

## GENERAL

1. **What buildings are original? (sign suggested) (6)**  
Four adobe buildings date from mid to late 1880s; the Zenda Mining museum building, Lil's Saloon, Lane House, and the front part of the General Merchandise store. Also said to be original are the center portion of the Rock Shop, and the Park Office-the only original wooden building.
2. **Where did their water come from?**  
At first, from the Mojave River which was often flowing above ground about six miles from Calico. Barrels were filled there and loaded onto wagons, so water could be delivered that way. Soon there were wells dug closer to town, and water was pumped out using steam powered equipment. That water was then piped to holding tanks and some businesses received gravity-delivered water, paying the Calico Water Works Co. for the service. Other residents built their own tanks, and paid the water company to fill them.
3. **Where did the wood for building come from?**  
The nearest source would have been from mills that harvested timber from the San Bernardino & San Gabriel Mountains, but cut lumber was also shipped by rail from Northern California.
4. **How many fires have there been? When? How did they start?**  
There were three major fires; in June of 1883 the cause was the explosion of a coal oil stove in the Globe restaurant, in September of 1887 the fire originated in the back room of H.W. Bell's general merchandise store, and in July of 1888 the fire started in Mrs. Garrett's restaurant.
5. **What was the population when the town was alive?**  
A geologist visiting in 1885 wrote that there were about 800 people in town then. The population for the entire 10-square mile Calico Mining District has been estimated at perhaps up to 2,000-4,000 people during the peak of the mining years.
6. **Was this a real town?**  
People began coming in to work and live fairly soon after the discoveries of silver during the year 1881. The U.S. Post Office opened in 1882, and closed in 1898.
7. **What year did the last resident leave Calico?**  
The Post Office closed in 1898 because there weren't enough people here to serve. The U.S. Census for 1900 did not record any residents here at all, but there were many Calico people who had moved to Daggett and/or remained in the local area by that time. Residents were said to have been here until at least 1907/1910 and even tried to mine for Borax during this time.
8. **How did it become a ghost town?**  
In 1896 the price of silver dropped so low it became unprofitable to mine, which affected everything in town. Without silver being profitable, miners left, mills went out of business, people left so stores and other businesses started to fail as well.
9. **How did they decide on "Calico"?**  
The mountain range here was called the Calico Mountains or Calico Range before silver mining began, because the variety of colors in the rock formations reminded people of the colorful varieties of calico

print cloth. According to a Los Angeles newspaper the year before the town was named, “These discolorations are due to the various minerals the hills contain; for silver, iron, copper, lead, tin, antimony, and arsenic are present, singly or one or more together, in almost all of the ranges. Some ‘prospector,’ poet as well as miner, has bestowed its fitting name upon the Calico Range.” Folklore has it that the silver miners thought the multi-colored hills were “as purty as a gal’s calico skirt.”

After the silver had been discovered and miners and businessmen began the establishment of the town, there was soon the need for a Post Office, which was then easily given the name of Calico as the town was located at the Calico Mountains.

10. **Who owns Calico?** The people of San Bernardino County. Calico Ghost Town is operated by the County’s Regional Parks dept.
11. **Does Mr. Knott still own calico?** No. He owned it from 1951 to 1966
12. **Did Mr. Knott sell calico?** No, he donated the town to the County in 1963. It was a three-year process which was concluded in 1966. See the commemoration plaque located at the flagpoles area in the center of town.
13. **Why did Mr. Knott give Calico to the County?** He was unable to acquire additional land for expansion. Also, he was busy with many demands in running Knott’s Berry Farm at the time.
14. **When did Mr. Knott start the restoration of calico?** The early part of 1952. Most of the work his crew did was during the mid to late 1950s.
15. **From whom did Mr. Knott buy the town site?** Zenda Mining Company.
16. **How much area belongs to Calico?** Calico Ghost Town Regional Park occupies approximately 500 acres.
17. **Why did Calico become a town?** The presence of the silver miners attracted businesspeople that could make a living here by selling the miners goods & services.
18. **Where did the people of Calico live?**  
The majority lived in town, in the rear of the business buildings on Main Street. Calico’s Chinatown was on the eastern side of Calico. Chinese individuals were important to the success of towns in the west. They provided a lot of services for miners and town dwellers, including laundry facilities and operated restaurants.
19. **How many Chinese lived in Calico?**  
Longtime resident Mrs. Lucy Lane estimated 40 Chinese at maximum. A large number of Chinese came and settled in the West in general due to the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. They followed and aided in the construction of the railroad and ended up in the west.
20. **How many Calico buildings were moved to Knott’s berry farm?**  
None. The town had already been stripped out by the time Knott started his ventures in Orange County in the 1940s. Some Calico buildings had been moved to the local communities of Yermo, Daggett, and even Barstow.
21. **What were the homes built with?** Adobe, lumber, and stones.

22. **Why are there no ruins of the homes?** Almost all the ruins that were not rebuilt have by now been destroyed over the years from erosion or vandalism.
23. **Where did the people get their supplies from in the 1880s?** Supplies were mainly shipped to Calico merchants by rail from San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.
24. **Did the railroad come to Calico?**  
The closest major, railroad was only about five miles away, directly across the valley from Calico (as it still is today, the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe). There were also two narrow-gauge mining railroads that served the Calico Mining District; one was the Waterloo Mining Company Railroad which ran from the Waterloo Mine to the company's stamp mill near Daggett, with a spur line that ran through Calico's Wall Street Canyon just below the town. The other narrow-gauge line was the Borate & Daggett Railroad which ran from the borax mining camp of Borate to the processing mill at the Calico Dry Lake- from where the line then became standard gauge and connected to the mainline at Daggett.
25. **How many saloons did Calico have?** Longtime resident John Lane estimated approximately 23 during the peak of the boom years.
26. **Did Calico have a fire wagon?**  
No reference found to one yet. After the 1887 fire, the town formed a bucket brigade. Business people often kept a barrel or more full of water ready to fight a fire at their individual locations. It was reported that residents of nearby Daggett fought a fire using a bucket brigade in 1908.
27. **Did Calico have a jail?** No. Prisoners were sometimes kept overnight locked inside the cellar of a building but most often they were transported by stagecoach and/or railroad to the jail at San Bernardino.
28. **Why was there no church in Calico?**  
The School House was used for church services & Sunday school lessons. The Town Hall was used for wedding ceremonies. For a short time Congregationalist Reverend Drummond McCunn lived at Calico, and there was interest by some townspeople to raise funds to build a church for him.
29. **Were there any killings in Calico?** It is said there have been from both gun and knife fights.
30. **How many people are buried in the cemetery?** A little over 100.
31. **Are the tombstones authentic?**  
Oftentimes tombstones were redone by family members/ancestors, so it is hard to tell when a gravestone/tombstone is original or not. Additionally, people didn't always have the money to buy a tombstone/grave marker right away so sometimes they were put in years later.
32. **Were all the antiques found in Calico?** Some were found in Calico, some came from Knott's Berry Farm and some from individuals interested in Calico having an historic look.
33. **When did Mrs. Lane come to Calico?** According to her memoirs, she came in 1885 when she was ten years old. Her father was a miner, who had arrived about the year before.
34. **Where are Mr. and Mrs. Lane buried?** San Jacinto Valley Cemetery at Hemet, California.
35. **What is the elevation here?** 2,480 feet. Since Calico is on the side of a mountain, the elevation varies from about 2,200 feet to 2,400 feet.

36. **How hot does it get here during the summer?** The average heat is between 95 and 107; occasionally it gets hotter.
37. **How cold does it get in the winter?** The average is 40-50 degrees; occasionally there are freezes & temps in the 20s.
38. **Does it ever snow at Calico?** Yes, about once a year.
39. **Is Calico open all year?** Yes, every day of the year except Christmas Day.
40. **What are your hours?** The overall Park operating hours are 9:00 a.m. To 5:00 p.m.
41. **Will the town be open late in the summer months?** There is no plan for it to be at the present time.
42. **Do you work for the county?** The concessionaires and their employees do not work for the county.
43. **How far is it to Las Vegas or Los Angeles?** About 150 miles each way.
44. **Where do you get the water supply?** From wells.
45. **How deep is the well?** 600 feet. (Have to ask a Ranger!)
46. **Does Calico have any fire protection?** Yes, a 500 gallon pumper truck and fire hydrants. There are several fire departments in the local area that will respond.
47. **Is there a legal post office at Calico?** No. The nearest Post Office is at Yermo, located a little over 3 miles away. However, the town had a Post Office at one time.
48. **Will the letters mailed here have the Calico postmark?** No. There is no legal Post Office currently at Calico.
49. **Why isn't the school house open during weekdays?** In order for the building to be open, someone interested in volunteering to be a period school teacher can submit an application at the Park Office.
50. **Are there gunfights at Calico?** Presently there are Calico volunteer gunfighters who perform a couple times a week.
51. **Are people allowed to climb the Calico Mountains?** No, it is not safe due to past mining and the dangers of old mine shafts. There are signs posted for No Trespassing.
52. **What does the town do with the guest book?** It is stored for future reference.
53. **Is there any place in town to get beer or mixed drinks?** Beer and wine are served at the Calico House Restaurant, Lil's Saloon, and the Old Miner's Café.
54. **Does the train ride go through the mine or the mountain?** No.
55. **Is there any place to stay overnight at Calico?**  
At the south end of Calico, 1,000 feet from the town site there are two campgrounds for campers, trailers, and tents. There are also six camping cabins for rent (4 person capacity), as well as a Bunkhouse with a 20-person capacity and a Mini Bunkhouse with a 6-person capacity.

56. **Can you write or call for campground reservations?** Camping reservations can be made online using [sbcountyparks.com](http://sbcountyparks.com) or by calling the Park Office at (760) 254-2122 or 1-800-TO CALICO.
57. **What are the names of the trees/bushes? (3)** Native desert trees here include Desert Willow, Palo Verde, and Mesquite.
58. **What are the names of the birds? (3)**  
A non-native but prevalent bird here is the Red-Legged Chukar. Also there are the Rock Wren, Verdin, House Finch, birds of prey such as owls and hawks, ravens, and migrating species seen every spring and fall.
59. **What other type of animals are here?** Mammals include bats, white-tailed antelope ground squirrels, and the gray fox. Reptiles such as snakes and lizards are seen. In the fall we see desert tarantulas.
60. **How do you get to the cemetery? Is it open? Is it active?** The cemetery is located to the West of the lower parking lot. There are burials still conducted on an exception basis.
61. **Why isn't there a plaque/sign in the China Town area?**  
This may be added in the future as Chinese individuals were important to the success of towns in the west. They provided a lot of services for miners and town dwellers, including laundry facilities and operated restaurants.
62. **Is this owned by Knott's Berry Farm?**  
No. Walter Knott owned it from 1951 to 1963. He donated the town to the County in 1963. It was a three-year process which was concluded in 1966. See the commemoration plaque located at the flagpoles area in the center of town.  
  
**Why?** He was unable to acquire additional land for expansion. Also, he was busy with many demands in running Knott's Berry Farm at the time...
63. **Who owns the town?** San Bernardino County. Calico Ghost Town is operated by the County's Regional Parks Department.
64. **Did any Indian tribes live in the area?**  
Members of various tribes used the Mojave River as a source of water and food, including a branch of the Serrano tribe called the Vanyume, who had a village near present-day Victorville. Piute Indians were known to have raided livestock from early-day Mojave River homesteaders, and Colorado River Indians were known to have traveled overland to trade with tribes living closer to the Pacific Coast.
65. **Are there or have you seen any ghosts? (4)** Some employees and guests have reported experiences.
66. **Does anyone live here now? How many?** Yes, mostly for security.

**MINING****67. How was silver first discovered here? When and by whom?**

Prospectors searched for silver all over these local mountains after exciting discoveries had been made in the late 1870s north of what is now Barstow (Waterman Mine). Silver-bearing ore was found right on the surface as outcroppings of veins, and prospectors simply began digging to follow the direction of the vein or veins. There were at least 40 mining claims filed in less than a month's time during the spring of 1881, at what became the Calico Mining District. One of the earliest mining discoveries in 1881 in the Calico Mountains was made by John McBride, Larry Silvia, and Charlie Meacham and they named it the Sue Mine (at the head of Wall Street Canyon).

Other discoveries were filed on March 26, 1881 and were named the Gibraltar, Red Jacket, and Red Cloud. The Gibraltar was discovered by three men named Lawrence Silva, Manuel Lorenze, and Hieronymous Hartman. The Red Jacket and Red Cloud were discovered by four men named Wallace, Parks, Newbill, and Ferrell.

**68. What was mined here?** Mostly Silver ore, horn silver, and native silver. Also Borax, lead, traces of gold and copper, iron ore, magnesium, and barite.**69. What was the name of the largest silver mine?** The Silver King. The Silver King Mine was filed on April 6, 1881 by six men named Warden, Yager, Mecham, Thomas, Miller and John King.)**70. Dollar amount and quantity pulled from largest mine? All of Calico area?**

Complete figures are not and may never be known, although there were some accounts of estimated tonnage that came out of particular mines, and some records exist of shipments of silver from mills to the mint in San Francisco. The recognized published figure (From State Landmark designation) for the Calico Mining District was \$13 to \$20 million in silver mined.

**71. Why did they mining stop?** In 1896 the price of silver dropped so low it became unprofitable to mine.**72. Did they mine 24 hours a day?**

The miners worked 12 hours shifts being paid \$3.00 to \$4.00 a day. Yes the mining operations did go on 24/7, due to two 12 hour shifts. Often mining work slowed greatly in the summer due to the heat

**73. Did any kids work in the mines?**

Underage mining was extremely popular throughout the US, even children under 13 were mining. I am not sure how it was in Calico, but kids were mining everywhere. A boy who had finished school here, typically at about age 13, might get a job doing basic mine work alongside his father as he wasn't exactly considered a kid any more at that age in those days.

**74. What was the average work day and work week for miners?**

An average work day consisted of 10 to 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Evidently some of the borax miners went on strike in the 1890s, asking for having Sundays off.

**75. What was the cost of living for the miners?**

Some hotels/boarded houses charged \$7.00 per week for room & board. Water cost 3-5 cents a gallon. A good pair of shoes could cost about \$3.50, and a pound of coffee about 45 cents. Prices at

Calico were not considered to be exorbitant “gold rush prices” since goods were shipped directly from San Francisco and Los Angeles via railroad and those trains stopped at nearby Daggett daily.

76. **Are there mines you can go in?** No, not outside the Regional Park.
77. **How many mines are around here?**  
Over 100, with at least 50 actively producing in the late 1800s. Some of the larger ones were; Silver King, Waterloo, Silver Odessa, Bismarck, Occidental, Runover, Oriental, Zenda, Maggie, Lucille, Red Dog, and Milwaukee.
78. **Are there any mines working now?** None at the present time.
79. **Will there be mining again?** Possibly, but most likely to the west of Calico if the price of silver raises enough to make mining profitable.
80. **How and when was the silver mined?** Picks, drills, shovels, and black powder. Most silver was mined from 1881 to 1896.
81. **Who owned the silver king mine?** It was first owned by six persons, one of which was San Bernardino County Sheriff John C. King, and it was one of the most profitable mines.
82. **How many mines were in the area?** Over 100, with at least 50 actively producing in the late 1800s.
83. **What are the names of some of the mines?** Silver King, Waterloo, Silver Odessa, Bismarck, Occidental, Runover, Oriental, Zenda, Maggie, Lucille, Red Dog, and Milwaukee.
84. **How much silver was taken out of the mines?**  
According to the State Landmark designation, \$13-20 million. Complete figures are not and may never be known, although there were some accounts of estimated tonnage that came out of particular mines, and some records exist of shipments of silver from mills to the mint in San Francisco. The recognized published figure (From State Landmark designation) for the Calico Mining District was \$13 to \$20 million in silver mined.
85. **How much was silver worth then and now?** At the highest it was about \$1.14 an ounce then, and is worth over \$16.00 an ounce now (late Feb. 2015).
86. **How many hours a day did a miner work and what were they paid?** They worked 12 hours a day and were paid \$3.00 to \$4.00 a day.
87. **Were any miners lost in mine accidents?**  
James McGowan was involved in a massive cave-in at the Waterloo Mine in 1891, but his body was not recovered. John McDonald was fatally blown up by a blasting explosion at the Bismarck Mine in 1885, and Malcolm McLeod died after falling 80 feet down an ore chute inside the Silver King Mine in 1886. William English was crushed to death by falling rock and timber inside the Oriental No. 2 Mine in 1895.
88. **What forms of silver were found here?** Silver ore, horn silver, and native silver.
89. **What other minerals and materials were found at Calico?**  
Borax, lead, traces of gold and copper, iron ore, magnesium, and barite.