

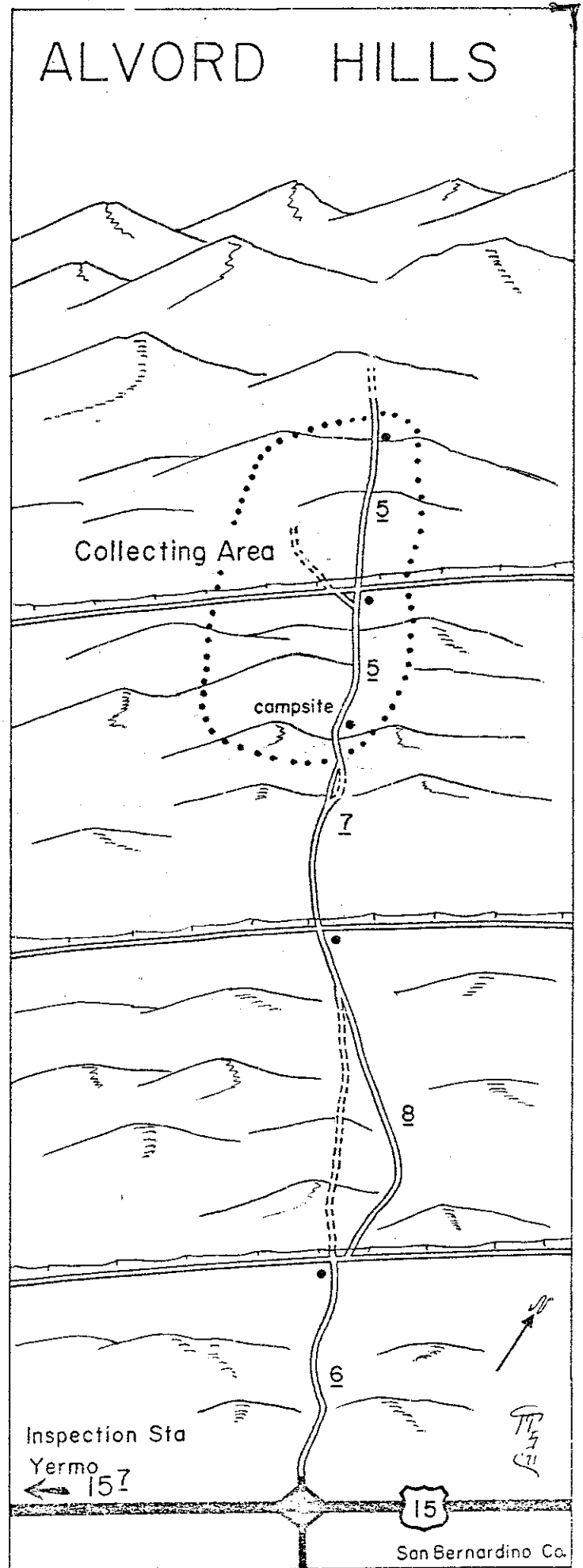
shallow depression. an occasional silvery-leafed desert holly will be seen bravely fighting the elements to stay alive

Though barren and desolate the Lower Mojave Valley may appear to be, it is a region of hidden surprises and exciting history. Through its length runs a river and it was once filled by a prehistoric lake along whose shores horses, camels and mastodons roamed.

The Valley has felt the wheels of covered wagons as pioneers traveled along the Old Spanish Trail; and it enjoyed the distinction of having a military camp built to protect them. Today, it is rich in excellent gem and mineral collecting areas. Of particular interest and within easy reach from a modern freeway, are the agates in the Alvord Hills.

The agate fields are reached by taking the Field Road offramp, approximately 15.7 miles east of the California Inspec-

Photos
by
Jerry
Strong



MAP 0021 B

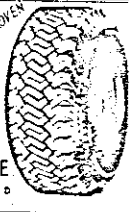
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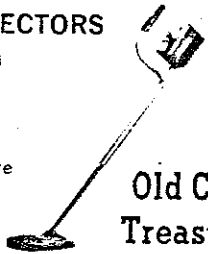
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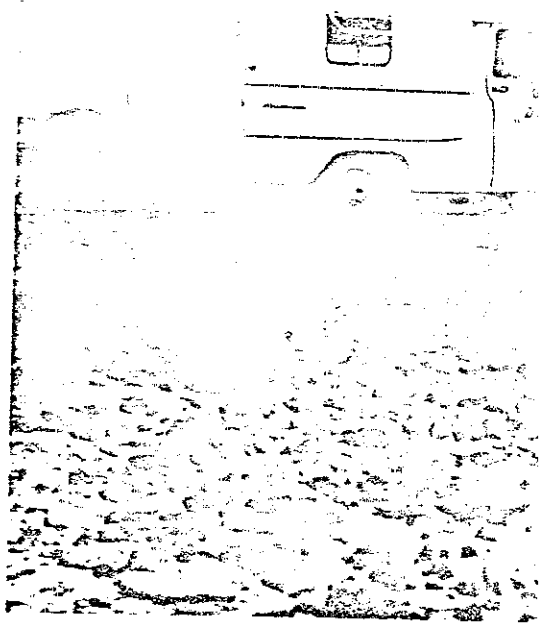
tion Station on Interstate 15 Cross over
the freeway and follow the good dirt
road northwesterly into the hills (see
map and road log for details). Two miles
from the freeway the road goes down
into a shallow valley and the main collect-
ing area begins. The valley makes an ex-
cellent campsite and offers a bit of shelter
from the desert winds. The road and the
collecting area continue for the next mile
where the road climbs a ridge and event-
ually joins the power-line

Agate, jasp-agate, jasper and petrified
palm wood will be found as float on both
sides of the road throughout the area in-
dicated on the map. Here are great quan-
tities of material in small sizes for tum-
bling and larger chunks for slabbing.
There is also a considerable amount of
leaverite. The collecting is easy—just a
matter of walking and looking. Even the
most discriminating rockhound should be
able to pick up some colorful, good qual-
ity, cutting material

There is a wide range of color and pat-
tern to be found in the Alvord Hills
specimens—pastel shades of pink, yellow,
salmon, beige and dark brown, black and
white. The most coveted material is the
blood red, gem-quality jasper shot
through with blue or white chalcedony.
This material is known as "lace carnelian"
and will cut into beautiful cabochons. The
scarcest item is the petrified palm root. It
is of brown color and can easily be over-
looked, if the specimens aren't carefully
scrutinized for eyes. An occasional
chunk of petrified reed may also be
found. It polishes well to show the reed
structure very effectively.

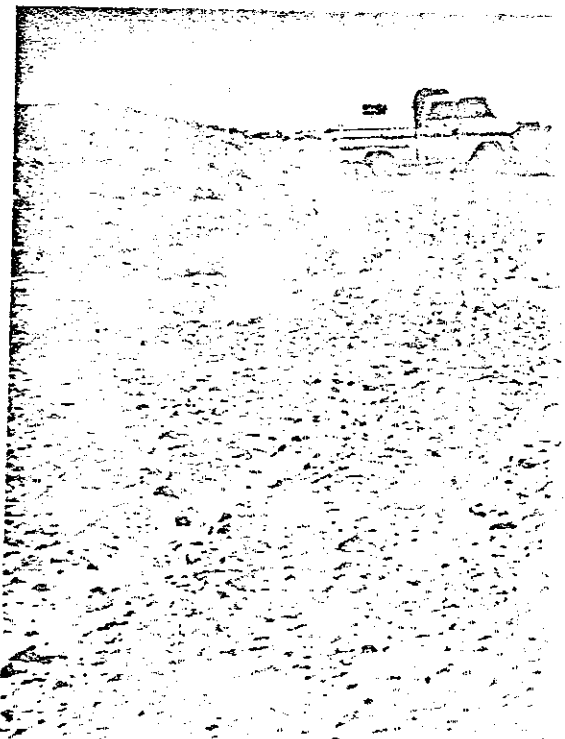
Looking east from the collecting area,
the sand-covered Cady Mountains form
the border of the Lower Mojave Valley
and the course of the meandering Mojave
River can be traced along the valley floor

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The river flows underground for many
miles along its course, surfaces in Afton
Canyon to run above ground several
miles, then, once again, sinks into the
sands

During Pleistocene Time, a million
years ago, the Mojave River flowed into
the Lower Mojave Valley and formed
Lake Manix. The climate was more hu-
mid then and this desert region is known
to have supported considerable wildlife
including horses, camels, mastodons, an-
telope and birds. The fossil remains of
fish vertebrae and four species of fresh
water mollusks have been found in the
green beds of old Lake Manix. These, to-





Fray Francisco Garces—the first white man to cross the Mojave Desert

During the 1860s, the settlement of the Mojave Desert region began as the result of its division into townships and sections by the United States General Land Office. A journey along the Mojave Desert section of the Spanish Trail was not without danger from marauding Indians. Following attacks on travelers and miners, Camp Cady, with a complement of a hundred soldiers, was established in the Lower Mojave Valley—two miles southwest of the present-day railroad siding of Manix. It is now in ruins.

Doctors tell us that hobbies are the rejuvenators of man. If this be so—the Alvord Hills are the right prescription. They offer the rockhound an easy-to-reach area, removed from the noise of the main highway. It is a peaceful setting of low hills and broad horizons uncluttered by the litter of civilization. Except for three pole lines, there is little to mark man's encroachment.

The ample gem fields make the pursuit of the hobby rewarding. The air is clear and refreshing to breathe and the night sky glitters with a million sparkling diamonds. A special quiet covers the area with the comfort of a favorite blanket. Yes, the Alvord Hills in the Lower Mojave Valley are the Rx for good collecting, good camping and good fun on the Great Mojave Desert. □

gether with the uniform bedding and the green color, which is due to oxidation beneath water, clearly indicate the presence of a sizeable lake. J. P. Buwalda studied the deposits extensively. In the published report of his findings of 1914, he named the prehistoric body of water Lake Manix.

The Lower Mojave Valley was also part of the famed Old Spanish Trail. First recorded by John C. Fremont during his expedition of 1844, it apparently had been in use over a period of years prior to Fremont's journey. The portion of the route from the Colorado River to the San Gabriel Mission was a well-established Indian trail; traveled in 1776 by Padre

ALVORD HILLS LOG

Mileages are not accumulative. Take the Field Road offramp on Interstate 15, at approximately 15.7 miles east of the California Inspection Station at Yermo. Cross over freeway.

- 0.0 Dirt road begins.
- 0.6 Pole line road. Jog right and then left.
- 0.8 Cross 2nd pole line road.
- 0.7 Reach little valley. This is an excellent campsite. Collecting area begins.
- 0.5 Cross 3rd pole line.
- 0.5 End of main collecting area.

This is a good dirt road and OK for cars and trailers.

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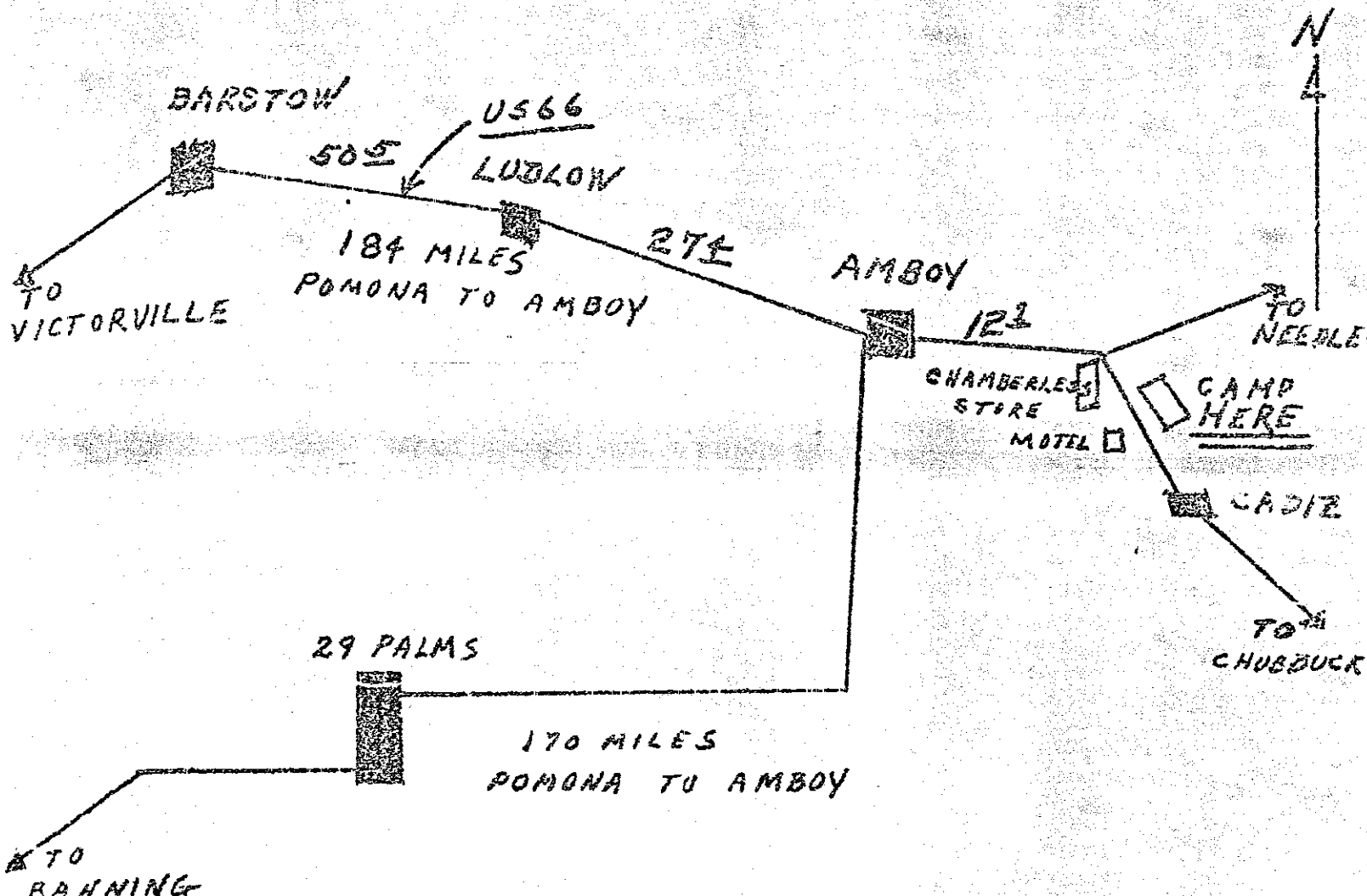
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MAP 0021D

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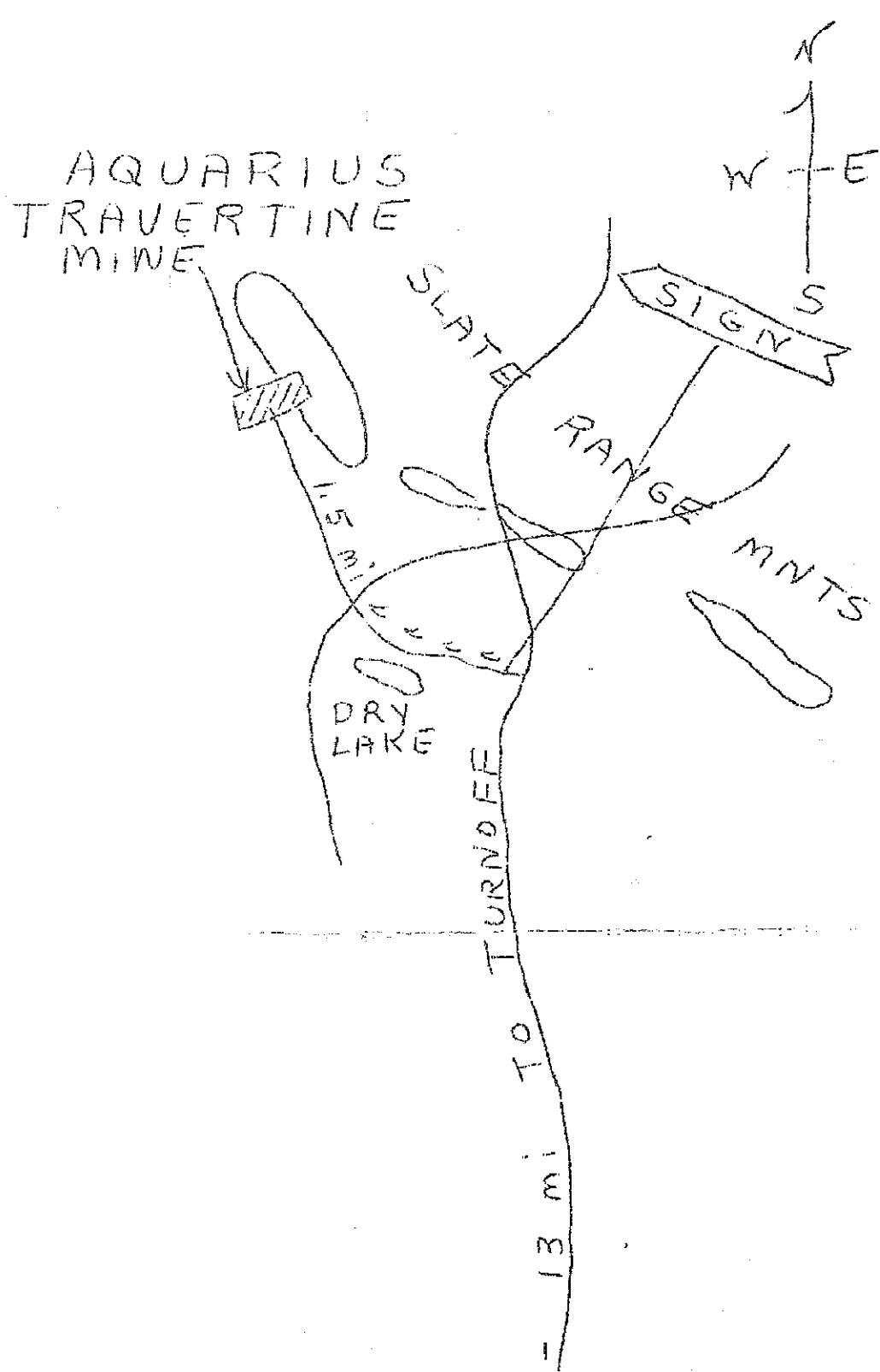
MATERIALS: ALGAE, TRILOBITES, BRECCIATED JASPER. — HEAVY TOOLS A MUST, BRING FIREWOOD & WATER.

IF YOU COME OUT SAT NITE FOR SUNDA

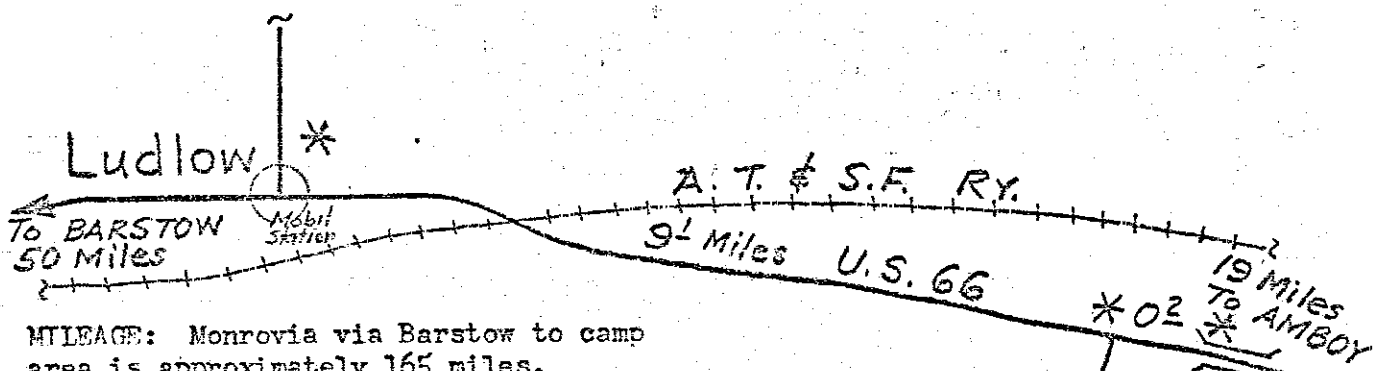
SEE JOEL BOWSER (622-5663) BY 2-15-68

REMOVE FROM BULLETIN BOARDS 2-19-68

MAP 0013A



MAP 0024A



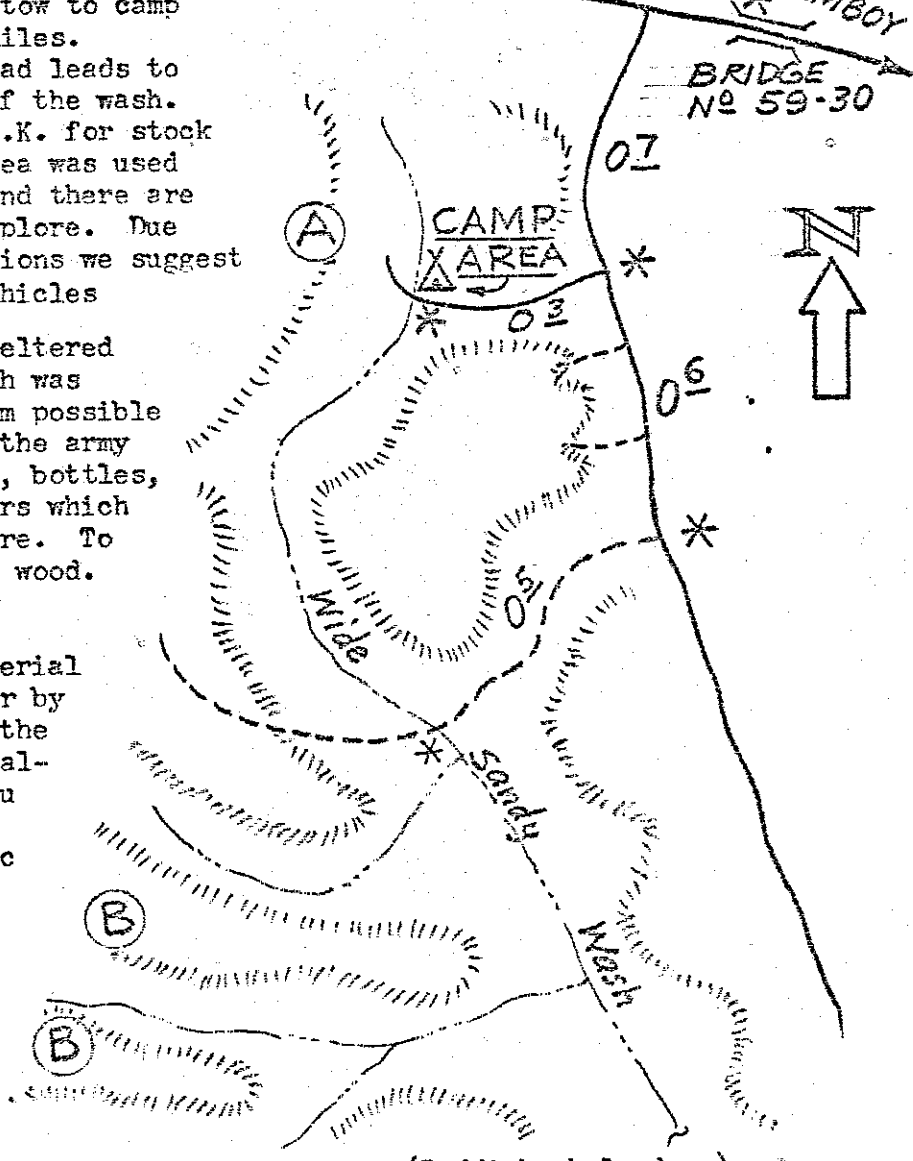
MILEAGE: Monrovia via Barstow to camp area is approximately 165 miles.

ROAD CONDITIONS: A good road leads to the camp area at the edge of the wash. Though a bit sandy, it is O.K. for stock cars and trailers. This area was used by the army for maneuvers and there are many roads and tracks to explore. Due to the extreme sandy conditions we suggest the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles beyond the camp area.

CAMPING FACILITIES: The sheltered area on the edge of the wash was selected for protection from possible winds. You will note that the army littered the area with cans, bottles, etc., as well as some timbers which may be used for the camp fire. To be safe bring your own fire wood. This is open desert country with no water.

COLLECTING AREAS: Most material may be found in the float or by shallow digging. To check the color and quality of the chalcedonies we suggest that you carry water with you to the collecting areas. A plastic gallon container of water and a second container cut in half to make a pan, plus a small stiff brush, will be a big help in removing the layer of dirt and revealing the color of your finds.

- COLLECTING AREA (A) : Agate, chalcedony, carnelian (Reddish chalcedony).
- COLLECTING AREA (B) : Flower agate, chalcedony, carnelian.



ASH HILL

MONROVIA ROCKHOUNDS, INC.

AMH FIELD TRIP 26, 1968

NOT TO SCALE

MAP 0026A