

Our Sweetest Hours: Recreation and the Mental State of Absorption By Gene Quarrick

"Not surprisingly, it is one of the deepest human yearnings to break out of this gravitational field, even though we value the security and stability it provides. Every vacation, every daydream, every bet on the lottery is precisely this wish to break away. In a recent psychological study, people were asked: 'If you had the time and money to do *anything* you wanted, what would you do?' The reactions were almost unanimous: Most respondents said they would travel. Actually, we do not have to travel to get away. It so happens that the very organism that imprisons us, also gives us a way out. What we are talking about is the sense of escape and diversion that occurs when we get absorbed in something. Absorption is but a simple switch of attention, yet it can open us up psychologically to a degree that is not possible in the everyday frame of mind. In a manner of speaking, absorption is the hypnosis of the common people. It is also the heart of adult play experience, and must be examined if we are to understand recreation as a phenomenon in its own right. In the first chapter we shall review the scientific evidence for the close relationship between absorption and hypnosis, and throughout the remainder of the book we will attempt to show how adults have used this absorbed-hypnotic capability to bring diversion into their lives."

— from the preface



McFarland, 1989, 246 pages, 9" x 6", hardcover, \$25.95 ISBN 0-89950-404-3

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Paul Davies, Ed.

Cambridge, 1989, 516 pages, 9" x 10", hardcover, \$49.50
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The Bouse Formation consists of loosely consolidated Pliocene sediments deposited in a delta near a proto-Gulf of California. D.G. Metzger photo, courtesy of USGS.

Darkly rust-colored Tertiary sandstone of the Mojave Mountains forms a region of spectacular rugged topography.

Volcanic rocks surrounded by radiating dikes line up along an ancient fissure.

Uplift Pliocene (Gulf of California related) north to Parker in the Bouse Formation was deposited.

The several million-year-old alluvial apron surrounding the Dome Rock Mountains is dark with pebbles coated with desert varnish.

Tertiary sediments were deeply dissected as Bouse Wash laid waste with Colorado River downcutting.

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Mountains to the east are the Piomosa Range, a faulted, tilted block of Tertiary volcanic rocks and Mesozoic sedimentary rocks. Tilted sedimentary layers can be seen on northern parts of the range.

Hillocks of sand that border the highway near mile 125 look like sand dunes, and probably are, though they are grass covered now. A little less rain, a little more grazing, and the sand would again blow with the wind. Grayish valley sediments beneath them, visible north of mile 128, lie along the valley of Bouse Wash and are known as the Bouse Formation. They contain fossils that date them as Pliocene, 4 to 5 million years old. In part at least they are made up of fine-grained marine or brackish-water limestone, with siltstone and fine claystone in their upper part. As much as 2000 feet thick, and extending beyond the town of Parker, they were deposited when the Gulf of California extended much farther north than it does now. Originally they were raised a thousand feet above sea level. The Tertiary deposits across this part of western Arizona and into California, lapping up onto the alluvial fans of mountains that were high enough at that time to have been islands or promontories. The Tertiary deposits slope right up to the north end of the Dome Rock Mountains, for instance, and interlayer with alluvial fans there.

Turning west at mile 131, the highway continues among these sediments, following Bouse Wash toward Parker. Here you can appreciate the thickness of the Bouse Formation and the way it merges with debris from the mountains.

Northwest of the highway are the Buckskin Mountains, a metamorphic core complex superimposed with some rough and jumbled volcanic topography here near its western end. Structurally the range, as you will see north of Parker, crosses the Colorado River to become the Whipple Mountains in California.

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