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## Southern California Edison Grant

### Digitizing Altadena Historical Society's Mount Lowe Archive

Altadena Historical Society recently received a \$5000 grant from Southern California Edison to digitize the Mount Lowe story. Our Mount Lowe collection, documenting the early 20th century San Gabriel mountain railroad attraction, consists of more than 2500 documents including photos, post cards, artifacts, ephemera, letters, maps, slides, films and books. The SCE grant will enable AHS to digitize 500 documents and create a virtual exhibit of the early 19th century railroad phenomenon that students, researchers, and the public can access on-line. AHS expects to have the project completed at the end of 2013.

One of our goals is to reach educators who are teaching third graders about local history. When completed, the Mount Lowe virtual tour will be useful for public, private and home school teachers in foothill communities that are adjacent to the San Gabriel Mountain range including Altadena, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Arcadia, La Canada and La Crescenta and others.

AHS volunteers working on the project will prepare materials for third grade history/social science teachers to help students use the site. Using maps, photographs, newspapers and other primary sources, the materials will address, for instance, how the building of the Mount Lowe Railway modified the local region and physical environment, and demonstrate how local

individuals and families contributed to the landmark's founding and development.

Next fall we will invite teachers to attend a workshop at the archives, showcasing the Mount Lowe virtual tour, sharing tips on how they might include this in their curriculum and providing them with lesson ideas.

If you want to get involved, please get in touch with us. Our contact information is on the back cover of the newsletter.





**President's Message**  
*By Jane Brackman*

This year has been a busy one. Getting the Scripps collection cataloged was at the top of our to-do list. Archivist Tim Gregory, who was hired to take on the project, tells us it will be publicly accessible sometime mid 2013. Thanks to all who have supported this project thus far. We raised around \$3700 of our \$4000 goal.

I hope you had an opportunity to join some of the 700 Altadenans who attended the November 3<sup>rd</sup> party at the Davies Building, celebrating Altadena's 125th birthday. AHS partnered with Heritage to organize and host the event. The lovely keepsake program is available. Pick one up when you drop by archives between 9 am and noon, Monday and Tuesday. As always, Tim Rutt, editor of our hometown newspaper, the altadenablog, was there to cover the party in detail. You can read about it, see photos and hear Sherry Cavallo and I lead the crowd in singing the Altadena Song at <http://www.altadenablog.com/altadena-125th-birthday/> We've included the words to the song inside the newsletter.

We continue to receive treasure troves of Altadena memorabilia. Mary Spriestersback gave us several invaluable items from the estate of her late mother, Virginia Lance, including comprehensive scrapbooks featuring Old Fashioned Days, the Barber Pole shop, Loma Alta school PTA, Realtors Association, and two volumes of minutes

and meeting notes from the Altadena Women's Circle, covering years 1907 to 1947. If you have Altadena related things in your attic or basement, please consider giving them to archives.

In addition to saying goodbye to Virginia Lance this year, we also remember M.J. Crunk who played an integral role in Altadena Historical Society' history.

Lifelong resident Ian White found Owen Brown's tombstone (story inside) that disappeared ten years ago under suspicious circumstances. We thank Paul Ayers for not only doggedly keeping this issue alive, but also for everything else he's done for Altadena.

And by the way, Ian White will be our guest speaker on Thursday, January 24, 2013. See details on page 10.

On behalf of our dedicated board and our marvelous volunteers, we thank all of you for your support in 2012.

Jane Brackman, Ph.D.  
President  
Newsletter Editor

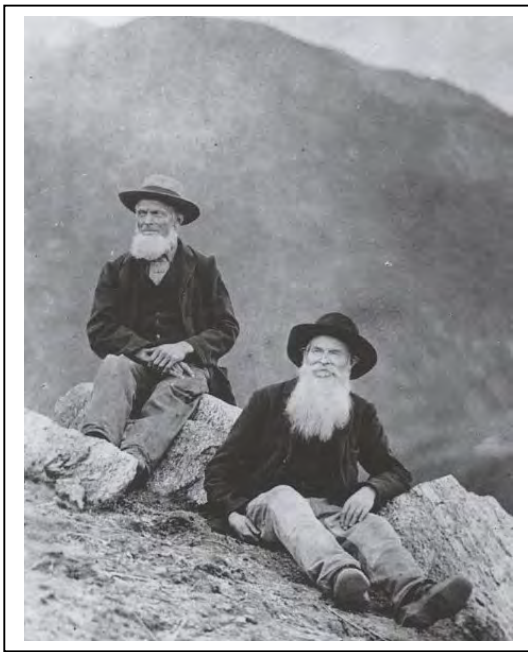
*Right: We hosted a tea and preview of items from the Scripps Collection on November 11, 2012 for all those who made donations to the Scripps Fund. Our volunteers: (Left to right) Mary Lou Langedyke, Marlane Forsberg, Jane Brackman, Tim Gregory, Mary Smeritschnig and Kathy Hoskins.*



## Abolitionist Owen Brown's Grave Marker Recovered

After ten years, and plenty of rumors as to what happened to it, the tombstone of abolitionist Owen Brown was spotted in the dirt near a trail, directly below the hill where Brown was buried in 1889. Altadenan and artist Ian White found the marker while hiking. The inscription on the gravestone reads: Owen Brown/ son of John Brown/ The Liberator. Below is Owen Brown's obituary as it was printed in the January 12, 1889 issue of the "Pasadena Standard".

*Died, at the residence of his brother-in-law, Henry Thompson, in this city, on January 8, 1889, Owen Brown, aged 64 years, 2 months and 4 days. Owen Brown was born at Hudson, Ohio, November 4, 1824, and was the third son of John Brown's first family, there being twenty children in all. Owen was with his father all through the struggle between the free state men and border ruffians in Kansas in 1836 and following years, and took part in the first pitched battle at Black Jack on the Missouri and Kansas border, and also at Ossawatimie where his younger brother, an unarmed lad, was deliberately shot down in the street.*

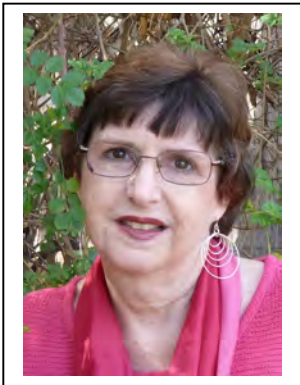


*Jason was also in these battles.*

*Owen was with his father at Harpers Ferry, a participant in that memorable raid which struck the death knell of slavery, not only in the United States but throughout the civilized world. He was one of seven who escaped from their through mountain fastnesses and swamps and forests and sassafras leaves, and such things as they could possibly devour without making a fire to cook. For they were pursued by soldiers and citizens with dogs, and a price was set on their heads. The Atlantic Monthly some 15 or 20 years ago published a narrative of their escape, which excels in thrilling pathos, and in plain matter-of-fact incidents of hardship, endurance, and apparently supernatural deliverances from discovery and capture, the most vivid conceptions of fiction. Two of them made reckless ventures to get food and were captured and hung. The remaining five escaped, Owen finally reaching his brother John's home on an island in Lake Erie.*

*About five years ago Jason and Owen Brown took a homestead on a bench of mountain land five or six miles north of Pasadena, at the settlement now called Las Casitas. This they subsequently sold and took land higher up the mountain side, built a cabin, cleared and worked a few acres, and lived there-two feeble old men, alone. (Jason was with his father in the Kansas struggle, but was not at Harpers Ferry.) They were much visited by tourists and citizens, some from mere curiosity and others from a warm sympathy with the historic career of the family. They had made a good wagon trail up to their mountain hermitage, and were continuing it as a donkey path to the top of the mountain known as Brown's Peak, but it is not completed yet. Owen had a desire to be buried on the top of Brown's Peak; and if Jason ever succeeds in finishing the trail he will try to have his brother's grave up there as he desired. But meanwhile he is buried on a lesser peak on their mountain homestead."*

Photo left: Jason and Owen Brown near Mt. Wilson  
Source: Library of Congress



## Archives Notes

By Sherry Cavallo

### ***Donations are always welcome:***

*Honor a deceased loved one with a memorial donation.*

*Donate \$100 to rebind a City Directory*

*Make a contribution to the Scripps Fund to help us reach our goal.*

*Altadena-related ephemera and photos you might have in your closet or attic are always welcome.*

We've had quite a few interesting items donated to the Archives the past few months, all contributing to the educational value of our collection. Thank you to all of our donors.

For the month of April, we had three donations: UCLA Press gifted us with a copy of their new publication, *A People's Guide to Los Angeles*; Susan Foster gave us newsletters and assorted documents dating in the 60's and 70's from the Altadena Town Council; Steve Rodriguez donated assorted Altadena memorabilia and Sid Gally added a 1970-1971 photo of the staff of Edison High School to our files.

May brought us two historic postcards, one of Camp Huntington and the other of La Vina Sanatorium from Sara Carnahan. Mike and Meredith Miller donated a desktop-sized version of the new Altadena community flag.

The Pasadena Museum of History generously honored our request in June for Rose Parade Program issues that were lacking in our collection: Twelve were from the 1900's and three from the 2000's.

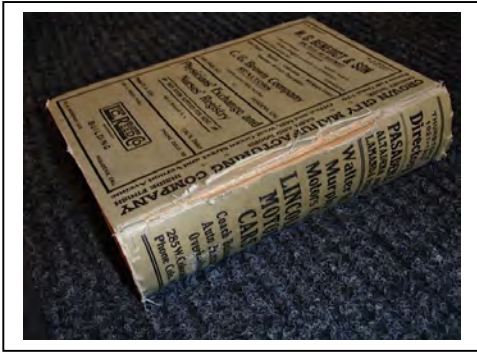
July overwhelmed us with our largest number of donations in one month in quite some time, a total of 10 in all. Scott Webster, of Webster's Stationery, gave us our first interior photo of the Webster Pharmacy, dating from the mid 1900's; memorabilia, awards and citations from the estate of Tony Stewart were donated by her niece, Amelia M. Lett; several paperback copies of *Altadena's Golden Years* book were donated by the R.H. Peterson Company, now headed by Tod Corrin, along with a copy of a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson.

Our youngest donor this year, Alex Saigh, gave us a copy of her newly published book on James McFadden, early Altadena resident, which she created for an elementary school project. Laurie Kinsinger added a copy of the 2012 *Altadena Connection* brochure, published by the county to inform Altadena citizens of available services. The first 2012 program from the Altadena's Sheriff's Support Group Summer Concert Series, created and published by Manning Press was donated by Sherry M. Cavallo. Historic homeowner, Judith O'Neal contributed copies of the article featuring her Altadena home in a book on Craftsman homes by Rizzoli Press.

Paul Ayers gave us copies of political cartoons that he used on posters during the La Vina campaign. Jane Brackman donated electronic images of the Rose Bowl Motel. Stanley Zucker donated metal shelving to store the Scripps collection.

In August, we received a full-sized Altadena community flag for display at the Archives by its designer, Sandra Thomas. And in September, Mary Spriesterbach, gifted us with a rather large donation of scrapbooks of past Old Fashioned Days parades created by her mother, Virginia Lance, who passed away earlier this year.

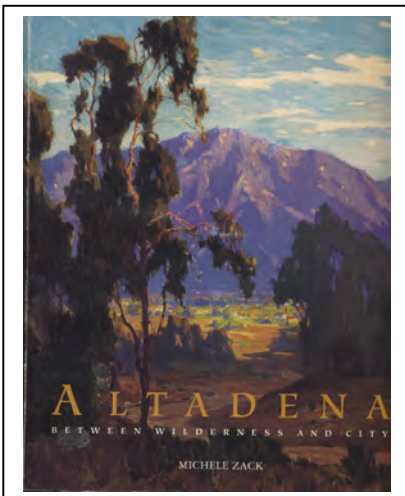
Needless to say we will have been quite busy getting these new accessions into our electronic database, as well as properly storing all this new material. Thanks everyone for keeping us busy with work we love to do.



## Book Notes

Our collection of city directories, precursors to the ubiquitous phone book, covering the who, what, where, of people living in Altadena from 1909 to 1976, are a much used resource at Archives. For instance, we recently received a 1923 Pasadena High School diploma and class photograph. The donor, from Sheboygan Falls, WI, noted that the woman was his sister. To find out more, volunteer researchers went to the 1923 City Directory. The young lady lived with her family in the 100 block of Woodbury.

With the city directories, donated by the Altadena Library several years ago, we can find out when a family moved to Altadena track their whereabouts over time, and when they left. By comparing and contrasting residences from year to year and the people who are listed as family members, we get an idea of deaths, births, and even financial hardships.



Many of the directories are shabby, some so badly worn that they are too fragile to use. AHS recently took three volumes to Kater-Craft in Pico Rivera to have them repaired and rebound, to the tune of about \$90 per directory. Our goal is to rebound all volumes as funds become available. We also had three copies of *Altadena: Between City and Wilderness* hard bound.

You might be wondering why we don't continue to print and sell this award-winning book. First, to print a book that can be retailed under \$50, we would have to print no fewer than 2500 books, investing almost \$35,000 into inventory. Second, although we've sold 4500 books since 2003, our sales have gone from many hundreds annually to less than 50 books per year, mainly because we've saturated our market. Our long-term plan includes making the book available in digital form, but only if we can maintain the same look and quality as it has in print form.

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## Clock Donated

Do you recognize the clock below? It hung above The Barber Shop and Kern's Deli. The clock was part of the estate of Virginia Lance. Her daughter was kind enough to donate it to archives. We'll hang it from the ceiling beams as soon as we find someone with a sturdy ladder to help out. If that someone is you, please call us.





## Altadena Historical Society

[www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org)

### From Our Files

*Rural Altadena 1915*

*July 21, 2012*



Does the above location look familiar? Today, the road is paved but the mountains still appear the same. Hint: Directly above the closest vehicle is a cut in the side of the mountain. That's the Mt. Wilson toll road in Eaton Canyon, and the car is heading north on Foothill (Altadena Drive). The camera was likely placed on a rock in the yard of what is now 2065 Altadena Drive. The two vehicles date the photo to about 1915. The writing on the back says, "Allen property, left." Relatives of the William Allen family donated the photo to AHS in 2010. William Allen purchased the 502-acre property north of New York Avenue and west of Eaton Canyon in 1878 and named it the Sphinx Ranch. The family grew grapes and citrus, and even maintained a small winery. Allen died in 1886. His son continued to run the ranch. Subdivision of the property began in 1911, about the time this photo was taken. By 1923, most of the land was developed into the Altadena Woodlands subdivision. *Photo right – Same view today.*





# Altadena Historical Society

From our Files  
Scripps Home Memorabilia

November 16, 2012

## 1911 through 1919

- 1912- William A. Scripps made a gift of land and building known as William A. Scripps Home for the Aged. Provided for this the Emergency Lounge and some caring for eight old ladies in a house on Nevada St.
- 1914- Gloria Cottage built for an infirmary, limited to seven patients.
- 1912-1915- Rev. William F. Knight was first president of the board of directors.
- 1916-1939- Dr. E. J. Wolkowick was president.
- 1916- Home was changed to Pasadena Home for the Aged.



### Altadena Historical Society

730 E. Altadena Drive, Altadena CA 91001  
(626) 797-8016 • altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com  
Archives open Monday, Tuesday, 9:00 am to Noon and by appointment. Come by and visit.

The landmark **Scripps Home** at the corner of El Molino and Calaveras is gone forever. But Historical Society is keeping the story of this beloved institution and its role in the community alive. A century worth of residents' memorabilia, photos, and documents were donated to AHS last year. Archiving a collection of this size requires the skill of a trained professional, as well as storage facilities to enable public access to this priceless information. We've undertaken a fund raising effort to raise the \$5,000 we estimate it will take to accomplish this task. Our membership has given generously and we have raised about 70% of our goal. As we enter the final phase of our campaign, we're appealing to everyone to make a contribution. With your donation we will be able to make the Scripps story accessible to all in 2013. (Send your check to the address listed lower left.) Professional historian and archivist Tim Gregory, who is organizing and archiving the collection, will be our guest speaker at the April 29, 2013 quarterly meeting. (More on this in early 2013.)

*Upper left: Page from one of 20 scrapbooks found in collection. Scripps originally provided care to retired "women without means". Men were included sometime later. The Gloria cottage (center) is all that remains.*

## AHS Partners with Local Girl Scout Troop

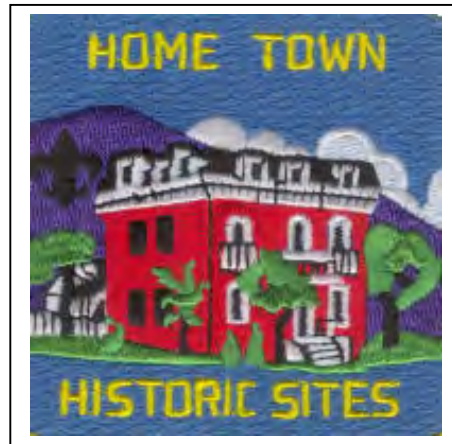
By Mary Lou Langedyke

The Altadena Historical Society has developed a series of activities for three Juliette Girl Scouts that will enable these Altadena residents to obtain their **Hometown Historic Sites Award**. The three girls are in the 6th grade, two attend Eliot Middle School and one is home schooled. The Juliette program allows girls to participate in Girl Scouts without being affiliated with a formal troop. It is very similar to independent study in school and allows girls with a variety of schedules and circumstances to experience scouting with the support of their parents.

The Hometown Historic Sites directives encourage the students to walk among a variety of sites in their hometown. Altadena is perfect for walking tours! After an introductory session on the general history of the development of Altadena and the San Gabriel Valley, we will be taking the girls on two walking tours. Our first walk will focus on the historic homes and people of Altadena. Our second walk will take the girls from Eliot Middle School up Lake Street comparing life in Altadena 100 years ago to today. Kathy Hoskins, who grew up in Altadena, attended Eliot and remembers Polly's Dress Shop, sodas at Webster's fountain and much more, will lead this walk. These girls will be given historic resources to enjoy hikes with their families in Eaton Canyon, Echo Mountain, Brown Mountain and Millard Canyon.

To obtain the award, the girls will prepare some type of culminating project of their choice. They may choose to make an oral report, prepare a brochure, or write a story for a future newsletter. History and creativity will be at work.

The Altadena Historical Society welcomes requests by students doing projects for school or Scouting badges. History is for all ages and in California local history is the focus of the third and fourth grade Social Science curriculum.



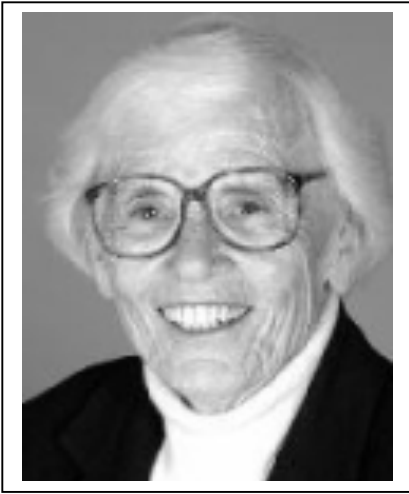
Girl Scouts' Hometown Historic Sites Badge

## A Special Research Request

AHS gets letters, phone calls and emails asking us to solve little mysteries about events, people and places in Altadena. It's fun to dig through the archives, and even more fun when we learn something new along the way. (We didn't know about the installation of the gates by Sheriff Eugene Biscauiluz.) A thank you note like the one below is appreciated, too.

*Thank you for the information on Sagemont and Mr. Paul Johnson. When we purchased our home at 1205 Sagemont Place in 1969, a few neighbors had small bits of anecdotal history for this area. They knew it had originally been an estate that was later subdivided, and one story was that it had a very impressive front gate, that was purchased by Eugene Biscauiluz, who was L. A. County sheriff from 1932 to 1958. That was all we knew for many years, until my wife's brother-in-law saw something about Sagemont and Paul Johnson in The Echo, Fall 2010. That got me wondering if AHS had any more information. We visited and, as they say, the rest is history. Now, after over 43 years in our "mid-century" home, we have a better appreciation of the original family that changed a scrub covered spot over 100 years ago into this impressive area of large trees and welcome shade. Thank you again for your research effort and for the AHS continuing to make Altadena's history available and accessible - Colin Silvio*





**Virginia Lance** (1924-2012)

My mother loved Altadena. It was home to her. Born in La Jolla, California on August 30, 1924, my mom spent her first two years in San Francisco until her parents moved to Altadena where they settled. Mom went to Altadena Elementary School, Eliot Jr. High and Anokia High School on Foothill and Baldwin. At Eliot she met Cliff Lance and they married while he was in the Air Force during WWII. They had four children and built a home on Arrowhead Court in Altadena.

From the moment her kids started Loma Alta Elementary School, mom was involved. She met her dearest friend and lifelong business partner there, Marion Lee Wullschlager. Mom was about 40 years old when she and Marion opened The Barber Pole, a men's and boy's clothing store. She and Marion also founded and ran Altadena Old Fashioned Days. Both were Altadena Citizens of the Year and also volunteers with the Chamber. After 11 years they sold the store and began in a very successful real estate business.

Mom was an Altadenan through and through. (Her mother was a member of the Scripps family) She grew up on Sacramento Street, built our family home on Arrowhead Court and bought another home on Lake Avenue within three miles of the other two houses. She dedicated her life and energy to her community. And she was always happy to give more.

*- By Mary Spriestersbach*



**M. J. Crunk** (1944-2012)

I don't want more time to go by before we acknowledge the passing last year of M. J. Crunk, AHS president from 1984 to 1995. (Although her given name was "Mary Jane," all her colleagues knew her as "M.J.") I give M.J. credit for stubbornly keeping the Society going when we had a shrinking membership and maybe, if we were lucky, \$100 in the bank. In the 1980s, when many thought the then-50-year-old Society should close down, M. J. refused to throw in the towel, hoping things would turn around one day, and sometimes using blunt language to convey that opinion. Her hopes obviously came true, as evidenced by how we have developed since that time.

On a personal note, when I was asked to chair the newly formed Altadena Heritage in 1986, I was a little hesitant to tell M. J. since she felt the Society should be the organization championing historic preservation in our community. But she swallowed her disappointment and became an active Heritage board member. I think she worked harder than just about anybody at our first garden party—the only time before or since I ever saw her wearing a dress! She was employed as an elementary-school teacher and, during her retirement, ran a small antique shop on Mariposa Street. But I think the real focuses of her attention were a vital interest in the past and the preservation of the rustic lifestyle she enjoyed in a modernized former cabin shared with her husband Frank on East Altadena Drive.

*- By Tim Gregory*

## The Legacy of Artist Charles White

We don't usually write books reviews, and a book published in 1994 isn't exactly timely, but if you're looking for a Valentine gift, consider purchasing a copy of *Reaches of the Heart*, a loving look at the artist Charles White, by his wife Frances Barrett White. Their son, artist and Altadenan Ian White, who maintains his parents' legacy will be our guest speaker on January 24th and will have autographed books available for purchase.

Charles White, who became a significant part of the twentieth century social realist art scene, was first recognized as a noted painter and lithographer in the African American modernist movement of the 1940s. He used his imagery to amplify the sting of racial oppression. His body of work is a testament to the struggle for racial equality, but it also portrays his hope for change.

In the mid 1950s White wrote, "I live in the United States as a progressive Negro artist. Like all artists, I have special problems. But I have reached a point in my life at which I know, with a conviction deeply rooted in reality, confirmed by small but potent and inescapable signs, that the future is very bright, and it holds great promise for the Negro people and all the working people of my country; I have tried to put this message in my art."

Frances' literary tribute to her husband is an endearing love story, an inside look at the 1950s hipster scene in Chicago and New York, and an intimate picture of what life was like for an interracial couple in a world not ready to accept such a union. The family eventually moved to Pasadena, and finally Altadena, where they were active in civil rights issues and the integration of Pasadena public schools.

### Lyrics to the Altadena Song Courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Altadena, where the fires come roaring through the hills,  
Where the skunk's perfume can fill a room  
"Til the windows slam against the sills!

Altadena, every night my honey lamb and I  
Sit alone and shake each time a quake  
Makes the Caltech meters go sky-high!  
We know we belong to the land,  
And we hope that our houses will stand.

(Chorus)  
So when we say  
Yeow, hi yi yip hi yoh yea  
We're only sayin'  
You're doing fine, Altadena,  
Altadena, please stay!

Altadena! Where the wind comes smashing through the town  
Blowing over trees, it knocks our knees  
And it nearly blows our houses down!

Altadena, Where the church leaks every time it rains,  
And the Altar Guild is panic-filled  
For the downstairs closet where it drains.  
We know we belong to the land,  
And we hope that our building will stand

(Chorus)

Altadena! Where the mud slides glue us to our seats,  
And the sandbag piles, go on for miles  
In the soggy February streets.

Altadena! Where we all commune to JPL,  
And astronomers send Pathfinders  
Off to Mars and really do it well!  
We know we belong to the earth  
And the planet responds here with mirth.

So when we say  
Yeow, hi yip hi yo hi yea  
We're only sayin'  
You're doing fine, Altadena  
Altadena, O.K.  
A-L-T-A-D-E-N-A-  
Altadena, OK

(Reprinted at the request of those who attended  
Altadena's 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, November 3, 2012)

Altadena Historical Society

# Quarterly Meeting and Lecture

**Thursday, January 24, 2013  
7:30 PM**

Artist

## Ian White

Ian will discuss the legacy of his father, artist Charles White, one of the greatest socially conscious figurative painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like musician Woody Guthrie and photographer Dorothea Lange, who used their art to paint a vivid picture of poverty in America during the depression, White used his powerful imagery to challenge the systems responsible for racial injustice. Ian, who lives in the Meadows where his parents lived in the 1950s, will talk about growing up in Altadena, and what it was like to have parents who inspired social responsibility and creativity.



Charles White (Photo: Walter Rosenblum Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum)

Altadena Community Center  
730 E. Altadena Drive  
Altadena CA 91001

626-797-8016

[altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com](mailto:altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com)

Programs are Free and  
Open to the Public



Altadena Historical Society  
730 East Altadena Drive  
Altadena, CA 91001-2351

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## The Echo

ALTADENA HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

730 E. Altadena Drive  
Altadena, CA 91001

(626) 797-8016

altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com

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*FIND US ON THE WEB:*

**altadenahistoricalsociety.org**

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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!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Premium Membership includes 4 limited edition vintage postcards featuring Altadena scenes (back of cards are blank).

You can now join on line <http://www.altadenahistoricalsociety.org/membership.htm>