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70% of an adult's body is made up of water.

HYDRATE



THE MYSTERY OF THE "JAPANESE CAMP" IN LANDERS

By Ken Jones, MBHS Staff Writer

PART I of II

The United States declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941, just one day after the heinous attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, but the purpose of this article is not to examine the war with Japan but rather to look at how these events led to one of the biggest injustices that our country has ever committed against its own citizens: the internment of nearly 120,000 of its citizens in what then was called Relocation Camps; and ultimately to the possibility that up to forty Japanese Americans hid in the hills above Landers, CA in 1942. And the question remains: *Was there a site in the Landers hills where Japanese Americans fled to safety?*

We have only fragmented information about the purported Landers Camp, and it needs to be stated at the onset that any and all opinions, claims, etc. about the rumored Landers Camp are nothing other than suppositions. No one to date has stepped forward and provided indisputable facts about the camp. The

passing of time has probably taken from us those who may have known the truth about what occurred in the hills of Landers.

Before we discuss the possibility of a Japanese American hiding place locally, it is germane to the story to take a brief look at why such an encampment may have existed. It began with the somber words of our then President, Franklin D. Roosevelt:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date that will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

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Japanese American citizens looked at the events after the declaration of war differently than many of us did and still do. While most Americans remained in their homes and at their jobs during the war, over 100,000 of Japanese ancestry were uprooted and their lives changed forever. The book *Years of Infamy, The Untold Story of American Concentration Camps* by noted historian/researcher Michi Nishiura Weglyn states:

In the early part of World War II, 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were interned in Relocation Centers by Executive order no. 9066 issued on February 19, 1942. Manzanar, the first of ten such concentration camps, was bounded by barbed wire and guard towers, confining 10,000 persons, the majority being American Citizens. May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism, and economic exploitation never emerge again.

(Excerpted from the *Years of Infamy* cover depicting a plaque placed at Manzanar Relocation Camp - see photo)

Although the Japanese Americans in 1942 were primarily employed in two industries – fishing and agriculture – there were many who were in professional fields. A typical example of a professional who was interned at Manzanar Relocation Camp in Northern California is Mr. Dwight Takashi Uchida, a Japanese American who had married here in the United States and had two children, one who was attending college. His life and that of his family is intricately portrayed in the book *Desert Exile, the Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family*, written by his daughter, Yoshiko Uchida:

The house was filled with an uneasy quiet. A strange man sat in our living



MANZANAR MEMORIAL, Owens Valley, California

room and my father was gone. The FBI had come to pick him up, as they had dozens of other Japanese men. Executives of Japanese business firms, shipping lines, and banks, men active in local Japanese associations, teachers of Japanese language schools, virtually every leader of the Japanese American community along the West Coast had been seized almost immediately (46).

Hysteria was rampant throughout the country, but especially in California. Nevertheless, there were many in responsible positions in the Army and in government who did not approve of the plan to send those of Japanese ancestry to camps, but rather advocated watching those who were suspect, but hysteria won out.

Santa Anita Racetrack was used as an assembly center, as was Tanforan Racetrack in the San Bruno area of northern California. Families were assigned to barracks (the horse barns), and then to apartments, which were actually stalls that originally held one horse, but now housed four or more family members, depending on the number of children in the family.

It bears emphasizing that at this time in our history immigrants were proud to become Americans, and there were no U.S. flag burnings, or marches protesting the laws and/or

events detrimental to the Japanese American citizens. And, there was certainly no marching through the streets carrying the flag of a foreign country.

Yes, there were illegal immigrants, but they were very small in number compared to the general Japanese population in the United States. Yes, there were surely undocumented Japanese aliens, but most of these people probably wanted to become citizens; however, the laws at the time prohibited their becoming naturalized. Yes, there were, without a doubt, some who were loyal to the country of the rising sun when war broke out, but the number that fell into this category was a very, very small percentage of the Japanese American population.



The mass evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry from all over California and from the western halves of Oregon and Washington must have been terrorizing for families suddenly uprooted from their homes, jobs, and lives, leaving for Relocation camps with few possessions and fear of their unknown home and future. Most complied obediently but frightened. Some chose to go into hiding, but to where?

Continued on Page 6

UPDATE LANDERS ESTATE

By Lloyd Noel – Administrator and
Dale Noel – Historical Sites Chair

We are continuing to move forward in the legal processes required to finalize ownership by the MBHS of the Landers Estate.

If all goes well this should occur by end of first quarter or early second quarter of 2007.

As directed by the settlement, the MBHS and Landers family worked together for the family members to remove the items of their choosing on four separate dates in 2006.

As soon as the handoff of the property to the MBHS is finalized we will be facing one of the most important financial, historical and challenging events in our young MBHS history.

The clean up and rehab of this historical property will require many member and non member volunteer hours to provide the MBHS with a much needed place to work and hold special MBHS events.

Though relocated and rebuilt, the Landers property does include the original Landers Post Office. This little post office is a recognized State of California Resource as filed by the MBHS.

The post office project was totally funded and accomplished by Vernetta Landers and her stepson, now deceased, Mark Landers.

Many members have shared their visions of what the MBHS can do at / with the Landers property including conducting tours of the post office which was made into a small museum by Mrs. Landers. The home and grounds offer many other possibilities.

Though the undertaking will be challenging from all angles, the long-term benefits will be of historical significance in the MBHS's history of progress.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I am happy to report that our Society is getting off to a good start for the year 2007 and moving



forward with lots of challenges and good times ahead. I would like to acknowledge and thank our volunteer staff of work-a-bees for all their efforts to make our Society one to be proud of. It is because we all work together as a great team that we Git-r-done.

Financially, we are in better shape now that we don't have to pay \$700 for rent and our MBHS Gift Shop is bringing in money. Over the last ten months we have averaged a gross income of a little over \$500 a month from the gift shop, an income that is the best thing that has happened to us since our Society was established in 1999.

As you read through our newsletter, please keep in mind that our officers, chairs, and committee members have put in many hours to keep our Society going and to make our events interesting. There is always room for member participation, especially with the rework of the Landers Estate facing us in the coming months, so give us a call and we will find a job for you!

"Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it."

Bob Connors
President 2002-2006



MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR

By Sallie Brown

This MBHS newsletter is an exciting issue for two main reasons:

First, is the redesign of our newsletter format, which is in COLOR! We thank one of our new volunteers, Barbara Harris, a graphic designer with her own graphic design business, for stepping forward to take leadership in redesigning not only our newsletter but the MBHS brochure and other graphic projects. Barbara also has designed the MBHS Warren's Well display about to open at the High Desert Museum at our March 4th meeting. We thank Barbara for her talents, time, and enthusiasm - she has certainly recharged our batteries!

Second, at a recent Board meeting, we discussed periodically offering controversial topics in our newsletter, knowing that controversy stimulates our thinking if we remain open-minded, ready to revisit the pros and cons of a topic. Another new volunteer stepped forward to serve MBHS in this matter: Ken Jones, who became interested in researching while pursuing his master's degree, is learning about our local history and became interested in the rumored Japanese camp. Tackling a controversial issue for publication is not for the faint-hearted. We thank Ken for his persistent researching the long-time rumor of a Japanese camp in our area. He diligently followed every lead possible, even driving to areas outside our Basin to interview referred people.

These are but two of our many hard-working, dedicated MBHS volunteers. We send our deepest gratitude to ALL our volunteers!

MEMBER NEWS

Our membership count as of February 1st is:

70 Individual members

44 Family

11 Business/Organization

61 Lifetime members

New members are Sandi Nevel of Clarksdale, AZ; Florence Marshall of 29 Palms; Robert Buhrlle, Roxanne McPherson and Bill Souder, all of Yucca Valley.

The MBHS is always looking for ideas to meet our expenses, so I found a clever way to gather some funds for the Society. I had an 80th Birthday Party at the Pioneer Bowl in Pioneertown, insisting no gifts. Rather than gifts, I asked my relatives, friends and fellow MBHS members to donate to the Society. They came through with \$1040 and Sales Chairs Wayne and Linda Darnell sold MBHS merchandise totaling \$128.00. In one day we made \$1168.00 for the Society. As a member, can you come up with a way to increase our Treasury? We really need your help.

- Bernice Falltrick, Membership Chair

IN MEMORIAM

Douglas Fetzer

August 11, 1944 - November 9, 2006

DUES ARE DUE JULY 1st EXCEPT FOR LIFETIME MEMBERS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

GET INVOLVED • SHARE YOUR TALENTS

CALL or EMAIL BOB CONNORS • 760-365-6163 • mrc5029@verizon.net

2007 GOALS

GOAL 1

Make ready the Landers Estate for our MBHS Headquarters/Museum

GOAL 3

Apply for grants to further our efforts in preserving our Morongo Basin History

GOAL 2

Increase our membership and volunteer team by 20%

GOAL 4

Continue to file CA Historical Site Resources, provide and place historical site plaques, and produce Historical DVD's

Need help in researching a topic about the Morongo Basin?

CALL or EMAIL

Ruth Long • 760-365-3573
HSV27Z@bhsblue.net

Need general information about the MBHS?

CALL or EMAIL

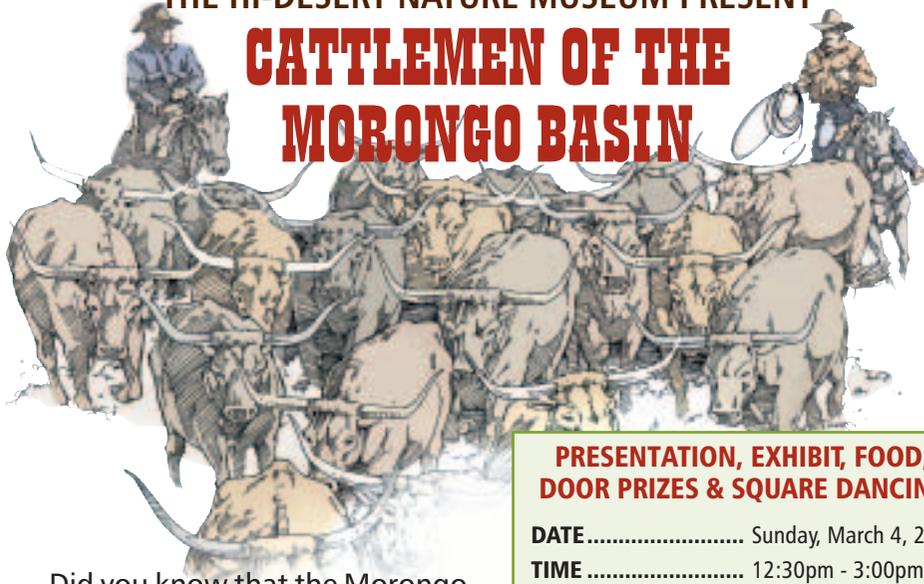
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MBHS MISSION STATEMENT

The specific purpose of this nonprofit corporation is to collect, conserve and exhibit artifacts; to collect, display, interpret and publish memorabilia relating to the history of the Morongo Basin; to locate identify and preserve historic sites; to promote the research and study of local history; and to share the rich heritage of the Morongo Basin with all the communities within and surrounding it.

MORONGO BASIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND
THE HI-DESERT NATURE MUSEUM PRESENT

CATTLEMEN OF THE MORONGO BASIN



Did you know that the Morongo Basin was once Cattle Country? That Cowboys and their ranches were primarily responsible for the development of this community?

Join the Morongo Basin Historical Society and the Hi-Desert Nature Museum in a joint Community fundraiser with the presentation of:

"THE CATTLEMEN OF THE MORONGO BASIN"

Sunday, March 4, 2007
12:30pm - 3:00pm

Cattlemen Presentation

1:00pm - 2:15pm

Square Dancing Presentation

2:30pm

The Morongo Basin Historical Society and Pioneer Posse members Ernie Kester, Harvey Legrone and Lloyd Noel will present a history overview of how Cattlemen and their families lived in the Morongo Basin during the late1800's.



PRESENTATION, EXHIBIT, FOOD, DOOR PRIZES & SQUARE DANCING

DATE..... Sunday, March 4, 2007
TIME 12:30pm - 3:00pm
PRESENTATION 1:00pm - 2:15pm
PLACE Hi-Desert Nature Museum
Yucca Valley
SQUARE DANCIN' 2:30pm - 2:50pm
COST Members - \$5.00
Non-Members - \$10.00

LIMITED SEATING - RESERVE NOW!

CALL: LAURIE GEESON
363-6681

Email: pg85pp94@yahoo.com
Make Check Payable to:
Morongo Basin Historical Society

Local historian Ernie Kester will answer questions as to who were the local cattlemen and ranches. Why the Morongo Basin? Where did they get the water? Cowboy clothing and where did they all go?

For MBHS members, this fundraiser is only \$5.00, non-members \$10.00. Seating is limited, with members having preferred seating. Food and drinks will be served along with a drawing for door prizes and a Square Dance demonstration. Ye-Ha Partnr' you are NOT going to want to miss this presentation!

Proceeds from this event will be shared with (2) non-profit organizations. Make your tax deductible check out to MBHS, and *Reserve your seat today!*

Call Laurie Geeson to register. All reservations MUST be in by Monday February 26, 2007. Call **363-6681** or email: pg85pp94@yahoo.com.

MORONGO BASIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WARREN'S WELL MUSEUM DISPLAY



As part of the festivities for the March 4th Fundraiser, "Cattlemen of the Morongo Basin," the MBHS will be unveiling the first in a series of exhibits scheduled to be on display at the High Desert Museum.

This first exhibit, designed by Barbara Harris, will tell the story of Warren's Well. Photographs and historic memorabilia will chronicle the history of Warren's Well.

This self-guide exhibit will show how Mark "Chuck" Warren and his family hand dug the first well in Yucca Valley and how it became an important part of cattle ranching for the area as well as a center of social life for the early settlers.



JOIN IN THE FESTIVITIES! COWBOY/COWGIRL ATTIRE WELCOMED

LIFE MEMBERS

Helen Dotts*	Mona Lowe*
Les Long*	Bob Connors*
Ruth Long*	Twillia Couzens*
Evelyn Conklin	Betty Diederich+
Dorothy Granger*	William Reifel
Norm Granger*	Chalyne Connors*
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Billy Holcomb	Chris Long
Chapter of ECV	Tim Long
Robert Leone*	David Williams*
Peter Wild	Sandra Williams*
Robert Green	Carole Kester*
Leota Bell*	Llyod Noel*
Laurie Geeson*	Mary Gaffney
Vernette Landers*†	Swella Chiropractic
Pauline Hanson*	Jeannette Webster
Harvey Legrone*	Todd Swain
Monika Legrone*	R. Lee Johnson
James P. Brock*	Bob Stadum
Donna Davies*	Wanda Stadum
Bruce Miller*	Roxanne Guez
Marion Arnett	Old Town
Fred Kramer	Mercantile Antique
Lois S. Johnson*	Mall
Dale Noel*	William R. Hilburn †
Taylor Jordon*	Leona Erkisen

† Deceased
* Charter Member

* * * * *

As a history lover, you know the infinite ways that history enriches our lives. As a member of the MBHS, we want to let you know that there is another way for you to preserve history far into the future. Most people know how important it is to have a will. Once you have provided for the people you love, we hope you will consider making a bequest to the MBHS. Bequests of any size will insure that we can continue our work to preserve Morongo Basin history.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT UPDATE

By Ruth Long

Eight prospective interviewers for the MBHS Oral History Project recently attended a workshop conducted by Ruth Long. Also attending was Bob Stephenson, the well-known local professional photographer and videographer, who is volunteering his expertise as a cameraman for this project.

The workshop focused on the legal and ethical rights of the interviewee, interviewer and the institution that archives the interviews and a long list of interviewing tips.

The purpose of the Oral History Project is to preserve the voices and memories of people with first hand knowledge of the way of life and/or the events which influenced the people of the Morongo Basin so that future generations will understand the daily lives of our



pioneers. Since 1999 twenty-five audio recordings have been made. Now, in 2007, video recordings will be added — preserving not only voices, but faces. An extremely valuable addition to our archives!

The meeting ended with three people accepting the challenge to become interviewers and are already contacting interviewees.

Help us preserve the Morongo Basin's local history! Become a volunteer!

Japanese Camp continued from Page 3

PART II

(in next newsletter)

Part II will describe what is left of the sheltered camp but will also offer the unsubstantiated insights and claims of the author and/or of the people interviewed for this article. After reading Parts I and II, the reader must ultimately draw his/her own conclusions. And at MBHS we hope some readers may provide us with concrete evidence of who occupied the encampment.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SUNDAY MARCH 4, 2007

CATTLEMEN OF THE MORONGO BASIN

See Page 5 For Details

Ernie Kester, Harvey Lagrone and Llyod Noel tell the story and answer your questions on how Cowboys lived in the Morongo Basin
Presentation • Exhibit • Food Door Prizes • Square Dancing
\$5.00 Members • \$10.00 Non-Members

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Email: pg85pp94@yahoo.com

SATURDAY & SUNDAY APRIL 21- 22, 2007

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Email: adset@verizon.net

SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2007 FOR MBHS ANNUAL MEETING DETAILS IN MAY NEWSLETTER



WHAT'S NEW IN THE MBHS GIFT SHOP

Located in Old Town Mercantile Antique Mall
 55727 Twenty-Nine Palms Hwy.
 Yucca Valley
365-1877
OPEN

7 Days a Week • 10:00am- 5:00pm daily
 By Wayne & Linda Darnell, Sales Chairs

The Morongo Basin Historical Society Gift Shop is featuring Willie Boy. This is the story that has intrigued all ages since early last century. On exhibit will be promotional items used by the movie industry to promote Robert Redford's movie titled, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*.

Several books have been published about Willie Boy and the following books reference his story and are available at the gift shop.

Willie Boy, A Desert Manhunt
 By Harry Lawton
 Available in cloth or paperback

The Chemehuevi Indians of Southern California
 By Ronald and Peggy Miller

Gateway to the Hi-Desert
 By Cal and Maxine Crotsenburg

Guide to the Beautiful and Historic Lucerne Valley
 By Bill Mann

Out of print and available at the gift shop in very limited quantity are:

The Hunt for Willie Boy
 By James Sandos and Larry Burgess

A Peculiar Piece of Desert
 By Lulu Rasmussen O'Neal

Along with the Willie Boy feature we will continue to bring in new and exciting products. If you have not been in the gift shop recently plan to stop by and find something special for you or a friend.

HISTORY BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Our newsletter is supported through advertising sponsorship. It is published and mailed to members four times a year, and distributed throughout the Basin during many of the local events. It's a great way for you to advertise your business. To learn how you can advertise in this newsletter contact Bob Connors at: 760-365-6163

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