

complaining in the wind. The empty streets were hummocked on both sides with weathered-down adobe walls. A few fences stood to protect phantom houses with steps leading to nowhere.

We parked the trailer beside one of these houseless sand-choked yards. We explored the few remaining houses and wondered about the people who had lived in them. Who were they? Where were they now? What they had left behind told us a little about them. Abandoned magazines and empty flower pots, cheesecake art and an old man's cane.

I liked the friendly loneliness of the wind as it whispered through the sage and cedar. "But this ain't no ghost town," denied Buss, the colored caretaker. "This town's too lonesome for ghosts."

While we were ghost-towning Poncho decided to trailer over to another kind of deserted city. This place lay on Putney Mesa overlooking the lava beds southeast of Grants. It was a large, four-hundred-room pueblo with walls of excellent masonry. The former occupants, too, left story-telling things behind. Turquoise beads, metates and manos and pottery. And we could guess who these people were. Acomas and Lagunas whose descendants now live in those two modern pueblos not far away. Pinyon, sage and chamiso grow in rooms and in the big rectangular plaza.

Below this prehistoric ghost town is that awesome sea of cold black lava which humps and writhes its way for 60 miles to the south and west. In the lava caves you find beautifully decorated ollas and other artifacts that were hidden possibly in hurried flight. Even today these fantastic and mysterious lava beds are waiting to be "discovered" by a professional archeologist.

In Grants we heard about a colorful desert character, a horse thief, who lived over in Rodeo, on the New Mexico-Arizona border. To Albuquerque and down the Rio Grande we went. To Hatch, Deming and Lordsburg. The country from Deming to the Mexican border and west to the Arizona line is a vast cactus garden. Nowhere in New Mexico is the desert so packed with cholla, prickly pear, ocotillo and yucca, devil's claw and Christ's thorn, barrel cactus, century plant and a dozen others. And the mountains! Carved out of great rough masses of color.

Rodeo sprawled at the foot of a magnificent mountain range—the Chiricahuas. It was in these mountains that Cochise and his band hid to harass the U. S. army for so long. Here, too, other outlaws disappeared when posses got too close. In this story-making background we pulled up to make camp on the edge of Rodeo.

After a few discreet questions we located our horse thief. This flesh-and-blood outlaw made fiction characters seem rather trite. I had expected to find a tough, hard-oathed individual. Instead he was a mild-mannered gentleman—utterly disarming. Only his eyes showed a defiant spirit.

We had many visitors here. One morning the screen door suddenly was pushed open. A long gray face topped with two huge ears poked itself in the doorway. If I hadn't stopped him, a burro would have walked right into the trailer. To ease his hurt feelings I gave him some bread. This was a mistake. He deserted the townspeople who gave him handouts and took up with us. Besides being a panhandler, he was a Peeping Tom. He liked to stand at the trailer windows and gaze in at us.

The Chiricahua country is real trailer country. Cave Creek with its brilliant and sculptured arches and cool rushing water. Curious deer wander close to campsites. And one day we were lucky enough to see a herd of javelina.

The animals of the desert have given us a lot of fun. Take that night in the land of basket-woven houses on the Papago reservation. A big round moon came rolling up in the east. We sat outside to watch it silver the saguaro and cholla and ocotillo around the trailer. A lone coyote began his yipping serenade. Soon other coyotes joined the lonesome one. Then Poncho gave a very real imitation of a coyote. From a far-off mesa came a wild reply. Again Poncho imitated our howling neighbors. The nearby pack answered. A third pack took up the talk. We were laughing hard now, for we had coyotes howling in every direction.

And then there was Liz. Liz was a small bob-tailed lizard who hung around and waited for us to kill flies for her. She had another amusing trait that pleased the children of our Papago friends. She liked to have her chin scratched. When I'd take a stick and scratch her chin she'd lift her tiny, dragon-like head in enjoyment. The youngsters would laugh and laugh, but Liz didn't care.

Frances, a Pima friend, told us about John Rope and Old Andy, two Apache scouts who were with our army hunting Geronimo. Frances made them sound so rich in living history that we hooked up and headed for the White Mountain Apaches. We parked beside a trading post at Bylas, and in a few hours the trailer was full of Indians.

John Rope was a dignified old gentleman whose dark red face seemed remarkably young for the decades of warring and pursuit he had seen. He

told us the Apache's side of treaty making and breaking. Of who were good leaders and who were bad, both red and white. John Rope was wise and tolerant and understanding and wore the biggest silver whisker puller on the reservation.

But old Andy was a clown. He was little and wrinkled and full of fun even at 80. He and his burro always showed up at mealtime. If I was slow in starting a meal, he'd turn to me and say, "Go head. Cook." Andy spent hours looking through our magazines hunting for "leg art." Whenever he'd come across a picture of a girl, he'd point and exclaim, "Oooo, pretty girl!"

Andy's women relatives joined the other Apache women in a mesquite thicket where they met for a daily gambling session. One afternoon his niece stopped in on her way to the game.

"You come with me," she pointed with her lips in the direction of the mesquite. "You play fan-tan with us." She eyed my red dress with envious contemplation.

"I don't have time today," I told her. "I don't know how to play fan-tan, either."

"We show you," she said, still eyeing my dress.

"Another time, maybe."

"Then you lend me two dollars?"

"How about selling me that old water jug you were carrying yesterday?"

She thought a minute. "All right." She sent her little boy to get the old basket-woven jug.

While we waited to complete the deal she asked, "You going to Stone Lake?"

"No. Where's that?"

"With the Jicarillas at Dulce. We go there to trade our baskets on September 15th. All Indians go there to trade."

By the time the child was back with the jug and the deal was finished we were planning to go to Stone Lake over in New Mexico.

There we unhitched the trailer among old-time Ute teepees and modern army tents on the shores of Stone Lake. We watched the Jemez bring in fruit from the Rio Grande. We heard Navajos haggle with Domingos over the price of jewelry. Everywhere Indians traded with Indians in their quiet way. For three days there was feasting and dancing according to ancient custom. Races and a rodeo. And a huge round dance at night.

On our second visit there Poncho was taken into the brush kiva and made a member of the Ollero clan. So, each year we go back and stay with his clan during the three-day ceremony.

But Indian reservations and ghost