



# COLD CREEK RANCH



BY

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COLD CREEK  
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I was on a high ridge about six miles east where the Ponderosa pine come down to meet the Pinion pines in the Spring Mountains of southern Nevada when I saw Cold Creek Ranch for the first time. Tom Weaver, a wild horse catcher from the VE quarter circle ranch and I were on our way to catch some mustangs that were grazing on the fenced hundred and sixty acre pasture below the Cold Creek Ranch house.

My partner Slim Davidson and I had rented some horses and a pack burro from Tom Weaver for a couple of weeks. We had tried to go to cold creek the week before but had trouble with the pack on the burro. The pack saddle was a regular McClellan saddle that had no breaching or breast strap and when we were going down into a draw, the pack slipped over the burro's head and he stopped short, gave his head a big shake and food, pans and sleeping bags went all over the ground. By the time we got loaded up Slim wanted to go back to Lees Canyon. We stayed there for a while till Tom came by one morning with a sack of freshly baked baking powder biscuits and a gallon jar of raspberry jam. We sat down and devoured all of them. Tom asked us if we would like to help him build a horse trap above us at a spring and afterwards he would take us to Cold Creek. We agreed in a hurry and here we were on our way to the exciting country of Cold Creek.

Slim drove the pickup with all our gear around by Indian Springs and we were riding our work horses cross country on wild horse trails high on the north slope of the mountain. When we crested the high ridge we looked down and saw the white house with a red roof, smoke coming out of the chimney and a stream sparkling as it ran down past the house and out into the big pasture where wild horses were grazing in the tall grass.

We were riding two great roping horses. Joe was a bay, Smokey was a gray and we had another gray called Cloudy. We also had a small three-year-old Sorrel with a silver mane and tail that I was breaking to ride as my own personal horse. We crossed a deep alluvial canyon by sliding down the shale slope on the east side and then quartering up the far side. Soon Cold Creek crept up on us. To the north we could see a hundred and fifty miles, to the east you could see the Sheep Mountains with all the wild canyons I would later explore. To our left was the high ridge of the Spring mountains all covered with Yellow pine, White fir and Foxtail pine near the top of the eleven thousand foot ridge.

When we pulled up to the Ranch house Slim, was waiting and so were Pierre and Dickie Pulling. Pierre was a biologist working for the Fish and Wildlife Service studying the habitat of the Big Horn sheep in the Sheep Mountains and that was the most suitable place to stay at that time. They were very gracious and I found out that night that Tom had made arrangements for us to be fed by Dickie and we would be able to sleep on their front porch while we were there. The front yard had alfalfa growing about two feet tall and we staked our horses out on the lawn and they felt like they were in heaven. The horses especially had it made when we

gave them a half gallon of rolled barley in their nose bags every morning and night.

That night we sat at a table in the sun room off the kitchen to the south where every window was a view of the mountains. Outside the window was a flower garden full of wild flowers with black lizards playing on the rock border. That night when the sun set, it cast shadows across Indian Springs Valley making quite a show and then you could see the sun drop behind a distant mountain to the west in a big orange glow. The stars came out that night and were so brilliant that you wanted to reach out and gather them in your arms like wild flowers.

The next morning after breakfast, the Pullings wanted to visit for a while and Tom got fidgety as he wanted to get busy catching the wild horses. Finally we got away and went down to the pasture and walked the fence line repairing all the breaks and loose wires before we shut the two gates. The road to the valley came right through the pasture so we had an upper and lower gate to shut. During the repairing of the fence the horses took off disappearing in to the pinion pines.

That night we opened the gates and the horses returned to feed on the grass. The next morning we shut the gates and had a herd of wild horses. We then built an eleven rail corral out of aspen logs that were already cut and drying. We dug the post holes with a bar and a coffee can. The poles were tied together with baling wire and we rigged a gate with a closing wire and two wing fences all ready to catch the horses. We saddled up and drove the herd into the corral except for the stallion who cut out and ran by us. We went ahead and shut the gate and had a corral full of untamed horses. Old sway backed mares with long yellow teeth, two nice bays with yearlings and spring colts following them around plus a variety of three and four year olds. I opened the gate and Tom rode into the corral. He circled around and was building a loop when a sway back mare came at him with her ears laid back and fire in her eyes and her mouth open with those huge yellow teeth coming right at him. Tom slid out of the saddle on the far side and ducked under the lowest pole on the corral just in time as she was right there to get him. What a bunch of savage horses we had.

There were lots of good horses but we decided to get two old mares out of the corral before we roped any more. We threw two loops from out of the corral and drug the mean mare right out of the gate. Before we let her go, Tom tied her nose partly together with a wire so she couldn't run away. It wasn't long before we had the herd all branded and were starting to break the young colts to halter.

My job was to break the three year olds to ride. We would first break them to halter and lead them around then tie a front foot up so they couldn't kick. We then put a saddle on them and I would get behind Tom on his horse and he would snub the three year olds up tight so I could slide off his horse onto the saddle of the mustang. For the first ride

I would just ride along and let them feel my weight on their back. As I moved my weight around they would learn to balance the load and not to buck as they were snubbed up too close to buck. After a few days we had mustangs ready for market.

Following a week of hard work, we packed the pack horses with a couple days supply of grub, saddled up and rode out to Wheeler Wells which was west a few miles over Willow Creek pass. It was all new country to me and in those days it was real wild country with only a wagon road that had been built to get to Willow Creek. Willow Creek started in a thicket of willows from a big hole in the ground and rambled down to the valley a mile or more before it sunk in the sand and disappeared.

Crossing the creek we headed up a draw to a pass at about nine thousand feet. The trail was for a single horse and once in a while we would have to take the axe and cut an opening through the scrub oak that had grown up in the trail to let our pack horse through. When we reached the summit we could see all the way down the west side into Pahrump Valley with all the checkerboard patterns of the farm land. Beyond was the Funeral range and the Panimints with snow crested Telescope peak over a hundred miles away on the other side of Death Valley.

A trail led down a draw full of pinion Pines and sage and rabbit brush, getting wider as we rode down the mountain. After a mile or more we entered a clearing where a cabin stood and a trough with running water. An old prospector stepped out the door and said "Howdy". He was lonely and getting down to short rations so we cooked up a big supper of spam and vegetables and biscuits.

Earlier, I had ridden through a grove of Mountain Mahogany with their fuzzy seeds falling down the neck of my shirt. It was sure itching so after supper I heated up some water and took a bath in a wash tub that was hanging on the front of the shack. The prospector said his name was Pat Mathias and he was prospecting and trapping coyotes for their bounty. He told us his old Model T Ford was stalled down the canyon a mile or more and he was planning to walk out to Pahrump soon. I thought he could, with some help, turn his truck around and it would roll down the mountain for ten miles before he came to a dugway that ran up out of the wash. We visited into the night as he was sure hungry for companionship.

The next morning after breakfast we packed up and loaded on some of his things to take down to his truck. With a few pulls from our roping horses with our lariats on his axel we got him squared away. On the way down he showed us where the trail turned off and went up to Trough Springs where a herd of wild horses were watering. We thought we would take a look and when we neared the spring we heard the horses up ahead moving around and trying to climb out up a rocky cliff in a box canyon.

When we got in sight we saw that the horses were all

branded but one. A sorrel with stocking legs, a silver mane and a bald face. Tom says he'd give five hundred dollars if he was in the corral over at Cold Creek. He rode up into the herd to try to get a loop on the sorrel but the horse was rope shy and would duck his head down every time Tom threw a loop. Tom told Slim to take the pack horse and head for the pass back the way we came and we would try to drive the herd over into Willow Creek country.

We got them over the pass after several hours of herding and down they went to Willow Creek. When we got there Tom tried again to rope the sorrel. He still had no luck so we herded them up out of the canyon into the old goat ranch where there was an old corral that was in good shape. We threw some ropes around some trees and got the remuda into the corral. As the sorrel went to jump out of the corral, Tom finally threw a loop around his neck.

We soon had him on the ground and we put a halter on him with a long lead rope. We sent the herd back up over the pass and started into Cold Creek with our sorrel and boy did he ever look good. He was broke to lead by the time we got to Cold Creek so we tied him up in the front yard with a lot of alfalfa to eat and plenty of water. We unloaded and got ready to catch the stallion that was still loose.

The stallion came back to be with the mares so we shut the gate again and rode out into the pasture to see what he would do. As we approached him he would keep his distance and move on so we chased him around the pasture taking turns and going a little faster. When he got winded after an hour or more, Tom rode up to him and as he stood trying to get his breath, Tom built a loop and threw it on the off-side of his head. He swung his head right into the loop and took off full speed and when he hit the end of the rope he pulled Tom off his horse and his saddle went side wise. Joe, the roping horse stood his ground. I rode up and threw another loop on the stallion and began to pull from the opposite side and soon he choked down till he hit the ground. Slim ran up and hog tied him and we let off on our ropes and we had another feral horse.

The stallion had a cut on his side and had more scars and knots all over his neck and withers. He had a Arab neck and little feet but he was sure some kind of a fighter. We put a halter on him and tied him to a Juniper tree in the center of the pasture to let him cool off for a day. He was hard to break to lead. We went out the next morning and when we got near him, he ran as far as he could in the opposite direction. When he hit the end of the rope he would turn end over end, get up and go the other way and do the same. After a while he changed his mind and decided to let us lead him.

We packed our gear and took the horses we hadn't sold and headed for Lees Canyon. It took all afternoon to get there and by nightfall the stallion was mighty weak. The next morning when I went down to where we had him tied his face was all swelled up and he was backing into his rope and going in circles. I ran and got Tom. He came down from camp

and said the stallion had lock jaw and was dying. Tom cut his throat to get him out of his misery and we had to take the carcass to the dump.

We decided to take the rest of the horses we had to the headquarters at Kyle Canyon. Slim and I started to drive them with a ranch horse out front to lead the way. A mile up the road, instead of following the road the horses turned off on a side trail for some reason. I told Slim to stay where he was and I would turn them back. Instead he followed me and when I turned the horses they started back down the way they had come with Slim right behind them going at full speed and down the road they went back to Lees Canyon. I was mad but got madder when I saw that the hooves of the horse Slim was riding, the horse I'd wanted to keep for my own, was laying down bloody tracks. That night we got into a fight. Slim was taller than me and he knocked me down hard before Tom separated us. I decided I would leave the outfit.

The next morning the Pullings arrived just after sun up and I saddled up three of the best horses and took them on a trail ride over Charleston Peak. It was a twenty-five mile ride from the ranch headquarters. We rode up along the main road into Kyle Canyon. At Cathedral Rock we got on the Charleston Peak trail and climbed the switch back trail up to the top of the south Kyle Rim. It was quite a climb from the ranch at six thousand feet to Kyle Rim at eleven thousand feet.

It's a beautiful sight to look out over what seems like the whole world. To the south, you could see the San Bernardino range with Mount Baldy at over 10,000 feet. To the east you could see beyond Lake Meade right up the north and south rims of the Grand Canyon till the sky meets the earth one hundred and fifty miles away. To the west you could see the Panimint Range on the west side of Death Valley and past that are the White Mountains with the highest peak in Nevada, Boundary peak at 13,314 feet. North of Cold Creek are mountains in central Nevada called the Grant range with Troy peak at 11,260 feet.

On up the trail loomed Charleston Peak at 11,910 feet with a bald dome covered in shale rock and a large snow bank right down its front. From the top of Charleston, we could look down into Las Vegas and think about how lucky we were not to be in the sweltering heat of the desert. We rode through alpine wild flowers and past Bristle Cone pines that had the bark blown off one side by the high winds when the storms hit the tops of the mountains. Some trees were laying on the ground but very much alive with the Fox Tail of a branch bright and green.

This was my second trip over the peak that summer and it was sure alot easier on horse back than hiking as we had the first time. The trail down the east face of Charleston cut through some snow banks. We got off and walked our horses as we didn't know if there was ice under the slush. The trail goes down and follows the top of the north rim of the canyon. You can look down and see Big Falls as the water

drops ninety feet off a shelf on the north side of the south canyon wall. The roar of the water is the only thing hear in the otherwise tranquil forest. When we finally got down off the mountain, Pierre and Dickie decided I should come stay with them for a few days. I was given my own room just off from the kitchen with a view to the valley to the north. Not even a picture or a painting can ever grab the vastness of such a panorama. When the sun went down each night, the last place you saw the sun light was on the east walls of Lees Canyon fifteen miles to the east. The colors changed as you stood there going from fire orange to crimson to purple with a shade of blue to match the sky as it grew dark.

Pierre's real name was Albert Van Sycelan Pulling. He was a Easterner born and raised in Poughkeepsie, New York and graduated from the University at Rochester. He first taught biology in Fredricksberg, New Brunswick. He got his name "Pierre" from being a canoeist in the north woods country of Minnesota. He also wrote books about canoeing and taking people up north to Hudson Bay by canoe. He worked as a biologist with the Fish and Wild Life Service first working along the Mississippi river at Winona, Minnesota at the migratory bird sanctuary and later transferring west to Fort Peck Montana. He finally came out to the Desert Game Range out of Las Vegas in 1942.

Dickie, whose real name was Gertrude Sieberling before she married Pierre, was born in Terrytown, New York. She went to Vassar College where she met Pierre. She was an outdoor girl and an athlete, a canoeist and camper and a good cook.

At Cold Creek, the ranch house living room had an open beam ceiling with cross ties every six feet. Hanging from the rafters was an Old Town canoe 19 feet long and two saddles and lots of tack. The living room was at least twenty-four by forty feet with a big fire place on the south center wall faced with Carrera Marble from a marble mine sixty miles north-west of the ranch. Every window held a spectacular view. Lots of people came up to visit as the Pullings were congenial hosts.

Frank Allen, one of their guests, was working as a paid fireman for Las Vegas when I met him. He had been a volunteer before it was made into a paid department. He was a cowboy of the old west. He had bowed legs and walked with a spring in his step and seemed born in the saddle. He had a herd of range horses in the Sheep Mountains, the full length of which you could see from Cold Creek. The Sheep range rose up from the valley floor to over nine thousand feet and on the far side was a vast forest of Yellow pine with lots of bunch grass and silver sage.

Frank owned six springs and had grazing rights for his horses. The income from selling the horses was putting two of his sons through college. He asked me if I would like to go with him to work the horses and later on drive them to the north slope of the Sheep range.

I was ready to go so he picked me up one day, we grabbed

some grub and drove out to Corn Creek, the headquarters of the game refuge. Frank turned off and drove up a gravel road till we got to the mouth of a canyon, took the right fork and wound up in a valley just north of Gass peak. We stopped about an eighth of a mile from White Blotch Spring. We made camp in the sage brush by a Joshua tree. We were so tired all we did was roll up in our sleeping bags and got to sleep.

Dawn came with a rustling of a breeze in the sage brush and soon we heard the horses coming in to water. Frank slipped around some rocks and took hold of a wire and pulled the gate shut. He then walked up and locked it. We went in with the horses and drove them into the holding corral and shut that gate, then went back and opened the outer gate and came back to hide as some more horses would soon arrive. It wasn't long and we had the whole herd corraled. There were about forty head of beautiful roans and Palominos with many soft white colors mixed with tans. The mares were sore-footed and the two studs were in very poor shape as the feed was gone from around the spring and the horses had to go a long way to graze.

For the next couple of days we shod some of the mares and shod and cleaned up a couple of stallions. To catch a horse we would stand in the corral with a lariat and as the horses circled around the corral we would rope throw a loop. As they revolved around the corral we would rap the rope around the snubbing post in the center; two raps and you had a hitch so you could choke down the horse. As the horse fell, one of us would sit on his head while the other one would hog tie him. It really was a lot of fun and lots of hard work except you never picked up a rope before you put on a pair of horse hide gloves as you could quickly get a rope burn in a hurry. Another thing is that you never wrapped the rope around your hand while going after one these beasts or you'd wind up getting dug around the corral like a sack of potatoes.

A few days later we went back to White Blotch Springs. This time we took two Pintos, Mex and Spot. When we neared the spring there was a steep grade. The pickup lost power and we were stuck on a hill. Frank tried to back down and the trailer got away from him and turned over on its side. We got the horses out and miraculously they were not hurt. That day, we started on a long drive and took the horses up past Quail Spring and through a canyon to Peekaboo Canyon which comes out to the main road at Mormon Wells. There was so much bunch grass along the way we had a hard time keeping the horses in motion. We managed to get there at about dusk. There was a nice holding corral to keep the horses till morning and they got plenty to drink that night. We sat down to a feast of sweet corn, ripe tomatoes, biscuits and spam all topped off with watermelon from Corn Creek ranch where Frank had planted a garden that spring. We had a young fellow drive the pick up along to bring our equipment and food.

The next morning we headed down a canyon road for three



miles and then turned up a faint trail that went by a nice cabin where we were to spend a few days. The trail went up past the cabin over a pass into the north park of the Sheep Mountains. The feed was so plentiful and the horses were so hungry and tired they lay down in the grass and ate till the grass was all gone and then they would move just far enough to eat some more. We moved the horses down the mountain a ways to Shale Cut Spring which was just a seep as the Bighorn sheep had it trampled shut.

We cut a few trees down and made it easy for the horses to get to the spring. One day, while cleaning out the spring with a shovel, I felt as though something was watching me. When I turned around I found a Big Horn ram staring at me with a quizzical eye. I wondered if he was going to come after me. My twenty-two pistol was hanging in a tree ten feet away. Luckily, he just turned around and walked away and vanished in the wilderness.

We had it nice in the cabin. There was a big Salt Lake range with a nice reservoir on one end to warm your water and a big oven on the other. We had two double beds to put our sleeping bags on and an out house out back. We had to haul the water over the pass from Perkins Spring which was down the draw and then up into a pocket where the water ran out of the ground in a big pool and babbled down the draw into the canyon. One night about dusk I was on my horse and had filled two water bags and was just getting on my horse when a ram, out of no where, darted up the wall and vanished over the top in the twinkle of an eye. Life in the desert mountains was never dull.

We left Mex and Spot with the range horses to winter as the feed was real good. We packed up one evening at sundown and started home. Where the road began we could look out and see Mormon Peak with the sun setting on it; a sight of splendor. Going back down the road to Peekaboo Canyon and out of the mountain I took a lot of memories that would last me through WW II. That November Pierre got an assignment to go to Tule Lake in northern California to spend a few months checking muskrat pelts. I told them to go ahead and I would close up the place. After one night by myself I decided it was time to leave. So the next morning I drained the water heater and locked up the doors, took my last look around and with a quart of beer in my hand I started down the mountain on foot. I closed the bottom gate and turned around and looked at the pretty house setting there with a mountain background and thought of all the great times I had there that summer. The tears come into my eyes and a big lump came into my throat. I turned away and walked for four hours till I got to Indian Springs. Two weeks later I was in the United States Army Air Corps at Tonopah Nevada. By Christmas that year I was on leave for a few days and came by Indian Springs. Tim Harneday, another long time friend of mine, told me some cowboys had broken into the house. I went with Tim to see what we could do. We took boards and covered the windows and put a hasp and lock on one door and nailed the

other door shut. The next year I spent two furloughs at Cold Creek. What a wonderful way to spend time away from the military life.

The winter of 1941 I got home from Salinas California on furlough and spent some time with Dickie and Pierre, they were then staying at Corn Creek, which is down in the valley towards Las Vegas. Dickie gave me the phone number and address of Naomi Warden the owner of Cold Creek ranch. She was living in Hollywood and was working for the Los Angeles Times. My train ride back to my station took me through Las Angeles and so I had an evening to wait for my train the next morning. I gave her a call, her mother answered the phone and told me that Naomi was at the Biltmore Hotel and I said that was where I was calling from, she said page her. so I did and that was how I got acquainted with Naomi the cow girl from Cold Creek.

I came back a month or more later and she took time off from work and we sat for three days and nights and drank whiskey and ate steaks she had saved her meat coupons for and had a glorious time. She was a star on Broadway and had found a sugar daddy who had a dream like her about owning a ranch high in the mountains out west. They drove out and slept out under the stars every night and landed in Las Vegas when it was a wide place in the road. A Realtor took them up to Cold Creek and sold her the quarter section. all it had was a shed and a fenced pasture, and a stream that the Mormons had dug out and run what looks like up hill out of Cold Creek canyon and it switched back and forth till it ran in the pasture a half a mile away from Cold Creek Canyon.

She and her sugar daddy lived in the shed and had a Contractor come all the way from Los Angeles with the material and his crew and they built the house sitting in the most wonderful place anyone could ever pick. She found out later it was a hundred feet off the land she had bought. She got Taylor grazing rights for several hundred cows and got herself a drugstore cowboy and went into the ranching business. With a lot of bad luck she went out of the cattle business the first year. There was a blizzard in the winter of 1936 which put five feet of snow at the ranch. the cattle had to be driven down on the desert and they lost most of there caves in the stormy weather, and her hay bill just about broke her before she could sell off the herd.

She went into Dude ranching then and had a great time, she added some rooms and put another door into the bath room. The cowboy she had as the story goes pinched some flesh on his side and shot himself through two thickness of skin and she got him to the doctor and found out what he had done so she got rid of him. She told me how they would go for an over night camp out at Mc Farland springs which is about five miles up the mountain and when they would sit by the campfire

they could see the eyes of the mountain lion glowing in the darkness. She told me how they went to Fallen to get a milk cow and when they were coming back to the ranch the cow gave birth and to keep the calf warm she brought it up into the cab of the truck and held it till they got home, then the cows milk gave her bangs disease. She had photos of the construction of the house and also told me the stone for the face of the fireplace came from a marble quarry up near Beatty. The house was built on a slope where the back of the house was level with the ground and the front of the house was five feet off the ground and that slope went all the way to the valley fifteen miles away a drop of four thousand feet.

I didn't get back to Cold creek till 1948 after I was married. I was working for the fire department and we worked twenty four on and twenty four off and twice a month we got three days off in a row. In the summer I got my neighbor who was an old prospector to drive us up in his one ton pickup, we supplied him with the gas and food all he had to supply was the truck, to get there it is forty two miles to Indian Springs and from there you turn south and went around a range of foot hill mountains through a gap and up a winding wagon road for fifteen miles. The road and the distance made it a private peaceful place to go and we camped at Cold Creek right at the stream as there had been a Ranger installed at the house, his name was Jim Burnham and his wives' name was Murtie and they were from Arizona and he was a real authentic cowboy that had ridden on the range in western Arizona. They were likeable and were our friends till they both died, we think they died from exposure to radiation from a cloud from the Atomic Test site when they were testing above ground in the early fifties.

We camped by the creek and slept on an island with a large bush for shade. We were young and smaller then. I weighed 150 pounds and June weighed 100 pound and we slept on a single cotton mattress with a mattress cover for a sheet and a sleeping bag for a cover. I could dip a cup in the creek and have a ice cold drink in the middle of the night. Our ice box was a hole I dug in the creek where we kept our beer in the bottle and perishables in a plastic bag. I made cobbler from wild currents and elderberries that grew along the creek. IN the fall we picked wild rose hips and ate the finest jelly we ever ate. A hundred feet up the creek was a cataract that tumbled down fifty feet from the streambed above, a quarter of a mile further was a hole in the mountain where the water came roaring out and it ran down Cold Creek canyon for several miles till it sank into the sand and disappeared. To see the spectacular sunset we had to climb out of the canyon fifty feet or more up and from there you could see a hundred and fifty miles to the north up to Spring valley and beyond.

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When the Burnhams were living at the ranch Jim put a ceiling in the living room and insulated it and installed a space heater, and boarded up the dining room and made a store room out of that. Making it comfortable in the cold winter. In the winter of 1949 while we were in Death Valley it snowed five feet deep at Cold creek and made Myrtle and her daughter and grandchild snow bound as Jim was away on business. They finally saddled up two horses they had and rode out after the storm and had a hard time getting back till the snow melted.

We spent a lot of time at the Ranch in the summer of 1934. I was building an apartment house for Bob Kost who lived across from the Thunderbird Air Field, we would take off Friday night from work and come back down on Monday morning. That was the summer Babs Corsan and her brother George were staying at Kosta's. We took George with us and Babs would come up after work as she was working swing shift in a Casino down town. She had an old car and drove up in the middle of the night, all by her self. That was after the new road was cut in which cut about eight miles off the distance but it was a dusty dirty road. I found that Babs didn't have a spare tire or a Jack in her car. She made the trip every week end. We stayed in the house with Ed Hance, who I had worked with in the Forest Service back in the fall of 1946, he enjoyed our stay and took us different places in his pick up.

We always enjoyed the wild blue birds that flew in the pinion pine trees behind the house, though they had a mournful cry they were so very colorful. I learned later that they are the only blue birds of this kind any where. A story goes that many years ago there were two tribes of Indians that lived west of the Colorado river. One tribe lived at the junction of the muddy and Virgin rivers that run into the Colorado river. They were the Moapa and the other tribe lived in the Charleston mountains and they were strange because they were all men. One day one of the Charleston Indians wandered over the mountains and came to the Moapa tribe and discovered the women and tasted some of the sweetness they provide. He went home and told his fellow tribesmen what he found and so they decided they all needed some women and their chief organized a plan to go over and steal all the women and take them back to the Charleston mountains. When the Moapa Chief found out what they did he got his warriors together and went to the Charleston mountains and fought till all the warriors were dead. The two chiefs seeing what they had done they climbed to the top of Mummy mountain and jumped off leaving the maidens all alone with no one to look after them. The women were heart broken, they prayed and fasted and asked the great spirit to bring back their warriors. He granted their wish but instead of warriors they came back as Blue birds which to this day inhabit the scene of the great battle.

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To see Cold Creek a foot trail climbs beside the cataract, it was made up of many pools with a two foot fall below each pool, they were full of travertine and wild flowers usually Columbine, and water cress. Above the cataract as you walk past the wild current bushes the stream makes a bend to the south and along its banks are several black willows hanging out over the stream and in their midst are the remains of a Moonshiners still. There were hoops left from the mash barrels and a boiler punctured with square pick holes by the revenueurs. The trail into the still is overgrown with sage and small pinion pines, making you wonder how they got into that spot. We found a place where there had been a corral, a few boards still lay on the ground.

Above the spring is a ridge that runs up the mountain a quarter of a mile to a large pine tree that sits in a marsh with a waterfall that falls a short way into a canyon, across the canyon to the east you can see what is left of a saw mill, the boiler and fly wheel still stand and also part of the old wood carriage. The logs came from a grove of Ponderosa Pine trees above the three knolls in a small valley just before the steep part of the mountain. A Mormon named Erastus Snow owned the saw mill around 1865 and sawed timbers for the Groom mine which lies seventy miles north up and beyond Indian Springs valley. A forest of Pinion pines have grown over any sign of a road.

Back at the ranch the creek running along the side of the house a wild flower called the Night Elgomer a relative of the Evening primrose grows sometimes six feet tall. The flowers bloom on the upper stock every day in the summer and the seed pods hang on the stock till winter then the seeds begin to fall. I once had a group of friends drive up and camp all night to take pictures of the phenomena. We had our cameras ready as it began to turn dark, a breeze would start coming down off the mountain and as it blew by the buds it would start unraveling the flower and all of a sudden it would burst out in all its glory. We had all kinds of lanterns to light the flower as it burst open and I captured it with my movie camera, what a glorious sight. I also took pictures of the shadows in the valley as the sun slowly dropped in the west. I snapped a few frames at a time at five minute intervals and the pictures were wonderful and as colorful as the Grand Canyon.

The Ranch house is gone now, all that is left is the front porch slab and the chimney, my Son says the stream runs by and down into the pasture, the pinion pine forest behind where the house stood has burned down. I like to remember it as it was when I first went there fifty years ago.

Dear Cold Creek Canyon Friends,

This excerpt of Cold Creek living was written by the uncle of a person with whom I work. Mr. Johnson is very interested in present-day Cold Creek happenings. If any of you would like to write him about your Cold Creek experiences his niece will forward letters to him.

You can bring any letters to Phil or me at 134 Elk Circle. We're usually here on week-ends, and I'll make sure Mr. Johnson's niece gets them for forwarding. He might even be willing to share some further tales in the future; I understand he has lots to tell.

Sincerely,

Barbara