

William Halliday, in his book 'ADVENTURE IS UNDER- GROUND', records an affidavit submitted by a Mr. Earl P. Dorr, describing vast caverns he and an associate allegedly discovered and explored in Southern California. Portions of the sworn testimonial are quoted below:

"...These caverns are about 250 miles from Los Angeles, California. Traveling over state highways by automobile, the caverns can be reached in a few hours.

At one point the man and a partner came across an abandoned mine and decided to follow it to the bottom. Near the bottom he was surprised to discover an ancient earth-fault which was wide enough for him and his companion to enter. They traversed this fault for a good distance until they finally emerged into a huge river-cavern. To his surprise he saw before him a crystal pure underground river over a quarter of a mile wide which flowed through the passage and out of sight.

Since learning of this incident the Municipal Water Director claims to have 'discovered' at least five similar underground rivers. Some of these have allegedly been die-traced and were found to emerge from the continental slope below the surface of the oceans, and at least one of them into the Gulf of California.

Other sources speak of a "Kokoweef" river-system which is alleged to lie below Kokoweef peak just east of FORT Irwin, which looked- -according to it's alleged discoverer, a Mr. Earl Dorr, and a few "Indians" who also claimed to have been in it--like a "Grand Canyon" underground. It allegedly consists of a river chasm generally 500 ft. wide and over a thousand feet high-deep, sided by steep tiered-shelved underground cliffs, huge stalactites and cataracts. Also, the alluvial sands on the 'beaches' along the river, which allegedly hold a large percentage of gold dust, are said to be several feet deep.

The entrance to this cavern was allegedly dynamited shut by Mr. Dorr to protect anyone else from getting to "his" gold. There is in fact evidence that Dorr did dynamite shut the lower level of 'Kin Sabe' cave in Kokoweef Peak, and there are present-day attempts to break through into this underground system. The water of the river allegedly rose and fell with the tides, suggesting that a very large body of water might exist upstream, that is if Dorr's account as well as the accounts of the Indians were not fabricated).

"Accompanied by a mining engineer, I visited the caverns in the month of May, 1927. We entered them and spent 4 days exploring them for a distance of between 8 and 9 miles. We carried with us altimeters and pedometers, to measure the distance we traveled, and had an instrument to take measure- ments of distance by triangulation, together with such instruments convenient and necessary to make observations and estimations.

"Our examinations revealed the following facts, viz:

"1. From the mouth of the cavern we descended about 2000 feet. There, we found a canyon which, on our altimeter, measured about 3000 to 3500 feet deep. We found the caverns to be divided into many chambers, filled and embellished with the usual stalactites and stalagmites, besides many grotesque and fantastic wonders that make the caverns one of the marvels of the world.

"2. On the floor of the canyon there is a flowing river which by careful examination and measurement (by triangulation) we estimated to be about 300 feet wide, and with considerable depth. The river rises and falls with the tides of the sea -- at high tide, being approximately 300 feet wide, and at low tide, approximately 10 feet wide and 4 feet deep. (Obviously this can only mean that, if this account is true, the "source" of the river is an underground reservoir large enough to be moved by the tides, "overflowing" into the river during the high tides and "receding" at low tide - Branton)

"3. When the tide is out there is exposed on both sides of the river from 100 to 150 feet of black beach sand which is very rich in gold values. The sands are from 4 to 11 feet deep. This means there are about 300 to 350 feet of rich bearing placer sand which averages 8 feet in depth. We explored the canyon sands a distance of 8 miles, finding little variation in the depth and width of the sands.

"4. I am a practical miner of many years' experience and I own valuable mining properties nearby which I am willing to pledge and put up as security to guarantee that the statements herein are true.

"5. My purpose of exploring the caverns was to study the mineralogy in order to ascertain the mineral possibilities and actualities of the caves, making such examination in person with my engineer necessary to determine by expert examination the character and quantity of mineral values of the caverns, rocks and sands.

"6. I carried out about 10 lbs. of the black sand and 'panned' it, receiving more than \$7 in gold. I sold it to a gold buyer who offered me at the rate of \$18 per ounce. 2 1/2 lbs. of this black sand I sent to John Herman, assayer, whose assay certificate shows a value of \$2145.47 per [cubic] yard, with gold at \$20.67 per ounce.

"7. From engineering measurements and observations we made, I estimated that it would require a tunnel about 350 feet long to penetrate to the caverns, one thousand feet or more below the present entrance, which are some 3 miles distant from my property.

"8. I make no estimate of even the approximate tonnage of the black sand, but some estimate of the cubical contents may be made for more than 8 miles and the minimum depth is never less than 3 feet. They are of varying depth -- what their maximum depth may be we do not know. -- Sworn by E. P. Dorr., 309 Adena St., Pasadena, Calif., November 16, 1934."

It is interesting that the "source" of this river would be some- where within or beneath the great western desert of Utah-Nevada- California where little surface water escapes by way of streams and rivers. Halliday in his book also refers to a water-filled cave annexed to Death Valley, known as "Devil's Hole", which according to some sources rises and falls slightly with the tides! This may indicate that certain underground water-courses below the Mojave Desert might ultimately connect with extensive underground lakes or small underground fresh-water seas. Whether this theory proves accurate or not remains to be seen... after future adventurous 'Speleonauts' make their way once again into Dorr's secret caverns and toward the SOURCE of the 'alleged' underground river.

"Devil's Hole" itself contains a rare species of cave-fish found no-where else in the world (at least nowhere that marine biologists are aware of). It is reported that at least two divers disappeared in this apparently 'bottomless' aqua-cave some years ago, leading officials to put the cave under government protection by making it an extension of Death Valley National Monument -- much of which lies well BELOW sea level. The existence of, or the possibility of the existence of, such underground 'seas' beneath the California- Nevada regions seems to be supported by other accounts. During the 'Shaver Mystery' years Ray Palmer received a letter from a reader describing Earl Dorr's cave. This letter stated that three Paiute Indian boys had, with the help of a 'treasure map', extracted \$50,000 worth of gold from these caverns, which they kept in the bank at Needle's, California. Their project was halted when one of the boys slipped from one of the lowest 'rock tiers' and died.

We will now quote from William R. Halliday's professional observations of the claims made in Dorr's affidavit, as they appear in his book 'ADVENTURE IS UNDERGROUND':

"...What is the gimmick?"

"This was probably the question in the mind of every reader of the CALIFORNIA MINING JOURNAL when this affidavit appeared in it's November, 1940, issue. The question still arises whenever a caver first hears the remarkable story of this still more remarkable cave. Furthermore, the answers to the other obvious questions are not those which might be anticipated.

"'Is this just an imaginary cave?' No, the cave certainly exists. I have been in it.

"'Did Dorr keep it's location secret?' No. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of people know it's exact location, high on the side of Kokoweef Peak in the Mojave Desert.

"'Has anyone tried to find this river of gold?' Yes, indeed. The prosperous Crystal Cave Mining Corporation owns the property. "'Then what is the gimmick?' That's quite a tale.

"The beginnings of the story of the cave of gold are shrouded in the mists of the minds of old-timers. For a long time, prowling prospectors have known of the existence of the wide mouth of a deep cavern on the limestone flank of a peak which forms part of the east face of IVANPAH VALLEY -- Kokoweef Peak. Even though only four miles by dirt road from the highway between LOS ANGELES and LAS VEGAS, the area was so desolate that, in the 1920's, weeks might elapse without the passing of more than an occasional prospector and his burro. The opening of the cavern was several feet in diameter and the cave was obviously much larger farther down. There were local stories that it was bottomless, although it took 'only a few seconds' for a rock to strike 'bottom'.

"Then someone found a narrow crack leading to ANOTHER cave, high on the east face of the peak. Maybe it was Dorr. The stories vary. One version repeats the common story of two Indians with a treasure map, which in this case was supposed to have showed the entrance to the cave. Dorr was well known in the area, having a claim across the valley, several miles southwest of Kokoweef Peak. Like any experienced prospector, he certainly prowled every ledge of the area. In any event, the new cave seemed even deeper than Kokoweef Cave. Like at least seven other caves in California, it eventually became known as Crystal Cave.

"Later, in 1934, another old prospector, Pete Ressler, was resting near the bottom of the southwest slope of the barren peak. He idly tossed a rock into a crack. To his surprise it rattled back and forth for a long time until the sound died away into the depths. He strapped his load on his burro and headed for Mountain Pass Station for dynamite.

"What do you think it is, Pete?" the men at the station asked him.

"Quien sabe?" he shrugged.

"Pete's Spanish, however, was horrible. It sounded like 'Kin Savvy' or 'Kin Sabe,' and this name stuck to the cave he dynamited open. It wasn't much of a cave. It slanted downward, but was filled with rubble (rubble from the dynamite blasts? - Branton) to a level not far below the entrance. Old Pete dropped out of the story. Dorr is the main character.

"Dorr must have been a strange person. No one else was particularly interested in the caves, but soon he was telling of an enormous cavern into which he was gradually making his way, trip after trip. The main part of the cave was a series of vertical drops from one small chamber to another. In several areas there were small, dry pools which contained sharp little crystals. From one of the small rooms a tight tunnel led a relatively short distance to a huge cavern containing a chasm 3,000 feet deep. He told of a stalactite 1,500 feet long (Note: Both Kokoweef and Door peaks are near the SW flank of the Ivanpah Mts., just south of Highway 91. Dorr alleged that he and his engineer, following the upper rock 'tiers', discovered a huge cataract or waterfall cascading down the side of the 'canyon' below what they judged to be Dorr Peak. They allegedly followed the upper 'shelves' for 8 miles. According to a map of the caves drawn by Herman Wallace Jr., under the personal instruction and supervision of Earl Dorr, the length of the 'stalactite' was given at only 500 feet long -- although this would still make it the largest "known" stalactite in the world at

this writing -- and was located adjacent to the underground waterfall which flowed into the underground river at the bottom of the canyon as one of its many tributaries. - Branton).

"The cavern went on for miles. He had walked to the brink of the chasm, but had not found a way to it's bottom. There were places where air came into the cavern, so other caves on the peak must open into it. And there ought to be an entrance somewhere on his claim, too. That was the direction the cave headed.

"Before long Dorr was claiming to have found a way down the wall of the subterranean canyon. Down below the wonders were even greater. He had found great deposits of placer gold. By this time he had the other old-timers half convinced. Still, THEY weren't going into that awful-looking hole for all the gold in the U.S. Mint.

"One day in 1928 Dorr again told his friends that he was going into the cave for another trip. Two days passed, three, four. His friends became worried. Gold would not tempt them to go into the cave, but they were his friends and the code of the desert is stern. Dorr might be trapped there, hurt, dying. A rescue party climbed to the mouth of the cave, where Dorr's ropes were still fixed.

"Hardly had they all entered the cave when they met a raging Dorr they hardly know. Although disheveled and wild-eyed, he was obviously in no need of rescuing. Nervously they shrank away from his needless fury. Had he gone mad from his long stay underground? (More likely it was the dreaded 'gold fever' which has affected the minds of men throughout the centuries and has often motivated them to acts of irrational cruelty - Branton) They were trying to help him, yet he was accusing them of trying to steal his gold.

"Before they quite understood, they felt the dull impact of a HEAVY charge of dynamite. Then Dorr calmed down. 'You'll never get it now,' he smirked.

"That blast finished the tunnel to the river of gold.' (Interesting Note: Halliday himself claims to have seen within this cave, along with several National Speleological Society or NSS members, the name of DORR written in black miner's lamp soot near what appeared to be a black line left by a dynamite fuse, below which was a plugged area of shattered rock - Branton)

"We do not know whether Dorr was ever convinced that his friends were only trying to rescue him. For several years he was a familiar figure in the Mojave Desert. Continually he attempted to persuade people to run a tunnel into the cave of gold from the lower slopes of Kokoweef Peak. He would go shares with them. If they were willing to pay for the tunnel, they could have part of the profits.

"On this basis few investors were willing to consider the project. Finally, however, a small group headed by a Los Angeles capitalist was willing to speculate on Dorr's proposition. First, they tried the easy expedients. Kin Sabe Cave was the most accessible. Dorr thought it connected with the great chasm.

"They installed an inclined railway track and began to remove the rubble which filled it. Before long they had quite a respectable cave, 125 feet deep, but the air in it was completely stagnant. Over Dorr's protests, they abandoned the attempt. If there was an entrance to the great cavern from Kin Sabe, it was too deep to bother with, at least until all easier possibilities had been investigated.

"Next they turned their attention to Kokoweef Cave, the first cavern discovered on the peak. A road was built to a nearby ledge and a short tunnel was drilled, connecting the bottom of the cavern to the surface of the peak. Again, much rubble was removed without encountering the true bottom. Operations were in full swing when someone discovered a mineral vein in the wall of the peak a few dozen yards from the tunnel. It was zinc, and high-grade ore. Because of the war zinc was at a premium. The Crystal Cave Mining Company promptly went into the zinc business. Dorr was disgusted. He abandoned the project. Occasionally someone would hear of him, still telling his story of prowling the hills near his old claim, still seeking another entrance to the cave of gold..."