



## Let's Go to the Marcell Inn!

### *Popular Restaurant and Speakeasy Replaced by Military Academy*

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**April Program Announcement**

A sign of the times--the 1920s and 1930s--recently came to the Altadena Historical Society Archives in the Community Center: "Marcell Inn, North End Lincoln Avenue, Pasadena."

The rusted, black-and-white rectangular metal sign was one of dozens found under wood siding, sheathing the back wall of a garage behind a Victorian cottage in north-central Pasadena, when termite damage called for repairs, according to resident and donor Janice Bakke.

The signs, which seemed to have been found in a 1930s stockpile and never posted before being used as garage-siding, proclaimed one of Altadena's best-known attractions in the Roaring Twenties and Depression-era Thirties.

The Marcell Inn was reported to be a fine French restaurant and ballroom in a charming, rose-garden setting when it opened in 1922 at Lincoln Avenue and Palm Street.

Italian immigrant Joseph Marcell Annechini, formerly the operator of a popular Los Angeles restaurant called "Maison Marcell," opened the inn on property he owned in

Altadena. (The restaurant was called an inn, but it never included lodging.)

Annechini maintained that the inn would be "in no sense a 'roadhouse,'" but a "dining and tea



**Janice Bakke, center, donates a Marcell Inn sign to AHS board members Rob Hallwachs and Jean Phillips**

place" specializing in lunches, teas, bridge, mah-jongg parties and dinner parties.

Annechini told the Pasadena Star-News in September 1922 that his cottage-type restaurant designed by architect Cyril Bennett would be "electrically illuminated" and that water, poultry and produce would come from his adjacent ranch.

Bennett's soft-pencil rendering of the inn's exterior shows a one-story, rectangular building with a low-peaked roof, with French doors

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## President's Letter *by Jane Brackman, Ph.D.*

### **Board of Directors**

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**H**istorical societies collect and organize information and materials, making history available to a wide public, from the serious researcher to the casual visitor. In 2013 we made substantial progress toward strengthening that mission.

Including quarterly lecture attendees and archive visitors, we educated 383 people last year. We processed 61 research requests and received 46 new accessions. To make it all happen our enthusiastic volunteers put in 469 hours of work.

To this end we spent \$21,571. A little less than half goes to paying our archivist, who works 12 hours a week, and the accompanying insurance, bookkeeping and tax expenses that go with having an employee. Supplies, telephone, computer, printing, postage and program costs account for the rest of our expenses. Because Los

Angeles County provides our office space at no cost, we're proud to say that more than 95% of your donated dollars go directly to running archives.

Due to your generosity, we raised \$21,511 last year, a third of that from memberships. Donations and book sales brought in about \$5,000. And we are so thankful for two restricted gifts. A long time Altadenan who wishes to remain anonymous donated \$5,000 to revitalize our oral history project. And another member gave us \$1,250 for professional signage and graphics.

You'll notice our newsletter is updated. Jean Phillips is the new editor, with contributions from Mary Lou Langedyke, Kathy Hoskins, Rob Hallwachs and Sherry Cavallo and design assistance from Paula Wegner. And we've launched our new blog, posting what's in the collection and what's new at AHS.

## **Remember to Renew!**

We'd like to thank all of our members who have sent in their 2014 membership dues. Without you, we would not be able to continue our work here at the Altadena Historical Society.

We rely entirely on your tax-deductible membership and donations, so if you haven't yet renewed your membership, we hope to hear from you soon. If there is a \$ on your label, please consider renewing now. Here's a reminder of what your contributions make possible:

- **A brand new blog with stories of Altadena's past!** [altadenahistoricalociety.blogspot.com](http://altadenahistoricalociety.blogspot.com)
- A growing collection of Altadena documents, photos, artifacts and memorabilia,
- Research facilities at our office in the Altadena Community Center. We'll research for you or help you do-it-yourself,
- Historical displays from our collection, also at our office,
- Popular programs highlighting local history and the people who shaped it,
- Fundraising tours and events, with discounts for members,
- Semiannual newsletters keeping you up to date with our activities.

As a member of AHS you have access to all of the above, plus a 10% discount on all gift department purchases at Webster's Community Pharmacy.

But the most important benefit of AHS membership is intangible – the knowledge that you are helping to preserve the history of the Altadena we all love.

# What's Up at AHS?

It's a busy time at the Altadena Historical Society archives, thanks to our members, donors and volunteers who make our work possible.

Board member Rob Hallwachs spearheaded several projects: covering our windows and doors with high quality UV film, which protects our photos, documents and artifacts from harmful rays; creating new signage for our front doors; and preserving Professor Thaddeus Lowe's cape, now professionally cleaned and safely stored in an archival box.

Mary Lou Langedyke is hard at work on the oral history project. All of our current oral histories have been transferred from tape recordings to CD's, and written transcripts or summaries are being prepared. We have purchased a video camera, so future interviews will feature both video and audio.

The Mount Lowe digitization project is also ongoing. We've completed most of the text and



AHS volunteers have completed five online classes in archiving and researching using the software, and we're pleased to have an intern from Pasadena City College joining us to work on the project this summer.

Finally, we've been blessed with many interesting donations ranging from Mount Lowe memorabilia to a children's book about Christmas Tree Lane. Turn the page for more information about new additions to our archives. —Jean Phillips



selected many of the photographs and images that will help tell the story of an extraordinary time in Altadena's history. Our next step is to finish scanning all of the selected images and send them off to our website designer, Terence Kratz. We're also working on a curriculum that can be used by teachers for 3rd and 4th grade local history studies.

We've purchased a new computer and updated our PastPerfect software, enabling us to make more progress digitizing our collection. Many of our



**UV-protective film was installed on all windows at AHS Archives, top; PastPerfect is helping us digitize our collections, above; Altadenans' oral histories have been transferred from cassette tapes to CDs, left.**

# Archives Notes

## Surprises at the Archives!



*Sherry Marsh Cavallo*  
AHS Archivist

**W**e never know when someone will come through our door with a box of archival treasures that we did not have in our collection. It is an exciting day when we

discover gems in a plain brown box.

When Mr. William Webster donated records and other items from his store and the Chamber of Commerce, we were pleased to find pamphlets on Altadena that we had never seen before, as well as information on the Chamber of Commerce and the Altadena floats that

appeared in the early Rose Parades.

One of the ripest cherries in his basket was a letter from Mary Pickford on her studio stationery, apologizing to the Chamber of Commerce for referring to Christmas Tree Lane as being in Pasadena.

Member Charles Seims donated both a reproduction of an early poster depicting hikers in the Southland and a disc containing images of Mt. Lowe.

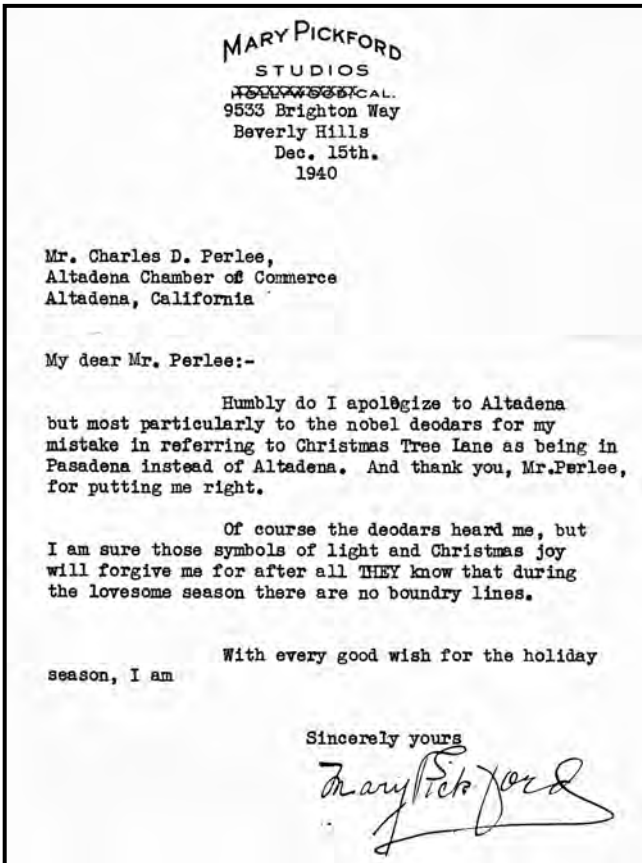
Another great treasure came from the great-great-grandson of Thaddeus Lowe, Lance Ferm, who donated a very large print of the Lowe Family on the occasion of the Lowe's 50th wedding anniversary in 1905.

Lance also gave us a lithograph by the famous artist, Tom Lovell, with a scene of the South during the Civil War showing Rebel soldiers shooting at Thaddeus Lowe's reconnaissance balloon, as he spied on the Confederate troops for the Union Army.

James Aguirre, a descendent of

William Henninger, generously donated two framed photos of his ancestors.

Jarrol Taylor brought us several scrapbooks, postcards and vintage cookbooks he salvaged from a neighborhood trash can before



**A very large print of a 50th wedding anniversary portrait of Thaddeus and Leontine Lowe and family was donated by Lowe's great-great-grandson, Film star Mary Pickford sent the Altadena Chamber of Commerce an apology, above.**





**Lithograph by Thomas Lowell shows Confederate soldiers firing on Thaddeus Lowe's reconnaissance balloon, above**

the county trash trucks came. And Jane Calhoun donated two scrapbooks on Altadena and Pasadena.

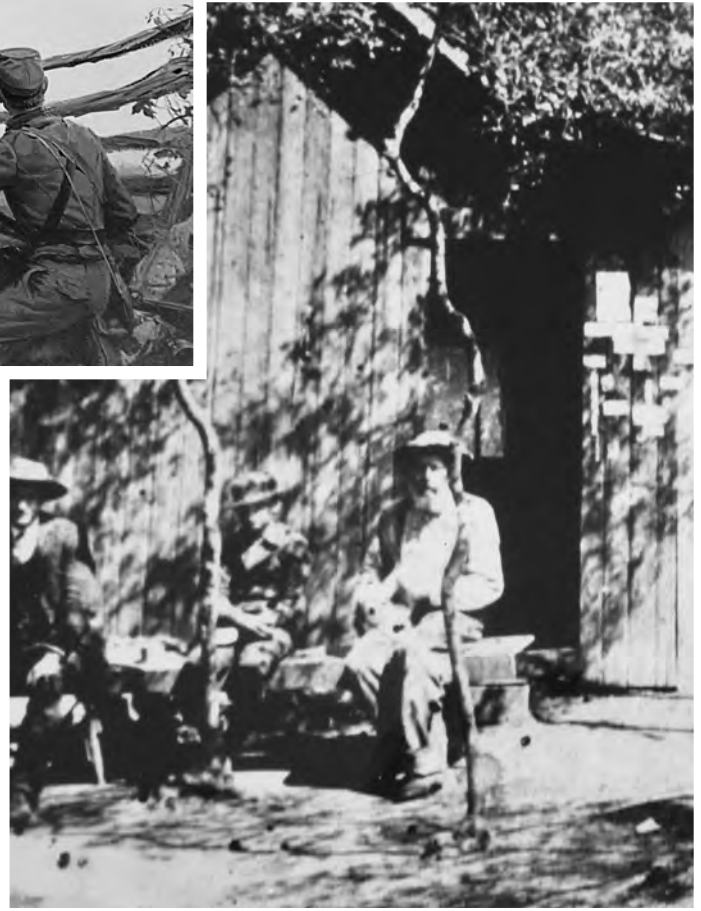
We also received a booklet entitled "Eighty-one Years of Public Education in Pasadena" from the PUSD Superintendent's Office. It includes several early photographs of Altadena and Pasadena schools.

When you are doing your spring cleaning this year, keep in mind that what seems like superfluous pamphlets and photographs, might be missing keys to the story of Altadena's growth that would be very welcome in our Archive.

**Altadena Grocery Co. store (current site of Altadena Hardware) is shown in photo from Chamber of Commerce booklet circa 1930.**



**Rare photograph of William Henninger at his cabin at Henninger Flats, below.**



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across the front under a wide, pillared porch covered by abundant, flowering vines.

Tinted, period postcards found by Googling images for “Marcell Inn” show a spacious, elegant dining room with a large dance floor, and an adjoining enclosed veranda with wicker furniture and white tablecloths. The postcards are captioned “Marcell Country Club.”

Author Michele Zack’s history of Altadena says the “charming country café...seated 100; in the evenings, a seven-piece jazz band and a large dance floor attracted a wide audience.”

Prohibition was already in place when the Marcell Inn opened. So perhaps Annechini closed his restaurant in Los Angeles and built a new one in the unincorporated, sparsely-populated foothills intentionally to serve profitable bootleg liquor in a less-regulated setting.

It gained a reputation as a speakeasy when, not long after the inn opened, it was busted in a presumably night-time raid by Elliot Ness-type federal agents. Pasadena blogger Thal Armathura quotes the *Los Angeles Times* report of a liquor raid

“on Nov. 12, 1923, when the Feds busted [owner Marcell] and nine others... and a full house of 300 headed for the hills.”

Even if the *Times* exaggerated the number of patrons who ran out the doors, that’s a good-sized crowd. And November 12 was a Monday in 1923!

Armathura’s postings say the audience frequently included the sheriff, whose car was usually in the parking lot, as well



**Metal signs from Marcell Inn, a fine 1920s French restaurant, ballroom and speakeasy in Altadena. Signs were recently found as a part of an old Pasadena garage repair.**

as the “Hollywood crowd” and--after the state allowed racing in 1933--fans returning from Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia along North Foothill Boulevard (now Altadena Drive), who were attracted by a searchlight atop a tower on the restaurant roof.

Altadenan Barbara Curtis Horton recalled in Zack’s Altadena history book that her family’s home was downhill from the inn, on Lincoln Avenue at the bend at Ventura Street, and that on several occasions “cars coming or going from there ending up on our front lawn. ... They must have been drinking and misjudged the curve. We helped roll them back onto Lincoln and away they’d go!”

Horton also recalled that once when she was thrown off the horse she was riding in the area of the inn, knocking her unconscious, she was rescued and carried into the kitchen of the restaurant and laid on the floor.

“I remember huge pots and vats of soup or stew or whatever, boiling away. It was the size of the pots and pans that impressed me, this was nothing like my mother’s kitchen.”

Twelve years after opening, and one year after Prohibition ended and it could serve liquor legally, the Marcell Inn was still serving good food. Elisabeth Webb Herrick, author of a 1935 book on Los Angeles-area attractions, “Curious California Customs,” said, “This historic and popular old dining room is one of the high spots of our culinary tour, Lucullus himself would have been delighted...”

She said, “Their \$2.50 dinner is something to



conjure with.”

The inn received a different kind of publicity when former Ziegfield Follies star and budding Hollywood actress Dorothy Dell died in a spectacular car crash on Lincoln Avenue on June 8, 1934, after she and her escort had been partying at the inn.

For whatever reason, the Marcell Inn closed in 1937, and was sold to Major John H. Dargin, who opened a boys’ military academy there. Mt. Lowe Military Academy used the former restaurant as its administration building, with the addition of dormitory wings on the east and west ends.

According to an extensive, illustrated academy history assembled by a MLMA alum and posted on-line, the school initially offered grades three through nine (ages seven to 13), but was later expanded to grades first through tenth.

Apparently, then, the academy didn’t offer a full four years of high school or high school diplomas, which is puzzling.

As the student body expanded to around 200, the campus also expanded with dormitories, classrooms, playing and drill-fields, and support buildings. But for financial reasons that the alumni



**A stone gate pillar on Palm Street bears a plaque saluting the students at Mt. Lowe Military Academy and the alumni who gave their lives in defense of their country. The academy replaced the Marcell Inn.**

wonder about, property taxes weren’t paid and Mt. Lowe Military Academy closed and the property was assumed by Los Angeles County in 1973.

Today, the former location of the Marcell Inn and Mt. Lowe Military Academy is the site of community garden plots and the adjoining Loma Alta county park.

The tall, rock pylons and iron gates that led to the academy are still standing, with a plaque saluting the school’s cadets, a number of whom subsequently entered the armed forces; several former cadets memorialized on the MLMA websites were killed in action.

The Marcell Inn sign and a Mt. Lowe Military Academy cadet’s uniform are on display at AHS Archives Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., open to the public free of charge.

Anyone with memories or memorabilia of the Marcell Inn and Mount Lowe Military Academy is encouraged to e-mail the Altadena Historical Society at [Altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com](mailto:Altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com) or contact us at (626) 797-8016. —Rob Hallwachs

137<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, California Cadet Corps



## Mount Lowe Military Academy



**1934 ~ 1973**

The first gathering of former cadets, the alumni of Mount Lowe Military Academy, on Saturday, August 30, 2003, is an historic and long overdue event.

This “reunion” is being held 69 years since the first cadet stepped on-boards, and about 30 years after the last cadet marched out the stone gateways. The event’s purpose is simple:

**“To maintain the memory of Mt. Lowe, its history and lore, and where – through camaraderie, former cadets and staff can share their experiences for the enrichment of all.”**

**Did This Advertisement Photo Catch Your Parent’s Eye?**  
This photo was part of a newspaper advertisement that was published for a number of years and brought many cadets to Mount Lowe.

We hope this reunion memento will help trigger good memories for our fellow alumni, and serve to “enlighten” those who missed the unique experience.

Over the years staff, uniforms, programs and schedules changed, but this booklet should provide a good generic look at the day-to-day life of the Mount Lowe cadet.

*Your Reunion Committee*

1

**Cover of Mt. Lowe Military Academy reunion booklet.**



**AHS exhibits at the east entrance to Webster’s Community Pharmacy have included “Altadena From the Air” and “Notable Altadena Women” during Women’s History Month.**



## **Rich Girl’s Exploits, Altadena Easter Services Featured in New Exhibits at Webster’s Community Pharmacy**

**S**he was young, pretty, and rich. Her family name was on Pasadena’s biggest, most famous hotel, which her patent-medicine-tycoon father had built and owned.

Both she and her family’s elegant private, transcontinental rail car were named after Altadena, where her family had one of the biggest mansions on Millionaires’ Row.

The exploits of Pasadena socialite Altadena Green and her polo playing husband were regularly reported in local newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*.

The story of Altadena and her eccentric, rich daddy, Col. G. G. Green, along with archival photos of Easter sunrise services on Mt. Lowe and in Farnsworth Park, are featured in new AHS exhibits at Webster’s Community Pharmacy on Lake Avenue.

For more than 70 years AHS has collected and preserved photographs, documents, artifacts and memorabilia of Altadena and has made them available to the community free of charge.

Many of these photos and artifacts are displayed at our archives, a mini-museum located in the Altadena Community Center. But since the

archives also serves as a research facility and office, display space is at a premium.

So we were delighted when Meredith Miller, pharmacy co-owner, offered AHS space in the east entrance hall for a rotating series of exhibits on Altadena history.

Websters’ itself has been an integral part of Altadena history for 88 years. Opened in 1926 by H.F. Webster as a pharmacy and soda fountain, the business expanded in the ‘60s and ‘70s under sons, Bill and Frank, until it included a video store, liquor store, office-supply store and card-and-gift shop.

Michael and Meredith Miller, former owners of Fair Oaks Pharmacy and soda fountain in South Pasadena, purchased the pharmacy in 2010.

The first AHS exhibit featured early photos of Altadena from the air, and the Altadena airport. Noted Altadena women were featured in our March Women’s History Month exhibit, replacing February’s “Love in Altadena” Valentine’s Day display.

An additional bonus to visiting the displays is that with an AHS membership card, Webster’s gives a 10 percent discount on purchases in their gift department. --Rob Hallwachs



## Remembering Judy Wheeler

Judy Wheeler was an active and valued member of the Altadena Historical Society, serving on the board and editing our newsletter, *The Echo*. In her memory, we are reprinting her obituary, written by Steve Lamb, which was published on the Altadena Blog in January, 2014.

“It is my sad and unfortunate duty to inform you that our fellow Altadenan, Judith Payson Wheeler died Dec. 20 [2013] at 4:20 a.m.

“Judith was descended from a pair of early New England families, the Wheelers and the Paysons. Judith was a third generation Smith College graduate and a housemate of Gloria Steinem. Early in her working life Judith compiled the Fortune 500 and edited Alan Greenspan's doctoral dissertation.

“Judith lived the life of a modern liberated woman that others only wrote about. She refused marriage, unlike many of her contemporaries, to

wealthy and powerful men, believing she could and should make her own way. Judith worked for the Rand Corporation becoming its first credited female analyst, and she gender integrated the executive lunch and board rooms at Lockheed.

“Judith was active in the Smith College Alumni Association, the Pasadena Chapter of the League of Women Voters (in both cases she served as newsletter editor), in the committee overseeing the Altadena Community Center, the West Altadena Neighborhood Association and in the effort to revitalize the Lincoln Avenue Redevelopment into

a thriving commercial district. For that effort, Judith a consummate researcher, relied on her business experience and crunched all of the numbers of the competing proposals and analyzed each of them, giving the public hard numbers to make factual comparisons.

“Judith suffered a serious stroke in 2006 and never fully recovered the use of her body, but her mind remained sharp and brilliant to the end.”



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## The Rosa Johnson House

If you missed the fabulous Rosa Johnson estate sale in February, you missed an opportunity to enjoy Rosa's 1912 Mission Revival-style house which is in near original condition.

Rosa, known to many as “Mrs. Altadena” or “Mama Rosa,” passed away last year, the day after her 103rd birthday. She and her husband Kim moved into their home on Rubio in 1957.

Lovingly cared for, the house was filled to the brim with Rosa's collections of bells, dolls and charming knick-knacks, all purchased at the estate sale.

AHS was the recipient of photos and an illustration of the house and cactus garden, donated by Rosa's daughter, Rosemarie Wallack, who is featured in the photo holding a poster detailing Rosa's life.



# From the Research Desk

Every Tuesday, we, as volunteer researchers, respond to the research requests that come to AHS by phone, e-mail or a visit to the archives. Here's a look at some of the questions we research, and how we found the answers.

A writer of professional baseball biographies wants to know about Romer Grey's life in Altadena for his biography of Grey's baseball



**Memorial obelisk created by Ryozo Kado at Manzanar.**

career at the turn of the century. (Romer Grey is author Zane Grey's brother.)

AHS's home tour committee wants more information about Sara Noble Ives, other than the autobiography she included in her history of Altadena published in 1935.

A member of St. Elizabeth's church wants to know more about Ryozo Kado, who built the Lourdes grotto at St. Elizabeth's in the late 30s.

Many people want to know the history of specific houses in Altadena.

For many inquiries, our research starts with a search of our People file, a collection of newspaper articles about prominent Altadenans. No file existed for

Kado and Grey and the Ives file only had information about the publishing of her book.

So we checked with Pasadena Public Library for obituaries, which usually include good summaries of a person's life and career, and the Altadena Library District for the biographies of Zane Grey, which have many references to his brother, their childhood, travels and professional life.

For Sarah Noble Ives, a simple search on Google Books opened the door to her life. There we learned that Ives was a talented author and illustrator of children's books who worked in various publishing houses in New York in the late 1890s, a role that was unique for women of her day.

Google Books also provided information on Ryozo Kado, who built over thirty Lourdes shrines in the Los Angeles area before and after his internment at Manzanar during World War II. St. Elizabeth's Lourdes grotto with a memorial obelisk, gate house and rock gardens are his artistic legacy.

Using ancestry.com and its census data, we found that both Romer and Zane Grey married "older" women. And the travels of Grey, Ives and their companions are found in ship passenger lists.

For house



**Altadenan Sarah Noble Ives was a talented illustrator of children's books.**

questions we use our archives as well as those of Altadena Heritage to find out when a home was built, who the architect and builder were, and any information about who lived there in the past.

Tim Gregory, the "Building Biographer" has compiled a card catalog for Altadena Heritage that contains a card for nearly every

residential address in Altadena. This is often the first place that we look. The card will give the address, the architect and builder if known, the cost of construction, and any historical significance if relevant. We also check our files to find if there are any pictures of the building.

The Pasadena/Altadena



**Old city directories are an invaluable resource for AHS researchers.**

# Quarterly Meeting and Lecture

## 7:30 p.m. , Monday, April 28, 2014

Popular long-time *Star-News* editor and columnist Larry Wilson will recall memories of his Altadena boyhood and youth.

The *Star-News's* public editor and columnist grew up at 1216 and then 1294 Sunny Oaks Circle, the latter a house designed for his parents by Harold Bissner, Jr., a prominent Pasadena architect perhaps best known for the Palm Springs-area "Volcano House."

He attended Noyes Elementary School and Eliot Junior High School.

Wilson bought his own first house on Alpine Villa Drive in 1984 when he was the founding



business manager of the *Altadena/Pasadena Weekly* in the same Lake Avenue office where Harry Smith used to publish the *Altadenan* newspaper, which Wilson and his friends in the East Loma Alta neighborhood used to distribute on Thursday mornings when in high school.

Wilson is now a resident of Pasadena, but says he "enjoys crossing the border to have a beer at the Altadena Ale and Wine House."

The 7:30 p.m. meeting at the Community Center, 730 E.

Altadena Drive, will be open to the public free of charge.

City Directories are also very important sources: These volumes contain a "reverse" listing of residents. We can find the name of the resident listed by alphabetical street address. We have a collection of volumes from 1911 to 1976. Often we are able to compile a list of who resided in the home as well as where they worked.

We really enjoy researching. Over the years we have learned much about Altadena and are pleased to share it with you.

*By Kathy Hoskins, a life-long Altadena resident and retired teacher, and Mary Lou Langedyke, also a retired teacher.*



**Famed Los Angeles-area architect Wallace Neff designed and built this substantial house on Mendocino Avenue for his new bride and romantically titled it "Honeymoon Cottage."**

### Did you know?

Many of the street addresses in Altadena changed in 1941 possibly due to the subdivision and development of large estate properties at the time.

Many street names have changed over the years – for example, Santa Clara is now El Molino.

Originally, North and South-oriented Altadena streets were named for saints (i.e. Santa Rosa, Santa Anita). East and West-oriented streets were named for California counties (i.e. Mariposa, Calaveras, Alameda).

During the Depression, many houses were either vacant or had two or more families living at one address.

Many very famous architects designed homes in Altadena. Among them are: Gregory Ain, Conrad Buff, Donald Hensman, Cal Straub, Louis Easton, Fredrick Roehrig, Charles and Henry Greene, Wallace Neff, Myron Hunt, Elmer Grey, Harwell Hamilton Harrison, Richard Neutra and Lloyd Wright (son of Frank Lloyd Wright).



## *Altadena Historical Socie*

Altadena Historical Society  
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Altadena, CA 91001-2351

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## The Echo

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SOCIETY

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(626) 797-8016

email:  
altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.com

website:  
altadenahistoricalsociety.org

VISIT OUR NEW BLOG!  
altadenahistoricalsociety.blogspot.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!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Premium Membership (includes DVD copy of 1912 silent movie, "What the Doctor Ordered," featuring historic Mt. Lowe)

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