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Thanks!

## What Does AHS Do?

Like museums, historical societies rely on images, documents, artifacts, memories and traditions to preserve the past. However, unlike museums, historical societies are research facilities, inviting the public to make use of these traces of history. Altadena Historical Society, in partnership with the community, is proud to lead in gathering, preserving, researching, presenting, debating and interpreting the evidence of our past. Because people like you have shown their support with memberships, we have been able to provide quarterly

newsletters, unlimited access to the collections, assistance with research requests, and educational programs – **all free of charge**. When you become a member you are ensuring that we can continue to offer these services in the future.

*Below: From Ben McGinty, a neon sign that advertised the Altadena Barber Shop, originally located at 837 E. Mariposa and owned by Augustus G. Butler. In 1955 Arie Quartell purchased the shop and in 1967 moved it to 2475 N. Lake Avenue where it continued to operate until the mid 1970s. Sign donated by daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arie Quartell.*



## President's Message

*By Jane Brackman*



Using primary source material to tell two different Altadena stories

Any volunteer can tell you that my favorite pastime at archives is reading old newspapers. As a writer who makes a living explaining the science of canine diseases and genetics, I was astonished when I came upon numerous articles about rabies in Altadena. In 1937 alone, 21 cases of canine hydrophobia were confirmed in our community.

My newsletter article on rabies (p. 4), and Mary Lou Langedyke's piece on St. Elizabeth's grotto (pp. 6 & 7) are both based on primary source material, which means raw information or evidence created during the time the event took place. Although a lot is in

museum collections or privately owned, most historical archives, like AHS, provide open access to primary evidence. Among other things, these might include artifacts, photographs, autobiographies, manuscripts, newspapers, oral histories or postcards. Whereas I referenced 1937 and 1938 issues of the local newspaper, *The Altadenan*, Mary Lou used the church archives, read books published immediately after the construction of the grotto, and conducted an oral history interview.

We thank St. Elizabeth's Church, Carolyn Virgil, and Carol Sharkey for permitting us to reproduce their archival images. To see more photos of the grotto go to our website home page: [www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org)

*The grotto at St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church, completed in 1939, was created by Ryozo Fuso Kado (far left), a fifth generation stone mason, and commissioned by Msgr. William Corr (middle)*



## Special Collections

We have many kinds of special collections, all of which contribute a great deal to our wealth of knowledge about Altadena's past. Some are singular: newspaper articles centered on one incident or subject. Others span several subjects and contain a mixture of pamphlets, books, postcards, photographs and memorabilia as well as news articles. Some cover a short period of time, others as long as 50 years or more.

One thing that all donated collections have in common is that they are compiled by someone with a specific interest. One of our most recently received collections is from this category. It was donated by **Marie Adamson** in 2007 just prior to her death. Marie obviously had a great love for Altadena, clipping newspaper articles on such subjects as Mt. Lowe, home values, community history, famous Altadenans and the history of various community organizations where she actively participated. She organized all this information into more than a dozen binders. Marie also saved correspondence from notable people and included photos and/or slides when available. No doubt she used these as a reference for herself as well.

Another type of collection is personal correspondence. The **Kellogg Family Letters** which contain correspondence between F.W. Kellogg, the California newspaper publisher, and his wife, Florence Scripps Kellogg, a member of the prominent philanthropic family who founded the Scripps Research Institute, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Scripps College and other family members is an example. Personal correspondence gives us a written picture of life in our community and the impact of current events on their lives. Diaries, scrap or memory books also fall into this category and researchers find these invaluable because they reflect the tastes and interests of the times.

Many people ask us what we are interested in accepting as donations. The answer is just about anything Altadena! If you enjoy saving brochures, tickets, articles and keepsakes, then your collection would be valued here in the archives. Please remember us when making decisions on the dispersal of your memorabilia.

Some of our special collections:

**Astrid Ellersieck** collection: Preservationist, community activist, and expert of southern California architecture. Clippings, artifacts, memorabilia and photographs, mostly related to preservation of Altadena landmarks and the many architectural gems she helped save.

**Oscar Werner** collection: A noted architect who designed hundreds of homes, apartment buildings, offices, and schools. Examples of his work, written material, drawings, photos, books and documentation of Pasadena's mostly unsuccessful effort to annex Altadena.

**Charles Seims** collection: Historian and author of two books including Mt. Lowe, Railway in the Clouds (1976). Memorabilia, books, photographs and artifacts from Seim's railroad and Altadena collections.



## Archives Notes

by Sherry Cavallo

*Archival donations from this past quarter include an Altadena housing tract map and St. Mark's tour house brochure donated by **Tim Gregory**, one colorized postcard of Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Elizabeth's Church, Altadena, CA by **Nancy Labahn**, neon barber shop sign by **Ben McGinty** (see front page) and three vellum maps of the Pacific Electric Mt. Lowe Division by **Paul Ayers**.*

*Many members have been extra generous when renewing their memberships and we would like to acknowledge them: **Dr. Alice J. Key, Reynolds and Rebecca Cafferata, Frederika Brooks, Mary Ann Laun, Ed Rounds, Barbara Fenske, George Miller and Kim Myers, Rosa Johnson, Dorothy K. Hull, Virginia Bangard, Pierre DuPuy, Robert L. Moore, Steven and Diane Horwitz, Mary K. Lenahan, William Whiteside, Bruce and MaryLou Langedyke, Todd J. Bayer, Stanley Zucker and Crista Earl, Ken Balder and Jack Cooley, Mary Copperud, Joan C. Christ, Dave and Peggy Blue, and Patrick and Rosemary Cochran**.*



## A Brief History of Rabies in Altadena by Jane Brackman

In 1938 there were 21 confirmed cases of canine hydrophobia in Altadena. The same year a local veterinarian died after treating a rabid dog. You couldn't say the epidemic arrived unannounced. Between 1900 and 1934, the county recorded 9,000 confirmed cases of rabid dogs. 86 Californians died, most in the greater Los Angeles area. By 1934, with no impound facilities (the county shelter in Downey wasn't built until 1946), lax laws, no cash (during the teens and twenties LA spent its rabies funds on infrastructure) and 20,000 stray dogs, Los Angeles was looking down the barrel of a loaded gun.

In 1938 the county clamped down, enforcing a strict 90 day quarantine. *The Altadenan* reported, "All dogs must be confined on the owner's premises at all times. Dogs cannot be taken out on a leash or in automobiles. All dogs, whether licensed or not, will be picked up by patrol wagons cruising the district. Five quarantine officers are assigned to Altadena." Impounded dogs were swiftly euthanised and examined for evidence of rabies. Reports were issued by the Department of Health and announced in local newspapers.

On July 8, 1937 the paper reported that rabid dogs had been picked up at 151 Woodbury, 462 Archwood, 200 East Las Flores and one in the 800 block of Mariposa. The Department of Health kept the community informed, "so that anyone having been in contact with such an animal can be made aware of the fact and report to clinics for treatment."

Each July 1<sup>st</sup>, dog owners were required to secure license applications at the Altadena sheriff's sub station. The licensing fee was \$1 for males, \$2 for females and \$1 for spayed dogs. Even though the dog vaccine was widely available as early as 1922, it was optional. Suspicious anti-regulation proponents fought successfully against government intervention for the next 18 years. In 1938 Altadena Rotary along with Animal Control sponsored rabies inoculation clinics at Farnsworth Park. The director, Mr. Miller said, "[He] hoped that dogs would be on their best behavior." The fee for vaccination was \$2 to cover the cost of supplies,

fairly pricey considering the average annual income was less than \$900.

As the epidemic waned the quarantine was eased. Dogs were allowed on leashes and in automobiles but could not run at large. However stray dogs off property or without licenses identifying owners continued to be euthanised indiscriminately. Pet lovers protested, accusing the county of rewarding dogcatchers with a \$1 bounty for each impounded dog. Some dogs were stolen or even held for ransom. The county denied the rumors, but "ruled that stray dogs must be impounded at least ten days before destroying them thus giving owners time to reclaim them. As a result, dog catchers must keep off private property in their roundup of canines."

The epidemic subsided through the war years but came back with a vengeance in the mid 1950s. The final showdown in the long battle over compulsory dog inoculation finally ended. In 1956 all dogs were required to be vaccinated as a prerequisite to licensing. The county paid for and vaccinated thirty thousand dogs. The ordinance worked so well that the state legislature followed suit and passed a similar law. Following mandatory rabies vaccination, within ten years the disease had all but disappeared from the pet dog population.

For the complete article go to our website:

<http://www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org/echos/fof/rabies.pdf>

### Sources

*The Altadenan*, July 1, 1937; July 8, 1937; February 10, 1938; March 4, 1938; October, 1938

Los Angeles County Department of Health website

California and Western Medicine, p. 308 vol 48, No 5

May 1938; NY Times, May 21, 1884.

Please join Altadena Historical Society  
and Malibu Lagoon Museum archivist  
**William R. Clark**  
For a presentation about the



## Treasures of the Malibu Potteries

In 1926 May Knight Rindge, widow of Frederick Hastings Rindge and last owner of fabled Rancho Malibu, opened the Malibu Potteries on the beach just east of today's Malibu pier. The Rindges had found deposits of high-quality clay on the ranch, both red and buff. After consulting with various ceramics experts, May Rindge hired renowned ceramicist Rufus Keeler away from the Calco Pottery in South Gate. Production at the Malibu plant was halted five and a half years later by a disastrous fire, but in the interim Malibu Potteries produced some of the most beautiful art tiles the world had ever seen. Attempts to restart production were thwarted by the developing economic depression. The number of tiles produced over this short life span were limited, and today Malibu art tiles are among the most prized – and expensive – of the art tiles produced in the “Golden Age” of California tile production in the early years of the twentieth century. This talk will focus on the Potteries, the people who worked (and played) there, and the incredible range of beautiful objects they produced.

Monday, April 25, 2011  
7:30 pm

Programs are free and open to the public

**Altadena Community Center 730 E. Altadena Drive Altadena, CA 91001**  
**[altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com](mailto:altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com)**



## Lourdes of the West

By Mary Lou Langedyke

Many are familiar with the role Altadena played in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a major tourist attraction thanks to the Mt. Lowe Railroad. Searching for old postcards of Altadena, I am not surprised to find pictures of Mt. Lowe along with Christmas Tree Lane, our two most common claims to tourist fame. But why are there so many postcards featuring the grotto at St. Elizabeth's church?

The story begins in the 1920's with the construction of St. Elizabeth Church, the rectory and convent using the designs of Wallace Neff. An elementary school was added facing Woodbury where the current parking lot exists. St. Elizabeth was under the leadership of Msgr. William Corr who served as its pastor from 1924 – 1940. Because of his visionary leadership the parish and its treasury grew in size. Fiestas held during the late 1920's earned \$10,000. A Christmas tableau along Lake Street drew thousands of visitors. The parish school enrollment reached over 300, one of the largest in the diocese.

Msgr. Corr purchased a lot on Lake Street and New York Drive in 1928, which, as the Pasadena Star News hinted, would become a shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes. While waiting for construction and funding, the area was used as a school playground for the girls. Using funds from the estate of Mrs. Mary Young, Msgr. Corr asked Ryozo Fuso Kado, a fifth generation stone and rock craftsman, described as "the greatest builder of Catholic shrines in the West and perhaps the whole country" to create the shrine which is his thirty-first and most ambitious sculpture in the Los Angeles area.

Kado's shrine is his interpretation of the famous grotto in Lourdes, France. Not an exact replica, as some believe, the artist used 135 tons of lava rock from the Mono Basin and ninety tons of cement to create a twenty-five foot shrine that provides as peaceful a respite today as it did when it was dedicated in 1939. Nestled among young deodars, the shrine had Carrera marble statues of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Bernadette. Damaged by vandals in the 1980's, the original statues have been replaced. The grotto contains a walk-in pool, and the peaceful sound of running water, all behind the original cement railings crafted to look like hewn logs. A cement pulpit shaped like a carved out log, additional railings and kneelers make it easy to envision the liturgies celebrated weekly at the base of the Grotto in the 1930's and 1940's.

On the first Sunday in October 1939, thousands of people (5,000 according to the *Pasadena Star News* and 10,000 according to the archdiocesan newspaper *The Tidings*) marched in procession from the school on Woodbury, down Fiske Street, across Atchison and up Lake Street entering the Grotto through the wrought iron gates of Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto. Within a year 500,000 devotees and tourists made pilgrimage to the holy place.



Postcard donated **Nancy Labahn**

Church hierarchy and community leaders joined school children, parish organizations, and the American Legion in a candle lit procession along with the faithful for what would become a common scene over the next fifteen years. The Grotto, landscaped with pathways, a fountain and Stations of the Cross painted by Theodore Braasch (who also painted the large pictures of scenes from the Old and New Testament which adorn the walls of the church) became a scene of devotion and pageantry. During the Christmas season alone about 200,000 came to enjoy the fourteen Christmas tableaux and the Nativity scene along Lake Street in front of the Church and visit the Grotto.

Those who believed in the devotional aspects of the waters of Lourdes and its miraculous power to heal the sick were drawn to Altadena by the thousands in the 1940's. When World War II made it impossible for pilgrims to travel to France, water from Lourdes was brought to Altadena and used in the devotions held each Friday and Sunday afternoons at 4 PM.

Rev. James P. Diamond was in charge of these services. A "peace candle" was lit by the American Legion which burned until the end of World War II. Visitors came from over 32 states and five foreign countries. Organized pilgrimages continued during the 1940's, but gradually diminished in the 1950's.

*Photo right: For those who believed in the curative powers of the water, ambulance service was provided and registered nurses were present at each event.*

Tom Joyce, a life-long parish member and Altadena resident, attended St. Elizabeth's elementary school in the 1940s. As a member of the boys choir, he participated in the processions up Lake St. as well as many celebrations in the Grotto. He recalls singing traditional Latin hymns and describes these events as "looking like the Rose Parade."

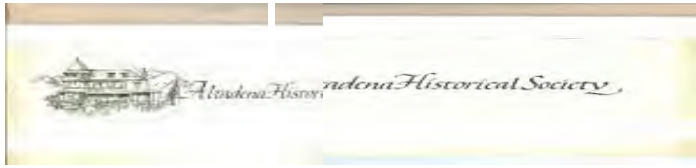
Tom noted that when he wanted to ditch school for a few hours there was no better spot to hide out than the grotto. He would climb up the grotto stones which provided easy access to the top - certainly not a use envisioned by Fr. Corr! Today, Tom says that the Grotto is "my favorite place in Altadena."

The Grotto is no longer the scene of pageantry and pilgrimages. Now it serves the parish as an outdoor space for celebrations of all kinds such as Easter sunrise Mass, prayerful meditation, dinners and dancing and even my wedding reception in September 1982.

To see more photos go to our website home page:  
[www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org)

*Sources:  
Interview with Tom Joyce, March 13, 2011  
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**altadenahistoricalociety.com**

Altadena Historical Society (AHS), a non-profit organization, was founded to gather, preserve, and make available information about the people, places and events that have shaped the community in the past. The Altadena Historical Society is proud of its history. Founded in 1935, we are one of the oldest volunteer organizations in the community.

### Please join or renew today!

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Premium Membership includes a copy of Altadena's Golden Years by Robert H. Peterson.

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation enclosed