



FRIENDS OF THE EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Preserving Inyo County's Past for the Future

FECM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

P.O. Box 33 Independence, CA 93526
info@fecm.org 760-878-5089

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

UPDATES: WHAT'S NEW

Museum Update:

The Museum is currently open Thursday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed to the public on Wednesdays.

The Jane Bright Memorial Rock Garden has been completed! Be sure to visit when you can. An informative brochure is under preparation.

Over these past months, Museum staff has posted more than 6,000 photographs on its online gallery, where visitors can do keyword searches, advanced searches, topic views, or simply enjoy the photographs at random. Go to <https://ecmuseum.pastperfectonline.com/> - this fascinating selection illuminates local history beautifully. The Museum has seen a significant increase in the number of photograph requests and interested viewers can order photographs.

In addition, California Revealed has posted 284 digitized Owens Valley oral histories from the Museum's collection. Visit them at <https://californiarevealed.org> (type in Owens Valley and/or Eastern California Museum for all the ECM postings).

Finally, we thank all who responded to the Museum's request for volunteers to help with various projects. If you can donate some time, please call the Museum at 760-878-0258.

In this issue and other updates:

In this issue, we report on the results of the recent Board of Trustees election, as well as outline upcoming Museum exhibits and FECM activities.

We also present a reflection arising from a Museum volunteer project that highlights the importance of our Museum's collections.

ANNUAL ELECTION AND MEETING

We had a very good turnout for the 2022 Board of Trustees election and thank all the members who sent in their ballots. Our new Board is as follows:

Officers (To serve a one-year term from March 2022 to March 2023):

Manuela Cerruti - President
Catherine Kravitz - Vice President
Jean Crispin - Treasurer
Linda Hubbs – Secretary

Trustees (To serve from March 2022 to March 2024):

Deena Davenport-Conway
Roberta Harlan
Bill Michael
Liz Toton

Active Trustees (Serving a two-year term from March 2021 to March 2023):

Tina Biorn
Jennifer Duncan
Lynn Johnson
Richard Potashin

Past President:

Mary Roper

We welcome our two new Board members, both of whom bring extensive experience to our efforts:

Liz Toton, a part-time resident of Independence since 2001, is now a full-time resident and happily retired from a forty-year banking career. Some of her hobbies include reading, gardening and fiber arts. This will be her third year volunteering for the AARP Tax-Aide program as a tax preparer for which IRS certification is required annually. As previous secretary of the Independence Civic Club and current Treasurer of the East Independence Sanitary District, she is very excited about joining the Friends of the Eastern California Museum board.

Deena Davenport-Conway served as a Board member from 2018 to 2021 and is returning with her special expertise in community outreach activities. She is the owner of Luxe Salon Bishop and currently the Board President for Eastern Sierra Pride.

Many thanks to our outgoing Board member Dave Wagner, who has been a Trustee for 15 years, including several terms as President and Chairman of FECM, a fascinating speaker on the area's geology, and creator of the Jane Bright Memorial Rock Garden. We also give our thanks to Pat McLernon, who served on the Board for approximately eight years.

This year, we held our annual meeting as a Zoom webinar. Our speaker, engineering geologist Cindy Pridmore, gave a fascinating talk titled *Ridgecrest Earthquake Sequence 2019 – Insights from the California Earthquake Clearinghouse*. Cindy presented much information about earthquakes, earthquake response, collaboration between government and technical experts, and critical resources for experts and citizens. The photographs showed the astonishing ground shift and sparked an interest in being able to see some of the actual locations.

We thank all of you who participated. If you missed the meeting, we taped the presentation. Please email us at events@fecm.org if you want a link.

UPCOMING MUSEUM EXHIBITS AND FECM EVENTS

In addition to the California Revealed oral histories and the ECM digital photo collection additions referenced in the “What’s New” section on the first page, Museum staff are setting up rotating exhibits in the Museum, each one up for visitors for approximately three months. The first exhibit, titled *Arborglyphs, The Art of Heritage*, highlights Basque history in the area and will be up in May through July. Nancy Hadlock and Board member Richard Potashin developed this project. The second one featuring mountaineer Andy Selters and “Smoke” Blanchard will run from September through November. Please be sure to check the Museum’s website for current information, as well as FECM’s website (www.fecm.org) and Facebook page.

MUSEUM PLANS

As you visit throughout the year, you will see changes throughout the Museum. A “gallery reset” is in process. The goal is to use the Museum’s collection to illustrate cohesive stories about life in the Owens Valley, bringing in as many perspectives as possible so visitors can get a good sense of what an extraordinary intersection of cultures and experiences the Valley has seen.

One of the updates currently planned is a redesign of the fossil exhibit to expand our understanding of the context and significance of Inyo County’s geologic past. Another is the creation of a set of outdoor interpretive panels for the Slim Princess No. 18 Engine, highlighting its place in local history.

You will also notice new display cases, environmental displays, new facility signage, and a refreshed bookstore. Staff is also reviewing its collection management procedures, with a view to better archival storage and creating a rotating exhibitions schedule to help preserve them. We, the FECM Board of Trustees, are happy to help as we are able, and we’re extremely grateful to our members and donors whose support makes it possible.

FECM PROGRAMS

Geology is in the air in 2022. In addition to the Jane Bright Memorial Rock Garden, 2022 is the 150th anniversary of the 1872 earthquake that resulted in numerous fatalities and brought down the Inyo County Courthouse in Independence. FECM, in collaboration with other local businesses and cultural organizations, have developed a tentative schedule. Please email us at events@fecm.org if you have any questions. We will post information on our website and Facebook pages.

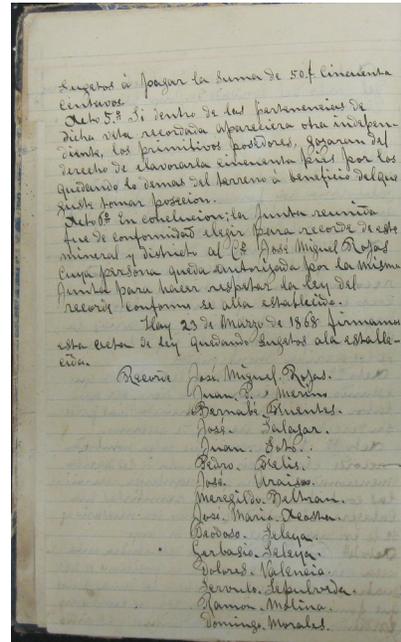
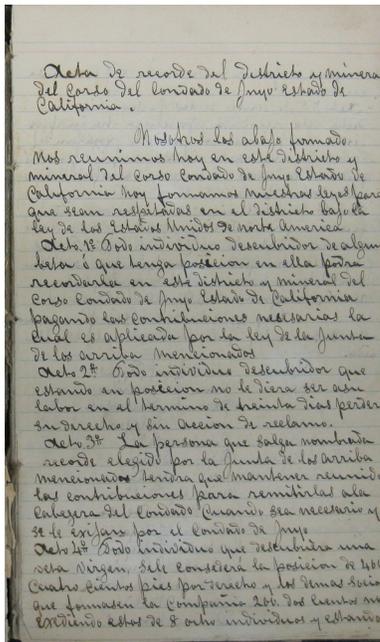
<i>April 2022</i>		
Rock Garden Dedication Event	April 10 Reception 1-2 p.m., Presentation 2-2:45 p.m.	Eastern California Museum, Independence
Independence Courthouse Birthday Celebration	April 10, 3 p.m.	Independence Courthouse
<i>May 2022</i>		
Speaker Series #1 Dr. Alan Glazner	TBD	Time/Location TBD
<i>June 2022</i>		
Speaker Series #2 Richard Potashin	June 18	Eastern California Museum, Independence
Earthquake Movie Series- How Does Hollywood View The “Big One?”	TBD	Lone Pine Film Museum
<i>July 2022</i>		
Independence 4 th of July Parade/Celebration		Independence
<i>August 2022</i>		
“Rock and Roll” summer concert at the LP Chamber Courtyard	TBD	Lone Pine
<i>September 2022</i>		
Ridgecrest Field Trip	September 17	Time/Location TBD
Lone Pine Rock and Gem Society Field Trip	TBD	Time/Location TBD

The Coso Mining District
An Appreciation of the Eastern California Museum

- A personal reflection by Manuela Cerruti

When we visit any museum, we might often register simply a snapshot of a place at a moment in time, without necessarily asking how does what we see fit into the complex intersection of narratives that we all experience, whether as history buffs or in daily life.

In early 2021, Museum Curator Heather Todd asked me to take a look at a Spanish-language notebook maintained by a group of miners, most likely Mexicans, who had set up a legal framework to regulate their mining activities and detailed all aspects of their project. The entries went from 1868 through 1871.



All the records detail the name and location of the subject vein, the names of the miners who are partnering in the effort, how many feet are allocable to each, and any other vein-specific details, duly dated and signed by the organization’s Recorder. The Recorder also kept records of fees and taxes paid to Inyo County, and the pages were sometimes also signed by the group’s Judges.

Beyond the details of the actual mining activities, there are extremely interesting windows into the miners’ lives. One social strata indicator in the form of address used in some of the entries. While most often the entries state merely First Name/Last Name, occasionally they will reference *Don* (a formal and respectful form of address, with “*Doña*” being the feminine form) or *Sr./Señor/Sres./Señores* (equivalent to Mr./Messrs.). Entries might reference miners by First Name/Last Name only, or First Name/Last Name and *Don* for another miner, or First Name/Last Name plus *Don* for one miner plus *Señor* for another in the same entry. Viewed from the perspective of today’s language usage, this would seem to be a clear indicator of social standing within the group.

This form of respectful address and possibly related social standing is not tied to literacy or educational levels. Throughout the document, the miners’ names appear with different spellings. These would have

sounded the same in the spoken Spanish of the Americas (e.g., Cilalla, Cilaya, Selaya) and would most likely be the same person as indicated by the same first name and the fact that they “signed” with a “+” mark, as they depended on the Recorder to write their names as best he could.

We can also see the relationship between the mining and ranching operations, with one notice explicitly stating “There will be no interruption of use of water by any beast or large animal herd [*ganado mayor*], except small animal herds [*ganado menor*] shall have no right to use the water, neither for drinking nor for any benefit of said smaller animals.” (*Ganado mayor* can be large animals such as cattle, horses, and mules. *Ganado menor* can be smaller animals such as sheep, pigs, and goats.)

As we go through the pages, we truly get a sense of who these people were, with an occasional unanswerable question. Until the entry for Claim #12, Juan Miguel Rojas, the Recorder to that moment, had exquisite handwriting. In this entry and the next, the text is almost undecipherable, especially the names. Subsequently, other persons served as Recorder, although he still appears in the claims. One must wonder what happened! Accident? Illness? We will never know.

Finally, one thoroughly interesting type of language usage is reflected in what we today call “Spanglish.” There is a distinction in these documents between *clemar/clemada* and *chompear/chompeada*. *Clemar* in its various forms is the English word “claim,” written as it might be pronounced in Spanish. Similarly, *chompear* in its various forms sounds like “jump” as in “jumping a claim.” Growing up in the middle of the last century and immersed in popular culture, I always thought only “bad guys” jumped claims by stealing them. However, many of these veins are “jumped” and also registered, and one mine is both *clemada* and *chompeada* by virtue of the original *cleme* having been abandoned, and another mine is subject to the third claim, it seems that *chompear/jump* means in this context to register a claim subsequent to the original claim’s being abandoned by the original owner.

And this brings me to why this is an appreciation of the Eastern California Museum: in wandering through the collections, and in volunteering to do projects such as this one, I end up asking myself, “what else didn’t I know?” What more can we learn? We are fortunate to have such a resource at hand to help answer that question.

Note: The original documents and the translation with translator’s notes are available at the Eastern California Museum. Also available is an original translation that was extremely literal, making it more difficult to read.

An additional resource available at the Museum is The Coso Mines, A Collection of Newspaper Articles Concerning the early Coso Mines. Compiler: Mark Davis, 1/1/2011, in which there is likely reference to “our” group of miners as follows: P. 12, September 05, 1870 (p?, c?) (excerpt: last pp.)

The Industrial Condition of the State.

A party of Mexicans, who settled in 1868 on some abandoned mines at Coso, fifty-five miles from Lone Pine, Inyo County, have taken out since April some \$30,000.

Join the Friends of the Eastern California Museum

The Friends of the Eastern California Museum work to promote, preserve and protect the important collections and memories that make up Inyo County's only regional museum. The Friends raise funds and contribute time and work to help maintain and improve the Museum's buildings and grounds. We support special exhibits and arrange for speakers, field trips, and programs that inform and entertain Inyo County residents and visitors who come from far and near. We have partnered with the Carson and Colorado group to display and promote the restored Slim Princess steam engine. We also provide funds to maintain the Museum's collections and enhance its permanent exhibits. Every March we hold our Annual Meeting, with a potluck dinner, silent auction and guest speaker. We invite you to join with us to support the Museum. FECM is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Members receive a newsletter, email invitations to special events, programs and field trips, and a 10% discount at the Museum Bookstore.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____ DATE _____

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter and announcements by email or mail? Please check one:

Email or Mail

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS: *The membership year begins on the date your membership dues are received.*

INDIVIDUAL-\$25 FAMILY-\$40 CONTRIBUTING-\$100 SUPPORTING-\$150

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION-\$150 PATRON-\$250 SUSTAINING-\$500 BENEFACTOR-\$1,000 & UP

Enclosed is my payment of \$_____ Make checks payable to **FECM**; mail to **FECM, PO Box 33, Independence CA 93526**

You can also pay for your membership with a credit card at www.fecm.org. Select the Membership tab.

**FRIENDS OF THE EASTERN
CALIFORNIA MUSEUM
P.O. BOX 33
INDEPENDENCE, CA 93526**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED