

# TRAIL O' THE TROUT

By JOHN L. VON BLON

**T**HE Trail o' the Trout! How it stirs the fancy, what charms it holds in actuality! Fortunate indeed are they that follow its winding course!

It leads to a glorious world apart—a wonderland of ashen deserts, fertile vales, tumbling waters, towering mountains and marvelous azure skies; a vast outdoor region without a peer for scenic beauty, sport and pleasure.

If you never have gone that romantic way you know not its irresistible lure, its glowing promise of all the



delights of the wide open spaces, and the joy of complete fulfillment. This is a trail not only of expectation but also of realization.

Should you already have traversed it these lines and this book of maps will appeal to you the more, for you will come again and again—and dream of it when you can't. Its inspiration stays with you.

There's an eternal call to man in the lightning flashing of graceful speckled fishes in sun-mottled, half-shaded pools, the pungent, invigorating odor of


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balsam firs and pines and the soft spring of their needles to his tread, the rustling of glistening aspen leaves, the song of rushing streams and the soothing feeling of self-effacement and profound peace of mind experienced only amid sublime heights.

And there the Trail o' the Trout takes you—to and through California's and Amer-



ica's loftiest, grandest, most changeful and impressive panorama, the Sierra Nevada Mountains along their eastern slope, saw-toothed Mt. Whitney, the Owens Valley, and on to Lake Mono and Tahoe or over Tioga Pass into the Yosemite.

Here are heaven-piercing peaks, frowning glaciers, snow-crowned range upon range, mighty forests, meadows colorful and fragrant with wildflowers, two thousand ice-cold, tree-fringed blue lakes, thousands of miles of rivers, creeks and brooks and—TROUT! Trout everywhere!

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Not alone trout, but game aplenty—in fact everything to be desired for the angler, the hunter, the camper, the motorist, the artist, the mountain-climber and the seeker after recreation and rest; a summerland paradise for man, woman and child.

With the Owens Valley as its focal point of access is a mountain realm more magnificent than the Alps and so big that all Switzerland could be dropped into it without bulging the boundary at a single point or radically changing the landscape.

That's the "where" of the Trail o' the Trout and the "why" of these maps that make clear the route to anyone interested—and who isn't? They are plain and correct, drawn by Lemoyne A. Hazard, to whom, through years of observant usage, the highways and byways and even dim paths of Eastern California have become almost as familiar as his own dooryard.

Mr. Hazard has signed the main arteries for many hundreds of miles with his famous Red Fish, and where these point is the right

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road. Stick to the Trail o' the Red Fish and you can't go wrong. Inevitably it will bring you to the living fish that await your hook.

To hit the Trail o' the Trout for the High Sierras and all their enchantment involves but little preparation, a simple camping outfit being the main requisite, with your car. Plenty of warm bedding, a shelter tent and a few cooking utensils will fill the bill. Purchase of supplies at reasonable prices at wayside towns or stopping-places is much preferable to carrying a load of provisions.

Camping outfits are regarded as a source of unnecessary bother by a large number of

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persons and these choose to go without, staying at hotels in towns along the line and mountain resorts at destination. Such places are indicated on the maps, while the advertisements call attention to the leading business houses, hence perusal will prove helpful.

From Los Angeles to Mojave, the first hundred miles, is a splendid paved highway; from Mojave to Little Lake, through gorgeously-colored, entrancing Red Rock Canyon, seventy miles, a stretch of natural desert road; Little Lake to Lone Pine, fifty miles, passing Owens Lake, similar roadway; and Lone Pine to Bishop, in the upper end of the Owens Valley, sixty miles, improved thoroughfare, including some miles of concrete.

The first stage of the journey, or what is to the majority the entire drive, from Los Angeles to the Owens Valley, can readily be made in one day, and many motorists do so; but it is much wiser, especially for those not familiar with the country and not accustomed to roads of that character, to take parts of two days and travel by easy stages. Thus the fascinating scenery may be the more thoroughly enjoyed and the dry wastes crossed during the cooler hours.

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It has become almost customary for motorists to start from Los Angeles about mid-afternoon, dine at some good eating-place by the way, roll over the desert in the evening, and put up for the night at a convenient hostelry or camp. By getting out early in the morning they reach the productive valley before the heat of the sun makes them uncomfortable.

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In the vicinity of Lone Pine is had the first glimpse of Mt. Whitney, 14,501 feet, the tallest eminence in the continental United States. Should you chance upon the scene at daybreak and behold the pale-rose rays of the rising sun slant across the stupendous White Mountains that wall the valley on the east against the frigid granite fingers that reach from the peak for the stars your memory will frame the picture for life; and if you pass in the evening and see, through opportune gaps in the chocolate-brown Alabama Hills, the gray spires silhouetted and bathed in the purple and gold and pink of a perfect sunset, succeeded by the all-pervading orange glow, you will thank your God.

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for the blessing of vision and the enthralling spectacle spread on the western rock-and-sky screen. That's Whitney, the top-notch!

Reflect a moment that here you are between the highest and lowest points in the country, the one within view from the other, for to the right lies Death Valley, terrestrial inferno. Possibly, in the not remote

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cataclysm that wrought this geologic jumble and brought in proximity torrid depths and icy elevations, the weird hole was scooped out for material to build the mammoth pile. These are sights that will spur even the most sluggish imagination.

This route that your modern auto covers in a dozen hours was blazed by the sturdiest pioneers that ever dared the grim unknown. It is an historic trail of tragic memory, of fearsome death from thirst and starvation, by bloody banditry and in battle with Indians. Lonely graves would mark its length today had not time and the elements obliterated the crude, pathetic headstones or

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the wooden crosses. At the same time it was a trail of triumph that added to the world's riches in that it bore up untold treasure of gold and silver in transit.

Over it came, in 1850, the ghastly surviving remnant of the "Death Valley party" that met its awful fate in the hell-sink. In the late 60's and early 70's there was hauled over it by Nadeau's freight wagons from Owens Lake to Los Angeles and tidewater silver bullion worth perhaps \$20,000,000, principally from the rich Cerro Gordo mine, high in the mountains above Keeler and to this moment producing zinc, lead and silver. From the western side of the rapidly-evaporating soda lake and the highway Cerro Gordo's lights are visible at night well toward the summit on the east.

Across a stretch from the north into Mojave the famous Twenty-mule Borax Teams drew out from Death Valley enough of the cleanser to wash much of the dirt off the face of the world, and then from the

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placer fields in Red Rock Canyon poured millions in yellow nuggets.

On the old stage coaches and other carriers of precious metals preyed the notorious road agent, Vasquez, and his band. Between Red Rock Canyon and Little Lake, on the left, you will see his stronghold, the "Bandit Rocks," still forbidding and suggestive of an ideal hiding place for desperadoes.

But all is changed. The desert's terrors of other days are no more. Ox teams and covered wagons are for the movie cameras only. The water holes have been converted into service stations and refreshment stands. The Trail o' the Trout is decidedly a pleasant avenue. And it penetrates to the heart of the best fishing territory on earth. The maps will show you almost the very spots in which to cast.

You might successfully fish a different lake or stream every day of a whole long lifetime and yet leave many untouched, so great is their number and extent. You can drive your car to the brink and one member of the party can land a mess while another gets the old fryingpan into action! You can

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find an attractive camping site almost anywhere. Fire permits, now as strictly required as angling and hunting licenses, can be obtained gratis at the office of the Forest Supervisor in Bishop, at Hazard's Garage, from any forest ranger and at hotels, resorts and business houses within the National Forests.

Which is a reminder to watch your camp-fire! Put it out! Help protect the timber, save the watersheds, conserve the water! The future of the West—your future—depends upon this! Fire recklessly handled and allowed to get beyond control is our most dangerous enemy. Carelessness with a match or a cigarette may cause irreparable loss.

The well-known and distinguished Trout family is here represented by its classiest

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branches, such varieties as Rainbow, Eastern Brook, Loch Leven, Golden, Steelhead, Cutthroat and Black-spotted Tahoe being the most commonly taken. They come in assorted sizes, too, ranging from small "fryers" to real whoppers. Their number is legion.

Every season the supply is augmented by the planting in the foaming, roaring creeks and the quiet lakes of many hundred thousand fry, including all the most desirable kinds. Few places remain unstocked and these are being given close attention.

Several miles beyond Independence, up against the mountains to the left of the State highway, looms the Mt. Whitney Trout Hatchery, a great, handsome structure of the Norwegian style of architecture, built by the Commonwealth of California and operated by the Fish and Game Commission. In this institution millions of eggs, brought

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down from the higher lakes, are hatched each summer and the fry distributed throughout Southern California. This is the only place in the world where Golden Trout are successfully propagated. The hatchery, most modern and complete extant, is open to visitors and will be found exceedingly interesting.

Deep water or shallow, swift or still, is available to the angler in the High Sierras. As a rule flies are the lure employed in the streams, though spinners and even "live bait" are not uncommon, and the urchin with a switch cut on the bank and a lowly worm on his hook is likely to annex a string as quickly as the expert with the most elaborate tackle can fill his creel.

Excellent fly fishing is also afforded by many of the lakes, and those who like to troll from the stern of a boat find abundant sport—and usually haul in the large ones.

Keep your eye on the unique, fat, brilliant Red Fish that marks the Trail o' the Trout at intervals and you will find the Fishing Haven of Your Heart's Desire.