

The Aylors of Caballo Camp

I can not claim to be Chuck Aylor's biographer, but while working for the Barkley Cattle Company in the 1950's I knew Chuck and Peg Aylor and had many interesting conversations with them.

The first time I met Chuck Aylor was with my father in 1948. The next time our trails crossed, Chuck Aylor was at his Caballo Camp in East Boulder Canyon. I believe it was in the summer of 1955. Barkley had asked me to pack salt down to the Brush Corral salt grounds. I found my way to Brush Corral, dumped the salt and then decided to take the stock over to East Boulder for a drink of water. As I was riding up East Boulder I came upon Chuck and Peg Aylor's Caballo Camp. Chuck knew I worked for Barkley the moment he saw me riding toward his camp. I am sure Betty Barkley had told him. Chuck always called me "Slim or Red" for obvious reasons. He asked me to step down and talk for a little while. He offered me a cool drink of water and a chance to rest. This began my friendship with Chuck and Peg Aylor, a friendship that lasted for almost a decade.

I was no different than other visitors who stopped at Caballo Camp. Chuck began his spill about the mountains once he learned who my father was. We talked for a couple of hours about the old Dutchman and Spanish gold in the Superstitions. He offered to take me over to see his mine, but I decline because it was getting late in the afternoon and I needed to get back to First Water Ranch and start the windmill for Barkley.

Chuck was working closely with the Q.E.D., a corporation on the East Coast at that time. A man named Jim Butler was the lead man for Q.E.D. Chuck had taken Butler into the country above the Upper Box of La Barge Canyon. I'm sure he showed Butler old Roy Bradford's diggings at the head of the Upper Box and they may have gone on into Miller Basin looking for the juniper stumps.

Chuck Aylor was a very interesting man. He found quoting Shakespearean drama a way of relaxation. I was told Chuck had worked as a cook in an insane asylum in Colorado prior to moving to Arizona. I heard many stories about Chuck and Peg Aylor some were probably true and others were undoubtedly not. Chuck was always packing people and their gear into the mountains to make a little money. He had two burros, one named Cisco and the other Jacko. There were many occasions when I was sitting around a campfire that I would think of Chuck and Peg Aylor and their many stories.

Chuck and Peg staked a claim in the Pioneer Mining District near the Silver King Mine on January 20, 1937. They called the claim El Caballo. They soon moved to the Superstition Mountain area in 1938. Chuck and Peg then recorded the Palomino #1 on February 24, 1939. They were actively involved with prospecting and mining in the Superstition Mountains from 1939-1961, according to the record books. I have heard stories about them prospecting in the Superstition Mountains as early as 1935. My father and Bill Cage first met Chuck Aylor in 1937 on the old road to the Silver King Mine. About 1955 Chuck built Peg another house in La Barge Canyon near the old Indian Paint Mine. Chuck had to give up this residence and return to Caballo Camp when the forest service learned about the La Barge house in an article written by Mary Leonard in the Arizona Republic. The forest rangers would not allow any permanent camps in that area. Chuck's La Barge Canyon dwelling had a masonry wall and a large glass picture window.

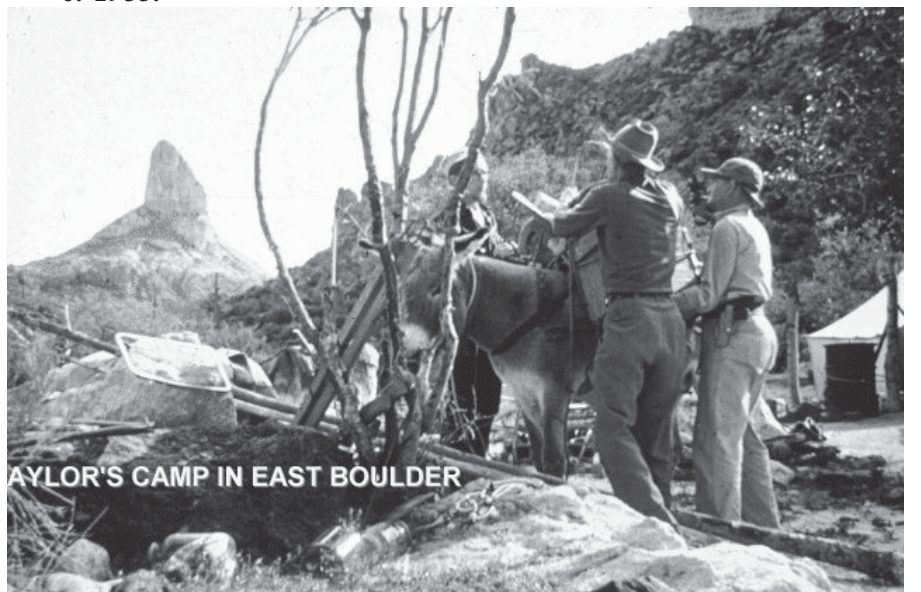
The last time I saw Chuck and Peg in the Caballo Camp was in late spring of 1960 when I rode into Charliebois Spring. Chuck believed there was gold in the Superstition Mountain, and many men have spent time with Aylor prospecting and talking about these mountains. Aylor's stories still flourish because of these people. Chuck Aylor had come in contact with many of the old timers who had searched for the Dutchman after 1900.

The other side of Chuck Aylor's life was his wife, Peggy. Peg Aylor considered herself an astrologer and thought of herself as a predictor of future events. Peggy had also taken up oil painting and had painted several pictures of the interior of the Superstition Mountains. I have one of her paintings in my collection, an oil painting was done about 1951. There is a good possibility several of Peggy Aylors' oils still exist around Apache Junction.

The Aylors were a special part of Superstition Mountain history. They were icons to many old timers who hiked the trails of the Superstition Wilderness in the 1950's and early 1960's. Their names have been etched into the pages of Superstition Wilderness history and will remain there forever. Chuck and Peg Aylor both passed away in the early sixties leaving behind a legacy of searching and dreaming.



Aylor following one of his faithful burros near Brush Corral in Boulder Basin. c. 1955.



Chuck Aylor packing one of his burros at Caballo Camp. c. 1953

