

THE
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*The Old, Historic Train
Depot in Caliente*

- Grand Tour of Central Nevada
- TB in Amargosa Valley
- Red Rock Canyon
- Gardening, CCSN News,
Restaurant Review

***YOUR GUIDE TO THE
DEATH VALLEY AREA***

Interesting Places You've Never Been To!

The "Grand Tour" - Part VI Caliente or Bust

by The Intrepid Explorer

Last time, we left you wandering around Cathedral Gorge. I hope you've had enough time to explore and are ready to move on, for there are still a few more things to see before the day is done and we're back in home territory.

You don't have to go far to the next stop. You'll barely get the engine warm. We'll be stopping at Caliente. No doubt you've heard it mentioned on the news when they get to the weather report. It's one of those towns "over there", with Panaca and Pioche. If you haven't been there before, you probably wonder just what's there. You'll pass the turn-off to Panaca just a few miles south of Cathedral Gorge. All I could see in the distance were round green patches. Irrigation pivots. Probably alfalfa or something similar.

After that the terrain begins to change once again and you're back into some rolling hills that obstruct your view. Signs of civilization begin to appear. Clearly there is something up ahead, but what could it be? Surely not farming. Mining? One can never tell in Nevada. Suddenly the road veers to the west and the town comes into view.

Almost the first thing you see is the old train depot on the Union Pacific railway. It was late afternoon when we got there and it was dazzling. Gleaming white. A huge structure, for those of us who don't live next to the MGM Grand or the Luxor.



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But before you rush to take a closer look, you might just want to head a bit west of the depot itself. There are a few interesting little items you might want to take a look at. Well, OK. They aren't so little. There are a couple pieces of rolling stock. An old caboose, with the "Caliente" sign sitting there next to it, in case someone coming down the tracks might not know what town they were passing through. And beyond that, is the other masterpiece in town. A large boxcar that someone has clearly spent many hours painting. It looked like something you might expect to find on the side of some large building in a big city, but here it was in a sleepy little town near a grand old train depot. There is a



ramp running up to the doors on the car. Is there something inside? Could Elvis and Big Foot be hiding out in Caliente? Unlike those brave souls on the X Files, we decided not to investigate further. The train depot itself is a classic Mission style, probably from the 30's. I'm sure there are some railroad buffs out there who know the details on this. But you can see from the pictures that it is a magnificent structure from many decades ago. However, unlike others of its kind, like the depot at Kelso, it appears that someone has been taking exquisite care of it. Clearly it's been seeing paint. When you ap-

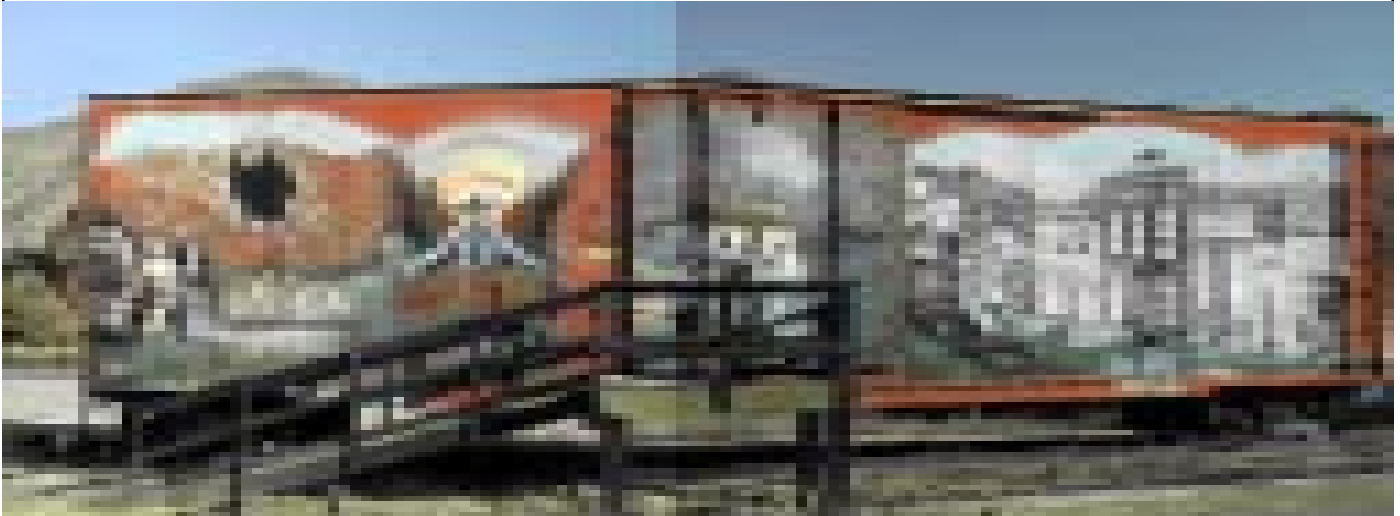
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proach it you begin to realize that it isn't some well preserved dinosaur, but it is still very much in use. The doors were open so we went inside. It looked like a modern office or public

afraid the picture doesn't do it justice. First, it's in black and white. And second, it was so large it couldn't really fit in one picture without distorting it badly. So I took two pictures and "pasted" them together. That's only a rough approximation of what was there.

On an adjoining wall was another mural, about a third



building. There was Union Pacific office clearly labeled. Stair led upstairs to my offices. The lobby had a hug mural on one entire wall. It was a map of the whole Mojave Desert. I'm

as big as it was on a smaller wall. As you can see, minor ob-

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structions like doors and windows didn't deter the artist one iota! Alas, this too is in black and white. You'll simply have



to go up there to take a look for yourself.

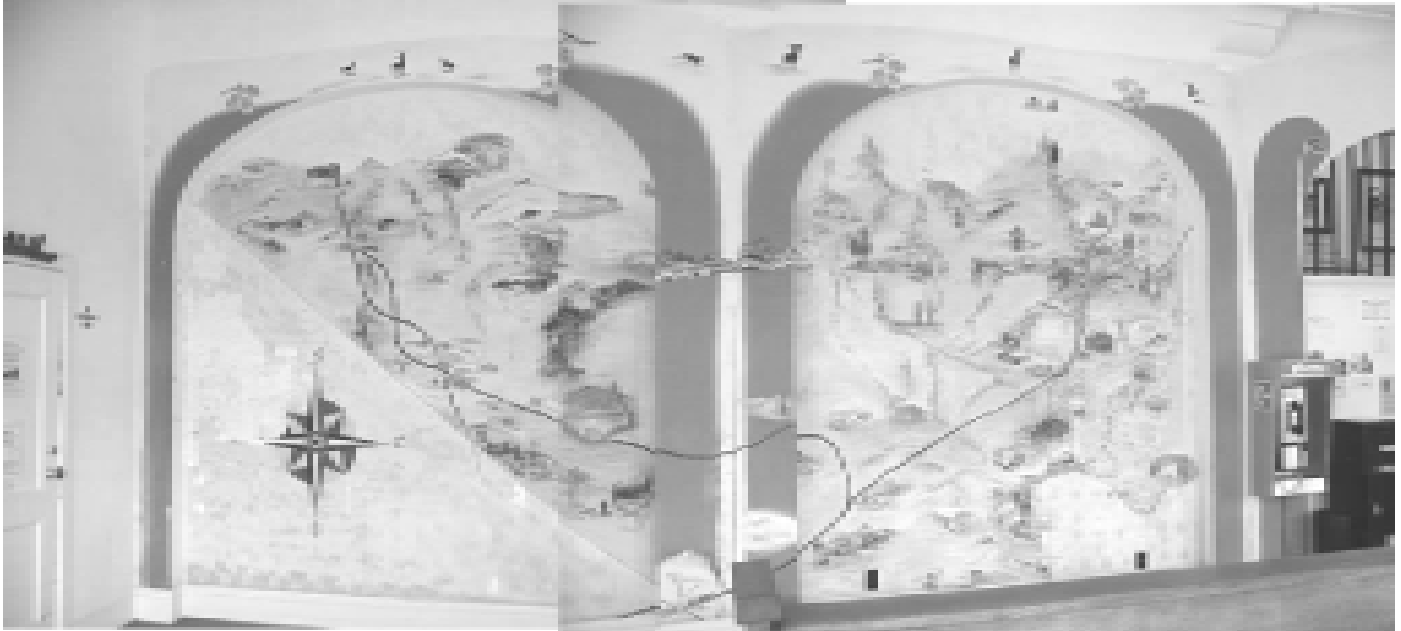
Even the windows were worthy of a picture. There are windows, and then there are windows. Nice, big, semi-circular windows. Even the doors were mostly made of window panes. There was plenty of light inside. I think there were lights there, but I don't even remember if they were on or not. They surely wouldn't have been needed, except at night. There was probably more to the building than just this one section, but we didn't have time to explore further. Outside were benches and various things you would find around a working railroad station. For all I know the train may still stop there. If anyone knows, I'd like to hear from them.

At the very least, the train still goes by, as you can see. Trains also go by the Kelso depot, but they don't stop at the station and haven't for quite some time. It seems somewhat odd that much of this part of the country grew because of the railroads, but so few traces are left of them that a visitor might wonder if a train had ever passed through these parts.

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small mountain ranges. This whole highway, from all the way back in Ely is designated as a “Scenic Byway”, and it surely is. But I’ve seen very little roadway in this end of the state that wouldn’t qualify. Even as many times as I’ve made the trip from Amargosa to Las Vegas on Highway 95, I still notice things that I hadn’t seen before. And every season it’s a little bit different.

Anyway, the road headed more or less due West with a few “passes” along the way. They were just points that were a bit higher than the rest. Hardly major obstacles to any-

Now, that is about all they do. Maybe trains will make a comeback some day when fuel gets scarce and people finally decide to take some time to watch the scenery as they travel from Point A to Point B, instead of being in a great hurry to get somewhere.

At least that is still what one does when in a car. It’s hard not to see the passing scenery, though one can certainly avoid paying much attention. The road out of Caliente continued on through the hills and then then wound up on a rather large plain, punctuated here and there by



one or anything. Soon enough we came to the junction that signalled the final stretch before returning “home”, which in this case meant Las Vegas. The turn on to Highway 93

ably gone for the holiday weekend.

By the time we had passed Pahrnagat, the sun had set and it was getting darker. We decided it was time to stop and get something to eat as there was still so much ground left to cover. After driving a short while a good stopping point appeared. Another of those Nevada Historical Markers. It was the proverbial “wide spot in the road”, so we pulled over.

I’m not a native Nevadan, as probably most of you are not as well. So, I’m not an expert on Nevada history. I do live near the California border and I’m aware of the original Von Schmidt Line, which is where the border once was. But here was a marker for the old boundary. This was Nevada’s southern boundary. It didn’t always have it’s sharp point. Way back when it was ripped from the Utah Territory, which was about half the size of the original Louisiana Purchase. Nevada got chopped off and other bits and pieces got whacked off until things are the way they are at present. It would appear that Nevada got some of what was once Arizona, so the old boundary line came right thru this area at the 37th



was the last junction before hitting the freeways of ‘Vegas. There were a string of very small towns. Had there not been signs, one wouldn’t have been aware of much of anything except an occasional house or building, green fields, and the White River. Not quite as grand as the Colorado or Mississippi, it clearly was enough to make a noticeable change on the local scenery and inhabitants. Up to this point everything had been rather dry and brown, except for the area around Pioche. Here it was green. We passed Crystal Springs, Ash Springs, and then Alamo. At least there were some signs of civilization in Alamo.

Finally, we come to the last major attraction on the trip, and the terminus of the White River. The fields disappeared and were replaced by marshland, and this was in September of a very dry year. We were at Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge. It wasn’t dark, but it was around sunset, so it was getting late. There was a good three hours of driving left to go, and we hadn’t stopped all day for lunch or dinner. We drove by, in no big hurry, but without stopping. There were roads running along the marsh, so one could get closer. I imagine if one came at the right time of the year and right time of the day there would be lots of birds to be seen, stopping for a little rest while on their way north or south. We could see a few, but the rest were prob-

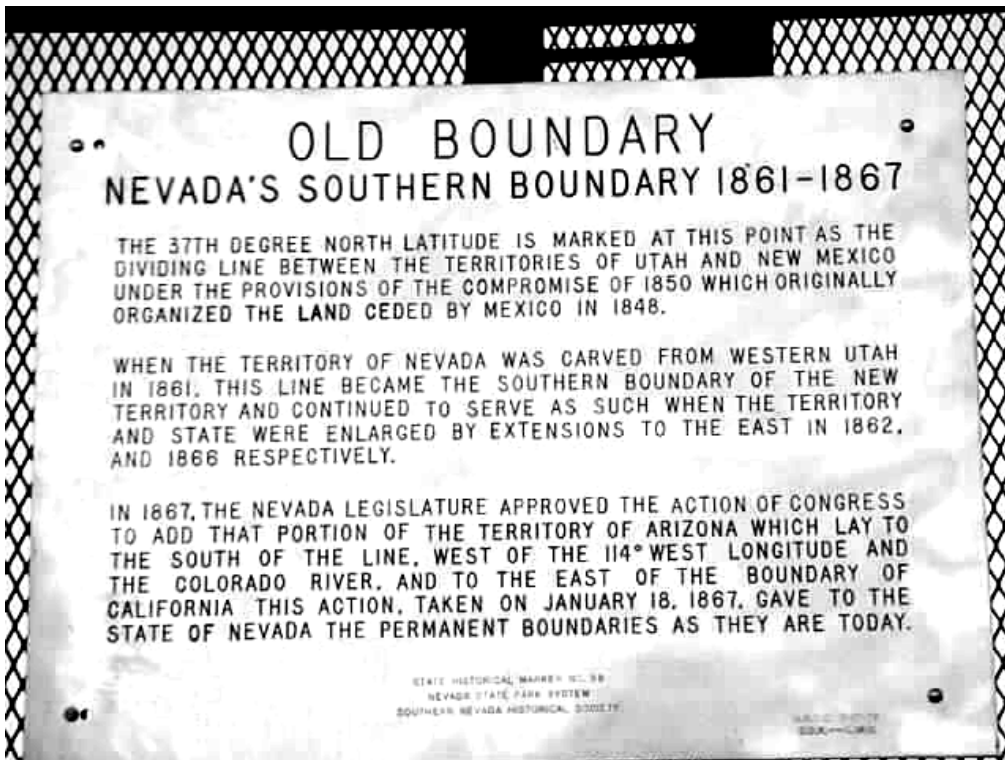
parallel. Unless you’re taking Nevada history, you’ll probably never run across this, but it’s an interesting little bit of information which lets you know that Nevada has gone through several modifications before it assumed it’s distinctive shape of today.



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The Grand Tour....

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And, that's about it for this trip. It was too dark to see what lay off to either side of the highway. Before very long the darkness was broken by lights off in the distance. Lots of them. Soon we were approaching Las Vegas. I venture to say that there will be other trips to report on.



That's All Folks!

Adventuring in Red Rock Canyon

By Charlene Dean and Maria Simatos

In this land of natural wonders we sometimes fail to see those awe inspiring things in our own back yard. Red Rock Canyon is one of those things. Just minutes away from both Pahrump and Las Vegas lies not only a geological wonder, but also an area just chocked full of things to do. No matter what your personal interests are, there really is something here for every-

one. Just ride the scenic loop road, which gives access to the interior of the canyon, for a look around, or take the kids on a picnic over the weekend. If you like to hike or want to do some rock climbing, these trails and cliffs are some of the best around. If you are an artist or a photographer, you couldn't expect to find more beautiful vistas for subject



matter. Did I hear you say that you would like to cycle or go horseback riding? Well...you can do that too. And for the natural history buff, there are petroglyphs, the desert turtle habitat, and species of fish that date back to the day of the dinosaurs.

Are you looking for something more cultural? Then take in one of the seasonal plays at Spring Mountain Ranch and the "Super Summer Theatre", or "Jazz Under the Stars". You can come early and visit the gift shop or take a walking tour and see some of the oldest historical buildings in this area. The tour will even take you to by the hidden "Lake Harriet", a reservoir located on the property.

Then, there is Bonnie Springs Ranch. They offer "Old Nevada", (a western theme park) a petting zoo, a wax museum,

entertainment on weekends, a miniture train ride and numerous other attractions for the kids. The adults can have some fun too. Shopping, a restaurant and themed motel accommodations will give creature comforts. Swimming in the pool and horseback riding are also available at the Ranch.

Do you need more motivation? The following tidbits of information and schedules of events should do the trick.

Red Rock Land Management Area.

The best time to take pictures is very early in the morning. Exactly at and just after sunrise, the light is great

for highlighting the colors in the Wilson cliffs.

There are a number of hiking trails and they vary in length and degree of difficulty. Guided hikes are scheduled for the cooler months and information regarding format, departure times, and meeting place may be obtained by calling the Visitors Center at 702/363-1921 or 702/363-1922. The schedule is also posted on the website at http://www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov/Things_To_Do.htm Please be sure to wear comfy

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shoes, carry water, have protection from the sun and bring a snack if the hike is a long one. Oh, and don't forget the camera!!!

A number of interpretive programs are offered throughout the season. Park Service personnel educate the young, the young at heart, and the curious on a number of subjects including the plants and animals native to the park, the history of the rock formations, and on selected evenings, give a talk on astronomy, complete with stargazing telescopes. The complete schedule is on the website and can also be obtained by calling the Visitor's Center.

The park is open from 6am – 8pm The Visitors Center is open from 8am – 5pm There is a \$5.00 admission fee for the Park. Season passes are available for \$20.00 and are good for a year.

Camping

The campground is located 2 miles east of the Visitor's Center on Rt 159. There are grills, picnic tables and tent pads. If you are taking a camper, be aware ...there are no hook-ups save for periodic water faucets for fresh water. There are no showers and pit toilets are the only bath house facilities. Bring your own wood if you want a fire. Gathering wood from the Conservatory is a no no. The campground access road is open from 6 am to 10 pm, so if you wander away, take a watch. The rates are 10.00 per night per site, and there are limits on number of tents to a site, number of vehicles to a site and number of people to a site. For more information call the Visitor's Center or visit them on the web at www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov/campinginfo.htm



Horseback Riding This is just another of several ways to enjoy Red Rock Canyon. Some of the stables are in the park and some are not. All of them offer guides to show you the ropes and your way around. The rates range from \$20.00 an hour to \$97.50 for all day. A list of the riding outfits and phone numbers follows

Bonnie Springs Ranch – Old Nevada: 702/875-4191 Cowboy Trail Rides 702/387-2457 Sagebrush Ranch 702/645-9422 Silver State “Old West Tours” 702/798-7788

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park

This 520 acre oasis is rich in a history laced with Indians, bandits, cattle ranching, and money. From a settlement camp for Indians and travelers alike, through a string of owners including Howard Hughes, the Ranch has come a long way in becoming a State Park. The stories are all recorded at the “main house” which serves as a Visitors Center, and tours are available. Guided tours of the area are given weekdays at 12 noon, 1 pm and 2 pm. Weekend tours are the same but for one added tour at 3 pm. The Visitor's Center is open everyday from 10 am to 4pm and volunteers are there to answer your questions. You may contact Spring Mountain Ranch State Park at 702/875-4141, or visit them on the web at www.state.nv.us/stparks/smr.htm



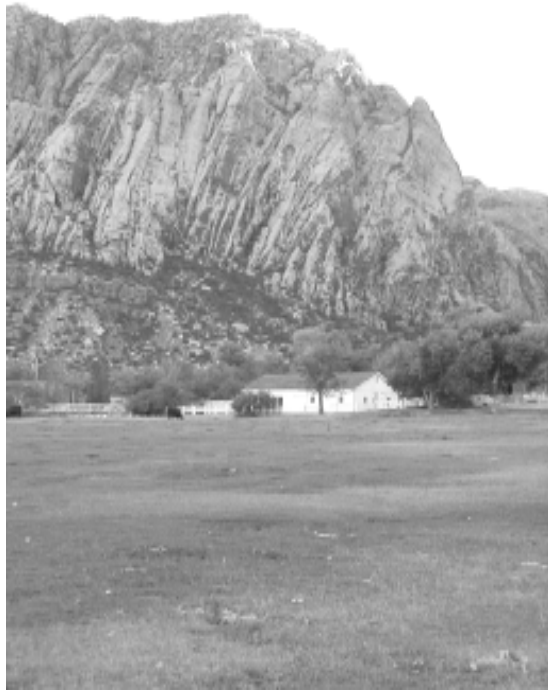
Super Summer Theatre –” Theatre Under The Stars”

The outdoor amphitheatre is located in the Spring Mountain Ranch State Park. Three plays are staged during the summer months and you are invited to come and enjoy a bit of culture in nature's most spectacular arena. Get yourself comfortable and bring a blanket or a chair (rentals are also available from the Park Service). You may also bring a picnic if you like, although snacks are available for purchase on site. The “Theatre Under the Stars” runs only during the months of June, July and August. Performances are scheduled for Wednesday through Saturday evenings beginning at 8pm, and rarely last longer than 9:45 pm. The summer plays are listed below as well as opening dates ONLY, and ticket prices.

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.June 12th - "Godspell" July 10th - "Lil' Abner" Au-



gust
7th -
"Annie"
The
gates
open
at
6:00,
so
come
early
and re-
serve
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Tick-
ets are
\$10.00
at the
gate
and
may be
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in advance for lesser and varying amounts. You may obtain more detailed information by calling them at 702/594-7529, or visiting their Website – www.supersummertheatre.com

Jazz Under the Stars

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park is also host to "Jazz Under the Stars". After the Super Summer Theatre has closed the season, another fun experience takes its place. Once a month on a Friday evening, Michael Shivo Productions presents a jazz concert in the amphitheater. At the time of this writing, information on dates and performing artists is unavailable. The concerts take place during the months of September, October and November, and more information will be available at a later date on their website www.mspjazz.com or you may call them at 702/228-3780. When visiting the website click on the "mailing list" option to have updated information arrive at your door.



Bonnie Springs Ranch

There are two major aspects to Bonnie Springs Ranch. One is for the kids and family enjoyment, and the other, more sophisticated version is for the adult with some rest and quiet time in mind.

"Old Nevada" western theme park is a replica of an 1800's mining town, and the facade isn't just a fake front...the buildings are real. There is a wax museum and a



train
ride,
ting
and
Hill"
century
ends,
ephas
gun-
and
"hags";

and the kids can help the "posse" catch the bad guys. "Old Nevada" is open from 10:30 am until 6:00 pm Admission is \$6.50 for adults, \$5.50 for seniors and \$4.00 for children 5 and under. Should you decide to stay over a night or two, The Bonnie Springs Ranch Motel has room for you. Accommodations range from themed rooms for lovers to suites with



kitchen facilities for groups and families. There is also a pool and a restaurant that serves cocktails should that be your pleasure, and if you like, sign up for a breakfast "ride". Reservations for the stabled horses must be made the previous evening. You may reach them by calling 702/875-4191 or visiting their website at www.bonniesprings.com

All of this is only a few miles away. Now that you know..GO!!! Enjoy yourself, and tell them The Amargosa News sent you!!

For a good source of information on Red Rock Canyon and all of the activities please visit www.sunsetcities.com/redrock.