



**Sierra Madre
Historical
Preservation
Society Newsletter
January 2003**

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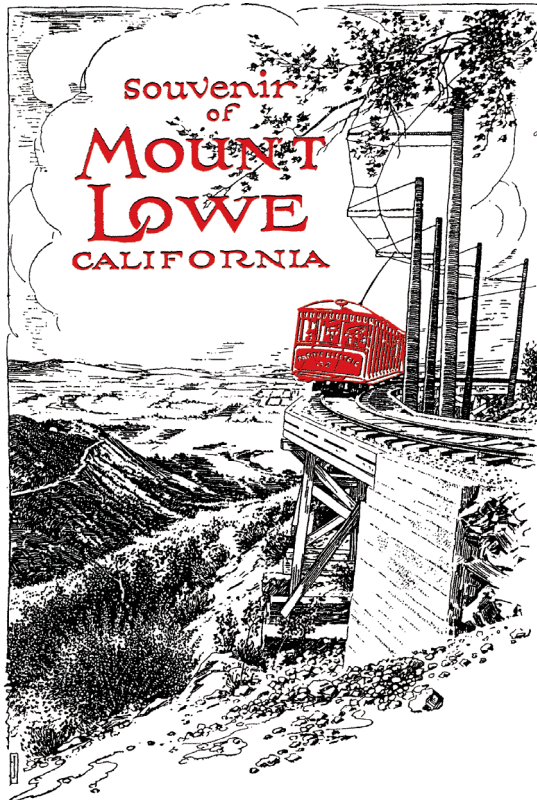
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**WANTED: PASSENGERS
FOR A MT. LOWE
RAILWAY EXPERIENCE**

Monday, February 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Senior Center
222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre, CA

Program: **Thaddeus Lowe and the Mount Lowe
Railroad**

Speaker: **Michael Patris**

Before there was Disneyland there was Mount Lowe, the mountain marvel resort first created by Thaddeus S.C. Lowe. From 1893 to 1937 millions came from all over the world to visit "Earth's Grandest Mountain Ride" as Lowe called it.

Michael Patris, founder and president of the Mount Lowe Preservation Society will present a slide program about this fabulous attraction high above Altadena and about Thaddeus Lowe who in 1850 attempted to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon, served as Chief Aeronaut for the Union Army during the Civil War and then did so much more after retiring to Southern California in 1888.

This promises to be an exciting evening! Guests are most welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information call Phyllis Chapman, (626) 355-3928.

Archives Acquisitions

The Archives has received a number of terrific donations since our last newsletter:

Richardson Family Bible donated by **Margaret S. Lusinger**. Margaret traveled with her family members on a rainy November morning to donate this wonderful artifact. All the Richardson births, deaths, and marriages are carefully recorded in the Bible and have already been made available to interested researchers.

Ken Taylor donated a Pacific Electric Railroad spike from Kersting Court. It is a welcome addition to our collection, rust and all. Ken also gave a 1912 map of the Pacific Electric Railway map and a book by Donald Duke titled Pacific Electric Railway: A Pictorial Album of Electric Railroading. We are delighted to have these artifacts in our collection.

Julie Morez has given the Archives many Sierra Madre postcards. The most recent is a wonderful photographic postcard of the interior of the chapel at Switzer's Camp. And recently she found a copy of Christmas in California by Eleanor Tucker, a book printed in 1924 by F. A. Pagenkopf here in Sierra Madre for our collection. We reimbursed her for the excellent book purchase and are grateful for her postcard donations.

The Archives received a third installment of the Wandalee Thompson Collection from Wandalee's son **Muir Thompson**. Maps, photographs, and

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President's Message

Long-time Board member Lois Hutchinson lost her battle with cancer in early January. Lois was an active member of the Historical Society for many years. Our deepest condolences go to her husband Stan Hutchinson and their family at the loss of their wife, mother and grandmother. We will miss her many contributions to the Historical Society and to the Sierra Madre community.

Our thanks go to all the people who have contributed to the Historical Society this past year both with acquisitions and with their time and effort on behalf of the Society.

We look forward to another year of events, programs and preservation efforts. If you are interested in being more active with the Society as a Board member or volunteering for a program or event committee, please give us a call (626) 355-8129.

Dane Lenton

Reactivation of the Oral History Project A Progress Report

In 1988 Jayne Kistner organized an oral history project sponsored by the Sierra Madre Library. Between the years 1989 and 1994, 110 interviews were conducted by various volunteers. Eighty five Sierra Madrans were interviewed in this process. The aim at that time was to transcribe the interviews and publish them in book form. Sixty three of these interviews were eventually transcribed. Only one was published in book form. The project waned after 1994. Following the death of Jayne Kistner in 1997, no further work was done.

At a Board meeting of the Historical Society on 15 August, 2002, interest was expressed in re-activating the project. Paul Neiby volunteered to put the existing collection in order and to prepare us to conduct a new series of interviews.

On September, 2002, personnel from the Oral History Department at Cal State Fullerton conducted an oral history workshop in Sierra Madre which eight people attended. In October, Paul Neiby attended a workshop in San Diego sponsored by the National Oral History Association.

Also, in September, the library purchased a tape-reading dictaphone. In early October we began to sort through the 240 existing tapes. Each tape was checked for quality, rewound and properly labeled. We also constructed a database to track the collection. This process was completed a few days before Christmas. We now have a full and properly labelled archive of original tapes.

In the week of January 12, we will begin work on replicating 20 tapes which have no working duplicates. Then, with a full archive of working duplicates, we will begin to transcribe the 47 interviews that remain unfinished. We estimate the cost of transcription at \$6,000. We also need to collect release forms, 45 of which were never signed.

Purchase of new recording equipment:

We have made a thorough search of recording devices. We need a portable machine, of high quality and one fairly easy to use. The choice is between a cassette recorder and a digital recording device. The library technology grant has allocated \$1,000 for this purpose. We hope to make the choice and complete the purchase in January, 2003. Then we will gear up and begin a new series of interviews.

by Dr. Paul Neiby



WANTED: BOOTH VOLUNTEERS

WISTARIA FESTIVAL

Sunday, March 23, 2003

ART FAIR

Saturday and Sunday, May 17 & 18, 2003

Call 626.355.8129 to sign up

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ephemera from the San Gabriel Mountain resorts such as Valley Forge and Orchard Camp are included. We also have Wandalee's tree planting journal from the 1940s and 1950s. The third portion of the collection is as outstanding as the first two. We are fortunate to have such a stellar collection as part of our holdings.

Alice Stornie donated a photograph of the 1904 Elks Reunion held on Mount Wilson. Alice's grandfather, Edgar Rice Braley, attended the 3-day event and is in the photograph. He noted on the reverse "plenty of fun all the time – night & day." This is a wonderful gift for the Archives.

Debbie Henderson, Associate Librarian—Archival Collection

Membership Information

Memberships expired December 31. Your address label shows the year your membership expires. If you joined the Historical Society in the later part of 2002, your membership will show an expiration date of 2003. Members have asked if more than one year can be paid at a time. The answer is yes. If you would like to pay two or three years at a time, your expiration date will be extended.

We are happy to report that our membership is steadily growing. Our current memberships have increased from 152 to 182.

Thank you everyone for your membership dues, donations, and offers to volunteer for our various functions. May the year 2003 be a wonderful year for you.

Marilyn Mc Kernan