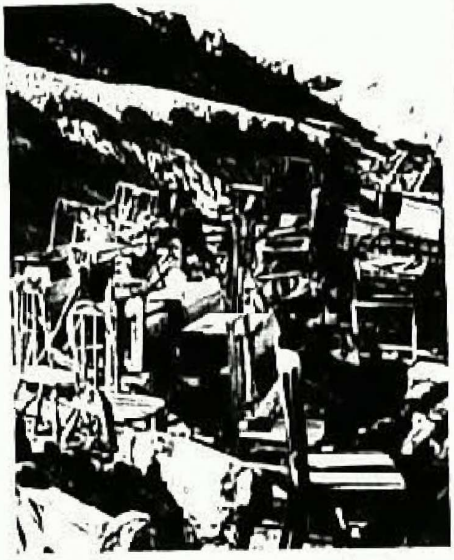
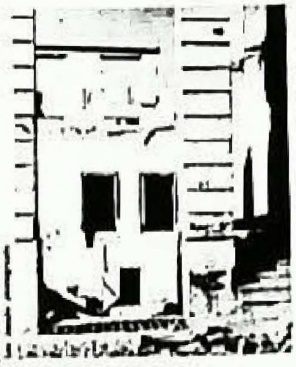


How did this junk pile start? Was it carried here by a compact rose? Collected by a hermit? Blown by a wind?





Principle edifice of the old Rhyolite was a hotel, now a sand-blasted ruin

In the monumental trash heap, remnants of a grind of homesteads and cabins

Detail of an ancient cat door speaks of transient of an era long vanished

Los Angeles Times
4-5-1959



All that remains of the [illegible] the three-story hotel are concrete pillars which frame the rocky hills

Junk pile with a past

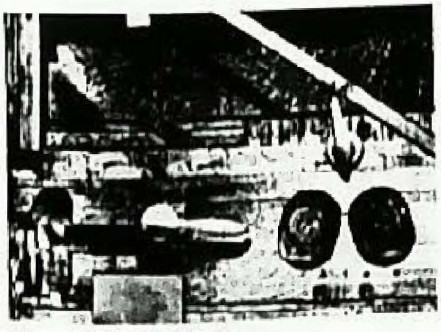
NEAR Death Valley are remnants of men's plans and hopes gone astray. They are the ghost towns and abandoned mines that dot an area once known for gold, lead and borax and in its day made famous by the 20 mule teams which trudged across the burning wastes.

Northeast of Death Valley, a few miles into Nevada on the Daylight Pass road, are ruins of the gold-boom town of Rhyolite, now ruined and fallen in the strong desert sun. Its heyday was 1906 and it died in 1907. In the rush to abandon worthless claims the town was deserted and everything portable was carried away. Today only the walls of a three-story hotel, a two-story bank and remains of a grocery face each other across a wood-infested path which assumes a road.

Rhyolite was once a fancy place as attested by the pseudo-Greek Bobbing in sheet metal which once adorned the hotel and now lies in pieces in the rubble. The town was set on the slope of barren hills and the wind often comes roaring up from the Amargosa Desert carrying sand to wipe this fallen ghost slowly away.

Not far from Rhyolite are other ruins. One lies along a road from Trona which leads into Death Valley from the west. Here are worn wood walls covered with screening and bits of plaster where once a settler tried to improve his home or barn. Trash heaps of monumental proportions are spread along what was once a wash. School desks, furniture, bedsteads, ancient plumbing and a fascinating collection of rusty articles are strewn in nature's path of destruction.

Ghost towns disappear slowly. They are carried away by man and eroded away by nature. But while they remain they are a living echo of the West's history.



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