

## Pioneer Picnic moves back to Montezuma Well picnic area

By Bill Helm Sep 18, 2018 Verde Independent



This year's Pioneer Picnic will be held from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 23 at the Montezuma Well picnic area. Photo courtesy of the Camp Verde Historical Society.

RIMROCK – It's been more than 90 years since the Verde Valley's first Pioneer Picnic, 1927 to be exact.

That's how Jane Goddard remembers it, though she surely wasn't around for that inaugural gathering of Camp Verde and Beaver Creek storytellers.

In years not so past, the Pioneer Picnic was held downtown in Camp Verde and was hosted by the Camp Verde Historical Society.

This year, the event is back, but at the site of the Montezuma Well picnic area where the event was held many a time.

This year, the Dickinson family will be recognized as families from across the Verde gather for a king-sized potluck and stories as far as the ear can truly hear.

Rimrock's own Bill Cowan will provide cowboy coffee, beef stew and cobbler.

At 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 23, the Pioneer Picnic will commence, as folks are asked to bring a dish that can be shared.

For Jane Goddard, the annual Pioneer Picnic was “definitely one of my favorite days of the year when I was growing up in Camp Verde in the 1970s.”

In the 2010 book *Images of America: Camp Verde*, by Steve Ayers and the Camp Verde Historical Society, Goddard recently pointed out a photograph of her father, Jesse Goddard, as he poured a cup of joe for then-Governor Bruce Babbitt.

“Don Godard’s father, Carl Godard, and my father, were first cousins,” she recalled. “My dad was almost 56 when I was born. My grandfather, William Goddard changed the spelling after my Aunt Nettie – who later married Tuffy Peach – told him her high school teacher said they were spelling the name wrong.”

At this year’s Pioneer Picnic, Don and Chris Godard will bring Martha and Jack Summerhayes to life in a recreation of the memoirist and US Army colonel.

Cowan, and 94-year-old Betty Dickinson Kent, both former Camp Verde Historical Society presidents, are also expected to speak at this year’s Pioneer Picnic, Jane Goddard said.

And there will be plenty of live music, as Ken Mikell will take a break from his duties as the ghost who narrates Jerome’s history at Jerome State Park.

According to his website <http://harpytrails.com>, Mikell plays a wide range of traditional music, with particular attention to the Celtic roots of cowboy music.

“Will likely contact other musicians, but [we’re] thrilled that Ken Mikell has agreed to play,” Goddard said.

Sponsored this year by Ghost Riders Tours, this year’s Verde Valley Pioneer Picnic is from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/C.V.Arizona](http://www.facebook.com/C.V.Arizona).

If You Go ...

- What: Annual Verde Valley Pioneer Picnic
- Where: Montezuma Well picnic area
- When: 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 23.
- Cost: Potluck. Bring side dish or dessert