

ARTI-FACTS

The Newsletter of the Award-Winning Idyllwild Area Historical Society

Preserving the History of Idyllwild and Surrounding Communities
in the San Jacinto Mountains

WINTER 2014

HISTORY — WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT IT?

By Ben Killingsworth

Those of us who belong to and support the Idyllwild Historical Area Society have an obvious interest in history, in this case the history of Idyllwild and the surrounding areas. But in a moment of random reflection I asked myself, “Why? Why do any of us care about past history?”

In fact, a common retort to a criticism or unfavorable remark of a personal nature is, “Oh, that’s ancient history!” In other words, it’s in the past, therefore it doesn’t matter.

And yet we do care about the past because in large measure it defines who we are today, like it or not. One reason the history of our little town means a lot to many of us is knowing that it began as a place where innovation, hard work and courage were the keys to progress. That being the basis of our existence has had, and continues to have, an important influence on what we have become and where we are going as a community.

You can see the evidence of that all over town, especially when it comes to our local businesses. For the most part they hang in there, working hard and displaying the courage it takes to keep at it through good times and bad.

Sometimes surviving can be tough, as evidenced by the number of businesses that are forced to call it quits. But their former places of business aren’t vacant for long, because another brave soul suddenly appears and puts his own particular brand of innovation, hard work, and courage to the test.

That in a nutshell is what has driven the development of our town and the surrounding area. It all began, as we know, with some really brave people



Our first successful entrepreneur, George Hannahs, created a general store in 1893 at the site of today’s entrance to the Idyllwild Arts campus.

IAHS Archives

who saw a way to make some money by starting a lumber business. From that beginning one thing led to another and pretty soon there were campgrounds, then little hotels and a few stores.

And the people who patronized these businesses were almost as brave and determined as the ones who ran them. Imagine coming up here by horse and buggy over primitive trails that no one in today’s world would dream of calling a road.

But history is a lot more complicated than that, especially if you break it down into a number of important categories, like the history of the universe, the history of planet Earth, the history of the world, the history of our country and of our state, our county, our community, our occupation, our religion, our family, and probably the most important of all, our own personal history.

Well, you might say, one’s own personal history is probably the least important in the overall scheme of things, but think of it this way. With the possible exception of the histories of the universe and our

(See History, page 3)

We do care about the past because in large measure it defines who we are today.

IDYLLWILD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Arti-Facts

<i>Co-Editors:</i>	Adele & Bob Smith
<i>Layout:</i>	Halie Johnson
<i>Feature Writer:</i>	Ben Killingsworth

ANOTHER REWARDING YEAR

2013 was a busy and productive year for the IAHS board and volunteer staff. Collaborations with the Idyllwild Garden Club, the Art Alliance of Idyllwild, the Town Crier, and the Community Lecture Series, together with our own programs—museum, home tour, ice cream social—kept us in the public eye.

Behind the scenes our collection of historical artifacts, documents, and photos grew to near 10,000 items. (See page 6.) The archive staff had an especially productive year improving the collection's organization; two-thirds of it is now searchable by computer. Its utility, together with the newly available on-line issues of the Town Crier, enabled us to provide meaningful answers to more than 80% of the weekly inquiries we received.

An active following of 285 memberships, an unusually successful home tour, and a steady flow of museum visitors produced \$29,600 of general revenue, in addition to donations for the garden or the on-line newspaper project. With routine expenses of \$20,600, we had a surplus to spend on the newspaper project, to hire expert assistance for revamping our website, and to regrade and pave our notorious driveway. At long last, vehicles now have easy access to our buildings and handicap parking.

And speaking of the on-line Town Crier project, we now have the years 1949-1953 available at www.GenealogyBank.com. This site houses the largest collection of historic newspapers on the Web, including Riverside and Hemet papers.

1949-53 were formative years in the postwar development of the community we know today. The ability to search for names, places, dates, and keywords gives us a powerful tool for learning what went on in Idyllwild at that time. Now, thanks to Idyllwild Public Library director Shannon Ng, for a limited time you can have free access to the Genealogy Bank website, normally a subscription service, on the library's computers

Looking ahead, we'll soon be adding 1954-1956. We hope to continue expanding this resource as funding allows. **But we urgently need to fill in missing issues from 1946-47 and 1958. If you have or know of any copies, please contact us at (951) 659-2717 or info@idyllwildhistory.org.**

HISTORY ... (continued from page 1)

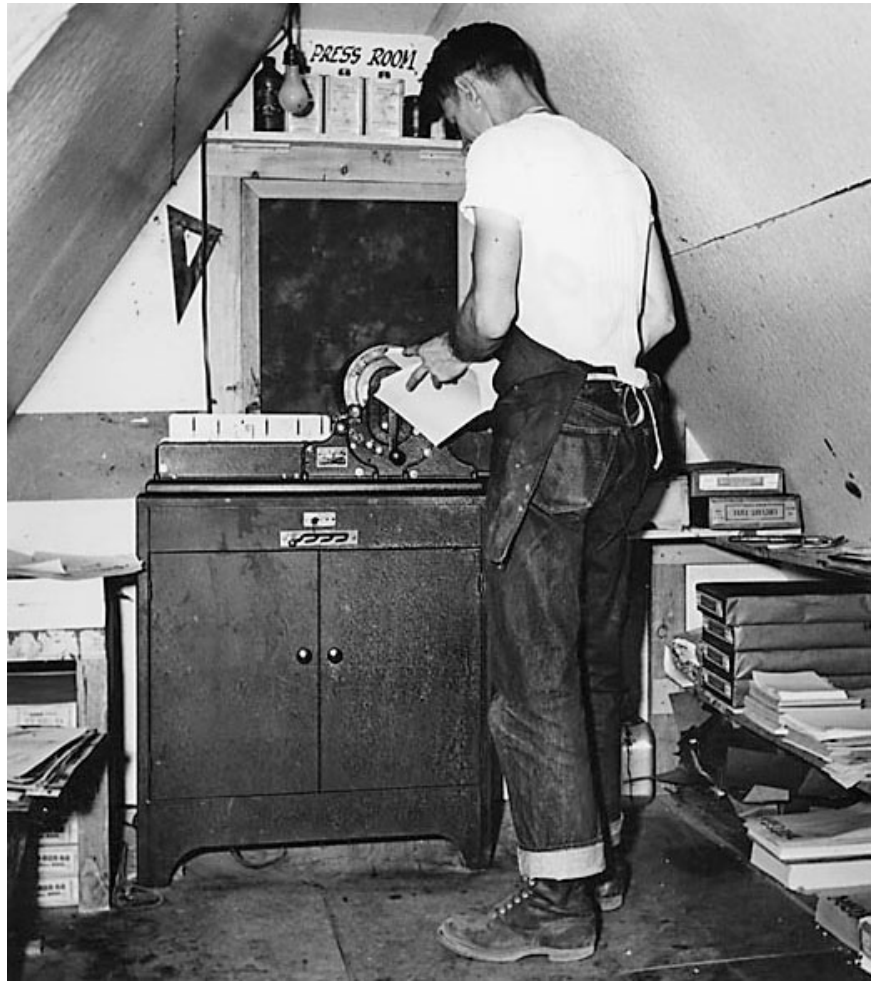
planet, the history of each individual member of a community determines, in some ways at least, the history of the community itself.

As one example, in 1946 Ernie Maxwell and his wife, Betty, established the Idyllwild Town Crier. That was a notable accomplishment, to be sure, but in order for it to have any real significance in terms of our town's history, other people had to buy the newspaper, others had to advertise their businesses in it, and still others had to patronize the advertisers. Otherwise the paper would have gone by the wayside long ago, and few people living here today would even know it once existed.

That's just one example which shows that most of what we refer to as "history" is really about people, or what historians call "human activity." Even when a particular building, say a home featured in our annual Home Tour, is admired because of its age, the structure itself is not what we are really admiring, whether we are conscious of it at the time or not. It's really the people who built it and the obstacles they may have had to overcome in order to complete the task that we are admiring.

In addition to old homes most of us have a great fascination with other old things – things we refer to as "antiques." Things like furniture, pieces of art, jewelry, clothing, documents, automobiles, tools, and even baseball cards, to name just a few. And the older they are the more valuable they are. But again, it isn't so much the object that we hold dear, but rather the people they represent – the ones who made them, the ones who used them, and perhaps the things people were doing at the time in accordance with the customs and beliefs of the day.

The importance we give to our history is also reflected in our system of education. Indeed, graduation from high school in California requires three years of history/social studies, including one year of U.S. history and geography; one year of world history, culture, and geography; one semester of American government and civics; and one semester of economics.



Ernie Maxwell cranks out an early edition of the Town Crier on a mimeograph now housed in the IAHS collection.

IAHS Archive

As for the history of our planet, scientists say the water we have today is the exact same water that Earth contained billions of years ago. That alone is interesting enough, but consider the fact that our bodies, and the bodies of every member of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, consist largely of water. And, as we know, there's a constant exchange going on – water in, water out, so to speak. And what's this got to do with history you ask?

Well, the water in your body at this moment could have been most anywhere a few weeks, or months, or many years ago. And since it's been going from one body to another for perhaps millions of years, it could easily have been part of a dinosaur's body at one time, or maybe it was part of George Washington's body, or Eleanor Roosevelt's, or Einstein's, or Madam Curie's, or Elvis Presley's. On the other hand, it could just as easily have been part of a ground squirrel's body, or a rattlesnake's, or a skunk's – even a tree's.

How's that for some personal history?

THE COMPANY WE KEEP
New and Renewing Members – October through December 2013

NEW MEMBERS

Benefactor

Jeff Chojnacki

Sherman Oaks

Family

Pat & Richard Schnetzer

Idyllwild

RENEWING MEMBERS

Founders Circle

Byron & Robyn Beck
 Barbara Burgess

Santa Barbara
 Idyllwild

Family

Terry Bauman & Charlene Wagner
 Jeannette Boller & Dan Scott
 Doug & Maureen Boren
 Barney & Jorgine Brause
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 Nancy & Jack Fletcher
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 Kathryn Goddard
 Eugene Hubbard
 Lana Ickes
 Elizabeth Miller & Neill Bell
 Liz & Walt Mueller
 Marge Muir
 Robin & Sarah Oates
 Dot Pentz
 Carol & Will Summers
 Deidre Vail

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 Venice
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 Idyllwild
 Idyllwild
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 Fallbrook
 Huntington Beach
 Huntington Beach
 San Diego
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 Idyllwild
 Idyllwild
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 Laguna Niguel
 Walnut

Patron

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Riverside

Benefactor

Howard Sherman & Gregg Houston

North Hollywood

Sponsor

Jim Crawford & Marcia Waldorf
 Rich Honn & Ann Snow
 Margaret McTague
 Linda & Manny Rider
 Anne & Doug Walker

Idyllwild
 Pasadena
 Riverside
 Palm Desert
 Palm Desert

Business/Organization

Idyllwild Garden Club
 Wilder Cabins (Pat Litfin)

Idyllwild
 Idyllwild

Individual

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 Kathy Dickey
 Francoise Frigola
 Donald Giger
 Joan McCullough
 Karen Metz
 Alma McGaugh Peters
 Cecilia Tepel

Idyllwild
 Cardiff-by-the-Sea
 Idyllwild
 Omaha NE
 Idyllwild
 Idyllwild
 Idyllwild
 Mountain Center
 Idyllwild

Contributor

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 Joyce & William Miller
 Earl & Peggy Parker
 Brad & Karen Radis
 Geraldine Sperling
 Adele & Ron Voell

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 Valley Village
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 Idyllwild
 Torrance
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 Idyllwild

OUR DONORS

We've been pleased this year to receive significant cash donations from Founders Circle members **Charles & Charlotte Bird, Jim Marsh** (also architect of our Frank & Mabel Moote Archive & Research Center), **Walt & Betty Parks, Bob & Adele Smith, and Jeff Wu.**

We also thank the following recent donors of books, maps, pamphlets, photos, postcards, quilts, and writings: Hill residents **Nancy Borchers, Myra Dutton, Gina Genis, Kathryn Gorzny, Barbara Jones, Teresa Lease, Sheri McLain, Marcel Pariseau, and Adele Smith; Terry Bauman, Marjorie Boyns and Bob Cox** of San Diego; and **Jim Yamasaki** of Oakland. Particularly valuable are a spectacular photographic portrait of the Mountain Fire on evacuation day captured by Gina Genis and a large wall map of all Idyllwild area properties with street addresses, donated by Nancy Borchers.

OUR MUSEUM DOCENTS

2013 saw the 10th anniversary of our museum, and its visible presence in the middle of Idyllwild is one of the keys to IAHS's success. During the year 3,867 visitors stopped in, learned more about the past, and through their donations, purchases, and memberships contributed nearly \$7,000 to our income. The folks who make this happen are our museum docents. So the Board of Directors recognizes and thanks all these volunteers:

Nancy Borchers
Maureen Boren
Susie Bowman
Dan & Sharla Carpenter
Diann Coate
Morry Copeland & Dick Dorisse
Susan Cowper
JoAnne Curren
Tuck Ernst
Dottie Goldfarb
Katie Grigsby
Charlotte & George Groty
Leann Gudmundson
Chris & Ginger Hadley
Carolyn Hall
Barbara Jones
Doris Lombard & Ron Perry
Virginia Lumb
Sheri McClain
Marlene Pierce
Susan Righetti
Bob Smith
Cecilia Tepel
Linda & Larry Turner
Adele Voell
Elaine Weiler
Betty Wilcox
Barbara Wilke

It's an impressive list, yet because Idyllwild is such a massive sponge for volunteers' time, many can offer only limited service. So half the work falls on a handful of shoulders. We perpetually need more docents.

With this in mind, we asked our current docent coordinator, Barbara Jones, to share her thoughts about docenting. Her response is in the adjoining column.

THE JOY OF DOCENTING

By Barbara Jones



Docent coordinator Barbara Jones

Wouldn't you like to know more about our unusual little village? Why does it have no official local government, not even a chamber of commerce? What was ISOMATA? How many golf courses were there once? Where was the Plunge?

Maybe you already know these answers, but if you start docenting in the museum you will deepen your understanding of this beautiful, cool (in all senses of the word) mountain area.

To become a docent you must be a member of IAHS and have 5 hours (one day or two half days) a month to give to the museum. The directions for running the place are all written out. At first, you will have an experienced partner until you feel comfortable.

The exhibits are well labeled so you don't have to know the history when you start. But when someone asks a question, what do you do? Look up the answer in the material available in the museum; if you can't find the answer, simply say "I don't know, but we'll find out for you." The more you work in the museum, the more understanding you have.

People who visit the museum are interesting. You get to talk with visitors from all over the world. The last time I docented, a gentleman explained how our cream separator worked. He was thrilled to see this bit from his childhood, and I was then thrilled to be able to tell kids how it worked.

I have been doing this for at least seven years and I still learn something new each session. Join our troop of docents and have a good time!

For more information call me, Barbara Jones, at (760) 835-8387.

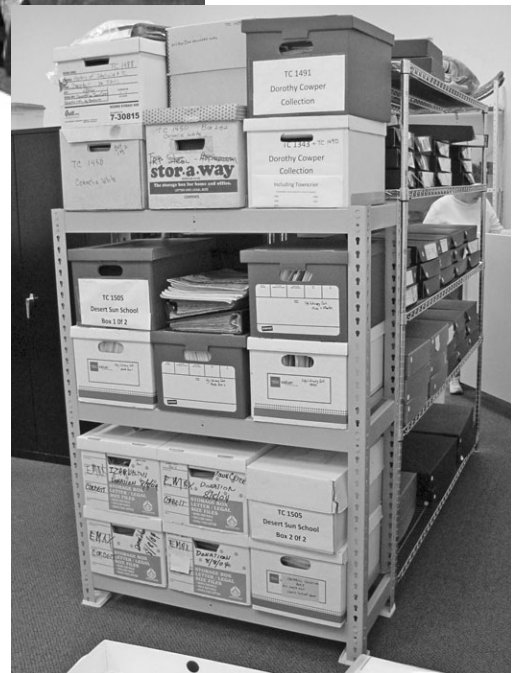
WHAT A DIFFERENCE THREE YEARS MAKES!



In this photo from January 2011 Charlotte Grotty (l) and Adele Voell start to organize the collection in the new archive building; below is the same view today.



This panoramic view captures the full scope of today's collection.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____ Email _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

_____ Individual (\$15) _____ Contributor (\$35) _____ Benefactor (\$250) _____ Business (\$35)

_____ Family (\$25) _____ Sponsor (\$100) _____ Patron (\$500) _____ Corporate (\$750)

Please make your tax-deductible dues check to IAHS & mail to PO Box 3320, Idyllwild CA 92549

If a gift membership, please enter your name and address:

Name _____ Address _____



Raffle prize donors Marilyn Kemple (l) and Marilyn Pierce draw the winning tickets.

2013 RAFFLE WINNERS

There was a new twist to this year's raffle: two parallel drawings for two different prizes. IAHS member Marilyn Kemple generously donated a set of four genuine Pinecraft bar stools, while President Marlene Pierce donated a 19th-century trunk recently lined with cedar. And, appropriately enough, it turns out both prizes will remain in Idyllwild.

The bar stools are going into the home of long-time resident Norma Miller, a collector of Pinecraft. She was ecstatic at the news she'd won the set, which adds a new dimension to her furniture.

Another local resident, Scotty Mason, was equally overjoyed to accept the trunk/cedar chest.

Any potential donors out there for 2014?

At right, clipped from The Hemet News, August 13, 1909.

THE HEMET NEWS, H

MOUNTAIN DEFAMED

Mt. San Jacinto Has Had Some Hard Joits.

Banning Herald: Isnt it about time old Mount San Jacinto had a rest? During the last half year this grand old mountain peak has been accused of about everything except horse stealing and it seems to be getting hot over the thing, as the snow up there is melting very fast.

The first report concerning the mountain stated that it was an eruptionist of the worst kind; that rumbling noises were heard emanating from the bowels of the earth and that the old mountain was certainly suffering from chronic appendicitis.

Then someone down in the Imperial valley saw airships sailing around the peak and over the Salton sea. The theory was that airship fiends had taken to the pine jungle and were engaged in building a ship that would put the Wright brothers on the wrong track.

After the airship had spent its force in the desert air some enterprising explorer around the peak found the ruins of an ancient city. Here was the main street, there was the town pump—but the mayor could not be found and he had evidently been recalled, or possibly, lynched.

Scarcely had the ancient city subsided before the homes of cave dwellers were found in the vicinity. The cave dwellers were not at home when company came—probably out deer hunting.

The very latest is a report to the effect that Hon. H. A. E. Marshall, supervisor of the Cleveland Forest Reserve, found a large lake glistening in the sun near the summit, higher than Lake Tahoe and probably 2000 feet deep. This spot would make a delightful summer resort, but a person ought to have an incline railway or a burro.

Visit our Museum:

**Winter Schedule (through June 15):
Saturdays, Sundays, & Monday holidays
11 am - 4 pm**

**Admission Free
Donations Welcome**

Visit our Website:

www.idyllwildhistory.org

**For special tours and other business,
call (951) 659-2717 or
e-mail to info@idyllwildhistory.org**

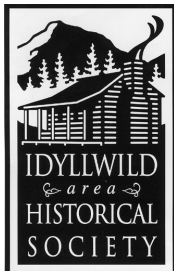
Congratulations to our 2013 Raffle winners:

Norma Miller

Scotty Mason

(See page 7)

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