

HIDDEN CANYON

by Tom Kollenborn © 1998

There are many stories about unusual places in the Superstition Wilderness Area. Since the late 1940's, Hidden Canyon has been a mysterious place that I have heard stories about and wanted to visit. For many years I believed this canyon was nothing more than a story, a big windy story, because I couldn't locate it. I've had several individuals tell me they have been there, but couldn't give me directions to its location for various reasons. A friend said he knew where the canyon was and he believed it was named after Bill Hidden, an old time prospector of the Superstition Wilderness Area who often camped there.

Some time around 1963, I came across a contemporary map sketched by some Dutch hunter named Darrel Warren who claimed his grandfather had drawn the Barlett-Warren Map describing the location of Hidden Canyon. I thought, at first, this was just a coincidence. I ended up with a copy of this map and filed it away. Thirty years later, Greg Davis located another copy of this map and gave it to me. I examined both maps and found there were several discrepancies indicating more than one author.

The names of historical landmarks have a way of being changed for various or obvious reasons. Each generation will often start on a campaign of changing local landmarks. Our city and county street names are a good example of these changes in landmark names. Roads such as Idaho, Meridian, Ironwood and Lost Dutchman Boulevard all had different names thirty years ago. Does anyone remember where Wilson Drive was, or how about Transmission Road, or County Line Road and Moer Road?

Not so many years ago a gentleman from eastern Texas contacted me about the location of a street in Apache Junction his grandmother lived on in 1946. He told she buried a couple of quart jars full of gold coins. He knew this to be true because both his grandmother and grand-

father didn't trust banks. His grand parents were Depression Era people. They retired in Apache Junction at the encouragement of Julian King. The name of the street his grandmother lived on is lost in the pages of Apache Junction history. I believe the street was called Rattlesnake Lane. Rattlesnake Lane has disappeared like Sunset Blvd, Sunset Airdrome and many others.

Tracing down landmarks that have been changed is a major undertaking. If names are changed they should be properly archived somewhere so references can be made to them. If the East Texas man's story is true, there are a couple of fruit jars full of gold coins near Rattlesnake Lane in Apache Junction.

This is exactly what happened to Hidden Canyon. The name 'Hidden Canyon' probably originated unofficially. It was a name used by prospectors and cattlemen around the turn of the century.

According to Floyd Stone, Hidden Canyon was used in the early days to corral range horses before a roundup. The canyon supposedly was located in what is now known as Horse Camp country east of La Barge Canyon. The canyon had a narrow entrance, but opened up into an area of about 40 acres.

In this forty acres was a small cabin and corral. Near the base of an intermittent waterfall was a small water seep that provided a dependable water supply year around. This was an ideal site for a prospector or range cowboy to set up camp. Down through the decades this site has been forgotten.

As far as I know, Hidden Canyon remains lost to this day. There were stories about a lost gold mine associated with this site, just like the lost gold on Rattlesnake Lane in Apache Junction.

My father always said there was a very thin line between legend and truth. Actually, he called it a thin gray line. After all, isn't that what legends and tales are made of?

