

# Arti - facts

The Newsletter of the  
Idyllwild Area Historical Society

Volume III Issue 1

Winter 2003

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

## The Cole Family Legacy

In November 2000, Becky Clark, Idyllwild Town Crier editor, handed me a copy of a letter written to her by Phyllis Marling of South Pasadena. Mrs. Marling asked someone from the newly formed Idyllwild Area Historical Society "to get in touch with me" as she wanted to join. (Phyllis is the niece of early settler, Lee Emerson,). That initial contact led to a treasure trove of photos and stories of Idyllwild's early days. Phyllis shared some wonderful memories of going to dances at the Idyllwild Inn and other memorable events. She also put me in touch with her good friend, Louise Cole Campbell who resides in Santa Barbara.

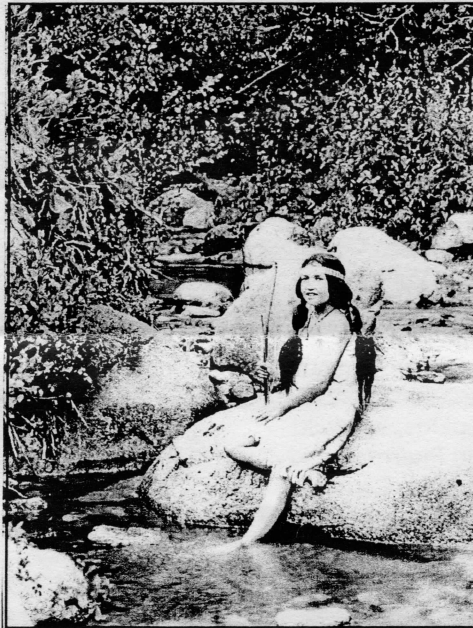
Last spring Louise started mailing us the most incredible letters containing detailed information about her family's life in Idyllwild starting with the 1920's and continuing

through each decade up to the present. The Cole family cabin on River Road, built in 1917, and acquired by Frances and A.W. Cole in 1922, is still owned by this family.

Delightful photographs accompanied the letters making her stories come alive. Anecdotes about neighbors and other Idyllwild families who were friends of the Coles also add to the historical importance of these accounts.

Bobsledding, snowshoeing on rented snowshoes from the Inn, hiking, dressing up for the annual Masquerade Ball, riding the *Haywire* wagon to summer barbeques at Whisnand's Barn, searching for lost golf balls in the wild rose bushes at the golf course, with her brother Vic, and swimming in the pool at the clubhouse were just a few of the activities that young Louise engaged in when coming from Long Beach to Idyllwild.

For the next several months, Louise continued to send wonderful letters chronicling her family's life at the cabin. What an incredible wealth of information about a very fascinating time in our history. We are so grateful that Louise took the time to share with our Society these invaluable recollections.



*Louise Cole at Strawberry Creek, ca 1924*

*by Sheila Meyer, president*

## Mission Inn Tour - January 14

Riverside's premier historic and architectural landmark.

### WALKING TOUR, MUSEUM VISIT AND OPTIONAL LUNCH

We have reserved space for 30 people to take the guided tour at 10:00am (two groups of 15 each).

The group price is \$6.00 each for the tour. Walter Parks, one of our IAHS Board members and an expert on Mission Inn history will be one of the guides for our group.

We need to send the money ahead of time in order to confirm. Please mail a check to The Idyllwild Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 3320 by **January 6**.

Also, indicate whether you would like to have lunch at the Inn. Reservations will be made for lunch according to the responses mailed in. Please call 659-5170 to RSVP or questions.

## OFFICERS

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| President          | Sheila Meyer   |
| Vice President     | Diana Smith    |
| Treasurer          | Ron Grassi     |
| Recording Sec.     | Kay Cenicerros |
| Corresponding Sec. | Ann Bashford   |

## DIRECTORS

|                      |
|----------------------|
| Lynnda Hart, curator |
| Ann Ashby            |
| Blair Cenicerros     |
| Joe Hart             |
| Walter Parks         |
| Bob Smith            |
| Lynn Voorheis        |

## ADVISORY BOARD

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| Harry Bubb, Kay Cenicerros,         |
| Craig Coopersmith, Keith Froehlich, |
| Kent Steele                         |

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Asst. Curator    | Shirl Reid        |
| Membership       | Blair Cenicerros  |
| Operations Mgr.  | Richard Levitski  |
| Historian        | Ann Ashby         |
| Garner Valley    | Ann Ashby         |
| Publications     | Ron Taylor        |
| Hospitality      | Lenore Miller     |
| Oral History     | Carolyn Levitski  |
| Research         | Bob Smith         |
|                  | Lynnda Hart       |
| Publicity        | Blair Cenicerros  |
| Office PC system | Shirl Reid        |
|                  | Nick Adamenko     |
| Newsletter       | Terry Casella     |
| Photo Album      | Nancy Harrison    |
| Field Trips      | Anna Gerdes       |
| Website          | Francoise Frigola |
| Special Events   |                   |
| Home Tour        |                   |

## 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!

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Pat & Linda Anderson, Idyllwild       | Lydia Kowalski, Woodland Hills               |
| Jack & Carolyn Batzler, Del Mar       | Ron Langlois, Garner Valley                  |
| Charles & Charlotte Bird, San Diego   | Judy Lawler, Idyllwild                       |
| Harold & Mille Bird, Palm Desert      | Dorothy Lewis, Idyllwild                     |
| Doug & Maureen Boron, Palm Desert     | Steve Lech, Riverside                        |
| Carratello Family, Idyllwild          | David Maurer, Claremont                      |
| Charlie Clayton, Idyllwild            | Maureen Mirau, Idyllwild                     |
| Diann Coates, Idyllwild               | Phyllis Cole Millard, Idyllwild              |
| Maurice Copeland, Idyllwild           | Floyd "Nick" Nixon, Hemet                    |
| Richard Dorisse, Idyllwild            | Karen Patterson, Idyllwild                   |
| Mo Farrel, Idyllwild                  | Marilyn & Erv Powers, Palm Desert            |
| Jan Fast, Idyllwild                   | Charlene Price, Idyllwild                    |
| Dean Finmark, Pine Cove               | Richard Price, Garner Valley                 |
| Fireside Inn, Idyllwild               | Aida Quiles, Idyllwild                       |
| Dianne Franco, La Quinta              | Laveda "Lee" Ralstin, Pine Cove              |
| Bill & Deanne Gage, Idyllwild         | Jerry & Sandy Rustad, Idyllwild              |
| Helen Drummond, Santa Rosa            | David & Stephanie Salter, Desert Hot Springs |
| Frank & Susan Gonzalez, Garner Valley | Ann Snow, Pasadena                           |
| Judi Hermanson, Idyllwild             | Phyllis Stowell, Redwood City                |
| Elaine Hill, Indio                    | Dale & Mary Ann Spickler, Idyllwild          |
| Richard Honn, Pasadena                | Roy & Wendy Stephens, Anaheim Hills          |
| Bill & Diane Hoese, San Diego         | Larry & Linda Turner, Idyllwild              |
| Pat Hopkins, Idyllwild                | Frank Tysen, Sherman Oaks                    |
| Idyllwild Pharmacy, Idyllwild         | Richard Walker, Hemet                        |
| Ronnie Imel, Garner Valley            | What's New Buy You, Idyllwild                |
| Steve & Mary Kenyon, Pine Cove        | David & Barbara Wilke, Idyllwild             |
|                                       | Carl & Ruth Williams, Brawley                |

## Thank You!

### We greatly appreciate the donation of items from

Diana Smith, Harry Bubb, Dael Patton, Shirl Reid, David and Kim Leonard, Millie Bird, Justin Farmer, Richard Levitski, Florence Steere Fields, Carolyn Levitski, Jan Priestley, Peggy Petty, Wes and Stella Johnson, Jerry Holldber, Carol Mills, Norm and Bonnie Doshier, Ann Lumsden, Carson and Donna Struthers, Larry Shaw, Community Lumber, Dave Brett, Dave and Barbara Burgess, Harold K. Smith

### And acknowledge the talent and services provided by

Richard Levitski, Chuck Clayton, Contractor; Carson Struthers, Norm Doshier, Wayne Donaldson, Restoration Architect; Nigel Prestley, Structural Engineer; Jerry Holldber, Top Hat Chimney Sweep; Grey Squirrel and Tahquitz Travel, Eileen Roberts

## Upcoming Events

### Elvis in Idyllwild - Fri. February 7

5:00 pm at the County Nature Center

"Kid Galahad" a 1962 Elvis movie filmed in Idyllwild and Garner Valley will be shown.

Hors d'oeuvres, wine and cider at 5:00, followed by a brief talk and the film. Members and guests.

### Volunteer Party - Sat. April 12

(Save the date) A fun event is being planned for all IAHS volunteers to celebrate our accomplishments. Details later.

### "Old Time" Campfire - Sat. May 17

Bring the whole family and gather round the fire for story telling and music. Bring your picnic supper. S'mores for the kids. Soft drinks and Sarsaparilla will be available. Museum park area.

## And Past...

### The James Reserve...

These are a few of the many comments we received from people attending the September 20 James Reserve field trip. 46 members and guests attended.

*"Thank you for the wonderful picnic outing to the James Reserve. As a part time resident of the hill, I knew nothing about this beautiful place and the inspirational story behind it. Thanks to the Idyllwild Area History society, I've uncovered yet another Idyllwild treasure."*

Carol Fine

*"We thoroughly enjoyed our first visit to the James Reserve. Mike Hamilton's presentation accompanied by the wealth of archival materials brought to life the multi-faceted legacy of Harry James. His egalitarian philosophy of the campfire, life-long commitment to education, and the pristine wilderness of the reserve are just three of the multiple memories we will cherish from the day spent at the Reserve."*

Harold and Lynn Voorheis

## A Smashing Success... Harvest Home Tour 2002!



photo by Francoise Frigola

A day of beautiful fall leaves, mist, fog and a little drizzle did not deter the 650 people who traveled from all over Southern California to Idyllwild to attend the Harvest Home Tour. The raves are still coming in about the selection of beautiful tour homes, and the warm, welcoming, and informed docents. Many of these compliments came from people who make home tours a week-end hobby and many have signed up for next year!

The success of an event like the Home Tour can always be traced back to the home owners and the volunteers, who gave of their time and effort...and then a little more. The 85 volunteers who put on the Home Tour 2002 are seasoned veterans at giving a *lot* more! Their combined enthusiasm and hard work helped double the attendance of last year and volunteers have already signed up for next year!

Idyllwild too, had a good day. The restaurants were over-flowing, people were out shopping after touring the homes and the Inn's were filled for the week-end. It is always sweeter when success is shared!

This lovely cabin, nestled among the pines, cedars and oaks at 54470 North Circle Drive, is the new home of the Idyllwild Area Historical Society.

A few steps out the back door of the museum, along a gravel path, lined with young oak trees, is the new office of the Historical Society. Just a few days after we acquired the property we started remodeling the original garage and out building to accommodate the needs of our growing organization.

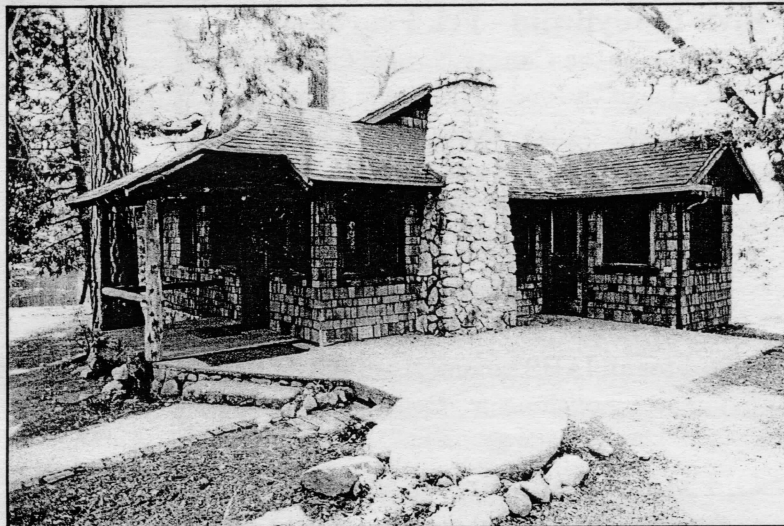


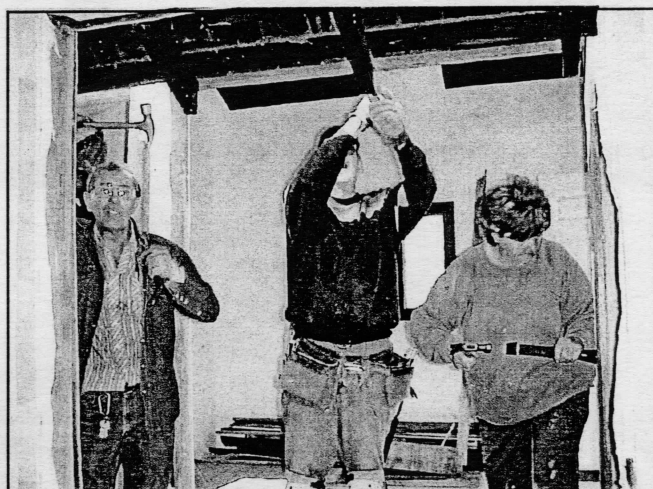
photo by George Meyer

Many many hours of work have gone into making the new office state of the art. Volunteers, Richard and Carolyn Levitski, Chuck Clayton, Charlene Price, Norm and Bonnie Doshier, Diana Smith, Carson and Donna Struthers, Phyllis Stowell, George and Sheila Meyer and Don Hart donated their time to this project so that we can be up and running by the first of January!

I invite you to stop by and see the work in progress.

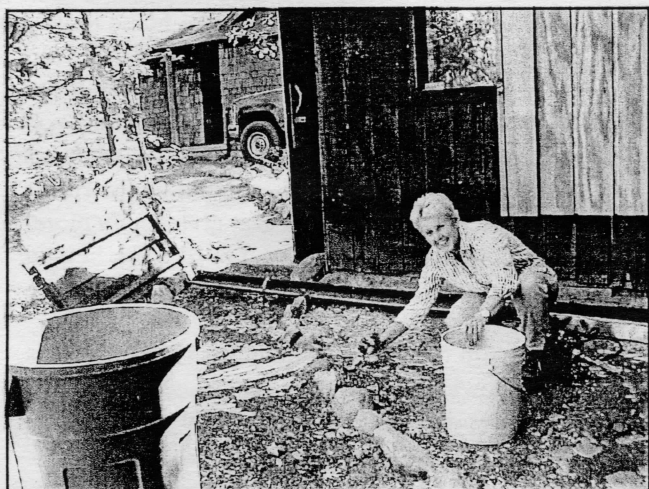


Office of the IAHS undergoing a remodel.



Making changes and improvements are volunteers Richard Levitski, Don Hart, Lynnda Hart (above, l to r) and Carolyn Levitski (left),

Photos by Carolyn Levitski



## Garner Valley Members Come To The Rescue!

A long time ago (possibly around the turn of the century) a little wooden building at Keen Camp, Mountain Center, was erected to house a blacksmith shop and tack room. Over the years it has withstood wind storms, fires and several repairs, as often happens with "working buildings", but it never lost its charm. It even became a 'movie star'!

Back in the 30's and 40's many westerns were filmed at Keen Camp and Garner Valley because of the natural beauty of the valley and surrounding backdrop of mountains. The script for *Take me Back to Oklahoma* starring Tex Ritter called for a blacksmith shop and so

this little wooden building, that sat patiently doing its intended work over the years, was called on to star in a Hollywood movie.

It came to the attention of the Historical Society that it would be torn down and people felt saddened that a part of our history would be lost forever. After many planning meetings were held and restoration experts were sought for advice, four members of the Garner Valley Equestrian Club and several Garner Valley home owners came to the rescue!

In the last few weeks, they have carefully and lovingly dismantled, transported and stored this historic structure that will later be erected on our Museum site as a ranch farm building, and the home for Garner Valley ranching artifacts.



*Keen Camp Blacksmith Shop.*

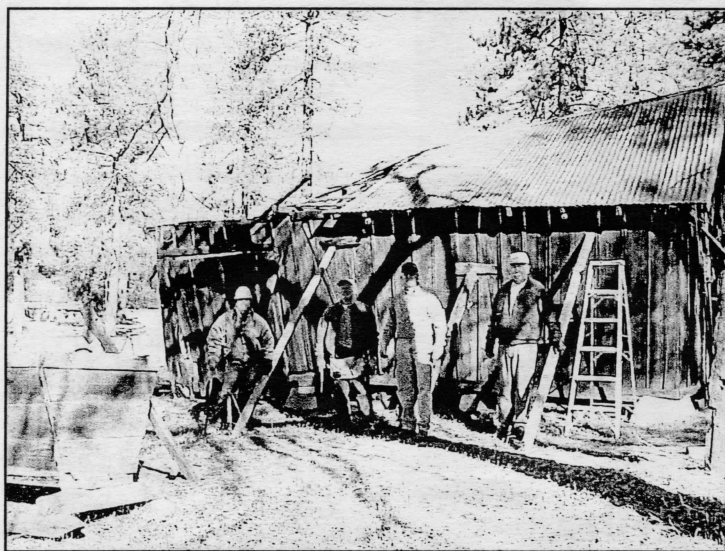
*Photo by Joan Fagan*

*Update in spring "Arti-facts".*



*Some of the Garner Valley rescue team: (l to r) Susan Gonzalez, Ron Imel, Ann Ashby, Dick Price*

*Photo by Ann Ashby*



*Getting started! (l to r) Susan Gonzales, Ron Imel, Dick Price, and Don Langlois*

*Photo by Carolyn Levitski*

## The High Country

### An Old Friend Returns...

Originally published from 1967 to 1984, *The High Country* journal was revived in 2002 to share stories with a new generation of High Country residents. The founders were Elsinore newspaperman Tom Hudson, Sam Hicks, the manager of Erle Stanley Gardner's Rancho Paisano, Al Newhart, an insurance salesman turned author, (and uncle of comedian Bob Newhart), freelance writer Bill Cox, Parker Kimball, and Temecula historian Horace Parker, with Ralph Love.

Today's *High Country* is published by the Temecula Valley Museum as a part of its on-going efforts to share the history of this area with residents and visitors alike.

We are very pleased to announce that an article submitted by the IAHS was accepted for this issue. *Memories of "Desert Steve" Ragsdale* written by Harry Quinn, was originally presented as a talk given by Harry at our annual general meeting on October 12, 2001.

The recently revived journal (issue number 63) is now available for purchase at the Temecula Valley Museum. Articles by Steve Lech, Phil Brigandi, John W. Robinson, Harry Quinn, and George Winkels, including historic photos, are featured in this born again edition. Price is \$6.95.



IAHS Archives

**Happy Holidays from the  
Idyllwild Area Historical Society**

Check out our  
website at

[www.IdyllwildAreaHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.IdyllwildAreaHistoricalSociety.org)  
for information on IAHS

### Join a Committee

As you can see by the credits column on page 2, we have a need for a person to head up a Special Events committee. Special events are community functions in which the IAHS participates. Having an entry in the 4th of July parade and a booth at Jazz in the Pines are two examples of our involvement in events other than our own.

Many of our members are already serving as chairpersons or committee members.

Thanks to all of you who are so generously giving of your time to help us in our mission of preserving the history of our mountain communities. Our Society would not survive without you.

Please contact Sheila Meyer at 659-3569 if you would like to help.

# IDYLLWILD INN...



DANCE—  
SWIM—  
FISH—  
GOLF—  
HUNT—  
RIDE—  
PLAY—

Badminton, Tennis, Ping-Pong, Bridge

at IDYLLWILD INN—  
High above the heat—

● Phone SAN JACINTO 9918 for Reservations ●

These six ads are from the Idyllwild section of the *Indio News*, August 20, 1937.

PEAK TRIPS

PACK TRIPS

## IDYLLWILD STABLES

Horses by hour, day, week or month  
BREAKFAST RIDES INSTRUCTION

### When You Purchase Lumber

For improvements or new building,  
consult us at Idyllwild—Phone 8882

**SAN JACINTO MOUNTAIN LUMBER CO.**

## HORSLEY'S MARKET

(Member of Orange Empire Organization)

SPECIALS—Friday & Saturday, Aug. 20 & 21

SUGAR FINE GRANULATED Cloth Bag 10 lbs. 52c

MUSHROOMS JACOBS HOTELS 2-oz. cans 3 for 25c

BIRD SEED FRENCH'S pkg. 12½c

SPINACH LIBBY'S No. 2 can 15c

MATCHES BLUE TIP 6 boxes 23c

FACIAL SOAP WOODBURY'S 3 for 25c

COCOMALT 1-lb. can 39c

TOILET PAPER GAUZE 4 rolls 15c

OXYDOL large pkg. 20c

## DANCE - Thursday Night and enjoy a Chicken Dinner at FERN VALLEY CAFE

A Mile beyond Idyllwild P. O. — On Circle Drive

Dinner 7 to 9 — Dance till 1 — Cocktails

## SOBOBA THEATRE San Jacinto

Thursday & Friday \* \* \* Aug. 19-20  
WALLACE BEERY—CLARK GABLE in request return of  
"HELL DIVERS"

Saturday Only \* \* \* Aug. 21  
"BORN RECKLESS" —Rochelle Hudson  
—Brian Donlevy

Sunday-Monday-Tuesday \* \* \* Aug. 22-23-24  
ALICE FAYE — DON AMECHE

"You Can't Have Everything"

Consider donating a Gift Card to help us complete our Office and Museum!

As you are shopping at your favorite home improvement store, why not pick up a gift card to donate to IAHS?

We could use it towards the many items still needed to complete the Office, such as, shelving, carpeting, window coverings, etc.

And you'll get a year-end tax deduction!

# Membership Information

## 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 the Idyllwild Area Museum

Won't You Join Us? , , , , , Send Your Annual Membership to:

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email 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  
Installment plan available - \$100 per year for 10 years

Send this membership form and check to:

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

- We appreciate your support -

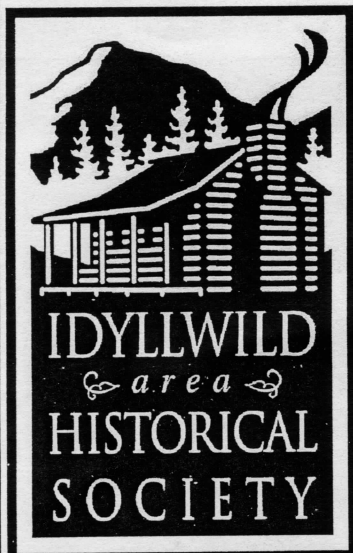
All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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

Newsletter Editor - Terry Casella

Contributors - Sheila Meyer, Lynnda Hart, George Meyer, Joan Fagan, Ann Ashby, Françoise Frigola, Carolyn Levitski



Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Idyllwild, CA  
Permit No. 3320

Bob & Adele Smith  
PO Box 3203  
Idyllwild CA 92549-3203