



Twin Falls County Historical Society Museum

In This Issue

A Grisly Discovery Pg.1&2

Item Highlight Pg.2&3

Recent Donations Pg.4

Upcoming Lectures Pg.5



The Official Newsletter of the Twin Falls County Historical Society Museum

February 2026

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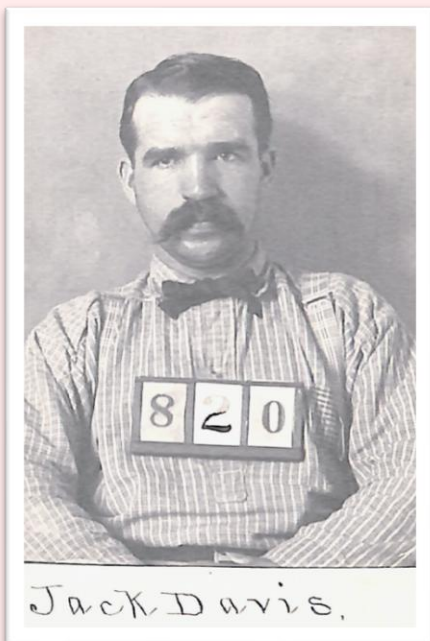
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A Grisly Discovery

The following excerpt comes from the book *Diamondfield - Finding the Real Jack Davis*, written by Max Black.

Black did extensive research into Diamondfield Jack Davis and the 1896 murder of Daniel Cummins and John Wilson. In 2011, Black was able to locate the gun believed to be the murder weapon.

Hear the full story of Diamondfield presented by CSI History professor, Justin Vipperman, at the Museum on Feb. 21st.

“On the morning of February 16, 1896, Ted Severe, a young sheep herder from Oakley, rode his horse to the top of a low hill and stopped to survey the countryside near the location where he and his herding partner had just established their campsite.

Severe estimated that his new camp was located two to three miles from the camp of a friend. Severe decided to ride over the hill and visit the neighboring sheep camp where both a friend and a recent acquaintance from Oakley were tending to a band of sheep.

As Severe surveyed the landscape of the surrounding area from a low ridge, he noticed that the herd of sheep from that neighboring sheep camp were scattered and appeared to be wandering. Severe looked for the herders but could not see a sign of even one, and it appeared that there was no one attending the sheep. He could see their camp wagon but no one was in sight.

Sensing that something was wrong, Severe rode down to the camp to investigate. He yelled out and asked if anyone was home, but no one responded. The sight of two dogs tied to the rear wheel of the wagon, apparently starving and hardly able to bark, increased his apprehension. Good dogs are an important part in a shepherd's life; to neglect one's dogs would be almost unthinkable.

The situation looked grim, and as Severe dismounted and approached the camp wagon, his sense of trouble only grew stronger, when he stepped up onto the tongue of the wagon to peek inside, his worst fears were confirmed: a body lay motionless on the bed at the rear of the wagon.

As soon as Severe entered the wagon he recognized the body as that of Daniel Cummins, a young man who had recently replaced his uncle at the camp. His body was lying across the end of the bed fully clothed, and the front of his shirt was bloody. Lifting the shirt, Severe could see what appeared to be a bullet wound in the young man's stomach. While he was examining Cummins's body, he realized that another body was also lying on the bed, covered over with a blanket.

When he lifted the cover, Severe recognized it to be that of John Wilson, his friend from Oakley, His shirt likewise was soaked in blood from what appeared to be a gunshot to the chin, a wound that resulted in considerable bleeding to the face and shoulder areas of his body.

The shock of finding the two bodies left him numb and wondering what to do next. He knew he had to return to his own camp and tell his partner about the grisly discovery...

Little did Ted Severe realize on that February day that he was a witness to the beginning of one of the most bizarre and notable criminal cases in the history of Idaho. The case would go on without resolution for the next six years and would become the subject of lingering questions, mythical stories, and misstated facts over the next 100 plus years."

-Diamondfield – Finding the Real Jack Davis, "A Grisly Discovery" by Max Black

Item Highlight

Hurrah for Kewpies!

Kewpies were introduced in 1909. Their design is inspired by Cupid, the Roman god of love.



Rose Cecil O'Neill
1874-1944

Rose O'Neill dreamed of becoming a New York cartoonist. An almost unheard-of feat for a woman at the time.

Rose was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1874, but spent most of her childhood in rural Nebraska.

She showed an interest in art from a young age, experimenting with drawing, painting, and sculpting throughout her childhood.

At thirteen, she won first place in a children's drawing contest sponsored by the *Omaha Herald* newspaper.

The judges saw great potential in her talents. With their help, Rose began illustrating for other local Omaha publications.

Her most marketable skill was her versatility. She could produce charming cartoons as well as darker "masculine" art.

In 1896, O'Neill became one of the first women to publish a comic strip when her work appeared in the September issue of *Truth* magazine.

This caught the attention of the popular comedy magazine, *Puck*, and Rose became the first female illustrator at the company.

This was a considerable accomplishment since female artists were considered inferior to males at the time. The magazine's New York headquarters didn't even have a restroom for women.

Her iconic Kewpie characters were introduced in a comic strip published in the Christmas issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1909.

The magazine's editor had asked O'Neill to create "a series of little creatures" similar to one of Rose's drawings of Cupid.

Thus, Kewpies were born. The characters resembled chubby babies with small tufts of hair and "budding wings". They had an appealing air of innocence with just a hint of mischief.

Rose described her new characters as "a sort of little round fairy whose idea is to be merry and kind at the same time" and "a benevolent elf who did good deeds in a funny way".

The charming "babies" became a favorite with readers. Kewpies started to appear in other popular women's magazines and ad campaigns for products like Jell-O. A *Woman's Home Companion* reader commented in 1913, "Long live Rose O'Neill! She enhances the value of your magazine twenty-five percent. Hurrah for Kewpies and Rose O'Neill".

In 1912, "Kewpie Kut-Outs" paper dolls were produced. That same year, Rose partnered with Geo. Borgfeldt & Co., a large doll distributor based in New York, to create the first 3-D Kewpie dolls.

Rose worked with a seventeen-year-old art student, Joseph Kallus, to sculpt a prototype of the dolls. These early Kewpie dolls were made of bisque with jointed arms, each one featuring a heart decal on the chest reading "Kewpie Germany". Some dolls were even autographed by Rose.

Kewpie dolls became an instant success, and more companies had to be enlisted to keep up with demand. Over the years, new characters and molds were introduced, adding to the Kewpie craze. At the height of their popularity, O'Neil was the highest-paid female illustrator in the world.

Kewpie dolls became more than just cute characters during a pivotal era for women's rights. O'Neil was a passionate supporter of the Women's Suffrage Movement, and she used her artistic capabilities to express her views.

Postcards and magazine illustrations featured Kewpies rallying for gender equality. In a particularly attention-grabbing stunt, a plane piloted by female aviation pioneer, Katherine Stinson, parachuted small Kewpie dolls adorned with suffrage sashes over a crowd in Nashville.

The Kewpies had already won over the hearts of readers, so they were seen as trustworthy. With their baby-like appearance, they brought a gentle face to feminism that appealed to a wide audience.

Kewpies fell out of popularity around the Great Depression. Rose O'Neill would go on to study other art media and create a large portfolio of works.

History remembers her as a talented artist, a passionate activist, and the creator of one of the most-beloved characters of the early 20th century.



As Kewpie dolls became more popular, other companies started producing "look-alikes". The dolls above, donated by J.L. Smith, are clearly inspired by Kewpies but lack the signature details of the real dolls.



O'Neill used her Kewpie characters to promote equality during the Women's Suffrage Movement.

Miss Anne Wheelon entertained at a birthday dinner last evening at her home on Third avenue north. A large kewpie formed the centerpiece of the table, and from it were suspended fifteen pink ribbon streamers ending at a small kewpie at each place, these being given as favors to the guests.

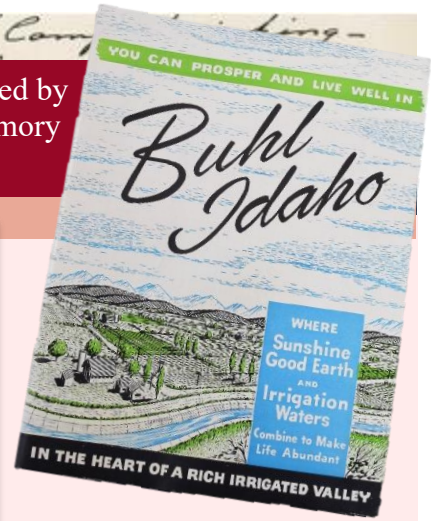
-Twin Falls Weekly News 1-22-1920

Local newspapers reporting social events in the 1920s often mention Kewpie dolls being used for party decorations and favors.

C. E. B. at "Camp Drinking C. E. B. at "Camp
Place" in lovely Hay
Valley where there

Buhl books, magazines, etc., donated by Carol and Beverly Crothers in memory of Sterling Edward Crothers

Donations



Baskets and Gold Strike stamps donated by Larry Koldewey



Butter churn donated by Marian Wallace



Fairbanks Feed Scale and pitchfork donated by Waive Stager



Steam Vaporizer donated by Diane O'Melia



A sincere Thank you to the family of Ted Poppellwell, who made a generous monetary donation to the Museum in his memory. We greatly appreciate your contribution!

... come hurrying
the cliffs for
Sunday - March 25 - 1923

Idaho Wild West Seminar

Idaho Wild West will present its annual seminar on Saturday, March 14th, 2026, at the Owyhee County Museum in Murphy, Idaho, from 9am-3pm.

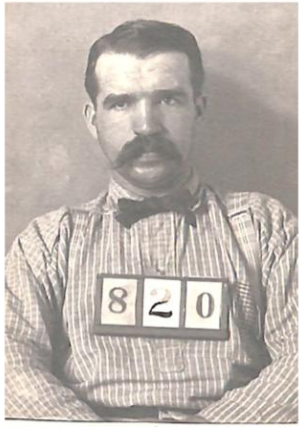
Immerse yourself in the captivating history of the Wild West in the great state of Idaho. This in-person event offers an opportunity to explore the legends and lore of cowboys, outlaws, and pioneers who shaped the Idaho frontier and beyond.

While the event is free, lunch tickets are available for \$20 per person.

There are no restaurants in Murphy. To secure your lunch spot, advance registration is required. Contact the Owyhee County Museum at 208-495-2319 or visit their website at owyheemuseum.org for more information.



Upcoming Lectures



Jack Davis.

• **Saturday, February 21st 1:00**

Diamondfield Jack: Outlaw, Scapegoat, and Idaho's Most Controversial Trial – Justin Vipperman

Diamondfield Jack was branded one of Idaho's most dangerous outlaws, but was he really a killer, or just in the wrong place at the wrong time? This talk dives into the bloody backdrop of the Idaho Sheep Wars, the murders that shocked the frontier, and the trial that sent Jack to death row on little more than rumor and fear.

Blending true-crime intrigue with frontier history, this presentation explores how justice worked, or didn't, on the edge of the American West, and why Diamondfield Jack's story still raises uncomfortable questions about guilt, power, and who gets blamed when a community is desperate for answers.

• **Saturday, February 28th 1:00**

Thinking Inside the Box – The Fascinating World of Honeybees – Heidi Tubbs

We depend on the efforts of insects for about 1/3 of the food that we eat. Bees and man have been connected historically, almost from the beginning of written history. What is it about these stinging insects that inspires both fear and amazement?

Come learn about the life and work of bees, how to get started if you're interested in keeping bees yourself, and some ways we can all help the bees in our community.



• **Saturday, March 7th 1:00**

From the Pearl River Delta to the Snake River Canyon: Southern Idaho's Chinese Cultural Legacy -Ron James

Recent archaeological surveys have revealed new information about the Snake River Canyon's Chinese gold mining camps, illuminating a part of Idaho history overlooked by traditional historical accounts.

Ron James's presentation reexamines the contributions made by Chinese immigrants to southern Idaho's history and shares the new evidence indicating that the Chinese gold mining sites ca. 1870- early 1880s were far more extensive and complex than previously understood.

