

Beatty



Museum

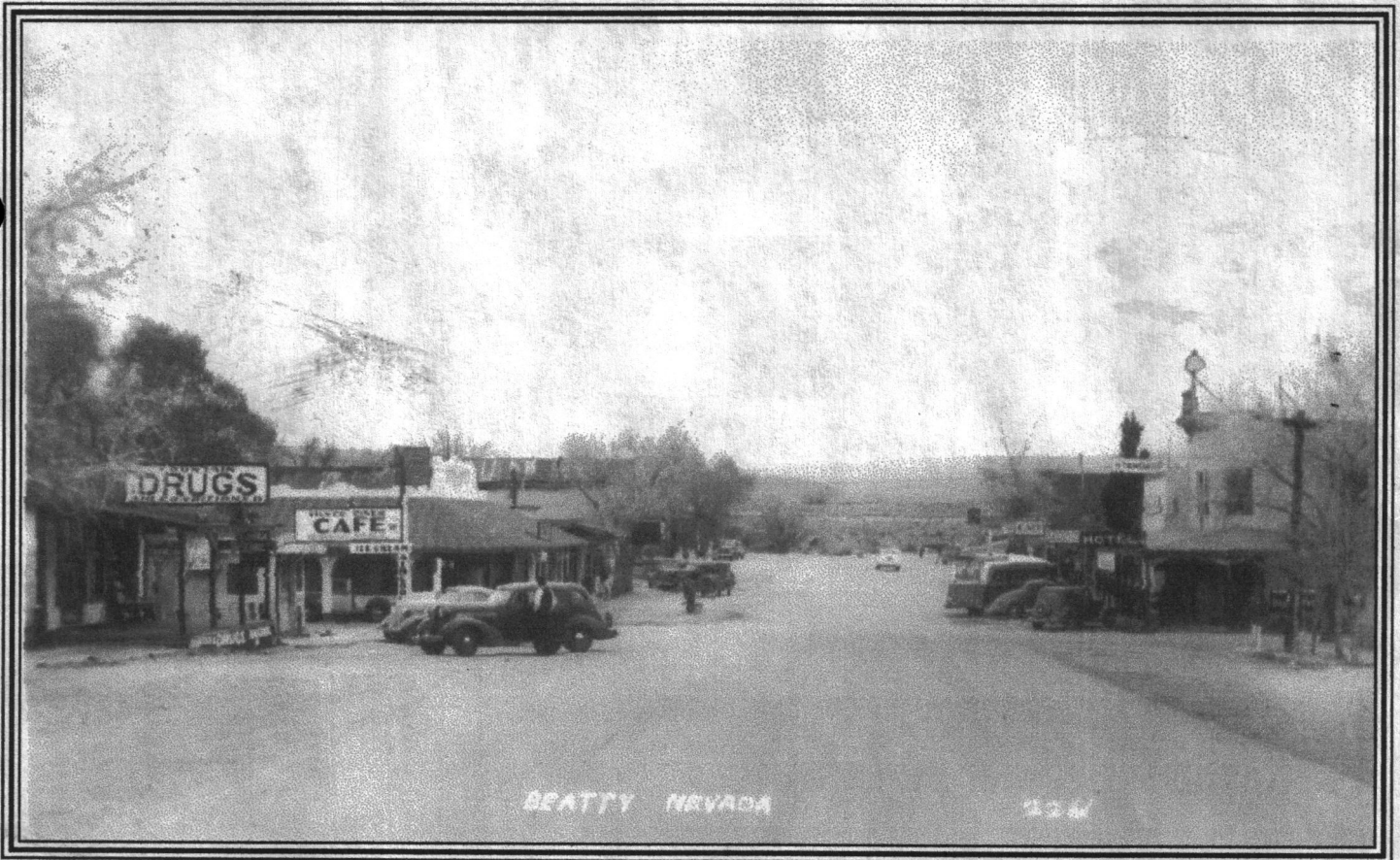
and Historical Society

Vol.5 No.3

NEWSLETTER

MAY - JUN 99

IT'S TIME FOR THE  
3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL



BEATTY NEVADA

124

BEATTY RAILROAD DAYS  
JUNE 4, 5, & 6TH



## A Message from the President Claudia Reidhead

BMHS IS MOVING ONWARD AND UPWARD. The Museum has purchased St. Theresa's. With the purchase of the church and 10 lots, we can now enlarge our Museum and set up some outside exhibits. Right now though, we have to bring it up to code and repair the exterior. Most of the work that needs to be done is cosmetic and we will be able to move in soon, however, not before Railroad Days. I owe you folks a large apology. I have not been real well this winter and between feeling miserable and full of self pity, I did not tend to some of the things I should have in a timely manner. Please forgive. The Railroad Days celebration is coming along great guns. Mary will be handling the new and expanded car show. The vendors will be coming back and so is the miniature train display presented by the Las Vegas Garden Railroad Club and sponsored by the Museum. Suzy McCoy will be signing her book again. We will be having shoot-outs by the Oasis Valley Shooters. A Hula Hoop contest has been added along with the talent show. The parade and lots of other good stuff is scheduled, so come play with us June 4th-5th-6th. Hope to see you then.

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**"RIBITS" from the editor....**

### **Bullfrog Billy**

Once again, it is time to make plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Railroad Days in Beatty. Zettia and I will be there for all the fun associated with this great annual event. Hopefully, you will also be able to attend. From the first day this organization got started, it has been a labor of love to do the things necessary to insure the success and future of BMHS. Those that have been a part of BMHS since the start have watched the progress continue with new milestones achieved at a steady pace. The latest sign of progress is the acquiring of a new facility for the Museum. Those that have visited the Museum know that the donations and loaned displays have increased to a point where more space is no longer an option to consider but a fact to be dealt with and now the much needed additional space is ours. It will take some time and work to get the new facility ready to open, but rest assured, it will be another glorious moment in BMHS history when the banner is hung that says "Grand Opening." Your continued support by

keeping your membership current is another factor that assures our continued success. Also recruiting new members to insure growth is essential. A big thank you is in order for Doug McDonald, who recently relocated to Reno from Montana. Doug operates Gypsyfoot Enterprises, which is a great Americana Auction service. In his latest catalog he gives BMHS a nice boost by mentioning us in the "Bullfrog District, Nevada" section of the catalog. You can order a catalog from Doug at his new phone # (775) 323-7614. Doug has also authored many great books which are available in his catalog. Thanks go to Claudia for our feature story in this issue concerning the railroads of the area. Everything from boos and hisses to hugs and kisses are in order for yours truly for the front cover photo. I thought you might like to see what part of the parade route looked like a few years before the parade. I suppose I should mention a little something about the smaller format for the newsletter. As I briefly touched upon the subject in the past, perhaps an update is in order. Time and money are the basic culprits involved in downsizing the newsletter. Printing costs have gone up 25% in the last six months. Postage costs went up in January. Obviously, postal costs are reduced when you reduce the weight of your mailing. Not much can be done to fight the price increases for ink cartridges and paper except cut back. By eliminating Claudia's picture and my picture (no great loss there..RIBIT) from this page, it allows us to print all black & white, two sides and use an outside service for printing and collating all but the front page. That alone results in a minimum savings of \$50 per issue. Again, cutting where we can, but keeping the information as intact as we can we have reduced the size by printing two sides of all sheets except the front page and eliminating or reducing other items such as listing of Birthdays, minutes of the meetings etc. We do plan on making the last issue of the year a bigger issue like we've done in the past, but again, we will stay mostly black and white and take the necessary cost reduction steps. Zettia and I have considered the newsletter our donation to BMHS since the very start and our way of helping to make BMHS succeed and grow. If outside funding was provided for a newsletter, there would undoubtable be restrictions, favors asked or demanded and any number of other "things" that would take away the fact that we are beholding to no-one and operate as an independent volunteer group. Here's hoping that you still find the newsletter a source of enjoyment and encouragement to continue your support. I hope to see you in Beatty for Railroad Days. Until then.....RIBIT



# Bullfrog Mining District History

## The Railroads of the Desert

BY

Claudia Reidhead

The towns of the last gold rushes were just beginning when talk of Railroads started. In fact, as early as April of 1905, "Borax Smith" was talking of bringing a rail line to his Lila C mine on the Eastern edge of Death Valley. However his original plans were for a traction train, but with the rapid growth of the camps the plans changed. He decided to make it a "broad gauge" using 60 pound rail.

Senator Clark completed the Los Angeles to Salt Lake City route for the Sand Pedro Line in late summer 1905. The San Pedro Line had granted Mr. Smith tie in rights at Las Vegas. Mr. Smith has started laying grade and received shipments of rail and other items needed for laying grade. In fact, he had about 10 miles of grade laid, when the San Pedro Line revoked his tie in rights, taking over both the grade and materials. (he had purchased the rails below cost) Senator Clark began construction of the Las Vegas and Tonopah line by grading a wagon road all the way to Beatty and Rhyolite. He was assured of Railroad right of way because of this. Nevada, like most western states, allowed rail lines to run along side of established wagon roads. He began laying grade at the end of the ten miles of grade that Mr. Smith had completed and was laying the grade at the rate of 12-15 miles per day. The grade had reached Lathrop's Well in the Amargosa Valley late July 1905 when the Irish rail hands decided to strike. They wanted shorter hours and at least Sundays off. They also wanted the same wages that the laborers in the mines were getting, which was \$7.50 per day. The rail hands were getting only \$6.00 per day. Senator Clark said no emphatically. He then brought in Mexican workers. These new hands laid grade and rail as far as Rose's Well, a distance of about 5 1/2 miles, then they too

went on strike for the same reasons. Senator Clark, forced to raise the wages to the same as the mines to keep his crews working, was not very happy.

The L.V. & T. arrived in the camps nearly 6 months in advance of the other two rail lines that were building in this direction. The second line to arrive was the Bullfrog-Goldfield. The B&G arrived here 5 months after the L.V. & T. but did not begin operation immediately. The managers asked the L.V. & T. to manage their line, so for the next 6 months the L.V. & T. managed the B&G. Four months after the Tonopah & Tidewater arrived, they took over the management of the B&G. This was the arrangement that remained in effect until the B&G sold out to the T&T in 1910.

The town of Beatty grew right along with the rest of the camps and the Mexican rail hands developed their own community near the rail yards. Like any fast growing community, they had their trials and tribulations. All the usual troubles of an exuberant society, the fights and brawls. I read of one where two Mexican gents got into a dispute over a pretty young lady and one killed the other. He and his friends became worried about it and decided that it would be better for all concerned if everyone thought he had become drunk and passed out on the tracks and got run over by the train that was due in the morning. So they very carefully arranged his body on the tracks. The only thing they didn't figure on was the security guard coming by just before the train was due and finding the body. Needless to say, the Deputy was called and the guilty brought to justice. There are many great stories out there of the rail hands and miners of this area and as time goes by, I will find more of them to share with you.



# DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

**Bill & Zettia Miller**-Long Beach, California-Registered package receipt with Rhyolite and Beatty postal cancellation.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Windshield Adventuring Books  
(Russell & Kathlynn Spencer)  
Oxnard, California

## COMING EVENTS

**May 9<sup>th</sup>** -Lions Club Mothers Day Pancake Breakfast-Beatty Park

**May 15<sup>th</sup>** - Rally the Valley motorcycle rally to benefit the Ambulance Service-Beatty Park

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Beatty High School Graduation

**June 4th-5th-6th** - BMHS presents 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Railroad Days

**BMHS meetings** - Last Monday each month - 7 p.m. - Beatty Community Center

**Beatty Lions Club** - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month - Senior Center

### OFFICERS:

**President:**

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Mary Revert

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

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