

at the lake until we left, and then dogged our trail with the expectation of stealing my mules at the first opportunity offered. But my experience had taught me to observe the utmost caution, and I left nothing to chance; consequently, we were not disturbed."

We can well imagine Mr. Santeleban's effort in getting his heavy load of salt up the Lancaster hill, which has three almost perpendicular pulls; but he got up and stopped for lunch at the Howard's Well on Johnson's Run, or Dry Draw as it has been called in recent times.

Mr. Santeleban stated, "As we were leaving the Wells, Anastacio Gonzales drove into camp with his six wagons. He was a citizen of San Antonio and, as I knew him well, it was natural that I should warn him of the Indian menace.

"I told him about the Indians who had constantly watched my camp during my stay at the Salt Lakes, and that they had followed my train until the day before. I urged him to be careful and to use every precaution to avoid an attack, because I was satisfied that the same Indians were hovering in the neighborhood, and if they ceased to follow my wagons, possibly they would make an assault on his camp, if they saw they could do so with impunity.

In the mean time my train had passed on and when I bade him farewell it was two miles ahead of me. I was the last person that talked to him, exclusive of his immediate associates, because the sequel will show that my warning was unheeded and his carelessness cost him and his men their lives.

I did not hear of the disaster that overwhelmed Gonzales until I arrived at Fort Clark. There I learned that Lieutenant Vinson with a detachment of troops were scouting in that country and stopped at Howard Wells soon after Gonzales and all his men were killed. The wagons were still in flames, and the charred body of Gonzales was found secured to one of them; evidently, he was bound when

still alive. Vinson immediately followed the trail of the Indians until he overtook them, and a fight occurred in which he and several of the soldiers were killed.

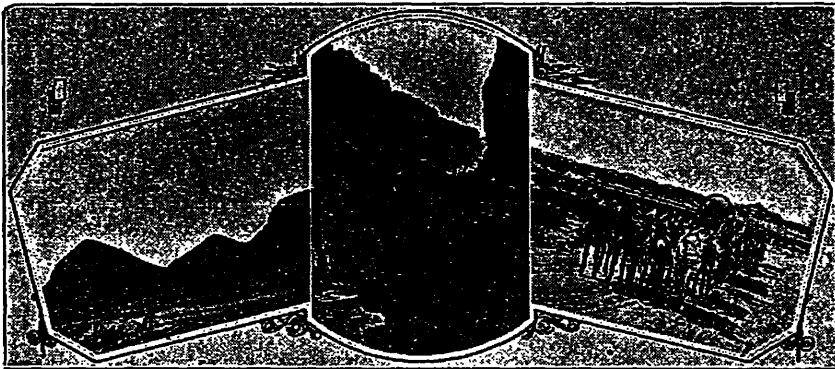
Frank Dobie in his book, "Coronado's Children," says: "The great trains of wagons passing between Chihuahua City and San Antonio were sometimes veritable Argosies of treasure. In five years time the enterprising August Santeleban alone transported over a million dollars in freshly minted Mexican silver."

"Out of such a background legend was inevitable. Legend says that not all the silver and gold that braved the routes crossing the Pecos got through. Some of it is at Castle Gap. Away to the south east of Castle Gap out of the sand country, the Chihuahua Trail followed up Devils River, left it at Beaver Lake, ran along side Dry Draw and then crossed over the Divide to the Pecos. Some where along Dry Draw (Johnson's Run) was—for it is not now—a cave known as Rattle snake cave. I never heard how much gold ore was stored in this cave or how it came to be there. Maybe some of it was native to the place. Maybe it was the "Gold Blocks" stuffed hurriedly into hiding by Spaniards, that early day cowboys used to look for in every cave they saw."

SANTLEBAN WAS IMPRESSED WITH HIS EXPERIMENTAL TRIPS TO CHIHUAHUA

Quoting Mr. Santeleban: "My experimental trips to and from Chihuahua had netted me handsome returns and I determined to confine my freighting in the future to that point. My arrangements were soon completed, and I received sufficient assurance that full cargoes of freight in both directions would be consigned to my care. These journeys were repeated many times, but, as the records have been lost, it would be useless to tax my memory by attempting to give an account of each journey. Therefore the incidents I will relate are over a lengthy period."

"I have an indistinct recollection of the trips I made in 1872, and I can only recall that on one of them, when returning from Chihuahua, I crossed the Pecos River, at the Horse Head ford, on a pontoon bridge belonging to the United States army. The military authorities had constructed it for temporary use to facilitate the movement of troops and government wagon trains. The



CHISOS MOUNTAINS—GRANDE CANYON
FREIGHT WAGONS