

Shoshone Museum Reader

Produced for our Members by the Shoshone Museum Assn.

shoshonemuseum.org

Spring 2025

Shoshone Museum Association

P.O. Box 38

Shoshone, CA 92384

760 852-4524

DELIGHTFUL WINTER PROGRAM

Death Valley Unified School District

DEATH VALLEY DOCTORS

(part 1 of 2)



Vance Williams Collection

Riley Shrum, MD (right) with nurses Mrs M. Sevy and Mrs Laura Brown and intern John Lange in front of the Medical Clinic at Death Valley Junction (1934)

Getting medical care was always an issue in remote frontier areas, especially in cases of an emergency. The Shoshone Museum building was said to have been a hospital in Greenwater, CA, during the copper boom of 1906-9.

In 1909 Shotgun Kitty Tubb (1885-1957) delivered an infant prematurely at Death Valley Junction (DVJ), CA. No medical care was available, so she kept the baby in a shoebox and fed it with a dropper. The boy barely survived, had health problems all his life, and died at the age of 32 in 1941.



The first mention of medical service at DVJ was in 1914 when Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad (TTRR) company records indicate that Dr. Robert Richard Ronan (1882-1943), a Los Angeles-based physician, was paid \$40 a month as a retainer. His father, Timothy Ronan, was a blacksmith who invented an improved mousetrap! His

younger sister, Kathryn Ronan (1885-1977), later became the second manager of the Furnace Creek Inn. Ronan's medical training was at the Los Angeles Medical College, which was the medical department of the University of Southern California. He graduated in 1912 and served as a surgeon in France during World War I. Evidently there was no doctor at DVJ after Ronan, because during the influenza pandemic of 1918, a death occurred at DVJ, the nearest doctor being 120 miles away.

The TTRR had reached DVJ in 1907, primarily to transport borax from the mines of the Pacific Coast Borax Company

(continued on page 2)

The students of Death Valley Academy in Shoshone presented a charming program of skits and songs that was thoroughly enjoyed by parents and community members.



Santa Claus (Paul Postel) and Principal Craig Hill

The program included a variety of entertaining skits and songs, cleverly presented with props that the students made, and original plays written by the students themselves.

Superintendent Jim Copeland, Principal Craig Hill, and Teacher Casandra Connor, assisted by classroom aides Maria Gomez and Kit Marty, did an amazing job of organizing this forum for the students to showcase their creativity. The performance was followed by a social gathering with delicious refreshments.

ROBERT DAHARSH

Our California Highway Patrol Officer

Originally from Bakersfield, CA, Robert was enthralled as a teenager with his aunt's photographs of her trip to Death Valley and Scotty's Castle. After



serving four years in the US Air Force, he enrolled in college majoring in criminal justice and worked full time as a campus security guard. A friend encouraged him to join the California Highway Patrol (CHP). At the end of his training, he was pleased to see that a position was available in Death Valley. He spent 4 years living with his wife, Michele, and their 2 children in Furnace Creek before moving to our area. He has enjoyed his work with CHP because he likes the community here and the job allows him to help people in need. He has had many adventures during his career, including driving more than one million miles in Death Valley! Robert works closely with our Inyo County Sheriff's deputies, and they provide backup for each other as needed.

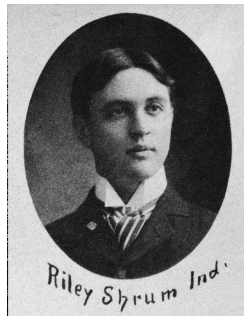
MUSEUM HOURS

Open daily from 9 am to 3 pm

The mission of the Shoshone Museum Association is to tell the unique story of the Amargosa region and to preserve its cultural and natural history

DEATH VALLEY DOCTORS continued from page 1)

(PCBC). Starting in 1923 most of the present buildings at DVJ were constructed to accommodate employees of the TTRR and the PCBC. They later served as a hotel when mining operations moved south to Boron, CA. A doctor's residence and hospital were constructed at that time.



University of Louisville
School of Medicine, 1898

Riley Shrum, MD, (1874-1953) came to DVJ in 1934. He was born 5th in a family of at least 8 children in Salem, IN. His father was a brickmason from Virginia. He attended medical school at the University of Louisville, KY, graduating in 1898. In 1900 he married Elizabeth A. King, a nurse also from Indiana, and in 1904 their daughter was born. His first medical practice was located in Bedford, IN, where he was also the city health officer and was

affiliated with a tuberculosis sanatorium in Ft. Wayne, IN.

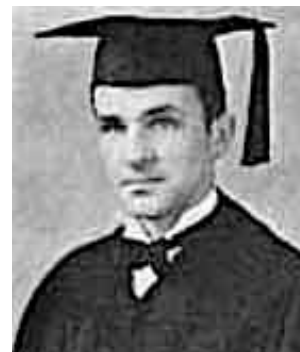
Shrum left Indiana in 1909 and established a general practice in Mayer, AZ (shortly before the town's founder tripped and fatally shot himself!). In 1915 Shrum's car skidded and fell 60 feet down an embankment, resulting in a compound fracture of a leg and broken ribs and thumb. He was hospitalized for several months in Prescott, AZ, and later in Chicago, IL. By 1918 he had moved to Jerome, AZ. In 1921 he obtained a California medical license and moved to Huntington Park, CA. In 1925 he joined the staff of the Weimar Joint Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Sacramento, CA, but was back in Huntington Park by 1928. By 1931 he was in Barstow, CA, where he organized a clinic to administer diphtheria shots to children and provide first aid classes for the general public. He was also appointed the Barstow, CA, district food inspector, and his first assignment was to inspect a new slaughterhouse.

When Shrum arrived at DVJ in 1934, the facility was being operated as the Amargosa Hotel, and the TTRR was transporting only supplies and tourists. His wife served as one of the nurses in the clinic. His practice was varied and consisted of caring for the railroad workers, visitors, and local residents. He traveled to accidents on the highways and in the mines. He stabilized a child who had ingested kerosene and the victim of a stabbing before transferring

them to hospitals in Tonopah and Las Vegas, NV. He cared for Shoshone resident Joe Volmer at DVJ after a serious accident in 1937 and during Joe's final illness and death at age 80 the following year.

Shrum was known for his community engagement. He anonymously published a periodic column in the Inyo and San Bernardino newspapers under the pseudonym Death Valley Rambler. He reported the comings and goings of notable visitors and the details of local life, such as who had a new hairdo or a new baby! He was an avid photographer and, starting in 1937, showed his home movies at Furnace Creek and later Corkhill Hall at DVJ.

In 1940 his wife died unexpectedly, and he retired. He moved to the Physicians Home in Los Angeles where he died in 1953.



Marquette University, 1933

In 1942 an article appeared in the Inyo Independent newspaper stating that Dr. Walter W. R. Schatz (1901-85) was operating a clinic twice weekly at both DVJ and Furnace Creek. Later that year, all services at Death

Valley were suspended until 1945 because of World War II.

Schatz was from Racine, WI, and graduated from Marquette University School of Medicine in 1936. He had married Dorothea Margaret Moon in 1930, and their daughter was born in 1938. In 1937 he obtained a California medical license and was in private practice in Pasadena and Ontario, CA. By 1942 his World War II draft registration stated that his practice was located at Furnace Creek in Death Valley. By the end of that year, he was serving as a Lt. Colonel in Europe until 1946. He and Dorothea divorced, and he moved back to Wisconsin. From 1954 to 1958 he was again in the military during the Korean War. He was working at the state hospital in Modesto, CA, beginning in 1958, providing psychiatric and medical care until at least 1970. He died in 1985 and is buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA.

(more Death Valley Doctors in the next newsletter)

Echoes from the Archives

by Susan Sorrells



The fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025 has been one of the busiest seasons in the Amargosa that residents have experienced for years, and the Shoshone Museum was the hub of this activity. The museum has become known in the surrounding communities, as well as in cities farther away such as Las Vegas and Los Angeles, as a place to learn about the history of the area and as a source of important information about the businesses and the services offered while visiting. The museum also offers information about the natural, historical and cultural treasures found in the area. Furthermore, it offers guidance on how to enjoy responsibly this delicate desert environment while ensuring its preservation. The gift shop, including the book section featuring books on the Amargosa, has expanded its offerings, so many locals, including those from Pahrump and Death Valley, stop in to see what new gifts are for sale. The staff is so knowledgeable and engaging that the many local visitors just stop by to hear the local news and to share information. Since the Death Valley and the Amargosa no longer has a Chamber of Commerce these services are very important to our small communities and to our visitors.



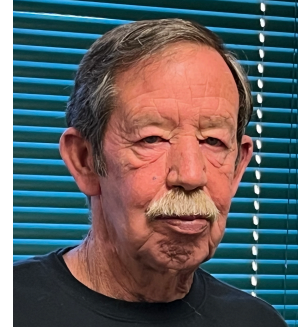
We are excited to introduce our wonderful student intern, a Junior from Death Valley Academy, Natalia Quintero Herrera of Charleston View. She came to us through the school internship program.

During her year and a half at the museum, she has worked on various projects, including cataloging new accessions, managing items for sale, and developing new exhibits—she has been a great help to us! Natalia has also been learning valuable skills like data entry, cash management, archiving, and inventory control. She has lived in the area since she was 11-years-old. She plans to go to nursing school after graduation and we are certain she will make a terrific nurse!

NEW FIRE CHIEF BILL LUTZE

by Robin Flinchum,
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD)

The Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD) is proud to announce that retired Inyo County Sheriff William Lutze is now our fire chief. After serving 45 years with the Inyo County Sheriff's Office (ICSO), 12 of those as sheriff, Lutze retired in 2018. While he enjoyed his retirement in Pahrump, traveling, spending time with family, and consulting part time with the ICSO, he heard about SIFPD's recent struggles to retain a chief. As a law enforcement officer, he was already familiar with SIFPD and its unique challenges. He also has training in firefighting and EMS and decades of hard-earned wisdom. Lutze has lived in Inyo County since he was a teenager and graduated from Death Valley Academy in Shoshone in 1973, making him a bona fide hometown hero even before he agreed to take on the job of fire chief.



Because of his experience navigating funding issues for the ICSO, Chief Lutze is the ideal person to steer SIFPD through a federally funded, county-administered active grant project to build two new fire stations, one in Tecopa and one in Charleston View, and to help solve the volunteer recruitment and retention issues facing the district. Plus, he's just a really good guy. Welcome Chief Lutze, we couldn't be happier to have you on board!

Our annual fundraiser in November was a tremendous success. Now called TecopaFest!, the event featured live music, interactive arts, vendors, and really good food. With funding from a Community Projects Support Program grant through Inyo County, we were able to hold the biggest, best-attended event yet. Publicity by our honorary member Sarah Jane Woodall, AKA Wonderhussy, brought in lots of guests. The actual event was made possible by the hardworking volunteer planning committee, including Eliza Woodall, Amy Noel, Paul Barnes, Kirsten Barrett, Mike Jerry, Toni Kizzia, Larry Levy, Angie Sinhoui, Danny Macbrohn, Billy Eichenbaum, Colette Zelwer, Cameron Mayer, Ross of Tecopa Mines, Marge Cawelti, Marlys Skarry, and many, many more community-minded friends.

Upcoming Events

Apr 19 - Dec *Shoshone Museum Raffle, call or stop in for information
 Tecopa Artists Group Gallery: Art As Spiritual Practice, through Fall 2025, Tecopa Hot Springs Resort
 Live music on stage Fri and Sat evenings, sunset - 10 pm weather permitting, Tecopa Hot Springs Resort

Ongoing

Death Valley Natl Park events: <www.nps.gov/deva>
 Get Outdoors Nevada volunteer opportunities <www.getoutdoorsnevada.org>
 Road Scholar Program, Death Valley Natl Park <www.dvnha.org/programs-events/road-scholar>
 Ash Meadows Natl Wildlife Refuge events information <adrienne_mcgill@fws.gov>
 Tecopa Hot Springs Campground (music, hikes, and more) <<http://www.tecopahotspringscampground.com/>>

*Please contact the Shoshone Museum for more information
shoshonemuseum@gmail.com 760 852-4524

Shoshone Museum Association Membership Form

(Annual Dues)

Individual	\$25	Name: _____
Family	\$35	Mailing address: _____
Business	\$50	_____
Nonprofit	\$35	_____
Mtn Lion	\$100	Email: _____
Mammoth	\$500	Donation: \$ _____
Senior	\$15	Amount enclosed: \$ _____
Student	\$15	New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>

Make checks payable to Shoshone Museum Association
 Mail to: P.O. Box 38, Shoshone, CA 92384 or
 pay by phone using VISA or Master Card 760 852 4524



Please share this newsletter
 --Reuse then Recycle



The Shoshone Museum Association
 P.O. Box 38, Shoshone, CA 92384
 760 852-4524