The Album

Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono

Being a quarterly recounting of the nature and history of two California counties

Vol. II, No. 2

Inside:

The Eastern Sierra
Land of Many Uses

This is the time of year for the annual migration of thousands of fishermen to eastern Sierra lakes and streams for the opening of the trout season.

Two of the most popular fishing spots in the region are Crowley and Grant Lake Reserviors, built by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The reserviors also attract boaters and water skiers.

The DWP works with Inyo and Mono counties to maintain the eastern Sierra as a vacationer's paradise. In addition to being one of America's finest recreational areas, the region is also the source of most of Los Angeles' water.

Most of our leased lands remain open for hunting, fishing and other forms of recreation. Additional land has been made available to public agencies for roadside parks, campgrounds and fish hatcheries.

We are doing our best to make sure that the eastern Sierra has something for everyone and remains that special vacation spot.

DWP Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

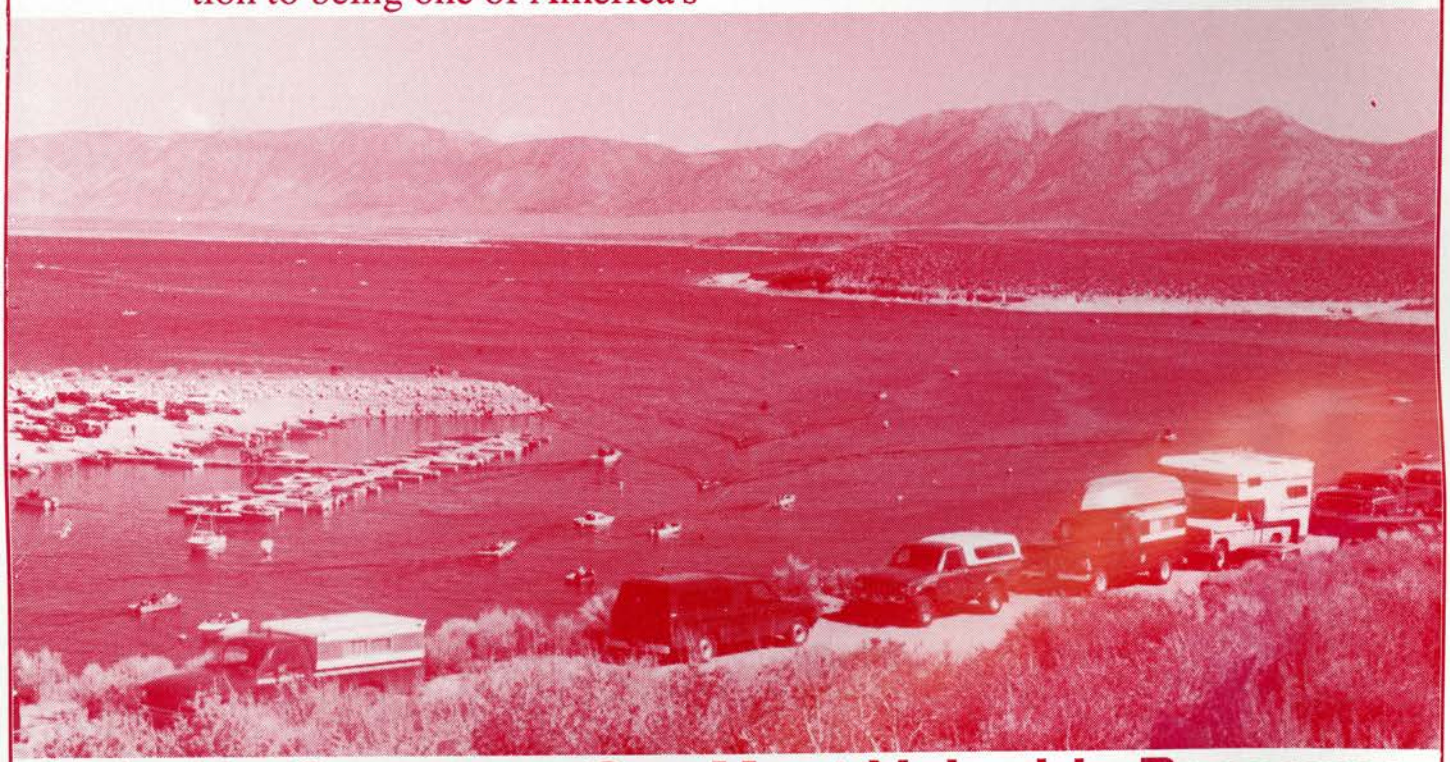

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Photo by Diane Reeseman

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In This Issue

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Cover photo: The indomitable Lillian Hilderman, Keeler's postmaster and one of a kind columnist. July 3, 1955. Photo from Eastern California Museum Collection.

The Album, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono, is a collection of stories, history, and natural history of Inyo County and Mono County, in Eastern California.

Letters, comments, and contributions are welcome; contributions should be accompanied by photos, documents, sketches, or maps.

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The Elusive California Nevada Border

Part II: The Von Schmidt Line.

by Thomas M. Little, Ph.D.

Col. Allexey W. Von Schmidt. Wells Fargo Bank History Room, San Francisco.

On the third of August 1872, the *Inyo Register* carried the following brief item: "Col. A.W. Von Schmidt has received the contract for running the eastern boundary line of California and Nevada. He will commence work immediately."

It is doubtful whether the editor realized at the time what a momentous event in interstate history he was reporting. What a Pandora's Box of pettiness, jealously, frustration and hardship was opened! But to compensate for these unpleasant situations, there must have been the pleasure of a glorious adventure in wild unexplored country. One can imagine the survey crew sitting around an open campfire under the stars singing some of the latest songs such as "Little Brown Jug," "Shoo Fly, Don't Bother Me," "Sweet Genevieve," and above all, that latest hit by Henry Clay Work, "Crossing the Grand Sierras."

Little is known about the man, Col. Allexey W. Von Schmidt, except his surveying exploits. Dr. Vincent Gianella, former head of the Geology Department at the University of Nevada in Reno and a great Nevada history buff, described Von Schmidt as a "very remarkable man." One can only read between the lines of Von Schmidt's notes, and follow the route of his travels from Oregon to the Colorado River to guess what a truly remarkable man he was.

Right from the start of his survey he ran afoul of an obstinate bureaucracy. He had decided that the best place to begin his survey was at the point near Verdi where the 120th meridian had been determined with the help of telegraphic signals over the lines on what was then the Central Pacific Railroad.

This determination was made by Professor George Davidson of the U.S. Coast Survey in July and August 1872. It had been carried out at the request of J.D. Whitney, State Geologist, and Clarence King, U.S. Geologist, names familiar to everyone acquainted with the Sierra Nevadas. Von Schmidt was confident that the results of a survey with which such eminent scientists were associated should be acceptable. He therefore sent a telegram to Washington seeking permission to use Davidson's results as the starting point for his survey. He received the following reply, "Personal determination of longitude is required, so that your affidavit to returns of the survey may be properly made."

Von Schmidt was obviously irked, but dutifully proceeded to follow out the instructions. He spent a week making astronomical observations in conjunction with telegraphic time signals from George Davidson in San Francisco. Getting these time signals posed a problem, for there were frequent interruptions from other operators, but he finally collected enough data to satisfy him that his results agreed with those previously reported by Davidson. He has been criticized for "stretching the truth" when he certified that the work was executed "in his own proper person," since he had depended too much on Davidson's work. However, if anyone deserves criticism it would seem to be Willis Drummond, Commissioner of the U.S. General Land Office, for making an unreasonable request. After all, Von Schmidt had spent a hard week's work trying to comply with this request.

Von Schmidt wrote to Drummond asking for permission to start from the established point near Verdi and run a line north to the Oregon border instead of the other way around as had been originally proposed. Without waiting for a reply from Drummond, he proceeded to run a line northward

toward the Oregon border. He had run this line about 100 miles when he received a reply from Drummond. The reply, a masterpiece of bureaucratic double talk, read in part as follows:

> ". . . in reply, I have to say that while the work of Professor Davidson may be correct, you are not to rely thereon, but will make your own observations and deductions so that you may be able to make the proper affidavits in regard to the correctness of the establishment of the line, which will, if deemed necessary, be tested by examination in the field.
>
> "No data of any other Astronomer or Surveyor except the establishment of the north east corner of the state by Major, which has been approved, can be adopted by you, as you are required to execute the work in your own proper person and in strict conformity to your contract and instructions.
>
> "There is no objection to your proposition to start from the railroad running thence to the intersection of the 120th West Longitude with the 40th North Latitude and correcting back, but the determination of the starting point on the railroad must be from your own observations and deductions. Major's corner must, however, be considered as the starting point of your survey and the line is to be marked with consecutive number of miles therefrom."
>
> Very Respectfully
> WILLIS DRUMMOND
> Comissioner

Thus Drummond had absolute faith in Major's work while ignoring or questioning the results of every other surveyor involved. Why did he apparently feel obligated to support Major? Was he indebted to Major for some reason, was he related to him, or were they fraternity brothers sworn to support each other forever? Perhaps we should be fair and grant that it was just a case of plain stubbornness. Whatever the reason, his blind faith in Major was hardly justified.

Nowhere in Major's notes was there mention of the methods used to determine latitude and longitude, nor any description of the instruments he used except for a transit. Nor does he explain the fact that his marker was over two miles west of the Houghton and Ives corner. In fact he makes no mention of that survey run three years earlier although it was well known to other surveyors, some of whom had utilized it in their work.

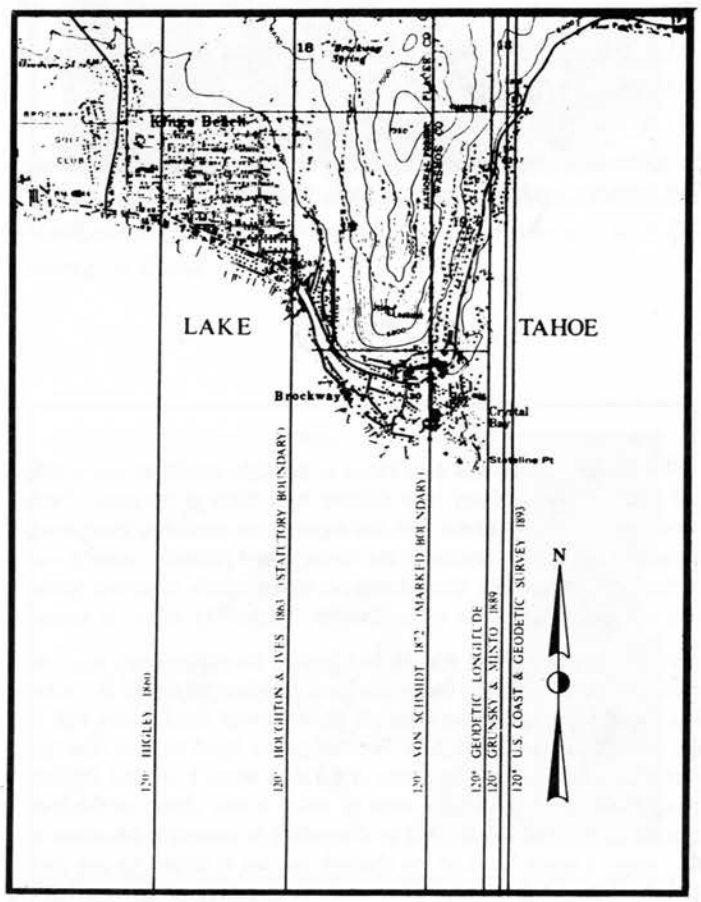
In spite of his reservations about the accuracy of Major's corner, Von Schmidt felt duty bound to follow instructions so he proceeded to run a line due south from the Major monument. He ran this line for a hundred miles, placing a marker every mile as instructed. When he reached Smoky Creek opposite from where he had discontinued his line from the south, he found that the two lines were three and one-half miles apart! This was the last straw. He had to decide whether his duty was to follow instructions and produce an incorrect line, or to run what he felt was a correct line, thereby disobeying the official instructions. He decided on the latter course.

He now retraced his steps to the Oregon border, removing all of the mile markers along the way. (This turned out to be an expensive mistake later on.) When he arrived at the border he destroyed the "hallowed" Major monument. He moved east about three and one-half miles and erected a new monument. From there he proceeded south, again placing markers every mile until he reached Smoky Creek, slightly to the east of his line from the south. After making minor adjustments he continued on to Lake Tahoe.

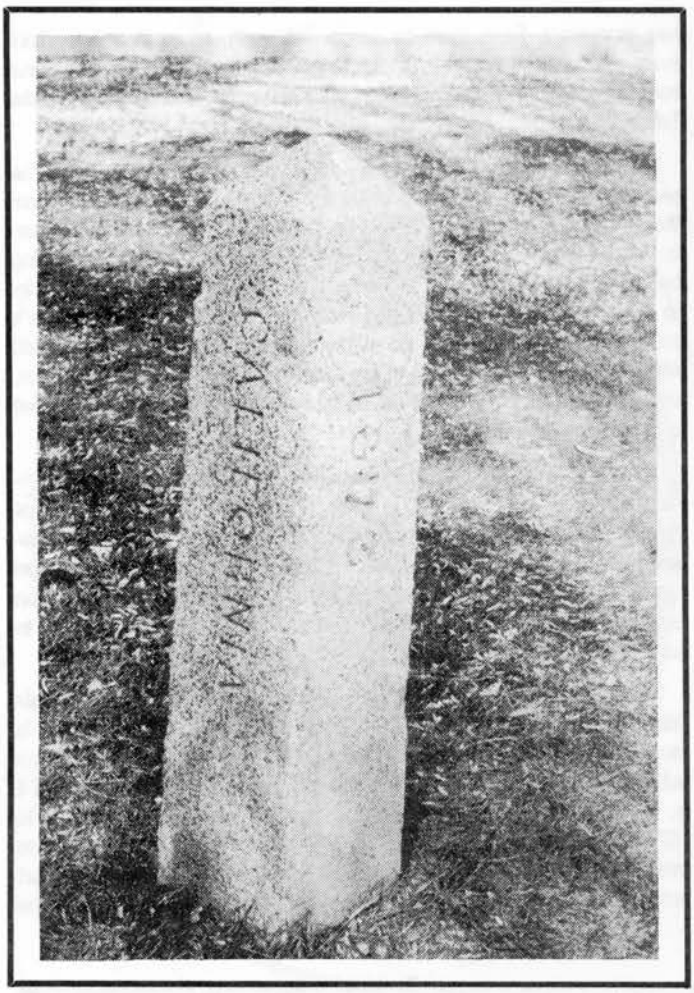
It is not known how Drummond reacted to this rank insubordination. The next we hear from the U.S. General Land Office is a communication from "Acting Commissioner" W.W. Curtis. (What happened to Drummond?) Curtis refused to honor Von Schmidt's claim for expenses involved in running the line 100 miles from the Oregon border twice. He stated that there was no evidence that Von Schmidt had really run the line south from Major's monument, since there were no markers to prove it. Poor Von Schmidt! When he had removed the out of line markers on the way back to Oregon, which was the correct thing to do, he had destroyed the evidence needed to support his claim.

It almost seems as though there was a conspiracy in the federal government to discredit Von Schmidt. In 1874, Charles A. Schott concluded that Von Schmidt's stone marker on the north shore of Lake Tahoe was three-quarters of a mile too far to the west. It turned out that the marker he had reference to was not Von Schmidt's but Col. Williamson's, and Von Schmidt had measured three-quarters of a mile east from this stone to establish his boundary.

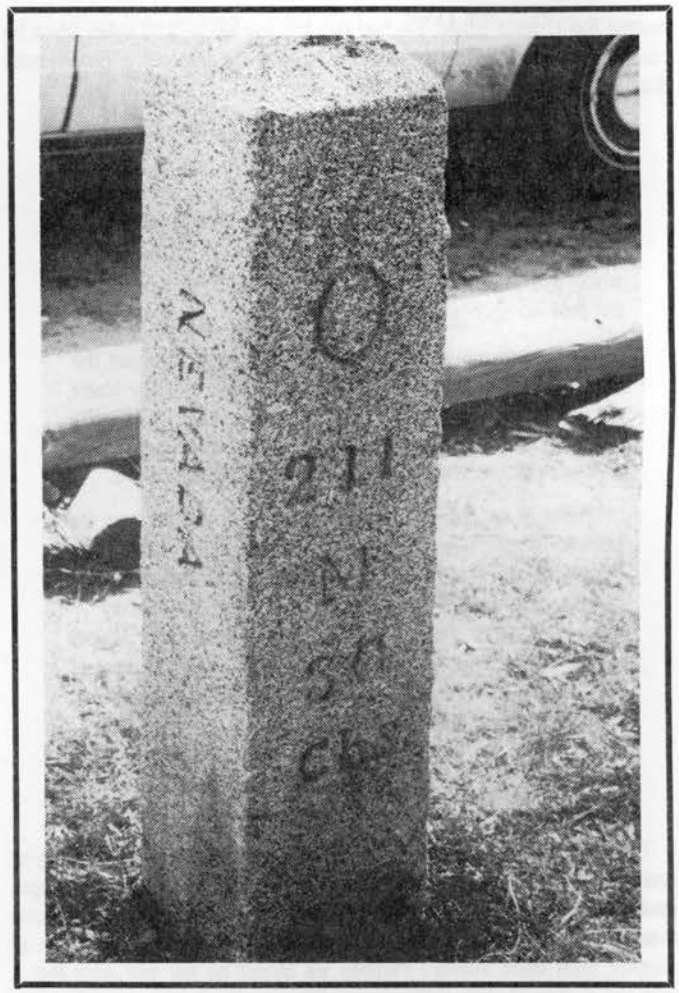
The situation at Lake Tahoe is impossible to simplify. There are six different lines passing through the north shore. The Houghton-Ives line is recognized in the statutes of both California and Nevada as the official line but this has long been ignored, and only a handful of people know where it is. The Von Schmidt line is the one that is marked on the North Shore. In 1977 California filed suit against the State of Nevada to settle disputes over the vertical boundary. The Special Master of the U.S. Supreme Court recommended that the present boundary known as the Von Schmidt line



Six lines through north shore of Lake Tahoe.



Von Schmidt monument from Lake Tahoe in front of Genoa Museum, California side.



Same, Nevada side, Oregon 211 miles. T. Little photos.

be approved as the permanent boundary between the two states. Thus, Von Schmidt's insubordination was finally vindicated.

Running the oblique line from Tahoe to the Colorado River was a difficult task, but the problems were different from those to the north. There were few political problems, but the topographic problems were much worse. To begin with, location of the corner posed problems, since it was in the middle of the lake. Von Schmidt set up fire signals at various points, and even obtained the use of the steamer "Truckee" to aid in his survey.

When he was satisfied that he had located the right corner, and had calculated the angle of the line to the Colorado River, he started to run his line. When he arrived at the Colorado River he was about a mile east of the terminal reported by Lt. Ives. Furthermore he found that the river had shifted its course so that the center of the river where it crossed the 35th parallel was about a half mile west of where it was shown on the Ives sketch of 1861. He was directed by Drummond to determine the corner in the center of where he found the channel. He was to correct his line back to Lake Tahoe, but actually did so only about a third of the way back, making a slight angle in his line.

Von Schmidt has been criticized by later writers for his failure to correct all of the way back. He was probably tired of the whole business at this time, had exhausted the available funds, and felt that a small error in a line through land of small value was not serious. The figures in later publications that show this angle are greatly exaggerated. Later calculations showed slight errors at both ends of the line, and a new line was run by the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey. Only the topographic maps show both the USC&GS line and the Von Schmidt line.

It is much more interesting to follow the line on these maps than to delve into the technical surveying details. Let us therefore follow the line and try to imagine what Von Schmidt and his crew encountered on the way.

On the southeast shore, he placed a granite monument showing the latitude, longitude and distance from the Oregon border. This monument has been removed and placed in front of the museum in Genoa. From the lake shore the line ascends abruptly to mountainous terrain reaching altitudes of 9,500 feet. (Any reference to "the line" hereafter will apply to either line unless otherwise specified, since they are fairly close together. At the beginning, the Von Schmidt line is about one-eighth of a mile southwest of the USC&GS line.)

In the 24 miles from Tahoe to Topaz Lake the line crosses seven ridges and seven ravines. Not an auspicious start for a 400 mile trek! The line bisects the lake, and fishermen from either state are allowed to use their licenses in this lake. Incidentally, Topaz Lake was known as Alkali Lake at the turn of the century.

After leaving Topaz Lake, the line crosses the West Walker River and Antelope Valley (not to be confused with the valley with the same name at Lancaster). After that it ascends into the Sweetwater Mountains, reaching a maximum altitude of 10,556 feet. Crossing about 15 miles of very rough terrain, it descends to the East Walker River just east of Devil's Gate and about ten miles northeast of Bridgeport. It is here that the two lines cross, and for the next 300 miles the Von Schmidt line is east of the USC&GS line.

The next hundred miles of the boundary are the most interesting to Owens Valley "explorers," since they cover familiar ground. About three miles from Devil's Gate on top of a high hill, the topo map shows two markers close together, one a Von Schmidt marker and the other a USC&GS marker. These looked interesting, so my wife and I decided to look for them. Driving along the east side of the Bridgeport reservoir, a road takes off to the right about a mile south of the dam. This winding dirt road follows a roughly northeast course toward the state line, eight air miles away but more like 12 road miles. Before reaching Masonic the road climbs "New York Hill," a 16 percent grade ascending over 400 feet in one-half mile. Four-wheel drive vehicles are strongly recommended.

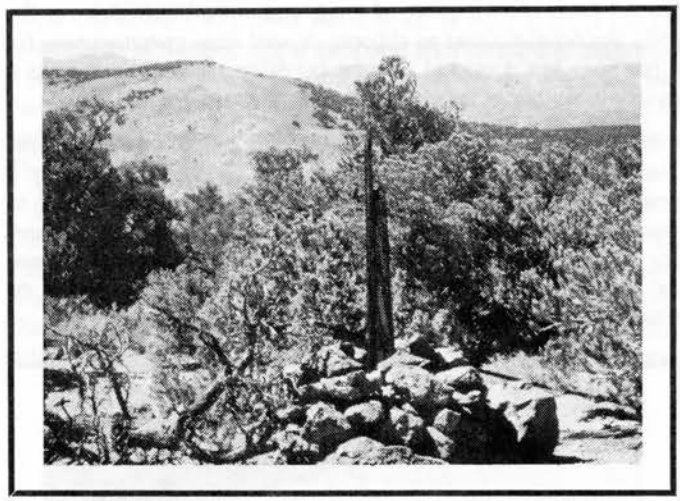
Masonic must have been a bustling mining town in its day. It even had two suburbs, Upper Town and Lower Town. Three miles north of Masonic the road curves around the shoulder of a prominent hill. We parked the truck where we thought we were closest to the markers. What a thrill it was, after a strenuous climb, to reach the summit and come face to face with the large stone cairn with a juniper post in the center just as Von Schmidt had described it more than a hundred years before. About a hundred feet to the south was the USC&GS marker as indicated on the map. The remnants of the flag scaffold were also there.

We decided to return by way of Devil's Gate, only two and one-half miles down the hill. The road, however, stretched nine miles, the first five of which were steep and winding. The state line was marked by painting on a large pine along this road. After reaching the bottom of the grade it was an easy trip back to Bridgeport.

The markers we found were not the highest in this range. The next hill down the line is Dome Hill, 8,000 feet, and 18 miles further on is Beauty Peak at 9,000 feet. From there the line descends abruptly to 7,500 where it crosses the Aurora road. One can imagine that after crossing more than 30 miles of high mountain country, the survey party was ready for a few days rest and relaxation at the night spots of either Aurora or Bodie. Von Schmidt never mentions such things in his notes.

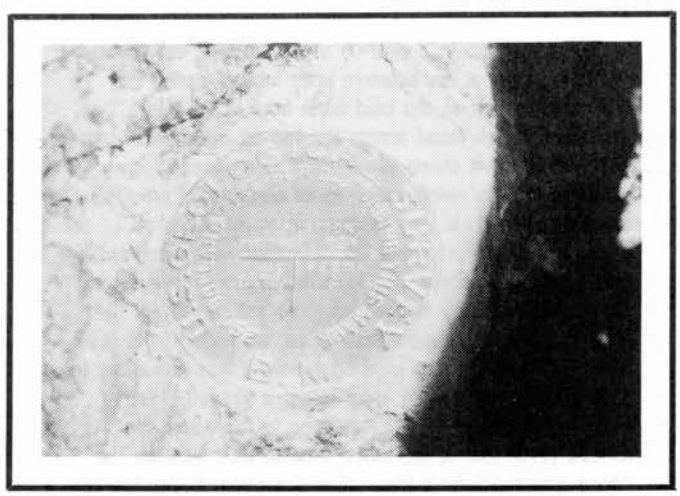
After climbing to 9,000 feet, the line descends in eight miles to 6,500 in Mono Valley, 10 miles northeast of Mono Lake. In the next two miles the line climbs to 7,500 feet and remains at about this level for the next 15 miles. It passes within a mile of Pizona on the west and the end of Truman Meadows on the east, an arrowhead hunter's paradise. The many collections of arrowheads by people in the Owens Valley contain hundreds of points from the Pizona-Truman Meadows region.

After crossing this plateau the line drops into Queen Valley between Benton and Montgomery Pass. Here it crosses the bed of the Carson and Colorado Railroad (later referred to as the Southern Pacific). The Von



Von Schmidt cairn above Masonic.

Rock outcropping near Von Schmidt cairn where USC&GS marker is found.



Closeup of USC&GS marker. *T. Little photos.*

Schmidt line is about a quarter of a mile east of the USC&GS line at this point. Von Schmidt placed an elaborate dressed stone monument here, but it has been torn down and only the foundation remains. Nearby was a crushed metal box of the kind used to store documents.

In two more miles it ascends an alluvial fan from 6,000 to 6,800 feet. The next four miles covers the steepest climb on the entire boundary. It crosses the saddle between Boundary Peak and Montgomery Peak at an elevation of 12,887 feet. Actually the Von Schmidt line was east of Boundary Peak, so that before 1896 this peak was not "the tallest peak in Nevada" as it is today. At that time Wheeler Peak in the eastern part of the state could claim that title.

Foundation of monument along railroad bed below Montgomery and Boundary peaks. T. Little photos.

The line proceeds along the eastern slope of the White Mountains, crossing many ridges and canyons but averaging about 8,000 feet for 10 miles. It then descends irregularly for another 10 miles to the base of the mountain at 5,200 feet. In the next six miles it goes over an alluvial fan to the floor of Fish Lake Valley at 4,800 feet.

The roughly 35 mile trek over the White Mountains from Queen Valley to Fish Lake Valley was not an easy one. The survey party had to go on foot, carrying equipment, food and bed rolls over incredibly rough terrain. The support party had to take the wagons and stock over Montgomery Pass and down through Fish Lake Valley where they could meet the survey party.

The difficulty of this trek cannot be appreciated from Von Schmidt's matter of fact notes, but C.H. Sinclair who supervised the USC&GS from 1893 to 1899 described the trip vividly:

> "The first station occupied by me for ranging out the line . . . was the most southeastern point located during the preceding season on the bold north front of the White Mountains, which stand across the line as a formidible barrier about 13,000 feet above sea level. It is an exceedingly difficult station to reach, owing to its altitude and precipitous sides. The footing is very insecure in many places on account of loose sand, and the difficulties were increased by the rarified atmosphere. . . . Next morning we moved upward, slowly, as far as the animals could be induced to go, then dividing the load between three of us, we reached the station after five hours arduous climbing, where it was necessary to shovel away the snow in order to get a forward sight. Patiently we waited for the heliotrope to flash from the forward party, and at last when it came they were on the wrong mountain, about three miles too close. It was too late for them to climb the mountain that day, so there was nothing left us but to descend to our camp and repeat the trip.
>
> "When the ascent was made the next day, the forward party was seen to be on the right mountain about 9.7 miles southeast in an air line, but as this station was 9,286 feet and the climb above the valley was about 4,000 feet, it was slow work for them. . . . When a point was lined in . . . two of us packed to the animals."

What happened to the third member of the party? Sinclair was very meticulous about minor details, but often careless about facts. For example, either he was way off in his statement about the 4,000 foot climb, or the forward party was utterly stupid to descend that far the day before. Post Meadow on Indian Creek at 7,600 feet was close by. Another example is his description of one point near the Aurora-Bodie road as being 2.8 miles "southeast" of Aurora, whereas it is really a little west of due south. The most ludicrous example is that of the East Carson River "running north and south" at one point!

The next twenty miles were fairly easy ones through the floor of Fish Lake valley and the alluvial fans on either side. The line then ascends the slope of the Sylvania Mountains, climbing to 8,000 feet in six miles. After 10 miles of rugged country, the line descends rapidly to 3,600 feet at the upper end of Death Valley, crossing only a small corner. Climbing rugged mountains to 5,700 feet, it crosses Grapevine Canyon at 4,000 feet, four miles east of the present location of Scotty's Castle. Going through the Grapevine Mountains, the line passes near Grapevine Peak (8,738 ft.) and Wahguyne Peak (8,628 ft.), both of which are between the two lines. Beyond this is the ghost town of Leadfield. This is the beginning of a one way road through Titus Canyon into Death Valley, a trip well worth taking.

The stretch of line from Fish Lake Valley to Leadfield caused the USC&GS party under Sinclair considerable concern due to the shortage of water and feed for the stock. An extra six-horse team was hired to haul hay and grain from Fish Lake Valley to various points along the line. Their own teams were used to distribute provender along the line and for hauling supplies from the railroad at Bishop.

After leaving Leadfield, the line skirts the eastern edge of the Grapevine and Funeral Mountains with the Amaragosa Desert on the east and the ghost town of Rhyolite with Beatty beyond. The topo map in this section mentions, for the first time, a new line called the "Baker Line" between the Von Schmidt line and the USC&GS line. This line extends only 20 miles on the Amaragosa Desert. What its purpose was or for whom it was named is not known by this author. It could be that it is named after the same person as the town of Baker on the Barstow-Las Vegas highway.

For 30 miles the line is mainly on the floor of the Amaragosa Desert, reaching a low point of 2,300 feet. It is at about the lower end of the desert that the "corrected" Von Schmidt line met the original line from the north and Von Schmidt finished his work. The two lines are one and one-quarter miles apart here, the widest discrepancy along the border.

At the end of the Amaragosa Desert the line goes over the Resting Springs range. At the foot of this range it crosses a very large sand dune and then enters Stewart Valley. After this it enters Pahrump Valley and crosses the Pahrump to Shoshone road due west of Las Vegas. The line lies mostly in Pahrump Valley for 30 miles, then crosses a low range of hills and enters Mesquite Valley. In the middle of this valley the two lines cross and from here on to the Colorado River the Von Schmidt line is west of the USC&GS line.

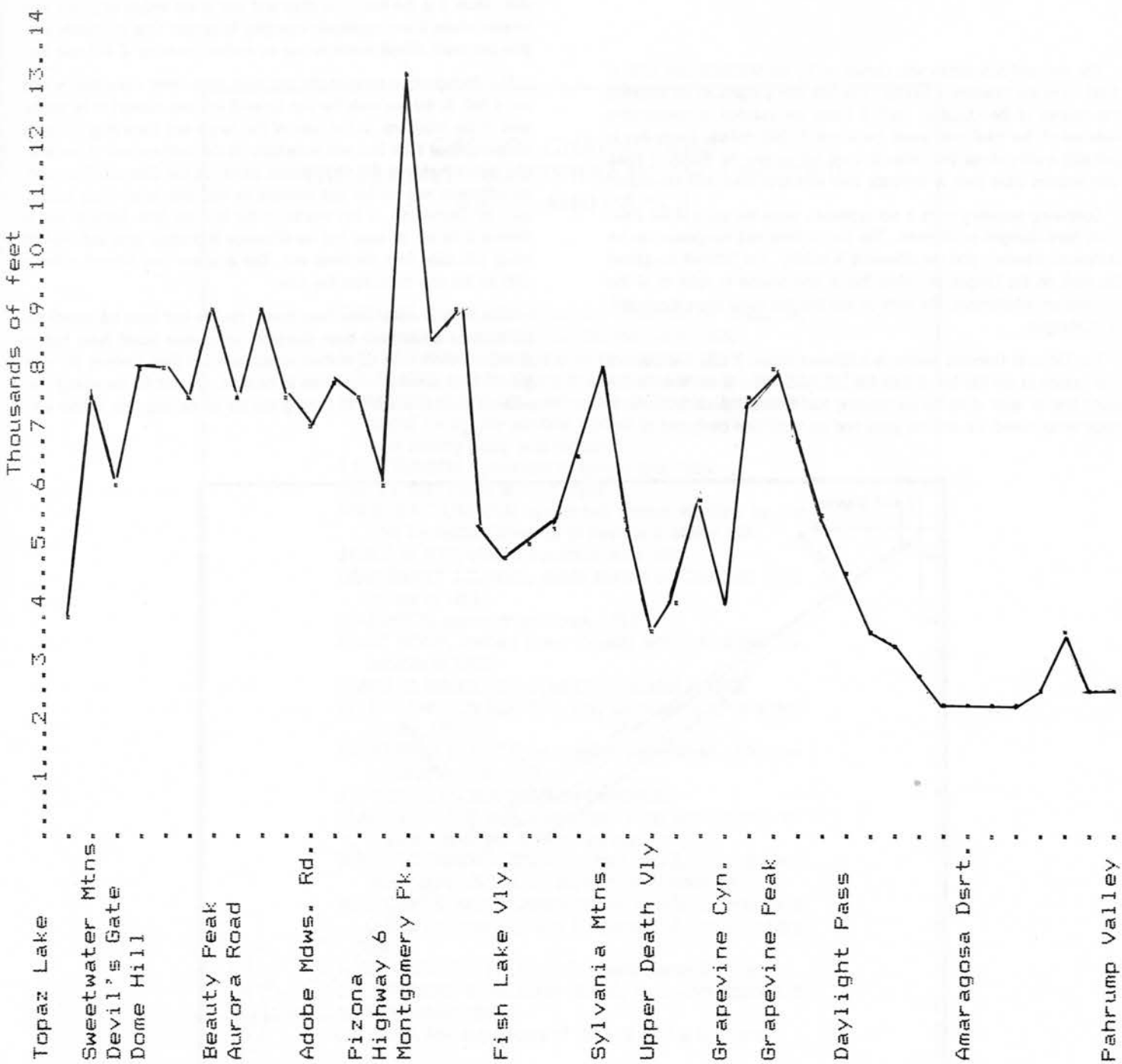
At the lower end of Mesquite Valley the line ascends to near State Line Pass (3,300 ft.) between the Clark Mountains and the State Line Hills. It then descends to the northern end of Ivanpah Dry Lake at 2,600 feet. Here it crosses interstate highway 15, the main Barstow-Las Vegas highway, which runs along the dry lake bed for four miles. For the next 20 miles the line is largely over large alluvial fans, rising gradually to 4,600

feet at the base of New York Mountains. The line ascends abruptly to about 5,200 feet, down a small valley and up through the Castle Mountains and the Piute Range. These mountains are not very high, but are very rough.

The next 30 miles over more mountains and alluvial plains brings the line to the terminal on the Colorado River. The 55 miles from Highway 15 to the Colorado is about the most uninhabited, if not the most desolate section of the line. Part of it is designated as the "East Mojave National Scenic Area," which may be appropriate for people with four-wheel drive campers, plenty of food, water, and gas, and a spirit of adventure. There is not a town within ten miles of the line unless one includes ghost towns and mining camp sites.

The end of the Von Schmidt line is about 15 miles south of Laughlin and 15 north of Needles. This is the lowest point on the line, being about 1,600 feet above sea level. To show graphically the ups and downs over mountains and valleys that Von Schmidt had to cover over part of his route, I have prepared a profile of the line from Topaz Lake to Highway 15.

Von Schmidt's survey by no means settled the problems of the California-Nevada line. When he arrived there he found that the river had changed its course since Lt. Ives had made his map in 1861. He therefore wrote to Willis Drummond (the same one who had insisted that Von Schmidt accept Major's corner as the starting point at the Oregon border), asking his advice. Drummond replied that since "Lt. Ives survey has never



PROFILE OF CALIFORNIA-NEVADA BORDER FROM TOPAZ LAKE TO PAHRUMP VALLEY

been returned to nor recognized by the department" it was Von Schmidt's duty to consider the middle of the river where he found it. This turned out to be bad advice, for many years later the USC&GS decided that the Ives corner should be adopted after all.

In 1889 the California Legislature voted to provide for the correction of some errors in the Von Schmidt line. The state Surveyor General, Theo. Reichert, appointed C.E. Grunsky and William Minto to survey the line from Tahoe to the Colorado, "provided the whole cost for the work shall not exceed 5000 dollars." About all they did was to check the two ends of the line, further muddying the waters.

The next and final survey was carried out by the USC&GS from 1893 to 1899 under the direction of Sinclair. The cost was $30,860.30 not including the salaries of the USC&GS staff. If these are included, a conservative estimate of the total cost would be about 80,000 dollars. Since this is primarily a story about Von Schmidt, I will not go into the details of these later surveys other than to compare their cost and value with his work.

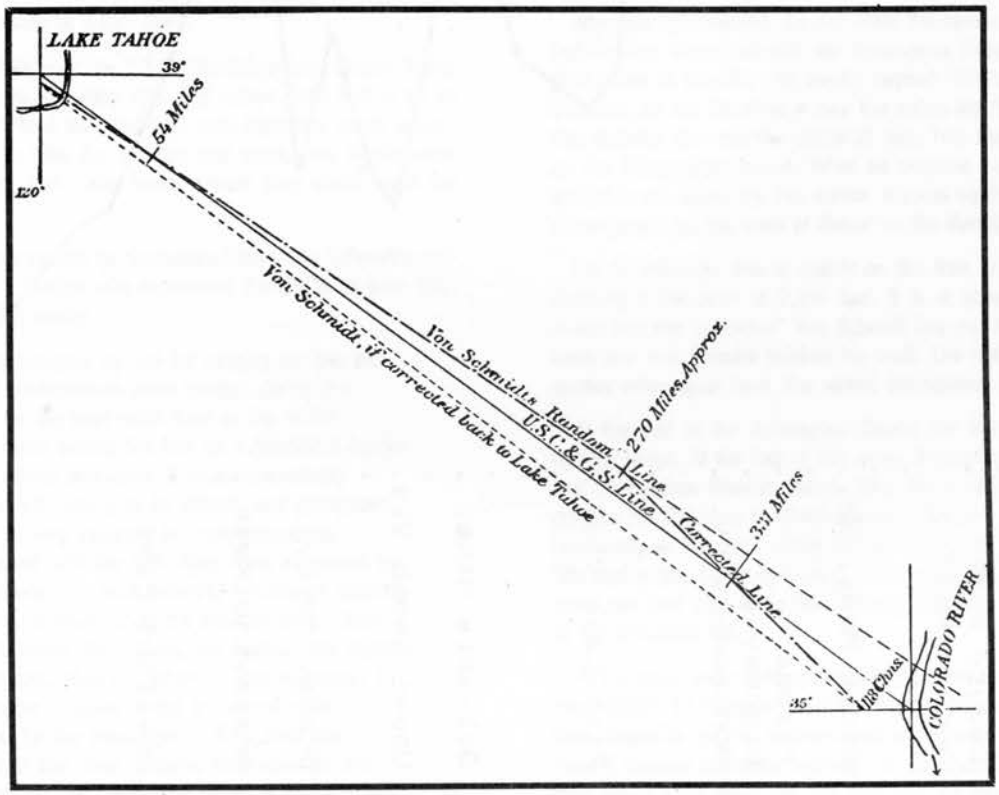
Comparing monetary costs is not legitimate, since the value of the dollar must have changed in 25 years. The cost in time and manpower can be compared, however, and the difference is striking. Von Schmidt completed his work on the Oregon to Tahoe line in one season in spite of all the bureaucratic interference. His work on this line has never been successfully challenged.

The Tahoe to Colorado section is a different matter. It took Von Schmidt one season to run this line. It took the USC&GS seven years to cover the same line. In spite of all the complaining that Sinclair did about the hardships encountered, he and his party had an easy time compared to Von Schmidt. After all, Von Schmidt broke new ground since he was the first one to cover the whole line. All the USC&GS party had to do was follow his line and make the correction they deemed necessary. Sinclair and other writers made much of the "angle" in his line. To see how little that angle deviates from a straight line, lay a 12 inch ruler on a flat surface with a paper clip under the middle. Press the two ends of the ruler until they touch the table and you will have a scale model of the bend in the line.

It is hard to understand why there was so much insistence on precisely following the line as described by the delegates at the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1949. Those men pored over what was at best a crude map by present day standards and drew two lines. The oblique line was especially unreasonable. One end was in the middle of a lake where the depth of the water was over a thousand feet, though they probably didn't know it at the time. The other end was in the middle of a river at a location where it was continually changing its course. One can hardly imagine two more difficult points to use as anchor points for a 400 mile line.

The discrepancies between the two lines were never more than a mile and a half. At the two ends the Von Schmidt line was claimed to be too far west of the "true" line. In the case of the Tahoe end there may be some question, since if his line was acceptable at the northern end of the lake, why wasn't it okay at the southeastern shore? At the Colorado River end, the difference was not his fault because he had been given faulty instructions by Drummond. In the middle of the line the Von Schmidt line is claimed to be too far east, and the difference is greatest (one and one-half miles) 100 miles from the lower end. This is where Von Schmidt called it quits on his way back from the river.

What damage would have been done if his line had been left stand? No communities would have been disrupted, no casinos would have had to close their doors, and no brothels would have lost their licenses. My vote goes to Von Schmidt for the man to be most admired for his energy, his patience and his tenacity in tackling the job of marking "the elusive border." ✤



Von Schmidt and USC&GS Survey lines.

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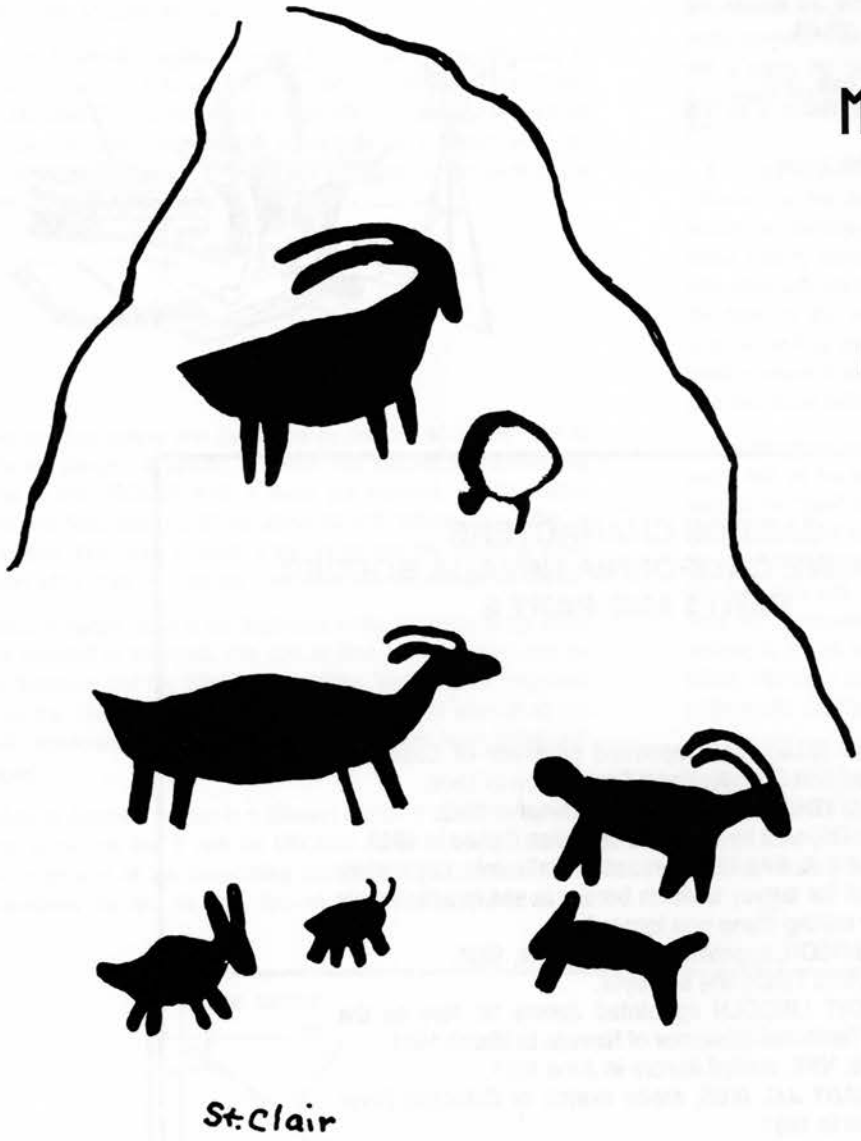
CAST OF CHARACTERS
THE ELUSIVE CALIFORNIA NEVADA BORDER
PART I AND PART II

GENERAL RILEY, self-appointed governor of California. Called first Constitutional Convention in 1849.
BRIGHAM YOUNG, formed state of Deseret 1849.
H.S. BEATIE, sent by Young to establish Genoa in 1849.
ALTHOUSE & SAILOR, persuaded California Legislature to call for survey of north border to see in which state their mining camp was located.
T.P. ROBINSON, appointed to survey line, 1854.
HIGLEY, first Tahoe line surveyor.
PRESIDENT LINCOLN appointed James W. Nye as the first Territorial Governor of Nevada in March 1861.
JAMES W. NYE, visited Aurora in June 1861.
LIEUTENANT J.C. IVES, made sketch of Colorado River corner in 1861.
HOUGHTON, surveyor with Ives, 1863
ISAAC ROOP, formed Roop County which included Susanville in 1863.
DANIEL C. MAJOR, surveyed 42nd parallel in 1863.
ALLEXEY W. VON SCHMIDT, only surveyor to cover entire border, 1872-73.
PROFESSOR GEORGE DAVIDSON, determined 120th meridian at Verdi in 1872.
J.D. WHITNEY, California State Geologist.
CLARENCE KING, U.S. Geologist - King and Whitney requested Davidson to make survey.
WILLIS DRUMMOND, Commissioner of U.S. General Land Office & Von Schmidt's superior in Washington.
W.W. CURTIS, Acting Commissioner of U.S. General Land Office. Refused payment for portion of Von Schmidt's bill.
THEO. REICHERT, California Surveyor General, 1889.
C.E. GRUNSKY & WILLIAM MINTO, surveyors appointed by Reichert, 1889.
C.H. SINCLAIR, supervisor of 1893-99 USC & GS survey.



MY MOUNTAIN IS ALWAYS GOOD TO ME

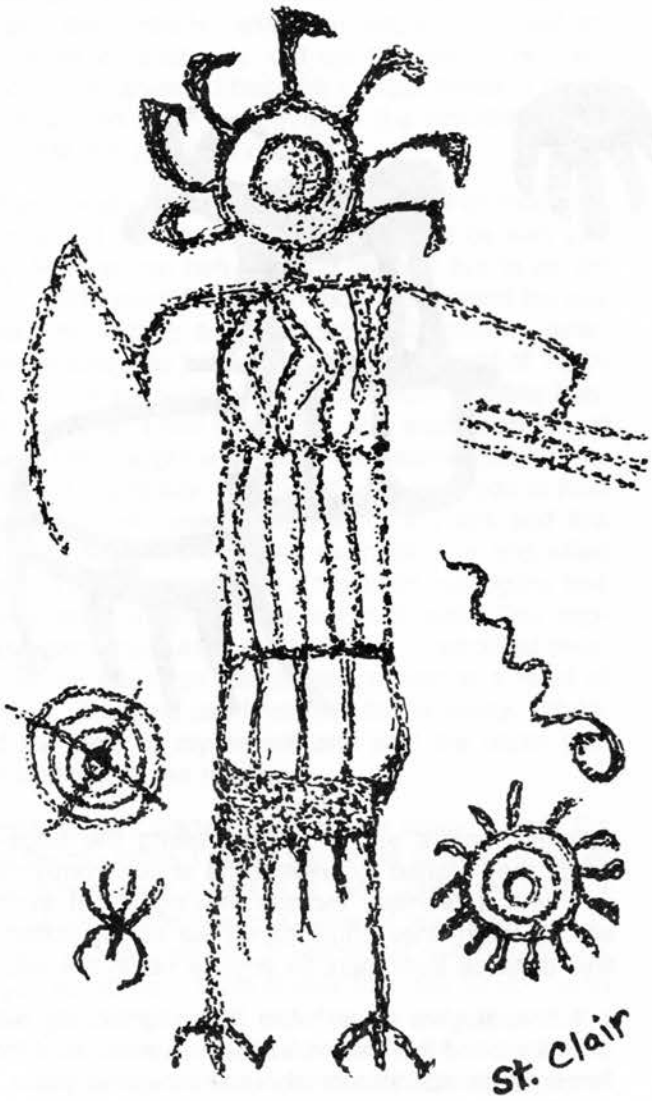
by Joy Fatooh

A hunter tracking a deer, high-powered rifle in hand, steps over an obsidian arrowhead. An archaeologist discovers the remains of an antelope trap with solid juniper fences a mile long. A hiker follows the trail of bighorn sheep to an ancient stone hunting blind.

Big game hunters stalked the eastern Sierra for thousands of years before recorded history began. Their methods were as diverse as the animals and terrain, their tools were made from materials at hand, and their motives — like those of hunters today — went beyond bringing home meat. How did they hunt, and why? And what became of their quarry in historic times?

The Paiutes of Owens Valley, Benton and Mono Lake hunted three big game animals: deer, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn antelope. Today there are far more deer than bighorn or pronghorn; but petroglyphs — those ancient and mysterious symbols chipped in rock — provide a clue that it may have been different then. Pronghorn are hard to distinguish from spike bucks in petroglyphs, but deer and antelope are far outnumbered by bighorn sheep. Whether bighorns were really that much more numerous, had greater cultural significance, or were simply considered better subjects for rock art, no one knows.

Hunting any of the three took skill, luck, stamina, and often a major group effort. Mule deer are migratory and elusive, bighorn sheep inhabit the most inaccessible mountain crags, and pronghorn antelope are the world's fastest long-distance runners. There must have been something of honor and adventure in hunting big game, as other foods provided much more reliable sources of daily nutrition.



The most popular image of an Indian hunter is probably an individual armed with obsidian-tipped arrows, trailing a deer through the woods. That was one way deer were hunted here. Another was to ambush them from a brush or stone hunting blind built alongside a known trail or near a stream or spring. According to Owens Valley elders interviewed by anthropologist Julian Steward in the 1930s, some hunters used trained dogs to round up deer; others "disguised themselves in deer skins and antlers, rubbing against rocks and brush, appearing angry, etc., to imitate deer, running away to make them curious, but keeping to their lee to keep the human odor from reaching them."

One informant said "a hunter left a killed deer in the mountains, went to the sweat-house that night saying, 'Old men, light your pipe. We will smoke.' After passing the pipe, they asked his luck. He told his experiences in detail. Next day they fetched home his deer. He kept the skin, neck and shoulders to the next to the last rib, giving away the remainder."

The front part of the deer was the hunter's share — or, in a group of hunters, the share of the one who made the kill. Sometimes several men would drive deer along a trail to where others waited, hidden.

And sometimes there were great communal deer drives with all the young men of a district carrying sagebrush torches, spreading out to encircle a herd of deer, firing brush and closing in and shooting them down. The meat was brought back to camp where the women and old men cured it by smoking and drying. "Some cured meat was left in the mountains," Steward says, "theft being impossible as anyone in need was welcome to it."

The pronghorn antelope, swift sharpeyed denizen of the open valleys, could not easily be surprised by a lone hunter. The best way to get pronghorn was by a communal hunt, late in the summer when large groups gathered for the pine nut harvest. The antelope drive was a rare adventure: so effective was it that the herds had to be allowed to recover for ten or fifteen years before a drive was held again.

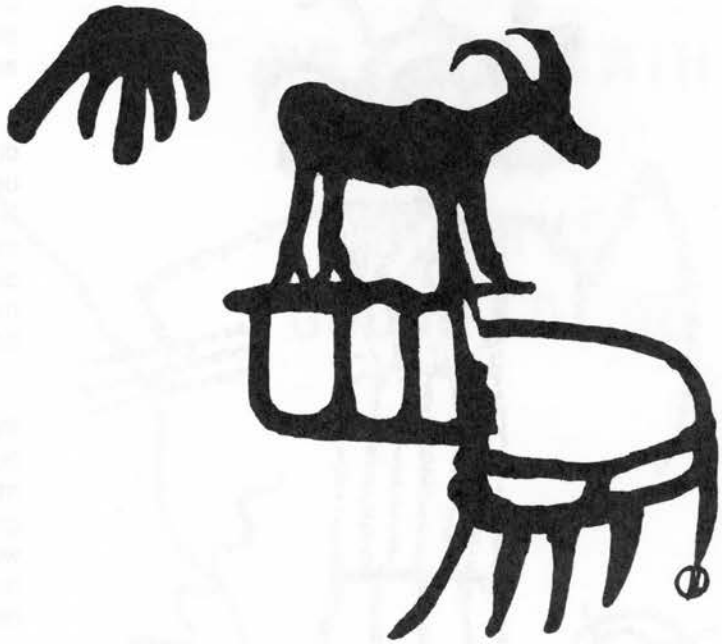
Antelope drive traps were long V-shaped wing fences narrowing to a corral at the point, often taking advantage of natural ravines and built of whatever brush or timber was on hand. Archaeologist Brooke Arkush has found three particularly impressive ones near Mono Lake: corrals and wing fences were made of close-set juniper posts, and the fences were up to a mile long.

Imagine: The stars are just beginjning to fade as you take your place near the opening of the corral. All of you have spent the past two days repairing the fences, and yesterday evening the best young runners started out for their positions twenty miles down the valley. Somewhere between them and you a herd of antelope sniffs the cold dry air.

The runners spread out across the valley and head toward the corral. The antelope start in alarm and run ahead of them, white rump patches flashing. More drivers are stationed relay-fashion along the way, so that whenever an antelope swings to the side a man or woman appears from behind a sagebrush to head it back to center and join the throng behind.

You can see the cloud of dust, and you know where the fences begin, though the antelope do not. Will they veer? No — they're in! The shouts of the drivers can be heard — closer — louder. The antelope rush past and you leap up and follow, heart racing, closing in.

They surge into the corral with all of you right behind,



frantically closing off the entrance. You fit an arrow to your bow as others light the fires. A few will be killed today, a few tomorrow, only as fast as the meat can be dried.

Bighorn sheep were usually hunted alone, often from a hunting blind by a trail or watering-place, or with the help of a few other men. John Muir write in 1917:

"Being perfectly acquainted with the topography of their hunting-grounds, and with the habits and instincts of their game, they were pretty successful. On the tops of nearly every one of the Nevada mountains that I have visited, I have found small, nest-like inclosures built of stones, in which, as I afterward learned, one or more Indians would lie in wait while their companion scoured the ridges below, knowing that the alarmed sheep would surely run to the summit, and when they could be made to approach with the wind they were shot at short range."

There is a blind like that on a high hilltop near Benton, a neat ring of stones with its sandy floor lightly scattered with obsidian flakes, where some patient hunter made an arrow point or two while he waited. A tall cairn of stones stands alongside, perhaps to accustom the local sheep to something man-sized standing there.

Muir described something similar in connection with yet another bighorn hunting method, a wing trap strategy adapted to the mountains: "Great numbers of Indians were of course required, more, indeed, than they could usually muster, counting in squaws, children, and all; they were compelled, therefore, to build rows of dummy hunters out of stones, along the ridge-tops which they wished to prevent the sheep from crossing . . . with a few live Indians moving about excitedly among them, they could hardly be distinguished at a little distance from men, by anyone not in the secret."

Archaeologists have found many temporary hunting camps around the Owens Valley that were used for millennia, then abandoned about a thousand years ago. The Indians had stopped travelling long distances in search of big game, and plant foods — always most dependable — became even more important. The reasons are unclear: perhaps fewer animals due to a change in climate or hunting technology; perhaps a new emphasis on agriculture as extensive irrigation systems were developed to water the valley's native plants — although Benton Paiutes practiced irrigation without giving up long-distance hunting.

But even where hunting became less important for supplying food, it still had great significance — at least for some. Julian Steward published "Two Paiute Autobiographies" in 1934. Sam Newland of *Pitana Patu* (Bishop) cheerfully admitted that he never did learn to hunt, though he tried. Jack Stewart of *Tovowahamatu* (Big Pine), "a very successful hunter" who told his life story when he was 100 years old, devoted much of it to hunting: learning as a boy; the colors he painted his arrowshafts; his first deer kill; attempting to win the girl he hoped to marry by bringing her family several bighorn sheep. He told of the dreams that brought him power:

"I dreamed I took an eagle wing and placed it across the back of my head and my soul said: 'I will go hunting high up in the Sierra Nevada as an eagle does. I will not be hindered by obstacles, but will be able to go over everything.' Afterward, I became a great hunter. I could stand long and tiring trips through the mountains and could cross the roughest country . . .

"When I was still a young man, I saw Birch mountain in a dream. It said to me: 'You will always be well and strong. Nothing can hurt you and you will live to an old age.' . . My power from Birch mountain helped me just as much in hunting as in sickness. My favorite deer-hunting ground was in the Sierra Nevada, west of *Tovo-wahamatu*, in the vicinity of my mountain. It often happened that after I had seen deer and tried to sneak up on them, they caught wind of me and started toward my mountain. I would say: 'My mountain, I want you to help me get some of these deer. They are yours and live upon you.' After this I always overtook one and killed him while he was lying under a mountain mahogany tree or some other shelter on the mountain side. This happened many times. After such a killing, I remained overnight on the mountain and treated myself to a feast of deer meat. The next day I returned to the valley. I distributed the meat to my people and sold the upper part which belongs to the hunter.

"Once when I started up Big Pine creek toward the foot of my mountain, I asked my power to make it easier for me to hunt deer. I said to it: 'Now, great mountain, I wish that you would give me some of your deer to eat. You have so many on you. If you would give me some, I wish you would have them at your foot, not far up.' Soon I came upon a group of deer at the very foot of the mountain as I asked, and killed one. As I was packing it back to my village, I saw a herd of mountain sheep. I stopped and hid to watch them, and as I waited one came toward me. I killed it with little trouble and went to the valley, carrying both animals. I distributed and sold them when I got home. My mountain is always good to me."

The Indians believed the animals belonged to the land and were shared by the land's good grace. The white newcomers were brought up in the tradition that "every beast of the earth" had been delivered into their hands at the time of creation, to do with as they pleased. The difference in philosophies is evident in the animals' rapid turn of fate.

John Muir, one of the few white men of his time who cared deeply for this land and its wildlife, admired the bighorn sheep and was optimistic about its future:

"Man is the most dangerous enemy of all, but even from him our brave mountain-dweller has little to fear in the remote solitudes of the High Sierra. The golden plains of the Sacramento and San Joaquin were lately thronged with bands of elk and antelope, but, being fertile and accessible, they were required for human pastures. So, also, are many of the feeding-grounds of the deer — hill, valley, forest and meadow — but it will be long before man will care to take to the highland castles of the sheep."

The first sharp drop in Sierra bighorn numbers had already come in the late 1800s with the influx of miners, especially in heavily mined, accessible areas like Lee Vining Canyon. Bighorn sheep appeared on at least one Bodie restaurant menu. Alarm at their decline was such that hunting them was banned by California law as early as 1876. But at the same time hundreds of thousands of domestic sheep — the animals Muir once called "hooved locusts" — were being grazed deeper and deeper in the mountains. Even more destructive than overgrazing was the introduction of diseases. A century after they were protected by law, there remained only two isolated herds of Sierra bighorn sheep.

In the high desert valleys to the east, the pronghorn antelope fared even worse: they vanished. There were probably only a few hundred here to begin with. Historical references are rare. Early explorer Capt. J.W. Davidson observed that they were hunted by Owens Valley Paiutes in 1859; surveyor A.W. Von Schmidt noted in his 1856 journal meeting a group of Indians in the Bridgeport Valley: "I found that they had been out on a hunting expedition and had killed two Antelope. I traded them for half a one for which I gave them a saddle blanket."

ANTELOPE

by

Eric Stone

Whether or not the pronghorn was overhunted is unknown. But as with the bighorn, the newcomers' livestock most likely sealed its fate. Even remote valleys that still appear wild have long been grazed by cattle, overgrazed, burned, replanted with grasses on which cattle thrive, and grazed again. Under such management brush grows taller, making pronghorn vulnerable to predators by blocking their line of sight and escape, and the native grasses and tender green plants they prefer to eat disappear.

The forage needs of mule deer are similar to those of cattle, and so they have done fairly well. Perhaps the greatest threats to the deer of the eastern Sierra are not in the past, but today. Three years of drought have reduced the herds by as much as half; bucks-only hunting has unbalanced buck-to-doe ratios; and a proposed ski development in Sherwin Bowl threatens to block their most important migration route.

Restoring large animals where they have been eliminated is a formidable task — as is well known within the government agencies charged with doing just that. The California Department of Fish and Game, the Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and others have been cooperating in efforts to redistribute Sierra bighorns throughout their historic range and to return pronghorn antelope to the valleys to the east.

Bighorns from the largest of those two remaining herds are chased into a net by helicopter and transported by truck to other Sierra canyons. Pronghorns are brought from northern California, where they are herded into V-wing traps in a method virtually identical to the Paiute antelope drive, except that a helicopter replaces the teams of runners. The costs — in dollars, in manpower, in risk to animal and human lives — are tremendous. So are the rewards.

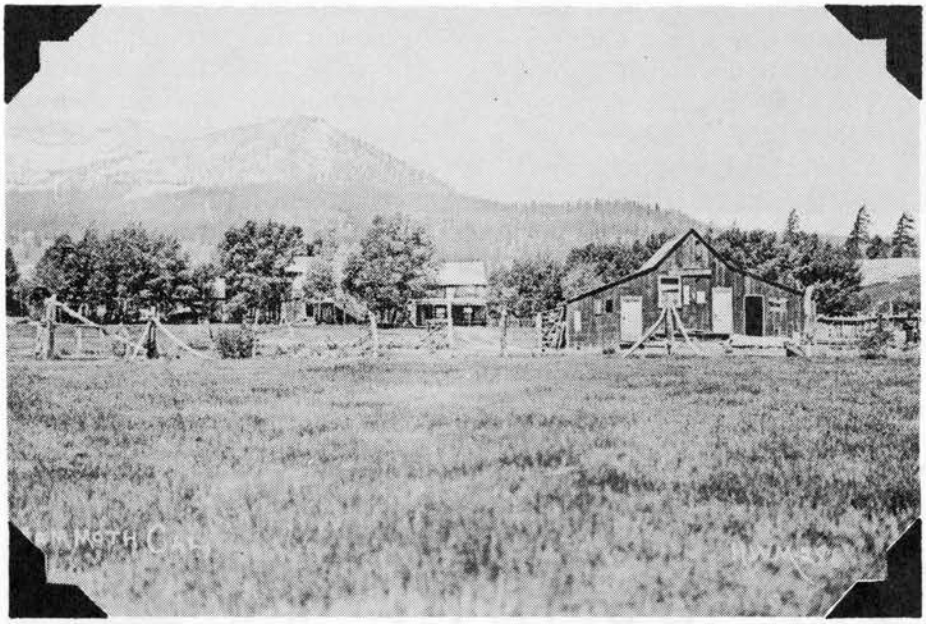
Early last spring a crew of Fish and Game capture experts and volunteers transplanted a group of bighorn sheep to Lee Vining Canyon, then headed north of Benton to see if they could use the sheep nets to improvise an antelope trap and install new radio collars in a herd of pronghorn that had become difficult to track. Among the volunteers was Toiayabe Tahedah Nelson, a young Paiute hunter whose name means Mountain Deer, curious and somewhat skeptical about the government's attempts to approximate his ancestor's skills. He himself seemed to have an uncanny, perhaps inherent sense of animal ways — combined with a very modern awareness that today, the fate of the animals is in human hands.

"I don't think it'll work," he remarked after helping set up the net, an elaborate arrangement partly hidden in a wash. "I think they'll see it and either jump right over it or turn and go around it."

The helicopter brought two groups of antelope: first clouds of dust, then flashes of black and white and gold, flying hooves and wide-open eyes. They passed almost right over Tahedah where he hid in the sage; then one group jumped right over the net, and the other turned and went around it. But one doe tripped and was caught, near enough that Tahedah was one of the first to come to her assistance, and thus became probably the first Paiute of his generation to hold a pronghorn antelope. Tagged and collared, she bounded away, carrying with her a touch of the future and of the past. ✤

The drawings used in this article are part of a collection developed on the Bishop Reservation by the native American art project. The sketches may be purchased in the form of gift cards. Proceeds from sales will be used to fund future native American youth projects.

Opposite: DEER by Tahedah Nelson



Mammoth, California *H. W. Mendenhall collection*

THE CABIN

by George Garrigues

I still see the bacon sizzling in the pan as I clean my fish for breakfast, smell the smoke from the wood stove, hear the wind whispering through the pines at night, the jays squawking at squirrels, rattling pinecones down the old tin roof. I feel the wiggley trout in my hand as I remove the hook in the crisp morning air, and savor the taste of simple meals cooked on the old wood stove, the freshness of pristine mountain air.

I will never forget the fun and laughter by candle light around the table in the evenings or the weight of blankets on my body as I crawled into bed for a good night's sleep.

It was just an old, substandard cabin (especially by today's standards) nestled off a dusty road amid pine and aspen trees, not far from the creek in Mammoth. The small living area was comfortably furnished with a broken-down sofa, an army cot, two worn easy chairs and a rickety table capable of seating eight or ten for meals. A hand crank Victrola, which didn't always operate at full speed, stood in a corner.

The adjacent kitchen contained a chipped, rusty sink, a short, linoleum covered drainboard, two metal lined mouseproof cupboards and a couple of shelves for dishes. The most important feature was the ancient wood stove. Not only did it provide heat for chilly mornings and evenings and the way to cook our meals, it contained a water jacket, the only means of supplying hot water for the inhabitants.

Three small bedrooms, barely large enough to accommodate a double bed each, completed the cabin interior. A splintery wooden deck extended along the north and west sides. Nailed to a nearby pine, the cooler, a wire cage covered with burlap which needed to be soaked with water several times daily, kept the milk, eggs, lettuce and other perishables cool.

A little snow melt ditch, mosquito breeding territory, meandered by the deck. It was bridged by a couple of half rotten logs leading to the outhouse trail through trees flanked by wild columbine, lupine, paintbrush and tiger lilies. The spider infested two-seater, walls covered with Saturday Evening Post pictures, was always the subject of black widow spider stories, but none were ever found there.

The cabin contributed many hours of happiness to a group of rowdy, rambunctious Bishop youngsters. It was often our vacation site during the depression years. Every summer either my mother or my aunt would take her turn, leaving the other behind in the peace of a quiet home for a week or ten day period, loading me, my brother, sister, and three cousins into the car to head for the cabin.

The trip usually took several hours, stopping first at Paradise Camp at the foot of Sherwin Hill for a cold drink and visit with long-time friends Gladys and Gene Crosby. It continued with the winding climb to the top of Sherwin Hill, into the refreshing coolness through Rock Creek Canyon, Tom's Place, and Happy Jack's.

Gaining speed to get over the ridge we'd go on to McGee Creek hidden in the aspen, around the bend and into our first view of the Minarets, Mam-

moth Mountain and Convict Creek; on to the turn-off and the old road, winding through the trees along Mammoth Creek, beyond Lutz Grocery, Sammy Griffith's service station and the Post Office, with one more hill to go. Tex Cushion's cabin and his barking sled dogs, the Penguin Cafe, Pine Cliff Lodge on the left, our road on the right and we were there!

Awake at dawn — no sleepy heads here as at home — eagerly jumping into our clothes like pelicans diving for fish . . . a rush to build a fire to warm the icy water from the spring and provide a bed of coals to cook breakfast . . . once it's roaring, head for the creek, fishing poles in hand, to challenge the native rainbows . . . enough caught within an hour to feed the hungry gang.

Back at the cabin, sizzling bacon followed by the morning's trout crisped in the cast iron skillet . . . add pancakes from the well-seasoned griddle, a cup of hot chocolate and maybe an egg or two . . . breakfast hastily devoured while discussing the plan for the day . . . no comics to read, no blaring radio or flickering television to distract us.

Our routine was fixed but flexible. After the morning cleanup, we might head toward Horseshoe Lake. It was a pleasant drive up to the old road, a winding, twisting congo line through the rocks, trees and meadows, with lupine and paintbrush adding color, past Old Mammoth City where sagging log cabins of the miners hinted of stories they could tell . . . perhaps a stop at Stephen Willard's studio to say hello and admire his photographs . . . the view from the top of Twin Lakes Falls so striking it still thrills . . . finally at Horseshoe to swim and play on the beach, enjoy our picnic, and exchange stories with the tourists there, bragging about how good we had it, laughing at the envy in their expressions.

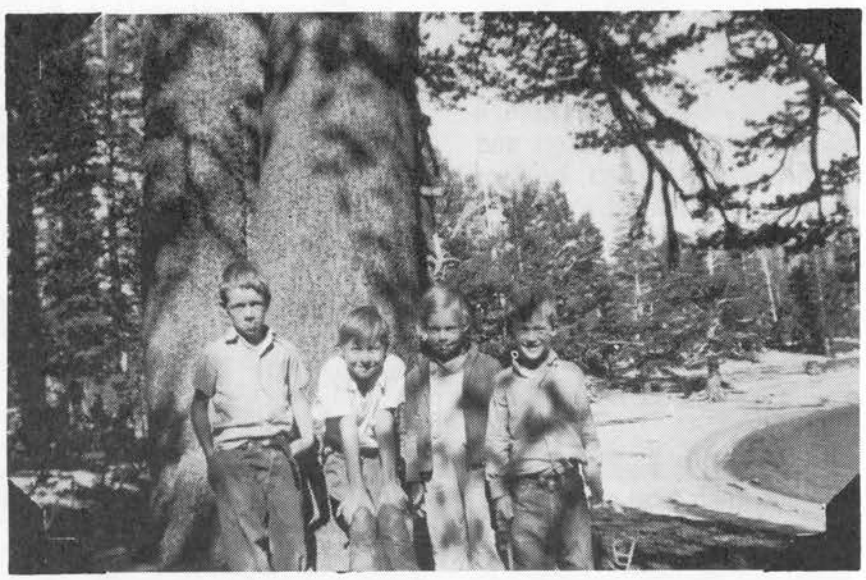
Another day we might stop off at the pack station to say hello and then continue on to Lake Mary, driving by all the people camping there with tents so close together they looked like bees in a hive, all believing they were "out in the wild outdoors." Maybe we'd hike up the trail to Arrowhead or Skelton Lakes to fill out the day or continue on to beautiful Lake George in the shadow of Crystal Crag.

For a full day of activity we went to Hot Creek. First a visit to the fish hatchery where it was fun to watch the newly hatched trout, some less than a half-inch long, wiggling in the hatching trays, with bodies like snips of black thread dangling behind their protruding large eyes . . . the fingerlings and catchables, interesting dark arrows fighting for food when fed, soon destined for roadside waters or a mule-back ride to the high country. If we felt extra bold, we stuck a finger into the water to tease the trout. I can still feel their teeth scraping my skin.

On down the old Hot Creek road, past the ranch (no fishing allowed unless you were a paying guest) until we reached the open water, where we'd fish or just explore the canyon walls . . . lunch always included fresh eggs hard boiled in one of the hot springs.

An excursion to the old Benton Crossing, now covered by Crowley Lake, filled another day . . . try for the big ones but mostly just feed the mosquitoes and watch the cattle grazing from one side to the other of lush green Long Valley.

Convict Lake was also an exciting side trip for sun basking under the grandeur of Mt. Morrison. While sitting on the rocks to enjoy a leisurely lunch, we'd discuss why the fish weren't biting.



Left to right: Doug MacIver, David Garrigues, Beth Garrigues (Crane), Bill MacIver.
August 1937, Horseshoe Lake
Garrigues collection

Sometimes a delightful day would be spent touring the June Lake Loop with a stop at Fern Creek Lodge for a ten cent ice-cream cone. (They only cost a nickel in Bishop, but this was the mountains. Distance and lack of facilities increased the costs.) Continue on to Mono Lake . . . no tufa towers protgruding, receding shoreline, just blue water right up to the edge of the highway. Even then the young gulls lined the gables of the Lee Vining buildings like poplar trees along a country lane. Our sojourn included a visit to the little cove near Tioga Lodge to see how many yellowhead blackbirds were there.

Probably the best of all daytime activities was splitting rotten, fallen pine trees until we had a can full of pine grubs. Then we'd head for Twin Lakes to borrow a boat from a friend and row out into the middle of whichever lake had the most fishermen. Anchoring in the middle of them and baiting our hooks with the grubs, before long we'd be pulling in one to two pound rainbows, while no one else caught anything. Soon the other boats would inch closer to us until you could almost walk from boat to boat without getting wet. They still didn't catch anything and we sure didn't tell them why.

On a different day we would take the old trail and fish from Twin Lakes back to the cabin, it was a trail seldom used and often difficult to find, but we knew if we followed the creek we couldn't get lost. We detoured carefully around the Valentine property . . . "no trespassing," and the story was that they meant it. True or not, we stayed away and never found out.

If our fresh food supplies ran low, it called for a stop at the Lutz Grocery Story.

Exchanging greetings with the always smiling Laura and John , we quickly purchase our necessities . . . take a look in the Post Office and a short chat with Sybil to let her know we're still here . . . cross the road for a walk through the flat, watching chipmunks scurry from their resting places in the sun on top of the big granite boulders, flushing sage hens as we go . . . how startling it is when they fly from under our feet.

At least once each summer we arranged to gather around an evening campfire with the Summers family for a wiener and marshmallow roast followed by a songfest or ghost stories in the flickering dying firelight. The high point always was Sybil's famous frying pan bread, a bag of flour, a pinch of salt, some pure cold water mixed thoroughly and plopped into a cast iron skillet placed on the glowing coals. I always thought there was a secret ingredient she didn't tell us about because the bread was like manna from Heaven.

In the evenings at the cabin, after our dinner cleanup, sometimes there was time before dark to walk down to deer meadow (where the Racquet Club is now) and watch the deer out for their evening feed. We always enjoyed sneaking up to peek through the pine and fir boughs, quietly observing the graceful animals. Once back at the cabin, there was a quick body check to see who had picked up the most ticks; "Get 'em before they can latch on.".

When the sun went down it was time to light the candles and old kerosene lanterns and get out the playing cards.

"What will it be tonight? Hearts, rummy, fan-tan, poker or what?"

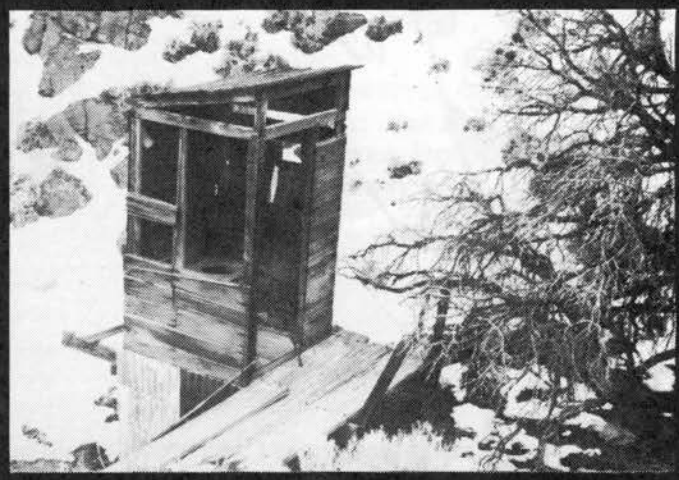
The highpoint was when I shot the moon in hearts much to everyone else's disgust.

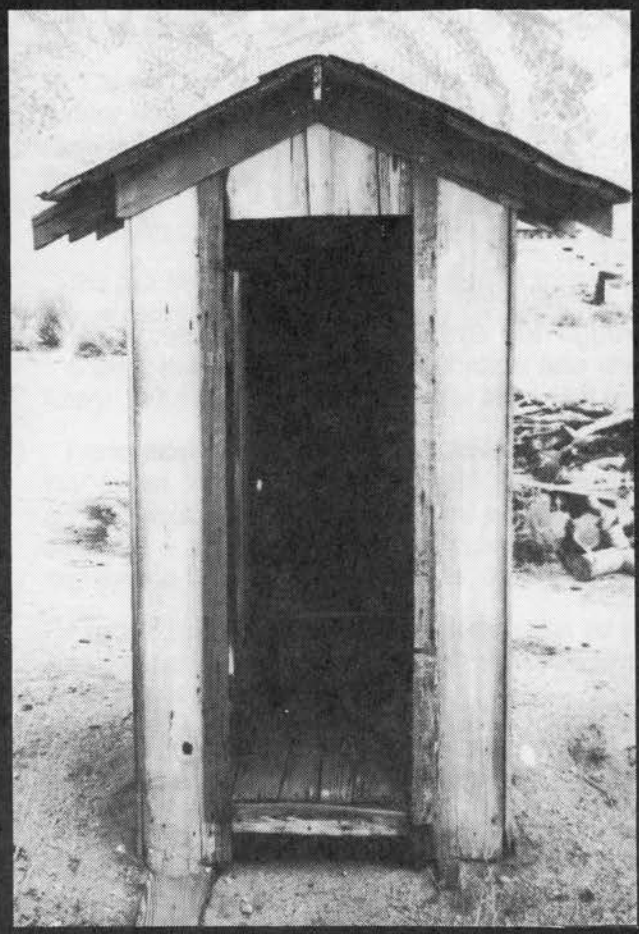
Off to bed, worn out by another day of active activity . . . one last trip in the dark to the outhouse . . . crawl under a pile of blankets or roll out sleeping bags on the deck . . . listen to the mice running through the attic, but not for long. Sleep comes easy and with it dreams of tomorrow.

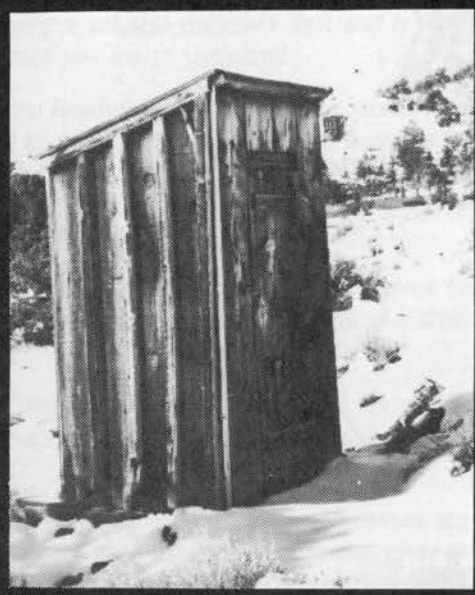
Then, as it always happened, vacation would come to an end. It was time to close our temporary home for the winter and head back to the schoolrooms. Nonperishable food stuffs were sealed in cans or jars and stacked in the mouse-proof cupboards behind tightly fastened doors. The dishes and cooking utensils were covered, blankets folded to be taken back to Bishop. The water was turned off and lines drained to prevent freezing. Lanterns were emptied and candles stored, poison grain set out on old coffee can lids to feed any unwanted intruders. The heavy wooden shutters were brought out from the shed and nailed in place covering the locked windows and bringing a gloomy, forboding atmosphere to the cabin interior. The stove checked one last time to make sure the fire was out, the doors closed tight and locked. Sadly we bid adieu to the cabin, wondering what damage the winter snow might cause. Once on the road our talk soon turned to plans for the next summer.

Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to be that age now. ✤

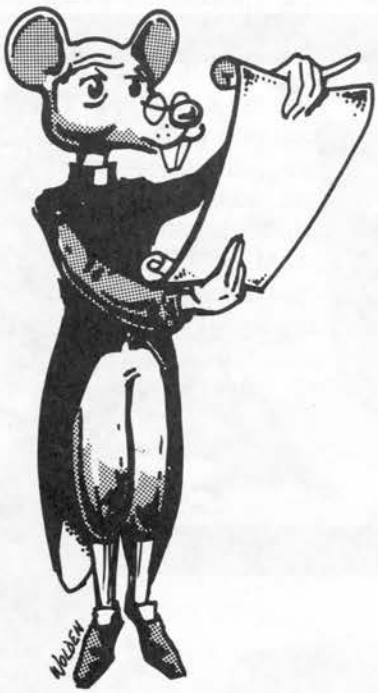
A Sentimental Photo Essay







photography by Warren Allsup



Clarence Churchmouse
Michael Wolden

BITS OF HISTORY TO GNAW ON

Documents of the Stamp Act through the eyes of a churchmouse.

by Peter Korngiebel

King George III document stamp used by Kings George III, IV, and William IV.

Queen Victoria had the "G" replaced by a "V"

Chester Churchmouse
Michael Wolden

Westminster Abbey
East Cloak Closet
London, England
February, 1989

Mr. Chester Churchmouse
Furnace Room
Presbyterian Church
Bishop, California U.S.A.

Dear Cousin Chester,

This past Monday while searching through an ancient side room here at Westminster, I came across several of the enclosed antique documents. I thought you would be interested in them.

Chester, that old parchment you said you've been chewing on is actually a valuable collector's item and a fine piece of history. You really should be more careful about what you gnaw! Sometimes you are so uncivilized!

I remember the comments about your "colonials" during the time before the Revolutionary War. "Taxation without Representation!" Indeed. Very few people in the British Empire were truly represented in our Parliament. Most people were peasants; they didn't understand what was happening and probably didn't care. They were too busy taking care of their next meal. And those barbarians — dumping tea into Boston Harbour is a most curious way of complaining. What ever did they do for a cuppa after they dumped those wonderful tea leaves? Barbarians!

I want to point out to you, Chester, that a stamp act under His Majesty King George II was applied throughout the British Empire and only later was a similar policy enforced against the colonies. That was done to support the cost of maintaining the British troops in the colonies.

If you look at the documents you will see that all of them have the "dreaded" tax stamp on the back, in addition to the customary fees placed on legal documents. We had our tax act for many years; you colonists ended yours after a few years and you were most uncivilized about it.

Examining the stamps, it appears that Kings George III, IV, and William IV all used the George III document stamps but Queen Victoria had the "G" replaced with a "V." In addition to the stamp act each page has a piece of sterling silver embedded in a piece of blue felt-like paper, glued to the parchment and then embossed with a fee amount (one pound, fifteen shillings, and so on) and a crest.

The early parchments perhaps were made by professional scribes or tanners. As time passed the parchment makers became more commercial. First there was no clue as to the supplier or tanner. Then the name appeared in small letters, then in large letters with "Silvester & Co. Engravers to His (Her) Majesty's Public Offices."

Each party who was a part of the Indenture (an old word meaning contract or agreement) signed the bottom of the document and had his signature witnessed with the witness' personal wax seal. Even an "x" was acceptable.

Chester, I know you're the curious type, so I researched the ink used. The ink is described in an old Encyclopaedia Brittanica: "To make a very good ink for writing: take three ounces of good (oak) galls, reduced to powder; which infuse in three pints of river or rain water, setting it in the sun of a gentle heat, for two days; then common copperas, or green vitriol, three ounces; powder it, run it into the infusion, and set it in the sun for two days more; lastly shake it well and add an ounce of good gum arabic." [1]

Well, Chester, if there is anything else I can teach you about your British heritage, please ask. By the way, that ink is very bad for your digestive system.

Cheerio,

Your Cousin,
Clarence Churchmouse

[1]Ency. Brit., Vol II, pg. 842, 1771 edition (reprint).

This Indenture

made the Twenty fifth day of June
Pursuance of an Act passed in the
intituled "An Act for Rendering"
same parties "Between Sam
Coole Lane in the Parish of Chadkirk in
the said County of Chester Yeoman
said County Miller of the third par

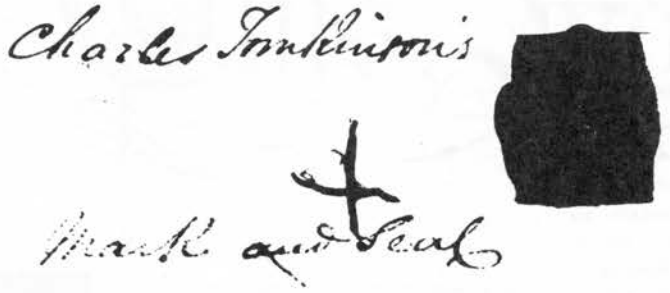
dak respectively the fourth and fifth days of March One thousand eight hundred and twenty nine the Appointment and Relea
described of the first part George Barker therein also further described of the second part the said James Heath of the third
The Plot of Land hereinafter particularly mentioned and intended to be hereby released with the appurtenances was limited
said James Heath and his heirs To the Use of the said James Heath and his assigns during his life without Impeachmen
and Administrators during the life of and in trust for the said James Heath and his assigns and so as to prevent and
To the Use of the said James Heath his Heirs and Assigns for ever And whereas the said James Heath hath erected a
Dwellinghouses Stable Cart House and other Erections and Buildings now standing thereon And whereas the
the absolute purchase of the said plot of Land Messuages or Dwellinghouses Stable Carthouse Garden and Hereditaments
to be hereby released and conveyed with their appurtenances free from Incumbrances at or for the price or sum of Fif
Indenture Witnesseth that in pursuance of the said Agreement and in Consideration of the sum of Two
said Samuel Eardley at or immediately before the sealing and delivery of these presents the receipt of which said sum
acknowledge and of and from the same and every part thereof doth acquit release and discharge the said Samuel Eardle
He the said James Heath Hath granted bargained sold aliened and released and by these presents Doth gran
heirs and Assigns All that plot piece or parcel of Land situate lying and being at Thurlwood in Oak Wode
called by the name of the First Field bounded on the Northeasterly side thereof by the Highway leading from Oa
thereof by a Messuage or Dwellinghouse Land and premises formerly belonging to John Beresford and now or lat
the said field called the First Field and on the Northwesterly side thereof by a Messuage or Dwellinghouse Land
Messuages or Dwellinghouses Stable Cart House and other Erections and Buildings standing and erected thereon or
John Eardley as Tenants thereof And All other Outhouses Eaisees Buildings Barns Stables Cowhouses Yard
Hedges Ditches Easements Commons Common rights profits privileges emoluments and hereditaments whatsoever
Premises belonging or in anywise appertaining or accepted reputed deemed taken or known as part parcel
Remainder yearly and other Rents issues and profits of all and singular the said Hereditaments and Premises
and demand whatsoever both at Law and in Equity of him the said James Heath of in to or out of and
And to Hold the said plot piece or parcel of Land Messuages or Dwellinghouses Hereditaments and al
and intended so to be with their appurtenances unto the said Samuel Eardley his Heirs and Assigns for
Deed or Deeds appoint and in default of appointment To the Use of the said Samuel Eardley and his Assigns for
of that Estate by any means in his life time To the Use of the said George Pointon his Executors and Administra
Assigns and on the determination of the Estate lastly hereinbefore limited To the Use of the said Samuel Eardley his He
shall become the Widow of the said Samuel Eardley shall have any claim to Dower out of the said hereditaments and
Administrators hereby Covenants with the said Samuel Eardley his Heirs and Assigns That Notwithstanding any act deed made
James Heath now has in himself good right full power and absolute authority to grant bargain sell alien release and con
to the use of the said Samuel Eardley his heirs and assigns according to the true intent and meaning of these presen
and assigns from time to time and at all times hereafter peaceably and quietly to enter into and upon and to have hold
granted and released or expressed and intended so to be and to receive and take the Rents issues and profits thereof
without the lawful let suit trouble denial eviction interruption claim or demand whatsoever of or by the said James Heath
or to claim by from or under or in trust for him or them or any of them And that free and clear and freely and clearly
said James Heath his heirs executors or administrators well and sufficiently saved defended kept harmless and indem
Titles troubles charges debts and incumbrances whatsoever either already had made executed occasioned or suffered or he
or his heirs or any person or persons lawfully or equitably claiming or to claim by from under or in trust for him them or a
all and every other person or persons having or claiming or who shall or may have or claim any Estate right title inte
or in Equity of in to or out of the said hereditaments and premises hereinbefore granted and released or expressed
Trust for the said James Heath or his heirs shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter upon every reasonable req
of the said Samuel Eardley his heirs and assigns make do acknowledge and execute or cause and procure to be made done
deeds things devices conveyances and Assurances in the Law whatsoever for the further better and more perfectly and
Premises hereinbefore granted and released or expressed and intended so to be and every part thereof unto and to the use of the sa
or Assigns or his or their Counsel in the Law shall be reasonably devised or advised and required. In witness whereof
set the Day and Year first above written

James [redacted] Heath

Samuel [redacted] Eardley

June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty three. In the fourth and fifth years of the Reign of Her present Majesty Queen Victoria xxx xx ing as Effectual for the Conveyance of Freehold Estates as a Lease and Release by the xx James Heath formerly of Odd Rode in the County of Chester Waller but now of xx in the said County Farmer of the first part Samuel Eardley of Betchton in xxx an of the second part and George Pointon of Church Lawton in the xx part Whereas by Indenture of Lease and Appointment and Release bearing xx Release being made or expressed to be made between John Morris Esquire therein further xxx third part and Richard Heath Labourer therein also further described of the fourth part xx ited and appointed granted released and conveyed with the appurtenances unto the xx shment of Waste Remainder To the Use of the said Richard Heath his Executors xx and Wife of him from being dowable out of the premises in question with Remainder xx ed and built upon certain parts of the said plot of Land Five Messuages or xxx xx e said Samuel Eardley hath contracted and agreed with the said James Heath for xx ments hereinbefore referred to and hereinafter particularly mentioned and intended xx Two hundred and twenty six pounds Now this xx xx Two hundred and twenty six pounds sterling to the said James Heath paid by the xx sum of Two hundred and twenty six pounds the said James Heath doth hereby Eardley his Heirs Executors administrators and assigns for ever by these presents xx grant bargain sell alien release and confirm unto the said Samuel Eardley his xx rode aforesaid formerly part and parcel of a Field or Close of Land there xx Old Rode aforesaid to Sandbach in the said County on the Southeasterly side xx lane to Richard Beresford and on the Southwesterly side thereof by other part of xx and premises belonging to Matthew Broady Yeoman with all those five xxx or on some part thereof now in the respective occupations of Matthew Hodgkinson and xx yards Gardens Trees Ways Waters Watercourses Paths passages Fences xxx ver to the said plot of Land Messuages or Dwellinghouses hereditaments and xx eal or membered thereof And the Reversion and Reversions Remainder and xx And all the Estate right title interest use trust possession property claim xx and upon the said premises and every part and parcel thereof To have xx all and singular other the premises hereby granted and released or expressed xx upon such trusts and in such manner as the said Samuel Eardley shall by any xx for his life without Impeachment of Waste and immediately after the determination xx Estate during the life of the said Samuel Eardley In trust for him and his xx Heirs and Assigns for ever And it is hereby declared that no Woman who xx and premises And the said James Heath for himself his Heirs Executors and xx matter or thing whatsoever by him the said James Heath to the contrary the said xx and confirm the said hereditaments and premises with the appurtenances unto and xx presents And that it shall be lawful for the said Samuel Eardley his Heirs xx hold occupy possess and enjoy the said hereditaments and premises hereinbefore xx thereof and of every part thereof to and for his and their own use and benefit xx Heirs or by any other person or persons lawfully or equitably claiming xx fully and absolutely acquitted exonerated and released or otherwise by him the xx indemnified of from and against all and all manner of former and other Estate xx hereafter to be had made executed occasioned or suffered by the said James Heath xx or any of them And further that he the said James Heath and his Heirs and xx interest inheritance use trust property claim or demand whatsoever either at Law xx dered or intended so to be or any of them or any part thereof from under or in xx request to be made for that purpose by and at the proper costs and charges in the Law xx one acknowledged and executed all and every such further and other lawful acts xx and absolutely granting conveying and assuring of the said hereditaments and xx said Samuel Eardley his Heirs and Assigns as by the said Samuel Eardley his Heirs xx thereof the parties aforesaid to these presents their Hands and Seals have hereunto

Each document is hand lettered on true parchment. Actual overall size is 24" x 36". The patch on the left side is blue felt-like paper with two pieces of sterling silver embedded, embossed with the amount of the fee and a crest. The royal tax stamp was placed on the back of the document behind this. Signatures (or an X) are at the bottom, with the witness' personal wax seal.



Signed with an "X"

Parchment makers became more commercial, from displaying no name of the supplier or tanner, then small letters noting their business, to highly visible letters advertising their appointment as engravers to the crown.

Note: Eleven of these beautiful original documents exist here in Bishop and are for sale. Owner's representative is Alan Wallace, Rt. 4, Box 111B, Bishop, CA 93514. ♣

Israel Russell, 1890 (second from left) *U. S. G. S. photo*

ISRAEL VIEWS MONO VALLEY

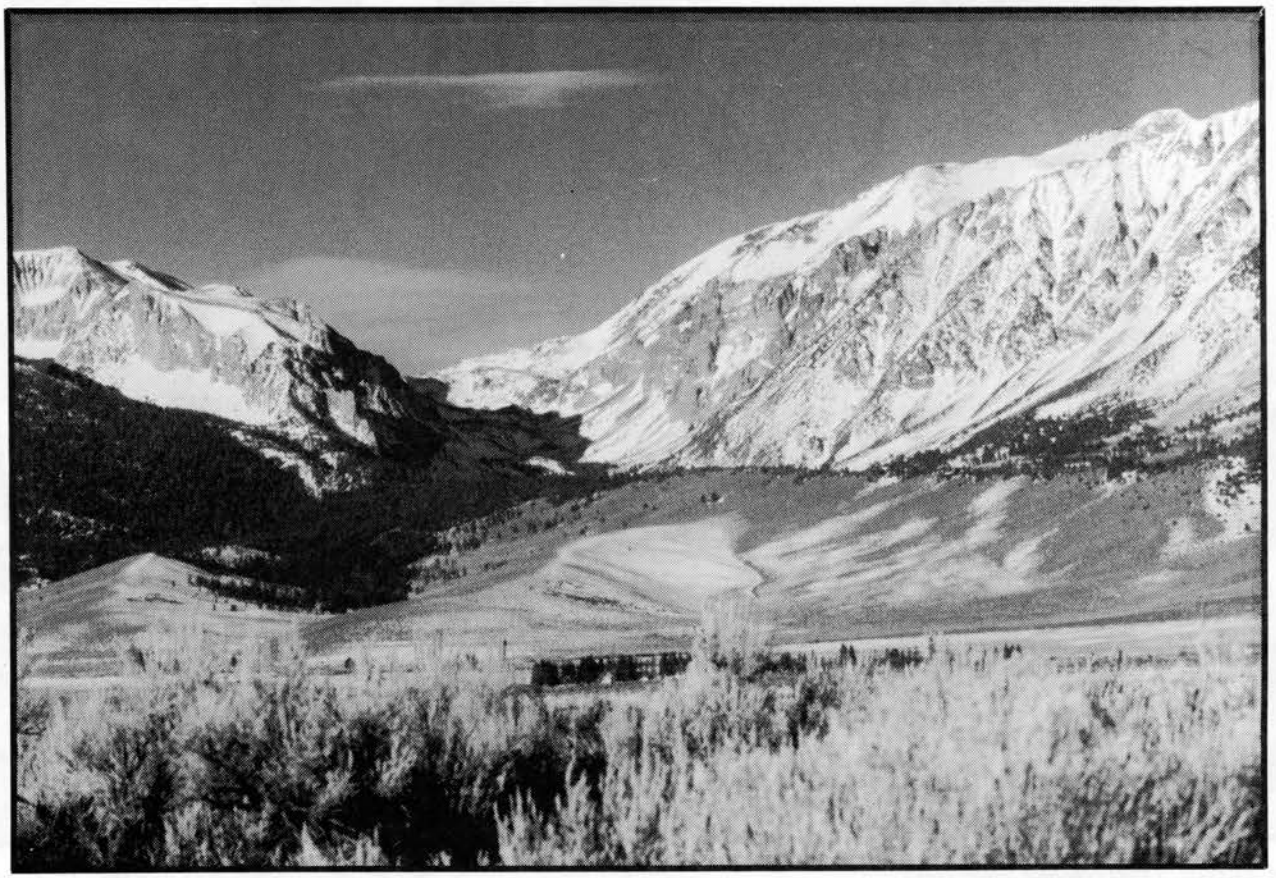
with Louise Kelsey

The mule, with his mulish self-concern, picked his way through the shale and low-growing pinion pine of the Bodie Hills. The man on his back was lean with the leaness of active, outdoor living. The food he packed had not been chosen for "low cholesterol," "poly-unsaturates" or "empty calories." These words had not been invented yet.

It was 1883 and Israel Russell, with mind and senses trained and tuned to the vast beauty of the Great Basin, looked at Mono Valley in silence. His analytical geologist's report would come later. With his first view he could only take in all his eyes would give him as he looked from the snow-splashed Sierra, down her craggy sides, through sagebrush foothills, past volcanic domes, into the blue, blue lake, east to the distant White Mountains and finally back to the pinion forest whose piney scent surrounded him.

Israel had been sent by the United States Geological Survey to record the Quaternary History of Mono Valley and its position within the Great Basin. This classic geologic study of the Mono Lake watershed was completed 100 years ago, in 1889. His career as a geologist/adventurer would lead him throughout the western states and into Alaska. His profession was to involve him in the creation of a new society called The National Geographic. His reports would be read and enjoyed for their written beauty as well as their accurate reporting.

Come back in time and savor Mono Valley without power lines, highways or stores, through the eyes of Israel.



Bloody Canyon, west Mono Valley *Louise Kelsey photo*

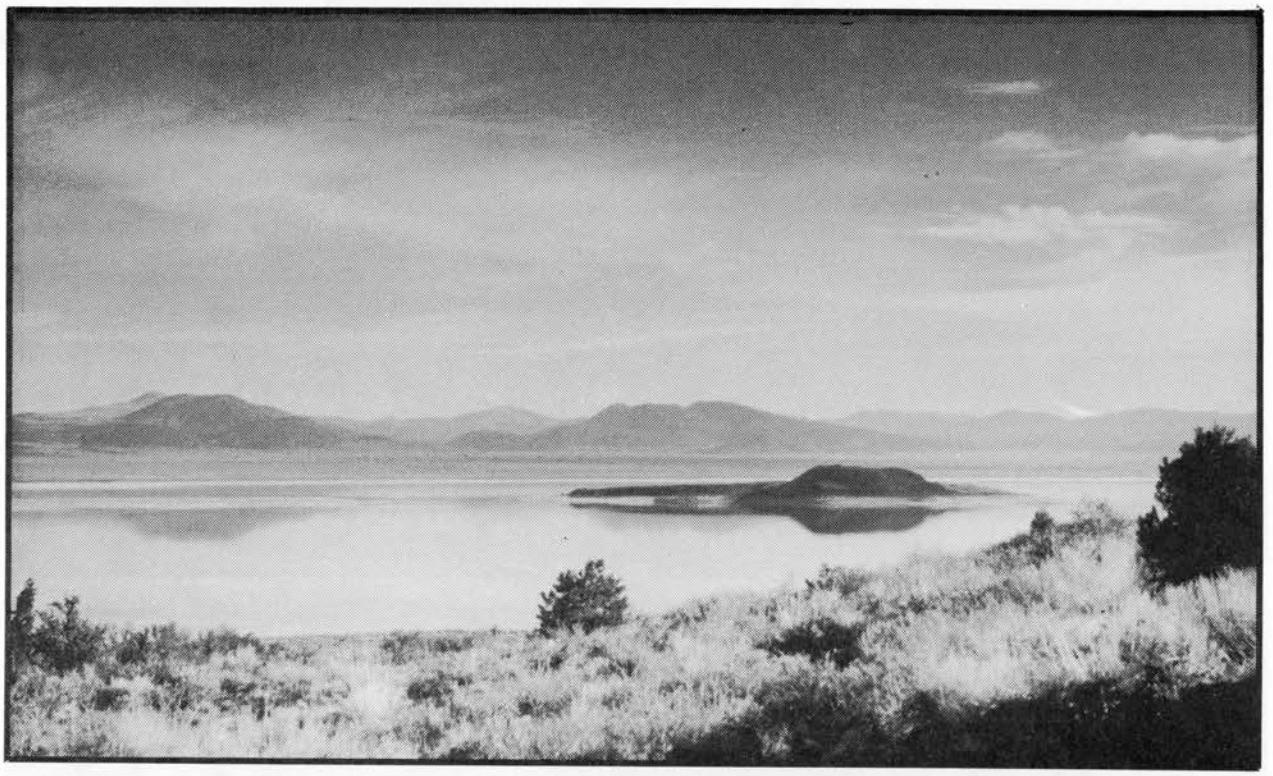
Upon entering Mono Valley . . .

"The eastern portion of the basin partakes of the character of the arid region and includes valleys covered with sage-brush and rugged mountain slopes, which are but scantily clothed with cedar and pinion. The tone of the landscape in this portion of the basin is gray and russet-brown, characteristic of the desert. Over its entire area no running water can be found during the greater part of the year, and the region is consequently silent and lifeless. To one reared under more humid skies this portion of the Mono basin would appear a veritable desert.

The southwestern border of the basin includes magnificent mountains that are clothed in favored places with forests of pine. The highest peaks reach far above the timber line and bear a varied and beautiful Alpine flora. In the canyons that descend from

the snowfields and miniature glaciers about the higher summits, the rush of creeks and rills is heard throughout the year. The eastern and western portions of this single hydrographic basin are fragments of two distinct geographic provinces. One has the desolation and solitude of the Sahara, the other the rugged grandeur of the Pyrenees.

Few journeys of equal length could present greater diversity in all the elements of scenery than a single summer day's ride from the parched and desert plains bordering Lake Mono on the north, to the crest of the mountain mass that fills the horizon to the west and southwest of the lake."



Mono Lake, Negit Island *Louise Kelsey photo*

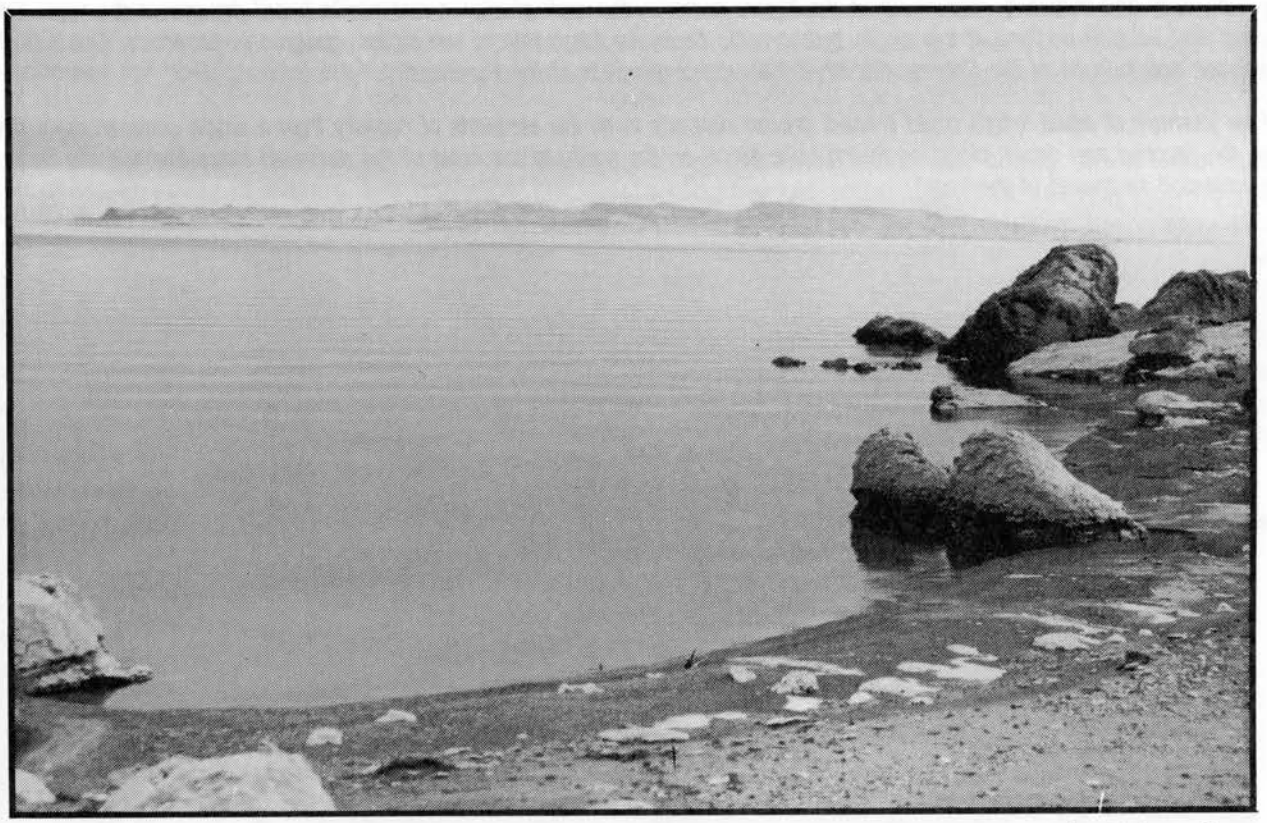
On Ancient Lake Mono . . .

"On looking down on Lake Mono from any commanding point one may easily restore in fancy its leading scenic features at the time of its greatest expansion, as they appeared to the ancient hunters who probably visited its shores. The waters were then fresh and rose several hundred feet higher on the precipitous sides of the mountains along its western border than at present. The peaks of the great Sierra, perhaps then known by names now long forgotten, were white with snow throughout the year and gave birth to ice rivers of great magnitude, some of which reached the shore of the lake.

The magnificence of the scene when the Mono Craters were in eruption is beyond description. The ancient sea must have been ice-bound at times for many consecutive years and perhaps for centuries. Again, a change of climate would unfetter its waters and call back the sea-birds to haunt its shore. At all times its scenery was stern and wild and resembled in many ways the grander features of the fiords of Norway at the present day."

On Ridge Highways . . .

"Mono Lake's gravel bars constructed by the waves and currents of the former lake are in some instances fine examples of shore phenomena: The shores of the lake during its highest stage were abrupt on all sides, but in the vertical interval between the present water surface and a horizon about fifty feet below the highest of the ancient water lines, the lake was confined on the north side of Mono Valley by a sloping plain. This produced very favorable conditions for the formation of works of construction through the action of waves and currents. In this portion of the basin a series of low, level-topped ridges of gravel, several miles in length and usually from seventy-five to one hundred feet broad, sweep about the border of the basin in concentric curves, concave southward. The symmetry of these long curves attracts the eye from commanding points and relieves the monotony of the scenery in this desert-like portion of the valley. In riding over these ridges one finds that many of them are natural highways of excellent character."



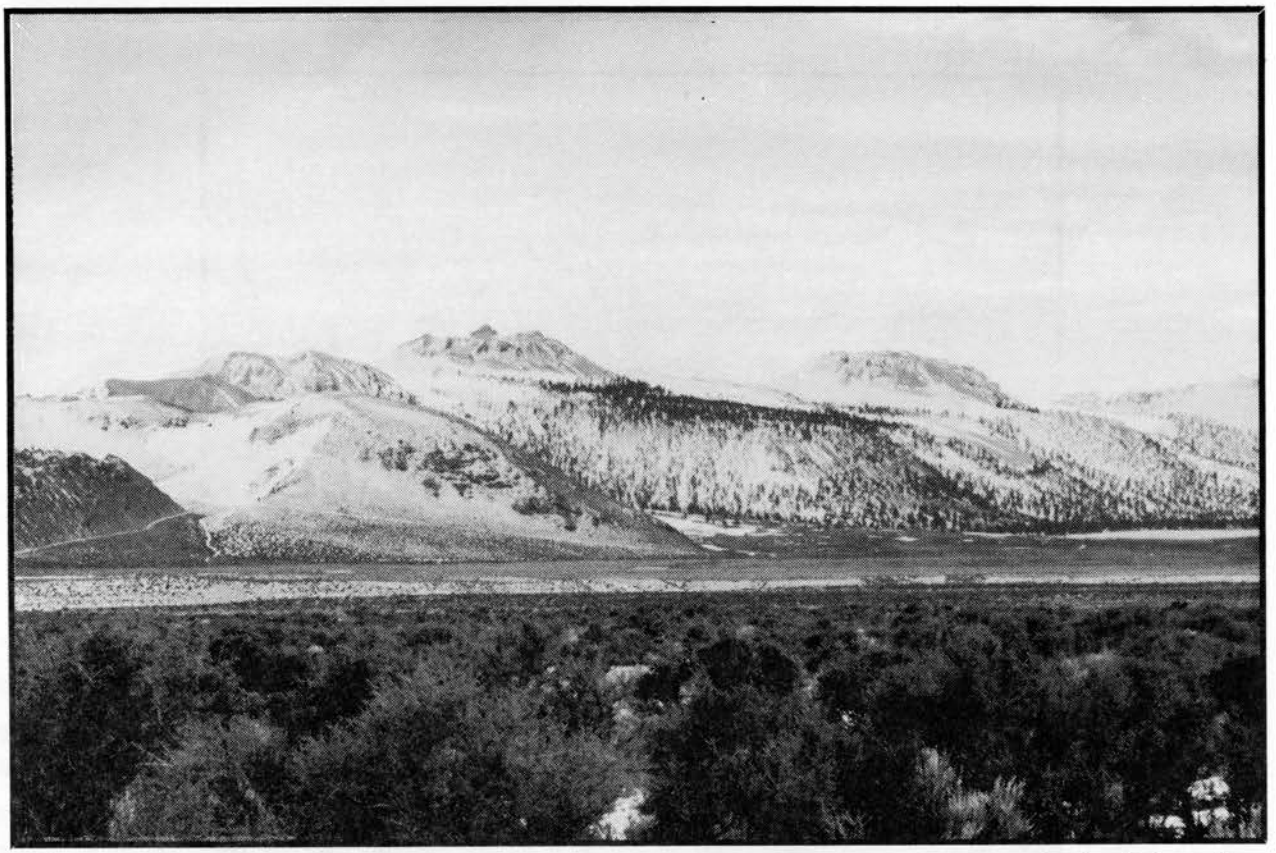
"Ridge Highways," Mono Lake Shoreline *Louise Kelsey photo*

Tufa Towers, Mono Lake *Louise Kelsey photo*

On Tufa Towers . . .

"The character of tubular lithoid tufa is well shown on the southern shore of the lake, about a mile east of the end of the Mono Craters. Several acres at this locality are covered with irregular tubular trunks, from a few inches to five or six feet in height, with a diameter of six or eight inches. The formation as a whole resembles a forest of gnarled and contorted trunks and stumps turned to stone.

The impression which this imitation forest leaves on the mind is that it is in some ways weird and uncanny. The silent and motionless trunks with their uncouth shapes recall Dante's description of The Wood of Suicides. This fancy is heightened by the proximity of a sea whose flowerless shore seems scarcely to belong to the habitable earth."



Mono Craters *Louise Kelsey photo*

On the Mono Craters . . .

"Near the steep face of the Sierra there is a range of volcanic cones that attract the eye, not only on account of their height and symmetry of their curving slopes of light gray lapilli, but also because they form so striking an exception to the prevailing mountain forms in view. These are the Mono Craters. So perfect are their shapes and so fresh is their appearance that the eye lingers about their summits in half expectation of seeing wreaths of vapor or the lurid light of molten lava ascending from their throats."

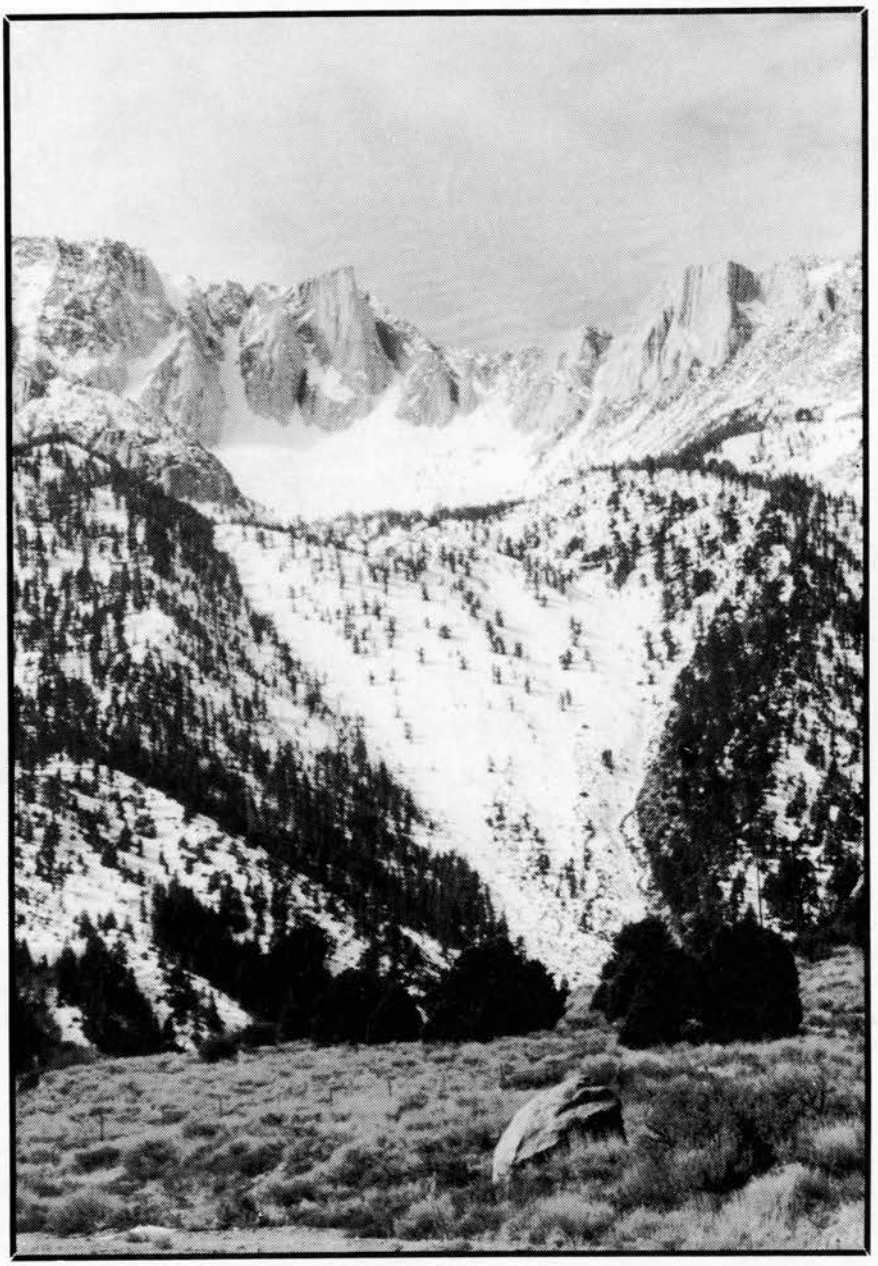
On Glaciers . . .

"Lake Canon (now called Lundy Lake, L.K.) is but three miles long and does not lead to a well defined peak, or drain a former neve region. To the geologist this is one of the most peculiar canons in the Mono basin, and one of the most difficult of the minor features of the region to account for. The cliffs forming the background are a portion of the western wall of Lundy Canon. The debris piles occurring on either side of the gorge have been accumulating since the melting of the glacier.*

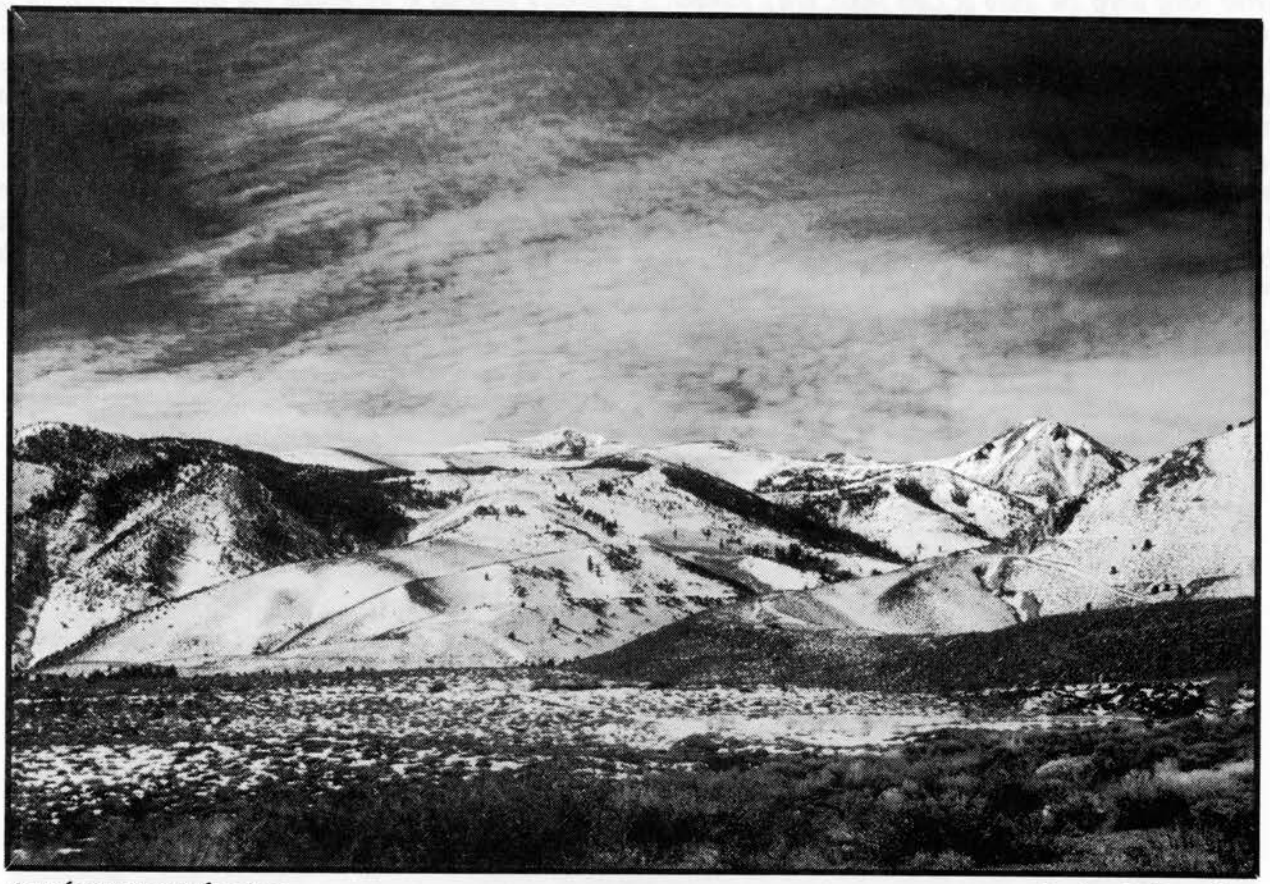
The bottom of Lundy Canon is irregular and is formed of alternate scarps and terraces all the way to the head of the gorge, where a scarp of grander proportions than those below crosses the trough and forms a wall of rock more than a thousand feet high. On scaling this granite precipice one finds himself in the elevated valley once filled by the Mt. Dana neve field. The cliff at the head of the canon must have caused a wonderfully grand cascade in the ice river which formerly flowed over it. From the

foot of this fall to the mouth of Lake Canon the ice must have been deeply fractured as it descended from terrace to terrace, and undoubtedly formed magnificent ice-pinnacles separated by deep crevasses. The observer, while endeavoring to restore, in fancy, the appearance of this gorge when occupied by glacial ice, may allow his imagination free scope without fear of overreaching the magnificance of the original."

*neve: The crystalline or granular snow on the upper part of a glacier which has not yet been compressed into ice.



Sierra Glacier, Lee Vining Canyon *Louise Kelsey photo*



Lundy Canyon Moraines *Louise Kelsey photo*

On Moraines . . .

"During the glacial epoch, as at the present day, the greatest accumulation of snow took place on the shaded sides of the canons. This indicates that the glacial winter had its days of sunshine.

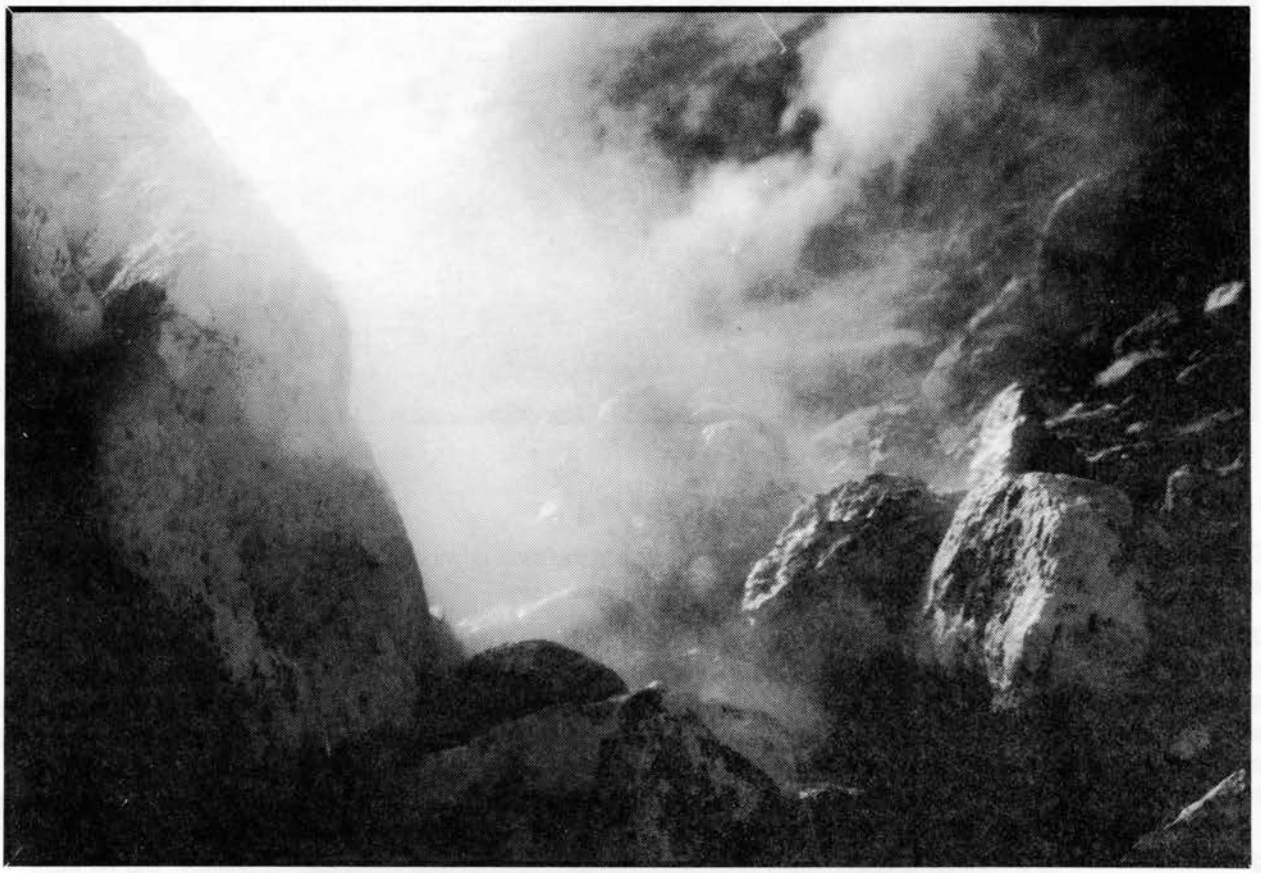
The space between the various pairs of morainal embankments in Mono Valley is usually filled to some extent with debris deposited as the glaciers retreated, but seldom enough to destroy the rounded contour of the bottom, except where meadows have been formed. In several instances the glacial trough is divided by terminal moraines into basins, some of which hold lakes. In others the terminal moraines have been deeply cut by present streams, and the lakes they once held drained to their bottoms. Where this has occurred we find, above the moraine, a grassy meadow through which a willow-fringed brook meanders. The softness and beauty of these sunny retreats are rendered all the more fascinating by the sternness of the rugged peaks filling the sky above them. The walls of debris enclosing these natural meadows are frequently clothed with noble pine or have their ruggedness concealed by the feathery sprays of the mountain mahogany. The traveler in the High Sierra can find no more welcome spot to recruit his strength after the toil of mountain climbing than these inviting campgrounds can afford."

On Naming Negit and Pa-o-ha . . .

"If the day chance to be stormy, we shall see an effect of the wind on the waters that but few lakes present. Lake Mono is strongly charged with alkaline salts: which when agitated by the wind, the waves break into foam which gathers along the leeward shore in a band many rods wide and sometimes several feet thick. Sheets of this tenacious froth are caught up by the wind and driven inland through desert shrubs in fluffy masses that look like balls of cotton. This peculiar effect of strong winds on alkaline waters is highly picturesque and adds greatly to the beauty of the lake. Strolling along the shore we find windrows thrown up by the waves, not only of sand and gravel but also of larval cases of a fly that inhabits the lake in countless myriads. These larvae are used by the Piute Indians for food. During the autumn, Indian encampments may be found all about the lake; while women, in picturesque groups, may be seen gathering food as it is thrown ashore by the waves. The partially dried larvae, the kernels, are separated from the enclosing cases, the chaff, by winnowing in the wind with the aid of a scoop-shaped basket; they are then tossed into large conical baskets, which the women carry on their backs. Such scenes are not only novel, but add a bit of life and color to a landscape apt to impress one as somewhat dreary and somber.

While riding along the shore of Lake Mono, one's attention is continually attracted to the islands that break the monotony of its surface. The largest of these is remarkable for its light gray color, which makes it appear almost white in comparison with the second in size, which is nearly black. In seeking names by which to designate them, it was suggested that their difference in color might be used, but the writer preferred to record some of the poetic words from the language of the aboriginal inhabitants of the valley. On the larger island there are hot springs and orifices through which heated vapors escape, which are among the most interesting features of the basin. In the legends of the Pa-vi-o-osi people, who still inhabit the region in scattered bands, there is a story about diminutive spirits, having long, wavy hair, that are sometimes seen in the vapor wreaths ascending from the hot springs. The word Pa-o-ha by which these spirits are known is also used at times to designate hot springs in general. We may therefore name the larger island Paoha Island, in remembrance, perhaps, of the children of the mist that held their revels there on moonlit nights in times long past.

The island second in size we call Negit Island, the name being the Pa-vi-o-osi word for blue-winged goose.



Paoha Island *Louise Kelsey photo*

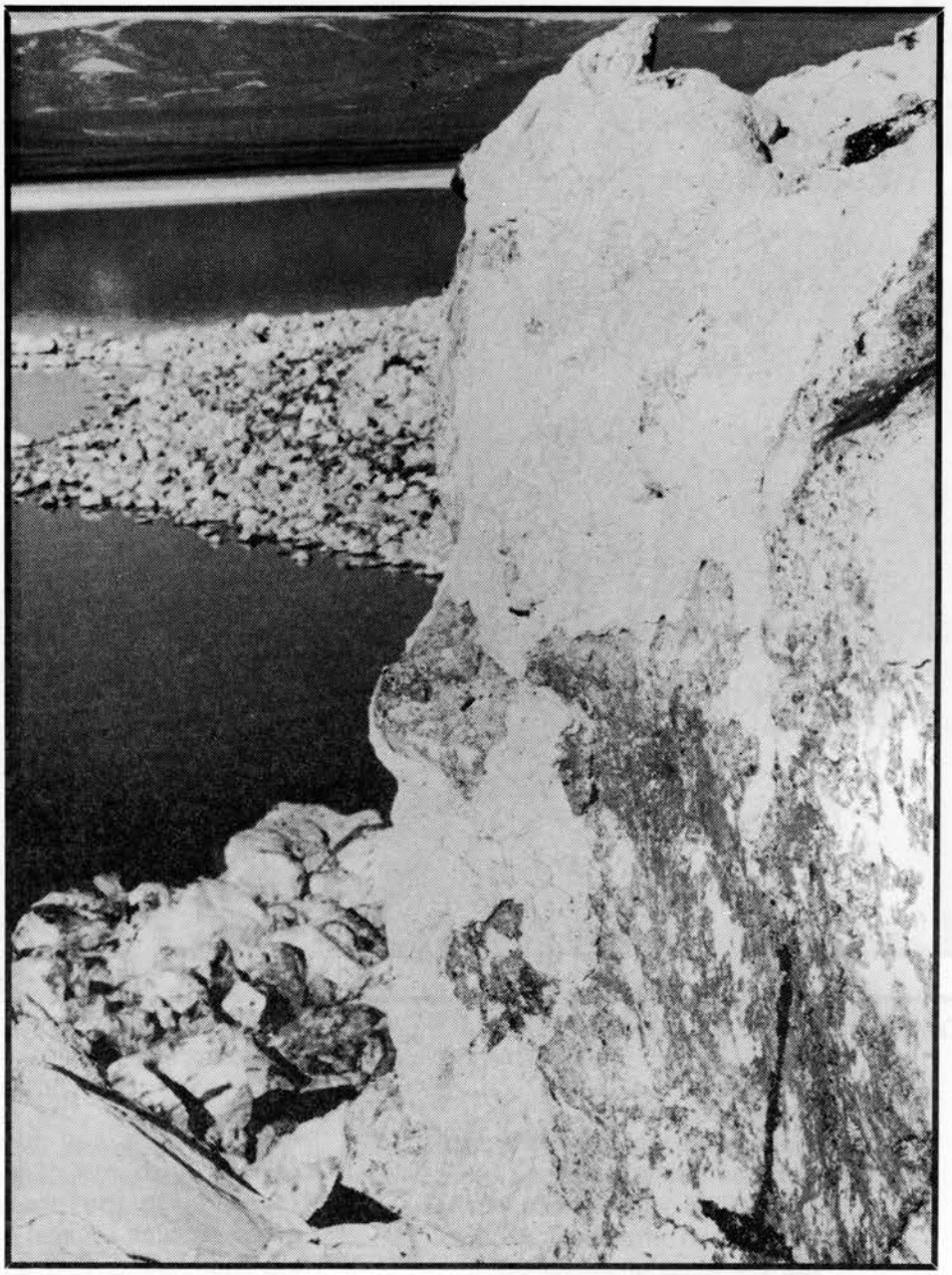
Resume . . .

"The Quaternary" as compared with the present, appears to have been a time of greatly expanded water surface, increased glacial action, and more energetic volcanic activity. In making such a statement, however, it is evident that we are comparing the events of a day with a whole volume of history. Could we look into the future with as much accuracy as we are able to review the past, it would be evident that changes are now in progress that in time will equal the apparent revolutions which occurred during the Quaternary. This, as every one will see, is but a restatement of the uniformitarian belief of geologists.

There is no certainty that the volcanic forces which were active at many different periods during a recent history of Mono Valley are now extinct. Volcanos are paroxysmal in their action. The present time of quiescence may possibly be followed by

eruptions as grand as those that built the Mono Craters. It is not safe to predict geologic events, but the causes which led to the former eruptions seem to be working now in the same way as during the ages that have passed . . ."

*Quaternary: The geological period including the Pleistocene and recent. (.01 million years before the present.)



The Benchmark
Louise Kelsey photo

Editor's Note: In 1890 geologist Israel Russell headed the first National Geographic Society expedition, a landmark survey of the St. Elias Mountains on the Alaska-Canada border, co-sponsored by the U. S. G. S. He was among the 33 founders of the National Geographic Society. The photograph on p. 25 was taken during the 1890 expedition. We are indebted to the Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power for referring to us the records for this article.

Russell's career built adventure upon adventure. Along with his peers J.D. Whitney, Clarence King and Joseph LeConte, he surveyed, described and named much of this intricate land and its history into deep time and back.

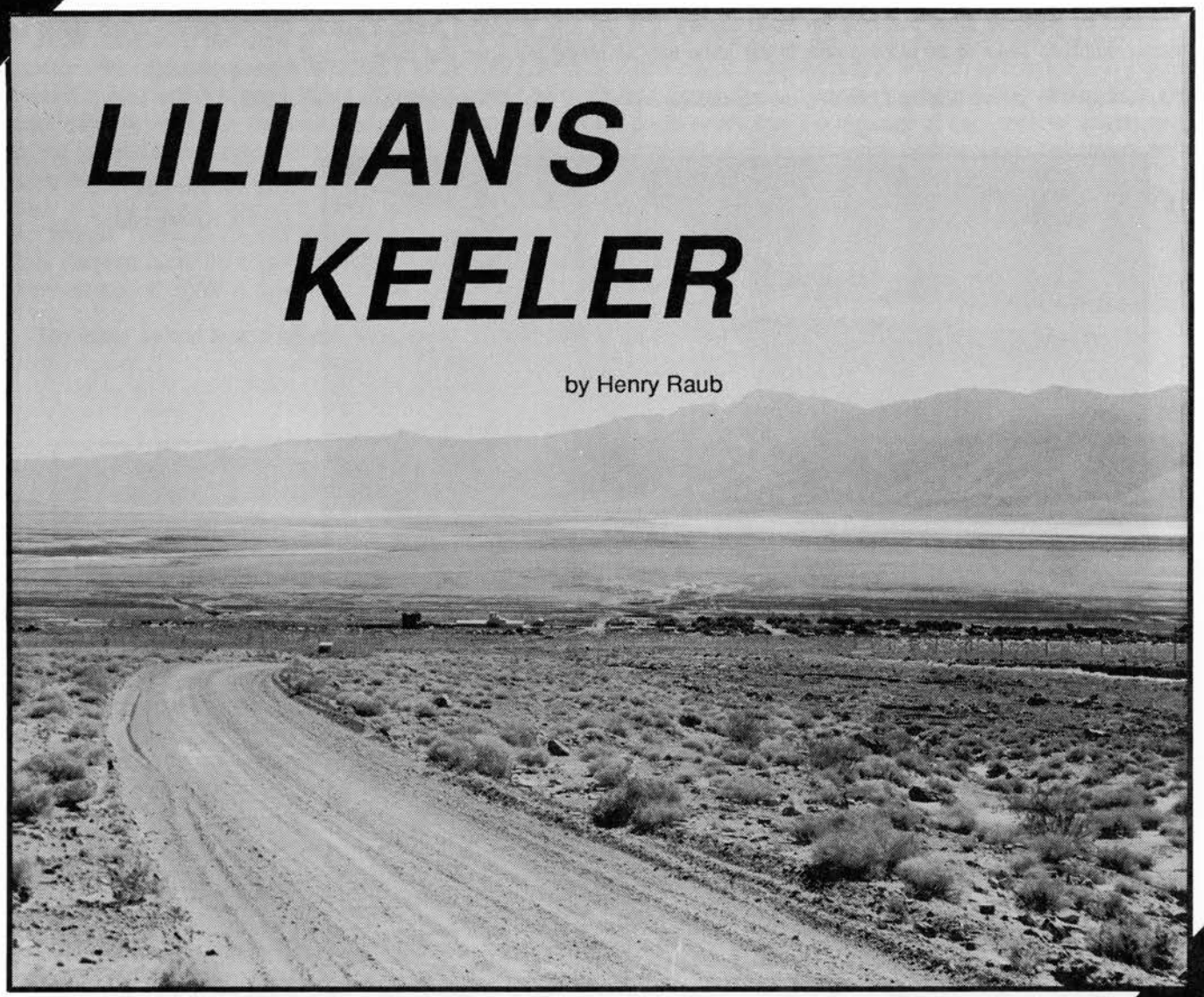
He left written descriptions and impressions that soar above the facts and figures of his Quaternary History of Mono Valley.

He left something else . . . a benchmark on Negit Island in Mono Lake which has become a lost and found indicator from over 100 years ago.

But that is another, and a very funny, story for another time. ✤

LILLIAN'S KEELER

by Henry Raub



Looking west on Keeler from Cerro Gordo road *H. Raub photo*

Keeler, an almost-ghost town, drowsing in the sunshine on the eastern shores of Owens Lake, surely must be one of the most unlikely places to abound with hot news for the press.

But when Lillian Larson Hilderman lived there and mailed her reports to Chalfant Press newspapers, the news did not have to be "hot" to be avidly read. Veteran fans opened the pages first to her column, naturally titled KEELER by Lillian Hilderman. Then they refolded the pages to scan Page 1.

It wasn't that the front page provided inferior reading. It was that Lillian wrote news unlike that known anywhere throughout the world of journalism.

Where can you pick up a newspaper and read ***James Smith has a new set of choppers***? Or notice a society tidbit reporting that ***Extra special sundaes were served to Mrs. Viola Race and Mrs. Osburn because one dislikes whipped cream and the other one specializes squirting people with it.***

As Keeler's self-appointed official in charge of weather reporting to the press, she might dispatch an item of interest mentioning that a strong north wind had blown all the tumbleweeds out of town into the desert. Then the next issue of the paper announces that a south wind had blown all the tumbleweeds back into town.

Where can you get news like that? The locals loved it, and big town travelers benefited from the contrast with the sensationalism of their metropolitan scandal sheets.

Keeler crouches on the eastern shore of Owens Lake, with the brooding Inyo Range as a backdrop, before water disappeared from the lake. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.

An understanding existed between correspondent Hilderman and Chalfant Press that her news items appear in the paper exactly as submitted. Editor Todd Watkins, it is said, notified the staff that not one jot nor one tittle of Hilderman's material was to be altered in any way. The Keeler scribe had fired in some critical remarks about tampering with her copy. Seemingly unavoidable typographical errors in her reports caused immediate response in the following news from Keeler.

Last week's paper gave Glenda Coburn's name as Brenda.

The Murrells have been at Morning Star four months, not four years, and their daughter is Densie, not Denise.

Then, as if Inyo county was proving to be no match for her, critic Hilderman, like a feminine David went after newspapers' Goliath, the prestigious Los Angeles Times.

L.A. Times has its errors too. Feb. 3 issue spelled Catholic as Cotholic ... Connie as Commie.

But a hypocrite she was not because she even included herself.

Error on my part listed Tommy Davidson as Tommy Fuller when eighth grade graduates were mentioned last week.

First a correction on my part. Gary Fuller was eight years old on his birthday, not seven.

Then along came a blockbuster in 1969 that brought the Keeler reporter bolt upright in her easy chair. True West magazine published a story about Keeler titled "How to Tame a Town" that was riddled with mistakes, as judged by Hilderman's memories. In no time the editor received 20 paragraphs from the Keeler reporter. Her printed story covered nineteen column inches of newspaper. Hilderman's article tore to pieces the magazine yarn about Deputy Marshall Dan Thomas with his trusty gun and holster cleaning up Keeler's community of 8,000 souls.

Keeler was a cross section of other Inyo county towns, she wrote, ***and I along with many others did not know it required a cleanup.***

As for girls coming from Mojave, not required as there were two and more at Lee's "Laundry" and one had a dugout room south end of Laws St., which we knew as "Bachelor's Row," there being a number of cabins.

Joe You spelled his name thusly and so pronounced. The cellar under his gambling room led by tunnel to Lee's "Laundry." Joe was not the storekeeper. Sam Kee Chan was owner and was registered as a voter, Sam Yuensang. The wife was Choy Foo and daughter Rossie Foo, why I do not know.

Critic Hilderman emphatically stated that Owens Lake bed was not dry in 1918, as stated in True West.

I remember Thomas Isaacson complaining of lake water jumping over a 20 ft. vat wall and spoiling soda in vat which was ready to harvest.

Other strange statements came under Lillian's fire such as, ***Don't understand about Dan Judge receiving a direct phone call from Cerro Gordo as that was a private line . . . I never heard of a man falling 400 feet at Cerro Gordo . . . Why was Shepherd's Canyon affair listed as a part of Keeler? That goes for Ballarat, too . . . Keeler population 8,000??? The great register of 1918 gives voters as 114, total of county 3106.***

As for arrests, June 1918, Logan and Thomas arrested a man for insanity; June 29 Logan and McAfee made an arrest on a liquor charge, then Aug. 23 Dan made an arrest on a pro-German charge, ditto for Aug. 25. Four arrests for a year . . . would you say town needed taming?

Lillian Larson Hilderman was born May 18, 1886, in St. Peter, Minnesota. In 1909 she came to Independence to be the bride of Ludvig Linde, and to establish a homestead half a mile south of town. They had one son, Lawson. Lillian's husband was killed in WW I. She moved to Keeler to become Postmaster in 1919 and to marry Harry Hilderman in 1929. Harry lived only four years more. Life held many sorrows for Lillian, and not the least of these was the death of her son and his wife and their younger son in an airplane crash.

Friends point out that she had great compassion for the sick and injured, and was the first to visit them with handmade gifts. She traveled in her car to bring cheer to people all the way between Bishop and Lone Pine.

Sick and injured dogs constantly received mention in her column. They seemed to be high on her list of friends.

Friday several dogs decided hunting they would go, later in the afternoon they came back, mouths, jaws and feet covered with quills from rodent porcupine. Two dogs required help from veterinarian.

Last week Mr. and Mrs. Van Hoose went to Hunters Mt. and dog Gomer received a tick bite on inner ear causing an infection, hence Gomer had a week's stay at Bishop Veterinary Hospital.

Mrs. G. Hernandez and Mrs. Bessie Stark have used Dirty Sox pool several times through past week. Mrs. Stark did not bring her dog, as stated last week.

Sunday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Earl Murphy, Diana, Susan and Gus, the police dog, called on me. If you don't think the dog counted, you can't realize the space he used in the Murphy's small car.

Hilderman included other animals, if they made news, and even if they didn't.

The Jim Merrills while at Ubehebe Mine have accumulated a number of animals, four goats, guinea hens, banti chickens and rabbits. They had two dogs, cats and chickens.

Of animal interest are the travels of Mrs. Suprenant's Dickie Bird who went with her in auto to Bend, Ore. After visit, daughter, Mrs. Joanis, took mother and bird to Reno, where bus would not take bird to Lone Pine. Back to Bend went poor bird, where it was expressed to Lone Pine. Now home, it is happy.

Keeler plant life appealed to the writer for favorable publicity.

Some towns may be in the red — just now Keeler is pink with the African Cedars (tamarisk) in bloom for Easter. Come and bring your color film.

It is noticed that sunflowers as grown here turn their heads with the sun while they are small but when larger, all face east.

Hilderman made a big thing out of that boring old hat topic of the weather. It sounded like maybe there was more of it in Keeler than any place else.

We thought spring slow in arriving, then on Wednesday a regular hot summer day, Thursday suddenly cold, no excuse for Friday's weather except opening for fishing was due. At 2 p.m. the biggest wind of many years began to show its strength by

Photos opposite are from the Eastern California Museum collection.

Until it burned to the ground, Hotel Keeler, operated by Mr. and Mrs. George Mates, provided for travelers at the southern terminus of the former Carson and Colorado Railroad, as well as those in the stage coaches bound for Mojave or nearby mining towns. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.

Steam locomotive pauses while crew thinks about thawing out in Keeler's Desert Club. Snow and icicles were not uncommon in this winter of 1933. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.

tearing large limbs from trees and the sign from Gandera's Grocery. Roofing paper and general litter of twigs, dried bushes, papers and tin cans move with gusto. Neither of the mountain ranges could be seen. Through night snow fell on Inyos and Sierra. Actually cold Sunday. At 3 p.m. a hail with rain. When I got home shortly before 8, highway had been posted with caution sign, sand covered part of road and diversion ditches from Inyo mountains and the Coso Range was white to foothills with clouds hovering east, south and west. Puddles of slush at Keeler and gauge registered a generous .40. Monday normal as usual.

Last Wednesday began with dark clouds overhead, wind and dust added to the dullness. Snow at 2:30. No power between 5 and 6 p.m. which meant no dinner, to many, also no light, no ice box, no radio, no heat, no iron, and so on, and if it keeps up no water, as tank empties rapidly.

Thunder and lightning Thursday a week ago caused a switch to Cerro Gordo mine to burn out. The fireworks were awesome.

Hilderman observed with dread the sometimes reckless antics of the War Department's fly boys, competing overhead with nature for the attention of mankind in Keeler.

Friday a plane or jet flew so low at 10 a.m. that 20 foot trees swayed as if there was a wind. That altitude is too low for residents' peace of mind.

Two thunderous booms 9:30 Friday as jets passed overhead.

A jet flew low at 11 a.m. Friday and broke the sound barrier, shook houses and people like a giant dynamite charge.

And no obvious improvement at ground level, either.

Atom bomb as set off in Nevada Friday seemed like an opening shot for Lone Pine Stampede.

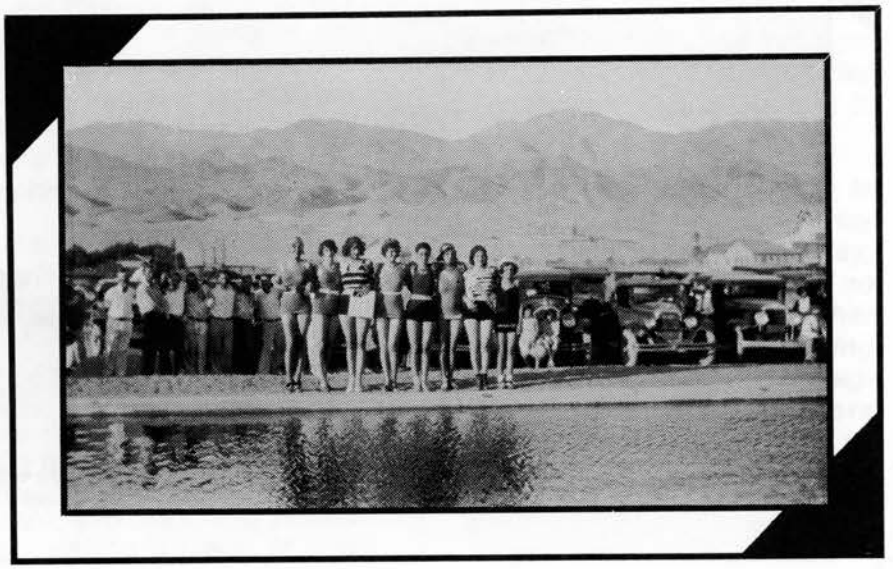
Lillian liked to report a distinctly more pleasing sound that came irregularly from the tracks of the old Carson & Colorado Railroad. Running just about as it pleased, the little narrow gauge steam locomotive came down from the north to the southern terminus of Keeler with the dusty, creaking sway-back box, flat, cattle cars, gondolas and ancient open-end platform passenger car, used as a caboose. They were so old they retained their original archbar trucks with wooden beams, truss rods and queen post supports. Rumbling, thumping and swaying down the undulating, well-worn tracks, they faithfully followed the tiny Baldwin locomotive. With blowing of the steam whistle and ringing of the bell the engineer, probably Mr. Ferguson, adjusted the Johnson bar to bring his freight consist to a fine wheezy, screeching and clanking stop at the yards.

Regular passenger went out on train Tuesday, ticket and everything.

After dark Friday, the whistle of engine was heard. Seems RR crew had been hauling for three days for nothern points and overtime piled up, requiring a 10-hour rest. Agent Crieman after being gone over four months was recalled from Lone Pine and saw Keeler by night for the first time.

Engine No. 9 Monday puffed out with three gondolas of bulk talc and twelve closed box cars.

Several wondered at the shrill whistles made by train as it came in Monday. Later learned two of our small fry took their sweet time in crossing right of way. Thank you, Mr. Ferguson for being alert.



Locally built Keeler pool, August 9, 1929. People gathered from miles around to admire the area's bathing beauties. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.

Some of Mrs. Hilderman's news items prove that her touted healthful air at Keeler did not always guarantee perfect health.

Mrs. B. Dillard and Cheryl were ill with colds last week.

Mrs. O. Hanger went to hospital at Lone Pine last Wednesday, returning Saturday feeling much better.

Andy Pedneau fell out of bed Wednesday night. Doctor's attention received Thursday a.m.

Charles Withrow and Richard Osburn in playing football last Wednesday had a mishap which places Ricky in hospital with bumped Adam's Apple.

Of course, Hilderman's column came to the reader as a grand mix of news at Keeler as it occured. A sample might be something like the following.

Moths were everywhere for a while, but the new moon . . . enticed them elsewhere. Since have come many scorpions and cinch bugs, and a few stray grasshoppers. Even the white cabbage butterfiles are here. So far, no rattlesnakes, but Harvey McMorris and Frank Wasson saw a larger than usual chuck-a-walla near their mine in Saline Valley.

Mrs. Hilderman went to Bishop last Monday.

A box of brass fittings and fixtures at one house, grew legs and walked off through Thursday night.

A truck of about 20 tons of Saline Valley salt was unloaded here Tuesday. Via Lee Flats — which means about 65 miles back and forth.

All through this weekend I've been told, "No Keeler news last week (in the paper)!" Certainly I know, but only two items were available.

A bulldozer went up Cerro Gordo hill on Friday.

Yes sir we are fully aware school began Thursday, September 9. Everything was so unearthly quiet.

Mrs. Frank Osburn brought me swiss chard from her garden Sunday.

Not to mention names, but three Keelerites were seen at Hawthorne, Nevada, on New Year's Day.

It may not be carrying coals to Newcastle but last week an Inyo county lady shipped a dog to Kansas. Kansas ships dogs to California, but, of course, not as good.

Bean dip, onion dip, shrimp dip are well known and enjoyed. Coming home from Independence Friday I noticed a Caution Dip.

Water pipes have been installed, cutoff valves and a few miniature red fire plugs installed. Last article should be appreciated by Pomeranians.

As of yesterday, vagrant breezes roll tumbleweeds out of Keeler, and tomorrow they will be blown into town. Children have birthday parties and parents hold meetings. Sand blows over the highway while lightning flashes overhead and thunder echoes through the nearby hills. War Department's killer planes roar over Owens Lake and break the sound barrier to make the citizens cringe. The everlasting Sierra peaks cast their lengthening purple

Keeler school, May 1929. The old fashioned 'public convenience' appears just behind the building on the left. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.

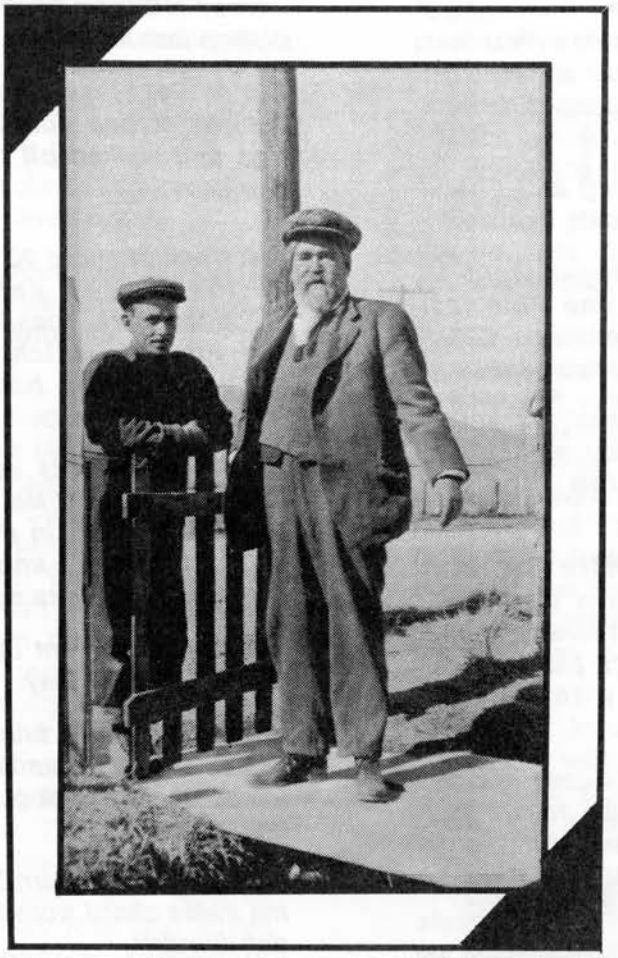
shadows across the nation's Deepest Valley as the golden sun sets slowly in the western sky.

In fading memories old timers see proud and fiesty Lillian Larson Hilderman return from Independence in her alkali-dusted, bluish mouse colored sedan, to emerge slowly at her modest Keeler home like a true lady leaving her chauffeur driven Pierce-Arrow limousine. Here was one of the truly great characters in Inyo's golden treasury of folk lore.

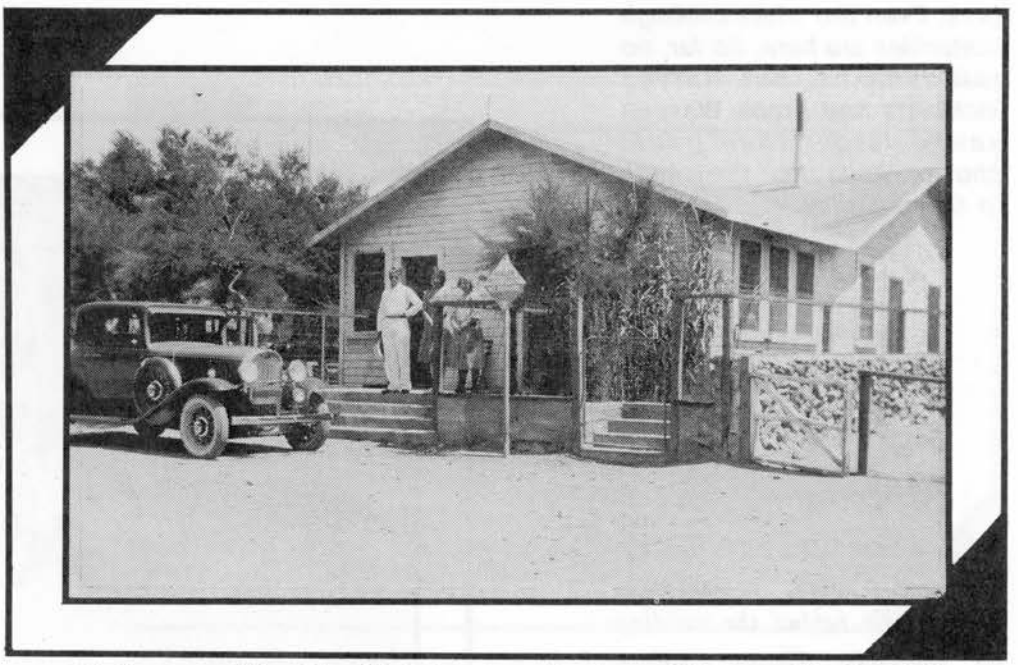
"She is gone now," wrote the late Ed Rosendorf, correspondent for the Inyo Independent, "but her columns will always remain classics in the memory of the many who each week turned at once to read what was going on in Keeler, one of the most unlikely sources of news in Inyo county.

"For her news was like the air she breathed. The flight of a bird, the winds rustling the trees, the soda ash over the lake, the shifting sands, a strolling dog, all of these were duly recorded events. And of course there were the comings and goings of the people of Keeler to be dutifully chronicled and faithfully read by a most loyal clientele."

After a life distinguished by being wife, mother, nurse for Inyo's noted "Doc" Irving J. Wooden, Keeler's postmaster, Eastern Star's Past Worthy Matron, historian, compassionate friend of the sick, and Chalfant newspapers' famous correspondent at Keeler, Lillian Larson Hilderman left this life February 7, 1976, at age 89. ✤



'Doc Irving Wooden, only medical docter in many hundreds of miles in Inyo County. Lillian Hilderman was his nurse in Independence before she married Mr. Hilderman. Photo: Eastern California Museum collection.



Keeler post office identified by sign also lettered 'No Parking,' which Keelerites ignored. Post office entrance is behind the man in white; Postmaster Hilderman's quarters behind windows at right.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANK YOU

These memories of Glacier Lodge, in this form, don't appear to be a letter, but that's how the article began. Mrs. Wm. Utter, Sr. wrote to us, relating some of her own recollections triggered by the story in our last issue. She asked that her letter not be published, but we begged and she has kindly written the following story, sharing her memories and some photographs of a beautiful time past and place long gone.

In the early 1920s Big Pine was a small town with a population of around five or six hundred, surrounded by some large ranches whose irrigation water came from Big Pine Creek. Among the businesses, here was a small lumber yard owned by George and Bertha Hall, and a pack station owned by Bob Logan who packed hardy fishermen up to the north fork of Big Pine Creek.

The creek had two branches that came together a short way above the present Glacier Lodge. The south fork was very rugged and few fished it. The north fork had seven lakes, the longest one man-made by a City of Los Angeles dam across the stream.

Among the prominent families were the Stewarts. There were four brothers, Jim and Joe having ranches on each side of Stewart Lane, two vehicle tracks which ran from what is now 395 to the river. The other two brothers, Bill and Bert, had a large band of sheep. In the summer they all headquartered in a small cabin built on a wide spot on the south side of the creek called Sage Flat, and tended their animals from there. At that time there were no other buildings on either branch of Big Pine Creek, except a power house about four miles out of Big Pine, owned by the City of Los Angeles.

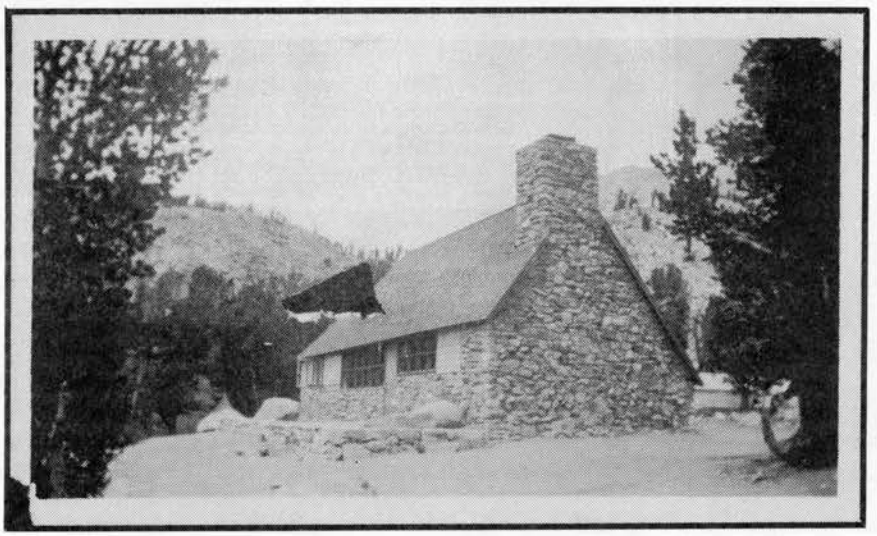
About 1925 Bertha Hall persuaded some friends by the name of Combo, from the Los Angeles area, to build a lodge a short distance from where the two branches of the stream came together. I do not know if Bertha was financially interested in the lodge, but she may have been.

My husband Bill and I, with a baby boy less than a year old, went up there to work. I did the cooking and he cut wood for all of the stoves, the only way of cooking and heating, and took guests fishing or on trips just to see or take pictures of the area.

About the same time Glacier Lodge was built, Bob Logan put a pack station about a quarter mile down stream, on the north side where the road ran. From there he packed to any of the seven lakes upstream. One of his packers was named Wes Blair and during the winter, when both places were closed, he and some friends would go over into Fish Lake Valley which was mostly open range. They would find a bunch of wild horses, chase them with an old pickup until they tired, then rope them from horseback, break them and bring them back to the valley to sell. Bob Logan used many of them for his pack train.

We worked at the lodge for two years. When the City of Los Angeles built Tinemaha Dam, my husband went to work there until it was finished. In the meantime a new owner of Glacier Lodge put a tent camp on the side of the mountain northwest of Fourth Lake, looking toward the glacier. During this time we had a daughter and another son.

Walter Dow, who built the Dow Hotel in Lone Pine, then bought both lodges. As he had known my parents when I was a child, he asked us to manage the upper lodge, the first year still in tents.



Upper Lodge, 'The Camp.'
Photo courtesy Mrs. Wm. Utter.

The next spring he built the rock fireplace, the fireplace and wood box taking up most of the east end of the building. All other sleeping quarters were tents.

Sometime during these years, the original Lon Cheney built his cabin between Third and Fourth lakes. He was an actor, quite small and very kind. He did not use a pole and line to catch fish. He lay on his belly, very quiet, and caught the fish he ate with his bare hands. He was afraid if he caught one on a hook, it might get away and die as a result of being hooked. His son was a large man, over six feet tall and weighing over 200 lbs. We always wondered if he was adopted.

Two young men, one trying to train the other to be a boxer, came to the camp one year. One of them caught a six or seven inch fish and just as he had it where he thought he could pick it up, another fish between two and three feet long swam by, grabbed the smaller fish and swam off with it, breaking his line without even knowing it was there.

Once a doctor came up with his adopted triplets and Bill took him to the glacier lake to fish. When he pulled in his line with his favorite fly, it caught on the edge of the ice. Bill dug his heels into the iceberg and held the doctor by his feet while he crawled down to get his fly. The water was so clear in the glacial lake that you could let a line out as far as it would go with a salmon egg on it and still see the egg.

Once Mr. Dow sent word up to the Camp by the packer that he was entertaining a group of City officials and wanted 75 fish to serve for dinner the following night. My husband and older son started catching the fish, and shortly after noon the next day had them all. Bill put them in a wet canvas bag, took it on his back and had them down at the lodge in time for dinner that night. He hiked back to the Camp rather pleased that he had done it — and it was appreciated.

The glacier was first explored by four or five men from Big Pine. I can remember three of them. Ed Ober, who was a Game Warden at the time, Sam McMurray, and Harry Mendenhall, who owned a camera shop and took pictures all over the Sierras. These men scratched their names and the date, which should still be visible, on one of the huge rocks. There were deep breaks, perhaps a couple of feet wide, in the glacier and one could shout down into them and hear the echo for several minutes.

As was mentioned in a previous article, Bob Clunie did much of his painting in areas all over the Sierras. He put his camp among the trees west of the Camp many times, and would join us around the fire in the evenings, rarely saying a word, but enjoying the company.

And there was Norman Clyde. He was a school teacher in Independence, a rather secluded individual not particularly liked by the students. One Halloween, some of them decided to bother him by pounding tin cans and making other loud noises. He asked them to go away several times and when they didn't, he fired his gun into the air. When the school board and townspeople learned of it, his teaching license was taken away and he became a mountaineer, writing articles and books. It made him a very meager living but he found rest in the solitude. Many others who know the Sierras feel that their rugged beauty compares favorably with the Swiss Alps.

Writing this has brought back many memories and I know I will be remembering more as the days pass. We have been back to the lower lodge a time or two after moving to Bishop but never to the Camp. The authorities that had the Camp destroyed and the rugged rock building town down cannot know how many people were denied the pleasure of seeing and enjoying the beauty of that part of our world.

Bill Jr., Betty and Bob Utter at 'The Camp.'
Photo courtesy Mrs. Wm. Utter.

FORAGERS' RECIPE

The first word I ever heard about diet was at the age of four. "Eat your carrots," Mama said. At five, "Eat your carrots or no lemon pie." At six, "Eat your carrots. Think of all those starving children in China. Every time you don't clean up your plate, some poor child will starve."

I didn't give a darn for any other children — I already had a brother to contend with. But I was intrigued with the logistics of how the surplus on my plate could be in direct ratio to the deficiency on a plate on the other side of the world. However, Dad, still a Navy officer then, had already impressed upon me that certain types of questions offered in a belligerent tone, no matter how honestly intended, fell into the category of mutiny and suitable punishment, so I never solved the problem.

Today's children go check the television, correct your error as to the location of currently starving children and remind you that pushy cooks spawn fat kids.

Reverse diet was our lot for years. By the time we were all born — my brother, sister, cousins and I — there were four generations of family hanging around this valley. By some immutable morphological law, some were fat and some thin, but the standard, impartial manifesto of the dinner table was, "Clean up your plate."

There were peerless cooks in the crowd, especially Grandma and Mama. They knew round was beautiful, breakfast consisted of at least three courses, as did lunch, and the best way to demonstrate love was a dinner that overflowed the platters from salad through opulent desserts made with thick cream, fresh eggs, homemade butter and real sugar. Furthermore, coffee was for getting out of bed at four or five a.m. and wine was for Thanksgiving and Christmas, so every person at the table drank rich, creamy milk from the family Jerseys.

Even on a bad day, it was pretty hard to go wrong when nearly everything on the table was raised on the back or front forty and harvested at its prime or brought in fresh from the hunt. There were no plastic tomatoes and plums, no sour apricots and peaches, no hard little dry string beans or overgrown wooden stalks of asparagus. When things were ripe and tender, they came to the table as proper accompaniment for home grown beef, pork and fowl, or for pheasant, sagehen and trout fresh from field or stream.

There were fine things to forage on the ranch. We never came to the table hungry. We never allowed ourselves even to get hungry. We roamed around rummaging all day in the orchards, fields and gardens. We presented ourselves on call, stained dark green from struggles with walnuts and black walnuts, purple with mulberries or plums. We perched in the trees like little apes, from spring until winter, gleaning the best of cherries, apricots, peaches, pears and apples as they ripened. The only things we left alone were chestnuts and the beehives.

Grandpa taught us how to pull up the taboose grass to find the sweet, blissfully mud-flavored nuts on the roots, and which part of the blossom from the honey locust tasted just like honey. Mama told us how the Indian ladies taught her to make a sugary candy from aphid, and a sort of chewing gum from milkweed milk. After a few bouts with castor oil, we gave those up, still willing to try anything to keep our mouths filled.

If all else failed, we ate vegetables down in the garden — the first peas, pod and all; warm, pungent tomatoes; baby string beans; carrots still crunchy with mud, as long as they weren't cooked. We hated the squash, cooked or raw, but nothing like we hated those cooked carrots. We lingered over the watermelons, but Mama had them counted and we never learned how to hide the evidence, so they were a treat we had to share with the rest of the family — after we cleaned up everything on our plates.

In the fall there were grapes and field corn. Don't let anyone tell you field corn is just for four-legged pigs. The tender new kernels are a delicacy to a scavenger of any persuasion.

We chewed on the wheat grains, the old wax we found in

the honeyhouse, the tender white joints pulled out of reeds, and even tried the chicken mash, but found it too much like our morning mush to suit our taste.

Even in winter something could be found in the cement cellar attached to the back entryway, big as the kitchen, covered with damp burlap bags and lined with shelves that smelled of apples and the yeasty residue from homemade beer explosions. And when Grandma moved into town, we could ransack her pantry cupboards after school.

"Clean up your plates," was a tough assignment after a long day of marauding. The problem with dieting is not so much desire for the plastic, imitation, fatless, sugarless, tasteless food out there, but it is the awful guilt about what to do with too much on your plate.

Doggie bags were invented for people who grew up stuffed and feeling guilty about starving all those unknown children somewhere. ✤

—from "Home Town in the High Country" by Jane Fisher, Chalfant Press, 1984