

Golden Trout Season Opens July 1; Lures Sport Lovers From Far and Near

by E. J. Fortman - late 1930s

Thousands of feet above a hole in the world that men call Owens Lake lies a paradise of rugged wonderland too few have seen. Capped in by the cool gray walls of the High Sierras, where the world's traditional four seasons rule. In ancient fashion, this virgin country breathes the sky in a splendor undisturbed by the schemes and lands of men, banked on every side by mountain peaks that wear a cap of snow even in midsummer's heat.

Winter finds whining wind devils romping in this great cathedral, dashing rain and sleet and snow into the even valleys, forbidding them to man. But with the tender winds of June a quiet peace descends – the deep snows disappear, the dazzling ice arches crumble from their posts across the winding brooks, lakes break from frozen prisons and plushy meadows meld their fragrance with the balm of cedar forests.

PLENTY OF DEER

Summer wakens life along the timber-line. Deer come up from their winter-feeding grounds. The wolverines climb upward to be nearer their enemy, the moon. Birds of a thousand songs congregate from everywhere. All mountain life moves up, for summer time in these old Sierras means a rigid isolation broken down by balmy winds and reawakened life.

And here is the sportsman's paradise. For up in this Cottonwood district is the home of the golden trout, the gamest fish that ever tempted the wandering angler, seeking new thrills and finer meat. The season for this wiry kind of the mountain stream opens July 1, and those who go up the Mt. Whitney pack train trail this side of Lone Pine can be assured of some of the finest piscatorial surprises of their lives.

NEW TRAIL COMPLETED

Hearing that the forest service had just completed a new trail from the bottom of the range to the south end of Cottonwood Lakes, making accessible thousands of acres of almost undiscovered country – beautiful, rugged and chock-full of wild game – a scouting party from the Paul G. Hoffman Company in a Studebaker special six duplex-phaeton went to Lone Pine a few weeks ago, and at the end of the 221-mile drive into this little jewel spot in the Owens Valley, motored to the base of the Sierras as far as a car could go and, transferring food and supplies to the back of pack mules, swung into the saddle and started up the trail.

The horses and pack mules for the trip were provided by the pack train firm of Chrysler and Cook, who have more than 100 head of stock in Lone Pine for mountain trail travel, and who rent animals and furnish guides at very reasonable cost. It was under the very competent direction of "Ted" Cook of this firm that the Studebaker party made the trip into the South Cottonwood district – the first party of packers to go into this country this year.

Sure of their footing, and trained to the trail, the dappled and bay ponies started up the 11.5 mile trek at a fast and steady gait. At every turn in the trail the panorama of the Owens Valley became more magnificent, more comprehensive, more amazing in its majestic sweep, until the first pass was reached at an elevation of almost 8000 feet.

Going up the trail is like riding into fairyland, for there is an ever-changing variety of picturesque and rugged mountain scenery for which the Sierra Nevadas are world famous, and dropping rapidly into gulches horses and men quaff sparkling, icy-cold water from gurgling brooks, fed by foaming waterfalls that live endlessly, because their life comes from the eternal snows of Mt. Whitney, lying just north, which rises to an elevation of 14,502 feet, and which is the highest mountain peak in the United States.

Once up the steepest grades, smaller ranges begin, and going over these one comes into great cathedrals of age-old trees, which suddenly give way to emerald meadows that carpet the beautiful valleys of the Cottonwood district with all the glorious charm of the historic West men dream about.

Up through gorges whose rocks have been painted with a thousand colors by the hands of time; swinging along trails that ride the top of cliffs; checking the ponies as a deer flashes out of the trail and begins his nimble ascent to the safety of giant boulders, trailing through a vista of wooded wonderland – and then the trail beaks upward for a final climb that means a downward trip, ending at the door of the famous Golden Trout Camp.

This camp, with headquarters in a huge log cabin set in the clearing, and just 250 feet away from a rushing mountain stream that is alive with thousands of golden trout, is the headquarters for fishermen who go into the South Cottonwood district. Everything has been brought in by pack mule – groceries, food supplies and the furnishing for the place, even to the big kitchen range and heating stove packed from below in pieces. Here, after July 1, Chrysler & Cook will have scores of horses for rent and tent houses will be available for fishermen who plan a week or two of real vacation.

It is just three miles from the Golden Trout camp to the South Cottonwood lakes – a string of beautiful jewels tucked into a world of granite that hold some of the most splendid fishing to be found anywhere. For the convenience of nimrods Chrysler & Cook have transported a half dozen boats to these lakes from Lone Pine, bringing them up on the backs of pack mules.

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Golden Trout camp to the south Cottonwood lakes—a string of beautiful jewels tucked into a world of

Up the Mt. Whitney pack train trail behind Lone Pine is the home of the golden trout. Season opens July 1, a scouting party from the Paul G. Hoffman Company in a special six duplex phaeton visited there recently, and took the first pack train into the Cottonwood Lakes district this season. Top photo shows Ted Cook and Anne Fleming 11,000 feet above seal level. Center left – A golden trout stream. Center right – Golden trout camp in the High Sierras. Lower left – The pack train going through a gorge of painted rocks. Lower right – The Studebaker in Lone Pine, with the Sierras in the background.



Anne Fleming – Actress