

Oro Valley Historical Society

P.O. Box 69754, Oro Valley AZ 85737

www.ovhistory.org



Harvest Heritage Festival

Many Society members volunteered at the November 12th festival. They conducted ranch house tours, sold water and books, displayed our collections, and recruited new members. The Society raised \$ 327 during the event! Thanks to Lois Nagy, Paul Loomis, Jack Evert, Bob Cain, Sally Kreida, Jo Di Gennaro, Jim Williams, Joyce Rychener, Pat Spoerl, Sue Chambasian, Peg O'Connell, Kaaren Drent, Lynn Pritchett, Al Efron, Roxy Johnson, Carol Bull, Carol Bagley and Shannon Glinski.

Society News

The Collections Committee presented a plan to utilize the Steam Pump Ranch House as a museum to display our collections and period furniture. The Board approved the plan...Thanks to Shannon Glinski for her work on the website. She has agreed to serve as our webmaster... Paul Loomis is heading a committee to study fire suppression and alarm systems for the Ranch House. They will work with the Town of Oro Valley to select the best system. This is necessary if we wish to use one of the rooms as an office...Our membership has grown to 285 members!

Speakers on December 14th

Bob Zucker and Flint Carter will discuss "Santa Catalina Mountain History and Legends" at the Oro Valley Public Library on Wednesday, December 14th at 2:00 pm. This event is free to the public. Please attend and bring your friends. The topic is a change from the previously planned "Buffalo Bill Cody."

Upcoming Events

December 10

Second Saturday at Steam Pump Ranch, 9:00 – 1:00

December 14

Speaker – Oro Valley Library at 2:00 pm

January 14

Second Saturday at Steam Pump Ranch, 9:00 – 1:00

January 26

Board Meeting at OV Library 3:00- 5:00 pm

New Officers Elected

The Board elected new officers at the November meeting;

Jim Williams, President

Roxy Johnson, Vice President

Paul Loomis, Treasurer – continues in office

Pat Spoerl, Secretary – will service until April, 2017

Tales of Yesterday....

Stage Coaches in the Oro Valley

By Jim Williams

The Camp Grant Road, later called Oracle Road, served as a route for a stagecoach that operated between Tucson and Mammoth in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Those who bought passage were in for a rough ride!

The stage coach left Tucson and followed much of what is now Oracle Road to the towns of Oracle and Mammoth. The roadway for the stage crossed the sandy bottom of the Rillito River about one-half mile west of the current bridge crossing (near the Tucson Mall). A bridge across the Rillito was not constructed until the early twentieth century. The current Oracle Road crossing of the Rillito River was not established until 1951. The stagecoach route was unpaved and nothing but a rough trail in that time period.

The stage continued northward and often stopped at Steam Pump Ranch to water the horses. The records of the stage coach company note that sacks of barley and hay were often left at the Steam Pump Ranch in several months of 1899. The fare for a passenger from Tucson to Steam Pump Ranch was \$1.50 at the time, and a package was delivered there for William Southerland (Sutherland) for twenty-five cents. Through most of this period, the stage coach to Mammoth hauled more freight than passengers.

In early 1900, the stage coach began to make fewer stops at Steam Pump Ranch and instead would travel to the Marin ranch nearby. This was located one mile north on Oracle Road, near the entrance of today's Catalina State Park. The Marin family maintained a stable with fresh horses. The hill near Marin's property, called Marin Hill, was the steepest climb for the horses and stagecoach on the entire route. This hill is located at the intersection of Oracle Road and Tangerine Road today.

Several of the men who worked on the stage coach line later quit their jobs and settled in Oro Valley. They included William Sutherland and Jesus Maria Elias. The stage coach was an important part of Oro Valley's early history.