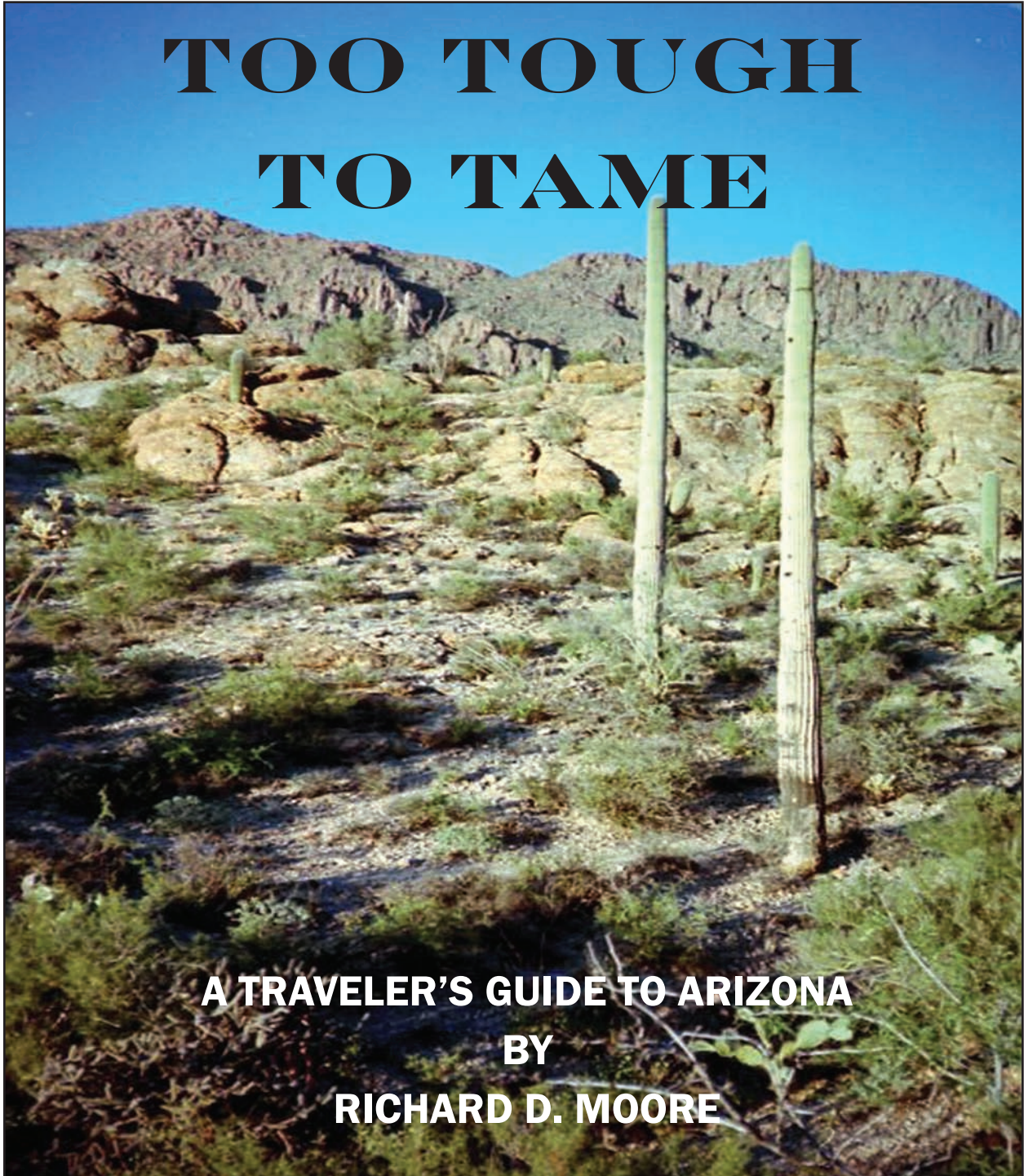


TOO TOUGH TO TAME

**A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO ARIZONA
BY
RICHARD D. MOORE**



In Memory of Roger Burr
A Bright Star In The Western Sky

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FOREWORD

Too Tough To Tame has been written to both educate and entertain visitors and residents alike. From north to south, east to west, Arizona's topography changes abruptly from desert to mountain and back to desert again. The use of mileposts in this book will enable the traveler to easily spot these landmarks as well as judge the distance from location to location accurately. It is my wish, that through this book, the traveler will come to better understand the Grand Canyon state. Through exhaustive research, I have located quotes from visitors to Arizona in bygone years and have sprinkled their anecdotal comments throughout the text. In 1903, David Dexter Rust, the founder of Phantom Ranch (then known as Rust's Camp) at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, explained his view of the Arizona Traveler:

"A thorough traveler must be something of a geologist, something of a botanist, an archaeologist, an artist, a philosopher, and so on. Through it all he is likely to be friendly with a camera. He must be agreeable in society, contented in solitude, enthusiastic and patient as a fisherman."

An 1878 book called Thompson's Teacher Examiner said of Arizona:

"Arizona Territory lies east of California and Nevada and south of Utah. The climate is salubrious, and in many portions of the territory the soil is fertile. Arizona has a small population. Its rich mines of gold and silver are as yet but little worked. The Indians are of various tribes, among them the Apaches and Utes are the most hostile to the whites."

Five years later in 1883, Paul Lindau wrote:

"...Aridazona! barren and dry, the territory deserves its name. Broiling sun; sky ever clear and forever glowing in the brightest blue; fine, desiccated sand; empty waterless plateaux; steep naked cliffs - such is Arizona...we were stirred by grand solitude, imposing strength, magnificent permanence, and massive dimensions..."

After traveling thousands of Arizona miles to experience the state's wonders myself, I cannot describe the state better than what Esther Henderson wrote in May 1956, shortly before my first trip to the state:

"...Wherever you go in the state of Arizona, there is always a scene, a story, an incident. Though little may remain of the physical struggles at each location, the atmosphere of legend encompasses them all. Mountain snows have buried, then disintegrated cabin scenes or pioneer excitement. Desert winds and rains have covered and melted the adobe structures of pioneer activity: massacres, feuds, battles, captures, surrenders--the most stirring events are today located often by only a pile of rocks, a mountain spur, a desert spring. To know them all would take a lifetime..."

Note to readers: Sources used for this book include books, periodicals, and newspapers. A full bibliography is available at www.TooToughToTame.com.

"The most desperate class of renegades from Texas and California found Arizona a safe asylum from arrest under the laws. The vigilance committee of San Francisco did more to populate the new territory than the silver mines"

Interstate 8

From the California border to
Junction with Interstate 10

MP-1

West of this milepost you cross the Colorado River.

When approached in 1540, Spanish explorer Captain Melchoir Diaz found the river to be half a league (over 1 ½ miles) wide in this vicinity. From 1852 to 1916, a total of 24 steamboats plied the waters of the Colorado River. One of the best known river pilots was Capt. Jack Mellon who, when the river was low, would turn his boat backward and use the paddlewheel to churn a channel through the sandbars.

EXIT 1

This is known as the Harold C. Giss Parkway. Giss was a state senator from Yuma who championed the cause of constructing a road between Yuma and Parker, Arizona. Known today as Highway 95. This is the exit for the Yuma Territorial Prison State Park.

Yuma Territorial Prison State Park

It is .6 miles to this prison whose nickname was the "Arizona Hellhole." From 1876-1909, this was probably the most infamous prison in the U.S. 3,049 men and 29 women served sentences here (which included 217 murderers and 11 polygamists) during its 33 year reign. The cornerstone of the prison was laid on April 28, 1876 and the prison opened on July 1, 1876 and closed on September 15, 1909, when the last prisoners were moved to the new state prison in Florence, Arizona. 26 prisoners successfully escaped while 8 were killed in attempts for freedom. The largest escape occurred on October 27, 1887, when 7 prisoners escaped, 4 were killed and 1 wounded in the attempt. According to Yuma State Park Rangers, the cemetery contains 107 documented graves, while the "official" count is 104. Whichever is accurate, it is a testament to the harsh living conditions that were encountered here. The longest stretch in solitary confinement (the "Snake Den") was 88 days; the same prisoner later served a second term in solitary and died there.



COLORADO RIVER (Richard Moore)

In 1910, the prison became a school and served as such for 4 years until a “real” school could be constructed. Today, Yuma High School still uses “Criminals” as its mascot and nickname. In addition to seeing the “snake den” and other cells, visitors may view an excellent exhibit on the female prisoners that served terms here. Visitors may also don prison garb and have their “mug shot” taken (use your own camera).



YUMA PRISON SALLYPORT (Photo courtesy of Arizona Office of Tourism)

EXIT 3

Junction with Highway 95 north. This highway was underwater in February 1993, from floodwaters of the Gila River. The flood inundated over 20,000 acres of farmland, causing \$100 million in damage.

MP-4

South of the border in Sonora, a Russian immigrant by the name of Emilio Kosterlitsky served as the head of the dreaded “Rurales” or Rural Police. Members were often conscripted, as was reported in the Arizona Sentinel on June 11, 1898:

“...The four American convicts, O’Neil, Kelly, McDonald and “Cherokee Bill” who escaped from the territorial prison recently seem to have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. A Mexican line rider was in Yuma yesterday and stated that the convicts had been captured and forced into the Mexican Army, where they will probably remain as long as they are able to carry a gun. As they are fugitives from justice they have no rights that any country is compelled to recognize and the only thing they can do is take their medicine like little men. They cannot desert from the Mexican Army as easily as they escaped from the canal camp. They will also find that the prison “snake den” is a paradise compared with the mode of punishment inflicted on unruly ‘volunteer’ soldiers in the Mexican Army.”

MP-6

Historically, this region was the homeland to the Yuman speaking people who called themselves the Quichans (pronounced as “Keechan”). Mistakenly called Yumas, this word came from their word “Umo” which described the smoke from the Indian fires along the Colorado River. The Quichans were great tellers of tall tales. When Capt. Hernando de Alarcon sailed up the Colorado looking for Capt. Melchoir Diaz in 1540, he encountered the Quichans who told him that California was an island ruled by an angry giantess whose people were as bald as the egg of a quail.

MP-8

In Algodones (Cotton) Desert. In 1851 as part of the first boundary survey, John C. Cremony wrote of the survey’s exploration of the nearby mountains:

“With much toil, several of our members ascended one or two of the highest hillocks, but as far as the eye could reach nothing was to be seen but one unbroken expanse of sand, white dazzling under the rays of a burning sun unrelieved by a single

bush or shrub---broken and fretted with countless hillocks, and utterly void of animal life. This part of the Colorado Desert is much more frightful than the great Sahara of Africa. The absolute stillness and repose is something awful; it is death in life; it is the most impressive lesson of man's feebleness, and the most startling reproof against his vanity."

Though not hospitable to humans, this desert is home to the Fringe Toed Lizard.

Fringe Toed Lizard

Adapted to the sand dunes of this region, this lizard can run 15mph to escape predators. However, its best means of escape is to dive 12" deep into the soft sand (5 times its body length). Nature has provided several adaptations for this lizard to survive in its sandy shelter:

1. The lizard has a countersunk lower jaw that prevents sand from entering its mouth.
2. The lizard exhales explosively through its nostrils to blow fine particles of dust away from its nose.
3. Inner passages of the nostril engorge with blood thereby restricting the size of the passage.
4. The Fringe Toed Lizard has the ability to evert its eyeballs from their sockets enabling the eyeball to roll around to help eject material from the eye.
5. The nails on the hind toes are shaped precisely to match the curve of the eyeball. This enables the lizard to scrape away material without scratching the eyeball.

MP-13

This stretch of road goes through an area that increases in population appreciably with winter visitors at the numerous R.V. Parks.

MP-15 North

North behind these mountains (Gila Mountains) was the location of Snively's Station, the first stop from Yuma for eastbound Butterfield Stage passengers. Named after station master Col. Jacob Snively, a Texan who was General Sam Houston's secretary during the Texas Revolution. In 1858, Snively made the first discovery of gold along the Gila River.

M-15 South

South of here on the west slope of the Gila Mountains was where the La Fortuna (The Fortune) Gold Mine was located. Discovered in the early 1890's, from 1896-1904, 123,030 ounces of gold and 10,179 ounces of silver were extracted for a total value of \$2,587,987. A fault at the 800 foot level of this mine separated the gold vein of which the remainder has never been located.

MP-19

Telegraph Pass in the Gila Mountains. Note the bent and folded "banded Gneiss" rock formations in each of the road cuts as you pass through them. Otherwise known as "nice" rock. Lt. Nathaniel Michler was given the task of establishing a new U.S.-Mexico boundary line from Yuma, Arizona to Nogales, Arizona after the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. Lt. Michler completed the field portion of the survey to determine the new international boundary on August 20, 1855. Close to its completion, Michler and his survey party met with some emigrants, Lt. Michler wrote:

"On our way -- we met many emigrants returning from California...among those we passed between the Colorado and the Tinajas Altas was a party composed of one woman and three men, on foot and a packhorse in wretched condition carrying them all. The men had given up from pure exhaustion and laid down to die; but the woman animated by love and sympathy, had plodded on over the long road until she reached water, then clambered up the side of the mountain to the highest tinaja, she filled her bota and scarcely stopping to rest started back to resuscitate her dying companions. When we met them she was striding along in advance of the men, animating them by her example."

MP-22 North

Looking north you can easily see the Aerostat Drug Balloon over the Muggins Mountains (in actuality, the balloon is tethered far north of these mountains). The primary peak easily seen here is called Klothos Temple (also known as Coronation Peak for its likeness to a crown). This peak is the rugged and dramatic focal point of this range. Imagine the early day travelers gazing on the same sight that we see today.

MP-24

In Lechugilla Desert, near Ligurta Wash. The only green plant seen in this region is that of the greasewood.

Greasewood

The Greasewood is the oldest living plant in North America. Seeds found in packrat middens (nests) have been radio-carbon dated to be 13,000 years old. The name greasewood comes from the greasy feel to the leaves of this plant. The other name for this plant that is frequently used is creosote bush, so called because after a rain the plant gives off a creosote-like scent. This pungent odor gave the plant its Spanish name of hedionella or “Little Stinker.” The greasewood however, was used by native tribes to cure all manner of ailments such as tetanus, acne, arthritis, boils, styes, sore throat, earaches, burns, toothaches, pneumonia and backache. A dry powder from crushed leaves was an antibacterial agent similar to anti-biotic creams used today for cuts and burns. Tea made from the leaves and stems helped treat constipation, cramps and tuberculosis. Today, on-going scientific studies have shown that the greasewood contains an acid that may help inhibit cancerous tumor growth.

MP-27

As the result of the deaths of 13 Salvadorans crossing through Organ Pipe National Monument in July 1980, the Border Patrol formed the Desert Area Rescue Team (D.A.R.T.). An elite group of trackers who from 1980-1990 found 52 bodies and rescued 212 people in the Tinajas Altas Mountains and Lechuguilla Desert region, an area that often sees summer temperatures soar to 125 degrees in the shade and 175 degrees in the sun. This desert was indeed correctly called “Tierra del Muerto” or “Land of the Dead” by Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza in 1774.

MP-30 North

To the north near the Gila River was the Butterfield Stage Station known as Mission Camp. During Father Kino’s and Father Garces time, this area along the river had many Indian rancherias (villages). The two priests, Kino, a Jesuit (circa 1700) and Garces, a Franciscan (circa 1775) ministered to these Indians, hence the name. Kino’s trail

which followed a portion of El Camino del Diablo (The Devil’s Highway) joined the Gila River near this spot at an Indian village he called San Pedro.

EXIT 30

This exit goes north to the town of Wellton, Arizona. Named for wells drilled for water tanks that served the steam engines of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 19th century. In this valley were two of Father Kino’s Visitas (small missions that were visited by the priest on a regular basis) called San Tadeo and San Simon. They were part of a large string of visitas located along the Gila River in the 17th century. Others were named San Bartolome, San Felipe, San Matia, San Pabla and San Dionysio (near present day Yuma). Kino first arrived to this area on February 21, 1699, after arriving from the south through the dreaded “El Camino del Diablo.”

MP-31-32

Cross Wellton Canal between these mileposts.

MP-34 North

Red Bluff Mountain (1,905’). So named because of its reddish appearance.

MP-34 South

Far to the south are the Tinajas Altas Mountains called “Agua Escondida” or “Hidden Water” by Father Kino in February 1699.

Early travelers observing these granite basins filled with water reminded them of their tinajas or “large earthen jars” back home. Black center of these mountains is volcanic Raven Butte.

El Camino del Diablo

These mountains served as the west flank of the El Camino del Diablo (The Devils Highway). Over 400 people died on this road from 1849-1857. Don Francisco Salazar wrote of what he saw in 1850:

“The Tinajas was a graveyard of unknown dead... the scattered bones of unknown human beings slowly turning to dust...the dead were left where they were sepulchered by the fearful sand storms that sweep at times over the desolate waste.”



TINAJAS (Richard Moore)

Almost half a century later Captain Galliard of the Boundary Survey of 1893 wrote that he: “Counted 65 graves in a single days ride of a little over 30 miles.” Father Kino pioneered and mapped this southern route at the end of the 17th century. Captain Juan Bautista de Anza used this route when he first explored a route to California in 1774. Still later, 49er’s avoiding the Apache menace farther north used this southern access on their way to the California goldfields. Unfortunately, the many graves found later was a testament to the hardship of this waterless route. However, those that reached this far could find water in the 8 granite basins for which the mountains are named. Tinajas Altas means “High

Water Holes”, granite rock basins which fill with rainwater and may contain water to some depth all year long. There are a succession of 8 basins of varying size and depth and travelers along the El Camino del Diablo often counted on water being available here for their journey, an assumption that cost hundreds of lives.

MP-36 South

To the south is Coyote Peak (2,808’).

MP-36

Just east of this milepost you cross the Mohawk Canal. Water from the Colorado River is pumped to this valley for agricultural uses. 65,000 acres is currently under cultivation in this valley. In February 1993, the Gila River to the north flooded 1/3 of all the cropland and moved its channel one mile from its previous course. Farmers in this region lost millions of dollars in crops from the flood. Over 100 years before, in 1889, Perry Wildman wrote of a similar disaster:

“...One day after the Gila River had spent its force from one of those raging floods that come almost annually, I tried to locate my 160 acres of land and could not recognize it. It was covered entirely by little hillocks of mud and silt and no trace of Alfalfa in sight, the bridge a short distance above me on the river was almost entirely on dry land.”

The nearby town of Mohawk began as a stamp mill for the King of Arizona Mine to the north.

MP-39 North

Antelope Hill (815’). North of this hill was Antelope Peak Stage Station, once touted as the best place to ford the Gila River. In 1859, this station replaced Filibuster Camp four miles to the west. Filibuster Camp was named after its role as a rest stop for Henry Crabb’s ill-fated Filibustering (land pirating) expedition in Sonora, Mexico in 1857. Crabb had been a losing candidate for senator with the Know-Nothing Party in California. Crabb’s entire force held off a superior Mexican Army that had surrounded it in Caborca, Mexico. After being promised that he and his men would have their freedom if they surrendered, Crabb and his men did so only to find themselves captured and executed before a firing squad on April 7, 1857. Afterward, Crabb’s head was decapitated and paraded around the town square in

victory. A small rescue party of Tucson Militia arrived too late and retreated in haste back home.

MP-43 North

Castle Dome Mountains. Some of the finest specimens of Turquoise were mined here into the 1970's. Castledome Peak (3,788') is the highest point of these mountains.

MP-44

Along this route, the first telegraph line in Arizona, (called by the Apache "Pesh-Bi-Yalti" or "Talking Wire") was completed on November 11, 1873 when the line linked Yuma and Prescott, Arizona. The first telegraph lines were always constructed in a straight a line as possible as it was believed that electricity could not turn corners. Due to the lack of timber only 17 poles per mile were placed while the bulk of the poles used were what nature provided in the area, mesquite and palo verde trees and saguaro cactus.

MP-48

In Mohawk Valley. To the south are the rugged and waterless Cabeza Prieta Mountains ("Dark Head" for their decidedly dark appearance). These mountains are part of the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge. Many illegal entrants in their pursuit of a better life attempt to cross these and other mountains along the Mexican border. From 2001-2005, Border patrol agents apprehended a total of 2,475,650 (an average of 1,356 per day) illegal entrants attempting to cross the Arizona border from Mexico. Those who are lucky are found before they perish of thirst. In 1985, 25 people were found dead in this unforgiving desert. An alarming amount at that time, death in this desert has unfortunately increased as the influx of illegal entrants has also increased. For the same time period (2001-2005), 845 illegal entrants (an average of 169 per year) died in attempts to cross this desert. In an effort to stem the flood of deaths, border warning signs have been installed along the border advising illegal entrants of the serious danger they face in crossing, especially in the summer. The signs read: "Cuidado! No Exponga Su Vida a Los Elementos-No Vale la Pen!" or "Caution! Don't Expose Your Life To The Elements. It's Not Worth It!" In addition, over 25 border beacons have been installed 15-30 miles north of the border. Mounted with lights and mirrors, illegals may summon aid from U.S.

Border Patrol officers when they are unable to continue their dangerous journey. In addition, Border Patrol Checkpoints (both permanent and mobile), helicopters and vehicles may be seen anywhere along Interstate 8. Many travelers who venture off the popular smuggling routes to avoid detection are never found.

MP-50 North

Black cinder cone is Signal Butte (542').

MP-52 South

Notice the numerous sand dunes south of the highway.

MP-53 North

At the northern extension of these mountains (Mohawk Mountains), was the site of the Petermans/Mohawk Stage Station. Judge Charles H. Meyer of Tucson once wrote of these stage stations:

"...The stops were five minutes except for meal stations; then it was twenty minutes. It was a grand sight to first hear the faraway toot of the bugle, then hear the rumble of the coach and the rattle of horses hoofs coming in at their best gait. All would get off and eat and be away again, in twenty minutes. Several times I saw men who would go off to get a new hat or cigar or something, when the stage was due to start. The next would be the toot of the horn as the stage started out and the man would rush out and request that the stage tarry, 'Wait two days for the next stage' was the only consolation he got and there was nothing else for it."

MP-54 North

In Mohawk Pass. Originally known as Mohawk Gap. Large pointed peak to the north that dominates the skyline is Mohawk Peak.

MP-56

At the Mohawk Rest Stop you are at an elevation of 480'.

MP-60

In San Cristobal Valley. Far south, just across the border in Mexico lies the Pinacate Volcanic Field. Now a Mexican