

# *Nell Murbarger's*

## **Western Ghost Town and Natural History Stories in *Desert Magazine***

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## *A Bibliography*

Nell Murbarger's iconic stories of western ghost towns and their personalities published in *Desert Magazine* during between 1949 and 1963 captured forever the essence of a now vanished time and place and consequently brought enduring stature to the publication. Her writings coupled with her black-and-white photographs and the distinctive cartography of Norton Allen reflect a gentler time when rural lives were rooted in nature's bounty and the charisma of the western desert was reflected in the patina on rusting iron and carved into the weathered cedar of desert structures and into the faces of their dwellers.

Nell Murbarger (1909-1991) began her career as a reporter and later as assignment editor on several western newspapers including the Los Angeles *Examiner*, Salt Lake City *Tribune*, Costa Mesa, California, *Globe-Herald* and Newport-Balboa *Press* and shifted to freelancing full-time in 1945. She also published four books between 1956 and 1964, two of which, *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* and *Sovereigns of the Sage*, are rewrites of some of her periodical stories about Nevada ghost towns and personalities; *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls* is a collection of stories about Arizona and *30,000 Miles in Mexico* is about automobile trips south of the border. Her books continue to be popular with the lay public but have not enjoyed sustained critical acclaim, although *Glory Trail* did receive recognition as the best nonfiction book of 1956.

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