

Shoshone Museum Reader

Produced for our Members by the Shoshone Museum Assn.

Fall 2015



A view of Ryan looking northwest from the Upper Biddy McCarty Mine

The Story of Ryan - Death Valley's Best-Preserved Mining Camp

Jessica L.K. Smith, Ph.D.

Possibly one of the best-preserved western mining camps, Ryan, California, sits perched above Death Valley on the west side of the Funeral Mountains. U.S. Borax (aka Pacific Coast Borax) had an established presence in the Death Valley region at sites like Harmony Borax, Monte Blanco, and the Lila C ("old" Ryan) by the time it began to focus on mining borax from the Hillside Group of claims in eastern Death Valley in 1914. The company created the camp of Ryan (originally called Devar, then "new" Ryan) as a base of operations for mining in the area. The Hillside Group of mines were connected to Ryan via a 24-inch-gauge railroad, called the Baby Gage; Ryan was in turn connected to the processing center at Death Valley Junction and the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad by the 20-mile-long, 36-inch-gauge Death Valley Railroad. By 1915, Ryan contained 26 dwellings, a boarding house with a dining hall and kitchen, a store, and a lighting plant in addition to ore bins, water storage structures, a corral, and miscellaneous outbuildings.

The 1920s were a period of much growth and activity at Ryan. Much of the camp underwent restructuring with the addition of two large miners' bunkhouses, a schoolhouse, a recreation hall, and state-of-the-art management living quarters. Most of this construction was carried out under the direction of the much beloved camp superintendent, Major Julian Boyd, an Australian World War I veteran. He was kind, yet firm, lowering the workweek to six days instead of seven, but

(continued on page 2)

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

OLD WEST DAYS HISTORY TALKS

Mammoth Room - Shoshone Museum
Moderator: George Ross

Friday 30 October

5:30- 7:30 pm - RECEPTION
(Light refreshments)

6:30 - **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Death Valley Red Light Women
Robin Flinchum

Saturday 31 October

2:00 pm Welcome & Presentations
Matt Kingsley,
Inyo County 5th District Supervisor

TOPICS

The Story of Ryan

Jack Lisle, Shoshone Pioneer

The Short Cut That Wasn't
Short: Death Valley 49ers

Growing up in the Shoshone-
Tecopa Area

SATURDAY SPEAKERS

Jessica Smith

Lisle Lowe

Cliff Walker

Annette Gill Dubuc

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Mary King, Shoshone Museum curator, is looking for volunteers to help catalog, inventory, and perform various other jobs for the museum.

(discover@shoshonemuseum.com 760 852-4524)

MUSEUM HOURS

Open daily (except Tues) 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

Never Too Late for Some Good News!

George Ross, long-time museum volunteer and former board member, just received some exciting news 24 years after the fact! Nonetheless, he is excited to share it with everyone.

In 1991, his then 25-year-old granddaughter, Melody Casner, won the first Miss Native American Pageant held in Oklahoma City that year. As part of the competition, she researched her Southern Paiute roots and gave a speech about her heritage. Thanks George, we're all very proud of her!



The Hutchinson News, Mar 29, 1991

Fall Activities in Death Valley

Geneil White
Development Coordinator, DVNHA

The Death Valley Natural History Association has some interesting activities this fall. The 10th Death Valley History Conference will be held Nov 6-8th at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. Sunday field trips will be announced shortly.

DVNHA is also a Road Scholar program provider, offering multi-day hikes for active adults in Death Valley.

Other fundraising activities include the new Scotty's Castle Adopt-a-Room program and the Death Valley Recreation Outdoors Campaign for Kids through Study (R.O.C.K.S.) program, providing youth with an opportunity to learn and experience nature in DVNP.

For more information about these and other programs, please visit: dvnha.org.

(continued from page 1)

The Story of the Ryan Mining Camp

continuing the prohibition of alcohol consumption within the camp.

In 1927, U.S. Borax shifted its focus from the Hillside Group to the Kramer deposit at Boron. Seeing the rise in Death Valley tourism, U.S. Borax seized the opportunity to use Ryan for tourist accommodations and remodeled the camp into the Death Valley View Hotel, which operated full time until 1930 and then on a limited basis until the 1950s. U.S. Borax eventually placed Ryan on "care and maintenance" status and employed several individuals as caretakers of the Ryan property over the years.

In 2013, after considering the best means to ensure the preservation of Ryan, U.S. Borax (now a subsidiary of Rio Tinto Minerals) donated Ryan, its surrounding land, and an endowment to a non-profit group--the Death Valley Conservancy (DVC). The DVC's approach to Ryan is to "preserve what is left and restore where possible" with a long-term goal of using the restored camp to support and facilitate education and research in the Death Valley region.

While many people are familiar with the history of Ryan, some lesser-known facts about Ryan include:

A church from Rhyolite was transported to Ryan by rail in 1918 and, with the addition of a stage and dressing rooms, became the Ryan recreation hall.

Ryan contains a hospital with one room designated as an "operating room" in building plans. However, Ryan did not have a resident doctor; instead, a full-time nurse handled small medical emergencies.

Ryan had its own ammonia ice plant to enable the preservation of perishable foods.

Much of Ryan's workforce during the summer months included Mexicans, Koreans, and Pacific Islanders.

Ansel Adams photographed Ryan's weathervane in the 1950s.

The opening scene of the film *Spartacus* (1960), starring Kirk Douglas, was filmed at Ryan, and remnants of the set are still visible today.

Ryan is private property, and trespassing is strictly prohibited. However, the DVC offers several public tours during the spring and fall. For information on tours and to keep updated on preservation projects, visit the Ryan Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ryancampdv.



About the Author: Jessica L.K. Smith, Ph.D., is Director of Archaeology for the Death Valley Conservancy and is in the process of nominating Ryan to the National Register of Historic Places. She lives full time at Ryan with her husband and three children.

Echoes from the Archives

by Susan Sorrells



After a long, hot summer, fall is a time when the community reunites to plan for the busy tourist season. The museum is no exception. Our first event was a book launch of Red Light Women of Death Valley, by Robin Flinchum, on October 2, 2015. This fascinating book will be available at many venues in the Shoshone-Tecopa area as well as at other outlets. For more information, contact the Shoshone Museum.

We are also planning a gala Old West Days celebration in Shoshone on October 30, October 31, and November 1. In addition to the history talks, our curator, Mary Burke King, will be available to scan historical photos and other documents of the area that our visitors bring with them to the event. In the past these contributions have been crucial in interpreting the complex but fascinating history of the Shoshone-Tecopa area.

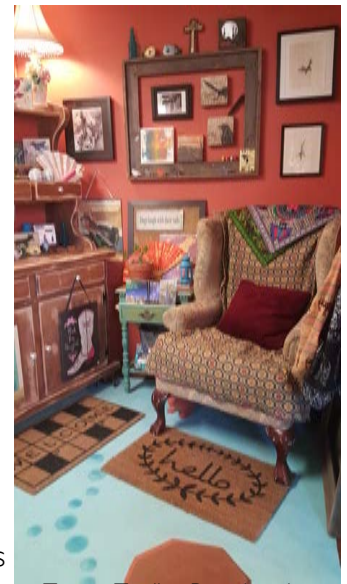
In addition to regular activities such as the mesquite-smoked, deep-pit barbeque; music and dancing in the Crowbar patio; bird walks; and craft show, there will be a Fairbanks Family Reunion and a Death Valley Alumni Reunion.

This winter and spring the Shoshone Museum Association is planning several historical talks on the area as well as several exhibits by local artists. In addition, Shoshone Village will be offering free bird walks in the Shoshone Wetlands and tours of the Dublin Gulch Historical District. Tecopa Hot Springs Campground and Pools will be presenting Songs and Stories around the Campfire every Saturday night, and the Tecopa Hot Springs Resort also will be offering many activities, including art exhibits at their gallery. Come visit our area and stay awhile. It will be a visit replete with discovery and adventure!

New Faces at Tecopa Hot Springs Campground & Pools (Hurlbut-Rook County Park) in Tecopa

Nancy Good

Tecopa, California, is seeing a growth spurt unlike those of recent (or not-so-recent) memory. The newest addition, Tecopa Trading Post, is located at the Tecopa Hot Springs Campground & Pools (county park). After taking over the property from Inyo County in January of this year, Ryan Thomas, Lara Murray, Paul Barnes, and Nancy Good have implemented an aggressive improvement plan for this desert gem. Included in this plan is meeting the needs of residents and visitors for groceries and gifts, precluding their having to make a 50-mile trip to Pahrump, NV. Following a 4-month remodel by Nancy, the former camp store/office space has been transformed from institutional beige and boring to warm and whimsical in both colors and atmosphere. Chairs for sitting and visiting are part of the homey feel. And as a nod to the importance of the hot springs, the floor is a bubbling surprise of blues and oranges. From groceries to camping gear, gifts to clothing, jewelry to original local art, natural wonders, and more, there is something for everyone!



Tecopa Trading Post interior

Dorothy Frederick



Our good friend and long-time Shoshone Museum Associate, Dorothy "Dort" Frederick, passed away September 19, 2015. We will miss her greatly!

Shoshone Museum Association Membership Form

(Annual Dues)

Individual \$25 Name: _____
 Family \$35 Mailing address: _____
 Business \$50 _____
 Nonprofit \$35 _____
 Mtn Lion \$100 Email: _____
 Mammoth \$500 Amount enclosed: \$ _____
 Senior \$15 Donation: \$ _____
 Student \$15 New ☐ Renewal ☐

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

Upcoming Events

- Oct 3 Moody Scott Concert (Tecopa Hot Springs Resort)
- Oct 15 Death Valley Chamber of Commerce Mixer
- Oct 16 Star Gazing at Ash Meadows
- Oct 17 Junior Refuge Ranger Day at Ash Meadows
- Oct 24 Get Outdoors Nevada, Sunset Park
- Oct 30 - Old West Days in Shoshone &
 Nov 1 *Old West Days History Talks
- Nov 6-7 DVNHA History Conference, Death Valley Natl Park
 Field Trips on Nov 8 (for info visit dvnha.org)
- Nov 6-8 Las Vegas Jam Band Society (Tecopa Hot Spr Resort)
- Nov 14 Fire Dept Fundraiser (Tecopa Hot Springs Resort)
- Ongoing Art Show (Thru Jan 15; Tecopa Hot Springs Resort)
 Get Outdoors Nevada volunteer opportunities
 <www.getoutdoorsnevada.org>
 Road Scholar Program, Death Valley
 <www.dvnha.org/programs-events/road-scholar>
 Boardwalk Tours at Ash Meadows (Oct - Dec)
 (for more info contact Benjamin_Jurand@fws.gov)

Please contact the Shoshone Museum for more information
 discover@shoshonemuseum.com 760 852-4524
 (* Shoshone Museum events)

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