

## Character Sheets for Mining Unit: Death Valley Characters

### Shorty Harris



Shorty Harris and his mule

My name is Frank Harris. My friends call me Shorty because I am only 5 feet 4 inches tall. I was born in Rhode Island but I spent a lot of time in mining camps in various states. The best strike I ever made was in 1904. I had five burros and plenty of grub. I was with my friend Ed when we found the chunks of gold. I literally tripped over the gold! We were rich but everyone knows that doesn't always last. I always spent the money real fast in town. I was a real good storyteller. I was a prospector for many years. I always had my pick.

### Julia Brier



Sketch of Julia Brier

I am Julia Brier, the wife of Reverend Brier. My husband, our three kids (Chris-8, John-6, and Kirke-4) and I were determined to head west through California in 1849. We started in Illinois and followed young bachelors into uncharted territory and boy did we find trouble. My husband was no prospector. We planned to establish churches in California. We were lost for quite some time and we had to slay our oxen and leave our wagons behind. I helped my husband survive dysentery, cooked all the food, loaded and unloaded the oxen, and took care of the children. It was really hard but I had to be strong for my family.

### Louise Grantham



Louise Grantham

I am Louise Grantham and I am a prospector and miner! In fact, I was the most financially successful female miner. I came to Death Valley when I was 25 years old from Ohio. I mined talc at Warm Springs and later gold at Gold Hill Mine. My mining camp at Warm Springs Canyon had a swimming pool, plumbing, and a TV! It was important to keep our workers happy! My mine used heavy machines to do most of the hard work, I would never use a pickax!

### E. Louise Presser



First school in Rhyolite

I am E. Louise Presser. I was supposed to marry a farmer in Nebraska but I wanted more adventure. I moved to Rhyolite, Nevada and became the mining camp's first schoolteacher. It was scary and exciting at the same time! My school had thirty desks and a slate board which was really high on the wall and hard to reach. I had 93 students! I split them into two groups; some had school in the morning, and others in the afternoon. Thank goodness the school board hired two more schoolteachers for the next school year!

### Death Valley Scotty



Death Valley Scotty

I am Walter Scott, or Death Valley Scotty. I am a true prospector....ok, no I am an entertainer and an amazing storyteller. I was born in Kentucky but soon found odd jobs that took me all the way to Death Valley. I worked at Harmony Borax Works and with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. Then, I convinced everyone I had a gold mine. Mr. Albert Johnson was my best investor. He soon learned that I didn't have a gold mine. However, we became good friends and he built a castle in Grapevine Canyon where I entertained all my new friends.

### Quon Sing



Chinese workers at Harmony Borax Works

I am Quon Sing from China. I came to Death Valley to work as a cook at the Harmony Borax Works. The Chinese immigrants, like me, were not treated kindly by the other workers. I worked as hard, and after a few years, my boss asked me to work at his ranch, later called China Ranch. There was nothing but tough, raw land on this ranch. I took this challenge and used a spring to bring needed water to the ranch. It was successful! We raised many crops and livestock and sold them to the mining camps upstream.

### M.J Moore



The Moore Family

I am M.J. Moore, the postmaster for the mining town of Rhyolite. I lived there with my wife and two kids, Joe and Kitty. My wife, Anna, was the first postmaster at the age of 18. Our post office was initially a small tent. I opened the sacks everyday outside the tent and called out the names of people who received post. In 1908, the post office moved into the basement of the bank building. I had an entire office just for me. My office was bigger than our original post office tent!

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- Julia Brier: <<https://desertgazette.com/blog/tag/desert/>>
- E. Louise Presser: Weight, H. and L. (reprint 1996). Rhyolite: The Ghost City of Golden Dreams. Pg 23. Death Valley Natural History Association.
- M.J Moore: Weight, H. and L. (reprint 1996). Rhyolite: The Ghost City of Golden Dreams. Pg 5. Death Valley Natural History Association.