



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society November/December 2017 Newsletter

Adams' Pack Station

Courtesy of Adams' Pack Station website; reprinted by permission. Edited for brevity by Jean Coleman.



Photo: Courtesy Adams' Pack Station

Our story begins in 1905 with the arrival of Iowa-born Charley Chantry who prospected his way to Sierra Madre from the Black Hills of the Dakotas. He erected a sturdy tent cabin in Little Santa Anita Canyon from which he rented riding donkeys. Soon his stock was packing into the mountain resorts.

While packing to Sturtevant's Camp, Charley passed through an oak-studded bench 600 feet above Big Santa Anita Canyon's bottom at the San Olene Gap. With a reliable spring and the relatively flat land of an ancient slide, Chantry imagined this to be an ideal site for a small ranch; Charley and his dog, Patch, did occasionally occupy a tent here, and grazed stock. Charley died in 1936, one year after LA County paved a road to his old stomping grounds from the top of Santa Anita Ave.

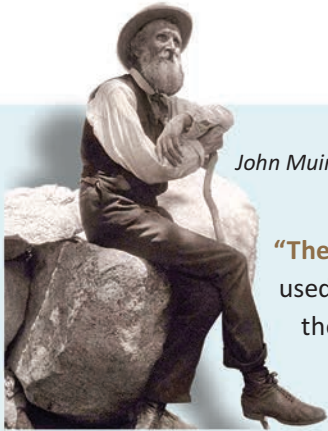
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Photo: Courtesy Adams' Pack Station

Donkey packing a mattress up Sturtevant canyon

The Great Hiking Era



John Muir

Excerpted from Mark Landis's July 10, 2017 article for the San Bernardino Sun "How 'tourist hikers' took over San Bernardino, San Gabriel mountains in 1880s". Printed by permission; edited for brevity by Jean Coleman.

"The Great Hiking Era" is a phrase used by local historians to describe the obsession that gripped Southern California from the 1880s to the late 1930s. In the 1880s, Southern California experienced a phenomenal land boom that brought settlers, investors, and tourists in huge numbers. Many of these city folk were drawn to the local mountains for adventure.

Famed naturalist John Muir spent weeks tramping through the mountains of Southern California in the late 1800s. He documented these journeys in letters to his friends. The accounts of his mountain adventures were published, and helped to inspire throngs of residents to experience the rugged beauty of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino ranges.

The first camp built specifically for the "tourist hiker" in the mountains of Southern California was opened in 1884, by Commodore Perry Switzer, of Pasadena. *(continued on page 3)*



Photo: Sierra Madre Archives

Hikers starting up the trail

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Adams' Pack Station

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The original entrepreneur who set out to capitalize on the road to Chantry Flat was J.P. Steele of Sierra Madre. At the time of the road's completion, Steele owned First Water Camp, directly below the flat in the streambed. Also around that time, Cora Corum, who had taken charge of her husband Bill's pack station in Sierra Madre after his death in 1931, was looking to retire. She sold the animals, tack and all other gear to Steele. He was one of a very few canyon dwellers who welcomed the road, as he saw an economic advantage in being able to truck supplies to within 3/4 mile of his camp, then using his own pack train to carry them down the switchbacks. He could gain all the packing business supplying 3 other active resorts and over 200 cabins. The barn he built still stands virtually unchanged and he built a 2-room bunkhouse, the backbone of today's pack station home/store. All went well until the great flood of March 1938.



The Chantry Flat main lodge/dining room of the camp was washed away; this loss along with the loss of 68 cabins and extensive trail damage, convinced the Steeles that the canyon was not a good business venture. They moved the 2-story house to Monrovia, parceled out the remaining cabins of the resort and sold the pack animals. Now all they needed was a buyer for the pack station.



Photo: Courtesy Adams' Pack Station

A young man named Frank Adams bought it in '38 but didn't realize that his new acquisition came without the animals! He contacted the man who bought the equine from Steele and was able to bring home long-time canyon-working mule, Jada. The business was expanded in the spring of '39 with the addition of two donkeys and a lead horse. In spite of ever increasing business, Frank lost interest and sold the business to his brother Bill.

Four years later, following a bad factory accident, Bill sold out to Ross Macrae Axling for \$500. Word has it that Axling ran the pack station into the ground, so in the fall of 1949, a recovered

Bill Adams came to the rescue and bought back the station for \$1,500. Three and

half years later he married Lila and together they packed supplies, delivered mail, brought out garbage, sold ice cream and soda, greeted visitors and generally took care of the canyon for 35 years straight.

In 1984, the Adams' sold the station to Bill's nephew Dennis Lonergan and wife Jody, and together they ran it for 15 years. Many times they could be found side by side repairing trails, putting new roofs on cabins, building retaining walls, installing water systems, cleaning outhouse vaults by hand, etc.

But strained finances led them to reluctantly sell the operation in 2000 to Kim Kelley, but she, too, had to sell, after just 5 years. Escrow closed once again in April of 2006 for Deb Burgess and her mother Sue Burgess. They put the Adams name back on the station and infused an unprecedented amount of energy into the pack station and made it the wonderful place it is today.



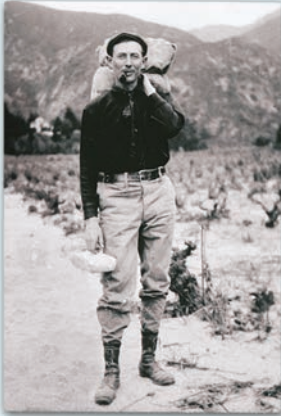
Bill Adams

Photo: Courtesy Adams' Pack Station

The Great Hiking Era

(continued from page 1)

Photo: Sierra Madre Archives



James Hawks on the way to Mt. Wilson trail 1903

The camp was located in a remote section of the Arroyo Seco, a rugged canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains, north of Altadena. Commodore Switzer teamed up with a well-financed friend, Harvey Walker, and the men built a rustic camp and the first passable trail up the Arroyo Seco Canyon. Switzer's Camp became a popular destination for tourist hikers, and guests could hike, fish in nearby streams, or just relax in a comfortable hammock.

During the early years of operation, guests at Switzer's had to contend with an occasional grizzly bear visit, but the campers seemed to take them in stride as part of the wilderness experience.

In the early years of the Great Hiking Era, hardware stores and gun shops began selling specialized hiking and camping gear, and they became the first sporting goods stores. Newspaper advertisements for hiking apparel became prominent in the 1910s. Stylish hiking boots, breeches, skirts, and hats were all the rage, and a trip into the mountains or canyons wasn't complete without the proper fashion attire.

Nearly every major town and civic group in Southern California had a hiking club in the early 1900s. In our era, the opening of the Mount Lowe Railway in 1893 had fueled the

Great Hiking Era with a flood of tourist hikers. Tourists could take electric trollies from points across Southern California, and transfer to the Mount Lowe Railway. The scenic mountain railway spiraled the tourists to high resort facilities that catered to hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. In 1906, the Pacific Electric Railway extended a trolley line to the town of Sierra Madre, bringing hikers to within a quarter mile of the popular Sturtevant and Mount Wilson trailheads. Sierra Madre quickly became a busy portal for adventurers wishing to hike or take a burro trip into the mountains.

The hordes of hikers passing through the portals at Sierra Madre at the peak of the Great Hiking Era were aptly described by Arthur N. Carter, in the 1937 Winter edition of "Trails Magazine:" "For several years, up to about 1916, hundreds, and perhaps even thousands of hikers used to travel up and down these trails every week-end. The procession of laughing and singing hikers would begin early Saturday afternoon and continue until dusk, or, on Sunday afternoon, the hikers came down, many of them foot-sore and subdued, and climbed onto the special Pacific Electric cars waiting to take them back to Los Angeles and adjacent towns."

The Great Hiking Era came to an end in the late 1930s due to a combination of natural, economic, and cultural factors. New roads were cut deeper into the once inaccessible mountains, and automobile trips began to replace day-hikes. Mother nature also took a heavy toll on the resorts, and many were destroyed or continuously threatened by wildfires and floods. The grand era had passed but the trails remain, to this day, extremely popular.



Photo: Leslie Ziff

Board member Jan Wiles created this great Lizzie Scarecrow for this year's competition

By Jan Wiles

We are in the early 1920's and Lizzie is busy cooking up chicken dinners and ravioli. There are ample supplies for the locals at the house restaurant. But that's not the only thing Lizzie is offering; she is serving whiskey as well! It's the time of Prohibition, but that doesn't stop her from pouring a shot here and there. Let's raise our glasses and give a cheer to the famous Lizzie! Happy Halloween to our beloved town of Sierra Madre!

Rudy Hartman Items Donated

By Maggie Ellis



Photo: Maggie Ellis

Chuck Hartman

We got a call from out of the blue – Chuck Hartman, grandson of the late, beloved Rudy Hartman who owned the Hartman Pharmacy in Kersting Court for decades, had closed out a family home and had things he wanted to donate to our Historical Society. What a cache of treasures it turned out to be!

The most striking was a large model, which Chuck himself had created based on a historical photograph, of the pharmacy as it looked in 1914. The model was in remarkable shape, and after member Tony Tanacsos glued down a few pieces that had come loose and got the tiny ceiling lights working, it was put out for display in the Richardson House.



Photo: Leslie Ziff

Hartman Pharmacy model

There were more treasures: large bound books of all pharmacy receipts dating clear back to its founding (fascinating reading), and a guest book from the pharmacy’s 50th anniversary party. You or someone you know may have signed it!

There were books about Sierra Madre and local history, and plaques that Rudy had received for his many contributions to our town, as well as directories from the Congregational Church, and commemorative items. And much more. We were thrilled to have this wonderful collection. Our then-Museums Curator, Norma Bachwansky, and our Archives Chair, Casey Seyb, decided where the items should be placed.



Photo: Leslie Ziff

Model of the Hartman Pharmacy in 1914, created by Rudy’s grandson Chuck Hartman.

Come see it in the Richardson House Museum!

Attention Landmark Homeowners!

Dear Landmark Homeowners,

We are blessed and proud to own such historic homes. Our homes add so much beauty to our city. It is our responsibility and hopefully pleasure to maintain our beautiful homes.

As president of the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society, I extend an invitation to all Landmark Homeowners to network ideas, contractors and businesses, which have helped you maintain your home. Please send me the names of those individuals and businesses that you recommend and trust.

- Contractors
- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Woodworkers
- Cabinet Makers
- Painters
- Architects
- Others

This information will be made available to all Landmark Homeowners so that we can continue to have pride in our homes and promote our beautiful foothill city.

For those of you who receive this newsletter and may not be members of our historical society, I urge you to join.

We are here to help answer questions, and be a support to you.

Sincerely,
Leslie Ziff

President, Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
lbziff@roadrunner.com



Photo: John Johnson



Holiday Event

Wassail, wine and dessert
 Hart Park House in Memorial Park
 December 21, 2017 7:00 p.m.
 Members & guests No reservation necessary

Guest Speaker: Historian Dr. Bill White

Pack Trains of Sierra Madre

Courtesy the W. White collection



Packing a piano up to Roberts Camp.

Have you ever wondered how they got the materials up to the top of Mt. Wilson for the first telescope?

Where were the first stables for our pack train?

Dr. Bill White will tell us about that and so much more in his talk on *The Pack Trains of Sierra Madre*.

A Holiday Gift Classic

Southern California Story: Seeking the Better Life in Sierra Madre

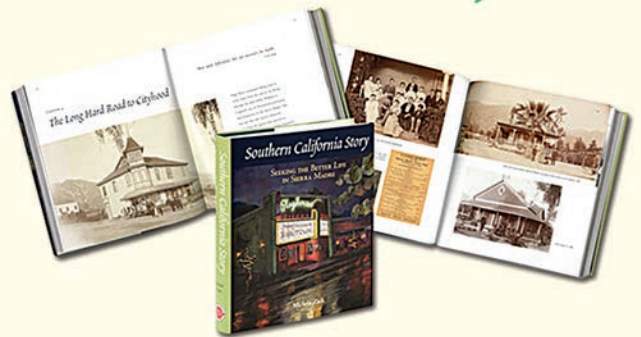
New Price: \$25 including tax (publisher's price \$50)

This heirloom book is a wonderful holiday gift for friends as well as for future generations.

Author Michele Zack and designer Jeff Lapides have been recognized nationally and have won two prestigious awards for their work on this book. After eight years of research, Michele Zack has written a well-documented story that chronicles the impact and effect of world events on Sierra Madre over hundreds of years. The hardback book is accompanied with 383 photos, maps and illustrations.

Purchase your copy at the Sierra Madre Library, Arnold's Hardware, Lizzie's Trail Inn Museum or at our booth at community festivals.


Own Our History



Welcome New Members!

We are very pleased to welcome Alice Clark, Joe Feeny, and Richard & Rose Meyer to the Historical Society. We are extremely grateful for their support and for the support of all our members.

www.smhps.org
SMHPS@outlook.com



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

Calendar of Upcoming Events

2017		
November 12	Pack Station Tour	12-3pm
November 25	Winter Festival Booth	TBA
December 21	Holiday Party / Mt. Wilson Trail talk	7pm
2018		
January 18	Board Meeting	TBA

President's Message

This looks to be a full and eventful year for our Historical Society. We are already involved in several projects. As President, my first focus is on the renovation of the Richardson House Museum. I have met with our Historical Architect and Civil Engineer advisors to lay out a timeline for what needs to be done to fix the back area of this historic home. We will be making this timeline available to you soon, including the estimated costs of each phase of the project. My hope is that we can get our community involved in helping to sponsor various sections of this renovation. It would be appropriate to place a plaque at the Richardson House with all the donors' names. It is important to keep our focus on this project. It has been too long in the planning and it is time to move forward.

Before leaving the topic of the museums - we are hoping to have the outside of Lizzie's Trail Inn painted. It needs some prep work and a good coat of paint. There is always a great group of docents up at the museums each Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 greeting the hikers and visitors to our museums. We have people from all over the Los Angeles area, greater California, different states and countries come to hear Lizzie's story. It always amazes me that many of our own local citizens have never been to Lizzie's before and we are always happy to lead a tour through each of the museums.

Mark Your Calendar!

November 12 will be our annual day at the Adams' Pack Station. Deb Burgess gives us a wonderful demonstration of how the pack animals are loaded up with gear to deliver goods and supplies to the surrounding cabins. The Adams' Pack Station is one of two working pack stations in the United States today. This is such a treasure for our town – yes, this pack station is in Sierra Madre – at the top of Santa Anita Avenue in Chantry Flats! Look for the posters advertising this event and come up to join the fun!

December 21 is our Holiday Party at the Hart Park House. Our speaker that night will be Dr. Bill White. Come hear his talk on the Mt. Wilson Trail and the history of the Pack Station when it was next to Lizzie's Trail Inn. Drinks and desserts start at 7:00 p.m. Talk will begin soon afterwards.

Looking ahead to 2018 we will be supporting our booth at the Wistaria Festival, the Art Fair, and the Mt. Wilson Trail Race. In April we are planning a tour of one of our beautiful Landmark Homes. We will be hosting several other

speakers in the months to come. We also have a Whiskey Tasting in the works - more to come on that as our plans progress.

I hope that you will take part in the activities we are planning for our membership. I encourage you, if you are not a member of our organization, to become an active member. We help to educate our community about our wonderful history and the individuals that made Sierra Madre a special place to live. We would truly appreciate your active support in our organization.

Respectfully, Leslie Ziff

2017-2018 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President	Leslie Ziff
Vice President	Maggie Ellis
Secretary	Pat Karamitros
Treasurer	Richard Mays

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Archives	Casey Seyb
Education	Leslie Ziff
Facebook	Jan Wiles
Membership	Maggie Ellis
Museums Curators	Mike Manning
	Jay Whitcraft
Newsletter	Maggie Ellis
Oral History	Louise Neiby
Ways & Means	Christel Chang
Website	Maggie Ellis

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Teresa Chaure
Joan Spears
Jan Wiles
Chris Leclerc
Jean Coleman

NON-BOARD MEMBERS

Library Board of Trustees Liaison	Rod Spears
Board Development	Rod Spears
	Judy Webb-Martin

Chicken & Ravioli Dinner Event in June



1939 Cadillac brought by Loren & Shana Birch.

Photo: Casey Seyb



Photo: Shannon King

There were vintage cars on display! Here is Board member Joe Catalano talking to Jim Diener, who brought his 1915 Overland for us to enjoy.



Photo: Casey Seyb

Everyone raved about the chicken and ravioli.



Photo: Shannon King

Michael Ellis gave the year-end speech for outgoing President Maggie Ellis.



Photo: Shannon King

Our new board was installed at the June dinner event at the park by our museums. Left to right: Jean Coleman, Director at Large; Teresa Chauré, Director at Large; Joe Catalano, Director at Large; Louise Neiby, Oral History Chair and Ways & Means Co-Chair; Richard Mays, Treasurer; Leslie Ziff, President; Casey Seyb, Archives Chair; Joan Spears, Director at Large; Chris Leclerc, Director at Large.

Not pictured: Maggie Ellis, Vice President; Pat Karamitos, Secretary; Mike Manning and Jay Whitcraft, Museums Co-Chairs; Christal Chang, Ways & Means CoChair; Jan Wiles, Facebook Chair.



Photo: Casey Seyb

There was delightful music by Roger Lebow (left) and Joe Tortomasi.



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
 (626) 836-6709
 www.smhps.org

SAVE THE DATE!

**Adams’
 Pack
 Station**
 at
Chantry Flat



Sunday, November 12
Adams’ Pack Station
12 - 3 pm

Join us for a demonstration of how they pack the donkeys to deliver goods and supplies to the cabins in our local mountains.

- Learn about the history of the Pack Station.
- Have lunch and enjoy some great music.
- Hike some of the trails at Chantry Flats.

Parking is \$10.00

Reservations recommended:

Leslie Ziff (626) 321-7735

Food available for purchase

SIERRA MADRE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
Membership / Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Membership Level

- ___ \$20 *Individual*
- ___ \$25 *Family*
- ___ \$5 *Student*
- ___ \$30 *Contributing*
- ___ \$60 *Patron*
- ___ \$100 *Supporting*
- ___ \$500 *Lifetime*

Specific Donations

- \$_____ Sierra Madre Historical Archives
- \$_____ Oral History Program
- \$_____ Museums
- \$_____ Richardson House
- \$_____ Lizzie’s Trail Inn

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make check payable to SMHPS.

The Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3).
 Your contributions are deductible within the limits of the law.

Thank You.

Yes, I would like to be a volunteer for the SMHPS. _____