

DIARY OF AN ARIZONA PACK TRIP

OF

WETHERILL AND CHANLER ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION.

Pack train of five head heading for Apache Reservation country in the White Mountains of Arizona, to survey country inaccessible to the automobile.

We left Scottsdale, Arizona, on September 28th, 1933. The first day out was a short and slow trip over level desert country, common to that area, in order to break in the animals.

Shoed two horses at Mesa, where we also purchased grub and supplies, in preparation and outfitting for a long and arduous pioneering voyage.

Left Mesa, a Mormon town sixteen miles East of Phoenix, on October 1st, and camped on the sloping foothills of the Superstition Mountains, under the very shadow of their towering, jagged cliffs.

Gazing at the Superstition group from the West, one is immediately struck with the impression of impregnability, of unscalable heights, which are forever before the eye as the pack train winds its steady course across parched desert land.

These mountains have taken their toll of human life, and seem ever to remain an unfathomable mystery. There is a gold mine somewhere hidden in that giant mass of rock, the Lost Dutchmans Mine, toward which lustful seekers have been drawn for half a century. Ten men, perhaps eleven now, have disappeared, and but one skeleton was ever found to solve the question. The skull had a bullet hole through the forehead.

There is atmosphere and color about these mountains. The air is clear and blue, clouds or haze are the exception. What a comparison there is between the glaring barrenness of the desert under the scorching sun, and the fertile canyons, cut through by ages of water, flowing and trickling downward, feeding the roots of shady Sycamores, of Walnut trees and wild grape vineyards. The miniature fruit is bitter to the taste as one plucks a handful riding beneath a hanging vine.

It was ideal camping under protecting trees, nestled deep between sky-scraping, cliff walls.

We rode one day almost by, but noticed in time an interesting group of prehistoric Indian pictographs, pecked, incised, not painted as they are in some parts of the South West, at what, by its location, might very well have been the site of a camp of roving hunters.

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The fourth day out was memorable to us for the morning visit of a young and growing Tarantula, which was enticed, no doubt, by the delicious fumes of cooking pots.

On October 8th, we arrived at Globe, Arizona, an important mining town, like others, paralyzed by the depression, not alone indeed in its misery.

We had traversed to reach Globe via the Superstitions well nigh impassable terrain, trails barred to all but mules, burros and mountain ponies.

Cow paths that lost themselves in brush clinging to steep grade led us to water sheds in rough and rocky canyons. Everywhere was marked evidence of the toil of penetrating prospectors, the so-called desert rats, had left deserted monuments, mute acknowledgment that all that glitters is not gold, nor silver, not copper.

Day after day, we slowly progressed, moving onward with our persevering stock, that granted frequently in toil, until we had rounded a hill and in surprising suddenness beheld the Inspiration Mine, very rich in grade of ore.

This mine once fed the kings of copper, once housed, and employed 2000 workers; today but thirty are enrolled and drawing pay.

We were near Miami's leaching plants. Vast hills, flat mesas of sand, which looked as if one day they might fill the draw, lay before us as we sat and rested our horses, having reached the crest of the divide.

October 13th, 1933.

We rode the six miles between Miami and Globe in the rain. It was literally a cloudburst - the washes in five minutes ran in deep and noisy rivulets - during which from the wind, from even hail, a tempest in intensity, we sought shelter among a grove of trees. Then did I truly value my saddle slicker reaching to boot and stirrup.

We camped at the outskirts of Globe, until recently a booming mining town, for five nights, because of daily rains and threatening skies.

On the sixth day, the sun optimistically shone again in azure blue, so we packed away, glad none the less for the days of rest. Ben Wetherill had made good use of his time by completing and topping off his survey notes for Alonzo Pond's expedition report on Northern Arizona prehistoric sites.

While at Globe, in reference to Indian ruins, Ben intro-