

# Arti - facts

The Newsletter of the  
Idyllwild Area Historical Society

Volume I Issue 2

Summer 2001

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

## 100th Anniversary

**T**wo events occurring in June 1901 make this year a 100th anniversary for Idyllwild. On June 28, 1901 the *Hemet News* reported that "the name of the Rayneta post office will be changed to Idyllwild."

Also, the Idyllwild Sanatorium was opened in June 1901, with Ralph A. Lowe as manager and Dr. H.G. McNeill as resident physician. A spacious, two-story structure containing 40 rooms and a number of separate cottages made this health resort the first large development in Strawberry Valley.

To commemorate this 100th anniversary, the Society plans to install a plaque to mark this occasion. In addition, our upcoming "gatherings" and field trips will be celebratory events.

Many changes have occurred in the last one hundred years, but the fresh air, scent of pine and cedar, and magnificent views remain constant and continue to draw people to our mountain communities.

I believe that our historical society and future museum will greatly enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Our readers would be impressed with the dedication and countless hours of work that have gone into the forming of this organization. It is extremely gratifying to work with people who are so knowledgeable and share the same passion and vision for our goal of a museum.

*by Sheila Meyer, president*

*Note: The source for the information on the June 1901 events is "The San Jacintos" by John W. Robinson.*

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## IAHS Special Events

### "Gathering" at Wilder Cabins

Sat. September 29, 4:00pm

54550 South Circle Dr., Idyllwild

Featuring: John W. Robinson  
author of *The San Jacintos*

### "Field Trip" with

Margaret Wellman Jaenke

author of *In the Olden Days*

Tues, October 23, 8:30am-12:30pm

Historical Sites of Anza and Garner Valley,  
including Arnaiz, Hamilton, & Contreras  
Homesteads and the Fred Clark Ranch in  
Terwilliger Valley

Transportation by Bus - \$10 bus fee

Limited number, by reservation only

Make reservations early by calling

(909) 659-4427 or (909) 659-3569

Lunch (optional) will be at Ciro's in Anza

Make checks for bus out to IAHS and mail to:

Phyllis Clark

c/o Idyllwild Area Historical Society

P.O. Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549

Indicate if you are doing lunch.

## Curator's Corner

*Note: This letter is the second in a series to be presented in our newsletter. The originals are maintained 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.*

A wonderful sequence of events relating to this 1946 letter began when I recently visited an historic cabin on Strawberry Creek built in 1925, and ended several weeks ago in Paris, France.

The present cabin owners, Carson and Donna Struthers, had bits and pieces of historical information from items found in the cabin. As luck would have it, additional information came from a young man who stopped by the cabin one day looking for the cabin his Mother's Grandfather, John G. Munholland, had built. This chance encounter led to the discovery that his mother, Betty Lue Munholland and her cousin Kim, had indeed come to the cabin when they were young children.

When I heard the name Munholland I remembered the Historical Society had a letter written in 1946 telling of the pleasant days spent in Idyllwild by this particular family. I found out that Betty Lue Munholland lives in Palm Desert and I was able to contact her. During the course of our conversations, Betty Lue said that the Society would benefit greatly if we could interview her cousin Kim. He was a bit older and might remember more details of those early days.

There was only one drawback, her cousin Kim was currently living in Paris. But since serendipity was still playing an important part in this story, I said, "How wonderful, it just so happens I'm leaving tomorrow for France!" The adjacent article is from the oral history Kim Munholland generously shared with me while we were sitting in a Paris cafe:

Aug - 24 - 1946

The opening of the fishing season over thirty years ago found us camping with a group of friends on Strawberry Creek near the Bridge. A big treat to us came from Savana from Long Beach to be up in the high mountains and huge trees which were then being logged for lumber.

Returning each year to the Sun with our two sons John & James for summer vacation. We built our cabin on Strawberry Creek in 1925 and now it is giving pleasure and recreation to our grand children Kim age 12 son of John and Betty Lue (age 6) and Jim (age 2) children of James.

The old one way road was a task for the best automobiles - our first trip was in our old 2 cylinder Buick and with much pushing and hauling we finally made the grade.

Now, with the completion of the Tramway from Palm Springs to the Peak we can enjoy a trip from our desert home to the cool Pines, with a short herabout ride down to Idyllwild, which still holds its charm, for us and ours.

John & Lue Munholland

*Historical Note: The Tramway construction was planned to begin in June of 1946 with completion scheduled for the 1947-48 Winter season. Many environmental and financial issues surfaced and completion was delayed for seventeen years! The Tramway opened in September, 1963.*

Some Memories by  
Kim Munholland

My Grandfather, John G. Munholland, purchased the property on Strawberry Creek sometime before 1917. Access to the property was not easy. There was a one-way dirt road that stopped at (forget name) corners. Horses were used to get to the property.

At first the family, my grandfather, my grandmother Lue Munholland, my father John E. Munholland, and my uncle James M. Munholland, would stay in tents. The first building constructed was an old, shingle barn-like structure that later was used for a garage. They hauled water from the creek for cooking and cleaning. They kept horses on the property.

My grandmother, father and uncle would spend their summers in Idyllwild. My grandfather would come up for the weekends. As of fifteen years ago, the old barn structure was still standing but quite dilapidated. The platform and tent were still there twenty-five years ago,

Continued on the  
next page

by Lynnda Hart

but may be gone now.

I do not know when the present cabin with the great stone fireplace (see photo) was built, but I think it was in the early 1920s, since there are family tales of my father and his friends coming up during his days in college (1925-29).

During this time my grandfather had real estate offices in Long Beach and then in Palm Springs, which was his residence for nine months of the year. Summers were spent either in Long Beach or in Idyllwild, which my grandmother preferred. I do not know when the road into Idyllwild was opened all the way, but I am sure that this is in the local records. My grandfather also was involved in business activities in Idyllwild, particularly with the Johnson family.

My own early memories date from just before the war when we made a trip to Idyllwild to fix up the kitchen, adding a modern stove, although the old, wood burning stove was left there and was often used as well. The cabin was filled with wonderful artifacts, including a stuffed alligator and many Native American baskets and blankets that my grandfather and great grandfather had picked up during their travels in the American Southwest. There was room enough in the cabin to accommodate a fairly large crowd with two double beds in the main room as well as the two bedrooms. The nearby creek provided me with many memories of fishing for elusive trout. In those days, the 1940s, there was no stocking of the stream, so it was a challenge to catch the very wary and elusive trout. We were obliged to return any trout under five inches in order to keep the stock up. A special pleasure was a trip to the village for homemade ice cream or to rent horses for riding. In the evenings movies would be shown in the theater with equipment that would regularly break down.

During the 1950s the cabin was less used. My own interests were more oceanic with sailing and surfing taking precedence over trips to the mountains. My uncle's family had their vacations and weekends. Then in the late fifties my parents, John E. and Dorothy Munholland, began making regular trips to Idyllwild for pleasure and business. I left

California in 1957 for military service and, later, for graduate school. My mother updated some of the furnishings, adding carpeting in the bedrooms, for instance. She was particularly fond of feeding the squirrels while my father worked with Jerry Johnson on business matters related to the Johnson Estate.

When my father died unexpectedly in 1966, the cabin again experienced a period of neglect. My mother was reluctant to return to the cabin herself, although she and her friends would occasionally make a trip up there. In the meantime, Idyllwild was becoming much more accessible, more people were living there year round, and the village began to expand, particularly along the high ground on the other side of Strawberry Creek. My mother felt this was an intrusion, and

she regretted the loss of the sense of isolation that had been there.

The next door property (to the east) which had been a camp was sold, and my uncle decided to sell the property to the west, which again brought residences closer to the cabin and diminished the sense of privacy. After my mother died in 1976, I made the last of our family visits to the property, although I again visited the place on my own once in 1983 after my uncle died. My aunt and I agreed to sell the cabin and the property since neither of us had the time to maintain it.

June 2001

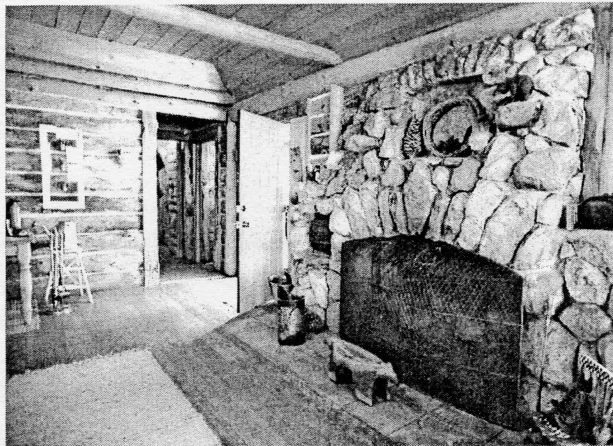


Photo by Julie Masterson

### *The Great Stone Fireplace*

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## Acquisitions and Donations

The exciting news this quarter is the generous gift from Margaret Wellman Jaenke who's family moved to Garner Valley in the late 1890's. She has allowed us to make copies of some 60 family photos.

The Historical Society made a wonderful acquisition of a signed self-portrait, wooden sculpture and ceramic bowl by Ernie Maxwell.

Mickey Regal donated a framed panoramic photograph of Lake Hemet and Dam, circa 1923.

When looking at all these wonderfully diverse pieces of our history, I'm convinced more than ever the importance of this project and the push to find a Museum so that they can be shared with everyone.

## The Garner Valley Section

### IN THE OLDEN DAYS

by Margaret Wellman Jaenke, President, De'Anza Heritage Genealogy Society

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#### IF TREES COULD TALK

If trees could talk they would have some interesting tales to tell about life in the early days.

Trees, or the lack of trees, have always played a big part in the lives of people living in the hill country. The higher elevations had the large trees that could be used for building, but around the Anza Valley there were few trees and much brush. Fences and corrals had to be built. The brush, mostly redshank, scrub oak, and manzanita were all useful for making fence posts and building corrals, but the brush was not large enough to turn into lumber. That made it necessary to haul building materials long distances over the dirt roads.

The Little Red Schoolhouse, built in 1914, was constructed with lumber that had been freighted up the mountain from San Jacinto in two wagons pulled by horses. The heavily loaded wagons were pulled up over the old Keen Camp grade and then down the steep Hamilton hill into the valley. It is likely that the wagons were stopped at a well known pinyon tree near the top of the grade.

For many years an old weather-beaten tree stood alongside the upper end of the grade. Years ago when we rode past the tree, it was still oozing pitch from a large cut in the side. Older members of the family told how in the early days pitch from the tree was used to dress the brakes on the wagons. That helped in controlling a heavily loaded wagon on the extremely steep downhill grade.

Trees and the smaller brush were important in other ways besides being used as building material. Everyone living in the area in the early days depended upon the trees or brush as a source of fuel for cooking and warmth. The Indians found some of the trees to be a good source of food. Each year they would go into the higher mountains where the pinyons, pines, and oaks grew, harvesting the nuts and acorns and

storing them for winter use. In good years they might even have a surplus of nuts or acorns and be able to trade with other Indians for a different kind of food.

When harvesting their food the Indians must have used the trail that later became the Hamilton grade as a route to travel to the areas where acorns grew. Alongside the Hamilton grade, near where the pitch-supplying tree once stood, there is a scrub oak bush concealing a very large woven Indian basket. The basket was about four feet high and about three feet across. By the time I saw the basket it had become a nest for rats and was disintegrating. Remnants of acorns spilled from the broken sides of the basket. For some reason the cached acorns had not been recovered before the rats had taken up residence and made the basket their own well-stocked home.

Trees have had a variety of uses here in the hills. Trees have been used by many as a place for signs. Road signs could be merely a notch in a tree, a rag tied to a bush, or a board tacked to a tree. When the mountain was surveyed in the early 1900s, surveyors attached little metal plates containing land information to trees. Some of these section markers can still be seen on trees.

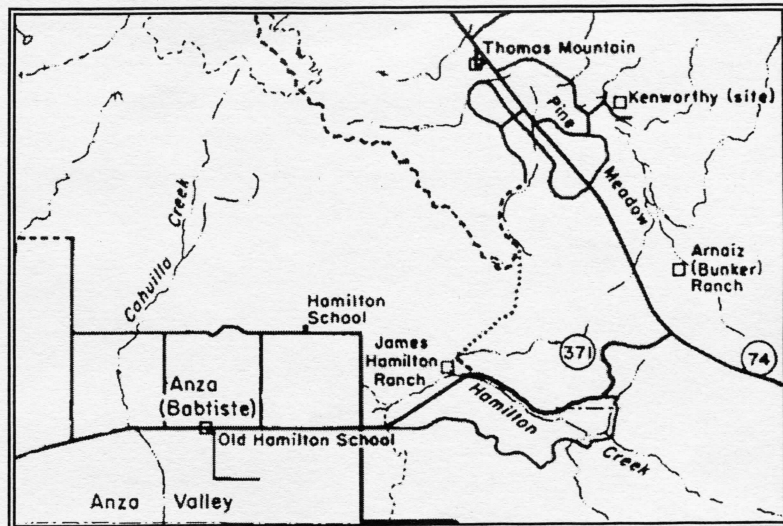
Trees that had become homes for bees were also a part of the early hill life. Anyone lucky enough to find a tree that was being used by the bees as a hive was sure to want to try to harvest the honey. Of course, the dangers in robbing a bee tree were to be considered, but some people were able to successfully collect the honey without too much trouble or pain.

Kids know that trees were made to have fun with. Trees are great to climb. Nothing is better for building a house or a clubhouse. Swings hanging from a limb of a big tree are a great favorite. Children everywhere have always found trees fascinating and are

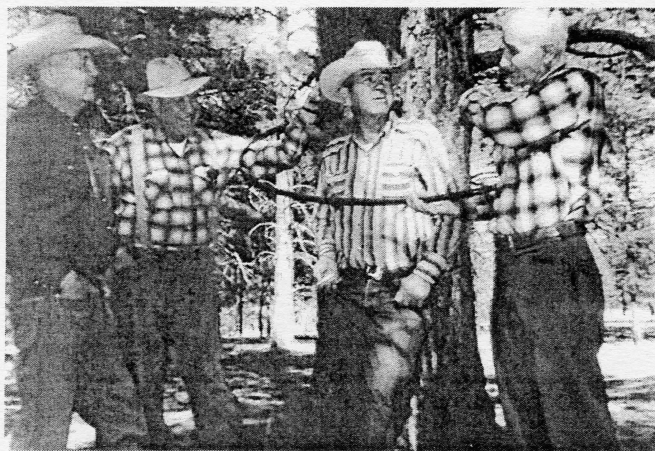
able to invent new ways to have fun with them.

That was the case around 1910 in the old mining town of Kenworthy. A swing was not enough excitement for some of the children at the Hamilton's school. Several mischievous little boys attending that school went a little further with their fun with trees.

The boys found an old buggy hoop, or rim, and with their combined efforts they were able to lift the rim high enough to put it up and over the top of a young pine tree. Over fifty years later when the boys and the tree were all fully grown, four of them met in Garner Valley to find the tree and to recall that day. Anyone watching could easily see that Joe Scherman, Lincoln Hamilton, Jim Wellman, and Henry Arnaiz were still good friends and that all of them were continuing to find much fun in life.



*Area Where the "If Trees Could Talk" Events All Happened*



*photo courtesy of Margaret Wellman Jaenke*

***"Pioneers" Appreciating Their Handiwork of Years Past***

In the area where the tree stands, many more trees have grown up, property lines have changed, and many new homes have been built. But today nearly a hundred years later, in spite of the many changes, the tree and the rim are there just as they were when the young boys had their day of fun. Little did those small boys realize that their fun would someday become a part of our mountain lore and history.

Reprinted by permission from the *High Country Journal*, April 15, 2001

*Join us for the  
October 23<sup>rd</sup> "Field Trip"  
to visit this historic area in person!  
(see page 1 for details)*



## Events

### July 4th Parade

Our historical society made a dramatic debut in the Idyllwild's traditional 4th of July parade. We rolled along behind our huge banner with two antique cars and a dozen members participating in period costumes. Harry and Mary Sigworth provided the antique cars with Harry driving his bright red 1911 Model T roadster with mother-in-law seat and Harry Jr. driving the 1929 Ford Model A "Woody" station wagon, one of the earliest.



Photo by Greg Demetre

Sheila Meyer and Phyllis Clark in the "mother-in-law" seat join owner-driver Harry Sigworth and his wife Mary in the Modet T

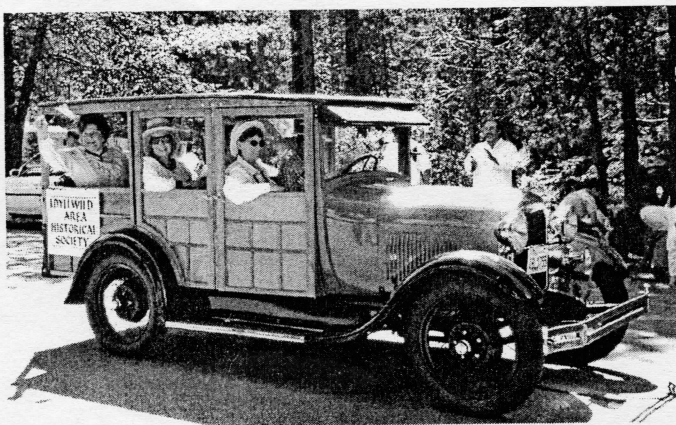


Photo by Nancy Millsap

Harry Sigworth, Jr and his wife Pat pilot Harry Senior's Model A "Woody" with passengers Theo Giannioses, Kay Cenicerros, Lynnda Hart and Terry Casella



Photo by Greg Demetre

George Meyer and Blair Cenicerros Proudly Carrying Our Banner

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### Gathering at Silver Pines

Silver Pines Lodge, the original Rustic Theater, was the venue for the April *Gathering*. Our featured speaker was Cheryle Humber Waner, the granddaughter of Rollin Humber, for which Humber Park was named.

Cheryle delighted the large audience with stories of the early years in Fern Valley, and her family's encounters with Marjorie Main and Angela Landsbury, both Fern Valley residents.

Cheryle brought a few of her family albums which contained photos and historic newspaper clippings to share with us. A display of photos from the society's own collection were also on view. We were pleased to have some old-timers attend and be part of this memorable evening.

We are striving to hold many of our *gatherings* at historic venues.

## THINGS WE REALLY NEED!

The Historical Society needs and is actively seeking the following tax-deductible donations to assist us in realizing our vision of preserving Idyllwild's history:

- √ IBM PC Compatible Computer; fast with lots of memory and disk space, and not too old!
- √ Office equipment (copy machine, fax machine, color printer, etc)
- √ Office supplies (archival supplies, paper, storage boxes, etc)
- √ Fireproof filing cabinet(s) to store Historical Society document collection
- √ Idyllwild area historical artifacts, photographs, receipts from early businesses, posters, letters, flyers, brochures, newspaper articles, postcards, books, etc
- √ Historical building or buildable lot in central Idyllwild for our Museum

To donate these or other administrative or historical items, please call Lynnda Hart at (909) 659-5170. Thank you!

**We have recently received our official non-profit status (501c3). All dues and contributions are tax deductible!**

## Membership Update

Welcome to our new members since the last newsletter. We look forward to seeing you at our *gatherings* and on our field trips. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Ron & Carol Acosta, Idyllwild	Robert & Lee Marshall, Pine Cove
Raymond & C.T. Alexander, Garner Valley	Leona McLaugh, Mountain Center
Dr. Cal & Ann Ashby, Garner Valley	Allen & Lenore Miller, Idyllwild
Bo Beck, Idyllwild	Warren & Marcia Monroe, Idyllwild
Suzanne Bowman, Pine Cove	Erin O'Neill, Idyllwild
Dave & Elise Brett, Idyllwild	Robin & Sarah Oates, Idyllwild
Dave & Barbara Burgess, Idyllwild	Bob & Pat Parish, Pine Cove
Marguerite Clapp, Idyllwild	Neil & Carolyn Passage, Idyllwild
Charles & Sara Clayton, Idyllwild	Bill & Sharon Price, Idyllwild
Roberta Corbin, Pine Cove	Nigel & Jan Priestly, Pine Cove
Lorel Cornman, Idyllwild	Susi Questad, Idyllwild
Dr. Richard & Sue Dellacqua, Garner Valley	Terry Richmond, Idyllwild
Kenneth & Kathryn Edgmore, Garner Valley	John W. Robinson, Fullerton
Dolores Ellison, Idyllwild	Dawn Sandhu, Idyllwild
Nancy Fahien, Idyllwild	Charles Schlacks Jr, Idyllwild
Steve & Chris Finney, Idyllwild	Larry & Millie Shaw, Garner Valley
Anne Frederick, Garner Valley	Fred & Donna Schmidt, Idyllwild
Keith & Bonnie Froehlick, Idyllwild	Grace Songolo, Idyllwild
Virginia Garner, Idyllwild	Ron & Melinda St. Pierre, Idyllwild
Rayburn Hanzlik, Idyllwild	Kent Steele, Idyllwild
Peter & Janeen Irrgang, Idyllwild	Chuck & Vicki Streeter, Idyllwild
Margaret Wellman Jaenke, Garner Valley	Betty Swank, Garner Valley
Jim Johnson, Idyllwild	Kevin Walker/arrow Printing, Hemet
Wes & Stella Johnson, Idyllwild	Tony & Barbara Widgery, Anza
Will Johnson, Idyllwild	Elizabeth Windsong, Idyllwild
Joan Kaplan, Rancho Mirage	Lester & Beverly Wintz, Idyllwild
Jack & Vicki Kerns, Rancho Mirage	Tom & Liz Wirt, Idyllwild
Larry Kueneman, Pine Cove	Debbie Zimmerman, Idyllwild
Don Laffoon, Pine Cove	
David & Kim Leonard, Riverside	
Bernard & Harriet Lipnick, Idyllwild	
Ann Lumsden, Pine Cove	

# Thank You!

**We greatly appreciate the donation of items from the following people**

Jane Acton, Becky Clark, Phyllis Clark, Susan Gonzalez, Rayburn Hanzlik, Lynnda Hart, Bud Hunt, Margaret Jaenke, Tom & Pat Laughlin, Harv Lubin, Mickey Regal, Harry & Mary Sigworth, Ron St. Pierre, and Carson and Donna Struthers.

**We would also like to acknowledge the talent and services provided by**

Ann Ashby, Anne Frederick, Rob Lindquist, Silver Pines Lodge, Kent Steele, Cheryle Humber Waner, and Debbie Zimmerman.

**Won't You Join Us? , , , , Send Your 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**)

Send this membership form and check to:

**Idyllwild Area Historical Society, PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 = (909) 659-3569**

*- We appreciate your support -*

All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

**Join IAHS or Give a Gift Membership and Receive**

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

**Idyllwild Area Historical Society, PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 = (909) 659-3569**

**Arti - facts**, the official newsletter, 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; Newsletter Editor - Terry Casella

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