

ICD

Desert

NOVEMBER, 1972 50c
08236



TREASURE FOUND

Dear Bill,

Recently I decided that I wanted to become a treasure hunter.

Several of my friends were having pretty good luck at coin shooting so I decided that was the way to start. Most of them (the lucky ones) were using D-TEX detectors. On May 5th, I got the D-TEX "Winner" and was soon launched on my new career.

Hunting mostly around parks and school grounds, I had accumulated the vast amount of 264 coins and felt that was pretty good for a beginner in only 8 or 9 weeks. On July 13 (my lucky number) I got up at 5:00 A.M. and headed for a neighborhood park to try to make it an even 300. I found one penny by the swimming pool. Next the monkey bars and found nothing. Then near the swings I got a loud signal. It was so loud I thought it was foil and started on. Then changed my mind and decided to dig, thinking no coin ever sounded that loud even on the surface. I had dug down about 6 inches with my knife and thought I must of had a false reading. No detector would detect a penny or even a silver dollar that deep. I stuck the loop over the hole again and the sound was so loud it almost scared me, so back to digging. The first thing was an old rotted pair of men's suede leather gloves, then I started getting coins. First 4 or 5, then a hand full.

By now the old blood pressure was getting up. I realized I was going to need better digging equipment, so looking furtively all around I quickly covered the hole. Then taking my "Winner" I nonchalantly sauntered back to the car. Looking all around and casually whistling and trying not to hurry. At last back to the car and away I went to get a shovel.

Hurrying back, I again strolled slowly back to my location, this time with a small shovel and again looking all around and being as casual as possible. I wasted no time digging it all out and into a sack. Quickly covered the hole, back to the car and away I go.

At home and still nervous as a cat, I washed and counted the grand total of 652 coins and with dates from 1911 to 1952. Makes you wonder, was it a stolen collection that the thief was afraid to spend and then later forgot where he had put them.

Anyway, it was my lucky day. I am now shooting for a total of 1,000 and don't have far to go. My total for the 8 to 9 weeks is now 916, so now I want your new Delux. If the "Winner" could find this, I should surely strike it rich with the "Delux". I also want to say "Thanks" for building such fine detectors.



Bob Martin
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Volume 35, Number 11 NOVEMBER 1972

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| DISCOVER PANACA | 8 | Robert M. Starry |
| SEARCHING FOR DEATH VALLEY'S PUFFFISH | 12 | Rita S. Busby |
| BAD LUCK AT BLACK HAWK | 14 | Van P. Wilkinson |
| A LOOK AT LOOKOUT | 18 | Mike Engle |
| SEGO . . . A WAYSIDE CANYON | 20 | Nema Anderson |
| CALIFORNIA CONDORS | 22 | Warren and Barbara Transue |
| AMBLING ALONG DEATH VALLEY'S WESTSIDE | 26 | Mary Frances Strong |
| CANDY-COLORED ONYX MOUNTAIN | 34 | Carolyn Strickler |
| THE SAZERAC LYING CLUB | 42 | Craig MacDonald |

DEPARTMENTS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| A PEEK IN THE PUBLISHER'S POKE | 4 | William Knyvett |
| BOOK REVIEWS | 6 | Jack Pepper |
| "DESERT EDITOR" REVIEW | 32 | The Founder of Desert Magazine |
| RAMBLING ON ROCKS | 44 | Glenn and Martha Vargas |
| NEW PRODUCTS | 48 | Items of Interest |
| CALENDAR OF EVENTS | 49 | Club Activities |
| NOTES FROM THE FIELD | 49 | Information from Readers |
| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | 50 | Readers' Comments |



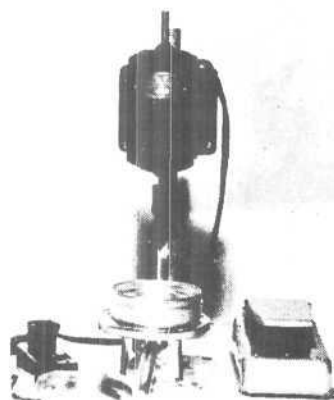
THE COVER:

One of the many attractions in the Death Valley National Monument on the California-Nevada border is the volcanic Ubehebe Crater. Formed some 3,000 years ago, it is a half-mile wide and 800 feet deep. It is reached on a paved road at the north end of the Monument near Scotty's Castle. Photo by David Muench of Santa Barbara, California.

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SEND FOR NEW CATALOG No. 9-B

LOTTIE M. SHIPLEY



A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

ONE OF THE joys of life is to be pleasantly surprised. And surprised we were one day last spring when a long-time subscriber and avid desert lover made us an offer we couldn't refuse! George Kehew and his company, Fun-trotter, a San Diego-based game manufacturer, had developed a game for the whole family to play and would we be interested in distributing the product on a nation-wide scale? He just happened to have a sample with him and we proceeded to get hooked on his game. It was such an impressive demonstration that

we asked George why he didn't sell the idea to a large concern where he undoubtedly could almost name his price. His answer was that he intended *Desert Magazine* to be a part of it from the very first concept. It was during weekend campouts on the desert that the general format of the game was plotted. So it was quickly agreed that we would promote George's game.

Since then the months have slipped by while we made slight changes and developed the game board to its maximum excitement potential. The basic idea is to recover one or more of five treasures placed around the treasure trail. This part of the game is reasonably easy, trying to get home safely with all your treasures is just plain unreal!

We take pleasure in introducing Bushwhacker, *The Fastest Fun in the West!*

An exciting game with lots of action and laughs. Quick to play and packaged to make it easy to tote along on outings. The five treasures involved in the game carry names familiar to *Desert* readers, Breyfogle, Pegleg, Lost Dutchman, etc. whose mysteries have been chronicled in our pages over the past 35 years. If you like *Desert Magazine* you'll enjoy Bushwhacker! It can be ordered by mail or if you are in the area, stop by the book shop and pick one up.



George at the drawing board

The new regulation regarding registration of off-road vehicles is being ignored. Only 30,000 of an estimated one million vehicles have been registered during the first three months the law has been in effect.

The grace period for operating a vehicle off the road on public land without the required special identification is over. Registration costs \$15 and is good for two years. Exemptions are vehicles already licensed for street use, those used exclusively in sanctioned competitive events, or vehicles used only on private land with expressed permission.

Law enforcement agencies have been requested to begin citing owners of motorcycles, trail bikes, dune buggies, snowmobiles, minibikes and all-terrain vehicles which are used on public land without the special identification sticker.

William Kuyatt

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Book Reviews

by Jack Pepper

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SOURDOUGH COOKBOOK

by Don and
Myrtle Holm



Author of the popular *Old Fashioned Dutch Oven Cookbook*, Don Holm has written a new culinary masterpiece which will make your taste buds propel you to the kitchen for exciting adventures in making sourdough delights.

And, as he did in his previous book, the author not only presents a variety of detailed recipes, but also delves into the history of sourdough and relates anecdotes by old-timers who maintained the three most important items for survival were their rifle, burro and sourdough starter.

Wildlife and Outdoors Editor of the *Portland Oregonian*, Holm not only lists recipes gathered and tried by him and his wife, but also those sent to him by his readers. Both Holm and his wife grew up in the northwest and were nurtured on sourdough biscuits.

"The belief that sourdough is only for backwoods trappers and prospectors is a wretched injustice, as you shall see," the author explains. "Sourdough cookery is an art that is equally at home in a camp, on a trail, or in your new all-electric kitchen."

"And, just to show you how simple sourdough is, you're going to learn how to make a sourdough starter in less than 60 seconds: Place two cups of flour into a crock, jar or Tupperware bowl that is at least warm room temperature. Add 2½ cups lukewarm water, and set the whole batch in a warm but NOT HOT place. That's all there is to it."

Although there are many other recipes listed in the book on how to make a sourdough starter, those are the basic ingredients. And from the starter comes sour-

dough culinary delights such as biscuits, pancakes, waffles, bread of all varieties, doughnuts, rolls, muffins, pizza and cake, to mention only a few.

Holm tells of a woman who was celebrating her 101st birthday and when being interviewed was asked the usual question as to what she attributed her longevity. "To keeping busy, staying decent, and eating sourdough bread," she replied.

You may not live to be more than 101 by eating sourdough cookery, but you will have more than 101 delightful culinary adventures by trying the recipes—and reading the tales—in *The Complete Sourdough Cookbook*. Slick, paperback, illustrated, 136 pages, \$3.95.

Holm's other book, *Old Fashioned Dutch Oven Cookbook* with the same format and price is also available through Desert Magazine Book Shop.

GHOST TOWN BOTTLE PRICE GUIDE

by Wes and
Ruby Bressie



Veteran bottle collectors and members of a number of bottle collecting and treasure associations, the authors have updated their popular *Ghost Town Bottle Price Guide*, first published in 1964.

The new revised and enlarged edition also has an expanded section on Oriental relics. It is profusely illustrated with drawings and photographs of bottles and relics which can still be found by diligent hunters. The approximate values of the bottles are also listed along with descriptions.

The authors also tell how and where to search for bottles and relics and how they have found many bottles in areas which had already been dug by previous collectors. They tell the secret of their success in the book.

A "Find Reference Index" and a "Descriptive Index" help bottle collectors to identify their finds. Collectors will find this new and revised edition a valuable help and guide for their field trips.

Slick, paperback, illustrated, 124 pages, \$2.95.

BALLARAT Compiled by

Paul Hubbard,
Doris Bray and
George Pipkin



First published in 1965 and out-of-print for several years, the authors have reprinted their book on "the facts and folklore of Ballarat."

Now a ghost town in the Panamint Valley near Death Valley, Ballarat was a flourishing headquarters during the late 1800s and early 1900s for the prospectors who searched for silver and gold in that desolate area of California.

Many found their bonanzas and millions of dollars of ore were mined during the brief, but historic period. Ruins of the town can still be visited by taking the dirt road east approximately 20 north of Trona from the paved road to Death Valley. Unfortunately, attempts to preserve the town as a historic monument have not been successful and it is gradually falling into disrepair.

The authors tell of the lives and relate anecdotes of the famous old-timers such as Pete Aguerberry, Chris Wicht, Shorty Harris and Seldom Seen Slim. Unfortunately, they failed to update the book which states Seldom Seen Slim is the last resident of Ballarat. Seldom Seen Slim died several years ago.

Death Valley buffs will find this a welcome addition to their library. Paperback, illustrated with pictures of the old-timers, 98 pages, \$3.00.



GOLD RUSH COUNTRY EARTHQUAKE COUNTRY

Compiled by the Editors
of Sunset Books

Two pertinent books—one a travel guide and the other relating to your possible survival — have been revised and brought up to date by Sunset Books.

GOLD RUSH COUNTRY is a detailed and historically informative guide to

California's Mother Lode where millions of dollars worth of gold was mined during the days of the '49ers. It describes the mining operations and the men and women who lived during this dramatic era of the West and takes you on a tour of the towns of central California which combine the old buildings of history and today's curio and antique shops.

The new "gold rush" of the Mother Lode Country is that of recreation. Vacationists are finding "color" in visiting the historic sites and taking advantage of the newly created lakes and recreational facilities in the area.

EARTHQUAKE COUNTRY brings you back to reality and is a hard look at what might happen to California when the next major earthquake occurs, and — according to seismologists—it could happen any day. Written by Robert Iacopi with a foreword by Dr. Charles Richter (originator of the Richter Scale) the book describes the recent San Fernando earthquake.

It also tells where the faults are located and where to see them, possible damage in property and human lives and "What To Do When the Next Big One Hits."

Both books are large format, well illustrated, heavy paperback. Gold Rush Country is 128 pages and Earthquake Country 160 pages. \$2.95 each.



NOTICE all the books reviewed in **DESERT Magazine** are available through the **Desert Magazine Book Shop**. Please add 50 cents per order (not per book) for handling and postage. California residents must also add 5 percent sales tax

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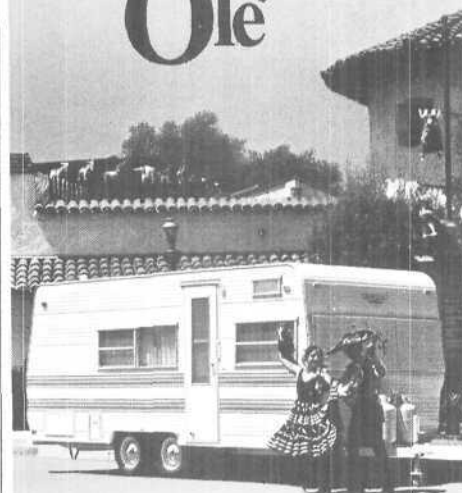
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DISCOVER PANACA

PLANNING ON traveling north or south on Nevada's U.S. Highway 93, or west out of Utah's Bryce and Zion country on State 25?

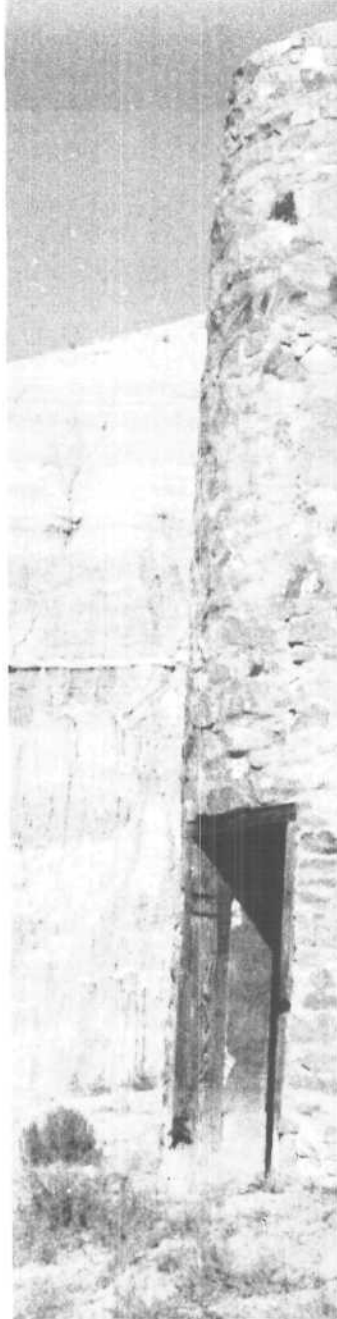
Without realizing it a traveler can easily miss one of Nevada's unique scenic areas and the interesting, historical settlement of Panaca. The first impression of the quiet tree-lined streets of the town and the miles of semi-arid country around it is misleading. There is much that does not meet the eye.

Panaca, settled over 100 years ago by hardy Mormon pioneers, has kept pace with the present yet managed to preserve much of its early-day atmosphere. Buildings erected in the 1860s still serve the

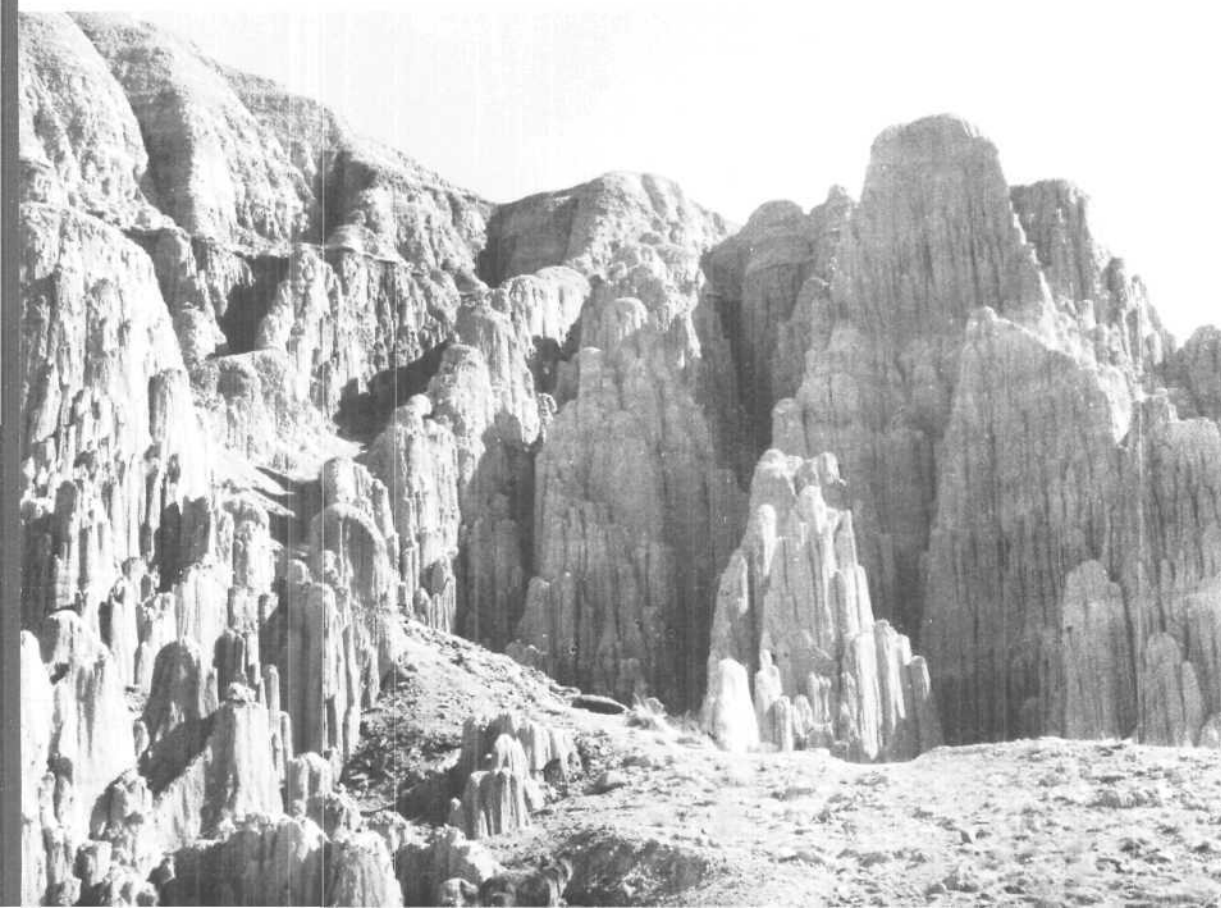
community in much the same capacity as originally used. In the center of town is the Panaca Mercantile in the same building that housed the Co-Op store of the first settlers. In the late 1860s supplies were hauled by team and wagon 350 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah. Four wagons with teams of six mules each were continuously on the road as the round trip took a month. Travel styles and methods have changed, but the Mercantile has retained its same position in the community.

One often wonders how a settlement like Panaca ever started where it did and how it manages to survive much less preserve the pioneer atmosphere plus the descendants of the first settlers. The two ver-

by
**Roberta
M. Starry**



Centuries of erosive forces have created the ethereal effect (left) and delicate carvings and pink-orange Gothic spires of Cathedral Gorge. Only man-made structure in the park is the old water tower (above) built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930 Depression years.





sions of the Indian word Panaca explains much. Persons familiar with the Paiute language have interpreted the name as "warm water" of which there has been an abundance from a large, free flowing spring on the northeast side of town. The other meaning credited to Panaca is white metal; silver, pointed out by the Indians, benefited the young settlement in some ways but created almost unsurmountable problems at the same time.

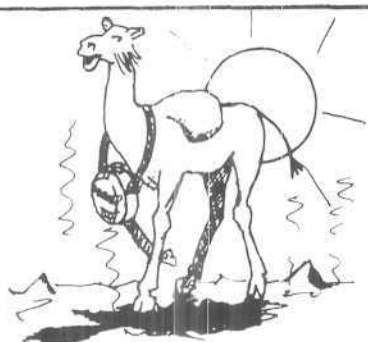
Mormons and Indians were getting

along well until word of the silver strike. Like other mining discoveries the news traveled fast, followed by a deluge of prospectors and get-rich-quick artists. Many of the miners were against the Mormons and totally disregarded the settler's right to farm land, water and mineral claims. With the increase in activity and influx of ruthless men, the Indians became resentful at being shoved around. Not distinguishing their former friends

Continued

Home of Francis and Jane Lee (above) who were Panaca's first settlers. Building was also used as a hotel in the 1870s. Cathedral Gorge (right) is a 1,500 acre wonderland with good camp sites, wood and water available. Park is open the year-round.





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from the incoming strangers, they harassed mine camp and farm alike.

As matters grew worse, the miners started moving into Panaca for protection and, for once, cooperated with the settlers in a project to erect an adobe and log fort. The structure was long and narrow with houses along the north and south walls; the school building inside the fort was eight feet square. When Indian interference increased to a point of real danger, a Mormon militia of 20 men came to protect the settlement.

Buildings of those early days, built of local brick and lumber, can be found on almost every street in the small community. In addition to the store and Stake House across the street, one of the most interesting structures a few blocks away is the large two-story wooden building that had been the home of Francis and Janet Lee, first settlers in Panaca. The imposing building served as the town's one and only hotel in the 1870s.

One of Panaca's earliest incidents involved Janet Lee when the family lived in a sod house before they had an opportunity to cut and saw lumber for the large permanent home. As the story goes, a

couple of young Indians from the Paiute camp, ten miles away, entered the Lee home and demanded the gun they saw on the wall. When Mrs. Lee refused to give them the gun one of the Indians made a dash for it, but Mrs. Lee floored him with a swinging blow of a long piece of firewood. When the Indian regained his feet he started to place an arrow in his bow at the same time taking aim at the woman. A second stick of wood put an end to the bow and arrow threat just as her husband arrived home on horseback. The Indians made a quick exit, ending the first Mormon and Indian skirmish, forerunner of many more during those first years.

In addition to interesting buildings, Panaca has a peculiar and conspicuous rock formation on the north side of town. The rock that is noticeable for miles is known as Court Rock, a favorite play area for boys and a courting haven for young lovers. At one time the tunnel on the far side served as jail.

A more outstanding formation than Court Rock does not show at road level. Cathedral Gorge State Park is below the level of the surrounding country. Just west of Panaca where State 2 ends in U.S. 93, a right turn to the north for one mile then a left turn off the highway onto a graded road brings one down into a long narrow valley. The park is 1,578 acres of wind and rain sculpture. Domed castles, cathedral spires, pinnacles and unusual shapes grip the imagination.

Marked trails add to the fun of exploring while shaded picnic areas and camping sites add to the comforts of the visit. Wood and water are available at the overnight campgrounds.

For the traveler who enjoys poking around extinct mine and town sites there is Bullionville that boomed in 1869. The silver mining camp was just a mile north west of Panaca. About 500 persons lived in Bullionville, most of which were employed in the five mills and one furnace operation.

A narrow gauge railroad built to haul ore from mines to mills went out of operation in 1881. Mills were moved away, tent and cabins were deserted, and little remained except the tailing piles. Thirty years later even the tailings were shipped out to a smelter for reprocessing.

Chunks of scrap metal, broken bricks, bits of glittering glass and parts of warped board are all that mark Bullionville today.

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Ernest J. Clark writes, "In three weeks since I received my Gardiner Model 190A Metal Detector, I have found a total of approximately \$685 worth of miscellaneous coins, jewelry and artifacts. Some of the coins dated back to 1802. I think the features of this metal detector are really way ahead of all the other makes, especially in the fact that it will distinguish bottle caps and other worthless items."

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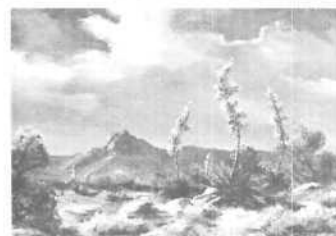
T508 A Surprise in the Sky—Merry Christmas and Happy New Year—Thomas



T107 Tidings of Great Joy—May the warmth and love around us at Christmas time, etc.—EchoHawk



T640 Beef and Beans—We wish you happy holidays, and a full chuckwagon Year—Dye



T577 Yucca Kings on Christmas Eve—May you be blessed with health and happiness—Vannerson



T654 "...a destiny that makes us brothers, etc."—Peace and Good Will at Christmas, etc.—DeIano



T618 A Cowboy's Prayer—May the Peace and Joy of Christmas be with you, etc.—Salisbury



T652 "...old days, old times, old friends."—Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes, etc.—Nicles



T613 A New Day's Promise of Beauty—Merry Christmas and Happy New Year—Engle



T655 "From the rising to the setting of the sun..."—May you have the Spirit, etc.—Wagoner



T621 Desert Star—May the Peace and Joy of Christmas be with you through all the Year—Steffen



T568 Candelabra on the Desert Altar—May the Blessings of Christmas be with you, etc.—Hilton



T550 Winter Lights—May the Christmas Spirit remain within your home, etc.—Shaddix



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A Search for Death Valley's Pupfish

by Rita S. Busby



Area where author's teenage son and friend

DURING OUR second camping trip to Death Valley, I was determined to find some of the much talked about pupfish, or *Cyprinodon Salinus*.

They are found in Salt Creek, which is the only year-round stream in Death Valley. Other species of *Cyprinodons*, and sub-species, live in pools of water in the Amargosa River and Saratoga Springs, but the true prehistoric, glacial age, salt water-loving pupfish inhabit this particular creek which is six times saltier than the ocean and is sometimes hot enough to boil any other type of fish.

During our first trip to Death Valley we drove and hiked short distances to many of the most popular attractions such as Dantes View, Golden Canyon, the charcoal kilns, Badwater, Skidoo, Devil's Golf Course, Ubehebe Crater and Salt Creek. Maps for these and other points of interest may be obtained at the Visitor Center at Furnace Creek.

We had stayed five days the previous trip in February and just hadn't had time to really absorb everything. The Valley is so immense and powerful that it almost overwhelms you—and it seems to grow in memory.

We had only three days this time be-



and the pupfish.



Author examines one of the many ponds found along Death Valley's Salt Creek.

fore my husband had to return to work, so we wanted to make the best use possible of this short interval. Our main goals were to visit the ghost town of Rhyolite and return to Salt Creek and find the elusive pupfish.

"A short walk along the river bank usually discloses the pupfish," was what the book, picked up at the Visitor Center, had said on our first trip. It just wasn't so and we didn't have the time to hike any further that day. Consequently, we had missed them. Not so this trip—I had my hiking legs and determination, and the short hike proved to be sort of an adventure. It was two in the afternoon when we parked by the many other cars along the narrow creek. Children were wading in the salty shallow stream and parents poked around on bent knee looking for the elusive fish. People just shrugged. They couldn't find the fish and didn't see anything. A few hiked upstream to less populated areas. Without hesitation this is what we did and I didn't even begin looking until we had hiked about a mile—and then I found nothing.

Finally, a man backpacking a child, who looked like a real hiker with tanned face, muscular legs showing above hiking boots,

smiled and said, "It's just a little ways."

By now the air was cooling and shadows were playing tricks along the sandy desert floor. Where everything had a few minutes before looked hot and dry it looked like a cool pleasant valley. I expected to see cattle grazing. There weren't any other people around now except my husband and two other boys who were hiking with my son.

I felt alone, peaceful, and as if I were experiencing something unique as a slight breeze whipped across my face. The sloping hills looked like sleeping giants.

Suddenly my son shouted, "Hey, here's some of them. All you've got to do is rustle some of this brush and they come swimming out." He had stepped into the water for a minute to cool his feet and they had darted out between his toes.

I was glad to finally see the smaller-than-an-inch, unobtrusive creature, but then I realized that most of the pleasure had been in the hike—past the groups of people bending over the narrow trickle of a stream where we parked the car, meeting and greeting people on the trail, walking across the crisp desert floor when the narrow stream bed turned into a sort of a salty swamp, and skirting around pools of

water after examining them on hands and knees, walking through the blazing sun right into the cool of the evening and then finally being able to say, "I saw the pupfish."

There is something about Death Valley that makes you see what a speck you are on this planet, but at the same time makes you feel as important as if you just moved a mountain.

I suppose it's that way with the pupfish. They seem so small and insignificant if you've ever fished for trout, but they present another type of thrill all their own. Many universities and scholars are becoming more and more intrigued with these tiny left-overs from a different age.

Many articles have been written lately fearing the extinction of the fish as man encroaches upon his territory—but I believe man will protect these tiny creatures from a prehistoric age.

Legislation has been proposed to form the Desert Pupfish National Wildlife Refuge in Inyo County, and the board of directors of the Sierra Club have voted to support it. So if you've got to hike and "get your feet wet," to find the pupfish—and preserve them—then that is what Death Valley will have us do. □



Once called Lookout Canyon, stark, vertical formations (left) choke the mouth of Black Hawk Canyon. Lucerne Valley is seen in the background. The outing is a rewarding experience for hikers.

Bad Luck at Black Hawk

by Van P. Wilkinson

Photos by the author

A TRIP THROUGH BLACK HAWK CANYON IS A CHALLENGE FOR FOUR-WHEELERS AND HIKERS WHO FIND THE HIDDEN OASIS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OFFERS EXCITING EXPLORATION BY DAY AND PEACEFUL SOLITUDE BY A CAMPFIRE AT NIGHT.

IN LONDON, a cluster of British financiers sit poised around investment charts. Dialogue drifts from praising the British Empire to praising the local ale.

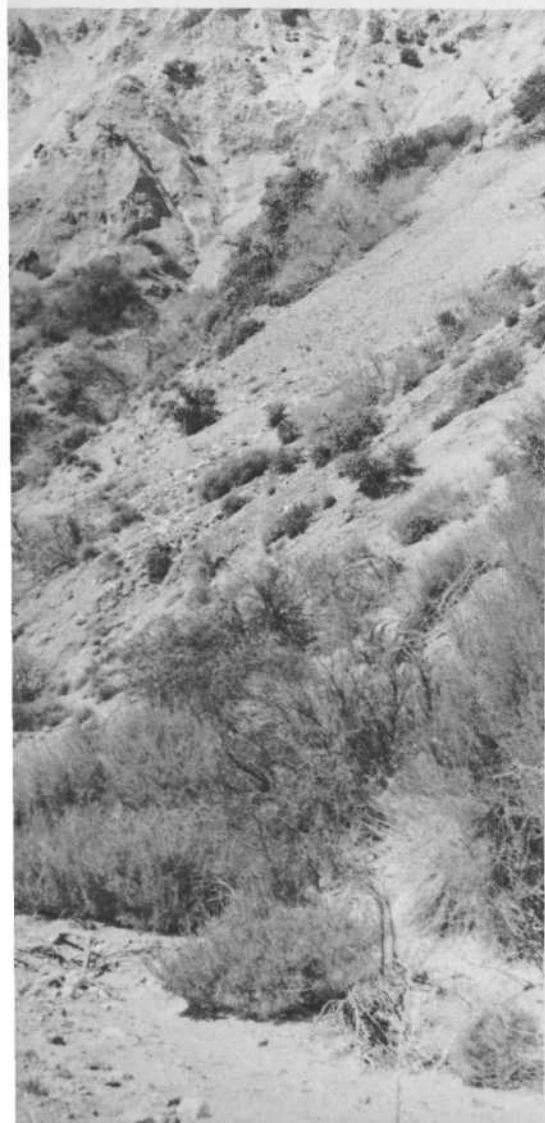
In California, a crusty prospector squints questioningly up the steep sides of an obscure, twisting canyon on the northeast side of the San Bernardino Mountains. His thoughts are on a large deposit of grey ore lodged atop the eroded cliffs rising from the Mojave desert.

What's the connection? In the 1880s it was gold.

The prospector was one of several men



A view from county road 4N15 of the tailings and debris (right) of the abandoned Santa Fe Mine. Jagged cliffs in Black Hawk Canyon (below) shows scars of blasting for gold which began in 1890.



whose singular obsession was to develop Black Hawk Canyon (then Lookout Canyon) and the Silver Reef hills into a profitable mining region.

Located 15 miles southeast of Lucerne Valley, this area was initially prospected in the 1870s due to tantalizing loose auriferous quartz—great chimneys of gold-bearing material—embedded in the canyon walls.

But transportation, fuel, and ore processing costs made the gamble too risky for investors, many of whom were content to milk the already-paying mines operating successfully further up in the San Bernardino, such as the Rose, Baldwin, Holcomb and Arrastre.

In 1890, however, an English-backed group put in an \$80,000 pipeline from Cushenbury Springs (which they bought) and a 10-stamp mill in preparation for monumental output. Twenty years of scrounging for money had ended, and expectancies and expense accounts ran high.

Some of the ore recovered from exploratory shafts driven 40 to 100 feet into the crumbling deposits tested at \$16 to \$20 per ton. Ore from open cuts and raw blasting ran less—\$4 to \$6 per ton. That's where the troubles began.

Wood at \$4.00 a cord, limited water, and low-yield quartz sediments doomed the venture to early failure. Plans for a

40-stamp mill were scrapped. Processing the scattered breccia deposits of the Santa Fe claims down the mountain slopes proved no more lucrative. Squabbles over title and liability erupted.

Less than a year after its start, the district folded. The mill was partly dismantled and the miners moved along to other mines still hitting pay dirt (Oro Grande, Sidewinder, Calico, and the Nevada big-time strikes).

The area was never forgotten, though. Mining started again after World War I. Cyanide tanks remain at the Akron Silver Reef claim which is still occupied. A massive concrete processing plant was erected on the east lip of Black Hawk Canyon overlooking Lucerne Valley and the Ord Mountains.

But World War II dealt the region its death blow. Salvage crews ripped apart the mill structures and removed scrap metal. Bullet holes and beer cans replaced the windswept outbuildings and ore chutes.

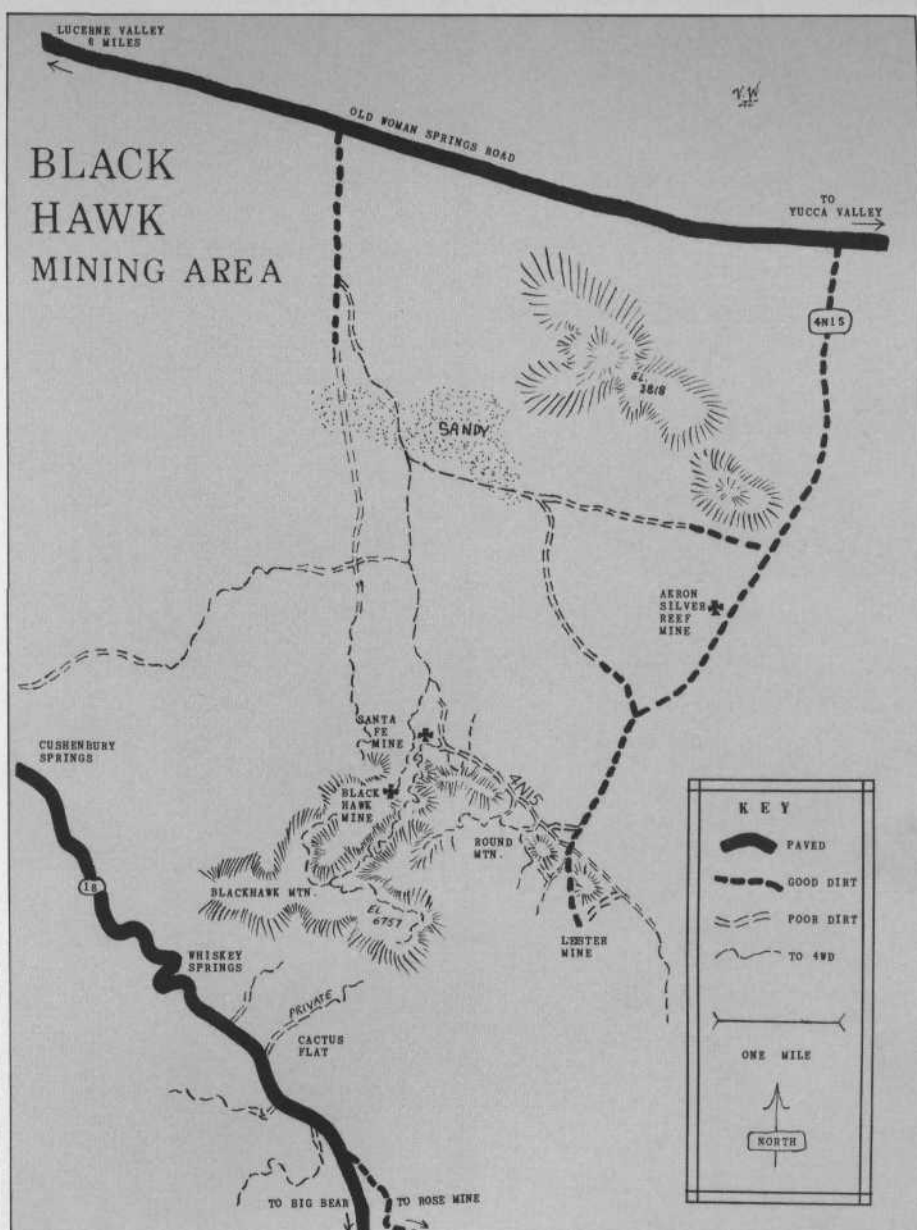
Today, the canyon and surrounding territory are hidden but accessible; sandwiched between State 18 (Cushenbury Grade to Big Bear) on the south and Old Woman Springs Road (to Yucca Valley) on the north, you can hike, bike, 4WD, or just plain drive into the midst of this area. Access from Cushenbury Grade is limited

—part is private and most is treacherous. Hiking down from here into Black Hawk Canyon is fun, if not tiring; but the panorama is impressive.

Most explorers visit the region by leaving Old Woman Springs Road southward on county road 4N15 (13 miles east of Lucerne Valley), which is marked with a county sign and a massive limestone boulder some 10 feet long. This road is flat and well scraped; the white dust on the roadbed is from quarrying.

Some three miles from Old Woman Springs Road you come to the Akron Silver Reef Mine, complete with reduction tanks, open tunnels, and "keep out" signs. Two more miles and you come to a tunnel-pocked foothill (Round Mountain) to the right. A county sign here identifies 4N15 again—go right, west.

This road is fine for pickups and campers, as it cuts and jaunts along its narrow, rocky way. Low-slung passenger cars may get hung up. Keep going past numerous side roads south into the hills; most deadend or are private. About a mile and a half west of Round Mountain you will emerge suddenly onto a red lake of dried mill by-products. This is the



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Santa Fe Mine, abandoned in the 1940s.

Beyond this desolate collection of concrete ruins is a narrow, rocky canyon—Black Hawk Canyon. A very slender jeep road is cut into the canyon's walls—no long wheelbases here. A trek along this old wagon road leads to the site of the original Black Hawk Mine, a half mile from the Santa Fe.

Tanks and storage buildings lay in various states of decay; even the dumps have been dug up somewhat. It's still remarkably quiet, closed in, and a trifle isolated.

Continuing on foot up the sandy canyon brings you to mini-avalanches of dynamited ore stretching down from the vertical cliffs 500 feet above. A tiny spring wets the west bank about one-quarter mile up from the mill site. It was near here that long ore chutes channeled

blasted rock to deposit stations for reduction. There is evidence, too, of electric lines to feed the motors of mining in later years.

Numerous camper and weekend spots of seclusion are found within a short distance of the Santa Fe Mine. Straying too far from 4N15 without 4WD can be risky—the Silver Reef region to the north is sandy and nearby arroyos are quite steep. Caution here is cheap; repairs and rescues are not.

There is much to take in near the Black Hawk and Silver Reef areas. Mineral specimens and decorative rocks abound. But don't be bowled over with enthusiasm, at least don't call your bank for a prospector's loan—in 1890 some British gentlemen paid \$350,000 for a hillside of valuable ore and all they got was a monetary black eye.

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A LOOK AT LOOKOUT

by Mike Engle

A FLURRY OF mining activity was touched off in the spring of 1875 when J. S. Childs, E. W. Burke, B. E. Ball, and J. E. Boardman discovered high grade silver on the east slope of the Argus Mountains. Their claims, on a rounded mountain top, overlooked California's broad Panamint Valley 1,500 feet below.

News of their discovery quickly spread to receptive ears of San Francisco financiers, and in a few short months, the Modock Consolidated Mining Company and the Minnietta Belle Silver Mining Company sprang into existence. Within a year, the bustling camp of Lookout seemed firmly rooted on the mountain top. By the end of the decade, it had become a ghost of the past.

Today, the stone shells of a few dozen buildings, a toppled wooden public hall, the broken chips of hundreds of champagne bottles, and the relics of a once vigorous past are all that remain.

A few months after filing their claims, Childs, Burke, Ball, and Boardman sold them for \$15,000. The buyers included Senator George Hearst whose company consolidated their claims. The holdings which stretched across the mountain and down the side were incorporated under the name of the Modock Consolidated Mining Company.

When other prospectors located claims along the base of the mountain and in the canyon to the south, the Minnietta Belle Silver Mining Company was incorporated in 1876 to work them. Though this latter company was a slow producer at the beginning, its original holdings are still being worked today. The operations of the Modock Company have been long idle.

The first few tons of ore from both the Modock and the Minnietta properties were packed by mule train across the dry Panamint Valley and up the steep road



to R. C. Jacob's Surprise Canyon Mill in Panamint City. The need for local reduction equipment became quickly evident.

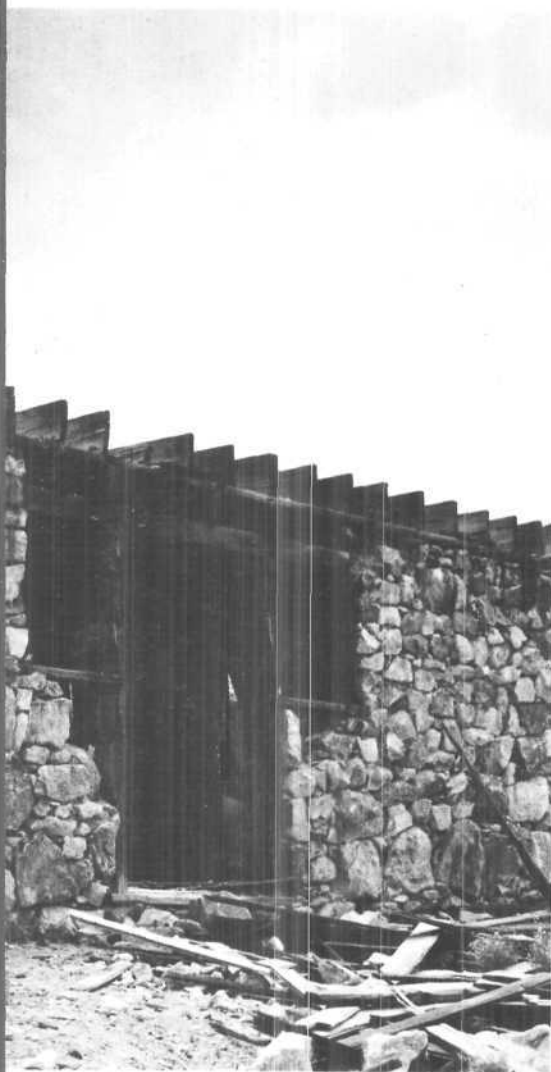
Superintendent C. J. Barber, with a crew of 75 men, began blasting rough roads "out of solid cliffs around the crest of the mountains—amid engineering difficulties of no small moment." From Panamint City, Jacobs hauled the equipment to erect a ten-stamp mill for the Minnietta Belle Company. The Modock Company sent James Stratton from San Francisco to select a site for their furnaces.

While Barber began to pipe water three miles from his company's springs in Stone Canyon to the west, the Minnietta Company commenced laying pipes from their spring in Snow's Canyon, six miles to the south.

Over the objections of Barber, the Modock Company accepted Stratton's suggestion for the furnaces to be located near the top of the mountain. In spite of the fact that it was cooler and far more habitable at Lookout than on the valley floor, Barber maintained that they should

*Largest building (below)
still standing on Lookout Mountain.*

*View from the mountain-top
(right) with Panamint Valley
1,500 feet below. Bill Treder
(below, right) examines some of the
relics found in the area.*



be built at the mountain's base.

"Thousands of dollars would have been saved by the company, in expensive roads and almost continual up-hill packing of ore, wood, coal, etc. to the furnaces," it was later reported, "while if they had been located below in the valley all such articles as wood, iron ore, and charcoal could have been hauled in wagons to their doors, and nature, so to speak, could have been harnessed and made to carry the ore from the mine down."

continued on page 38





Only a few walls and gutted buildings remain of what once was Sego. All photos by the author.

Sego ... A Wayside Canyon

CROSS-COUNTRY TRAVELERS funnel through. Thompson, Utah, on U. S. 50, not knowing of its Sego Canyon. And that may well be why this wayside oasis still has its little-touched ghost towns, its Moqui ruins of a more ancient people, a number of Indian pictographs, and weird fumaroles of smoke and steam hissing from its burning coal veins.

Sego's seven-mile-long road—the old railroad bed—is surfaced with the coal it once carried. Criss-crossing the stream

by Nema Anderson

Desert Magazine

*The road to Sego (right)
follows the old railroad bed
through colorful canyon walls.
"Andy" Anderson (below)
inspects one of the many
prehistoric Indian petroglyphs
and pictographs found in the area.*

thirteen times, its bridges are trestles with parallel planks nailed over them for automobile wheels. Check that they are secure before driving onto them; the only other precaution for visitors is to avoid stepping on the thin crust near the burning coal vents.

Redrock walls in Sego Canyon are covered with a series of Indian paintings and petroglyphs. The first mural appears after the crossing of the fourth trestle. This large pictograph and a half dozen others nearby picture distinctively triangular huntsmen and their quarry. Most unusual, the pigments used by these ancient artists still retain a red coloring.

Two more trestle crossings reveal the right fork of the road cutting through a defile and, beyond, cabin and dugout ruins give notice of approach to the one-time town of Sego. Masonry walls of Sego's store and the two-story, white-painted boarding house stand in a clearing. An abandoned cookstove, bedsprings and rodent-scattered mattress-cotton litter its rooms. Relics of railroading, especially the highly-prized spikes—which hobbyists heat to bend, and weld together to fashion gilded works of art—are much in evidence.

Water created Sego, just as the failure of its springs started its decline. Among the pioneer ranchers who, during the 1880s, ran their herds in this desert canyon of the spring-fed stream, was Harry Ballard. Soon acquiring a sizeable spread, Ballard branched out into ownership of a store, hotel and pool hall in the settlement, then called Thompson's, which huddled around the railroad at the foot of Sego Canyon. The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad built a small station at Thompson's. With his everyday affairs going so well, Ballard began to poke around the canyon from whence came his water. At the head, near the

continued on page 40





Photo above by Carl B. Koford

CALIFORNIA CONDOR

by Barbara and Warren Transue

THAT OLD saw about "a bird in the hand" makes good sense—unless the bird in question happens to be the giant California condor, in which case its 9½-foot wingspread will probably prevent such close acquaintance.

William Leon Dawson, in his *The Birds of California*, 1923, states: "... for me, the heart of mystery, of wonder, and of desire lies with the California condor, that majestic and almost legendary figure which still haunts the fastnesses of our living wilderness."

Almost legendary, to be sure, because, as of this year, the official census of this magnificent remnant of the Pleistocene age lists between 40 and 60 individuals sighted. A sad promise for one of nature's real masterpieces.

The U.S. Forest Service has established a sanctuary for this vanishing species at the condors' nesting grounds in the Los Padres National Forest, which is near Los Angeles and encompasses portions of both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

The birds are under the strict protection of California law, the area having

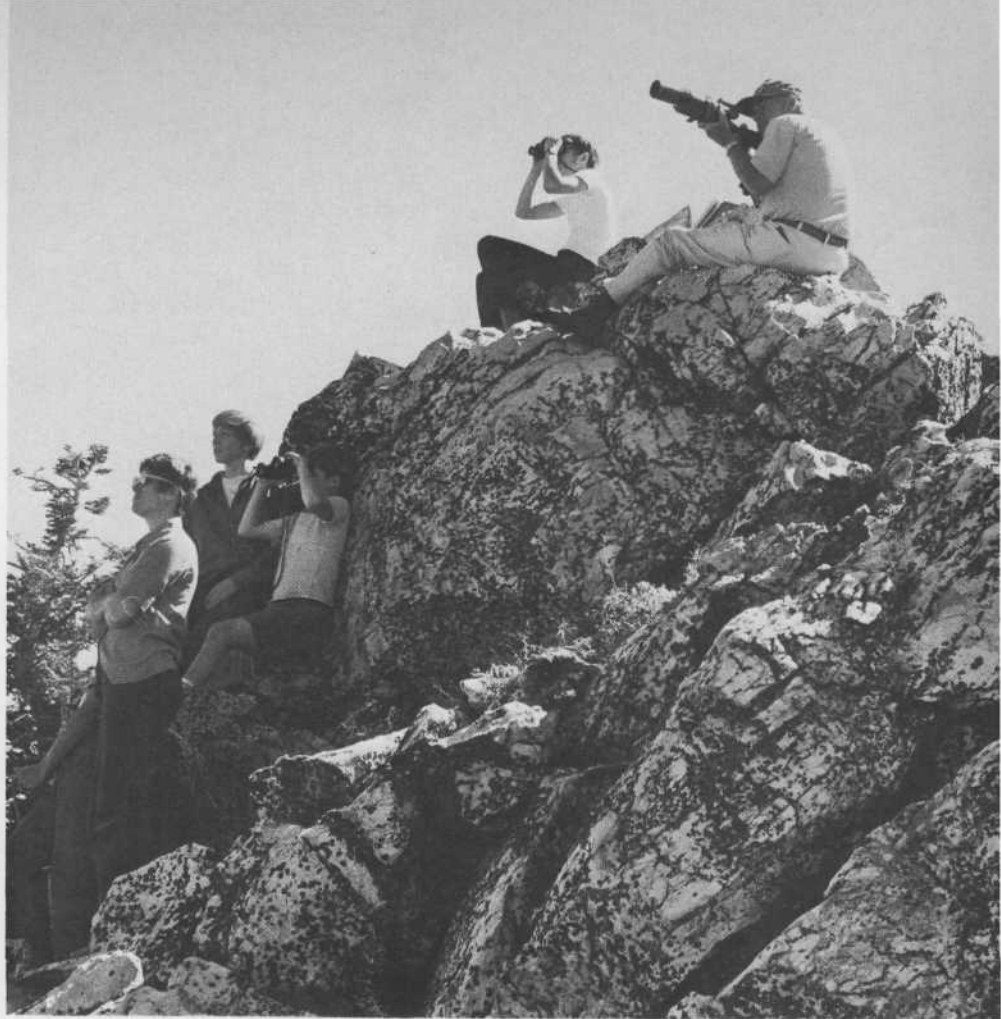


California's few remaining condors are under strict protection laws. Bird watchers (right) use all kinds of cameras and binoculars. Looking for the rare species (below) attracts people of all ages.

been declared a Nature Monument by the 1942 Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere. Within this sanctuary, the condor finds ample food. Ironically, the very hunters who hasten his extinction provide carrion for him with their "sport" of deer hunting. If air currents are favorable, the giant creature can soar and glide for over an hour at a time in his search for food.

Nature and conservation groups like to gather at the sanctuary's observation site when the condors soar through the pass in greater numbers than usual and on a fairly predictable schedule. Bird watchers of all ages, with all kinds of sighting equipment, play the fascinating waiting game on the windswept hill. The early-teenage segment is among the most knowledgeable, expertly distinguishing between the prevalent Cooper's Hawk and the sought-after condor.

The birds range a horseshoe pattern, the upper corner of which is approximately San Luis Obispo. The loop dips down through Santa Barbara and Sespe—40 miles from the observation site—and back up through old Ft. Tejon and finally the lower Sequoia area to the east. It is strictly against the law to capture or molest a California condor—shooting one automatically results in a \$500 minimum fine. In a rare instance of captivity, one of the condors is now living in the Los Angeles Zoo under the watchful eye of curator Frank Todd. This bird was discovered, young, injured and starving, in the rugged area near its nesting grounds.



Having been abandoned by its mother, it faced certain death. The zoo, which engages in an impressive program of protection and breeding of endangered species, welcomed the opportunity to rescue the little victim and at the same time to observe at first hand its growth pattern and living habits.

Todd and his assistants have successfully brought their charge to his third year, and will no doubt be able to study him for some time to come, since such a wild creature raised in captivity cannot be released to fend for himself—he is incapable of survival alone, even in his native habitat.

The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) varies in its appearance according to its degree of maturity. For instance, juvenals—the correct spelling in reference to birds—in first-year plumage have dark heads, and their wing linings progress from white to spotted, while adults display orange heads and definite white wing linings. Two to three-year-olds are often mistaken for young eagles or turkey vultures—hence the Audubon Society warning, "Don't shoot any large dark bird!" At age four, the California

Canine condor counter watches from the billtop with his family. Photos by the authors.

condor is once again deceptive in appearance, wearing a pale hood and a somewhat spotted wing lining as it advances toward adulthood.

Earlier statistics proclaimed that the California condor might attain a wingspread of 11 feet, but recent and more accurate sightings indicate that 8 to 9½ feet is more nearly correct. The condor and his mate nest—usually in isolated natural rock caves—only every other year, and produce a lone egg. One can imagine the couple's difficulty in raising the cherished offspring in the face of today's noise pollution. The birds are extremely sensitive to unusual disturbances, and such symbols of progress as the trail bike, the gun and the jet engine play havoc with the precarious balance of nature.

Roger Tory Peterson, writing in the "Birds" issue of the *Life Nature Library*, is convinced that "... some birds may



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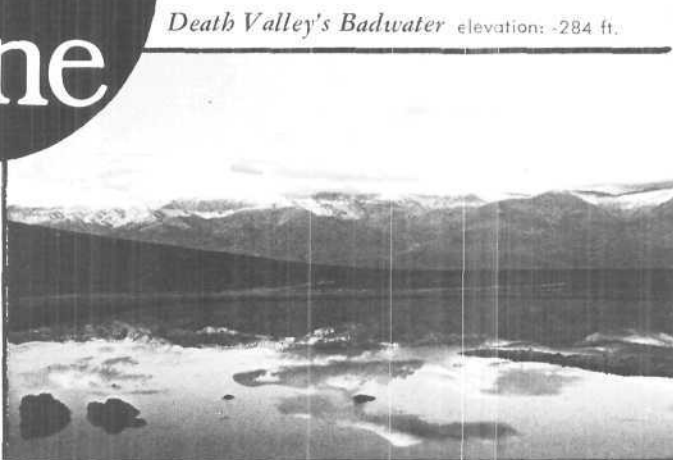
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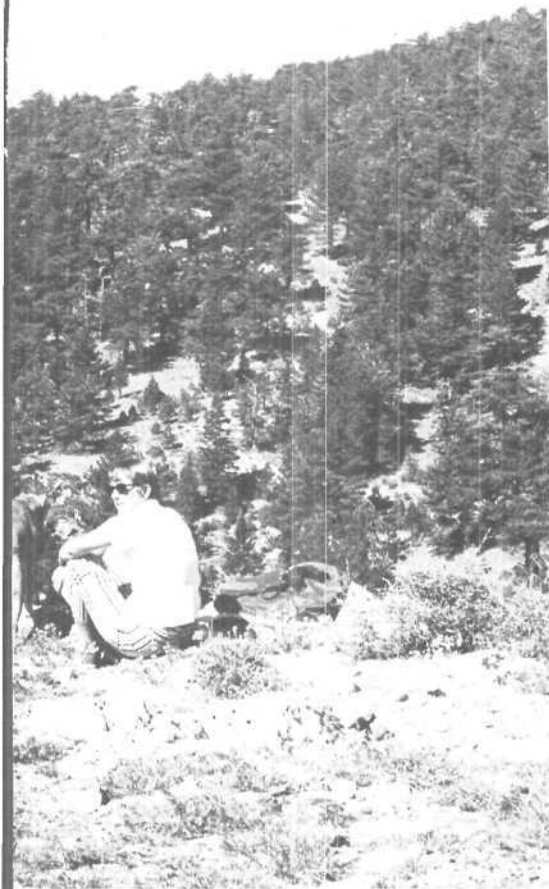
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go out of the picture, not simply because modern man has made an ecological nuisance of himself, eliminating their habitat, the source of their livelihood, but because they have reached a cul-de-sac, a dead end out of the main stream of life in a changing world. This could be the predicament of the California condor. With a static population of perhaps 60 birds, this is the last descendant of the giant scavenger that flourished in North

America during the Pleistocene, when mammals were bigger and more abundant than they are today."

Dead ends notwithstanding, man is giving a material assist in the demise of a king, the final ushering out of a magnificent legend. For in spite of the condor's well known skittishness over human encroachment, conservationists have until now been utterly frustrated in their efforts to gain passage of laws which will keep man from noisily invading *Gymnogyps californianus'* nesting grounds and frightening him out of the skies. ☐

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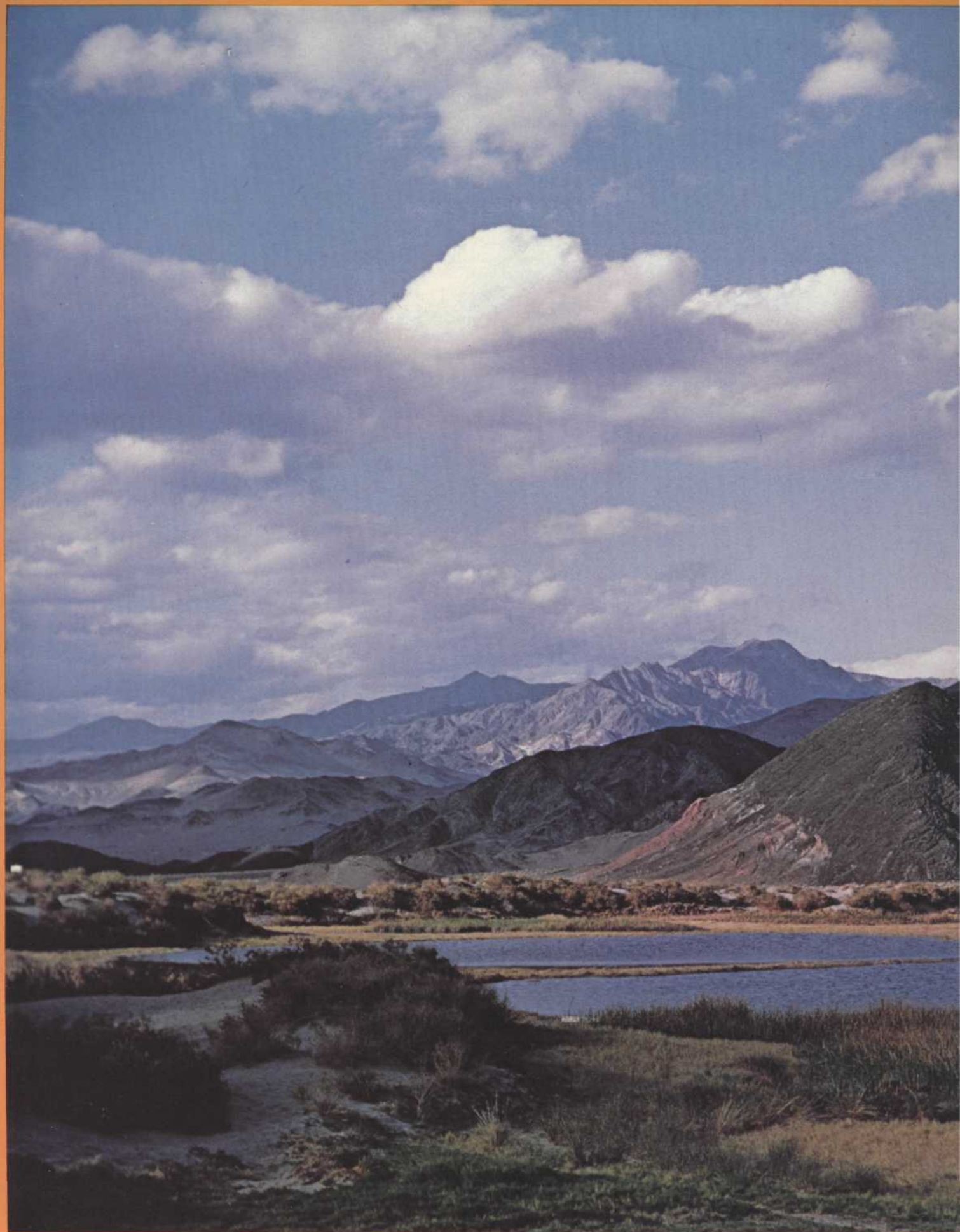
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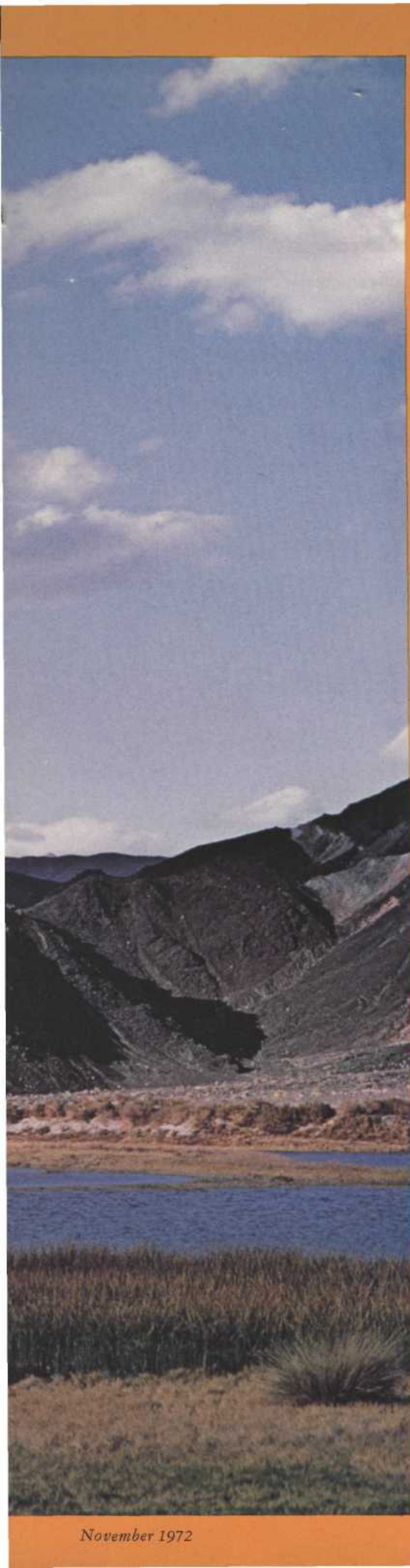
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Located at the southern end of Death Valley, Saratoga Springs stands out like an oasis against the background of mountains and salt flats. It is a stopping place for migratory birds and much wildlife can be seen in the area. Photo by Jack Turner, Palm Desert, California.

Ambling Along Death Valley's Westside Road

by Mary Frances Strong

ONCE DEATH VALLEY captures the visitor in its magic spell, a winter vacation is not complete unless a few days are spent within its friendly embrace. Winter storms may race across the Mojave Desert plummeting temperatures to well below freezing. But Death Valley, wrapped in a blanket of mountains, will be a haven of warmth and magnificence.

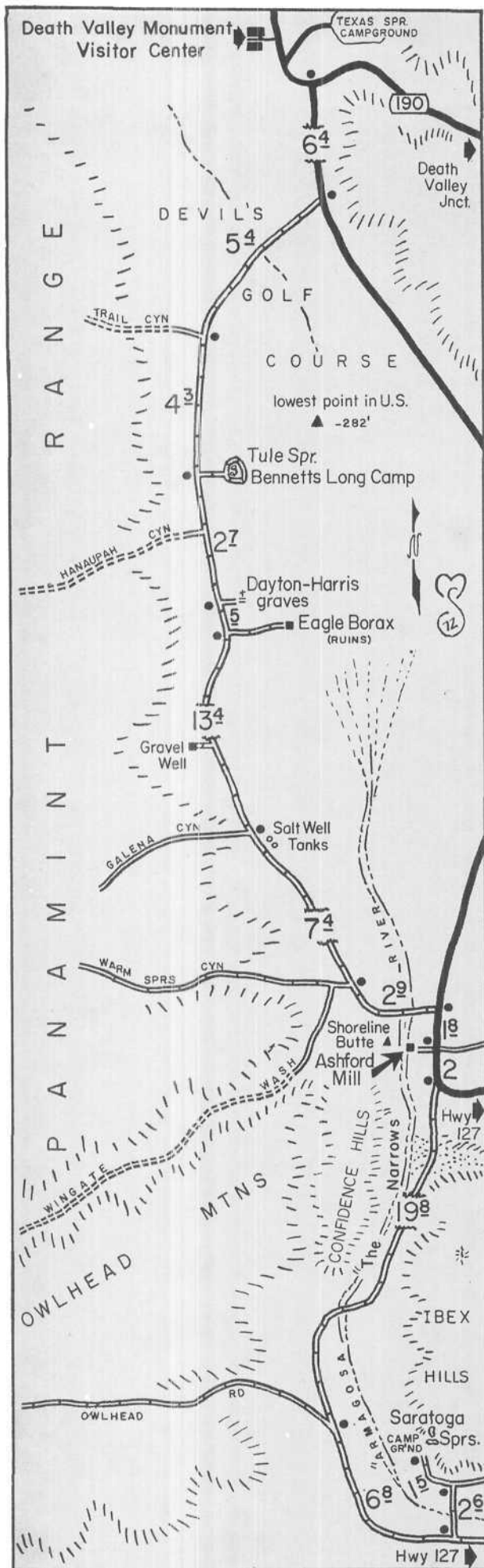
It is easy to return to familiar places; the campground you have always enjoyed, the pleasant evening programs at Monument Headquarters and exciting trips to the many spectacular points of interest. This year, why not try something different? Leave the crowds and paved roads behind and "amble down the westside of Death Valley." Though lesser known and seldom used, the Westside Road will bring you to an intimacy with Death Valley not possible along the more well-traveled routes.

It is not paved with asphalt nor elevated above the Valley floor. Instead, the Westside Road wanders across a salt-encrusted playa, rubs elbows with large stands of mesquite, passes briefly to pay homage at the graves of two, beloved early-day residents, then brings the traveler to a campsite at one of the largest springs on the Great Mojave Desert. There is more, much more, to be seen traveling the westside.

Even though well-graded and safe for stock cars and trailers, it is not a road for fast travel. This is as it should be, since too much is missed during "flying low" trips. Pick up any necessary supplies at Furnace Creek Ranch (groceries-ice-butanene available). Gas up your "wheels" and explore with us this 70-mile segment of southern Death Valley.

Seven miles south of Monument Headquarters, the Westside Road leads south-

continued



Enroute to Saratoga Springs the road crosses a mud-cracked playa (right) with the colorful Ibex Hills in the background. Beautiful Saratoga Springs (far right) is one of the largest in the Mojave Desert.

There is an unimproved, but restful campground near the Springs.

**Photos
by
Jerry
Strong**



westerly across the Devil's Golf Course—actually the bed of prehistoric Lake Manley and the sink of the Amargosa River. During the end of the Ice Age, a 100-mile body of water occupied the floor of Death Valley. When the glaciers began to recede the climate became warmer and drier. The mighty Sierra Nevada Range formed a barrier for moisture-laden Pacific storms and Lake Manley began to dry up.

Salts in the water were slowly precipitated — eventually accumulating to a

Bed of the Amargosa River and Shoreline Butte (right) are seen through the walls of the old Ashford Mill. Looking eastward from the Ashford Mill ruins (far right), the trail to the Golden Treasure Mine is seen leading into the Black Mountains.





depth of 1,200 feet. Geological forces tilted the salt beds and erosion began. Violent thunderstorms and tumultuous winds have carved the deposits into sharp, needle-like spires and ridges—almost impenetrable by man or animals.

The Devil's Golf Course now enjoys a claim to fame, since a recent survey determined the lowest point in the United States (-282 feet below sea level) to be within its southern terminus. Badwater's long reign as the "basement of the U.S." is



over.

Here, in the bottom land of our country, the eyes must raise upward and wide angle lens are needed to absorb the vast panorama. Across the valley floor, the fortress-like walls of the Black Mountains and the Greenwater Range form a natural barrier to Nevada. Immediately alongside, the sunburnt slopes of the majestic Panamints rise skyward to an ultimate height of over 11,000 feet at Telescope Peak. This is a giant land and we are

mere specks of movement as we wander southward.

Trail Canyon Road greets us at the edge of the Devil's Golf Course. It is one of the many back-country routes into the colorful canyons and exciting drives in the Panamints. Four-wheel-drive is generally advisable. Exploring these recesses must wait for another time as our journey continues to Tule Springs.

Lying just off the road in a thicket of mesquite, Tule Spring provides sustaining



moisture for the birds and animals in this corner of Death Valley. Burro trails lead in from several directions and they are often heard, though they try not to be seen.

Park awhile and view the wide expanse. Imagine what it must have seemed like to the men and women in the Bennett-Arcane party when they camped here in 1849. Lost and short of rations, after following a so-called shortcut to the California goldfields, they elected to remain at Tule Spring while William Manley and John Rogers set out on foot to obtain help in Los Angeles.

Their historic journey and subsequent return has been chronicled many times. However, the impact of their feat is readily felt as you see the vast, unexplored terrain over which they journeyed on foot. One of the '49ers described the Valley as "The Creator's dumping place where He had left the worthless dregs after making the world, and the devil had scraped these together a little." It is understandable that, to the first white people to cross the deep rift, it seemed to be a Valley of Death.

Three miles beyond Tule Springs lie the graves of Jim Dayton and Shorty Harris—two men who shared the common bond of "loving this desert valley." Most desert enthusiasts have heard about prospector Shorty Harris whose life story has been told by many writers (Desert, Nov. 1971). However, "Who was Jim Day-

ton?" is often asked.

Jim's early days in Death Valley were spent as a swamper on a borax wagon. His claim to fame stemmed from being the first to drive a 20-mule team wagon. He later became the foreman of the Greenland Ranch (now Furnace Creek). Under his direction the ranch developed into a flourishing oasis of large alfalfa fields, pastures for livestock and a provider of fresh food for the Harmony Borax Company crews.

When the borax mine closed down, the ranch operations were curtailed to alfalfa production with Jim apparently handling the chores alone.

History has two versions of Jim's last journey to the "outside." One story has him leaving the Valley permanently, the other states he was going out for supplies. Which ever be the case, Jim was traveling the Westside Road in the summer of 1899 when felled by a stroke. Two friends found his body beneath a large mesquite, his faithful dog forlornly standing guard. They buried Jim on the site.

Thirty-five years later, at his request, Shorty Harris was laid to rest alongside Dayton. Below the epitaph is written, "To these trail makers whose courage matched the dangers of the land, this bit of earth is dedicated forever."

A half-dozen miles south brings into view the ruins of the old Eagle Borax Mine—site of the first borax discovery in Death Valley. Though borax has played

an important role in the Valley's mining history, this deposit, located in 1875, did not become a valuable operation.

Actual mining wasn't attempted until 1881 when Isidore Daunet erected a crude refining plant on his claim. Only a small amount of ore was shipped. The difficulties of transportation and the impurities in the borax made the venture highly unprofitable.

A short road leads to the ruins which lie among large tamarisk (athel) trees. A marker briefly describes the history of the site.

The Westside Road follows a meandering course over the 13 miles to Salt Well Tanks. Along the route many side-canyon jeep trails look inviting and wait to be explored.

In 1971, the early winter night caught up with us here and we elected to spend the night in lee of the tanks near a huge mound of mesquite. This may have been illegal (no camping in the Monument except at regular campgrounds) but wandering unknown trails at night can lead to complications. Surely Park rangers would prefer a visitor to stop in such cases. While the road is safe—a wrong turn could lead to a sandy disaster.

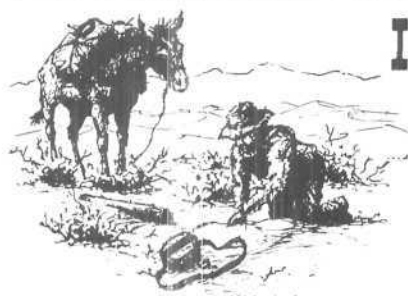
Evidently talc mining is still active in the Galena Canyon-Warm Springs area as a heavily laden ore truck came down the mountains and passed by as we enjoyed dinner.

Early morning in Death Valley is an intoxicating experience. The land is bathed in a maze of light and shadow which creates sharp perspective. The clear air is touched with a tinge of winter's chill and the new day seems to promise adventure.

The next ten miles are quickly covered and we briefly join the paved Eastside Road. A mile south brings an excellent view of Shoreline Butte and the several water-level marks left near its crest by receding Lake Manley.

Our first stop is at the ruins of the Ashford Mill—built in 1914 by the Ashford brothers to process the ore from their nearby Golden Treasure Mine. Research shows conflicting stories about the mine and the more romantic one is related on the marker at the site. A 1938 mining report has owner Harold Ashford stating the total production amounted to \$135,000 with \$18,000 of this sold from 1937 to 1941.

The ruins, whose stout walls resemble a fort, are very photogenic. Immediately



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west, Shore Line Butte rises abruptly from the flat-bottomed bed of the Amargosa River. To the east, a set of tracks will be seen leading into the Black Mountains to the Golden Treasure Mine.

Two miles beyond, the paved road makes a 90-degree left turn, climbs out of the Valley and joins State 127 at Shoshone. We continued south on the graded dirt road.

During the next four miles, the Confidence Hills and Black Mountains crowd closely together and form "The Narrows" of the Amargosa River. Immense, almost vertical alluvial fans spill down from the entrances to Rhodes and Confidence Washes. They are vivid reminders of the violent thundershowers that often hit Death Valley—washing out roads with swift water carrying large boulders and assorted debris.

The sun-baked mountains retreat a little and the road becomes a gut-rattling washboard. We cross the sandy bed of the Amargosa River (road well-maintained and safe for stock cars and trailers), then travel along the base of the Owlhead Mountains.

Fine smoky quartz crystals occur on the eastern slope of the Owlheads, beyond the Monument boundary. However, it has been necessary to use a road leading off of the Monument road for access to the collecting area. This route has been used regularly for over two decades without any problems. However, it has been reported that—though the road was not posted—Park Rangers cited a number of collectors for illegal off-road use. Do not attempt to reach the crystal area via the former route (the one shown in *Desert Gem Trails*).

Our final destiny, Saratoga Springs, lies seven miles south and the turnoff is clearly marked. A good dirt road crosses a hard-baked dry lake, then wanders along salt-grass marshes to what is considered one of the most beautiful springs on the Great Mojave Desert. There is a small, unimproved campground in a delightful setting of large tamarisk trees, sand dunes and springs with a background formed by the black and green Ibex Hills.

Swimming is not permitted, but there are opportunities for birdwatching and observing the rare, protected "pupfish" in the pools.

The springs, among the largest on the Mojave, have been a popular camping

place since prehistoric time. Nearby petroglyphs indicate its use by the Indians long before the coming of the white man. Early day prospectors rested and, no doubt, soaked their aching bones in the springs. Travelers along the primitive road connecting the National Old Trail Highway with mines in the Death Valley-Tecopa area, found the springs a welcome stop-over along their journey to the boom camps. The springs have also provided a base camp for mining activities in the Ibex Hills.

Today, Saratoga Springs offers a sanctuary for people who come to the desert for respite from the turmoils of civilization. During our two-day trip along the Westside, only two cars and one truck were encountered. It is a trip into the real Death Valley—where its stark, bold countenance is revealed for all to see.

Though good roads have been provided, you can still feel a sense of exploration and a strong awareness of the naked land. You can fill your eyes with blazing beauty and your soul with quiet contentment. Death Valley is a misnomer—it is a valley where man can be reborn. ☐

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Desert Editor

the story of Randall Henderson
and Palm Desert

by J. Wilson McKenney



Southern California's Scenic Route 74 passes through several mountain resorts and then winds down the west side of the Santa Rosa Mountains. From the start of its 5,000-foot descent, the "Palms to Pines Highway" leaves the evergreen snow country and passes through manzanita, Joshua, piñons, ocotillo, agave, wild palms, yucca, sage brush and cactus.

The highway terminates at the cultivated palm trees and garden plants of the communities of Coachella Valley, only a few hundred feet above sea level. Less than 100 years ago a desolate and arid land inhabited by Indians, Coachella Valley today is a sprawling oasis with several resort communities, including Palm Springs and Palm Desert.

Just before Scenic Route 74 starts its descent there is a dirt road off the highway which makes a steep climb up to a peak of the Santa Rosas where you can look down on Deep Canyon and Palm Desert.

It was on this peak that two friends and business associates camped 36 years ago. While sitting around the

fire that night they decided to make their "two-year-old dream" a reality. The men, Randall Henderson and J. Wilson McKenney, published two newspapers in Imperial Valley. They had often talked about starting a monthly periodical "devoted to the desert, its people, wildlife, arts and crafts, minerals, history, lost mine legends, ghost towns, Indians and travel."

After making their decision, the two men returned to Imperial County and eventually sold the two newspapers. In October, 1937 a dummy issue was prepared and November, 1937, the first issue of *DESERT Magazine* came off the press. There were only a few thousand copies.

Today, 35 years later, *DESERT* has a circulation of more than 50,000 and is distributed nationally. Despite the changing times, it retains the same basic format and ideals established by its founders.

Known as "Mr. Desert," Randall Henderson was publisher and editor of *DESERT Magazine* for 21 years during which time he explored the back-

country of the West and wrote hundreds of articles about the people and the land he loved. His two books, *On Desert Trails* and *Sun, Sand and Solitude*, are considered Western Americana classics.

He served in the military forces in both World War I and World War II. It was while stationed in Africa during World War II, he decided to move the magazine from El Centro to the area where Deep Canyon meets Coachella Valley; the same area he had seen from atop the Santa Rosas when he and McKenney decided to "make our dream a reality."

Randall moved the magazine into his new Spanish-style building in 1948 and soon afterward the first post office was established. The second part of Randall's dream—and Palm Desert—had become a reality. On July 4, 1970, at the age of 82, Randall Henderson passed away at his Palm Desert home.

At the time of his death, Randall was working on a third book about the founding of Desert Magazine and Palm Desert. His widow—and devoted companion—Cyria Henderson, asked Wilson McKenney to complete the book. Although Wilson had not been associated with Desert Magazine for many years and was living in Georgetown, California, he readily offered his services.

He soon discovered, however, it was impossible to write in Randall's style, so, instead of completing Randall's book, McKenney has just completed a book devoted to "Mr. Desert."

Desert Editor . . . the story of Randall Henderson and Palm Desert is a story of a man who fulfilled a dream and who greatly enriched the lives of the people who love the West.

The owners of Desert Magazine are proud that Mrs. Henderson has asked us to make the book available through our retail store and by mail. It is hardcover, illustrated with 188 pages. Single copies of this limited edition are \$7.95, plus 40 cents sales tax for California buyers. When ordering by mail send check or money order to Desert Magazine Book Shop, Box 1318, Palm Desert, California 92260.



Wild burro in Death Valley, California

Photo by George Service

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NESTLED IN THE ARGUS MOUNTAINS AND OVERLOOKING PANAMINT VALLEY THERE IS A COMMERCIAL MINE WHOSE FRIENDLY OWNERS HAVE OPENED THEIR "MOUNTAIN OF ONYX" TO ROCKHOUNDS WHO FIND IT IS EASY DIGGING FOR THE GEMSTONE MATERIAL. THE AREA, NEAR DEATH VALLEY, IS ALSO GREAT FOR 4WD EXPLORERS.



CANDY-COLORED

ON THE SLOPES of the Argus Mountain Range near Death Valley in Southern California there is a virtually unlimited deposit of high-grade onyx and one of the most productive such mines in the West.

Unlike most commercial mining operations, however, this one is open to the public and rockhounds are finding it a veritable bonanza for both digging and outdoor camping and recreation.

Located 25 miles north of Trona, with a spectacular view of Panamint Valley, the mine has a large processing plant at the foot of the mountain of onyx, camping

facilities for rockhound clubs—and is the permanent home of the owners, Delia and Fletcher Tweed.

The congenial and friendly couple have individual backgrounds as interesting as their mining operation.

A tall, attractive woman of Indian and Irish descent, Delia is not a newcomer to mining. During her younger years, she traveled throughout the southwest with her geologist father, a full-blooded Cherokee, who taught her "how to read the earth as easily as reading a book."

After his death she continued her interest in mining and prospecting trips,

and in 1958 purchased the onyx mine from H. C. Denger who discovered it in 1925 while prospecting for gold in the Panamint Mountains and Death Valley.

Between finding time to gradually develop the mine, her career included a variety of occupations. She was a rancher, rodeo rider, owner and operator of a polo field, restaurant owner and talent agent for motion pictures—in addition to raising and guiding the career of her son, Robert "Buzz" Henry, a movie star and director.

While still living in Los Angeles, she spent weekends at the mine. After locat-



by
Carolyn
Strickler

A campground (opposite page), complete with water and sanitary facilities, is adjacent to the main buildings at the foot of the onyx diggings. Potential rockhound Mathew, 2, rests (left) while Fletcher Tweed weighs a piece of onyx dug by C. J. and Ida Powers, Culver City, California. Fletcher and Delia Tweed examine rock specimens (right) on their property. Panamint Valley is seen in the background.

ONYX MOUNTAIN

ing several other deposits of onyx, including white, gold, chocolate, brown and blue, Delia decided to leave the metropolitan area and devote full time to developing her mine.

A road was built to the site, building materials brought in and areas leveled. While planning the overall operation, she lived alone in a shack with her two chihuahua dogs and a shotgun for protection.

When work came to a standstill due to a shortage of workmen, she returned to Hollywood. It was then that a friend of many years stopped by and when informed of her problem offered to help her

build the factory.

Fletcher Tweed's background was certainly not that of a mining man. Known professionally as John Fletcher, he was a singer and entertainer of screen, stage and night clubs both in the United States and Europe. For years he sang in operas and musical comedies during five world tours.

Although Delia doubted if someone with Fletcher's background could "make the grade," she agreed to give him a chance. Much to her surprise, he was just the man she needed. He readily adapted to the life and became a good dozer man, builder, electrician, welder and untiring

worker both in the office and in the field.

The mine was opened, processing plant built, trailers hauled in and the campsite landscaped. Delia had previously located two springs three and a half miles away. A pipeline was put underground and a 12,500-gallon water tank installed.

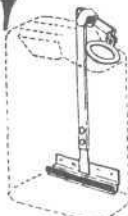
Three years after their business partnership started, the project was completed and the business partnership ended. Delia and Fletcher were married on February 9, 1962.

Today, the commercial processing plant is the source of beautifully finished onyx

continued



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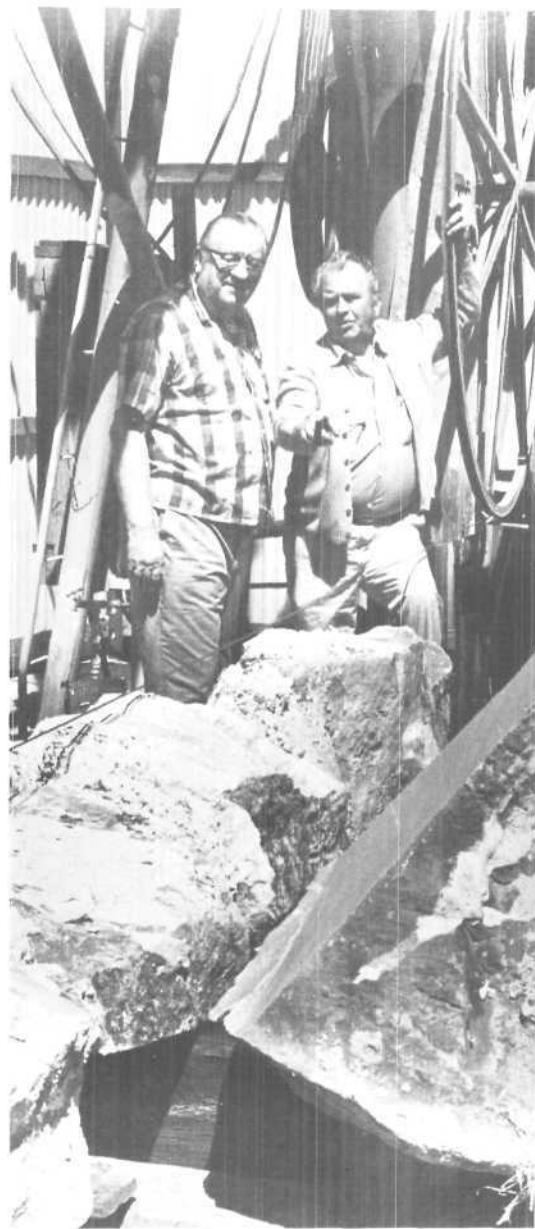
Gem stone material of this kind is sedimentary rock formed in fresh cold water deep in the earth and brought to the surface later by volcanic action.

The basic material is calcium carbonate and the various colors represent the many different minerals in solution at the time of its formation. Geologists report there are many millions of tons of the gem stone within the area.

Onyx is also found in the form of stalactites in caves where water drips down carrying calcium carbonate. One other form, not too often found, is a spring depositing calcium carbonate as the water runs out of the ground. This type is usually pock-marked with holes or sometimes too loose a crystalline structure for commercial use.

About a year ago, the Tweeds started allowing rockhounds to conduct field trips on the property. Admission charge is \$1.00 per person for weekend camping and a minimal charge per pound for all onyx taken out. There are free guided tours through the plant and a small showroom to acquaint visitors with materials from the mine. Sanitary facilities, overnight campsites and plenty of fresh spring water are available.

Rockhound groups from many states are scheduling their weekend trips to the



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"cowboy skipper" Art Greene sez:

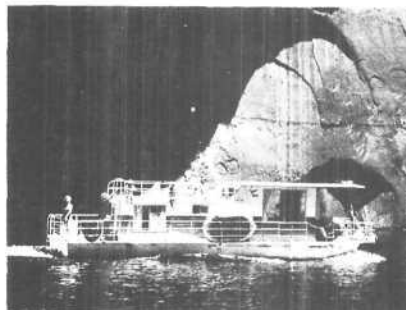
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Fletcher Tweed, right, explains to Slim Barnard, producer of the weekly television series "The Happy Wanderers," how he cuts large slabs of onyx for commercial uses. Rockhounds (below) find many colors of the gemstone. Left to right, Sol Lowe, Culver City, and Nick Duncan and Gordon Standlee, of Thousand Oaks, California.

onyx mine and many visitors stop by "to see what onyx looks like." Scrap materials and finished products such as table tops, book ends, pen sets, spheres, clock and lamp bases and jewelry can be purchased at the store.

One of the most popular novelty items are the Indian prayer sticks that have been copied from the prayer sticks Indians once carved from the onyx taken from the hills thousands of years ago. These, according to Indian tradition, are held in each hand as a vital link between you and the Great Almighty.

The onyx mine is located 25 miles north of Trona on the paved road to Death Valley. Eighteen miles north of Trona turn left off the main highway onto paved Nadeau Road at a large white sign saying "Onyx Mine." Three and a half miles down Nadeau Road there is another "Onyx Mine" sign where you turn left on a gravel road for two and a half miles to the mine. The gravel road is passable for all passenger cars.

Rockhound clubs wanting to reserve camp sites at the mine should write to Fletcher Tweed, Box 395, Trona, California 93562.

Whether you belong to a rockhound club, are an individual prospector or just a visitor passing by, you will find the trip to Delia and Fletcher's Shangri-La—and a visit with these interesting and friendly people—a rewarding experience. □

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DEATH VALLEY, CALIFORNIA



Bill Treder digs for old bottles and relics at one of the many dumps at Lookout.

A LOOK AT LOOKOUT

continued from page 19

Early in 1876, a rugged toll road was carved across the Argus Range between Darwin and Lookout, and the machinery for the first furnace was hauled into Lookout from the rail terminal at Caliente.

Over the next several months, encouraging reports centered around the activity at Lookout. By the end of 1876, the Cerro Gordo Freighting Company had hauled more than 5,000 bars of silver bullion worth over \$400 a ton from the mountain top.

In December the *Inyo Independent* reported: "Not less than 500 mules, and quite an army of packers, teamsters, coal burners, wood choppers, etc. are constantly employed in furnishing coal and other local supplies."

Six months later, the Modock Company was averaging shipments of over \$80,000 a month. Eventually, the combined efforts of the Modock and Minni-etta Companies took over \$4,000,000 from the district.

In Wild Rose Canyon, across the Panamint Valley, near Death Valley, the Modock Consolidated Mining Company owned extensive wood claims and ten custom charcoal kilns. By the summer of 1877, the kilns and a force of 40 men were producing coal and wood far faster than the Lookout Coal and Transportation Company could pack it by mule train to the

furnaces at Lookout. At one time there was 3,500 cords of wood stacked near the kilns and, on the mountain, bars of silver ingots were stacked like cordwood.

Remi Nadeau and his Cerro Gordo Freighting Company were quick to seize an opportunity. Through the length of Panamint Valley from the Slate Range on the south to the base of Lookout Mountain, he carved his famous 'straight-as-an-arrow' shotgun road. Across the valley's width, from the kilns at Wild Rose to the furnaces at Lookout, he cut another. These roads that once echoed to the teamster's cracking whips and the loaded wagons of the Cerro Gordo Freighting Company, can still be driven today.

With all this feverish activity, Lookout had become quite a sizeable community by the end of 1877. The town, later known as Modock when the first post office was established and it was discovered that California already had a town by the name of Lookout, reached its peak during this year. There were over 140 voters registered and eight children were assigned to the Darwin school district. The actual population can only be surmised, but whatever the count, three saloons and two general stores accommodated the residents. There was a community hall where dances and other public events could be held and the sheriff's deputy, Frank Fitzgerald, operated a tri-weekly stage between Lookout and Darwin.

Though Lookout's citizens left the bro-

ken shards of many festive occasions behind, there is little evidence that the community ever lived by the law of the Colt and shotgun, though from time to time a few shootings did occur. On the whole, the camp was peaceful and law abiding. Once, when an express wagon leaving Lookout broke down on the steep mountain grade, its entire load of silver bars was left unguarded by the roadside while the teamster went for assistance. When he returned, the valuable cargo had not been touched.

As was the case with the express wagon of the past, conventional automobiles approaching Lookout will have to be left by the side of the road. Depending on the road condition and the ability of the driver, a passenger car should be able to come within two or three miles and an easy hike of the townsites. Four-wheel-drive vehicles, dune buggies, and trail bikes can easily make it all the way.

A dirt road turns west from the paved highway that runs the length of Panamint Valley between Trona and Panamint Springs. The turn-off, about 7 miles south of Panamint Springs and 36 miles north of Trona, is marked by a sign pointing the way towards the Minni-etta Mine. Follow this well-graded road to the old Nadeau shotgun road near the base of Lookout Mountain. Turn north and carefully follow this much rougher road to the mouth of Stone Canyon on the north side of Lookout Mountain.

A weathered sign at the canyon points towards the Defense Mine to the West. Turn here and follow this rocky road as it enters Stone Canyon. It becomes progressively more difficult, but follow it as far as you can. Depending where you have to leave your car, the hike to Lookout along the old Cerro Gordo Freighting Company road is not difficult. A steeper, but more direct route, is along the trail that switchbacks up the side of the mountain.

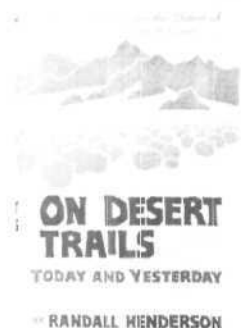
When you have reached Lookout, you'll never find a 'boothill' cemetery, but at least one funeral is known to have taken place there. It occurred in 1878. Friends of the deceased, who had come from as far away as Darwin, erected a fence around the grave site and sent away for a marble headstone. Nearly a century later, neither remain, but ghost town buffs and relic collectors of the 1970s can still enjoy the last remains of Lookout. □

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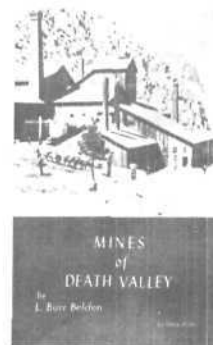
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GOLDEN MIRAGES by Philip A. Bailey. Out-of-print for more than 20 years, this was a collector's item. A valuable book for lost mines and buried treasure buffs, it is beautifully written and gives first-hand interviews with old-timers long since passed away. Excellent for research and fascinating for arm-chair readers. Hardcover, illustrated, 353 pages, \$9.95.



Although primitive, Sego's "homes" had electricity after 1927.

SEGO . . . A WAYSIDE CANYON *continued from page 21*

generous springs, he found a large seam of coal exposed.

Ballard's coal was hand-dug at first, and wagon-hauled down the steep canyon to the railroad at Thompson's. Word of its high quality spread throughout this country of severe winter cold, and customers came from as far distant as the Four Corners to get loads of it. B. F. Bauer, of Salt Lake City, also heard of it. Buying Ballard out, he sold stock and formed the American Fuel Company, with himself the major stockholder.

The rich veins of high quality coal, combined with an abundance of good water, were auspicious beginnings of production in 1911. Not only were the store, the boarding house and other substantial buildings erected, but all were piped with running water—a singular system for mining camps of that time and place. A coal washer was built—the first one west of the Mississippi River—and a modern tippie for emptying coal cars. The D&RGW built a spur line up into the canyon to the mines.

While Sego was rambunctious in the

way of mining camps, it enjoyed a "good camp" reputation, especially among the miners' families. Hay crops, truck patches, a few cattle and sheep augmented the miners' pay; and ghostly trunks of dead apricot trees stand in mute reminder of once-flourishing orchards. A power-line brought electricity in 1927 to light even Sego's dugouts, as ceramic insulators on their walls and drop cords from the ceiling attest.

However, Bauer's company was early beset with troubles. The little steam engine which pulled four loads of coal to and from the tippie frequently derailed; at other times it roller-coastered out of control down the canyon. The water table dropped gradually, and unnoticed, until the trickle from the springs became too thin to operate the coal washer.

Bauer brought about a reorganization in 1916, the new operation to be called the Chesterfield Coal Company. But neither a new name nor a different manager helped much. Paydays stretched to a year apart, with scrip issued to the miners in lieu of cash. Jobs were hard to

come by during the Depression 'thirties, so with scrip to trade at the company store, a load of hay or a calf to sell, for an occasional spot of cash and fuel readily available, 27 families still lived on the scenic homesteads in Sego Canyon when the company finally folded.

Learning, in 1947, that the mine property would be sold at a sheriff's sale in Moab, the 27 families scraped together \$18,000 and the guarantee of loans in the amount of \$12,000. Thus, for the total of \$30,000, the employees became owners. They incorporated under the name of the Utah Grand Co.

For a while the new company prospered—the end of the first year's operation found the loans repaid. Then the familiar jinx struck them. First of the catastrophes was destruction of the tippie by fire. Production was curtailed as a result, and the railroad discontinued operation of the Sego spur.

Racing against time, the men set to work. Within five months the building of coal-loading ramps and a new tippie was completed. Then, although it plunged the company deeply into debt, purchases of two dump trucks and a boxcar loader were unavoidable. They were back in production by the middle of December, but Christmas brought further calamity instead of cheer. Another disastrous fire completely destroyed the shops. Lost were all the spare parts and repair equipment.

An inventory brought the grim realization that one more blow would topple the company. Its main asset was a stockpile of large lump coal which, readily loaded for rail shipment, would bring badly needed cash. And the railroad itself had always been a dependable customer for the sack coal and screenings, the sale of which subsidized the cost of mining the high grade. Resolutely, the men set to work. Then came the fatal blow: The railroad discontinued the use of coal in favor of diesel fuel for its locomotives.

So it was that yet another race of people departed Sego. And ghosts of their time have joined those of antiquity to make this wayside canyon a wonder for present visitors.

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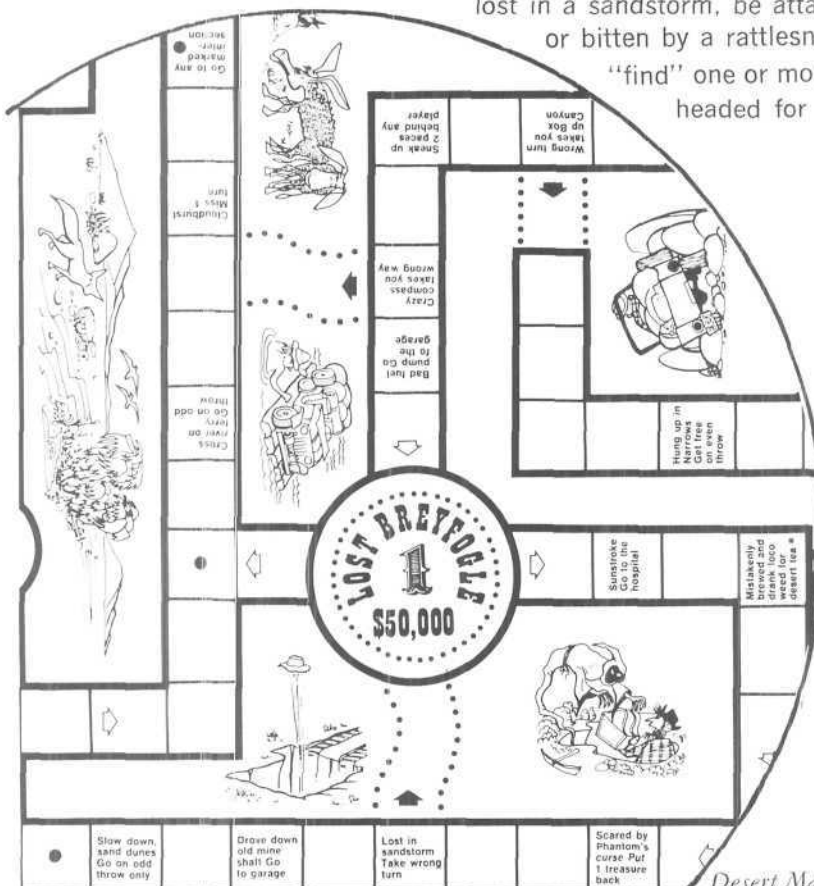
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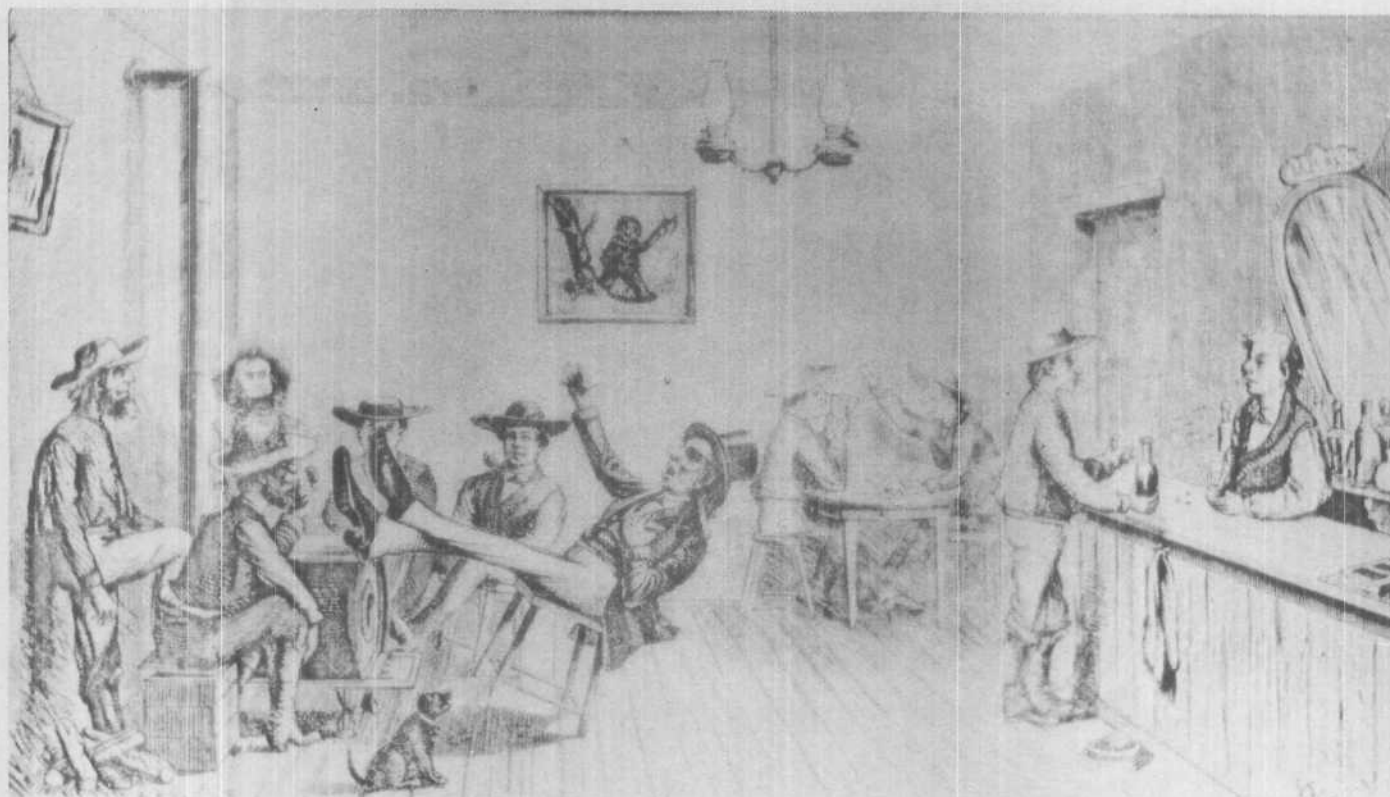
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An unknown artist's illustration of members of the Lying Club.

The Sazerac Lying Club

by Craig MacDonald

IN AUSTIN, NEVADA, America, there is a society whose objects are competitive lying. It is under government patronage, and the member of the Association who tells the best and most unreasonable lie is awarded a gold medal worth fifty thousand thalers. The awards are made annually by a commission appointed by the Governor of Boston, and which is in perpetual session at the seat of National Government in New York."

So stated an 1873 issue of *Carlsruher Zeitung*, a newspaper published in Germany. This article was the result of the activities of the Sazerac Lying Club of Austin, Nevada, which received worldwide recognition for its lies in the 1870s. Today, 100 years later, the world champion liars are chosen in a contest held annually in Burlington, Wisconsin.

Founded by two journalists in 1931, the Burlington Liars Club receives over 1,000 entries per year from around the globe.

The best lie brings the author a gold-plated, diamond-studded medal for the year.

Many of the winning liars are from the desert areas and small towns, whose inhabitants wrote some of the following world championship lies:

"It was so dry this year that when my canary wanted a drink, I had to pull up the well and run it through the wringer."

"I have a deer rifle with such terrific range I have to dip the bullets in salt so the meat I shoot will keep till I get there."

"Fishing around here was so bad sometimes this summer that even the biggest liars didn't catch any."

If you have a good whopper that will "raise 'em out of their boots," send it (before December 25) to Burlington Liars' Club, Inc., Burlington, Wisconsin 51305; you might be the next world champion liar.

After Christmas the winners, runners up, and other top liars are announced and their lies are released to the major wire services which give them global coverage.

Impressive as the Burlington group is, the granddaddy of all such organizations

was the Sazerac Lying Club, which met nightly in the Sazerac Saloon in Austin, Nevada. The saloon was the resort of many choice spirits other than those kept behind the bar—mainly old '49ers and prospectors—who sat around the stove, smoked their pipes, fired tobacco juice at a mark on the stovepipe and swapped lies.

Fred Hart, editor of the *Austin Reveille*, dropped in the Sazerac consistently in hopes of gleaning some items he might use in his column. But the stories were so far from the truth he dared not use them.

One night Hart visited the Sazerac to find a new man, George Washington Fibley, telling the gathering about a pile of silver bars he had seen in one of the Pacific ports. His story was an outrageous exaggeration "for all the silver ever produced by the famed bonanzas of the Comstock would not make a pile seven miles long, forty feet high and thirteen feet wide, the dimensions of the stack of silver Fibley was describing."

The following afternoon Hart was short of news and needed a quick filler.

The result—"Elected President. The Sazerac Lying Club was organized last night, our esteemed, prominent and respected fellow citizen, Mr. George Washington Fibley, being unanimously chosen president of the organization. There was no opposing candidate; his claims and entire fitness for the honorable position being conceded by common consent of the club."

Thus the readers were introduced to an organization which would attain worldwide acclaim in its five years of "open" activity, daily reported in the *Reveille*.

One of the most outstanding members of the Sazerac Lying Club was "Uncle John" Gibbons who drove Concorde between Belmont and Austin, Nevada. Gibbons gave this explanation for being late to a meeting one day.

"While crossing Smoky Valley, a short distance this side of the salt marsh, I observed a heavy bank of dark clouds over the valley. As the stage approached nearer to the object, however, I became convinced that the mass was composed of livin' creatures.

"The team was gittin' kind of scary, but I held 'em level, and as I kept gittin' nearer I saw the thing warn't nothin' but a flock of sage hen; so I jest threw the silk at the leaders and yelled fire and brimstone to the wheelers, attemptin' to slash the team squar' through the flock without any trouble.

"But boys, thar' was more sage hen obstructin' of that road than I had reckon'd on; and when them leaders struck into them sage hens, they was throwed back on their ha'nches jest as if they had butted clean up agin' a stun' wall.

"As far's you could see there warn't nothin' but sage hen; the United States mail was being detained by feathers. I quickly unhitched one of the wheelers and rode back to the station for help.

"There I stated the situation in a hurry to a prospector, hostler and cook. They saddled up some of the stage stock and got a couple of axes, intendin' to go back with me and chop a road through the sage hen. But the prospector says it would be easier to blast 'em out.

"He went up on the hill and got his drills and a lot of giant powder cartridges, and the rest of the blastin' apparatus, and then the whole raft of us started back for the place where the stage was; and when we got thar—well I wish I may be runned over by a two-horse jerk—

there warn't a sage hen in sight."

Using the press as a means of transportation, this was one of many yarns which eventually wound their way across the United States to Europe where they appeared in Germany's *Carlsruher Zeitung*, as well as other papers.

The Sazerac Lying Club's international reputation flourished until 1877 when it closed its doors to the public (and press) because of what Fibley termed, "the constant invasion of privacy."

The public's image of the club did not change for a while, thanks to Hart who published a novel, *The Sazerac Lying Club* made up of the columns which appeared in the *Reveille*.

The book is, however, near extinction, as is the reputation of this long-forgotten granddaddy of the lying clubs, the Sazerac. But as long as clubs like the Burlington keep alive the cultured and refined science of lying, the American public will be treated to the age-old art of a civilized accomplishment. □

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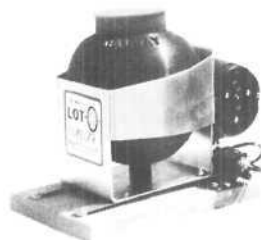
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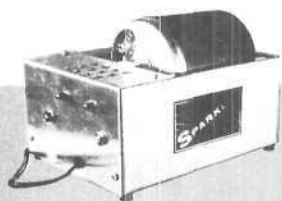
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Rambling on Rocks

by

Glenn and

Martha Vargas

BIOLITHS:

Rocks Made By Living Things

IN ONE OF OUR past columns we discussed gem materials made by living things. We talked about coral, pearl, ivory, jet and others. These, with the exception of jet, cannot be classed as rocks, and thus we ignored the large group of sedimentary rocks known as bioliths. The name is from the Greek, *bios*-life, and *lithos*-rock.

Jet is a member of the coal group which is probably the best known of the bioliths, but its popularity is on the downward trend, being replaced in many areas by other fuels.

The coal group is extensive and varied. In its simplest form it is known as peat which is really nothing more than accumulated plant remains; roots, stems, leaves that are compacted enough to be preserved. In many parts of the world, peat is an important fuel source, mined in what are known as peat bogs. These are usually the remains of lakes that have disappeared in the fairly recent past.

As far as geologists can tell, all coal began as peat bogs, but most of them existed many millions of years ago around huge lakes that teemed with prehistoric plants. What happened to the peat after it was formed determines the type of coal.

If the peat bog was subjected to a moderate amount of pressure from sediments placed upon it, the peat was changed to lignite. This is the lowest form of coal and is usually brown, soft, and crumbly. It will burn, but is not considered to be a good source of heat. Most of the chemicals that were in the living plants are still in the lignite. Much heat is necessary to drive these chemicals off before the coal will begin to consume itself and begin to give off heat.

These chemicals that take up part of the heat of burning make lignite valuable. Many of our well known products today had their beginning in the heating of lignite, some cosmetics among them. There is a large industry concerned with heating lignite and other soft coal to recover these chemicals, with the remains becoming coke. Coke is really the fuel portion.

Jet is a form of lignite coal, and really does not fit the popular designation. It is black, dense, and reasonably tough, but here it belongs just the same.

More pressure over a long period of time will produce bituminous coal. This is the coal that most people know, and is commonly called soft coal. Those that have stoke furnaces have seen bituminous coal go into the fire. It is a much better heat producer than lignite, but will also produce various chemicals at the start of the burning process.

The ultimate in pressure, with perhaps some heat also, will produce anthracite, or hard coal. This is highly carbonized, dense and hard. It is the best coal, and is usually reserved for use by industries that need extreme heat. It is the fuel for the fast disappearing forge of the village blacksmith.

Coal may be the best known biolith, but limestone is the most common. The name encompasses a large number of types that have one thing in common; they are made predominantly of calcium carbonate, usually calcite. The name comes from lime, a calcium oxide that is produced by burning calcite.

Limestone contains a good percentage of other materials as well as calcite, but these are usually impurities such as silt.

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The calcium carbonate portion is composed mostly of fine sediments made of the skeletons of small animals. Most of these are microscopic, but some are large enough to be seen without magnification. Calcium carbonate is nearly always present in solution in large bodies of water. This is the reservoir that clams, oysters, snails and other mollusks tap to make their shells. There are other sea animals, called plankton, which make shells for their bodies out of calcite. When such animals die, their shells collect on the bottom and at times produce huge beds.

After many thousands of years, the constant rain of small particles of calcium carbonate builds up into thick deposits. When this is covered by sediments of the same or a different type, the material is compacted into limestone. It is a hard rock. Limestone beds covering many square miles, and in thicknesses of over a thousand feet, are to be found in the Grand Canyon region, as well as other areas.

Sometimes, the by-products of the life processes of plants will cause limestone-type formations. Whenever algae (one-celled plants) appear in huge numbers, the water immediately surrounding them is filled with the various chemicals and oxygen that are part of their waste products. When the situation is just right, calcium carbonate is caused to precipitate out of the water immediately surrounding them. Some of this will sink to the bottom as sediments to add to the bodies of living things. On other occasions, the calcium carbonate sediments will adhere to the mass of algae, and these will often be incorporated into a limestone bed.

If the bodies of water that contained the algae groups were small, the deposit would cover rocks and create interesting formations. The deposits in the lower Coachella Valley on Travertine Point are of this, and are known as calcarious tufa. The name travertine used here is incorrect. In the deserts east of the Sierra Nevada there are a number of prehistoric dry lakes that contain formations resembling punch bowls, fountains, and large mushrooms. These are made of calcarious tufa.

Another biolith is chalk. This is the calcium carbonate remains of the bodies of microscopic living things known as foraminifera. If one would make a chalk mark about one inch long on a blackboard, this would use up the bodies of thousands

of these shell-like animals. The best known chalk deposits are the cliffs of Dover, England.

Found within chalk, but also elsewhere, is flint. This is a form of silicon dioxide (much resembling agate) which is again the remains of microscopic living things, but are known as radiolarians. Instead of secreting a calcium carbonate shell, they are able to extract silicon dioxide from the water. Flint is usually black, but may be other colors, and some have been of interest to the amateur gem cutter.

Silicon dioxide (actually a form of opal) is secreted as a shell by plants called diatoms. These are nearly microscopic in size. The shell is much like a small box, the top part sliding down over the lower portion. The outline, however, is seldom rectangular like a box. They may be round, oval, spindle-shaped, curved like a boomerang, or almost any reasonable shape. Diatoms live in huge numbers in small bodies of either salt or fresh water, and their shells have formed huge deposits of a rock known as diatomite, or diatomaceous earth.

Diatomite is microscopically porous, very light in weight, and soft enough to be easily cut into blocks. It is used in industry for filters, mild abrasives, and even in cosmetics. As it is soft, it has attracted the attention of amateur sculptors. It is sold under a number of names, one of which is Mapl-rok.

Bioliths are being made today. Wherever large groups of small plants or animals are living in areas where their remains can be deposited into beds, we have the beginning of what someday may be compacted into these special sedimentary rocks.

If you have any questions relative to "Rambling on Rocks" send them, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to Lapidary Editor, P.O. Box 1318, Palm Desert, California 92260.

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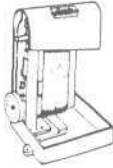
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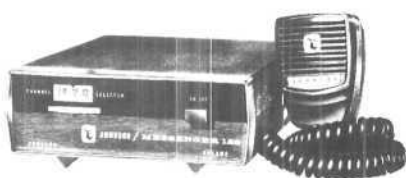
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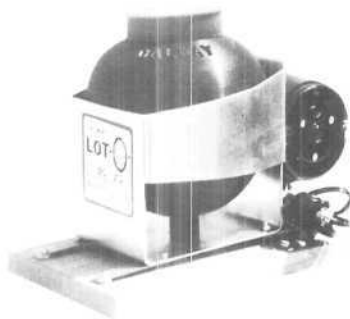
New and interesting products

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New Koenig Winch

A new electric winch for all two and four-wheel-drive vehicles has just been introduced by Koenig Iron Works, Inc., manufacturers of automotive PTO winches for 35 year. The winch is a complete assembly including 150 feet of cable and hook, channel bumper with splash plates, four-way cable guide roller assembly, bolts and electrical hardware. It has 8,000 lbs. of positive pulling power and features reversible 12-volt DC operation, positive action touch controls and many other new features. New two-color literature describes the winch designed for your specific vehicle. Free by writing Koenig Iron Works, Inc. Dept. DM, P.O. Box 7726, Houston, Texas 77007.



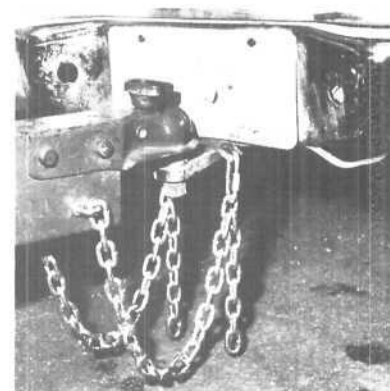
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Called a "Lot-O-Tumbler" this new lapidary equipment operates on vibratory action rather than on the rotary barrel principle. It agitates at a frequency of 40 cycles a second and polishes without scratching or chipping, according to the manufacturers. The tumbler will polish a variety of rocks at the same time and handles 4 lbs. of material per load. Highlights include fast yet gentle action, easy inspection, quiet operation, easy loading plus other features. Unit retails for \$34.50. For additional information write Colorado Geological Industries, Inc., Dept. DM, 5818 East Colfax Ave., Denver Colorado 80220.



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Calendar of Western Events

OCTOBER 21-23, GEM FESTIVAL & SWAP MEET sponsored by and held at Southern Nevada Museum, 240 Water St, Henderson, Nevada. Write Museum.

OCTOBER 21 & 22, ANTIQUE BOTTLE SHOW & SALE sponsored by the Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club, Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo, Glendale, Calif. Admission 50 cents, Children free. Write P.O. Box 60762, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, Calif. 90060.

OCTOBER 31—NOVEMBER 3, ANNUAL 1972 NORRA MEXICAN 1000 RACE from Ensenada to La Paz, Baja California. Competitive race down the Baja peninsula with all classes of back-country vehicles. Write National Off Road Racing Association, 1616 Victory Blvd., Glendale, CA. 91201.

NOVEMBER 4 & 5, BEAR GULCH ROCK CLUB 10th annual show, Masonic Hall, Ontario, Calif. Free admission and parking. Write Royal Fulton, 1770 W. 9th, Upland, Calif. 91786.

NOVEMBER 4 & 5, SYMPHONY IN ROCKS sponsored by the Lake Havasu Gem & Mineral Society, Smoketree Elementary School, Lake Havasu City, Arizona. Door prizes, dealers, slides, etc. Write Mrs. Ruth A. Reichel, Box 1366 Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403.

NOVEMBER 4 & 5, 12TH ANNUAL GEM & MINERAL SHOW sponsored by 29 Palms Gem & Mineral Society, Intermediate School, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Write P.O. Box 505, Twentynine Palms, CA. 92277.

NOVEMBER 11 & 12, GEM & MINERAL SHOW sponsored by Montebello Mineral & Lapidary Society, Masonic Temple, 6310 East Olympic Blvd., East Los Angeles. Free admission. Write Box 582, Montebello, CA 90640.

NOVEMBER 17-19, RIO GRANDE ARTS & CRAFTS ASSOCIATION'S annual show. More than 200 artists and craftsmen displaying original handcrafted items for sale. Indian, Spanish and Anglo cultures represented. Jewelry, rugs, furniture, paintings, etc. Albuquerque (New Mexico) Convention Center. Write P.O. Box 14325, Albuquerque, N.M. 87111

NOVEMBER 18 & 19, RIVER GEMBOREE sponsored by Silvery Colorado River Rock Club, Davis Dam Recreation Hall, Bullhead City, Ariz. Free admission, door prizes, demonstrations, etc. Ample camping facilities. Features chalcedony roses this year. Write Box 431, Bullhead City, AZ 86430.

Notes from the Field

Warning, Four-Wheelers!

Acts of vandalism are occurring with considerable frequency to parked vehicles. One hub is turned to the "lock" position and when driven under these circumstances the result is very costly damage to the front axle differential.

Here is an easy way to check your hubs and prevent any damage. Paint a red line across them in the free position. A quick glance will tell you if someone has tampered with them. Remind the "gal" who drives the 4-Wheeler to check the hubs after parking in a shopping area. This is where most of the vandalism occurs.

CALIFORNIA

Death Valley Junction

Marta Becket has completed the murals on the walls of the Amargosa Opera House (*Desert*, March '71). She extends an invitation to all of our readers to stop by and see them.

If you haven't enjoyed an evening of "Ballet-Mime" at the old opera house, you are in for a surprise and a delightful evening. The fall season begins October 2 and performances are given at 8:15 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Monday evenings.

Way Stations

The first in a series of Desert Way Stations is scheduled for construction in the Barstow area. Each station will provide rest rooms, water and sanitary dump station. A bulletin board will provide information and orientation via maps.

Mitchell's Caverns State Park

The cavern tour has been greatly enhanced by enlargement of the area open to the public. Though small, it is an interesting and beautiful cavern. The State Park personnel are to be commended for the many improvements at the cavern. Especially noteworthy is the excellent presentation of geological and historical facts and the dramatic lighting effects created to best display the formations.

Owens Valley

Travelers heading north (or south) on U.S. 395 will find two, good, free overnight campgrounds close to the highway, yet away from the noise and not heavily

used. At Lone Pine, turn west on Whitney Portal Road for .5 mile to Tuttle Creek Road. Turn left for .1 mile to the entrance to Portugee Joe Campground.

Eight and a half miles north of Independence, turn west on Black Rock Road and drive .8 mile to Sawmill Creek Campground.

OREGON

A reminder to camper and trailer owners—Oregon has passed a new law against water being allowed to drip from RV's, even into a bucket. Strict enforcement is now in effect.

Mail Box

An informative note from Doug Vandegraft was received recently. He mentioned some of the interesting areas around Baker, California—one of his favorite stomping grounds. Doug, we think you will be glad to hear that an article on this area is scheduled for next year.

The Column

The purpose of this column is to pass along timely news of general interest. We solicit your help and welcome your letters. Let us know about an unusual area you have visited, that "special gem" you collected, changes in status, good campsites or any other news for the desert enthusiasts.

If you have any questions, I will be glad to try and answer them. Just enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and allow time for a reply.

Mary Frances Strong,

Field Trip Editor, *Desert Magazine*,
Box 1318,

Palm Desert, California 92260

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Letters to the Editor



Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.

Triple Error . . .

Re Jack Pepper's "Running The Colorado Rapids" in the September '72 issue. Three men—not two, left the Powell party and were subsequently slain by the Shevrit Indians. They were William H. Dunn and the brothers, O. G. and Seneca Howland. A minor error of Pepper's, but a definite error of the three!

HOWARD M. BERMAN.

Editor, The Agatizer, San Pedro, California.

Coyote Controversy . . .

I enjoy reading *Desert* each month and must add that the pictures are very interesting and I absorb each caption. I also read every word from cover to cover.

I wish to focus your attention in particular on the article titled, "Desert Vocalist" in the March '72 issue. I feel that my remarks are as worthy of attention as those of the several men who set themselves up as specialists in the article. I have studied and worked in competition with the coyote for most of my 70 years.

If these experts on the coyote had looked at their own figures as stated within the article, they would have seen where they missed the boat.

Within this study why were the coyotes eating and living on the rodents? Let's take their own words and figures along with some known facts. The first is: They were working within an area that had been under coyote control for some time. The fact that the coyotes were living on the rodents and not bothering the ranchers was due to the control measures which left the rodent population large enough and the coyote population low enough that a sufficient diet was available.

The family figures sound to me like they are a little high as given by these experts. Most coyote families that I have had contact with would average in the 5 to 7 figures. Life span in a normal animal would probably (and remember the word 'probably' does not signify a fact, either in my writing or in theirs) be from 8 to 10 years. Alright, 6 pups in a litter, 3 males, 3 females. One year later 3 pair produce 6 pups each, that's eighteen, one year later 9 pair, plus the first 3 pairs each produce . . . and so on. You figure it out.

The first pair, now grandma and grandpa, were and are eating rodents, rabbits, snakes and keeping them in fairly good control, at least enough to please the rancher as stated by the experts. Please tell me what all these grand-

children are living on? They are living on the farmer's chickens, geese, ducks, pigs, calves, lambs, even known to take colts—this is a personal experience and can be proved by parties still living with me.

If some of these conservationists who are making such a stand as set forth by the writers mentioned here (not named) were to get out on a farm of his own, make a living for a family, educate children, pay taxes, feed coyotes and stand sand storms, cloudbursts, tornadoes, fire and theft, then battle the middlemen for prices, I'm not sure, of course, but do believe that better studies of actual conditions would be placed in our reading material that could be accepted by perhaps a few more people who know the facts of life.

Don't get me wrong. I do not believe in extermination. But I do believe in control. This is no more than the city dweller expects of the dog control laws. He doesn't want his neighbors to go without pets, but he is an American citizen and as such is entitled to, and should expect, those dogs to be controlled.

I looked out of my window this morning and two of my neighbor's cats lay dead in the street, unable to escape the greatest predator of all—Man.

FOURTH F. THOMAS.

Princeton, Idaho.

Editor's Note: We felt Reader Thomas had some valid points, so we asked K. L. Boynton, Desert's Naturalist Editor and author of "Desert Vocalist" to reply. Here are Naturalist Boynton's views. We hope both letters will help readers to evaluate the complicated wildlife problem.

Indeed you are right that a serious problem exists when the normal predator-prey balance of nature is upset. Once this happens in an area things are off-kilter until the balance is restored. In nature, as you know, imbalances that occur in the normal rise and fall of animal populations are corrected in time—sometimes by epidemics, sometimes by starvation, sometimes by increased reproduction, sometimes, as scientists are finding in some species now, by a kind of automatic shut-off in reproduction when animal numbers reach an optimum, populations decreasing even in the face of good conditions.

But, as you say, when man is around, the balance can no longer operate normally or be restored normally. In the case of the coyote, it is almost always possible to trace back through the years and find that either deliberately (as in rabbit drives, prairie dog poisonings, etc.) or inadvertently through changes made by agriculture, overgrazing, or the spread of towns, etc., man has removed the coyote's natural source of food (both animal prey and plants) to the point where the coyotes must turn to other sources, harder to get, more dangerous to try for. And, in such an area, there is trouble, as nobody needs to tell you.

The normal reaction is to want to clean out the predators which has been tried and found to be a bad mistake because the other side of the balance swings up for worse destruction; i.e. the famous Kaibab Plateau case where cougars, wolves, coyotes were exterminated with a view to establishing big and fine deer herds for hunting. The result was that deer increased so

fast they destroyed the natural vegetation, caused serious erosion and watershed damage and starved off by the thousands. The survivors were sick and worthless. Hunting came to a standstill. The environmental effects of this bad mistake are still being felt years later.

As you say, coyote extermination is not the answer and yet this is what so-called "control" ends up with because man can't seem to stop short of going too far in any direction. Why this is so I don't know, do you? Unless it is just the nature of the beast. Your idea of control is feasible if it is a temporary measure and wisely handled by somebody on the spot who understands the crucial need to keep a normal balance and who would try to build up the prey side of the balance at the same time. It might work very well and result in a man-aided balanced community that could set a pattern to be followed elsewhere. I stress local direction of such control.

It wouldn't hurt you any to be more open-minded about scientists. While they do work under controlled conditions in the lab and occasionally in the field for specific anatomical or behavioral tests, the major part of real ecological field work is done in uncontrolled areas and since different scientists are at work, in many different localities under strictly natural conditions as they actually exist (Fitch's study referred to in the article, for example) and the results of such careful work are accurate, even if the facts found turn out to be contrary to preconceived notions.

Likewise, it would do scientists a lot of good if they had a chance to talk with sensible people like you, see what you are up against and listen to your findings and good ideas. The trouble is that they would wear out their welcome, I'm afraid, for I think you would have many a tale of Idaho's past to tell also that would make mighty interesting listening—they would probably keep on making excuses for not going home.

I am glad that you wrote. I enjoyed this visit by mail and am asking *Desert* to publish the gist of your letter and mine.

K. L. BOYNTON.
Naturalist.

Dust Storms . . .

Re the letter from Orville Smith about 600 4WDs—of which I was one of the drivers—causing dust storms that descend on their town.

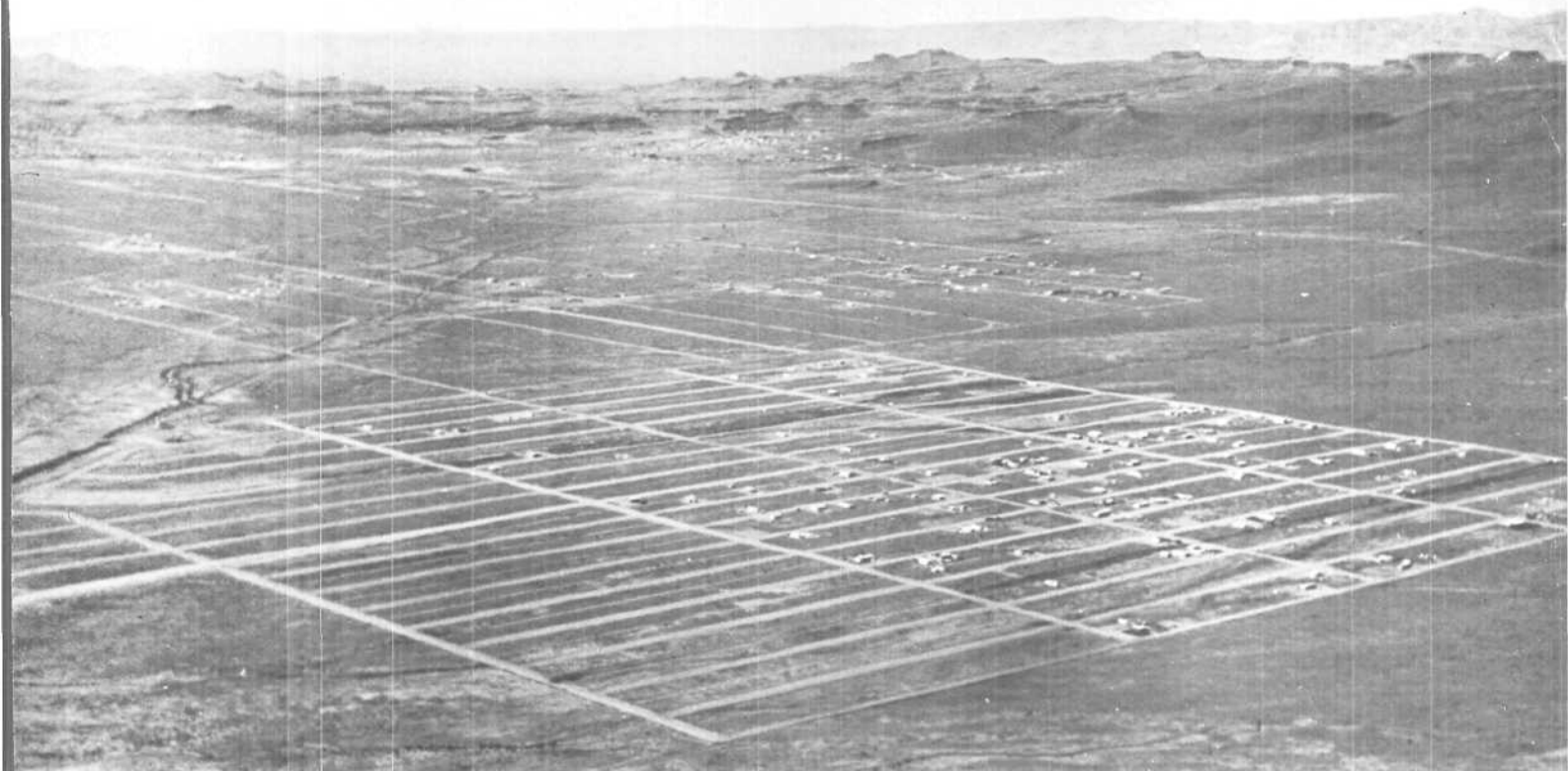
In 1931, I was the construction superintendent on the building of 36 bridges and the paving of the road from the county line to Arroyo Salado and also in the winter of 1927-28 we paved the road from Arroyo Salado to the Elmore Ranch.

If my memory serves me right there were dust storms back in those days long before the 4WDs came into being. Also along the road it was easy to find old abandoned cars and trucks which were burned out. True, I will say that people should not leave broken-down vehicles in the desert and camps should be cleaned up, but do not blame the dust in the air on the 4WDs.

HAROLD HAWKINS,
San Diego, California.

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