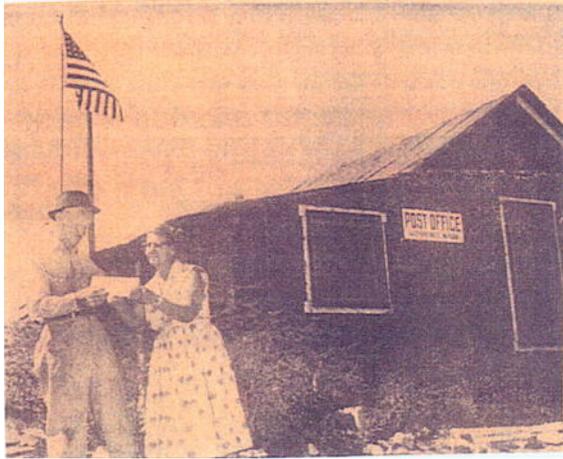


Goodsprings Historic Buildings # 1

People who visit Goodsprings are often curious about the old buildings they see. The Goodsprings Historical Society encourages people with information on these buildings to share their stories with us. This newsletter highlights the Coyote Den of Don Russ.



1956-- Sam McClanahan & Postmistress
Leona Proud in front of post office

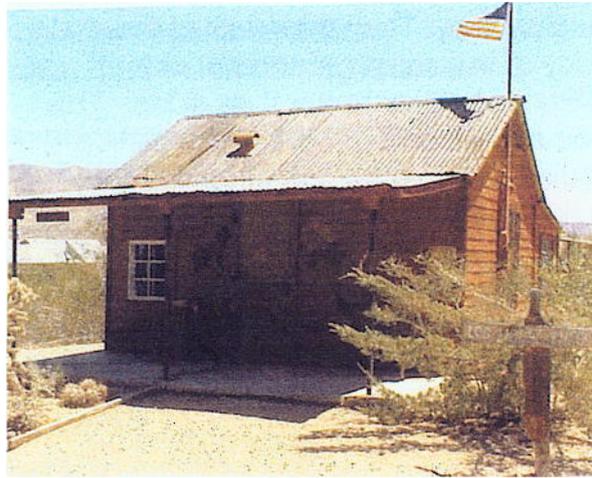
Coyote Don's out-building, Coyote Den, is one of the interesting historic buildings in Goodsprings. This small structure served as a family home and, later, a post office before being moved to its present location. The following article describes the cabin and chronicles its move to the Coyote Ranch.

Post Office to Coyote Den

by Bonnie Castro aka Coyotess

Back when we were building our ranch house the old building that would become the Coyote Den was situated 2 short blocks north of its current location. At that time it housed the local post office which was open about 3 hours in the morning. It was quite the town gathering place as residents waited for mail to be put up. The lady who owned the building and ran the post office was Terry Cowart. Unfortunately, a serious fatal automobile accident that took the life of Mrs. Cowart led to the closing of the post office at this location. The U.S. Postal Service couldn't strike an agreement with Terry's son for the continued use of the building so the post office boxes were moved out of the building and relocated elsewhere. This left the building abandoned and

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2002-Coyote Den

vulnerable to vandalism. Thankfully, a cold winter and a frozen mechanism on the Coyote well saved the old post office and led to its relocation at Coyote Ranch. On one cold morning, Coyotess got up to turn on a faucet and no water came out. Let me tell you turning on the faucet and having no water come out when you own your own well is traumatic. After a few choice words, Don discovered it was some type of starting mechanism on the well that had frozen up and, with the help of a hair dryer, water was soon restored at Coyote Ranch. Don then realized he would have to erect a more substantial building over his well to prevent this from happening again. Coyotess came up with a perfect solution. She had read a story in Nevada Magazine about how people would settle in a mining camp and then, when the mines were stripped of their mineral wealth, they would disassemble their cabins, pack them onto wagons and move on to the next bonanza. If this was an acceptable practice in the past, why could it not work today. All that was needed was to find an abandoned cabin that could be moved. Don checked into the ownership of some of the mining shacks in Goodsprings and was offered

the building that had housed the post office. The problem now was how to get the cabin to Coyote Ranch. Don and his buddy Rich decided to remove the front and back porches from the building and drag them up the street behind Rich's old blue pickup. They then jacked the main body of the cabin up and put old telephone poles under it as skids. This was all well and good, but the pickup couldn't handle the job of towing the building up the street. Now that was a real problem. Don and Rich scratched their heads and soon decided to call the near-by tow-truck company and request the assistance of the tow truck that hauls broken down semis on the freeway. When the tow truck driver arrived he shook his head, but agreed to give it a try. He hooked the cabin to the back of the tow truck, but the cabin wouldn't move. Just about then, Don remembered Coyotess had baked a blueberry pie so he suggested taking a break while he went up to the house to get a snack. He returned with 3 pieces of blueberry pie topped with homemade ice cream. The driver devoured his portion, set the empty plate down and stated, " that's the best blueberry pie I've ever tasted. Let's get back to work." You'd have thought the blueberry pie added a spark of some magical fuel to the engine as all of a sudden the building that had appeared to be glued to the spot let loose. The tow-truck took off like it was shot from a cannon and laid the cabin to rest in almost the exact spot where it was needed. It was only about a foot too far south of the holding tank of the well, but Don solved that problem by adding a jig to the back porch making it a foot wider than the building.

As Coyote and Coyotess looked at the cabin many questions filled their minds. Before it was a post office, the cabin had been a home for various families. What had life been like for those families living in such a small house with no running water? The answers to those questions were found one May when the Coyotes

attended the Goodsprings Old-Timer's reunion and talked to folks who told about a family of 5 who occupied the cabin in the 30's. At that time, the front porch was wood half-way up with the top portion screened. The kids slept there. In winter when the wind blew and the snow flew, snow occasionally came to rest on the quilts piled on the beds. The back porch was completely enclosed and had a back door. It was used as a pantry. The window had shelving built around it with two shelves for perishables. Old burlap was tacked to the top of the shelves and hung down over the goods. The burlap was kept wet to create a cooling action. The main room of the house had the old wood burning cook stove which not only was used for cooking but for heating the house as well. The kitchen table and the parent's bed also occupied this main room. The house had a water faucet outside a few feet from the building which made for easy access to the water supply. Because of this, the cabin rented for \$10 a month. Cabins without water rented for \$5 a month and water was carried from one of two community wells. The old timers did not spend money to furnish their homes with lots of things, so they did not need a lot of space to store them. As for air conditioning, the old timers related that they would spray the sheets with water to cool down and get a good night's sleep. Coyote Don and Bonnie welcome guests to the Ranch to visit the Den.

Society News

The GHS held its annual meeting at the Old Timer's Reunion May 4, 2002. President Steve Fleming reviewed the year's activities which included the dedication of the Good's Springs marker, the completion of the walking tour brochure, and participation in the Historic Preservation Fair in Las Vegas. He discussed future projects which include programs and speakers on local history, preservation of existing buildings and sites, markers at designated sites and the establishment of an appropriate archive for donated items.

Goodsprings Personalities

Terry Cowart

In March of 1984, the Review Journal ran an article on Goodsprings postmistress Terry Cowart. At the time, Mrs. Cowart was 88 and enjoying her job as mail clerk in one of Nevada's last rural post offices. She was proud that Goodsprings was still hand stamping mail and noted that the number of post office boxes had increased from 65 to 85. She related how she was born in Dorchester, MA. and arrived in Goodsprings in 1961. She moved to the town because her cousin, Marie Laughton had given her title to the place she owned in Goodsprings. After the death of her husband in 1965, Mrs. Cowart went to work as a mail clerk and held the job until her death in December, 1984.

Coyote Don and Bonnie

Coyote Don, a building contractor from Minnesota, and Bonnie, his Coyotess, moved to Goodsprings in 1984. Before that, Don had been working in Minnesota while Bonnie was living in Maui, Hawaii. On weekends, they would meet in Las Vegas. A cashier at the Flamingo deli introduced them to Goodsprings and, when they finally found some land for sale in the town, Don started building their log home. That log home was followed by 2 more log homes and 2 straw bale homes that Don has had a hand in building. The Coyotes, with their innovative building materials, have changed the look of housing in Goodsprings forever.

Upcoming Events

On August 20, 2002, Alice Baldrice, Deputy Administrator of the State Historical Preservation Office in Carson City and Mella Harmon, National Register of Historic Places Specialist from the State Historic Preservation Office will present information on historic districts and how to nominate an area for this designation. Come to the Goodsprings Community Center **at 7:30** to find out what having an Historic District designation would mean for Goodsprings. Refreshments will be served.

In September, Su Kim from UNLV Special Collections has agreed to hold a tour of the Special Collections Room at the Leid Library for GHS members. The date for this meeting will be announced later.

Donations

The Goodsprings Historical Society would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their contributions to the Society.

Freight wagon:

Helena and Alien Esslinger
Karen Esslinger Salamon
Julie Salamon

Services to move freight wagon and bull bell
"Friendly Dave" Kent

\$300 Donation from the Pioneer Saloon
Don Hedrick and "Friendly Dave" Kent

Goodsprings Miners baseball jersey
Beverly Hughes and Billy Hamilton

5 sandstone markers for historic sites
Mike Kiddy of Las Vegas Rock and Laura Taylor of Aquarius Stone

Donations to GHS in memory of Milton Blake:

Von Tobel and Zahn Families

Tom Papagna

Joan Swift

Jewel Furr

Alma Hirkala

J.C. Crouch, Lucy Dixon

Daniel Ludeman

Don Von Tobel

Colleen Rivers

Membership Application Form

We invite your membership in the Goodsprings Historical Society. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to

Goodsprings Historical Society

P.O. Box 603

Goodsprings, NV 89019

Goodsprings Historical Society Memberships

_____ Individual Membership \$5.00/vr

_____ Family Membership \$10.00/vr

Donations to GHS: In addition to my membership dues, I would like to make a donation to the GHS in the amount of _____

Please make checks payable to:

Goodsprings Historical Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

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