

Jonathan Watson, was not available until 1868. Prior to that the lineage of most bruins killed around the old Picnic Grounds remains in some doubt. Like Bengal tigers (which are always "royal"), nearly every bear shot was claimed to be "a grizzly." For example, Stephenson speaks of Patterson Bowers, an early settler in what became Orange, who "killed" a big grizzly beneath these very oaks."¹² N.T. Wood was credited with shooting two yearlings at the same place which weighed 400 pounds apiece, and with seeing "two monsters which he thought would have weighed about 1,500 each."¹³ Even trimming the fat from that figure by half, these would *have to be* grizzlies. Sometime after '68, but close to it Watson dropped "a big fellow" near Robber's Peak.¹⁴

But not all, apparently, were grizzlies. J.C. Joplin, long-time County Treasurer, who came to the Valley in '75, was a man whose word was as reliable as his bookkeeping. Like Pleasants, he flatly declared: "Black bears have been killed in the oak grove of the County Park."¹⁵

So you pays yer money and takes yer choice.

Though details of his life are sparse, Samuel Shrewsbury is generally conceded to have been the *second* gringo in the Santiago.¹⁶ He made up for it with a number of firsts. Shrewsbury was the first to establish a lime kiln in the mountains,¹⁷ and the first to bring in bees.¹⁸ Henceforth, honey would become the chief source of income for those living in the hills. Before Sam's enterprise in Limestone Canyon (whose name stems from his cement operation there),¹⁹ and before he homesteaded the future Modjeska place,²⁰ he lived in Downey. Coming with his parents from West Virginia, he had visited California twice prior to 1861 when he settled here for good. With him came a love of big game. Recalled Pleasants:

Sam Shrewsbury . . . and some of his friends used to come into the Santiago canyon hunting in 1861, '62 and '63. They got bear frequently. I was with them once when they killed one at the mouth of Black Star Canyon. Sam was afterward a settler in the Santiago and brought in the first bees.²¹

One of Shrewsbury's yarns concerned another early bear brought out of Black Star. A youngster with them, who had strayed from the main party, came hustling down canyon late one evening and breathlessly announced that he had just killed a grizzly with his shotgun. After

to "prove up," and the dubious winner (Thistlewaite) emerged with a mouldy bear skin and a high-graded mine that returned zilch.²⁹ Such are the depredations wrought by grizzlies and good intentions.

A few weeks after Thistlewaite got his bear, a veritable monster was reported "three or four miles north of camp." If no more precise than the *Gazette's* last account (according to the litigants just mentioned) that could have meant anywhere this side of Hell. On the other hand, the piece was specific enough as to the terror induced by an all-night attack by the brute which ended when he was finally "driven out of camp with firebrands and picks."³⁰

Happily, as these defenders had no guns, their friendship probably outlasted the ordeal.

Oddly enough, word of an earlier mining strike in the Santa Anas reached the public much later than did news of the silver lodes of Madera. This was the discovery of "a perfect bonanza of coal" in a canyon we now call Black Star. While there may be less glamour in unearthing a coal mine than one of silver, the latter is an unrefined luxury; coal comes ready for use. Moreover, at the time, coal was a necessity that found a quick market.³¹ As to the 'Balboa of Black Star,' history supplies a number of contenders. Stephenson says that "As early as 1876, Ed Honey . . . and 'Doc' Nimmo gathered sacks of coal on the surface of the grass hill east of the mouth of Black Star."³² A year before that, Frank Carpenter,³³ "a half American, half Mexican," built an adobe in the canyon to become its first resident.³⁴ Carpenter knew about the coal but put no premium on the stuff except for his own use.³⁵ August Witte was not so indifferent. Coming into the canyon late in '76 to raise bees,³⁶ he found the Carpenter family using coal in their home, and ". . . got the boy to show him where it came from."³⁷ Though a well-thumbed discovery by now, Witte saw its commercial potential, had the field surveyed and filed on it the following April.³⁸ Six months later, the Black Star Coal Mining Co. incorporated.³⁹

In short order the company ballyhooed its story for stock purposes, let contracts for tunneling,⁴⁰ and announced that a town would soon "mushroom on the spot."⁴¹ Readers familiar with Black Star's still-primeval state may find this hard to believe, and folks in '77 must have felt the same way. Certainly nothing so elaborate as Silverado resulted, but by December several "comfortable residences and a boarding house went up to . . . join Witte's ivy-twined cottage."⁴²

A BOYS' BOOK OF BEAR STORIES

During the several years that it lasted, anywhere from six to ten tons of coal was dug daily from Black Star's 900 feet of tunnel.⁴³ From there mule teams hauled the fuel to L.A. or Anaheim by wagon.⁴⁴ Had the mine really been on government land, as first thought, the company and its stockholders might have prospered. Unexpectedly, a new line was run on the Irvine. The survey stretched the boundary of the Lomas just far enough east to gather in Witte's coal field.⁴⁵ Once his ranch line was extended, James Irvine lost further interest, whereupon he promptly sold the tract back to its developers.⁴⁶ But the purchase price, on top of getting the coal to market, doomed any chance the mine had of showing a profit.⁴⁷

During its brief heyday, Black Star attracted only a handful of settlers.⁴⁸ As elsewhere, most found their livelihood in bees. That was sufficient to entice bears into the area, though no recorded kills are known. In 1879, however, the *Gazette* did inflate one report to the point that "apiarists in the vicinity of the Black Star Mine have had to barricade themselves against the inroads of a grizzly." Apparently no shots were fired, as "the beekeepers are waiting for a moonlight night so that they can draw a fine bead."⁴⁹ If their stakeout proved no more profitable than the coal mine, they may still be waiting.

Three other coal deposits discovered almost simultaneously in 1878 (all on the Lomas) may be dismissed as weak "carbon copies" of the Black Star.⁵⁰ A fourth, the Santa Clara, wrote a fresh page. Rivaling the Black Star in output, it exceeded it in town developments. Furthermore, it kept Silverado Canyon alive for several years after the mines upstream lost their lustre. Discovered by Casida and Slanker, as mentioned, the Santa Clara was wrenched from its owners in much the same manner as the Black Star. Three years after it went into production, some lynx-eyed executive of the Southern Pacific suddenly perceived, "What the hell, we've been buying *our own* coal!"⁵¹ And so they had. A new survey on the old Soto place confirmed that the 320-acre claim was indeed on railroad land,⁵² and in March of '81, the original claimants were given the boot.⁵³

A speedy infusion of S.P. money did much to mechanize the Santa Clara's operation.⁵⁴ Though indifferently located, a company town called "Carbondale" blossomed below the Holtz home, in the flats on the opposite side of the creek.⁵⁵ Like its predecessor farther up canyon, Carbondale soon possessed all the requisites of a full-blown mining

miners from New York seeking the Silverado of Napa County became confused as to the locality, hence the name "False Silverado." *Ibid.*, 123. My favorite is that "... a Mexican, Alvarado, found the old Madera Mine, and it was named Sil-Verado in his honor." *Ibid.*

Let it be said for the last time, Orange County's Silverado had nothing to do with Robert Lewis Stevenson's *The Silverado Squatters*, a book written about Calistoga and not published until 1883.

¹⁸ Thompson and West, 67.

¹⁹ *Gazette*, June 22, 1878.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1878.

²¹ *Ibid.*, August 28, 1878.

²² *Ibid.*, June 12, 1878.

²³ Among them the Mountain View, Loring, Gold Hill, Ophir and Excelsior claims, according to various newspaper reports. W.E. Taylor owned the Fairview store at the depot in West Anaheim (Loara).

²⁴ *Great Register of Los Angeles County* (1879). Thistlewaite exhibited the first silver ore samples in Anaheim. *Gazette*, December 25, 1877.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1878. Interview with Len Harvey in "Natural Resources," 127. What is today known as the Blue Light Mine is a consolidation of a number of claims, the original ones being the Dunlap or Blue Light, the Flanigan, and the Harvey & Thistlewaite.

²⁶ *Gazette*, June 12, 1878.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, July 3, 1878.

²⁸ See *Ibid.*, August 3, 1878, and Los Angeles *Evening Express*, July 30, 1878. The case went into court as "Thistlewaite & Harvey vs. the Florentine Mining Co." *Gazette*, September 18, 1878.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, October 5, 1878, and Thompson and West, 67.

³⁰ *Gazette*, September 7, 1878. "Three or four miles north" puts the incident around Sugarloaf (now Pleasants) Peak, which sounds wrong. The Quincy mine, only a mile north of Silverado, was the northernmost silver discovery.

³¹ Orange County's major coal deposits were in Coal, Fremont, Santiago, Silverado, Black Star and Trabuco Canyons. All are now exhausted. Another half dozen smaller pockets have been reported but were never worked.

While far from opulent, these half dozen

lignite deposits of medium grade coal produced twice the wealth of all of the county's precious metals put together. Otherwise, silver was our best "crop." Unfortunately, with no smelters closer than San Francisco, the cost of shipping the ore removed any chance of profit.

³² Stephenson, 32.

³³ Frank Carpenter, better known as "Pancho," was the son of Lemuel Carpenter and a brother of the first Mrs. J.E. Pleasants. Born in 1852, he would have been 23 years old when he went into Black Star. *Great Register of Los Angeles County* (1886). Two years earlier, he and Pleasants had an apiary in Aliso Canyon (now the Serrano place). Santa Ana *Daily Register*, October 14, 1919. Long a mountain figure, Carpenter's career ended as a butcher in Orange, where he died in 1928. J.P. Harrington's annotations to *Chiningchinich* (Santa Ana, 1933), 151.

³⁴ Carpenter's adobe stood a quarter mile beyond the old wagon road to the Black Star Mine. Describing the place, Stephenson called it "... picturesque ... built partly of brick and partly of rock taken from the stream bed." He adds, "Pancho Carpenter, son of an American trapper father and Spanish mother, came here in the early '70s, and homesteaded 160 acres. He built the adobe. In later years the place came into the possession of Bob Shaw, a well-known fire warden of the Santiago." Stephenson, 111.

³⁵ Carpenter made no effort to claim the coal, then thought to lie on adjacent government land. Though burned over in 1914, 1948 and 1967, evidence of the Black Star mines will be found .4 of a mile west of the point where the Forest boundary jogs southeast.

³⁶ Interview with J.E. Pleasants by William McPherson, July 9, 1933. Notes supplied by Don Meadows. Mrs. Pleasants gives the date as "about 1875." Mrs. J.E. Pleasants, *History of Orange County, California* [3 vols.], I (Los Angeles, 1931), 246. Several years later, Witte's apiary of 75 stands was destroyed in a forest fire. *Gazette*, September 14, 1878.

³⁷ "Natural Resources," 86.

³⁸ The Black Star coal tract was first surveyed and mapped by George G. Knox, of Anaheim. Recorded in Msc. Maps, Los Angeles County (April 23, 1877), 363-3.

Contemporary accounts credit *only* Witte as Black Star's 'discoverer.' Properly, he was its first developer. "The first 50 foot tunnel was started by Witte in May [of 1877]." *Gazette*, November 21, 1877.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, December 29, 1877, and Thompson and West, 67. The Black Star Mining Co., capitalized at \$500,000, issued 5000 shares at \$100 each. Its incorporators were Dr. August Witte; his brother, William A. Witte, a former St. Louis bank cashier, who became its agent; B.F. Seibert, an Anaheim banker; H.A. Barclay, of Los Angeles; and Santa Ana's town founder, William H. Spurgeon.

⁴⁰ *Gazette*, October 31, 1877.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, December 29, 1877.

⁴² *Ibid.*, November 21, 1877, and Thompson and West, 67. Witte's "little white house" was located about one hundred yards from the original tunnel and a hundred feet lower, "opposite the mouth of Spring Canyon." This is as close as one can pinpoint Black Star's proposed townsite.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ "... drawn by 8-12 head of mules." *Gazette*, July 31 and August 24, 1878.

⁴⁵ For the ranch survey which took in the Black Star, see *ibid.*, March 20, 1878. This was history repeating itself. The first coal discovery in the range occurred ten years earlier in Santa Ana Canyon. Los Angeles *Star*, June 25, 1864. Four years later the *Star* reported that "Flint, Bixby and Irvine have gobbled up the Santa Ana [Canyon] coal mine . . . with a ranch survey that 'extended' just far enough to cover the mine." *Ibid.*, November 28, 1868.

Irvine ran a number of surveys that did not exactly endear him to folks in the mountains. Of these realignments, the *Gazette* commented: "The wonderful elasticity of that famous ranch makes title to any valuable property situated anywhere within fifty miles of its boundary extremely insecure."

⁴⁶ Irvine sold the 168-acre mine parcel on September 7, 1878, for \$3,365.20. Deeds of Los Angeles County, book 63, page 620.

⁴⁷ Thrice revived and 'primed' with new money, the Black Star mine operated spasmodically until 1882 when it gave up its smoky ghost forever.

Undoubtedly the richest pockets en-

countered in this venture were those of its stockholders. On November 6, 1878, Joseph Yoch became the mine's sustaining angel and chief promoter. See "Natural Resources," 124f, and *Gazette*, August 7, 1880 and July 2, 1881. The last rumblings about reopening the mine occurred in 1908.

Of interest to nature lovers, the most striking reminder of Black Star's glory days is an olive grove in the little mesa just north of the mine's tailing heaps. Miraculously, after so many forest fires, a half dozen trees still thrive.

⁴⁸ Settlers either leased from the Irvine or squatted farther up canyon on government land.

⁴⁹ *Gazette*, November 7, 1879.

⁵⁰ These were the Santiago, the Fremont and Harris coal mines. The Santiago is located above the grove of eucalyptus and conifers on the north shore of Irvine Lake. In operation until 1917, it was Orange County's last producing coal mine.

The Harris Mine is located a half mile north of Bench Mark 611 at the east end of Irvine Park, and was last leased by Irvine (1899-1902) to Friederich F. Conrad, who used the coal at his Anaheim brewery.

The Fremont Canyon Mine was a 20' thick vein discovered by Messrs. Huntington and Wright, of Orange. Eventually stripped, a huge pile still stands a quarter mile north of the Irvine Dam spillway. Considering that this coal heap has survived several blistering brush fires, its quality is in some doubt.

⁵¹ Before being resurveyed, the Southern Pacific held a lease on the Santa Clara, with an option to buy. *Gazette*, January 29, 1881.

⁵² *Ibid.*, March 26, 1881. Prior to taking possession, the railroad paid \$3.50 a ton for Santa Clara coal at its source and \$7.25 a ton delivered to its bunkers in Los Angeles.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, April 9, 1881.

⁵⁴ The S.P.'s biggest improvements were piping water over from "McKelvey's Hill" (in Ladd Canyon) and installing an elaborate boiler works. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1881.

⁵⁵ The earliest mention of the "new mining village of Carbondale" occurs in the *Gazette* of July 9, 1881. "The village of

point from which wide view is obtained

Area containing attractive camping sites

Trail or route passable for foot travel only

Railroad station

Stage station

Supplies obtainable

Gasoline obtainable

Back and saddle stock obtainable

Culdes, packers etc obtainable

Donchets where butter milk eggs.

Ranchers, where butter, milk, eggs, etc. can be obtained

Meals and lodging

Forest ranger station - Information obtainable

Auto stage route

Good accessible for autos

Good accessible for wagons

Twill - accessible for neck outfits

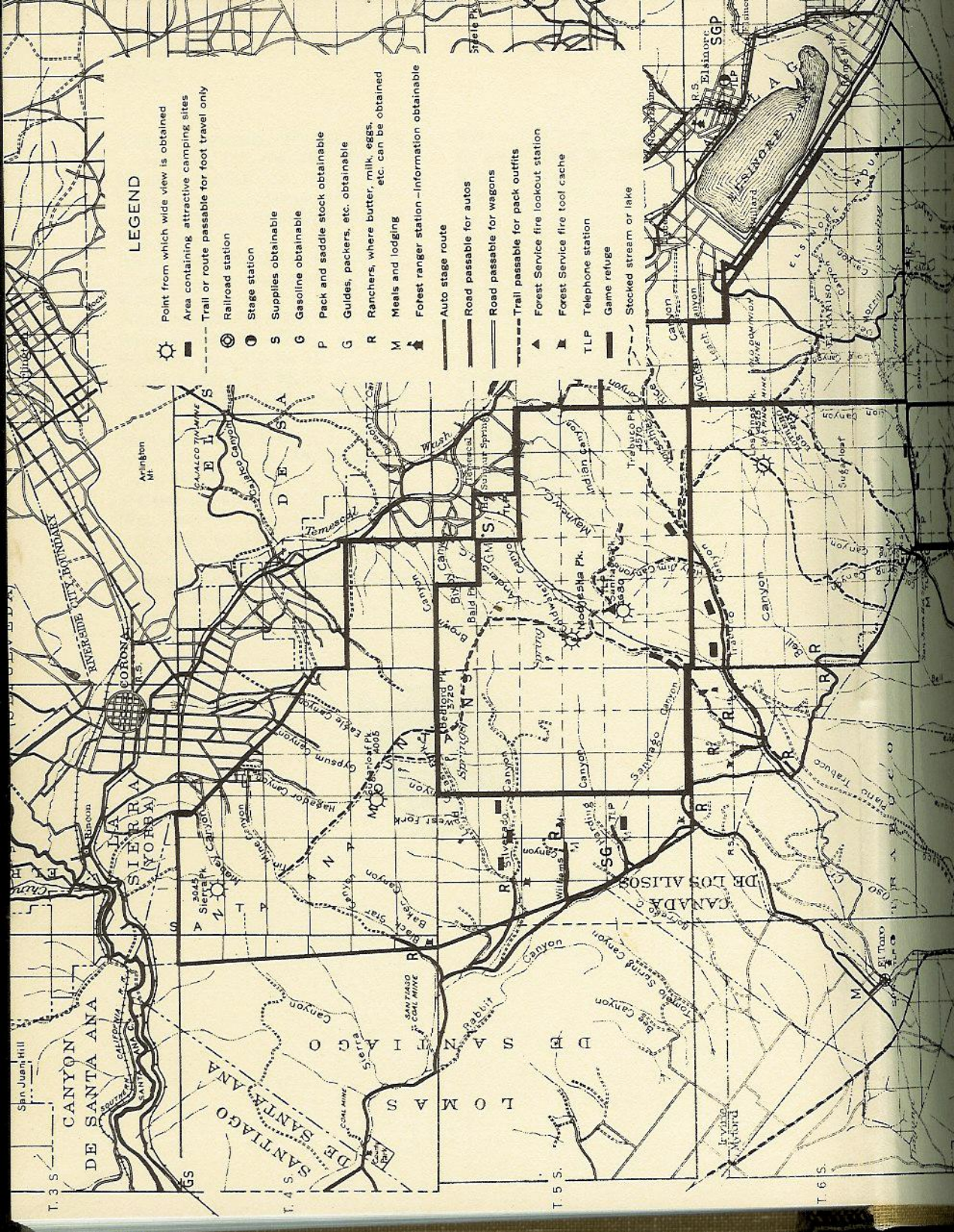
Forest Service fire lookout station

Forest Service fire tool cache

Talenkone station

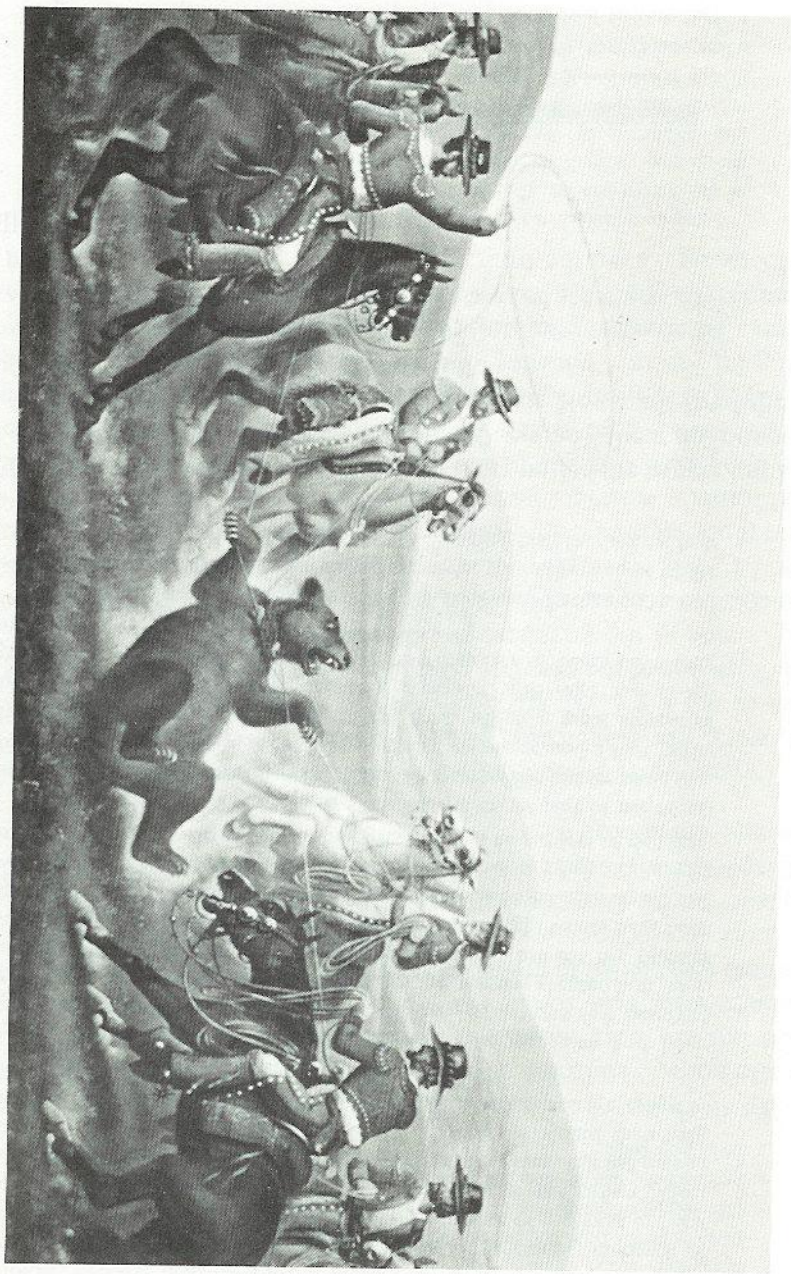
Game refuge

Stocked stream or lake



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JOSE SEPULVEDA AND HIS ROUGH-RIDING POSSE
Santiago Canyon was the best grizzly grounds in the hills