

Alpine History Mystery for July 2013 – Solved!

The name of the gentle giant, the subject of our July Alpine History Mystery, is **Rorie**, and he is not your everyday human. No, this chap is a BIG Gorilla. But, he's not real - he was made of fiberglass right here in Alpine by the Fiberglass Menagerie Company during the 1960's. The company's owners were Jim & Mildred Rorie who came to Alpine in 1947. In 1962 they started their fiberglass manufacturing company, and sometime in the 1960's produced the gorilla. For many years Rorie stood on the roof of the Old Log Cabin Café holding on to the overhanging Oak Tree with one outstretched hand. In 1987, when the café was torn down, Rorie was saved by Mike McCall who stored him in the family barn. Then in 2000, Brian McCall, Mike's Brother, gave him to the Alpine Historical Society.

Of course, there's a lot about Rorie that is special to Alpine children. You see, when Rorie came to the Alpine History Museum in 2000, we discovered that he had no given name, so the Historical Society sponsored a contest for Alpine school children to name the Gorilla. The winning name given to the Gorilla was Rorie, which comes from the last name of his creators, but also picks up on the impression you get when you see his face: he looks like he is Roaring! Sadly, we lost the name of the child who submitted the winning name. So, part 2 of the mystery is: Who named Rorie. If you know who submitted the name, please send us a note to tomandjudy@rcn.com.

Oh yes, there's more to the story. In 2010, we discovered that bees had entered through Rorie's left foot to make a hive inside this fearsome giant. So we had to operate on his foot to remove the bees and honey, then seal up the foot again to prevent more bee hives. As far as we know, Rorie has never hurt anyone in Alpine, and never will. So you see, he is really a sweet and gentle giant.



Brian McCall & Rorie



Rorie in tree at Alpine History Museum