

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

SUMMER 2016

GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN!

By Robert B. Smith

That thought probably didn't occur to pioneer Idyllwild resident C.C. Hooper as he made his first trip here in 1918, coming up "the old 22% grade" on a motorcycle, at midnight, in pouring rain. But, as his wife Winnette later recalled, nothing serious happened, so in 1925 he returned with his new bride to build a mountain home on Strawberry Creek in Fern Valley.

Zippering up and down Highway 74 or 243 today we rarely imagine the challenges that faced early travelers to Idyllwild. In part, that was because the earliest roads into the high San Jacintos were crudely scraped out of the mountainsides for horse-drawn lumber wagons.

The first was Hall's Grade, a toll road hastily built by promoter Milton Hall in 1875 to get logging wagons up and down the mountain from Cabazon, where they were to deliver railroad ties and locomotive firewood for the transcontinental rail line being built through San Gorgonio Pass. You can still spot it from I-10 near the Morongo Casino. Zigzagging precipitously up the sheer mountainside to Hurley Flat, it continued on past Vista Grande to "Little Strawberry Valley," later known as Hall Canyon,

where Lake Fulmor lies today. Deadly for both man and beast, it fell into disuse by 1879. Although an improved version was built in 1905, Cabazon's failure to develop into a city left it, too, little used.

In the 1880s a thriving sawmill on Fuller Mill Creek spawned a similar wagon road from San Jacinto up Indian Creek through Hall Canyon, but it met the same fate in 1895. It took the lure of tourism to induce the first road from Banning, built in 1910. From the foot of San Gorgonio Avenue it snaked around the western slopes of the foothills to Poppet Flat. There a tiny store offered cold drinks and a welcome break during the day-long drive from Los Angeles.

Above Poppet Flat the Banning road incorporated Hall's Grade from Vista Grande to Hall Canyon, as does Highway 243. Because there was no Lake Fulmor, the old road had to detour up the canyon to ford Indian Creek. Between Hall Canyon and Idyllwild the route was much like Highway 243, except for its approach to Pine Cove, which traced out today's Pine Cove Road.

There was no access at all from the Coachella Valley desert until 1932, when the long-planned and much
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The 1910 road's detour up Hall Canyon is still visible above the shores on both sides of Lake Fulmor.
—IAH archive

IDYLLWILD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*Board meetings are open to the membership and
are held in the archive building
on the 2nd Friday of each month at 4 p.m..*

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Arti-Facts

Co-Editors: Adele & Bob Smith

President's Corner

Our **IAHS Annual Membership Meeting** will be held at the Idyllwild Library this year, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 6th. Join us for the meeting at the library, then visit the museum afterwards for refreshments and a tour of the Archive Building. We have displays of art, Idyllwild artifacts, Pinecraft furniture plus new acquisitions to pique your interest.



Summer sizzled early in Idyllwild, as we jumped from cool spring to very hot summer temperatures. In spite of the early heat our museum garden is doing very well, offering a shady respite, including picnic tables and garden benches. Stop by at your leisure and enjoy our native plants and trees, highlighted by Idyllwild's beautiful mountain vistas.

International visitors this August include an Elvis Presley fan club from Suffolk, England who will visit our museum and archives and tour filming sites. We look forward to visitors with our expanded summer hours at the museum, which include Fridays and Monday Holidays.

What defines summer if not ice cream? Join us on Saturday, September 3rd for the Free **Ice Cream Social** – noon until approximately 2:00 p.m. Indulge in hand scooped, luscious ice cream sundaes with a variety of toppings, plus root beer floats and other treats.

Thanks to our diligent docents, friends and members, IAHS continues to fulfill our mission of preserving and sharing the history of the Idyllwild Area. Enjoy your summer.

Marlene Pierce
IAHS President

Save the Date:

Saturday, September 17th
IAHS Annual HOME TOUR

*Docent at our Home Tour and enjoy a free preview
of all this year's houses.*

Call: Charlotte Groty at 951-201-1400

ROADS ... (continued from page 1)

disputed Pines to Palms highway completed what's now Highway 74. At the future site of Mountain Center it met the 1929 "high-gear highway" from Hemet. As with all the present roads, years would pass before the completed highway was paved.

That new Hemet road was itself a welcome relief from its predecessors. The earliest of them appeared in 1875, when Joseph Crawford, who had a ranch called "Oak Cliff" in the San Jacinto river bottom, hastily scraped out a treacherously steep wagon road from there straight up the mountain.



Scene on the Crawford Road.

—IAHS archive

Because Crawford's purpose was to extract money from loggers rushing to exploit the newly discovered timber in Strawberry Valley, he installed toll gates at both ends. When he lost his toll franchise in 1888, the road became public, but transformed his ranch into a popular interim destination for travelers. Stagecoaches exchanged horses there for the climb to Idyllwild.

In 1891 Hemet Dam builder Edward Mayberry needed to bring materials and workers to his construction site, so he built a wagon road from Oak Cliff up the main canyon along Dry Creek beyond its confluence with the San Jacinto River's South Fork, culminating in a fierce set of switchbacks leading to what's now McCall Park. From there he pioneered Highway 74's present path over Keen Camp Summit to Garner Valley. (A recent chaparral thinning project exposed a bit of the Mayberry Road at 74's sweeping horseshoe curve.)

Although the Mayberry Road was a bit out of the way for Idyllwild visitors, its gentler grade led George Hannahs, facing the prospect of increasing traffic to the planned Idyllwild Sanatorium, to scrape a cut-off between McCall Park and Idyllwild. It anticipated the present route of Highway 243, except that it entered Strawberry Valley along the route of today's Saunders Meadow Road. That roundabout segment was eliminated by the county in 1901 by cutting today's more direct route into the valley at the Bluebird Hill curve.

The appearance of new-fangled automobiles created a demand for better roads to Idyllwild, so the Crawford Road was substantially altered in 1909 to ease the climb from Oak Cliff onto today's Tollgate Road. (As you enter the San Jacinto River Canyon from Hemet, you can still see the 1909 road as a long, straight, diagonal streak on the mountainside in the direction of Idyllwild.)

By 1920 traffic became so heavy that the County Board of Supervisors imposed one-way controls. Every 90 minutes through the day, the permissible direction of travel reversed, so anyone who didn't make it all the way up or down in time pulled off and waited for the next window to open. This earned it the popular name, "Control Road."

One road you can't track was a "highway" to San Jacinto Peak. First suggested in 1909 by Cleveland National Forest Supervisor Harold Marshall from his remote office in San Diego, it



Early supply wagon climbing the Dry Creek switchbacks.

—IAHS archive

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THE COMPANY WE KEEP
New and Renewing Members - May through June 2016

NEW MEMBERS

Individual

Lyn Foster	La Habra
Victoria Lesser	Idyllwild
Sue Wallen	Visalia

RENEWING MEMBERS

Benefactor

Jim & Doris Ferguson	Riverside
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Sponsor

Phil & Carol Baily	Temecula
Nancy Borchers	Idyllwild
Barbara & David Cutter	Palm Desert
Wayne Donaldson	Fair Oaks
Helen Drummond	Yuma AZ
Bonnie Lynn Lawrie	Cerritos
Daniel & Jane Levy	Pasadena
Roger & Kathleen Place	Thousand Palms
Dave & Shanna Robb	Idyllwild
Joyce McGaugh Silberstein	Anaheim
Mike & Denise Wimbrow	Lake Forest

Business

Wooley's (Pam Allen)	Idyllwild
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Contributor

Suzanne Bowman	Idyllwild
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Gary & Karen Brown	Idyllwild
Bob & Val Cox	Idyllwild
Kathryn Goddard	Huntington Beach
Peg Holsclaw	Carson City NV
Steve Lech	Riverside
David & Kim Leonard	Riverside

Contributor (continued)

Jeanette Schultejan	Idyllwild
Joan Wright & Gregory Hayes	Carson City NV
Lloyd & Shirley Wood	Idyllwild

Family

Bill & Pat Altman	West Covina
Irene & Lew Brahm	El Cajon
Jeanne & Jerry Buchanan	Idyllwild
Dore Capitani & Trish Tuley	Mountain Center
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Virginia Lumb	Idyllwild
Judi Milin	Idyllwild
Susan Miller	Hemet
Linda Otterbeck	Palm Springs
Julie Wright Reilly	Santa Ana
Megan Sullaway & Ed Dunbar	Redondo Beach

ROADS ...*(continued from page 3)*

caught the fancy of flatland tourism promoters. County Surveyor A. C. Fulmor in 1926 plotted a route from Pine Cove via Tahquitz Valley and Round Valley, where it would connect with the proposed aerial tramway up from Palm Springs. Blessedly, the plan died on the drawing board.

Today's travel is indeed a far cry from 1915, when Dr. William Snyder's family would arrive by

car at their new house with a terrified Mrs. Snyder at the wheel, because he refused to ride up the grade. Instead, he and the children hiked. She recalled that "often they outdistanced the car—and then she would call to them to come to the rescue. They would literally boost the old Ford up the steep places."

Think about that next time you're stuck behind a flatlander who's oblivious to turnouts. □

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE HOME TOUR

The 16th annual Idyllwild Home Tour is coming on Saturday, September 17, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. As usual, ticket booklets are \$20 per person, available starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Idyllwild Monument on Village Center Drive or at the IAHS museum.

Once again Nanci Killingsworth has enlisted five remarkable homes, ranging from vintage vacation cabin to brand new residence. You'll visit a 70-year-old, 3rd-generation family cabin overlooking Strawberry Creek, replete with original furnishings. Its 80-year-old neighbor would impress a devotee of the "tiny house" movement, with its bedrooms reminiscent of Pullman railroad cars.

One of the tour homes harks back to the Old West of Hollywood films, while providing a retreat for multiple generations. Another features a stone-walled garden that could transport you to jolly old England. And no home tour would be complete without an expansive modern residence, and you'll have that on offer, as well, complete with quintessentially endless mountain views.

Tour coordinator Charlotte Groty promises another stimulating and enjoyable adventure. As always, there will be refreshments available at the museum throughout the day.



Scenes from last year's record-setting tour.
—FrazierDrake photos

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Names(s) _____ E-mail _____

Mail 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 _____

Museum Hours

11 am - 4 pm

Summer Schedule (June 17-Labor Day)

Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays,
4th of July, & Labor Day

Winter Schedule (Sept. 10-June 12)

Saturdays, Sundays,
& Monday holidays

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IdyllwildAreaHistoricalSociety>

Visit our website:

www.idyllwildhistory.org

For special tours and other business,
call (951) 659-2717 or
e-mail to [info@idyllwild history.org](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.org)

Admission Free

Donations Welcome

Dates to Remember:

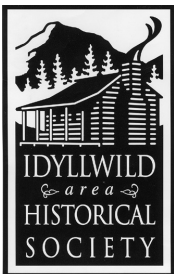
Saturday, August 9 – IAHS Annual Meeting (see p. 2)

Saturday, September 3 – Annual Ice Cream Social (see p. 2)

Saturday, September 17 – 16th Annual Idyllwild Home Tour (see p. 5)

**Saturday, October 8 – Art Walk & Wine Tasting
(sponsored by Art Alliance of Idyllwild)**

P O Box 3320
Idyllwild, CA 92549



Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
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**Mark your calendar:
HOME TOUR
September 17**