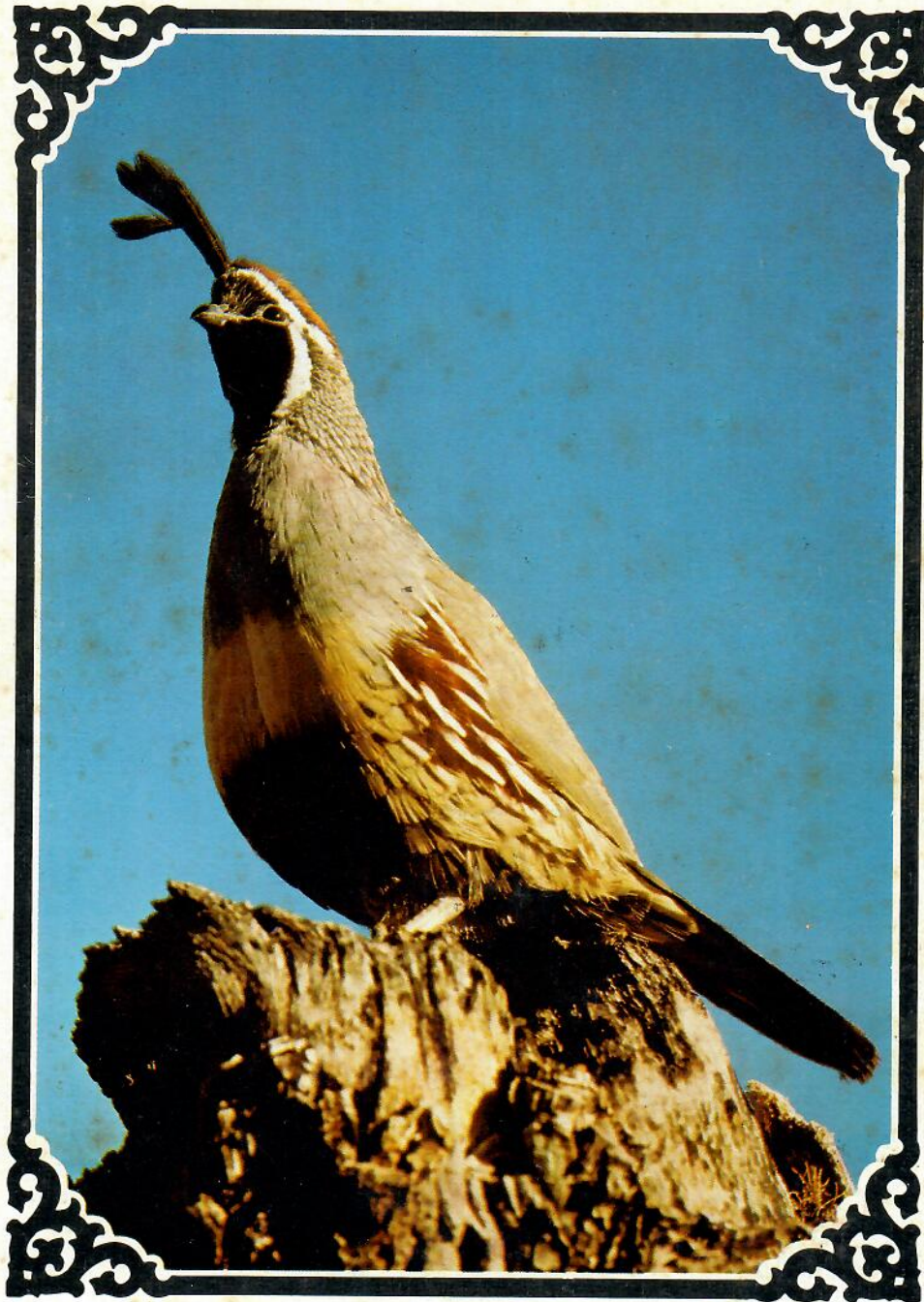


The Heritage of Yucca Valley

CALIFORNIA

INCLUDING GIANT ROCK



Vol. 1, No. 1

\$20.00

The population was sparse, but the spirit was high. The roads shown on this early aerial photograph are still being used. Can you locate any of today's buildings or topographical features? The wash in the upper right of this

photo, leads to Pioneer Town. The barren area at the upper left is now Blue Skis Golf Club. Can you locate the old school house at Yucca Trail and Wamego Trail?

The photo was taken by Willie Boldizar in the summer of 1947.

Willie Boldizar


Yucca Valley Calif. - 1947



YUCCA VALLEY ... Big plans even in the Early Years.

The Heritage of Yucca Valley

CALIFORNIA



This volume contains a great deal of material covering the chronological and statistical background of Yucca Valley, California. However, it is not just a history of the community. It is more a statement of the effort and dedication of those persons who made up the beginning of our town; their perception of what was needed and what they did about that need. This, then, is not specifically a history of the area but the "Heritage of Yucca Valley." It is perhaps a statement of thanks to those who gave us our thriving community.

The facts and photographs were compiled by Joan Wilson. The writing is the work of Pat Helm, with graphic embellishments by Neal Q. Vocke. Obviously, much has been omitted from this volume. It is the intention of the publishers to produce a subsequent volume in the not-too-distant future.

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By Joan Wilson and Charleen Grubb
Yucca Valley, California U.S.A.

*To George
Joan Wilson*


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Cover Photo: Loran Perry

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DEDICATION

 **T**his book, at first conceived as a history of Yucca Valley and its immediate surroundings, has become an enlarged "thank-you note." On reflection, though, this is indeed proper. We believe the most interesting chapters of any history are those that show the actual people, when and how they lived and what they did (or tried to) accomplish. And their inheritors should, naturally, express their gratitude. We do.

We decided to go a step further and include as many humorous anecdotes as we could, making it like no other historical collection the reader has ever read. We feel it is only natural to include these funny happenings and comments since, in the midst of many hardships, our "pioneers" welcomed with relief all of the lighter moments that came their way and kept them going.

As the story of Yucca Valley's Heritage unfolds the reader is made aware of the "true pioneer spirit" of those hardy souls who came early into the area and, without hesitation, embarked on a life of much hard work and precious few human comforts. There were no frills and a scarcity of modern conveniences clear into the late 1940's! Just surviving, our earliest pioneers made history. To them a good crop and a high wood pile were plush luxuries. What these rugged individuals built up may not be earth-shattering by world standards, but it all meant much to the future town.

From this hearty stock of so-called "little people," Yucca Valley grew into a fine, solid community of neighbors who helped each other in all ways possible. As the town grew and more people came they caught the spirit and threw themselves into helping shape Yucca Valley into the kind of place that everyone would enjoy living in — and they succeeded.

In the earlier-day rush to improve, develop properly and boost the town, the caring civic leaders and eager citizens occasionally made some whopping mistakes. Some were funny. Some not. But all were well-meaning errors and unintentional "crimes."

To all those who have gone before, and who have served to exhaustion and helped to lay the fine foundation for present-day Yucca Valley, we humbly give thanks for their unstinting efforts, their financial, moral and physical support, their helping hands and hearts. There would be no Yucca Valley as it is today without their time-consuming works and positive accomplishments.

Therefore, we gratefully dedicate this book to the people of our Yucca Valley Heritage and, hopefully, to the "newcomer pioneers" who must now pick up the burning torch and continue the life-flow of this ever-growing community.

We have painstakingly tried to include everyone who took part in the building of Yucca Valley. Unfortunately, there will be some who will be left out, but not intentionally. To those few we truly apologize and remind that God has remembered them. ■

The discovery and early-day uses of the Hi-Desert area and its environs is, in its own way, a microcosm of this country's pioneer development and ever westward movement. First there were Indians; then a Spanish explorer; followed by a succession of Spanish adventurer-miners and later, under the colors of Mexico, numerous Mexican miners; there were also American miners, adventurers and surveyors combing and criss-crossing the area. Still later, there were the pioneer ranchers and homesteaders who operated their own mines and cattle ranches; additional settlers; and those who were sent here by their doctors to regain their health. Next came the population-bursting period of the "week-end grubstake" or, five-acre homesteaders who pored in from "down below" on weekends, holidays and vacations. With many of those original weekenders now retired and living here full-time and even more new people finding the Hi-Desert a desirable place in which to live and work, the population keeps increasing and the "settlers" boom continues.



LUMBER WAGON—Talmadge's Lumber Mill in Big Bear, 1800's.

As the original inhabitants, the California Indians, in a positive expression of their native wisdom, traveled back and forth between the lower and high deserts following the seasons and the best of the climates. No fools they. They stopped and camped at numerous canyon springs which then dotted the San Bernardino Mountains and desert-edged foothills leading into what is now known as the Greater Morongo Basin.

However, while the weather was pleasant, it was not all vacation-style living. In addition to providing for their food, shelter, clothing and medicine they actually were the very first miners in the area. They had been busily discovering and working the turquoise and gold mines in the Mojave Desert a good number of years before Juan Itrube, believed to be the first Spanish explorer of this portion of the Southwest Desert, set foot on its sandy/rocky soil in 1615.

THE FIRST

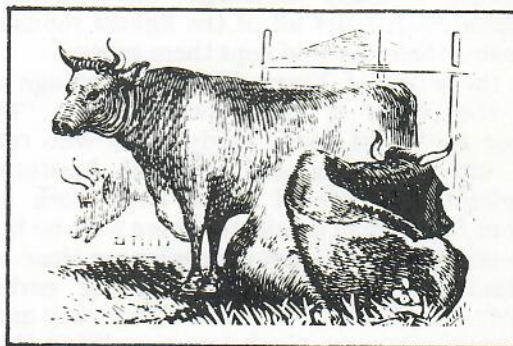
The torrential spring rains of that year had spawned floods of such dimensions as to create a bay in what is now the Salton Sea. Captain Iturbe sailed his ship, loaded with pearls, north of the Gulf of California right into the new "bay." However, typical of the desert and its elusive waters, the flooded bay did not hold and the water receded rapidly and flowed down into the gulf, thus stranding the captain, his crew and his ship.

Before the forced abandonment of their vessel and a precarious march back to Mexico, Captain Iturbe and his men took a quick exploratory trip around the northern "banks" of the departed bay and its nearby hills. This land is now recognized as the southern section of the Joshua Tree National Monument and, in their brief trek, they may have been the first white men to look out across the high desert valleys. Captain Iturbe's ship, pearl cargo intact, is reportedly still somewhere in the Salton Sea-bed area having long since been buried and blown-over with sand.

OUR FIRST PIONEERS

It wasn't long before the search for gold throughout the San Bernardino Mountains was on from many quarters simultaneously and consecutively. The Spaniards moved up through Baja California while adventurers of many nationalities headed east across the coastal plains to climb into the mountains. All were seeking the same thing — their own personal El Dorados.

When Mexico gained its Independence from Spain in 1821, all of its territories, including Alta California, were placed under Mexican rule. The exploratory mining and constant searching continued uninterrupted in the Southwest mountains and deserts with enough successful strikes occurring to fire the fevers.



CATTLE ranching, this area's first industry.

ONES

In our more localized area the Mexicans worked their way across the foothills and lower mountain ranges surrounding the high desert while the American explorers and early-day prospectors were gratefully discovering the established Indian trails leading to the west. These trails passed a network of waterholes and eventually crossed the Colorado River, the California Desert and on down to the coast. Unfortunately, very few records were kept in those days so little is known concerning the names and destinies of these venturesome men. But there were many of them. From time to time a modern-day canyon explorer may come across the surviving fragments of old, exhausted Spanish and Mexican gold and silver mines. Up until fairly recent years the remnants of an old Spanish arrastre from a nearby mine lay in Little Morongo Canyon. Then, in 1938, a wicked storm broke over the Morongo foothills and washed out that section of the canyon in the resultant flash floods. This has been the fate of many of the last vestiges of these miners and their claims.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

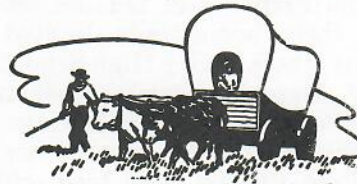
The first American Government Survey of the Southern California Deserts was made in 1855, when Colonel Henry Washington was sent out to accomplish the task. Headed westward, he stopped at the Oasis of Mara and reported the native palm trees as "cabbage palmettos." Then he followed the Indian trails leading into the mountains and, in doing so, crossed the floors of what were to become Yucca and Morongo Valleys. His records told of spotting familiar Indian signs such as wickiups, an occasional branch trail, etc., but not of encountering any actual Indians. What is more than likely is that the Indians were observing his passage.

The Oasis of Mara also attracted A.P. Green when he surveyed Section 33 in 1856. He counted twenty-six large palm trees around the oasis' springs and gave the locality its first recorded name — Palm Springs. Sound familiar?

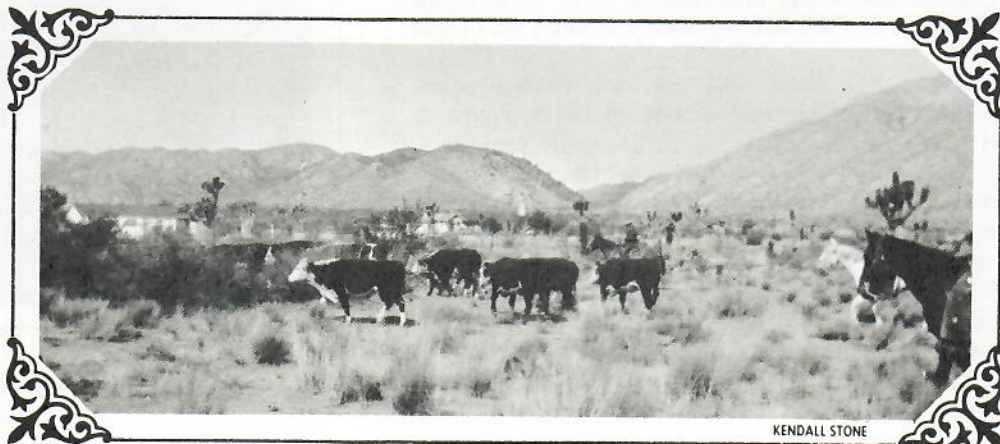
Also during the 1850's a cattleman named Pauline Weaver just may have made minor history by becoming the first white man to cross the high desert from west to east. Weaver was one of the participants of big cattle drives into Arizona. The story is told that he learned of a number of fine watering holes and springs from some Indians he had befriended. Using this knowledge, he drove his cattle through the Big Morongo Canyon while the others moved their herds through Indio. He invariably got to the river several days ahead of them. It has not been explained how he did it, but Weaver kept his route and the location of the watering holes a secret for a long time.

However, a good thing like that is bound to get out and others took advantage of the route. Hank Brown, an early-day miner who apparently wanted to be helpful as well as leave a record of his own travels, left notes stating that he had followed the Weaver route from the springs to the river.

Still another somewhat indebted to the speedier cattleman was General William J. Palmer. In the survey of 1867, the General proposed a route to San Diego which extended from the Needle crossing over what is now believed to be the old Bagdad-Twenty-nine Palms Road. From Twentynine Palms the General used the Weaver route down through Morongo Canyon and across San Gorgonio Pass. One can't help but wonder what Weaver and the General would think of the present-day traffic through the Pass? ■



EARLY YEARS — cattle drive through Yucca Valley.



KENDALL STONE

Plucky Homesteaders

Among the attributes that the earliest homesteaders had in common with the first-arriving townspeople were the bravery required of them in living a remote frontier existence when they could be living elsewhere in more "civilized" surroundings; the strong ability to persevere; the rugged ability to endure hardships; and the serene ability to make do with no modern conveniences and with precious little of the comforts we now take for granted.

Since most of them had come to the high desert for their and their families' health they were willing, simultaneously, to put up with more and put up with less.

In 1910 a Mr. Percy, a locator of Government lands, filed on and put down a well in Section 31, of what became Yucca Valley. That same year Joseph and Mary Susie Heard came by covered wagon from Fullerton. With them were their children Alma, Howard, Katherine, Margaret and Patricia. They filed on a 160-acre farming homestead (now the Blue Skies Country Club and the Country Club Mobile Home Estates) where they lived in a tent until they could build and move into the Joshua tree log cabin. They planted various grains and alfalfa for their stock and a fruit and vegetable garden for the family. Later, Howard made the first beehive in Yucca Valley, made up of wild bees. Also, in 1910, Byron Pearce filed on a 160-acre farming homestead. The John Cariker and Fred Pearce families moved in and filed on their homesteads located near the present-day Yucca Valley High School.

In 1913, Hezekiah Quick, a hearty 73 years young individualist from Hot Springs, Arkansas, filed on his homestead. One of his daughters married John Redden, who filed on his nearby homestead in 1923. One of Quick's favorite comments to his family and friends was, "Mark you well, some day we will see a city at the foot of the hills."

Frances Sargeant was another strong-willed woman who homesteaded here in 1913. Then, in 1914, Martin and Minnie Fuller, the Smalleys, the Robertsons, the Kellerman family, Robert Grey, the Evans family, Mrs. Dutton and her three children and Frank Gullick all filed on homesteads here.

Walter Harrell came out in 1923 and filed on land in the center of the valley next to the road. He named his property the Lone Star Ranch and put in the first gas pump in the valley. His ranch is now the Plaza, immediately east of Hi-D Center.

The Lockwoods bought Byron Pearce's homestead in the 1920's.

Fred and Barbara Pearce moved to Pipes Canyon in 1924 and built a rest home of the Walt Gehre's property. John Minter filed on his homestead between Warren's Well and The Windmill. William G. Hudson, a Redlands attorney in ill health, came out in 1925 and took over the Minter homestead. He and his wife, Camilla, and their three children — Kippie, Jean and Billy — lived in a 10'x12' shack and slept in a tent. Looking back, Camilla said, "I don't know what we would have done if it had snowed that first winter!" They later filed on a homestead in Pipes Canyon where, for a short time, Camilla taught the local children in what was recorded as "the smallest school in the largest county in the country."

Claude Guinan homesteaded in Water Canyon in 1931. Ernie Sanders homesteaded in Yucca Mesa in 1932.

That same year an ill June LeMert Paxton moved out from Hollywood and homesteaded and built "The Joshuas." She soon started writing about the desert and published a book *My Life On The Mojave*. In her feature article "I Call On My Neighbors," she told of her first days and getting accustomed to the isolation and loneliness despite visiting neighbors. "An old, antiquated two-ton truck was our means of hauling the fire wood and water and served also, for a time, as our pleasure car. As soon as I could travel about the valley I learned that, scattered sparsely over the desert, there were people much less fortunate than I. It was then that I realized that I should not only recover my own health but also try to encourage others to do the same!"



THE REDDEN Family Homestead — 1923.

..And The Town That Grew Up Around Them

Meanwhile, up in Pipes Canyon, Stanley Bowden built his "House of Tomorrow," the only cabin with a rug on the floor and an indoor bathroom. He also had the only well in the Pipes area at the time. Naturally, this was the site of many get-togethers and parties.

Still further up Pipes Canyon, the families of Carl and Nellie Jones, Dorothy Sall and Ruth Duarte homesteaded and settled in. Johnnie Kee, Sr., homesteaded northeast of Pipes Canyon in 1933. The Frank Bull's homesteaded in 1934, as did Lionel Sall near The Pipes, Tom and Rose Scarvan (near present-day Desert Christ Park) and Fred and Berta LaFerney six miles east of Warren's Well. Tom Scarvan was noted for being an excellent windmill "fixer." Frank Rogers also built a home, in 1937, near Warren's Well. The Kiner family moved here in 1939.

The Homestead Years ended along with the 1930's when filing on 160-acre claims was stopped by the Government. A way of life was coming to a close in the high desert. Some families moved away during World War II, either going into the service or into some form of war-work. But they moved back at the war's end.

Rene and Mabel Mellette moved out to Yucca Valley in 1943, purchasing property near the entrance to Pioneertown. When Rene regained his health he gave piano lessons. Mabel was a news reporter for the old Twentynine Palms Desert Trail.

Vance and Laura Danner moved out in 1946 for his health. He built his landmark "two by four cabin" on the south side of the highway (now across from K-Mart). Vance designed, made and sold lamps, jewelry boxes and picture frames from Joshua tree bark.

With the small town's first subdivision in 1945, came the first stage of the real boom. The Costa Mesa developers, members of the Yucca Village Co., were Fred Storey, Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Tamplis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estus, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Thomas Bouche and Flora McCann. They laid out the streets, subdivided the lots and started the Yucca Water Co., Ltd.



The people really started moving in and opening up their own businesses. Some of those early merchants were: Art Katje's and Ken Fletcher's Lumber Co. (the old Quonset hut); Peggy's Cafe; Becker's Variety and Hardware Store; Jule Boldizar's Shell Station and Yucca Valley Sky Corral; Tom and Vi Humphreyville's Yucca Inn; Ole Hanson's, Bob Potter's, and Bill Williams' Real Estate Offices; Sammy's Texaco Service; Ruth and Paul Albert's Yucca Valley Liquor Store; Sandy's Silver Dollar; Art Le Fever's Painting; Roger Stine's Feed and Fuel; Swain and Whitney Insurance; Jack and Madaline Barrett's Ice House; Barney Copley, the Desert Mason; Bill, Mary and Hattie Hurley's Lombardo Motel; San Ratliff's Laundry and Dry Cleaning; "Watty" Watkins Real Estate; Glenn Hammett's Wheel Alignment Co.; Wilson C. Lindsay, realtor and insurance agent; Barnhart's Desert Garden Nursery; Harry and Mabel Housh's Burnt Mt. Dude Ranch; D.D. Evans Construction Co.; Frances Akers' Desert Sky Motel; the Ray's Whirla Whip Drive In; Al Peters Real Estate; E.R. Jernberg's Grading and Paving; Bill Pace, general contractor; Arthur N. Leth, Masonry contractor; H.W. Creaser's Food Co.; Harre Starr, printer; Dorothy Chapman's Trails Motel; Master Cleaners; E. Ramey's Yucca Pump, Supply and Well Drilling; Pearce's Garage; A. Mayo Bradfield, goodwill advertising; George Mehrens' Upholstery Shop; Josephine, John and Bernadette Kreton's Desert Queen Motel; Dave Baxter's Signs; Joseph Freeman, surveyor; Danny Pekarovich's Grading and Paving Co.; Paul and D.S. Perrin's Lifetime Cabins; Frank Campbell's Galvanized Water Tanks; Gerth's Auto Parts; H. and M. Odgers Richfield Station; Blackie's Garage; Roy and Margaret Jewett's Desert Lamp Maker; Signe Ohlson's Juice Bar and Salad Bowl; Unigas; A. and V. Samson's Burnt Mt. Rancho Motel; Cheri Belcher's Roller Skating Rink; Al Furton, contractor; Boldizar's Desert Sands Motel; John Ehrismann, electrical contractor; Jim Baxter's Yucca Valley House Trailer Sales; Ed Hardesty's Custom Floor Covering; Bill Adams' Road Grading; and Bill Brohamer's Stables.

These and others are the ones who have put the heart and soul into Yucca Valley — and the miracle is that, despite the struggles, most of them were usually enjoying themselves, loving their life-styles and introducing other family members and friends to the town — thereby starting off another cycle. ■

THE LONE STAR Ranch, owned by Mr. & Mrs. W.A. Harrell.

WARREN'S WELL

The usual pattern in the old west was for cattle ranches to be literally hacked out of the wilderness, developed into going concerns and then the "dirty varmint" rustlers would swoop down and make off with the rancher's cattle.

But, in the Greater Morongo Basin the pattern would seem to be reversed. Some twenty years after the swifter-moving drover, Pauline Weaver, rustlers discovered the Basin and began driving cattle stolen from ranches near Cajon Pass into this area. Here they stayed (in Hidden Valley, a virtual high desert hideout located in what is now a part of the Joshua Tree National Monument) until it was considered safe to move the cattle out to the Colorado River and across into Arizona Territory. This proved to be a profitable business for the resident rustlers until the adventuresome streams of eager prospectors and miners made it necessary to seek other hideouts with less passing traffic.

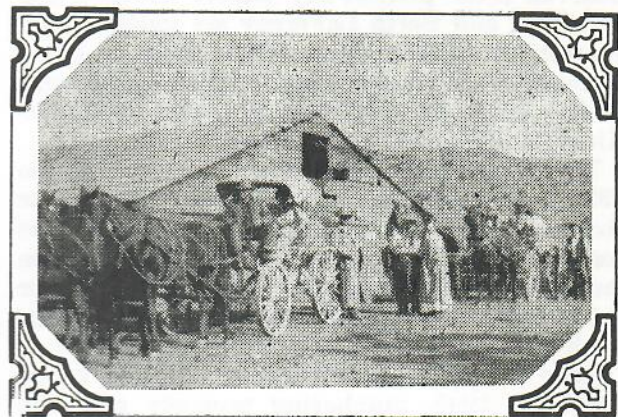
The honor of being the first local cattle ranchers goes to Ben de Crevecoeur and his brother who settled their families into Morongo Valley in 1873, and built separate ranches in Big Morongo Canyon and Little Morongo Creek. Ben, Jr., the first white child to be born in the Morongo Basin, made his initial appearance in the canyon ranchhouse in the year 1874. The de Crevecoeurs ran cattle from their ranches until 1884, when the families moved to Banning. A grown Ben, Jr., became a famous and respected lawyer in Banning.

The year of 1884 was also the year that Mark "Chuck" Warren discovered the high desert. His family owned ranches in the San Bernardino Valley area. Chuck himself also drove freight wagons over the Chuckawalla Trail until he decided to take over the de Crevecoeur's Big Morongo Canyon property and devote his full time to ranching. His youngest child, Lela Angeline, was born at the ranchhouse in 1892 — the first white girl to be born in the high desert.

Chuck, his wife, Sylvia, and their large family continued to live on the Morongo Valley ranch, part of which, in subsequent years became Covington Park and the Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve. The latter is operated by the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department and was obtained through the auspices of the Southern California Branch of the Nature Conservancy. But, returning to those earlier days, Chuck dug a well — a good one — for the benefit of his cattle on the open range up over the hill to the east of his ranch. It, of course, became known as Warren's Well but no one had the slightest

idea that what would develop around it in the years to come would be the town of Yucca Valley.

The well and the small frame house Warren built there became the center of life in this area for many years. Widely known as a stage-stop and a prominent stock-watering location, it soon became the magnet for most social life. Spring calves were branded there; mail was picked up there; mule skimmers — freight wagons loaded with ore from the Dale mines — stopped there to rest and get water; and the stage, bringing travelers to and from the mines, stopped there.



A CARAVAN passing through Warren's Well — 1910.

ADOBE dwelling at Whitewater — 1929.



KENDALL STONE

When homesteads began to dot the landscape, the homesteaders made weekly visits to Warren's Well, taking the family laundry to the adjacent reservoir to be washed, their children to be bathed and their portable water tanks filled for the coming week.

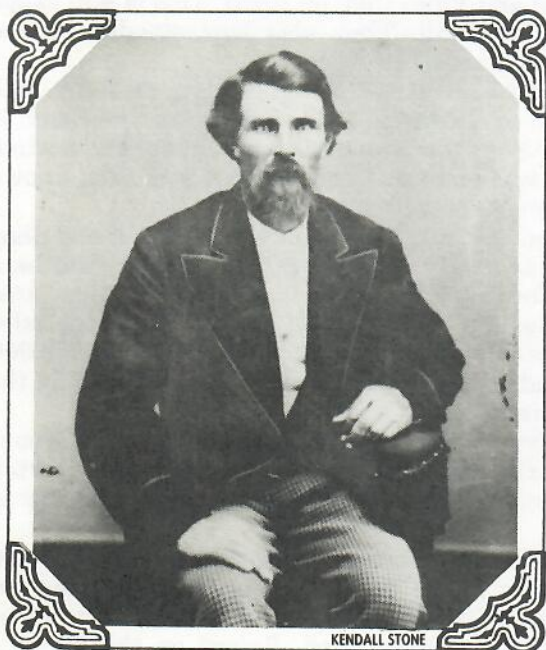
Completing the history of Warren's Well's owners, the Talmadge Brothers, John, Frank and Will, cattle ranchers from the San Bernardino Mountains, bought the well from Chuck Warren in 1909, when the stage service was discontinued. The operation of the well was taken over by Cattlemen C.O. Barker and Will Shay in 1918.

Then, in 1929, Jim Dever, one of Talmadge's cowboys, and a man named Berry acquired the well and ranged their cattle in the nearby area for about three years. Also in 1929, the frame house at the well burned down. Dever soon built an adobe house in its place. In the meantime, he, his family and Berry lived in the housing units installed at the well that same year by the Telephone Company during its Mojave Desert project.

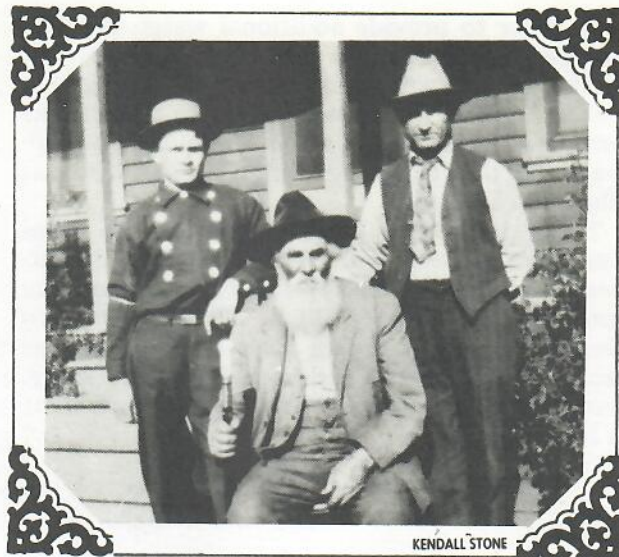
Still later the well was sold to Sheriff James W. Stocker for his winter range headquarters. The cattle drivers from the mountains through Pioneer Pass and Yucca Valley were discontinued in 1947. What with the advent of the first subdivision and "city folk" moving into the "suddenly-sprung-up" town, it was thought best. In 1950, Sheriff Stocker sold his cattle to the Hamilton Brothers.

During the early '50's Dr. John Bendall filed on the well and adjacent acreage and became the new owner. He converted and added to the adobe house, making it into a combination medical office and home. There he tended to ills and injuries and delivered babies. One of this elite group of natives to be born at Warren's Well was Dorinda Ruenell Grubb. She was born on May 21, 1963. The daughter of John and Charleen Grubb, of La Quinta, she is also the granddaughter of Joan Wilson, of Yucca Valley.

Known as "The Flying Doctor," Dr. Bendall later built the Yucca Valley Airport on his acreage to the south and designed the runway and approaches so he could taxi his plane right up to his front door. In the '60's he sold the Warren's Well house to Mr. and Mrs. Lou Stockton, the historic site's present owners.



FRANCIS LeBaron Talmadge — Grandfather.



BURT, Francis and John Talmadge — Three generations, Circa 1916.

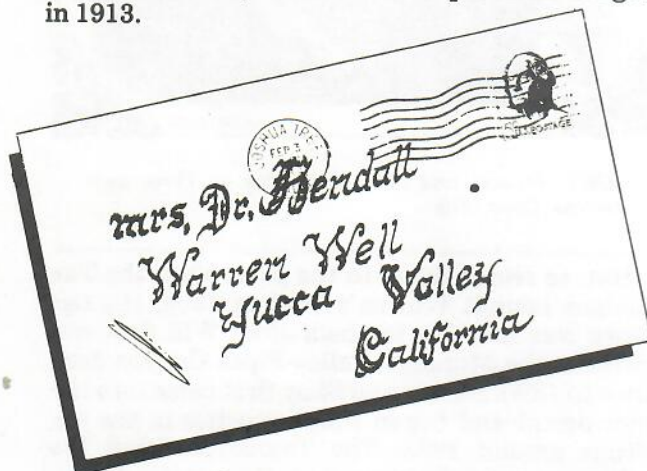
But, to return again to the past, when the Talmadges bought Warren's Well in 1909, the territory was not new to them since Will first ran cattle in the Morongo Valley-Pipes Canyon area prior to 1890. Barker and Shay first came into the high desert and began ranging cattle in the environs around 1905. The Talmadges used the well-site as a holding corral for their cattle during the spring round-ups.

In 1912, the Talmadges bought out Jim Smart and took over his ranch. Legend has it that they also took over the Smart brand — the JS. The lower part of the J had reportedly been broken off the branding iron. Be that as it may, the Talmadge brand and all their holdings did become the IS Ranch; and Kendall Stone, the great-grandson and grand-nephew of Frank, John and Will, said he never knew why the ranch was given the name IS. Stone is also known around these parts as a retired Undersheriff of San Bernardino County.

During its heyday, the IS Ranch covered approximately 750,000 acres! Most of it was leased from the government, thousands of acres were owned by the Talmadges and some of it was "just used." The mountain and desert ranch acreage included what is present-day Big Bear, Baldwin Lake, Moonridge, Rose Mine (Pioneer Pass), Smart's Ranch, Antelope Valley, Reche's Well (Landers), Giant Rock, Surprise Springs, Coyote, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley, Morongo Valley, the Joshua Tree National Monument, Devil's Garden, Thousand Palms, Desert Hot Springs, Whitewater, Cabazon, Whitewater Canyon and Mission Creek. Stone said many times during the spring round-up they found some of their cattle had strayed off across the wide open range as far as present-day Indio.

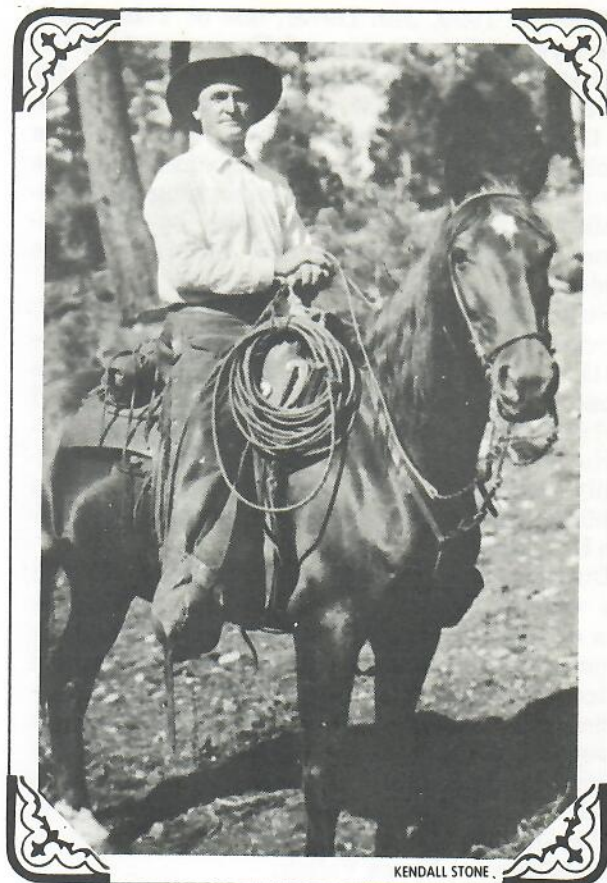
In order to provide additional water, the Talmadges constructed a reservoir, named The Tanks, in the southwest corner of present-day Yucca Valley. Water was piped to The Tanks from the tunnel to the south where they had already dug out the spring. Tanks were also built at Black Rock Springs.

The spring at The Pipes (the entrance to Pipes Canyon) was developed over the years by the cattlemen and water was carried into an impounding pond by a stone-lined ditch. About 1910, Gus Knight, a pioneer of Big Bear Valley, held the property at The Pipes and ranged his cattle there. Barker and Shay secured The Pipes from Knight in 1913.



Warren's well.
 Was dug by Chuck Warren and sons, in 1880, and was used for watering cattle. Bill Warren was cow boy for many years, and lived at Warren's well, after Bill Warren got married his Brother Walter Warren took over the cow business at Warren's well in 1910 the Talmadge brothers took over the Warren's well, and young Talmadge named Oat, Talmadge lived at Warren's well and who was drowned in Bear Lake, there the Talmadge bros, held Warren's well until one James Stocker, James Deaver, Mrs. Berry her son John and (Dr.) Bointen held Warren's well until Mrs. 1948 after this date Yucca Valley took over,
 Wm. F. Keys

A LETTER written by Wm. F. Keys, explaining the succession of owners of Warren's Well as he understood it. Written 1964.



JOHN TALMADGE on his horse Prince — Circa 1919.

Will and Sarah Shay (Stone's uncle and aunt) homesteaded the tract in Pipes Wash east of the present-day junction of Old Woman Springs Road and Pipes Canyon Road. This is still called The Windmill. They also homesteaded farther west towards The Pipes.

John Cariker, of Yucca Valley, drilled a well north of Coyote in 1915, for Barker and Shay. A large reservoir was constructed there and a windmill was erected. The area that was then known as Coyote is now known as Sunfair.

The Talmadge's IS Ranch and Barker and Shay were two of the biggest cattle outfits in Southern California. The cattle business in this area reached its peak about 1920. The Talmadge sales of beef that year amounted to more than 200,000 pounds. Barker and Shay sold approximately the same amount.

When contacted for pictures and reference material for this publication, Stone started reminiscing and had quite an interesting story to tell.

Stone was born in Victorville, California, on January 19, 1919, but grew up literally living the life most little boys in America would have given anything to have lived. Raised on the family's mountain ranch, he learned early and, subsequently, did a lot of riding, roping and cattle

handling through the years. He also became quite familiar with chopping wood, harvesting the hay crop, feeding it to the livestock and other ranch chores. When they were still young boys, he and his cousin, Billy (former San Bernardino County Supervisor William Betterley), went on the twice-a-year cattle drives, moving the herds from the mountain meadows in the fall to the desert valleys and back again in the spring.

Like all other western ranchers, the Talmadges and their cowboy hired hands took a very dim view of the homesteaders and such things as the hated barbed-wire. Since some of the homesteads had no water on the property, they were given the nickname "sandlappers."

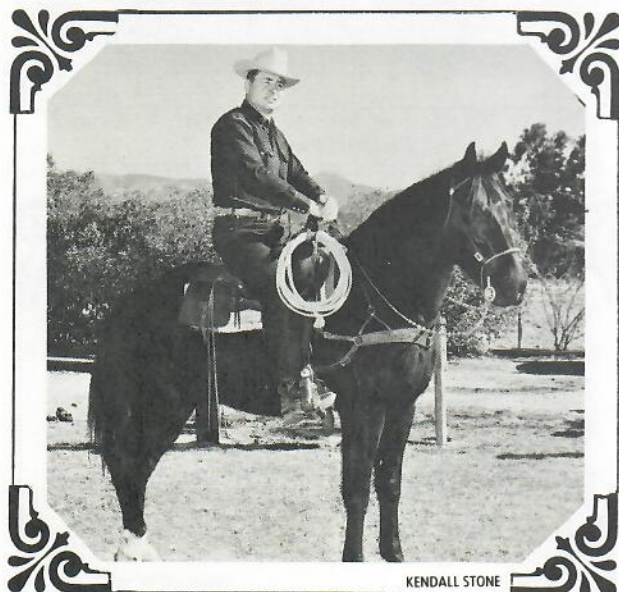
Thinking back, Stone made a list of the cowboys who worked on the IS Ranch. They were Harve Martin, Bud Waite, Frankie Paul, Jakie Thompson, Slim Spence, Jess Bangle, Bob Belt, Jim Dever, Joe O'Rourke, Otis Talmadge, Bert Talmadge, Bill Betterley and Kendall Stone.

He also listed the good horses from the IS Ranch: Ole Blue, Spelic (Playboy), Ace, Pinto, Arkansasaw, Buddy, Big Enough, Cub, Dick, Mike, Paddy, Banjo, Montie, Chief, Dumbo, Prince, Long John, Savina, Smoky, Eleck, Pike, Apache, Pedro, Tom, Chub, Buttons, Baroso, Sheep, Flag, Spike, Snipe, Baldy, Badger, Pompo and Skeeter.

All the ranchers and cowboys would help each other out and go together on the cattle drives and round-ups.

Some of the most vital of resources on these drives were the famous springs, water holes, windmills, etc. of the IS Ranch which were used by the Talmadges, Barker and Shay and other cattle ranchers of the area.

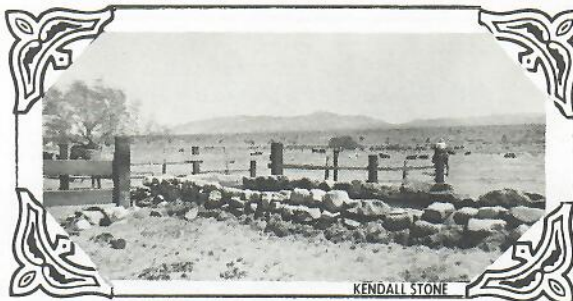
KENDALL STONE, whose help in tracing the history of Warren's Well was invaluable.



KENDALL STONE

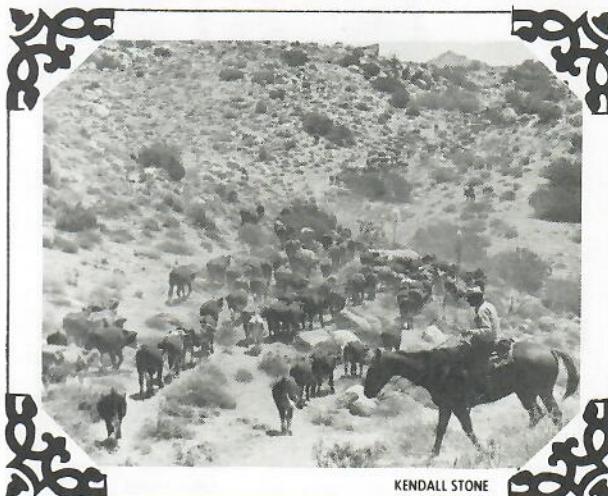
Among the springs and water holes Stone listed Saddle Rock Springs (northwest corner of Pipes Valley), Bryant Springs (also northwest corner of Pipes Valley), Chupparosa Springs — which means both Butterfly and Hummingbird (northwest of Pioneertown in an old Indian camp), One Horse Springs (Whitewater area in an old Indian camp), The Tanks (southwest corner of Yucca Valley), Black Rock Springs (southwest corner of present National Monument), Lower Covington Flat Springs (in Monument), Bull Springs (north of Yucca Valley and east of Pioneertown), Coyote Holes (Joshua Tree), Quail Springs (north of Smith Canyon), Stubby Springs (in Monument), Round Valley Springs (Rose Mine area of Pioneer Pass), Surprise Springs (north of Coyote lakebed), Whiskey Springs ("many with this name, located everywhere"), Mound Springs (west end of Antelope Valley), Reche's Well (Landers), The Barrel (below Ruby Mountain and Willie Boy gravesite), Visera — meaning Calf — (under Tip Top), One Hole (near mouth of Rattlesnake Canyon), Two Hole (near Old Woman Springs), Rock Corral (south of Old Woman Springs), Painted Rock (an old Indian camp noted for paintings and petroglyphs).

There were windmills at Warren's Well, Reche's Well, Pipes Wash, Coyote, Smith Canyon; plus a half-dozen windmills on the Los Flores.



KENDALL STONE

ABOVE, tank at Warren's Well, used for many years by cattle drives typical of the one shown below.



KENDALL STONE

Stone said that Charlie Reche, knowing of the existing earthquake fault, studied the lay of the land on his property, dug down 25 feet and established a very fine well. The Talmadge Brothers and Reche went 50/50 on the well which supplied all the water that was needed for domestic purposes and the range cattle.

Also, Reche and Al Swartout dug the well by hand that furnished all the water at Old Woman Springs. Prior to that there was only a small spring there where some Indians lived. An old squaw that lived there gave Old Woman Springs its name, said Stone.

Swartout thought up and informally designed a syphon system which could be turned on or off. Reche built it. "Reche could do anything," Stone said. This system was later described as "probably a water phenomenon." A hydro-electrical engineer who inspected it said, "The only thing wrong with it was it was not thought of by a hydro-electrical engineer."

Stone's great-grandfather, Francis, donated and hauled all the lumber from Blue Jay to San Bernardino for the first Masonic Lodge to be built in the county. He also became a charter member of that Lodge (the Phoenix). Years later when Stone became a member, that made the fourth generation of the same family in the same lodge.

Stone graduated from Longmire's Business

College, in San Bernardino. From the time he was a small boy in the mountains he was as at home on skis as he was in the saddle. This skill came in very handy in World War II when Stone, as a Captain in the U.S. Army Paratroops, led a Para-Ski Unit of the renowned U.S. Army Ski Patrol in the Bavarian Alps.

When the war was over he returned and entered the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. "Like Reche, I was a special deputy for years," he said. Altogether, he served for 33 years, capping off his law enforcement career as the Undersheriff, under Sheriff Frank Bland, from 1962 to 1973, when he retired.

He and his wife, Mary Rose, still live in Big Bear where he raises quarterhorses and she owns and operates the White Dove Trading Post. Since his retirement they have also purchased property in Morongo Valley.

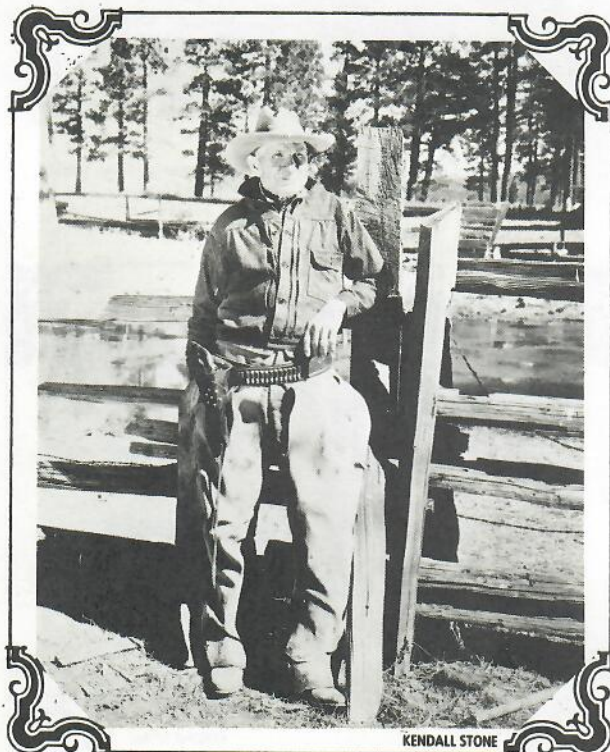
In summing up his life and his life-style, Stone jotted down the following thoughts:

"A Superior Soldier — I would have to admit to being pleased to be referred to as a 'good and patriotic soldier' — and I was.

"An Honest Law Enforcement Officer — I also have to admit that to be called a 'good and honest Law Enforcement Officer' — which I was — is also very gratifying.

"A Wild, Wild Cow Chaser — But, I am most flattered, most pleased and most proud when called a 'good all-around cowhand.'"

WILL SHAY, dressed for a part in a movie shot at the Shay Ranch at Baldwin Lake — 1944.



KENDALL STONE



KENDALL STONE

ABOVE, Founders of Mormon trail ride — Kendall Stone, Bob Angel, Freeman Lewis.

BELOW, Will Talmadge and Kendall Stone at Warren's Well adobe — 1940.



KENDALL STONE



KENDALL STONE

ABOVE — Circa 1916. Foreground, Will Talmadge; background, John Talmadge.

TOP RIGHT — L. to R., Elizabeth Dunlap, Sarah Shay, Martha Talmadge and Mrs. Whitley (first name unknown), taken around the turn of the century.

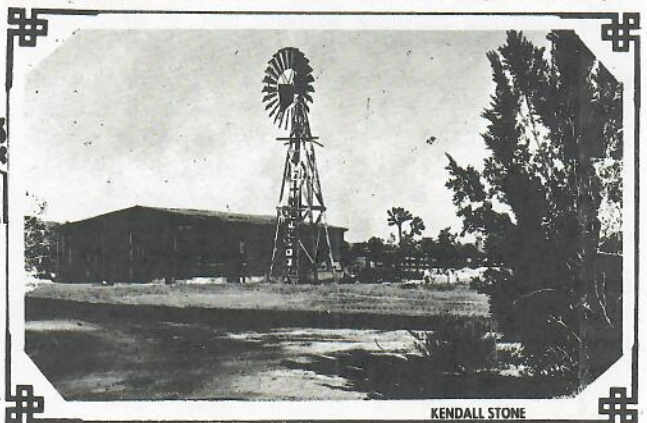


KENDALL STONE

Warrens Well Album



KENDALL STONE



KENDALL STONE

LEFT — Walter Reche on a wild mustang caught several years before in Arctic Canyon.

THE DOG was a Russian Wolfhound named Butch. Above, Barn, Windmill and Corral at Warren's Well just before demolition.



LEFT — Jim Stocker.

BELOW — the corral at Warren's Well. **JIM STOCKER**, left, John Talmadge, right. Buttons Dean near the barn.

RIGHT — Kendall Stone at Warren's Well adobe.



KENDALL STONE



KENDALL STONE

Desert Christ Park

World War II had different effects on all those who lived through it. For Eddie Garver, who ultimately became nationally famous as the Desert Parson, the end of the war left him with a myriad of dreams and many prayers that he be allowed to find a location and dedicate it to world understanding and brotherhood.

He and his wife, Jane, both new missionaries, followed a passage from the Bible and chose the desert; more specifically Yucca Valley. There they founded the Yucca Valley Community Church at Apache and Santa Fe Trails (now the Christian Science Church) and began their church services and ministering to their growing congregation. Serving without pay at first, they both taught Sunday School classes and he preached the Sunday Sermon. During the rest of the week the Desert Parson worked as a builder for his livelihood. Friendly and helpful, the pair were well-liked. Though straight and tall, the Desert Parson was perceived to be genuinely humble.

As he set about his many tasks he did not forsake his dreams or his resolve. For that reason alone Yucca Valley is the "home" of one of the most unique features in the country—Desert Christ Park.

"The Lord moves in mysterious ways" was never more true than in the series of circumstances that drew Rev. Garver and Sculptor Frank Antone Martin together.

BELOW — Creator of Desert Christ Park, Frank Antone Martin.



Joan Wilson

Martin, an aircraft plaster pattern maker, lived in Inglewood, Calif., where he was also magnificently engaged in sculpting, wood and stone carving and painting—a true artist. An avid student of the Bible, he, too, had a dream. He built an awe-inspiring, ten-foot high statue of Christ in his backyard. It was made of concrete and steel and weighed 6,300 lbs.

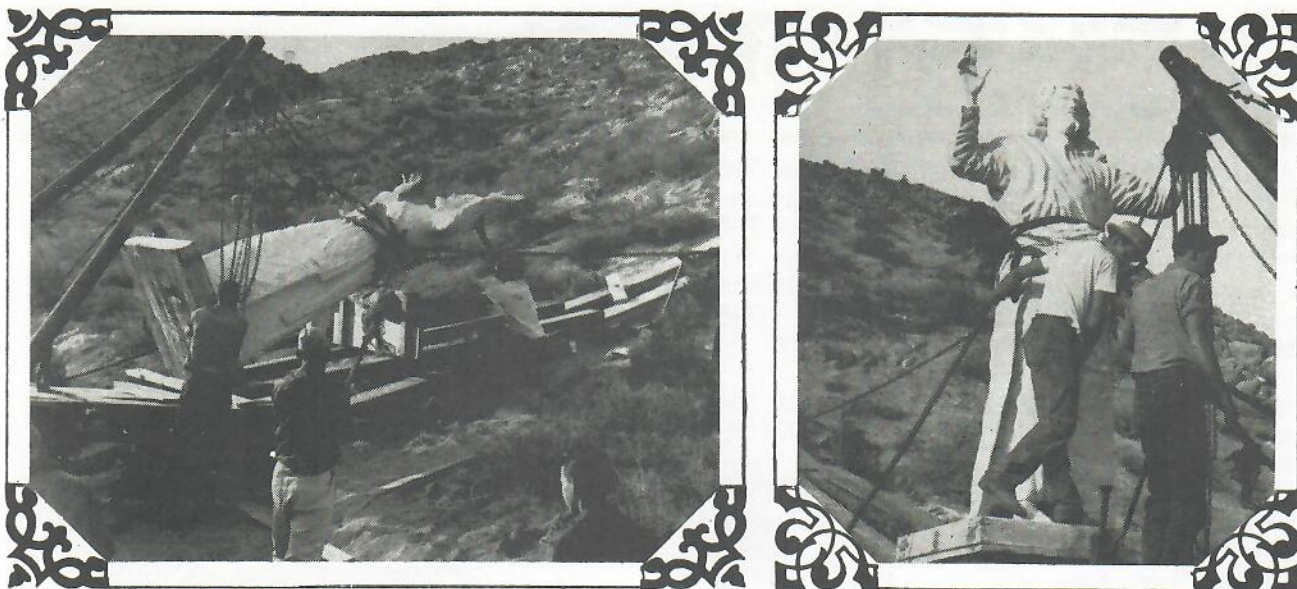
His intention was to present it to the U.S. National Park Service. He had planned that it should be placed on the Rim of the Grand Canyon. However, the Federal Government had to abide by its division-of-church-and-state rule and could allow no permanent statue, cross or other religious artifact to be erected in a national monument. It was explained that the cross used in the Easter Sunrise Services at Grand Canyon was taken down again after the services.

National magazines told of Martin and his dilemma and his gigantic work of art (also an obvious labor of love) became known as "the Christ that wasn't wanted."



Joan Wilson

TEN FOOT HIGH statue of Christ, in place overlooking Yucca Valley.



HOISTING the first 10 Ft. statue of Christ a labor of love. March 28, 1951.

Joan's Collection

Frustrated but undaunted, Martin offered the impressive statue to a number of churches. But, he insisted that it be installed in a public enough place that everyone might be able to see it.

Rev. Garver, still pursuing his hopes and dreams, had filed on a ten-acre plot on a north-side hill overlooking Yucca Valley. Five acres was for his church and five acres was to be retained by himself and his wife. When he heard of Martin's offer, the Desert Parson's dreams took on gargantuan dimensions. He contacted the sculptor at once and told him he had the perfect spot for the statue—one where it could be seen from the whole town.

The rest is history, but that sounds easier than it was. Rev. Garver asked the townspeople for help and got it. Clay Tunstall had a crane and block and tackle large enough to lift the statue. Tommy Bouchey, former Harbormaster of Balboa Bay, Calif., arranged for the use of some dock-side loading rollers. He, Gus Templis and Hugh Estes went down to Newport Beach and brought the heavy loading rollers back in a big U-Haul truck.

Performing another miracle of sorts, Rev. Garver and Ralph Kingston went down to Martin's home and, with a mighty effort, managed to load the statue on their truck. It was slow moving all along the way with motorists gawking as they passed by the struggling truck. When they got to the Morongo Grade it looked like they might not make it. Kingston suggested that they turn the truck around and go up the hill in reverse, as that gear can have more power. However, they did manage to make it and ease over the brow of the hill and drive on to what was to become the statue's permanent home—a hillside in Yucca Valley.

A foundation for the statue had been prepared

on the hillside site. Those who had helped build the foundation and who now worked together to get the statue in place included (besides Rev. Garver, Kingston and Tunstall) such stalwart citizens as Al Livingston, Paul Mercatoris, Ernie Peters, Barney Copley, Billy Royal, Dave Harmon, Ralph Martine, Ken Witting, Bill Pace and Frank Garske.

Rev. Garver was anxious to have the statue in place for Easter Sunrise Services, which were less than a week away! Through Herculean efforts the statue was hoisted bit by bit up the steep, 50-foot hillside to the knoll. Tunstall was aided in planning the operation by Dr. John Bendall. It was he who had made all the safety-factor suggestions and they were followed to the letter. It took days of diligence and dedication on the parts of the volunteers; or, as one of them said, "It took pure guts and hard manual labor!". It truly was a tremendous undertaking, but the job was done, and on time. Jane Garver and Margaret LeFever had kept them all well-supplied with sandwiches and ice tea. Odis Ray donated many sacks of hamburgers and cups of coffee sent over from his cafe.

Both "Life" and "Time" Magazines had taken an interest in the moving of the statue to its new home. One of the statue's fingers had been accidentally broken in the move and the magazine's photographers took a number of pictures including one of Antone Martin explaining how easily the finger could be replaced.

Tunstall, looking back over the years at their accomplishment, said the statue actually weighed more than his truck. "I'm just very glad we didn't have any accidents and no one got hurt in getting the statue up there because that would have been terrible," he said. "God was looking after us."

And so, following the Easter Sunrise Services on April 8, 1951, the statue of Christ was dedicated.

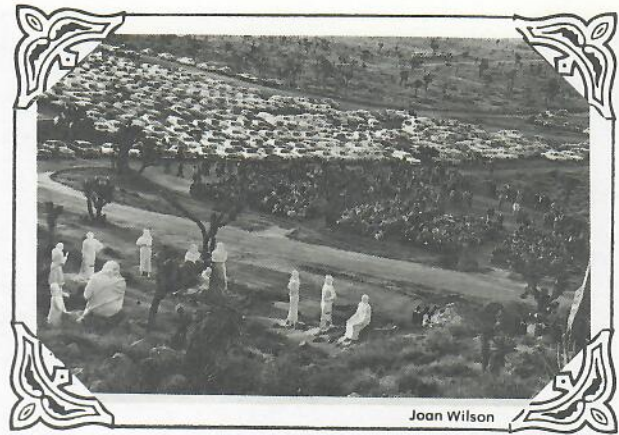
Martin subsequently moved permanently to Yucca Valley and he and Rev. Garver immediately started plans for what they called their "Peace Garden." The town's first subdividers donated five adjacent acres to Martin. This group, known as the Yucca Village Company, was composed of Fred Storey, Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Templis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estes, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Tommy Bouchey and Flora McCann.

Martin had also moved from Inglewood the statue of Jesus Blessing the Children. All the other religious stauary pieces were done in Yucca Valley, paid for by donations from a moved and appreciative public. Rev. Garver, following Sunday services, would don his work overalls atop his "preaching suit" and help where he could.

The Biblical scenes depicted by larger-than-life concrete statues include that of the Holy Sepulchre with statues of the three mourning women standing outside the open tomb dug into the hillside, the Betrayal of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane; Christ at the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha; Christ at the well with the Woman of Samaria; and Christ Blessing the Little Children. In Martin's grouping for the Sermon on the Mount, he immortalized the Desert Parson by sculpting his likeness on one of the disciples' statues.

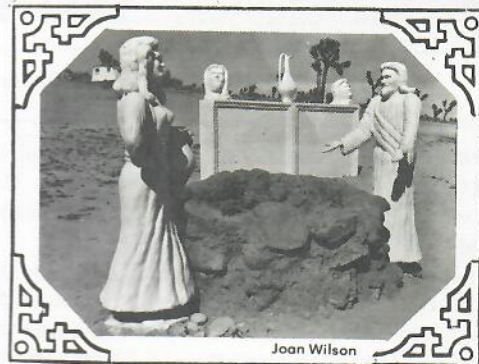


ABOVE, Antone Martin with statue of Christ, moved from Inglewood, Circa 1952. Below, Martin shown with statue of Christ at the well — 1953.



ABOVE — Easter Sunrise Service — 1955.

BELOW — Antone Martin shown with two of his creations.



By far the most ambitious and magnificent of Martin's works is the carved facade of the Last Supper. The head of Christ, framed in an open window, is carved in three dimensions. All the remaining figures are in bas relief. The facade is three-stories high and thirty feet wide.

While Martin was busily and happily at work on his beloved Biblical scenes, Artist Frank Garske designed and built the adjoining chapel. Here, again, Rev. Garver was in his overalls and helping out everywhere. After the work was underway, Garske and the Desert Parson asked Artist Kirk Martin to do a perspective rendering of the chapel.

Enthusiasm grew as the new chapel grew and Garske said he got help of all kinds from numbers of townspeople who would drop by and lend a hand at whatever was being done at the time. The chapel door was built and donated by the late Peterson brothers, Guy and Herb, Joshua Tree cabinet-makers. Garske said he was particularly indebted to Dr. Dick Sternxerg, of Los Angeles, who closed up his office for the whole of one Easter Week and spent his time mixing mud for the chapel.

Garske also, years later, designed and constructed the piers at Brownell Hall in the neighboring Yucca Valley Evangelical Free Church. For the last several years he, too, has become a sculptor of note, receiving national recognition.



ABOVE — Sunrise view of Christ at the Sermon on the Mount.

BELOW — One of Antone Martins more ambitious projects.



Joan Wilson



CHAPEL, adjoining Christ Park, built by Artist Frank Garske.

Bob Stephenson

As soon as the beautiful chapel, made of native desert stone, was finished Rev. Garver was performing wedding ceremonies there. It became a very popular place in which to be married—may be because it could only hold sixteen people.

By this time the donations were reportedly amounting to \$3,000 a month. Martin, using the money to buy the supplies he needed, kept working untiringly at his statues.

Unfortunately, he and Rev. Garver had a falling out concerning the property which was now known as Desert Christ Park. In the midst of the general misunderstanding, one of the reverend's parishioners bought the five acres retained by the Garvers. This was later sold to the church. A very saddened Reverend and his wife moved away to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Northern Arizona where they worked. Reverend Garvers has now passed away.

Martin, with the proven dedication of an artistic genius, continued his work until his death in 1961. By prior agreement, Desert Christ Park was to be turned over to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District after his death. In the interim period, before the district took official possession, Howard Clark and Mayo Bradfield maintained the park and its statuary.

Since then Desert Christ Park, under the auspices of the local district, has had such additional facilities as rest rooms, picnic tables and extensive landscaping planned and constructed. The night lighting of the statue groupings was designed and installed by Bob Kelly, a Southern California Edison employee and, at that time, president of the Yucca Valley Jaycees. The lighting project was paid for by the Yucca Valley Rotary Club.

The Yucca Valley Evangelical Free Church bought the controversial adjacent property and constructed its own church building. It now also owns the small chapel built by Garske. Easter Sunrise Services and other special programs are held in the newer Amphitheatre.

The last "gargantuan task" to be completed on property which was all originally part of the "Peace Garden," was in March, 1966, when the steeple for the Evangelical Church was put on the roof.

With Pastor Oscar W. Johnson and a number of guests watching, the 650 lbs., 25-foot high spiral was flown in from Palm Springs by helicopter, suspended by nylon ropes. Waiting on the roof, ready to bold the new steeple down in place, were John List and John Steele.

The helicopter was flown by Donald Landells, president of Palm Springs Aviation. He had volunteered to lift and place the church steeple, having gained experience in similar jobs such as he performed for the Palm Springs Tramway. ■

Yucca Valley Post Office

Mail was delivered casually in the early days by anyone who was coming up through the Morongo Basin from Banning. Later Johnnie Hastie brought it up in Old Betsy on a more regular basis. But the first real feeling that there was a U.S. Post Office in Yucca Valley was in October, 1945, when Hilda Hardesty generously decided to share her dining room with thirty postal patrons.

The dining room was in the family living quarters of Hardesty's Grocery Store. The store was located on the north side and across the Twentynine Palms Highway from the old Lone Star Ranch (later known as The Plaza and now the block-long-Hi-D Center). Thirty boxes, with pleased patrons to match, were installed in the dining room and Hilda became the town's first Postmaster.



LEFT, Hilda Hardesty, Yucca Valley's first Postmistress.



RIGHT, Ed Hardesty, one of our first merchants, in whose store our first Post Office was established.

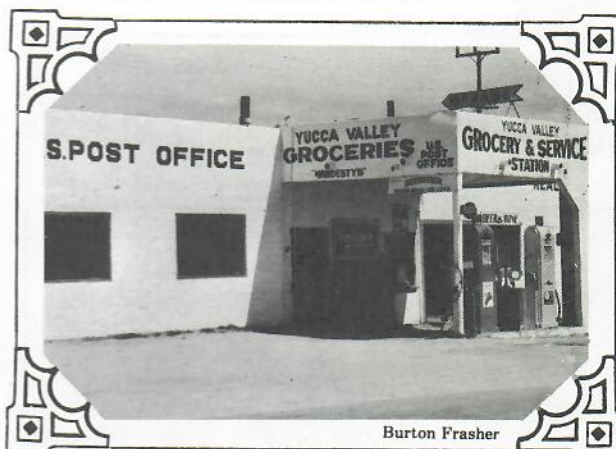
She received her commission from the government on September 25, 1946. It was Hilda, incidentally, who named the town officially when she selected Yucca Valley and recorded it through the U.S. Post Office Department. Gross sales receipts for 1945-46 totaled a quite respectable \$893.23.

The peacetime population grew and so did business in the Post Office and Hardesty's Grocery Store. More space and more boxes were needed for the people, so the Post Office moved into what had been the bedroom. Dorothy Stephenson became the first extra employee when she was hired in December, 1948.

More growth—and an addition was built on the west end of the market. With the welcome elbow room came the equally welcome second staff member—Jane Kie Singleton.



THE POST OFFICE at Whitewater. Yucca Valley received its first mail deliveries through this branch, prior to 1945.



Burton Frasher

YUCCA VALLEY'S first Post Office, established 1948 in Hardesty's store.

Things kept humming along as usual until one day in April, 1958, when fire destroyed the Post Office portion of the building. The familiar slogan proved to be right because, thanks to the employees, the Postal Inspector, Chamber of Commerce officers and many helpful citizens, the Yucca Valley Post Office opened for business the following morning in the Chamber Office in The Plaza. For six months the town was serviced out of the Chamber Office on a General Delivery basis.

Then, in the fall of 1958, the new Post Office building was opened on the south side of the highway between Elk and Fox Trails. Also in 1958, the first Star Route carrier honors went to Lloyd Havener.

Other employees to join the growing Yucca Valley Post Office in the late '50's and during the '60's included Gordon Barth, Al Oakvid, Daisy

Freeman, Paul Youtsey and Les and Dottie Pippitt.

City (home) delivery service was inaugurated on September 17, 1960, with John Stephenson the first carrier. He was joined by Bill Murray in 1961, and by Hamilton Freburger in 1964. R. Harrod became the second Star Route carrier in 1963. Bill Shemmer was added to the staff in 1964, as Assistant Postmaster.

Once again growing pains were getting out of hand and so a new building was constructed right next door on the south east corner of Fox Trail, its present quarters. The old location is now occupied by the Hi-Lite Lighting Center.

The newest facility was dedicated on October 17, 1964. While not as cozy as a dining room it does contain a much-needed 5,000 square feet of space. In May, 1965, the city routes were extended into more residential neighborhoods and business house delivery was inaugurated throughout the town.

On February 1, 1962, the Yucca Valley Post Office acquired a rural station—in Landers. Mrs. Vernetta Landers was awarded the contract to operate the station. Her assistant was Mary

Chessy who worked with her for ten years, retiring in 1972. Mrs. Chessy said when the station opened it had sixty boxes. Today there are between 500-600 boxes. Mrs. Landers still operates the station with the assistance of Virginia DeShon, Judy DeShon and Marie Fritts.

Back at the main Post Office, there are thirty-one people working here. Fifteen of them are city carriers and two are Star Route carriers.

Mrs. Hardesty retired in Dec. 31, 1975. After a temporary fill-in of Acting Postmasters, Peggy Wood was appointed and commissioned Postmaster. Bruce Boner is Superintendent of Postal Operations.

A study of the postal sales records indicates the steady growth of the town. In 1962, the gross receipts were \$48,035.11. By 1964, the receipts amounted to \$82,380.77, which was more than double the \$37,750.32 gross receipts for 1960. In 1966, they had climbed to \$103,982.92. Postmaster Wood reports that the receipts for the fiscal year October 2, 1980-81, amounted to \$592,208 which was a thirteen percent increase over the prior year. And that was before the last stamp price-rise, too. ■



Hilda Hardesty



Ralph Kingston

THE YUCCA VALLEY Post Office has experienced everything from fire to blizzard, and in many locations.

UPPER LEFT, the morning after the Post Office fire, Hilda Hardesty, Ron Webb and Jim O'Connor survey the damage.

UPPER RIGHT, one of many businesses that occupied the present Post Office location at Fox and 29 Palms Highway.

RIGHT, Post Office No. 2, which was next door to the present Post Office. It was opened in 1958.





FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

What is now listed on the maps and what we call State Highway 62, or, the Twentynine Palms Highway, was only known, in the days of the early miners, as the Dale Road. This was when most of the travelers were the miners themselves, or people doing business with them, and the road led to the Dale Mine and connected with other roads and trails to all the other area mines. Naturally, the original dirt road was not given the modern grading of today. It followed the contour of the land, going up and over the dunes and small rises, dipping in and out making its way higher and further into the Morongo Basin.

By 1934, when it was first oiled, it was called the Twentynine Palms Road. The State of California took over the first portion of the road, from present-day Interstate 10 to the San Bernardino County Line in the canyon, after 1941. It was straightened and paved in 1947.

The state officially assumed responsibility for the road, from Morongo Valley to Twentynine Palms, on October 1, 1961. By April, 1962, it was State Route 62. Then, in September, 1972, it accepted State Route 247, from its intersection with SR 62 in Yucca Valley to SR 18 in Lucerne Valley.

That intersection of SRs 62 and 247 (better known locally as the Twentynine Palms Highway and Old Woman Springs Road) was well-known in the early days to all those on horse-back or riding in stage-coaches, wagons or buggies. With the advent of the automobile, visitors in increasing numbers began to making their appearances. They seemed to have trouble in distinguishing between one dirt road and another. In the early '30's someone threw down an old, worn blanket in the road at the intersection and that remained the marker for those who wanted to go north to "Pipes Country" or beyond.

Through the years this became known as "crash corner." So, in May, 1960, a left-turn lane and a boulevard stop sign were installed on the highway at that corner. This was supposed to make the intersection safe. The present-day electronic signal system was installed and in operation on Nov. 8, 1973 and would have been deemed a miracle by the "blanket spinners."

The happiest (for both the residents and travelers) and most recent event connected with the Twentynine Palms Highway was the completion of the road-widening project in December, 1982. The highway, SR 62, is now a four-lane road from Interstate 10 off-ramp clear through Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms. The last-remaining bottlenecks have been removed! ■

David's Store for Men and Boys held its Grand Opening on November 8, 1971.

★★★★★★

Aztec Mobile Home Park opened in 1973.

★★★★★★

When Jule Boldizar had his airstrip and motel in the west end of town he also had a dog named Cuddles. It was a Heinz 57 Variety pooch. Its favorite outdoor sport was to walk slowly out to the middle of the west bound lane in the highway and lie down and take a deep-sleep nap all day long. In that time period, even on weekends, no one would think of harrasing the dog by tooting a horn or shouting at him. Instead, every single car drove carefully around him. How long would Cuddles last today? ■

★★★★★★

1959 was a truly vintage year for new businesses in Yucca Valley. Among the newcomers who were very happy to move to the Hi-Desert and "set up shop" were Ted Keller, who opened the Service Plumbing Shop; Dr. J.B. McDonald, who opened optometrist offices; Iva Huneycutt, who opened his real estate office; Val Valentine and Ted Morton, who opened the Yucca Valley Liquor Store and Delicatessen; Lyons Furniture opened a new store; Whirl-A-Whip was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Gifford, who renamed it Hi-Desert Drive-In; the Hat Rack Motel was purchased by Wally and Twila Estill; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Herman opened the Hi-Desert Shoe Repair in the Bonser Building; Yucca Valley Appliance Center was opened by Mac McCulloch and his wife, Dorothy, opened Stuff 'n Things right next door; Sylvester and Katherine Lukezich opened the Plaza Pastry Shop; medical offices were opened by Drs. B.J. Woodley and S.C. Hon in the Bonser Building; Barnhardt's Nursery was purchased by Harold Sipes; Sky Harbor Estates was opened by Elsinore Machris, Norm Essig and John Haskell; Western Hills Estates moved into its new location at the Old Woman Springs Road intersection; Mrs. Lee's Golden Arrow and Candle Shop opened; ground was broken for the new Waysilk Chiropractic Clinic; Ben Gage opened his Land and Development office; Mrs. Austin opened the Custom Drapes Shop in the Evanoff Building; Mr. Obar opened the Art and Stationary Store; the De Wi Ki Floral Shop was opened by Mrs. John Bruder; Mr. and Mrs. Orville Elkins broke ground for their Real Estate Office; Leonard Quigley opened the Plaza Barber Shop; Golden State Dairy Products opened a branch office and storage plant here; Bruce Jenkins opened his insurance and real estate office; and Sage Realty opened its offices. 1959-1970. ■

FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

In 1931 the Ervine Market was built and opened by the bend in the road. It was later sold to the Lilley family, which, in turn, sold the market to the Hardesty family. In 1935 the first and only phone in town, a pay phone, was installed outside the Hardesty's Market. From the time Yucca Valley was called Lone Star and from 1947, when it was called Yucca Village (the first real subdivision) on through the first part of the continuous building boom, the G and M Market, Pop Hardesty's Market, Grant Redden's Market and the Peters' Market all faithfully extended credit to the building contractors and construction workers. They were building all the new houses but quite often did not get paid until the property owner had come to look at the work and progress, etc.



ABOVE, the original — Ervine, Lilley, Hardesty Market, Circa 1933.

RIGHT — Ruth Duarte and son David at her Pipes Canyon Homestead — 1936.

The first Safeway Supermarket was built and opened in 1964. Von's Market opened its new facility "way on the east side" in September, 1970. What with the ever-growing permanent population, the weekenders and vacationers and the people enroute to the Colorado River and back home again, both of these Yucca Valley markets led their chains in sales in Southern California — until the gasoline shortage in 1974. But they have both built back up since as the growing population more than made up for what became a temporary slump. So much so that both markets opened newer, larger and more super markets — still further east — in the part of town that the future planners are now referring to as "the eventual center of town." Taking advantage of this movement, Safeway opened its new Super Store on June 15, 1980; and Von's opened its big, new facility on February 25, 1981.

Ruth Duarte, a rarity even for the hard-bitten pioneers, came out to the Morongo Basin in 1933. She was an unmarried woman and alone! She filed for a homestead high, high up in Pipes Canyon! Unheard of, considering the real hardships and the likelihood of bitterly cold weather and deep snows in the wintertime! But, "Rootie," as the beloved John Olson called her, more than proved that she had the desire, the will and the grit to stick it out and make it work successfully — despite the fact that the deer ate up all of her first planted vegetable garden. It took a lot of muscle to dig out all the rocks and prepare the soil for that first crop, which she was counting on to can and carry her through that first snowy winter.

Whenever "Rootie" and her canyon neighbors came down for supplies and visiting, the trip home was a slow one as they could only drive at a speed of 3 to 5 MPH, following the cattle up the canyon trail.



Ruth Duarte

Then, in 1959, she opened and operated the town's first answering service — the Hi-Desert Answering Service — in a house on Bannock Trail. She later moved the business to Acoma Trail, its present location. She took over Western Union from the Yucca Valley Trading Post in 1961 when additional equipment was put in and tied in with the phone service. She sold the answering service to Ruth Gomes in 1964. She, in turn, sold it to Pat and Carlo Conradi. Ted Keep is the present owner.

"Rootie" had also started up and published the Hi-Desert Guide in the late '50's. She was assisted in this popular endeavor by Jessie Mann. They worked up an excellent mailing list and the guide told of all the clubs, organizations, restaurants, motels, major stores and points of interest to be found "From the Mountains Through the Deserts to the River." By 1970 the newcomers outnumbered the oldtimers and Ruth thought that these latter-day enthusiasts should know about some of the Yucca Valley people that she knew. So, she wrote "Colorful Characters of Yucca Valley," which was published that year.

Yucca Valley Fire Department

There may have been other fast-growing western towns that worked just as hard and just as long to get a Fire Department — but none worked harder than the sturdy band of dedicated citizens who were busily building the community of Yucca Valley and shaping it into “the kind of hometown we want to live in.”

During the early ranching and homesteading days when something caught on fire everyone in the near vicinity helped as best they could — but, mostly, the places just burned down. Then, everyone from miles around really set to and either rebuilt right on the spot or helped the hapless victims move into another location.

It was much the same in 1945, when many of the earlier residents moved back to the desert at the end of the war. Following right along were one of the first contingents of big-city evacuees who were seeking the quieter, less hectic life of a small town. Yucca Valley got its first subdivision — Yucca Village — and began filling in some of the wide open spaces in what is now referred to as the west end of town. By 1949, Yucca Village had built two hundred homes and business buildings.

Two serious fires and the resultant losses led an eager group of citizens, headed by Fred Storey, to propose the creation of a Volunteer Fire Department. One of those, who worked especially hard and devoted weeks of his full time to the formation project, was Clarence Davis. After a series of informal meetings a Volunteer Fire Department was created and Davis became the first Volunteer Fire Chief.

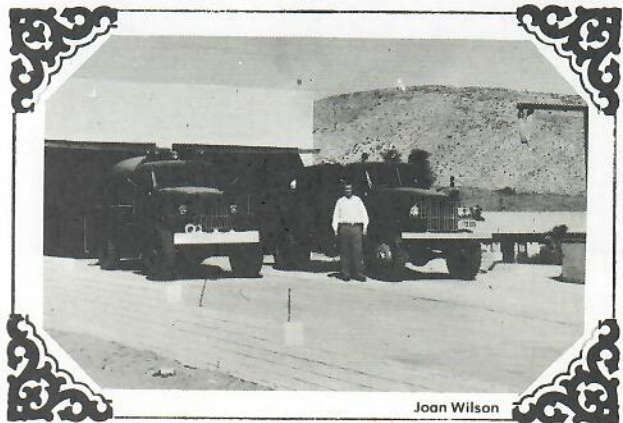


FRED STOREY, one of the early hard workers for a modern Fire Department.



YUCCA VALLEY'S first Fire Engine in use even prior to the building of Fire Station No. 1 — Circa 1948.

YUCCA VALLEY'S Station No. 1, housing our first Fire Engine and Tanker-Pumper, Old Nellie — Circa 1952.



Next, Capt. Don Lewin, an advisory officer and instructor; Davis; Storey, Mac McClung, Blackie Owens, John Headley, Clay Tunstall and Jule Boldizsar started a fund-raising campaign for the purchase of equipment. The Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce got behind the volunteer movement and sponsored the fund-raising drive. While that was going on Alice Webster and Edith Peters spent a day canvassing the entire area for contributions and returned with a fairly fast \$135.

Enough money was raised to purchase the first equipment — a fire truck and an auxiliary pressure pump. For personal reasons Davis was unable to continue as Chief and Clay Tunstall became the first full-term Fire Chief. Tunstall provided day and night housing the service for the department's equipment.

In those early years there were Annual Firemen's Balls to raise money to keep everything going. One of the most memorable sights for the townspeople at one of the first balls was the vision of Corene Hammett riding on the fire truck and wearing a beautiful, bright red chiffon gown.

Though indebted to all the volunteers and supporters, by April, 1951, it was obvious that a more complete operation was needed for the rapidly expanding town. County assistance was sought and a Fire Protection District was planned. In July, 1951, the citizens voted overwhelmingly for the creation of the special district which encompassed, at that time, nine sections.



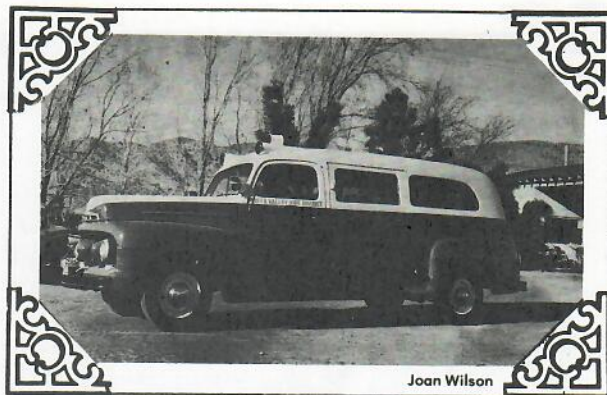
ODIE RAY, Chairman of our first Board of Fire Commissioners.

The first Board of Commissioners consisted of Odie Ray, chairman; Jule Boldizar; Clay Tunstall; Jess Tonkin; and A.C. Stout.

Soon it was realized that a fire station with a night attendant and a telephone were musts for the district. So, Bill and Rose Pace who moved to Yucca Valley in 1946, and built their Buckin' Horse Ranch, donated a piece of their property on the Twentynine Palms Highway, just west of Boldizar's Shell Station.

County taxes paid the district's operating expenses but it was going to be a wait for the station. Once again, the town got busy and the fund-raising efforts were flying. In addition to the balls, the Yucca Valley Community Players, as they were then known, put on a three-act play written by M. Brooks Buxton especially for the benefit of the Yucca Valley Fire Department Building Fund.

This was in October, 1953. A mystery entitled "Checkmate," the play starred Kenn Witting, Harold Westcott, Harry S. Wallman, Ruth English, Ruble Caerbert, Vesta Peters, Mary Hardesty, Clyde Barth, George Scott and Charlsie, Floyd and Sandi Peters.



YUCCA VALLEY'S first ambulance, sponsored by the Lions Club, purchased with public contributions, operated by Volunteer Firemen.

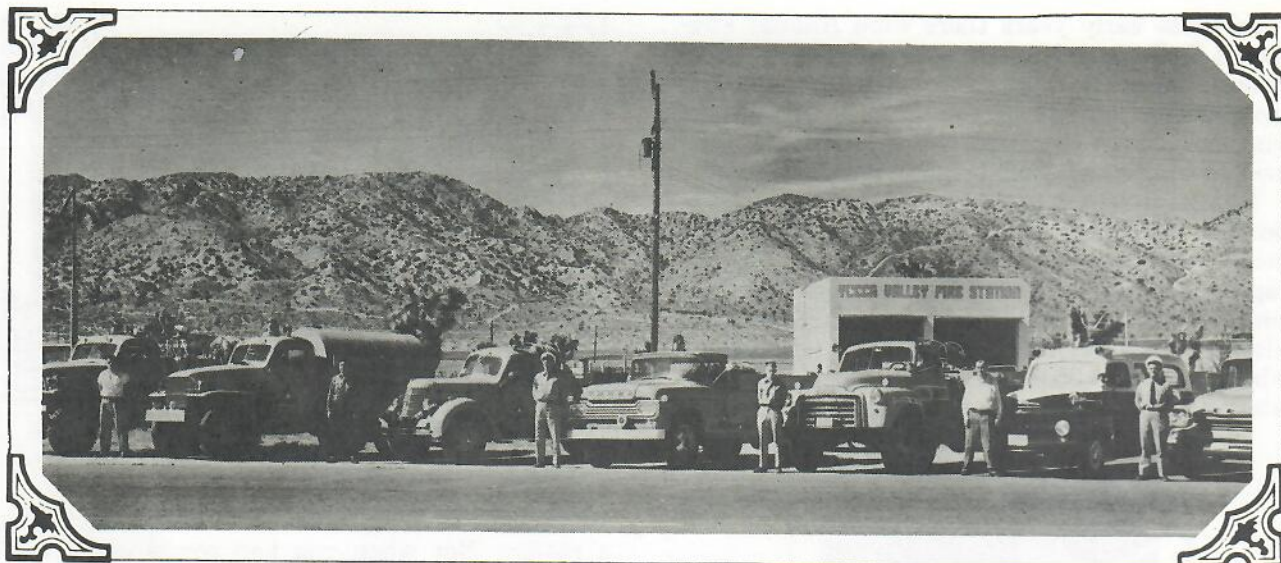
It wasn't too long before Fire Station No. 1 was a reality. Not when you had townspeople who were more than willing to volunteer their labor and build the station, all bright and shiny, from the ground up. Men who didn't just talk, but who gave their time, skills and the sweat of their brows for the benefit of their community. Men like Eddie Garver, Clay Tunstall, Woody Wilson, Ron Webb, Hap Rigby, John Arch, Ralph Kingston, Edwin Kruder, Kenn Witting, John List, Bill Pace, Jim O'Connor, Chick Ristine, Everett Taylor, Billy Royal, Paul Perrin, Ernie Peters, Howard Heard, Paul Griswold, Freddie Marble, Little Beaver and John Kee. Any time materials were running short Jule Boldizar and Odie Ray reached in their pockets and supplied the "grease" to keep the wheels moving.

At the time of the play and the fund-raising push A.J. LeFever and Dr. John Bendall had replaced Tonkin and Stout on the Board of Commissioners.

Clay Tunstall was Volunteer Fire Chief; Boldizar, Assistant Chief; Ed Hardesty, Captain; and Don Lewin, Advisory Captain and Instructor.

Volunteer Firemen included Paul Griswold, Fred Tunstall, Don Taylor, Chet Lemke, Grant Redden, Dean Evans, Harvey Odgers, Gordon Barth, Ralph Anderson, Chick Ristine, Eddie Kruder, Ralph Kingston, Johnnie Arch, Earl Rising, Roy Jewett, Roy H. Paul, Richard Harmon, Ernie Peters, Kenn Witting, David Erfurt, Jimmy O'Connor, Glenn Harper, Everett Taylor, Bill Lace, Jack Barrett, A.W. Holt, Jr., Keith Hagan, Clyde Barth, Glen Hammett, Bill Pace, Charlie Watkins, Father Smith, Eddie Garver, Harold Westcott, Lee Cotton, Ken Horton, Lionel Plasse and Lou Urmston.

The next item needed was a resuscitator. Without hesitation Vi Humphreyville, Dorothy Tunstall and Dorrine Gerth started another fund-raising campaign and collected a sufficient amount of money to purchase the resuscitators, which was presented in the memory of Vi's late husband, Tom.



EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT and the men who operate it Circa 1958 — shown L to R - Roland Webb, Hap Rigby, Edwin Kruder, Jim O'Connor, Odis Ray and Chief Harry Brissenden.

The Yucca Valley Lions Club, under the direction of Paul Perrin, president, sponsored the fund-raising campaign that enabled the town to purchase a much-needed ambulance in the spring of 1958. The hard-working Lions were greatly assisted by their wives — the Dandee-Lions. After the ambulance was purchased it was turned over to the district for \$1. The very welcome ambulance was operated by the volunteer firemen.

Fire Station No. 1 was operating smoothly and was a comfort to the people but the town kept growing toward the east and the need for a

second fire station was admitted. Charlie Watkins and his wife, Joan, donated a parcel of land on the highway just west of Joshua Lane. There a newer, larger Fire Station No. 2 was built. It is the present headquarters station. In 1969, the original Station No. 1, now outmoded, was closed down and the property reverted back to Bill Pace.

Harry Brissenden was hired as the Fire Chief, receiving partial pay, thus becoming the first paid Chief. He served from 1959 to 1967. His Assistant Chief was David Harmon. The first district now encompassed 22 sections of land.

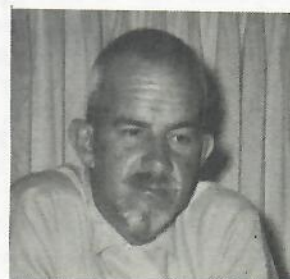


Hank Scott

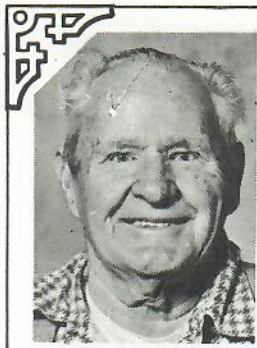
THE MEN of the present-day Yucca Valley Fire Department. Proud to serve Yucca Valley and make it a better, safer place to live.

BACK ROW, from left, Steve Darr, John Swenson, John Licher, Rick Denison, Roger Picard and Dave Garry.

FRONT ROW, from left, Ed Thornton, Bob Diehl, Henry Scott, Gary Pohlman, Mike Fagan, Steve Sipes and Don Westfall. Not in picture: Jerry Merriam, Kim Bliss, Gerry Bradshaw, Gary Benedict and Mike Nelson. — May 1984.



William Harmon—Volunteer



Clay Tunstall
First Fire Chief



Chief Harry Brissenden



Asst. Chief David Harman



Everett Taylor

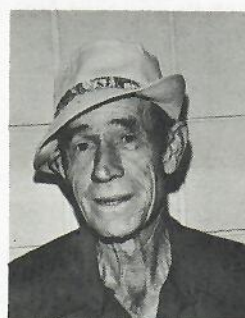
Bob Stephenson



Ralph Kingston



Jules Boldizar

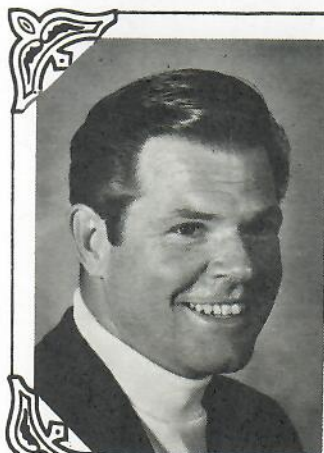


Paul Griswold



Art LeFever

Bob Stephenson



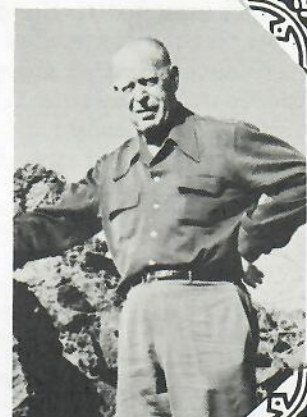
Chief Wm. Cook

Odis Ray continued as board chairman and Ed Hardesty and E.E. Boyd replaced Clay Tunstall and Dr. Bendall as commissioners. By this time a complete training program had been set up and, among the commissioners with ambulance driving and Advanced Red Cross Training were Ray, LeFever, and Hardesty. Boyd was in charge of the Ambulance Division.

The firemen (all still volunteers) who had similar ambulance and Advanced Red Cross Training were Ralph Kingston, Gordon Barth, Everett Taylor, Jack Weaver, Robert Durant, Al Furton and Roland (Ron) Webb. Other volunteer firemen were Paul Griswold, Daniel Pekarovich, Jr., W.T. Harmon, Jr., Raymond Royal, L.A. McCulloch, Jack D. Bottorff, William F. Great-house, Woody Wilson, Thomas H. Green, John G. Kee, Jr., Harold Rigby, Ray Sumner, Al Young, Isidor D. Vannozzi, William M. Adams and Morgan Reche.

Chief Brissenden planned many unannounced School Fire Drills to get the children used to acting in an emergency. One day, in a surprise drill (even the principal was surprised) the Yucca Valley Elementary School evacuated the students, teachers and administrative staff in a flat 27 seconds! The Fire Department sent out twelve volunteer firemen and three pieces of equipment and arrived at the school in three minutes!

By now the halls were an institution in the still-



Jule Boldizar
Al Anderson



young town and the 11th Annual Firemen's Ball held September 10, 1960, featured the always popular Firehouse Five Plus Two. All money raised went into the Rescue Equipment Fund.

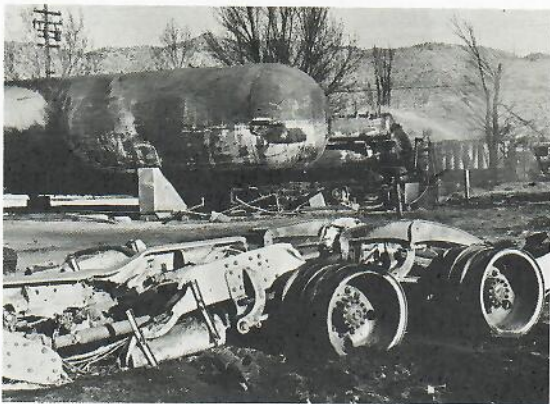
By the time William A. Cooke, Jr., had replaced the retiring Harry Brissenden as Fire Chief, most of the firemen were employees, not volunteers. The three oldest employees, in terms of service, are Hank Scott, now an Engineer, who started in 1964; Jerry Merriam, a Captain, who started in 1966; and Charles Hollier, Battalion Chief, who started in 1968.

Many of the firemen attend the Fire Science courses at Chaffey College and College of the Desert. In 1976, two Federal Government Grants set up the Paramedics Program for the Yucca Valley Fire Department. Grants of \$43,000 and \$27,000 paid for the training and equipment for the vital program. How many balls would the old-timers have to give to match that? The end result is Yucca Valley's life saving services are the best to be found anywhere.

The department's "finest hour" came in February, 1970, when, under the direction of Chief Cooke, it fought and put out the Uni-Gas propane fire after a delivery truck exploded. The firefighters were able to keep the large underground storage tank cooled down enough (despite the terrific heat of the fire) so it did not explode, thereby saving a large portion of the town from destruction.

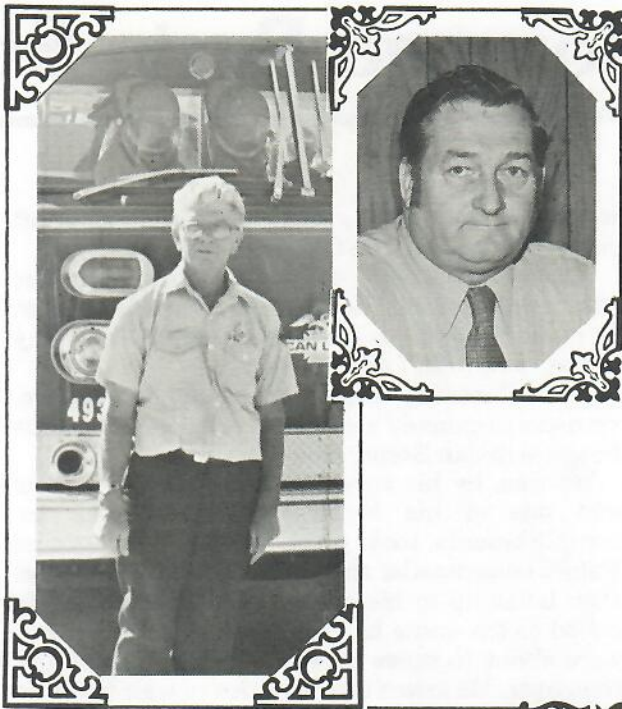
As the area developed additional sections of land were annexed to the district, so, naturally, another station was needed. Harold and Cathleen Reed donated land at the corner of Avalon and Aberdeen in Yucca Mesa. A new station was built and ready for occupancy in 1974. It became Station No. 2 and the headquarters station became Station No. 1.

Bob Stephenson



Bob Stephenson

ABOVE — Picture of the Unigas outlet before the fire. Right top to bottom, shots of the destructive fire and the devastation shown the morning after.



Today, Fire Chief Clarence L. Gish, supervises the personnel of thirty paid firemen and ten volunteers at the main station in Yucca Valley and the Yucca Mesa station. The district has filled out to 52 square miles.

Fire Department equipment includes four Class A fire trucks, two fully-equipped ambulances and two water tenders. There are approximately 1,350 fire hydrants (all marked on maps) in the district — with more being installed as we continue to grow.

Clay Tunstall is retired and still lives in Yucca Valley; Harry Brissenden passed away in 1983; and Bill Cooke still lives in Yucca Valley.

The Yucca Valley Fire Department participates with all other fire fighting departments in the Morongo Basin in a Mutual Aid Program for emergencies. It is also active in community services by offering classes in CPR and physical fitness and in showing films and giving demonstrations. It also schedules regular Blood Pressure Reading Days.

Most people agree that it's very nice and comforting to have a professional fire department, but the present-day crew is ever-mindful of the debt of gratitude owed to all those volunteers and boosters who really did sacrifice time, money and labor to create (for the love of a town) the department that was turned over to them. ■



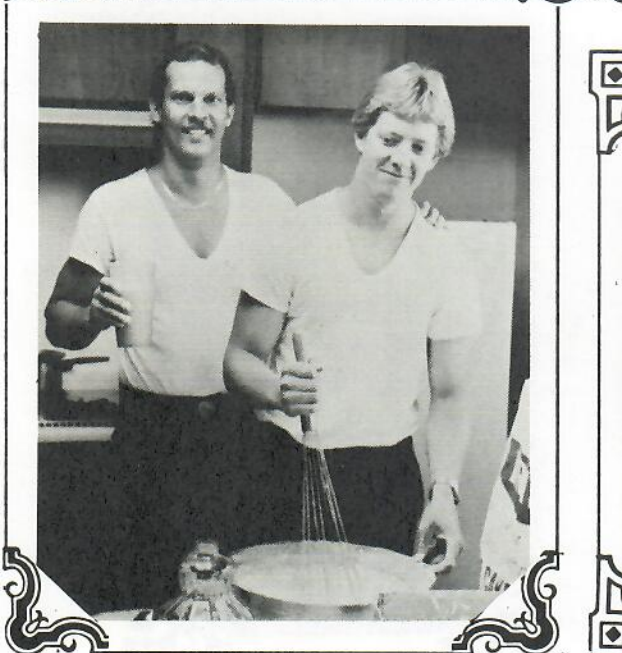
Counter-clockwise — starting from top right:

PRESENT Chief Clarence Gish

Hank Scott, who received a 20-year pin for dedicated service.

ANNUAL Pancake Breakfast benefiting Fire Fighters Association — John Swenson and Gary Benedict, Culinary Artists for the Fire Dept. Breakfasts.

Y.V. FIRE STATION — Mr. Carpenter, Otis Ray, Fire Commissioner Forest Baxter, Francis Wood, Magda Lawson, County Supervisor, Paul Perrin, Mr. Hanft, representing Red Cross.



Law And Order • Morongo Basin Style

Naturally, Charlie Reche comes to mind as the Morongo Basin area's first lawman in the earlier years of this century. Then, in 1930, Gustavis "Gus" Seely became the first appointed officer for the vast and still remote territory. He was both Constable and Deputy Sheriff, the latter being a non-salaried commission at the time. He was on call 24-hours a day.



CHARLIE RECHE, 1910, the area's first law man.

Orville J. "Jack" Cones and his wife, Clara, had homesteaded in Twentynine Palms in 1928. A World War I veteran, Jack had been seriously wounded in combat and had been left with a bad leg and foot—but that didn't slow him down a bit. In 1932 he took over Seely's duties and, in the next 28 years, he became one of the best liked and most admired law officers in the county. His starting salary was \$25 a month. He had his own plane and in those first years in office he flew it all over his territory at his own expense. Of course his nickname was "The Flying Constable."

He did some of his patrolling by car and by horse, but mostly he flew. Taking to the air at a moment's notice, he assisted in all the Basin's search and rescue operations; he actually landed his airplane on the desert roads and helped people stranded in balky cars get underway once more; he would make "fly-bys" over mines and cabins and give a wig-wag "hello" to the more remote residents; and, in his happiest trips of all, he

would fly in presents and candy to the far-off ranch children at both Christmas and Easter.

He knew, literally, everyone who lived in the Morongo Basin in those earlier years and, later, he made it a point to get acquainted with as many of the "new folks" as he could.

He voluntarily drove the local ambulance, transporting many a sick or injured person to the hospital in San Bernardino.

He was, by his very nature, a legendary man; and one of his legendary (and typical) accomplishments took place when a Twentynine Palms homesteader shot and killed a woman and then holed up in his cabin. The Deputy Sheriffs called to the scene had his cabin surrounded and were about to move in when Jack appeared and took over. He asked the Deputies to wait while he went in and talked to the man, whom he knew. Inside, he did talk, politely asked for and received the man's gun and they walked out. He was an early-day, calm-talking, one man SWAT Team!

On February 7, 1960, an era came to an end with Jack's death. It was a Sunday and he and Orville Jones, Safety Engineer from the Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, had flown into the Yucca Valley Airport in Jack's well-recognized Piper Cub. They visited with Yucca Valley Fire Chief Harry Brissenden, John Arch and many other flying aficionados enjoying the perfect weather day. Then the pair got back into the plane for the return flight. During the take-off

THE Flying Constable — Jack Cones.



..... Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office



SHERIFF Frank Bland



JACK CONES with his ever-present Piper Cub — Circa 1958.

1981 — Sheriff Floyd Tidwell giving Ernie Sall a plaque for long service in the Search & Rescue. Ernie retired that night.

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT



SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

1967 — Yucca Valley's. Installed Robert Nordyke as Captain and Val Jones as Secretary-Treasurer. January 11, 1967 at Copper Room. Outgoing Officers are Jim Couzens, Captain, Charles Haynie, Secretary-Treasurer.

BACK ROW — Left to right: Ernie Sall, Larry Allison, Ray Atherson, Allen Weltz, Dr. Sterling Butler, Thomas Proctor, James Ishmael, James Goodman, Corky Kee, Charles Haynie.

FRONT ROW — Jim Couzens, Robert Nordyke, Lt. Joseph Karr of 29 Palms Sheriff Substation, Sheriff Frank Bland, Inspector Floyd Tidwell, Val Jones, Jack Volcic. Goodman and Proctor were sworn in as new members by Sheriff Bland. During the evening Ed Arnal talked on Indians of Arizona.



SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

SEARCH and Rescue Installation — January, 1974.

BACK ROW — Woodring, Statz, Rhoads, Ferkles.

FRONT ROW — Hughes, Krafft, Cubitt, Bland, Wilson.

the plane banked sharply, the motor stalled and the Piper Cub crashed to earth. Brissenden was the first to reach the crash site. He pulled Jones, who was critically injured but did live, from the plane. Thanks to the Fire Chief's quick actions there was no fire. However, it took a wrecking bar to extricate Jack from the plane's wreckage. He died en route to the Ince Hospital, Twentynine Palms.

The entire Morongo Basin, realizing it had lost a wonderful friend, deeply mourned his death.

Tom Mooney was the first full-time Deputy Sheriff to be assigned to the Morongo Basin, working out of Twentynine Palms. That was in June, 1952. He was joined by Deputy Bob Woods in 1953, and Deputy Leo Lewis in 1954. When San Bernardino County Sheriff Frank Bland took office in 1955, "Doc" Martin became the first Deputy Sheriff to be assigned to Yucca Valley.

Ron Webb became the Resident deputy for Yucca Valley in 1957. In the old-time tradition, he was on call 24-hours a day. His allotted territory covered Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, Pioneertown, Landers, Johnson Valley and Morongo Valley, an area of approximately 640 square miles.

Deputy Webb was assisted by nine members of the Sheriff's Reserve Unit. They were James O'Connor, George Balazs, David Hansen, Ernest Peters, Joel Hammett, Roger Melanson and Larry Gray, of Yucca Valley; Harold Rigby, of Morongo Valley; and Howard "Red" Davidson, of Pioneertown.



1961. Yucca Valley Sheriff's Rangers Search and Rescue group. Front row, left to right: Clifford Endeman, Roger Melanson, William J. Farris. Standing, left to right: Charles P. Haynie, William P. Morrison, Charles Kee, Roy S. Smith, R. Sterling Butler, John L. Kee, Robert Howell, Roy Carter, Newlin Landers, Ralph Ewing.

The Yucca Valley Rangers, headed by John Kee, were used in search and rescue missions; and four local pilots volunteered their services and placed their planes at Webb's disposal. They were Jule Boldizar, Myrle Ruple, John Arch and Ray Bennett.

In 1959, a small office was opened in the Plaza by the Sheriff's Department. (Editor's Note: Actually, it shared an office. The full office belonged to the Yucca Valley Chamber of

Commerce which gave free rent and space to the Sheriff's Department, the County Building Inspector, the Hi-Desert Star and the Yucca Valley Post Office after it burned down. No visitor to that office could ever say he didn't know what was going on in town!)

In these pleasant surroundings Truman Clifford was the Deputy Sheriff. He was replaced by Deputy Jo Karr in that post. Roger Melanson replaced Karr in May, 1960. Karr returned to the Basin years later as a Captain in command of the Twentynine Palms Sub-station.

The Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office and Melanson moved into new quarters on Acoma Trail in 1961. The following year he was joined by a second Deputy—Ed Baker. Later, Deputy Ted Dykes joined them.

Still another move took place for the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office when it acquired the most spacious quarters up to that time on Church Street. Opening on March 1, 1966, under the supervision of Sgt. Louis Richenberger, it boasted a four man staff: Deputies Ted Dykes, Ed Burke, Rudy Likens and Gene Rogers. Pearl Barden was the Deputy Clerk. Detectives Roger Melanson and Robert Dunham were also assigned to the local office. In August of that year Sgt. Richard R. Rhoads replaced Richenberger as supervisor.

The Sheriff's office has recently moved from their location in Yucca Valley, just west of the Ideal Mall. This was the former home and workshop of Roy Jewett, Famous as the Desert lampmaker.

Under Capt. E.E. Crawford, commander of the Twentynine Palms Sheriff's Sub-station, and Lt. R. Dean Knadler, supervisor of the Yucca Valley Office, there were (counting sergeants, detectives, deputies and limited duty deputies) thirty-five law officers maintaining the peace in the area. There were also three deputy clerks in the offices. In addition, the Sheriff's Reserve Units, the Yucca Valley Rangers and the Morongo Basin Sheriff's Mounted Posse stood ready to give assistance at any time.

Lt. Rhoads and Deputy Clerk Barden have retired and Detective Melanson is on disability sick leave. All are still living in the Yucca Valley area.

The Sheriff's Sub-station is now moved and headquartered in the new County Complex in Joshua Tree, the personnel roster will be enlarged and will grow with the burgeoning area. Both the population growth and the additional law enforcement coverage is something old Charlie Reche and Flying Constable Cones would say was a darn good idea. ■



1955. Staff of the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, left to right: Ed Burke, Sgt. Richard R. Rhoads, Supervisor of Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, Ted Dykes and Pearl Barden, Deputy Clerk.



ABOVE — The people who served Yucca Valley and the Morongo Basin in 1967. They are, left to right: Sgt. Richard Rhoads, Deputies Elwood Haas, A.C. James, Jr., Cyril J. Couzens, B.E. Pope, Capt. Joseph M. Karr, Area Commander and Clerk Pearl Barden.



1958. Ambulance drivers' class in first aid and handling ambulance patients. Front row, left to right: Ben Carpenter, Red Cross Instructor; C.R. Loy, Red Cross Instructor from the 29 Palms Marine Base; Paul Perrin. Center row, left to right: Red David Hanson, Odis Ray, Roger Melanson, Ralph Kingston, Woody Wilson, Sam Hines, Ed Boyd, Ronnie Webb. Back row, left to right: Gordon Barth, Floyd Peters, Hap Rigley, Ernie Peters, Art LeFever, Ed Hardesty, Jimmie O'Connor.

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT



SHERIFF FLOYD TIDWELL installing 1981 Officers. Com. Rocky S. Saliccioli, Com. Gordon Atherton, Sec./Tres. Bob Dunn, Training Officer C.J. Glover.



THE LAST location of the Yucca Valley Sheriff Station. HEADQUARTERS is now in Joshua Tree in the County Complex.

Yucca Valley Rangers..Sheriffs Mounted Posse

The Yucca Valley Rangers, in keeping with the true "Spirit of the West," started as a horse group. It was formally organized in September, 1955, with the original membership consisting of John Kee, Dr., Charlie Kee, Roy Kee, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Perrin, Mr. and Mrs. Belcher, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Brownell and Mr. and Mrs. Kenny. The women in the group were installed as deputies.

Through the years the Yucca Valley Rangers' Search and Rescue Unit has served well the community and the whole desert area. As part of their volunteer duties they search for all people reported lost or missing in the desert, rescue and return those lost people when found, administer first aid when needed, search for evidence in connection with crimes, assist the Sheriff's Department during floods and other natural disasters and perform crowd-control and traffic-control duties during special events at Yucca Valley High School and at community observances such as the Easter Sunrise Services at Desert Christ Park and the Grubstakes Days Parade.

They also participate in monthly practice and training sessions in which they receive instructions in jeep driving, tracking, first aid, firearms and mine-shaft rescue.

The Rangers have also actively sponsored special sporting events, benefit movies, community clean-up campaigns, picnics, etc. "Jonesy" became well-known to many a youngster as the boss of the motorized chuckwagon at many of these events.



SEARCH & RESCUE at work — Four shown here are Charlie Kee, Jim Grover, Corky Kee, Gordon Etherton.

The Rangers' Captains have been Paul Perrin, 1955-56; John "Corky" Kee, 1957-58; Ed Boyd, 1959; Corky Kee, 1960; Dr. R. Sterling Butler, 1961-62; James Ishmael, 1963; Corky Kee, 1964; Donald Dougan, 1965; Jim Couzens, 1966; Robert Nordyke, 1967; Jack Volcic, 1968; Robert Nordyke, 1969; Lee Edge, 1970; Bill Iliff, 1971; Jerry Ducey, 1972; Dave Cubitt, 1973; Don Kraft/Hap Harlow, 1976; Norman Cloutier, 1977; Jerry Woodring, 1978; Dave Cubitt, 1979; and John Mahany, 1980.

Four Yucca Valley Rangers took the College of the Desert course on rock climbing and rock rescue in 1978. They were Jerry Woodring, John Mahany, George Marshall and Rod Weidner. The following year the Rangers formed a Rock Team for the Search and Rescue Unit. Original members of the Rock Team were Bill Commerford, C.J. Glover, Bruce Willingham, Roger Cloutier, Jerry Woodring, Steve Shafer, John Mahany and Rod Weidner. Rick Anderson, Joshua Tree National Monument Superintendent, was not a member of the Yucca Valley Rangers but was a member of the Rock Team.

As the Rangers unit grew in size it turned more and more to mechanized transportation. But it was also acknowledged that there would always be a need for the man on a horse. With this very much in mind, Sheriff Frank Bland instituted the new Morongo Basin Sheriff's Mounted Posse and presented Donald B. McDowell with his Captain's bars on June 16, 1966.

Founding year members of the Posse were Sheriff's Detective Roger Melanson, Rudolfo Arce, Karl Arnold, Jr., Travis Blocker, Jamie Cain, T.A. Candelario, Darwin Cline, Rex Combs, David Coyner, Howard Davidson, Richard Hedrick, George Hostler, John Hulbert, Fred Johnson, Charles A. Kee, Roy Kee, Rudy Meier, Raymond Milsted, Truman Peet, Ira Philipps, Duane Pierce, Darrell Pitts, Tom Riggs, Hugh Shaffer, Albert Van Diver, Howard D. Vore, Eugene Weslow and John Zoller.

The Posse performed the same duties as the Rangers, plus its members rode in many mountain and desert area parades and participated in the very grueling re-enactment of the Willie Boy posse tracking. ■

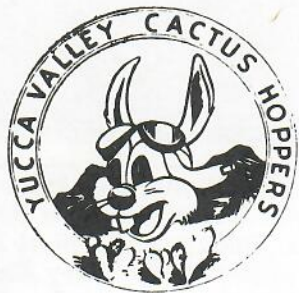
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Remember when the Yucca Valley Rangers played the Harlem Clowns (a unit of the Harlem Globetrotters)? It was October, 1960. Forget the score. But never forget that it was Roger Melanson, Dr. R. Sterling Butler, Charlie Haynie, Tony Petruzzello, Bill Morrison, Bill Mowbray, Bob Howell, Ray Smith, Newlin Landers and Roy Carter who volunteered for the game of their lives. ■

Yucca Valley Sky Corral

Jule and Val Boldizsar and their two daughters, Judy and Sherry, moved to Yucca Valley in the spring of 1947. Jule set right to work building his private dream — a Super Service Station to accommodate both aircraft and automobiles — and the Yucca Valley Sky Corral was born. He cleared and graded a 3,000 foot dirt landing strip north of the highway. His station, the best tradition, was built on the highway with the cars being serviced in front and the planes in the back of the building. At the west end of his highway frontage he built his beautiful native rock home. Later he filled in the space between his home and the Shell Station with the Sands Motel and a fine stand of shade trees.

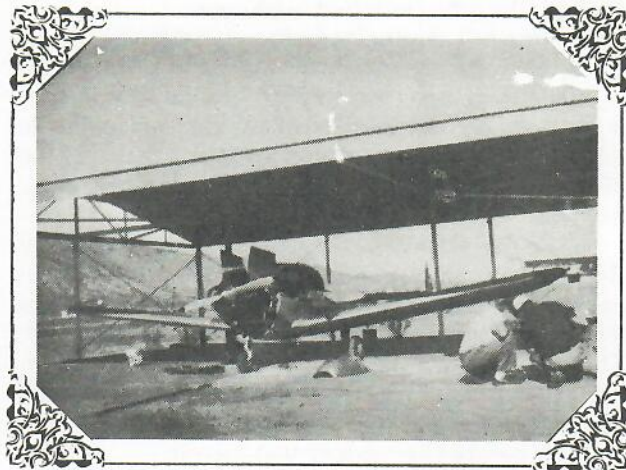
Jule, an inveterate flyer himself, quickly attracted other local and soon-to-be-local pilots to his airstrip. That first happy group was called the Yucca Valley Cactus Hoppers.



LOGO for Yucca Valley's first flying club — 1964.

Very shortly private flying clubs from all points of the compass were "dropping in" at the Yucca Valley Sky Corral on Saturdays and Sundays. They would leave their planes on the airstrip, troop across the highway to Ray's Cafe for a delicious house-specialty breakfast of Swedish pancakes and lingonberry jam as prepared by Vi Ray's mother, Gussie. When they had eaten their fill (sometimes two and three irresistible orders apiece) they returned to the airstrip and swapped stories with Jule and the other pilots. Then they would get in their planes and fly off, promising to return often — and they did.

The Sky Corral was a very busy place during the late 1940's and early 1950's when the airstrip was much used by television and movie stars and production crews enroute to Pioneertown. While the films were being shot, their planes, delivering personnel and some light equipment, would fly in



FIRST hangar built at Yucca Valley Sky Corral in 1948.

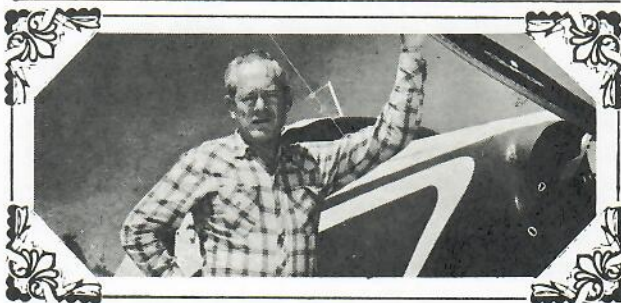
and out every day for weeks at a time. Jule's telephone was the message center and exchange between the Hollywood studios and the on-the-set producers.

According to Jule, there have been, on occasion, two twin-engine Douglas DC 3's and a twin-engine Beechcraft D-18-S on that small field at the same time. The very early flights were made by famed United Airlines pilot, Paul Mantz.

Jule was a flight instructor at the time and, over the years, added several dozen joyful local flyers to the wild, blue yonder.

By the mid-50's progress took its toll and it became apparent that population growth and developing subdivisions would soon squeeze out the little airstrip.

Dr. John Bendall was one of the local pilots who wanted to keep an airport in the community. So, in 1957, he built the present-day Yucca Valley Airport, located east of Old Woman Springs Road and south of his former home at Warren's Well. He was living there at the time, of course.



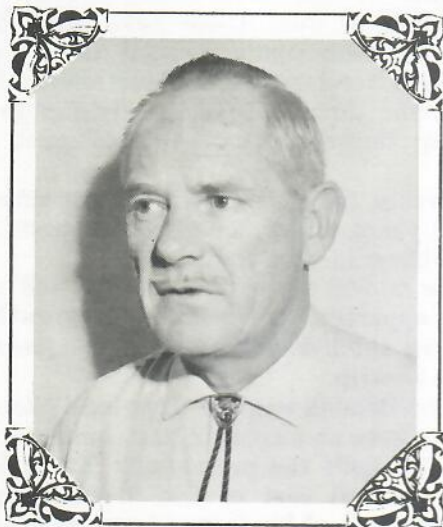
DR. JOHN BENDALL, original builder of Yucca Valley's present airport. Dr. Bendall passed away Sept. 30, 1984.

He designed the airport for his use and for the other local flyers. Those who bought lots and built homes along the runway (including Jule and Val) taxi their planes from the main runway right into their own private hangars at the rear of the houses. The fronts of the houses open onto the streets like other subdivision homes.

Dr. Bendall originally built a 2,700 foot dirt airstrip, installed a gasoline pumping service and runway lighting. The Copper Room Restaurant was built for the benefit of all the townspeople and visitors, but especially for the airborne. One of the first permanent signs to be installed in the bar was "Flying Is Spoken Here."

In the early 1960's Norm Essig, Art Miller and Bob Potter, after making arrangements with all concerned, extended the runway to the east to a length of 4,200 feet. The runway was then paved. They still laugh about the poor Copper Room bartenders who had to run, frantically take down all the glasses and wash them every time a plane took off before the runway was paved.

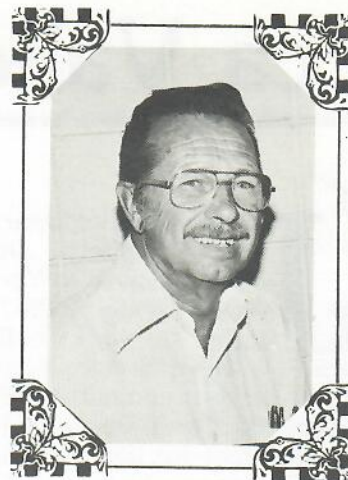
Being a medical man with a growing practice, Dr. Bendall could not afford the time to operate an airport, too, so he regretfully sold it to a group of businessmen from Redondo Beach. They planned to operate the airport and build an airtel for visiting and vacationing flyers. It was a good idea but their plans were not completed.



DR. JOHN BENDALL, whose skill as a physician and love of flying did much to bring the age of flight to Yucca Valley.

Dr. Bendall, along with Essig and Miller, wanted to buy back the airport. However, the Redondo Beach owners sold it to another local group comprised of Emory Stromberg, Mike Arrasmith, Leon Selzer and Dan Harrison. In later years Ray White took over the Yucca Valley Airport.

Meanwhile, through all the years more and more people were flying in and out and moving next to the airport. The roster of local pilots included (naturally) Jule, Dr. Bendall, Essig,



ABOVE, Jules Boldizzar, one of Yucca Valley's strongest boosters.

BELOW, Val and Jules Boldizzar around 1949 when Sky Corral and the Sands Motel were under their direction.



Stromberg, Glenn and Lil Hammett, Clyde Gilbert, Robert Shoenleber, Bob Roberts, Arrasmith, Potter, Johnny Arch, Myrl Ruple, Doug and Vonda Carlson, Miller, Jerry Kindseth, Ross Simpson, Cy Dieter, Al Peters, Ray Royal, Ralph and Dottie Kingston, V. Ray Bennett, Bill Hanson and Louis and Garnet Stockton.

Going back a bit, on Oct. 16, 1957, at a dinner given by the Hammetts at the Copper Room, those assembled decided to form an air club. They couldn't decide on a suitable name (having outgrown the Cactus Hoppers) but they elected Ruple the Civilian 4-Star General; Jule, Commander in Chief; Lil Hammett, 1st Vice President In Charge of Keeping Things Humming; Bill Riesen, 2nd Vice President, Resident General Mechanic and Flunky; Blanche Barrett, Secretary-Treasurer; Hammett, Dispatcher; and Eunice Ruple, Rosemary Riesen, Val, Lil and Blanche as the Welcoming Committee. Dues collected that night at 1¢ apiece were 9¢.

And still the visiting pilots flew into the airport in ever-increasing numbers. One Sunday in 1961, some sort of a record for a small airport was established when 86 transient aircraft landed in one day in addition to the regulars' flights being logged.



THE YUCCA VALLEY AIRPORT has played a big part in the development of the area. Shown left to right in 1960, at the opening of the Sky Harbor Subdivision, are Ben Gage, Mr. Tanner, President of Air Pony, Art Miller, Casey Rogers, John Haskell, Elsinore Machris and Harold Brown, then President of the Chamber of Commerce. Many real estate clients have found their way through the Yucca Valley Airport.

From 1962 to 1965, the flying members of the Yucca Valley Lions Club, assisted by Essig and Miller, voluntarily conducted the Flight For The Blind feature during Grubstake Days weekends. Those who bought tickets were flown over the Joshua Tree National Monument and around the Morongo Basin. All proceeds went to the Lions Club "Sight For The Blind" program.

The Flying Grandfathers, organized by aviation pioneer, Wally Timm, met monthly at the Copper Room and included in its far-from-creaking local membership such hot-shot pilots as Al LeFevre, Essig, Boldizsar, Schoenleber, Roberts and Hammett.

The local flying gentry were taking off for all parts foreign and domestic, also. One such adventure was the 11-day flight (just a short hop) in March, 1963, of a trio of Yucca Valley couples. They were the Hammetts, the Essigs and the Boldizsars. They flew to Silver Springs and Cypress Gardens, Florida; the New Orleans Mardi Gras; Nassau, in the Caribbean; and on to San Antonio, Texas, and the historic Alamo.

Typical of the kind of fun the flyers love to have was the Hangar Party given at Essig's hangar on Oct. 15, 1975. More than 250 guests crowded around to honor "Doc" and Evelyn Bendall and a trio of Yucca Valley birthday honorees — Mrs. Mabel Mellette, 92; Bill Pace, 82; and Al LeFevre, age not mentioned.

All five, plus the other guests, had a wonderful time at the party which was organized by Ann Murry and Phyllis Grubaugh. Joan Wilson was the emcee of the evening. Hal and Dottie Bahr

manned the bar while Stockton cooked hamburgers. Both Ray's Cafe and Mario's donated food "to the good cause."

Food preparers and servers were Phyllis, Angela Spencer, Kay Hulten, Milt Murry, Jessie Overkirk, Mary Hugentugler, Elsie LeFevre, Shoenleber, Val and Jule, Garnett, Doris Bigman and Mary and Art Gerpheide. Musical entertainment was provided by Lanny Moffitt, Marilyn Steely and Leonard Malin.

Darlene and Bob Roberts hosted an early-morning breakfast the next day for the clean-up crew.

The start of a new phase in the life of the Yucca Valley Airport took place in 1973, when Hawk Industries Aircraft Division built their company facility. The firm, engaged in aviation research and development, is headed by Ernie Hauk, president; Walt Zerman, administrative manager; and Larry Stewart, operations manager.

In 1981, the Yucca Valley Airport Home Owners' Association started the procedures to purchase the airport corporation and its assets and form an airport district to administer and operate the Yucca Valley Airport. Only those owning property around the airport would be included in the district. The proposal was approved first by the petitioners, then by both the Local Agency Formation Commission and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. In a very recent election the flying property owners voted to become a district and they, henceforth, are in charge. ■

Chamber of Commerce

Until a town has grown sufficiently in population and political influence to willingly attain cityhood and a regulated form of government, it usually must rely on the more informal (but, hopefully, practical) guidance and leadership of its chamber of commerce. Yucca Valley is no exception.

However, while it had the very good fortune to have many wise leaders and planners steering a steady course, there were a number of instances in the early years when enthusiasm became unbridled and plopped the chamber into some ticklish situations. Looking back, they now seem innocently hilarious, but at the time they left a wake of confused fear and baffled consternation.

None of these instances were "programmed" with cunning or malice aforethought. On the contrary, they grew out of a lack of knowledge and information. These were good, well-meaning people who seemed fated to learn each lesson the hard way.

For instance, there was the year the chamber hung a huge promotional Grubstake Days banner high up between two power poles flanking either side of the Twentynine Palms Highway. This was right in front of Dr. Richard Nahaas' former dental office on the west-end hill just before the Morongo Grade.

During the night the wind blew hard and it had also rained. The ropes got wet and stretched, allowing the banner to droop and lower its height. Back toward the center of town, no one noticed as they hurried into the Yucca Valley Coffee Shop for an early morning cup of coffee. None of the chamber boosters knew they were supposed to cut holes in the banner to let the wind blow through. But they found out!

All of a sudden there was a very loud "snap," a screech of brakes and they couldn't believe their eyes! The banner was completely wrapped around a big semi truck and the driver could not see a thing. Fortunately, there wasn't heavy traffic in those days and the driver was able to stop without damaging his rig. The damage was elsewhere on the street — the pull on the banner had snapped both power poles at ground level! Some days it just doesn't pay.

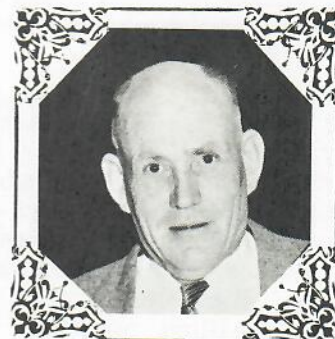
Another time, when Art Miller first arrived in town with his champion parade horse, Peavine's Golden Major, a chamber member arranged for the horse to be kept in a backyard with a barbed-wire fence! A lesson in the proper corralling and stabling of prize horse-flesh was quickly learned.

Then there was the first time the chamber engaged the Jalopy Races as a Grubstake Days attraction. Everything was running smoothly

when a deputy sheriff showed up with a warrant. That was how certain chamber members learned about obtaining permits. San Bernardino County Sheriff Frank Bland was a close friend of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce (having eased the members out of earlier bloopers). He was called, informed of the situation and he rapidly ordered the issuance of the permit, thereby surprising the deputy who did not want to let such hardened criminals get away.

Still another incident was more like a Halloween prank than a deliberate flaunting of authority. In 1962 the chamber and most of the townspeople wanted to change the name of the main thoroughfare in the town.

Among many suggestions, Yucca Blvd. was selected. The chamber duly requested the name change but the County Board of Supervisors turned it down. Everyone was disappointed.



THE LATE Roy Rousch, Chamber President 1956-1959. It was his effort that led to incorporation of the Chamber of Commerce in 1951.

Shortly after, on a dark night, a number of the promoters were sitting around the Glen Restaurant commiserating with each other. Suddenly, they decided action was called for. Stencils, and cans of quick-drying black and white paint were obtained. They split up into two groups and soon every sign along the highway read, "Yucca Blvd." It was a short, happy victory because the county painted the signs back to the original Twentynine Palms Highway.

In all fairness to the past chamber boards and its hard-working members, these examples are really exceptions to the rule. Their accomplishments included full support of the creation of the Volunteer Fire Department and, later, Fire District; the fund-raising campaign for the first fire truck and ambulance; the fund-raising campaign for a hospital and the creation of that district; the house-and-street-numbering

project; the street-lighting project; the census; the Pioneer Pass Push; early-day studies of incorporation and cityhood possibilities; the sponsorship of a town newspaper; the encouragement of people and businesses to move in; the work to form the park and recreation district, build a park and promote schools; they also kept track of good and bad zoning and sent delegations of citizens to San Bernardino if not satisfied; worked with the Associated Chambers of Commerce and went to the Los Angeles Public Utilities Commission hearings to fight for lower utility rates; helped get a new Post Office building; put in town signs at both the west and east ends; looked into the feasibility of cable television as regarded reception; cooperated with the Desert Beautification group; established a Wildflower Watch for the benefit of both residents and tourists; sponsored a curbs and gutter construction program on the highway; sponsored Grubstake Days; the Christmas Decorating Contest; co-sponsored the tumbleweed removal; promoted tourism and the town of Yucca Valley; and generally assisted the businessmen, merchants and townspeople in the more usual ways of a chamber.

Furthermore, these early-day chamber members (officers and troops) were operating on a shoe-string. They had no place at all to meet at first. They would gather around a couple of pick-up trucks parked on the highway, using the truck hoods as desks. Later Mort and Sam Rosenbaum, owners of Cabin Homes and Desert Builders' Emporium, gave the chamber a desk and phone to use — free. As soon as the chamber had enough members to cover it, it paid the phone bill itself. Sam also bought a copy of the Bureau of Land Management film of all Morongo Basin parcels which gave the names of all the property owners. He gave the film to the chamber for a mailing list.

The chamber itself was incorporated on December 10, 1951, after the diligent efforts of Roy Roush.

Right from the start, in 1948, the chamber accomplished a great deal and should be forgiven those few mistakes, especially since they almost always provided a retroactive laugh.

Typical of the businessman's-chamber member's spirit in those days was the way George Robinson, manager of Homestead Building Supplies, made his point in 1958. He got tired of hearing that there were no big businesses and/or payrolls in Yucca Valley. So, he went to the Bank of America and made arrangements. The next payday his employees were paid in silver dollars. The following week they received their pay in \$2.00 bills. There couldn't have been any doubters left that Robinson had an \$8,500.00 payroll per week as the town was awash with silver and \$2.00 bills.

Glen Gaines, Paul Neilson and Paul Lytell were three of Homestead's carpenters and Paul

Hammett painted all the signs and designed the now well known outhouse with TV antenna on the roof which Homestead incorporated as its logo in 1956.

Both the chamber and its representative businesses were happily impressed with Yucca Valley's development. In the 1959 issue of the Grubstake Days brochure, California Water and Telephone Company (which served the Hi-Desert) proudly advertised itself as "an independent, locally-managed telephone company whose properties have grown more rapidly than those of any comparable company in America."■

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hen the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1948, Dr. Thomas B. Sowell was elected president. He resigned in July, 1949, and was replaced by J.R. Shales until the next election.

In the following list of presidents it will be seen that some men served more than one term of office. Also, when a president had started his term and, for various personal reasons, had to step down, another replaced him. Therefore, there are more names listed for some of the years.

Art Katje was the first full-term president for the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce, serving from 1949-1950. He was followed by Jule Boldizar, 1950-1951; Archie LeFever, 1951-1953; Floyd J. Peters, 1953-1954; Emery Hanson, 1954-1955; Woody Vance, 1955-1956; Roy Roush, 1956-1959; Harold Brown, 1959-1960; Roy Roush, 1959-1960; Ken Bonser, 1959-1960; Harold Brown, 1960-1961; Ken Tornborg, 1961-1962; Norm Granger, 1962-1963; and Ed Rance, 1963-1964.

Bill Littleton served from 1964-1965; Jim Ishmael, 1965-1966; Ray Hapsburg, 1966-1967; Marv Wood, 1967-1968; Harry Logan, 1968-1969; Larry Fine, 1969-1970; Lanny Moffitt, 1970-1971; Ken Watts, 1971-1972; Carl Smelko, 1972-1973; Dominic Villani, 1973-1974; and Jack Harrington, 1974-1975.

Breaking the ice and a new precedent, Patty Schumacher was the first lady president, serving from 1975-1976. She was followed by John Uraine, 1976-1977; John Plavan, 1977-1978; Ted Fogel, 1978-1979; Frank Fleck, 1979-1980; Paul Carlisle, 1980; Bill Bryan, 1980-1981; Pete White, 1981-1982; Gary Hann, 1982-1983; and Keith Robbins, 1983-1984; and Hal Paradis, 1984-1985■

How To Celebrate A Town



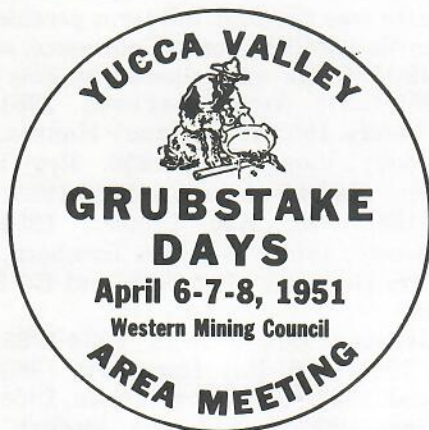
here comes a time in the life of most young towns when it is felt that some sort of an annual celebration or special event would be beneficial to everyone.

Yucca Valley came to that decision in 1950. Jule Boldizsar, a Chamber of Commerce officer, made a strong recommendation that the time was ripe for such a civic undertaking and his fellow directors and the townspeople agreed. They would hold a parade, sponsored by the Chamber.

That first year, 1950, they didn't have an official title for the event, but they certainly had a celebration — and a fine parade. Maybelle Royal was named the Queen of the parade. Kenn Witting, as the master of ceremonies, described each parade entrant, often with droll humor. The Yucca Valley Players entertained during the weekend.

The Chamber also sponsored Maybelle Royal as its Queen Contestant for the National Orange Show, in San Bernardino. In addition, it sponsored and manned a booth at the Orange Show to publicize the town of Yucca Valley.

Everyone was well-pleased with all these activities and it was obvious that Yucca Valley was ready and eager to get more involved with a larger observance to come.



The following year J.P. Hall, then publisher of the California Mining Journal and a Yucca Valley property owner, made arrangements with the California Mining Council to hold its meeting here. The Chamber went into action and started planning its second town celebration which would be held in honor of the Council and the visiting miners. The Chamber also wanted to give recognition to the early mining background of the Morongo Basin. The community celebration was given the name of Grubstake Days.



CACTUS KATE, first Grubstake Queen — 1951.



J.P. HALL, Publisher of California Mining Journal. His effort brought the first Grubstakes Celebration to Yucca Valley.

Cactus Kate, in all her glory, was chosen as the first Grubstake Days Queen. Sheriff Frank Bland was the Parade Grand Marshal. The true flavor of the miners' lives was maintained in the special events which included Grubstake Pack-Loading Contests and Gold-Panning Contests (using real gold nuggets obtained courtesy of the Mining Council). Before the weekend was over everyone was panning for gold. The visiting miners thoroughly enjoyed themselves, Grubstake Days was acknowledged to be a huge success and a tradition was launched.

• • Grubstake Days



Maybelle Baurtin
1950



Donna Royal
1952



Judy Hammett
1953



IN THIS GALLERY of the past are shown some of the Pageantry of the Queen's selection and an array of the first Queens of Grubstake Days. Above, the Pageant of 1959. Seated is Queen Beverly Hoffman. Her Court, standing are, left to right: Edna Briggs, Midge Tunstall, Sandy Harmon, Tina English, Nancy Garver and Cheryl Hammett.



Sandra Dodder
1954



Diane Peters
1955



Marguerite Hardesty
1956



Gloria Allee
1957



Tina English
1958



Beverly Hoffman
1959



Judy Brown
1960



Marginia Ewing
1961



Mary Lou Holland
1962

Jule Boldizar was in charge of that memorable first Grubstake Days. His main helpers (besides the ever-willing townspeople) were Archie Le Fever, Ole and Emory Hanson, Woody Vance, John Kee, Sr., Mrs. Harold Brown, Mrs. Lombardo and, of course, J.P. Hall.

In succeeding years Grubstake Days has grown larger and added many features, but the accent has always been western.

The earlier Queen Contests, which now also bestowed the "Miss Yucca Valley" title on the winner, were won by popular town vote.

Following Cactus Kate, the triumphant Queens were: Donna Evanoff Royal, 1952; Judy Hammett, '53; Sandra Peters Dudder, '54; Diane Peters, '55; Marguarite Schuller Hardesty, '56;

Gloria Allee, '57; Tyna English, '58; Beverly Hoffman, '59; Judy Brown, '60; Marginia Ewing, '61; Mary Lou Holland, '62; Emily Tornborg, '63; Sharon Whelan, '64; Peggy Allison, '65; Charyla Bridges, '66; Beverly Vollaire, '67; Doreen Smith, '68; and Sally Rassmusson, '69.

Other Queens have been Melanie Melanson, '70; Susan Goodwin, '71; Barbie Cummins, '72; Suzy Lenhardt, '73; Debra Denbo, '74; Nancy Gerpheide, '75; Mary Ann Carpenter, '76; Jennifer Bransford, '77; Charice Lyman, '78; Kim Korcha, '79; Sid Haley, '80; Julie Pechstedt, '81; Amie Negron, '82; and Lori Keyes, '83.

For three of the earlier years running Laurel Martin, an artist in her own right, was in charge of the Miss Yucca Valley Contest and designed and made the costumes for the Queens and their

Courts. Famed for her artistic creations in leatherwork, she made matching soft leather outfits for the girls. Laurel also made matching outfits of denim with leather fringe trim and her very popular Sand Dabs — leather mocassins. One of the many friends of the Martins is Ross Carmichael, a Life photographer who took pictures of the girls in their costumes for that magazine.

Enthusiasm carried over to all the clubs and organizations as each entered beautifully and laboriously decorated floats for the parades. Most of the floats were built on flat-bed trucks but, whatever the vehicle, it was decorated from top to bottom.

dressed up for the occasion and only Cactus Kate was allowed to wear her own "best bib and tucker."

The Queen and Court made appearances on four television programs over local Hollywood TV stations and a great number of Hollywood-based radio stations during the week before Grubstake Days.

Harold Brown was able to arrange for this "saturation" schedule of promotion plugs through the auspices of Bob Purcell, former station manager of KTTV, Channel 11; and Radio Station KFWB. Earlier Queens captured the Publicity spotlight courtesy of Jack Renfro, a regular advertiser on KTTV and KTLA, Channel 5; and Radio Station KFI.



THE TALENTED Laurel Martin is shown on the left and in center photo. Her designs in leather and her organizational talent kept Laurel in charge of the Miss Yucca Valley contest for several years. Judy Hammett, Miss Yucca Valley 1953, is shown wearing one of Laurel Martin's creations.

In the very early Grubstake years two separate Soapbox Derbies were held on Acoma Trail but, apparently, a continuing effort couldn't get off the ground and they were dropped.

The first well-documented Grubstake Days was in 1957, thanks to the Chamber's own newspaper, The Desert Star. That was the year that Queen Gloria Alee and her Princesses, Diane Peters and Tyna English, were chosen by popular vote at the Teen Age Dance held at the Yucca Valley Community Clubhouse on April 3. Johnny Arch was the master of ceremonies and Jean Arch was in charge of the contest and the girls' appearances throughout the year. Everyone was all

Television Western Star Rex Allen appeared as a featured attraction of the 1957 Grubstake Days. He crowned the Queen at the Coronation Ball on Friday, May 17. Then, on Saturday night, he presented his own western show as a benefit for the Yucca Valley Community Church and its building fund for a youth center. The handsome Western actor was introduced to Yucca Valley by Luther Colvin and Art Miller.

That year the Parade Grand Marshal was Brig. Gen. T.G. McFarlane, commander of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base.