

Beatty



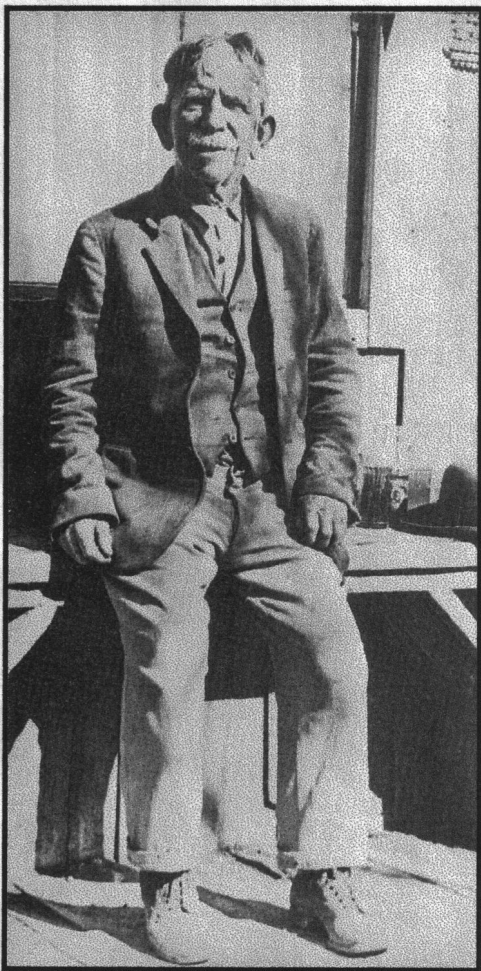
Museum

and Historical Society

Vol.4 No.4

NEWSLETTER

JUL - AUG 98

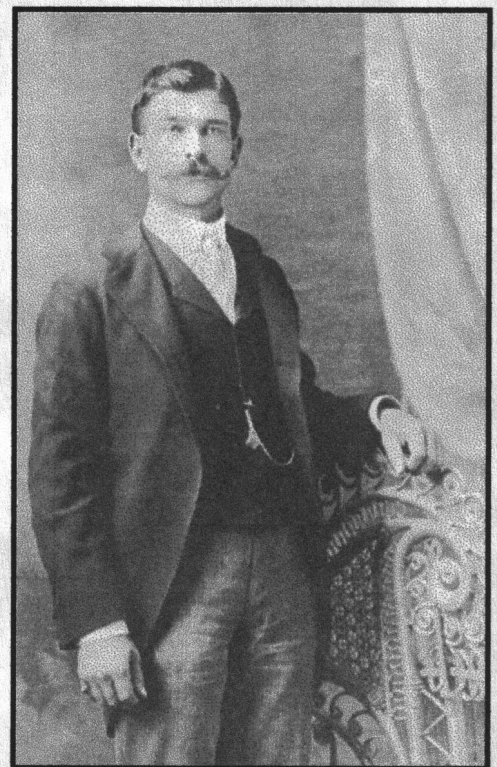


Shorty Harris

**SHORTY HARRIS
&
ED CROSS**

**FOUNDERS OF THE
"ORIGINAL BULLFROG MINE"**

The conclusion of
Short's own story in
The Beatty Museum
and Historical Society
History Section



Ed Cross



A Message from the President Claudia Reidhead

Hi Folks: It's just me again, with an update on Railroad Days. IT WAS GREAT! The week-end went well in spite of all the minor disasters that just naturally occur at the last minute, and nature had to come along and play too. The weather was surprisingly cool, and our Talent Show was enhanced by a double rainbow with a couple of rain squalls to cool things down. Our local talent was unperturbed by two brief showers and a gust of wind. These young people proved to be professional by continuing on with the show. Thank you to everyone who participated. The Parade was the best this town has ever seen, a unanimous decision by everyone who was here. First place over all went to the 76 for the best float in the parade, titled the Red Rooster. They portrayed a brothel scene from the early 1900's. It was a riot, with County Commissioner Bob Revert in a starring role complete with red long-johns. Las Vegas Garden Miniature Railroad took first place in the Walking Group Category. They also set up their wonderful display in the Community Center. Thanks for coming folks. Midge Ondes came from Rohnert Park, California to be our Grand Marshall. Midge was born in Rhyolite almost 90 years ago and I can only say that I want to be just like her when I grow up. Thank you Midge for being the wonderful lady you are. Your sense of humor is marvelous and your stamina put the rest of us to shame. She is a member of longstanding in our organization and we are proud to have her. Joe Delaney, from Las Vegas, was here also as the Mayor of Rhyolite and M.C. for the Friends of Rhyolite Miss Rhyolite contest. Out of town members who were here and who participated in the parade were Clint and Ellen Boehringer. Clint walked and Ellen rode on the float for the Museum. Both gave up their playtime to give walking tours of Rhyolite. They come every winter to Rhyolite as caretakers for BLM. Roger and Barbara Piatt came out from Ohio. Barbara was commandeered along with Bill Miller, to judge the parade when two of our judges failed to make it. Roy Neighbors became ill just before parade time and Nate Tannenbaum didn't get here from Las Vegas. Gary Waddell, from KLAS T.V. in Las Vegas was our only Judge that made it. God bless you Gary. I don't think the Railroad Days parade would go if it weren't for you. Please come back again

next year. Thank You's are due so many people. Vonnie, Mary, Kanna, Andy Gudas, Leon Abrams from Berkeley, who brought his friend Jim, a retired engineer who graced our float. Lynn and Ellis Vance who came from Sparks bringing some wonderful exhibits for display during the week-end and rode our float in their wonderful costumes. Kim Hickenbotham, who sold raffle tickets and buttons, worked in the skits, rode our float and was all around a charming hostess for our out of town guests. Thanks to Sue Boschert from the Burro Inn who did the kids games again this year. There were some very special exhibits on loan to our Museum for Railroad Days. First, Lynn and Ellis Vance brought with them a gold and silver coin collection with a complete set of cc dollars and mint gold coins, and two razor collections. The straight edge collection had one dated in the 1860's and the double edge safety razor collection was all early 1900's. Leon Abrams brought an 1868 silver dollar he left on permanent loan to the Museum. A very special exhibit from Bob and Mary Revert included gold and silver coins, gold nuggets found locally as float and a railroad watch collection. Also one of the prettiest gold on quartz stone I have ever seen. On loan from Zoe Sideri was her families stamp album that has been in the family 150 years, from England and all over the world. From Dave Watson, on loan was a photo of the window ad used by the Porter Brothers in 1907. Naturally we always thank Pastor Jeff, who announced the parade and talent show and worked with us on photos. Thanks to our drunken Judge, Roger Mountefil, Roger Wright, Joe White, Bob Revert, Kim Hickenbotham, Alan Baltazar, all the ladies at the 76, Joanie, Connie, Karen, Charlie and all the other people who participated in the shoot outs. Thanks to The Burro Inn, The Exchange Club, The Stagecoach, The Bar, The Sourdough, The Donut Emporium, The Beatty Club, NAPA, Wild West Express, Janda Ribbons, the 76 Station, The Shady Lady and Barrick Mine who loaned us radios and provided bus service to Rhyolite. Thanks to the Beatty Chamber of Commerce who donated the trophy's for the Car Show and thank you to all the Clubs from all over who participated. Most of all, I want to express my gratitude to the wonderful people who came and stayed and played with us, the members, and the people of Beatty who gave their time and energies to make this a fun time for everyone. Thank you all so very much.



"RIBITS" from the editor....

Bullfrog Billy

Charming, gracious, loving, caring, sweet, funny, full of energy and an outlook on life that makes you glow inside, (but enough about me...RIBIT) those are just a few of the more important qualities that make up the lovely lady Midge Ondes. Serving as Grand Marshall for the 2nd Annual Beatty Railroad Days, Midge came through like a champion by doing just one thing, being herself. On Friday evening June 5th, Midge was the guest of honor at a dinner party held at the Burro Inn. No need to tell you how delighted all the guests were. On Saturday evening June 6th, Midge hosted a cocktail party which included Joe Delaney of the Las Vegas Sun. Hope you saw Joe's column dated June 11th which reaffirms all of what you have read about Midge. On July 28th, this wonderful lady will celebrate her 90th Birthday and we all send our fondest wishes for a grand celebration. Perhaps Midge will come back next year for our 3rd Railroad Days celebration. Railroad Days was a great week-end of fun. The parade was outstanding with a record number of entries. I truly enjoyed the Beatty High School Band and all the great floats. Suzy McCoy signed her book "Babysitting a Ghost Town" at the Museum during Railroad Days. I read it, loved it and you need to have it in your library, so get yourself a copy and tell her old Bullfrog sent ya. The Talent Show was great fun as always, even though the weather got a little bizarre a couple of times but all the entertainers hung in there and delighted the large appreciative audience. The miniature railroad display at the Community Center was a delight as well as the Friends Of Rhyolite Display. A standing ovation to all who participated in the Railroad Days celebration for doing an outstanding job. Sunday evening, June 7th, found Zettia and I out at the bottle house in Rhyolite for a Bar-B-Q dinner with gracious hosts Suzy and Riley McCoy. The outstanding steaks were provided by Leon Abrams and chef deluxe Kanna handled the "How Ya Want Your Steak Done" duties. Nothing quite like sitting around the old Bar-B-Q pit, shooting the breeze with the likes of Claudia, Clint & Ellen, Suzy & Riley and Roger & Barbara Piatt. Kinda reminds me of that old movie "Blazing Saddles." (RIBIT) As with each trip to Beatty, besides enjoying the company of the regulars, I always have the opportunity to get to know someone a little better than on previous occasions. This time it was Leon Abrams,

who I had a great chat with at the Bar-B-Q. Leon always attends the Rhyolite Festival and the Railroad Days celebration and is one of the people who always help to make each event a little more enjoyable. This issue we complete the Shorty Harris story after taking a one issue break for Railroad Days. We are fortunate to have the talents of David Wright of Ridgecrest, California assist us with the completion of the Shorty Harris story. David picks up where the original story ends and gives us further insight on the life of Shorty as well as the details of his funeral. David did a lot of research on this project and we thank him for his outstanding effort. The usual Beatty Museum and Historical Society Minutes section will consist of notes from Vonnice Gray about Railroad Days rather than the usual minutes you read. Time restrictions inherit with all the work involved with Railroad Days and a deadline for the newsletter prevented us from being able to give you the regular minutes. We should be back on track next issue. All the other normal goodies you love are included. Have you suddenly got the urge to splurge and need to go to a shopping mall? Well, save yourself some time and money. Just head over to the Beatty Museum. They have some great items for sale including T-Shirts for \$12.00 up to size XL and for \$14.00 you can have sizes XXL and XXXL. Also for your shopping pleasure you will find coffee mugs for \$7.00. And they have a very limited (12 at last count) number of a great "Ghost Town" video that you can obtain no other place on this planet. And when they are sold out of the video, there will be no more. This tape contains about 30 minutes of footage that includes Rhyolite, Death Valley, Rawhide, Bodie, Aurora and a few other great places. All footage is from the 1930's. Some of the footage is challenging visually due to the age of the original films, but it is a great opportunity to see what some of these places looked like 65 plus years ago. Here's the best part. The video sells for \$20.00 which includes a \$5.00 donation to the Museum. Here is a late breaking news item to think about. There is a proposal to merge the Friends of Rhyolite with BMHS. What do I think about the proposal? Since I belong to both groups, I believe I'll make a statement rather than give an opinion, since I don't want to use this column as a bloody pulpit. "Whatever is in the best interests of preserving the history of the Bullfrog Mining District and preserving Rhyolite, then that is the group or groups I want to be involved with.".....**RIBIT!**

Bullfrog Mining District History

The Life of Frank (Shorty) Harris

by
Frank (Shorty) Harris
(Final Chapter)

How many claims do you figure on staking out? Ed asked me. "One ought to be plenty," I told him. "If there ain't enough money in one claim, there ain't enough in the whole country. "If other fellows put extensions on that claim of ours, and find good stuff, it will help us sell out for big money." Ed saw that was a good argument, so he agreed with me.

After the monuments were placed, we got some more rich samples, and went to the county seat to record our claim. Then we marched into Goldfield, and went to an eating-house. Ed finished his meal before I did, and went out into the street where he met Bob Montgomery, a miner that both of us knew. Ed showed him a sample of our ore, and Bob couldn't believe his eyes. "Where did you get that?" he asked.

"Shorty and I found a ledge of it southwest of Bill Beatty's ranch," Ed told him.

Bob thought he was having some fun with him and said so. "Oh, that's just a piece of float that you picked up somewhere. It's damn seldom ledges like that are found!"

Just then I came walking up and Ed said, "Ask Shorty if I ain't telling you the truth."

"Bob," I said, "that's the biggest strike made since Goldfield was found. If you've got any sense at all, you'll go down there as fast as you can, and get in on the ground floor!" That seemed to be proof enough for him, and he went away in a hurry to get his outfit together--one horse and a cart to haul his tools and grub. He had an Indian with him by the name of Shoshone Johnny, who was a good prospector. Later on, it was this Indian who set the monuments on the claim that was to become the famous Montgomery-Shoshone Mine.

It's a mighty strange thing how fast the news of a strike travels. You can go into a town

after you've made one, meet a friend on the street, and take him into your hotel room and lock the door. Then, after he has taken a nip from your bottle, you can whisper the news very softly in his ear. Before you can get out on the street, you'll see men running around like excited ants that have had a handful of sugar poured on their nest. Ed and I didn't try to keep our strike a secret, but we were surprised how the news of it spread. Men swarmed around us and asked to see our specimens. They took one look at them, and then started off on the run to get their outfits together. I've seen some gold rushes in my time that were hummers, but nothing like that stampede. Men were leaving town in a steady stream with buckboards, buggies, wagons and burros. It looked like the whole population of Goldfield was trying to move at once. Miners who were working for the big companies dropped their tools and got ready to leave town in a hurry. Timekeepers and clerks, waiters and cooks--they all got the fever and milled around, wild-eyed, trying to find a way to get out to the new "strike." In a little while there wasn't a horse or a wagon in town, outside of a few owned by the big companies, and the price of burros took a big jump. I saw one man who was about ready to cry because he couldn't buy a jackass for \$500.00.

A lot of fellows loaded their stuff on two-wheeled carts--grub, tools, and cooking utensils, and away they went across the desert, two or three pulling a cart and the pots and pans rattling. When all the carts were gone, men who didn't have anything else started out on that seventy-five mile hike with wheelbarrows; and a lot of 'em made it alright--but they had a hell of a time!

When Ed and I got back to our claim a week later, more than a thousand men were camped around it, and they were coming in every day. A few had tents, but most of 'em were in open camps. One man had brought a wagon load of whiskey, pitched a tent, and made

a bar by laying a plank across two barrels. He was serving the liquor in tin cups, and doing a fine business. That was the start of Rhyolite, and from then on things moved so fast that it made even us old-timer dizzy. Men were swarming all over the mountains like ants, staking out claims, digging and blasting, and hurrying back to the county seat to record their holdings. There were extensions on all sides of our claim, and other claims covering the country in all directions.

In a few days, wagon loads of lumber began to arrive, and the first buildings were put up. These were called rag-houses because they were half boards and half canvas. But this building material, was so expensive that lots of men made dugouts, which didn't cost much more than plenty of sweat and blisters.

When the engineers and promoters began to come out, Ed and I got offers every day for our claim. But we just sat tight and watched the camp grow. We knew the price would go up after some of the others started to ship bullion. And as time went on, we saw that we were right. Frame shacks went up in the place of rag-houses and stores, saloons, and dance halls were being opened up every day.

Bids for our property got better and better. The man who wanted to buy would treat with plenty of liquor before he talked business, and in that way, I got all I wanted to drink without spending a bean. Ed was wiser, though, and let the stuff alone--and it paid him to do it too, for when he did sell, he got much more for his half than I got for mine.

One night, when I was pretty well lit up, a man by the name of Bryan took me to his room and put me to bed. The next morning, when I woke up, I had a bad headache and wanted more liquor. Bryan had left several bottles of whiskey on a chair beside the bed, and locked the door. I helped myself, and went back to sleep.

That was the start of the longest jag I ever went on; it lasted six days. When I came too, Bryan showed me a bill of sale for the Bullfrog, and the price was only \$25,000. I got plenty sore, but it didn't do any good. There was my signature on the paper, and beside it, the signatures of seven witnesses and the notary's seal. And I felt a lot worse when I found out that Ed had been paid a hundred and twenty-five thousand for his half, and had lit right out for Lone Pine, where he got married. Today he's living in San Diego County, has a fine ranch, and is very well fixed.

As soon as I got the money, I went out for a good time. All the girls ate regularly while old Shorty had the dough. As long as my stake lasted I could move and keep the band playing. And friends--I never knew I had so many! They'd jam a saloon to the doors, and every round of drinks cost me thirty or forty dollars. I'd have gone clean through the pay in a few weeks if Dave Driscoll hadn't given me hell. Dave and I had been partners in Colorado and Utah, and I thought a great deal of him. Today he's living over in Wildrose Canyon, and going blind. Well, I had seven or eight thousand left when Dave talked to me.

"Shorty," he said, "If you don't cut this out you'll be broke in a damn short time, and won't have the price of a meal ticket!"

I saw that he was right, and jumped on the water wagon then and there--and I haven't fallen off since.

Rhyolite grew like a mushroom. Gold Center was started four miles away, and Beatty's ranch became a town within a few months. There was 12,000 people in the three places, and two railroads were built out to Rhyolite. Shipments of gold were made very day, and some of the ore was so rich that it was sent by express with armed guards. And then a lot of cash came into Rhyolite--more than went out from the mines. It was this sucker money that put the town on the map quick. The stock exchange was doing a big business, and I remember that the price of Montgomery-Shoshone got up to ten dollars a share.

Business men of Rhyolite were live ones, alright. They decided to make the town the finest in Nevada--and they came mighty

near doing it. Overbury built a three-story office building out of cut stone--it must have cost him fifty thousand. The bank building had three stories too, and the bank was finished with marble and bronze. There were plenty of other fine business houses, and a railroad station that would look mighty good in any city.

Money was easy to get and easy to spend in those days. The miners and mockers threw it right and left when they had it. Many a time I've seen 'em eating bacon and beans, and drinking champagne. Wages were just a sideline with them--most of their money was made in mining stock.

Rhyolite was a great town, and no mistake--as live as the Colorado camps were thirty years before, but not so bad. We had a few gunfights, and several tough characters got their lights shot out, which didn't make the rest of us sore. We were glad enough to spare 'em. I saw some of those fights myself, but never took any part in the fireworks. "Shorty, the foot racer" was what they called me because I always ducked around the corner when the bullets began to fly. I knew they were not meant for me; but I wasn't taking any chances.

There was plenty of gold in those mountains when I discovered the original Bullfrog, and there's plenty there yet. A lot of it was taken out while Rhyolite was going strong--\$6,000,000 or \$7,000,000--but they quit before they got the best of it. Stock speculation--that's what killed Rhyolite! The promoters got impatient. They figured that

money could be made faster by getting gold from the pockets of suckers than by digging it out of the hills. And so, when the operators of the Montgomery-Shoshone had a little trouble; when they ran into water and struck a sulphate ore which is refractory, and has to be cut and roasted to be turned into money--then the bottom dropped out of the stock market and the town was busted wide open. She died quick, too. Most of the tin horns lit out for other parts, and that's a sure sign a mining camp is going on the rocks.

If the right people ever get hold of Rhyolite they'll make a killing; but they'll have to be real hard rock miners, and not the kind that do their work only on paper. Rhyolite is dead now--dead as she was before I made the big strike. Those fine buildings are standing out

there on the desert, with the coyotes and jackrabbits playing hide and seek around them.

My last big strike was made over in the Panamints at Harrisburg while Rhyolite was going strong. I crossed Death Valley with a jackass outfit, and went into Townsend Pass. From there, I climbed the range, and found an outcropping where Skidoo was afterward located that showed some values. But it was not good enough to start a stamped, so I followed the belt south for ten miles, and picked up some ore that looked wonderful. I formed a partnership with a man by the name of Crawford, and he put up a mill, and worked ore. The mine payed "from the grass roots down," as the saying goes. Crawford took out \$25,000 from the first milling and it looked like the ore went deep. But you never can tell when a vein like that will pinch out, and when a man representing a company in San Francisco offered Crawford and me a fair price, we decided to sell. I got ten thousand in cash and 165 shares of stock, and Crawford got the same. Fifty thousand shares of the stock I put away, and sold the rest at from thirty-five to fifty cents a share.

With plenty of money in my bank account, I decided to have a good time; so I made two trips east, and scattered that coin around in Kansas City, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia. Nothing was too good for old Shorty when he had the money. And I was surprised to know how many friends I had. Fellows that I had never seen or heard of before gave me the glad hand, and helped me to spend my jack.

When I got back from my last trip east, I heard some bad news. The company that owned the Harrisburg property had levied a big assessment on the stock--more than I figured it was worth. It was just a "freeze-out" game, but I let my stock go instead of paying the assessment. Promoters can always find some way to take the prospector's share away from him without paying for it.

Then I heard some more news that showed me how close I had come to making a strike in Skidoo. Thompson and Ramsay prospected over the same ground I had covered before I located Harrisburg, and struck some pay rock that was almost the pure stuff. I had missed it by half a mile when I found the

low grade and decided to follow the belt south. Well, Thompson and Ramsay cleaned out sixty-five thousand each, and they didn't have a ten-foot-hole! That was the cream of the strike, and they sold out to Bob Montgomery, who spent \$300,000 before he took out an ounce. But he got all that back, and plenty besides—for Skidoo paid him about a million. And after he pulled out, the leasers worked the mine for several hundred thousand more.

Since Skidoo, Greenwater, and Rhyolite went down, there hasn't been so much doing in the mining game around here. The war started a few years after those camps hit bottom, and that was a death blow to a lot of gold mines. When the cost of labor and machinery went up, it meant that the value of gold went down. Properties that were operating and paying dividends on low grade ore before the war are not being worked now.

There hasn't been a real strike made since the jackass men dropped out of sight. These flivver prospectors are just a bunch of four-flushers—they have never made a strike, and take it from me, they never will. If any more good stuff is found in this country, it will be the ass men who turn the trick, and you can bank on that!

I never had much use for a flivver. Several years ago, a friend gave me one, and thought he was doing me a favor; but it turned out that he just let me in for a lot of trouble. I didn't know how to run the thing, so I got a young chap to drive it for me. This fellow said that he had been a chauffeur for the Kaiser, but he couldn't keep that car on the road. Over by Furnace Creek, he ran it off a small bridge and mused it up considerable. It cost me plenty to fix it up, and then I had the devil's own time getting it back to Ballarat. For several weeks it stood by my house and I didn't know what to do with it; then something happened that gave me a fine idea, and I got rid of the thing and had some fun too.

An Indian, whose name was Tim, had run my burros off and hid them in a canyon. Then he came to me, after I had hunted for them several days and said:

"Mebbe so I see your burros; for ten dollars I find them."

"You fetch 'em in to me and I'll pay you," I said.

Well, he stayed out for three days, and then brought them in and got

the money I had promised. After that, the story went about that I had it in for Tim. One day, after I got the flivver back to Ballarat, I saw Tim, and asked him how much he'd pay me for it. He said that ten dollars was all he had, and I told him that the car was his. So he drove it away, thinking he had a wonderful bargain—but he didn't know what he was in for. That was three years ago, and ever since then the car has kept him and his whole tribe broke. All the money they have made has been spent for tires and parts. I got even with that Indian, and no mistake!

Well, this brings me to the end of my story. Gold mining is down in the dumps, and prospecting ain't what it used to be. While things were going strong I made several fortunes—and spent 'em all. The interest from all that money, if I had it now, would put me up with some of the big fellows in the city; but I'm a lot happier out here in the desert, where I've always lived. I do some work on the road for the county, and earn enough to buy grub, and my rent doesn't cost me a cent, because I live in the old schoolhouse and don't have to pay any taxes. These old wheels of mine get pretty flat with the rheumatism, but I'm still able to keep going and have a good time. And I have some wonderful friends out here, prospectors and miners who speak the same language that I do—the kind that the old-timers understand.

But one of these days something is going to happen; something that will make them all sit up and take notice—old Shorty Harris is going to make the biggest strike of his life! Not far from Death Valley is a district that hasn't been touched. I've picked up some of the richest float over there that has ever been seen in these parts, and some time I'll find just where that float came from. After that happens, there'll be a real party pulled off in Paris. All these years I've heard a lot about the mademoiselles, the Eiffel Tower, and Notre Dame, and I'm going to give them the once over before I retire for good.

DIMINUTIVE DEMISE

The Death
of
Frank "Shorty" Harris
by
David A. Wright

"While the sun sank slowly into the purple haze that filters over Death Valley at twilight and taps sounded in the clear air of this mysterious land he knew so well, "Shorty" Harris, miner, Good Samaritan and friend to all who knew him, was laid to rest in a dusty grave on the valley floor last Sunday afternoon."

So said the November 16, 1934 Inyo Independent, the historic tabloid of Inyo County, California, commenting at the gathering of humanity in the land of the dead. They came from far and near to bid farewell to the "Short Man" of Death Valley, whose life has been celebrated and chronicled here in past issues. Now we examine his death, for his tomb can be easily visited upon today.

Shorty Harris spent much of his life at Death Valley, but his last months were spent in the shadows of the mighty Sierra Nevada Range, about 100 miles northwesterly of his beloved stomping grounds.

"Shorty Harris, dean of all desert prospectors, died at the age of 74 years in a cabin at Big Pine, where he had sought rest and health following an illness about a year ago. He passed away in the restful sleep that he had sought." *1*

Harris was quite active during his last days, but he had a penchant to keep searching for the end of the rainbow nearly up to the end. In the year 1933, Shorty underwent three major operations. Then in the wintertime of that year, another incident nearly killed him. If one scrutinizes a photo of his residence in the old adobe schoolhouse at Ballarat published in Harris' autobiography in the October 1930 issue of Touring Topics, one cannot help but notice the rear portion of the side wall having a serious tilt, it being propped up by what appears to be a 4"x4" piece of lumber. It may have been that particular wall that prompted a telegram sent from Trona, 27 miles south of Ballarat stating: "Wall fell on me. Hurry. Bring doctor. Shorty Harris" *2*

That telegram was sent from Trona *3* in Shorty's behalf as he lay under the rubble of an adobe wall for more than 2 ½ days without medication or pain relief. While in his cabin, he had pulled on a wire protruding from the adobe wall and brought it down upon himself. Those who came to Shorty's aid thought that surely this would be the end of Shorty's life, even planning for his funeral as he was being dug out. But Shorty had

other plans for the time being, and was planning his next trip as he lay in his hospital bed.

I'm losing a thousand dollars a day lying here. Why, that ledge--" *4*

Shorty recuperated in the home of William Caruthers, friend and author. During that time, erroneous news of his death was broadcast over Associated Press that Harris had died. That brought scores of people to pay their last respects, including one man who was a partner with Harris in Leadville, Colorado.

After Shorty recovered, he returned to Ballarat. Doctors orders were to rest for three months.

"I'm losing \$5,000,000 a day sitting here. Soon as you're rested, we'll start. You'll be in shape by day after tomorrow won't you?" *5*

That day after tomorrow brought an expedition by Harris and Caruthers up Hall Canyon in the Panamint Range behind the Indian Ranch. *6* That canyon rises nearly perpendicular up the face of Telescope Peak from the Panamint Valley floor. The two climbed for seven hours and covered a distance of about 3 1/2 miles, but returning, Harris collapsed. Both of them stumbled down the mountain and Shorty stumbled again. Caruthers grabbed him literally by the seat of his pants before he went headlong over a cliff. After a long period of time, Caruthers managed to get Harris back to Ballarat. Shorty was unconscious most of the way. The next morning, it was expected that Shorty would be found dead, but instead they found him chopping firewood.

Caruthers claims it was to him that Shorty uttered the famous words found inscribed upon his epitaph:

"Here lies Shorty Harris, a single blanket jackass prospector." *7*

On a Saturday morning of November 10, 1934, Shorty got his wish when he gave up his last breath. He spent his last days at Big Pine, California, about 120 miles by today's road from Ballarat. He was laid to rest the following day at the spot he wished, next to Jim Dayton. *8*

"The simple service, when the last rites were pronounced, was beautiful in the quiet solitude of the great valley. Chaplain Henry of the C.C.C. camp at Cow Creek, officiated at the open-air burial

service. One hundred and fifty C.C.C. boys were present, bowing their heads out of respect for the grand old man of the desert, whose stories of early Death Valley, of burrow-prospecting days, have been chronicled far and wide by writers of national repute. The body was lowered in the grave exactly at sunset and more than 300 people stood quietly at attention as taps sounded. ... The burial of 'Shorty' Harris went down in history as the first Christian burial in Death Valley, altho (sic) there had been many more who were buried there in shallow graves before, without Christian services." *9*

It took over a year before the monument found today adorned the dual graves of Shorty Harris and his friend, Jim Dayton. It required approval of the then adolescent Death Valley National Monument to give permission for a stone and bronze memorial for Harris. Finally, on March 14, 1936, the monument was dedicated.

"MEMORIAL UNVEILED AT DESERT GRAVES - ABLE ADDRESS GIVEN BY REV. J. J. CROWLEY"

"About two hundred people were present, including Colonel White, Superintendent of Sequoia National Park and Death Valley National Monument, friends of Shorty and Jimmy, and desert-lovers from all over California, at the dedication of the memorial at the graves of Jimmy Dayton and Shorty Harris in Death Valley last Saturday afternoon.

Acting Director T. R. Goodwin of the Monument opened the program with an explanation of the history of the spot, Jimmy's death there in 1898 and Shorty's desire to be buried by his side. He thanked Supervisor Charles Brown, who had donated the bronze tablet in memory of these pioneers, and had given Shorty a home in his latter days. Supervisor Brown spoke briefly on his happiness in the tribute now being paid to Shorty. Mr. Goodwin read telegrams from absent well-wishers whose hearts were gladdened by the occasion. Albert Stovall, who had worked side by side with Shorty in the old days, related three characteristically humorous anecdotes of the diminutive miner and told of his affection for Jimmy Dayton, whom Shorty called "the best friend I ever had." William Caruthers, writer, friend of Shorty's and of that

lamented lover of the desert men, Harry Carr, told of his respect for Shorty, and of how he oped (sic) some day to publish his notes on this lovable soul. He pointed out that Shorty had spent his life looking for gold, but that today, when this group had gathered to pay him tribute, he had found true gold.

Father Crowley, Catholic pastor of Inyo County, gave an address 'in Memoriam.' Col. White thanked all who came and showed how the Park Service had found in Death Valley the generation of miners that had succeeded Shorty and Jimmy, and through good roads and memorials such as this endeavoring to render accessible and perpetuate the grandeur of the valley and to assure the miners every protection in their labors. Mrs. Brown, assisted by Harry Gower, Superintendent of the Pacific Coast Borax interests in Death Valley, then unveiled the tablet..." *10*

Unlike the majority of those of the dead that lay in the shadow of the Valley of Death, the name of Shorty Harris is known by most with even a rudimentary knowledge of Nevada and California history. Unlike Harris, who walked in the peace and tranquility of Death Valley in the trailing dust of many a burro, modern adventures trail dust from under air conditioned Explorers, Outbacks, Blazers, and Pathfinders: many of these easily find their way to Harris' now only relatively "lonely" grave, situated 20 miles south of Furnace Creek Ranch. Shorty would have loved it that way.

FOOTNOTES

1. Inyo Independent, (Independence, CA) November 16, 1934.
2. LOAFING ALONG DEATH VALLEY TRAILS: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF PEOPLE AND PLACES, Copyright 1951, by Caruthers, William page 115.
3. Trona is located 31 miles south of Ballarat (by today's road) in the adjoining Searles Valley.
4. LOAFING ALONG DEATH VALLEY TRAILS: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF PEOPLE

AND PLACES, Copyright 1951, by Caruthers, William page 116.
LOAFING ALONG DEATH VALLEY TRAILS: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF PEOPLE AND PLACES, Copyright 1951, by Caruthers, William page 118.

his namesake Aguerberry Point in 1945.

EXPLORER'S GUIDE TO DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, THE, Copyright 1995, Bryan, T. Scott and Bryan, Betty Tucker

6. Indian Ranch is located 10 miles north of Ballarat by dirt road.

7. Caruthers claims that Shorty uttered those words as he and Harris were riding in a car and were passing by the grave of Jim Dayton, who died in 1898.

8. Interestingly enough, Harris was the last person to be granted permission to be buried in Death Valley National Monument. His partner at Harrisburg, Pete Aguerberry, was denied permission to be buried at

9. Inyo Independent, November 16, 1934

10. Inyo Register, (Bishop, CA) March 19, 1936

LOAFING ALONG DEATH VALLEY TRAILS: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF PEOPLE AND PLACES, Copyright 1951, by Caruthers, William

REFERENCES:

Newspapers:

Inyo Independent, November 16, 1934

Inyo Register, (Bishop, CA) March 19, 1936

PETE AGUERBERRY: DEATH VALLEY PROSPECTOR & GOLD MINER, Copyright 1982, Pipkin, George C.

Periodicals:

HALF A CENTURY CHASING RAINBOWS - Touring Topics, October 1930

Books:

DESERT PADRE: THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF FATHER JOHN J. CROWLEY 1891-1940, Copyright 1997, Brooks, Joan

Other:

Transcribed verbal notes from trip December 20, 1997 and other research notes by author.

BEATTY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

A special Railroad Days Recap dated June 7, 1998

by Vonnie Gray

Thank You to all of the participants. We took in \$2,034.71 but our expenses were \$2,068.28. We took some chances this year in ordering tee shirts and more mugs. Both of the items can be sold in the Museum. We also spent \$600 on event insurance this year for our protection.

MONEY REPORT:

Tee Shirts - \$362 - Raffle \$316 - Button \$604 - Warrants \$197 (Realize they also did a lot of button sales plus 15 warrants) - Vendors \$530 - Train \$25.71 - Total \$2,034.71

We were able to provide the community with a great parade. The Museum is now known to be a group of people who are active in the community to help educate, promote and inform people of the wonderful area we live in called Beatty.

The raffles were won by the following people:

50/50 raffle - Theresa Pate (Tonopah) - Pizza from the Sourdough - Helen Terry (Beatty) - Dinner for two (Burro Inn) - Don Schurer (Beatty) - Silver Picture Frames - Gloria Hudie (one of the vendors) - Leather attache case - Linda Burowick (Beatty) - Nevada Tourism Bag - Leon Abrams (Berkeley)

We had 105 visitors that signed the register in the Museum in one day (WOW!) We also had some great displays. We received some great ideas for next year: 1- Enclose in the vendors pack, 10 tickets and they must be present to win, also give a tee shirt or button free. 2-All functions in the park. Jail included. 3-Cheerleaders or High School groups have own booth, not wandering. 4-Friday: Noon for set-up, family picnic at the park. 5-Miss Beatty Pageant in the park Friday evening. 6-Parade: order numbers given when groups sign in. 7-Saturday: Parade, Vendors, Car Show, Railroad display, Children games / carnival at tennis court, Talent Show / Ms. Rhyolite contest. 8-Sunday: Youth Breakfast in the park, Church, Lions Club lunch, 1:30 raffle drawing. 9-One or two people in charge of delegating responsibilities. 10-Larger signs and especially A frames at Burro, Lost River, General Store & NAPA. 11-Banner across the Highway. 12-Move White Elephant Auction to Burro Days. 13-Raffle tickets sold beginning of April. 14-More advertising in Las Vegas area. 15-See about Beatty High School Reunion for Thursday Dinner BBQ in/at football field. 16-Cost of vendors was to high. Might want to charge \$50. 17-Close down 3rd St by the Park. 18-Get Beatty, Rhyolite and Nevada books for Museum to sell. 19-Not to stress the things you can't change!

DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Alan Baltazar-Las Vegas, Nevada - Approximately 20 volumes of School Books, Novels etc. with copyrights dating 1868-1913.

Murphy & Maxine Breedlove-Beatty, Nevada - Various photos and papers relating to Bessie Moffatt.

Bill & Zettia Miller-Long Beach, California - Video "Death Valley Out-takes."

Midge Ondes-Rohnert Park, California - \$10.00 donation to Museum.

Stagecoach Hotel & Casino-Beatty, Nevada - One 15 passenger bus.

Jeff Taguchi-Beatty, Nevada - Garrotype negative, photos & prints from same and antique negative cutter.

Dave Watson-Lancaster, California - 1868 2 cent coin.

COMING EVENTS

July 27th - BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

August 31st - BMHS meeting - 7 p.m. Beatty Community Center

September 5th 6th & 7th - Beatty Days

September 15th - Miss Beatty Pageant

October 31st - Beatty Burro Races

Date TBA - BMHS "Picnic in the Park"

For further information, please call the Beatty Chamber of Commerce (702) 553-2424

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BMHS

The Beatty Museum and Historical Society will conduct a rummage sale one Sunday a month and will also conduct a bake sale one Sunday a month. All funds raised will go to the BMHS building fund. Please call the Museum (702) 553-2303 for further information.

ASK A FRIEND TO JOIN BMHS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Spike Foge
Bonita Springs, FL

Friends of Rhyolite
Beatty, NV

Charles E. McManis
Las Vegas, NV

J. "Larry" Moog
Lompoc, CA

Gary D. Morgan
Clio, CA

James A. Walling
Berkeley, CA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO!

Jane Reidhead July 4th

Jason Manus July 8th

Mary Revert July 8th

Richard Ahearn July 12th

Lois J. McDonnell July 15th

Boyd A. Reidhead July 21st

Lynn Vance July 21st

Midge Ondes July 28th

Karen Bohmer August 4th

Vern Potter August 18th

Ellen Boehringer August 19th

Linda A. White August 24th

Sandra Baltazar August 29th

Gil Schmidtman August 29th

Jane Cottonwood August 30th

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