

# RURAL CONNECTIONS

## Rural Roadtrip of the Month: St. Thomas

Within the boundaries of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area lies a ghost town that was inundated when Lake Mead first filled up in the 1930's. Once a Mormon settlement, St. Thomas thrived as a stopping point between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City along the Arrowhead Trail.

Today, remnants of the town can now be seen thanks to the lowering water levels of Lake Mead, which is due to severe drought conditions. Once the town was flooded higher than 60 feet above the tallest structure, now visitors can roam the ghost remains of a true western town. St. Thomas lies in the northern part of the park near the Overton Arm along the Muddy River, which feeds into Lake Mead. The access road is dirt and sometimes bumpy so visitors with low riding vehicles may want to be careful. However, most vehicles should be able to handle the approximately 3 mile dirt road. There is a dirt trail leading to the town site from the parking area.



### St. Thomas History

St. Thomas was founded in 1865 by Mormon settlers who mistakenly thought they were still in Utah/Arizona Territories. The location was a prime farming spot at the confluence of the Muddy and Virgin Rivers, which flowed to the Colorado River, 22 miles south.

However, the Mormons were not the first inhabitants of the region. The Anasazi and the Basket-Makers made their home in the area. In fact, located across the river from St. Thomas was an Anasazi settlement that became known as the "Lost City", which has been recreated in the town of Overton at the Lost City Museum.



The Mormons settled here until it was discovered that they actually settled in Nevada. Nevada officials demanded five years back taxes which the Mormons refused to pay. So after a vote they decided to abandon the town, save for one family, the Bonellis. The Mormons burned down their homes and abandoned their crops and moved to Salt Lake City.



Around the 1880's new settlers began to arrive at the town site. These settlers discovered that the soil was good for farming. The peak population of St. Thomas was around 500 people. There was a school,

post office, grocery stores, church, soda fountain, and several garages for the new invention of the automobile. What St. Thomas did not have was indoor plumbing or electricity. But memories written by the former townspeople were of a happy and simple life.

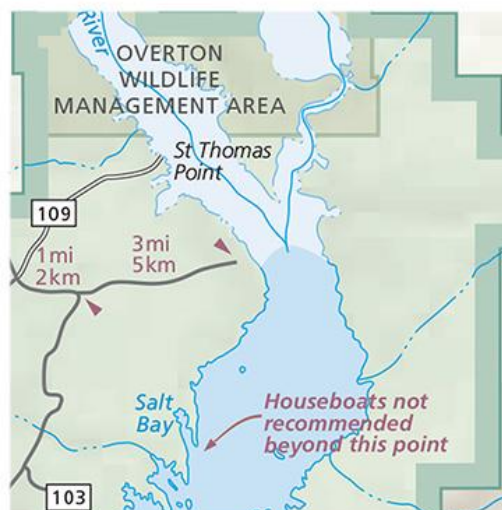
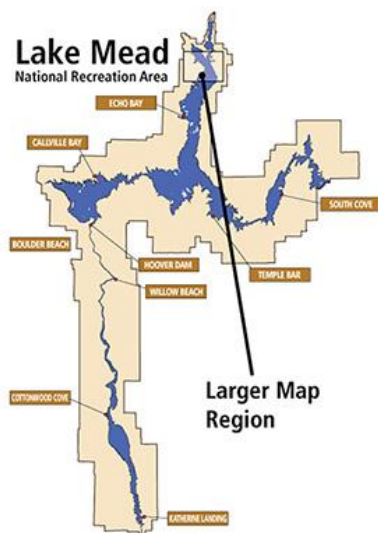
In 1928, President Calvin Coolidge signed the bill authorizing the building of Boulder (Hoover) Dam. This dam would create a large lake behind it, Lake Mead, and as the waters rose, areas that had been high and dry along the Muddy and Virgin Rivers would be inundated by the lake. The residents of St. Thomas were told they would have to relocate, and that the government would reimburse them for their property. The filling of Lake Mead started in 1935. As the waters rose, slowly the town was overtaken. One of the last residents to leave was Hugh Lord, who paddled away from his home when the rising waters lapped at his front door in 1938. When the lake reached its high water mark, St. Thomas was sixty feet below the surface.

With the fluctuations of the lake water levels, St. Thomas has arisen from the depths several times since 1938. In 1945, 1963, and 2012 there were reunions of former residents and family members. Today the town is still exposed and visitors can roam the roads and trails that were once a thriving wild west town.

*This article and photos came from the National Park Service website. For more photos, information and maps, visit the website at: <https://www.nps.gov/lake/learn/nature/st-thomas-nevada.htm>*

*The Moapa Valley Chamber of Commerce website has more great information about St. Thomas and Moapa Valley: <http://moapavalleychamber.com/st-thomas-overton-nv>*

*The Lost City Museum is also a great place to visit on your trip to Moapa Valley and to learn more about St. Thomas: <http://www.museums.nevadaculture.org/lcm>*



## Events for September – Northeast

- **Mondays at the Moapa Valley Library** – ABC Kids: Nursery rhymes, songs and dances for ages 3–5, 11:15 am; Read with me: readers of all skill levels welcome for one-on-one reading practice, ages 5–11, 4 pm;
- **Mondays and Tuesdays at the Moapa Valley Library** – Tutoring and Homework help, 2:30 pm
- **Tuesdays at the Moapa Valley Library** – Circle time for ages 0 – 18 months, 11:15 am; Computer Basics for beginners, 3 pm
- **Wednesdays at the Moapa Valley Library** – Hands-on Computer Helps at 11 am; Computer Topics at 3 pm and Computer logic at 4:30 pm
- **Thursdays at the Moapa Valley Library** – Tiny tots songs and finger plays for ages 18 months to 3, 11:15 am; LEGO Quest for ages 8–11 at 4 pm
- **Fridays at the Moapa Valley Library** – Handicrafters at 10 am; Teen Space at 1:30 pm and Story Hour for ages 5–11 at 4 pm
- **Saturdays at the Moapa Valley Library** – English Language discussion group at 10:15 am; Game on at 12 noon; Crafternoon at 2 pm
- **Wednesday, September 14**– Moapa Valley TAB\* meeting at the Moapa Valley Community Center, 7 pm
- **Monday, September 26** – Story Salsa at the Moapa Valley Library, Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with storyteller Liz Mangual and her signature storytelling style, 11:15 am
- **Tuesday, September 27** – Moapa TAB\* meeting at the Robinson Justice Court & Community Center, 7 pm
- **Thursday, September 29** – Bunkerville TAB\* meeting at the Bunkerville Community Center, 7 pm

\*TAB = Town Advisory Board \*\*For details call 702-397-2690

## St. Thomas Site Stewardship and Docent Education Project

Partners In Conservation's (PIC) has partnered with the National Park Service (NPS), Lake Mead and the State of Nevada's Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Nevada's Site Stewardship Program (NSSP) to monitor historic buildings and features in St. Thomas. Those who want to participate will take a class to learn of site stewardship protocols and at the same time, will receive training as docents.

The concept is to combine 2 great programs to have them function more informally than regular docent and stewardship programs. Participants will be assigned specific buildings and features to monitor and will visit their areas regularly to observe any changes. Changes can be man-made or natural and participants are trained to report both positive and negative impacts.

The uniqueness of this program is that while volunteers are performing site stewardship duties, they may encounter tourists, who may have questions or request information. And the stewards can provide such! St. Thomas is very popular and has a steady stream of visitors when the weather cools off. This creates the ideal situation to perform helpful monitoring duties while visiting with tourists who want to know more about St. Thomas' colorful past and engaging history as its ruins emerge from the water and are once again available for all to enjoy.

If you are interested in being a site steward, please contact Rayette Martin or Samantha Rubinson in the Las Vegas Office of the NSSP @ 702-486-5011.





## Events for September – Southwest

- **Every Wednesday** – Sewing/craft group at the Goodsprings Community Center, 4 pm
- **Every Wednesday** – Adult/Teen basketball from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Sandy Valley School Gym, \$2.00. People are welcome to come walk around the gym, too.\*\*
- **Tuesdays in September** – Volleyball skills at the Sandy Valley School Gym, 5 pm
- **Monday, September 5** – First 4H meeting of the year, 6:30 at the Keystone Center in Sandy Valley
- **Friday, September 9** – 4H leader training, 6 – 9 pm at the Cooperative Extension building in Las Vegas – if you are interested in becoming a 4H leader you will need to attend this training, see Christine Brown for more details
- **Tuesday, September 13** – Sandy Mesquite Valley Dev. Assoc. meeting at the SV Community Center, 6:30 pm
- **Tuesday, September 13** – Sandy Valley CAC\* meeting at the SV Community Center, 7:30 pm
- **Friday, September 16** – Free Community dinner presented by the Sandy Valley 4H, 4 – 7 pm at the Keystone
- **Saturday, September 17** – Sandy Valley Community Breakfast, 8 am to 10:30 am at the Senior Center, \$3.50 for the best pancakes & sausage or biscuits & gravy
- **Thursday, September 22** – Movie night at the Sandy Valley Community Center, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, 5 pm
- **Saturday, September 24** – Dinner and Raffle to benefit Wanda VanDyk at the Sandy Valley Senior Center, Dinner from 5 to 7 pm and the raffle drawings will be held at 7 pm. Dinner is \$7 and will be Terikayi Chicken, sides, dessert and a beverage. Raffle tickets available at the Senior Center and the Post Office.
- **Tuesday, September 27** – Goodsprings CAC meeting, Goodsprings Community Center, 7:30 pm
- **Wednesday, September 28** – Red Rock CAC meeting, Blue Diamond Library, 7 pm

\*CAC = Citizens Advisory Council    \*\*Contact Shawna at 702-723-5040 for more information



# September Events at Spring Mountain Ranch

## Pioneer Day

In the 1870s, three ranches formed the core of the Las Vegas community, and Spring Mountain Ranch was one of them. On Saturday, September 17, the park will turn back the clock to our early days as a pioneer ranch. Experience the sights, smells, and tastes of the Nevada frontier with Dutch oven cooking, blacksmithing, live 19<sup>th</sup> century music, arts, crafts and a special visit from Jackson the Red Rock Canyon Burro.



**WHEN:** Saturday, September 17, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, located 11 miles down Highway 159 from the I-215 / West Charleston Boulevard intersection. 6375 Nevada Hwy 159, Blue Diamond NV 89004

**COST:** Entry to Spring Mountain State Park is \$7.00 per vehicle for those with Nevada driver's licenses, and \$9.00 per vehicle for all others.

**CONTACT:** David Low, 702-875-4141, [smr-interp@parks.nv.gov](mailto:smr-interp@parks.nv.gov)

## Family Yoga on the Meadow

Join us for a family-oriented yoga class. Trained yoga instructors lead this class geared specially for parents and their young children. Bring your own yoga mats to stretch and relax on our green, grassy field beneath the breath-taking Red Rock Canyon landscape. There is no charge to participate.



**WHAT:** Family Yoga on the Meadow

**WHEN:** Every Wednesday in the month of September at 10:00 a.m. (We will offer yoga every weekend until it gets too cold.)

**WHERE:** Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, located 11 miles down Highway 159 from the I-215 / West Charleston Boulevard intersection. 6375 Nevada Hwy 159, Blue Diamond NV 89004

**COST:** Entry to Spring Mountain State Park is \$7.00 per vehicle for those with Nevada driver's licenses, and \$9.00 per vehicle for all others. A pass to enter Spring Mountain Ranch State Park for the year is available for \$65.00.

**CONTACT:** David Low, 702-875-4141, [smr-interp@parks.nv.gov](mailto:smr-interp@parks.nv.gov)

## Events for September – Northwest

- **Wednesdays** – Coffee Talk at the Indian Springs Community Center, 10:30 am\*\*
- **Thursday, September 15** – Indian Springs TAB\* Meeting at the Indian Springs Community Center, 6:30 pm
- **Thursday, September 29** – Mt. Charleston TAB\* Meeting at the Mt. Charleston Library, 7pm

\*TAB = Town Advisory Board \*\*For information, contact Teresa Hazel at 702-879-3890

## ISVFD Receives Proclamation

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, the members Indian Springs Volunteer Fire Department, Station 83 gathered for what they thought was their regular monthly training meeting. Instead, they were surprised to be presented with a Proclamation from State Assemblyman James Oscarson in honor of their hard work, dedication, community involvement and being named Fire Station of the Year by the Nevada State Firefighters Association. Clark County Fire Chief Greg Cassel, Deputy Fire Chief Roy Sessions and Assistant Fire Chief Larry Haydu were also in attendance to share their congratulations.



## Cold Creek Community Says Farewell to Longtime Residents

The mountain community of Cold Creek held a farewell party for Dave and Mable Belt on August 30<sup>th</sup>. The couple celebrated 30 years of mountain living in Cold Creek this past August. The party was hosted by Ned and Edna Clem. Dave and Mable were presented with a scrapbook of memories covering the 30 years put together by friends and neighbors. They will be missed by everyone.





## Events for September – Southeast

- **Sunday, September 4** – Movie Matinee at the Laughlin Library, 1:30 pm\*\*
- **Thursday, September 8** – Brown Bag Book Club, 11 am\*\*
- **Friday, September 9** – Movie “The Boss” at the Laughlin Library, 2 pm\*\*
- **Saturday, September 10** – Children’s Craft at the Laughlin Library, Ages 5–11, 3 pm\*\*
- **Tuesday, September 13** – Laughlin TAB Meeting at the Regional Gov. Center, 1:30 pm
- **Wednesday, September 14** – Searchlight TAB meeting at the Searchlight Community Center, 6 pm
- **Thursday, September 15** – Pirate Day Celebration at the Laughlin Library, Ages 5–11, 4:30 pm\*\*
- **Thursday, September 22** – Adult Coloring at the Laughlin Library, 2 pm \*\*
- **Friday, September 23** – Movie “Me Before You” at the Laughlin Library, 2 pm\*\*

\*TAB = Town Advisory Board \*\*For more information call the Laughlin Library at 702-507-4060

## LEGO Club at the Laughlin Library

Miss Mindy and Mr. E host the Lego Club every Wednesday at 4 pm at the Laughlin Library. Participants create amazing things that are then put out on display in the library. Kids can come and make a new creation every week. Here are some of the things that the kids built during August.

