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

Fall 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.

Finally, we thank all who responded to the Museum's request for volunteers to help with various projects. As Museum staff move forward with update projects (see the Collections Assessment note in this issue for updates report), it would be helpful to have some additional volunteers, primarily to staff the front desk and, if possible, help with some organizing tasks. Even two hours a month will help. If you can donate some time, please call the Museum at 760-878-0258.

In this issue:
In this issue, we feature some of the fascinating history of our own Slim Princess #18. The Slim Princess was recently at the Great Steam Up in Carson City and won the *Most Liked Locomotive by the General Public* award. We also report on the progress of a collaboration with California State University-Dominguez Hills to digitize some of the Museum's Manzanar collection.

JOIN US ON OCTOBER 15, 2022: BBQ!!!

FECM will have a "Wild About Marys" barbecue on Museum grounds on October 15, 3 to 6 pm. In addition to great food, there will be a tour of the Mary DeDecker Native Plant Garden and of the equipment yard. Gail Swain will come as Mary Austin. The cost is a $40 donation for adults, $25 for kids 11 and under. Tickets are available through Eventbrite. Be sure to get all the details in the flyer in this newsletter, and we hope to see you there!

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME!

If you would like to volunteer for FECM activities (e.g., Fall cleanup, Commander's House decorating, joining the Board of Trustees, please contact us via our website (www.fecm.org) or by email at info@fecm.org.

THE SLIM PRINCESS #18

Recently, Dave Mull, President of the Carson & Colorado Railway, a nonprofit organization based in Independence dedicated to maintaining and preserving the Slim Princess #18 locomotive, shared some of this thoughts with us about his love of the train and its history.

Dave recalled that around 1996 or1997, a gentleman came into his store in Lone Pine and placed a grease fitting on the counter. He had a comment. The fitting came from the locomotive and the locomotive looked sad. “Clean it up and make it look pretty.” So, with Museum approval, a few friends started getting together on Saturday mornings to do just that. As they pulled it apart, they saw that each bushing was dated. The dates reflected the engine’s rebuilding in February 1953. The Slim Princess was retired in October 1954 and went to live in Dehy Park on the northwest end of Independence in 1955.

“Our” Slim Princess ran up and down the Owens Valley. The original owner was the Virginia & Truckee (V&T) Railroad, a private operation that used rails to transport supplies and ore to and from silver mines in Nevada and California beginning in the mid-1800s, helping to replace horse-and-wagon hauling operations. Henry Yerington, President of the V&T, extended the operation in the hope of profiting from the Cerro Gordo silver strike and in 1880 built the Carson & Colorado Railroad, a narrow gauge track to Keeler. It turned out not to be profitable for the V&T. In fact, there is a memorable quote, that the railway was built either “300 miles too long or 300 years too soon,” attributed to Darius O. Mills, one of the founders. The Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) bought the operation in 1900. Although the Cerro Gordo boom was over, SPRR still shipped quite a bit of silver and then, just in time, large silver strikes were found in Tonopah and Goldfield, in Nevada, boosting the operations.

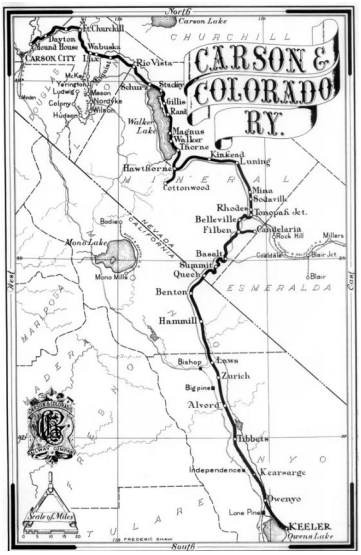
The Slim Princess was not originally built for the Carson & Colorado Railroad. It was built for the Nevada California Oregon (N-C-O) Line, intended to travel between Reno (NV), Alturas (CA), and the Columbia River (OR), beginning in the late 1800s-early 1900s. The N-C-O Line was also a narrow gauge track, just like the Carson & Colorado. And like the others, the Southern Pacific RR bought it up. Eventually, the trains were retired by the middle of the 20th Century.

Fast forwarding to today, once the all-volunteer work on the Slim Princess got underway, the restoration group incorporated the Carson & Colorado Railway as a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to this task. Randy Babcock, a skilled train engineer, assembled a group of people experienced in working with steam engines and, together with Dave and other local and out-of-town enthusiasts, restored the engine. The work did not go unnoticed by the Durango & Silverton Railroad (D&SRR) in Durango, CO. The Slim Princess has visited Durango several times, in large part because the Slim Princess is an oil-fired locomotive and D&SRR’s locomotives are coal-fired. In today’s very dry environment, this is a crucial consideration, as coal-fired locomotives shoot sparks, whereas oil-fired do not, and thus they may better comply

with environmental regulations. And so the Slim Princess has a “new life” as a teacher for folks who want to learn the mechanisms of oil-fired locomotives.

In 2017, the Slim Princess moved to ECM grounds. It sits in the Larry Peckham Barn on the southeast corner of the Museum yard. You, the readers who were members of FECM at that time, contributed to the cost of building the Barn through a special membership vote approving the expenditure. On special occasions, the Slim Princess is fired up and runs on the short track laid down on the Museum’s yard grounds to the great delight of residents and visitors of all ages, most especially our youngsters.

FECM and the Carson & Colorado Railway continue to be collaborating partners with the Eastern California Museum to preserve and explain Inyo County’s history in all its aspects. For safety reasons, the train barn is not always open, but we hope you will visit the barn when you come and certainly when there is an event in which the train goes out for a spin.



The route
Map courtesy of the Carson & Colorado Railway at
https://carsoncolorado.com/historic-route/the-route/
Photographs courtesy of the Carson & Colorado Railway

On a run

Taking passengers on a spin

Leaving the Larry Peckham Barn

JAPANESE AMERICAN DIGITIZATION PROJECT

The California State University (CSU)-Dominguez Hills received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to oversee the Japanese American Digitization Project to tell the story of Japanese Americans in the 20th Century as contained in the CSU archives. Because of its great importance as a repository of the experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar during World War II, the Eastern California Museum received funding from the CSU project to digitize a selection of its holdings related to Manzanar. The digitized photographs and documents were primarily those of Shi Nomura, who donated them to the Museum before Manzanar was established as a National Historic Site. The project was initiated by former Museum Curator and current FECM Board member Roberta Harlan. Project tasks were completed by FECM Board member (and former Museum Administrator) Bill Michael. Some photographs here give you an idea of the work. All photographs courtesy of the Eastern California Museum.

Heating water for dishes – Nom 19

Shi Nomura leaning over a barrel while his brother pounds mochi – Nom 23

Mary Kageyama Nomura
singing at Manzanar – Nom 231

Flag Day Ceremony at Manzanar. Bob Bron, Reports Officer, Master of Ceremonies - Nom 275

Dillon S. Meyer, National Director of the WRA, addressing Manzanar Town Hall Meeting – Nom 281

Military Police at
Manzanar – Nom 282

ECM COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT

Museum Administrator Shawn Lum is taking very exciting steps forward to continue to help the Museum evolve and improve. A Collections Assessment was completed by a well-known expert in the field and recommendations are already being implemented. In addition to immediate-term matters, there are larger plans to manage issues such as lighting and storage. FECM is very proud to be working closely with Museum staff in the planning, and to the degree possible, in helping with funding for these critically-needed updates.

FECM WON A PRIZE!

On the 4th of July this year, FECM won the Judge's Award for a very fun interpretation of this year's theme: *Cruising for Independence.* The celebration and parade was very well attended. In the morning, FECM Board members Jennifer Duncan and Liz Toton gave an educational talk by the Commander's House that was also well attended.

ANDY SELTERS TO CURATE SMOKE BLANCHARD EXHIBIT

Mountaineer Andy Selters will curate an exhibit featuring legendary mountaineer Smoke Blanchard. The exhibit is projected to open around October 22 and run through early 2023.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of Trustees is pleased to advise our members per FECM's Bylaws of a planned vote in the October 2022 meeting to approve a revision of FECM's Bylaws. This revision updates, streamlines, and incorporates current best practices into the document, which had not been updated since 2013. The revision was the result of numerous hours of analysis and discussion among 10 of our 13 Trustees. For further information, please email us at info@fecm.org.

NEW/RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS, DONATIONS, FOUNDER'S PATIO PAVING STONES
FALL 2022 - RECEIVED SINCE THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Sustaining
Shawn Lum

Business & Organization
Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce
Mt. Williamson Motel & Base Camp, LLC

Supporting
Christine Hoffman

Contributing
Steve & Nanci Adler
Tom Budlong
Jeffrey Burbank
Greg Humphrey
Marie & Earnie Masumoto
Michael McAfee
Mary Nomura
Luther C. Pugh
David Rambeau
Bob Snyder
Georgette Theotig
Rich White
Kay Wilson

Family
Richard & Laurie Bolles
Mark & Melinda Clark
Douglas Greiner
Edward & Marolyn Hartman
Harry & Susan Holgate
Calder Reid & William Holmes
Loyd Hopper
Becky Hoskins
Art & Frieda LaCues
Lorelyn Lewis
Joanna Linkchorst
Philip & Jan Marshall
Sam J. Miller
Steve & Regina Moore
Dave Mull
Lee & Jen Roeser
Bill Bjorklund & Gayle Rosander
Ron & Linda Sandstrom
Raymond & Barbara Skryja
Donald & Deanna Smith
S. Hulbert & G. Smith
Judy & Nina Weisman
Pat & Donna Woods

Individual
Dale Au
Chuck Campbell
Dick Drake
Bonnie Eisner
Shirley Ellsworth
Taka Go
Will Gorenfeld
William Helmer
Albertus Hoogeveen
Thom Lapworth
Yaney MacIver
Patrick McLernon
Alan Mendelsohn
Maryann Mendez
Beth Pelfrey
Charles Perry
Robin Roberts (2 yrs)
David Robertson
Gerrie Rodenburg
Clay Stalls
Bill Taketa
Pam Vaughan
Chantal Walker
Bridget Wall
Heather Whitlock
Vincent Wood
Martine J. Work

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS
Elizabeth Goodson
Jon & Katy Linkus
Andrew Stevenson & Liberty Mutual Group, Inc.

FOUNDER'S PATIO PAVING STONES
Sponsor
Marie & Earnie Masumoto: KIYOSHI OKAMOTO FOUNDER OF THE HEART MOUNTAIN FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE

Friends of the Eastern California Museum

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER BBQ & SILENT AUCTION

Mary Hunter Austin

"Wild About Marys"

Mary DeDecker

Let's celebrate our illustrious local ladies with BBQ and Bloody Marys!

Saturday, October 15, 2022 from **3-6 PM** at the

ECM picnic area (155 N. Grant St. in Independence)

$40 ticket donation* for adults / **$25** for kids 11 and under

3:00-6:00	Roaming Conversations with Gail Swain as Mary Austin
3:15	Mary DeDecker Native Plant Society Garden Tour
	Equipment Yard Tour
3:45	Jane Bright Memorial Rock Garden Geology Tour
	Kids' Basket-Making Activity
4:30-5:30	BBQ Dinner by **Glacier Lodge**
	Music by **The Black & White String Band**

Tickets are available for purchase NOW on **Eventbrite**:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wild-about-marys-fundraiser-tickets-422805311067

There is limited seating so please **RSVP** by October 12th!

Contact **events@fecm.org** with any questions.

*All ticket donation proceeds benefit the FECM to support the Eastern California Museum.

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:

Each paving stone is 8" x 8" and can contain 5 lines of text with up to 16 characters per line (spaces between words count as characters). The letters are ¾" tall.

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!

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: *Membership year begins on the date of your check or receipt of electronic payment.*

□ 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.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED