



# MORONGO BASIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January, February, March 2019

# Newsletter

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## Yucca Valley Pioneer Homesteaders

Jessie Redden (Jarman) was only 9 years old when she came with her family to the desert to what was to become Yucca Valley. Her descriptions and stories of her family's history and what it was like to grow up and live here in the early years provided most of the content for the following articles. It was her grandfather, Civil War veteran Hezekiah Quick, who persuaded his son-in-law, John Redden and wife Edna, Quick's daughter, to come to California and homestead in Yucca Valley.

Sources for the articles are: [Jessie Jarman Interview](#) by Art Miller and Bob Stephenson, December 9, 2013, for MBHS; "Friend to Prospectors and Pioneers," [Grubstake Days Program](#), May, 2008, the year Jessie was honored as Grand Marshal; [Jessie Jarman Interview](#) by Ruth and Les Long, February 26, 2008, for MBHS; "Back In the Day," by Jimmy Biggerstaff, [Basin Wide Spirit](#), Winter 2003; "Early Homesteading Family's Daughter Turns 100," by Stacy Moore, [Hi-Desert Star](#), 3-14-2014. In Jessie's interviews she refers to copies of her grandfather's letters, his annual journals about life in California, a Civil War journal (stolen from her house), and many photographs, deeds, discharge papers and other documents.

## Hezekiah Quick and The Redden Family

Hezekiah Quick was 73 years old when he came from the Midwest to California to homestead in 1914. Born in 1840, he came from a wealthy Indiana family and was well educated for the time. His mother's name was Susan Smart and his father's name was Samuel Quick (Quick and Smart).

He was a veteran of the Civil War, which had a lasting impact on the remainder to his life. Indiana, although a part of the Union, was home to a large number of southern sympathizers. As was common in other states that bordered the Confederacy, families were divided, fathers fought against sons, brothers turned against brothers. And Hezekiah's family was split, with some of his brothers going off to fight for the South and others for the North. Hezekiah chose the Union.

He often referred to himself as Captain Quick after the war, apparently, according to his granddaughter Jessie, because he had commanded a ship on the Mississippi River during a battle early in the war. However, he, in fact, at age 22, enlisted in the Indiana volunteers on February 1, 1864 for "three years or for duration of the war." He was discharged on November 17, 1865, in Vicksburg, Mississippi, "by reason of Surgeon's certificate of disability" – so he had either been wounded or was too sick to continue in the army. He was a Sergeant in Company B, 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Indiana veteran infantry when he left the army.

According to some accounts, Quick never got over his bitterness about the war and would never again wear an article of clothing that was colored gray (representing the South). Instead he almost always dressed in blue and loved wearing his medals. Jessie Jarman had a photograph of her grandfather that had a heavy metal frame supposedly made from melted-down Confederate cannon. Later while living in Redlands, Jessie remembers Quick sitting on his veranda in the evenings, with other Civil War veterans, reliving and arguing about the war.

After the war Hezekiah never had much to do with his family. He was married and he and his wife and children settled in a small town in Kansas, Harveyville. It was during this time, that his wife lost her sight and when daughters Jessie (Jarman's namesake) and Hattie moved to Emporia, Kansas, they took their mother with them because she was not able to take care of herself. Hezekiah would visit first one daughter, then another, but he especially liked staying with his daughter Edna, and her husband, John Redden and their children. He enjoyed being with his grandchildren, including Jessie, the youngest one, who was named after her Aunt Jessie Quick.

Hezekiah moved around quite a bit and eventually, perhaps because of the effects of his war years, found his way to the soothing waters of Hot Springs, Arkansas. It was there that he met Joseph Heard (Yucca Valley early homesteader – see Fall 2018 issue of the newsletter) and they became friends. Heard, at that time the postmaster in Hot Springs, told Quick about his plans to move west to California

and take up a homestead there. He must have convinced Hezekiah to do the same because four years after the Heards arrived in Yucca Valley in 1910, Quick came, in 1914, and settled on adjacent land on the western edge of town.

Hezekiah took up a relinquishment from a man who had started to prove up a homestead but stopped and sold his claim to Quick. This arrangement was later challenged by the former owner, unsuccessfully, after Hezekiah had proved up the claim. This situation is one of the issues referred to in Quick's letter (see below). In the meantime, after Hezekiah had completed his claim, he began to divide his time between Yucca Valley (then known as Big Morongo) and Redlands, California. In an effort to lure his daughter, Edna, and son-in-law, John Redden to California, Quick purchased a five-room house in Redlands.

And so, in 1920, the Redden family arrived in Redlands to take up residence in Grandfather Quick's home. It had been a harrowing trip by train from Iowa through severe winter storms. Jessie Redden Jarman remembered the huge icicles hanging from stations and water tanks along the way. The journey had frequently been held up for hours at a time when the railroad had to clear snow from the tracks. California must have seemed like a paradise to the Reddens when the train pulled into the station in Redlands. The city at that time was surrounded by orchards and was an agricultural center. The weather was mild and flowers were blooming.

Three years later, in 1923, the Reddens made the trek, by model T, to Yucca Valley to take up their new life homesteading in the desert.

The following letter sent by Hezekiah Quick is dated August 30, 1914, and was mailed from Banning where Quick was staying at the time to earn extra money by picking fruit in the orchards there. In the letter to his daughter Edna he writes about his life homesteading in Yucca Valley, the wonderful climate in California, despite the scarcity of water, and about working as a picker in the Banning orchards. The letter also reveals his anxiety regarding the suit being brought by the former owner of his property who had relinquished his claim to Quick.

This remarkable letter illustrates Hezekiah's fluency with words and writing. According to Jessie Jarman, her grandfather was a prolific writer of letters, especially to his family, all of his life. Quick also wrote in journals about everyday life. Apparently, he had kept a journal while a soldier in the Civil War and he also kept annual journals of his travels to California and of his daily life here.

**Banning Cal**

**Aug 30-1914**

Dear Edna and All,

I received your card yesterday. Was truly glad. Am well, hearty as a Buck army sergeant. At Banning, working every day. Come down from the Valley when the fruit crop come in for harvesting, first Prunes. Second Apricots. 3<sup>rd</sup> come Peaches. Then pears. Then grapes. Last Almonds And have been here two weeks. Every day hard at it. Harvest all by hand. I hold the championship, day by day, for number of pounds. 60 pounds is a good days work. It is not hard. Sit in the shade. Only work with hands. There are 10 of us on the job.

Weather delightful. Have not saw but one rain since I've been in California. That was up in the mountains before I come here. It never rains here at this time of year. We are located in a valley. Mountains on either side 5 miles apart. It thunders lightnings & rains up there almost daily. Days are warm at noon. Mornings are cool. Have to wear our coats till about 9 AM. Then gets hot till 4 PM. Gradually grows cooler. Nights are real cool. We sleep under a Heavy Blanket and also comforter. We all sleep outdoors.



Hezekiah Quick Grave Site  
Redlands

There are 4 families here. We have a good house rented. Eat, cook & keep our things in, but prefer open air at night. I have a splendid spring cot with a sufficient amount of good bed. Am on one side of road under 2 trees. Olive at head, Pecan at foot, with English Walnut and Pepper trees also furnishing me shade during day. Good protection at night. Sleep good here. Well if you would see the Walnuts on the ground in the morning that rattle off in sleep. Snoring you would say that was some sleeping (ed. he is joking that his snoring caused the walnuts to drop). My bed is in the Back orchard and near corner. Driving East is Prune orchard. West is Pear orchard nearby grape Vineyard with an abundant supply in all. I am never Hungry.

I am going to stay here until I get my check (Civil War pension check). Then I have another trip to Los Angeles. The Land Office. Everybody tells me I am safe. Will get My land all right, but he (ed. the former owner) has made arrangements to stand a Contest suit. He Has not filled the requirements of the Law in any respect. It remains now to be seen why and what plea he will set up for his failure to do so, but I am in it and will stay to the finish. I heard a letter read the other day from an old soldier who holds a claim, not as good as mine, one Mile distant. He was offered \$1,000 for his relinquishment. He said No - \$1,500 will buy it not less. And I Here tell you truly if I live to get a US patent on My Claim no man's \$1,500 would be

any inducement to me.

I am not excited, nor running wild. No just give us Water and Weather. And we will have the finest country in the world and it is only a question of time. It is a coming right there, Just as sure as sun set follows sun rise. In time it will be there and then the Morongo Valley will bloom equal to any part of California. There are thousands and tens of 1000s of improved acres here all around me. You can't buy a single acre of it for less than \$1000 (ed. He meant if improved) per acre. They have water here and irrigate. You can't buy an acre unimproved, the roughest for less than 100\$ and from that up to \$250 and Higher owing to Locality & Location.

As to climate it surely is ideal except for the Extreme Heat in middle of the day. However, in the shade it is real pleasant even at noon. The breeze wafted off those snow-covered Mountains in the shade makes it pleasant. Of course, now it is all new, wild and a desolate place to look at. It is no good until we get water. It requires some Nerve and a little gall to Live there and live the life of a hermit among the Varmints, Wolves, Owls and Snakes and endure all the Hardships & inconveniences a Man has to undergo. But I came for 160 acres of Land in Morongo Valley, California - now I have them.

My arrangements are all made for winter. My friend B.S. Pearce and I are putting up fruit. We Have it now in every imaginable shape and I think quite enough for two years at least and then some. His place is close to mine. We have built a House on his claim. We will winter there as I will not attempt to do much there until the Contest (ed. on his claim) is decided. Now, do not be uneasy about me if you do not hear from me for a time after I get set there. We are 24 miles from the nearest post office and there is no regular delivery. Just as someone Happens to pass is our only Chance for mail.

But as soon as I get a sure thing on my Claim, I will go to work to Have better accommodations and Have Every arrangement made for the winter. Except some grub, and that I will buy and ship to the nearest railroad station. That is at Palm Springs, California. Now remember, that will be my Address after I go back up in the Valley. I will Have to Hire a team to Haul my supplies out from Palm Springs to the Valley. Now don't any of you be uneasy about me. I am well fixed for winter. I am among friends, and am in good health. Really, never felt better in my life.

Dear Daughter – This is to all of you. Please read this and then mail it to the Children at Harveyville. I received a letter from Jessie (ed. his daughter Jessie) last Friday. Will answer in a few days. Answer soon, direct to Banning this time. From Your Affectionate Father with regards to all - H Quick N. B. Address My letters in care of Fred Pearce – Palm Springs Cal

## How Tough Are You?

### The John Redden Family Homesteaders in 1923

Did you ever think that you could have been one of the early pioneers in the Morongo Basin? Could you have endured the hardships and loneliness? Would you have been able to build a cabin, can vegetables and fruit, dig a well, walk five miles to the nearest school, haul water from a well or spring from a mile away? The first settlers in the Morongo Basin did all of this and more.

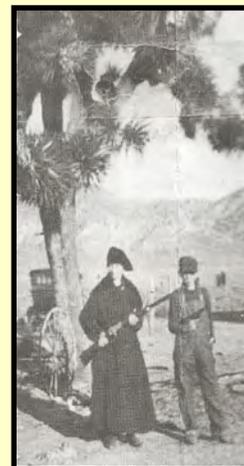
They often had to do their own doctoring as the following account by Jessie Jarman (Redden), youngest daughter of John and Edna Redden, illustrates. Jessie recounted about the time her father was digging a well and ran a pick through his foot at their homestead at Kickapoo and what would become Twentynine Palms Highway. He got up out of the hole and hobbled back to the house. There his wife poured lamp oil into a pan for him to soak his foot in it. Early the next morning, he got up and went back to digging the well. With the help of a "home remedy" and his "toughness" John Redden did not let an accident stop him from finishing his work.

It was Hezekiah Quick who lured John Redden and his family to the desert in 1923. His letters describing the life and climate in California persuaded his son-in-law and his wife, Quick's daughter Edna, to move from Iowa, first to Redlands in 1920 and then on to Yucca Valley in 1923. The Reddens brought 9-year old Jessie and 6-week old Robert with them while two older brothers, Leroy and Granville, (Grant) along with older sister, Iva, remained in Redlands in a house provided by grandfather Quick.

We think of Americans as being always on the move these days but it is surprising how mobile folks were after the Civil War in the last decades of the 1800's, long before automobiles and national highway system, airplanes and convenient rail travel. The first generation of the Redden family in the United States, consisting of the parents and eight sons, seemed to be constantly moving. They arrived in the United States from England in March, 1842, and settled in Indiana. The father died that summer, not long after their arrival. On October 3, 1842, another son was born, the ninth in the family, and named Isaac (John Redden's father). The mother managed to keep the family together until she died two years later.

A maiden aunt took Isaac into her home and raised him until he was nine years old and he ran away from her. He wound up in southern Iowa with some people that he knew and never had any more contact with his family. He enlisted in the Union army before he was 17 years old and served under General Dodge for three years until he was discharged. He was in Sherman's March to the Sea. He then re-enlisted but by that time the war was over.

After the war he worked as a scout for the freighters from Omaha to Salt Lake City. His duty was to ride ahead of the wagons and watch for Indians and buffalo herds. After that he worked in Salt Lake City hauling blocks of wood for the Mormon Tabernacle. On August 10, 1870, he married Sara Holman at Council Bluffs, Iowa. Altogether they had eleven children, 8 sons and 3 daughters. Four sons died in infancy. Isaac and Sara were Jessie Jarman's paternal grandparents.



Edna Redden & son  
Grant

December, 2013.

They moved to Missouri for Isaac's health for five years but then returned to Iowa in October, 1888, and lived there on a farm. Isaac died of pneumonia January 22, 1893, but Sara Redden lived for another 24 years until she died on July 7, 1917. Both Isaac and Sara are buried in Downsville Community Cemetery, East Weston, Iowa.

All three daughters married and remained in Iowa but the four remaining sons, including John Redden eventually relocated to California. Emmett was killed in an auto accident near Woodman, and Uncle Melvin died in 1946 and is buried in Redlands. Jessie's father, John, died in 1955, and is buried in Loma Linda. The other brother, Burt, worked on the aqueduct from Arizona through San Jacinto. Emmett helped to raise the family because Grandpa (Hezekiah Quick) died from pneumonia and the effects of the war. Mother, Edna, died in 1949 from cancer.

Before moving to Redlands, California in 1920, John and Edna Redden, who were married in Eskridge, Kansas, moved around quite a bit mostly due to John's job of cutting logs for the government. He concentrated on harvesting black walnut timber which was used to make gun stock. The Reddens had six children. The eldest, Leroy, was born in Kansas in 1902, but Iva, the oldest girl, was born in Missouri. The family moved back to Kansas where Lennabell and Granville (Grant) were born. They moved again and Jessie was born in Iowa. Robert, the youngest child, was born in Redlands, California and was six weeks old when the family moved to Yucca Valley in 1923. The two oldest boys, Leroy and Granville, stayed in Redlands to work, and elder sister Iva remained there too and took care of her brothers and Grandpa Quick, cooking their meals and keeping the house.

Meanwhile life on the Redden homestead in Yucca Valley was an adventure. Cattle, left by the ranchers to graze, roamed freely over the desert. Jessie's mother tried to keep a garden and grow a few trees but the cattle often knocked down the fence and trampled everything. If it wasn't the cattle, then the rabbits would eat all the plants and destroy the garden. Occasionally a steer would chase one of the kids and they would have to jump over a fence to escape.

A favorite activity of Jessie, her brother and the Heard children, who lived nearby, was to attempt to ride the semi-wild burros that were wandering around, released by prospectors who had no further use for them. Several of the children would climb on one of the burros and go for a ride. When the burro got tired of carrying the load it would just sit down, often right next to or on top of a patch of cholla.

Jessie remembers one colorful old prospector who travelled around with a small menagerie of animals, including a dog, a burro, a rooster and a goat. The rooster perched atop the burro, which was pulling a wagon with the goat tied to the back and the dog running alongside. The banging of pots and pans hanging from the wagon signaled the approach of the strange little group. When asked to come into the cabin and join the Redden family at dinner, the prospector politely declined and said he preferred to have his dinner outside. He had lost his family in the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and was reluctant to enter any structure ever again.

For Jessie, the prospectors were more than objects of curiosity, they were the source of reading material. She was an avid reader and would get *Argosy Magazine* issues, a used mining journal or maybe even an old newspaper – anything to read – from the itinerant prospectors. Her father would bring her books from the Morongo Valley Inn when he walked there to replenish his pipe tobacco supply. Imagine walking from Kickapoo in Yucca Valley to Morongo today!

Jessie Jarman's account of her love of books and reading and of her education brings to mind the stories of Abraham Lincoln and other pioneer children and their quest for books and learning. Of course, there were no schools in Yucca Valley or anywhere in the Morongo Basin in those days. So, while they were proving up the homestead, Jessie's mother, Edna, taught her at home. A school teacher aunt (Jessie's namesake) taught primary grades in Wichita, Kansas, and helped in the schooling by sending each semester's curriculum to Jessie's mother to use as a comprehensive guideline.

After being out of school for three years, Jessie returned to Redlands with her family and was enrolled in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the school there. She loved to read and had no trouble with spelling or mathematics. However, Jessie was more than a little apprehensive. She felt she was more prepared for 4<sup>th</sup> grade, not 7<sup>th</sup>.

"I kept quiet because I knew if they found out I hadn't been in school, they'd probably make me repeat. And so, I kept quiet and I went all through that year just, you might say, sweating it out. And at the end of the term, this principal, Mr. Barnes, called me into his office and my heart was down in my shoes. I just knew that was it. And I walked in and he said 'Young lady where have you been going to school for the last three years?' And I said there wasn't any school where I lived in Big Morongo, it wasn't Yucca Valley then. My mother taught me and my aunt sent work and I learned that way. And he said 'It looks like you've done a good job, you can go ahead.' I flew out of that office. How I had been worried about that." The Redden family would spend summers, holidays and vacations in Yucca Valley (known as Big Morongo at first). Jessie loved the desert and vividly describes it in her last interview for the Morongo Basin Historical Society in

December, 2013. "The desert was so quiet, so peaceful, except when it stormed. You could hear the wind for miles as it gathered volume. It was beautiful. When it stormed the rocks and the debris came down from the canyon. It would be roaring. Great huge, big pieces of rock rolling. It would be a waterfall almost, so strong.

My father and mother were very wise. They knew a lot more than what we call education now. Cause they knew about the heavens, they knew about the stars, they knew about life. And they taught us. I've followed the desert, it's my home. I've been here most of my life, off and on. As far as the desert and Yucca Valley, it will grow, but it will never be the desert as I knew it growing up and perhaps it's best. It was so beautiful, so calm. People trusted one another. When someone needed help, we were there. For everyone we had no prejudice about race, people, money. We were all one person. And that's the way God intended it. I am going to be 100 in March (of 2014) and it doesn't seem possible. I still don't feel like I'm that old. And that's the story of my life."

Jessie Louise Jarman died at age 101, in July, 2015.

## Warren Martin Family of Morongo Valley

The Morongo Basin Historical Society received a donation last summer of documents, newspaper clippings and other items related to the Martin family of Morongo Valley. The following letter from George Martin, Warren Martin's father to President Dwight D. Eisenhower concerns an almost one- hundred-year old Civil War Claim. This letter and the following documents regarding a Small Tract homestead claim are from the Martin papers on file at the Research Center and Museum in Landers.

June 1, 1953

PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Dear Mr. President:

As an American citizen I am taking the liberty of addressing you in regard to an old Civil War Claim. I have contacted both my California and Missouri Congressmen. Each has given me about the same reason for not being able to do anything about my claim.

Mr. President, I am not satisfied with their reason, thus, this letter to you. I cannot believe that our government can pass off this claim. It is a just and honest claim and its merits will prove I am right.

For your information I will give you a little history of my case:

During the Civil War, General Fremont, with his Army, camped alongside my grandfather's home in Tipton, Missouri. My grandfather was a blacksmith and operated his business from his home. General Fremont confiscated his shop, consisting of tools, finished wagons, horseshoeing equipment, etc. My grandfather was promised that in due time everything would be fully paid. Mr. President, I am sure you can understand that at that time a Southern Sympathizer got very little consideration. Therefore, needless to say, my grandfather got very little consideration.

In 1916 my aunt (now deceased) put in a claim through Missouri Congressman Dorcey (sic) Shackelford. I am enclosing Congressman Shackelford's letter in which he states he had presented a bill, and that affidavits and evidence to prove the claim had been placed on file. My aunt never heard any more about her claim. This claim only amounts to \$1,000.00.

As the sole living heir, and through sickness and age, I am in need of this money. I am trying again to see if it may be possible to have something done about it. I am enclosing both letters from Missouri Congressmen. One letter of 1916 and the other of 1953.

I would be very grateful if you would have this claim investigated, and I feel sure that if these papers are still on file in Washington, D.C. something could and should be done about it.

I would be very grateful to you and would appreciate anything that could be done for me.

Respectfully,

George V. Martin

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George Martin received a detailed two-page reply dated August 3, 1953, from Lucy S Howorth, General Counsel of the War Claims Commission. Martin's letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower had been referred to the Commission to handle. Basically, it stated that the War Claims Commission, created by the War Claims Act of 1948, had no jurisdiction to process claims arising out of the Civil War since it

had been created in order to “adjudicate claims and pay out compensation to American prisoners of war and civilian internees of World War II.”

Ms. Howorth went on to state that three acts passed in 1863, 1864 and 1871 regarding Civil War compensation claims were no longer in effect and that “it would appear to be extremely difficult to pursue a claim such as this with any degree of hopefulness that compensation might be obtained.” So, George Martin’s quest for compensation related to the Civil War could not be processed because the claim was too old and there was no longer any way it could be handled.

**Warren Martin Letter to US Department of Interior January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1955 unedited copy**

RE: Small Tract-APPLICATION NO La o120485  
E1/2 SW1/4 NW1/4 NW1/4 Township 1S Range 4E  
San Bernardino Meridian  
United States Department of Interior 1515 P.O. Building  
Los Angeles 12, California Attention: A.N. Osborne

Dear Sir:

I am writing in regard to a 5 acre lease I filed on in Morongo Valley on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of October 1954. I was 2<sup>nd</sup> in line at 8:45 A.M. and found the party 1<sup>st</sup> in line was not interested in the same lease as I was. Your office was not opened until 9:45 A.M. as all in line were checking time. Now, when I asked the clerk about the above described lease, she checked a book and found it open for the lease. I then signed up and the clerk put my name on the book and I gave a check for \$25.00.

Now, three months later I received a letter from your office stating another party had filed before me. As I had checked this particular lease the day before and was told the party who had previously had it had until 12 o’clock midnight to redeem it. I was under the impression one had to file in person on these leases. Your office told me a party had filed on it by mail and the mail had been opened before the 9:30 A.M., naturally by the time a clerk had checked on this lease and I signed up and had written out my check my time was recorded at 10:15 A.M. War 2, I do not know if the party that is supposed to have filed before me by mail is a veteran, as the Los Angeles Office would not divulge his or her name.

\*Editor’s note: Mr. Martin sent a similar letter on January 28, 1955 to Congressman Harry Shephard 27<sup>th</sup> District California Washington D.C.

This letter is another example that there was often risk and uncertainty when filing a claim for a homestead. This particular case involved the Small Tract (or “Baby”) Act of 1938. Elsewhere in this newsletter we wrote about Hezekiah Quick’s problems (Homestead Act of 1863) in 1923 when the former owner of his homestead, who had relinquished the claim to Quick, brought a suit contesting the transaction (after Quick had already proved up his claim). It was not always a smooth process and there were no guarantees until an actual patent was issued.

## **A Short History of the Oral History Project**

One excellent source of history is found in our oral history files. Since 1999, a group of dedicated volunteers, has interviewed people with first-hand knowledge of the way of life or the events which influenced the people of the Morongo Basin. The purpose of the Oral History Project is to preserve these voices and memories so that future generations can better understand the past.

Charter members, husband and wife team Les and Ruth Long, were the first to dedicate many hours to interviewing. From 1999 to 2007 they were responsible for twenty-five audio-recordings with the help of others who transcribed the tape recordings. The first interview in 1999 was Dr. Vernetta Landers who talked about the Landers Post Office.

In 2007, the society decided to add a new dimension. Bob Stephenson, owner of Pro Video volunteered to professionally film the interviews. Art Miller Jr. realtor and longtime Yucca Valley resident teamed up to interview the local pioneers with Bob behind the camera.

Stephenson’s family came out to the Basin on weekends from Norwalk. In 1965 Bob moved permanently to Yucca Valley starting Stephenson’s Photo. He worked for Hi-Desert Publishing as Production Manager before establishing Pro Video twenty-eight years ago. He continues to work recording municipal meetings and specialized video projects.

Art Miller, Sr. came to Yucca Valley in 1957 subdividing the land named “Western Hills.” Art, Jr., owner of Yucca Valley Realty, has

deep roots in the Basin and community of Yucca Valley.

Art explained that he spends 2-3 hours of preparation before each interview giving a list of questions that helps jog interviewees memories. Art immediately puts people at ease because folks know him from school or church, as neighbor, friend or businessman. Miller has a photographic memory for street names, the names of families who lived on what section of land or on which homestead. He is not averse to bringing up escapades, pranks or fond memories of holidays and celebrations.

Bob Stephenson and Art Miller have completed 30 plus interviews with 5 more important Morongo citizens lined up for interviews. The Les and Ruth Long family made a generous donation to help fund the Oral History Project.

## Baby Contests Back in the Day

Today pediatricians chart a babies growth in their offices on computers, parents and grandparents brag about children's weight and height gains on social media but in the early twentieth century, the practice of charting babies in public aimed at establishing standards of infants' health.

Infant health contests were held at State Fairs possibly inspired by the popular livestock contests. Physicians and nurses weighed and measured the babies. Few families actually had scales in the home at this time. Some contests offered cash prizes, ribbons, media attention or simply bragging rights for Papa and Mama.

While looking in our files, we came across two stories about locals who were entered in contests during the early 1900's.

The first is from the Warren Martin collection of papers donated in June, 2018. Warren C. Martin, a longtime resident of Morongo Valley, was instrumental in installing and maintaining TV Translation equipment that provided television service to Morongo Valley beginning in 1978. As a result of his efforts he received a Community Service Award from Roadrunner Grange of Morongo Valley.

## Warren C. Martin

The Los Angeles Express was the only evening paper in Los Angeles with the Associated Press News Service. Founded in 1871, it was acquired by William Randolph Hearst in 1931.

Monday, March 9, 1914 on the front page of the Los Angeles Express: "Warren C. Martin issues a challenge to infants".

**DEFI (Challenge) FROM HUSKY TOT** *No Fads, But He's Wonder*



Toddler Warren  
Martin

2 Years 4 Months Old, is 3 Feet ½ Inches High, Weighs 42 Pounds

Warren C. Martin's health program: Sleeps when he is sleepy. Awakens when he feels like it. Eats when he is hungry. Has no fads.

A challenge has been issued by Warren C. Martin to husky babies of Los Angeles to meet him on the scales and in the folds of the measuring tape. Warren asks for only one rule in the physical development contest, namely, that it shall be an age-for-age affair.

Warren is 2 1/3 years old, the son of Mr. and Mrs. George V. Martin of 1724 South Burlington Avenue, and according to Dr. E. Luther Trimmer, who was present at his birth, he first tipped the scales at 15 pounds. His height was 22 ½ inches; chest, 15 inches; neck 6 inches, and wrist 3 ½ inches.

His measurements today are as follows: Height, 3' 1/2"; Weight 42 pounds; Head 20"; Chest 22 ½"; Waist, 23"; Biceps, 7 ½"; Thigh, 13"; Neck, 10"; Hips, 22"; Wrist 5".

~Warren has never been entered in any contest. Get your tape measure and see if you can beat him"~

## Bob Connors

Bob Connors, Past President of Morongo Basin Historical, present Board of Director tells about the first contest his mother entered him when he was just one year old.

"I am not sure as my folks did not share much of their past but my Mom was active in the community and I was only one year old at the time. This certificate fell out of a scrapbook with no explanation...

At the time we lived in what is now the worst part of Los Angeles and I was born in the Methodist hospital which is where Dodger stadium is today.

My Mom was always entering my sister and me in something to improve us like tap & ballroom dancing, piano lessons, Boy & Girl Scouts, church. In grammar school I was voted president of the Teensteer Tavern, a Friday night dance for us 7th & 8th grade school kids. Lots of good memories..."



Bob Connors' certificate

## Morongo Basin Horsemen's Association Donation

Morongo Basin Historical Society member, Matthew Midgett lived in Morongo Valley from 2005 to 2009, restored the film star Guy Madison's house and now lives in New Mexico on his "Followed Dream Ranch."

Midgett, a member of Morongo Basin Horsemen's Association (established in 1992-2017) recently donated a patch and several commemorative metal Pony Express Rider magnets and a Tee shirt of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Pony Express Reenactment May 16, 2009 from the Palm Springs, CA Post Office to the Pioneertown CA Post Office.

The first MBHA Pony Express ride was held in 1994 and was tied to the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days. The first rides involved few riders, and the starting point evolved always ending at Pioneertown Post Office. The Grubstake Days Pony Express ride tradition returned in 2017.



Matthew Midgett leads the Pony Express Riders

Matthew participated in the Pony Express "reenactment" rides (the Pony Express company only lasted 18 months, and never actually passed through the Morongo Basin) from 29 Palms to Pioneertown.

Midgett thought the MBHA might benefit from a more ambitious route, and suggested that a ride from Palm Springs to Pioneertown would likely receive more publicity. With 28 riders for the 15<sup>th</sup> Reenactment May 16, 2009, the Morongo Basin Horseman's Association rode from the downtown Palm Springs Post Office 33 miles with mailbags to the Pioneertown Post Office.

Thank you, Matthew, for your donation.

## In Memorium

**Bert Barber, Jr.** passed away September 3, 2018, at home at the age of 86. He was born on Aug. 8, 1932 in Oakland to Lena Nichelini and Bert Barber. He is survived by Donna, his wife of 31 years. Both Bert and Donna supported the mission of Morongo Basin Historical Society by generously opening up their ranch for history tours once a year. Born a natural salesman, he sold Cloverine salve, war bonds, bicycles, newspapers, vacuum cleaners, and ultimately automobiles. Bert seemed to have a knack too for repairing transportation. All the kids on his block brought their broken bicycles to him! Later in the Air Force he worked on airplanes.

Bert turned his passion for automobiles into his life work by founding a two-man dealership, Barber Auto Sales in Vallejo in 1955. That business eventually became Barber Auto Sales and grew to become the largest dealer group in Solano County. After thirty-three years he chose to retire from active involvement in that business. He and Donna eventually moved to Indian Wells where they have kept themselves extremely busy for the last twenty-two years with numerous projects, including the running of his beloved ranch. Retirement was never about relaxation for Bert!

Published in The Desert Sun on Sept. 23, 2018

**Ruth Frances Durrant** was born in Chicago, Illinois, March 25, 1922. She died Oct. 16, 2018, two days before the first anniversary of her husband, Stewart Durrant's death. They were married for 69 years.

Both Ruth and Stu, long time members of Morongo Basin Historical Society, were avid supporters of history in the Morongo Basin. They generously donated the seed money for the museum's portico completed in 2014.

After high school Ruth worked as a telephone operator. She married Gilbert C. Procter in 1942. She was widowed in 1945 and returned to the phone company until 1948, when she married Stewart Durrant, an aeronautical engineer.

They moved from the Chicago area to the St. Louis area in 1954. When Stewart retired they moved to Yucca Valley in 1982.

Over the years in Yucca Valley, she volunteered with the Adult Health Services project, Unity Home, Meals On Wheels and the Boys & Girls Club (among other projects). It gave her pleasure to run into adults who remembered her as the "craft lady" at the Boys & Girls Club. She was a Greenleaf Society award winner in 2008 and received a Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award for outstanding work for others in 2012 from President Obama.

Ruth is survived by two children, Paula (Elvin Lightcap), of Yucca Valley, and Martin (Elisa), of Greeley, Colorado. Published in The Hi-Desert Star on October 18, 2018.

Member, **Arthur Edward Gerpheide** passed away at the age of 91. Born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, moving to Pasadena, he graduated from Pasadena High School and then enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Upon his honorable discharge, Art went on to UCLA where he met and married Mary in 1952.

After building their first home, Art formed the Ron-Art Corporation, subdividing acreage and building homes in Arcadia. In 1961, he moved his family to Yucca Valley and with two partners, built and eventually owned the Yucca Inn, which is now the Travelodge. In addition, he was contracted to build the Co-Op apartments (Country Club Terrace), and custom homes as well as the Glen Realty, where he was also a partner. He further pursued his real estate career by opening the Sun Realty office.

His memberships included Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Realty Board, Lions Club, Aero Barons and Morongo Basin Historical Society. Art and Mary were also the very first members of the Yucca Valley Golf and Country Club when it became an 18-hole golf course. Published in The Hi- Desert Star October 31, 2018

### Donations

**Barry Mayron**, member of the society recently donated: *The Call Bulletin WAR EXTRA San Francisco* October 24, 1940 AXIS PEACE OFFER HINTED fine condition.

Also, *The Call Bulletin WAR EXTRA San Francisco* December 9, 1941 5 cents \*NAZI \* ITALY \*JAPAN

**Gay Smith** donated: *California's Desert Paradise Complete Guide to Year 'Round Travel and Fun In the Sun' Detailed Maps & Information on all Activities* Spring 1957 & Winter 1958.

*Landers Homestead Valley Association Inc.* February 1, 1962.

**Carol Swain** donations In Memory of her husband Jack Swain:

The Swains moved to Morongo Valley later in life when they took up horseback riding joining the MB Horsemen's Association turning their 5 acres into a ranch. Both Jack and Carol were also active members of the Morongo Basin Tractor Club, donating Jack's photos of various antique tractors. Included in the donation are badges, pins and scrapbooks.

Carol gave a generous donation of numerous historic and other items from the Swains yard and corrals.

Warren Martin papers and newspaper clippings.

**Betty Butler** donated: Landers Earthquake Tee-Shirt, 1 bottle of water given to survivors, Scrapbook of B & W photos of earthquake, 120 negatives of photos with detailed identification

**Elephant Stew** Submitted by Betty Butler

Member of Yucca Valley C.O.P.

*United We Stand Yucca Valley Citizens on Patrol*

Published 2008

For Large Crowds at Your Event

Cut elephant meat into bite-sized pieces. This will take about 2 months. Place meat in pan and cover with 1,000 gallons of brown gravy and simmer 4 weeks. Shovel in salt and pepper to taste.

When meat is tender, add vegetables. A steam shovel is useful for this. Simmer slowly for 4 more weeks. Garnish with parsley. Will serve 3,800 people. If more are expected, add the 2 rabbits. However, this is not recommended, as very few people like hare in their stew.

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 medium sized elephant | 200 bushels of carrots     |
| ½ ton salt              | 4,000 sprigs of parsley    |
| ½ ton pepper            | 2 small rabbits (optional) |
|                         | 500 bushels of potatoes    |

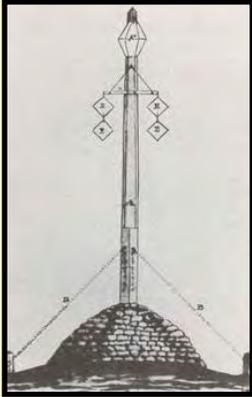
## George Washington's Nephew in the Mojave Desert?

By Jeff Drozd (Mojo on the Mojave)

Desert USA, December 29, 2014

Henry Washington did a pretty good job of making a name for himself and also for naming many places in California. I guess you could call him the father of our County, actually many counties in the State of California for that matter.

In the early 1850's Colonel Washington was paid to survey many areas of the Country including Florida, Colorado and California. The history of this baseline dates back over 160 years to November 1852. At that time, Colonel Henry Washington was the deputy surveyor under contract with the U.S. Surveyor General of California. He was given the task of establishing an Initial Point of all future surveys, where the baseline and meridian would intersect at a highly visible point in Southern California.



George Washington's  
Survey Monument in  
1852

The general location of that Initial Point had already been established just the year before and after a four-day hike into the mountains from San Bernardino through very rough territory. Washington and his team of 12 assistant surveyors established the Initial Point at a location approximately a half-mile west of Mt. San Bernardino at an elevation of 10,300 feet. This was not the highest point in Southern California but it allowed anyone in the San Bernardino Valley a view of the point. Washington erected a monument on the site of his Initial Point that still stands atop San Bernardino Mountain to this day.

Little did Colonel Washington know that his monument would become the point of beginning of every piece of private and public property owned by over 25 million inhabitants of Southern California.

Washington also traveled north to Death Valley, and south through Temecula to the Mexican border; he noted "Indian Villages" in the vicinity of Temecula. He was paid to survey the Coachella Valley and during this survey he is credited with naming Cathedral City in 1855. During a survey of the Colorado Desert, he reportedly stood in Cathedral Canyon and said the rock formations looked like a European cathedral – the name stuck.

When one travels through the heart of San Bernardino today, one of the main streets that you might see is Baseline Avenue. This street is actually on the baseline set by Colonel Washington. This street exists west of the meridian line but if you go east of the meridian line you travel through the mountains and down into the Mojave Desert. Colonel Washington was one of the first non-native people to record his visit across the Mojave Desert.

Today as you follow the baseline to the east you travel through downtown Yucca Valley, then as 29 Palms Highway curves north the baseline follows Yucca Trail, which then turns into Alta Loma Drive in Joshua Tree. At the termination of Alta Loma Drive there is a mountain of boulders with a canyon headed south. While on his survey of the baseline in 1855, Washington noted this canyon, and at that time he also noted this huge rock mountain. He mentioned petroglyphs on the rocks and the hole at the end of the canyon dug by coyotes to reach shallow water, thus he named the canyon, "Coyote Hole Springs". There is also an ancient Native American "work circle" in the area, you will find it if you explore the area thoroughly.

After this point he went around the rock mountain and proceeded to survey the baseline east to 29 Palms and beyond. Eventually he found an oasis with Native Americans living amongst the palm trees, thus he named it Twentynine Palms (we will use the term 29 Palms in this blog).

The community of 29 Palms has many murals and one of its many murals commemorates the visit of Colonel Washington; it is officially known as Mural #2. 29 Palms was known as the Oasis of Mara by the natives. The life-giving springs of the Oasis of Mara supported Native Americans and early settlers, and its famous fan palms were the source of the 29 Palms name. The year after Colonel Washington's visit a deputy surveyor reported that "near the springs the land has the appearance of having been cultivated by the Indians". He counted 26 palm trees at that time but the name "Twentynine Palms" was already recorded. He further stated "there are Indian huts in section thirty-three, the Indians use the leaf of the palm tree for making baskets, hats, etc. Around the springs there is a growth of cane of which the Indians make arrows for their bows."

In 1855 Colonel Henry Washington headed north with his survey and came through the then unnamed Johnson Valley.



Washington Survey Monument Today

Near the west end of the valley he found two elderly Indian women alone at a spring, thus Colonel Washington appropriately named it Old Woman Springs, and the name was recorded for all to ponder. The two Indian women may have been left there to watch young children; the rest were probably in the nearby mountains gathering pinon nuts and hunting, as hunter-gatherers were known to do.

**Jeff Drozd**, who writes under the moniker “Mojo on the Mojave”, is a long-time member and supporter of the Monrogo Basin Historical Society. He was a Career & Technical Education teacher & coordinator in high school for 25 years and now serves in a similar capacity at Copper Mountain College. In addition he is a member of the Yucca Valley Town Council. In his “spare time” he enjoys research desert facts, exploring the desert and enjoying the many animals he and his wife keep. He has always loved history and the Mojave Desert.

**DesertUSA** (DesertUSA.com) is an online publication/portal to a variety of articles exploring the deserts and ecosystems of the Southwest. If you haven't heard of it before, you should add it to your favorites list.

### 2019 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Lecture Series

**January 9, 2019** “The Folklore & Legend of Giant Rock” Barbara Harris, historian, researcher & storyteller.

**February 13, 2019** “Fire On the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts & Mountains of Inland So California” - Ruth Nolan is an author and former seasonal wildland firefighter

**March 13, 2019** “Better Know A Butterfly-Joe Zarki, author and former Joshua Tree National Park Ranger

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| WELCOME NEW MEMBERS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Glenn Isaacs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><u>Joshua Tree</u><br/>Glen Steigelman<br/>Johnnie Painter<br/>Patricia Glover<br/><u>Los Angeles</u><br/>Karl Loescher<br/><u>San Francisco</u><br/>Erin Quist</p>  | <p><b>Glenn Isaacs</b>, as a former employee, sponsored a \$500 donation from State Farm Insurance, a portion of which has been used to purchase signs featuring a composite of Glenn's photographs promoting MBHS. The signs will be used in Landers and at events and activities in which the Society participates.</p>  |

## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

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| <p><b>29 Palms Band of Mission Indians</b><br/><b>29 Palms Historical Society</b><br/><b>Desert Christ Park</b> - a Museum of Sculptures<br/><b>Dr. Robert Lombardo, DDS.</b><br/><b>Glenn Isaacs &amp; Sallie Brown Isaacs</b><br/><b>Guity Race Club</b> - Eric Pealstrom<br/><b>HI-DESERT AIR</b> - Lance and Kari Cody<br/><b>Hi-Desert Nature Museum</b><br/><b>Hi Desert Water District</b> - Ed Muzik<br/><b>Homestead Valley Community Council</b><br/><b>Integratron</b> - Patty, Nancy &amp; Joanne Karl<br/><b>Johnson Valley Improvement Association</b></p> | <p><b>Karl Loescher</b><br/><b>Phillip Brown Home REALTOR</b> - Phillip Brown<br/><b>ProVideo</b> - Bob Stephenson<br/><b>Rainbow Stew</b> - Stacey Clayton, Valerie Meyer &amp; Michelle Nemechek<br/><b>Swella Chiropractic, Inc.</b> - Gene Swella<br/><b>Tortoise Rock Casino</b><br/><b>Tri-Valley Realty</b> -Linda Paino<br/><b>Ultimate Motors</b> - Adam Spitz<br/><b>VisitPioneertown.com</b> - Kenneth Gentry<br/><b>Yucca Valley Insurance</b> - The Millers</p> |
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