The southern end of Passage 41 follows a shallow ravine northward, before paralleling the route of State Highway 67. Just beyond the highway to the west is the beginning of Warm Springs Canyon. In the winter of 1890, copper was discovered in the Kaibab Limestone along Warm Springs Canyon, just west of Jacob Lake. Scores of mining claims were soon filed in the area, and a number of mines opened. Copper was produced on and off for the next fifty years by a number of mines, peaking during World War I and World War II, as was typical with many Western mines. One of the most successful mines in the area was the Mackin Mine. During the 1920’s, the Mackin Mine hauled copper ore by railroad down Warm Springs Canyon to its smelting furnace at the company town of Ryan. The mine reportedly produced 150,000 pounds of copper in 1929 alone. A couple of small open pit mines produced copper in the area as well, but all grew silent as the 1940’s drew to a close. While the forests have begun to reclaim the old mine sites, evidence of the area’s copper mining days can be seen in the stones of greenish, copper ore used in construction of the Jacob Lake Inn.

Much of this passage traverses the crest of a broad, forested highland known as the Kaibab Plateau, which was forced upward by faulting in recent geologic time. The Kaibab Plateau is part of a sparsely populated, five-million-acre section of land bordered by Nevada, Utah, and the Grand Canyon, that is often referred to as the “Arizona Strip.” The rugged geographic barrier formed by the Grand Canyon has always kept this part of Arizona isolated from the rest of the state. Culturally homogenous with southern Utah as a result of predominately Mormon settlement in the area, the Arizona Strip was the subject of numerous failed annexation attempts by Utah to make it a part of that state. Historically, Arizona has had a difficult time enforcing the law in the Arizona Strip, due to its isolation. A number of raids by Arizona law enforcement during the latter half of the 20th century attempted to curtail some of the practices of a polygamist sect in the area.

The northern third of this Arizona Trail passage makes a slow descent to the flatter, forested country near the village of Jacob Lake. Jacob Lake takes its name from Jacob Hamblin, a well-known Mormon explorer and pioneer credited with exploring much of northern Arizona, while attempting to establish Mormon colonies there. Hamblin is credited as the first person to travel around the entire Grand Canyon, among many other accomplishments. Jacob Lake itself, an old limestone sinkhole, lies a mile west of the village of Jacob Lake, and was an important source of water in this largely waterless region. The lake was a frequent water stop for those traveling through the area. Located in heavy timber, Jacob Lake was also the location of a sawmill during the early 1880’s. In 1923, Harold and Nina Bowman established a gas station for travelers along the highway at Jacob Lake, followed by a two room lodge a year later. The highway was moved a mile east in 1929, and the Bowmans built a new lodge known as the Jacob Lake Inn, along the new highway route. The Jacob Lake Inn, which grew to include a restaurant, store, and lodging, is still operated by the Bowman family.
References


