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Volume 36, Number 8

AUGUST 1973



THE COVER:

A bonus for old mine buffs is this shot of a headframe in Mineral Canyon in the San Juan Range of Colorado. Photography by David Muench, of Santa Barbara, California.

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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

THE WEATHER MAN has been playing Dragon Man and breathing his hot breath over most portions of the Southwest with temperatures hitting into the 120° bracket in the lower desert areas. Riverside, California experienced its hottest June since 1902. With this in mind, the August issue points out a few places that should not lead to heat prostration.

Helen Walker "cools it" in the Lake Shasta region and Mary Frances Strong brings us a "never-before published" collecting area in Bridgeport Valley and tells about camping on the East Walker River and all the good summer fun available. On the other side of the ledger, a long-time friend of *Desert*, Harold O. Weight, comes up with a hot story of a lost ledge of gold over by the Colorado River, not too far from Yuma, Arizona. Harold, and his wife, Lucille, were associate editors of the magazine 'way back in the '40s and it's a great pleasure to welcome him on board again.

Ernie Cowan depicts one of his favorite loop trips in the Anza-Borrego State Park and Buddy Mays rounds out the issue with an article about beavers in the desert.

The Desert Southwest lost a great booster in a tragic air crash when Dick Smith, operator of Canyonlands Aviation, and three National Park Service employees were killed while taking an aerial survey of park wildlife.

An important editorial appears on page 11 regarding the upcoming Off-Road Vehicle Use Plan and all readers are urged to circulate the information to all interested parties.

William Knapf



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?
True ☐ False ☐
5. The new game 'Bushwhacker' is the most exciting, wildest, and unpredictable game of chance invented since cards and dice?
True ☐ False ☐

If your answer was True to any but Number 5, your fun sense is running down. Join thousands who have sparked their fun sense to an all-time high by playing "Bushwhacker," the game of chance that makes even losing fun!



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Books for Desert Readers

All books reviewed are available through
Desert Magazine Book Shop

BAJA CALIFORNIA

By
Choral
Pepper



Should the reader harbor mixed emotions concerning stories of missions and lost treasures as being dull or even incompatible, a great revelation is in store upon reading this thoroughly and smoothly written book. The setting, largely, is in the country that was so loved by the late Erle Stanley Gardner, known to friends and Baja natives as Uncle Erle. And Choral Pepper was introduced to the Baja she also loves by this man who could weave such mysteries about people, and who was so intrigued by this magic land that he returned often by every form of transportation including the helicopter.

Delving into the sometimes controversial history surrounding many of the old missions, the Santa Isabel, San Juan Bautista, San Vicente Ferrer and the more than 30 others (the 800-mile trek covers them all from North to South), she, packs into this comparatively small book a world of facts about the land, the insects, vegetation, the seashore, and the missionaries who came to tame the hostile Indians and teach them how to till the soil.

One of the "tall tales" is that of the Yaqui Indians and the Santa Isabel curse. Read it and learn what other treasures are in store for you. The author describes Baja California as "the strangest land in the world" where a carrot-shaped tree, the cirio, appears to grow upside down, and where the children of a remote *rancheria* that has never known electricity, board a daily plane to fly to school! A land of contrasts, indeed.

In one instance, the author relates a

visit to the Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, where the wild terrain hasn't changed since the 1800s and was once described by a visitor as the "tail end of an earthquake." Upon her visit, the area was accessible only by helicopter and it could be seen from the air that centuries of burro travel were indicated by a trail winding around the hub of a mountain. She says that it was near the site of the original mission that a forest of hardwood trees grew and led a padre, with native help, to haul lumber to the port of Mulege where he built the first ship on the peninsula, the famous El Triunfo de la Cruz. Impossible, you say, and so did the natives. This is but one of the many TRUE tall stories for your "armchair" trip down that fascinating route of the Padres, the Erle Stanley Gardners, and the Choral Peppers.

Paperback, well illustrated, 126 pages, \$1.95.

FAMILY FUN IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

By
Dean Publications



The Southwestern deserts of the United States abound in National Parks and Monuments where the visiting family will find many of nature's wonders carefully preserved . . . assuming, of course, that the interested family has a capable "guidebook" to help them.

Somewhere between the 25 cent pamphlet, vaguely describing points of interest, and the expensive hardcovers, describing the most complicated aspects of the area, there is room for a family-oriented, reasonably-priced souvenir guidebook. "Family Fun in Joshua Tree National Monument" is just such a book.

Through the cooperation of the National Park Service, Dean Publications has successfully produced a book that is easily understood by youngsters and at the same time highly informative for adults. And it's all done in an entertaining way. The pages are packed with palatable information and quality illustrations to help everyone gain a better understanding of this fascinating Monument.

The publishers have introduced a personable "guide" for the young-at-heart in

a character they call "Mr. Yahooty." The readers follow this charming little fellow as he leads them step-by-step through the Monument, pointing out the highlights. "Mr. Yahooty" introduces the readers to many of the plants and animals they may see and gives them "down-to-earth" explanations about the geology and history of the area. A thorough and accurate "tour guide" and centerfold map orient the visitor quickly while the numerous games, puzzles and coloring pages will keep the youngsters alert and interested in their surroundings.

"Family Fun in Joshua Tree National Monument" is the first in a series of National Park and Monument guides from Dean Publications. Paperback, 4-color cover with attractive 2-color treatment on the inside. 36 pages, \$1.25.

UTAH GEM TRAILS and GEM TRAILS OF ARIZONA

By Bessie W. Simpson



Whether the collector or reader be neophyte or experienced in the field, these guides provide an uncluttered, concise description of gem locations in each of the states. Illustrated maps with highways, side roads, lakes, ridges, etc., all identified plus photos of the various rocks and petrified wood, offers suggestions for a safe and comfortable way to travel to these designated areas. The author points out that most every location is readily accessible by car or pickup, but all cautions should be observed. It is also suggested that the collector supplement the guides with BLM maps and regular highway maps furnished by service stations. In this way, any changes, new roads, number changes on highways, etc., may be noted.

The guides are easily carried on a pack trip because of their light weight. Both are paperback, 88 pages, Arizona, \$3.00 and Utah, \$3.50.

All books reviewed are for sale at Desert Magazine Book Shop or by mail. Simply enclose your check or money order and your order will receive same-day shipping. California residents please add 6% state sales tax.

BACKPACKING by R. C. Rethmel. Stresses caution and confidence in this popular sport and includes details about equipment, clothing, food and techniques for trail and camp preparation. Good for the novice, too, who wants to go wilderness camping with family or a few friends. Paperback, \$3.95; Hardcover, \$6.95.

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.



GEM MINERALS OF IDAHO by John A. Beckwith. Contains information on physical and optical characteristics of minerals; the history, lore, and fashioning of many gems. Also eleven rewarding field trips to every sort of collecting area. Slick paperback, maps and photos, 123 pages, \$2.95.

THEY FOUND GOLD by A. Hyatt Verrill. Treasure hunting is not restricted to the West, as is brought out here. Instead, Verrill deals with his efforts and those of others to locate treasures from sunken ships off the coast of Yucatan and Central America, and ethnological expenditures around the world. Hardcover, illustrated, 267 pages, \$7.50.

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.

MEXICO by Auto, Camper, Trailer by Cliff Cross. Revised edition. Excellent guide with information on trailer parks, butane and ice suppliers and street maps for villages and cities. New enlarged edition includes Baja and Yucatan. Large format, paperback. \$3.50.

A FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS by Roger Tory Peterson. The standard book for field identification sponsored by the National Audubon Society. 2nd edition, enlarged with new section on Hawaiian birds. 658 in full color. Hardcover, \$5.95.

BOOKS OF

DESERT ANIMALS OF THE SOUTHWEST by Richard Clayton. Delightful for children and grown-ups, this little book includes sketches and concise descriptions of animals with accompanying footprints. Covering 38 creatures, it could be used as a game around the campfire. Paperback, illustrated, 78 pages, \$1.95.

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.

GHOST TOWNS OF THE COLORADO ROCKIES by Robert L. Brown. Written by the author of Jeep Trails to Colorado Ghost Towns this book deals with ghost towns accessible by passenger car. Gives directions and maps for finding towns along with historical backgrounds. Hardcover, 401 pages, \$6.95.

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.

GUIDEBOOK TO THE FEATHER RIVER COUNTRY by Jim Martin. This is a "must" for recreation enthusiasts eager to relive the discovery of gold in this country. Try your luck at gold panning, fishing, boating, hiking and ice angling as described in this western travel book. Slick paperback, illustrated, 128 pages, \$1.95.

LET'S GO PROSPECTING by Edward Arthur. Facts and how-to-do-it on prospecting are presented by the author who has spent 30 years searching for gems and minerals in California. For those who think there are no more valuables left in California, they will find a new field in this informative book. Includes marketing data, maps, potential buyers for discoveries. Large 8x10 format, illustrated, heavy paperback, 84 pages, \$3.95.

NATIONAL PARKS OF THE WEST by The Editors of Sunset Books. A pictorial interpretation of the 23 scenic preserves that encompass within their 12 million acres most of the nation's finest mountain and desert scenery. Contains 247 photographs with 32 pages in 4-color, 43 2-color maps, drawings, geological diagrams, history and other informations. Large 9x11 format, heavy slick paper, hardcover, 286 pages \$11.75.

THE WEST

WESTERN GEM HUNTERS ATLAS by Cy Johnson and Son. A helpful book of detailed maps showing gem and mineral locations, from California to the Dakotas and British Columbia to Texas. Markings note private claims, gem claims (fee charged) and rock and gem locations. Also suggested reading for more detail on areas included and other rich areas not included in this publication. Paperback, maps galore, collector's library, 79 pages, \$3.00.

BACKPACK COOKERY by Ruth Dyar Mendenhall. Full of good ideas for making the most of dehydrated foods. Paper. \$1.00.

LOST DESERT BONANZAS by Eugene Conrotto. Brief resumes of lost mine articles printed in back issues of DESERT Magazine, by a former editor. Hardcover, 278 pages. \$7.00.

THE ROCKS BEGIN TO SPEAK by LaVan Martineau. The author tells how his interest in rock writing led to years of study and how he has learned that many—especially the complex petroglyphs—are historical accounts of actual events. Hardcover, well illustrated, glossy, bibliography, 210 pages, \$8.95.



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.

NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA GHOST TOWNS by Stanley W. Paher. Directions to and history about 23 of Arizona's most famous ghost towns. Historical photographs and artist sketches enhance editorial content. Large, 11x14 format, slick paperback, 48 pages, \$2.95.

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.

GHOST TOWNS OF THE NORTHWEST by Norman D. Weis. The ghost-town country of the Pacific Northwest including trips to many little-known areas, is explored in this first-hand factual and interesting book. Excellent photography. Best book to date on ghost towns of the Northwest. Maps. Hardcover, heavy slick paper, 319 pages. \$6.95.



DESERT GEM TRAILS by Mary Frances Strong. DESERT Magazine's Field Trip Editor has revised and brought up to date her popular field guide for rockhounds. She has deleted areas which are now closed to the public and added new areas not covered before. The maps have also been updated. This is the "bible" for both amateur and veteran rockhounds and back country explorers. Heavy paperback, 80 pages and still the same price, \$2.00.

COMMON EDIBLE & USEFUL PLANTS OF THE WEST by Muriel Sweet. A description with artist drawings of edible (and those not to touch) plants along with how Indians and pioneers used them. Paperback, 64 pages, \$1.50.

1200 BOTTLES PRICED by John C. Tibbitts. Updated edition of one of the best of the bottle books. \$4.95.

LOST MINES OF DEATH VALLEY by Harold Weight. This is a new approach to the enigma of Death Valley Scotty's life and legends and gives additional insight into the Lost Gunsight and Breyfogle bonanzas, plus other Death Valley mysteries. Paperback, historic photographs, reference material, 86 pages \$2.50.

NEVADA GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS by Stanley W. Paher. Covering all of Nevada's 17 counties, Paher has documented 575 mining camps, many of which have been erased from the earth. The book contains the greatest and most complete collection of historic photographs of Nevada ever published. This, coupled with his excellent writing and map, creates a book of lasting value. Large 9x11 format, 700 photographs, hardcover, 492 pages, \$15.00.

SPEAKING OF INDIANS by Bernice Johnston. An authority on the Indians of the Southwest, the author has presented a concise well-written book on the customs, history, crafts, ceremonies and what the American Indian has contributed to the white man's civilization. A MUST for both students and travelers touring the Indian Country. Heavy paperback, 10x7 format, illustrated, 112 pages, \$2.50.

GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS OF CALIFORNIA by Remi Nadeau. The only good, hardcover book on the California ghost towns. We recommend it highly. \$7.50.

MINES OF DEATH VALLEY by L. Burr Belden. About fabulous bonanzas, prospectors and lost mines. Paperback. \$1.95.

LOST MINES OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST by John D. Mitchell. The first of Mitchell's lost mine books is now available after having been out of print for years. Reproduced from the original copy and containing 54 articles based on accounts from people Mitchell interviewed. He spent his entire adult life investigating reports and legends of lost mines and treasures of the Southwest. Hardcover, illustrated, 175 pages, \$7.50.

HOW AND WHERE TO PAN GOLD by Wayne Winters. Convenient paperback handbook with information on staking claims, panning and recovering placer gold. Maps and drawings. \$2.00.

30,000 MILES IN MEXICO by Nell Murbarger. Joyous adventures of a trip by pick-up camper made by two women from Tijuana to Guatemala. Folksy and entertaining, as well as instructive to others who might make the trip. Hardcover, 309 pages, \$6.00.

ON DESERT TRAILS by Randall Henderson, founder and publisher of Desert Magazine for 23 years. One of the first good writers to reveal the beauty of the mysterious desert areas. Henderson's experiences, combined with his comments on the desert of yesterday and today, make this a MUST for those who really want to understand the desert. 375 pages, illustrated. Hardcover. \$6.95.



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.

THE NORTH AMERICAN DESERTS by Edmund C. Jaeger. A long-time authority on all phases of desert areas and life, Dr. Jaeger's book on the North American Deserts should be carried wherever you travel. It not only describes each of the individual desert areas, but has illustrated sections on desert insects, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants. 315 pages, illustrated photographs, line drawings and maps. Hardcover. \$5.95.

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.



Pit River Bridge across upper end of Shasta Reservoir. Bridge carries railroad and U.S. 99 traffic.

LAKE SHASTA...

WHEN THE summer sun begins to sear the desert sands, it is time to trade your desert boots for fishing pole and a paddle board. One place that is likely to please everyone in your family, is Lake Shasta—why not give it a chance?

Water conservation parented Lake Shasta. In defense of yearly floods, the Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit Rivers were backed up behind Shasta Dam. Their combined runoff created the picturesque playground that offers you and I year-round outdoor activity.

The curvaceous shoreline totals 365 miles, and you may camp anywhere along the shore—providing you observe fire and health regulations. Both private and public facilities are also available for your camper, trailer, or tent.

Come to Lake Shasta prepared to fish, hunt, swim, water ski, sail, sightsee, or just snooze in the sun. You will find the days warm, the nights balmy—even in the winter the lake is ice-free—truly a recreation area open 365 days a year.

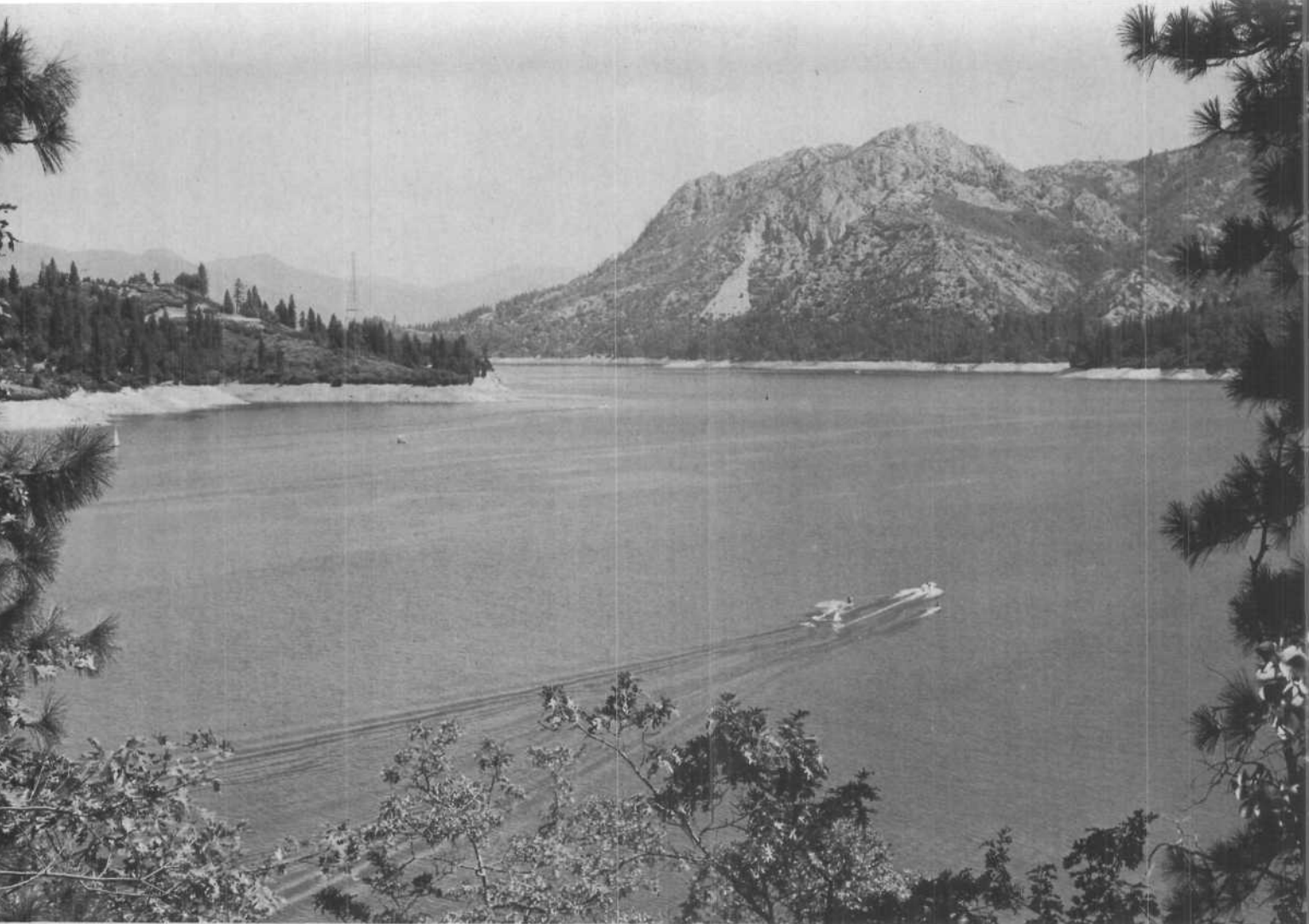
Ever envied the family on a houseboat? Lake Shasta is a great place for you to satisfy that secret yen. You can rent a houseboat along the shore, and with a short practice run, and a few instructions, you will have your "Captain's Papers." You and your family can slip away and discover the exciting adventure of sun on your private deck, dragging a fish line at your leisure, and the gentle rocking of your boat while you drift off to sleep in your private cove at night.

Fishermen find a real challenge at Lake

Shasta. You are never 100 percent sure what will take your bait, but be prepared to net trout, salmon, kamloop, bass, crappie, bluegill, catfish, and even a big sturgeon. There is no excuse for not getting your fill of those early or late fishing hours—for here at Shasta you may fish 24 hours a day—with only one restriction—no trout or salmon fishing at night! Good boat launches are available at spots along the shoreline, if you have brought your own boat. Rentals of all water sport equipment is available, and along with it, reliable information on where to go, and what to do when you get there.

For you cave enthusiasts, there is an exciting tour through the Lake Shasta Caverns. Your ticket will entitle you to a cruise on the catamaran, "Cavern Queen,"

Desert Magazine



Looking across Shasta Reservoir above Pit River.

Bureau of Reclamation photo

FAMILY FUN!

by Helen Walker

which transports you across the lake. From the boat dock on the opposite side of the lake, a bus will convey you, via a scenic winding road, to the cave entrance, some 800 feet above the lake surface. Guides will escort your small group along the lighted passages. Care has been taken not to detract from the display that nature spent millions of years creating, and at this very moment, is still working to improve.

Like giant icicles, the stalactites hang from the ceiling. With a broader base, and a more blunt tip, the stalagmites push upward from the floor. If these two confuse you, it may help to remember the stalactites have a "C" for ceiling, and the stalagmites have a "G" for ground. In some areas, where the water has dripped

through a crack, a dripstone formation may hang from the floor to ceiling—it is said to resemble draperies. Your imagination can pick out ballerinas, bacon rind, pop corn, faces, and many other formations.

To even further enhance the mystery of the cave, there is an old Indian legend told by the Wintu Indian tribe. It relates how three Indian maidens entered the cave on the advice of the old wise ones of the tribe. They were told to bathe in the two pools of Sawame, magic water, for this would bring them good luck.

The Indian maidens entered the cave and found the first pool, and one by one they bathed in the cool water. The passage to the second pool was dark and narrow—the maidens clung together in

their fear of the darkness. On the damp and slippery path, one of the maidens slipped and fell out of the grasp of the other two. The unfortunate one disappeared into the dark abyss. The two remaining maidens retraced their steps, and went to seek help. Young braves attempted a rescue, but their grass ropes would not reach the bottom of the pit. It was believed that the spirit had claimed the maiden.

The legend again came to light when, in 1903, two scientists, in search of fossils, found a skeleton on the floor, where the maiden had supposedly fallen on that tragic day.

From your base camp at Lake Shasta, you will discover many interesting side trips of varied interest. To the north is



Along the shoreline, you will find boat launches, tackle, bait, and sporting goods shops.

Mt. Shasta—it dominates the landscape at an elevation of 14,161 feet.

When the atmospheric pressures are just right, this perpetually snow-capped giant can be seen for nearly 150 miles. Also, in a northerly direction from Lake Shasta, is Castle Craig State Park. Here

you will marvel at the rugged pinnacles that stand 6500 feet before you.

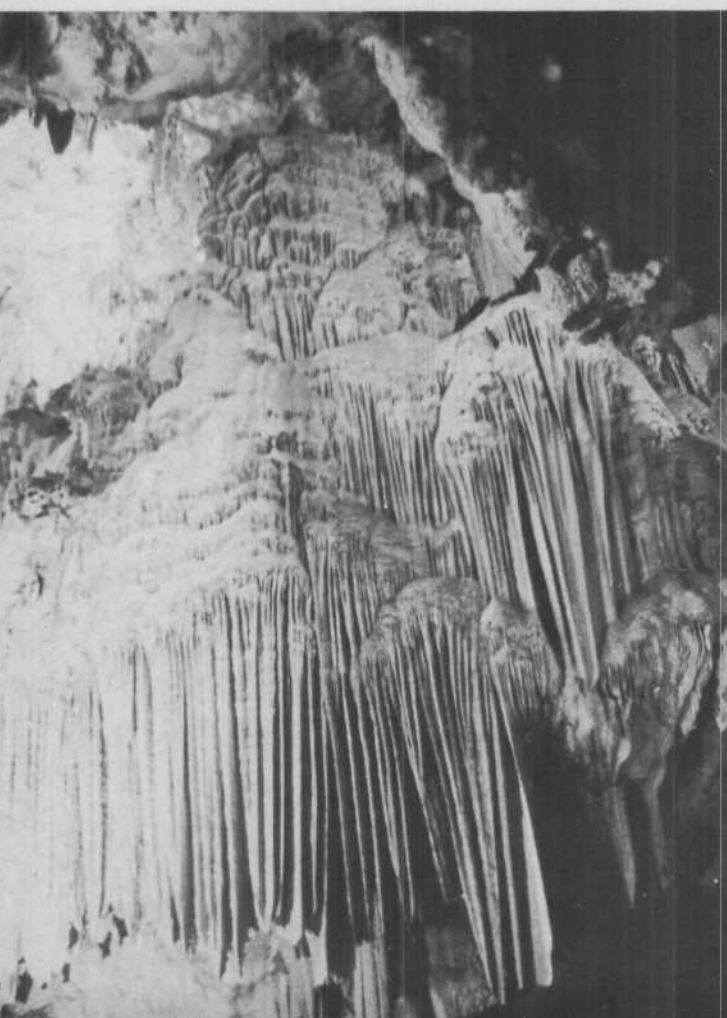
Traveling southeast, you will visit Mt. Lassen Volcanic National Park. A self-guided car tour will explain all the points of interest along the foothills of this active volcano.

Ghost towns are scattered throughout this Mother Lode country. A few of the local ones, near Lake Shasta, include Whiskey Town, Weaverville, Keswick and others. Here you may have a chance to ponder the yesteryears of the colorful gold rush days.

Of course, no trip to Lake Shasta is complete without a visit to Shasta Dam. The approach is spectacular, as you glance across the water, and into the majestic face of Mt. Shasta, 60 miles away. Shasta dam is 602 feet high—second tallest concrete structure ever built in this country. It is said that the concrete used to build the dam would provide a three foot wide sidewalk around the world at the equator. Tours of the dam are self-guiding, and can be taken during the daylight hours. If you can squeeze in the time, see the dam both during the daylight, and again at dark. At night the dam is a glow of lights, and it is the backdrop for the deer that come down to feed on the green lawns—a real treat for the youngsters.

By now I am sure you are convinced there is never a dull moment at Lake Shasta—and it's true. The whole family will have fun on this trip.

However, when the days begin to get shorter, crisp leaves begin to fall from the trees, and the cool air nips at your ankles—grab those desert boots again. Start your adventures where you left off—the desert will welcome you back home again. □



Columns of stalactites extend 60 feet and more from the roof of the cave.

IMPORTANT EDITORIAL

On the drawing board at this time is the Bureau of Land Management's plans for off-road vehicle use in the California Desert. With an increase of 100% in visitor use days in the last five years it is obvious that some control is necessary.

The BLM held open house meetings to obtain ideas and recommendations from the public before drafting the ORV use plan. These meetings were held in such cities as Bishop, Barstow, Blythe, Lancaster, Indio and Riverside.

The ORV plan will contain three types of area: Open; Restricted, with the restrictions not known until the plan is presented; and Closed, meaning access to the area would be by foot only.

Since this plan is the control of public lands, it is imperative that the public be aware of the plan and just what it will mean to users of the 12,000,000-acre desert area.

The plan will be presented to the public in another round of open house meetings sometime late August or early September. This will be the most critical period for commendation or criticism. Attend these meetings! Understand the restrictions, ask questions and if necessary, file any protest by mail to:

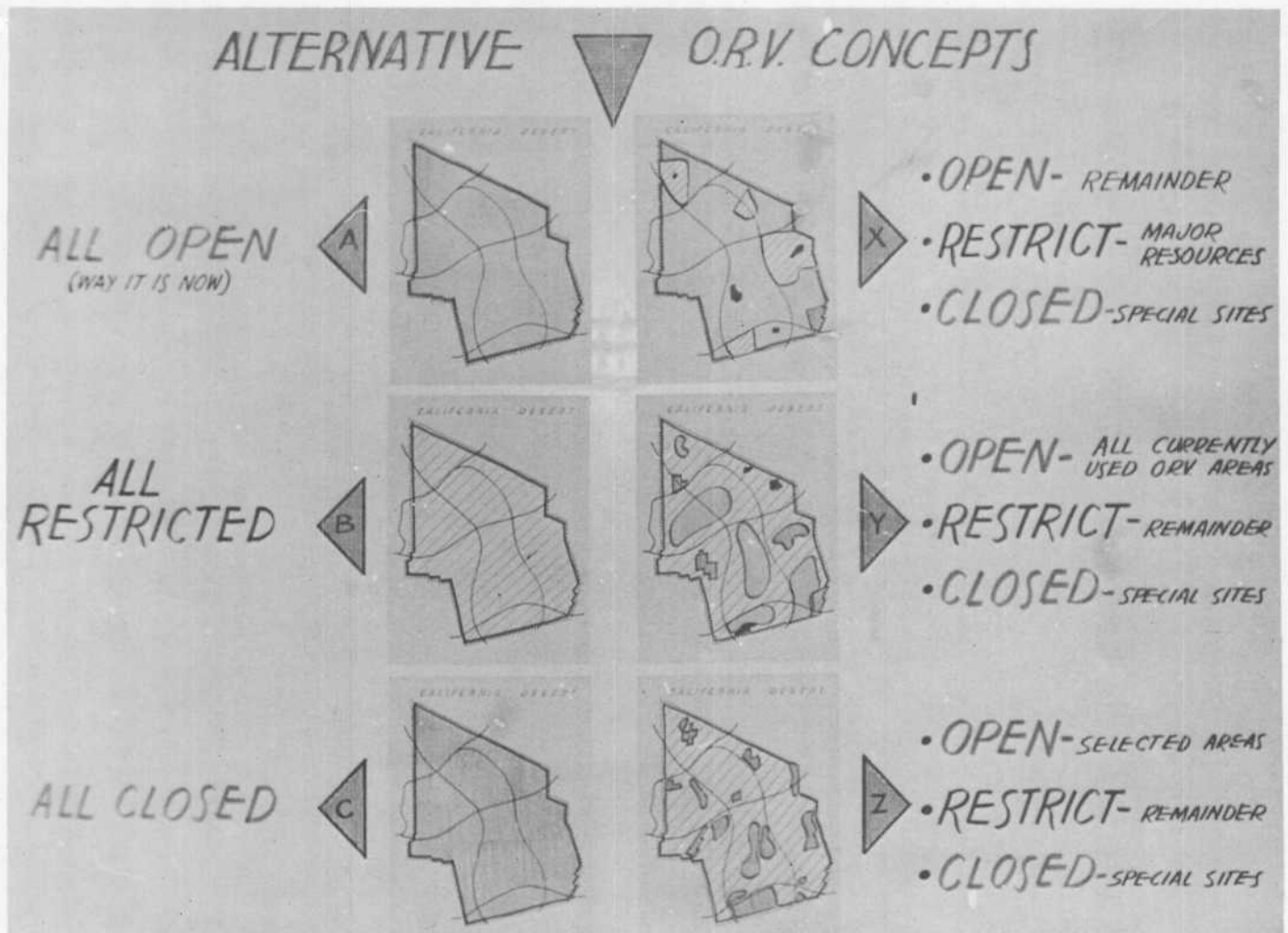
Mr. Burton W. Silcock, Director
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

The where and when of these meetings will be announced in the press but you can be placed on the BLM list to receive notification by writing to:

Mr. Neil Pfulb, Desert Plan Director
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 723
Riverside, California 92502

To be realistic we must understand that no special interest group will come up a winner, and that each group will lose a little is to be anticipated. After this plan has been presented to the public for comment it will proceed to BLM state headquarters in Sacramento and then on to Washington for final ratification. These meetings will, in clear-cut terms, spell out just what we can and cannot do on the California Desert in our off-road vehicles.

And for those of you who assume that an ORV is either a motorcycle or 4-wheel-drive, let it be clear than *any* vehicle leaving a maintained road can be classified as an ORV, which really encompasses all of us who love the desert.



These diagrams depict several ORV alternatives. The final Desert Use Plan proposal will probably follow along the lines of X, Y or Z, but there are so many possibilities it may not resemble any of these in its ultimate presentation.



New Mexico's Mystery Stone

by Jack Kutz

IN THE timeless reaches of the desert, only the rocks are eternal. Desert sands constantly shift. Straggling vegetation lives out its brief time and dies. Men come and go. Even the ageless rivers gnaw at their banks and continually change.

Only the rocks endure. Yielding slowly to the desert's grinding, they stand haughty and aloof, watching the passage of the centuries. The rocks of the desert have seen the lifetime of the land and in their volcanic hearts, they hold the desert's history—its past, its secrets.

Surely no rock in the deserts of America holds a more tantalizing secret than the fabled Mystery Stone of New Mexico.

Fifteen miles northwest of Los Lunas, in the midst of a scorching wasteland, a rounded mesa rises above the banks of the Rio Puerco. It differs in no way from the other mesas around it. Its arid slopes stretch up to a dark basalt crown and its

sides are cleaved by boulder strewn arroyos. Halfway up one of these gullies lies an ordinary rock—ordinary except for one thing.

There is a carving on the rock—an inscription so strange it has puzzled archeologists, anthropologists and laymen for more than one hundred years.

The Mystery Stone is part of a basalt column which appears to have toppled onto its side. At the base of the column, a smooth surfaced corner stone bears nine letters of writing—11 sentences composed of 216 letters. Forty different letters make up the individual words of the message. Most are Phoenician characters; several are of the ancient Rock Hebrew, a few from Russian Cyrillic and one each in Etruscan and Egyptian. The words formed by this linguistic potpourri cross and recross the rock in perfectly straight lines, carved deep in the age-old lava.

When the dark "desert varnish" that

coats basalt is penetrated, the light-colored inner core of the rock shows through, giving the inscription the appearance of chalk words on a blackboard. It stands out, sharp and clear. But what does it say? Why is it there? And who was its artisan?

The Mystery Stone's existence has been an "open secret" for longer than the living memory of its oldest visitor. Indians, prospectors and ranchers have sat before it and scratched their heads in perplexity. Scientists have trooped up the narrow trail like pilgrims to a desert shrine. Photographs have been taken, plaster castings made and a dozen theories advanced.

Is it a hoax? By scratching one hard stone against another, one can quickly determine the time required to make a single deep incision into solid basalt. Cutting the inscription was an incredibly painstaking process, done as it was, without the aid of modern tools. Why would anyone labor long hours in the broiling sun of

Desert Magazine

an obscure arroyo to create a cryptogram which no one might ever find?

If not a hoax, then what? A treasure marker, perhaps? Attempts have been made to dig beneath the stone. The excavators found nothing but more rock.

How then do we solve the stone's mystery? The first clue lies in the fact that the periods come at the beginning of the sentences. It seems obvious therefore that the inscription must be read from right to left. Hebrew and many other ancient languages are read in this way.

Using this as a starting point, Old Testament expert Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard University made a phonetic translation. It was, he concluded, the Ten Commandments direct from Exodus 20: 2-17. "I am Yahweh thy God who brought thee out of the land . . ."

But Dr. Pfeiffer's interpretation still did not tell us who carved the inscription. Nor when. Could it be that the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel had somehow found their way to the desolate wastes of New Mexico's Rio Puerco Valley?

Further comments came from Dr. Frank Hibben of the University of New Mexico's Anthropology Department. Dr. Hibben had first examined the carving in 1936. He did not dispute Pfeiffer's translation but believed it to be the work of Mormon immigrants who crossed the West in the 19th century.

There had been Mormon settlements along the Puerco to the north, but could there possibly have been a Mormon pioneer learned in ancient Phoenician, Hebrew and Cyrillic?

The mystery seemed only to deepen. Was the inscription pre-Columbian or a relic of the American Frontier? Where had its makers come from and where had they gone? Many questions remained unanswered but at least the message had been translated.

Or had it?

In the early 1960s, an Albuquerque petroglyph expert, Robert H. LaFollette, took an interest in the stone. For some reason, LaFollette was not satisfied with the previous explanations. He began working on his own. By first determining the phonetic sounds for each of the strange Phoenician characters, he was able to read the inscription aloud. Much to his surprise, the reading sounded very much like Navajo.

August, 1973

A quick check of the BIA's Navajo dictionary confirmed it. LaFollette, with the help of a Navajo interpreter, translated the rock's message into English and found it to be a story of an epic journey. It told of a people, pursued by enemies and fleeing across the water. There was an account of a battle and an ordeal of hunger and thirst. The travelers met other tribes, were aided by them and at last arrived at a river where they built their homes.

Now, there were two completely different translations of the same inscription and the LaFollette interpretation again posed more questions than it answered.

The Navajos of today have no written language. If the Navajos were employing stone writing at the time of their arrival in the Southwest and the language they wrote was Phoenician in origin, why then did their Athabaskan ancestors in Canada not have the same written language?

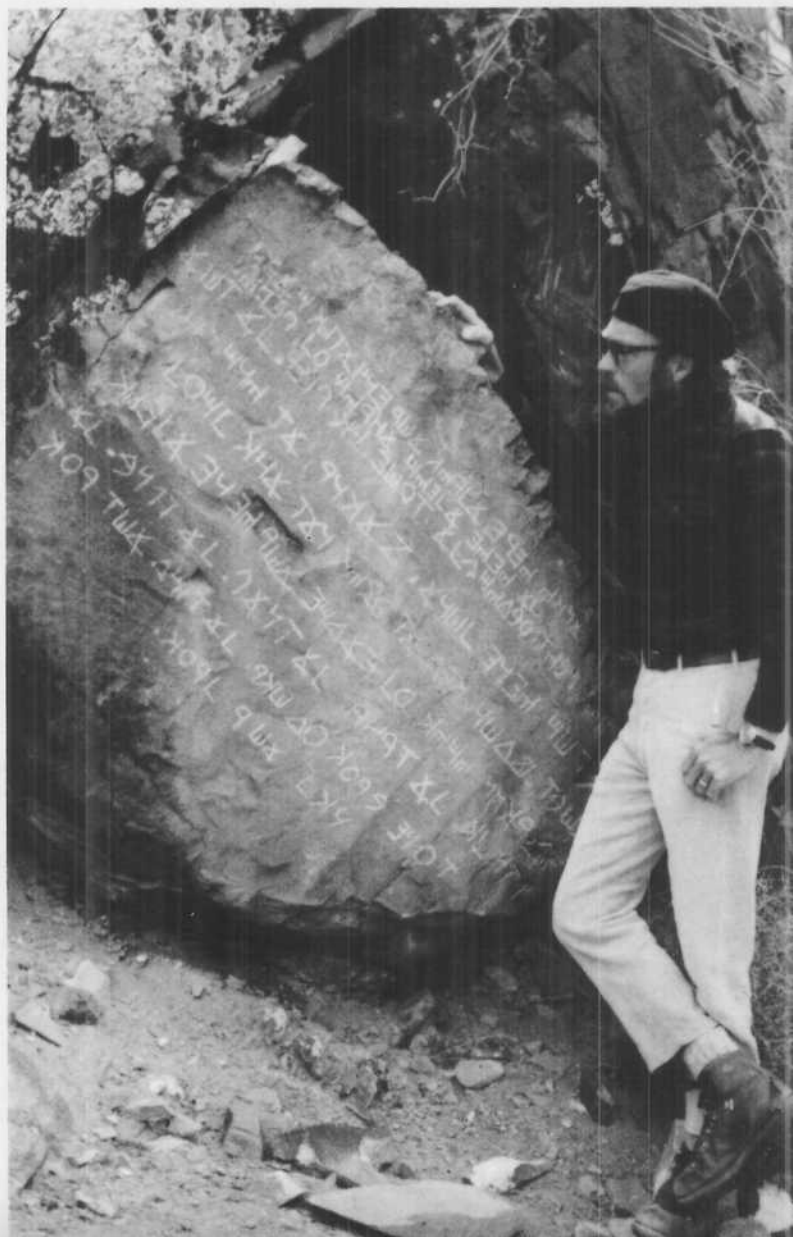
Puzzles seem to appear within puzzles. The more the Mystery Stone is studied, the deeper its mystery grows. Let us leave the stone for a moment and climb on to the top of the mesa itself.

From the summit, a magnificent desert panorama spreads in all directions. The muddy Rio Puerco follows its tortured, twisted course through wild, empty country. To the east, the escarpment of the Manzano Mountains rises sharply and to the west, a maze of tablelands and canyons pile one behind the other. It is an awe inspiring view and we quickly realize we are not the first to have seen it.

Scattered over the hump-like crest of Inscription Mountain, the broken ruins of many Indian pithouses are clearly visible while along the edge of the mesa, dozens of petroglyphs, the Indian rock drawings appear. There can be no doubt that this desert hill once hosted an Indian village.

Continued on Page 41

*Author
examines
stone
writings
that remain
as much
a mystery
today as
when first
discovered.*





*Coming through
"The Squeeze."
Photo by Jim Huie,
Escondido, California.*

CALIFORNIA'S 16 MILLION acres of desert is a place of wide variety that provides most "desert rats" with their own favorite areas.

Maybe you like the sand hills, where tiny insect trails crisscross rippled dunes. The pinyon-clad high desert might attract you in the warmer months where the wide-open mesquite flats invite you to wander on foot. Or perhaps the deeply eroded hill country is your favorite.

Whatever your choice, rarely are all of these environments found closely together. But Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in San Diego County offers such a place along a 35-mile jeep route that's as exciting as they come.

I call it the "Scrapbook Trail" because it covers the desert from top to bottom, showing the visitor historic high points of both natural and human significance.

This route, from Pinyon Mountain east to Fish Creek, can be traveled easily in one day, or there is enough to see to keep you busy for a week or more.

The Pinyon-Fish Creek route is a four-wheel-drive trail only. It is rugged, requiring some skill, but there is little danger and only a few places where real caution is needed.

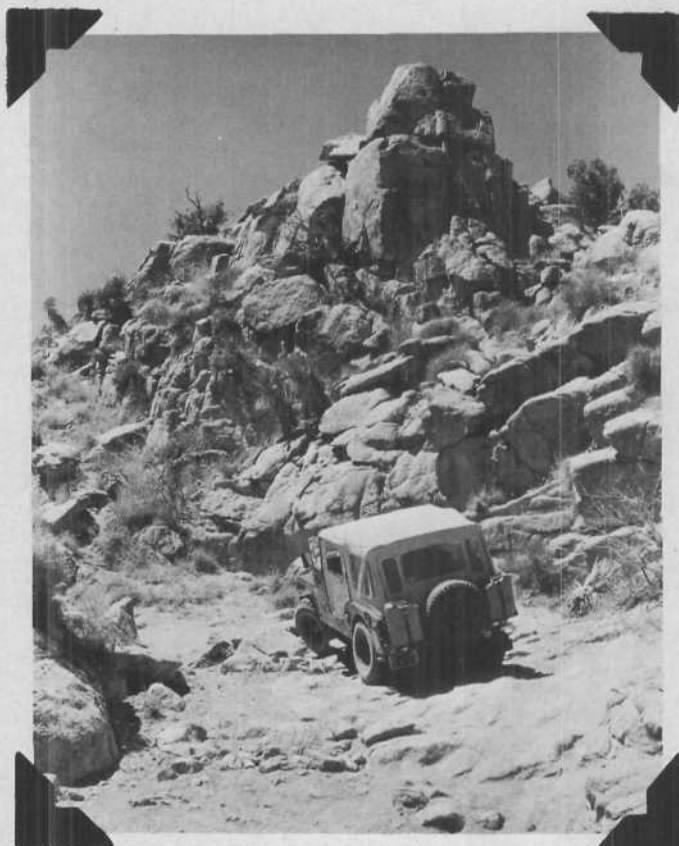
I have traveled the route many times, often spending as many as three days to



Above: A Jeep goes down "Heart Attack Hill" with a view northeast across Harper's Flat. Below: The trail out of Pinyon Wash gets rocky and required four-wheel drive. From this point it is just a short distance to "Heart Attack Hill."

Anza-Borrego's Scrapbook Trail

by Ernie Cowan



cover the distance. To gather pictures and details for this story, however, I started early one morning from Escondido for a day trip. Two old desert buddies, Jim Huie and Earl Watson were along for the ride. By 5 p.m. we were back on pavement and when it was all over we couldn't remember when we had enjoyed a day in the desert more.

There's a catch to this particular trip that I had better tell you about early. The catch is called the "Squeeze," or "Fat Man's Misery."

About seven miles up Pinyon Mountain Road is a narrow rock opening, only a few inches wider than six feet. I have taken a Jeep Wagoneer through the Squeeze, but anything wider won't make it without some damage. The best bet is a smaller

four-wheel-drive rig or a dunebuggy.

So, if you're set, buckle up and let's hit the trail and see what there is to see.

To reach the Scrapbook Trail, take state Highway 78 in San Diego County to the junction with county road S-2, about 12 miles east of the old mining town of Julian. Now paved, S-2 was once the route of the Butterfield Overland Stage between 1858 and 1861.

Turn east on S-2 and follow the pavement about four miles until you see one of the large brown and yellow state park signs on the right. On the left you will notice a small trail post the same color. Here is where you turn off to begin your adventure into Pinyon Mountain Valley.

The road climbs a long sloping mesal flat, once roamed by Indians who made

good use of the many items of plant life here. Evidence of the Indian can be found in several places along this trail. Their legacy is broken pottery, bedrock morteros and pictographs.

The wide mesal flat soon narrows into a compact little canyon and the road begins to seesaw over successive ridges as you climb into the pinyon-juniper belt, a fantastic area of high desert. The air is rich and clean, the plant life more profuse than at lower desert elevations and the altitude affords views for miles in many directions.

The road passes between two huge mountains, Pinyon on the north and Vallecito on the south. Both peaks are covered with the stunted desert pine called pinyon. The seeds of the pine were once sought by Indians who would trek into the area and gather the cones before the seeds fell. The nuts were then stored and eaten after being removed from the cones.

On the north side of the road just beyond Pinyon Mountain, you will notice a huge pinyon tree. It stands alone on the valley floor and can be seen for a long distance as you approach. This particular pinyon is perhaps the largest in the state park. A short side road leads to the tree and on a warm day its filtered shade makes a pleasant picnic spot.

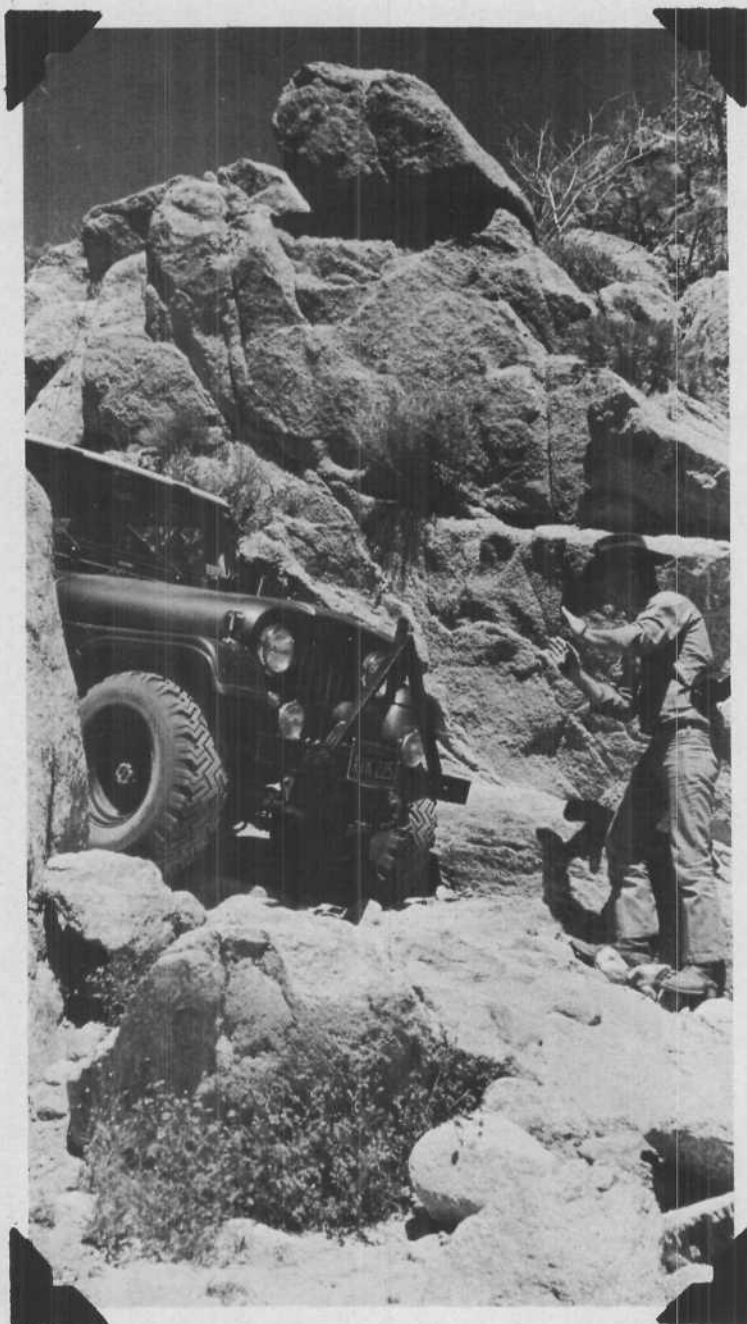
From here on the real fun begins.

About a mile beyond the monarch pinyon, you come to the Squeeze that I warned you about earlier. No matter how small your vehicle, it's best to have someone guide you through this tight spot. I have seen gas cans scraped and rear view mirrors shattered on the unyielding rocks.

The real four-wheeling begins at this point. Remember, you are in a state park, so stick to the existing route. Let me tell you, it's rough enough as it is.

The trail stays in the wash for about a half-mile after popping through the squeeze, then makes a hard right and follows a rocky path up a smaller wash. This is sometimes hard to find, so keep a sharp eye out. If you do miss it, don't worry, because you can only go about a half-mile more in the main wash.

The road climbs a ridge and at the summit there is a panoramic view to the northeast, across Harper Flat wilderness area, the rugged Sunset Mountains and the Salton Sea. Just a few hundred yards more brings you to "Heart Attack Hill."



*Jim Huie
of Escondido,
California,
guides
a Jeep
through
"The Squeeze."*

*Afternoon shadows
give texture to the
mountains as we drive
along Fish Creek Wash
at one of its wider points
near the junction
with Loop Wash.*



At this point you have your choice of dropping over, or dropping out. I have seen two vehicles rolled on this very steep hill, both the result of careless driving. The key point is to let your engine compression be the brakes. Don't hit the brakes, because you might begin to slide and turn sideways. The hill is straight, with no side slope, so with this technique you should have no difficulty.

Up until a few years ago I was able to drive up the hill, but it is badly rutted and chewed up now, making it almost impossible to go any way but down.

So, this is the point of no return. Once over the hill, you must continue on to Split Mountain. Make sure you have water and the basic emergency gear before committing yourself. It's a long way to the local garage from here.

After the dropoff, the road continues winding down over a series of small ridges into Pinyon Wash once again. You can turn left at this junction and follow the wash back to the west a short distance.

A hike of a few hundred yards further will bring you to one of two large concrete dams, filled to the brim with sand. Out of the wash to the left is an old cabin.

These were built by a family named Harper who ran cattle in the big flats just August, 1973

to the east. The dams were constructed in the early 1920s to provide a water source for the animals. Heavy runoff quickly filled them with sand and an outbreak of anthrax wiped out the cattle, putting an end to the whole project.

On a day trip, this is a good half-way point and makes for an interesting lunch stop. From here Pinyon Wash continues to run east, then turns north. At this point the state park rangers have put a fence across the road, closing the vast expanse of Harper's Flat to motor vehicles.

Harper's Flat measures about four miles long and two miles wide. It's a great place to explore on foot. In a March 1972 *Desert* story I told of efforts by park rangers to re-introduce the desert tortoise to this area. More than 20 tortoises were collected and released here in Anza-Borrego State Park.

As you follow the Pinyon-Fish Creek trail, you may come across one of these new residents. If you do, look for a number etched on its shell and report this to rangers. Please don't pick him up for a pet, as it's against the law.

From the entrance to Harper's Flat, the road loops back south and begins a climb out of the wash. It pops out at the top of a long, sloping fan known as Hapaha

Flat. From this point the view to the southeast includes the Carrizo Badlands, Carrizo Mountains and Signal Mountain on the horizon. You are now in Fish Creek Wash and the next 20 miles to pavement is down hill all the way.

After crossing Hapaha Flat, the canyon walls again rise and narrow down as you enter an area of ancient sea beds that have been uplifted and eroded, forming deep character lines on this desert face. This is canyon country with several marked washes that lead into narrow maze-like canyons.

One of the most interesting is Sandstone Canyon. You will probably reach this point toward mid-afternoon. Try and set some time aside to see this spectacular gorge. It's well marked, so you can't miss it.

Sandstone Canyon is about three miles long and in places just wide enough for a vehicle. There are high sandstone walls that hang out, over the canyon floor in places.

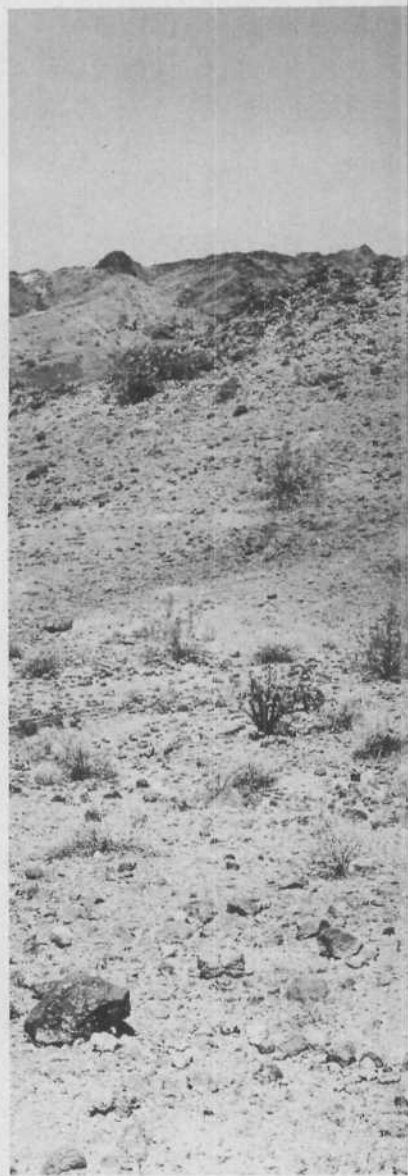
On this trip I put my camera bag over my shoulder and set out alone for a hike up canyon away from my companions. As I walked into the muffled silence of the canyon, I watched a redtail hawk gliding overhead.

Continued on Page 40



Left: Picacho Peak, landmark on the hidden gold ledge trail, and Picacho Basin, where principal mines of the region are located.

Below: Ed Rochester, on the mesa near Ferguson Lake, the approximate spot where the Indian boy began his cross-country trek with Devine.



YUMA GOLD!

by Harold O. Weight

Harold Weight, whose literary efforts have not been seen in **DESERT** Magazine for many years, comes on strong with a tale of a lost ledge of gold near the California-Arizona border. Many of the facts appear in print for the first time and, with the price of gold??

SOMEWHERE SOUTHEAST of old Picacho Peak, between the peak and the Colorado River, tradition says, lies a rich golden ledge which has been known to the Yuma Indians for generations and through those long years was systematically concealed by them from prying eyes of Mexican and American prospectors. This hidden gold of Yuma is located, Ed Rochester believed, close beside an ancient Indian trail perhaps four miles southwest

of the lower edge of Ferguson Lake. Ferguson Lake, almost due east of Picacho Peak, was Ferguson Flats before the Colorado River backed up behind Imperial Dam.

The Yuma Gold is one of three tantalizing lost mine legends which inhabit this wild region of desert hills, basins and washes in far southeastern California. The others—the Lost Sullivan, east from Pebble Mountain, and the Colorado River Lost Dutchman, northwest of Imperial Dam—I have related in earlier issues of *Desert Magazine*.

Ed Rochester knew more about the hidden Yuma Gold than any other man, having collected scraps and bits of its history for more than thirty years from Indians, from whites, from any source he could tap. It was his unshaken conviction, through the years he and I hunted and talked lost mines, that the Yuma ledge, the Sullivan and the Dutchman were really one and the same, independently discovered at different times from different directions.

I could not, still cannot accept the Sullivan and the Dutchman as the same ledge. But neither can I deny that, as Ed demonstrated long ago, when the waybills to these three lost mines are worked out on

a map, the search lines will converge and if carried far enough, intersect.

Ed was too knowledgeable a prospector and practical a miner to chase any fabled bonanza full time. But he was certain that the Yuma gold did exist, and hunted it periodically as a pastime and a challenge. And requesting only that I would not publish or publicize the story while his quest for the ledge continued, he discussed his progress—or lack of it—freely, tape-recording his findings and opinions for me through the 1950s.

He died in January 1962, with the Yuma ledge still unfound and the story he had hoped to compile of his search for it still unwritten.

Ed's significant involvement with the hidden Yuma Gold began in the early 1920s, although he had heard of it from his first days on the river. At that time he was out on the mesa near Senator Wash—"perhaps prospecting, perhaps hunting game." Seeing a horseman riding through the country, he cut the man's trail and passed the time of day with him.

The rider was J. E. Devine — better known as "Deacon" or "Deke" Devine to the Colorado River people. He had been editor of the Yuma newspaper, the *Sun*, from 1899 through 1904.

continued



Ferguson Flats in the process of becoming Ferguson Lake, with water building up behind Imperial Dam. Devine is supposed to have tied up his boat somewhere along the river, right of center, and to have climbed with the Indian boy, up one of the ridges shown.





Ed Rochester, Earl Kerr and Charley Curtis, in the old Tom Riley store, where they were then living, at Picacho in 1951. This was a period when Ed and Earl were actively searching for the hidden Yuma gold.

"You prospecting?" Devine asked Rochester.

"Well, I have been prospecting," Ed answered, "but it looks like pretty low-grade country."

Devine shook his head. "You wouldn't think it, but there's a very rich mine back in there somewhere."

When he was editor of the *Sun*, he went on, a young Yuma (or Quechan) Indian worked for him in the newspaper office. The boy was quick, intelligent, edu-

cated—he had been to school, probably Sherman Institute. But like so many of his people, he was suffering from tuberculosis, and was not strong. Devine gave him work in the print shop which was within his physical capabilities, and helped him in such ways as he could.

In those days, most newspaper editors in mining country were themselves deeply involved in mining. Deke owned numerous claims, and projected himself whenever possible. And, of course, there was almost constant talk of mines, ledges and discoveries around the office. One of the first things a prospector would do, hitting town after making a strike (after "wetting his whistle" at a favorite saloon, of course), would be to take his prize samples to show the newspaper editor.

The young Indian listened to this talk, looked at the specimens, witnessed Deke's excitement. One day he said to the editor: "You want gold? Some day I will show you where there is lots of gold."

Deke wouldn't leave it at that, and under his eager questioning, the boy told this story. When he was very young, before he had gone off to school, one day he and his father came down the old Indian foot trail between Picacho and the Potholes, which was located on the Colorado River at the site of present Laguna dam. There had been a heavy storm with a great deal of runoff just before the Indian and his son made their journey. And at one place the father left the trail and led the way down into a nearby wash. In the bed of the wash was a ledge, richly studded with visible gold, which had been uncovered by the flood waters.

Leaving the gold untouched, the older Indian gathered heavy boulders and placed

them on the ledge so that it was completely concealed. Only the Yuma Indians knew that the ledge existed, he told his son, and it was the duty of the first one along this trail after a storm to make sure the ledge was covered, so no white prospector might discover it.

Then they returned to the trail, and continued on down to the Potholes and the Yuma Reservation.

The young Indian had only been there that one time, and that was years before, but he had thought he could find the ledge again. Devine gave him no peace until he agreed to try.

The exact date of the expedition the two made up river does not seem to be of record. Ed Rochester said it was in the early stages of construction, or of preparations for construction of the Laguna dam. Devine had a power boat which he had leased to workers at the dam site. The two drove up to Laguna, obtained the boat, and continued on up the Colorado. At the lower end of Ferguson Flats, following the boy's directions, they landed and secured the boat.

"Now we walk," the young Indian said.

Long ago, on a U. S. Geological Survey quad, Ed Rochester marked the probable spot where Devine had tied his boat.

"You know how these washes come in here at the lower end of Ferguson Lake," he said. "Well, they climbed up on one of these ridges, between the washes, and they walked south and west. You remember, when we were in there, there's a kind of basin back there. They seemed to be heading for that basin. But when they had gone almost four miles—maybe three and a half—the Indian boy sat down. He was sick and exhausted, and could go no farther.

"He was so bad Devine thought he was going to die right there. He had almost to carry him back to the boat, and then rushed him down to Yuma and into a hospital. I think the old building there just at the end of the old bridge was a hospital in those days.

"With care the boy got better. But when he was well enough to leave the hospital, he just sneaked away, across the river and into the arrowweeds. Devine never saw him again, but he heard that he died only a short time later.

"It wasn't mineral country right where the Indian boy collapsed. But the more

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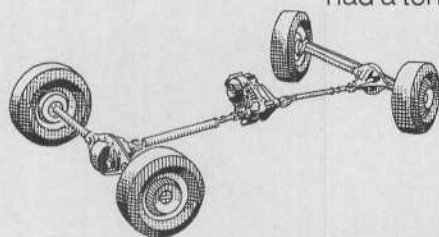
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Devine thought about it, the more convinced he was that they had been close to the hidden ledge. He thought that, maybe, was why the boy got sick. Because he was showing a white man the ledge, and they were in sight of it. He was a Yuma Indian, and there has never been any record of any full-blooded Yuma ever showing any white man any gold.

"The gold taboo was a very strong taboo with the old Yumas. The oldtimers. As far as I was able to learn, it was a taboo that went back before the whites came—even the early Spaniards. It's not easy to get that kind of information from an Indian, because a great many of the

some of the stronger Yuma men to pack the gold out of the country, and none of these men ever returned home.

"Then a great flood came which put the invaders at a disadvantage, and the Yumas killed them and turned their bodies into mountains or hills to protect their villages from the flood waters. Pilot Knob is one of those hills. Then—since the gold had enslaved them and had been a curse to them, they threw it into the river—and their leader put a taboo on it.

"There wasn't any tribal enforcement of this taboo, or any punishment by the tribe for breaking it. None was needed. An Indian *knew* that if he violated that taboo,

I knew his mother, and she was only quarter-Indian, so I suppose that's what the uncle was. No more than that. Johnny had even more European blood, so maybe they figured it would be all right for him to get the gold.

"Johnny told me they went up the trail that swings off east from Pebble Mountain. Back in that country. Then they climbed up on a little hill or mesa where they could see quite an area of land.

" 'Well, now — you look,' the uncle said. Then he left Johnny there on the hill, and high-tailed it out of sight and came back to the reservation here. Apparently he knew the location of the ledge, but had too much Yuma blood to monkey with it. It was dangerous for him.

"And Johnny, left there all alone, lost heart. He looked around for a little while, but he didn't look too strongly. He didn't see any ledge, so he figured it wasn't in the cards for him to find the gold. He came back here. He never looked again.

"You know, there are gold ledges and deposits all over this country. The Yumas must have known where they were. They know everything else about the land. They know, and have told me, where every other kind of rock is. But I can think of only one old Indian who is supposed to have mined and sold gold. That was old Catula, and I don't know but what he was a half-breed. Or maybe he had just married into the Yumas. Anyhow, if he did break the taboo, the only thing that happened to him was that he died of old age.

"This Catula, he used to live up there around the Potholes, and was supposed to have dug out a lot of placer gold. Supposed to have been placer, but I never saw any of it. Not right at the Potholes. Back somewhere north of the reservation. Maybe it was a little dry placer he found up there, by the Lost Yuma or Lost Sullivan, or whatever you want to name it. He and this woman used to go up that way and be gone for quite a while and come back with gold. He died not so long ago, and Indians around here will tell you that a relative of his has got fruit jars full of gold that old Catula placered out somewhere."

To return to Deke Devine, after the young Indian vanished, the editor decided he would go back to the place where the



Photo from Weight collection

The mining camp of the Potholes, on the Colorado River, at the present site of Laguna Dam. Picture shows the camp as it was about the time Devine and the Yuma Indian boy made their trip to locate the Yuma gold ledge.

oldtimers have a reluctance to tell their stories, and the young ones don't know them. I don't believe that *anybody* has ever got too much truth from a Yuma Indian regarding this mythology. But I'm just of the opinion that I've come as near doing that as anyone has. And by questioning some of the old Indians who have since died, this is what I got.

"They didn't try to set any date, because when you ask a date, they just say it was a long time ago. They didn't mention any names, because after an Indian has died, his name is never mentioned again. But a long, long time ago these strange people came in from the south searching for gold, and they found it. They came in great numbers, apparently, or else with superior weapons. They forced

he would die—and he just proceeded to die. The younger generation, though, you just can't tell what they think about that. They are right betwixt and between. They believe it and they don't believe it.

"The principal taboo was against showing any outsider any gold. You'll find that in most of these stories where an Indian is persuaded to show someone a gold deposit, he will never take you directly to a spot and say: 'Here is the gold.' He'll take you to the vicinity, and you're supposed to find the gold yourself.

"An Indian named Johnny Black — killed in an auto accident a couple of years ago—told me that when he was a young man, his uncle on his mother's side took him to show him a gold vein—this one I've been looking for, I think.

boy had collapsed, and from there make a serious search for the golden ledge. He returned to the landing spot at the lower end of Ferguson Flats, tied up the boat, climbed to the mesa. But once there he could not pick up the trail they had followed, could not recognize the route they had taken. In search after search through that country, he could not find the hidden ledge.

Unable to continue the search himself, he grubstaked two prospectors to take up the quest. One day they came excitedly down to Yuma with several pieces of very high grade ore. From their description of their strike, Devine was not certain whether it was the ledge he had been hunting. But it was well worth investigating.

Then, the night before the prospectors were to lead Deke to their discovery, they got into a saloon brawl. The one who actually had found the high grade ore disappeared and the editor never saw him again. The other could not—or would not—relocate the ledge from which the samples had come. Neither could Devine find it, then or later.

As Rochester traced it out, the main Indian trail between the Potholes and Picacho followed up the big wash just east of the present Picacho road (which Ed called Big Picacho Wash) until it reached Pebble Mountain. There it divided. One branch went on past the mountain and finally into Carrizo Wash. The other turned east at Pebble Mountain, curving around to enter Marcus Wash. This latter must have been the one for which the Indian boy was heading when

he and Devine hiked in from Ferguson Flats. The Yuma Gold must be hidden in a wash close to that trail.

If so, why haven't the thorough searches made uncovered it? Perhaps a principal reason is that even along main trails, especially near the river, there were many variations, cutoffs, intersections and crossings, at times forming almost a network, and varying even according to the season of the year.

Once only in his searches, Ed Rochester found a place that fitted Devine's description perfectly.

Continued on Page 30

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Little Colorado

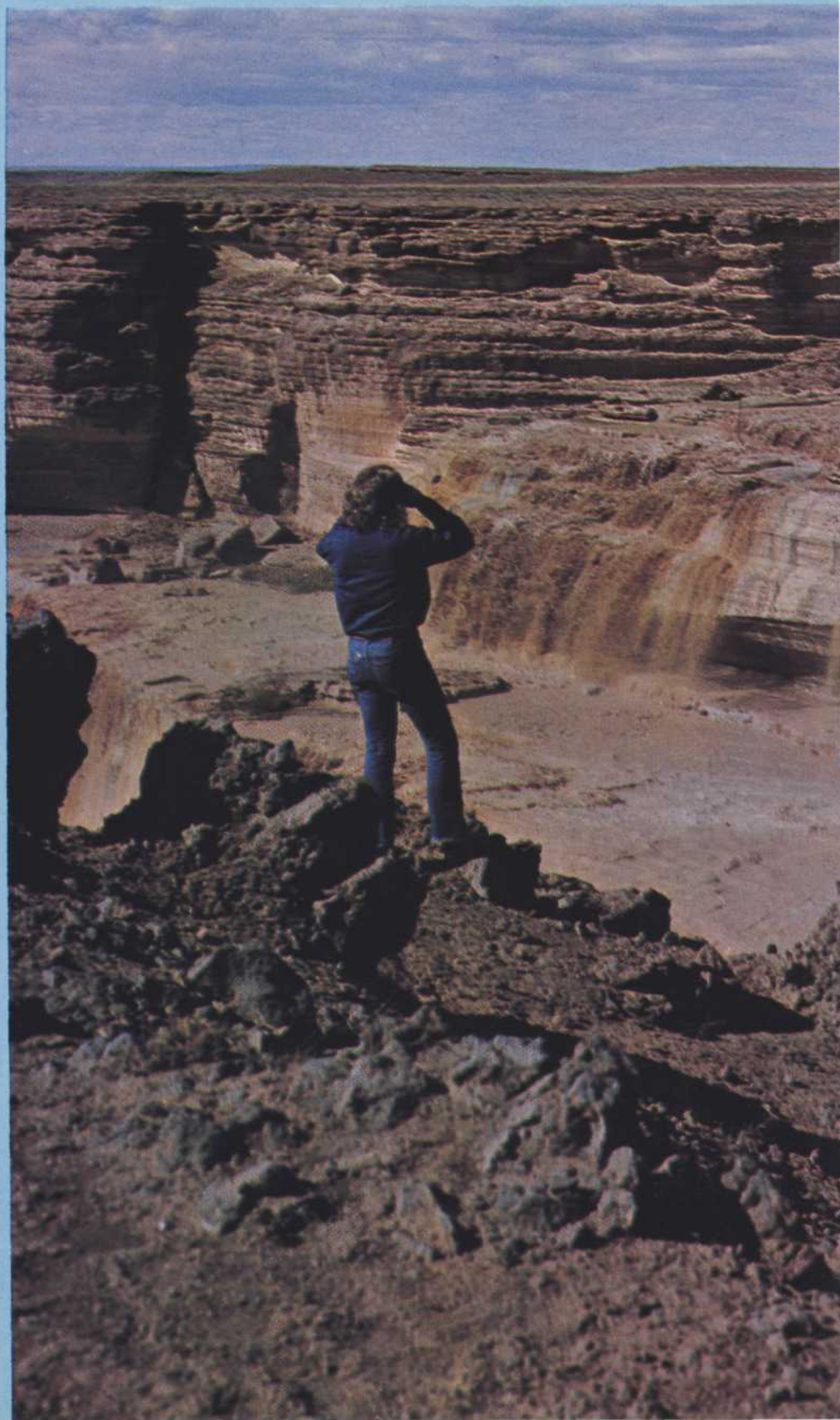
by
James
Harris

A PROSPECTOR, LOST in the deserts of northern Arizona, dying of thirst, would not believe his eyes if he stumbled upon Grand Falls. Located on the Little Colorado River, 45 miles northeast of Flagstaff, Arizona, this spectacular waterfall only flows an average of a few weeks each year. But when it is "on" it is something else.

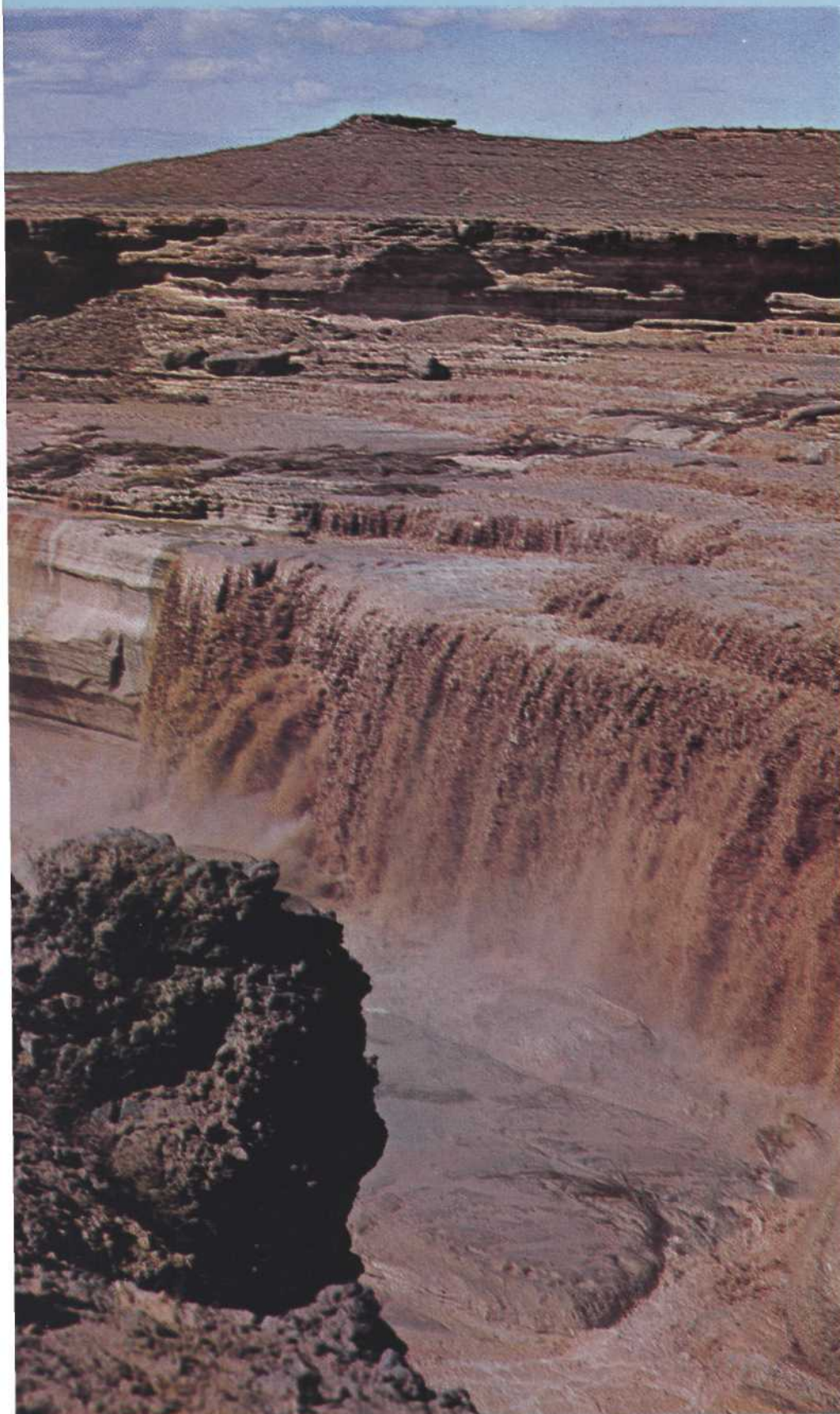
Reportedly higher, 185 feet, and wider, 300 feet, than the famed Niagara Falls in New York (depending upon which Almanac you read), Grand Falls is currently flowing at an amazing rate of 8000 cubic feet of water per second.

Due to the high content of heavy red clay and minerals in the surrounding terrain, the water coming over the falls is a dark brown color, hence it's nickname "Chocolate Falls." The cascading waters form a spray which coats everything and everyone in the area with a fine, red silt. Due to the very heavy snowfall in the mountains around Flagstaff which feed the Little Colorado (over 200 inches in the winter of 1972), runoff assures Grand Falls a long life this season.

Created thousands of years ago by a violent eruption of Rodin's Crater, a few miles southwest of the Falls, the Little Colorado, one of the few rivers to flow northward for a time, once flowed over the Moenkopi sandstone. The river's canyon extended upstream in a straight line at the same depth. Then came the eruption and molten lava streamed into the river bed, filling the gorge of the canyon and extending over the opposite rim. The lava stream eventually extended 20 miles down the canyon. The lava flow



o's Grand Falls



*A visitor surveys
Grand Falls, running at
half capacity.
This photo was taken
during spring, 1973 runoff.*

made a very effective dam and a lake formed. The lake overflowed around the end of the lava dam and plunged over the fall of its former canyon. This is how Grand Falls came into being.

Grand Falls is located on the Navajo Reservation and is under the Tribe's jurisdiction. Visitors are welcome. The Falls is sometimes difficult to find because, in spite of the size of this phenomenon, its roar cannot be heard until one is standing practically on the rim. This makes actual visual sighting of the Falls a necessity.

At one time, the Little Colorado carried a much greater water flow. In 1851, the U. S. War Department instructed a Captain Sitgreaves and his command to determine if the river was navigable to the sea. It was at Sitgreave's camp a mile above the Falls that he finally decided the river was not navigable and then set out for California overland. Today, after years of semi-drought, it is hard to imagine the Little Colorado flowing on such a scale as to even justify such an expedition.

Visitors wishing to see the Falls, but not want to take the chance of driving 45 miles and being disappointed by a trickle flow, can call the U. S. Geological Survey's Water Resources Bureau in Flagstaff for a report on the Falls' capacity and condition.

Sightseers take Highway 89A north from Flagstaff three miles, turn onto the Leupp Road and follow that to a left-hand turnoff onto dirt clearly marked with a "Grand Falls" sign. It's a 10-mile drive over passable dirt road to the Falls. □

August, 1973

*Travertine Springs consists of
numerous springs, many of which
have formed deep pools.
This area was a favorite campsite
of the Mono Indians.*



FUN in BRIDGEPORT Valley

by Mary Frances Strong

photos by
Jerry Strong

SURROUNDED BY mountains, with the serrated peaks of Sawtooth Ridge providing a formidable backdrop, lies California's Bridgeport Valley—one of the Eastern Sierra Nevada's fine recreation areas. In this alpine setting, outdoor enthusiasts can pursue their interests be they camping, fishing, exploring, hiking, swimming, bottle, rock and artifact collecting, ghost town hopping, visiting geological points of interest or just relaxing in picturesque mountain country. Everyone is sure to enjoy a vacation of "summer fun in Bridgeport Valley."

Perhaps of first concern are the camping facilities. You will find every type available. Two trailer parks on the eastern shore of Bridgeport Reservoir offer full hookups. Five miles north of Bridgeport, on Highway 395, in Huntoon Valley Campground; a small improved, forestry camp with tables, stoves and sanitary facilities. No fee is charged. Swauger Creek runs through the camp and is regularly stocked for fishing.

Eight miles southwest of town along the Twin Lakes Road, are several excellent Forestry campgrounds — Honeymoon, Paha (closed in Sept. 1972), Robinson Creek and Sawmill Creek. The latter has a "cycle trail" for those who enjoy this two-wheeled sport. Each campground is well-laid out and provides stoves, tables, water and sanitary facilities. Trailer limitation is 22 feet. The fee is \$1.00 per day.

Our personal choice for camping is a group of unimproved sites along the East Walker River which begin below the dam

and follow the river north about 10 miles. They are ideal for S/C units and offer an esthetic setting, privacy and fishing at your doorstep.

The town of Bridgeport can provide any needed supplies, including excellent homemade bread at the local bakery. For those who do not wish to camp, there are motels in town. No doubt reservations would be advisable during the height of the season.

After getting settled, your first step should be the Bridgeport Ranger Station on Highway 395, four miles north of town. They can furnish you with several good maps of the region showing the many points of interest. You will find the friendly crew willing to help you all they can. Four-wheelers will find the maps invaluable for exploring the numerous back-country trails.

There are so many scenic and historical areas in and around Bridgeport Valley that one vacation could not include visits to every location, especially if some time is spent fishing and loafing. Instead, let's discuss the highlights that should be included on the first trip to this region.

You will find the scenic route to Twin Lakes an enjoyable drive. Take along your lunch and look over the campgrounds on Robinson Creek. You may elect to use one (if you didn't this time) on a subsequent visit.

Since Bridgeport Valley is at an elevation of 6427 feet, it is an easy climb to the 7000-foot lakes. The paved road crosses meadows where herds of cattle

graze, passes a well-known guest ranch, then continues up Robinson Creek. You will find Twin Lakes are two blue jewels lying in a very narrow canyon near the base of Sawtooth Ridge. Many private chalets have been built along the southern lake shores and give a "Swiss" atmosphere to the alpine setting.

The road ends on the western edge of the lakes at a private resort where a campground with hookups is available. This area is also one of the trail entrances



The "warty" exteriors of the nodules and geodes in Huntoon Valley give no indication of the beauty hidden inside.



Dandy grass-covered campsite will be found along the East Walker River, north of Bridgeport.

to Hoover Wilderness Area which was established in 1931. It was named after former President Herbert Hoover who spent many boyhood vacations in the area and returned in later years as the Superintendent of the Bodie Mines.

Wilderness areas have been set aside as a means of keeping them in a wild state—free from all civilization. There are no roads and motorized transportation is not permitted within their boundaries. Man can visit but not remain. Hoover

Wilderness encompasses 42,800 acres of primitive forest where bears, bobcat, mule deer, coyote and mountain lion still roam. Travel through the region is by foot or horseback, giving man the opportunity to study nature and enjoy solitude. The latter is becoming a rare commodity in our modern society.

Another pleasant drive is down the canyon of the East Walker River. This route was originally known as the Dardanelles Toll Road. Stages from Virginia

City regularly used the route on their runs to Bodie. If you haven't visited the famous ghost town of Bodie, now a State Historic Park, you will find it a dandy one day trip.

The river drive will take you past Murphy's Pond, perhaps the most beautiful stretch of the East Walker River. Just south of Frying Pan Creek and east of the highway, lie the stone ruins of Williams Stage Station—one in a series of several along the route. Beyond is Devil's Gate and the Nevada State Line.

Four-wheelers will find adventure following the old routes to Masonic, Aurora, Star City and other back-country trails in the Sweetwater Mountains and Bodie Hills. They are shown on the Bridgewater Ranger District Map, Sec. 1-D.

Numerous hot springs occur in the Bridgeport Region and a few have been developed into small spas. One of the most interesting is Travertine Springs, two miles southeast of town. A visit to the springs will let you observe "travertine in the making" as they burp, bubble, steam and deposit the calcareous material. Several of the springs have formed sizeable pools with borders as brightly-colored as the "mod" print. Water cascades forth from smaller springs leaving brilliant colors trailing down the hillsides. At one time, considerable travertine marble was mined and used for decorative purposes on several large buildings in San Francisco.

The early Mono Indians — Piutes (meaning "Water Utes" and indicating living near rivers and lakes), had a major campsite near the springs. The "scoured out" primitive tubs indicate they, too, enjoyed hot mineral baths. Many Indian artifacts have been collected in the general area.

Grace Crocker, of the Bridgeport Motor Hotel, and her husband are the owners of Travertine Springs. She is a very friendly person. We talked at length in the charming lounge where table tops and other decorative features were made from the local travertine.

"Desert's readers are welcome to visit Travertine Springs," Grace told me and added, "Permission isn't necessary." Rock collecting is not permitted and it is hoped that everyone visiting the area will abide by this rule. In the past, several club groups have scheduled field trips to the area without attempting to obtain per-

Desert Magazine



Nodules and geodes can be found in and along the dirt road leading to the collecting area in Huntton Valley. The best specimens will be found on the hillside behind the 4-wheeler.

mission. Any such actions in the future will result in a locked gate.

However, there is a fine gem field near Bridgeport where rock collectors will find geodes, nodules and cinnabar-colored opal. I am indebted to Marion Hysell, Fire Control Officer at the Bridgeport Ranger Stations, for sharing the Huntoon Valley location with our readers.

This is an easy-to-reach, as well as an easy collecting locale. From the Ranger Station, drive north on Highway 395 for 5.2 miles. Turn right, ford Swauger Creek keeping ahead .1 mile. Turn right and head east. At .2 mile make another right turn and follow the road along the fence for .4 mile to the base of a hill on the left. Park here. Thousands of geode and nodule fragments will be seen on the ground. Whole ones will be found in float as you walk up the low rounded hill. They are quite plentiful near the top where several small diggings will be seen.

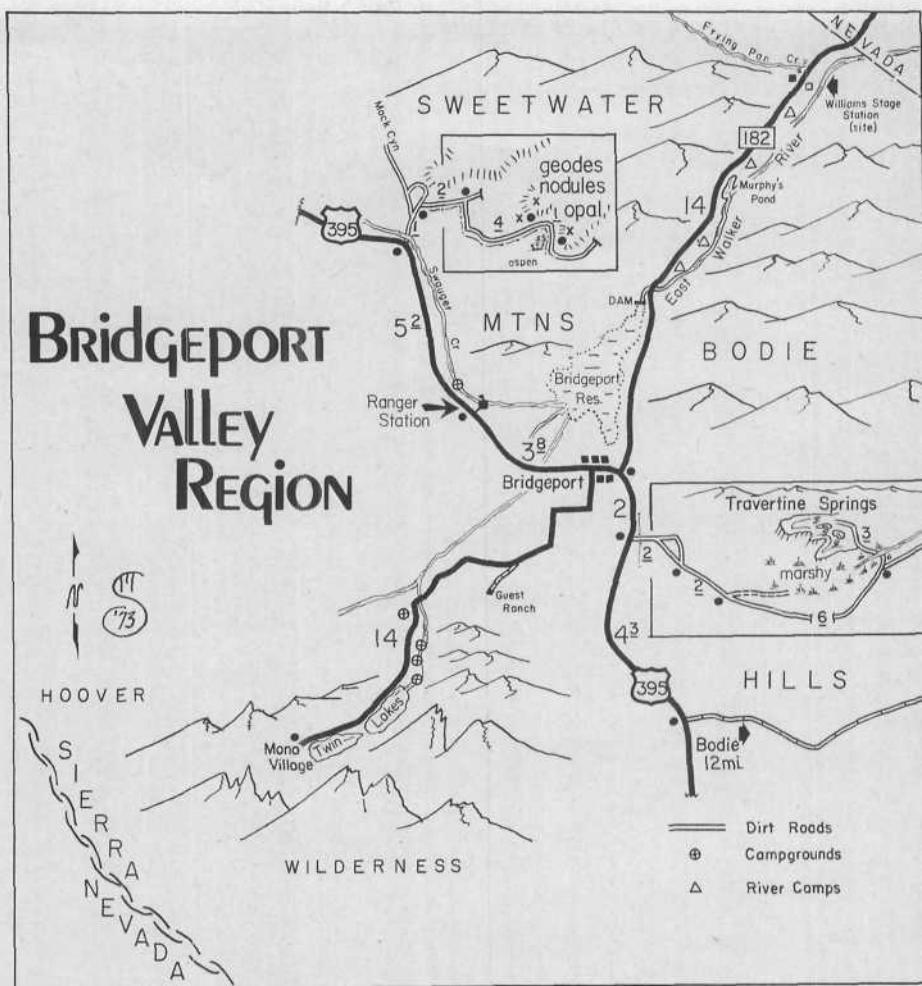
The nodules and geodes have a dark-brown, "warty" matrix and the centers are quite varied. Many are of bluish and fortification agate. Others are filled with quartz while some have sparkling drusy-quartz crystal interiors. We found the nodules of most interest due to their very unusual centers. They are fascinating to cut. One of our specimens contained a solid pink center with dainty, black (manganese) "flowers." Others were mottled blue and green and had large white inclusions which formed perfect carnation blossoms. They are very striking.

Nearly every rockhound I have met seems to enjoy collecting nodules and geodes. Perhaps, this is because there is always an element of surprise when they are cut. In all such material there are many duds but there is also always a chance of finding a special beauty, too.

Bridgeport itself is an historical point of interest. Originally called "Big Meadows" by the Indians living in the area, they saw it as a land of promise. There was plenty of game and pine nuts, good water and natural hot springs to cure their aches and pains. They stayed in spite of the rigors of the hard winters spent in the valley.

Early explorers passing through Big Meadows brought back tales of waist-high grasses, ample water and game. It reached the ears of ranchers throughout the country and in the late 1850s a few came to see this promised land. Men such as N. B.

August, 1973



Hunewill, the Huntoon Brothers and Hiram Leavitt remain familiar today because of valleys, hills and meadows which bear their names.

The first settlers traveling by wagon to Big Meadows were the Whitney Brothers. In a letter to his family William Whitney wrote, "We came into a valley as beautiful as Paradise with the purest water and richest grasses I ever saw." The Whitneys took up ranches in the valley about 1855 as did a number of other settlers.

As more and more people began to settle in Big Meadows, a business district developed. The blacksmith shop was first and conveniently located near the footbridge on the eastern side of the river. A store, hotel and inn soon followed. This little settlement became known as Bridgeport. Many lumber mills were built to supply the material for homes being erected on the new townsite laid out west of the river. This is where Bridgeport stands today.

The little village grew into a bustling town. Dozens of heavy freight wagons came through Bridgeport on their way to Bodie, Lundy and other mining camps to

the south. Stages made regular runs through town enroute to Virginia City or Bodie.

Many of the original buildings are still in use. An old school house is part of the Mono School Museum complex where visitors may enjoy many fine displays of early-day memorabilia. Standing proudly in the center of town is the 1880 courthouse. Other old buildings will be seen along the main street.

May through October are the ideal months for vacation in Big Meadows. Spring brings forth the beauty of nature's rebirth. Summer's sun warms the valley and blends the pungent fragrances of wild grasses and water. Wildflowers add their perfumes and somehow the sky seems to be bluer than elsewhere.

Night finds the great, dark bulwark of the Sierras under a vast canopy of stars. Cool evening breezes rustle gently across the valley. Sleep comes easily in mountain country. You will be awakened by the stillness of early morning and as the greeting of songbirds begin, you will find yourself hurrying to partake of more "summer fun in Bridgeport Valley." □



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WELTON B. WINN, General Manager

Yuma Gold!

Continued from Page 23

"You can drive almost to the spot," he said, "It's on what I am sure is one of the oldest trails through that country, and it's just off the trail. There's a mineralized-looking vein — and the rock looks good enough to eat. A quartz ledge with iron in it. And there's been quite a bit of work done on it—ancient looking work.

"When I saw that, I was just sure I had a lost mine.

"But I took sample after sample, and could never get a color out of it. The ledge itself ran along the side of the wash. That's where the work had been done. Then it dipped and went under the bottom of the wash. But the whole bottom there is filled with boulders. Maybe that's where the mineralization is — and the Yuma Gold. Maybe! But it would take days just to clean the boulders out to find out."

Today, twenty years after Ed saw it, it might not even be possible to find that wash to see what lies under the boulders. The trails are more washed and eroded. All too frequently they are masked or destroyed by motorcycle and four-wheel-drive tracks. Possibly cloudbursts have filled the wash itself, or changed its course.

But the legend of hidden gold in this area is confirmed by other sources than Ed Rochester. Here, for example, is a paragraph from a newspaper story of 1900:

"Then there is the old mine back from the Potholes in San Diego county (this was before Imperial county was created), that was worked by the Spaniards a century and more ago. When the Indians arose and killed their taskmasters, they filled in the shaft and obliterated the trail, but they know where it is to this day. A few years ago a Yuma agreed to show the spot to Dr. DeCoursey of Yuma, but during the journey he became frightened and turned back."

And even more convincing to me is the story told me by another old miner-pro prospector friend and Arizona pioneer—Bill Keiser, also now gone.

"About 1924 I stopped in Yuma on the way to Quartzsite. While there I met an Indian I had known for years. He told me that he had learned of a very rich ledge of gold ore, somewhere between

Yuma and the old mining camp of Picacho. He didn't know where the ledge was, but he had seen the gold. An uncle of his—an oldtime Indian—knew the location. The ledge was from one to two feet wide and it was on a wall or cliff—so that his uncle had to stretch up to reach it. The gold was in a rotten oxidized red iron ore and in brown limonite—wire gold and coarse pieces.

"The old man was very secretive about it, and would not tell him where it was. But every now and then he would sneak away during the night and be gone two or three days, coming back with a small sack of very rich stuff. All my friend knew was that the gold was somewhere between Yuma and Picacho, and not over 25 miles from Yuma.

"My Indian friend took me to a jeweler in Yuma who confirmed the story. Yes, once, sometimes twice, a month an old Indian would come in with about \$20 worth of quartz gold. Mostly wire and coarse gold, for which the jeweler gave \$15 an ounce.

"I met the uncle. He was tall, lanky, wrinkled, and looked at least a hundred years old. He could understand English,

and we explained that if he would show us where the ledge was, we'd give him half interest, and either work or sell it. Either way, he'd get lots more than he was getting now.

"Well, his family needed eats, he said. I agreed to give him \$10 right then—and did—and he agreed to go up to the ledge and take samples for us. Not take the best he saw—just test across the vein in three places along a hundred feet. After he got the samples, he would leave them under a certain culvert, and his nephew would pick them up. If anybody tried to follow him, it would be all off.

"About three days later my friend came over, much excited, with two sacks he had found under the culvert. We opened them and dumped them into a gold pan.

"And we found that the old devil had filled the sacks with ordinary sand and gravel from a wash.

"My friend threw up his hands. 'Well, the old bastard just won't trust any white man,' he said, 'and just the other day he told me I was no better than a white man!'"

And the hidden Yuma Gold remains hidden. ☐

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Washoe Lake from east shore.

Washoe Valley

by Tom Baugh

A FEW SHORT miles north of the Nevada capital at Carson City, Highway 395 crests a gradual rise before dropping into beautiful and historic Washoe Valley. From the top of the rise, the desert-weary traveler is greeted by a panorama of green meadows, pine-clad slopes and the silvery reflection of Washoe Lake.

Most travelers make note of the valley because of its striking oasis-like quality, but unfortunately they hurry on their way to the pleasure palaces of nearby Reno. Few of them are aware of the history of the area, and fewer yet take the time to glance from the ribbon of high speed concrete to notice the abundant wildlife which inhabits the lake and its surroundings.

Without a doubt, the Indians who lived among the pines of the eastern Sierra slopes knew Washoe Valley as a gift from their benevolent diety Pah-Ah. They hunt-

ed the shores of the lake for waterfowl and fished its waters.

The first European settlers in the valley were the faithful congregation of Mormon pioneers under the leadership of Bishop Orson Hyde. Bishop Hyde and his industrious congregation settled in the verdant valley in 1855. Through their efforts, the community of Washoe City grew to become the first county seat of Washoe County, a position now held by Reno. Bishop Hyde and his people were recalled to Salt Lake City by Brigham Young when it appeared that a confrontation might occur between the Mormon settlers in Utah and the government of the United States. The land and holdings of the faithful who responded to Young's call were preempted by other settlers.

The discovery of silver in the mountains to the east of Washoe Valley brought changes to this quiet agricultural meadow land. In 1861, a mill was constructed on

Desert Magazine

the northeast side of the valley to reduce the rich ore from the Comstock Ophir mine. Around the mill grew the bustling town of Ophir. The hectic activity of the silver era soon gave way to the march of history. Ophir and the Washoe City of the 1800s became memories recorded in the tabloids of their era. Today, the small, sedate community of Washoe City has little to remind one of the roistering silver towns of the past.

It was in Washoe Valley that Sandy Bowers, of Comstock fame, built his mansion. This structure has been preserved by the County of Washoe. The surrounding grounds are now a well tended park and tours are conducted daily through the restored mansion by the County Park's staff.

Although heir to the development which has taken place throughout west-central Nevada, Washoe Valley continues to retain much of the natural beauty which has appealed to visitors for the last one hundred years. Washoe Lake remains an important waterfowl nesting habitat. During the spring months, Canada geese nest

on the rush-covered islets which dot the central portion of the lake. Cinnamon teal feed in the ponds on the west side of Highway 395. Colorful avocets perform their courtship rituals along the shallow shores of the tiny inlets and bays. On occasion, the great white pelicans of Pyramid Lake visit the waters of Washoe.

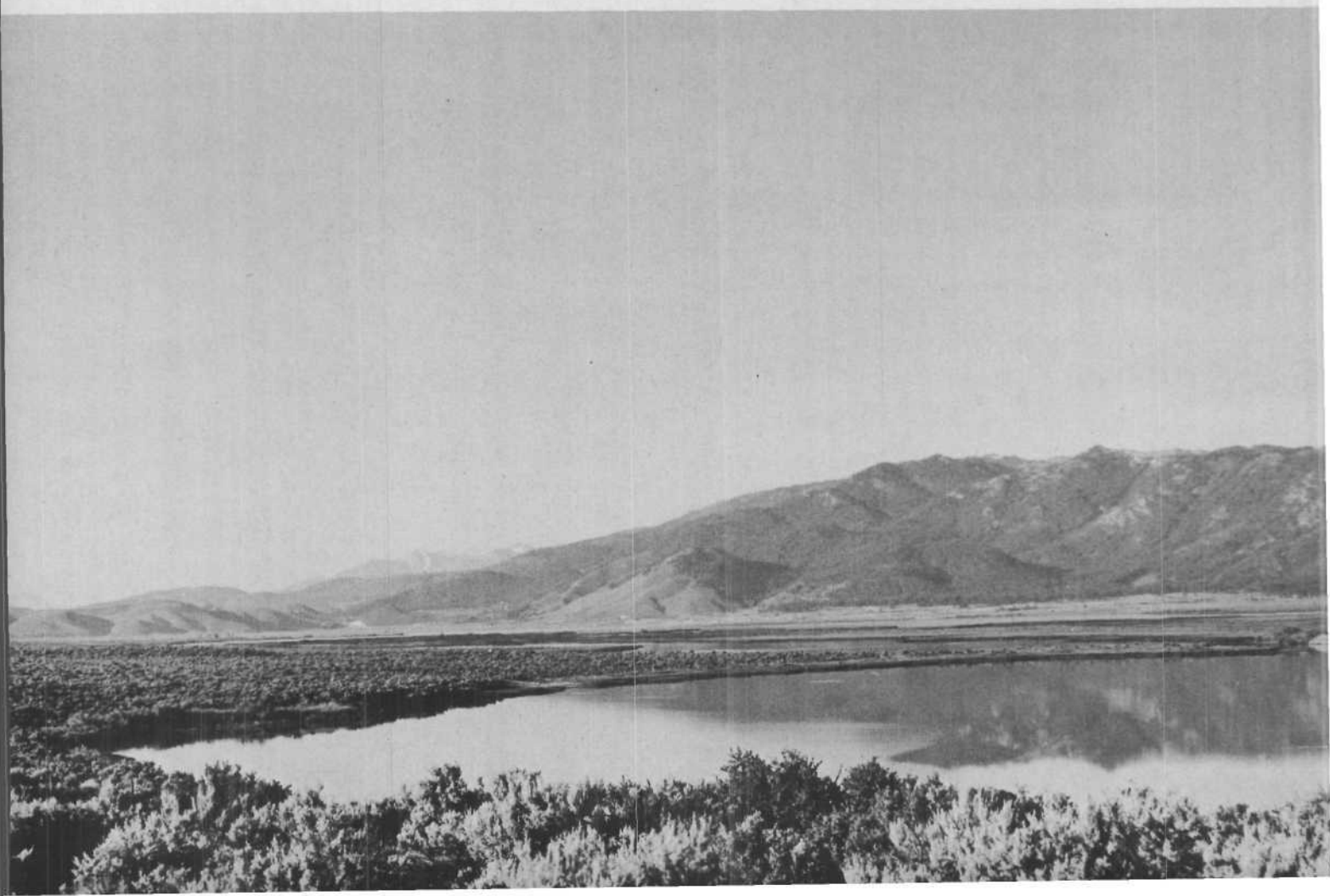
Washoe Lake is fed by several small eastern Sierra streams. The lake itself is a fairly shallow body of water, approximately four miles long and two miles in width occupying a major portion of the valley floor. The east and west sides of Washoe Valley share little in common. The lake provides a natural divide between the pine and grass-covered slopes of the Sierra Nevada range to the west and the steeply rising sage-covered hills on the east. The lake harbors several species of fish, among them the scrappy catfish.

Washoe County maintains boat launching facilities on the west side of the lake. Boats, in general, are restricted to the main portion of the lake and are specifically restricted from entering the prime

waterfowl habitat during the nesting period. In addition to the boat ramps, the county also maintains an excellent 100-acre campground located among the pines on the western side of the valley at Davis Creek. The Davis Creek campground has a total of 63 sites of which 19 are constructed for trailers. The remaining 44 sites are combination units suitable for tent, trailer and camper-truck visitors. The campground boasts shower facilities, 24 picnic sites, a self-guiding nature trail and a five-acre fishing pond stocked with Rainbow trout and Bluegill. All day-use facilities are free to the public, however an overnight camping fee of \$2.50 per occupied site is charged. Both group picnicking and group camping are available, by reservation, at Davis Creek.

Washoe Valley provides a pleasant interlude to any trip. Its closeness to both Reno and Carson City allow the non-camping traveler the pick of hotel and motel facilities as well as excellent dining. So if your travels take you north of Carson City on 395, why not stop awhile in beautiful Washoe Valley. □

Little Washoe Lake with eastern slope of Sierra Nevada in the background.



On The Trail

with

Russ
Leadabrand



QUITE A number of years ago, the *Desert Magazine* fraternity was shocked by the reports of atrocities against wild or feral burros in the deserts of California. At that time the principle atrocities that took place were in the Panamint/Argus/Coso region and photographs of mutilated carcasses of slain burros were distributed.

After months of hauling and pulling, a burro sanctuary was created adjacent to the Death Valley National Monument north of the Panamint Country. It was a paper victory, as it turned out, for those who disliked wild burros still disliked them. And those who thought they had discharged their obligation to the feral burros had done that, but the danger of slaughter

to many of the animals still exists.

The wild burro is a victim of his own hardiness, his ability to live in a harsh land, and his fecundity.

In areas of Death Valley there is hard evidence that he has been "managed" or "harvested" since the establishment of the burro sanctuary, primarily because he competes on the desert range with a natural wild animal, the bighorn sheep. The bighorn belongs on the desert range. The burro is an exotic, it has been inserted into the biota and plainly, according to range management people, raises hell with everything.

The most current problem involving the wild burro concerns the Naval Weapons Center, with headquarters at China Lake, and with the desert/mountain range (again) involving the Argus/Coso country.

There, in March of this year, Rear Admiral H. Suerstedt, Jr., the current commanding officer, applied for, and was granted, a permit to kill two hundred wild burros "which are causing damage to property."

The request for the slaughter came to the attention of Representative Jerome R. Waldie, 14th District of California, who wrote a letter to John W. Warner, Secretary of the Navy, protesting the application. "The Navy is not qualified to make such a judgment based on the evidence

supplied me," said Waldie.

Congressman Waldie received a return reply from the Navy Department, signed by Rear Admiral W. H. Livingston, director of Research, Development, Test and Evaluation. (Acting) which stated, and I will quote only in part:

"The Naval Weapons Center has established that a serious overpopulation of burros exists on Naval Weapons Center property and that during the more arid period of the year there is insufficient water and forage to sustain the herd and other animals dependent on the same food and water supply. Consequently, the Naval Weapons Center decided that, for humane reasons, action should be taken to reduce the number of burros now inhabiting the areas in question.

"Fortunately there has recently been increased rainfall which improved the grazing in the area. Consequently, action to reduce the herd has been held in abeyance to allow revision and review of the environmental assessment, with regard to the improved grazing and consideration of additional alternatives recently suggested.

"The Naval Weapons Center will discuss and evaluate all aspects and alternatives with agencies involved in wildlife management, with a view to providing a solution of the problem other than

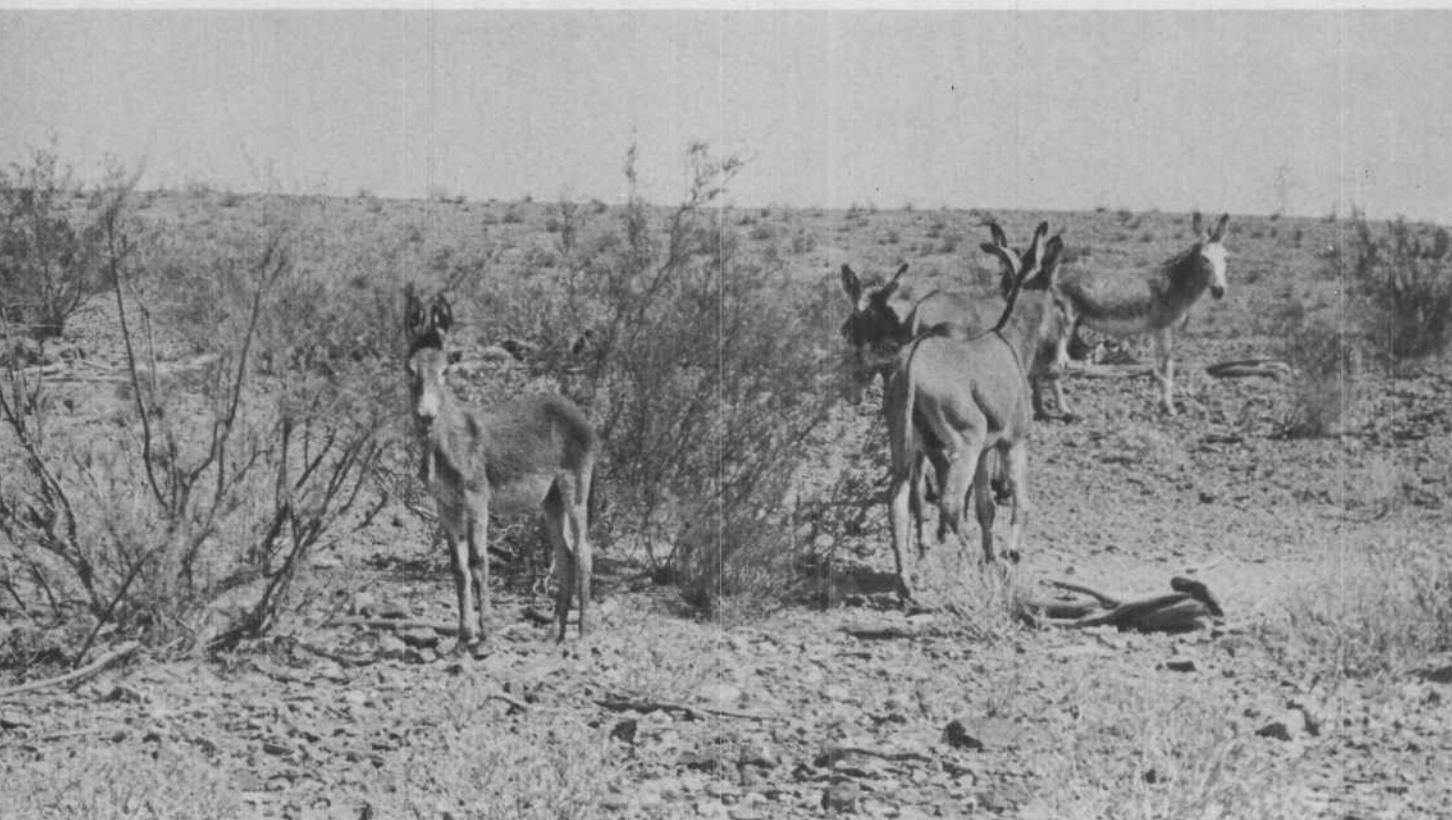




Photo by George Service

eliminating the animals. You may be assured that any action will be taken for strictly humane purposes." End of quote from Rear Admiral Livingston.

Several points in the letter are provocative.

The application and permit approved by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Division of Plant Industry, Control and Eradication, I have seen is dated March 3, 1973. Admiral Livingston's letter is dated May 10, 1973. Between those two dates did enough rain fall on the Naval Weapons Center to cause the re-evaluation?

And . . .

In his final quoted paragraph above, Rear Admiral Livingston mentions "eliminating" the animals. Does this mean eliminating the burros on the Naval Weapons Center range, All of them? His letter is not more specific. It does not say how many burros are there nor what percentage of the population were scheduled for slaughter.

Also, I cannot help but be curious as to the ultimate planned disposal of two hundred burro carcasses. If not sold nor

transported, then the quicklime pit? Leave them there for the carrion birds?

☆☆☆

It is easy to be arch with the Navy about the situation, just as it has been easy to attack the National Park Service about their management of wild burros in Death Valley National Monument.

But this attitude, while it is sentimental and perhaps humanely motivated, does not solve what seems to be a continuous problem in these managed areas of the desert.

The wild burro remains an exotic. That he is there is not his fault; nor is it his fault that in each of his ranges he always seems to be the most adaptable creature.

Perhaps it is time now, after burro outrages that have spanned at least two decades, after the establishment of a sanctuary that solved none of the problems, after repeated killings of burros in various places, after the pet food rumors and the atrocity pictures, that a blue ribbon panel of experts on the desert range animal, management, and all related talents, get together to try to solve the problem in a way that would offend the least number of

those concerned. I am opposed to killing as an alternative for death. The rationale is less than valid. If such a blue ribbon panel could solve such a problem, someone, perhaps Congressman Waldie, should encourage its contribution.

☆☆☆

Answers to letters . . .

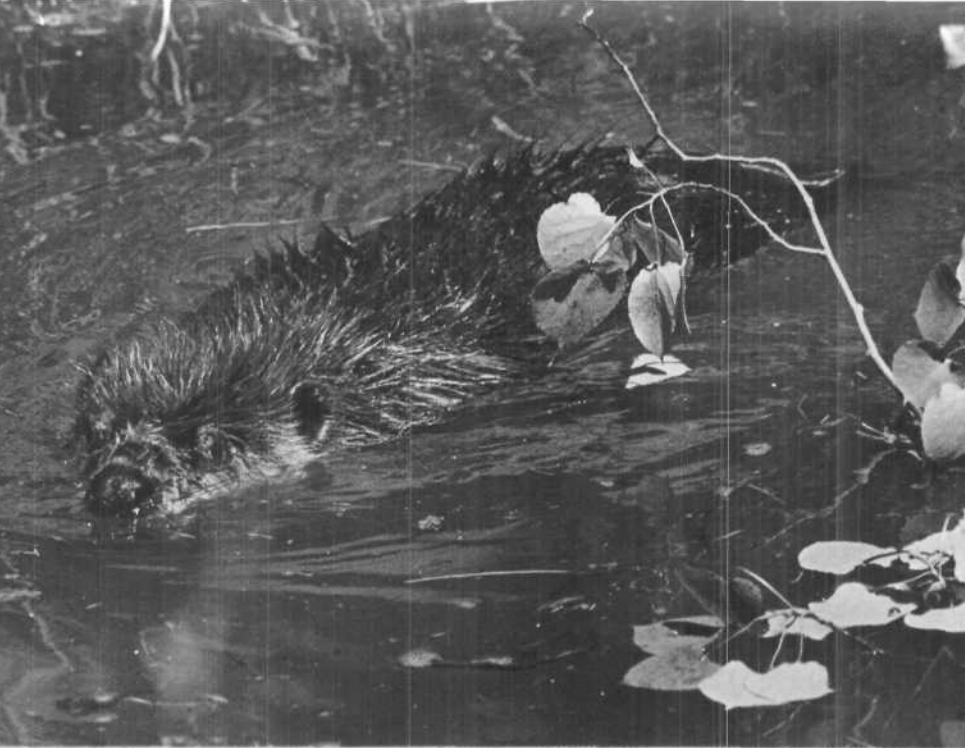
There were several interesting letters following my offering to help dig into some of the unusual items in the desert country. All were fine letters. I am answering one this month. More to come.

For R. H. Vreeland of Hawthorne.

Information on the namesake of Kramer Arch, off Philips Road, off Mule Canyon, near Yermo, is vague. But there is some harder data available on the Kramer after which Kramer Junction was named. There is at least a small reason to suspect that the two namesakes are the same.

Place-name expert, Erwin G. Gudde, reports that the Kramer Junction site was given its name by the Southern Pacific in 1882. The Santa Fe, Gudda adds, retained the name and research has revealed a Moritz Kramer in the Great Register in 1879.

□



WANDERING along the rugged banks of the Colorado River deep in the Grand Canyon one evening, a loud splash jolted me from my thoughts. Looking out over the silty water I saw a small brown head moving rapidly toward the shore. It was a beaver, no mistaking, but what it was doing in the middle of the Grand Canyon, I had no idea.

During the remainder of the float trip, whenever time permitted, I searched the river and its side canyons for beaver signs. Most often I found the animals plentiful. There were no ponds or dams, but the unmistakable rough-edged cut



by Buddy Mays

on the trunks of fallen trees said "BEAVER" in foot-high letters.

Since then, on every desert trip I make, it has become a habit to search the local streams (if there are any) for beaver. I've found that most of the large rivers of the west, like the Colorado and Rio Grande, contain many families, quite often several per mile. Even tiny watercourses such as New Mexico's Mescalero River, which is just barely deep enough to wade in and runs smack down the middle of a mesquite desert, has more beaver than fish. What is even more surprising is the fact that in many cases the beaver have not always been in these hot, dry areas. Just like the dust bowl families of the early 20th century,

Desert Magazine



they were forced to go in search of new habitations when their old ones were destroyed. Surviving in places like the foothills of the Jornada Del Muerte and deserts of the Grand Canyon hasn't been easy, but somehow, the beavers have.

Castor canadensis, as the American beaver is known, was and still is, for the most part, a mountain dweller. While man busied himself chipping rocks into tools and weapons, Castor was damming mountain streams, creating multiple habitats for other prehistoric aquatic wildlife.

In the Tenth Century, when Viking warrior Leif Ericsson set foot on woody American shores,

beaver were here, diligently building dams on flood-prone streams. But, in the late 1700s, men like Daniel Boone, Davey Duncan and other frontiersmen of their caliber began bringing bales of pelts by the thousands out of Kentucky and the Ohio lowlands. A few years later, as man moved steadily westward, buckskin-clad mountain men roamed the Rockies at will, often taking whole populations of beaver from one valley before moving on to the next.

By this time Castor's numbers had diminished alarmingly, and probably because he was being pushed so hard by man and since the aspen valleys were being filled with houses and wagons and chil-

dren, he began to move. It took a hearty beaver to make the trip from his mountain home to the drier, less populated desert areas, where man seldom came and even more seldom hunted. But make it they did, and it wasn't long before several old desert rats, living along the banks of some murky, hot country river, began hearing the flop of beaver tails slapping out a danger signal on the water.

Like most of the order "Rodentia" (rodents), beaver survive in a world of dusk and darkness, hence man has little chance to see them. On desert streams they most often live in burrows dug patiently into the bank. The entrance

to the burrow is usually under water, quickly putting a halt to aggression from any would-be predator, especially those who can't swim. Since beavers are nocturnal animals primarily, they spend most of the daylight hours snug inside this burrow, sleeping in an enlarged nest deep underground. Then, from sundown to sun-up, the entire family—male and female adult, a litter of kits, and often a couple of two-year-olds from the previous year—gnaw incessantly at the trunks of surrounding trees, whether they be one-inch-thick desert willow or a four-foot-thick mountain aspen. With incisors that throughout its lifetime never stop growing, a single beaver can fell a four-inch tree in 15 minutes. One medium-size tree will furnish a week's supply of food and a lumber yard for repair of a dam (if present) or a nest.

Since most desert areas do not have an appreciable winter, families of beaver are usually active all year round. If a snow or heavy freeze happens to come along, the family may retire to the nest for awhile, but they will soon venture out again, if, for nothing else, to replenish the food supply. If the stream should freeze over and a beaver finds it necessary to go onto the ice, he simply bangs his head on the underside until



the ice cracks, then he chews his way through.

Unless he is cutting trees, though, a beaver will seldom leave his watery home. On land he is a slow, clumsy creature, almost unprotected from predators like the coyote or mountain lion, except by his extremely acute sense of hearing. Once in the water, he becomes more fish than mammal.

As spring approaches and a female senses that she is pregnant and soon to give birth, the rest of the family will leave the nest and fend for themselves for a few days.

Freshly gnawed bark and other soft materials are heaped on the nest floor by the mother to form a nursery platform. Eyes open and bodies furry, the newborn kits weigh less than a pound, but within a month they have learned to swim. In six, they are weaned. When they're between

two and three years old, they will leave the nest, find a mate and "marry" for life. One life, one mate. Perhaps man might learn something here.

To this day, some consider the beaver not a helpful beast of beauty, but a pesky rodent whose value to mankind is next to nothing. In reality, *Castor* is a conservationist par excellent.

For example, on desert streams where beaver have built a dam, the complex not only controls flash-floods but also provides water for wildlife and moisture for vegetation which surrounds the pond. Dammed or worked streams are great fire guards, and breeding places for fish. In some parts of the west, especially in farmed desert areas, farmers rely upon the complexes for irrigation.

But, even though *Castor* is a great conservationist, and even

though in the past he has left his natural mountain habitat to escape man, he is still trapped unmercifully in most states.

"We harvest about 1000 a year," said one state game and fish department official in a state where there are only an estimated 5000 beaver. "Harvesting," I found out later, consists of capturing the animal in an underwater trap and allowing him to drown.

Seemingly, like the bison and the mountain lion, the beaver, hunted almost to the point of extermination, has reached an ebb on the outgoing tide of survival. Fire, film packs, pesticides and poachers are his killers. Still, the beaver and his artistic works are one of the most common of desert animals, if only one knows where to look. We can only hope that the day never comes when the harvesters put up the last of the crop. □



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No picture really shows how steep "Heart Attack Hill" is, but that is probably just as well. The hill is only one of the many highlights on the Scrapbook Trail.

Anza-Borrego's Scrapbook Trail

Continued from Page 17

I may have come here by horsepower instead of horse power, but I was experiencing the same thing as many men before me would have experienced. The wilderness has to be humanity's lowest common denominator. The scene, the silence, the whole realm is unchanged from the time the first human footprint was made here. It's a common experience that man has shared through the centuries.

From the mouth of Sandstone Canyon, it's about 12 miles of good dirt road along Fish Creek Wash to the pavement. This is an interesting 12 miles as the wash widens and narrows, passes sand dunes, mud hills and through Split Mountain.

As the name implies, Fish Creek has "split" a huge mountain, creating a gorge that is 600 feet deep in places

Split Mountain is a popular recreation area and an ideal camping spot for those with trailers or large camper rigs. It's

also an area of great geological activity, much of which is described by information signs put up by rangers.

At the mouth of the canyon you will once again reach pavement. Turn left and in 11 miles you will reach the community of Ocotillo Wells on State Highway 78. Stop in at the Burro Bend cafe and tip your hat to Earl and Kathi Cartier, and if you have time, ask to see their scrapbook.

Over the years they have saved clippings about this desert land, and the scrapbook provides an interesting up-to-date history of this particular area.

As you cruise home, I hope you can slump back in comfort with that tired feeling as we did and look upon your day as one of the most enjoyable you have ever had. I think Anza-Borrego's Scrapbook Trail is one you'll want to put in your scrapbook. □

New Mexico's Mystery Stone

Continued from Page 13

Yet, it is hard to see any relationship between these ancient people and the enigmatic stone resting below. The petroglyphs, as usual, have been pecked into the basalt while the inscription has been carved—deep and permanent. We find ourselves drawn magnetically back down the slope, to gaze again at the Rock of Mystery.

Could one inscription actually have two translations and a dual meaning? Phonetic interpretations as tenuous at best. Even among experts, there is disagreement about various pronunciations and phonetic sounds for many rock characters are unknown.

LaFollette claimed that a plaster cast he made of the stone revealed two faintly drawn human faces which, to the naked eye, are indiscernible on the actual rock surface. Was the present inscription placed on top of an earlier, incredibly old carving? The mind boggles at the thought.

The sun bears down hot in the arroyo and aberrant thoughts come easily. Inevitably, the visitor finds himself turning to the strangest theory of all. Could the stone-carver have been an extra-terrestrial?

A growing school of thought contends that the Earth has been visited many times in its past. Suppose travelers from another world reached the Earth in Biblical times. Further, suppose they wished to leave behind a message in a then unexplored, unknown part of the world. Assume for a moment, that the message was not intended to be read for many, many generations.

Isn't it conceivable that an intelligence capable of inter-planetary travel would also be capable of devising a coded message which incorporated two separate translations within which a third—and true—meaning was hidden—a meaning which we are perhaps not yet ready to receive?

Again, we can only stare at the stone in frustration. Is it a message from outer space? Or merely a hoax? A Mormon tablet or a Phoenician monument? Perhaps someday we will know the whole answer. Perhaps not. The rocks of the desert hold their secrets well. ☐

August, 1973

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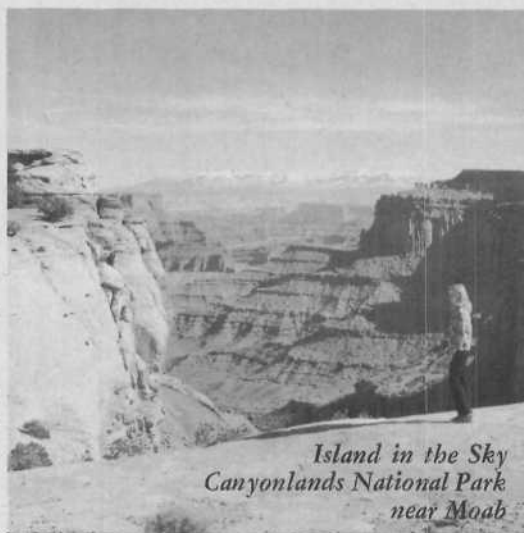
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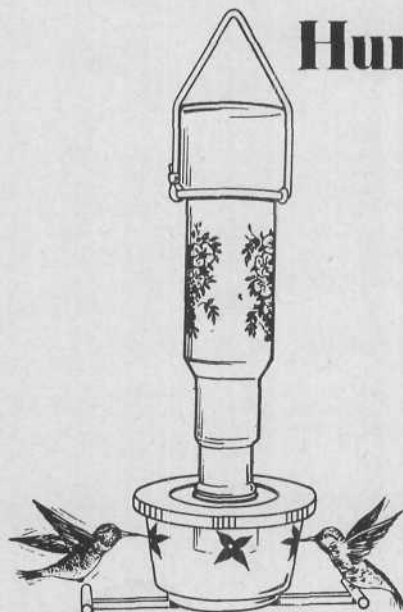
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No. 5	4 mm	\$14.00

Rambling on Rocks

by
Glenn
and
Martha Vargas

QUARTZ: The Gem With Many Aliases

EXCEPT AMONG mineralogists and lapidaries, the name quartz is seldom used. To the general public, the names amethyst, rock crystal, rose quartz and

smoky quartz are often used, but most do not realize they are the same mineral. We also hear of Herkimer diamonds, Lake County diamonds, Pecos diamonds, other "diamond" names associated with some locality. Yes, they are all quartz!

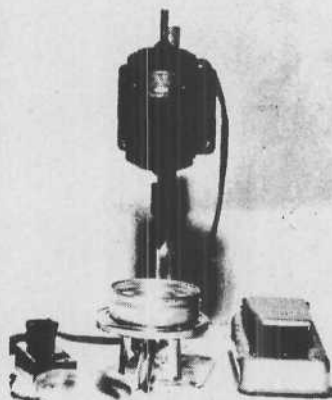
Why so many names for one mineral? The most important reason is that it is very common; making up a very large percentage of the rocks of the earth's crust. It is the most common mineral. Another reason for the many names is that it appears in many forms, and thus tends to look like some other minerals.

The reason that quartz is common is that it is a perfectly stable mineral. It does not chemically break down under natural conditions. It may melt, or become part of a hot water solution, but it stays as quartz, and when conditions get back to normal, quartz in some form is again the result.

The reason for this is in the molecular makeup of the mineral. It chemically is *silicon dioxide* (SiO₂), a combination of one atom of silicon (a black silvery metal) and two atoms of the gas oxygen. These are so connected by all electrical bonds (which hold all molecules together) that they are completely satisfied and interconnected. There is no electrical charge not neutralized, and no part of the molecule is attracting a charge from some other element.

It has been said that of all the quartz that has ever been formed on earth, every bit of it is in existence today. The statement is very true. When we realize that minerals are being formed today, and that quartz is also in the process, then this very common mineral is actually becoming even more common.

When we have a mineral that is very common, then it is constantly being subjected to all the physical stresses of our environment. It is heated, dissolved, broken, moved and compressed.



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Desert Magazine

When it is heated it will melt and can become part of lavas, usually the lighter-colored ones. Very small crystals of quartz are common in lavas.

If it is bathed by hot waters (about 1000 degrees F. or higher) it will dissolve and can then be transported to some other type of geological formation. When the temperature drops to the point where quartz crystals will form, the entire amount of quartz that was first dissolved will precipitate out as a solid mineral.

Quartz is very brittle, and easily broken into pieces. When the particles are about 1/32 inch or less, we call it sand. The word sand is used somewhat loosely, and generally denotes any large amount of any mineral that has a small particle size. However, most of what we call sand is made of quartz. The dunes of the desert, and the white sands of the beaches, nearly always are mostly pure quartz sand.

As sand, quartz can easily be transported by rivers, or carried about by ocean currents, and then be deposited in large beds. This can now be compressed into sandstone. Our desert southwest (as well as many other world locations) contain huge sandstone formations. All these are made of nearly pure quartz. Some are again being broken up and transported, to form new beds that may again become sandstone. Other beds may be subjected to extreme temperatures and either be melted or dissolved as mentioned above.

Sandstone can be subjected to another type of heating that may change it. Sandstone is porous, with more or less open spaces around each sand grain. If the sandstone is buried deep beneath the surface, hot water containing quartz in solution may enter the spaces between the

sand grains. When the water cools, the dissolved quartz precipitates out and cements the grains together into a solid mass with no porosity. This is quartzite, which may resemble sandstone somewhat. The easily visible difference between the two—sandstone breaks around the grains, leaving a rough surface. Quartzite breaks across the grains, offering a nearly smooth surface.

Quartz in its purest form is colorless, or virtually so. If it is in crystals, either colorless or milky-white, it is often called rock crystal. The term is not really correct, but usage has made it a part of our vocabulary. If the mineral is a massive lump, (then it is never clear) more or less colorless, it should be called massive quartz, but such names as milky quartz or bull quartz are used.

Some regions produce perfectly formed crystals in sizes up to about one inch. These may be perfectly clear, and thus very reflective and brilliant. These have often been mistaken for diamonds, thus they are erroneously named.

The most notable of the fine crystals are found in Herkimer County, New York. These are six-sided double pyramids. In Lake County, California, small, very clear chips are known as Lake County diamonds. The Pecos River area of Texas contains some very well-shaped crystals called Pecos diamonds. The list is long.

When quartz has a color other than above, each color is given a name. Violet is amethyst, gray to black is called smoky quartz, a pink color is known as rose quartz. One type of pink quartz is called pink quartz. If the color is yellow to orange, it is called citrine. This is sometimes incorrectly called topaz, but that is a story for our next column. □

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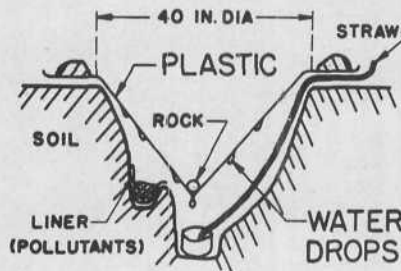
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Letters to the Editor

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A Four-Wheeler Speaks Up . . .

This letter is in response to a letter from a Mr. Stewart of Victorville, which was published in the December, 1972 issue.

Mr. Stewart stated that he had moved to the desert after his retirement because he liked its stark beauty. This same beauty attracts me as well as many other four-wheelers, to the remote areas of our California desert.

While it is true that some four-wheel-drive owners have no respect or consideration for others and only come out to hot-rod on weekends, these few by no means represent all four-wheelers.

Because we can't all live in the desert, some of us must visit only on the weekends and holidays. Most of us realize that the desert must always be there and that any act of thoughtlessness on our part could possibly leave scars long after we leave. That is why most four-wheelers that I have met share the same concern for the desert and its wildlife beauty.

Mr. Stewart's idea to send new four-wheel drive vehicle owners to school is a good one. Special classes in handling off-road vehicles and desert conservation should be taught to prepare the new owners for the responsibilities as well as the enjoyment of their vehicles.

The banning of four-wheel-drive vehicles from the desert, as suggested, is not fair to the majority of considerate drivers who appreciate the desert and respect others' rights to its use. Mr. Stewart would do well to take a closer look at the good drivers and their efforts to maintain a beautiful desert before again making rash judgments of ALL four-wheelers.

CHARLES SMITH,
San Pedro, Calif.

Sold! One Ghost Town . . .

Your article on Madrid, New Mexico, in the May 1972 issue (Ghost Town for Sale) was very interesting and well done. I thought you might like to know that Madrid has been sold.

WILLIAM C. FIEDLER,
Albuquerque, N.M.

This letter was just one of the many sent to us by observant readers. Madrid has been sold to a California investment group that plans to set up a tourist attraction and movie set over the next five years. W.K.

Calendar of Events

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.

AUGUST 25 & 26 — ANTIQUE BOTTLE SHOW AND SALE, sponsored by the South Bay Bottle Club, Hawthorne Memorial Center, 3901 W. El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif. Adults, 50c, children under 12 free. Sales tables available. Buffet dinner. Auction.

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 22 & 23—DELVERS SILVER JUBILEE FOR '73. Delvers Gem and Mineral Society presents its 25th anniversary show at Simm Park, 11614 S. Clark St., Bellflower, Calif. 90242. Dealers, special exhibits demonstrations, snack bar, ample parking, admission free. Show chairman: Jerry Ames 1234 Arlington St., Anaheim, Calif. 92801.

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—DESERT GEM-O-RAMA, presented by Searles Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Trona Recreation Hall, Trona, Calif. Camping space available. \$1.00 fee. Dealers, field trips and Searles Lake crystals. Admission free. For more information, contact Jenny Langner, 654 Trisha Ct., Ridgecrest, CA. 93555.

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 12-14, ANNUAL TUCSON LAPIDARY AND GEM SHOW. Sponsored by the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, Inc. Tucson Rodeo Grounds, 4700 block South Sixth Ave., Tucson, Arizona. Dealers. Show chairman: Milton Reiner, 2802 East 10th St., Tucson, Ariz. 85716.

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.

OCTOBER 18-21—PLAZA OF GEMS AND MINERALS, sponsored by the Pomona Rockhounds Club, Montclair Plaza Shopping Center, San Bernardino Freeway and Central Ave., Montclair, Calif. Thurs. & Fri., 10-9:30; Sat. 10-6; Sun. 12-5. Geo. Beaman, 1295 Loma Vista, Pomona, Calif. 91766. Dealers, guest exhibits, working demonstrations, free parking and admission.

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.

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