

MORONGO BASIN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

APRIL 2024

BAGLEYS | EISENHOWER | RATTLESNAKES



BOARD AND COMMITTEES

PRESIDENT

Claudia Spotts

VICE PRESIDENT

Justin Merino

SECRETARY

Valarie Carlomagno

TREASURER

Jim Spotts

SITE CHAIR

Steve Hanson

CURATORIAL COMMITTEE

Jon Delouz

Irina Delouz

APR 2024 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Helen Bagley

Melissa Steadman

Tom Granger



**MORONGO BASIN
HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

632 Landers Lane
Yucca Valley 92284

www.mbhistoricalmuseum.org
hello@mbhistoricalmuseum.org
[@mbhistoricalmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/mbhistoricalmuseum)

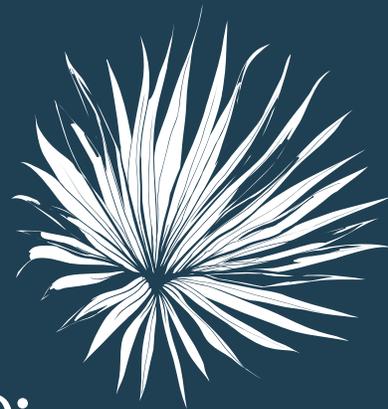


Visit Us

FRIDAYS &
SATURDAYS
11A-4P

SATURDAYS IN THE SAND:

Unearthing Morongo Basin's
Histories at the Museum
May 4th at 11am



Respect and Relocate: Coexisting with Rattlesnakes in the High Desert



Join us for an enlightening session with Danielle Wall, a dedicated animal rescuer and reptile relocater, who will share her extensive experience with rattlesnakes in the Morongo Basin. Discover the critical ecological roles these creatures play, learn to debunk common myths, and receive practical advice on safely managing snake encounters. This talk is essential for anyone interested in wildlife conservation and learning to coexist peacefully with these often-misunderstood reptiles. Danielle's engaging stories and expert insights will inspire a deeper respect for these vital members of the ecosystem. Reserve your spot for a compelling and informative experience!



MORONGO BASIN
HISTORICAL MUSEUM

632 Landers Lane, Yucca Valley, 92284

RSVP: MBHISTORICALMUSEUM.ORG

For those interested in touring the museum
before the session, it opens at 10 a.m.

*Legacy in the Sands:
The Bagleys'
Homesteading Journey in
Twentynine Palms*

In the heart of the Mojave Desert, amidst the rugged landscape of Twentynine Palms, the pioneering spirit of Frank and Helen Bagley thrived. Arriving in 1927, they transformed a humble homestead into a cornerstone of community life. This feature celebrates their enduring legacy, from their early days in Oregon to the lasting impact they had in shaping Twentynine Palms.

Join us as we explore the lives and contributions of these remarkable homesteaders, whose spirit is immortalized in both local lore and the vibrant mural that adorns our town.



Frank and Helen Bagley's legacy in Twentynine Palms is a testament to the enduring spirit of American pioneers who transformed the Mojave Desert into a thriving community. Arriving in 1927, the Bagleys faced the daunting task of building a life in the sparse desert landscape. From a simple 18-foot square garage, they

established the first general store, which grew to become the nucleus of Twentynine Palms, providing essential services and becoming a community hub. Frank Bagley's role extended beyond business owner to a pivotal community leader. His extensive involvement included serving as the postmaster, a position that placed him at the heart of community

communications, and as the president of the local American Legion post. His efforts were crucial during the formative years of Twentynine Palms, helping to organize the construction of essential infrastructure and advising newcomers on land acquisition, leveraging his expertise to guide the settlement's development.

Helen Bagley's contributions were equally significant. Her detailed accounts of their early days, documented in her book "Sand in My Shoe," offer a vivid picture of the challenges and triumphs faced by the homesteaders. This narrative not only preserves the history of Twentynine Palms but also underscores the role of women in



SPECIALS

Friday, January 13, 1939
This Week End

GROCERIES...

Peter Pan Salmon - Tall Cans.....	2 for	21¢
Spartan Steel Wool.....	Package	5¢
Jello - Six Flavors.....	Package	5¢
Bliss Coffee.....	lb.	22¢
All Pure or Banner Milk - Tall Cans.....	4 cans	25¢
Kern's Vinegar.....	qts.	9¢
Kecno Dog Food - Tall Cans.....		5¢
Flap Jack Syrup - Quart.....		21¢
Extra Large Fresh Eggs.....	Dozen	28¢
Century Large Ripe Olives.....	Can	14¢
Heinz Soups.....	2 cans	27¢
Snowflake Crackers - 2 lb. Packages.....		28¢

MEATS...

Salt Pork.....	lb.	17¢
Swift's Oriole Bacon - Half or Whole Slab.....	lb.	24¢
Brookfield Cheese.....	lb.	23¢
Leg of Lamb.....	lb.	29¢

VEGETABLES...

Large Heads Solid Lettuce.....		5¢
Northern Pippin Apples.....	10 lbs.	25¢
Cabbage.....	lb.	2¢
15 Pound Sacks Fancy Russett Spuds.....	sack	20¢
Oranges - Fancy Navels.....	Doz.	10¢
Juice Oranges.....	10 lbs.	25¢

BAGLEY'S
TWENTYNINE PALMS

pioneering communities, often overlooked in historical accounts.

The Bagleys' entrepreneurial spirit was evident in how they adapted their business strategies to the needs of the community. Their store expanded multiple times to accommodate a growing inventory demanded by the increasing population. This adaptability was key to their success and the growth of the area. The store became more than just a place to buy necessities; it was a place where residents could meet, exchange news, and strengthen their bonds, effectively knitting the community closer together.

Their legacy is also marked by their commitment to civic duties and community building. Frank's leadership in establishing and supporting new enterprises and organizations laid a strong foundation for the community's future. Meanwhile, Helen's literary efforts captured the essence of their experiences, providing future generations with a window into the life of Twentynine Palms' early days.

Today, Twentynine Palms remembers the Bagleys through various memorials, including murals and named buildings, which celebrate their contributions. Their story is not just one of personal success but a reflection of the broader American homesteading experience that shaped much of the rural West during the early 20th century. The Bagleys' story continues to inspire residents and visitors alike, serving as a reminder of the power of determination and community spirit in overcoming the challenges of the harshest environments.

TWO FRIENDS: AMELIA & CLEMA

Amelia Earhart has recently captured headlines again. Deep Sea Vision, a deep-sea exploration company, believes it may have found the wreckage of Earhart's plane, which disappeared in 1937. The company's autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), or drone, detected what could be the remains of the Lockheed Model 10-E Electra at a depth of 16,400 feet—4,000 feet deeper than the Titanic. The site is approximately 100 miles from Howland Island, and the company plans to return after making necessary repairs and modifications to the drone.



Amerlia Earhart, 3rd to left, Clema Granger, 4th to left

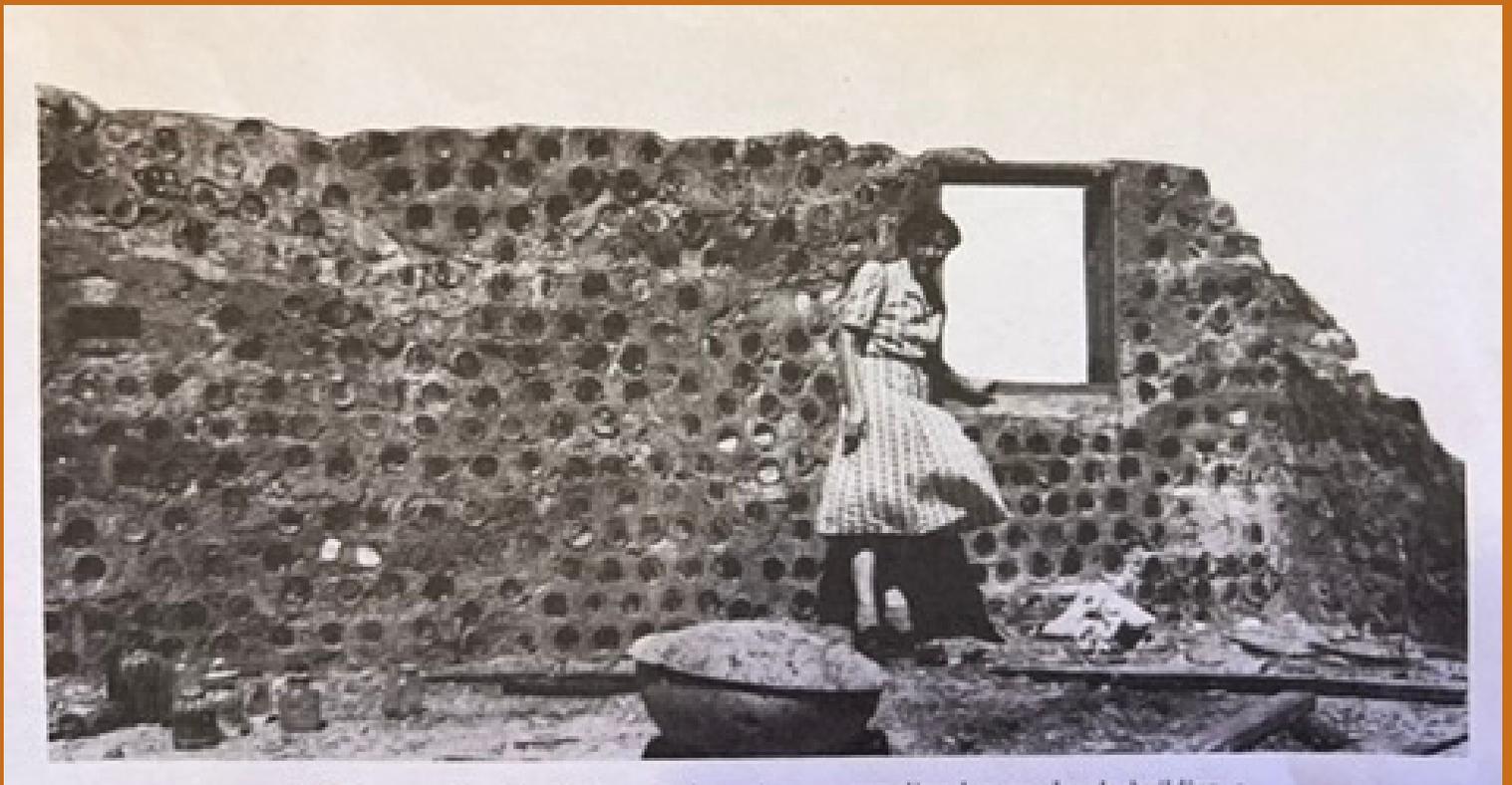
Tom Granger, a longtime resident of Yucca Valley and an active member of the Morongo Basin Historical Museum, shared his family's historical connection with Amelia Earhart. His grandmother, Clema Granger, was not only a notable pilot but also a close friend of Earhart. Known as the “loop the loop queen” for her aerial maneuver achievements, Clema participated alongside Earhart in numerous air races during the early golden age of air racing. She was a founding member of the 99 Club, a society of female pilots established during the 1929 National Air Races, and later served as secretary-treasurer of its western region when Amelia Earhart was president.

Clema, alongside her husband James, also a renowned pilot, ran the Pacific School of Aviation at Santa Monica's Clover Field during the 1920s until James's untimely death in an aircraft accident in 1934. After her husband's death, Clema ceased flying and relocated to Palm Springs. She remained engaged in her community, notably through the Aviation Breakfast Club, whose anthem fondly reflects, “To the desert town in Palm Springs to the place where Clema dwells, to the Chi-Chi bar we love so well.”

Clema continued to connect with her family and friends, often visiting her recreational cabin in Landers with her son Norman and grandson Tom. The Granger family settled in Yucca Valley in 1958. Clema passed away on June 28, 1983, leaving behind a legacy as an aviation pioneer, akin to her friend Amelia Earhart.

MELISSA STEDMAN'S BOTTLE HOUSE: A TESTAMENT TO INGENUITY AND PERSISTENCE IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

Melissa Branson Stedman, born on July 21, 1891, in Texas, embarked on an unusual journey following her divorce in 1940. A public school teacher in Los Angeles, Stedman decided to pursue a homestead in the Morongo Basin, inspired by her research and writing on homesteading for a British magazine. This pursuit led her to construct one of the most unique homes in the area, famously known as the Bottle House. She passed away in 1971 at the age of 79.



It was not until her third attempt that Stedman found the ideal five-acre plot in Morongo Valley, free of washes and excessive boulders. In March 1941, she began constructing her Jack Rabbit Homestead with assistance from family and friends. By December of the same year, as the United States entered World War II, she had completed a modest 12 by 14-foot room—the entirety of her homestead at the time due to the wartime scarcity of materials and labor.

Stedman's endeavor was part of a larger movement known as "jackrabbiting," where thousands of urban Southern Californians, motivated by a revamped 1938 Small Tract Act, claimed desert land to escape urban life. This act allowed individuals to lease-to-own five-acre parcels by making improvements on them, a process colloquially known as "proving up".

Post-war, in 1946, Stedman's vision expanded with her experience working in a glass factory. She conceived the idea of constructing a house using cement and discarded glass coffee jars. By September, she commenced building what would become known as the Bottle House, ingeniously using the jars to create a unique wall structure. Jars were placed neck to neck, with the bottoms forming the wall's sides, and cemented without obstructing the necks to allow light passage. The house, characterized by its resilience and eco-friendliness, faced queries about its durability, to which Stedman humorously assured that repairing a small bottle hole was simpler than replacing a large glass window.

The construction progressed slowly, with Stedman utilizing vacation time to extend her unique abode. She completed one wall with a window and door and continued working on another that was half-finished. Prepared to use window glass or rocks if she ran out of jars, Stedman was resourceful—her land provided ample rocks for building materials.

Today, the Bottle House stands as a legacy of Melissa Stedman's creativity and determination. Family members recall the house not just as a structure but as a repository of memories—tchotchkes like whole eggs, colorful pebbles, and costume jewelry filled the jars, alongside whimsical additions such as detention and absentee slips, reflecting Stedman's lifelong commitment to education and her whimsical spirit.

Melissa Stedman's Bottle House is more than an architectural curiosity; it embodies the resilience and ingenuity of a woman who used her vision and resourcefulness to create a home that was both a personal sanctuary and an environmental statement, long before sustainable building came into vogue. Her legacy is a reminder of the power of innovation and the enduring spirit of the American homesteader.

EISENHOWER'S PHONE



We are delighted to highlight a unique piece of presidential history in our Veterans' Room at the museum: a telephone that belonged to Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States (1953-1961), and Supreme Commander of Allied Forces during World War II. This telephone was not just used by Eisenhower; it was from his personal residence in the Coachella Valley. As a revered military leader and president, Eisenhower led pivotal operations during World War II and significant domestic achievements such as ending the Korean War, launching the Interstate Highway System, and enforcing school desegregation.



Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Dwight Eisenhower stand on the future site of Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage on Jan. 31, 1967.

Photo Courtesy Of Palm Springs Historical Society

Eisenhower's fondness for golf also brought him frequently to Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley during and after his presidency, culminating in his purchase of a winter home at El Dorado Country Club in Indian Wells with his wife, Mamie, after his presidency.

The green telephone, affectionately referred to as "The Eisenhower phone," was a fixture in his Coachella Valley home and was acquired by Tom Walsh, a local from Yucca Valley responsible for telephone equipment in the area. Kept in his family for many years, the telephone was later donated to our museum by Mary Ellen Walsh Friesen. This artifact serves as a bridge between Eisenhower's illustrious public service and his personal life, enriching our collection and providing our visitors with a direct connection to this significant figure in American history.

We thank the Walsh family for this generous donation, allowing us to share this piece of significant American history with all who visit.

The Nile Green Model 40 telephone is an iconic piece of American design, introduced in 1938 by Automatic Electric. Renowned for its art deco styling, the Model 40 incorporated all essential components within its casing, eliminating the need for an external network subset and ringer. This particular model, characterized by its distinctive Nile Green color and deluxe chrome trim, includes chrome bands on the handset and a chrome fingerwheel, embodying a combination of functional design and aesthetic elegance. Known for its durability, the Model 40 was made of solid Bakelite and offered in various colors.

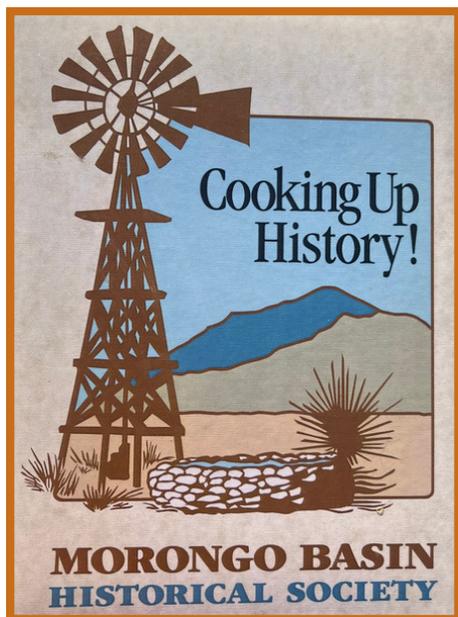
BAKING THROUGH THE RECESSION: INSIGHTS FROM HISTORICAL COOKBOOK



In a time of economic uncertainty, many are turning to history for lessons on resilience and adaptation. The Morongo Basin Historical Museum's 2003 cookbook, "Cooking Up History," provides not only a glimpse into the past culinary habits of families but also offers relevant insights into dealing with today's economic strains, particularly inflation.

The cookbook tells the stories of local families such as the Hardestys and the Grangers who moved to the Morongo Basin in the mid-20th century. They brought with them not just their belongings but also their recipes, which carried them through times of scarcity and prosperity alike. One standout recipe from the collection is the "Depression Cake," contributed by Evelyn Conklin. This cake epitomizes the ethos of the Great Depression: "Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without." Remarkably, the recipe allows for flexibility with ingredients, which could be particularly resonant today as many households find themselves needing to adapt to both availability issues and budget constraints.

Historically, during the Great Depression, simple ingredients were a staple in most households, and recipes often had to be adapted due to shortages. For instance, in 1929, a pound of coffee cost 45 cents, a stark contrast to today's prices where even basic grocery items have seen significant inflation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics notes a substantial increase in food prices, part of an ongoing trend of inflation affecting various sectors of the economy.



GREAT DEPRESSION CAKE

Evelyn Conklin
Yucca Valley, CA

2 c. sugar	2 tsp. baking powder
2 c. strong coffee	1 tsp. cinnamon
½ c. shortening	1 tsp. allspice
2 c. Sun Maid raisins	1 tsp. cloves
1 apple, peeled and grated	1 tsp. nutmeg
2 c. all-purpose flour	1 c. chopped walnuts
1 tsp. baking soda	

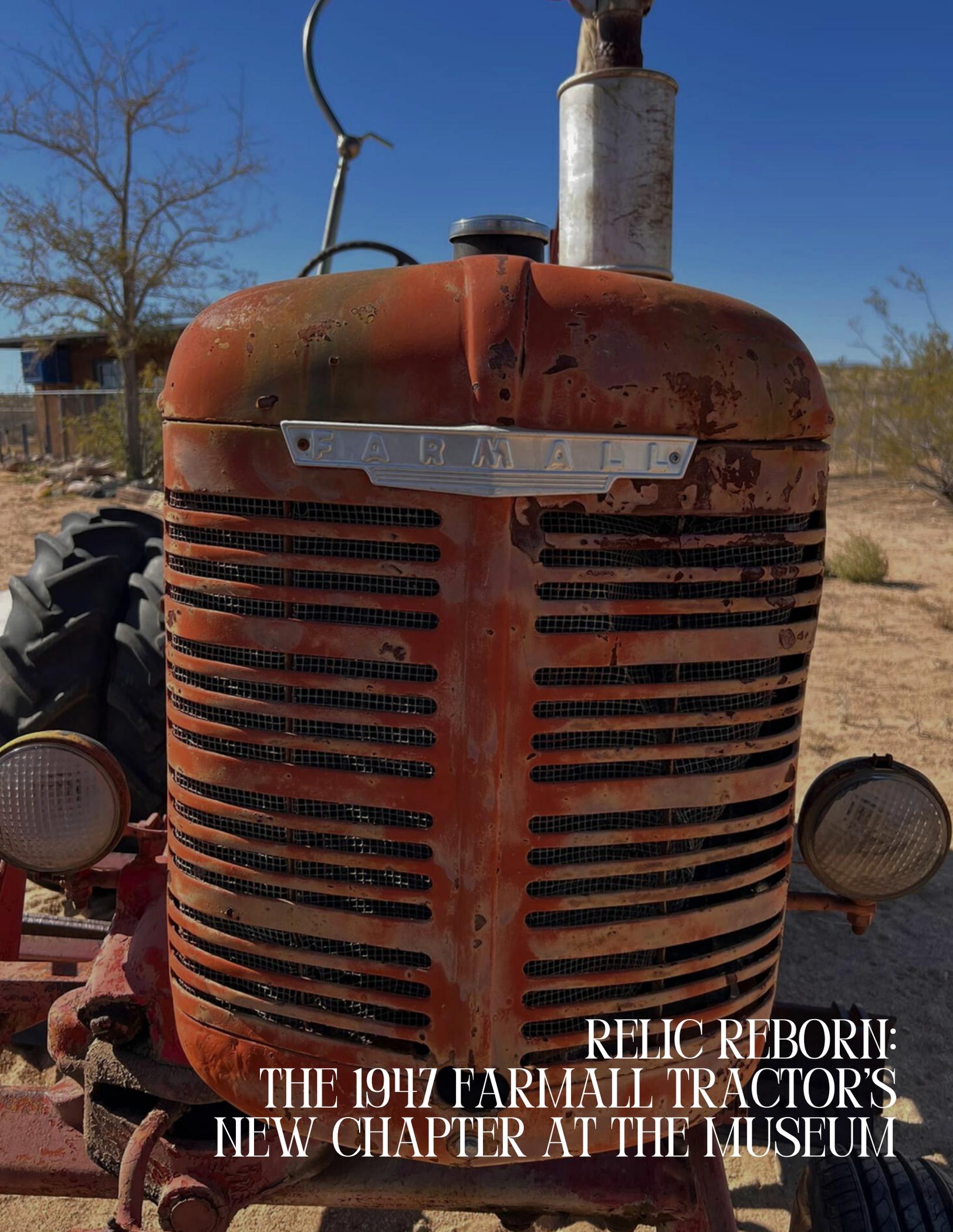
Heat oven to 350°. In a large saucepan, simmer the sugar, coffee, shortening, raisins and apple for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool 10 minutes. Blend together the remaining ingredients and stir into mixture. Pour batter into well-greased and floured 13 x 9-inch pan. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool and dust with powdered sugar if desired.

Note: Take away the milk, the eggs and the butter and what do you have left? A great tasting, moist and spicy cake that became popular after the stock market crash of 1929. Two cups of water may be substituted for the coffee. Diced candied fruit may be added for an easy fruitcake.

The economic situation today mirrors some aspects of past financial crises, where inflation and supply chain disruptions affect everyday life. The lessons from the "Depression Cake" are particularly relevant, emphasizing sustainability and creativity in the kitchen—qualities that can help mitigate the impact of rising food costs. The historical prices listed in the cookbook, like 31 cents for five pounds of flour in 1925, also serve as a stark reminder of the long-term effects of inflation.

Furthermore, understanding the context in which these recipes were created and used can also provide modern-day families with strategies to extend their food budgets. Recipes that require fewer or more accessible ingredients can be particularly valuable when prices are high and certain items are scarce.

In conclusion, "Cooking Up History" does more than recount the personal histories of Yucca Valley's earlier residents; it offers a blueprint for coping with economic hardships through culinary creativity and flexibility. As we face similar challenges today, the wisdom embedded in these historical recipes can inspire us to adapt and thrive, much like the families of the Morongo Basin did decades ago.



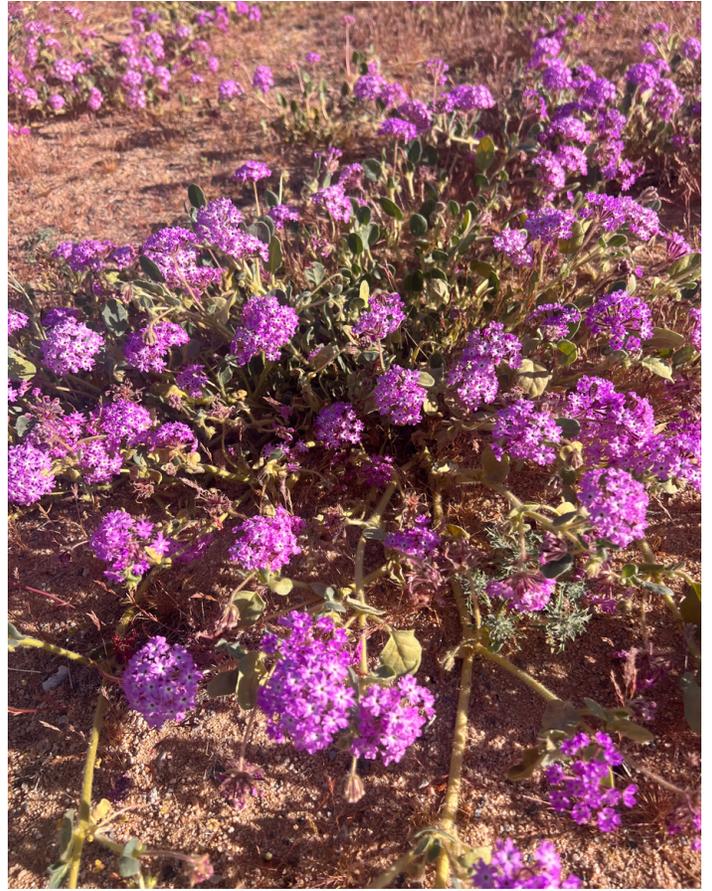
RELIC REBORN:
THE 1947 FARMALL TRACTOR'S
NEW CHAPTER AT THE MUSEUM

The Museum has recently added a vintage 1947 FarmAll tractor to its collection, donated by Steve Bardwell and Sarah Kennington with support from Lefevre's Towing. Originally brought to the Morongo Basin from the Midwest by Carole Tumbleson's father, this tractor, restored by local enthusiast Bob Hunt, has served various roles from agricultural work to providing entertainment like "Hayrides." Museum curators describe it as "a desert time machine, transporting pioneers through the sands of time during secret midnight escapades," highlighting its role as a portal to the past and a cherished piece of local history now accessible to visitors.

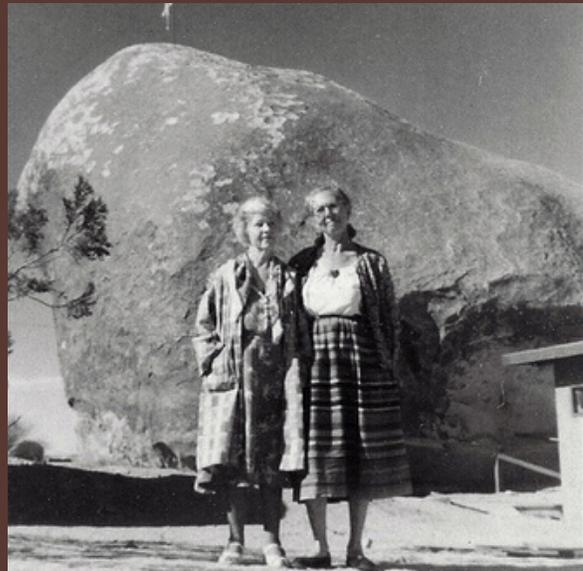
Come check out this timeless treasure and journey through the region's storied past!



Spring at the Museum



PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE BUSINESSES THAT GENEROUSLY SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM.



- 29 Palms Band of Mission Indians
- Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
- Crossroads Café
- Desert Christ Park – A Museum of Sculptures
- Desert Region Fire Safe
- Glenn Isaacs & Sallie Brown Isaacs
- Greenspot Market
- Gubler Orchids
- Hi-Desert Air – Lance & Kari Cody
- Hi-Desert Water District
- High Desert Emergency Action Alliance
- Homestead Modern
- Jim Bagley – Realtor
- Johnson Valley Improvement Association
- Phillip Brown Home Realtor
- ProVideo – Bob Stephenson
- Rainbow Stew – Stacey Clayton, Valerie Meyer & Michelle Nemechek
- SVN - Mark Spohn
- The Integratron – Nancy, Joanne & Patty Karl
- Tortoise Rock Casino
- Tri-Valley Realty – Linda Paino
- Twentynine Palms Historical Society
- VisitPioneertown.com – Kenneth Gentry
- Yucca Valley Realty – Art Miller



Join or Renew @
mbhistoricalmuseum.org/join

Donate @
mbhistoricalmuseum.org/support

A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization



HELP YOURSELF HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR

COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS EVENT: A FREE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FAIR OFFERING INTERACTIVE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOPS, DEMOS, AND THE CHANCE TO MEET FIRST RESPONDERS. A PERFECT BLEND OF FUN, LEARNING, AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT AIMED AT EMPOWERING YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS FOR ANY SITUATION.



SAVE THE DATE!

MAY 11TH
9AM-1PM

WALMART PARKING LOT
IN YUCCA VALLEY



BUSINESS SUPPORTERS BULLETIN BOARD