




IMPERIAL COUNTY'S

Scenic Wonders



Associated Chambers of Commerce
Imperial County, California

Toward the Setting Sun

Imperial Wonderland

The Imperial Valley of Southern California lies waiting for those who see the desert as a place of charm and beauty. Auto tourists find in Imperial valley during the winter months the most ideal climate in America—and those who have experienced a winter visit may be pardoned for using complimentary terms in describing the dry, crisp air, the blue, cloudless skies, the even temperatures which have combined to make Imperial valley a winter resort of fast growing popularity.

From any one of the fine hotels located in the principal cities of the valley, the tourist may drive to points of interest and return to the starting place within a few hours.

Imperial valley is a great sunken basin, having a unique character as a center of geological interest. Around its rim in the valleys and mountains to the west, along the Colorado river to the east, at the Salton sea on the north, and in the great Mexican Imperial valley to the south, may be found scenes of beauty, places which hold the charm of the desert.

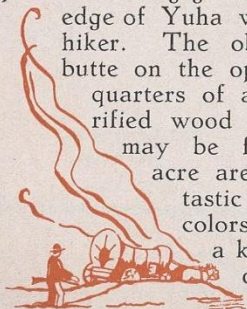
The autoist will find in this folder a number of suggestions which may help him make up an interesting and profitable itinerary for visiting points of scenic wonder in this sunken garden of the desert.



Petrified Forest

The Petrified Forest of Imperial valley is located near the international boundary, ten miles southwest of Coyote Wells. The motorist reaches Coyote Wells about 23 miles west of El Centro after a pleasant drive on the U. S. 80 highway. A meandering desert track winds off through the sage from this point, heading toward a purple, round-topped butte in the southeast.

The road, which has a gravel base and is easily passable during good weather, ends abruptly on the edge of Yuha wash. The autoist becomes a hiker. The objective is the base of the butte on the opposite side of the wash, three quarters of a mile away. Pieces of petrified wood with distinct grain markings may be found scattered over a ten acre area north of the butte. Fantastic shapes and softly blended colors in rock make the grounds a kaleidoscope of wonder—found only in the deserts of the great Southwest.



PICTURESQUE PAINTED GORGE

Painted Gorge

Painted Gorge is seven miles north of the paved highway U. S. 80 and about 30 miles west of El Centro. Entering Painted Gorge, the motorist will be impressed with the variety of color in the walls of the canyon and as he progresses, new shades and tints will be exposed.

The visitor will note that there are many curious shapes and formations in the face of the cliffs. A patchwork of color looks like the design of an old-fashioned quilt.

High coral reefs and well preserved oyster shells may be found in the upper stretches of the gorge, testifying that a great inland ocean once covered this point, several hundred feet above the floor of the valley.

In Alverson Canyon, just across the mountain from Painted Gorge, is the hunting ground for geologists, where sea urchins more than a million years old have been found. At 1.2 miles west of Coyote Wells the road turns to the right and at 4.1 miles further is the canyon. The curious fossil deposits are worthy of a visit.



Oyster Beds

On the Yuha plain, which stretches north and east from the petrified forest, may be found veritable treasures for the geological specimen-hunter. Sandstone concretions, shaped by wind and rain, form oddly shaped figures. Beds of decaying oyster shells and fish fossils are easily found.

The fossil "hunting grounds" can be reached by auto on a road which forks from U. S. 80 highway, 1.2 miles west of Dixieland. Five miles south on this road is the best collection of wierd curios.

Romantic Backgrounds

Smugglers' Cave High in the mountains, two and one half miles south of Boulder Park, the first stop at the top of the Mountain Springs grade, is the Smuggler's Cave. Requiring a round-trip hike of approximately four miles, this trip is probably the most interesting for the hiker anywhere around the valley.

The hiker walks straight south over the first ridge. It will be necessary to scan the mountainside closely to pick up the smuggler's trail, a well-defined horse path which was formerly used by Chinese smugglers. It leads through a desert garden where rocks, cacti, and cypress are scattered in a harmonic plan. It is desert and mountain beauty which will make the beholder catch his breath with wonder.

The Smuggler's Cave is several yards across the international line, which is marked with the remains of a barbed wire fence. Large enough for twenty men to huddle together for shelter, the cave is roofed with a huge rock and floored with coarse gravel and ancient charcoal.

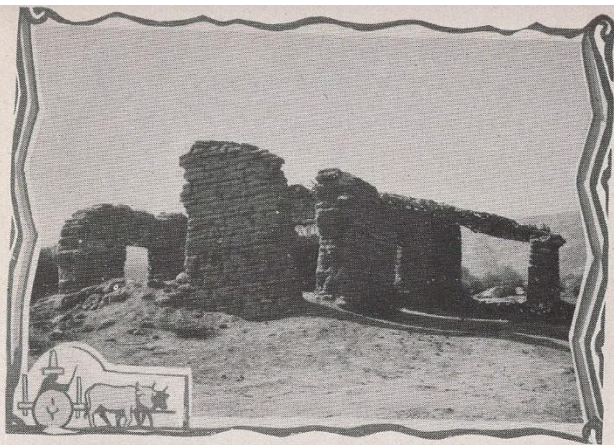
To visit Smuggler's Cave is like turning back a page of forgotten history and finding it still fresh with interest and romance.



Dos Cabezas Silently watchful, Dos Cabezas look out over the desert. If the two great bald rocks could tell the story of the evolution that has taken place beneath their gaze, what a colorful tale they could unfold!

A sparkling mountain spring which once dashed merrily between the Dos Cabezas rocks is gone now but the mountain-side down which it ran is still beautiful, a desert garden seldom matched in any man-made preserve. Yucca and cactus grow profusely and a scanty growth of scrub cedar adds to the variety. At the base of the ancient waterfall is a splendid picnic grounds provided with tables and plenty of shade trees.

The great rocks are near the Imperial county line in the Coyote mountains. The visitor should drive on U. S. 80 highway to a point four miles west of Coyote Wells, take the right fork on the old paved road, and again take the right fork onto the sandy road which parallels the railroad tracks. After crossing the tracks three times, drive toward the mountain canyon. The picnic grounds are 6.7 miles from the highway.



OLD BUTTERFIELD STAGE STATION OF VALLECITO

Butterfield Trail It was in 1858 that John Butterfield, pioneer stage driver and transportation executive, first drove his wiry teams before a lumbering stage-coach, crossing the Salton Sink from Yuma to Carrizo. Remnants of that St. Louis-San Francisco route still remain in the desert and the ruins of several stage stations still stand as memos of that romantic era.

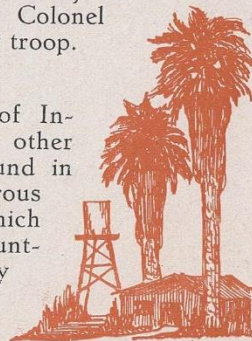
The first station was at Araz, a few miles west of Yuma on the north bank of the river. It was a small depot and very little of it still remains. From Araz westward the route of the stages is uncertain. However, the trail is again found on the west-side highlands near Dixieland. On a battered old sign beside the U. S. 80 highway between Dixieland and Plaster City is a sign which designates the north fork as "The 49ers' trail, later the Butterfield route across the desert."

For a trip into the past and as a means of partially appreciating the hardships of the stage passengers, the modern autoist should take the 20 mile trip from the highway to the Carrizo stage station.

It was over this trail that Captain De Anza traveled in 1774, followed soon by the mission padres and later by Colonel Kearney with a U. S. Cavalry troop.



Indian Pottery Valuable pieces of Indian pottery and other relics may be found in Coyote Mts. There are numerous collections in the valley which were gathered by amateur hunters. Geology and archeology students find the mountains a good place to explore.



Along the Rio Colorado

Picacho District On the Colorado river at the extreme eastern edge of Imperial county, is the old mining town of Picacho. Half a century ago it was the center of one of the greatest gold rushes in the west.

An Indian is credited with the discovery of gold in the Picacho hills in 1860. But it wasn't until several years later that Picacho really boomed and just before the close of the nineteenth century 1500 people lived in the thriving town.

The motorist who wishes to visit Picacho should drive to a point about two miles west of Yuma, where a dirt road leads north through the Yuma Indian reservation. The road continues straight north and when it reaches the mesa land above the reservation, it is generally hard-packed and in good condition.

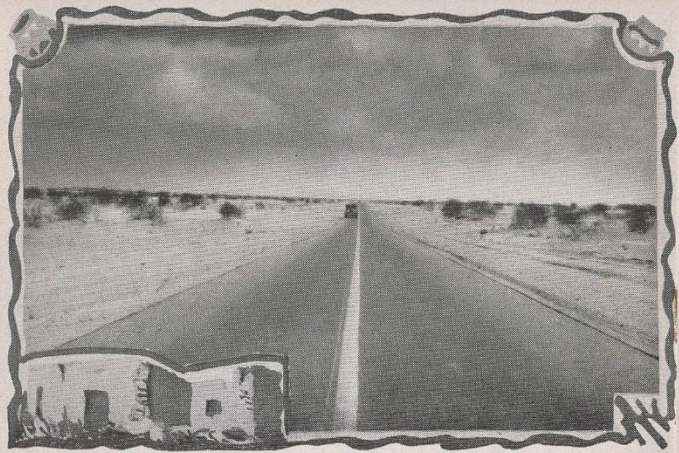
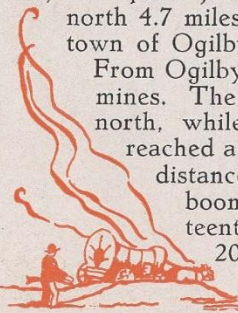
Dashes of green and dabs of brilliant red are painted into the landscape of Chocolate mountains. The cathedral-like spires of Mount Picacho stand rigidly erect like a general astride a charger, reviewing his troops. There is water and a good picnic ground at Picacho. There are old buildings, forgotten mine shafts, and ancient relics which make the old town a particularly interesting place to visit.



Ancient Mines Like turning back the yellowed pages of an old history book or reading the epitaphs on old gravestones—that is how a traveler would describe his visit to the abandoned camps of the Tumco and American Girl mines.

These two ancient gold mines are in the Cargo Muchacho mountains, north of the Yuma highway and east of the great sand hills. Good highways lead eastward from El Centro or Calexico across the sandhills. A good desert road turns north (to the left) at a point just east of the dunes. Traveling north 4.7 miles, the visitor comes to the little town of Ogilby on the Southern Pacific line.

From Ogilby two main roads lead to the mines. The Tumco mine is three miles due north, while the American Girl may be reached after a journey of about the same distance on the right fork. During the booming rush days of the late nineteenth century Tumco was a town of 2000 population, but the American Girl, developed later, was worked by less than 200 men.



PERFECT HIGHWAYS LEAD TO

Imperial Sandhills Sands of Arabia—sweeping, immense, awesome—the great sand dunes which line the eastern side of Imperial valley are the Mecca of artists, moving picture companies, and sight-seeing tourists.

There is a romantic quality about the graceful sweep of the horizon, the soft swish of a dry breeze, the peaked hills with razor sharp ridges and steep sloping sides. It would require a stony heart to resist the charm of the dunes on a balmy evening when the air is peaceful and the sand lies in ripples, whitecaps, and waves as far as the eye can see.

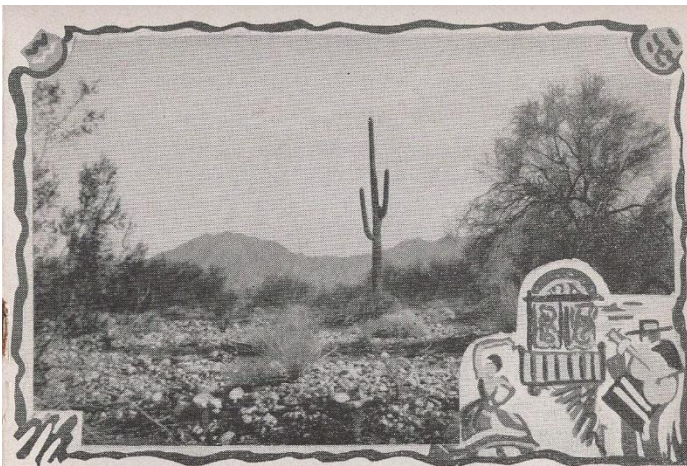
The U. S. highway 80 crosses the dunes near the international line. First crossed in May, 1915, with a plank road, remnants of which may still be seen, the crossing may now be made on a wide concrete highway which was completed in 1926.



Rockwood Gate One of the most important engineering structures in Imperial valley is the Rockwood intake gate at Andrade, about 50 miles east of the center of the valley and a mile and a half south of the Yuma highway at Pilot Knob.

Concrete or improved road may be used the entire distance. Every visitor should see this man-made structure, even if he must sacrifice some of the other intriguing journeys to points of interest about the valley.

In some seasons of the year a sandbar is built across the riverbed and the entire flow of the Colorado river is diverted for use in the valley. But during flood season the waters rise nearly to the top of the gate. Rise or fall, the gate is the regulator of the life stream of the valley.



ENCHANTING DESERT VISTAS

Mount Signal Mistress of the desert, regal Mount Signal is credited with an altitude of 2262 feet. Her foot is exactly at sea-level and her summit towers far above all other minor hills within the ranges which hem in the valley.

The federal soldiers who were stationed at Fort Yuma at the opening of the twentieth century about the time the Colorado desert was first being developed, are said to have used the peak of Mount Signal as a relay station for heliograph messages flashed from Yuma and Pilot Knob to any point in the valley.

Many tourists find sport in climbing Mount Signal in order to get a bird's eye view of the Imperial valley and the vast desert which surrounds it.

Mount Signal is a familiar landmark which can be seen from any point in the valley. Residents and visitors alike feel a sense of security in the dark shape, for it is a unity with the history of the valley, past and present.

Road to Alaska The road which takes the traveler over the Cantu grade through Baja California to La Rumorosa, better known as Alaska, passes desert and mountain landscapes of great variety and beauty. Alaska is a small settlement located on the summit of the Sierra de Juarez mountains. Its principal feature is the district military garrison where a corps of federal soldiers are stationed.

Traveling south through Mexicali and across New river, the motorist soon finds himself passing the shoulder of Mount Signal. The road lies across Laguna Salada, through a colorful canyon, and up the famous Cantu grade to the top of the mountain.

In the Land of Mañana

In Old Mexico A visit to the unique city of Mexicali, capital of the northern territory of Baja California, Mexico, should be included in the itinerary of every visitor.

Dusky children romp with dogs and chickens on the doorsteps of weed-thatched homes, a candy and bread vendor plods toward town with his table of wares balanced precariously on his head—all the life and color of Mexican peon life may be found here.

On the other hand, the visitor may drive down wide boulevards and see fine homes, surrounded by well-kept lawns and gardens, costly school buildings and neat appearing pupils. The homes of the government officials face on Avenue Obregon, which ends at the front steps of the Governor's Palace.

A new garden, featuring desert flora and cacti, surrounds the palace and a bandstand and open air theatre are nearby, contributing to the culture of the city.

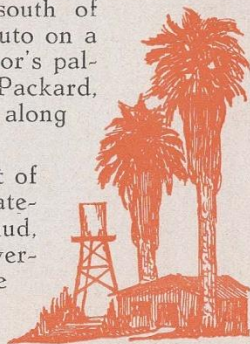
The cantinas and gaming houses of Mexicali are always interesting. The international line gate is open from 6 a. m. to 9 p. m. daily and officials do not require passports from visiting United States citizens.

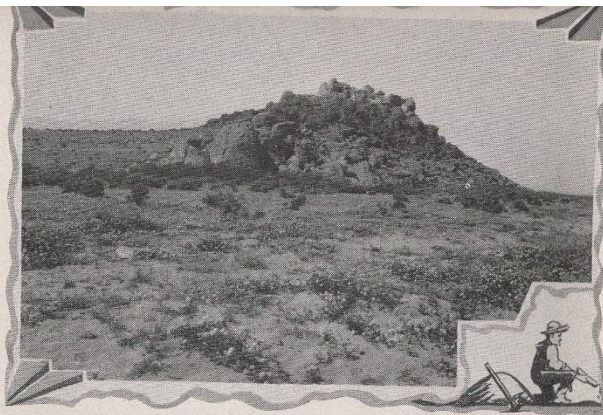


Black Butte He who visits Black Butte must have imagination. He must call up a picture in his mind of the time perhaps millions of years ago when the little black hill down in Baja California was a belching volcano of fire, throwing brilliant tongues of flame into the night and spitting streams of molten rock over the surrounding desert.

Black Butte, or Cerro Prieto in the Spanish tongue, one of the few extinct volcanoes on the Pacific coast, is about 25 miles south of Mexicali, and is reached by auto on a road which passes the governor's palace, goes through Palaco and Packard, and follows a devious route along ditch banks.

Eight miles south and east of the volcano are the great solfataras, eruptions of sulfurous mud, piled in cones as high as the average Imperial valley office building—truly an impressive sight.





DESERT FLOWERS AT TRAVERTINE ROCK

Ancient Beachline

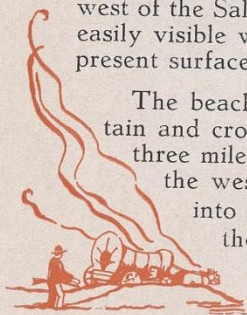
In a geological age long before man, Imperial valley was the bottom of an inland sea into which the Colorado river poured millions of tons of silt which it had dug out of the Grand Canyon. The level of the sea was governed by the ocean to which it was connected by a narrow neck at the southern end. Thus, at the sea level an ancient beach line has been left, encircling the irrigated area of Imperial valley and holding real treasures for the geologist.

One of the points of special interest on the ancient beach line is Travertine Rock, an upthrust near the U. S. Highway 99 on the western shore of the Salton Sea, about 58 miles north of the center of the valley.

Travertine Rock derives its name from the hard crust of calcium carbonate which covers it, known as travertine, and deposited from waters having lime in solution. There are various estimates as to the age of the travertine substance but it is well agreed that the latest inundation was at least 1000 years ago. In the chalk-like substance, geologists have found markings which they have definitely identified as Indian petroglyphs.

Along the mountains which parallel the highway west of the Salton Sea the motorist may see an easily visible water line, 250 feet above the present surface of the saline lake.

The beach line skirts Superstition mountain and crosses U. S. highway 80 about three miles west of Dixieland. It follows the west highline canal and continues into Mexican lands. In the sands of the beach and within a short distance of it may be found shells, pottery, fossils and relics.



INTERESTING PLACES

Mammoth Footprints

To reach the prehistoric animal tracks in the Fish Creek mountains entails a drive over rough roads and a short hike. Turn left on the south fork 12.5 miles west of Kane Springs. Five miles of travel on a winding road brings the visitor to a big wash near railroad tracks of the gypsum mine. Follow the wash through a canyon and about five miles further on leave the car and walk east a few hundred feet to a small side canyon. Here hundreds of imprints may be found in the sandstone which geologists declare are mastadon footprints. It is presumed the canyon was once a waterhole where great prehistoric animals came to drink, leaving their tracks in the mud, which later solidified.

In these mountains undoubtedly lie many undiscovered treasures for the geologist, paleontologist, and archeologist. Students and amateur fossil hunters find the mountains and canyons on the west side of Imperial valley a splendid place to explore.



... AND THE SOUTHEAST

Yuma Indian Reservation

One of the best known Indian reservations in the Southwest is that set aside for the Yumas in the southeast corner of the county of Imperial. On the California side of the Colorado river, high on the hill north of the highway, is a great school building, built by the United States government for the education of the Indians.

About 4.5 miles north and east of the Indian school is the cross-roads town of Bard, near which the Government Farm is located. Persons interested in agriculture experimentation are always intrigued by the work of the specialists who conduct this station.

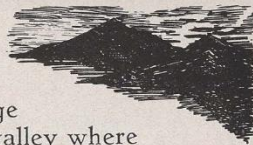


A LONGER JOURNEY

San Felipe A journey which requires at least three days and preferably longer will take the visitor to San Felipe, a sleepy little fishing village on the north shore of the Gulf of California. The road lies through Mexicali and is unimproved for the total distance of 145 miles to the gulf.

Totuaava and white sea bass weighing 100 to 300 pounds apiece are the usual catch for fishermen equipped with small boats and strong tackle. Men have been known to return to San Felipe camp with 400 pounds of fish after a half day of sport. Fishing permits must be secured from Mexican officials.

TO VISIT NEAR SALTON SEA . . .



Duck Clubs During duck hunting season in Imperial valley, which opens October 1 and lasts until January 15, the eight prominent gun clubs along the Alamo and New rivers and on the flats of the Salton sea attract hunters from all over the west.

North and east of Rockwood, five miles north of Brawley, is a lagoon on the Alamo river in which there are many acres of fresh shallow water lands and tules, ideal for ducks. Blinds and other equipment are provided and motor boats are used in which boating and hunting parties may enjoy a pleasant ride on the lagoon.

About 13 miles west of Calipatria in the marsh lands of the Salton sea are four duck clubs and several duck preserves.

Low marsh lands in this area are idea feeding grounds for great flocks of ducks. Seasonal conditions, rates, accomodations, and other information will be gladly furnished by the Brawley chamber of commerce.



Mullet Island Mullett island and the famous mudpots and oxide springs are five miles west of Niland in the extreme north end of Imperial valley. The autoist may reach the resort by turning west off the Calipatria-Niland highway at a point six and one-half miles north of Calipatria. Drive west three miles and north two miles. The road is well posted.

After many years of work, Captain Charles Davis, the proprietor, has built a showplace that is unique and characteristic of the old west. "Hell's Kitchen" is a small museum filled with curious pottery, samples of pigments, and natural phenomena without number.

A picnic pavilion on top of the hill overlooks Salton sea, and a plunge is filled with the health-giving mineral waters.

An area of bubbling oxide springs have been dubbed "Indian Paint Pots."

The mud geysers, located a half mile from Mullett island, are a phenomena every visitor should see. Small hills of black and gray mud have been thrown up to a height of five or six feet and out of their peaks issue puffs of sulphurous gas. There are approximately 50 eruptions in an area of 20 acres, an exhibition unique and interesting.

Sunset View Among the vantage points around the valley where visitors may see the real Imperial wonderland in all its charm and beauty, is the summit of the pass which crosses the Chocolate mountains a few miles northeast of Niland. From this high place in the mountains overlooking the Salton Sea and the lowlands of the valley one can get an inspiring picture of desert panorama.

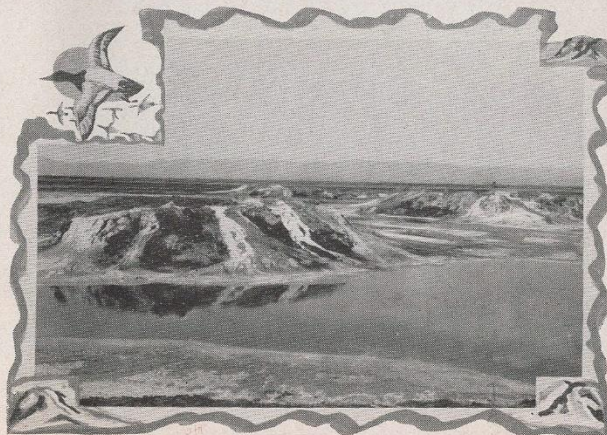
Some inspired soul dubbed the pass near Beal's Well "Sunset View." Perhaps no other place in the world could a painter find a more fitting subject for canvas than the view of many-hued clouds and sharply outlined mountains as the sun goes down behind the Fish Creek range many miles away, on the opposite side of the "hollow of God's hand."

WELCOME

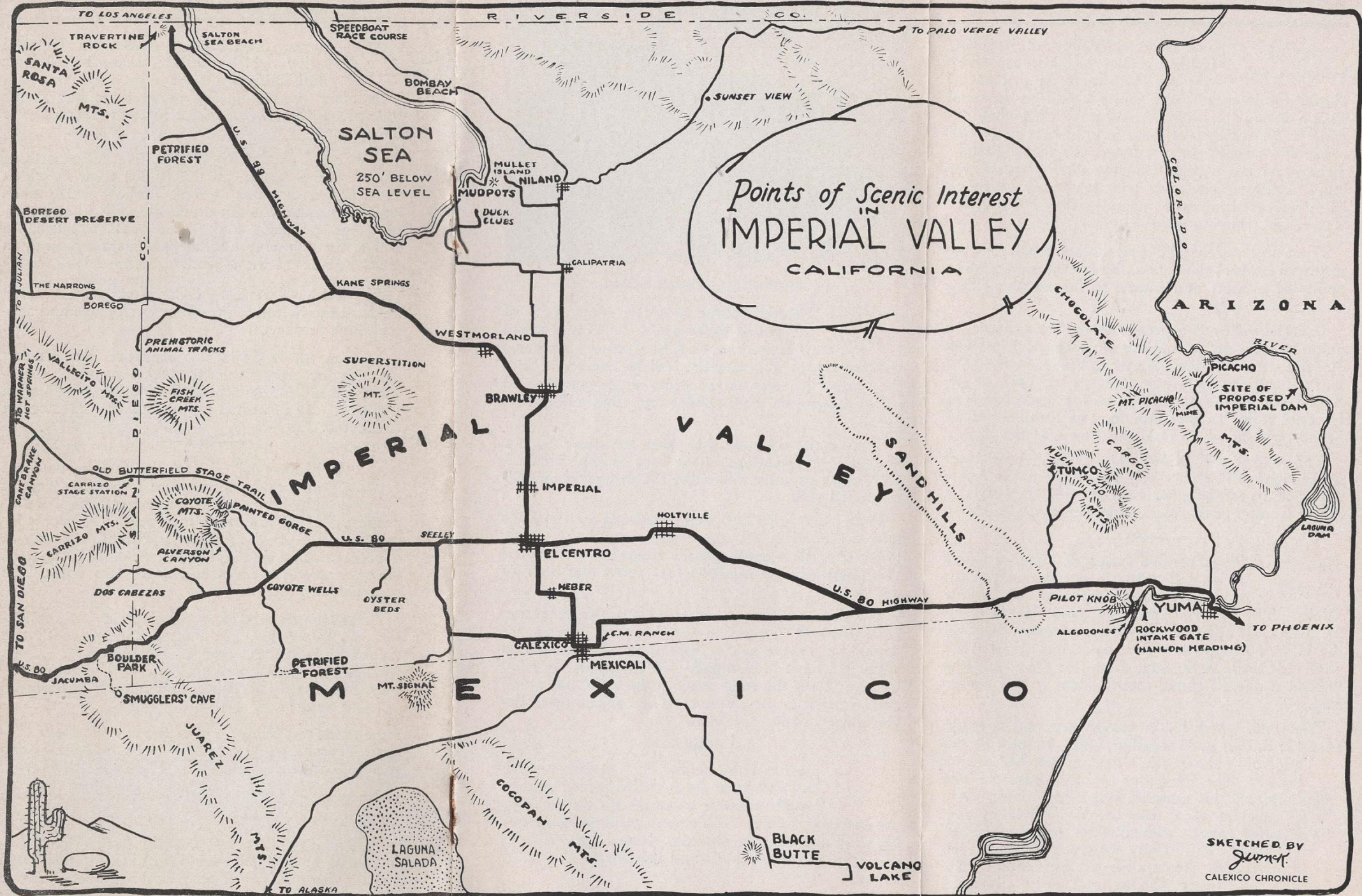
The Associated Chambers of Commerce of Imperial county gladly welcome visitors to the "Winter Garden of America."

Any visiting group wishing to make a tour of the points of interest in the valley will be welcomed hospitably at any of the chamber of commerce headquarters, where a guide will be provided.

Brawley—115 No. Eighth St.	Phone 438
Calexico—Hotel de Anza	Phone 712
El Centro—140 So. Fifth St.	Phone 146
Holtville—City Park	Phone 104
Imperial—City Hall	Phone 240
Calipatria—108 E. Main St.	Phone 56
Niland	Phone 39-R-4
Seeley	Phone 13-J-5
Heber	P. O. Box 314
Westmorland	Phone 8713-J-2
Mexicali—228 Madero Ave.	Phone 190 W



FAMOUS MUDPOTS AT MULLETT ISLAND



SKETCH illustrating roads and highways in Imperial Valley, a portion of the mountain back-country of San Diego county, and part of Baja California, Mexico.

INCLUDED in the above sketch are thirty-two suggested points of interest for the motorist to visit. They are all within a hundred mile radius of the center of the valley.