

TATTERED TIDBITS

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 3, Issue 4

October 2009

Upcoming events:

- October 18th—Italian Feast
- October 24th and 25th—Museum Open House
- October 4th—Viejas Day Parade
- November 28th and 29th—Museum Open House
- December 6th—Alpine Woman's Club Holiday Home Tour

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ALPINE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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JUDGE HOWATT TO ENTERTAIN AT THE FEAST!

In October, 2007, our annual Italian Feast featured a reenactment, by the Honorable William Howatt, of the famous Alpine Ranch Murder Trial. This proved to be one of our most well-attended and enjoyable programs. Judge Howatt performs historical reenactments as a hobby.

On October 18, Judge Howatt will become Philip Crosthwaite and will tell the stories of Yankee Jim, hung in Old Town on September 18, 1852, and the Roy Bean/John Collins duel on horseback which also took place in Old Town in 1852. One will think they're looking at Philip Crosthwaite, who, while serving as county clerk and recorder, was deputized by all the other county officers to act for them while they attended a bull-and-bear fight. Thus,

for a short time Mr. Crosthwaite held all the county offices at once.

In addition to this much anticipated program, the Board of the Historical Society will be serving an Italian Feast. The feast will feature various pasta dishes, salads, hot bread, dessert and drinks. The cost of this dinner will be \$8 for adults and \$5 for children. If it's anything like past feasts, there will be an abundance of delicious food combined with excellent company. Mark your calendar and don't miss this event.

The feast will take place at The Alpine Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Boulevard, at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 18. This is one of the Historical Society's major fundraisers, so come out for an amazing dinner and pro-

gram while you are supporting the effort to preserve Alpine's rich history.

Please R.S.V.P. to Carol Morrison at 445-2544, or send an e-mail to: info@alpinehistory.org. Hope to see you on October 18th! This will be a memorable evening for all in attendance. ■



Hon. William J. Howatt, Jr.
(Retired)



*Philip
Crosthwaite -
left and
Roy Bean
(before using the
"Judge" before
his name) - right*



Welcome and Thanks!

We have a new life member! Mark Anderson recently joined our Society as a life member and has contributed family photos that are an important part of Alpine's past. Mark is the great grandson of Dr. Sophronia Nichols. Welcome, Mark, and thanks for your contributions.

Another person from Alpine's past, Shirley Walker Dyer, has also joined the Society. Shirley is the daughter of Donald Walker, Sr. and sister to our Don Walker, Jr. Don and Shirley recently invited "the Carols"—

Morrison and Walker, into Don's home to sort through boxes and boxes of family photos. Included in these boxes were wonderful scenes from Alpine's famous "The Willows" resort. The project is finished and the Society has been able to add many scanned photos to our archives. Thank you, Don and Shirley and welcome, Shirley!

Welcome also to new member Diana Lothspeich.

Thanks also go to the following renewing members: Jim Carretta, Alan Dadisman, Katherine Garrard,

Richard and Jane Kelso, Peggy Jean Miller, and Elma Terry.

Monetary contributions have been received from Ann and Tom Hill, Max Robinson, Jim Hinds and Shirley Dyer.

Additional donations to the archives include a natural beehive and photos from the collection of Neil Galloway's great nephew, Steve Galloway.

Sincere thanks to all of you—these contributions enable us to continue our work.■



Natural Beehive donated by Peter Swoboda is now on display in the Beaty House

In Memoriam—Thomas Edmund Hill



Alpine recently lost a dear friend—Tom Hill. Tom's family moved to Alpine in 1926 and Alpine was his home until his death.

The Tom Hill, Sr. family, seeking a climate that would help young Tom's health, found their farm one Sunday after driving miles and miles through Arizona and California. A "For Sale" sign on the roadside led them to a tree-shaded lane where they hoped to inquire about the land. When they started to get out of the car, they noticed a large hand-written sign "No Business on Sunday." Fortunately, Percy Foss saw them and, in spite of the Sabbath, took them to see the land. The 40-acre parcel became their home and, at one time, they had the best fruit orchard around.

Tom is survived by his wife Ann, sons Bruce and Eric, his sister Zelma Rae "Tootsie" Joseph, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. How we will miss driving by the property and seeing Tom and his dogs out puttering around—always on the go and always with a friendly greeting.■

San Diego Legends' Author Speaks at August Meeting

The August 16th meeting proved to be one of those rare events—perfect weather, absolutely wonderful food, and a speaker that everyone identified with and enjoyed.

Jack Innis, author of the book *San Diego Legends*,

came with a wide variety of stories about some of San Diego's legends of the past.

Mr. Innis has the unique ability to capture his audience and encourage interactive dialog. The "lecture" proved to be a

lively, interactive discussion. Everyone in attendance appeared to greatly enjoy the program.

On such a lovely summer's day, the food provided by attendees was especially tempting. A

wide variety of dishes to meet everyone's tastes and desserts to die for.

Thanks to all who came—attendance was greater than usual—your interest and support is greatly appreciated!■

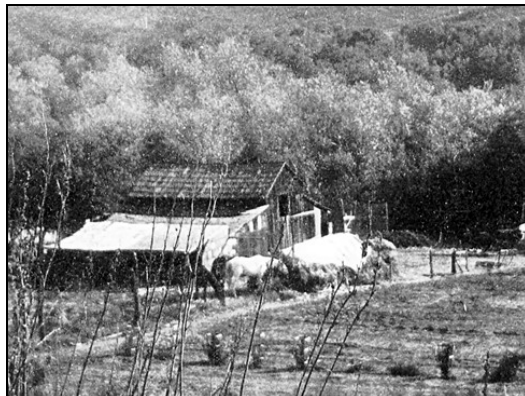
Kid on the Sweetwater—by Vic Head

Three miles to the east Bell Bluff was almost black against the dawn. The kid's bare feet were drenched with dew as he entered the kitchen with a jar of pollywogs from a puddle in the almost dry bed of Deer Creek. Green slime and pollywogs couldn't survive unless it rained soon. "Not likely," according to old Brother Tate, perhaps 88, with back so bent his chin was never far from his knees. "Creek trickles a bit every second or third winter."

Raymond was fixing flapjacks and bacon. He'd been a cook in the Royal Navy, wandered America doing odd jobs, then joined the Kosmon Fraternity's religious community in Sacra-tero Valley as mechanic and cook. Now the kid's feet slipped on linoleum, glass shattered and pollywogs wiggled much to Raymond's disgust. The cook seized an eight-quart kettle and kicked it, football fashion, across the kitchen. Sister Mary, close to 80, held the frightened kid in her arms, rebuking Raymond with a pleading look. The cook looked chagrined and silently cleaned up the mess.

By mid-morning, while Brother Ed was weeding the vegetable garden grown with water provided by a 70-foot high windmill and water tower, Bell Bluff had turned to pale lavender grooved by dark gullies. And by high noon the kid could see the change to brick red and granite gray, perhaps the truest colors of the rocks. To the north was the orchard, then the slope increased to a long ridge topped with balancing rocks.

Years ago the ranch had been a haven for orphans chosen from San Diego Orphanage to be brought up in the beauty of God's country, deer and mountain lions and all, but by now all



The Kosmon Faithist Community in Sacra-tero Valley—early 1920's

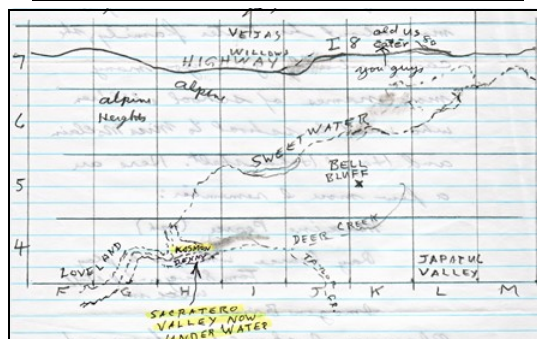
Editor's Note:

Spending some years of his youth in the Alpine area during the 1920's, following the divorce of his parents, Vic Head has written priceless documents recalling the time he spent in the Kosmon Faithist Community in Sacra-tero Valley. The ranch was used as a refuge for children from a San Diego orphanage as well as for children like Vic and his siblings.

Sincere thanks to the Millbrook Society, Hatboro, Pennsylvania, for granting permission to The Alpine Historical Society to use this and other of Vic's stories. Many were first published in the Millbrook Society's publication, *GRIST*.

Vic's two other stories about his Sacra-tero Valley days, *Sweetwater Doldrums* and *Storm on the Sweetwater*, can be found on the Society's website,

www.alpinehistory.org.



Mr. Head's map showing location of Sacra-tero Valley

had flown the coop, one a nurse, another a mechanic—business man—school teacher—, and the four old members were left alone. It had been after the kid's childhood diseases and two operations ("please God don't every let them put an ether cone over my face again!") when the doctor told the mother that if she wanted him to live to grow up she should take him out of school and let him run wild for a year. Thus at age 8 he found himself here with no other children, running barefoot on this intermittent tributary of the equally intermittent Sweetwater River, 30 miles east of San Diego in the mountains 15 miles north of the Mexican border.

Wandering over a bridge and west a half mile, he found the Denny Ranch and a new companion—10 year old Mary Denny. A few weeks ago Mr. Denny had shot a skunk in his milk house, followed by weeks of regret, but the pervasive aroma of the Denny Ranch was new and not totally unpleasant experience to the kid. Sometimes, barefoot boy and girl would hold hands and run past her house and on under a grove of giant live oaks to a long granite ledge. She would scrape away the leaves to reveal a line of eight metates. It was fun to pretend they could see the ghosts of eight squaws still sitting grinding corn with their mortars and pestles. It must have taken generations to grind some of these metates seven or eight inches deep.

Across the dry Sweetwater River bed they would hunt for arrowheads and bits of pottery in an ancient burial ground, and laugh when they found two shards whose broken edges fit. Might they ever glue enough pieces together for a complete clay vessel? (continued on page 5)

Our Dedicated Volunteers—Vic Head

“Sacramento Valley is under water now. They’ve built a dam near where the Indian Burial Ground used to be. It took decades to silt the coarse sand to hold water, and dramatic changes in weather patterns have prevented the Sweetwater from going dry as it used to every summer. So, with several dams, a large bit of the Sweetwater valley has become part of the San Diego water supply system. But, in 1949, a young man showed his family the valley, still much as he remembered it, except that ranch houses, windmills and water towers had been hauled away. The only familiar man-made sights: the ancient metates where the ghosts of squaws still seemed to grind their corn and the four standing timbers, each some 14 inches square, which had once supported the Kosmon windmill.”

Vic Head, now almost 92-years-old, wrote the above passage in one of a series of articles he wrote about the Kosmon Community

His involvement in Alpine began when he was a toddler. It grew stronger when he “fell in love” with a pigtailed schoolmate, Patty Foster, when they both were in the fifth grade in what was Alpine’s most remembered teacher’s first class.

Moving to Pennsylvania in 1929, he remembered his Alpine days and, in the late 1990’s, began to write his memories. His uncanny recollection of facts, names, places and events shows clearly in these stories.

Contacting his first love, he began to inquire about research he had been doing on Captain Harry Jeremiah Parks, an early resident of the area and a Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient. Patty put him in touch with Barbara Cater who does valuable research for the Alpine Historical Society. As a result, Barbara and Vic started corresponding and soon the Society gained these wonderful stories which have so enhanced our collection.



Vic Head, at age 90, sits on bench dedicated to the memory of his wife—Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, 2008

Vic continues to write about interesting events in his past—never ceasing to amaze us at his ability to capture events and paint pictures with words.

He is a different type of volunteer—one that is invaluable to the preservation of our history.

We thank Vic, the late Patty Heyser, and Barbara Cater for all coming together to enrich our knowledge of the past.

All of Vic’s writings are available on the Society’s website.■

**COMING
SOON!**

*A collection of
the writings of
Vic Head is
being compiled
and will be
available at the
museum in the
near future.*



Victor, Consuelo, Norman and Sylvia Head on the Foss Ranch—mid-1920’s

*“The only familiar
man-made
sights: the
ancient metates
where the ghosts
of squaws still
seemed to grind
their corn...”*



Vic Head with his late wife, Flo 1976

Kid on the Sweetwater *(Continued from Page 3)*

But they were soon diverted by a horned toad, really a tiny lizard almost as wide as long. He'd sit on your hand a while and then—zrrp! He was away and out of sight among the shards.

Once they came face to face with a six-foot diamondback rattler, always a gentleman, giving adequate warning. Old saying: "Don't worry about a rattlesnake you hear in a tree, but if you hear a locust on the ground, watch out." Of course, Sister Mary had a rattlesnake kit—wooden box, alcohol and swabbing cotton, razor blade to lance an "X" and permanganate crystal and gauze. This

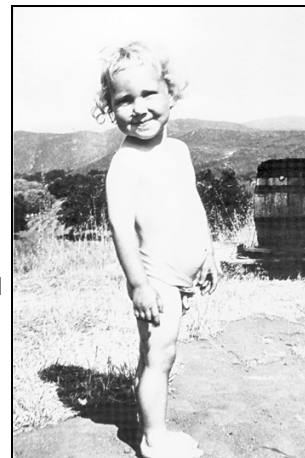
snake moved on to hide in the Manzanita.

He loved to watch Sister Mary skim the almost solid cream from the overnight milk pans—yummy on hand-held shredded wheat. She let him push and pull on the churn handle till the butter came. But when the cows wandered onto the willows the milk was bitter for a week.

Just before sunset, Bell Bluff gleamed like a mirror, then faded to royal red. Some nights were long in his cabin. Once he heard a baby cry, only a coyote yapping at the moon, Brother Ed told him. Once

a tremulous la-la-la-la—only a raccoon wickering near the corn patch. Once it was sight, not sound, a black figure against a star-filled sky. Holding a revolver? Seconds turned to minutes before he gave vent to screaming terror. Finally, the light of a coal oil lantern, and Sister Mary led him across to the ranch house and tucked him in with her and slowly sobs subsided. Next morning the figure proved to be a familiar cactus near the open cabin door.

And so began a year of near-wilderness experience with all its danger and all its joys, long treasured memories. ■



**Vic Head,
Age 2
Sacramento Valley**

Don Walker Recognized at ALPS Award Ceremony

The Alpine Historical Society presented a Special Recognition Award to Don Walker at the annual Alpine Leadership and Public Service Award (ALPS) ceremony for his outstanding community leadership and public service.

Don and his sister Shirley Walker Dyer attended the ceremony along with Society President Carol Morrison.

Don has been driving his tractor in the annual Viejas Day Parade to pull the Society's float and the winners of the historical essay contest for many years. His donations of farm equipment, artifacts from The Willows Resort, and many, many historic photographs have greatly enhanced the Society's collection.

The ALPS Award ceremony

is an annual event sponsored by the Alpine and Mountain Empire Chamber of Commerce and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. It was held on September 23, at the Viejas Dream Catcher Lounge.

Don and his family are an indelible part of Alpine's history and his contributions to the community are greatly appreciated! ■

"Just before sunset, Bell Bluff gleamed like a mirror, then faded to royal red."



**The Kosmon Faithist Community
1920's**

Our museums are open the last Saturday and Sunday of each month between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m. Stop by and see the recent changes!



**Sacramento Valley
1920's**

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Areas of Interest for Volunteers:

Building Preservation
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Please complete this form and include your check payable to the Alpine Historical Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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