

Newsletter

632 Landers Ln, Landers 92285 • PO Box 2046, Yucca Valley 92286 • www.MBHS.net • 760-364-2000

Yucca Valley resident, Steve Hanson, submitted this autobiographical account of his family's homesteading experience on the Mesa from 1948 to 1960. Last issue we presented the beginning of his story; we pick up here.

Putting Down Roots

by Steve Hanson

At the end of the 1940's only one house was visible on present day Old Woman Springs Road between 29 Palms Highway and our turn off which is now Aberdeen Drive. It was a cement brick house that is still there just north of Amerigas Co.

We started building in 1950 with a 5' x 8' cement brick building that Dad planned as a tool and electric generator room. In-



Breaking ground on the Mesa, early 1950.

side, he installed a two-cylinder, gas powered generator on a heavy duty wood bench.

Also in early 1950 Dad helped a couple friends start their cabins and we became what some called "weekenders." The first cabin we built was Jimmy Dixon's who had five acres just south of ours. Dixon's family still owns that cabin and visit often. Dad also helped Clyde (Trigger) Martin with his cabin on four five-acre parcels due east. That cabin is now in rough condition with most of the windows broken out.

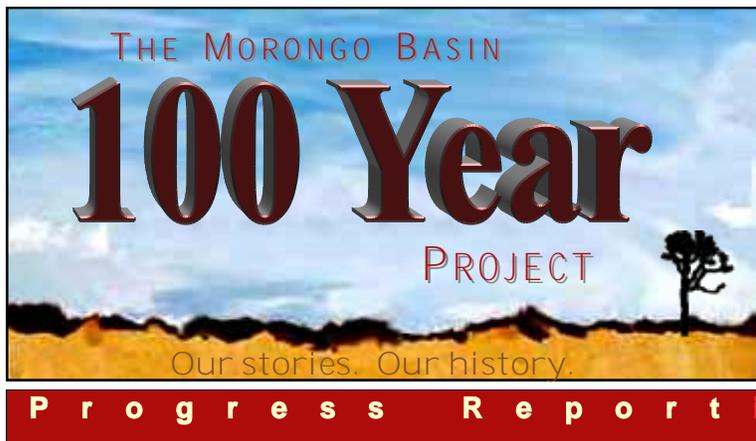
Jimmy and Trigger worked with Dad in Santa Ana. Clyde Martin worked for Orange County Wholesale Electric Co. and Jimmy Dixon was an inspec-

tor for Edison Co. Jimmy's office was across the street from my mom's restaurant, "The Do-nut Kettle," in Santa Ana.

About the same time Bob Thomas, another weekender, homesteaded five acres just north of us and down the hill almost in Pipes Wash. He built his house about 50 feet above the wash. The Thomas's also came out from Santa Ana most weekends.

Bob was a contractor and owned Thomas Electric. He had tractors and all the tools he needed to do his own work. He made a passable road now named Breeze Trail that lead up to the Mesa and connected to Sage Avenue then Aberdeen Drive.





Since our last newsletter, folks involved with the 100 Year Project (*and there's lots of 'em*) have hunkered down with their individual assignments.

Recent accomplishments

- + 48 of the 52 year-by-year essays MBHS has been assigned are complete. Many other details are being culled and incorporated where necessary.
- + Patrons and Gold Patrons are being solicited via an ongoing advertisement in the *Hi-Desert Star Weekend* edition. The ad was designed and donated by Publisher Cindy Melland.
- + An article about the partnership between the Twentynine Palms and Morongo Basin historical societies was published in the *Basin Wide Spirit*, and another on the "Opinion" page of the *Hi-Desert Star Weekend*.
- + When asked to be a Volunteer Researcher for the project, Congressman Paul Cook agreed to do so. When completed, he sent his essay

to us with a note stating that it had been read into the US Congressional Record on September 10, 2013.

To be done

- + Julie Landry will do a final grammar and spelling edit of all 103 text files.
- + Both Historical Societies will review the final text files and digitized photos before they are released to Hi-Desert Publishing for composition and printing.
- + *Certificates of Appreciation* will be prepared for Volunteer Researchers (aka essay authors), Partners, Gold Patrons and other contributors from both Historical Societies.

Become a Partner or Patron

If you missed becoming a *Partner* for one of the **Year pages it's not too late to make a donation.** You can also support the project by becoming a *Patron* for a \$25 minimum contribution.

Both *Partners* and *Patrons* will be acknowledged in a special listing in the final publication. *Patrons* donating \$100 or more will be designated *Gold Patrons* and receive a commemorative edition of the publication with a personalized *Certificate of Appreciation* bound in.

For more information contact Wayne Darnell at 760-369-1970. **Don't miss this rare opportunity to support our mission and become part of Morongo Basin's recorded history.**



Use this Enrollment Slip to become a **PARTNER, PATRON or GOLD PATRON**

I would like to become a **PARTNER** to the 100 Year Project for any year assigned me. \$100.00

I would like to become a **PATRON** to the 100 Year Project. Minimum of \$25.00

I would like to become a **GOLD PATRON** to the 100 Year Project. \$100.00 or more

My name is _____

Enter your *Individual, Non-profit or Family PARTNER* name as you would like it to appear in the final publication

Enclosed is my check made payable to MBHS in the amount of \$ _____

**Mail this with your check to Wayne Darnell, P.O. Box 1167, Yucca Valley, CA. 92286
 OR - for details, call Wayne at 760-369 1970**

Impressions from the President



November was a very good month for the Morongo Basin Historical Society.

Saturday, Nov. 2 was our very first Museum Marketplace and thanks to Claudia's P.R. effort, a lot of people showed up. Your board of directors voted to earmark the proceeds from the Marketplace for the Portico Concrete Project account that already had \$1,000 in it from two donors. We added \$200 so we are on our way.

Friday, Nov. 15 we enjoyed our first field trip to Whitewater Preserve. All week it had been beautiful and warm so we were surprised when we got there and it was really windy. Nevertheless many of the 27 attendees braved the cold weather and walked the very beautiful grounds before sharing lunch inside. Dawn Boatman, the naturalist on site and a graduate of Yucca Valley High School, shared facts about the Preserve. Everyone also received a copy of "The Whitewater Story" by Vera McPhersm Stocker.

Wednesday, Nov. 13 saw some 40 folks attend the 2nd Wednesday Program to hear about mining in this area. Everyone enjoyed the very in depth program.

On Nov. 20, the 50th anniversary since the Kennedy Assassination, was the "JFK Project" where we interviewed local residents about where they were when they first learned President Kennedy had been assassinated. We collected many very interesting accounts of that day in the lives of friends and family.

I am looking forward to a very busy holiday season. On behalf of the Morongo Basin Historical Society, I'd like to wish you a joyous holiday and prosperous new year.

Laurie Geeson, President
Morongo Basin Historical Society



An eclectic bizarre where you'll encounter rare and wonderful bargains, the first and second Museum Marketplace events were real successes. We certainly had more than our share of fun too!

It all happens the first Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Antiques, toys, tools, local items, plants and more. The possibilities of what people wants are endless.

Vendors, don't miss this opportunity. A table and \$10 donation get you in to this thriving market!

During Marketplace hours the Museum & Research Center are open for folks to discover, learn and support the Historical Society.

While we prefer to stay in the garden, when the weather is cold we just move inside where its warm.

There's plenty of space.

Please consider donating gently used items suitable for sales at the Marketplace for 2014. Come and join the fun, find some treasures, meet new people and maybe old friends too.

Karen Ford,
Marketplace Chairman



Come see what we've been up to ... Tuesday's from 10:30 am to 3 pm

MORONGO BASIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Museum & Research Center

632 Landers Lane, Landers, CA 92285

From Hwy 62 go 10 miles north on Old Woman Springs Rd (Hwy.247). Turn right on Reche Rd, turn right on Landers Lane. MBHS is 3/10s of a mile south of the Post Office, on the right. Call ahead to 760-364-2000.



Coming exhibit is out of this world!

The Morongo Basin Historical Society is preparing an exhibit on the extraordinary history of UFO activity here. We aim to attract visitors from all over in an effort to expand awareness of our unique history.

The unveiling is Sunday, Jan. 26 with **AREA 62...The Journey Begins** at the MBHS Museum & Research Center in Landers (see page 7). Public viewing begins Saturday, Feb. 1 at 9 a.m.

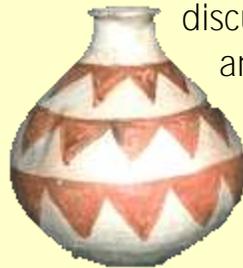
The exhibit, when finished, will include the history of Giant Rock and The Integratron, and also have a playful feel with aliens, contactee info, and a spacecraft model that crashed. **It's meant to be informative and fun.**

Many of you have experiences with Giant Rock, Spacecraft Conventions and Van Tassel; we **hope you'll want to share them with us. We'll conduct oral histories** similar to those just done for the JFK Project in November. Your story is important, so tell us what you remember.

If you have related memorabilia you can donate or LOAN for this display, please let us hear from you. Items on loan will be returned when the display is dismantled.

Wednesday, March 12

Tony Soares, the Joshua Tree potter whose Native American pottery is exhibited at Hi-Desert Nature Museum and the Palm Springs Art Museum, will



discuss the history and craft of building a pot from clay deposits gathered in the

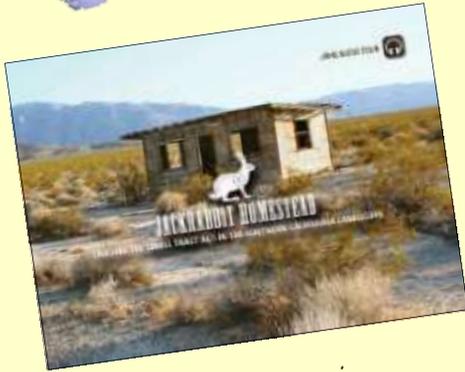
Mojave to his finished piece.

Wednesday, April 9

Rae Packard of Joshua Tree Tortoise Rescue will discuss the program she began and will bring two tortoises.



Programs of community interest held at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum in Yucca Valley on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Presentations normally begin at 5:30 p.m. but we recommend calling ahead. A \$5 donation is suggested.



Wednesday, January 8

Author & artist, Kim Stringfellow, presents:

Jack Rabbit Homesteads and how the Baby Homestead Act of 1938 changed the landscape of Morongo Basin.

Wednesday, February 12

Paul Smith, historian and co-owner of the 29 Palms Inn back by popular demand to present:

A new look at Willie Boy.



Building Our Home

We started building our main house in late 1950 and finished the first two rooms in 1951. We called it our “Desert House”. I remember going out almost every weekend from there on. Dad first started to layout the foundation and put in the cement forms. The front room was 22’ x 32’ and the kitchen was 20’ x 20’. Mom and Dad wanted a view from our front room looking up Pipes Canyon so the whole west wall was to have lots of windows. It was going to be a big house.

The next phase was pouring the foundation.

There was a cement company in Yucca Valley and I remember we visited with the cement company’s owner at the restaurant ran by his wife at the old Rexall Drug Store in old Yucca Valley. They talked and the next weekend we poured the foundation. We ate at that restaurant many times. Later they added a new room west and moved the restaurant there. It eventually became the C&S Café.



home on Sunday night. It was hard work for an eight to nine-year-old boy but I managed.

On right: Our kitchen and living room with fireplace drawn by my cousin, Dick Babin, in 1953.



I remember going with my Dad to a cement block company in Santa Ana, to place an order. Dad wanted cinder base cement for block material because it was supposed to be a better insulator.

The blocks came in two sizes, 4” x 8” x 16” and 8” x 8” x 16”. Mom and Dad decided to stagger them just for looks so they bought an equal number of both sizes. The cement blocks were trucked from Santa Ana out to our five acres and we had to meet the truck in Yucca Valley and guide the driver to our property.

We came out most of the weekends for the next three months to lay and fill the holes in the cement

blocks. Dad made a hole in the bottom of a metal bucket and used it as a funnel to pour the cement in the holes. He borrowed a cement mixer and poured cement in every hole of the blocks and he put steel in every other hole. He wanted it strong enough to withstand earthquakes. (It withstood the 1991 Landers 7.4 quake with no damage).

I remember helping mix cement for mortar and bringing the cement blocks to where Dad was working. It was my job to clean the tools at the end of the day and load them in our trailer to take

We wanted a big efficient fireplace so Dad asked around and was told that a Heat-a-Later steel fireplace built right into the cement block construction was the best so that’s what he bought and it worked great.

Dad had a big polished copper hood built to vent the stove. It was beautiful and was always talked about when we had visitors. Dad built the kitchen cabinets from knotty pine which was still in the house the last time I visited there in 2009. We bought a kerosene refrigerator because there was no electricity to the property and we couldn’t have the generator running all the time.

To be continued .

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

People think volunteering is for the benefit of others, but that is just a byproduct of the personal fulfillment you receive for getting involved.

The Morongo Basin Historical Society, like every non-profit organization of its type, needs volunteers to make its programs and events successful. I know you are out there, retired, laying in front of the television eating bon-bons and watching old reruns or playing endless games of solitaire on your computer. You could be out having fun with us, yes, history is fun and exciting especially when it is *your* history. Spend the day any Tuesday and get a free lunch.

The Morongo Basin Historical Society has many exciting projects underway, but we cannot achieve them without the help of volunteers. Please read the list below and let us know if you can help. Write to me at mbhspatrick@aol.com or call me 760-363-9212. Also, let us know if you think you have project you think the Historical Society should be involved in.

We need your help and appreciate any time you can give. Here are just some committees and projects offering volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Coordinating Committee
Membership Committee
The Old Post-Office Committee
The Miners Cabin and Mine Shaft Committee
Museum/Gift Shop Committee
Helping in the Research Library
Morongo Basin Photographic Inventory
Fundraising
Oral Histories
Museum Market Place
Maintenance of the Landers Center
Museum Guides and Docents
2nd Wednesday Programs
Homestead Cabin
The Earthquake House
MBHS Field Trips

For a more detailed description and explanation of any duties of the above, please contact me: mbhspatrick@aol.com, 760-363-9212. Also, contact me if you move, or if you want to switch to the paperless edition of this newsletter.

Patrick Kelly,
Membership Chair

SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Cadiz Inc.
Cherish Consignments
Connie's Clip & Curl
Gateway Pawn & Loan
Gubler Orchids
Guilty Race Club
Hi-Desert Publishing
IsAgenix
Rainbow Stew
Robert Lombardo, DDS
Route 62 Diner
Signs by Wanda
Swella Chiropractic Inc.
Tamma's Magic Mercantile
Ted's Cleaning
The Hot Rod Shop
The Integratron
Yucca Valley Chrysler Center
Yucca Valley Insurance

Membership
continues to grow.
As of November 15,
we are 292 strong,
including 11 members at
the new Booster Club
level.

Membership still seeks
younger members and we
welcome Miss Makayla
Geeson, 11 years young, to
our ranks.

ProVideo
 Professional Video Service
BOB STEPHENSON
 Owner
 PO Box 17
 Yucca Valley, CA 92286
 760-365-5869
 Fax 760-228-0066
 Cell 760-408-2389
 rispv@msn.com

Morongo Basin Historical Society Group Page
 morongo@groups.facebook.com · Open Group

Share: Post Link Photo Video Event Doc

Dogs on Parade

MBHS top dog, Bob Barker, invites you to join him on the beautiful grounds of the Vernette Landers Home & Gardens at the MBHS Museum & Research Center in Landers for **“Dogs on Parade.”**

MBHS official photographer, Glenn Isaacs, will be on hand to take photos of dogs and their parents. Mark your calendar then bring a furry friend to join the fun.



11 to 2 p.m.
Saturday,
February 15



Morongo Basin Historical Society
 PO Box 2046, Yucca Valley, CA 92286
 www.mbhs.net

Photo by Stephanie Kern