

Is Kokoweef Mountain Hollow?

Billion-Dollar Gold Legend Won't Die

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BARSTOW —Legends die hard — especially when there's a lost gold ledge worth a billion dollars involved. It was made known that a mining land expert, Edward J. Soehnel of San Bernardino, personally prospected Kokoweef Mountain, said to be hollow, said to contain a cavern with a billion dollars worth of gold and said to have an underground river which rises and falls with the tides.

Soehnel said Emmett Culligan, whom he described as "one of the outstanding water chemists of the world," invested \$75,000 drilling for that river.

So the tale has not been laughed out of court.

Recently, Soehnel said, Earl P. Dorr's nephew, Joe Dorr, was doing

assessing work in the area. He had been sent to the world's largest rare earth mine near Kokoweef Mountain and prospected the legendary site while he was close. He turned back on finding a skeleton. Turned out to be a burro's.

Soehnel, one of the co-ordinators of the mining convention to be held in Barstow on Oct. 14, said the Kokoweef Mountain claims are owned by Carbo-nite King Mines Co. or a "Mr. Robinson" of "somewhere near Pearblossom."

Soehnel said Robinson brought about a court injunction to stop Culligan's drilling on government land.

Soehnel bought up the Pinto Valley lands and held a reunion for the old homesteaders a couple of years ago. There were Dorr's aplenty at the reunion. None would disclose the secret of Kokoweef Mountain, about 15 miles northwest of the old homesteads.

Harold D. Bailey, manager of the rare earth mine at Mountain Pass, said there is no gold. "It's just a story."

Soehnel's search in the area was "enjoyable."

"There are caves with stalactites. We enjoyed visiting a ghost town just north of Kokoweef Mountain, a bankrupt flagstone operation — " he said.

He didn't deny the legend; however, he didn't outright advise grubstaking a further search.

Uncle Earl was said to have died in firm faith that two feet further down would reveal a 3,000-foot cavern with a fabulous gold ledge, and he dug and dug and stopped where his nephew found the burro bones.

Soehnel said the multi-million dollar Duval Corporation invested \$50,000 in core drilling, searching for rare earth, didn't find it and quit.

There are two mining conventions coming up in this region. The first one includes a tour of the world's largest rare earth mine, managed by Bailey and within three miles of the legendary bonanza. It's the Molybdenum Corporation's mine.

Calico Ghost Town's mining tours will be offered the women at Barstow's convention, and the officials and other conventioners may stay over to see the silver mine remnants of the last century. Or they may settle for an arm-chair tour by seeing the musical comedy "Calico" to be presented at John F. Kennedy High School Auditorium after the convention.

That is, if the conventioners aren't away prospecting for the billion-dollar gold deposit that Earl P. Dorr claimed to his death bed was "only a couple of feet further."

Pioneer Days,