

A Finger of Land on an Old Man's Hand: Adventures in Mexico's Baja Wilderness

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Where wilderness can also be a paradise

About the book

This book by author Earl Vincent de Berge details the adventures of young men testing themselves in the wilderness of Mexico's Baja California in the early 1960's. It provides clear-eyed and thoughtful insight into the awesome diversity and beauty of desert ecologies, landscapes, flora, and fauna. De Berge has a powerful yet graceful writing style that will keep you turning the pages and leave you spellbound.

Most of the settlers they met were friendly and welcoming, but they also came across reclusive hermits, gold prospectors, and hardscrabble miners, as well as brigands and fools. The explorers experienced dangerous situations and occasions that brought them close to nature and to spiritual beliefs.

However, the most intriguing encounter was with the land itself. The Baja wilderness proved a formidable challenge to the young men, their resolve, and their equipment. The land was beautiful even as it was barren, generous even as it was treacherous, and comforting even as it was challenging.

More than a straightforward autobiography, de Berge writes this book as a wonderful story of adventure and exploration, recounted by a participant – someone who actually experienced



what scientists and explorers can rightfully call a wilderness expedition.

Why you should read this book

What was the Sonoran Desert like before “civilization” reached it? What was Baja like before off-road vehicles started tearing it up, before a highway connected Tijuana to La Paz and Cabo San Lucas resorts, and before paved roads, cell phones, and GPS?

It was a wonderful place.

While introducing the reader to the beauty and challenge of this desert paradise, the book also celebrates the spirit and resourcefulness of the individuals and families who dare to settle where few chose to do so.

It is a glimpse of the lives of people whose tales of family, love, war, faith, patriotism, and survival are often told beside a campfire.

Photos help convey the peninsula’s compelling environment in which the adventurers immersed themselves -- the special mysterious beauty of the landscape and flora, and the joys and challenges experienced by the people who live there.

This book and other titles will be featured in the 2023 London Book Fair.

About the author

A native of Arizona, Earl de Berge is a poet, photographer, political scientist, and writer.

As a poet and writer, he draws much of his inspiration from the Sonoran Desert as well as his experiences in Guatemala’s post-civil war years.

He has published two books of poetry, *Allegro to Life* and *Swans to Carry Me*, with a third, *Winds in the Elephant Tree*, in production. He is also at work on biography titled *The Man Who Ate His Dreams* and a collection of short stories about the desert for young readers.

Earl and his partner Suzanne split their time between Arizona and Guatemala, where they founded *Seeds for a Future*, a non-profit organization that helps rural women create backyard farms to produce nutritious food for their families.

Earl Vincent de Berge

US Book Press

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