

The
FIRST-CENTRAL
TRUST COMPANY

SCENIC & HISTORICAL
POINTS *of* INTEREST
in
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA
in the vicinity of
BOULDER CITY

"THE VALLEY OF FIRE."

The Valley of Fire is located in Clark County, Nevada, about thirty five miles north of Las Vegas. It is reached by a narrow gravel road leading eastward from U. S. Highway 91, the "Arrowhead Trail", and branching away from it at Crystal.

The desert trail then proceeds across the barren desert country for perhaps eight miles continually rising until it reaches the base of the Muddy Mountains. The country now becomes very rugged and the trail continuing its steady climbing as it winds among the towering peaks at last reaches a pass between them.

Immediately the road descends rapidly into the southern extremity of a valley which is several miles in length. Here the character of the mountains undergoes a complete change, the drab grayish colored peaks of the Muddy Mountains being replaced by a relatively low range of hills which are composed entirely of sandstone which is colored a bright red.

The rays of the sun being reflected by the red rocks present an unusual and an astonishingly beautiful sight. The impression created is that of approaching an immense furnace that is partially filled with a vast quantity of red hot coals. It is, of course, this phenomenon that gives the valley its name.

The narrow trail follows along at the base of the red sandstone range the entire length of the valley. The picturesque formations into which the rocks have been formed as well as their unusual coloring present a sight that is quite unlike anything to be found elsewhere in the desert in the great Southwest.



The Alleged Road that leads from Crystal to the southern entrance to the "Valley of Fire".



The first sight of the Bright Red Sandstone Hills, looking approximately northwest up the Valley.

As one approaches more closely to the red mountains the fantastic formations stand out more clearly and the next impression is that some prehistoric giant has dumped an enormous bowl of taffy and allowed it to flow along the floor of the valley, congealing into the weird formations as it cooled.

A closer inspection reveals unmistakably shapes into which the rocks have been formed were brought about by the action of flowing water at some time in the past. Caverns and undercuts precisely similar to those found in the banks and along the bed of a rapidly flowing stream are apparent throughout the entire length of the range.

Just when this water was present within the valley is a matter for conjecture. Since it has disappeared, however, and the rocks have been left out in the open, they have been further eroded by the action of the elements until nearly all of them are covered with a scale of sandstone from which the binder has disappeared. This scale is so soft that it can be easily crushed to sand between the fingers.

After the disappearance of the water but still antedating the knowledge of modern man the valley was inhabited by some unknown race of people who covered the surfaces of several of the smoother and harder rocks with small pictures and characters which scientists have called "Petroglyphs", or rock writings. Many of these writings have been badly dimmed by erosion but those on the more sheltered surfaces away from the prevailing winds are still quite distinct. No key has ever been found to assist in translating them so their meaning, as well as the people who made them remain a mystery.



Like huge lumps of Bright Red Taffy the hills extend above the floor of the Valley.



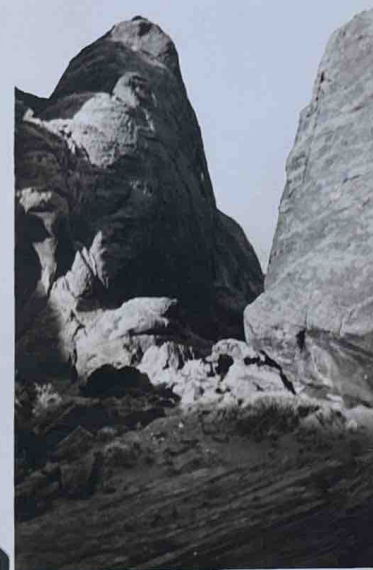
"Elephant Rock", one of the most curious of the formations created by erosion.



Atlatl Rock, which is higher than any of its neighbors, and unlike them is fairly hard and has a smooth surface, was ideally adapted for these writings. A large portion of its surface is covered with them. A rude stairway has been chiselled into the surface of the rock, affording more or less easy ascent of perhaps one third of its height. At this level the flowing water has worn completely through what must have been softer rock and has left a boulder weighing many tons balanced on the edge with no apparent tie to the main rock. It seems that gravity and friction are all that keep this boulder from plunging into the valley.

This natural phenomenon is usually referred to as balanced rock. Since it is in a well sheltered position, being protected from the eroding action of the elements by the bulk of the main rock, the writings on its surface are still in a good state of preservation, and are perhaps the most distinct of any in the valley.

Another interesting phenomenon of the valley is the presence a short distance away from Atlatl Rock of a number of petrified logs. Since no vegetation except that of the desert variety, chiefly sage brush, small cacti and desert holly now exists in the valley and there is no evidence that any trees ever have grown there, the thought is that these logs were floated into the valley from the north and were left there when the water receded. Since their deposit in the valley they have become petrified to a hardness greatly exceeding that of the neighboring sandstone hills and have been almost completely covered with the shifting sand. They have been located chiefly by excavation but a number of them are now out in the open where they may be inspected by visitors.



"Atlatl Rock" which has a harder texture and smooth surface offered an ideal location for picture writing.



Balanced Rock separated from the main body of Atlatl Rock by the eroding effect of rushing water.

The entire valley lies within the confines of the Federal Reservation on which Boulder Dam is located and which has been designated by the State of Nevada as Boulder Dam State Park.

The state has been given assistance by the Federal Government in the maintenance of the trail through the valley and in the erection of a quantity of helpful signs which enable those who take the trip to find and inspect all the wonders the valley affords.

The Citizens Conservation Corps members have established a fine picnic spot near the center of the valley. They have built several stone cabins and a fairly large open sided shelter house with a thatched roof. They have also provided a number of open fireplaces, as well as several rectangular sheet iron stoves for the use of tourists who wish to cook their meals out in the open. Well constructed picnic tables have been placed in convenient locations both inside the shelter house and out in the open. A small weather proof shed is located within the shelter house which contains a register in which all visitors are asked to sign their names.

A tour of inspection through the valley consumes the greater portion of a day which any lover of Nature will feel has been very well spent.

Visited Sunday, November 25, 1934.

BY _____



Stone Cabins erected by the C.C.C.
Unit #573 - Ohio Boys.



The "First Mate" of
the Expedition.

