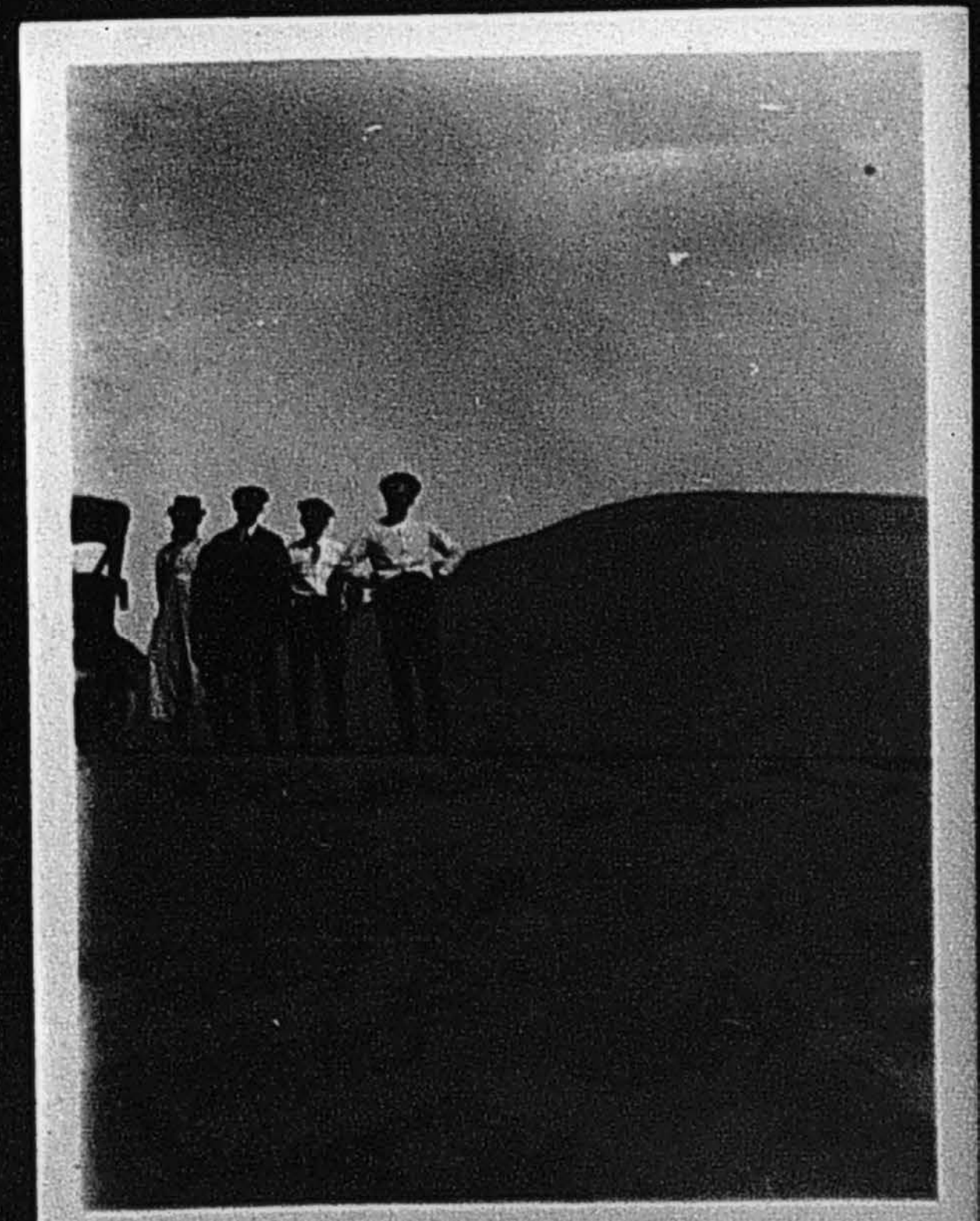
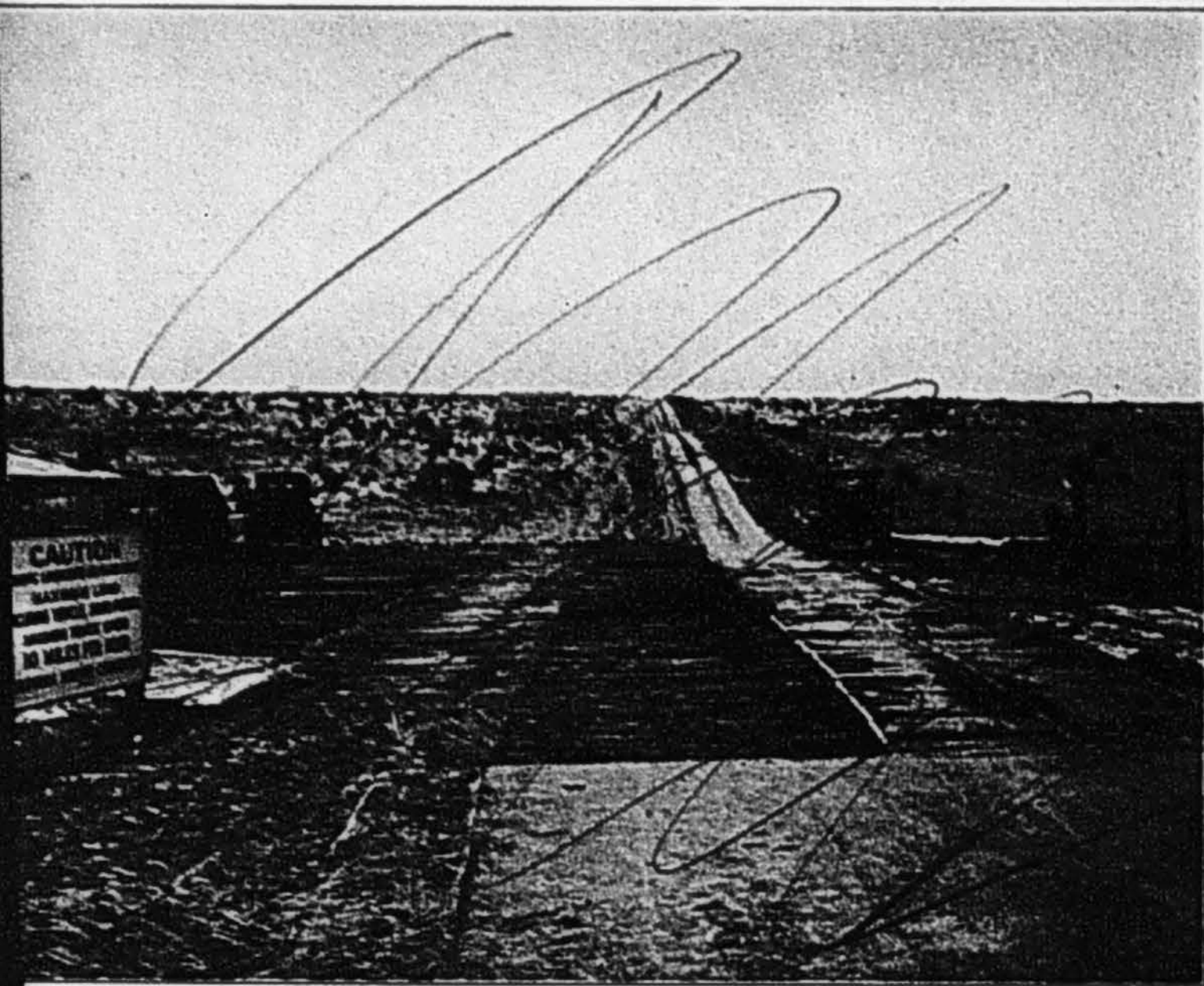


YUMA PLANK ROAD
6 PHOTOS BY FLETCHER ON FIRST
RUN ACROSS ROAD.





County.—The western end of the old plank road, now replaced by a 20-foot asphaltic concrete pavement across the Sand Hills

Please return
to Ryan
①

Ed Fletcher on left in Yuma Sand Hills
[w/ E. John Eshleman]
CSM 91

OVER SAND HILLS IN FLETCHER'S FORD

LEFT TO RIGHT - COL. FLETCHER, LT. GOVERNOR JOHN ESHLEMAN,
PHIL SWING, BITLER - MAKING FIRST RUN *over new*
plank Road
through the
Sand Hills
Hollister to
Yuma
Sept. 1911
Direct Along
Imperial

[L to R:
FLETCHER, SWING, ESHLEMAN, BITLER]
CSM 91

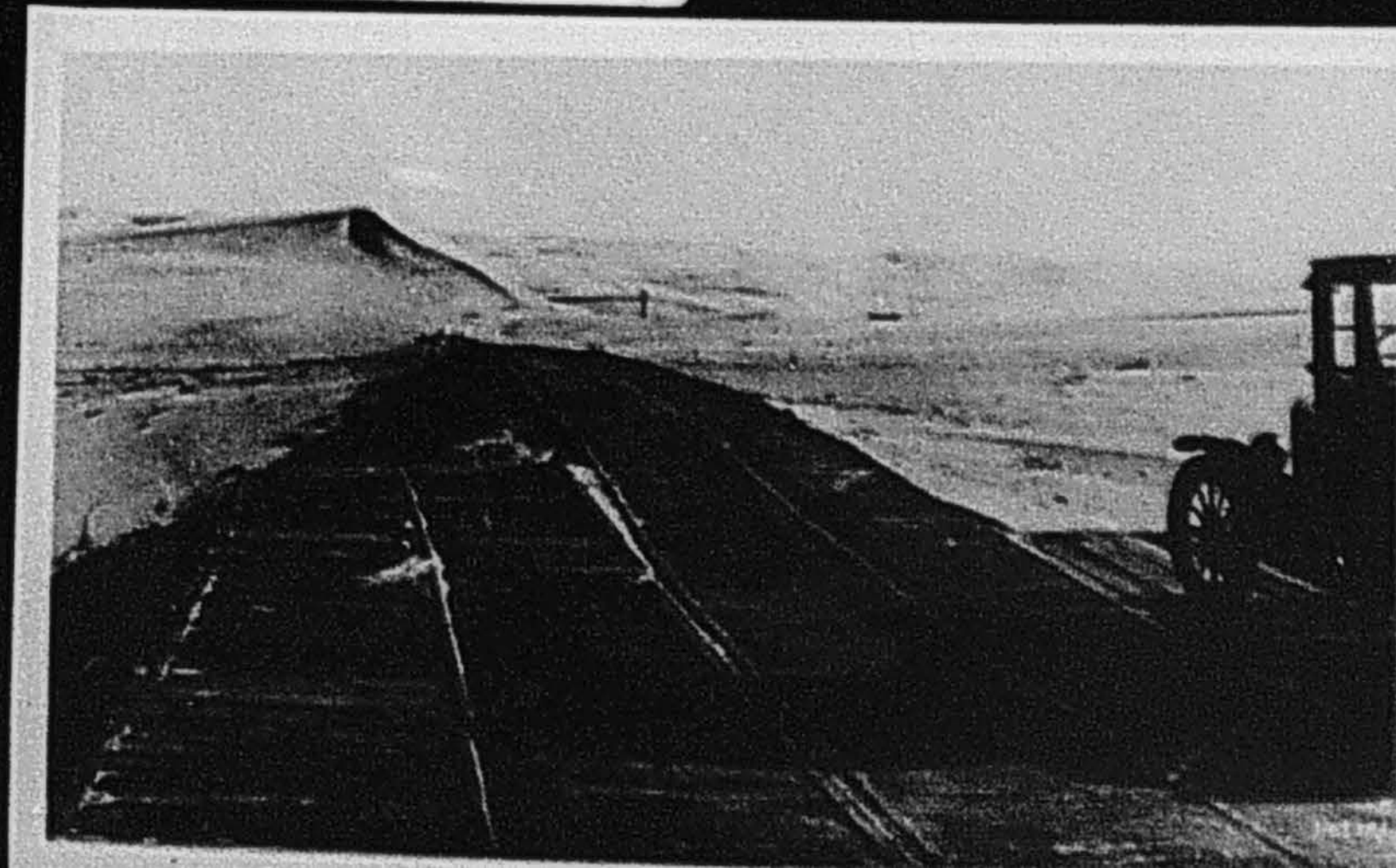
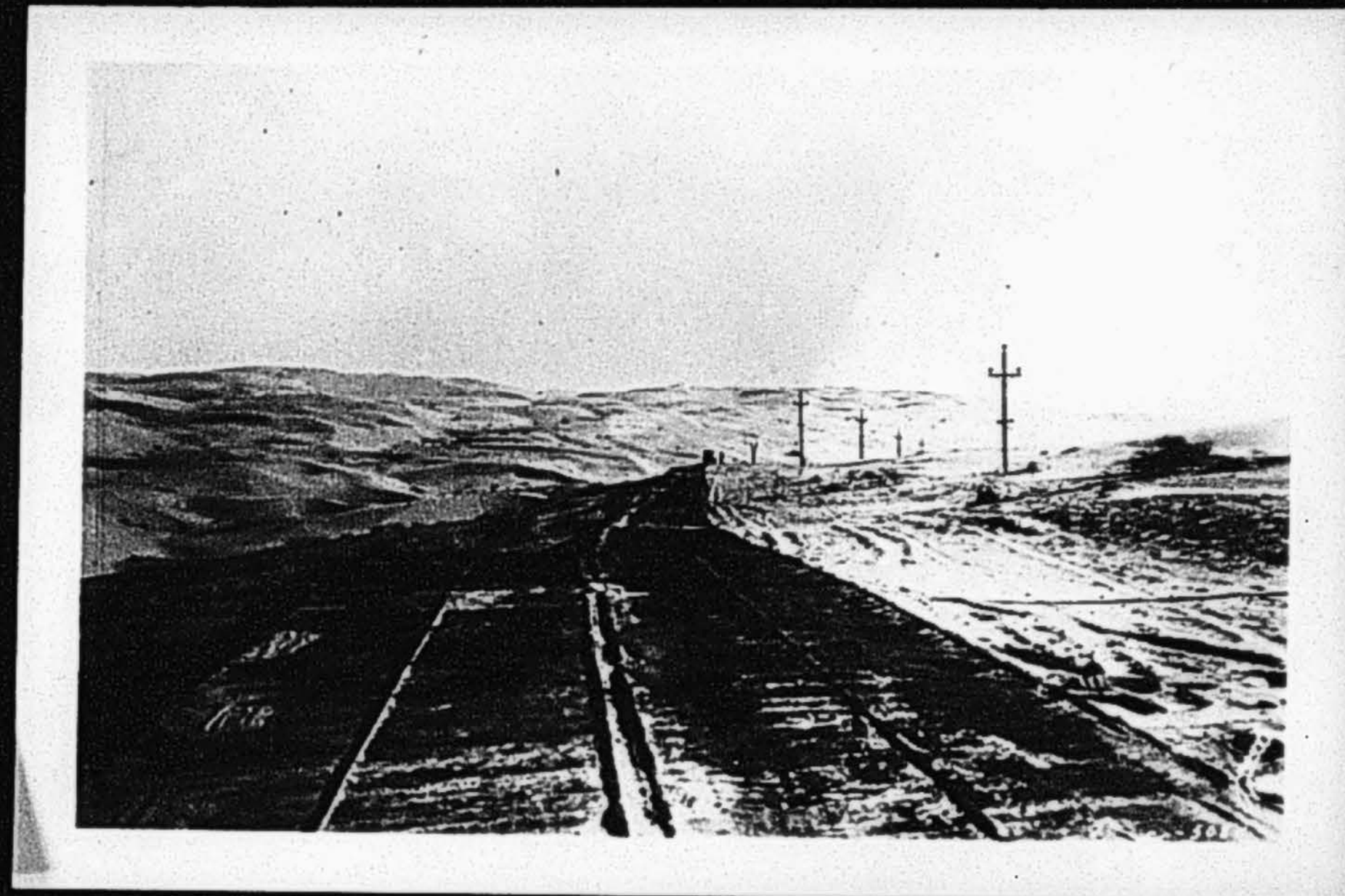
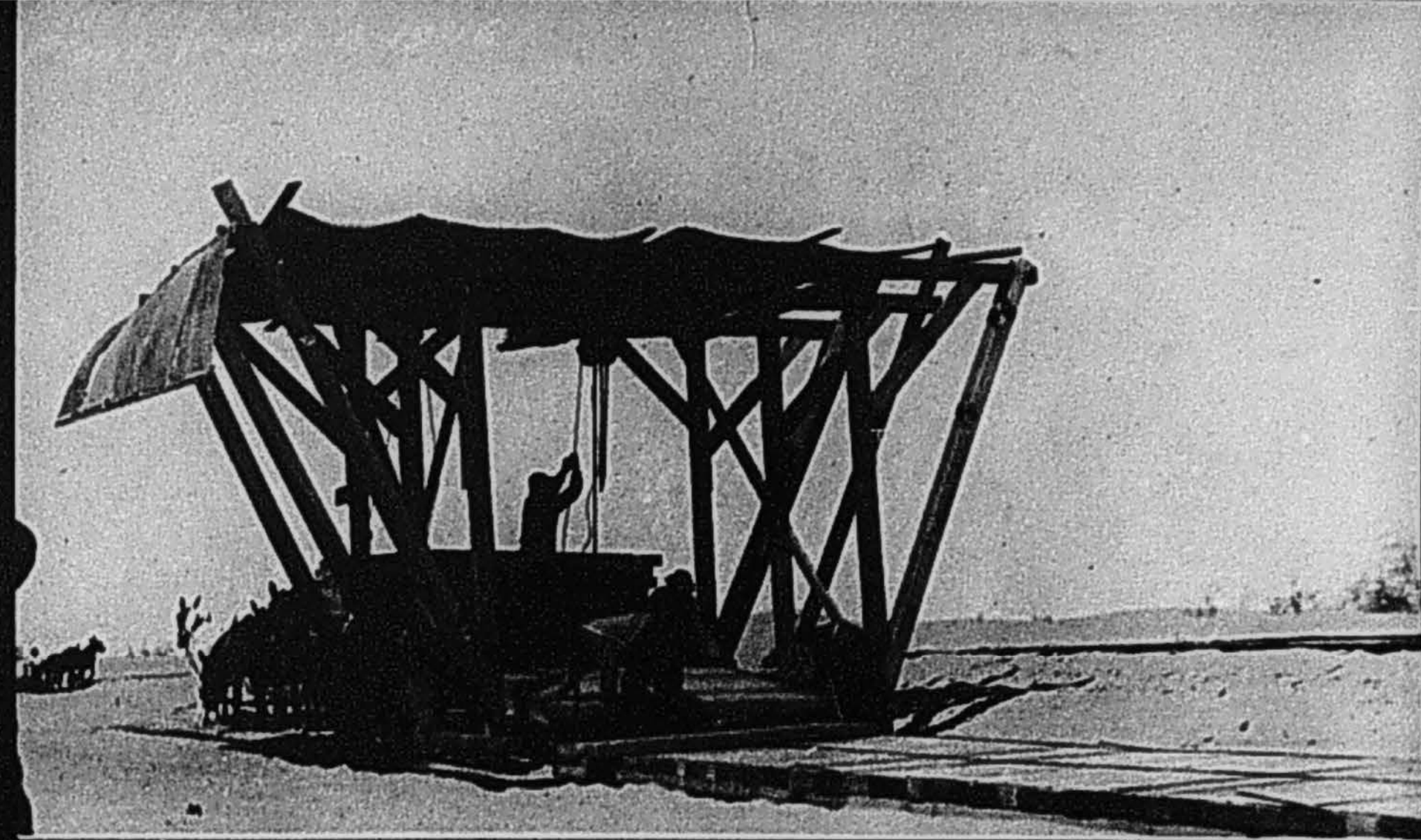
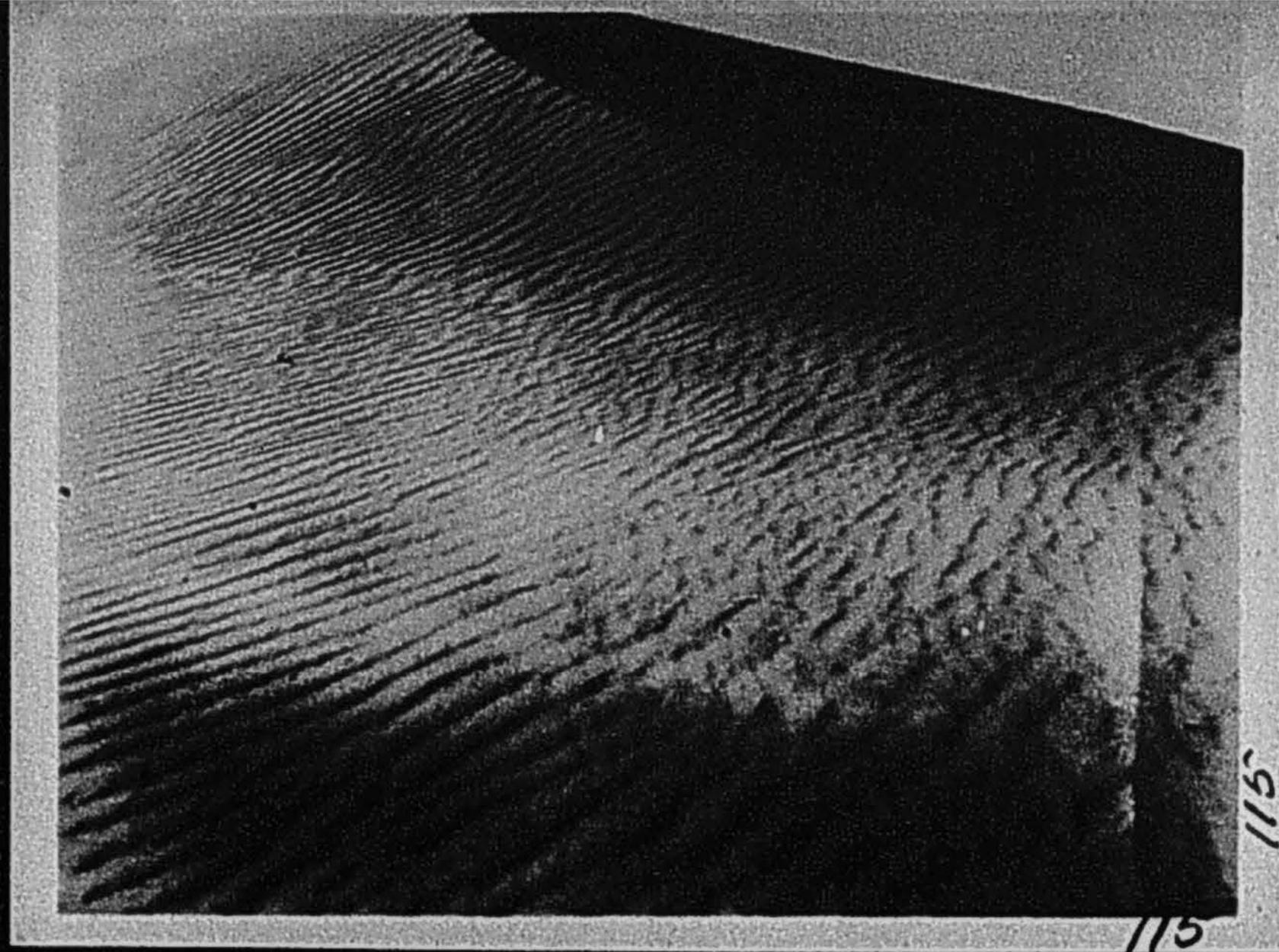
Hollinger Corp.
pH 8.5



The Old Plank
Road

[L to R:
Phil Swing, J. Eshleman, Bitler, Fletcher]
CSM 91

YUMA PLANK ROAD 15
ASPHALT
14 PHOTOS



Hollinger Corp.
pH 8.5

Blank Road to Yuma

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf from an old book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor discoloration and faint smudges. There are dark, irregular stains and smudges, particularly along the right edge and bottom corner, which appear to be ink or paint marks. The left edge of the page shows the binding of the book, with some dark material visible. The overall tone is a light cream or off-white.

Plank road Between Hotville and Yuma

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor discoloration and dark smudges or stains, particularly along the left edge and bottom corner, suggesting wear or damage over time. There is no text or other markings on the page.

POST CARD

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESS

NAME

PLACE

STREET

HERE

NAME

POST CARD

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESS

NAME

PLACE

STREET

HERE

NAME



Sand Hills, Imperial County.—A turn-out on the old plank road. The rapid deterioration of this road and the hazard to traffic because of its narrowness, were the reasons for its replacement by a permanent asphaltic concrete pavement.



Sand Hills, Imperial County, California.—Drag-line scraper at work constructing fill for new asphaltic concrete pavement across the Sand Hills.



THE Sand Hills of Imperial County have long constituted a barrier to the traveler between Southern California and Arizona. The spanning of this forbidding 7-mile area of wind-tossed and constantly shifting sand-dunes by a permanent highway of asphaltic concrete this August attracted the nation-wide interest of engineers, and stands as one of the master strokes of road-building in recent years.

Credit for this notable enterprise goes to the California Highway Commission, which built the road, using State funds and Federal aid.

These desert wastes, of such finely pulverized sand that every wind sets up new formations, are familiar to millions of movie fans as the desert setting of scores of "Sheik" pictures. The dunes are in constant motion, promising not only the most unstable kind of subgrade, but also threatening to engulf any attempted permanent pavement.

However, the demand for a connection of some kind across the desert resulted in 1916 in the building of a plank road, with funds largely raised by public subscription.

The plank road was eight feet wide, and built in

changing dunes. As the planks afforded but a narrow one-way road, turn-outs were provided at intervals. Any car going off the planks was likely to remain until pulled out of the sand by outside assistance. The road was the terror of timid motorists whose dread of the desert made the perils of traveling this narrow roadway a double hazard. Even though built in movable sections, the road was sometimes buried under the shifting sand. With the increase of traffic it finally became imperative that the route be kept open and improved, if possible, to provide better communication facilities.

Studies were begun to determine the feasibility of a permanent pavement or the best type of movable pavement. By driving stakes in the sand-dunes, records of their movements were obtained. At first it was believed that a road would have to be made up of sections which could be moved when threatened by the approaching dunes. It was found, however, that the dunes seldom exceeded a certain height, and a final decision was made to lay a permanent pavement on a grade-line at a sufficient height to insure against encroachment of the sand on the roadway. Two experimental half-mile sections of road were built.

A 58

13

40

Old Plank Road upper right
or Road to Yuma Hwy 8 on left

40

13



Photo.
by
Hetzel.

From same Quarry
to Cor. Fletcher.



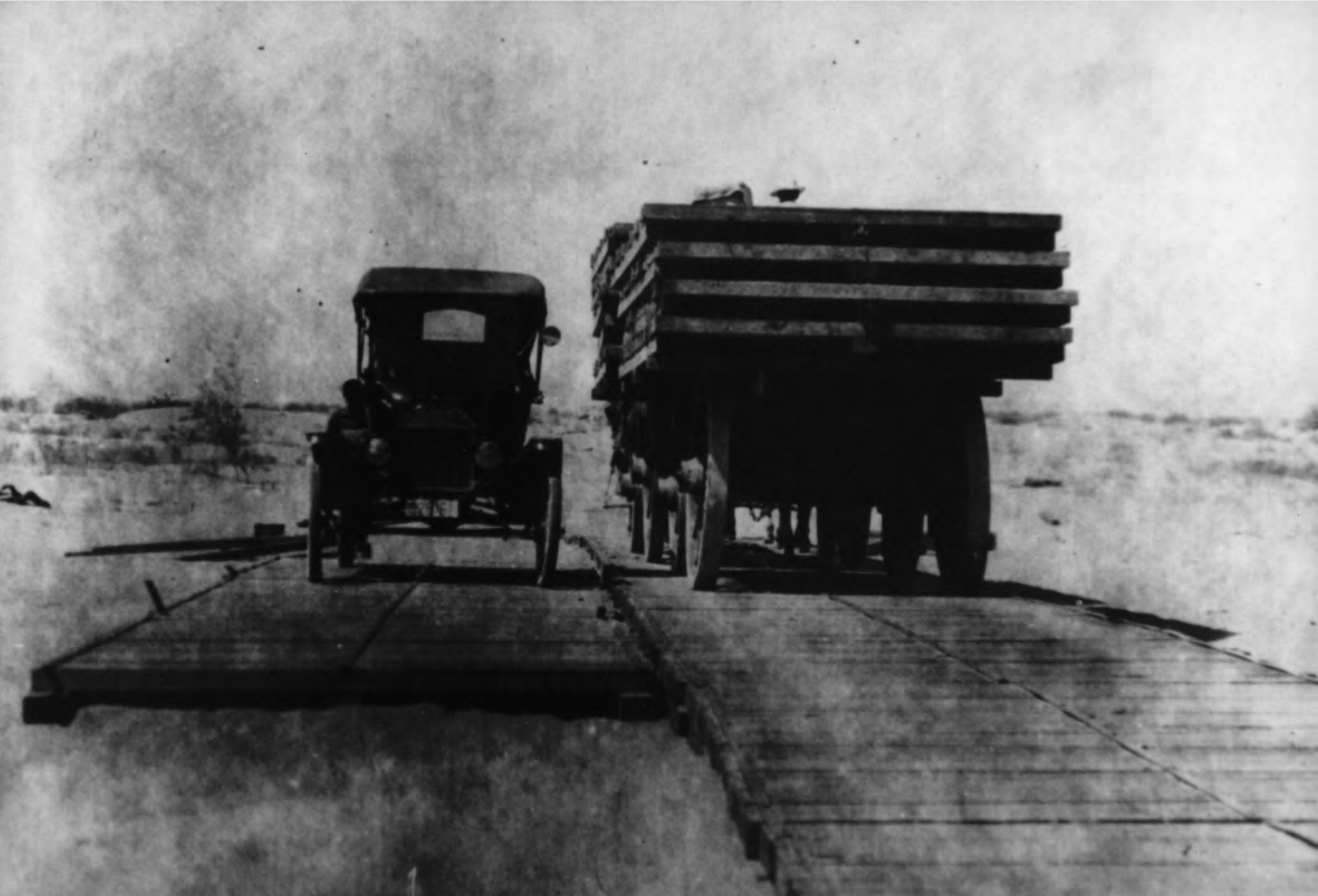
Gen 158



Photo
by
Hutzel

Grays Well Scene
Road crew Camp
1914

From the Nursery
to the Station



Gen. 157



Photo
BY
Hetzl.

Start building of plank highway
1914

From New Orleans
To San Antonio



The Old
Plank Road



California's Highway Across the Sands of Death

By
BEN BLOW

Field Secretary, National Automobile Club

FOR SO MANY YEARS that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, the lighter sands of the Salton Sink have been picked up by the prevailing northwest winds, blown to the southeast and piled up into a great windrow of dunes, which stretches for thirty miles from northwest to southeast and spreads out seven miles in width to the south of the Salton Sea. How long it has taken to build up this vast barrier of sand which separates Yuma, Arizona, from the fecund Imperial Valley, no one seems to know beyond declaring that it has "always" been there to try the souls of migrating mankind, passing those through who had strength and adequate water supply; dealing out destruction to the weak and those who dared the crossing, not knowing that an ample water supply for man and beast was the only safeguard against the pitiless heat of the way across the sands of death.

That the Yuma dunes were crossed by migrating animals bound from the badlands of the interior to the pleasantly watered foothills which lie back of the San Diego of today is in all probability true; that Indians crossed them, stalked by tragedy, is certain,

for when California's highway engineers were building up the roadbed of the present highway which connects Yuma with El Centro, they found deep buried in the sands many broken ollas telling of a lost water supply and possibly a thirst-crazed struggle against inevitable defeat. Across this interminable waste of sand the early emigrants to California toiled toward the end of the southern route, those who were lured by the gold that set mankind into a frenzied western rush in 1849, or those who, seeing the specter of Civil War hover over their country in the 50's, fled to avoid a struggle which would pit brother against brother in a lifelong bitterness. Those who were strong, who had cattle that were rested, and an ample water supply, got through; those whose cattle were weak or who ran out of water, too often left their bones to bleach beneath the cloudless sky, the skeletons of men and beasts mingling indiscriminately



After a windstorm when the road was blotted out. One of the old "Goodrich" road signs and, nearby, sunbleached human bones.

with the wreckage of abandoned wagons which fell apart beneath the pitiless beat of the brazen sun.

That the way across was a torment that tried men's souls is the story of all those who crossed in the early days when the shifting sands, in ten minutes sometimes, wiped out all wagon tracks, and each new caravan, after every blast, faced an uncharted expanse of sand. Where the shifting dunes did not exist, brush piled into the wagon tracks made the going easier and finally a makeshift roadway, built up of brush and whatnot, was developed, changing in this or that section as the moving dunes marched on, over which early day automobiles made the passage, steaming and smoking, when unavoidable necessity demanded a braving of the hardships of the way.

This condition existed up to 1912 or 1913, when Col. Ed. Fletcher of San Diego, then as now, a man who, waking, visioned and sleeping, dreamed of roads, formed a little coterie of San Diegans and vastly circulated around raising money here and there and everywhere, finally getting together enough to buy thirty-six carloads of twelve-inch wide planks with which he proposed boldly to bridge and dare the sands of the creeping dunes. With this lumber and the financial help that he has always been able to command, Colonel Fletcher laid down a roadway which consisted of two parallel planks nailed stoutly to cross boards and so separated that the wheels of the automobiles of the day would track, thus supplying a solid roadbed except in such times as the sand drifted over and obscured them, when the custom was to pick the plank road up and move it, it being built in sections to make this defense against the drifting of the dunes feasible. When some motorist of those early days, aiming his primitive contraption erratically, ran off the edge of the foot-wide track, it was just too bad, for all he could do was to clamber out, shake the sand off his duster, remove his goggles and moan with King Richard III, "A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" Those who drove across this old plank road of Colonel Fletcher's will remember what a tiresome job it was to steer over the long, long trail of planks which wound up, down, over and around the dunes and occasionally vanished from view beneath a drift of sand which, if deep enough, blocked

traffic until equine reinforcements appeared. To facilitate the passing of traffic little two-plank turnouts were built out to one side or the other of the plank road and the few motorists who traveled the dunes found that the trip across was a sort of "pussy wants a corner" proceeding, the vehicle nearest the turnout being required to shunt off the main track and make room for the one further away. That this method of procedure did not tend to promote fast travel is well remembered by those who, on occasion, found the traffic so congested that they had to play hide and seek with ten or fifteen automobiles in the seven and one-half mile trip, the time required for the crossing under this adverse

neers, assisted by an interested public, tried to develop some feasible engineering plan which would conquer the marching dunes. For quite some time the suggestion that a causeway similar to that four-mile-long structure which connects Sacramento with Davis would solve the problem, received well merited attention until thought was directed to the fact that some of the dunes were 350 feet high and finally, in 1920, Division VIII of the California Highway Commission, with headquarters in San Bernardino, was established and a young highway engineer was brought down from Redding and put in charge to make a study of the dunes. This man, E. Q. Sullivan, coming from the free

water region of Mount Shasta, brought with him no preconceived notions relative to the whys and wherefores of dune movement, and so proceeded to initiate a study of the bibliography of sand dunes in relation to highways, the result being exactly nothing except that in the Sahara desert he found that the answer was camels. No whit discouraged, he began *de novo* and proceeded along engineering lines, sending young men down into the torrid sand section with surveying instruments and ample supplies of extra long surveyor's



The new road across the sand dunes showing oiled slope. Old plank road to left.

condition being about two hours. "Blow, winds and crack your cheeks," was probably the reflection of Colonel Fletcher, reverting back to Shakespearian readings, when he viewed this first plank road complete in all its undulating glory. And blow the winds did, whereupon the plank road sections where some trespassing dune had squatted were picked up and moved. So persistent was Boreas that the situation finally developed into a sort of checker game between the plank road and the dunes, with one or the other continually in motion.

This condition obtained until 1916, when the California Highway Commission assumed responsibility for the warfare against the sand dunes and built another plank road which was solidly cross-planked to a width of eight feet, built in sections which would permit its removal when need arose, and decorated every half-mile with platforms for turnouts. This second plank road served better than the old one as a roadbed for traffic, but the checker game still continued with the result that the Highway Commission found itself spending about \$35,000 a year to keep the way open while its engi-

stakes with instructions to plat the area and so stake the more active dunes that their crest movement could be accurately measured after any particular windstorm the while they kept an accurate record of that point of the compass from which the wind came, its duration and velocity.

During the two-year period when Mr. Sullivan was studying the dunes, aided by the carefully placed surveyor's stakes and the sweating young surveyors, he led a rather active life of travel between his office in San Bernardino and the sand dune area, traveling post haste down to the dunes when the wind blew and returning equally post haste back to his office with whatever engineering information he had acquired to wiggle around the wavy lines which marked the dune crests on his beloved charts. Exalted by what he was finding out he reconciled himself to a sandy sort of existence for a good part of the time, thinking sand, breathing sand and dreaming sand until he finally had the rate of progress of practically every one of that vast collection of dunes accurately measured and this was what he [CONCLUDED ON PAGE 18]

lem. It also will eliminate the formation of frost or any other vision-obscuring form of precipitation on the windshield glass.

To achieve the first purpose, the device, which is a heated element attached to the glass, has a sealed dead air pocket. This prevents the formation of any mist on the glass and without the use of electric current. For formations on the outside of the glass which the windshield wiper will not remove, the unit contains small electric wires which heat the windshield to a temperature of 90 degrees, keeping it always clear.

The reason so many automobile clocks are not running so much of the time is that their owners have not kept them wound. That is the explanation given by one large clock maker who is offering a new line of timepieces for motor cars which never will stop for the reason that they are electrically wound.

The latest dash model, which may be attached to the car with the drilling of but one one-half inch hole, now is being offered at a price of \$8.75. It costs a dollar more if one wants a luminous dial. Otherwise the face is silver on black, all bordered by a chaste silver band.



The same carrier folds neatly and compactly when not in use.

Other electrically wound models are offered for mounting above the windshield and in the form of a combined clock and rear-view mirror. These latter are more expensive, listing at \$10.75 and \$12.50 respectively.

While on the subject of things electrical, there has just been developed such a power unit as many have thought should have appeared previously on the accessory market. It is an ignition booster, designed to make engines start easily irrespective of how high their compression ratios may be, or how weak their batteries or ignition coils. Even the interference to easy starting offered by the introduction of radio resistor suppressors is overcome, according to the manufacturer, one of the largest in the battery field.

The device takes the form of a relay unit and dry cell battery which attach to the dash immediately below the hood.

When the motorist steps on the starter the booster delivers an average of 28,000 volts to the spark plugs in contrast with the 11,000 volts normally delivered by the car's unaided storage battery. The result is a complete assurance of easy starting under any conditions, the manufacturer declares.

Thus are the ends of beauty and utility served by the latest crop of accessory developments.

1932 REGISTRATION

THE 1932 Automobile Registration Renewal Period will start on December 15. The Division of Motor Vehicles will require the following information, in addition to the usual surrender of the white slip:

The serial number of the car and the number of cylinders. When applying for your license, be sure to have this information with you, otherwise your application will be returned.

As usual, plates will be available to members of the Club at all District Offices, or may be obtained through your own insurance agent.

The necessary credential to secure the new plates is your white Certificate of Registration. If your address has been changed since

you last applied for plates, insert the correct address on the white certificate.

If the car was bought under contract and payments have been completed during the past year, it is advisable to clear title to the car through the records of the Division of Motor Vehicles by also submitting the pink Certificate of Ownership, on the reverse side of which the contract holder has released his equity in the car. This release will cost an extra dollar, making the total registration fee for 1932, \$4—\$3 for the license and \$1 for the release. New pink and white certificates will then be issued.

If there has been a transfer in the ownership of the car, there is a charge of \$1. This also necessitates submitting pink and white certificates.

California's Highway Across the Sands of Death

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8]

found: that the main disturbers of the highway peace in the sand hills were not the larger dunes. These he had succeeded in proving by his two-year study moved only about one inch per year, blow high, blow low. As for the smaller dunes he found them something like fleas, that the smaller they were the faster they moved, those up to thirty-five feet in height being the main disturbers of the peace, the rate of progress of a ten-foot high dune, for instance, being fully 100 feet an hour under the drive of a high wind.

Collateral to this field study of the dunes he had constructed at his headquarters in San Bernardino a wind tunnel, similar to those now used in studying airplane models, and trucked a load of sand from the seat of trouble, establishing a sort of sand dune incubator where, with the aid of powerful electric blowers, he could manufacture miniature dunes of his own and make them move about when Boreas denied him that privilege in the area below the Salton Sea. With data thus accumulated and fortified by an imposing plat of the sand dunes whereon, in those wavy lines that topographers love, he had recorded the vagrant wanderings of the sand hills, he convinced the Highway Commission that the answer to the problem they had given him was to build the road up, in those sections where the sand hills were prone to wander, to a height of thirty-five feet, using the thirty-five-foot high dunes as part of the plan, his findings proving that dunes over that height moved so slowly as to give little trouble if the proposed new road was carefully located. He further suggested such a slope for the embankment as would, when properly treated with a binding oil surface, permit the smaller dunes to march up to the highway level and over it

with a minimum of effort, leaving no sand behind.

Fortified by the okey of his superior officers, Mr. Sullivan gathered a battery of steam shovels and proceeded to pile up the present fine roadbed, wetting the sand down thoroughly when the asphaltic concrete surface was ready to be laid, finding many a broken olla in the steam shovel buckets to tell of that infinite tragedy which takes place when the atom, man, dares the desert lacking water to quench his thirst. That the decision of the California Highway Commission to adopt the recommendations of the engineer they had charged with studying the dunes was a wise one is proven by the fact that since the new road was opened up for traffic on February 28, 1925, it has never been closed in spite of sand storms so violent that the windshields of automobiles caught therein are sand-blasted and made opaque, while the enamel is stripped down to the bare metal by the cutting power of the wind-blown sand.

Such is the history of the conquering of the sand dunes of that region between Yuma, Arizona, and El Centro, where the sands from the Salton Sea, blown about for ages, have raised a barrier of dunes which barred back travel for years untold from the East to the West, and sent many a man who dared the burn of the sun to struggle on toward El Dorado only to find a heat crazed death. Today the road across the dunes is never closed and the distance of twenty-two miles between Holtville and Yuma is a matter of less than half an hour over a fine wide highway which, in places, lies close to the old plank road built in 1916, which served well in its time but now, in its abandonment, suggests strangely the cast-off skin of some vast and prehistoric snake.

Make 1 column cut of

Please read
article only



April 27,
1919

7 1/2

LE PURCHASES
EL, IN EL PASO;
E IT HIMSELF

R. E. FISHBURN
MADE EL PASO
AIRPORT HEAD

Randolph E. Fishburn, consulting
engineer of the International bound-
ary commission, received notice Fri-
day of his appointment as chairman
of the municipal air port committee
for El Paso.

The appointment was the first step
in a campaign to make El Paso one
of the great air ports of the United
States. It was made at the instig-
ation of the National Aeronautic as-
sociation, and ratified by D. A. Bar-
deen, manager of the El Paso cham-
ber of commerce.

To Organize at Once.

"An organization will be formed
immediately to help put El Paso's
air program over," said Mr. Fishburn.

"The possibilities ahead of El Paso
are enormous. It is one of the logical
centers for commercial aviation and
we will carry on a campaign that will
make it such a port in as little time
as possible."

The El Paso chamber of commerce
appointed Mr. Fishburn.

El Paso Herald-Examiner
April 27
1923

USO ALSO finds the Daily Journal Want ads prompt in finding what they seek. A unit decided they needed two portable electric heaters, advertised in the Journal and had five calls, finding exactly what they were seeking.

The San Diego Daily **JOURNAL**

Second Section

San Diego (1), Calif., Tuesday, Feb. 27, 1945

Tel. M-4031

Good Highways Make San Diego *Market Place of Southwest—Tourist Mecca of Nation*



'Twas a great day in May of 1913 when these San Diego business men gathered on yon side of the mountains to celebrate completion by Fred A. Rhodes of the Mountain Springs grade connecting the San Diego county highway at this point with the Imperial county highway down in the valley. Hoisted aloft for all to see are Rhodes, now city manager, (left) and Fred Jackson, banker (right). Rhodes sits on shoulder of John M. Gillons, and grasps the shoulder of Supervisor Charles Swallow. Jackson sits on shoulder of Milton Barber and someone unseen. Above Barber (wearing the "cady") is Attorney Patterson Sprigg. Second from the left in the front row is Lester Bradley (who moved his head), and

back of him (wearing cap) is City Councilman Herbert Fay. Smiling Col. Ed Fletcher stands in front center, hat and paper in hand, and directly in back and above him is Judge Milton R. Thorp, one-time township judge and assistant city attorney. Just above Fletcher's right shoulder is Percy Goodwin, while the tall man in the cap, above Goodwin beside automobile windshield is Fred A. Heilbron. The man at the extreme right of the picture is George Keith, and above him is George Parker. Also in the extreme right foreground, arm skimbo, and surveying the scene with dignity is Maj. Minard J. Ferris, superintendent of transportation for the San Diego Electric Railway Co.

It Was Dig, Dig, Dig for Years, But Merchants' Pockets Yielded

By CHARLES RYAN

San Diego has the distinction of being the home of businessmen who, in years gone by, have contributed money wherewith to build public highways a hundred miles or more removed from the city. That was their good neighbor policy.

It wasn't philanthropy that prompted them to adopt such a policy; it was simply hard-headed business sense considering the fact that their home town was hemmed in between a tranquil bay on the west and forbidding mountains on the east. Those men couldn't sit still and see San Diego become stagnant in her paradise. They were "business men" that knew their paths where highways never ran.



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People could easily enough travel in and out of the little new city that was destined to become California's most southerly metropolis. They could go by way of the coast to Mexico, or they could go northerly along the coast to the rival town of Los Angeles. Only the intrepid ones dared passage by stage over mountains to the east. To this very day, when attention is focused on the proposed low-elevation San Diego — Arizona highway, those mountains have challenged the city.

San Diego county extended to the Colorado river and included what now are Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino and Inyo counties when the newly-formed San Diego Chamber of Commerce promoted a wagon road from this city to Fort Yuma some seventy-five years ago. That was the only way by which freight could be hauled between San Diego and Arizona before the Southern Pacific railroad provided rail service. Nearly a week of rough and tumble travel by stage faced the adventurer who undertook that trip. Imperial county was carved out of San Diego county in 1907 but that placed no check on the ambition of San Diego businessmen to make their city the market place of the southwest, and the tourist Mecca of the nation. Ed Fletcher, San Diego realtor and now state senator, aided by Governor George W. P. Hunt of Arizona, called a highway convention which convened at Yuma with 92 delegates including Fletcher, U. S. Grant, Jr., Fred Jackson and William B. Gross who represented San Diego. They elected Fletcher president of a San Diego-Arizona Highway association set up for the purpose of building a highway from San Diego to Phoenix by way of Yuma.

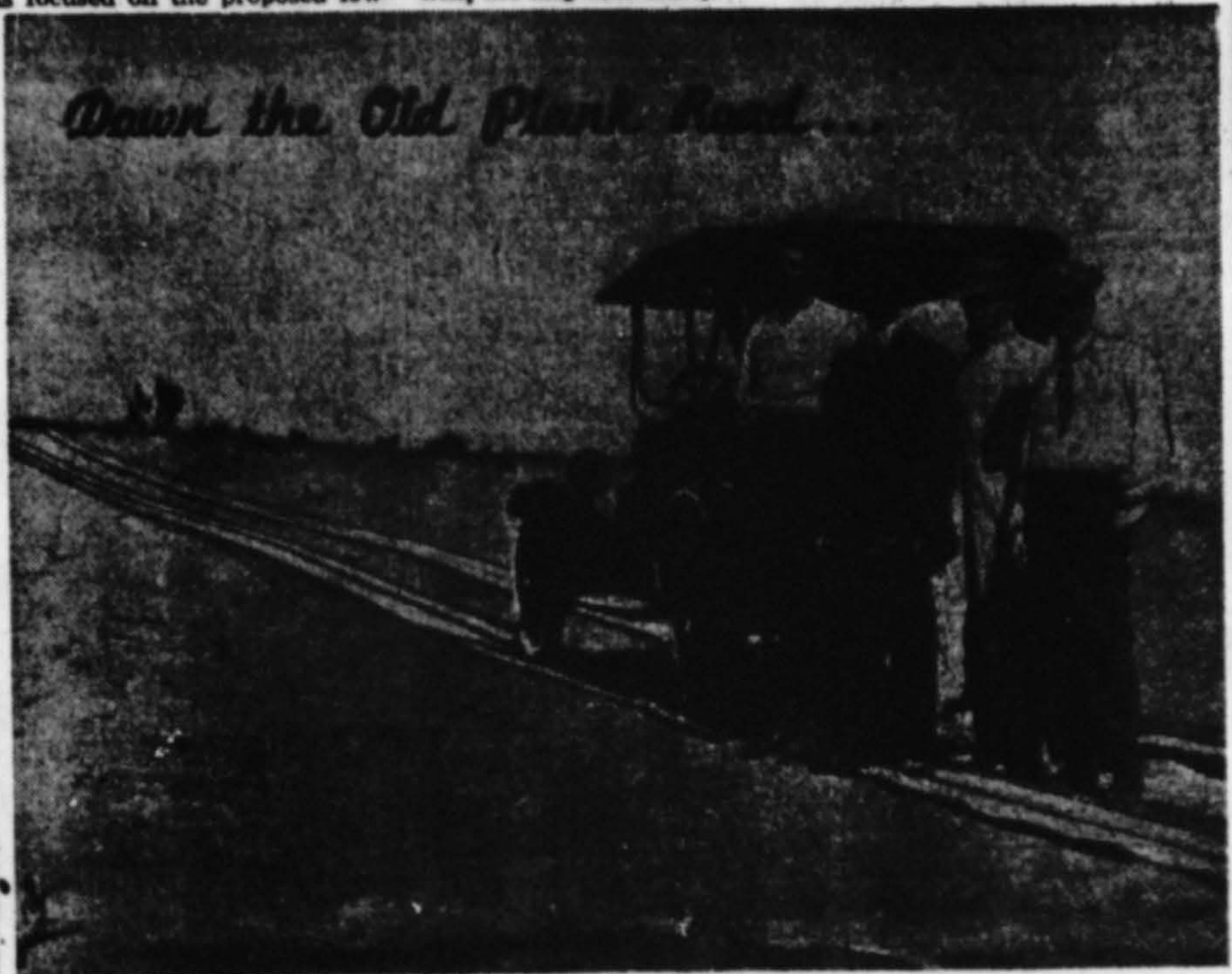
FROM OWN POCKETS

First work of the association was to have a bridge erected over the Colorado river at Yuma, and for that project, San Diego businessmen dug into their own pockets to the tune of \$15,000. Cost of the bridge had been estimated at \$73,800 and appropriations of \$25,000 each had been made by the congress, Arizona and California. The California appropriation was vetoed because the state engineer estimated the bridge cost at \$150,000 but, on completion of the bridge, made possible by the San Diego businessmen, the state refunded the money that had been subscribed.

The newly-formed Imperial county was a poor relative that could do little to further the highway construction program so close to the heart of San Diego. Although San Diego county had a good highway connecting the city with the Imperial county line, nothing but a tortuous road carried that highway down the far side of the rocky range into the valley. In 1911, Fred Jackson, vice-president of the First National Bank, employed Fred A. Rhodes, engineer, who now is San Diego's city manager, to figure out where to locate that needed valley link. Rhodes recalls that he nearly suffered sunstroke before he completed countless miles of walking through otherwise impassable canyons, and over boulder-strewn hills in preparation of his report which favored construction work along Myers creek, later known as Incopah pass. With the report in hand, Jackson, John F. Forward,



John Seum, new superintendent of shops for the city, is at the wheel of this super-roadster, beside which stands City Councillman Herbert Fay looking over the new road connecting San Diego with the Imperial valley.



Col. Ed Fletcher (left) with three daring companions (one in duster is Phil D. Swing) stop on the old plank road over Imperial Valley dunes to have their picture taken beside their touring car. Next to Fletcher is John M. Eshleman, then Lt. Gov. of Calif. On right is Don M. Bitler.

Jr., vice-president of the Union Title Insurance & Trust Co., and Refus Choate, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, proceeded to solicit the needed funds. Rhodes built the mountain springs grade, 16 feet wide with a maximum grade of 7 percent in about eight months with manpower and mulepower, for about \$42,000 thereby enabling Jackson to return \$22,000 to subscribers.

FAMOUS PLANK ROAD

And then came the need of an automobile road between El Centro and Yuma. An engineer representing Los Angeles interests insisted that the only practicable route was along the course of the railroad while the San Diego businessmen insisted on a shorter route over the sand hills. The engineer lost his temper and proclaimed that "the sand hill idea is the most asinine thing I ever

heard of." Nevertheless, the San Diegans were granted the privilege of proving their point which they did by donating 36 carloads of lumber for construction of the famed plank road which at first was simply wheel tracks made with planks laid lengthwise, but which later was reconstructed with the planks laid crosswise. For years, that plank road carried traffic over shifting dunes between the valley metropolis and the Arizona border town.

Always willing to lend a helping hand and, of course, to extend San Diego's sphere of influence, the city's leaders joined with Imperial county business men, not long after completion of the plank road, in raising \$15,000 needed to carry through a highway project connecting Yuma with Phoenix. Their good neighbor policy was far reaching and practical.

Nino Marcelli
Guest speaker at Hollywood, bo...

VALLEY ACTING ON ROAD TO LAS VEGAS

EL CENTRO, Aug. 6 (Special)—San Diego is sending a delegation headed by Col. Ed Fletcher and Supervisor LeRoy Richards to meet with the supervisors of Imperial county this afternoon. The subject matter is the Colorado Valley highway extending from La Vegas, in Nevada, to Calexico, and the necessity for its early completion.

Fletcher issued the call, and all towns in Imperial valley will be represented, including Blythe, Ripley and Palo Verde. The missing link is the proposed highway between Niland and Blythe. The location of this road never has been completed, and it is necessary for the board of supervisors of Imperial county to take formal action in relation thereto before funds can be appropriated either by the county, state or federal government for its construction.

At a highway meeting celebrating the construction of the Mecca-to-Niland highway, which Richards and Fletcher attended last spring, Fletcher suggested the proposed Colorado valley highway from Las Vegas, via Boulder dam, Needles, Parker and Blythe, into Imperial county, a large section of which is already a good county road or in the secondary highway system of California. The response was instantaneous.

The route will shorten the distance to the ocean many miles and save 150 to 200 miles of travel between Imperial valley and Las Vegas. Imperial county is vitally interested in the early completion of this highway and it will mean much for San Diego county as well as in the diversion of travel tapping three transcontinental highways—United States No. 91, from Salt Lake at Las Vegas; United States No. 66, at Needles, and United States No. 60, at Blythe.

2nd June 8/7/34

PAGE EIGHT

ROAD IS PLANNED PAST DAM, WORD OF FLETCHER AS AID ASSURED

Another highway of vital importance to San Diego and Imperial county is in the making. Col. Ed Fletcher's suggestion of a Colorado valley highway from Las Vegas, past Boulder dam, Searchlight, Needles, Parker, Blythe and to Calexico via Niland and the Imperial valley, is a step nearer coming true.

When completed it means diversion of transcontinental travel from United States highway 91 from Salt Lake to Las Vegas, United States highway 66, Albuquerque via Needles to Los Angeles at Needles, United States highway 60, Phoenix to Los Angeles at Blythe, as well as hooking up all the towns along the Colorado river and shortening the distance 150 to nearly 200 miles from Las Vegas to El Centro.

Fletcher and Supervisor LeRoy Richards have presented the matter to the board of supervisors of Imperial county and by a unanimous vote the supervisors went on record to dedicate as a public highway a road from Niland to the Riverside county line and asked the California highway commission to cooperate with them in selecting the route. The same plan will be adopted in Riverside county.

Richards made an appeal for 100 percent cooperation on behalf of the board of supervisors of San Diego county. He stated: "It is not our intention to come here and dictate, but to cooperate. We have not the authority to ask for any particular highway, but we do urge something definite be done."

Fletcher, with a 10-foot map, graphically described the location of the proposed Colorado valley highway and showed the missing links. He also read resolutions passed by 37 chambers of commerce, irrigation districts and municipalities including Las Vegas, all the cities enroute and in San Diego county approving the project. Fletcher also produced letters from the California highway commission, Earl Lee Kelly, director of public works; Engineer E. Q. Sullivan, in charge of San Bernardino county, and E. E. Wallace, engineer in charge of Imperial and San Diego counties, pledging their support and hearty cooperation with good prospects of including the necessary funds in the coming budget for the completion of this splendid work as far as their jurisdiction covered. It will be necessary to acquire federal funds to assist in completing the highway from Niland to Blythe in another state highway system.

Fletcher already, in Washington, has laid the foundation for such finances.

Fletcher today stated: "Next to the Broadway of America, this highway, when completed, will divert thousands of cars, seven or eight months of the year, from each one of the three transcontinental highways into Imperial valley. San Diego will get its full benefit. We shorten the distance from El Centro to Boulder dam by nearly 200 miles and we can easily reach Boulder dam from San Diego in eight hours when this highway is completed. No finer trip on earth than this, particularly during the six or eight, fall, winter and spring months of the year. Imperial county is appreciative of what all of San Diego county is doing to help promote this great enterprise. The gratifying thing is that, with two exceptions, every municipality and every chamber of commerce in San Diego county passed resolutions and showed their interest in this new highway that will mean so much for San Diego county."

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 70 Folder: 1

**Business Records - Other Fletcher Activities - Highways -
1911 Plank Road: Yuma to Phoenix, photos and articles;
includes photos of construction and after completion;
also of Fletcher party which made the first run over the
completed highway; also photos of early asphalt replacement**



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