



Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

Spring 2022

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

BARN PROPERTY



For many years the Museum has hoped to acquire the adjoining property with its barn (between the P.O. and us). At long last this has come to pass with a lease on the land. Intentions for the near future are storage in the barn and parking for events. Long term plans include exhibits such as the Frazier Mountain lookout tower and the Glendale Fire Dept. bell. We also hope to uncover the edge of the swimming pool from the 50's that lies beneath (shown below).



To get started, this year you will likely see a cement floor and doors on the barn, removal and leveling of the dirt, and fencing around the perimeter. If you're local and have the means to remove any yourself, the dirt is FREE!

SOME DAM STORIES – WATER THAT IS..

It was 50 YEARS AGO, in 1972 that Pyramid Lake Dam was completed. Nearby residents were amazed to watch the water fill the huge new reservoir. Construction of this California Aqueduct reservoir began in 1967 when the State Department of Water Resources constructed two exploratory tunnels at the site to determine the stability of the area. The dam was then constructed to a height of some 400' high and 1,000' in length, creating twenty miles of mountainous shoreline in the Los Padres and Angeles National Forests in northwestern Los Angeles County.

The reservoir was named for a pyramid-shaped mountain that was created when Highway 99 was built through the canyon in 1933. That rock or mountain can still be seen just below the dam (at the end of Templin Highway & Golden State Highway).



There is a large pyramid-shaped island in the lake, but it is not the "pyramid" that many think the lake was named for. The old Highway 99 ends at the boat ramps on the north end and starts again at the south end. Actual construction of the Pyramid Dam was not started until the portion of Highway 99 that would be buried under the lake was built into the new Interstate highway to the east, high above the lake.

60 YEARS AGO our mountain communities experienced the failure of a much smaller dam when the earthen dam in the community of Lake of the Woods failed.



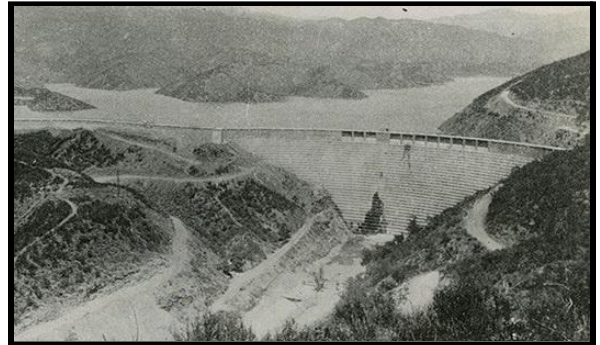
In February 1962, three days of heavy rain filled the lake to overflowing. The lake was spreading throughout the community and the concrete spillway could not maintain a safe water level. Families along the creek bed were warned that the dam might not hold – and many evacuated. On Saturday night, February 11 at 10:25 p.m. the dam gave way. A twenty foot wall of water swept down through the Frazier Park area. The flow filled the stream bed all the way to Castac Lake at Lebec, threatening homes and damaging Frazier Mountain Park Road on its way.

Silt from the flow buried the trunks of trees along its route so that just the tops of some trees are still visible as a result. Surprisingly, no homes or lives were lost, but the road to Frazier Park and Lake of the Woods was not usable for several days. Power and telephone poles on the edge of the flood line were leaning dangerously, but crews began their work at 3 a.m. Sunday morning to brace them.

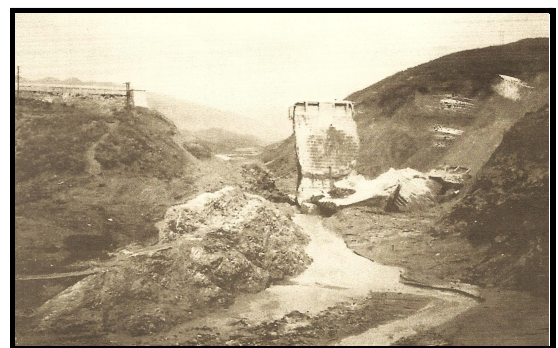


The next morning, west side of the Monterey Trail bridge

A much larger neighboring dam failed **94 YEARS AGO**. In 1926, the 200' high St. Francis Dam was completed as a part of the Los Angeles Aqueduct project in the San Francisquito Canyon, the canyon that once contained the most popular route to and from our mountain area.



After numerous warnings that there were problems developing, at midnight on March 12, 1928, the dam gave way and the huge reservoir, with eleven miles of shoreline, emptied in a little more than an hour. A wall of water, initially 180 feet high, tore down through the canyon and through the Santa Clara River Valley, devastating the towns of Piru, Fillmore and Santa Paula as it raced 54 miles from the dam site to the ocean. The wall of water and debris was said to be still some 40 feet high when it reached the Pacific Ocean between Oxnard and Ventura about five hours later. Between 400 to 600 people died, the worst man-made disaster in California history.



COMPUTER ISSUES

Our last issue was put together with the last gasp of our old computer. Bear with us this issue (at least). After at least 6 years, we have changed to a new (Windows 11) computer and with it, new programs for preparing and publishing the

newsletter. With it comes a new look, as well as a learning curve, and probably some delay in getting it out!

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Congratulations to those of you who have taken advantage of our "sale" on lifetime memberships. We welcome Tom & Judy Ferkel, Cheryl Bird, Pat Best, Laura Darling and Nicole Chybiorz to our ranks. Others of you like Tony Waters, Sigmund Lichter and Bob & Lynette Lame have continued to donate healthy sums to our continued operation. Thank you all!

You still have a few months to take advantage of our \$300 sale on our \$500 Lifetime memberships.

MOVING INTO 2022

As the Ridge Route Communities Museum returns to normal, following the past couple of years of very limited activity, we would like to report on the busy winter we have had. Late in 2021 the Museum received a grant from the Virginia and Alfred Harrell Foundation of Bakersfield to reestablish and make improvements to our irrigation system. Shortly after receiving that grant, one of the December storms backed up water onto the roadway on Park Drive above our property that caused a good deal of erosion on the museum's dirt bank. This caused the exposure of the new water lines that had been put in, a messy mud flow onto the patio and undermined the fence along the road. Funds from our wonderful annual Yard Sale were added to the grant so that, under the skillful guidance of Richard Orante of "Simply Green", we have been able to add irrigation and electrical panels all around our grounds, replace our badly damaged entry gates and add a walk-through gate. He expanded the patio wall to avoid any future mud flows, removed mud build-up in the drainage creek through the property, and painted the trim on buildings, benches & picnic tables, etc. etc. So, we are now ready for a busy visitor season ahead.

Our spring pine needle basket weaving class had a record number of people interested, so we ended up running two classes, with still more people on a waiting list. Two tours of the famous

old Ridge Route Road are planned April 21 and May 7. We are looking forward to our popular Saturday evening "Programs on the Patio" this July, especially our annual theatrical production of "Heap of Living" – which tells of one family's life in our mountains from the 1860's to the 1910's.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The museum now has a YouTube channel; visit the website or our Facebook page for the link, or visit directly at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzbAA2ghANJbBzbZrHknxvg>. Please subscribe as we need 50 subscribers to get a custom (easy to remember) link, vs the longggggg link above.



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Or, to join Amazon Smile from your mobile app, open the app and find "Settings" in the main menu. Tap on "Amazon Smile" and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on Amazon Smile on your phone. Our Amazon Smile link is: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/77-0431597>

SCHOLARSHIP



For the first time, the museum is honored to be able to offer a \$500 history scholarship. It is open to full time residents of the area that are high school students with a minimum 3.2 GPA. Applicants should submit a 750-1000 word essay that is compelling and historically interesting, and based on a local event, person or place, or a national or state event that has bearing on local history. Call the museum 245-7747 for full details. Applications can be found on our website, Facebook and at Frazier Mountain High School.

Sponsoring our scholarship can be another opportunity to support the museum!!

Start Saving Rummage Items for our Yard Sale Labor Day Weekend

UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

May

- 3 Give Big Kern
- 7 ~~Ridge Route Road TOUR~~ **SOLD OUT**
- 28 Booth at Ridge Route Run Car Show

July

- 2 Saturday Evenings Programs on the Patio
- 2 California Independence & Statehood
- 9 Kevin Woten on Castac Indians
- 16 Pyramid Dam & Lake History
- 23 Heap of Livin' - Dramatic Reading
- 30 Matthew Herman of Buena Vista Museum
On Local Earthquakes

August

- 5-7 Booth at Fiesta Days
- 8 Accepting Donations for Yard Sale
- 13 Rib Basket Weaving Class - \$20

September

- 3-5 Great American Yard Sale
(Labor Day Weekend)
- 9-10 Part 2 : Great American Yard Sale

October

- 22 Corn Husk Wreath Class

December

- 3 Booth at the Holiday Faire

BOARD MEETINGS - PUBLIC WELCOME

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held at the Museum on the third Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m.. The next meetings are May 18, June 15 & July 20. The public is welcome to attend.

ESTATE PLANNING & ENDOWMENTS

Please consider a bequest or endowment to the Museum. A bequest is a gift from your estate. Endowments provide yearly income. Bequests can be made for a specific amount or a percentage of the estate. Endowments funds are held in perpetuity and generate earnings that provide income to support non-profit organizations's programs & services. Contact us for more details.

HISTORY DAY AT THE LIBRARY

On March 17 the Museum hosted students of Gorman Elementary School at the Frazier Park Library for a local history lesson.



Bethel Billesbach, Bonnie Kane, Kevin Woten - Photo: Lori Woten

If you would like your school or class to visit the museum, or for us to visit you; please contact us.

PINE NEEDLE BASKET WEAVING CLASS

On March 26, Bonnie Kane hosted our second SOLD OUT Pine Needle Basket Weaving Class. These classes are always a big hit, and help us to raise funds for the museum. Thank you to all those that attended.



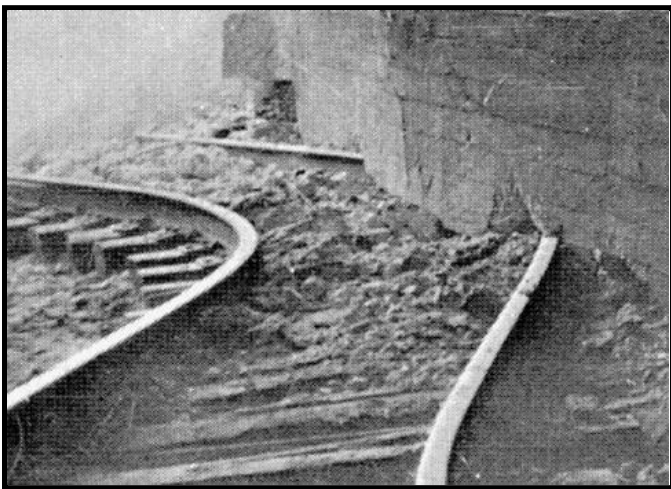
Photo: Lori Woten

1952 KERN COUNTY EARTHQUAKE

70 Years ago, on July 21, 1952 at 4:52 am (PDT) the mountain communities, along with the rest of Kern County and much of Southern California, was woken up early that Monday morning. The 7.5 magnitude earthquake was centered 3.7 miles WNW of Grapevine, CA. It was the strongest California earthquake since the estimated 7.9 magnitude 1906 San Francisco.

The Kern County earthquake was located on the White Wolf Fault, running somewhat parallel to the Garlock Fault, in a SW to NE direction along the northwestern transition of the Tejon Hills and Techachapi.

Damage - Some of the most damage was in Tehachapi, but there was damage throughout Kern County. Beale Memorial Clock Tower was damaged to the point it had to be demolished. Only the original clock works were saved. 11 miles of railroad track, and several rail tunnels had major damage, shutting down rail traffic over the Tehachapi Pass for 25 days.



(Photo: Southern Pacific Railroad)

Other damage was done in Maricopa, with the Maricopa Hotel, the post office and justice court building all being condemned due to heavy damage. A Kern County school collapsed; in Taft a wall at a J.C. Penney's store was destroyed.

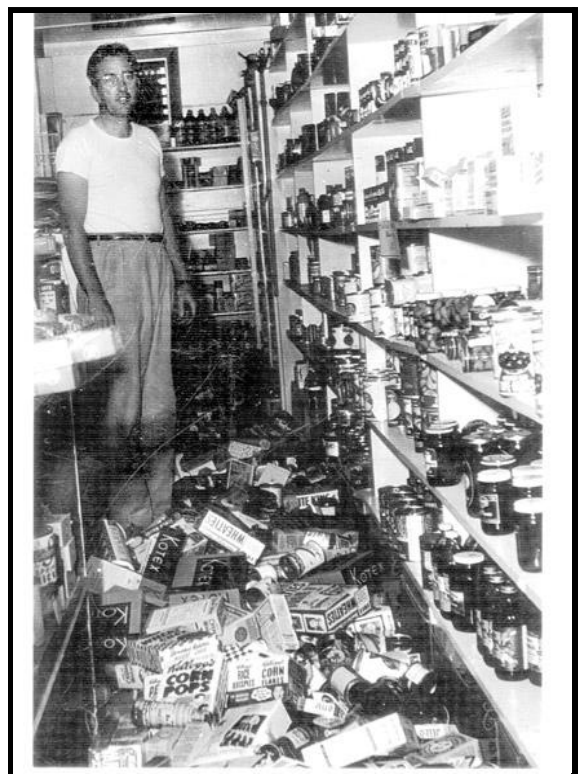
A total of 12 people died and at least 18 were injured with a property damage bill of \$50 to \$70 million.



Hotel Maricopa & Justice Court (Photo: Online Archive of Calif.)


Aftershocks - Continued for several months, with Caltech recording 188 aftershocks greater than magnitude 4.0, and ten of those were above a 5.0.

In **Frazier Park** - Many chimneys were damaged, and a few houses twisted on their foundations. Items were knocked off the shelves at the local grocery store. A 30 foot section of water pipe was ripped out of the ground, forming an arch that did not break.



Vern Weigel - Frazier Park Store [RRCM&HS photo]

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UPDATE FROM: Ridge Route Preservation Organization (ridgeroute.org)

ROADWAY UPDATE

We have some good news regarding the condition of the roadway. Southern California Edison and other contractors recently completed a project to replace some of the wires on their power lines. To make sure the vehicles they used could traverse the roadway and not do any damage, they cleared the roadway. The large rockslides in Swede's Cut and Serpentine Drive reported in January have been removed. The large boulder that was moved during our August 2021 CUTRR was broken down yet more and moved further from the roadway. The gates still remain closed and the roadway between the gates is only open to non-motorized travel.

CUTRR EVENTS & ONLINE MEETINGS

Our CUTRR (Clean up the Ridge Route) events are currently on hold due to personal obligations. They will resume as soon as possible. We are also working with the USFS to get permission to use heavier equipment/mechanized tools to increase our efficiency. Thank you all for your patience and continued support.

Our online meetings should resume soon. I (Michael Ballard) am working on a date for May at this time. Previous meetings have been quite successful, and I would like to keep that going. Your input has been very helpful. Future meetings will be recorded, as requested through our recent poll. If you miss a meeting, it will be posted on our YouTube channel.

HELP SUPPORT THE MUSEUM !!!

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For more information please contact us at 661-245-7747 info@ridgeroutemuseum.org		Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society PO Box 684, 3515 Park Drive, Frazier Park, CA 93225 Open: Fri-Sun 12:00pm - 4:00pm • ridgeroutemuseum.org	

MANY THANKS TO



FOR PRINTING OUR NEWSLETTER

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RENEWING your membership early, or **SPONSORING** an event or exhibit, or

BUYING from our website. Find out about local people, places and things. or

DONATING, just because!

Museum Location: 3515 Park Drive, Frazier Park, CA

Museum Hours: Fri. Sat. & Sun. Noon-4:00

Museum Phone: 661-245-7747

Museum Website: ridgeroutemuseum.org

Museum Email: info@ridgeroutemuseum.org



RIDGE ROUTE COMMUNITIES MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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