

THIS IS INYO...

One of a series of articles prepared by Inyo Writers' Guild to further the history of Inyo county.

Legends of Inyo

By Aurelia McLean

Incredible Inyo is a land of many legends. They have been retold so many times that many stories have been told of the same place. The following legends I have heard often.

The Legend of Winnedumah

Many years ago before the white settlers entered the valley—so the legend goes—the Indians in Inyo and Saline Valley were not too friendly, and would poach on each other's territory. The Owens Valley Indians would hunt in Saline Valley and bring back their catch, and the Saline Valley Indians would do the same in Owens Valley. At one time the Owens Valley Indians caught a large number of Saline Valley Indians hunting in their territory. They held a trial and decided to send them all back but the chief. Later, they made a large bow and arrow, and fastened the chief to the arrow and shot him over towards Saline Valley.

The arrow landed on top of the Inyo mountains, which separate the two valleys. The Inyo Indians exclaimed "Winnedumah!"—meaning "Stay where you are." The arrow with the chief attached was turned to a shaft of stone, which is now known as the Winnedumah Monument. It is 90 feet high, and can be seen from the floor of the valley as you approach Independence.

Another well known legend is the Legend of Independence Creek, which is almost opposite the Winnedumah Monument and on the Sierra side of the valley.

The Legend of Independence Creek

One very cold winter in Owens Valley in the town of Independence, the Piute Indians lost their fire and were freezing to death. The Fire God lived on the top of

the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and he was mad at the Indians and would not give them any fire. The Indians had a big meeting to see what they could do.

The coyote, who was a friend of the Indians, came to the meeting. He told them he would go to the top of the mountains and steal a mouth-full of fire and would bring it down the mountain and give it to the Indians. They were to line up along the creek and pass the fire from one to another.

The Fire God saw the coyote coming down the mountain with his mouth full of fire, but could not stop him. When the Fire God saw the Indians lined up to receive the Fire, he turned them all into Pine Trees, and so they still stand.

As you drive up the valley from the South of Independence, the Pine Trees are plainly seen along the banks of Independence Creek.

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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ADOPT OFFICIAL MAP OF PRIMARY ROAD SYSTEM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, has caused a map to be prepared showing each road proposed to be improved in said County of Inyo primary road system and

Notice is further given that said Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California intends to adopt said map as the official map of such system and

Notice is hereby given that a hearing upon said adoption of said system and said official map thereof will be had at the Supervisor's Chambers in the County Courthouse, Independence, Inyo County, California, at two o'clock P. M., March 1, 1948, at which time all interested persons will be heard.

Dated. February 2nd, 1948.

JOHN H. LUBKEN,

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

ATTEST.

FAY LAWRENCE,
County Clerk and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

(Pub. AP Feb. 6, 1948.)

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