

10-28
(June 1941)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

----- NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. 0-35

Part 1

*National Monument
Cactus Area*

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NEWTON B. DRURY,

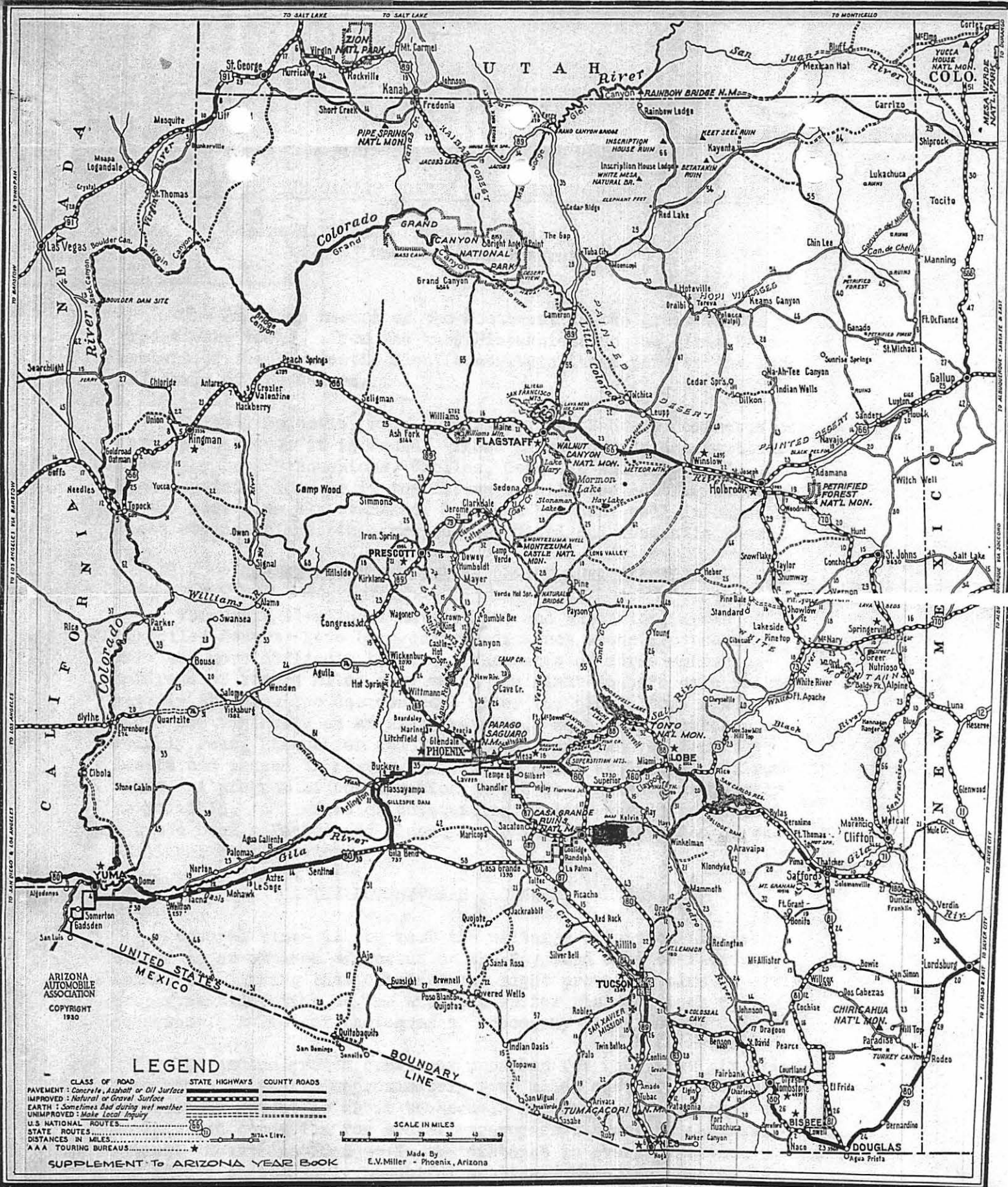
Director.

NOTES ON CACTUS FOREST AREA WHICH BEGINS FIVE MILES EAST

OF FLORENCE, ARIZONA ON THE IMPROVED RAY ROAD.

July 26, 1932.

Robert H. Rose,



LEGEND

CLASS OF ROAD	STATE HIGHWAYS	COUNTY ROADS
PAVEMENT: Concrete, Asphalt or Oil Surface		
IMPROVED: Natural or Gravel Surface		
EARTH: Sometimes Bad during wet weather		
UNIMPROVED: Make Local Inquiry		
U.S. NATIONAL ROUTES		
STATE ROUTES		
DISTANCES IN MILES		0 10 20 30 40 50
AAA TOURING BUREAUS		

Made By E.V. Miller - Phoenix, Arizona

NOTES ON THE CACTUS FOREST AREA NEAR FLORENCE, ARIZONA.

Robert H. Rose, Park Naturalist,
Southwestern Monuments.

The American Desert of the Southwest is the great Cactus area of the world. From the baby Pincushions to the giant Sahuaro, members of the "Fantastic Clan" contribute their part to the lure and charm of the desert.

Solemn, majestic, even mysterious, the Sahuaro dominates our interest wherever it is found. These giants of the desert tower above the baby Pincushions, Chollas, Ocotillo and Palo Verde. High mountains loom up in the distance while the setting is completed by the soft blue sky overhead. Nature has done well in choosing these strange plants to carry out her wierd and fantastic theme.

CONSERVATION OF TYPICAL DESERT AREA NEEDED

Through agricultural development and expansion, ^{vast} areas of unspoiled desert have been destroyed. Such areas are becoming more and more difficult to find. Thousands of acres embracing hundreds of square miles over which the giant Sahuaro once reigned have in the past two decades come under the plow. Some species of Cacti are vanishing at an alarming rate. Each year thousands of Prickly Pear, Pincushion and Barrel Cacti are removed from the desert and placed in cactus gardens and other artificial environments. A program of conservation should be completed as quickly as possible. All areas of outstanding quality should be studied and the best selected and placed under the administration of the National Park Service.

CACTUS FOREST NEAR FLORENCE, ARIZONA.

Several times in the past the writer's attention has been called to an expanse of cactus on the Ray road east of Florence, Arizona. Thinking that observations might prove of value in giving proper consideration to the area the writer visited it on two occasions. A list of photographs accompany these notes.

The cactus growth continues unbroken for more than six miles from where it starts approximately five miles east of Florence. The north-south extent is about the same. The Ray road, improved and in splendid condition for travel, traverses its entire east-west extent. Mountains loom up in the distance in every direction giving the area a particularly beautiful setting. Numerous species of

Cacti are well represented throughout the area. On several occasions from seven to nine species were identified within a radius of thirty five feet from the point of observation. These included (1) Sahuaro giganteus, or Giant Cactus; (2) Prickly Pear; (3) Four species of the Cholla variety of Opuntia, including the Buckhorn and Jumping varieties; (4) several species of the Pincushions; (5) and the Barrel type of Echinocactus. Ocotilla and Palo Verde occur in abundance. One corner of the Cactus Forest is made up almost entirely of the Ocotillo. Palo Verde and Ocotillo add much to the beauty and charm of any cactus forest and they should receive consideration in any final selection.

Supplementary Features

The western margin of this Cactus Forest is flanked by a high ridge of basalt, a black volcanic flow rock. Abrupt east-facing cliffs overlook the Cactus Forest and on their tops and fronts are pictographs graven there by vanished hands. These pictographs-or perhaps more accurately, petroglyphs,- are especially interesting in that geometric designs greatly outnumber human and animal figures. These carvings occur in three places almost in stone's throw of one another. Their total extent is equivalent to about seventy five yards of unbroken cliff face fifteen feet high covered with pictures.

Status of Lands

Upon visiting the Recorder's Office, Pinal County, the writer learned that practically all of this land is public domain. Some homesteads have been taken up and more rights are sure to be filed as time goes on. It is this ever-increasing complexity on status of lands that behooves our Service to make a final survey and decision on a typical desert or cactus area at the earliest possible moment. Further inquiries should be made of the nearest U.S. General Land Office regarding the status of the lands.

Summary

In general, the writer feels that (1) accessibility to trans-continental and Phoenix-Tucson travel; (2) beauty of setting; (3) density and perfection of Giant Cactus growth; (4) the abundance of Ocotillo and Palo Verde growth to enhance this beauty; (5) and the large number of species represented over the whole area, are some of the factors that make this region take high rank among the Cactus Forests of the Southwest. Careful study of this region should be made from every standpoint in order to determine whether or not it is the best among many similar areas proposed.

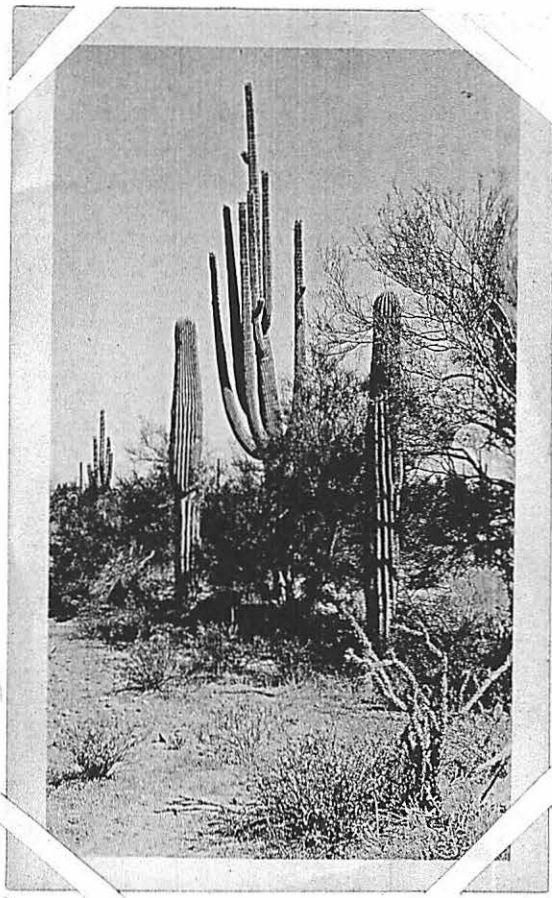
Respectfully submitted,



Robert H. Rose,
Park Naturalist.

Fig. 1.

Giant Cactus, Palo Verde, and Buckhorn Cholla



"SENTINELS OF THE DESERT"

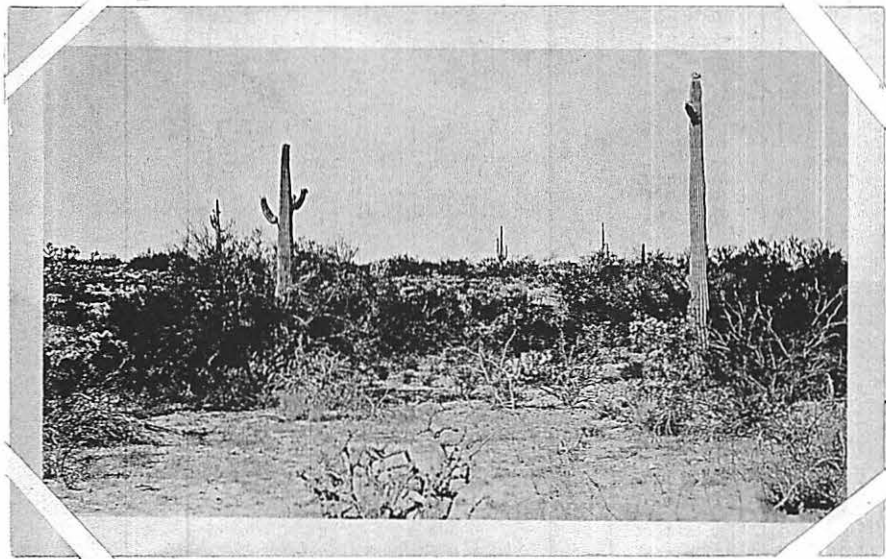


Fig. 2.

(Note fruit on ends of stems and arms)



Fig. 3.

(Fruit on topmost tips)

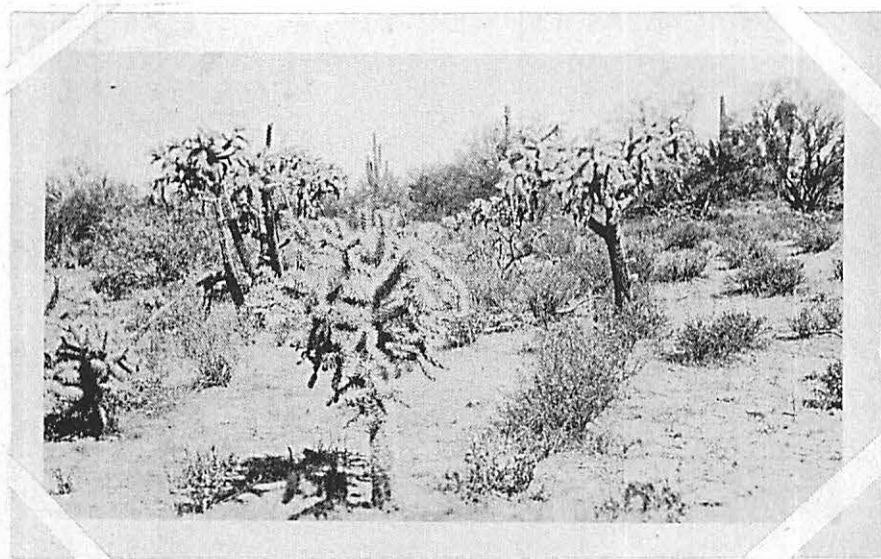


Fig. 4.

"CHOLLA FOREST"
(Note Sahuaros in distance).

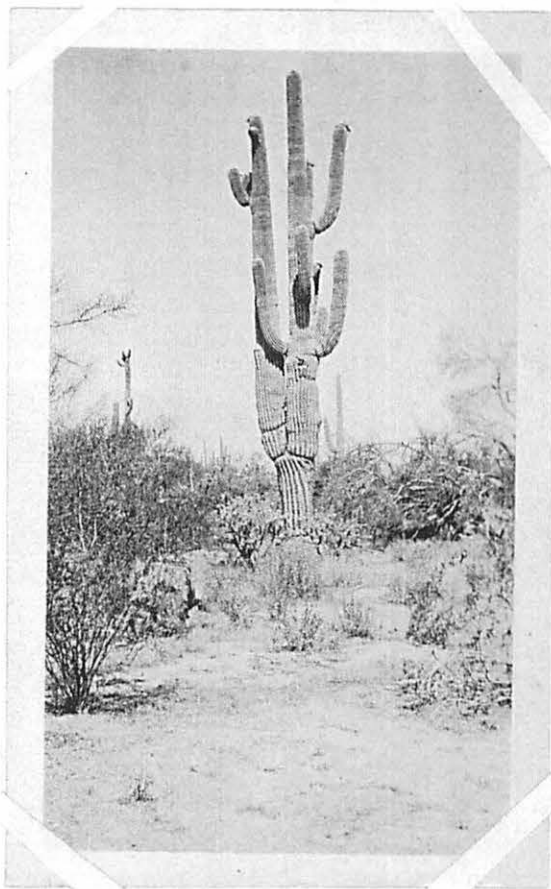


Fig. 5.

"MONARCH OF THE DESERT"
(Note fruit on tips)

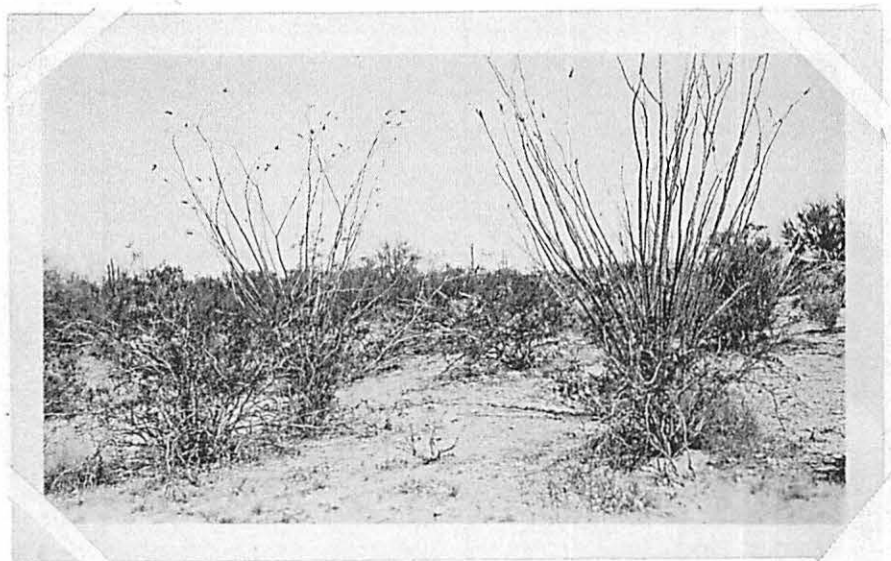


Fig. 6.

"THE OCOTILLOS"

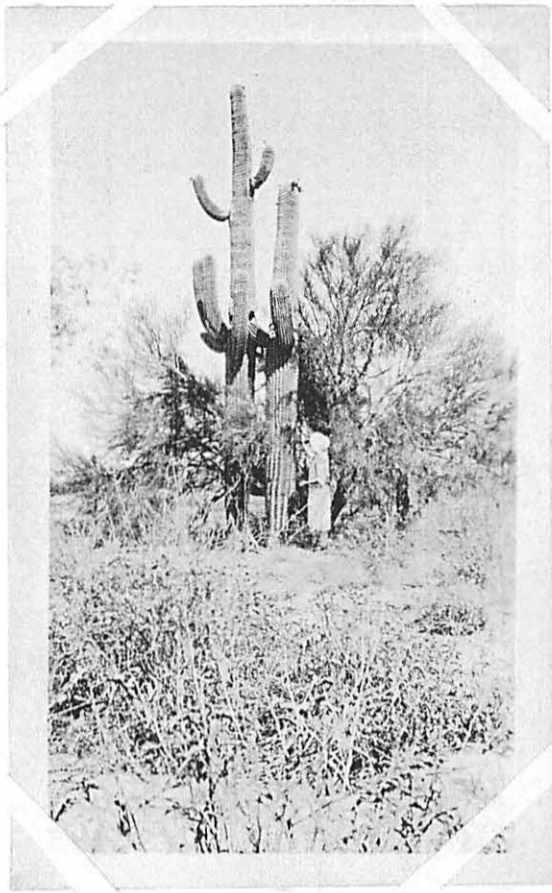


Fig. 7.
CEREUS GIGANTEUS AND PALO VERDE
Fruit on tip

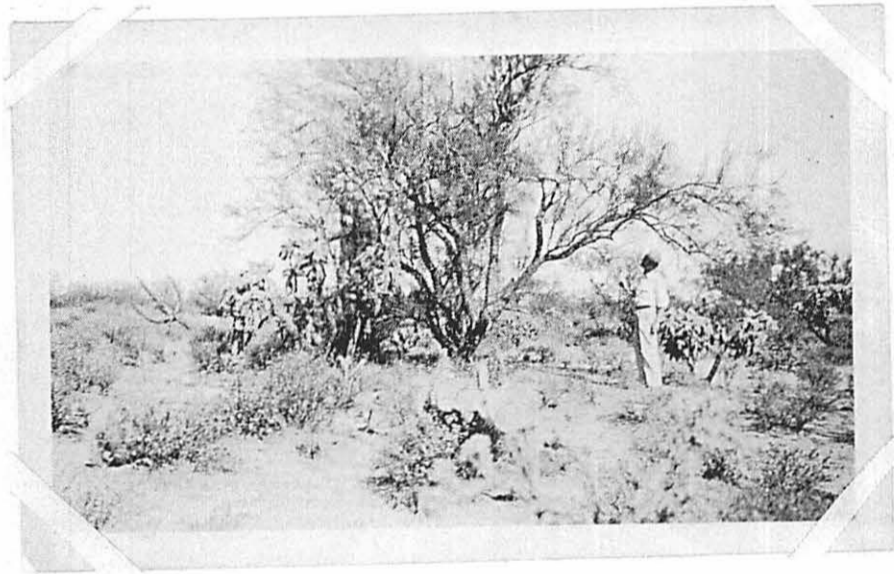


Fig. 8
PALO VERDE, CHOLLAS, AND PRICKLY PEAR
(2)

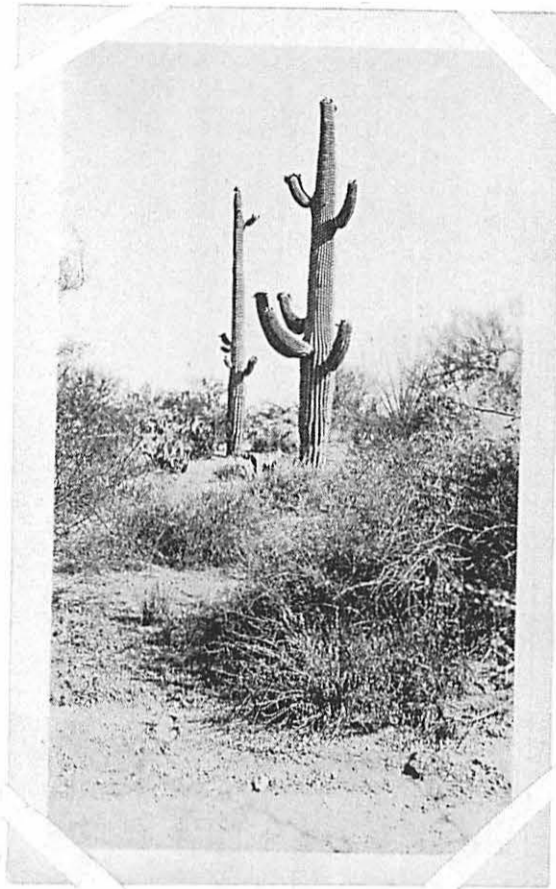


Fig. 9.

(Note fruit on tips; also Ocotillo,
Prickly Pear, Cholla and Palo Verde.
Many Pincushions are hidden).



Fig. 10

PALO VERDE ADDS DEPTH, RICHNESS AND BEAUTY TO
AREAS OVER WHICH REIGN THE DESERT GIANTS.

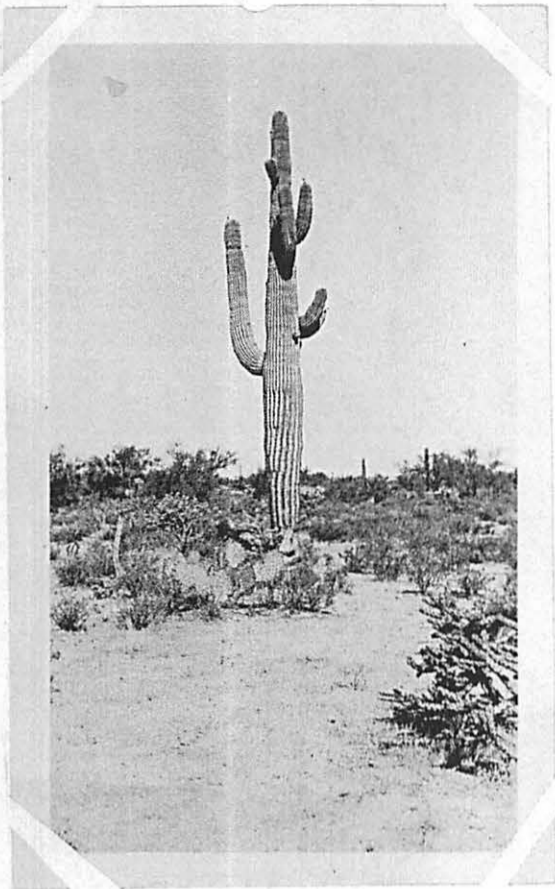


Fig. 10
Note Buckhorn, Cholla, Prickly
Pear and Palo Verde.

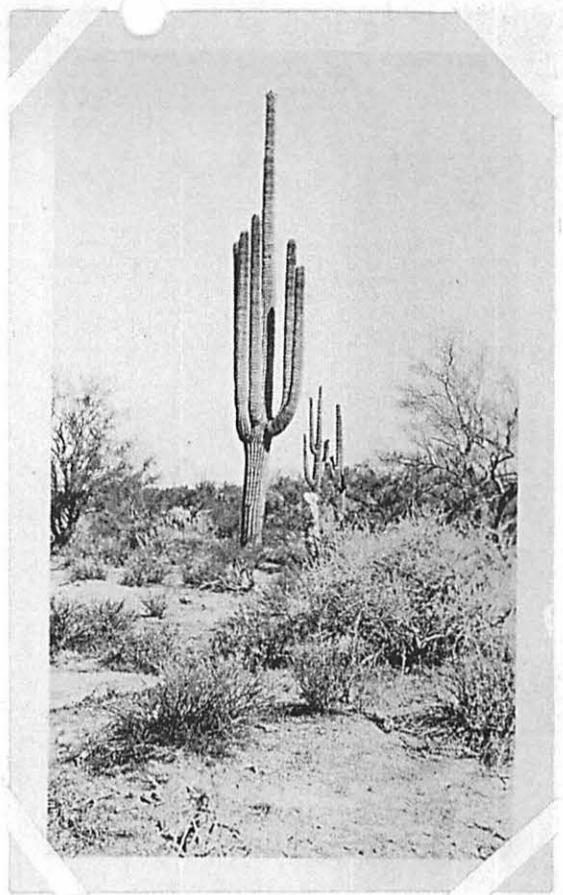


Fig. 11.
(Fruit, extreme tip).



Fig/.12.

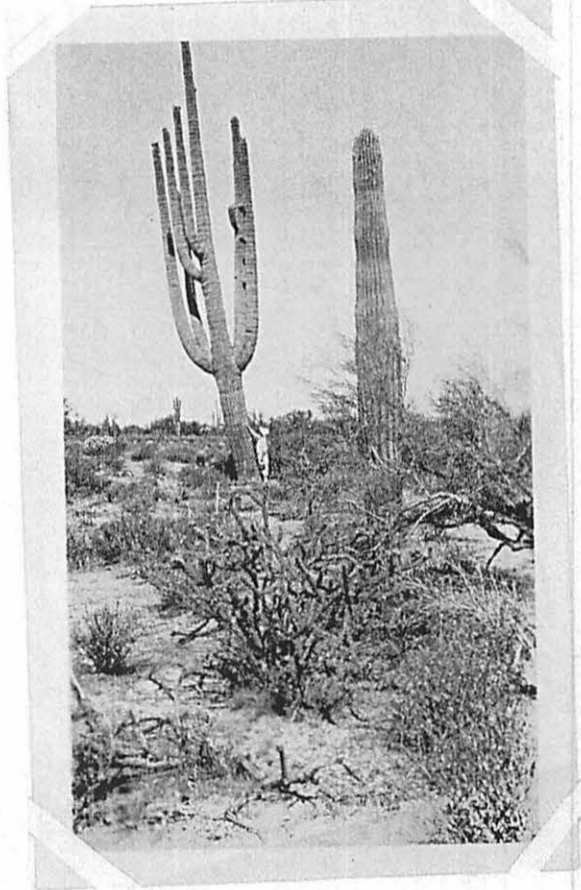
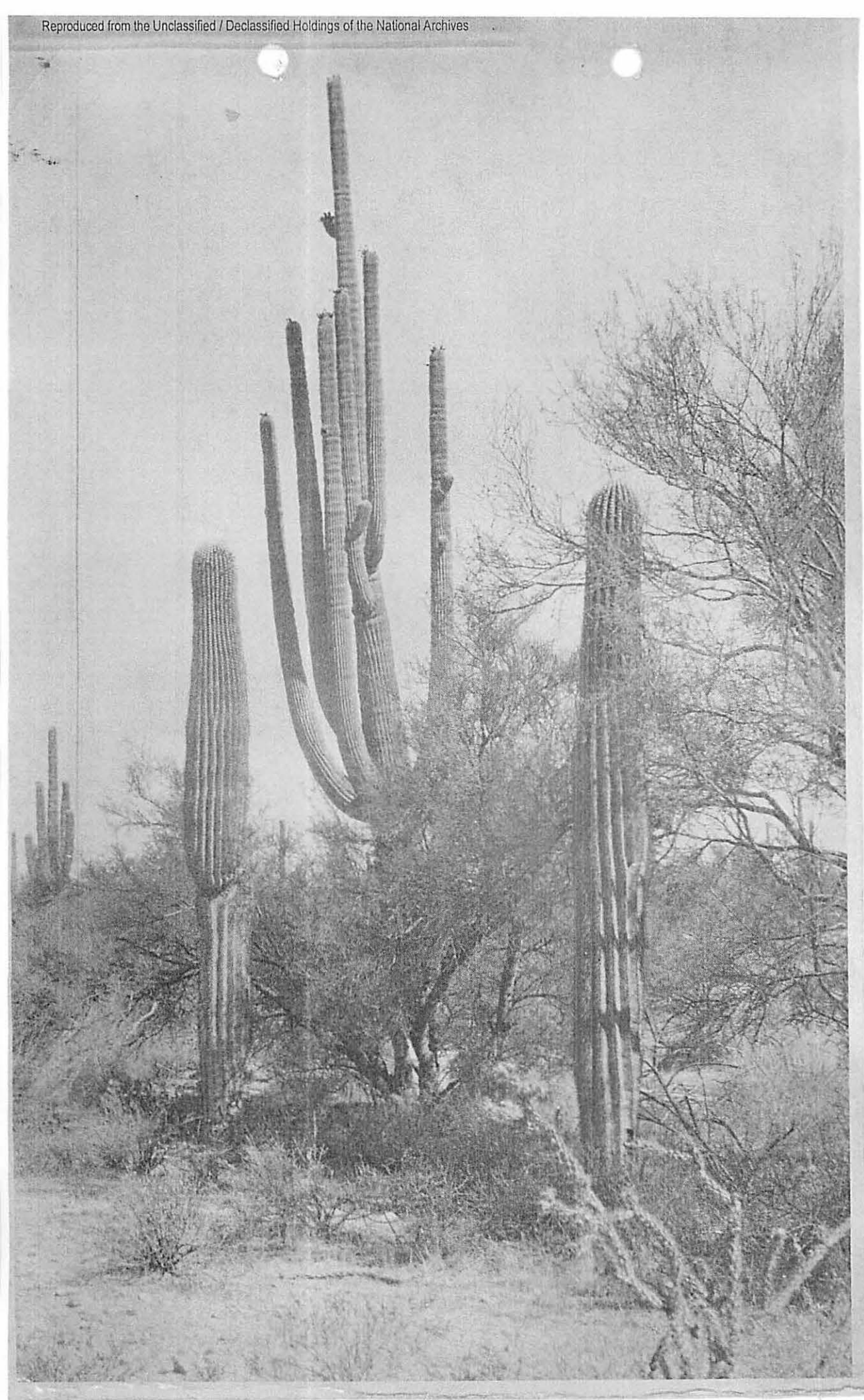


Fig. 13.



(PROPOSED) CACTUS AREA NAT. MONUMENT, ARIZ.

~~Also called the Joshua Tree Area.~~

Location: Located five miles east of Florence, Arizona.

History
and
Remarks:

Asst. Park Naturalist, Robert H. Rose, submitted a report on this area, dated July 26, 1932. In his letter of October 1, 1932, the Director suggested to Supt. Pinkley that he and Mr. Rose continue to investigate cactus desert areas in Arizona. On March 31, 1932, Mr. Toll submitted a favorable report, *on another area.*

Status: Awaiting further investigation.
