

The Kinton-Stuckey General Merchandise Store in Rosamond, circa 1906. Ella Kinton is center in black dress, and her uncle, John Stuckey, with the white beard, is seated to her left. The store was later moved to the Tropic Gold Mine.



‘Miss Ella’ Rosamond pioneer

WRITTEN BY **Norma Gurba**
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Dorene and Glen Settle

Ella Blanch Kinton (1863-1944) was a pioneer Rosamond homesteader, merchant, hotel owner and postmistress. Kinton devoted most of her life to the development of her community. She arrived in the Antelope Valley in the late 1880s on a stretcher near death, but fortunately her health improved.

The daughter of Theodore and Margaret “Maggie” Ellen (Stuckey) Kinton, she was born in Mans Choice, Bedford County, Massachusetts.

Her great-great-grandfather, Thomas Kinton, served as an officer under young Maj. George Washington in the French and Indian War (1756-1763).

While a young woman she moved to the Antelope Valley where her uncle, John Alexander Stuckey (1835-1914), resided.



Ella B. Kinton

Ella Kinton, nearest to the mast, sails on the Desert Queen, a wind-powered wagon, on Rosamond Dry Lake, circa 1902. The men are miners from the Tropicco and neighboring gold mines. The wagon was built by brothers Carl and Charles Hoyt, who worked at Ezra Hamilton's Lida gold mine on Tropicco Hill.

About one year later she located a 160-acre homestead that was approximately five miles west of Rosamond on present-day Willow Springs Road at the Hamilton Mill.

Her health suffered another blow when in 1891, as the Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette reported, "Ella Kinton narrowly escaped with her life when while standing at the head of a team of mules they started to run and she attempting to hold them, was dragged over some distance and thrown down, when the wagon ran over her head. Her injuries, though serious, are on the mend."

She survived this horrible accident and continued to improve her land, drilling two wells. She lived there for about five years.

She became involved in the local emerging mining industry and sold 20 acres of her property for the Hamilton Mill site.

She also became friends with Ezra

M. "Struck-It-Rich" Hamilton. In 1894, Hamilton discovered gold in the Antelope Valley on the north side of Crandall Hill, later called Hamilton Hill and now known as Tropicco Hill. His first major discovery was not until 1896, after which he built his first stamp mill.

Around 1896, Kinton, or Miss Ella as she was commonly known, moved back to "downtown" Rosamond where she and her uncle built and became the proprietors of Rosamond's business center on present-day Sierra Highway.

The popular establishment consisted of a general merchandise store, which was later moved to the outdoor Tropicco Gold Mine property where it is still on view although closed to visitors.

It also included a hotel and dining room, blacksmith shop and livery stable. During elections her store was the community's polling site, and later she sometimes acted as a voting inspector.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 73

Stuckey, a former Illinois deputy sheriff and farmer, would also work with her at the different businesses.

Kinton was also kept busy as she was appointed the town's postmistress in 1903; the post office was also located on her property.

In 1905, she was paid \$208.10 annually. The postmistress/postmaster appointment was one of the earliest federal government positions open to women due to the Civil War. The pay scale reflected how busy and large a community was compared to others.

During this same time period Los Angeles Postmaster M.H. Flint was paid \$6,000. Other area postmasters and their reimbursement rates were Mojave Postmaster William Collins, \$1,100; Randsburg Postmaster A. Young, \$1,100; Tehachapi Postmaster Peter J. McFarlane, \$852.94; Lancaster Postmaster James F. Dunsmoor, \$455.61; Palmdale Postmaster John A. Scherer, \$261.40; Acton Postmaster Jessie F. Taylor, \$239.37; Del Sur Postmaster E.A. Johnson, \$155.35; Neenach Postmaster George Bowman, \$91.20; Littlerock Postmaster Loran A. Traver, \$65.53; Elizabeth Lake Postmaster James Hefner, \$62.36; Manzana Postmaster David H. Baldwin, \$48.81; and Gorman Postmaster James A. McKenzie, \$39.03.

Kinton's mining interests continued as she owned the EBK gold mine and the M.C. claim in the active Rosamond Mining District.

In 1907, Kinton also sued the Tiger Head Mining Co. after a failed stock promotion. It is not known, however, how much money she earned from her Rosamond gold mines through the years.

She must have been a well-respected citizen as she also acted as a witness for several invention patents submitted by local residents in 1889 and 1891, which was not common for women during this period.

In 1900, her brother, George Watson Kinton (1896-1955), also moved to Rosamond and lived with Kinton and their uncle.

He worked in the Hamilton Mine and then became a cattleman working with Harry Butterworth, a leading Valley resident.

The Kintons were also close friends with cowboy Rawley Duntley, the Antelope Valley's "Barbecue King." George later became a local deputy sheriff and eventually took a position as the Lancaster Inn Hotel night clerk.

A historian at heart, Kinton during her later years enjoyed sharing Rosamond's early history with new residents. It is a shame she did not write down her stories to share with future generations.

Sometime after 1940, Kinton and brother George moved to Ventura where she died in 1944. She is buried next to George at Grand View Memorial Park in Glendale, California.