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# Desert

WESTERN TRAVEL / ADVENTURE / LIVING

APRIL 1966

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**TREASURE OF TUMACACORI  
LEGEND OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN  
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14th Annual Yuma County Fair, Yuma, Ariz. March 30-April 3; Annual National Art Exhibit, Springville, Utah, April 1-30; Opening of Pioneer Historical Museum, Flagstaff, Ariz., April 1; Inyo (Calif.) County Centennial Bottle Workshop Show and Sale, Bishop, Calif., April 1-3; San Joaquin Valley Gem and Mineral Show, Fairgrounds, Stockton, Calif., April 2 and 3; Annual Ute Indian Tribal Dance, Whiterocks, Utah, write Utah Travel Council, Capitol Hill, Salt Lake City, Utah for dates; 16th Annual Tucson Festival Arts Show, Tucson, Ariz., April 13-14; Trail Ride to Superstition Mountain Wilderness Area, Maricopa County Parks Dept., Phoenix, Ariz., April 16; 8th Annual Kern County Gem and Mineral Show, Fairgrounds, Bakersfield, Calif., April 16-17; 7th Annual Northrop Gem and Mineral Club Show, Hawthorne, Calif., April 23 and 24; Riverside Community Flower Show, Armory, Riverside, Calif., April 23 and 24.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Some dates are subject to change. If you plan a trip to attend a specific event, we suggest checking first with their 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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## New Books for Desert Readers

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.

### HISTORY OF SAN BERNARDINO AND SAN DIEGO COUNTIES, 1883

*By Wallace W. Elliott*

The reprinting of this extremely rare edition of the history of these two important Southern California counties (which today also includes Riverside County) is a major event in the publishing world. Long out of print, its original limited editions were prompted by the linking of Riverside and San Diego after the completion of the California Southern Railroad. Panoramic sketches of downtown scenes, homes, buildings, orange groves and ranches will send you on a pictorial romp through this region's Victorian past and the lively text, written by a pioneer newspaperman, gives a fascinating account of early settlers, customs of the Rancho period, the arrival of the Mormons, descriptions of early mines, Indian battles, bandit raids and fiestas.

Hundreds of steel engravings and a two-color plate map enhance the large format, gold-stamped, hardcover book. It seems incredible that this beautiful 204-page book would cost only \$12.00.

### JOHN SPRING'S ARIZONA

*Edited by A. M. Gustafson*

Authentic history of early Tucson, battles with Apaches and of daily pioneer life at Tubac, Fort Bowie, Camp Wallen and similar places was recorded on the spot at the time it happened by this early Swiss-born, Arizona pioneer. Having come from an American army assignment in which a battle wound removed him from the fray, he joined with the Regular Army to help protect the Arizona frontier from the depredations of the Apache. A soldier, storekeeper, farmer, clerk, brewer, school teacher, federal court translator, artist and writer, his experience was broad and so was his humor. He describes events, such as a heavily chaperoned ball, so vividly that the reader squirms with him in frustration when he tries to

arrange a private word with the lovely Miss Eulalia.

Always curious, John Spring became interested in recording the legends and lore of Pima and Papago tribes when he settled in the Casa Grande area and became attracted to prehistoric artifacts. His findings are included in this book and have contributed much to our knowledge of these tribes.

Hardcover, 326 pages, the book is illustrated with reproductions of John Spring's own sketches. \$7.50.

### PUEBLO OF THE HEARTS

*By John Upton Terrell*

Pueblo of the Hearts, an Opatá Indian village in Sonora, was given its name in the 16th century by Cabeza de Vaca when he and his companions arrived there and were offered hundreds of dried deer hearts as food. Though Pueblo of the Heart's history was brief, it played host to some of the most famous European explorers while they outfitted expeditions in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola.

In following a trail of history, the author travels via a road of today. This village, situated a short distance north of Hermosillo in Sonora, Mexico, is located along one of the oldest trails of mankind on the North American Continent and directions are given to guide you there today. The book is brilliantly researched—and, unfortunately, the research is apparent. It picks up in spots, but unless you have an intense interest in the early explorations of this area, which include those of Diaz and Alarcon up to the Colorado River as well, you might have trouble keeping your interest on the book. For history buffs, though, it is recommended. Hardcover, 101 pages, \$6.00.

### AN ARIZONA CHRONOLOGY

(Statehood 1913-1936)

*By Douglas D. Martin*

Here is a simply marvelous book. History, without a single footnote!

In his second volume, which follows the first one devoted to the Territorial Years of Arizona (1846-1912), Mr. Martin has used newspapers as his source.

Unfortunately he didn't live to edit his notes and the job was completed by Patricia Paylore, who did a commendable job.

In no other way is the history of time so strikingly revealed as in a good chronology, as this is. Although it is not an interpretation of the time covered, something close to that evolves naturally from day-to-day news headlines. Before people started sending their sinus' to Arizona, the intellectual climate was more concerned with the three Cs—copper, cotton and cattle. The Big Depression, of course, was highlighted, as were long disputes over the waters of the Colorado River and Hoover Dam.

But, oh, what wonderful items there are to stimulate the imagination! On October 25th in 1921, for instance, a group of New Yorkers were so inspired by a Harold Bell Wright novel that they organized a \$100,000 corporation to finance a search for the lost Iron Door Mine in Arizona's Catalina Mountains. And later, on July 20th in 1928, Arizona decided it needed to expend \$30,000 to build a school for delinquent girls. They'd been imprisoning them with the delinquent boys at Fort Grant and the co-educational system led to trouble!

On New Year's Day in 1931, the Tucson Daily Citizen declared the past year one of outstanding accomplishments with the coming of airmail, completion of a subway, erection of a Federal building, enlargement of the school system and a \$200,000 program to improve streets and lay dust. But *all* was not glory in Arizona. In January three years later the W.C.T.U. made a national survey and listed Arizona as one of the few *really* wet states!

Even if you've never been to Arizona, you'll find this \$4.50 paperback book fascinating. This reviewer wishes we had a good one for Southern California. The earlier and smaller Volume 1, incidentally, which covers the Territorial Years, is \$1.95 and after reading this new one, you'll want the earlier one too.

#### COOKING AND CAMPING ON THE DESERT

By Choral Pepper,  
editor of *DESERT Magazine*

Here I am again in the happy position of reviewing my own book! This time we have a "desert" book enhanced with a foreword by Erle Stanley Gardner and a chapter on desert driving and surviving by Jack Pepper, which make the book much more than just a cookbook. Recipes are truly different and those who don't camp any farther from home than their

own patios will profit from this whole world of gourmet cookery with little effort and lots of short cuts.

The book covers cooking by desert lakes, cooking by desert seas and cooking in dry camps. There's Sam Hick's jerky recipe for the hardy wanderer, Jim Hunt's sour dough starter for the sourdough prospector and turtle steak for the Baja *aficionado*. Then there are lots of exciting things for celebrating anniversaries or gold strikes in camp, last night fiestas when you're out of everything fresh, and many, many tricks we've devised to make our ice supply last as long as two weeks, pack double the amount of food you'd usually put into half the space, and chiefly, our own system for concocting spectacular meals in camps without cutting into adventuring time.

As an extra fillip we've included instructions for the "desert still" which will produce life-saving water from the most arid land. Recipes are named after lost mines, ghost towns and interesting desert characters, with information about them, which will make for good camp conversation and contribute ideas for desert trips.

In his foreword, when Erle Stanley Gardner describes the wonders of desert camping, you're transported right along with him. Much of his desert savvy has influenced this book as many of our richest desert experiences have been in his camps.

Illustrated with 12 pages of desert photos from our own album and artwork by well-known Southwestern artist Donald Yena, the book is hardcover and only \$3.95.—C. P.

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## DESERT QUARTET

by Louise Price Bell

AS MOST people know, cacti of various kinds grow in the Southwest desert. Some are more interesting than others and over a period of time visitors to the desert have decided that the four most popular and interesting ones are the ones shown here. They are often referred to as the "Desert Quartet."

The Saguaro, or Giant Cactus, is found nowhere else in the world except in southwestern United States and northern Mexico. It is larger and lives longer than the others, often reaching the height of fifty feet and the age of 200 years. The blossom is a waxy white bugle-shaped bloom about five inches in diameter but closing in the heat of the midday sun. This blossom is the State Flower of Arizona. After the flowers shrivel up, purple fruit appears and the birds feast upon it. Many Indians in that area eat the fruit raw or preserve it . . . sometimes dry it as figs are dried. The Saguaro always bears fruit, no matter how dry a season it may be—because it is like a reservoir and can store water for as long as four years in the ribs that extend from top to bottom.

Prickly Pear Cactus is a young growth, as compared to "Granddaddy Saguaro," and seldom reaches 20 years. However, young plants break from the parent one, so the cactus continues growing. There

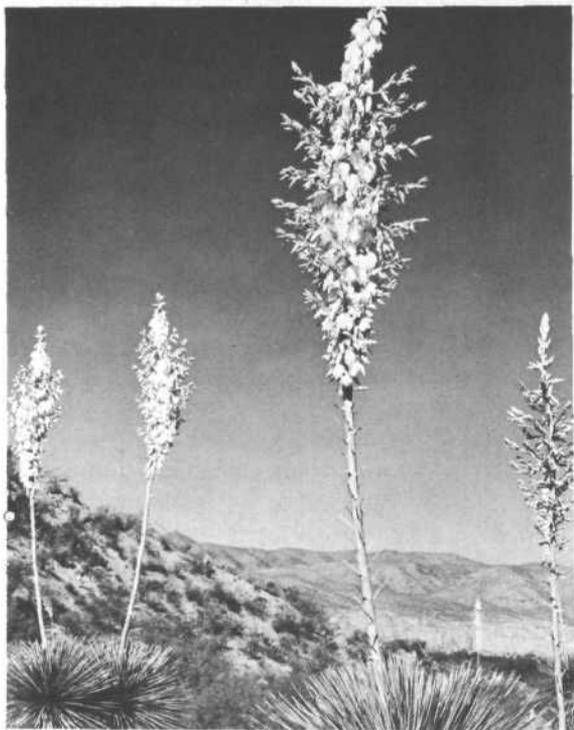
are several kinds of Prickly Pear but they bear a strong family resemblance to one another so are easily recognized. They are usually about two to six feet tall and sprawl over from 16 to 18 feet of desert. And they are covered with tiny prickles!

The Barrel Cactus was named *Bisnaga* by the early Spaniards because it is shaped like a barrel and *bisnaga* is Spanish for barrel. This cacti is also a great help to anyone lost in the desert since when the top is chopped off and the inside pulp mashed with a stick, water can be squeezed out. Many lives have been saved by this water, in the early days when there was little travel across the desert. The Barrel Cactus also serves as a compass, because it leans a bit toward the south.

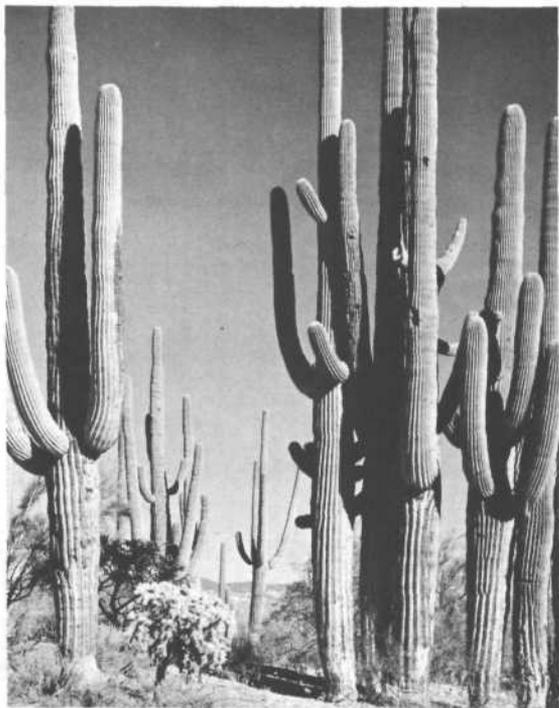
The Yucca is really not a cactus but is associated with them. It is related to the lily family, also the onion and garlic families. It grows about five or six feet tall and its top looks like the top of a palm with sharp pointed leaves from which its creamy-white blossom-stalk shoots into the air about five feet. The Yucca is the State Flower of New Mexico.

All desert growths have a peculiar fascination but the four shown here rank first for desert gardens. □

*Waving in the hot desert air the flower-topped stalk of the Yucca makes a dramatic sight, is sometimes called "Spanish Dagger" because of sharp pointed leaves which look like daggers, also resemble palm leaves.*



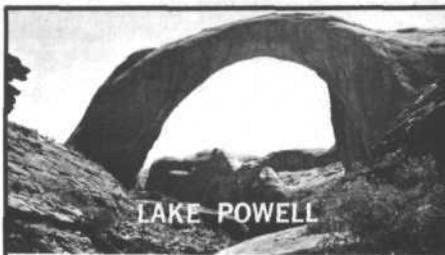
*The Saguaro is the "granddaddy" of them all. This group is in the Saguaro National Forest near Tucson. Holes are homes for desert-wrens.*



*The "paddles" of Prickly Pear are covered with needle-like spines, in spring the blooms form at edges of paddles, are usually yellow, sometimes red or purple.*

*Cruel-looking (and feeling) fish-hook spines cover the Barrel cactus but beautiful reddish-orange blooms form a crown at top, come Spring. Cactus candy, on sale in Southwest candy stores, is made from the pulp of this cactus.*





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**By Lee Lucas**

**O**VERLOOKING THE mining town of Superior, Arizona, juts Apache Leap, a granite mountain of sheer cliffs and jumbled boulders. Scattered widely around the foot of the mountain are black nodules of obsidian, called Apache Tears, and there is a poignant legend that explains how these black gems came to be.

During the 1880s, the fierce Apache Indians had a stronghold in the rugged mountains near present day Superior. From there the warriors staged sneak attacks against the white settlers and the peaceful Pima Indians.

It was the autumn of one of those years, while cactus fruit ripened on the lower desert flats, that the men congratulated themselves on a successful raid and settled down to divide the plunder. The women gathered up their fringed burden baskets, along with all the chil-

When capture seemed certain—to the wild-spirited Apache, a fate worse than death—the warriors agreed to jump from the cliff's edge to their death below.

When the women returned to camp, their baskets heaped with fruit, they found the twisted bodies of their warriors lying among rocks at the base of the cliff. While the women buried the dead, their sorrow was so great that their tears mingled with the earth and turned into bits of black glass, a tribute to undying love.

Hardheaded realists counter the legend with scientific fact. When lava cools too quickly, it forms a natural glass called obsidian. It is specks of magnetite, they say, which cause its black coloring. Still, they have never explained satisfactorily, to me, why the obsidian is found in small nodules scattered haphazardly throughout the perlite beds. One theory is that it rained while the lava cooled, hence cooling the spots faster where the raindrops hit, and thereby forming obsidian. No matter how you explain it, the Apache

**The Legend of the Apache Tears**



dren, and set off to pick the purple cactus fruit to provide their families sweets throughout the coming winter.

Meanwhile, a detachment of cavalry soldiers, led by trusty and accurate Pima scouts, tracked the Apaches to their mountain hideout. That night, under the withering fire of U.S. soldiers, the outnumbered Apaches sought refuge atop the steep-sided mountain. But there was no escape. Slowly they were driven to the cliff's edge. They were without food or water and their arrows were nearly gone.

Tears are there. And near Superior, there are several good places where, for a small fee, the public is welcome to gather the tears to their hearts content.

If you get an Apache Tear, hold it to the light and you will see inside, solidified for all time, the tear of a heart-broken Apache squaw. I will ignore here the mutterings of those realists who claim that it is actually the beginning of an incomplete crystal. Some things are better left to one's imagination, especially so the legend of the Apache Tears. □



# Strictly-- for the birds!

by Babs Kobaly

ACCORDING to desert ornithologists, there is no other oasis in Southern California quite so attractive to migratory birds, both spring and fall, as the high desert's Morongo Valley. Yet this attraction, so far, has been strictly for the birds! Realtors are content to tout Morongo's nearness to Palm Springs or Joshua Tree National Monument, ignoring entirely Morongo's own unique offering.

Few know, for instance, that according to certain naturalists, this valley has its own native palms (two). Few, but birds, know that this town has its own old buildings, mines and ancient Indian sites. But more important, teachers, students and Audubon Society members are planning annual treks to Lower Big Morongo Canyon, site of one of the most recently declared Audubon Sanctuaries. Beside a small stream, mist-netters expect to find quiet niches that will prove good for banding warblers, buntings and tanagers.

In this canyon alone, over 160 bird species have been tallied.

From the air, this three-by-eight-mile valley must be surprisingly enticing to come upon in arid desertland. Coexisting are conditions almost impossible to resist on a long, tiring, cross-country flight. Water, both running and still, and the proximity of so many different kinds of terrain offers haven and foodstuff for a wide variety of birdlife. Morongo airstrips beckon to flyers from chaparral and chamisal; to travelers from marshlands, streamlands, woodlets and shores. It offers a piece of homeland to birds of

*Morongo Valley provides a haven for more Vermillion Flycatchers than people.*



grainfields, thoroughfares, pastures and cliffs. Yet, if birds browsed in brochures for resorts, they'd never head for Morongo Valley. Nor do an over-abundance of human residents, compared to the rest of the high desert towns.

Known as the "smallest mountain-surrounded valley in California," its advertisers claim little for this "tranquility without tranquilizers," as one realtor dubbed Morongo's virtues. Much underground water, an abundance of ultra-

violet rays and a smogless haven for those in ill-health are about all the statistics that landbuyers are offered. Birds, least of all, are interested in such statistics. They also care not a feather whether or not Morongo had the first grass-roots government, the first streetlights, the first telephone on the high desert. These firsts, in fact, had they continued at the same pace, might sooner have hurried the birds off! Far more people pass through than stay.

There are those who think this underdevelopment was a planned project by oldtime landowners quietly hanging onto their acreage while money, progress and people pass untapped through the Gateway. Little do they realize that the townspeople have to drive miles to a hospital, employment, a place where suits are sold, or teeth extracted. Yet these very conditions, though detrimental to civilized progress, are responsible for the town's greatest attraction: its cosmopolitan visitors-on-the-wing. Nature-lovers, by-passing the rest of the high desert, often drive many miles to merely catch a glimpse of that local favorite, the Vermilion Flycatcher, poised on a pasture fence.

Unwinged tourists are lately flocking to the swank, new eatery which just opened; owned, strangely enough, by Sam Levine of Palm Springs Biltmore fame. Strangely, because Levine is also the owner of the magnetic green core of the newly-declared bird sanctuary in Lower Big Morongo Canyon.

Through the years, small bird arrowheads have been found on flats leading down into Lower Big Morongo Canyon, evidence that this spot was as enticing to birds in the past as it is today. Birders hope to keep it that way, so for their sake, no map accompanies this article . . .

You might have to take the back way, a dirt road leading in from Desert Hot Springs whose only marker is a fenced water control sign. Or you might have to have a resident lead you in, atop the backbone of surrounding hillsides, until you hairpin around to and through a cattle gate. Or, you might have to walk all the way from Covington Park, which is close to the center of town, yet adjacent to and part of the new sanctuary. Some residents are even unaware of it.

In fact, to discourage most, remember that the road through this canyon is washed out completely. Sincere birders will still risk it, however. To the rest it will remain too remote, scaled too small for those used to extravagant beauty. For here, as in many desert canyons, one must have the ability, as Charles Saunders put it, "to appreciate life's small offerings." □

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# Springtime is Snaketime

By Lucile Martens

EVER SINCE the serpent first reared his ugly head and spread his poison in the Garden of Eden, men have loathed, despised and feared the evil snake as the lowest form of creation. History is replete with incidents of treachery and bloodshed wherein the venomous snake played the role of villain. Legends, myths and folklore are woven about his insidious ability to charm and fatally fascinate his victims. These tales usually culminate with the stinging bite which was always considered deadly. To some, the snake has been a symbol of mysticism and reverence—but to most he has signified mortal danger.

There are many harmless reptiles in the United States, but only four types are known to be poisonous. Their venom is always painful and dangerous, and occasionally fatal. Of these, the rattlesnake is by far the most common and widespread although the copperhead, cottonmouth moccasin and coral snake are occasionally encountered in some areas.

The dry, arid regions of Southern California and Arizona are particularly inviting to the North American rattlesnake. San Diego county harbors three species of the dangerous snakes, while Arizona boasts the greatest number of varieties in the United States—some 18 out of the large number of presently known species and sub-species.

The rattlesnake loves the sun, but is not equipped to withstand its heat. At temperatures ranging above 91°, he is quickly rendered helpless and if allowed to remain in the higher temperatures longer than 10 minutes, he will perish. Is it any wonder the rattlesnake seeks shelter among brush, rocks, or any other shade that will break the mortal rays of the hot sun?

Neither can the rattlesnake withstand

the cold. At temperatures around 35° F., just pleasantly brisk to the human creature, the rattlesnake is immobilized and unable to defend himself or carry on life processes.

Throughout his existence, the rattler has lived on small ground animals and lizards, yet he cannot pursue them. He has no legs to run with and being a thick, clumsy reptile he moves very slowly. When hungry, the rattler lies in ambush waiting for his next meal to stumble unwittingly within striking distance. Having once killed his prey and injected enough venom to prepare it for his peculiar palate, he has no teeth with which to chew and must slowly ingest and swallow it over a period of several hours, in some instances, during which he is at the mercy of his enemies.

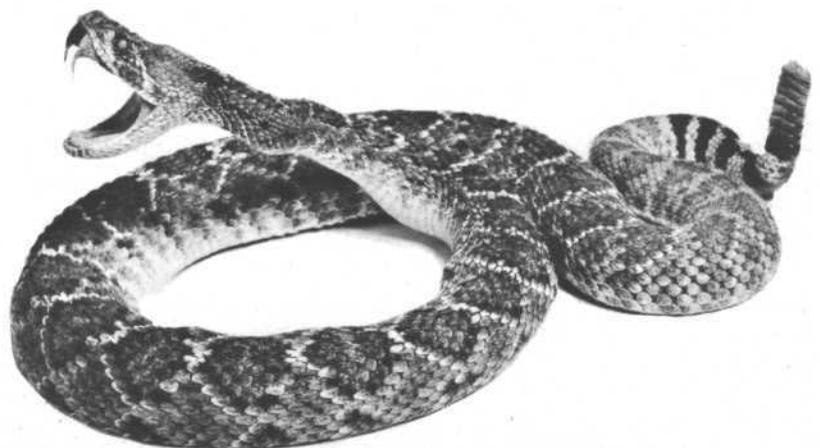
It is pretty well established that rattlesnakes have no sense of hearing and are deaf to air-borne sounds. Their head, although equipped with sharp and penetrating eyes, has no eyelids and the snake must lie awake or asleep staring malevolently into space.

The rattlesnake has no way of saving his skin when he sheds it and at regular

intervals the old skin is automatically discarded to uncover a brand new one. During this shedding process the rattler is blinded by a fluid that forms over his eyes. He is very cranky while undergoing this inconvenience and discomfort. However, each time this transformation takes place, the snake adds a new rattle to his string—which, by the way, has nothing to do with the number of years of his total age.

When the rattlesnake is pursued by an enemy more deadly than himself, he is equipped to climb very little and certainly not to heights great enough to afford even a small degree of protection. He is not belligerent by nature and although he can both bite and strike without coiling, his strike can reach barely half again his length.

In colder climates the rattlesnake may be depended upon to hibernate during the long winter, but in the mild climate of Southern California the hibernation period is not long and exact dates are not predictable. When the sun breaks unexpectedly through the gloom and the air warms up for a while, out pop the



snakes to enjoy the balmy weather while it lasts, no matter what the month.

Rattlesnakes are not uncommon in the coastal areas of San Diego county, but the dry, rock-studded hills of the back country are usually more to their liking. The Southern Pacific rattlesnake may make his home in either location but the Red Diamondback rattlesnake—as gentle and peaceful a reptile you are apt to find in the rattlesnake family, is partial to the rocks and dry bush for his habitat. However, in spite of the fact that the rattlesnake is physically handicapped, cowardly, weak-minded and misunderstood, he must never be underestimated nor his existence ignored! His only defensive mechanism is his inherent ability to manufacture one of the most deadly of known venoms, and to inject it in whatever amount he deems necessary. When the rattlesnake is threatened or believes himself in danger, he instinctively strikes

In water, the rattlesnake travels much more rapidly than on land. He is a buoyant swimmer but here again, he is not likely to attack until thoroughly annoyed. He swims on the surface where he can be readily detected.

The greatest danger from rattlers is not to see them, and anyone visiting or residing in an area where these snakes are ever found is wise to train himself in the art of observation. Many accidents are caused by stepping on a rattlesnake or annoying him unintentionally; or by trying to kill one without suitable means. Amateur snake handlers are apt to learn the hard way if they make a mistake in the presence of a rattlesnake or a person who is unable to move because of injury or other reason, might conceivably be a victim. And, of course, children too young to identify danger should not be given an opportunity to pick up or play

cate harmful snakes. There is also an account of a fishing guide who swished the grass as he advanced in order to cause the snakes to sound their alarms, and another fisherman, on the Salton Sea, reached out of his boat to examine a snake swimming by. Sure enough, it was a rattler—and it required considerable time to get him ashore and to a doctor.

Early settlers were careful to keep their houses closed at night to avoid snakes from crawling into their homes and even recently a Palm Desert, California woman called the police department to rid her bedroom of two sidewinders who had crawled in from the patio through an open sliding door.

Although incidence of accidents is declining and advancements have been made in developing anti-venom and in the treatment of bites, the possibility of injury from this source will probably continue to exist in greater or lesser degree while the hardy breed exists.

There are simple precautions to take while camping, hiking, fishing or just plain living in the dry, sparsely settled areas of California and Arizona. Common sense may not only enable one to avoid being bitten, but may help avoid dangerous encounters. It has been said before but it is worth repeating—"The dangerous rattlesnake is the one that you didn't see."

Don't lift a stone or log under which a snake may be hiding. If the stone must be moved, pry it loose with a stick or prybar, or your booted foot.

Never reach into holes, crevices, or under rock piles, or into other openings where danger may be lurking.

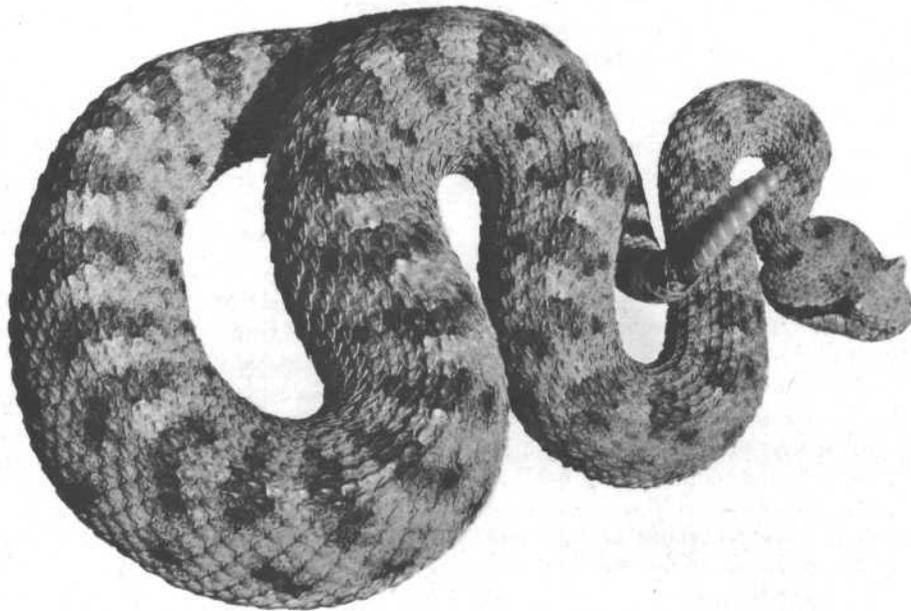
Keep a sharp lookout for snakes if walking through brush, grass, or rocks. Keep in the clear as much as possible. The color of snakes often renders them almost invisible unless one is alert to their possible presence.

Snakes are active at night. Don't gather firewood in the dark; wear your shoes and carry a flashlight when you move around at night.

Camp in a clearing and keep your bedroll away from rock piles, rubbish, or brush piles. Keep boots and clothing high enough to prevent rattlers from crawling into them. Look over the situation before resting on a rock or a log.

If you hear a warning rattle, locate the snake before moving away from it. Look behind you before you back up.

Even though you kill a rattlesnake, its head remains dangerous for considerable time. If you remove the rattles, place your foot on the snake's head to avoid a pos-



out and inflicts his dangerous bite on his victim.

A rattler will not always warn you of his presence. He will first try to lie quietly hoping you will not see him and will go away. By the time that ominous rattle sounds, you may be sure that he is fearful and annoyed. Usually, before striking, he will rattle, hiss, and wind himself into a well-anchored striking coil, shaped like a letter "S." But he can bite without engaging in any of these preparatory acts, and sometimes does so.

Darkness is no protection against a prowling rattler. In fact, because of the mildness of night temperatures, the snake is often more active than by daylight. Wise campers or hunters do well to keep this in mind after nightfall.

with snakes—even little ones. The venom of the baby rattler is often more deadly than that of its parents.

Adults can outrun a rattlesnake if they see him in time. A distance of two or three feet from a snake will usually insure safety, even if the snake is coiled to strike. To run from one snake and encounter another is a common danger. Anyone trying to avoid a rattlesnake should be very cautious about the direction he takes.

In the early days on the Santa Fe Trail, men were sent ahead with large whips to frighten snakes out of their pathway. In early Indiana, it is said that the pioneer housewife, when tending her garden, hunting eggs, or picking berries, carried a snake stick with which she sought to lo-

sible accident. To protect others, bury the head as soon as possible, handling it with sticks or a shovel to play it safe.

Remember that snakes cannot stand heat and will lie in the shade when it is hot. Although most of them occur in the lower altitudes, in the southern states they may be found in even the highest spot. There is no "safety belt" for rattlesnakes.

Never step over a log or rock without first stepping on top of it to make sure there is not a rattler concealed on the other side.

Give rock ledges ample clearance if the path allows and avoid walking close to them; in climbing amid rocks, don't reach above your head for a hold.

Look for a cleared spot before crawling under a fence. In high grass, beat the grass with a stick to give the rattler a chance to sound off and reveal himself, or to escape.

Snakes can swim, so use your oar to remove them if they approach or attempt to seek refuge in your boat.

In the rough and ready jargon of camp and outdoor life, a "good stiff drink" used to be considered a positive and welcome cure. A tall bottle of "snake-bite

medicine" was essential in every sportsman's kit. We now know that in the event of a bite from a poisonous snake, alcoholic stimulant of any kind is the worst possible remedy. In fact, the more alcohol that the body contains, the more rapidly the system distributes the poison and the more promptly do the tissues absorb the dangerous venom.

What to do? Carry a recognized and approved snake kit which may be purchased from most drug stores or camp supply stores and read the instructions for use in advance so in case of an accident you'll know what to do. Then call a doctor immediately or transport the victim to the nearest hospital. The earlier anti venom is administered the better. It is not recommended that it be administered by persons unfamiliar with the technique.

If our pioneer fathers had allowed the many varieties of the North American rattlesnake to bluff them out, the West would not have been won. But their best weapons were the same then as now—alertness, caution, and presence of mind. Although a rattler may seem to threaten a human, that human is a much greater threat to the snake—unless he panics!

Be alert—be calm—and BEWARE! □

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# The Lost Dutchman Legend

BY ROBERT BLAIR

ONE HOT June day in 1931 a sixty-five-year-old man, crippled, and walking with a cane was guided into the lonely reaches of Arizona's Superstition Mountain by two cowhands from a neighboring ranch. Adolph Ruth, a retired civil servant from Washington, D. C. was not a greenhorn prospector; he had in fact broken his leg some years earlier while searching for a California mine which, ironically, may have been the Lost Pegleg. Though the fracture had been a bad one, Ruth did not forswear his interest in lost mines; he knew little of the Arizona mountains, but he had what he thought were compelling clues to the location of a famous gold mine within the Superstition range.

When two weeks had passed and the elderly adventurer did not return, search-

ing parties were formed and the mountains were scoured. It was six months before his ultimate fate was discovered. First a skull, then later a skeleton, was found. The personal effects and physical evidence proved the remains to be those of the unfortunate Ruth. News accounts of the discovery contained much speculation that the explorer had been near to finding the famous Lost Dutchman Mine.

The mention of the fabled mine, plus the horrifying fact that the victim had apparently been beheaded, resulted in extensive press coverage of the event. With the death of Ruth, the modern legend of Superstition Mountain was established, and continues to grow with subsequent killings and shooting affrays in the years since, for it is the astonishing number of murders, some of them unsolved, that has

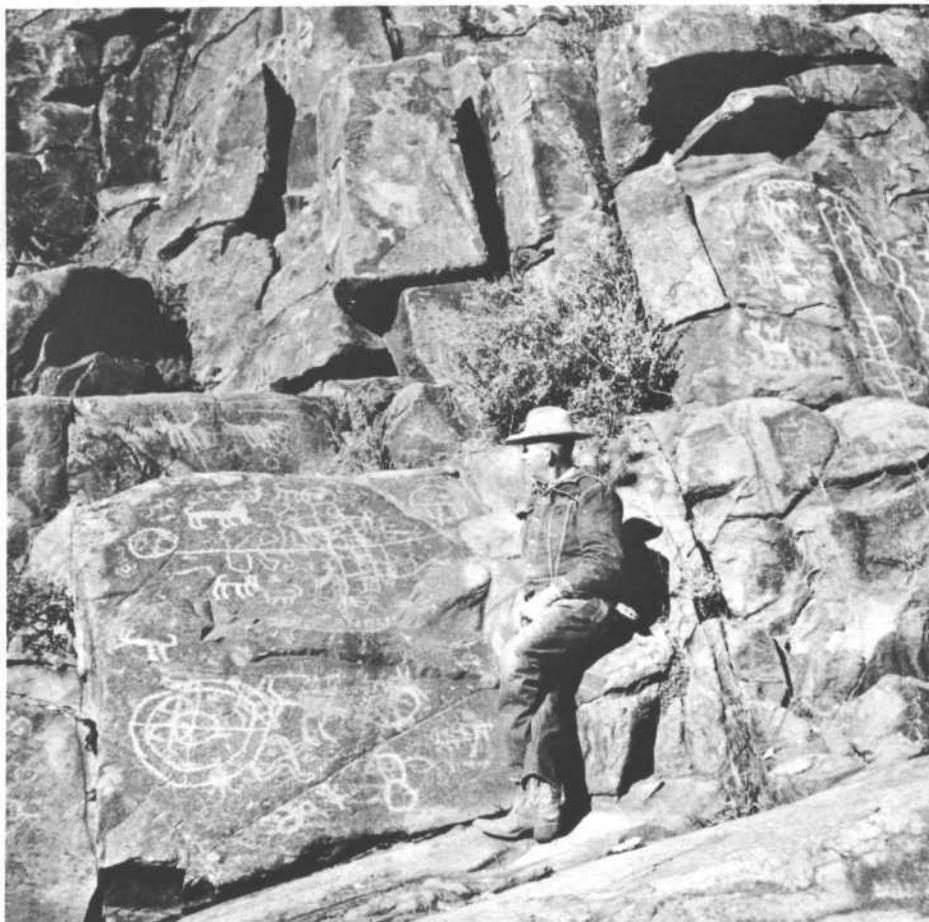
given the Superstition story its added dimension of danger and mystery. The American West abounds in legends of lost mines and buried treasure, real and imaginary, but nowhere, perhaps not even in the Klondike of Dangerous Dan McGrew, have so many men apparently lost their lives.

A rigid orthodoxy binds the telling of tales of lost mines. The plots are as stereotyped as soap opera stories, and the many variations on the Lost Dutchman theme embody all that is typical in Western dramaturgy: white bearded prospectors, treacherous Indians, perfidious white men, lost gold, stolen maps, with murders, massacres and mystery enough to satisfy a whole generation of television writers.

The "Dutchman" was actually a German immigrant named Jacob Walzer, known locally by a variety of names such as "Old Snowbeard," or simply "Jake." He died in 1891, and is buried in an unmarked grave in a Phoenix cemetery after thoroughly mystifying the residents of that city for over 20 years. It was Walzer's practice, particularly after partaking liberally of Phoenix beer, of boasting about his rich mine in the Superstitions that focused attention on that particular range as a possible gold site. His stories, embellished and distorted by succeeding generations of tale-spinners, have become the legend of the Lost Dutchman.

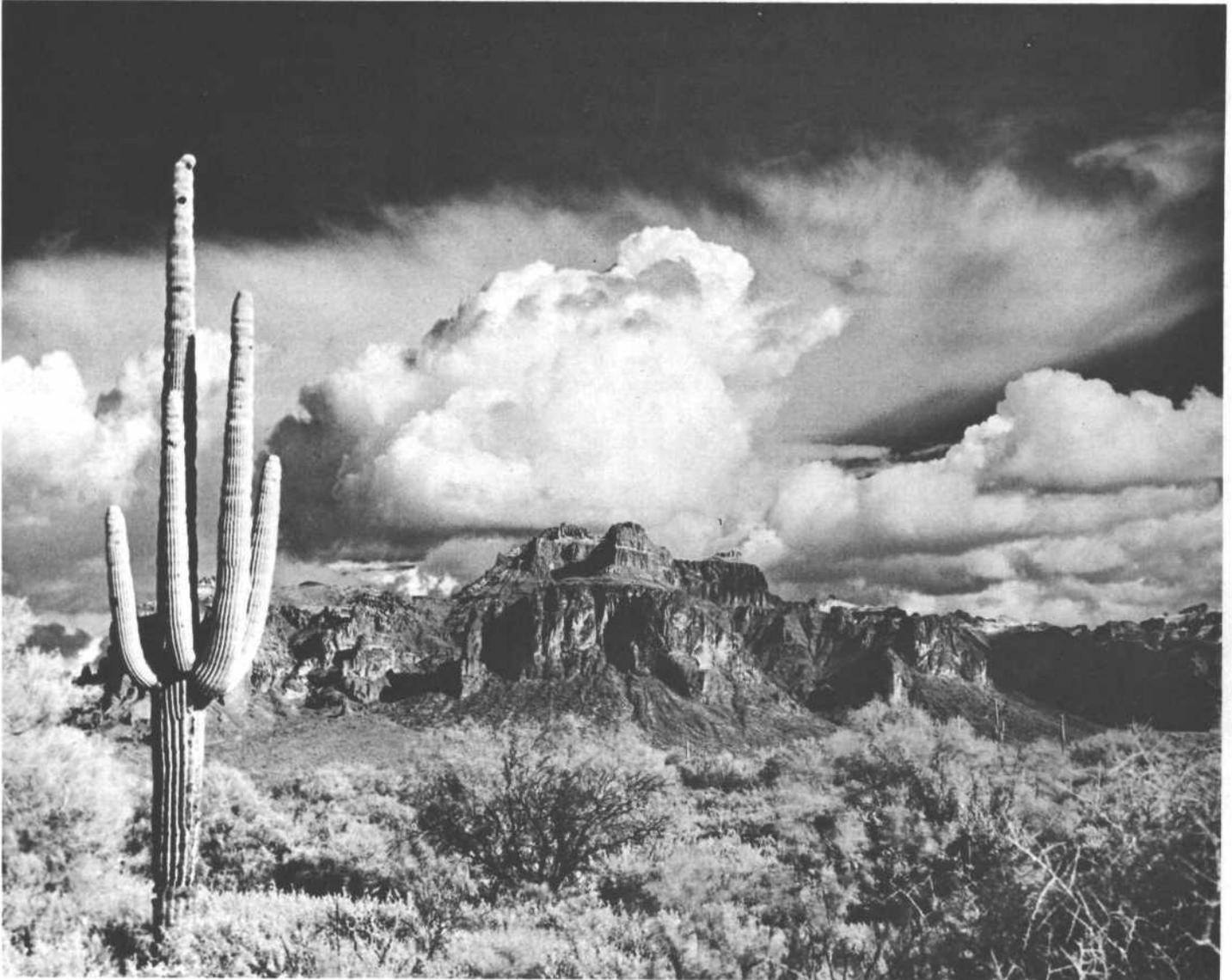
In its usual telling, the mine was originally discovered by the Peralta family of Sonora, Mexico. Working in the vicinity of Superstition Mountain in the 1840s, they are thought to have developed a number of highly productive gold deposits. With the pending transfer of southern Arizona to U. S. jurisdiction in 1848, the Peraltas are said to have assembled a large number of Mexican workers in order to recover as much as possible from their mines before the territory became overrun with Americans. Unluckily, the sudden appearance of such large numbers of men and animals caused the fierce Apache residents of the region to conclude that their mountain stronghold was being invaded.

Shortly after the arrival of the large



*These prehistoric petroglyphs have been called treasure symbols by uninformed persons. They were here long before the Dutchman.*

*The Superstitions in a dramatic mood.*



mining party under the command of Miguel Peralta, Apache bands began a series of merciless raids. The Mexicans, unable to withstand the massive assault, fled frantically with their pack mules and their gold, attempting to reach the safety of the flatlands at the northwest end of the Superstition Range. They were cut off, so the story goes, and died virtually to the last man after a pathetic last stand in a steep box-canyon at the northwest end of the mountain.

After this massacre of 1848, the Indians held the mountains uncontested for

nearly 20 years, though a few adventurers reportedly found encouraging signs of gold during this period of Apache occupation. Several fanciful anecdotes relate to this time, with references to Weaver's Needle as a conspicuous landmark near the alleged gold strikes. For one improbable reason or another, none of these latter finders ever returned to file a claim.

Jacob Walzer appears in the story in the late 1860s after reportedly having worked for a time at the great Vulture Mine in Wickenburg. With a fellow

miner named Weiser, he made his way southeast towards Florence, Arizona, now the county seat of Pinal County. Somewhere along the way the two Germans are presumed to have found the fabled gold deposit, a strike of such incredible richness that milling was not required—the gold could be recovered by hand-crushing and sorting methods!

According to one account, the two partners worked their mine in peace until about 1879, when the unpredictable Apaches struck once more, this time killing Weiser. (Other sources intimate that

old Jacob murdered his partner, later placing the blame on the Indians.) Walzer managed to escape from the mountains after first carefully concealing all signs of the mine.

Crushed in spirit following the death of his partner, Walzer settled in Phoenix, returning to the gold mine only a few times to retrieve portions of the caches of selected ores which he and Weiser had accumulated during happier days. It is reported that when the old miner set out for the mountain, some 40 miles way, he was followed by hordes of Phoenicians bent on discovering the location of his celebrated mine. Somehow, the foxy Walzer invariably managed to elude his pursuers, and return to the city with a fresh supply of gold.

After his death in 1891, friends of old Jacob tried without success to follow the few vague hints and clues that he had given of the location of the great bonanza. Some accounts describe a map originally given to Walzer's housekeeper, but later stolen. Dozens of bogus copies of this "map" have been sold over the last half century, some for hundreds of dollars, some for lost lives.

With the unexplained killings in the decades after the Dutchman's death, the legend has come to include other fantastic details, such as an assertion that an Apache curse hangs on Superstition Mountain, causing death to overtake those who venture too close to the location of the lost gold. Some have contended that Apache tribesmen actually work the mine, but are careful to dispatch any outsider who ventures close to their operations.

I have spent much time in Arizona attempting to authenticate these legends. I have been through the files of the two Phoenix dailies, and have interviewed the coroner in Apache Junction, Judge Norman Teason. I have talked to mountain guides and wranglers, to local law-enforcement officers, and to members of the Sheriff's Posse of Pinal County. Further, I have been the length and breadth of the mountain area itself, both on horseback and afoot on seven different occasions.

Taking the various facets of the Dutchman tale in sequence, one might first ask whether the area was ever productive of gold. The answer is yes, for there are two formerly active mines within five miles of Apache Junction, the Mammoth and the Bluebell, which can be seen today. Neither is in the mountain area itself, however.

Did the "Dutchman," Jacob Walzer,

actually exist and did he have gold? Again yes, in both instances, though he probably had only small amounts of gold to augment his meager income during the last years of his life in Phoenix. Walzer, it will be recalled, had worked at the Vulture mine in Wickenburg and it is likely that he was obliged to leave his employment there in some haste because of the strong suspicion of the mine operators that he was "high grading" the better ore samples for his own purposes. It seems probable that when he eventually sold these pickings, he used the Superstition story as a blind to cover the actual facts. Walzer died poor, and it is hard to believe that he would not have patented any claim he had and thus lived the good life as did his fellow-immigrant, Henry Wickenburg.

What of the hundreds of murders? Who has been, or is now responsible for such wholesale slaughter? By careful searching, I can find proof of approximately 21 actual homicides, and of these there are about a half-dozen still unsolved. I could find no real evidence that anyone had been beheaded, though skeletal remains have in some instances been found widely scattered. It must be remembered that man does not have the desert to himself; the coyote, the skunk, the rat, and the mountain lion have large appetites and though they will not attack a living man, they most assuredly do not respect the dead.

In his recent book, *Hunting Lost Mines by Helicopter*, writer-adventurer Erle Stanley Gardner wrote that he had been informed of more than 350 unexplained deaths in the Superstitions, but some of these could have been due to exposure, accident or natural causes.

As for the Indians, there are no North American tribes, including the Apache groups, who appear to have engaged in gold mining. I can readily believe that the Peraltas had their troubles with the Apaches, but no lawman whom I have interviewed has the least suspicion that recent Superstition murders were committed by Indians.

Are the mountains then safe enough? Though I have never encountered any difficulty personally, I have met a few citizens in the back country who did not seem altogether saintly, and some had the unmistakable glint of madness in their eyes. The Superstition region is the only place, outside of a Hollywood sound stage, where I have seen prospectors actually wearing side arms or carrying rifles.

It is probable that most men who have come to grief in the mountain have been victims of the familiar hazards to be confronted in any remote desert mountain area; snakebite, exhaustion, sunstroke, coronary disease, thirst, or accidental injury. I could find no documented instance where a party of men or even just a two-some, has sustained gunshot wounds. Virtually all of the murder victims have either entered the area alone, or had become separated from their colleagues.

If ordinary caution is exercised, there should be small risk for a party of healthy and intelligent adults venturing into the region. Certainly the beauty of the countryside is unsurpassed and completely unspoiled. Traveling the canyon trails, you have the sensation of timelessness, of being in another, and happier, century. Even in a state celebrated for its spectacular views, it would be hard to find more impressive mountain scenery or more varied desert flora.

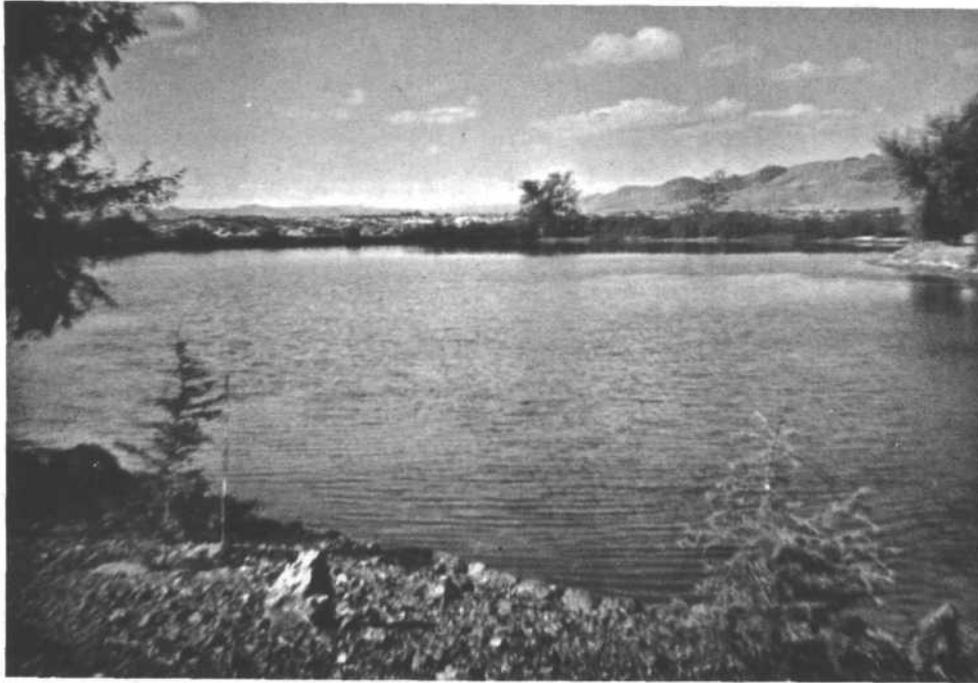
By any standard, the ideal method of seeing the inner canyons of Superstition is on horseback, accompanied by guides from nearby Apache Junction. Since no form of motorized transport is permitted in the Wilderness Area, the choice is either to walk or ride a horse. I have tried both, and I vote for the saddle rather than the boots, though either way one may acquire blisters one place or another.

There are only two feasible routes leading into the inner reaches of the mountain. The southeast approach via well-marked trail is known as the "Don's Route" and involves a fairly steep climb for about three miles. At the northwest end of the range a habitation known as First Water Ranch marks the start of an easy trail that winds for approximately seven miles up to the Needle. At the western slope of this imposing spire is a permanent spring and a pretty glade suitable for either camping or a lunch stop.

The latter trip is an easy and thoroughly pleasant one by horseback, and can be completed, in and out, in one day. It is the preferred route, in my estimation, for women and older children, providing of course they are able to sit a horse. Overnight forays and hiking away from the marked trail is definitely man's work, and for those sound in lung and leg.

However you go, the trip is worthwhile. And, in spite of evidence which suggests the Old Dutchman was a high-grader rather than the possessor of a secret mine, there's enough doubt to take a chance on finding it yourself. Who knows? You might stumble on one even the Old Dutchman didn't find! □

*If you've always dreamed of your own desert lake, go to*



## *the strange desert world of Silver Valley*

*By Betty L. Ryker*

THE WORD "desert" is defined as "an arid, barren tract incapable of supporting life without an artificial water supply." Silver Valley, at Newberry in Southern California, resembles a desert. Its terrain consists of sand, volcanic ash, dry lakes, a lava flow, mesquite and tumbleweeds. Yet its water-table lies only from six to sixty feet underground. This phenomenon was known to primitive Indians some 20,000 years ago and even in historic times the area was named "Water" when the Iron Horse wormed its way West. Later it was renamed Newberry, but it is still a railroad water stop.

No one really knows why this small valley, 80 square miles, boasts such an abundance of water. Some say it's the Bentonite clay which forms a deep, wide bowl underneath and contains the runoff of centuries of rains from surrounding mountains, along with natural springs. That the Mojave River goes underground near Barstow, 18 miles west, and continues throughout the area, could also account for the natural reservoir.

During a recent three-day exploration

of this region I heard of caves in the rugged south rim of the Newberry Mountains. They had been used by prehistoric Indians who left artifacts. Bones of the Giant Condor and small three-toed horse had also been found. Directions to these caves were confusing and, aware of a maze of little canyons flowing into larger ones, I knew my chances of finding it alone were slim.

At my headquarters, the Sidewinder Cafe on Highway 66, I learned that the closest route was to leave my car at Echo Ranch and head straight up the wide mouth of the canyon afoot. This couldn't be missed, I was assured, as it was the only opening. When I asked if Echo Ranch was occupied, a gentleman sitting down the counter sort of smiled and said he thought it was. There was only one person living at the ranch at present—a caretaker—himself. And he would be happy to direct me toward the mountain.

With such an auspicious beginning, my guides, Jack Hutchison and his big dog, Prance, led me to the wide canyon. Jack had been there years ago, so had a vague idea of its location. But time and erosion change many things, even light and

shadows make a difference and the light this morning was diffused with gathering clouds. We followed washes, cluttered with boulders, and many times Prance chose the better path for us to follow. But we did take one wrong turn into a blind canyon where crumbling shale provided little or no footholds and we had to descend by the seat of our pants.

We were rewarded around the next outcropping where a great rock guarded the entrance to a cave. Eons ago it had been the facing of the cave, but some earth movement evidently created a schism and this piece of mountain now leaned precariously over our trail. From the other side, I touched it, expecting it to go crashing down. But it didn't.

The cave itself was not big. It intruded into the mountain some 25 or 30 feet, growing smaller as it receded, and the passageway circled around to return to the front on a higher level of flooring. The ceiling was black with the smoke of ancient campfires. Outside we found remnants of excavation materials used by archeological expeditions, so the cave had been explored before.

As we descended the alluvial fan that

*First view as you come upon cave.*



spewed from the canyon's entrance, winds whistled and howled like irate spirits. Then it started to rain. I wondered if the wrath of those primitive spirits had been evoked at our disturbance of their resting place.

Back at my headquarters I learned

from Mrs. Ruth Armstrong, an authority on rocks and gemstones in the area, of lava bombs to be found around the base of the Pisgah Crater, to the east. This extinct volcano blew its top at late as 700 years ago and is responsible for the layer of dry "black top" called lava flow. This

spooky mount, rising mesa-like from the desert floor, is not distinguishable as such until it is viewed from nearby. Then, its blackened, charred exterior reflects the violence and tragedy of an unexpected eruption. A locked gate discourages motorists from driving up to it, but its empty silhouette contributes much to the timeless mood of this strange desert with its vast underground of water stored in a natural sealer of Bentonite.

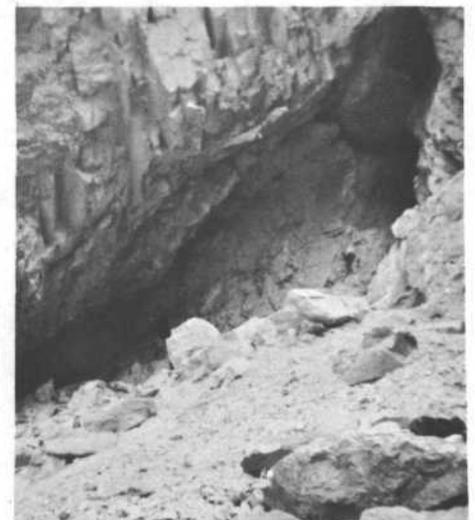
With the inception of the modern-day bulldozer, the properties of soil in this region have been utilized to the fullest. Within a few short hours, an acre-sized lake can be scooped out and lined with its own non-absorbent clay. Then a single well drilled to a depth of 100 or 150 feet assures an unlimited supply of fresh spring water. The cost of an acre lake is little more than that of a swimming pool!

Depending upon a person's particular tastes, each may realize what he wants here. If you're a fisherman, bluegill, catfish, bass and trout thrive in these man-made desert lakes. If more action is desired, a lake can be shaped for water-skiing, boating, sailing or water paddling. Or, if you just want to get away from it all, you can create an island retreat and stock it with crocodiles! Already some 35 to 50 lakes have been dug, or are in the process, but the rolling, dune-like desert hides these real-life mirages and unless you're equipped with a sand buggy, you may miss most of them.

Hal Burdick, one of the newer pioneers, owns a nearly five-acre lake stocked with fish and planted with luxu-



*Silver Valley seen from Newberry Mountains. Cady Range at right.*



*Passageway inside cave circles and returns to upper level at right.*

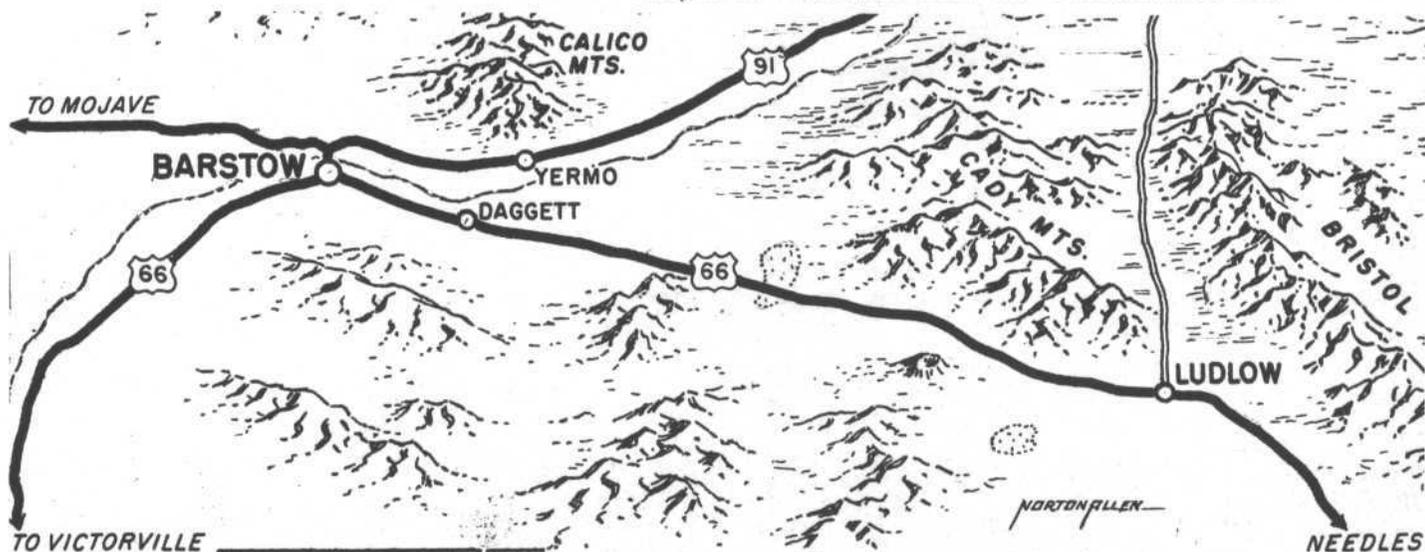
riant foliage. He is now completing the landscaping of another lake with two islands joined by a Japanese rainbow bridge. Another, Lake Loreen (DESERT, Nov. '62), is a more commercial venture of 34 acres. Operated by Gus and Loreen Raigosa, the public can enjoy its fish-filled lagoons and swimming holes, boating or just plain picnicking. And for the gourmet, there is a little Polynesian restaurant where food rivals that of Bali Hai, on San Diego's Shelter Island, which inspired this place.

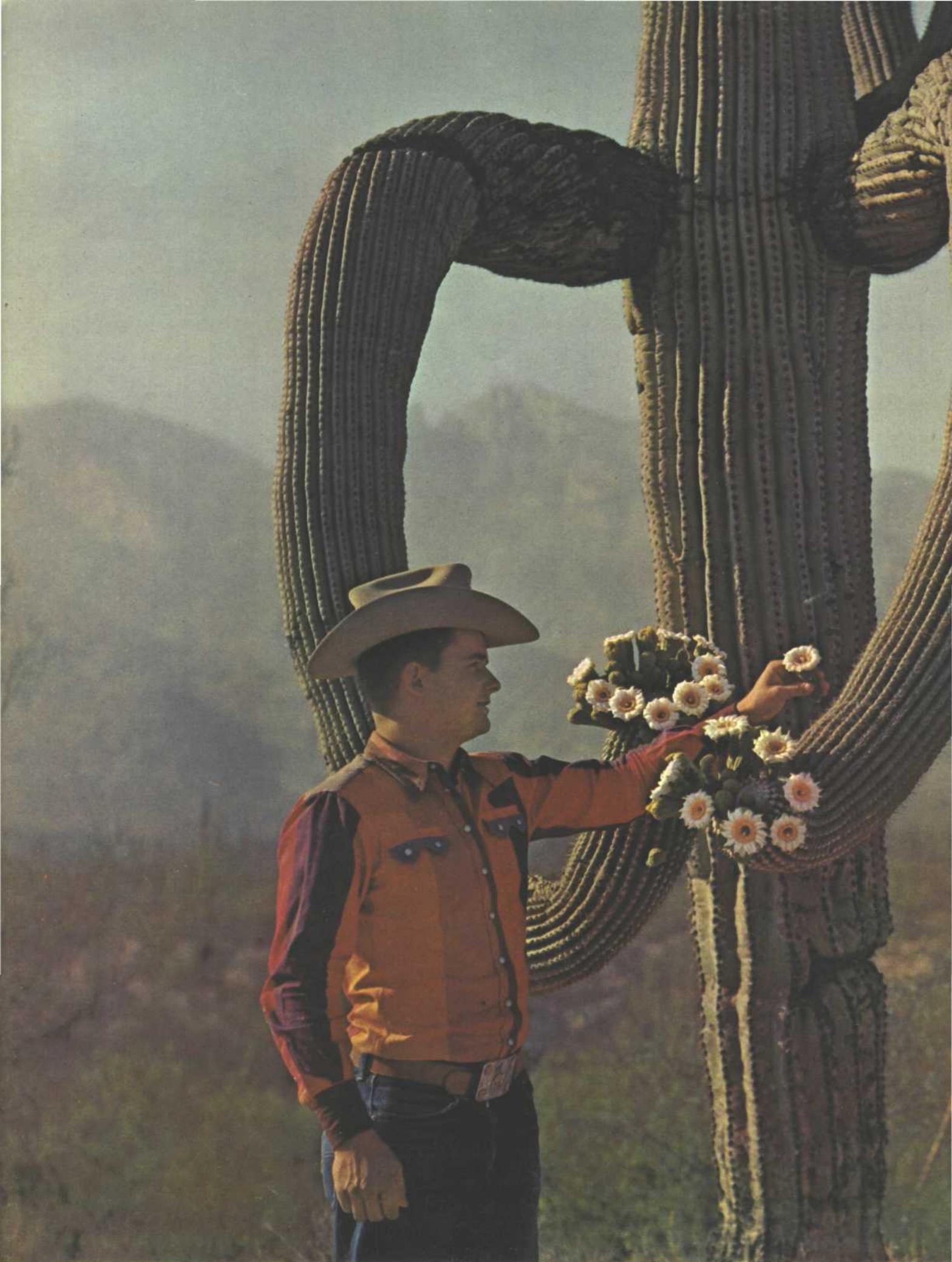
On the eastern edge of the valley is the long, shallow basin of Troy Dry Lake. One of these days a far-sighted developer will reconvert this to its original state, making a wonderland of homes and recreation areas against the purple and beige Cady Range which slopes up from its shoreline. That this was once full and lush is evidenced by arrowheads and artifacts, probably of my primitive Indians who frequented the cave. But it was also a more recent battleground. In the mid-1800s, soldiers drilled at old Fort Cady whose ruins lay to the north. This outpost was one of the worst assignments a soldier could have and desertions were many despite its convenience and protection for more than 2,000 covered wagons a year. It was also a shipping point for the gold mines of Alvord, until it was abandoned in 1870.

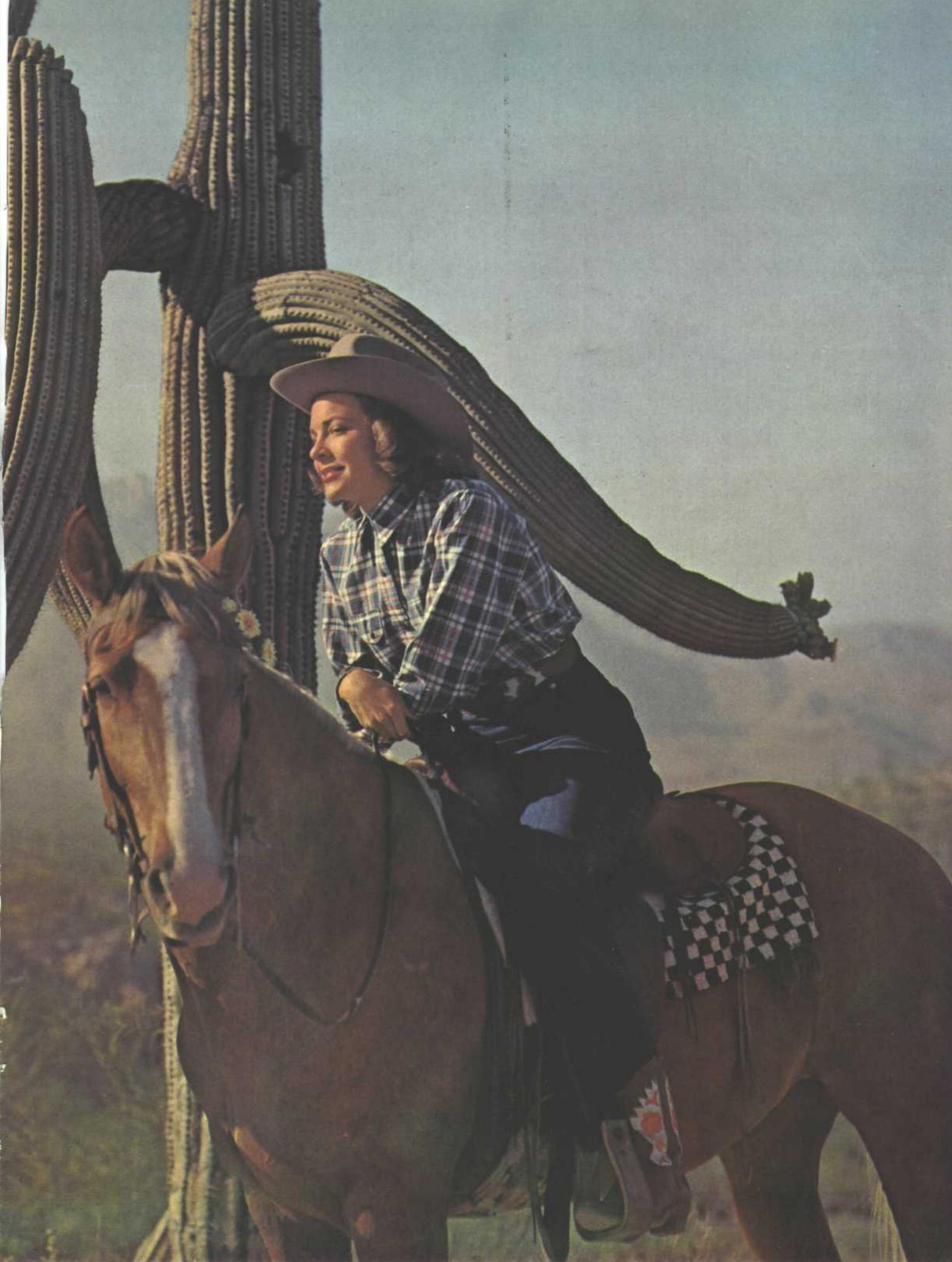
Even in modern dress, Silver Valley and its neighboring communities still breathe the days of old. The revived ghost town of Calico brings western-minded tourists into the area and although Barstow has assumed a facade of shy sophistication, ranchers still come to market wearing broad-brimmed hats and spurs on their boots.



□ An old photo of Pisgab Crater taken before it was fenced. You may still climb its steep sides, however, and collect lava bombs around its base.





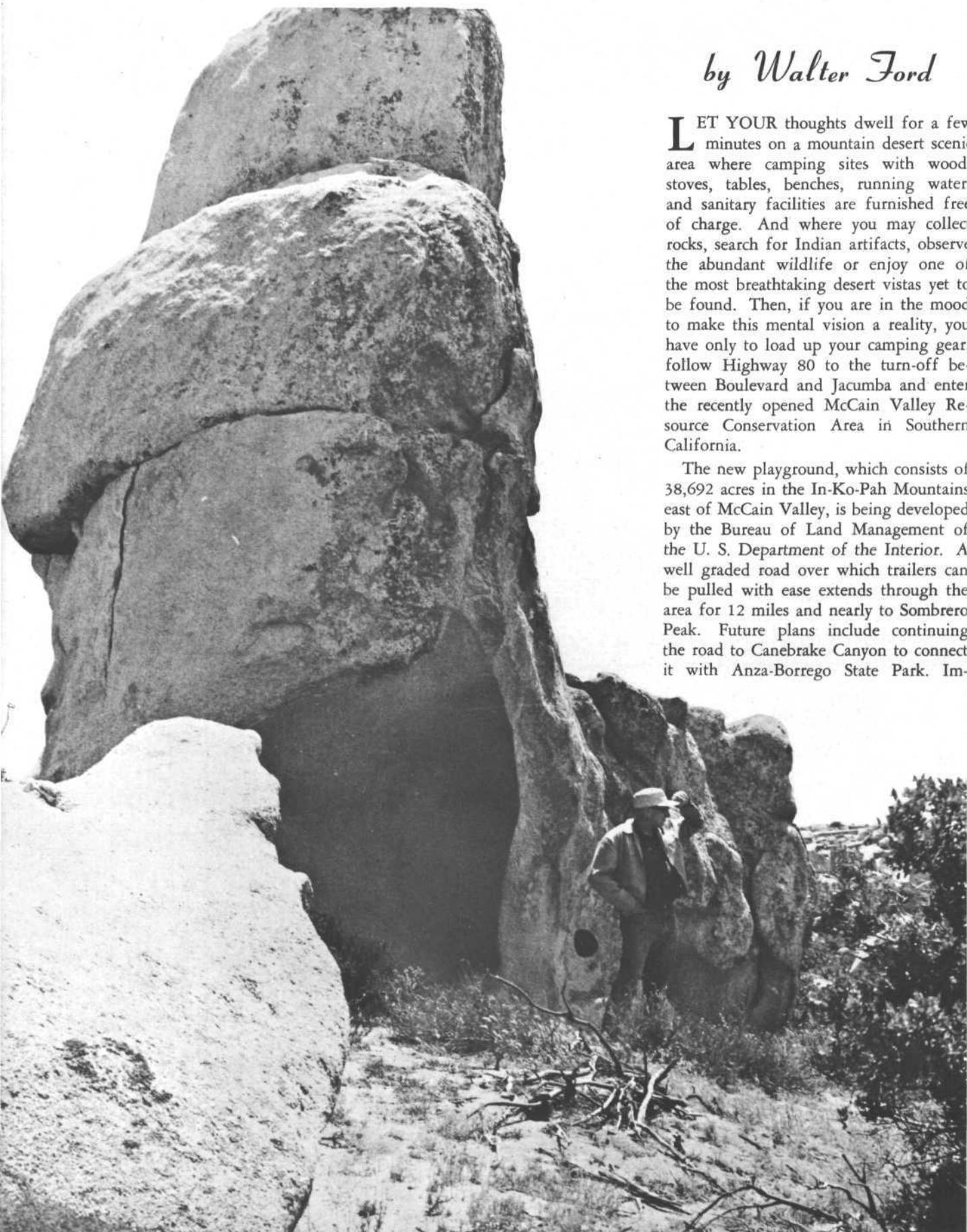


*after reading this article, you'll want to be the first to visit the*

*by Walter Ford*

**L**ET YOUR thoughts dwell for a few minutes on a mountain desert scenic area where camping sites with wood, stoves, tables, benches, running water, and sanitary facilities are furnished free of charge. And where you may collect rocks, search for Indian artifacts, observe the abundant wildlife or enjoy one of the most breathtaking desert vistas yet to be found. Then, if you are in the mood to make this mental vision a reality, you have only to load up your camping gear, follow Highway 80 to the turn-off between Boulevard and Jacumba and enter the recently opened McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area in Southern California.

The new playground, which consists of 38,692 acres in the In-Ko-Pah Mountains east of McCain Valley, is being developed by the Bureau of Land Management of the U. S. Department of the Interior. A well graded road over which trailers can be pulled with ease extends through the area for 12 miles and nearly to Sombrero Peak. Future plans include continuing the road to Canebrake Canyon to connect it with Anza-Borrego State Park. Im-



# NEW DESERT MOUNTAIN PLAYGROUND

proved campsites at Lark Canyon, White Arrow, and Cottonwood provide at present 25 camping spaces. These campsites are spaced at intervals along the west side of the access road and are plainly marked with signs. About four miles beyond the Lark Canyon site there is access to an observation point from which you can get a view of the whole Carrizo Badland area and on clear days, see the Salton Sea glistening in the sun some 50 miles away.

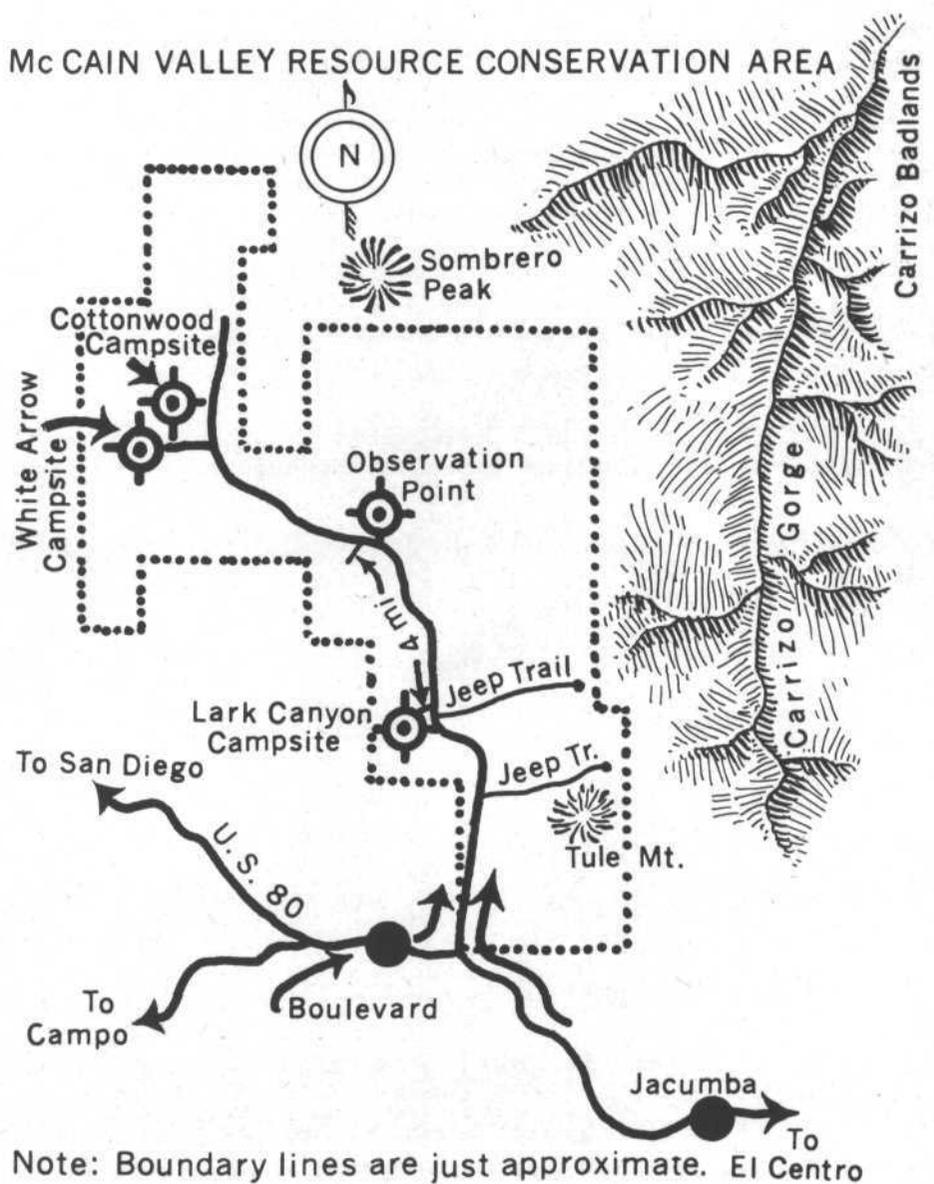
The McCain, for which the valley was named, played an important part in the early history and development of that section of San Diego County. George McCain, the first of the family to settle in the region, arrived on August 18, 1868. The first shelter was built with tules and willow poles, and from that humble beginning one of the largest cattle spreads in San Diego County was developed, covering more than 40,000 acres. From the time of their arrival the McCains waged a continuing battle with Indians, white renegades, and weather. In her book, *Memories of the Early Settlements of Dulzura, Potrero, and Campo*, the late Ella McCain tells about the killing of one of the McCain boys by Indians, storms which left four feet of snow on the ground, and sub-freezing temperatures in which much of their livestock perished.

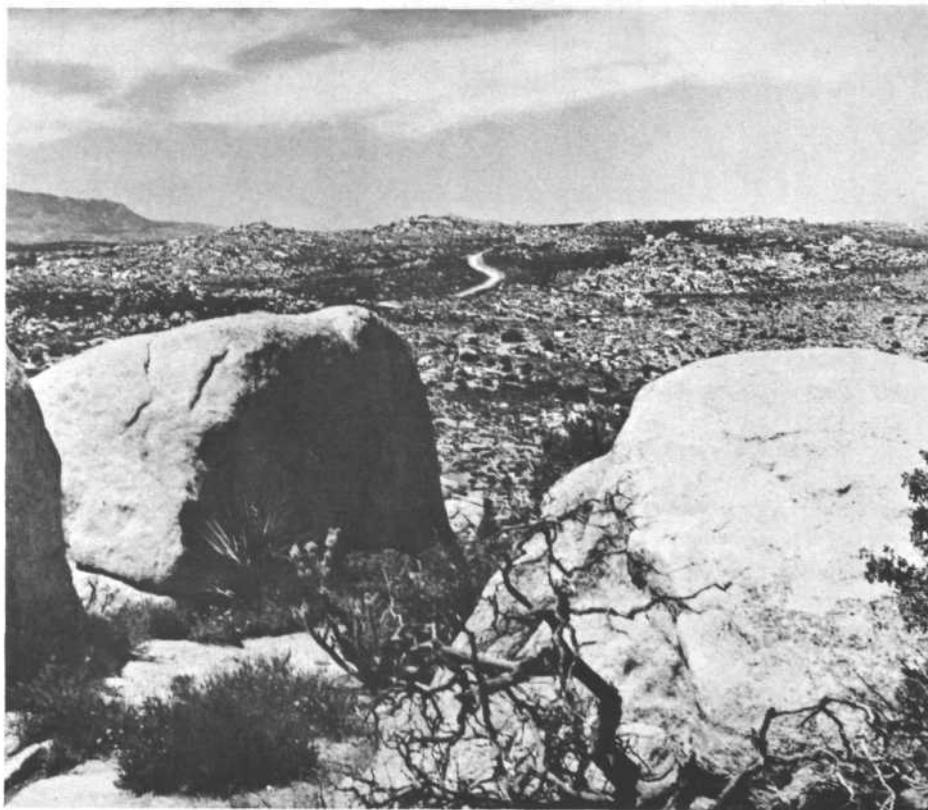
One half mile beyond the entrance to the new playground an unimproved road leads eastward toward Tule Mountain and terminates on a rocky ridge overlooking Carrizo Gorge. Geological Survey and auto road maps show a "Sacatone Spring" near the end of the road and I have had more than a casual interest in springs with that name ever since I did a series of stories on old-time desert watering places for *DESERT Magazine* about 10 years ago. Early maps showed a Sacatone Spring on the Mojave Desert near Ivanpah and another of the same name near Arroya Salada, west of Salton Sea, but I was never able to locate either spring. On my first trip to the Tule Mountain section I was curious to see if its Sacatone Spring was going to be as elusive as the others. It was. Ed Green, regional manager for the State Department of Fish and Game told me later that the spring is improperly located on

maps, but that it could be found in a drainage several hundred yards from the edge of the ridge. Sometime I'll make the trip down the slope just to convince myself that there is really a Sacatone Spring.

Our unsuccessful search for Sacatone Spring was not entirely wasted effort. The attempt to locate it led us to the top of a ridge where we were rewarded with an unexpected view of the S.D.A. & E. railroad tracks winding around the side of Carrizo Gorge less than two miles

away. Directly ahead was the highest wooden railroad trestle in the world, one of the 16 tunnels in the gorge, and a car on a siding. Often dubbed, "the railroad that couldn't be built," the S.D.A. & E. was considered one of the outstanding railroad construction jobs of its time. Claiming equal attention was the spectacular beauty of the route through Carrizo Gorge, which, unfortunately, passed from reach of the traveling public when passenger service was suspended in July, 1951.





Had we been aware of the events occurring across the two-mile stretch to the railroad, we could have had ringside seats to one of the most bizarre dramas ever enacted on the desert. A few days previously 11 freight cars were derailed, spilling their contents over the side of

the 1,000 foot gorge. Part of the cargo was 72,000 cans of beer. When the word got out, thirsty adventurers descended upon the scene like a swarm of hungry locusts on a field of clover. They came on foot, on motorcycles, and in Jeeps. One was even seen pushing a wheelbarrow

along the tracks. A few of the more hardy ones tried a backdoor approach by making their way through Carrizo wash from the valley floor. One motorcycle rider entered a tunnel only to bound out a few minutes later with an onrushing diesel engine close behind. A frantic Jeep driver had a brush with disaster when he backed out of a tunnel with just a foot clearance as a train thundered by. Some of the thirsty brigade managed to get their spoil out intact, while others found railroad guards and deputies waiting to charge them with trespassing and theft, and—perhaps the cruelest blow of all—to confiscate their hard-earned plunder.

Much of the terrain of the new recreational area is covered with granite boulders, some of which are 50 or more feet high. Smoke blackened recesses and caves among the boulders indicate occupation by the long vanished Diegueno Indians, who are considered by archeologists to have been descendants of the Yuman tribe which once lived along the shores of ancient Lake Cahuilla. Mortars for grinding seeds and acorns are numerous and a sharp pair of eyes will often reward their owner with a perfect arrow point, or perhaps an earthen utensil in some dark recess. The term "Diggers" has often been applied in a derogatory sense to these ancient inhabitants because of their custom of digging for roots and plants, which they used for food. However, their artistry of design



*There are some who believe the black gold nuggets of Pegleg's might be found in this area. Gold finds were reported during building of the S.D.A. & E. railroad tracks which wind around the top of Carrizo Gorge.*

as depicted in their baskets and feathered costumes, and the inventiveness displayed in the making of utensils and tools for daily living, indicates that their culture was equal if not above other contemporary tribes.

A small section of the McCain Valley recreational project has been set aside for mining operations which are confined mainly to quartz, tungsten, feldspar, and beryl. Specimens of beryl weighing several hundred pounds have been reported from a mine on the slope of Tule Mountain. While there are no records of successful gold mining within the area, Harry Phillips, a mining engineer of El Cajon (DESERT, Aug-Sept. '65), told me recently that during the construction of the S. D. A. & E. railroad through Carrizo Gorge one of the engineers on a work train found enough gold specimens to fill a cigar box. Since many present-day followers of Pegleg Smith's trail believe that the Carrizo section holds the secret of his fabulous find, Harry Phillip's story may add an additional note of assurance to their beliefs. When we consider that most of the drainage from Carrizo Gorge flows through the Carrizo Badlands, it requires little imagination to visualize rich outcrops, high upon the ridges or slopes, that could well be the source of Pegleg's lost gold.

Campfire permits are required for open fires in the McCain Valley Conservation Area and campers entering from the west may obtain them from the State Division of Forestry at La Mesa or Descanso. The nearest ranger station for those coming from the east is at Campo, about 13 miles west of the recreation area entrance. The ranger who patrols the McCain Valley section works out of the Campo station, so you may be able to avoid going the extra distance by phoning from Jacumba learn the time of his next trip, when you may obtain your fire permit.

The rules which govern visitors to the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area are outlined in a brochure which may be obtained from the Bureau of Land Management, Riverside, California, and are few in number. They deal mainly with fireprevention and campsite cleanliness regulations which conscientious campers usually follow without reminders. Campers and visitors are advised not to trespass upon mining properties and privately owned land in the recreational area. These are usually posted or fenced. That just about sums up the rules and regulations, except the last one on the list and perhaps the easiest to follow. It states, simply, "Enjoy yourself." □

## MOCCASINS

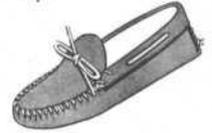
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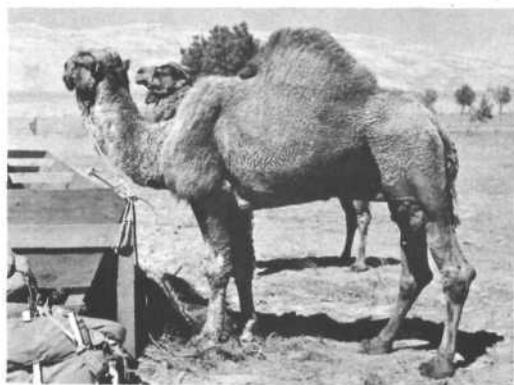
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# The Art of Desert Survival

by Freddie Harris



*The camel can go a week or so without food or water. It does this with the help of its distinctive hump. The hump contains fat. If the camel is forced to do without water, the fat breaks down and furnishes nourishment. This process releases hydrogen which combines with oxygen in the camel's breath to form water. For every pound of fat, the camel receives about one pound of water.*



*The mesquite sends roots down 100 feet or more to reach a permanent source of water. Sand may smother other desert plants, but not the mesquite. It simply sends up new branches to keep above ground. Great dunes build up around mesquite trees in this manner.*

*The small kit fox has huge ears that can detect the faint scurrying of rats and other small animals, which are its prey.*



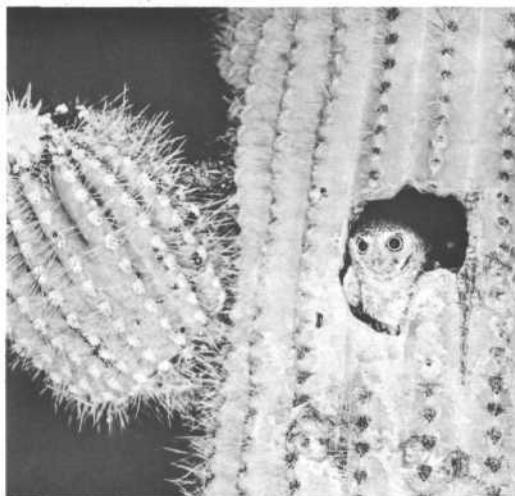
*Cactus plants are perfectly adapted to the desert. Their cylindrical shapes and their lack of leaves reduce moisture loss by exposing less area to the sun. The spiny surfaces discourage hungry animals. Some cacti are pleated, like an accordion, so they may expand when they drink water and shrink as the water is used. Their roots are shallow, but wide-spread, since most water during rare desert rains stays on the surface of the ground.*



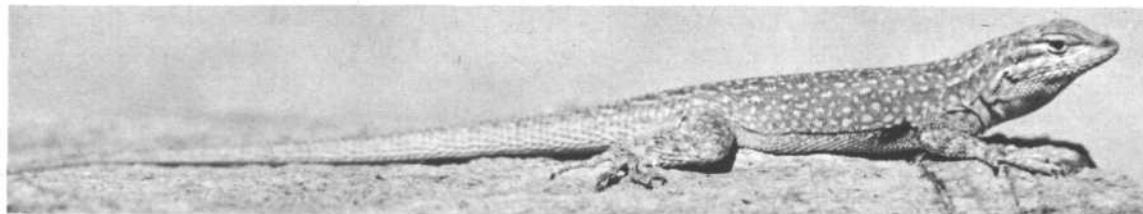
The kangaroo rat eats only seeds and occasional green vegetation, which require less cooling for the digestive process than a meat diet. During the heat of day, it retreats to its burrow, which it seals off with a plug of dirt. The rat's own respiration then keeps the burrow cool and moist.



Owls escape desert heat by pecking holes in the sides of large cactus plants. The inside of the nest dries out to form a hard shell. This reduces the amount of moisture that evaporates through the hole—a process by which the plant protects itself from dehydration.



The fringe-toed lizard hides from its enemies by plunging out of sight in loose sand. Its peculiar breathing system makes it possible to breath without inhaling sand.



The tortoise, a cold blooded reptile, has no built-in thermostat to regulate his temperature during extremes of heat and cold. Therefore, nature has enabled him to hibernate underground for long periods during cold winter months or hot summer days. When he comes forth in the Springtime, his hard shell protects him from predators who move faster than he does. What can we learn from him? Well, when there's trouble, duck!



The pack rat protects its burrow from raids by predators by covering the entrance with piles of sharp-spined cholla cactus joints.



# The Treasure of Tumacacori

**D**URING THE 18th Century tales of fantastic treasures were not uncommon in Southern Arizona. Early pioneers and prospectors spoke often of lost missions, Spanish gold and hidden mines. They combed the hills searching for the mine with the iron door, or the mine sealed by neatly stacked rocks, or the mine whose door had a copper handle.

The treasure reputed to be the richest of them all, however, was the treasure of the Tumacacori Mission. Early prospectors told the story that whoever found this cache would practically own Arizona.

It was not until sometime after 1880 that people in southern Arizona began to realize just how fantastically rich this treasure was. What they had believed to be several different treasures were now all considered a part of Tumacacori.

For more than 150 years Spaniards, and then Americans, tried to wrestle the secret of the Tumacacori treasure from the rugged mountains south of Tucson, Arizona. Searches have been mostly concentrated to the east of the Santa Cruz River around San Cayetano, a part of the Coronado Mountains. It wasn't until the mid-1880s that someone searched elsewhere.

This someone was a foreigner. He came to Tucson professing to know the whereabouts of the treasure. He openly claimed to possess certain Spanish church records revealing the location of "2,650 mule loads of silver and 905 loads of gold."

According to an account in a Tucson newspaper dated about this time, the foreigner stayed in town only long enough to acquire supplies for a couple of weeks in the mountains and to purchase several mules on which to pack the treasure from its hiding place. When he left Tucson, according to the same newspaper account, he went as far south as Tubac and there, instead of turning east as all other treasure hunters had before him, he turned west and entered the unfriendly Tumacacori Mountains.

Several weeks later he spent an evening with two prospectors somewhere on the trail north of Tubac. After a little time around the camp fire and the warming influence of a generous meal, he proudly



*Sudden rainstorms make treasure hunting in the Tumacacori Mountains dangerous as flash floods carry away everything in their paths.*

showed his host what was later estimated to be "about 200 pounds of gold."

The prospectors related to authorities in Tucson that the foreigner's mules were laden with gold and claimed the foreigner told them that he was going to Tucson to sell the gold and then return for another load.

But he never reached Tucson. The two prospectors were the last known persons to ever see the foreigner.

Copies of Church records brought from Spain by the foreigner showed up again a few years later in the hands of a treasure seeker from the East. This character became a familiar sight in southern Arizona for several years. He lived in an old shack deep in the Coronado Mountains, east of Tubac, and came to town only when he needed supplies. Then, like the foreigner, he disappeared. Some say he found part of the treasure; others insist he grew tired of his long, lonely search and returned to the East.

In 1910 seven Mexicans joyously rode into Tucson after wagons, burros and supplies. They said they had found the

Tumacacori treasure. They paid for their purchases with small gold bars and triumphantly left Tucson, never to be heard of again.

During the 1930s an engineer came into possession of the old Spanish Church records and set out to try his luck. Before entering the mountains, he made arrangements to be met by a friend on a certain day of each week at a certain spot. At the end of the third week, he returned to the meeting place laden with bags of fantastically rich gold ore. The bags were made of deer skin, old and brittle. He told his friend there were thousands more where these came from and sent his friend to a nearby ranch to get mules to haul out the gold.

The engineer was never seen again.

Like the others, the only thing he left behind was a copy of the ancient Church records. Here is part of one translated version:

*Redotero—Year of 1598 to 1658 this redotero belonged to Tumacacori. The mine of the Tumacacori, named the virgin of Guadalupe, is one league south*

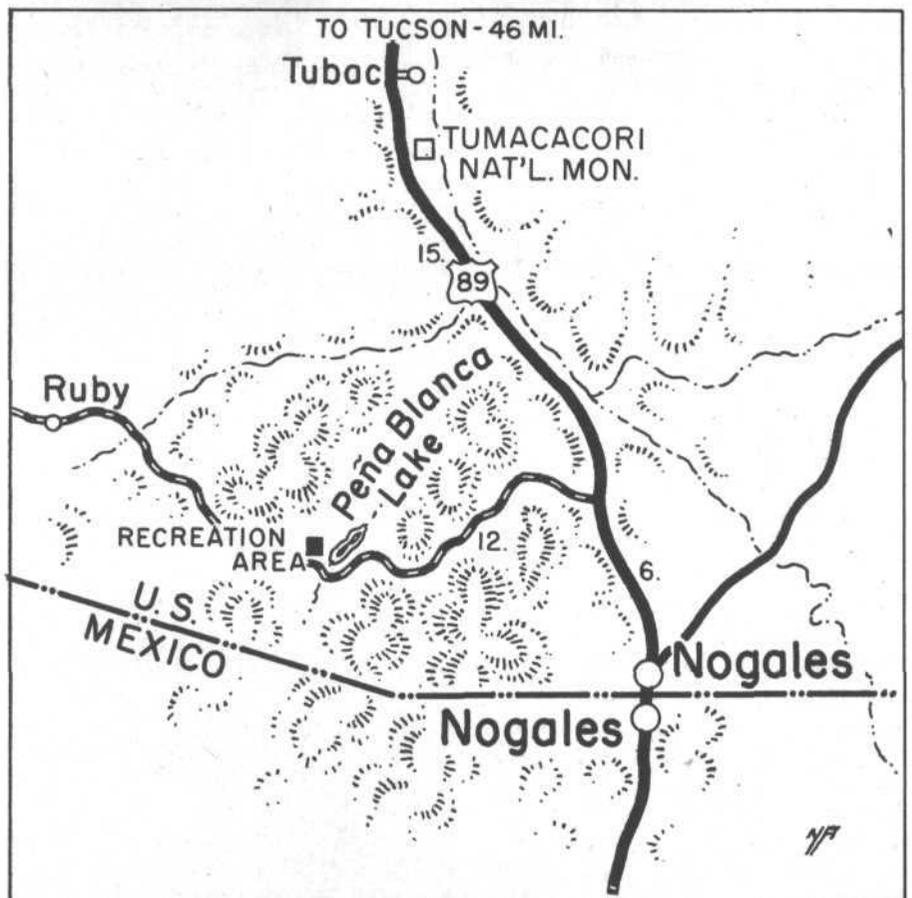
by Allan L. Pearce

from the main door of the Mission and from the water of the San Romain. To your left you measure one Kilometer and 40 varas to the north. About 1,800 varas before you get to the mine there is a black rock with CCD-TD carved underneath the rock. Fifty varas from the cross of the Christ is the treasure. There were two knolls which were blown up on the mine and without further help powder was put between the cracks of the rocks, leaving no trace.

There is a patio that measures 50 square yards and in this place is the treasure of our mission. In the middle of the patio is the mouth of the mine, inside and out is the treasure. There are 2,650 loads of stamped silver and 905 loads of gold. The gold was brought from the Sierra of Guachapa.

The records continue in the same manner to reveal the whereabouts of four additional mines, all unbelievably rich.

This is the treasure which has excited



M200, an inscription found near the entrance to Jenkin's mine.



the adventurous souls of men for nearly 300 years. In view of the number of seekers why hasn't it been found? With directions contained in the Church records it would seem that a reasonably intelligent person would need only begin at the mission and start picking up gold.

This is the problem. Where is the mission? The foreigner and the engineer searched in the Tumacacori Mountains to the west of the Santa Cruz River. Everyone else has combed the San Cayetano Mountains to the east of the Santa Cruz River.

The Easterner probably used the ruins of the Tumacacori Mission now standing near Tubac as a starting point. Before the government made this mission near Tubac a national monument, gold hunters had literally torn it to pieces. They had ripped up the floors, chopped the plaster from the walls and dug deep holes all over the patio.

The mistake these men made was in simple arithmetic. There were two Tumacacori Missions. The one now standing was founded by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino in the late 17th Century. The Church records revealing the whereabouts of the treasure (see above) were dated in the mid-17th Century, almost 40 years earlier.

The fact that there were two missions is

substantiated by the use of two names in ancient stories told by the Indians. They referred to the lower Mission, the one now standing, as Tumacacori de Cayetano and the upper Mission as Tumacacori de Cerrita; the first being located near the San Cayetano Mountain and the second near the Cerrito Mountain.

The first mission, the one which hides the secret of the treasure, is believed to be located several miles west of the Santa Cruz River and further north.

A considerable amount of treasure has been found in this area. Early prospectors, the foreigner in particular, and even modern hunters have found golden candlesticks, silver crosses, bullion and several gold bars bearing the Jesuit stamp. In 1960 a javelina hunter stumbled across a partially buried mine which is now believed to have been one of the Jesuit mines. This mine is currently producing silver in large quantities.

Some treasure hunters believe Father Kino spent much of his time looking for this treasure. In letters to Spain he wrote of the dangerous trips from the Soynota Mission—over 100 miles to the west—through the Tumacacori Mountains to the Tumacacori mission. Such a trip would carry him into some of the most rugged mountains in southern Arizona and would take longer than the more popular route southeast from Soynota and then northwest. Most travelers avoided this unfriendly chain of mountains with its

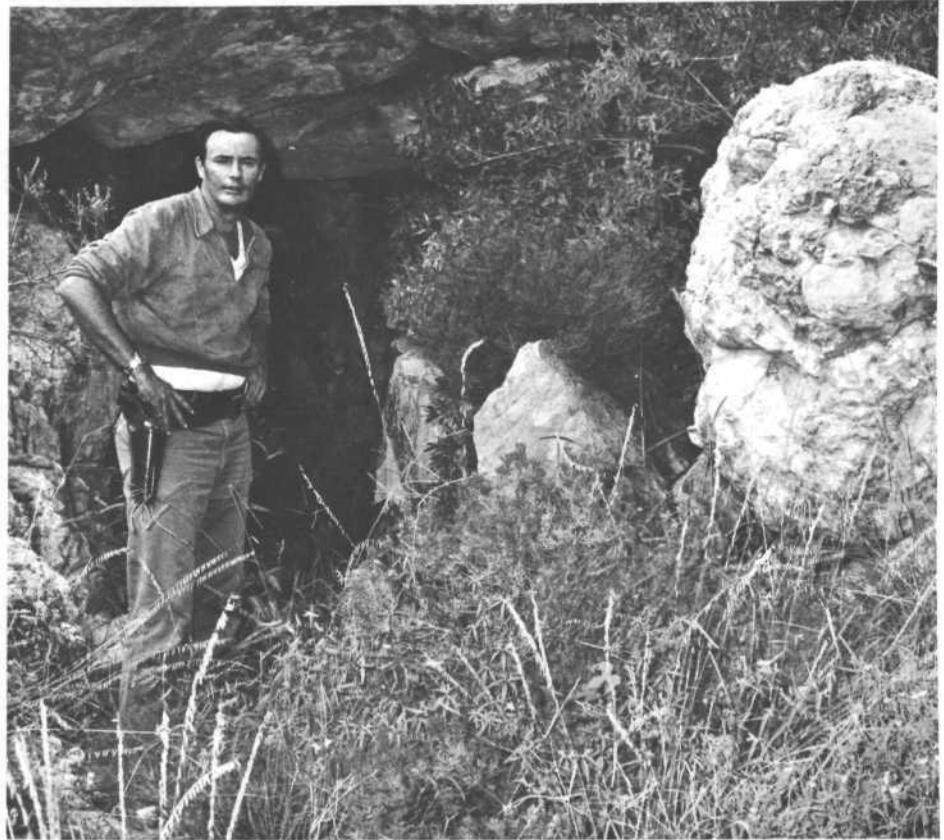


*Historic photo of present Tumacacori Mission.*

steep peaks and treacherous cliffs. It was, and still is, barren of life and vegetation. It lacks water, except during the rainy season when heavy rains cause dangerous flash floods.

If these mountains were so treacherous and there were no Indians living in them whom Father Kino could convert, why did he travel through this area? The answer might be a simple one. Church records, which reveal the location of the five Jesuit mines, states that the mines

*Some seekers look for an explanation in prehistoric petroglyphs they refer to as "Spanish hieroglyphics." They should know better!*



are located in a straight line due south of the mission. This straight line would lead directly through the mountains that Father Kino traveled.

Was he looking for the mine? Tales told by Papago Indians still living in the area claim he was. They say the padre spent much of his time looking for the lost treasure of Tumacacori.

Why?

Father Kino discovered several mines of his own during the time he was founding a series of approximately 30 missions throughout northern Mexico and southern Arizona. These mines, according to legend, were fabulously rich. If such were true, why did he spend so much time looking for the Tumacacori treasure?

The only possible answer is because the father knew what was in those mines; he knew that a treasure worthy of a king's ransom had been hidden somewhere by earlier Jesuits. The same problem plagued him, however, that later plagued others. He couldn't find the first Tumacacori mission!

This mission could have been destroyed by Indians, or by soldiers looking for treasure, or have been washed away in floods.

All of this, of course, is speculation, but the belief that Father Kino never found the treasure is supported by the fact that he made no mention of it in his letters to Spain.

This type of reasoning brings up an important question: If Father Kino couldn't find the treasure 40 years after it was buried, what chance has a fortune hunter 300 years later?

There must be a clue no one has deciphered except the foreigner who brought the Church records to Arizona. Not knowing this clue, today's treasure hunter still has something working for him. According to Church records, all five mines lay in a straight line due south of the Mission: "You continue in the same direction to the south. From here there is one stream that leads out of the river Santa Cruz. About three leagues from the mine of our Lady of Guadalupe is one mine by the name of Los Janos, towards the south . . . from the mine of the Purima Concepcion to the mine of our Lady of Guadalupe, there are three leagues. About halfway, in the same direction is the mine named Los Opates." If the mine found by the javelina hunter in 1960 is actually one of the hidden Jesuit mines—there are reasons to believe it is—you need only go directly north to find the other mines.

Jerry Jenkins, a part-time treasure hunter, advanced this theory two years ago and, surprisingly, after combing the mountains from the border to the northern fringes of the Tumacacori Mountains, he found a mine which might be one

of the mines mentioned in the church records. This mine is adjacent to the mountain believed to be the one referred to in Church records as Guachapa. It is a tall peak almost directly west of the present Tumacacori mission and directly south of where the first mission is now believed to have been. The mine is full of water and, according to Jenkins, it would be impossible to pump the water out because it is internally fed by a spring coming from somewhere within the mountain.

This writer accompanied Jenkins to the site and as we were walking to the mine, he discovered a huge boulder, partially buried, with the inscription, "M200." Just what that means, we don't know.

The mine found by the hunter lies on the Arizona-Mexico border a few miles west of Nogales. If a line is drawn straight north through the Tumacacori Mountains to the Cerro Ruido, where the mission is believed to be, this line would intersect the mine found by Jenkins. Furthermore, the water in the mine escapes down the side of the mountain and becomes a part of a "stream that leads out to the river Santa Cruz."

In the company of this writer, Jenkins has followed the directions given in the Church records from the site where the early mission is believed to have been and wound up within 100 yards of the mine he found. The inscription "M200" is less than 50 yards from where the inscription "CCD-TD" is supposed to be.

Jenkins believes that if he could continue following the directions from the mine he found, he would eventually come close to another mine mentioned in the records. He's convinced that the discovery of one more mine will unravel the entire secret.

"But I'm only a spare time treasure hunter," he complained. "I don't have time to follow this thing through and from the rate people are starting to explore the desert, I'll probably be too late."



"HE WANTS TO KNOW IF WE HAVE ANYTHING FOR BURNED FINGERS."

Nothing could be closer to the truth. In recent years, since the discovery of the silver mine on the border and particularly since Jenkins found his mine, treasure hunters have been pouring into Tubac by the hundreds. Residents of this little village claim that the number of treasure seekers have increased several hundred per cent. They say that the law of average indicates that someone must soon find another mine, if only by accident. Perhaps it will be the mine which will "buy Arizona for the owner." □

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# The Road to Old Socorro

by  
Edward  
Orr



**T**HE BAYING of hound dogs is not a sound you would expect to hear in Baja California, but then the Meling Ranch is not an ordinary place.

Located about 160 miles south of the border, the ranch lies protected from the main road by 34 miles of dirt road through mountains that belong to the moon. If you are hardy and have a 4-wheel drive truck the trip is no problem. If you want to try it in a passenger automobile, carry a rabbit's foot in each pocket and tow a trailer full of spare parts. Or, you can fly down and land on the excellent strip just east of the ranch minutes after your take-off in the states. Any way you go, the trip is worth it.

My family and I decided the road to the ranch was one of the few in Baja we had not explored and for us that is reason enough to start packing. We loaded our Power Wagon, called the boss and told him we expected a severe attack of flu on the following Monday, and pointed the "Beast" south. We rolled through the familiar check points: Tijuana, Ensenada, Santo Tomas, and San Vicente and soon reached the end of the pavement.

As you pass Arroyo Seco take a good look at the asphalt, it is the last there is between there and La Paz. But fortunately there are only seven miles of chuckholes between the pavement's end and the turn-off for the ranch. Eight miles off the main road is the village of San Telmo where the store is clean, the beer is cold, and there is no water in the gas. From San Telmo it is only 26 miles to the ranch and as you top the last mountain you can see in the distance the peaks of the San Pedro Martir Mountains which have the only pine forest in Baja California.

We pulled in to the ranch, our arrival announced by the flute voiced canines, and met our charming hostess. Peggy McLean runs the guest ranch while Bertie and Salvador Meling share the old ranch house. It was dark when we arrived and the guests were sitting down to dinner. The ranch was packed that weekend, but in the tradition of hospitality everywhere there was room for a few more. After a home-cooked dinner of tender mountain

quail flanked by huge bowls of potatoes and hand-made tortillas, we relaxed under a hot shower and spent the night in one of the comfortable cottages which stands near the main house.

The next day we lived the quiet life of the ranch. We rode horseback in the mountains, swam in the pool filled with clear stream water, and lay in the sun. That night we had the privilege of spending the evening in front of the fireplace in the old ranch house talking with Bertie Meling, a living legend in Baja California.

We looked at boxes of old photographs and tin types, one taken of her grandfather more than 100 years ago. And we heard the story of the Meling Ranch, the gold mine, and the house we were in.

The house is over 50 years old and the original frame has adobe additions to accommodate the Meling family. Salvador's father was the first Meling in Baja. Although Baja California seems an unlikely place to attract a Scandinavian whaling captain, he settled there and sent for his family. The call of the sea is not quickly lost and Salvador's gnarled hands tell of his early days before the mast. Whether he was drawn back to Baja by the mountains and the land or by rancher Johnson's pretty daughter is not known. But he and Bertie were married and went to live on the ranch which now bears his name.

From that point the legend of the Meling Ranch began to grow and the fabulous production of the Socorro Gold



*The road to the mine is no freeway!*

Mine only added fuel to the fire. The origin of the Socorro, as told by Aunt Bertie, had its roots in the attitude of the Spanish Conquerors and their lust for gold. The Padres quickly realized the Spaniards came to Baja only for gold. They reasoned if none were found the Spaniards would leave. So the priests decreed it taboo for an Indian to reveal any source of gold. Through the years this grew into a religious belief and to this day the main sources of Baja gold, although known to the Indians, are lost to the white man. But stories filter through—stories of a group of Indians north of the San Pedro Martirs who found a lump of yellow metal, very soft, just right to make an arrow straightener; and of a trader near the mouth of the Colorado who traded these Indians five horses for the tool made of pure native gold. Others concern a young brave hoping to make the same trade when he, too, found a large piece of the yellow metal. But he was forced by his father to discard it because it was rubbing a sore on his horse. He buried it beneath a cairn of rocks beside the trail, meaning to return. But he didn't and it remains there to this day, waiting.

These stories drew men from all walks of life to search the mountains for the hidden treasures. Not all were disappointed. One of the daughters of the first Meling married a young man completely infected with the fever and he vowed to find gold or die in the attempt. His plan was to set off with his bride eastward over the San Pedro Martir Mountains to the Twenty Mile Desert on the other side.

An old Indian asked of the elder Meling, "Do they know how hard life is on the desert?"

The old man replied, "They have never been there."

The Indian paused, turning over in his mind his teachings and weighing them against the love he had for the little girl he had helped to raise. Then he spoke. "You remember the canyon where we killed the black bull three years ago?" he asked. Mr. Meling said he did. "It would be better for them to look there than in the desert," the Indian said quietly. And thus was discovered the famous Socorro Gold Mine.

The Socorro poured forth its rich horde for many years, but it was Bertie's father who really made it pay. The mine was from the beginning a placer operation with a shortage of water. As the rich top ore began to pay out it became apparent a new source of water was needed. But

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the nearest dependable stream was nine miles away. Senor Johnson, a wealthy rancher in his own right, consulted with engineers from the states. "Absolutely impossible," commented one. "You couldn't do it even if you could get the equipment in, which you can't," said another. So Johnson and a few Indians living on the ranch did it by hand. They carved an aqueduct through the mountains and poured the cascading water through the sluices nine miles away and got very rich doing the impossible. His dream completed, Johnson passed on to his reward and the inertia of Baja took over his mine. The water died shortly after and the mine remains a relic of a time when Baja was as rich and promising as its northern neighbor.

As we sat by the fireplace and listened to the history of the ranch we felt some of the magic that had drawn men here for years and perhaps was responsible for our own trip.

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The next morning we pushed the "Beast" nine miles further up the mountains to see first hand the remains of the old Socorro Gold Mine. The site is marked by a couple of adobe ruins and piles of ore still waiting to be processed. As we explored the mine we found gold fever was as infectious then as it was 100 years ago. A dozen times we were sure we had found gold in a piece of rock, only to find it was shining mica that gleamed in the sunlight. Sometimes the color was faint and we couldn't be sure it was really there. We still have pieces in our rock garden that might contain gold. After all it was a gold mine.

On the way back we stopped at the ranch to say goodbye to Aunt Bertie, Salvador, Peggy and all of the wonderful people who had been so kind and generous to us. We drove home with a contented feeling. It isn't every day a person gets an opportunity to step back into history. But we had done it and landed in the middle of a gold rush. □

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## Shafter, Texas

BY LAMBERT FLORIN

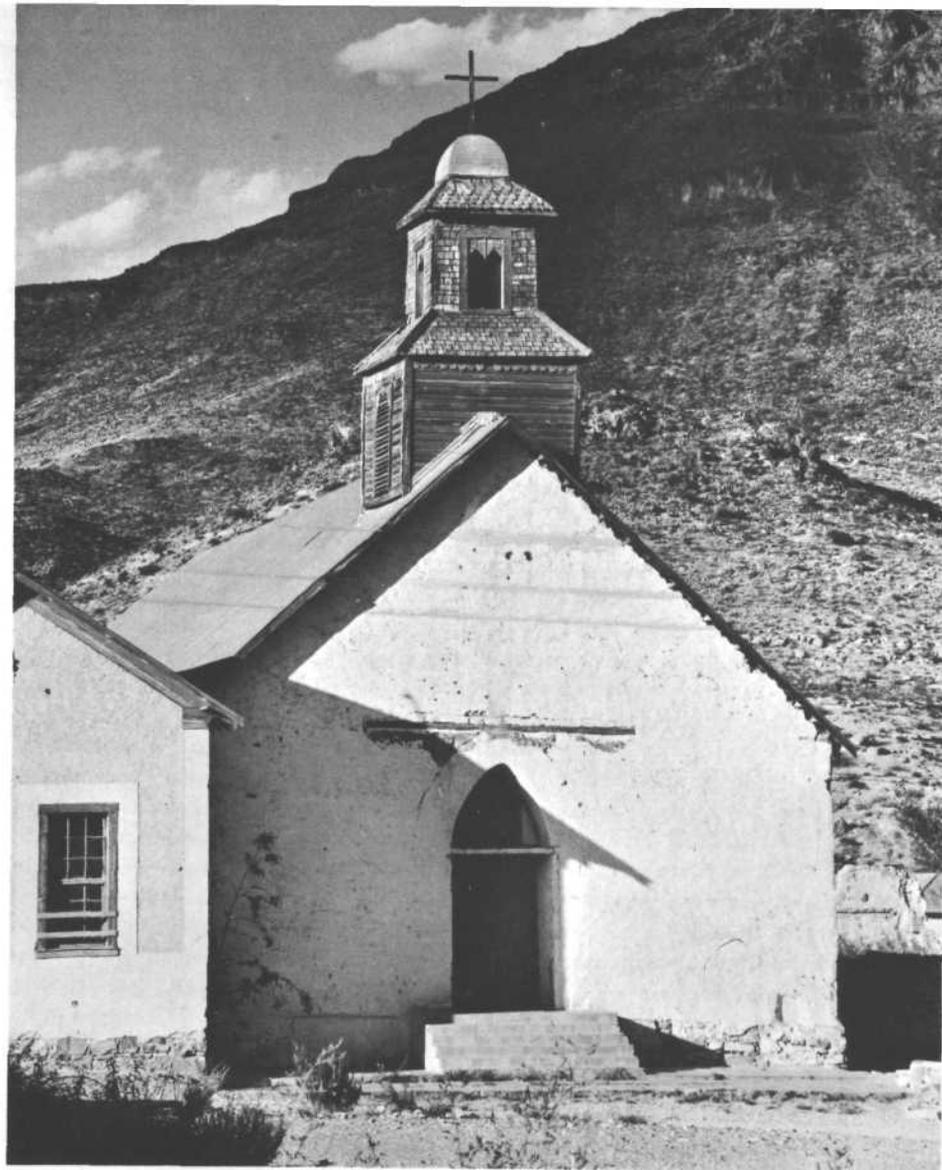
AS FAR BACK as 1876 white men looked covetously at the lands just north of the Rio Grande where the river makes its big bend. Even then the ruggedly barren Chianti range was known to hold immense deposits of silver, gold and mercury. In the '70s a geological survey party was organized at Fort Davis, the object being not only survey, but to confirm persistent rumors of vast mineral wealth in the region. The expedition, under J. C. Tait had hardly penetrated the foothills of the Chiantis when it was forced to return to Fort Davis. The reason—the sighting of several Indian war parties ahead.

The next several years saw little but pillage and murder by Indians. Travel by whites through the area was dangerous; trying to establish ranches, fatal. But by 1880 U. S. troops had brought partial subjugation of the Indian menace and almost immediately settlers moved in. One of the earliest was John Spencer, who established a ranch on lands north of the Rio Grande granted to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

In 1882 Spencer found it necessary to travel north to Fort Davis for supplies. He reached the southern foothills of the Chiantis the first night, making camp on the banks of a stream flowing through a grove of oaks. As in most of the Southwest, the water table was much higher then; streams, grass and trees more plentiful. While his men prepared supper, Spencer took his gun and walked in a circle around camp, searching for lurking Apaches. It was on this little tour he saw gleaming rock on the ground. Closer examination convinced him the chunk was nearly pure silver.

His trip to Fort Davis had been urgently speedy, but now he traveled even faster in his anxiety to reach the assay office, which proved his guess correct.

Now the discoverer of the mountain of almost solid silver soberly realized he couldn't mine it himself. He lacked capital, and then there was the ever-present



danger from Apaches. Killing two birds with one stone, he informed Major (later General) Shafter of his find and made him a partner. Shafter set his cavalry to exterminating surrounding Apache tribes while he went to San Francisco to raise money for the mining operations. Successful in both projects, he organized the Presidio Mining Company and found the Chiantis free of Apaches on his return.

Now the hitherto lonely land boomed with big mining operations. Machinery arrived piecemeal on the backs of burros and in jolting wagons. The first ore had been hauled to Ojinaga on the Mexican side and milled with the aid of water from the Rio Grande. Now a mill was established on Cibolo Creek, and by 1913 a tram was strung up to carry ore directly to the mill.

During the years which followed, Shafter acquired an exciting legend involving raids by Mexicans, Pancho Villa in particular. One Mexican general, Pascual Arozco, was believed to have smug-

gled an immense fortune out of Mexico and secreted it in an abandoned mine tunnel at Shafter. Later, General Orozco got back across the border, but due to the unrelenting pursuit of Pancho Villa never returned to Shafter to retrieve his treasure. During its heyday Shafter had a population of over 4,000, the mines alone employing some 500.

Last June this writer made a trip through the Big Bend country to collect material for a forthcoming book tentatively titled *Ghost Towns of El Dorado*. We found Shafter a most satisfying ghost town, all the hustle and bustle of a big silver mining camp long faded. Rows of collapsing adobe and stone buildings line the streets, and in the center of town is the well-preserved old mission church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pictured here. It has been many years since Shafter had a resident priest. Senora Lupe Munoz, postmistress, storekeeper and general lady Alcalde of the town has the key to the church, and at specified hours opens the side door for worship by members of the 12 remaining families. □

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# Hints For Campers

by Bruce Barron



The "frug" was invented by a hapless camper dodging yellow jackets at mealtime. As a source of annoyance, ants at a picnic aren't even in the running! Nothing makes you come unglued faster than to discover a voracious yellow jacket eyeballing your tonsils as you bite into your hamburger. Complete panic develops when you feel one taking a safari up your pants leg.

Here's how to make an amazingly simple, but highly effective, trap that will quickly rid your campsite of these pesky critters before they drive you to distraction.

Into a pan or pail of water add a small quantity of detergent, as you would for washing dishes. Skim off any resultant foam. Next, take a stick or lath about two or three inches wide and long enough to span the stop of the vessel. Tie a piece of bait (meat, fish, fowl, or melon rind, etc.) to the center of the lath and place (bait down) over top of vessel, allowing a scant 1/2 inch of space between the bait and water. Place your trap wherever the yellow jacket activity is heaviest. Eliminate other competitive food sources. In rapacious haste to eat and run, yellow jackets will drop into the detergent water and drown immediately.

In the event of emergency, this container of detergent water also serves as an excellent fire extinguisher. □

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# Jack's Jottings

Every month we receive hundreds of letters from readers and press releases from manufacturers and organizations describing their particular product. Many of the letters contain information of interest to readers and many of the press releases contain items which will make your travel adventures more enjoyable and interesting. This column will appear every month with a potpourri of information.

*We have received more than 100 letters on the story in the February issue on Mike Kovac's lost placer gold. It was impossible to print a detailed map of the area so, as I stated in the article, obtain the topo map and a map of Riverside County, then use the map with the article as a guide and you'll get there. A word of advice from T. H. Turner of Yucca Valley, Calif. The Iron Age Mine is still very active in iron production so do not trespass. As I stated in the story, respect all mines in the area, even if they look abandoned—and watch out for mine shafts which are numerous and not marked.*

R. D. Hall Manufacturing Inc., producers of the popular Alaskan Camper line, have just published a novel cook book. The recipes were especially assembled to meet the requirements of cooking delectable foods while living in a camper. Copies may be obtained by sending \$3.00 each to R. D. Hall Manufacturing, Inc., 9847 Glenoaks Blvd., Sun Valley, Calif.

*Webb Morrow, general manager of Star Diamond Industries, Inc., 1421 West 240 Street, Harbor City, Calif., manufacturers of lapidary equipment, reports a phenomenal increase in interest in gem collecting and cutting. To meet this increased interest they publish a free booklet "Gem Making as a Hobby." Available at above address.*

We receive numerous letters asking when the wild flowers will bloom on the desert. This question is impossible to answer. First, desert areas vary with altitude, winds and rains so where the flowers may be out in one area there may not

## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope

### The Peacock's Tail was Gold . . .

*To the Editor:* I am sending you some rocks for your bookshop exhibit. It is not desert rock, but I have seen ore like this in the Panamints. This came from the south side of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River. It is five and one half miles east of Camp Baldy and about a half mile east of Peacock Saddle. Between 50 and 80 years ago there was a mine up there called the "Peacock." No one seems to know where it was located. Four men in my company have eight claims up there. A friend and I were offered 1/5th interest in it. They had nothing to show except seams all over the mountains, all from one inch to four inches wide. They had a 15-foot shaft, but they forgot to put a collar on it, so the rain filled it up with mud. Assays show that the stringers carry values up to \$600 a ton. It carries copper, gold, silver and some stuff that looks like gold, but not even Madame Zircra's crystal ball can show me moving 24 cubic feet of country rock to get one cubic foot of ore!

There may be a main body some place around there, that is if the Peacock Mine did not find it years ago. Anyway, the rocks make nice samples.

I enjoyed the article "Where is This Gold?" in the February issue. We had had news about the Lost Quail Ledge we looked for last year. Seems that four of the eight sections we were going to search are privately owned. But we will not give up yet.

JACK DERFUS,  
Burbank, California.

### Whink at Rust! . . .

*To the Editor:* This is an answer to Mrs. Hutten's inquiry about a cleaner for bottles that would remove "rust." Having tackled this problem for two years the hard way, I finally tried a liquid rust remover called "Whink" and happily found that it worked.

SMITTY SCHMIDT,  
Belchertown, Massachusetts.

be any just a few miles away. The desert areas of Southern California and Arizona have received more than the usual amount of rain this year, but at the same time it has been colder than usual. Veteran flower watchers, however, still predict a bumper crop in March if it ever warms up . . . that is unless they have frozen or the wind blows them away. Oh, well, if you don't find flowers you'll always find something of interest on the desert.

*On the statistical side the National Park Service says they will open 2,108 new camping sites in the United States during 1966 making a total of 29,890. They expect "in excess of 119 million visits to be recorded in the more than 225 areas of the National Park System." Just thought you might want to remember this the next time you can't find a space.*

### To the Man Who Found Pegleg's Black Gold . . .

*From the Editor:* Several things we thought might interest you. First, readers still wend a steady trail to the DESERT Magazine Bookshop to look at the gold nuggets you sent for display. Now that the season is cool, the desert is alive with amateur prospectors. Fortunately, there's still enough of it to accommodate all the "Pegleggers" and still give those who seek solitude enough room to be alone—provided they stay out of State parks where they must all huddle together in "designated camping areas" and leave their dogs cooped up in a kennel at home.

Secondly, FORD TIMES is publishing a special Western Travel Book and asked us to do a piece on your story and the "gold rush" it induced. We think the only gold found so far has been sun-gold, which is a mighty fine kind, and hope we did your story justice. Even if you're a slow reader, you'll get through this one fast. There was much more to say, but because of space limitations I'm saving that for a chapter in a book which, hopefully, will be finished next fall. If there have been any interesting developments from your point of view, we'd like to hear about them.

And thirdly, I can't help but remark that you must have the healthiest ego in the world. As much for your astuteness in handling a fantastic situation, you are to be admired for your ability in relating it with style, controlled climactic sequences, and sincerity. In short, masterfully! Yours has been a magnificent job of writing all the way through and even though I am in a position to profit professionally from your skill, I very honestly regret that I am unable to give full credit to the source. You have made new desert history which, someday, will be incorporated with Pegleg's contribution to Western Americana. It is astonishing that you continue to insist upon anonymity. I don't believe your story is a hoax, but if those who do turn out to be right, it's one worthy of a Mark Twain and still to be considered an accomplishment in writing. C.P.

### Architectural Honors . . .

*To the Editor:* It might interest readers to know that Tyrone, N.M. (Feb. DESERT) was one of two communities designed by Bertram G. Goodhue in our great Southwest. The other community was Ajo, Arizona, constructed immediately after Tyrone. Using the same architectural design, Mr. Goodhue laid out the town of Ajo on a slightly different pattern than the one he incorporated in Tyrone. With this exception, the two towns could be twins. Ajo is also a Phelps Dodge town and has a population of 7,049.

DAVE I. REES,  
Ajo, Arizona.

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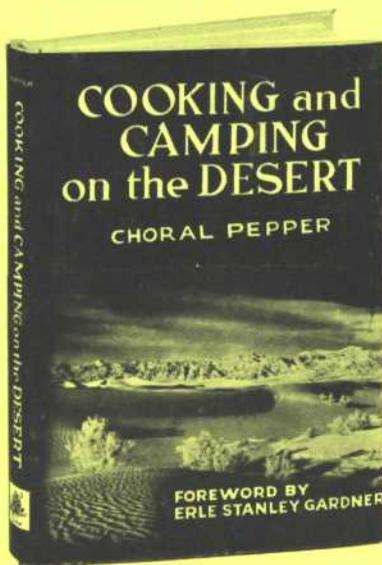
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