

MARCH, 1969 50c

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Desert

MAGAZINE

SOUTHERN BAJA

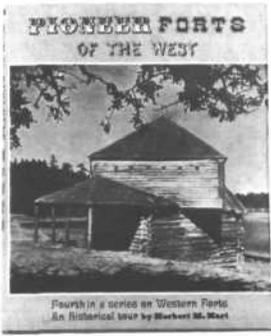
LOST MULE SHOE GOLD

DESERT MAGAZINE BOOK SHOP

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POWERBOATING THE WEST COAST OF MEXICO
By SPENCER MURRAY and RALPH POOLE

The full scoop on cruising from Guaymas to Puerto Vallarta with side trips ashore along the way. Excellent guide for those who plan to make the trip and interesting reading for those who would like to. Hardcover, profusely illustrated, 304 pages.

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SUPERSTITION TREASURES by Travis Marlowe. Wealth that exists in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona, fabulously rich mines, plus a cache or two of gold and silver—piled high in secret hiding places by those long-ago Peralta miners. Maps carved on stone before the massacre of 1848. Illustrated in color and black and white. Paperback, 64 pages. \$2.50.

BEACHES OF BAJA by Walt Wheelock. The author has personally explored the beautiful beaches of Baja, which, unlike those of Upper California, are uncluttered and uncrowded. He tells how to reach the beaches and what type of transportation is needed. A companion book to Gerhard and Gulick's Lower California Guide Book. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

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MARCH COLOR PHOTOS

Front Cover: Water from melting snows in the mountains tumbles down the canyons and into the desert in Southern Arizona's Sabino Creek. Photo by David Muench, Santa Barbara, Calif. Page 22: Gary Moore, Monrovia, Calif., illustrates his article on the ghost camp of Skidoo with the color photo of one of the last remaining buildings. Back Cover: Rain clouds hover over palm trees in Coachella Valley near Palm Desert. Photo by Harry Vroman, Palm Springs.

BOOK REVIEWS

ROUGH RIDING

By Dick Cepek and Walt Wheelock

Two veteran desert travelers have compiled an excellent book on how to drive and survive in the back country. Although based on driving through Baja California, the information is applicable to all other areas of the West.

Dick Cepek is a long-time back country explorer and operates a supply firm for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Walt Wheelock is the author of numerous books and has been exploring the West for "forty-plus" years.

Among the chapters in the book are Adventure, Back Country Roads, Learning, Tires and Wheels, Speed, Sand, Digging Out, Rocky Roads, Stream Crossing, Food and Water, plus many others.

If you are not an experienced back country driver and want to be one, this book is a must. Veterans will also find new information and tricks-of-the-road for future use.

I strongly recommend anyone who drives off the pavement, whether in a passenger car, four-wheel-drive or dune buggy, put this handy paperback, 36-page book in the glove compartment of his vehicle. The dollar spent for the information will pay off in the long run. Yes, it's only \$1.00.

BOTTLE COLLECTOR'S HANDBOOK AND PRICING GUIDE

By John T. Yount

As the hobby of bottle collecting becomes more popular, new bottle books are published to keep up with the latest in prices and identification. This book should be a valuable aid in these fields.

Contents include listing of 1850 bottles and their current market value, seventeen categories, including the Jim Beam series, where to sell or buy bottles, identifications made easy, and how to tell which bottles will turn purple. Even for those who have other bottle books, this one should be a welcome addition. Paperback, illustrated, 89 pages, \$3.95.

LOST MINES AND TREASURES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

By Ruby El Hut

The best book on lost mines and treasures in the Pacific northwest area, this volume has been out of print for several months. It is now available again through the Desert Magazine Book Shop. Illustrated with maps and photographs, the author has done an excellent job of both research and writing. Hardcover, 257 pages, \$4.50.

FOSSIL VERTEBRATES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Theodore Downs

Another in the excellent series of California Natural History Guides published by the University of California, this volume deals with the history of animals and identification of their fossils, plus an excellent chapter on the Care and Collection of Fossils. Illustrated both in color and black and white, 61 pages, paperback, \$1.75.

DEAD MEN DO TELL TALES

By Lake Erie Schaefer

Frank Fish, a well known and controversial treasure hunter, died under mysterious circumstances in his mobile home at Amador City, California. Although the coroner's verdict was suicide, many of Fish's friends, including the author of this book, believe he did not take his own life.

Mrs. Schaefer and her husband were close friends of the treasure hunter and helped him establish his Buffalo Ranch Museum in Amador City.

The first part of *Dead Men Do Tell Tales* describes Fish's years as a treasure hunter, his search for the Lost Dutchman bonanza in Arizona's Superstition Mountains, and the author's conversations with Fish. This part of the book, and the last chapter in which she de-

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scribes the circumstances surrounding his death, make interesting reading.

The second part of the book is merely a short compilation of alleged lost mines and bonanzas in the West. However, for those interested in the life of a professional treasure hunter, this book makes interesting reading. Paperback, 80 pages, illustrated, \$3.00.

ROOM TO ROAM

Published by the Bureau of Land Management

A section of the Department of the Interior, The Bureau of Land Management administers some 450 million acres of public domain land, ranging from arid deserts to Arctic tundra.

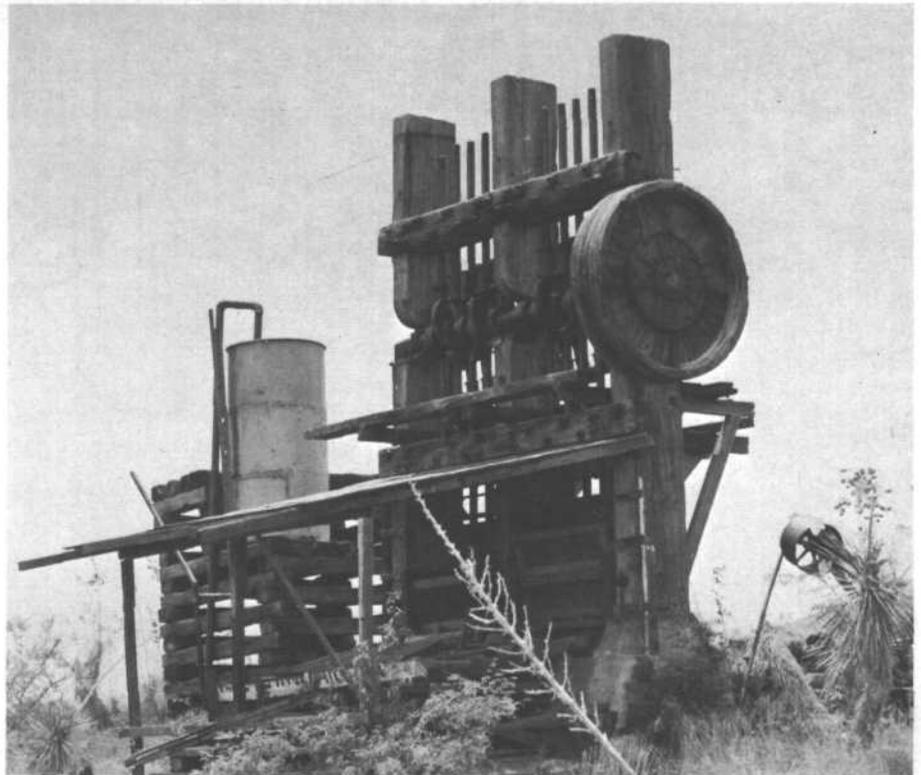
Created in 1812 as the General Land office, the Bureau "maintains the public domain as a national storehouse of lands and resources for the future, while managing the lands for multiple uses to meet needs of the present." This is a hard task for any organization and the Bureau of Land Management has its critics as well as supporters.

The millions of acres of land they administer in the West are the wilderness areas which hundreds of thousands of people visit each year, ranging from complete camping grounds to barren acres where man can find peace and solitude.

Room to Roam is a recreation guide to these public lands and your heritage. Beautifully illustrated with 4-color photographs and maps of the West's recreational areas, it includes a complete guide to points of interest in the various areas. Officials of the Bureau of Land Management are to be commended for this publication—and it's yours for only 50 cents. Send money order to Room to Roam, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402. THIS IS A GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION AND IS NOT CARRIED BY DESERT MAGAZINE BOOK SHOP, SO PLEASE ORDER FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Silent Stamp Mills

by L. L. Schoenfeld



NORTH OF the Dragoon Mountains in Southern Arizona stands a monument to Arizona's mining history. Deserted, abandoned and forgotten, it's wooden parts and iron pieces have been treated kindly by the dry desert air. It seems to be resting, awaiting a resurgence in man's quest for that elusive yellow metal.

From the Mother Lode to Cripple Creek, from the Comstock to Tombstone, it was known through the West as a stamp mill. Wherever men dug precious metals from the earth a stamp mill was usually nearby—crushing lumps of hard quartz into a slurry of runny mud so that the gold or silver could be removed. It was well suited to the needs of the

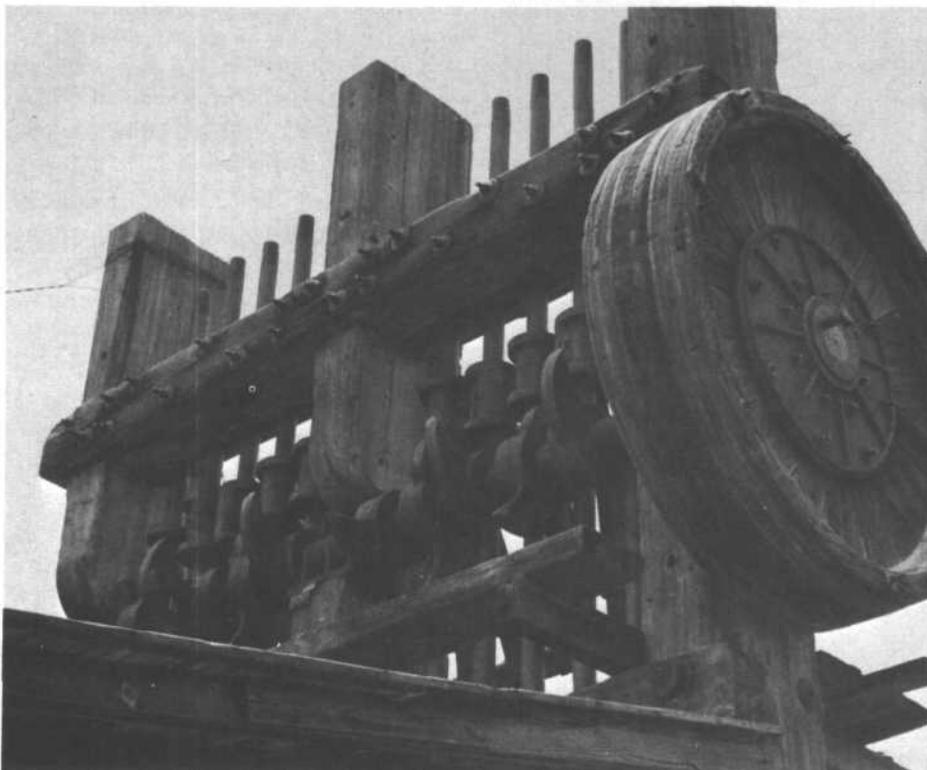
early-day miner, being simple to operate and reliable in operation—and it could be taken apart and hauled most any place a wagon could go.

Stamp mills were usually powered by low-pressured steam engines, the steam coming from locomotive-type boilers with extremely tall smoke stacks. Fuel was whatever was handy, be it sage brush, mesquite or tall pines.

The genesis of the stamp mill is lost in antiquity, it is simply the mechanization of a mortar and pestal. The most widely used version consisted of five stamps per mortarbox and a rotating camshaft to rise and drop each stamp in turn. The falling stamp—some weighted over 750 pounds—would crush the ore and release the precious metal.

The most remarkable thing about the stamp mill was its longevity. The modern version was put in use in California and Nevada about the time of the American Civil War and some stamp mills were still in use in the 1930s. The gyratory crushers and ball mills that come into use in the copper mills were not nearly as efficient as stamp mills for certain types of gold and silver ore.

A standing stamp mill is a rare sight nowadays. The scrap iron drives of World War II cleaned out almost all of them. In fact, the one pictured here may be the last one left in Arizona. □



Brush-Popping Dune Buggies

by Pat Holmes



The author was awakened one morning by the baying of sheep and the tinkling of a bell on the sheepherder's burro as they casually walked past the campsite.



Due to visibility and easy maneuvering, dune buggies are ideal vehicles for the exploration of both canyons and desert areas.

THE RAM'S head with its curling horns was silhouetted against the late afternoon sun above the canyon. Two more mountain sheep, a female and a young one, were right below him. They were kind of a beige color, but the ram was lighter—almost a cream. Poised on the sheer wall before going over the top, they were an unforgettable sight.

My husband and I took turns watching them through the binoculars. Then, as I focused my camera, the sheep disappeared from view over the canyon rim. They were probably too far away to get a good picture, but at least we had the thrill of seeing wild mountain sheep.

This was our second trip through Goler Wash in the Panamints in our dune buggy. The last time we had gone all the way to Butte Valley, but this time we didn't get as far. There were too many rocks to examine, odd formations to look at, and pictures to take.

My husband and I have never been able to hike very far into the back country so we explore by dune buggy. Holidays and weekends will find us with our camper, buggy hitched on behind, heading for the desert or mountains.

Since we like the convenience of a camper and not moving camp very often, it was either buy a four-wheel drive or a dune buggy. For us the buggy was the most practical. In fact, we now have two. Our first, a Corvair called the Jungle Cruiser because it has heat and doors, is bigger and heavier than most rigs. The latest is a Volkswagen.

This year we traveled the canyons near Johannesburg. The trail wound around the hills until it washed out at a deep

gully. Unhooking the rig, we scouted the gully, finally finding a place to cross. My husband drove the camper and I took the buggy across and down to a lovely campsite—all to ourselves.

Just for a little while though. The next morning we shared it with hundreds of sheep. Leading the sheep was a belled donkey loaded with gear while the herder and his dog brought up the rear of the flock. I'm not sure who was more surprised—the herder or us.

The wild flowers were scatter-rugs of yellow and blue sprinkled with white. There were several clumps of desert asters and a red flower, a new one to us. We stopped at the ruins of a ranch and wondered how it had burned. While there we snapped a picture of a desert tortoise.

On the way home we explored Last Chance Canyon. Wild flowers and bushes were in bloom; a Beaver Tail cactus's bright pink flower contrasted sharply with the brown earth. One of the weird formations in the canyon looked like a dripped sand castle. There were many old mines, and jasper, agate, and petrified wood to hunt.

In the summer we explore jeep trails near Kennedy Meadows or other mountain areas. During hunting season the men use the camper as a base camp, then travel in the buggy to where they want to hunt, whether it's ducks at Tule Lake or deer in the Sierras.

Sometimes friends who haven't a rig will take one of ours and go with us. We celebrate New Years by traveling cross-country along the Colorado River. A cold wind always seems to blow until the day we leave; then the weather turns beautiful. So it's bundle up warm when we hunt geodes in the Potato Patch in the Wiley Well area.

In some places we gully-run to keep out of the wind and when I'm driving in them, I never seem to be able to get me and the people riding in the back through the overhanging branches without *them* getting slapped. But it's all fun.

Citizen's band radios are in both our camper and buggy. It is easier to caravan with one. For the amount of money spent we believe it was a good investment as some day we might have to call for help.

When we go exploring in the buggy we carry a shovel, tools, a few parts,

binoculars, cameras in a case (to protect against heat and dust), sunglasses and lotion, Kleenex, hooded jacket, water and a lunch. A lunch is important! Some of the men went for a ride expecting to be back by dinner time. About three hours after dinner, they finally returned. To keep the seven of them from starving, they divided the only food they had—a roll of Roloids.

But I have my problems too. Like the time I ran over a cactus. And it was such a little one. Have you ever tried to pump up a tire punctured with cacti needles with a hand pump? It took three of us taking turns to inflate it enough so we could reach camp. It was after that we bought a tire pump that fits on a spark plug.

Are dune buggies dangerous? Not if you follow common sense rules. After all we're not dashing up rocky washes or hills at 60 miles an hour. We are lucky if we travel at 10 mph. We want to see things as we explore. By going exploring, the things a family can learn about the back country are amazing. The places to see are endless and dune buggies are for brush popping. □



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ARIZONA'S APACHELAND

by Barbara and Warren Transue

THE SLEEPY little military cemetery, drowsing undisturbed in the warm desert sun, lends a deceptively peaceful aura to Arizona's Fort Apache. It was here the renegade Geronimo made Western history, and put the Apache country "tall in the saddle" on every American map.

The fort itself was born in 1870, strategically situated between the Navajo and Apache domains. Troops stationed at Fort Apache gave chase to the elusive Geronimo and Nachez. Originally known as Camp Ord, its name later was changed to Camp Thomas in tribute to Major General George V. Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga." After a visit by the colorful Cochise, who stayed there for several weeks during the year of its founding, the camp finally received the permanent name of Fort Apache in a gesture of friendship to Cochise.

Where cavalry troopers and foot soldiers once stood at rigid attention before General O. O. Howard and General George A. Crook, Indian youngsters now romp. For after being manned as a fort until 1924 by the United States Cavalry, the property was turned over to the Indian Service to be used as a school. It is now known as the Theodore Roosevelt



School, and several of the original fort buildings are still in use as a part of the institution.

Fort Apache was "home" to many who were not United States soldiers. It was the training camp for many famous Apache scouts, whose invaluable aid to the troops beside whom they traveled can never be overstated. These were the men who led our soldiers into the secret hiding places of the renegades; who followed the outlaw bands into little-known canyons and rock formations to persuade the fugitives of the futility of their fight. And these are the men who lie side by side with their soldier buddies beneath time-tilted white headstones in the little Fort Apache Cemetery, on a gentle cactus-grown slope at the end of an almost unmarked path.

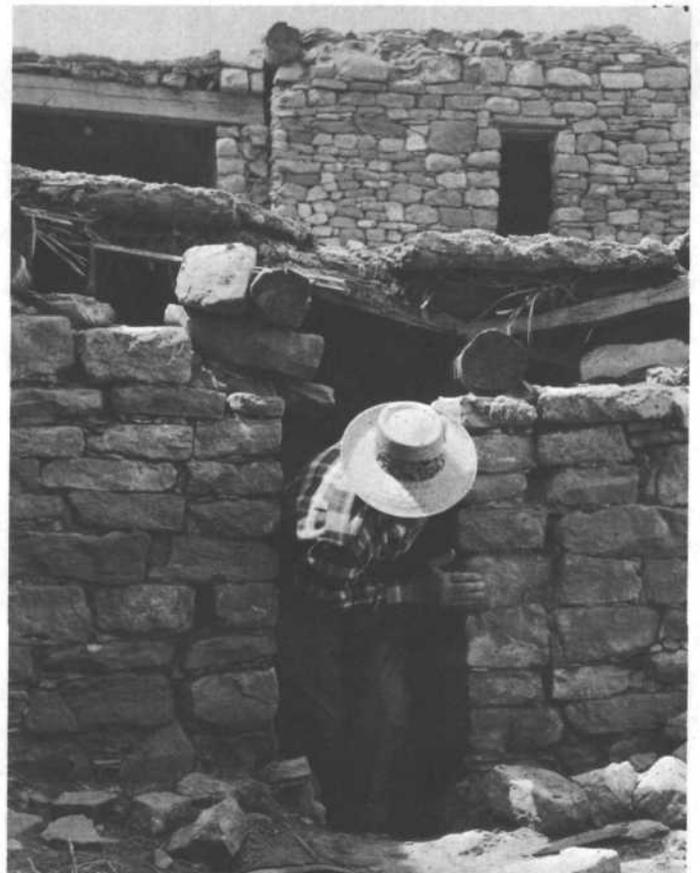
The fort itself is only a part of the great Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Several miles beyond the fort, there is a tiny sign pointing off to the right of the main highway (State 73) and labeled Kinishba Ruins. An unpaved road wanders a mile or so to the site of one of the most impressive early Indian habitations to be found anywhere. The word Kinishba is derived from two Indian words: *kin* for house, and *lishba* Apache for



Many of the original Fort Apache buildings are used today for the Indian Theodore Roosevelt School.

As many as 2000 people lived at Kinisbba centuries ago during the Pueblo III period. Buildings are in remarkable shape for their age.

A visitor slides through a tiny door of the Kinisbba ruins. It is now a National Historic Landmark, open to the public the year 'round.



brown. These ruins tell much about a community of probably 2000 people who lived here some seven centuries ago. In the days when the fort was pulsing with military life, soldiers and other residents apparently dug in the ruins for souvenirs, thus removing much that could have added more detail to the Kinishba story. In 1931, the head of the University of Arizona's Archaeology Department, Dr. Byron Cummings, began a program of excavation and restoration at the site, a project which continued until 1939. Kinishba is now a Registered National Historic Landmark under the protection of the National Park Service, and while visitors are welcome to wander freely in the ruins at all times, they are not allowed to remove any artifacts or do any private excavating.

Kinishba is known as a Pueblo site of the classic or Pueblo III period. It has two large "apartment houses," each with over two hundred rooms. With the addition of a number of smaller structures nearby, the community could accommodate between one and two thousand residents.

Archaeologists believe that the span of Kinishba's occupation reached from sometime in the late 1200s—its peak—to after 1350. They are convinced that it was finally abandoned for a no more mysterious reason than that the water problem in the area became acute and forced its occupants to move on.

Fort Apache Indian Reservation enjoys a delightful, temperate year-round climate, the altitude of nearby White River being approximately five thousand feet. There is ample opportunity for camping in this White Mountain recreation spot; on the reservation itself as well as in adjoining Sitgreaves National Forest. The small towns near the fort, such as White River (eight miles) and McNary (twenty-three)—departure point of a day trip by old fashioned steam locomotive—have comfortable hotel and motel accommodations. As for fishing, the Fort Apache Reservation contains about half—more than three hundred miles—of the state's excellent trout streams. The Indian residents extend a friendly hand to visitors, who may attend some summer tribal ceremonies with their cameras as long as they do not intrude.

Arizona's Apache land is pure Americana—don't miss its living history. □



Indian scouts lie side by side with soldiers in the Fort Apache Cemetery. Scouts aided troops in the war against Geronimo and Nachez.



Southern Baja . . .

The Easy Way

by Bill Hayden

THE DRIVE from the California border down the entire length of Baja California has long been an adventure for desert travelers. In addition, the southern part of the trip offers a special bonus. Here you can find historic Spanish ruins, abandoned Yankee mines, sleepy tropical villages, and desert mountains springing dry and dusty from the sea.

Since the inauguration of the La Paz to Mazatlán ferry three years ago the roads in Southern Baja have been improved for passenger car travel, opening hundreds of miles of scenic areas to people who did not have the right equipment or time to make the trip.

You won't find freeway and air conditioned motels yet, and swimming pools are few and far between. There are plenty of problems still to be overcome. But you can surmount these problems with an ordinary passenger car, and two weeks vacation.

If you have a couple of extra weeks, a suitably rugged vehicle, and the patience to savor the empty desert without rushing, drive down as we did last summer. For 10 days we lurched and jolted through the wasteland, following a pair of ruts over rocky hills and through dusty valleys choked with greasewood and cactus. We cooked for ourselves, or ate beans and tortillas in dirt-floored adobe kitchens, and slept in the open beside the road every night.

To enjoy this region your family should be moderately adventurous, and willing to rub shoulders with the friendly folk of rural Mexico. It isn't really necessary to camp out. But for people who like to camp on their own, without supervision and crowded camp sites, Baja is perfect. Besides, after tourists begin to discover this bonanza they'll quickly overload the limited accommodations, and your camping gear will lend valuable extra flexibility to your trip.



Southern Baja California abounds in picturesque bays and uncrowded beaches and camping areas such as this one at Concepcion Bay.

If you're not ready, willing and equipped for that particular form of adventure, don't give up on Baja. Instead, breeze from Los Angeles down to mainland Mazatlan in three and a half days, driving on paved highways all the way. Then, bring your car across to La Paz on the twice-a-week overnight ferry.

Although this luxurious ferry has plied the Gulf for several years, until now it hasn't really done the motoring tourist very much good. The roads in southern Baja were so bad there was hardly any place to drive to. Now, that scene is changing.

One day last summer we left La Paz at noon and found a newly-paved highway to San Jose del Cabo, 125 miles south. The easy afternoon's jaunt left plenty of time for sightseeing.

We explored the old mining town of El Triunfo, a ghostly relic of past gringo enterprise. In the 1860s an American named Brooks operated an ore mill with 24 stamps here, the largest mill south of the Mother Lode. Nowadays, a pair of towering brick chimneys overlook the half-abandoned town. Mounds of purp-

lish slag surround the village, creeping up to the very back door of the old church.

We investigated the catch at a fly-in fishing resort along the Bahia de las Palmas, where marlin abound from June to October. By mid-afternoon we crossed the Tropic of Cancer, near the picturesque oasis village of Santiago. We followed a short side road west to the village, past the small Hotel Palomar. Dry desert foothills surround the tiny green valley and push it up under the massive Sierra de San Lorenzo. Lush fields and groves yield sugar cane, dates, bananas, mangoes, and papayas.

By suppertime we reached the end of the highway at San Jose del Cabo. We found a restaurant, groceries, and gasoline in this attractive tropical village. A few blocks from the plaza is a small hotel, the Casa de Fisher.

For the next 25 miles we twisted along the Gulf coast toward Cabo San Lucas, the southernmost tip of the Californias. The unpaved but adequate road climbed over and around desert sand dunes most of the way. On our left, the

surf hammered at rocky headlands and rolled into broad, sweeping sandy coves. We pitched camp on the open beach here, right beside the road. There are, however, three luxurious fly-in tourist hotels along this stretch. Reservations are advisable, and can be obtained by mail or in La Paz.

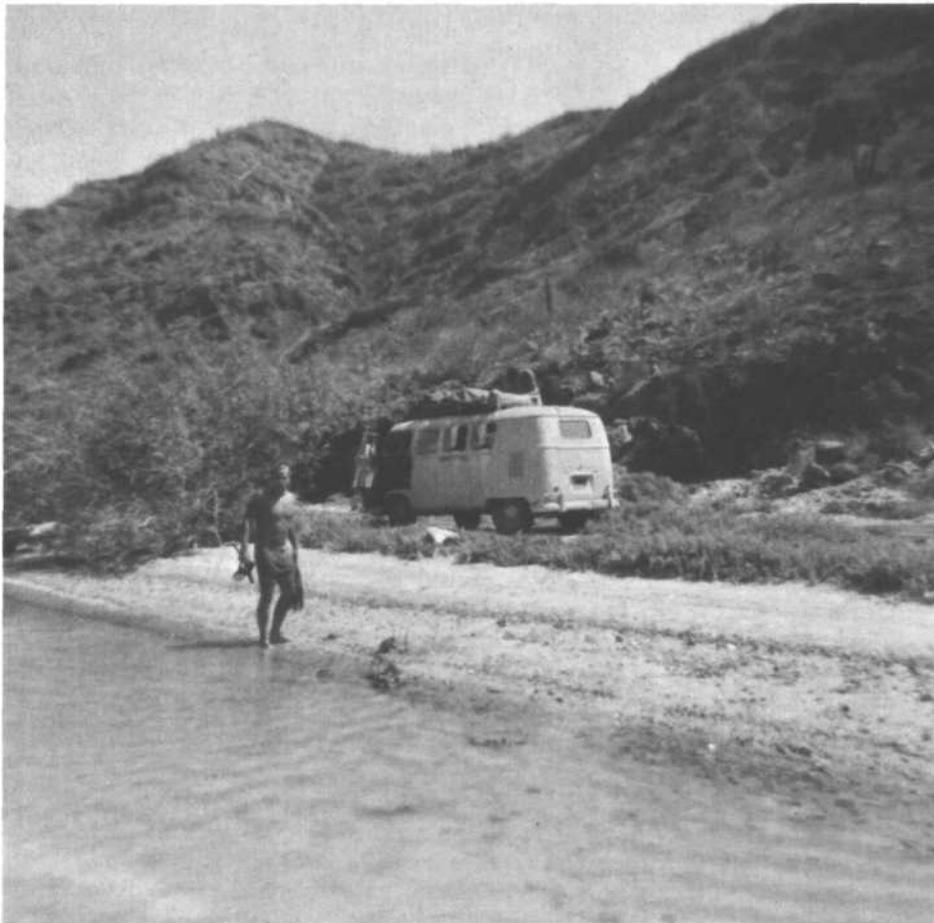
Another easy drive south from La Paz leads to the charming Pacific coast village of Todos Santos, especially praised for beautiful tropical flowers. The Hotel California there is frequented mostly by Mexican travelers; you might find it an interesting change from tourist routine. From La Paz to Todos Santos it's just fifty miles, half paved and half gravel.

North of La Paz, new roads are opening a dramatic region previously beyond the reach of the ordinary motoring tourist. The trip north starts with 130 miles of excellent paved highway, renovated just last summer. The lightly traveled road cuts through the desolate Magdalena Plain to Villa Constitucion, a half day's drive. From this raw, dusty cotton-farming center a new road branches eastward toward the Gulf, 60 miles away.

The first half of this new road was completed last summer: a wide, graded modern highway, surfaced with gravel, easy to drive. Then, the road hit rugged country, and stopped short. Last July a road crew was punching the last 30 miles through the mountains down to Puerto Escondido, on the Gulf. Local officials told us that this road would be passable by the end of the summer.

Before you try to drive this segment, check in La Paz (the Department of Tourism, on the waterfront drive) and in Villa Constitucion on the condition of this road. Allow two or three hours for the 30-mile mountainous stretch, and don't let nightfall catch you there. Start early from La Paz to reach Loreto, or spend the night at the modest hotel in Villa Constitucion and tackle the tough grades the next morning.

Once you get through the mountains to the Gulf, 75 miles of improved, newly-built gravel road stretch ahead. Your first sight of the Gulf, Puerto Escondido, is a landlocked jewel of quiet water nestled under mountain crags. Cruising northward, you'll easily crest the rounded, barren foothills and dip down beside sheltered coves. Here are inviting lonely



The clear waters of the Gulf of California are ideal for skin diving. The tropical climate makes it an ideal winter vacation area.

beaches with shade for camping, and clear clean water for swimming and skin diving.

Fifteen miles up the road is a stone church tower, rising above a grove of date palms beside the Gulf: your first glimpse of historic Loreto. A turnoff leads through a warped checkerboard of dusty streets, walled by adobe dwellings, to the small plaza and the old stone church.

Missionary Jesuits first built here in 1697, founding the first lasting settlement anywhere in California. From this spot, 70 years later, Father Serra set out to establish the missions of Upper California.

We stayed days longer than we'd planned in Loreto, enjoying the hospitable guest house of Dona Blanca de Garayzar, across the street from the church. We especially loved her shaded veranda and garden, a cool retreat alive with singing birds in the evening. Dona Blanca and her vivacious daughter served delicious food, and sparked lively conversation at the family-style table.

Rural Loreto wakes you early and with charm: roosters crow at each other, and the church bells ring three summons before each mass. Sweet-voiced nuns sing daily services in the old mission.

Loreto's people move slowly in the blazing summer; they live simply, and smile easily. The whole town faithfully observes the admirable custom of siesta.

Two fly-in tourist resorts just outside of town didn't intrude on Loreto's enchantment. Hopefully, the beautiful new seaside hotel now under construction right in the town will fit in as well.

Last summer the new road reached north to the southern reaches of Concepcion Bay, a huge natural harbor opening to the north. Here massive mountain shoulders crowd into the Gulf, bending the shoreline into secluded coves and sheltered lagoons. After pitching camp here, you can fish for bass from the rocky points, pick up buckets full of clams in the sandy shallows, or locate an outboard with guide and go after pargo or roosterfish.

The conventional auto has to turn back here, for the present. Forty miles of brutal terrain block the way to Mulege. You should be able to drive back to La Paz in one day, without any trouble.

The road problems isolating southern Baja will soon be solved. The other major problem is the La Paz to Mazatlan car ferry. This modern white ship makes two overnight round trips a week. Travel brochures emphasize the comfortable



The La Paz to Mazatlan Ferry makes two trips weekly, carrying passengers and vehicles. A second boat providing more service is expected soon.



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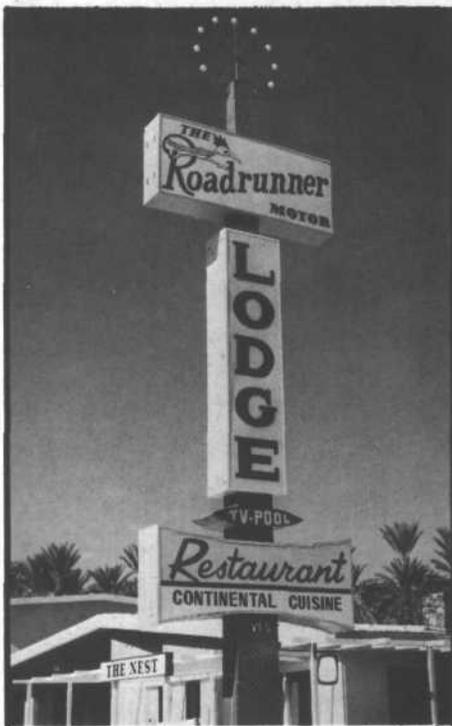
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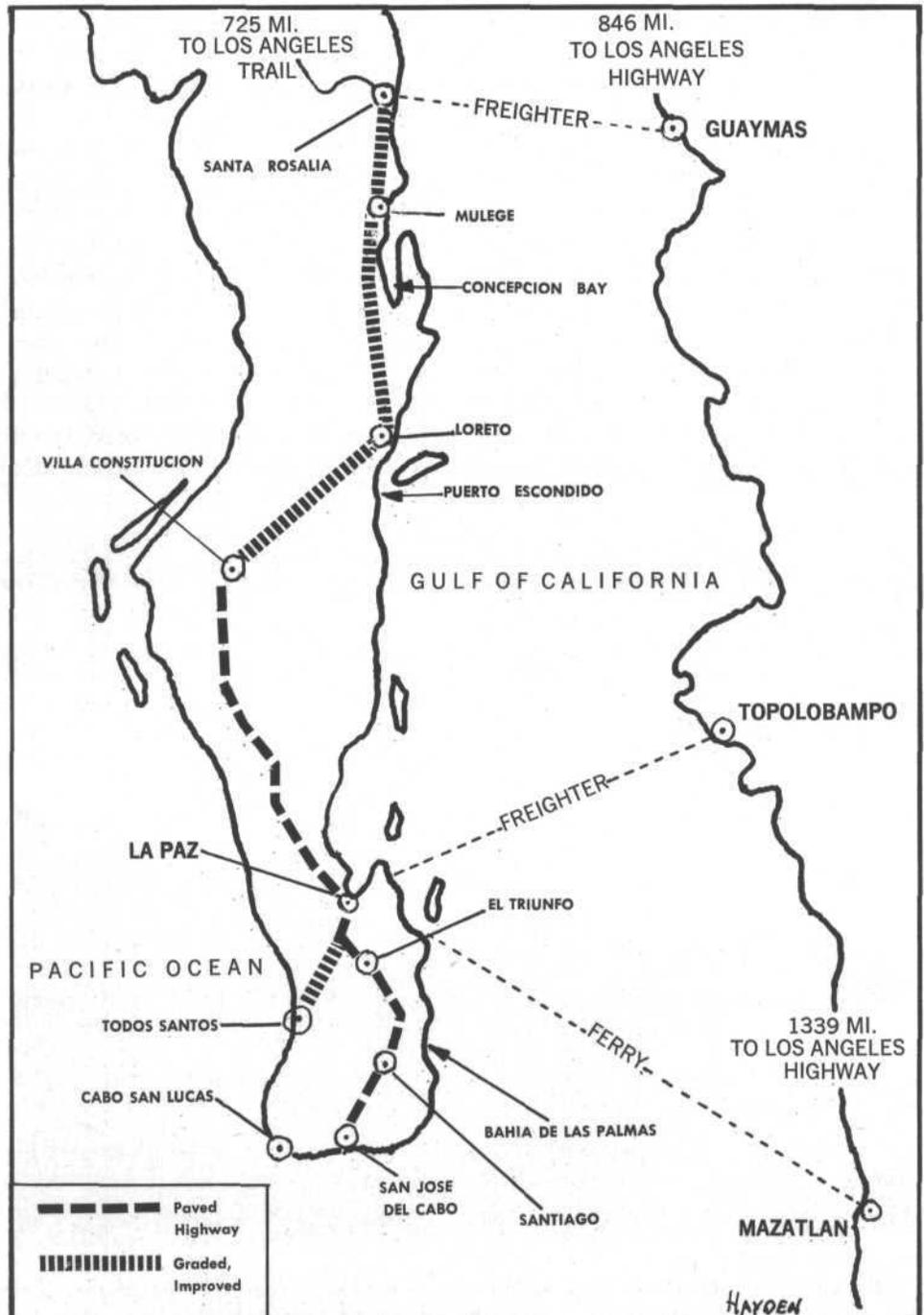
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staterooms, the three dining rooms, and the 115-car capacity. What they don't mention is the very real problem of getting your car on board the ferry.

That problem stems from an abundance of huge trailer trucks. These giant vans are the main support of southern Baja's dynamic economy, which has boomed tremendously in the last five years. They cross back and forth to mainland Mexico, bearing the lifeblood of Baja: bales of cotton, stacks of lumber, bags of cement and flour, tanks of butane, and case after case of bottled beer.

Last summer, by government order, these trucks enjoyed top ferry priority, and there always seemed to be more trucks waiting than the ferry could hold. After forty huge rigs were packed aboard, no more than six or seven automobiles could be jammed into the remaining nooks and crannies. The procedure for obtaining one of these precious spaces was unbelievably irksome and time-consuming.

Our advice is to plan a week's leeway in your schedule, and apply for the ferry crossing before the one you really



want, to establish your priority. Of course, if you take this advice you'll have to appear in La Paz at various particular times during a whole week.

If you have to spend a week tied down somewhere, La Paz is a wonderful place for it to happen. For one thing, you can work-in side trips to Todos Santos or the Cape between your scheduled negotiations. For another thing, La Paz itself is friendly and fascinating. The conveniences and vitality of a modern city of 50,000 rest easily on a provincial, tropical foundation.

The newest part of town is inland. Here, not far from the territorial capital building, is the Artesiana Mexicana trade school. They'll make you feel welcome while you watch apprentice potters and weavers learning traditional skills from master craftsmen.

The older part of La Paz stretches along the bay. Traffic bustles on clean cobbled streets; modern stores alternate with the old military headquarters, the central market, the large church with its unusually musical bells. Beside the water, the Hotel Perla's spacious, shaded open air restaurant looks toward the wharf where small freighters load and unload.

The half-dozen hotels in La Paz range from well appointed tourist resorts,

on the outskirts, to comfortable, more typically Mexican establishments downtown. The Sombrero Campground, on the west side of town, offers thatched cabanas, showers, and a cooler stocked with cold beer and sodas.

So, if you have to wait in La Paz, there's plenty to see and do. However, it's very possible that improved ferry service may alleviate the problem by next summer. Already, we're told, capacity has been increased 50 percent by a third weekly trip between Mazatlan and La Paz. In the future they plan to sell reservations by mail, or through local travel agencies. Further plans call for additional ferries to handle the increased traffic. You should check for the latest ferry information before you leave, at your nearest Mexican Consulate, or with the Mexican Government's Department of Tourism, 3106 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.

Baja California is changing fast. To be sure, the northern desert will retain its awesome emptiness and challenge for further years to come. The south, on the other hand, is about to receive a massive onslaught of tourists. Maybe you can beat the rest of them there.

If you can't—then, maybe you ought to join them. □



Jon Hayden and Marty Brumfeld had no trouble in keeping the author's party supplied with fish. Year 'round fishing is excellent, both on the Gulf side and in the ocean off southern Baja California.

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The Disappearing

by Jack Roof

The giant Condor, a living link with the Age of Dinosaurs, once numbered in the thousands. Today it is believed less than 100 exist and unless conservation measures are taken the bird will become extinct. The vultures are harmless to man, feeding only on dead animals. They nest in the high mountains of Central and Southern California.

Photos by Carl B. Koford and illustration courtesy of the National Audubon Society.

AT FIRST it appeared to be a distant airplane, but as it flew closer, the observer on the mountain top became more interested. Soon he saw the distinctive white feathers on the leading edge of the black wings that spanned nine-and-one-half feet of sky.

It was a California condor, the largest land bird in North America, and one of the rarest. As soon as he identified it, Robert Mallette noted the exact time, the direction of flight, and the probable age of the bird and recorded them on his prepared tally sheet.

Mallette, the Coordinator of the California Condor Survey Committee, leads a



California Condor

team of 134 men and women who annually travel to 64 mountain tops in southern and central California for a two-day count of the rare birds.

The team is made up of representatives from the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Departments of Interior and Forest Service, Audubon Society, University of California, Los Angeles County Zoo, and other interested conservationists.

"We counted 52 this year," said Mallette. "But in 1965 we saw only 40. We hope this means that they are increasing, but it's too soon to tell; our survey methods have improved in the past four years. It doesn't really mean that there

aren't more than 52, but that's all we saw. Some might have stayed in the roosting area or for some reason didn't fly within sight of an observer."

The condor, a living link with the Age of Dinosaurs, once flew the coastal and desert mountains from the Columbia River in Washington to Baja California, Mexico and numbered in the thousands. Now it can be seen only in remote sections of Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Kern, Tulare, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and San Benito counties.

"Several factors might have caused the decline in condor population: harassment by thoughtless mountain visitors, unlawful shooting which can bring a \$500

fine and a jail sentence, lack of available food, the poisoning of dead animals in trying to eliminate predators, but most important of all—the encroachment of civilization on its nesting and feeding areas," Mallette said.

Condors will not tolerate much disturbance, especially mechanical. Fred Sibley of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that a nest is seldom found within a mile of a road. "We saw a nesting bird," he said, "which showed considerable nervousness when a hiker came within a half-mile of it, but when a noisy truck started up at an oil well over a mile away, it flew off and didn't return for several hours."





So rare is the million-year-old species that scientists and nature lovers come from all over the world to study it. Lucky is the one who gets to see this magnificent bird, the master of flight, as it soars over the rugged mountains, its telescopic eyes searching for carrion.

Like other vultures, harmless to man and beast, the condor eats only dead animals from the size of a squirrel to a large steer. "We are trying to work out some method of artificial feeding. For example, a condor eats about six pounds of food daily. A nesting pair could eat a 100-pound deer in a week. During that critical period, if the birds have to go too far for food, it might mean the death of their one offspring that it takes over a year to raise. Incidentally, they lay only one egg every two years," Mallette added.

To keep the count as accurate as possible and to avoid duplicate counting, each observer records the time of sighting, direction of flight, number of birds, and approximate speed of the birds. The records are collected each night by a sector captain who reports to main headquarters. That way minimizing a multiple count of a bird that might fly 100 miles in a day, passing many observers.

Although there is considerable pressure from an irrigation district to build a dam and roads into the only sanctuary left for the birds, the agencies involved and other conservationists intend to fight to keep the 53,000 acre refuge in the Sespe Range of the Los Padres National Forest inviolate and free from trespass.

"We want to keep the condor for its scientific and aesthetic values," Mallette said. "If the condor isn't kept as a symbol for conservation attempts, this living part of California's heritage and many more dwindling species will have difficulty surviving the encroachment of civilization and so-called progress."

Some critics of government spending complain about the cost of the annual survey and the bird's protection, but future plans are to continue it. About one third of the observers are unpaid conservationists. One of them summed it up: "I don't mind paying taxes to support them. It's possible that there are only 52 of them in the world; I'd gladly pay my part to support a living dinosaur, so why not a bird that might be extinct in a few years." □

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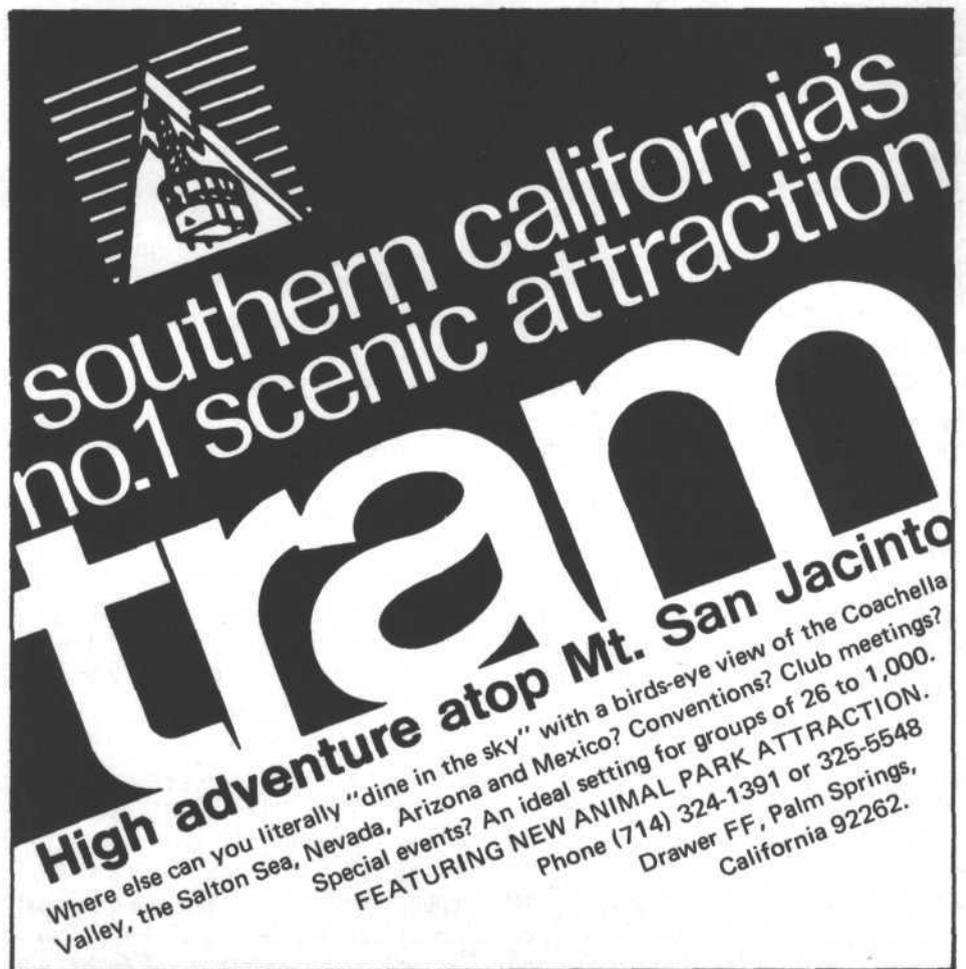
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Freddy the Frog vs. Myrtle the Turtle



by Jack Delaney

As the circular starting gate is raised during the Joshua Tree turtle races, the speedy contestants plunge to the finish line.

A BUNCH OF the boys were whooping it up, down by the old horseshoe pits, when a breathless courier raced toward the Calaveras County Jumping Frog Jubilee headquarters at Angels Camp. He carried a legal document from the Joshua Tree National Turtle Race Association addressed to the august body of jumping frog experts.

The communication was a challenge for a meeting, with no holds barred, between a thoroughbred Calaveras County jumping frog and a determined Joshua Tree plodding turtle at the Joshua Tree National Turtle Races early in May (1968) followed by a courtesy rematch at Angels Camp a few weeks later. The challenge was accepted and the competitions held. The novel race was so thrilling and controversial it will be a feature every year from now on at both Joshua Tree and Angels Camp.

At Joshua Tree, last year's race resulted in a victory for the frog. Reports that he hitchhiked part way on the back of the turtle are unfounded—the record shows that he won fairly. At Angels Camp, the

Joshua Tree turtle, "Old Josh," won by a nose. It was a photo finish with cameras clicking all around the finish line! With the series all tied up, this year's two matches will provide suspense and excitement for the thousands of spectators who attend these annual events.

The community of Joshua Tree is located on the high desert of southeastern California's San Bernardino County. It is approximately 30 miles from Interstate 10 along the Twentynine Palms Highway, at the entrance to Joshua Tree National Monument. The town was named after the thousands of Joshua trees that cover the landscape in all directions. Years ago, the Mormons named the giant yucca plant, "Joshua Tree" or "Praying Plant," because of its branches which resemble upstretched arms.

It is claimed that in this area the sunrises are as colorful as the Grand Canyon—upside down! Should you doubt this and wish to verify the claim, plan to stay overnight. There are six motels and three mobile home parks here, and several restaurants. Additional accommodations are available at nearby Yucca Valley and

Twentynine Palms. Many attractions are offered in the high desert, but Joshua Tree is the only community in the world that sponsors turtle races.

The National Turtle Races of Joshua Tree are held on the first weekend in May. This year, the 24th annual event will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 3rd and 4th. Four or five weeks ahead a roundup of turtles will be held. Residents of the area search the desert for the little animals and bring them to race headquarters where they will be penned, fed, and cared for prior to the race days. Immediately after the festivities, according to law, they will be taken back to their natural habitat and released, for another year of romping and roaming.

The question has been asked: "Are the participants in these races turtles or are they tortoises?" A simple answer to this question is yes. There are two general types of turtles—the water-loving group known as *terrapin*; and the terrestrial, or "land lubber" forms called *tortoises*. Since the animals used in the Joshua Tree races are denizens of the desert, they must be tortoise-type turtles.

Daniel Webster, who never had the opportunity to enjoy the annual turtle races, describes a turtle as: "any of an order of land, freshwater, and marine reptile with a toothless horny beak and a bony shell which encloses the trunk, and into which the head, limbs and tail usually may be withdrawn." This description certainly doesn't suggest that the creature is capable of running (or crawling) a 100-yard dash!

As a preliminary to the big event a queen and a number of princesses are selected to reign over the festivities. On Saturday, starting at 10 a.m., a parade consisting of floats, the Queen and her court, clowns, old prospectors, mounted groups, bands, and Myrtle the Turtle, will proceed through the town's business district ending at Sportsmen's Park, the scene of most of the day's activities. There will be entertainment, music, turtle egg hunts, food and amusement booths, pony rides, etc., in addition to the turtle races. The park also has picnic facilities, a children's playground, green lawns and Joshua trees.

On the first day (Saturday), the selection, classification, and identification of turtles begins at noon. More than a 100 of these little desert creatures are involved; and they are sorted into three classes: the regular "free lance" group, sponsored by the festival management; the privately owned animals entered by visitors who are eager to see their pets in

competitive action; and the "rent-a-turtle" entries who give their all for the spectator who cares enough to pay the rent.

Anyone without a turtle of his own may rent one for a 50-cent registration fee, and enter his in any race for an additional 50 cents. For identification, tabs containing numbers are prepared and attached to each animal's shell. Different colored tabs are used for the three categories of entries — general, privately owned, and rented. (This system was adopted many years ago when it was discovered that the application of paint to a turtle's back is harmful to the little creatures.)

After the selection and identification procedure the competition starts, with a race every 20 minutes throughout the afternoon until 5 p.m., at which time the presentation of awards to the winners is scheduled. The feature attraction is the match race between a Joshua Tree turtle and a Calaveras County jumping frog. It is held around 3:30 p.m. Sunday, the activities start at 10 a.m. with turtle races held at 20-minute intervals until 4 p.m., followed by the awarding of prizes and the Grand National Sweepstakes. This final race is open only to the winners of the two days' racing and results in the champion for the year.

A unique feature of the National Turtle Races is the circular starting gate in the center of the track. The turtles are

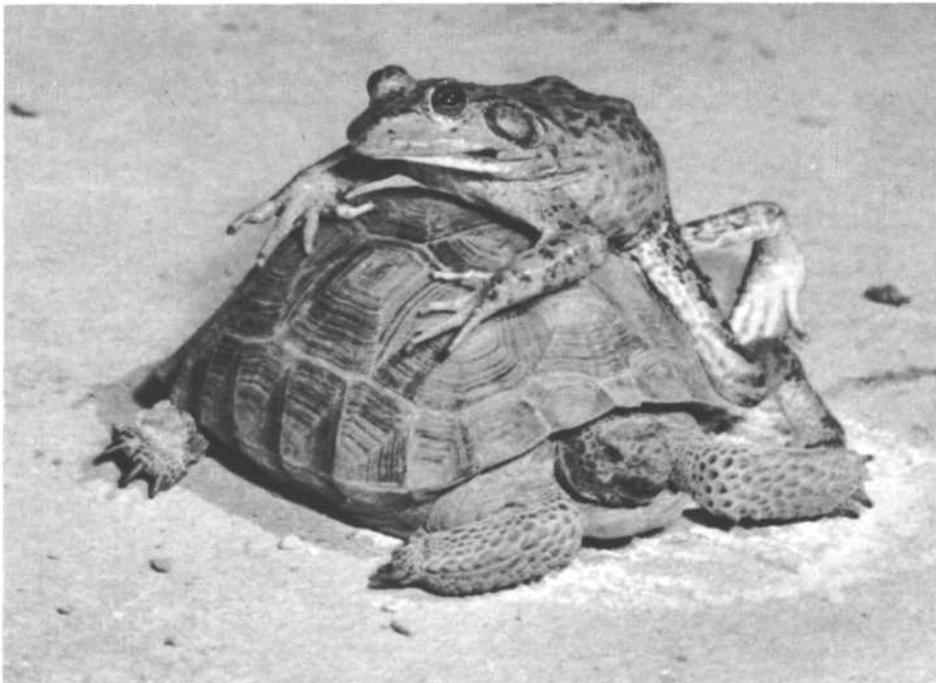
placed in the numerous compartments of this central contraption; then it is raised and they race toward the perimeter. There is no chance of an entry being crowded against the rail because there is no rail! They are all free to run or crawl in any direction toward the finish line—if they are so inclined.

The number of turtles per race differs but some of the feature events include as many as 40 or 50 entries. It is thrilling to watch so many of these little armored reptiles jockeying for position, or in some cases, showing indifference by taking numerous rest stops along the way. After an exciting 20 minutes, the "also-rans" are scooped up in order to clear the track for the next race.

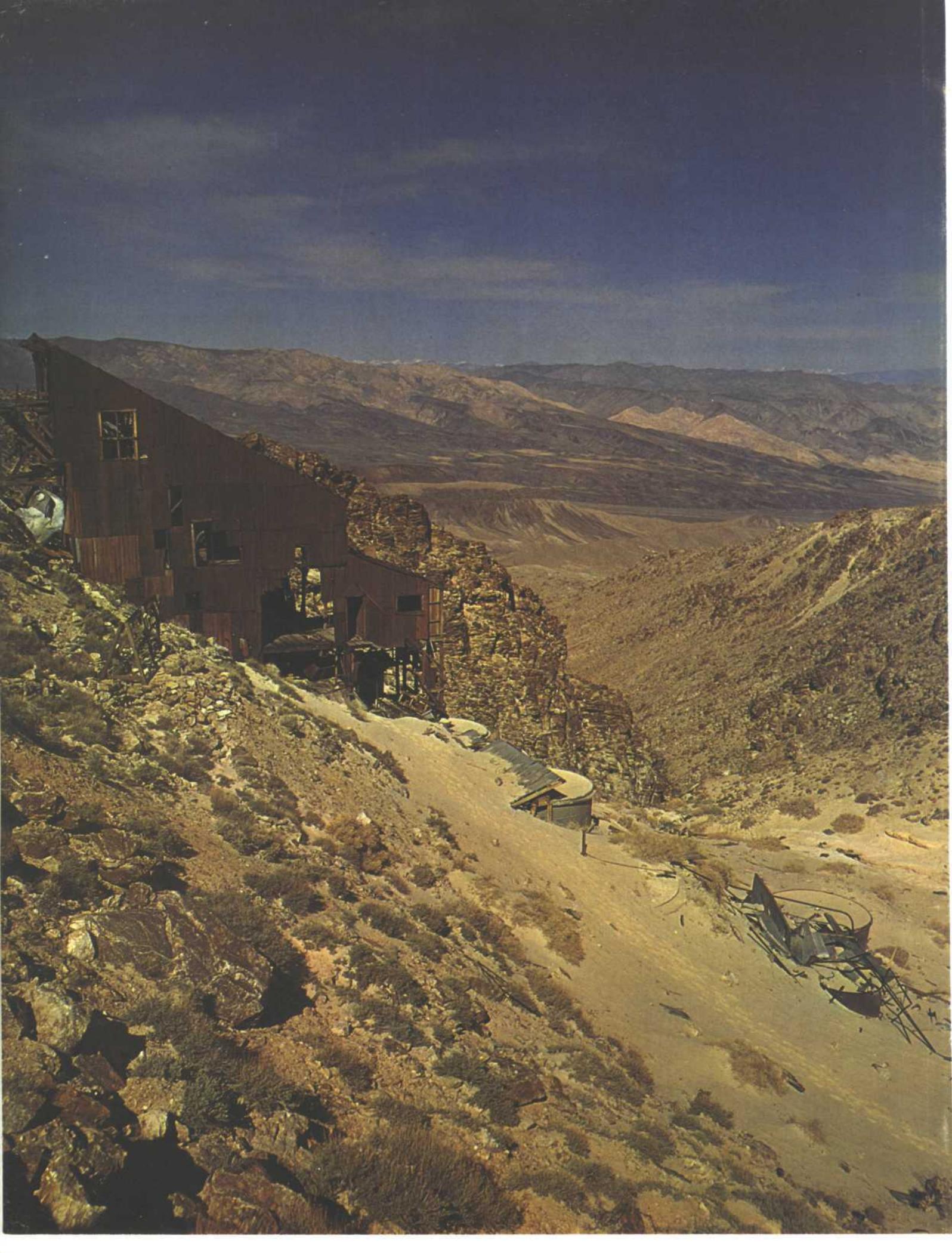
Excitement and good humor prevails at the turtle races, even when they develop into slow motion performances. The only thing serious you'll see here is the turtle himself—the expression on his face could bring tears. It is interesting to watch the owners of entries and study the methods they have devised for bringing in a winner where their turtles confuse the event with a drag race and are inclined to overdo the dragging bit! The owners are not satisfied with a smile from Lady Luck—they won't settle for anything less than a passionate embrace!

For instance, a librarian in Palm Desert had a pet turtle a few years ago. The turtle's name was Richard, and he knew it—he would respond to the calling of his name. She entered him in the National Turtle Races at Joshua Tree and was thrilled with his excellent performance. She carried a supply of lettuce and bananas to feed Richard between races, and stood at the finish line shouting his name during the contests. His ability to recognize his name and his passion for lettuce and bananas resulted in two wins in three races!

However, certain turtles have been known to ignore all incentives and set a snail's pace—or perhaps a turtle's pace. In other words, they choose to dog it. One thing is clear, whether you are the proud owner of a stable of turtles, the sponsor of a single hardtop pet, or a spectator-type turtle-watcher, you'll enjoy the exhibition of competitive skill this annual event offers, and a pleasant day or two in the high desert sunshine. Remember, during the first weekend in May, the place to be is Joshua Tree! □



Freddy the Frog and Myrtle the Turtle relax before the race. Once the race starts all friendships cease as they speed toward the finish line in this thrilling contest.



Twenty-Three SKIDOO

by Gary Moore

TWO PROSPECTORS were crossing Death Valley in 1905 when they were caught in an unusual fog—one of the few ever recorded in the area—and were forced to make camp until they could once again see the trail.

Harry Ramsey and his partner "One Eye" Thompson were enroute from Rhyolite, Nevada to the new gold strike area of Harrisburg when they made camp on the south side of the Tucki Mountains.

While waiting for the fog to lift Ramsey did a little prospecting and found ore which started a gold rush and the founding of Skidoo and a short, but violent history.

After their discovery Ramsey and Thompson staked claims. Later Ramsey sold his claim to Bob Montgomery, a major holder of mining interests in Rhyolite, for \$60,000. When financier Charles Schaub took an interest in the area, Skidoo was made.

Fortune seekers came from all directions. The fact there were no roads or trails made little difference. The population filtered in over the rocks and through the ravines.

The town took shape. It had a newspaper, *The Skidoo News*, a bank and the inevitable saloons. The town boasted three restaurants, hardware, and general stores. Roads were nil but the Skidoovians had a telephone line. Mines in the area were approaching a total yield of \$3,000,000 in gold and silver.

Essentials for living had to be hauled 10 miles. Water was piped 23 miles from Telescope Peak. This 23-mile water pipe may have been the reason for the town's name, due to the popular cliché of the era "Twenty-three Skidoo."

More interesting than any other aspect of the town were the personalities like one Joe "Hooch" Simpson. His middle name indicated his favorite pastime.

Hooch blew in from Keeler where he had killed a man, just prior to shooting up a saloon in Independence. He apparently reasoned that going straight was far superior to crime so went into partnership with Fred Oakes, building the Gold Seal Saloon.

But Hooch didn't stay sober or legitimate long. One day in a drunken stupor he ambled across the street to the bank. The bank was part of Jim Arnold's Skidoo Trading Company. Hooch demanded at gunpoint all the cash in the place. Jim laughed and grabbed the gun from the drunk. Adding insult to injury, Jim hid Joe's gun.

Joe's pride was hurt. It didn't take him long to find his weapon, wander back to the bank, and shoot Jim Arnold. Hearing the shots, several townsfolk rushed in to apprehend Hooch. Joe was chained to a barroom table. Drinks made the rounds of all, including Hooch. But later that night when Jim Arnold died, public opinion changed. The consensus was to hang Hooch immediately — which they did without hesitation.

The verdict and punishment were so fast the photographers from the city arrived too late. Obliging citizens hastily restrung Joe from the same telephone pole so pictures could be taken.

Sam Hooper worked for Jim Arnold in his combination store and bank as a store helper and bank clerk. He gambled and lost so decided to dip into the bank funds to pay his debts. To do this he decided to stage a mock holdup with himself the victim.

The bank clock consistently ran one hour fast, which irritated Hooper no end. Such was the case when he left the bank that afternoon. After dark he returned, cleaned out the safe, and left town to hide the loot. While on the road Sam ran into George Murrel and exchanged greetings.

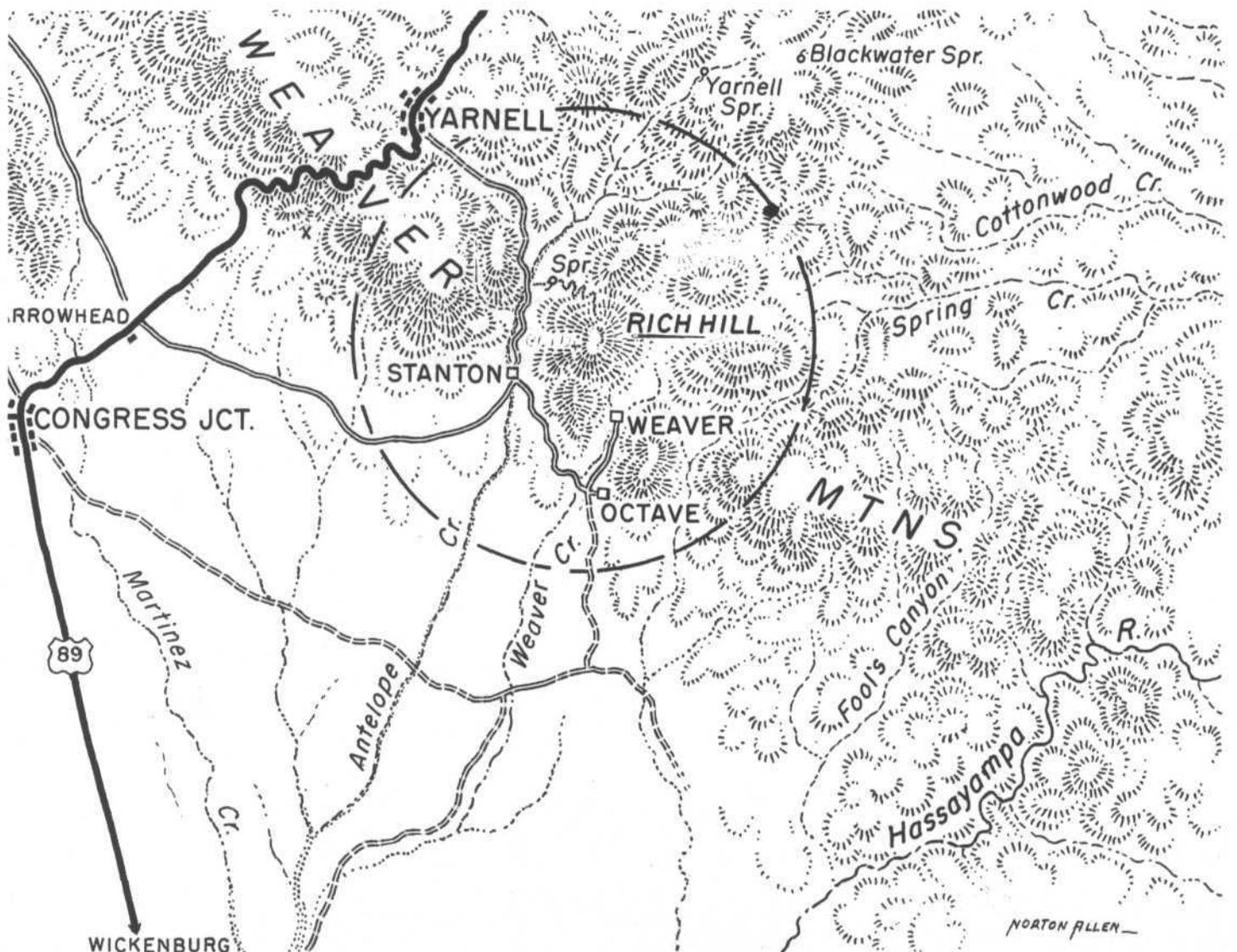
Returning to town, Sam went to the bank, strewed papers all over, and set the clock back an hour. Firing a shot into it and the desk, he took a dive to the floor from the desk top.

When he was found everything went as planned, until George Murrel turned up. It seemed that Arnold had corrected the clock also. The clock had stopped one hour earlier than Sam had planned, exactly at the time Murrel saw him. He confessed and was run out of town.

Skidoo lasted only a few years and today few buildings remain of the once roaring and violent town — the town known as the "place where they hung the same man twice." □

RUBBLE, TREASURE AND GHOSTS

by Al Pearce



CONGRESS JUNCTION has been called a town so tough that even the women strapped on six guns and shot it out. It was the site of the rich Congress Gold Mine and supply center for the nearby towns of Stanton, Weaver and Octave. The four towns combined made up a center for practically every incorrigible who ever wandered into Arizona.

Today, only their ghosts remain; ghosts of men who defied the Apaches to wrestle a fortune of gold from the ground—or steal it.

Some say the fighting has never ended. They insist that on dark nights, the Apaches smear their faces with war paint and come howling out of the nearby hills. They claim the ghostly outlaws still ride drunkenly down the debris-littered streets. On particularly stormy nights, when the clouds are claspng with thunder, one may even see a detachment of Cavalry troops come charging from the Old Date Creek Army Camp.

According to legend, a flood in 1890 in the Hassayampa River washed away a mining camp, carrying downstream a safe containing a small fortune in gold.

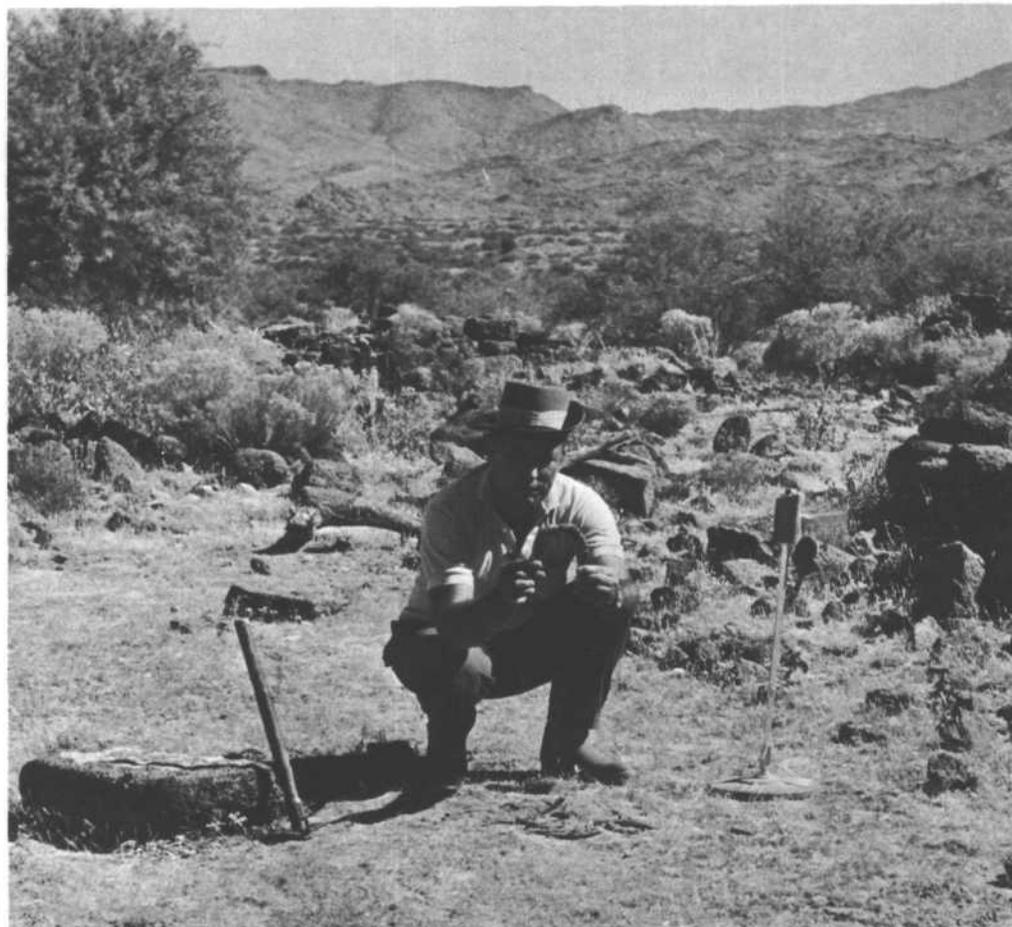
Another story tells of three Italians who befriended an Indian and was led to a rich gold deposit. The three men loaded themselves down with gold, but were attacked by other Indians before they could reach civilization. The story was told by one of the men who survived the attack, but died before he could draw a map to his treasure. His pockets were filled with gold when he died.

This was in 1860. Three years later, the town of Weaver was founded by prospectors who picked thousands of dollars of loose gold from the ground. Octave came to life that same year when placer mining yielded over a million dollars worth of gold. Later, the Octave mine produced \$8,000,000 worth of ore. The Congress mine also produced a similar amount, not to mention the millions that were scooped from the sand.



Ruins of stone houses which were once the homes of miners can be found between the towns on the loop-trip in Arizona.

Using a Goldak metal detector, the author found "lots of horseshoes" during his brief trip. Time prevented a complete search.





Ruins such as this are ideal areas for metal detecting and bottle collecting. Few people have visited the area in recent years.

The trip to the old army camp is strictly a four-wheel-drive as can be seen by this washed out and abandoned road.



Nearby Stanton was a placer camp, originally called Antelope Springs. A mean hombre named Charles Stanton hired a bunch of Mexicans to murder the town's leading citizens. Then he re-named it Stanton. But whatever his profit, it was short lived. He was soon murdered by a bad guy from Weaver.

Abandoned in 1896, Weaver became a den for outlaws whose apparent aim in life was to shoot the daylight out of other outlaws who had taken over Congress.

One of the most popular tales concerns a gang who robbed a gold shipment and then returned to Weaver to boast of their accomplishment. That night the robbers went to bed in a drunken stupor. They were murdered and their gold never found. It seems they hid it somewhere between Congress and Weaver.

After reading about the four Arizona ghost towns and the army camp—the history is like a wild west movie on the late, late show—my wife and I decided to visit the area.

There are not too many areas that can boast a background similar to the 25 mile radius surrounding Congress Junction. There are restaurants, service stations, and several families in Congress. It's quiet and peaceful, a marked contrast to what it must have been during its heyday. It's kept alive by the tourists traveling Highway 89 from Prescott to Phoenix. But for every occupied building there are several that are deserted, mute evidence of what the town had once been.

We took a dirt road to the west a few miles north of Congress towards the old army camp. This dirt road crosses the highway and continues east to Stanton, Weaver and Octave, in that order. These three towns can be reached in a passenger car. It's rough, but a cautious driver can make it. It takes a four-wheel-drive rig to reach the army camp. This seldom visited site is across a sandy gully at the end of a rough, washed out dirt trail. This old camp site has numerous old dumps of interest to bottle collectors. The camp was occupied from 1867 through 1874 so any bottle would be a collector's item.

We had a Goldak metal locator, which is one of the best I have ever used. However, our total find this trip consisted only of tin cans and horse shoes. If some-

one would invent a detector that would tell the difference between gold and tin cans! On the other hand, many an old prospector hid his gold in a tin can, so you can't afford not to dig them up.

The army camp is found by driving west from Highway 89 about 10 miles before turning south on a rough dirt road. The turnoff is directly in line with a railroad bridge. After making the turnoff, take the first road to your left. Here the going gets rough. Cross the stream bed and then bear sharply to the right, going towards piles of lava rock.

There is no road here. You just follow your nose towards a large clump of trees downstream from where you made the crossing. You won't be able to see evidence of the army camp until you're almost on top of it. Crumbling walls are all that remain above ground.

If you do make the trip, give yourself plenty of time. I'm sure there are a lot of old bottles under ground and all you need to find them is a little time and patience.

My wife and I reluctantly left the army camp shortly before noon and turned our Jeep towards Stanton, eight miles east of Highway 89. Here we encountered our first disappointment. What is left of the town is on private property and posted. From the road we could see several build-

ings, indicating that the town was fairly well advanced before it was abandoned.

We headed towards Weaver, two miles away. There are a couple of families living in Weaver and I sort of envy them. They have the type of view from their front door that would cost a small fortune elsewhere.

The area is a maze of staggering foothills, bordered to the north by high, coniferous forest-covered mountains. Between the foothills small gullies are remaining evidence of the floods that swept gold from the mountains.

A few miles to the south a prospector is reported to have picked up \$30,000 worth of gold nuggets in one day.

Beyond Weaver the road gets a bit rougher. The hills get steeper and there are more and more deserted miners cabins along the way. Due to a lack of time, we didn't stop at any of these cabins. However, I am certain an afternoon of exploring would be both interesting and possibly profitable.

Octave consists of crumbling walls and a dump site that covers the entire side of a hill. A part of this dump has been explored. There are broken, purple bottles all over the place. The heart of the dump, which appears to be many feet deep, is untouched and my wife grumbled

for hours about not having time to really go through it.

We were in the area for only a day, a very short time when you remember the history. We left with a desire to return.

The Congress-Octave area is a fading part of history, and as one rambles through the area he is overcome by the presence of the ghosts who contributed so much and left only a few tales of lost fortunes and violence. □

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Author plans to return to the old mining camp area in Arizona as he believes there are many sites which would produce finds.

NATURE'S INSTANT LIZARD

THE CRAFTY

HE IS THE second largest lizard in the United States. His name, Chuckwalla, is of Indian origin. The generic name, *Sauromalus Obesos*, means "flat lizard." And indeed he is both a "flat" lizard and a "fat" lizard.

The skin is so loose it hangs in folds over his entire body, front and back. When alarmed at a noise or frightened by an enemy, this flat body enables him to squeeze into the narrowest of crevices in the rocks, and because of the loose elastic skin, he can inflate his body so it is impossible to pull him out. His inflation can be 50 to 60 percent greater than his normal size.

A 16-inch-long male can either deflate his body to three-fourths inch in thickness, or inflate his body to three inches as a protection against his enemies. If a

Chuckwalla is undecided as to whether danger is near, he usually sits high on his rock, body inflated and very slowly looks over the terrain. His scales are small, smooth and closely set.

His habitat is in the rocky areas of the lower desert regions of Southern Utah, Southern Nevada, Southern California and the lower part of Arizona, being more numerous in Arizona. He requires a daily temperature of from 80 to 120 degrees.

Being a cold-blooded animal, Chuckwallas' activities are completely dependent on temperature; unable to locomote after temperatures fall below a certain point. In the fall of the year, when the daytime temperature begins to drop, the Chuckwalla is seldom seen. He will move slower and slower, until finally retreating

under the rocks or in a hole in the ground for his winter hibernation.

The Chuckwalla is the last of all the lizards to emerge from his winter hibernation into the awakening of spring. Nature intended this, for, as almost all other lizards can live on insects, the Chuckwalla is a complete vegetarian and must wait in hibernation until the buds and flowers of the desert come into bloom. He eats prickly pear, leaves of the creosote bush and encelia bush, and blossoms of all colors, although its favorite food seems to be anything with a yellow color.

A good part of every day is spent lying on the rocks, sunning and napping. The territory of a male Chuckwalla includes at least one good-sized rock, about four or five feet high, and six to eight

When danger threatens the Chuckwalla inflates his body.

Early morning the lizard crawls out of his hole into the sun.



CHUCKWALLA

by Bernie Crampton

feet in width. This territory is about 20 feet square. He will allow very young Chuckwallas in his territory, most females, but never another male. Early morning and late afternoon seems to be the time for eating, which is a slow, contented process. The nights are spent under the rocks sleeping.

With the exception of the Gila Monster, the Chuckwalla is our second largest Iguanid lizard, and a full grown male usually grows to about 18 inches, including the long, rounded tail, which is generally equal in length to the body. The color is a brownish grey, or lightish grey. As a male grows older, his grey color turns to a black and he will have yellow and orange spotty dots on his back and stomach. These will not be too noticeable when he is cold or fright-

ened, but warm and contented and lying on his rock, he presents very beautiful coloring.

Their chief weapon of defense is their fat, blunt tail, which, when hurled in an enemy's direction, will cause the enemy to think twice before attacking again. Their teeth are in a single row around the edges of their jaw, and they use them when the occasion arises. They are sharp and the bite from a Chuckwalla feels like many tiny pin pricks. Their last means of defense, but the method used most often, is running into a crevice and inflating their bodies to full expansion—making themselves quite impossible to be pulled out. Living among the rocks as they do, crevices and safety are usually within easy reach of the Chuckwalla.

Mating takes place in late May and

June and the eggs are laid in July or August in holes in the ground. Hatching occurs in late August and September, and the number of eggs to a clutch is from eight to fourteen. The babies are about two inches in length.

In spite of their languid appearance, their stubby legs can carry them with great speed. Watching a Chuckwalla at very close range, he looks demure and contented as any peaceful soul on earth. When frightened by noise or enemy, he has the appearance of a vicious monster from a prehistoric age.

But they are not vicious monsters. They are shy, yet friendly and curious. You can spend hours watching their antics, but, even if you do capture one to study, don't take him home . . . leave him in his own natural habitat for others to enjoy. □

A vegetarian, the Chuckwalla dines on leaves and berries.

Despite his fierce appearance he is docile and shy.



Tulare County's

MOONEY GROVE

by Irene Wray

EARLY EXPLORERS who traveled through the San Joaquin Valley found a primeval forest of valley oaks and welcomed the relief of deep shade after their travels through the desert. Today, the valley is the gardenland of the world, but you can still find the remnants of the forest where the Kaweah Indians lived, and you'll also find a replica of a pioneer village. There are log cabins, a blacksmith shop, a cupola-topped one-room school, furnished settlers' homes, and probably the largest collection of old farm tools and machinery anywhere.

The pioneer village is surrounded by a 10-acre park, with picnic tables, rowboats and a man-made lagoon twisting through the giant oaks, a playland, a miniature railroad, and many other surprises. It's called Mooney Grove, supervised by the Tulare County Parks Department and the Tulare County Historical Society. There's no entrance fee, the pioneer village is free, and so are the rowboats. It's open all year 'round.

On U.S. 99 south of Fresno, take the Visalia Turnoff, (Highway 198). After about five miles, watch for Mooney Boulevard, turn right and it's about four more miles. When you leave the park, continue south on Mooney Boulevard toward Tulare. You'll come out on U. S. 99 again.

If you bring a picnic lunch, a good place to eat would be the shaded tables near the pioneer village museum. Kids can run and play here, and there's something to interest everyone in the village after lunch.

You'll enter through the museum building where there are cases around the rooms with exhibits of all kinds: old sewing machines, churns, quilts, clocks, dolls and doll furniture, clothes, and many interesting old photographs. One set of old pictures shows five sisters of a family in various poses showing off their long hair. It not only reached the floor, it trailed along for another foot or two, like a weird wedding train. There's a special room for Indian artifacts. In a covered area back of the museum are housed a 1915 Cadillac V-8, old tractors, and an early model Best tracklayer.

Step out into the pioneer village. With wide expanses of lawn, and mighty oaks shading you, you'll see a windmill, two old schoolhouses, settlers' furnished homes, a jail, a blacksmith shop, a log cabin, and other buildings. All are authentic. Some have been moved from their original sites around the county.

The tool shelter is a long shed which covers quite an assortment of farm tools. Wagons of all kinds, mowing machines, hay rakes, potato planters, grain seeders, manure spreaders, scrapers, discs, Stockton gang plow, ensilage cutter, fan mill, walnut huller, sulphur duster, cultivators, and, most interesting of all, a Holt Combine. This monstrous machine, built in 1917, was run by a gasoline engine and pulled by horse or mule teams. It has a twenty-foot header and was sometimes used with an eight-foot extension. It often harvested fifty acres of grain in a day.

Inside Surprise School you'll go back 60 years when you sit in the old desks. Windows are view-height, and the "out-

doors" looks as tempting now as it probably did to students then.

The two-story Emben house, near Surprise School, is typical of the larger ranch homes built in the 1890s. The Emben and Cramer houses are both furnished in pioneer style and look charming and livable. The Cramer house has a carpet weaving loom in the back bedroom. The jail was built in 1872 and stood on the north side of Courthouse Square in Tulare.

The Ducor building, originally the home of the Ducor Women's Club, and later the community library, now is home for two Washington Hand printing presses and the Alpaugh telephone switchboard. One of the printing presses was used for many years by the Visalia Times Delta.

The log cabin is one of the oldest houses in Tulare County, built about 1854 on Elbow Creek, northeast of Visalia.

Mooney Grove is centered in what's left of the great forest which once covered Four Creeks country, the delta of the Kaweah river and its many channels. It was marked by streams where wild berry vines entwined with oaks, cottonwoods and willow trees. The Yokut Indians, of the subtribes of Ga-We-Ha, or Kaweah, Yokohl, Wukchumne, Wolasi, Telamne, and Choinok enjoyed an abundance of game and great production of acorns. Life was easy, in this place of peace.

Fathers Garces and Zalvidea and Lt. Francisco Ruiz were probably the first white men in the area. Father Zalvidea said it would be a good site for a mission, but it was his considered opinion that the land was "too arid for anything but sunflowers."

Jedediah Smith trapped beaver here in 1827; Ewing Young's party, with young Kit Carson as a member, passed through in 1829. Carson returned in 1844 with John Fremont's exploratory party.

In the early 1860s Michael Mooney bought the property now known as Mooney Grove. His son, Hugh, responding to public appeal to save some of the valley oaks, sold the land to the county at a token fee. The Tulare County Historical Society became the recipient of gifts of houses, buildings and exhibits and the pioneer village. Museum hours are from noon to six o'clock weekdays and noon to seven on weekends. □

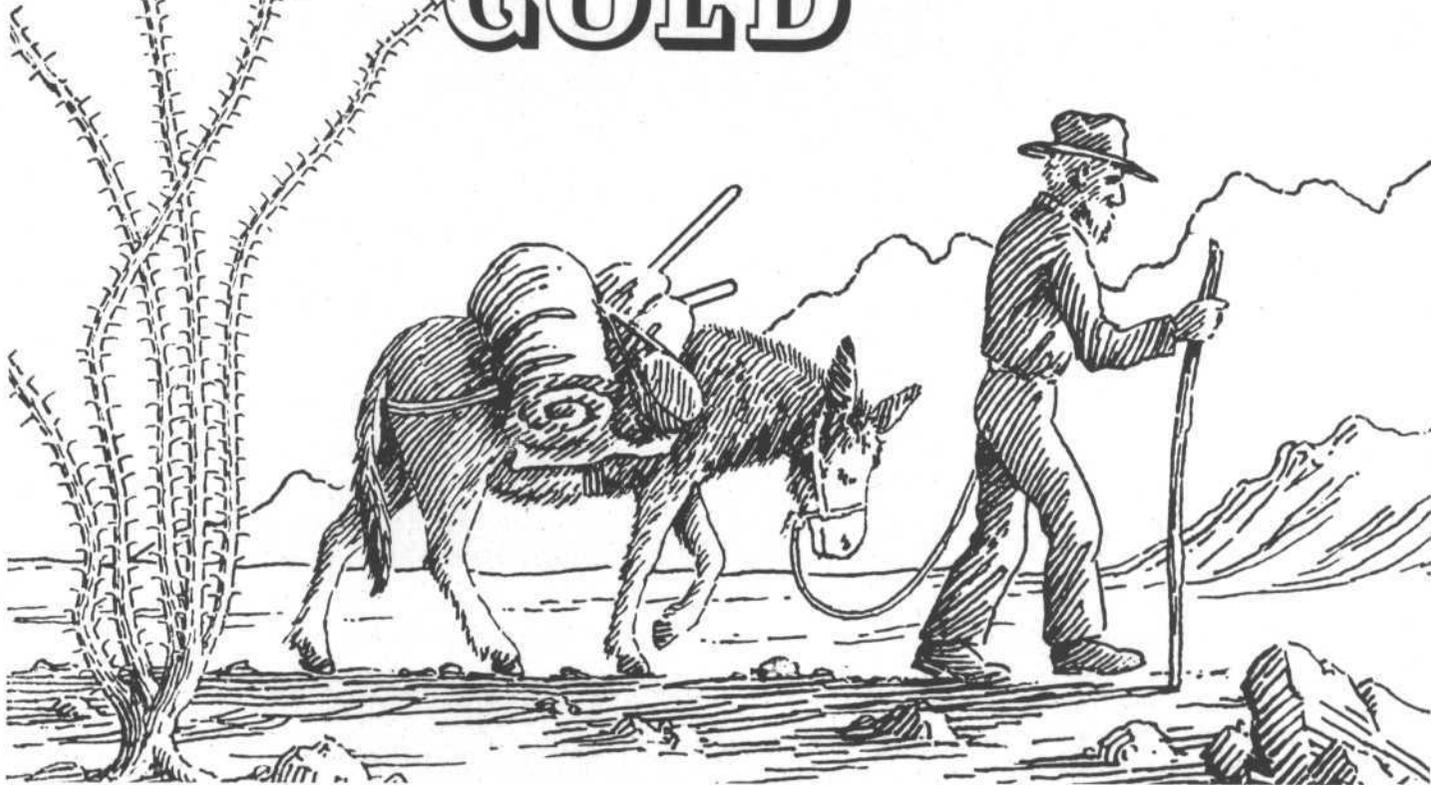


One of the many pastimes at Mooney Grove is boating on the lake and picnicking on the shore. Area is open the year 'round.



The Pioneer Village is complete with log cabins, an old school, blacksmith shop, pioneers' furnished homes and other authentic replicas of the past.

LOST MULE SHOE GOLD



As described in the 1969 January issue of Desert Magazine, the Cargo Muchacho Mountains in Southern California are dotted with mines, some of which are believed to have been worked by the early Spanish explorers. Today the area is as confusing and dangerous as it was a century ago. And within this area is the Lost Mule Shoe Gold as described in this article by Harold Weight, reprinted from the 1954 September issue of Desert Magazine.

IT IS 40 years or more since the man who found the Lost Mule Shoe Gold rode from Picacho, on the Colorado River 25 miles north of Yuma, into that maze of cragged mountains, volcanic flows, rock-paved mesas and great washes to the northwest. He was seeking the most direct possible way to the oasis of Dos Palmas, almost 90 airline miles distant.

It would have been foolhardy for a healthy man to strike out thus, alone, across an empty and jumbled and almost waterless land. This traveler was almost too ill to ride. But in time he reached his destination—and on the way he stumbled upon a ledge so richly laced with yellow metal that the rock would scarcely fall apart, even when broken.

Unfortunately, the man who found the Lost Mule Shoe Gold never returned to his golden bonanza to reap its reward. Nor was he able to describe his route so others could trace it out—though at least one man spent the greater part of his lifetime in the attempt. Possibly he failed because it was no real trail he had followed, but part road and part ancient Indian pathway and part, perhaps, the

ways of wild game to watering places, and part a trailless trek up sandy washes and over a multitude of look-alike ridges.

The man had been ill with dysentery when he was ferried across from Arizona to Picacho. Nonetheless, he was desperately determined to press on to Dos Palmas. He did press on, but four and a half hours after he had left Picacho, he was so sick and so weak that he could continue no farther. At that time he was crossing a saddle between two low hills. He dismounted and sprawled on the ground.

After a few moments he felt better, and as he lay there, his eyes wandered over a ledge which cropped out near by. Even in his semi-conscious condition he saw the golden streakings in the rock and was excited by them. He made his way to the ledge. The ore was rich beyond anything he had ever seen. Should it continue to any depth, here was a fortune! And spilling down from the ledge was the dull gleam of placer gold that had been eroded from it.

Here was the realization of every prospector's dream—if he could stake out

claims and file upon them. But he was too weak even to build a stone discovery monument. Finally he removed his vest, folded it and laid it on the ledge. Then he took a spare mule shoe from the load on his pack mule and placed it on the vest to hold it in place. With samples from the ledge, and one last look at the terrain to fix it in his mind, he rode on. The vest and mule shoe, he hoped, would be there to identify the spot when he returned.

But when he reached the coast, his illness continued and in time became infinitely worse. He was in the veterans' hospital at Sawtelle when William M. Smith learned from him the story of the golden ledge he had seen so briefly. Smith's relationship to the man is uncertain. One says a brother-in-law, another a son-in-law, a third no relation. But Smith visited the man in the hospital over a period of two years. And at last the old prospector gave Smith a map of the route he had followed, as he remembered it.

"I'll never get back now," he said. "If you find it, send me just enough to make me comfortable."

So the man who found the Lost Mule Shoe Gold passes from the story. Today not even his name is remembered by those who have heard of his strike. Even the date of his discovery is indefinite. According to Carl Walker, of Gold Rock Ranch near Ogilby, California, who heard the story often from Smith, the ledge was found while the American Girl and Hedges mines in the nearby Cargo Muchacho Mountains were still operating. Hedges, near Tumco, was worked quite steadily from 1892 to 1909 and intermittently, 1910-16. The American Girl was active from 1892 to 1900, and 1913-16.

There was no doubt in William M. Smith's mind that the strike was a real one. Probably he saw some of the ore. At any rate, in 1927 he bought the property at the old Hoge ferry landing, at the mouth of Gavilan Wash, about seven miles above Picacho. Later he frankly stated that he had bought the ranch to be in a position to hunt for the lost ledge, which he was certain would be found within a few miles of that point. He put up new buildings beside the river, named it the 4S ranch, moved his family in, and began the quest which was to continue the rest of his active life. And even after



The main streets of Picacho are now under tules and water of the Colorado backed up by the Imperial Dam. The discoverer of the Lost Mule Shoe gold ferried across the river at this point.

he had given up the ranch, more than 10 years later, and moved back "inside," Smith returned again and again to hunt for the Lost Mule Shoe Gold.

If it does exist how could Smith, aided by the map and the directions given him by the original finder, have searched for more than 20 years in vain? Anyone who knows the Picacho country can answer that. Above the old gold camp is mile upon mile of desert-mountain wilderness which has never been tamed by man. Prospectors have been through most of it, at one time or another, but back from the river there are no habitations. West from the river no road has touched the most of it, and probably no road ever will. It was lonelier when Smith hunted the ledge from the 4S than it was when the sick man first found it. It was lonelier when that man crossed it than it had

been a decade or two before, when prospectors were numerous. And it is even more lonely today than it was when Smith started his search, and just as dangerous as it has always been for the careless or inexperienced.

All of the land where the Lost Mule Shoe Gold may be hidden is considered a part of the Chocolate Mountains. On the river side, above Picacho, at least a score of giant washes drain these mountains, and have cut their foothills and mesas into thousands of ridges and buttes, and probably into thousands of low hills connected by saddles. Among them are White Wash and Bear Gulch and Carizo, Gavilan and Julian Parra washes, in that order, and far to the north, Vinagre. In most of these washes, placer gold has been found.

When the discoverer of the lost golden

The lost bonanza is believed to be somewhere in the area of Gavilan Wash which goes from Indian Pass to the Colorado River. It is passable only by back country vehicles.



ledge rode through this country, the river road from Picacho crossed the mouths of all these washes. There also was the road Hoge built up Gavilan Wash to Indian Mesa, along which he once trail-herded hogs from his Arizona ranch. There was the road Julian Parra roughed out from an upper tributary of the wash that bears his name to Mesquite Diggings, which he discovered. And many were the deep-rutted Indian trails, leading to watering places and through the easy passes, still used by Indians and Mexican and American miners.

Today the river road lies submerged by backed-up waters of Imperial Dam,

and Parra's mining road has almost vanished. The Indian trails are broken and weathered and unused. Between Picacho and Vinagre Wash—more than 20 miles by the river—the only road which enters this lonely land is the jeep trail successor to the one Hoge made up Gavilan Wash.

Editor's Note: Even today the road from Picacho to the site of the old 4S Ranch where Gavilan Wash meets the Colorado River is passable only by back country vehicles. However, there are good gravel roads for passenger cars to the Gold Rock Ranch, Indian Pass and from Yuma to Picacho on the Colorado. (See Desert, Jan. '68.)

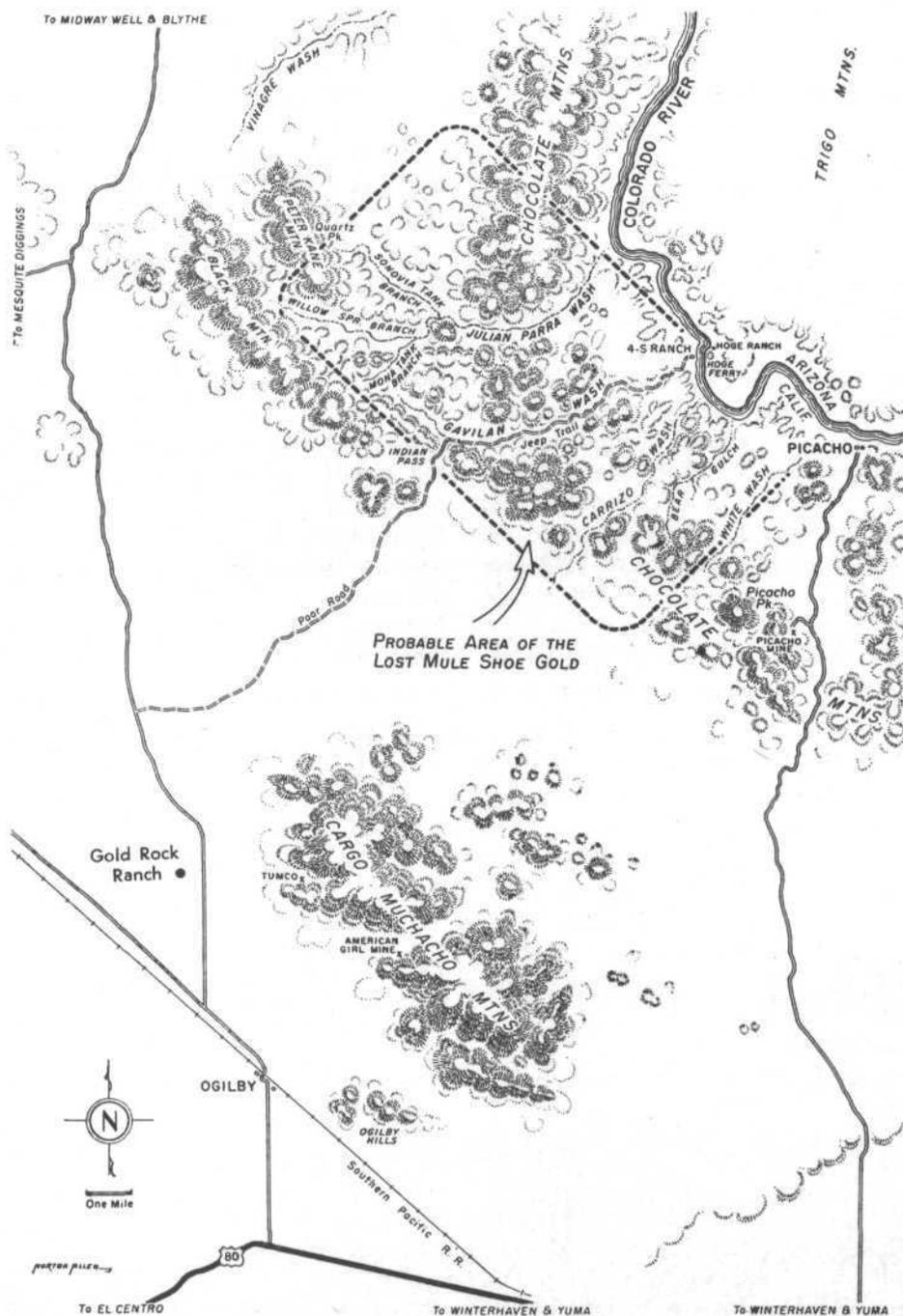
But which of the great washes did the man who found the Lost Mule Shoe Gold enter? Which of the old roads or trails did he follow even in part?

"I feel," says Carl Walker, "that the maximum a sick man could make in four and one-half hours, riding a horse and leading a pack mule, would not be over 16 miles. If I were trying to retrace that man's steps, I would do just as he did. I would start from Picacho, riding a horse and leading a mule and remembering that he was sick, and take the shortest route to Dos Palmas. That would establish his speed and the approximate area in which he could have made his discovery."

But what was the shortest route to Dos Palmas, as the man who found the Lost Mule Shoe Gold knew it? That would depend upon his knowledge of the land, or lack of it. The course he followed could shift, by several miles, the place where the search for the lost ledge should begin. A mile, or even a square mile, does not look large on the map. But when one attempts to explore it on foot or horseback, the area becomes immense. Particularly is this true in broken country like Picacho, where a square mile spread out would probably equal ten square miles.

Walker thinks the sensible route would have been along the river road to Gavilan Wash, up it to Indian Mesa, across to Mesquite Diggings, then down to the Southern Pacific Railroad where water would be available. Smith's map must have led him to the same conclusion, for this is the line along which he began his search. But through the years, his quest widened. When Ed Rochester, who has prospected all of the Picacho country, first heard of the Lost Mule Shoe Gold from Smith, about 1932, the latter was concentrating his hunt for the ledge between the 4S Ranch and Midway Well, especially in the area where Parra Wash heads, east of Imperial Gables. Ed thinks that Carrizo, Gavilan and Parra washes are all possible locations for the lost ledge, with Parra most likely.

When Clyde Stewart of Picacho, who also has prospected this country thoroughly, talked to Smith in 1937 about the ledge, Smith was searching for it in the main northern tributary of Parra Wash, where the great Sonovia natural water tank is located. Julian Parra Wash — Julian wash on some maps, and invari-



ably called "Hoolihan" by the oldtimers—has three chief tributaries, the left with Mona Tank, the center with Willow Spring, and the right with Sonovia Tanks. Julian Parra, who had a ranch at the mouth of the wash, was placing gold near Sonovia Tanks 65 years ago. Stewart believes that the lost ledge is in or near this branch.

"Every wash that comes in to Parra from the north side will pan gold," he declares, "but Sonovia has the most. And this is the way the old main Indian trail went, right past Sonovia Tanks. They never go dry."

Myself, I wonder—since Dos Palmas and not Glamis, Amos, Niland or any other railroad station was given by Smith as the sick man's destination—if it is not possible that he kept south of the Chocolate Mountains all the way. He may have traveled on a northwest line, past Midway Well and on until he struck the old Bradshaw or Chuckawalla Trail, then followed it past Canyon Springs to Dos Palmas. This could have placed him north even of Parra Wash in four and one half hours.

When Smith last visited Ed Rochester at Picacho—Ed believes it was in 1948 or 1949—he had been up Parra Wash in the vicinity of Mona Tank on another hunt for the lost gold, and he kept Ed up all night talking about it. His search had failed again, but he blamed the wetback Mexicans for it. They had been in the area in such numbers that he was afraid to go farther or stay longer.

Unfortunately that is true today. You cannot go anywhere along the river—or often many miles back from it—without seeing some of these border-jumping laborers—the *braceros*—or evidence of their recent presence. When we jeeped down Gavilan Wash and over the ridges to Parra Wash this spring, we passed several of them. Their trail along the river, pounded to deep, white dust by thousands of poorly shod feet, can be seen miles away and is so well marked it can be followed by starlight. Frequent graves—often low mounds of gravel in desert washes, with half-gallon water bottles as the only markers—are poignant evidence of their desperate determination to achieve their golden dream—common laborers' jobs in the United States. Most of them are honest and friendly, but it would be foolhardy for lone or unpro-

ted persons to chance the bad hombres among them, or the vicious ones who sometimes travel with them.

After his visit with Rochester, William Smith made one more attempt to locate the Lost Mule Shoe Gold—probably his final one—late in the winter of 1949. He was alone this time and he stopped, as he often had in the past, with the Walkers at Gold Rock Ranch. And that night the old man was certain of success.

"I know exactly where it is," he insisted. "I'm going right up there and find it tomorrow." Then he urged Carl Walker to come with him. "I'll fill that box with gold for you," he said, pointing to the old trunk the Walkers used as a wood box.

Continued on page 42

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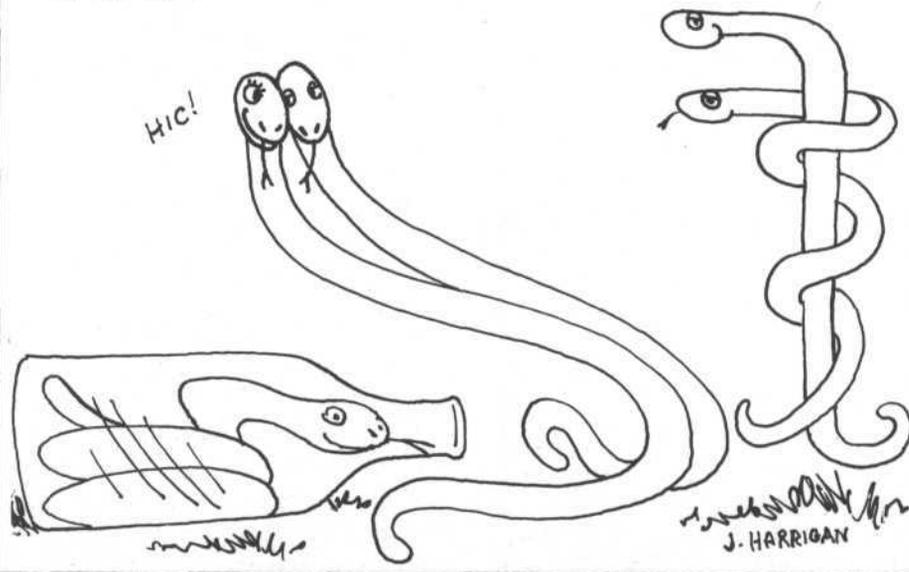
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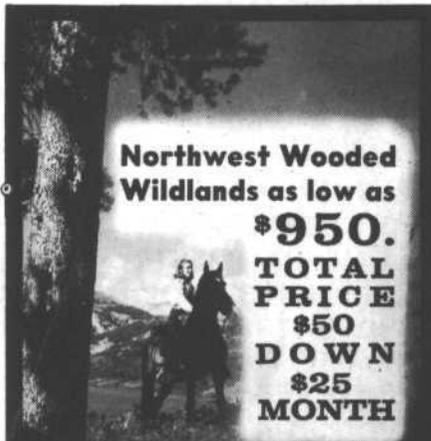
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MANY PEOPLE who drive from Los Angeles to Newhall and Palmdale for exploring and adventure in the Mojave Desert miss a significant and intriguing leftover of the last century. Travelers who stop to read the three historical markers on the east side of Highway 14 about a mile north of its junction with U.S. 99 (Interstate 5) are short changed for their effort if their curiosity does not prompt them to walk up the eroded ravine beyond the roadside parking area.

Less than a quarter mile up the hill is the deep cut which once was the summit of the tortuous San Fernando Pass. Carved by hand out of the sandstone on the orders of General E. F. Beale in 1859, the passage is about 65 feet high and from 10 to 15 feet wide through warped strata that once blocked access to Soledad Canyon and points north. Many notables in California and American history used Beale's cut. Today it is a ghost passage.

For a long time, this area saw most of the north-south traffic of Los Angeles, especially during Death Valley's rich and boisterous heyday when the legendary 20-mule teams dragged gold and silver in-

gots and borax toward the seaport of San Pedro. It still is the main access route to the north with two high speed arteries slicing through mountains that have been barriers to man for centuries.

Gaspar de Portola was among the first of the explorers to use San Fernando Pass in his efforts to find a trail up the coast to Monterey. In 1770, he journeyed through the Newhall area and camped at an Indian Village on the Santa Clara near Castaic. Six years later, the Spanish priest-explorer, Francisco Garces, trudged over the pass.

The important mountain crossing became known as Fremont Pass after John C. Fremont led his troops from Santa Barbara into the San Fernando Valley for the signing of the Cahuenga Capitulation Treaty, ending the war with Mexico. But when heavy wagon and stage traffic increased, General Beale cut his slot in the hills and the pass was renamed for him by the thankful teamsters.

Even at that, however, teams were doubled up at Lyon's Station to pull the 35 to 40 ton loaded wagons with seven-foot wheels over the mountains. Two draglines of 20 mules hitched end-to-end



Beales' Cut is 50 yards long, 65 feet high and about 20 feet wide. It was carved by hand out of the sandstone for the now abandoned San Fernando Pass Road.

resulted in 250-feet of mule power straining against one cumbersome freight vehicle. Chock blocks were always left dragging after each right hind wheel to catch and hold the load when the mules faltered.

When stage coaches climbed the grade, passengers got out and walked beside it if they were lucky. Most of the time, they had to lend a hand to the horses by pushing from behind.

At the summit was a toll gate where passengers paid 10 cents and wagons were charged a quarter for passage. The indented ledges that supported the beams of a roof over the gate can still be seen in the sandstone walls of the cut. Nearby also are pick marks 100 years old.

By 1870, the wagon and stage traffic became so heavy the San Fernando Valley was faced with its first air pollution problem. The heaving horses choked in the thick dust churned up in the narrow gap. Teamsters with fists full of rein could scarcely breathe at all. Finally a sprinkling cart was brought in to patrol the road making the pass livable.

Those who traveled during the rainy season didn't get dust in their lungs, but they were often struggling through knee deep mud. After a hard drenching, the grade was impassable as wagons ground to a halt with axles dragging. On such days, the tavern at Lyon's Station did great business.

As a thoroughfare for the horseless carriage, the steep grade left a lot to be desired. In 1902 the first car to traverse

the cut had to go in reverse so the gas would continue flowing to the carburetor, and the driver had to send word ahead to clear the pass of animals so his contraption would not create unforgivable bedlam.

Beale's cut was finally deserted in 1910 when a tunnel was bored through the hills about 1/4 mile to the west. This disappeared when the present giant cut and modern four-lane highway was built.

Through the years, the old landmark has been used in western movies. William S. Hart, whose mansion and ranch in Newhall is now a State Park, is rumored to have jumped his horse across the gap, either for a scene in a movie or for a publicity stunt.

The rock and dirt road over which thousands of wagons and stages once traveled is rapidly eroding and small earthslides have partially blocked Beale's Cut. But deep inside the gap and at the north end, it is much the same as it ever was. With the slightest bit of imagination you can envision the pass crowded with mules snorting and coughing in the dust and teamsters shouting and cursing atop wagons loaded with the stuff that built the West.

Fremont Pass, as primitive as it was, played just as important a role in developing Los Angeles yesterday as U.S. 99 and the Golden State Freeway do today. It's ironic that Beale's Cut is generally overlooked as a significant historical landmark and will eventually slip into oblivion. □

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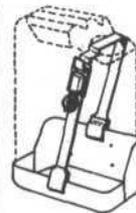
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BACK COUNTRY

FOUR WHEEL CHATTER

by Bill Bryan

I predict that in the near future there will be instituted a program we will all hate, but legislators will decide it is the only solution to the control of vandals and litterbugs. It will be necessary to obtain an off-the-road permit in order to drive through state and Federal administered back country land—such as the type permit the boating people must obtain.

If a full-scale program to stop the littering of dunes and back country areas is not instituted promptly all of our recreational areas will become one giant garbage and trash dump.

Maybe the outdoor sign companies can help by contributing billboards reminding back country users to:

1. What you haul into an area you haul out.
2. Do NOT bury your trash as coyotes and other animals will dig up the debris.
3. Police your campsite before leaving, including the use of brush to smooth the sand so it is left in its natural state.
4. Just because another person left his trash doesn't mean you should; two wrongs do not make a right.

Another thought is for the soft drink and beer companies to cooperate by offering a penny or so for the return of their cans and bottles. This way children could make candy money and feel proud in having helped clean up the deserts and mountains.

If these companies used just a small percent of their advertising funds for this project the publicity and improvement of their public image would more than compensate for the expense.

Recently we received a letter from a man who said he wants to make more desert trips, but that he can't stand the litter and that DESERT Magazine, by writing articles about the desert, is enticing people to go to the back country and therefore we are causing the litter problem.

C.O.D.

A park caretaker obtained the address from the car license plate of one carload of picnickers who had left behind the litter and debris typical of far too many picnics. He carefully gathered all the litter, packaged it for mailing and sent it to its former owners — C.O.D. Since money became involved in it, likely those people will take the time to avoid littering from now on.

The influx of people into the back country areas is increasing and will continue to increase, and if our magazine is responsible for people discovering the fun of exploring, bottle collecting, rock hounding and hunting for lost treasure, then we are proud of it. A weekend out in the open is better than sitting at a corner bar or watching television for two days.

At the same time I would like to point out to this reader that DESERT MAGAZINE devotes more space and more articles on conservation and anti-litter campaigns than any other recreational and travel magazine published—and we will continue to try and educate those litterbugs and vandals who make it so hard on the rest of us.

Organized four-wheel-drive clubs all have a code of ethics to which the members must abide or lose their membership. In addition, every organized back country club in the West stage clean-up campaigns, as shown on these pages every month.

So we are appealing to the "devil may care and to hell with others" individuals to treat the back country as they would their own backyard. The majority of drivers of 4WD vehicles, dune buggies, motorcycles and passenger cars, and the majority of horseback riders and hikers appreciate the desert and leave it in its

natural state. But within each of the categories—I mean in each and all—there are the vandals and litterbugs. Let's all try and show them the error of their ways so we can all continue to have the privilege of enjoying our wilderness areas.

Congratulations to the International Desert Racing Association and the Imperial Valley Dune Buggy Association for the excellent manner in which they conducted the annual New Years meet at the Imperial Sand Hills. Also to the sponsoring organizations who equipped the competition area with trash cans, the camping area with trash cans and restrooms. The attendance this year appeared smaller than usual, but I think you can chalk that up to New Years coming in the middle of the week.

The four-wheel-drive events seemed to be dominated by members from the Oceanside Four Wheelers, Bakersfield Trailblazers, Santa Maria Four Wheelers and the Hemet Jeep Club.

It looks like traffic in Baja will really be picking up with all the stories we hear about planned vacation trips. Don't forget your copies of Gerhard and Gulicks Baja Guidebook. Also another book many people may be overlooking is Arnold Senterfitts "Airports of Baja." This book has a picture of every airport in Baja and information about the facilities available.

If you have plenty of time to look around I would also suggest checking through some of Erle Stanley Gardner's Baja books. Believe me, you can't know too much about this area. Cliff Gentry of Indio tells me there were more than 100 gringos with trailers and campers set up in the Puertecitos area recently. There are some real fine four-wheel-drive rallies coming up in the next two months in Arizona and California so if you own a four-wheel-drive you would do well to attend. These events are the finest way in the world to find places to go and country you will want to return to.

TRAVEL



Calendar of Western Events

Napa Valley Jeepers Stage Major Clean-up Campaigns

For the completion of seven major projects during 1968 the Napa Valley Jeepers, Napa, California, this month will receive Desert Magazine's Conservation and Preservation Award. In addition to the clean-up projects they participated in two Search and Rescue practices.

Their first project was cleaning up the litter along the Oat Hill Mine Road between Napa and Calistoga as part of a program to convince the State of California to make the road area a historical monument.

More than 4000 Douglas fir trees supplied by the Bureau of Land Management were planted by the Napa Jeepers on the Oat Hill Mine Road after they had cleaned up the area. One hundred and seventy-seven man-hours were involved in this project.

On Sunday, April 28 members of the club swarmed over State Route 12 and cleaned up the litter along the road. Twenty-eight members spent 140 man-hours on the project. "From the comments of the people in the area this made a very favorable impression for all four-wheelers," Charles W. Elliott, conservation chairman, reported.

A 20-acre campground in the El Dorado National Forest was their next project. Twenty members cleaned up the area. Many large trees which had fallen during the winter were cut, split and stacked. The cleanup was to prepare the area for the summer influx of tourists.

Construction of a garbage pit in Grayhorse Valley and cleaning up the litter in the area was accomplished on the weekend of June 23. This large project involved 30 members and 360 man-hours with each member driving 12 hours round trip to the site.

When thousands of tiny trout were marooned in pools when a stream dried up in Redwood Creek, 21 members of the Napa Jeepers worked with game wardens to remove the fish from the pools and transport them to the Napa River. This activity was conducted over a two-week period.

Their final project of the year was cleaning up six miles of the Columbus Parkway in the Vallejo area. Enough litter to fill two dump trucks was picked up by members of the club.

In addition to the conservation and preservation projects, members of the Napa Valley Jeepers work closely with the Napa County Sheriff's Aero Squadron in search and rescue. Each month they conduct practice missions using simulated wreckage of downed aircraft in order to have perfect coordination when the real search mission is needed.

As a result of these projects the Napa Jeepers not only received letters of commendation from California and Federal officials, but, in being observed by the public, they greatly improved the public image of four-wheel-drive organizations.

FEBRUARY 20-22, SCOTTSDALE ROCK CLUB'S 4th annual show, Fashion Square, Scottsdale, Arizona. For details write Cliff Bruce, 8720 E. Jackrabbit Rd., Scottsdale, Ariz.

FEBRUARY 22 & 23, ROCKHOUND HOLIDAY SHOW sponsored by the Arrowhead Mineralogical Society, Alpha Lyman School, across street from the San Bernardino County Museum, 18890 Orange, Bloomington, Calif. Specimens of rare and unusual minerals on display, educational exhibits, lapidary work, etc. Parking and admission free.

FEBRUARY 22 & 23, GEM FAIR—SAN FERNANDO VALLEY presented by the Associated Gem & Mineral Societies of the San Fernando Valley Area. Devonshire Downs Fairgrounds, 18000 Devonshire, Northridge, Calif. Displays, dealers, camping and demonstrations.

FEBRUARY 21-March 2, IMPERIAL VALLEY GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY'S 22nd annual show at the California Mid-Winter Fair, Imperial, Calif. For details write Robert W. Wright, 770 Olive St., Apt 2, El Centro, Calif. 92243.

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 2, NATIONAL FOUR WHEEL DRIVE GRAND PRIX, Riverside, Calif. Write P. O. Box 301, Fullerton, Calif.

MARCH 1 & 2, INDIAN AND WESTERN RELIC SHOW sponsored by California Indian Collectors, The Museum, 135 West Foothill, Monrovia, Calif. Antique and modern Indian and Western Americana items for sale, trade and on display. Free appraisals. Admission \$1.00. For information write Howard Chatt, 2324 W. 25th Street, Los Angeles, Calif.

MARCH 1 & 2, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD PANNING CONTEST, Tropic Gold Camp and Mine, Rosamond, Calif. Celebrations and activities commemorate discovery of gold in Southern California. For information write Glen A. Settle, Route One, Box 98A, Rosamond, Calif. 93560.

MARCH 6 - 16, NATIONAL ORANGE SHOW, San Bernardino, Calif. All kinds and types of celebrations and exhibits highlight the 54th annual show.

MARCH 7-9, PHOENIX GEM AND MINERAL SHOW featuring "A Salute to the Bola Tie." North Exhibit Hall, State Fair Grounds, Phoenix, Ariz.

MARCH 8 and 9, MONROVIA ROCK HOUNDS ANNUAL GEM SHOW, Masonic Temple, 204 West Foothill Blvd., Monrovia, Calif. Write George Peterson, 204 Violet Ave., Monrovia, Calif.

MARCH 15 & 16, SECOND NATIONAL BUG-IN EXHIBITION and racing of dune buggies. Write P. O. Box 1617, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626.

MARCH 29 & 30, 4TH ANNUAL TRI-CLUB GEM & MINERAL SHOW sponsored by Coastal Bend Gem & Mineral Society, Fairgrounds, Angleton, Texas. Write O. C. Coleman, P. O. Box 307, Angleton, Texas 77515.

APRIL 3 through 6, PHOENIX JEEP CLUB'S EASTER RALLY near Quartzite, Arizona. Write P. O. Box 168, Phoenix, Arizona.

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LOST MULE SHOE GOLD
Continued from page 35

But that same night he made the only change in his lost mine story that they remember. Walker mentioned the low hills with the saddle between. "Oh, no!" Smith corrected him. "It was a saddle between two high hills!" Later — they talked most of the night—he broke off his enthusiasm to smile sheepishly at Margaret Walker. "I guess I've got the gold bug," he admitted.

In the early morning they saw him off up the road toward Indian Pass. "Be careful!" Mrs. Walker warned. "Don't get your car off the trail. You're too old to be able to work it out of the sand."

That evening he had not returned by the time he promised, and the walkers set out to look for him. Not many miles from the ranch they found him. Shortly after he had left them in the morning, he had attempted to drive up a big sandy wash. The sand trapped him, and there he had been sitting all day. He returned to the coast the next day, but as he left he assured them, grimly, "I'll be back."

The next year, the Walkers told me as much of the story of the Lost Mule Shoe Gold as they knew. "But you musn't print it yet!" they said. It's really William Smith's lost mine—and he said he was coming back."

But in the four years since, Smith has not come back and they have have heard no word from him. Late this spring, sitting on the big porch of Gold Rock Ranch and staring moodily at the somber lava flow through which Indian Pass enters the country of the Lost Mule Shoe Gold, Carl Walker said: "I guess it's anybody's story now — and anybody's gold."

That is only partly true. It is still the desert's gold—and the desert knows how to guard it. The country above Picacho is as merciless toward the careless or the inexperienced as it was half a century ago. The heat in summer is just as deadly. It has killed before, and it will kill again, given the opportunity.

Some day, perhaps, that fabulous ledge in the saddle between two hills—low or high—may be found again. But my guess is that its discoverer will be a man who knows what he is looking for and how to protect himself while he is looking. □

*Strictly
from a
Woman's
Viewpoint*

In answer to the Yucaipa reader's letter in the January issue wanting a recipe for Skillet Bread this is the best of two I have:

- 4 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¾ cup powdered milk
- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon and raisins, if desired

Cut in shortening until fine meal texture. May be stored in cool place as long as desired. Add water to make thick dough, may be made in plastic bag, squeezing to mix (no bowl to wash). Pat out dough in fry pan, lightly greased, to one inch thickness, and fry 8 to 10 minutes on each side over low heat. Same mix may be used for pancakes, muffins, by adding one egg per cup mix and varying amounts of water.

MRS. RUTH PAWELSKI,
Vista, California.

BREAKFAST SANDWICH

In the desert my husband and I have found the quickest and easiest breakfast to prepare is to fry two eggs, heat two sliced precooked sausage links, butter and toast a large egg twist roll, and put into a sandwich. This makes a whole complete breakfast without having to worry about dishes and silverware. The ideal way to cook the breakfast sandwich is on a griddle. This enables you to prepare one or two complete breakfasts at a time.

MRS. LOIS COONFIELD,
Long Beach, California.

LETTERS to and from the Editor . . .

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.

Rescued . . .

On October 26, 1968 my friend and I were exploring the Superstition Hills southwest of the Salton Sea in beautiful 110 degree weather. While exploring a 4WD trail our dune buggy became hopelessly stuck at the bottom of a steep washed-out gully in extremely fine sand. The next thing we knew, our battery was dead. For two hours we did a lot of digging and sweating, but our vehicle wouldn't start. We were five miles from our camp and another five miles from a paved road, and we didn't expect to see a soul as all of the tire tracks we saw were about two weeks old. But, just as we had given up hope on our dune buggy, we saw about six 4WD rigs on the horizon. They were from the Correccaminos 4WD, Vista. It was the most welcome sight I'd ever seen, and in no time, we were winched out and on our way again. We would like to thank the Correccaminos for their helpful attitude and assistance.

GARY R. WEAVER,
Hermosa Beach, Calif.

P.S. I'm going to buy a jeep as soon as I can afford one . . . you made the sale.

Old Government Road . . .

I have been taking DESERT for two years and think very highly of it. I was interested in the articles in the 1968 September and November issues relative to the Old Government Road and the forts along the route. During Thanksgiving my family and I visited the area and were surprised to find no one near Fort Marl Spring. However, at the old town of Providence there were so many vehicles we couldn't find a camping place. Could you answer the following questions?

1. One article shows Ft. Mojave on the east side of the Colorado and the other on the west side. Which is right?

2. One location of the fort is at Rock Springs and the other at the Government Holes. Where is the fort and what are Government Holes?

3. One map shows Ft. Soda Lake and the other does not. Where can I get more information on this string of forts?

Editor's Note: Relative to history and details of the forts see Herbert M. Hart's excellent books, Pioneer Forts of the West. Walter Ford, author of our December article and a long-time writer and historian, furnishes the following information for the above questions:

1. In *Dictionary of California Land Names* by P. T. Hanna, Fort Mojave is listed in San Bernardino County, which would place it on the west side of the river. Some old maps also show it on the west side. However, a recent

Automobile Club of Southern California map (which are excellent) shows the fort on the east side. Confirmation might be obtained by writing to Dept. of Library and Archives, 3rd Floor Capitol Building, Phoenix, Ariz. 85007.

2. *The fort was at Rock Springs. Some of the stone fortifications may still be seen along the north side of the spring. Government Holes was only a well which served as a water supply. A windmill, tank and watering trough mark its location today.*

3. *Fort Soda Lake was on the west side of Soda Lake. Prior to World War II several stone masonry walls of the fort buildings were still standing, but since that time the property has been used for a health resort and it is questionable if they still remain.*

4. *Old maps and government publications are often available in colleges and public libraries.*

Tumco Mine . . .

In the past 18 years my family and I have spent many happy hours exploring the Tumco mine area and also talking with Mr. Walker at the Gold Rock Ranch.

The beautiful old building in ruin on Page 22 of the Jan. '69 issue was the mine hospital according to Mr. Walker. We have used it many times as our base camp.

Other buildings still recognizable as such were one of the seven saloons and a meeting hall. Also, the foundation of the huge 100-stamp mill is still there. The mill machinery was sent to China in the '20s. We can scarcely imagine what tremendous ear-splitting sounds those 100 ore crushing stamps must have made in that little valley

At our last count, the cemetery west of the mine contained at least 75 desecrated graves, which is so appalling that we can't help but wonder what kind of ghouls are running loose.

Incidentally, our son, now in Vietnam, informs us that there is a waiting list of SeaBees who absorb every issue of DESERT Magazine we send him.

G. A. AMBROSE,
Chula Vista, Calif.

Keeping Track . . .

A few months ago I wrote to DESERT Magazine inquiring about an article on some dinosaur footprints in Southern Utah, with the idea of obtaining more information about them, giving them protection if necessary. Perhaps you would be interested in the status of this project.

I am a member of the Utah Archeology

Society, a group of lay people who are interested in the prehistoric cultures of our area. I don't know if Utahns are any worse than people are elsewhere but we seem to have an epidemic of collectivism—people doing almost anything to have a display of Indian petroglyphs, petrified wood, dinosaur footprints, etc., in their rock garden collections. It was with this in mind that I investigated the dinosaur footprints mentioned in the article hoping they could be protected from the collectors.

The land on which these footprints are located is on U.S. Government land which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM has been notified particularly the Regional office of the BLM in Kanab, Utah. The BLM is very good in enforcing the Antiquities Law which protects such sites. This is about where the project stands now. I haven't decided whether to leave things as they are or to pursue it further to see if the BLM would develop it as a Natural History Attraction as they sometimes do. I learned in inquiring about it (I didn't know this before) that dinosaur footprints are not rare in Utah. But the number and extent of the tracks described in the article is a bit unusual.

If anything further develops that would be interesting to readers of DESERT Magazine, I shall let you know.

GRANT M. REEDER,
Bountiful, Utah.

Takes Exception . . .

In regards to a letter written by C. Bruno in the Feb. '69 issue, I resent being called an idiot because my husband and I ride motorcycles! I am sure there are several thousand other Southern Californians that resent this also. Some of the nicest people I've known are these so called maniacs on wheels of jeeps, dune buggies and motorcycles. We have seen much more of this beautiful country of ours by getting off the beaten path on our bikes and riding trails, paths, etc.

Keep America Clean! Yes, I agree with this but please, Mr. Bruno, read your DESERT Magazine more thoroughly. I have four issues printed in '68 before me now telling how these so-called maniacs on wheels of Jeeps, have spent their time cleaning up left behind litter from different desert and sand dune areas—incidentally, Red Rock Canyon is one mentioned!

I would also like to ask Mr. Bruno to please remove his blindfold while driving down our highways and byways—this roadside litter is not done by jeeps, dune buggies and motorcycles.

COLLEEN MONAGHAN,
Newhall, California.

