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Scenes from the past--V

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This is one of many related papers that were included in the 1978 NMGS Fall Field Conference Guidebook.

Annual NMGS Fall Field Conference Guidebooks

Every fall since 1950, the New Mexico Geological Society (NMGS) has held an annual [Fall Field Conference](#) that explores some region of New Mexico (or surrounding states). Always well attended, these conferences provide a guidebook to participants. Besides detailed road logs, the guidebooks contain many well written, edited, and peer-reviewed geoscience papers. These books have set the national standard for geologic guidebooks and are an essential geologic reference for anyone working in or around New Mexico.

Free Downloads

NMGS has decided to make peer-reviewed papers from our Fall Field Conference guidebooks available for free download. This is in keeping with our mission of promoting interest, research, and cooperation regarding geology in New Mexico. However, guidebook sales represent a significant proportion of our operating budget. Therefore, only *research papers* are available for download. *Road logs*, *mini-papers*, and other selected content are available only in print for recent guidebooks.

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SCENES FROM THE PAST -V

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Twenty-Four Years Ago

The Fifth Field Conference sponsored by the New Mexico Geological Society began in Alamogordo, October 21, 1954, covered the Sacramento and Guadalupe mountains in southeastern New Mexico, and disbanded near Guadalupe Peak in west Texas on October 24.

Rex Alcorn, then with Sun Oil Company and now an Independent, was General Chairman. (See photo, NMGS Guidebook 26, p. 79; Rex was subsequently President of NMGS in 1958 and always an enthusiastic supporter of various activities.) He comments—"It is indeed nostalgic to flip the pages of the guidebook covering the Sacramento and Guadalupe mountains of southeastern New Mexico and note the still familiar names of officers and committee members: Stipp, Helmig, Milks, Bejnar, Pray, Fagadau, Meyer, Clark, Bruce, Matchus, Bachman, Sheldon, Jones, De Benedetti, Bradley, Greve, Simon, Belknap, Clifton, Oliver, McNulty, Kassube, Buzzalini, Davis, Bybee and several others. One name was omitted from the guidebook pages and should be mentioned at long last. Frank Podpechan stepped forward after press time and contributed much to the success of this venture. Frank is now in Tulsa as President of Petroleum Reserve Corporation and doing very well. Frank relieved me of many concerns during the trip, and it's gratifying to have the chance to so note.

"Recalling the faces that go with the aforementioned brings the word 'change' to mind. In 1954, Roswell was the site of 23 offices of major oil companies, but now there are none. Only Phil Helmig and myself still reside in Roswell; this means that we reluctantly bid farewell to literally hundreds of oil-industry friends over the years. Tom F. Stipp remained in Roswell until his passing in 1976. Tom was President of the NMGS in 1954 and was editor of the guidebook. It was always a pleasure to be associated with Tom. We all miss him and his quiet gentlemanly manner, and most certainly his expertise.

"It seems inevitable that each such trip supplies a memory of some occurrence having nothing to do with the actual purpose of the endeavor, and this was no exception. I have a vivid recollection of receiving a phone call in Alamogordo late in the evening prior to the beginning of the trip. Two friends and colleagues with Sun Oil Company had flown from Dallas to El Paso to attend the conference. They requested that I drive to El Paso and pick them up at the 'bridge' spanning the Rio Grande at Juarez. I agreed to do so, definitely without enthusiasm, and arrived at the appointed place about 2:00 a.m. knowing that there was no way that they would be waiting. Surprisingly, there they were, fully prepared to convince me to enter Juarez so they might view just "one more show." I agreed to do so feeling that it would probably save time to simply succumb to their pleadings rather than spend time listening to their not-too-coherent but well-prepared debate. We returned to Alamogordo just in time for me to reach the assembly point for the first day, offer the traditional remarks of welcome, and introduce Lloyd Pray, trip leader for the Sacramento Mountains portion of the excursion. It is no doubt fortunate that I don't recall a word I said, for it had to be the least enthusiastic opening remarks ever thrust upon an innocent but captive audience. Needless to say, this participant was glad to see the first day come to an end.

"Special mention should be made of Lloyd Pray, whose extensive knowledge of the Sacramentos was generously imparted to all participants. I still have a mental picture of Lloyd high on the Sacramento escarpment spraying paint on marker beds to be easily viewed by all while he offered pertinent comments over the PA system.

"I t's probably noteworthy that nothing exceptional occurred as the trip progressed in the way of more than the usual unforeseen crises. From Carlsbad, the Guadalupe Mountains and reef escarpment, not to mention the potash mines, were examined with emphasis on the Capitan reef and the forereef and backreef facies. The impressive contributions by a dedicated group of volunteers participating in the field conferences of the NMGS through so many years has enhanced our knowledge substantially. And, the Fifth Field Conference was no exception. This certainly should prompt a feeling of pride for all who contribute in this way to their chosen profession.

"So, the past 24 years have brought about 'change.' People have changed, their professional affiliations have changed, too many are no longer with us, ideas have changed, cities and towns have changed, roads and highways have changed, nomenclature has changed—but one thing remains the same—the rocks are still there and they have not changed. They lend themselves to further study by our successors eagerly waiting to receive attention. If the guidebook for the Fifth Field Conference has been of any assistance at all to those who followed, then the considerable effort was well worthwhile.

"The trip ended some place on the west side of Guadalupe Peak, almost half way to El Paso from Carlsbad. My two friends requested that I take them to El Paso for their return flight to Dallas, with just a little time in Juarez, of course. I agreed more readily on that occasion for two reasons. I felt the trip had been a success and also it was my birthday. I now thank those two wonderful guys for the memory, for they both now are prematurely deceased."

Lloyd Pray, then with California Institute of Technology and now with the University of Wisconsin at Madison, was one of the field-trip leaders. His work, and that of his students on the geology of southeastern New Mexico, is well-known. He comments—"My dim memories of the 1954 NMGS Conference are of good weather, and a large and enthusiastic group of geologists in a very lengthy caravan. The part of the trip which went into the Rocky Arroyo and Guadalupe Mountains area was into largely *terra incognita* for me. Up to that time my personal involvement with the geology of southeastern New Mexico had been largely in the Sacramento Mountain area, where I had done my thesis mapping in the late 40's and where in the early 50's I held Cal-Tech annual summer field camps. The trip to southeastern New Mexico and the Guadalupe Mountains in 1954 was my first involvement with a formal field trip on parts of the Permian reef complex. I little realized at that time that the subsequent years would see a shift in my emphasis to the Guadalupe area, and to the Permian reef complex—which has been the focus of much of the research by myself and University of Wisconsin students in the 1970's, culminating in the 2-day Wisconsin-led field trip of May 1977. And, we are still just starting to understand the sedimentology of the Permian reef complex."

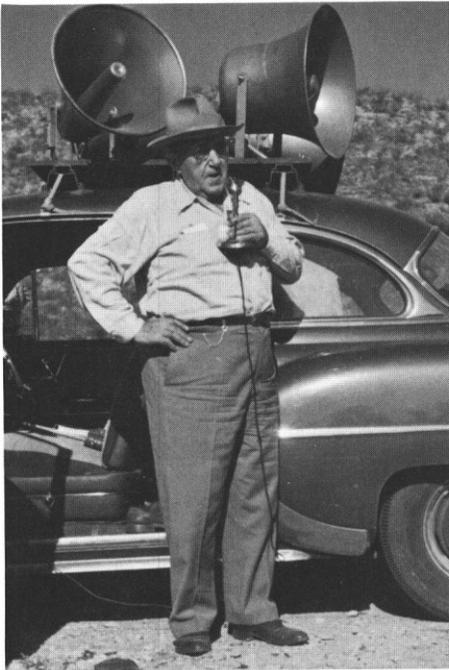
Credits for Photographs and Captions

S. A. Wengerd, Consultant, Albuquerque; R. H. Jahns, Dean, School of Earth Sciences, Stanford University; J.P.D. Hull, President, Impel Energy, Denver; J. E. Allen, Portland State University; Lloyd Pray, University of Wisconsin; John T. Rouse, Consultant, Billings; and U.S. Geological Survey Library, Denver.

VIGNETTES



Rex Alcorn and E. Russell Lloyd (a very prominent geologist and expert on southeastern New Mexico and west Texas, now deceased). "He (Alcorn) surely was a most pleasant and efficient person to work with in conjunction with that trip."—Lloyd Pray. (Pray photo)



"E. Russell Lloyd at some stop in the Guadalupe Mountains area. Lloyd, who had only recently completed his New Mexico Bureau of Mines Bulletin on the geology of southeastern New Mexico, was certainly the "Grand Old Man" on that trip. His warmth and encouragement to me and to many others who at that stage were just beginning to learn something of the geology of southeastern New Mexico will long be remembered and appreciated"—Lloyd Pray. (Pray photo)



Lloyd Pray and Wally Bejnar. (J. E. Allen photo; labeled 1955 but discussion with Pray suggests somewhere on 5th Field Conference.)



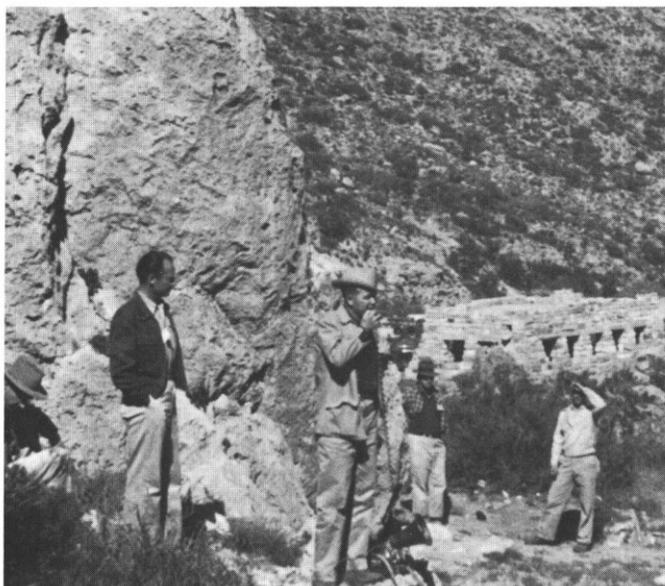
"Wally Bejnar and Abe Rosenzweig in front; standing are Bill Ramalho on left and Marshall Parry on right (both UNM flagmen) with Rod "El Charro" Roderick in the middle"—S. A. Wengerd. (Wengerd photo)



John Eliot Allen, S. A. "Sherm" Wengerd, and Bill Moran. (J. E. Allen photo; labeled October 1955 but probably was 1954.)



"The assembled caravan on the crest of the Delaware Mountains just south of El Capitan. The view is looking toward El Capitan and Guadalupe Peak to the northwest from somewhere near the area of the Gateway Limestone outcrops on the western edge of the Delaware Mountains, a mile or two south of U.S. Highway 62"—Lloyd Pray (Pray photo).

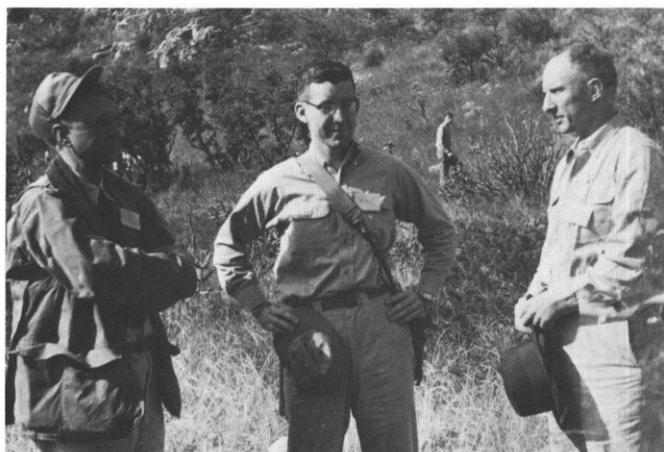


"Sitting Bull Falls stop. Rex Alcorn standing on left while Bob Bybee, Humble, at the mike tells us about the Permian section in Rocky Arroyo"—S. A. Wengerd. "Bob Bybee is now Exxon Operations Manager for the Gulf Coast. He was discussing results of Humble No. 1 Huapache which was drilling on Huapache monocline"—Bart Belknap. (Wengerd photo)

THE LATE HOLOCENE



"Bernold M. (Bruno) Hanson, Wallace E. Pratt, Joseph P. D. Hull, Samuel W. Bishop, John W. Skinner and Garner L. Wilde in the Guadalupe Mountains, New Mexico, spring 1956. The occasion was a field trip of Humble Oil & Refining Company geologists. All of us were geologists with Humble in Midland, Texas, except Pratt, who was retired chief geologist of Standard Oil Company (N.J.) living on his ranch at Frijole, Texas, in the Guadalupe Mountains. Pratt had been Humble's first geologist and first chief geologist. Hanson is now an independent oil operator in Midland. Pratt lives in Tucson, Arizona, and still contributes to the professional literature. Hull is president of Impel Energy Corporation in Denver, Colorado. Bishop is with Exxon's Mineral Division in Casper, Wyoming. Skinner is retired from Exxon in Midland. Wilde is senior exploration geologist with Exxon in Midland"—J. P. D. Hull. (Hull photo)



"Philip B. King, Donald W. Boyd and Norman D. Newell in McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains, October 21, 1955. These three were the leaders of the Permian Field Conference to the Guadalupe Mountains sponsored by the Permian Basin Section of the S.E.P.M. King at that time was teaching at the University of California in Los Angeles; now he is with the U.S.G.S. at Menlo Park. Newell was Curator of Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and now holds the same title Emeritus. Boyd was Geology Instructor at Union College, Schenectady, New York and now is Geology Professor at the University of Wyoming in Laramie"—J.P.D. Hull. (Hull photo)



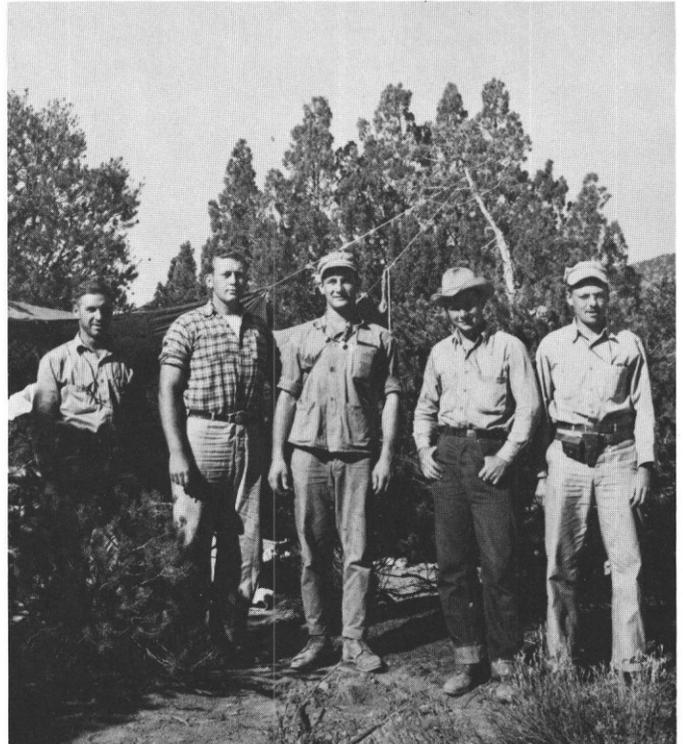
"Dick and Frances Jahns at Brown City, Iron Mountain, Sierra Co., New Mexico, in 1942"—R. H. Jahns. A high grade helvite pit was being examined in the Iron Mountain Be-W project. Jahns was Chief of Strategic Minerals Project for the U.S.G.S. (Jahns photo)



"Jewell J. Glass (Mineralogist, U.S.G.S., Washington, D.C., now deceased) at Winston, New Mexico in 1942), when she was working on the mineralogy of the helvite group and looking at the Iron Mountain occurrences."—R. H. Jahns. (Jahns photo)



Robert Hollister Chapman, U.S.G.S., topographer, and crew in camp at Steeple Rock Post Office, Grant Co., New Mexico, Christmas Day 1902(?). Chapman explored and mapped some of the wildest regions in the western United States. His earliest work in New Mexico was under A. P. Davis in the 1880's. He worked in 1887 on the Albuquerque and Santa Fe sheets. He designed and secured the adoption of the blue pennant used by the U.S.G.S. (Photo courtesy U.S.G.S. Library, Denver; background information from Clifford Nelson, U.S.G.S., Reston.)



"Mapping crew from Caltech at Ojo Caliente in Rio Arriba Co., New Mexico in 1947. Camp near Joseph mica mine. Clay T. Smith (New Mexico School of Mines then, NMIMT now), Don M. George (then curator of mineralogy at Caltech, now retired), William R. Muehlberger (then at Caltech, now Prof. of Geology at U. of Texas in Austin), Eugene M. Shoemaker (then and now at Caltech but at lots of places in between), Richard H. Jahns (then at Caltech, now at Stanford University)"—R. H. Jahns. (Jahns photo)



"Milton Hruby, retired Mobil geologist now at Kerrville, Texas and John T. Rouse, formerly with Mobil and now consulting geologist, Billings, Montana. Bottomless Lakes near Roswell, New Mexico, March 1, 1947"—John T. Rouse. (Rouse photo)