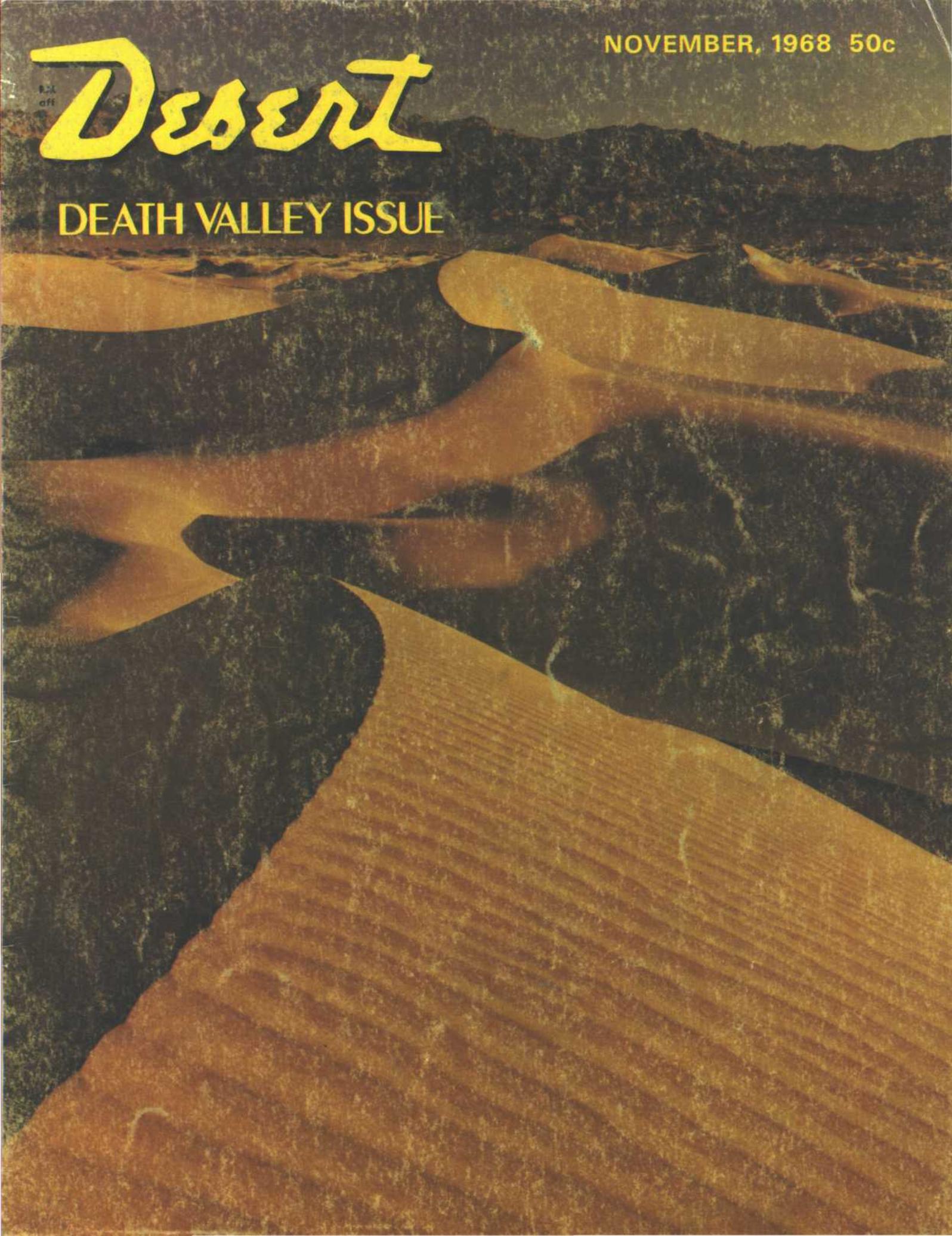


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DEATH VALLEY ISSUE

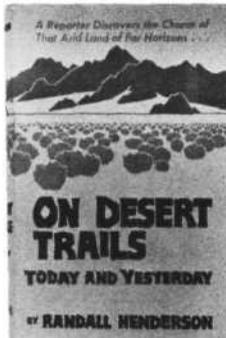


DESERT MAGAZINE BOOK SHOP

ANZA-BORREGO DESERT GUIDE by Horace Parker. Second edition of this well-illustrated and documented book is enlarged considerably. Tops among guidebooks, it is equally recommended for research material in an area that was crossed by Anza, Kit Carson, the Mormon Battalion, '49ers, Railroad Survey parties, Pegleg Smith, the Jackass Mail, Butterfield Stage, and today's adventurous tourists. 139 pages, cardboard cover, \$2.95.

THE MAN WHO WALKED THROUGH TIME by Colin Fletcher. An odyssey of a man who lived simply and in solitude for two months as he hiked through the Grand Canyon. Combining his physical prowess with Thoreau-like observations, the author has written a book of great magnitude. Hardcover, illustrated, 239 pages, \$5.95.

AMATEUR GUIDE TO BOTTLE COLLECTING by Bea Boynton. Popular little book for beginners. Highly recommended. Paper. \$1.00.



ON DESERT TRAILS

By RANDALL HENDERSON

Founder and publisher of Desert Magazine for 23 years, Randall Henderson is one of the first good writers to reveal the beauty of the mysterious desert areas. His experiences, combined with his comments on the desert of yesterday and today, make this book a MUST for those who want to understand the southwest.

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FANTASIES OF GOLD by E. B. Sayles. During his search for archeological finds for more than 30 years, the author was exposed to the rumors and legends of lost gold and treasures. After his retirement as curator of the Arizona State Museum, he classified and delved into these still unsolved mysteries. An interesting and informative book on lost bonanzas and legends, many of which have never been published. Hardcover, well illustrated, 135 pages, \$6.50.

MAMMALS OF DEEP CANYON by R. Mark Ryan. A study of the habits of more than 40 animals living in the Deep Canyon Research Area in the Colorado Desert. The site was selected because its ecology is typical of deserts throughout the world. Paperback, illustrated, 137 pages, \$2.95.



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By RUTH KIRK

A comprehensive guide to the wonders of Death Valley National Monument with complete details as to where to go by car, 4-wheel-drive and on foot. Introductory chapters summarize the Valley's history, geology, animals, plants and weather. Directory section tells where to find lodging, meals, gas stations, campgrounds and driving techniques. Paperback, slick paper, photos and maps, 88 pages.

\$1.95

GEMS, MINERALS, CRYSTALS AND ORES by Richard M. Pearl. A paperback edition of his best-selling hardcover book which has been out of print for a year. From agate to zircon, the book tells where gems, minerals, crystals and ores can be found, how they are identified, collected, cut and displayed. Paperback, slick paper, 64 color photographs, 320 pages, \$2.95.

1000 MILLION YEARS ON THE COLORADO PLATEAU by Al Look. For 40 years the author has hiked over and explored the Colorado Plateau. Citing the area as a typical example of the earth's overall evolution, he gives a vivid account of the geology, paleontology, archeology and uranium discoveries starting back 1000 million years. Written for the layman, the non-fiction account reads like a journey through time. Hardcover, illustrated, 300 pages, \$3.75.

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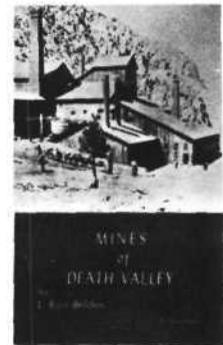
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HUNTING LOST MINES BY HELICOPTER by Erle Stanley Gardner. As fascinating as one of his Perry Mason mysteries, the author takes you into Arizona's Superstition Mountains looking for the Lost Dutchman mine and into the Trigo Mountains in search of Nummel's lost bonanza. Hardcover, color photos. \$7.50.

DESERT GARDENING by the editors of Sunset Books. Written exclusively for desert gardeners, this book is climate zoned with maps pinpointing five diverse desert zones. Calendar presents plans for care of plantings throughout the year. Illustrated, 8 x 11 heavy paperback, \$1.95.

HIGH TRAILS WEST by Robert F. Leslie. Complete information about the trail systems from the Canadian border to Mexico is provided by the author including itineraries, maps, trail tips and what to do in case of danger along with personal experiences. Excellent for campers and hikers. Hardcover, 277 pages, \$4.95.



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An authority of Death Valley, Burr Belden tells the story of fabulous mining booms, of men who braved hot wastes to find gold and silver bonanzas from 1849 to World War II. Accounts of the famous Lost Gunsight and Lost Breyfogle mines and an explanation of the Lost Mormon Diggings are based on factual research.

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GEM, MINERAL AND 4-WHEEL-DRIVE MAPS compiled by Dale Hileman. Maps showing gem and mineral collecting areas, roads for passenger cars and 4WD roads only. Map No. 1 is on Lost Chance Canyon, Mesquite Canyon and Iron Canyon in Kern County. Map No. 2 covers the Opal Mountain and Black Canyon areas in San Bernardino County. Both are black and red colors on 16x17-inch parchment paper. \$1.00 per map.

PIONEERS OF THE WESTERN FRONTIER by Harriett Farnsworth. The author presents the Old West through the eyes of old-timers who are still alive. Each chapter is an interview with a prospector or adventurer reminiscing about the days back when. Hardcover, illustrated, 127 pages, \$2.95.

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DESERT

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Number 11

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WILLIAM KNYVETT
PUBLISHER

JACK PEPPER
EDITOR

ROGER DEAN
Art Director

ELTA SHIVELY
Executive Secretary

MARVEL BARRETT
Business

LLOYD SHIVELY
Circulation

CHORAL PEPPER
Travel Feature Editor

JACK DELANEY
Staff Writer

BILL BRYAN
Back Country Editor

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NOVEMBER COLOR PHOTOS

The rolling patterns of sand formed by the winds of Death Valley are captured in the dramatic cover photograph by David Muench, of Santa Barbara, Calif. The loneliness of Death Valley is portrayed in the back cover photograph by Hubert Lowman.

BOOK REVIEWS

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

THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

By Donald Chidsey

The California Gold Rush of 1848 and 1849 changed the lives of thousands upon thousands of people and altered the course of American history. When word spread from Sutter's Mill that gold had been discovered, men left their homes, jobs and often families to head for California.

They came from all parts of the United States, from foreign countries and by all means of transportation. Sailors jumped their ships to join adventurers, gamblers, politicians, businessmen and a scattering of women in a search for excitement and gold.

Historian Chidsey has presented this era of American history in a well-written and colorful account of such men as John Augustus Sutter and the flamboyant Sam Brannan, former Mormon turned vigilante. He vividly describes the ill-fated Donner party whose members were forced to cannibalism to survive, San Francisco and the Committee of Vigilance, and the spartan lives of prospectors. Hardcover, excellent artist illustrations, 208 pages, \$3.95.

BEACHES OF BAJA

By Walt Wheelock

Unlike most of the beaches of Upper California, the beaches of Baja California are uncrowded and uncluttered. They also are some of the most beautiful to be found anywhere in the world. Veteran

explorer Walt Wheelock describes the beaches on the Pacific side of Lower California and tells you how to get to them.

Although the blacktop ends at Colnett, halfway between Ensenada and El Rosario, passenger cars can reach the majority of the beaches, providing drivers remember they are not on a Los Angeles freeway. The author tells which beaches can and cannot be reached and by what type of transportation.

This is an excellent book for adventurers headed down the west coast of Baja. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

GHOSTS OF THE GOLD RUSH

By George Koenig

Majority of travelers through California's Mother Lode Country miss the major points of interest in this country which played such an important part in the history and settlement of the United States.

They not only miss the points of interest, but having little knowledge of the exciting history of the gold rush days, they are unable to appreciate their venture into the past.

An authority on Western Americana and a long-time explorer into little known corners of California, Koenig has written an excellent travel and historical guide. Whether you are visiting the Mother Lode Country for the first or tenth time, or are just an arm-chair explorer, his book is interesting and practical reading. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

GEMS, MINERALS, CRYSTALS AND ORES

By Richard M. Pearl

The original hardcover edition of this book has been out of print for more than a year. The fact that Desert Magazine Book Shop has received more than 50 orders for the original edition during the past six months proves its popularity. With the exception of having a color softcover instead of hardcover, the new

edition is identical to the original, profusely illustrated with 64 pages in full-color photographs.

From agate to zircon, this authoritative handbook tells where gems, minerals, crystals and ores can be found; how they are identified; how they can be collected, cut, and displayed. Whether you are an amateur rockhound, or have advanced to the stage where you are getting into lapidary work, you will find this collector's encyclopedia invaluable.

Professor of Geology at Colorado College, the author has written 21 books about the mineral world and is a well-known lecturer. On the practical side, he has prospected and collected in nearly every state and province in the United States and Canada. Color softcover, slick paper, illustrated in color and black and white, 320 pages, \$2.95.

HAPPY WANDERER TRIPS

Volume Two

By Slim and Henrietta Barnard

Producers and stars of the popular Happy Wanderers television series, Slim and Henrietta Barnard have published another book containing excellent maps and descriptions of their trips through Arizona, Nevada and Mexico.

Their first Happy Wanderers Trips, Volume I, published last April, listed 52 of their trips through Southern California. It was so well received, they have issued Volume II. The second volume has 41 trips to unusual and exciting places, including romantic towns of Mexico, ghost towns, fishing resorts and hunting areas in Arizona and Nevada.

It also includes a section on tips on hunting, driving, visiting Mexico, boating and many other useful pages of information. Both volumes are 8 1/2 x 11 format, heavy paperback, well illustrated and highly recommended. When ordering please specify Volume I or Volume II. \$2.95 each.

DEATH VALLEY BOOKS

Published by the Death Valley '49ers these five volumes have been selected by '49ers as outstanding works on the history of Death Valley. All are durable paperback on slick stock.

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PIONEER VILLAGE **BAKERSFIELD**

by Kenneth Bartlett



EARLY EVERY man or boy who ever watched an old-fashioned steam locomotive has wanted to climb up into the cab and pretend he was the engineer or fireman. Now he can mount the cab of Engine No. 2914, built in 1898, one of Southern Pacific's largest and most powerful in its day, presently located in Bakersfield's Pioneer Village, 100 miles north of Los Angeles. Just behind "Old 2914" he can also scramble up a wooden caboose to see where the flagman, the switchman, and freight conductor slept and kept supplies to service freight cars.

He may not be as eager to enter the traveling wooden jail. Built in 1874 in nearby Delano, it was carried on a flat car when railroad tracks were being laid to Caliente. There is also a handcar, used by workmen to hand-propel themselves to areas needing track repair. Adjacent is a narrow gauge boxcar once used by the Inyo County line of the Southern Pacific.

Boys who have played at being cowboys will like an exhibit of cattle brands in the Branding Iron Exhibit. Branding of animals goes back to the ancient Egyptians, and later spread through civilized Africa. When the Moors captured Spain in the 8th century, they brought the branding iron to Europe. Several centuries later the Spaniards, in turn, brought it to the New World, where it eventually spread throughout Mexico and Southwestern United States.

In the old days of the West a cowboy would build a small hot fire, heat the

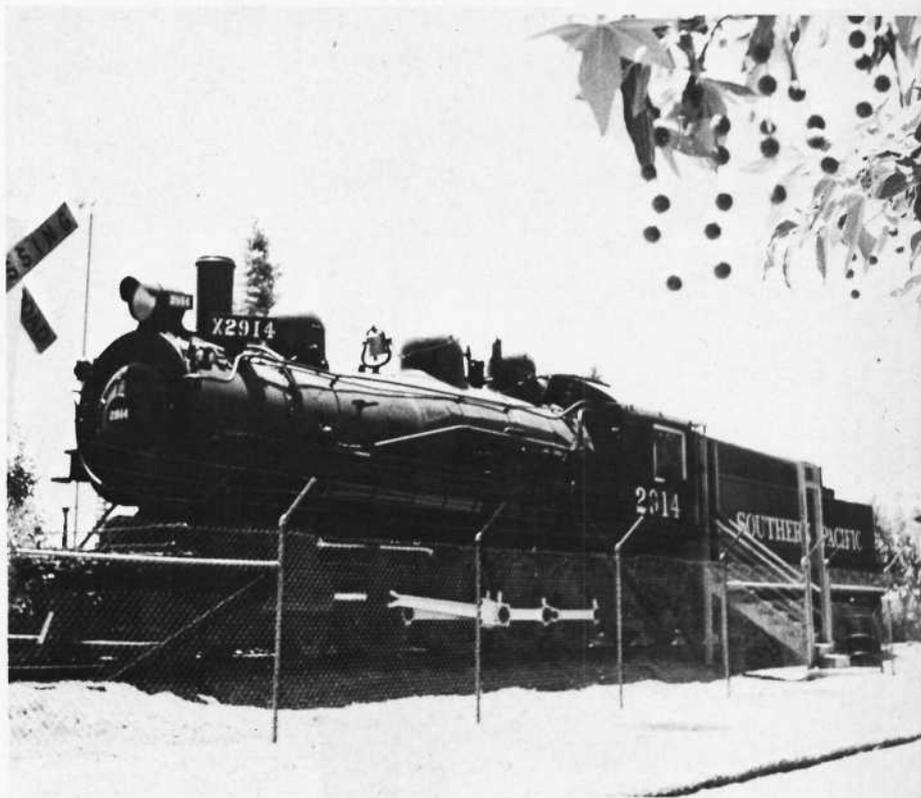
branding iron and apply it to the hip or shoulder of the cow. Naturally, the cow resisted, so it was necessary to rope and tie the animal before applying the brand. Nowadays, the cow is no longer roped, but instead is held rigidly and less harmfully in a chute while the cowboy applies the iron, which, unlike the smoking hot iron of former days, is now smeared with acid.

Across from the Branding Iron exhibit, near the fence, lies an enormous plow, the largest known animal-drawn plow in history, formerly drawn by no less than

80 oxen. It was designed in 1874 by W. G. Souther to aid in digging the Kern Island Canal.

A typical ranch yard, complete with such buildings as the ranch house, barn, windmill and tankhouse, cook-wagon, hay-derrick, and even a hog-scalding kettle, is located nearby. The cook-wagon, which formerly helped feed large groups of ranch herds, was actually a horse-drawn cafeteria on wheels.

Among the many horse-drawn vehicles at Pioneer Village are an extremely long feed rack wagon, a street sprinkler,



Built in 1898, this Southern Pacific Steam Locomotive No. 2914 is now "out to pasture." Steps enable the visitors to see the engine's interior.

freight wagon train, a gas company service cart and even a beer wagon. To care for horses, a harness shop is provided (including a leather-working vise, a creaser, a sewing machine, patterns for cutting saddle leather, and a complete case of harness hardware). Horseshoeing was carried on in the working blacksmith shop built about 1890 at the Calloway Ranch.

Built at the same time was Firehouse No. 1, containing a hand-drawn hosecart with a hook and ladder wagon used by volunteer firemen of Bakersfield.

Several professional buildings such as a dentist's office, a doctor's office, a drug store and a photographer's gallery are represented. Others are the Bella Union Hotel, the Woody General Store, the Village Telephone Exchange, a Fraternal Hall, the office of Kern County's first newspaper, the Havilah Courier, with its "working" exhibit, which includes old-time printers' equipment and a George Washington hand press.

You may visit Pioneer Village at 3801 Chester Avenue, Bakersfield, daily from 8:00 to 4:00 on weekdays, 1:00 to 4:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays for 50c for adults and 25c for children. School classes accompanied by their teacher, or groups such as Camp Fire Girls or Boy Scouts, if headed by their leaders, are admitted free.

Next door to the Pioneer Village is the free Kern County Museum, open from nine to five, housing many early automobiles and horseless carriages.

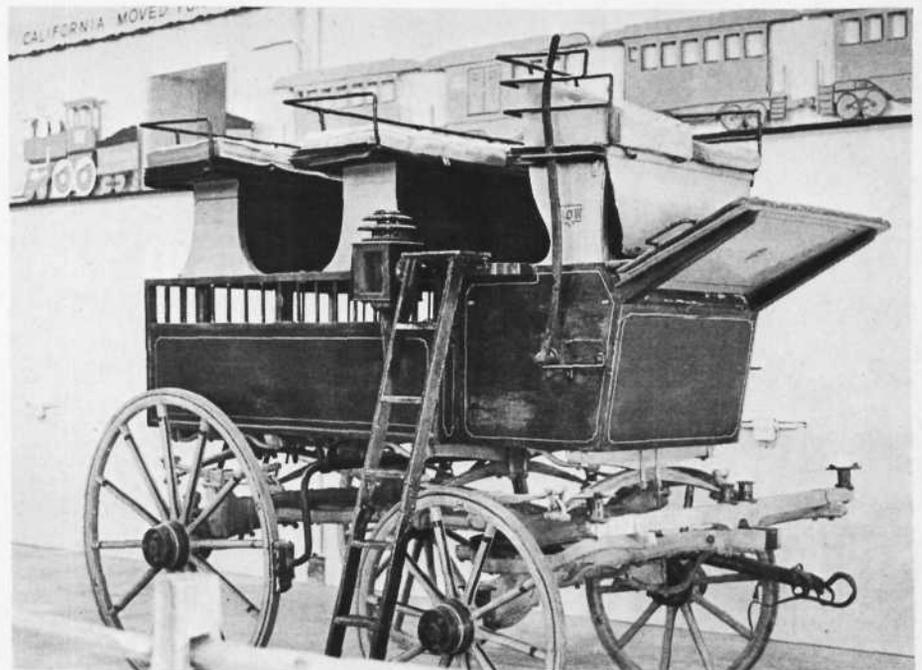
Across town is another exhibit that lures adults and children alike—the Harry D. West Vehicle Collection of horse-drawn vehicles. Located in Building No. 5 of the Kern County Fairgrounds, it is approximately five miles south of the museum on Casa Loma Drive.

One of these vehicles is the Stanhope Booster, a one-horse rubber-tired jaunting cart, considered quite elegant by its owners. Finely constructed, and expensive, with distinctively curved shafts, it was primarily used for pleasure. A surrey "with the fringe on top," having three seats, usually served as a family carriage. Possibly the most popular rental vehicle provided by livery stables, its name came from being first used in England's County of Surrey.

Continued on page 33



The old-fashioned barber shop and telephone exchange are faithfully reproduced with all their trimmings, including a candy-striped pole.



The Tallyho, or Break, was a four-in-hand pleasure coach, taking passengers to picnics and sporting events. Although slow, no gas was needed.

MITCHELL CAVERNS

CALIFORNIA



by
Frank Taylor

THERE ARE a number of interesting caverns scattered about the length of California but one of the finest is found tucked away in a remote part of the desert. Mitchell Caverns has a history as exciting as a tour of the caverns themselves.

The caverns are 25 miles north of Essex, California, a small community half way between Needles and Amboy. The Providence Mountains, rough and jagged, poke at the sky like an ancient fortress, forbidding and remote. A broad valley spreads out at the base of these patriarchs sprinkled with a profusion of desert vegetation and wild life.

Once the home of roving Indians, the caves wind deep into the mountains at several points. For many years only the

bats used them for shelter. The Indians disappeared and there was no one to claim these beautiful natural features or explore their twisting chambers.

During the 1940 Depression a jobless miner and prospector, Jack Mitchell, heard about the caves. He was so impressed he sold his home in Los Angeles and moved to the desert with his wife to stake a mining claim on the property.

Mitchell gradually improved the site, did a little mining to prove up the claim he filed, and built a modest rock house for himself. The Mitchells supported themselves by giving tours of the caves and boarding guests who wanted to enjoy the desert. After Mitchell's death, the State of California acquired the caverns

and now operate them on a seven-days-a-week schedule.

Despite its beauty and attractions, Mitchell Caverns is one of the least visited parks in the entire state system. Less than 10,000 persons annually drive up the paved and graded dirt road leading to the caverns. Those that do discover one of the finest tourist bargains in the state, and one of the coolest bargains on the entire desert. A guided walking tour costs only 25¢ per adult. Children are 10¢.

There is no way of determining exactly how old the caverns actually are, but it is known similar formations take millions of years to create using the natural processes of Nature. Eons ago the layer of limestone which forms the caves was part of an ocean floor. Geologic activity compressed it and thrust it upwards when the Providence Mountains were lifted from the old sea bed.

Naturalists estimate the actual excavation of the present caverns by underground rivers started about 60 million years ago. When the underground rivers dried up, the hollow chambers remaining were decorated with dripstone speleothems (cave formations) by the action of dripping water seeping through the cave ceilings.

It is not known when the Indians arrived, but different bands made their home in the caves for at least 500 years; the last Indians having moved out more than 100 years ago. A rich collection of hunting sticks, arrowheads, baskets, pipes, axes cemented in wooden handles with pitch, pounding rocks and other relics of human habitation have been recovered from the cave floors.

The bones of a ground sloth was also found about five feet under the floor of the cave by a team of archaeologists who patiently sifted the tons of earth covering it. Today it is easy to see why the Indians liked the caverns. Situated on the cool side of a mountain slope, high above the desert, it would have been a natural place to defend, and the even temperature of 58-60 degrees winter and summer made it an ideal habitat.

There are two major caves, but only one is open to the public. However, a new passage being blasted out of the rock will join the big caverns and the two attractions will be ready late in 1968. Formations in the caves resemble everything

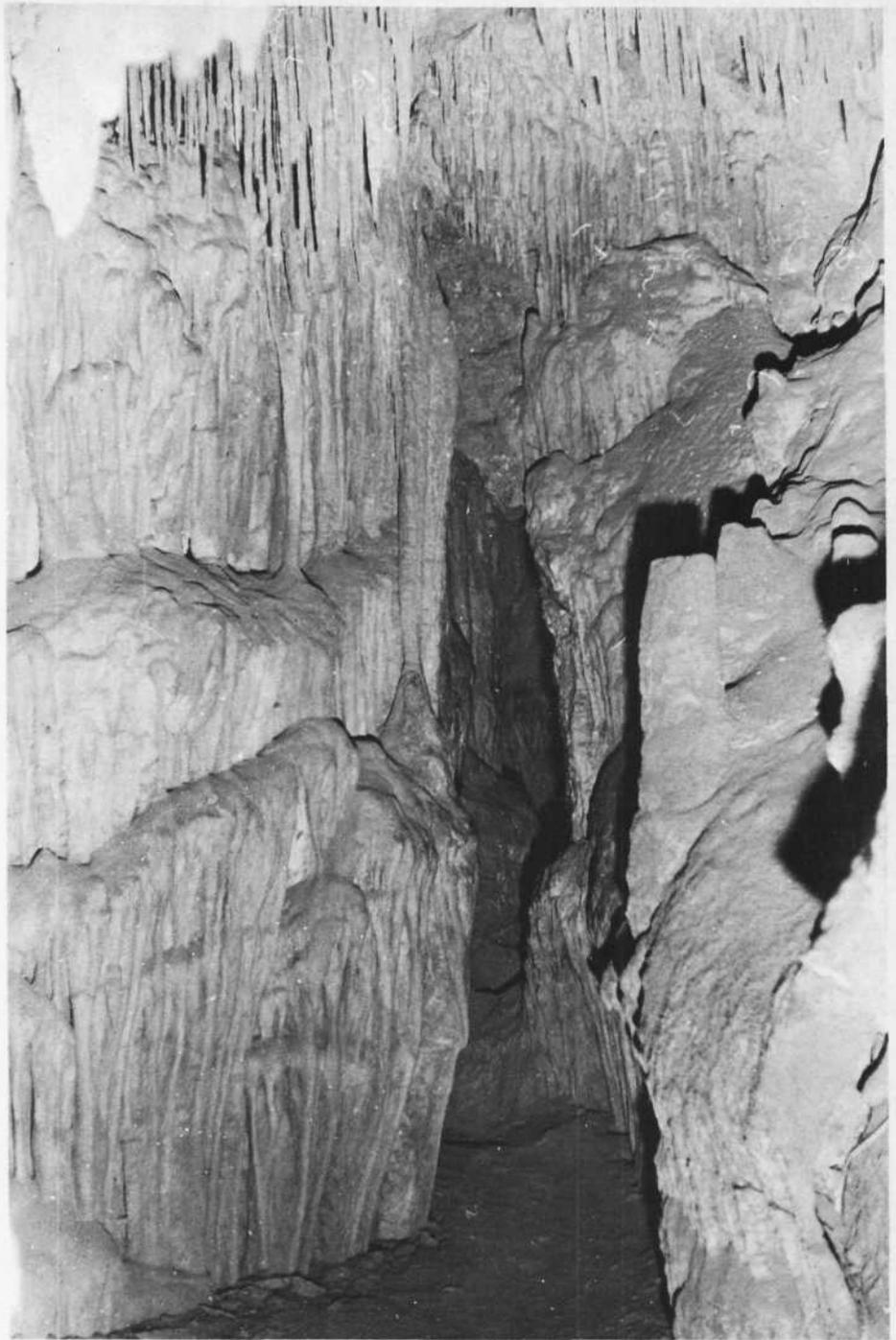
from icicles to frosted cakes. Huge fingers of stone point down from the ceilings only to be met by other stalagmites pointing upward.

The caves are lit by electricity, a far cry from the torch-lit tours Mitchell took his guests on years ago. Smooth, graded paths lead from room to room, but in a few places Nature wasn't too thoughtful of modern tourists loaded with cameras and other traveling paraphernalia. These are only big enough for one person to squeeze through. As you pass from one room to another the changing beauty of the walls and ceilings impresses one with the prolific palette Nature possesses.

A modern improved campsite with a paved parking lot and rock stoves is at the lip of the hill below the Visitors Center. During the week only one tour a day is conducted, but on weekends there are two offered, one at 10 a.m., the other at 1 p.m. A pleasant hike up a nature trail named in honor of Mary Beal leads to the caves. This takes about 20 minutes of easy walking. Mary Beal was a former contributor of nature articles to DESERT Magazine.

Along the way the park rangers point out shrubs, rock formations and points of interest across the desert plain below the caverns. Resembling a miniature Monument Valley, the country surrounding Mitchell Caverns is magnificent and spectacular.

Inside the caverns you will need flash bulbs and high speed film for good pictures. The caves are several thousand feet above sea level, so no matter what the temperature registers along the highway turnoff at Essex, you can expect a cool time at the park. □



Sixty million years ago underground rivers formed the caves. When the rivers dried up, weird formations of limestone were made by dripping water.

Mitchell Caverns are in the Providence Mountains high above the desert floor. Below the Visitors Center there is a campsite with rock stoves.

AN OLD FORT ROAD

by Walter Ford



FIFTEEN miles directly north of Cima there is a mountain around which has been woven one of the most fantastic lost gold tales ever to come out of the southwestern desert. It is known as Kokoweef Peak. According to a statement which allegedly was sworn to in November, 1934, and published in the November, 1940 issue of the California Mining Journal, a prospector and a mining engineer entered a cave in Kokoweef Peak during May, 1927, and remained underground for four days. As they worked their way downward from the entrance they passed through a maze of huge stalactites, one of which had a diameter of 27 feet and descended 1500 feet into a canyon 3500 feet deep.

All measurements were claimed to have been verified by instruments which they carried with them. In the canyon they found a river which rose and fell with the tides of the sea, and varied from a width of 300 feet at high tide to about 10 feet when the tide was low. At that stage beaches of gold-bearing black sand were exposed, some of which assayed later to show a value of over \$2,000 per yard.

After the prospector's affidavit appeared in print, the Kokoweef story began to be heard in many different forms. One version was the prospectors, fearing detection, blasted the entrance closed and were never able to find it again. Another account had them closing the original entrance merely to make another of easier access. And somewhere along the

line rumor gave it a gruesome twist. As the story was told the prospectors found two claim jumpers at work within the cave when they returned to close the entrance. Quickly preparing a charge of dynamite, they blasted the entrance closed and sealed in the intruders.

There was also a report of a mining company taking over to operate the claim, but no news of a fabulous strike has since filtered out of the region. The original prospectors have long since passed from the scene, so perhaps the gold-filled sands still line the underground beaches, disturbed only by the flow of the river as it follows the rhythm of the distant sea.

While you may be denied the thrill of gold-filled sands filtering through your fingers, this region in California's San Bernardino County provides wealth of another sort which requires only pleasant explorations. You may travel back in fancy nearly 200 years and follow the footsteps of Father Francisco Garces, the first white man to enter the region, as he hastened toward his goal at San Gabriel mission. You may prowl through stone fortifications set up by U.S. troops 75 years later as they endeavored to keep the westward supply lines open. And you may gaze upon what is considered to be the largest sand dune in North America, a glistening expanse of white sand which rises 500 feet above the desert floor and covers an area of over 50 square miles.

On a hot day in August, 1858, a group of immigrants from Iowa stopped on the east bank of the Colorado River to rest before continuing their journey to the



Promised Land of California. Suddenly death rode out of the river undergrowth amid a clamor of Mojave Indian war cries and a shower of feathered arrows. Despite heavy casualties, the surviving immigrants were able to retreat from the river and avert a total massacre. Out of that incident Fort Mojave was born. Colonel Hoffman was sent to the area with a detachment of soldiers during April, 1859, with instructions to pacify the warring Mojaves. Shortly afterward a peace treaty was signed and a fort constructed.

By 1860 travel was increasing over the westward route, which attracted roving bands of hostile Piutes to the California side of the trail. Forts were established at Rock Springs, Marl Springs, Soda Lake, The Caves, and Cady, along a route known as the Government Road. Another fortification known as Fort Piute the ruins of which still stand, appears on some maps, but the date of its establishment and the extent of its occupancy does not appear in the records of the forts mentioned above. Although Rock Springs was established officially as a fort in 1860, names and dates painted on the adjacent walls, such as, "Stuart, 4th Inf. May 16, 1851," and "Sgt. Swain, 1851" indicate that troops camped at the spring long before the fort was established.

The lot of the troops manning the forts along the Government Road was hardly a happy one. Intense summer heat, poor food, undermanned stations, boredom, and the ever present danger of attacks from marauding Indians all contributed

to a lowering of morale. Desertions were frequent. On some occasions when non-coms were sent out to try to apprehend the fugitives, they joined the ranks of the hunted themselves. In spite of the unfavorable conditions under which they had to serve, the garrisons along the route did a commendable job in subduing the hostile tribes. In October, 1870, a treaty was signed with the various chiefs in the Mojave Desert region and organized attacks against travelers on the Government Road came to an end. Shortly after the forts along the route were abandoned, with Camp Cady being the last to go in March, 1871.

Last April I visited the Kelso-Cima area over the Amboy-Kelso road with Baylor Brooks, Geology Professor at San Diego State College. We carried no camping equipment other than sleeping bags and no one we asked in Amboy would assure us that food would be available at Kelso. We moved along to Kelso anyway, and learned that our concern had been unnecessary. Glowing in the darkness above the Union Pacific station was a sign, "Cafe Open 24 Hours." Although the building resembles a railroad station, its main function is to serve as a clubhouse for train crews that end their runs at that point. On my last visit to Kelso the nearby Vulcan iron mine was in full operation and the little town was bustling with activity. Today it seems to be surrounded by an air of quiet contentment, with only the occasional passing of a train to break the spell.

Early last spring the residents of Kelso were jolted from their tranquil state by

the arrival of two women who stated that they had bought the land on which the one room school house stands at a tax sale, and that the building would have to be moved. They then filed a suit to vacate, so they could build a resort. On April 11, Superior Judge Haberkorn of San Bernardino, ended one of the town's greatest crises by denying the women's request. "If there had been any dispute about the location," he ruled, "it should have occurred 50 years ago."

I asked a local resident about the type of construction the women had in mind, but he said that he had no idea as to what they intended to do. He did say, however, and apparently in all seriousness, "Sometime, someone is going to develop a method for skiing on sand." "Then", he added, "we'll have it made." As I pondered the strange prophesy, I thought that in this age of miracles, perhaps it wasn't as far out as it sounded. Maybe, at some future date we may read on our favorite sport page something like, "Joe Sandpiper breaks the world sand skiing record on Kelso Dunes!"

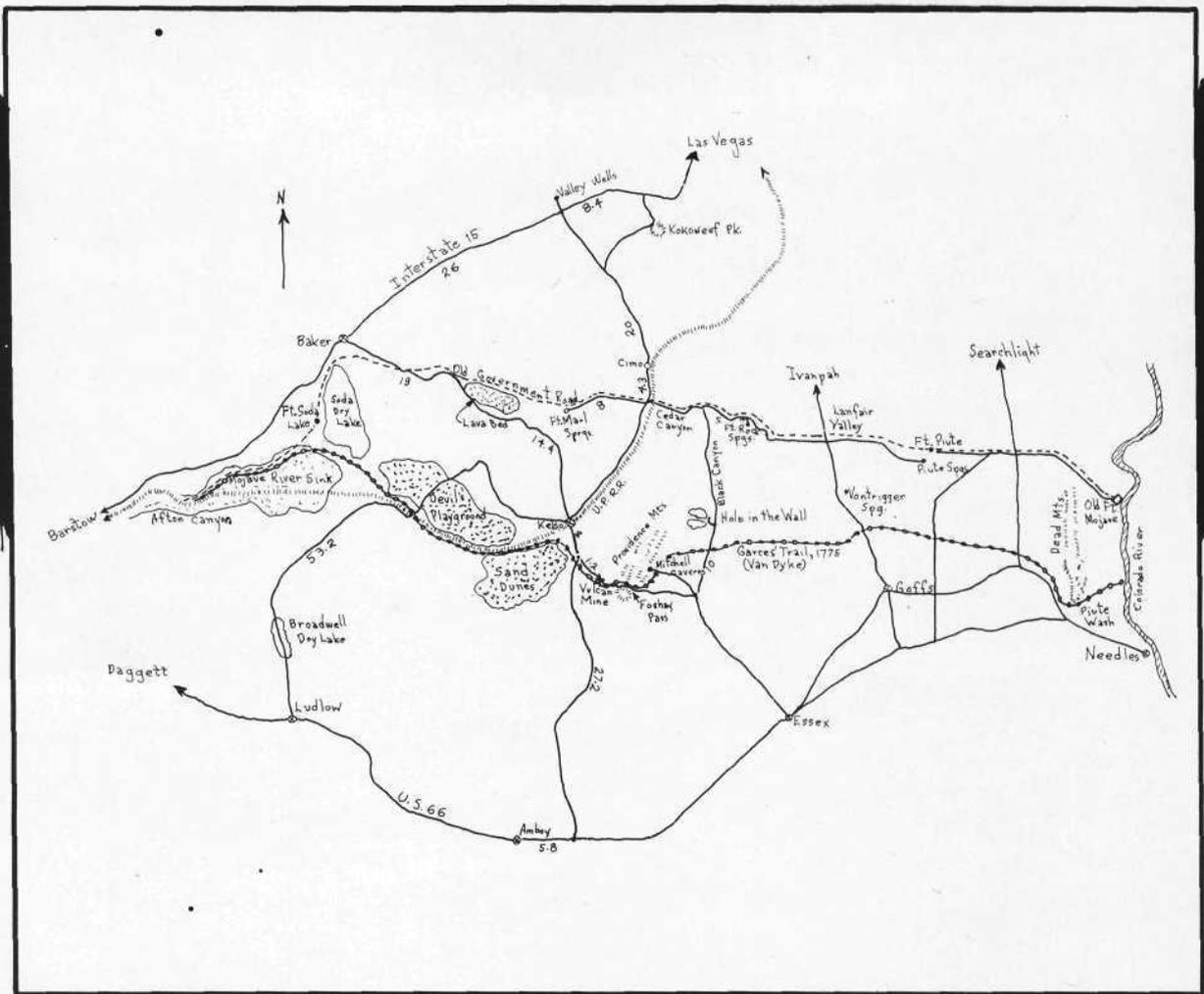
While a missing wagonload of whiskey may not fall into the category of a lost treasure, there is a 60-year-old legend concerning a shipment of the amber liquid which merits retelling. During the building of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad, now the Union Pacific, a teamster started out from Bagdad station with a wagonload of whiskey for the saloons of Kelso. Their supplies were exhausted and the thirsty railroad workers were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the cargo. All went well until the driver

Kelso Dunes is so large only a distant view shows its full extent. The mountain of sand is seen from Vulcan Mine, five miles from Kelso.



Remains of old fort at Marl Springs. Spring is still used for watering cattle. It was an important stop on the Government Road.





started across the Kelso dunes. A sandstorm arose suddenly forcing him to unhitch his team and move it away from the stifling sand which filled the air. When he returned later to get his wagon and its precious load it was nowhere to be found. The sand had covered it completely.

On certain moonlit nights when the air is still, it is said that sounds of revelry may be heard coming from the dunes. Some oldtimers say ghosts of the teamster and his cronies have located the lost liquid bonanza and return to celebrate their find. Non-believers, however, insist that the sounds heard are only the yapping of coyotes on their nightly search for food.

Cliff Barnes, a cattleman who used to live at the Pine Tree ranch about 10 miles south of Kelso, believes the sand dunes have never been fully explored. Once, when he was high upon the Old Dad Mountains looking for stray cattle through field glasses, he spotted a valley with trees in the dunes, but was never able to locate it.

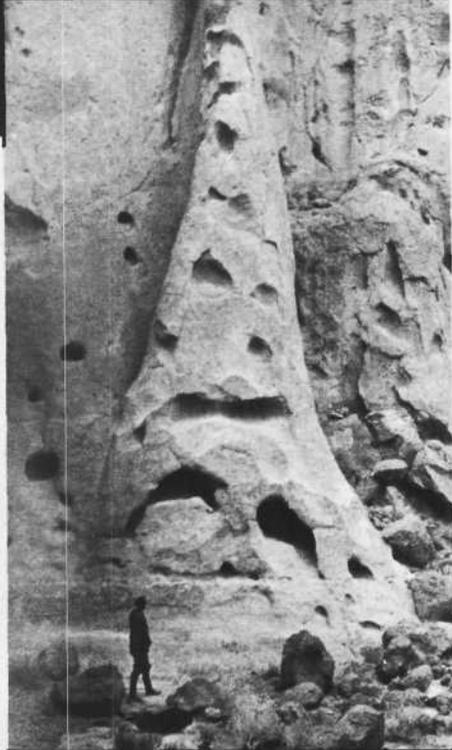
Dr. Elliott Coues, in his interpretation of Father Garces' diary, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer*, indicated Garces followed a route which was to become the Government Road about 75 years later. Dix Van Dyke, noted desert historian and long time Justice of the Peace for Daggett Township, disagreed with Coues' interpretation and spent many months retracing Garces' route to confirm his beliefs. The results of his wanderings and observations appeared in the Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California for the year 1927. According to Van Dyke, Garces followed Piute Wash from the Colorado River, then turned northeast toward Vontrigger Spring. South of the spring he veered toward the base of Providence Mountains, which he followed to what is now known as Foshay Pass. From Foshay Pass, Van Dyke traces Garces' trail down a wash, past the Kelso sand dunes and on to Soda Lake.

Historically minded travelers through

the area may find it interesting to compare the routes about which Coues and Van Dyke did not agree. The two important forts along the Government Road, Rock Springs and Marl Springs, may be reached over graded dirt roads, and Foshay Pass was made accessible a few years back when a road was graded over it to bring natural gas to southern California. This road connects with a paved road which extends from Kelso to the abandoned Vulcan Iron Mine and provides an opportunity to see this interesting open pit type of mining operation.

When comparing Van Dyke's route with Coues', it is easy to understand the logic of Van Dyke's reasoning. His route is shorter by at least a day's travel, which would be of much importance to foot travelers such as Garces. There were no mountain ranges to cross except Foshay Pass and it was accessible over a long gradual slope. And the few springs along the route were sufficient for the traveler's needs.

The Hole-in-the-Wall where wind has carved fantastic formations and where once lived long departed Indians.



Weathered and dim, the figures "May 16, 1851" are faintly discernible on a stone wall near Rock Springs.

E.N.D.

The road over Foshay Pass includes a very steep grade which seems to be intended for 4WD vehicles only. A standard car might make it with a long running start, but for safety's sake a detour which by-passes the steep section is strongly recommended. Since we had slept at the Vulcan Mine the previous night, we traveled over Foshay Pass in the opposite direction followed by Garces merely as a matter of convenience, but I believe that travel over it in either direction will show its advantages over the route outlined by Dr. Coues.

From Foshay Pass the road leads eastward about five miles to join the Essex-Mitchell Cavern State Reserve road. We had not visited Mitchell Caverns since they were acquired by the State of California, so we were pleasantly surprised to find Frank Fairchild as Supervisor in charge of the Reserve. Frank formerly served as a ranger in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, where his courtesy and assistance to travelers made him one of the most popular rangers on the State Park staff.

When Jack Mitchell lived at the Caverns I visited him several times a year and on those occasions he usually would have some happening or story to relate about visitors to the Caverns. I recall one such story that had somewhat of a sequel some 300 miles away.

Shortly after the Kokoweef gold story appeared in print, Mitchell said a man drove up to the Caverns and introduced himself as a writer for an eastern news service. He told Mitchell he wanted to write a story about his caverns and asked Mitchell for a photograph to illustrate it. I visited Mitchell during March, 1941. He said the professed news-service man had used the cavern picture, not in a Mitchell Caverns story, but about one in Kokoweef Peak in which he claimed he had found several thousand mummified pygmies!

One week later I was reclining under a palm tree in the Borrego Badlands when a man drove up who said he was an anthropologist for the Smithsonian Institution. He told me he had found some pygmy dwellings in an adjacent canyon and he would be glad to show them to me if I would meet him at a lower tributary in about an hour. Pygmies again! I began to think the little

men really got around. At the risk of appearing extremely gullible I agreed to meet him, but I might as well have continued my siesta under the palm. The pseudo-scientist never showed up. Weeks later I heard he had been locked up for safe keeping.

Ten miles north from where the Black Canyon road joins the Essex-Mitchell Caverns road, there is a section known as the "Hole-in-the-Wall," where wind has carved a fantastic array of towers, human figures, and caves which served as dwellings for long departed Indian tribes. A narrow ravine through a steep granite upthrust connects the upper and lower levels together. Many odd formations are located near the east entrance or upper level, but to see what is probably one of the most bizarre assortments of figures ever carved by desert winds, you must reach the lower area. Formerly, it was possible to pass through the adjacent 7IL ranch, but that road is now closed to the public. To reach the lower section today it is necessary to descend on some shakey wooden ladders which were put there over 35 years ago, but there is a brighter picture ahead.

Frank Fairchild wrote to me recently the Bureau of Land Management, which controls most of the land in the vicinity, had laid out a campground near the upper level or east entrance of the Hole-in-the-Wall, and another one is planned near the lower level. Also, they are presently surveying a road which will by-pass the private road and open the west side of the area for automobile travel.

There are a number of roads into and from the Kelso-Cima region from Interstate 15, or U.S. Highway 66. Any one of them should satisfy your preference for a particular type of desert scenery, or provide for activity to match your mood. Historical trails, abandoned forts, lava beds, yucca forests, mysterious mounds of sand, and mile-high mountain peaks—all are there for your enjoyment. There are no motels nearby, but you will find hundreds of square miles of unrestricted terrain on which you may set up camp. And if you wish to dispense with camp cooking, you will find the excellent food available at Kelso's Union Pacific Cafe—a most satisfying ing substitute. □

WE LOST A LEDGE of GOLD!

The majority of lost bonanza legends are basically true, albeit embellished as they are passed down through the years. Although few of the old-time prospectors who found and lost fortunes are alive today, many of them related their experiences in early issues of Desert Magazine. So you may share their exciting adventures first-hand, we will, from time to time, reprint the articles as they appeared. This one on Death Valley is from the September, 1955 issue.

by Asa M. Russell

ERNIE HUHN, or Siberian Red as he was known by his friends, is gone now. He passed away a few years ago and is buried at Shoshone, east of Death Valley. He was fairly well off financially when he died because of the interest he had in the well run Grantham Talc Mine.

But Ernie could have been one of the richest men on earth and me along with him if—and that's a mighty small if!

While he lived I dared not tell of our experience high in the Panamint Range in 1925, but now I'm sure he wouldn't mind if I do. He was very touchy about it saying that if anyone ever found out they would class us as fools. I guess he was right, but he should have made it "careless fools."

Folks wondered why Ernie, who had mined gold in Siberia, Alaska and California and loved the yellow metal as much as any man, suddenly gave up looking for it and satisfied himself instead by opening up drifts of plain baby talcum powder, as he called it. I was his partner and the last man to grubstake him on a gold venture. I know why.

I met Siberian Red at the Cresta Escavada (summit diggings), a placer property near Randsburg in the early 1920s. The terrain there was made up of rolling,

spotted bedrock with no paydirt, just egg shaped rocks. Although it mined out to a dollar a yard Ernie soon found that it wouldn't float a dredge so he decided to move on. There was no way to make it pay.

We met again in Trona some time later and during our visit he repeatedly gazed intently at the towering Panamint Range visible behind the Slate Range. Finally he remarked, "I understand that four formations meet there at the south end of the Panamints. It should be a hot spot to prospect." Somewhere Ernie found out that a road could be easily cut from Death Valley up to Anvil Canyon opening that area for mining if and when a discovery was made. At Anvil Springs there was a stone house and plenty of water.

"Carl Mengel, who has only one leg, says he came through there with his burros—stayed at the stone house and says the area looks like good gold country to him," Ernie went on. I soon became enthusiastic about the area's prospects and offered to grubstake him on the trip and to accompany him, too. I had a fairly successful tree business in Los Angeles at that time and could afford the venture. Before long we struck an agreement.

I bought a truck, loaded it with supplies enough for three months and we headed for Butte Valley by way of Death

Valley. In those days there was an old road through Death Valley with a sign post pointed toward the mountains which read: "Butte Valley, 21 Miles." Instead of going on to Butte, the road ended right there in a soft sandy wash where the water drained down to Death Valley through the narrow canyon.

We returned to our original plan and headed up Anvil Canyon making our own road. Every thousand feet we had to stop and drag off the rocks to clear the next thousand feet ahead. To get through the loose gravel we used block and tackle. After five days of hard work we had our road into Butte Canyon by way of Anvil Canyon. The former takes its name from a strata of solid rock projecting 500 feet high in the center of this valley. There was no dirt or vegetation on this huge rock and it was striped with many different colors. The miners called it the Striped Butte.

We located the spring and the stone house and set up camp. We were never able to find out who built the house, but it was built to last. It dated back to the early 1880s and was as good as ever. Here we relaxed for a couple of days, taking short walks around camp.

We had a beautiful view down the canyon to the floor of Death Valley, 20 miles below. The refreshing breeze picked up the scent of sage, ephedra and pinyon making our campsite a delightful place.

The country immediately around us was well mineralized. Small veins shot out across the hills in all directions. Some looked like they would pan fairly good and had they been wider would have caused plenty of excitement. The stone house contained some old newspapers and books, pack saddles and odd shaped demijohns, reminders of days that had gone before. We had ideal prospecting headquarters.

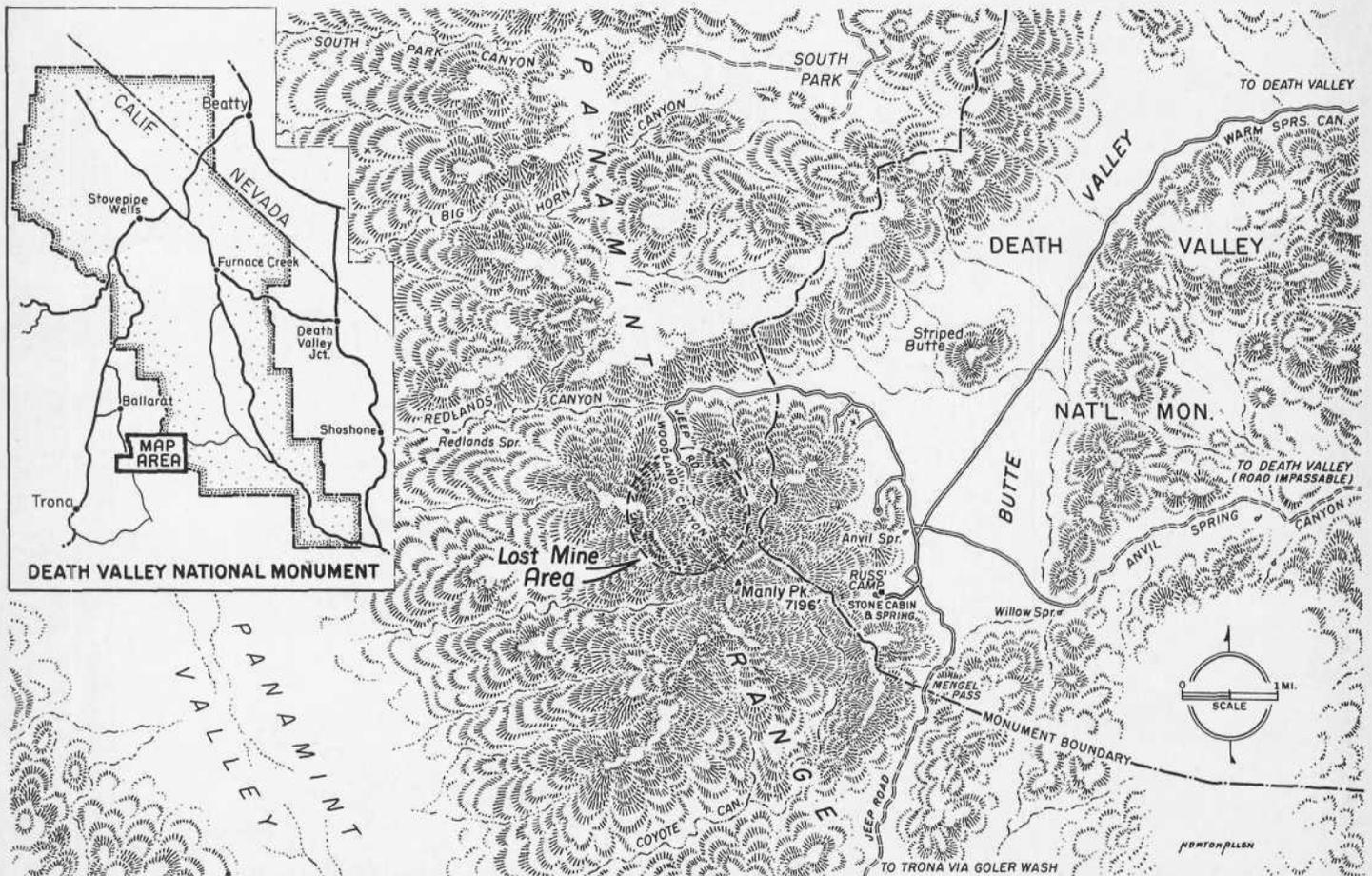
We soon found that this was a big area to cover. Naturally we concentrated on the valley floor at first, prospecting a day and then resting a day. We wanted to toughen up gradually before we tackled the high ground. On these low level hikes Ernie would often reach down to the ground with his pick and crack open a rock that looked like ordinary mud to me. He explained that after a little experience I too could distinguish mere mud from stones that had been thinly covered with mud following a rain.

Occasionally I picked up a piece of float. Each time I did Ernie knocked it from my hand and warned me that it was a bad habit to get into. "Unless you intend to follow the float up and find out where it comes from, don't waste your time and mine. You might have a piece that dropped out of a saddle bag or pack mule. Be sure your sample comes off a vein of ore in place—and a vein wide enough to investigate. Remember, we are 67 miles from the nearest supplies. Don't waste time." I listened to his advice. I knew it was experience talking and I had much to learn.

In time we became tanned and toughened. Our legs were strong. Ernie was convinced that somewhere along this contact a rich vein existed.

One day we had a visitor—a Shoshone Indian—who was leading a string of pack burros. He was on his way to Warm Springs to do a little prospecting. He told us that if we needed some packing in the near future, he would be glad to do it for us.

Another week went by and on the first of October a tall, unshaven man named Greenslit walked into our camp. He was a



tough old fellow of 65 and had been prospecting the hills for six days out of Trona.

He took out a piece of ore and showed it to us. He had found it on the ridge near Manly peak in a short tunnel of an abandoned mine. He relocated it and was on his way now to Shoshone to try to interest some friends in his find.

After he had gone the next morning Ernie took the piece of ore Greenslit had given him and panned it out. He found it to run about \$200 to the ton.

"I wonder just exactly where he got that rock?" I asked. By the look on Ernie's face I knew he was wondering the same thing. He pointed to the high ridge to the right of Manly Peak. "It must be up there," he said. He scanned the area with his field glasses and then handed them to me. "Look close up there—there's a little gray patch on the mountain side—looks like an old dump—that may be where Greenslit found his ore."

The next day we tried the higher ground. Ernie warned me before we left that when we reached the timber line our vision would be cut down considerably except in small and infrequent clearings. He had me prepare 10 pieces of five different colored rags and told me that should I find a vein large enough to locate, I was to mark it properly, take one piece of colored cloth and wrap the sample in it and number it. The matching piece of rag I was to tie on the top of the highest and nearest tree. A small strip of the cloth was to be tied at ground level. If, after panning the ore, we found it to be worth while, the vein would be easy to relocate. I was also instructed to make a note of the general terrain around my find. "This is the best system I know of for tender-foot prospectors," Ernie said to me as we started out at dawn.

It was a steep climb up the hogback to Manly Peak, but we took our time and had no trouble reaching the saddle on the ridge at the right of the peak before noon. The view alone was worth the climb. Looking over the Slate Range toward Trona the Panamint Valley lay at our feet and at our back was Death Valley.

We ate lunch on the ridge and then made our way to the gray patch below the saddle. As Ernie had predicted we found that it was an old ore dump and there nearby, was Greenslit's new monument.



Stone house in Butte Valley where Ernie and Russ made camp.

An old anvil and a few scattered tools with rotten wooden handles lay near the tunnel mouth. We guessed that its former owner was an old timer who had found the high altitude detrimental to his mining efforts.

Before we separated Ernie gave me my instructions for the prospecting trip back to camp. He was going to cover the lower side, close to the contact while I was to stay close up along the side hill. If I needed him I was to yell as loud as I could—the air was clear and my voice would carry. If I found anything sensational I was to let him know at once.

We started off and for a time I could hear him cracking rocks with his pick. I made my way around some large boulders, keeping my eye out for snakes, outcroppings and quartz veins and all the time trying to remember all I had been taught during the past weeks by Ernie.

The little veins made me mad as they peeked out under ledges. I followed them down draws, out under ledges and up steep slopes. Few were wide enough to get excited about. Still I took some samples from the widest ones and marked them as ordered.

About four in the afternoon I ran across an outcropping of yellow broken quartz under a pinyon tree. The vein, the widest I had ever seen, was about 15 inches across. It was heavy with iron oxide and I figured important enough to call Ernie.

I yelled down the canyon and presently he answered. It took him 30 minutes

to find me. After studying the vein he gave me his verdict: "pretty high up, rugged approach, should run about \$40 a ton. It would have to widen out considerably to be profitable."

I was disappointed, but he suggested that I put up a monument, locate, and mark it well for perhaps someday the price of gold would go up and then it would be worth mining this vein.

I showed him the rest of my samples, all wrapped carefully in their colored cloths and numbered. He didn't comment on them, but told me that we would pan them out on Sunday. He reached into his pockets and pulled out a half dozen pieces of rock. One of them was cement gray in color and was very heavy. I showed surprise at the weight and asked him about it.

He had chipped it off a vein about three feet wide. The ledge was only exposed for about 20 feet on the surface on the steep side of the draw near the contact. Although he had never heard of anyone finding platinum in these mountains, he wondered if the sample he had might not contain some of that precious metal.

I asked him if I could use his glass to give the specimen a close look, but he had forgotten it. "We'll pan it Sunday along with the other stuff," he said and started off toward camp.

"Did you mark it with a colored cloth?" I shouted after him.

Ernie laughed. "That's only for rookies. An old timer remembers and doesn't need flags and sign posts."

When we got back to our stone house the moon was up. After a sound sleep we decided we had better rest for two days before tackling any high ground again. I placed all the samples we brought back on the high shelf on the outside of the house and we agreed to pan them out as soon as possible. It's a good pastime when you are laying around camp. But we were out of fresh meat and spent a day hunting and then on the next day there were shoes to sole, wood to cut and other chores around camp. On the third day we tended the small garden we had put in earlier near the spring, so we put off panning the specimens again.

Then we had visitors. A couple of miners took the road we had made to camp. They were looking over the country and we spent many hours talking to them around the campfire. When Sunday came again we spent it quail hunting and that night the four of us enjoyed a delicious dinner.

Our supplies were running low so after the miners left Ernie and I took a week off and went into Shoshone to

stock up again. We didn't hurry and still another week went by before we picked up the specimens to pan them out. By now over three weeks had slipped by.

Ernie breezed through my six colored cloth wrapped samples and a few of his own before noon. We found nothing to excite us. The whole lot averaged about \$25 a ton. The rock from the vein I had called him to see under the pinyon tree was the best—it ran around \$40.

After lunch I ground up the heavy cement-gray stone and Ernie started to pan it out. He remarked that he wouldn't at all be surprised to find a little platinum in it.

I had ground it up well as Ernie had asked me to do. Coarse pieces of iron may often hold small particles of gold that had to be released if a good pan was to be had.

While Ernie panned the gray stone I sat on a large rock near camp and took some pot shots at a hawk that was circling low trying to scare a family of quail out in the open.

An explosive yell from Ernie brought my thoughts back into focus and I slid

off the boulder and ran toward him. He was jumping up and down with glee and shouting, "We hit it! We hit it! We hit it!"

"Look at the gold," he cried holding out the pan to me. I grabbed it from him and still dazed peered into it. The bottom was covered with gold.

Ernie was excited and spoke on in a frenzied voice: "I knew it—I knew I would find something good on the contact! We hit it this time, Russ! Our troubles are over! We're rich! We're rich! I never saw ore like that any place in the world!"

After he calmed down he told me that the panning indicated an ore value of \$15,000 a ton! "And just think, it's ready money—free milling. The ground is all open for location. How does it feel to be rich, Russ? How does it feel to be able to have anything you want—and plenty of good yellow gold to pay for it?"

I couldn't answer—it had all been so sudden. I walked into the house and in a fog put on the spuds and beans for supper.

Continued on page 34



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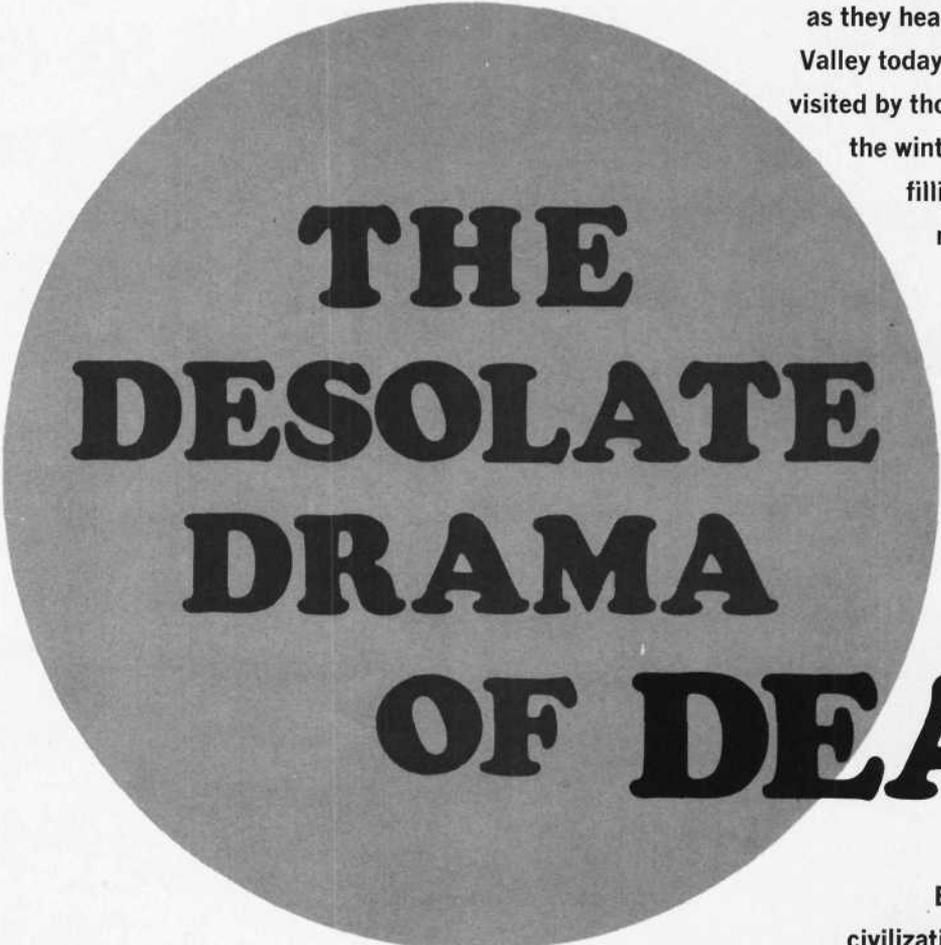
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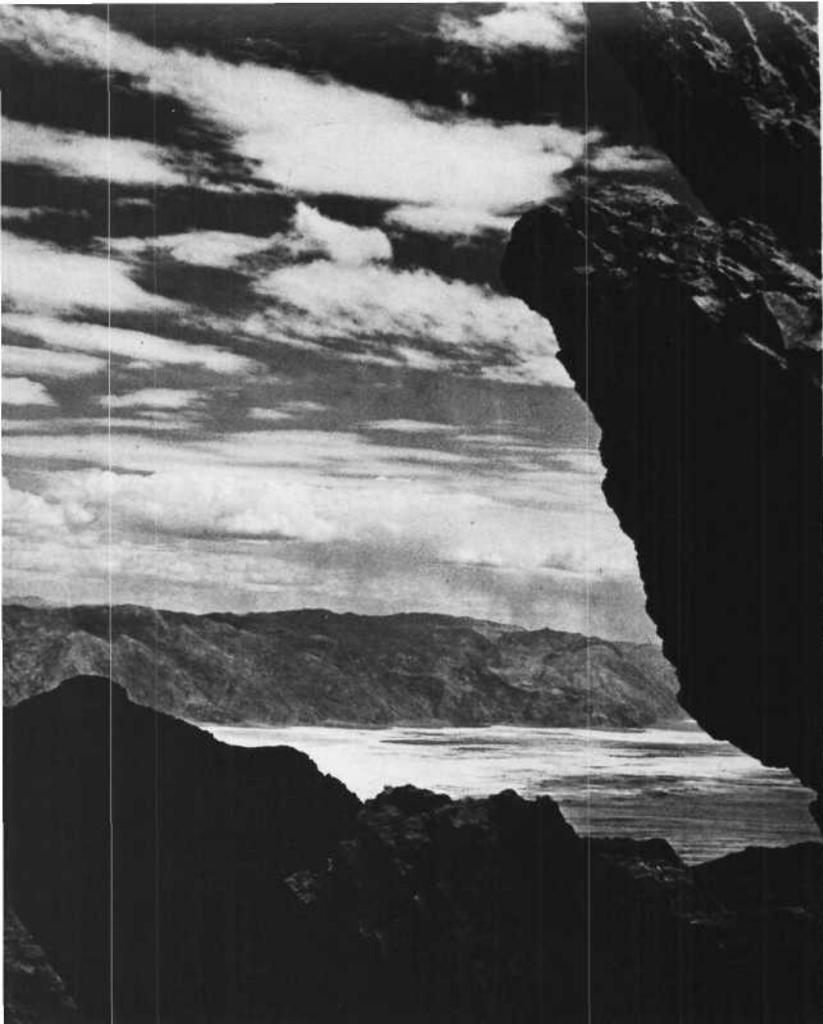


THE DESOLATE DRAMA OF DEATH

Once dreaded by prospectors and '49ers as they headed for California, Death Valley today is a National Monument visited by thousands of people during the winter season. Man has built filling stations, restaurants, motels, a golf course and a landing field. The National Park Service has paved roads and built a Visitors Center and Museum in which is told the Story of Death Valley.

But these marks of man's civilization are hardly discernible in the thousands of acres of Death Valley. And the moods and shifting sands of this timeless and silent land have not changed during the centuries.

It is a strange and sometimes eerie silence that prevails; from Badwater, 280 feet below sea level, to Dantes View, 5780 feet above. Better than words, these selected photographs convey the moods and shadows of Death Valley.



The rugged rocks of Aguereberry Point are silhouetted against the sky with Death Valley below and the Panamint Mountains in the distance.

VALLEY....



A late afternoon sun casts weird shadows on the sands of Death Valley.

DEATH VALLEY



Death Valley's metallic mushroom.



Once busy and hot, the charcoal kilns of Wildrose Canyon today are modern housing for the animals and birds of Death Valley.



Death Valley Scotty's Castle—who really paid for it and provided the gold dust so Scotty could live like a king?

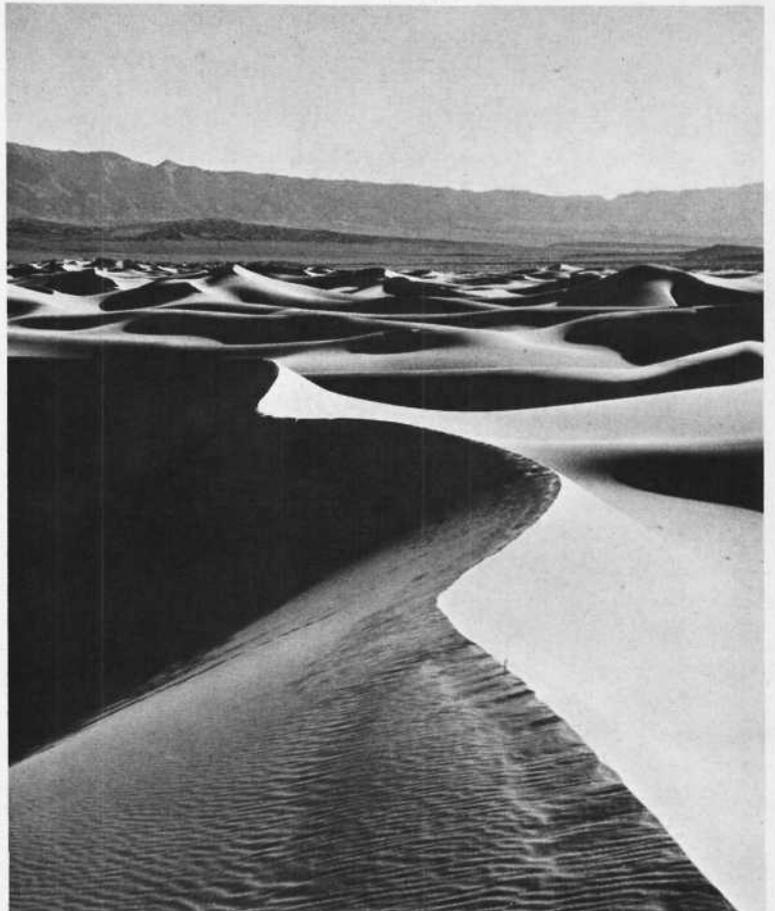
When the thirsty '49ers saw the white outline from thousands of feet above the valley they thought it was drinking water—only to find it was saline and deadly— that's why they called it Death Valley.



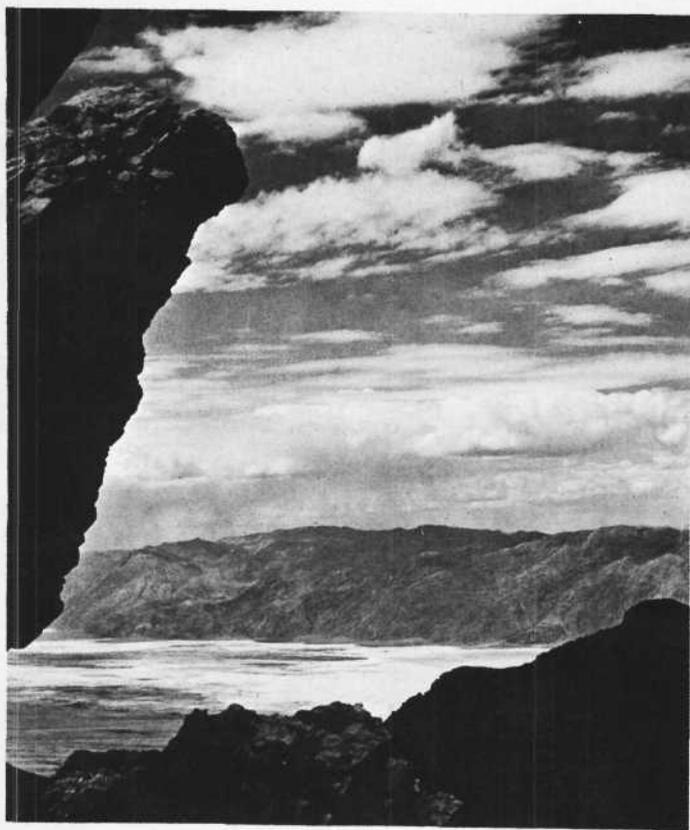


Man's footprints—and his endeavors—are fleeting. His signs of yesterday are obliterated tomorrow by the winds which play upon the sands, returning them to their natural state of silence and shadows.

The Drama of Death Valley unfolds as the sun sinks and leaves the world to darkness—only to rise again to reveal its changing, timeless and mysterious beauty.



DEATH VALLEY



Death Valley is beautiful, lonely—and sometimes deadly.



The fingers of Red Rock Canyon seem to reach for prey.

The sand dunes constantly move and change in this strange world of silence.





Twenty-mule team hauling borax under the searing sun.



Gutted and lonely, Ashford Mill is a victim of changing times and the inexorable winds and heat of Death Valley.



"The wheels of weary life at last stood still."



DEATH VALLEY

NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT

DEATH VALLEY'S annual outdoor extravaganza, a kaleidoscope of family entertainment known as "The West's Greatest Free Show," will be held this year November 8 through 11. It will be the 18th year of the event, sponsored by the Death Valley '49ers in cooperation with the National Park Service.

Held in the Death Valley National Monument in California, next to the Nevada border, the event attracts thousands of families who come to the historic area by passenger car, camper, 4-wheel-drive and sometimes by just plain mule—to enjoy the start of the winter desert season.

The Encampment features exhibits by outstanding western artists, authors and photographers, conducted tours of the Valley, an old-fashioned fiddlers' contest, evening campfires featuring noted musicians and historians and family sings.

Other attractions include gems, minerals, gold and historical Indian artifacts displays, museum exhibits of the famed Twenty Mule Team wagons and other mining equipment, daily naturalist talks by Park Rangers, and nightly dancing under the desert stars.

One of the highlights of the Encampment is the Burro-Flapjack Contest. No matter how large the number of spectators, the outdoor circle affords easy view

as you watch the contestants coax, cajole or carry their critters around a center post and return to their own starting point where each will unpack the burro, build a fire, mix and cook a pancake. The first prospector (real or would-be) to feed his animal the finished product is declared the winner. The top three contestants in each of two races will compete for top prizes in a third race, which has been called a "crazy cook-off."

The Burro-Flapjack Contest is the most popular for all visitors to Death Valley because a contestant will finish (at least he would hope to finish) the race directly in front of a spectator.

All events at the Encampment are open to the public and most are free of charge. There are only a few activities for which a fee is collected: the Authors' breakfast where a noted author is the featured speaker; the Photographers' breakfast with exhibits of prize-winning photographs of Death Valley; the Artists' breakfast, highlighted by top-flight western artists painting striking pictures while you watch. An added attraction to this breakfast is the auction sale of a picture painted at the previous year's breakfast—a valued addition to any collection. These events are at Furnace Creek golf course.

Because of the large number of events

presented during the Encampment, visitors find it impossible to participate in all of them; however, they always find ample camping and trailer facilities available. The many camping and trailer parking areas are large enough to accommodate thousands of people. Campsites and trailer parking are available at Texas Springs Campground, Stovepipe Wells Village, and Furnace Creek Ranch.

Lightweight clothing is generally all that is needed, but it is wise to bring warm clothing and adequate bedding because the nights sometimes turn chilly. Food and other necessary supplies can be purchased at various locations in the Valley, but firewood is at a premium and many campers supply their own.

There are hotel and motel accommodations available for those less-than-hardy people who prefer comforts of indoor living, but due to the limited number of facilities in Death Valley, it is suggested that reservations be made well in advance of the Encampment.

For 18 years Death Valley has been the site of this great celebration. The sponsoring group, the Death Valley '49ers, Inc., was formed in 1949 to pay centennial tribute to those heroic men, women and children, who late in 1849, found themselves in a desperate situation. Lost, hungry, almost without hope,

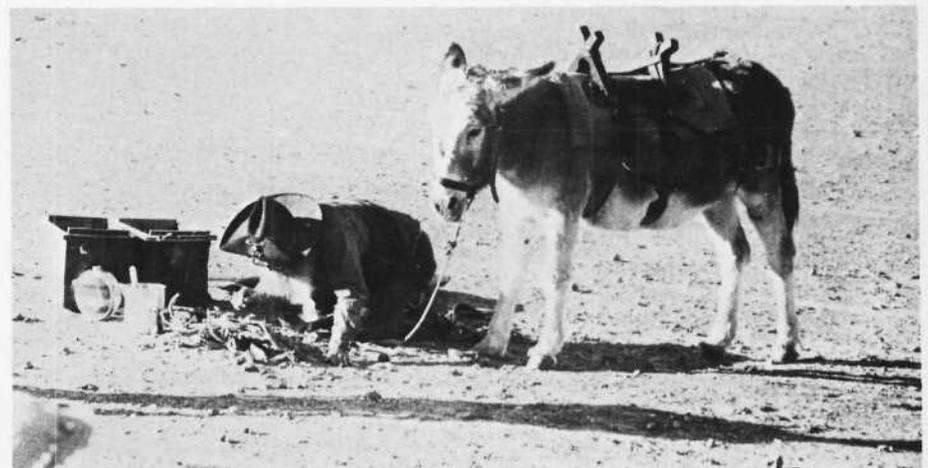
and with no apparent way out of the Valley, nearly 100 pioneers were able to survive their hardships and make their way to California.

The founders of the Death Valley '49ers, a group of civic and business leaders, as well as persons interested in the history of the Valley, wished to plan an annual commemorative celebration to honor the original '49ers and to preserve the memories and beauty of Death Valley. The result was the Death Valley National Encampment, which increases in interest, pageantry, and attendance each year.

A non-profit organization, the Death Valley '49ers sole income is from the sale of memberships and publications, and donations. A single membership is \$3.00, a family membership \$5.00, and a Life Membership \$100.00. For detailed information as to how to become a member, write the Death Valley '49ers, Death Valley, California. They will be happy to send you information, a list of accommodations and a guide map, and a calendar of events for the 19th annual Death Valley Encampment to be held November 8 through 11, 1968. □



Spectators at the Burro-Flapjack race near Stove Pipe Wells are entertained with hoedown music. Square dances are also held during Encampment.



An old-timer tries to control his ornery critter who seems to have his own ideas about where he is going. Bottom, his burro waits for his flap-jack as the prospector lights the fire. First contestant to make and eat the hot dough wins.

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ARON WINTERS was a desert prospector who lived in a crude hut with his Indian wife, Rosie, at Ash Meadows near the Funeral Moun-

tains of Death Valley. He had spent most of his life in the desolate wastelands searching for gold.

On his way to the Nevada mining country, a lone prospector stopped overnight at Winters' cabin. As they talked of prospecting, the visitor mentioned a new compound found in the desert in large beds of small crystal-like salt. He said it was borax and was selling as high as 25 cents an ounce.

As he listened to the prospector, Winters remembered a bed of white crystals

cause of a chance visit from a lonely prospector whom he befriended. Soon after the discovery, Winters sold his claim to William T. Coleman for \$20,000—a pittance compared to the fortune borax would later bring to Coleman and his partner, Frank Smith.

Borax was discovered in Tibet in 1742. The Tibetans called this unusual mineral *baurach*. Sometimes it is referred to as tincal, but most often it is called borax, a mispronunciation of the Tibetan name. Borax is commonly found in the dry marshes of the desert where the rains gather and evaporate after draining from the barren mountains.

Winters' discovery was a significant find, but not the first in California. Dr. John A. Veatch found borax crystals in

tache, lived in a canyon near Columbus Marsh. From his cabin he could see the men shovelling crude borax from Columbus Marsh. He could also see Teel's Marsh, but there were no men gathering borax there. This seemed strange to Smith, since both marshes looked just alike.

Curious about Teel's Marsh, Smith took samples and sent them to a chemist. When the chemist's report was returned he knew he found a rich deposit of borax. He immediately staked out his claim. Smith dug and sold borax until he was a rich man. People began to call him "Borax Smith." It was not long before Smith and Coleman formed a partnership in mining Death Valley Borax.

The Harmony Works was located at

DEATH VALLEY BORAX

by Ben Traywick



he had seen while looking for gold in Death Valley—crystals he had walked over and ignored. The visitor said that if he poured a certain liquid over the crystals and set them afire and the resultant flame was green, it was a sure sign of borax.

After obtaining the test liquid, Aaron and Rosie crossed the comparatively cool Funeral Mountains and descended into Death Valley and the vicinity of Furnace Creek. The prospector selected a piece of the white deposit, saturated it with liquid and lit a match. The fuel sputtered and as Rosie and Aaron held each other, it suddenly took hold and burst into a green flame!

After all the years of searching, Aaron Winters did not strike gold, but he did discover a rich deposit of borax—all be-

the waters of Lick Springs in Tehama County in January, 1856. He also found borax in Borax Lake in Lake County the same year.

The mud of Borax Lake was about five feet deep and was filled with borax crystals. The mud was shovelled out and placed in vats where the impurities were washed away with water. Crude borax crystallized when the water evaporated. In 1865 the Lake yielded 240 tons of borax.

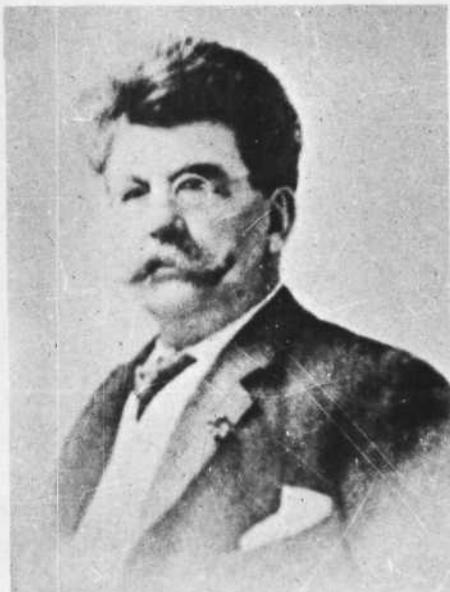
Columbus Marsh was the first big discovery site of borax in Nevada. This marsh was a salt crust approximately three feet deep. Borax was obtained here by simply boiling it in big vats and re-crystallizing it.

Frank Smith, a gigantic man with bushy hair and large drooping mous-

the site of the Aaron Winters discovery, northwest of Furnace Creek. Work at this site was done in the open under the sizzling sun. Even at night there was no relief from the heat. Consequently, it was difficult to find men who would work under such conditions.

Borax was shipped out of Death Valley by 20 mule teams which consisted of 18 mules and two wheel horses. A jerk line 125 feet long was used to guide the team as it pulled the two wagons. The wagons were built in Mojave for \$900, had rear wheels 7 feet high and front wheels 5 feet high, each with steel tires 8 inches wide and one inch thick. The hubs were 18 inches in diameter and 22 inches in length.

The spokes, of split oak, measured 5½ inches wide at the hub. The axle-



Borax Smith was the most famous of the Death Valley prospectors. After making his fortune he became an important political figure in San Francisco.

trees were made of solid steel bars, 3½ inches square. The wagon beds were 16 feet long, 4 feet wide and 6 feet deep. Empty, each wagon weighed 7,800 pounds. Loaded with borax, it weighed 31,800 pounds. Two such loaded wagons, plus the water tank (which held 1,200 gallons and weighed 9,600 pounds) made a total of 73,200 pounds or 36½ tons.

It took anywhere from ten to twenty days each trip to haul borax out of Death Valley, often in heat of 120 degrees with the mule skimmers averaging only 15 to 18 miles a day. And the nights (there was no air conditioning in those days) were only a few degrees cooler than the days! For hauling borax across the hot desert and over the hazardous Panamint Mountains, the driver was paid a total of \$100 a month and his swamper \$75.

The discovery of a new, hard form of borax southeast of Furnace Creek on Mount Blanc closed Harmony Works. The name *colemantite* was given to this new form of borax in honor of William T. Coleman. New deposits of colemantite were found throughout California, in Ventura County near Bakersfield, in the Calico Mountains, and in the Mojave Desert. The borax boom was on.

William T. Coleman, because of misfortunes in other business ventures, lost all his investment in the borax business. Frank Smith rose to the front as the top borax man of the world. Eventually so much borax was mined that the price was reduced to just a few cents a pound and still the demand for it grew and grew.

Another huge deposit of borax was found in the Mojave Desert in 1928 and yet another in Death Valley soon after. The strike in the Mojave was a new type of borax called "rasorite." It has been found nowhere else. This particular deposit is 100 feet thick, almost pure borax and lies 400 feet beneath the earth's surface.

Death Valley gave the world an inexpensive and almost limitless supply of borax. Borax gave the world adventure through the 20 mule teams that crossed the valley of death.

California still leads the world in the production of borax today. Aaron Winters didn't fully realize the impact of his words when he shouted in joy, "She burns green! We're rich!" □

Opposite page, a twenty-mule team hauls borax out of Death Valley. Teams hauled borax even in the summer when temperatures reached 120 degrees.



A chance meeting with another prospector resulted in Aaron Winters and his wife, Rosie, finding a fortune.

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THE RIDDLE OF THE RACETRACK

C

by Roger Mitchell

OFF the beaten path in the northwest corner of Death Valley National Monument lies a hidden valley—and a mystery. The valley contains a dry lake approximately one-and-a-quarter miles wide and three miles long. The Racetrack Playa at first glance appears like any other of hundreds of such dry lakes in the southwest.

It has one different and mystifying feature; rocks and other objects on its surface have been known to shift, move and skate about! No one has actually seen any of these objects move but the tracks left from such movement are obvious.

There are many theories explaining the phenomena. Some say it has to do with the earth's magnetism, while others claim it is related to the sunspots. Still others suspect the gravitational pull of the moon producing an effect similar to the ocean's tides. Under scientific examination, however, most of these theories can be dismissed.

The wind is immediately suspect of being the culprit. This alone seems unlikely for a number of reasons. First, many of these moving rocks are round in shape. It seems the wind would tend to roll such objects like a bowling ball. Such is not the case however.

Rounded objects, like the more flat objects, slide along keeping the same relative position. Many of these moving stones are rather small, about the size of a softball, others weigh 50 to 600 pounds.

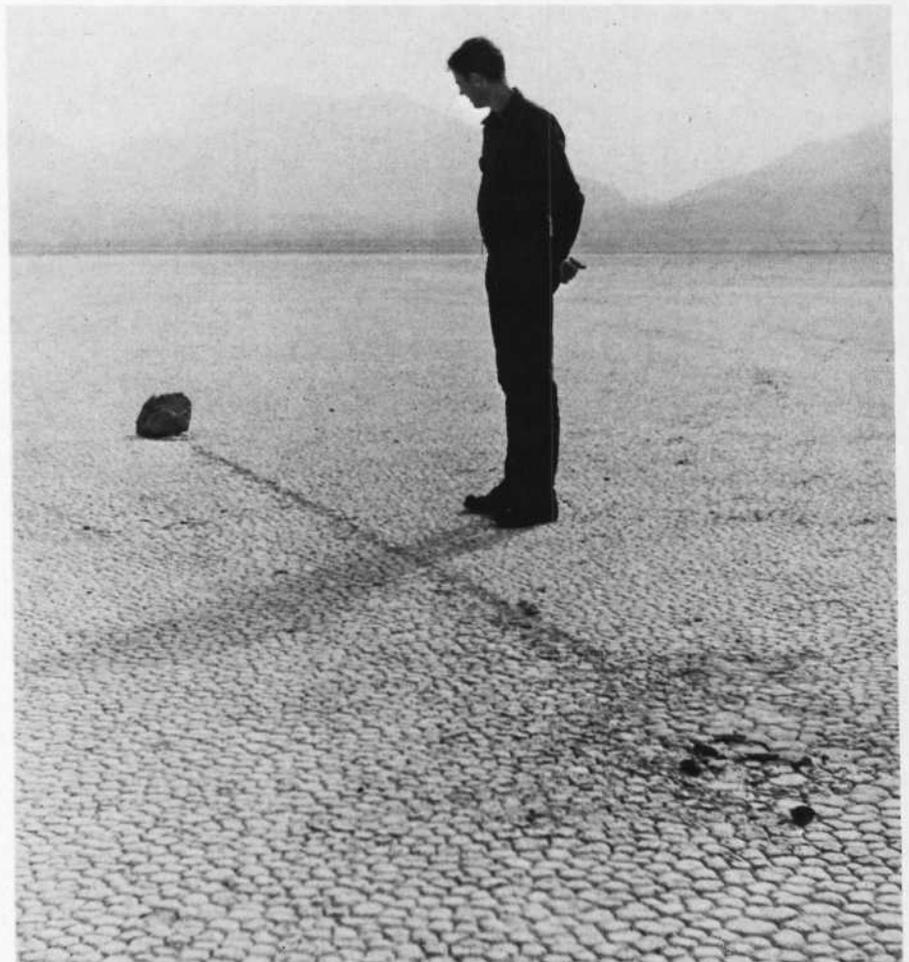
Close examination of the tracks reveals one important fact. At the time of movement, the playa's surface is wet. The furrows and grooves left behind by the moving objects plainly show the once muddy nature of the playa's surface. Ridges of once soft mud are also seen pushed up in front of the once sliding object.

The theory is that the wind moves the various objects only when the playa is wet or muddy. Because several objects close together sometimes appear to have moved in echelon, the theory is further expanded that water on the playa surface freezes—trapping several objects together in an iceberg. The wind then blows this iceberg around causing only the rocks to leave tracks in a parallel

pattern. This line of reasoning seems to have some merit.

The surrounding country of some 70 square miles drains into the Racetrack Playa. This desert area receives about three inches of rainfall annually on a long term average, although rainfall in some years may be almost nil. A thin sheet of water on the playa has been observed a number of times, and being 3708 feet in elevation, such water would freeze during the cold winter nights.

Although every theory has some flaws in it, it does seem likely that the phenomena must be related to the combination of wind and a wet playa surface. Actually the Racetrack Playa is best known for the mystery, but the phenomena has been observed in other dry lake beds. Similar occurrences have been reported at Bonnie Clair and Nelson dry lakes in nearby Nevada and also near McKittrick in California's San Joaquin Valley. I have also seen similar tracks at Laguna Chapala in Baja California.



Death Valley's mysterious moving stones have puzzled scientists for years, although the most popular theory is they are moved by winds when the usually dry lake is covered with ice.

While it is easy to tear holes in other people's theories, it is difficult to suggest a solution which itself is not flawless. About the only thing observers can agree upon is that the tracks are truly a product of nature and not some pranksters' idea of a joke. It appears that the mystery will remain unsolved until some hardy soul camps at the playa's edge all winter, and waits with a movie camera for the action to begin. Any volunteers?

The Racetrack can be reached by conventional automobile by way of a 25 mile graded dirt road which goes south from Ubehebe Crater in the north end of Death Valley.

A more scenic route comes up from the south and goes over pinyon-covered Hunter Mountain. However, the dirt road portion of this route is almost 40 miles long and may be a little more rough. This road, paved at first, leaves Highway 190 at a point approximately 4 miles east of the Darwin Road. Signs indicate it as the Saline Valley Road. Go north 15.7 miles to a junction. The left fork descends into Saline Valley. Take the right fork which continues to climb up the slopes of Hunter Mountain. If you disregard the numerous side roads which show much less evidence of use, the next major road junction will be at Tea Kettle Junction, 25 miles from the last one. Turn left



No one has ever seen the stones actually move. Some of the giant boulders weigh more than 500 pounds. The area is in the northern part of scenic Death Valley.

here and the Racetrack is but 7 miles down the valley. This second route is not difficult for vehicles with high clearance, and with care can usually be negotiated by standard passenger cars if they are not too heavily laden. This route is not recommended unless you are a seasoned desert driver. Neither route should be attempted unless your tires are in good condition.

The best time to visit the Racetrack is in the spring or fall, although the weather may be pleasant on many winter days. Because of the extremely high temperatures and lack of assistance should you become stranded, the Racetrack area should be avoided during the summer months.

There are no established campgrounds at the Racetrack, but many campers have found shelter in The Grandstand—a large rock outcrop at the northern end of the Playa. Plenty of water should be carried, however, as the nearest dependable source of drinking water is at Gold-belt Spring, some 20 miles away on the Hunter Mountain Road. Whether you spend an hour or a day there, the riddle of the Racetrack is sure to prove fascinating. □



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ADVENTURES IN DESERT CAMPING

by Randall Henderson



Using the copy compiled in his reporter's notebook during more than 50 years as a journalist on the American desert, Randall Henderson, founder of the *Desert Magazine* in 1937, recently has completed a book to be published in October by Westernlore Press in Los Angeles under the title "Sun, Sand and Solitude." Following are some of the author's experiences recorded in his chapter "Adventures in Camping." Mr. Henderson is also author of the excellent book, "On Desert Trails."

FROM A COASTAL city in California came a letter from a father asking about camping on the desert. He and his family had never camped out, and they wanted to know about sleeping bags, air mattresses, camp stoves and utensils. The letter was courteous and sincere, and I gave what information I could.

More recently, on a camping trip, I met the man who wrote the letter. He was with his wife and two daughters, aged six and twelve. They were lugging in deadwood for their campfire. They had acquired a well-chosen outfit and were having a good time.

They invited me to join them at their campfire that evening and I learned their story. Their home was in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and the girls attended the city schools. During the conversation I got the impression that the father had ample income to provide well for his daughters—but he and his wife were well aware that it requires something more than money to raise wholesome youngsters. They knew the demoralizing effect that luxury-without-effort may have on the character of youth. They wanted their children to learn the virtues of simplicity, to be natural and genuine, not sophisticated and snobbish.

They were very intelligent people, and out of their deliberations came the decision to turn to the outdoors for the solution of their problem of parenthood. Not just the kind of outdoor life that consists of long motor trips on paved roads. They realized that such activity—or lack of activity—could become very tedious to energetic young people. They would camp out and make a grand adventure of the chores of cooking over an open fire, sleeping on the ground, and exploring the canyons and mountains.

In order to have companions qualified to help and instruct them they joined the Sierra Club of California, whose members camp in the mountains or on the beaches or in the desert nearly every weekend of the year.

To middle-aged people who have never slept on the ground in their lives, the first few nights may not be too comfortable. There are some problems in camping that can be solved only by the trial and error method. But humans who have kept their adaptive functions can adjust to the experience.

It is the plan of the parents, as the girls grow older, to invite their boy friends on these camping trips. With a few exceptions youngsters like camping and exploring, and there probably is no more wholesome environment for their activities than evenings around a campfire and days spent in close association with the natural things of this earth.

☆ ☆ ☆

Some campers spend hours preparing elaborate meals with soup and salad and all the thrills of a Thanksgiving dinner, and more hours washing pots and pans and dishes. And that is all right if they like to do it that way. I happen to be one of those indolent campers who would rather eat crackers and cheese than fuss around with a camp stove and a lot of dirty dishes.

I have rather prided myself on the simplicity of my camp chores, but recently I learned some new labor-saving gimmicks from a couple of friends from the city. I regard them as the world's champions when it comes to preparing a camp dinner. Here is their formula: Their tools are a coffee pot and some paper utensils. For dinner in the evening they scoop out a little cavity in the sand and build a fire big enough for the coffee pot and a couple of cans. A few sticks of dead creosote will provide all the flame they need. Then they open the lids on the cans, perhaps one vegetable and one meat, and set them in the fire along with the coffee pot. When the food is hot it is served on paper plates with paper cups. After the meal they burn the utensils, smash the cans and bury them with the fire, rinse the inside of the coffee-maker and put it in a paper bag. This takes only a few minutes and allows them extra hours for exploring the nearest canyon.

Now that is my idea of camping—but I am not going to argue with anyone about it because others may have a formula which suits them better—and after all, the glory of a camping trip on the desert is in the opportunity to get away from that pestiferous tribe of human beings who are everlastingly trying to get you to do as they do and think as they think.

This is being written in September and in another month I will be getting out my hiking boots and making circles around some of the dates on my calen-

dar—dates scheduled for weekend camping trips into desert canyons and mountains during the winter season.

Since my home is less than a hundred miles from the Mexican border, I'll be making two or three trips into Baja California where there are many lovely palm canyons few humans have ever visited because they are so inaccessible. Also on my agenda for this season is a gem-stone collecting area along the Colorado river which can most easily be reached by boat, and a backpack jaunt into the Santa Rosa Mountains in search of a cave—the walls of which are said to be blackened by the soot of ancient Indian fires. The more years I live on the desert the longer grows the list of remote places I want to visit and explore.

And of course I'll be resuming my lifelong quest for a meteorite. I think I would get a greater thrill in finding a chip off the moon or one of the distant stars than in finding a gold mine. I've been looking for one for more than 50 years—and I haven't found it yet. Probably I have passed over hundreds of them, for the celestial bodies are said to have been pelting this earth with stone and metal fragments for millions of years. I always carry a piece of emery paper, at the suggestion of a science professor. "If in doubt" he told me, just rub the stone with emery and if it is a meteorite it may disclose bright specks of nickel or iron."

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Soon after the school year ends in June each year, and during the Christmas and Easter vacations, motor travel to and from and across the desert Southwest reaches a peak. Heavy travel, especially on weekends, brings out a blaze of "No Vacancy" signs along the roadside. All of which is evidence of good business for the motel proprietors, but exasperating sometimes to the motorist who has been at the wheel since early morning.

I have found a simple formula for beating the "No Vacancy" situation. My solution will not appeal to everyone, but it offers a carefree way to travel on the desert where, with proper equipment, one may sleep comfortably out of doors almost every night of the year.

There's always a sleeping bag and a box of groceries in my car. And in the sleeping bag is one of those pneumatic

mattresses—the kind that can be inflated either with the tire pump or my own lung power. The latter method is a fine exercise in deep breathing. I generally carry a two-third length mattress. It serves adequately, and takes less puffing.

In the great expanse of the desert Southwest there are a hundred thousand arroyos and sheltered coves and level mesas where one can park not far from the road, spread the bedroll on the ground and sleep in security and comfort. I carry a lightweight waterproof tarpaulin, and if it starts to rain during the night—as it seldom does—my bedroll sheds water like a duck. One of my Indian friends once said to me: "Good for white man sleep on the ground, all same Indian."

Traveling with that kind of insurance gives one a freedom of action and a sort of gypsy independence that adds immeasurably to the pleasure of the trip—even when I have no occasion to use the sleeping bag. The "No Vacancy" signs cause no dismay because the wide open desert always has ample bedroom space.

Of course there are many refinements to the comfort of sleeping outdoors—a cot for those who have inhibitions regarding crawling reptiles, a wool ski cap for cold weather, a hot rock for added warmth if needed, an electric lantern for reading in bed, a thermos of hot coffee for a morning rouser. But I regard a tent merely as needless excess baggage.

A few cans and packages of food are a good standby for emergency—in fact I fare better with my private larder than in some of the roadside eating places. There are no more skilled chefs on earth than the cooks who prepare the canned and packaged goods on the market shelves.

Once on a trip through New Mexico I found a new function for my grub box. I had stopped at one of the roadside stands where the Pueblo Indian women sell their pottery to passing motorists. When I started to leave without having bought any of the ceramics, the elderly Indian woman said, "Maybe you have something, trade?"

When I asked what she meant, she said: "You got groceries?"

That was an idea. So I got out the grub box, and for the next half hour we had a grand time swapping sardines and canned

peaches and soda crackers for decorated pottery. I would select a piece of her earthenware. Then she would reach into the box and set out the items she wanted in exchange for it. Of course she asked more than it was worth—or expected to get. So I would deduct a can of spaghetti, or reach into her stock for another piece of pottery.

She would giggle and I would hagggle—and I don't know yet who got the best of the deal. But we both had a lot of fun.

Yes, the food box is a useful item, whether you are on a camping trip or not. And with a sleeping bag stowed away with the luggage for each member of the party you can laugh at the "No Vacancy" signs, and the memory of that night on the sand will long remain a pleasant recollection. □



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PIONEER VILLAGE

continued from page 7

Another popular vehicle in the West Collection was the brougham, or "hack" named for Lord Brougham of England who drove the first one ever built. Constructed almost entirely of wood, its finish consists of many coats of paint, each one having been rubbed and polished to a glass-like surface. The plush upholstery, glass windows and silver fittings made it a perfect setting for the elegantly-dressed ladies and gentlemen who rode in them.

During the gold rush at Shaw's Flat in Tuolumne County a great wagon was driven patterned after the Conestoga wagons made famous in Pennsylvania's Conestoga Valley. Usually drawn by six horses, it carried tremendous loads. Similar vehicles, through smaller, with a driver's seat in front and canvas-covered bows, were renowned as prairie schooners.

Favorite of wealthy sportsmen was the hunting wagon. With its rubber-tired wheels, and kerosene lamps mounted on each side, it was usually pulled by a team of two spirited horses. To add to the hunter's enjoyment, a compartment beneath the two seats provided space for lunch and "refreshments" when a party was out in the field.

The most familiar vehicle in the collection is probably the Concord coach, made by Abbott Downing of Concord, New Hampshire, known to viewers as the stage coach of western movies. Discovered in an old barn of the Pacheco Pass in 1939, it had been used last on the route between San Jose and Fresno via that Pass. Four to six horses were used on coaches of this type, depending on the roughness of the terrain covered. Nine persons could be accommodated inside, with as many up on top along with the driver and baggage as could find room and handholds.

Both Kern County's Pioneer Village and the West Vehicle Collection are worth a stop-over at Bakersfield. Picnic tables are available near the Village for those wishing to bring their lunches. For travelers on their way from Los Angeles to Sequoia or Yosemite, it is a pleasant break in the trip, especially if one arrives in the cooler part of the day or season. You will be transported back to the days when horsepower was provided by horses, and steam powered the locomotives. □



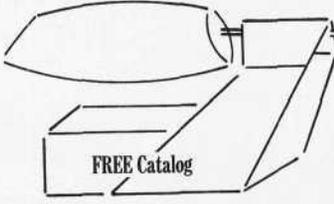
Kenneth Current climbs the fence to inspect the noose over the gate of the corral at the Bakersfield Pioneer Village. It is a popular week-end family outing area.



This wooden jail at one time was mounted on a flat car during the construction of railroad tracks to Caliente, near Bakersfield, California.

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WE LOST A LEDGE Continued from page 17

That meal was the longest I have ever eaten. It started at 5:30 in the afternoon and at 2 the next morning we were still at the table dreaming and talking. Ernie had a list a mile long of things he was going to buy with his new found wealth. At the very top was a Lincoln coupe, half way down was a small yacht—he was going to sail to the old country and see his mother—bring her back to this country with him. He was walking on air.

Clearing off the table at 2:30 in the morning I could hardly believe it had happened to me. Then I felt a little sick in my stomach remembering that we had let three weeks slip by following discovery, and in those three weeks there had been a heavy rain and a few light showers.

Ernie first spotted the 20 feet of gray ledge from which the specimen came while resting on a boulder some where on that vast mountain. The mountain side was steep and the ledge would be hard to find. How much better would I have felt that night had Ernie used colored cloth to mark the gray stone's vein.

Neither Ernie nor I could sleep. He paced the floor eager for daybreak to arrive. He was all packed, ready to go. He had powder, fuse, steel tape, blanket, location papers—everything he would need. While he was hunting for the ledge I was going to go into Warm Springs to buy a pair of pack burros. We would need them to carry supplies for a new camp near our new mine.

Ernie would put up the discovery monument and locate it and pack back what ore he could. When I showed up with the burros we would return to the mine and put up the corner markers.

As soon as it was light enough to see he was out of the door. "Get those burros up here quick as you can," he shouted over his shoulder as he started up the hill.

Twenty hours later—near midnight—he returned to the stone house. Something had gone wrong. His clothes were torn and his face haggard. He slumped into a chair by the fireplace and muttered four words: "I couldn't find it."

There was nothing for me to say. I turned to the stove and started to warm

up some food for him. As I did my eyes fell upon the colored cloth on the shelf I had used to mark my worthless veins.

He was gone before I woke up the next morning. That night he staggered in again. Nothing. This went on for days and weeks.

I went along with him several times, but my prospecting partner was not the same man. He rushed from bush to boulder—nervous, excited, cursing and damning the elements that had taunted him with a peek at a treasure and then concealed it again.

I took him to all the places I had marked with the colored rags which were easy to find, thinking that he might, in some way, get above the spot he was looking for, recognize a familiar rock or tree and somehow find that gray ledge again. But, it was no use. His nerves were cracking. He had to quit.

For about three months he remained at Butte Valley and looked for the ledge and then he left it for good. Ernie landed at Warm Springs and got back into talc mining.

We often met in Shoshone in later years and he would always bring up the subject of the lost mine. "Is there anything we overlooked?" Have you searched for the ledge since then?" he would invariably ask me.

My guess is that the rains that fell after he picked up the specimen caused a boulder to roll off the top of the mountain across the ledge, pushing the soft decomposed granite ahead of it over the vein. The rain and the wind could have left that small area completely changed in three weeks.

I went back to the city to work at my old job, but every year since have returned to the mountains to do assessment work on my claims. I often wonder how long it will be before someone stumbles across that rich vein on the southwest slope of Manly Peak facing Redland Canyon. If it is hidden, I wonder if Nature will expose it again for some prospector—more alert than we were—to claim. The ground is still open for location.

Folks ask me, "how can you lose a mine?" How do you lose anything? Through carelessness. □

A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

Steeped in the history of the West, Death Valley is one of the Southwest Desert area's most publicized regions with its exposure to millions on radio and television in the "Death Valley Days" series. This month we have honored the "lowest point" in the United States with what we consider some of its high points editorially and pictorially. On this, the 19th annual Death Valley '49er Encampment, we hope to perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the early pioneers who played such a heart-breaking role in winning their way West. We are looking forward to meeting many old friends of DESERT November 8 through 11.

This month also has brought a few changes in our format and as we feel that this magazine belongs to the subscribers we would appreciate your cards or letters telling us if we are on the right track. The most noticeable change is on the cover where the stock has been upgraded so that the quality and reproduction of the cover photographs will be readily apparent. As so many of the subscribers save their magazines they will appreciate the heavier cover stock which will tend to eliminate the cover becoming dog-eared as happened with the lighter stock.

DESERT is indebted this month to Mr. and Mrs. Hunt of Palm Desert who have generously loaned their bottle collection to us for display in the book shop. This is a very fine collection and Mrs. Hunt personally did the display case and has really enhanced our little museum of artifacts. Incidentally, the book shop is now open on weekends and we apologize to those who came to see us in the summer when we were closed. For you early birds our 1968 greeting cards have arrived and the book shelves have been stocked and we're ready to help you solve your gift problems.

The desert southwest had a most distinguished visitor recently. Hundreds attended as the Lord Mayor of London, England, resplendent in his ceremonial robes, laid the corner stone for the reconstruction of London Bridge at Havasu City. Bought for \$2.5 million, the bridge was dismantled and carefully numbered, transported by ship and truck to Arizona and now will become part of a huge marine complex. Most bridges are built over water, but this one will be on dry land and when completed, a lake will be channeled out for the bridge to bridge.

Back in California, two local landmarks are in danger of being destroyed completely by vandals. The homes of Cabot Yerxa and Harry Oliver, that gay old escapee from the movie sets of Hollywood, are in sad repair as of this date. These two men built their own castles—Yerxa fashioning his after the pueblo style in Desert Hot Springs with a total of 35 rooms in all. Oliver constructed his home along the lines of an old fort and in fact called it Fort Oliver. It is just off Interstate 10 at Thousand Palms. Harry, the Old Desert Rat, has retired to a San Fernando Valley home and with the passing of Cabot Yerxa both these dwellings that added much to the local color are in danger of being lost.

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Calabasas

Once a wild frontier town,
this Los Angeles suburb now
sleeps in the noonday sun.

by Florence Diehl



ALABASAS, a small, quiet community in the southwestern part of San Fernando Valley in California, once had a reputation as one of the wildest, toughest towns in the west. It was on the trail linking the Spanish Missions and was a stop on the stage line to Monterey.

The dance hall and saloon in Calabasas were crowded and noisy. Often customers rode their horses onto the dance floor. Next to the jail stood the "Hanging Tree." Today in front of the old grocery store, you can see an old oak tree that was once used for quick frontier justice. One of the rare mission bells along Camino Real hangs in front of the store.

Calabasas comes from the Spanish word "Calabaza" meaning pumpkin. In the fall of 1824, a farmer was taking a wagon-load of pumpkins to market. Frightened by a rattlesnake, his horses reared and as the wagon tipped over, the pumpkins crashed on what is now Calabasas Road. The next spring, pumpkins sprouted throughout this area. This is how Calabasas got its name.

In the middle 1880s, a tall, dark-haired stranger rode into the lawless town of Calabasas. He was to become known as the "King of Calabasas." Miquel Leonis was lord of more than 1100 acres of land, cattle, sheep and horses. He hired Mexicans and Indians to help guard his land. Range wars between the settlers and armed mercenaries of Leonis raged for weeks at a time.

As you drive down Calabasas Road, dried-out wooden wagons stand beside the huge cacti. Calabasas has a post-office, a garage, antique shops, a grocery store, boat store, cantina and the Leonis Adobe. The Leonis Adobe, recently restored, is set back from the road beneath oaks and pepper trees. Grape vines, cacti, iris, geraniums, and wisteria frame the Spanish Monterey Adobe.

Miquel Leonis lived with his wife, Espiritu, an Indian Princess, the daughter of the Malibu Chief, Odon. The Leonis Adobe is located on Calabasas Road in Calabasas, California. It is open to the public without charge from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, also Memorial Day, Fourth



Old oak tree was once used for frontier "justice".

of July and Labor Day. Group tours at other times may be arranged by calling Tel. (213) DI 6-2683.

Coming from Los Angeles, take Ventura Freeway west to Mulholland Drive-Valley Circle Blvd. Turn off (two miles west of Topanga Canyon) less than 20 minutes from any point in the San Fernando Valley. Make a sharp right as you leave the Freeway and curve left to Valley Circle Blvd. Go left on Valley Circle Blvd., over the bridge across the Freeway, then immediately right on Calabasas Road and into the town of Calabasas.

From the direction of Ventura, take Ventura Freeway east towards Los Angeles to Mulholland Drive-Valley Circle Blvd. turn-off, turn right and proceed across Mulholland Drive straight ahead into the town of Calabasas.

The sign in front of the Leonis Adobe reads "1844." It is an example of gracious living when San Fernando Valley was ranching country.

In front of the Leonis Adobe there is a wineshed with its grape-presser. A few wooden wagons stand in front of the building. In back of the house is a large barn with many old hand-made tools. Beside the kitchen door is the water pump. There is a bee-hive oven built of stone where bread was once baked by the Indians.

Inside the house, you will see the old family portraits and books. Lace curtains hang on the parlor windows. Adobe floors, oil lamps, the old iron stove and kitchen utensils carry you back into the historic past of Calabasas. □

Strictly from a Woman's Viewpoint

Evidently our women readers are getting ready to head for the back country. We have several requests to print a recipe for a sour dough starter. Although there are various ways of making the starter, this one from a Wyoming rancher is one of the most popular.

SOUR DOUGH STARTER

1 cake yeast dissolved in 2 cups warm water.

Add 2 cups flour and place in crockery or pottery bowl, not in metal.

Let set in warm place for 3 or 4 days.

When it begins to ferment, skim off top. This scum will be quite thick and may have to be skimmed half way down. Add enough flour and water to make consistency of paste. To keep alive, add flour and water same as above and skim off as it works. For sour dough pancakes or biscuits add about a tablespoon of starter to your favorite batter for a batch to serve four. Experiment with the amount to find how much suits your taste.

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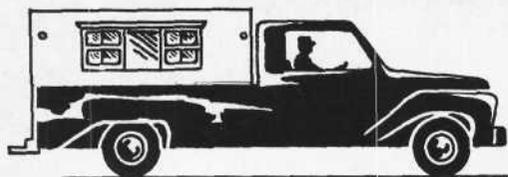


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BACK COUNTRY

Desert Magazine is sponsoring an entry in the National Off Road Racing Association's Second Annual Mexican 1000 Race. This grueling competition involves a non-stop and non-sleep race down the 1000 miles of dirt roads from Ensenada to La Paz, Baja California.

Our entry and sponsorship is different than the other 189 vehicles already signed for the event, which starts in Ensenada on November 5, and ends at La Paz some two days later (give or take a few dozen hours).

The difference is Desert Magazine wants to see just what the gals can do. In the many years of jeeping the back country when we broke an axle, rammed into a tree or just plain skidded into the mud, our "gentle" co-pilots always told us what we did wrong. Now they can prove their point.

Driving Desert Magazine's entry will be my wife, Carol, and Letha Patchen; as of press time the only all-female competitors in the race. They will be driving against veterans such as Vic Wilson, Ted Mangles Manles, Chuck Owens and

Orrin Nordin. We have also told them they are not to stop if they see TV actors James Garner and Steve McQueen with busted pistons along the way; they cannot slow down, powder their noses and offer help. Their job is to show female drivers can compete with men; are not of the weaker sex, and will not succumb to the wiles of race drivers. At least that's what we told them.

They will be driving a 1967 Kaiser Jeepster V-6 with automatic transmission owned by Marv Patchen, publisher of the flying industry's popular magazine, AERO, and husband of one of the drivers. The vehicle will be put into competition shape by Brian Chuchua's Four Wheel Drive Center in Fullerton. Brian has quite a few other entries in the race, all male drivers, so will not comment on the eventual outcome.

How about a 2000 mile 4WD trip? Along with Doug and Carrol Hunt, of Palm Desert, Calif., and the Doyle Latimers of Indio we headed for Colorado. The first night out we camped at Mingu Mountain between Prescott and

Jerome, Arizona, and the next night we spent at Four Corners, where Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah meet. This was probably the poorest spot we chose during the entire trip. Although there were dozens of people staying there, there are no rest rooms or water. You would think one of those four states could get on the ball. Considering the hundreds of people who stop every day, it is a pretty poor showing. The next day was spent at Mesa Verde where the cliff dwellings are located. This is a sight to behold. The camping facilities are the greatest. Roomy campsites, showers and laundromat. This would be a nice spot to spend an entire vacation. We moved on to Durango, Colorado for a ride on the narrow gauge train. Although short of camping sites, we stayed at Hermosa Meadows Campground, a privately owned park. The cost averages \$2.00 for your vehicle and two people and 25 cents per person over two. They have clean rest rooms and showers.

After spending several enjoyable days discovering the Durango area, we went to Silverton. We camped about three miles north of Silverton on Mineral Creek. In Silverton we dug for old bottles in the dump and had very good luck. Doug Hunt hit a pocket of whittle-mold three-piece beer bottles and many others which are now on display at Desert Magazine. Out of Silverton we went to Cinnamon Pass and Sherman, Carson and Lake City, returning via Engineer Pass. The trout fishing was real good. After four days we went to Ouray and Ridgeway and to the free campground in Telluride. The people of Telluride encourage you to camp in their city park where there are rest rooms and water. We took the trip over Ingram Pass and returned via Ophir Pass, stopping at most of the abandoned mines and campsites to look for bottles.

A must stop is the museum in Telluride. By seeing the museum first you have a good idea of where to go and what to see. I think Telluride, Colorado is the mecca for jeepers.



Using guile, beguile and feminine intuition plus an intransigent determination to transgress into the intrinsic field of racing males, Letha Patchen, left and Carol Bryan study a map of Baja as they prepare to meet and test their skills against male drivers in the 1000-mile Ensenada to La Paz race. They refused to allow a photograph of the vehicle's engine section, claiming it is their secret weapon.

TRAVEL

by Bill Bryan

Calendar of Western Events

Information on Western Events must be received at DESERT six weeks prior to scheduled date.

Using both boats and vehicles, 50 percent of the Sundowner's Jeep Club, Inc., of Santa Fe Springs, California cleaned up Crystal Lake in the Angeles National Forest. Since the club consists of 10 members, this means 5 members (plus two guests) totaling 13 adults and 12 children, collected garbage left by hundreds of litterbugs. May the litterbugs henceforth stay home, clean up their own backyards and no longer dump their beer and bean cans so others have to clean up after them. Desert Magazine is proud to present the Sundowner's with its Conservation and Preservation Award.



Sundowners collect trash from lake.



Debris is then put into large sacks for dumping.



Trailers and 4WD vehicles are used to haul litter to dump.

OCTOBER 12, PAINTED INDIAN CAVES OF BAJA CALIFORNIA, color film and talk by Dr. C. W. Meighan, UCLA archeologist and Baja authority, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, 532 West Mission Drive, San Gabriel, Calif. 8 P.M. Write Baja California Society, P.O. Box 643, Arcadia, Calif.

OCTOBER 17-20, THIRD ANNUAL BORREGO SPRINGS DESERT FESTIVAL highlighting the opening of the area's desert vacation season. Rock shows, art displays, guided tours and walks, 4WD trips, etc. Write Borrego Springs (Calif.) Chamber of Commerce.

OCTOBER 19 & 20, NORTHPROP RECREATION GEM AND MINERAL CLUB'S Harvest of Gems annual show, Hawthorne Memorial Center, 3901 West El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif. No admission. Write William Greenwood, 841 Bejay Place, San Pedro, Calif.

OCTOBER 26 & 27, SAN DIEGO COUNTY ROCKHOUND GEMBOREE, 7th annual show, Scottish Rite Masonic Memorial Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego.

OCTOBER 27 & 28, ART OF GEMS SHOW presented by Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society, Community Center, Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, Calif. Side trips into Mojave Desert. Camping available.

NOVEMBER 2 & 3, MINERAL SHOW of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, Pasadena City College, 1570 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, Calif.

NOVEMBER 4-7, SECOND ANNUAL NORRA BAJA 1000 RACE. For information write NORRA, 19720 Ventura Blvd., Suite H, Woodland Hills, Calif. 71367.

NOVEMBER 8-10, HEMET JEEP CLUB'S 8th Annual Afton Canyon Jeep Junket, Razoo Area. Fifty mile scenic trip through Afton Canyon. For information write Jim Loomis, Hemet Jeep Club, P. O. Box 841, Hemet, California 92343.

NOVEMBER 9 & 10, MONTEBELLO MINERAL AND LAPIDARY SOCIETY'S gem and mineral show, Gardens Masonic Temple, 6310 East Olympic Blvd., East Los Angeles. Free mineral specimen cards to teachers and grammar students.

NOVEMBER 9 & 10, MONTEBELLO MINERAL AND LAPIDARY SOCIETY'S gem and mineral show, Gardens Masonic Temple, 6310 East Olympic Blvd., East Los Angeles. Free mineral specimen cards to teachers and grammar students.

NOVEMBER 9 & 10, MOODS IN WEEDS, 26th annual show of the Twentynine Palms Woman's Club, plus a Gem and Mineral Show, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

NOVEMBER 9-10, HARVEST OF BOTTLES of the Sequoia Antique Bottle Society. Displays and sale, free parking and admission. Crafts and Hobby Bldg., Tulare County Fairgrounds, Tulare, Calif.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, POINSETTIA FIELDS BLOOMING along Highway 5 in San Diego County. World's largest Poinsettia Ranch bordering the Pacific Ocean.

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LOST DESERT GOLD, legendary and geological history of the southern California desert, with photos and maps to pinpoint locations. \$2.50 postpaid. Gedco Publishing Co., Box 67, Bellflower, Calif. 90706.

GHOST TOWN DIRECTORY — Pictures, maps, price \$1, or order free catalog, books, maps, for treasure, bottle, rock, arrowhead hunters. Pierce Publishing, Dept. T-25, Box 571, Georgetown, Texas 78626.

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LETTERS to and from the Editor . . .

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.

Good Samaritans . . .

In regards to the story on Ivanpah Springs in the September issue, we made the trip on August 30 and really enjoyed it. We had car trouble about half way up and a couple of total strangers spent two hours helping us get started. I would like to thank them through Desert as I know they will see it.

JIM and VIRGINIA DENVER,
Azusa, Calif.

We Dropped a Mighty O . . .

Re the interesting article in the June '68 issue, *San Bernardino's Fossil Beds*, the statement is made "time prior to 80 million years ago would be called pre-Cambrian." By the printer dropping the second O, it results in a discrepancy of 720 million years in the Geological Time Scale! Desert is improving with age—I should know as I have read every issue since its inception 31 years ago.

J. A. KAY,
Capistrano Beach, Calif.

It's Searching Time Again . . .

What has happened to Mr. Pegleg and his black nuggets? Now that the winter season is here and we can once again start exploring the lower desert areas we would like to be brought up to date on the latest of this fascinating mystery.

The last letter you published from him was in the July '68 issue (I am sure because I read every issue from cover to cover) in which he gave two theories—one the magma theory and the other the Peralta version. Which does he really believe? We spend many weekends in the area near Salton Sea looking for nuggets, old bottles, Indian artifacts, but mostly just having fun by getting out into the open and away from this Los Angeles smog and rat race.

Keep up the good work you are doing at Desert; and keep us informed so we can plan trips we read about in "our" magazine.

WELLS SAGER,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Editor's Note: We have not heard from "Mr. Pegleg" since his letter printed in the July issue. Now that cooler weather is here, he may return to his bonanza and let us know the latest developments. We also have three very interesting manuscripts relative to the Pegleg nuggets which we have been holding. We did not want to publish them and start a stampede to the desert during the hot summer months—we might have lost a few subscribers from heat prostration! The articles will be published soon.

Coyote Cuisine . . .

In your February 1968 issue I read your article about "The Rugged Rogue." Some weeks ago I camped with friends in the sand dunes in Death Valley. As three of us left on bicycles at dawn, Bob stayed to clean up camp. When we met him again he told us about two coyotes who came to visit. One jumped up to the rim of a trash can and fished out a bag of garbage which he took with him. When Bob went back to his sleeping bag he was surprised to see the other coyote sitting on his sleeping bag with the filling of styrofoam and down around his snout and all over the campground. Here is another item to add to the list of the coyotes preferred food: the sleeping bag. It had three holes in it! Perhaps Maryellen Garvey, who wrote this article, would like to know about this experience.

ERIKA WERNER,
Lancaster, Calif.

Seeks Old Map . . .

While doing research on the Skeleton Canyon bandit treasure, I came across your November 1951 issue with an article titled "Buried Treasure of the Chiricahuas" by Weldon Heald. I have located the area where the treasure is buried and I was hoping one of your readers could help me locate a map that was supposed to have been made by Zwing Hunt.

I have located Davis Mountain and a mile or so due west is a canyon of many turns. In the canyon is a cataract or waterfall and on the west wall of the canyon at the waterfall is a bubbling spring (believed to be Silver Spring). Up the canyon from this spring is another spring, it should be Gum Spring. Near Silver Spring is a grave under a juniper tree. This tree is over one hundred years old. I believe this to be the grave of the outlaw mentioned in all of the stories. I have spent a considerable amount of time in the area and could not find the rock with the crosses or the burned wagon. If the rock and burned wagon are in fact true clues, there could be many reasons for their disappearance over the years.

I have heard that there is a map showing the location of the buried loot, but I am unable to find out who has possession of such a map. If the rock and wagon have been washed away by the elements then the map is the only possible way to find the treasure. I will be making a few trips to Davis Canyon. If anyone could help me locate the map I am sure we could recover the treasure.

JOHN HALLIGAN,
2674 Dumetz St.
Camarillo, Calif. 93010.

Don't Opt Octopi . . .

If you are going to print stories about sea animals like the one in the July issue by Marie Valore, I think your readers should be told that there is a great danger in handling octopi.

Sanibel Island in Florida has one of the famous shell beaches and after a storm live stuff comes up in quantity. There is almost always several octopi of various sizes and, since they are so small, they are not considered as anything but amusing.

A winter ago one of the guests of Casa Ybel was given a little octopus and in handling it he was bitten on the middle finger. In a few moments the finger began to swell. It grew numb and was painful for six months. In the head of the octopus there is a gland behind the pincher teeth which injects poison of quite virulent degree. People who may handle the little animals ought to know the danger.

MISS SIDNEY BALDWIN,
Boothbay, Maine.

Editor's Note: Although Marie Valore did not find or handle octopi during her La Jolla marine collecting trip, DESERT thanks Miss Baldwin for her warning.

Road Paved . . .

Relative to the article on Pipe Springs National Monument in the August issue, Arizona Highway 389 west of Fredonia has been paved. Motorists can now visit the National Monument by taking Utah Highway 59, which is paved, at Hurricane. I have driven past Pipe Springs National Monument several times since June of this year. One of these times I plan to stop and look around. It looks interesting.

W. E. SMITH,
China Lake, Calif.

Ivanpah Road . . .

In your September, 1968 Desert Magazine there is an article titled *Ivanpah, Queen of the Clark Mountains*. I am very interested in making this trip, but was wondering what condition the road is in. Can the trip be made in a regular passenger car without any problem? Also, will you tell me the approximate altitude of Ivanpah? Thank you.

J. A. CARDELLO,
Santa Ana, Calif.

Editor's Note: Majority of the roads to and around Ivanpah can be reached by passenger car if you drive carefully and watch for soft sand. If you are in doubt, get out of your car and check the road for high center and other obstacles. The area ranges from 4000 to 7000 feet.

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