



The Mohave Museum  
of History and Arts  
**Mohave Memories**

May - June 2021

Letter from the Director:

There is a softness or more a gentleness, as it were, attached to the history of Mohave County. The work was hard yet the weekend would find the cowboys and miners with their callused hands scrubbed, their hair slicked back – Saturday night clean; all the necessary preludes to the anticipation of the Saturday dances. The end of the week socials were adorned with starched linen and soft cotton waltzes. The music was always live and alcohol was consumed outside in dirt alleyways lit only by moonlight. These events somehow elevated the toil of the previous week to a well-deserved reward.

Skip ahead to present day history in the making: the search for instant gratification, abundant creature comfort and most important ego driven motivation as the catalyst. The Museum is thankful for having a team in place that will be able to sort and process this information digitally. Please come down and meet the Research Library staff and volunteers; even better join this team of professionals dedicated to keeping the records of the past and present.

The Museum has done a stellar job in the theme and thought of past history and is now faced with the challenge of keeping our history alive virtually. I have found from my previous experience that there is no job too big for this Museum to accomplish. The Museum will continue to keep the spirit of the past alive and translate that to the hope of a rich and rewarding future.

Artifacts are not only an avenue that takes us back in time, they also have an intrinsic value. Have you kept a relic of the past and wondered how much it is worth monetarily? Good News, Sean Morton, a licensed appraiser, will be here on June 12<sup>th</sup> to answer the inquiry as to the monetary value of any such item (excluding guns, stamps and coins). Sean has been here numerous times before and the response has been overwhelming, so please call the Museum and make an appointment for the 12<sup>th</sup> of June.

Please, spend some of our new gained freedom of movement and visit our three great facilities: Mohave Museum, Route 66 Museum and the Bonelli House.

*Shannon*

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## 100 Years Later: The life, death, and funeral of one Sam Swaskegame By Claire Whitley

Swaskegame. Swaskegami. Skwegjuhme. All spellings and pronunciations of one person from Mohave County. All words that could be pronounced in four simple letters. Hero.

Sam Swaskegame Jr. (officially pronounced as squege-a-me according to an article in the Miner circa 1950) was a Hualapai man from Peach Springs. He was drafted into the U.S. armed forces during the Great War. Swaskegame served on the frontlines in France during the latter half of 1918 as part of the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.

Swaskegame is described as an exemplary soldier and volunteered for hazardous scouting missions. His prowess as a scout was detailed in one account that had him and several other Native Americans swimming a river to reconnoiter German positions without being detected by the enemy.

Swaskegame left Mohave County in October of 1917 on his way to Camp Kearney for training. "The farewells by some of the men were touching," wrote one journalist from the Mohave County Miner, Oct. 6, 1917. "Probably it was the first time that a full-blooded Indian had said farewell to his people to embark for a foreign country to fight. One parting was particularly touching. It was the parting of Sam Swaskegame with his wife and papoose, and was said with the typical Indian stoicism. With scarcely a spoken word, he walked to the coach, accompanied by his wife and little one. There was a firm handclasp, a solemn, stern glance into each other's face, and good-bye -- no tears, no mournful separation -- just a severing of ties that bind and the subsequent heart pangs felt by all who give their loved ones for their country."

Donald George fixed up a box of sandwiches, cake, fruits of all kinds, and surprised Swaskegame. A reporter wrote that when George handed up the box of delicacies, Swaskegame's eyes lit up with "inexpressible delight." Swaskegame thanked George with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile that spread all over his face. He later wrote George expressing his appreciation for the gift. He wrote about enjoying the life of a soldier. "He has become quite a favorite with the Arizona boys, who are proud to have a 'real Indian' listed as one of their numbers."

Swaskegame was deployed to the frontlines of France in July of 1918. He served in some of the most vicious parts of trench warfare. Many times he had to be pulled down from what he considered his vantage point in looking over the top to get a shot at the enemy and when told that he was liable to be killed replied: "I did not come over here to hide, I came to fight."

Swaskegame died at the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge at the beginning of October 1918. One month before the Great War came to a close. Sam's body finally made it back home in 1921. A large Native American get together in Kingman was held to honor the memory of Swaskegame.

Swaskegame's body lay in a flag-draped coffin at the American Legion Hall for two days while mourners from all over the northern and western parts of Arizona came and paid their respects. Sam was given a military funeral, held at St. John's Methodist Church, in conjunction with a traditional Hualapai Farewell Ceremony for the fallen hero at the gravesite.

Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Strong the commander of Camp Kearney where Swaskegame received his combat training before shipping overseas, wrote in his letter to Sam's widow Bertha, "No braver fellow ever wore the uniform of Uncle Sam's soldiers than Sam Waskegame (sic), and we hope that the tribute to his memory will be fitting."

**Cont...**

A Mohave County Miner reporter wrote about the service Sept. 1921: At the grave, the burial service of the Legion was read and as the body of Sam Swaskegame was lowered into its last resting place, the Hualapai performed one of the most touching services ever seen in the southwest. This service is only rendered during the times of what is known among the tribes as the Big Cry, coming after pestilences and many deaths have invaded the ranks of Native Americans. Six squaws and six braves march forward and back chanting their song that is intended to drive away the spirit of evil while a brave rushes around in circles stabbing the invisible foe with a spiked arrow shouting defiance to the devil and his cohorts. Back and forth went the squaws and bucks chanting their song, and then an old squaw breaks forth with the wail for the dead.

With the echoes of the chant fading away, the firing squad came to attention over the grave and fired the final salute, the bugler sounded taps and the service for Sam Swaskegame was over.

Swaskegame was awarded a World War I Victory Medal and a Purple Heart posthumously. No matter the name, the pronunciation or the spelling, it can be said without a doubt that we can all call Sam Swaskegame one thing: a hero.

Excerpt from Dick Waters, former Commander of the American Legion No. 14 written May 20, 1971: "The hero was Sam Swaskegame of Peach Springs, a boy who grew up in the Indian world and tramped the hills and valleys of the high country of northwestern Arizona. Sam's lifestyle later proved to be the key to his worth as one of Uncle Sam's finest performers in the trench warfare of Europe...when the army ran out of men like Sam Swaskegame they invented the helicopter for future wars ... Sam was a man probably not otherwise destined to be remembered by any but family, his acts of valor on a far-away battlefield gave this community a new look at the red man as an American and a human being rather than as a marauding drunken scoundrel; a stereotype opinion of our Indian neighbors held by many Anglos in yesteryear. Sam's funeral services were an occasion of monumental importance in this town... Most of the men and women who were there that day would agree with the tribute to Sam Swaskegame written in 1921 by Helen E. Pope. It was called 'The Warrior Comes Home' and one stanza goes like this: '--and through the years when tribal camp fires gleaming shall spread their glow across the evening sky, your story will be told, your fame undying, as the purple hills that guard you where you lie.'"



Sam Swaskegame, Hualapai Indian veteran of the First World War.

The Kingman American Legion Post #14 is named for Sam.



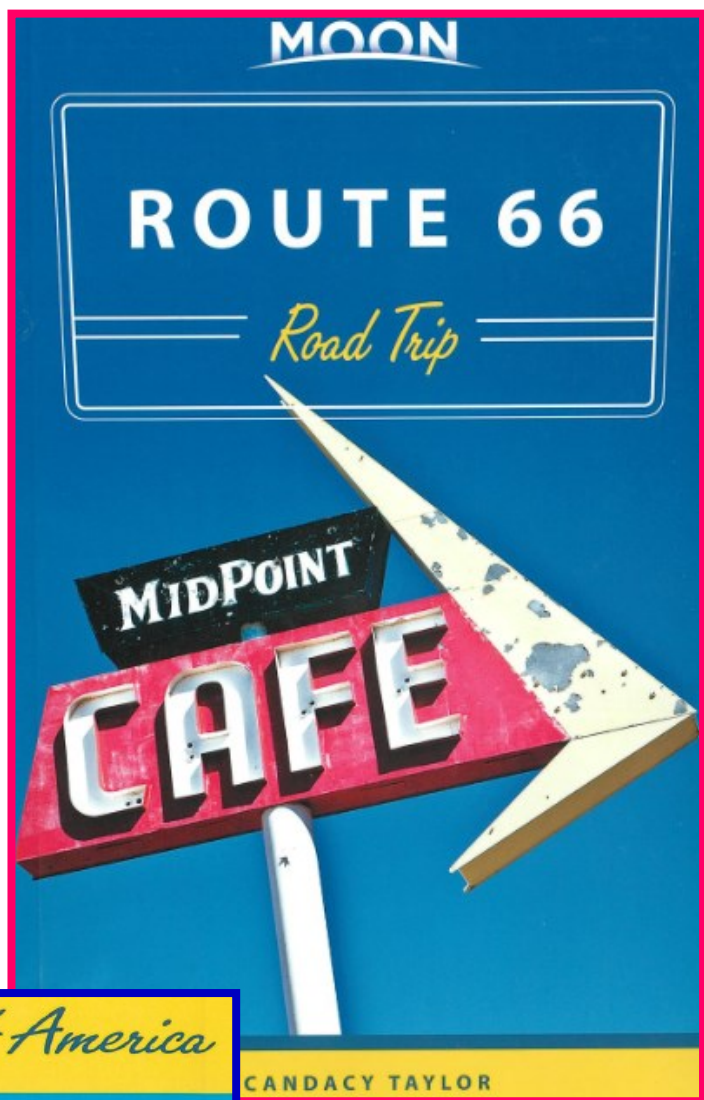


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guide to road tripping  
along Route 66!!

350 pages filled with  
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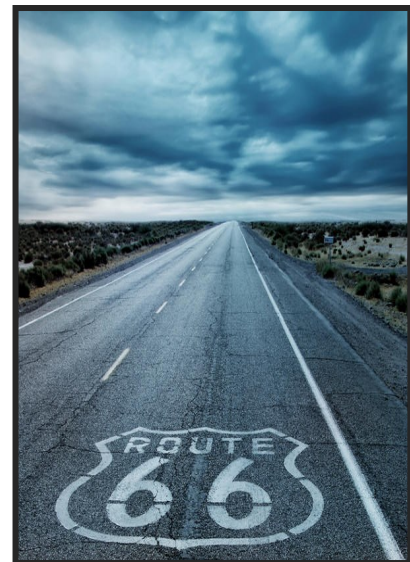
## *Drive into the Heart of America*

CANDACY TAYLOR

From pristine prairies and red rock mountains to the glittering Pacific, this fabled highway has beckoned everyone from Dust Bowl escapees to 1950s vacationers. Their stories are threaded throughout this book, amid the colorful characters and cultural curiosities that embody the Mother Road today.



- Follow turn-by-turn directions to connect with the historic highway—and learn where to get off the route for worthwhile excursions
- Experience roadside attractions, outsider art, and kitsch masterpieces
- Wander transcendent landscapes like Acoma Pueblo, the Grand Canyon, and Joshua Tree
- Meet the trailblazing women who defined Route 66 for generations to come
- Discover the untold stories of the Green Book, which enabled African Americans to travel west safely



## !!Back By Popular Demand!!

Sean Morton of Morton Appraisal's LLC in Scottsdale, AZ is returning to the Mohave Museum to present a private appraisal of your antiques and collectibles.

Sean is a certified, licensed and insured personal property appraiser and a member of the Antique Appraisal Association of America. Sean also works as a representative helping clients consign to nationally recognized auction houses.

The Appraisal Fair will be held Saturday June 12th, 9am to 4pm. Appointments are needed.

Contact the Mohave Museum at 928-753-3195 for an appointment and to purchase tickets.

There will be a maximum of 3 items per person.

1st item is \$20

2nd and 3rd items are \$15 per item.

**Please no coins, stamps or guns.**



What some of our visitors have to say...

Displays were fabulous!  
A.C. Barrett-OH

Drove by, saw it, went in. Loved it!  
K. Haynes-CA

G. Brumble-NV-Homeschooler  
So much history and visually  
educational models, etc.



Very interesting all the way around.  
You're doing a great job of preserving  
history. R & K Sebo

AWESOME!  
Anonymous

We are here at second time! We like your museum very much!  
Lovely place and kindly man! S. Fanci-Budapest, Hungary

## Membership Renewals

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 Harry "Bud" Alenik  
 Rose Cobb  
 Claire Whitley  
 Ruth Doremus  
 Helen Soto, Tustin, CA

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If a Memorial donation is not designated for a specific purpose, it will be used at the Museum's discretion.

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## Mohave Memories

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invites you to participate in preserving our past and building our future.

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Route 66 Museum & Bonelli House.

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Includes all General Member benefits, plus no-charge research assistance from Museum staff.

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OF HISTORY AND ARTS

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*Published bi-monthly by*

MOHAVE COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

President .... Bill Wales

Director ..... Shannon Rossiter

Printer ..... H&H Printers, Inc.

Non-Profit Org.  
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May - June 2021



Mother's Day May 9th

Memorial Day May 31st



Flag Day June 14th

Juneteenth June 19th

