

Beatty



Museum

and Historical Society

Vol.4 No.3

NEWSLETTER

MAY - JUN. 98

MAKE TRACKS TO BEATTY



2ND ANNUAL

RAILROAD DAYS

JUNE 5, 6 & 7TH 1998

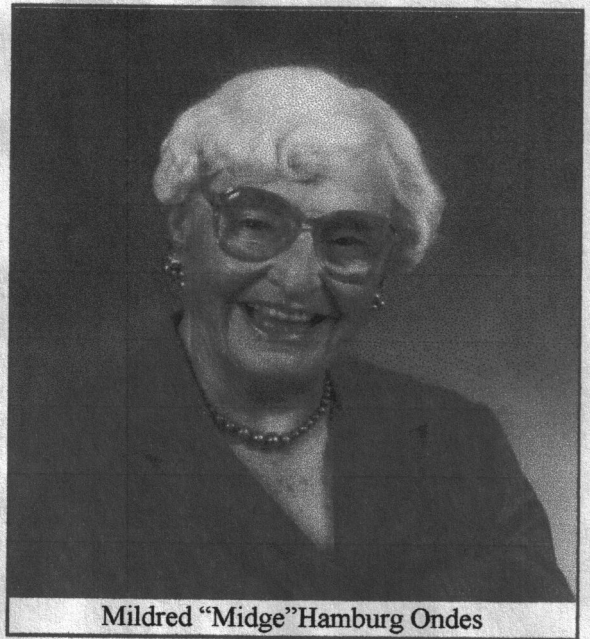
Midge Ondes to be Grand Marshall at 2nd annual "Beatty Railroad Days"

Midge Ondes was the first woman elected President in forty years at the Tamalpias Valley Improvement Club and served in the years 1960-1961-1964-1973. While in office she obtained a Post Office and Library. She also has received recognition for her service as follows: County of Marin-Aide to Supervisor Rice-Volunteer Jan 6, 1981. Sonoma County & University of California-Completion Master Food Preserver-August 8, 1985. Rohnert Park Police Department-10 years continual dedicated service as a volunteer 1979-1989. Sonoma County Legal Service-Volunteer in Legal Aid 1991. Petaluma People Service Center-Volunteer Fiscal Office-1993-1997. California Legislature Assembly-Volunteer of the Year-June 23, 1993. Commonwealth of Kentucky-Governor Martha Layne Collins-"Know ye that Honorable Midge Ondes is commissioned a Kentucky Colonel February 13, 1984 in the 92 year of the Commonwealth." The Beatty Museum and Historical Society is very proud to have Midge as our Grand Marshall for the 2nd Annual Beatty Railroad Days. Here, in her own words, is a brief look at the life of this wonderful lady. "Doctor Grisby brought me into this world in Rhyolite, Nevada on July 28, 1908. I was told I weighed in at nine pounds with three rolls of fat on my back, which is still there. My parents were Edna and Richard R. Worthey. My parents separated when I was six months old. After much searching, my Father found me when I was twenty two. He was a chef working at some of the best hotels. My Mother married Lawrence Jerome Hubbard, a mining engineer. By chance, they returned to Rhyolite where he was Superintendent of the mine and mill. From there we lived in remote areas where there were no school or children. My Mother taught me at home until I was ten years of age. At that time I enrolled in school in Alameda with hundreds of other children. In 1922, my Step Father sold our home and we moved to Santa Rosa to open a Piggly Wiggly Store, and I attended high school. I was a cheer leader for four years and also was a member of the Drama Club and the Booster Club. I enjoyed being in several plays. When my Step Father lost the business, we moved to San Francisco. Instead of going to college, I went to work for the telephone company. I left to accept a position with



Midge 2 yrs. with Mother

the Reo Motor Car Company. Then for years, the telephone company would send me out to firms who needed a telephone operator. I worked for fifty five different firms.



Mildred "Midge" Hamburg Ondes

February 8, 1935, I married Jay Hamburg, the love of my life for 34 years and 3 days. We had quarters at the Presidio and I worked for the Signal Corp. I worked the day of Pearl Harbor from 10 am to 2 am. I transferred to Fort Lewis in December and returned to Fort Ord in May. I remained there while Jay was overseas for over three years. I was chief operator overseeing thirty two operators and the load was about 65,000 calls a day. In 1945 we moved to Newhall and opened the Horse Shoe Cafe. After nine months, we sold at a profit and returned to San Francisco. I worked in the financial district and Jay worked at Fort Mason. We bought a home in San Francisco and 3/4 of an acre in Mill Valley. Jay was recalled during the Korea affair, so the house was built and we moved in 1955. My love passed away from cancer in 1969. I married a friend of his, a navy retired man named Andrew Paul Ondes. He was fifty two and I was sixty two when we married. Three days after Christmas 1972 he passed away with a massive heart attack. In 1979, I sold our beautiful home and moved into a mobile park in Rohnert Park, California."



Midge at 19



A Message from the President Claudia Reidhead

Hi Folks: Looks like you have to put up with me again for two more years. I'm very proud to be your President and congratulations to the other election winners, Mary Revert, Vonnie Gray, Andy Gudas, Kanna Lindgarde and Jeff Taguchi. This is the last term I can serve according to our By-Laws and Charter, so over the next two years you will be meeting more of the local people through this newsletter and hopefully you will be able to make a good selection for President, Vice-President and Secretary. Member Kim Hickinbotham returned from Washington, D.C. with a group from Beatty High School and was very impressed with the Smithsonian. And now we bid her Bon Voyage on her trip to Germany. Plans for Railroad Days are well underway. The Las Vegas Miniature Railroad Group is coming again, so be sure to see their wonderful exhibit at the Community Center and their entry in the parade. The parade is filling up real well and should be even better than last years. The Antique and Classic car groups are returning and we hope to have a better set up for them to show their cars. There will also be a Antique and Classic car show & shine. The new set up for the vendors and crafters will be all around the park, with Park & Recreation putting in more power supply places for the vendors. A huge thanks go to them. Look out for the deputies and the Kangaroo Kourt officers who will be serving warrants and making arrests. (All in good fun) There will be button sales, a 50/50 raffle and a talent show. If you have a talent that you would like to showcase, just step in. Beatty C of C will sponsor Bingo in the park. There will be street dances and a pig roast at the Sourdough on Saturday night. Friends of Rhyolite have moved the Rhyolite Festival up to combine with our Railroad Days and they will have people in costume to give walk and talk history tours in Rhyolite Saturday and Sunday. A gold and coin display is on loan to the museum to enjoy along with the many new and wonderful exhibits. At the museum on Saturday, from 10 a.m. til 3 p.m., Suzi McCoy will be signing her book "Baby Sitting a Ghost Town." It is a historical romp through the town of Rhyolite including fact and fiction. She will also be at the Beatty C of C Sunday from 10 a.m. til 2 p.m. Pastor Jeff will conduct Church in the park Sunday morning. There will be kids

games and many more events. I'm hoping to see all of you in June at Railroad Days.



"RIBITS" from the editor.... Bullfrog Billy

Welcome to our annual Railroad Days issue. Perhaps I should compose a song titled "It's The Most Funderful Time Of The Year." Last year was the start of a great tradition, The Beatty Railroad Days. A record number of entries produced the largest parade ever in Beatty. All the wonderful exhibits, the talent show and all the hard work by so many dedicated people helped to make the week-end to remember, a week-end to repeat again and again. Claudia has given you lots of information on what you will see and be able to enjoy for the 2nd Annual Railroad Days. Once again she has put together our History Section with a story about the Railroads of this area that I'm sure you will enjoy. My thanks go to Linda Greene, Chairperson of The Friends of Rhyolite for submitting a story about this years Rhyolite Festival which will be held the same week-end as Railroad Days. As we have been advertising in recent issues, "Two Great Events, One Great Week-end," I think it might be appropriate at this time to change that to read, "Three Great Events, One Great Week-end." By whispering a few sweet RIBITS in the ears of one of the sweetest people I know, I was able to convince Midge Ondes that she was the person that should be Grand Marshall for Railroad Days. She is a member of both BMHS and Friends of Rhyolite. I met Midge a few years ago at one of the earlier Rhyolite Festivals and have kept in touch with her and I am delighted that she has agreed to be a part of the festivities. She was kind enough to write a little bio of herself and send some pictures and it was a labor of love that produced the special page on Midge that we have in this issue for you to enjoy. You will want to take the time to meet and chat with this charming lady, who was born in Rhyolite in 1908, and I guarantee that you will be smiling for many days afterwards. Thank you Midge for being a friend and an inspiration. I hope all of you will be able to attend Railroad Days. Room reservations are a must and the time to make them is right now. You will want to bring a camera and/or a video camera and plenty of film as this promises to be a great week-end. I hope to see all of you June 5th, 6th and 7th. In the meantime, stay healthy, stay happy and don't do anything a frog wouldn't do.....**RIBIT!**

Bullfrog Mining District History

The Golden Roads

by
Claudia Reidhead

The history of the railroads in this area is really the history of this area only a couple of years later. The *Las Vegas and Tonopah*, (LV&T) better known locally as the Clark Line, was financed by Senator Clark and his brother J. Ross Clark, a financier. The *Tonopah and Tidewater*, (T&T) was financed by "Borax" Smith to accommodate his Lila C. Mine, a Borax mine in Death Valley. The *Bullfrog-Goldfield*, (B&G) was financed by John Brock, the Tonopah Mining Company and the *Tonopah-Goldfield Railroad*.

December of 1904, "Borax" Smith decided to build a Railroad through to his mine in Death Valley. He called it the Tonopah and Tidewater. He talked to Senator Clark who was building a line from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, Utah. The San Pedro line was having trouble with Union Pacific on the tie in. January 30, 1905, having completed the Salt Lake line, the Senator had more time to look a bit more closely at the suggestion of "Borax" Smith to build a line to Tonopah from Las Vegas. "Borax" Smith had brought in all the supplies, having applied for and receiving tie-in privileges for the rail line he had called the T&T. The Senator decided to cut Smith out, so through delays, right-of-way wrangles and lost shipments, he was able to purchase the grade and supplies left behind by Smith and commence construction himself. Senator Clark sent out survey teams and talked to people from this area. The mines were producing at a good rate and with more opening up all the time, it seemed a viable idea. So with his substantial financial background and his brothers backing, he began in earnest to build his railroad.

Meanwhile, "Borax" Smith began his rail line from Ludlow with a great many delays. He was already several months behind and continuous delays from floods and construction tie ups and slow material delivery kept putting him further behind.

There was talk of another line starting from Goldfield in the North coming South. Senator Clark was really being pressed to push his LV&T faster. Clark had incorporated LV&T under Utah laws and formed the "NEVADA Rapid Transit," laying out and grading an auto road from Las Vegas to the Bullfrog District. Superintendent Frank Grace, (who is buried in Beatty) had 15 teams and 22 men grading road.

A second Auto Transit Co., "Nevada Trading and Transportation Company," an Auto Stage Line, opened for business with a fare of \$40.00 for the 140 mile trip from Las Vegas to Rhyolite one way, so competition in both ways was experienced by the Senator. October 1905 he finally purchased the 10 miles of grade ties, rails and accessories.

Surveying East from Gold Center, Chief Engineer Arthur Maguire was laying advance routes to Rhyolite and points West for LV&T.

The Gold Roads were really under way. From the South was the LV&T coming from Las Vegas. The T&T was on its way from Ludlow. "Borax" Smith had worked out an agreement with The Santa Fe Line and gotten right-of-ways and was building grade around Silver Lake. The B&G was starting out from Goldfield under the stewardship of John Brock in Rhyolite.

LV&T secured a tract of land 200' x 1400' for use as rail yards. Senator Clark found other backers in Richard C. Kearns, Ambassador Arthur Maguire as Chief Engineer, Frank M. Grace as Superintendent and Charles O. Whittemore as General Counsel and Public Relations Manager. December 28, 1905, LV&T Locomotive #1 was delivered in Las Vegas. It was a Baldwin, #11867, wheel arrangement 4-6-0 built May 1891. Wheel size 54" cylinder diameter and piston stroke 18" x 24" weighing 134,000 pounds, a good size engine. All tracks laid were

standard gauge, the only narrow gauge tracks were down to Ryan in Death Valley and a few spurs to some of the mines. The first rails of the LV&T were laid on January 4, 1906. # 2 Locomotive was delivered in late February, allowing the advancing rails to move at a faster pace, moving forward at the rapid pace of two miles per day. By March 1, 1906, 43.6 miles of track had been laid. They started regular rail service to Indian Wells, now called Indian Springs. By the middle of March they had advanced to 53 miles. One local reporter either with tongue in cheek or a complete lack of historical background and experience was observed to comment: "One day last week the track layers beat the worlds record, laying two mile and 140 feet!"

On March 24, 1906, a four day storm washed out the main line of Senator Clark's SP, LA&SL (Salt Lake Route) in Meadow Valley Wash and the construction crews were conscripted to help repair the damage. For 22 days the Transcontinental line was closed to all traffic, while work on the LV&T was halted for over a month. In spite of this delay, the LV&T was still far ahead in the three way race to bring rails to the Bullfrog District. The Brock Line (B&G) was still talking and hadn't started laying track. The T&T (Smith Line) had grade eighty miles south of Rhyolite but only crossed Silver Lake and still had the big obstacle of Amargosa Canyon to go.

Estimates made indicated that LV&T rails would reach Beatty by the first of May, following which three additional months would be required to complete the High Line. With the heavy rock work and the necessary deep embankments, the cost would be 10 times greater than the lower line, but due to contracts with the mines they had to complete the High Line.

April 1906, a new strike at Transvaal caused a discussion of a spur line up Florine Canyon, and a survey crew started to lay out a line going there before the rails ever reached Gold Center and Beatty. Mid June 1906, LV&T was progressing, rails were still 29 miles from Gold Center, at Rose Wells. T&T

had completed 75 miles of track and stalled at Amargosa Canyon. B&G had started to lay track on May 8, 1906, heading South. All three lines were progressing now, although slowly due to the scarcity of labor and the extreme heat. August 1906, LV&T was hit with flash floods, but work continued on the High Line, over Dores Montgomery Pass. Settlement of the sailors strike in Los Angeles brought the release of ties that had been harbor bound for four months, and work was progressing rapidly again. The arrival of the first 10 carloads of ties at the end of September and promise of a shipment of steel the following week settled nerves and encouraged Rhyoliters again.

October 22 and 23, Beatty welcomed the arrival of the first train with a wild celebration. (arriving a full six months ahead of the competition, J. Ross Clark's LV&T was first albeit behind schedule) The second to arrive was the Smith Line, the T&T, after finally clearing the Amargosa Canyon, and all the mud slides that destroyed both track and grade. It arrived in March of 1907, with less fanfare. But welcome none the less for with competition the fares dropped a bit for both passengers and freight. The B&G arrived in May of 1907. At first they had the LV&T help them administer their line, but by September of 1907, they had combined with the T&T allowing Smith's Line to fulfill its name of Tonopah and Tidewater. The completed route of the three lines, The T&T, the B&G and the Tonopah-Goldfield, allowed Mr Smith's Line to run all the way from Tonopah to Ludlow, tying in with the Santa Fe, to run all the way to the coast.

In 1918 the Government allowed the LV&T to disband and pull the tracks. The iron from the rails was used for ships in the war effort of WWI. The T&T continued to run until June of 1941, when the last train pulled out of Beatty. It was a work train and loaded with iron rails. As it left town, the last whistle from the train echoed back from the narrows, a lonely plaintive goodbye to the towns and camps of the last big gold rush.

Friends of Rhyolite Proudly Present The 7th Annual Rhyolite Festival

by
Linda Greene
Chairperson
Friends of Rhyolite

The Friends of Rhyolite are excited about being part of the Beatty Railroad Days. We hope to help make this a celebration to remember!

The Friends will help start off Railroad Days on Saturday, June 6, by participating in the grand parade in Beatty. Then, from 11: a.m. to 4: p.m., we will offer an exhibit of photographs and other memorabilia and artifacts from the days of Rhyolite in the old Yucca Mountain office across from the Exchange Club. We will also be sponsoring a poster contest among the grade schools in the area with the theme "Remember Our Past." Students will be asked to design posters portraying some aspect of the early days of the Beatty/Rhyolite region. First place winner will receive a \$50.00 savings bond, second place a \$25.00 savings bond.

Also during the day on Saturday, and again on Sunday,

we will offer "living history" tours of Rhyolite, with interpreters in costume talking about Rhyolite and various aspects of life there during the boom years. Saturday night, at the talent show, we will select a new Miss Rhyolite for the coming year. She will replace our present representative, Debbie Baker, who has served us with grace, beauty and good humor during the last year.

On Sunday, June 7, we will again offer Rhyolite tours and the historical exhibit, ending about 3:00 p.m. We hope to have a large number of Rhyolite descendants on hand so that we can do something special with them on Sunday also.

We think this will be one of the biggest and best celebrations of the Beatty region's history ever and look forward to seeing all of you in June.

BEATTY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

February 23, 1998 -Meeting Canceled because we lacked a quorum.

March 30, 1998 - Meeting called to order 7:05 p.m.

Treasurer Report -\$6,861.45

Museum Report - visitors - 124 - volunteer hours - 69.5

The minutes of January were accepted. Ballots counted - election results - Claudia Reidhead/President - Mary Revert/Vice-President - Vonnie Gray/Secretary/Treasurer - Jeff Taguchi/1 yr director - Beverly Coffee/1 yr director - Kanna Lindgarde/1 yr director - Andy Gudas/2 yr director. 25 Ballots were returned.

Friends of Rhyolite - Linda Greene told us of the events planned. The Exchange Annex will be open

11-4 Sat and unknown hours Sun. Asked if they could hold Miss/Mrs. Rhyolite competition in Fashion/Talent Show. They were also having a poster contest. Rhyolite tours will be Sat & Sun. All approved of ideas.

RAILROAD DAYS DISCUSSION - Parade/Andy Gudas. We have 3 judges. Sheriff Honor Guard will lead. Claudia will contact Nellis Color Guard to follow. Mary motioned/Kanna 2nd/approved. Also

discussed floats, marching bands, antique cars and Shriners. Need to video tape the parade. Need to check about lunch in the park (Lions), Church in the park and Youth breakfast in the park. Senior Center to have ice cream/pie. Vendors - 10-15 calls from returning vendors. Discussed lowering rate for local vendors. Fee is staying the same. Encourage people to go in together for booths. Park will be ready according to Jeff. Sue Boschert will do games again. (need to check for little league field) Car clubs will be at the football field (need to ask Booster Club if they would like to run concessions) Set up Friday June 5th Noon. The raffle drawing will happen at the park field. Museum will have the table set up/registration table. Banners - Kanna will get the 2 banners ready to put up on the Welcome Board. Ellen & Riley making a registration

banner. Moved by Vonnie/ Norma 2nd to order 1,500 buttons (Claudia) and order cups with logo. Vonnie to look into t-shirts, engineer caps, train whistle and photo post cards. Moved by Vonnie/Peggy 2nd. We need 6 or more poster signs for various places also RR Days and Sandwich Signs plus Kangaroo Court/ photo cutouts. Norma will make packets for registration. Motioned by Peggy/Vonnie 2nd. Bev donated hat feathers and paper clippings.

New Business - Owens River Gang wanted BMHS to pickup their hotel and meals. Discussed that we don't have the funds. Motioned by Vonnie/Bev 2nd to inform them we couldn't meet the cost. Claudia will call them.

DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Beverly Coffee-Beatty, Nevada - Magazine clippings from the 50's, feathers from early 1900's hat.

Bill & Zettia Miller-Long Beach, California - Dual view postcard of Beatty, Nevada.

Bebe Mills & Ert Moore-Fallon, Nevada - ON LOAN/Hand made Bow & 3 arrows made by last of Shoshone Indian Bow & Arrow makers - 1937.

Scott Russell-Visalia, California - 2 quart can of valve grinding compound from early 1920's.

COMING EVENTS

May 2nd-Barrick Mine will be having a open house

May 2nd-Rally the Valley Motorcycle run to benefit the Ambulance Service

May 2nd & 3rd-Best of the West Horseshoe Pitch at the Burro Inn - Pre-register by April 24th

May 10th-Lions Club will be hosting a breakfast in the park for Mothers Day, all funds go to the sight fund

May 14th-SPECIAL BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

May 25th-BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

June 1st-SPECIAL BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

June 5th - 6th - 7th - BMHS Proudly Presents 2nd Annual Beatty Railroad Days

June 6th - 7th - Friends of Rhyolite Proudly Present 7th Annual Rhyolite Festival

June 29th-BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ert Moore
Fallon, NV

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO!

Martin Kenney, May 2nd

Robin McMullen, May 7th

Larry Gray, May 12th

Leon Abrams, May 20th

Zettia Miller, May 22nd

John Hardin, June 6th

Ralph Lisle, June 17th

Kay Howell, June 26th

Joseph White, May 5th

John Boehringer, May 8th

Kanna Lindgarde, May 13th

Violet Shafer, May 20th

Claudia Reidhead, May 30th

Richard McCutchan, June 6th

John Slenter, June 20th

Sharon Boehringer, June 28th

Sharon McCormick, June 29th

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