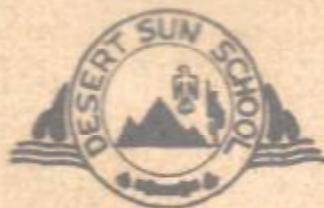




OUR DESERT SUN SCHOOL

An inherited vision





DUSK ON THE SALTON SEA.

THIS PHOTO, TAKEN BY SYLVIA HOLLAND
ABOUT 1939, WON THE AWARD FOR BEST
PHOTO OF THE YEAR IN THE MONTHLY
CONTESTS HELD AT DISNEY STUDIOS.



DESERT AND MOUNTAIN MEMORIES

Collected and edited by Theo Holland Halladay, alumna, 1937-1942

EARLY DAYS OF THE DESERT SUN SCHOOL AND CAMP

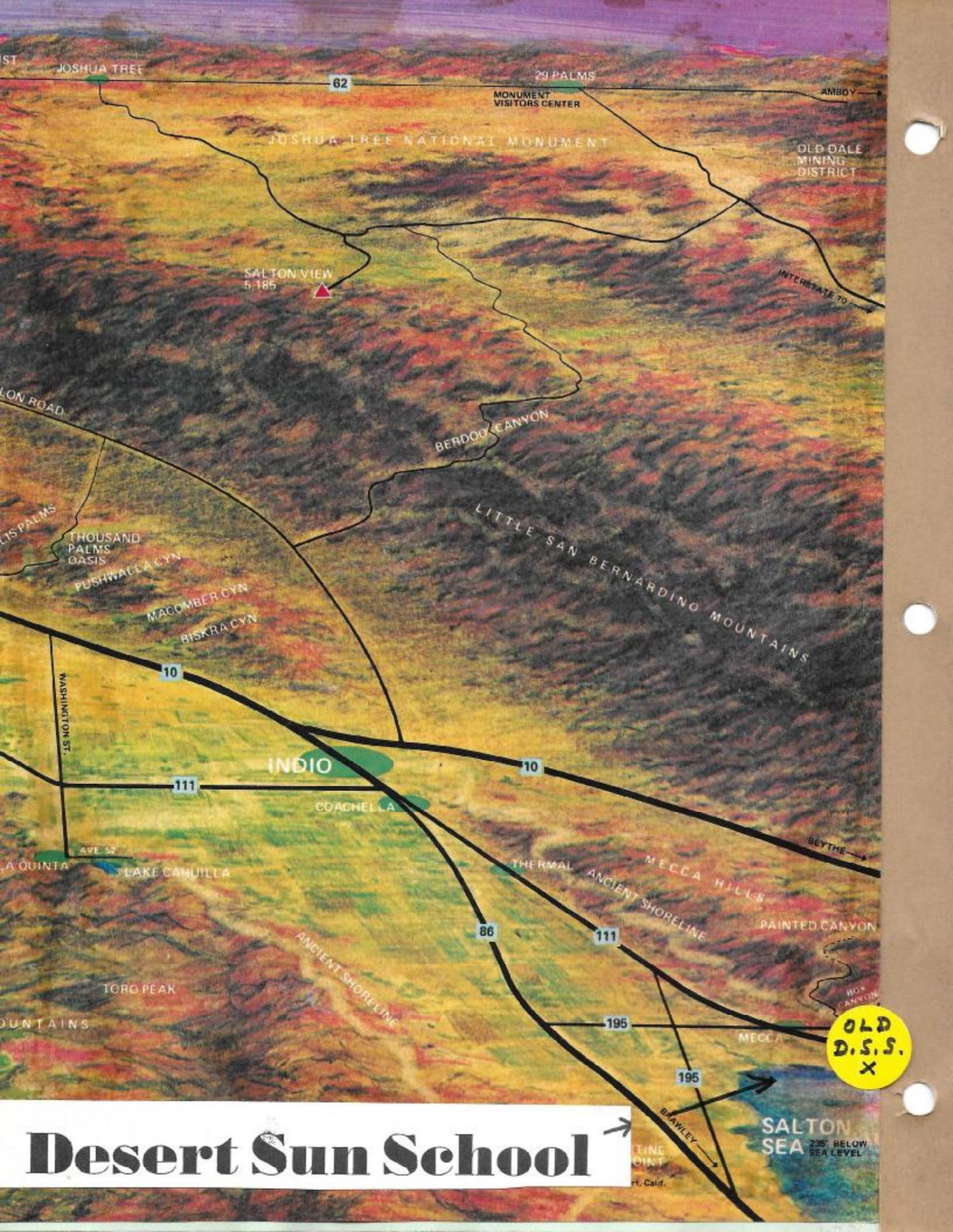
Name changed to Elliott-Pope Preparatory School in 1984, "EPPS".

MOST OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS BOOK WERE TAKEN BY SYLVIA HOLLAND IN 1938 AND 1939 AND ALSO DURING THE SIX MONTHS IN 1942 DURING WHICH SHE WORKED AS A TEACHER AT THE SCHOOL IN THE DESERT, THREE MILES SOUTHEAST OF MECCA, CALIFORNIA. ALL OF HER PICTURES ARE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

ALSO INCLUDED ARE SOME COLOR PHOTOS FROM DESERT MAGAZINE WHICH SHOW THE DESERT AROUND THE SCHOOL AND SOME FIELD TRIPS WHICH USED TO BE TAKEN; AND THERE ARE ALSO SOME COLOR PHOTOS SHOWING THE SCENERY AROUND IDYLLWILD.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL. *The Desert Sun School was founded in 1930 in the Coachella Valley near Mecca, California, by Edith Elliott and her older sister Helen Jayne and with the substantial help of Edith's husband Richard Wharton Elliott ("Dickie" to the children thereafter.) It was established on the Elliotts' desert ranch, and during the school year it continued there until it was permanently moved to Idyllwild, California in 1946. A summer camp, the Desert Sun Camp, was opened in Idyllwild in 1933, and the staff moved back and forth from desert to mountains every year until the winter and summer programs became one with the purchase of Saunders Meadow Lodge in 1946, where the summer camp had already been held for several years.*

"Edie," "Dickie" and "Ong" were the mainstay of the school and camp until their retirement, with help at times from several other members of the clan. Edie and Ong were two of the four children of Arthur and Xan Hammond, the other two of whom were Alex (the eldest) and Marian (the youngest). All four had nicknames and were like adopted family to the earlier alumni: Bagdad, Munga, Ikey and Ming. Ikey's wife Winnie was also included as family, as were Dickie's Uncle Harry and Aunt Ruth, and at the very beginning Aunt Ana and Aunt Dix. This spirit of family was never lost, and has always been a conscious part of Desert Sun's philosophy.



JOSHUA TREE

62

29 PALMS

MONUMENT VISITORS CENTER

AMBOY

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

OLD DALE MINING DISTRICT

SALTON VIEW
5,185

INTERSTATE 70

LONG ROAD

BERDOO CANYON

THOUSAND PALMS

THOUSAND PALMS OASIS

PUSHWALLA CYN

MACOMBER CYN

BISKRA CYN

LITTLE SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS

10

WASHINGTON ST

INDIO

10

COACHELLA

BEYTHE

AVE 52

LAKE CANUELLA

THERMAL

MECCA HILLS

111

ANCIENT SHORELINE

PAINTED CANYON

LA QUINTA

86

ANCIENT SHORELINE

TORO PEAK

MOUNTAINS

195

MECCA

OLD D.S.S. X

195

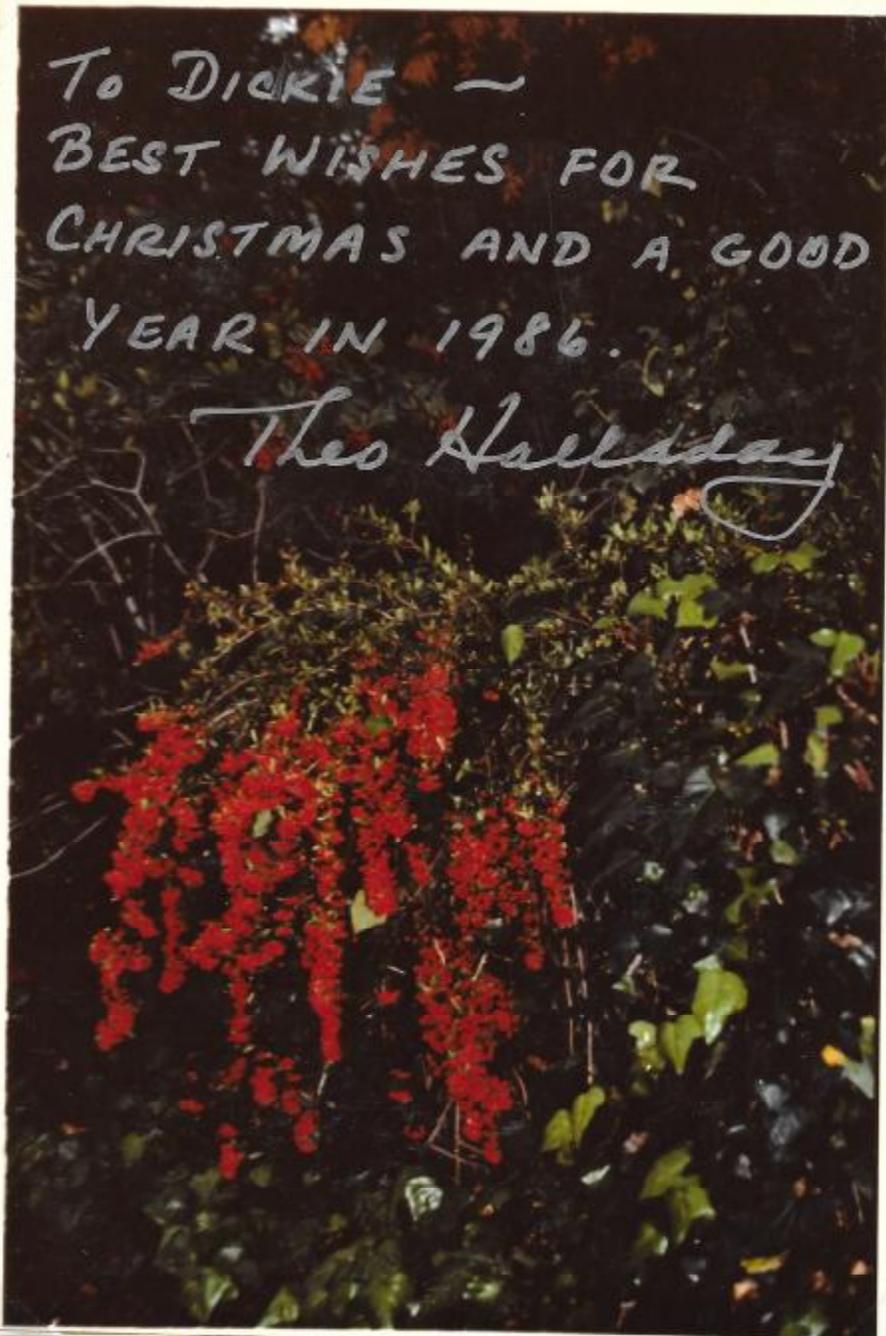
SALTON SEA
235' BELOW SEA LEVEL

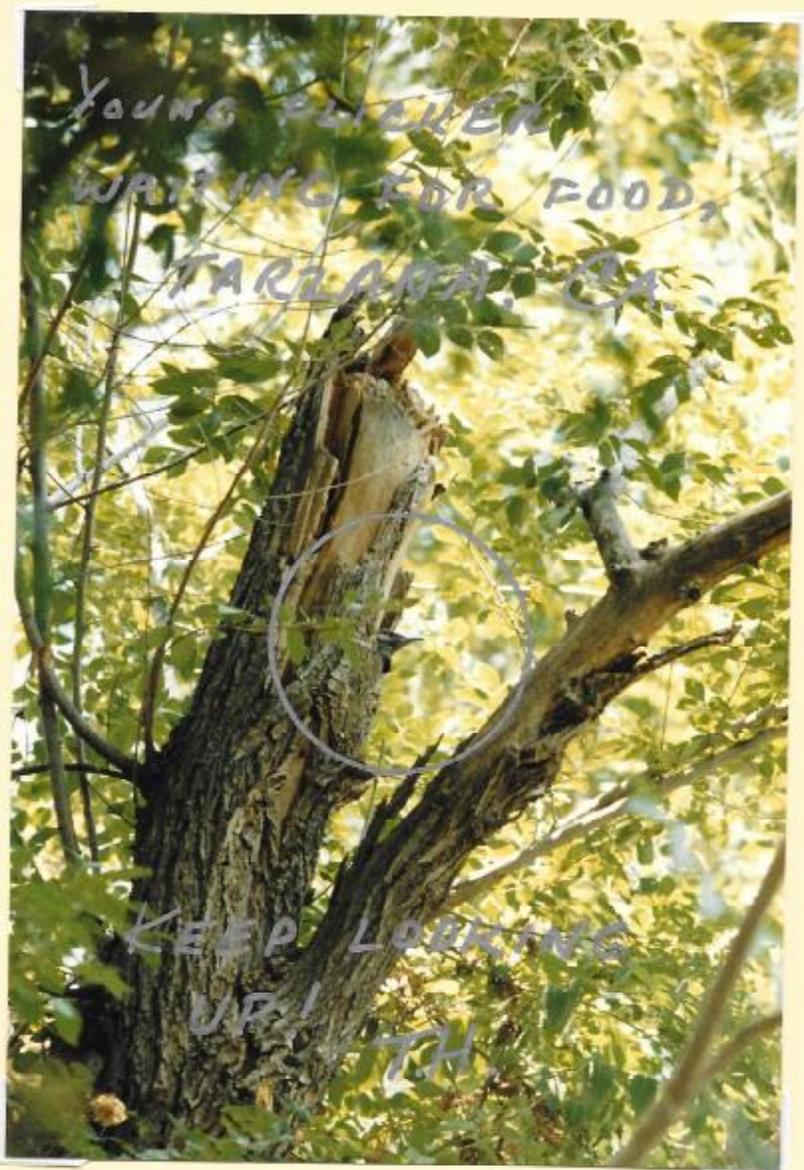
Desert Sun School →

Imperial Point
H. Calif.

TO DICKIE ~
BEST WISHES FOR
CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD
YEAR IN 1986.

Theo Halladay





YOUNG FLICKER
WAITING FOR FOOD,
TARLATA CA.

KEEP LOOKING
UP!
TH

HALLADAY NATURE PHOTOS

18653 Ventura Blvd.
TARZANA, CALIFORNIA 91356 USA

(818) 344-4628 or (Serv.) 996-0727

DATE Dec. 21, 1985

SUBJECT Album

DICKIE

Dear Friend -

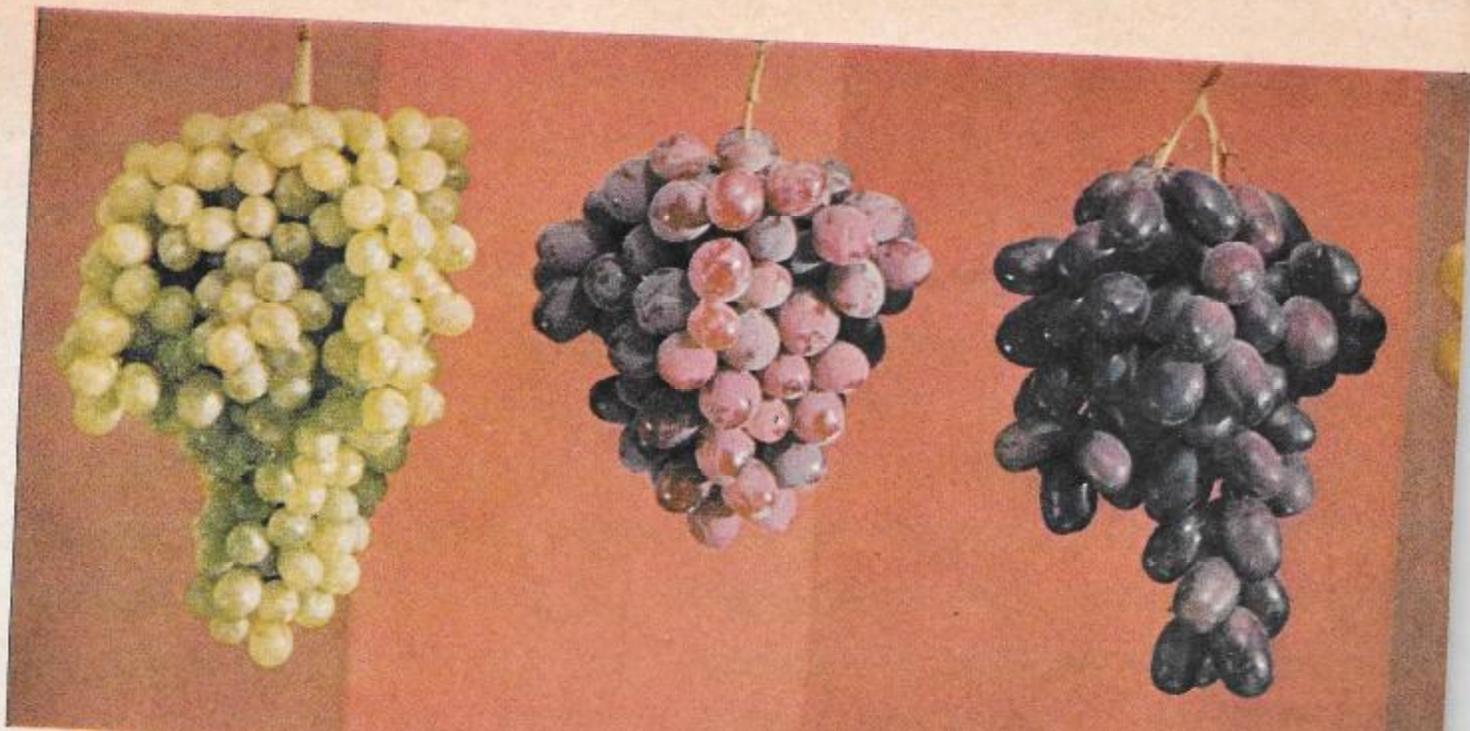
I have made up this album of old photos from the years 1937-1942 at the D.S.S. school & camp, which I think you might like to have. Also include some other pix & maps.

Later if you wish to pass some or all of it along to the school's present management, I'm sure they would like to have it. At least they sounded thrilled when I told them I had the old photos. I'll be glad to furnish larger prints if you or they wish them, as I have all the negs. Might even send negs. SIGNED Love, Theo

PLEASE REPLY NO REPLY NECESSARY



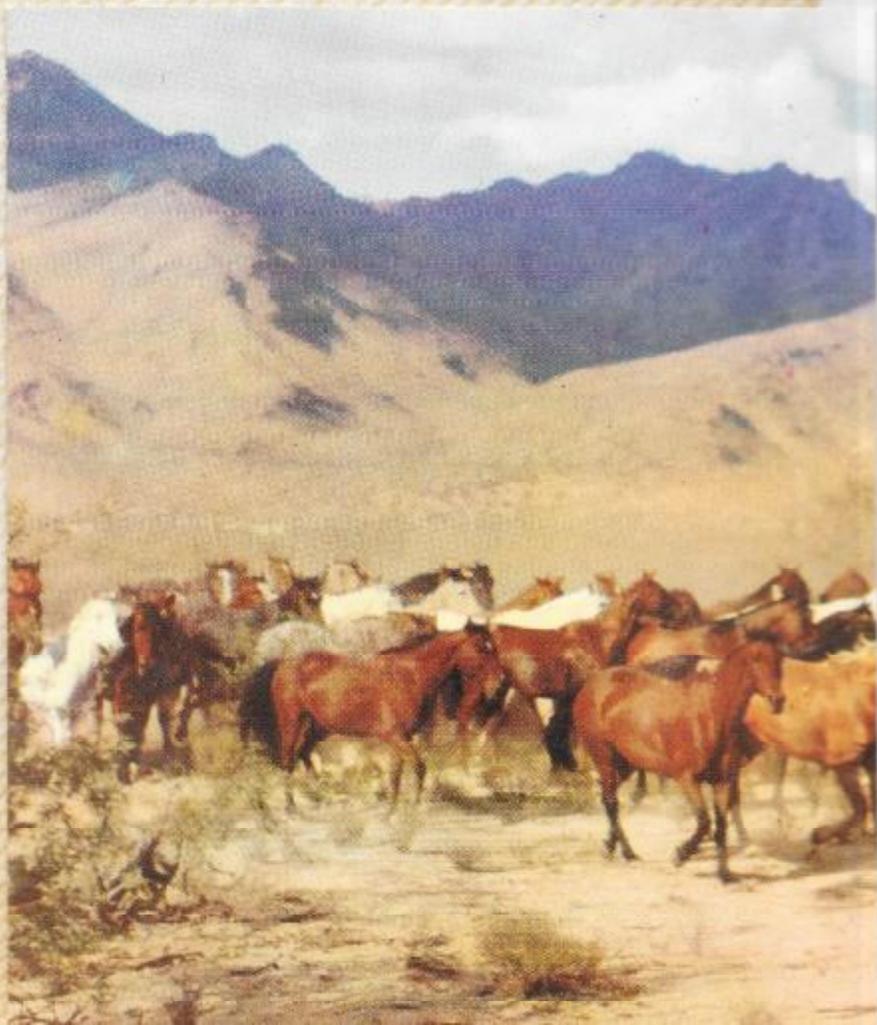
PETER WILLET AND TOM FARNSWORTH



Thompson Seedless. Number one seller. Firm, tender texture; rather thin skinned. Mildly sweet, sometimes bitter when ripe

Tokay. Spectacular. Thick, fairly tough skins. Distinctive crackling texture. Firm and juicy, with a unique winy flavor

Blackrose. A new hybrid, with Ribier as one parent. Tender, crisp flesh. Has a more typical grape flavor than Ribier



HOW IT ALL BEGAN ON THE DESERT

Although Richard "Dickie" Elliott maintains he was a corporal and not the executive type, he played an important role in the founding and development of the Desert Sun School, now The Elliott-Pope Preparatory School.

A Coachella Valley rancher and native of Tennessee, Dickie fell into the education field by association. His wife, Edith "Edie" and her sister, Helen Jayne, were school teachers.

Desert Sun School began when the Elliotts found it was much easier to educate their own children on the ranch. Soon, others were drawn to the program and before long 12 pupils had enrolled and studied in tenthouses.

"At first, I resented all the outside children around. I was a rancher with some engineering background, but the school program grew and I became the mathematics teacher. I loved it and developed a real love for the kids," Dickie said recently at his Idyllwild home.

His role was more than that of a teacher. With his background he also became maintenance man, builder, bus driver and a few other things at the fledgling desert school that attracted an increasing number of children.

In 1932 a summer camp program was initiated not



Richard "Dickie" Elliott

far from the present site of the T.E.P.P.S. campus. There were several locations during the following years before the present site was selected as the permanent home of Desert Sun School.

The facilities had been originally designed as a country club, but like other such ventures in the mountains it failed during the Great Depression.

Three weeks before the desert school was to reopen in 1945, Edie and Helen informed Dickie that they wanted to stay in the mountains.

"I was dumfounded. I thought of kids sleeping in the snow. The idea floored me!" he recalled recently.

The school moved and the snows came. Dickie remembers one night when

tent houses were used as dorms and snow began falling late at night. He began his rescue plan, which was directing all pupils to the main lodge and raking snow from the canvas covered structures.

At the girls' dorm, Dickie encountered a girl coming from the tent, bathed in tears. He asked if she was hurt or frightened.

"No, I'm so happy!" the girl replied amid her tears.

The pupils loved the snow and when 1949 came with its long cold winter, everyone pitched in to shovel paths and roads for three days.

(Cont. Page Eleven)



Although he ranks himself as a corporal, Dickie assumed many responsible roles in and around the community. He was an officer of the Idyllwild Chamber of Commerce, Director of the Fern Valley Water District, served as a School Trustee for the Hemet Unified School District and was called upon to participate in countless programs.

At Desert Sun School, he initiated and arranged regular seminars that brought prominent scientists, political leaders, journalists and educators to the campus. Students discussed key issues with Cal Tech scientists and NASA officials.

Because of his outdoor background, Dickie was instrumental in seeing that the Desert Sun School had a strong equestrian program. The School's mounted troop participated in parades throughout the area.

At 85, Dickie Elliott is like many men of his nature and experience. He has mellowed and become much more involved in spiritual and philosophical matters. The "diamond in the rough" quality has lost its sharp edges.

"I don't carry a gun any more", he said recently.

--Ernie Maxwell

With Love to Dickie . . .

"Dickie" has been like a father to many who have been part of The Desert Sun community over the past fifty years. Whether in the classroom, on horseback or at the dinner table, Dickie's love has infected all of us. He has deeply touched the lives of campers and students, parents and faculty. No matter how busy, Dickie has always taken the time to listen to those seeking his counsel. He has given youngsters the confidence to succeed. We remember his high expectations, and especially his demands for individual responsibility and personal integrity. Whether parading with The Desert Sun Troop down the streets of Idyllwild or listening to homespun stories around the campfire, we still treasure those moments with him. Knowing Dickie has enhanced our lives. Through his concern for us, Dickie epitomizes the best in independent education. Now a Trustee of the School, his loyalty to Desert Sun continues.

Letter from Dickie

Dear Alumni
and Alumnae



What a wonderful thing it is to have six alumni on our present Board of Trustees! What a long distance from our tent houses overlooking the Salton Sea, where Edie and Helen Jayne started teaching twelve students of ranch families of the Coachella Valley!

After our Board of Trustees Meeting today (September, 13th), in the beautiful Edith Elliott Memorial Library, we adjourned to the barbecue—hosted by the school and Board of Trustees, and we had some wonderful visits with Idyllwild friends, parents, students and teachers.

We are re-doing our Master Plan to take full advantage of our beautiful 110 acre campus. The challenges of our future make us realize that it will take the "uncommon" men and women to meet and solve the problems of our nations present and future. We expect our graduates to be so well equipped intellectually and morally that they will "have the wrestling thews that throw the world." We expect them to want to share the love and wisdom, compassion, courage and integrity they have grown to admire and cultivate at Desert Sun.

I know you would enjoy helping us to give the inspiration needed to achieve these ends. Those who do not have money to give can inspire some who are able to share. You will never have a better chance to help make a better world. THINK BIG! Be the "uncommon man." And come and see me—soon!

Dickie

EDITH HAMMOND ELLIOTT
MEMORIAL LIBRARY

DEDICATED TO THE FOUNDER OF
THE DESERT SUN SCHOOL
WHO FOUND HER FULFILLMENT IN LIFE
BY HELPING OTHERS TO ACHIEVE A
GREATER FULFILLMENT IN THEIRS.

1972



*Edith
Hammond
Elliott*



1902 - 1971

IN LASTING AND LOVING MEMORY





THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of DESERT SUN SCHOOL announces the founding of two vital, permanent memorials to Edith Elliott who for forty years guided, developed and moulded the spiritual character of hundreds of our young people while at the same time bestowing upon them the finest academic education.

THE EDITH ELLIOTT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Today, more than ever, the staff at DESERT SUN SCHOOL provides excellence in inspired teaching and mature guidance. Character building, a sound education and thus preparation for the future is the paramount objective in the school's work with young people.

Worthy students are continually visiting the school and saying "this is the kind of environment in which I would like to live and study." How unfortunate that so many cannot afford to do so! It is equally unfortunate that the school does not have scholarship funds available to meet the tuition needs of these deserving students. There is also an important need to bring students to DESERT SUN with diverse backgrounds who, by living and studying together, provide the cross-fertilization necessary to help all students understand and meet the challenges of today's turbulent society.

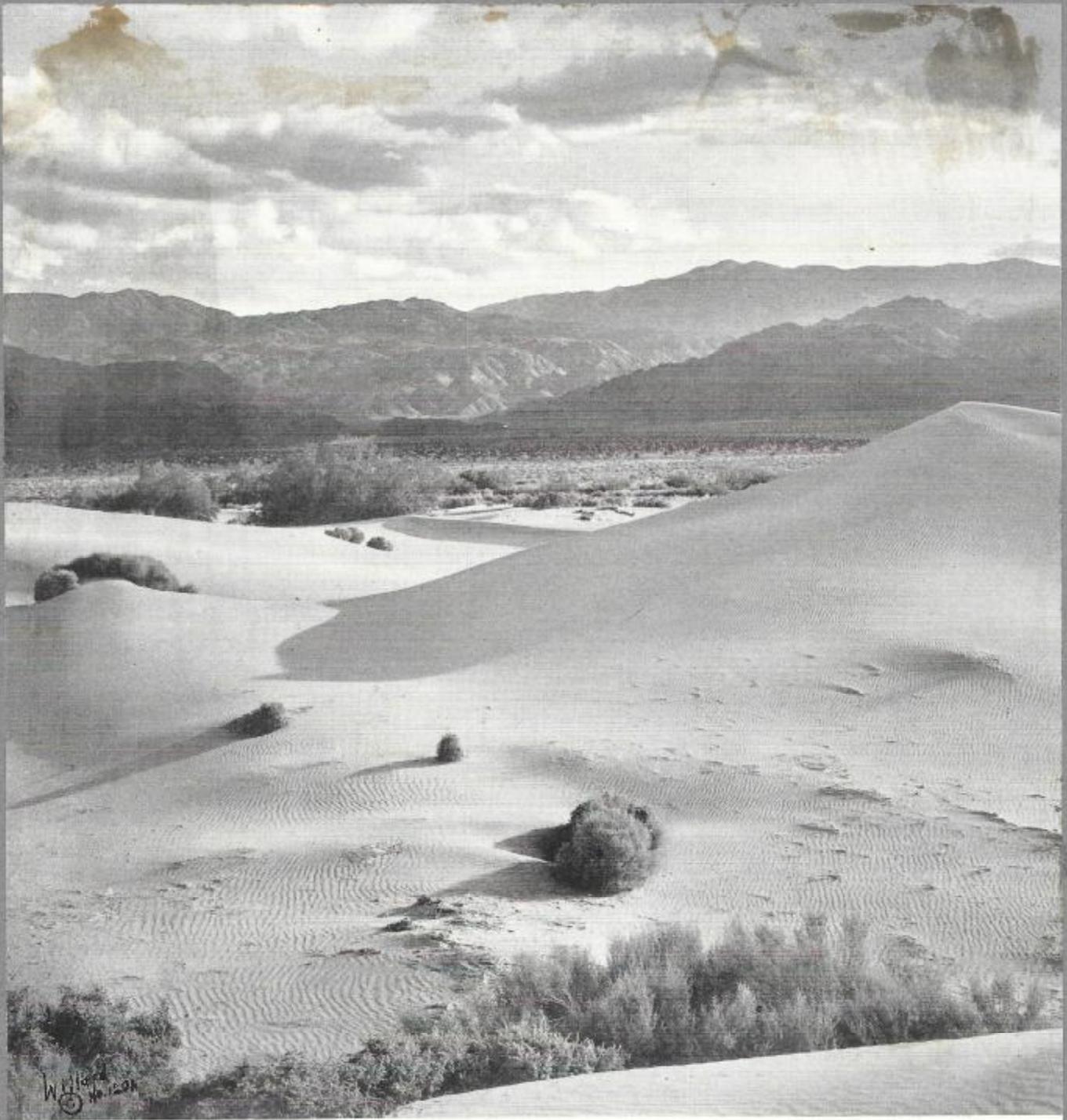
It is the specific objective of the EDITH ELLIOTT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND to make the DESERT SUN educational experience, which Edie worked so long and so faithfully to develop, available to more of these worthy and needy students.

THE EDITH ELLIOTT MEMORIAL LIBRARY FUND

By resolution of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES, the new library shall be dedicated to the everlasting memory of EDITH ELLIOTT. It is indeed a most fitting memorial as no single school project was closer to Edie's heart nor more critically needed than the beautiful new library building. It will be far more than simply a facility for storing school books. As envisioned by Edie, it will be the center of a wide variety of academic activities and will contribute immeasurably to the total educational process at DESERT SUN SCHOOL.

The library building is now under construction! Through the kindness and generosity of many DESERT SUN friends sufficient funds are now available to complete the building as originally conceived. However, new requirements stemming from the recently created memorial nature of the library and from the need for appropriate furnishings and equipment, have generated the necessity to appeal for additional donations.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO EITHER ONE OR BOTH OF THESE CHERISHED MEMORIALS



Photographs Copyright by Stephen Willard





PARENTS' DAY, 1938
 DESERT SUN SCHOOL,
 MECCA, CALIFORNIA.

THE PLAY GIVEN WAS
 "PYRAMUS AND THISBE"
 FROM SHAKESPEARE'S
 MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
 DREAM.
 EARLIEST SCHOOLHOUSE
 (CONVERTED SHED) IS
 BEHIND AUDIENCE.
 NEW DORM IN BKGD.
 ACTORS, R.: THEO
 HOLLAND, MARLOU RAU,
 JOANNE MACDONALD,

MARILYN



PAUL
 JENKINS





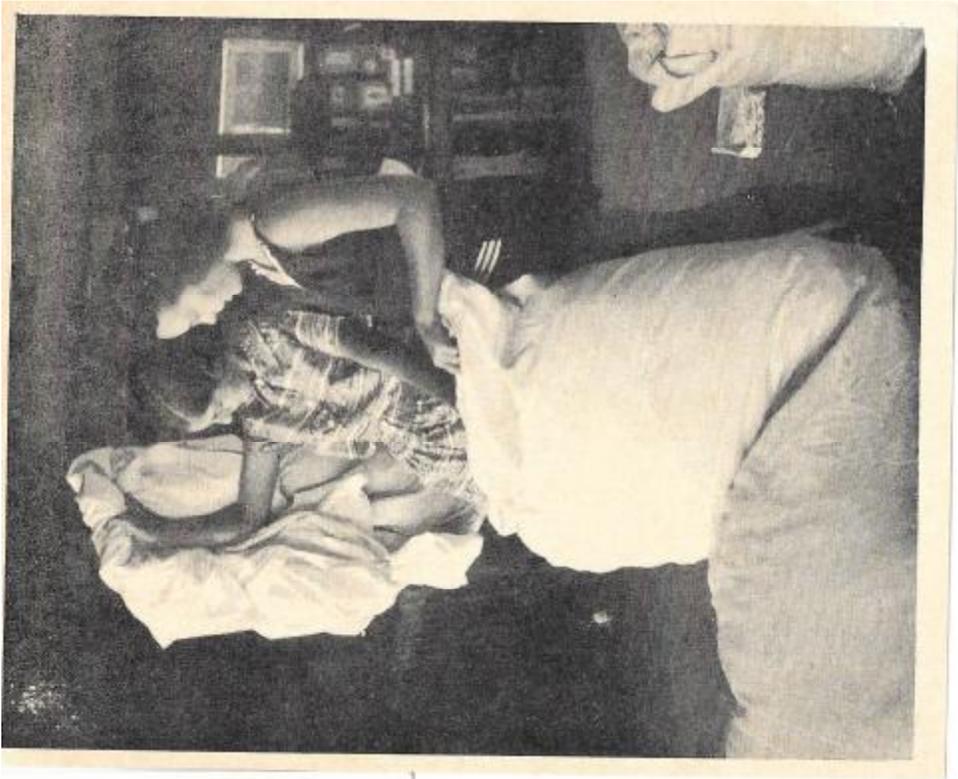


Christmas



CHRISTMAS PLAY, 1939 (ABOVE AND BELOW) PERFORMED
IN THE MAIN HOUSE. SEVERAL OF US KNEW IT ENTIRELY BY
HEART, AS IT WAS DONE FOR YEARS. IT WAS A NICE PLAY.







L: SALUTE TO THE FLAG
AT EAST END OF PLAYING
FIELD, ABOUT 1941.
TAMARISK TREES IN
BACKGROUND.

BELOW: SKETCH OF
DICKIE, MADE BY
ARTIST SYLVIA HOLLAND
IN 1942.





VIEW OF MAIN HOUSE.



REAR: WATER TOWER
AND HAMMOND HOME
(MUNGA AND BAGDAD)



REAR: HORSE CORRAL
AND RUNWAY (R.) TO
PASTURE.



GYMNASTICS ON PLAYING
FIELD. ARCHERY TARGET
IN BACKGD.



STARTING OFF FOR A
RIDE. WE RODE ALMOST
EVERY DAY.



BELOW L: BORIS HOLLAND.
BELOW R: PETER JAYNE
AND MARGARET ROCKWELL.



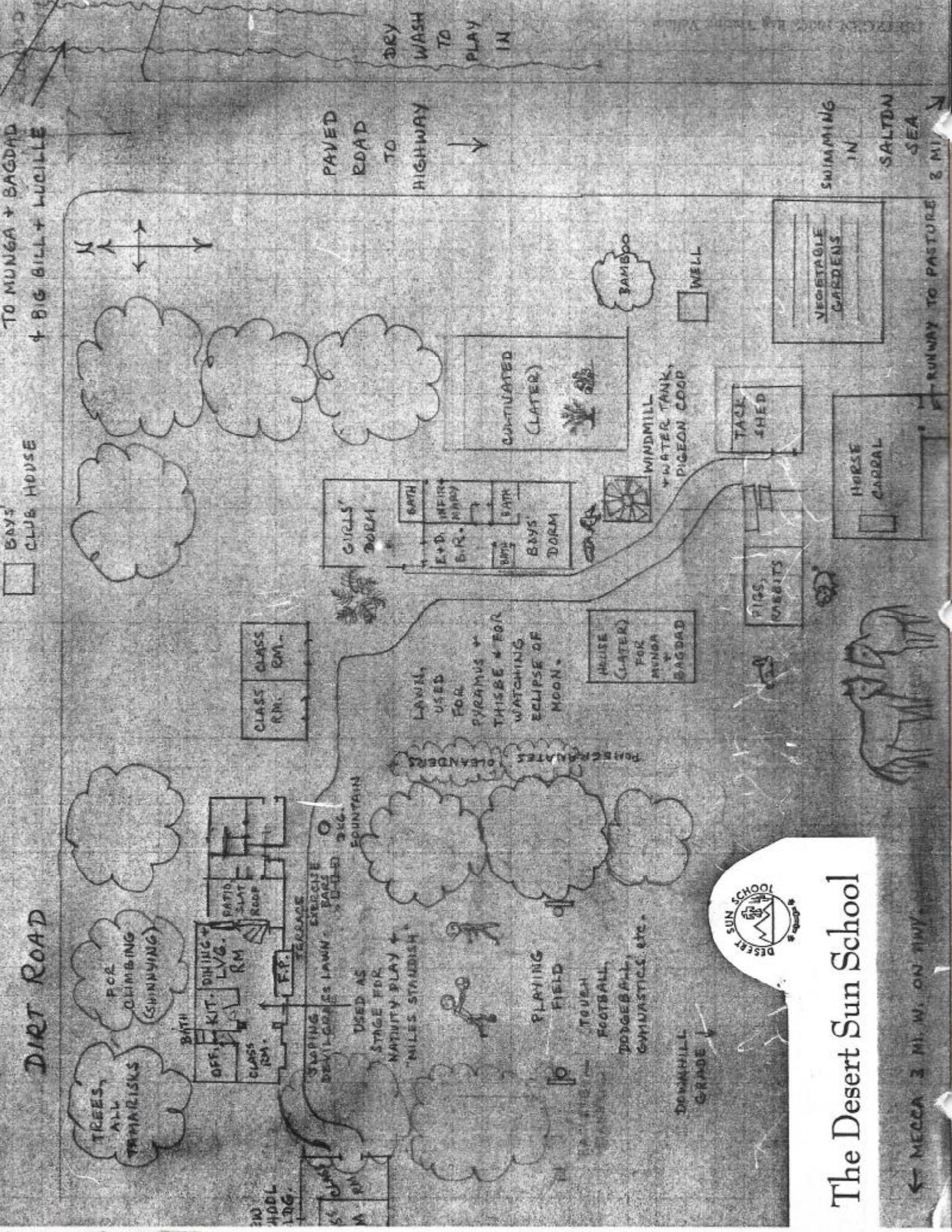


PICNIC FUN. REAR:
THETIS MAY DIAS.



DICKIE IN FIREMAN'S HAT,
WITH BORIS AND THEO.





The Desert Sun School



THE DESERT SUN SCHOOL

invites you to attend
its
Graduation Exercises
Saturday afternoon
at
four o'clock

JUNE FIRST · NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY



PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL, Mrs. Malcolm McDonald

GREETINGS

PAPER, "Our Pets" Fred MacMahon

SONG "All Through The Night"
(Accompanied by Jim Cottle on trumpet)

DECLAMATION Elizabeth Ketcham
(Excerpt from "John Brown's Body"
by Stephen Vincent Benet)

PIANO SOLO, Waltz (Brahms)
Ana Mary Elliott

DECLAMATION Theodora Holland
(Excerpts from "Bambi" by Felix Salten)

VOCAL SOLO Ana Mary Elliott

PIANO SOLO Theodora Holland
Scarf Dance (Chaminade)

DECLAMATION Ana Mary Elliott
(Excerpts from George Washington's
"Farewell Address")

SONG Girls' Chorus
(Nocturne from Midsummer Night's
Dream (Mendelssohn-Bartholdy)

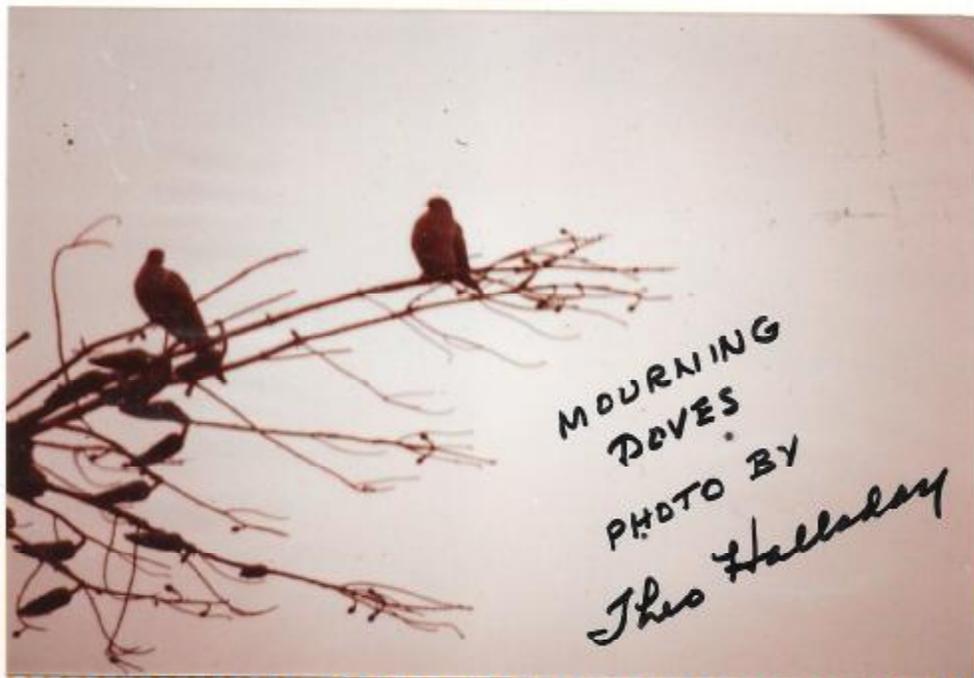
PIANO SOLO Mrs. Malcolm McDonald
(Arabesque, by Debussy)

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

SONG, Sicilian Mariners by the school



HELEN BELL



MOURNING
DOVES

PHOTO BY

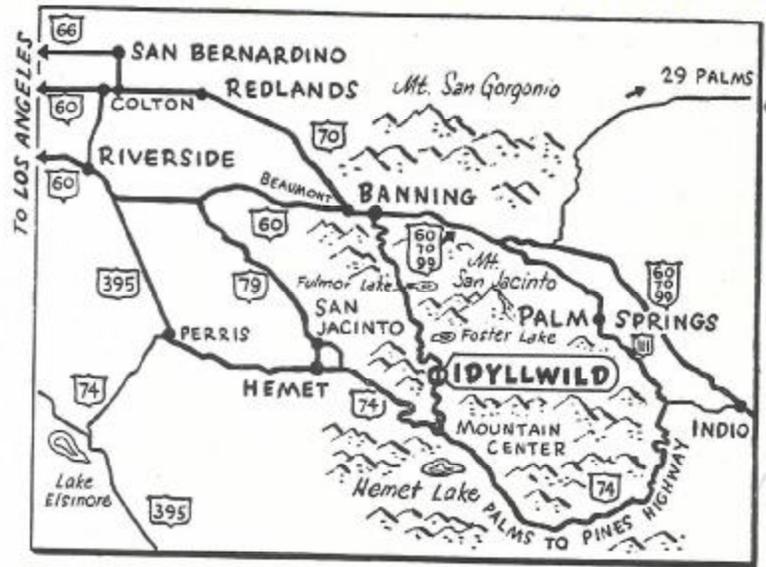
Theo Halladay

IN THE *Heart* OF THE SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS

IDYLLWILD lies half-way up the western slopes of the San Jacinto Mountains, at an elevation of 5400 feet—just over the crest from Palm Springs on the desert side. Excellent highways provide easy access to Idyllwild from Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego, Riverside, and the Coachella Valley.

The new Banning-Idyllwild Panoramic Highway connects the mountain community with the San Geronimo Pass area. From Hemet it is a 40 minute drive.

A spectacular approach is via the Pines-to-Palms Highway that rises from the desert floor at Palm Desert, affording a commanding view of the Coachella Valley.



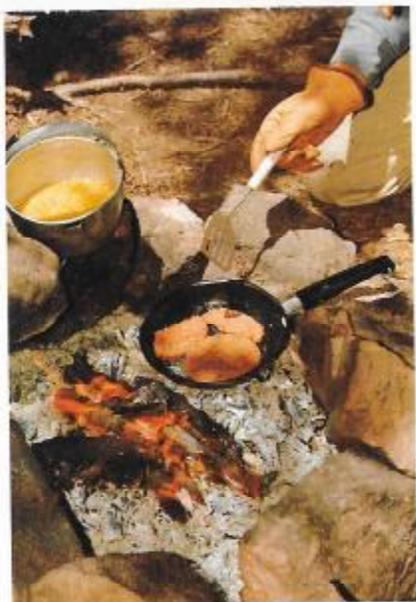
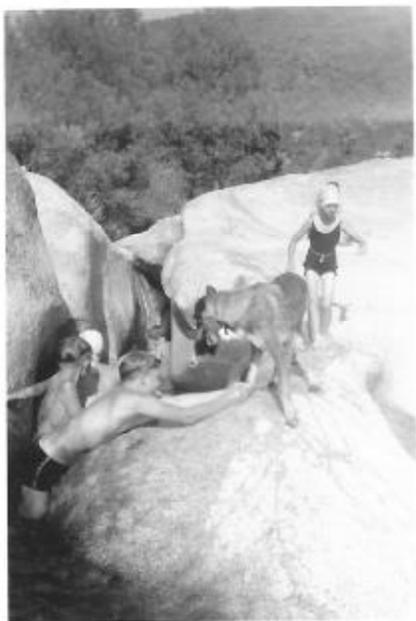
IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE CAMP THERE WERE CONTESTS.

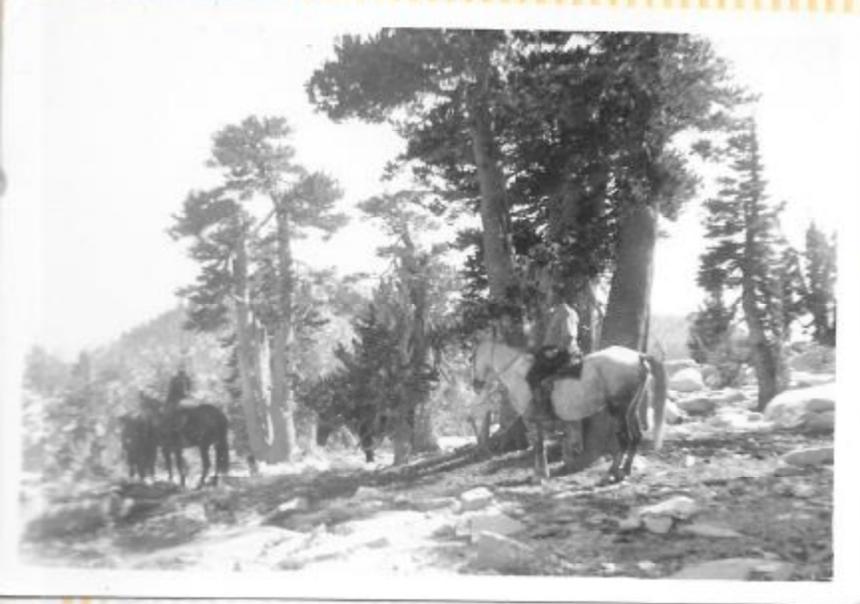
SCENES AT TODD'S MEADOW, WHERE D.S.S. SUMMER CAMP WAS HELD FOR SEVERAL YEARS AROUND 1936-39, NOT FAR FROM ITS PRESENT LOCATION. NOTE SWIMMING HOLE.

FOURTH
PRIZE

THE
DESERT
SUN







THIS PAGE: SCENES FROM A TRIP TO MT. SAN JACINTO TAKEN AT THE END OF THE CAMPING SEASON, JUST BAGDAD, RICHARD, (BOTH AT UPPER R.), MARIAN (MING) AND JACK WITH THE TWO DOGS BONNY AND HILDA R.), SYLVIA (IN COWBOY HAT, BOTTOM PHOTO) AND UNKNOWN OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.



THE INDIAN ROCK HOUSE

FROM A LETTER BY RICHARD W. ELLIOTT TO THEO HALLADAY, WRITTEN 5/16/85

YOU SPEAK OF "COMMUNICATION." I ONLY HAD TWO EXPERIENCES. THE SECOND ONE WAS WHEN WE WERE "LOST" COMING BACK FROM OUR POST-CAMPING SEASON RIDE TO WARNER'S HOT SPRINGS. I CAME ACROSS AN ANCIENT ABANDONED STONE STRUCTURE. IT WAS ABOUT 8 FEET HIGH, THREE WALLS, NO ROOF, NO FRONT, A CHANNEL ABOUT 30 INCHES WIDE AND ABOUT 12 OR 14 FEET LONG WITH AN OPENING IN THE LEFT WALL OF THE CHANNEL. YOU MAY REMEMBER IT VAGUELY."

I FIND THIS A SACRED SPOT TO THE INDIANS. THERE ARE NO SEAMS AT THE JOINTS. IT IS SOLID ROCK. NOT ROCKS STUCK TOGETHER - JUST ROCK!

THE YOUNG INDIAN CHIEF AND I MET AT A COUNTY PLANNING COMMITTEE. I TOLD HIM THE STORY. TWO MONTHS LATER HE BROUGHT HIS AGED GRANDFATHER FROM MESA, ARIZONA TO THE MEETING. THE GRANDFATHER HAD ME DESCRIBE ROCK HOUSE TO HIM. THEN HE SAID, "YES, THAT IS ROCK HOUSE."

I ASKED HIM, "SAM, DID YOUR ANCESTORS BUILD ROCK HOUSE?" "NO." "WHO DID, SAM?"

HE STRETCHED OUT HIS RIGHT HAND AND SAID, "THE ANCIENT ONES."

I AM ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE WHO HAS EVER SEEN "ROCKHOUSE." YOU ARE, ALSO." A FORMER LOCAL INDIAN FRIEND TOLD ME ON HIS DEATH-BED THAT HE HAD LOOKED FOR ROCKHOUSE ALL HIS LIFE AND HAD NEVER FOUND IT.

WELL, WHEN I CAME TO THIS OBJECT THAT NIGHT I ASKED OUR FATHER TO PLEASE TELL ME WHAT TO DO. A VOICE IMMEDIATELY REPLIED, "GO AHEAD." I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN WAS ACTUALLY SPEAKING TO HIS SON HERE ON EARTH. SO I ASKED HIM TO PLEASE REPEAT. AGAIN, JUST THE TWO WORDS, "GO AHEAD." I HAD NOT YET DISCOVERED THE CHANNEL IN THE BACK.

I DROPPED THE BRIDLE AND WENT TO THE BACK OF THE ROOM, PEERED THROUGH THE SCRUB OAK BUSH INTO A 30 INCH WIDE CHANNEL ABOUT 12 FEET LONG. I THOUGHT IT HAD NO OPENING, BUT I TWISTED AND TURNED EACH THREE-FOOT STALK UNTIL IT CAME APART, PULLED EACH "TRUNK" OR STALK UNTIL IT CAME OFF, CAREFULLY CARRIED EACH TO THE FAR CORNER

OF THE "ROOM" - AND WALKED UNBELIEVING TO THE FAR END. THERE WAS A 30-INCH WIDE GAP. I STARED AT AN OLD, OLD TRAIL...

*The reference to my remembering, or being there, is because I was one of the teenage campers whom "Dickie," as we called him, was leading on the pack trip. I do indeed remember that we all saw the Rockhouse, stopping there and then leading our horses past it and on up the scarcely discernible trail. Later, being unable to proceed farther, we came back the same way and returned to our previous camping place. We rested overnight before trying again, and the second time we took an easier route and did not get lost.

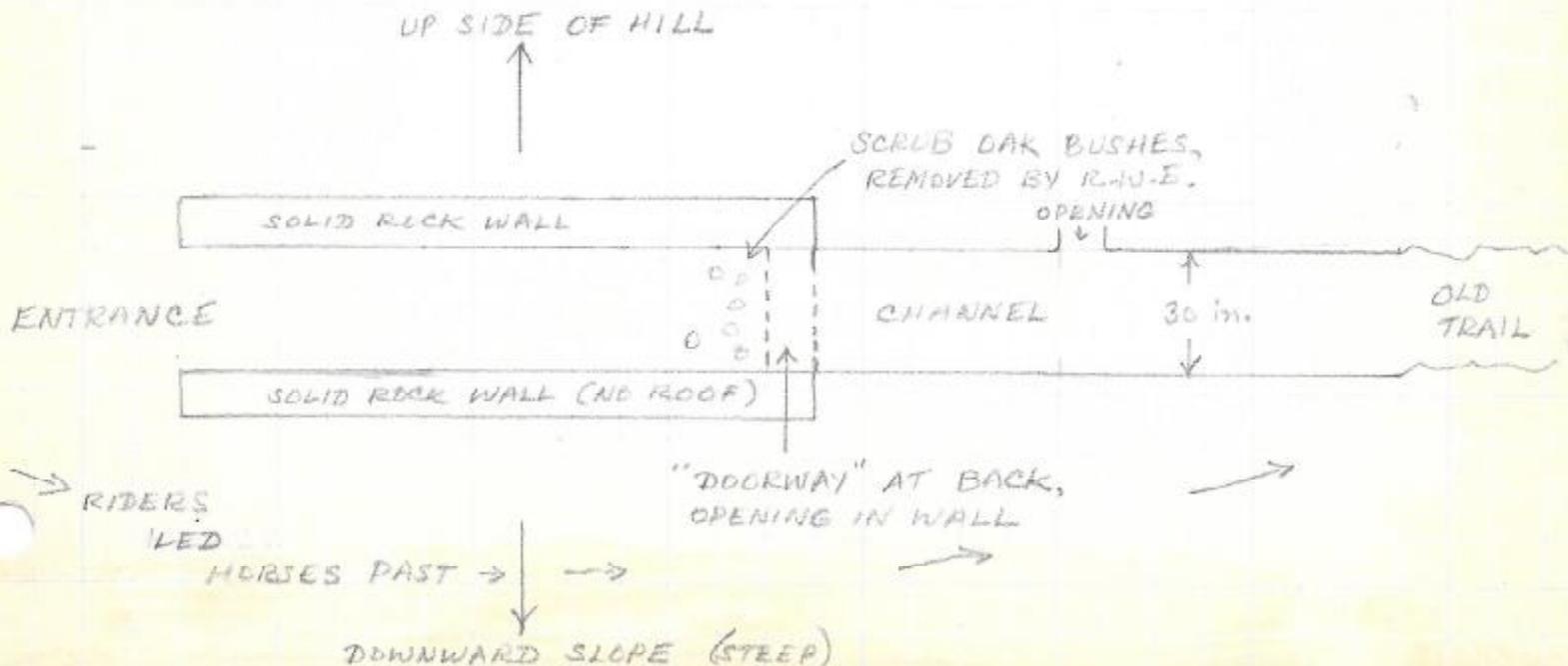
In my six years at Desert Sun I believe it was the only time a group ever got lost. It was as if someone or something was pulling us away from the established trail, causing us to miss it and take a different one instead - the one that led us to the mysterious, ancient Rockhouse.

Did Dickie imagine the voice he heard? As he said, he could not believe it was the voice of God answering his request for direction. Might it not have been more like what the Indians believe, a guardian spirit of some kind? Someone, perhaps, who knew that Dick Elliott was a good man, with a part-Indian wife, who had a heart full of love for the Indians...

Theo Halladay

"ROCK HOUSE"

NEAR ANZA, CALIF.





SCENES AT THE IDYLLWILD GYMKHANA.
D.S.S. PARTICIPATED IN THIS AT
LEAST ONCE OR TWICE EVERY SUMMER.
SEE BACKS OF PHOTOS FOR EVENTS.





SCENES AT SAUNDERS MEADOW LOCATION, 1940 ON.





DESERT SUN SCHOOL SONG

Words and Music by Theo Halladay

The sun rides high across our sky,
Then it sinks beyond the pines;
But we have light both day and night
From a sun that always shines.
Whenever life seems dark with strife
And friendship must be won,
Where there's many a trail to be blazed ahead
And many a deed to be done,
There you and I will be working by
The light of the Desert Sun!

This song, written about 1965 and sent to the school, was lost there and not rediscovered until about 1979. It was then used until the name of the school was changed in 1984.