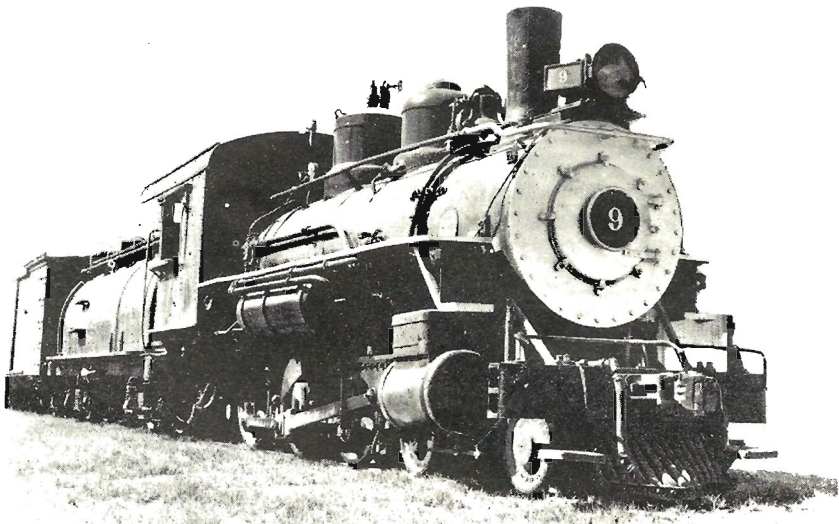


Welcome Visitors!

**L A W S**  
**RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
AND  
**HISTORICAL SITE**  
Bishop, Ca.

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. 953  
LISTED ON  
NATIONAL REGISTRY OF HISTORIC PLACES  
*Department of the Interior*



OPEN ALL YEAR  
VISITING HOURS - 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.  
*operated by the*  
BISHOP MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 363 • Bishop, CA 93515  
(760) 873-5950  
*e-mail: lawsmuseum@aol.com • www.lawsmuseum.org*  
NO SMOKING ON MUSEUM GROUNDS

# Chronology in Brief . . .

INCORPORATED MAY 10, 1880

**FEB. 1882** - Railroad completed from Mound House to Candelaria, Nev.

**JAN. 1883** - Completed to Benton, Calif.

**MAR. 1883** - Completed to Laws—first train run April 1.

**JULY 1883** - Completed to Hawley (Keeler). Train services initiated in August.

**FEB. 1892** - Carson & Colorado "Railway" Co. incorporated to consolidate three divisions and to refinance previous corp.

**MAR. 1900** - C & C sold to S.P. for \$2,750,000. R.J. Laws for whom station was named retained as Supt.

**JULY 1905** - Tracks from Mound House to Tonopah Jct. standard gauged (145 mi.). Hawthorne, Nev. founded by C & C in 1881 by-passed. Shops moved to Mina.

**AUG. 1905** - Standard gauge to Tonopah completed. N.G. abandoned.

**SEPT. 1905** - Mountain Time for N.G. adopted.

**FEB. 1908** - Construction started on S.P. "Jawbone Branch" standard gauge road, Mojave to Owenyo, jct. point with N.G. Keeler to Laws Branch.

**OCT. 1910** - "Jawbone Branch" completed—used principally to haul equipment and supplies for building Owens Valley Aqueduct (City of Los Angeles)—first direct railroad service south out of Owens Valley.

**JAN. 1912** - Nev. & Calif. Ry. Corp. (C&C) dissolved and N.G. assumed Southern Pacific designation.

**JUNE 1913** - Overnight Pullman sleeper service inaugurated between Owenyo and L.A. over "Jawbone Branch." Business conducted from Owenyo office.

**1932** - Passenger service through Laws abandoned.

**1943** - Mina to Laws freight service abandoned and track removed.

**JAN. 1959** - S.P. announces application for ICC permission to discontinue N.G. Keeler to Laws branch (the last narrow gauge common carrier west of the Rocky Mts.) Permission later granted.

**Reason:** "declining and unpredictable use of line" — "expensive and time consuming transfer of shipments between narrow gauge (small sized cars) and standard gauge cars" — "Action unavoidable though regrettable from a sentimental point of view." S.P. expressed a "great affection for the unique branch line which dates from 1883 and appreciates the warm regard for the line by old-time residents and a host of railroad hobbyists. However, the little railroad with its 36 inch gauge and tiny cars is an anachronism which can no longer be justified as an efficient operation."

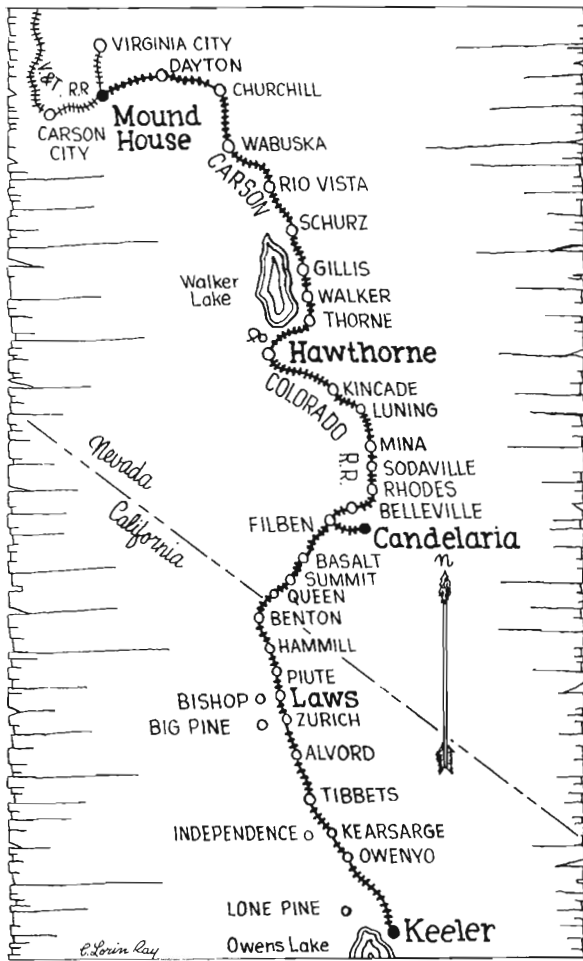
**FEB. 1959** - Laws Agency discontinued and depot closed.

**APRIL 30, 1960** - Final day of operation of narrow gauge between Laws and Keeler. Locomotive No. 9 (a ten wheel Baldwin built in 1909) together with a string of cars, Laws Station Building and surrounding railroad installations formally transferred by the S.P. jointly to the City of Bishop and County of Inyo in form of a "Gift Deed." Thus ended the story of "The Slim Princess" as a living, moving part of railroad history. It is now legend.

**JULY 6, 1964** - Actual transfer of land (app. 11 acres) donated by S.P. to Inyo County. Deed accepted by Board of Supervisors. Recorded in official records Inyo County Vol. 165, page 78.

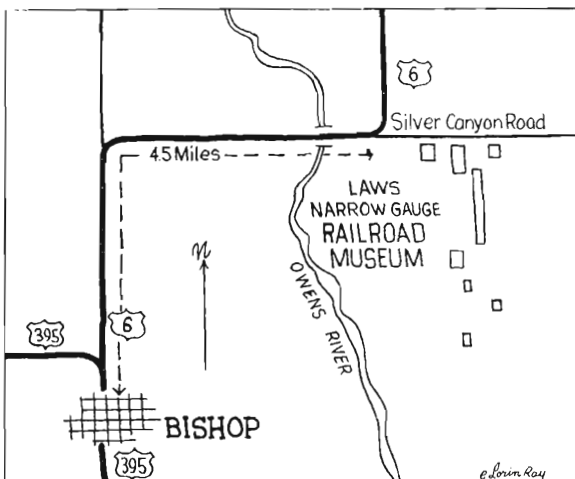
**JAN. 1965** County of Inyo, City of Bishop, negotiated an Agreement with Bishop Museum and Historical Society to take over Laws site as Headquarters with permission to operate a Museum under certain conditions mutually agreed upon.

**APRIL 1, 1966** LAWS RAILROAD MUSEUM opened to the public 83 years from the day the first scheduled train arrived at Laws from the north, complete with U.S. Mail, Wells Fargo Express and baggage cars, and offering both passenger and freight service.



## GIFT DEED

In appreciation of the interest of Inyo County and the City of Bishop in preserving the memory of the Far West's last common carrier narrow-gauge railroad, the Keeler Branch, Southern Pacific Company is pleased to donate steam locomotive No. 9 together with other rolling stock, and the Laws Station building and surrounding installations for safekeeping in behalf of generations to come.



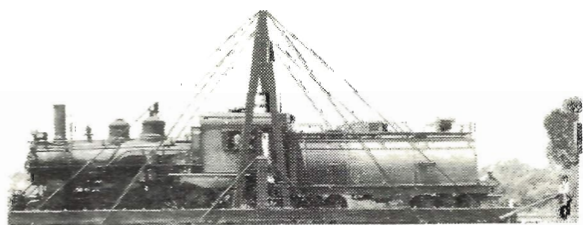


## In Memory of the "Slim Princess"

Doubtless there are none of us who know from whence came the name "Slim Princess." Some thought from the slim rails that extended over the 300 miles, but to most the name was accepted for the sentiment it bore.

Since that day in April 1960, when the last train arrived at Laws, there were those who dreamed of preserving the site, against adverse conditions. It now appears the program of preservation and restoration is at hand.

There are those who have passed the station, occupied with their thoughts, and scarcely giving it a glance. They were in the minority. Among the others were: the retired engineer who stood by Old No. 9 remembering the day his hand was on the throttle . . . the elderly couple who stopped to recall the day a youthful bride-to-be was met at the station . . . a former valley rancher from a piece down the track whose thoughts included days of long ago when the little engine whistled his milk cows off the tracks . . . the ex-sheepman paused to let his mind drift back to when he had loaded sheep at his site for shipment to northern markets . . . the salesman, banker and miner who had stepped down from the coach after a long hot ride, to take their place in a new community . . . the soldier who had waved goodbye as he departed for the war and many, many others who would be pleased if the depot and "Slim Princess" could be retained for future generations to view and enjoy.



## Story of Laws . . .

On May 10 1880, the Carson and Colorado Railroad Company was formed and incorporated by William Sharon, Henry Yerington, and Darius Mills. They planned to run the narrow gauge railroad from Mound House, Nevada, and Carson River to the Colorado River, calling it the C&C Railroad. It never reached the Colorado River but stopped at Keeler, California. It has often been referred to as 'the railroad that was built 300 miles too long or 300 years too soon.'

As the word was out that the railroad would run east of the Owens River people started to arrive at what is known now as Laws. A new railroad town was built. It took 3 years for the rails to be laid from Mound House to Laws, with the first train arriving in April of 1883. The depot, agent's house, section boss's house, outhouses, water tank and turntable were all ready when it arrived.

In addition to the railroad buildings other construction quickly followed which included many homes, barns and corrals, two general stores, a rooming house, eating house, hotel, boarding house, pool hall and dance hall, blacksmith shop, post office, barber shop, powder magazine and warehouses. Several industrial buildings followed later. Many ranches surrounded Laws and used the railroad to ship their crops.

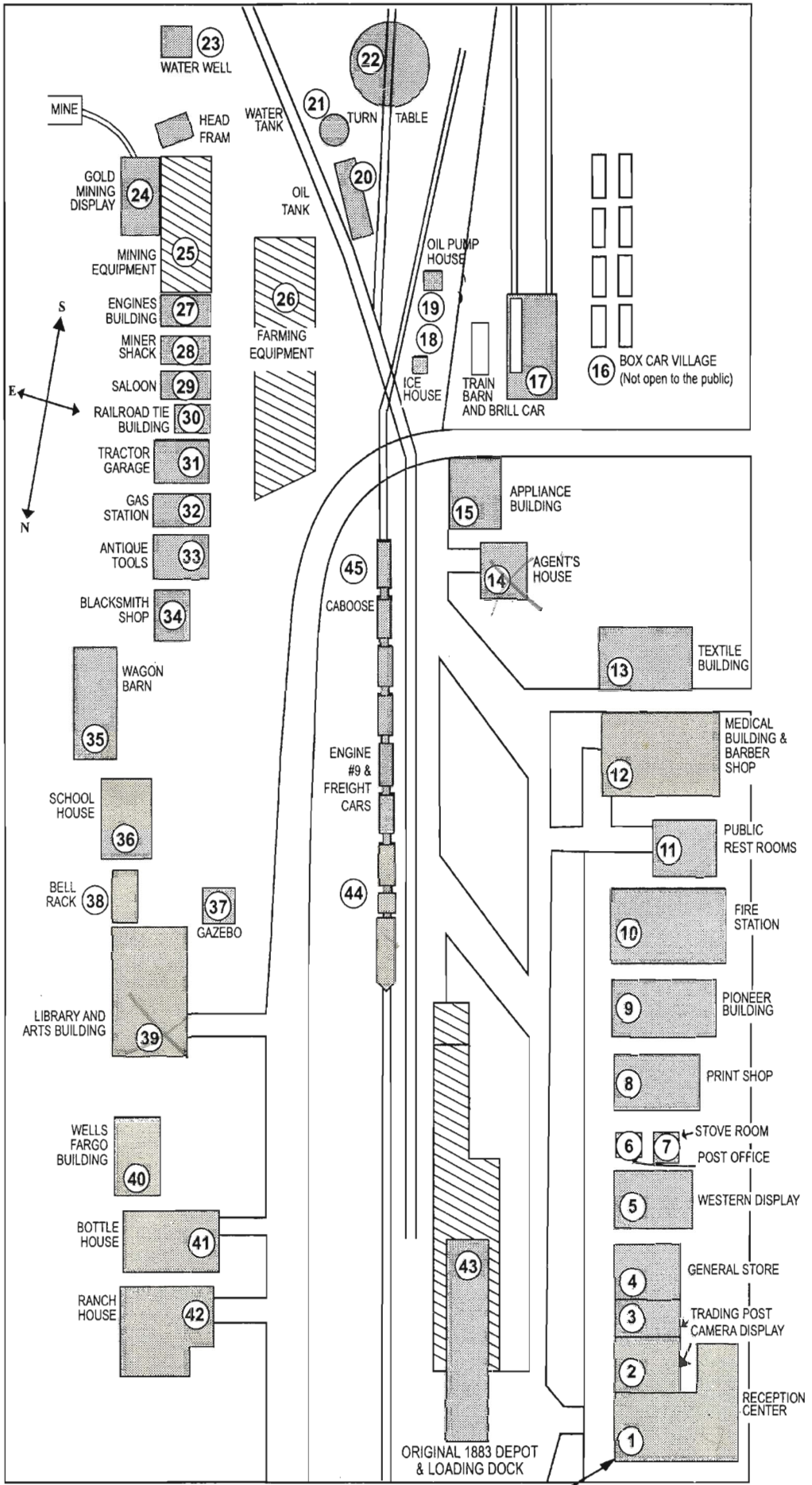
The decline and demise of Laws and the railroad were the result of the local mines closing, trucking becoming cheaper than rail freight and the City of Los Angeles buying most of the valley for the water rights. By 1959 when the railroad ceased operation, there was no trace of any of the buildings at Laws as they had all been torn down for salvage. Only the depot, agent's house, oil and water tanks and the turntable survived. All the other buildings you see at the museum today were doomed for destruction locally, but saved by being moved to the museum grounds..

*Compiled from the "Story of Laws" by Clarabelle Hawkins.*

## **FOLD OUT MAP TO RIGHT EXHIBITS AT LAWS**

1. RECEPTION CENTER. Gifts, books and old historical photograph display.  
This building was used in the "Nevada Smith" movie.
2. CAMERA DISPLAY. Antique cameras and photos.
3. TRADING POST. Thrift store items for sale.
4. GENERAL STORE. Early Laws mercantile store.
5. WESTERN DISPLAY. Saddles, brands and antique horse-drawn hearse.
6. POST OFFICE. Last original Laws Post Office.
7. STOVE DISPLAY. Antique stoves and lanterns.
8. PRINT SHOP. Complete working printing presses and equipment dating back to 1880.
9. PIONEER BUILDING. Antique bathtubs, guns, radios, telephones, pianos, musical instruments, sewing machines and military items from several wars.
10. FIRE STATION. Vintage fire engine and equipment. Antique auto, hearse and auto-related items.
11. PUBLIC REST ROOMS.
12. MEDICAL BUILDING. Doctor, dentist and optician offices. Pharmacy and barber shop.
13. TEXTILE BUILDING. Dressmaker's shop and beauty shop.
14. ORIGINAL 1883 AGENT'S HOUSE. Furnished with period items.
- \* 15. APPLIANCE BUILDING. Early refrigerators, stoves and various fruit presses.
16. BOX CAR VILLAGE. Original C & C box cars (not open to the public).
17. TRAIN RESTORATION SHOP. The restored historical self-propelled 1929 Brill Car is on display here. It was used in Death Valley.
18. ICE HOUSE. Original Bishop ice house used to store ice cut from local lakes.
19. OIL PUMP HOUSE. Used to fill the oil tank.
20. OIL TANK. Original oil tank used after the railroad discontinued using wood.
21. WATER TANK. Replica of the 1883 water tank.
22. ORIGINAL 1883 TURNTABLE.
23. ORIGINAL WATER WELL.
24. GOLD MINING DISPLAY. Antique stamp mill, Head Frame and Mine Tunnel
25. MINING EQUIPMENT AREA.
26. FARM EQUIPMENT AREA. Tractors and other farming equipment collection.
27. ENGINES BUILDING. Old engine collection
28. MINER'S SHACK
29. SALOON AND BATHHOUSE.
30. RAILROAD TIE BUILDING.
31. TRACTOR GARAGE.
32. GAS STATION. Vintage gas pumps and model A Ford. Auto repair garage with a model T Ford.
33. ANTIQUE TOOL DISPLAY.
34. BLACKSMITH SHOP. Early types of tools, forges, bellows and work shop.
35. WAGON BARN. Old wagons, rare tractor, engines and wagon repair shop.
36. ORIGINAL 1909 NORTH INYO SHOO HOUSE.
37. GAZEBO
38. BELL RACK. Old local school, church and mine bells.
39. LIBRARY AND ARTS BUILDING. This was formerly the first Catholic Church in Bishop. On display are books, art, musical instruments, family histories and many other antique items.
40. WELLS FARGO BUILDING. Rock displays, assay equipment and our Indian artifacts collection.
41. BOTTLE HOUSE. Extensive bottle collection.
42. RANCH HOUSE. Restored circa 1900 local ranch house with period furnishings and our doll collection.
43. ORIGINAL 1883 DEPOT AND LOADING DOCK. Railroad memorabilia and model trains.
44. 1909 BALDWIN 4-6-0 ENGINE #9 AND VARIOUS TYPES OF CARS.
45. CABOOSE.

\* Displays under construction



SILVER CANYON ROAD

ENTRANCE

PUBLIC PARKING

ORIGINAL 1883 DEPOT & LOADING DOCK

BOX CAR VILLAGE  
(Not open to the public)