



Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert

P. O. Box 2001, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

Vol. 24 No. 10

December 2009

COME ONE – COME ALL ❄️ DEC. 15 ❄️ 7 P.M.

Please note: half an hour earlier than usual

HOLIDAY PARTY TIME at the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert!

🌿 **JOIN US** for our annual HSUMD Christmas Party. We'll meet at the Historic USO Building at 7 p.m. (30 minutes earlier than usual) for a bit of tradition and maybe something new.

🌿 **Come enjoy the fellowship and fun!**

🏠 **Bring your favorite dessert – plus some Christmas memories – to share with everyone.**

★ **We'll play a game or two dealing with history, with a nice prize for the winner.**

We'll furnish the hot cider, water, and coffee.

🎵 **By popular demand, the Immanuel Baptist Choir will return to entertain us!**

– Jim Kenney



The Immanuel Baptist Choir at last year's party

Photo by Liz Babcock

President's Message



Bruce Wertenberger

The end of the year is rapidly approaching, yet there is so much yet to do! In the midst of all this, our HSUMD Christmas meeting will occur on Tuesday night, Dec. 15. See the front page for details.

★ All membership renewals are due on Jan. 1; see the article on page 3.

★ I am happy to announce that Jerry Hinman recently gave us a collection of 35 U. S. Geo-

logical Survey and American Automobile Club of Southern California quadrangles. Some of these maps were originally published in 1892 and early 1900s and reprinted in the 1920s and 1930s. The older maps had been collected by Jerry's father and added to the collection.

The maps are of portions of Southern California and Baja California. What an interesting step back in time!

We've had some interesting plays which were well performed in the Historic USO building in the last several weeks. Hope you were able to see and enjoy them.

★ A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you. ★ — Bruce Wertenberger



Hank Jones, a participant in the recent HSUMD tour to Darwin looks over the gravestone of Nancy Williams, an 1872 resident of the old mining town. Our excellent tour conductor, Jim Kenney, tells us that he's looking at lining up something in January, so look for details in the next newsletter.

Photo by Andrew Sound

Company's Coming

Early in 2010 HSUMD will get the opportunity to show off our Historic USO Building and our town's history to a group of historians from all over the state of California.

Thanks to some hard work by our friends at the Searles Valley Historical Society, the Conference of California Historical Societies will hold its Spring 2010 symposium in Ridgecrest in a joint sponsorship arrangement with HSUMD.

The symposium will start on Friday, March 5, when HSUMD volunteers will conduct tours in our valley. Maturango Museum and the U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology will be prominent stops on these tours.

Both lunch and dinner will be at our Historic USO Building, and you'll be learning more about how you can attend in the next issue of this newsletter.

I do know that Lorraine Blair will be the luncheon speaker (I presume speaking about the Rand Mining District topics she knows and loves so well), and I (Liz Babcock) will speak at dinnertime (with a PowerPoint show along similar lines to the one I gave about Inyokern's 100th anniversary, but much shorter).

On Saturday, March 6, the group will tour Searles Valley museums and plant, including a lake tour of Searles Valley Minerals. During lunch at the Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Building in Trona, Jim Fair-child will show a video of the valley's timeline.

Dinner that evening will be at the Carriage Inn in Ridgecrest.

In addition to all that, the group will be offered two opportunities for self-tour of the living ghost town of Randsburg — on the afternoon of Thursday, March 4, and the morning of Sunday, March 7.

This schedule sounds great, doesn't it? Many thanks to Sharon Hartley and Lit Brush of the SVHS, as well as to our own Kathy Armstrong, who is representing HSUMD on the planning committee.

— Liz Babcock

Mysterious Handshake



We know these men are both military officers and one of them is a chaplain, but we'd like to know their names, which one of them is congratulating the other, and why. Our Collections Manager Carol Porter found this mystery photo in the large collection

donated to HSUMD by Bette and Larry Fox. Carol plans to put more such mystery photos in future newsletter issues in hopes of getting more photos in the collection identified.

In other news, Carol reports, "We are working on a plan to vacate the Station Street location and will be putting many things into deep storage and deciding what to have readily available for display and research. When we have a plan in place I will be calling for volunteers to help with sorting and boxing up." She'll be looking for help with this effort, possibly in February or March. Want to help or have mystery photo information? Call Carol at 760-446-3400.

2010 Due\$ Are Due Jan. 1

HSUMD dues are modest, considering what you get in return — great programs and activities, plus the satisfaction of knowing that you're helping keep the history of our town alive.

Your 2010 dues are due starting on Jan. 1 — a few short weeks away — so why not send in your check now (\$20 family membership or \$30 business membership) to Treasurer, HSUMD, P.O. Box 2001, Ridgecrest, CA 93556.

Also — how about giving your relatives gift memberships in the Society? Or if someone you're seeking a gift for is already a member, a brick (see below) or a simple donation in his/her name is likely to fill both of you with a warm feeling of holiday good cheer.

HSUMD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your dues are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. So pay now and you can count your dues as a charitable deduction on your 2008 taxes!

There's Still Time for You To Be a Brick Santa!



Help the USO Building restoration effort by buying your favorite gift recipient a special commemorative brick or give yourself a brick for the holidays!

You can get a 4- x 8-inch brick for \$100 or an 8- x 8-inch brick for \$250. The 4x8 brick has space for three lines, with 21 characters per line, and the 8x8 brick has space for

six lines, 21 characters per line. See last month's newsletter for a convenient form that has the letter spaces already

counted out for you.

You will have an opportunity to review and approve what you want the brick to say before it is engraved. Once you have your brick's message figured out, print it legibly in ALL CAPS and send it and your check to **Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert, P. O. Box 2001, Ridgecrest, CA 93556.**

Questions? Call Andrew Sound at 371-1795 or e-mail him at asound@ridgenet.net.

And for some great stocking-stuffers, stop by the USO Building any weekday between 10 a.m.–2 p.m. and browse the goodies in our Gift Shop!



California's Waters

By John
Di Pol

Rushing
water,
Kern River
Canyon.

Photo by Liz
Babcock

This month your article will stray away from our general area of high desert and mountains history and take a quick look at California's pressing water problems.

Obviously, this short article can't entirely cover such a broad subject, but will touch upon some generalities, identify the major systems of water collection, storage, and transportation within our state, and mention some major issues.

"Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting" said Mark Twain. Fighting not only between California and its neighboring states, but also within California. Two thirds of the surface water (rain, snow, rivers, etc.) is "produced" in Northern California, which has only one-third of the population, while only one-third is produced in Southern California, which has two thirds of the population. Agriculture uses 80 percent, with 20 percent for all other users.

To solve the imbalance between the water sources and users noted above,

seven major systems to collect, store, and transport water were built starting back in the early 1900s.

Those systems are as follows, north to south:

1. The State Water Project

Started in 1960. Collects water from the Feather River watershed into Oroville Dam, 3.5 million acre-feet (MAF) capacity. The aqueduct runs south through the delta into San Joaquin Valley and past San Luis Dam (regulatory reservoir), is pumped over the Tehachapi Mountains into Antelope Valley, then runs south to Parris/Hemet area at 4.2 MAF capacity. The project normally delivers 2.3 MAF average per year but currently delivers only 1.9 MAF because of low water supply and delta environmental issues. Users: 70 percent urban, 30 percent agricultural.

2. The North Bay Project

Serves cities north of San Francisco Bay, such as Santa Rosa, Petaluma, San Rafael, etc. The Russian River is the primary source of water. This

project also taps the headwaters of the Eel River which is diverted into the Russian River.

3. The Central Valley Project

Federal project started in the 1930s. Serves Northern and Central California. Water from the Trinity and Sacramento Rivers is collected behind Shasta Dam, flows south to pick up the American River, then flows through the delta and continues south into the San Joaquin Valley, collecting the water from the major rivers out of the western Sierras.

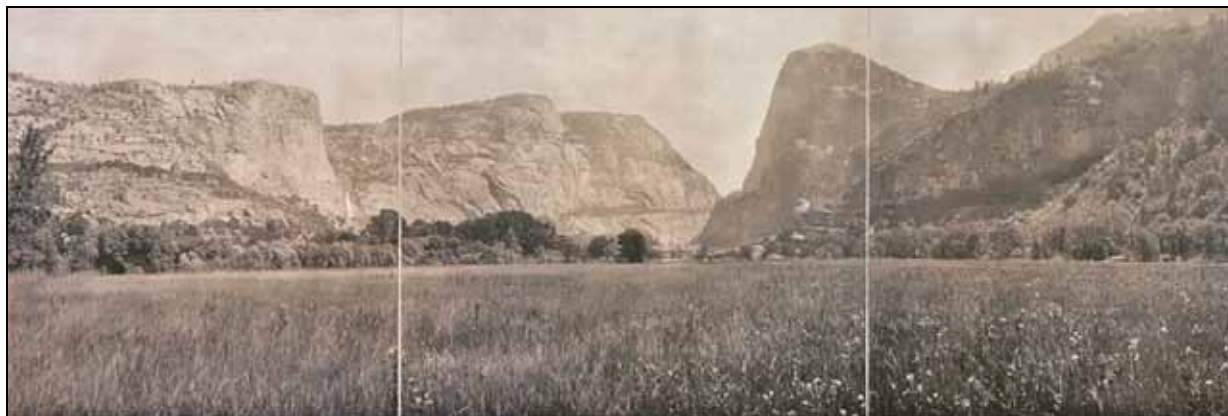
Max system capacity is 7.0 MAF annually, but deliveries are substantially reduced because of current drought and environmental issues in the delta. Users: 85 percent agricultural, 15 percent urban

4. Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct

Very contentious project in the late teens and early 1920s. The Tuolumne River is dammed in Yosemite National Park to flood the scenic Hetch Hetchy Valley. The aqueduct conveys water for 2.3 million people in San Francisco and South Bay cities.

5. Mokelumne Aqueduct

Mokelumne River in the western Sierra is the sole source. Serves 1.2 million people in Oakland and East San Francisco Bay cities.



Hetch-Hetchy Valley in 1911 before it was flooded.

Original image owner Matt Ashby Wolfskill, Library of Congress American Memory Collection

Continued on p. 5

Our Business Members — *please patronize them!*

Allen County Public Library,
Genealogy Department
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Baxendale's Antiques
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JRP Historical Consulting
Dick Lewis Domestic Water Systems
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The News Review (Farris)

The Pleistocene Foundation
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Southern Sierra Medical Clinic
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Gary P. Staab & Assoc., Inc.
The Swap Sheet

California's Waters

From p. 4

6. Los Angeles Aqueduct

In operation since 1913. Delivers Mono Basin and Owens Valley water (both surface and underground) to the City of Los Angeles. Maximum capacity is a nominal 500,000 acre feet per year, but export levels depend on snowpack in the High Sierra.

Exports are also reduced by requirements to rewater Mono Lake, abate Owens Lake dust, rewater Lower Owens River, and limit the pumping of underground water. Estimates for the next 20-year period indicate an average export of 320,000 acre feet annually.

7. Colorado River Aqueduct

Completed in 1939 to transport Colorado River water into Southern California communities. Built and operated by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), which wholesales the water to 26 municipalities and water agencies that serve more than 16 million people, all urban. Maximum capacity of the aqueduct is 1.2 MAF, but the amount of water currently being transported is substantially less.

Note: The history and evolution of Colorado River water uses and priorities are replete with legal decisions, interstate agreements, federal management, etc.

That history is a most interesting

story in itself. For example, California is allocated 4.4 MAF of Colorado River water annually. The agricultural districts of Imperial, Coachella, and Palo Verde Valleys annually use 3.85 MAF of this water via the All-American Canal, leaving 0.55 MAF for the MWD, which also purchases water from the State Water Project to meet its needs. Still, the MWD is under some strain.

On top of all this is the obligation by the U.S. to pass 1.5 MAF annually of Colorado River water into Mexico.

Some Major Issues

- Periods of drought — low water supply.
- Increased demand, both agricultural and urban.
- Strong environmental requirements and constraints.
- Judicial court decisions (sic), transfer of water rights, public trust doctrine, etc.
- Lethargic California state legislature.

However, a major water reform bill, passed early this November (2009), has several major features, one of which mandates a 20-percent-per-capita reduction in urban use by year 2020.



Hoover Dam on the Colorado River.
Los Angeles Department of
Water and Power

Ref: *THE GREAT THIRST — California and Water, 1770s–1990s*, Norris Hundley Jr., 1992

WATER FOR CALIFORNIA,
David Carle, 2004

CADILLAC DESERT — The American West and Its Disappearing Water,
Marc Reisner, 1986

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**You could be seeing this
newsletter in color!**

Check out our website, www.maturango.org/Hist.html, for an archive of our newsletters. Thanks to our gracious webmistress, all the recent issues are included in the archive as color PDFs.

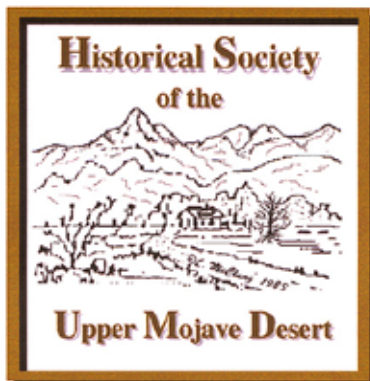
Important Reminders

- ★ Annual dues are \$20 per family for the calendar year.
- ★ Business Member dues are \$30 for the calendar year.
- ★ Please remember the Historical Society in your wills, trusts and other gift giving. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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Upper Mojave Desert
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Ridgecrest, CA 93556

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DECEMBER 2009 HOLIDAY PARTY!

Tuesday, December 15, 2009, 7 p.m.— *Half-Hour Earlier Than Usual* — Historic USO Building