



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF INYO

P. O. DRAWER N • INDEPENDENCE, CALIFORNIA 93526

TELEPHONE (760) 878-0373

email: [dellis@inyocounty.us](mailto:dellis@inyocounty.us)



August 18, 2022

Mammoth Lakes Town Council  
c/o Jamie Gray, Clerk  
P.O. Box 1609  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Honorable Council Members:

As you may or may not be aware, there is a grassroots effort – led by Mr. Randy Short of Bishop – to urge the County of Inyo to rename Bishop Airport the “Bishop-Dave McCoy Airport.”

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors discussed the request at its August 16 meeting and concluded that it could not take definitive action in the absence of feedback from other airport stakeholders. The Board plans to revisit the discussion on September 20 when it has additional information.

As such, the Board is reaching out to request your input on this proposal. Mr. Short’s request is enclosed along with letters of support and opposition, and documentation provided to the Board at its August 16 meeting.

Please respond with your feedback no later than Sept. 2 to Assistant Clerk of the Board Darcy Ellis at (760) 878-0373, [dellis@inyocounty.us](mailto:dellis@inyocounty.us), or P.O. Drawer N, Independence, CA 93526.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Darcy Ellis,  
Assistant Clerk of the Board/  
Assistant to the Administrator

cc: Board of Supervisors  
CAO Chapman  
Incoming CAO Greenberg



# County of Inyo



## County Administrator

### **TIMED ITEMS - NO ACTION REQUIRED**

**MEETING:** August 16, 2022

**FROM:** Assistant Clerk of the Board

**SUBJECT:** Request to Rename Bishop Airport

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Request Board: A) consider and discuss the request by Mr. Randy Short to rename the Bishop Airport the "Bishop - Dave McCoy Airport;" and B) provide any necessary direction to staff.

**SUMMARY/JUSTIFICATION:**

On June 21, 2022, the Assistant Clerk of the Board received a written request from Mr. Randy Short to rename the Bishop Airport the "Bishop - Dave McCoy Airport." The request was submitted per County policy (attached), which also requires three letters of support from community members. Those letters - 5 total - are attached, and were collected in February 2020 following Mr. McCoy's passing.

These letters were part of a formal request dated February 26, 2020. Per County Policy, the request should have been agendized within 6 weeks of receipt. The request was postponed to accommodate additional discussion with the proponent and then, unfortunately, set on the backburner during the subsequent arrival of COVID-19 in Inyo County.

Mr. Short, one of the supporters of the original proposal, has now taken over for the previous proponent and resurrected the effort to have the airport named after Mr. McCoy.

As part of your Board's consideration, according to the policy, you must find that the naming recognition is being given to individuals/organizations which have:

1. Demonstrated social and moral responsibility and exemplary actions that inspire others.
2. Made significant contributions of time, talent and/or financial support to an important part of the County's, State's and/or Country's history.
3. Had major historical significance.

The policy also states that no County facility/building shall be named after a private individual unless he or she "contributed a majority of the funding that was used to construct the facility or acquire the land upon which the building is situated." The proponent acknowledges that Mr. McCoy might not meet this criterion, but states he did build and then donate to the County the largest building at the Bishop Airport, a massive hangar that today houses Sierra Life Flight and others.

Another policy requirement is a commitment from the proponent(s) to cover all the costs resulting from this request, but this can be waived at the discretion of the Board.

The policy requires a staff recommendation. At this time, staff can recommend neither approval nor denial - only that the Board hears from the proponent(s) and considers the request according to the previously approved guidelines. This same request previously went to the Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee, which declined to support it and in fact voted unanimously at a recent meeting to recommend retention of the name "Bishop Airport."

A letter of opposition from one of the members of the NIAAC members is also attached.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:**

**ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

Your Board may or may not provide direction to staff.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

**FINANCING:**

County policy requires a commitment from the applicant that they will cover all the costs resulting from the request, but this can be waived at the discretion of the Board.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Plaque Placement & Facility Naming Policy
2. Randy Short Airport Name Change Request 07.21.22
3. Letters of Support for Airport Naming Request of 02.26.20
4. Name Change Request from February 2020
5. Opposition Letter to Renaming Bishop Airport 08.11.22

**APPROVALS:**

Darcy Ellis  
Darcy Ellis  
John Vallejo  
Meaghan McCamman  
Leslie Chapman

Created/Initiated - 7/28/2022  
Approved - 7/28/2022  
Approved - 8/3/2022  
Approved - 8/10/2022  
Final Approval - 8/11/2022



# COUNTY OF INYO

## PLAQUE PLACEMENT AND NAMING OF COUNTY FACILITIES POLICY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set the criteria for evaluating requests to name or place plaques on County facilities/buildings.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### SECTION I: INFORMATION NEEDED IN REQUEST

All requests to the Board of Supervisors for naming or placing commemorative plaques on or by County facilities/buildings must include:

1. Reason(s) for request.
2. Description of circumstances surrounding the request.
3. Brief profile of the nominee.
4. A minimum of three written endorsements in support of the request.
5. The location of the facility proposed for naming or placement of a commemorative plaque.
6. A commitment from the applicant that they will cover all the costs resulting from the request.

#### SECTION II: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING REQUEST

In evaluating the request the County will give consideration and recognition to individuals / organizations, which have:

1. Demonstrated social and moral responsibility and exemplary actions that inspire others.
2. Made significant contributions of time, talent and/or financial support to an important part of the County's, State's and/or Country's history.
3. Had major historical significance.



### **SECTION III: CRITERIA FOR DENYING REQUEST**

The County will deny any request that:

1. Carries as a condition the brand name, corporate name or family name of a fire arm, alcohol or tobacco product; or is capable of confusion with a trade mark, copyright, brand name or existing landmark, without proper consent of the lawful owners of same;
2. Are deemed to be in poor taste; and
3. That does not meet the conditions expressed under Section II.

In addition for requests to name a County facility/building only, no:

1. County facility/building shall be named after a private individual unless that individual contributed a majority of the funding that was used to construct the facility or acquire the land upon which the building is situated; and
2. County facility/building shall be named for a public officer while the official remains in public office.

### **SECTION IV: PROCESS FOR PLACEMENT OF REQUEST ON BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA**

In order to initiate the process for naming or placing a commemorative plaque on a County facility/building:

1. An applicant needs to submit a letter to the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors that explains the request by answering the questions in Section I and asked to be placed on the Board's Agenda. The letter should include the address and phone number of where the applicant can be reached; and
2. Upon receiving the letter the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors will schedule the request on the Board of Supervisors Agenda within six (6) weeks and contact the applicant with the time and date.

### **SECTION V: APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

1. All requests will be placed on the Board of Supervisors Agenda for approval per section IV.
2. Staff will provide a recommendation to the Board on any request.



3. Any request for naming and/or placing a commemorative plaque on a County facility/building will require a 4/5's vote approval by the Board of Supervisors.
4. Generally, a facility shall not be named after a public official or private individual unless that person is deceased. A decision to name a facility after a public official or private individual when not deceased shall require a unanimous vote of approval by the Board of Supervisors.

####

July 21, 2022

To: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Re: Naming the Bishop Airport the "Bishop - Dave McCoy Airport"

Dave McCoy did more for Inyo County and its people than any person in the County's history. For starters he developed skiing in the Eastern Sierra. Dave started his ski area operations in 1938 at McGee Mountain, he owned and operated three ski areas, in his lifetime, McGee Mountain, Mammoth Mountain, and June Mountain. For 67 years Dave's work produced significant revenue and jobs to the people of Inyo County. Dave McCoy lived in Bishop for most of his life, he lived a modest lifestyle preferring to put almost all of the profits back into the ski area. Many of the school children of Inyo and Mono Counties learned to ski at Mammoth for very little money, less than a dollar a day. The children were also provided with rental equipment if they couldn't afford their own, all due to Dave's generosity. He created the first major scheduled air service into Bishop and Mammoth airports, with Bishop based Sierra Pacific Airlines. Dave built and then donated to the County the largest building at the Bishop Airport, a massive hanger that today houses Life Flight and others, producing significant revenue for the county.

Dave McCoy was instrumental in creating what Cerro Coso's Eastern Sierra College Center is today. He and his family contributed significant funding to both the Mammoth Lakes Foundation and the Eastern Sierra Foundation. These foundations were initially established to secure land and build permanent facilities for Cerro Coso Community College programs in both Mammoth Lakes and Bishop.

Dave McCoy's vision and generosity have been transformational for students and their families. Since the Eastern Sierra College Center opened, through both campuses have awarded 837 certificates and degrees and the foundations have awarded over 2,000 full scholarships to local students. Dave McCoy's legacy will live on in the lives of Eastern Sierra students and their families who have benefited from local, affordable access to higher education.

Few people know the totality of Dave's giving. One may ask, where did the scoreboard at Big Pine High School come from? "An anonymous donor". Who jumped at the opportunity to help fund the "Dick Noles Wounded Warrior Pathway" at June Lake? We all know the magnitude of things Dick Noles did for this valley. Who was the money behind those projects? There are hundreds of examples like this and yes all done by the man simply known as "Dave".

Dave first came to Independence in 1928 and settled there in 1935. Dave's wife Roma was born in Bishop and graduated from Bishop High School as did all their six children and most of his 16 grandchildren. Even though the businesses that he was famous for creating were in Mammoth Dave's feet were firmly planted in Bishop, the McCoy family never lived in Mammoth. Dave died in 2020 but his contributions to Inyo County; Mammoth and June Mountains, goes on today 84 years after he began, and will continue contributing every day into the future. For these reasons it is fitting that the airport that is poised to be an important and growing asset to Inyo County be named after the man who helped make so much in Inyo County better.

While this request does not strictly comply with the Board policy I request this still move forward.

I respectfully request that the item be placed on the Board of Supervisors agenda.

Randy Short

393 Mt Tom Rd, Bishop 760 872 9056



Marshall Ryan McCoy  
PO Box 1174  
Verdi NV, 89439

Inyo County Board of Supervisors  
Matt Kingsley, Chairman  
PO Drawer N  
Independence, CA 93526

February 24, 2020

Dear Chairman Kingsley:

I would like to put in my formal request to rename the Bishop Airport after Dave McCoy. Dave's contributions to the Eastern Sierra after founding Mammoth Mountain in neighboring Mono County has recognizably changed Inyo County, and its residents.

Dave was not only a pioneer to the Ski Industry, but was the first to bring commercial air service to Inyo County. Dave purchased Sierra Pacific Airlines in 1973. Sierra Pacific operated with the company headquarters at the Bishop airport. Sierra Pacific provided scheduled air service from both Bishop, and Mammoth to the Los Angeles basin, Fresno, Las Vegas, Reno, and the Bay Area.

In 1976 Dave built the largest hangar at the Bishop airport with a lease agreement that the hangar be returned to Inyo County after 25 years. Mammoth continued to lease the hangar from Inyo County until the mid 1990's as its principle base of operation for the resorts corporate aircraft. That hangar still stands, and is the current base of operations for Inyo Counties only Emergency Air Medical Operation.

Dave sold Sierra Pacific in 1978. The airline is still in operation, based in Tucson, AZ. Currently Sierra Pacific operates Two Boeing 737-500 aircraft. They provide charter for the United States Military, United States Marshal service, and the United States Forest Service.

Sincerely,

Marshall Ryan McCoy

February 22, 2020

The Honorable Inyo County Board of Supervisors  
P.O. Drawer N  
Independence, CA. 93526

Dear Honorable Board Members:

I am writing to offer my support for the naming of the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport in honor of Dave McCoy. Dave McCoy's impact and influence on the Eastern Sierra is legendary and extremely deserving of this distinction.

Memories of the pristine alpine landscape of the Eastern Sierra that Dave had visited in his childhood, left a lasting impression on him and after graduating from high school he rode his motorcycle to Independence, CA. to pursue his dreams. And as the saying goes, "the rest is history"!

And what a remarkable history it is. As he explored the backcountry as a hydrographer for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, his imagination, his work ethic and his love of the great outdoors fueled his dreams. Combined with his love of people and providing opportunities for them to enjoy what he was so blessed to experience, Dave started with one rope tow for local skiers and ended up creating a world class ski resort that he built, literally from the ground up. He built Mammoth Mountain Ski area with his principles of hard work, determination, and respect and admiration for his employees and those people that shared his dream and passion. He never asked anyone to do anything he wasn't willing to do himself. He had the ability to motivate others and create a work environment that inspired and challenged others to work their hardest to achieve the dream they shared with Dave. He never missed an opportunity to learn from others and honor their perspectives. He lived by the principle of teamwork long before it became a slogan for current organizations.

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area stands as a testament to Dave and his dream. But it is Dave's life that is his legacy. His life that was dedicated to family and friendships. He was a champion skier himself and shared his talents as a coach of young athletes and ski champions. His dedication to and love of youth and their families, is exemplified by the remarkable program that he instituted that gave school age children in the Eastern Sierra the opportunity to ski for what started as \$1 dollar for a ski pass as long as it was not on a school day. There is no way to adequately capture what that opportunity meant for tens of thousands of young "Dave McCoy" skiers who were blessed to become life- long skiers because of the heart of Dave McCoy. School programs throughout Inyo and Mono Counties were established so that young students could learn to ski and compete, if they chose, because Dave McCoy just wanted to see people smile and have a good time with teachers, families and friends. He then applied that love of youth and education to establish the Mammoth Lakes Foundation which resulted in building the first institution of higher learning, Cerro Coso Community College in Mammoth Lakes.

Dave's lifetime achievements are too numerous to acknowledge within this letter, but they all point to the extraordinary man that he was and the life that he led that exemplified his love of family, friends and community. Bishop was Dave's home and the place where he raised his family, with the love of his life, Roma. The Eastern Sierra is the place where his lifelong dreams came true. The citizens of Inyo County will be forever grateful for this man who worked so tirelessly to better our community guided by a deep and sincere love for his fellow human beings.

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Inyo County Board of Supervisors

As the proposal to name the Eastern Sierra Airport is considered by you, it seems so fitting that airline pilots and passengers from near and far will fly above the majestic Sierra and witness all that inspired Dave McCoy—**Mountains to match his Dreams—Valleys that represent the highs and lows of his Work Ethic and Perseverance—a landscape vast with Humility and Generosity—And the deep blue skies of A Giving and Grateful Spirit with Love of Family, Friends, Community and Humanity.**

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to moving the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport towards a new and exciting future. And how fitting that this airport be named in honor and recognition of a pioneer in the ski industry who shared the philosophies of two pioneers in aviation:

“If we worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true really is, then there would be little hope for advance.” Orville Wright, inventor, engineer and test pilot.

“The most effective way to do it, is to do it.” Amelia Earhart, first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic.

Dave was also an inventor, engineer and a test pilot in his own field and he certainly flew solo when he first imagined building Mammoth Mountain.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Linda Arcularius

February 24, 2020

Board of Supervisors

168 N. Edwards St

Independence, CA 93526

Gentlemen,

I am writing to you to recommend that the Bishop Airport be renamed the Dave McCoy Regional Airport. Dave's impact on the Eastern Sierra and in particular Mono and Inyo Counties began in the thirties. He set up his portable rope tows in various locations, depending on the snow. He settled into a more permanent location at McGee but still went to Mammoth Mountain when the storms subsided in the spring. Finally in 1953 the Forest Service gave him a permit to begin building what now is known as Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort.

As we know it today Mammoth Mountain is a huge economic driver for Inyo and Mono Counties, that goes without saying. What isn't well known is how he specifically impacted the local Bishop businesses. Dave McCoy and his family never lived in Mammoth, McGee and Crowley was as close as he ever got. Most of his life he lived in Bishop and as much as he loved Mammoth Mountain he also had a deep affection for Bishop. Dave would not take his buying power elsewhere, he always insisted that we buy locally. He bought chain saws from Joe's Garage, auto and truck parts (and rope tow parts) from Steve's Auto and did the same with many other businesses in Bishop. Dave continued that policy until the day he passed away. If you could get something in Bishop then that is where you bought it.

Dave plowed every penny back into Mammoth Mountain, ROI (return on investment) was a Wall Street concept that was unimportant to him. As he said to me one day "I guess that makes me not a very good businessman". Maybe that's true in today's view but from where I sit, what he did will provide good lives to the people of Inyo and Mono Counties for generations to come.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Randy Short", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Randy Short

393 Mt Tom Rd

Bishop, CA 93514

Inyo County Board of Supervisors  
168 N. Edwards St.  
Independence, Ca. 93526

February 21, 2020

RE: Support letter to rename Bishop Airport

To the Board of Supervisors,

I support the recommendation to rename the Bishop Airport in Dave McCoy's name. Dave has built more than a Mountain to ski on. He has built communities, relationships, families, a life style and more. After all, it's because of Dave that we live, work and play in the Eastern Sierra. Dave McCoy has given us the opportunity to raise our family here and many other business opportunities. The list goes on and on. Most of us would not be here today with out Dave McCoy. It is fitting that we rename the airport after him. "Dave McCoy Regional Airport". That has a nice sound to it!

Randy Gillespie  
3063 Mesquite Rd  
Bishop, Ca. 93514

Laura Smith

771 N. Main St. Spc. 104

Bishop, CA 93514

(760) 872-4034

February 20, 2020

Dear Honorable Inyo County Board of Supervisors,

It is a very good thing when a community takes the time and opportunity to acknowledge individuals who have given their entire life in service and dedication to that community. When we leave memorials and monuments marking the great generosity and commitment of those individuals it leaves a mark of legacy to inform and inspire those of us who remain and for future generations.

For this reason I encourage all of you to seriously consider the naming of the airport in Bishop to include the name of Dave McCoy along with its regional name.

Thank you for all the work you are doing to improve our airport and bring reliable, quality commercial air service to the entire Eastern Sierra community.

With my sincere respect and appreciation,

Laura Smith, Mayor of the City of Bishop

OFFICE OF THE  
**SHERIFF**  
**INYO COUNTY, CA**



**JEFF R. HOLLOWELL**  
**SHERIFF**

**ERIC PRITCHARD**  
**UNDERSHERIFF**

*"A Professional Service Agency"*

February 26, 2020

Inyo County Board of Supervisors  
Matt Kingsley, Chairman  
PO Drawer N  
Independence, CA 93526

Dear Chairman Kingsley,

As the elected Sheriff and a lifelong resident of Inyo County, I would like to make a formal request of the Board to consider dedicating the new Regional Airport in Bishop to Dave McCoy. Dave was a pillar not only in the community but the entire Eastern Sierra Region. I believe dedicating the new Regional Airport in the name of Dave McCoy would be a tribute to the devotion Dave brought to the County and region.

Dave McCoy was born August 24<sup>th</sup> 1915 and passed away February 8<sup>th</sup> 2020. Dave moved to Inyo County in 1936 and worked for the City of LA, DWP as a hydrographer. Dave started a "rope tow" ski run west of Independence and later one at McGee Mountain. In 1953, Dave received a permit from the Forest Service to develop Mammoth Mountain. In 1973, Mammoth Mountain purchased Sierra Pacific Airlines, bringing commercial charter flights to Bishop and Mammoth. In 1989 Dave's vision to cultivate higher education in the Eastern Sierra resulted in the formation of the Mammoth Lakes Foundation. This is what brought Cerro Coso Community College to the Sierra's.

For transparency reasons I will inform you my son in law is Marshall McCoy, grandson of Dave McCoy. This had no bearing on my recommendation to rename the airport. I am open to suggestions on the name, but agree with Marshall that Bishop Regional Airport-Dave McCoy Airfield would be fitting and appropriate.

Dave is survived by his wife of 78 years, Roma, 6 children, 19 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jeff Hollowell".

Jeff R. Hollowell, Sheriff

To the Inyo County Supervisors  
Meeting of August 16, 2022  
Re: Discussion of name change for Bishop Airport

Dear Supervisors,

I am a member of the Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee (NIAAC), though I am writing as an Inyo County citizen and a member of the pilot community of Bishop Airport. I respectfully request that the Board retain the name of Bishop Airport unchanged.

I have multiple reasons for this request. To begin with, all of us on the NIAAC learned that although a number of Jennifer Rosier's constituents brought the proposal to her to rename the Bishop Airport for Dave McCoy, Dave McCoy himself would have strongly objected to it! The McCoy family in fact were initially against it as well. I find it offensive that some would posthumously "honor" Dave in a way that he would have unequivocally objected to when he was alive.

The major proponent for this name change, Mr. Randy Short, pointed out that people flying into southern California fly into the John Wayne airport, though he didn't note the other airports that serve the region: Los Angeles International, Ontario, Van Nuys, and so on, that basically go by the city name. This is the far more common and useful practice and reduces confusion. Of the roughly 5000 public-use airports in the US, the airports named for people number only in the few dozen (and mostly for politicians).

In the three NIAAC meetings during which this topic was discussed (February, May, and August 2022) other reasons expressed included: the possibility that other worthy Inyo County individuals (or their families) would feel disrespected because they were overlooked; the objection to naming airports for people in general; the confusion as to the location of the airport if the name is not "Bishop" (this was one reason of several that the name "Eastern Sierra Regional Airport" was abandoned); the fact that the name "Dave McCoy" is associated with Mammoth Mountain, regardless of the fact that he lived in Inyo County; and for pilots, the loss of a simpler and more straight forward call for the several times the airport name is used in radio communication when flying into, out of, or near Bishop Airport.

The NIAAC gave Mr. Short (at the May 2022 meeting) the opportunity to suggest to his fellow proponents, to have the new terminal building (a future project at Bishop Airport) named for Dave McCoy instead. We found out at the recent meeting that this was rejected. After further discussion a motion was made to recommend retaining the name of Bishop Airport; it was seconded and unanimously approved.

I was truly surprised by the flat out rejection of what seemed to be a reasonable compromise. I find the move to change the airport name disrespectful of Dave McCoy and I urge the Inyo County Board of Supervisors to retain the name of Bishop Airport.



Respectfully,

Eileen Burger

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From: Stacy Sparrow [gurlsparrow@gmail.com]  
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2022 2:34 PM  
To: BoardClerk  
Subject: Item 24, 8/16/2022

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Inyo County Network. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and trust the sender. Contact Information Services with questions or concerns.

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Dear Inyo County Supervisors,

I would like the board to consider naming the Bishop Airport after Charles Partridge. The Partridge family has a rich history in the Owens Valley. I feel that it would be much more appropriate to honor a man with a direct connection to the planning and development of our airport. It would also honor the members of the Partridge family that have come after him and have piloted aircraft through our valley skies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Stacy Sparrow

**From:** Tara Joy Partridge [neversummer1181@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2022 3:02 PM

**To:** BoardClerk

**Subject:** Item 24, 8/16/2022

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Dear Inyo County Supervisors,

I stand behind my cousin Pam Milligan Vaughn's request that the board consider naming the Bishop Airport for my Great Grandfather Charles A. Partridge, who was District 2 Supervisor and founder of and supervisor of the building of both Bishop airports.

Aviation runs in our family in the Owens Valley, my grandfather Bill Partridge, son of Charles A. Partridge, was a pilot here as was his son, my father, Don Partridge. My own daughter, Tylar Banta, went on to get her Private Pilot Certificate in 2021 at age 17 after training at the Bishop airport. My father Don Partridge was a pioneer in aviation organizing an international hang gliding competition The Owens Valley Cross Country Classic.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tara Joy Partridge

**From:** Jennifer Roeser <jroeser@inyocounty.us>

**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2022 2:16 PM

**To:** Darcy Ellis <dellis@inyocounty.us>

**Subject:** FW: The airport

Hi Darcy – sending this to you as it includes some information that may be good to add to the timeline that you researched and compiled.

**From:** Pam Vaughan [<mailto:pamcob@earthlink.net>]

**Sent:** Saturday, August 13, 2022 9:30 AM

**To:** Dan Tothoroh; Rosemary Jarrett; [pucci@gmail.com](mailto:pucci@gmail.com); Rick Pucci; Jennifer Roeser; Matt Kingsley

**Subject:** The airport

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12 August 2022

Supervisors Tothoroh, Griffiths, Pucci, Roeser, and Kingsley:

February 1, 2020 I emailed a request to all the supervisors for the Bishop Airport to be named for my grandfather, rancher and District 2 Supervisor Charles A. Partridge, who was the founder of and supervisor of the building of both Bishop airports. I did not hear back from any of the supervisors including my own Supervisor Pucci or District 2 Supervisor Griffiths. I did not even know there was a process for name changes in this county. I know the pandemic hit about that time, and people are always very busy.

Hopefully you saw the Partridge diaries excerpted in the Inyo Register a little while ago. If so you know what work he did in modernizing this county.

The first airport was built in 1928 near where the Bishop sanitary landfill is today. It only lasted about a year because of a few factors: 1)Not enough turning radius to the west, 2)Too windy, 3)Possibly too sandy, 4)No room for expansion of the runways. Mr. Partridge then founded the 2nd airport location at its current site. He traveled to both Los Angeles and San Francisco investigating and researching airport construction in those cities. He found the current airport location on the Symons and Shaw Ranches and arranged for the county to purchase that land. He

organized the construction of the airport buildings and runways. He even did some of the work himself if there were deadlines to meet.

He was a humble man and probably would be embarrassed that I was even suggesting the airport be named for him. He worked behind the scenes to build up the valley economy in a time of economic depression due to the water conflict and the Great Depression. This also included modernizing the valley by paving the roads (he was also County Road Commissioner) and digging out and designing the trails in the Bishop Creek Watershed to encourage tourism.

I have the highest respect for Dave McCoy. He especially contributed a lot- especially in Mono County development. He was my mother's first crush when he worked as a soda jerk in the Independence Drug Store. The Mammoth Airport would be a better place to have the name changed to his. But even if there would be no name change at the Bishop Airport, I would respectfully request that a plaque be put up at the Bishop Airport to honor the memory of my grandfather, Charles A. Partridge, who contributed so much to its founding.

There are 3 attachments. 1) The text of my original email. 2) A page from the history of the local airports by Kirt Nance. 3) A few of the excerpts from Charles Partridge's diaries about the building of the airports. 4) A PDF of his biography which you might want to just skim since it is 10 pages long.

I will be in attendance at Tuesday's supervisor meeting, and hopefully I will get a chance to speak.

Sincerely,

Pam Vaughan

801 Valley West Circle

Bishop, CA 93514

(760)873-4742

Email: [pamcob@earthlink.net](mailto:pamcob@earthlink.net)

Author- Images of America: Bishop

History Columnist- Inyo Register

Board Member, Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Site

-----Original Message-----

From: Grant <grant614@suddenlink.net>

Sent: Saturday, August 13, 2022 9:08 PM

To: Darcy Ellis <dellis@inyocounty.us>

Subject: Naming Bishop Airport

Dear Miss Ellis,

I'm writing to you in support of the naming of Bishop Airport in honor of Dave McCoy. I think it's not only a great idea but honoring this man who has done so much for both Inyo and Mono county's is exemplary. My vote is a definite YES.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Grant Bishop,CA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Teri Allsup <[Robertstmr@gmail.com](mailto:Robertstmr@gmail.com)>

**Date:** August 15, 2022 at 9:25:29 PM PDT

**To:** [dellis@inyocounty.us](mailto:dellis@inyocounty.us)

**Subject:** Bishop Airport

Darcy:

This letter was emailed personally to each of the 5 supervisors. Thank you!

August 15, 2022

Inyo County Board of Supervisor (Name):

Your board will be considering a request to rename the Bishop Airport the "Bishop - Dave McCoy Airport" at your August 16, 2022, Board Meeting.

The following is my letter of support in an effort to recognize entrepreneur and friend Dave McCoy by renaming the Bishop Airport in his honor.

Dave McCoy was an active member in the Bishop Community and lived here for the better part of 87 years. His accomplishments and contributions to the community are too numerous to list, but well recognized by all. His generosity expressed his humility and love for the Eastern Sierra, the businesses, and the community at large. His vision, and perhaps his greatest endeavor, was bringing the sport of skiing to the Eastern Sierra.

Dave McCoy was an icon in the Eastern Sierra, and perhaps the most historical contributor by creating significant revenue and job opportunities. His vision and goodwill for the Eastern Sierra transformed the well-being of its citizens as well as creating an environment that welcomed tourism from all over the world.

In closing, Dave McCoy deserves this honor and I wholeheartedly support renaming the Bishop Airport the "Bishop - Dave McCoy Airport."

Thank you for your consideration in honoring Dave McCoy and his memory.

Sincerely,  
Teri Roberts-Allsup  
Bishop

Sent from my iPhone



Board of Supervisors:

Thank you in advance for reading this letter. My letter is in support of the proposal by Randy Short to rename the Bishop airport after Dave McCoy. Being born and raised in Bishop, raising my family here, running a business and being a part of this community are all things that I am proud of. This pride comes from knowing where I have come from and in part I have come by way of Mammoth Mountain. Where would Owens Valley be without the vision of Dave McCoy?

One man's vision, fortitude and work ethic acted as a chain reaction of many family legacies of many generations up and down Owens Valley. From housing developers, builders, to scrap yard owners, hardware stores and their employees, mechanics, snow chain installers, snow cat operators, ski lift operators, restaurant owners, hospitality workers, plumbers, electricians, the list goes on and on. We all have a more vibrant community in part because of the development of a world-class ski resort that may never have been.

One man took the chance and poured his life into the planning and development of such a place. Dave McCoy took a dream mixed with a passion for skiing and the mountains and inspired thousands of employees over the years. These employees still admire the man that started it all.

As a resident of Inyo County for 80+ years Dave McCoy chose to live and raise his family in Inyo County where he proved to be humble, approachable, innovative, and family focused. Knowingly or not, many or most residents have had a connection to Dave or his family. The McCoy's would provide the town with a spectacular Christmas light show on Rocking K Rd., donated to scholarships and local charities, offered discounted ski programs for the surrounding schools. Many friends and family members took pride in working for him on a plethora of innovative projects, like his electric side by side conversion, building motorcycles or printing and cataloging his photography. Dave's generosity was a character trait that not one could deny and was contagious.

Commercial air service to Bishop would not be without the working relationship between Inyo County and Mammoth Mountain. As Mammoth Mountain would not be without the relationship with Dave McCoy. When you talk with long-time residents that have finally had the chance to take a commercial flight over our beautiful valley they are in awe and wonder. Dave McCoy was a visionary that led the way into a new and uncharted territory. Being a true leader is not always easy, never perfect but if you ask those that believe in you it is worth it! Renaming the airport is a way to honor our past, while encouraging and inspiring a new chapter.

Thank you again for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Randi Pritchard

**From:** Fred Phillips [Twins1988@msn.com]

**Sent:** Sunday, August 14, 2022 8:20 PM

**To:** BoardClerk; Randy McCoy

**Subject:** 8/16/2022 meeting Agenda item #24 Renaming of the Bishop Airport

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Inyo County Network. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and trust the sender. Contact Information Services with questions or concerns.

You don't often get email from twins1988@msn.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I have known Dave McCoy all of my life (68 years) and am urging you to name our Bishop airport in honor of this great man. Dave has done more for our community than anyone. My many experiences with Dave is that he was NEVER looking for recognition for anything he has ever done but it would be a great honor for not only for his family but to us that were so lucky to actually know the man. Dave's legacy will live on regardless of this outcome, but it would be a nice gesture for the County of Inyo to name our Bishop airport in his honor. Thank You      Lloyd (Fred) Phillips

**From:** [web.noreply@inyocounty.us](mailto:web.noreply@inyocounty.us) <[web.noreply@inyocounty.us](mailto:web.noreply@inyocounty.us)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 12, 2022 8:40 AM

**To:** Darcy Ellis <[dellis@inyocounty.us](mailto:dellis@inyocounty.us)>

**Subject:** [Contact Information] Airport Name Change

Douglas Brown (not verified) ([kellib4@aol.com](mailto:kellib4@aol.com)) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.inyocounty.us/contact-information>.

The sender's name

Douglas Brown

The sender's email

[kellib4@aol.com](mailto:kellib4@aol.com)

Subject

Airport Name Change

Comment or Question

Hello Supervisors, I would like to support the proposed name change of the Bishop Airport to the Bishop- Dave McCoy airport. Dave was instrumental in many firsts at the Bihop Airport and it only seems fitting to honor him with your yes vote.

Thanks

Doug Brown , Distict #4

Contact ID

contact-595

Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

Dear Supervisors:

I am aware of a proposal in front of the Supervisors to rename the bishop Airport in honor of Dave McCoy at the August 16 meeting. I am in support of this proposal. Dave McCoy did remarkable things in Inyo for the schools, the community, the Tribes and our economy. I hope you can go forward and support this idea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Simpson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barry Simpson  
Superintendent of Schools

Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

Dear Supervisors:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Kemp".

Mary Kemp

Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hefner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

David Hefner

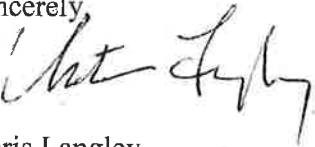
Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Langley", written in a cursive style.

Chris Langley

Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

Dear Supervisors:

I am aware of a proposal in front of the Supervisors to rename the bishop Airport in honor of Dave McCoy at the August 16 meeting. I am in support of this proposal. Dave McCoy did remarkable things in Inyo for the schools, the community, the Tribes and our economy. I hope you can go forward and support this idea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Cash". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.




Inyo County Board of Supervisors

August 11, 2022

Dear Supervisors:

I am aware of a proposal in front of the Supervisors to rename the bishop Airport in honor of Dave McCoy at the August 16 meeting. I am in support of this proposal. Dave McCoy did remarkable things in Inyo for the schools, the community, the Tribes and our economy. I hope you can go forward and support this idea.

Sincerely,

Tom Snyder  


The Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee met at 5:30 PM on Monday August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

The following Board members in attendance:

Eileen Berger  
Peter Tracy  
Wayne Sayer  
Mike Patterson  
Geoff Pope

Geoff Pope moved the following:

"The Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee recommends that the name of the Bishop Airport not be changed."

Eileen Berger seconded the motion.

After a short discussion a roll call vote was called.

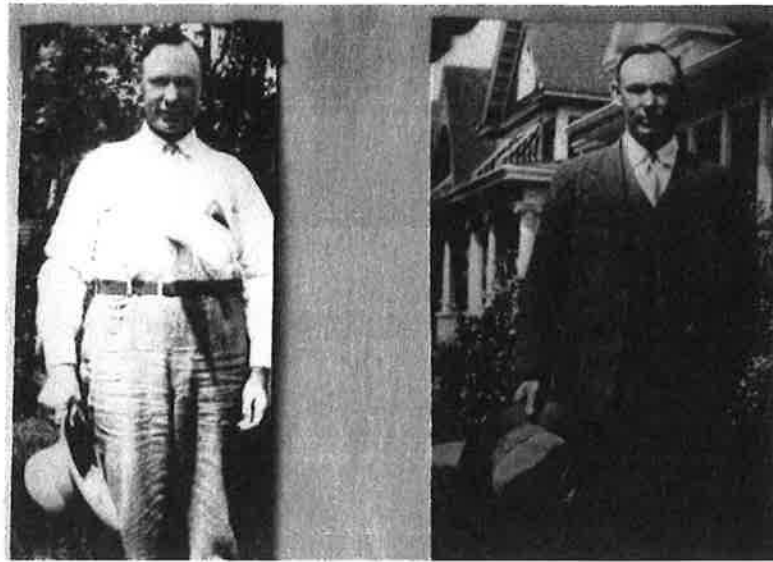
The motion passed unanimously.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geoff Pope".

Geoff Pope  
Chairman, NIAAC

8/13/22



Charles Partridge and  
information about his  
involvement in the founding  
of the Bishop Airport.

*Submitted by  
Paul DeGruen*

12 August 2022

Supervisors Totheroh, Griffiths, Pucci, Roeser, and Kingsley:

February 1, 2020 I emailed a request to all the supervisors for the Bishop Airport to be named for my grandfather, rancher and District 2 Supervisor Charles A. Partridge, who was the founder of and supervisor of the building of both Bishop airports. I did not hear back from any of the supervisors including my own Supervisor Pucci or District 2 Supervisor Griffiths. I did not even know there was a process for name changes in this county. I know the pandemic hit about that time, and people are always very busy.

Hopefully you saw the Partridge diaries excerpted in the Inyo Register a little while ago. If so you know what work he did in modernizing this county.

The first airport was built in 1928 near where the Bishop sanitary landfill is today. It only lasted about a year because of a few factors: 1)Not enough turning radius to the west, 2)Too windy, 3)Possibly too sandy, 4)No room for expansion of the runways. Mr. Partridge then founded the 2<sup>nd</sup> airport location at its current site. He traveled to both Los Angeles and San Francisco investigating and researching airport construction in those cities. He found the current airport location on the Symons and Shaw Ranches and arranged for the county to purchase that land. He organized the construction of the airport buildings and runways. He even did some of the work himself if there were deadlines to meet.

He was a humble man and probably would be embarrassed that I was even suggesting the airport be named for him. He worked behind the scenes to build up the valley economy in a time of economic depression due to the water conflict and the Great Depression. This also included modernizing the valley by paving the roads (he was also County Road Commissioner) and digging out and designing the trails in the Bishop Creek Watershed to encourage tourism.

I have the highest respect for Dave McCoy. He especially contributed a lot- especially in Mono County development. He was my mother's first crush when he worked as a soda jerk in the Independence Drug Store. The Mammoth Airport would be a better place to have the name changed to his. But even if there would be no name change at the Bishop Airport, I would respectfully request that a plaque be put up at the Bishop Airport to honor the memory of my grandfather, Charles A. Partridge, who contributed so much to its founding.

There are 3 attachments. 1) The text of my original email. 2) A page from the history of the local airports by Kirt Nance. 3) A few of the excerpts from Charles Partridge's diaries about the building of the airports. 4)A PDF of his biography which you might want to just skim since it is 10 pages long.

I will be in attendance at Tuesday's supervisor meeting, and hopefully I will get a chance to speak.

Sincerely,  
Pam Vaughan  
801 Valley West Circle  
Bishop, CA 93514  
(760)873-4742  
Email: pamcob@earthlink.net



Feb. 1, 2020

Dear Supervisors Griffiths, Pucci, Totheroh, Tillemans, and Kingsley:

In regards to the Bishop Airport, I am respectfully requesting that it be named for my grandfather, Charles A. Partridge, who served as Supervisor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> district from 1920-1937. I hope you have been reading my Saturday columns in the Eastern Sierra History section of The *Inyo Register* about once a month. At the moment, they consist of his diary excerpts.

He was a humble man and probably would be embarrassed that I was even suggesting such a thing. He worked behind the scenes to build up the valley economy in a time of economic depression due to the water conflict and the Great Depression. This included modernizing the valley by paving the roads (he was also County Road Commissioner,) digging out and designing the trails in the Bishop Creek Watershed to encourage tourism, and supervising the construction of the two Bishop Airports.

I've attached three documents including: 1)Excerpts from his diaries pertaining to his involvement with these airports, 2)a short biography, 3)A page from the history of the local airports by Kirt Nance.

Many of the airport excerpts in Mr. Partridge's diaries are omitted because he was at the airports every day during most of the construction activities; it would be redundant to include so many. He found the locations then hired the workers to do much of the work but also did some of the work himself. The first airport was located in 1928 where the Bishop sanitary landfill is today. It only lasted about a year because of a few factors: 1)Not enough turning radius to the west, 2)Too windy, 3)Possibly too sandy, 4)No room for expansion of the runways. Mr. Partridge then found the 2<sup>nd</sup> airport location at its current site. He traveled to both Los Angeles and San Francisco investigating and researching airport construction at those sites.

Would you like me to speak before a board meeting about this matter? I would be glad to attend. Let me know when.

Thanks so much for your time. I know how busy you all are.

Sincerely,  
Pam Vaughan  
801 Valley West Circle  
Bishop, CA 93514  
(760)873-4742  
Email: pamcob@earthlink.net

# *Airports of the Owens Valley*

*1928 thru 1945*



Kirt Nance - Bishop, CA

2003

In 1928 aviation was a fledging industry, made up of an eclectic collection of planes and pilots that probably had more airplanes than prepared landing fields. Most were using farmer's pastures or simple graded dirt strips. But like the train and automobile, the plane was to make inroads into society and usher in a new era of transportation.

The Owens Valley wasn't any different than the rest of the country, and wanted in on this new means of transportation. There were streams teeming with trout, mountains where game was in abundance, all waiting for the outdoorsman. The problem was the long trip by auto to get here from the urban areas to the south, which could take two days. With established airports in the valley not only could the area be opened to sportsmen, but a regular air service would also allow for the movement of freight and passengers.

Dialog between the City of Los Angeles and Inyo County resulted in a partnership that would see land exchanges, and cooperation that would result in the building of the first County run airports at Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine, and Bishop. Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, C. W. Naylor, along with supervisors, A.P. Hancock and C.A. Partridge were in charge of handling the airport building operations for the County.

Mr. Partridge handled the construction on the Bishop Airport, and work commenced in March of 1928. It was noted in the March 22, 1928 issue of the Inyo Register that he "expected to be ready in 60 days to receive planes". The airport would be located, "on the Owen Larson property easterly and northeasterly from the Sunland Schoolhouse". True to his word, Mr. Partridge announced in the Inyo Register on April 26, 1928, that "the airport is well advanced and ready with first class condition to receive pilots". This issue of the Register stated that the location of the airport was two miles south of the flag pole. "The flag pole", at that time was located at the corner of Main and Line streets. East of the airport property was a water tower on which was mounted the airport beacon light. This beacon remained after the airport was closed, and because highway 395 makes a curve there, it became known as beacon curve. The tower and beacon have been gone for a long time, and for a time there was a tavern at the location known as "The Beacon Tavern"

A new airline called, Nevada Airlines proposed service to include mail, passenger, and freight, from Reno through Bishop and on to Los Angeles. This was to be the first established airline to service the Owens Valley, and looked pretty promising as its chief pilot was Roscoe Turner. Mr. Turner had made a name for himself as a movie stunt pilot, and as a promoter of Gilmore Oil products. The trademark of the oil company was a lion, so he acquired a real lion and flew from town to town advertising Gilmore aviation oil products. He also held the coast to coast speed record carrying passengers, using the same plane that he would be using for his airline, which was the Lockheed Vega. The trip from Reno to Los Angeles would take four hours in the four passenger plane, and cost \$ 60.00.

The runways at the Sunland location however were not long enough to handle the Lockheed Vega safely. Extensions and upgrades to this airport were not feasible, and a new airport location was required. The new site would be two miles east of the town, on the former property of the Symons ranch and the Harry Shaw ranch. Nevada Airlines request specified length and width of runways, and also that they be oiled to cut dust.

The runways were to be 100 feet wide, by 2500 feet long, and would consist of a main runway and a cross wind runway. The Gilmore Oil Company was the high bidder for the



# CHARLES PARTRIDGE DIARIES

## AIRPORT EXCERPTS

1928

January

18- Made appraisalment [sic] of Bank Building and looked over field on Irwin or Powers place to find suitable place for airport....

February

23- Started to Van Nuys with George W. Naylor and Mrs. Naylor and picked up Amos Hancock at Cottonwood Power Plant. Started at 4 A.M. Had breakfast at Mojave and into Van Nuys at 12 noon. Out to proposed airport where we had barbecue and speeches by the Supervisors and some of the water board. [To get ideas for Owens Valley airports]

March

1- With B.E. Johnson, George Deibert, Craig and Sam Griffith. Looked over several airport sites and consider the best one south east of town [site of present sanitary landfill.]

7- [In Oakland at state supervisor's meeting]...and looking over major projects and out to Mills Field [present day San Francisco International Airport] where I went up in plane for ride over city and surrounding country.

14- Out all day with Naylor, Hancock, Leahey, Christopher making selections of airport sites. At Bishop- Larson and Whitney places combined at Big Pine Bert Steward place west of road.

Independence- Baxter field east of road and north of house. Lone Pine-Thomas Boland field east of State Highway. Came home in evening.

21- Went to [Bishop] airport field where Turner, Wright, Shumate, Earl Compton, Kelley and Will Brockman are burning brush and taking out willow trees. Then went to Forest Station in Mammoth and got 150 of Pyratol to use on stumps [at airport.] Judge Patterson going along for company.

24- Went up on roads in Sunland and found wasteway had washed out the road below Robbs place. Went to airport and got 50 lbs of [blasting] powder at Wottons for Bill Brockman to use with Pyratol.

26- Boys [workmen] on airport, have trees nearly out.

27- Went up to airport where men are at work and got two boxes (dynamite) powder from Wotton for same.

29- Went to airport and gathered [pay]claims.

30- Went to airport and looked over with Crosby.

April

1- Went upon airport where men are at work after looking at cattle.

4- Went up on airport in morning where Shumate and Warren Halliday and Will Brockman and Kelley are taking out stumps and making very good progress.

5- Went up on airport where Shumate, Halliday, Brockman and Kelley are gathering up stumps as they have all the trees out.

6- Went upon airport where men are getting brush pretty well off.

7- Went up to airport where men are finishing up the brush and trees. Showed Wilkins airport who thinks it is O.K.

9- Went to Stockton place and loaded float on Shumates wagon to use on airport. Filling up holes there.

10- Went over ranch and to airport at noon hour.

11- Went to Independence in A.M. to see about sending Casners boy to L.A. General Hospital to have eye treated. Stopped on way back and looked at stock and over ranch. Went upon airport in P.M. men with grader pretty slow.



- 12- Turner and Shumate running grader on airport. Wrote to G. Elias and Bro. Inc, Buffalo, N.Y. and to Johnson Airplane and Supply Co., Dayton Ohio for prices on supplies [sic] for airports.
- 13- Went to airport where men are at work filling in ditches and Brockman and Kelley are finishing burning and grubbing brush.
- 14- Went on roads and airport in A.M....Adams and I staked out circle on Airport and also bridge at road in northwest part of town.
- 17- Went upon airport in A.M. and took Frank Parcher to look at same.
- 18- Went over Adams property to make appraisement and out to airport to see about circle, find drag pretty slow or like a picnic.
- 19- Went to Independence in AM and looked over airport and to where [A.O.] Adams [cement contractor] is putting in circle at Bishop Airport.
- 20- Went over airport with [Sup. George] Naylor who is up with Jesse Lawrence to get plans for drag.
- 21- Went to airport where Adams is putting in circle, Naylor up to look at drag. Finished landing field with large drag.
- 23- Went upon airport [as he did everyday] where Adams is finishing circle and Shumate running smoother over ground.
- 25- Staked out airport for boundry [sic] corners with Adams. Went out with Van Loon and Chalfant to see if smooth enough to land satisfactory.
- 26- Out to airport most of day and in town.
- 27- Shumate smoothing up airport and Turner and Wright there also and made ditch on west side.
- 28- Shumate smoothing lower part of airport and I and Turner and Wright getting Old Wright house ready to move to airport....Army plane arrived from March field [near Riverside] with two men in it who pronounced field first class.
- 29- At home most all day but went to Bishop Airport where plane landed from Mono on way to March Field.
- 30- Moved house to [air] field and took tools home in P.M. Turner and Wright at work leveling up house.

#### May 1928

- 1- The men all at election except Wright who is at work on airport cabin.
- 7- Went to town in morning and got airport papers from Frank Parcher.
- 9- Went to airport and into town.
- 10- Seen about airport circus with Dunn. Legion boys to sponsor same. [applies to dedication ceremony.]
- 12- Went up on airport and inspected L [Charles drew a L-shape in the diary] put in by Adams as boundry corners.
- 13- Went to airport in P.M. and watched flying and parachute jumper had quite a large crowd.
- 14- Went up to Airport and started Charles Benton clearing way for road and to dig ditch. Wallace Beery [Hollywood actor] landed with his plane.
- 15- Went to airport and on road east of town where C.L. Olds is running motor grader.
- 17- Went to City offices and then to Littles office with Cooper and Ford Hendricks to make deposition. Naylor and wife and I went to Fullerton airport and to Vail Field where Western Air Express is located and met McCole the manager there.
- 26- Turner and I put up wind cone in P.M. [at airport.]
- 27- Went to airport in P.M. where Miles and partner are taking up passengers in Fairchild 4 passenger plane.
- 29- At airport in forenoon and had Chas. Benton cleaning up around there.
- 31- Went to Airport and around district collecting claims. Paid for fireworks at Bunnells Book Store 40.00, but aviators would not take them up so have them on hand. Went to fish fry in evening and dedication of Airport. Captain Leroy Smith made a very good speech.

#### June

- 1- Three army planes arrived from March Field in P.M.
- 10- Went with cook [Lena his wife] to Independence to airport meeting but as wind blew very strong did not stay but went up Big Pine Creek instead and had lunch at Glacier Lodge for two.
- 14- Went to see L.A. Fireworks Co....about price of Aeroplane fireworks. [For grand opening celebration.]
- 27- Went to Lone pine, Independence, and Bishop Airports with [Supervisors] Hancock, Naylor, Leahey to see about final disposition of buildings, etc.

#### September

- 15- Went to air meet at Mines Field [Future LAX] entrance. Fee 2.00 and tickets 3.00 for grand stand. A very good show.
- [Sept 16- back at show.]

#### December

- 7- Around home till P.M. when went to airport where Brown and Jim Warlie are clearing of sage brush.
- 8- Went to town and Jim Warlie are grubbing and burning brush.
- 22- James Warlie at work on Bishop Airport.
- 28- Went to airport where Jim Warlie is grubbing brush and [then] into town.

### 1929

#### March

- 6- Turner and Wright at work on airport.
- 4- Up in plane with Sam Capt. Turner. Mr. Mansfield to look over airports.
- 5- Dunn and I went to Independence with Capt. Turner and Mansfield. Seen City officials about changing site of airport to Shaw field as other one is too windy and not enough room to west. At Independence all day and not through.

#### May

- 4- At work on house till noon finished wall board. Went to County Farm and to Dude Ranch where fire done damage. Up in plane with Sam Capt. Turner. Mr. Mansfield to look over airports.
- 5- Dunn and I went to Independence with Capt. Turner and Mansfield. Seen City officials about changing site of airport to Shaw field as other one is too windy and not enough room to west. At Independence all day and not through.
- 13- Went up Bishop Creek in morning after seeing crew start on airport. Crosby going along.
- 17- At airport with Rich and Shepard to lay out to get 200 acres on east of road.

#### June

- 24- [He and Lena finish a trip around the country and into Canada to visit relatives. He heads to the Bishop Airport] Went to town and airport in P.M. Find airport in fair shape but very sandy.
- 26- Went to airport as Nevada Transport action plane landed. O'Brien pilot.

#### July

- 8- Had conversation with Mr. Hearne regarding airport work.
- 15- Went to airport and got soil to send to Shell Oil Co.
- 17- Went to [county] yard and rec'd caterpillar tractor and had Bryant show Olds about running it....Had Tom Harrison haul leveler over to airport.
- 18- Went to airport and find smoother is too small so shall have to hunt lumber to make larger one.
- 20- Went to airport in morning then had car in garage.
- 30- Went to airport and Sunland roads in P.M.

#### August

- 3- To Laws to help unload grader...seen Mansfield about airport.
- 19- Greased saddle and went to airport where Olds is leveling with new drag.
- 21- [Tax rate for airport set by him and other supervisors was set at 7¢]
- 23- Went over airport with Loy and Hearne in P.M. and E. Line St road to see about oiling.
- 26- Went to airport where Olds and Tom Harrison are leveling.
- 28- At work cleaning up around yard till noon then went to airport and as it is smooth stopped work for present.

#### September

- 11- Went to Bishop Creek and took Olds up to bring "Cat" down to fuel oil truck on airport.
- 12- Went to airport and town in P.M.
- 13- ....At airport in P.M. Wallace Beery [famous Hollywood actor who had a summer home at June Lake area] there with large plane.
- 16- At work at house till 3 P.M. and then went to airport and helped pull trees and also helped Standard Oil man map airport.
- 17- At airport in P.M. blowing out trees on east side.
- 18- At home in AM working on cellar and at airport in PM
- 19- Helping a little at airport....
- 20- Took saw over to airport to use on trees.
- 21- Chored around house in A.M. Went to airport and to Watterson tract in P.M.
- 22- Went to Airport in the morning to clean toilets, etc. At celebration balance of day (not much.)
- 23- Went to airport in morning as they are finishing.
- 24- At airport in P.M. as oilers finished. Hearne left on plane.
- 25- Done chores in morning and went to airport and met Roscoe Turner of the Nevada Airlines who is not satisfied with celebration of last Sunday.
- 26- At airport....
- 30- To airport in P.M. to look at future work.

#### October

- 4- Have Ben Davis at airport at work.
- 5- At work on airport and helping get things ready....
- 6- Also attended Airport doings which was very good.
- 8- Went to airport and to the [county] yard to see about getting straightened up in P.M.
- 12- Out at airport to look over runways find them need smoothing.

#### November

- 2- Took roofing off of old shed at airport. Olds and Turner tearing down fences there.
- 11- And to airport....

#### December

- 10- ...then to airport where someone has stolen posts from fence.
- 14- ...Went over airport and tending to needy pensions in P.M.
- 23- Went upon road at airport where Turner, Olds and Wright are taking out culverts. Find them working pretty short days. Lengthening out culvert at south end of Airport Road.
- 26- Went up on road near airport.
- 30- On road where Turner and Olds are working on Airport Road.

#### 1930

#### January

- 3- Went over roads in Warm Springs in A.M. Olds wetting Airport Road.
- 4- Went on Airport Road which is finished for the present.
- 16- Looked at gravel in ...[airport] field to cover road east of town

May

29- ...and went to airport with Sam Griffith to locate pump space.

1931

January

27- Had Olds, Turner and Dick Chamberlain moving house from old airport to new one.

## Biographical Overview

### CHARLES ADELL PARTRIDGE

B: 8 Dec 1876 Evansville, Minnesota D: 17 Mar 1937 Mojave, CA

Families were large in the days when Charles Partridge was born in Evansville, Minnesota. His father, Philip S., with his wife, Rhoda (McKibben), decided to take their family west on the train to find new California farmland in 1888 when Charles was twelve. Philip's brother, James, had preceded them to Porterville. Whether Philip's family went to Porterville initially remains unknown, but they eventually ended up in the Owens Valley just south of Bishop where they homesteaded some parcels and bought other adjoining properties (Inyo County, [www.BLM.com](http://www.BLM.com).) The valley is high desert situated between the Sierra Nevada and the White Mountains. It was sparsely populated, and the ranch lands were well irrigated by Sierra snow melt. The Partridges settled on a ranch that was located nine miles south of Bishop. All that's left today is a dense stand of cottonwood trees.

Charles had attended school in Minnesota. No one knows if he continued his education in the Owens Valley; however, he was a smart, lifelong learner. In the early years, Charles worked on several Inyo County ranches, in particular A.W. Rawson's ranch which later became the Inyo Syndicate Ranch and still later the Butler Ranch. It then became the Longyear Ranch, located just north of what was to become the new Partridge Ranch. The Longyear Ranch was the largest Owens Valley ranch and located on the north side of Collins Road spreading to the Owens River. For a time Partridge also managed the Mowrer Ranch. At twenty-eight years old, Charles started his own spread two miles north of his father's property.

### THE PARTRIDGE RANCH

The Charles Partridge Ranch in the Aurora Land District had been owned previously by a succession of owners. June 11, 1870, A.J. and Mary Ann Slinkard took ownership of 360 acres. At some point it went into the hands of William J. Watson who died in 1897. Mrs. Watson sold it to D.R. McLaren who rented it to the Gish family in 1898 who in turn bought it in January of 1900. In 1905, A.E. Gish sold it to Charles Partridge, his new son-in-law, the year after Charles married their daughter, Lena. This included the important water rights.

After Charles and Lena purchased the ranch, Charles set out to be a successful independent man of the land. Like most Bishop ranchers, he had to have diverse sources of income through endeavors such as crops, stocks, and other investments. There were, for example, forty or fifty turkeys and the processing was an all day family affair. Around December 19th or 20th, the family would spend the day pithing, plucking, cleaning, and then loading the carcasses into barrels for rail shipment from Laws depot to the Los Angeles market. In his diaries, Charles often mentions train shipments of his products to Los Angeles. Sometimes they used Zurich station, east of Big Pine.

They also kept as many as two hundred head of swine on the ranch. In the smokehouse Charles and Lena would make ham and bacon. Their daughter, Dorothy, remembered the big tub of scalding water where they would put the dead hog in order to

scrape off the bristles; Helen, another of his daughters, added that they kept this fire stoked under the tub during processing. But they would also sell piglets to local kids for projects. Mostly, though, the live beasts were shipped to market. Helen remembers calling the hogs from the willow patch; they never would come until she and her brothers or sisters would somehow "make them mad," and then the hogs would chase them all the way back to the barn. The ranch pigs were never like "Babe."

There were always rabbits and chickens that were used for the family's meat and eggs. Lena would sell the eggs to friends in town for 60¢/dozen. They usually had a couple of milk cows, and there were always pans of milk sitting around the kitchen in various stages of souring. Lena would concoct a great brew of curds and ground corn for the chickens.

Cattle, however, were the mainstay of the ranch. They usually kept around 180-200 head which were always purebred Herefords. Poor specimens were culled for meat or market. Charles was careful about where he bought his bulls as this entry from his diary will show, "Dec. 23, 1925- Went out to Los Angeles County farm with Mr. Castle of the Agricultural Extension Service to look at bulls. Picked on 'Prince Aggie' of Inyo - a son of Prince Aggie of Berylwood for \$250 a very nice bull." Sometimes he would buy his bulls from George Watterson, the uncle of Mark and Wilfred who would later lose their banks during the Los Angeles-Owens Valley water conflict and their freedom to San Quentin. Occasionally he traded bulls with other ranchers since one can only keep bulls for servicing a limited number of years until incest was about to occur.

They practiced transhumance. This is when stockmen send their herds or flocks to better summer pastures, so the home grasslands can recuperate. In 1930 for example, Charles and Lena sent 180 head of cattle west into the Sierra's Coyote Valley which they leased for about \$120/month. Coyote is a beautiful lush place in the summer with streams, springs, and several small lakes. They drove the cattle to Shannon Canyon, south of Keough's Hot Springs, the day before the big drive in June. The cowboys would arrive at the ranch before dawn, and Lena would get the food ready for them. They would then herd the cattle up the south ridge of the canyon into Onion Valley then Coyote Valley (also called Coyote Flats,) camp out, and come back the next day. The cabin that Charles and his brother, George, built there in the early 1920's still stands. In September, the cattle were driven back to the Owens Valley, and it was always a worry that some would stray. If they did, a couple of drovers would go back up the mountain to find the missing stock. Other ranchers such as A.A. Brierly and Judge Dehy also took their cattle to Coyote, and the stock would get mixed because it was open range. Soon after the downward drive, the buyers from Los Angeles would look over the herd. Then Charles would drive the purchased cattle to the depot at Laws.

Besides livestock, the family raised crops including corn, table grapes, Peruvian alfalfa, sweet clover, redtop, hairy Peruvian hay, timothy, wheat, barley, and black barley. In the early years, Charles raised thousands of tons of wheat; in the biggest year, 1921, he grew over 51,000 lbs. Most of this was taken to the mill on East Line Street just past the canal. The Partridges would get some of it ground for personal use, but most of it was sold directly to the mill. Charles and Lena also kept a few 100-lb. sacks of wheat which they sold to customers for about \$4.00 per bag. As the years progressed, wheat production declined as Charles got increasingly involved in civic activities and investments.

The family also had plenty of potatoes and vegetables which Lena tended. The

root cellar was a large canvas lined and covered hole in the ground where the root crops were stored so the family could have vegetables in the winter. Lena canned much of her produce and kept the jars near the house in the stone cellar which stayed cool all year round. There was a large orchard with a variety of fruit, especially pears. In one of Charles' early diaries, he talked about ninety-one baby apple trees arriving and planting them with his brother, Harold. There was a two acre one thousand grapevine vineyard on the north side of Collins Road and west of Hwy. 395 near Wilkersons. Helen remembers having to sit and guard the vineyard when it got near to harvest time making sure no strangers picked the grapes. She enjoyed hiding out and scaring people who tried their hand at piracy.

Owens Valley was a great honey producing region in the early part of the twentieth century. Charles was a beekeeper and had more than a hundred hives. In the 1926 diary, he makes reference to having sold his honey for \$167. In 1927 he sent the Diamond Match Co. \$28.10 for 2,000 honey sections. He shipped his honey by train to Los Angeles and sold some of the product to locals. The family had a honey house which was lost when the Partridge home burned down in March of 1929.

The old barn at the ranch was always an interesting place to be. It contained a tack room and stalls because it had been a stagecoach station in the 1800's, and kids loved to play there. There were pieces of ancient wanted posters still on the wall of the tack room even into the 1960's. The oldest north-south road through the valley ran through the middle of the yard in front of the barn. More recently, local classes of school children visited the ranch to see this historic barn. Unfortunately it burned down in the 1990s due to an electrical short. The remaining structures of the old ranch which still exist are the silo, cellar, and large old garage. The Yribarrens, the current owners, have torn down the main house and put in a modular home.

Until his sons, Kid and Jack, got old enough to help on the ranch, Charles usually hired someone to work with him. From 1911-1915, Charles employed Pat Chatiavich, a Paiute. After that, the youngest Partridge brother, Harold, worked for him for many years. Harold was an important person to Charles and was mentioned in the diaries daily. Charles frequently mentions his other brothers in his journals: Wallace, Frank, and George and their comings and goings. They helped each other out in many endeavors. At wheat harvest time, Charles would also hire a threshing crew for about \$4.00 per worker per day. There was a great deal of wheat grown in the valley in those days but none now. The threshing crews would start at the northern end of the valley and work their way south. Charles Olds was one of the foremen.

Charles rented out pastures to others for additional income. In 1914, he received 50¢ per month per animal. Large herds of cattle being driven through the area would sometimes spend the night for a fee. Harold Eaton, the son of the Fred Eaton of the water conflict fame, would seasonally stop by for the night with over 3,000 head of cattle.

#### OTHER FINANCIAL ENDEAVORS

There was income from other sources. Charles was hired by the banks to appraise farms, lots, homes, resorts, ranches, and herds of livestock. In order to do this, he traversed Inyo and Mono Counties and occasionally ventured to Nevada. He initially received \$5 plus mileage for this service. He had salaries as well. After being elected Inyo County Supervisor in 1920, he received \$50 per month, \$100 in later years. He also was

on the Board of Bank Directors for which he received \$5 per month. Charles occasionally received pay of \$75 for being Road Commissioner.

He invested this income wisely. He accumulated stocks such as Bancitaly (which became Bank of America,) Transamerica Insurance, Republic of Peru bonds, Bulgarian bonds, Caribbean sugar futures, power and light stock, Mayfair Hotel stock, etc. He also bought federal and municipal bonds such as Los Angeles street bonds. He invested for his mother and brothers. His children now say that even though he didn't have much of a formal education, he was self taught in these financial matters as well as having trusted financial advisors in Los Angeles including Jim Donlon and Miss Dolan.

Charles loaned many people money especially during the Great Depression. Diary entries at the beginning of each month list what loans he had made, the interest involved, and the delivery of statements to the recipients. Many of them could not repay him. Others such as Will and Mary Belle McCrosky were dilligent in their repayments. The tough part of this was when he would have to foreclose. He had to foreclose by mutual agreement on a farm owned by his brother, Harold, near Merced between Winton and Atwater but let the tenant, John Hansen and his wife, stay on as renters even offering Mr. Hansen an equal partnership. The other foreclosure was after his death in 1938 and that was by far the worst. This was the Hans Lof parcel near Crowley Lake which is now Aspen Springs. In Charles' diaries, Hans eked out a living on this 163 acres by growing potatoes; he sometimes would give spuds to the Partridges as a payment. Hans also produced bootleg potato "brandy," and drank far too much of it. Sometimes Mr. Lof was too drunk to take care of business with Charles. The 163 acres had gone into foreclosure when Charles died so his widow, Lena, had to take Mr. Lof along with the Bergens, the renters, to court to evict them. The Bergins along with Charles had done a great deal of work renovating the place. When Jack, Charles' son, moved to the property, Hans had trashed it. Jack's sister, Helen, stayed with him, and she said Hans was a scary guy with his wild eyes and a hook in place of a hand. Mr. Lof was not a favorite of other children either. This was at the tail end of the Depression, not a good time for people.

The Partridges were hard working people. If Charles had a major fault it was expecting everyone around him to labor as hard as he did. His diary entries are mostly work related. He seldom rested except when he was ill or on summer Sundays when the family would typically head up the hill to Keoughs Hot Springs which he refers to in his journals as the "swimming pool." He also enjoyed fishing in the mountains or attending the local movie theater. He read all the local, Los Angeles, and Sacramento newspapers plus innumerable magazines and farm journals. If the internet had existed during his time, he would have made great use of it for agricultural research and getting the best equipment and most advanced farming methods.

### WATER TROUBLES

From Charlie's diaries, we can ascertain that he was not one of the radicals in the water conflict. He was officially involved in it politically and through lawsuits against the City of Los Angeles. He was on the governing board of several ditch committees, and they pooled their resources into the Owens Valley Irrigation District from which Charles represented the Owens River Canal in negotiations with Los Angeles. Charles refers to this in the diaries as the "Ditch Pool," and its purpose was to negotiate with Los Angeles



in a more organized manner. Together, the representatives hired a lawyer, Mr. Boone. Perhaps my grandfather could see that it was inevitable that Los Angeles would win these disputes. In The Untold Story; The Owens Valley Controversy and A.A. Brierly, Brierly said,

Fred Eaton...wanted the City to pay him for the 150-foot Long Valley Dam. The City [refused] and commenced buying land. So the heads of the Associated Ditches, William Symons, George Watterson, George Warren, and I think Charles Partridge, good, respectable, honest farmers, went for it.

In Charles' diaries it is apparent that he wanted and worked for a fair settlement for the local ranchers and farmers since in the early wave of valley purchases by Los Angeles, this was not the case. Many considered that in the lands of the first acquisitions, L.A. used underhanded procurement methods and gave the ranchers far below what their lands were worth. Some historians think that the second wave ranchers got far more than their acres were worth. Charles sold his 360 acres for \$104,000 which included the important water rights. The family leased back 2,000 acres for about \$2,000 per year which included the \$25.00 monthly house rent.

Brierly went on to say it was the newly formed Irrigation District that radically fought the city and seized the aqueduct. In November of 1924, There were seventy of those folks who headed out of Bishop at night with their car headlights turned off and captured the aqueduct for close to a week. In his diaries Charles didn't "seem" to be one of them although his heart was with them; after all, he did donate \$5 (worth about \$60 in 2014) to the folks at the Alabama Gates barbeque. However, in his November 16, 1924 entry, he depicted them as "Mob from Bishop turned water out of aqueduct at Alabama Hills."

According to Arlie Brierly, "Those were red hot times. Lots of people packed a gun." It's uncertain whether Charles did. His daughter, Helen, never saw him armed but said it was possible her father may have had one under the seat of his car. Helen liked to tell about the time when Charles went upstairs in the Bank Building in Bishop where the Department of Water and Power office was located. Cy Williams (owner of the grocery store,) H.V. Wotton (owner of the hardware store,) and several other men stayed at the bottom of the stairs with sawed-off shotguns and told Charlie that if he didn't come down they were going up. They were concerned for his safety. In his journals he was frequently negotiating with city officials including William Mulholland. During this period Partridge's son, Charles Jr. (Kid,) was deputized to protect his father. Helen remembers her father telling his family to get under the bed one night when a truck broke down in front of the house. Everyone in the valley was edgy and when one contemplates the goings-on, it's a miracle no one was killed.

#### OTHER DISEASES BESIDES THE WATER WARS

The year 1924 brought Charles other headaches. Foot and mouth disease was present in the Central Valley and indeed throughout most of California. In true western fashion, they headed off the epidemic by drastic measures including quarantining all stock from entering the valley and fumigating all produce in transit. He spent several days at Little Lake personally fumigating northbound trains and automobiles; the passengers were not exempt from this process and were doused also. The chemicals they

used were permanganate of potash and formaldehyde on passengers and formaldehyde and chloride of lime on cars. It worked. Foot and mouth disease did not enter Inyo or Mono Counties.

Charles worried, too, about other animal ailments. Helen remembers when the newborn calves were born in the middle of winter, sometimes their little tails would freeze. Anthrax was another problem. On 2 August 1915, he enters in his diary, "Stray cow died of anthrax. Burned her." His own cattle were usually vaccinated against this disease which is picked up when the grass gets so short that cattle ingest soil. There were other frequent worries about "black leg." Black leg is in the clostridial family of bacterial infections which can cause edema and also tetanus in cattle. It usually affects calves, particularly bull calves.

There were worrisome human diseases. On November 11, 1918, he mentions, "War is Over." He underlined this. But 1918 brought the "Spanish" flu pandemic to the Owens Valley. He mentions Mrs. L.C. Hall (Nevada Belle Butler) and others dying from this illness. L.C. Hall was a lawyer fighting Los Angeles. Charles' daughter, Helen, said that in 1918 when her dad went to the mortuary, the place was filled to capacity with the dead, all of whom were friends of his. She went on to say that whenever her father went to town during this time, he always covered his mouth and nose with a surgical mask. No other family members set foot off the ranch during the winter of 1918. Their isolation saved them like many other valley ranch dwellers.

#### CHARLES AS A COUNTY SUPERVISOR

##### CORNERSTONE PHOTO

Charles Partridge was Inyo County Supervisor from 1920-1937. His name is on the corner stone and the bronze plaque next to the front door of the Inyo County Courthouse in Independence as he was a Supervisor when the new building was dedicated in 1921. From his diaries, one gets the impression that he did not spend a lot of time campaigning for office, but when he did go out to meet his electors, Lena often accompanied him. In his diary of 1928 he states he was re-elected by a "slim margin" of 38 votes, but then Inyo County had a small population. When he wasn't running for office, he supervised the elections to make sure they ran smoothly and all the votes were counted properly. Additionally he was the head of the Republican Central Committee of the county. It's ironic that while he probably didn't vote for Franklin Roosevelt, he certainly worked to get New Deal Programs into Owens Valley such as the W.P.A., C.W.A., and C.C.C. There was also S.E.R.A. (State Emergency Relief Administration.) He often met with New Deal officials to negotiate for funds for Inyo County projects, especially employing men for the construction of roads and trails.

As a supervisor he spent much of his time overseeing the building of roads such as Sunland Drive, Warm Springs Road, and Black Canyon Road. He also was pro-active in getting Highway 395 turned into a paved highway and negotiated the rights-of-way through many pieces of property for this project. Before the paving, it took two days for Inyo-ites to travel to Los Angeles, typically spending the night at Little Lake. The blacktop led more tourists to the Owens Valley and the Eastern Sierra. On an almost daily basis, he ventured out to check on the upkeep or progress of a particular road or bridge project. He sometimes purchased explosives to take up to the various trail

builders in the Bishop Creek area. Helen remembers accompanying her father, and the two of them would lay out the new trails by placing rocks along the proposed route. Some of the trails designed by Charles Partridge that are still in place today are the Long Lake, Tyee Lakes, La Marck Lakes, and Blue Lake trails. Once the design was in place, the crews would come through and dig and blast through the route Charles and his children had prepared. You can still spot some of the cylindrical blasting holes on the routes today. Building these trails was an attempt to create tourism in the Eastern Sierra, and he was instrumental in the fish stocking of lakes to bolster the local economy by attracting outdoorsmen. His goal was to ease the economic decline of agriculture in the valley brought on by the water conflict.

To bring in more traffic in the 1920's, he was very active in getting an airport built near Bishop's present sanitary landfill and went on to supervise its construction. Just a couple of years after that, Nevada Airlines wanted to use Bishop as one of its refueling spots on its four hour flight to Los Angeles. The runways weren't long enough, so Charles found the location of the next airport east of Bishop and supervised the building of that. The actor, Wallace Beery, was one of the first pilots to land his plane there. The airport is still in use today.

Occasionally Partridge would travel to distant parts of Inyo County with other supervisors to look over mines including ones in Death Valley. One time while there, he stayed at Ryan, a Borax mining camp, where the miners put on a play for them, the men also playing the female roles. He said the play was "very good." Charles and the other supervisors enjoyed these adventures. In 1926 he stayed at the near completed Scotty's Castle; he knew Scotty, and Charles also had dealings with Scotty's friend, Mr. Johnson, who would come into Bishop occasionally.

In those days, supervisors were also the local welfare workers; Charles oversaw the pension and welfare cases in his district. He was a frequent visitor to the county farm at Big Pine which was located where the county animal shelter is today. It was referred to as the "poor farm" because welfare cases- especially the elderly- lived there and could grow a few vegetables, raise meat animals, etc. He wrote of the many cases where he would dole out public assistance to ailing folk so they could go to Los Angeles for medical treatment. He would sometimes give the local grocery store \$25 credit for a poor family. His obituary recalls that he did not keep his supervisor's salary but used it to help the poor; his children remembered this as well. Diary entry of Feb 20, 1929 states, "...seen Elsie Graves who is paralyzed on left side have Mrs. Brown to tend her in nights." And on April 25, 1929, "...to see about getting food for two quarantined Indian families." As the Depression progressed, he would oversee more and more people. Businesses in Bishop were also hurting during this time period because Los Angeles was buying up land in the valley, and as ranchers left the scene, merchants had fewer and fewer customers.

Charles was planning on leaving his county supervisor position which he had held for seventeen years to run for California State Senator. He had started subscribing to the *Sacramento Bee* (in addition to the *Inyo Register*, *Inyo Independent*, and the *L.A. Times*) in 1935. He sent his daughter, Helen, to Woodbury Business College in Los Angeles, so she could be his secretary in Sacramento. Supervisor Charles Brown came to tell Charles that he was also thinking of running for state senator but would not do so if Partridge ran. Partridge told Brown that he planned to wait until his next supervisorial term was up

since he had just been re-elected to his fourth term. Charles Partridge died in an auto accident before these plans could be realized, so Brown went ahead and ran for senator and won.

#### OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES

In his earliest diaries, he mentions his involvement in the local schools after he was elected trustee to the Bishop Union High School Board April 8, 1910. He may not have had much of a formal education, but he wanted to make sure the local schools functioned well. In an entry dated 27 July 1911, he says, "...went down to Nortons with Cooper to make plans and estimate on school improvements. Went to town and gave estimate to Mrs. Clarke and got school books balanced. Seen Perry and got him to make price on building anteroom on school house." He later notes hiring several teachers on different occasions.

He was the chairman of the Owens River Canal Committee and one of the directors of the Bank Board. He also took leadership roles in the various other ditch committees such as the Rawson and Mesa Canal Committees. These ditch pools made it more difficult for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to take whatever they wanted.

#### IT WAS A SOCIAL THING

Partridge was involved in many fraternal organizations. He was heavily involved in Knights of Pythias while Lena was in the Pythian Sisters; the Masons where he rose to the rank of Scottish Rites while Lena was in Eastern Star; the Shriners (his fez was buried with him); the California Livestock Association; the Advisory Committee of the Alfalfa Growers Association; Woodmen of the World, a fraternal insurance organization; Rotary to which he attended weekly meetings; Piñon Club; Rainbow (trout stocking) Club. He travelled to many of the associated conventions in California (Los Angeles, Oakland, Santa Cruz, Eureka.) He and Lena also traveled in 1929 to Dallas, Texas to the national Rotary convention after which they drove to Minnesota to visit relations including his older half sister, Frances, and then to Canada to visit other relatives. They were gone for a month. Since it was in March, the muddy roads were a real hindrance, but he made numerous diary comments on the condition of farms, farming regions, and the roads. Over the years he enjoyed attending several livestock shows in the Los Angeles area with other valley ranchers. In general, fraternal organizations and livestock shows were important parts of small town community life before the onslaught of television.

#### A SERIES OF ACCIDENTS

On January 14, 1934, Charles was driving with some passengers heading for Sacramento. There was a very heavy poconip (radiation) fog at Mono Lake that morning, so Charles pulled over and stopped at the side of the road. His car was struck by the automobile of his friend, Cy Williams. This is the bit from his 1934 diary:

Left for Sacramento at 6 A.M. with Mrs. Chas Summers and two children as passengers. Very heavy fog nr Mono Lake. Had collision with Cy Williams car occupied by Cy, Ernest Bulpitt, Cy LaBree, E.T. Albright, and Woodson Rathjin. All badly done up. Deweys [Albright] head badly cut. Ernest left arm broken. My knee cap split on left. Cars somewhat wrecked.

Bill, his son, said that Charles' kneecap was pushed half way up his thigh. Charles insisted that everyone go to the hospital before him even though he was hurt the worst. After a few days recuperation at the ranch, he was sent to Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles in an ambulance. In Mojave, he paid for the ambulance's gas. At the hospital, he had surgery and spent months recuperating there and at the ranch. Riding horses was a somewhat uncomfortable situation for him after this, and Helen said that he walked with a slight limp after he recovered. A couple of months later, someone backed his car into Charles' other knee, badly bruising it. Dr. Boody took care of this, too. The very next day, Dr. Boody was thrown from his horse at the rodeo and was crushed to death. Charles witnessed this.

Helen, his daughter, remembers after the Mono Lake incident, her dad said that if he was in another car accident, it would kill him, and it did. She was with him and remembers the crash:

March 12, 1937 I was attending Woodbury Business College in Los Angeles. Helen Barlow Talbot also was attending there. Dad was called to Redondo Beach on the 9th or 10th to bail Uncle Bob Gish out of jail. They had rabies around and he was supposed to keep his dogs shut up, but got in a big "to do" with the police, so they locked him up.

Being as Dad had to be back in Bishop for the weekend and then had to go back to Los Angeles on Sunday to some meeting, we gals decided to go home for the weekend. It was Friday March 12, 1937. We ate breakfast in Mojave. Dad kidded me about eating so much. It was raining hard. About 15 or 20 miles north of Mojave, we hit a dip with mud running through it, and we had a blow out. It's the tire Dad just had fixed because he had been having trouble with it. Was said that we went through the air 37 feet and rolled over 7 times. I was thrown out on the first or second turn and knocked unconscious. No seat belts in cars then. Dad was thrown in the back seat and had his neck broken and was paralyzed from neck down. Said the worse 20 minutes he spent was thinking I was under the car.

Was raining very hard. A couple from Bishop was on their way to Los Angeles- stopped and said they would go into Mojave for help, but someone drug Dad by the shoulders to the road and we were taken to the hospital in Mojave. Helen Talbot's dad came down and brought Mom with him. He went back to Bishop that day, taking Helen with him. She only had a mild concussion. That was on a Friday morning about 9 A.M. Last words I heard Dad say was "Oh my God!"

I was unconscious until the following Wednesday about noon. Mom had two or three specialists from Los Angeles come to check Dad out and they all said there was not any chance for him to live. He died around 6 P.M. on Wednesday evening, March 17- St. Patrick's Day. A hearse and ambulance were

called from Bishop to come down and move us to Bishop where I was in bed- flat on my back for 2 1/2 months. Mom slept beside me on the couch. Sometimes I could hear her crying in the night.

The people from Bishop were named Kelso. One of their daughters married Jack Barlow later on.

We were in a Buick car-which was a new car. Dad had bought this car in November, and the wreck was in March. Totaled the car.

#### CHARLES' SIBLINGS

Frank married Gladys McClure in 1914. Charles lent them the down payment to buy a ranch in Fallon, Nevada; their children are George and Ellen. Ellen passed away in 2004 near San Diego. Wallace married Hazel Tinder in 1914 and remained in Owens Valley and ranching. For many years they owned the Glacier Lodge Pack Station above Big Pine with their two sons, Wilfred and Kenneth. Wallace and Hazel remained close friends with Charles and Lena. George, another brother, fought in World War I, was injured by inhaling mustard gas, and suffered the rest of his life. He married Laura Smith in 1928 and moved to Carson City, Nevada where he was a foreman on the highways; their children are Gracie who passed away in Idaho and Ruthie who lives in Carson City. Harold married Bernadine McKellips, a neighbor, in 1924 and moved to the Central Valley living in Merced and then near Sacramento; their daughter is Janice Linder. Vina married Jim Rother in 1903, a poultry association executive, and lived in Berkeley; they did not have children. Vina developed Parkinsons; when I knew her she could not speak. They were very early members of the Sierra Club which they joined for health and hiking purposes; they knew and hiked with John Muir. Ruth lived in Round Valley with her husband, Oliver Linscott, a rancher. She died at a young age in 1930 from heart problems. Ruth and Ollie had 4 children: Ada, Leonard, Elizabeth (Sis), Robert and one possible stillbirth buried in Bishop's West Line Street Cemetery as "Baby Linscott 1907-1907;" there is no record of Baby's birth, death, or stillbirth. Alba married Frank Tomlinson and moved to Oakland; their daughters are Barbara and Lila. Barbara lives in Belmont, CA, and was married to Charles Daubert. Lila lived in San Diego and was married to Robert McElroy.

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Diaries of Charles Partridge, 1910-1937.

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## TIMELINE

*Disclaimer: This is by no means comprehensive and some of the sources used contradicted each other on exact dates and other details (with regard to military usage and early commercial flights).*

**1928:** LADWP and Inyo County successfully negotiate for Inyo County to build and operate airports in Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine, and Bishop. Supervisors C.W. Naylor, A.P. Hancock, and C.A. Partridge are in charge of the projects.

**March 1928:** With Partridge at the helm, construction of the Bishop Airport starts on property located two miles south of the intersection of Main and Line streets.

**Late April 1928:** Bishop Airport is ready to receive aircraft.

**1928-1929:** Nevada Airlines expresses an interest in providing mail, passenger, and freight services from Reno through Bishop and on to Los Angeles – making it the first established air service in the Owens Valley. However, the runways are insufficient to accommodate the Lockheed Vega fleet. The County identifies a new location two miles east of Main Street on property formerly occupied by the Symons and Shaw ranches, where it can build a larger airport.

**September 1929:** One Captain Herne and engineer Paul Rich take the lead on the project, which would include runways built to Nevada Airlines' specifications.

**September 18, 1929:** Construction of the new Bishop Airport is finished.

**September 21, 1929:** A grand opening ceremony is held at the new airfield. Guests include Captain Roscoe Turner, Nevada Airlines' chief pilot and former movie stunt pilot, Evelyn "Bobbi" Trout, who at the time held more aviation records than any other female pilot, and U.S. Army Air Force personnel.

**Early 1930:** Nevada Airlines ceases operations, citing high operating costs and its fleet's small load capacity.

**1938:** Bob Symons organizes the first soaring expedition to the Owens Valley.

**1939:** The government begins an inventory of the country's usable airfields, and Bishop Airport is classified as a "class-one" airfield. This means it could be put to direct use by the military without significant upgrades.

**April 1940:** The government subleases 897.22 acres from Inyo County.

**1941:** The government awards Inyo County more than \$500,000 to upgrade its airports so they meet National Defense Airway standards.

**December 1941:** Construction on local airports is accelerated, and the government announces plans to start a "Civilian Pilot Training" (CPT) program.

**1942:** The government closes all private airfields up to 150 miles inland, and the Owens Valley becomes a valuable training ground. Bishop Airport has 60 CPT pilots in training.

**June 1942:** Operation of the Bishop Airport is transferred to the Department of the Army, and the CPT pilots are reassigned to other airports. Students with 200 or more hours of flying are hired by the Army and trained as military pilots.

**Late 1942:** Improvements and upgrades at Bishop Airport are finished. The site is now designated as the "Bishop Army Airfield" and is a subbase to Muroc Army Airfield used for aircraft flight and ordnance delivery training.

**December 16, 1942:** Bishop Army Airfield is placed under the jurisdiction of the Tonopah Army Airfield with personnel from Murdoc Army Airfield.

**May 1944:** 200 Marine pilots and crew arrive at Bishop Army Airfield to practice bounce training necessitated by a design problem with the Corsair, which would be widely used throughout the rest of WWII and the Korean War.

**September 1945:** Bishop Army Airfield is turned over to Air Technical Service Command as a storage airfield.

**November 1945:** After complaints to Congressman Clair Engle's office that public use of the airport was being denied despite no military activity taking place there in over a year, the Department of the Army declares the Bishop Army Airfield surplus.

**1946:** Bob Symons and Harland Ross team up to start Bishop Flying Service at the soon-to-be ex-military airfield known again as Bishop Airport. Until 1958, Symons conducts snow surveys, aerial photography, flight instruction, cloud seeding, special air charter operations, medical flights, and search and rescue operations.

**1946-1951:** Symons and Ross set numerous altitude flying records from Bishop Airport and conduct flying experiments to understand the "Sierra Wave" phenomenon. These experiments lead to the groundbreaking "Sierra Wave Project," a study funded and conducted jointly by the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and UCLA that will be based in Inyokern.

**May 2, 1949:** The Army cancels the initial airport lease for 897.22 acres it entered into with Inyo County in 1940.

**1958:** Bob Symons is killed in a glider accident just months before he is scheduled to host the National Soaring Championships at Bishop Airport.

**February 3, 1969:** The Board of Supervisors amends the Bishop Airport lease and the contract between the County and Charles Luther to enable qualification for Federal Assistance Programs.

**September 15, 1969:** The Board of Supervisors declares its intention to exchange a portion of real property near Barlow Lane for a portion of real property owned by the City of Los Angeles in the vicinity of Bishop Airport.



**November 8, 1972:** Inyo County subleases the airport on a non-exclusive basis to Charles Luther.

**1973:** Sierra Pacific Airlines begins operating out of Burbank Airport (BUR) with destinations that include Las Vegas (LAS), Los Angeles (LAX), Fresno (FAT), Bishop (BIH), Mammoth Lakes (MMH), and San Jose (SJC).

**1973:** Sierra Pacific Airlines is purchased by Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, which continues to operate regularly scheduled and charter flight services from Bishop Airport.

**January 28, 1974:** The sublease with Charles Luther is amended and reassigned to Dave McCoy so that he can build a hangar for Sierra Pacific Airlines. The sublease requires that construction begin on or about July 1, 1976.

**1975-1976:** The airline begins flying non-stop from Mammoth Lakes to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Fresno with direct, one-stop service to Burbank.

**June 21, 1976:** The County approves a lease for the airport with Sierra Pacific Airlines.

**March 27, 1980:** Mammoth Mountain Ski Area turns its lease back over to Inyo County, with Dave McCoy urging the County to find another operator or operate the facility itself. He states it is no longer economically feasible to continue supporting the Bishop operation on his own. Mammoth Mountain will continue to run the flight school and rental planes until another operator is willing to take over.

**1981-1983:** Southern California-based Wings West operates service linking Mammoth Lakes and Bishop airports with Oakland, Sacramento, and Santa Monica.

**1984:** Alpha Air, based in Van Nuys, begins operating flights to Mammoth Lakes and Bishop.

**1985-1987:** Alpha Air relocates and begins operating flights between LAX and Mammoth Lakes and Bishop airports.

**December 7, 1993:** The Board of Supervisors establishes a Northern Inyo County Airport Advisory Committee.

**February 15, 1994:** The 1993 Bishop Airport Improvements Project/Apron Paving Project is complete.

**January 13, 1998:** The Bishop Airport Automated Aviation Fuel Terminal Project is complete.

**April 7, 1998:** The Bishop Airport 7-25 Taxiway & Apron Reconstruction Project is complete.

**September 11, 2001:** The Bishop Airport Fuel Terminal Relocation Project is complete.

**February 26, 2002:** The Bishop Airport Terminal Project is complete.

**February 18, 2003:** The Bishop Airport Asbestos Abatement Project is complete.

**May 20, 2003:** The Board of Supervisors accepts a Scheduled Air Service Market Report for the Bishop Airport; approves changing the name of Bishop Airport to "Eastern Sierra Regional Airport;" approves staff recommendations to continue ongoing efforts to attract a commuter airline to the airport; and directs staff to schedule an Eastern Sierra Council of Governments meeting to begin discussions with the City of Bishop, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and Mono County on the regional airport concept.

**July 15, 2003:** The Bishop Airport Demolition Project is complete.

**August 10, 2004:** The Board of Supervisors adopts and designates the Draft Bishop Airport Master Plan as the planning document to guide development of the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport through 2020.

**October 11, 2005:** The Eastern Sierra Regional Airport Water Distribution System Project is finished.

**January 1, 2007:** The Eastern Sierra Regional Airport Access Road Construction Project is complete.

**May 29, 2007:** The Eastern Sierra Regional Airport Fire Suppression Well Project is complete.

**August 19, 2008:** The Board of Supervisors dissolves and re-establishes the Northern Inyo County Airport Advisory Committee.

**January 5, 2010:** The Board of Supervisors approves an Easement Agreement between the County of Inyo and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for property located at the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport. The document gives the County land tenure and documentation necessary to secure federal aviation funds for airport projects.

**2012:** The County begins applying for Department of Transportation Airport Improvement Program Matching Grants.

**October 13, 2012:** Per a recommendation from the Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee, the Board of Supervisors approves changing the name of the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport back to Bishop Airport. The Committee believes pilots are having trouble locating the airport.

**October 13, 2012:** Per a recommendation from the Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee, the Board of Supervisors approves requesting an altered approach for the Bishop Airport from the FAA.

**2013-2019:** The County completes \$7.9 million worth of airport improvement projects at the Bishop Airport using standard FAA funding and matching county funds.

**May 13, 2014:** The Bishop Airport Electrical Lighting Vault Improvement Project is complete.

**March 15, 2016:** The Bishop Airport Airfield Lighting, Signing, and Visual Aids Rehabilitation Project is complete.

**July 29, 2016:** The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments holds a meeting attended by senior regional staff from the Federal Aviation Administration to participate in discussions about regional air service.

**September 6, 2016:** The Board of Supervisors appoints Chairman Jeff Griffiths and Supervisor Mark Tillemans, as the County's representatives to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments, to an ESCOG

Subcommittee comprised of representatives from the County of Inyo and Town of Mammoth to evaluate the most efficient way to expand and diversify long-term regional air service to the Eastern Sierra.

**March 14, 2017:** The Bishop Airport-Airfield Pavement Crack Repair, Pavement Sealing and Paint Marks, and Terminal Area Security Fencing Project is complete.

**January 16, 2018:** The Board approves an Outline of Statement of Intent for Flexibility and Cooperation on the Development of Infrastructure and Programs in Support of the Provision of Reliable and Expanded Commercial Air Service between the County of Inyo and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

**July 18, 2018:** The Bishop Airport – Apron Rehabilitation Project is complete.

**May 16, 2019:** The U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary announces the FAA's intent to award Bishop Airport a \$7.85 million grant for a runway improvement project.

**June 4, 2019:** The FAA recognizes the County of Inyo and Town of Mammoth Lakes with the Herman C. Bliss Airports Partnership Award.

**2019:** Inyo County, the Federal Aviation Administration, Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area commit to bringing commercial air service to Bishop Airport in 2020.

**January 22, 2020:** Inyo County hosts a scoping meeting in Bishop as part of the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA), and an Initial Study (IS) to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed airline service at the Bishop Airport.

**June 19, 2020:** Inyo County Administrator Clint Quilter announces that due to COVID-19, the County will not meet its goal of having commercial air service by October 2020. He states that the following work will continue to bring in air service in 2021: Bishop Airport Taxiway Rehabilitation Project; Bishop Airport Runway 12-30 Runway Rehabilitation Project; purchasing Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Vehicle; firefighter certification for airport personnel; the Environmental Assessment and Initial Study of the Proposed Commercial Service; Final Part 139 Certification from the FAA; terminal design and purchase; and negotiating with the airline regarding facility use.

**January 5, 2021:** The Bishop Airport – Taxiway Rehabilitation Project is complete.

**February 2, 2021:** The Bishop Airport – Runway 12-30 Rehabilitation Project is complete.

**May 2021:** The Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration of significant environmental impact is released.

**June 1, 2021:** The Board of Supervisors authorizes the purchase of a temporary 50-foot by 60-foot tensioned fabric structure to serve as passenger screening and seating areas for commercial airline service to begin this winter.

**August 2021:** The FAA issues a Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision regarding proposed commercial airline service at Bishop Airport, and subsequently issues the County of Inyo an Operating Certificate under 14 CFR Part 139 and approves an Operations Specification Amendment for SkyWest Airlines to provide scheduled service to Bishop Airport.

**September 21, 2021:** The Board of Supervisors approves the Bishop Airport's Airport Emergency Plan.

**December 14, 2021:** The Board approves a Use License Agreement between the County of Inyo and United Airlines for a non-exclusive, nontransferable, fully revocable license for use of a portion of the Bishop Airport property

**December 19, 2021:** United Express begins direct commercial flights into Bishop Airport from LAX, San Francisco (SFO), and Denver (DEN). Much fanfare, dignitaries, and members of the public greet the first incoming flights. Speakers include

**January 25, 2022:** The Board of Supervisors sets rates for parking at the Bishop Airport.

**Mid-March:** Winter commercial airline services are ceased for the season.

**March 29, 2022:** Bishop Airport summer schedule for commercial airline services is announced: beginning June 4, flight service between the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (BIH) and SFO will operate on Saturdays and Sundays through June 19. Flights will then be offered daily, except on Saturdays, from June 24 through September 5, 2022.

**May 10, 2022:** The Bishop Airport Terminal Project is complete.

(Sources: Board of Supervisors records; "A Short History of Flying in the Owens Valley" by Gigi de Jong; Kirt Nance; Wikipedia; miscellaneous aviation websites)