



Newsletter for the Friends of the

EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Preserving Inyo County's Past for the Future

P.O. Box 33 Independence, CA 93526

Fall/Winter 2017-18

FECM Spearheads Efforts to Preserve the Cottonwood Charcoal Kilns



The Cottonwood Charcoal Kilns circa 1923. Photo Courtesy County of Inyo, Eastern California Museum.

The two adobe brick kilns, built on the west side of Owens Lake by Col. Sherman Stevens in January 1877, produced charcoal to fuel the smelters used to process silver-lead ore from the Cerro Gordo mines in the Inyo Mountains east of the lake. Stevens first constructed a steam powered sawmill in in the Sierra Nevada. Lumber and logs were transported down to the valley via a 13-mile-long wooden flume. The logs were burned in the kilns to produce charcoal, which was then loaded onto scows that were towed by the steamboat Mollie Stevens across Owens Lake to the smelters on the opposite shore. In September 1877, a fire destroyed part of Stevens'

flume as well as a large stockpile of logs and lumber. The output of silver and lead from Cerro Gordo and Darwin faltered that same year, as did the demand for charcoal. In 1878, miners left for new strikes at Mammoth City and Bodie, and Stevens' short-lived empire collapsed

The Cottonwood charcoal kilns, designated California Historical Landmark No. 537 in 1955, have suffered from the ravages of time and vandalism. FECM has partnered with the County of Inyo, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and the Coso Operating Company to protect the kilns from further damage.

Construction of a protective shelter has commenced. FECM volunteers were on the ground during Phase I of the construction project to hand dig postholes on the north side of the kilns and monitor ground disturbance to ensure archaeological resources were not impacted.

A big thanks to FECM volunteers Rich White, Dave Wagner, Linda Hubbs, Tina Bjorn, Mark Basgall, Mary Roper, Pat Woods, Raul Hidalgo, and Lynn Johnson. Ashley Helms, Assistant Engineer, Inyo County Public Works Department, assisted FECM volunteers. The crew from LADWP did an excellent job installing the ten support posts. A report on Phase II of the Cottonwood Charcoal Kilns Project will appear in the Spring 2018 Newsletter.

FECM is planning to install a kiosk telling the story of the Cottonwood Charcoal Kilns. The project will be completed in 2018.

FRIENDS OF THE EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Officers:

Rich White	President
Pat McLernon	Vice President
Linda Hubbs	Secretary
Jean Crispin	Treasurer

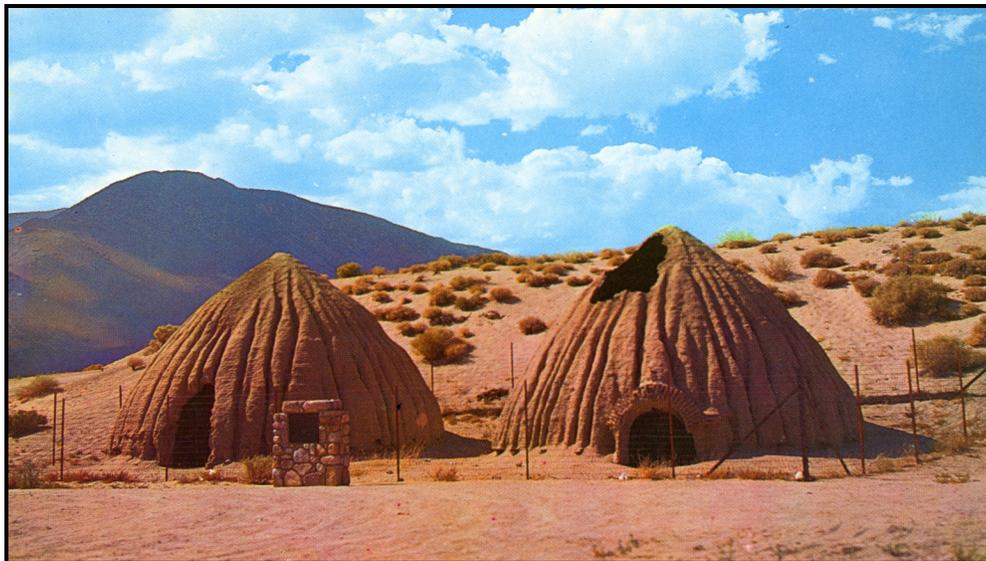
Trustees:

Sharon Avey	Lynn Johnson
Alina Berry	Mary Roper
Jennifer Duncan	Dave Wagner
Paul Fretheim	Pat Woods

Past President: David Woodruff

Website: www.FECM.org
 Address: P.O. Box 33
 Independence, CA 93526

FECM is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization



Postcard showing the condition of the Cottonwood charcoal kilns circa 1955 when they were designated Historical Landmark No.537. Photo courtesy County of Inyo, Eastern California Museum.



FECM volunteer Rich White digging a post hole.



FECM volunteer Linda Hubbs screening for artifacts.



(Left) FECM volunteer archaeologists on the site. Mark Basgall and Tina Bjorn are screening for artifacts while Lynn Johnson records the results.



LADWP crew setting posts.



The ten posts are in place. Note the condition of the kilns today compared to 1923 and 1955.



Display containing artifacts in the Noren Collection

THE NOREN COLLECTION

Al Noren, an employee of the U.S. Forest Service, worked throughout California. He collected rocks, minerals, and artifacts all of his life. In 1943, he was assigned to the Inyo National Forest until his retirement in 1954. He continued to live in the Eastern Sierra until his death in 1974.

Noren suspected that the Bristlecone Pines in the White Mountains are very old prompting him to contact researchers who confirmed that some Bristlecone Pine trees in the White Mountains are among the oldest living things on earth, nearly 5,000 years old.

In 1990 Bill Michael, then Director at the Eastern California Museum, learned that Noren's large collection of artifacts was in danger of being sold at swap meets. Mr. Michael contacted the family and negotiated a price for the entire collection. The museum was short of funds so the Friends of the Museum raised the sufficient money for the purchase. The collection was returned to Inyo County intact and has been stored at the museum ever since.

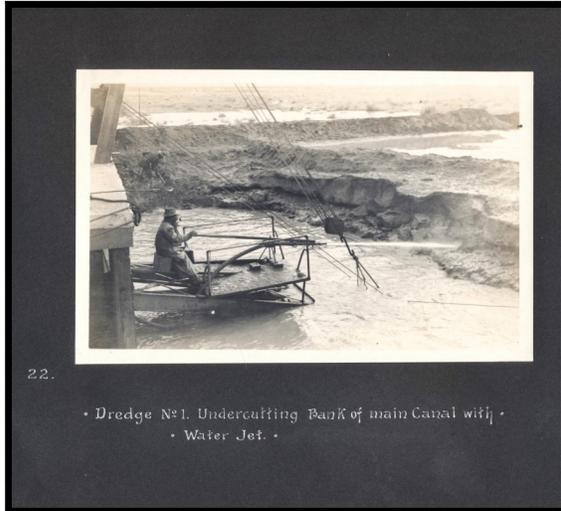
In 2015 a project was undertaken by FECM,

with the help of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Archeologist Greg Haverstock, to catalog the prehistoric part of the collection. Archaeology interns supported by both BLM and FECM cataloged 4,147 artifacts. These include projectile points, engraved tablets, metates and manos, shell beads, pendants, and an intact arrow with a historic metal arrowhead.

Most of the prehistoric artifacts had been framed in 37 handmade wooden display boxes. The boxes were carefully disassembled so each artifact could be individually inspected, documented and placed in a protective plastic bag. One frame was left intact to be used for interpretation of the collection. Some of the frames had labels describing the general location of where the artifacts were collected such as "Inyo and Mono County", but many had no location information. After the cataloging was complete, a searchable database was prepared to allow researchers to analyze the collection and to provide educational opportunities. The future of the Noren Collection will be discussed further in an upcoming edition of the FECM Newsletter.

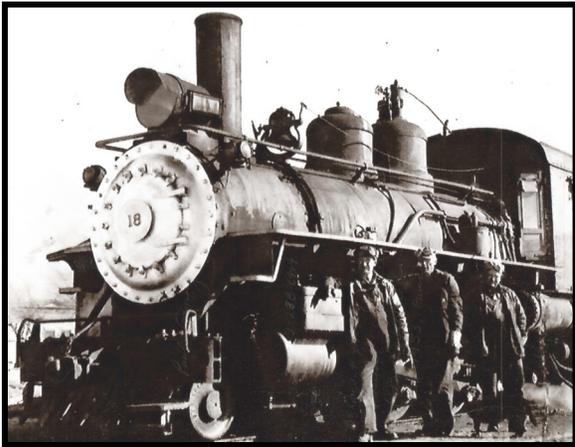
COLLECTIONS CORNER—Fall/Winter 2017-18

Roberta Harlan, Curator of Collections & Exhibits



Robert Jones

Mr. Robert Jones of Simi Valley recently donated a significant addition to the Museum's Los Angeles Aqueduct collection—a classic photograph album entitled “Views of Construction on Los Angeles Aqueduct”, ca 1915. The historic piece chronicles the creation of the aqueduct through a series of seldom-seen black and white images, complete with handwritten descriptions. A unique and much appreciated gift.



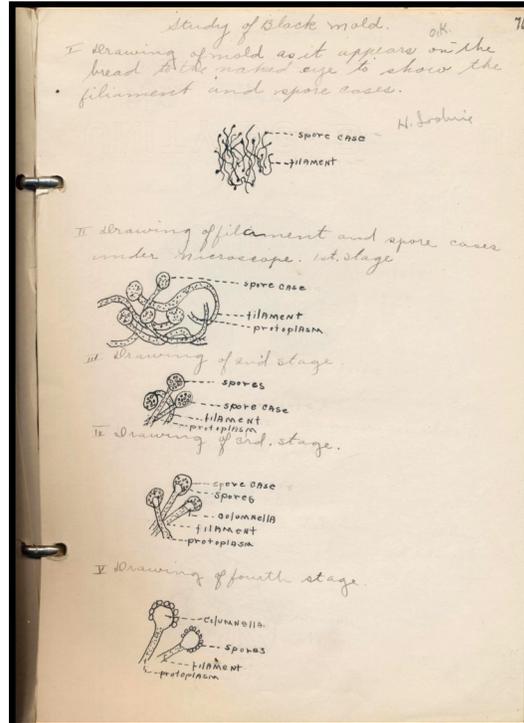
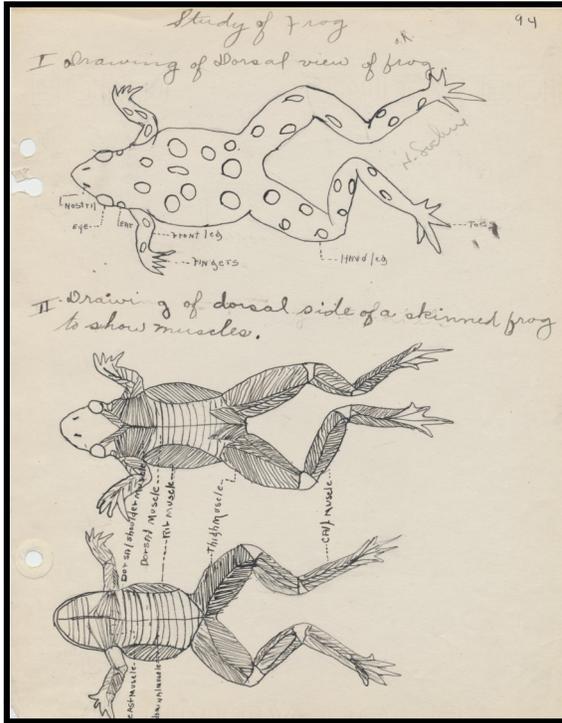
Paul Gomez

Generous donor Paul Gomez gifted to the Museum a black and white photograph of #18, the Slim Princess, Carson & Colorado Railroad/Southern Pacific, on the track at Owenyo, California, dated 1953. Mr. Gomez's father is one of the three men standing next to the engine (E. Gomez is on the left). Thank you again Paul for the thoughtful donation of another great addition to our historic photograph collection.

William Alan Rowe

Dedicated museum donor William Alan Rowe graciously donated a collection of books from his family's personal library, related to the natural history of California, as well as the Eastern Sierra. One of our favorites is *Son of the Wilderness, The Life of John Muir*, written by Linnie Marsh Wolfe, and published in 1945 by Alfred A. Knopf Publishers. Another great addition to our Bob Alan & William Alan Rowe Eastern Sierra Photography Collection. Thank you again Will!

continued



Rich and Kathy White

Long-time Eastern California Museum supporters Rich and Kathy White of Independence recently donated a collection of historic papers, periodicals, photographs, and school memorabilia dating back to 1915, belonging to Owens Valley residents Harriet and Winona Lochrie. Especially notable is a Westminster Loose-Leaf Binder, ca. 1920 which holds class notes, pen & ink drawings, and assignments related to Harriet Lochrie's Science/Biology classes. What a treasure trove of wonderful information and imagery!



Larry and Andrea Vetter

Our thanks go out to Dana Point residents Larry and Andrea Vetter for their terrific donation of a vintage long-neck railroad oil can connected to The Union Pacific Railroad in Colorado. The red 'oiler' is an outstanding addition to our railroad transportation collection.

Join the Friends of the Eastern California Museum

The Friends of the Eastern California Museum, (FECM) work to promote, preserve and protect the important collections and memories that make up Inyo County's only regional museum. The Friends raise funds and contribute time and work to help maintain and improve the museum's buildings and grounds. We support special exhibits and arrange for speakers, field trips, and programs that inform and entertain Inyo County residents and visitors who come from far and near. We have partnered with the Carson and Colorado group to display and promote the restored Slim Princess steam engine. We also provide funds to maintain the Museum's collections and enhance its permanent exhibits. Every March we hold our Annual Meeting, with a potluck dinner, silent auction and guest speaker. We invite you to join with us to support the Museum. FECM is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

YES, please send my newsletter and announcements via email

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

INDIVIDUAL -- \$25	FAMILY -- \$40	CONTRIBUTING -- \$100	BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION -- \$150
SUPPORTING -- \$150	PATRON -- \$250	SUSTAINING -- \$500	BENEFACTOR -- \$1,000 AND UP

Enclosed is my payment of \$ _____ Make checks payable to **FECM** and mail to **FECM, PO Box 33, Independence CA 93526**

DATE _____ **The membership year begins on the date your membership dues are received.**

New Membership **Renewal**

You can also pay for your membership with a credit card at www.fecm.org. Select the Membership tab at the top of the page.
Members receive a newsletter, email invitations to special events, programs and field trips, and a 10 percent discount at the Museum Bookstore

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