

Shoshone Museum Reader

Produced for our Members by the Shoshone Museum Assn.

Summer 2011

Shoshone Museum Association

P.O. Box 38

Shoshone, CA 92384

(760) 852-4524



"If these walls could talk"

a series on the historic buildings of Shoshone

CROWBAR CAFE & SALOON

Constructed about 1935, the Crowbar is the oldest eating establishment in the area. The original building was just the cafe with a screened in area to the south, which was used largely for storage at that time.

George Ross remembers that the chairs in the cafe had clips on the back of the seats to hold the hats of the gentlemen!

In the late 1940s, the porch was enclosed and converted to a saloon and the building was enlarged. The bar was quite a lively place when mining was active here. There was poker table and a pool table in

NEW HOME FOR ENDANGERED DESERT TORTOISES

Shoshone's five desert tortoises are getting ready for a move into a new home. Presently they are residing within the foundation of the old Sorrells home, which was taken down in the 1980s when the foundation gave way. Their new home is planned to be behind the Old Timers Inn and will be a proper desert habitat.

The tortoises are 39 years old and were hatched from eggs by Charles Sorrells in 1972. All five are male so there have been no new tortoises!

Desert tortoises are endangered and it is illegal to capture or harm them. They hibernate during the winter in deep burrows which also provide a refuge from the hot summer sun.



One of Shoshone's desert tortoises



Crowbar about 1947 after the bar was enclosed



Waitress Celesta Lisle Lowe with her cousin, DeLoy Fairbanks



Cafe about 1935 with screen porch where bar would later be

the back. Restrooms were added later in back of the building.

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The proprietor, Senator Charles Brown, was apparently a skilled pool player. He was, however, less skilled at mixing fancy drinks. When he was pressed into bar tending duties, patrons often had to settle for a "Coke High."

The foot railing around the bar is a piece of old Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad (T&TRR) track. A local artist by the name of Jill Thacker welded the names of the nearby mines on the top of the railing.

The interior of the cafe and the bar are decorated with many historic photographs and artifacts including pictures of all four of the children of Senator Charles and Stella Brown.

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

At the recent Family Science Festival held at Tecopa Francis Elementary School in Tecopa, students and their families had an opportunity to experience a room full of exciting hands-on science activities. The festival was put on by the Roadside Heritage Project, a program of Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education, a non-profit organization in Bishop. Both the festival, which was created by Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley, and the audio program, Exploring Extreme Environments, promote informal science learning and were funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Echoes from the Archives

by Susan Sorrells
Museum Board President

The mission of the Shoshone Museum Association is to tell the unique story of the Amargosa region and to preserve its culture and natural history, and no one is more qualified to tell this story than Ethel Rook Messer. Ethel's mother, Stella Proctor Rook, an important pioneer of the Mojave Desert, met her husband, Carl Rook, while he was building the Arrowhead highway, later known as I-15. After their marriage Carl began working for the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad. They moved to Shoshone in 1937, and Carl constructed a home for his family out of railroad ties. Carl became known as "the little giant," and was the foreman for the Inyo County Road Department for thirty years. Stella also was well known throughout the region for her many talents. They both were chosen to be Citizen of the Year by the residents of the Amargosa region.

Ethel has followed the footsteps of her parents and has been an invaluable community member. She and her husband, Luvon Messer, also were chosen to be Citizen of the Year, and have left their
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Summer Hours

closed Tues; open 9am-3pm

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imprint on every aspect of our community. When Ethel retired from the Death Valley Unified School District she agreed to be a staff person for the Shoshone Museum Association, and her presence has been invaluable. Her knowledge of the region and its people, her computer and bookkeeping skills, and her natural rapport with visitors has taken the museum to a higher level. We are hoping, with her expertise, to create a new exhibit that will display the fascinating



Remnants of the old narrow gauge track

TRACES OF SHOSHONE'S HISTORIC PAST

In the early 1920s a narrow gauge short line was run from the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad main line to the Associated Oil clay mine west of town. This track was taken up in the 1940s and it was thought that time has erased all signs of it. Amazingly, vestiges of the old line have recently been discovered, showing exactly where the old track ran.



Ethel Rook Messer
in front of
Women's History
Exhibit featuring
her mother,
Stella Rook

Upcoming Events

Shoshone Museum Association Membership Form

Annual Membership Dues
(Please circle one)

Individual \$15.

Family \$25.

Business/Nonprofit \$50.

Cougar \$100.

Mammoth \$500.

Building Fund _____

Name: _____ Date _____

Mailing address: _____

Email _____@_____

Returning Member ___ New Member ___

Amount enclosed _____

We are grateful for your contributions.
This is your museum and we hope to
make you proud to be a member.

Make checks payable to: Shoshone Museum Association.
Mail to: P.O. Box 38, Shoshone, CA 92384
or Pay by phone using your Visa or Master Card! 760-852-4524

- Jun 4 Let's Explore: After Dark! - Ash Meadows
- Jun 11 Michael Voegele, Pahrump Museum
- Jun 15 "Summer Fun" Local Artists' Fine Art
Exhibit at the Tecopa Art Gallery
(through September, 4-9 pm)
- Jul 23 Let's Explore: 115 degrees Fahrenheit
- Ash Meadows
- Sep 3-4 Blues & BBQ with Moody Scott
- Tecopa Hot Springs Resort
- Sep 10 Let's Explore: Snakes & Lizards!
- Ash Meadows
- Oct 8 Let's Explore: Wild Birds! - Ash Meadows
- Oct 28 **OLD WEST DAYS*** (until Sun 30 Oct)
- Nov 4-6 DVNHA History Conference - Beatty
- Nov 19 Let's Explore: Quest for Bighorn Sheep!
- Ash Meadows
- Dec 10 Let's Explore: Backcountry Expedition!
- Ash Meadows

please call the Shoshone Museum
for more information 760 852-4524
- (*Shoshone Museum events)

The Shoshone Museum Association
P.O. Box 38, Shoshone, CA 92384
(760) 852-4524 shoshonemus@veawb.coop