

JANUARY, 1969 50c

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# Desert

MAGAZINE

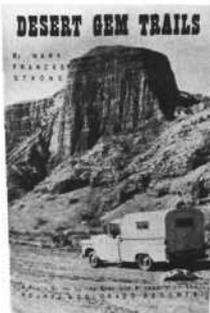
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# DESERT MAGAZINE BOOK SHOP

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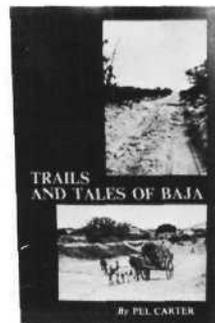
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# Desert

Volume 32

Number 1

**JANUARY, 1969**

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EDITORIAL OFFICES: 74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, California 92260. Area Code 714 346-8144. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs not accompanied by self addressed, stamped and zip coded envelopes will NOT be returned.

ADVERTISING OFFICES: 74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, California 92260. Phone 714 346-8144. Listed in Standard Rate & Data.

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT: 74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, California 92260. Desert Magazine is published monthly. Subscription prices: United States, 1 year, \$5.00; 2 years, \$9.50; 3 years, \$13.00. Foreign subscribers add \$1.00 U. S. Currency for each year. See Subscription Order Form in back of this issue. Allow five weeks for change of address and be sure to send both new and old addresses with zip code.

DESERT is published monthly by Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, Calif. Second Class Postage paid at Palm Desert, Calif., and at additional mailing offices under Act of March 3, 1879. Title registered NO. 358865 in U. S. Patent Office, and contents copyrighted 1968 by Desert Magazine. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs cannot be returned or acknowledged unless full return postage is enclosed. Permission to reproduce contents must be secured from the editor in writing.

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### JANUARY COLOR PHOTOS

Front Cover: Desert sentinels overlooking Arizona's Grand Canyon are captured by Photographers Louis and Virginia Kay, Carmel, California. Page 22: Once a large gold mining operation, Tumco Mine today is silent with only a few buildings standing as reminders of its once active past. Photo and article by Jack Pepper, editor of Desert Magazine. Back Cover: Cave Creek Canyon in Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains.

# BOOK REVIEWS

Books reviewed may be ordered from the DESERT Magazine Book Order Department, Palm Desert, California 92260. Please include 50c for handling. California residents must add 5% sales tax. Enclose payment with order.

## EXPLORING CALIFORNIA BYWAYS IN AND AROUND LOS ANGELES Volume 2

By Russ Leadabrand

A companion to his book, *Exploring California Byways From Kings Canyon to the Mexican Border*, Volume 1, this latest travel guide describes one-day and weekend trips from Los Angeles. Like his other six guide books, this one is well written and illustrated. He not only reveals interesting but little known areas to visit, but also provides the historical background. Excellent for both adults and children preparing their geography and history lesson. Paperback, 184 pages, \$1.95. Be sure to specify Vol. 1 or Vol. 2 when ordering.

## MAMMALS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Ernest Sheldon Booth

The latest addition to the California Natural History Guides, this volume identifies and describes the habits and tells where the mammals of Southern California can be found. It contains eight pages of full color photographs, plus artist sketches of all of the mammals which range from tiny moles to mammoth whales. Paperback, 100 pages, \$1.75.

## THE KILLER MOUNTAINS

By Curt Gentry

The two most controversial and best known "lost mines" of the West are California's Pegleg Bonanza, and Arizona's Lost Dutchman in the Superstition Mountains near Mesa.

In 1966 an Oklahoma private detective and his three companions announced they had positively discovered the Lost Dutchman mine. The announcement was carried by wire services throughout the world.

*The Killer Mountains* is the story of these men, their search for the mine and how they eventually found what they

believe is the Lost Dutchman—or at least one of the gold bonanzas in the Superstitions.

Prior to their announcement it is believed at least 37 persons had lost their lives in searching for the mine from which a Dutchman, Jacob Waltz, after whom the mine was called, is supposed to have taken out a fortune in gold during the 1800s.

The book is based on personal interviews over a long period of time with Glenn Magill, the private investigator, whose story of the search for the bonanza is filled with suspense, intrigue, frustration and mysterious attempts against his life. Whether the Oklahomans really found the Lost Dutchman or not, *The Killer Mountains*, a combination of fact and fiction, is fascinating reading. Hardcover, illustrated, \$5.50.

## MEXICO'S MAGIC SQUARE

By Earle Stanley Gardner

Erle Stanley Gardner's fifth book about Baja California covers the areas close to the border of the United States. Previously he has explored and written about the people in the central and southern parts of that fascinating land.

Most tourists know about the main streets of Tijuana and Mexicali, but are not aware of the beauty of the mountains, lakes and canyons within 150 miles of the international boundary.

To explore this area, the famous mystery writer used sand buggies, campers,

airplanes and finally the Goodyear blimp. Gardner does not write about places, but rather about people and few authors have his ability to bring the personalities of the people about which he writes into sharp focus through fast moving dialogue.

As in his previous books about his experiences in Baja, his latest account is a fast moving adventure and presents a keen insight into our neighbors south of the border. Profusely illustrated with color and black and white photos, hardcover, 205 pages, \$7.50.

## TREASURES OF THE DEAD

By Ben T. Traywick

Who can resist the lure of lost treasures? Whether you seek the bonanzas from a comfortable easy chair or actually pit your wits and risk your life in search for the elusive gold and silver, your life is enriched by reading about the treasures of the dead.

The author has compiled 22 such lost treasures in his new book, many of which have new and different clues not previously revealed. A frequent contributor to *Desert Magazine*, Ben Traywick has the ability to be factual and at the same time present lost treasures as though the reader were actually present during the time. Paperback, 108 pages, \$2.50.

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# Manhattan, Nevada

by Lambert Florin



WALTER BARIEU was described as a treacherous and quarrelsome man who was not above striking a lady, even though the lady in question might have been questionable. When Barieu became so angered at the unidentified woman and slapped her face she screamed for help.

It so happened Sheriff Thomas W. Logan was standing at the bar and saw the incident. He grabbed Barieu by the seat of the pants and threw him out of the saloon. Enraged, Barieu got up and fired his six-shooter through the window at the sheriff. He missed.

Sheriff Logan ran out of the saloon to arrest his attacker, but as he rounded the corner, Barieu shot him four times in the stomach. Before collapsing, Logan took Barieu's gun away from him and beat him over the head with it. Both men then fell to the ground, Barieu in a faint, but the sheriff very much dead.

Although minor details of Manhattan's most famous shooting vary, the reports on the funeral held in nearby Tonopah do not. The town celebrated the funeral in typical old West fashion with all businesses closed for the day and everyone turning out for the occasion. And everybody got drunk, which was fitting, as Sheriff Logan had been a very popular man.

As uncertain as the details of the shooting is the identity of the man who discovered the gold vein that started Manhattan's boom. Aaron Whiting is credited but so are Louis Gordon and Slim Morgan who discovered gold at nearby Round Mountain.

Probably the correct version is that of John Humphrey, a cowboy who, on his way over a pass from Belmont, finding some gold rock. Humphrey and his three companions broke off a few chunks and took them to Goldfield where it is said they collected \$3200 for the samples. This started the boom.

At first the only visible vein of gold was the one discovered and claimed by Humphreys, but the men who flocked into the area found plenty of the yellow metal in the bed of Manhattan Gulch. All this happened in 1905. Winter came early at Manhattan's altitude of 6,905 feet, and those hopeful prospectors coming after the first summer-spawned rush found the camp under a heavy blanket of snow some five or six feet deep. When spring came the claim-owner's homes gradually descended to the ground.

Although little or no mining, whether hard-rock or placering, could be accomplished while the camp was in the grip of winter, many made money. Speculation was rife; lots along the newly established Main Street sold for \$1500 each—a rise of \$1500 from what they were worth before the advent of Humphrey and his jewelry rock. Buildings went up in spite of bitter weather and snow; the road from Tonopah was clogged with wagons and sleighs loaded with passengers and supplies. And all this time almost no gold had actually been mined. It took an earthquake and fire in San Francisco to shake some of Manhattan's stoutest boosters into realizing the town's values were all on paper, stimulated by Bay City speculators whose offices were now destroyed.

The shock of withdrawn financial support caused a severe depression that paralyzed the mining camp for years. Recovery was slow, but substantial, as a modest prosperity grew based on actual mining. By 1912 most of the buildings that had been abandoned while still new in 1906 were again occupied and the bank put into operation once more.

Charles Phillips, now of Portland, Oregon, was born in Manhattan in 1910 just before the town's resurgence of prosperity. His boyhood memories of the raw camp make a vivid picture of life there. At this period (as over most of Manhattan's life) the largest mining operation was that of the White Caps. The mine owners milled their own ore, crushing the large chunks of rich rock in a nearby stamp mill. Among independent producers were the La Verde and Big Four.

He tells how drivers of mule teams were in the habit of urging on stubborn animals with well-aimed rocks off the top of the load of ore. Much later, during the depression of 1929 a good many out-of-work men made a good living for a while by collecting this gold ore along the road and selling it. Many of those "throwing rocks" brought a tidy \$5 — not bad for those hard days!

In common with most gold camps, Manhattan eventually suffered from the fixing of gold values. Today it is quiet, with only a few people living in the surviving houses. Our photo shows the old Rippy Grocery. It was later remodeled into a movie theater, but today even that last flicker of Manhattan is silent. □

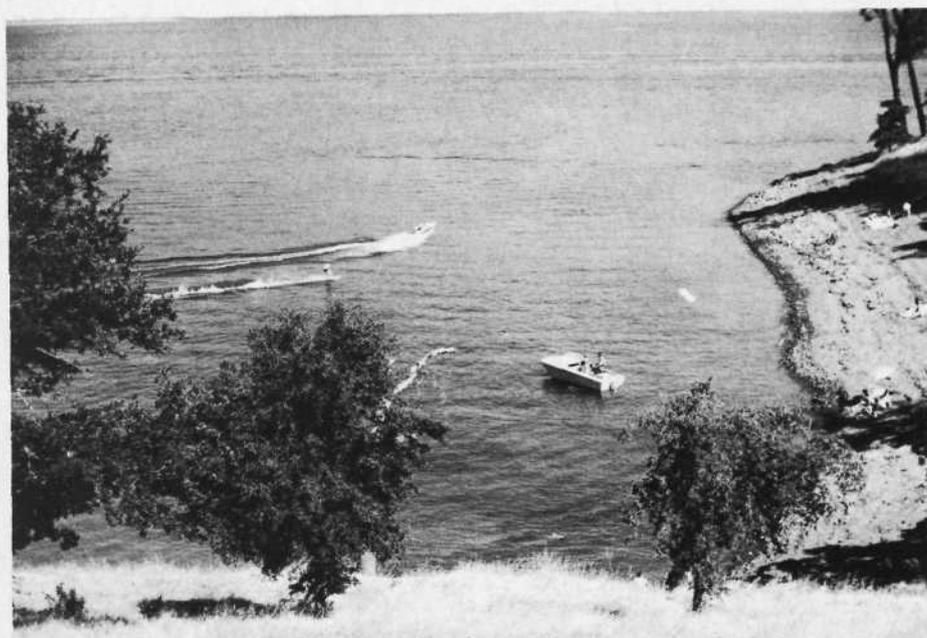
## Calaveras County's

# COPPEROPOLIS

by Jean Rossi



*The old Union Mine headframe where W. K. Reed discovered copper on July 4, 1861. It was the largest copper producing area in the 1800s.*



*Boating, swimming and fishing are popular pastimes at the Hogan Reservoir, one of four recreational areas near Copperopolis.*

THE MOTHER LODE Country is one of California's most interesting and exciting spots for there one finds many reminders of early California's past.

Today it is quiet, but if you stand before one of the old stone buildings with its great iron doors, shuttered windows and sagging balcony, you can dream of what might have happened there—and it all seems like only yesterday.

The walls of the old saloon rock with loud music, brawling and an occasional gun shot. A stagecoach arrives and among its various passengers is a "fancy lady" to prey on the miners for their gold. A Chinese coolie with his long black pig-tail silently enters the old Joss House to confer with his various gods. Look into the grove of trees and you may see Joaquin Murietta and his men resting their horses behind the rocks after eluding a posse, or Black Bart, the gentleman bandit who left his amusing poems as calling cards in each empty strong box.

Many of the interesting old towns and landmarks can be reached on Highway 26. The highway passes through or near Mokelumne Hill, San Andreas; Campo Seco, one of the most lawless of the early gold rush towns; Murphys with its old hotel where Ulysses S. Grant once stayed; and Angels Camp, named, not after the angels of heaven, but after a real live sweating, hard-working miner by the name of Henry Angel.

Highway 4 rambles over oak-studded hills checked with miles of beautiful stone fences built in the Gold Rush days by Chinese coolies, to Copperopolis in Calaveras County. It is not far from Mark Twain's Angels Camp of Jumping Frog fame, and Bret Harte's Poker Flat, where his colorful *Outcasts of Poker Flat* supposedly lived.

It sleeps like a Rip-Van-Winkle today with its less than 200 population. But in the 1860s it was a roaring town with a population of 10,000.

It wasn't gold that got things started but a metal so important that five feet of land sold for \$35,000 in 1863 and a single share of stock was purchased for \$25,000.00. W. K. Reed discovered copper on July 4, 1861—not just a little copper, but enough to make it the largest copper producing area in America in the 1800s. They named the site Copperopolis (Copper-City), a name which a San Francisco newspaper called absurd in 1861 and stated that "a respectable name will soon be substituted."

Reed's Union Mine, which he and his partner sold in 1863, was not the only

mine in Copperopolis although the largest. There were many others with such colorful names as the Hope, Scorpion, Empire and Keystone, Harlem, Table Mountain, Kentucky, etc.

During the Civil War, the Union Guards, composed of local men, were garrisoned there to safeguard the Union Army's interest in the ore that was to supply them with muskets, cannons and ammunition. Copperopolis was also one of the main sources of copper during World Wars I and II.

In 1863 approximately \$1,700,000 in copper was mined and laboriously hauled by oxen or 14-mule team wagons through the mountains to Stockton where it was transferred to stern-wheel river boats that plied their way down the snake-like San Joaquin River to San Francisco. There the ore was transferred to sailing ships sailing around the Horn to the East coast of United States and to England.

What the future holds for this once bustling town is unpredictable for much activity is taking place. The entire area is becoming a great recreational center for sports-loving, sun-worshipping, na-

ture seekers of the 20th Century coming to play and build summer homes to escape the smog and coastal fogs.

This activity has been prompted by the boating, swimming and fishing areas at Melones Dam, Pardee Reservoir, New Hogan Reservoir, Camanche Dam, where somewhere beneath its surface is the old historic town of Camanche; and Tullock Dam, which covered the site of O'Brynes' Ferry covered bridge and near Funk Hill where Black Bart staged the last of his 28 daring holdups.

There is also the new and profitable pastime being enjoyed on the Calaveras, Stanislaus and the Mokelumne Rivers by young men and women in rubber diving gear, fins and oxygen tanks. They are scouring the river bottoms for gold that escaped the miners of '49.

Although the old-timers still talk about copper in Copperopolis, the younger generation thinks the area will once again boom—but this time the precious metal will not come from the mines, but from the pockets of tourists and new residents coming to California's exciting Calaveras County. □



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*JUST THE THING* for the man who has everything—a furlined backhouse! This is what an official from the Bureau of Land Management saw when he inspected a homestead in Alaska. A small, livable home had been built and an adequate portion of the land was being farmed in accordance with homesteading requirements. Everything was in good order, but the backhouse was something out of this world! It was completely furlined—walls, ceiling, door, seat, backrest, and even a footrest!

It is possible the homesteader desired solid comfort on cold mornings, while reading his *Wall Street Journal*. However a more likely explanation is that, in this remote region, animal skins and furs were readily available while the popular interior finishing materials were in scarce supply—and what's wrong with polar

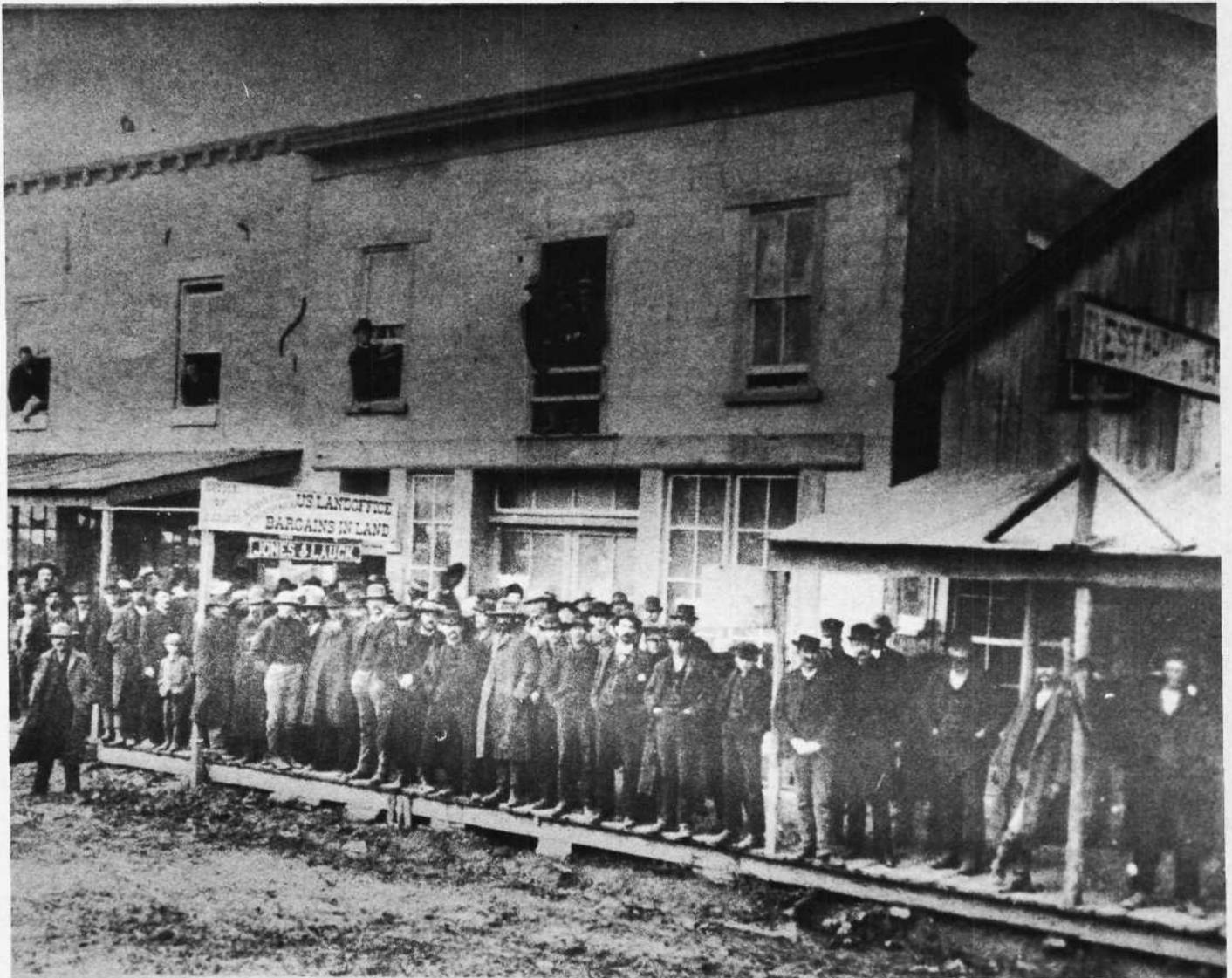
bear wallpaper! The amazed inspector was Walter Holmes, who is now assistant manager of the Bureau of Land Management in the Riverside, California district.

This incident occurred several years ago. It is mentioned here because of its location. Alaska is actually the last frontier for the rewarding challenge known as homesteading. All good things must come to an end sometime and the Homestead Act, which was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln May 20, 1862, at the height of the Civil War, was certainly a "good thing" for many people. In the past 100 years our citizens have earned the right to own more than 1,400,000 homesteads on over 247 million acres that previously had been public domain. In California, 66,738 patents have been granted, amounting to 10,476,665 acres.

Prior to the Homestead Act public

lands were given to many men for various services to our country, especially in the military field. Daniel Boone was granted about 875 acres of public lands in northern Louisiana; Ulysses S. Grant received 160 acres for services during the Mexican War in 1853; Abraham Lincoln was presented with 40 acres in 1855 and another 160 acres in 1860 for services during the Black Hawk Indian Wars; and Jefferson Davis was issued 160 acres in 1855 for his services during the Mexican War. Many others received Government land as a reward for services rendered.

While all land owned by local, state, or Federal Government, including city, state, and national parks and forests, belongs to the public, the reference "public land" or "public domain" applies to that part of the original land of the United States, plus those areas later acquired by the Government which are under Federal



*Early land office in Gaden City, Kansas. The first patents were issued here after passage of Homestead Act May 20, 1862.*



*After purchasing land under the Small Tract Act, the new owners usually build small homes such as these near Palm Desert. Unlike the Homestead Act, land acquired under Small Tract Act does not have to be improved to obtain clear title.*

ownership. The history of the public domain is a story of the expansion of the United States. All of the land acquisitions, with the exception of the 13 original colonies and the present states of Texas and Hawaii, were part of the public domain.

When the United States was founded it was only a small country east of the Mississippi River. In 1803 the Louisiana Purchase added over 500 million acres, including most of the land from the Mississippi River west to the Rocky Mountains, except what is now the state of Texas. In 1819, the land that is now Florida became part of the United States. Texas was brought into the Union in 1845, and a year later the United States acquired the area that is now known as Oregon, Washington, and Idaho through the Oregon Compromise with Great Britain.

In 1848 the United States obtained from Mexico the lands that now compose the states of California, Nevada, Utah and parts of Arizona. The last large addition to the land area of our country came in 1867 when Alaska was purchased from Russia. All of these lands are the property of the people; but the Federal Government has the responsibility of

taking care of them so long as they are a part of the public domain. (There is no public domain land in Texas because that state kept its land when it became a state.)

When the Homestead Act became effective millions of acres of the public domain awaited settlement and development by pioneering farmers and stockmen. Each settler could claim up to 160 acres of land. Then, if he cultivated and improved the tract, built a home of sorts, and lived there for five years, he could file final entry (called "proof") and receive title (called "patent") to the land. As time passed, the public lands most suitable for homesteading were transferred into private ownership.

Many people ask: "Why, in a country that is dominated by private enterprise and in which the efforts of the Government for more than a century have been to dispose of its lands, almost one-fourth of the land area of continental United States is still in Federal ownership?" The answer rests on three points: The absence of private demand for the lower grade public domain; the public's interest in retaining some types of government land, such as national parks, forests, historic sites, etc.; and laws unsuited to private

acquisition of some types of public domain.

For all intents and purposes the opportunity to earn free land anywhere, except in Alaska, at the present time is practically nil. Although the homesteading law is still on the books, nearly all of the land which could be farmed economically has already been granted to others who applied years ago. Most of the remaining public land is too dry, rough, or otherwise unsuitable for cultivation—and the purpose of homesteads is to encourage the establishment of farms and ranches.

If you have a desire to settle in southeastern California's Coachella Valley, or the surrounding desert country, and have entertained the idea of developing a homestead, you should be interested in a recent decision by the United States Department of the Interior. This department stated . . . "we cannot transfer title to any land which would place more pressure on the already inadequate supply of water from the Colorado River." So, additional farming projects in the Colorado Desert region would not be feasible.

However, in 1938, the Small Tract Act was passed and this could be just what you need to realize your ambition to settle in, or near, the desert — and no farming is required in this program. The Act authorized the sale to citizens of tracts of public lands, not exceeding 5 acres, for use as homesites, camping spots, recreational areas, or even business locations.

The new program of selling public land is definitely not related to the old Homestead Act, though it is frequently thought to be. As pointed out previously, the Homestead Act required residence on the property, the building of a home, and the cultivation and tilling of the soil before title was granted. Under the Small Tract Act there are no requirements. You may purchase the land and use it for any legal purpose you wish—or even hold it for a possible retirement site at some future date if this fits into your plans.

Public land is sold by auction sale through sealed or oral bidding. Every parcel is appraised by the Government at fair market value and cannot be sold for less than this value. For Southern Californians, auctions are held every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Riverside District and Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, at 1414 University Avenue, Riverside, California 92502. (It should

be stated that the land offered at this office is the only public land available in California, under the Small Tract Act.) Before bidding on land be sure to examine it and become familiar with the location, character, accessibility and other features of the site.

Tracts are sold to the highest bidder at or above the appraised value. A bidder must be a citizen of the United States and must not have previously acquired title to land under the Small Tract Act. Bids are accepted by mail, and I was given a tip that if you send in a bid at the appraised value you'll have a fair chance of buying the land at this reasonable price. A mail bid requires a check to cover the purchase, which is returned if the sale is not consummated.

An example of what is available in Southern California, according to a recent list, might surprise you. It includes 146 tracts ranging from approximately a half-acre to five acres, in ten different areas from Apple Valley to the Twentynine Palms region. Appraised values ranged from \$420 for a 2½ acre plot at Valley Mountain to \$4250 for a five-acre tract at Joshua Tree. Detailed listings of available tracts, with complete descriptions, locations, and appraised values are supplied by the Bureau of Land Management, either by mail or in person.

For current information on public lands for sale, the official and authentic source to contact in Southern California is the Riverside office mentioned above. In other parts of California, contact the Bureau of Land Management at Federal Building, Room 4017, Sacramento, California 95814. Real estate promoters who offer public lands at bargain prices should be avoided. They have no way of obtaining sites at a lower price than the appraised value available to the general public. It is recommended that you deal directly with a government agency in obtaining public land.

Now that you know about the Small Tract Program and who to contact for further information, it is hoped that you will find a beautiful spot in a scenic wooded area, with a babbling brook, in which to set up a permanent own-your-own vacation location. If you do, be sure to provide extra accommodations for the many friends who will drop in on weekends—because they just happened to be passing by! □



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# TOO LONG AND TOO EARLY

by Jack Oakes

CALLED BY one of its developers—the railroad that was either 300 miles too long or 300 years too early—the famed Carson and Colorado is now nothing more than a name in the history books of the West and railroading.

However, there are still a few places

along its 293-mile route between Mound House, Nevada, near Carson City, and Keeler, California, where the old right-of-way, ties and remains of refueling and section stations are visible.

One of the Carson and Colorado's best preserved areas in Northern Nevada lies

between Dayton and Fort Churchill along the south bank of the Carson River. Here you can drive over the original railroad bed for approximately 15 miles as it makes its way through a picturesque cottonwood-covered canyon walled by volcanic bluffs on one side and Pine Nut Mountains on the other.



*Clifton, a section station on the old Carson and Colorado Railroad, is still in fairly good condition. Railroad car at left was probably used as an office. At right is storage shed constructed of rocks and ties where the hand car was stored.*



The author's daughter stands in the doorway of an old cellar where perishable supplies were stored for section crews living at Clifton.

To reach the railroad bed turn east off U.S. 50 in Dayton at the Dayton Inn, cross the river and follow the paved road to Comstock Drive. Turn left to Eureka Way and then right to the cattle guard where the road meets the right-of-way.

In several places you actually drive over the old ties, still intact. Occasionally the road will leave the bed to ford a wash or creek, and you can clearly see the remains of the railroad trestles.

Nearly midway between Dayton and Fort Churchill is the long-deserted section of Clifton, which is in surprisingly good condition. The station now consists only of a railroad car, a root cellar, a storage shed and a well. Bottle and relic hounds may still discover a few artifacts for their collections in this area, and rusty rail spikes can be found by the dozens. Nearby there are several good picnicking and camping sites along the river.

Little has changed in this old settlement since 1883 when the Carson and Colorado was in its prime. So, if you are the kind who likes to imagine what it was like, stand along the rail bed and try to visualize famous old "No. 8" coming down the narrow-gauge track, black smoke rolling from its stack, and Chinese coolies rushing to the station to load the fuel car. Behind the engine imagine there are passenger and freight cars loaded with supplies and adventurers, wealth-

seeking souls bound for the roaring mining camps of Bodie, Belleville and Candelaria.

The Carson and Colorado was developed by such famous early West entrepreneurs as William Sharon, H. M. Yerington and D. O. Mills. Originally the plan was to extend the line 500 miles south to the Colorado River, but mining activity in eastern California prompted a change of course over Montgomery Pass into the Owens Valley.

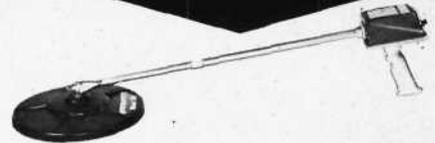
In 1905 the Southern Pacific purchased the railroad and eventually laid tracks between Fort Churchill and Hazen on its main line. This move eliminated the need for the section between the fort and Mound House. The last train passed through Clifton in 1932.

The road east from the section station is not recommended for passenger cars, however, trucks and jeeps should have no trouble. Travelers are urged to close all gates as there are several ranches on the opposite side of the river that run cattle in this area.

The road leaves the right-of-way at the junction of the Southern Pacific spur line near Fort Churchill. It follows the tracks about a mile south to the site of Churchill, another early station on the Carson and Colorado. From here you can reach U.S. 95 Alternate by following the road east across the tracks and up the wash for three miles. □

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# One Man's Monument to Peace

by Barbara and Warren Transue

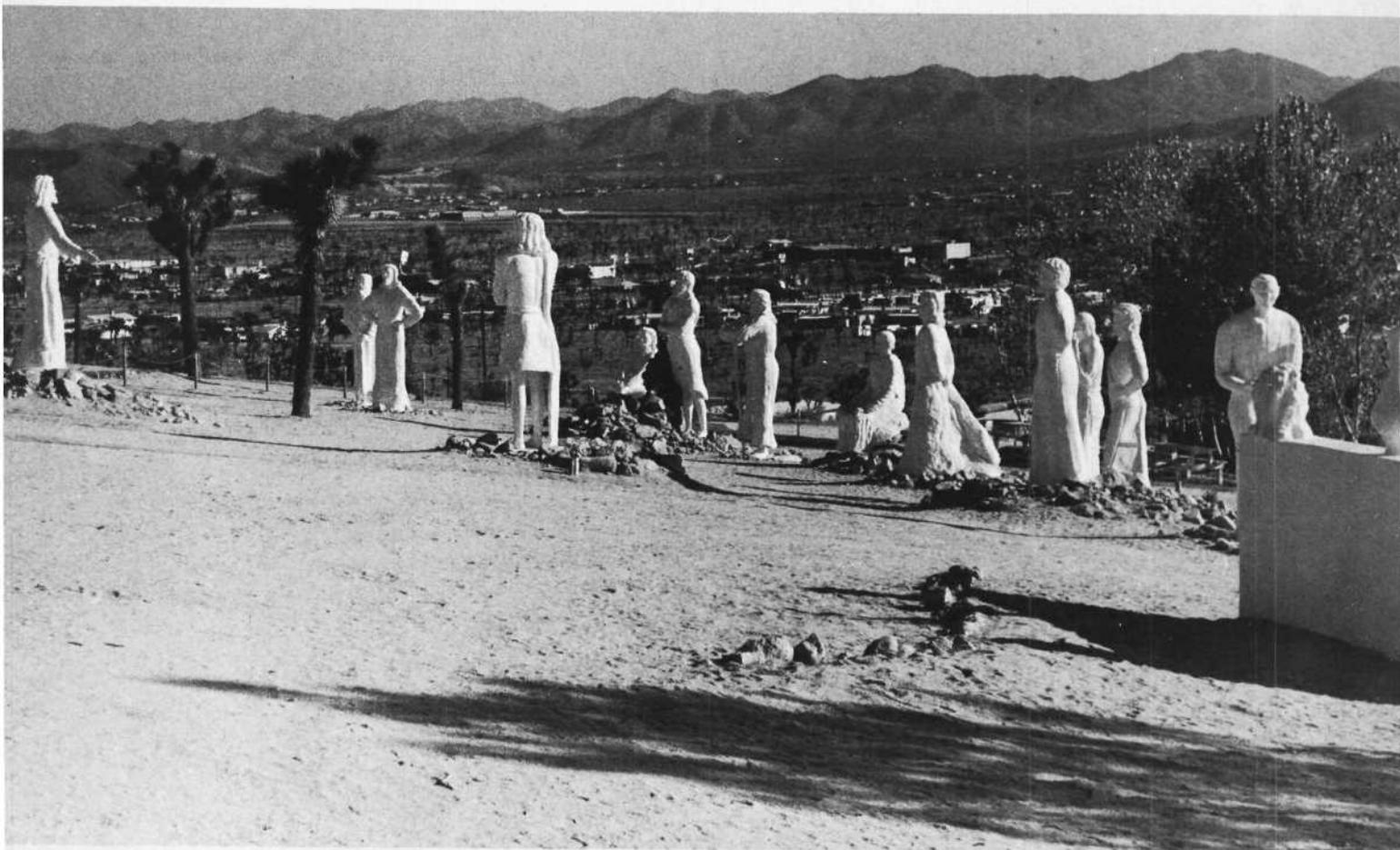
ON A GENTLE slope overlooking Yucca Valley, 125 miles east of Los Angeles, forty gigantic Biblical figures dwell among the Joshua trees in a setting which must closely resemble the original cradle of Christianity. Here, backdropped by blue sky and billowy white clouds, Christ prays in the Garden of Gethsemane while His companions doze. A little lower on the hill, nine-foot tall disciples hear the Master preach the Sermon on the Mount, while nearby is reconstructed the

columned facade of Lazarus' home where Jesus visits with Mary and Martha.

Desert Christ Park is the creation of Antone Martin, a former aircraft worker who moved to Yucca Valley when the Reverend Eddie Garver, the community's famed "Desert Parson," offered a permanent home to Martin's first statue, a three-ton, ten-foot high, unwanted figure of Christ. This was in 1951, and on Easter Sunday of that year the pastor and

the sculptor dedicated the statue as the beginning of Desert Christ Park.

For the next ten years, Martin—who eventually took up residence at the site of his work—created all but two of the pieces of statuary that now comprise the park. The groups and individual figures express Antone Martin's dedication to the concept of peace and good will on earth and his hope that his works "may bring mankind together before we are completely obliterated."



Martin died in 1961, leaving several unfinished pieces which are on display just as he left them. These incomplete figures reveal the details of his construction techniques. Each piece is of solid concrete molded around steel rods which extend down into the ground at the construction site to anchor the figure permanently. The gleaming hand-finished exterior coat is a special mixture developed by the sculptor, who preferred using his hands instead of tools wherever possible. The figures weigh anywhere from four to sixteen tons each, with the massive Last Supper relief tipping the scales at approximately 125 tons!

A favorite of the camera-toting visitors, who have flocked to the park—sometimes 40,000 strong in a single year, is "Suffer

Little Children to Come Unto Me," which consists of a seated Christ with a baby and a small girl. Another impressive piece, in a realistic setting near Lazarus' house, is "Christ and the Woman of Samaria at the Well." The glistening white figures are visible from the highway almost a mile away, yet are amazingly detailed under close scrutiny.

Some Yucca Valley residents say that the minister and the artist had an occasional difference of opinion regarding the park and its operation, and that at such times sculptor Martin would vent his wrath by heaping destruction upon his own work. Once, they say, he knocked the noses off all the figures except Judas, and then put the noses back when his anger was spent. Another time, he al-

legedly went to work with a bulldozer and wrecked several of his creations. But in spite of any differences, the two men teamed to create a lasting memorial to the Christian spirit.

At Martin's death, Desert Christ Park was presented to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District, which administers it now as a public park. It is non-denominational and is open, free of charge, 24 hours, every day in the year. Picnic tables hide among the park trees, and descriptive brochures are available.

Desert Christ Park, the product of a man's devotion to his art and his God, transcends denominational considerations. It is a twentieth-century reminder of the meaning of Christ's life — "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." □



# DESERT

# PARADOX

by K. L. Boynton

© 1969

It is but it isn't—that's a paradox that fits the little variegated ground gecko—a lizard so widely distributed throughout the great American desert region, as to be quite commonplace. Yet, without searching, it is rare to see one.

Abiding by the union rules of the gecko tribe, this one hides by day, but from here on it goes its offbeat way. It is strictly a ground operator, since its feet do not have the suction pad and hook equipment for wall and ceiling work usual with the gecko clan. Nor is it a runner like other species of ground lizards, for relatively weak legs restrict it to a few yards from its hiding place. Equipped with sheathed claws on its toes, it still is no climber, seeming to prefer working a flat terrain.

It can't stand heat and sunlight, and can't stand cold, and so must do its insect hunting only in that small period of time when the great desert is cooling down from the day's big blister and before the night's stiffening chill sets in.

But this is no luckless gecko. It can stand long periods of starvation and still



remain active, which takes some doing. Almost any lizard can sign off during winter hibernation. The variegated ground gecko does this from October to March. It can keep going without food even in summer when high air temperature sets body machinery going so fast that a big expenditure of energy has to be made just to stay alive. This little three inch lizard with the brown bands has licked the mighty desert to a standstill, and multiplied its kind exceedingly.

Turn over practically any small rock, or peer into the shade of practically any yucca and what do you find? A surprised variegated gecko waiting for dusk when it can open up for short-time business.

So what? Well, Australian zoologist H. Robert Bustard, currently reporting on his work on lizards at the National University, Canberra, is interested in the so-what since his Australian desert lizard, *Lucasium damaeum*, doesn't do half as well in arid conditions.

Studying a batch of these American variegated ground geckos in his Australian lab, he has reported that two or three mealworms a week took care of the menu for the average adult. But if these lizards were not fed for a long time, they could stuff in at least six to eight big mealworms one right after another. Four days of eating like this, and some mighty fat geckos were the result. Their tails alone more than doubled in size.

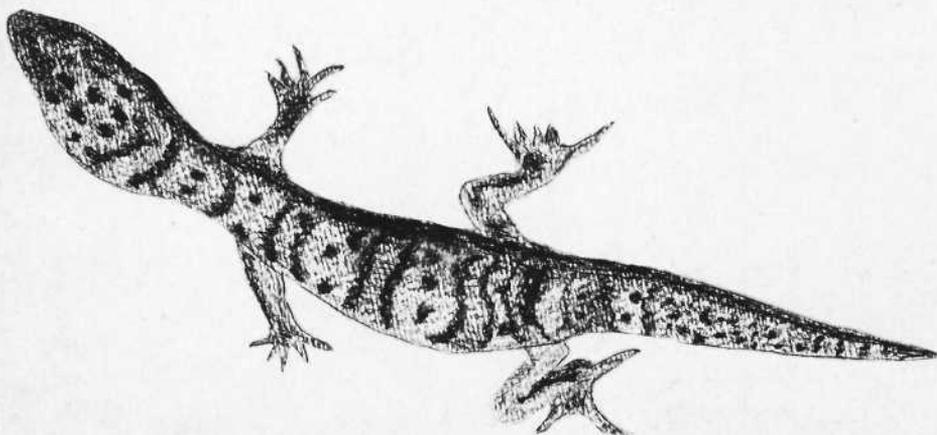
Now the tail's the thing in lizard circles, for most of them can break it off when attacked, leaving it behind to engage in a bouncing rear guard razzmatazz with the predator, while the owner scurries away to safety. Interestingly enough,

the tail does not come apart *between* the bones that make it up, as might be supposed. Each bone has a potential fracture point at about the center. At each of these spots, the muscle masses working the tail are attached in neat groups, so that the entire piece of tail comes away easily. Drawstring muscles also strategically located around the big tail artery at these points clamp down, preventing blood loss. The new tail growing out in time has only a cartilage rod support instead of bones, but the overall size is bigger and fatter. Geckos lose their tails often, a trick compensating for lack of defense and get-away speed.

Trading a tail for a life is a good deal for any lizard even though the temporary loss of the tail may be bad news if the stored fat in it was what the lizard was going to live on in times of food shortage. Not so for the little Variegated One. It stores fat all over its body, only a small part of the big reserve actually being warehoused in the tail. So, even minus such a very useful appendage, this gecko can flourish, and this is an ace in the hole for a little lizard living under desert conditions, and forced to deal with hungry neighbors.

So efficient is this gecko in piling on fat all over its body in a post-starvation eating spree, it can set up a reserve that can tide it over nine months without any food at all, if necessary, the fat being used up gradually.

Now in any scientist's book this is a case of very high class survival adaptation to an extremely rugged environment—all accomplished by an offbeat gecko which can become commonplace, because of its exceptional talents. □



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# STUTTERS

by Andrew Flink



JOHN SUTTER played an important part in the progress of California. Now a State historical monument, his fort was conceived and built in 1839. Landing by boat in Sacramento, he immediately started work on the bastion, naming it "New Helvetia" in honor of his native Switzerland. The construction project took four

left Sacramento for his ranch in Marysville. In 1880, John Sutter died in his hotel room in Washington, D.C.

In 1888, after sitting idle since 1849, the Fort became the property of the Native Sons of the Golden West who set out to refurbish the decaying structure. The years of abandonment had taken

# F O R T

years to complete and soon the reputation of "Sutter's Outpost" spread throughout the west. The stockade was under the Mexican flag of Governor Alvarado until 1846 when the American flag flew in its place following the Bear Flag Rebellion.

During the years of use, the walls surrounded a wide variety of activities. During the Bear Flag Rebellion John Fremont recruited and trained troops made up of men from all walks of life. Volunteers from Indian tribes of the Delaware, Walla Walla and California Indians, mountaineers, sailors, immigrants and employees of the Hudson Bay Company were all under the command of John Fremont. These men furnished their own ammunition, horses and clothing, and fought against the Mexican Californio's while living and training at the Fort.

In 1848, the cry of "Gold!" brought a cross section of people to the Fort at Sacramento. The news from Sutter's Mill spread and anyone seeking quick wealth—miners, adventurers and mechanics—found their way through the gates. The precious ore, discovered by James Marshall, started a round of endless activity at the outpost. Merchants rented space. Boarding houses, saloons and businesses of all types flourished. As various enterprises rose and prospered, the town grew around the Fort.

Then Sutter began to feel the sting of his own good nature. Men with no conscience, pretending to be friends, took advantage of his good nature and problems started piling up for him, mostly financial. The problems grew to such an extent that he finally had to turn his holdings over to his son and reluctantly

their toll and the only part left was the main building. The State Legislature appropriated money for the needed restoration.

Lawns, trees and shrubs decorated the grounds, the slough on the north side of the Fort that once supplied water became duck ponds. A foot bridge was built leading to the Indian museum. This museum contains Indian relics and artifacts along with archeological discoveries providing a clearer insight into the lives and habits of the Indians of the early west.

Today, for a fee of twenty-five cents, you can walk through the grounds and see many of the rooms set up as in the days of the greatest activity. The large administration building, the first structure you'll see when you enter, stood by itself when the first refurbishing project started. It's where Sutter had his office, main living quarters and where John Bidwell acted as Sutter's clerk. The offices and parlor are set up as Sutter used them, with desks and furniture belonging to the era. The basement of the

building had been used as an aratory and general storage.

Walking along the path, the Fort is arranged so you can walk up to the door of a particular room and look inside. The rooms are furnished with the personal belongings of Sutter himself. Walking the perimeter path, you'll see the quarters where his Indian guards lived, ready at all times in the event of an emergency.

For many years, all went well for John

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*Once used as a defense weapon this old cannon today is mute testimony to the days when the West was being settled by gunfire rather than peaceful arbitration.*

Sutter. His Fort contained a city within its walls. Today, the rooms are set up to depict life as it was then. A trade store has goods used as trading items for dealings with the Indians and to exchange needed materials. A blacksmith shop is completely equipped with forging tools. A large carpenter shop contains all the tools necessary to build or repair. Candles supply the illumination within the rooms. A special room has molds used for making candles of any given size.

A stroll through the grounds takes nearly two hours. No guided tours are provided—leaving you on your own to see what you wish to see and for as long as you'd like to linger.

Just three blocks off the Interstate 80 freeway going through Sacramento, the Fort stands at 27th and L Streets. The freeway runs overhead above 30th Street so the off ramp nearest L Street will put you near the grounds with no trouble.

In 1967, the Fort told her story to more than 300,000 people. In following years, it will attract many more and maybe you'll be one of them. □



*One of the most important rooms at Sutter's Fort was where the gunsmith repaired weapons and mixed powder. Although they appear crude compared to our modern-day weapons, the guns of the 1800s were deadly—when fired at close range.*

# It's The Slogan That Counts!

*DRYTOWN* is not a dry town—it had more than 26 saloons in the gold rush days! *ROUGH and READY* is not rough and ready—its main attraction is a picturesque wedding chapel.

These California towns serve to reinforce the idea that names are unimportant and sometimes misleading. *Walla Walla* (Washington) tells us nothing—excepting that two Wallas are perhaps better

## COMMUNITY QUIZ

(To complete the test, enter the name of the appropriate Western city after each slogan.)

1. "Queen City of the North Pacific"
2. "Winter Golf Capital of the World"
3. "The City of Lilacs"
4. "Clam Capital of the World"
5. "Most Exciting City in the World"
6. "World's Finest Vacationland"
7. "Danish Capital of America"
8. "Everybody's Favorite City"
9. "The Poinsettia City By-the-Sea"
10. "The Miracle City in the Sun"

Now turn to page and compare your selection of city names with the answers. Allow ten points for each correct choice, and check your total score against the *Performance Rating Scale* to determine your status as an informed traveler.

Answers to *Community Slogan Quiz* on Page 42.

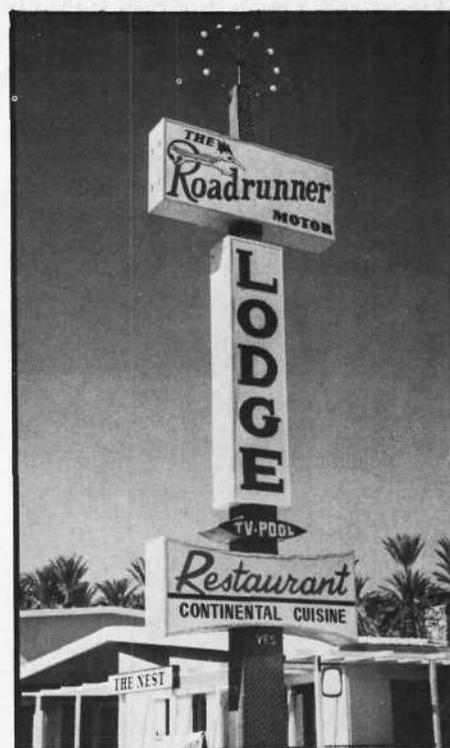
than one. Another example is *Show Low* (Arizona) whose name has no reference to mini skirts; it resulted from an incident, many years ago, when two men cut the cards and the low-man won the town!

Examples of misleading town names can be found in every state. Also, descriptive slogans have been adopted by most communities, and these are more meaningful to the average tourist. For instance, the name *Calipatria* (California) may mean nothing to you, but its slogan tells a

story—it is "The Lowest-Down City In The Western Hemisphere." (Calipatria is 184 feet below sea level, so the slogan is accurate.) In checking popular cities in the West for their nicknames, I found only one blank — Los Angeles has no slogan. It has been called many things, but these are not official.

The following quiz will provide an opportunity for you to test your knowledge and memory of Western city slogans, and possibly avoid embarrassment of driving to "The World's Carrot Capital" when you really intended to visit "The Foot-hills of Heaven!"

Do not be disturbed if you are unsure of some of these slogans—many cities have more than one, and on occasion, new one are adopted. However, those used here are the ones that are currently favored in each case.



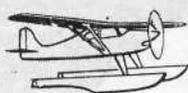
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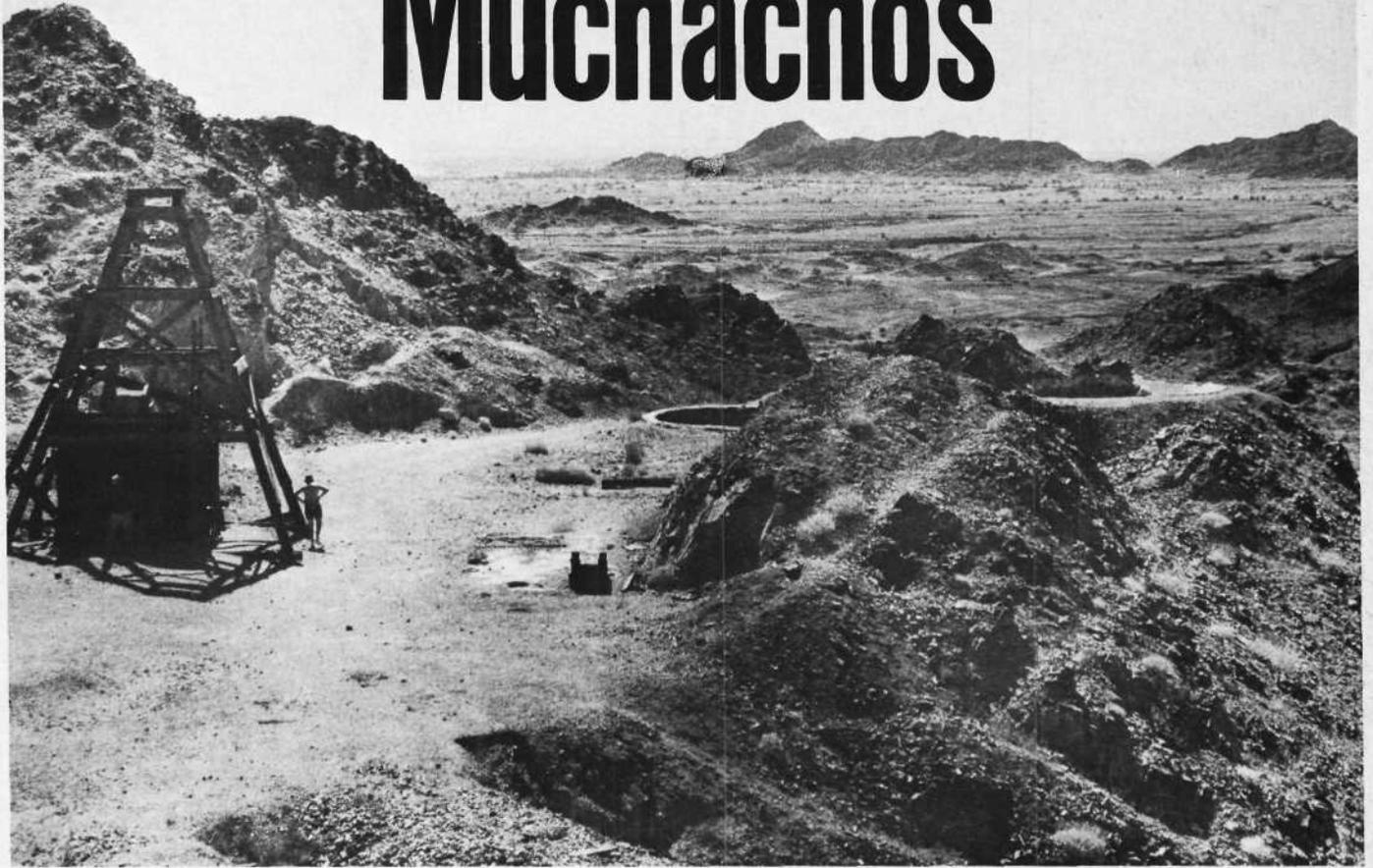
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# Mysterious Cargo Muchachos



by Jack Pepper

SWEATING AND cursing the 120-degree heat the miners hacked at the iron ore deposits under the blistering sun which turned the rock formations into an inferno. Beside them worked captive Indians—slaves to the white man and his insatiable quest for gold. Indians who would soon revolt, kill their masters and dump the gold into the Colorado River.

The time was the 1770s and the place the Cargo Muchacho Mountains in California's Imperial County. Today the Cargos and the nearby Chocolate mountains are pocketed with more recent mining operations and there are a few—but not many—more people in the area. There still remain hundreds of forbidding canyons and washes which probably never have been transgressed by white man.

Although there is no documentary evidence, it is believed that the Cargos were

the site of the first discovery of gold in California, three quarters of a century before Marshall found nuggets in the Mother Lode country and started the stampede of the '49ers.

J. Ross Browne and William Blake, both early explorers and historians, said gold was known along the Colorado River in the 1770s, and Paul Henshaw, writing in the *California Journal of Mines and Geology* in 1942 stated mining was first carried on in the Cargo Muchachos in 1780 with the founding of the Spanish settlements on the Colorado River.

Although what Spanish records might have existed were lost when the Indians revolted and destroyed the mission pueblos, present day members of the Yuma (or Quechan) Indians still talk of their ancestors who were forced to dig gold for the Spaniards. As Fray Salmeron

reported in 1629, the Spanish soldiers "out of greed for silver and gold would enter hell to get them." This particular hell was in the form of *tepushete de color*, found in the region. *Tepustete* is gold-bearing iron ore found in Sonora and in which the early Spaniards thought would be found gold in the Colorado River area.

In 1775 Father Francisco Garces, the dedicated Jesuit missionary who spent his life exploring and documenting the Southwest, commented on the *tepushete* and said his Indian interpreter indicated there was much gold in the area. At the time they were camped near the present town of Yuma.

Five years later Father Garces, three other missionaries and some settlers, allegedly "protected" by Spanish soldiers, established two mission-pueblos on the Colorado River. This was in 1780. Father



*Vandals have dug up and desecrated the graves at Tumco Mine and shot holes into a sign warning it is a criminal offense to commit such acts. If further acts of destruction continue the mine may be closed to the public.*



*The road from Indian Pass through Gavilan Wash to the Colorado River is spectacular and colorful. It should not be attempted except in back country vehicles due to several steep hills and soft sand.*

Garces was not interested in gold, but evidence indicates the Spaniards had been mining gold for 10 years in the area with Indian slave labor. One year after the mission-pueblos were founded, on July 17, 1781, the Indians revolted, killed Father Garces and the other missionaries, and captured those soldiers and settlers who were not slain. The Indians made no distinction between the white men who sought their salvation and those who sought gold.

Today the evidence of these Indians can be found in the distinct rock trails across the mountains and desert, petroglyphs and broken pieces of pottery (potsherds), a few arrowheads and the mysterious scratches on the hundreds of rocks at Indian Pass.

These interesting Indian artifacts and landmarks, coupled with old mines which produced millions of dollars in gold during their operation in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, and the availability of semi-precious stones make the Cargo Muchacho Mountains an area rich in adventure.

And you can see and visit the majority of the interesting places in a passenger car. The once rutted roads have now been graded and are kept up by the county. Al Pearce, whose article on the vanishing Bighorn Sheep appeared in last month's *Desert*, and his wife and I explored the area for three days recently. We could have spent a week and still only covered a small section.

We made our headquarters at the Gold Rock Trading Post. To reach Gold Rock, turn left off Highway 80 from El Centro to Yuma, just before Winterhaven and just after 80 ceases to be a freeway. A good gravel road takes you to the former railroad town of Ogilby and the railroad tracks. Once a flourishing community, Ogilby today consists of cement slabs and three lonely graves.

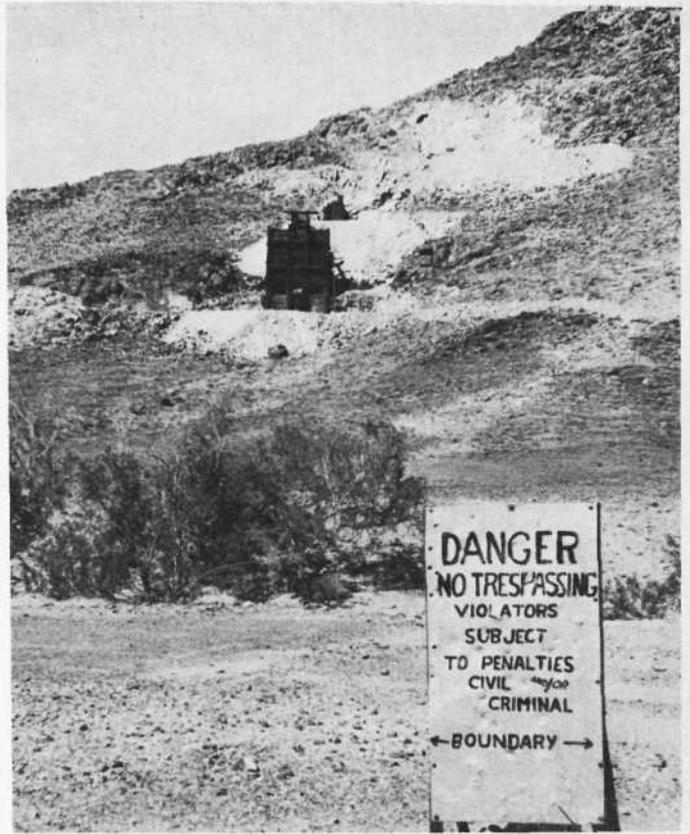
Cross the railroad tracks at Ogilby and watch for the sign to Gold Rock. Keep left and five miles down the graded road you will reach the trading post. An asphalt road is being built parallel to the graded road to Gold Rock and goes between the trading post and Tumco Mine.

If you take this road turn left at the entrance to the Tumco Mine—seen on the right—and two miles down the road you'll arrive at the post.

Hosts at Gold Rock are Bob and his wife, Margrete, better known as "Scotty," who have an interesting and vast collection of rocks and mining equipment, plus Indian artifacts which they have collected during their years of exploring. They are a wealth of information and will direct you to places of interest and rock hunting areas.

They also have soft drinks and sandwiches and a wide area where you can pitch your tent or park your camper. Bob Walker is the son of Carl and Margaret Walker who established the trading post and were the last owners of the Tumco Mine.

Tumco Mine was more than a mining operation; it was a gold camp and company town. Named from the initials of the corporation, The United Mines Company, it had a peak population of 2500 during its heyday. Started in 1892, it



*Al Pearce, explorer and writer, uses a metal detector to look for old coins near one of the many adobe ruins found in the Cargos. The area is also a favorite hunting ground for rockhounds.*

*Although there are many old mines in the Cargo Muchachos which are abandoned and may be explored, some have recently been reactivated and are posted. Even if there are no signs of life at the posted mines, do not trespass.*

flourished until 1909 when it was shut down for one year. New owners operated it on a more limited scale from 1910 until its demise in 1916. It is located only two miles from the Walkers.

As you enter Tumco Mine keep to the right on the gravel road. Although there are several washes by driving slowly a passenger car can easily maneuver. The main road will take you up to the main glory hole where you can turn around. Don't let children wander by themselves as there are unfenced holes in the area.

In the middle of Tumco and across the tailings to the left you will see the main building shown in our color photograph with this article. Just below this building and across the old mining road is the graveyard. To get there walk across the tailings and keep to your left.

Vandals have dug up several of the graves and shot bullets into a sign which states it is a criminal offense to desecrate graves. Vandals have also torn down the parts of the houses of Tumco and dumped trash into the mine shafts. For this reason the Walkers finally gave up

their claim to the mine and any liability. If further vandalism continues, however, it may be closed to the public by Imperial County and the Bureau of Land Management.

Tumco was one of several mines which operated at the same time. Others included the American Girl Mine, Cargo Muchacho, Piacho, Micatale Mill, Vitrifax Hill (which produced the vital kyanite during World War II) and the Padre y Madre Mine. Only the Tumco can be reached by passenger car, however, and many of the other mines in the area once again have been claimed and are off-limits to visitors. If you have 4-wheel drive vehicles or dune buggies and are exploring the other mining areas, respect the "Keep Out" signs; there are many places to explore where you will not trespass on private property.

Another interesting side trip is to the area of the mysterious scratched rocks in Indian Pass, easily accessible in a passenger car. From Gold Rock go north 9.3 miles and turn right on a good gravel road which takes you across the flatlands.

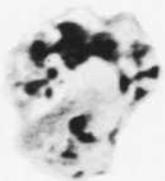
Ahead on the right you will see Picacho Peak—a landmark for prospectors. If you stop to explore the washes along the way you will discover what look like graves. Actually they are small gun emplacements used by soldiers during maneuvers in World War II.

Approximately 11 miles from the turn-off you start into Indian Pass, reaching the mysterious rocks at about 19 miles from the turnoff. They are at the top of a hill and from here the road descends sharply downward to Gavilan Wash. Unless you have a 4-wheel drive vehicle or a dune buggy DO NOT go down the hill.

If you do have a back-country vehicle, the road through Gavilan Wash takes you to the Colorado River and the now abandoned 4-S Ranch. A Boy Scout camp is located at the end of the road. North along the Colorado are several interesting washes. The road south follows along the banks of the Colorado and through the hills from which you get a panoramic view of the river. Unfortunately there is

Continued on Page 30

# BLACK BONANZA!



by Victor Stoyanow

In March, 1965 DESERT Magazine published an article by an anonymous author who stated he had found the famous Lost Pegleg bonanza and had recovered more than \$300,000 in black gold nuggets. During the ensuing years DESERT has carried many articles on the controversial bonanza, along with letters from the anonymous discoverer, all of which are on display at our Palm Desert office. Victor Stoyanow, a former Marine Corps major and long-time desert explorer, is the latest contributor to this fascinating mystery.

THIS ENLIGHTENED year 1968 sees the Pegleg gold mystery focused not so much on where this famed black bonanza hides, but why it is there at all. Little doubt now exists that on California's low desert reposes a fortune in dusky gold nuggets. Too many sightings are authenticated to any longer suspect the legacy of Pegleg Smith to be a pipe-dream or self-perpetuating fraud.

Familiar to DESERT readers, for example, is the mysterious correspondent we'll call "X" who tantalizingly outlines how in ten years he removed over \$300,000 in black gold nuggets from the surface of the desert within 30 miles of the Salton Sea (Desert, March '65). He has sent samples to the editors. Still, X prefers anonymity; fame and fortune admittedly having their pitfalls. He has provided logical clues to a sketchy waybill which have been analyzed by many readers. X concludes that he has uncovered the legendary black gold of Pegleg Smith.

This conclusion is possibly correct. Conversely, it could be dead wrong. Because *wherever* his location, it is by no means the only site on the low desert where black gold nuggets have been positively found in recent times.

No need rehashing the Pegleg saga; in its many forms it is as familiar to Southwest treasure buffs as is Racquel Welch to the troops in Vietnam. Suffice that we refer to the trapper Thomas L. Smith who, in 1829 between Yuma and Warner's Ranch, found and lost a fortune in large black gold nuggets. Pegleg died in County Hospital, San Francisco, October 19, 1865, without ever rediscovering his find where, in his own words, "there's enough gold to load a hundred wagons without half trying."

Much serious search for the Pegleg, validated by geological conditions and human experience, both Indian and white, has for years centered to some extent in the Borrego Badlands northeast of lower San Felipe Creek. The investigation and theories have accelerated since X's disclosures. An example is J. A. Lentz, who in a sharp dissection of X's clues (Desert, May 1968), settles on Tule Wash, listing numerous matching factors: wildflowers, terrain, roads, old Indian rock rings, distances, even part of an old Spanish scabbard found by X. The significance of the scabbard derives from a new school whose particular bag is the intriguing concept that Pegleg's nuggets reached the desert not by nature but by the ill-fated Peralta Caravan which disappeared without a trace circa 1800 en route from the Calaveras gold fields to Sonora, Mexico. Intriguing also is the brief written exchange late last year between one Bill

Bean and X (Desert, Nov. and Dec. 1967). Bean declares, with succinct points, he knows the locus of X's diggings, and X replies that this is very likely. A perplexing twist is Bean's declaration that the gold source is very near the place "where Pegleg lay dying." To me, this was like a voice from beyond the grave.

Black nuggets have been found in the Borrego Badlands, though the majority of the finders is a taciturn lot. Consider my publicity-shy acquaintance near Palm Springs who found "a number" of black nuggets near a barranca "south of Traver-tine Rock." Since this could be any one of 20 "Blake's Ravines" from Grave to Campbell Wash, I pressed. My host demurred. I examined his sole remaining nugget. It was for real, all right. Perhaps its mates were involved with the finder's recent vacations to Canada and Europe. So there are black gold nuggets in Borrego Badlands—but this is not the only place.

Any complete anthology of Peglegiana in the public domain has recorded accounts of black nuggets in the Carrizo, the Algodones, the talus of Fish, Super-

stition, and Davies mountains, and on lonely Superstition, to say nothing of the scarp of the Chocolates whence John D. Mitchell removed — and then lost — \$12,000 in black stones one day in 1926. Not all, if any, of these valid finds were, by any stretch of your great aunt's maidenform, from a Spanish mule-train, whether Peralta's or Pancho Gonzales'! The sober fact is that these king-size black marbles coexist and have been found in several places on the low desert; but with rare exceptions, we hear only from the losers. The finders, a silent breed, don't talk—though I suspect they laugh in privacy.

Seeking the *why* of our nuggets in the ordinary light of bench, stream, gulch, or valley placers familiar to prospectors, we ricochet off stone walls. But realizing the whole low desert from Palm Desert to the Gulf was fairly recently an arm of the ocean, known as Lake Cahuilla or Blake's Sea, and thus subject to marine conditions, our perspective changes. Our nuggets then become candidates for a phenomenon rare in oceans and unheard of on deserts: the Beach Placer.

Mining geologist Josiah E. Spurr says:

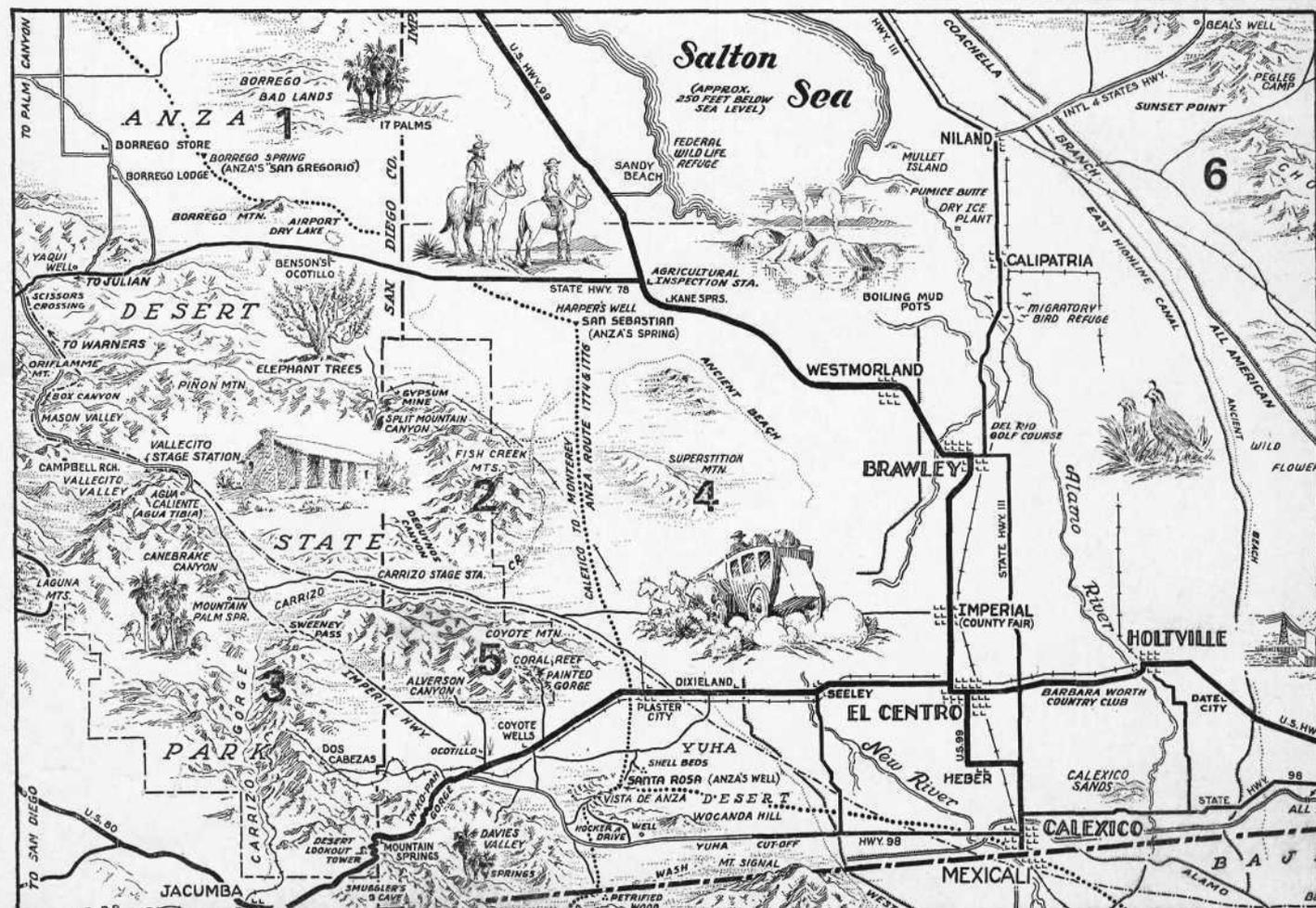
"Waterways discharging swiftly into an ocean carry rock fragments and gold particles of considerable size, depositing them on the seashore. The surf often effects a concentration, the gold accumulating and the lighter material sweeping away, thus beach placers are formed."

Consider now the genesis of black nuggets. Through centuries a waterway, say San Felipe Creek, flash-floods and transports coarse gold from subtrata of the rich Julian-Banner axis to the old shore-

### Black Bonanza Map Key

Numbers on map show approximate sites of where author states black nuggets have reportedly been found. Caution: Parts of the Chocolate Mountains, Carrizo Wash area and other sections near the Anza-Borrego State Park are gunnery ranges and closed to the public.

1. Borrego Badlands  
(Tule, Grave & Campbell Washes)
2. Fish Creek Mountains
3. Carrizo Wash
4. Superstition Mountain
5. Coyote Wash
6. Chocolate Mountains



line near Ocotillo Wells. The gold stops. Worked by wave and current, it concentrates. Now, in an active ocean, beach placers are rich but short-lived. That's why they're rare. But here something strange happens: the angry Colorado jams its delta with mountains of silt, and Lake Cahuilla, cut off from the Gulf, evaporates. Then seismic upheavals follow—the low desert straddles three nasty faults whose tremblor-tantrums are felt annually. This upheaval is important—it explains the nuggets on high ground.

William P. Blake, the geologist whose career focused on Lake Cahuilla, said that *since* dessication of the sea, "there has been considerable uplift and tilting of the whole region and a change from marine to fresh conditions." For proof one need only inspect the ancient beachline. Nowhere is it uniform, but everywhere is *higher* than the mean sea-level line. Its elevation at Travertine is 39 feet; 49 near Salton, 28 near Signal Mountain, and is 60 feet above m.s.l. at Holtville. And what about beach placers? Thus uplifted to the surface, the large gold chunks are subjected to aeolian mechanics—the abrasive action of wind and

sand—and smooth, round nuggets form. In time the strange biochemical process of patination (desert varnish or manganese) finishes the job. Our nuggets are now camouflaged. Bearing in mind the same conditions prevailed throughout the low desert along the ancient shore, it is a safe bet to look for most black gold nugget placers *between sea-level and the hundred-foot contour*—a relatively narrow zone of action.

If losers scream and finders laugh in silence, there's at least one finder who shared his experience. The late Fred Harvey owned a fine rock shop and for years was intimate with the desert. Skeptical as I am of desert "experts"—I was raised in their midst—I accepted what Fred told me at par, since it always checked out. He steered me straight, for instance, on the Hank Brandt riddle (Desert, Oct. '64). One day Fred showed me a partially black gold nugget lovely as a wild walnut. He said it assayed at 73% gold, the rest copper and silver, and was about 900 fine. He said this nugget and others came from the Yuha Desert near Imperial County's Plaster City. Here's how Fred told it.

During the war Fred was duck hunting on the Salton Sea when a chubasco roared in from the Gulf. Chubasco is a gale-force wind that can sandblast you or your car in nothing flat, so Fred and his friend made tracks for San Diego via old U.S. 80. West of Plaster City, the visibility hit zero. Stopping just where the highway bends southwest, they sought shelter in defilade on the banks of Coyote Wash, a short distance north. When the storm abated the terrain looked like a weird moonscape. Chubasco had stripped up to three feet of sand from the desert floor to bedrock. The ironwood and smoke trees, roots bared, appeared to be on stilts.

Between the highway and Coyote Wash, Harvey and his companion picked up some heavy round black stones "just on a hunch," though they were more concerned with their sand-gutted car. In San Diego they discovered they had several large gold nuggets mantled in black veneer—the legacy of Pegleg Smith. A frantic trip to the desert availed nothing. The trees were normal. The floor had a thick blanket of sand. Digging was frustrating and fruitless. What the desert had

## ***New letter from "The man who found Pegleg's gold"***

This summer I took my usual trip to Alaska and points north, extending it an extra month this year. The July issue containing Mr. Odell's letter was forwarded in the mail and caught up with me in September.

Having just returned home (I haven't visited the discovery site as yet) I received the November issue and felt it was time to answer Mr. Odell and Mr. Sager.

From the beginning it seems that a number of letter writers have assumed things I have not said. For example, Mr. Odell thinks I have changed from my original theory to the Peralta theory of the origin of the black nuggets. In the last paragraph of my letter in the July issue—in which issue Mr. Odell's letter also appears—I made it clear that I think my original theory is perfectly valid. I also made it clear that the Peralta caravan theory—in light of the Spanish artifacts—also is valid.

What I've tried to do, ever since the Peralta theory was introduced, is to keep an open mind and lay the evidence out in a neutral way to see if expert opinion could swing the balance one way or the other. I haven't said it in so many words up to now, but personally I still lean towards the orig-

inal theory I developed. On the other hand, after Robert Buck came up with the Peralta theory, into which I tied the old corroded Spanish-type buckle, and then the discovery of the sword-sheath "throat" which was authenticated by experts, my position became simply that this evidence could not be ignored, hence the possibility that the Peralta theory is valid too!

Since my original theory also has been confirmed by geological experts and mining engineers, it would seem at this point that either theory is still possible.

Now then, had expert opinion been totally against my original geologic theory, then I would of course lean more heavily to the Peralta side. Had the sword throat not been found "authentic," then the evidence on the Peralta theory would have been rather weak. All this may sound confusing, but in reality, I'm still keeping an open mind, hoping further evidence will turn up to confirm one theory or the other.

Mr. Odell's reasoning about the location of the nuggets in relation to the surface is quite good. I have considered this same matter in detail and very carefully ever since the Peralta matter came up.

But with the advantage of having looked

over the ground very carefully, and in light of what any experienced "desert hand" knows about the ravages of flash floods in the desert, I will say that it is possible (using the Peralta theory of the nuggets having been dropped or left on the surface) that they could have been scattered, buried, exposed, then scattered, exposed and buried again by flash flood action over the many years that have elapsed and, in the process, the hill and mound could have been formed as they were with the nuggets exposed and buried as I found them. Obviously I have given a further clue here to the effect that the soil is alluvial and in an area where considerable erosion could take place.

Nevertheless, my original theory also accounts for the hill and the mound and the location of the nuggets, both exposed and buried.

So where are we? In my opinion the matter is still open. Either theory is still possible until evidence turns up to prove one absolutely or discount the other. You mention having three stories on hand about the Pegleg nuggets. Perhaps one of them will shed more light on the matter.

*The Man Who Found Pegleg's  
Black Gold*

been forced by the storm to reveal, it quickly had concealed again. After the war Harvey and some Marines with mine detectors made the scene. In four trips three nuggets, no more, were found, widely scattered.

In April, 1968, Colonel Russ Hughes and I departed for the Yuha Desert. First I did two things. I called on Fred Harvey's brother Jess. He hadn't been on the desert with Fred but he recalled Fred saying the gold source was on the edge of a government reservation. Thus, the search area would be the banks of Coyote Wash from the curve in Highway 80 to the Naval Gunnery Range northeast of Plaster City—roughly R 11 E - T 16 S, sections 4 through 9. Next, I played a recording. I had taped the nugget interview with Fred. Now I wanted to be very sure of what I'd heard. Because part of his waybill was such a weird coincidence that, other than for Russ Hughes, I've kept it to myself until this moment.

Now I'll try to bring what I know, plus the speculations and certitudes of others, all onto one plane. I mentioned that Bean's peculiar and unchallenged statement, that the nuggets were near "where Pegleg lay dying," sounded to me like a voice from the grave. Well, it was. Toward the end of the tape, there is Fred's voice, very clearly: ". . . Not far from this place there's this big ironwood tree on Coyote Wash. That's where they found Pegleg Smith dying."

At this point in the interview, I recall, I'd counted ten and reminded Fred that even the rawest Peglegophile knew that Pegleg died in San Francisco of pancreatitis, acute. Fred explained he wasn't referring to *the* Pegleg, Thomas L., finder of the fabulous 1829 nuggets, but to one of the latter-day Pegleg Smiths. As we know, there were two besides Thomas. In those violent days, amputation was as common as the name Smith, and anyone with a wooden leg was called, what else, "pegleg." This Pegleg, Harvey continues, was the Yuma driver living in San Bernardino. He had a gold source somewhere, probably in the Santa Rosas. He used to sortie from Dos Palmas in dead of night to evade followers, and used to leave his spare wooden leg near a campsite to mislead hijackers. In 1872, between Campo and Kane Springs, he became dehydrated trying to get to Sackett's Well on Coyote Wash, and was found by a cowboy from

the big ranch near Seeley. There being no Imperial County then, the death was investigated by a deputy sheriff from San Bernardino who arrived two days later and buried Smith near the ironwood tree. Harvey says a cross was evident there for some time, and that the incident is in the San Bernardino records, as well as at Wells Fargo, where Smith had deposited his gold. Since this information, though interesting, had nothing at the time to do with my story, I filed it—until I saw Bean's letter and X's answer.

Standing on the ridge between the two forks of Coyote Wash, I wondered how much gold had cascaded down this broad waterway from the rich lodes of Jacumba, or from the Japa across the border. That a trace of color had been panned from the Coyote and Carrizo two winters before, I knew. I now found several Indian rock rings on the ridge toward the gunnery range. I was dead center on the Sonora Trail where passed many a conquistador and mule train. Nearby, at Coyote Wells, in the Yuha, and in Davies Mountains, Spanish artifacts have recently been found. To the east, the ancient beachline can be seen, at elevation 52 above m.s.l. And incidentally, purple desert wildflowers were in bloom to the west.

Though the old highway west of Plaster City is still discernable, the terrain between the curve and Coyote Wash looked like it had been struck by an asteroid. A major excavation is in progress. Not for the gold—not yet—but by the State for gravel for the new freeway, Interstate 8.

Still, Russ and I swept the area with a detector. The response was an electronic cacaphony beyond belief: cans, nails,

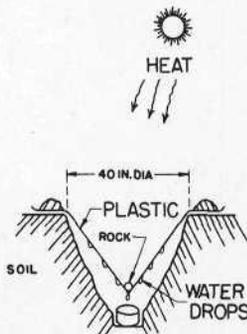
springs, church-keys — but no nuggets. Not even a used Spanish scabbard. Shifting emphasis east toward the Navy range, we found a mesa alongside Coyote Wash made more sense than the man-made crater to the west. Here the area is blanketed with thousands of black pebbles of every size and description. But that day we were fighting time as well as space, and though our cursory sweeps homed in on some faint signals, the net result was negligible.

That this shy and provoking loot is out there, not far horizontally or vertically from where we trod, I have no doubt. Too many unrelated clues point to the same target. But some irritating questions remain unanswered, and are beginning to chafe.

Is this black bonanza, one of the several known desert grails, ensconced somewhere beneath the ironwood and smoke tree roots, lurking beyond detector depth on the high ground near where the Coyote meets the ancient shore? Is it in the walls of the yawning gravel pits, having escaped the predatory earth-moving monsters? Will deep-range detectors ferret it out? Will it take another unpredictable chubasco to once more uncover the heavy, heavenly spheres?

Or has it come to pass, in the grand design, that the ageless, inscrutable desert has once more wrought its peculiar justice, and that this fortune is safely and solidly immured in several million tons of roadbed supporting a super-highway over which hurried and harried man speeds headlong toward his ultimate destiny? Truth, like gold, is where you find it—and the finders laugh in silence. □

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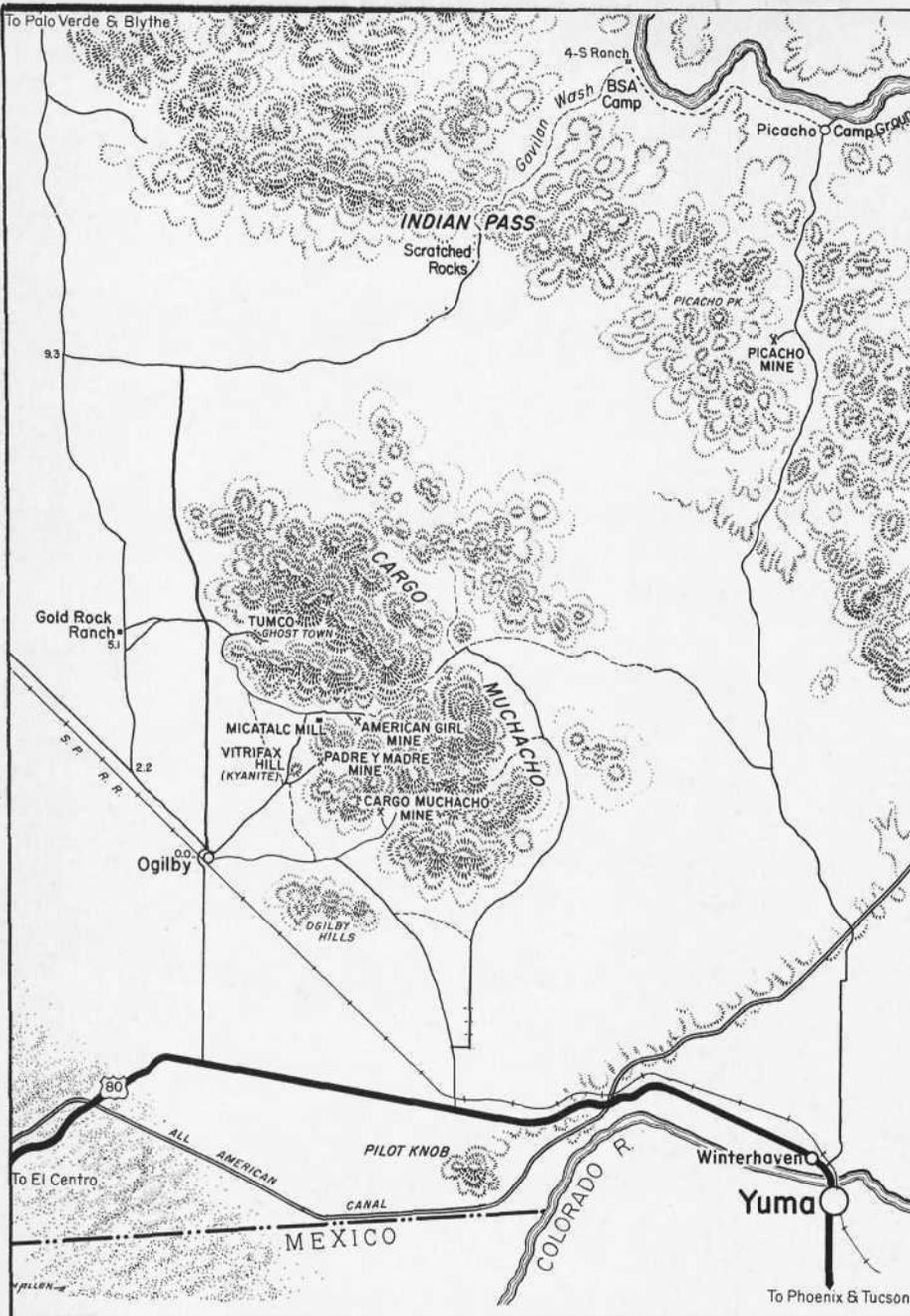
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## CARGO MUCHACHOS

Continued from Page 25



heavy brush to the river's edge so there are few camping areas.

Approximately 10 miles south from the Boy Scout camp is a small campground and launching ramp. At one time it was a private enterprise, but today is operated by the state. There are no services available here. The campgrounds can also be reached over a passenger car road from Winterhaven (see map). Along the passenger car road from Winterhaven are several old mines, including the Picacho Mine. The section is a favorite hunting ground for rockhounds.

The area approaching Indian Pass and the Pass itself is also rock hunting territory. I am told you can find petrified palm root and fiber, blue dumortierite, silicified fossils, jaspers, agates and chalcidony.

At the top of Indian Pass park your car on a level spot above Gavilan Wash. The scratched rocks are only a few yards off the road to your left. They cover a large area and can easily be found. Also through the area you will find Indian rock rings and Indian trails.

The scratches on the rocks are not very deep but they must be quite old as they are covered with patina (desert varnish). When Malcolm Rogers, an archeologist, visited the area many years ago and dug into the rock circles it is reported he found conventional petroglyphs along with the marked stones. However, as far as I can determine, there are no petroglyphs in the area today.

Who scratched the rocks and when? There are numerous theories. One is that Indians gathered at the pass for religious ceremonies and kept time to their chants by striking the boulders with sharp rocks. Another is they were scores for some kind of game or contest of physical skill. Historians say Apaches once hunted mountain sheep in the area.

The most logical theory, in my opinion, was advanced by Harold Weight in an article on the rocks in *Desert Magazine* in February, 1949. The author points out the pass lies close to the western boundary of land once claimed by the Yuma Indians. It also marks the natural division point between the valleys and river bottoms of the Colorado and the desert.



*A scratched rock from Indian Pass. There are many theories as to why and when the rocks were marked. Indian trails and rock rings are found in the same area.*



Part of an old Indian trail winds through the rocks covered with patina or "desert varnish." The trails wind for miles and can be seen from the Colorado River to the Chocolate Mountains.

It is then possible the camp on the pass was sort of a border station and trading area for various Indian tribes and the marks on the rocks would be a tally of the persons traveling through the pass or a tally of traded goods. After all, the white man has toll roads, so why not the Indians?

The scratched rocks of Indian Pass are just one of the mysteries of the Cargo Muchacho Mountains and the nearby Colorado River. Who knows what other unsolved riddles are hidden within the rocks and washes of the area? Maybe someday you too will find another page out of the past in this country of fascinating history. □




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# GOLD DISCOVERY DAYS

by Irene Wray



*Gold Discovery Days in Coloma will be held January 25 and 26, with the big parade on Sunday. This year's celebration will honor the founding of the first Japanese colony in California 100 years ago.*

THOUSANDS OF people will visit the tiny town of Coloma, California in January to take part in the annual Gold Discovery Days Celebration. The drawing card will be a new sawmill, which was completed earlier this year. It's an authentic replica of the one James Marshall built in 1848. It's a full-sized working model, the only undershot waterwheel on the West Coast.



*A replica of Sutter's Mill at Coloma is operated during the summer season. It was near here that John Marshall discovered gold in 1849, starting the rush of argonauts to California.*

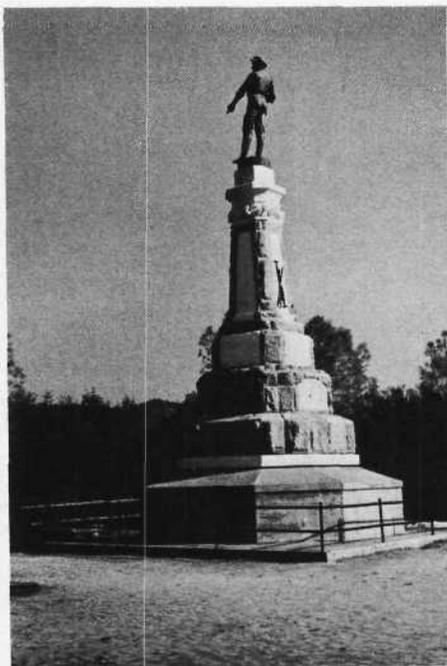
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Gold Discovery Days will be held January 25 and 26, 1969. Celebrations start early Saturday and the parade and other events Sunday. Theme will honor the Japanese in observance of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first Japanese colony in California located at Gold Hill, near Coloma.

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A sawmill was also the catalyst in 1849. It was in its tailrace that Marshall found the flakes of gold, and changed the course of history. This new replica cuts jack-pine lumber for tourists each weekend and on request anytime.

Visual reminders left by the army of argonauts still survive in Coloma; there are two stone Chinese stores, a museum filled with relics, Marshall's cabin, tools and machinery, many churches and other buildings, all a part of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Park. It has also been designated a national monument.



A monument to James Marshall. His arm points to a spot where gold was discovered in the American River.

Coloma is on the south fork of the American River, 58 miles northeast of Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. You can drive up Highway 80 to Auburn, then onto Golden Chain Mother Lode Highway 49, which will take you right to the park. Or you can go to Placerville on Highway 50, then come in on Highway 49 from the other direction. Either way you'll see evidence of the miners' activities here—abandoned mines, cabins, and ruins of mining towns. The roads, though winding, are adequate for any kind of vehicle.

History and romance began in Coloma when Marshall climbed out of the tailrace and made his way to the spot where his crew worked. "Boys," he said, "I believe I've found a gold mine."

And what a gold mine! Nearly two billion dollars worth was found between 1850-53. Good diggings brought an average of eight ounces a day, worth \$128. Some single nuggets were found, worth \$5000 and more. The biggest nugget found at Coloma brought \$73,710.

Marshall's flake of gold — bitten, pounded, boiled in lye, then pronounced authentic—didn't cause much stir at first. Californians were too busy staking out free land and politicking. Slowly the word was passed, and the value became bigger with each telling. Eighty thousand gold seekers came, and Coloma grew until

more than 300 frame buildings nestled between the mountains and the prolific gold-carrying river.

Coloma is the site of many firsts in California: first effective gold discovery, first sawmill in the interior, first gold rocker, first mining ditch, and the first El Dorado County seat. After the gold rush days, Coloma became a charming town of homes, gardens, orchards and vineyards.

Today, population stays at around 175. The park offers shady picnic areas with tables and barbecue pits. You can spend hours browsing in the museum, where you'll see original timbers from the first sawmill. There's a unique collection of pioneer artifacts, and a panoramic diorama of mining days. Old gold pans, arastras and sluice boxes are displayed.

Up on the hill (there's a road, but if you feel like hiking, you'll be able to put yourself in the gold miner's boots) you can see the monument to Marshall, a display case, Marshall's cabin, St. John's Catholic Church, and a lovely cemetery.

Coloma is usually quiet and peaceful, but in January the bustle and excitement of Gold Discovery Days is recreated. There'll be a Gold Rush parade, complete with covered wagons, bands, stage coaches, old spring wagons, mules and miners, and mounted horsemen. After the parade you can watch Sutter's sawmill cut lumber as it did 120 years ago.

"Bad Day in Coloma, or Melinda to the Rescue From Beyond the Grave," is the intriguing title of the melodrama scheduled at old Coloma Hall. Here you'll be encouraged to hiss the villain and cheer the heroine. The Sacramento Fiddlers' Club will play toe-tapping tunes—all request numbers, and none younger than fifty years old.

This sun-warmed, mountain-sheltered bend in the river will probably have-pleasant weather, even in January, so plan an outdoor picnic. Cold drinks are sold, but no food is available. Avoid the traffic jam by parking in one of the lots at either end of town, then walk through. The main street is only about a mile long.

You can see everything in one day, but to absorb nostalgia and learn what it was like in 1849, plan to stay two days. The ever-interesting background of pioneer history is a proper setting for a look into the past, an appreciation of the present, and a forecast of the future. □

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# *We Conquered the Mexican 1000!*

by Carol Bryan

as told to Jack Pepper, Editor of Desert Magazine



Carol Bryan

Now that it's all over and I am back with my family in Indio it all seems like a dream—with some nightmares thrown in—at least they seem like nightmares now but when they really happened we didn't have time to reflect, only to act.

It all started several months before the race during a casual conversation in which someone said several of the entries were a man-woman team. Someone asked what about a two-woman team? Letha and I looked at each other, then at our husbands, who looked at each other and shook their heads as though we were crazy. Several times during the race I was certain we were.

Letha Patchen



After Marv Patchen (Letha's husband) said he had a Jeep we could use, Bill (my husband) picked up the phone and called Bill Knyvett and Jack Pepper, owners of *Desert Magazine*. Would they sponsor a two-woman-driver vehicle in the race? "We'll let you know tomorrow," they said. Ten minutes later they called back. "Okay, go ahead, but don't kill yourselves." When Brian Chuchua, who had five entries in the race, said he would service our Jeep, we knew we were in.

During the next two months the men made the necessary mechanical adjustments on the Jeep while I took a two-week mechanic's course at our local College of the Desert. Bill and I have been 4-wheel drive addicts for years so I was not a novice at back country driving. Letha was also familiar with off-road driving. But I was to learn there is nothing to compare to the Baja run!

On November 4 we drove our Jeep into the inspection and impound area in Ensenada. As vehicle number 109 we were scheduled to depart at 7:49 a.m. the following morning. There were 247 vehicles of all types and descriptions in the impound area. Only 106 finished the race. Movie actor James Garner was driving one, and naturally was surrounded by adoring women. Ordinarily I would have been one, but I was too occupied with last minute preparations to join the crowd.

Our husbands had agreed to allow us to enter the race on one condition; we would not compete against the veteran male drivers, but would only try and drive the 832 grueling miles within the 50-hour time limit. This meant driving the entire distance without sleep.

Two weeks before the race Brian Chuchua had invited Letha and me to make a dry run with several of his other drivers, so we had traveled the entire distance from Ensenada to La Paz. If it hadn't been for Brian's offer, I know we would never have finished . . . there are just too many wrong turns to make unless you know where NOT to go. We were certain we would not make a wrong turn . . . but we did.

There were eight check points between the start and finish where each vehicle checked in and could get gasoline. In addition Bill Bryan and Harold Hawthorne were in a plane piloted by Arnold D. Senterfitt, author of *Airports of Baja California*, and Marv Patchen was flying

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another plane with Dick Myers, Danny Foltz and Bob Love. They landed at the various check points and helped service and make minor repairs to our vehicle and those of Brian Chuchua. I am certain none of us would have finished in time without their valuable help.

Although a week before the race I was so keyed up I had to take sleeping pills, the morning of the race I was amazed that I felt so calm. Amid the cheers of the hundreds of spectators, we left the starting point and headed for the long road to La Paz. Letha was driving the first lap. With vehicles starting every minute, the first leg of the race was congested but by the time we left the pavement 130 miles below Ensenada traffic had thinned out. We had decided to set a steady pace which we figured would put us in La Paz in 40 hours, so when faster vehicles approached we slowed to the side of the road and let them pass.

We passed Camalu and El Rosario, the first two check points, without trouble and on our scheduled time. Outside of Camalu we passed the wrecked vehicle of veteran driver Bruce Meyers who, along with his co-pilot "Weelo" Anderson, was injured when they hit a wash. Also along the way we passed quite a few vehicles that were out of the race with mechanical failures.

Our first trouble came at Laguna Chapala when we broke a steering stabilizer. While I held the light, Letha crawled under the Jeep and fixed it. Then outside of Punta Prieta our engine coughed and died. I knew it was either the carburetor or distributor points—victims of the fine dust which clogs the engine and accounted for many of the vehicles dropping out of the race.

Knowing about the dust, Bill had supplied us with a bottle of compressed air. It took us only five minutes to blow the dust out of the distributor and we were on our way to El Arco, the fifth check point. We arrived there on schedule at 6:45 a.m., twenty-three hours after leaving Ensenada. After Bill and Marv made some minor engine adjustments, we gassed up and headed for San Ignacio where we arrived at 11:20 a.m. We were more than half way and we figured we had it licked. Little did we know!

A few miles south of San Ignacio we pulled around a stalled dune buggy and stopped. They said we could not get

through the sand ahead, it was just too soft. I walked up to the sand, dug my boot into the road, went back to the Jeep and gunned it through. I was thankful for my previous driving experience in the sand around Indio.

A few miles further our engine again coughed and stopped. Just as we were starting to blow the distributor out again Wayne Minor, of Hemet, Calif., pulled up behind us. Not knowing he also was having engine trouble we told him not to stop just because we were women—that we were competitors. As he helped us blow out the points, his co-driver fixed his vehicle. A motorcyclist by the name of Kitchen also stopped to help. After a half-hour delay we all headed south, but the men soon out-distanced us. By this time we had been driving 32 hours and were beginning to feel the effects of the constant pounding of the dirt and rutted road.

Then we made the wrong turn. On our dry run with Brian we had discovered a short cut which left the main road—if you can call it a road—for several miles. Our trouble was we turned right instead of left to make the short cut. We were going about 40 miles an hour when I got the feeling we were not right. But it was too late. We came over a hill and before we could stop the Jeep plunged into soft mud of a lagoon near the ocean. Our wheels sank into the muck up to the hub caps. It felt as though we were in quicksand—later I was told the mud in that area is just like quicksand, sucking heavy objects into the mire when the incoming ocean tide makes the mud even softer.

I knew we were near the ocean so I grabbed the tide table. My fears were confirmed; high tide was coming in. We jumped out of the Jeep and took out the two heavy tires to lighten the load. Using a heavy farming-type jack we raised the Jeep and I tried to back up. It just sank deeper into the mire. As far as we could see there was only sand and mud, not one tree, stick of wood or grass to put under the wheels.

The tide was coming in; we were certain no other vehicles would come this way; the Jeep seemed to be sinking even deeper in the mud! I made the understatement of the year: "Letha, we've had it!"

Letha and I sat there for five minutes feeling sorry for ourselves and at the

same time blaming ourselves for being so stupid as to take the wrong turn. We didn't cry—maybe because we just didn't have enough energy left. We decided the only thing to do was to hike back to the main road and try to get help, although we knew by the time we returned the Jeep would be a total loss.

We had walked back about 10 yards when we saw it; white and hard crusted salt! We knew it was our only chance. Forgetting how tired we were, we rushed back and dumped our personal belongings out of plastic bags and filled the bags with salt. Jacking up the back wheels we dumped the salt under the tires and then repeated the process with the front wheels. We couldn't turn around—our only hope was to back up to the hard surface.

With the salt under the wheels I got in the Jeep and slowly applied the throttle to the automatic transmission. The Jeep went back a few yards and then bogged down in the mud. For two hours we carried salt, jacked up the Jeep, put salt under the wheels, moved a few yards and then bogged down again. How many times we did this I can't remember. All I know is that within a few feet of the hard sand we had used up the last of the precious salt. If we didn't make the surface on this last try we would have had it. I said a silent prayer as I made the last attempt. The Jeep moved back and then started to bog down. Maybe it was Letha's superhuman push plus our prayers, but just as the 3000-pound vehicle started to sink the back tires caught on the firm sand and slowly I crept onto the hard surface. We were free!

Now our only thought was to get back to the main road and to La Purisima, the seventh check point. We had lost all confidence and track of time and had given up even finishing the race, let alone on time. We didn't even know how far it was to La Purisima. We just wanted to see people—any people.

Heading south on the main road we passed several abandoned racing vehicles and 60 miles later arrived at La Purisima. There was no use staying there so we decided to go to the final check point, Villa Constitucion, 80 miles south where Bill was waiting for us. He could take the Jeep in from there, even though it meant we were out of the race.

Bill had thoughtfully provided us with

a tape recorder so I turned the music on full blast and headed south. Every once in a while I looked down at the speedometer, thinking I was going 40 miles an hour—we would be going ten. Nothing was real and I kept imagining animals were crossing the road. The giant cardon cactus looked like moving people.

Finally there were lights and Villa Constitucion. In a daze I pulled into the check point and stopped the motor. Then I heard a voice shouting, "Where the hell have you been; you're seven hours overdue!" Later I realized my husband's harsh words were from worry, but at the time it made me so mad I shouted back at him. Evidently my anger started my blood circulating and my mind functioning. Bill's shouting was just the therapy I needed! For the first time since we made the wrong turn I checked the time; we had been driving 45 hours and La Paz was only 130 miles away, with pavement starting in only a few miles—the first pavement in 750 miles. We could still make it!

"Stop yelling and fill up the tanks," I shouted back at Bill. "I'll tell you about it later." Within minutes we were on our way.

Today I cannot remember driving the last 130 miles. All I remember is I was mad at Bill for shouting at me and that I would show him what we women could do. And then I worried; I worried about my children at home, I worried about taking too many No Doz tablets, I worried about falling asleep . . . I worried myself all the way into La Paz.

The next thing I remember was lights, people shouting and Bill kissing me and telling us we had made it in 47 hours and 55 minutes, two hours short of the deadline. We were the first and only two-woman team to complete the Baja run.

Would I do it again? It seems a shame to waste all that experience and knowledge of what to do and what not to do that Letha and I had learned. Of course, I wouldn't compete against the men—at least not all the way—and besides, I'd have to ask my husband—he's the boss. □

See additional photographs and Bill Bryan's article *Helping Hands Across The Border* on following pages.

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# BACK COUNTRY

## Helping Hands Across The Border

This was the second year of the Mexican 1000 Race. What has been the effect on Baja California? Has it helped or hurt the people of Baja and the roads of the country?

Sponsored by the National Off Road Racing Association, the first race in 1967 had 64 entries. This year's race had 247 vehicles start and 106 finish.

Baja California is a 1000-mile peninsula extending from Tijuana and Mexicali, below the California border, to Cabo San Lucas. There is one main road, of which only 300 miles are paved. The unpaved section of the road is not passable by passenger car, although a few hardy souls have driven Volkswagens the entire distance.

Between Ensenada (60 miles below Tijuana) and La Paz there are only a few small communities. Compared to Upper California, Baja California is sparsely populated. Ten years ago only a few *Norte Americanos* traveled through Baja; today thousands of *touristas* visit the "last frontier of the West" every season. (Few travel there in the summer as it is too hot.)

Although the majority of the residents of Baja are not as affluent as their Mexican counterparts on the Mainland, they are a proud, extremely honest and self-sufficient people. Other than in the cities their main income is from fishing and farming, the latter of which is limited due to the scarcity of water. The third source of income is from the *touristas*.

I have visited Baja many times during the past five years and driven the entire length on two different occasions. The last time was after the second Mexican 1000 Race last month when I drove the

Desert Magazine sponsored vehicle back from La Paz. (See article on the race in this issue.) During the race I flew over the area and stopped at the eight check points.

Therefore, I feel I am qualified to state that the Mexican 1000 Race has definitely helped, not only the people of Baja, but has improved the roads.

First, let's discuss the roads. There are a few—and only a few—sections in the sandy areas I found on my return trip immediately after the race that had been damaged by the race vehicles. By damaged I mean the wheels had caused sandy ruts in the road. But this is no more damage than the heavy trucks hauling supplies from Tijuana to La Paz cause—and how those Mexican drivers maneuver those roads with those trucks I'll never know!

On the other hand new roads and short cuts have been created both by NORRA, before the race, and the drivers themselves as they seek a shorter distance to cut down their time. In addition the main road has been improved by the drivers who, by necessity, have had to fill in washes and clear obstacles out of their paths.

A typical example is that of Mrs. Espinosa at El Rosario, who owns the local gas station and cafe where you can get the most delicious lobster tails I have ever eaten—not to mention the fresh tortillas and beans.

She told me the race was the greatest thing that ever happened to her community. The local residents were so concerned about the drivers getting lost they stayed up all night leading them with flashlights. Previously a road through to

her farm had been completely washed out and was impassable. When the drivers found out this wash was a short cut, 67 cars took the route. They virtually made a new road. "Now we have a new road to the farm, and it's even better than the main road so I guess everyone will be using it from now on," Mrs. Espinosa told me.

At least a dozen similar short cuts were turned into good—and shorter roads—during the race. I drove over them on my return.

At Rancho Santa Ynez, the third check point of the race, Josefina Zumia, who once lived in the United States, last year decided because of the race she would enlarge an old airstrip, add more gas facilities, and serve food. Today she has an excellent airport, gasoline, delicious food and lodging and a big smile for Baja *touristas* the 'year round—all because of the Mexican 1000.

At Laguna Chapala the natives stayed up all night helping to pull out stalled vehicles from a sand trap. They refused payment for their work. At El Arco enterprising natives turned an abandoned garage into the "El Arco Hilton" and served food, along with entertainment. The local grocery store did a land office business.

I can cite dozens of other examples of how the good people of Baja helped the people of the United States—and how the people of the United States have helped the people of Baja. Yes, the Mexican 1000 Race has done more to promote good feelings and understanding between the U.S. and Mexico than all the gringo dollars could buy—just people to people proudly working together for a better Baja California. □

# TRAVEL

by Bill Bryan



## NORRA'S 1968 MEXICAN 1,000

Of the 254 vehicles starting the 1968 NORRA Mexican 1000 Race, only 106 made it to the finish line in the allotted 50 hours. Driving a 1968 Honda, Larry Berquist, of Duarte, and Gary Preston, of West Covina, drove the 830 miles in the amazing time of 20 hours and 38 minutes. Berquist drove half-way and Gary Preston the other half. Thirteen of this year's finishers

broke the 1967 record of 26 hours and 8 minutes established by Vic Wilson and Ted Mangels in a Meyers Manx dune buggy. Winners in each of the seven classes received \$1250 plus contingency prizes. Total NORRA cash awards were \$25,600 and contingency awards amounting to \$33,500.



The afternoon before the race Letha Patchen, left, and Carol Bryan, (see her story of the race on page 34) posed for photographers. The girls wore slacks while driving and were not this clean when they finished.



Leaving the starting point at Ensenada, the DESERT Magazine-sponsored Jeep heads for La Paz, 830 miles and 47 hours and 55 minutes away. The 247 vehicles left start at one-minute intervals.



Television star James Garner and his co-driver "Scooter" Patrick, driving a 1968 Ford Bronco, placed fourth in their class with a total time of 26 hours and 52 minutes. They were 19th in the overall race.



Pat Wayne, son of movie star John Wayne, checks a map prior to starting the race. Wayne and his co-driver, Everett Creach, developed engine trouble which prevented them finishing under the 50-hour time limit.

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# Calendar of Western Events

## Strictly from a Woman's Viewpoint

My husband and I like to camp and this is one of our favorite recipes—it's especially popular with the children.

- 2 tablespoons oleo or butter
- 4 tablespoons brown sugar
- Small can of pineapple slices or chunks
- Canned meat such as Spam, sliced
- Medium size can of pork and beans or oven-baked beans

Melt oleo and sugar together in a large frying pan, preferably an iron pan. Add pineapple juice and cook until it bubbles well. Add pineapple and sliced meat, turning frequently until pineapple and meat are browned, using a low fire. Add beans and heat thoroughly before serving. Amounts may be varied and peach slices or apricots substituted for pineapple.

MRS. FRANCES HANKEN,  
Lucerne Valley, Calif.

### QUICK CAMPER BREAKFAST

The day before leaving on a trip make a number of waffles, cool and wrap in several foil packets. We like to add dry quick oats to the batter for extra protein. Store in cool shelf, or ice box if not damp. Next morning unwrap waffles and toast in pan on top of stove. Waffles can be frozen or otherwise will keep for several days.

MRS. EVELYN NASH,  
Lakewood, Calif.

### ONE DISH STEAK AND POTATOES

Enough round steak tenderized to serve family. One large potato for each person and one or two large onions. Cut steak into one inch wide strips and fry slowly in enough shortening or oil to cover bottom of pan until redness has gone from steak. Slice onions and potatoes in layers into pan on top of steak. Salt and pepper to taste. Cover pan and fry slowly, adding more shortening if needed. Turn to keep from burning and cook until potatoes are tender.

Would like to have a recipe for making skillet bread. Can any Desert readers help me?

A Yucaipa Reader who forgot  
to sign her name.

### ANSWERS TO COMMUNITY QUIZ

1. Seattle, Washington
2. Palm Springs, California
3. Palmdale, California
4. Pismo Beach, California
5. Las Vegas, Nevada
6. San Diego, California
7. Solvang, California
8. San Francisco, California
9. Ventura, California
10. Phoenix, Arizona

### PERFORMANCE RATING SCALE

100 points: You must be a Travel Agent

90 points: Boy, have you been around!

80 points: You're up in the winner's circle.

70 points: A memory course you don't need.

60 points: Evidently you have gone places and seen things.

50 points: Midpoint—you are neither sloganized nor otherwise.

40 points: Your slogan I.Q. is dragging.

30 points: Next time try the bus.

20 points: Just a couple of lucky guesses.

10 points: Might as well return to your solitaire game.

0 points: Nice try — you old stay-at-home.

### CONSERVATION AWARDS

Desert Magazine each month will recognize either an individual or members of an organization who have contributed toward the preservation or conservation of our wilderness areas. We hope by presenting this award it will teach vandals and litterbugs to change their habits and enjoy and not destroy our natural resources. Please send your nominations for an individual or organization and a description of the project to Back Country Travel, Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, Calif. 92260.

DECEMBER 28 - 30, THIRD ANNUAL ROCKHOUND ROUNDUP of San Diego Council, Gold Rock Trading Post near Ogilby, Calif. Camping, field trips, gold panning, swap table, auctions. Everyone welcome and everyone free. For details write Joseph Wilt, 4510 Date Ave., La Mesa, Calif.

DECEMBER 28-30, BUTTERCUP BRAWL of Imperial Valley Dune Buggy Assn., Imperial Sand Dunes off Highway 80 near rest area. Excellent spectator event. Public invited.

JANUARY 13, 24TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY DEADLINE. Exhibition, Feb. 1-23. For entry forms and information write Mary Albright, 7243 S. Phillips, Chicago, Illinois 66049.

FEBRUARY 1 & 2, PROSPECTORS PARADISE sponsored by Orange Coast Mineral and Lapidary Society, Junior Exhibits Building, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, Calif. For details write Marshall Tinsley, 1111 Lake Avenue, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92646.

FEBRUARY 14-16, TUCSON GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY'S 15th annual show, Tucson, Arizona Fairgrounds, camping for self-contained units. Exhibits, demonstrations, lectures, etc. Admission 75c.

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 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. 92245.

## BOOKS



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# LETTERS to and from the Editor . . .

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.

## Moving Rocks . . .

Having just read the article about moving rocks on the "Racetrack" by Roger Mitchell in the Nov. 1968 issue, I am moved to advance another theory. His wind and moisture theory are correct but not the ice angle. I was there one winter when there were muddy areas and standing water. The mud is as slippery as grease, making it quite easy for a stiff wind to slide the rocks along on the mud. I found one rock whose trail took three differing angles due to wind changes.

HAROLD ROUSE,  
Tehachapi, Calif.

## Bergman Museum Open . . .

I was sorry to hear of the passing of Harry Bergman. Is his interesting museum between Aguanga and Anza on Highway 71 still open? I enjoy stopping there.

HARVEY GRAY,  
Palm Desert, Calif.

*Editor's Note: Harry Bergman spent 70 years collecting artifacts from the Arctic to South America. He died two months ago at the age of 86. His daughter says Harry's fascinating museum is definitely open every day of the week. A trip to the museum is well worth the time. (See Desert, March 1968)*

## Pegleg Holes . . .

Regarding the letter from Mr. Pegleg in the July, 1968 issue, I believe I am guilty of digging the two holes he mentions. There were four of us in our group and the temperature was 120 degrees. My son's wife became ill and our two metal detectors went haywire so we had to leave the area in a hurry before filling in the holes. I sure would like to work that place over with a #8 caterpillar. There should be at least another million in gold there.

STANLEY M. DeWALT,  
Lake Worth, Florida.

## Keep Them Coming . . .

I have been reading your magazine for three years and thoroughly enjoy each issue. The only request I make is that you print all the articles that you can on the Black Gold of Pegleg. I have been chasing Pegleg's Ghost for the past six years. The letters and articles by your Mr. Pegleg have been most helpful, but not quite enough.

Keep up the good work.

FRED BARRETT,  
San Diego, Calif.

## Maybe He Did . . .

Years ago I did an article on Death Valley Scotty for Time Magazine. While on the assignment I made several treks into the Racetrack area (Desert, Nov. 1968) because he wanted to show me the pale green jade around the foothills of Hunter Mountain. Although we hiked 22 miles and wore out a set of boots it was worth it for the jade I picked up and the intimate glimpse I got into the character of Death Valley Scotty.

He was inclined to fabricate the truth but usually much of it could be authenticated, such as the time he told me there were white bats in the caves of Hunter Mountain. I did not believe it, nor his statement about the moving Racetrack rocks. Both statements later proved true.

At the time I wrote my article I said "Scotty's gold mine was a millionaire insurance man named J. L. Johnson from Chicago." But now I wonder if Scotty really did have a gold vein or two.

Incidentally, Bob LeMaire, star of the "Rendezvous With Adventure" television series, soon will make a trip to the Racetrack to film the moving rocks on a time-lapse sequence. He will also look for jade and the white bats. I will fly in by helicopter to pinpoint the places Scotty showed me—we might even find his gold vein.

CHET L. SWITELL,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## Blues and Greys . . .

James Harrigan's article in the September '68 issue in which he tells about American soldiers at Fort Mojave in 1880 reminded me of another group of soldiers about that time just a bit farther south. The Territory of Arizona had been "invaded" by a Confederate force and a group of Union volunteers known as the "California Column" routed them at Picacho Peak, northwest of Tucson in the most western battle of the Civil War.

By the way, if you have an ancestor who fought in the Civil War, you should know that now you can obtain photocopies of his records on file in Washington, D.C. for just one dollar. Write for free form #GSA6781 to General Service Administration, National Archives & Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408.

STAN SCHIRMACHER,  
Tempe, Arizona

## Old Mule Skinner . . .

I recently read a story in your magazine concerning Death Valley in which you pictured the 20 mule teams. You need in your picture to take out the big wagon for a trail wagon and put in a wagon to hold about seven ton of weight and one to hold about five ton. You also need a feed wagon behind the water wagon with hay and grain on it. The way it is now the mules must live on desert sunshine and air. I am an old mule skinner and drove for J. N. Tedford out of Fallon, Nevada, and drove the last teams on the road in July of 1920.

I have driven everything from a 14 mule team to a 22 mule team. I am not criticizing you but if you would like to contact me I could certainly give you some pointers on the distribution of your loads, etc.

ROY LINSEA,  
Ely, Nevada.

*Editor's Note: I'm not an old mule skinner nor am I thin skinned, so the next time we run a photo of a "20 mule team" I'll check with Reader Linsea to be certain we have the right wagons with the right mules.*

## Coyote Canyon . . .

I would like to commend you on your recent editorial on the proposed road through Coyote Canyon. I am speaking for the 100 to 500 who use it every day. I'm sure that a majority of us agree that a road put through it would ruin its natural and historical value. Please keep up the good work.

MARK A. WOOD,  
San Diego, Calif.

Sandy and I heartily join Desert Magazine in opposing the proposed Coyote Canyon highway. We will help circulate a petition, if one has been initiated, and if you will put us in touch with the petitioner.

BEN and SANDY SUMNER,  
Sepulveda, Calif.

## Death Valley Tally . . .

The 1968 Death Valley Encampment, March 9-11, drew 30,000 people, up some 9000 from 1967. A great big, big vote of thanks to DESERT. Your excellent November Death Valley issue and the holiday weekend combined to make the record. We are planning to have competing events next year to avoid congestion.

L. BURR BELDEN,  
Death Valley '49ers.

