

Sez Hard Rock Shorty of Death Valley



By LON GARRISON

"Buffalo?" said Hard Rock Shorty. "Sure. They used to be lots of buffalo here. Moose an' deer too. Only fifty year since they disappeared. It was all on account o' them skeeters."

Hard Rock moved out of the sun into the shade of the store porch and proceeded to enlarge upon his statement.

"A feller from New Jersey started it all. He'd a little claim down to the lower end of the Valley, an' got so lonesome he sent back to New Jersey an' got some skeeters to give 'im somp'n to do. Climate down around Bad Water seemed to agree with 'em an' it wasn't long 'il they was big enough to take care o' themselves an' most anythin' else in the country besides.

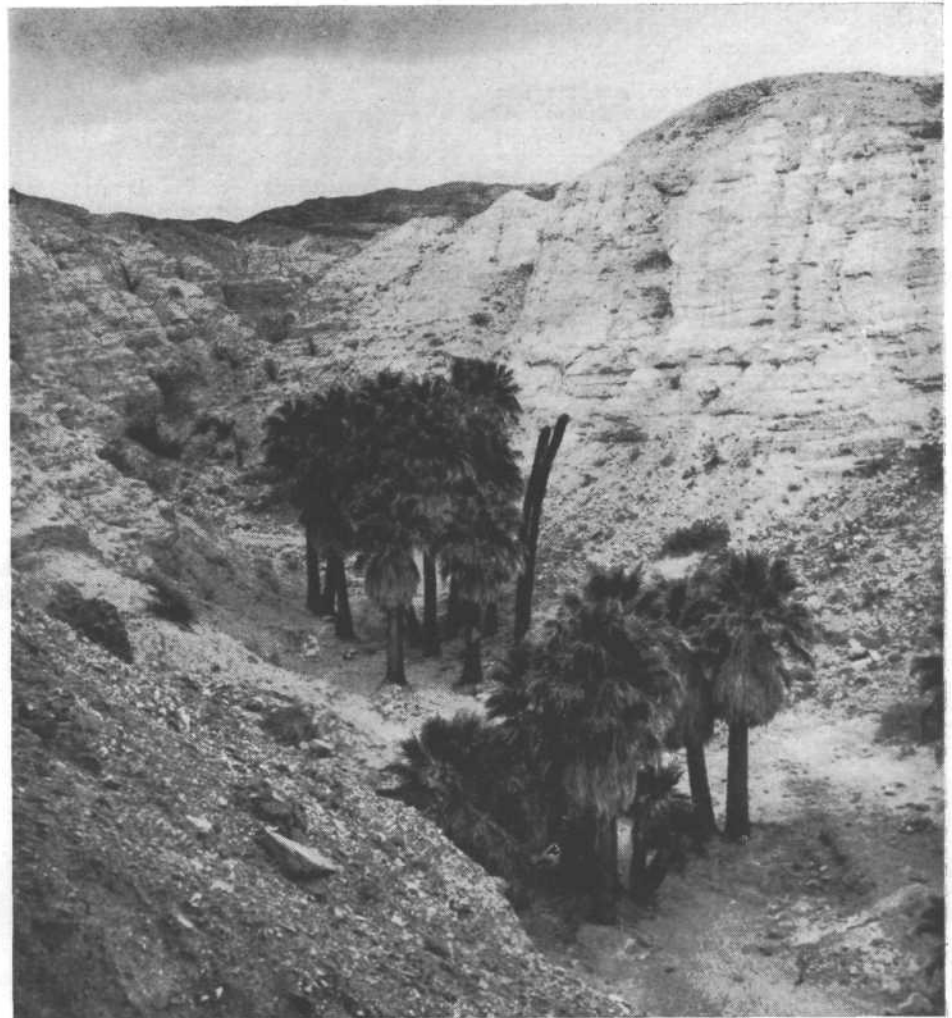
"Yup—they begin crossin' with buzzards an' road runners. Now sir, that was a combination! The zing o' the skeeter, the size an' eyesight o' the buzzard, an' the speed o' the road runner, an' they wasn't nothin' could get away from 'em. They just cleaned things out proper — moose, buffalo, an' all. They caught ever'thin' that flew an' run down ever'thin' that hadn't no wings.

"Not only that, it got so men wasn't safe 'less they carried guns—them skeeters sure got to be big devils. They was too big—they couldn't get enough to eat, an' that was what ended 'em. One day one o' their scouts come in an' reported a whole wagon train load of canned meat goin' up the Nevada side. They flew over an' raided it an' got so full they couldn't fly good. Comin' over the Funeral mountains they couldn't get the elevation an' all crashed into the side o' the hill.

"But the catastrophe came too late to save the buffalo—none left—nor none o' them big skeeters either."

Hidden Springs

This is the correct name of the oasis pictured below. Mrs. E. Thiel of Glendale, California, was the winner of the \$5.00 cash prize offered by the Desert Magazine for the best letter naming and describing this landmark. The winning answer is published below.



By MRS. E. THIEL

THE lovely picture in your July issue is without doubt that of Hidden Springs, a secluded spot in the foothills of the Orocopia mountains on the Colorado desert of Southern California.

This place can be reached from the old Mecca-Blythe highway. Approximately three miles east of Mecca turn southeast and follow the power line for about three miles then turn north along a sandy wash for five miles.

A short distance after reaching the point where the canyon becomes narrow with high walls on both sides is a little tributary canyon taking off to the left. There one has to leave the car and follow the tributary about 100 yards on foot. The trail leads through broken boulders

of conglomerate and at one place it is necessary to crawl on hands and knees through a narrow passageway.

As one emerges from the semi-darkness of the tunnel a surprising picture comes in view. There are two groups of palms numbering about 40—all of them native Washingtonia.

Under the upper group is a little spring about two by four feet in the clay-like ground. The water is fairly good and generally swarms of bees are there. The lower spring is usually dry but water can be obtained with a little digging. The palms are nicely grouped in a spectacular setting of multi-colored hills. The spring also may be reached by a short trail from Shaver's well. There are excellent camping spots in the main canyon.

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