Friends of the Eastern California Museum Newsletter

Preserving Inyo County's Past for the Future

Spring/Summer 2023

In this issue:

- Director News
- Slim Princess
- Stock Tank
- Curator's Corner

FECM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

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SLIM PRINCESS OFF TO TWO WEEKS GIVING RIDES AT LAWS AT END OF WIN-TER'S SEASON

SHAWN LUM ANNOUNCES BIG NEWS AND A BIG PROJECT!

"Lum sets forth California Cultural and Historical Grant details and $364,000 budget for 3 years"

The Eastern California Museum (ECM) is honored to be awarded a $364,500 grant from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment through the CA Natural Resources Agency to "Re-imagine Eastern California Museum". This project is a three-year, multiphase effort to bring the historic preservation and cultural interpretation of California's second largest and most isolated County up to 21st century museum standards. Guided by a team of established museum professionals, local representatives and Tribal leaders, this project will result in new interpretation that honors California's past and celebrates previously untold, historically under-represented Tribal and rural stories, integrated with existing themes.

This project enables the museum to meet its mission to interpret the past in all its complexity and diversity, and to bring history to life for visitors today and in the future. The project will more appropriately balance the narrative interpretation of ECM and the objects it stewards to include historically underrepresented voices, while transforming the interpretation to be more interactive and contextual. The museum has over 30,000 objects in its artifact collection, and this project will highlight the connections of people, place and time represented by these artifacts, while emphasizing the overlapping and often layered themes in our local history. The grant funding will be used to transform the museum interpretation from object-centered static displays to more immersive visitor experiences that highlight the stories these objects contain.

First steps for the grant funded work will be a series of community engagement workshops to gather input from local stakeholders' groups, community members and interested residents. The public is invited to join in the planning process at community engagement listening sessions scheduled to begin in Summer 2023. Dates, details, and places to participate will be released soon.

Events

July 22, 2023 at 2:00pm

There It Is . . .Take It!

In our ongoing effort to support the Museum's mission to preserve and interpret the natural and cultural history of Inyo County, the Friends of the Eastern California Museum are proud to present, "There It Is . . .Take It!," a living history/ Chautauqua performance. Author and historian David Woodruff assumes the character of dreamer, designer, constructor and despot of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, William Mulholland. Abhorred in the Eastern Sierra, revered in Southern California, "Bill" brought a river from 233 miles away, so that the City of Angels could grow into a great metropolis, while leaving a rural, agrarian community in ruins. This is "water wars" at its best/worst!

The 55-minute program is FREE and open to the public and will be inside the American Legion Hall in Independence, 201 S. Edwards Street, Independence, California.

Refreshments will be served. Call David Woodruff for more information, at (760) 920-8061

FECM members and the **PUBLIC** are invited to attend. This is a **FREE** event.

Please RSVP to (760) 920-4020 or email at rolh@suddenlink.net

A Stock Tank Tells Many Stories

Just west of Olancha, in an area currently under construction for a Caltrans four-lane project, a corrugated metal stock tank rested on a cement foundation. It is an artifact of a bygone era when hundreds of thousands of sheep were driven up a stock driveway from Kern County to the lush mountain meadows of the Eastern Sierra. Mary Austin referred to this journey as “the long walk.” A number of sheepherders paused here to water their sheep and inscribed names, dates, illustrations, and commentaries before journeying northward with their flocks. The tank reflects the numerous historical relationships that tied diverse groups, cultures, and areas together. Thankfully this wonderful artifact will not be sacrificed to progress but has been preserved and relocated to its new home at the Eastern California Museum. If you’ve been looking for a good tank to read, well this maybe it.

This tank is a window into the diversity of cultures that passed through or resided in the Eastern Sierra. Basques, Native Americans, Anglos, and Latin Americans all played a role in the economy of sheep raising, a major industry that joined two distinct regions, Bakersfield/Kern County and the Eastern Sierra, together.

Tank in setting – “sheepherder guest register”

The Stock Driveway emerged from the Old-World practice of transhumance. Transhumance is defined as the movement of livestock and herders from lower wintering grounds to higher mountain meadows with the changing seasons. Herders adapted this practice to the unique geography of California.

Many of those who shepherded in this manner and inscribed their names on the tank, were of Basque origin. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, thousands of young, ambitious Basques ventured across the ocean to make their fortunes in the American West raising and herding sheep. Some Basques, who wrote their names on the tank, like Guillaune Saldubehere, John Saroiberry, Guillermo Echenique, and Mateo Amondarain found their way to Bakersfield where they were introduced to the open range sheep industry.

In 1920, Amondarain immigrated from Yruita, a small village in the province of Navarra, Spain. Gregorio Mendiburu of the M&R (Mendiburu and Rudnick) Sheep Company, one of the largest sheep operations in the Western United States, initially hired Mateo.

Mateo Amondarain’s experiences might illustrate what a typical journey was like along the stock driveway. After lambing in late February, Amondarain’s band of sheep left their traditional winter pasturing area in Lancaster and began the long sheep walk northward through the Mojave Desert. His whole life consisted of a tent, cooking utensils, clothing, food, and a rifle. These were packed on the back of a burro. Indispensable to the herder were his partners and companions in this journey, two border collie sheep dogs. He had made this journey a number of times before, as early as 1930 when he traveled to Tres Plumas Meadow in the White Mountains. In subsequent years, he journeyed to other locations such as Conway Meadows (1932), the Glass Mountains (1934), and McGee Creek (1949). Fortunately for Mateo, a bountiful winter in 1943 had produced an abundance of feed that would sustain his sheep up the Owens Valley to Bishop. By June his band would reach the high mountain meadows of the Sierra Nevada, whose rich forage would produce fat lambs. For now, though, he hoped to reach Olancha where there was a stock tank to provide needed water for his sheep.

He covered roughly ten miles a day. Upon reaching Olancha he watered the sheep and rested. He noticed that other herders had left their names and dates on the corrugated metal of the tank, a sheepherder guest register of sorts. He pulled a lead pencil from his pocket and inscribed "*Mateo Amondarain, 20, May, 1944*".

This was not the first time he left a record of his presence in the Eastern Sierra. Mateo was a talented tree carver, leaving his name and date on a number of aspen trees throughout the region. For over 30 years, he worked for a several sheep companies out of Bakersfield. He passed away December 11, 1974 with his final resting place the Union Cemetery, Bakersfield. He never married nor had his own family. He did maintain ties with his Basque family, however, as evidenced through his pall bearers Santos Goni, Fernando Goni, John Mariluch, and J.P. Etchemendy.

Artifacts, like the stock tank, tell stories that connect us to communities and cultures in the Owens Valley we may not have been aware of. Mateo's is just one of these stories. Valued for their dependability and work ethic, Basques provided the backbone of the sheepherder ranks. The inscriptions on the tank also enlighten us to the fact that Native Americans herded and drove sheep up the stock driveway. A future article will chronicle that story.

For those interested in visiting the stock tank and its many inscriptions, it is currently located in the equipment yard at the Eastern California Museum.

By Nancy Hadlock and Richard Potashin

Curator's Corner

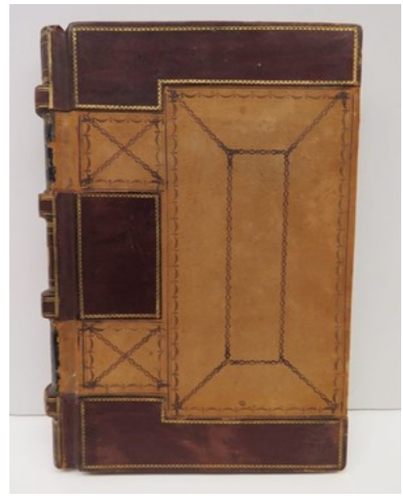
By Heather Todd

If you were able to attend the 2023 FECM Annual Meeting in March you already know that 2023 has been an exciting year for the museum. On the curatorial side of things, I'm thrilled to report that we have received several notable donations over the last four months.

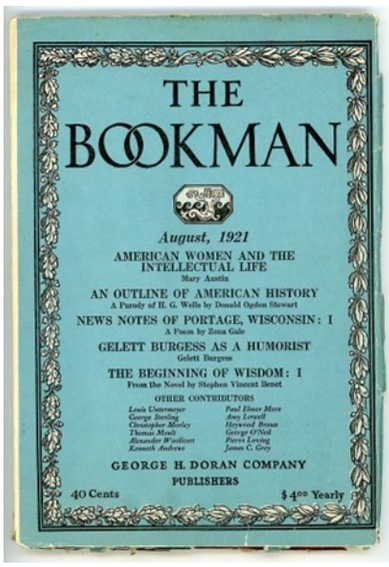
Our thanks to Ken Jewett for sending in the Pictorial Edition of the *Manzanar Free Press*, Vol. IV, No. 1, September 10, 1943. This copy belonged to his mother, Betty A. Jewett (1926-2015), who had been employed as a clerk/typist at Manzanar War Relocation Center during World War II. If you are interested in hearing about Mrs. Jewett's experiences working at Manzanar and living in Independence from 1930 onwards you can listen to her oral history online at: https://californiarevealed.org/collections/eastern-california-museum.

The Fillmore Historical Museum kindly sent a 1917 Geological Map of Inyo County, California. This map was issued by the State Mining Bureau and despite its age (106 years old!) it is still vibrantly colored. Because it has been stored folded for so long it will need some conservation work before being put on display. We will be using a humidification chamber to gently relax and flatten the map, document repair tape to mend tears, and finally have a custom frame made to house it.

Returning home to Inyo County after a roundabout trip from the Merced County Historical Society is a pristine stock ledger book for the Minnietta Belle Mining Company. In 1876 the mines in the Lookout Mining District were being touted as "a par excellent to Cerro Gordo" by Superintendent J. F. Cox. By the summer of 1877 the Minnietta Belle Mining Company was organized by a number of investors from San Francisco, Merced, and Mariposa to work the Minnietta Belle, Mountain View, and Keystone mines. They had a capital stock of ten million dollars and were led by Directors W. F. Cashman, James B. Peck, I. H. Jacobs, and Charles M. Blair. However, less than a year later the company was on the Delinquent Tax List and embroiled in a lawsuit, which they lost on May 11, 1878. By virtue of a Decree of Foreclosure and Order of Sale the assets of the Minnietta Belle Mining Company were auctioned off in a Sheriff's Sale. Despite the failure of the company, the mines were not played out. J. J. "Jack" Gunn (1845-1918) would later purchase the Minnietta Mine and from it he took "many small-sized fortunes." Various accounts put his "small-sized fortunes" anywhere between one and two million dollars—not bad!



Two separate donations have substantially improved the museum's Mary Hunter Austin holdings. A recent inventory brought to light that the museum only had copies of roughly half of the 27 books published by Mary Austin over the course of her career. Denny Kruska was able to find and purchase nearly all the missing titles, and currently we are only lacking four publications: *Christ in Italy*, *Lovely Lady*, *Young Woman Citizen*, and *American Rhythm*.



Among the donations is the August 1921 issue of Bookman magazine, which contains an article written by Mary Austin titled, "American Women and the Intellectual Life." In it she writes, "Thirty years ago the question whether a particular young woman dedicated herself to the intellectual life or not, depended on the likelihood of her expensive preparation for it being, as our mothers phrased it, 'thrown away on some man'. In those days, before the problem of marriage *or* a career had been superseded by the perplexities of marriage *and* a career, freedom of decision for a particular young woman was a polite fiction, and brainy girls were distinguished form others by hair brushed straight back from the forehead and by the wearing of sensible shoes."

We are grateful to Roderick McAulay for sending us a collection of photographs taken in 1954 by his uncle, Carter Richard Bishop, Jr., of the Southern Pacific in the Owens Valley. Notably it includes photos of engines #9 and #18, and the stations at Laws, Keeler, and Owenyo. If you are a railfan, I encourage you to check out the incredible work the non-profit Carson & Colorado Railway, Inc. group has done on our very own Southern Pacific Engine #18 at: www.carsoncolorado.com.

Additionally, two loans were up for review and renewal this year, and I am pleased to report that both have been renewed! We would like to express our gratitude to Mike Prather, who is loaning incredible artifacts related to the Los Angeles Aqueduct, including two of my personal favorite items: a letter written by Mark Watterson in 1907 urging a local rancher not to sell his land, and also a framed display containing a souvenir pennant and a glass bottle (that would have contained water) from the L.A. Aqueduct opening ceremony on November 5, 1913.

The second loan renewal is for the incredible mammoth tusk that was found in the Owens Valley in 2015. It is loaned by LADWP, on whose land it was discovered, and has become one of the most popular exhibits in the entire museum. We are ecstatic that visitors continue to be able to experience the awe of seeing this massive tusk in person for years to come!

A final piece of news is that in January the museum migrated to a brand-new museum collection cataloging system called CatalogIt. This new system has many advantages over our previous cataloging system, one of which is a free, easily customizable website called "The HUB" that we can use to directly share museum holdings: photos, documents, artifacts, books, etc. Currently over 9,000 items are on the website, and it is updated every week. You can access The HUB at: https;//hub.catalogit.app/9821.

NEW/RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS, DONATIONS, AND FOUNDER'S PATIO

PAVING STONE ORDERS

RECEIVED BETWEEN 12/9/2022 AND 5/31/2023

Benefactor
Anonymous
Monimos Foundation
Sam Mudie
Thomas Tormey

Sustaining
Lynne Bunn
Jim Parker
Ken & Julie Stichter

Patron
Lon & Hester Bell
Alison Binder
Gary Taylor & Cindy Pridmore
Cathy & Paul Wallace
James & Priscilla Walters/Portal Preserve LLC

Business & Organization
Wynne Benti
Dow Villa, Inc.
Gardner's Home and Sports Center, Inc.
Ray's Den Motel

Supporting
Toshio & Akiko Akiyama
Ellie & Dick Mansfield
Paul Rose
Richard Schwabe
Karen & Rick Scott
Jeffrey Sipress
Bob & Virginia Stockman
David & Jeanne Willey

Contributing
Pam Ford & Ken Alford
Tom Allen
Kathryn Anderson
William Apt
Peter Barrett
Don Becker
Alina Berry
Tina Biorn
Loyce & Joe Braun
Manuela Cerruti
Sherry Chiero
Eastside Sports, Inc.
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Helen L. Hammer
Roberta Harlan
Linda Hubbs
Greg Humphrey
Doug Kari
John & Pam Lundblad
Julie McElroy
William Michael
Jeff & Susanne Owens
Diana & Allan Pietrasanta
David Rambeau
James Rosenthal
Hugh Smith
Richard Lee Thompson
Larry & Barbee Tidball
Bill, Rose, and Heather Todd
Lynn Johnson & Dave Wagner
Theona Wasson
Jane Wehrey
Vincent Wood
Diane Drew Wright

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Mike and Kathy Barnes
Marilyn Bracken
Jim & Sandee Bilyeu
William Birdsong
Steve Bower
Tom & Tina Bowman
Marilyn Bracken
Laura & Don Bright
Alisa Lynch & Alan Broch
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Peter Caldwell
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Jean Crispin
Deena Davenport-Conway
Ronald Hubbard & Elaine Delaney
James E. Dent
Tony Ferrari
Robin Flinchum
Amy Gilreath
Tom Good
Douglas Greiner
Jan Hart & Cheryl Howerton
Harry & Susan Holgate
Janet Hashimoto & William Hull
Paul & Ellen Jagger
Ed & Christine Jesser
Bernadette Johnson
Aiden King & Family
LeRoy & Irene Kritz
Takashi & Yoko Kono
Rosanne Lampariello
Tom & Ulla Lipp
Liz Toton & Gil Larimore
Diana & Lynn Leary
Ellen & George Lockwood
Jim Macy

Daniel Pritchett & Sally Manning
Martha & Marty Markham
Nancy & Rick Masters
Robert & Tiana McGowan
Lawrence T. McHargue
Geoffrey Miller
Steve & Regina Moore
Janis & Darrell Odum
Nancy Hadlock & Richard Potashin
Sharon Lilly & Joan Potter
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Michael & Agnes Rettie
Dave Jette & Debra Sampson
Saburo & Anna Sasaki
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Cyndi & Dan Signett
Judy Sipe
Courtney & Junko Smith
Howard & Marge Walker
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Scott Weaver
Sally Westmoreland
Elaine & Peter Wiley
Joy Williams
Paula Brown-Williams
Theodore & Donna Young

Individual
Kathy Bancroft
Nancy Bast
Geoffrey Best
Hanns Botz
Keith Bramstedt
Bruce Branson
Robin Chandler
Kay Condie
Sherry Conrad
Deanne Cooney
Daniel Cutshall
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Dennis Kruska
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Tom Lapworth
John Lasky
Barbara Leachman
Allen Lilleberg
Mary Anne Mairs
Carole Mall
Mary Marca
Patrick McLernon
Marty Meeden
Brian Norden
Gary Oye
Robert Pavlik
Judy Peek
Janet Poole
Karen Riggs
Susan Hillier Roe
Mary Roper
Julie Sasaki-Hom
Diane Satchwell
Robert Schaich
Gary Staab
William C. Stalls
Paul P. Thompson
Randy Tomlin
Chris Uyemura
Blair Van Vliet
Mark Wagner
Frank Weingart
Leon Worden
Ken Zinns

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS
Jennifer Alquijay & Boeing
Tony Ferrari
Herbert Gregory
Virginia Hammerness
Daniel Horning & Deloitte-SPC
Carole Mall
Daniel Pritchett & Sally Manning
Ellie & Dick Mansfield
Margaret Crowley & Denis McGuirk
Lawrence T. McHargue
Robert Miyatake in memory of Francis “Frank” Kikuchi
Brian Norden
Janis & Darrell Odum
Portal Preserve LLC
Andrew Stevenson & Liberty Mutual Group, Inc.
Howard & Marge Walker

FOUNDER'S PATIO PAVING STONES
Friend
Ruth Katzin-Kilpatrick: James Kilpatrick 1940-2022 Independence was home to Mick

Sponsor
Banner and Southey Families: IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOAN SOUTHEY MOTHER & FRIEND CAMP DIRECTOR

Founder
Ron and Gayle Stock: Our dear brother Gary W Miller with eternal love & lifetime memories

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 _____

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 AND 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

FOUNDER'S PATIO ORDER FORM

Order your paving stone today and help us build for the future

Yes, I would like to order a paving stone for the Eastern California Museum's Founder's Patio in the amount of:

___ $125 Friend ___ $250 Sponsor ___ $500 Patron ___ $1,000 Founder

I would like the paving stone to be engraved with the following inscription:

THE EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM RESERVES THE RIGHT OF APPROVAL FOR ALL PROPOSED INSCRIPTIONS.

DATE: _____

DONOR NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please return this form with payment to:

Friends of the Eastern California Museum
P.O. Box 33
Independence, CA 93526

You can also order and pay online at www.fecm.org, Support Us tab.

Questions? Write us at info@fecm.org.

THANK YOU!