

by Dallas Jail Medic

## JACK RUBY KILLED THE WRONG MAN

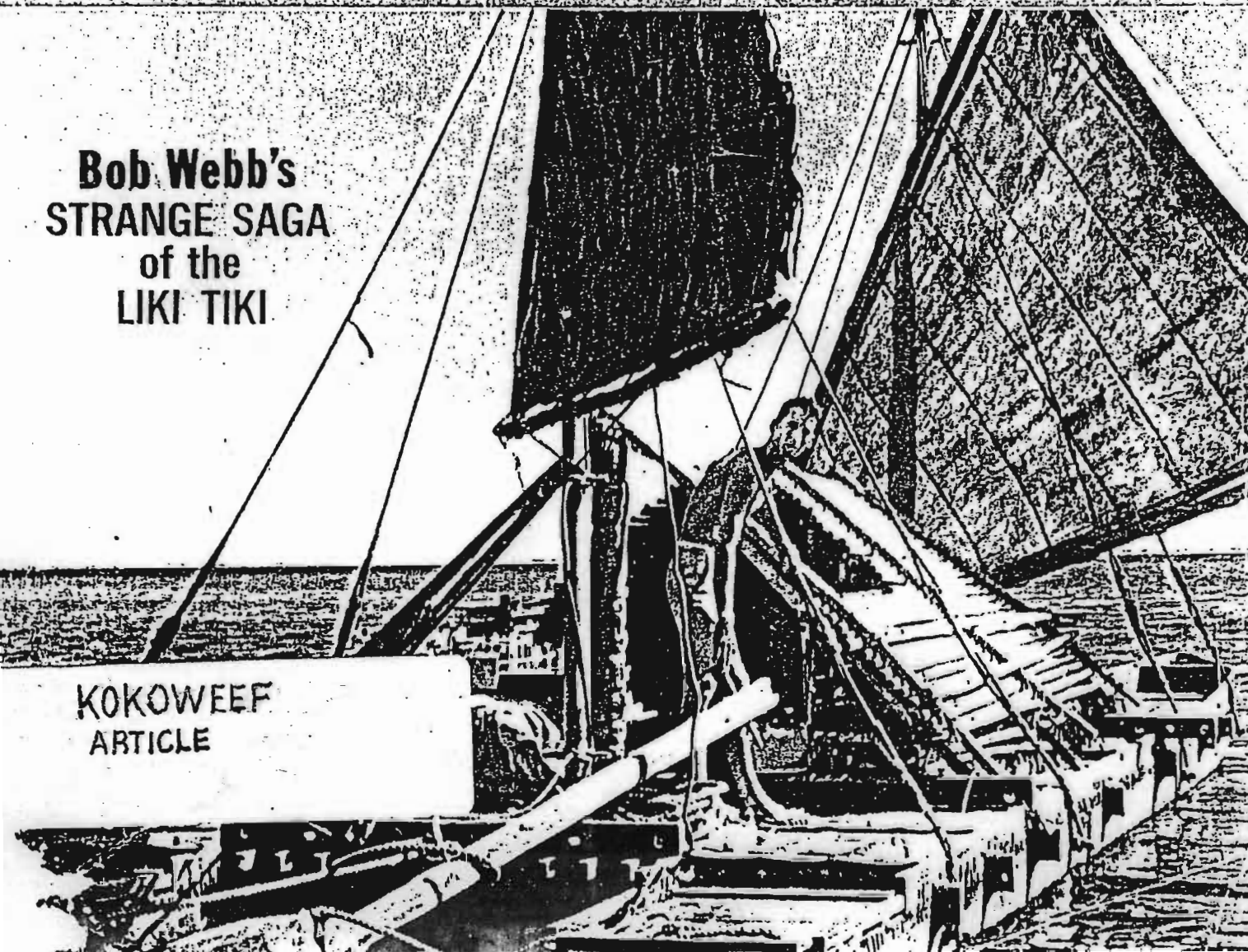
### ACTUAL PHOTOS OF FLORIDA SEA MONSTER

### AFRICA: Last Frontier for Adventure

**BOOK BONUS:**  
**LATEST CRIME NOVEL BY JOHN CREASEY**

**Bob Webb's**  
**STRANGE SAGA**  
of the  
**LIKI TIKI**

**KOKOWEEF**  
ARTICLE



# HOLLOW MOUNTAIN- FILLED WITH GOLD?

BY RAY DORR

Uncle Earl never found his way back to the fabulous gold-filled sand of Crystal Cave, but it's waiting there somewhere -- maybe only a few shovelfuls away

Either Uncle Earl M. Dorr discovered the richest gold deposit in the United States in 1931, or he was the most imaginative liar in the state of California. One thing is certain. His lost cavern of gold ain't lost! Its exact location—if it does exist—is mapped, charted and public information. Two men were killed as recently as 1959 in a tunnel leading to Earl Dorr's cavern. Some people say at least five men have died inside the "hollow mountain," including the two prospectors who were entombed alive by my desert-rat relative.

In 1934, Uncle Earl made the following sworn testimony before a notary public in Los Angeles County, California.

"To whom it may concern:

"This is to certify that there is located in San Bernardino County, California, about 250 miles from Los Angeles, a certain cave. Traveling over state highways by automobile the cave is reached in about 10 hours.

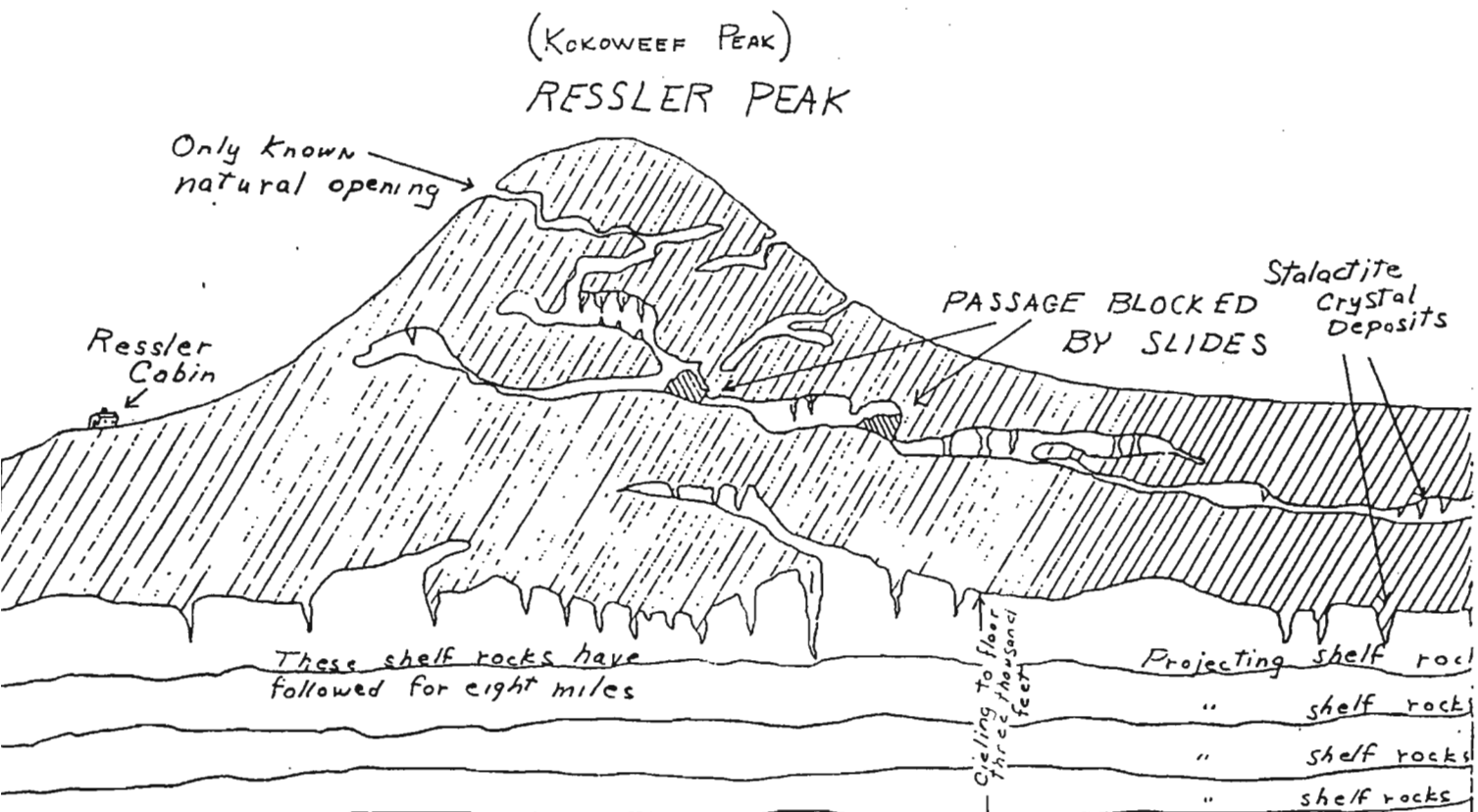
"A Civil Engineer, Mr. Morton, and I spent four days exploring the cave for more than eight miles. We carried with us Altimeters, Pedometers and a Theodolite, with which to observe and record actual directions, take elevations and measurements by triangulation.

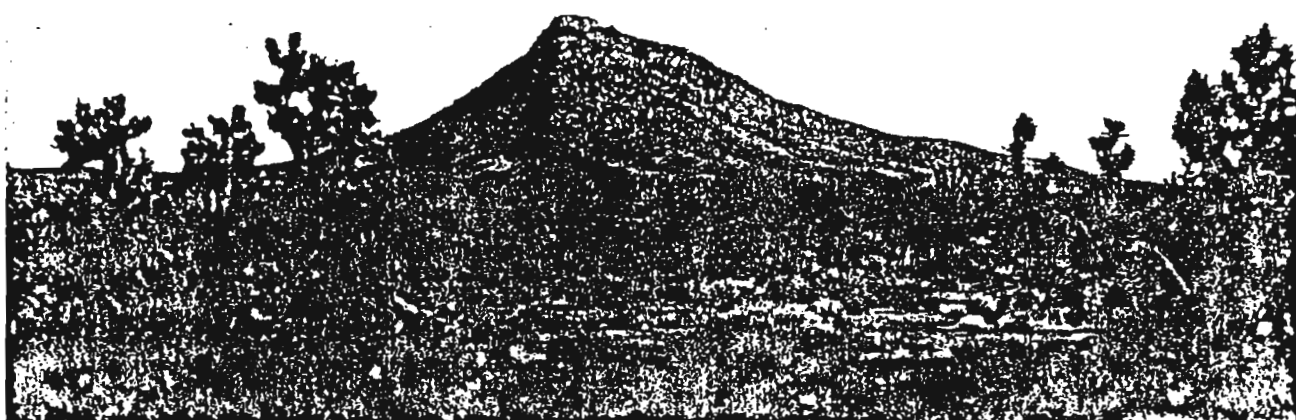
"Our exploration revealed the following facts:

"1. From the mouth of the cave, we descended about 2,000 feet, where we encountered a canyon, which from the Altimeters and by calculations we found to be from 3,000 to 3,500 feet deeper; making a total depth of 5,400 from the mouth where we entered the caves to the floor of the canyon.

"2. We found the cave divided into many caverns or chambers, of various sizes, all filled and embellished with Stalactites and Stalagmites, besides many grotesque and fantastic shapes that make these caves one of the wonders of the world.

"3. The largest chamber we explored is about 300 feet wide, 400 feet long and from 50 to 110 feet high. It is encrusted with crystals, fashioned into festoons of





Above is Kokowecf (Ressler) Peak, San Bernardino County, California. Clearly visible is the fault line containing Crystal Cave, through which the author's uncle reached Dorr Peak to discover its awesome cache of treasure.

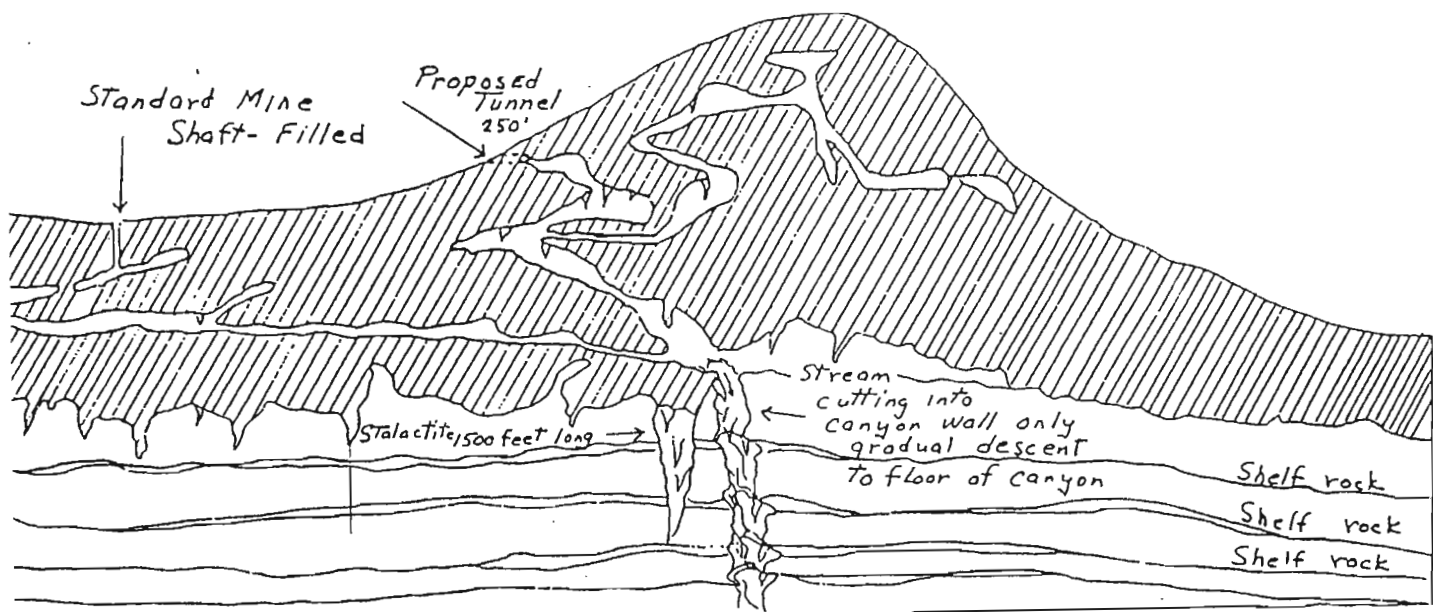
innumerable Stalactites, that hang from the ceiling, some of which are extremely large. One, the largest seen, is 27 feet in diameter and hangs 1,510 feet down into a 3,000 foot canyon. This great Stalactite is perpetually washed by water flowing down over it and falling into the dark canyon depths. The huge glistening white crystal is 500 feet longer than the Eiffel Tower, and challenged us with amazement and wonder.

"4. There is a flowing river on the floor of the canyon, which rises and falls with tidal regularity. All measurements and estimates of the river, including its tides and beach sands, were reckoned by triangulation, taken with the Theodolite, and while we did not reach the river, nevertheless, taking observa-

tions with our Theodolite and its telescope, we reckoned the river to be about 300 feet at high tide and 10 feet wide at low tide. It rises and falls from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 feet. The Peysert brothers confirm our reckoning. (Author's Note: The Peysert brothers were Indians who worked on my grandfather's Colorado ranch in the 1890's. They took a liking to their boss's eldest son, then a hot-tempered young cowboy. When one of the Peysert brothers was killed in the cavern, the survivors were forbidden by tribal law to return to the place of his death. Probably about 1930 they told Uncle Earl of their tribal secret.)

"5. When the tide is out, there is exposed on both sides of the river from 100 to 150 feet of black sand, which the Peysert brothers (continued on page 89)

## DORR PEAK



report is very rich in placer gold. They report the sands of the river shore to be from 4 to 11 feet deep and on an average about 8 feet wide.

"6. There are numerous ledges above the canyons that are from 10 to 40 feet wide and covered with sand. We personally explored the ledge sand for a distance of more than 8 miles, finding little variation in the depth and width of these ledge sands. And wherever examined, the ledge sands are found to be fabulously rich in placer gold.

"7. I have known intimately Oliver, Buck and George Peysert from my boyhood. I have discussed these caves with them repeatedly and thoroughly. They have reported to me in detail their experience in exploring the caves. One of them, George, lost his life in the cave. Buck and Oliver say George was killed by diving in the river on the floor of the canyon. He struck an unseen rock, which killed him instantly. They have reported to me repeatedly their mining experiences and say they mined on the beach sands of the river a total, in all, of six weeks. They carried lumber down to the river and constructed a sluice box and, using a pump, the three mined for six weeks, during which time they recovered more than \$57,000 in gold (gold at \$20 per ounce); they sent their gold directly to the U.S. Mint and banked the returns in a bank in Needles, California, and another bank in Las Vegas, Nevada. I last talked to them in my home about November 10, 1934, at which time they repeated their former statements, giving information as to how they discovered the river, and more of their experiences in mining. They recovered several of the largest nuggets of gold ever found in California.

"Both Mr. Morton and myself filled our pockets with the sands from the ledges, carried it out and had it assayed. Just what Mr. Morton's sands assayed, I do not know, but it was approximately \$2,000 per ton. I carried out 10 pounds and 2 ounces of the ledge sand, and panned 7 ounces, recovering more than 57 in gold with gold at \$20 per ounce. I sold the gold for \$18 per ounce. The balance of my ten pounds of sand I sent to John Herman, a Los Angeles assayer. His assay certificate shows a value of \$2,144.47 per yard—gold at \$20.67 per ounce.

"I, E. P. Dorr, residing at 390 Adena Street, Pasadena, California, make the foregoing statements for the purpose of inducing investors to invest in the work of mining the gold in these caves and I solemnly swear that all statements hereinabove are true and that all persons will find the physical conditions in the cave as above stated.

(signed) E. P. DORR

"Subscribed and sworn on this 10th day of December, 1934.

(signed) H. HARRISWELL MILLER, Notary Public in and for the County of Los Angeles, State of California."

**T**he so-far unanswered problem of access to the cavern of gold was created on the day Uncle Earl carried Mr. Morton out of the depths of Crystal Cave. According to my uncle, Mr. Morton was sick and had to be taken to a hospital in Las Vegas. Two

prospectors, camped at the mouth of Crystal Cave, helped carry Mr. Morton to Uncle Earl's beat-up old touring car parked at the foot of Kokoweef Peak. On the way, they discovered the black sand and gold in the old man's pockets. My uncle told me he immediately went back into the cave and dynamited shut a narrow tunnel, sealing off the cavern, except for a second entrance through which he had seen daylight while he was inside the cavern. He gambled on locating this second entrance rather than lose the treasure to claim jumpers.

Some people say that Earl Dorr returned from taking Mr. Morton to the hospital to find the two prospectors inside the cave and that at that time he sealed it off.

**L**ast winter, I was hired by Moishdennum Corporation of America to fly 1,000 miles from my home in Colorado to be their construction representative at a European mill being built on the summit of Mountain Pass, California—less than three miles from Uncle Earl's hollow mountain! As Uncle Earl had many times told me the story of the lost cavern, I decided to attempt to find out whether the tough old ex-cowboy and miner-pro prospector had spent too many years in the desert sun, or had actually died a multimillionaire whose vault door got jammed shut. As an employe of the mining company, I would have access to detailed geological maps of the immediate area. Also, I would be in a position to question mining engineers, assayers and hard-rock miners who had spent a lifetime pecking away at Mother Nature's desolate, rock-bound storehouse.

At the Las Vegas airport, I rented a car and took the highway south across the desert, with its sparse vegetation of cactus and salt weed. The air felt balmy and luxurious. For nearly an hour, I tooted along. In the distance on either side of the highway rose low mountains of stark, jagged granite. At the California state line, the road went flat out across a dry lake bed for ten miles and arched up in a deceptively steep climb into a pass through a range of craggy mountains. Cliffs closed in on either side of the highway. A few scrawny cattle nibbled on tufts of dry grass at the base of Spanish Dagger cactus. Joshua trees thrust their spiny arms from narrow crevices between granite boulders. I took a deep breath and smiled. I was back in desert country again.

Near the summit of the pass, I eased the car off onto the Bailey Turnoff road that led to La Cenda Café. A dirt road cut through a group of house trailers, then twisted up the side of a mountain to a cluster of weather-beaten mine and mill buildings. At the mine office, I parked the car, worked my way past a receptionist and an office manager to the superintendent. Mr. Bailey was not only the mine superintendent, he was the patriarch of Mountain Pass. An old-time Westerner, he was short on words but long on savvy.

The main office had failed to notify him that I was arriving, so there was some confusion as to why I suddenly appeared on his doorstep. My reception was a bit chilly. However, we finally blundered through formalities and got around to small talk.

Had I ever been in desert country before? Yes, I had spent quite a bit of time

in the deserts of California, New Mexico, and Chihuahua and Sonora in Old Mexico. Mr. Bailey began to loosen up a little. He had spent fifteen years at Mountain Pass. I pulled my ace in the hole.

"As a matter of fact, I had an uncle who lived right here in these mountains by Mountain Pass for many years. Did you happen to know Earl Dorr?"

"Is that so? Earl Dorr? No, I didn't know him, but I heard about him." Mr. Bailey swung around in his chair and pointed out a window to an odd-shaped peak that jutted up behind the first range on the opposite side of the pass. "See that mountain? It's called Dorr Peak. Your uncle spent a good many years diggih' in that mountain."

At that point, I pulled a colossal blunder. I told the mine superintendent that he was mistaken. The air again turned frosty and remained that way as long as I was on that job. But the cause of that blunder may be the reason why so many searchers have failed to gain entrance to the huge cavern of gold. For years, men have been tunneling into what Mr. Bailey called Dorr Peak. But when I was about ten years old, my father took me out to visit Uncle Earl at his shack, which was close to a tunnel he was digging. That shack was in a canyon on the opposite side of the Mescal Mountain Range from Dorr Peak!

The next day, things began to percolate. I ate breakfast and lunch with the miners at La Cenda Café, which was operated by a Mrs. Dickson. This gray-haired lady came to Mountain Pass about the time my uncle moved away. She told me one of Uncle Earl's cronies was a dried-up little desert

rat named Pete Ressler. Peter was rumored to have been a member of the Butch Cassidy gang. Before his death, Pete gave Mrs. Dickson some charts, made by my uncle, of the hollow mountain. Now, she gave them to me.

One morning, I was stuffing in pancakes and sausages at La Cenda when a stranger suddenly appeared at my table. He was in his early thirties, short, with rumpled clothes, a two days' growth of beard, dark, wavy hair and blue eyes that missed focusing on mine by a fraction of an inch. I had seen that same look on the faces of many treasure hunters. The man was looking at me, but in his dream world, he was seeing something else. He clutched a battered black brief case to his chest.

"Are you Ray Dorr?" he asked.

"Yes. Sit down, won't you?"

He slid onto the edge of a chair. "Was Earl Dorr your uncle?"

I nodded.

He grinned. "I heard you were here. I came out from Los Angeles to see you." He tapped the brief case. "In here, I have everything that was ever written about your uncle and Kokoweef Cavern." The eyes pleaded with me. "That gold is down there. I know it. My wife left me, and my family, too, because I've spent so much time looking for the lost entrance. But the gold is there, isn't it? Is that why you're here? Did your uncle tell you something that hasn't been printed?"

"Now, wait a minute," I laughed, which was a mistake, because to this man and many others I talked with while at Mountain Pass, the gold in the hollow mountain is not a laughing matter. "I'm not out here

to find Uncle Earl's gold, although I'm certainly not going to kick a fortune aside if I stumble over it. Uncle Earl talked a lot about the cavern, but he *did* have vivid imagination."

The young man wrenched open the brief case and thrust reams of materials at me: California mining journals, newspaper copies of allidavits. All had articles about Uncle Earl's cavern.

"The gold does exist! You can't deny it with all this evidence!" he said. "They are a few things that I haven't been able to figure out. Will you help me?"

"Sure, what do you need?"

"Did your uncle die a rich man, a millionaire, as this article says?"

"Nope. During his last years, he was watchman at a tungsten mine near Victorville," I told him.

Frowning, he crossed out that part of his evidence.

"People sometimes laugh at his stories about the huge cavern and the underground river in the desert and the fact that it rises and falls with the tide. Do you know anything to back up these stories?"

A mining engineer was sitting at a nearby table. I called him over and put the question to him.

"In the first place," the engineer explained, "we know that there is gold in this region. From outside the café, you can see the dumps of old Spanish mines high on the east side of the pass. In fact, all around this area are gold mines, some of which were worked until recent years. The Mountain Pass mine originally was a gold mine.

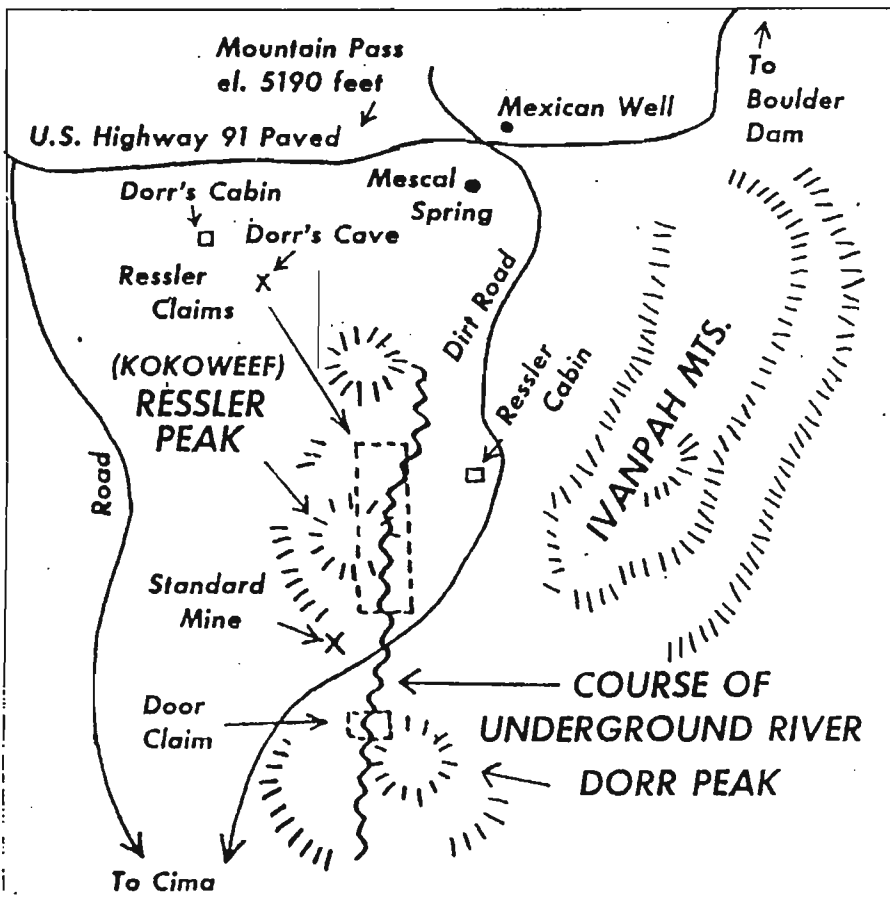
"Also, we know that there are extensive cavern systems in these mountains. There are several caverns inside Kokoweef Peak. Your uncle claimed to have descended into the big cavern through Crystal Cave or Kokoweef.

"About water. There's lots of it under this sun-baked desert. For the time being, we pump thousands of gallons of water every day from Murphey Well, which is down on the flats on the opposite side of Kokoweef Peak. Incidentally, that well is in line with the underground river your uncle shows on his charts.

"You asked about the river rising and falling with the tide." The engineer chuckled. "It's strange, but the water level in some of the wells around here *does* rise and fall with the moon tide."

The following weekend, I drove out to Mountain Pass and turned off at the café. Instead of driving west, to the mine, I headed the car east onto a dirt road that twisted up a series of canyons and ridge until it came out onto a plateau-like area at the north edge of the Mescal Range. Rising out of the plateau was a mass of stone several hundred feet high, somewhat resembling a capsized battleship. Along its ridge was a straight line of cliffs, dark oppressive and punctured with caves—obviously a fault line. This was Kokoweef Peak. Beyond was a smaller peak upon which the cliffs again appeared in line with those on Kokoweef. The cliffs on this peak—Dorr Peak—were even more darkly awesome as they dropped away thousands of feet to the dry Ivanpah lake bed in the sun-scorching valley below.

Parking beside the burned-out ruins of



A R G O S Y

Pete Ressler's cabin. I backtracked, then followed a foot trail up the side of Kokoweef to the entrance to Crystal Cave. It was a few hundred feet below the cliffs and looked like a manhole in the side of the mountain. The top of a rickety ladder poked out of the manhole. The bottom perched on a ledge no wider than your hand. The top of another ladder was visible at the ledge, the lower portion obscured by the darkness of the pit. I dropped a rock into the opening. It bounced and rattled down the shaft for several seconds.

Out of that hole, Uncle Earl was supposed to have carried the sick Mr. Morton. Uncle Earl could have done that. He was a big and extremely powerful man. With the help of the two prospectors, he had carried the engineer down the mountain to the dirt road where my car was now parked. On the way, the prospectors found the gold in Mr. Morton's pockets. So Uncle Earl had climbed back up the mountain and descended deep into the cave to blast shut a tunnel. Later explorers of Crystal Cave did indeed find a tunnel blasted shut and the letters "D-O-R-R" smoked on the ceiling with a carbide lamp.

In 1959, two men tried to blast open the tunnel. They died from dynamite fumes. Were they the second and third to die in the hollow mountain? Or the fourth and fifth?

A year later, an emaciated creature staggered onto Mountain Pass Highway. He babbled something about his wife and two children at Pete Ressler's cabin. A rescue party found the woman and children close to death. The husband had gambled all their lives on the chance that he could dig into the big cavern through Dorr Peak before they all died of starvation.

In 1963, police officers rushed up the dirt road to Kokoweef Peak to prevent an old-fashioned shoot-out over claim jumping between a group of prospectors and a drilling crew working for Emmett J. Culligan, of water-softener fame. At that time, the prospectors hinted they had discovered the long sought-after second entrance to the big cavern. However, the mountain is now deserted, as it was the first time Uncle Earl scaled its dark side in 1931.

Back at the highway, I turned west onto the lane marked "Los Angeles." I was out of the pass before I saw what I had been looking for—the foundations of the old Clark Mountain Station. This was the one landmark I remembered from the single trip I had made to Uncle Earl's shack at the age of ten, more than a quarter of a century ago.

Beyond the foundations, a dirt road, overgrown with brush, snaked between cactus toward the south edge of the Mescal Range. An hour later, the car wheezed to a stop beside the remains of the rustling sheet-iron shack that snuggled between towering slabs of rock at the mouth of a narrow canyon. A herd of wild burros scampered up a side canyon, then reappeared as they climbed high among the rocks above.

I kicked around the cabin for souvenirs. Stuffing a flashlight in one hip pocket and a .38 S&W in the other, I took off up the canyon on foot, following a well worn trail. The setting sun lengthened the darkening shadows in that narrow, crooked canyon.

In some places, I could reach out and touch both vertical walls. I'm not a superstitious person, and I don't want to sound corny, but after all those years, I had a funny feeling that Uncle Earl was in that canyon with me. Not that I minded; he was a great old gent.

High on the right-hand side of the canyon was a formation similar to the cliffs on Kokoweef. There were many caves, but none showed signs of being worked. It was half an hour before I saw what I had been searching for—a dump below a large cave.

Breathless, I scrambled up the steep canyon side, switched on the flashlight and edged into the dark cavern. It was a large room with a rock formation through the center. I stumbled over something hard—an old wheelbarrow. At the back of the room was a large, dark hole in the cavern floor. The flashlight revealed a shaft about twenty feet deep, well cribbed, with a substantial-looking ladder nailed to the cribbing.

There was writing on the rock wall above the shaft. In large, black, fuzzy letters, written with a carbide lamp, were the words: DANGER—KEEP OUT—EARL DORR.

Climbing down the ladder, I found myself in a natural tunnel leading deeper into the mountain. Crystals glistened in the walls. The tunnel opened into a room. The floor arched outward and downward at a steep angle. A rotted ladder followed the contour of the floor until both disappeared downward to unknown depths. Without a rope and some help, I had no intention of climbing down that ladder. The rear wall of the room was a mass of granite, as polished as a headstone. This was exactly the same formation Uncle Earl showed in his drawings of the cavern under Kokoweef, which was several miles away.

Why did Uncle Earl spend so many years digging in this cave while he told everyone, from mining engineers to treasure hunters, that the best way to reach the cavern was by tunnelling into Kokoweef or Dorr Peaks? Was it under this area that he had seen sunlight filtering into the big cavern? That didn't make sense. The major fault under Kokoweef and Dorr Peaks ran east and west, well to the north of this cave. I knew that the only answer—if there was a logical answer—would be in the geological maps in the engineer's office at the mine.

Arriving at the mine early Monday morning, I dug through the files and pulled out the one map I wanted. It showed the east and west fault under Kokoweef. My finger moved west along the fault line. Then, there it was! A solid line that branched off the fault and ran directly to Uncle Earl's cave! If the huge cavern of gold does exist, it could extend as far as the cave on the south edge of the Mescal Range. The undiscovered second opening could be in that relatively unprospected area.

A husky miner who knew I had been looking for Uncle Earl's cave entered the engineer's office.

"Want to make a billion dollars after work this evening?" I asked.

"Why not?" he answered with a shrug. "I haven't got anything else to do but go home and listen to the old lady nag at me."

After work, we scrounged a coil of rope from the tool shed and went up to the cave

in the canyon above Uncle Earl's cabin. At the top of the rotted ladder, the miner wedged himself into a crevice and belayed the rope around his waist. I tied on and gingerly started down the ladder.

"If one of these rings break, hang on tight," I cautioned.

"I was planning on turning you loose and kicking rocks down on your head."

The farther I inched my way down the vertical shaft, the closer the walls squeezed in. About forty feet down, my searching foot struck solid rock, the bottom of the shaft. For the first time, I loosened my grip on the ladder and swept the shaft with the flashlight.

Gouges in the rock showed where Uncle Earl had swung his pick for the last times before the fine, white dust of this place accumulated in his lungs, forcing him to give up forever his dream of again wading through black, gold-laden sands. A breath of air stirred from an inch-wide fault-line crack in the floor.

Something huddled in the corner of the shaft! I whipped the flashlight around! A skeleton! The flesh was gone, but shreds of skin clung to whitened bones. I laughed nervously to myself when I realized it was the skeleton of a wild burro that had fallen down the shaft.

When I told this part of the story to Argosy's article editor, Bob Shiarella, he commented wryly that there was an ass at the bottom of the ladder that day.

Uncle Earl never got into his private Fort Knox a second time. But he swore he had seen light filtering into the cavern from a second entrance. If someone were to dig down along the fault crack just two more feet, would he break into a natural tunnel leading to the big cavern? Or, for the more bizarre imagination, would he suddenly break through the ceiling of a 3,000-foot-high cavern?

Uncle Earl Dorr never learned the answer. He spent the last years of his life digging "just two more feet." ● ● ●