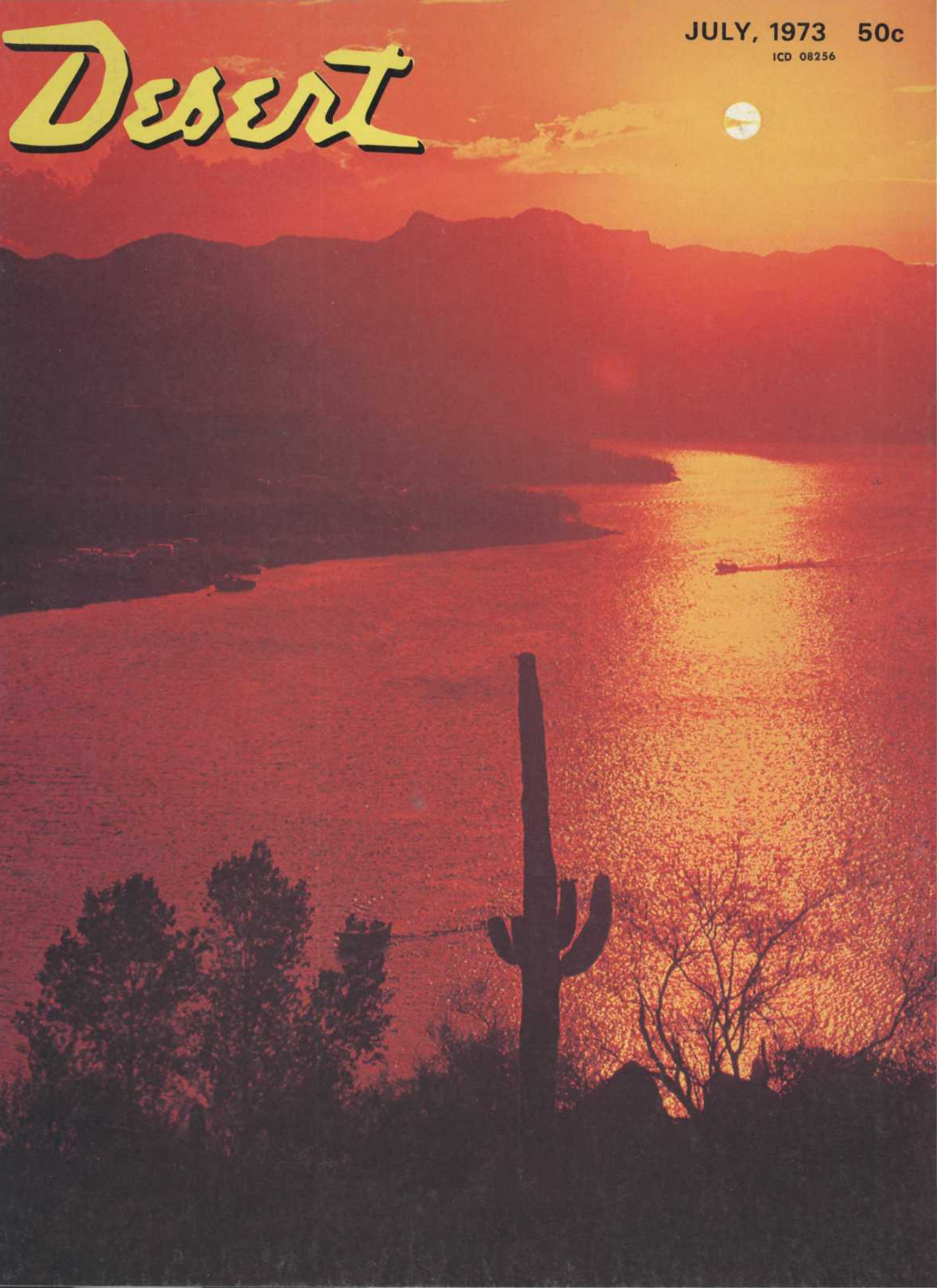


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Volume 36, Number 7

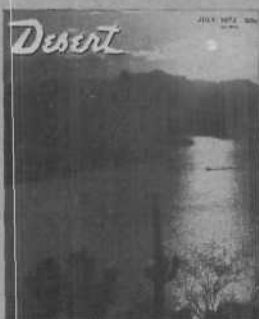
JULY 1973

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THE COVER:

The magic of sunset on Canyon Lake on Apache Trail scenic drive in colorful Arizona. Photography by David Muench of Santa Barbara, California.

EDITORIAL, CIRCULATION AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: 74-109 Larrea St., Palm Desert, California 92260. Telephone Area Code 714 346-8144. Listed in Standard Rate and Data. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: United States, Canada and Mexico; 1 year, \$5.00; 2 years, \$9.50; 3 years \$13.00. Other foreign subscribers add \$1.00 U.S. currency for each year. See Subscription Order Form in this issue. Allow five weeks for change of address and send both new and old addresses with zip codes. DESERT Magazine is published monthly. Second class postage paid at Palm Desert, California and at additional mailing offices under Act of March 3, 1879. Contents copyrighted 1973 by DESERT Magazine and permission to reproduce any or all contents must be secured in writing. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs WILL NOT BE RETURNED unless accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

EACH ISSUE of *Desert Magazine* is designed to bring a variety of articles to a diversified readership. Every effort is made to *balance* the book so that there will be something of interest for everyone no matter what their avocation. Because the Southwest has become so popular, in the past emphasis has been placed on off-beat and off-road areas. This month we feature two different ways of enjoying this land we love so much via riverboat and a narrow gauge railway!

F. A. Barnes, takes us on a riverboat, the Canyon King, out of Moab, Utah and tells how this vessel came into being. Enid Howard paints a word picture of the fun and nostalgia in a 68-mile train ride through some great areas of New Mexico and Colorado.

Mary Frances Strong's field trip finds us in the Trinity Range near Lovelock, Nevada and Helen Walker brings us her version of the archeological find of the west, the Lovelock Caves.

Back in California, George Pflieger has a puzzle for us in the mysterious ruins found in Holcomb Creek and stirs the juices of treasure hunters.

In summary, the *balance* this month includes a riverboat on the Colorado, narrow gauge trains in New Mexico, rock-hounding and archeology in Nevada and an old gold area of California.

There's only one thing wrong. Now I'm *unbalanced*!

The bindery department was off-balance last issue and several subscribers received their copies minus an entire section. If this happened to you, please send me a card and I'll get a good copy off to you immediately.

William Knepper

♥ ♠ ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ ♣ Test Your Fun Sense with these five questions:

1. Draw poker is the best game of chance for that Saturday night game?
True ☐ False ☐
2. You have to go to Las Vegas to get real action?
True ☐ False ☐
3. Roulette is the most unpredictable game of chance?
True ☐ False ☐
4. Dice is the wildest and most wooly game of chance?
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Books for Desert Readers

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MINES OF JULIAN

By
Helen Ellsberg



Historical photos and a detailed history of the little-known mining area above the Anza-Borrego Valley, bring to light the discovery-find that was made by a farmer, Fred Coleman of Volcan Mountain. It started a new gold mining spree in these foothill regions of Southern California some 20 years after the better known gold rush to the Mother Lode Country. The author has spent many days researching the mountain regions of Julian and Banner ferreting out stories from old newspapers and talking with old-timers who remember the beginnings of some of the successful diggings. Accounts of mines such as The Washington, The Warlock, The Gold King and The Gold Queen, The Ranchito and The Golden Chariot make for a refreshing look at what is now a land of tasty apples and other fruit, and a refuge for those who want to get away from the city.

Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

EXPLORING CALIFORNIA BYWAYS VI OWENS VALLEY

By
Russ
Leadabrand



Trips for a day or a weekend. For many years now, the author has been carrying on a great love affair with the land he calls, "Back Behind the Mountains!" That's the Owens Valley country. Russ was born and brought up in a different slice of California and his side of the mountains looked different, that was the San Joaquin Valley.

The author suggests in one instance using Lone Pine as base of operations and absorb some of the local community, then take off for a weekend or week-long

pack trip. It's an especially good change for anyone bored with flatland living and like the author, you will find it can't be seen nor conquered in a weekend or a week.

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THE GOLD HEX by Ken Marquiss. A single man's endeavors, Ken has compiled 20 of his treasure hunts in book form. His failure to hit the "jackpot" does not mean he is treasureless. From gold panning to hardrock, from dredging to electronic metal detecting, he enjoyed a lifetime of "doing his thing." Slick paperback, illustrated with photos and maps, 146 pages, \$5.00.



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THE STERLING LEGEND by Estee Conatser. The story of the Lost Dutchman Mine is in a class of its own. Here the author presents the Jacob Walzer story in a realistic and plausible manner. An introduction by Karl von Mueller, and a map insert leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions between fact and fiction. Paperback, illustrated, 98 pages, \$3.50.

THE NEVADA DESERT by Sessions S. Wheeler. Provides information on Nevada's state parks, historical monuments, recreational areas, and suggestions for safe comfortable travel in the remote sections of western America. Old journals, micro-film copies of early newspapers and memories of living persons make an exciting history of Nevada. Paperback, illustrated, 168 pages, \$2.95.

TRADERS TO THE NAVAJOS by Frances Gillmor and Louisa Wade Wetherill. John and Louisa Wetherill of Kayenta, living among the Navajos from 1900 into the 30s, served the Indians in many ways from historians and school teachers and guides to explorers and archeologists. John Wetherill was the first of two white men to reach Rainbow Bridge. Paperback, 265 pages, \$2.45.

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EXPLORING CALIFORNIA BYWAYS VOLUME VI OWENS VALLEY by Russ Leadabrand. Trips for a day or a weekend will lead the readers a merry chase in pictures and words up and down the narrow Owens Valley. Your eyes will feast on such attractions as the Alabama Hills, Mono Lake, Mt. Whitney, giant boulders of obsidian at Glass Mountain, Bishop Creek and the now plundered Owens Lake and many, many more. Paperback, illustrated and mapped, bibliography, 126 pages, \$1.95.

WILY WOMEN OF THE WEST by Grace Ernestine Ray. Such women of the West as Belle Starr, Cattle Kate and Lola Montez weren't all good and weren't all bad, but were fascinating and conflicting personalities, as researched by the author. Their lives of adventure were a vital part of the life of the Old West. Hardcover, illustrated, 155 pages, \$5.95.



MAP OF PIONEER TRAILS Compiled by Varna Enterprises. Publishers of popular maps on lost mines and ghost towns in California, Varna has released a new large map on pioneer trails blazed from 1541 through 1867 in the western United States. Superimposed in red on black and white, the 37x45-inch map is \$4.00.

INDIAN SILVERWORK OF THE SOUTHWEST, ILLUSTRATED, VOLUME I by Harry P. Mera. An illustrated analysis of silver work, with a brief history of each category and excellent photos. The text makes it easy to identify the various types of workmanship. Hardcover, 122 pages, \$4.50.

DANCING GODS by Erna Ferguson. Many Indian dances and ceremonies of the Southwest are open to the public, but some are restricted or closed to viewing. How this came about is explained by the author who describes and locates the dances open to the public, and why some are not. Paperback, illustrated, 280 pages, \$2.45.

WEST OF DAWN by Hugh D'Autremont. The author's account of his life of adventure which started in the 1930s during which he looked for lost mines, prospected for gold in Mexico and hardrock mined in California. Reads like a fictional wild west novel. Hardcover, 187 pages, \$5.00.

PALM CANYONS OF BAJA CALIFORNIA by Randall Henderson. The beautiful palm canyons and isolated areas of Baja California are described by the late Randall Henderson, founder of DESERT Magazine. Although these are his personal adventures many years ago, little has changed and his vivid writing is alive today as it was when he first saw the oases. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.



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.

COINSHOOTING, How and Where To Do It by H. Glenn Carson. This book presents tips and 'tricks' on coinshooting and hunting other items lost by people over the years. Metal detector owners will find their hobby made more profitable, says this veteran "coinshooter." Paperback, illustrated, 58 pages, \$2.50.

THE CAHUILLA INDIANS by Lucile Hooper. Compared to the large tribes of the West, the Cahuillas, although being comparatively small, play an important part in the history of Southern California. Customs, living habits, the cultures of this tribe are better appreciated by the author's insight. First published in 1920, and again in print. Paperback, large format, bibliography, 65 pages, \$2.50.

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GHOSTS OF THE GLORY TRAIL by Nell Murbarger. A pioneer of the ghost town explorers and writers, Miss Murbarger's followers will be glad to know this book is once again in print. First published in 1956, it is now in its seventh edition. The fast-moving chronicle is a result of personal interviews of old-timers who are no longer here to tell their tales. Hardcover, illustrated, 291 pages, \$7.00.

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LOST MINES & BURIED TREASURES ALONG THE OLD FRONTIER by John D. Mitchell. The second of Mitchell's books on lost mines which was out-of-print for many years is available again. Many of these appeared in *DESERT Magazine* years ago and these issues are no longer available. New readers will want to read these. Contains the original map first published with the book and one pinpointing the areas of lost mines. Mitchell's personal research and investigation has gone into the book. Hardcover, 240 pages, \$7.50.

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTHWEST by the Editors of *Sunset Books*. A pictorial with a brief text showing modern day activities of cities such as Phoenix, El Paso, Taos, and communities below the Mexican border, and covering the Southwestern states, canyons and deserts. 240 photographs of which 47 are four-color, large format, 223 pages, hardcover, \$10.95.

TIMBERLINE ANCIENTS with photos by David Muench and text by Darwin Lambert. Bristlecone pines are the oldest living trees on earth. Photographer David Muench brings them to life in all their fascinating forms, and Lambert's prose is like poetry. One of the most beautiful pictorials ever published. An ideal gift. Large 11x14 format, hardcover, heavy slick paper, 128 four-color photographs, 125 pages. \$22.00.

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JOURNEY OF THE FLAME by Walter Nordhoff. The most exciting tale of early Baja and Alta California ever written. Recounts lost treasure legends and is accurate historical account presented in fictional style. Hardcover. \$4.95.



LOVELOCK'S

LOVELOCK, A BUSY little agricultural community in Pershing County, Nevada, will be celebrating "Frontier Days" August 3, 4 and 5. Everyone who enjoys a rip-roaring good time of old-fashioned family fun is invited to come to the beautiful Humboldt Valley and join in

the festivities. Lovelock's citizenry is well-qualified to stage a frontier celebration, as the community's heritage is closely linked to pioneer trails and early day mining.

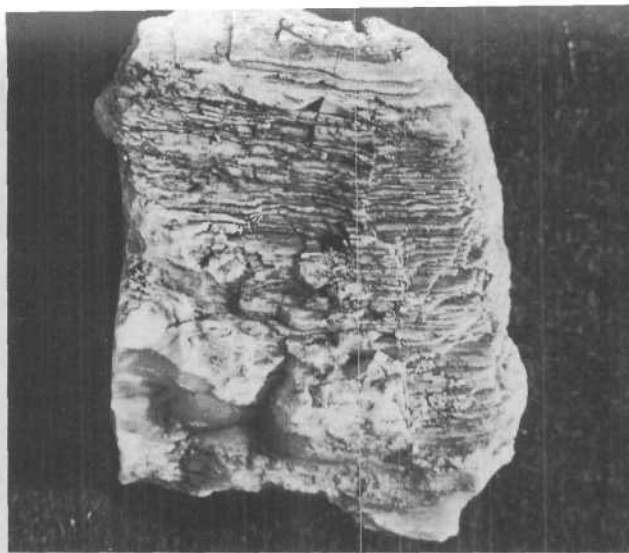
Peter Skene Ogden and his Hudson Bay Party are believed to have been the first white men to visit what is now the site of Lovelock. Ogden and his men were trapping beavers along the river which, because of their explorations, became known as Ogden's or Mary's River—the latter after Ogden's Indian wife. It was renamed Humboldt by John C. Fremont



Above: Hard rock drilling and gold panning (right) are just part of the fun of "Frontier Days." Far right: Lava-capped peak and near-level area are landmarks for gem field in the Trinity Range.

Desert Magazine





Opposite page: Across the paved road, dirt tracks lead down into the canyon where colorful opalite and agate will be found. Left: Opalite occurs in massive deposits. The material in this one is a soft, pastel lavender shade.

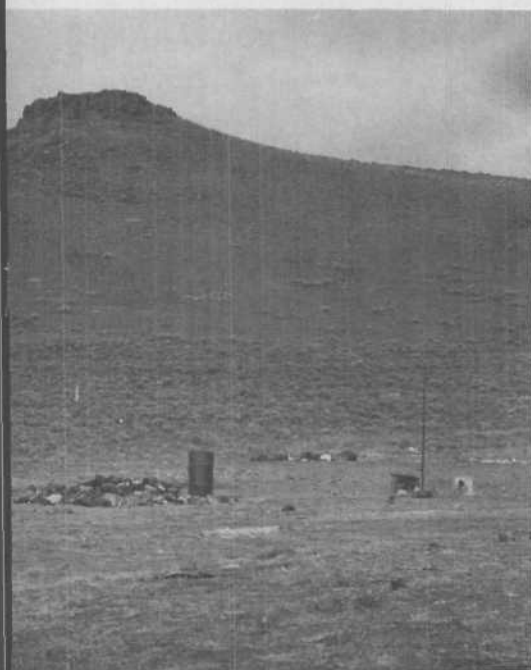
Left: Small limb sections with clear chalcedony centers are often ringed with red, yellow or brown agate.

LEGACY

by
Mary Frances
Strong

when he saw the great river during one of his expeditions in the 1840s.

Originally known as "Big Meadows," the Lovelock area was a welcome rest stop along the emigrant trail. Many pioneers camped here for long periods of time while they prepared their wagons for the dreaded crossing of the ill-famed Forty Mile Desert. The lush meadows and ample water gave both man and livestock a chance to store energy for the grueling push across barren wasteland that seemed to have been created by the devil himself.



Due to the increasing number of people traveling the Emigrant Trail, George Lovelock decided to build a station and supply point on his ranch property at Big Meadows in 1862. When the Central Pacific Railroad was brought through the region in 1867, the small settlement which had sprung up was officially designated Lovelock.

In these early days, the Humboldt River ran free and clear as it meandered down the long valley. During the seasons of drought it shrank to a mere trickle but became a raging, destructive torrent in periods of heavy rainfall—bringing feast or famine to the ranchers along its route. In 1908, Rye Patch Dam was completed and the river lost its freedom. Today, the river's water is stored and supplies regular irrigation for over 10,000 cultivated acres in the fertile valley.

Rye Patch Dam State Recreational Area, 22 miles northeast of Lovelock, provides vacationers with a site where camping, fishing, swimming and boating may be enjoyed in a desert setting. Camping spaces include tables, grills, fireplaces and sanitary facilities. The fee is \$1.00 per night with a two-week limit. Trailers up to 25-feet can be accommodated.

Back-country explorers will find many points of interest around Lovelock which
July, 1973

Frontier Days

The origin of the Lovelock Frontier Days Celebration runs a parallel to the founding of the town of Lovelock — a handful of people striving for the achievement of something beneficial to future generations.

In August of 1868 George Lovelock Sr. granted some property for a right-of-way to the Central Pacific Railroad and the township of Lovelock began.

One hundred years later the Chamber of Commerce approached Pat Rowe and Elaine Pommerening, two of George Lovelock Sr.'s great-great granddaughters to head a committee for a Lovelock Centennial Celebration.

The three-day celebration was fashioned from activities of the past and included a parade, beef bar-b-que, mucking contest, children's games, park concessions, Indian pageant, Kangaroo Court, and beard and old-fashioned dress contests.

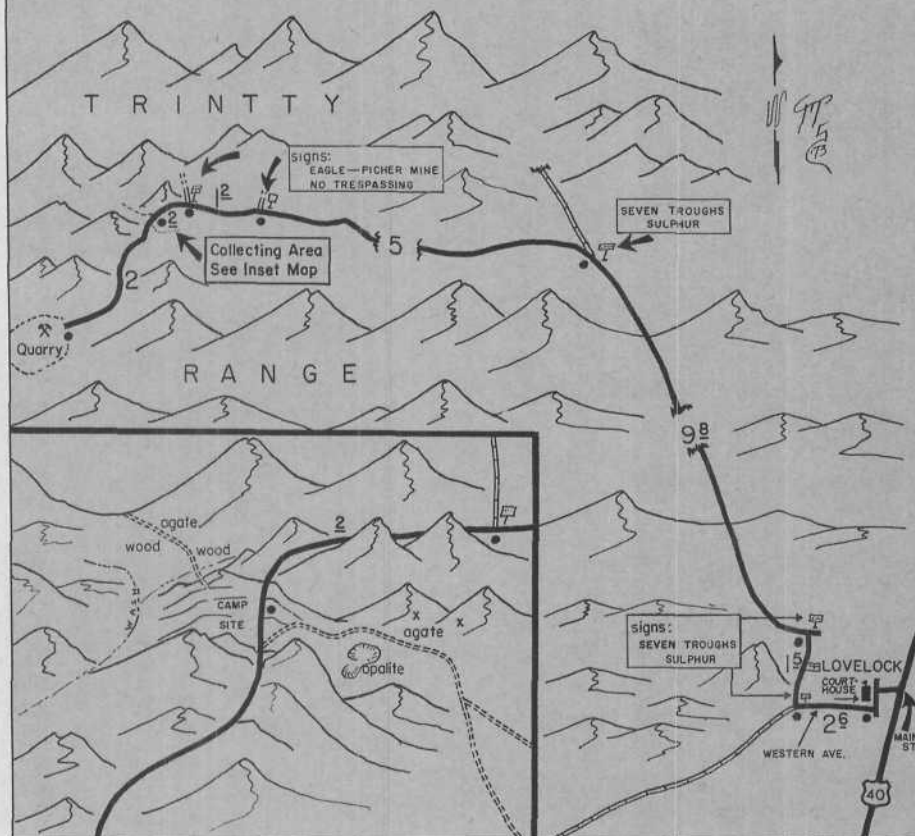
Due to the interest and co-operation of the town people and nearby communities and the huge success of the celebration itself, it was decided that an annual family affair of the same nature should be held.

The Frontier Days Celebration has increased in size and interest with an attempt at an added attraction each year. In 1969 the Hard-Rock Drilling with cash prizes was a featured attraction, in 1970 an antique bottle show and sale and flea market was added, in 1971 the addition of a big name country singer was featured and gold-panning was introduced and the Basque Contests and dancing was added in 197.

It is the intention of the Lovelock Frontier Days Committee to continue the hard work and to solicit new workers and new interests in the years to come.

A Gem Field in the Trinity Range

Pershing County, Nevada



make easy, one-day trips. Two great mountain ranges, the Trinity and the Humboldt, form the valley's east-west boundaries. Within their confines are several mining camps more than a century old—Arabia (discovered by George Lovelock in 1859), Rabbit Hole (1850s) and Rochester (1860s). Interesting camps of the early 1900s include Seven Troughs, Vernon, Farrell and Scossa to name but a few. Most of these sites are shown on the Pershing County Map.

Bottle and artifact collectors generally have good luck in this region. There are also several fine rock collecting areas. One of these—the Trinity Gem Field—is less than 20 miles northwest of Lovelock and is reached via a paved road!

There is usually a "Main Street" in most small towns and this is where our field trip begins. In the center of Lovelock turn west on Main Street and go one block. The street ends at the County Courthouse Square. (Incidentally, there is a fine, shaded picnic area on the courthouse grounds.) Jog left on Dartmouth a few yards then turn right on Western Avenue which runs between the courthouse and a Safeway store.

Western Avenue heads straight for the Trinity Mountains and in 2.6 miles the paving turns right and curves around Lone Mountain. Then, after a sharp left turn, it heads for the hills. The next nine miles climb a gentle grade into the mountains.

The paving turns west at the junction of the Seven Troughs-Sulphur Road (duly marked on the right) and continues through the lava-capped peaks. From time to time, you may encounter heavy ore-laden trucks roaring down the road. They will be hauling from several diatomaceous earth quarries of the Eagle-Pitcher Mining Company. Mine property is clearly posted "No Trespassing."

Numerous beds of diatomite occur throughout the Trinity Range and some of them have been mined intermittently since the 1900s. The large Eagle-Pitcher operation began in 1958 and reportedly shipped 2000 carloads annually. There are hundreds of uses for diatomite and product specifications are extremely exacting and complicated. Eagle-Pitcher has been strip-mining filter-grade diatomite from deposits containing relatively minor contamination. The ore was processed in their modern plant at Colado Siding, 25

miles north of Lovelock.

Diatomite is a siliceous sedimentary rock consisting mainly of the fossilized remains of diatoms, a form of micro-cellular organisms. Many sedimentary rocks contain diatom remains but the term "diatomite" is restricted to material of quality and purity suitable for commercial uses. Pure diatomite is composed of opaline and hydrous silica and most deposits contain a high amount of free water.

The diatomaceous beds in this region were deposited in a large, fresh-water basin during the late Tertiary Period before the present mountains were formed. These organisms have the ability to extract silica from the water in which they live and biologically precipitate it to form their shells. Such skeletal accumulations, formed at the bottom of lakes and seas, range in thickness from a few feet to as much as 8000 feet or more.

Large diatomite deposits are usually associated with volcanic formations. Most geologists believe that some source of soluble silica is necessary over long periods of time in order to form beds of significant thickness. If you are interested in examining diatomite, stop at the quarry at the end of the road. At the time of our visit it was not being used nor was it posted.

The rock collecting area is 7.4 miles west of the Seven Troughs-Sulphur Road at the base of a sharp-topped, lava-capped peak—at a point where the road turns abruptly south. On the right, a sizeable pull-out area provides a good campsite. See map for detailed mileages. There was a fire ring and a refuse can when we camped here. No water or wood is available.

There are two collecting areas—one on each side of the road. North of the campsite a two-track road will be seen leading up across a saddle. Small specimens of petrified woods will be found along the slopes from this point to the paved road. It is of light color—white, beige, tan and brown with some centers of deep brown and others almost white. The most sought-after limb sections have a clear, chalcedony heart with outer rings of yellow, red or golden brown. The annular rings of the wood show very clearly. All the specimens we have collected are of small size—one to three inches in length and girth. They are

of good quality and take a fine polish. However, they are not too plentiful. Agate and jasper also occur in this area and several diggings will be seen.

A short distance south of the campground, across the paved road, a 4WD trail leads down into the canyon. It is passable for pickups in dry weather. In less than a tenth of a mile you will see several excavations in an opalite deposit on the south. Digging is required to obtain the best materials which occurs in soft, pastel shades of pink, chartreuse, beige, red and purple.

Agate will be found eroding from two small hills on the north side of the 4WD trail — a short distance east of the opalite. It is good material for the most part, with brilliantly-colored patterns. Plume, moss, dedritis, picture and banded are a few of the varieties to be collected. A clear chalcedony with inclusions of red and yellow jaspers also is found here. It cuts into beautiful cabochons. There is, of course, considerable "leaverite."

Petrified wood has been reportedly found over a considerable area in this locale. Trees grew along the shores of ancient lakes and were probably covered with ash when extensive volcanism occurred. Through eons of time they were petrified through infiltration and then were uplifted during the building of the Trinity Range.

Diatomite is particularly susceptible to diagenetic changes caused by leaching and redeposition as opal, chert and porcelainous silica. This is quite possibly the origin of the opalite, agate and jasper deposits.

Regardless of your interests, you will have an exceptionally rewarding vacation in Lovelock, if it is planned to coincide with their Frontier Days Celebration. You will find yourself stepping back in time to the days of pioneers and prospectors. In spirit, you will be joining the stalwart breed of men and women who found the courage to journey through an almost unknown land to open the west. Let's all head for the Humboldt Valley and Lovelock's Frontier Days.

"See yuh thar. Pardner!"

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WATERLO

by
Dan McCarthy

WITH METAL detectors buzzing, treasure seekers comb the Southwest in growing numbers amid yesteryear's off-road communities. Brass buttons surface around abandoned military posts. An old pick-ax is unearthed in soil at a desolate, abandoned mine. Square nails are pocketed with mementoes recovered in a long-quieted village.

But nobody needs a detector to discover some of the most fascinating, historic metal now a celebrated part of America's desert in Arizona.

Out Lake Havasu City way, where legendary London Bridge spans a mile-long Colorado River channel instead of the River Thames, some Old World treasured metal is found. It is part of a tourist attraction that cost \$2,460,000 to buy from the City of London (plus another fantastic bundle of shipping and reconstruction money).

The entire project cost \$8,400,000 to relocate and rebuild on American soil the 10,000 tons of Aberdeen and Haytor granite quarried in Scotland.

Left: This artistic, vintage lamppost, is one of 14 spaced across famed London Bridge at Lake Havasu City. Opposite page: This Old World treasure, London Bridge, blends in well with desert mountains for a backdrop.

A bit of Britain basks in Arizona sunshine, with Lake Havasu in the distance.

Fourteen old-fashioned green lamp-posts, spaced along the 1,005-foot span, once were shaped into cannons for warfare. And no less a military expert than Napoleon Bonaparte himself led French troops against England to fire those cannons during the 1815 battle at Waterloo.

Sixteen years after Napoleon's Waterloo, William IV and Queen Adelaide invited 1,500 guests to dine with them during the 1831 dedication ceremonies of the new bridge. Their evening was illuminated by artistic lampposts originally cast into weapons of war.

London Bridge's fame is worldwide. Shakespeare had crossed the predecessor of the Arizona bridge often to reach Globe Theatre. And there's that nursery rhyme about it falling down. Actually, the bridge

was settling into the Thames one inch every eight years. That's one of the reasons why London officials put it on the auction block and sifted through 100 worldwide bids before the span came to the United States.

Stand at the northeast end of the bridge while taped chimes of Big Ben stroke the hours. Across the colorful flowerbeds and manicured grass to the parking lots, pick-up campers and recreational vehicles of many styles are braked. Out come people who have been wandering about the southwest, stopping to probe gem stone sites, adventurers who have meandered among ruins of ghost towns, would-be prospectors pausing at an old mine site. Perhaps, just maybe, there's still that bonanza vein of ore to be discovered.

By the thousands visitors are drawn to the bridge. During the first year after its elegant, very-British dedication on October 10, 1971, some 750,000 visitors walked the famed span, or drove across it at slow speeds.

Just at bridgeside is the \$1,600,000 English Village. Take time out for fish and chips amid Ye Olde Merrie England atmosphere beneath one of the arches.

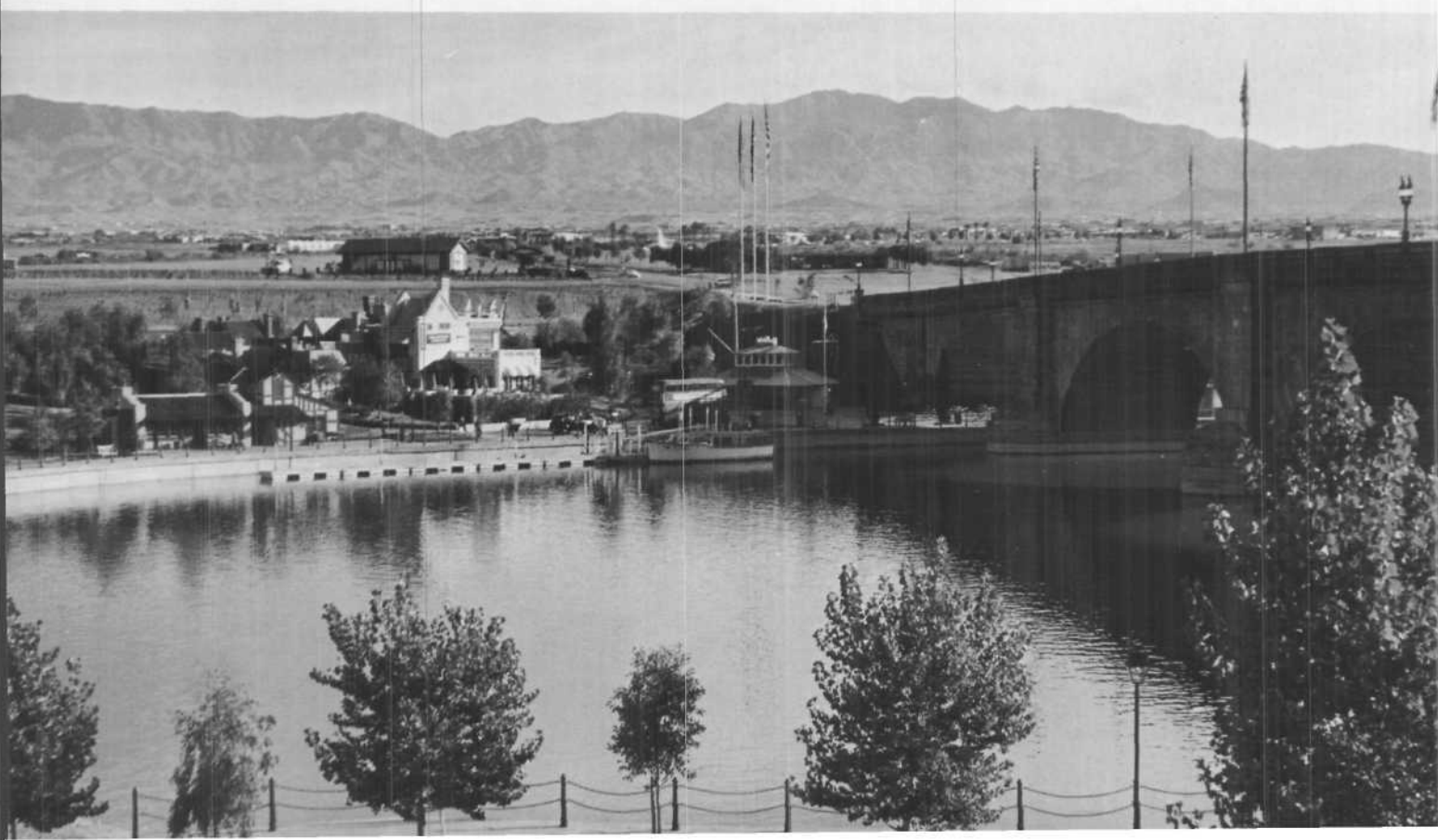
To the northeast are the distant Mohave Mountains where many a prospector labored for years looking for, and sometimes finding, the "gold in them, thar hills."

Can't you just imagine, if the clock could be turned back to those pioneering, prospecting days, what one of those optimistic old sourdoughs would have said or done, had he come around a draw to find London Bridge right smack out there on the desert?

He might have murmured aloud that at long last the sun was getting to him and he was glory-bound to eternity. Why, they even rolled out that strange old bridge to carry him across to his reward.

"Git up, there, you old flea-ridden desert canary! Trot over there and let's see what that thing's all about. Git up, now! Git!" □

O ON THE DESERT



The Mystery Ruins of Holcomb Creek

NOT TOO many years ago, in the San Bernardino Mountains of California, a prospector was working along rugged Holcomb Creek in quest of his fortune, a dream that had not yet been realized.

Panning some gravel from the creek bottom, an occupation which until that day had been no more than a repetitious, mechanical and fruitless pastime, he discovered there was more than the usual amount of color in the bottom.

The discovery site, a few yards downstream from a deep, dark, water-eroded hole in the canyon was worth checking further. Right now it was time to rest and contemplate possibilities of sudden wealth.

Propped against the trunk of a small tree he felt the weariness slowly seep out of his bones and his tired muscles gradually relax.

Like all prospectors before him, only his body rested, his eyes continued to

by George Pflieger

scan the gravel in the creek, the sand, rocks and hillside.

High on the side of the mountain something stood out, which was not consistent with the natural formation of things. It seemed to be a man-made wall and his curiosity, which could only be satisfied by a closer look, quickly won the battle and he dragged himself to his feet.

Climbing the forty-five degree slope to the construction took only a few minutes and he was rewarded for his labors when he mounted the six-foot high parapet. Following the wall a short distance to some huge boulders, he discovered a small natural defensive position, which had been improved by man, facing the creek below. Digging around inside the main shelter, he wondered at the mystery of who put the place together and when, until his discovery a few Spanish coins. He figured he had discovered some sort of old Spanish fort.

After spreading the story of his discovery the prospector seems to have disappeared. He described the place as being located three miles west of Hanna Flats. The alleged facts of this story have since grown to include Indian attacks and treasure in the form of gold bullion, which the Spaniards were unable to carry and hurriedly concealed before fleeing.

The legend of a Spanish fort and its gold mine has fascinated treasure hunters and prospectors for decades and some have journeyed down Holcomb Creek from Hanna Flats. In all cases they just walked right past without realizing it might be so close at hand, assuming this to be the fortress described above.

Not so for prospectors Cliff Overby, Bob Schoose, and Jake McCullough of Big Bear Lake, Calif., they are a trio of sharp-eyed miners. While prospecting the area they spotted these same walls and to them, being untrained in archeology, it appeared to be something the Indians built. They continued with their prospecting chores without giving it any more thought, but kept it in the back of their minds.

About a month later the same rugged mountaineers were visitors at the U. S. Forest Service Station a few miles east of Fawnskin on the north shore of the lake, when several young men riding in a jeep came and asked the rangers on duty if they knew of some crumbling stone
July, 1973

Overby in white shirt, Schoose kneeling, and McCollogh on the walkway which may have been built by Spaniards. The boulder behind men forms roof of fort.



walls in the vicinity of Holcomb Creek. The men in the jeep went on to describe the walls and called them the "Lost Spanish Fort."

The three prospectors could scarcely contain themselves when their discovery was described perfectly by the fort hunters. However, calm was maintained while they posed a few questions of their own and were told research had turned up information that the Spaniards mined gold there long ago and had constructed a prospective stronghold to ensure their safety. Severe Indian attacks had eventually caused them to suddenly evacuate the area, abandoning the gold they had mined and melted into bars.

Knowing I was a prospector, treasure hunter and writer, the discoverers of the old ruins presented the full story and told of the help they needed. They questioned how and where to look for the treasure, could the author use his metal detector to find the golden goodies and also, I was to write their story.

Happy to accept the invitation, a rendezvous was agreed upon and I followed the prospectors to their mining camp (they are actually involved in gold mining) where we loaded our equipment aboard a pick-up truck.

Some had to ride in the bed of the truck which proved to be very uncomfortable. I, as the honored guest, rode in the

A solid section of the path which was built so long ago.



co-pilots seat with the camera, metal detector and cold beer, which was refreshing and also helped smooth out some of the roughest spots in the road through the forest which was extremely primitive and poorly maintained, being negotiable only by jeeps and the amazing vehicle in which we rode.

Stopping on a curve high above the creek we dismounted and slid, fell, stumbled and rolled down the south slope to the bottom, a distance of about one hundred yards.

The construction was pointed out and we clawed up the north side of the canyon to the site. The wall visible from below proved to be a built-up catwalk running about two hundred feet in opposite directions from a central-like structure, the interior of which measured approximately twenty feet long and six feet wide, being "L" shaped with a solid stone roof which consisted of a single boulder resting on three others. It can be assumed that the above mentioned catwalks were used by overseer-guards to assure that the Indian slaves working the placer mine below would be more inclined to work than escape.

This enslavement, which was the customary labor practice of the early Span-

iard, was irritating to the friends and relatives of those enslaved and usually resulted in the attacks that led to their being driven from the area.

Tuning in the new metal detector took some doing since there was no time to practice with it previously and even after we did familiarize ourselves with its temperamental moods, nothing containing metal could be located. This is understandable since in the days when the alleged Spanish fort was operational, anything made of metal was essential to the survival and comfort of its owner. Who would be so careless as to lose a knife, buckle, sword, pistol, cup, gun, fork, etc., when the nearest source of replacement might be over 200 miles away or many days travel and usually purchased at an extremely high price?

The walled enclosure itself now filled with soil that has washed in through the back entrance covers any possible artifacts to a depth of several hundred feet making electronic detection of very small objects like coins impossible.

The placer site below shows no sign of ever having been worked, for during heavy rains and the spring thaw the water has to squeeze through the narrows at this point, causing it to move at a deadly

speed, obliterating any indication of human activity.

The deep part of the creek at the base of the narrow falls looked like a logical hiding place for any gold ditched by the Spaniards. It is about ten feet deep under the falls and very dark, a perfect place for someone to throw gold bars and other treasures when being harassed by irate aborigines with no time to waste on digging holes. A thorough search of the area failed to turn up artifacts or even treasure signs which the Spaniards usually left when forced to abandon a rich location.

The day was coming to a close and after a tortuous climb back up to the truck affectionately dubbed "The Moff," we loaded our gear and bounced back to camp, three miles up the creek. Upon arrival, it was discovered, the three prospectors wives were ready with a charcoal fire and a stack of thick steaks which were immediately set out to broil.

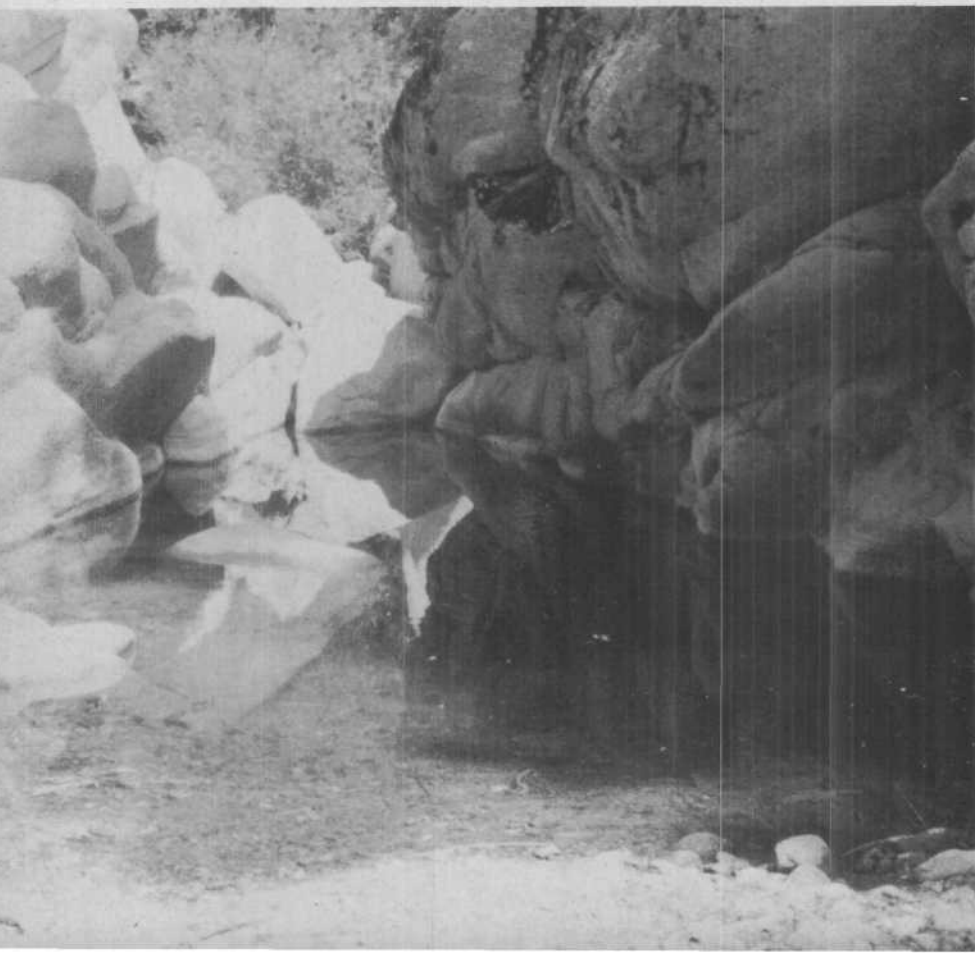
It was two weeks before we could make another concentrated effort to discover the gold cache or whatever might have been left behind by the long departed inhabitants. However, the miners did find a few hours of free time to dig around in the stone shelter and came up with a small gold nugget, definite proof of the purpose of the fortification.

We all got together as planned in the middle of September and made another expedition to the diggings, this time taking along both of my detectors.

As before, the machines failed to turn up any metal objects, not even tin cans. However, we did notice an extension of the catwalks along a short distance upstream, but on the south side of the creek heading in an easterly direction. The built-up path extended for a distance of about five hundred feet and it overlooked the wide gravel beds along the creek.

Here was evidence of a camp having been utilized for years. Two old cedar trees about five feet in diameter were used for a fireplace and a hole large enough to crawl through was burned into the base of one.

This new find extended the mining



*This black pool
is thought to be
a hiding place for gold
by early-day Spaniards.*

area to a length of approximately one-half mile. It seems someone had spent considerable time in the canyon, maybe as long as two hundred years ago. They went to a lot of trouble building the catwalks along the creek. Was the purpose to better control Indian serfs panning out the yellow metal? Only the discovery of artifacts could prove this theory.

The mining operation which was soon found to have extended almost three miles along the creek toward Hanna Flats right into the camp area of our three friends had to be a lucrative one to have drawn the fearless men of old into such hostile territory.

There has to be lots of gold laying on bedrock along Holcomb Creek since it originates in Holcomb Valley, scene of the recovery of many millions of dollars of this precious metal in the 1860s and '70s.

The prospectors, Cliff, Bob and Jake have purchased a four-inch dredge to use on the site, hoping to find their fortune in the murky depths of the creek. They have secured the property with a twenty-acre placer mining claim and it includes the fortress on the hillside. It is hoped that this mine will prove to be as good as it may have been when worked by the original miners. These three men will find the gold if it is there.

To reach the site you first go to the town of Fawnskin on the north shore of Big Bear Lake and turn north on the road to Hanna Flats, where you then head west on the road along Holcomb Creek. On the left you pass a sand and gravel pit and on the right a house trailer that has been destroyed by vandals. It is possible to drive a car about three-quarters of a mile beyond this point, from there on a four-wheel-drive vehicle is necessary.

About two miles further along this jeep trail you will arrive at a place where the road is several hundred feet above Holcomb Creek, which is now on the right and far below. Do not make the hard left turn where the road dives steeply down into the canyon but pull off to the right and stop. Here you descend to Holcomb Creek and the walls and fortification which can only be "The Lost Spanish Fort of Holcomb Creek."

Explore the area carefully and maybe you can find evidence which will prove that the Spaniards of old did in fact build the fort and mine gold. □

July, 1973



Above: The three prospectors walk along pathway toward fort, followed by man's best friend. Below: A front view of rock fort, showing partially crumbled wall.



Mono's Volcanic Islands

by Betty Shannon

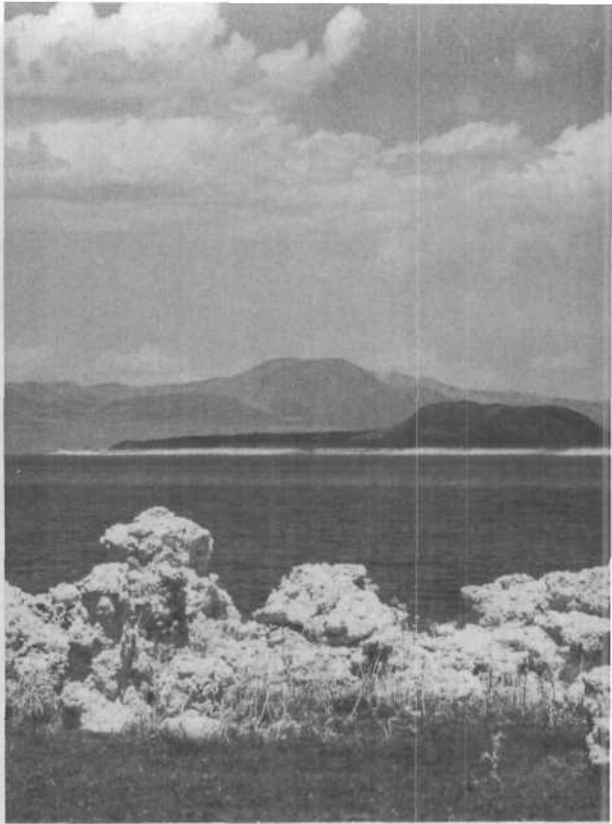
TWO OF California's most intriguing parcels of land are viewed by thousands of motorists daily, yet few have ever left their footprints there. Although located only five miles from U. S. 395 as, in this case, the sea gull flies, Mono Lake's twin volcanic islands remain remote and nearly inaccessible, truly islands in time, little disturbed by man.

Mono's diverse twins are a unique study in contrasts. The black island, Negit, is little more than a volcanic creater, a tow-

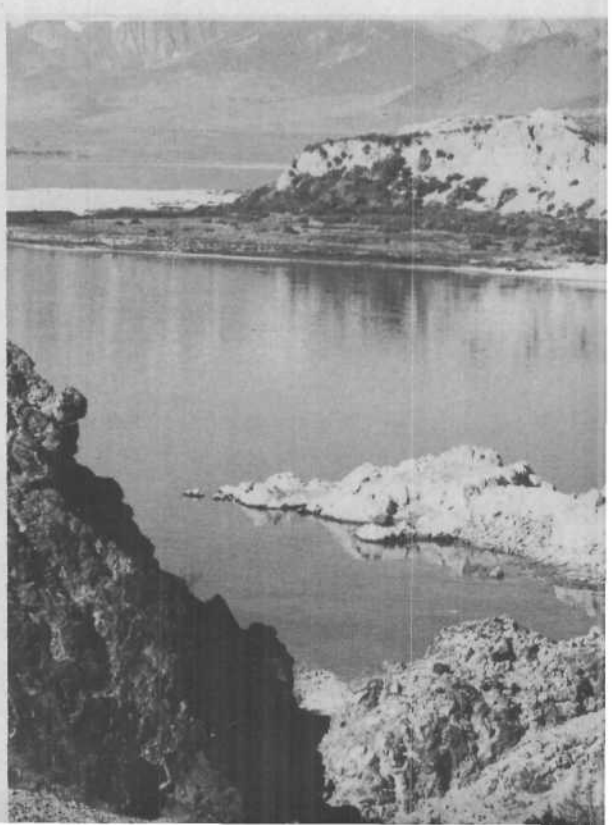
ering mass of scorched, jagged lava boulders. Paoha, the white island, is a stark scenic contradiction to Negit's angular silhouette. It has all the physical characteristics of the legendary, romantic desert isle—a long, low sinuous form cresting along a ridge of white cliffs and broad pumice sand beaches. But Paoha's tranquil landscape caps a not-so-placid interior. Bubbling hot springs and hissing steam vents audibly hint of the turmoil still seething deep underground.

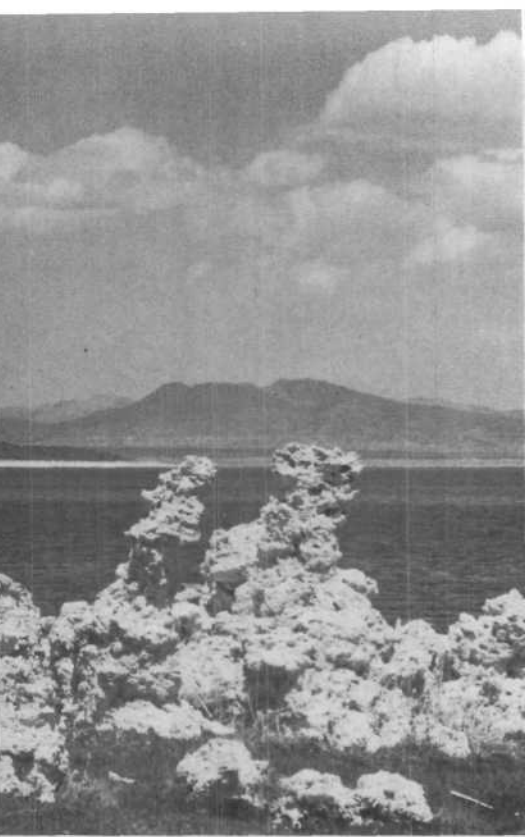
The origin of the islands is explained in a legend told by the Mono Indians. It tells of a once beautiful land ravaged by mountains of fire. For many moons the earth rumbled and trembled, but at last the smoke cleared to reveal a large plain dominated by a snow white mountain. Alongside it was one of the fiery mountains.

The Great Spirit then sent to the white mountain Paoha, the White Angel. From her mountaintop she commanded to all



Above right: Mono Lake's Negit Island, summer nesting site for a large colony of California gulls. Left: a gull chick blends into the landscape of one of Mono's tufa islets. Right: On the lee side of Paoha, Mono's white island.





the mountains around that there would once again be peace throughout the land.

But the small fiery mountain at her side roared in rebellion. Flames belched forth and out of its belly came a warrior cloaked in gleaming black. A fierce battle ensued between the White Angel and Negit, the Dark One. In the end, the Angel triumphed and she banished the vanquished warrior to the dark interior of his mountain.

However, the land was still ruined and



ugly. Many suns passed, during which time the North Wind covered the land with ice and snow. Then the South and West Winds blew gently, creating great canyons and rushing streams. Finally, the Great Spirit replenished the land.

Still the beauty was marred by the jagged black mountain. So Paoha ordered the streams of the mighty mountains to empty their water about her to cover the unsightly Negit. But as the waters lapped higher and higher on the scorched moun-

were created by extensive volcanic activity.

Probably the islands' most famous visitor has been Mark Twain. One blistering summer day, while on a holiday from the mines at Esmeralda (Aurora), the celebrated author and his friend, Calvin Higbie, rowed out to Paoha. They explored its two and one-half mile length, crossing its ash hills several times.

But Mark Twain was not impressed. A few years later, when he recounted their Mono Lake adventures in "Roughing It,"



Holly Shannon looks into an active steam vent, one of several on Paoha.

tain's sides, she relented a little and allowed to its peak to remain free in the sunlight, and she sent to it her white birds of hope and promise.

Although geologists have developed a complex and more scientific explanation, based on extensive studies of the Mono Basin, their theory and the Indian legend do agree on certain basic facts. The lake first appeared during the glacial ages, and many of the prominent geological features of the basin, including the islands,

July, 1973

he complained of Paoha's silence and solitude. Through his jaded eyes, the island's landscape was "dead," "dismal" even "forbidding."

However, he did recall one bright, picturesque spot. It was the island's only tree—a small, graceful pine whose branches were kept perpetually moist by the mist from a nearby steam vent.

It gave me an eerie feeling when, several summers ago during our own explorations of the island, we happened upon

that same pine, the only one on Paoha. Now no longer small, it is a sturdy 30 or 40 feet tall, but its branches were still wrapped in a veil of steam.

In 1881, Paoha served as a temporary refuge for a group of Chinese laborers, thus perhaps averting a bloody battle along Mono's eastern shore.

The Chinese had been employed to lay the tracks for the 32-mile railroad which was to connect Mono Mills, south of Mono Lake, to the mining camp of Bodie, located in the treeless mountains north of the lake. Work was begun at Mono Mills and proceeded northward.

When word reached members of the Miners' Union in Bodie that Chinese labor was being used, an angry delegation set out, on foot, to meet the railroad and protest the employment of Chinese. By this time the rails had been laid to the lake's eastern shore and the Chinese were camped nearby. But the superintendent received word of the impending trouble in time to load all the Chinese and their supplies on the company's steamer, which had previously been used to haul lumber across the lake, and transport them to the safety of Paoha

Island.

They camped there until the union members, finding them gone, had time to cool down and returned to Bodie. The Chinese continued building the railroad until it was within several miles of Bodie. Then they were released and the job was finished by a crew of Bodie's union men.

During the early years of this century, the Mono Basin experienced a minor economic boom. There were indications of oil—black gold—and slumbering Paoha suddenly became a hub of excitement. Lumber was barged from the railroad siding at Warm Springs on the lake's eastern shore. A derrick was erected on the island's southern tip and in 1909 drilling began. However, the project was abandoned a year later. The well had reached a depth of 1500 feet but the only gusher was hot water.

Paoha's silence and solitude, that was so depressing to Mark Twain, has been an attraction to others. For awhile, the Wallace McPherson family lived on the island, homesteading 160 acres on the western side. They built a home with a magnificent view of the Sierra Nevadas, and raised vegetables and Toggenburg

goats. Their house burned in the early 1930s, but the goat barn, with its double row of stalls, still stands.

But the strangest buildings are over the ridge on the eastern side of the island. Nestled against the hill, now almost hidden by the encroaching bitterbrush, are three dome-shaped, concrete cabins. They front on a broad, white sand beach, which curves around into a crescent shape creating a natural harbor, for this is the lee side of the island where the wind usually blows down off the snowy peaks of the Sierras.

This was to have been a sanatorium, the dream of a doctor from Southern California. The location seems ideal, remote and quiet. Nearby are several mineral springs where you can have your choice of hot or cold water. But we were told the project was abandoned before it really began. In the jungle of bitterbrush we found the rusted skeleton of a doctor's examining table. In one of the cabins was a doctor's leather bag, twisted and shrunk from its years of exposure to the dry desert air.

Some of the scenes for the Hollywood swashbuckler, "Fair Winds to Java," were shot at Mono Lake. The filming crew set up their headquarters at Yates Harbor on Negit Island.

The script called for an erupting volcano, so a plaster model was built on one of the nearby, small tufa islands. Fueled by gallon-size jars of gasoline, it looked, throughout the Mono Basin, like the Dark One had finally escaped his millennial imprisonment.

It has been more than twenty years since the movie-makers have packed their cameras and returned to Hollywood, but the volcano and several other fragile props are still standing.

Until now man's impact on the islands has been temporary, a transitory fling and he was gone again. It has remained the domain of the White Angel's birds, the California gulls and other shore birds.

During the nesting season, which begins in June and extends through July, Negit and several nearby islets literally become one vast gull factory. The slightest depression, when linked with a few feathers and dried weeds, satisfies a gull's nursery requirements, so almost every available spot of bare ground is utilized. Two or three speckled eggs are laid in each nest. After hatching, the fluffy gull chicks

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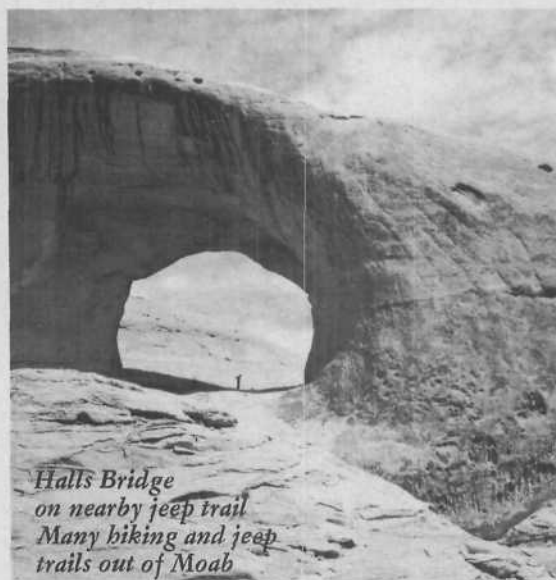
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become cave dwellers among the many crevices and under ledges of lava boulders and tufa formations.

Throughout the summer, gulls, in various stages of development, monopolize the Mono landscape. But in September, the entire colony leaves its island homes and wings westward to the coast.

Because of Negit's importance as a nesting site for the gulls, the island was recently designated a natural area by the Bureau of Land Management. But just how long Negit will remain a sanctuary where the gulls may nest undisturbed is seriously questioned.

During the past two decades, the lake's level has dropped drastically. The insatiable thirst of the City of Los Angeles has caused most of the shrinkage. Water from several mountain streams that once poured into the lake is now diverted to the Los Angeles aqueduct. A recent survey concluded that in perhaps as few as three or four years the receding waters will create a land bridge between Negit and the shore, thus opening this once wild island to all predators, man and animal.

Caspian terns, killdeer, grebes, and phalaropes are also attracted to Mono's

marine environment. A small colony of avocets stakes its territorial claim to one of Paoha's secluded beaches, far from the raucous cries of the gulls, while rock wrens and swallows take advantage of ready-made homesites within the islands' abrupt cliffs of lava and tufa. However, if more water is not released into the lake, eventually all of Mono's birds will face a precarious future.

The outboard motor has replaced oars, but otherwise it is not much easier to get to the islands now than it was in Mark Twain's day. The receding lake has left the Mono Marina's launching ramp high and dry, so that facility is now closed. There are no boat rentals at Mono Lake, but a small boat may be launched at just about any place where it can be carried to the water.

However, a word of caution. Winds can suddenly whip a mirror surface into a foaming froth. Throughout the years, Mono's alkaline waters have capsized several large boats, sending a number of victims to its depths.

In the summer and fall, the lake is most likely to be calm during the morning hours. There are two good harbors

on the lee side of Paoha, one at the southern tip, the other toward the northern end of the island. If you are caught out in the middle when the wind begins, it's best to wait it out on Paoha. The wind usually stops just as suddenly as it began, and by late afternoon Mono is once again serene and calm, her twin islands aglow in the last golden rays of sunlight. □



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UTAH'S STERNWHEEL RIVERBOAT

by F. A. Barnes

*Captain Tex McClatchy
uses the giant ship's wheel
in the pilot house to
steer the CANYON KING
on its maiden voyage.*

PADDLEWHEEL RIVERBOATS are a part of American tradition. With the advent of steam engines, these hard working but glamorous craft evolved rapidly in design, capacity and number until they carried a large proportion of America's freight and passengers along its coastal waters and vast inland waterways. A few even plied the open seas, although carry-

ing enough fuel for such long voyages was a problem.

The story of America's riverboats has been told in book, song and poem, but this story began to end with the completion of the vast railroad network that has served this nation since the late 1800s. Rail transportation was both cheaper and faster, and thus seemed to be dictating the final chapter in the romantic and adventurous tales of the paddlewheel boat.

Strangely, however, these powerful, efficient workhorse craft, did not disappear entirely from the American scene. A few continued to ply western waters for several decades into the nineteen hundreds. Others continued to haul passengers and freight on major midwest rivers. Even now a big paddlewheel workboat does daily duty for the U. S. Coast Guard in Puget Sound.

But the few craft still in operation have had difficulty in meeting stringent modern safety standards and regulations. Exceptional and expensive measures have had to be taken to keep alive some of the older craft such as the Delta Queen. Thus, for the most part, the very few paddlewheel boats in operation today are either drastically rebuilt old-timers, boats newly built for limited or captive use in movies and vacationlands, or powerboat hulls clumsily converted to paddlewheel power for tourist sightseeing ventures. Within the last several decades, very few paddlewheel boats have been designed and built as such, and fewer still to modern safety standards.

Still, paddlewheel boats can do jobs that more modern craft cannot. The Canyon King sternwheel riverboat, operating



*Continued on Page 28
Desert Magazine*



Negotiating Tanglefoot curve.

Photo by David Ogle.

All other photos by

Tom Brown.

Narrow Gauge to Yesterday

by Enid C. Howard

Highlight your summer vacation with a trip on a beautifully scenic narrow gauge railway line. Pass through magnificent gorges, lunch at 10,000 feet. Bring home some great photos and a bit of nostalgia.

THERE ARE thousands of people living in our country today who have never traveled on a train! Never heard the click-clickety clack of steel wheels on rails, or heard that whistle blow for a road crossing far out on the prairie, or watched a hundred-car freight train snake its way down a mountain side.

But the age of nostalgia is with us and memorabilia of the 1800's is fashionable. Even such a weighty object as a 187,250-pound narrow-gauge steam locomotive is a subject of awe and curiosity for just about anyone and particularly for Narrow-Gauge Railroad Club members. As much as they would like to acquire their own private collections, such large items of yesterday are a little difficult to handle.

Scenic Railways Inc. has solved the problem for clubs and everyone else by operating narrow-gauge systems as recreational and sightseeing trips, and the demand for tickets exceeds the supply. The narrow-gauge lines are ideal for this pur-

pose, so says Robert Keller, President, of Scenic Railways Inc. He maintains that the external combustion processes, such as those used in steam boilers and gas turbines, produce an exhaust which is remarkably free of pollutants if the fuel-to-air ratio is correct. Robert Keller, Ph. D., knows whereof he speaks, his special field is mechanical engineering design.

How does a train stay on its tracks? The answer is quoted from Bob Keller's



Desert Magazine



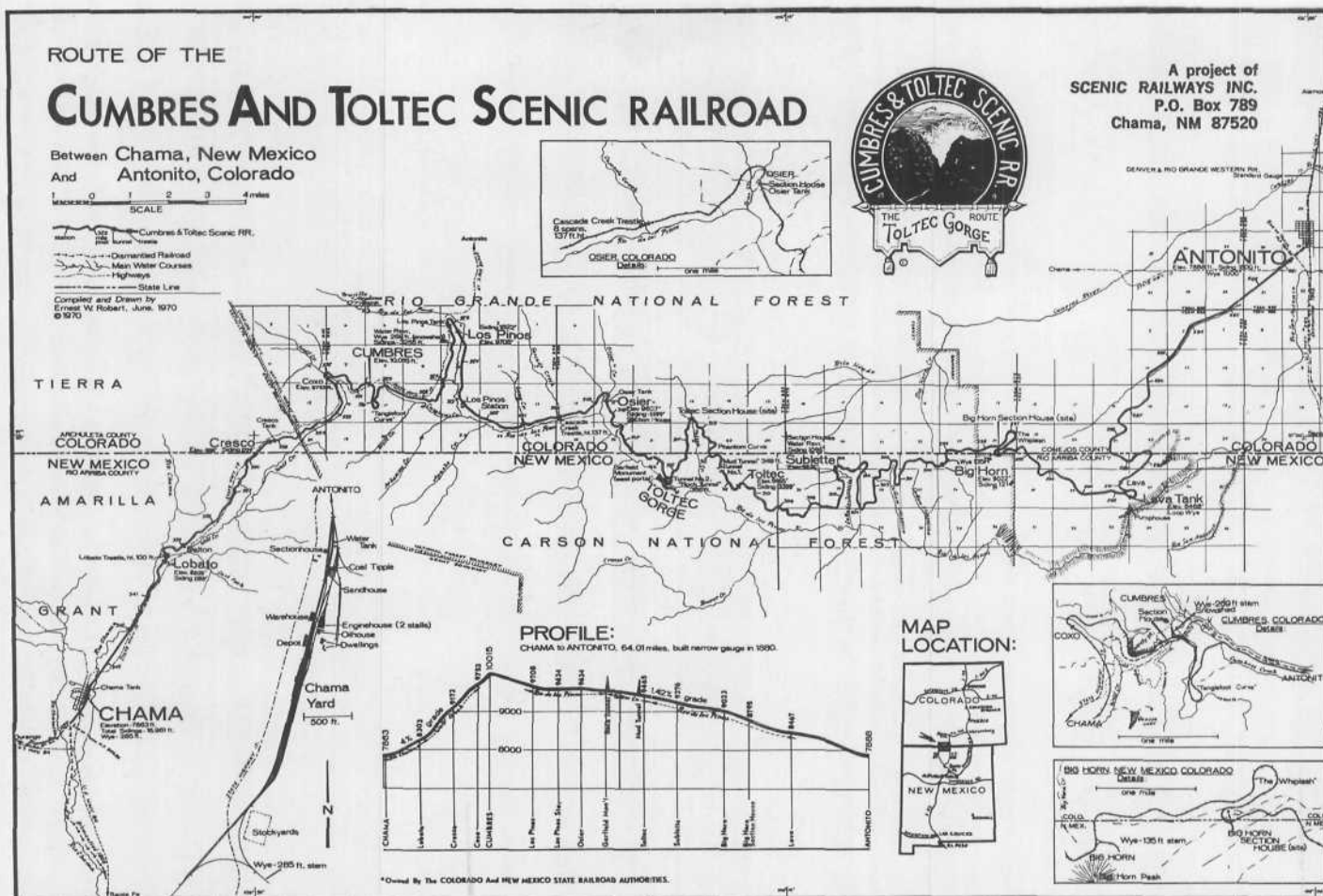
report, "Transportation for Recreation Areas and Sensitive Environments," — A Review of Alternatives to the Private Automobile, published by Scenic Railways Inc.

"Although well known when railway technology was new and expanding the means by which railway wheelsets follow the track is not common knowledge today. The flanges on railway wheels do have an important role, but they are not the July, 1973

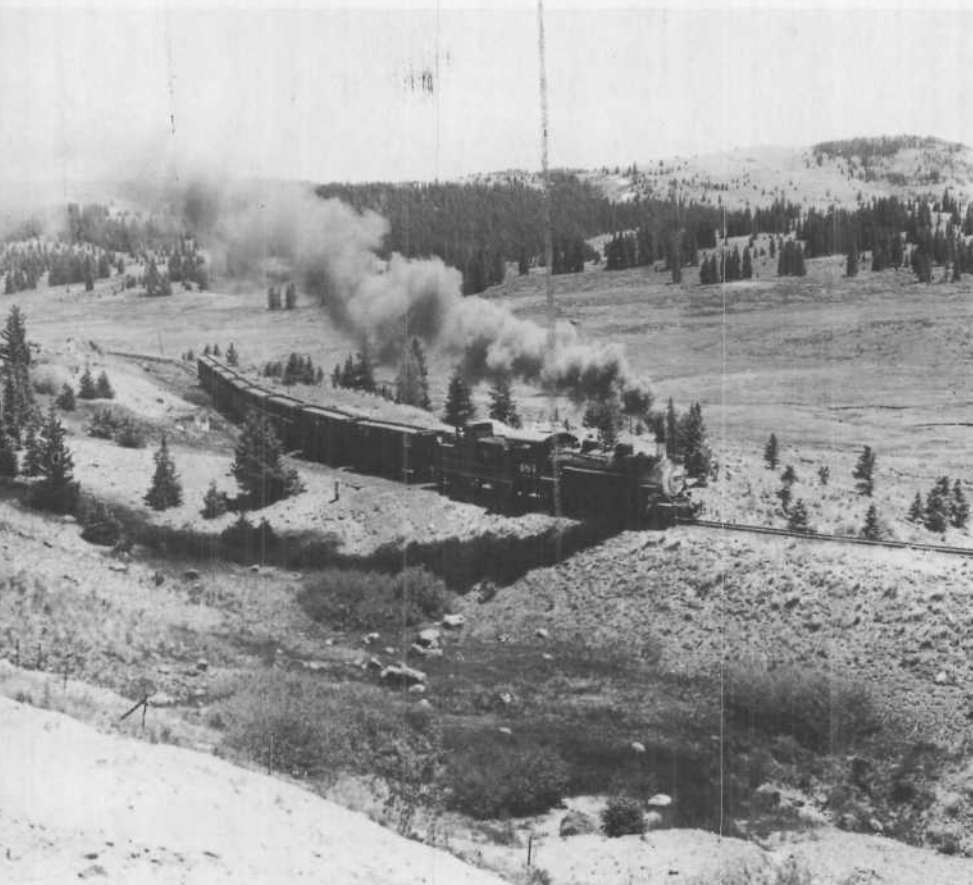
prime means of guidance. Primarily, guidance is accomplished by forming each wheel with a slight taper, the largest diameter being inboard. On curves, where the outside wheel must travel further than the inside wheel (while each makes exactly the same number of revolutions due to its rigid connection with the axle), the wheelset moves a small distance outward on the curve. Thus the inside wheel runs on a reduced diameter. This auto-

matically compensates for the effect of the curve and allows the wheelset to negotiate it without flange contact."

One of Scenic Railways systems, The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad has as colorful a history as any wild west story ever written. The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad completed the narrow-gauge tracks west from Alamosa, Colorado, to Chama, New Mexico Territory, on January 1, 1881, later extended



Below: On the last leg of the westbound climb to Cumbres Pass.



them to Durango and Silverton, Colorado.

Millions of dollars worth of ore, coal, oil, timber, and livestock were hauled up the 14 miles of 4% grade from Chama to Cumbres Pass at 10,015 feet elevation, then down the 1.42% drop to Antonito, Colorado, thence to Alamosa and eastern markets. It was possible then, to travel from Denver through to Silverton in thirty-one gruelling hours on what railroad officials called the "San Juan Express," because its run ended at the San Juan Mountains which dominated the country and gave up rich silver ore to be shipped east.

The transition from work horse railroad to the more glamorous role of recreational transportation was not made without anguish. When the Rio Grande announced on September 18, 1967 that they had filed formal application with the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the narrow-gauge between Alamosa, Colorado, and Farmington, New Mexico, the citizens of both states raised a howl that let the ICC know just how they felt about "their" railroad.

A tug-of-war between the people, the Rio Grande, the ICC, and the two states

dragged out for three years. A group of citizens who formed the "Colorado-New Mexico Citizens Committee to Save the Railroad," explored new and innovative ideas to decide what course of action could save at least part of the scenic narrow-gauge line, but were dealt a low blow when the ICC handed down the opinion that the line, "was obsolete, and a misfit facility and is inadequate to serve the needs of the area."

Americans have ever been famous for their know-how and can-do. "Save the Narrow-Gauge" echoed over the land, and the crusade brought history buffs and railroad fans to join the fight. Newspapers kept tally on gains and losses. Finally, the problem went before both state legislatures and the miracle was struck. Both states voted to jointly purchase the 64 miles of track between Chama and Antonito.

On July 16, 1970 the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad received \$547,120 from two states, who were willy-nilly in the railroad business, lock, stock, and nine steam locomotives, with sundry antique rolling equipment, repair shops, water tanks and buildings on right-of-ways. A neat package all wrapped up in antiquity!

Rio Grande efficiency experts solemnly predicted it would take three years and a million dollars to put the railroad into operational status. Not so—the first official tourist run left Chama, N. M., June 26, 1971, nine months after the purchase! By the end of the season in October, 9000 happy travelers had experienced the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad, or "The Track of the Cats," as the people of New Mexico and Colorado have affectionately named "Their" railroad.

And who should have the better right to affix an endearing name to the Narrow-Gauge?

When the two states took title to the line, volunteers from every corner of the states, and neighboring states, too, converged on the 64 miles of track and "cleaned house."

Weeds were chopped, rotten ties replaced, portions of the roadbed were rebuilt, warped rails replaced. Professional railroad employees, retired and not-retired, worked long hours and week-ends on the locomotives, tenders and shop equipment. Carpenters and plumbers swarmed over the box-cars installing plexiglass win-



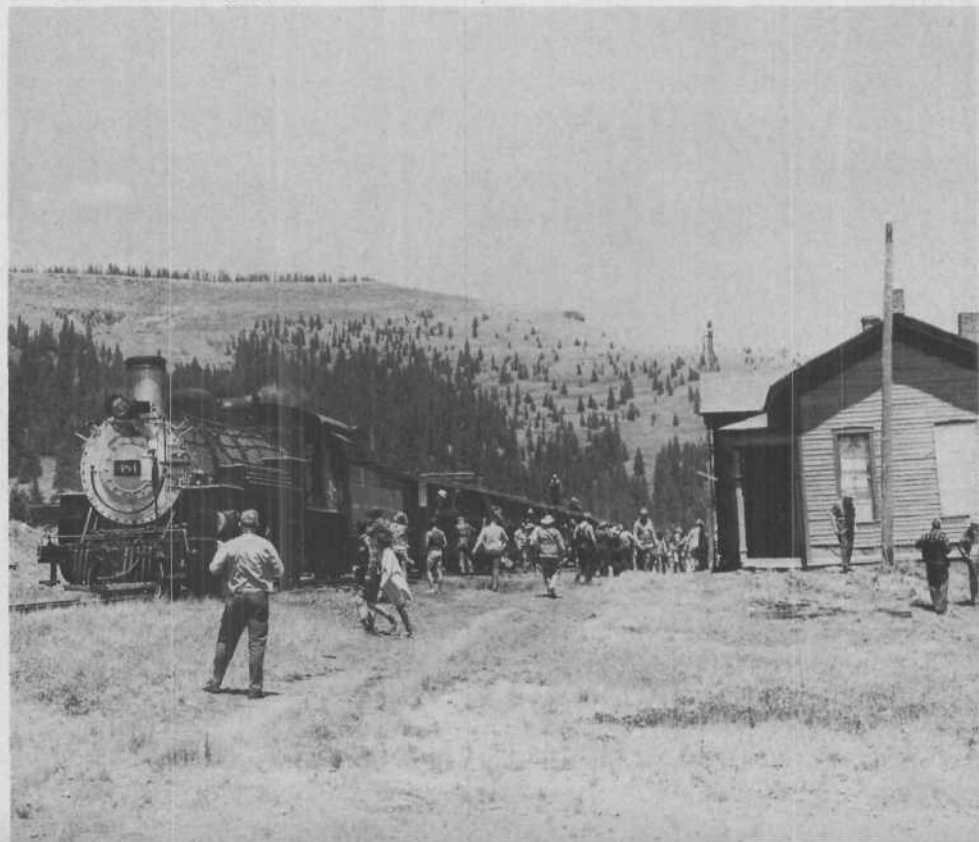
Above: Crossing Cascade Creek trestle near Osier, Colorado. Below: Passenger stop at 10,015-foot Cumbres Pass shows old section house that was used recently in the filming of the movie "Showdown".

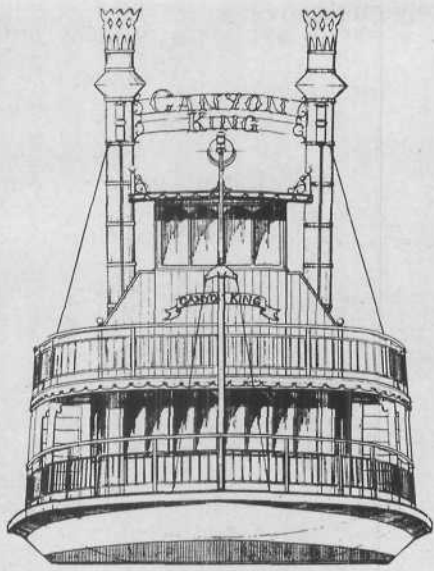
dows and rest rooms, painters did their thing in rich red paint on the outside of the faded old box-cars.

Rejuvenation of "The Track of the Cats" was the personal contribution of hundreds of volunteers, not only of labor, but in hard cash, because they wanted to "get the narrow-gauge on its wheels

again." And they did—the first trial run three months after the purchase on a crisp September morning in 1970, a gala occasion for the workers and well-wishers who gathered at every curve and crossing to cheer Engine 483, which was christened, "Chief Cat," on its way.

Continued on Page 40





RIVERBOAT IN THE MAKING

Continued from Page 22

on the Colorado River out of Moab, Utah, is proof of this.

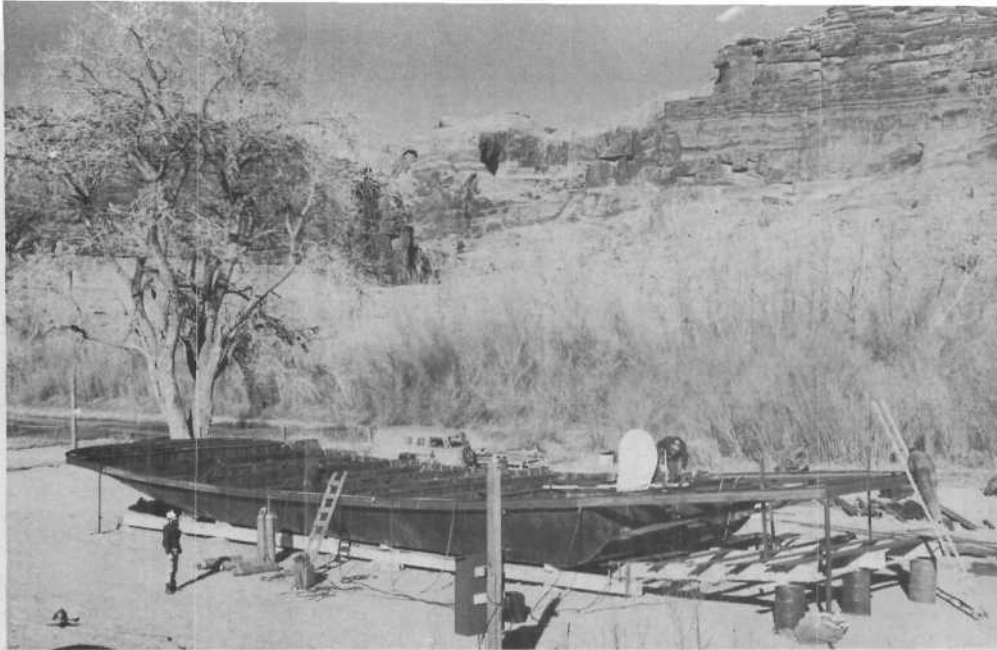
Way back in 1957, "Tex" McClatchy of Moab was dreaming of running commercial boat tours on the highly scenic Colorado River. In those days, powerboating on the Colorado was considered a pastime only for eccentrics. But Tex did more than dream—he studied the stretch of river he wanted to run, and he experimented with various types of boats and propulsion.

He discovered that neither conventional propeller-driver boats, nor ultra-modern jet propulsion were satisfactory on the Colorado. Numerous shallow sandbars made propellers impractical, and the heavy silt content of the water rapidly eroded expensive jet pumps.

Then Tex had another dream. Why not a big, old-fashioned sternwheel riverboat, one designed to haul hundreds of people, to operate in shallow water and to lend an air of last-century nostalgia, yet built to modern safety standards and offering its passengers modern on-board conveniences?

After a flurry of consultations with marine architects and an Alaskan who had built and was operating two such boats already, Tex decided his dream was feasible. He then began turning it into reality.

By January of 1972, everything was organized for the complex task, and construction began on Tex's "dream boat,"



Above: The CANYON KING was constructed beside the Colorado River, just three miles north of Moab, Utah. At this point the hull was complete and work was progressing on the first deck and below-deck installations. **Right:** The CANYON KING's two decks were complete, the framework of the pilot house was in place, and the big marine-diesel engine that powers the craft is being hoisted onto the deck. **Far right:** The CANYON KING was actually pulled down its launch ramp by human-power. Some 800 local citizens participated in this operation by tugging on steel cables run through pulley blocks. When the signal was given, everyone hauled away, and the 40-ton vessel slid down the ramp.

which he later christened Canyon King. Architectural details were worked out, steel by the ton was ordered, west coast shipyards were searched for various items of equipment and a crew of experienced shipbuilders from Alaska was hired to build the basic vessel.

By early April, the basic structure of the Canyon King was complete. Moab workmen then took over, hurrying to ready the boat for the coming travel season.

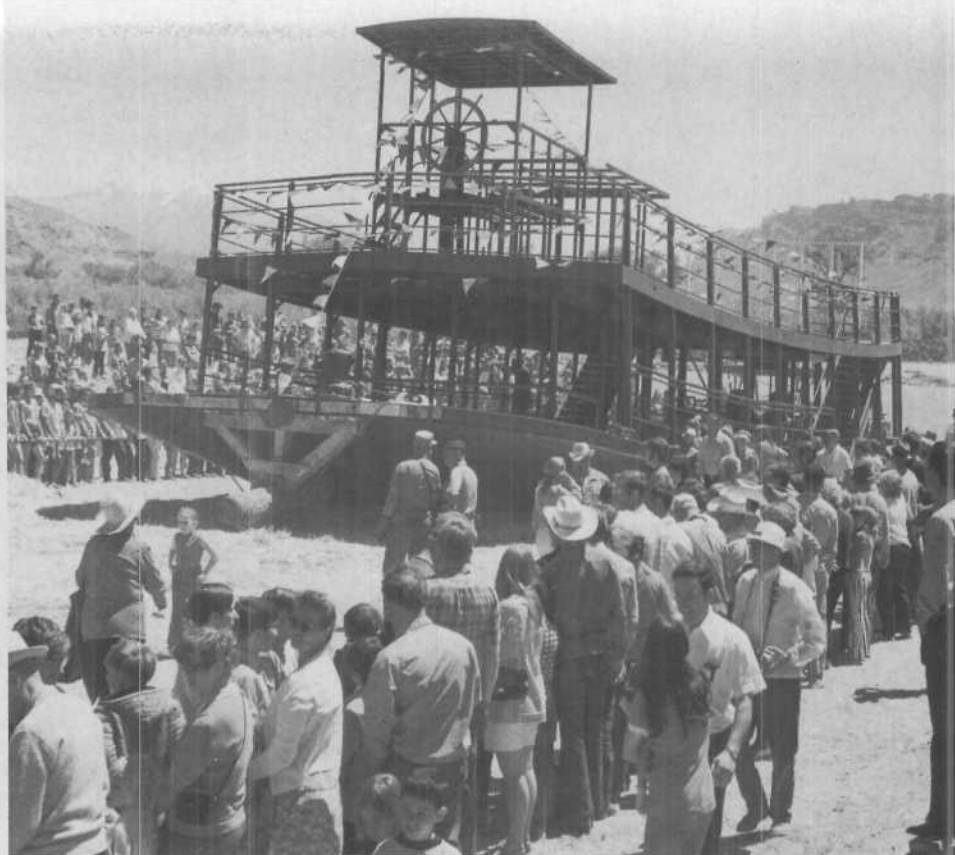
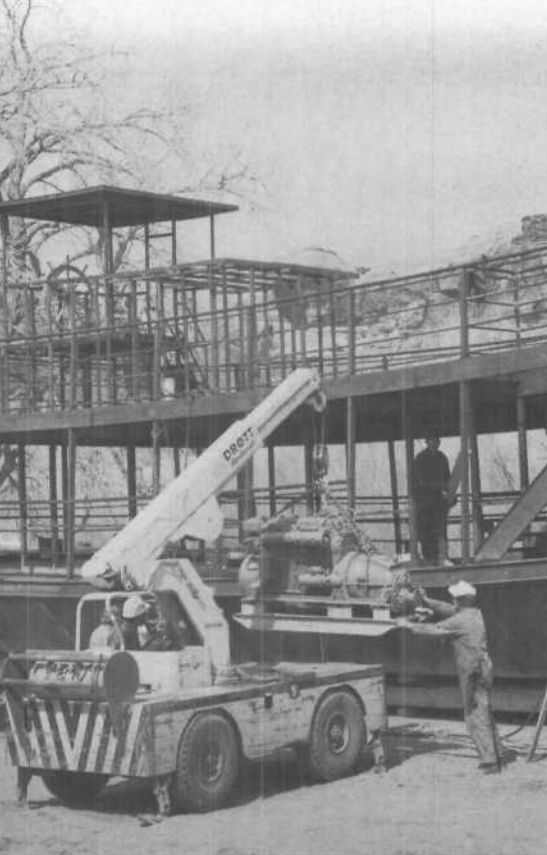
They succeeded. The Canyon King was launched on April 30, 1972, just four

months from the time its "keel" was laid. It was structurally complete and its power system was installed and operational, but many details remained to be completed before the scheduled maiden voyage two weeks later.

The Canyon King is not the first paddlewheeler to ply the Colorado River near Moab, but is the first excursion boat, and the first even approaching its size. The 93-foot boat has a hull 72 by 26 feet and weighs over 40 tons, yet draws less than two feet of water, and with proper handling can cross sandbars still shallower than

Below: A large bulldozer eased the CANYON KING into the river after 800 people on long tow lines had moved it to the water's edge. **Right:** Starting its maiden voyage, a full load, of some 200 tourists and local citizens crowded aboard for the historic trip. Even fully loaded, the big boat only draws two feet of water. Shallow draft is essential to boating on the Colorado River because of numerous sand bars beneath the surface. **Far right:** CANYON KING as it tours the Colorado River gorge. Twice-daily excursions are offered. The daily trips are in the morning and late evening.





that. The fireproof, all-steel boat is powered by a large marine-diesel engine which is connected by a series of gears, drive belts and sprocket chains to the 14-foot, wood-bladed paddlewheel.

The boat's lower deck is glass enclosed and surrounded by a shaded walkway. The upper deck is open for viewing and photographing the towering river-canyon walls, except for a sunshade and the pilot house. Passengers enjoy the luxury of music, a snackbar and sometimes entertainment from an old-fashioned player piano.

Under way, the Canyon King can carry

150 passengers, but for dockside parties, conventions, weddings, family reunions, business meetings and other charter uses, there is room for 200 people aboard.

During the long travel season that southeastern Utah enjoys, from May through October, the Canyon King plies the picturesque Colorado River gorge downstream from Moab every day, carrying passengers through majestic redrock scenery unmatched anywhere, on waters that are just not suited to boats of more modern design.

And to such trips, the big boat itself

adds a taste of the romance and drama of yesteryear, as it churns through the water with its powerful, bright-orange paddlewheel flashing in the sun, and its tall, black stacks silhouetted against the deep blue sky. Traditionally, boats are "female," with names to match, but after a trip aboard this proud craft you cannot help but agree with Cap'n Tex when he says:

"As I watched this boat grow from a pile of steel, I just knew it was going to be the best, so it had to be called the "Canyon King!"



IN THE great and vast deserts of the Southwest, there dwells a certain beady-eyed little character known locally as the desert shrew, and among biologists as *Notiosorex crawfordi* (notio-southern, sorex-shrew, and crawfordi after the fellow who collected the first example of his kind).

Now although Notio measures less than 4 inches from nose tip to tail end, and even with an ample dinner aboard tips the scales at scarcely more than one stick of gum, he's an established member of the desert community, and a first class puzzle to science, as well.

Clad as he is in ashy grey tones, and with his good-sized ears, he looks much like a mouse whose nose has been pulled out into a long pointed snout, and whose tail has been shortened. But right there the resemblance ceases, for inside Notio is exceedingly un-mouselike. No rodent he, but a member of the ancient order of insectivores, a fraternity of insect eaters going far, far back into time, and whose representatives today retain many of the old primitive ways. In fact, Notio has the same type of flat cranium as his old low-brow ancestors, his back-sloping forehead being scarcely higher than the bridge of his nose.

Inside this narrow flat skull is a very small brain of a style in vogue millions of years ago, and which is mostly devoted to smell matters. The two small cerebral hemispheres supposed to handle more advanced brain jobs are noteworthy in the paucity of their convolutions and little grey matter. Notio, in short, is no genius.

Out of date brainwise, he is likewise old fashioned when it comes to teeth, for he's still eating with the same old ancestral dentures. The upper molars in this primitive tooth set up are triangular in shape with three sharp points connected by cutting edges. The molars downstairs also have shearing edges fore and aft, but the three points of their triangles stand in peaks that fit like wedges into gaps between the upper teeth. Notio, munching on an insect, cuts up its hard body covering into small bits with this battery of points and blades, and crushes the pieces, which is why crusty crickets, grasshoppers and beetles go down his hatch with such speed and in such numbers. A thorough eater, Notio first neatly removes the legs to immobilize his prey and then bites their heads, proceeding thereafter to

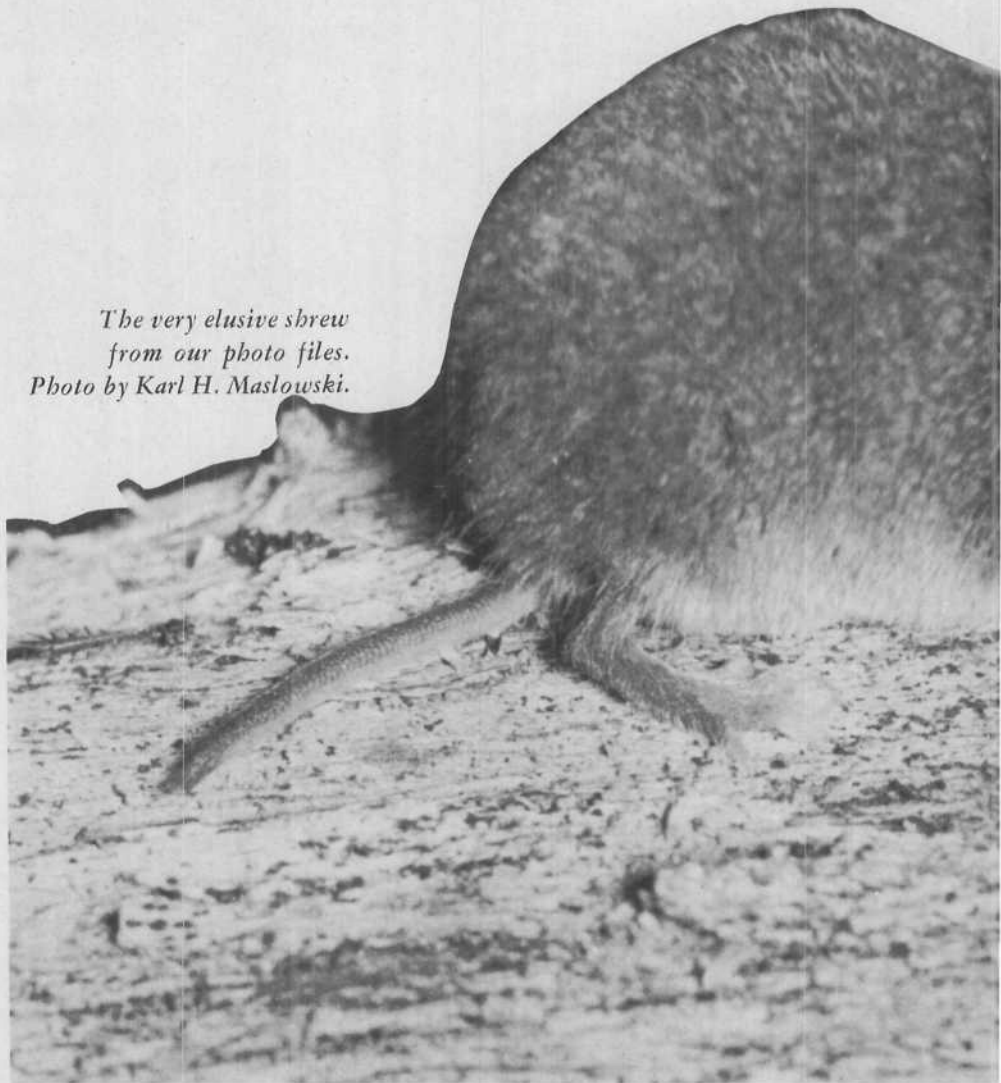
do a complete job on the rest of the carcass. Then, nose twitching, whiskers akimbo, he rushes off on the trail of the next one.

This insect diet furnishes sufficient moisture which is lucky, for unlike his cousins among other shrews who live in forests and prairies, Notio is at home only in places of extreme aridity where free water is seldom available. Favorite spots are typical desert areas of mesquite and cactus, creosote, salt brush, sagelands, yuc-

ca flats. Nor does he follow the pattern of small desert animals whose lives depend on a hole into which to escape the heat. Notio is no digger, nor is he interested in a second-hand hole dug by somebody else. His abode is topside, a little ball of soft materials tucked under a dead agave plant, or under litter or amongst the piled-up debris of a woodrat's castle, or under a cottonwood log—in fact under whatever is available on the surface that offers protection. The team of biologists, Donald

DESERT

*The very elusive shrew
from our photo files.
Photo by Karl H. Maslowski.*



SHIREW

by K. L. Boynton

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Hoffmeister and W. Goodpaster, looking into the affairs of the desert shrew in Arizona, found an especially neat domicile made of cottonwood leaves packed close together, those on top being laid like shingles. This seemed an architectural design excellent for shunting aside the rays of the sun, and rain water runoff. When it comes to housing, Notio, whose kind has been around deserts so long, obviously knows what he is doing. He is also neat about his home, establishing

his comfort stations several feet away from his nest, usually on an elevated spot with a view.

Shrews as a tribe are a peevish lot, being prone to furious fights in which the victor promptly dines on the vanquished, not even saving the end of the victim's tail for a toothpick. In fact, when biologist C. H. Merriam confined three of the Blarina type together one evening, two immediately slew and ate the third. On hand to greet the scientist the next A. M.

was only one shrew with a bulging belly. Notio's particular brand, however, are surprisingly amiable, and while each adult builds and occupies his own private nest, they seem to get along together well enough in the wild. Even in captivity, as long as food is available in excess, and they are not confined too closely together, there is little fighting among these more even-tempered Notios. Not that they are placid, for shrewlike, their movements are erratic and fast, haste being always the by-word. Five-fingered, five-toed, they're flat-footed to boot, but still leg it along a zigzag course at top speed, tail held up in a stiff curve out of the way.

It must be said in defense of shrews as a whole that all this rushing about so characteristic of them, and their notoriously short-fused tempers and warlike ways can be laid in part to the fact that their body tempo is so astonishingly fast. Metabolically they are little dynamos, driven by a body rhythm so rapid that it burns up reserves quickly, and they must eat every few hours to keep from starving to death. In fact, one of the Blarina bunch can eat its own weight in meat about every three hours, and consequently must spend most of its time hunting. A shrew of this type may pitch into a mouse much bigger than itself, lay it out with the poison in its saliva, and be dining with gusto all within a few moments.

The desert dwelling Notios apparently do not eat live rodents so relished by other shrews, captives in labs turning them down regularly. They also spend far less time hunting for food, taking time off during the day to do nothing. They must be slower geared, probably a distant adaptation to desert environment where survival at best is chancey and any needless expenditure of energy can be fatal. Hoffmeister and Goodpaster found these shrews at their siesta, curled up or stretched out on their sides, or sleeping peacefully on their backs with all four feet up in the air.

Notios are exceptionally sound sleepers to boot, and the fact that they rouse so slowly from sleep intrigued zoologists H. N. Coulombe and B. H. Banta studying them in Inyo County, California. Pondering the matter, they concluded that this apparent deep slumber might, in reality, be a period of a big metabolic slowdown during which time these desert dwelling shrews were able to cut their

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respiratory water loss to a minimum. Certainly spending the hottest time of the day quietly resting in their well-protected surface nests would conserve on energy, lessen the need for so much food, keep body temperatures down within reason, and thus save the high cost of heat dissipation.

Trying to find out what goes on in the social life of shrews is a frustrating job since basically there isn't much to find, shrews at their best not being exactly hail fellows well met. Furthermore, their small size and secretive habits add to the difficulty. However, Sherlocks among scientists have deduced that the skin glands which are very prominent in the bare thickened skin on the flanks of the adult males are not there for nothing, particularly since glands of a similar type, but covered with thin hair, are also found on the flanks of the ladies. More and more is being found out about animal glands in general these days, Australian scientists reporting that the wild rabbits there seem to have a variety of scents that mean different things under different conditions, thus serving as a form of communication in rabbit society. It may well be that a similar situation applies here, shrew scents conveying subtle meanings lost on the dull human nose.

Anyhow, all the Notios know when it is Spring, and the wooing season must go on throughout the warmer months of the year, since young have been found at varying times throughout the summer. The length of the gestation period is not known, and it is believed that usually from 3 to 5 youngsters make up a standard litter, although six places are provided at the table.

Newborn shrews are very under done upon arrival. Blind and helpless, they are quite naked as well, looking much like wrinkled pink prunes. They are also far from finished, for their ears are mere bumps and their fingers and toes only knobs with no claws. Ah, but what a difference only three days can make! The newcomers now have short fine hairs, claws on their feet, their ears are beginning to look like ears, and their eyes are about to open. Forty days from arrival the youngsters are out of the nest, well haired, almost adult in size and catching insects right and left.

Shrew glands, while being a source of major attraction to other shrews, ap-

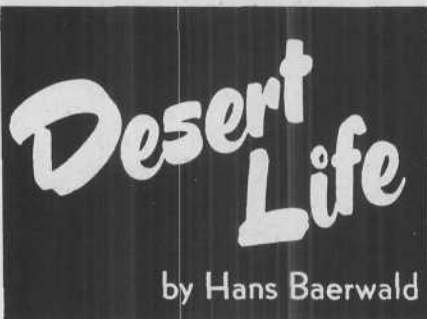
Desert Magazine

parently make their owners taste bad, thus discouraging the rank and file of hungry neighbors. But great horned owls and barn owls eat shrews anyway, and since a variety of snakes also live in the environs, it may be that they form a part of snake diet, too.

Shrews of all kinds interest many a scientist for so much remains unknown about these old relics of the past. Thanks to the recent fine work by zoologists David Armstrong and Knox Jones Jr., Notio particularly has the spotlight currently, and no wonder, for here is a tiny animal driven by a fast body tempo, and limited by lack of brain development and by retention of a tooth style adapted primarily only to insect eating, who is bound to have enough problems under the most favorable conditions.

By rights, such an animal should not be able to make it in a desert, since there the cost of living is too high for its small body, its water loss potential too great,

its food supply too uncertain. Yet, Notio flourishes far and wide in the most arid of conditions. True, his sagacious choice of homesite, and his unshrewlike habit of time-off for such sound sleep siesta-ing, his more even-temperment are all adaptive features. But biologists suspect that there are still more reasons for his success in the desert. And what these are, they're still trying to find out. □



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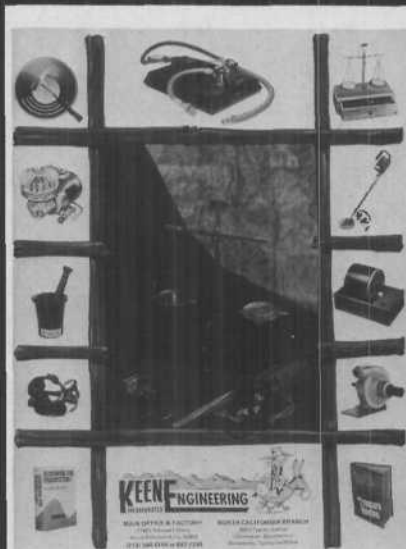
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On The Trail with

Russ Leadabrand



IN 1964, in the Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners Brand Book Number Eleven, subtitled *The California Deserts, their people, their history and their legends*, Richard C. Bailey wrote what is probably the definitive article on Red Rock Canyon.

I had the good fortune to be the editor of that book, a volume that is a rare and sought after property today. While I was both praised and condemned by the Westerners for changing the established format of the Brand Books, I think that articles such as Bailey's will enter into the permanent literature of the California desert country.

Bailey, then and now the director of the Kern County Museum in Bakersfield, California, talked at length in his article about the geologic importance of the Red Rock Canyon area, a region now neatly bisected by Highway 14, north of Mojave.

Placer gold was discovered here in 1893; possibly even earlier, around 1860, Bailey noted.

During the 1890s "hundreds of miners sifted the sands for gold among the basal conglomerates and tuffs that lined the beds of the various gulches. That their efforts were richly rewarded is evidenced by the report that around sixteen million in gold was taken from the canyons within a few years."

Red Rock Canyon, as pointed out by Bailey, and earlier, by a large number of Sunday supplement writers, was a place of strange rock formations. Here were outcroppings that were named Griffin Pool, Shrine of Solitude, Temple of the Sun, Pottery Caves, Red Rooster Point, and the names went on and on, including the classic and the comic.

Red Rock Canyon had a generosity of gemstones. Fossil material was found here including evidences of the sabretoothed tiger. A "petrified forest" stood on the eastern edge of the Red Rock Canyon region. Today it is gone. The rockhounds have hauled it all away.

But more than being good picking for the rockhound has befallen Red Rock Canyon. It has become the gathering place for every kind of off-road vehicle.

Today, a growing body of concerned citizens and state officials feel that Red Rock Canyon is being overused, perhaps it is in danger of being used up.

In 1938 the area was added to the state park system by the enactment of Assembly Bill 561. The intent of this assembly legislation by Senator Walter Stiern and Assemblyman Kent Stacy was to preserve and protect the area. And Red Rock Canyon never did achieve full and official State Park status.

In the new study of the area made this year by Henry Raub, chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee, Conference of California Historical Societies, the point is noted: "There is no doubt as to the original intent of the 1938 bill to make Red Rock a park. The only ones against it are the highly articulate off-road vehicle owners."

Neither Raub, nor his committee, are anti-ORV people. They are, it would seem from conversation, study and interpretation, only against destruction of some of the precious, irreplaceable features of the Canyon.

Raub, who has told me personally that he would like to have a dune buggy so he could explore portions of the Mojave, writes in his status report:

"A visit to Red Rock Canyon brings dismay to the ecologist, environmentalist, nature lover . . . Motorcycles, four-wheel-drive vehicles and dune buggies roar thunderously trying to scale steep hillsides . . .

"Historic preservation of the park must be considered because of a number of factors.

"Dug up in the area have been the fossil bones of the mastodon, sabretooth tiger, horse, rhinoceros, antelope, camel, dog, cat, wolf. Also from the Pliocene are fossilized plants and trees.

"Indian caves, pictographs, bedrock mortars, stone tools, and projectile points may be found in the park.

"Zeolites, analcite and natrolite, are

*Red Rock Canyon
as captured on film
by Bruce Barnbaum.*

two crystals found here and in only one other spot in the world."

Raub quoted Bailey in a recent comment, as saying: "Everyone concerned with ecology hopes that official Park status will be given soon to the area before widespread vandalism largely obliterates and destroys the pristine nature attractions that initially brought the proposal for its preservation."

The not-quite-a-state-park now has two rangers. They have a temporary homestead near the vanished community/camp of Ricardo. They have, according to Raub in conversation with me, been able to curb some of the worst damage being done to the geological features of the Red Rock Canyon area by the ORV.

And Raub added: "The Bureau of Land Management representative in Bakersfield has told me that there is a large, repeat large, area not far from Red Rock where ORVs would be welcome, completely legal, and would not damage or endanger such historically and scientifically valuable countryside."

Raub and his committee hope for early creation of a full park status, for the diversion of the ORVs crowd, in large measure to the new area, and the rebuilding and preservation of the Canyon.

One day, the committee hopes, the area will have the pristine, wild, incredible unspoiled beauty it did in 1849 when members of the Death Valley Forty-niners stopped there.

*

I welcome letters and suggestions, from *Desert Magazine* readers, of little-known legends, stories, areas and events in the Desert that they would like me to comment upon. I hope, in the months to come, to keep *Desert* readers informed on a variety of desert problems, pleasures, folklore and discoveries.

If anyone, for instance, could supply me with more information on the Death Valley Wash "bigfoot," I'll chase after that sandy will-o'-the-wisp. □





Nevada's Mysterious

TWO MINERS, James Hart and David Pugh, soured on their luck at gold mining, turned to mining fertilizer from an old cave they had discovered. During their digging operation, they unearthed one of the richest archeological finds in North America. The cache had lain buried under hundreds of tons of bat guano. The artifacts were preserved in near perfect condition by the natural combination of dry air and protective cover. While the discovery may well prove the key to the lives of early man on our western plains—to the miners it was just bad luck.

The cave, measuring approximately 160 feet long and 40 feet wide, is located 22 miles southwest of Lovelock, Nevada. It came into existence during the Pleistocene

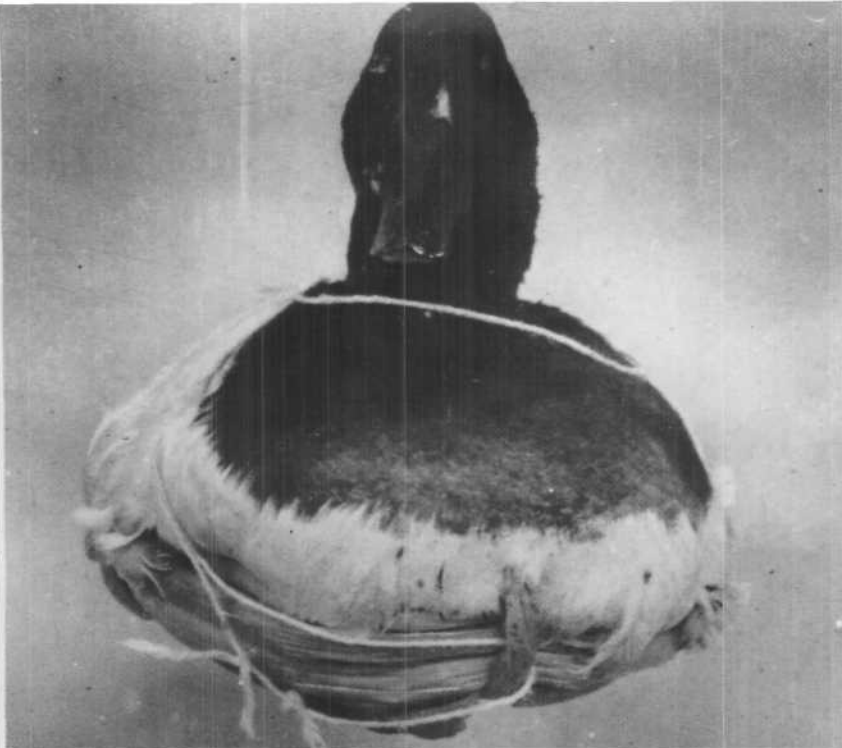
Epoch, 70,000 years ago, at a time when the melting waters of the Ice Age began to form lakes in the lowlands. Along the shoreline of this ancient Lake Lahontan, winds swept the water into waves, which in turn pounded and eroded a great limestone dome along the shoreline. As the water evaporated, it cut away the soil beneath the dome, until finally a natural cave resulted. Climatical changes over the centuries caused Lake Lahontan to recede further leaving the cave to dry out and await occupancy.

Bats were the first to discover the opening. They held possession long enough to lay a 20-inch mat of droppings above the lake sediment. Man followed the bats. Recent tests with carbon have

dated man's discovery and use of the cave to include a period between 2000 and 3000 B.C., and as recent as 1800.

Migratory bands of Indians, that came roaming aimlessly from the north, were man's first tenants. They were in search of food and shelter, and resources to maintain their families. Many different groups occupied the cave, each in his turn smoothing the floor, and covering the discards of his predecessors. In this manner, layer upon layer of camp litter became locked in the earthen floor of the cave.

As Hart and Pugh dug at their fertilizer deposit, foreign matter of bone, matting, and bits of rope made it necessary for them to screen the material to produce a top grade product. It soon became un-



Left: Lovelock cave mummy—buried in a basket. Above: Duck decoy illustrating the use of feathers on the highly advanced and very life-like bird. Right: Sara Winemucca Hopkins—a daughter of Chief Winemucca. Her accounts of the giant, red-headed Indians is one theory of the current investigation. Photos courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society.

Nomads

by Helen Walker

profitable, so the men abandoned the project. News of the artifacts drew curious seekers, and unfortunately many valuable pieces were indiscriminately lost.

The University of California became interested in the discovery, and sent L. L. Loud to explore the cave and recover the archeological treasures. Loud, working alone through the spring and summer of 1912, was able to catalog 10,000 artifacts. Serious interest was again kindled in 1924 when the Museum of American Indian sent H. R. Harrington, director of research at the Southwest Museum at Los Angeles, along with Loud to again research the cave findings. Their recovery of items read like a mail order catalog.

Harrington made an indepth study of
July, 1973

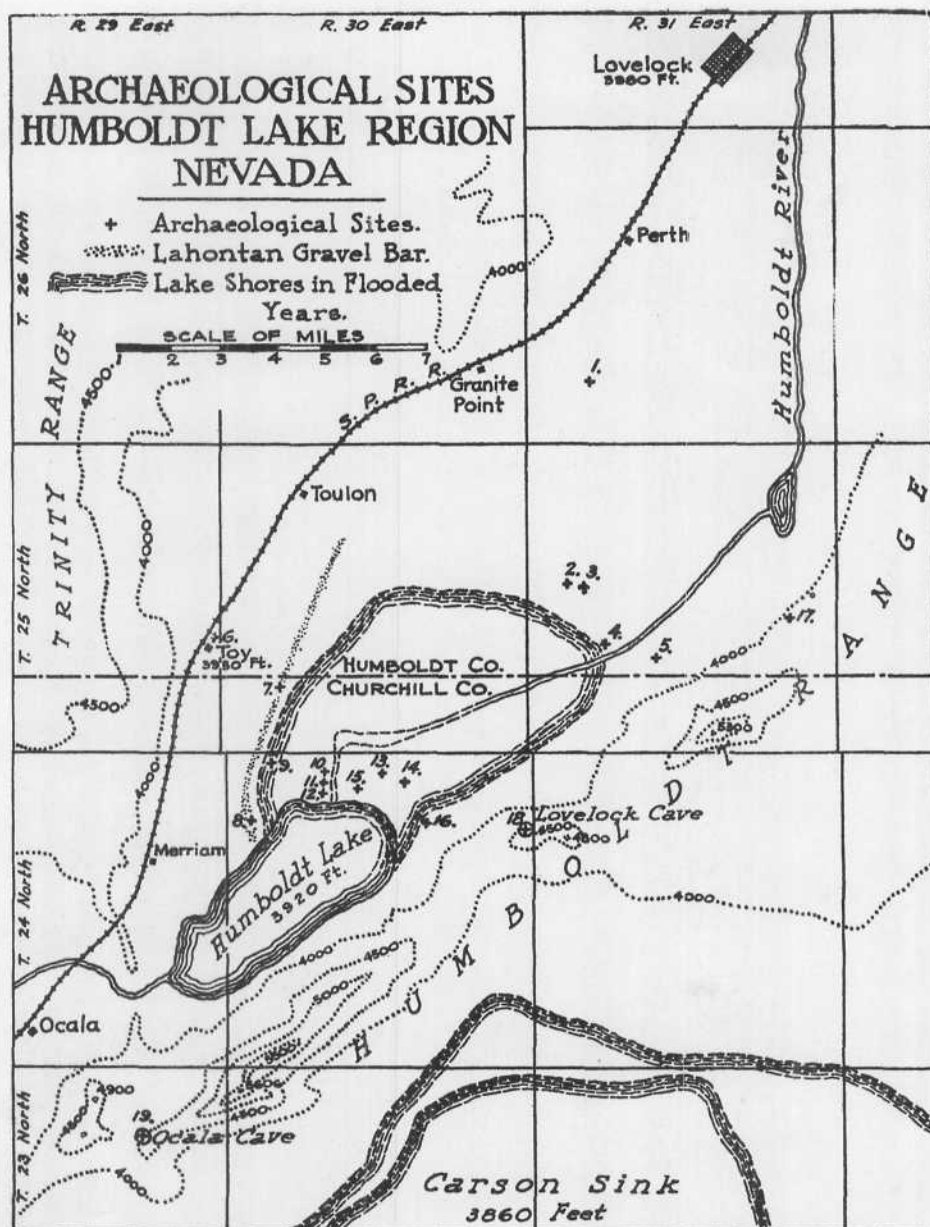
one of the undisturbed sections that he excavated. It became apparent that the articles found there could be classified into three groups—Early, Transitional, and Late. The one object that showed advancement of culture most readily was the weapons the tribesmen had used to hunt their prey.

From the deepest sections of the pit, Harrington was able to piece together fine examples of the dart thrower or atlatl. This instrument, used to hurl stone-tipped darts, was clever in design. The atlatl was made by using a long thin stick with a handgrip at one end and at the opposite end an indentation to secure the dart. When the throwing arm extended, the dart was pushed forward, allowing the pressure

from the butt end of the atlatl to give the dart greater power and velocity.

The more advanced bows and arrows made their appearance in the Transitional group of artifacts. In the Late Period, the atlatl vanished, being obsoleted by the more versatile bow and arrow.

Fish and game were the primary source of food for these primitive people. No evidence of any agriculture or planting was found in the cave. Thus, by necessity, they became craftsmen at their hunting devices—nets, weapons and decoys. The material used for making their nets included fibers from the tule plant that grew along the shores of Lake Lahontan, and flax from the nettle. Contrary to ropes and cords made today, these Indians twist-



Humboldt Lake region from University of California Publication of American Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. 24. Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society.

ed their twine for nets and cord in a clockwise direction. Sizes of nets found in the cave differed for each species of game hunted. Snares were made for rabbits and land fowl, and larger nets for waterfowl and fish.

Found stored along with the nets were two types of bird decoys. One was a simple painted type, the other, a more advanced model, featured a stuffed head and body that was overlain with feathers. The bodies of both types were made by bending bundles of 20 or 30 reeds into the shape desired, then the end of the reeds were trimmed to resemble a duck's tail. On the advanced decoys, a head had been fashioned, then the entire form was covered with duck feathers. The result was a decoy life-like enough to

attract flights of birds into the range of the hunter's weapons or nets.

Hunting and fishing was not a sport to these early residents of Lahontan basin—it was a necessity for survival, and it was worked in all seasons. During the seasons when the water was clear of ice, they built rafts from bundles of tule, and on them slipped silently into the waters to fish. In the winter they dug holes in the ice, and squatted patiently awaiting their luck. Fishing was a skill. The men trained themselves to allow ample time for the fish to swallow the brittle bone hook, then to avoid a struggle which might dislodge the hook.

The women of the tribe were responsible for the preserving and storage of the food. They first prepared a cupboard

by digging a hole in the cave floor. The hole was lined with bits of grass, shredded bark, and pieces of worn matting. Into the cupboard were places baskets of seeds and nuts, along with the dried meat and fish. In one such cupboard, Harrington discovered a cache of food which included 126 dried fish. One ponders the reason why such an important lot was left behind.

The contents of the baskets revealed one unusual entry into the diet of these early inhabitants—that of cat-tail rushes. Their method of preparing this food staple was simple. Fire was introduced and carefully controlled to prevent the seeds from being singed by the flame as they popped from the pods. When a sizeable amount of seeds had accumulated, they were gathered and ground by hand in their metates. The meal was added to boiling water, and the result was a nourishing mush.

Thousands of baskets of nuts were recovered at all levels of the excavation. Since there was no evidence of pottery, baskets served a family from birth to death. A new-born infant was cradled in a basket, food was stored and served in them, and in many cases the body was laid to rest at death in a ceremonial basket.

Hides of small animals supplied the nomads with material for winter robes and moccasins. Fur robes were fashioned with a belt, undoubtedly used to keep the cold air out, and the same robe doubled as a blanket and mattress while sleeping at night. For gay occasions, robes and blankets of feathers were made—these were found packed among the headdresses and ceremonial attire.

Other miscellaneous articles included combs made from split quills tied in a bundle, simple musical instruments, children's toys, etc.

Who were these ancient nomads? We can only speculate today about the first two lower layers of artifacts that were recovered. Harrington, in his research, has matched many of the objects that he found in the upper layers with those used by the northern Piute Indian tribes.

Another theory is told in Sarah Winnemucca Hopkin's book, "Life Among the Piutes," published in 1883. She tells of a tribe of barbarians who harassed her people by kidnapping victims along the trails, killing them, and then eating their flesh. The Piutes referred to these war-like people as the "Redheaded People

Eaters." She described the intruders as very brave, very tall, and very strange in their ways of life.

Her people, she relates, finally resorted to killing the cave dwellers as they left the cave—one by one. This method was slow, and not too effective. In desperation, they gathered wood and stacked it at the opening of the cave, sealing off the intruders. The Piutes gathered outside and offered the trapped Indians their freedom — asking only that they live in peace and not eat their people like animals. When there was no response, they set the wood on fire—none of the trapped tribesmen were seen to escape.

Fact or fantasy—no one knows for sure. Harrington did find mummies in the cave with long reddish-colored hair. His theory was that the hair had become discolored by the chemicals in the soil, after hundreds of years of burial. As for their being barbarians and flesh eaters—findings indicate it is a possibility. Among the bones recovered, some had been split in a manner that the marrow could have been eaten out—a cannibalistic tendency.

Today, dust dances over most of the ancient lake bed. Its shores have shrunk

many miles, but the old shore line is still in evidence. One thing we know for sure, the cave and lake bed have surely provided us with one of the most complete findings of Indian artifacts ever recovered in one spot in the United States.

Many of the displayed items may be seen today, if you visit the Nevada Historical Society Museum at Carson City.

However, we thank you, James Hart and David Pugh—your bad luck is our good fortune! □

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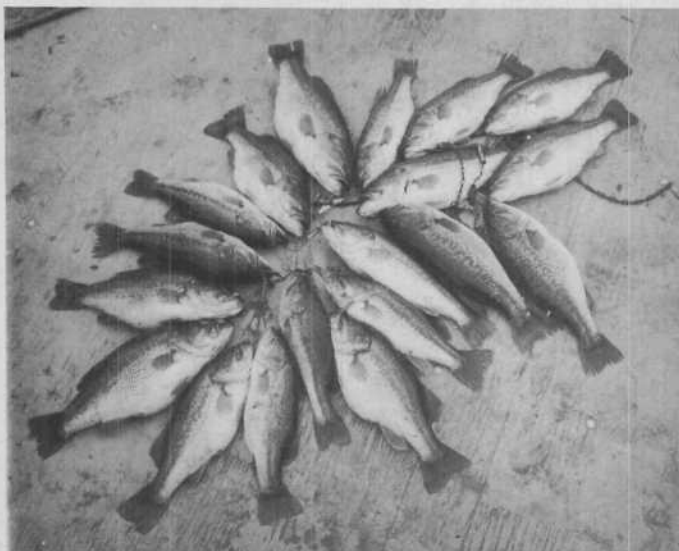
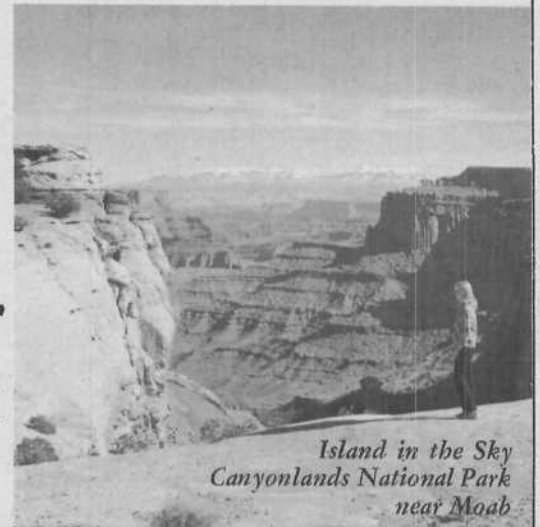
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Continued from Page 27

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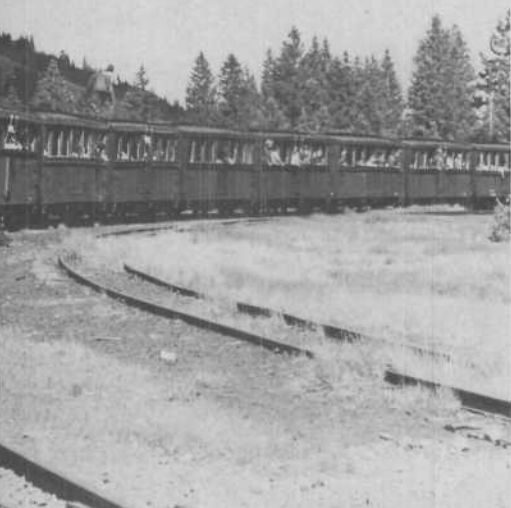
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Left: Engine 484 at Cumbres Pass.
Below: Westbound on a S-curve
descending grade near Chama.

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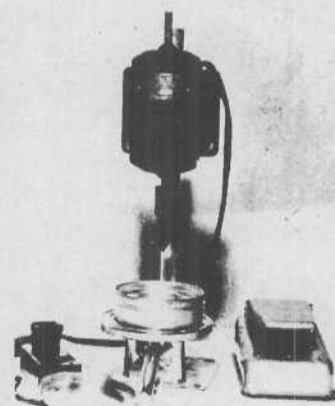
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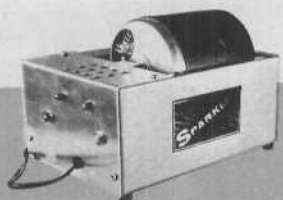
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Rambling on Rocks

by
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FOSSILS:
Geology's
Calendar
Stones

FOSSILS ARE the tools that geologists use to arrange the parade of life through the ages in an orderly manner. The knowledge of where in the time span of the history of the earth a certain plant or animal lived, can then help in the cataloging of information on other living things found in entirely different formations. Any species that lived in many parts of the earth is usually well represented in the rocks of the region. Any other species that was more or less local can thus be cataloged as to the time when it lived. If this second species appears again in a different type of rock, then an age for that formation can be set.

What is a fossil? The word is from the Latin—*dug out*. Simply, a fossil is the

remains of some living thing that can be found in rocks. Whether the animal or plant is presently living or not, is not really important for a definition. These remains need not be altered in any way, except that they must be buried. On the other hand, they may be converted to some mineral, now called a *pseudomorph* (see March 1971 column). They may be altered more or less in some way. How a fossil is altered is not of any real consequence to the historical geologist, what he most wants to know is its original form so that he can determine its relatives, and its time of occurrence.

Ordinary sea shells on a beach are not fossils, but if the same type of shells are to be found in a dirt bank at the back of the beach, they may be considered as fossils. Going beyond this simple example of fossilization, we find many types. Nearly everyone knows of clams or oysters, filled with sand, and locked in a hard rock. One many find similar shells that have been dissolved away and then replaced with a mineral of some type. The finest example of this is the clams found in Australia, that have been replaced by precious opal.

Some fossils have been squeezed or distorted in some way. At times this may distort or obscure some of their diagnostic features, but most are still recognizable. The distortion may be only a slight flattening, on down to where only a print remains. Many plants appear as fossils that are slightly compressed to an oval from their original round cross section. Others are completely flattened, but bark and leaf surfaces may still be intact. Some fishes are preserved perfectly as prints, where virtually every bone and scale remain visible as an aid in classification.

Many fossils have been replaced by some mineral. In some cases, such as the opalized clams mentioned earlier, the

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original body has disappeared. Under these conditions, the shape and outer texture of the original is faithfully retained. These are correctly called casts, but they are still of interest to the geologist.

Petrified wood falls in this group of fossils. Even though the wood is still there (see August 1970 column), and completely surrounded by some mineral, it is certainly a fossil. Fossilized wood has been carefully studied, and that which has been infiltrated by a mineral such as agate is just as easily studied as any other type.

Fossil bone is usually found as a pseudomorph, either replaced by or infiltrated with some mineral. The remains of dinosaurs or other large animals of the past are usually found in this condition.

Many wood fossils fall into a class that is loosely termed as carbonized. In this condition, the wood has been acted upon by heat and pressure so that it is largely or virtually pure carbon. Cellulose, the major constituent of wood, is a carbohydrate, a chemical compound of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. When conditions are correct, the hydrogen and oxygen are driven off as water (H₂O), leaving the carbon as remains.

Carbonized wood has been found under many circumstances, and in a wide variety of locations. The most common, however, is in coal mines. Coal is the result of the compaction and carbonizing of plant life, and much of it is unrecognizable as the original plant. In some cases, the wood structure and surface features are at least partially recognizable.

What do fossils teach us? The presence of fossils in various rock stratas tells us about the age in which the rock was laid down, what animals and plants lived there, and something about how they lived. Which animals lived early in the earth's history, who followed them, and

sometimes why they disappeared, can all be gleaned from fossil-bearing formations. If one stops to think about it, the historical geologists have done a remarkable job of reading fossils.

In recent years, the geologist has been given a new tool to work with. It goes by various names, but is best called *radioactive dating*. The one measuring the smaller amount of time, a maximum of 30,000 years, is known as *radiocarbon dating*. Briefly, some of the carbon in all living things is slightly different than most other carbon atoms. These have a tendency to radioactively decay after the plant or animal dies. By carefully measuring the amount of radioactive decay, it is possible to determine with great exactness the point in history that the fossil was a living thing. For periods greater than 30,000 years, other radioactive elements are used. We shall shortly devote a column to this very fascinating subject.

The use of fossils to tell us what animal or plant lived where, and at what time, has given us some surprises. The finding of fossil coral in the Arctic regions has opened up many discussions.

Recently, a fossil of a lizard-like animal, known as *Lystrosaurus*, was found in Antarctica. Fossils of this animal are known also from Africa and India. This new find is now taken as part of the proof that the continents of the world have been drifting apart over the ages. There is no reasonable way that this animal could have traveled from Africa to Antarctica, or vice-versa. The only conclusion left is that the two continents were one, or at least touching.

Fossils are more than curiosities—they are the illustrations on the pages of the book of time. How we read the pages, depends upon how we interpret the illustrations, and how we use the tools we have at hand. □

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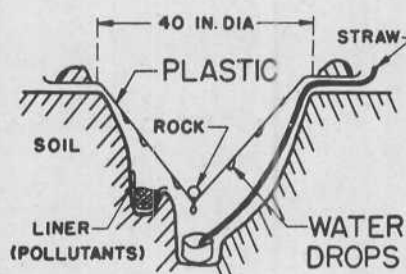
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Letters to the Editor

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Land Abuse In Utah . . .

As you know, Utah is a booming visitor state, and the sparsely settled land in the southeast portion around the perimeter of Canyonlands National Park, and the Glen Canyon Recreation Area bordering Lake Powell and the Colorado River is drawing many out-of-state recreation vehicles, trail-bike lovers, hikers and campers in ever-increasing numbers.

Mr. Frank Shields, District Manager of the Bureau of Land Management office in Monticello, Utah is greatly concerned about the increasing vandalism, littering, destruction of growing trees for firewood, and just plain disregard for the regulations governing off-road travel for motorized equipment.

Because of the large coverage of this area by reporters, photographers and writers in the past three years, the public seems to have an erroneous idea that the entire area is open to travel without restriction. This is NOT true. All BLM land in Utah is subject to the same rules and regulations that apply to usage of public lands in every part of the country, and are subject to closure if land damage is apparent. This applies to National Forest land also, and the Glen Canyon Recreation Area as well.

ENID C. HOWARD
Associate Editor, *Desert Magazine*
Monticello, Utah

Desert Visitor . . .

The K. L. Boynton article on the "Great Horned Owl" was most enjoyable due to the fact that we believe one of them visited our backyard about two weeks ago. My husband and I were awakened by what he called a "hoot owl," a sound I had not heard since my early childhood in Illinois.

The next morning our local radio station announced that a rare species of horned owl could be seen in the vicinity of the Nautical Inn. We were sure then that he had visited us first.

The *Desert Magazine* has been a great help in acquainting us with our new surroundings. We have lived in Lake Havasu City only three years.

JOHN AND DOLORES DIXON,
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Calendar of Events

JUNE 29, 31-JULY 1, ANNUAL NATIONAL CACTI & SUCCULENTS SHOW sponsored by the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc. 9 A. M. to 5 P. M. daily at the Los Angeles State & County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, Calif. Admission free, door prizes. Contact: Mrs. Kathryn Sabo, 20287 Rustin Rd., Woodland Hills, CA 91364. Phone: (213) 347-5590.

JULY 21 & 22, MT. JURA GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY'S 9th Annual Show in conjunction with the Greenville Gold-digger Days. Town Hall, Greenville, Calif., Plumas County. Demonstrations, free camping, field trip Sunday. Admission 25¢. Contact Chairman Milt Meyers, Rt. 1, Box 7, Greenville, Calif. 95947.

AUGUST 4 & 5, "GOLDEN GATEWAY TO GEMS," sponsored by the San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society, in the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park. All phases of the lapidary art will be featured, and exhibit collections of material from the desert regions of the Southwest. Also specimens from old and rare collections.

SEPTEMBER 8 & 9, ALL ROCKHOUNDS POW WOW CLUB OF AMERICA, INC., Cle Elum, Washington. Mineral Springs Resort. Field Trips, Dealer space. Louis Nees, 118 - 41st Ave., N. E., Puyallup, Wash. 98371.

SEPTEMBER 29 & 30, "JUBILEE OF JEWELS," 14th annual show sponsored by the Carmel Gem & Mineral Society, Exhibition Building, County Fairgrounds, Monterey, Calif. Dealers, special exhibits, demonstrations, refreshments. Admission, 50¢, children under 12 free when accompanied by adult. Dealer space filled. Show chairman: Bob Mullnix, P. O. Box 5847, Carmel, Calif. 93921.

OCTOBER 5 - 7 WASATCH GEMS SOCIETY SECOND ANNUAL CARNIVAL OF GEMS, Utah State Fair Grounds, Commercial Exhibit Building No. 3, North Temple and Ninth West, Salt Lake City, Utah. Show Chairman, Joseph Cipponeri, 1849 David Blvd., Bountiful, Utah 84010.

OCTOBER 6 & 7, "EARTH'S TREASURES" sponsored by the Nevada County Gem & Mineral Society, National Guard Armory Bldg., Ridge Rd. and Nevada City Highway, Nevada City, California. Admission free. Prize drawings, demonstrations.

OCTOBER 6-7, SIXTH ANNUAL NATIONAL PROSPECTORS & TREASURE HUNTERS CONVENTION, sponsored by the Prospectors Club of Southern California, Inc. will be held at Galileo Park in California City, Calif., (approximately 100 miles north of Los Angeles). There will be five competitive events, with everyone invited to participate. The latest in prospecting and TH'ing equipment will be

displayed, and many well-known personalities in the TH'ing field will be on hand. Admission free to convention. No charge for parking or camping. For those who do not wish to camp, there are restaurant and motel accommodations in California City. For further information contact: S. T. Conatser, PCSC Convention Chairman, 5704 Eunice, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

OCTOBER 6-7, THE HI-DESERT GEM & MINERAL ASSOCIATION'S 2nd annual show hosted by Yucca Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Joshua Tree Gem & Mineral Society; Hi-Desert Rockhounds of Morongo Valley and Oasis Rock Club of 29 Palms, will be held at the Yucca Valley High School, 7600 Sage Ave., Yucca Valley, Calif.

OCTOBER 7-13, 6TH ANNUAL NATIONAL SILVER STREAK RALLY, Golden Village, Hemet, Calif. All Silver Streak owners, whether club members or not, invited to rally. For further information, contact V. L. Cooper, rally coordinator, Silver Streak Trailer Company, 3219 N. Chico, So. El Monte, Calif. 91733.

OCTOBER 12-1, OLD PUEBLO LAPIDARY CLUB OF TUCSON'S First Lapidary Show to be held at the Old Fair Grounds on South Sixth Ave., Tucson, AZ. Special Displays, Exhibits, Swap Areas, Commercial Displays. Contact: Milt Reiner, Chairman, P.O. Box 2163, Tucson, AZ 85702.

OCTOBER 13 & 14, LA PUENTE GEM & MINERAL CLUB'S 4th Annual Show, "Wonders of Nature," La Puente Handball Club Bldg., 15858 Amar Rd., La Puente, Calif. Dealers, Silent Auctions. Chairman: Raymond Whaley Sr., 4031 Hackley, West Covina, Calif.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, ELEVENTH ANNUAL SAN DIEGO COUNTY ROCKHOUND GEMBOREE sponsored by the Council of the San Diego County Gem & Mineral Societies, Scottish Rite Masonic Memorial Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego, Calif. Chairman: Elmer Schmitt. Dealer Chairman: Mrs. Marian Horensky.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, "GOLDEN HARVEST OF GEMS AND MINERALS" sponsored by the Sacramento Mineral Society, Scottish Rite Temple, 6151 H St., Sacramento, Calif. Exhibits of gems, minerals, crystals, handcrafted jewelry, dealers and demonstrations.

NOVEMBER 8 - 11 1973 DEATH VALLEY ENCAMPMENT, in the Stovepipe Wells and Furnace Creek areas of the National Monument. Hotel accommodations limited, so plan to "camp under the desert stars." Campfire meetings, historical talks, guided tours and exhibits of gems, minerals, desert art and photographs. For further information contact, William Newbro, (213) 746-4313.

The Frontier Days Committee
guarantees a GOOD TIME as the

REWARD

for joining in the 1973 celebration of

LOVELOCK'S FRONTIER DAYS

August 3-4-5

MUSIC—Reno Municipal Band Concert in the Park, 11:30 a.m., Saturday, August 4th.

FEATURED ENTERTAINER—HENSON CARTILL, TV-Recording Star Thursday and Friday Nights, August 2nd and 3rd.

RODEO—(Sponsored by Pershing County Horsemen's Association) Friday and Saturday, August 3rd and 4th.

PARADE—10:00 a.m., Saturday, August 4th.

ACTIVITIES IN PARK—Saturday and Sunday, August 4th and 5th.

CHILDREN'S GAMES, CONTESTS, CONCESSIONS, FLEA MARKET,
KANGAROO COURT, HARD-ROCK DRILLING, REFRESHMENTS.

BARBEQUE—Old-Fashioned Barbecued Beef, Beans, etc.
(served in the Courthouse Park, Saturday, August 4th, 5 to 7 p.m.)

PANCAKE BREAKFAST—August 3rd and 4th, 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. Courthouse Park.

PARADE ENTRIES—Should be in by Saturday, July 28th, advise
form your entry will take: Mounted, Walking, Float, or Other.

FLEA MARKET—Everyone is invited to rent space in the Flea Market and display your wares
(for example: handiwork, bottles, rocks, ceramics, jewelry, baked goods, or any other treasures)
for sale or for show.

Please Reply to: FRONTIER DAYS COMMITTEE,
P.O. Box 672, Lovelock, Nevada 89419.
Telephone: 273-2272, 273-2417, 273-2687

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