

With Special Recognition: Mona Lange McCroskey



Mona is a fourth-generation Arizonan, descendant of a pioneer ranching family in Yavapai County. She grew up on the Yolo Ranch near Camp Wood and on the SV Ranch northwest of Wikieup. Commuting to Phoenix, she graduated from Phoenix South Mountain High School, earned her secretarial science diploma from Lamson Business College, and spent twenty years as a legal/judicial secretary in Phoenix. Returning to college full-time in the 1980s, Mona obtained a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Southwest History from Arizona State University, and a Master's of Library Science from the University of Arizona. Concentrating on history and archival study, she worked for various historical organizations while attending college: the Arizona Historical Foundation, The Heard Museum, and the Salt River Project. She returned to Prescott in 1989 and became affiliated with Sharlot Hall Museum.

She has presented papers at Arizona History Conventions and published articles in several venues, including The Journal of Arizona History, Journal of the West, and The Bulletin of Bibliography. She compiled, with Harley Shaw, *Historic Photographs of Central Arizona Grasslands* and edited *Summer Sojourn to the Grand Canyon: The 1898 Diary of Zella Dysart* and *The Journey with Tom: Memories of an Arizona Pioneer Woman*, a retrospective narrative written by Alice Curnow. She self-published *A Mule's Eye of the Grand Canyon: The Photographs of Trail Guide Ray Tankersley* in 2004. Her latest books are *Chasing Cattle and the Cure: Oral Histories from Yavapai County, Arizona*, and *And We Danced: More Oral Histories from Yavapai County, Arizona*, both of which were finalists in the New Mexico-Arizona book awards in 2013 and 2014 respectively. She is working on a third volume of oral histories.

In 2000 Mona received the Sharlot Hall Award for her contributions to the preservation of Arizona history, mainly from her work as Sharlot Hall Museum's oral historian. She recorded more than three hundred family history interviews with Prescott and Yavapai County residents, concentrating on the pre-World War II period. In 2005 she was named an Arizona Culturekeeper. The Culturekeeper program was an Arizona Centennial project formed to recognize one hundred state residents who have made a positive impact on Arizona's history, culture, environment or economy.

Mona's experiences in recording oral histories have gained her a "family" of hundreds. She says that whatever she has contributed to keeping Arizona's history alive has been returned to her many times over by the enriching contacts and friendships she has formed with her fellow Arizonans.