

# **John Reed and the Lost Dutchman**

**by Clay Worst**

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Clay wrote this article in 1987, many years after the his search for the Lost Dutchman Mine involving, John Reed and Erwin Ruth. Portions of this “John Reed and the Lost Dutchman” story have their background in the correspondence between Clay Worst and Erwin Ruth and John Reed.

I have included the article as part of this collection as it dovetails with items in those letters.

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Garry Cundiff

March 15, 2010

# John Reed and the Lost Dutchman

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It is almost an axiom that the Dutchman, Jacob Waltz, was the most enigmatic individual in the annals of Superstition Mountain. If this be so, then John Reed must run a close second.

My own involvement began in the winter of 1949. There had been discord between Chuck Aylor and his wife, Peg, at their East Boulder camp, and Chuck and I had set up our own camp down La Barge Canyon, just below Marsh Valley.

We came in off Black Mountain late one evening, morrated the burros, cooked supper by lantern light, and were relaxing with our pipes over the embers of a night fire. It was then that Chuck brought up the matter of John Reed.

"Clay, in your search for the Lost Dutchman Mine, have you ever come across a small sloping flat, about 150 feet up out of a gulch, with brush at the upper end and three rocks about the size of a beer barrel on it?"

I thought a long time before answering. "Not that I recall, but as much rough country as there is back here, I doubt that I'd remember it unless there was some significance attached to it. Where is it?"

"If I knew, we'd be rich," he responded. "Have you ever heard of John Reed, or the Dutchman's placer?"

"I've never heard of Reed," I answered. "The only reference I have to any placer is from Hermann Petrasch. Hermann told me that the Dutchman stumbled across an old placer working earlier on the same day he discovered his rich hard rock mine. He never said he worked it."

"The story goes a lot deeper than that," Chuck responded.

For the next half-hour, I sat in silence, while Chuck related the story of John Reed, and his

involvement with the Lost Dutchman Mine. It was a story I researched thoroughly in the years following.

It all came to light as a result of the Adolph Ruth murder

In June, 1931, Dr. Adolph Ruth was packed into the Superstitions. He was in possession of a Mexican map, which he believed would lead him to the Lost Dutchman Mine. He was never again seen alive.

His bullet pierced skull was found in December of that year, and the remainder of his headless skeleton was found the January following, over half a mile away. The story of his demise was nationally syndicated in newspapers throughout the country.

In mid-December, before the remainder of the skeleton had been found, the sheriff of Maricopa County received a letter from John Reed, of St. Louis, Missouri, requesting the mailing address of Erwin Ruth, the son of the late deceased. At the same time, Reed also wrote the Mesa Police Department, who referred him to "Tex" Barkley, owner of the Quarter Circle U Ranch. It was from Barkley's ranch that Dr. Ruth had made his departure into the Superstitions, and upon whose range the lost mine was presumed to lie.

In a letter to the Barkleys, Reed stated that between 1881 and 1888 he had been taken to the mine on three occasions by his father, and that on two of these trips they had a hostile encounter with the Dutchman.

Reed also wrote Erwin Ruth, giving him a brief account of his involvement with the mine. Correspondence between Reed, Ruth and the Barkleys continued during the summer.

In August, while Erwin Ruth was away on business, his brother Earl was contacted by Northcott Ely, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior.



Chuck Aylor, East Boulder Camp, 1950

Ely's father, Sims Ely, was the City Manager of Boulder City, Nevada. The elder Ely, during earlier years, had hunted the Lost Dutchman Mine in concert with Jim Bark, the then owner of the Quarter Circle U Ranch.

All evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, the sheriff of Maricopa County dismissed Adolph Ruth's death as accidental. In truth, he had no jurisdiction. Ruth's remains were actually found just over the county line in Pinal County.

It must here be admitted that investigation of a homicide with no witnesses, based solely on skeletal remains found in a remote wilderness, is generally pretty hopeless. Accordingly, the dismissal of such cases as "accidental death" is understandable, though this has done little to diminish the number of unsolved cases of "lead poisoning" for which the Superstitions have received their fair share of infamy.

Ruth's family, however, were naturally pressing for a homicide investigation. Earl Ruth, impressed with Northcutt Ely's federal credentials, hoped to enlist his aid. In furtherance of their relationship, he showed John Reed's letters to Ely.

Upon his return, Erwin Ruth took exception to his brother Earl's action. He contacted Reed, attempted to dissuade him from negotiating with Ely, and proposed that they make a trip together to the Superstitions in the fall.

Ely, meanwhile, had wired Reed, asking him to meet him between trains as Ely was passing through St. Louis on business. Reed also met with him a second time on Ely's return.

The following day, the results of these two conversations were reduced to writing by Ely, mailed to Reed for comments and corrections, then forwarded to Jim Bark in Long Beach, California. The transcript follows:

October 2, 1932

Dear Uncle Jim:

I have just spent 2 hours with John Reed, the following are the highlights of his story, see his map attached.

Immediate locality of the mine, a gravel slope about 2 acres in size, with large brush at the upper end of which about 30 of the largest trees or brushes have been cut, largest is about 10 inches across all look decayed. He was last there in 1888. Character of the ore, to my surprise, he said nuggets in packed gravel which loosens up in water enough so that nuggets can be picked out by hand. They got \$3200 in a month's work, working afternoons at the mine and carrying water in buckets over a mile, the shaft is timbered about 40 feet high, 6 feet across, with a cross cut at the bottom high enough for a man to walk in, on their last visit, it had been filled partly in and they had to dig the shaft out.

(Mexican workings) Reed's dad said there used to be a Mexican drift into the gravel flat from the creek, but it couldn't be found. 7 Mexicans were working the shaft when Reed's dad first saw it, this was about 1860.

Location with regard to the needle - - about 2 or 3 miles northeast from the needle, about 2 miles west of La Barge, on the slope of a mountain.



Route followed -- The map refers to the 3rd trip in 1888, he was 12. Left team at Holbrook and walked all the way. Followed the Salt River down to what he thinks is Fish Creek to Tortilla, up Tortilla and out over high ground, following a faint Indian trail, he couldn't see it, (but his father claimed he could) to La Barge (he is sure it is La Barge, his dad used that name) down La Barge (distance not given) and out to the west over high ground, past the needle, on the way they pass cut timber (didn't remember when I first asked him). Continued until they hit the first large creek running south opposite direction from the way La Barge flows. Thinks this is the creek opening out -- west of Bark's ranch (on a previous trip, in via Globe -- they had come in via this creek from the south) turned up this creek and continued past the needle (hard to say how far) but turned to right up the first large tributary; this is a canyon about 100-150 feet wide and with walls about 100 feet high of rock and broken material, (nothing to identify this junction he remembers). But up this tributary about 2 miles are large water holes 10 feet across, with grass around them, full of water (January) hadn't encountered that much water before, made their camp there, continue on about a mile; the canyon plays out in some draws. Here they climbed sharply up to the right climbing 100 or 150 feet. Had to use hands. Material is hard compact gravel; (this comes clear down to the Creek, whereas further down the canyon had been harder rock) This sharp climb brought them out on a slope nearly flat 2 acres no growth on it, at the upper end of the slope large brush apparently going on up indefinitely (I gather that the flat is the lower end of a long gravel draw the upper part being steeper and wooded). The mine is marked by 3 rocks each about the size of a barrel.

"Walzy" had a camp about 1/8 to 1/4 mile away over a rock ridge in direction of La Barge. Walzy carried his rubbish off there to keep from giving the mine location away. Walzy had been working the mine since 1868, when he claimed to have bought it from the Mexicans. Walzy and Reed's dad had been in the Civil War (confederates) but Reed wasn't German and hadn't met Walzy until he encountered him in Arizona in the 60's (apparently Pa Reed saw the Mexicans working the mine about 1860, before he saw Walzy).

Other Trips: Once before (he was 5 then) they had come in from Tucson; a second time from Globe, on the Globe trip they followed Pinto Creek, along a good trail, had come down La Barge much further than shown on the map, in fact looping around from the north finally hitting your south running canyon and following it down to the water hole canyon. His father never had any trouble finding the mine.

Land marks: Doesn't remember any cave nor any heavy Indian or other trails.

I think Reed is entirely honest. I am willing to chip in on his expenses if he can go out to join John in the spring. Shall I proposition him on going out? He says he can't promise, but he rather thinks he could find his way to it if the country wasn't changed too much.

Your pard,  
Northcutt

Here ended Ely's letter.

Through October, correspondence was exchanged by all parties. Northcutt Ely presented Erwin Ruth with an agreement offering Ruth a one-fourth share in the mine, but declined to have Ruth participate in the expedition. Ruth refused, attempted to persuade Reed to deal directly with him, and to make their search with the help of Tex Barkley. Reed, meanwhile, was hedging his bets, and pursuing negotiations with both contending factions.

By December, nothing had been reconciled. Reed, meanwhile, had written the General Land Office for instructions on filing mining claims in the Superstitions, and seemed to be considering making the trip on his own. The intrigue continued through the winter.

In February, 1933, Jim Bark wrote the Barkleys, offering to pay their expenses, and John Reed's, if they would come to California to meet with him, Bark was getting too old to accompany the expedition, but said he wanted "to wind up this, my last hunch." In his letter, he freely acknowledged the shortcomings he noted in Reed's narrative, particularly the obvious overestimation of distances, which he attributed to the fact that Reed was a child at the time.

Concurrently, Erwin Ruth attempted to organize a trip of his own for April.

Reed, at this point, seemed to withdraw, and no trip was ever forthcoming. In October, Ruth again contacted Reed, advising that with a change of administration, Ely was no longer in government service and perhaps not availed of the political clout he formerly enjoyed.

Ely did not contact Reed again until the following year, when he advised that Jim Bark was making a trip to Arizona and wished to pursue the matter further. Reed again met Ely at the railroad station in 1935, when Ely again offered to pay Reed's expenses to Arizona, to meet with Jim Bark and his nephew, John Spangler. Bark opined he was getting too old and deferred his position to Spangler, suggesting a trip in the spring of 1937.

This trip too, was never consummated, and Bark wired Reed in April, asking for a personal interview.

By this time, Reed had received no less than 45 communications from all parties, and was apprehensive about the whole matter. Bark wired him again, offering transportation expenses to meet him in Phoenix in October.

Reed declined, moved without leaving a forwarding address, and the entire matter came to a standstill. Thus it stood when Chuck Aylor first told me the story 12 years later, around a campfire in La Barge Canyon.

From an old G.I. ammunition box, Chuck produced the copy of Ely's letter, reproduced above. The other details were reconstructed by me during the years following.

Chuck and I noted the number of obvious inconsistencies in Ely's letter. The narrative simply didn't orient itself to the terrain.

The lost mine hunter's usual reaction in such cases is to make a "stretch fit", modifying the story to fit the land. Too often, his own preconceived notions take over.

We decided to try to locate Reed, if he were still alive.

Summers in the Superstitions are almost unbearably hot, and permanent water holes are few and far between. Accordingly, with hot weather, Chuck pulled a light Siwash camp down to John Chuning's cave in lower La Barge, and I went to Montana for the summer.

In September I made a trip to Washington, D.C.

to do some work at the National Archives and had a serious talk with Erwin Ruth. On the way home, I stopped in St. Louis, and tried unsuccessfully to locate Reed.

Then, after a lapse of 13 years, Reed again contacted Erwin Ruth. Ruth phoned me, and I left at once for St. Louis.

Reed lived in a modest but neatly kept apartment. He was then 74 years old. He said he was married, but his wife was nowhere to be seen.

The man's appearance was not easily forgotten; he was built like an ox, but carried not an ounce of fat on his body. Of amiable disposition, he was well spoken and mannered. He had a friendly smile, but was powerful enough to be intimidating, even at his age. I was a young man then, and physically active, but I believe that Reed had the physical strength to have killed me with his bare hands.

We met a number of times during my stay. Though we became good friends, I quickly perceived there were some unwritten ground rules that governed ones association with the man. He had a few strange behavioral habits, ones you simply did not question.

Immediately apparent was that he always wore two pair of pants. Each was supported by a separate pair of suspenders, the outer pair worn with the waistband a good five inches below the inner one. Curious though this may have been, one simply did not ask personal questions of John Reed.

Almost as strange was the fact that, as late as 1950, though his hearing was excellent, the man had never once spoken over a telephone. I then understood why Ely, Ruth and Bark had always sent letters or telegrams.

You also called him "Mr. Reed"; you didn't call him "John."

As we became better acquainted, he told me of his background.

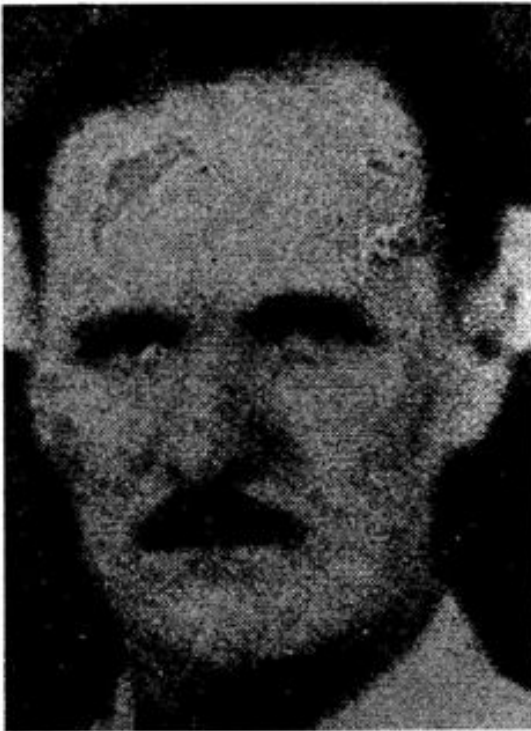
His father was from Pennsylvania, one of five boys of a family in which, for two hundred years, every generation had produced a Presbyterian minister. Reed's father was elected, and at sixteen was sent to a seminary. Being otherwise disposed, he "escaped in the middle of the night," went out West, and never again contacted his family.



Sims Ely



William A. "Tex" Barkley



Erwin Ruth



James E. Bark



About 1840 he went to the west coast via northern Mexico, where he became familiar with primitive Mexican methods of mining and refining gold and silver ores. Reed's father became a seasoned outdoorsman who enjoyed the privations of life on the frontier. In Arizona, he lived with Indians for an extended time. It was in their company that he observed a group of Mexicans working a mine in the Superstitions. They were not molested.

The circumstances of Reed's birth were never brought up, though he must have been born in 1876. If he ever knew his mother, he never mentioned it.

His earliest recollections were of traveling around the West with his father in a wagon. He seemed to respect - - or perhaps fear - - his father. He apparently never liked the man.

He ran away when he was fourteen, and never saw his father again.

As a relaxed friendship developed, our conversation turned to the Lost Dutchman Mine.

"You're entitled to some explanations," Reed began. "I'd no sooner made contact with Ruth, Ely and Bark, than I could see there was division in the camp, and I expected trouble. In the beginning, I think they thought they might find the mine themselves, just from my description, which wasn't to my best interests. They pressed hard for more details than I wanted to give, and I figured I had to protect myself."

Then, with a grin, he added, "Some way I have an idea that the description I gave them is somewhat inaccurate. If we make a trip out there together, there are some things I'll have to set straight."

It was then July, temperatures on the Arizona desert were soaring, but I left at once for Arizona. Locating Chuck Aylor was no problem. There had been no rain, so all I had to do was check the permanent water holes. Together we made a plan of action, and I returned to my home in Montana.

The first rains came in November. Chuck rode out of the mountains and phoned me to pick up John Reed and head for Arizona. I drove to St. Louis, loaded Reed's gear, and we set out.

During the days enroute, we visited casually,

but the evenings, when we shared a motel room, were devoted to serious talk of the Lost Dutchman Mine.

"The first thing you've got to know," Reed advised, "is the nature of the ore. It isn't a placer mine at all. Ely was with the Interior Department, so I figured he knew a lot of geologists, and I thought a description of the ore might tell them what kind of country it might be found in.

"There were two kinds of rock in the mine. One was a very hard, white rock. You had to be careful of your eyes, because it threw sharp chips when you hit it. Fresh broken pieces glistened in the sunlight, but when it layed out in the

weather, it turned dull. The shaft was actually inclined, and the white rock was a foot to two feet wide where it showed on the floor and the roof."

"On the side there was a very soft greyish brown rock. It had been scraped from the wall, but still showed in places.

"Both the rocks had lots of gold. We just broke it up with a hammer, and picked out the gold by hand. We panned the fine stuff.

"The last time we were there, the shaft was completely covered, and we had to dig it out. We wouldn't have found it if we hadn't known exactly where it was.

"We dug down maybe five feet and hit two layers of logs with the bark still on them, laid at right angles. There was some drill steel and tools in the bottom of the hole. There was timbering down to maybe nine feet, and just a little more at the bottom. Somebody had used powder, but Pa didn't, as he didn't want to attract attention.

"Another thing; I was never there three times, only twice, and we only saw "Walzy" on the first trip. The last trip the place looked like it had been deserted for years.

"Years ago I'd told several people about these trips, and people have a habit of passing a story along to others. I figured I needed some way of knowing where any newcomer who might approach me was getting his information. If anyone mentioned three trips I'd know they were getting their information through Ruth or Ely.



John Reed in La Barge Canyon, 1950

"The first trip was actually from Globe. I was pretty small and it was not so far. We hit the big canyon at its headwaters and stayed in it all the way to the mine. I remember one place where the sides got real narrow and steep, and then it widened out again.

"I remember we camped once at a spring where there were lots of big trees. We went down the canyon a ways farther before we climbed out. We didn't climb up a side canyon, we just climbed up the side of the mountain.

"There were some side canyons coming in on the right just after we left the spring, before we climbed out to the mine, but I don't remember how many.

"There was a big pinnacle off in the distance, I think to the south. I remember you could see it from the mountain the mine was on, but I don't think you could see it, at least not all of it, from where the mine was.

"From the mine you could see up and down the big canyon, but you couldn't see the canyon bottom directly below you without walking over to the edge of the flat. There wasn't a sharp drop-off at the bottom edge of the flat, it just gradually got steeper.

"Also," Reed added, with a twinkle in his eye, "there weren't any three rocks the size of a beer barrel!"

"Another thing, what I told Ruth and Ely about circling around to the south and west of the Needle was all made up to throw them off the track. We never were south or west of the Needle. Pa knew exactly where the mine was, there was nobody else back in there, and there was no need to go circling all over the country. We went straight to the mine.

"We did make our last trip in from Holbrook in the winter of 1887-1888. We had to leave the horses and wagon up in that country north of the Salt River. We walked all the rest of the way, but I was older then and got along pretty well."

Reed's admission of deliberately misleading Ruth and Ely left me a little apprehensive about how truthful he was being with me. For the greater part though, it relieved my concern over the obvious inconsistencies in his earlier versions. At least his current story fit the country, which his first one did not.

One evening Reed asked me if any of the people who contacted him in the 1930s were still active in the area. I advised that the only ones we were likely to meet were the Barkleys. Tex Barkley was getting along in years, and the U Ranch operations were largely conducted by his son Bill.

At this, Reed insisted that his true identity never be revealed to anyone outside our immediate party. "I'm your uncle Olaf Nilsson from Blackduck Lake, Minnesota. It's in Beltrami County. Remember that," he said. "I'm just here on vacation, and I never set foot in those mountains before."

To this I acquiesced good-naturedly, and for the remainder of the trip John Reed was my "Uncle Ole."

Reed and I arrived in Phoenix about the first of December. I left him at a motel, while I hiked into the Superstitions to locate Chuck Aylor. La Barge had water running everywhere, and Chuck had moved back into our camp below Marsh Valley.

To Chuck, I explained Reed's changes in his story, and we agreed on the most likely orientation. We felt that Reed's "big canyon" was most likely La Barge, and that his "place where the sides got narrow and steep" was the Upper La Barge box. Reed's "spring where there were big



trees" would probably have been La Barge Spring.

Accordingly, we resolved to take Reed into the headwaters of La Barge by way of the high country to the north, completely away from the presumed search area. By so doing, as we worked our way down the canyon, Reed would be seeing the country fresh, and from the same direction of travel as on his trips with his father.

We set up an arrangement to meet at Tortilla Ranch two days later, and I returned to town. Chuck, meanwhile, pulled a Siwash camp into La Barge, above the Upper Box.

Reed had declined the offer of a saddle mule, saying he preferred to walk. So Chuck left the animals in camp and hiked out to meet us at Tortilla. He arrived in mid-morning. Introductions were made, and the three of us set out to find the Lost Dutchman Mine.

Reed was in high spirits and anxious to get on to the mine site but agreed with us that it was best to travel slowly, with Reed studying the country carefully as we went. He was in excellent physical condition and handled himself very well on the trail.

During the trip to our first camp, by way of Indian Springs and Cane Springs, he recognized nothing familiar. Chuck and I were not particularly concerned at this, as there were no salient landmarks enroute that a child would be apt to remember sixty years later.

The second day we left our camp intact and began slowly working our way down La Barge on foot. Reed recognized nothing until we came to the Upper La Barge Box. He seemed certain he remembered this as the place where the canyon walls got steep and narrow. We continued on through the Box, and along in the afternoon we returned to our first camp.

The next day we struck camp, packed the burros, and moved to a cave on the north wall of La Barge at the mouth of the Box. While Chuck and I set up camp, Reed hiked on down the canyon alone. I had provided him with a gun belt and a revolver to carry. He seemed quite able to take care of himself and had no reservations about being alone. He returned to camp towards evening.

The next day we left our camp gear set up at the

cave and explored La Barge past the mouths of Whiskey Canyon and Trap Canyon, as far as La Barge Spring. The following day we struck camp and packed down to the spring.

Reed was confident it was the spring he remembered with all the big trees, but said he really thought the spring was on the other bank of the creek. Nevertheless, he was convinced it was the right place, and that his childhood memory was defective.

There was a headbox and a concrete trough at the spring, and Reed commented that they weren't there in 1888. This, of course, would be correct, as they were not put in until the early years of the Quarter Circle U outfit.

From the camp at La Barge Spring, we worked our way northward, downstream, nearly as far as Charlebois Canyon. As we passed the mouth of Music Canyon, Reed again repeated that there were canyons "like this one" coming in from the right after they left the spring, but he wasn't entirely sure that Music was one of them.

Further, while the cliffs of Bluff Springs Mountain to his left and Music Mountain on his right seemed familiar, there were no obvious landmarks he could positively identify.

Again, we returned to camp, and the following day moved camp to Charlebois.

Up to this point, all Reed would verify was that it "looked like the right country."

From the Charlebois camp we worked westward down La Barge, along the southern cliffs of Charlebois Mountain (mistakenly labeled Black Mountain on the 7 ½ minute U.S.G.S. topographic map). Here Reed was not so sure of himself.

Just past White Rock Spring we climbed out of La Barge to the west, and out across a flat just northeast of the confluence of Bluff Springs Creek and Needle Creek. Here, Weaver's Needle presented itself in an unobstructed view to the south.

Here, Reed again became sure of himself. "I don't ever think I was here," he said. "We must have come too far."

Since it was well into the afternoon, and the comparative luxury of our main Marsh Valley camp was close at hand, Reed and I hiked into the main camp, while Chuck returned to

Charlebois to tend the animals and spend the night. Towards noon the next day, he rode in with the pack outfit and our nomadic camp gear.

That afternoon we held council. Reed asserted that everything seemed right until somewhere below Charlebois, and then nothing seemed to fit.

I then pointed out to Reed that in 1854 an expedition of Mexicans were supposed to have surveyed a mine site in the Superstitions. The survey story became known as the Salizar Survey, which story was told by me in Volume 4 of the *Superstition Mountain Journal*. The terminus of that survey seemed to fall in an area called the Red Hills, immediately west of our Marsh Valley camp.

Since the area was close at hand, we suggested that Reed examine the area, in the event that Reed's mine and the mine referenced by Salizar, might be the same.

Accordingly, Reed and I spent two days in the Red Hills area. He advised that it was the wrong kind of country.

From the Marsh Valley camp, we also worked farther down La Barge, along the southwest slope of Black Mountain (Malapais Mountain), as far as the Lower La Barge Box. Again, Reed said the country was all wrong.

The most likely spot, Reed believed, was the basin, or rincon, on the southeast slope of Charlebois Mountain, formed by the upper reaches of the first canyon on the right below Charlebois.

We spent the next several days studying that area, working out of our Marsh Valley camp.

Around the campfire one night, Reed drew his final conclusion. "I'm sure La Barge is the right canyon," he said. "I really believe I remember the Upper Box and La Barge Spring. I'm fairly sure we passed both Music Canyon and Charlebois Canyon before we climbed out. Yet when we climb up into that country, I just don't see anything that jogs my memory. But as rough as this country is, I can see that you'd have to know exactly where to dig.

"All these years, I've really thought I could go back to it. But it's been over sixty years, and when I was just a boy, I never dreamed that someday I'd want to come back on my own. If I

had, I'd have made some markers or have paid better attention to the country.

"I'm really sorry to have put you to the trouble I did. I really think it's up there somewhere, but I don't think I can find it."

Chuck and I were disappointed, certainly, but having made many an unsuccessful treasure hunt, we accepted Reed's verdict graciously.

At least we had brought Reed into the Superstitions, reworked his route to the best of our ability, and were left with the hope that someday some additional scrap of information might give us the missing key to the puzzle.

Supplies had run low, the result of Pete, our mule, having raided our provisions one day while we were out afoot. Since a trip to town seemed imminent, Reed asked to accompany us, to check on mail from his home.

Chuck's post office box at Phoenix held a letter from Reed's wife. Reed advised she was not well, and he thought it best that he return to St. Louis.

I bought him a ticket, gave him some traveling money, thanked him, and bid him goodbye at the station.

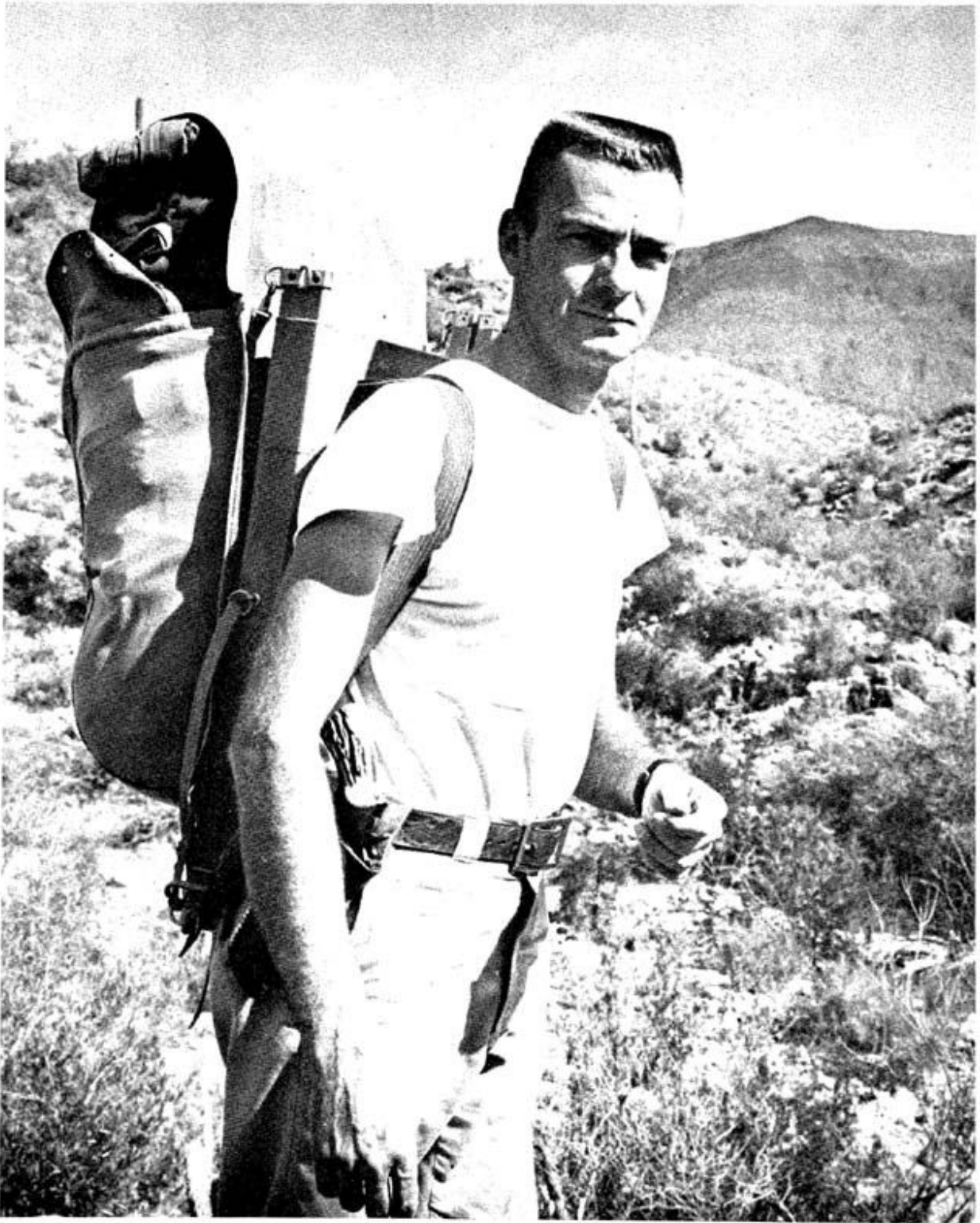
A year and a half after Chuck Aylor had first told me of John Reed, Chuck and I again sat around a night fire, doing a treasure hunter's "post mortem" on the John Reed episode.

"Clay, do you really think Reed was ever here before?" Chuck asked.

"We'll never know," I responded. "A lot of his story, the final version at least, does tally. Holbrook was there when Reed said it was, and the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad did run through there. Globe was there when he said it was.

"Now I'll admit he could probably have researched these things out in any good public library, but if he'd gone to that trouble, you'd think he'd have gotten a map of the country. And if he had a map, why was he so grossly overestimating his distances? Reed's certainly smart enough to read scale off a government map. And a map wouldn't have told him there were big trees at La Barge Spring.

"And there are a couple of things Reed knew that I don't see how he could have researched out.



Clay Worst, the author, in the Superstition Mountains in 1950



"The first was the fact that in 1888 the place appeared to have been abandoned for some years. Only a few people know that when the Dutchman died in 1891, he said it'd been eight years since he'd been to the mine. That would have made his last trip in the winter of 1883-1884. The mine had been abandoned for four years before Reed's last trip.

"Most people think the Dutchman worked his mine until shortly before his death. I don't know of anything to the contrary in print, and I don't know how Reed could have known about it.

"Another thing, Reed described the shaft as being bulkheaded down five feet with two solid layers of logs crossed at right angles, then backfilled to the surface. The Dutchman described exactly the same thing, but again, it's never been written up. How could Reed have known it?"

"What about Reed's dad having run the Dutchman off on the first trip?" Chuck queried. "The Dutchman was supposed to have killed three men to get the mine, and four more to keep it a secret. Is it logical that anyone that determined is going to let himself be run off so easily?"

"Yes," I answered, "there is an explanation. Do you know what kind of a gun the Dutchman carried in his later years?"

"No," Chuck responded. "What could that have to do with it?"

"Plenty," I replied. "In his later years the Dutchman carried a double barreled shotgun loaded with buckshot. There's only one reason why a man traveling alone on the frontier wilderness would carry a short-range scattergun. His eyesight must have been failing and had grown too poor to see the fine sights of a rifle.

"If he'd had a confrontation with anyone armed with a good long-range rifle, the sensible thing to do would be to back away from it. He would've been no match for Reed's dad in a shoot-out."

"We'll never know the answer," I went on. "There will always be the chance that Reed was simply an old man who wanted one chance at high adventure, hunting a lost mine or buried treasure. If it was actually all a dream, he may even have relived the story so many times that he finally convinced himself it was true.

"But there's another mystery about Reed that I've never told you about, Chuck. "Before I went to St. Louis, Reed sent me a hand-drawn map of the city, directing me to his home. The map was carefully detailed, as the route was complicated.

"When I got there, I tried to follow the map, and got hopelessly lost. I finally stopped at a gas station, and showed the map to the attendant, who advised me he'd lived there all his life.

"The man puzzled over the map for a minute, first advising it was all mixed up. Then he broke out into laughter."

"For Pete's sake, fella," he chuckled. "Somebody has drawn you a map of St. Louis, perfect in every landmark, except it's an absolute mirror image. North and South are right, but East and West are reversed right to left."

"Why would he do that," Chuck inquired puzzled. "There's no place imaginable where the city would look like that."

"Yes there is," I responded. "There's one place **imaginable**. It's how the city would look if you **imagined** you were looking up at it from deep underground. **Like down in a mine.**"

"But how could Reed have known about the damn logs?" Chuck blurted out.

I stared into the dying embers of the fire for a long time before I answered.

"I don't know," I replied.