



## A 75th Anniversary Welcome from the Park Superintendent

In 2011, park visitors have an opportunity to help Joshua Tree National Park celebrate a significant milestone. This year the park commemorates its 75th anniversary as part of our nation's National Park System. First established as a national monument in 1936 and later expanded and renamed as a national park by the 1994 California Desert Protection Act, Joshua Tree throughout its history has served as a mirror of the times. From the early mining and homesteading era, the park became a training ground for efforts to prepare American troops during World War II. After the war, Joshua Tree became the site of major conservation struggles over mining and industrial development; debates that continue to this day.

The story of how we use our leisure time can be seen in the changes that have occurred in recreational use of the park. Joshua Tree has evolved from a little known desert campsite to a world-renowned destination for rock climbing. The rapidly changing face of southern California is reflected in the people who have played parts in Joshua Tree's story. Miners and homesteaders such as Bill Keys and Johnny Lang gave way to conservationists like Minerva Hoyt, Alan Cranston, and Larry and Donna Charpied. Through it all, the influence California's rapidly growing population and its dynamic creative energies were felt as writers, film-makers, artists, and musicians all contributed to the park's history and folklore.

These people and their stories reflect the constantly changing way we view the desert landscape. Nineteenth century explorer John

Fremont labeled the Joshua tree, "the most repulsive member of the vegetable kingdom." By the 1930s, desert ecologist Edmund Jaeger saw it as "the most spectacular and most characteristic tree of the Mojave Desert." Here at Joshua Tree National Park, you can trace these evolving views and measure them against your own.

No matter what people think about the desert, Joshua Tree National Park protects and preserves a sprawling, highly diverse, and endlessly varied landscape. California's desert lands have been identified by scientists as a 'hotspot' for biodiversity. The park also harbors the nation's largest wilderness close to a major metropolitan area. Congressionally designated wilderness lands comprise over 75% of the park and provide a vital reservoir of open space, natural quiet, and refuge from our increasingly harried lives.

As we commemorate the park's complex past and its many stories, we invite you to enjoy the park today. Revel in its unique desert vistas, travel its trails and byways, and share with us your feelings and hopes for Joshua Tree's future over the next 75 years. Throughout 2011, there will be many special events both in the park and in our neighboring communities. Anniversary events and activities will be highlighted on the web site: [www.jtnp75.org](http://www.jtnp75.org). Join us during our year-long celebration and become part of Joshua Tree National Park's continuing story.

Mark Butler  
Superintendent



# A Park for Minerva by Park Ranger Joe Zarki



Joshua Tree National Monument's genesis as part of our nation's National Park System can be credited today to the efforts of Minerva Hamilton Hoyt, a wealthy socialite and civic activist from South Pasadena, California. Without her leadership, Joshua Tree might never have become a national park. How a transplanted southern belle, born on a Mississippi plantation during the Civil War Reconstruction Era, came to become a staunch

advocate for desert landscapes is perhaps one of the more unlikely stories in the annals of national park history.



Minerva Hamilton led a genteel early life

attending finishing schools and music conservatories. Her marriage to Dr. Sherman Hoyt led her to New York and eventually the South Pasadena area where she demonstrated talent as an organizer of charity events and developed a passion for gardening. Gardening introduced her to native desert vegetation commonly used in

southern California landscaping. Trips to the desert instilled in Mrs. Hoyt a strong appreciation for the austere beauty and wonderful inventiveness of desert plants that somehow thrive in the harsh arid climate. She also saw the wanton destruction of native desert plant life by thoughtless people who dug, burned, and otherwise destroyed the cacti and Joshua trees that Minerva found beautiful.

Minerva chose to dedicate herself to the protection of desert landscapes. In the late 1920s, she organized exhibitions of desert plant life that were shown in Boston, New York, and London. She founded the International Deserts Conservation League, became its first president, and set a goal of establishing parks to preserve desert landscapes. Mrs. Hoyt was tapped by noted landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. to serve on a California state commission formed to recommend proposals for new state parks. She prepared the commission's report on desert parks and recommended large parks be created at Death Valley, the Anza-Borrego Desert, and in the Joshua tree forests of the Little San Bernardino Mountains north of Palm Springs.

However, Mrs. Hoyt believed the best option for preservation of a large park

to preserve desert plants was through the National Park Service. Minerva began a carefully organized campaign to achieve her goal. She hired well known botanists and desert ecologists to prepare reports on the virtues of the Joshua Tree region. She was

## *"Apostle of the Cacti"*

introduced to President Franklin Roosevelt whose New Deal administration became active in the establishment of national parks and monuments as a jobs-creation initiative. Mrs. Hoyt soon developed an ally in Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes.

Her growing reputation in the cause of desert protection led her to receive an invitation from the Mexican government to make recommendations on their efforts to establish parks and reserves in the unique Mexican desert landscapes. Mrs. Hoyt met with the President of Mexico Ortiz Rubio who named Minerva the "Apostle of the Cacti" and announced the creation of a desert national park in honor of the International Deserts Conservation League and its work.

Returning to the United States, Minerva had a major success when President Roosevelt announced the withdrawal of over one million acres of federal land from mineral entry or homesteading in order to study the area as a proposed federal park. The National Park Service was asked to prepare a recommendation on the site, but instead of the million-acre park Mrs. Hoyt desired, the Park Service proposed a smaller 138,000-acre park comprising the Wonderland of Rocks and the best of the Joshua tree stands. Mrs. Hoyt complained to Secretary Ickes about the Park Service's lack of understanding of desert landscapes, and Dr. Harold Bryant, the Chief Scientist for the Service, was asked to take a second look at the area. Dr. Bryant returned a much more favorable report more in line with Mrs. Hoyt's vision.

Problems with the inclusion of certain railroad lands forced a reduction in the size of the proposed park from over one million acres to a more modest 825,000 in the final proposal. Finally, on August 10, 1936, President Roosevelt signed a presidential proclamation establishing Joshua Tree National Monument. Minerva finally had her grand desert park.

## \*Did You Know..?

by Caryn Davidson

Deep in the park's interior, an inholding once belonging to Dr. and Mrs. Charles Stokes of Los Angeles eventually became the Lost Horse ranger station. The cement cabin, nestled among—and within—the surrounding granite boulders, was built as a weekend getaway retreat. In 1957 Dr. and Mrs. Stokes sold the cabin and its adjacent buildings to the National Park Service. The small complex now houses participants in the Artist-in-Residence program and supports field ranger operations and the Joshua Tree Search and Rescue Team.

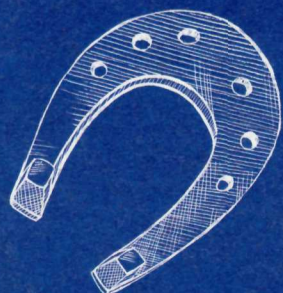


Photo by David McChesney



## 'Rangering' in the Early Days

by Park Ranger Pat Pilcher



*Log notes of Harold Hildreth, first ranger at Joshua Tree National Monument, May 1941. This log entry is based on the Superintendent's notes from 1940-41 for Joshua Tree National Monument.*

Six months ago I reported for duty at Joshua Tree National Monument in the Mojave Desert of California. This is my first posting with the National Park Service and the first time I have left my home state of Washington. The desert is something very different for me after spending my life in the rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula.

After reporting to Superintendent Cole, I was assigned to patrol the park boundaries and log any possible trespass violations. My other duties included routine administrative tasks.

Patrolling the boundary gave me a greater perspective on the geography and biology of the Monument. I have put my engineering skills to good use as much of the Monument is unmapped and I must rely on basic compass techniques and the limited topographic maps to find my way. I have ridden around the entire boundary and have

found only minor trespass violations.

The Superintendent is worried about these violations because, while the Monument was created in 1936, he did not report for duty until January of 1940 and did not hire a ranger until I arrived in December 1941.

Mr. Cole believes many of the homesteaders and miners will not respect the boundary

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*"...will visit other miners and ranchers in the coming months ... they will be our neighbors for many years to come."*  
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because, for many years, they were free to graze cattle and pursue mining interests in, what is now, the Monument. Cattle grazing is at a low ebb now because of the below average rain fall in the past few years. So far this year, the rainfall at the Monument has recorded just two inches of precipitation.

Last week I rode out to visit William Keys at his homestead. Mr. Keys is the main source of trespass problems as he often grazes 50-75 cattle on his land and the adjoining Monument land. Superintendent Cole has mentioned several times to Mr. Keys that he must put up fences to keep his cattle on his land. The government has offered to help pay for this expense but so far, little fence has been built.

I introduced myself to Keys and we talked about his ranch and mining interests and his family. He told me about his boundary disputes with his neighbors including the government and how he has tried to make a living here for over 25 years. When our visit ended, I told Keys I would do all I could to make sure he gets help to build his boundary fence. I documented 12 cattle grazing on Monument property and reported this to Superintendent Cole.

I conclude this report by stating I have patrolled the Monument's boundary and will visit other miners and ranchers in the coming months. I realize we must make good impressions on these folks as they will be our neighbors for many years to come.

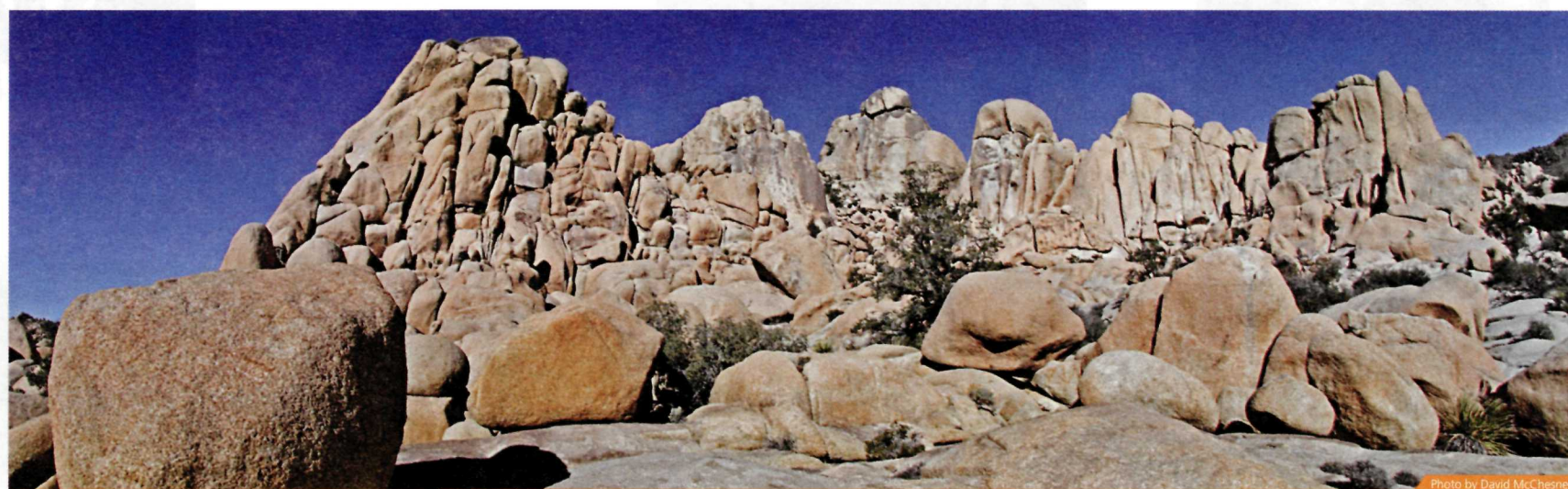
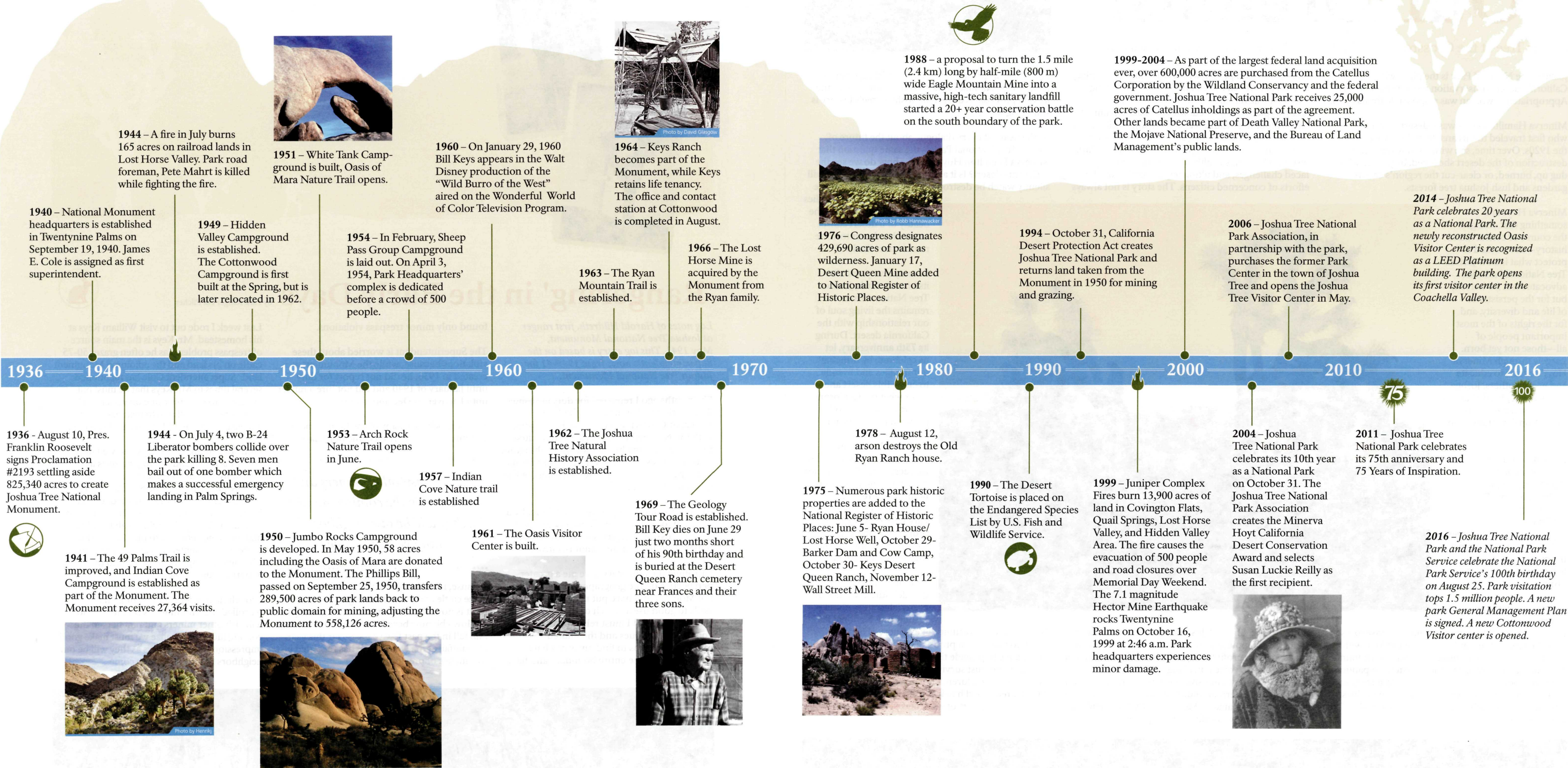


Photo by David McChesney

# 75 YEARS OF INSPIRATION



## \*Did You Know..?

by Caryn Davidson

Stratigraphy is the study of the order and position of layers of rock and their relationship to geologic time. In Joshua Tree National Park, where granite outcrops and sparsely vegetated mountains offer spectacular opportunities to learn about the deep history of southern California's deserts, another kind of stratigraphy awaits the visitor's discovery: the many layers of the park's human stories.

# Desert of Our Dreams:



Joshua Tree at the Crossroads of California Desert Conservation by Mike Cipra

Joshua Tree National Park is the place where the California desert conservation movement was born. Appropriately, a woman was responsible for its birth.

Minerva Hamilton Hoyt was a desert enthusiast who first traveled to this area from Los Angeles in the 1920s. Over time, she witnessed widespread destruction of the desert she loved, by people who dug up, burned, or clear-cut the region's cactus gardens and lush Joshua tree forests.

Minerva Hoyt did something that changed the course of conservation history—she worked to protect what is now Joshua Tree National Park. She advocated not for herself, but for the persistence of life and diversity, and for the rights of the most important people of all—those not yet born. Largely through Minerva Hoyt's efforts to educate and inspire others, Joshua Tree was shepherded into the National Park System as a national monument in 1936.

In 1994, Joshua Tree achieved national park status with the passage of the California Desert Protection Act. This landmark piece of legislation is still the largest public lands bill to impact the contiguous United States, and it was drafted by ordinary citizens.

This new generation of desert lovers was inspired to protect rugged mountains, dense forests of Joshua trees, and sand dunes that explode with fragrant desert lilies in spring. The act, which found a champion in Senator Dianne Feinstein, expanded the park's boundaries, taking in mountain ranges and bajadas that today are home to some of the wildest and most ecologically important places in Joshua Tree National Park.

Over 1.4 million people will visit Joshua Tree during its 75th anniversary year. For those of us seeking a welcome adventure in the desert, it is easy to take this place for granted, with its shaded palm oases, blooming wildflowers, abundant wildlife, and dramatic vistas. Doing so would be a missed opportunity to reflect on Joshua Tree National Park's history. The park's health and existence have always faced challenges, and ultimately depended on the efforts of concerned citizens. The story is not always

one of the largest landfills in the world adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park. The final outcome of the landfill proposal is uncertain; Joshua Tree's history is still being written.

At the heart of every dialogue about the future of Joshua Tree National Park is the same question that Minerva Hamilton Hoyt raised—how do we see the California desert? Is it a distant wasteland that we will silently watch be destroyed, or is it a cherished place where we bring our families and friends to discover the beauty of a desert sunset or watch a desert tortoise ramble over the land?

Seventy-five years after its historic birth, Joshua Tree National Park remains the living soul of our relationship with the California desert. During its 75th anniversary, let us celebrate by bringing our families and friends to enjoy this desert and savor what the California desert does like no other place on Earth—inspire us with hidden life, profound beauty, and unparalleled opportunities for recreation. While we are here, and when we return home, let us remember that Joshua Tree National Park only exists because ordinary people did something extraordinary—they spoke for the future.

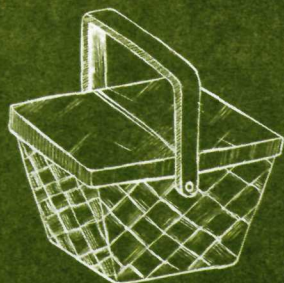
In another 75 years, our grandchildren will tell an even richer story about Joshua Tree National Park.

We have the opportunity, like Minerva Hamilton Hoyt, to make them proud of their history. We have the chance to provide them a world where human beings do not just survive in the desert—we come here with our children, knowing that hearing the call of a red-tailed hawk at sunrise or seeing a cactus bloom is a vital part of what makes us human.



a simple one. In 1950, Joshua Tree had land cut out of its core by politically-connected mining interests that sought to profit from public land. There were not enough citizen voices speaking against this plan to stop it, and today a massive open-pit mine scar sits on the park's southern boundary, as a historical record of environmental damage. More recently, independent citizens have successfully fought a proposal to place

## \*Did You Know..? by Caryn Davidson



At the site of the park's westernmost campground, Black Rock Canyon, there once stood a privately-owned campground: Jellystone Park. When it celebrated its grand opening on October 10, 1970, it boasted a heated swimming pool, tennis courts, hot showers, a laundromat, a miniature golf

course, horse stables, and a "ladies' hair grooming center." Fiberglass statues depicting Yogi Bear, Boo Boo Bear, Ranger Smith, and Cindy Bear graced the Joshua tree-pinyon pine woodlands. Vestiges of Jellystone still remain: if you explore Black Rock Canyon Campground carefully, you will find

the outline of the swimming pool, the cement slab of a volleyball court, and an old wagon wheel chandelier hanging in the visitor center conference room. The National Park Service acquired the property later in the 1970s and removed most of the amenities once available to Jellystone campers.

# The 75th Anniversary

## ... A Longer View

by Park Ranger Josh Pelham and Park Historian Hannah Nyala-West.

Stand anywhere on these lands we now call Joshua Tree National Park and gather your senses close for a deeper look at the past present. Seventy-five years, you will see, is only a heartbeat in time. For more than 8,000 years, the sandy soils beneath your feet and the arid skies above your head have nurtured human life. Signs of human presence throughout those long years abound in pictographs, petroglyphs, bedrock mortars, fire hearths, and middens. These signs, however, signal more than a long past Native connection to this land. Modern Chemehuevi, Serrano, Cahuilla, and Mojave tribes continue to honor their early ancestors and lifeways across this desert.

The people of these tribes spoke different, but related languages, and they occupied distinct, recognized territories within the lands that stretch from the river now known as the Colorado to the city we now call Los Angeles. One of the longest inhabited sites in the park today can be found at the Oasis of Mara, in Twentynine Palms, where at different times Serrano, and then Chemehuevi people made their homes. Despite considerable cultural diversity, all the tribal groups in this area developed a keen awareness of the land and its seasons, water sources, plants, and animals. Using and constantly updating this intricate web of information, desert peoples traveled between the low desert and high mountains on a regular basis to access food sources and other materials like medicines in each of these ecological zones.

Their travel, of course, was not limited to local territories. According to anthropologist Lowell Bean, "A veritable highway connected the Colorado River to the coast. This route was heavily used prior to European contact, and continued to be important throughout the historic period as people traveled it both directions to visit relatives, exchange foods and other goods, engage in religious practices and secular activities like singing bird songs, playing games, or courting." Ethnographic and archival

research is underway now to gain a better understanding of these patterns and to identify how the National Park Service can best work with tribes to manage sites like Queen Mountain and the Oasis of Mara that are known to have been important in these wider networks.

Listen, then, if you can, beyond the rustle of the wind lifting palm fronds at an oasis, for the sounds of Chemehuevi children playing at the Oasis of Mara while their parents visit with a group that has just arrived from the river to the east. Listen for the soft footfalls of a Cahuilla family walking up the long canyon to Cottonwood Springs, where bighorn sheep regularly water and mesquite can be found.

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*"...we must work together to protect it..."*  
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Listen to the lilting tones of a Serrano mother speaking with her young daughters as they walk to higher ground near Hidden Valley to gather acorns. Listen to a Mojave man teaching young men to hunt on the wide plains between the river and the oasis.

Listen ever more carefully, though, to the voices of all their descendants today, for, as Cahuilla elder Katherine Siva Saubel remembers elder Pedro Chino telling her, "We need always to remember that this was our territory." Reflecting on what the National Park Service and public can do now, Mrs. Saubel continued, "Now we must work together to protect it; the plants especially, as I wrote in my book. They have many uses good for people that few people know. If we keep these lands as they were, so that they do not become destroyed like so many other places, this will help. Then this kind of knowledge may still be able to help human beings."



### \*Did You Know..?

Little-Known Stories of Joshua Tree National Monument and Park  
by Caryn Davidson

These stories and more comprise a chronicle of thousands of years of human history at Joshua Tree. Beginning with the people who inhabited the Pinto Basin, and continuing through the seasonal rounds of the Cahuilla, Serrano, Chemehuevi, and Mojave, the gold prospectors, homesteaders and cattle ranchers establishing settlements, and arriving in the present as we enjoy the park today, we can observe the layering process of human activity. The park's museum collections house more than 239,000 objects that bear witness to the human stories told within the park's boundaries. As Joshua Tree celebrates its 75th anniversary, we invite you to seek out the many exciting human tales awaiting discovery within your national park. Ask a ranger to share his or her favorite "little-known" park story. Perhaps you have one of your own to share with us—we would love to hear it.



### \*Did You Know..?

by Caryn Davidson

We all know the desert bakes in the summer heat. But did you know that over 75 years ago there was a desert bakery not far from the park's headquarters on Utah Trail? The Aaron family established a 160-acre homestead on the west side of the road in 1930. Situated below a formation known as The Indian Chief, or The Great Stone Face, the dwelling bore the name Aaron Great Stone Face Ranch. A rock structure on the property was the first bakery in Twentynine Palms. The outdoor oven provided freshly baked bread for local residents and was also referred to as the Pioneer Bakery.





by James W. Cornett

The Park's future is intimately tied to human activity on surrounding lands. At its current size, the Park is probably not self-sustaining if residential, commercial and recreational developments line its borders in years to come. Only the severe recession early in the 21st century kept half its southern boundary from being converted to residential development.

Changes wrought by global warming are already starting to eliminate Joshua trees from the Park. It is probably too late to save the forests of these giant yuccas. However, the natural communities of the next century can be nourished and maintained by (1) acquiring as much land as possible presently in contact with Park boundaries, (2) directly connecting the Park, through natural corridors, to other established preserves and (3) continuing to educate local residents and visitors regarding the fragile nature of desert ecosystems. Thankfully, each of these actions has either started or is in the planning stage.



by Dr. Cameron Barrows  
UC-Riverside, Palm Desert Campus

National Parks protect what is best about our country, and Joshua Tree National Park doesn't disappoint. Located at a crossroads of the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts, with influences from southern California's mountain ranges, it shares lizards, birds and plants from each of these regions.

This happenstance of geography has created a treasure for naturalists and an invaluable laboratory for scientists seeking to understand what factors govern why species occur where they do. The park is also at a crossroads in terms of change; changing climate, introductions of invasive weeds, fire and surrounding land uses.

Each of these creates stresses on the park's natural systems and challenges for ensuring that the park's rich biodiversity will be here for future generations. Will Joshua trees be able to find refuge here from the effects of climate change and fire? Will tortoises survive here in the face of weeds, fire and increased drought?

Scientists and park managers are working together to provide an edge for the native flora and fauna. This is indeed one of America's best ideas, but it is an idea that we will all need to work to protect.



by Cindy Zacks  
Biology and Ecology Teacher,  
Yucca Valley H.S.

For the past seventeen years, Joshua Tree National Park has played an important role in my ability to introduce local high school students to the natural world. Together, we have camped, hiked, participated in biological field studies, and interacted with the park's wonderful rangers. The result? Passion. Students who never camped developed an insatiable love of camping. Those afraid of the smallest insect became brave protectors of all living creatures. Individuals with no clear direction became dedicated to careers protecting wild places.

As urbanization spreads into our community, the park remains one of our last bastions of freedom for young people. Where else can they test limits, develop personal reliance, and reflect on their role in the natural world? Every day society bombards kids with messages about what they should value, who they should be, even what to buy. Time in wild places allows them to sift through the messages, deciding for themselves who they will become.

It is my vision for Joshua Tree National Park to remain a place of exploration and discovery of self and of wild places over the next 75 years, as it has been for my students for the past seventeen years.



by Gene Rotstein

Joshua Tree National Park is a treasured neighbor to the communities of the Morongo Basin. Residents have easy access to its natural beauty and unique rock formations. Local business benefits from the increasing number of park visitors, and this enables community growth. But growth brings its challenges.

A healthy park ecosystem requires wildlife to pass back and forth to the mountains and desert beyond the park. Neighboring communities need to preserve space for these vital wild corridors. The busy highway to the park serves visitors and community residents, but it must also provide ways for wildlife to pass over it or under it.

Educational programs about the park, for community children and adults are a means for teaching how to use, understand and protect the park. They are also a means to teach how to have community growth with minimal impact on the night skies, and the fragile air and water resources of the park.



## The Park's Next 75 Years...