

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

CRYSTAL CAVES?

If you, dear reader, had seen the beautiful sparkling white, three-sided crystals in the sample cluster taken from diversion tunnel number one, and which now rests in a little box in the Journal office, you most certainly would pardon our rambling into a quizzical sort of brown study—a “thinking out loud” process—such as we will here launch . . .

Don't know a darned thing about chemistry or geology, except that a “calamine” is sort of geologic formation peculiarly adapted to mining and occurring only in California, and that an igneous rock is one that cons ago was too ignorant to come in out of the rain. (Look 'em up in dictionary if you don't believe me.)

C. W. Bingham first told me he saw in a narrow seam running about these samples of crystals across the roof of diversion tunnel two—later he gave me a sample.

The seam was concreted over about a month ago, and so samples

are not available now.

When the miners of Hoover dam drove that big tunnel thru the solid rock in the Nevada terrain, far inside the cliff from the canyon wall, their blasts of dynamite uncovered this seam of pure white crystals, about a foot wide and presenting a sort of air pocket, long and narrow, faced on either side by the sharp, diamond-edged crystals, that sparkle in the light.

In round, irregular clusters, and curving, undulating surfaces, this shimmering white hollow presented a striking contrast to the rugged, dusty virgin rock of the terrain—natural jewelry set off in lustreous fashion against the unpoetic rock-face.

Chunks pried off revealed that inside this crust of crystal mass with its thousands of three-sided points (every point is perfectly triangular in having flat faces like a three-sided pyramid) a sort of pencil-lead-like black substance that you can write crudely with on a piece of paper.

Puzzled, we sent a specimen to the chemistry expert of the Las Vegas high school staff. Came back word that the white substance is “calcite— CaCO_3 ” and the black substance is “manganese dioxide— MnO_2 .” Them'd be fightin' words if anyone called US anything like that!

But as applying to these specimens, that sounds okeh to us. We accept the information with appreciation, and now we seek further interpretation of the hidden meaning of this crystalline incrustation (that last was misused, but it's too late now.) We expect someone who knows to come in and explain some of the geology of the canyon to us, and we'll pass it on to our readers.

The dictionary says calcite and limestone are related in some manner. Says limestone is “A rock consisting chiefly of calcium carbonate and yielding lime when burned. It is formed **CHIEFLY OF ORGANIC REMAINS, AS SHELLS, CORAL, ETC.**”

Now, Mister Webster, do you mean to tell us these crystals of Bing's and of the Journal's (thru courtesy of Bing) were formed of marine critters that once lived on

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The Ra
Resuscitatio
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North America
Al-to-the-last-
Old Potatoes.

Division 4—Advice and

Commander—Professor

(The professor will be closed hack, but will lean to answer any questions up to including “Who Hit Billy Paulson?”).

the shores of Black canyon? If so, it's been a long time those poor beasties have been entombed before miners unearthed them. And those over which the three-foot layer of concrete tunnel lining was cast a month ago will remain in dark once more, for a long time to come.

Come set us right on this data, ye experts; we're ignorant and admit it!