

*THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – July 1, 2010*  
*Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society*

**THE ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In March 1962 a group of local residents met to talk about starting a Historical Society in Alpine. The first meeting took place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Montague Brabazon. The president of the San Diego Historical Society was present along with Mr. and Mrs. Clayburn LaForce and several other residents.

On April 8, 1962, they had their first official meeting. Twenty two people showed up at Sky Mesa Ranch, home of Clayburn and Bea LaForce. The following officers were elected: President Ralph Walker, Vice President Lenore Oakleigh Lusk, and Bea LaForce was Secretary and Treasurer. Mr. Walker appointed E. L. Freeland and Hazel Hohanshelt to draw up by-laws for the new Society to be voted on at the next meeting.

For thirty four years the members had to keep photos, important papers and documents in their homes because they did not have a place to store them.

The man who made it possible for the AHS to have a place of their own was John Colby DeWitt. He lived in the Dr. Nichols house and owned the land around it. When he died, he willed the doctor's house and one acre of land to the Alpine Historical Society. His family sold the property and house to developer Paul Gonya. After several years of negotiating, with the family, Mr. Gonya signed the property over to the AHS in January 1996. The AHS finally had a permanent home to display their historic documents and treasures.

The ribbon cutting ceremony took place on April 19, 1998. The museum was named the John Dewitt Historic Museum and Library after Mr. DeWitt.

Later in 1998, when I was president of the AHS, I received a call from Ted Christiansen. He and his wife, Donna, had purchased Rancho del Sequan from the Balentine Jenney family. They were planning to build custom homes on that property. Ted told me there was a historic house on the land and if he did not move the house he would have to tear it down.

The house he was referring to is the Captain Adam Beaty house which was built in 1899. He asked me if the AHS would like to have this house. If so, he would move it free of charge. He said he could put it right next to the Dr. Nichols house.

Without hesitation I said, *"Yes, of course, that would be wonderful."* It didn't even cross my mind to consult with the Board of Directors. Before I even had a chance to inform the board members, Mr. Christiansen had already moved the house. Boy was I in trouble! The property manager and the vice president were very upset with me and resigned. However, the rest of the board members were very excited about the Beaty house. In the end everything turned out fine. I learned a very valuable lesson from that experience. When you are a member of an organization you cannot make decisions on your own.

If you are interested in learning more about Historic Alpine or receiving information about the

Alpine Historical Society please contact Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544.

*Carlette Anderson and her husband JC have lived in Alpine for 17 years. She is a board member of the Alpine Historical Society, author of "My Alpine" and "Dysfunctional is Normal", the owner of Save-A-Heart "The CPR Pros." and Honorary Mayor of Alpine. She can be reached at myalpinehistory@aol.com*