

BEATTY MUSEUM and HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Vol. 2 NO 3

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Donation requested \$1.00

Message from the President.....

CLAUDIA REIDHEAD

Hi Folks! I'm back, thanks to all of you for voting for me. We have a great board this time, all of them are active and we are lucky to have them with us. On to more interesting news. The kids who vandalized the cemetery have had their first hearing and will be sentenced on April 15. (LATE BREAKING NEWS! - Two young men were sentenced April 15, a fine of \$2000.00 and 100 hours community service. One traded the 100 hours of community service at \$10.00 per hour because of a move to Elko Nevada and will pay a total of \$3000.00. The third young man is still at large and has not responded to the summons from the Nye County Sheriff Office and the District Attorney.) March was a very busy month for us as Mary Revert and I had been sewing costumes and bazaar items for weeks for the Bazaar. Ellen Boehringer made all of our hats (we call her our "Mad Hatter"), she is so talented. When March 16th arrived we had hats for everyone and we were all in costume, including Zettia Miller and Linda White who were here for the Rhyolite Festival. We opened a temporary exhibit on the 16th & 17th and it was very well received. We borrowed the Lorraine Perry Thomas collection of photos from UNLV, photos covering the eras from the early teens through the thirties with some great photos of Pioneer as a living town. Bob and Mary Revert loaned the exhibit a wonderful roll phonograph from the early 1900's, a sewing machine and tools, a couple of Iron mortar and pestles that had been used in the labs of the era. Stock certificates, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets that Bill and Zettia Miller have contributed made a great display. On loan from Gloria Shearer were some wonderful beaded handbags, one of them from Rhyolite and a showcase piece, Anna Beatty's watch. Displayed courtesy of Larry and Vonnie Gray were bottles from Rhyolite, RR property line post, various tools and they loaned some oak display cases. Walk-in friends who came back bringing items for display were Sue Boschert who brought in the washboard that was used by "Sandy" Sanbournes mother in the very early days and that great friend "Anonymous" loaned us a ore car manufacturers tag from one of the ore cars in the Montgomery Shoshone Mine. Also on display were flat irons, various tools, melting pots, RR spikes, mine spikes, 1902 apple juicer, and

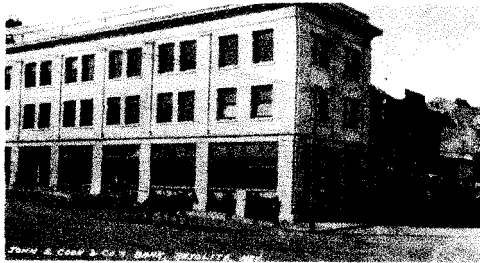
blacksmith tools. Thank you Barbara Piatt for your Bazaar idea that turned into a very successful week-end that gained us some new members and brought in over \$500.00. Thank you also to Kim Hickenbotham who represented us so wonderfully at Rhyolite. You were great and Ellen and I are very proud of you. To Bev Coffee who put in many hours hosting at the exhibit and bazaar and she also baked a cake that she never even got to put on the table before it was sold. To Carol Monk for baking a cake. To Chloe Lisle for baking a cake and all the things you do for us, we appreciate you. Yours truly along with Mary Revert and Vonnie Gray had our temporary museum opened for two week-ends in April and grossed over \$200.00 in coffee cup sales and donations. The museum will be open on the second week-end of each month and perhaps at other times for special occasions. The photo exhibit will change quite often in the museum. We want to congratulate Clint and Ellen Boehringer as they were selected among the top seven volunteers in the country. Tracey Pharo from the BLM Office in Tonopah wrote the letter recommending them. The award is being presented to them April 25th in Washington D.C. by the Secretary of the Interior, attended by the Senator and Representatives of Oregon and their grandson Brian. They also attended a breakfast given by Nevada's Senator Reid. The award honors their volunteer work at Rhyolite for the last four winters as caretakers of the Bottle House and their work to help preserve the history and spread the word among visitors of how precious the memories of the past are. The visitation has grown from only a few hundred the first winter they were there to over 17,000 people at the Bottle house this winter, each of whom either Clint or Ellen spoke to personally, telling the story of the house and town with humor and pride. They have studied the history of the town exhaustively and enjoy telling it's story and enjoy promoting preservation of historic places. Karen Bohmer is a special member of our group working for the Chamber of Commerce. She keeps us informed on what is going on in the town. We love you Karen and are glad that you are back in the office. I guess that about says it all for this time with a final note that our second annual "Picnic in the Park" will be August 17th so mark your calendar and watch for upcoming news with all the details. Bye for this time.

Bullfrog Mining District History

IN BOOM TIMES

PART TWO

Being the Experiences of a Young Physician in a Nevada Mining Camp



When I had time to draw my breath, I began to study the business conditions existing in the camp. On every side I saw men making money hand over fist and pouring it back into new ventures. Ingrown optimism of the most violent type was the dominant characteristic of the desert-dwellers. I use the word "violent" because it would have been as much as a man's life was worth to hint that the game was too lively to last and that the bubble was being expanded to the bursting point. "Look at Tonopah and Goldfield!" was the slogan. Rhyolite reflected the sensational success of the two camps to the North. The Mizpah and the Mohawk mines

had set the country ablaze with gold fever, all the more so because the Mohawk stock had been placed on the market at ten cents a share. At this figure an investment of one hundred dollars would have been worth seventeen thousand dollars. It was the grand prize in the dessert lottery. Every man who bought stock in an unknown property hoped that it might turn out to be another Mohawk or Mizpah, and every man who had a hole in the ground capitalized it and found eager buyers, at home as well as abroad. Our camp had the spirit of the old West, mixed with modern get-rich-quick ideas and practices. The press agent was a prominent factor in Nevada boom days, for the promoters knew the value of publicity and used it lavishly. Mines and prospective mines were advertised in newspapers from one end of the country to the other. The local broker's offices were clearing houses for checks, which poured in with every mail; and every check represented an individual who was gambling that there was gold at the bottom of a particular hole in the ground, which he had never seen. Some of these mines were honest producers; some of them promised to produce, and others were capitalizing their hope and selling it with a smear of printer's ink. I suppose I was afflicted with effete ideas of conservatism and stability. I could not look at that tented town and bring myself to believe it would last. I had been used to brick houses from fifty to one hundred years old. Rhyolite in 1906 had no appearance of permanence and gave one the impression that the next strong wind from the North would whirl it over into Death Valley. At any rate I was a bystander during the first wild months of that boom. It was a game I did not understand, and one that my cautious Eastern mind told me was unsafe. Still, optimism is catching; and the time came when I dipped into speculation with the others. My first speculative investment--and I would now be richer by several thousand dollars if it had been my last--was not in mining stock. The railroad was coming into Rhyolite and the camp was greatly excited in consequence. A patient of mine, who was supposed to have inside information, advised me to buy a certain lot on Golden Street. "But that's away out of town!" I protested. "What do I want with that sandpatch?" "Never you mind!" said he. "Just run along and buy it as quick as you can. You can get it for three hundred dollars." I bought the lot. Then I went to look at it and wished I had my three hundred dollars back. I had never owned any real estate before, but that section of sand and sagebrush looked less like real money than any piece of property I had ever seen. Toward noon a stranger dropped in. "Doctor," said he, "you've just bought a lot on Golden Street. I'll give you nine hundred dollars for it." I nearly upset my desk in my eagerness to close with him. Before I was through congratulating myself upon my business shrewdness a second man waved a certified check for two thousand dollars under my nose, and he also wished to buy the lot on Golden Street. I was forced to tell him the property was no longer mine. Then I put on my hat and went out to find my friend. "What is doing on Golden Street?" I asked. "I sold that lot for nine hundred dollars and I could have had two thousand dollars by hanging on to it a little longer. "You sold it!" roared my friend. "Why, you chump, the railroad is coming through there. It'll be the business

center of the camp!" So my Eastern conservatism cost me eleven hundred dollars. It was a lesson to me; but the confidence and optimism I acquired as time went on cost me much more. Rhyolite was not exactly a lawless camp, but it was a camp that had its share of killings and shooting scrapes. Willful murder was not allowed to pass without punishment; but in the case of a quarrel between two men public opinion found no fault with the one who drew first and centered his shots. A plea of self-defense could be stretched to cover almost any range of fact or fancy, and if a man could prove that he had ever had trouble with his victim that fact was regarded as sufficient excuse for the killing. "I had to get him or he would get me!" was a popular plea. During my first winter in Rhyolite a Chicago friend paid me a visit. George was the sort of man who smokes a pipe at all hours, cool, phlegmatic and reflective. A nervous man prefers a cigarette, but George had no nerves, at least none that I had ever been able to discover. On his first night in camp he was sitting on the steps outside my office, watching me pick the stitches out of a mule-skinner's face. The man had been slashed with a knife in a saloon brawl. My office was still in the room behind the bank. It was small enough to begin with, but when half of it was curtained off and turned into a sleeping apartment there was just enough room left for a desk and two chairs. My waiting room was the open street. George sucked on his pipe and took it from his mouth to ask a question. "Do you get much of that sort of work round here?" said he. "Quite a good deal," said I. "Sometimes the boys get to fighting and----" Bang! Bang! Bang! The roar of forty-fives interrupted me. I jumped to the door. The darkness of the street was pierced with flashes; two men were settling an argument in front of a dance hall. George did not move from the steps until one of the wounded men was carried into the office, shot through the body. Hardly was he on his way to the hospital, and I ready to follow, when a second shooting affray broke out at the other end of the street. George, still sitting on the steps and nursing his pipe, watched one of the participants dash by, his hobnailed boots striking fire from the flinty ground. I recognized him as a waiter in a restaurant. As he ran he yelled to me: "Doc, I just shot that Swede gambler up the street! Got him good and plenty!" I had one eye on my guest, for I expected some sort of an outburst from him. Two gunfights in one night was unusual; two on the same street inside of five minutes had never happened before. George listened until the hammer of footsteps died away in the distance, but he made no comment. The wounded man died at the hospital and we were late in getting to bed. Just as we were preparing to retire there was a knock at the door. It was a young tramp miner with a broken hand. He told a pitiful hard-luck story and I set the broken bones and made him as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. "When did you eat last?" I asked him. "Yesterday." I gave him two silver dollars. "Get something to eat and a bed," said I. "Don't gamble with this money and don't buy booze with it, because all these tinhorns and saloonkeepers know me and if you spend the money the wrong way I'll be sure to hear about it." The boy promised and went away. "You're pretty soft!" said George. "Anybody could tell that the kid was a professional hobo. His hard-luck story was too good to be true. He'll probably bet that two dollars on the line and go broke." I did not argue the case, because I thought it more than likely that George's diagnosis was correct. Our first caller in the morning was the tramp. I knew when I looked at him that he had not slept. "Doc," said he, "I thought I'd better come round and tell you about it. I felt lucky last night; so after I had a plate of beans and some coffee I played a little Black Jack and won; then I went over to the crap table and---" "Aha!" What did I tell you?" chuckled George. "And now you want breakfast money?" said I. "No, doc, I don't," said the boy. "I told you I felt lucky. The dice certainly used me right; so I thought the best thing to do would be to come round and split with you fifty-fifty." He took eight twenty-dollar gold pieces from his pocket and laid four of them on the desk. "There's your cut, doc," said he. "It's always fifty-fifty when you stake a feller." I took the money--and George went outside and loaded his pipe. I never knew what he thought, because he did not say. He left us the next afternoon, carrying with him some peculiar ideas about the West. I suppose to this George never thinks of Nevada without associating the state with knife wounds, forty-five-caliber revolvers, sudden death, and bread upon the waters paying four thousand per cent. In time I surrendered to the microbe of optimism. I think my capitulation was due in great measure to the stone-and-cement buildings that were erected when the railroad came through. They made a powerful appeal to the conservative element in my nature. It did not seem that there was so much danger of the camp's blowing away after it had been anchored with a sixty-thousand-dollar bank building, a modern hotel and an electric-light plant. Automobiles chugged through the streets. Tents and shacks disappeared and their places were taken by substantial structures. Outwardly, at least, Rhyolite was taking on a semblance of stability and permanence. My practice grew steadily. Do not think these people of the desert were satisfied with a small amount of attention, antiquated ideas in medicine and slipshod methods. I found them most exacting. A patient might be a mucker from a mine, or he might be an Eastern capitalist fresh from the hands of the best specialists in the country. Money was no object-but service they would have. We passed through some terrible epidemics of lobar pneumonia of a very virulent type. The Eastern physician who believes he has

seen pneumonia at its worst can have but a faint conception of the desert scourge. When cold weather came it fell on us like a bolt from the sky, and there were times when the hospital was filled with these cases. A mining-camp doctor cannot shirk responsibility or run away from his work. He is shut in with it and every fight is a fight to a finish. I decided that my office was not large enough and built a five-room bungalow at a cost of something like nine thousand dollars. The lumber bill alone was thirty-five hundred dollars. I speculated a bit as time went on and acquired some very handsome specimens of steel engraving, which are still in my possession though I have forgotten just where they are. I have not seen them for some time, because it makes my head ache to look at them and recall all that they stood for in the days when we thought we had another Tonopah in the shade of Ladd Mountain. Whenever stock in a new property was placed on the market it was customary for everybody to buy a few dollars' worth. This ceremony took the place of a vote of confidence; it was our way of showing good faith. And then, of course, there might be another Mohawk at the bottom of the hole, though we bought the stock whether the hole was dug or not. It was at this period that the advertising fever touched one hundred and five degrees and the boom swelled to its greatest proportions. The camp was virtually living on foreign money and no dollar that came in was allowed to escape if the promoters could help it. I have heard of a very simple but effective scheme that was worked with tremendous success upon Eastern capitalists in search of investment. We will say that Mr. Coyne T. Byrne, of Chicago or New York, arrives, allowing it to be known that he is in the market for mining properties. A gentlemanly agreement between mine owners makes Mr. Byrne the prey of the one who sees him first--Smith, for instance. Smith shows Mr. Byrne the Singing Mule property, but does not succeed in landing the capitalist. Enter Jones, also a mine owner, who takes Mr. Byrne to dinner. More than likely Mr. Byrne asks Jones' opinion of the Singing Mule. According to the game as played in the East that would be Jones' cue to tell the painful but honest truth about the Mule--Mr. Byrne expects to hear the worst--especially from a man who admits that he has mines of his own for sale; but nothing of the sort happens. "You don't mean to say that you've been offered a chance at such a property as the Singing Mule?" ejaculates Jones. Mr. Byrne acknowledges that such is the case. Mr. Jones dives into his pocket for a checkbook. He writes a check payable to Byrne for five thousand dollars--or even ten thousand dollars--the size depending upon the price Smith hopes to get for the Singing Mule. "Here!" says Jones, crowding the check on the stranger. "If you buy that property put me down for the first ten thousand dollars' worth of stock. Why, she's a bonanza!" This frank offer, backed by a check that is perfectly good when inquiries are made at the bank, goes far toward convincing Mr. Byrne that the Singing Mule is the Caruso of its kind. He buys the mine, Smith makes good to Jones the amount of his check--with a suitable commission--everything is lovely, and the alien money remains in the camp. I am not going into the causes that led to the failure of the metropolis of the Bullfrog District. For one thing Rhyolite had been over promoted; for another, the district did not produce sufficient high-grade ore to sustain a boom. When the properties did not develop as they were expected to do there was a shrinkage in the value of stocks. The banks had been loaning money and taking mining stocks and properties as security. When the bottom dropped out of the market the bottom dropped out of the banks too. And there was another reason: the country, in the language of a wise old desert-rat friend of mine, was "ripe for a trimming." "They been a-flyin' too high, doc," said he. "They're due to come down; so get from under. The stuff ain't in the ground, I tell you; and when the old high-grade ain't in the bowels of the earth you can't pump it in with hot air or shoot it in with printer's ink. Play her for a bust, doc. This country is ripe for a trimming!" The bubble, having reached its limit, did not explode at once; it began to dwindle in size and lose its bright coloring. Then the ingrown and incurable optimism of the inhabitants asserted itself. "A bank or two has failed," said they; "Why, sure! What of that? Don't banks fail everywhere: This is nothing but a temporary setback-a slight depression. It'll be all right in a few days." Rhyolite, they announced with a great deal of heat, was going to be another Tonopah--yes, even greater than Tonopah--and all the powers of earth and air could not stop her. The slight depression they mentioned might resemble the bottomless pit to an outsider; but the darker the outlook the louder rose the boosting chorus. If expressions of confidence could have saved the camp it would have been save a thousand times over. Those men were so thoroughly impregnated with the boosting spirit that they could not or would not recognize disaster. About this time there rose a loud noise to the north of us. The camp of Rawhide was celebrating the first flush--we called it the four flush of its boom. The gamblers packed their paraphernalia and left us--and that was a bad sign, for the professional gambler always follows the money center. Little by little the population of Rhyolite began to slip away. Men would not admit they were leaving the camp. They said they wanted to see what was doing at Rawhide--they made all sorts of excuses; but they did not come back. I had some business that took me north and on the way I stopped at Rawhide. There were the same frame buildings, the same tents, the same crowds in the street, the same gamblers, the same brokers' offices, and the same blind eagerness to invest in anything that bore the name of a mine--it was

Rhyolite in 1906 all over again. The next day I reached Virginia City, and there I saw the other side of the picture. Virginia, as they call it in Nevada, was once the greatest silver camp the world has ever known. Out of the miles of workings underneath her steep streets came the millions that saved the credit of the nation during the Civil War. Dozens of the large fortunes of the present day were founded on the Comstock Lode. The silver kings of the sixties built their city as if for all time, hauling in the materials by mule train. I was directed to a hotel; but there was no clerk behind the desk, no bellboy to take my satchel. I found myself alone in a spacious lobby where the furniture was hand-carved walnut or mahogany. The mirrors in their heavy frames reached halfway to the frescoed ceiling, from which hung tarnished chandeliers. Everything about the place was massive, old-fashioned, and eloquent of the days when money was the commonest thing on the slope of Mount Davidson. I was lost in the midst of this dusty magnificence until I heard a tapping, which seemed to proceed from the hotel office. At first I thought a woodpecker had taken possession of the premises; but on investigation I discovered an aged cobbler, who had turned the office into a shop. He was mending miners' boots, and the tap-tap-tap of his hammer rang hollowly in that lonesome place. The cobbler pushed back his glasses and blinked at me curiously. "Is it safe to leave my satchel here?" I asked. "Safe enough," he said. "Nobody comes around here much. Jim will be back pretty soon and he'll take care of you." The atmosphere of a vanished generation was depressing; so I went out and walked through the streets. On all sides were boarded windows, locked doors and dust-covered steps. It reminded me of Fifth Avenue in New York in the summertime; but I knew as I looked that the men who had locked those doors would not return for the winter--or any other season. At dusk I came on three old men sitting on the edge of the sidewalk. "How does the camp look?" I asked. "Well," said one old fellow, "she's picking up a little--yes, sir, she shore is! Been pretty quiet for a long spell, but she'll get over that--give her time. She's picking up some--ain't she boys?" Thus appealed to, the others wagged their gray heads and nodded assent. "She was a humdinger once!" said the spokesman. "Yes, sir; she was a looloo bird with a long tail, and she will be again when silver gets back to the right mark. If Dick Bland had lived--Well, she's picking up right along anyhow." So there I found it again--the hopeless, ingrown optimism of the mining country, where no depression is more than temporary and no decline is cureless. I went back to the hotel and was guided upstairs by a decrepit Chinaman, who seemed childishly pleased to see a strange face. Perhaps that was why he asked me only a dollar for the use of a suite of rooms that, judging from the richness of their fittings, must have been reserved for bridal couples or the princess of the silver age. I looked at the big four-poster bed, the marble-topped tables, and the thick, faded Brussels carpet. Surely here was the permanent camp if ever there was one; and there came to me a realization that stone and solid timbers do make prosperity--nor can they hold it once it begins to slip away. The soul of Virginia City had been the men in it--and they were gone. I thought of Rawhide, with its new white tents in the sagebrush. Within forty-eight hours I had seen the beginning and the end of a mining boom; and somewhere between the two I saw the finish of the metropolis of the Bullfrog. I remained in Rhyolite until there were only three hundred inhabitants left; so it cannot be said I deserted my practice. My practice deserted me. I did, however, take the precaution to transfer all my available capital to a California bank, so that when the final crash came I was able to establish myself in a city and wait for a practice, which I am thankful to say is arriving. There are times, however, when I am lonesome for the desert, and nights when I miss the men I knew there. I think of the Bull Pen--our exclusive social club--and I see them all again, the cheerful, hardy souls who met there to pass the evenings. There will never be a reunion in the Bull Pen, for some of those men are dead and the rest of them are scattered over the face of the earth--probably on the track of the latest gold excitement. Wherever they are, I wish them well with all my heart; but I shall probably never buy anymore stock in their prospects.



BEATTY MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

March 25, 1996 - 7pm - Meeting called to order by Vice President Mary Revert

Attendance: Mary Revert, Vonnie Gray, Clint & Ellen Boehringer, Jane Cottonwood, Andy Gudas and late arrival Claudia Reidhead

February minutes were read and approved with the spelling corrections of Keith Koerner and Dale Lerbakkan

Treasurers Report: \$2,673.36 Expenses \$81.00 (JANDA)

Old Business: Rhyolite Festival weekend began the opening of our small but well displayed museum as we opened the Cottage Gift Shop across from the Death Valley Information Center. Thanks given to Claudia Reidhead for the hours of hard work to get the building ready. We had a bazaar, sold pieces of cake and cups of coffee. We also had people dressed in early 1900's costumes. Thanks given to Mary Revert for the hours of costume making. Thanks also given to Bobby Revert for the sun screen tent. The weekend was such a success that we will be having the museum open the second weekend of every month. The Beatty Museum mugs were well received and sold out. The new mugs are being printed. Thanks given to Kim Hickenbotham for representing the Beatty Museum and Historical Society at Rhyolite. Flowers were sent by Mary Revert March 25, 1996. Flowers were also sent March 25, 1996 by Mary Revert to Karen Bohmer who had major surgery. Thanks to Carol Monk and Kathy Tollenson for making the ad for the Historical Society to be placed in the High School Year Book. Discussion concerning the National Register of Historic Buildings: Claudia called and will call again for the information and will also write a letter. (We need the forms to place the School on the Historic Register as well as other buildings in town) Claudia presented application for a Publicity Grant in which we could make post cards to place in the different motels, casinos and businesses as advertising. Motion made by Ellen and 2nd by Jane to pursue more information.

New Business: We read the letter composed by Clint Boehringer. He encouraged all members of the Beatty Museum and Historical Society, Friends of Rhyolite and the Beatty Chamber of Commerce to join together in putting on the Rhyolite Festival for next year. He presented good ideas to make the Rhyolite Festival a positive weekend. It was decided to table the Rhyolite Festival weekend discussion until the next meeting, pending the actions of Friends of Rhyolite.

1997 Railroad Days - The floor was opened for discussion. Subject was then tabled until others had time to think of ideas to share at the next meeting in April.

Motion by Ellen to ask the Commissioners for the Senior Center for the Beatty Museum and Historical Society. 2nd by Clint and Jane. Claudia agreed to ask for it on the agenda.

Up and coming events were noted:

Fourth of July Parade - float and members in costumes (need to encourage more members to participate)

Picnic in the Park - Saturday August 17, 1996. It will be a potluck and auction (planning and donations help needed)

Museum Hours: 10am - 5pm SECOND WEEKEND OF EVERY MONTH (need volunteers to take duty)

Motion to adjourn 8:40pm by Vonnie, 2nd by Jane

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?
YOU MIGHT ENJOY ONE OF THESE!

"Desert Country" by Edwin Corle

"Memoirs of an Old-Timer, Rhyolite, Nevada, 1906-1907" by James R. Moffat

"Ghosts of the Glory Trail" by Nell Murbarger

"Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps" by Stanley Paher

"My Adventures with Your Money" by George Graham Rice

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