

Shoshone Museum Reader

Produced for our Members by the Shoshone Museum Assn.

Fall 2008

Shoshone Museum
Association
P.O. Box 38
Shoshone, CA 92384
(760) 852-4524
Editor: Jennifer O. Viereck

The first of new series: If These Walls Could Talk . . .



THE FLOWER BUILDING OF SHOSHONE

By Judy Palmer and George Ross

The "Flower Building" is one of the oldest structures in Shoshone and, like many in the region, was "hand made" by the local people. Not surprisingly, it was the local women who were responsible for initiating its construction. In the late 1930s, a chapter of Woman's Improvement Club was formed in Shoshone and Tecopa. This was a national organization of women, founded in the late 1800s, that worked to improve life in their local communities.¹ The construction of a community hall in Shoshone was the first big project of the Shoshone-Tecopa group. The Death Valley Rambler in the Inyo Register reported that a "barn dance [was held] June 30, 1939 [as a] celebration of the completion of the foundation, and large concrete slab or floor for the hall, which will be built later, step by step, as the necessary funds are accumulated."²

Harry Rosenberg of Tecopa had a cement mixer that was used to mix the concrete.³ The slab was used initially for square dancing⁴ and later for roller skating.⁵ The holes for the wall footing bolts were drilled with hand steel by Sid Smith in the early 1940s.⁶ Heat was supplied by a wood stove which was later replaced by an oil furnace.⁷ Originally called simply the "community hall", the name "Flower Building" was derived from the flowers painted on the sides in 1975 by Ethel Rook Messer, a local artist, and other volunteers.

By 1942, the walls were up and the club sponsored a dance jointly with the American Legion.⁸ A stage was added by 1945.⁹ The building was also used for club meetings¹⁰ — at the 51st meeting (May 2, 1942) the group decided "to do some sewing for the war." Public meetings were also held there, including the Tire and Sugar Rationing Board.¹¹ The

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All Kinds of Fun at OLD WEST DAYS in Shoshone CA Oct. 31-Nov. 2

Museum History Talks—see page 2
Relive local history! Meet many authors and purchase autographed books – wonderful memories or Holiday gifts, & supports the Museum.

Craft Show in the Flower Building

Western Wagons Corral #14 will
be in Shoshone at 12:00 pm. Fri.

OTHER SATURDAY EVENTS:

- 9:00 am - Walking Tour of Shoshone with Susan Sorrells; benefits Amargosa Conservancy
- 11:00 - BJ & the Silver Tappers
- 11:30 -7 - Mesquite Barbeque \$8
- 12 - 6 -White Horse Band
- 7 -10 - Street Corner Blues Project

ANNUAL QUILT RAFFLE!

to Benefit Shoshone Museum

Tickets \$1 or 6 for \$5

Send a check for yours today!

Drawing Noon Sunday

Don't have to be present to win!

Exquisite queen size quilt by
Dort Fredericks & Victoria Brazzle

OLD WEST DAYS '08

HISTORY TALKS SCHEDULE AT THE SHOSHONE MUSEUM

Moderator: George Ross

Talks are free, but donations are really a help! A keepsake booklet about presenters and sponsors of History Talks will also be available. *See you there!*

Friday October 31

4:30 pm - **DEDICATION OF WHITEY BILL GRAVESTONE** at the Shoshone Cemetery, with VFW Post 10054

5:30 - 7:00 pm - **RECEPTION** at Museum

6:00 pm - **WELCOME & PRESENTATIONS**, including our new exhibit **WHEN THE DESERT WENT DRY** with the Jack Madison suitcase and much more!

Saturday November 1

1:30 pm - **THE STORY OF RESTING SPRING** - Don Hendricks

2:00 pm - **RED LIGHT CHRONICLES**
Robin Flinchum

2:03 pm - **LILLIAN MALCOM, Lady Prospector** - Genne Nelson

3:00 pm - **THE EARLY HISTORY OF PAHRUMP** - Harry "Button" Ford

3:30 pm - **PAHRUMP/SHOSHONE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS** - Tim Hafen

Sunday November 2

10:00 - 12:00 - Speakers and authors available for book signing in front of the Shoshone Museum.

(Continued from page 1)

Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) also held union meetings for miners¹² and sponsored well-attended dances for the general public.¹³

By 1951, the hall was beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The old floor was broken up and removed by volunteers, and in addition to the new floor, new doors were also hung at the entrance¹⁵.

To celebrate the completion of the renovation, the Girls Club at the high school, The Cactus Cats, organized a highly successful Saturday night dance.¹⁶ Christmas that year saw the production of the "The Christmas Tree Surprise" by the elementary students, and the town teenagers presented a puppet show "The First Christmas".¹⁷ They built the puppet stage themselves.¹⁸ A ping pong table that had originally been built for the school at Death Valley Junction was donated for the Teen recreation program in 1951.¹⁹ The teen center program continued through the 1960s.²⁰



DANCE PERFORMANCE IN THE FLOWER BUILDING, 1953

A wide variety of community events have been held in the building. Mr. and Mrs. Blanchard had a dance school there in the mid 1950s.²¹ It was used as both a school and for Sunday school classes. School graduations were held there, including grade school from 1949 to 1954, and high school in 1953,²² and as a place for orchestra practice.²³ The restrooms were added about 1960.²⁴ Other events included school dances (sponsored by the PTA), proms, and movies in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Carl and James Rook remember running the projector for free admission!).²⁵

Other uses have included a hearing (in the late 1940s) about an attempt of Bloss Elias to privatize the Hot Springs in Tecopa,²⁶ and the inquest over the death of Bert Osborne, killed at Eclipse Mine in 1941.²⁷ It was also the local polling place for elections.²⁸ Many birth-day celebrations and funerals²⁹ have also been conducted in this building.³⁰

For 40 years now (since 1968) the Shoshone Desert Art Show has been held in the Flower Building. The proceeds have been used to upgrade the building (the side door and patio was added in 1977 with these funds) and to benefit the high school in Shoshone.³¹

Article References are on file at the Shoshone Museum..

Echoes from the Archives



As the summer heat begins to fade and there is a hint of a crisp cool breeze in the air, the thoughts of the community begin to turn toward activities of the fall season. One of the most popular is Old West Days, held every year in Shoshone on the first weekend of November. It includes the History Talks and Walks sponsored by the Shoshone Museum Association.

This year's event is going to be especially interesting because the Talks will highlight the grand opening of a fascinating exhibit interpreting the history of local bootlegging, called "When The Desert Went Dry". The exhibit is so intriguing because the life of the main character, Jack Madison, is revealed through the contents of a suitcase that happened to be rescued from an abandoned building in Shoshone.

The story of bootlegging not only played out in the communities of Shoshone and Tecopa, but also in the neighboring farming community of Pahrump. This year, the museum is fortunate that two of the pioneers of the Pahrump community, Harry Ford and Tim Hafen, are featured speakers at the Talks. The communities of Pahrump, Shoshone and Tecopa have always been linked socially and economically, and the interweaving of the lives of the residents will be revealed by the stories of these two fascinating men who participated in these events and whose lives shaped the future of the region.

One of the most entertaining aspects of Old West Days is that the event itself, like a magnet, attracts many of the interesting people who once lived in the area and, although they have left, continue to call it home. The conversations that ensue after the talks are as interesting as the talks themselves. So please join us at Old West Days for a weekend filled with fun, music, bar-b-que and a celebration of our history. We'll see you there!

—Susan Sorrells, Board President

The next building in the series "If These Walls Could Talk . . ." will feature the historic Brown residence (Green House) which now houses the Amargosa Conservancy. The next issue of the newsletter, however, will conclude our series on local authors with a story about Benny Troxel, renowned geologist.

RACHEL ERICKSON JENKINS, M.D.

Dr. Jenkins passed away quietly on Saturday, July 26, 2008, in her home, with her family around her. She was 94 years old.



She was born in Sioux City, Iowa, on September 20, 1913. She completed her medical training in Chicago in 1937 and started practice in Long Beach, CA in 1940, later moving to Lomita. Here she was a founder of the Bay Harbor Hospital and the Peninsula Rehabilitation Center. In addition to her medical practice, she raised 4 children, played tennis, swam daily, and was an active community member.

Dr. Jenkins' uncle, Jack Madison, lived in Shoshone from 1914 until his death in 1967. Although Jack was a farmer and miner, he is best known for his bootlegging activities. Jack's suitcase, containing many historical papers, was donated to the museum by Dr. Jenkins and her family; it is the centerpiece of the new exhibit, WHEN THE DESERT WENT DRY (the history of the Prohibition era in the Shoshone area). Dr. Jenkins and her family have been enthusiastic supporters of the Shoshone Museum.

FALL MUSEUM HOURS:
Closed Tues. Open 10am-4pm Wed.-Mon.

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.



SMA Membership Form

Membership Dues

Individual	\$15
Family	\$25
Business/	\$50
Nonprofit	
Lifetime	\$300
Mammoth	\$500
Donation:	\$_____

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

Name: _____

E-mail for events: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Returning Member: ___ New Member: ___

Notes To Museum Association Members

Many thanks to those of you who renewed your membership to the Shoshone Museum Association since our May newsletter. We would especially like to warmly welcome our new members and those who took advantage of the new joint membership offered by the Shoshone Museum Association and the Amargosa Conservancy, initiated at last year's Old West Days.

Many categories of joint membership are now available, which offer a significant discount to individual memberships with the two nonprofit organizations. Please inquire by calling 760-852-4524 or email shoshonemus@veawb.coop for more information or a membership form.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have not renewed your membership for 2 years, this will be your last issue. Due to rising postage costs, we are culling our list by date. We don't want to lose you- please renew now.



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