

TATTERED TIDBITS

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 5, Issue 3

Carol Walker, Editor

August 2011

Upcoming events:

August 21st—
Quarterly Meeting

August 27th and
28th—Museum Open
House

September 24th and
25th—Museum Open
House

October 16th—
Annual Italian Feast

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ALPINE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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AUGUST QUARTERLY MEETING

The speaker at the August quarterly meeting of the Alpine Historical Society will be Dr. Sue Gonda who will give a presentation entitled "Not Just Another Pretty Face," a history of women in California.

Dr. Gonda represents the Women's Museum of California, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1983 as the Women's History Reclamation Project. Its founder, Mary Maschal, spent most of her life collecting and preserving many historic artifacts

that exemplify and document the life histories and achievements of women throughout the world. This museum, located in downtown San Diego, is one of only five such museums in the United States.

The meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 21st, at the Alpine Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Boulevard. The meeting will begin with a potluck luncheon and the program will start at 2:00 p.m.

Everyone may attend the

luncheon or come just for the speaker. Please R.S.V.P. to Vikki Coffey at 619-445-6636. We look forward to seeing you! ■



Dr. Sue Gonda

THE END OF AN ERA—ALPINE STORE DEMOLISHED

Demolition of the old Alpine Store Building began on June 24, 2011 and signified the end of an era. The building, a fixture on Alpine Boulevard since 1933, was familiar to all who live in and love the Alpine community.

The original one room Whitney's Store was located on the south side of the road. H. J. Whitney operated this store in the 1860s. The first mail service to the store began in 1865. When Charles Emery purchased the store in 1890 it was renamed The Alpine Store. The building burned down in 1904 and

was replaced with a larger building on the north side of the road, built by T. M. Albee in 1905. Ownership passed to Edwin Snow, John Wilkinson, and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Flegal. The Flegals sold the store to C. V. and Maude Hilton in 1916 to devote time to the Brabazon Vineyard and Winery that they had purchased in 1913. This building burned down in 1933 and was rebuilt and leased to Art and Alice Simmons.

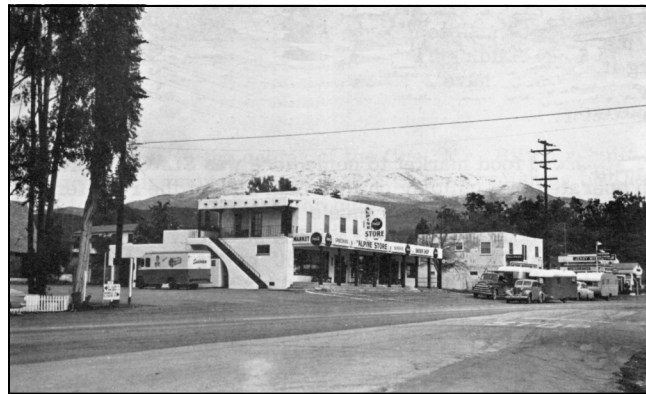
In 1936 Gordon and Mava Wilson, along with their four children, (Continued on page 2)



The view along Alpine Boulevard has forever changed with the demolition of the old Alpine Store building.

The End of an Era *(Continued from page 1)*

took over management of the store. Good merchants and friendly hosts as well, the Wilsons made a visit to the store seem as much a call on friends as a shopping trip. Everyone came to know the Wilsons and they to know everyone for miles around. Mava and Gordon ran the store until 1951 when they retired and turned the business over to their son, Jack, who ran it until 1964. The Alpine Store closed its doors as a grocery store and has since



The Wilson's Alpine Store in the 1950s

been Tyler's Feed and Tackle, a 99 Cent Store, Henry's Wolcott's Frontier Gallery and Lori's Fibers and Frames.

The Wilson children remain active members of the Alpine Historical and everyone enjoys hearing the tales their youthful adventures in the store.

It's fair to say that all of us who drive down Alpine Boulevard will always remember with nostalgia this symbol of Alpine's past. ■

Buffalo Soldiers Presentation

Attendees at the April quarterly meeting of the Alpine Historical Society were treated to a terrific presentation by members of the San Diego Chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers.

Included in the group was

a gentleman who actually served in the Buffalo Soldiers. He spoke of his service and was an inspiration to all in attendance.

A moving skit was given by Trooper Rachel Hillard who portrayed the first

female Buffalo Soldier.

Many artifacts and photos were provided by the group and were on display for all to enjoy. The collection was impressive.

Nearly sixteen months after the end of the Civil War, Section III of an Act of Congress entitled "An Act to Increase and Fix the Military Peace Establishment of the United States," authorized the formation of two cavalry regiments composed of "colored" men. The Act was approved on 28 July 1866. On September 21, 1866, the 9th Cavalry Regiment was activated at Greenville, Louisiana and the 10th Cavalry

Regiment was activated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. These regiments were to later be called the Buffalo Soldiers. They served with distinction in many varied military engagements until disbanded in 1944.

Thanks to all who came to Alpine. We truly enjoyed the presentation! ■



A number of representatives, pictured above, from the San Diego Chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers attended the April meeting. Photo on the right is of some of the many photos and artifacts they brought to share with meeting attendees.



Whoops!

We goofed. The logo shown on the front page of the April 2011 Tattered Tidbits is that of the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club. The logo pictured above is the correct logo for the San Diego Chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers. The editor apologizes for the error!

Mary Chase Walker—Our Gumption Girl *by Albert Simonson*

Looking at her photo in the Old Town schoolhouse, I am reminded of the silly old song that goes “She was a nice girl, a pretty girl, and her hair hung down in ring-a-lets.”

Well, pretty in a schoolmarmish way that could turn severe at any suggestion of a stray impure thought. She looks directly at me from between those tight, tubular ringlets, with a fine lace collar held chastely by a cameo. I avert my gaze.

Not satisfied with her \$200 annual salary as a New England schoolmarm, Mary Walker paid almost two years’ wages for a four-week journey by sea to San Francisco. It was an unusual thing for a single

woman to undertake. But there was no work for her there.

Backtracking to San Diego, she made a deep impression on E.W. Morse, president of the school board. So, in 1865, she became the first regular schoolteacher in American San Diego.

So impressed was Morse that, after her first year, they got married. Morse probably had few impure thoughts, and was acclaimed as the “ideal citizen.” A Yankee himself, he fancied that Yankee schoolmarm look. He was worthy.

It would have been scandalous for a married woman to teach innocent children, so she had to re-

sign. They could afford it - Morse was a successful merchant who continued to be involved in virtually every major business or civic venture in the area, from banks to Balboa Park to subdividing El Cajon.

In 1898, a year before her death, Mary sat in quiet retirement by Tavern and South Grade Roads in Alpine and penned her first impressions of San Diego and her pupils.

“Of all the dilapidated, miserable looking places I had ever seen, this was the worst. The first night, a donkey came under my window and saluted me with an unearthly bray. The fleas were plentiful and hungry.”

About school, she lamented tardiness and absence caused by a lack of clocks and an abundance of fiestas. At recess, the girls smoked cigarettes while the boys lassoed vagrant pigs and hens. Boys could be expected to desert their scholastic endeavors for a whole week to take part in preparations for a bullfight.

Their lack of reading skills mattered little, on a practical level, since the girls’ privy was readily identifiable by a crescent cut into the door, while the boy’s had a simple round hole.

Things have improved since then, but teachers still complain. Next time you hear them complain, just tell them about what Mary was up against. ■



The photo on the left was taken at the Mason Street School in Old Town, San Diego. This is the photo Albert references in “The Gumption Girl,” and shows Mary Chase Walker at age 38. The photo on the right is Mary later in life, perhaps when she lived in Alpine.

Alpine History Day

The annual Alpine History Day celebration was held on Saturday, June 6 on a perfect day in Alpine. The highlight of the day was the presentation of awards to winners of the third grade essay contest. The children and their teachers did an outstanding job again this year and the efforts of everyone involved were appreciated.

This year third graders from Boulder Oaks Elementary, Shadow Hills Elementary and Alpine Elementary School participated in tours of the museum houses and the essay contest.

This special event began with a fund raiser which offered a mouth-watering

lunch of homemade chili, hot bread, salads, soft drinks and ice cream sundaes. The fund raiser was very successful thanks to the coordination of Jill Sing,

Food Chairman, Jane Kelso and Judy Matlock who organized food service, Mary McBride, the sundae maker and all the cooks who prepared and donated the

food.

Major contributors to the event included Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, SDGE a Sempra Energy Utility, Chris Wiley of Primary Residential Mortgage, Inc. and Kamps Propane. Local businesses Alpine Auto Repair, Albertsons, California Bank and Trust, Edward Jones Financial and Save-A-Heart also contributed.

Albertsons contributed ice cream sundae fixings and Alpine Kiwanis donated their awning—and the manpower to put it up and remove it. Thanks to all for another very successful Alpine History Day event! ■



C. J. Iglinski shows off the certificates recognizing the honorable mention he received for art. After this, C. J. won \$100 in the raffle. He was a very happy young man!



Above left, all the third grade essay contest winners along with Vicki Whitmire, representing Viejas, and Lori Brown, representing Senator Joel Anderson, 36th Senate District, who presented recognition certificates on behalf of the senator. Above right, Joan Waterworth played the Society's 1890's organ while Barbara Hendrix led all in attendance in a sing along featuring traditional American folk songs. Below left shows the food line with Mary McBride at the ice cream sundae station. Vicki Whitmire, Senior Vice President of Borrego Springs Bank, assists Essay Committee Chair Vikki Coffey distribute certificates to the winners in the middle photo below. Some of the fantastic artwork created by third graders was displayed and is shown below right.



Cemetery Association Honors Betty Noble



On April 26th a commemorative plaque was placed on the wall at the Alpine Cemetery in honor of one of Alpine's best—Sergeant Major Betty Noble. Betty served as President of the Alpine Cemetery Board from 1975 to 2005 and was instrumental in many of the cemetery improvements over the years.

Betty, the daughter of Dorothy Walker Noble Markley, was one of the Walker's of Alpine's famous resort, The Willows. The years of her youth were spent at the

Willows working along with her sister Suzanne and her cousins to make the resort a successful family endeavor. Her cousin Don Walker still lives on original Willows property.

Betty joined the Marine Corps and attended "boot camp" at El Toro in 1943. She became the seventh female marine to be promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major and received numerous commendations and awards throughout her years of service.

After her retirement, Betty returned to Alpine and lived on the family property. In 1971 she built a beautiful new home overlooking the creek. The lilac bushes on the Willows property were legendary!

In her later years, Betty was not only active on the Alpine Cemetery Board, but also was an active member of the Alpine Historical Society and the Alpine Woman's Club. Betty passed away in 2005 and she is sorely missed by all who knew her. ■



Upper left: Sergeant Major Betty Noble at her retirement, 1968. Lower left: Betty driving a truck at El Toro Marine Base, circa 1943. Lower right, from left: Dick Rabell, Cemetery Board Member, Carol Morrison, AHS President, Don Walker, Betty's cousin, Doug Birrell, Cemetery Board President and Bob Duck, Cemetery Sexton.

Thanks to Donors/Volunteer Opportunities

The Alpine Historical Society depends upon donations and volunteers to continue its quest to preserve the history of the community.

Nancy Nichols donated a six foot long wooden "Welcome to Alpine" sign that is displayed on the side of the barn.

Jeff DeFord donated a brochure advertising Ye Alpine Tavern which dates from the 1920's.

Lena Stephenson Williams copied the diary of Congressional Medal of Honor winner Harry J. Parks in 1928 and 1929. The original pages, in her handwriting, were donated by her son, Roy Williams. The text of the diary is available on the Society's website.

Mina McWhorter donated a 1928 United States certificate appointing Tom Hunter as Postmaster of Harbison Canyon Office.

Finally, Grace Long donated three sets of miniature storefronts, an oil lamp and wooden shelves.

Sincere thanks to all for these valuable donations!

There are some openings on the Historical Society Board and help is needed. If you have interest, please call Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544. This is a great group of caring people. Join us, please! ■

In keeping with the theme of the August program, "Not Just a Pretty Face," this month's newsletter highlights the contributions of Alpine's women in history. Betty Noble and Mary Chase Walker, along with Mava Wilson and her daughters, all played an integral part of the history of Alpine.

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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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