

July 24, 1963

Dear Mrs, McGee,

Your letter lists all the genuine qualifications necessary to join the "Untouchables Collapsibles"--welcome!. We enjoyed (and sympathized) your vivid descriptions of your travels and trials, they were funny even though frustrating to you.. however, no one should be allowed to laugh who has not endured this ultimate of all miseries--miles from home and the only transportation is the ten-legged animal under you and your own legs are screeching about their troubles! You wonder why you were ever idiotic enough to leave home and swear if ever you get back alive the roughest thing you'll ride will be a rocking chair on an uneven floor. The odd part comes after you have started to mend. Blood, bruises and sweat are just that at the time, but sitting at home healed and comfortable it is amazing how many laughs to the mile there is in the telling.

Am mailing your pictures to Bill Martin, Sr. for identification, I Hope. Coffee Flat Mountain is just west and north of the fork where Red Tanks, Randolph and Fraser Canyons all put together to form Fraser.

Dick Carpenter evidently gave you the impression he owned the Reavis Ranch, he bought 45 acres of the patented land from us--the house and orchards--that's all. We still own several acres of land, some trees and all Reavis Grazing allotment and the J F brand and cattle. The only thing he owned, when you were there, was nerve. He had the same permission you did, to stay a few days, instead he moved in. Oh, yes the date of sale was June 13, 1963.

Temporarily, we are living in two trailers. A state of togetherness not to be desired for long. We plan to build a new headquarters just north of the small orchard. Stoney's trips up with the trailers would have made quite a movie except I didn't have the nerve to watch, even thru a finder, house trailers being pulled around the dome.

Reavis Ranch actually is named after "old man" Reavis. My dates in the following info are approximate because the title search papers are in the Forest Service office and the brand record went to a brand display and hasn't been returned. The Reavis farm and the J F Ranch overlap as you will see. As you know, Reavis had a garden and planted a few apple trees about where the barns are now, his house stood where the saddle shop is. He made regular trips to the Silver King to sell his produce and, going on one of his trips with loaded burros, was murdered. No apparent motive such as robbery because he had just left the farm and always used the money he received from sales to buy provisions each time. Rumors were that he had gold hidden on the mountain, but why wait until he left it if this gold were the object, with him dead there would be no way to make him give it to whoever was after it? There is another inference to be made but it is just that. Reavis never filed on his homesite, perhaps it wasn't open to entry at that time, I don't know, but he had "Squatters(Rights"

also he established water rights to the waters of Reavis Creek and its tributary canyons because he used the water to irrigate crops.

According to one story, the J F Ranch began when Jack Fraser, a saloon owner, won 29 cows on a election bet around 1880. He hired a cowpuncher and turned him and the cows loose, there were no fences then and cows wandered where the feed and water were best. His man used Fraser's initials to brand the animals and so began the J F. As the cattle increased so did the amount of range needed, until at one time in the early 1900s the J F range ran from Salt River south to Florence between approximately the same boundries as at present. Lots of this country is arid in late spring and summer so the need for permanent waters increased with the growth of cattle numbers. (In 1909, when Fraser was selling to Clemons, he guaranteed 5000 mother cows) Fraser several times offered to buy out Reavis and was refused. His cows ate Reavis' crops and Reavis bothered the cows, so things stood until Reavis was murdered. Evidently, the J F just moved in on the farm after that. Harry Knight was Fraser's foraman at that time, his wife, Pearl, homesteaded the Reavis Claim, HES 412, approx 65 acres--not a full claim, perhaps because of taxed or Pine Air. Whether they took advantage of the homestead law, working for Fraser, to make some money or Reavis death for the same purpose or whether there was a more sinister plan starting with the murder is anyone's guess. Fraser is reputed to have paid Knight's three thousand dollars for the claim, only to sell to Clemons Cattle Co of Florence two or three years later. They registered the J F Brand to the J F Land and Cattle Co in 1912 with Arizona Livestock Board. My stepfather John (Hoolie) Bacon and uncle A C Upton bought it from Clemons in 1946. By then the boundries had shrunk to where they are now, then Bacon bought out Upton, split the allotments and sold the western Tortilla and south J F Allotments to Bill Martin. We bought Tortilla back from Bill and then the Reavis Allotment from Hoolie.

Clemons planted all the old apple trees at the Reavis, built one house which burned down. Two women were canning fruit the day it caught fire, and the men were working at Whiskey Springs. They also set up a saw mill there for ranch lumber because everything was packed in from the south over Reavis Divide. The present house was built in 1937 by two cowboys who contracted to do the job for \$500.00

My folks planted the new orchard with 500 trees, about 350 are there now--poor planting and deer killed the others--about 500 trees at present. They also built the road with their money, no state or federal money has ever been spent on it. We cannot control where people ride or walk on our allotments, nor do we care to, but we can control the traffic on our road, mostly for the safety of everyone concerned, as you are now aware how dangerous it could be to flatlanders

Also in the Reavis history, is the plan for a summer community, made by the Mormons of this area, named Pine Air. A plat was laid out and lots were sold. Several old time residents of Mesa have told us about their purchase of lots and one still has his papers. The present road follows their original survey, except for two places. They began building road from both ends but the financing gave out and the claims reverted to public domain or wherever they go. Part of their wagon road is visible yet on the lower end. The Mormons may have staked and filed on these claims before Fraser could do anything about the Reavis and since Knights lived there, he didn't, they could claim only what was fenced or used as pastures--only a guess, no dates checked.

Am forwarding your letter to Bill Martin to answer the questions, if he will. If he becomes convinced you are interested in history and not lost mines, he will cooperate but he has had many years of gold hunters and has no use for same. Perhaps we will be the same in fifty years. One reason we didn't want our name mentioned-- enough of them track us down as it is. They want us to all but lead them to certain described areas, their description usually fits a dozen places, enter over the road or if that isn't in the right direction, is there another road? If not, why not? Loan them a horse? And then the hunters! As soon as any article appears in newsprint about any peculiar and particular spot in our area, comesthe deluge. Most who call couldn't find the far side of a mountain in broad day light and the few who do, usually louse it up, as you've noticed.

We are looking forward to reading about your trips and would enjoy reading the series that ran in your paper. I sent those clippings to Bill too, hope he returns them. Any pictures you send we will like and any special ones we can return. We hope you can return sometime, perhaps then we can be of more help and give better directions so none of your time will be wasted. Stimulating and interesting people, such as you, are always welcome. Learned more facts from you than I knew existed, so who should ask who questions?

It is midnite and Stoney is heaving big, disgusted sighs so had better quit the chatter.

Yours for softer saddles,

*Sucille Stone*

*P.S. And my typing is much better than my writing!*