

50 YEARS AGO...

In the November 1940 issue of the I.H. Review (Vol. XVII, No. 2, p. 48), Captain G.S. BRYAN (U.S. Navy) reported on a mysterious feature situated in the North Pacific Ocean. Here are some extracts of this report:

"LOS JARDINES (E.D.)

For over 400 years navigational charts of the North Pacific Ocean have shown a small island in latitude 21°-40' N., longitude 151°-35' E., with the designation 'Los Jardines', (E.D.), the symbol 'E.D.', as all navigators know, indicating 'Existence Doubtful'.

As implied by this description, the existence of this island has been shrouded in mystery. It has been well established in recent years that there is no island within over 200 miles of the position given. However, the search for this island resulted in the discovery of a feature of the ocean's bottom which will at least serve to revive the legends of the disappearance beneath the sea of former islands similar to that of the fabled continents of Atlantis and Mu.

In 1529, Alvaro de Saavedra reported the discovery of two small islands in a position generally placed about 375 miles northeast of the Marianas Islands. He gave to these the name *Los Buenos Jardines*. Several days were spent here and mention was made that the natives were very friendly. About 14 years later Villalobos reported sighting in the same general location a small group of islands which he also called *Los Jardines*. It seems probable that he considered that this was the same group as that reported by Saavedra. The location of these groups was given as between latitude 21° and 22° North and in longitude 153° East.

Nothing further was heard of Los Jardines for almost 250 years. In 1788 Captain MARSHALL (for whom the Marshall Islands were named), in the 'Scarborough' reported the sighting of two small islands in latitude 21°-40' N., longitude 151°-35' E.

A whaler later reported them in latitude 20°-50' N., longitude 151°-40' E.

In 1933 the 'Ramapo' conducted an organized search for Los Jardines, spending two days in covering the area thoroughly. No semblance of land was sighted, but the development by the sonic sounding gear of the contour of the ocean bottom in that locality resulted in the discovery of a remarkable submarine formation. From surrounding depths of 3,000 to 3,200 fathoms a submarine mountain about 20 miles in diameter rises abruptly to a height of 2,000 fathoms above the ocean floor and terminates in two small peaks about 8 miles apart. The highest peak is 1/120 fathoms below the surface.

It will be noted that the latitude and longitude, as given by Captain MARSHALL, are only a few miles from the northernmost of the two peaks, giving a position remarkably close and well within the limits of accuracy of navigation of that time.

Did Los Jardines ever exist and did Saavedra, Villalobos, Marshall, and the whaler actually sight them? Or did they actually sight Marcus Island and all of the discoverers make the same error in fixing the position — an error of over 200 miles? Was there actually a Los Jardines Island in the position indicated which afterwards disappeared beneath the sea due to some cataclysm of nature.

Los Jardines is no longer shown on charts issued by the Hydrographic Office as we know that there is a prominent submarine mountain in the position formerly assigned it. We can only speculate regarding any connection between the two features. After all is said about all that we ever will know definitely about Los Jardines may be summed up by the two letters 'E.D.'"

The IHB has checked that no seamount or other feature name is shown in this geographic position either in BP-0008 or in the U.S. Gazetteer (Ed. 1981). Two seamounts are shown in the Japanese chart INT 510 at this position (21°40'N — 151°35'E) but none of them has a name.

