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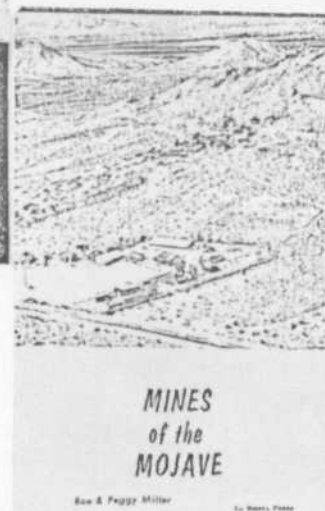
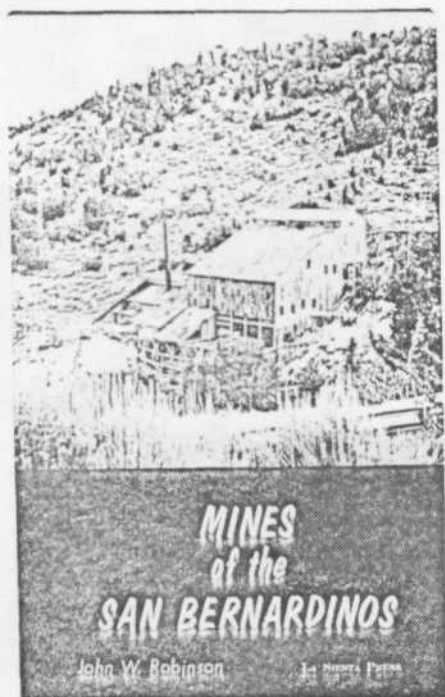
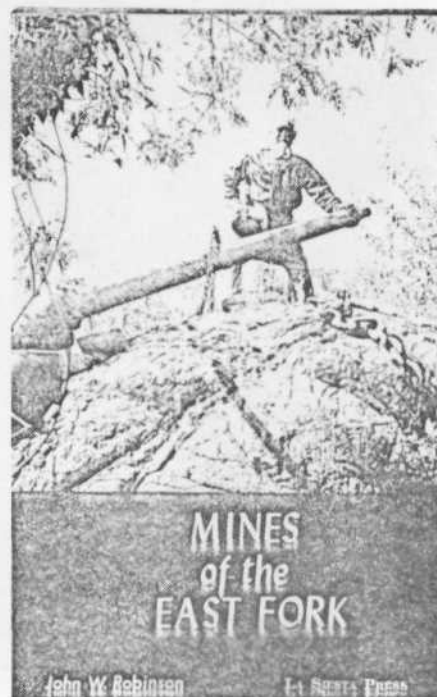
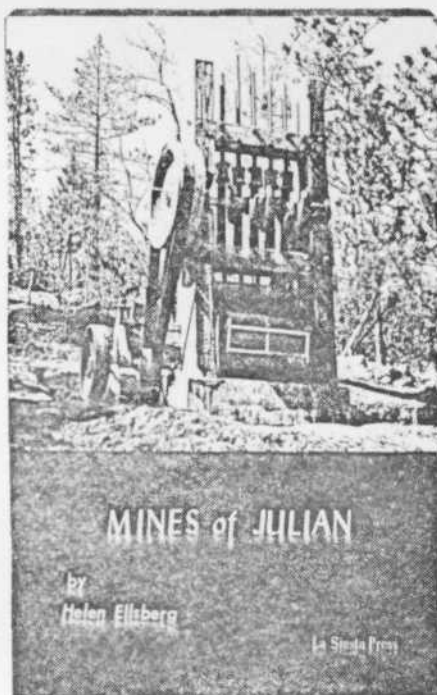
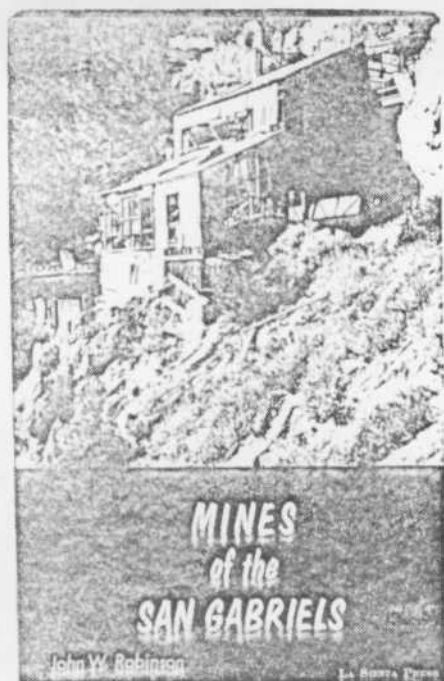
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**Desert**  
MAGAZINE



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Volume 48, No. 1  
 February, 1984



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# RIVERSIDE COUNTY'S NATIONAL DATE FESTIVAL

There are no flying carpets or camel caravans to Southern California but each year thousands of winter vacationers find ways to get to that part of the Southwest Sunbelt where a major entertainment attraction is the county fair built around an Arabian Nights fantasy theme.

Riverside County's National Date Festival, held in mid February each year, celebrates an annual date harvest that produces a gross value of around \$35 million. It is the only significant commercial date harvest outside the Arab world. Table grapes and citrus are the other economically important crops produced in the Coachella Valley.

Date palms were introduced into the Coachella Valley in 1899 as part of a federal program to diversify United States agriculture. Experimental plantings in other states were largely unsuccessful.

Origin of the date palm from the countries of old Arabia gave the National Date Festival its Arabian Nights theme which is carried out by an outdoor Arabian Nights Pageant fantasy, camel and ostrich races (note the picture on the next page), the Queen Scheherazade Court of Beauty, exhibits of dates, citrus, and other farm crops of the valley.

Between Palm Springs and the Salton Sea are about 5,000 acres of date groves which produce 23 varieties of dates, although one variety is predominant. Date harvest normally starts in late September and continues into February.

There is a huge outdoor stage that is a replica of an old Arabian Nights village as envisioned by the late

Harry Oliver (see the story in this issue) who designed it and supervised the construction. Harry was an early Hollywood set designer who won one of the motion picture industry's first awards for his design of the set for the original "Ben Hur".

Built on several levels, the stage has an array of Obelisks, staircases, spires, mospues, and a towering minaret from which the muezzin makes his nightly call to the faithful. In the case of the Arabian Nights Pageant, the faithful include a volunteer cast of up to 100 costumed singers, dancers, and other performers. Music is arranged and scores adapted from the most popular songs of all-time hit musical comedies and operettas.

Queen Scherehazade and her Court of Beauty wear their elegant costumes as they tour the fairgrounds several times daily. Photography buffs take note of that. In addition, there are afternoon camel and ostrich races. They have no counterpart in the Arabian Nights stories, but are a lot of fun to watch.

Coachella Valley residents held a "Date Festival" in 1910 to celebrate their first date harvest. Similar celebrations have been held through the years and the Arabian Nights theme was adopted in 1947.

Arabian Nights fantasy and whimsy does not diminish the fact that the National Date Festival is the Riverside County Fair. There is a junior fair and livestock show along with one of the finest industrial arts shows. In addition, there are also a large gem and mineral show, home arts exhibits and contests, agriculture and horticultural displays, food, fun, and a carnival for all to enjoy.

Information on next years Date Festival may be obtained by writing the Date Festival at Box NNNN, Indio, Calif. 92201.



OSTRICH RACES ARE POPULAR AT THE DATE FESTIVAL.  
BROOM IS USED TO STEER OSTRICH; NOT AS A WHIP.

# FOCUS ON FUN

## WHAT TO DO AND SEE IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

In addition to the areas featured in this issue, there are many more recreational, scenic and

cultural places for family fun in and around the Coachella Valley, some of which are listed here.

### PALM SPRINGS TRAMWAY

From the Valley Station, 2000 feet above sea level and Palm Springs, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway cable cars carry passengers in just 18 minutes to the 8000 foot station in the scenic San Jacinto Mountains where a panoramic view of the Coachella Valley is matched only by the sight of the San Bernardino Mountains more than 50 miles away.

During the ride from the valley to the mountain station, four complete geological life zones--the equivalent of life changes observable on a motor trip from Sonora, Mexico to the Arctic Circle in Alaska, can be seen. The Mountain Station has an Alpine Restaurant, cocktail lounge, gift and apparel shops. Hiking trails lead to Long Valley and 11 campgrounds.

The tramway is located in Chino Canyon, off Highway 111 on the north side of Palm Springs. Hours are 10 a.m., weekdays, 8 a.m., weekends, Mid October to April. Last car up is at 7:30 p.m., last car down is at 9:15 p.m. Ask about their ride and dine (at the top) special. Telephone (619) 325-4227

### MALKI MUSEUM

Located on the Fields Road turn-off from Interstate 10, between Banning and Cabazon, the Malki Museum was established by the Cahuilla

Indians to preserve their culture and history, and to acquaint others with their tribe. The Cahuillas lived in Riverside County long before the Spanish first came through the area in the 1770's.

There are more than 3000 artifacts, the majority of which were donated by individual Indian families. The basket collection is especially fine.

### BERGMAN MUSEUM

The late Harry Bergman spent more than 50 years of his life collecting artifacts and historical objects from the Western world. Many of the relics are from the immediate vicinity and include Indian artifacts and objects left by the early Spaniards. The charm of this museum is the helter-skelter and hodgepodge displays. It has one of the best Indian arrowhead collections in Calif. It is located on Highway 71 between Aguanga Valley and Anza, only an hours drive from Palm Springs. Take Highway 74, the Palms to Pines Highway to the junction with Highway 71, turn left and follow the highway until the museum.

### WHITEWATER TROUT RANCH

Open the year around every day except Monday, this is an excellent picnic and one day outing spot for the family. A mountain setting with lakes, meadows, and brooks is located here in a thumbnail setting. Fishing is allowed (fee charged) and no license is required. There is a modest fee for use of the picnic area.

From Interstate 10, a few miles north-west of Palm Springs, take the White Water offramp and go north about 5 miles.

### INDIAN CANYONS

Ancient Indian canyons, once home to the Agua Caliente band of Cahuilla Indians, line the nearby mountains around Palm Springs. These canyons are stark reminders of the country before development. They are both quiet and beautiful, rugged and colorful.

The Agua Caliente canyons begin five miles south of downtown Palm Springs. Here can be seen relics from the Indians' history--pictographs, bedrock mortar holes for grinding grain, and stone houses and shelters built high on the cliff walls centuries ago and attesting to the working life and culture that formerly existed.

Palm Canyon is one of the most famous of the picturesque Indian canyons. It has been praised in newspaper and magazine articles around the world and used for natural settings for several motion pictures.

A constant stream of icy mountain water flows through Palm Canyon.

Andreas Canyon, named for "Captain" Andreas of the Cahuilla Indian Tribe, has a perpetual, icy, sweet stream winding through a dense growth of alders, willows, sycamores, thick tangles of wild grape and mesquite and groves of stately, skirted Washingtonia palms.

Andreas, Palm, and Murray canyons are open to the public. They are located on South Palm Canyon Drive, one-half mile south of the Americana Canyon Hotel. Admission is charged to Palm Canyon. There is a souvenir shop offering antique postcards depicting Indian history, Indian jewelry, snacks and cold drinks. The canyons are open from October to June.

### PALM SPRINGS DESERT MUSEUM

The Desert Museum in Palm Springs is not a museum from the literal or static sense of the word. It is a living museum--an institution of ideas rather than things which are constantly being changed to create adventures into the past, present and future.

A few of the services and exhibits offered by this unusual non-profit, non-municipal museum include Fine Art, Primitive and Folk Art Shows; Natural History and Scientific Exhibits; Auditorium Lectures and Concerts; Film Series; Field Trips and Nature Walks; Publishing of Scientific Books; Art Classes and a Reference Library.

### SALTON SEA

Fed by the affluent waters of the canals and ranches of the Imperial Valley and the runoff from the Chocolate and Santa Rosa Mountains, Salton Sea is more than 30 miles long and 15 miles wide. It is located between Indio and Brawley with State 86 on the west and State 111 on the east.

A year around camping, recreation, and fishing area, the Salton Sea was formed in 1905 when the Colorado River broke its banks and flooded much of the area. For more information, see the December 1983 issue of DESERT.

### SANTA ROSA MOUNTAINS

The Palms to Pines Highway (State 74) is one of the most scenic routes in Southern California. It leaves the desert floor at Palm Desert and winds through the Santa Rosa Mountains as cacti are replaced by the flora of higher elevations, including yucca, agave, mesquite, and then, reaching the 5000 foot mark, are the verdant pine covered meadows and mountain slopes.

During the summer it is a welcome respite from the hot desert and in the winter the snow covered area offers family fun and sledding. The community of Idyllwild has facilities for travelers both in winter and summer.

## CABOT'S OLD INDIAN PUEBLO

Cabot's is an Indian pueblo style building with 35 rooms, 65 doors, and 150 windows. For more information, please see the article in this issue. Located in Desert Hot Springs at 67-616 East Desert View Avenue.

## DATE GARDENS

The Coachella Valley is known as the Date Capital of America, for it is where the only commercial date crop in America is produced. Located along Highways 111 and 86 are numerous "Date Gardens", stores that sell various date and citrus products. Unique to the valley are Date Milk Shakes and date crystals. Shields Date Gardens on Highway 111 in Indio offers a free slide show on the "sex life of the date".

## KINGDOM OF THE LIVING DOLLS

This is a museum of hundreds of handmade dolls outfitted in authentic costumes from 11 different periods in history. Among the detailed settings for the dolls are a Turkish mosque, a midieval castle, a Southern plantation.

The miniature world is the only one of its kind in the United States and took over 18 years to create. It was created by Mrs. Betty Hamilton. It is open noon to six, Tuesday to Sunday. Admission charged. Located in Desert Hot Springs at 66071 Pierson.

## LIVING DESERT RESERVE

The Living Desert Reserve is located 2 miles south of Highway 111 on Portola Street in Palm Desert. It is a 900 acre desert interpretive center. The Reserve is situated on an expanse of open desert surrounded by the ever awesome Santa Rosa Mountains.

Features include exhibits of live native mammals and reptiles, a visitors' center with geological exhibits of the Coachella Valley and a combination bookshop-gift shop. Their botanical gardens depict several types of North American Deserts.

There are six miles of nature trails, a picnic area and patio for resting and contemplating the serenity of the desert. It is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but closed during the summer.

## MOORTEN BOTANICAL GARDENS

This is Palm Springs' internationally famous living, growing museum. Features nature trails among over 2,000 varieties of giant cacti, flowers, trees, birds, succulents, and such. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Located at 1701 South Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs.

## LAKE CAHUILLA

One of the newest Riverside County parks, featuring fishing, boating, swimming and picnicking. Lake is stocked by Fish and Game Department (license required). Non motorized boats only. Picnic grounds with barbecues and tables. Park open 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission and fishing fees charged. Located in La Quinta, six miles south on Jefferson Street from Highway 111.

## MISS CORNELIA WHITE'S HOUSE

Built in 1894 from railroad ties, the house is located in the Village Green next to The Vineyard Shopping Center on South Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs. It contains such historically unique items as Miss Cornelia's bibles, paintings by Carl Eytel, and the first telephone in Palm Springs. Maintained by the Palm Springs Historical Society. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Open from October through May.



# FIG TREE JOHN'S LOST GOLD MINE

## AND A TRIP TO FIND IT 60 YEARS AGO

Gold you say?? And near Indio?? Surely you must have been out in the sun too long. Or have you?? It is not just the magic word itself that quickens the pulse. There is a lure to it like nothing else. A pick and a frying pan strapped to the back of a grizzly prospector's burro. It's adventure, uncertainty, and riches, if you are one of the fortunate. If you find it, you can buy all that your heart desires, after making a contribution to the Internal Revenue Service.

And if you don't find it?? Well, there has been the fun of looking for it and just because you didn't find any paying color doesn't mean that it isn't somewhere out there in the hills. Someday you will go back for another try.

Let's go back in time say 130 years ago or so. The place is St. Louis, Missouri. A wagon train has just left for the new land in the west. Wide open spaces, clean fresh air, a new life, and maybe riches--GOLD had been discovered in California.

It is a hard journey but the travelers always have their eyes on the far horizon that never seems to end on the plains of Kansas and Oklahoma, but which gradually disappear as the Rocky Mountains come in to view.

It is raw, undeveloped country with no freeways, no motels, not even an Howard Johnsons or gas station. Its population is mostly animals and Indians. And then comes the deserts.

The deserts and fierce Indians. One morning there is the streak of an arrow screaming towards the wagon train, the spine-chilling yells breaking the stillness of the glistening sands that means Indians on the attack. The whole affair does not take long. The travelers don't have a chance against the greater number of Indians on their superior knowledge of the area and attack abilities. The wagon train is now a smoking heap under the same blue sky that earlier smiled at the travelers. The Indians have left now, taking their booty with them. But, what is the spot on the horizon??

A survivor?? Yes. A survivor, running aimlessly across the burning sands, unseen by the attackers. Tears in his eyes, fear in his heart, he runs as fast as he can. He is a five year old boy. But what is this?? An Indian on a pony is swiftly approaching. Quickly he is scooped up by a strong bronze arm and held to its rider.

The pony and its rider rejoin the other Indians galloping across the desert towards the low foothills to the south. The hills close in behind them. The wagon train is now only a mess of glowing embers. The thoughts of a new life and riches have gone up in smoke.

The time is now about 1880. A man knocks on the door of a St. Louis boarding house run by a Mrs. Bruckman. The man is looking for room and board and he appears very weary and sick. He walks with a very noticeable limp. His skin is brown from many years of sun in the desert. He is very muscular and appears to be used to hard work. Mrs. Bruckman shows him the rear room, which he takes without discussion.

All he wants at this particular time is peace and quiet and to a few well intended questions from Mrs. Bruckman, he has few answers. He will pay her well. He takes a bag from his old suitcase and scatters some shining rocks on the table. She may have them all if she will just let him rest for a while.

Mrs. Bruckman goes down to the kitchen with a frown on her usually placid forehead. She talks to her young daughter, Ellen about their new boarder. There is a mystery about him and she openly wonders if she should have taken him in. They have no man in the house to protect them. There is no doubt that the man is ill. Maybe he is just too sick to act friendly. So, with a shrug of her shoulders, she puts doubts and fears aside. But mystery and the spell of the unknown are at work today.

There is a quickened light in Mrs. Bruckman's eyes. Life goes on day in and day out without much of anything to break the monotony. This stranger spells adventure--the mystery of adventure--and that is something, even in St. Louis.

The man shows improvement after a time under the understanding and kindly care of Mrs. Bruckman and her daughter. He has gained weight and started to talk about leaving as soon as he is able to travel again. And he has been most generous in his appreciation of the hospitality that the Bruckmans have given him. He has also been generous with the yellow colored nuggets from still other bags in his suitcase.

After all, he confided to Mrs. Bruckman, his has been a hard life with his father and mother taken from him when he was five. But beyond that unhappy bit of information, he is quiet about his past.

Then one day the stranger becomes very ill and the doctor who is called in gives the Bruckmans little hope of his recovery. Good care and good food have brought only a temporary improvement. The stranger is going to die.

One evening shortly after the doctor's visit, he asks Mrs. Bruckman and her daughter to sit with him for a while. He has something he wants to tell them and something to give them also. He tells them the story of the lost wagon train, his boyhood spent with the Indians who carried him off that terrible day, and speaks of such names as Fig Tree John, which means nothing to the women from St. Louis.

Had Mrs. Bruckman been familiar with the history of the Coachella Valley in California and the Cohuilla Indians, she would have known of that famous old Indian character, Fig Tree John, who disappeared at intervals only to return with his pockets bulging with gold studded nuggets. But this is St. Louis, Missouri, and no one has heard of such a desert valley as the Coachella, much less Fig Tree John.

The stranger asks her to bring him a pencil and paper and slowly he starts drawing lines on the piece of paper. Then he hands it to her. It is a map, he says. A map to a gold mine in the mountains near a large dry lake on the desert. There is much gold there and he wants her to have the map and maybe somehow she can get out there and get some of the gold. There is too much gold that they could live any place they wanted to. Ellen can go to a young womens college and have beautiful clothes. Mrs. Bruckman could live like a real society lady.

His story is like a fantasy to the Bruckmans. The stranger tells her to guard the map carefully and not to tell strangers about it; to tell no one about it. A fortune in gold lies within the grasp of the person who follows the map. Almost as he cautions her, he passes away. Mrs. Bruckman folds the map up and places the pages in her family Bible.

Between those pages lie adventure, riches, fame, and maybe death. Look what happened to the stranger. She begins to think of people she can trust with her secret but a fear and suspicion new to her nature is born in her mind and she and Ellen decide to keep their secret until someone comes along who can help them. Time passes and Mrs. Bruckman dies.

The map remains in the Bible for many years, and it intrigues Ellen. She still has several of the gold nuggets the stranger gave her mother. Within her grasp is everything she would like to have, thanks to the map. The spell of mystery and adventure grow with each passing day and finally she leaves the city of St. Louis for the far west, where gold just lies on the ground to be picked up by the finder and magically turned into money to buy all things one could want.

With time, Ellen arrived by train in Indio, California. She proceeded to search, always alone, for the location of the gold. She dares not tell anyone her secret. The days pass and the gold eludes her search. She studies the map and the code carefully and with each new trip she seems to draw closer to the location indicated on the map and the two pine trees that mark the spot.

Tired and disheartened, but not discouraged, Ellen moves to Los Angeles, California and takes up residence. Each year, when the heat leaves the valley, she returns to search more.



FIGTREE JOHN

But her efforts are not rewarded as time passes and she grows older, she becomes less physically able to continue her search. It is then that Ellen decides she will never enjoy the riches of that fabulous lode of gold the stranger had so painstakingly mapped for her mother back in St. Louis so many years ago. And, incidentally, there is a code required to translate the locations and reference points on the map. She must decide what to do with the map and code.

It is in 1923 in the little town of Palm Springs that Ellen's friendship with Mrs. Zaddie Bunker and her husband Ed, prompts her to talk about the lost mine. It could be one others have looked for. It was, she believed, the long lost Fig Tree John Mine. Gold is supposed to lie on top of the ground waiting for someone to pick it up. Just like the stranger said in St. Louis.

Mrs. Bunker accompanied Ellen to her bank in Los Angeles and they removed the map from its resting place in a safe deposit box. With a quickened anticipation, they unfolded the now-yellowed sheet and looked at the curving lines, the crosses, the marks that indicate the railroad tracks and the strange groups of figures: 880 149 880 049 separated by three dots within a circle. Then she looks at the code. It seems as though surely it won't be too hard to read. And Mrs. Bunker tells Ellen that she and Ed and her friend Cornelia White will search for the lost mine. And when they find it, they will take her to it so she may have the thrill of standing at last on the site of the fabulous treasure of gold. It is her mine, after all, and when she is physically able to stand another trip into the mountains of the desert, they will insist she come with them.

Mrs. Bunker watches as Ellen tears out pages from a notebook, each bearing the explanation of the groups of figures. The last page of the notebook is left in the safe deposit box with the understanding it will be brought out when the mine is found.

And so on a clear, warm day in May, the three, Mr. and Mrs. Bunker and Cornelia White, set out for a spot believed to be in the vicinity of a big dry lake. However, by this time, the Salton Sea has been created and the big dry lake is now full of water. They rent two burros to pack their provision and equipment on. Using a ranch near Oasis as their base camp, they start out on foot with the burros.

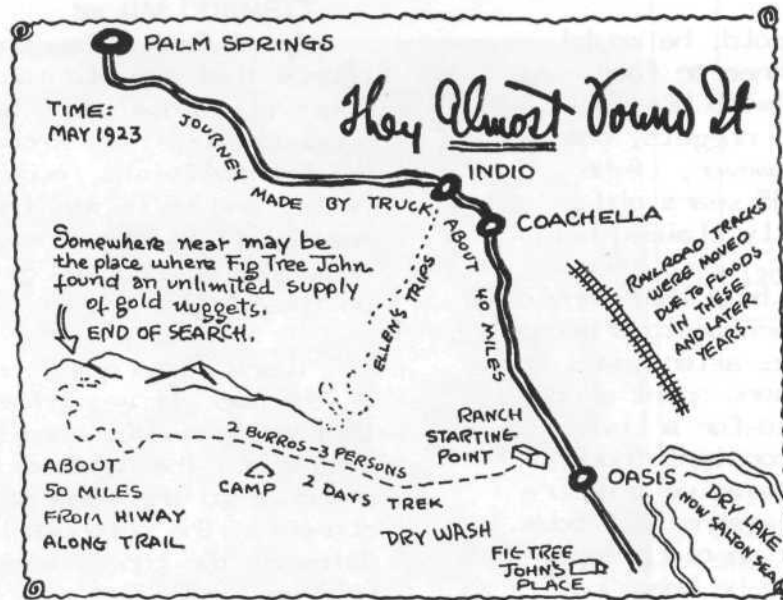
They enter a wide canyon which is followed until nightfall and camp is then made. They realize they must find water, but according to the code and the map, by the end of the second day, they should find the spring shown on the map.

Just in case, however, they bring an emergency supply of water. Just 10 years ago, Ulysses S. Grant's grandson had almost perished in this area for lack of water.

It is a slow, uphill journey all the way but they have no difficulty finding the landmarks indicated on the yellowing map. Nature seems to have stood still in her growth, or change in this area, but then the desert changes very slowly, naturally. By sunset on the second day they find the spring shown on the map. It is a perfect spot for a new base of operations and they set about gathering wood for the stove and fire. So far, fortunately, everything has tallied with the map. The three buttes, the high mountain to the northwest, the spring. Surely they will find Ellen's mine for her.

They are up with the sun to find mountain sheep drinking at the spring. The sky is a faint blush of pink and they are tense with excitement for they really have started in earnest in their quest for the lost mine. They keep their eyes to the ground looking for an outcropping that will appear to be gold-bearing ore. The stranger told Mrs. Bruckman that the precious metal was lying around on top of the ground. There were a great many pieces of broken Indian pottery half buried in the ground, evidence of one time Indian habitation. However, as yet, nothing resembling this had appeared.

It is possible that the band of Indians that attacked the wagon train lived in these canyons or that they had been the home of the boy they raised. But wagon trains were rare in the Coachella Valley and the Indians not often warlike. There are many stories of Indians in the vicinity with rich quantities of gold in their possession, sometimes in the form of black metal, generously sprinkled with free gold that was readily passed for currency at the country store.



THIS MAP INDICATES THE PATH TAKEN IN 1923 TO FIND THE LOST GOLD MINE OF FIG TREE JOHN

The trail became increasingly steep and difficult to travel and after five days they reached the spot where the pines are shown on the map. Here, there is a great amount of underbrush, many trees, and such, so it is decided to find a high point from which they may obtain a perspective of their location. They know they are close to where the mine is. And the May sun is hot.

They push through the undergrowth, startling a young mountain sheep with a badly swollen jaw. "Probably snake bite", says Mr. Bunker. They reach the summit, exhausted from the heat and dripping with perspiration. They eagerly look for the pine trees. But there are none. Without the 2 pine trees, they are without a map point and lost. Provisions are running low so they return to the base camp to rest and study the map for a possible misreading or error.

Returning to the summit the next day, the three branch out in another direction. For several days, they repeat this procedure, but nothing is found.

Short of food and with the May hot spell upon them, they return to the Oasis Ranch. From there they travel back home to Palm Springs. There they get news that Ellen has passed away. Mrs. Bunker remembers the last page of the notebook, but is unable to go to Los Angeles to try to retrieve it.

The map and code remained in the possession of Zaddie Bunker for many years. Thus there is some physical evidence to this treasure tale. No one seems to question that Fig Tree John had easy access to some fountain of great wealth. His existence and his habits were known to at least a few pioneer people of the Coachella Valley. He possessed gold nuggets and he found them somewhere not too far from where he lived in the "dry wash" area near the present day Salton Sea.

When he needed gold, he would disappear for three or four days, returning with his pockets filled with nuggets. One would wonder, however, if he were actually 135 years old when death finally claimed him.

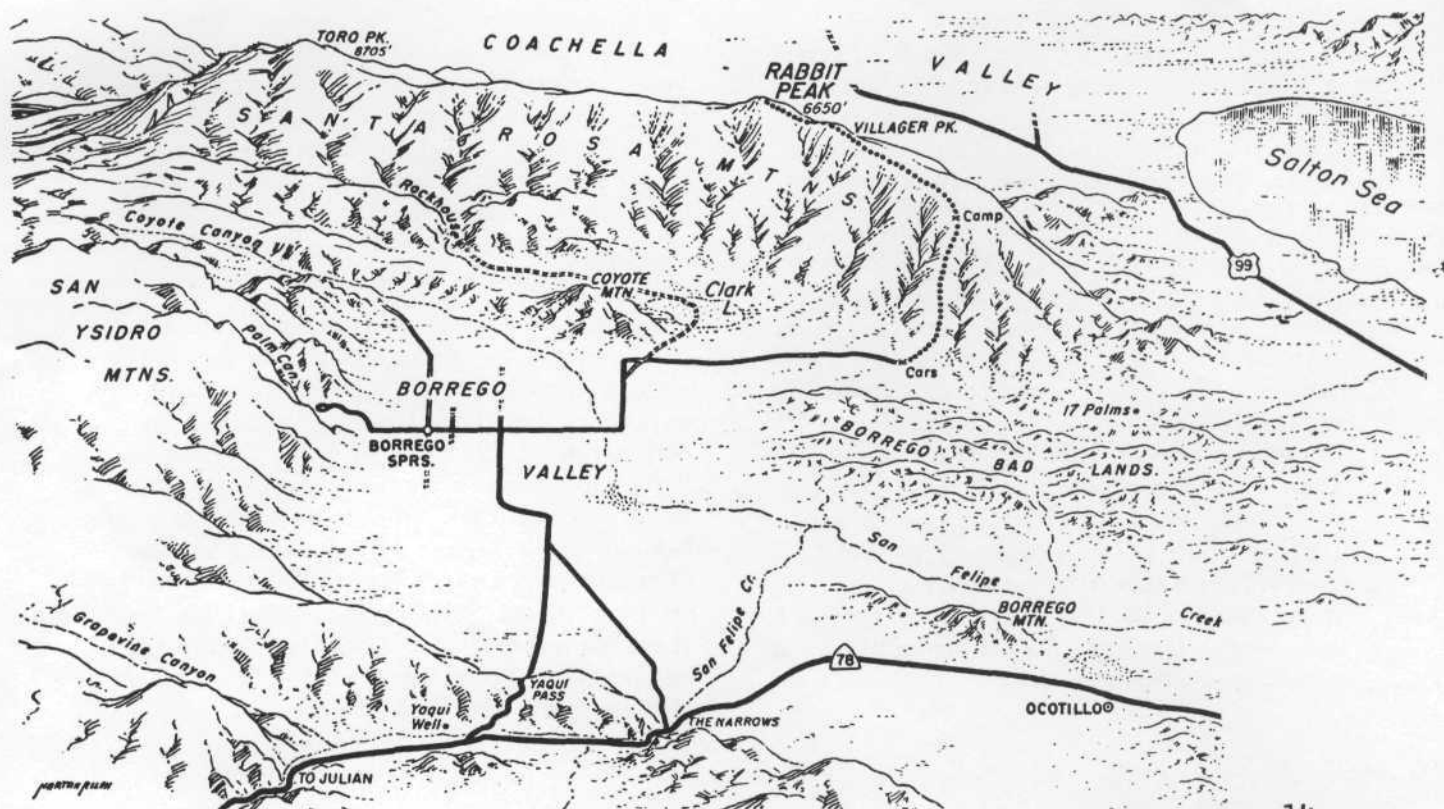
It is quite true that many of the old desert prospectors became quite unreliable, after years in the sun and seasons spent alone with only a burro for a living companion. The constant thought of finding that elusive treasure kept them going against all odds. It could be that an old prospector might imagine he knew just where that mine was located. He could very well draw a map, and he could quite accurately remember places he had visited afoot and possibly many times. However, the area around the Coachella or Salton was not a mining area in the 1850-1870 era. But gold has been found in the Julian area,

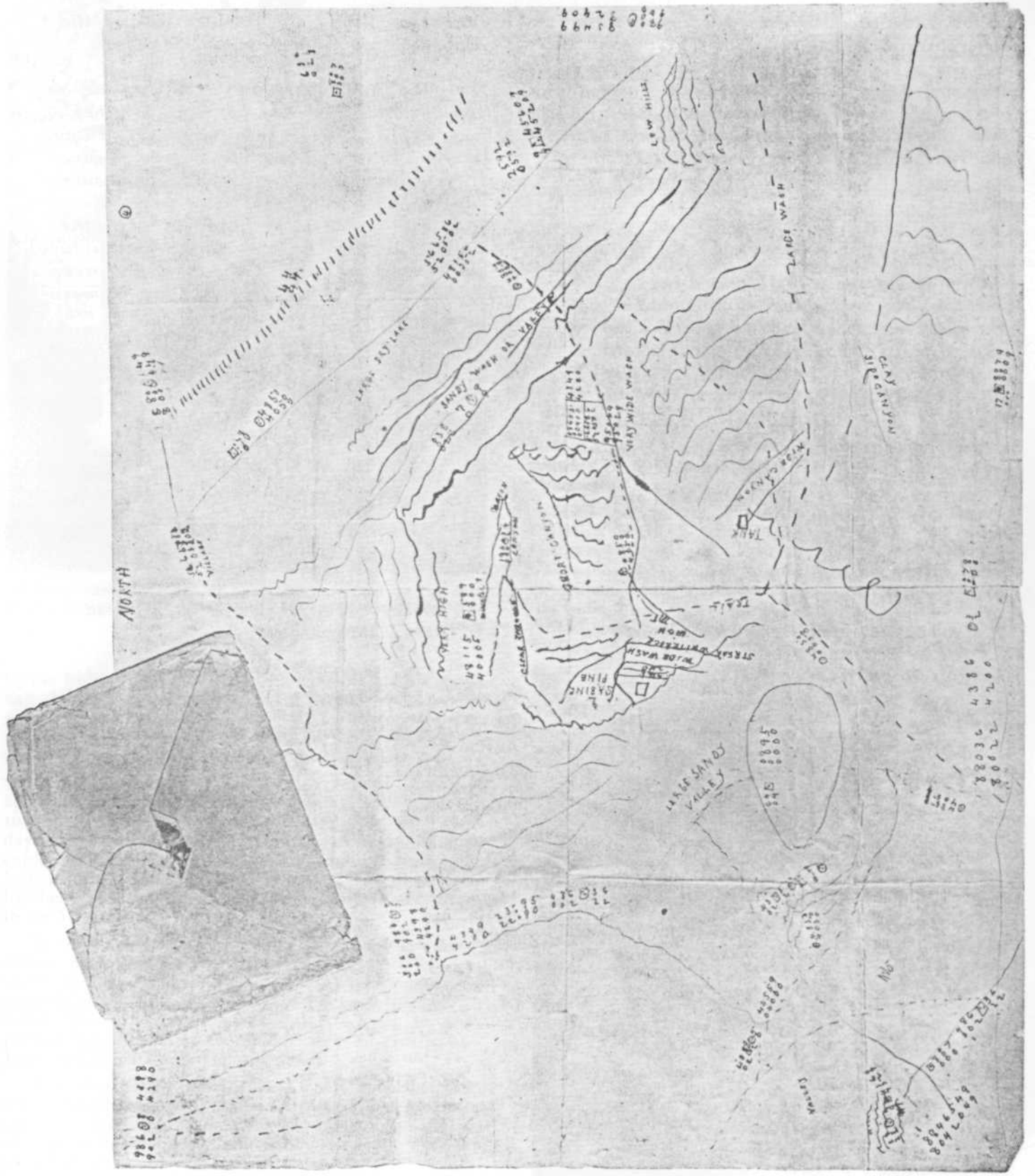
Apart from this, there is also the chance that the old man who died in St. Louis all those years ago did know, as somebody must have known then, that gold actually was found in the desert hills, and if it was there then, it must still be there. And how can one explain the accuracy of the points on the map??

There is no question about the age of the map. It was inked on a paper that was commonly used in the 1870 - 1880 era. The notebook adds further credence to the accuracy of the time element. The notebook had printed dates at the top of each page. The year was "1871".

For all of those readers who long to find a long lost treasure, the reproduction of the map on the following page may lead you to finally discover the true source of the mysterious wealth of "Fig Tree John" and the stranger. If you find it, at least bring us a sample of the nuggets.

SOME YEARS LATER, A GROUP HIKE IN FROM THE BORREGO SIDE, BUT FOUND NOTHING. THE MAP BELOW INDICATES THEIR ROUTE.





THIS IS THE MAP USED BY THE BUNKERS AND C. WHITE ON THEIR EXPEDITION TO FIND THE LOST GOLD MINE IN 1923

## DATE QUIZ

DOES A LIST of date varieties read like an Arabian Boy Scout roll call to you? Are you a pointer--do you enter a date shop and say, "Gimme a pound of these, a pound of those, and toss in a few of them there?" If so, you should save wear and tear on your index finger by learning the names of a few popular varieties of dates.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, date growers in the Coachella Valley of Southern California have concentrated on improving the quality of the various types originally imported from Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Arabia and

(To complete the test, indicate your selection by checking one of the three possible answers to each question.)

1. Which of the following date varieties is the leader in sales, and is the only date with a large amount of cane sugar?  
A. Maktocm            C. Deglet Noor  
B. Amir Hajj
2. One of these has the reputation, in the Persian Gulf, of being the most delicious date in the world. (It is grown here.)  
A. Khalasa            C. Rhars  
B. Kustawy
3. Check the date that has been developed into the largest sized of all of the imported varieties grown in the United States.  
A. Halawy            C. Medjool  
B. Sayer
4. A popular soft date is round in shape and is one of the best dessert dates. Can you name it?  
A. Khir            C. Iteema  
B. Barhee
5. Which date, in its highest quality, is translucent? Its seeds can be seen when the date is held up to a light.  
A. Hayany            C. Tazizoot  
B. Deglet Noor

Morocco. They now produce 95% of the dates grown in the United States.

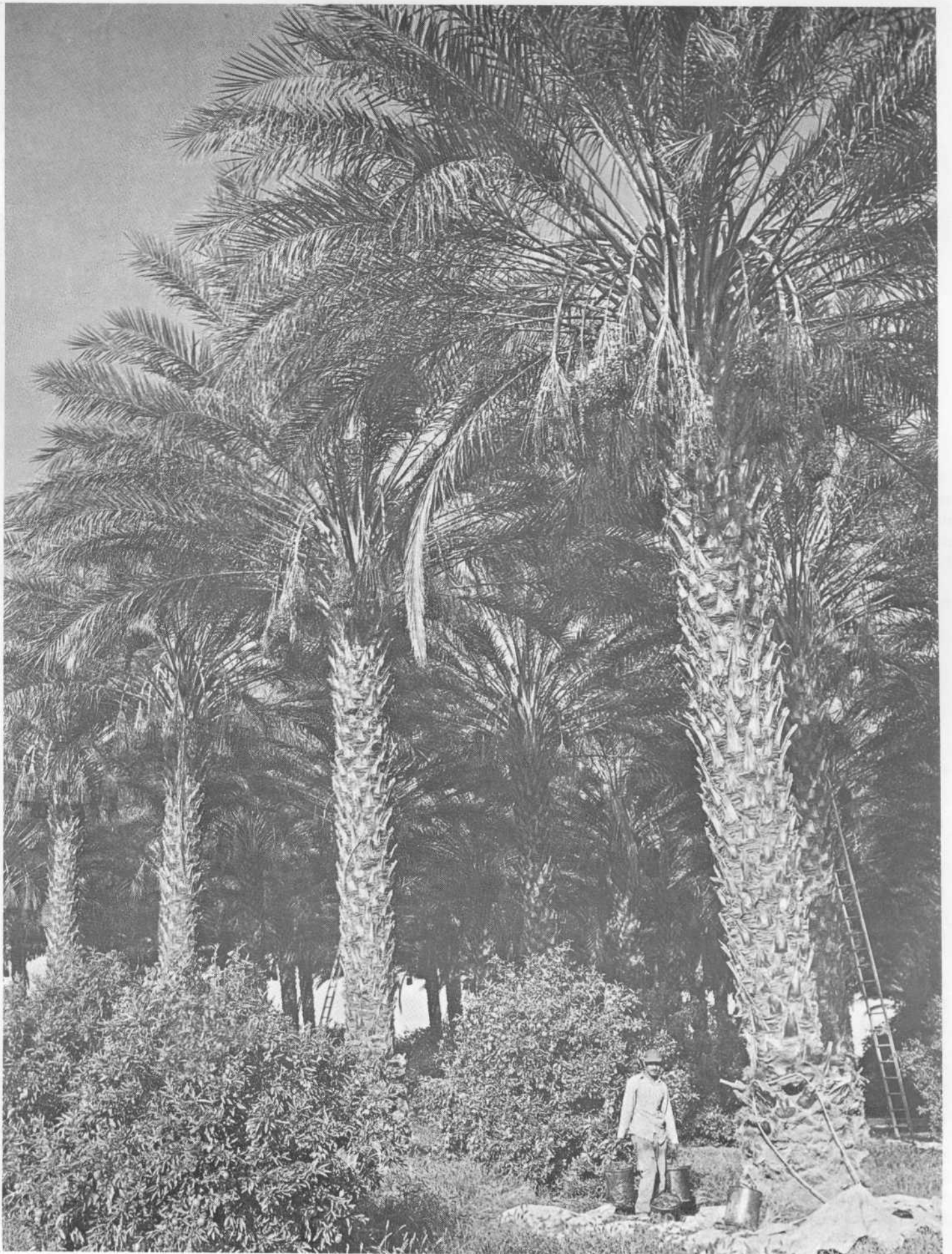
The following quiz will provide an opportunity for you to prove whether you are date-wise or otherwise. Please do not be disturbed if you are unsure of the answers--the author was unsure of the questions until he cornered Roy W. Nixon (horticulturist with the United States Department of Agriculture) and Hillman Yowell (Marketing Services Manager of the California Date Growers Association.)

A Deglet Noor Date Orchard

6. Can you select, from these three, the inverted sugar date that is suitable for enjoyment by diabetics?  
A. Khadrawy            C. Saidy  
B. Zahidi
7. One of these is known as a bread date. Which one?  
A. Medjool            C. Thoory  
B. Barhee
8. Which of the following is a dark colored (almost black) date?  
A. Dayri            C. Hilali  
B. Ashrasi
9. Check the popular date that is frequently used for cooking.  
A. Kustawy            C. Khalasa  
B. Halawy
10. Which date is the sweetest? It is large and is brown in color.  
A. Rhars            C. Hayany  
B. Saidy

Answers are on Page 30





# White Man's Pueblo



by Laura Raef

**T**HE UNIQUE pueblo "castle-turned-museum" jutting out of the side of a mountain in Desert Hot Springs, California, is best described as an extremely remarkable feat—as extremely remarkable as its builder, Cabot Yerxa.

From a distance, this Hopi-designed cliff dwelling practically camouflages itself with its own muted, gray-like hues which blend with those of the surrounding desert. Then, like a genie popping out of a bottle, the rambling pueblo emerges from out of the mountainside into a spectacular view.

Cabot Yerxa, famous in the desert for his paintings of Indians, designed his Pueblo from ancient cliff dwellings of the New Mexico Indians who lived over a thousand years ago.

He started his building before the

birth of the city—now known for its healthy mineral waters—and continued to build, adding room after room, for a total of 24 years.

Yerxa deviated only slightly from the Hopi Indian style of construction. One change he made was building stairways inside rather than the Indian-style ladders on the outside. Ancient dwellings had only one window and one door in each room, but Yerxa included two and sometimes three in most of his—with exception of the cave rooms which have none at all.

The east wall on the ground floor is 24 inches thick at the bottom and 10 or more inches at the top. It has no doors nor windows. The sun rises but does not shine into the downstairs rooms until sunset.

All 35 rooms of the four-story rambling cliff dwelling have a different roof level. Altogether there are 150 windows and 65 doors and 17 of these doors lead to the outside.

Yerxa included four small apartments inside his pueblo. These were often occupied by artist friends. His fourth floor studio towers above the canyon walls, bringing into view nearly all of Coachella

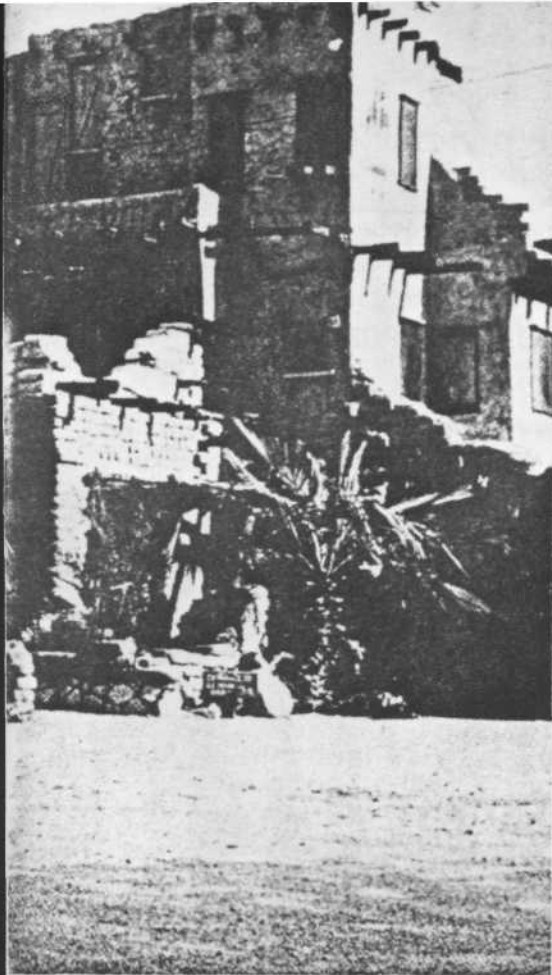
Valley. However, the canyon opens out toward Mt. San Jacinto which gives every room a view of Riverside County's highest mountain.

The castle is built over a hot water well. The pump, located in Yerxa's workshop, lifts the 128 degree water to a tank behind the pueblo. The building is 300 feet above the desert floor but only 140 feet to water.

When he started construction, he had no money for tools. Using a second-hand pick and shovel, he started digging. For a solid year, he dug a deep cavern in the mountainside. With the dirt, he filled up the canyon in the front of the mountain, which later became his front yard.

In his Model T Ford, he hauled sand, rocks and cement—along with barrels of water—up to the mountain peak. Unable, financially, to buy materials, he scoured the desert collecting old railroad ties, used nails and anything else which might be of possible value.

Excepting for a very short time when he had the help of one man, he did the work alone—even hand-mixed his cement. As soon as the construction developed to crude livability, Yerxa and his wife, Portia, moved in.



*The late Cabot Yerxa  
and his famous Indian pueblo  
into which he built part  
of his soul.*

fought against General Custer, are in the museum.

As the fantastic cliff dwelling grew larger and larger, the public clamored to see the inside. Reluctantly, Yerxa opened a part of the castle to sightseers, conducting tours.

Yerxa first came to the desert as early as 1913, with only a paper bag of food and a quart of water and minus a blanket. Keeping warm at night by campfire he slept during the day on the sand while the sun warmed his body.

His first desert home was a hole dug in a bank with no roof, no door, no furniture—only the hole in the earth. Next he built a one-room cabin to be followed shortly by what he named as the "Eagle's Nest." This was half underground and had one door and one window, also atop Miracle Hill. There was a fireplace and this is where he brought his bride home to live before he started his castle.

Having sunk his roots deep in the desert, Yerxa spent much time with Indians, sometimes living with them and going to places never before seen by white man. Consequently, he became a prolific "teller of tales," having been steeped in Indian lore.

A native of Minnesota, he was a descendant of John Cabot, the discoverer of Newfoundland. He came by his reputation as an adventurer early in life. Having left home at the tender age of sixteen, he drifted to Alaska. Friends say he operated a cigar store there during the gold rush and made a fortune. Later, he lived for two years in an Eskimo village. Then he came to Desert Hot Springs and started his castle.

He never stopped building, adding room after room. He was often heard to say, "I'll never stop building and adding on to the castle—as long as I keep building I'll never die!"

But a little more than 17 years ago, the desert lover's blunted pick and shovel, along with a few other crude tools, lay idle in his workshop. To the end, he was true to his word. He continued to build for 24 years, until his death at the age of 83.

After his death the building was empty until a group of professional and business men formed an organization called the Landmark Conservators, a non-profit corporation devoted to restoring and preserving landmarks of America.

They have not only restored the building, but have added many new artifacts and things of historical interest. Now called Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo, the building is open for public tours every day of the week except Mondays from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. Desert Hot Springs is a few miles north of Interstate 10 near Palm Springs.

When visitors tour the strange castle, climb the narrow cement steps, try to understand its peculiar structure, they are almost certain to feel the personality and presence of the man who gave over a third of his lifetime to its construction.

With every shovelful of earth he dug, with the driving of every nail and with the crude hand-mixing of every bag of cement, there went into the castle, bit by bit, year by year, along with the man's strength, his very heart, soul and spirit.

The Cabot castle-turned-museum atop Miracle Hill stands—a tribute to a remarkable man who created a remarkable spectacular! □

Somewhere along the way, one room became an art gallery where hung paintings of his as well as his artist friends. He also turned one room into a trading post where he displayed handwork of Indians as well as Mexican artisans, books and many desert souvenirs.

In Alaska during the gold rush days, Yerxa had collected many things used by Eskimos living near the Arctic Circle. These included animal skins, metate stones, pack saddles, animal traps and many pictures taken during the gold rush to Cape Nome in the 1900s.

A museum of early day relics, Indian artifacts and beautiful bead work of Northern Indians, was established inside the castle also. Here, he displayed a tomahawk and buffalo leather shield taken from a dead Indian on the Custer Battlefield. A pair of red moccasins, decorated with porcupine quills, worn by Red Cloud, leader of a band of Sioux who

MANY READERS HAVE ASKED IF DESERT MAGAZINE COULD BE PUBLISHED EARLIER IN THE MONTH. PRESENTLY, DESERT MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED ON THE LAST DAY OF EACH EVEN NUMBERED MONTH.

WELL, WE HEAR YOU OUT THERE. IN STAGES, WE ARE ADVANCING OUR PUBLICATION DATES. YOUR APRIL, MAY WILL BE MAILED AROUND APRIL 15 AND THE JUNE AROUND JUNE 1. INCIDENTALLY, JUNE WILL FEATURE A RETURN TO FULL COLOR.

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR MANY FORMER SUBSCRIBERS, IF YOU KNOW OF ANY, LET THEM KNOW DESERT IS BACK. IF ALL GOES AS PLANNED, WE WILL INCREASE OUR FREQUENCY TO 9 TIMES A YEAR LATER IN 1984.

THIS ISSUE IS DEVOTED TO THE COACHELLA VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA. AS SUCH IT IS A SPECIAL ISSUE. WE WILL RETURN TO A GREATER GEOGRAPHICAL VARIETY OF ARTICLES NEXT ISSUE. A SPECIAL DEATH VALLEY ISSUE IS ALSO PLANNED FOR LATER THIS YEAR.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY DESERT AS MUCH AS I DO.

*Ronald Grantham*

## BOOK REVIEWS

NEVADA POST OFFICES, AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY BY PAHER AND GAMETT

THIS BOOK IS INTENDED FOR THE PHILATELIST OR POSTAL HISTORY STUDENT. BUT IT IS MOST USEFUL TO THE GHOST TOWN BUFF OR NEVADA HISTORIAN. IT LISTS SOME 760 TOWNS THAT ARE AND WERE IN THE SILVER STATE. DATES OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POST OFFICES AND DATES THEY WERE CLOSED ARE LISTED. THESE USUALLY CORRESPOND WITH THE MOST ACTIVE PERIOD OF THE TOWN. EACH OFFICE IS LISTED ALPHABETICALLY AND BY COUNTY OF LOCATION. ILLUSTRATIONS ARE NOT REAL CLEAR BUT NEVERTHELESS INTERESTING. SEVERAL MAPS SHOW THE APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF THE TOWNS (BUT SEVERAL ARE MISSING). THIS BOOK IS RECOMMENDED AS A GOOD ADDITION TO A NEVADA REFERENCE LIBRARY. AVAILABLE AT THE DESERT BOOKSTORE FOR \$30.00 PER COPY, A PRICE WHICH WILL PROBABLY DECREASE THE APPEAL OF THE BOOK, BUT WORTH IT.

# HIDDEN TOWN NAMES PUZZLE

Desert readers will remember some of the brainteasers of times past. Here is a new twist—for the historians. There are 33 names of towns or settlements or stations in the Coachella Valley that have or had United States Post Offices. They may read forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally. Answers are on Page 37 and are based on the article "Towns and Places of the Coachella Valley Past and Present", beginning on Page 38 in this issue.

GOOD LUCK

N O R T H E B C Q D E S E R T S A N D R  
O O Y A L C O O B E R M U D A D U N E S  
R G R R L R G A O S C P A L M C I T Y U  
T I A T B E I C X E O S R E T L A W L C  
H L N H H I E H A R A B I A G W A T E R  
Y B C O B P L E R T J K O K E L L G K W  
T Y H U E A A L S H I L L T H E R M A L  
I G O S R L Q L R O C K I R A M O N G T  
C P M A D M U A M T X H W E L L O O U T  
L A I N O R I A O S W U M A C I T Y A T  
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R M A P C T T A K R A R X N S E A N D T  
D D G A A R A E L I K E I N Y O R Z O I  
E E E L M E E M I N M W V N U A K E M C  
H S R M P R E E T G R A Y N G O L D E N  
T E O S C R R D E S A L T O N S E A C O  
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C T O W P A L M S P R I N G S U N R A L  
I N D I A N W E L L S K Y V A L L E Y A  
S E R O H S H T R O N E E R T E K O M S

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1909 A PAIUTE INDIAN CALLED "WILLIE BOY" KILLED OLD MIKE BRONFAC AT BANNING AND KIDNAPED HIS DAUGHTER, LOLITA, A CHEMEUEVI. HE FLED FROM THE GILMAN RANCH, DRAGGING HER WITH HIM DOWN THE RAILROAD TRACKS AND OVER TO ONE HORSE POINT IN THE PASS NEAR WHITEWATER. WILLIE BOY (THE INDIANS CALLED HIM "SWIFT FOX") PLANNED TO ESCAPE TO HIS PEOPLE IN 29 PALMS, EVADING A POSSE GATHERED BY THE CONSTABLE OF BANNING HE FLED NORTH THROUGH MORONGO VALLEY TO THE PIPES. LOLITA HAD STUMBLER AND FALLEN INTO CACTUS AND WAS SLOWING HIM DOWN. A FEW MILES NORTH OF THE PIPES HE SHOT HER AND HEADED ON DETERMINED NOT TO BE TAKEN. OVER DUNION FLATS, THEN NORTHEAST TO THE BULLION MOUNTAINS, THEN SOUTH TO MESQUITE SPRINGS AND THROUGH MESQUITE DRY LAKE TO 29 PALMS. WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE HE FOUND THAT FEAR OF WHITE REPRISALS AGAINST THE INDIANS AS A GROUP FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE HAD DRIVEN HIS PEOPLE SOUTH TO THE SAFETY OF THE RESERVATION TO THE SOUTHWEST. WITH THE POSSE NOT ON HIS TRAIL HE FLED NORTH AGAIN TO MESQUITE SPRINGS THEN WEST ACROSS DRY LAKES TO ROCK CORRAL. FOR ONE WHOLE AFTERNOON HE OUTRAN, ON FOOT, A POSSE ON HORSEBACK UNTIL THE HORSES NEARLY EXPIRED OF EXHAUSTION. FOUR OF A POSSE THAT NUMBERED AS HIGH AS 75 MEN AT ONE POINT, TRAILED WILLIE BOY TO RUBY MOUNTAIN. THERE THE CLEVER PAIUTE AMBUSHED THEM. CHARLIE RECHE WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED AND THE OTHER THREE HAD THEIR HORSES SHOT OUT FROM UNDER THEM. THE POSSE ESCAPED DEATH, FLED CARRYING RECHE AND RETURNED ONE WEEK LATER TO FIND THAT WILLIE BOY HAD KILLED HIMSELF BY PUTTING THE 20-30 TO HIS CHEST AND PULLING THE TRIGGER WITH HIS BIG TOE. HE HAD OUTRAN THEM FOR 500 MILES ON FOOT AND THEN TOOK HIS OWN LIFE.



"Willie Boy" 1909

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1862 WARREN HALL AND HENRY WILKERSON DROVE A STAGE ON THE BRADSHAW ROAD FROM LOS ANGELES TO LA PAZ (A COACH AND SIX HORSES). TWELVE DAYS AFTER DEPARTURE THEY ARRIVED AT THE RIVER AND MADE A RETURN TRIP WITH \$5,000 IN GOLD IN ONLY FOUR DAYS. FARE WAS \$40.00 AND ON ONE TRIP 35 PEOPLE, THE DRIVER AND A CHINAMAN MADE THE JOURNEY. A MONTH LATER HALL AND WILKERSON WERE KILLED BY A STATION KEEPER IN SAN GORGONIO PASS. THE KILLER WAS TRIED AND ACQUITTED, CLAIMING SELF-DEFENSE.

PEDRO FAGES WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST WHITE MAN TO MAKE A RECORDED TRIP THROUGH COYOTE CANYON. PURSUING SOME DEER IN 1772 HE WAS FORCED TO TAKE TO THE MOUNTAINS BECAUSE OF LACK OF WATER IN THE DESERT.

JUAN BAPTISTA ANZA MADE AN EXPLORATORY EXPEDITION THROUGH THIS AREA IN 1774. THE NEXT YEAR HE LED THE FIRST SPANISH COLONISTS OVER THE ROUTE TO ALTA CALIFORNIA FROM SONORA, MEXICO.

JULY 9, 1867 THE FIRST COACH OF THE SAN-ANTONIO-SAN DIEGO MAIL LEFT TEXAS AND ARRIVED IN SAN DIEGO ON AUGUST 30. BEING RUN WITH MULES LED TO ITS BEING CALLED THE "JACKASS MAIL."

JONATHAN WARNER, OF CONN. SOLDIER, WAS GRANTED MEXICAN CITIZENSHIP AND HEAD AGENT OF LAND IN 1844. HE BOUGHT WARNER'S RANCH WHICH BECAME AN IMPORTANT STAGE STOP FROM 1858 TO 1868. HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO JOHN JOSE WARNER, THE SPANISH CALLED HIM "JUAN LARDO". HE WAS 6'3" TALL IN 1860 WARNER'S RANCH WAS ATTACKED BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ JR., AN INDIAN WHO WAS REBELLING AGAINST TAXATION BY WHITES. DURING THE ATTACK THE INDIAN KILLED ONE OF WARNER'S MEN AND WARNER KILLED FOUR INDIANS WITH HIS LONG RIFLE. THEN HE AND HIS FAMILY FLED TO SAN DIEGO. HE NEVER RETURNED TO LIVE THERE. HE DIED IN LOS ANGELES IN 1876.

JANUARY 20, 1847 THE MORMON BATTALION COMPOSED AT WARNER'S RANCH. THEY BOUGHT SUPPLIES AND RESTED UNTIL JANUARY 23. THEY MARCHED AWAY AND ARRIVED IN TEMECULA VALLEY ON JANUARY 25. BY JANUARY 29 THEY HAD REACHED SAN DIEGO. THE WAR HAD ENDED AND THE BATTALION DID NO FIGHTING. THEY WERE DISCHARGED ON JULY 16, 1847. MANY OF THE MEN TRAVELED BACK TO UTAH OR NORTH TO FIND WORK. IN OCTOBER OF 1847 MOST OF THE MEN ARRIVED IN SALT LAKE VALLEY AND MET WITH THE "SAINTS" WHO HAD ARRIVED THERE IN JULY OF THAT YEAR. THE MEN THAT REMAINED IN CALIFORNIA FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN SACRAMENTO VALLEY AT SUTTER'S MILL. THE AUTHENTIC DATE OF THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD AT SUTTER'S MILL WAS RECORDED BY ONE OF THE BATTALION MEMBERS WHO WAS PRESENT. HENRY BLOLER RECORDED THAT EVENT IN HIS DIARY AS JANUARY 24, 1848. IN THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS, \$500,000,000 IN GOLD WAS TAKEN FROM THE CALIFORNIA SOIL.



John Jose Warner

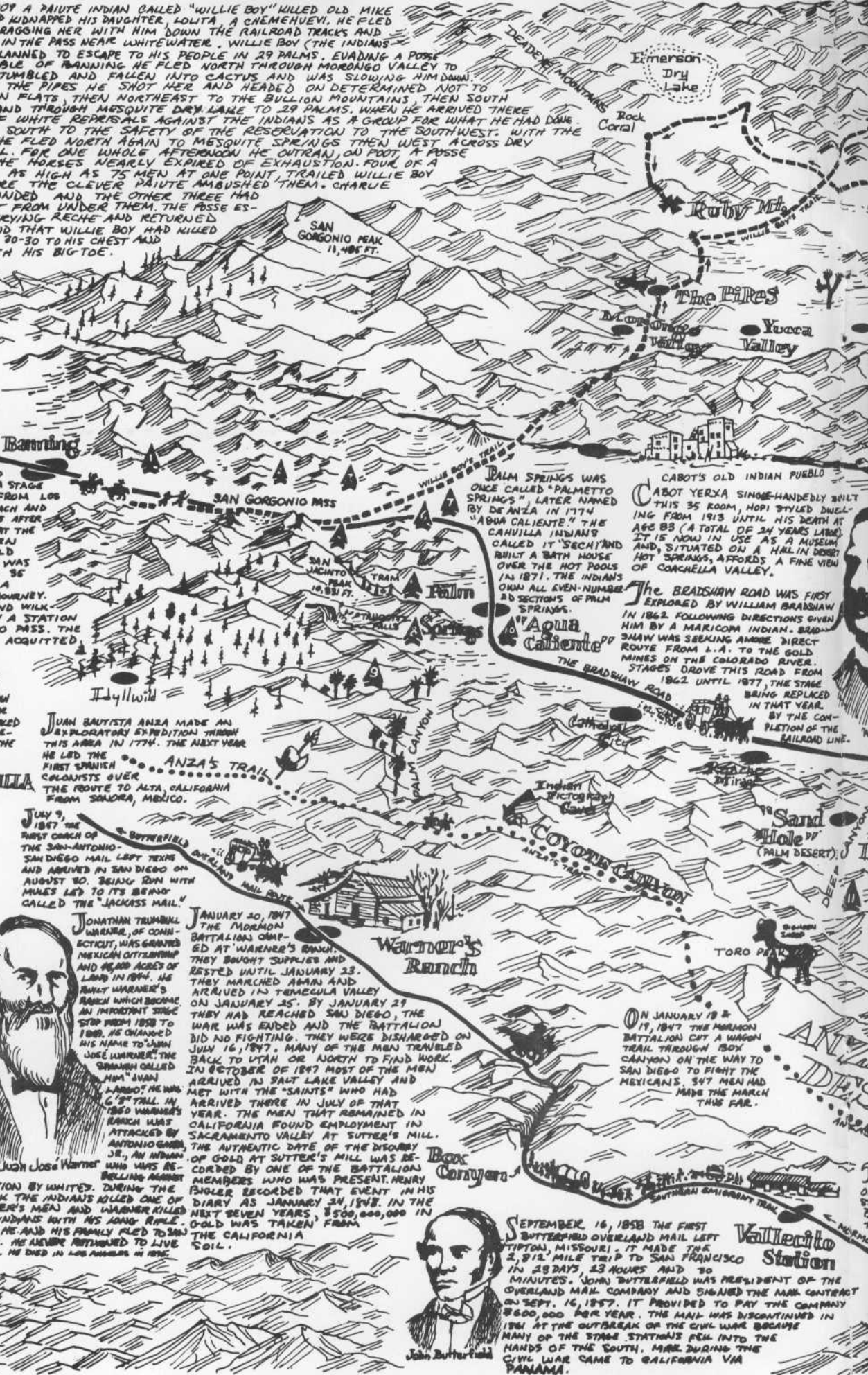


John Butterfield

SEPTEMBER 16, 1858 THE FIRST BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL LEFT TIPTON, MISSOURI. IT MADE THE 2,312 MILE TRIP TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 28 DAYS, 13 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES. JOHN BUTTERFIELD WAS PRESIDENT OF THE OVERLAND MAIL COMPANY AND SIGNED THE MAIL CONTRACT ON SEPT. 16, 1857. IT PROVIDED TO PAY THE COMPANY \$600,000 PER YEAR. THE MAIL WAS DISCONTINUED IN 1861 AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR BECAUSE MANY OF THE STAGE STATIONS FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THE SOUTH. MORE DURING THE CIVIL WAR CAME TO CALIFORNIA VIA PANAMA.

KEY TO SOME CAHUILA INDIAN SITES

- AS BANNING WATER CANYON
- AS STUBBE CANYON
- AS WHITEWATER CANYON
- AS SNOW CREEK
- AS CHINO CANYON
- AS BLAISDELL CANYON
- AS PALM SPRINGS STATION
- AS TANQUITZ CANYON
- AS ANDREAS CANYON
- AS PALM SPRINGS
- AS DEEP CANYON
- AS INDIAN WELLS
- AS PUICHIKIVA
- AS BLA DULCE
- AS BIG TREE JOHN SPRINGS
- AS FISH SPRINGS



# Historical Map of the Coachella Valley and region

©1971  
MERLE H. GRAFFAM  
ART AND PRODUCTION  
BY ROGER DEAN & ASSOC.  
PALM DESERT, CALIF.

THE NAME "COACHELLA" IS OF UNPROVEN ORIGIN. TWO THEORIES ARE GIVEN FOR THIS STRANGE NAME. THE FIRST IS THAT "COACHELLA" IS A CORRUPTION OF THE SPANISH "CONCHILLA" ("LITTLE SHELL"). THE FLOOR OF MUCH OF THE VALLEY IS COVERED WITH LITTLE SHELLS LEFT BY THE ANCIENT SEA WHICH COVERED MUCH OF THE AREA. THE SECOND THEORY IS THAT "COACHELLA" IS A CORRUPTION OF THE NAME "CAHUILLA" OR "COAHILLA" WHICH IS THE NAME OF THE INDIAN INHABITANTS OF THE VALLEY.

BILL KEYS LIVED IN THE AREA THAT IS NOW JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT FROM 1910 TO HIS DEATH (AGE 87) IN 1967. HE RAN THE OLD DESERT QUEEN MINE. HE WAS ACCUSED, TRIED AND CONVICTED OF KILLING HIS NEIGHBOR, WORTH BAGWEL IN 1943 AND SERVED 5 YEARS OF A 10 YEAR SENTENCE, THEN WAS PAROLED. EARL STANLEY GARDNER INVESTIGATED KEYS' CASE AND WROTE AN ARTICLE IN ARGOSY MAGAZINE WHICH LED TO A FULL PARDON OF BILL KEYS.

BILL AND JIM McHANEY SETTLED IN 29 PALMS IN 1879, BILL TURNED TO PROSPECTING AND HIS DISHONEST BROTHER BECAME A CATTLE RUSTLER AND HORSETHIEF. OF THE SIX IN THE McHANEY GANG ONE HAD SERVED 16 YEARS IN PRISON FOR MURDER, TWO HAD ESCAPED THE HANGMAN'S NOOSE AND THE OTHERS WERE EQUALLY MEAN. THEY MADE THE OWNER OF THE DESERT QUEEN MINE SIGN OVER HIS DEED TO JIM McHANEY AND THEN KILLED HIM. FINALLY JIM WAS IMPRISONED FOR CASTING 300 GOLD PIECES OUT OF LEAD AND GOLD PLATING THEM. HE SERVED 17 YEARS FOR HIS CRIME.



PEGLEG SMITH (FROM A DRAWING MADE WHILE HE WAS LIVING)

THE SAN ANDREAS FAULT IS THE MOST DOMINANT FAULT IN CALIFORNIA. IT IS MADE UP OF A LARGE ZONE OF PARALLEL FAULT LINES EXTENDING OVER 650 MILES. THE FAULT IS THOUGHT TO BE 20 OR 30 MILES DEEP INTO THE EARTH'S CRUST. MOST EARTHQUAKES IN CALIFORNIA HAVE THEIR ORIGINS ABOUT TEN MILES DEEP. THE SAN ANDREAS FAULT HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR CALIFORNIA'S TWO MOST DESTRUCTIVE EARTHQUAKES. THE FIRST WAS IN 1857, THE SECOND WAS THE FAMOUS 1906 SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE IN WHICH 700 PEOPLE DIED AND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN PROPERTY WAS DESTROYED.

THOMAS L. SMITH WAS A CONTEMPORARY OF THE FAMOUS JIM BRIDGER. BORN IN KENTUCKY SMITH LEFT THERE FOR NEW MEXICO AT AGE 22 IN 1823. WHILE TRAPPING ON THE PLATE RIVER SMITH WAS SHOT IN THE LEG BY INDIANS AND AMPUTATED HIS OWN LEG TO SAVE HIS LIFE. THIS CAME HIS NICKNAME "PEGLEG." AT AGE 29 HE WAS CROSSING THE COLORADO DESERT AND BECAME LOST IN A STORM. HE CLIMBED ONE OF THREE PROMINENT HILLS TO OVERLOOK THE TERRAIN. HE PICKED UP SOME STRANGE, HEAVY PEBBLES WHICH HE LATER FOUND WERE MALKENED BRIBGETTS OF PURE GOLD. HE BECAME AN INFAMOUS HORSETHIEF WHEN HE FAILED TO FIND THE PLACE OF HIS DISCOVERY WHEN HE RETURNED. HE DIED IN THE COUNTY HOSPITAL IN 1866, A BROKEN AND UNBELIEVED OLD MAN.



Wyatt Earp

THOUGH WYATT EARP DID NOT BECOME FAMOUS FOR DRIVING STAGES, LOCAL HISTORY WAS MADE MORE INTERESTING BY THE FACT THAT THIS FAMOUS PERSONALITY CRACKED A WHIP OVER THE TEAMS OF HORSES WHICH PULLED ROADS OF GOLD FEVERED PROSPECTORS THROUGH SAN GORGONIO PASS TO THE GOLD STRIKES ON THE COLORADO RIVER IN 1865.

IN 1906 A BAND OF FIVE MEN HELD UP A DETACHMENT OF CAVALRY GUARDING A PAYROLL OF \$9,000 IN GOLD COIN FOR THE MEN AT FORT YUMA. FOUR OF THE FIVE MEN WERE APPREHENDED AND SHOT FOR THEIR PART IN THIS INDIAN WELLS ROBBERY.

"RANDLESS ED" THE FIFTH MAN IN THE CRIME WAS NEVER CAUGHT OR HEARD FROM AGAIN AND THE \$9,000 IN GOLD WAS NOT RECOVERED. ENDLESS ED, WHO WAS A SHARP SHOOTER AND WORE A MONACLE WAS THOUGHT TO BE THE HEAD OF THE GANG. DID ED GET AWAY WITH THE GOLD OR IS IT HIDDEN NEAR INDIAN WELLS? NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE.

THE LAST SPANISH GENERAL (IN CALIFORNIA), GEN. JOSE MARIA FLORES RETREATED THROUGH THE SAN GORGONIO PASS AND THIS VALLEY TO ESCAPE INTO OLD MEXICO IN 1847.

OF ALL OF THE HISTORIC PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE DESERT, PROBABLY THE MOST INTERESTING AND INACCESSIBLE IS THE REGION SURROUNDING AND INCLUDING THE CHOCOLATE MOUNTAINS. THESE INTERESTING MOUNTAINS CONTAIN OLD MINES, INDIAN STORAGE CAVES AND THE BONES OF OLD PROSPECTORS. THIS AREA HAS BEEN A NAVAL AERIAL BOMBING RANGE SINCE WORLD WAR II AND IS STILL A RESTRICTED AREA. IF AND WHEN THIS AREA IS OPENED AGAIN, MUCH IMPORTANT HISTORIC ARTIFACTS AND INFORMATION WILL BE GLEANED FOR OUR LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS... AND POSSIBLY A FEW GOLD MINES WILL ADD TO THE INTEREST OF THE DESERT.



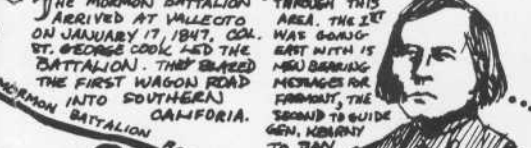
Indian Wells



Mecca



Santa Rosa Mountains



Mormon Battalion Route



Agua Caliente



Kit Carson

FIG TREE JOHN WAS ONE OF THOSE MEN WHO ARE THE GRIST OF LEGENDS. A CAHUILLA INDIAN OF THE SWEETWATER CLAN, HE WORE A SILK TOP HAT, AND A LONG BLUE CIVIL WAR COAT WITH SHINY BRASS BUTTONS. HE WAS USUALLY SEEN WITH A CANE IN ONE HAND AND HIS SHOES IN THE OTHER, PREFERRING TO GO BAREFOOT. HIS NAME WAS REALLY JUAN RAZON AND HE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN 1791 AND DIED OF AN ATTACK OF THE FLU APRIL 11, 1927 AT AGE 136 YEARS.

THE FAMOUS MORMON BATTALION CROSSED THE COLORADO RIVER ON JANUARY 10, 1847 AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF MARCHING FROM LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS. ARRIVED HERE ON JAN. 16, 1847.



Fig Tree John



THE SALTON SEA AS IT IS TODAY, OVER 200 FEET BELOW SEA LEVEL, WAS ONCE A DRY LAKE BED OF THE INLAND ARM OF THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA CALLED "ANCIENT LAKE CAHUILLA." SALT WAS MINED IN THIS LAKE BED UNTIL 1905 WHEN THE COLORADO RIVER RAN OUT OF CONTROL AND FILLED THE SALTON BASIN TO ITS PRESENT SIZE. A TOWN AND A TRAIN LIE BENEATH ITS WATERS.

# THE MEDJHOOL... DESERT DELICACY

by Lee Birch

**D**O YOU know you can eat a fruit that has been relished by sheiks and sultans at their sumptuous banquets dating back to biblical days?

If you've never eaten a date large as a prune, a date so plump and succulent that you can bite into it and miss the seed—then you have a treat in store. The American public is just beginning to get acquainted with the Medjhoor date and for those who have, it is truly an unforgettable experience.

The Medjhoor date palm originated in Africa and was brought from Morocco through the efforts of an American from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He had eaten some Medjhoors in London and had fond memories of them. Later, when opportunity knocked, this foresighted man took advantage of the circumstances to introduce Medjhoors into the United States.

Date palms have been in existence for more than 8,000 years and there are many references to it in the Bible. Its fringed leaves have long been tokens of victory and beauty. It is known that it will bear fruit for 200 years, not counting the seven years it usually takes for it to start producing fruit. A date palm will grow from 60 to 100 feet high. The sex of a date palm is unknown until it flowers if the shoot is not attached to the parent palm. As the male tree does not bear fruit, the best way to insure planting a tree that does is to plant the suckers that grow from the base of a female tree. This method provides reproduction of the prime bearers as well.

These trees are so important a food source in the world that they are a consistent reservoir of income for their owners, and most groves in Africa are handed down from father to son. The date is amply supplied with protein and sugar pectin; so much so that a half pound of dates and a glass of milk make a full nutritional meal.

Nothing is left to chance with this precious food supply. The fear of famine is so great in Africa that even an extra supply of pollen is saved from one year to the next as a precautionary measure in case of adverse weather conditions. Each season every tree is hand pollinated to get the full benefit of ten to fifteen clusters of dates, weighing from 300 to 500 pounds per tree. Also, at different times, the clusters must be thinned, air circulation provided and the dates covered for protection from the weather. In Southern California the picking normally starts in September.

In May of 1927, an American, Mr. Walter T. Swingle, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was invited to join representatives of various countries as a commission to investigate the Baioudh disease infecting the date palms in Morocco. By chance, this was the same man who had previously bought Medjhoors in London. In their travels, the commission saw the destruction wrought by the parlatoria scale (which had been introduced from Algeria at Colomb Bechar) and were on their way farther south when they were delayed several days at Bou Denib waiting for a military escort into the

troubled French occupied country.

During this delay, Swingle became acquainted with the Sharif of Bou Denib, who invited Swingle to dinner. This Sharif was also a Hajji and as such was the religious and civil head of the oasis, having complete authority there. A Sharif is a lineal descendant of Muhammad and a Hajji is one who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Over a dinner of roast lamb, kous-kous and tea, Swingle discussed the Medjhoor date with the Sharif, knowing that about 100 miles west of Bou Denib was Tafilalet, the greatest date oasis of them all and especially noted for its Medjhoor dates.

To Swingle's surprise, he learned from the Sharif that the Arabs were paid two cents a pound for the same dates he had paid 24 cents a pound for in London. He informed the Sharif of the London price and told him that he thought the price of two cents was not high enough. Swingle added that he felt if the dates were graded for moisture content and size and were protected from insects, they should ask three to four cents more per pound.

Pleased with the prospects of more income and grateful for the information, the Sharif was glad to show the American the operation of their Medjhoor gardens, listening attentively for any other suggestions he might have. Swingle then asked the Sharif if there was a way to buy some Medjhoor offshoots to take back to America since we did not have that variety. Happy to return a favor, the Sharif and Swingle went through orchard after orchard searching for a grove that did



not have any evidence of the yellowing center in the top of the trees, the sign of the Baioudh disease. They finally found what seemed like a healthy garden, and the native workmen hastily cut six uniform offshoots, breaking off five more little shoots in the process. When packed for shipping, the five small offshoots were used to help fill in the spaces around the six larger shoots and Mr. Swingle was charged only for the six larger offshoots of standard planting size.

Five weeks later, 11 Medjhoal offshoots arrived unheralded in Washington. Fearful of the Baioudh disease, the authorities decided that the plants would have to be grown under strict supervision and conditions for several years in a remote area away from other palms to prevent contaminating American groves.

Meanwhile in Morocco, they had stopped planting Medjhoals because of their susceptibility to the Baioudh disease.

Where to find an area with a climate acceptable for growing dates where no date palms had ever grown, seemed an impossible task. But found it was. The southern tip of Nevada was discovered to be nearly ideal in climate and Nevada had no

*The male and female bloom of the date palm, which must be hand pollinated.*

date palms. Besides a favorable climate, however, dates not only require a sandy alkaline soil, they need lots of water which meant more searching. Finally a farm was found that had a well which could assure a good water supply. It was owned by an Indian who was amiable to raising the offshoots for the government.

After all this seeking and appraisal, it was learned the farmer's land was not within the Mojave Indian Reservation and the Indian farmer had no title to his land! So the government changed the reservation boundary officially to include it!

The 11 offshoots were first fumigated and then planted on July 4, 1927 and they all grew. One day, however, while the farmer was away, his dog dug up two of the little shoots which died, leaving nine plants.

A few clusters of dates and some new suckers had grown by the third year. To bear fruit this early was very rare, especially with heavy sucker growth, so it was an indication that they would do well in their



new homeland.

At long last, in 1936 the quarantine period was over and the nine Medjhoal palms and their offshoots were brought to the Indio Date Garden of the U.S. Department of Agriculture where they thrived and provided more offshoots for planting other groves.

Today you can find Medjhoals growing from Indio to Yuma. People who have never cared for dates before drive miles out of their way to buy them. For this rare and royal gift, our thanks to an enterprising American. □

### THIS ANCIENT LAND

By MADELEINE FOUCAUX  
Los Angeles, California

From my veranda where the hanging olla  
Offers its wind-cooled water close at  
hand,  
I look across the arid miles where cholla  
And Joshua cast blue shadows on the  
sand.

Between the dunes of spiny vegetation,  
Washing the dust of centuries away,  
A river runs in my imagination;  
A window opens into yesterday.

Marshes and lakes with tree-ferns at the  
edges  
Shine in the valley's Mesozoic light.  
There giant saurians wallow in the sedges  
And queer, reptilian birds take clumsy  
flight.

A million years have passed. The window,  
closing,  
Returns me to the desert, hot and dry.  
Where have the monsters gone? A lizard,  
dozing,  
Wakes up and mocks me with an ancient  
eye.

### MASTER MOLDER

By MILDRED C. TALLANT  
Glendale, California

The Molder of Mountains one aeon,  
Pushed a thumb-print deep in the clay;  
Impressions then fired in earth crayons  
Formed deserts, vermilion and grey.

### MY DESERT

By HARRIETT FARNSWORTH  
Lancaster, California

Oh give me the desert with the double glow  
Of sunset at eventide;  
And snow-capped peaks hemming me in  
A world that's friendly and wide.

When the sun slips over the Joshua tops  
In a sea of rose and gold,  
My thoughts drift back to other lands  
In memories I cherish and hold.

Oh give me the desert with camp-fire nights  
Warm, friendly stars overhead;  
Where the far-off wail of the coyote's call  
Woos sleep to my earthy bed.

### TREASURE

By DORA SESSIONS LEE  
Prescott, Arizona

From all the treasure of this earth  
These I would choose and more—  
A bit of jade from the sands of time  
On a burnished desert floor.

A chastened view of the distant peaks  
Where greed's hidden treasures lie;  
A fortune wrought of the desert gold  
When the Sun-God rides on high.

A calm content with my desert home  
A peace that no gold can buy;  
A heart serene and a trust divine  
And a tranquil desert sky.

### CONSECRATION

By CATHRYN ADAMS  
Loma Linda, California

Waked from slumber, wrapt in wonder,  
Just as dawned the new-born day,  
In the breathless morning magic,  
From the sand on which I lay.  
From the white sand, clean and drifted  
There I saw the desert pray;  
Saw ten thousand arms uplifted,  
Silhouettes against the sky;  
Saw ten thousand mute forms standing.  
Unaware of such as I.  
Filled my heart with strange elation,  
Viewing there such consecration.

### CONTRAST

By KATHRYN AINSWORTH GROVER  
Alhambra, California

A city house shut up and locked  
I think looks empty only,  
A desert home looks near to tears  
And oh, so very lonely.

### FACE LIFE

By TANYA SOUTH

Weep not, nor grieve, oh soul of mine,  
For that which now you reap.  
Life is a wondrous great design  
For souls who climb the steep.  
Face life with courage squarely, then,  
And bravely upward tread.  
There's no advance without its pain,  
But there is Light ahead.



### LEMON-DATE LAMB

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 leg of lamb, 5 to 7 lbs. | 1 tablespoon prepared mustard |
| Salt                       | 3 or 4 lemons                 |
| 1/2 teaspoon pepper        | 1 cup water                   |
| 1/2 cup sugar              | 12 fresh California dates     |
| 1 tablespoon cornstarch    | Parsley sprigs                |
| 1/2 teaspoon sweet basil   |                               |

Rub lamb with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper and place on rack in roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer in center of meaty part, not touching bone. Roast in 325-degrees (moderately slow) oven 2 to 2 1/2 hours or until thermometer registers 170 to 180 degrees F. for rare or until well done lamb as you prefer. Meanwhile, blend sugar, cornstarch, 1/2 teaspoon salt, basil and mustard in small saucepan. Squeeze 1 or 2 lemons for 1/4 cup juice; blend juice and water into sugar mixture. Cook, stirring, over medium heat until sauce comes to boil and is thickened.

Brush some of sauce over lamb every 10 minutes during last 30 minutes roasting-time. Slice 2 lemons into 6 slices each, discarding ends. Snip dates lengthwise with kitchen scissors; flip out pits. Arrange lemon slices in shallow pan; top each with date. Brush with sauce and place in oven with lamb during last 10 minutes roasting-time. Transfer lamb to warm serving platter; arrange lemon-date slices around lamb. Garnish with parsley. Serve with remaining sauce. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

### BANANA DATE APPETIZER

- 1/2 cup pitted fresh California dates
- 2 medium-size bananas
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Iceberg lettuce
- 1/4 cup salad oil
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped onion
- Mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 4 walnut halves

Slice dates crosswise into rings. Peel bananas and cut into halves; split halves lengthwise. Roll in mixture of lemon rind and juice. Arrange lettuce cups on 4 salad plates; shred 2 cups lettuce and place 1/2 cup in each. Mix remaining lemon juice mixture with oil, dates and onion. Place 2 pieces banana in each lettuce cup; ladle dressing over. Dab with mayonnaise; garnish with walnuts. Makes 4 servings.



### DATE SAUCE SCHEHERAZADE

- 1/2 cup fresh dates
- 1/4 cup whipping cream
- 1/2 teaspoon instant coffee powder
- 1 can (8-oz.) butterscotch sundae sauce

Finely chop dates. Combine with cream, coffee powder and butterscotch sauce. Spoon over firm ice cream, baked custard, rice pudding or bread pudding. Makes about 1 cup sauce.

### CHOCOLATE DATE SQUARES

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 square chocolate
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup sifted flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped nuts, pecan or walnut

Melt the shortening and chocolate together. Add sugar and mix well. Add beaten eggs and stir thoroughly. Add flour, salt, vanilla, dates and nuts. Pour batter into greased 8x8-inch pan and bake in 350 F. oven for 30 minutes. Cut into squares.

### STUFFED DATES

Prepare fresh dates for stuffing by snipping off one side with scissors, lift out pit, or buy pitted dates. Stuff dates with:

- Crystallized ginger
- Blanched almonds
- Crunchy peanut butter
- Pimento cheese
- Cream cheese, chopped maraschino cherries mixture

### DATE AND NUT BREAD

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg

Pour 1 cup boiling water over 1 cup chopped dates and 1 cup chopped nuts, add 1 teaspoon soda. Let this cool. Then add to first mixture and place in greased loaf pan. Bake at 300 degrees for about an hour.

### FROSTY DATE SALAD

- 1 cup fresh dates
- 2 pkg. (3-oz. each) cream cheese
- 1 can (8¾ oz.) crushed pineapple
- ¼ cup chopped maraschino cherries
- 2 tablespoons syrup from cherries
- ½ cup whipping cream
- Salad greens

Slice dates. Gradually blend softened cream cheese with undrained pineapple. Add cherries, syrup and dates. Whip cream until stiff, and fold into cheese-fruit mixture. Turn into refrigerator tray and freeze until firm. Slice and serve on salad greens.

### DATE AND NUT TORTE

Beat thoroughly 4 eggs. Gradually beat in 1 cup sugar. Mix together and stir in 1 cup fine bread crumbs, 1 teaspoon baking powder. Add 2 cups pitted dates, finely chopped, 1 cup chopped walnut meats. Spread in well-greased 9-inch square pan. Bake in 350 degree oven for 35 minutes until set. Cut into oblongs 2x3 inches and serve cool with whipped cream or ice cream topping.

### SPICED DATE CAKE

- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 cup salad oil
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 cup pitted chopped dates
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine sugar, oil and eggs. Beat until smooth and creamy. Sift together dry ingredients and add alternately with buttermilk to creamed mixture. Mix until smooth. Stir in nuts, dates and vanilla. Turn batter into a greased and floured 9x13x2 inch pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 55 to 60 minutes. Cool cake in pan. Spread with icing.



### DATE APPLE BREAD

- 1 or 2 apples
- 2½ cups sifted flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground mace or ¼
- teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 cup packaged diced dates

Core and finely chop enough apple to measure 1½ cups. Sift flour with baking powder, salt, cinnamon and mace. Cream butter with sugar, then beat in eggs. Beat flour mixture into creamed mixture alternately with milk; fold in dates and

apple. Turn into greased and floured 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Bake in 350-degree (moderate) oven 1 hour and 15 minutes or until bread tests done. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then turn out and cool on rack. Makes 1 (9x5x3-inch) loaf.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Domestic Dates* (without pits) Natural and Dry		Ingredients in Edible Portion of 1 lb. of Dates	
Protein	10.0 grams	Potassium	2939.0 mg
Fats	2.3 grams	Vitamin A	230.0 units
Carbohydrates	330.7 grams	Thiamine	.40 mg
Calcium	268.0 mg	Riboflavin	.44 mg
Phosphorus	286.0 mg	Niacin	9.6 mg
Iron	13.6 mg	Food Energy	1243 calories
Sodium	5.0 mg		

\*Source—Agricultural Handbook No. 8, United States Department of Agriculture

### SHEIK'S DATE CURRY

- 1 cup California dates
- 6 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 cups water
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
- 2 lbs. fresh deveined shrimp
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons water

Quarter dates crosswise. Melt butter in large skillet. Stir in seasonings and onion. Saute onion 2 or 3 minutes. Add 2 cups water, lemon rind and juice and shrimp. Bring just to a boil. Cover and reduce heat; simmer 5 to 7 minutes, until shrimp is tender. Blend cornstarch with 2 tablespoons water. Stir into shrimp mixture. Cook until sauce is thickened. Add dates and heat a few minutes. Serve over hot rice or noodles as desired.



# LAND OF LITTLE SUMMERS

BY LOWELL BEAN AND WILLIAM MASON



THIS ARTICLE WAS  
WRITTEN 20 YEARS  
AGO.

*Research for new material on Coachella Valley's first inhabitants initiated in 1962 by the Palm Springs Museum resulted in the Museum's new Cahuilla Room. Lowell Bean, curator, tells here of previously uncovered records which are of special importance to the project.*

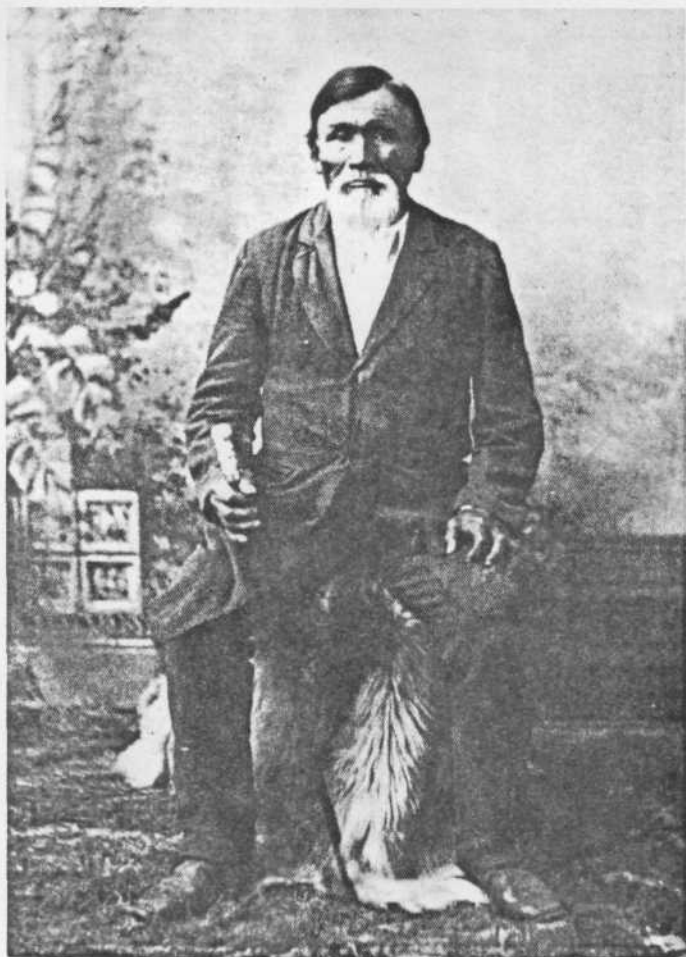
ONE OF THE most exciting finds turned up by the Palm Springs Museum's research into Coachella Valley history is the recently discovered diary of Brevet Captain Jose Romero. Although this gentleman's history, as an individual, remains a mystery (no known records exist of his origin and demise), well-documented descriptions of his penetration into Coachella Valley have contributed much to the area's vague history.

Fearful of English, Russian and other foreign enterprises around California in 1822, the Mexican government instituted a series of inquiries seeking an overland route to California from Sonora whereby troops and supplies could be transported rapidly in case of trouble. Opportunely, a Cocomaricopa Indian appeared in Los Angeles at this time to acquire beads and cloth that a Cahuilla Indian had told him might be found there. Realizing that he had bypassed dreaded Yuma territory without harm, his alliance was cultivated by the Mexicans and word was sent to Tucson instructing Brevet Captain Jose Romero to seek this inland route to California. Records of Romero's trek westward are incomplete, but after his arrival in Los Angeles he organized an expedition of 50 men and several hundred horses and proceeded again into the Colorado desert.

After stopping at San Bernardino Rancho to rest their horses, the men struggled onward into rugged San Gorgonio Pass. The Indians they encountered there were a Cahuilla group, known at the Wanikik Cahuilla, who had already been visited by white men—Franciscan priests of the San Gabriel Mission who established the San Bernardino Rancho in 1819 and the Rancho at San Gorgonio shortly thereafter.

From San Gorgonio Pass the expedition dropped into Whitewater Canyon to pasture their horses. Although this initiated the first recorded visit to Coachella Valley by civilized men, there is tangible suggestion that others had preceded them. For one, Romero's diarist and assistant, Commander Lieutenant Jose Maria Estudillo, noted the day before the expedition's arrival in Palm Springs (December 28, 1823) that there would be no water or pasture until Agua Caliente was reached. This implies that he knew of the hot spring's existence beforehand and it was not a discovery of this expedition.

Further indication that Palm Springs, or Agua Caliente as it was then called, was known to priests as well as to the military is apparent in the fact that, upon Romero's return trip in 1824, he encountered a cattle drive between Palm Springs and San Gorgonio Pass guarded



CABEZON, CAHUILLA CHIEF OF THE LATE 18TH CENTURY. HE WAS SON OF CHIACHIA, ONE OF THE CHIEFS WITH WHOM ROMERO SPOKE.

by the Indian vaqueros of the San Gorgonio Ranch who had driven the cattle to Agua Caliente in search of pasture. Also, San Gabriel baptismal records note that Indians from Whitewater Canyon were baptised as early as 1809.

Romero's journal is of special interest to the Palm Springs Desert Museum because of its detailed reference to Indians and geography of the Coachella Valley. The day after the troupe's arrival at Palm Springs, the men explored Palm Canyon where they met two Cahuilla Indians with Christian names—Jose and Vicente—who had been employed on mission ranches and were friendly to the Mexicans.

From December 28 to January 1, the Romero Expedition passed through what is now Indian Wells, then veered southeast a little below the site of Indio, passing through what is now Thermal, Mecca and finally Fish Creek Springs where they rested for a time. In their journey they met three prominent chiefs of rancherias—Juamey, Chiachia and Tujuma Abali.

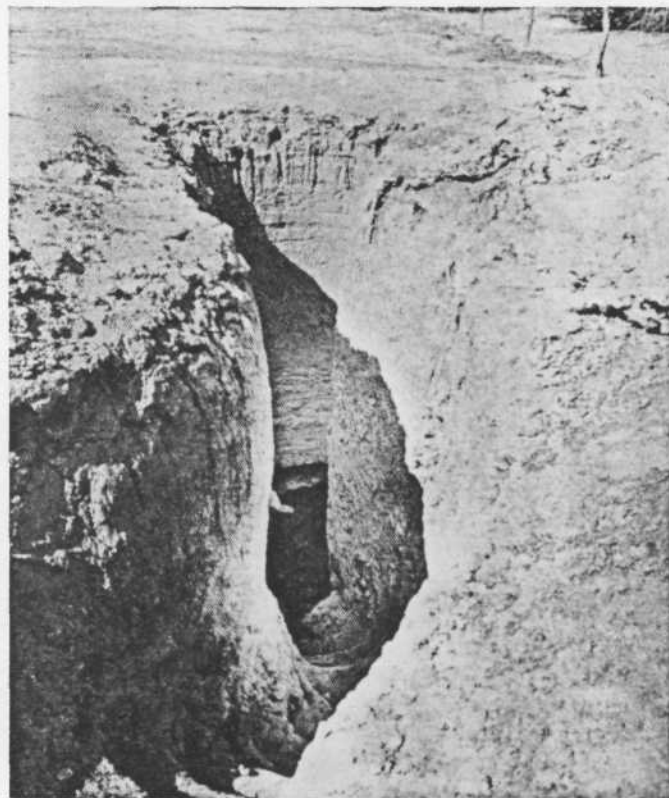
The diary tells of an incident where a horse fell in one of the deep Indian wells and drowned. The Mexicans gave it to the Cahuillas and it was eaten by the Indians with great relish. After establishing rapport with the principal chieftains of the area, the expedition left several tired horses with them and proceeded onward to Dos Palmas, marching through the dry bed of Salton Sea, as that body of water was then non-existent. Turning into the Orocopia Mountains, the soldiers searched for the Colorado River, but failing to find it, returned

through the waterless wastes to Coachella Valley on January 8th. A fortuitous discovery of Canyon Springs by Private Juan Higuera may have saved several hundred of the thirsty animals, for enroute they were without water for five days.

Gratefully, the expedition reached Coachella Valley where there was water and an occasional chance to pasture animals. A little difficulty with Cahuilla-Mexican relations transpired at various rancherias where horses had been left to be cared for by the Indians. Some were missing (perhaps enjoyed at Cahuilla banquets). This angered Estudillo, who demanded their return and took as hostages a chief and his family. The next day, however, the horses were returned, with only a few missing, the Indians released. Whether the Indians stole mission cattle from San Gorgonio in this period is not known, but cattle and horses must have been a great temptation to people who relied on rabbits, and other small game, with only an occasional deer and mountain sheep, for meat. If the cattle were brought down frequently from San Gorgonio to the Coachella region, the mesquite beans—a Cahuilla staple—must have been depleted, which could have resulted in forays on mesquite-fattened cattle.

On January 15, 1824, Estudillo introduces an important fact in his diary. He writes that the expedition returned to the spot known as "los Veranitos" by the soldiers who were impressed at the sight of corn, pumpkins, melons and other summer crops cultivated by the Indians growing in mid-winter. Thus they christened the spot "Veranitos," meaning "little summers."

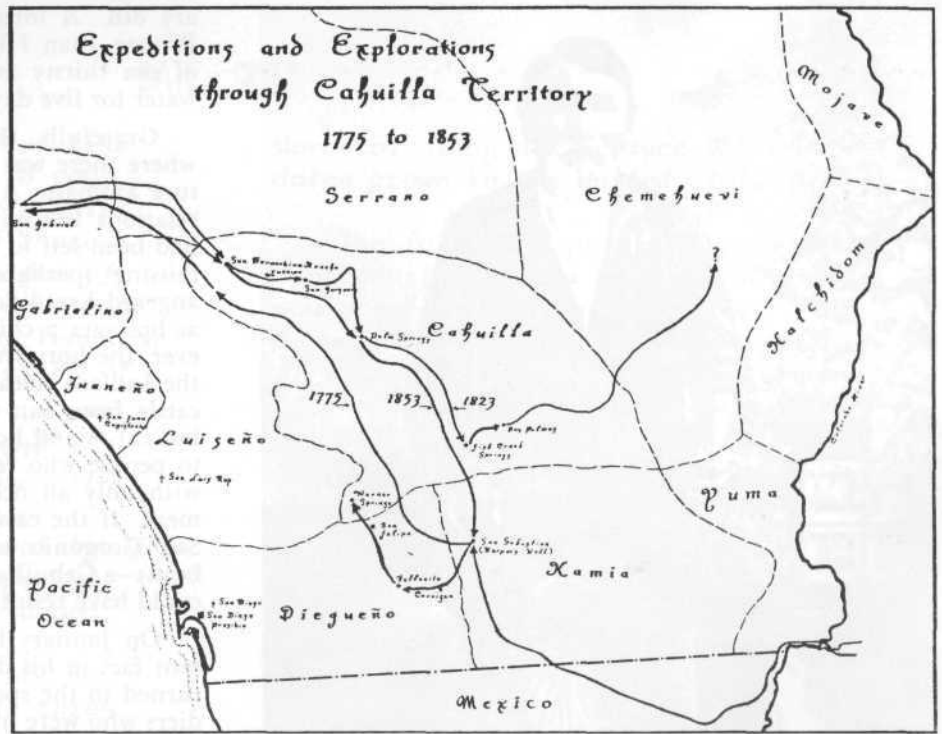
This is important because it proves that the Desert Cahuilla practiced agriculture at an earlier date than formerly believed. How long they had planted seeds, or where they acquired the innovation is not certain. Perhaps the San Gabriel mission had inspired them to practice agriculture, or perhaps agriculture had been transmitted from the Colorado River tribes such as the Halchidum or Yuma. Inasmuch as the crops mentioned by



THE WALK-IN WATER WELL INTO WHICH ONE OF ROMERO'S HORSES FELL. CAHUILLA INDIANS BUILT RAMPS LEADING INTO THEIR WELLS.

Estudillo were found growing in Yuman garden patches at the time of first Spanish contact by Anza in 1774, it is more plausible that the Cahuillas obtained the science of agriculture from their Halchidum allies, who grew the same crops as their Yuman enemies.

On January 20th, the expedition left the Coachella Valley. En route they were aided by Indian vaqueros of the San Gorgonio Rancho who gave the famished soldiers two cattle to augment their exhausted food supply. The Romero expedition of 1823-24 finally returned to San Gabriel on January 31st, but a year later, in December, Romero and his men ventured to the Colorado River. This time they were successful. The route was carefully surveyed and mapped by Lieutenant Romualdo Pocheco, who also kept a diary. Probably much more material concerning the Coachella Valley lies buried in various archives waiting to be uncovered. Lamentably little has been found recorded, so far, about the period of Cahuilla Indian history after 1834, when the Desert Cahuilla united with other Cahuillas in war against the Mexicans, possibly in protest to the secularization of San Gabriel mission in that year.



Thus, a new era of the desert's history has been opened for viewing and the Cahuilla—its first masters—are now known as friends of strangers, agriculturists, and skilled in socio-political matters of their time. ///

ABOVE MAP SHOWS TRAILS BROKEN THROUGH INDIAN COUNTRY BY EARLY PIONEERS.

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## ANSWERS TO DATE QUIZ

- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| 1. C. | 6. A.  |
| 2. A. | 7. C.  |
| 3. C. | 8. A.  |
| 4. B. | 9. B.  |
| 5. B. | 10. B. |

100 points: You must have peeked at the answers.

90 points: No one could be so smart.

80 points: You should be operating a date shop.

70 points: Congratulations — you are almost an expert.

60 points: So you missed a few—we all do.

50 points: Oh well — you can't win them all.

40 points: Not bad — but not good.

30 points: Better start asking questions.

20 points: Might as well face it — this isn't your field.

10 points: So you picked it by accident.

0 points: Better return to your kumquats!

# Desert Plant Life

by JIM CORNETT



**E**VEN PERSONS normally uninterested in wildflowers fall in love with this plant during spring. The Hairy Sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa*) often forms thick carpets in many desert localities. The rich rose-purple hues stun all on-lookers regardless of tastes.

Winter rains are required to bring out this low-lying annual in all its grandeur. Sparse and erratic precipitation may bring forth a few plants, but several inches must fall before the lavender fields arise. As the moisture sinks into the ground, the dormant seeds take in some of this water readying themselves for the onset of warm weather which stimulates germination. If conditions are favorable, the new sprout will break through the sandy soil and begin creeping along the ground. Soon, the xerophyte (plant adapted to arid conditions) will have stems leading in several directions, each of them hugging the ground quite closely.

Botanists call the Hairy Sand-verbena a drought avoider. As May approaches, the plant dries up leaving only its seeds as a reminder of its presence. The seeds, not the plant, withstand the hot, desic-

cating summer days. Thus, the plant itself actually "avoids" the arid conditions, growing only during the comparatively cooler spring months when ground moisture is still present as a result of winter rainfall.

The verbena is a member of the plant family known as *Nyctaginaceae*. This is quite a mouthful so perhaps it is best to remember the English equivalent, "Four-o'Clock." Unfortunately, this plant is not a true "verbena." Its common name is a misnomer in that the true verbenas are of a completely different family known to scientists as *Verbenaceae*, an appropriate designation. There is some resemblance between a few members of both families, but there are also many differences. Most notable is the fact that in the Southwest all members of the true verbena family are perennials whereas the Hairy Sand-verbena is an annual.

You won't have to search long to find this plant each spring. Any creosote-dotted basin with lots of wind-blown sand is sure to have at least a few of these flowers adorning the countryside. □

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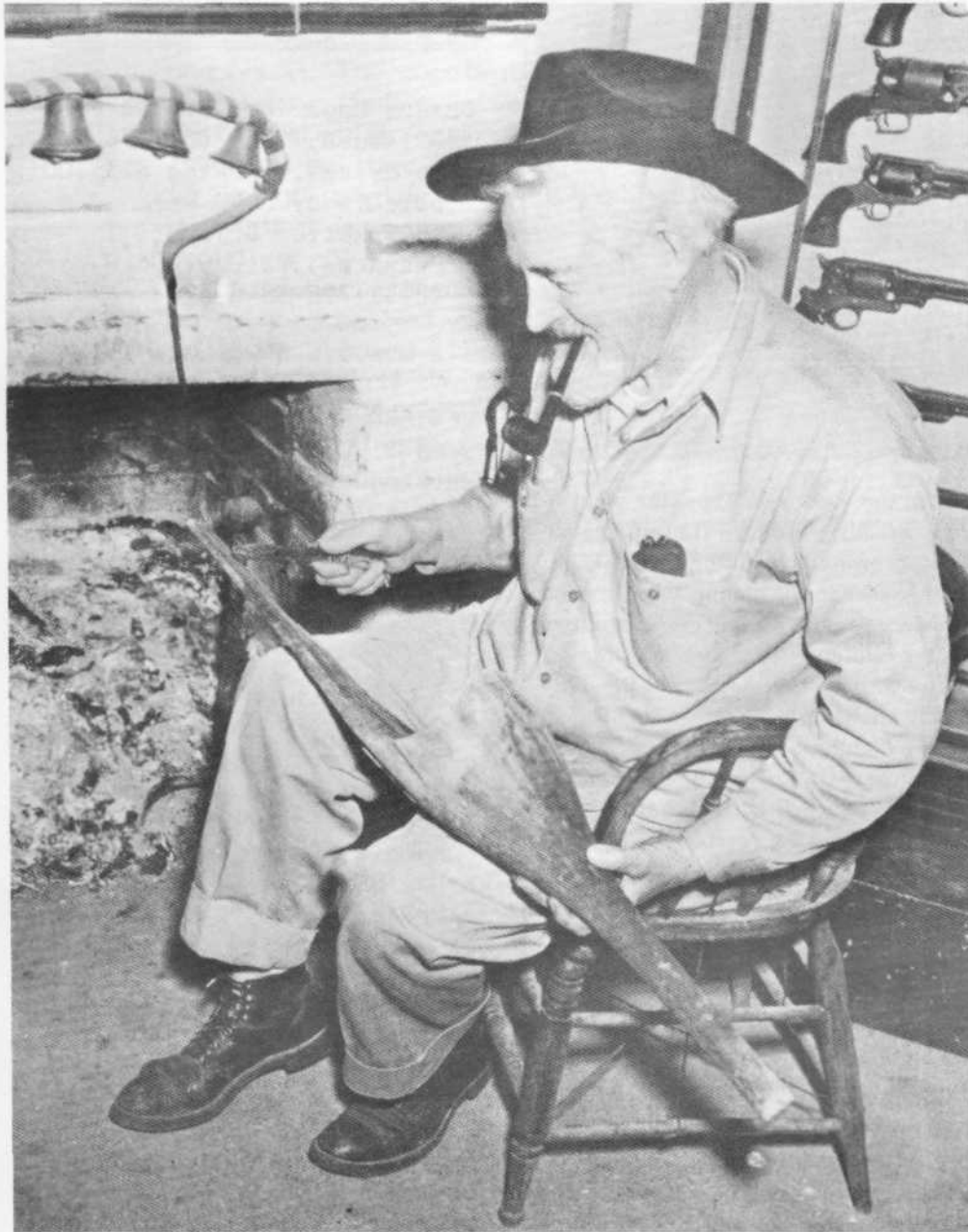
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# Harry Oliver

## "The old Mirage Salesman"



Harry Oliver, at Old Fort Oliver, who proclaimed himself Pegleg Smith's press agent, and was one of the two founders of the Pegleg Liars' Contest and Trek. Harry is touching up one of the wooden peglegs he produced to further the Pegleg legend. Harry scattered a number of these through the Borrego Badlands through the years to encourage hunters for the Pegleg Gold.

Harry (Harold G.) Oliver purchased a small parcel of land at Thousand Palms, Cal. on March 27, 1943 for \$10.00. (Editors note: that same parcel is for sale today at a price of \$45,000). He then set about building what would be known as Old Fort Oliver.

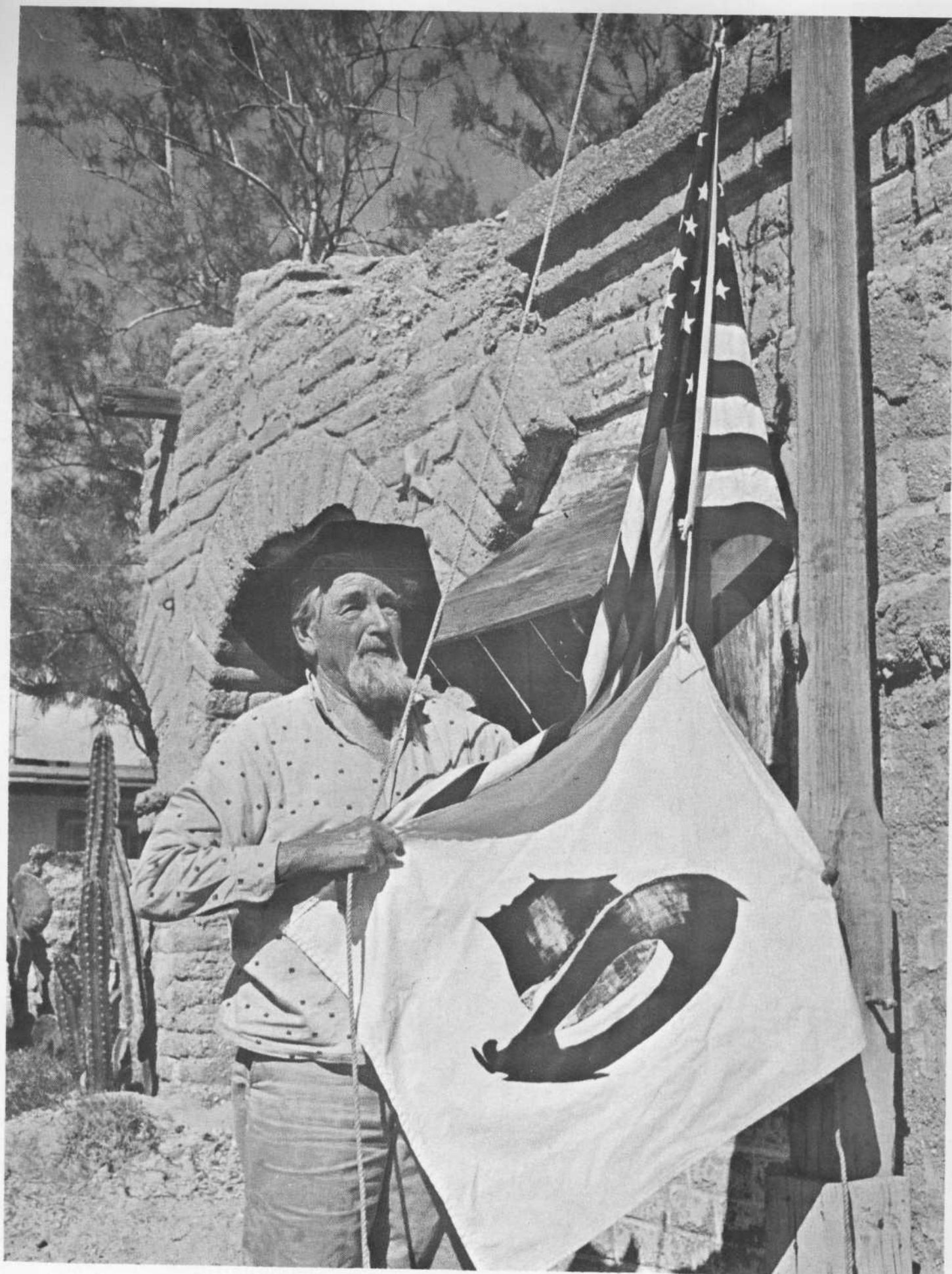
There he launched what was to become his famous DESERT RAT SCRAPBOOK. Harry, as he preferred to be called, published 44 editions, composed of 11 pouches (envelopes) of 4 issues each. The first issue came out in the fall of 1946, shortly after the completion of Old Fort Oliver.

Harry's scrap book was printed on a light tag board paper and billed as "the only paper in the world that you can open in the wind." Early editions cost ten cents. As an indicator of Harry's approach to life, the last page read: "POSTMASTER--DO NOT--send this back--if the subscriber don't know where he lives, I sure as heck don't either."

In his first issue, Harry stated "I will keep people interested in the plants, animals, and beauty of YOUR desert. I will say nice things about the folks that love the desert and just not talk about those that don't understand it. I will tell only authentic lies. I will be the best gold-dern publicity agent for Your desert You ever had."

Continued on page 41





# OLIVER TWISTS

Randall Henderson Wrote This In  
**HIS DESERT MAGAZINE, June 1945**

On display in the Desert office is an 18 "karrot" gold nugget from Lost Pegleg Mine No. 999, We are indebted to Harry Oliver—No. 1 clown of the desert country—for this gorgeous hunk of "precious metal."

The nugget looks and feels suspiciously like the replica of an ordinary bunch of carrots (18 of them) done in plaster paris and then lacquered with a few coats of that gold paint you buy in the store.

This is the same Harry Oliver who manufactured several scores of wooden peglegs, finished them with a sort of a weathered appearance, and then planted them in various caves and "coyote" holes in the Southern California desert. That was many years ago, and the desert prospectors still are bringing in proof that Pegleg Smith carelessly left his artificial leg behind when he prospected this country and discovered the famous Pegleg mine.

**NOTE . . . . .**  
 On April, 1939 . . . Randall ran the first story on my planting of Peg-Legs—I want you to know of my great effort—an effort that is today a real achievement, for at last "PEG-LEG IS KING OF ALL LOST MINE GHOSTS." "LONG LIVE THE KING."


Oliver began his desert career as a homesteader in Borrego valley, did a tour of duty as art director at Hollywood, and returned to the desert to "live like a human being." He now has "OLD FORT OLIVER" a "100-year-old" adobe fort he built about 20 years ago, at Thousand Palms. He wears a set of whiskers like Steve Ragsdale. In fact the resemblance is so great that a Coachella valley newspaper once ran a picture of Steve to illustrate a story about Harry. Strange things happen on the desert when Harry Oliver is on the prowl!

Behest of  *If there is a red X here,*  
 Make It Short—Initials Best  *your subscription has run out*

*Has Staked Claim to This Book*

*Whose Diggins are at*

**BE A PEG-LEG LIAR**



**B O R R E G O**  
 December 31 st

3 CENT STAMP HERE **YOU** ME **Sec. 34.66 DT AD**

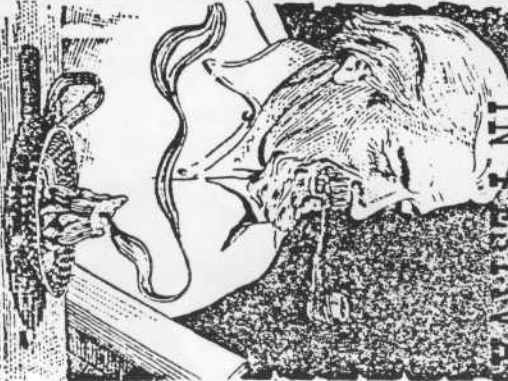
PRICE TEN CENTS . . . . . ONLY ONE LOUSY THIN DIME

PACKET ONE OF POUCH TEN NAMES AND PLACES

**HARRY OLIVERS DESERT RAT SCRAP BOOK**

A POCKET SIZE NEWSPAPER COVERING THE GREAT SOUTHWEST

**Seeing Old West IN FESTIVAL & PAGEANT**



THE PLAYERS — WILD BILL HICKOK — DEATH VALLEY SCOTTY—MARK TWAIN — DICK WICK HALL — BILLY THE KID — STUDEBAKER — PEG-LEG SMITH — COLT — LOST DUTCHMAN — P. T. BARNUM — WILL ROGERS—BUFFALO BILL—STERSON — PAWNEE BILL — LUCIUS BEBE — BRET HARTE — RIP VAN WINKLE — L. BURR BELDEN — BERT FIREMAN — MATT WEINSTOCK — WALTER KNOTT — RANDALL HENDERSON—A. A. BEATTY — HERB S. HAMLIN—PARK SUPERVISORS AND MISSION FATHERS.

EACH NAME A PROMISE

THE MIRAGE SALESMAN

THE SETTING—DEADWOOD—DEATH VALLEY—SALOME—NEW MEXICO—CALAVERAS — HANGTOWN—PIKE'S PEAK—PHOENIX—BORREGO DESERT—OLD LINCOLN, N.M. —MOTHER LODGE—CALICO GHOST TOWN—SONORA—KNOTT'S BERRY FARM—YUMA —OLD FORT OLIVER—GOLDFIELD—RAND MINING DISTRICT—GOLD GULCH—HEMET—SANTA BARBARA—CALEXICO—WICKENBURG—WHISKEY FLAT—DESERT RAT CIRCUS. The Indian Pow-Wows of Arizona and New Mexico are the West's Greatest Shows!

**PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR**

I HAVE MAILED THIS TO THE EDITORS OF "BARTLETT'S QUOTATIONS" TO ADD TO MY EVER GROWING LIST OF QUOTES.

Smallest newspaper in the world and the only 3 page one. (Not a Texas Boast)



Packet 1 of Pouch 10

This paper is not entered as second class mail. It's a first class newspaper.



Published at Fort Oliver  
THOUSAND PALMS, CALIFORNIA

Four Times a Year

ON THE NEWSSTAND 10c A COPY  
But sometimes they don't have them.

MAILING PRICE \$1.00 A YEAR

After the Democrats get rid of Summerfield and stamps come down in price, I will go back to 50c a year.

This offer expires when I do

Asbestos editions will be forwarded in case you don't make it.



Published by

HARRY OLIVER  
1888 1999

Fort Commander  
Publisher  
Distributor  
Lamp Lighter  
Editor  
Artist  
Janitor  
Gardener  
Owner



There is nothing bigger than the "out-doors."

Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

**THE MAIL**



People ask me how I get my name in the papers so often. It is so easy—all you do is build yourself the most colorful place to live in all the whole county—then live in it 20 years or so with a startling horde of screw-ball animals—and if you do not give the Animals "last names"—your name is sure to be used every time they do the unexpected—and who is to know—you kinda set-the-stage—abit—

# Peg Leg Smith

The P.T. Barnum of Desert Ghosts

THINGS JUST HAPPEN IN  
BORREGO DESERT

In the year 1836 an earthquake shook-up this desert valley and from Coyote Mountain a large boulder was detached and rolled out on the edge of the valley (*where the view is good and the parking grand*) in the next hundred years, the hot summer sun and the cool winters caused this boulder to disintegrate and decompose into fragments,—the base of the Peg-Leg Monument today.

This all happened the same year Peg-Leg Smith came West and found and also lost his fabulous GOLD, (*the most noteworthy colourable Desert fantasy we have today.*) A little less than a hundred years later, I, Harry Oliver, homesteaded in Borrego. The survey showed this disintegrated rock to be on the section line, the East boundary of my 160 acres, along side of the H.O. Ranch adobe house.

In the year of 1916 the Peg Leg Smith Club was started,—at first just talk, Doc A. A. Beatty was the Boss Tall Tale Teller, Roy Brininger, second best, The Kelseys and Jack Dickerson, Harry Woods and the DuVall's and others kept it going.

It was about 20 years later (1935) that I got to know Peg Leg (*and learned I could tune-in and talk to the Old Gold-Finding-Ghost*) 6 shots of old Bourbon was all it took to make contact—8 shots and he would come and sit beside me. *This Bourbon stuff is Payola, unpaid as—YET.*

## PRESS AGENT FOR A GHOST

It was after we talked, sitting on the fragments of the rock, that I started as his Press Agent and went to work on getting the Monument started.

As to what has been done over the last 25 years I suggest you read Bert Fireman, of the "Phoenix Gazette," his story, on the next page, Bert is Arizona's top historian and as-sayer of "Lost Mines."

## HAPPY OLD GHOST

*And I just wonder if he don't know where his lost mine is,—Why else does he always hang around Borrego?*

As I await the word from Clyde E. Strickler Park Supervisor—that,—at long-last, (after 25 years effort) The San Diego County Land Marks Society, — will accept The Peg-Leg Monument. And after endless requests the Historical Society will adopt Mr. Thomas L. Smith as a sure-enough Borrego Desert Pioneer.

*I am happy as I know, the Old Ghost himself told me, it will be.)*

A Show Bigger Than

# BEN HUR

Two Thousand Wild Buffalo Stamped past the Grandstand in the last 'Act.'—Can you just see J.J.C. of M.G.M. taking 2000 Wild Buffalo to Rome,—(I can't).

"Where?" — Up in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, "The Black Hills Round-up," stages a Great Show here at this place in the spectacular Bad Lands, (July 3-5).

"Gee"—2000 is a lot of Buffalo.

In this edition you will find many Shows of The Old West with names and places you should know more about.

I can't begin to list them all—A chain of Missions, many Great Parks, Ghost Towns, numerous Cavalcades, Indian Pow-Wow's, and Frontier Days.—I pick them for showmanship and unforgettable names.—So I say, "Take a few years off and see them all."

## Peg-Leg in New York

My 25 years as Press Agent for a Peg Leg Ghost has at long last caught the attention of New York.

Frank Scully, writing in the New York Variety, May 25, 1955, says, and I quote—"Wonder if Oliver ever heard of the silver pegleg that was buried with Peter Stuyvesant, once a mayor of New York? If he ever does, he may do for the silver market what even Wm. Jennings Bryan couldn't do."

# BURROS

## Wests Greatest Actors

The Burro hiding behind his absurd face has a keen intellect, is a great actor, and has long taken his part in entertainment. Some are used frankly as museum pieces. Owners of roadside establishments in the Southwest often park one or two outside to lure tourists. Rodeo clowns train them as comedy mounts, and they are used for laughs in softball or basketball games where the players are mounted. A burro race is staged in Colorado each year, from Leadville to Fairplay. Also Death Valley has its Burro-Flapjack race. In the dude and pack-trail business, eleven burros pack about as much as six horses, eat less, and are surer-footed. Several outfits, including the Sierra Club, of San Francisco, use burros for pack animals on hiking trips over the John Muir Trail. Burros are also standard equipment without which no buried-treasure expedition would be official.



# Coachella Valley's Ghost Town

By Phyllis Wight



*Berdoo Camp in 1936*

**I**F YOU'RE the kind of person who always has to find out what's at the end of "that little road," you belong to an ever-growing breed of weekend explorer who spends all free time on the desert. Some prospect, some look for purple bottles, others just look, but one thing they have in common. They want to know why the unexpected things they inevitably find, are there.

Just such a place lies less than a dozen miles from Indio. This isn't a hidden spot—it's not possible to hide vast cement foundations with stairways leading nowhere still intact. Rather, it's well on the way to becoming an historic spot, with a history reaching back some 30 years.

For those of you who haven't visited this ghost town, take Highway 60 out of Indio a mile and a half to Dillon Road, follow Dillon seven miles and turn right at the San Bernardino Canyon sign. Watch for a left turn a little more than three miles up the Canyon. After you turn, the road forks and you will notice a chain across the right fork which leads to what is left of the old change house and warehouse, but the road you will follow turns sharply to the left, under the spot where the railroad trestle used to be. This winds around and up a short hill, and, oddly enough, this road is paved. There are

two small washouts here, but with reasonable care a passenger car can detour around the bad spots. When you have reached the top and parked your vehicle, you've arrived within easy walking distance of "Berdoo Camp."

Built when the Metropolitan Water District was constructing the aqueduct to carry water from the Colorado River to Los Angeles, substantial buildings with all possible conveniences were constructed to accommodate the men who worked the desert project.

Eight other camps were established in Coachella Valley to facilitate the project—Fargo Canyon, Yellow Canyon, Pushawalla among them—but Berdoo Camp was the largest and most costly. The sum of \$148,000 was spent to complete it. Considering the low cost of construction in the early '30s, that was a large sum of money. There were more than 40 buildings plus necessary improvements—even fire plugs on the hilltop!

Roads had to be provided prior to work on the aqueduct itself. The building of the first section of road, 35 miles along the north side of Coachella Valley, between Garnet and Indio, was completed in 1933. Each road built by the District was planned to connect with state highways, with paved branch roads to the division camps and the aqueduct intakes. Then stub roads were brought to the individual contractor's camps to complete

the District road system. The original roads were first prospector's trails, then "scratch" roads built by the District. Prior to that, the only State highway able to serve any of the camps east of White-water was old Highway 99 and its branch from Coachella to Blythe, called the Sunkist Trail. In addition to roads, the District installed power lines, telephone lines, and water lines with wells and pumping equipment before construction could start.

It is evident that the roads in various stages of construction were not too smooth. An editorial in the old *Coachella Valley Submarine* described a trip to visit the Berdoo Camp, commenting that the men would be glad to stay in camp once they got there! Meanwhile, Coachella and Indio merchants outdid themselves trying to get business from the camps. This same editor also stated that "Coachella built a road into town from the aqueduct while Indio argued as to how to spend its money."

The buildings in Berdoo Camp were of various types. The layout plan shows different-sized dormitories—one to house 40 men, one for 28, several for 20, a couple for eight and a number housing only four. Again quoting the Report, the District charged a little more for the privilege of listening to fewer snores, as the larger dormitories charged 20c per day for lodging, and the cottages charged 25c and 35c!

A 9-room guest house was maintained at the camp for use of visiting members of the District organization and guests, with \$1 per person per night the rental fee. A large mess hall served meals to the men with hours according to the shifts being worked. Nine meals a day were not unusual. These meals cost each man \$1.15 per day. Each camp also operated a commissary where toilet articles, tobacco and cigarettes and so forth could be purchased at small cost.

The Division Headquarters Office was in a large building near the northern boundary of the camp, at the edge of the ravine. The superintendent's residence was above and to the right of the office, and there were other buildings used as an auto repair shop, car shed, tool shed, machine shop and general utility buildings.

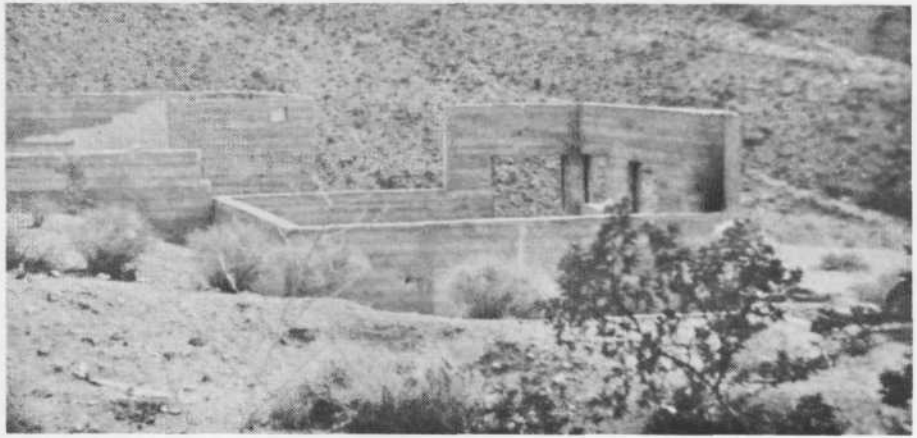
One of the largest buildings, at the upper end of the camp near the "U" turn, was a 27-bed hospital. While other camps had emergency first-aid stations, the hospital was located at Berdoo Camp where accident (and other) cases were

brought by ambulance. T. Sheridan Carey, M.D., of Los Angeles, was surgeon-medical officer for this class A industrial hospital, with one assistant surgeon and 14 registered male nurses as staff. The air-conditioned hospital was equipped with a modern operating room, X-ray plant, diet kitchen, general offices and other modern facilities. Each employee was charged 5c per working day for medical service. It was decided, as the Coachella tunnels neared completion, to expand the medical facilities at Banning. Accordingly, the Berdoo hospital was closed in October '36 and all equipment moved there.

The camp buildings were of frame, sheeted with plaster wallboard outside and insulating wallboard on the interior. Each building was sprayed with light brown lacquer, wired for electricity and equipped with modern plumbing. They were heated by gas radiators supplied with gas piped from a liquid butane plant; the dormitories were cooled in summer by air forced through insulated ducts from a centrally located plant where coils were cooled by water circulated from a cooling tower.

Although the roads were rough and summer weather hot, the men didn't suffer for want of entertainment. One event was Indio's two-day Miner's Day Celebration. Work on the tunnels was suspended so the men might attend. Along with boxing, sack races and so on, a contest was held to determine the best rock-drilling team (driller and chuck-tender) from the various camps. A prize of \$1,000 was donated by Indio business men. This contest involved two blocks, one weighing 41 tons and the other 37, with the idea being to drill a hole completely through each of the solid concrete blocks in the shortest time possible. The winning team came from the Wide Canyon Camp, with Berdoo coming in second. The winning time was 5 minutes, 42 seconds.

All entertainment wasn't so innocent though. In May of 1934, Chief Sanford of Indio inaugurated a general clean-up of card rooms and saloons, where frequent brawls proved upsetting to the community. Some of the "hardrock" men objected to this and made strong comments through the newspapers about the enforced "loss of recreation."



Foreground foundation was four-man dormitory.

The placing of concrete in the Coachella tunnels was finished on May 8, 1937, with the completion of the lining of the east heading at Berdoo Camp. At that time, passages were closed off in the Yellow and Pushawalla tunnels with heavy concrete plugs. At Fargo and Berdoo, doors were set in the tunnel lining and the passages (adits) were to be maintained as entries to the tunnel for inspection. In December of that year, the Coachella Headquarters Office was closed.

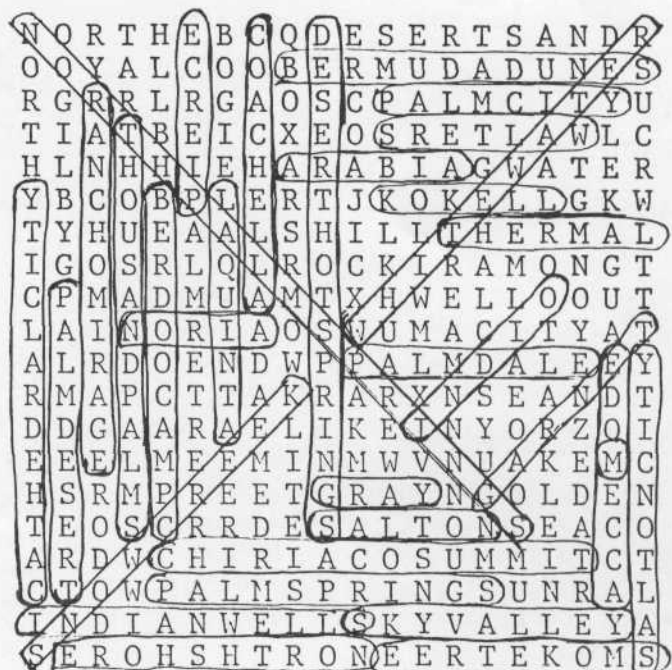
(Three of the tunnels have been inspected and re-opened to be used as air raid shelters through an agreement between the Civil Defense office in Indio and the Metropolitan Water District.)

While you consider the busy camp's short history you can't help but speculate upon what could be done with the slabs of concrete still intact? On a large one at the "topside" of the camp, wouldn't it be fun to build your own Berdoo Camp, enjoy the breeze in the evening, and watch the lights come on over the valley?

A parody of a Julia Carney poem goes:

"Little drops of water  
On little grains of sand,  
Make a lot of difference  
In the price of land."

Some day, no doubt, old Berdoo will be awakened from her long rest by an ambitious dreamer who will discover her magnificent view when he innocently follows a rainbow to "the end of that little road." □



ANSWERS TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 21

# TOWNS AND PLACES OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY

BY D. W. GRANTHAM

Many areas of the Coachella Valley have had names which enabled the visitor or resident to specifically identify that area. Some have even had several names. However, few of these places have had sufficient economic resources or population to warrant attaining official recognition of their place--by having a United States Post Office.

In times past, the destiny of a community was decided by the presence or absence of a Post Office. It gave a sort of permanence to the community. Often the Post Office served as the social center for the community--a place to gather, meet friends, and pass current news.

The Coachella Valley was no different in this respect. Many of the communities that received post offices still exist today. And many of the names give us an idea of why these towns were named.

The valley also has numerous areas--that have never had a post office but are still recognizable--such as Myome, Painted Hills, and Seven Palms.

To explore the Postal history of our Desert Valley is to recall these communities and their locations. Some of the inactive offices are clues to perhaps a ghost town such as Berdoo Camp or a "lost" settlement such as Pierce. The Coachella Valley has had at least 34 post offices. Let's see what these 34 offices are:

## ARABIA

Office opened August 22, 1913. Was also a station name for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Town was named for its similiarity to Arabia. Had a small business district. Office closed October 30, 1915. Town was located 3 miles South of Thermal.

## BERMUDA DUNES

Office opened September 1, 1961. Is a real estate promotion name. Office closed 1977. Site located 4 miles northwest of Indio and 1 mile east of Palm City.

## CHIRIACO SUMMIT

Office opened August 1, 1959. Named for Joseph L. Chiriaco, owner of the site and service station. It is a travellers stop on Interstate 10. Located 30 miles east of Indio.

## BERDOO CAMP

Office opened May 18, 1934. Was a construction camp for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District aqueduct. Berdoo is a slang name for San Bernardino. Office closed July 15, 1937. Site is North of Indio. Many ruins are there.

## CATHEDRAL CITY

Office opened September 27, 1928. Town named for a nearby Cathedral like rock formation. Located 6 miles South of Palm Springs.

## COACHELLA

Office opened November 30, 1901. The name comes from a Spanish word "conchilla" which means sea shells. The area was a part of ancient Lake Cahuilla at one time. Location is 3 miles Southeast of Indio.

## DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Office opened August 1, 1944.  
Named for its location on the desert and presence of hot water springs. Earlier area was called Coffee's for a spa located there. Location is 12 miles North of Palm Springs.

## GARNET

Office opened June 18, 1927.  
Named for a nearby hill where garnets (stones) may be found. Area also known as Seven Palms. Located 6 miles north of Palm Springs. Office closed August 4, 1943.

## INDIAN WELLS

Office opened July 9, 1915.  
Closed December 30, 1933. Reopened September 1, 1968. Named for wells dug by the Cahuilla Indians for water. Located 7 miles west of Indio and 4 miles east of Palm Desert.

## KOKELL

Office opened May 10, 1901. Town adopted the name of the Southern Pacific Railroad Station but its source is still unknown. Location is 6 miles north of Mecca. Was a townsite. Office closed June 7, 1902 and name changed to Thermal.

## MECCA

Office opened September 26, 1903.  
Named for a date orchard planted from shoots imported from Mecca. Formerly known as Walters. Most of the town is below sea level. Located 13 miles Southeast of Indio.

## NORTH PALM SPRINGS

Office opened February 16, 1950.  
Named for its geographical location North of Palm Springs. Formerly known as Garnet Gardens. Located 6 miles north of Palm Springs.

## EDOM

Office opened August 28, 1913. Location was originally next to the Southern Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way but was moved in 1938 to a site 3/4 mile northwest of the original location. The name is Hebrew for "reddish". Located 9 miles east of Palm Springs. Office closed June 1, 1939. Name changed to Thousand Palms.

## GRAY

Office opened August 8, 1913. Named for Hilda M. Gray, who applied for the job of postmaster but did not get it. Located 11 miles Northwest of Edom along the Southern Pacific Railroad. Office closed May 10, 1918 through a name change to Noria.

## INDIO

Office opened July 3, 1888. Name is a Spanish term for Indian. Location is 7 miles east of Indian Wells. Was a active railroad town.

## LA QUINTA

Office opened November 22, 1930. Name is Spanish for a retreat or stopping place to rest. Also translates as "fifth day", a place to rest on the 5th day of travel. Located 9 miles South and West of Indio.

## NORIA

Office opened May 10, 1918. Formerly known as Gray. Origin of name unknown. Located 11 miles northwest of Edom along the railroad. Office closed September 30, 1920.

## NORTH SHORE

Office opened April 2, 1962. Named for its physical location--on the North shore (side) of the Salton Sea. Located 10 miles Southeast of Mecca.

## OASIS

Office opened as a branch of another office. Located in the "Oasis" area, so named because it was a watering spot for travellers on the road from Indio to El Centro. Located 6 miles Southwest of Mecca.

## PALMDALE

Office opened March 9, 1888. Named for the nearby oasis of Palm Springs. Was an agricultural community, raising grapes and oranges. Located 3 miles north of Palm Springs. Office closed May 12, 1890 when the post office was physically moved 3 miles south and renamed Palm Springs.

## PALM SPRINGS

Office opened May 12, 1890 when moved there from Palmdale. Originally located in San Diego County before Riverside County was formed. Named for the warm springs located by Palm Canyon. Area formerly known as Agua Caliente. Located 12 miles Northwest of Palm Desert.

## RANCHO MIRAGE

Office opened February 1, 1951. Named for a real estate promotion project. Located 10 miles Southeast of Palm Springs.

## SALTON CITY

Office opened July 8, 1961. Named for its location along the Salton Sea. Site is actually in Imperial County, 30 miles south of Thermal.

## PALM CITY

Office opened October 15, 1962. Named for a real estate promotion decorated with palm trees. Located 7 miles Southeast of Thousand Palms. Area is locally known as Palm Desert Country Club now.

## PALM DESERT

Office opened July 16, 1947 through the efforts of Randall Henderson who moved Desert Magazine there. Named for its location on the Desert with Palm trees. Located 12 miles Southeast of Palm Springs.

## PIERCE

Office opened December 16, 1898. Named for the family, Pierce, who owned the ranch where the Post office was located. Located 2 miles West of Palm Springs and 23 miles Northwest of Indio. Closed April 30, 1902.

## SALTON

Office opened February 4, 1889, originally in San Diego County before Riverside County created. Named because it was a shipping point for salt. Site is now under the waters of the Salton Sea. Located 25 miles Southeast of Indio along the railroad. Office closed April 30, 1906.

## SKY VALLEY

Office opened June 10, 1959. Named because of geographical location in a valley high above the desert floor that enables one to "look" down from the sky onto the desert below. Located 11 miles Southeast of Desert Hot Springs. Office closed June 5, 1969.



## SMOKE TREE

Office opened September 16, 1968 as a branch of Palm Springs. Named for the ranch located there, which was probably named for the trees of the area, called Smoketrees. Located 2 miles Southeast of Palm Springs.

## THERMAL

Office opened June 7, 1902. Previously known as Kokell. Named for the Thermal wells drilled to obtain water. Located 7 miles south of Indio.

## WALTERS

Office opened February 25, 1896. Named after the owner of the townsite. Located 13 miles Southeast of Indio. Office closed September 26, 1903.

## SNOW CREEK

Office opened April 25, 1914. Named for the creek flowing past the area, which is seasonal and fed by melting snow from Mt. San Jacinto. Located 5 miles Southwest of Whitewater. Office closed July 31, 1918.

## THOUSAND PALMS

Office opened June 1, 1939. Formerly known as Edom. Named for the many fan palms growing in the area. Located 9 miles east of Palm Springs.

## WHITEWATER

Office opened May 3, 1926. Named for the nearby Whitewater River, whose waters appear milky as they flow over a sandy river--bed. Located 10 miles north of Palm Springs.

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HARRY OLIVER, continued from page 32

When a subscriber complained that his news was not too fresh, Harry told him, "The news in this paper has been tested by time. You should subscribe to this paper and save the packets for junior...cuz no one is going to be crazy enough to print stuff like this when I'm gone." And he was ever so right.

Many of his sayings have contained bits of wisdom that have endured the test of time. For instance, "In baiting a mouse trap with cheese, always leave room for the mouse." Or, "Never speak loudly to one another unless the shanty is on fire."

And then there was the time Harry decided to help all those people who were running around looking for the lost Peg Leg Smith gold. Harry went out and had a number of peg legs made. He then took them out into the desert and scattered them about. For some time thereafter, prospectors were "close" to finding the lost gold because they had found Smith's peg leg.

Harry once told Tom Murray, "I've lived in various deserts for years, and I can tell you that Death Valley is King. I, as most people, like the mystery of the desert. The desert tolerates the invasion of people, but it never reveals its secrets."

In 1965, after 21 years as Fort Commander, artist, publisher, editor, and desert rat, Harry Olive bade farewell to his old Fort Oliver and retired to the Motion Picture Country Home in Woodland Hills, Calif. He passed away there on July 4, 1973, the very day he had predicted he would pass on.

Old Fort Oliver remained vacant for the next six years. The elements took their toll on the buildings and numerous brainless vandals destroyed everything they could. The once proud fort became an eyesore. The County building department tried to condemn it. It was restored for a time, but then again fell into disuse and ruin. Finally, it was leveled.

Desert is proud to present a copy of a side of one of Harry Olivers' DESERT RAT SCRAPBOOK on pages 34 and 35. Reading it will enable you to gain an insight into Harry Oliver, the desert rat and philosopher.

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- HISTORY OF THE OWENS VALLEY ACQUEDUCT
- DESERT VISITS JULIAN
- MORE ON FIG TREE JOHN AND HIS GOLD MINE
- A VISIT TO AN ARIZONA GHOST TOWN
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# Desert

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