

March 17, 1966

Mr. Hugh d'Autremont
6311 N. Figueroa
Los Angeles, California, 90042

Dear Mr. d'Autremont:

Jack and I want to thank you very much for taking the time to write. Your name is familiar to us. When your letter arrived, the name on the envelope kept nagging away at our memory, but couldn't remember where we had heard it. The third paragraph of your letter finally enlightened us. Ha. You cannot imagine how good it is to hear from someone who has actually been in the Superstitions. Most of our mail come's from well meaning people, who have never been there, but want to tell us exactly where we can locate the mine's, treasure's, cache's, etc. Ha. I had hoped we had made it clear in the story that we are not treasure hunters, but it seems by writing a story about the subject, we have automatically become Dutch hunters. Ha. This is untrue!

Yes, we have tried to research all facets of history regarding the Superstition's, and immediate surrounding's. It has proven to be most difficult. No two source's of information read the same. The Peralta family's geneology is still not clear in our minds, nor will it ever be, therefore Mr. Marlowe's story as told us, was as accurate as any we had heard, or read. What a mess! I am sure you know better than most, what we have encountered in trying to arrive at some truths. Jack and I were born about thirty years too late. Ha. How we envy you in exploring the Superstitions before it had been trampled by thousands of tourist feet. The points we were most interested in, you slid over in your letter, such as the Archaeological work you accomplished in the cliff dwellings. We are familiar with the L.A. County Museum, as Los Angeles was our home for eighteen years. Went all through school there; Jack graduating from Hollywood Professional High School, and I from Manual Arts High School. Your business address is not far from where I was raised. We lived near Vermont and Slauson, our church was on Figueroa and 57th or 58th.

I wish you would take your statement of writing a story, and follow it through. So little has been written from experience, such as you describe in your letter. Name's like Eli and Storm, are the only one's we have to draw from when trying to find reference material. I do not own Storm's book, although I did see it years ago at the public library. The book had been so mutilated and defaced, I gave up trying to use it. Entire chapters were missing, and my photo's had been cut out with a razor blade. The one's left for viewing had pencil and pen drawings all over them. There were some beautiful photographs of Weavers Needle! As I remember right, the story read very well until the ending, which sounded more like a Chicago gangster movie script. It did not sound right anyway, but perhaps it was true. The whole ending sounded flat and unfinished....more like fiction. I hesitate to say this as we have had mail saying the same thing about our story. We did tell exactly what happened, and have letters from Marlowe to show that the meeting was not pre-arranged. We were as surprised as anyone. Many people find this meeting hard to swallow, but is true.

We had heard disturbing rumor's that Storm was responsible for some of the Spanish glyphs, but since it could not be proven by anyone, we let it pass. Now I have mad up!! Ha. This is the one thing I cannot tolerate...cheating! How is it possible to find which of the glyphs are authentic, and which are Storm-made? He has created a situation that only he can straighten out, and for him to admit his little scheme, (to sell books?) would take more guts than he probably has!! As you can probably tell, we are fascinated by petroglyphs, and have the protective instincts of a she-cat, when it come's to them being tampered with in any way. Can you recall which were made by Storm? Where and how many. Your name, nor his, will ever be mentioned in connection with this info.

It would be for our own use in eliminating them from a collection of Indian and Spanish glyphs. In 1963, Mr. William Coxon, glyph expert from Phoenix, kindly helped us with many of the Indian glyphs. He and his wife had made a thirty-some-odd year research of glyphs in every country, traveling around the world many time's, to gather them, even though our own hemisphere has the greatest number of concentrated symbols. Mr. Coxon passed away in August of that year, leaving many of us dangling in the center of an unfinished study. Unfortunately he did not write any book length research material. It is our hope that his wife will carry out this long overdue possibility. Recently Leland Lovelace sent us her collection of article's on petroglyphs, beginning in 1933. It contained much of Mr. Coxon's material....so, you see how you touched on a soft spot when bringing up the mention of Barry Storms stupidity and bungling. No telling what he has managed to ruin, change, etc. It is a heartbreaking fact, and one I shall never forget. Ha. We would appreciate any help you might give us as to the locations of the fraudulent glyphs. You are the first eye witness to give support to these rumors about Storms conduct in the mountains. Thank you for telling us. We had planned a trek to Black Top Mt. (Spanish Mesa) to photograph the glyphs up there, but now I have a sneaking suspicion that some, or all, might be fake's. Unfortunately, very few of us would know how to run chemical test's to determine age. Those who do, probably wouldn't get off their duffies long enough to accompany us! Ha.

The words, "Kitchen-Middens" is a new one to us,.... what does this mean? We are impressed with the fact that you made arrangements to have all artifacts sent to the museum. Good for you! Most would have used them for personal gain.

Even though we know nothing whatsoever about mining, it sounds like you all were thorough in your prospecting the Weavers Needle watersheds. In our article of 1964, Old West, Winter Edition, we stated that if the mine's were ever found, they would be far to the East of Weavers Needle. Ha. As Ranger Weir told us in 1963, "Every rock in the Weavers Needle area has been turned over at least three time's" Ha. Since we are not miner's; prospector's, geologist's, or what have you, this is strictly a hunch...one we never hope to prove. Ha. Mr. d'Autremont, did your group ever work the Fish Creek, Rodgers Canyon, White Mt, Iron Mt, Mound Mt. area's? Or North of the Salt River? As a mining engineer, can you (or would you) comment on the controversial "lime dyke" that runs through the Silver King, Magann copper, region. We have been told that two mining engineers said that this same huge lime dyke take's shape in Buenos Aires, continue's up through Central America, Mexico, Arizona, turning to the West into upper California, and disappears into the waste's of Alaska. And that all mine's of value have been found in close proximity of this lime dyke. The geologist at Jack's Company scoffs at this theory, and ask's how this can be determined?...How does anyone know it is the same lime dyke? Others have said it is possible. Is it one of those things that can never be proved as a certainty? Would like to have your opinion. It is strange that all big mineral strikes have been found along this supposed dyke; Brazil, Sierra Madres, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, the California gold strike's, and also Alaska.

To our small knowledge, nobody has ever found a nickle's worth of "nuthin'" in the Superstitions. They may keep it quiet for tax purpose's, and smuggle it out of the country, but other than the Dutchman's story, and the Peralta's, these hasn't been even a hint of anything being found. I hope someone finds something soon...We feel there is (or was) something there at one time, but many years have passed, with many thousands of lookers, it seems if it was still there, someone would have found it! It was simple (evidently for the Spaniards) as they supposedly found seventeen mine's..pardon me, eighteen. If so few men found that many, why haven't thousands of men found even one mine? Don't understand it. Ha.

Your story of the two quail hunters had Jack in stitches. Ha. It is a wonder that this story hasn't been circulated all over the hills. I imagine those two old boys lost their taste for quail after that meeting. Bet they haven't been back to this day!

On page three you refer to chalking the signs. I hate to keep harping on the subject, but it is important...can you divulge which symbols were chalked? This is one thing Mr Coxon insisted upon in his advise to us... "Never chalk an incision" Of course he meant, "to bring out the design more clearly". I think you meant to "Add symbol's that weren't originally there".

In regards to the "pot-holed rock" It is only a portion of the photograph. There were dozens of hole's at the one particulat spot. It was on flat desert, and not in a canyon or creek bed. We have seen them on huge egg-shaped boulders where water would have run off freely, also they are too well-planned and too symmetric to have been formed by chance. Perhaps this ~~this~~ water flow you mentioned did make some of them through erosion, but we have found them (in Texas and Arizona) always near a source of water. A spring, tank, creek or river. We have been told that the Indians used them first..(perhaps I should have said made them) for grinding food! Later the Spaniards used the idea, and perhaps even used the same pot-hole's left by the Indians. I think you are right that not a great deal of crushing would be done on the spot, but is it possible that they too, crushed and sampled along their travels...trying to ascertain the quality of their finds before hauling all that heavy cumbersome stuff all the way across the mountains to the Salt River? It is a thought, and we only report what we read and hear. Ha.

Gosh, I wish we could spend some time talking to you. Would love to hear of your experience's. Some things that happen don't seem too funny at the time, but once you are home, the humor of the situations can be seen a little better. The d'Autremont's, Burbridge's, Eakin's, and other's who explored the Superstition's before the "Masses" would be most interesting. Most of our information has come from the rancher's in the Superstition's. Their families have been there since the early days. These are the people who can enlighten many of us, should they decide to do so.

I presume you did not read our first article in Old West. "The Other World of the Superstitions". Our visit to the Reavis Ranch would have told you of the forests of tree's in these higherelevations. I wouldn't have believed it, had we not spent two days exploring the surrounding country, from the lower elevations to the highest. We saw walnut tree's, and tree's I can't name, because I am not a botonist...I do good to recognize a Mimosa tree. But there are many, many variety's...the woods are dense, green and cover all the mountains of higher elevations. It was 75 degree's up there, whereas we had spent miserabe hours in temperature's exceeding 100 degree's just the day before...and we again ran into the heat in Roger's Canyon, but not as entense as on the lowest elevations. The Reavis Trail (Old Reavis foot trail) took us through a grove of tall pine's... the most beautiful sight you ever saw. They were so tall and thick, that no sunlight came through. The grass was thick and green underneath the pine's, and the ground was literally carpeted with brown cone's. This is where I would like to live some day...a Shangri-La in the middle of the Superstitions. White Mt, and Iron Mt. are heavily wooded. We have never been on Montana Mt., or Mound Mt., but would ~~asm~~ assume from their elevation and close proximity, they would also be wooded. We heard of the tree stumps as being close to this area, although we have not seen them. They were also mentioned in Eli's book, which we understand was taken mostly from Jim Bark's diary. ? Quien Sabe? Although Mr. Eli said "Mesquite" tree's, I see more Palo Verde's than anything else...of the mesquite family?? On our four trips into the area, the Reavis is our favorite!

d'AUTREMONT - HELMS & ASSOCIATES

CONSULTING MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

6311 N. FIGUEROA STREET LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90042

255-7121

24 Mar 66

Mrs. Bernice McGee,
4612 Merida,
Fort. Worth, Texas 76115.

Dear Mrs. McGee:

Your very interesting letter arrived while I was on a business trip to Reno so am delayed in answering but find myself eager to do so. In assuming that you keep a file copy of your correspondence I will comment by paragraph number to match.

1. I am sure that you realize that I did not believe the two of you were "Dutchman" hunters but I can see where the uninitiated might think so. My feeling-that you and your husband must have had a helluva lot of fun in the preparation of your story.
2. You say you were born 30 years too late! I thought I was born 100 years too late at the time but have found out since that there are always new frontiers to explore and that is still the case today. I could give you some ideas having worked at it real hard.

My office address is on North Figueroa Street in Highland Park but I live in La Crescenta. However, I am very familiar with your former section of town having tried to place in a track meet (1933) with Manual Arts High School while at Fremont High School. Following World War II and 39 months in the Pacific Theater I lived for a short period near 52nd and Vermont.

3. After writing to you, I explored my home and finally found Storm's book which had been misplaced for some years. Upon re-reading it I find that I agree with your comments in every respect. Storm tried to dress it up a bit. At the time he was a "pulp" writer and was carried away. If Upson hadn't verified the fact they were fired upon I wouldn't have believed it. I remember asking Walt about this when on the trail in lower Chihuahua months later. In his non-committal way I gathered little. Storm may have taken liberties in the last chapter of his book prepared a year or so later.

I also noticed in his story that he tried to tie in our being tracked with a similar experience on his previous expedition. For continuity, he made it appear that it must have been the same person (small foot prints). This is strictly hogwash as the "nuts" on our trail wore big boots. In Storm's way of thinking it probably created greater reader interest.

On the other hand, most of his book should be defended on the basis of reasonable accuracy. Storm told me he planned to write such a book and had spent many months of research in the matter. He felt that by being accurate his book would be accepted by libraries all over the U. S. thus increasing it's total sales. I personally think it is the best source book I have seen. As an example, consider the estimates of the number of people on the Peralta expedition (you said it ranged from 68 to 400). Whoever said there were 400 simply didn't under-

stand the logistics of the 1840's. (If you are interested in my reasoning I can develop this further in a future letter.) The number of 68 was probably too high but Storm was just reporting his sources.

I noted that Storm described me as an "Engineer from Hollywood". This, if it were true, would be like finding a rainbow trout in salt water. It is the last place I would ever be found. However, in Storm's mind this was the most glamorous place in the world and he probably felt that the public believed the same. Thus, he felt he was enhancing my prestige by making such a statement. Little things like this keep creeping up thru the story.

Regarding your strange meeting with Marlow, that to me rang authentic, and to any other discerning reader.

4. Now you are angry at Storm. I really can't blame you but watch your indignation as we are speaking of a personality raised in another era under extreme circumstances. He must now be about 60 years old.

Storm's real name is unpronounceable. I think by now he has forgotten it. He left a stepfather in the State of Washington at the age of 12 but by this time he could at least read. Most of his reading was western trash which was about all that was available in the various jail cells where he voluntarily wintered. Where else could a young boy hoboing around the West get a square meal? His summers were spent picking fruit or sharpening scissors at 2-bits a throw. Give him credit for his overpowering ambition to become a writer and to climb above the soggy, hungry masses of the early depression years. He has, in recent time, written many creditable articles. His lack of higher education (and the fact that he has spent so many years in the waste lands) had probably retarded development of ethical values. In his era, almost anything went if it meant food. If prestige meant grub he would go any legal or semi-legal means to obtain it. Being an oldtime hobo myself, I understand this only too clearly. This guy is a real character and highly intelligent. He is now desert-rat-ing in Pinto Basin near 29 Palms, California, where he has some Jade claims, selling same to rock hounds. Nothing said here is any criticism of your normal reaction to his "cheating", it is just that I wanted you to know a little more about his background. Storm was so certain that the mines were in the vicinity of Spanish Mesa he probably rationalized that it did no real harm to improve the evidence.

5. No, I would not have any idea as to how to identify the "Storm" marker except by retracing the ground. I think that with a magnifying glass and a little experience, a normal person using judgment and the ability to compare could soon discern the fakes. Frankly, I see no reason why the Peralta's would mark the trail except at 5 places: where entering a canyon on either side of the range, each major fork and the turning points on the flanks of Weaver's Needle. This was a route to the Salt River and, except for these points, the trail (low in the canyons) was obvious. Therefore, why would the Peralta's place markers where no mine could possibly exist? In my mind, all other markers are false except for the Indian drawings. Neither do I think Barry Storm did all of the dirty work.
6. The term "Kitchen-Midden" is, as I recall, Germanic and refers to refuse dumps of shore dwellers on the Baltic Sea. Nineteenth Century archeologists upon finding unexplained heaps on ancient shore lines (the land elevated after the No. European glaciers melted) excavated these mounds. They found huge volumes of opened sea shells which represented food for dwellers of the Mesolithic culture. Naturally, they found flint axes, knives, etc. mixed with the shells

where mislaid or lost. Thus the term crept into English useage.

The Cliff dwellings on Geronimo Head amount to but 4 rooms intact. I dug the floors until I came to bed rock. The greatest depth was only 12" and I was not impressed with the minute bits of broken pottery and broken stone, none of which seemed to fit together. These primitives did not even paint their pottery! Neither did they have a true Kitchen Midden as they dumped all refuse down the cliff. Natural erosion had covered it to a depth of about 2 feet on the upper fringe. I didn't explore the lower fringe for 2 reasons: The upper fringe gave meager results. Also, it was too much work to perform in my available time. You misunderstood my arrangements with the Museum; I was being paid for this service as a "dedicated professional". The truth is (although I was highly excited over this mission) that I was being very practical about the whole matter. By extracting my pound of flesh I was able to finance the trip and continue to eat for some time. My biggest find was some sloth bones in a dusty neighboring cave. In fact, the dust was waist high at one point. I just about gaged wading thru this fine material which never seemed to settle.

I later saw my material (opened but still crated) at the Museum. They appreciated my log and were planning to assemble the items "When they had the time". Don't know if they ever did so. Their preliminary dating on the Sloth was 10,000 years.

7. Yes, I think we were thorough in our prospecting. No hard-rock ore ever originated near Weaver's Needle or it's watersheds.

No, we did not prospect the easterly portions of the Superstitions so have no comment.

Yes, I made one trip, up one canyon only, north of the Salt River. We found more color but were still unimpressed. Walt and I did, however, find a Cinnebar out-cropping (ore of Mercury) which Walt identified for me and was the first I had ever seen. I have been thinking about this since mercury has climbed to \$425 per flask. After all this time I don't even remember the estimate of grade. I suppose Walt Upson is still somewhere around and if it was high grade I am sure he would be after it. I have too much going on to bother.

Regarding the "Lime Dike", your Geologist at Jack's company is closer to the truth. Let me explain as simply as I can: look at a relief map and see the high mountain chains on the west coast of both continents; they have replaced other mountains which have eroded away. Even earlier, when the earth was hot and the ocean was clouds, the igneous materials of the earth was saturated with soluble caliche (lime). The earth cooled and we had a million years of rain. This carved the first landscape and washed out the lime to sedimentary beds in the depressions and created the oceans. In some areas of the earth this lime is two thousand feet thick.

Do not confuse this phenomena with the lime beds resulting from sea shell deposits on ancient sea floors now dry land. There are several theories on mountain building. Anyway, in some places mountain chains rose thru these sedimentary limes but not necessarily all at the same time. The southern Sierra Nevada's of California (not the northern) rose thru this lime and tipped it about 45°. It runs exposed at Walker Pass and is obvious clear to Bishop, Calif. where it tends to disappear. My point is, it is not a dike. A dike is an intrusive. The contact zone between this lime and the igneous (granite) mass is metamorphised (re-heated, then cooled). The only mineral in volume

that I have ever found in these zones is scheelite (ore of tungston). I have operated tungston properties along this belt and still own a mill near Inyo-Kern. There is no reason that a secondary intrusion in such a zone could not deposit other minerals. In fact, I now remember one in gold (high peak mine). I was not, however, aware that the "big strikes" of the new world were along such a "dike". This is not true in the American West as the big strikes near such a lime tilt are only coincidental. If I ever have the chance I should give you a black-board outline of the phases of the origin of ore-bearing fractures. I am not familiar with the facts in South America. I have been in Alaska and points in between to Durango, Mexico and have seen lime tilts but they are not continuous from one section to the other. How could they be, since the original lime drained to the low depressions like water to a lake.

8. The only thing anyone may ever find in the Superstitions might be banknotes that some holdup artist may have stashed in a cave. They would do as well looking for Captain Kidd's treasure.
9. When I stopped the quail hunters I thought they were carrying rifles. On closer approach I saw they were actually shot guns but had to carry out my act as I was committed to a line of action.
10. I see no reason why the hieroglyphics can not be marked with chalk for photography. The first rain should wash the chalk away, thus baring the original incision.
11. I agree that Indians grind food (mesquite beans, corn, etc.) in pot holes in rocks. Be sure you learn how to identify the difference between these pot holes and stream created pot holes. Indian pot-holes are relatively shallow (if too deep they couldn't get the meal out) and are near a permanent camping place, usually trees and good water. Rocks at the mouth of a canyon and out on the desert have been washed out to this point. No Indian would camp where there is danger of flash flood. Neither is there any evidence of great numbers of Indians ever in this area; only nomads except for a few miserable cliff dwellers. There is no trace of ancient irrigation ditches as on the Salt River or in New Mexico.

It is extremely unlikely that any Spaniard would ever use these pot-holes, en-route, to further concentrate his fines after their already having been thru an arrasta. He would have to unpack and then perform this duty without water if your picture is correct. He just wouldn't do it. He certainly wouldn't use hauled drinking water! Anyway, I don't think the Peralta's were carrying crushed fines. I believe they carried placer gold from the original placer bars on the Salt River. Their tunnels (mines) were in ancient placer bars above the stream bed, then (and now) dry. Where these gravels had compressed to conglomerate, they would mine it like a lode vein.

I saw a lot of high grade ore around Phoenix which was claimed to have been picked up in the Superstitions. This was "sucker" bait. Storm had a piece. He later admitted to me that it was actually from the famous Vulture mine near Wickenburg; they are still in business. Remember that the Don's Club (a sort of Chamber of Commerce) was interested in supporting any and all stories and rumors concerning the Superstitions. This meant lots of shekels from expeditionists, etc. which helped build the Phoenix economy.

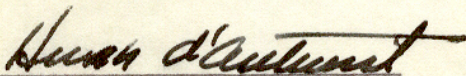
12. Once in a great while I have occasion to pass thru Texas. If so, I will visit if you haven't moved in the meantime.

13. I missed your first article in "Old West". I now see that you were also in the eastern portion of the Superstitions which must be much higher in elevation. I was not there. That is another watershed and am surprised to learn that the area is considered part of the Superstitions.
14. I think you should continue your research on the petroglyphs. This sounds like fun and should be a good source for another story.

I am happy to hear that you appreciated my last letter and also enjoyed your pleasant commentary. I now feel like a pen pal, a new experience. I have another ulterior motive for such long letters: first, my carbon copy gives me good backup material should I ever decide to attempt to write. Second, my friends enjoy our correspondence. So, you see, the circle widens.

I hope you keep me informed on new ideas and material and would appreciate a copy of your next article.

Sincerely yours,


HUGH d'AUTREMONT