

Emery County

LIFESTYLE



Photo by Patsy Stoddard

Shirl and Bessie McArthur display a picture of the "Mormon Freighter."

A 'Historic' Calling

Local couple accept calling to gather history of Deseret Coal Mine

By **PATSY STODDARD**
Staff, Emery County Progress

Shirl and Bessie McArthur have been called and have accepted a work mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to collect and put together the history of the Deseret Coal Mine.

The call was not expected and McArthur said, "I always intended to write the history and have had it in mind to do this for a long time and now I have an extra push to get it done. The Lord spoke up and realizes the importance of preserving this history. We received the call and were set apart on March 1 which was our 60th Wedding Anniversary as well.

"I was called to the Carbon Stake House in 1946. I met with a group of stake presidents and their counselors from around Emery and Carbon counties. The purpose of this meeting was to establish the need for a coal mine to furnish the church with a coal supply. Emery County was a depressed area at the time. The opening of this mine would provide jobs for people and would also give valuable mining experience for young miners which would be useful as the area began to develop.

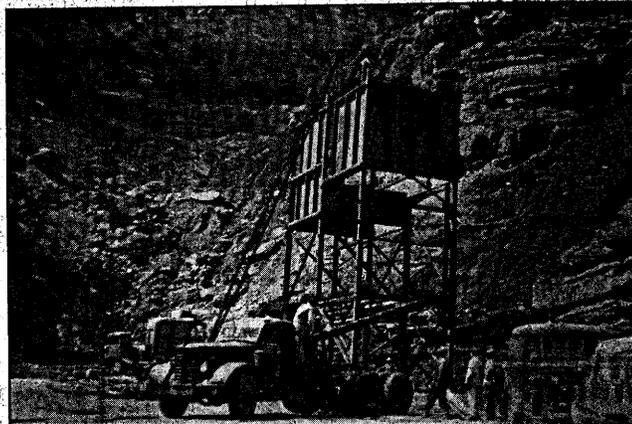
"I told the men present that I wanted to be a part of it. I was asked to take charge of

opening this mine; this was the largest welfare project for the church at that time. The mine fulfilled its mission, it furnished the fuel needs of the church. We provided coal for BYU, LDS Hospital, the Manti Temple and the St. George Temple as well as supplying 26 coal yards. We supplied coal for church needs in all of the western states. We had six coal trucks that transported the coal for us.

"A story is told of a man from Sanpete county who came over and trucked coal back to a coal yard where it was distributed by Bishop's orders. This man donated his time, vehicle and fuel to see that his community had coal.

"One of my friends from Orangeville told of a relative of his who was down in the area and they were taking her to a lot of different areas around Emery County and they went up to the Deseret Mine site and she told him, he didn't need to tell her about that mine, she remembered when David O. McKay had come down and had meetings inside the mine with mine workers. She was fairly bursting with the information and history she was able to provide about the mine and that historic occasion.

"Stories like this are many and we would like to make an appeal to the people, if your parents, grandparents or anyone has told



Construction of the steel tippie in 1950.

you stories pertaining to the Deseret Mine or if you have photographs that would be helpful in recording this history to let us know.

"Around this time a geographical survey was done by the government which in-

dicated that Emery County was not conducive to large coal mining operations, there were too many faults and other things that made it a difficult area in which to mine. If

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BITS OF HISTORY

Treasures to Troop

Deseret Mine

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is a good thing we did not listen to them concerning coal in Emery County.

"Deseret Mine operated from 1946-1972 at which time it was sold to Utah Power and Light. In 1950 the old wooden tippie burned down and a steel one was built in its place. This new tippie was built with all volunteer help and it was a large project to construct it.

"Ours was the first mine to introduce the first permissible diesel shuttle car. I met first Gordon McKlein who was the President of National Mine Service at the time, they said they didn't think they could build an underground diesel shuttle car. I told them if they couldn't build it then I would find someone who would. They did build it and the union accepted it.

"The introduction of this shuttle car brought a lot of people to the mine to look it over and see if it would work in their mines. There were letters from England and the States and people from England and the States that came to see the shuttle car. The letters expressed their appreciation for the kind treatment and hospitality they were shown in visiting our mine.

"It was dubbed the 'Mormon Freightier' All who saw it were impressed with the car. We also introduced the first continuous miner in the churrun mine and a rock dusting machine. I attended many conventions and people always asked me how the 'Mormon Freightier' was running. The manufacturer couldn't believe that we hadn't ordered any parts in two years time, and he asked me about it one time. I told him the only thing it had needed was fuel and oil changes in that two year period of time.



The wooden tippie burned in 1950.

"Our coal was also used as a subsidy for the needy widows or people without jobs that needed fuel. Some people took loads directly to needy families from the mine. There are only two people, Fred Van Buren and myself who were there at the beginning that are left today. Edgar Slikerud and Harold Bell were also on my original crew. That is why it is so important to get this history done now.

"We are not sure what form the end product of this compilation will be. We would like letters, anything pertaining to the operation, personal histories, personal testimonies, photos anything that would help us tell the story of the Deseret Mine. How it effected people, how it helped out those in need, we are interested in all of these areas.

"One day two men were there at the beginning of a shift and we gave them a hand out and a belt and then invited them to join us in prayer. We never began a shift in that mine without first gathering for a prayer. This particular man happened to be Jewish, but he often told me afterwards how impressed he was with that prayer.

"No money ever exchanged hands at the mine, all coal was received from a Bishop's order. The church mine was always very supportive of the people who worked there. Besiege McArthur said, 'We only had one car and we lived in Orangerville at the time. I would load up the men and drive them up to work and then come back and get my children ready and take them to school. I was the godder for the mine. I went and picked up parts and anything that they might need. We were among the first to have a telephone in our home. The phone company installed it because we needed it to conduct mine business.'



The steel tippie was constructed in its place with all volunteer help.

HAPPENINGS

Babe Ruth Baseball

Sign-ups for Kids 13-15 will be Apr. 4 from 5-6:30 at Castle Dale City Hall. For cost and information call Mark (748-5522), Ludaun (381-5294), or Kaylene (687-9104).

JWP Museum

Green River's John Wesley Powell River History Museum in association with host guest Utah Humanities Council will host speaker Joel Frensdson on a fun, fact filled discussion on Matt Wharner, outlaw, lawman, and Justice of the Peace on April 4, at 7 p.m. This presentation is free to the public.

Notice:

All pre-school and elementary age children are invited to meet and front of the Town Hall. So bring your baskets and don't miss the fun in Cleveland. It's fun, it's free and everybody gets a prize! Please don't late, we start promptly at noon. For more information call the Town Hall at 653-2319 or Jamie at 653-2219.

Memorial

Easter Egg Hunt
Happy Easter, Bunny Loves in Memorial Park will happen April 7 at Huntington Ball Park next to Hearts at 41. Prizes Eggs and Lots of Ice Cream! Sponsored by Huntington Lions Club. Walk-in from 10-11:30 a.m. Come and have fun!

Emery County Crime Watch

A meeting for the Emery County Crime Watch will be held on April 10 at 7 p.m. at

You are invited to the ministry of **Dick Williams**

Wednesday Night
April 4th, 7:00 Pm

WHERE:
New Life Ministries
1950 West 4100 North
Castle Dale, Utah

