

Appeal of mountains beckons him westward

By SUSAN TAUBER

tains in his second book, "A Tiny Bit of God's Creation."

HE WROTE ABOUT the mountain's heritage — about the plants and wild life living there, about the men and women who lost their lives searching for gold mines and protecting their wilderness homes.

Dahlmann, a tall, lanky, man, wrote in detail about the trail rides he's led as a guide into the mountains for the American Forestry Association.

In his book, he described his impression when he took his first glance at Superstition Mountains, near Apache Junction, Ariz.

"From that hour, until this day 25 years later, I have been entranced and intrigued with one of the most interesting women of my life," Dahlmann wrote. "She is the mighty Superstition, beloved by me, yet unlikely unto a woman, I sometimes do not understand her moods and her changing whims, but perhaps with only two exceptions, my mother and my wife, have I found more peace, understanding and solitude in the arms of my mighty Superstition."

Dahlmann has always enjoyed writing.

"I've always written poetry and short stories. Writing is a hobby for me," he said.

The author's first book, "Wandering," is a collection of his writings.

Both of his books are in the Avon Township Public Library, 210 W. University.

WHILE SEATED in his "retirement" home in Rochester, Dahlmann talked about how he became interested in the West.

"I was born in Rochester to a pioneer family. Our house was on the southeast corner of Main and Second streets. My family moved down to Rochester Greenhouse on East Third. That was my dad's business. His name was Frank Dahlmann," said the former Rochester city councilman.

"My dad was the one who really got me interested in the West. He had a Model-T Ford. When I was 17, he built a covered wagon on the back and my family took a trip. We stayed in the southern part of the West in the winter and the northern part in the summer.

We went of Canadian northwest, to the Calgary stampede. We even stayed at in Indian incampment. I had all of this bred into me as a youngster," Dahlmann said.

When he and his wife were first married, they used to talk about taking a trip across the states in a covered wagon.

"But we were too poor. So we spent hours reading the Sears catalogue, picking out things we wanted to buy for our travels," he recalled.

When Dahlmann is in Rochester, which isn't for many months of the year, he gardens, works on two books he's currently writing, visits with his son Jerry and his five children — lives a relaxed, easy-going life.

WHEN HE and Mrs. Dahlmann are

at their home in Mesa, Ariz., life is different.

"It's so dry out on the desert," he said. "Rattlesnakes come up to the front door."

Out West, Dahlmann is involved with the Superstition Mountains. He serves as a guide on different expeditions, days at a time, for trips sponsored by America Forestry Association.

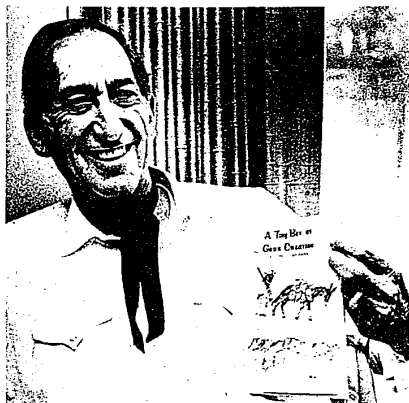
"I'm the one who promoted the trail-rides with AFA through Washington, D.C.," he said.

One of the trips Dahlmann was on is recorded with pictures and text in the National Geographic Society book, "Wilderness USA."

He's quoted as saying: "I've ridden backcountry from Alaska to Mexico and I'm here to tell you this is one of the meanest and driest of them all. But there's something about these mountains that pulls like a magnet on people. They keep coming back and I'm no exception."

Dahlmann also spends hours talking to men and women who are part of the heritage of the mountains.

Ted DeGrazia, a famed Western artist, is one of Dahlmann's friends. They met 18 years ago during the of a movie starring Roderick Crawford.



John Dahlmann and artist-friend Ted DeGrazia combined their talents for the book, "A Tiny Bit of God's Creation." They did it out of their love for the Superstition Mountains in Arizona, they said. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

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