

Arti-facts

The Newsletter of the
Idyllwild Area Historical Society

Volume I Issue 1 Spring 2001

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF IDYLLWILD AND NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES IN THE SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS

Our Vision

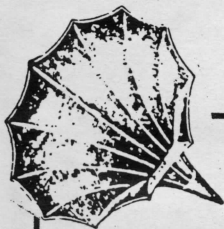
You have just entered the Historical Society museum somewhere in downtown Idyllwild. There are displays showing old logging equipment, memorabilia of early ranching in Garner Valley, items from the early camps including Peak and Pine and Camp Emerson.

Gaze at an early Cahuilla basket and listen to the folklore and legend of these Native Americans. Look at photos of early transportation including stagecoaches and vintage cars puffing up the "toll" road. Read letters from old timers telling of the campfires, taffy pulls and fishing in Strawberry Valley. Drool over the 1920's menu from the Idyllwild Inn when a full course dinner cost 50-75 cents and dances were often held later in the evening.

Attend a campfire gathering in the evening and listen to yarns and tales told by old timers. Push a button and view the videos of some of our well known early families telling their stories. Return next month to see a new display in the changing exhibit section of the museum.

We hope you share our vision by joining us in preserving the Idyllwild area's past. We are currently launching a membership campaign. To those of you who have already joined, thank you for your support and involvement. It is our hope that the rest of you will become a part of this effort to preserve the history of these mountain communities. We look forward to meeting you at our "gatherings", field trips and special events.

by Sheila Meyer, president



Special Events

"Gathering" at Silver Pines Lodge

Tuesday, April 24 - 7:30pm

Guest speaker is Cheryle Humber Waner
(grandaughter of Rollin and Margaret Humber)

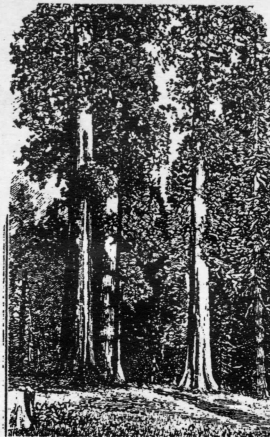
"Old Timers Campfire"

Sat. July 28, 2001, Town Hall Park

Bring your picnic dinner and enjoy an evening of
story telling, songs, and s'mores.

(a reenactment of a 1946 Idyllwild campfire)

Note: This letter is the first in a series to be printed in the IAHS newsletters. The originals are contained in a wooden log book which has been graciously donated by Keith Froehlich. They contain wonderful accounts of early life in this area and are written in the pioneers own handwriting.



Old Letter

(written on August 9, 1951)

My first trip to Idyllwild as told by Geo. W. Thomas to Myron M. Thomas.

"I first came to what is now Idyllwild in October 1874. I was only a lad 14 yrs of age and came up by four horse team on a light wagon with my brother-in-law, Wm Short and his brother Frank.

At that time, as I remember there were only two people living in the valley, a Mrs. Pierce, who was a widow and Sam Temple (characterized in the story of Ramona by Helen Hunt Jackson). They were living in a cabin which was located just about where the School House is now located.

The Shorts and I stayed with Mrs. Pierce and Temple while in the valley. The first night after supper we were sitting before the fire in the fireplace, the grown ups spinning yarns, I being a listener but thirsty. Upon going to the water bucket and finding it empty, I took the bucket and started out to the spring, but before I got to the spring, I was startled by a most unearthly yell which frightened me, so I went back into the house "post haste" forgetting all about being thirsty. A few minutes later we heard a pig squeal and Mrs. Pierce said, there's that (W--m) lion after my pigs again. No one went out to see about it that night. The next day we went out and just a few yards away layed a dead pig with one hind quarter eaten off.

My brother-in-law had at that time quite a large flock of sheep and as feed in the lower valleys was scarce he had come to the mountains in search of feed. Upon finding feed plentiful he returned to Riverside and brought his sheep up into Strawberry Valley, but was immediately driven out by cattlemen who controlled the entire mountain area.

I did not come back to this part of the San Jacinto Mts. until several years later. In the fall of 1929 I bought property in Fern Valley and built the home in the summer of 1930.

My wife and I spent most of the summers and parts of the winters for the ten years following, here in the mts. Since my wife's death in April 1941 I haven't spent as much time here.

If by chance you should stroll into upper Fern Valley you will see a large old cedar tree dedicated to me.

Geo. W. Thomas was born in Omaha Nebraska August 13,

(continued on page 2)

was taken and raised by a widow woman by the name of Eliza Thomas. When young George was 10 years of age he and his foster mother came to Calif. and came to Riveerside in Oct. 1870 where they obtained a squatters right to 120 acres of land on West Arlington Ave.

On August 15, 1880, Geo. W. Thomas married Margaret Marinda St. Marie and they started house keeping in the new home on Phoenix Ave. which he had built of adobe. All of the lumber used in building this new house was hauled from the San Jacinto Mountains.

Of this union eight children were born, five boys and three girls."

Peak and Pine

Our first major acquisition, donated to the Society by Pat and Jan Boss last fall, is a large cast iron wood burning cook stove used at the Peak and Pines girl's camp. The location of the camp was on South Circle Dr. about where the Rainbow Inn is now situated. The summer camp was started in the early 1920's and run by Harriet A. Snyder. Mrs. Snyder also had a cabin built in 1920 on Tahquitz Dr. near Florence Casebeer's cabin.

Pictured below is a scene from Peak and Pine Camp.



Note: The reprint below from Idyllwild Breezes is the first in a series, and is taken from the personal scrapbook of Mrs. Florence Churchill Casebeer, with entries dating from 1921 to 1923. Idyllwild Breezes was apparently the first newspaper on the Hill.

Idyllwild Breezes

Idyllwild, Cal., June 29, 1921 Volume 111 Number 1

Sale of Lots

People of Southern California who love the great out-of-doors, are just beginning to find out that mountain homes with perfect title and an adequate supply of water, can be purchased in Idyllwild. Since the last edition of the Breezes, Idyllwild has sold thirty lots, each one of which will be built on as soon as material can be gotten to the lots. The sale of these lots has been made without the aid of advertising or personal solicitation, but are the result of people's appreciation of the wonders of Idyllwild.

Building Operations

The building operations at Idyllwild have been very active. The following people have houses under construction, some of which will be completed before the first of July:

A.J. Casebeer, Los Angeles; Charles W. Hill, San Bernardino; Mrs. Jessie Struve, Hollywood; O.J. McMahon, San Jacinto; Mich Monohan and C.B. Woodhead, both of San Jacinto; Miss Ruth Locke, Miss Pearl Brittain, both of Hollywood; Charles P. Carl, Hemet; C.H. Stone, A.M. Lobaugh, Frank R. Strong, Grant E. Bell, J.W. See, F.W. Dee and J.W. Dillion, all of Los Angeles; Rev. Wilson Martin, Hollywood.

These are good, comfortable cottages ranging in price from one thousand to six thousand dollars. In addition to these, we have orders for forty more cottages.

IDYLLWILD SUBDIVISION

Choice Homesites for Sale

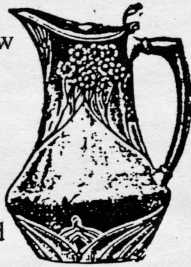
Ask to be Shown

—We will rest the case in
your hands.

Curator's Corner

As a young child coming to the Idyllwild area in the mid 40's, Pine Cove specifically, I have always had a fascination and love for the mountains, its history and people. So I was thrilled at the opportunity to become the curator for the Idyllwild Area Historical society and to be a part of making sure that our heritage will be preserved for those of us fortunate enough to live here, for future residents and visitors.

With that important task at the top of the priority list, we have been fortunate to draw from an enthusiastic, talented and dedicated group of people whose job it will be to document, restore, preserve and display artifacts, photos, documents and oral histories. To help ensure that the historical treasures being donated to the Society are properly maintained and presented, we have several work shops planned that will address these important areas. A valuable service of visual documentation of historic cabins and buildings is being donated by professional photographer and member, Julie Masterson. This will set the tone for what we hope will be an educational, interactive and exciting museum.



Lynnda Hart, curator

Idyllwild Breezes

Reprinted from "Idyllwild Breezes", August 10, 1921

SUNRISE TRAIL

"Many of the people of Idyllwild are indebted to Miss A.R. Bunker for the new trail she has blazed for their enjoyment, and which has been unanimously and appropriately styled "The Sunrise Trail." The ride over this new trip requires two hours time and should be taken in the early morning. Parties usually leave the Inn at six o'clock breakfast. Miss Bunker acts as leader, and being at home in the saddle, and knowing the mountains perfectly, the guests are assured a most delightful and instructive trip. Sunrise Trail leaves the main Idyllwild grade just below the bridge, climbs the ridge toward Lily Rock, and drops down into Saunders' pasture, skirting that beautiful meadow, and climbing over a most picturesque route onto the Keen Camp grade this side of Chalk Hill. The return to Idyllwild being over the Keen Camp-Idyllwild grade."

Thank You

at and Jan Boss, Jack Brosky, Keith Froehlich, Richard and Karen Greenwood, John Holt, Idyllwild Community Church, Idyllwild Garage, Idyllwild Town Crier, Jane Levy, Sally McManus/Palm Springs Hist.Soc., Carol Mills, Photo Arts, Bruce and Val Raynor, Francis Rhodes, Kent Steele, Kevin Walker/ Arrow Printing, Bill and Margaret Wootton.

Membership

Welcome and happy spring to our members. If you don't find your name on this list, please use the form on the back of this newsletter to join.

Nick & Shirl Adamenko, Idyllwild
Karl & Joy Allgeier, Idyllwild
Elise Arbuckle, Idyllwild
Reva Ballreich, Idyllwild
Barney & Jorgine Brause, P. Cove
Ralph & Carolyn Brumby, P. Cove
Dr. Roland Bush, Pine Cove
Pete & Suzy Capparelli, Idyllwild
Terry Casella, Pine Cove
Blair & Kay Ceniceros, Idyllwild
Sanders Chase, Hollywood
Becky Clark, Idyllwild
Phyllis Clark, Idyllwild
Robert B. Compton, Indian Wells
Greg Demetre, Pine Cove
Anne Frey, Idyllwild
Jamie & Theo Giannioses, Idyllwild
Cathy Grassi, Idyllwild
Katie Grigsby, Idyllwild
Jim & Marla Harrigan, San Diego
Ed & Nancy Harrison, Pine Cove
Joyce Harrison & Ernie Frantz, Pine Cove
Don & Lynnda Hart, Pine Cove
Jan & Elisabeth Jaspers-Fayer, Idyllwild
Phyllis Marling, So. Pasadena
Charles & Kirsten Marvin, Encinitas
Julie Masterson, Idyllwild
Kimberley Maywald, Idyllwild
George & Sheila Meyer, Pine Cove
Mary Ann Miller, Idyllwild
Patricia & Jim Miller, Valley Center

Roy & Carol Mills, Idyllwild
Richard & Catherine Miller, P. Des.
Bob & Nancy Millsap, Idyllwild
Bob & Marjorie Muir, Pine Cove
Marion Popp, Idyllwild
Lou & Annamarie Padulla, P. Cove
Earl & Peggy Parker, Idyllwild
Johanna Peterson, Garner Valley
Marion Popp, Idyllwild
Ralph & Cathy Priem, Idyllwild
Allan & Dianne Reichle, Plm Sprg.
Jeanne Sherman, Idyllwild
Mary & Harry Sigworth, Idyllwild
Vic & Kate Sirkin, Idyllwild
John & Dolores Sizer, Idyllwild
Edna Traweek, Idyllwild
Ron & Adele Voell, Idyllwild
Marilyn Weare, Palm Desert
Alex Wilson, Idyllwild
Bill & Margaret Wootton, Idyll.



Volunteer Opportunities

We still need to fill some committee spaces. If you are interested in working on museum development or on helping to organize one fund raising event a year, please call 659-3569. Ideally, we should have three people on each of these committees.

We greatly appreciate the services and donation of items from the following people:

Field Trips

We have taken several field trips to historical society museums in Southern California. Hemet Depot, Big Bear Valley Museum, Julian Pioneer Museum, Coachella Valley Museum, and Palm Springs Historical Society Museum are just some of the places we have visited this past fall and winter. The curators/directors of these societies have given us invaluable information as to how they got started, what forms they use, how their displays evolved, and general funding sources. In addition to gathering these facts, our trips have been fun and extremely educational. We plan to include his-

toric sites such as Native American village sites and historic routes or trails in future trips.

If you have a suggestion for future field trips or speakers for our gatherings, please contact Phyllis Clark, vice president and chair for trips and programs. Or send us a note at our P. O. Box 2454, Idyllwild CA 92549.

Our Name

As you have noticed, the word **Area** appears in our name. We plan to have a Garner Valley history page in the next newsletter and incorporate some of the history of all the mountain communities in future newsletters.

Won't You Join Us?.....Send a Membership to:

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____

Gift card from _____
 \$10 Individual \$20 Family \$25 Business/organization
 \$100 Sponsor \$500 Patron \$1000 Founder's Circle (lifetime membership and plaque in museum)

Idyllwild Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 3320, Idyllwild CA 92549, PHONE (909) 659-3569
-We appreciate your support-

JOIN IAHS OR GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP



- Arti-facts Newsletter
- Field Trips
- Gatherings
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Support of Historical Research, collection and documentation of photos and artifacts
- Support of future Idyllwild Area Museum

Idyllwild Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 • PHONE (909) 659-3569

The official newsletter, *Art - facts*, appears quarterly and is mailed to all members

Board of Directors: President - Sheila Meyer; Vice President - Phyllis Clark; Curator - Lynnda Hart; Treasurer - Nancy Harrison
 Recording Secretary - Blair Cenicerros; Corresponding Secretary - Nancy Millsap
 Committee Chairs: Preservation - Anne Frey; Membership - Theo Giannioses; Publicity - Joyce Harrison,
 Historical Sites & Structures Identification - John Holt; Oral History - Alex Wilson



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