



## Shepherd Ranch

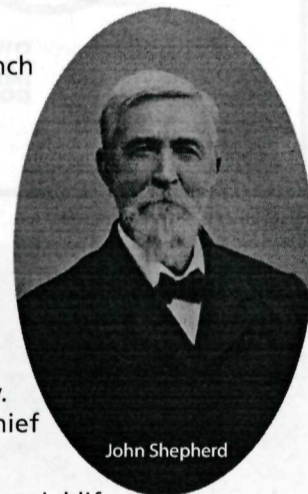


**Manzanar** has many layers of history. Paiute Indians have lived in Owens Valley for millennia. Euro-american miners and ranchers moved into the area in the nineteenth century, and in 1863, the U.S. Army forced the Paiutes to a reservation at Fort Tejon, north of Los Angeles. With the Paiutes "relocated" from their homeland, the Euroamerican settlement of Owens Valley continued unabated. The Shepherd Ranch, in the "North Park" area adjacent to the park tour road, was one of the earliest Euroamerican settlements in the southern Owens Valley.

John Shepherd, born in Illinois, moved to Stockton, California in 1852. He first came to the Owens Valley in 1861 looking for cattle feed during a drought year. After prospecting and hauling freight for a few months, he homesteaded 160 acres within what is now Manzanar National Historic Site. At the time, the creek that now bears his name flowed through his acreage; Shepherd Creek has since been redirected about a half mile to the north. In 1864, after the Paiutes were removed, Shepherd built a small adobe brick cabin and brought his 18-year-old wife Margaret and two children to live there. He began a cattle-ranching operation and sold meat and grain to nearby mines. He also hauled wood from the Sierra Nevada to the Inyo Mountains for sale to the miners.

After the 1872 Owens Valley earthquake, Shepherd built a nine-room two-story Victorian-style ranch house. Redwood for its construction was brought by wagon from the port of San Pedro near Los Angeles. The house's elaborate white gabled exterior soon became a landmark in the southern Owens Valley; an ornate fountain graced its front entrance and the house was surrounded by apple, walnut, cottonwood, and poplar trees. A flume led to a small waterwheel, and a grape arbor connected the new house to the original adobe brick home, which was used at different times as a kitchen, dining room, extra bedroom, and bunkhouse.

Shepherd quickly rose to prominence in the area's political and social circles. He was elected Constable in 1866, became a District Judge in 1871, and was elected an officer of the recently established Masonic lodge in Independence in 1873 and a county supervisor in 1874. He obtained a contract to build a toll road from Owens Lake to the mining towns of Darwin and Panamint City. To build the road Shepherd employed a large Paiute work crew under the supervision of Paiute Chief Captain George. The road was finished by the end of 1875 and Shepherd served as toll collector.



John Shepherd

The Shepherds raised eight children, and the Shepherd Ranch became the center of much spirited social life and a stopping place for travelers and teamsters traveling the nearby Inyo County Wagon Road. By the late 1800s the Shepherd ranch had grown to some 2,000 acres and included two-thirds of the water rights on Shepherd Creek. Shepherd raised cattle, horses, mules, grass, hay, and grain and hauled ore from the Inyo mines to Los Angeles, bringing back supplies to the Owens Valley.

Barbecue grill at the site of the Shepherd Ranch constructed by Japanese American Internees during World War II.



Historic Photograph of the Shepherd Ranch from the approximate location of the Manzanar Tour Road.



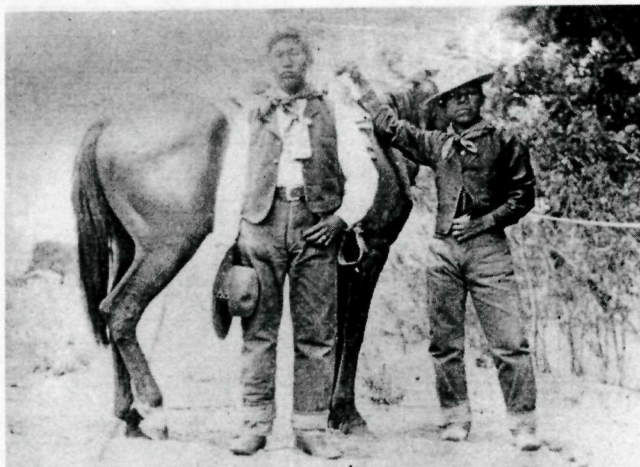
### The Paiutes and Shepherd Ranch

An Indian camp was established to the west of Shepherd's home above the irrigated portion of the ranch. The camp consisted of tents and traditional Paiute houses made from tule reeds. Within a few years of their removal to Fort Tejon, most of the Paiutes had returned to the Owens Valley. Dispossessed of their land, they sought new ways to make a living. By 1874 Shepherd employed more than 30 Paiutes on his ranch, paying them 75 cents a day, and providing land for their camps. The women winnowed grain and performed domestic tasks on the ranch. The Paiute men, many of whom had been successful farmers of their own crops before their removal, performed irrigation work and other chores on the ranch.

In fact, it is possible that Shepherd and his crews reused Paiute irrigation ditches that had been developed over centuries. Many Paiutes took the surname of their employer, a sign of respect on the part of the Paiute and of the paternalistic relationship which developed.

### Owens Valley Improvement Company

In 1905 Charles Chaffey purchased the Shepherd Ranch and moved his family of eight to the ranch. Charles's brother George was already a world-renowned land developer, and together the Chaffey family formed the Sierra Securities Company. Over the next five years they acquired properties adjacent to the Shepherd Ranch. Charles lived at the ranch until 1907; later a succession of company farm superintendents lived there. Land holdings and water rights were transferred to the Chaffey family's new Owens Valley Improvement Company in September 1910. A concrete pipe manufacturing operation was begun and a system of concrete and steel gravity-flow irrigation pipes was constructed to carry water from Shepherd and Bairs Creeks to the development, which was to include both farms and a town.



Paiutes John Shepherd and son Louie Shepherd.

## Fortunes in Apples In OWENS VALLEY INYO COUNTY - CALIFORNIA



OWENS  
VALLEY  
IMPROVEMENT  
COMPANY

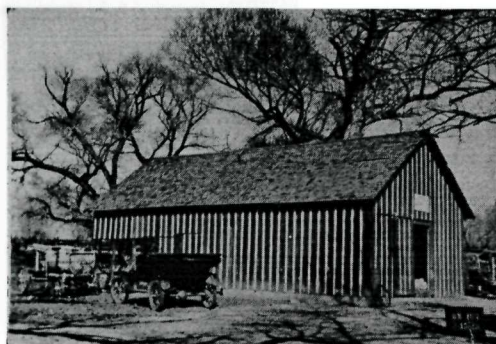
### Town of Manzanar

Called the Manzanar Irrigated Farms, the Chaffey family's development was advertised by agents in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Brochures touted the potential for success and wealth at the new colony because of its fine soil, abundant water, favorable climate, and proximity to markets. Parcels of ten, twenty, and forty acres were offered for sale at \$150 and up. Planting of apple and pear trees was begun by the Owens Valley Improvement Company, and by 1912 over 20,000 trees had been planted. By the 1920s the town of Manzanar boasted a general store with a post office, a community hall, a service station, an ice cream stand, a cannery, a lumber yard, a two-room school house, and over 25 homes.

In 1924 Los Angeles bought the Owens Valley Improvement Company in order to acquire the water rights of the Manzanar Water Company, and by 1927 Los Angeles had become owner and absentee farmer of most Manzanar properties. A Los Angeles inventory lists three residences and seven other structures at the Shepherd Ranch in 1929. The residences included a 1,757-square-ft wood frame Victorian house with a stone foundation, indoor plumbing, electrical wiring, tongue-and-groove ceilings, and a shingle roof; a 798-square-ft wood frame building with a sill foundation and shingle roof; and a 523-square-ft four-room wood frame building with a sill foundation, electrical wiring, and a shingle roof. Other listed structures included a 20-square-ft latrine, a 275-square-ft "cellar" with a concrete floor (possibly the original adobe house), a 368-square-ft garage with a concrete floor, a 424-square-ft blacksmith shop with a dirt and plank floor, an 800-square-ft warehouse, a 2,280-square-ft horse barn, and a 189-square-ft chicken house.

### Farewell to Manzanar

In 1930 Los Angeles adopted a policy of abandoning its Owens Valley ranches and farms to conserve water for export to the city. Most of the Shepherd Ranch buildings were sold for salvage in 1934. In 1936 John Shepherd's daughter, Eva Lee Gunn, asked her friend Ralph Merritt to drive her to Manzanar so she could watch the intentional burning of her old home. Ralph Merritt would later be instrumental in having the Manzanar area selected as the location for a Japanese American relocation center during World War II. Merritt would then go on to become the center's director.



OVI warehouse at the Shepherd Ranch.

### Archeology at Manzanar

Since 1993 National Park Service archeologists with the help of volunteers have conducted numerous surveys and excavations at Manzanar. This work has provided a glimpse into the past beyond that provided in written records and old photographs. In April 2003 excavations will be conducted at the Shepherd Ranch to find out more about those who lived in this area before the internment center. Work will focus on finding the foundations of the Shepherd House and other features related to the ranch.



For further information contact:  
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or visit Manzanar's internet site:  
[www.nps.gov/manz](http://www.nps.gov/manz)

Bulletin prepared by the Western Archeological and Conservation Center. Historic photographs courtesy of the Eastern California Museum and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.