

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

# Shoshone Museum Reader

*Produced for our Members by the Shoshone Museum Assn.*

Fall 2018



Laurie Naiman photograph

George Ross, with the ever-present cup of coffee, in the Crowbar Café

## GEORGE ROSS and his Legacy

George Ross was born December 26, 1925, in Shoshone, CA, and lived most of his life in the Shoshone-Tecopa area. George's father was a Hungarian miner and his mother, Julia Weed Ross, was a Native American. Julia's parents, Tom and Nellie Weed, were Southern Paiutes from Manse, NV, who moved to Shoshone in the early 1900s. After a tragic fire in 1930 that killed Tom and Nellie, Julia and her family moved to the oldest house in Shoshone (built by James Nelson Metbury in the 1880s).

While attending school in Shoshone, George did odd jobs for Senator Charles Brown, cutting wood and keeping the tourist cabins supplied with firewood. He was sent to the Stewart Indian School in Carson City, NV, but he missed his home and family and managed to run away on more than one occasion. He also washed cars, built roads, and painted buildings. In 1942 he got a job taking up the rails of the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad—he was paid 85 cents an hour!

In April 1944 George was drafted into the Army and did his basic training at Camp Roberts near Paso Robles, CA. He then went to Germany and fought in the Battle of the Bulge and the Ruhr Pocket Battle (which effectively ended the Nazi war effort). After the German surrender, he was sent to Japan and was among those who entered Tokyo after Japan surrendered.

(continued on page 2)

## OLD WEST DAYS

Mammoth Room - Shoshone Museum

Reception 5:30 - 7:30

6:00 pm Welcome & Presentations

**Robin Flinchum**

### Keynote Speakers

**Mike Reynolds**

Superintendent,

Death Valley National Park

**GEORGE ROSS**

and his Legacy

by

**Susan Sorrells**

**Ethel Messer**

**\*\*\*Saturday 3 November\*\*\***

1:00 **Dad & Celestia Fairbanks**

by Pat Schoffstall

1:30 **Deke Lowe**

by Lyle Lowe

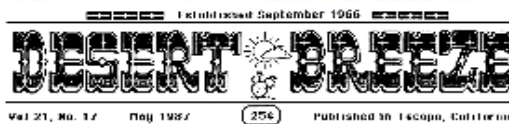
2:30 **Celestia Fairbanks**

by Jenny Larkin

3:00 **Best of Fairbanks**

**Photo Albums**

by Jim & Vance Gilliam



### OLD ISSUES OF DESERT BREEZE SOUGHT BY SHOSHONE MUSEUM

The Shoshone museum is seeking copies of the old Desert Breeze newsletter published from 1966 to 1987. It was typed and mimeographed by Leland Gritzner in Tecopa. We have copies of some issues, but would like to complete the set. We will photocopy the originals and return them to you (or if you prefer, send us the photocopies). The newsletter is a valuable local history resource, containing local gossip, obituaries, and other articles of general interest.

## 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*

(continued from page 1)

In 1946 he married Edith Nellie Drake, and they had 3 children—George Allen (who tragically died at age 2 months), Stephen Andrew (1947), and Dixie Lee (1950). He and Edith divorced, and he married Jewell Anderson. Although this marriage also did not last, he remained close to Jewell's daughter, Judy Williams. In 1984 he married Lois Elizabeth Ross, and they lived together in southern California and Tecopa until her death in 1997.

Trained as a heavy equipment operator, George worked for the Inyo County Road Department and also as an ore truck driver and a hard-rock miner in many of the local talc mines and in Idaho.

George was always active in community affairs and in the preservation and recording of local history. In 1949, WWI veterans Jim Francis and Harry Rosenberg, together with WWII veterans George Ross and Danny Fields, organized Amargosa Days in Tecopa (George was awarded a plaque in recognition of his role). In 1987 the event was moved to Shoshone under the sponsorship of the Shoshone Development Company and renamed Old West Days. George was also manager of the local baseball team, the Shoshone Indians. He was the star fast softball pitcher and an excellent outfielder—it was said he could catch anything!

In 2006, with Cynthia Kienitz and Brad Mastin, George cofounded the Tecopa Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association and served as the Chief Trail Tracker and Native American consultant. He often recruited friends and family members on his expeditions to find and map the route of the trail. He and his granddaughter, Ila Ross, attended many of the national meetings, and his knowledge of the past always proved useful.

In 2013 George's oral history was recorded by Robert D. McCracken as part of the Nye County Town History Project. Copies are archived at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and reference copies can be found at Nevada public libraries and the Shoshone Museum. In this oral history, he worked with his old friend Harry Ford of the Pahrump Valley Museum to record Paiute words and phrases. He also coauthored several books about the area (available in the museum).

George was a volunteer and board member of the Shoshone Museum and served as moderator for the annual Shoshone Museum History Talks for the past 15 years. During the Old West Days celebrations, he led tours of the town of Shoshone and the Shoshone Cemetery, which are recorded on DVD and available for sale in the Shoshone Museum (at his request, all proceeds of the sales benefit the museum). George was an avid supporter of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District and each year would offer to donate \$100 if another person would make a matching donation—Matt Kingsley, our 5th District Inyo County Supervisor, always jumped in to be the matching donor! George was a Site Steward for the Bureau of Land Management and made regular visits to local archeological sites to document and report any problems.

After his retirement from mining and road construction, George could often be found in front of the Shoshone Museum where he enjoyed greeting visitors and relating stories from the old days. George loved to sing and play the guitar and was a frequent participant in Tecopa Community Center Variety Shows. He also had a great sense of humor and loved to tell jokes.

We lost an irreplaceable community member when George died this spring at the age of 92 years. He is remembered as a fun-loving, kind, and thoughtful person, always willing to help those in need.



George and granddaughter, Ila Ross, on a BLM Site Steward site visit

## Echoes from the Archives

by Susan Sorrells



When George Ross passed away this spring, the museum, as well as the community, lost one of its most beloved members. George was an invaluable volunteer at the museum, and, among many other things, assisted in presenting events such as speaker nights, art shows, and readings by regional authors. During these events he always insisted there be an abundant array of cold cuts such as ham, turkey, roast beef, and cheese, as well as crackers and bread and all the condiments, for the guests. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee added to the ambience since George loved his cup of joe. And these events were never complete without a cake that celebrated the birthday of a community member. He almost always donated these feasts to the museum and reveled in their careful preparation. The night of the event many attendees came to see George, as well as the planned presentation, because he was so knowledgeable, warm hearted, and entertaining.

But George gave so much more in achieving the mission of the museum of preserving the history of the area. Because he lived the history of the region, he could make it come alive and was the go-to person to clarify clouded information. His interviews and oral history, in addition to documentaries about him, are a gold mine for historians studying the area.

But most of all George was a beloved friend to many in the area, and he is deeply missed!



Mojave School students at the Nye Communities Coalition classroom on the last day of class in 2018

## Tecopa-Shoshone Writers Group

by Robin Flinchum

In late 2017 the Tecopa-Shoshone Writer's Group teamed up with the Shoshone Museum to offer an ongoing lecture series bringing in authors who have shared history, mystery, madness, memoir, fantasy, travel, and more with our audiences.

In July, students of the Mojave School, a week-long creative writing summer workshop held in Pahrump every year by hometown hero Claire Vaye Watkins and her husband Derek Palacios (both critically acclaimed, award-winning writers), held an Open Mic night at the museum. A dozen high school-age students participated and read some of their work to a standing-room-only crowd.

Watkins, author of [Battle Born](#) and [Gold Fame Citrus](#), grew up partly in Tecopa with her parents, Martha and Paul Watkins, who were active in forming and promoting the Death Valley Chamber of Commerce. Martha Watkins was past curator of the Shoshone Museum.

Watkins and Palacios have been holding the Mojave School in Pahrump almost every summer since 2012. Next year, says Watkins, they plan to expand the scope of the school and offer a creative writing workshop for adults in Shoshone at the same time. Look for more exciting announcements about the Mojave School in 2019!

Last season's speakers included mystery writers Megan Edwards ([Full Service Blonde](#)) and H. G. McKinnis ([A Justified Bitch](#)), as well as Rick Quinn, author of [Arizona and New Mexico: 25 Scenic Side Trips](#), and historian Karen Wilkes, who kicked off the series in December with a talk about her book [Trampin' In Pard](#).

This coming season the lineup is set to include Kathy Goss, author of the unusual 'fictional memoir' [Darwoon Dyreez](#), written in a hybrid language the audience will learn during the talk. Other upcoming speakers include: A. D. Hopkins, longtime Nevada journalist and author of the forthcoming novel [The Boys Who Woke Up Early](#), and Daniel Stallings, author of [Sunny Side Up](#) and creator of Master Mystery Productions.

Authors usually read a bit of their work, talk about their creative process, and sometimes share writing exercises with the group. All events are free, with light refreshments served.

To receive notices and reminders about upcoming lectures at the Shoshone Museum, become a member today. You can also add your name to the Writer's Group email list by contacting Robin Flinchum at [rkflinchum@earthlink.net](mailto:rkflinchum@earthlink.net).

### Upcoming Events

- Oct 20 Opening Martin Powell's Birds (3 - 6 pm)  
Tecopa Hot Springs Resort
- Oct 27 Firehouse Fling, Community Center, Tecopa
- Nov 2-4 Old West Days & History Talks\*, Shoshone
- Nov 3 Musicians Levi Chen, John Luttrell, Jacqueline Lennon  
Tecopa Hot Springs Resort
- Nov 16-18 Las Vegas Jam Band Society, Tecopa Takeover IV  
Tecopa Hot Springs Resort
- Feb 16-17 Sierra Club Desert Section Meeting, Shoshone
- Mar 15-17 DV Chamber of Commerce Art Show, Furnace Creek
- 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.dvnh.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/>

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

### Shoshone Museum Association Membership Form

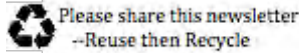
(Annual Dues)

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

Your Amazon purchases can benefit the Shoshone Museum. Sign up for Smile Program at Amazon.com

Eligible for **amazonsmile** donation



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