Bible

THE GOLD OF HIDDEN CANYON

This log contains the record of the search for Earl P. Dorr's hidden canyon with its subterranean river and its fabulous deposits of placer gold. The search was triggered off in September 1967 by an article on a "Hollow Mountain Filled With Gold", that appeared in the Argosy magazine. The article told how Earl P. Dorr, accompanied by a civil engineer, desended through the passages and chambers under Kokoweef Peak to the hidden canyon, where they spent four days exploring the uppermost shelf of the canyon wall. It told of how Dorr, thinking that he had spotted a second means of access to the hidden canyon, blasted the passageway shut after he had brought out a sample of the black sand. And finally, it told how Dorr spent the rest of his life in an unsuccessful attempt to find the second access to the hidden canyon. The article, for some unknown reason aroused our interest to such a degree that we decided to investigate the area personally. Practically every week-end of the months that followed, until the heavy snows of December 1967, was spent in investigating the entire areas surrounding the two principal scenes of action, cited in the article. They were; Kokoweek Peak, the site of Crystal Cave, and the central interior of Mescal Range, the site of Dorr's diggings.

The first week-end was devoted to the verification of the factual aspects of the article by their correlation with the physical landmarks and topographical characteristics that exist in the two areas. All of the salient features that were mentioned in the article were located, and except for Crystal Cave, all were investigated. In addition, other equally important features, which were unknown to or disregarded by the author of the article, were located and investigated. As is usually the case in fiction type magazines, directional orientation of the two areas and the relationship of features within each area were grossly misstated, the verbage and illustrations in the article had glaring

inconsistencies, and literary license in the form of romantic exagerations was thoroughly overworked. In spite of these adverse findings, our correlation of stated to actual features and their investigation enabled us to eliminate much of the fiction, and to become more aware of what, in our opinion, were the facts of the case. Without realizing it until later, we were beginning to form an opinion of the man, Earl P. Dorr. Subsequent week-ends spent in the two areas yielded more and more details which strengthened our original differentiation of fact from fiction. During the second week-end, while exploring the Mescal Range in general vicinity of Dorr's diggings, we located a boundary marker of the Hidden Canyon Mining Co. and found the 1942 Assesment Affidavit which was written and signed by Earl P. Dorr. As we handled and read the affidavit, we realized that Earl P. Dorr was quite a man and wished that we knew more about him.

The 1967 Winter Issue of True Treasure, a non-fiction magazine, answered our wish by publishing an article entitled 'The Cavern of Kokoweef Mountain". The over-all story closely paralleled the previous story except that it was written in a more factual manner and contained considerable background information on Earl P. Dorr. The author and Dorr had corresponded for a considerable length of time prior to their meeting and working for the same company during 1949 and 1950. The author must have been impressed because the article portrayed Dorr as a reliable highly qualified miner-prospector, a resourceful man of high morals, integrity and square dealing, and one who would resent being the brunt of any sharp practice. This information rounded out our opinion of Earl P. Dorr. We believed in him and his hidden canyon.

The facts of the two articles, as we see them, have been consolidated into the single account, upon which we based our continued search. The factual consolidation is as follows:

Earl P. Dorr, as a boy lived on his father's ranch in Colorado where he, being a friend of the nearby Indians, was also a playmate of their children. In appreciation, two of the elders told Dorr of a great cave in a desert,

the location of which had been passed on to them and a third brother as tribal history. The three brothers (presumabley the Pelpert brothers) had entered the cave, the exact number of times is not known, descended to a great depth to the river and its sands filled with much gold. Bags were filled and carried out until one brother slipped from the cliff and fell to his death. Respecting tribal tradition, the two remaining brothers would not return to the tomb of their lost brother. They did however draw maps for the white boy who, when he grew up, might go and find the riches. The white boy (Dorr) kept the maps, grew up to be an experienced mining man, and eventually found himself on the scene.

At the age of 18, Dorr was running hoist for Winfield Scott Stratton on the Independence mine in Cripple Creek, Colorado, where only the best men were hired. Dorr's activities from this time until 1927 are not known, however in May 1927 Dorr, accompanied by a civil engineer by the name of W. P. Morton, spent four days exploring the hidden canyon and its complex of passageways and chambers.

Dorr and Morton were equipped with pedometers for measuring the distance that they traveled, altimeters for verifying elevations, and a theodolite for making measurements by triangulation. They entered the cavern complex through Crystal Cave, which is situated on the eastern slope of Kokoweef Peak, a few hundred feet below its apex. They followed descending passages and chambers, through the 1800 foot thick lime formation, for three and a quarter miles. At a depth of approximately 2000 feet below the entrance, they came out on a shelf rock on the side of a huge fault in the granite and quartz that lay beneath the lime formation. They found a fracture in the side of the fault, through which water ran into the canyon below, and let themselves down from one shelf to the next until they got to the bottom of the fault, which turned out to be a veritable hidden canyon. It was

between 8 and 9 miles in length, 300 to 500 feet in width, and 3000 feet from its roof to the surface of the flowing stream at its bottom. This stream rose and fell approximately eight feet with a tidal regularity, the cycle o which is not known. At low tide, the black sand beach that was exposed on each side of the river was between 100 and 200 feet in width. The black sand varied from 4 to 11 feet in depth.

Dorr and Morton explored these beaches for a distance of more than 8 miles, and found little variation in the depth and width of the sand deposits. Dorr estimated that the sand deposits on both beaches would average better than 300 feet in width and at least 8 feed in depth. Dorr and Morton also explored the rock shelves (presumed to be as indicated on Dorr's sectional sketch) for a distance of more than 8 miles. The black sand deposits on the shelves varied from 10 to 40 feet in width and had little variation in depth. The sand deposit, on each shelf, is presumed to aver- age 27 feet in width and 3 feet in depth.

Further exploration was halted on the fourth day because Morton became ill. They filled their pockets with the black sand and Dorr, with much difficulty, got his ailing partner back to the entrance of Crystal Cave. Two prospectors, who were camped near the entrance, helped get Morton down the side of Kokoweef Peak to Dorr's waiting vehicle. Dorr, realizing that the prospectors had seen the balck (BLACK) sand that fell out of their pockets, returned into the passage and blasted it shut to protect their discovery. Dorr then drove Morton to a Las Vegas hospital. Little is known of Morton's later activities, except that he passed away sometime after 1950, and that his passing preceded Dorr's

Dorr sent a two and one-half pound sample of the black sand to John Herman, a Los Angeles assayer, whose published assay certificates show a value of $2,145.47 per (cubic) yard with gold at $20.67 per ounce. At todays prices,

with gold at $35.00 per ounce, the same sample would show a value of $3,625.84 per cubic yard. Dorr, realizing that he had found a bonanza and that he could not carry on the operation single-handed, solicited the mining companies for assistance.

The mining companies that Dorr brought into the area were, in Dorr's estimation, "Drug Store Miners"-all talk. The enormity of Dorr's stated discovery was past their belief, so they went to work on values in sight rather than those unseen. They set up operations, in which Dorr had no share, to mine ore worth only a few cents a pound. Every time a round of shots was set off in the zinc, the whole mountain shook, caves caved in, rocks fell into passages, all of which damaged the access to the incalculable wealth below. Dorr attempted to reopen the passage, that he had previously blasted shut, in spite of the danger of falling rocks that were loosened by the blasts. He finally gave up the attempt when the general destruction became too extensive. Dorr then decided to gamble on locating the second entrance where he had seen daylight while exploring the hidden canyon.

Dorr knew that the hidden canyon was not under Kokoweef Peak. Dorr, being an experienced miner and probably having a good underground sense of direction, knew that he and Morton had traveled three and a quarter miles from Crystal Cave before they came out on the rock ledge in the hidden canyon. Just how Dorr translated his underground knowledge to surface direction and distance is not important. The important thing is that, right or wrong, Earl Dorr had faith in his own ability, believed that his translations were correct, and had enough courage in his own convictions to move his operation to the central interior of the Mescal Range. The site that Dorr selected, as the probable second access to the hidden canyon, lies four and one quarter air-miles from Kokoweef Peak on a

relative grid bearing of 302 degrees. It is assumed that this time Dorr took steps to protect himself from sharp dealing operators by forming the Hidden Canyon Mining Company and filing a claim on the south-west portion of Section 23 of T. 16N, R. 13E. As stated previously, we found an affidavit for the assessment work accomplished in 1942, which was signed by Earl Dorr.

Dorr's tunnel is situated approximately 100 feet up the right hand wall of a canyon that runs in a south-easterly direction up into the central interior of the Mescal Range. The entrance is a natural cave that lies just below a huge horizontal cigar-shaped rock formation. Dorr increased the depth of the cave to approximately 30 feet where he sunk a six foot square shaft until he broke into a small chamber about 20 feet below. From this chamber Dorr drove a 30 foot long tunnel to a sloping face of solid rock. Here he sunk a shaft for approximately 40 feet, in the solid rock that paralleled the sloping face. Just how long it was after May 1927 that Dorr started the above tunnel, and just when, after September 1942 he was forced, by ill health, to stop the excavation are not known. The shrinking size of the shaft, as Dorr drove it deeper and deeper, made one fact very apparent, Earl Dorr was finally becoming tired after all of his years of frustrating trials and tribulations. Twice during this period, Dorr attempted to get financial assistance to expedite his operation. In December 1934 Dorr prepared an affidavit of his findings in the hidden canyon, and had it notarized to induce people to invest in his operation. For the same purpose, Dorr had the affidavit published in the November issue of the California Mining Journal. Apparently neither attempt was successful, for in 1949 and '50 Dorr was a well respected worker at a small pilot mill on the desert near Victorville. He has since passed away.

In order to better understand Dorr's tenacious attempts to regain access

to his hidden canyon, and to define the goal that spurs our search, certain details of the preceding paragraphs are projected to establish the potential wealth of the hidden canyon.

ASSUMPTIONS

Length of Hidden Canyon = 8 Mi. =	14,080 Yds.
Number of Ledges (1 side only) =	4
Sand Deposit (avg. width per ledge) = 27 Ft. =	9 Yds.
Sand Deposit (avg. depth per ledge) = 3 Ft. =	1 Yd.
Sand Deposit (avg. width of 2 beaches) = 300 Ft. =	100 Yds.
Sand Deposit (avg. depth on 2 beaches) = 8 Ft. =	2,667 Yds.
Value of Gold/Cu. Yd. of Sand =	$3,630.00

YARDAGE AND WEALTH POTENTIAL

Cu. Yd. Sand/Ledge (1x9x14,080) =	$126,720
Cu. Yds. Sand/ 4 Ledges (4x126,720) =	$506,880
Cu. Yds. Sand/2 Beaches (2,667x100x14,080) =	$3,755,136
Total Yardage (cu. yds.) =	$4,263,016
Value of Gold/Ledge (3630.00x126,720) =	$459,993,600
Value of Gold/4 Ledges (3630x506,880) =	$1,839,974,400
Value of Gold/2 Beaches (3630x4,390,736) =	$15,958,571,680
Total Value of Gold =	$17,798,546,080

In December 1967, we spent a long week-end in the area, from early morning of the 9th until mid-morning of the following Tuesday. We explored a new area, a canyon complex that ran in a northwesterly direction from Piute Valley, opposite Kokoweef Peak, toward the 6221' peak where survey marker USMM 137 is located. This canyon complex is situated midway between, and on a direct line from Kokoweef Peak and Dorr's diggings in Mescal Range. Following our usual practice, we slowly worked our way up first one canyon then another, not really looking for anything in particular but trying to recognize anything that was out of the

ordinary natural pattern. On the side of a ridge, where erosion has caused a slide area, we found small rock formations that did not belong on the surface. These rock formations were small sections of stalactites and fragments of other types of calcium carbonate which could develop only in subterranean caverns or passages with extremely moist environmental conditions. We followed the trail of these displaced fragments up the slide to their source, a three foot wide rift or fracture in a large rock formation that protruded from the face of the slope. Erosion had filled the fracture with rock, silt, and caliche. Not having excavating tools with us, we spent the remaining daylight hours of Saturday exploring the immediate area surrounding the fracture.

Just over the crest of the ridge to the west, we found the remains of a crashed aircraft. At the base of a rock outcrop on the ridge to the north, we found the remains of an old campsite bounded by rock walls. A short distance to the south, we found an adit to what we believe was an old Spanish Mine. From the adit the tunnel sloped downward at a forty five degree angle for a distance of twenty feet to what appeared to have been a vertical shaft that had been blasted shut. Further investigation of the plugged shaft would have to wait for awhile.

Sunday and Monday were spent at the fracture, removing some of the washed-in debris. Getting the sun-baked caliche out of the fracture, with the tools that we had brought from camp, was a slow process. We found more loose fragments of calcium carbonate stalactites and crystals in the debris, and on the right wall of the fracture we uncovered vertical projecting finlike formations of calcium carbonate crystals, which could develop only in a moist underground environment. This discovery led us to believe that we were digging into what had been an underground passage, or at least a chamber. Monday afternoon we uncovered the butt end of a stalactite (three inches in diameter) in the debris at the bottom of the fracture. Its natural vertical attitude convinced us that we were, in fact, working our way into what was atleast an underground chamber.

Tuesday morning, because of the threatening sky, we broke camp and headed for home. Later that day, the heaviest snow storm, seen in years, moved into the Kokoweef Peak-Mescal Range area.

Because of the deep snow, the last trip to the area in 1967 was totally unsuccessful. About two miles from the highway on the unmaintained county road to Piute Valley, I slid one wheel of the Scout over the edge of the bank and got stuck. Three and a half hours later we were back on the road heading back towards the highway disappointed but not disheartened.

During the month of January 1968, we reread the magazine articles, reviewed our field notes, recalled personal observations, made allowances and trade-offs, and discussed the probabilities of the other tunneling activities in the area reaching the hidden canyon. We reached the conclusion that the fracture we had discovered had as much, if not more, potential than any of the others. Because of this, we formed the Rio Escondido Exploration Association and made the preparations to locate Rio Escondido #1 and #2 Placer Claims, using the fracture as the discovery site.