

We had left Bahia de los Angeles on the road going south which, on all maps, dead-ends at the old Las Flores ore mill. Before departing, Uncle Erle told Antero Diaz, proprietor of the resort there, that we hoped to find some trace of the tracks left by his 1962 expedition when, after days of moving boulders and winching cars out of holes, he'd managed to break through the rugged terrain from Las

Exclusive report on recent Erle Stanley Gardner Expedition  
to Baja California made by  
Hiller Fairchild helicopters, Grasshoppers, and 4-wheel drives



*With Grasshoppers, we climbed the mother-of-pearl wall deposited by eons of turbulent seas.*

Flores to El Barril. Such a route, if established, would open a new area of interest and entice more tourists to the Diaz resort, which now lies at the end of a branch road off Highway No. 1. We expected Senor Diaz to register great enthusiasm.

Instead, he shrugged and said, "Trucks go that way."

Later, when Uncle Erle discussed our projected route with Ynez, a Yaqui Indian guide from Bahia de los Angeles who had accompanied other of his expeditions and who joined us now, Ynez also shrugged.

"You know this route?" Erle asked.

Ynez nodded.

"It's being used?" Erle prodded.

"Trucks," Ynez said.

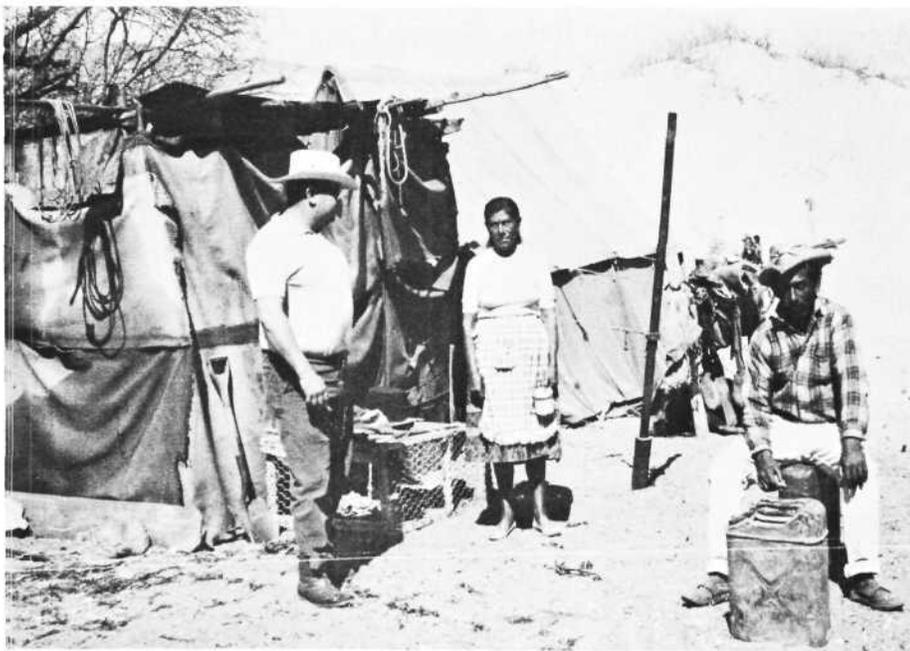
Well, this was a blow. Here we thought we had a story in being first to break a new trail and now we learn it's a regular truck route! Things had changed since 1962 when, following the Gardner breakthrough, the Automobile Club tried to map it, but turned back after the first 22 miles.

Nevertheless, we consoled ourselves, *touristas* don't know about it yet and with the route so well established, we could travel faster and have more time to explore in the Grasshoppers, which we were

now calling by their Mexican name, *Chapulinos*.

Our caravan whizzed along at about 15 miles an hour to Las Flores. With the addition of Ynez to our party, there were drivers for all trucks so J. W. Black and I unhitched one of the Chapulinos and traveled in it.

J. W. has improved this vehicle since introducing it on our search for the John Nummel mine in Arizona last year (DESERT, April 1965). Now its roll bar supports a red and white striped canopy to cut the sun and a windshield provides wind protection. I can't imagine any trip more fascinating than one covering the



*Richard Castillo asked this couple at Las Animas Bay where we might dig clams. They live here entirely isolated from civilization, even distilling their own water. Below right is their ranch where they keep goats, chickens and a few pigs.*



*Above, George Jee climbs aboard the old engine at Las Flores. Below, we dug for clams which we steamed back at camp.*



full length of Baja in a Grasshopper. Their bucket seats are comfortable, they carry a fair-size load on back, their mileage is remarkable, they don't require water, they are so light they never bog down and, with four-wheel suspension, they float over the roughest of roads. J.W. manufactures them at his plant in Paradise, California, and also sells plans (\$10) and parts so that you can construct your own. Of all the vehicles J. W. has invented for Gardner expeditions, this one is best.

In 1889 the ore mill at Las Flores was the center of English and American mining and about \$2 million worth of silver ore was processed here. Interesting relics are scattered about, but much has been stripped from them to provide metal and wood for other purposes. J. W. Black knows a great deal about Las Flores and will do a DESERT story about it for a future issue. We poked our heads into the old jailhouse and took some photos, then set off again on the road. It didn't appear to be well-traveled, but as yet we didn't doubt its reputation as a "truck route." That didn't occur to us until we'd covered about 20 miles of it. Then we began to wonder. Cardon crowded the sides of the ruts and spiny branches of Palo Adam, which looks like an ocotillo with a trunk, broke against the cars. Considering the wide loads Baja trucks carry, this made us suspicious.

At the end of 30 miles, the trail grew so thin we couldn't distinguish it with certainty. Sam Hicks, a natural born tracker, picked out signs of tire treads from the former Gardner expedition. "No one has been further than this," he said, emphatically.

Still, Ynez was our guide. Courtesy prevented us from doubting him verbally.

"Let's make camp here," Uncle Erle directed. We stopped where we were and while the boys popped up tents for Jean and me and unloaded gear, we combed the area for firewood. "If this isn't enough," Erle puffed, dragging up a dead mesquite trunk, "I'll sit by a candle."

When the smoke curled high and conversation grew mellow, Uncle Erle turned to Ynez. "Ynez," he said, "just when was it that truck drivers used this route?"

Ynez studied the stars while he pondered. "I think it was to bring equipment into the mill at Las Flores," he recalled. "Maybe once about 1940."

"Remarkable memory, these Mexicans have," someone muttered. Diaz, too, had recalled the event as though it were yesterday!

On the following morning, explora-

tions began. Six of us set forth in the three Chapulinos, each into a separate wash with instructions to veer east toward the gulf coast. We figured that sooner or later we'd come to a plain or hill where we could locate one another and meet at the beach to dig clams. On most Gardner expeditions we explore this way, in teams of two or three, so as to cover the most territory. Then we compare notes back at camp and all head for the most interesting project.

Our Chapulino took off down a broad sandy wash we called Cardon Boulevard. Photographs simply don't do this kind of beauty justice. Some deserts are hard and rocky, some harsh and black, others brilliant with red and orange. This one was pastel where gray-blue smoke trees feathered against pink sand and immense cardon reigned in uncrowded splendor. We followed the wash until it grew shallow and finally opened into the verbena splashed dunes. As long as I live, the merest whiff of verbena will bring back that moment to me.

From the top of a dune we saw one Chapulino enter the plain from a wash below and then the other arrived. We headed our vehicles toward a pass where the dunes swept against the lava mountains and an ancient watercourse led out to the sea. Wind caves gaped from their naked sides and the floor of the brief canyon was a jumble of rocks, but the Chapulinos took it all in stride and soon carried us to the fringe of a vast salt marsh. Up ahead a blinking hillock flashed silver in the sun. We thought it a trick of heat waves, but it wasn't. It was a bank of iridescent mother-of-pearl oyster shells deposited by eons of turbulent sea. We drove the Chapulinos up the bank, over shells and all. On the opposite side it dropped steeply into the sea. Tons of sand-polished pebbles lay under the surf and we picked up fine specimens of chalcedony and agate among the shells. We didn't dig for clams, though. This wasn't the place for that.

Upon returning to camp via a different route, we crossed faint signs of an old road which appeared to lead toward the sea somewhat north of us. Our guess was it started near Las Flores and led to Bahia de las Animas, a primitive port occasionally visited by boats from Bahia de los Angeles. Still hopeful of a clambake, we set forth the next day to find out.

After again crossing the verbena dunes, we entered wild lava country where ancient trails led nowhere, but here and there appeared threads of our road. Then it grew firm, leading to the apex of a hill which, as we'd guessed, overlooked



*J. W. Black examines ingenious still which turns sea water into fresh water, as described in story.*

beautiful Las Animas beach and bay. As we approached a thicket of mesquite near the beach, we heard an oink. Not knowing whether wild javelina oink or not, I warned Ricardo, with whom I rode, to slow down. But I guess he knows his swine better than I because he ignored my warning and charged right into the middle of a farmyard where two pet pigs bathed in the sun.

Only because of a beach shack on which someone had nailed a factitious sign reading "Animas Hilton" did we know where we were. The couple who lived in the poor, but immaculately clean, house and cared for the pigs, chickens, dogs and goats were as resourceful a couple as you'll ever meet. The water from a nearby spring was all right for stock, they told us, but not for humans, so they'd contrived a sea water still from two large oil drums which is so ingenious it deserves a description.

One oil drum, the larger, is used as a boiler; the other as a condenser. The boiler, mounted on a pile of rocks, is filled about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of sea water and a fire is built under it. All openings in the drum are tightly sealed with mud plugs. When the sea water is heated to the boiling point, steam rises in a vapor and passes through a copper tube sealed with mud into the boiler outlet which extends from it into the condenser drum, which is filled with cold sea water. Here the vapor condenses back into liquid as it passes through the copper tube and out

of the drum into a glass jug. This liquid, of course, is pure water. With their water situation solved, the couple lives the most idyllic life imaginable, if you can imagine a totally isolated existence.

The bay here consists of a semi-circular sweep of fine white sand protected by pink and white dunes reaching out into the sea. The rancher has a pongo for his own use, but there's a rock pier for the larger vessel of his patron, a gentleman from Mexicali who owns the ranch and occasionally comes down to fish. We asked the rancher to accompany us to a good place to dig for clams and he took us to an estero about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile down the beach. After an hour or so of digging, we returned with our community bucket only half full. Meanwhile, his wife had collected twice as many right in front of the house. We'd asked the wrong person where to dig! In Mexico it's the women who do that kind of labor.

Bruce Barron spotted it first, the primitive dam among rocks and dead trees. Then someone noticed a scraggly date palm standing alone. Usually they grow in groves and this one was relatively young. "Must have sprouted from seeds dropped by dead ones," someone remarked.

We left our Chapulinos and climbed into the ravine where remnants of a dam once held water in a natural reservoir. An ancient wall, half-buried in sand, angled from the dam and stretched in broken sections across the level valley. Then,

from the other end, a similar wall serpentine up the side of a steep mountain. It was easy to miss, as the stones were coated with desert varnish and melded into the rocky terrain. The upper parts of the wall, constructed above a thicker base, remained in only a few places. The top of the mountain appeared flat, but the sides were steep and from where we stood, we could only guess at a structure on top.

"Let's go," Ricardo shouted, while the rest of us contemplated the steep climb in the warm sun.

"I think it's just a corral," Bruce decided.

"Heluva place to put a corral!" Uncle Erle observed, considering the prospect of lugging the large rocks up the steep incline.

"Yeah," Bruce agreed, starting uphill alongside the wall.

"I still think it's a corral, though," his voice floated down from midpoint along the path.

But why wouldn't the walls in the valley have held the animals, I questioned, if all these miles of rock wall were meant only as a corral? I had to agree with

Uncle Erle. Curious, I took off up the hill. Somehow, I felt we'd discovered something interesting. And I still think so. I think this is the old Jesuit mission of Santa Maria Magdalena, which was begun and never finished!

In the first place, it was an enormously ambitious project, much more than the Indians native to Baja would have undertaken on their own. Then, the rocks on the walls were heavily coated with desert varnish, all of it deposited on the upper sides. Judging from what scientists know of desert varnish, it forms exceedingly slow and in less than several hundred years the tops of all these rocks wouldn't have tanned to the same degree. On the plateau at the top of the mountain, the wall continued around the edge, but in several areas there were large piles of rock which appeared to have fallen, or have been knocked down, from a larger structure.

One thing that surprised us here was rock rings grouped in a colony at the far end of the plateau, some with adjoining openings as if to designate separate rooms. We've seen prehistoric Indian rock rings in desert areas of the Southwest, but haven't found any in Baja, although this

may be because we haven't explored where they're found. Eroded clam shells lay among the rings, further evidence of human population.

Where the water came from that was dammed below, we can't imagine, but in view of the extensive walls in the valley and the number of huge old trees, many of them dead, there must have been a live spring here at one time. And, since the walls of the valley were designed to confine cattle, that, along with the date palm, is indicative of early missionary direction.

So here is the reason behind my thinking.

After a number of Indian insurrections and the destruction of mission properties in 1742, the King of Spain ordered a presidio erected and instructed the Council of the Indies to propose a plan for the pacification of the whole Baja California territory. As a result, four recommendations were made, which King Philip V accepted and embodied in a decree dated 1744. These stated that missionary work should continue in charge of the Jesuits; that colonies of Spaniards should be founded near all convenient ports and protected by military posts; that to make



*Uncle Erle, in the lead, waits where the road ends where we'll plot a course into unmapped terrain.*



*Bruce Barron pauses mid-way up the steep incline to speculate on the mysterious ruins of a wall and a dam.*



*On the mesa at the top we found ancient rock rings.*

quicker conversions among the natives, missions should be established in the north of the peninsula and united with those of the south; and that the number of missionaries should be doubled. In return, a complete report and description of missions and mission stations was to be drawn up and sent back to the King.

It was from this report, dated 1745, that we learned Indians had been converted by Fr. Fernando Consag and the mission of Santa Maria Magdalena begun in the north. On an old mission map it is identified as *Mision de Santa Maria empezada* (*empezada* means "begun") slightly north of latitude 29 degrees and within a few miles of the Gulf. Moreover, Fr. Consag was assigned to the Mision de las Dolores del Norte, the closest one at that time to this location. No subsequent reference is ever made of this mission and it was not among those inherited by the Franciscan order after the Jesuits had been banished from New Spain by the King.

Judging from the ruins in the isolated area we were in, it appears likely the original plans had been aborted and the project never completed. However, the plateau atop the mountain offered an ideal lookout for a military post and it was located close to two convenient ports—that of Bahia de los Angeles and Las Animas—in line with the demands of the King. Later, the mission trail followed up the center of Baja and then crossed to the Pacific Coast, but at the same time the Mision de Santa Maria Magdalena was instituted, Fr. Consag was interested in the Gulf coast, hoping to establish land contact with the missions of Sonora.

There are a few references which cast

doubt upon this idea, but in turn there's so much doubt cast upon the references that they can hardly discredit the possibility. In *Camp and Camino in Lower California* published in 1910, author North writes of visiting the ruins of the Jesuit mission chapel of Santa Maria de la Magdalena about six miles south of Santa Rosalia. However, Gerhard and Gulick in their superb *Lower California Guidebook* refer to these same ruins as those of the Magdalena chapel built by the Dominicans in 1774. They don't refer to them as a mission at all, which makes good sense, as the Dominicans didn't even get to Baja until 1773 and their first mission, established in 1774, was much further north and on the Pacific coast. It's possible that the Jesuits began

the Santa Maria de la Magdalena mission on the Gulf slightly above 29 degrees, as indicated on their 1757 map, and then abandoned the project and moved it south to the 27th parallel where Arthur North reported his ruins in 1910, but because further reference to this mission is ignored in other records of importance, I'm inclined to believe the ruins south of Santa Rosalia never were a mission, but instead are those of an early Dominican chapel established to serve rancheritas and mines in the productive Magdalena and Santa Rosalia mining area.

As the days passed by, we explored other enigmas, by land and by helicopter. This was only the *beginning* of the Erle Stanley Gardner expedition of 1966! □

To be continued.



*The author is great at finding chippings, but never comes up with a whole arrowhead!*

# The Angel was a Mule

by Frank M. Scott

ONE OF the strangest roundups ever witnessed was held in the desert east of Caliente, Nevada. This was when members of the National Mustang Association captured Old Whitey, a mule with a living legend.

The legend begins in the mid-'40s when Nevada cowboys trapped, roped and rounded up wild mustang for packing houses which used the animals for

dog and cat food. Old Whitey, as he is called, was caught on several occasions, but released to the hills because of a brand respected by his captors. Old Whitey had been branded in 1911 when the Union Pacific Railroad used him as a pack mule to carry supplies into remote sections.

Local residents and cowboys who have witnessed the fabulous feats of this mule attest to his age of 53 years. Before mass roundups conducted by airplanes were

outlawed, Old Whitey assumed the aspects of a quadruped guardian angel by leading mustang herds into primitive areas where the cowboys couldn't find them.

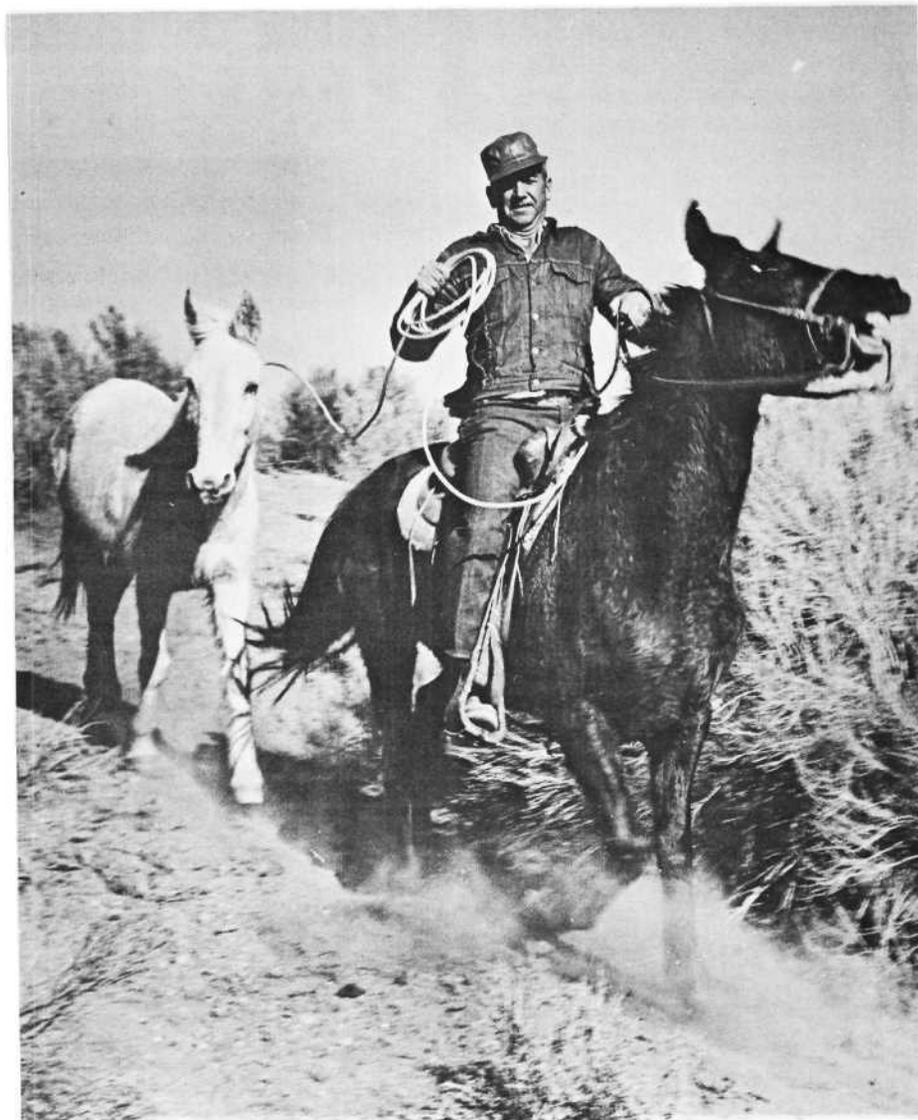
Recently the mythical white mule became a reality when Tom Holland, president of the Mustangers, and his group were riding in the rolling hills near Eccles Flat on an outing for their organization. Ivan Hunt, a Utah rancher, roped the animal and brought him to the Caliente stockyards and sure enough, a faint U.P. brand was still apparent on the right fore-neck of the mule.

Ironic as it may seem, Old Whitey has continued to roam in an area near the tracks of the Union Pacific where he once worked. Tom Holland said, "According to available information, we feel the mule is probably the oldest in the world and I contribute his longevity to his freedom, fine climatic conditions with mild winters and having to forage for his food."

Mustanging, not a new sport to cowboys, is gaining recognition as a spectator sport. Observers gather in 4-wheel drive vehicles, motorscooters, campers and pickups to watch cowboys and horses roll hell-bent over rocks, shrubs and cacti chasing the elusive animals. Although the mustang is now protected by law against slaughter and capture, the National Mustang Association has permission to capture some of the males and replace them with upgraded males in order to improve and protect this last of the Wild West animals from extinction.

After Old Whitey was captured and brought to the Caliente Stockyards, he was kept overnight, fed and photographed, then released to run with his mustang friends until he is again spotted by a hard riding cowboy with an inquisitive mind and a desire for a rough ride.

Mustang hunts are conducted in the Caliente area by the Caliente Chamber of Commerce and the National Mustang Association. They feature trail rides with sourdough breakfasts and cookouts. □





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# Eerie Elves of Death Valley

by DOROTHY ROBERTSON

**K**NOCK - KNOCK! Most people would be tempted to ask: "Who's there?" But not the hardrock miner. He *knows* who's knocking behind the walls of his mine.

One miner may shiver and mutter, "Tommyknockers!"

Another may stop, listen a moment then smile, "Tommyknockers."

Every miner is familiar with the fable of these small gnomes or trolls—those fellows around two feet high, caricatures of men, and having pointed ears and great, long noses.

In Medieval times these little creatures were a part of Old Country life. Sometimes they were prankish, sometimes helpful. They were also supposed to be hardworking. Thus the men who worked deep underground for the earth's treasures accounted for the strange noises, thumps, squeaks, clinks and clanks that sounded occasionally at odd hours, and were not to be explained away.

In Germany these creatures were called kobolds. In Cornwall, they were known as tommyknockers. Cornishmen, working their tin mines along the wild, sea-swept northwest coast of England, were especially susceptible to the idea of these supernatural sprites they called the tommyknockers, for their country, wild and isolated as it was, kept them hill-bound and cloistered for centuries, so that their myths and legends became a way of life.

To avoid the tommyknockers' ill-will, a Cornish miner would leave a bit of his dinner behind as an offering. Sometimes the tommyknocker would reward the thoughtful giver by tapping at a certain spot on a hanging-wall. This would, presumably, turn out to prove a rich, ore-bearing vein.

On the other hand, many a miner believed the knocking to be a friendly warning of coming trouble, or even to be ominous, a warning of impending death due to rockfalls or an accident in the mine.

During our Gold Rush days of '49, there was an influx of Cornish miners who came to be called Cousin Jacks. As is natural, the Cousin Jacks' belief in tommyknockers soon spread among the mining fraternity, reaching as far as Montana and Colorado—wherever, as a matter of fact, the miner dug his way into the bowels of the earth for treasure.

Our own Death Valley was not exempt. Many a miner here will admit to

hearing the strange tapping and knocking noises, the just-heard footfalls, the almost-heard whispers of strange voices; but naturally, no one will ever admit to seeing any of the little gnomes.

Back in 1927 my friend Everett was working in the old Johnnie Mine, 30 miles east of Death Valley Junction (and believed by many to be the old lost Breyfogle mine) when a literally hair-raising event occurred.

Everett and his side-kick Bill Dole had gone down to the 200-foot level, then made their way into the long 1800-foot drift to put in a round of shots. The many bends or drifts in the tunnels of a mine help to deaden the sound of blasting and soften concussion. From a safe 400 or 500-foot distance Everett and Bill stopped to count the shots. As the last shot died away they turned to leave.

"It was pitch dark down there," Everett remembered, "and the only light came from our own mucker's lamps. On the walls ahead of us flickered eerie little pinpoints of lights, and then there would be a sudden splatter of falling stones. It was weird, but we weren't really scared because we knew what it was—our lamps reflected in the eyes of mice.

"Then all of a sudden we heard footsteps walking along behind us. I remember how Bill's jaw dropped. 'You reckon Dick was back in there when we shot off those rounds?' he worried. But I didn't see how anyone could have been back in there. There wasn't any other way in except along the drift we were in ourselves.

"Pretty soon we heard footsteps running behind us, and then a rumbling deep down in the earth. 'Earthquake!' Bill said, but we couldn't feel the slightest movement or tremor. We heard those running steps come right up behind us, then stop. Our lamps showed absolutely nothing!"

Everett looked sheepish. "You know, my hair stood straight up on my head!", he said. "We'd heard those blamed footsteps running right up to us as clear as day, then bam! nothing!"

"How do you account for it?" I asked.

Everett grinned, "Well, there are a lot of miners around would have been pretty sure what it was. Tommyknockers!"

# SWEDE PETE'S PICK

by Kenneth Marquiss

**M**OST LOST mine directions are rather nebulous, but this one has a sign that undoubtedly still points right at it. The trick is to find the sign!

I first heard of the lost ledge of amethystine quartz (speckled with yellow slugs big enough to see after sun-down), when Dad and I were leasing in central Nevada back in the hungry part of the '30s. That version was too filmy to chase and besides, my tires, grub box and budget were in the same condition, even if the story had been stronger. It wasn't until recent years that I again cut the trail of Swede Pete and his bonanza rock. For portions of this, I am indebted to long-time lawman Stanley Fine and to Charley Vaccaro, both of Eureka. Charley is a soft spoken, unexcited, hard-headed mining man who has hunted for the ledge a number of times. If Charley says it's "solid," you can bet your saddle it's worth looking for.

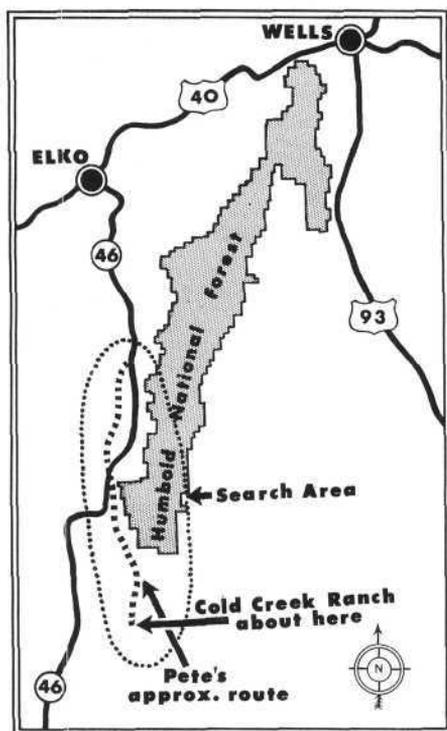
Shortly after the turn of the century, Swede Pete showed up in the Eureka country. He was a big, raw-boned, rugged character who seemed to have no last name—perhaps he wanted it that way. He rode an oversized, mean, dappled grey

horse of questionable ancestry and he flagrantly violated the axiom that it is not wise to mix your drinks or occupations. He drank what was available and worked as a miner, cow-poke, cook or carpenter, as the mood and opportunity suited him. All of which helps to muddle his trail and account for what happened. Even his first name had variations (some unprintable). He was also known as Big Swede, Big Red, and Pete the Swede.

The mountain ranges of Northern Nevada stand like petrified waves in roughly north-south parallel rows. Between the Diamonds east of Eureka and the southern end of the Rubys, is a wide valley of good grass. At the north end of this valley is the old Cold Creek Ranch.

In the old days the Simonsons used to run the ranch, and I understand Charley got some of his story information from them.

Late one fall, shortly before the snows were due, Swede Pete was working at the ranch. A small bunch of uncounted beef in prime condition had been discovered hiding out in a box canyon and it was decided to chouse them up north to the loading pens on the railroad at Elko for



*There's a lot of empty country in this part of Nevada.*



shipment—in spite of the lateness of the season. Swede Pete was picked for the job.

His projected route was easy going, almost due north. It would take him across the little white hills visible from the ranch, past Water Canyon coming out of Bald Mountain, down along the west side of the Ruby foothills to hit Huntington Creek; past the settlement (and saloon) at Jiggs—and thence along the wagon road to Elko.

Swede Pete never got to Elko.



*The country is rugged and roadless, for the most part. A trail bike helps, when you have gear to carry.*

Somewhere along the way between the ranch and Jiggs, three of the frisky yearlings made a break for the cedars. Pete headed his big grey in profanity-prodded pursuit. He got two of the animals and headed back to the herd, but the third eluded him. He swung back into the cedars to try to track the calf. His quarry had headed for high country and Pete was hot on his trail when the tracks led across a low outcropping of purplish-grey quartz. Even before he dismounted, Pete could see the glint of yellow specks in the rock. There were scattered pieces of float all around the ledge which barely showed above the ground. The young steer couldn't have made a better getaway if he'd known what he was doing!

Most cow-pokes travel with a bare minimum, but not Swede Pete! He had a pick in his saddle bag, along with jerky, salt, coffee and tin can. The pick was a short, old-fashioned prospector's type, about 16 inches long, with one end square for hammering and with a two-foot knock-out handle—sort of an oversized grandfather to the modern rock-hound's

hand pick. Pete had worked underground long enough to know what he'd discovered. He was RICH now, and he could put a spigot in endless booze barrels!

After calming down, he caught the big grey who'd been spooked by his rider's wild war-whoop and subsequent discovery dance. Pete figured as best he could the dip and strike of the ledge, and built a small monument slightly up-hill from the lode. The cap stone of the monument was a long white-pink rock that pointed directly to the ledge.

As soon as he had crammed his pockets and one saddle bag with choice pieces of ore, he gathered up all the float and hid it under a big cedar slightly down hill from his discovery. He kicked dirt and brush over the top of the outcropping to keep it from being obvious. As an afterthought, he broke away some branches of the big cedar, and drove the point of the pick hard into the trunk of the tree "yust nose high, vere any tamm phool can see it." The blunt end pointed directly at the ledge and monument.

Unfortunately, all this happened on a Friday, just before sundown. Most of the Saturday night cork crowd had already gathered at the Jiggs saloon by the time Pete slammed through the doors and made the bottles on the back bar bounce with his bellowed "Yahooee" greeting.

He dumped fistfulls of jewelry rock on the bar, announced to the world he was now "as rich as dose Baldwin, Stanford and Gould pickers" and called for drinks for the house. He didn't have to buy any more. In mining country, that

pile of rocks on the bar—glittering in the dull yellow light of the kerosene lamps was adequate proof of his new financial status. It is always wise to be a friend of the new money giant and Pete accommodated the new friends who offered toasts, and oblique questions as to location. The additional information their booze bought them was that the ledge was on a hump in the cedars, he'd staked it with monument and pick and, "Py Yumpin' Yudas! Aye ban gonna plug any mangy coyote with the temerit to trespass or to try to claim jump."

The stars were getting ready to dim when Pete staggered to the center of the floor and wove unsteadily. Someone asked him what he was going to do. He replied, "Yust as soon as that door ban come around again, Aye ban going to go get me some sleep. Aye ban a beeg man now, vid tings to do. Leef me alone!" The door swung around again and he staggered out into the night.

He was found late the next morning, soaked to the skin and half frozen in a nearby ditch into which he had stumbled in his alcoholic stupor. He also had a whopping big lump on his head.

Tender (and gold hungry) hands put him to bed, but the excitement and booze had been too much. He was big and tough, but he couldn't whip a roaring case of pneumonia. Camphor vapors and turpentine helped a little, but he died before the next sun had set, still clutching a couple of pieces of his ore.

Attempts were made to back-track the big grey's hoof prints, but wind, rain and wandering range stock masked the trail and to this day no one has ever found his ledge. Minor finds of white and yellow quartz have been made in later years in the area, but never anything like Swede Pete's strike.

It's a puzzling deal. The search area is relatively small, Swede Pete's route obvious enough, and much of the area can be covered by jeep or a trail bike. There is also the intriguing factor that Swede Pete's route crosses the presumed path of the Mormon Elder and his wives (*DESERT, May 1965*) who found much the same kind of rock on their tragic journey. However, the immediate locale descriptions differ and the Mormon's find should be somewhat east of Pete's route.

As Charley Vaccaro says, that old rusty pick with its rotting handle must be still stuck in the big cedar, pointing to a fortune in jewelry rock.

The only trouble is that there are a million cedars — and Nevada is big country! □

# Treasure Wears Many Faces

by Robert Ramsey

WHEN THE word treasure is mentioned, gold and silver automatically come to mind. But that isn't always the case. There's an old adage, "All that glitters is not gold," and a not so old one which says, "All that's gold doesn't necessarily glitter."

There's another precious commodity of which every good treasure hunter should be aware. It's not quite so glamorous, as it's composed merely of rags and wood-pulp, yet its discovery is as exciting and as rewarding as locating any bandit's cache.

A treasure hunt starts with research. If you're lucky, it could end there, too. For research inevitably leads to books . . . and books are the commodity I have in mind.

Now, I'm not speaking about collecting rare books, although there are some out-of-print items we'd all like to get hold of. What I am talking about is just plain *finding* them; scouting them, as it is called in the book trade. Truly rare books belong in special collections where they'll be preserved and recorded for posterity, and I'm all for seeing they get there. Particularly if I'm the one who helps put them where they belong.

Today there are two main fields in book collecting. One is first editions by important authors and the other is a rather ambiguous field called "Americana." First editions don't exactly fall within the scope of this article, but they are not to be sneered at either. A first edition of an Edgar Allen Poe book might bring \$25,000. Just a few years ago a lucky housewife found one of these rarities in a trunk in her attic!

Americana is loosely defined as material printed earlier than 1875, of an historical nature. Any early writings about overland emigration, missionaries, outlaws, Indians, or the founding of towns and mining camps fall into this category. In fact, almost anything written about California, Arizona or Texas in those days may be included. These items range in value from a few dollars to several thousands of dollars, depending upon, among other things, condition and scarcity.

It could happen any time or any place,

but let's suppose you're out in the back-country around the Mother Lode Country. Over the hill you see an old barn and decide to investigate. You step inside and peer around with caution. A few minutes later, your eyes light on the corner of an old book tucked under a rafter. Reaching up, you retrieve it and after brushing off the accumulated dust, you note that it's in good condition. The title reads *Miners & Business Men's Directory*. Sounds rather dull, but into the knapsack it goes anyway.

Later, back home, you've completely forgotten about the book until you run across it while unpacking your gear. There it is and you wonder what to do next.

I suggest you write down the title, the year of publication, and all other information found on the title page and head for your local library. Don't take it to a rare book dealer, at this point, and ask casually, "What's it worth?" He's a professional and will expect a fee for his appraisal and your book might not be worth a cent. All old books aren't valuable, just as all first editions of every author don't have a \$25,000 price tag.

Most public libraries carry excellent reference works which give the kind of information you'll need to evaluate your find. If you have trouble, a librarian will be glad to help.

So there you are. With your little slip of paper clutched in your hand, you nervously thumb through the pages of a large reference book. You come to the section you're looking for and there it is—*Miners & Business Men's Directory*, by Heckendorn and Wilson, Columbia, 1856. It's exactly the same as you have written on your paper. The book is a history of Columbia, Tuolumne County, California. There are about six known copies, yours would make the seventh. You gasp when you see the catalogue value—\$1000. Eureka! That's a pretty good haul for one days work!

So my advice to you, treasure hunters, is this: Be aware of the whole world of treasures waiting to be found. Some might be silver, some might be gold, and some might be literature that's 100 years old! □

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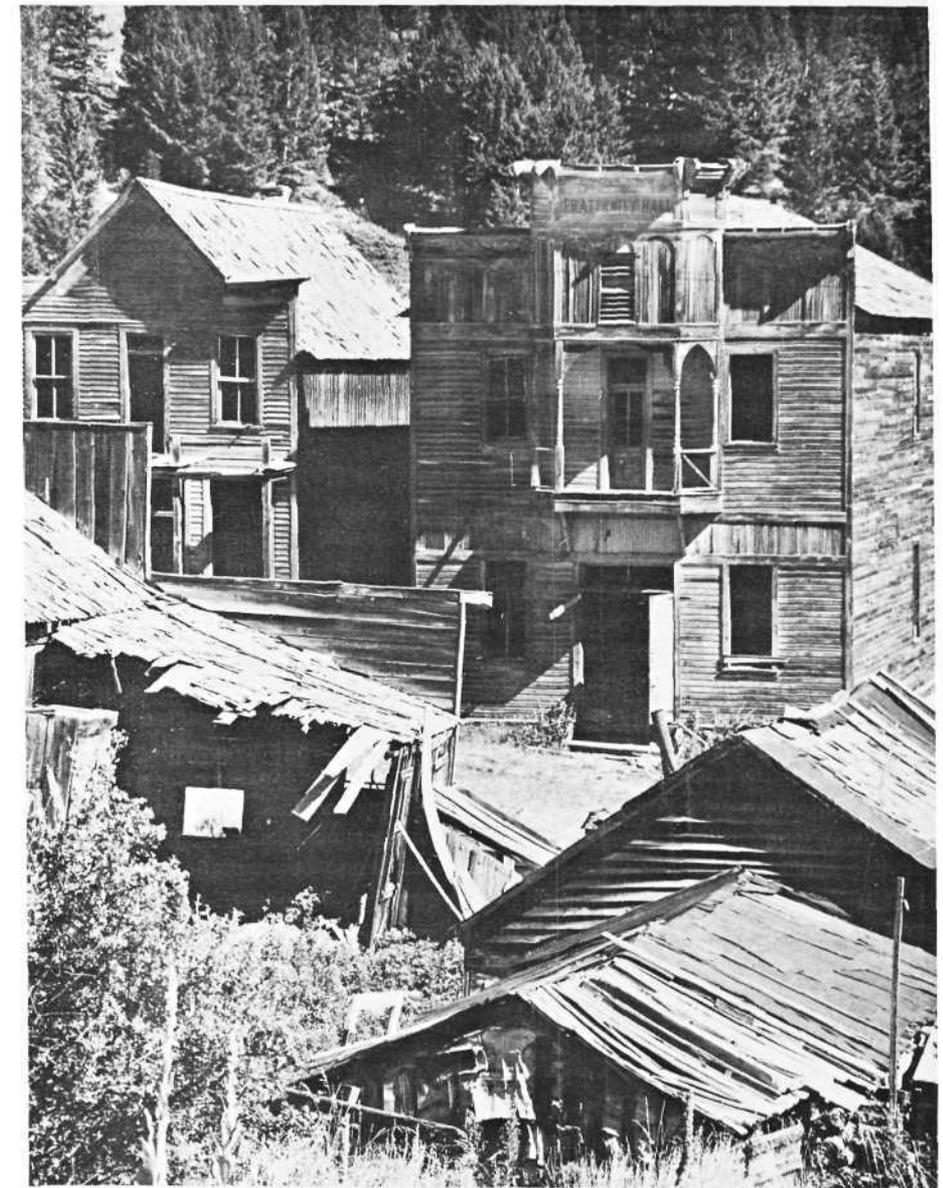
## Elkhorn, Montana

BY LAMBERT FLORIN

**I**N THAT LIVELY decade called the "Gay Nineties" the Fraternal Hall was easily the most imposing building in Elkhorn. Today, though weathered and gray, the old structure still holds that honor. Montana's wintry gales have removed shingles from the roof, vandals have knocked out windows and the stage is stripped of its ornate curtains and backdrop, but the old Hall's castellated cornice still stands defiantly erect and vestiges of the once-elaborate balcony remain where ladies and their escorts stepped outside for a breath of air.

As the name would indicate, several lodges used the hall for meetings. Among them were the Masons, Knights of Pythias, I.O.O.F., Redmen and I.O.G.T. The Cornishmen had a fine Glee Club which practiced and performed upstairs where prizefights and boxing matches were also staged. On Saturday nights the whole town turned out for dances held on the first floor. Some of these grew pretty wild as the evening wore on and male dancers responded to the effects of Montana Lightning.

One night a sweating miner requested the orchestra play a waltz. The leader regretted that a square dance had already been asked for, pointing out the prior applicant. In a few minutes an argument developed between the waltzer and the square dancer. Both men drew their guns while the crowd fell back, dodging bullets. When smoke cleared, the waltzer lay dead on the floor, but his killer never



did get to enjoy his square dance. He danced from a rope instead.

Peter Wys, a Swiss, found the richest quartz lode in the gulch in the middle 1860s. Though several others were developed in the same period, Wy's Elkhorn Mine out-ranked them all. The Swiss was just starting to enjoy his luck when he died. In 1872 the property was taken over by a Helena banking concern. Heading the outfit was one Anton M. Holter. Although Holter was a clever financier, his claim to fame stemmed from an attack by the notorious road agents at Alder Gulch in the early days of that camp. His Elkhorn Mine became one of Montana's leading producers and the town that grew up just below it was automatically called by that name.

During its heyday Elkhorn's boarding house sheltered more than 300 single men representing every nationality Europe could provide. There were 14 saloons to keep down their thirst and half a dozen

places that offered gambling, girls and other diversions enterprising entrepreneurs promoted. The booming population also required schools, churches, drug stores, livery stables and other businesses.

There was even a railroad, built in 1889 by the Northern Pacific. Trains had to be short, longer ones couldn't negotiate the hairpin turns of the steep grades up the gulch. Service was cut drastically when the silver panic hit. After all, Elkhorn's gold, while glamorous, was only a sideline and insufficient to maintain the economy. Tracks were taken up entirely in 1913 and the town went on the skids.

Today Elkhorn is a true ghost, populated at most by a sheepherder or two. Gaunt buildings reflect its former grandeur. The gravel road from Boulder, while steep in places, is easily negotiated, leading the eager searcher to as satisfying a reward as can be found in the old West. □

## BLACK MOUNTAIN MAGI

Continued from page 11

Indian shelters! A story told me years ago by the Paiute centenarian, Tatzumbie Du Pea, returned to mind.

"A long time ago," she had said, "Black Mountain was our Old People's sacred mountain. Once a year tribesmen gathered for religious purposes. A month was set aside during which all could come in safety through enemy territory. During this time, everyone did their trading. There was dancing and games, and marriages were made. Medicine men went into their trances and healed the sick and blessed the people. But before the month came to an end, those who must pass through enemy country hurried to leave. That big Black Mountain over there was our Old People's ceremonial place."

Now with the cold wind blowing down my back, I could well believe it!

We all tried to guess the depth of the crater—100, 200 feet? The diameter of its lip appeared to be around 400 feet.

What must this region have been like when time was young? Volcanologists tell us it was once a heaving, shifting, warping, spewing mass. Imagine, as the earth's crust split, that first sudden spurt of steam—awisp in the sulfurous air during a lull in the earth's trembling—followed by hissing steam vents. The first awful roar had hardly rent the air before searing molten lava oozed from the fissures. A succession of minor explosions then brought forth fountains of white-hot viscous fire which, breaking into incandescent sprays, showered the surrounding earth with crimson, cooling cinders, continuing spasmodically for weeks and months.

Cinder cones built up to great heights by these terrible spewing sprays were demolished by subsequent flows from the same vent, building up again and again, as additional fiery cascades fell, and the center of eruptive activity shifted. And then the large volcano dominating the scene that had periodically spewed lava until the hillside, enlarged with superimposed thicknesses of hundreds of feet, suddenly went berserk.

At first the lava flow ceased — as though the captive monster were taking a deep preparatory breath while the vent rained cinders . . . then the ground began to shake and heave and undulate as the monster strove to disgorge. With a sudden cataclysmic, roaring explosion, a gigantic eruptive of molten lava and rock spouted from a yawning pit, boring down into the bowels of the writhing, lava-

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covered hillside.

Geological evidence shows that this country once experienced such a cataclysm. Early lava flows over-ran the site of developing volcanic vents, temporarily checking the escape of gases from these budding vents. This caused tremendous pressures beneath the thin crust of lava, until that final awful explosion when the volcano literally blew its top. Thus, we have Black Mountain and her yawning maw.

From the peak, over 5000 feet above Indian Wells Valley, we had an unobstructed view of blue, purple and rosy-hued ranges below and the glistening

snow-hoods of Mt. Whitney and her sisters far to the northwest. But as we looked directly down, we realized we'd have to descend faster than we got up, or it would be dark. In places, with less than two inches of handhold and a sheer drop below, this wasn't easy. Someone suggested we save an hour's hike and slide down by digging our heels into the loose lava. This wasn't easy, either, but it was adventurous if you like that kind of thrill and haven't brittle bones!

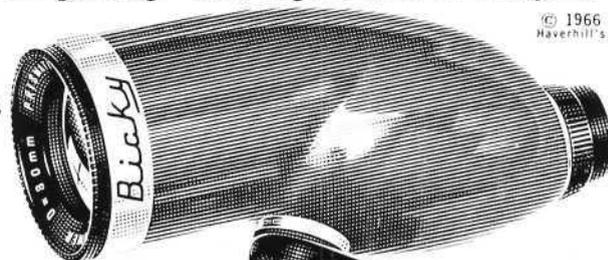
At any rate, it is fascinating country and a hike worth making. Only next time, I'm not going to get so fascinated that I forget to watch the setting sun. □

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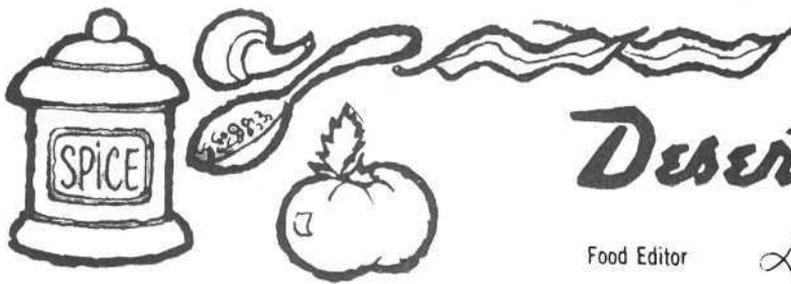
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# Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

*Lucille Inedale Carlson*

## HOLLYWOOD PIE

Filling:

- 2 cups dried prunes
- 1 cup sliced apples
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup orange marmalade
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped nuts

Baked 9-inch pie shell

Meringue:

- 2 egg whites beaten stiff
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar

Pit prunes and cut in half. Cook prunes with apples and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water for about 15 minutes or until prunes are tender and apples are soft. Remove from stove, add marmalade and nuts. Fill baked pie shell. To make meringue, beat egg whites until stiff and dry; add sugar gradually, making sure there are no lumps and continue beating until meringue is stiff. Using two large spoons, put meringue in spoonfuls around the edge of pie. Bake in 300 degree oven for 5 minutes or until meringue is light brown.

## CARAWAY FRUIT SALAD

- 1 cup cut-up canned peaches
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon caraway seed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 package lemon or lemon-pine-apple Jello
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dairy sour cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated Cheddar cheese

Drain peaches well. (If desired pears may be used). Combine syrup from fruit with water, caraway seed and salt, and boil for 2 or 3 minutes. Pour over Jello, stirring to dissolve. Blend in lemon juice. Chill until thickened and mixture mounds on spoon. Fold fruit into half of Jello mixture and turn into mold or square pan. Fold sour cream and cheese into remaining gelatin. Turn into mold over fruit layer. Chill until firm.

## BLUE CHEESE AVOCADO SALAD

- 2 packages lemon gelatin
- 2 cups boiling ginger ale
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cups cold ginger ale
- 1 medium avocado, sliced
- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1 8 oz. can crushed pineapple, drained

Dissolve gelatin in boiling ginger ale. Add lemon juice and cold ginger ale. Chill until very thick. Fold avocado into 2 cups of the mixture. Pour into  $1\frac{1}{2}$  quart mold. Chill until set, but not firm. Meanwhile, hold remaining gelatin at room temperature. Then fold in blue cheese and pineapple. Spoon on top of avocado mixture. Chill until firm. Serve on lettuce with a dressing of sour cream and finely chopped crystallized ginger. 10 servings.

## PRUNE WHIP SALAD

- 1 cup prunes
- 1 cup water
- 1 package lemon Jello
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups boiling water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

pinch of salt  
canned peach halves  
Combine prunes and 1 cup of water in sauce pan; bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 10 minutes. When cool, pit prunes and cut into large pieces. Meanwhile dissolve Jello in boiling water; add lemon rind, juice and salt. Chill until slightly thickened. Whip at medium speed until doubled in volume. Fold in prunes; chill until firm. Place peach halves on lettuce beds and top with a generous serving of prune whip. Garnish with mayonnaise or sour cream.

## PEAR SALAD

- 1 package lemon Jello
- 4 canned pears, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grapes, seeded and halved
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon juice from sweet pickles

Two cups liquid, pear juice and water added to make 2 cups, scant because of the tablespoon of pickle juice. Dissolve Jello in hot liquid. Add ginger and pickle juice. When gelatin becomes syrupy, stir in pears and grapes. Put into oiled mold or individual molds. The ginger and pickle juice give this salad a distinct flavor.

## CRANBERRY AND ORANGE SALAD

- 1 package orange Jello
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups boiling water
- 1 cup canned whole cranberry sauce
- 1 large orange cut in small pieces

Dissolve Jello in hot water. When it has begun to set, stir in cranberry sauce and orange pieces. Top with a dab of mayonnaise. Serves 6.

## COTTAGE CHEESE APRICOT SALAD

- 1 1 lb. can apricot halves
- 2 3 oz. packages lemon Jello
- 2 cups creamed cottage cheese
- 1 cup canned milk or whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup drained, quartered maraschino cherries

Drain apricots and add enough water to syrup to make 2 cups liquid. Heat to boiling and stir in Jello until dissolved. Cool. Add cottage cheese and beat in and chill until mixture begins to set. Fold in apricots cut into small pieces, cherries and whipped cream. If you use canned milk, place it in bowl in freezing compartment until it begins to freeze around edges, then whip until stiff. Pour into molds and chill until firm. You may surround molds with apricot halves to garnish.

# Hints for Desert Travelers

by Bruce Barron



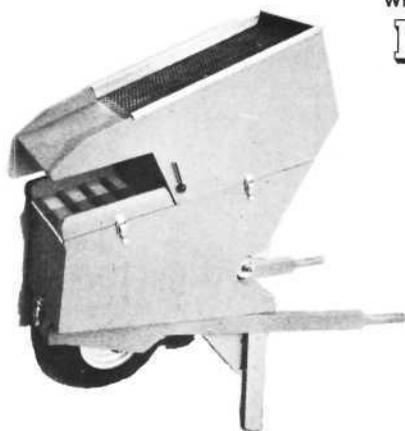
Bruce Barron shows Erle Stanley Gardner and Mexican vaquero how to start a fire with a tequilla bottle and a yucca.

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scope, reading glasses, etc., can be used as a magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays into the pithy center of one of these dried stalks. A small coal will develop, which will spread rapidly if encouraged with slight fanning or blowing. By adding a small handful of shredded bark, or light twigs, it will soon burst into flame. A bottle full of clear liquid will also serve as a magnifying glass, but will require focusing into the sun. If no sun is available, strike a spark into the tinder by hitting flint against steel. □



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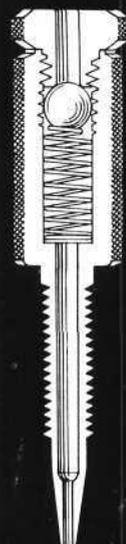
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# LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope

## To Our Readers . . .

No doubt a number of sharp-eyed readers will catch it, but maybe we can jump the gun by correcting a misplaced photo in last month's issue. The petroglyph photograph on the left at the bottom of page 24 is one of a series from the Cornudas Mountains in New Mexico rather than a Baja California pictograph, and should have accompanied the Butterfield Trail story on page 12. The others are correctly captioned. C. P.



## Cowboy Stew . . .

*To the Editor:* Could a DESERT reader furnish me with the recipe for S.O.B. Chuckwagon stew, a famous Southwestern stew made by cowboys?

RALPH MORGAN,  
Hesperia, California.

*Editors note:* Please send recipe to DESERT Magazine and we will publish it next month on this page. C. P.

## Still More Lost than Found . . .

*To the Editor:* You may not have heard that the Lost San Saba Mine, as well as the Lost Dutchman in the Superstitions, has been reported found.

ART BROWN,  
Atascadero, California.

*Editor's comment:* Reader Dan George of Ontario sent the same information, as did D. E. Woody of Borrego Springs. The San Saba is believed to be about 50 miles north of the LBJ ranch near Bend, Texas, and, of course, the Lost Dutchman's general location was described in DESERT's April issue. Prospector Woody, who seems to have some inside information, claims the map which led the Oklahoma claimants to the lost site was the one once possessed by Adolph Ruth, whose skeleton was recovered in 1932 with the head severed from the body. Woody believes the find is legitimate. The San Saba, from all accounts, sounds like a legitimate find also. This excites us at DESERT. We believe it will encourage adventurers to look more closely at the lore of the West and, along with recovering lost loot, will institute a new, vital appreciation for the Southwest's colorful history. This, in turn, will lead to a voluntary protection and preservation of back country areas without having to incorporate them within regimented government supervised parks where you can only camp amid throngs of people in designated campgrounds. C.P.

## Big Wheel . . .

*To the Editor:* About eight years ago, I found this old wagon up Buck Eye Creek out of Bridgeport, California. Later, I asked Miss Ella Kane about it and she informed me that there was an old water power sawmill up Buck Eye Creek which operated between 1840 and '50. The tree growing inside the wagon must be at least 120 years old. The wheels were round blocks of wood, cut from logs, and rimmed with an iron band. Probably six or eight oxen pulled the wagon. I found several oxen shoes in the area.

EUGENE MEIVES,  
So. San Francisco, California.

## Reader Digs Gardner . . .

*To the Editor:* Your magazine has been appreciated by me since I first subscribed in 1958. It has helped me to relive and to plan new adventures into our Southwest. I am especially grateful to DESERT for introducing me to Erle Stanley Gardner's adventures. I have read them all and enjoy his style where you, the reader, feel you are part of the adventure. I think he conveys this realism and presence by centering adventures around people on the expedition and their problems and contacts with other people. It's not like reading a text. I feel I know every member personally and can laugh and learn with them. In fact, your title of "Uncle Erle" seems appropriate even to us readers who don't personally know him.

DON FERREL,  
Orange County.

## Peaceful Lake Powell . . .

*To the Editor:* I congratulate you and Pat Capson on a well-written article on Lake Powell in the May issue. However, I do hope the many readers of DESERT all over the land will not be disappointed if they do not find turbulent and choppy water in the channel. In a letter to me, Mrs. Edward Duffield said she is planning a trip to Lake Powell including a hike to Rainbow Bridge and that "I hope we do not encounter turbulence in the river as they did, but I will still risk it to see Rainbow Bridge." There are only a few days when the lake is rough and most of the time it is like glass.

I also hope your readers are not disappointed if they catch their limit of bass and trout weighing one to seven pounds. For the past two years, limit catches have been made almost every day, as checked by the Arizona and Utah Fish and Game Commission. Also, by accurate count, the distance today from the landing to Rainbow Bridge is less than 1¼ miles.

ART GREENE,  
Wahweap Lodge and Marina,  
Page, Arizona.

*Publisher's Note:* Written many months ago, the Lake Powell article was held for the SPECIAL UTAH EDITION. A paragraph updating the constantly receding hiking distance to Rainbow Bridge and present facilities on the lake was left out by the printers. We also did not want to convey the impression the lake is turbulent. I have spent many days on this magnificent and scenic body of water and nearly always find it calm. It is certainly one of the West's ideal vacation areas. J.P.

## Hail to thee, St. Luis . . .

*To the Editor:* We enjoy your articles on Baja and save those issues. As "resident tourists" living in San Felipe, Baja California, for the past two years, we do a lot of exploring and camping from San Felipe to San Luis Gonzaga. In the June issue you mentioned Sr. Gorgonio Fernandez and his camp at Willard Bay in Your Magic of Baja. Here is more information about the statue of St. Luis on the hill overlooking the camp and bay. It has been there for two years and consists of scrap metal welded together. It's about five feet tall with bowed head and extended hands holding a large cross.

Pappy Fernandez's expression about who made it, "a foreigner, not a gringo," is a perfect example of his natural tact when explaining idiosyncrasies of North American tourists. The fabricator of this art work was a wandering nonconformist popularly called a "Beatnik" in the U.S. These people, in their dress, attitude, and manners, are found hard to explain by the Mexican people and to them, they are foreign.

MRS. W. E. GEMMELL,  
San Felipe, Baja California.

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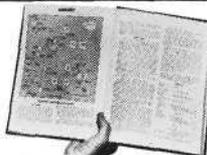
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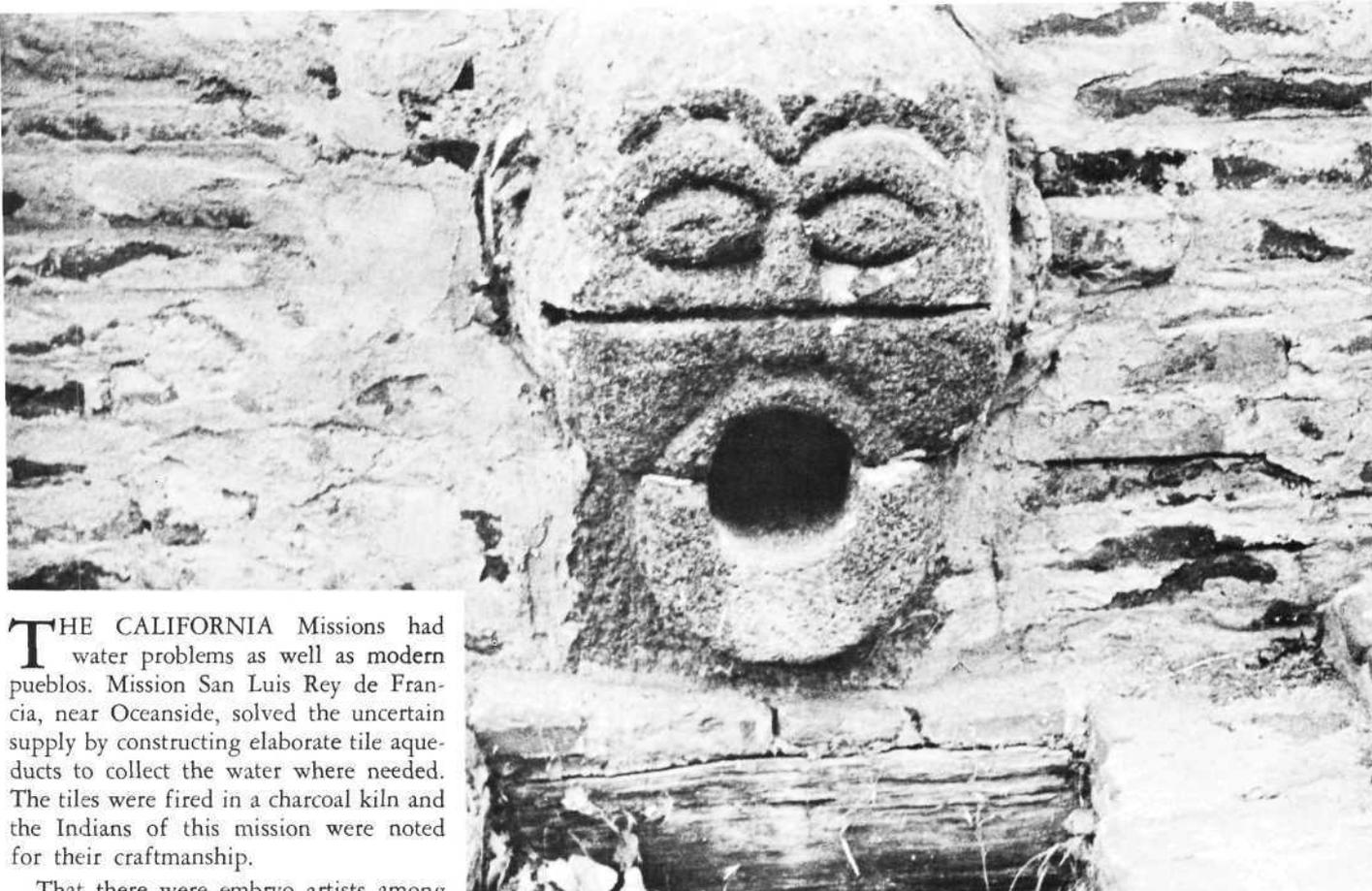
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That there were embryo artists among them is attested to by the decorative water outlets in the outdoor laundry area. Such highly-distinctive, original, even humorous, art is rarely evolved among aborigines and suggests a flowering of native culture. The gargoyles are located in the Indian tile pools and sunken gardens of the beautiful old mission.

One can almost hear these "big mouths" haranguing the laundry workers, "All right, you Indians, stop lally-gagging and get a move on!"

It wouldn't surprise me if the Indians had nicknames for their stone overseers, like maybe Big Yap Francisco for the one with the circular mouthpiece, or Gabby Abbie for his pal.

The mission was founded by Padre-Presidente Lasuen, June 12, 1798. Padre Peyri served it for 34 years. Lt. Col. John Charles Fremont took temporary possession in 1846 and Kit Carson, General Philip Kearny and his Dragoons camped here the same year. Several months later the Mormon Battalion with 80 women and children moved in. Mormon women were allowed to accompany the Battalion as laundresses, so they probably had a few words with the Big Mouths, too! □

## *Indian Gargoyles*

*by Daniel Reardon*



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