



Trader Goulding shows Navajo prospector how a Geiger counter reveals radioactivity in piece of uranium ore
Photos by Thomas E. Stimson, Jr.

The Navajos Hunt Big Game...

Uranium

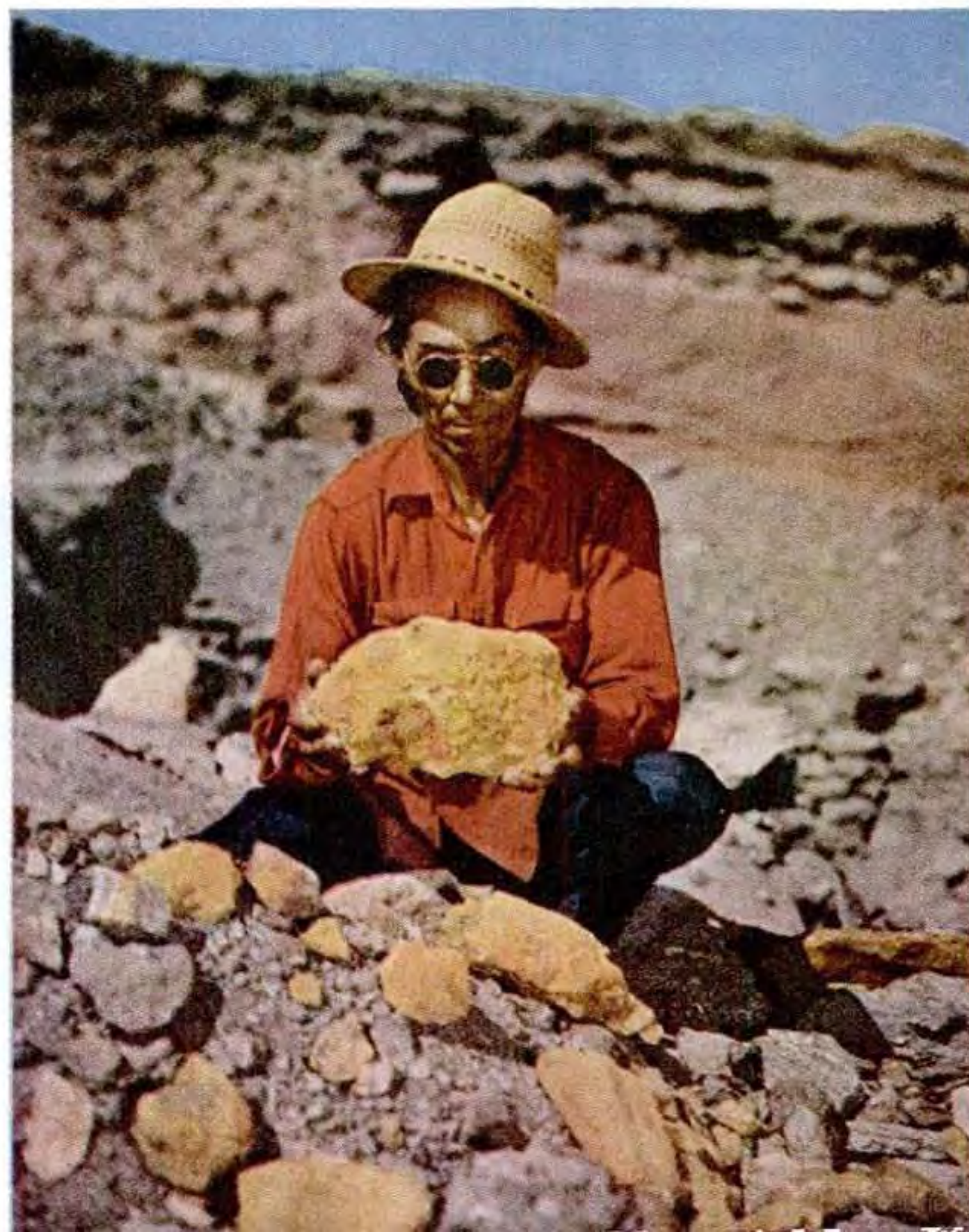
By Harry Goulding
Indian Trader

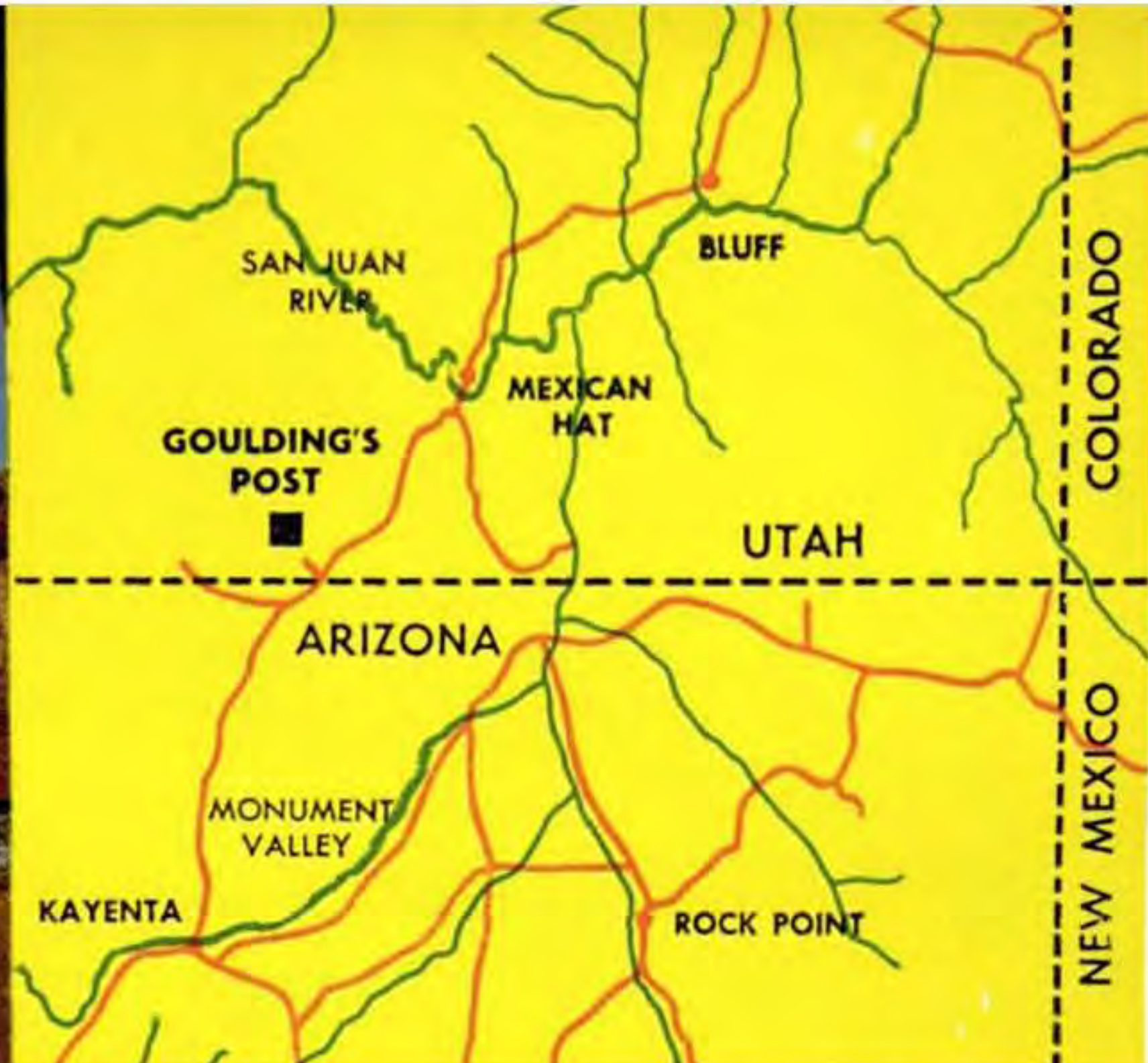
NOT LONG AGO two of my Navajo friends rode up to the trading post and told me of a distant canyon where they had noticed some rocks that were crusted with a bright-yellow substance and some nodules of blood-red crystals.

That is exciting news and I'm going to explore the canyon. In this country a canary-yellow mineral that occurs with the red crystals of vanadium is almost certain to be a uranium ore. Possibly by the time you read this the United States will have one more mine that is producing the raw material for atomic energy.

If the stuff that the Indians described proves to be radioactive, it will be the seventh uranium deposit that I have helped to locate. Several I found myself, early in the war, after the government sent out a plea for new deposits of vanadium. The vanadium was needed, to be sure, but no one told us until after Hiroshima that the

Indian miner inspects a chunk of low-grade uranium ore taken from a new mine in Monument Valley





Goulding's rustic trading post is overshadowed by towering cliff in Monument Valley. Map shows San Juan River and its network of dry-bed tributaries; the red lines indicate dirt roads and trails in the region

associated uranium was the real reason why vanadium was being sought.

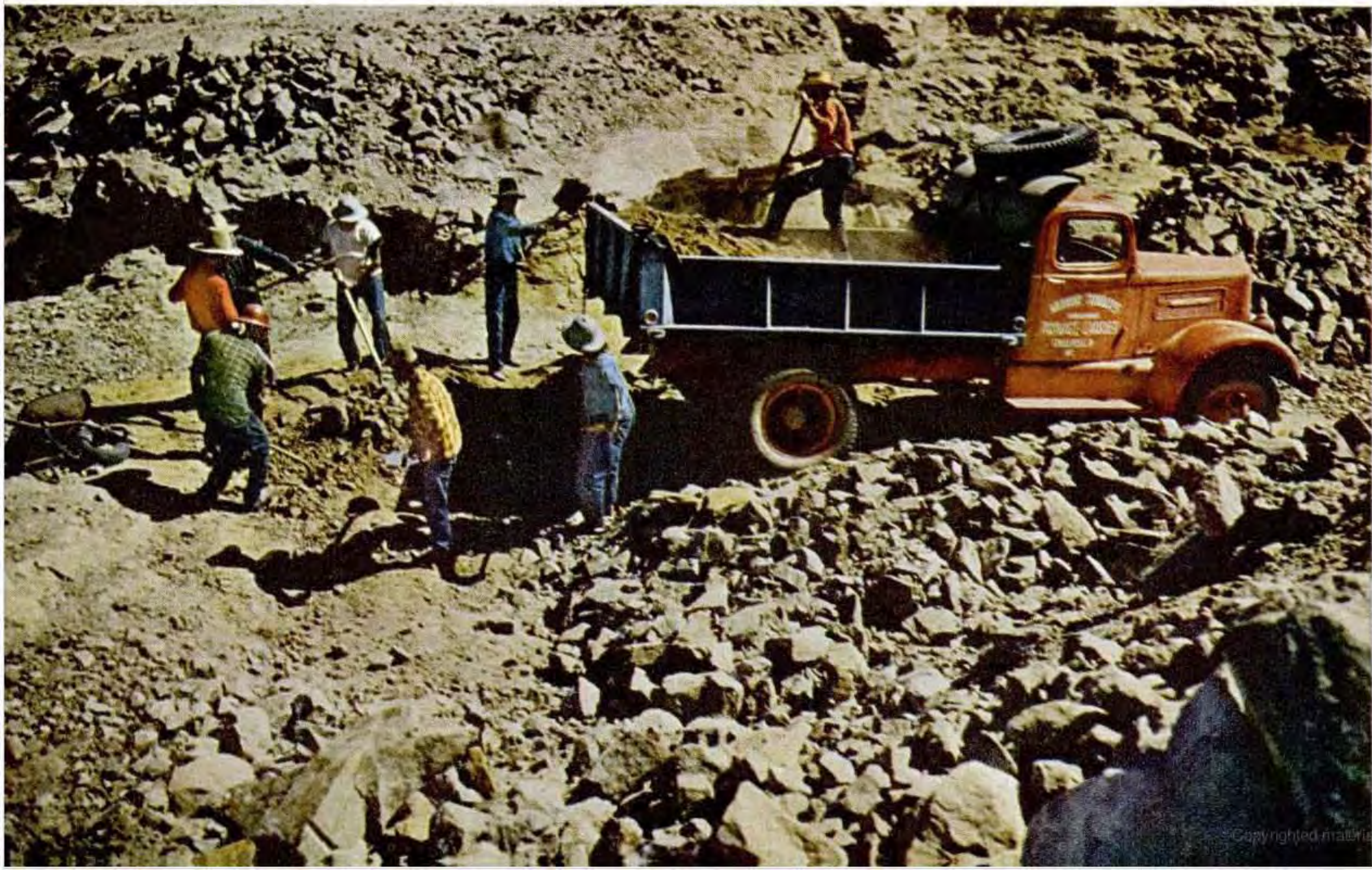
Radioactivity, in fact, led us direct to one uranium-vanadium deposit. A photographer whom I was guiding through the area happened to pick up an oddly colored rock and, since his pockets were full, he placed it in his film case. Later, he wrote me that all his film had spoiled and he wondered if the rock could be radioactive. An assay showed that it was, and we went back to the spot where he'd found it and opened up a new vein.

One of the richest uranium mines in the country was discovered by a 19-year-old Indian boy, Luke Yazzie, who noticed an

outcrop of yellow ore while grazing sheep on the east side of Monument Valley. He and I drove over in my beefed-up desert car and prospected it, and found plenty of uranium. Work started on it at once and Navajos were employed as miners. Fifty of them are still working at the mine.

During the war the patriotic Indian miners wanted to wake up before dawn every morning so that they could work as many hours as possible. None of them had an alarm clock and one of the Navajo truck drivers volunteered to buy one on his next trip to town. No alarm clocks were available. The Indian used his head and brought back a rooster instead. Every morning at

Indian miners load low-grade uranium ore into truck in valley mine. It is trucked to railroad miles away





Goulding talks to Indian women who have driven 15 miles to trade homemade rugs for cloth at his post. They camp out overnight and return home next day. Right, many Navajo sheep have couple of extra horns

about four o'clock the rooster started to crow. The noise woke up the miners just as efficiently as any alarm clock.

I operate an Indian trading post in Monument Valley in southern Utah, on the Navajo Indian Reservation. My only white neighbor is 20 miles away and the nearest paved road is 100 miles from my post. The region is the most remote, least known and most starkly beautiful portion of the United States. It is an arid, barren desert, so unpopulated that the nearest post office is in another state. I get my mail at Kayenta, Ariz.

Parts of the area are still unmapped and thousands of square miles of it never have been surveyed. I've lived there for 27 years.

Eons ago Monument Valley was a high, flat tableland. Erosion gradually cut numerous box canyons into the tableland, exposing the underlying red sandstone. Eventually, the canyon walls were worn back until here and there they broke into the next canyon. Left behind were scores of pinnacles, buttes and small mesas, some as high as 1500 feet and all with sheer, vertical sides. These towering buttes give the valley its name and are the scenic attraction of the region.

A thousand years or so ago, with a wetter climate, the valley and the whole area were populated by the cliff-dwellers, an agricultural people who lived in rock houses that they built in depressions on the

Totem Pole pinnacle in distance towers 1000 feet from base and is as high as the Eiffel Tower





Trading-post operator takes time out to watch squaw weave a rug on crude loom; his "taxi" waits by post

faces of cliffs. When the climate dried out the cliff dwellers disappeared.

Today, the whole section is an Indian reservation on which thousands of Navajos live. They are a quiet, honorable people with many admirable characteristics. Other tribes have received much government help but the Navajos have been left vir-

tually to shift for themselves. About 400 of them live in Monument Valley and in its immediate vicinity and they make a poor living by grazing sheep and goats on the sparse vegetation.

The nearest school is almost 50 miles away and it is 100 miles to the nearest

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Movie studio built the realistic fort which the Navajos now own and let other studios use—for a fee

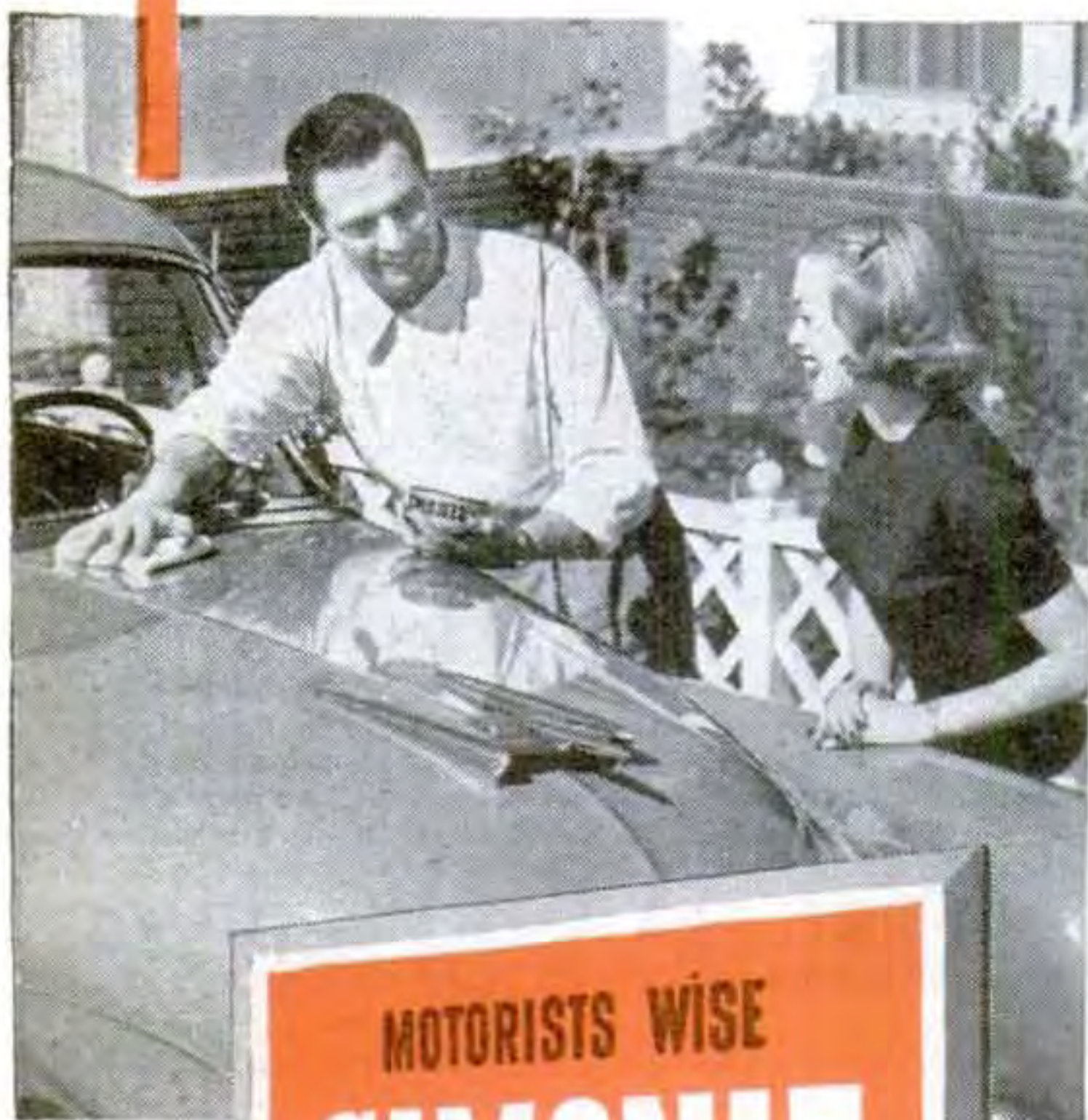


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High-Speed Splinter

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sports. Annual dory races were held on the Thames in England as early as 1716 and it was a rough sport even in its early years. Friends of some oarsmen would stand on the bridges that spanned the course and would pour water or drop heavy stones into the boats of competitors. Other "spectators" tried to maneuver large craft in front of struggling dorymen to stir up the water and make the rowing more difficult.

The sport gradually spread to most parts of Europe and across the Atlantic. The first races in America were held on the Hudson around 1750, when crews from various ships raced in whaleboats or in ships' boats. Racing by private clubs and colleges started some 75 years later and the traditional Harvard-Yale boat races began in 1852. Meanwhile, professional oarsmen practiced at training camps, issued challenges and engaged in match races for large purses.

The present fast, lightweight shells began to evolve in the middle-1800s. Outriggers were one of the first improvements, then the English colleges developed the keelless hulls that are in use today. The sliding seat was an American contribution that came in the late '50s. Gradually, the present shells that are built and tuned virtually like violins came into being.

Another American contribution to the sport is the famous Hiram Conibear "comfortable" stroke, now used by virtually all crews, that combines speed with enough relaxation to permit a fast pace all through a long race. Conibear developed his stroke while coach at the University of Washington early in the century.

Pocock hulls and the Conibear stroke, plus continued good coaching, have made Washington the strongest rowing school in the United States. Washington won eight of the last 20 intercollegiate rowing regattas at Poughkeepsie, using the eight-man boats over a four-mile course. And in the 20 regattas Washington placed first, second or third a total of 19 times.

The Navajos Hunt Big Game

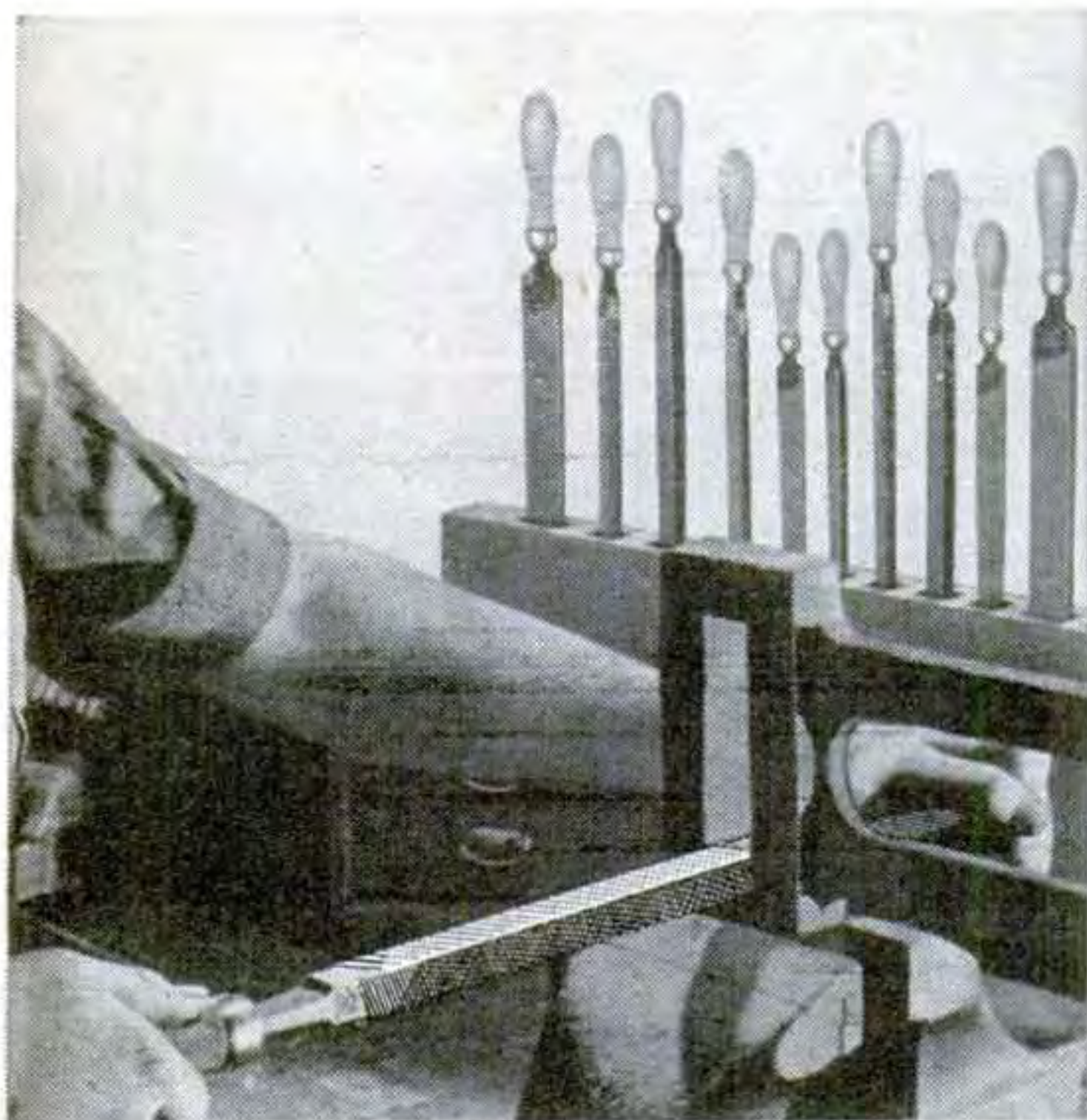
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hospital. My trading post is practically the only local link with civilization.

The result is that the Monument Valley Navajos are living just about as they did a century or two ago. Their only houses are crude "hogans" that are built of brush and mud, with perhaps a piece of stovepipe stuck through the roof. Men and women alike still wear their hair long, bound up in

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a knot behind. Because of their natural love for color you find the Indian women always dressed in gaudy clothes no matter whether they are visiting the trading post or are tending sheep out on the desert.

The Navajos still weave their rugs and blankets on crude outdoor looms from balls of dyed yarn. The wool comes from their own flocks. They still grind their corn on a flat rock and they still make their jewelry from silver and turquoise ore.

Living under these primitive conditions, the Indians are a fascinating sight to visitors. Everyone who drives through the country takes snapshots until they run out of film. But there is another side to the picture. No more than three percent of the Indians around Monument Valley speak English, because of the lack of schools.

When one of them is desperately ill and word reaches me in time I try to rush the patient to a hospital. The long, arduous ride over dusty dirt roads and trails doesn't help the patient. Then, if he reaches the hospital alive and eventually recovers, he has to walk back home. There is no other means of transportation.

Their primitive life is not by their own choice. Besides local schools and hospitals, they need irrigation water, brought possibly from the San Juan River. With adequate water they could become industrious farmers, for the soil would support a good agriculture. The only water that's available now comes from a few springs and seeps and provides only enough for drinking and bathing purposes. Indianlike, none of the Navajo families will camp beside a spring. They prefer to camp a mile away, out of sight of the spring, and carry the water they need all the way to camp. This leaves the spring open for use by the coyotes and other wildlife in the vicinity.

Another thing that the Indians need is a paved road, with a bus line. This would allow them to move back and forth, to leave the reservation in search of jobs and to return home when the jobs end.

An Indian trader is more than a simple storekeeper. As a matter of fact, money rarely passes over my counter. Rugs, jewelry and other products are traded in for dungarees, staple foods, tools, saddles and what other necessities the Indians can afford. In turn I sell their products to visitors or through regular channels.

I'm also an interpreter, amateur doctor, general adviser, intermediary on legal matters, lodge operator, prospector and a one-man chamber of commerce.

I operate a modern lodge at my trading post because about 1000 visitors a year drive into the valley and there's no other

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place for them to stay. Incidentally, visitors should never regard the Indians as mere exhibits. They are living their own lives and one should not invade their privacy by photographing them without permission. I tell Indians and visitors alike that a half dollar fee should be paid for the privilege of making pictures.

As a prospector I'm interested in finding mineral deposits that might help the inhabitants. As a white man I can't stake a claim or own a mine on the reservation and there is no reward for making a discovery. Any income or royalties goes direct into tribal funds.

Possibly you never heard of Monument Valley until now but there is a good possibility that you have seen pictures of it. It has served as the background for a number of Western movies. Each year I make a trip to Hollywood to try to get the studios interested in making pictures in the valley. The resulting income is one the biggest financial helps that the Indians have received. The tribe gets a fee for the use of the land and the individual Navajos draw wages for serving as actors. Portions of "Stagecoach," "Darling Clementine," and "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon," among other Western pictures, were filmed in Monument Valley.

It takes a real expedition to make a movie here. Sleeping tents, set materials, lighting plants, water, food and every incidental must be brought in by truck. Actors and crews come in by special busses and aircraft. For the time being we have two-way communication with the rest of the world. Each location group keeps in touch with its home studio by short-wave radio. The motion-picture sets that are erected in the valley are built for permanence and become the property of the tribe. They may be used, for an additional fee, by the next studio that comes in.

The scenic attractions of Monument Valley are so great that eventually, perhaps soon, it will have to be turned into something like a national park. More and more tourists are visting us every year. My hope is that the valley will never be taken away from its inhabitants and turned over to some agency for operation. The valley is the property of the Navajo tribe and if it is to become a public attraction the Indians themselves should be trained in park operation and should be allowed to manage it.

After all, the land was given to them as a reservation because it was considered worthless for any other purpose. No one dreamed, then, that it contained a big percentage of our uranium reserves and that because of this it actually is one of the most valuable areas in the country.



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