

# TATTERED TIDBITS

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 5, Issue 4

Carol Walker, Editor

October 2011

## Upcoming events:

October 8<sup>th</sup>—  
Marker Dedication  
Ceremony Honoring  
Dr. Nichols

October 16<sup>th</sup>—  
Annual Italian Feast

October 29<sup>th</sup> and  
30<sup>th</sup>—Museum Open  
House

November 26<sup>th</sup> and  
27<sup>th</sup>—Museum Open  
House

## Inside this issue:

Daughters of  
the American  
Revolution 2

Dr. Nichols'  
Shingle on Al-  
pine Centre  
Store 3

Beatrice  
LaForce 4

Dr. Sue Gonda 4

ALPINE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 382  
ALPINE, CA 91903-0382

## ANNUAL ITALIAN FEAST THANKS TO VIEJAS!

Mark your calendar today for the annual Italian Feast which this year will be hosted by the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. The event will be held on Sunday, October 16, at 5:00 p.m. at The Alpine Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Boulevard. Viejas is providing all the food plus luscious desserts. Dinner will include a choice of pasta dishes, salad, rolls and drinks and the desserts are to die for! The cost of the event is \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors.

This event is one of the major fundraisers for The Alpine

Historical Society and is always enjoyed by all who attend.

The speaker this year will be Jack Innis, an award-winning local journalist who has made an extensive study of the wonderful, and often quirky, history of San Diego. Jack will be weaving tales of famous ghosts from San Diego History. A long-time surfer, fisherman and boating enthusiast, he is the local media relations representative of the International Game Fish Association. Mr. Innis is a freelance editor and writer who

lives in San Diego with his wife and daughter.

His interest in writing the book *San Diego Legends* began when he heard the story of a man hanged for petty thievery—after all, as Innis writes, “few cities may lay (continued on page 2)

*Thank you, Viejas!*

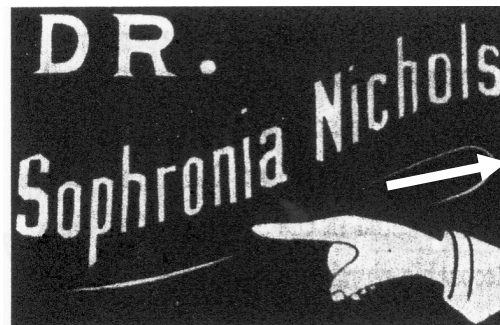
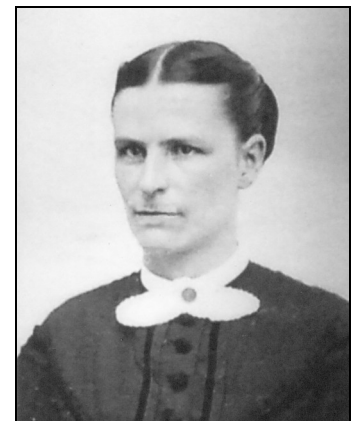


## HONORING DR. NICHOLS

The DeAnza Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution has received approval to place a commemorative marker on the former home of Alpine's Dr. Sophronia Nichols. Her home now serves as one of the pioneer museum houses for The Alpine Historical Society.

The marker dedication ceremony will be held at the John

DeWitt Museum and Library, 2116 Tavern Road, Alpine, California, on Saturday, October 8, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. The program will include presentation of the colors by a Sons of the American Revolution unit dressed in full uniforms of the 1776 Continental Army—including a bagpipe player. Several prominent legislative leaders are expected to attend this (continued on page 2)

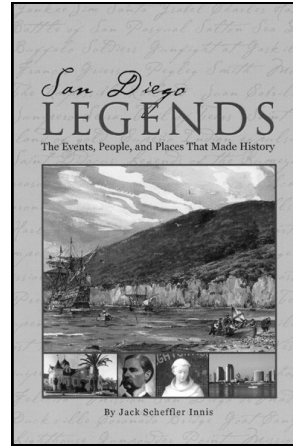


Above, Dr. Sophronia Nichols—age 25. The sign at the left is believed to be the oldest existing sign in Alpine. In one early 1900's photo, Dr. Nichols' shingle can be seen hanging in a prominent spot on the building which was the center of the community—the general store (see page 3).

## Annual Italian Feast Thanks to Viejas! *(continued from page 1)*

claim to hanging a man for stealing a rowboat, but San Diego can." The story of James "Yankee Jim" Robinson, who was hanged in Old Town on Sept. 18, 1852, after a jury trial that included two of the boat's co-owners, is just one of the many quirky tales that fill this fascinating book.

You'll find early historical figures, like San Diego's founder, Padre Junipero Serra, and such famous names as Wyatt Earp and Joshua Bean. Then Innis



Left: Jack Innis; Right: Book Cover

takes readers right up to modern times with stories on some of the religious cults that are based in the county, a well-documented city-wide hoax, local UFO sightings, as well as the multi-talented stars of stage and screen who have called San Diego home.

Please RSVP to Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544 or e-mail [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org) if you plan to attend this worthwhile event. You will enjoy dinner while supporting the history of Alpine. ■

## Honoring Dr. Nichols *(continued from page 1)*

important event in Alpine.

Dr. Nichols' great-grandson, George Anderson and his family will be attending as well as Tom Curtin, the great grandson of Dr. Nichols' husband Joel.

An historical reenactment of Dr. Nichols' life will be presented by her great great granddaughter, Donna Sisson.

Dr. Nichols is the granddaughter of Reverend Joseph Thaxter who served as Chaplain for the Ameri-

can Revolutionary Army. She is being recognized as a person of historical significance. Dr. Nichols graduated in 1874 from the Boston University Medical School and held Homeopathic Medical Certificate #26 in California.

This event is the culmination of over a year's work that took place to prepare the application and document Dr. Nichols' genealogical connection to an American patriot of the Revolutionary War.

Nancy Eggert, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, coordinated the project with Carol Morrison, President of The Alpine Historical Society.

Months of genealogical research was performed by Historical Society member Barbara Cater. Without Barbara's efforts, this event would not have been possible. Carol Walker prepared the binder of required materials that was presented to the Daughters of the American Revolution for consideration.

The event is open to the entire community of Alpine; however, seating is limited so you are asked to RSVP to Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544 or send an e-mail to [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org). Period costumes may be worn and are encouraged!

The Alpine Historical Society thanks the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians for again stepping up to the plate and providing a most generous donation to support this event. They are truly wonderful neighbors. ■



The DAR National Headquarters, located near the White House in Washington, DC, encompasses an entire downtown city block.

**The Daughters of the American Revolution National Society was founded in 1890. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., it is a non-profit, non-political women's volunteer service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children.**

**DAR members volunteer more than 250,000 hours annually to veteran patients, award thousands of dollars in scholarships and financial aid each year to students, and support schools for underserved children with annual donations exceeding one million dollars.**

**As one of the most inclusive genealogical societies in the country, DAR boasts 170,000 members in 3,000 chapters across the United States and internationally.**

## Dr. Nichols Shingle in the Center of Town

The following is an excerpt from a brochure printed circa 1895. Entitled "Alpine—Its Resorts and Resources," the brochure points out the benefits of the local community.

"This cut is a good representation of the Alpine Centre store. It is a commodious and substantial building, pleasantly located on the Cuyamaca stage road, 11 miles east of Lakeside and 13 miles from El Cajon. C. F. Emery, proprietor and postmaster, has occupied the building since it was erected some five years ago, carrying a full line of general merchandise. He has, during that time, built up an extensive trade, a large part of which comes from the mountain region north and east. Having

always lived in this section, Mr. Emery is well qualified for the business he is engaged in, by reason of his acquaintance with and knowledge of the wants and needs of his customers. He has the advantage, also, of holding the Mexican and Indian trade, by his familiarity with their language and dialect. By purchasing of reliable parties only first-class goods, he is enabled to compete in prices with other stores of perhaps greater pretensions. This is the central trading point for a radius of from 8 to 12 miles. The altitude here is 1,900 feet. There are good camping grounds near the store, with plenty of wood and water, which parties en route to the mountains usu-

ally avail themselves of. It is at this point that the start is really made for the Cuyamacas, Julian, Stonewall, Pine Valley and the Moreno Dam, and where travelers, after a few days rest, replenish their stock of supplies. The reliable information Mr. Emery is able to furnish those who desire to reach the above-mentioned points, concerning the most accessible routes, the best camping grounds and the different points of interest, is of great benefit to the stranger. A further inducement for choosing this route is in the well kept roads and easy grades. Parties leaving San Diego at 9 a.m. will reach the store and post office, via stage, at 1 p.m. Hotel and stage station near the store. Places of

resort and boarding places within easy reach."

Carol Morrison recently noticed, while looking at an enlarged copy of the photo shown below, that Dr. Nichols' shingle can be seen on the front of this photo (white oval). Dr. Nichols was certainly a pillar of the community!

From the article, one can clearly see that the residents of Alpine were drumming up the tourist trade—after all it was only a four hour trip from San Diego!

As was the fate of so many of Alpine's early buildings, the Alpine Centre Store burned to the ground in 1904. At that time it was still owned and operated by Charles Emery. ■



*The Alpine Centre Store—this photo appeared in a brochure entitled "Alpine—Its Resorts and Resources," published circa 1895. Look closely and you can see Dr. Nichols' shingle (white oval) prominently displayed on the front of the store. The shingle now hangs in the Alpine Historical Society's museum—Dr. Nichols' former home.*

## Beatrice LaForce—Author, Historian, Friend

The excitement in Alpine, leading up to the dedication of the marker honoring Dr. Nichols, makes one pause to remember the one person who is most responsible for initiating the preservation of Alpine's history.

Beatrice Boyd LaForce, author of the book *Alpine—History of a Mountain Settlement*, is known to all

true Alpine residents. Although she never disclosed her age, Bea once told Carlette Anderson, "I was born in the back of a wagon somewhere in Arkansas." Her son, Clayburn, did, after her death, leak the fact that she was born in 1905. If this is so, Bea lived until age 98—60 of those years were spent in her beloved Alpine.

Bea and her husband, Clayburn, Sr., met in San Diego in 1923 and were married in 1925.

Of their move to Alpine in 1943, she said in her book, "...the LaForce's, J. Clayburn, Bea and their three children, Carolyn, Alice and Clayburn, Jr., moved into the big house on Rancho del Sequan with

a five-year lease from Colonel Balentine, the ranch's owner. Before the five-year period ended, they knew they wanted to stay here forever, so purchased land for a future home on South Grade Road..." She went on to tell how the family, after losing all their old family heirlooms in a fire that destroyed their rented (Continued on Page 5)



**So much of what we know about the rich history of Alpine is from the writings of Beatrice LaForce, "Alpine's Historian."**

**She will never be forgotten!**

**Left: Beatrice LaForce in later years. Right: Bea soon after she arrived in Alpine.**



## A Look at Women's History



Dr. Sue Gonda

Dr. Sue Gonda was the guest speaker at the August meeting of the Alpine Historical Society. Dr. Gonda's presentation, "Not Just a Pretty Face," dealt with the history of women in California.

Dr. Gonda represents the Women's History Museum and Educational Center of San Diego. Founded in 1983, the museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of women in the state.

With the help of many volunteers and a dedicated

staff, the WHM features a diverse variety of changing exhibits and displays on women's history, sponsors workshop and lecture series that are open to the public, develops and implements educational events including art shows, performance presentations and provides speakers for the community. The WHM is a co-founder and sponsor of the San Diego County Women's Hall of Fame.

The presentation was informative and all in attendance enjoyed Dr. Gonda's interesting talk about California's women in history. ■

### Open Board Positions

**Currently there are opportunities for residents of Alpine to fill open positions on the Alpine Historical Society's Board of Directors.**

**Interested? Call Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544!**

## Beatrice LaForce—Author, Historian, Friend *(Continued from page 4)*

home, the big house at Rancho del Sequan, moved to their property where they camped while they worked on the completion of their home.

They named this 260-acre homestead Sky Mesa Ranch and that name is still used today by the developer who purchased the land surrounding the LaForce home prior to Bea's death in 2003.

Built of railway ties, native stone and cement blocks, even though the house was brand new in 1949, it had the ambiance of an old country home. The gas-

burning stove and kitchen fireplace were touches that made the home a special place.

Even though Bea's passion was writing—she wrote numerous plays, newspaper articles, books—she was an active participant in community activities and worked part time at the Alpine Library. She helped organize the Alpine Players, the First Alpine Art Association and the Alpine Historical Society.

Serving as its first Secretary/Treasurer, Bea worked tirelessly as a member of the Historical Society to

document the history of her beloved community.

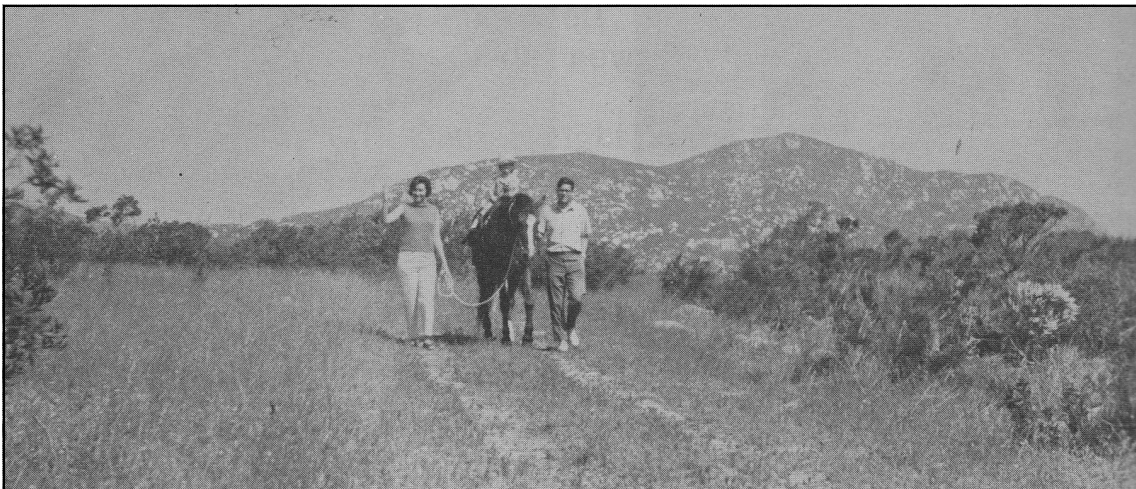
For many years the third graders of Alpine were invited into the LaForce home as a part of the Social Studies Local History Curriculum. Bea would demonstrate how corn was ground to make tortillas, how to cook on a wood-burning stove, show the children the many artifacts she had collected from days of old. The LaForce home was a showplace—Indian artifacts, collections of wagons, spurs, horse bits, horseshoes and a variety of Western memora-

bilia. The children were captivated.

Carlette remembers Bea as a nature lover—she loved plants and animals. Her menagerie included a donkey, horses, goats, geese, chickens, several cats and a collection of doves—and a pet goose who served as her watchdog, following her wherever she went.

I believe Bea would be proud of the manner in which Alpine's history continues to be preserved!

*Note: Photos and recollections courtesy of Carlette Anderson. ■*



**Above: The LaForce's at Sky Mesa Ranch**

**Left: Bea LaForce stands in her kitchen by her wood-burning stove.**



**Right: Bea and Carlette Anderson in the LaForce living room—1996.**

Alpine Historical Society  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382  
Address Correction Requested

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ALPINE, CA  
91901  
PERMIT NO. 18

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send notices via: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category (Please check one):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5     | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35         | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$50         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$15     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Org. \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Life \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500          |  |

Amount Enclosed:

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest for Volunteers:

Building Preservation  
 Technical/Clerical  
 Where Needed

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

ALPINE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

2116 Tavern Road  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

Phone: 619-659-8740  
E-mail: [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org)

We're on the Web!  
[www.alpinehistory.org](http://www.alpinehistory.org)