

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Proposed Red Rock Canyon National Monument
Kern County, California

Report to Horace M. Albright
Director, National Park Service

By
Roger W. Toll
April 18, 1935.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

515 Custom House,
Denver, Colorado,
April 18, 1933.

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Director:

On January 30, 1933, Mr. Thos. C. Vint and I visited the proposed Red Rock Canyon National Monument in Kern County, California.

The area is traversed by the highway from Mojave to Owens Lake, Independence and Mono Lake.

The area contains scenic formations, carved by erosion from strata of red and white sandstone.

There are some petrified trees in the vicinity, but not on the area under consideration.

Part of the essential area of the canyon is in private ownership and I believe no offer has been made to donate it to either the State or the Government.

The accompanying photographs indicate the character of the formation.

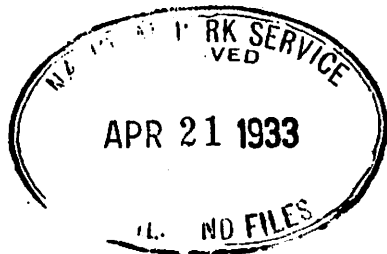
The formations are interesting and make quite a feature for the highway, but it is believed that the area is not sufficiently outstanding to warrant consideration as a national monument.

Your file on the Red Rock Canyon is returned herewith.

Very truly yours,

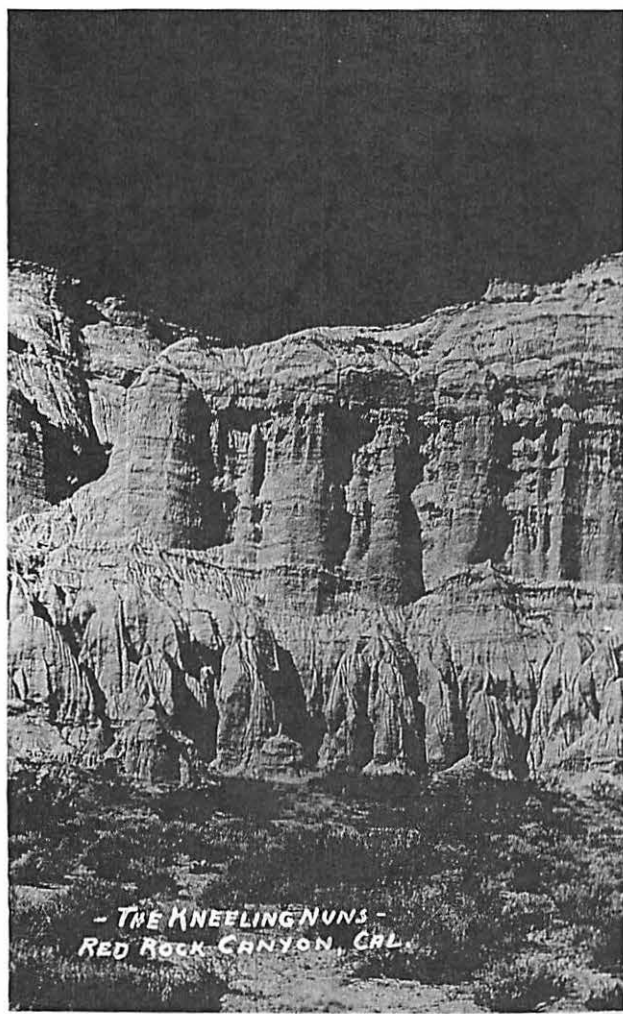
Roger W. Toll
Roger W. Toll

Inclosures

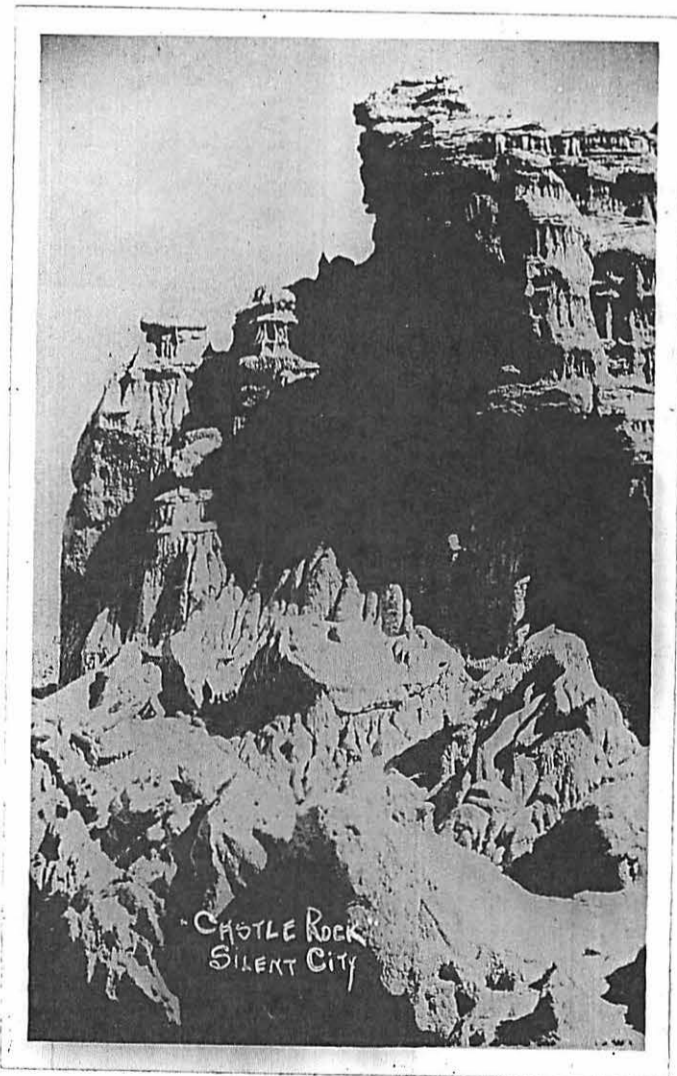
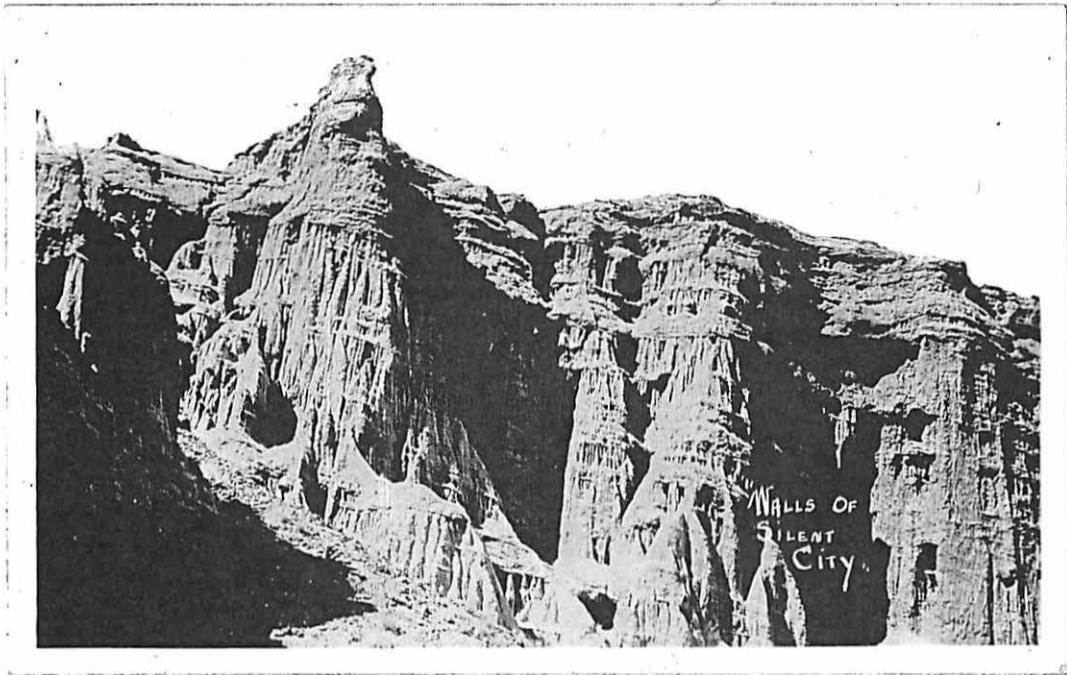


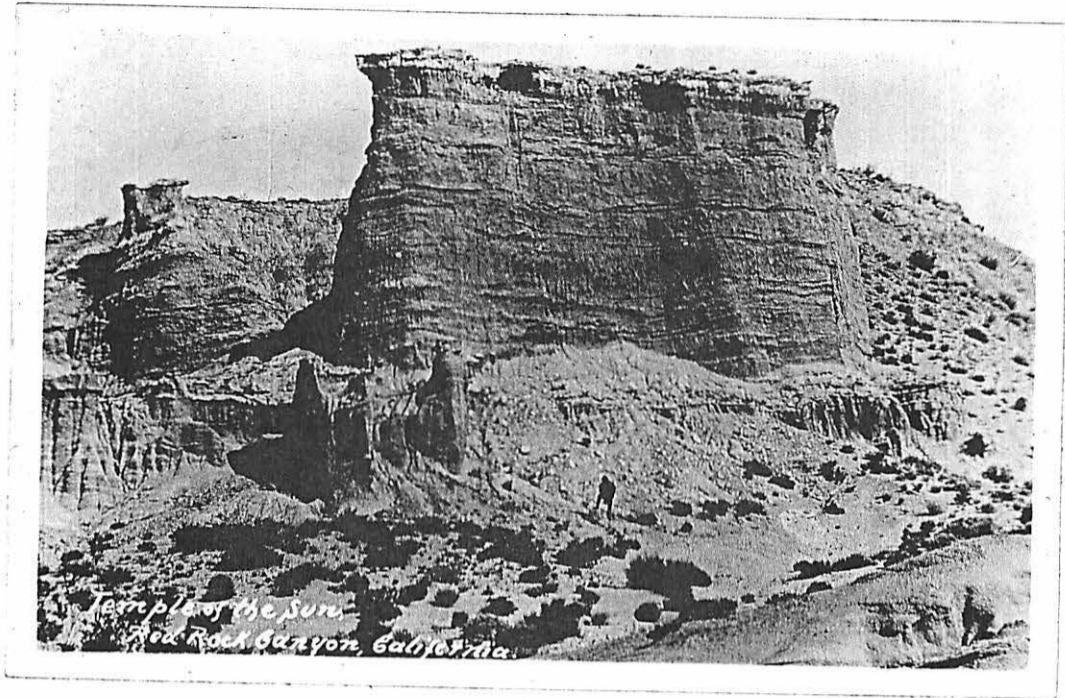


*The Royal Gateway
Red Rock Canyon, Calif.*



*- THE KNEELING NUNS -
RED ROCK CANYON, CAL.*

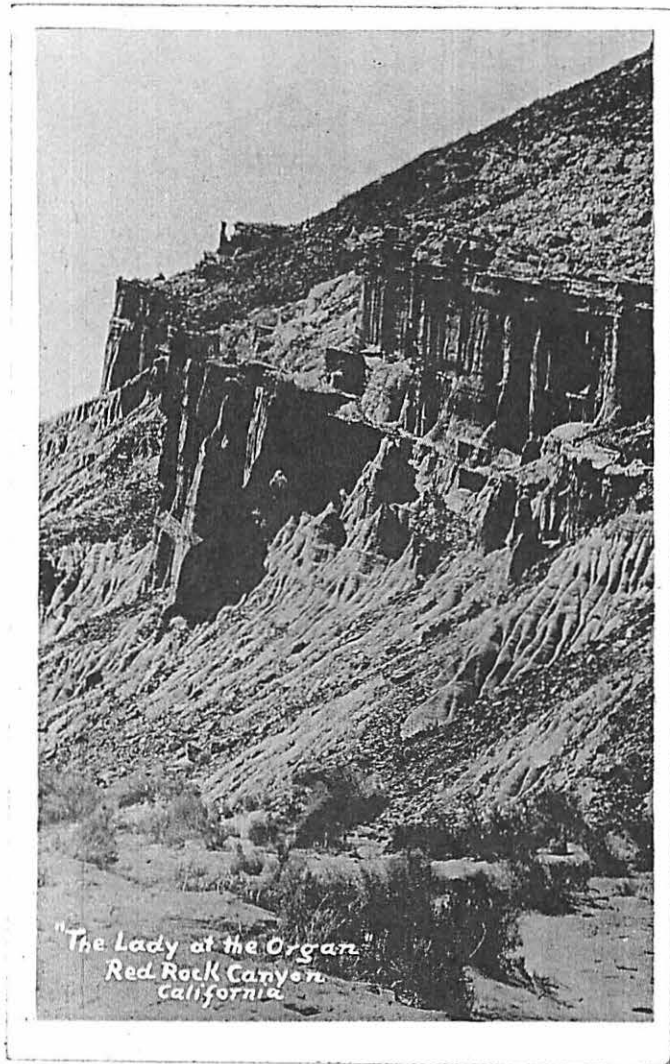
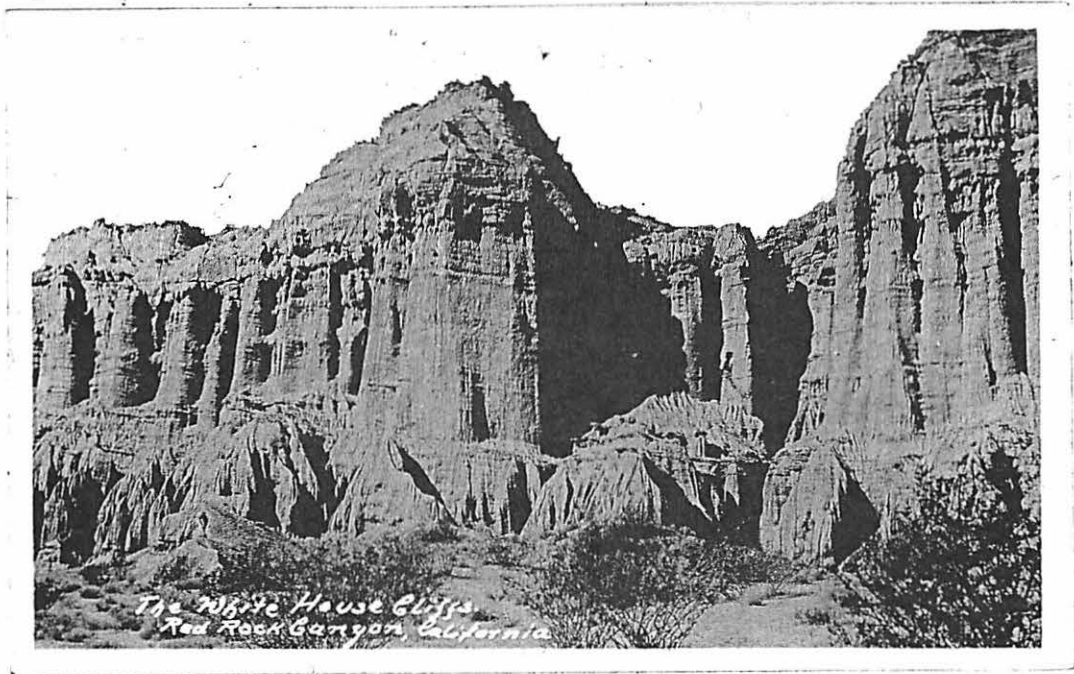


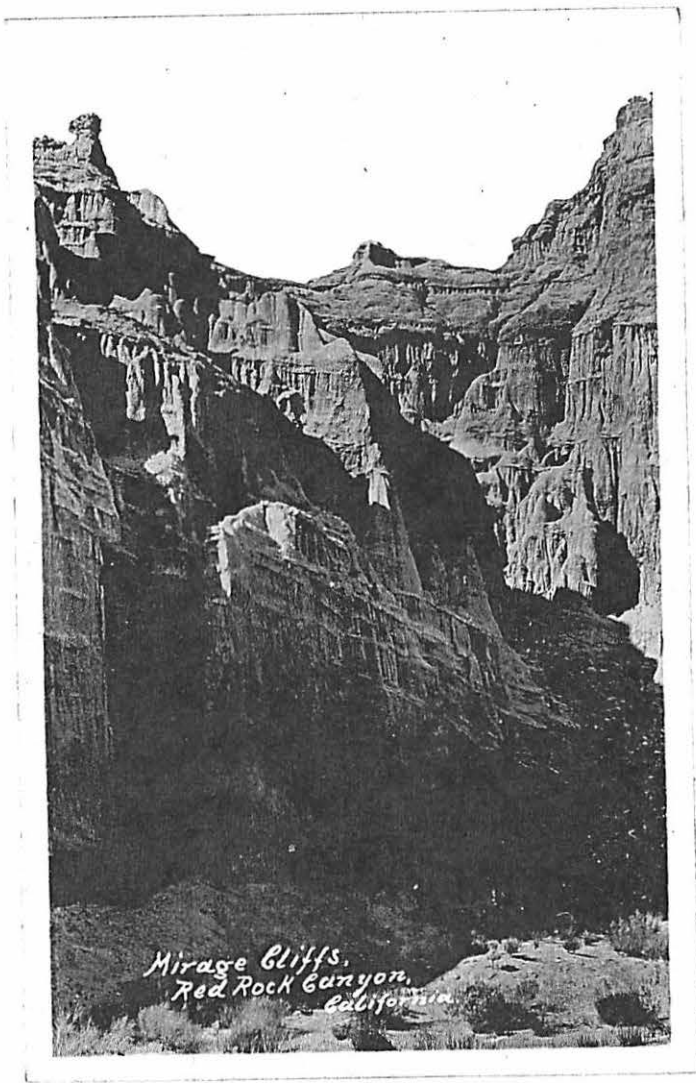
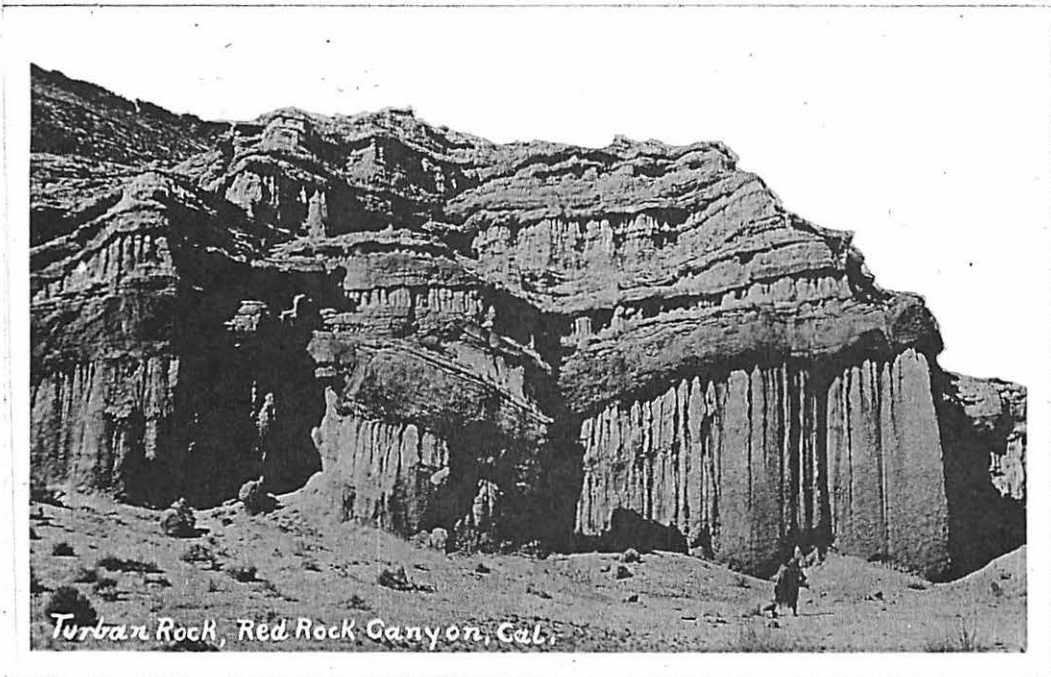


Temple of the Sun
Red Rock Canyon, California



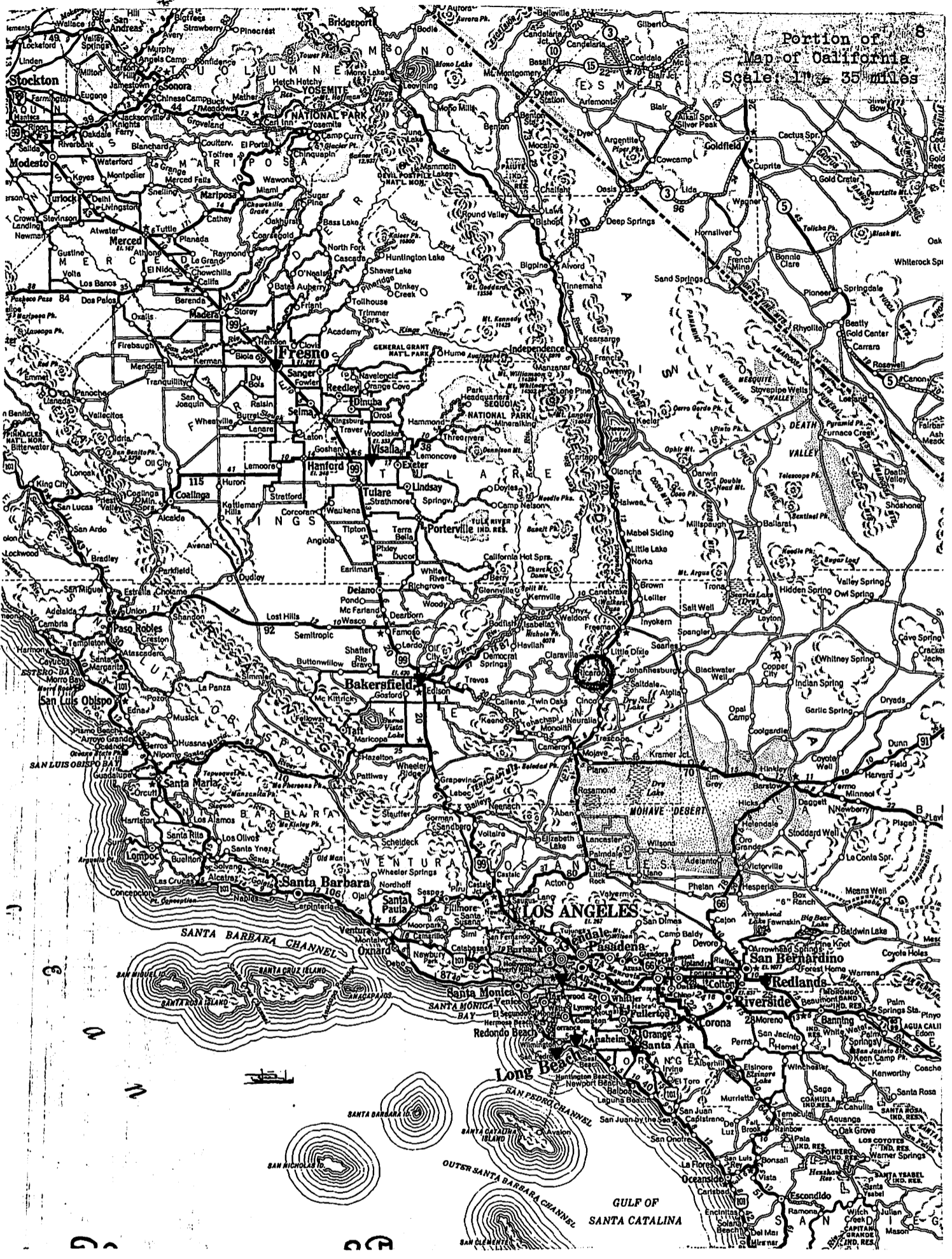
"Truro-Light-House"
Red Rock Canyon
California







CAMEL ROCK
RED ROCK CANYON, CALIF.



Portion of
Map of California
Scale: 1" = 35 miles

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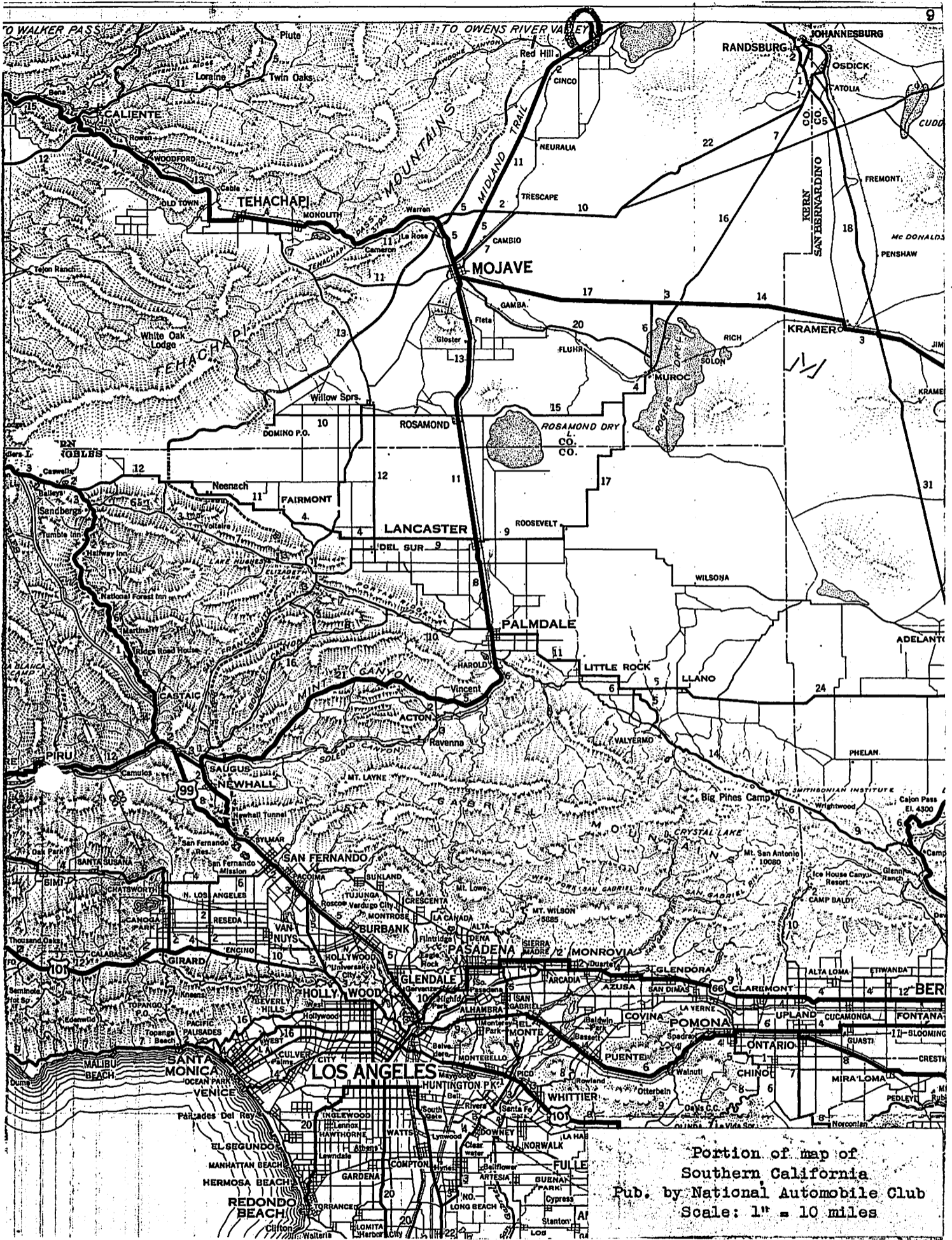
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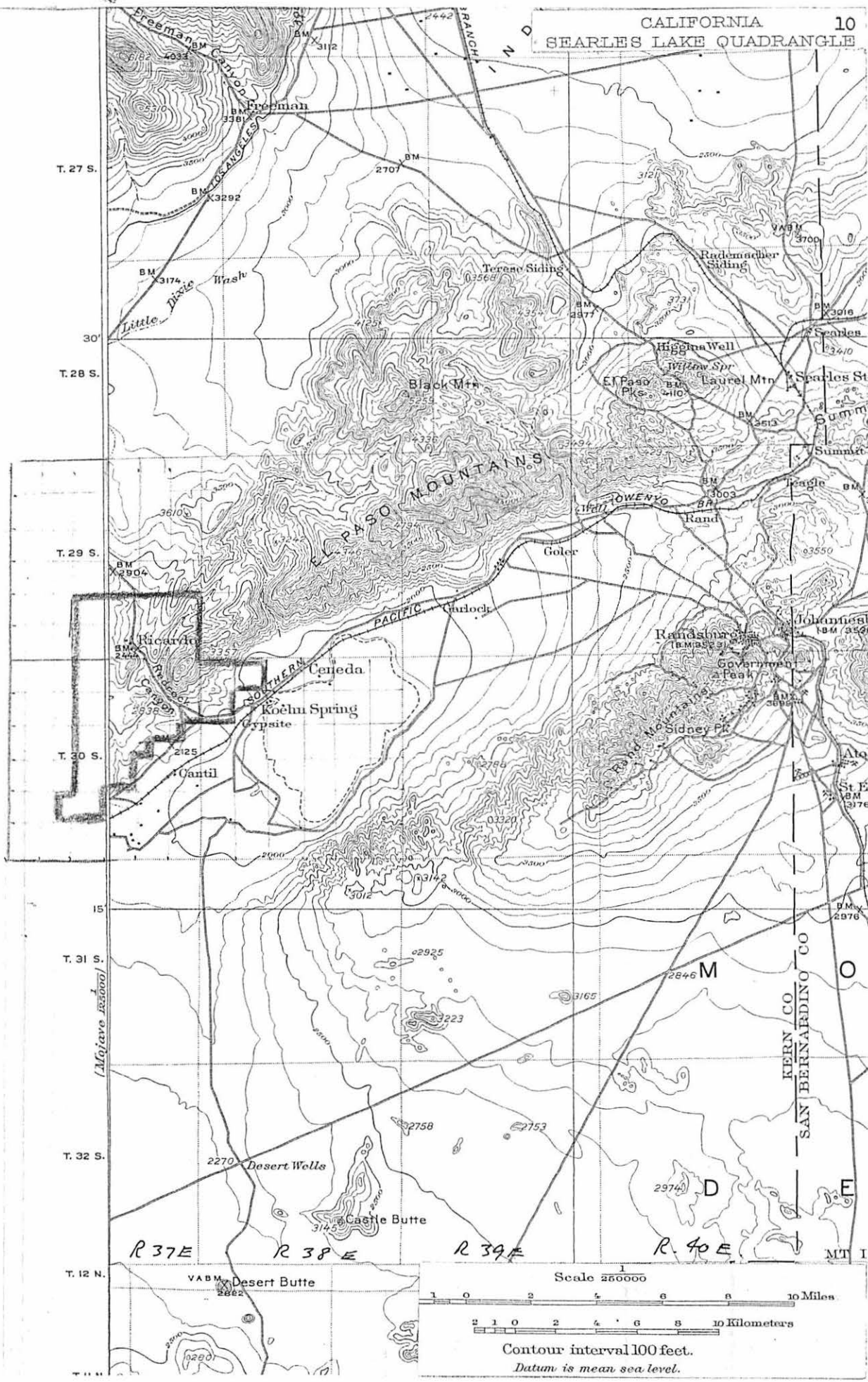
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Portion of map of
 Southern California
 Pub. by National Automobile Club
 Scale: 1" = 10 miles

CALIFORNIA 10
SEARLES LAKE QUADRANGLE



Scale 1/250000
 1 0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles
 2 1 0 2 4 6 8 10 Kilometers
 Contour interval 100 feet.
 Datum is mean sea level.

History of Project

On July 25, 1927, a "Joint Parks Committee" composed of conservationists and scientists in Los Angeles and vicinity petitioned the General Land Office for the establishment of four national monuments in Southern California. The areas recommended were:

Red Rock Canyon and Environs
 Morongo Pass District
 Painted Canyon District
 Thousand-Palms Canyon District near Edom.

The area suggested by the Joint Parks Committee was as follows:

"Red Rock Canyon and Environs

Sections 1,2,3,4,9,10,11,12, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 13, N $\frac{1}{2}$ of Sec. 14, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 14, Sec. 15,16,21,22,28, E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Sec. 29, Twp. 30 South, Range 37 East, Sections 25,26,27,28,33,34,35, and 36, Twp. 29 South, Range 37 East, Sections 5,6,7, Twp. 30 South, Range 38 East, and all of Twp. 29 South, Range 38 East, Mt. Diablo B. & M."

This tract is indicated on the accompanying topographic map, and comprises 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ square miles.

The statement prepared by the Joint Parks Committee in support of preserving Red Rock Canyon and environs is as follows:

"(1) Scenically

Red Rock Canyon with its tributary canyons is spectacular in form and coloration. The strikingly eroded formations are peculiarly attractive; in some places, the formations being grotesque, in others symmetrical, offering striking similarity to Buried Cities, Cathedral Facades, Worshipers at Prayer, Grecian Temples, etc. Added to this attractiveness is the great variety of colors due to coloring of the rocks themselves, and changing in character, depth of coloration and attractiveness with every changing hour of the day, with particular attractiveness at sunrise and at sunset. This district is similar in many of its formations to those of Bryce Canyon National Monument, and Cedar Breaks in Utah, with an individuality however, that sets it off with uniqueness and distinction of its own.

"(2) Geologically

The aforesaid Red Rock Canyon district is tremendously interesting from a geologic standpoint, containing as it does remarkable examples of erosion of the forces of Nature acting upon

stone, being composed of volcanic tuff, with an overcapping of lava flow, as well as granite and other crystalline rocks at the mouth of the canyon, the cliffs at this point being approximately 700 feet in height on the west side of the canyon, and 1100 feet in height on the easterly side. Here is found a wonderful display of the forces of Nature, and is offered to the student and tourist alike an opportunity to study and ponder upon those forces that have brought about world creation.

"(3) Biologically

The above proposed reservation is exceedingly valuable from a biological standpoint, containing the now famous Ricardo Pliocene beds, rich in fossilized remains, specimens of which are now in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles Museum, and other places, and offering a wonderful field for study to those interested in the science of Paleontology and related subjects. J. C. Merriam, now with the Carnegie Institute of Technology, has made a thorough study of this district, having reported thereon in University of California Bulletin, Department of Geology, Volume 11, 1919, Pages 437-584.

"(4) Botanically

Red Rock Canyon and environs is noted in Southern California for its botanical resources, wild desert flowers in great variety being profuse in the locality, with sparsely assorted desert flora of the cacti and yucca varieties. Much weight should be given this consideration from the standpoint of preserving the botanical specimens in this district, as in rapidly growing territory the wild flowers are first to suffer at the hands of collectors and others, who, without vandalistic intent, tend to destroy the blossoms and thus the means of reproduction of the flowering plants themselves.

"(5) Educationally

This district is visited annually by hundreds of students from the high schools and colleges of a large metropolitan district with its tributary population, and serves as a store house of knowledge to these students, giving to them an insight into the geologic past as well as the present, and furnishing a living laboratory for their operations.

"(6) Accessibility

Red Rock Canyon is on the main highway between Los Angeles and the thickly populated territory south of the Tehachapi Mountains and the High Sierras which are visited annually by thousands of tourists. It also is the gateway to the Owens River Valley and

territory to the north and south, and is on the highway which is part of one of the trans-continental highways. The district is located 130 miles from the center of Los Angeles and is especially accessible to the large centers of population of Southern California.

"(7) Recreationally

Red Rock Canyon is a spot chosen by many for week-end trips who are in search of recreation only, offering as it does, special scenic attractions to those who desire to view the beautiful in Nature, an opportunity for rest, recreation and inspiration, better fitting these individuals for their daily tasks in the work-a-day world."

General Characteristics

The principal features of Red Rock Canyon are colored erosional forms, carved by the weather from tilted layers of sandstone. The colors of the strata include white, red and salmon.

The area containing the most spectacular of these formations borders the highway for a distance of perhaps two miles. Most of the formations are on the west side of the highway. A side road, about six-tenths of a mile in length, permits autos to approach more closely into the area of formations.

There are a few Joshua trees scattered sparsely over the area.

A petrified "forest" is located some twelve miles distant, but is on private land and a small admission charge is made to visitors. Its principal feature is a stump fourteen feet high and four or five feet in diameter. Judging from photographs, this petrified forest is not exceptional in the number or size of the petrifications.

The report of the California State Park Survey, by Frederick Law Olmsted, 1929, contains the following:

"Red Rock Canyon Region, file number 5200, Kern County. One or more areas of desert mainly unpatented public domain several square miles in extent including notable Joshua trees and other typical desert vegetation. Special features within this region are Red Rock Canyon, showing remarkable erosion forms and color (but now largely in private ownership), petrified forest, and Walkers Pass."

Land Ownership

We were told that Mr. Hagin owns three sections of land including the principal part of Red Rock Canyon. His valuation of the land is not known, but it is said to be high as he believes the region has mineral possibilities. A few miles away several large gold nuggets are said to have been found, containing from \$1,500 to \$3,500 in gold.

Itinerary

January 30, 1933, 8.30 a.m. (Cyclometer 9463). Left Los Angeles with Thos. C. Vint.

10.15 (9502) Saugus.

10.55 (9525) Summit.

11.15 (9541) Palmdale. Looked over some areas of Joshua trees.

12.25) (9576) Mojave.

1.15)

(9599) Turned left at junction of road to Randsburg.

(9601) Entrance to Red Rock Canyon.

1.50 (9603) Center of canyon area.

(9604) Ricardo.

2.00 (9609) From a crest we obtained a view of the Owen River country. Turned around and returned to

2.15 (9614) Ricardo.

(9615.2) Took side road to right (west).

2.45 (9615.7) End of side road.

3.00 (9616.3) Back to highway.

Thence to San Bernardino.

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File

MAY -1 1933

Jim
Proposed Red Rock Canyon National Monument, Calif.

Review: Located in the north central part of Kern County containing highly colored and carved canyon walls.

On Feb. 22, 1931, Col. White attended the dedication ceremonies at Red Rock Canyon of the paved road from Los Angeles to Bishop. He wrote an enthusiastic letter to the Director on Feb. 25, 1931, and urged its preservation by the State Park Commission. The Park Service has recommended to Mr. Newton B. Drury of the State Park Commission of California, that this area be made a State park.

Mr. Toll investigated this area and submitted an unfavorable report under date of April 18, 1933, in which he states that "Part of the essential area of the canyon is in private ownership and I believe no offer has been made to donate it to either the State or Government."

"The formations are interesting and make quite a feature for the highway, but it is believed that the area is not sufficiently outstanding to warrant consideration as a national monument."

Recommendation:

It is recommended that this area be disapproved as a national monument.

MAY -5 1933

C. L. Wirth.

Approved:

Newton B. Drury
Director.