

Desert Plants

A quarterly journal devoted to broadening knowledge of plants indigenous or adaptable to arid and sub-arid regions, to studying the growth thereof and to encouraging an appreciation of these as valued components of the landscape.

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Editorial

Palms, Presidios and Pride: An Update on Arizona-California Sibling Rivalry. In a recent publicity campaign Californians are claiming that if their state were a separate country it would rank as the seventh largest nation in the world with respect to wealth, business and foreign trade. In a world where "Arizona Rosewood" has already been given the scientific name *Vauquelinia californica* and where many Californians think of Arizona as little more than a *Haworthia liliputana* growing at the foot of a giant *Sequoia*, someone needs to fire a defensive round in support of Arizona.

To this end, the present issue of *Desert Plants* presents evidence that the original type-locality of the "California Fan Palm" (*Washingtonia filifera*), the site where the species was originally "discovered" and made known to science, actually lies in Arizona, not in California as residents of that state have long claimed. Although this may seem a trivial point to the average person, it really isn't. This noble palm was discovered and named by European plant scientists in the middle of the 19th Century at a time when the great resources and natural wealth of the United States were literally stunning the world. This palm from Arizona was considered so exquisite, so far above the rank-and-file of plant discoveries, that European science bestowed the name of the first president of the United States upon it, creating the genus *Washingtonia* as a monument to honor America's great patriot. A lesser plant to honor Washington would not have done! And what location in the United States contributed the stalwart tree which the world of science chose to honor America and her great President? Dr. Victor Miller argues convincingly in the following article that *Washingtonia* came from a remote stagecoach route 30 some miles from Prescott, Arizona! It is truly fitting that *Washingtonia* came from a giant young land full of opportunity and of vast potential good.

Arizona is still a young land ripe with opportunity and bristling with potential. Its forests of giant Saguaro cacti, its immense Grand Canyon, its checkerboard of biotic communities, mountains, canyons, and deserts contrast so strongly with humdrum landscapes elsewhere that scope and scale tend to stay with a person to inspire great heights of achievement and the vision to begin enormous projects. Building of the mighty Boulder Dam, on the Colorado River in Arizona, was the single most important event which made possible the development

of Los Angeles, California, providing both water and electricity. But after decades of litigation between California and Arizona over water rights, Arizona soon will be diverting Colorado River water inland to the enormous Central Arizona Project designed to complement the existing water delivery system made possible by Roosevelt Dam and the Salt River Project. "Arizona grows where water flows."

Northern Arizona's Lake Powell, which didn't exist a few years ago, is close to being the largest man-made lake anywhere. It is already one of America's greatest vacation spots, ranking among such tourist attractions as the Grand Canyon and Disneyland. And far downstream at Lake Havasu City a man decided that Arizona's natural wonders were not enough; when the Britishers decided to sell London Bridge, he had it meticulously taken apart at great expense, shipped to Arizona and put back together! The region about London Bridge has recently undergone almost unbelievable development and is close to being the fastest growing area anywhere in the world.

Arizona has had a long relationship with California. Take for example the "Long Legislature." It convened at Prescott (then capital of Arizona), voted to move the capital to Phoenix, but fearful of being waylaid by the populace took the train to San Francisco, eventually arriving in Phoenix much later after deliberating along the way and fortifying each other with liquid libations at all the stops, or so historians say. Californians point with pride to San Francisco, long the west coast equivalent to New York and the Pacific gateway to America in the 19th Century, a city still important today with its historic Presidio, Federal Reserve Bank, numerous corporate headquarters and amenities of civilization. Yes, Arizona and California go back a long way in history. But Arizonans are quick to point out that it was an expeditionary party from the Presidio of Tubac (in present-day Arizona) that travelled overland through the Sonoran Desert to establish a little settlement on the Pacific Coast—the little town that became San Francisco, California! We suspect that Arizonans have a few other projects in mind yet as well—perhaps channelization of the lower Colorado River could allow development of a seaport at Yuma for trade with Australia and South America! Arizona is yet a giant young land, a sleeping giant with vast potential. And high among its list of assets we rank the myriad of desert plants whose uses we are only now beginning to discover.