



Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

Winter 2017

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

Editors: Chandra Sargent Mead and Bonnie Ketterl Kane

85 YEARS AGO . . .

In January of 1932 an event happened in our local mountains that made national news. A tri-motor Stinson "skyliner" of Century Pacific Airlines went down on a peak west of Fort Tejon. The aircraft left Bakersfield at 3:50 p.m. and soon got into high winds, clouds and fog. Others piloting "ships" in the same area that afternoon said the winds and fog were the worst they had ever encountered. A "flyer" later reported he had been pushed by a 60 mph tail wind over the Ridge Route and had to make an emergency landing in a field in the Antelope Valley.

Among the five men and three women traveling on the ill-fated plane was the Chief Deputy Sheriff of Los Angeles County, Frank Dewar (possibly from the Bakersfield Dewar's Candy Shop family), who had been searching for a band of kidnappers and gangsters in the Buttonwillow area. Also among the "lost sky voyagers" was a Hollywood starlet, Marie McSweeney, who had been visiting her family in Bakersfield.

A squadron of 35 airplanes searched for six days using the landing strip west of Castac Lake at Lebec as an operating base, where a fleet of fuel trucks stood by to refuel. Shown below is a sister plane to the missing one and fellow captains from Century Pacific that searched for the lost plane.

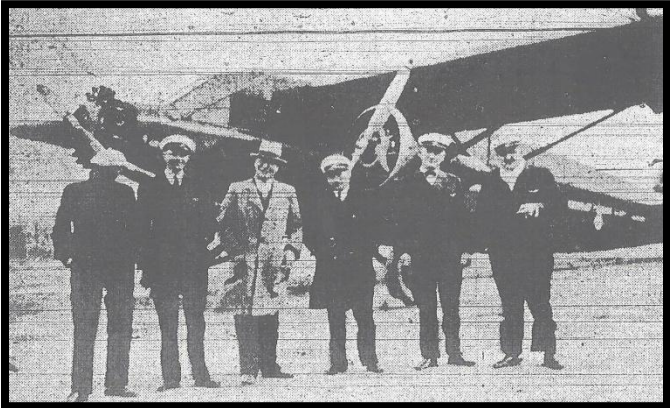


photo from Los Angeles Times

Through the deep snow, 200 horsemen and hundreds on foot in snowshoes – cowboys from surrounding ranches, sheriff and police officers and the Gorman posse - searched the hills. The snow that

had fallen sometime after the crash had covered and obscured the site from the air. Shown below are Tejon Ranch "Indian scouts" that helped search.



photo from Los Angeles Times

On February 6, 1932 the "skyliner" was finally located on a ridge above Johnson Canyon west of Fort Tejon by Paul Apodaca, a Tejon Indian cowboy, and his three dogs. He received a \$500 reward for his efforts from the Pacific Coast Coffee Association. One of the passengers, Mr. Polhemus, was a wealthy San Francisco coffee importer.

Investigators believe that the pilot, Mr. J.V. Sandblom, became lost in the fog, and pancaked the plane onto the ridge while attempting to climb above it. His body and one of the women's were thrown clear; the rest were found still secured by their safety belts, in seats that had torn free from the force of impact. The cabin and those in it were burned from the fuel tanks igniting on impact.

The story didn't end there. Los Angeles and Kern County officials got into a bit of an altercation as to whose authority the plane belonged under. Even though the plane had taken off and crashed in Kern County, Los Angeles County wanted to be in charge of the wreckage because there was an L.A. Co. Sheriff on board. Guns were drawn and shots fired before the disagreement was resolved and Kern officials gained control of the site.

See the complete story in Volume 4, The Resources, of "A View from the Ridge Route".

CABIN . . .

We began the New Year on a bit of a downer when someone vandalized the old Cuddy Cabin by breaking the windows with, of all things, an old bowling ball – a real surprise to us all!! The windows will be replaced with Plexiglas to avoid any future problems. Shown below is the cabin in the first snowfall of the year.



DORIS & DORIS REMEMBERED

We have lost two well-known former residents of the community as well as long-time members of the museum, Doris Brunk and Doris Steinhoff.

First, Doris Bradley Brunk passed away in November at the age of 92. Her well-known local family moved to Frazier Park when Doris was in 8th grade. After attending high school and college in Bakersfield, Doris married Harold Brunk, whose family ran the dairy in the community of Wheeler Ridge. Doris's mother, Grace Bradley Toenjes, was one of the earliest historians for this area. Grace's collection of articles and photos is now included in the museum archives thanks to Doris.

More recently we lost Doris Steinhoff early this year. She had turned 100 years old just last February. Doris married Edward Steinhoff, a descendent of the Cuddy Family, the "only one with red hair", as she would say. Doris and Ed lived in Oildale all their married lives but spent a good deal of time with family on the mountain as well. She was living with Steinhoff family members in Cuddy Valley at the time of her death.

Donations to the museum have been received in the name of both of these dear ladies.

2016 VISITORS

We had a record number of visitors this last year, 1681, not counting approximately 400 that came to our three day yard sale. Visitors came from as far away and exotic places as China, Belarus, Venezuela,

Korea and Ukraine, as well as England, Australia, Canada and Denmark. From states outside California we had visitors from Idaho, Kentucky, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. In state, we had visitors from San Diego, Alameda, Lafayette, Goleta, Brentwood, Springville, Davis and Sanger as well as many, many of you from our local communities. This year, we look forward to many more of you coming to visit us.

FOR SALE. . .



The museum has received a donation of a beautiful Niagara Wood Cook Store to use for fundraising purposes. It has been in an old Frazier Park home since the community was founded in the 1920's. We are asking \$2,500 for it, but will entertain your best offer. If you know of someone who would be interested in it please have them contact us.

GRANT MONEY AT WORK



Curtis Newman and Jim Kane are shown installing one of our new and more detailed information signs on the museum grounds, thanks to a grant from the Bakersfield Californian Foundation.

EVENTS IN THE COMING YEAR

Many of the following events are still in the planning stages, but we will get specifics to you as soon as possible.

Sat. **February 18** we still hope to have Ben Teton from the Tejon Conservancy speak on and show "slides" from the **Night Cameras** located on Tejon Ranch, although this has not yet been confirmed.



Sat. **March 11** Bonnie Kane will instruct a Pine-Needle **Basket Weaving Class**; \$10 cost covers materials.

Sat. **March 25** Bonnie Kane will lead a **Ridge Route Road Tour**; \$12 cost includes Self Guided Driving Tour handout.



Sat. **April 30** the museum will host its first "Junk from the Trunk" event, along the lines of Antique Roadshow. Bring your mystery item to be appraised (for a small fee) or just come to see what others bring.



Sat. **May 6** will see a **Mad Hatter Tea** at the museum.

Instead of a picnic this year, we intend to have an **Old Fashioned Social** on Sat. **June 24**. Make and bring old-fashioned hand-made foods such as bread to share. If you're looking for ideas, pick a recipe from our Heap of Eatin' cookbook, or prepare an old family recipe. We hope to have a barn dance, and Happy Hidden History for the kids (gold panning, scavenger hunt and simple period games). Make and decorate a dessert to auction off.

Later on in the year, we intend to have another **Living History Theater**, a dramatic reading from the book on the local historic McKenzie family, "Heap of Livin'".

In late September we will bring back our **Destination Dinner**, this time at the historic Lockwood Ranch.

Labor Day weekend will again be our popular **Yard Sale**.

We intend to have a presence at several events such as the Lilac Festival in Pine Mountain Club in May, the local car show on Memorial Day weekend, Ft. Tejon events and Frazier Park's Fiesta Days in August, selling books and such, as well as an information table.

We have in the past, and continue to offer private tours for groups such as the Kern County Genealogical Society and the California State Park Rangers.

We are working on bringing speakers on birds, American Indians, tracking, and genealogy to the museum, and hope to have a candle making workshop (probably in the fall).

Best to confirm these events by calling the museum, checking our website or Facebook. Reminders will be sent out to those of you who have e-mail.

SOME PICTURES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



Museum booth (right) along Mt. Pinos Way at the December Holiday Faire in Frazier Park



Carolers at the Dickens Christmas Tea

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES . . .

Consider making a donation to help offset the cost of the following:

- replacing the cabin windows - \$200
- replacing our antiquated (and dim) fluorescents with LED bulbs- \$200
- life size condor banner - approx. \$100
- repaint sign above building - \$100
- time & expertise to restore outdoor benches
- OR, VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME!!!

PLEASE SUPPORT THE BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT US!

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Tejon Mountain Village 

FOR THE PRINTING OF OUR NEWSLETTER!!!!

and

 **TO BARBARA & SCOTT ROSEN OF
FRAZIER MOUNTAIN INTERNET
FOR THEIR SERVICES AND SUPPORT!**

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES!

Please Note: General Membership is now \$25 (and includes Family)

Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society

PO Box 684, Frazier Park, CA 93225

New Member	Renewal		
_____	_____	General Membership	\$25.00
_____	_____	Senior Membership	\$15.00
_____	_____	Business Membership	\$50.00
_____	_____	Lifetime Membership	\$300.00

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MUSEUM BOOK CLUB



Shown are some members of our Book Club that meets on the first Monday of each month. Books that we have read in the past include "Giants: Parallel Lives of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass", "Watchers" and "Shattered" by Dean Koontz, "A Passion for Nature: the Life of John Muir", "Suspect" by Robert Crais, and the historic novels of Edward Rutherford. We are currently reading "One for the Money" by Janet Evanovich. Suggestions for future months include Diana Gabaldon's "Outlander", John Berendt's "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil", Isabel Allende's "The Japanese Lover", and the local McKenzie family saga "Heap of Livin". Come join if you can.

THE NEW YEAR BEGINS . . .

We had a great staff party at Don and Daisy Cuddy's home on their ranch in Cuddy Valley. Other than that, January & February are quiet on the "hill" while Mother Nature renews the earth with copious amounts of snow and rain. Quiet that is, except for the "snow bunnies" that have smothered us from the metropolitan areas. *The Mountain Enterprise* reported that the mountain area received an estimated 168,000 visitors on January 1st alone.

Museum Location: 3515 Park Drive, Frazier Park, CA

Museum Hours: Fri. Sat. & Sun. 12-4; summer 12-5

Museum Phone: 661-245-7747

Museum Website: www.rrchs.org

Museum Email: rrchs@frazmtn.com

RIDGE ROUTE COMMUNITIES MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**PLEASE CHECK YOUR
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