

Desert

The Magazine of the Great American Desert

July 1982



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The Man Who Found Peg Leg's Gold • Moving to 29
Palms • Walking White Sands • Ghostly Belmont



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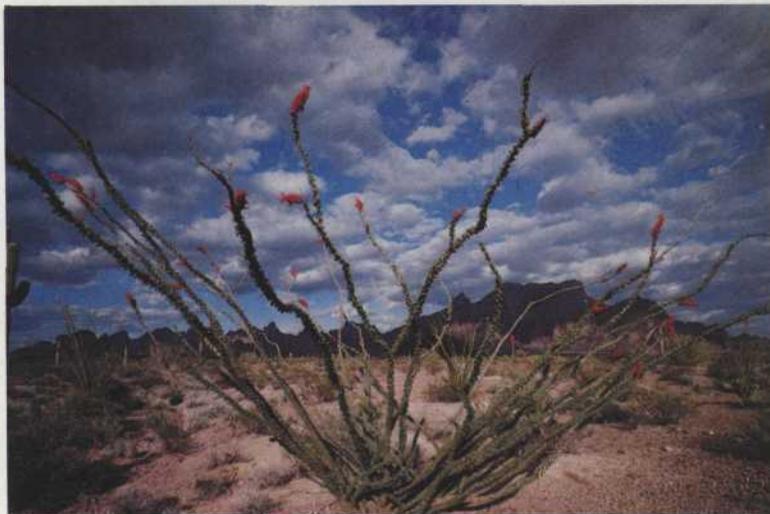


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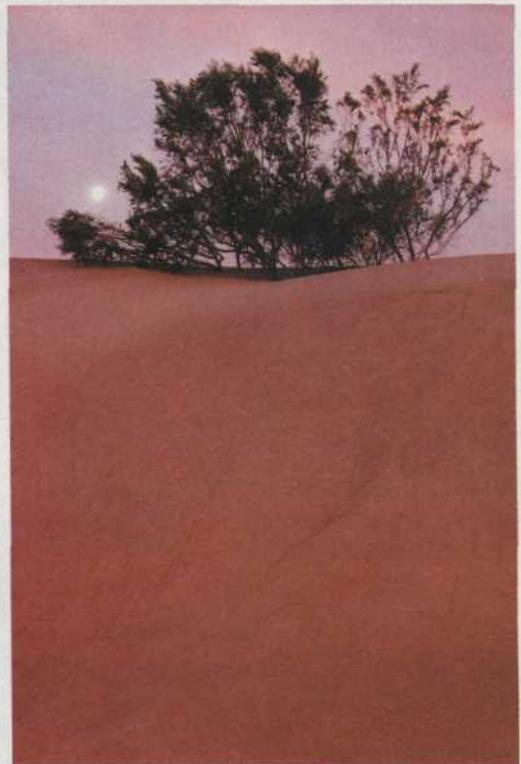
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A. Light and shade contrast in the Mesquite flat dunes of Death Valley National Monument in California.—David Muench



B. An ocotillo blooms with the Kofa Mountains of Arizona in the background. David Muench



C. A creosote bush witnesses the dawn, with the moon setting, over the dunes at Death Valley National Monument in California—Jeff Gnass

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Desert

Volume 45
No. 1 through 7
July 1982

The Magazine of the
Great American Desert

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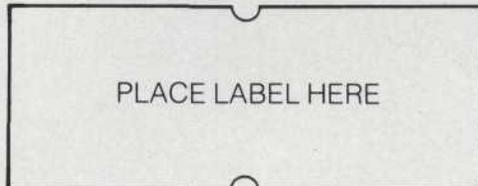


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Welcome to the Great American Desert

by Jacqueline Shannon

For this, the first issue of the "new" *Desert*, we want to talk about our editorial philosophy, the history of *Desert Magazine*, the rapidly changing Southwest, and about you—our readers. We did a whole lot of soul searching and research about all of those things before we made the changes you'll see in this issue and the ones to come. And we'd like to share some of that information with you so that you'll get a better idea of where *we* are coming from.

Our editorial philosophy is a simple one: *Desert's* purpose is to entertain, educate, and explore with our readers the beauty, life, and culture of the Great American Desert.

The Great American Desert—that's what they used to call the arid regions of the Western United States, the geographical area that *Desert* covers. We are reviving that phrase because it represents to us all of that beauty, life, and culture, and all of the past, present, and potential of the desert Southwest.

Potential is an exciting or frightening word, depending on your viewpoint. Nevertheless, the potential of the Southwest obviously is no longer a secret. In the past, if and when an Easterner or Midwesterner contemplated the Southwest, he or she would inevitably picture a forbidding, desolate landscape filled only with rattlesnakes, cacti, tumbleweed, and ghost towns. Now, that same person is becoming aware of an attractive environment that promises ex-

cellent recreation and travel, low-density housing, sunny weather, and growing employment opportunities. In fact, the lure of our region is so great for all of the rest of the country that people are moving or traveling to the Southwest in record numbers. And the phenomenal population growth set in motion in the '70s is not going to let up in the '80s or '90s. The Southwest is where the action is.

Put more statistically, the growth rate of our region is expected to be double the 11 percent growth rate projected for the entire United States by 1990. Typical in the region is Arizona. The population of Arizona in the year 2012 is expected to be 2½ times what it was in 1980.

Desert Magazine has a unique history in the ever-growing, rapidly changing Southwest. In November 1937, Randall Henderson established the magazine from a storefront operation in El Centro, Calif. At the same time, he began to acquire land in the area near Palm Springs known as Palm Village and Palm Desert. With the help of his brothers and other investors, he was able to acquire enough land to house the magazine headquarters as well as to begin building structures for the development of that area as a real city. He also negotiated with the U.S. Postal Service to have a post office established, promising that he would give them enough business with the mailing of his magazine to make it feasible.

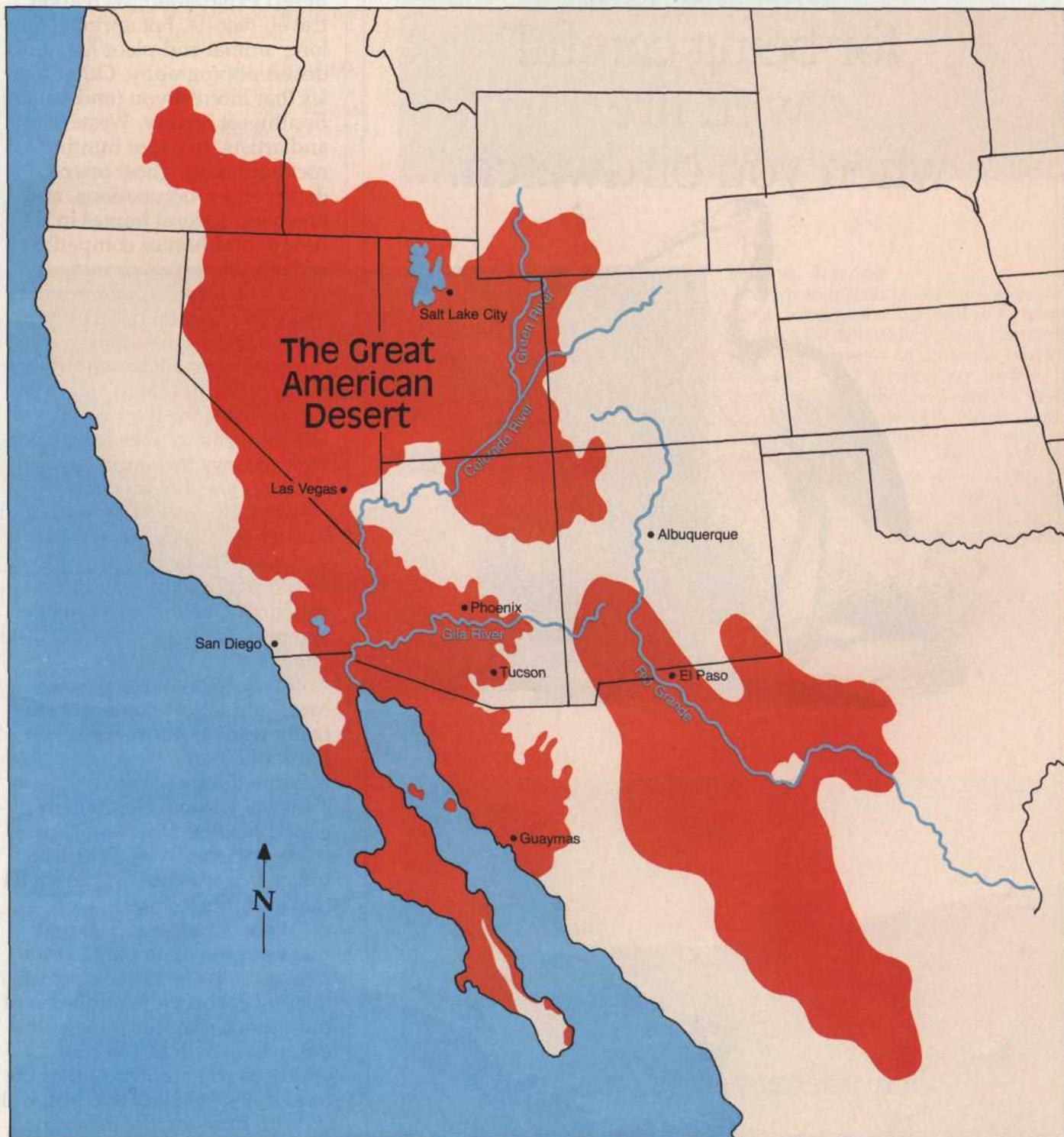
By putting it on the map, he

was directly responsible for the town's impressive growth, which far exceeded what had been expected. In 1940, there was only one shack on the land that would eventually become Palm Desert. In 1968, there were less than 8,000 people living there. Four years later, the population was estimated at close to 30,000. Since then, even more growth has occurred in the area.

Henderson started *Desert* for the desert lover, in part, and also to give those who misunderstood the desert an appreciation of a beautiful place. His editorial content adhered to the idea that the desert was an excellent place to travel, to learn to understand yourself better, and to appreciate nature to a fuller extent. He stayed with the magazine until 1961 (after 1958, as an advisory editor), and those who followed him tried to stay close to the philosophy he followed.

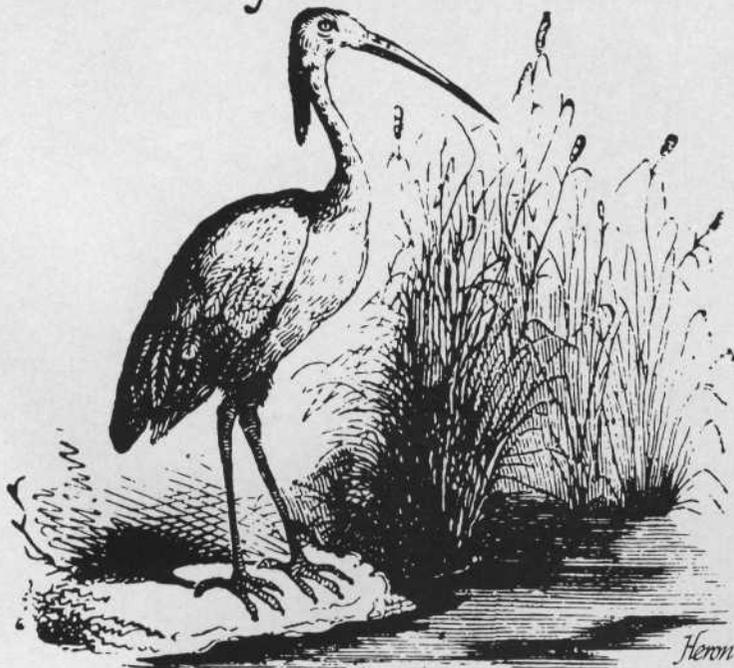
But because the Great American Desert has grown and changed, so must *Desert Magazine*. Along with the long-time *Desert* reader and desert resident, we now also have to fill the needs of a new and different breed of desert dweller. Henderson's ideas fit well with the old desert, with the desert he first encountered. But with the new desert, a new style had to be found. You are holding it in your hands.

You, our readers, are a very diverse group. Most of you visit the desert frequently—some, every weekend. Many of you, of course, live there. And quite a



Our Great American Desert, stretching from Eastern Oregon to Western Texas, includes five deserts. They are the Mojave, Great Basin, Painted, Chihuahuan, and Sonoran Deserts.

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few of you live thousands of miles away and perhaps see the desert only in these pages. But the common bond is that all of you love it.

By letter, by reader survey, by phone, and in person, you've told us specifically what you love about the desert, and so we will cover those things. Within our pages, you'll see and read about desert exploration, recreation, travel, resorts, hot springs, folklore, animal and plant life, and desert photography. Other topics that interest you (and us) are Southwest history, Western art and artists, treasure hunting, rockhounding, ghost towns, desert cities, occupations, and lifestyles, second homes in the desert, and homes compatible with the desert environment. We'll also discuss contemporary and controversial desert topics. And while the vast majority of our coverage will be within the borders of our Great American Desert map, we'll also occasionally take you to a desert in a foreign country to compare it with the ones we all know best.

Naturally, you won't find *all* of that in each issue. To do that, we'd have to be the size of a Sears catalog. But over the course of a few months, we promise you'll get a healthy taste of each.

Finally, please: Keep those cards and letters coming. We really want to know what you think of *Desert*.

Some things never change. The way Randall Henderson ended his first *Desert* editor's column 45 years ago is as true today as it was in 1937. So I'll let him end this for me:

"We would like to feel that these pages will impart to their readers some of the courage, the tolerance, and the friendliness of our desert; that this issue and every issue will be the cool spring of water at the end of the hard day's trek; and that you will go with us along the desert trail and find the journey worthwhile." □



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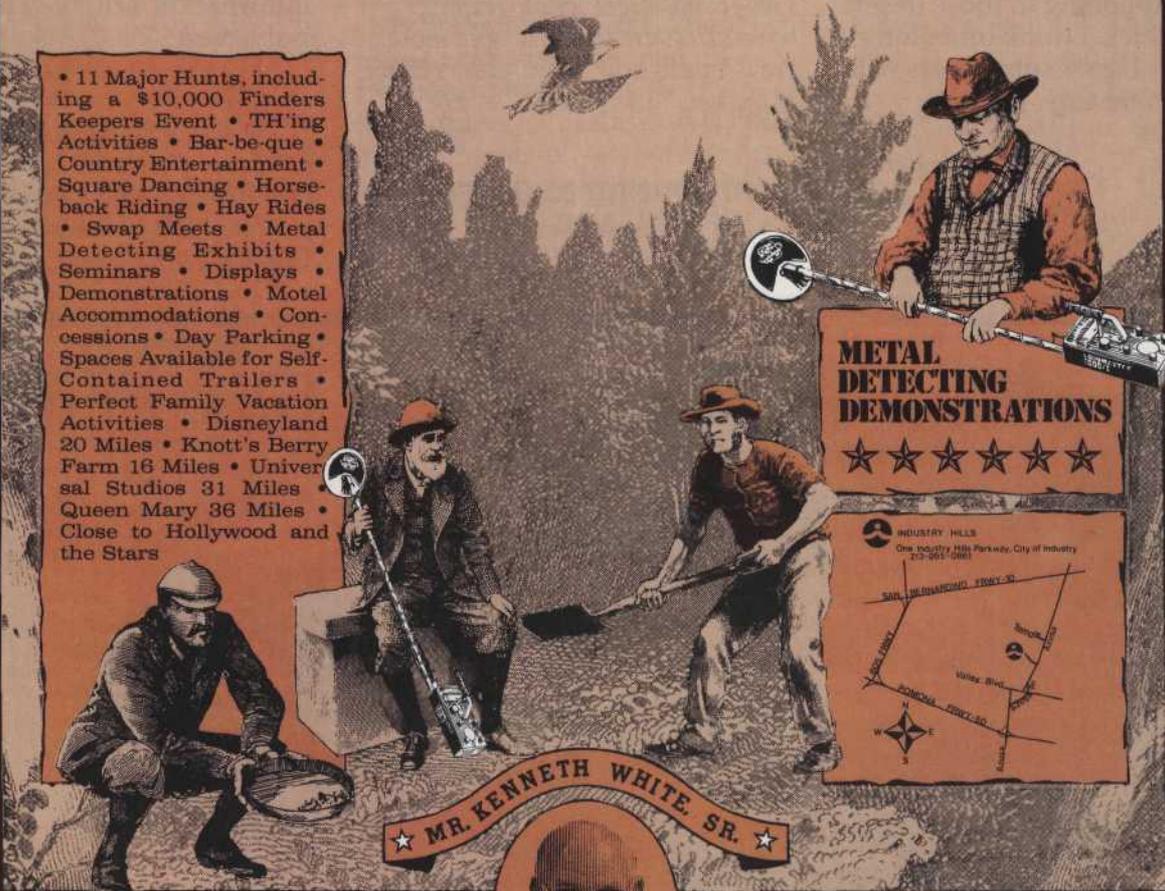
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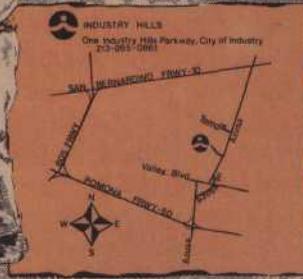
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Letters

Cactus City revisited

Greatly miss the "Cactus City Clarion." It gave the extra touch of herbs and seasonings to the magazine. Unless one subscribes to all of those newspapers, one doesn't know the fascinating things happening in those desert communities. I think other long, long-time *Desert* subscribers will feel the same way. Please reconsider.

J.W. Anderson
Whittier, Calif.

It is back . . . and it will appear in

this and every issue from now on. We've changed the name to the "Cactus City Chronicle," but we feel that you'll enjoy this expanded section as much — if not more — than the old "Clarion." Besides the news you miss so much, we've added Desert nostalgia, photography, books, treasure hunting, and more. We'd love to hear what readers think of the new "Chronicle." — Ed.

Contributing to Desert

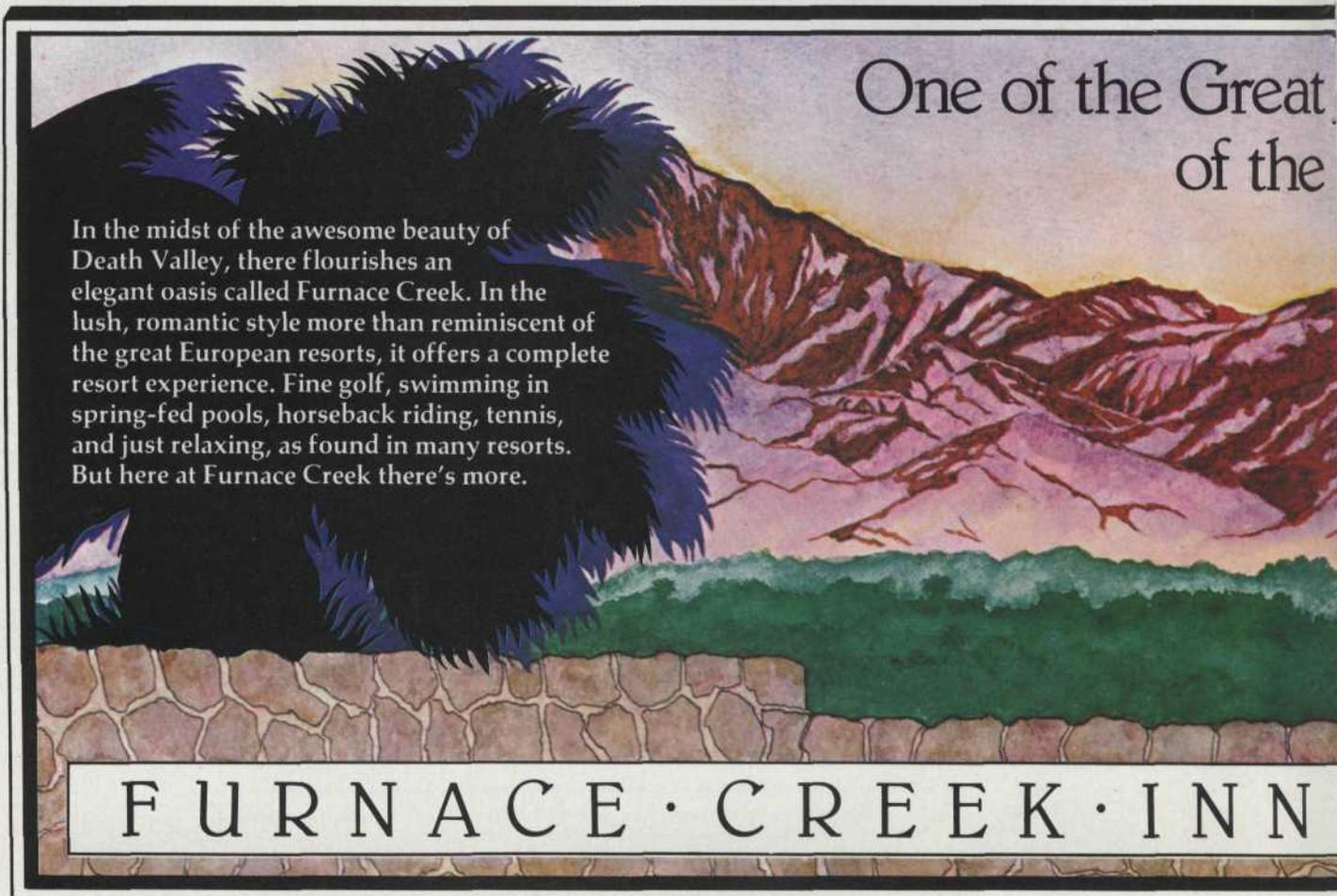
I am a new subscriber interested in writing an article

about a particular desert area. And although I am quite familiar with the area and have ideas and pictures for such an article, I don't know how to go about getting it published.

I am hoping you can send me information as to how to get it published.

David Titmarsy

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Pen pal possibilities

I am greatly interested in corresponding with readers of your magazine who actually live their lives in the desert . . . the Southern California deserts in particular. Is there any chance your magazine could help bring the desert I love closer to me by your readers?

John Hall
Kirkland, Wash.

We have a "Personal" section in our "Chronicle" in which readers can advertise for pen pals, hiking partners, and other personal contacts. Don't be surprised when you see John Hall's advertisement in this issue: We asked him if he wanted to become our first "Personal" advertiser. Other

readers can get how-to-advertise information in the classified section of the "Chronicle." — Ed.

On kicking cacti

For many years I've been a desert explorer, and whenever I found a dead cactus I would kick it — if it wasn't a threat to self-injury. Then I would stamp on it and kick it still more till I was satisfied I had pulverized it as much as possible. This I did for the first 20 years — before I became an avid amateur botanist, before I developed an urge to examine more intricately every piece of flora underfoot.

But in a more recent year I observed one day that seedling plants sometimes sprouted in the protection of the old dead spine shell. Suddenly, in remorse, I wondered how many new seedlings I had killed in my thoughtless though unintentional devastation, for I have none but the warmest

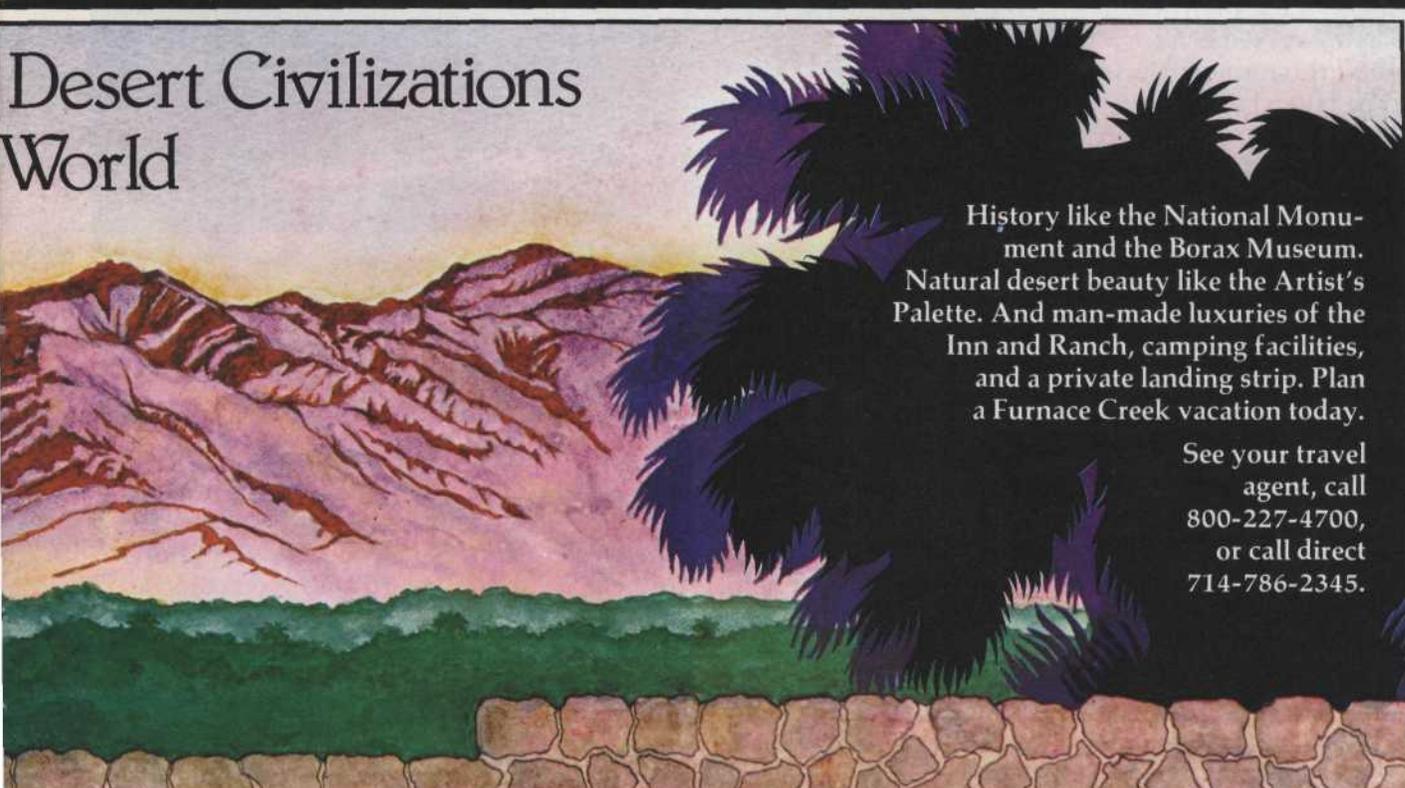
feelings for every sprig of desert vegetation. What a lesson! Surely I was helping nature, I had reasoned, by hurrying the decomposition of the deceased organic matter.

So, today, whenever I want to plant cactus seeds, or any other kind for that matter, I look for a dead cactus to sow them in. I even had to learn that to pick up the dead plant, in order to place the seeds, was to destroy the root anchorage of any seedlings. What better protection could be found for both seeds and tender seedlings while the dead cactus shell disintegrates over the years. Some cacti, such as our California Sclerocactus polyancistrus, require five years, I estimate, to grow to a mere nine-millimeter diameter.

Bob Lahmeyer
Fallbrook, Calif.

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Things to know before
you go to ensure that you'll get back

When you're stranded

By Jacqueline Shannon

It doesn't matter if you're planning a two-week camping trip in a van, a weekend of four-wheeling, or just a three-hour sightseeing drive. The desert can be a killer if you're not prepared for that ultimate desert emergency: Being stranded out there in your vehicle with no help in sight.

You can greatly increase your chances of being found by following seven suggestions provided by the Automobile Club of Southern California, the Office of Disaster Preparedness (ODP), and the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

The first three suggestions should be taken before you ever leave home.

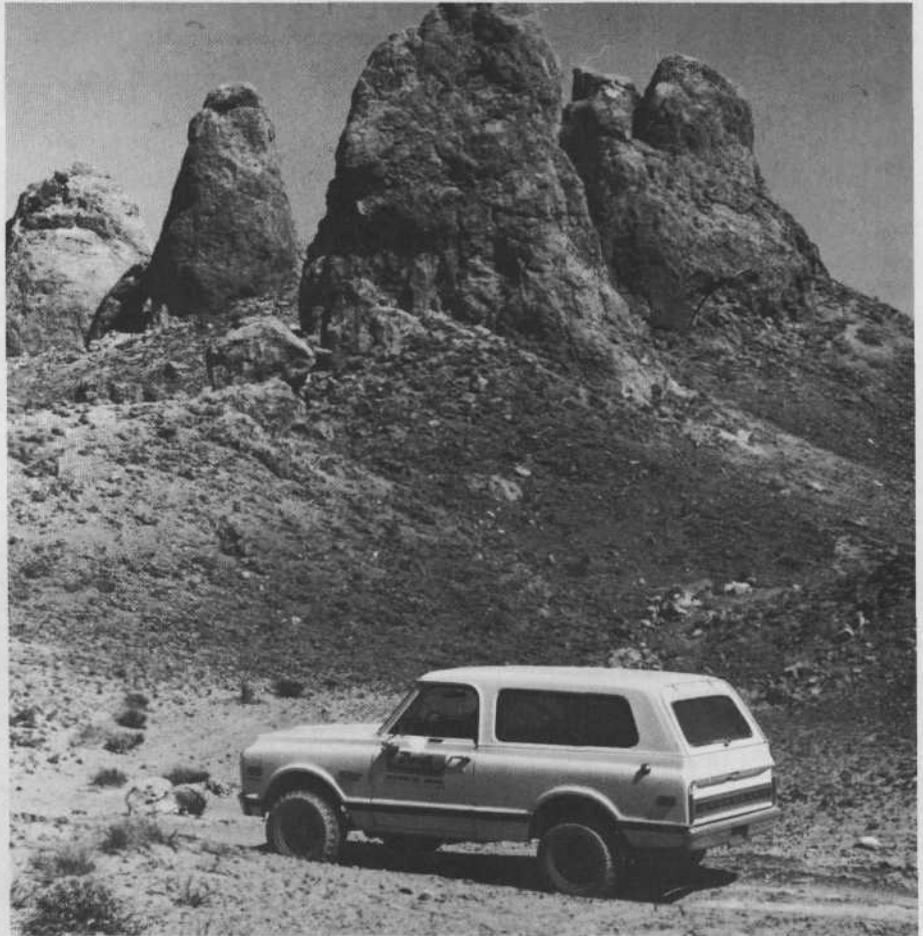
1. Bring plenty of extra drinking water.

2. Give someone at home your itinerary. Tell that person where you're headed and when you expect to be back. And give him or her your vehicle's license number. The CHP says that this can be just as essential to them, when they're searching for a vehicle, as the make, model, and color.

3. Pack a survival kit in your vehicle. Besides extra water, the ODP recommends that you have at least the following items: concentrated food, matches, a small shovel, a good jack, basic vehicle repair tools, a blanket, and leather gloves.

4. Keep your gas tank full.

5. When stranded in a hot, arid region, avoid unnecessary exertion, and — most



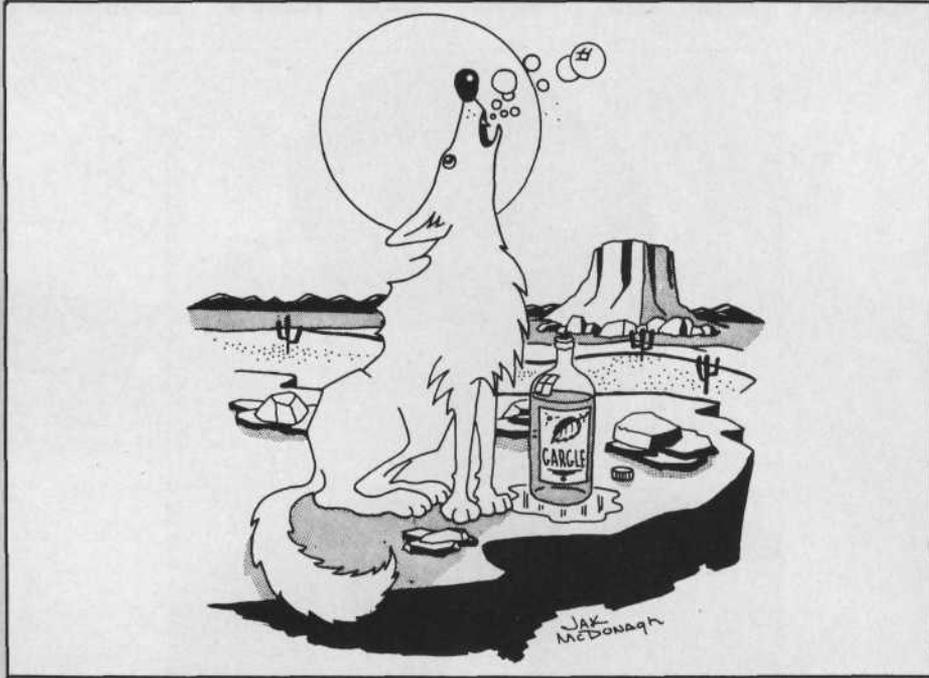
importantly — stay in the shade.

6. Stay with your vehicle. People are usually making a big mistake when they leave their cars to "walk for help." Your car provides shade, the horn can be heard over long distances, and the lights can be seen at night. It's much easier to find an auto than a person on foot.

7. Devise a method for signaling for help. You can use a mirror or polished surface to reflect sunlight in daytime and a flashlight, headlights, or flares at

night. Another method is to spell out "HELP" with rocks or anything that might be visible from the air. Or, if you're not in a fire hazard area, you can use gas, oil, or your spare tire (let the air out first) for a smoke signal to attract attention.

8. Finally, have faith. "There is a correlation between faith, maintenance of courage, and the control of fear," says the ODP. "Many search and rescue units will be looking for you as soon as you're missed." □



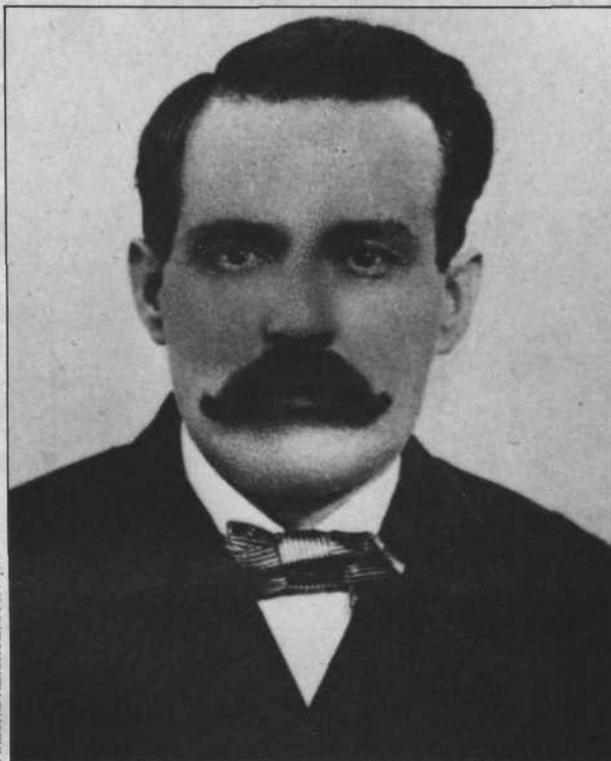
From Desert, January 1965.



"Why, that's my first name, Lady. I'm Japan Jicarillo!"

From Desert, February 1965.

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ARIZONA BAD MAN

By John L. Parker

At one time in the Southwest it seemed the bad men outnumbered the good. There was a continuous string of desperadoes on the loose ranging from outright outlaws to minor hired gunslingers who switched so rapidly from one side of the law to another that they defy classification.

Worth more than passing mention as an all-around bad guy for his day or any other day was Tom Ketchum, who died "Black Jack." Some said he got the nickname because of his looks, but it was more likely because of his deeds. Like many others who stained their trails with blood by choice, Ketchum started out as a footloose cowboy. He had been orphaned at six and under the somewhat lackadaisical care of an older brother, Sam.

History does not reveal what caused Black Jack, Sam, and others to leave the cow business for crime. We have no explanations as to why punchers frequently decided that \$30 a

month and board was not for them. Perhaps a realization of how remarkably few turns of the cards could wipe such a sum from the pocket helped many a cowpoke make up his mind.

Black Jack was working for the Bell Cattle Company — a New Mexico spread so vast its limits were mostly defined by the distance roamed by longhorns wearing the Bell brand — when he and his brother Sam decided to change occupations. And like most changes in that wild and violent country, the change was made instantly.

They went bad.

The day they quit the Bell — in the late 1870s — the boys headed south. That night, in time for supper, they hit a familiar wide spot in the road known as the Liberty Store and post office. As was his custom, the storekeeper, Levi Herzstien, let them bunk in an old warehouse next to the store. The next morning Herzstien found the boys had left during the night and taken everything loose they could

carry, including the postal receipts and the contents of the store safe.

After the discovery, no great calamity at the worst, Herzstien exercised remarkably bad judgment for a cautious businessman. He organized a posse consisting of himself and two Mexicans and took off after the early risers. Perhaps he just couldn't imagine two inoffensive boys like Tom and Sam, whom he had known for so long, turning killer. Or maybe it was the sight of the boys devouring some of the unpaid-for perishables from his store that rattled him.

Whatever the cause, he made one final error in his estimate of the two men, and it was period for Levi Herzstien. He and the two *compadres* galloped up to the Ketchums as they sat on a shady bank eating lunch and, without even bothering to draw a gun, demanded their immediate surrender. The two cowboys of yesterday came up shooting; Black Jack with a thirty-thirty, Sam with a revolver.

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Herzstien and one of the Mexicans were killed instantly. The other looked dead to the Ketchums and they rode away without rifling the bodies, a little detail they did not overlook in later shootings.

The wounded man, with a hard-nosed .30-caliber bullet through his middle, got up and rode nearly 20 miles to sound the alarm and lived to tell the tale.

The alarm was sounded loud enough, but it was nearly 20 years before justice — in the form of a *maguay* rope — was able to deal firmly with Black Jack, and by that time the first killings were of little matter. There would be some 19 more murders to add to those first two. Black Jack kept a faithful record, delicately carving small notches on the handle of the gun at his hip.

Lawmen who sought him in five states declared that most of the notches were made with a .30-30 and preferably at some distance. All three of the men in this first shooting were hit with a .30-30. Sam might just as well have fired in the air.

After the New Mexico escapade, the boys circled north and Black Jack swung a wide loop as far up as Montana. In Colorado he and some others ambushed a stagecoach on the Santa Fe Trail and killed the armed guard. In Montana they helped a cattleman drive a herd of prime steers south from Henry's Lake to loading pens on the Union Pacific in Idaho.

The steers arrived at the pens safe and sound, but the owner got permanently lost somewhere along the way. No trace of him was ever found, and Black Jack was in Utah spending the money from the sale of the animals before the change in ownership was noticed.

Black Jack first appeared in Arizona on a bicycle at the Tap Duncan ranch near the Colorado across the line from Utah. It was, as Tap Duncan said, "the devil of a way for a self-respecting

cowhand to travel." It seems that in St. George, Utah, Black Jack — who was six feet tall, darkly handsome, and of quiet demeanor — had become very much the ladies' man. For awhile he had plenty of spending money from the late cattleman's herd and lots of time to spend it. His activities as a gallant earned him the nickname "Bishop."

This pleasant interlude in Ketchum's busy life of crime came to an end abruptly when the husband of one of the ladies — whose admiration for the tall, handsome desperado was ardent, if indiscreet — came home unexpectedly. Black Jack departed via a window without bothering to lift the sash. There being nothing handy to speed his departure except for the returned husband's bicycle, Black Jack took off on it and was seen in St. George no more.

Tap Duncan, an irascible man in the best of humor, was a bit mortified when he caught Black Jack trading the bicycle for a horse. He pointed out the continuation of the trail to the outlaw and suggested that he take it, on the bicycle. The suggestion was too pointed to be ignored, or at least the accuracy of the sights on the Sharp's buffalo gun that Tap kept beaded on Black Jack caused him to get going in a hurry.

Ketchum continued south, and for several years he headquartered with a gang near Duncan, Ariz. The gang was soon headed by Black Jack, who had long since parted with his brother Sam. (Sam reformed, and later died respectably in bed.) He decided the gang should specialize, and specialize they did. While they were willing to commit any crime in the book, they tried to work a solid source of dependable income for those lean periods that occur in criminal activities as well as in normal business. Their rainy-day — or perhaps it should be called rainy-night —

activity was horse stealing.

It was, as Black Jack said later while meditating in the *carcel* at Old Santa Fe, downright amazing how many people you could rile up by stealing a horse. Such occasions called for a hurried change of scenery and occupation.

On one such occasion, when the gang found it necessary to split up for a time, Black Jack went to Nogales, Ariz., on the Mexican border. He robbed the bank on the American side and galloped eastward across the Patagonia Mountains, pursued by Nogales' Sheriff Fly and a posse. After killing one of the posse, he eluded them in Skeleton Canyon. His horse gave out in Wild Cat Canyon at the southern tip of the Chiricahuas and he buried the loot from the bank — most of it gold and silver — somewhere in the canyon. (To his death, he never revealed the location.)

His welcome had been worn pretty thin in most parts of the territory by the time Black Jack pulled one final deal that aroused the citizens of Arizona. Short of money again, he learned that the ranchers around the Camp Verde store on the banks of Verde River were in the habit of depositing sizable sums with the owners, Mack Rogers and Clint Wingfield. Camp Verde was a rather isolated spot 25 miles from the copper activity at Jerome and 40 miles from Prescott, the Yavapai county seat.

Black Jack came into the store just at dark one summer evening as the owners were closing. As he came in the door, Rogers was walking to the rear room where they kept the safe. At Black Jack's command, Rogers dashed for the door. A single shot left him dying on the floor. Young Clint Wingfield stepped to the store entrance from his seat on the porch and Ketchum dropped him with a bullet through the heart.

In wild haste Black Jack raced

from the store and onto the street, colliding with a Captain Boyd who had left the store a few minutes earlier and was hurrying back to investigate the shots. There is confusion about whether Boyd was shot in the leg or merely kicked and left lying on the ground. In any case, he crawled into the store and found the two men dead.

Black Jack had left his horse tied to a tree several yards from the store and was able to get mounted and headed for the safety of the mountains along the Arizona-New Mexico border.

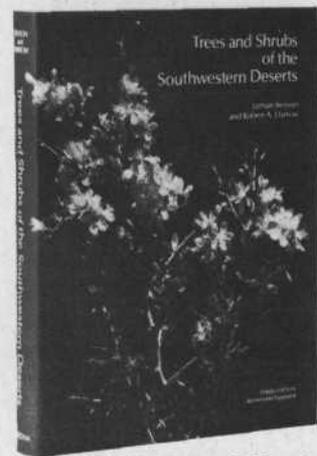
Within a few hours, Frank Wingfield — a relative of the murdered youth — and a group of valley ranchers attempted to follow the trail of the outlaw and scoured the hills and mountain country east of the camp.

Johnny Munds, the Yavapai County sheriff, arrived from Prescott the following day and headed a posse of 20 men, including an Indian tracker, Bill Head. It was a chase Munds often mentioned in later years. Long and fruitless, it ended at Wild Horse Springs in New Mexico after the wily outlaw had taken a long lead. Two horse-stealing members of Black Jack's gang were captured by the posse, but only after they had managed to sneak a fresh mount to Black Jack.

By the time Munds led his weary crew back to the adobe store on the Verde where Wingfield and Rogers had been so wantonly and uselessly murdered, Arizona territorial officials had been spurred to action. A dead-or-alive reward of \$1,750 was posted for Black Jack and John Munds was given extradition papers to get Black Jack from New Mexico to Arizona.

Back into New Mexico went Munds and two deputies to take up Black Jack's trail at Wild Horse Springs. Here Munds learned that the outlaw had stolen a horse and continued north. Munds and his deputies

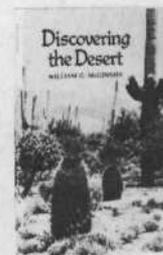
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trailed Black Jack through 1,000 long miles of the wildest part of New Mexico, then into Texas, and down into Old Mexico. Munds crossed and crisscrossed the *Llano Estacado* — that hot, dry, waterless section of 40,000 square miles that bisects Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. It was a serpentine chase that came to a blind end for Munds at the little plaza of Vequita on the Rio Grande, where all traces of the outlaw vanished in the dry fall air. Munds got in touch with New Mexico authorities and camped at Vequita to wait for information.

Black Jack, flat broke as usual, pushed on north towards Clayton, N.M. Along with some other outlaws, Black Jack decided to hold up the much-robbed Denver & Fort Worth passenger train.

The bandits arranged to meet near the whistle-stop of Folsom. But when Black Jack climbed over the coal car and ordered the engineer to stop the train, he found himself alone. Deciding to go through with the job and rob the train single-handedly, he erred in stopping the train on a curve: When he ordered the fireman back to uncouple the express cars so they could be pulled up the track and rifled, there was not enough slack to open the couplings.

Meanwhile, an expressman stuck his head out of the door of the express car and was shot in the jaw for his trouble.

Failing in his attempt to pull the express cars away from the train and rifle them at his leisure, Black Jack decided to rob the passengers on the first coach and call it a day.

But on board this particular train, however, was a conductor named Frank Harrington who had grown more than a little tired of train robbers, and even wearier of being the butt of so many jokes about the frequency with which his train had been robbed. In consequence, Harrington had taken to toting a

double-barreled shotgun and presented himself as an official reception committee for any and all bandits.

As Black Jack came back toward the coaches, driving the engineer and fireman before him, Harrington stepped to the platform. Shooting around the two trainmen, he blasted Black Jack with both barrels, hitting him in the arm. The blast knocked Ketchum to the ground, but before Harrington could reload, the outlaw crawled under the train and fled in the brush along the tracks.

The trainmen did not hold up the train schedule to follow the well-marked trail of blood, but the next day Harrington was back bright and early riding with Sheriff Saturnino Pinard of Clayton, N.M., in the cab of a switch engine.

When they pulled up at the scene of the attempted robbery, who should be there to wave them down but Black Jack Ketchum. His arm was hanging by a few shreds of skin and cloth, and he was so weak from the loss of blood that he was barely able to totter. Although harmless in his present condition, Black Jack was a pretty hot potato to handle considering the number of his gang members and lawless friends still free around Clayton. Sheriff Pinard put an armed guard around him and rushed him to Santa Fe for safekeeping. In Santa Fe, they amputated his arm above the elbow.

Sheriff John Munds, pacing the plaza impatiently at Vequita, heard the news and rushed to Santa Fe carrying both the reward money and the extradition papers. Governor Otero and the officials at Santa Fe congratulated him warmly on his indefatigable pursuit of Black Jack. It was, in fact, one of the longest jobs of trailing a man in frontier history.

But when it came to releasing Black Jack to the Arizona officer, New Mexico balked! That state

had come to have strong feelings about the popular sport of train robbery. And well they might! It had gotten so that regular passengers on the Denver & Fort Worth train never knew when the train stopped whether it was a scheduled stop or merely a pause to accommodate some trigger-happy bandit.

Train crews had blisters on their feet from walking back and forth between the engine and the rest of the train, due to the merry habits of bandits, who usually ran the engine and express cars a few miles down the line to give them time to rifle the express and mail. Besides, passenger trains cluttering up the tracks raised the deuce with freight schedules.

Black Jack hadn't gotten anything but a charge of buckshot in this attempt, but he and his gang had robbed the Denver & Fort Worth at least twice before. New Mexico needed an outstanding example of what happened to *malo hombres* who regarded train robbing as a frivolous pastime and here was a noted bad man right at hand. The temptation was too great.

So one sunny April day in 1899, in the Union County courtyard at Clayton, Black Jack, now a one-armed man, walked with his hand lashed to his back across those few steps from the county jail to where they had built a high platform with the strong cross member 10 feet above.

At one minute to 12 noon Sheriff Pinard asked him if he had any final words. There have been some attempts to put a fine, bragging, devil-may-care speech in his mouth, but in the memory of men who stood there on the platform with him, Black Jack was a quiet, soft-spoken man of few words. He had nothing to say on this occasion.

Perhaps he remembered another sunny noon years before when Herzstien and two others sprawled in the dust before him. □

Early-American Graffiti

Dear Editor:

For decades, archaeologists have pondered endlessly upon the true meanings of the ancient Indian petroglyphs found in this country.

Recently, a crack team of young American graffitiologists was summoned to Northern Arizona to try to decipher these mysterious messages.

After several grueling hours of research, equipped only with two pencils and having to rely on their years of personal analysis and participation in this field, they were finally able to interpret these prehistoric inscriptions and give us a glimpse into the past.

We hope you will enjoy knowing that things have not really changed all that much.

Sincerely,

*Mitch Lange, Pat Lange, Kevin McClung, and Jim Hammond
(who took the pictures)*

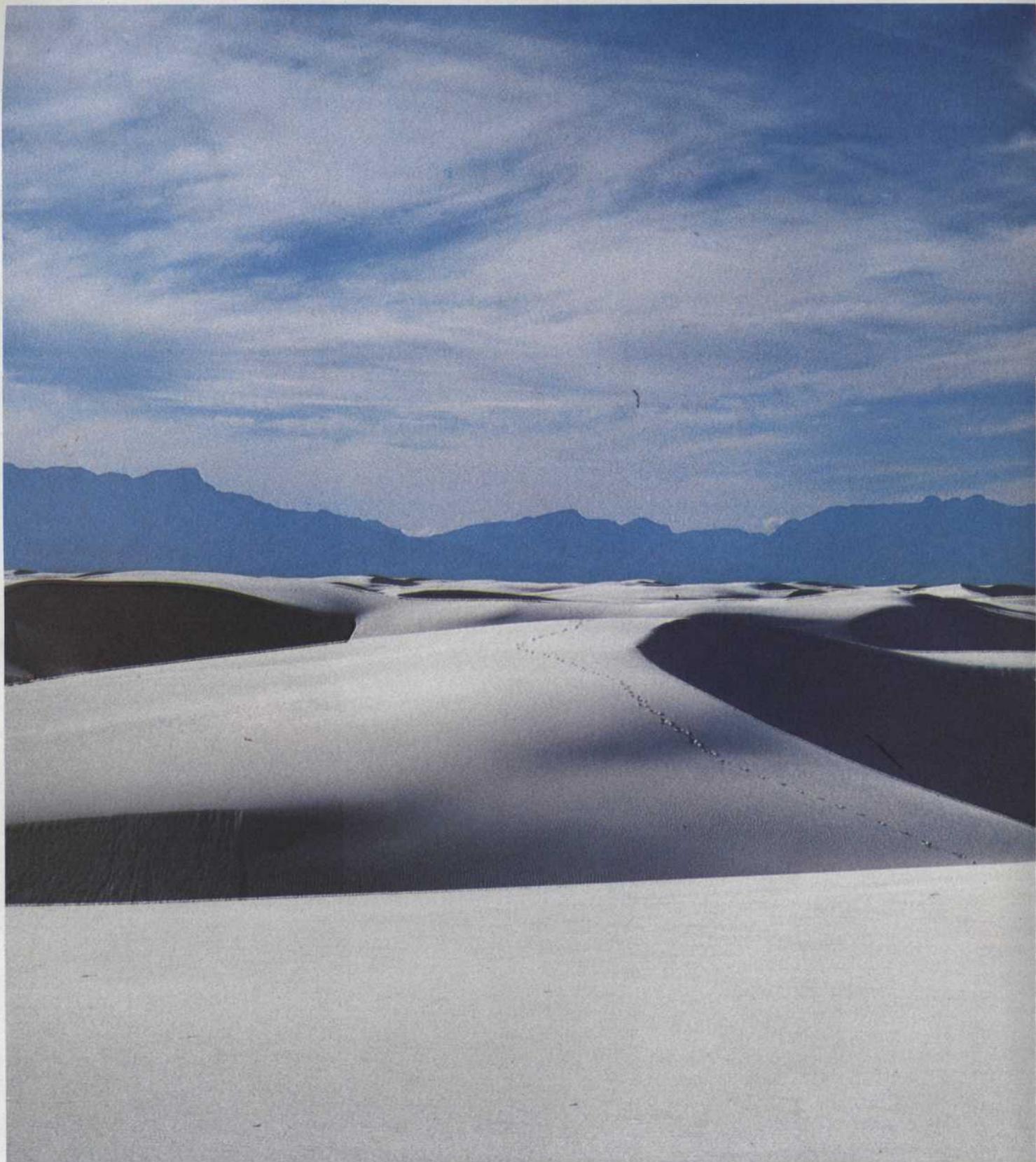
Readers: Have you seen any funny bumper stickers, signs, or situations while traveling in the desert? Next time you do, snap a picture for us — we may print it and your name in "On the Road." If we do, we'll send you \$5 as a reward for being so observant. Send your submissions to "On the Road," *Desert*, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109. Submissions will not be returned.



"No intelligent life here, Scotty. Beam us up!"



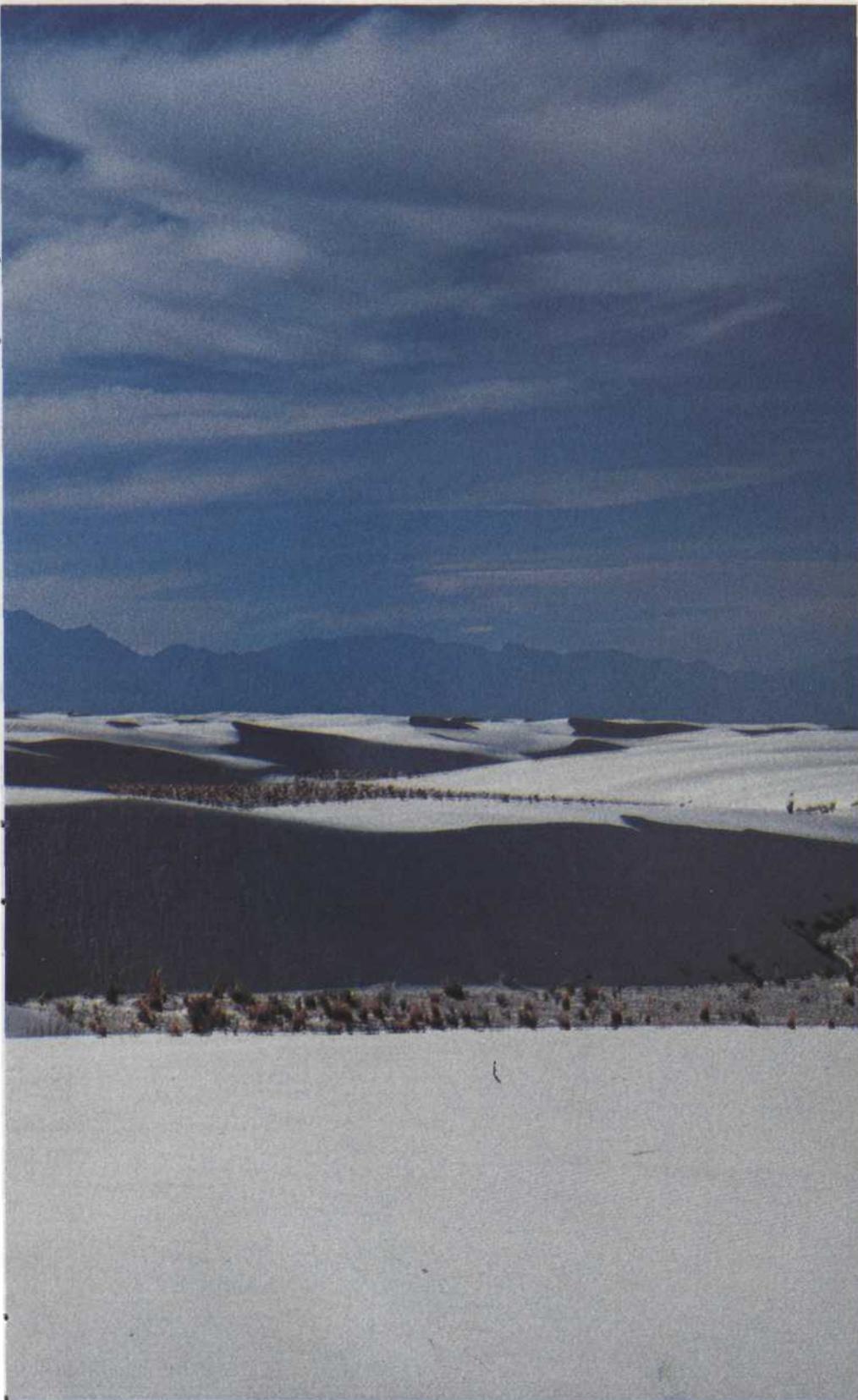
"Little Dove + Lame Elk 4-ever."



There are four different kinds of dunes at White Sands. The embryonic dunes are dome-shaped. Transverse dunes are

long, straight ridges. Barchans are shaped like a quarter-moon pointing ahead. And parabolic dunes are U-shaped. Each type of

dune has a different movement rate, and those rates vary from eight to 400 feet a year. The younger the dune (embryonic



Walking White Sands

A first-hand initiation to the science and scenery of a natural wonder that's almost 30,000 years old

Text and photos by Renee Rubin and Michael Delesantro

Standing on top of a towering gypsum dune in the heart of White Sands National Monument in southern New Mexico, we gaze upon a vast openness. Stretching toward the distant mountain ranges are wave upon wave of pure white sand. There are no power lines, buildings, or other works of humans. There are not even trees to break the pattern of the undulating sand dunes. Here, our spirits are free to soar.

Yet climbing down into the interdunal areas, surrounded on all sides by hills of constantly moving sand, we feel claustrophobic, as if the weight of the sand above us might come crashing down in a sudden desert tidal wave. It is in these interdunal areas, however, that the true nature of the dune fields unfolds. Plants and animals

dunes are the youngest) the faster it moves. As the dunes move across the monument, they change to one of the other shapes.



Renee Rubin walks the dunes, which are located 90 miles from El Paso, Texas, and about 16 from Alamogordo, N.M. The soft, calming appearance of White Sands belies the major headlines that have been made in the general vicinity. On July 16, 1945, the experimental atomic bomb explosion occurred nearby. And on March 30, 1982, the space shuttle Columbia landed at White Sands at the end of its third and toughest test flight.

struggle for survival as the dunes, pushed slowly forward by the prevailing winds, advance to cover them.

We have visited White Sands before, as do thousands of others every month. But like most of them we had been content to view the dunes from our car or from the few short nature trails. Now we feel like the early pioneers and explorers may have felt upon encountering the imposing dune fields: That we are about to strike out across a trackless wilderness.

At the edge of the dunes many plants have gained a temporary foothold. Water drains after infrequent summer rains and provides the extra moisture required to allow hardy plants to push through the hardened interdunal soil and begin the dune stabilization process. In an otherwise barren landscape, their struggle seems to be a celebration of life against all odds.

Our hike along the backcountry access trail takes us past sand monuments or pedestals, marvelous wind-sculpted formations created by roots of trees or large shrubs, like skunkbush sumac and cottonwoods, which extend their roots deep into the sand in the search for water. The strong desert wind has blown away the surrounding sand to expose the roots and the sand trapped around them. Even after the trees or shrubs die, the hardened sand remains as a reminder of the power of the wind. Some of these pedestals rise eight or 10 feet above the desert surface.

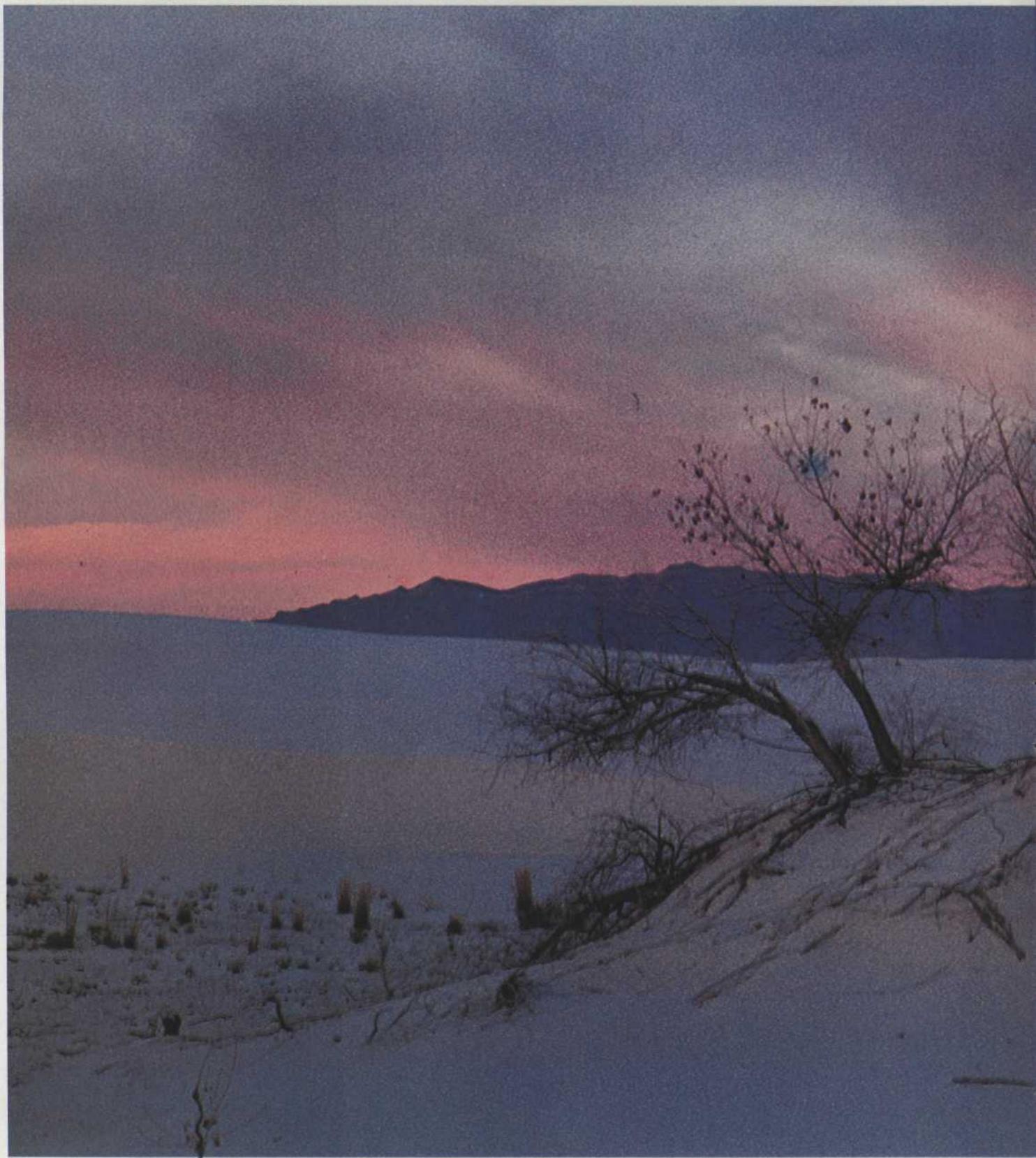
The wind is the animating force behind the shifting sands. We have been here when gusts of grit stung our faces as the sand was hurtled across the countryside. But now the air is still and silent. The distant calling of a desert sparrow is the only interruption.

Trudging up and out of the interdunal area, we struggle to the top of a dune. We wear hiking boots to prevent the sand from finding our feet, but even their heavy tread provides little traction in the sand. Frustration sets in when for every step we take forward, we seem to slip a half-step back.

But soon we fall into a rhythm of slowly climbing the slippery dunes and then joyfully racing down, half-falling and half-flying into the interdunal areas. After a mile, we reach the backcountry campground, the only area open for overnight visitors to White Sands National Monument. A sign reminds us that water is available only at monument headquarters about 5½ miles away. Our supply of two gallons of water seems adequate for our spring overnight stay. But in summer, desert hikers should carry at least one gallon of water per person per day.

Hiking opportunities from the campsite abound. Access, however, is limited at times because of missile firings at nearby White Sands Missile Range. Visitors, therefore, must check with the rangers at monument headquarters before entering the backcountry.

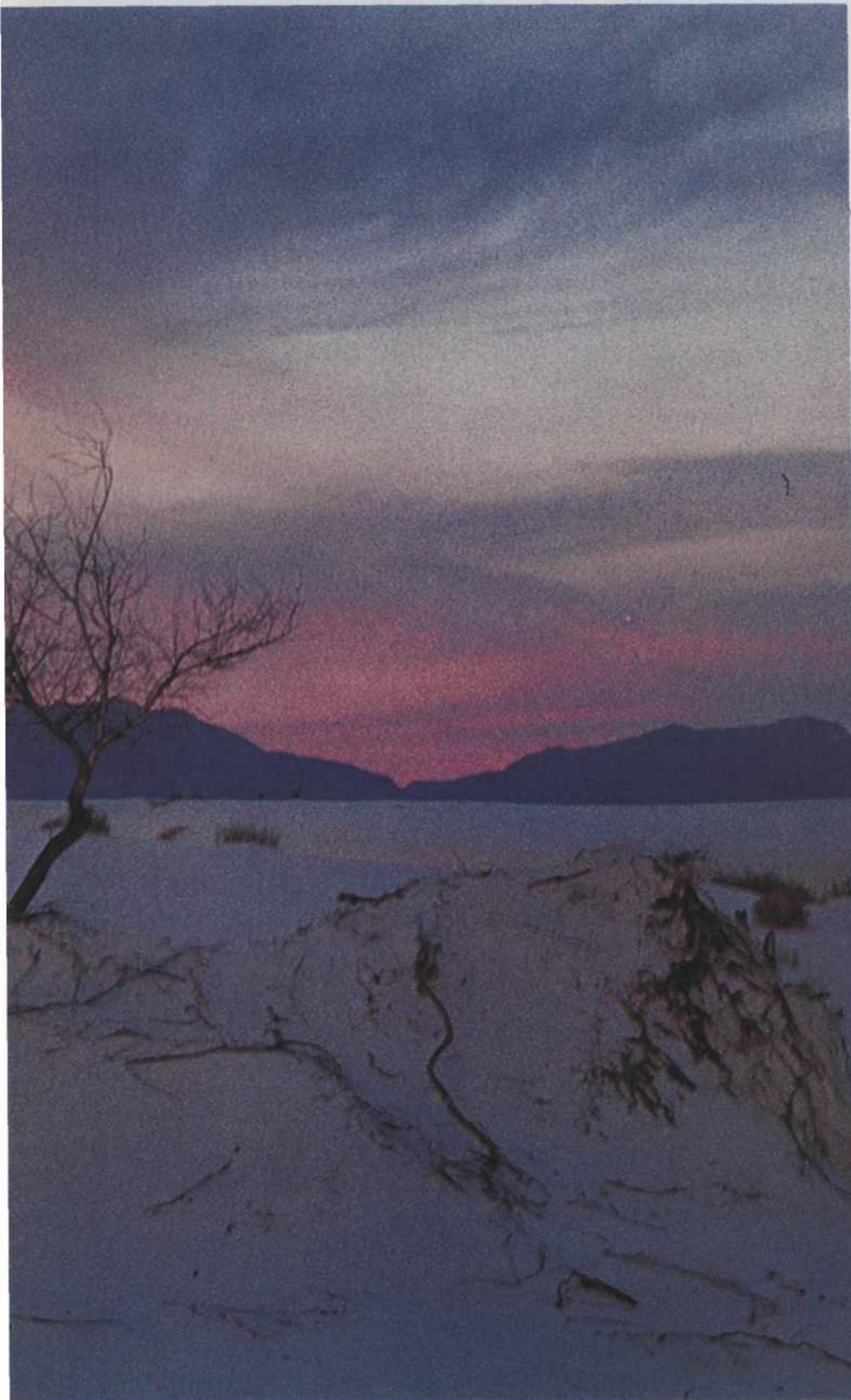
Our destination is the heart of the dunes where sand rules supreme and plants quickly surrender to its movement. There are no marked trails, so we begin to plot our course across the dunes with a compass. We cannot depend on our tracks to lead us back because the winds pick up suddenly and quickly work their magic, erasing all signs of humans. Taking compass bearings on distant landmarks, we plot our course relative to the mountain ranges surrounding us; there are few other landmarks in the dune fields and the large dunes all look alike.



The sands and vegetation are home to many field mice and lizards that have a distinct advantage: They're hard for

predators to spot. Over the centuries, their natural colorings have changed to a white that matches the sands. This was due

to natural selection – the darker field mice and lizards were easier to spot and to kill, leaving those with lighter coloring to reproduce.



From the interdunal areas we often see nothing in the distance but the sky, and we have to climb the nearest dune to take our readings. The dunes provide a challenging test of our pathfinding skills.

Again, we feel a kinship with travelers of an earlier age when orienteering and pathfinding were ways of life instead of pleasant diversions during a brief escape from the worries of modern society. After leaving the campground, we see no human footprints except our own. The isolation frightens us at first, but at the same time accentuates the exhilaration of striking a new path across unexplored territory.

As we trek deeper into the vast dune fields, the early-morning chill gives way to the heat of the desert sun. We shed our parkas. At the same time, we shed our cares and open our eyes and minds fully to appreciate the scene around us.

Most of the rain falls here in sudden summer rainstorms, so the interdunal soil is still dry during the spring. The parched earth forms mosaic patterns on the ground. But despite the extremely dry conditions during most of the year, many plants grow in these desert areas.

Four-wing saltbush is a common inhabitant of this region. It thrives on alkaline soil and its extensive root system can search deep into the ground for water. The soap tree yucca, the New Mexico state flower, also is excellently adapted to the sandy habitat. The yucca's stem grows quickly, keeping the top of the plant above the surface of the moving dunes. The leafless Torrey ephedra has adapted by



The famous sands, which provide Rubin with a comfortable napping spot, are about 35 miles long and 15 miles wide. At least 62 species of plants live in the dunes and the level flats between them. White Sands plant life includes four species of mallows, milkweed, morning glory, mustard, Gilia, 13 species of aster, one true verbenas, and several species of cacti.

producing chlorophyll in its stem rather than in its leaves, thus conserving water by having less area for evaporation. Because the pioneers made tea from this plant, its common name is Mormon tea. Another common interdunal plant, rubber rabbitbush, derives its name from its sap, which contains latex rubber. Various animals feed on its stem and seeds. Hardy grasses also provide food for dune animals.

Although the desert does not offer the variety of flora and fauna found elsewhere, we are fascinated by the manner in which these few hardy plants and animals survive in the dunes despite the temperature extremes, aridity, and moving sands. Some lizards and mice in the monument, for example, have evolved white skin and fur to help them hide. It is too early in the year, however, for us to

see the lizards who enjoy the summer heat.

We stop for lunch and rest in the soft sand, which conforms to the contours of our backs, and we lazily watch wisps of high clouds drift by. This is the life! An essential part of all of our outdoor experiences is time spent doing absolutely nothing except enjoying the peace and grandeur of nature.

We could easily spend the rest of the afternoon on our sand beds, but we resume our hike toward the largest dunes. We delight in deciphering the tales told by the tracks and other signs we find in the desert. Wood rats pruned the yuccas with their sharp teeth. A kit fox left large tracks as he chased a pocket mouse down a dune to its tiny hole beneath a bush. A horned lark dug a little hole in the sand where it found seeds, and then it walked off again in search of

more food.

As we walk toward the heart of the dunes, the plants become more sparse and the dunes more domineering. Some of the dunes rise 40 feet above the interdunal floor. From the top of the large dunes, one dune seems to melt into the next, and the wind has shaped each into curves and soft arcs.

Several landmarks stand out in the distance. While we sit in the hot sun, Sierra Blanca, the tallest peak in southern New Mexico, still wears its sparkling snowcap. To the east is Sacramento Peak Observatory where scientists study the sun through clear mountain air. Squinting against the bright sun reflected off the white sand, we can see the San Andres Mountain peaks that mark the western sky.

The mountains are the source of these gypsum sands, which form the largest dunes of this type in the United States. The gypsum washes down the mountainsides into the Tularosa basin. About 30,000 years ago the basin filled with water, and gypsum sand dissolved in the lake. Over the years, the climate changed and the wet basin dried up, leaving the gypsum behind as selenite crystals. When southwest winds broke up the crystals and blew the pure white particles northwest across the basin, the dunes were formed.

If the area wasn't dry today there wouldn't be any dunes because gypsum dissolves in water. Two small sources of water in the basin — Lake Lucero and the alkali flats — continue to dissolve gypsum from the mountains and release it as crystals in the dry season.

The sun begins to sink lower in the sky and the dunes cast long shadows, making an almost endless pattern of black and white. Reluctantly, we turn back and finish our five-mile loop

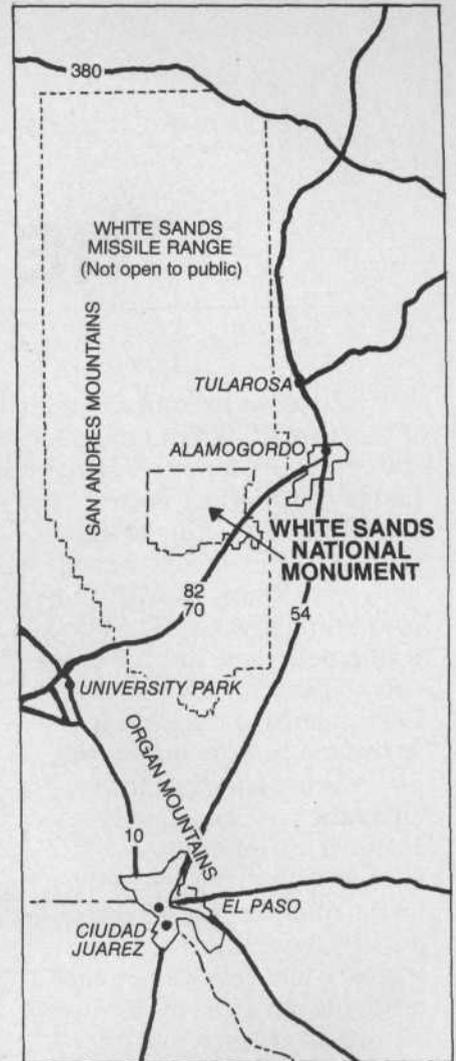
through the dunes. We reach our campsite before sunset.

Cottonwood trees, the largest trees in the dunes, offer us an anchor for our tent, the only one in the campsite that night. After setting up camp, we climb a nearby dune to watch the sunset. There are no trees to block our view of the sky. To the east the Sacramento Mountains turn red in the late afternoon sun. The snow on Sierra Blanca glistens in the alpenglow and the high thin clouds turn pink as the sun produces its last light before setting. It is a perfect ending to our enjoyable day.

Because the white sand does not trap the heat, the temperature falls quickly and forces us to return to our tent for parkas. In the desert, and especially in the white dunes, there are marked differences between day and night temperatures. A monument ranger told us that even during the summer, when daylight temperatures soar above 100 degrees, he had shivered in a down sleeping bag at night. But at the moment we feel that our noses and cheeks, which had been burned by the sun's reflection off the white sand, could warm the entire desert.

Only a gentle breeze blows and the old dried cottonwood leaves tap our tent. Although the wind remains calm tonight, it had blown away two campers' tents earlier in the month. Later we take a short walk to view the stars, beautiful in every corner of the midnight heavens.

We get up in time to see the sun rise over the Sacramento Mountains. In the early-morning sunlight, we notice huge sandhill cranes migrating along the San Andres Mountains to their northern breeding grounds. Near the campsite we discover mineralized roots and stems from an old sand pedestal. Some of the wood has become



totally fossilized, but other pieces are covered with just a thin layer of sand.

We explore the area surrounding the backcountry campsite until the hot afternoon sun reminds us that our water is running out. Just as the plants and animals of the desert are limited by water supply, so too is the length of our trip. We pack up the gear and follow the rising and falling trail back.

At the crest of a dune ridge we take one final look across the waves of sand. After hiking in those giant hills, we find it hard to believe that some people still call this area a barren wasteland. We have seen many things, but they are just a few of the marvelous secrets hidden in the dunes of white sand. □

Before dying, this central Nevada town begat a riot, a lynching, one of the state's biggest mining booms, and an early state hero.

The Best of Belmont

Text and photos by James N. Price

Ghost town visitors are often disappointed. I frequently hear the complaint today: "There's just nothing left up there." And often that's true, due to the effects of time, the elements, and, sometimes, vandalism in old mining towns. Ah, but fortunately there are still those special places left where the full romance of the West in its mining heyday lingers on, places where one can truly enjoy the past. Such a place is one of my favorites — Belmont, Nev. It is blessed with a number of fascinating mining-day ruins, easy access, a few very-much-alive residents, and one of the nicest settings for a town that one can imagine.

Belmont is nestled at an elevation of 7,000 feet in the northern end of one of Nevada's incomprehensibly large valleys — the Ralston, an easy 40-mile drive north from Tonopah. Belmont is ringed on three sides by the oft snow-clad peaks of the Toquima range. Directly to the east, where most of the mines were, is a view of the Monitor Valley, so enormous that shadows from huge cumulus clouds appear like small footprints on the valley floor. On each visit, I savor the unlimited high-desert vistas, the bubbling natural spring in the middle of town, the large green trees, and the abundance of clear air, all of which are part of the wonderful sense of being there. Belmont's summer climate is virtually ideal, and its winters are, well

. . . severe, but tolerable.

Belmont's summers are enjoyed by some two dozen residents, most of whom "winter" in nearby Tonopah. Andy Eason, whose older brothers went to school in Belmont, has lived in the town every summer for more than 20 years and told me that he wouldn't have it any other way. He owns the Belmont Bar, which reopened in the 1960s. Operated by Richard Ashton, formerly of Las Vegas and now living in nearby Manhattan, it's open each weekend of the summer. The bar is a lively gathering spot on those weekends for locals and visitors alike. Meanwhile, John Richardson and his family "escaped" from Southern California about five years ago, bought a house in the middle of town, and are among the six year-round residents of Belmont. These lucky people and a few others have the enviable "job" of living in Belmont while helping to preserve its remnants of the past. And what an intriguing past it's had!

The history of Belmont

In the boom-and-bust days of the West, each major boom town had an enormous influx of prospectors, very few of whom actually made money during that boom. The disillusioned ones headed for the "next hill," and thus new finds were made and new booms were created. Austin, one of Nevada's earliest post-Comstock strikes, begat

Belmont in this way. Early strikes were made in the Toquimas in 1864, and by 1865 the Silver Bend district was established with Belmont as its noisy, pulsating heart. In this year alone, some 1,500 people came to a previously empty piece of Nevada desert to try their luck. And there were some big strikes, virtually all silver. Some ore was said to assay at \$10,000 a ton, but the norm was more like \$100.

By 1867, Belmont had all the accoutrements of a civilized existence. The main street was lined with a bank, newspaper and telegraph offices, a music hall, sawmills, a bakery, two doctors, a drugstore, and Ernst & Esser's, which stocked all other needed products. The premier edition of the *Silver Bend Reporter* on March 30, 1867, stated that "the hills are beginning to blacken with prospectors."

Also in 1867 came one of any mining town's greatest sources of pride, stability, and importance: Belmont became the seat of Nye County, stripping the title away from struggling Ione. Because the officials of the county, formed a scant three years earlier, had just built a courthouse in Ione, seven years elapsed before Belmont had its own gorgeous red brick courthouse.

Belmont also became a major transportation center, with stages serving such booming Nevada cities as Austin, Luning, Wadsworth (near Carson City),



and Eureka. This latter connection was especially important when the Eureka & Palisade Railroad began service to Eureka in 1875. Ore for processing in Belmont's mills was brought in from as far away as Lida, more than 100 miles to the south. Much of Belmont's metal output went directly to the mints in Carson City and San Francisco.

Belmont's peak population was reached in the 1870s. The emergence of the White Pine district in the 1868-69 period drained Belmont's population for a while but new rich strikes in 1873 put Belmont back on firm

ground. The exact number of residents at the peak is quoted anywhere from 2,000 to 10,000. In any case, Belmont was a bustling community for about 20 years.

Then the generous earth, seemingly unlimited in its supply of metal, changed its personality. It ceased to provide further riches, and Belmont's production was essentially complete by 1885. Some \$15 million worth of silver, gold, lead, and mercury had been taken from the slopes of the Toquimas. The town declined through the 1890s and had only a handful of residents by 1900.

With the beautiful Monitor Valley as a background, some of the walls of Belmont's Highbridge Ore Mill are still standing. The building was at least three stories high, with an interior the size of a large gymnasium.

Tonopah began booming and quickly whisked away the county seat honors in 1903. There were attempted revivals in 1909 with the discovery of turquoise, and in the Teens when the tailings were reworked and processed in a small new mill. These ventures were not profitable, however. The Silver Bend district's once-thriving heart has throbbed meekly and slowly since.

The people of Belmont

The history of Belmont's people is special and intriguing, too. Belmont was generally not as lawless and certainly a good deal more refined than most western mining towns, but there were moments. Surely Belmont had its share of robberies and shoot-outs, but there were two especially shameful events in Belmont's past — a riot by mine workers and the lynching of two young miners by a town vigilante group.

The former event occurred in April 1867. Large groups of Irish and Cornish miners had come to Belmont and they'd brought their traditional rivalry with them. When it seemed that the Silver Bend Company was going to give preference to Cornish workers (who would work for cheaper wages), a group of the Irish stormed the company office and challenged an agent named Canfield. When he could not satisfy the group verbally, he was strung up on a metal rail and carried around town from bar to bar. The miners grew rowdier and more threatening until at one bar they encountered Louis Bodrow, a former marshal from Austin. He informed the group they should cease their actions. One of the group's leaders, Pat Dignon, spat in Bodrow's face and the fight was on. Both Bodrow and Dignon were shot and killed, and numerous people were injured, but Canfield was saved by friends.

The other major event of

disgrace to Belmont occurred in May 1874. Two young men named Charlie McIntyre and Jack Walker had come to Belmont from Pennsylvania to try mining. Some references say they were union organizers. In any case, they managed to irritate a local citizen in a bar one night, which, in typical Western style, led to a shoot-out and a couple of injured bystanders. So the two men were put in jail. They escaped but were quickly recaptured in a local mine where they had hidden. Although they were put in a more secure cell, some local citizens were not at all pleased by the young men's behavior and decided to do something about it. Breaking into the jail, the group bound up the sheriff, proceeded to the men's cell, and promptly hung them. The group left a "301" tag on each — the symbol of Belmont's local vigilante committee.

The story would have ended there except that a blood-and-guts version of this episode appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which said that not only had this horrible deed taken place, but that the bodies had also been riddled with bullet holes, thus spattering blood all over the floors and ceiling of the jail. The sheriff vigorously denied this story in a later *Chronicle* article, but he finally succumbed to pressure from bloodthirsty visitors: He flung red paint around on the jail's walls so that "everyone can be happy and we can have some peace around here!"

Belmont's biggest and in some ways most incredible people success story was its progression of district attorneys in the declining days. In the early 1890s, "Old Andy" Johnson, an uneducated, unkempt mule rancher, was elected district attorney as the result of a joke that backfired. Although he knew nothing at all about the job, he engaged the talents of William Granger, a retired

lawyer in town, to handle the few pieces of county business during Andy's tenure. Johnson was removed from office in the election of 1896, but he'd decided he liked it in the courthouse and would not leave. For nine days he sat at his desk, admitting only trusted friends with food and whiskey. But he finally gave in and went back to his mules.

Johnson's replacement was also an uneducated rancher, but presumably one who smelled better. His name was Jim Butler and he lived on a ranch north of Belmont. If that name sounds familiar, it should. He was the man who, while chasing one of his mules on a prospecting trip, literally stumbled across the rich lode that became Tonopah. Even more amazing is that Butler's assistant district attorney, Tasker L. Oddie, went on to become an important figure in Nye County, then governor of Nevada, and finally a U.S. senator! He was a state hero.

Meanwhile, in the early 1890s, a daughter named Rose was born to Mr. and Mrs. Goldbach, who lived on Barley Creek near Belmont. By marriage she became Rose Walter and she has spent virtually her entire life living in or near Belmont. She went to school in a little adobe schoolhouse at the north end of town, and then stayed on as one of Belmont's few full-time residents. She was, in fact, the only year-round resident of Belmont for many years; only recently did she sell out in Belmont and move to Tonopah. (The aforementioned Richardson family now lives in her home.)

The walking tour of Belmont

The setting, the history, and the people all lead up to Belmont today: It's a wonderful collection of decaying buildings from the 1860s and '70s. Because Belmont had water, wood, rock, and a nearby deposit of clay, a kiln was built for firing brick. Thus, many of Belmont's buildings and mills



The Nye County Courthouse, in the foreground of this view south down the Ralston Valley (left), is now being restored by the state of Nevada. Recently, a shiny new white roof was installed and plastic sheets were placed in the previously gaunt window housings to protect the building's interior. The state has further restoration plans for the courthouse. Many Belmont locals fear for the longevity of the Cosmopolitan Music Hall (below). Once the town's center of culture, its sides are now bulging, the roof is slowly disappearing, and the building may collapse soon.

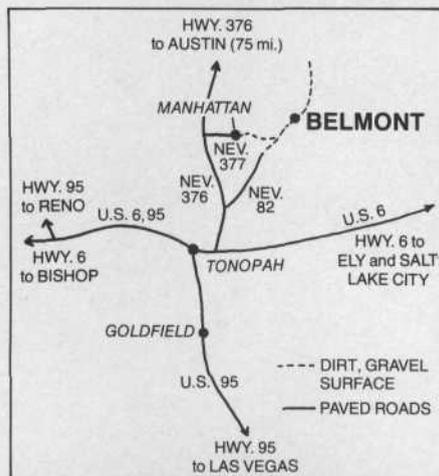


were built of local brick and stone and have survived. Join me on a tour starting from the south end of town (coming in from Tonopah).

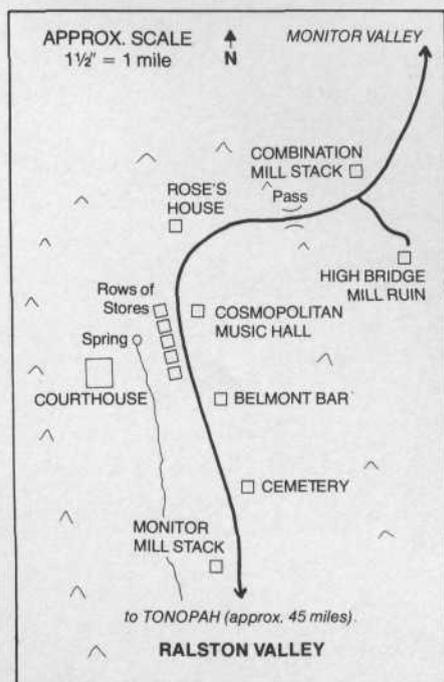
On the left is the enormous, square brick stack and foundations of the Belmont-Monitor Mill. This mill once contained 80 stamps, no doubt inundating the valley day and night with the clatter of prosperity.

Toward town, a bit further on the right, is the cemetery, somewhat hidden in trees. It's fenced, reasonably well-maintained, and contains a number of older headstones.

The Belmont Bar, mentioned



Map of central Nevada showing routes to Belmont.



Map for a tour of Belmont.

previously, is next on the right. I have quaffed a few beers here and had a chance to meet the "town folks." Although this is a newer building, there are some good historical photos on the walls.

The west (left) side of the main street contains a row of period buildings — some brick, some wood. These were offices, stores, and saloons.

Across the street is one of the West's most photographed and haunting structures: the Cosmopolitan Music Hall. The hall was Belmont's cultural center and featured the likes of Lotta Crabtree (one of the most famous stage actresses of the 19th century) and Fay Templeton (a child performer of the day) on its stage.

To the west of the main street is Belmont's little spring. Its stream disappears into the desert's dryness below town. Just beyond is Belmont's most prestigious building and my all-time favorite ghost town edifice: the Nye County Courthouse. It's a beautiful building, built entirely of local brick and stone in 1874. The cost for construction was \$3,400. Each room, including the jail, attached to the rear of the building, had a heater, and thus the courthouse sports a number of chimneys. I have thoroughly explored this fascinating relic. I have surveyed the graffiti on the walls inside, some of which is more than 50 years old, and I have even ventured up creaky staircases to the second floor and to the gorgeous cupola atop the building. The courthouse virtually talks of history and nostalgia! Thanks to the state of Nevada, the building's restoration has begun.

Back to the main street, on the north end of town at the bend in the road, is the sturdy brick house where Rose Walter lived for so many years. To the right and up the hill was a quaint wooden Catholic church, which, after Belmont's demise, was

moved to nearby Manhattan. It still graces that town. All around the perimeter of town are mine remnants, walls and foundations of dwellings, and all variety of metal and glass pieces. In short, one can explore Belmont in as much depth as one desires. I always find some new relic of Belmont's past on each return visit.

The final part of the tour is East Belmont, a short walk or drive over the hill from Rose's house. Beside the road is the round brick stack and foundations of the 40-stamp Combination Mill. The mill, which cost \$225,000, was moved from California in the late 1860s by mule trains: 14 teams of 10 mules each. I can believe incredible stories like that only because there was no other means of transportation at the time.

Further down the hill and about one-half bumpy mile off the road is the shell of the Highbridge Mill. This building is one of the largest single ruins in any ghost town in the West. Inside are numerous footings for the large ore milling machinery. This building and the views of the Monitor Valley below offer excellent photographic possibilities, as do many of Belmont's lovely old buildings.

Belmont has been spared the normal mining camp maladies of fires and floods. Because local building materials existed nearby, much of Belmont was built of brick and thus remains. The town had a somewhat rowdy but quite civilized past. But through it all, the town's lovely setting and omnipotent scenery remains a primary attraction. And I not only appreciate but envy Andy Eason and a few others who spend as much time as they can in Belmont — it's a pleasant place to be. Visit Belmont, savor the feeling of being there, enjoy the buildings, drink in the high-desert air. Belmont is a special place. □



Chronicle

Milestones, Magic, Myths, and Miscellaneous of the Great American Desert July 1982

GOLD FEVER SWEEPS ARIZONA MOUNTAINS

BULLHEAD CITY, Ariz. — Gold fever among mining firms has led to a major claim-staking war in the historic Oatman mining district in the Black Mountains near Bullhead City.

A major mill has begun production in the area and the United States' biggest silver

producer has begun exploratory drilling near Oatman.

Nyal Niemuth, a geologist and mineral resource specialist for Arizona's Bureau of Mines, said the reason for the rush into Arizona's top gold-mining district is simple. Companies mine for gold in the places where gold has been found be-

fore, he said.

The rush into the area was signaled when Freeport Exploration Co. staked nearly 250 claims in the old San Francisco Mining District in March 1980 when gold prices were rising.

While many of the area's operators say they are mining only marginal gold ore, offi-

cials at Heckla Mining Corp., the largest producer of silver in the country, said they recently discovered characteristics in the Oatman district that make them optimistic about chances of discovering the kind of blind-ore bodies that made Oatman a thriving city 50 years ago. —UPI

CACTUS CRUSHES ITS GUNMAN

PHOENIX, Ariz. — A 27-year-old Phoenix man was killed when the saguaro cactus he shot fell on him, authorities said.

Maricopa County sheriff's deputies said David M. Grundman illegally fired a shotgun at least two times at a 27-foot cactus.

The shots caused a 23-foot section of the cactus to fall,

crushing Grundman, deputies said. They also said Grundman had already felled one of the statuesque saguaro.

Destruction of cacti is a misdemeanor under Arizona law.

Grundman and a friend, Joseph Suchochi, were in a desert area north of here when the incident occurred, deputies said.

—Associated Press

LAGGING RV SALES GAINING ON ROAD TO RECOVERY

DETROIT — Their business still is far from fiscal fitness, but recreational vehicle builders say improved sales in 1981 may signal a rebound from what an industry spokesman calls "the disaster years."

Manufacturers of vehicles such as motor homes and camping trailers shipped 239,100 RVs to dealers in 1981, up 31.8 percent from 1980's 181,400, according to industry reports. RV output peaked in 1972 when 582,900 were shipped.

If the nation's economy improves this year, "we could be into a boom situation," said James B. Summers, executive vice president of the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association.

And David J. Humphreys, president of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, called last year's performance "a definite recovery."

Dealers and manufacturers who weathered the 1979-80 slump now are generally making profits, industry officials say. During those years, the number of members in the RVIA dropped from about 200 to its current membership total of 110, according to Summers. He estimates half the country's dealers went out of business.

One large manufacturer, Champion Home Builders Co. of Dryden, Mich., had 14 RV plants in 1978. Today, it operates only two.

—Associated Press

PEG LEG STORIES — A PACK OF LIES

BORREGO SPRINGS, Calif. — A story about how the legendary desert wanderer and gold prospector Peg Leg Smith treated rattlesnake and tarantula bites won a Tarzana, Calif., man the top honors in this year's recent Liars Contest here.

Martin Bravin spun the tale the judges liked best from among 15 storytellers — ranging in age from 10 to about 70 — entered in the annual competition.

Bravin told *The Borrego Sun* that he was in Borrego Springs on vacation and read about the contest in the newspaper. He said he made up his story during the contest.

The contest is an annual tribute to Peg Leg Smith, who legend says once found black rocks in the Anza-Borrego desert that later were proved to be gold. Smith spent his cache and returned to the desert, but was unable to find the vein again, according to legend. (See a related story in this issue of *Desert*.)

This year, on a cold, windy evening, storytellers sat around a desert bonfire for more than two hours, telling new versions of how Peg Leg actually made his find and weaving other tales of the desert.

— *The San Diego Evening Tribune* and *The Borrego Sun*

LET THE SHUTTLE BE YOUR GUIDE

PAINTED DESERT, Ariz. — A few days before the space shuttle Columbia landed safely at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, commander Jack Lousma narrated a spectacular, 12-minute color TV travelogue of "America the beautiful — from sea to shining sea."

"Here we are coming over some of the beautiful sand desert," Lousma said as the spacecraft flew over the Painted Desert in Arizona. "The colors are even more descriptive and colorful from up here because you can see them together. It is a very beautifully painted desert." —UPI

ALL IN THE NAME OF FRIENDSHIP

CHANDLER, Ariz. — A 30-foot sculpture of a saguaro cactus was recently unveiled here at General Instrument Corp., a computer parts manufacturer.

Sculpted by well-known Chicago sculptor Gene Horvath, the work is called "Friendship." According to the company, it was designed to symbolize dissimilar but harmonious relationships — like the friendship between science and art, between business and nature, between General Instrument and Arizona, and between Horvath and Frank Hickey, the company's chairman of the board. Horvath and Hickey are long-time friends.

"Friendship" is 13,000 pounds and consists of two

30-foot columns, each 54x36 inches wide, that lean into each other at angles of 50 and 12.5 degrees. The structure causes a visual feeling of falling — much the way a large water tower will appear to fall due to the clouds behind. This illusion is countered by the introduction of three columns of negative space that pierce the leaning columns, and thus support them. The sculpture is constructed of 1/4-inch flat and 3/16-inch rolled stainless steel plate.

Among Horvath's other significant projects are a sculpture for the American Heart Association and a bronze and steel sculpture for the University of Illinois Medical School.

THE FASTEST CHECKS IN THE WEST

KANAB, Utah — Learning the principles of banking in a high school class has proved a detriment to three high school students here.

Two local banks, State Bank of Southern Utah and Zion's First National Bank, have been teaching classes on banking at Kanab High School for about two weeks. The classes simulate as closely as possible the setting up of a business and the banking needs that go with it, such as making deposits, setting up books, and writing checks.

After learning to write checks, some decided to try to use them and were successful . . . for a while. The checks were printed with "I Am Student" in the place where the name of the person owning the account is found. The students in question took a check into a local business and cashed it during a busy hour. The checks were made out properly and signed "I Am Student."

At this time, however, the students have been charged by Kanab City Police.

— Southern Utah News

MOVING STATES

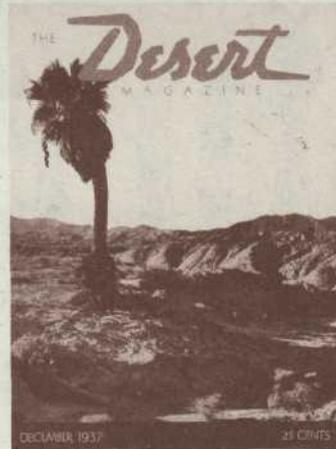
Allied Van Lines defines a "magnet state" as one where at least 55 percent of all household moves in a year involve people moving into the state. Allied's 1981 migration survey lists 14 magnet states. Hawaii was No. 1 followed by Alaska, Texas, and Arizona. The others: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington. Biggest losers: Michigan, Iowa, and North Dakota.

— The Wall Street Journal

Readers: We're looking for interesting, amusing, hilarious, or strange desert-related stories for this page. Send us magazine and newspaper clippings — we'll pay you \$5 for each one we use. In case of duplicate submissions, the contributor with the earliest postmark wins. Mail your submissions to News, *Desert*, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109. Please include your name and address and the source of your clipping. Clippings will not be returned.

45 YEARS AGO

From Desert of 1937:



EL PASO, TEXAS —

American farmers living along the Rio Grande Valley have organized a vigilance committee to protect their cotton fields from raids by armed Mexicans from across the border. According to their report, the Mexican thieves come across at night and steal bags of newly picked cotton which are sold to gins south of the line.

ADOBE HOME TYPIFIES TRUE WESTERN DESIGN

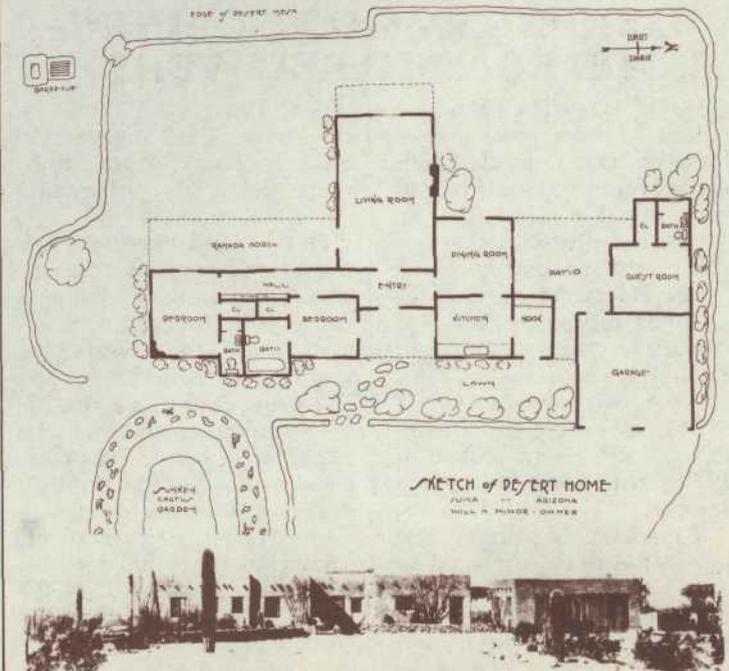
Nearly every window in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Will H. Minor near Yuma frames an entirely different view of one of the most beautiful and varied landscapes in the Southwest.

Not every home builder can have a two-acre lot at the edge of a mesa, 80 feet above fertile Yuma Valley, and look out at the panorama of the Colorado winding at the foot of Pilot Knob. But many have observed the good taste and forethought which guided the Minors in planning their unique home.

The five-room house is built of adobe, plastered inside and out. It is definitely western in

design, faithfully representing the early Hopi Indian pueblo type. No conflicting note is allowed to mar the outside effect. Native desert shrubbery and cacti are used exclusively, with the exception of lantana and a few other hardy shrubs requiring irrigation — and, of course, a green lawn . . .

. . . Outside dimensions, not including the two-car garage and guest house, are 65x47 feet. The Minor investment for home and landscaping is over \$15,000. Cost of house construction will vary, according to location, between \$8,000 and \$10,000.



JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME

At Palm Springs petitions are being circulated preparatory to holding an election for the incorporation of the town.

Although I have no financial investment and only a limited acquaintance in Palm Springs, I am watching the progress of this new movement with all the interest of a native of the Village.

Perhaps my fears are unfounded, but I have been afraid that the money-makers would crowd out the artists. Palm Springs today is the realization of a beautiful dream. It was founded and much of its planning has been done by those men and women who find greater happiness in creative work than in the mere accumulating of money.

In recent years I have sensed the invasion of a new element there — an element which would take the charm and prestige which creative genius has brought to Palm Springs and barter these priceless assets for gold.

I hope it doesn't happen. Money alone cannot create so picturesque a community as Palm Springs. Nor can mere dollars retain for that quaint little village at the base of San Jacinto that intangible lure which now draws visitors from all over the world.

Not that there necessarily is a clash between creative art and profit-taking. The real work of the world is done by men and women who possess a happy blending of both talents. But, unfortunately, the pitiless race for dollars has

sometimes numbed man's appreciation for the really worthwhile things.

Please do not construe this as a plea against incorporation of Palm Springs. I regard it as miraculous that so many members of the human family have been able to dwell together in that community for so long a time without a local governing agency. No doubt there are many good reasons why Palm Springs should be incorporated.

I do hope very earnestly that a majority of the new city trustees, if and when they are elected, will be men whose souls have not lost all of the poetry with which the Divine Creator endowed them.

And, having gotten that out of my system, I will admit that

ANZA, CALIFORNIA —

Desert residents will be provided with a new route to the Pacific Ocean if plans of civic leaders in Riverside and San Diego counties are successful in their plea for the construction of a 24-mile link connecting the Palms-to-Pines Highway with the new Imperial Highway near Aguanga. The road will be known as the Cahuilla-Anza Cut-Off.

Riverside county supervisors have been asked to establish a prison camp to carry on the work.

the incorporation problem at Palm Springs is really none of my business.

And now, for the information of any and all desert writers — please do not send me poems and stories about horned toads that hop. These desert toads just don't travel that way. They really do not belong to the toad family anyway. And spell "Ocotillo" without an "a."

—Randall Henderson
Founder and first editor of Desert



This evaporative water recirculating cooler is economical and easy to install and maintain.
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From \$45.00 up

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A DESERT CHRISTMAS GIFT

... for particular people

PALM RIPENED CALIFORNIA SOFT DATES

Six varieties of the finest palm-ripened soft dates grown in California. This attractive three-pound container makes an ideal Christmas gift.

ONE 3-POUND CONTAINER \$2.15
Delivered any place in U. S. A. for

TWO 3 POUND CONTAINERS \$3.90
Delivered to ONE address in U. S. A. for

ONE CASE (12 three pound containers) \$19.20
Shipped express, charges collect.

Above three-pound Variety Pack of Soft Dates AND a three pound Sampler Pack of Desert Delicacies (including date cake, date loaf, stuffed dates, and large soft dates) delivered to ONE address \$4.45

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BARBECUE DELUX \$9.75



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- The Super Chief twice-weekly in each direction between Los Angeles and Chicago, is the only solid-Pullman 39¾ hour transcontinental train; and The Chief is the finest, fastest and only extra-fare Chicago daily train.
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1938 IS A SANTA FE YEAR

Reprinted from Desert Magazine, 1938.



Pancho Contento on his way to Calexico, where he always finds the best for the least.

Si, Si, the

HOTEL DE ANZA

on the border of
Mañana Land
CALEXICO, CALIF.

Rates from \$3.50

Roland L. Still, Mgr.

Reprinted from Desert Magazine, 1938.

SOUTHWEST COOKBOOK

BISCUITS AND GRAVY

A typical breakfast on any roundup, be it a hundred years ago or today, would be biscuits—sourdough or baking powder—fried steaks, and milk gravy. While the chuck-wagons might have been very shy on eggs, they always had plenty of canned milk. Hard-working cowhands dearly love to sop their biscuits in good milk gravy.

Don't be surprised, when traveling in Texas or other parts of the South, to see restaurants named simply BISCUITS AN' GRAVY. Besides the usual ham and eggs, the one specialty is, like the name says, biscuits and gravy.

Some cooks are always asking just how much flour and milk is needed to make gravy, because it's almost impossible to find a recipe giving amounts. Here's a good rule of thumb: 2 level tablespoons of fat and 2 level tablespoons of flour will thicken $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of liquid. Seasonings vary, with some cooks adding a smidgen of garlic salt or onion flakes. Drippings from fried ham, pork or lamb chops, chicken, spareribs, sausage, and hamburger all make the foundation for a good gravy. Even old faithful salt pork can be used to make good gravy for biscuits.

Salt pork gravy

$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. salt pork
2 tablespoons flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk (canned or fresh whole milk)

Salt and pepper to taste
Dash of MSG (optional)

Parboil slices of salt pork for 10 minutes. This can be done the night before, or you can soak the salt pork overnight to remove some of the salty taste, but do not omit parboiling. Drain well, then cut pork into bite-sized pieces and fry. Remove pork, set aside. Add 2 tablespoons flour to fat and brown slightly. Add milk and stir until thickened. Season to taste. Add the fried pork and serve over hot biscuits.

My favorite way to make good gravy is to fry good-sized round steaks (that have been pounded, floured, salted, and peppered) in hot fat in a heavy iron skillet until the steaks are crusty brown on both sides. Then remove the steaks, letting lots of crispy, delicious flakes fall back into the skillet. This is the ingredient that makes or breaks a good pan of gravy. If there's not enough fat in the skillet, add several tablespoons of bacon drippings and scrape all of the fryings from the bottom of the skillet. Add flour and stir until lightly brown, then gradually add the milk. Continue stirring until the gravy is thickened and smooth.

The cowboy or mountain man may have been the originator of our modern prepared biscuit mixes. Most of the time, when traveling light, he prepared his flour, baking powder, and salt in a sack before leaving home. When he camped, all he had to do was add water and shortening and bake. Sometimes he might have used canned milk instead of water, resulting in a much lighter and tastier bread. The shortening was either bacon drippings or lard.

Almost all of the old-time cooks I ever knew mixed their biscuit dough in a dishpan of flour. Making a well in the middle of the flour, they poured in starter (if making sourdough bread), additional water, sugar, and salt, and began mixing by turning in small handfuls of flour as they spun the pan around. They wouldn't have known how to get a good "scald" on their bread mixing it any other way. Other bread makers would mix their dough right in the top of the flour sack, by first rolling the sack down to flour level, making a shallow well, and pouring in the liquid. They would then pinch off biscuits and crowd them into a Dutch oven. No mixing bowl, no breadboard, no rolling pin. It

looks easy but it sure isn't.

Wonder how these cooks knew just how many biscuits would result from such a haphazard method? They knew the number of biscuits in a batch was determined by the amount of water or milk used. So much water or milk takes up just so much flour. So when you're using flour—not pre-mixed—the proportions to follow for each cup of water are, approximately, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shortening, 1 teaspoon salt, and 3 teaspoons baking powder.

I never make biscuits without adding a little sugar. Not enough to sweeten the dough, but just enough to cut the flat taste that biscuits sometimes have.

Some old-time cooks preferred water biscuits to those made with milk, claiming that water biscuits stay fresh longer. When cooking for a bunch of hungry men in camp, I never have any left over to test this point.



Baking powder biscuits

2 cups flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons shortening (not oil)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup to 1 cup milk or water

Sift flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar together. Cut in shortening or blend with fingers; pour in milk gradually to

make a soft dough. Roll out on floured board to about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick. Do not knead—handle as little as possible. Cut with a biscuit cutter or juice can and place on a greased baking sheet or pan. Grease should be warm. Bake at 450 degrees for 15 to 18 minutes.

—Stella Hughes

READER RECIPES

We'll soon begin featuring some of the favorite recipes of our readers in "Southwest Cookbook." In each issue, we'll publish reader recipes that either include a specific ingredient (like avocado) or that fit a particular style or category of cooking (like Mexican casseroles). We'll let you know each month what we're looking for.

Our editorial staff will review the recipes submitted and will cook up and taste all recipes tentatively selected for publication. *Desert* will publish the selected recipes and the contributors' names. We will pay \$10 for each recipe we publish.

Currently, we are seeking recipes that include avocados; recipes that include popcorn; and terrific chili recipes.

Some rules and further information:

1. Recipes should be printed or typed and should include your name, address, and telephone number. (If your recipe is published, we'll only print your name and city.)

2. All recipes become the property of *Desert Magazine* and will not be returned.

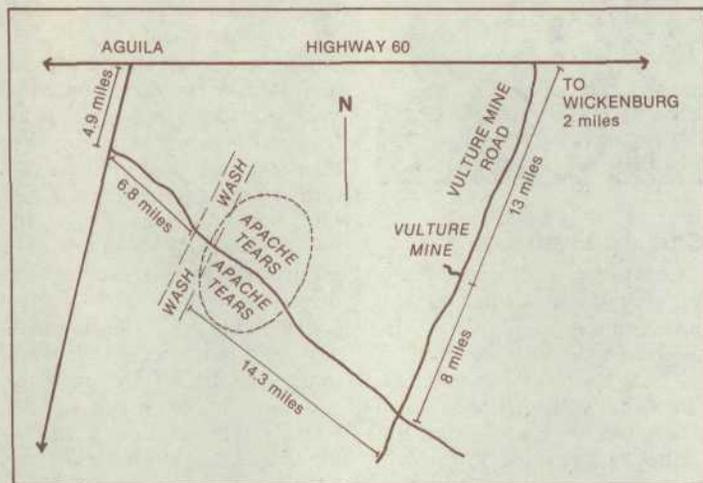
3. There is no limit to the number of recipes you may send.

4. Recipes should be mailed to Recipes, *Desert*, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109.

5. Recipes will be judged on originality . . . and good taste!

Check this box each month for our recipe-seeking updates.

ROCKHOUND



APACHE TEARS

Collecting sites: I recently had the opportunity to accompany a friend as he did some prospecting near Wickenburg, Ariz., which is 60 miles northwest of Phoenix. This locality is known to have produced gold, and it boasts one of the state's most famous mines, the Vulture. We started our search south of Wickenburg and decided to work westward from there. My primary interest was not gold, though, but minerals. Each time we stopped, my friend would begin digging and sampling, while I would explore the area. In the course of our week's work, we did, in fact, locate some gold and a number of nice mineral deposits. My favorite of the latter was discovered the last evening of our trip. The location offers thousands of tiny Apache tears, many of which will take a beautiful polish.

We had decided to spend our final night next to a wash my friend wanted to inspect further, and that evening, while setting up my tent, I noticed there were lots of tiny black stones scattered throughout the sandy soil. I tossed the first few out of the way so that I would have a smooth sleeping area, but eventually I became curious about exactly what they were. When I cracked one, its secret was revealed. The interior was a beautiful, smoky-black glass. After this discovery, I excitedly scrambled around picking

up additional specimens and cracking them. Each revealed a glassy interior. I had set up my tent in a field of Apache tears.

The next morning, while my friend was working in the wash, I spent the time gathering tiny black obsidianites. Before noon, I'd filled two lunch bags and also found some excellent, bubbly chalcedony. Most of what I obtained took a good polish in a tumbler, and a few of the large specimens made nice faceted pieces. The majority are transparent, and some exhibit a billowing sheen when polished.

When searching for Apache tears, the best technique is to walk with the sun to your back. The bright lighting makes the tiny black stones stand out against the much lighter soil. It takes some patience and walking to find a quantity of the little gems, but this is a fairly productive location that's worthy of a visit if you are in the area.

To get there, simply take Highway 60 to Aguila, and then head south from town. Go $4\frac{9}{10}$ miles, then turn east on the intersecting dirt road. Continue approximately $6\frac{8}{10}$ miles to the big wash. After you've crossed it, you will be at the edge of the collecting site. From here, continuing at least one mile east, the ground is littered with the Apache tears.

While in the area, I strongly suggest continuing to the old Vulture Mine. To get there,

proceed east $14\frac{3}{10}$ miles from the big wash at the collecting area, turn left onto the intersecting road, and go another eight miles to the sign.

You must park outside and pay a fee in the office before beginning your walking tour, but it is worth it. The mine was shut down when the vein was lost in a fault, but it has never been abandoned. The potential value of the property, if the vein is relocated, is substantial. For this reason, most of the buildings and equipment are in surprisingly good condition, so you see original — not reconstructed — items.

Visitors can try their luck at panning for gold. I have been able to find a few flakes on each visit. The personnel are friendly and glad to answer questions. In addition, there is an impressive display of gold in the office, as well as some historical items from the region.

Books: An interesting new book is now available. *Arkansas' Incredible Diamond Mine Story* gives the history and other pertinent data about America's only diamond pipe, located near Murfreesboro, Ark., which is 150 miles southwest of Little Rock. This site has been well-known to rockhounds for years, and the book is a must for anyone who has visited there or plans to do so. The cost is \$6.45, and it can be obtained by sending a check to the author, Jerry Wilcox, Desert Dept., P.O. Box 534, Nashville, Ark. 71852.

The University of New Mexico Press (Desert Dept., Albuquerque, N.M. 87131) has just published *Brazilian Stone Meteorites*, by Celso B. Gomes and Klaus Keil. It sells for \$20 and is a great reference for anyone interested in those once-celestial objects. There are two sections. The first is an exhaustive discussion of meteorites in general, including classification, mineralogy, composition, and recognition. The second section is devoted to meteorites found in Brazil.

Publications: It was recently called to my attention that there is an investment newsletter available to persons dealing in gemstones. It's called the *Precioustone Newsletter* and is a monthly, 24-page publication. The cost for a sub-

scription is somewhat high, though, with a trial offer of \$45 for three months. I have not been able to review a copy, but, if you're interested, contact *Precioustone Newsletter*, Desert Dept., P.O. Box 4649, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91359.

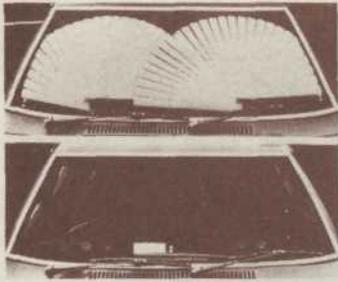
Equipment: If you work with gold or any other heavy metals, you might be interested in the Scrap Trap, available from Abbey Materials Corp., Desert Dept., 2911 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207. This device attaches to the drain under your workshop sink. It contains a filter that will catch any gold filings or scrap that might get washed down. With the price of gold so high, this could be a good investment.

The Graves Company, Desert Dept., 950 S.W. 12 Ave., Pompano Beach, Fla. 33060, has completely remodeled the Mark IV Faceting Machine. It is now cast in one piece, providing for greater strength. In addition, the renovated Mark IV features a new motor and drive system and ball bearing arbor mounts with screws that permit the arbor to be precisely positioned. This allows for accurate alignment of facets, no matter where on the lap they are ground.

B. Jadov and Sons, Inc. recently developed a new economy line of jeweler's saw blades. A variety of sizes are available and they are individually packed to maintain quality. The cost is 69 cents a dozen, and more information can be obtained by writing B. Jadov and Sons, Desert Dept., 53 West 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

Diamond discs are now available to all lapidary craftsmen and can be used on any sponge-covered face plate or spin disc in six or eight-inch diameter. Raytech Industries, Inc., Desert Dept., P.O. Box 6, Stafford Springs, Conn. 06076, is the manufacturer and claims they are far more economical than traditional silicon carbide varieties. The cutting rate is much faster and they boast a considerably longer life. True Circle Diamond Discs are manufactured in 325 grit and 1200 grit and have a pressure-sensitive backing that allows them to be mounted and removed easily. — Rick Mitchell

Introducing...



Out of the hot seat

Somebody has finally come up with a solution to the touchy problem of hot-baked car seats, steering wheels, and dashboards. New Auto Sun Shields are fans that protect the front interior of the car when you have to park in the scorching sun.

They're made of aluminum venetian blind material and are easily installed by suction cups to the inside base of the windshield. They can be opened and closed in seconds, and when the Auto Sun Shields are not in use they fold onto the dashboard out of the driver's vision.

At \$32 a set, Auto Sun Shields are available in sizes to fit cars and vans sold in the U.S.

Trade Power Inc., Desert Dept., 3808 Rosecrans St., Suite 480, San Diego, Calif. 92110.



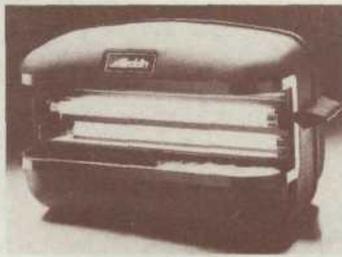
For desert fans

On average, a ceiling fan pays for itself in 24 months in savings on heating and air conditioning bills, according to Homestead Products. Their new Whisperfan III is a ceiling fan with six 38-inch blades (most fans have four). The extra blades circulate more air, says the company, and consequently can run at a lower and quieter speed. The fan is a light 15 pounds and can be easily installed by amateur home improvers.

The Whisperfan comes in

three models and two sizes. Motor casings are available in antique and contemporary designs. The blades can be ordered in oak, walnut, white-wood, or a cane texture. Whisperfan III retails for about \$259.

Homestead Products, Desert Dept., 114 14th St., Ramona, Calif. 92065.



A farewell to swarms

The people at Aladdin say that their new Bug Battler electric bug killer produces results that must be seen to be believed—because they can't be heard.

"While other electric bug killers operate with a constant loud zapping and popping that sometimes can be more annoying than the bugs themselves, the Aladdin unit does the job silently," says an Aladdin spokesperson.

The Bug Battler works on the same luring principle as electric grid models. It employs a blacklight lamp that emits a blue glow to lure insects. After the bugs have been lured into the openings of the unit, a powerful fan mounted above the lamp creates a strong downdraft that forces bugs into a trap-tray of water, drowning them quickly and silently.

The unit's lamp is rated for 6,000 hours of continuous use and the Battler operates for less than \$1 per month on a standard 110-volt household current.

Except for emptying the trash-tray about once a week, the unit is maintenance-free. It's designed to be mounted on a tree, post, or wall, or positioned as a freestanding unit. The suggested retail price is \$69.95.

ALH, Inc., Desert Dept., P.O. Box 100255, Nashville, Tenn. 37210.



Can-do canoe

Camping, exploring, fishing—Coleman designed the new Scanoes to fit all of the needs of the sportsperon.

The Scanoes is a square-stern canoe that's easy to handle and much lighter than aluminum jonboats or semi-V fishing boats, according to Coleman. Its hull material is slippery so that it can get into and out of tight places. Best of all, the Scanoes is car-toppable—you won't need a trailer.

It paddles on a river or stream, but you can also add a motor. Coleman says that the Scanoes never needs painting and will withstand much more abuse than aluminum, fiberglass, or the coated fabric of inflatables. Retail price is about \$449.

The Coleman Company, Inc., Desert Dept., 250 N. St. Francis, Wichita, Kan. 67201.



Two four one

A system that combines the fuel efficiency of two-wheel-drive with the security and handling of full-time four-wheel-drive has been introduced on 1982 Jeep Wagoneer, Cherokee, and J-10 truck models made by American Motors Corporation.

It's called Selec-Trac, and this new full-time 4WD/2WD system is standard on Wagoneer Limited and optional on other Wagoneer, Cherokee, and J-10 vehicles. Offered only in combination with an automatic transmission, Selec-Trac succeeds Jeep Quadra-Trac, a full-time 4WD system.

Conceptually, Selec-Trac is

identical to the Select Drive system employed on AMC Eagle 4WD cars. But Selec-Trac also includes a low-range—or two-speed—capability in the transfer case to provide added torque when required.

The low-range mode can be activated only when the Jeep vehicle is in 4WD. A sequential lockout system within the transfer case prevents activation of low range when the vehicle is in 2WD. Low range can be activated by a floor-mounted lever next to the driver.

Selec-Trac gives the motorist a fingertip choice of driving modes to fit whatever road condition he or she may encounter. All it takes is a simple flip of a switch mounted on the dashboard. There are no wheel hubs to adjust so there is no reason to leave the driver's seat.

American Motors Corp., Desert Dept., 27777 Franklin Rd., Southfield, Mich. 48034.



Moving conversation

"They punch through loud and clear—and they're true professional-quality units, not toys," says Cobra Communications about their newest walkie-talkies.

The model 3GTL is a three-channel, two-watt unit and the 6GTL is a six-channel, five-watt unit. Both transceivers are compact and lightweight and feature high-impact ABS plastic cases. They're 9 1/4 x 3 x 2 1/4 inches deep and weigh about two pounds. Both models are

furnished with transmit-and-receive crystals for the popular walkie-talkie channel 14. Maximum range is assured by the telescopic antennas and the metal grounding plates on the vertical edges of the case that are in contact with the operator's hand when the unit is in use.

Both models also feature squelch control, low battery indicator (LED), external speaker jack, and hand/shoulder straps. The 6GTL, in addition, has high-low power for choice of five or one-watt power and a loading coil on its telescopic antenna for greater transmission efficiency.

Suggested retail price for the 3GTL is \$74.95; for the 6GTL, \$99.95.

Cobra Communications, Desert Dept., 6460 W. Cortland St., Chicago, Ill. 60635.



The world on the wall

"Around the World in Sight and Sound" is a new collection of narrated travel slide programs that can provide hours of entertainment, information, and education at home.

Fifty programs are available. The "People and Places" category includes programs about China, France, Egypt, Hawaii, and more. Desert lovers will appreciate two offerings from the "Recreation" category—"Walking in the Wilderness" covers backpacking and hiking and "Touring on Two Wheels" is all about bicycling and camping. "Reading the Sky" concerns cloud formations and how to forecast the weather by looking at them. One of the biggest sellers is "America's National Parks," which gives tips for what to do and see at several major parks.

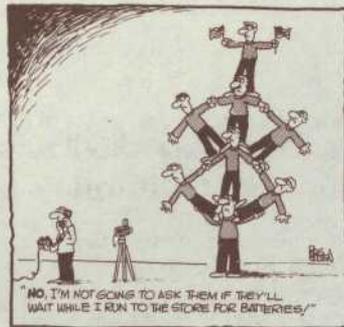
Each program contains 80 slides and a narrated cassette ranging in length from approximately 10 to 30 minutes. Prices start at \$39.95.

Programs are also available on videocassettes for U-Matic, Beta, and VHS systems. Prices

start at \$59.95, and rentals are also offered.

The company will send a free catalog.

Around the World in Sight and Sound, Desert Dept., 3255 Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14623.



Big charge

You're in the middle of the desert at sunset photographing wildflowers. It's getting so dark that you take out your flash. Uh-uh . . . the batteries are dead.

The uncertainty about how much more life you can expect from a "throwaway" battery is a thing of the past now that General Electric has made available their GE Rechargeable Battery System. Available in several lightweight, miniature sizes, GE says it will keep battery power flowing continuously for up to four years.

The GE system comes in the most popular battery sizes—AA, C, D, and nine-volt. Initial cost for the three parts—module, charger, and nickel-cadmium batteries—is less than \$20, and the price is even lower for a miniature charger unit that comes as a complete set in each of the four sizes. Initial cost of carbon and alkaline "throwaway" batteries is considerably lower, but GE says that their system will more than pay for itself—in a year or less in some cases—in terms of time and cost factors.

To recharge, the batteries are inserted into a module, snapped onto the charger, and then the entire system is plugged into the nearest electrical outlet. The batteries recharge in eight to 12 hours. Should the batteries be overlooked and remain in the outlet for weeks or months, there won't be any damage.

General Electric Company, Batteries Division, Desert Dept., Gainesville, Fla. 32602.



Nuts to you

DRI Industries has developed such a variety of direct-mail hardware that they've produced a catalog. It's called "The Catalog You Should Never Throw Away!" and it contains "just about every conceivable type, size, style, and

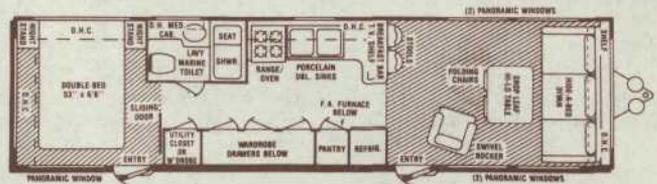
kind of hardware you can imagine," according to a company spokesperson.

Do-it-yourselfers will love the catalog because it features hundreds of different kinds of nuts, bolts, screws, rivets, electrical terminals, nails, and other fasteners and hardware. Each type of hardware comes in complete sets, called Work-Shops.

Items in the catalog are described in terms of what they do and for what kinds of projects they're used. Each is shown in its actual size.

The catalog can be obtained for \$1, which is deductible with your first order.

DRI Industries, Desert Dept., P.O. Box 20612, Bloomington, Minn. 55420.



Space and grace

Plenty of room to relax and entertain guests in a travel trailer? That's what's behind the design of Komfort Industries' Model 34-T travel trailer.

It features an extra-spacious living room with a full-width hide-a-bed divan and four panoramic windows. The living room of the 34-foot trailer also includes a drop-leaf high-low coffee/dining table with two folding chairs, a swivel rocker, and 6½ feet of headroom.

There are two entries to the 34-T—one in the living room and the second in the master bedroom. That master bedroom is separated from the rest of the travel trailer by a sliding door. It, too, has a panoramic window.

At the trailer's center is the galley, which has a breakfast bar, four-burner range, large

oven with glass see-through door, and a 10-foot double-door deluxe refrigerator with a cross-top freezer. Other galley features are large porcelain double sinks and a spacious pantry and storage. Suggested retail price is about \$15,995.

Komfort Industries, Inc., Desert Dept., 7888 Lincoln Ave., P.O. Box 4698, Riverside, Calif. 92514.

Attention desert product makers: *Desert Magazine* will be glad to consider your product for inclusion in this column. We require that it be new, commercially available, and of specific interest to our readers. Send your information and a glossy black and white photo to the New Products Editor, *Desert Magazine*, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109.

Within a year after first discovering the gold, I retired from the work I was doing and have been enjoying life ever since.

Why, then, should I break a 10-year silence and write about the discovery now? Perhaps the answer lies in a remark made by a former editor of *Desert Magazine* in describing the men who came to *Desert's* office looking for information about lost mines and treasures of the desert. His parting words to all of them were, "Good luck — and if you find it, be sure to write a story for *Desert*. So far we haven't had such an article, but there's always a first time."

For all these years I've intended to keep the discovery an absolute secret for the rest of my life, but those words "so far we haven't had such an article" and "there's always a first time" kept going around and around in my mind. Somehow I'd always assumed that more than one lost mine or desert treasure had been rediscovered and the riches claimed. Apparently this is not true, unless someone has found something and kept it quiet as I have.

Perhaps it is time also to give hope to those hardy souls who have spent months and years of their lives searching for lost bonanzas. There have always been doubting Thomases who claimed that lost mines and treasures of the desert were nothing but figments of somebody's imagination. Well, now it is time to prove that at least one lost desert bonanza has been discovered — and not lost again, for I know exactly where it is.

At this point let me qualify myself. I've lived most of my life in the Southwest and have always loved the desert. I've been a subscriber to *Desert Magazine* for many years and although I've enjoyed reading the articles about the lost mines and treasures, I never had any burning urge to search for them. A story on where to find a field of desert wildflowers in the spring or a map showing where to collect mineral specimens was just as interesting to me as a story about lost gold.

Secondly, now that almost 10 years have passed since I first found the Peg Leg gold and I am retired for life with a com-

fortable income to do as I please, the passion for secrecy is no longer important.

Finally, I've already found all of the gold that can be easily collected without actual mining operations. With the surface gold gone, I don't think anyone else is going to find the Peg Leg for the simple reason that whatever gold is left is well underground.

The story of Peg Leg

Before going into my own story, let's go back to the beginning for a brief resume of the Peg Leg story and quote Henry E. W. Wilson from his story "Lost Peg Leg Gold is Not a Myth" from the November 1946 issue of *Desert Magazine*:

"About the year 1852, John O. Smith, known as Peg Leg Smith, journeying from Yuma to Los Angeles by way of Warner's Ranch, attempted a shortcut across the desert. He was familiar with this part of the Southwest, having been a horse trader and guide.

"Somewhere in this desolate region he climbed one of three hills, on the top of which lay a quantity of black lumps of metal which Smith took to be copper. He picked up a few for his collection of curiosities. Arriving in Los Angeles, he showed his "native copper" to a mining friend who pronounced it pure gold. Though coated with black desert varnish, the nuggets were the real thing beneath the surface."

Peg Leg disappeared during a subsequent search for the black nuggets and in the years that followed several others found them, but either could not go back to the location or died or were killed. The last discovery was made about 1880 by a half-breed who was later knifed in a brawl. More than \$4,000 worth of coarse gold was found in his bunk.

Although none of the black nuggets have shown up in the 80-odd years since the half-breed was knifed, probably no "lost gold" story has created as much mystery, legend, and excitement, or led as many men to search for it as the Peg Leg.

Whether the black nuggets found by Peg Leg and the others are the same as those I discovered, I can't be sure. But

I am sure of one thing. I found the black gold and I've got the proof in the form of photographs as well as the black nuggets themselves.

My own story starts in the month of March 1955. Let me reiterate, I was a simple rockhound, not a treasure hunter or a searcher for lost mines.

The discovery

I'd driven to that part of the low desert in my Jeep for a weekend of fresh air, good weather, some exercise, and a bit of rock hunting. Fortunately, in view of what transpired, I was alone on the trip. Saturday afternoon I drove the Jeep as far as I could go up a sandy wash and camped for the evening. Sunday morning, after a leisurely breakfast, I took off for a long hike, carrying only a canteen, a rock hammer, and a small sack to bring back specimens, intending to come back to the Jeep for lunch. I walked about two miles through uneven terrain, stopping now and then to pick up rock samples, none of which, as I remember, were of any particular interest. About 11 a.m. I sat down on top of a small hill to take a drink from the canteen and rest a bit before starting back. The hill I was sitting on was covered with a crust of smooth water-worn pebbles, the sand and dirt having been partly blown from them by the wind. After drinking I leaned over on my left elbow and idly began to flip the smooth pebbles down the slope with my right hand as I would shoot marbles, hardly paying any attention to what I was doing. The eighth or tenth pebble I picked up was heavy — so heavy I retained it in my hand and sat up to examine it closely. It was black and rounded on the edges and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. Hefting it two or three times, I quickly realized that for the weight of its small size it must be metal — and heavy metal. Quickly I brought out my pocketknife and scraped the surface of the pebble with the edge of the blade. When I saw the yellow glitter I dropped it — then picked it up again with a trembling hand. I'll never know how long I sat there paralyzed with that first black gold nugget in my hand.

I'd read the Peg Leg story in *Desert* some years before, but had forgotten all about it. As my numbed brain started to function again it all came back to me and I realized the area I was in was part of the Peg Leg country described in the story. This was it! I'd found the black Peg Leg gold!

The next thing I remember was scrambling wildly on my knees among the pebbles, picking them up by the handfuls and hefting for heavy ones. In the next two hours I found seven more nuggets, which later weighed out from a half-ounce on up to one that went nearly two ounces.

My hands were getting raw from handling the pebbles so I sat down for awhile to gather my wits and to do some thinking. The first thing was to make sure that I knew where I was and could come back to the same place again. If the black nuggets of metal in my pockets really were gold, then I was damned if I was going to rush back to the Jeep half-cocked and end up not being able to find my way back like so many others have.

Forcing myself to stay calm, I retraced my route to the Jeep by placing stone markers every 50 feet or so. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at the Jeep, but without even realizing my acute hunger, I rolled up my sleeping bag, snatched a couple cans of food, and headed back to what I already had named "Peg Leg Hill." It was there, exactly as I had left it. I unrolled my sleeping bag on top of the hill, cut open the cans, and ate the cold food.

Secret mining plans

It wouldn't be fair to say that I slept that night, for I didn't. I lay there wide awake, my mind racing. During that sleepless night I arrived at three absolute decisions. (1) I would go back to the Jeep a second time and be positive that I could find my way back to the hill again. (2) I would mark the spot where the Jeep was, turn it around and measure exactly by the speedometer the distance to the next road and the main highway, and draw myself a map and mark the distances on it. (3) I would go home and find out if the black nuggets really were gold.

PEG LEG'S GOLD

Continued

At first light in the morning, I sorted more pebbles with my tender hands, more slowly this time, and added two more black nuggets to the seven already in my pocket. Then I rolled up my sleeping bag and headed back to the Jeep.

There were many questions churning in my mind. Should I announce the discovery — provided the nuggets turned out to be gold? Should I call a newspaper and tell them about it? Should I confide in my friends? The first obvious answer to these questions was a resounding NO! The best thing to do, I decided, was to keep the whole business absolutely secret and tell no one and do nothing until I'd had a lot more time to think things over.

On the drive home another thought occurred to me. The story of Peg Leg's black nuggets was well enough known that it wouldn't be a good idea to show anybody a black nugget while trying to find out what it was. I'd scraped through the black varnish or coating with my pocketknife, so maybe there was a way to remove it so I could show something that wasn't black. After some trouble I finally removed the black coating from one nugget and took it to an assay laboratory. They ran a spectroscopic assay and it was, indeed, gold.

I later learned that the so-called black desert varnish or coating on the nuggets was simply copper oxide. Most gold found in its native state, particularly in California, is usually alloyed with silver, which averages 10 to 20 percent. The Peg Leg black nuggets contain about 70 percent gold, 20 percent silver, and 10 percent copper. It was the copper molecules that oxidized and gave the nuggets their black color. Later, I will explain my theory of the origin of the Peg Leg gold, but at one time or another all of the nuggets were either uncovered by the elements and exposed to the heat of the sun and the oxygen in the air for long periods of time which allowed the copper to form into black

oxides, or, at some time, perhaps millions of years ago, after the nuggets were alluviated (i.e., had their sharp edges worn off by the abrasive action of sand and water), they were exposed to either volcanic heat or the internal heat of the earth's crust, which caused the copper molecules to oxidize and turn black.

Let me say here that I am neither a mining engineer nor a geologist, and there may be a more precise, scientific explanation of the black nuggets, but during the past 10 years I have read a great deal about gold and gold mining and do have a fair knowledge of the subject.

Had these nuggets been in a running stream all of these years, like those found in California's Mother Lode country, then the action of the water and sand would have kept them clean and shiny with perhaps some oxidation in the pits or cavities in the nuggets.

The point is this: Pure 1000 fine gold, or even gold with 10 to 15 percent silver alloy, will not tarnish and will stay golden in color under almost any circumstances. It is possible that a coating of some kind may build up on the outside surface, but in the case of the Peg Leg nuggets it is the copper that turned them black.

A golden theory

As to the origin of the Peg Leg gold, my theory is that millions of years ago gold was present in a lode or vein that was embedded in a mountain. As the mountain slowly eroded away, the gold, being heavier than the surrounding material, gradually worked its way down into the lower areas. It is known that the Salton Sea basin was part of the Gulf of California and probably at one time received quantities of rain. The action of the water and sand on the nuggets alluviated or rounded the sharp edges off of them and ultimately most of the gold in the lode or vein made its way to the bottom of the watercourse. Undoubtedly, there was shifting of the earth's crust and probably what was once a streambed was lifted up or possibly buried completely. The original mountain carrying the lode was totally eroded



The sample black nuggets the anonymous author sent to Desert are no longer at the magazine offices. But this garden-variety rock should give you an idea of the size of the first nugget the author found. It's about three-quarters of an inch in diameter.

away so the gold was simply buried in a pocket of what had once been a streambed.

In the case of the Peg Leg nuggets, I believe the continuing erosion of land that finally turned into a desert exposed the nuggets again on the surface.

Within 10 days of the first discovery I was back at Peg Leg Hill, this time with a metal detector and a small shovel. I stayed there six days and brought out 720 ounces of nuggets that later netted me a little more than \$20,000.

Now that I knew exactly how to get there, the problem became one of hiding or concealing my trail so that no one could follow me. This is the main reason why I went there only two or three times a year. I was very careful to fill up all the holes I dug to recover nuggets located with the metal detector and to replace the pebbles and make the surface look as undisturbed as possible.

There were other questions that came up. I thought seriously of going in to file a claim, but after careful thought I discarded the idea. The minute I filed a claim, then at least one other person would know the location. Obviously, I wasn't going to mention the gold, but the very fact that I filed a claim on a particular spot in the desert might just make somebody curious enough to talk and someone else curious enough to go

snooping around. The worst fear here was the fact that the nuggets could be found on the surface or close to the surface, and even if I filed a legal claim I couldn't spend the rest of my life standing guard over it with a double-barreled shotgun. Or, if I hired someone to guard the claim, what was to prevent him from picking up nuggets or telling someone else? Once the word got out, nothing on earth could ever have prevented a stampede of people from overrunning the claim. Nothing could have come out of it except trouble in one form or another. No, the gold had been there all those years. I decided to take my chances and play it alone and in secrecy. Time has proven me right.

The next most important thing was how to sell or dispose of the nuggets. The thing that bothered me most was the fact that black gold nuggets would arouse or provoke curiosity anywhere and talk would be rampant. Sooner or later the cat would be out of the bag, especially if I tried to sell any sizable quantity of black gold nuggets at one time. The first problem, therefore, was the matter of removing the black color.

After serious study and a good deal of experimentation, I finally devised a method to accomplish what I wanted. By dipping the nuggets into a hot chemical bath, all of the copper oxide was dissolved and stripped off, leaving the bright

yellow gold nuggets. Certain solutions, I discovered, would strip off most of the copper but still leave the nuggets with a reddish tint that was quite natural. This was desirable in view of the plan I had to dispose of them.

On to Alaska

The first thing I decided was to never sell or display any of the nuggets anywhere in the Southwest. What I did that first summer was to fly up to Nome, Alaska, taking the nuggets with me. The gold dredges were still operating there and gold nuggets were rather plentiful around town in the various curio and jewelry stores. I soon got on friendly terms with some of the prospectors hanging around, learned the jargon of placer mining, and went up the creeks myself to "prospect." Actually, I just camped out, did a bit of hunting and fishing, enjoyed my vacation thoroughly, did some "panning" with my gold pan, and generally went through the motions of placer mining. Back in Nome I let it be known that I had worked hard, had found a little "color," but nothing to get excited about. I then sold the gold, a few ounces at a time, to various stores, jewelry makers, private parties, and anyone else who was interested, but never more than 15 ounces at one time.

Why all the secrecy? Well, the strategy worked in that I've kept the discovery of the Peg Leg a secret these 10 years, and undoubtedly could for 10 more.

Actually, there were two areas at Peg Leg Hill that contained nuggets — the hill itself and a large mound about 60 yards to the west. During the six days of the second trip I covered the whole countryside for several miles in all directions, searching carefully for nuggets and using the metal detector everywhere. It was the detector that located the nuggets in the mound, as all of them were underground from about four inches down to two feet, where I discovered some of the largest nuggets. *The three hills of the original Peg Leg story were not in evidence.*

In any event, I've covered the ground so thoroughly that I

believe I've found every nugget both on the surface and underground within range of the most powerful and sensitive detector. In short, I've found all of the easy gold. I've got my share of the Peg Leg black nuggets and then some.

I've wondered whether I should reveal the location now that I've cleaned out all of the easy gold, but if I did there would still be a wild stampede and I would always feel some sense of responsibility for all of the hardship and struggle of those who failed to find the gold.

I'm sure there are more nuggets underground, probably great quantities of them along the ancient watercourse into which they were washed ages ago. They may be anywhere from four feet to thousands of feet underground, or wherever the twisting and faulting of the earth's crust has exposed or buried them. There may even be other places where they can be found on the surface as I found them on Peg Leg Hill and the mound, and they may be miles away.

I've also thought about going in to file the claim now, but again I discarded the idea. Why? To go after more of Peg Leg's black nuggets would require the expense of forming a mining company, taking in partners or associates, the purchase of expensive equipment, the expense of moving it to the site, and the bother of 1,001 other problems that would arise. I'm happy now and I've got all I can spend in a lifetime. My time is my own with no

problems of any kind. I'm healthy and there really isn't anything else I want.

Besides, I'm reminded of the stories the Alaskan prospectors told me about the men who found a rich pocket of gold and, after having cleaned it out, they still were not satisfied and spent it all digging deeper trying to find more. Greed is one of man's weaknesses.

No, I'll say it again. I've got my share of the black gold and I'm satisfied.

Next month, we'll feature the letters that readers sent in 1965 after reading this story . . . and the anonymous author's answers to them. — Ed.

Readers: Do you have a favorite treasure-hunting tale to tell? An ages-old legend . . . or an experience of your own? Later this year, we'll be printing reader treasure-hunting contributions, paying \$50 each for those we publish. If good-quality photos accompany your story, we'll add another \$50 to your pay (and, of course, all of the gold is yours to keep!). Send your contributions to "Treasure Hunting Lore Galore," Desert, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109.

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BOOKS/MAGAZINES

NATIONAL PROSPECTOR'S Gazette. The newspaper for the prospector, treasure hunter, and the person who's making a living on the road. Six issues per year. \$5. NPG, Box D, Ames, Neb. 68621.

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ALTA LOMA California History, 1880-1980, includes Russian and Mennonite colonies, pioneer accounts, 187 pages, 350 photos. Softback \$18, Hardback \$27. Guaranteed delivery. Wallace Stoebe, 3201 Valencia, San Bernardino, Calif. 92404.

DESERT MAGAZINE from 1937. Other Western magazines. Box 940, Trona, Calif. 93562.

NEW CITY Old Bridge, unlikely story of how Lake Havasu City and fabled London Bridge merged on Sonora Desert. Authentic story, beautiful color. \$4 includes postage and handling. New City Old Bridge, P.O. Box 1907, Lake Havasu City, Ariz. 86403.

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FOOD/RECIPES

GOURMET LEFTOVERS. 3 recipes, \$3. K. Bagley, Box 1325-D, El Cajon, Calif. 92022.

ON A SUGARLESS or sugar-restricted diet? 10 delicious main dish recipes, \$4. S. A. Trobaugh, 1862 Thomas Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109.

MAPS

OLD STATE, Railroad, County maps. 70-110 years old. All States. Stamp for catalog. Northern Map, Dept. DM, Dunnelion, Fla. 32630.

PEN PALS

DESERT NUT desires pen pals who are living in the Mojave, Colorado, or Sonoran deserts. I'm a conservationist who enjoys desert exploration, reptiles, and plant life. Please write and share your views with me. John Hall, 732 16th Ave. W., Kirkland, Wash. 98043.

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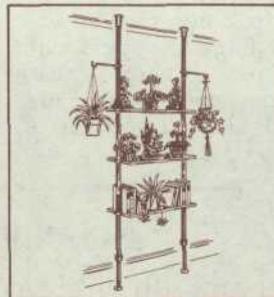
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How to Get Into The Trading Post

Your ad can be run on these pages for only \$1 per word per issue. A check or money order must accompany all orders.

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Examples: P.O. Box 200 counts as three words; telephone numbers as two words. Abbreviations and zip codes are one word.

Desert Magazine Trading Post
2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109

PEOPLE PHOTO CONTEST

The majority of desert lovers are photography lovers, too, according to our research. You're *active* photographers and usually take your cameras along when you go to the desert. That's the reason we offer tips on techniques and equipment in every issue of *Desert*. But we want to go even further in encouraging you to expand your creative photography abilities — and to offer you some exposure — through our photography contest.

The subject of the contest is people in the desert. An overwhelmingly broad subject? That's intentional: The possibilities are almost limitless, so you really must do some creative thinking, planning, and selection in order to shoot and then send us a prize-winning shot.

Some ideas: An elderly Indian woman, a couple of kids running a race, a family barbecue, a young woman playing the flute, a dancing couple, exhausted hikers, or a person or two just sitting there enjoying the desert air, or the sunshine, or the view. Your only boundaries are that you must include at least one person in your picture . . . and the picture must be shot in the desert.

Here's how the contest will work. From now through December, the three best photos will be chosen monthly and will be printed in that month's issue of *Desert*. All of these monthly winners will then be eligible in the final judging for the two grand prizes at the end of the year. We'll return your photos each month (if you choose the return option), so that you won't be without them too long.

For the monthly prizes, color

and black and white will be considered together. In the end-of-year judging, however, one color and one black and white photo will be selected — so there will be two grand-prize winners.

Expand your creative photographic abilities. Sharpen your people picture skills. Enter *Desert's* People Photography Contest today.

Rules:

1. Maximum of four photos per entry (enter as often as you wish each month).
2. Maximum size of prints is 8x10 unmounted and unframed. Maximum size of envelope accepted is 9x12.
3. Preferably, slides should be sent in plastic sheets, because boxes tend to get damaged.
4. Enter color or black and white. Any camera format is acceptable.
5. Personal drop-offs are accepted, but no personal pickups. All entries must be accompanied by the official entry blank or a photocopy.



6. All entries must have name and address clearly marked on them.
7. All "return" entries will be returned by mail.
8. If return of entry is desired, a \$2 fee for handling and postage must be enclosed with *each* entry — otherwise, entries will not be retrievable by the owner.
9. Photos must be recent (i.e., within the last year), and should not have won a

10. Photo rights remain with the photographer — but *Desert* has *unlimited* right to use entries in relation to the contest, in advertising, and in promotion.
11. Professional photographers are not eligible (anyone who earns more than 50 percent of his or her income from taking pictures).
12. Three winners will be chosen monthly through December. To qualify for the monthly prizes, entries must be received by *Desert* by the following dates: June 15, July 15, Aug. 15, Sept. 15, and Oct. 15. Entries received after the fifteenth of these months will be included in the next month's judging. Entries judged each month will be returned within six weeks, and only the three monthly winners will be held for consideration in the grand-prize judging.
13. The maximum is one monthly prize per individual.
14. All monthly winners will be eligible for the year-end grand prizes.
15. Grand-prize winners will be selected from the monthly winners.
16. Winners will be published two to three issues after the contest closing date.
17. Decision of the judges is final.

To Enter: Complete the entry form on this page and enclose with entry. Be sure to indicate whether entry is free or if \$2 is enclosed for its return. Print your name and address on the back upper right-hand corner of each individual print or on the slide mount. Send contest entries to Photo Contest, *Desert*, 2145 Garnet Ave., San Diego, Calif. 92109.

Please note: All prizes must be accepted as presented and are nontransferable and unredeemable for cash. In case of unavailability of a prize, *Desert* reserves the right to substitute a prize of similar value. All trips given must be used within six months of the issue announcing the winners.

It is our experience that it is best to avoid mailing photos and slides in boxes and odd-shaped packages because these undergo the most wear and tear in the mail. A flat package (resembling a regular letter) is most desirable. Thin cardboard should be enclosed with all photos. If sending slides, we prefer these in plastic sheets (these offer the best protection during handling) and advise against sending glass-mounted slides. Although all reasonable care will be taken, *Desert* is not liable should damage or loss occur. Participation indicates acceptance of the above contest rules.

Monthly Prizes

Every month until December, the top three photographers will be chosen, and each of those three photographers will receive an 11x14 framed enlargement of his or her winning photo.

Grand Prizes

Our two grand-prize winners will receive glorious vacations at desert resorts. Details will follow soon!

This label will be used as a return label — please fill it out carefully.

Photo Contest
Desert Magazine
2145 Garnet Ave.
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- My entry is free. I do not want my photos returned.
- I am enclosing a \$2 fee for the return of my photos.

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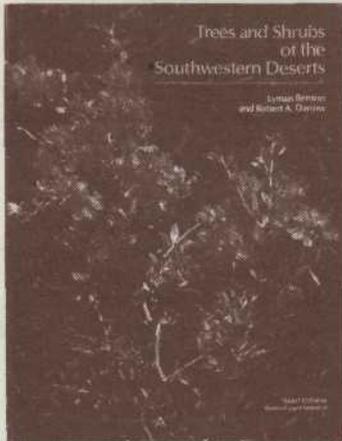
Name _____

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State _____ Zip _____

DESERT LIBRARY



Trees and Shrubs of the Southwestern Deserts

by Lyman Benson and Robert A. Darrow; University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Ariz., 1981; 436 pp. Hardcover, \$49.50.

The book jacket of this excellent, classic reference book says that "the authors' use of simple language makes (it) an accessible volume for any nature lover." Well, granted, the book includes a thorough overview chapter of the deserts it covers and a detailed explanation of the terms and study methods used throughout the book. Still, the constantly technical language, organization, and size of this book will probably make it a bit rough going for anybody below the advanced-amateur botanist level.

That warning aside, this revised and expanded edition of the book that was first published in 1945 covers almost 500 trees and shrubs in the Mojave, Colorado, Arizona, and Chihuahuan deserts. It's the result of 46 years of field research by its botanist authors. The book features 424 black and white photographs and drawings and 252 maps that are highlighted for easy geographic location of a species. There are also 95 full-color photos in a separate section near the end of the book.

One unique and very helpful design feature is that material of general interest — like key characteristics of plants and

geographic distribution of species — is printed in large type, while more detailed and technical information appears in small print.



The Best Free Attractions: The Western States

by John Whitman; Meadowbrook Press, Deephaven, Minn., 1981; 150pp. Paper, \$3.95.

Any book that lists 1,500 things to do and see for free is terrific, but this one gets an even higher *Desert* rating because there's so much in it for desert lovers.

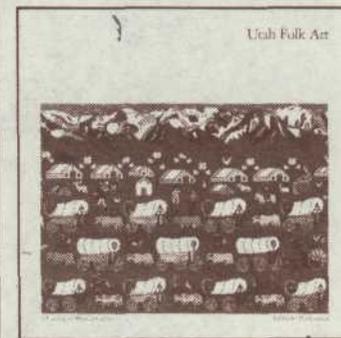
The book has listings for Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The organization is simple — each state's free attractions are listed under the towns (which are alphabetized) nearest to them.

Here's a free-attraction sample, listed under Deming, New Mexico: "Gems for Free: In Rock Hound State Park there are none of the usual restrictions about taking away stones. In fact, you're encouraged to dig for agates, jasper, and opals — and allowed to cart off up to 15 pounds of rocky treasure. Polished specimens of rocks found in the park are on display. Time: Best time is March during the Rockhound Round-up, one of the great rockhounding events in the state. Place: 14 miles southeast of town via New Mexico 11 and access road. Contact: (505) 546-3847."

Listings also frequently contain a "note" that gives an insider's hints. For example, in

the listing for the Apache Scenic Trail near Apache Junction, Ariz., the author advises you to "always go up the trail so that your car is against the cliffs. Do not take the trail in the dark."

Of particular interest to desert lovers, the book includes scores of ghost towns, rockhounding sites, mining camps, museums, campsites, festivals, hiking and biking trails, beautiful desert drives, historic sites, hot springs, and Indian artifacts and pueblos.



Utah Folk Art

Edited by Hal Cannon; Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah, 1980; 150pp. Paper, \$15.95.

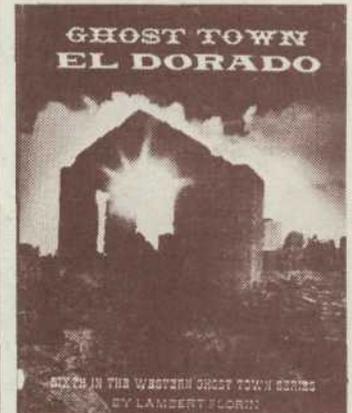
The Ouzonian carpet on the cover may trick you into believing that this is your basic quilts-and-carvings picture book. But it is much, much more (as it should be at such a steep price!). It is, in fact, as the subtitle states, "A Catalog of Material Culture." That is some catchall phrase — and many paragraphs in the book are devoted to defining it and "folk art." Anyway, by the time you get to it, you shouldn't be surprised that one of the chapters deals with houses (not what's in the houses, but the floor plans and exteriors of the houses themselves).

"A folk house can be studied as art because it is the material articulation of a specific designing process," explains Tom Carter, author of the House chapter. "A house is not folk because of the way it looks but because its basic plan is traditional within the culture that produced it."

Put another way, in the

book's Introduction, the featured items throughout *Utah Folk Art* are all "handmade, made-in-Utah objects which are most revealing in terms of a Utah experience."

Other folk art discussed and lavishly illustrated: Indian art; frontier furniture; saddles and other leatherwork; pottery, tinware, carpentry, and other crafts; quilts, bonnets, and clothing; carving; and painting.



Ghost Town El Dorado

by Lambert Florin; Bonanza Books, New York, N.Y., 1978; 192pp. Hardcover, \$12.95.

From Bakers Bay, Wash., to Study Butte, Texas, this book includes 63 towns that gradually faded into ghosts after their mining heydeys. The sheer number of ghost towns covered might have made a textbook approach to the subject matter dully repetitious after a few chapters. But the book is *never* boring because Florin frequently employs a novelist's tools to introduce readers to the ghost towns — dialogue, colorful character sketches, and lots of legends and speculation.

Treasure hunters will enjoy the many tales of lost and found fortunes, like that of Allison "Eilley" Orrum Hunter Cowan Bowers of Gold Hill, Nevada.

Ghost Town El Dorado is packed with maps and black and white pictures of town remains, though I found myself occasionally wishing that the author had included some historical photos of the towns during their frenetic heydeys. The comparison would have made this book even more visually ghostly.

— Jacqueline Shannon

DESERT PHOTOGRAPHY

TIPS

Better desert scenics

Large, empty areas in a picture — particularly empty foregrounds — are a big obstacle to a good scenic picture.

Remember that the next time you're high up on a mountain, aiming your camera at the desert floor. You *need* something in the foreground to give your picture some depth. Without this depth, your picture will have no perspective — the scene will look two-dimensional, flat.

Put the branches of a tree, or another mountain, or a person in the foreground and suddenly you've got three dimensions. Now your family and friends can get a real feel for how far below, or how big, or how endless that desert is.

Remember, though, that if you're putting a person in the foreground, that person should take up just a small part of the picture and should not be in the center. The person also should be looking toward or at the scene you're photographing. If the person is too large in the frame, is looking at the camera, or both your viewer will be confused about the point of the picture. He or she will wonder whether it's supposed to be a portrait or a scenic.

GEAR

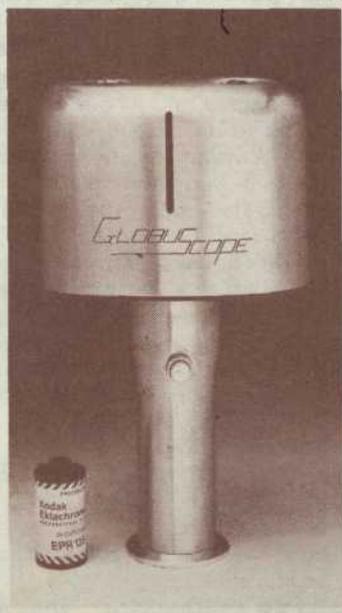
GlobuScope

Here's an out-of-the-ordinary 35mm camera that's made by a company of the same name. The GlobuScope takes panoramic pictures. A revolving slit is synchronized with an orbiting camera inside a stainless-steel body to make exposures on a 35mm film cassette.

The GlobuScope's 25mm super wide-angle lens takes the whole view, and the camera was created for spectacular group or scenic pictures. (Sounds ideal for desert landscapes.) Surprisingly, the camera uses no electricity or batteries. It runs on something called built-in spring drive.



By including part of the mountain in the "middleground," the photographer gave this picture — shot from the top of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway — an even better depth perspective.



The system weighs 3½ pounds and has a wooden carrying case. List price is \$1,500.

GlobuScope, Inc., Desert Dept., One Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003.



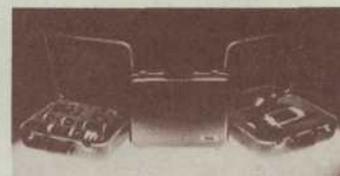
Minolta AF2-M

This compact 35mm rangefinder is just about foolproof — and it constantly reminds you so. The AF2-M "sounds off" when you're about to make a

mistake. A long "beep" and a constant light in the viewfinder warn you when you should use the built-in flash. When you are either too close to focus or beyond flash range, you hear a series of short "beeps" and see a blinking light.

Add to that the fact that the AF2-M is totally automatic and you've got one easy-to-use camera. It has automatic focusing, electronically programmed auto-exposure, and automatic film advance and power rewind. The camera's standard lens is a 38mm f/2.8 and the overall weight is 12-11/16 ounces without batteries. The retail price is about \$139.

Minolta, Desert Dept., 101 Williams Dr., Ramsey, N.J. 07446.



Endura Cases

Cases Incorporated recently introduced its 1982 line of Endura camera cases. The line features new, stylish positive closing locks. The aluminum trim that secures the lid and body has been improved to offer even greater dust and moisture resistance. A durable padded handle has been added to make heavy loads more comfortable to carry.

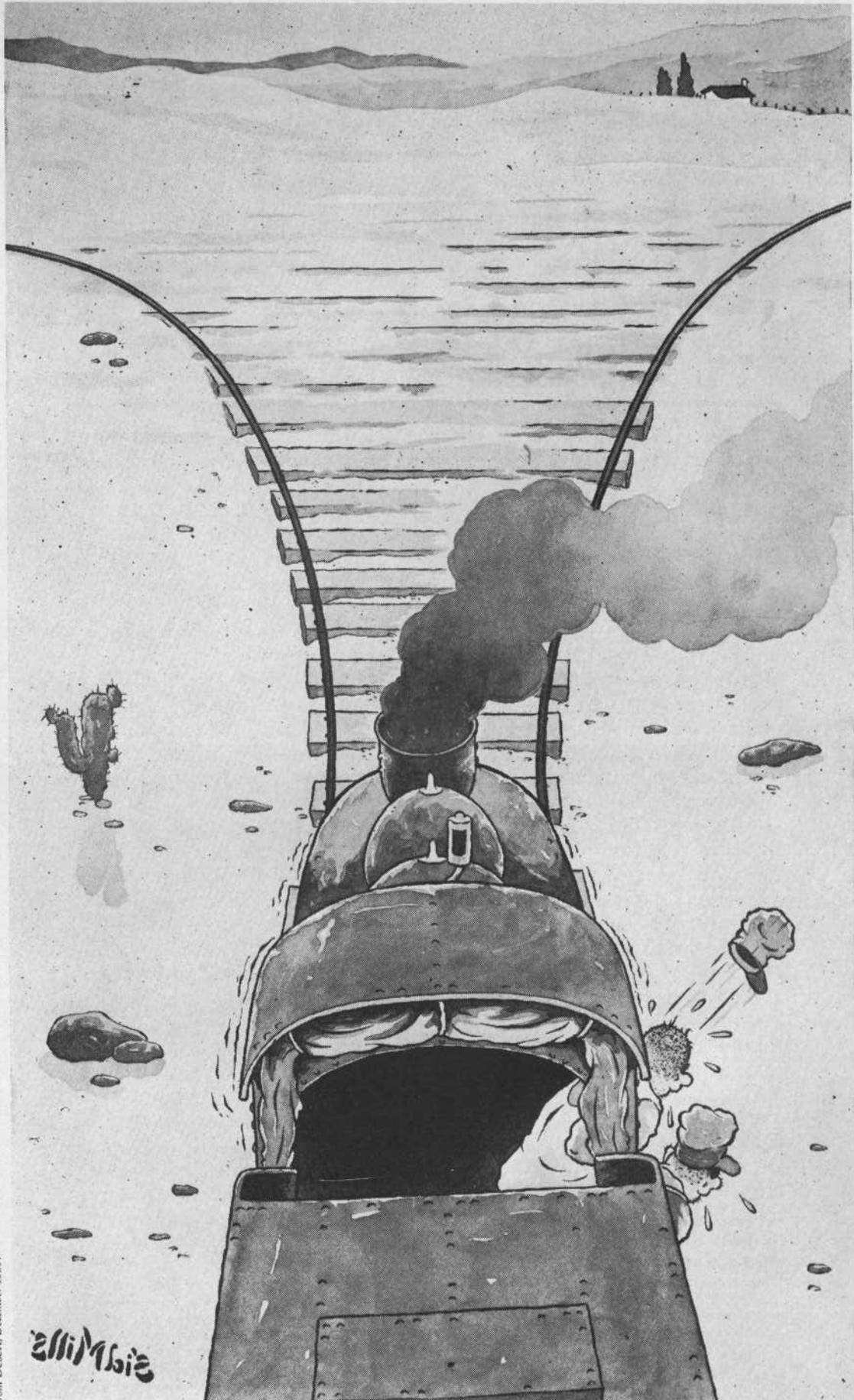
The Endura shells are made from a special blend of molded fiberglass that was designed to resist tremendous abuse. The company says that the shells are so durable that the new Enduras feature replaceable lid supports, locks, and handles.

Manufactured to last for years with just minimum care, the shells can be wiped with an oil-based substance — like furniture polish — to make scratches and scuffs practically disappear.

The cases are lightweight, but the company especially recommends them as able to withstand the rigors of air travel.

With pre-cut foam interiors, the six-inch-deep Endura has a suggested retail price of \$139.50; the eight-inch-deep model, \$149.50.

Cases Incorporated, California, Desert Dept., 1745 West 134th St., Gardena, Calif. 90249.



From Desert, December 1939.

Don't worry, Bill, maybe it's only one of them mirages.

DESERT MONSTER

The gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) of the southwestern United States and Sonora, and its relative, the beaded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*) of Mexico are the only known venomous lizards in the world.

At 12 to 16 inches in length, both are large, heavy-bodied lizards with short, thick tails and are colored with gaudy patterns of black with pink, orange, or yellow blotches. Their small, round, closely set scales suggest almost an Indian beadwork appearance. Their normal habitat is semiarid country, especially desert woodlands and the vicinity of farms and intermittent streams where they have access to water and damp soil. Primarily nocturnal (active at night), they prey upon small mammals, birds eggs, and reptiles.

Gila monster venom is quite strong and being bit by one is excruciatingly painful. The lizards usually bite as a defensive action, and, indeed, most bites from gila monsters in this country result from careless handling of captive lizards. When a gila monster does bite, its strong jaws hold on and chew

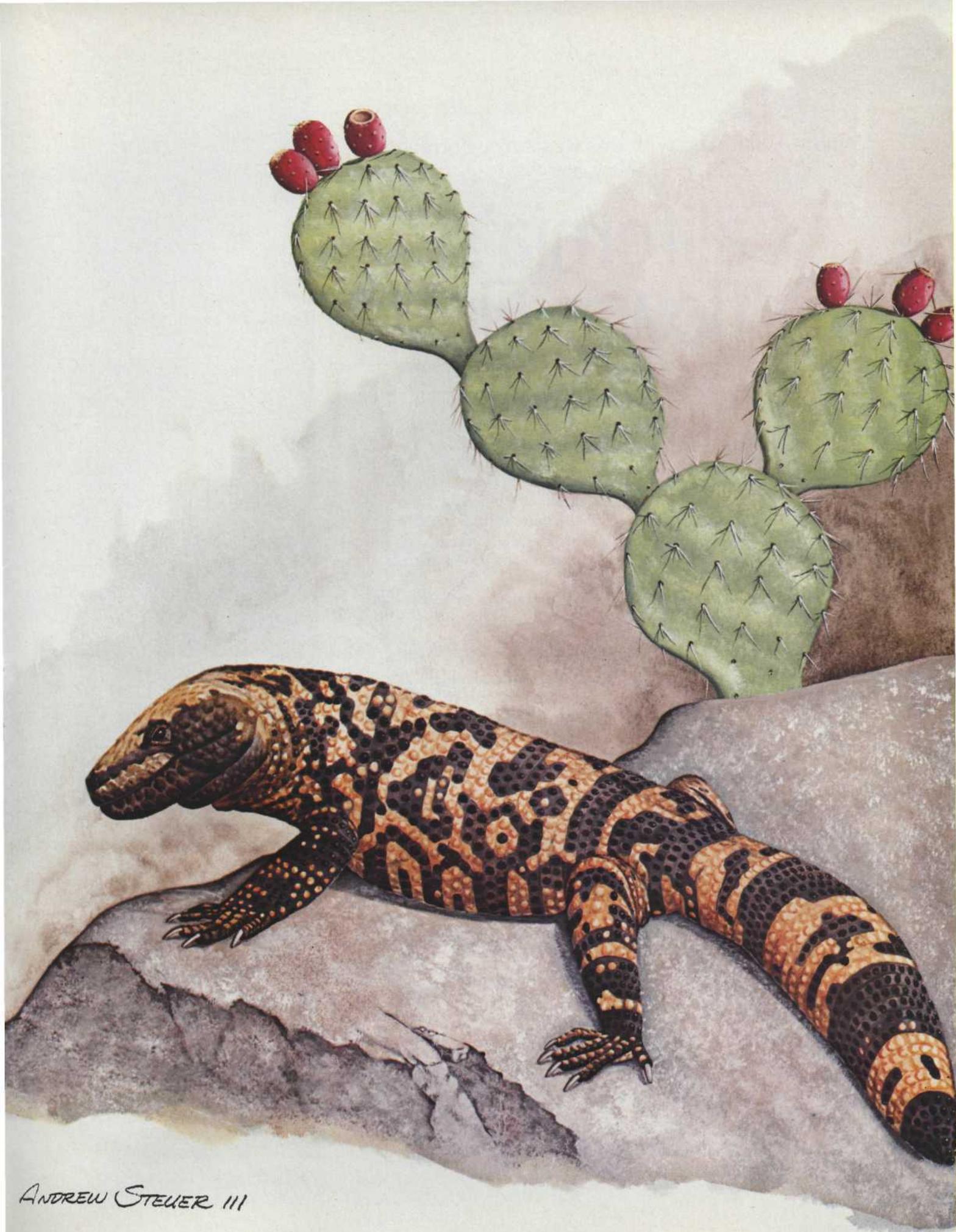
the venom into the wound. The venom is produced in glands in the lower jaw and is expelled into the mouth along grooves in the lower teeth. The grooves act as ducts to carry the venom by capillary action into the wound, in contrast to the fangs of venomous snakes, which, like hypodermic needles, inject the venom directly into the flesh. A bit of folklore from the United States is that the gila monster has no anus and produces its venom from food decomposing in the digestive tract.

While very few people have died from the bite of a gila monster, it requires immediate medical aid. Symptoms of the bite include sweating, nausea, thirst, sore throat, ringing in the ears, weakness, rapid breathing, faintness, and collapse.

Although formidable in appearance, these lizards are not dangerous unless they're molested or handled. So don't touch! In Arizona the gila monster is protected by law.

Their range? They can be found in extreme southwestern Utah, the tip of Nevada to the eastern edge of the Colorado River, and south to New Mexico and Sonora, Mexico. □

Text by Karen Sausman
Illustration by Andrew Steuer III



ANDREW STEUER III

Where, what, and why this was Anza-Borrego's
best show ever

California's Wildflower Finale

Text and photos by Michael Vlassis

Besides dealing out extreme summer heat and strong winds, the harsh desert climate provides only two or three inches of rainfall a year, and that's not every year. The winter water is enough, though, to start an explosion of growth almost every spring. And it's always worth a drive and a few rolls of film. That was especially true this year.

The winter of 1981-82 was one of the coldest and wettest winters in recent history. California deserts received their share of it. Rain fell in surprising quantities and many people claim that the resulting flower crop was the best they've seen in 20 years.

That's why thousands of RVs, vans, and cars filled desert roads

this past spring — for a view of the spectacle. *Desert Magazine*, too, took to the road to give those of you who missed it a last look at the fantastic, extraordinarily green spring of 1982.

When many people think of desert flowers, they think of the flowers of cacti. Desert cactus flowers definitely are some of the most beautiful and vibrantly colored in the world. But this month, in the pages that follow, I'll be showing you the other side of the desert's flower life. I concentrated on the soft, gentle flowers — many of them annuals — that grow from seeds each spring if there is enough rain.

While taking my own pictures, I watched many of you stop by the side of the road, making

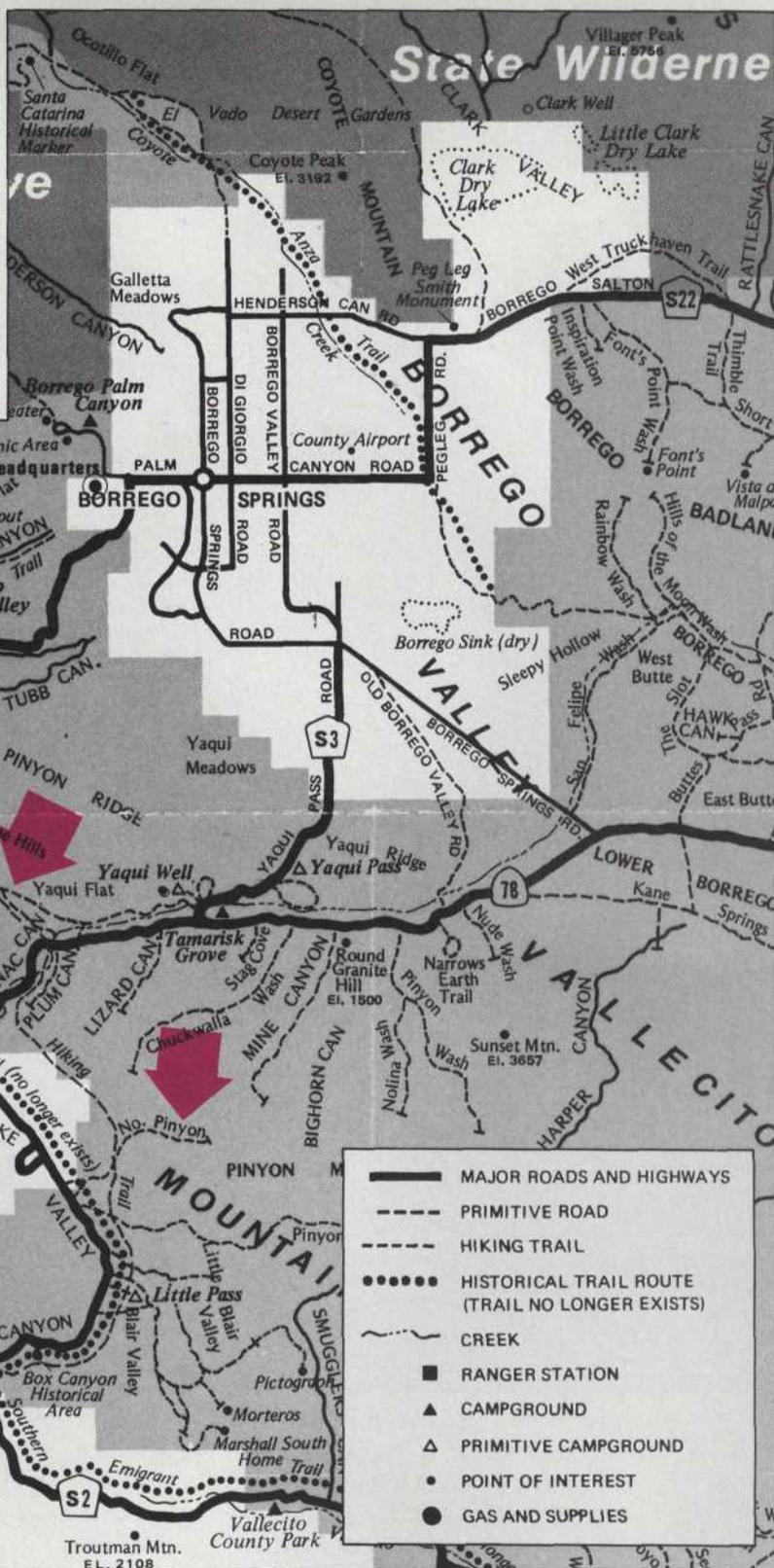
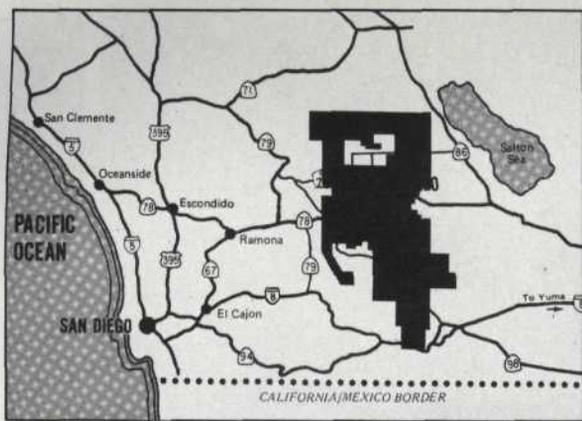




frequent use of your binoculars or cameras, like the gentleman with the white Mercedes. But I hope that he and the rest of you flower sightseers went further than the side of the road, because a great many of the wildflowers — some of which you'll see in the coming pages — grow in small clusters hidden from view. A few species grow

only in one place and in very limited numbers. To find these hidden jewels, you must drive on dirt roads and do a bit of walking.

The purple field at sunset, however, was visible from the main road (Highway S2). It's a field of thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), a member of the mint family.



Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is approximately three hours from Los Angeles and two from San Diego. From Interstate 8 take Highway 79 north to Highway 78 east. Then Highway S2 north

will take you to the park headquarters. Or, to reach our next stop, take Highway S2 south from Highway 78 for four miles. You should then see the Stage Trail Ranch, which is an RV Park. You can camp there

and be near numerous trails. A couple of hundred feet south of the Stage Trail Ranch, on the opposite side of the road, is North Pinyon Road. It will take you about four miles toward the Pinyon Mountains.

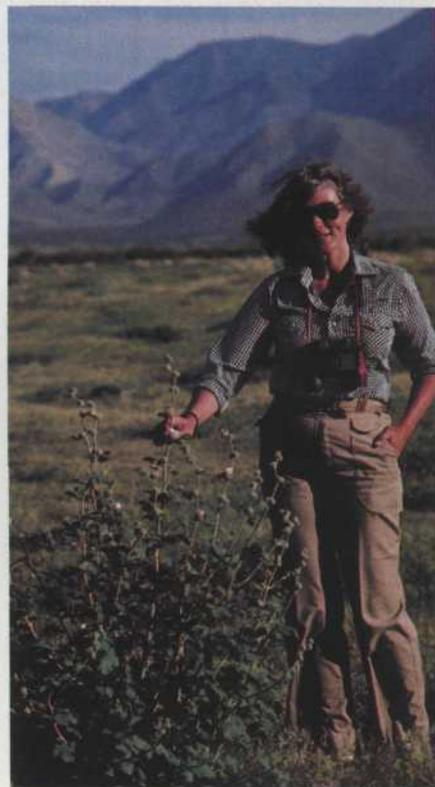


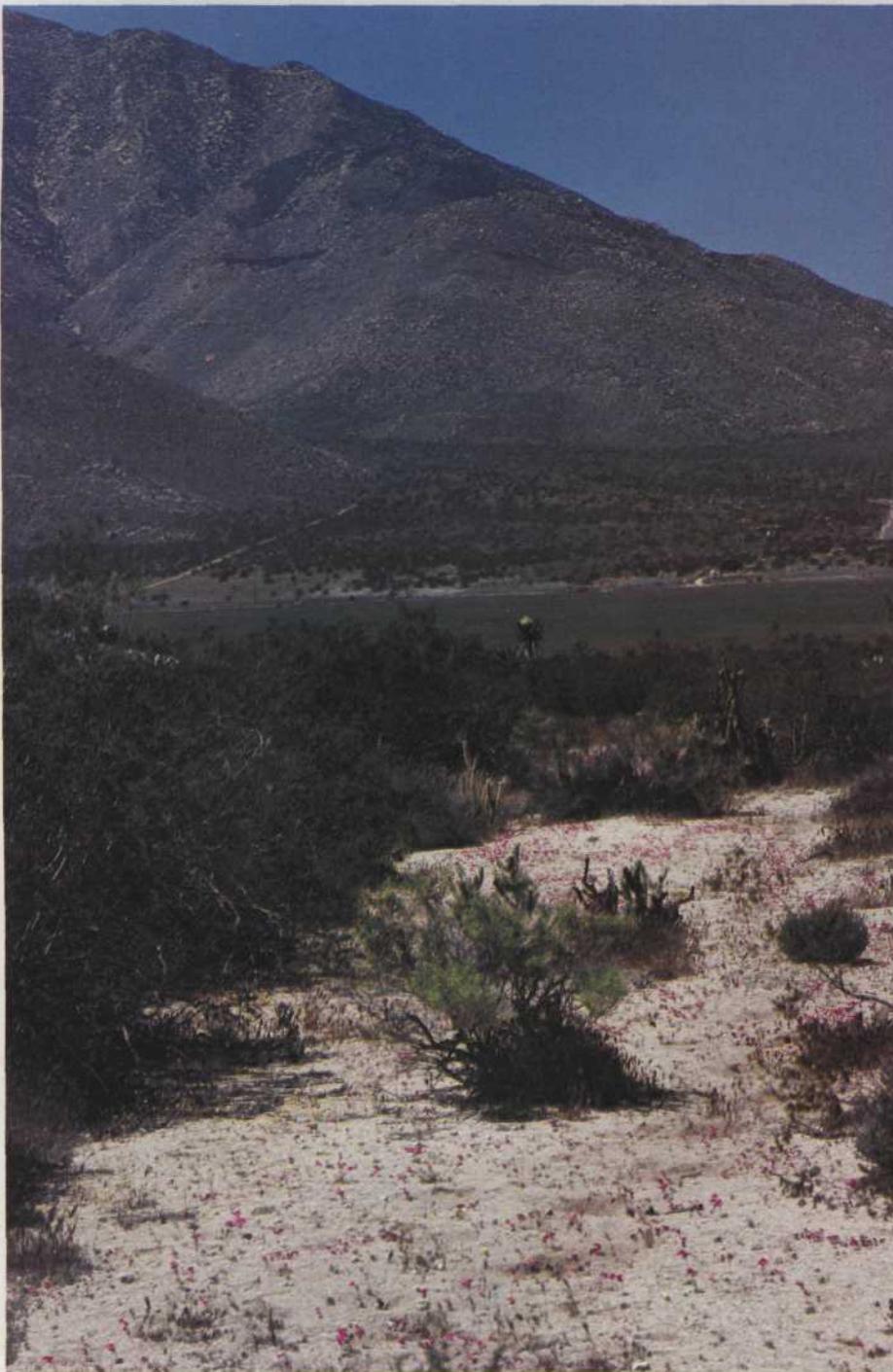
The beautiful white prickly poppy is large (five to six inches in diameter) and so textured that it looks as if it was made of paper and cloth. Part of the poppy family, its real name is *Argemone corymbosa*. And how do I know such an esoteric name? Well I cheated a little. I had the benefit of a guide, Pat Flanagan, at right. She's a biologist and naturalist who not only supplied me with the names and locations of all the desert flowers, but knew their natural history and sex habits, as well.

Flanagan, who has worked for Anza-Borrego State Park, started the Rent-A-Naturalist service

last year to teach visitors where to go and what plants and animals to see without investing in an expensive vehicle. She takes you on your tour in your own car, and says that almost any standard car, when driven with care, can handle the majority of dirt roads in the park. Flanagan's naturalist service operates from November to May, and you can get a brochure and rates by writing to Anza-Borrego Desert Tours, Box 301, BSR, Julian, Calif. 92036.

Both the white prickly poppy and the variety of mallow, pictured next to Flanagan, were found in Oriflamme Canyon just one mile off Highway S2.





N

orth Pinyon

Road has a gentle grade and is in the center of an alluvial fan.

When water flows out of mountain canyons it erodes the mountains, opens up into a fan shape, and deposits most of its particulate matter to create alluvial fans, which are millions of years old.

Superimposed on alluvial fans are braided streams, drainage systems that are shallow washes from recent rainstorms. Braided streams have sandy channels, such as the one I stood on to take the picture at left. We're overlooking a dry lake bed, and across from us is another alluvial fan, which has its origins in the Granite Mountains. The houses and road are part of the community of Earthquake Valley, now renamed Shelter Valley by real estate developers who want to make sales easier.

The braided streams carry seeds and this winter's rains persuaded the majority of them to flower. The most prominent flower, however, is pictured at right. It's the desert monkey flower (or *Mimulus bigelovii*) of the figwort family. The monkey flower needs well-drained soil — usually sand — in order to grow. It has a single straight root, two to three inches long, with no root hair because there is no humidity nearby. It is hard to predict where the monkey flower will grow from year to year.





The desert soil is too dry for bacterial growth, so the recycling of plant matter, which happens so quickly in the woods, is very slow in the desert. Dead vegetation, like this dry cactus stem on the sandy bed of a braided stream, top, acts as a valuable trap for soil, water, nutrients, and seeds.

Around the cactus stem, in addition to the colorful desert monkey flower, we found white desert stars (*Monoptilon bellioides*) of the sunflower family and purple mat (*Nama demissum*) of the waterleaf family.

The small flowered primrose, middle photo, is of the evening primrose family.

Almost impossible to detect while you're standing, the desert calico (*Langloisia matthewsii*), bottom photo, is of the phlox family and blends with the dirt and gravel.



Along with green grass and stereo music, some Californians like to carry the beach with them to the desert. This group, at left, camped right in the small stream of Grapevine Canyon and enjoyed a perfect April day with sunny skies and 90-degree dry heat. Just a short walk away grows this extraterrestrial-looking, scaly-stemmed sand plant (*Pholisma arenarium*), pictured above, of the lennoa family. This is a parasitic plant — it usually feeds off of the roots of cheesebush.



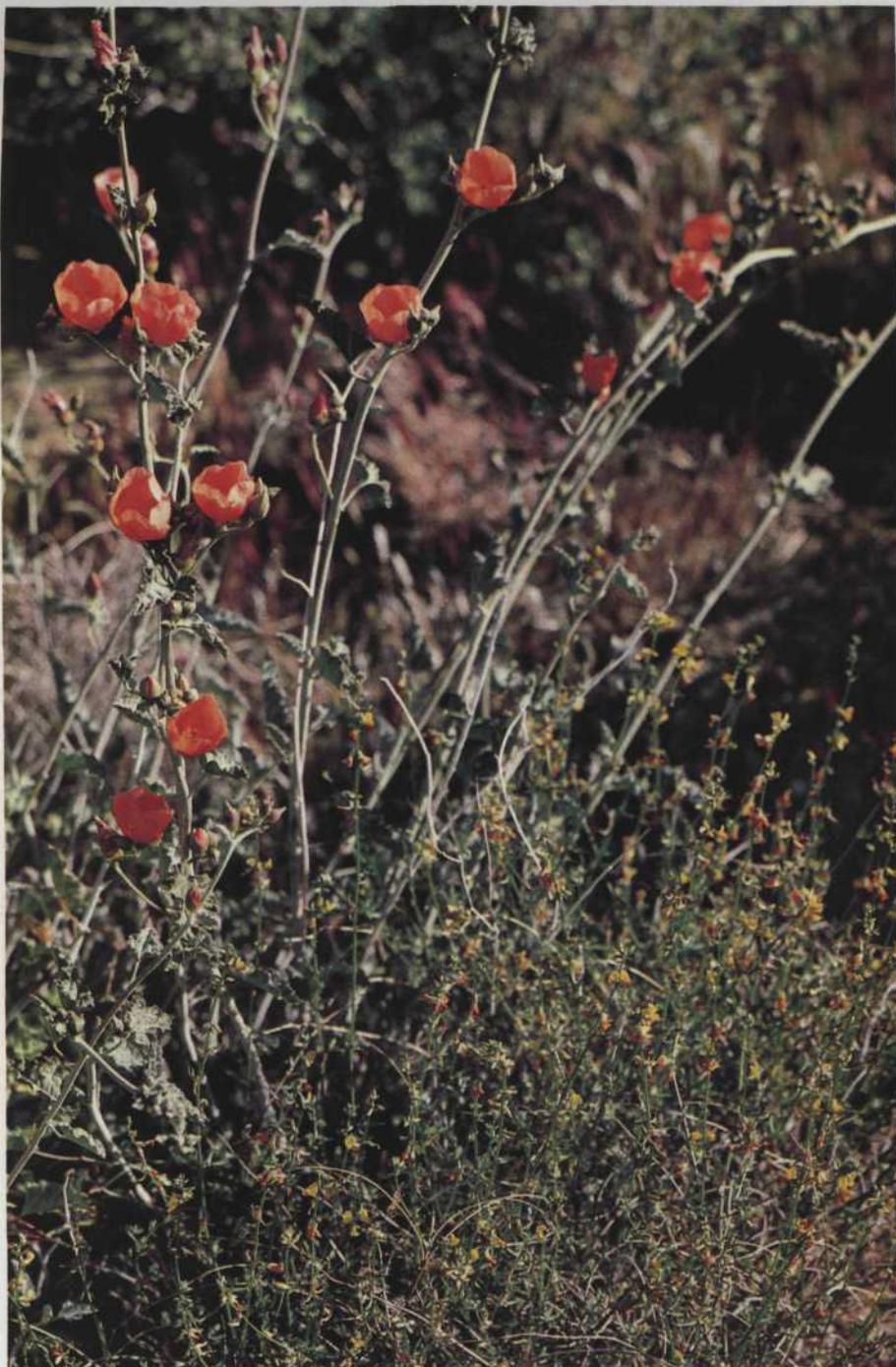
My favorite desert plant is the ocotillo. I shot the one above at sunset while heading east on Highway 78, which is lined for miles with thousands of them.

The ocotillo has spines and sprouts green leaves after a good rainstorm. The leaves can grow any time of year, but the plant flowers only in the spring. It's a common misconception that the ocotillo is a cactus — but it does not have a succulent's stalk like a cactus does, and its spines are very different. Ocotillo spines are the hardened petiole (stems) of the first leaves of new growth. All of the new leaves that follow, in response to rain, are stemless and grow in the axil between the spine and the stalk.

The flower lacks a landing platform for insects and bees can't hover. In addition, the tubular flower is too long for the short mouths of insects. And insects can't see red — the color of the ocotillo flower. They see ultraviolet. So it's the hummingbird, with its long bill and ability to see red, that pollinates the ocotillo.

There is plenty of nectar to supply the energy needs of the hummingbird. Indians were known to use this ocotillo nectar as a sweet. They harvested and ground the seeds, as well. Ants also harvest the seeds — stripping off the hairy coats before storing the seeds underground.





For shape and color, one of my favorite flowers is the apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) of the mallow family. It's pictured at right and above, co-existing with the hairy lotus bush of the pea family.

I hope you enjoyed this parade of gentle desert flowers as much as I enjoyed shooting

them. Plan to visit them next spring in person . . . and don't forget your camera. For the information of camera buffs, I used an 85mm lens with 1½-inch extension tube for all of the close-ups.

Look for our cactus flowers presentation later this year. □

Camping in Anza-Borrego

Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation

The park contains two developed family campgrounds — one near park headquarters at Borrego Palm Canyon (25 sites) and one at Tamarisk Grove (25 sites). The sites at these campgrounds contain tables, wood stoves, shade ramadas, and cupboards; water and restrooms with flush toilets are nearby. Wood fuel is sold at the park, or bring your camp stove and fuel. Vacation trailers up to 24 feet long and motor homes up to 31 feet can use these sites.

Campers with motor homes, trailers, or pickup campers may prefer to use the trailer area at Borrego Palm Canyon. Its paved "pull-through" parking spaces have connections for water, electricity, and sewage. This area is not suitable for tent camping.

If you are planning to camp in one of Anza-Borrego's developed or trailer campsites on a weekend or holiday during the winter, reservations are recommended. Ask the ranger for reservation information or call (916) 445-8828.

Primitive campgrounds are scattered throughout the park. Facilities there include only pit or chemical toilets and trash cans — you must bring your own water. In addition, you are welcome to camp anywhere along park roads or designated routes of travel.

There is also a group campground located at Borrego Palm Canyon that will accommodate up to 120 campers. For more information, contact park headquarters. □

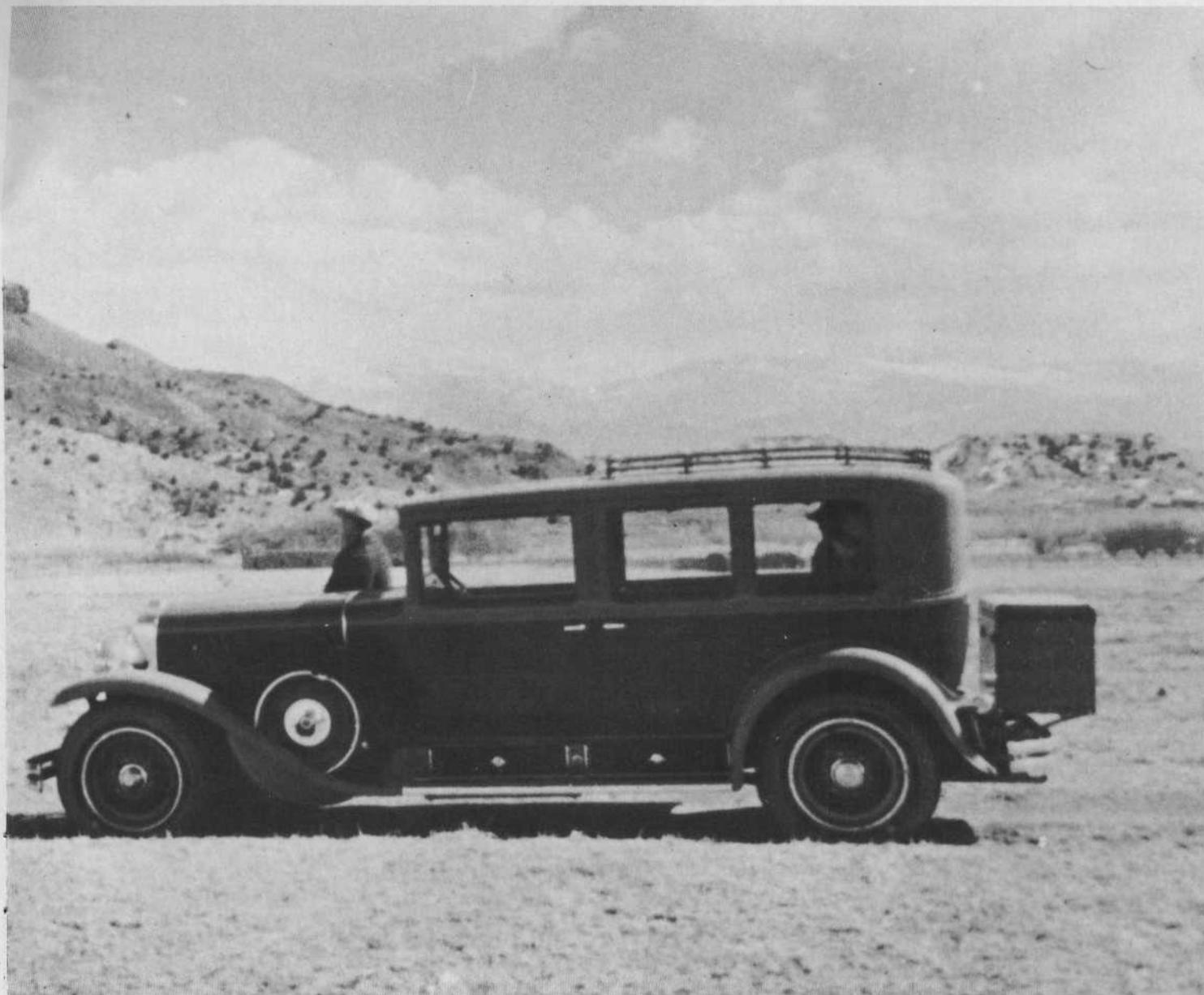




Along the Indian Detours Trail

The dust of the frontier was just settling when this upstart touring company began kicking it up again

By Albert D. Manchester
Photos courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico



On the 15th of May, 1926, a new Packard Eight touring car rumbled out of the railroad station in Las Vegas, New Mexico, en route to Sante Fe by way of Glorieta Pass. There were several snappily dressed tourists in the open car, a young woman guide, and a chauffeur who looked as if he had been outfitted by Zane Grey. This was the maiden trip of a new touring business called the Indian Detours, and it was breaking a dusty trail for thousands of tourists who would follow in the years to come.

New Mexico — and by 1929 the rest of the Southwest — was about to be rediscovered by a new group of adventurers:

middle-class Americans. Awaiting them were some still-obscure corners of the map, pueblos occupied by real Indians, Spanish mountain villages, and magnificent natural wonders. Until the Indian Detours hit the trail, most of the Southwest had been out of reach of the average traveler, who had no reasonable means for getting far away from the railroad towns. Now, powerful, reliable cars were at their disposal, comfortable hotels, good food . . . and a romantic sense of adventuring among ancient peoples and on untrodden paths.

It was an exciting time to get off the beaten trail in the

Two Harveycars — a Cadillac touring car and a Cadillac sedan — arrive at Black Mesa, south of Espanola, N.M. By 1929, after the Indian Detours had been in business for three years, cars could be hired by individuals for \$100 a day to take them almost anywhere in the Southwest.



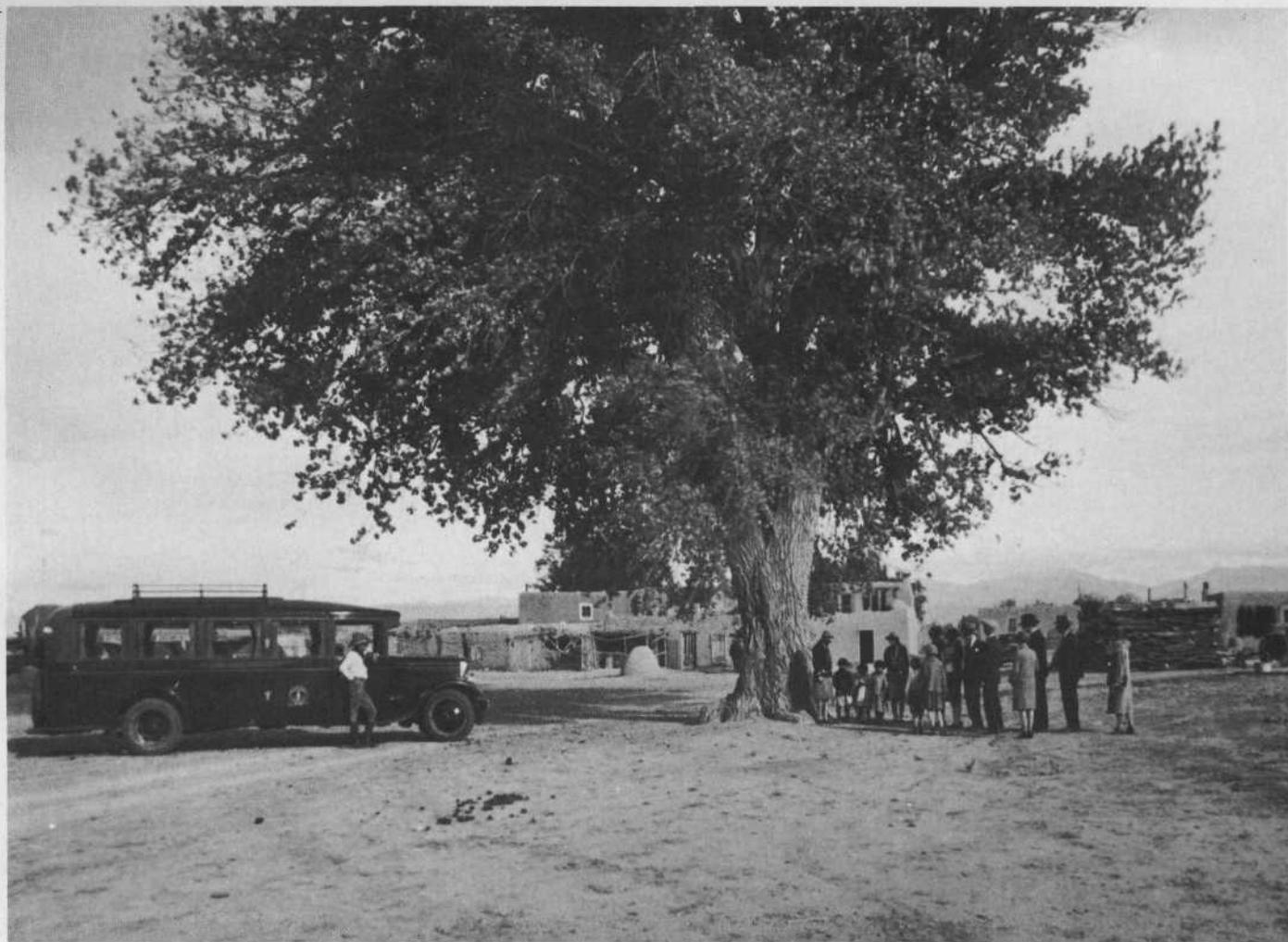
Inspecting and admiring pottery at Indian pueblos was popular with most "dudes." The company discouraged the drivers — like this one, who is correctly attired as a cowboy — from speaking with the tourists. Their orders: "Keep your hands on the machinery, your eyes on the road."

Southwest. Although the window to the Old West was closing, a perceptive visitor could still look through it to see images of an earlier day. The Indian Wars were a living memory, and men who had fought in the Lincoln County range war were still spry and mean.

The Indian Detours was an outgrowth of the Harvey House restaurant and hotel chain, a business that had followed the railroads across the West, providing decent food and lodging for train travelers. Even prior to World War I, the Harvey business had offered motor trips along the rim of the Grand Canyon from the lodges and hotels it operated there. In the early 1920s, a young, war-decorated British expatriate, Major R. Hunter Clarkson, was in charge of transportation at the

Grand Canyon for the Harvey people. The vast Southwest intrigued him, as he thought it must intrigue others, and he came to envision motorcar tours across the beautiful land. He presented the idea to his employers and the managers of the Santa Fe Railroad. They liked the idea so much that they put Clarkson in charge of the entire operation.

Major Clarkson set up headquarters in Santa Fe, just a block south of the plaza. The nine Packard Eight touring cars he bought were garaged there, too, along with two small buses for larger tours. Clarkson moved ahead quickly but with military thoroughness. *Nothing* was left to chance. Drivers and guides were hired with care and trained well, advertising brochures were sent out across the country, and accommodations for tourists



were found and booked. The Indian Detours was planned as a class operation, in keeping with the high standards of the Harvey House business and the Santa Fe Railroad.

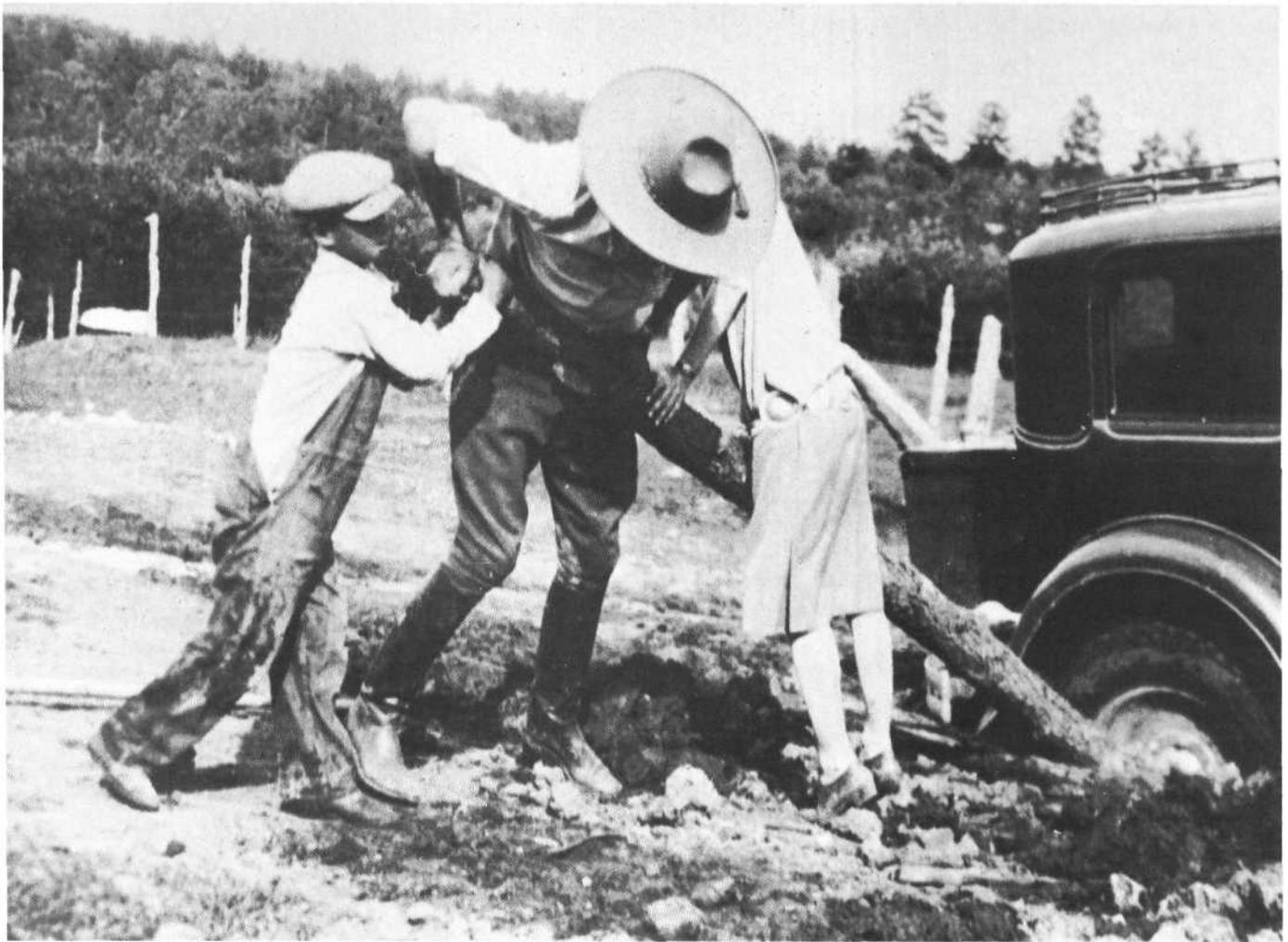
The Detours chauffeurs were all local boys. They knew the country, which was absolutely essential because the roads were primitive and there were few road signs. Local citizens were not beyond taking the wooden signs home for kindling, one of the retired drivers remembers. Some of the ex-chauffeurs still live in the Santa Fe area and enjoy recalling those early days along the Detours trail.

Each driver was dressed in a Tom Mix-style ten-gallon hat, silk neckerchief, colorful shirt, riding breeches, and high boots, a uniform guaranteed to thrill the "dudes," as the young men irreverently christened the

tourists. The boys were not allowed to smoke, drink, or chew in the presence of the dudes, nor did they even talk to them very much. Legend has it that the Santa Fe Railroad was not beneath sending vampy tourists on the trail to see if the boys could be enticed beyond endurance. "They'd just throw it in your face," recalls one of the drivers with nostalgic wonder. The drivers were expected to be strong and silent . . . and stoic.

In the early days the Detours drivers had only dirt or graveled roads to drive on, rickety bridges or none at all, and some of the switchbacks in the mountains were so sharp that the boys were forced to back up in the curves for a second run, a maneuver likely to send chills through flatlander dudes. They drove across all of the Southwest in all seasons, in snow and rain and

A small Harveycoach visits San Ildefonso pueblo, where tourists admire a group of Indian children framed between couriers. Although most of the tourists were intelligent and kind, the couriers had to keep their cools in the face of some abjectly stupid questions and occasional rudeness. The company was known to send "spy dudes" on the tours to make sure the women treated the dudes with courtesy.



A courier and a local farm boy help the driver lever a Cadillac out of the mud. Every Harveycar was equipped with this emergency gear: a distributor, spark plugs, a tool packet, spare tires, a tarp for traction in sand, a shovel, and an axe.

dust and mud. During the millions of miles they logged over the years no dude was lost in the wilderness for good, and none was killed in an accident. The Indian Detours drivers were capable young men who inspired confidence in the city slickers who rode with them across mountain and desert.

"Couriers" were in the car to do the talking for the drivers. They were young women guides, all college educated, but from varying backgrounds and parts of the country. They were given crash courses by recognized authorities in local geology, history, anthropology, and the arts and crafts of the Indian and Spanish peoples of the Southwest. When they were deemed ready for the trail, they were expected to lecture at high speed about virtually anything encountered along the way.

The couriers had a uniform of their own that included a soft, wide-brimmed hat with the Indian Detours insignia attached, a brightly colored velveteen or corduroy blouse patterned after those worn by the Navajos, a practical skirt, and sturdy walking shoes. Jodphurs and boots could be substituted for rough country or climbing among Indian ruins. Plenty of clanking silver and turquoise jewelry, including a squash blossom necklace, concho belt, and bracelets completed the distinctive, attractive outfit.

Several of the ex-couriers still live in the Santa Fe area. Trekking across the boondocks, one of them recalls, taught the women a lot of self-reliance. She was on a trip to Taos when one of the leaf springs of their Cadillac touring car broke. Her



driver was new at the game. After he scratched his head and stared at the slumping machine for a time, he admitted that, by golly, as far as he was concerned they were good and stuck.

The courier found some baling wire, and then, just off the road, she located a piece of driftwood on the rocky shore of the Rio Grande. The wood was wedged in under the car body and wired in place. They drove into Taos, where the local mechanics and blacksmiths pronounced the jury rig as good as *they* could have devised until the car could be driven to Santa Fe for a new spring!

To be sure, the drivers and couriers did not often have to "get out and get under." Maintenance and preventive maintenance of the Packards — and later the Cadillacs, which became the workhorses of the

Detours through the 1930s — were part of the daily routine. Major Clarkson kept several mechanics busy, and there were checklists for the drivers to go through when they brought the cars in, and again before the cars went out. Failure to adhere to the mandated procedures for maintenance was tantamount to immediate dismissal. Dudes were *not* to be injured, lost, or stranded through simple carelessness.

The Indian Detours would have been impossible without the dudes. In fact, the Detours came along at what may have been the only time in our history when such a venture could have been supported. Ten years before, neither the roads nor the machines were up to the mark. Ten years later, in the mid-1930s and in the midst of an economic calamity, fun had gone out of

A couple of tour cars climbing out of the northern entrance of New Mexico's Chaco Canyon. This road is not much better today, but most of the Indian Detours can now be duplicated on paved roads.

people of that day had, taking things for granted was not one of them.

The wealthy and the famous of the period, and some foreign visitors, risked the Wild West in the rear seats of Harveycars. One ex-driver recalls that he was the favorite chauffeur of Andre Kostelanetz and his wife Lily Pons, who eventually came to own a house in Santa Fe. That same driver remembers exploring the Four Corners area with two wealthy women from Philadelphia for the better part of three months.

Although the first Detours were concentrated in northern New Mexico, by 1929 the tours had spread out all across the map of the Southwest. By that time a long-range "land cruise" could be organized to poke into virtually any part of the Southwest where a reasonable road or trail could be discerned. By then, too, dudes were being picked up at other points along the Santa Fe Railroad, such as Winslow, Ariz., where they were lodged at La Posada.

The influence of the Indian Detours on the Southwest cannot be minimized, although few people today are aware of the entire story. The first generation of Americans to explore the Southwest comfortably, as tourists, did so with the Indian Detours. The 20th century arrived in many parts of the Southwest in a Harveycar.

A brief, planned excursion from a long cross-country train trip was the mainstay of the Indian Detours. The cost of the tours included all expenses. Tour number six, for example, was an overnight jaunt to Taos. On the way up from Santa Fe, the dudes passed by Black Mesa, visited the modern Indian pueblos of Santa Clara and San Ildefonso, and climbed among the ruins and cliff dwellings at Puyé on the southern escarpment of the

Pajarito Plateau. Part of the ride to Taos followed the canyon of the Rio Grande. Once in Taos, the dude visited local artists, the chapel at Ranchos de Taos, and the Indian pueblo of San Gerónimo de Taos. On the return trip, stops were made at the Spanish mountain villages of Truchas and Cordova, and finally at the religious sanctuary of Chimayó, a modest adobe mission church. Then back to Santa Fe, the railroad, and the 20th century. That tour, including lodging and meals, cost \$45 in 1929 — a lot of adventure per mile per dollar, even by the standards of the time.

1929 came and went. The Great Depression gained momentum as the 1930s matured. A lot of the dudes had to stay home to watch the shop, if they still had a shop to watch. Trips were cut from the Indian Detours. The equipment started to age. The national highway system improved through the 1930s until it was a practical idea for the average family to drive out West in their own car. Then World War II came and the Detours stopped altogether for lack of gas and tires. Although the business was revived after the war — tours were conducted into the early 1950s — it was not the high-toned operation of the early days. The glitter had long since faded from the original dream.

The Detours was a colorful touring business that happened along at just the right time and place. There was never another quite like it in this country. And although the dudes missed the frontier, they, too, were pioneers in their own way. If the Indian Detours has an image of its own, it is probably that of the early days . . . the dusty touring car, the colorful chauffeur and courier, and the natty dudes, all heading for a distant pass on a dirt road. □

This medium-sized oasis is drawing new residents —
and not just by military order!

29 Palms, California

Text and photos by Marvin Patchen



After World War I, the U.S. government searched for a place offering clean air, sunshine, and low humidity so that those suffering lung damage from gas attacks could recuperate. They settled on 29 Palms. It was an oasis that had been discovered in 1855, and the nearby Dale Mines had yielded more than \$3 million in gold by 1900.

The government proved to have made a correct choice: 90 percent of the injured men recovered. The community became noted as having the perfect climate for those with respiratory problems.

Located in Southern

California's San Bernardino County, the town is in a broad valley between the Bullion, Little San Bernardino, and Pinto Mountains and next to the 558,000-acre Joshua Tree National Monument.

In 1927, Frank and Helen Bagley established the area's first store in a garage that also served as their home. The Bagley store became the focal point for 29 Palms homesteaders, with part of the store devoted to a post office and a tiny library. A well was nearby and the pioneer families would routinely stop at Bagleys for mail, provisions, water, and the local gossip.

29 Palms' broad Adobe Avenue is one of the two principle streets that serve the shopping needs of the community. Residents must travel 25 miles to Yucca Valley for the major department stores and car dealerships, but all other major needs can be fulfilled in 29 Palms. The mountains in the background are part of the half-million-acre Joshua Tree National Monument.

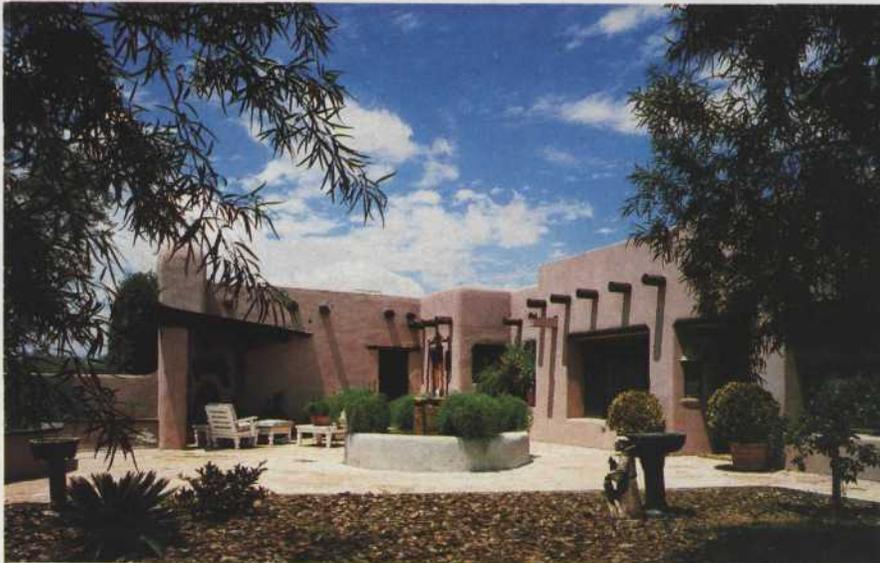
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DESERT TREASURES

Tucson, Arizona

Six acres, with views of Sabino Canyon and the rugged Catalina Mountains, surround this three-level contemporary home of six bedrooms and five and a half baths. Floor-to-ceiling windows in the living room open to the desert landscape, and a fireplace and wet bar add their cheer. On the lower level is a game room with fireplace wall and wet bar, which leads to a patio with a 50-foot pool. The master suite, with its huge double bath, Roman tub and shower, also has its own fireplace. Brochure. \$1,000,000

MILLER HOMES
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Tucson, Arizona

Nearly four acres seclude this romantic adobe residential compound in Catalina Foothills Estates. Walled patios surround the main house — an authentic Jorseler creation — and a breezeway leads to a three-room guest house. There is a brick caretaker's house, as well. Within, high-planked ceilings, three fireplaces and colorful floors of flagstone, tile and painted concrete create a true Southwestern aura. The master suite has two sitting rooms, one with a fireplace and the other opening to a patio and a 40-foot pool. Brochure HH-715424. \$650,000

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Tucson, Arizona

On more than three acres with a four-stall horse barn and three fenced exercise runs, this adobe ranch home centers on a beamed living room with fireplace and views of the Catalina Mountains. Along with three family bedrooms, three and a half baths, and separate maid's quarters, there's a family room overlooking an adobe-walled heated pool and patio with the city lights far below. There's also a separate guest house with bath and beamed ceiling. \$329,000

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In 1940, the army established a glider training base at the nearby Mesquite Dry Lake, which later became a fighter base. After World War II, the Navy and Marines took over the base and the operations have grown ever since. The base population is now 7,500.

Outside the base, today's population is approximately 11,500. Although 29 Palms has but a few major chain stores, there is no lack of the usual services and businesses. There is also a fire department, a sheriff's department, and complete health, recreation, legal, and library services.

Public transportation needs are served by buses that go to Palm Springs and Los Angeles. The community also has taxis and a new commuter airline. This is a far cry from the 1930s and '40s, when transportation and shopping were handled by a station wagon driver who

traveled to Banning to meet the train from Los Angeles. This driver was armed with various shopping lists of items to buy in the Banning stores because they were unavailable at Bagleys.

The moderate cost of housing is the prime reason that many choose to live in 29 Palms. Some desert locales target on higher-income groups, offering many luxury homes. 29 Palms *does* have some fine homes with appealing architecture, but the ratio is small compared to many other desert localities. Much of the housing has been designed to appeal to moderate income and military families who prefer to live off the base.

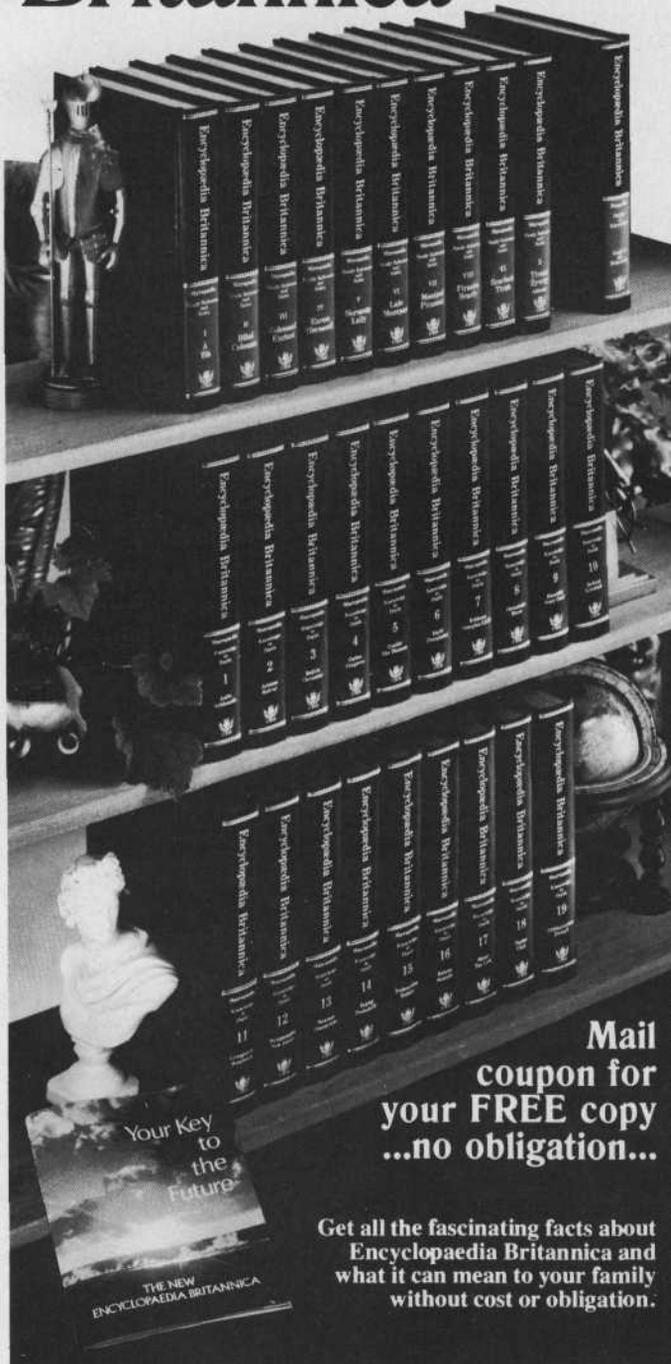
For those who prefer acreage there are numerous small cabins or homes in the outlying areas. Some are served with wells or electricity, others are not. A shell cabin with five acres but no water will cost about \$3,500 to \$7,000, according to Barbara

This 29 Palms home is in the "custom" price range, but most housing prices are within the budgets of moderate-income families.

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Reed of Libby's Realty in 29 Palms (she supplied much of the real estate information for this article). Reed says a livable home in an outlying area on five acres with a well runs around \$35,000.

Aside from moderate housing costs and having the beautiful Joshua Tree National Monument for a front yard, the more or less laid-back attitude of the community appeals to many, but angers some. Whereas 25 miles to the west booming Yucca Valley vibrates with rapid growth, large department stores, and industry, 29 Palms grows at a slower pace. Although it is unincorporated, an elected community council acts in an advisory role. It is said that the "city fathers" have fostered a slow-growth policy, but that, gradually, new blood is being elected and a new attitude is beginning to emerge.

Who are the people who have elected to call 29 Palms home? It is estimated that between 25 and 50 percent of the residents are retired. A major attraction for retired military personnel is that they can take advantage of lower prices by shopping at the base PX. Other retirees come for the combination of desert beauty and healthful climate.

Those who need employment pretty much have to create their own jobs by opening a business or finding civil service work at the base or with county government. Because of the slow population growth, and because the town already has almost every practical business, only two new possibilities have been suggested by locals: Any community can always use another good restaurant and additional mobile home parks could be built to relieve the near capacity that now exists.

Reading back issues of *The Desert Trail*, the town's fine weekly newspaper, reveals the community's tempo and attitudes. Vehicle accidents, school sports, and local club

29 Palms, California	
Schools	Kindergarten — 12th grade Two-year community college Four-year private college
Water	Within water district, wells have been drilled throughout district. Outside district, must drill own well if geographically possible. If not, must install underground water tank, which is filled by trucks.
Churches	20
TV	Cable TV available in some areas
Radio	KDHI-AM (country-western) KQYN-FM (rock)
Utilities	Electric, butane, telephone
Summer Cooling Costs (Avg.)	Evaporative cooling — \$40-50 per month Central air conditioning — \$200-300 per month
Clubs and Organizations	72
Parks and Recreation	Two parks — 9-hole golf course and swimming pool
Elevation	2,000 feet
Temperature Range	Summer low/high average — 67-100° Winter low/high average — 36.2-63.8° Spring low/high average — 40-70°
In-Town Housing Costs	Small 3-bedroom — \$48,000-55,000 1,280-1,600 sq. ft. home — \$68,000-78,000 2,200 sq. ft. home — about \$95,000 Custom deluxe home — \$100,000-125,000
Building Cost (New Construction)	\$42-48 per sq. ft.
Lot Cost in Town	\$3,500-7,500
More Information	Chamber of Commerce P.O. Box 1164 29 Palms, Calif. 92277 (714) 367-3445

activities are the big news. The only time people seem to get worked up is when a utility proposes some high lines or facility that could spoil the town's visual and air quality.

Most of the people are individualistic and not at all timid about speaking their

beliefs. The majority are self-reliant. They are repulsed by excessive bureaucracy.

For those considering a move to the desert, 29 Palms could be too big or too small . . . or it could, perhaps, present the perfect balance for living in the desert. □

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12th Annual Jim Butler Days, May 27-31, at various locations in Tonopah, Nev. Activities include dances, a parade, Liars Contest, gunfighters, and more. For details, contact the Tonopah Chamber of Commerce, 301 Brougner St., Tonopah, Nev. 89409, or call (702) 482-3859.

Yucca Valley's Annual Grubstake Days, May 28-31, on Highway 62, east of the K-Mart in Yucca Valley, Calif. All-day events include a carnival, parade, art festival, and a golf tournament. For details, contact the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce, 7211 Joshua Lane, Suite 8, Yucca Valley, Calif. 92284, or call Nancy Wilson at (714) 365-6323.

Golden State Roundup, Annual Square Dance Festival, May 28-30, at the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, Calif. Activities include square dancing and round dancing, plus exhibitions. Hours: 28th, 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.; 29th, 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.; 30th, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. For information and details, contact Parker or Jill Brown, 1587 Mizzen Lane, Half Moon Bay, Calif. 94019.

Newberry Springs Art Show, May 29-30, at the Community Center Building in Newberry Springs, Calif. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., both days. This is a fine arts show open to all artists residing in the upper desert. For information, contact the Newberry Springs Art Club, P.O. Box 23, Newberry Springs, Calif. 92365.

Memorial Day Pow Wow, May 29-31, in River Park on Grant St., in Lebanon, Ore. This event is sponsored by the All Rockhounds Pow Wow Club of America and activities will include tailgaters, swappers, entertainment, and potluck dinners. For more information, contact Nadine Greenlee, 7043 S. Clement, Tacoma, Wash. 98409.

Annual Pioneer Days Celebration, June 3-6, at the Curry County Fairgrounds in Clovis, N.M. For more information, contact J. R. Spencer, Clovis Chamber of Commerce, 215 Main St., Drawer C, Clovis, N.M. 88101.

Annual Green Faire and Arts and Crafts Festival, June 4-6, at Red Rock State Park in Church Rock, N.M. For details, contact Martin Link, Mgr., P.O. Box 328, Church Rock, N.M. 87311, or call (505) 722-5564.

San Bernardino County Historical Bottle & Collectibles Club 14th Annual Show and Sale, June 5-6, at the County Fairgrounds in Victorville, Calif. Hours: 5th, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 6th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, contact Gary Crabtree, P.O. Box 3843, San Bernardino, Calif. 92413, or call (714) 884-6596.

16th Annual Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Show, June 5-6, at 8500 Fallbrook Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. Hours: 5th, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; 6th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The show includes exhibits, dealers, demonstrations, and a country store. For details, contact George Cogswell, 7338 Mason Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91306, or call (213) 348-8392.

Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale, June 5-6, at the San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, San Bernardino, Calif. Hours: 5th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 6th, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. This show and sale is sponsored by the Gates Cactus and Succulent Society. For details, contact Doris Lutz, 1228 Lugo, Apt. B, San Bernardino, Calif. 92404, or call (714) 885-7692.

Sunset Days, June 11-19, in Sunset, Utah. Activities include a pageant, marathon, rodeo, and carnival. For more information, call (801) 825-6202.

Second National Solar Cook-Off, June 12, at McCormick Railroad Park in Scottsdale, Ariz. Solar cooker enthusiasts are invited to bring their cookers and favorite recipes for the cooking contests. Also included are displays and exhibits. For information, contact the Arizona Solar Energy Association, P.O. Box 25396, Phoenix, Ariz. 85002, or call Doris Stutzman at (602) 993-2649.

Old Fort Days, June 8-13, at Fort Sumner, N.M. Events include a beauty

pageant, parade, junior rodeo, BBQ, fiddlers contest, and much more. For details, contact Fort Sumner Chamber of Commerce, Fort Sumner, N.M. 88119.

Annual Fiesta at Mission San Antonio, June 13, in Jolon, Calif. After Mass, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., there is a BBQ and dance. For more information, contact San Antonio Mission, Jolon, Calif. 93928, or call (408) 385-4478.

Tigua Saint Anthony's Day Ceremony, June 13, at the Tigua Reservation near El Paso, Texas. Special ceremonies and dances will be presented. For details, call (915) 859-3916.

"Texas," June 16-Aug. 21, in the Pioneer Amphitheatre in Palo Duro Canyon State Park, near Amarillo and Canyon, Texas. This musical drama of Texas history will be held on Monday through Saturday nights. For information and reservations, call (806) 655-2181, or write P.O. Box 268, Canyon, Texas 79015.

Golden Spike Oldtime Fiddlers Contest & Bluegrass Festival, June 17-19, in Ogden, Utah. Events include national competitions and concerts day and night. For information, call (801) 399-8288.

Gem and Mineral Exhibits at the 1982 Southern California Exposition, June 18-July 5, at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, Calif. Features include gemstone faceting, creation of jewelry, and many other exhibits. For information, contact Fairgrounds, Del Mar, Calif. 92014, or call (714) 755-6940 or (714) 275-2705.

Aztec Fiesta Days, June 18-20, in Aztec, N.M. Activities include parade, arts and crafts fair, raft races, and a junior rodeo. For details, contact the Aztec Chamber of Commerce, 125 N. Main St., Aztec, N.M. 87410.

Lassen Rocks & Mineral Society Show, June 19-20, at the Lassen County Fairgrounds in Susanville, Calif. Hours: 19th, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; 20th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Events include exhibits, demonstrations, field trip, dealers, silent auction, and tailgating. For further information, contact Rose Reiling, 35 Inspiration Dr., Susanville, Calif. 96130.

Festival of the Arts, June 19-July 30, in Flagstaff, Ariz. The festival starts on the 19th with a fiesta grande dinner and art auction. For details, contact the Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, 101 W. Santa Fe, Flagstaff, Ariz. 86001.

Prineville Rockhounds Pow Wow, June 19-27, at the Crook County

Fairgrounds, Prineville, Ore. Dealer booths, rock auctions, field trips, and much more will be included in the events. For more information, call (503) 447-6760, or write, Prineville Rockhound Pow Wow Association, P.O. Box 671, Prineville, Ore. 97754.

1982 Reno Rodeo, June 22-27, in Reno, Nev. The country's largest added money rodeo will include bronc, bareback, and bull riding; calf roping; steer wrestling; and much more. For details and ticket information, contact Connie Emerson, 1055 W. Moana Lane, Suite 200, Reno, Nev. 89509, or call (702) 826-0600.

Utah Arts Festival, June 23-27, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Program includes performing and visual arts, crafts demonstrations, children's art yards, and international cuisine. For details, call (801) 533-5895.

The Santa Fe Festival Theatre, June 28-Aug. 29, at The Armory for the Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe, N.M. The season includes three plays: "Wild Oats," "Wings," and "Amerika." For reservation information and a free brochure, contact The Festival Theatre, P.O. Box DD, Santa Fe, N.M. 87502, or call (505) 983-9400.

Annual Butterfield Trail Days, July 3-4, at the Luna County Courthouse Park in Deming, N.M. Festivities include a parade, flea market, watermelon-eating contest, pet show, and BBQ. For more information, contact Mike Levine, P.O. Box 850, Deming, N.M. 88031.

Hopi Craftsman Show, July 3-7, at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, Ariz. For information, call (602) 774-5211.

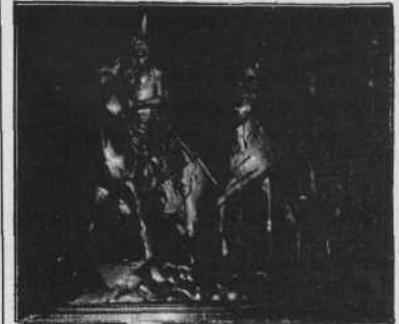
Festival '82, July 7-11, in downtown El Paso, Texas. Festival includes historic exhibits, ethnic foods, dance, and music. For details, contact the El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau, Five Civic Center Plaza, El Paso, Texas 79999, or call (915) 544-3650.

Rodeo de Santa Fe, July 8-11, in Santa Fe, N.M. Top rodeo performers from all over the country gather for four days of tough competition. For more information, contact Rodeo, P.O. Box 281, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501, or call (505) 471-2567.

Annual Fiesta and Barbecue, July 17-18, at Mission San Luis Rey, near Oceanside, Calif. Hours: Sat. and Sun., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Entertainment, BBQ, and the arrival of trek-riders are featured. For details, contact Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave., San Luis Rey, Calif. 92068. □

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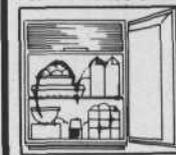
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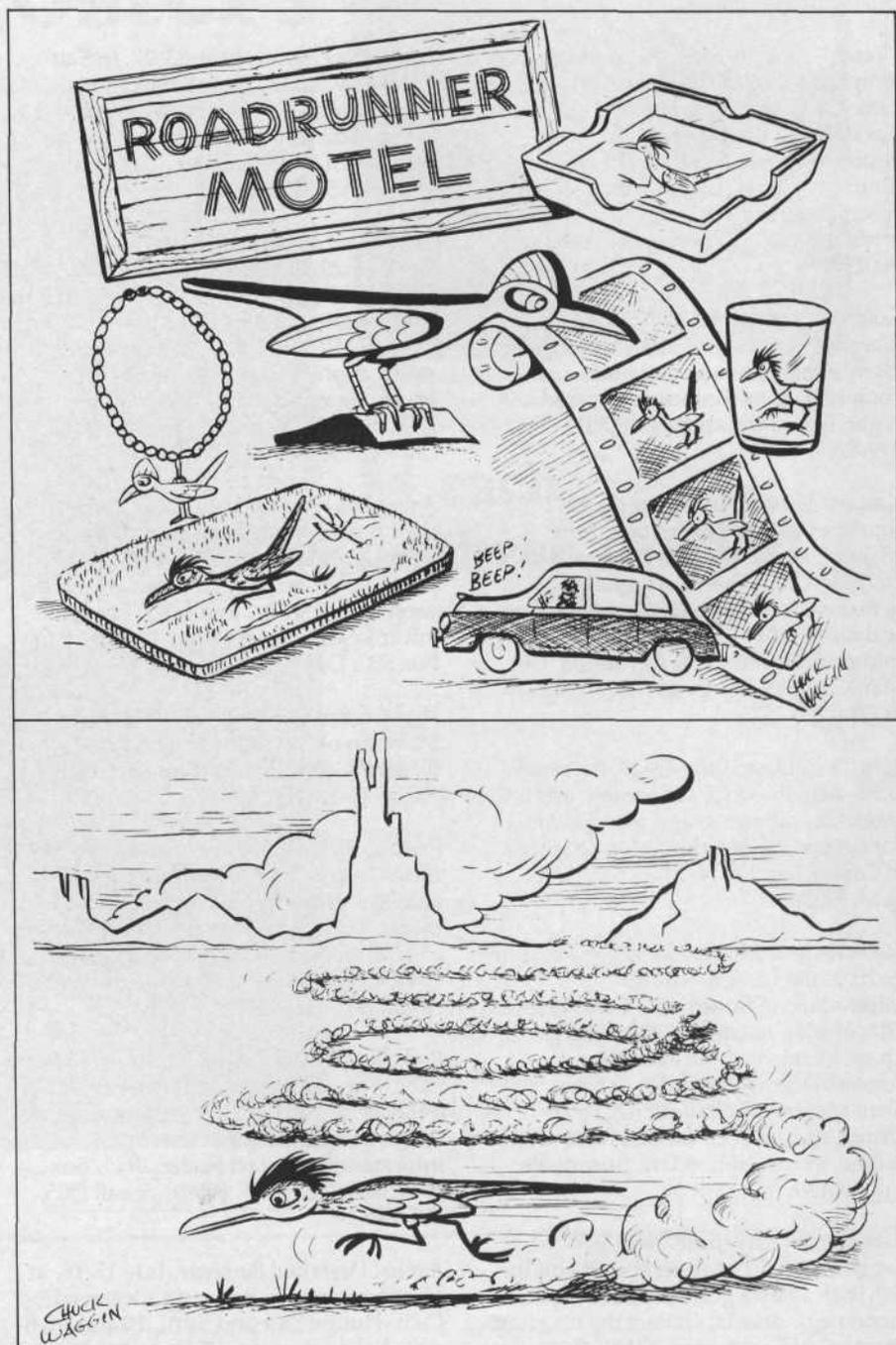
The roadrunner's image and name is on every kind of business imaginable, from beer halls to beauty parlors. Its likeness appears on ashtrays, glasses, greeting cards, rugs, clothing, and jewelry. There are ceramic and wood-carved roadrunners, many of which are made in other countries. A car manufacturer used the name "roadrunner" to sell cars. It is also a famous cartoon character.

These birds are extremely fast on their feet. In a flash they can go from a standing stop to full speed. They have been clocked at about 15 miles an hour. Changing directions is no problem for them with the aid of their tail and wings, which they manipulate for braking, balancing, and turning. Their speed and ability to change directions are necessary to catch prey and to make it difficult for them to be caught by predators, such as large hawks, bobcats, and coyotes. Roadrunners run more than they fly. Their flights are short and gliding, and when they hit the ground they hit running.

The roadrunner can be found in California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico. It is the state bird of New Mexico.

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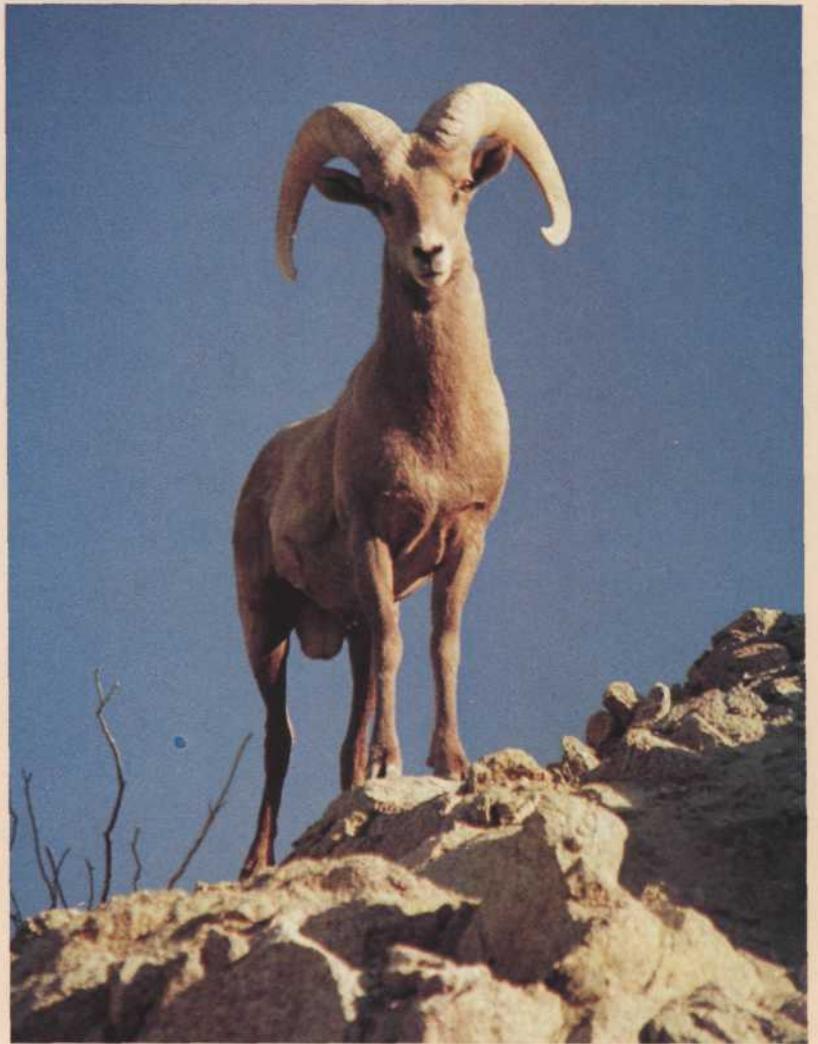
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