



CORNVILLE COURIER

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Railroad History Right Here in Cornville!

The 16th Annual Meeting of the Cornville Historical Society on March 16 featured guest speaker Allen Montgomery, representing the Wyoming Division Historical Society, a model railroad club that has an amazing HO gauge layout right here in Cornville! The layout models the Union Pacific from Cheyenne, WY to Ogden, UT as it was when huge steam engines pulled long trains that required helper service through the mountains. The layout, developed by Verryl Fosnight, features scale-model structures and geographic features that match the actual Union Pacific route. Montgomery manages the facility and describes Cornville as a place he considers home, where he recalls fishing, swimming and playing with trains since his youth. He shared his enthusiasm with complete details about trips to learn the route, to take photos, and then to replicate the amazing system that now occupies two levels. He hopes that one day the facility will become a hands-on museum—a playground for adults and children! Visitors are welcome to stop by at 1249 S. Eastern Drive in Cornville.

Membership Status

As of May, the Society's paid membership stands at 64, an increase of three businesses and two families since February. The total now includes 35 family memberships, 10 honorary members, and 6 businesses. Yay!

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTS A TEAM APPROACH

After the March 16 Annual Meeting and Election of Officers, the new Board members met to determine leadership responsibilities. Those who were re-elected are **Cheryl Chamberlain** and **Cindy Snyder**, who will continue to serve as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Continuing members **Sharon Morehouse**, **Patricia Nomm**, **Nita Rinehart**, **Diana Stipek** and **Karen Wilkens**, along with new Board members **Cindy Traverso** and **Muffy Vallely**, agreed to take turns chairing meetings and events as needed during the coming year. The Team approach will take effect when the Board resumes monthly meetings, which are held from October through April. **Welcome** to our new Board of Directors:

Cheryl Sharon Patricia Nita Cindy S Diana Cindy T Muffy Karen



A Tribute to Gary Banker

Gary Banker, age 87, owner of Banker Insulation, a long-time business in Cornville, passed away in Scottsdale on February 21, 2023. Gary and a partner founded Banker Insulation in 1977, and built it into one of the Southwest's largest insulation companies. Gary served as CEO right up until his death.

In ... Banker purchased the Cornville property where the former Cornville Post Office was located for many years. He had the old structure moved to make way for his parking lot; and the building was taken to Camp Verde, where it became part of an old west theme park. By then, it had been remodeled into a residence & replaced by Post Office space in what is now the Cornville Mercantile building.

Fast Forward: In ..., the Cornville Historical Society hosted an event to unveil historic markers at its old post office sites. Gary Banker provided his records and photos during research for a history report and for the signs. He even had a new fence built in front of his parking lot, where one historic marker was placed (see photo). He



and his wife attended the unveiling event, which also honored Mrs. ... Chick, daughter of pioneer Postmasters ... and ... Chick. That day, County Supervisor Chip Davis announced the possibility that the original post office was again

available if the Historical Society could move it. Before the day was over, several thousand dollars were pledged by Chick family members and others, including a generous check from Gary & ... Banker—making it possible for the Historic Cornville Post Office to be moved “back home” on December 2, 2012.

Gary Banker is remembered as a man with an *“incredible work ethic and pragmatic business sense ... driven by service to others” ... He sought ito help where he could*”. He certainly proved those characteristics right here in Cornville by helping to bring the original post office “full circle” right back to where it began! Gary Banker, rest in peace.

Society News Tidbits

Historic Markers: CHS has four historic signs placed in Cornville. Two signs mark the historic sites of the Old Cornville Post Office in the heart of the community. Two more mark the James Page Homestead (now the Page Springs Fish Hatchery) and the Page Gas Station & Store (now Up the Creek Grill). The signs have all been in place for ten years or more and showing wear, so the Society will be soon reaching out for replacement sign estimates. More markers for other historic sites are planned in the future.

NEEDED: A Cornville History Place: Looking ahead to the future, the CHS is in dire need of a “place” to house records, conduct research and interviews, host meetings, and carry out the Society’s business. Since our beginnings in 2004, records and supplies have been stored in private homes or commercial storage units, making our work awkward and ineffective. Now, CHS is seeking a grant for matching funds to lease a suitable space within the community. If you know of any available space, please contact us!

Farmer’s Market Participation: Society Representatives attended the Cornville Farmer’s Market on April ... where they greeted visitors at a table to share information about the Society. They visited with a few residents and handed out information materials ... but soon learned that most attendees came from outside our local community.

Business Memberships Available: This year, the Board is reaching out to local businesses to increase their representation in the Society. As of now, the Society has Individual, ... Family ... and ... Business Members. New members are ALWAYS welcome. Go to www.cornville-historical-society.org to learn more about us.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Cornville Historical Society 2023-24 Board of Directors

Cheryl Chamberlain (Secretary), 928-639-0865 or wormworm@earthlink.net;

Sharon Morehouse (928-634-8927 or stevsharmor@msn.com; **Pat Nomm**, 928-821-0040 or patnomm@hotmail.com;

Nita Rinehart, 928-963-1990; **Cindy Snyder** (Treasurer), 928-649-9628 or CindySnyder9550@gmail.com;

Diana Stipek (Vice President), 928-639-3632; Cindy Traverso, 623-337-6332 or fentazme@aol.com; and

Karen Wilkens (Membership), 920-650-1702 or kewilkens500@gmail.com



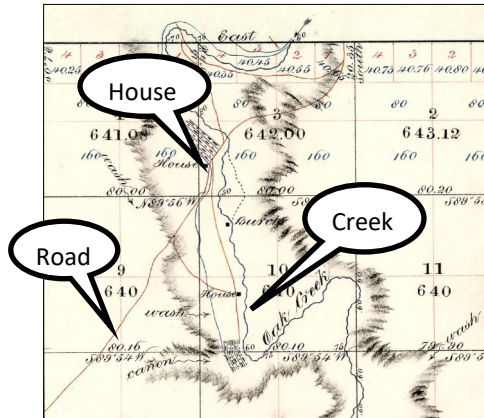
ONCE UPON A CREEK

Local History Mysteries

One of the interesting tasks as a member of the Cornville Historical Society is to receive questions, research, and try to respond to inquiries received from our readers of the *Cornville Courier*; and our website at www.cornville-historical-society.org.

Here is a sampling of what's come our way in recent weeks.

WHERE is the missing school building anyhow? There was once a school, or maybe two, on what was known as the DA Ranch owned by Gertrude Gates. CHS research shows that Mrs. Gates opened a school for Indian students. There is one photo on file that shows a school structure on her property, which may have been later moved across the creek, possibly near where LoloMai Resort is now located, or maybe on private property down Schoolhouse Lane off Page Springs Road. Can someone verify such a thing? Here is a photo of a building that may have been moved. Is there a building that still exists that resembles this structure? Who knows?



On WHICH side of the creek was the stage stop? The second Cornville postmaster was Sammy Dickinson, who homesteaded land that straddled Oak Creek. The original 1887 township survey plat shows a residential structure on the site, which has been presumed to be the "post office" where the stagecoach would have dropped off mail on its way through. The *Cornville Postal History* document indicates that the post office/home was on the *east* side of Oak Creek. Now, after a second look, the plat clearly shows that the structure was on the west side! The current landowner on Merritt Ranch Road is writing his family memoirs and can now confirm the family lore that his property was very likely a historic Cornville stage stop! (And the postal history document now needs an addendum!) Wonders never cease, when it comes to historical research!

WHO knows the history of Mason-Lane Ditch? A recent inquiry was received for information about the history of the Mason-Lane Ditch. While we know that the ditch (also known as the Oak Creek Ditch) is about five miles long with original filings for water rights dating back to 1876, the Society has no other historical information to offer. We also know that a project to bury a long section of the Mason-Lane Ditch was just completed; and the work appears to be well done! It would be great to know the history of the ditch — as well as all the rest of Cornville's "manmade waterways". If any of our readers have information to offer or an interest in compiling ditch history, please let us know!

WHAT about the story of Spring Creek Ranch? The Society's records of Spring Creek Ranch show that it was homesteaded in 1891 to William Munds. Then there is a big gap until the ranch was apparently purchased by Dr. Paul Ryerson in 1967. Now, the ranch land has been annexed by the City of Cottonwood; and most of the ranch is owned by Eric Borowsky who has it advertised for sale. The historic ranch includes a lodge, outbuildings, a unique riparian area, significant archeological site and historic ruins. Cornville is known for its ranch histories by CHS Researcher Janet Cassagio, but the story of Spring Creek Ranch is missing. Who can we find to compile the story? If you have an interest, or know its history, please work with us!



These are just a few of many "research opportunities" that the Cornville Historical Society would like to pursue, but volunteer energy is needed! We'd like to hear from anyone who might know the history, have information to offer, and/or is willing to gather data! Contact any board member (see page 2) or www.cornville-historical-society.org to offer your help.