

JACUMBA: DESERT VIEW TOWER/ BOULDER PARK CAVES
Imperial Valley, Imperial County.

1879 Bert L. Vaughn born in West Virginia. He moved west after serving in the Army during the Spanish American War. Vaughn was an early pioneer who developed Jacumba valley and owned most of it. He became a real estate man and founded several towns including Needles, California.

1913 Vaughn moved to San Diego and became the city's mayor.

1922-23 Bert L. Vaughn built the Stone Tower to commemorate the early road and railroad builders opening up this area as well as pioneers travelling the Mormon Trail across the desert to San Diego. The mail route was established in 1857 by James E. Birch and was derisively called "the Jackass Mail". Later the route became a toll road operated by the San Diego and Fort Yuma Turnpike Company until 1878. The lookout Tower is a three story circular structure, about 60 feet high and has walls four feet thick, and was built of native materials on solid rock.

1930's W. T. (*letter from Elder to Chamberlain re plaque says M. F.; letter from Elder to plaque makers says W. T./Ratcliffe, (Ratliff in Sunset article; 5 years)*) an itinerant engineer, recovering from tuberculosis, spent c. 2-5 years carving fantasy stone animal figures including snakes, lizzards, fish and buffalo out of the boulders on the site.

c. 1930-40 Bert Vaughn sold his land on Jacumba and gave the Tower to his son Dick.

1947 Dennis A. Newman, a veteran flyer of World War II, came to Jacumba for rehabilitaiton after five years operational flying in Europe and the Middle East. He acquired the property from Dick Vaughn, Bert's son, with the idea of opening it to the public. The Boulder Park Project took three years. of building and reconstruction.

1950 May 26, Desert View Tower was opened to the pulic. The tower was converted into a museum containing Newman's collection from World War II, old guns, swords, lamps, war trophies, wagon models, Indian and pioneer relics, southwest artifacts. The top level of the museum is an observation tower, with binoculars providing a view of the surrounding country.

1976 Road to the Tower washed out in a hurricane

1976 Vaughn died aged 97.

1977 Newman was in contact with Russell Cahill, Director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation concerning the Towers being made part of the Anza Borrego Park, as the rear line of the property is the boundary with the Park. Apparently the department was not interested in having 93 ac. land, improvements and property transferred to them (*see letter 12/26/77 from D. Newman to S.R. could contact the Department for copies of the correspondence?*)

1978? SPACES mistakes Thematic Nom to Nat Reg 1980 Placc ment on Nat Reg

1981 May. California Registered Historical Landmark No. 939. Twentieth Century Folk Art Environments in California Thematic Resources.

1984 May 5th. Plaque placed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in Cooperation with Imperial Valley Pioneers and Squibob Chapter, E. Clampus Vitus.

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ODENS, Peter, R.

Desert Tower Country: The Desert's Edge.

ROSEN, Seymour

1979 In Celebration of Ourselves. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; A California Living Book.

CONTACT

Box 301, Jacumba California, 92034

Ex/ owner: Dennis A. Newman, 12745 Via Esperia, Del Mar, CA 92014.
714/ 755 3650 (*alive now or deceased?*)

current owner??

For further information contact:

1. City of San Diego, re info concerning him as Mayor -- and to find out if they have any personal papers that may relate to Desert View Tower.
2. Imperial Valley Pioneers and Squibob Chapter, E. Clampus Vitus.
3. Track down death certificate of Vaughn; Ratcliife (Ratliff)
4. Newman's family for papers.
5. Current manager's of Towers.