

Spring 2010

The Echo

Volume 76

Altadena Historical Society Newsletter

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April 19 Program

Jane Brackman will
show new acquisitions
collected for G. G.
Green Carriage House
Tour.

Life on Mariposa Street circa 1900 Millionaires Road Indeed

Mariposa Street residents Woodbury, McNally, Scripps and Kellogg may be better known, but it's possible that Col. G. G. Green was richer than all of them. A multi millionaire when a million dollars really meant something (A million in 1900 would be worth about 24 million today), Green was no itinerant snake oil salesman hawking elixirs and potions from apple box podiums. He made his vast fortune by expanding the patent medicine enterprise started by his father in the 1840s, and investing the profits in real estate including a major portion of future Altadena.

By 1880, most patent medicine companies published newsy almanacs to advertise their products. So popular were these medicines that by 1900 one almanac was printed for every two Americans. Most patent medicines were 50% morphine and/or alcohol by volume. Some historians estimate that one in five Americans were addicts at the turn of the last century, the majority being women who took the medicines for their "calming effect."

Green's almanacs, like most, featured detailed color graphics on the cover meant to impress with pictures of industry or manufacturing plants. Some featured idealized rural scenes, others rosy cheeked children.

In 1906 the Pure Food and Drugs Act was passed requiring contents and dosage to be labeled. Consequently patent medicine sales decreased by one third. Green ceased manufacturing his products, August Flower and Dr. Boschee's German Syrup, about 1916.

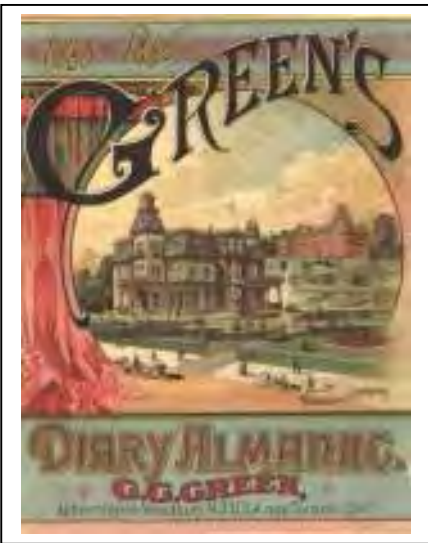
**If the label on your newsletter has dollar signs (\$)
it's a reminder to**

PLEASE PAY YOUR 2010 DUES

(See back page for details)

President's Message

By Jane Brackman



A newsletter dedicated to Col. G. G. Green – the subject of our April 25th tour – proves we certainly are not above shameless self-promotion when it comes to raising money for AHS. The description of his patent medicine fortune on the front page, and the article on page 7 about our discovery of the Greene & Greene remodel work of the mansion on Mariposa Street (where the Altadena Library now stands) reflect efforts of not only our volunteers and archivist but also numerous people and organizations across the country.

We are indebted to Don Chaput for donating an entire collection of references detailing our community beginning as early as 1870. Much of the new data we've collected on the Green family come from Don's files.

Pasadena Museum of History has been a tremendous resource. The museum has a comprehensive collection on Green (he built the Castle Green in Pasadena) including a close to complete collection of almanacs (left).

We've also received images from the Gloucester County, N. J. library, and the Museum of New York City.

Via the internet we tracked down the small town where the Green family "summered," Lake

Hopatcong, N. J. The Lake Hopatcong Museum of History where most of the Green collection is archived sent more than 50 photos for our review including images of Green's railroad car, interior and exterior views, and his boat named Altadena.


Charles Seims sent us three slides he shot in 1964, the day of the estate sale just prior to the demolition of the house. His slides provide the only view we have of the north side of the mansion.

And via the internet we tracked down descendents of the families who lived in the house: Guyer, Green and Van Der Kar – all have been an invaluable resource, and many will be returning to Altadena to attend the event. We are still trying to track down relatives of the Stainer family who lived in the house between 1915 and 1938 and the Riccardi family who owned the home from 1938 until 1964. (Any leads our readers can give us will be much appreciated. Leave a message at 626-797-8016.)

Preceding the tour - on Monday evening, April 19, I'll present our collection of photographs and stories of Col. G. G. Green, his children, his patent medicine enterprise, his real estate endeavors and the contributions he made to the Altadena community. As always, the program starts at 7:30, and as always it's free. (see page 5 for details)

We hope you can make it.

Altadena Historical Society



Cobblestone carriage house, circa 1905

*Presents a Tour of a
Special Altadena Landmark:*

G. G. Green's Carriage House

2495 Santa Rosa
Altadena, CA 91001
(located south of Altadena Library's parking lot)

Sunday, April 25, 2010
10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Ticket Prices:
Members \$ 13 - Non-members \$ 16
At the door \$ 20


Send check to:
AHS
730 E. Altadena Dr.
Altadena, CA 91001-2351

*All pre-purchased tickets
will be held at the door*

For more information contact:
ALTADENA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(626) 797-8016

altadenahistorical.society
@yahoo.com



A painting of the carriage house from the mural inside the residence that shows Altadena in the 1890s.

To purchase tickets on-line: <http://ahscarriagehousetour.eventbrite.com>



Archives Notes

by Sherry Cavallo

As I write from my desk, our computer guru is hooking up a new work station, providing an opportunity for several people to work simultaneously. Two additional volunteers will be able to add new accessions at the same time. And I also will be able to use our data base program at my own desk when he is through. With six volunteers we have had a waiting line at the one work station. Now, we won't have to wait turns.

And the accessions keep coming in! This past quarter we received a variety of printed materials, as well as a fabric donation. We also received the gift of two Tiffany style lamps for our office, courtesy of **Sandra Miller**.

An illustrated Christmas card by Altadena cartoonist Clifford McBride was donated by **Lucille Washburn**. Mr. McBride began his career in 1923 as a staff artist for the Los Angeles Times. He then went on to work as a cartoonist for several national syndications, later creating the canine comic strip character Napoleon. Lucille's father received the card from Mr. McBride.

Mario and Brenda Miralles gave us a poster advertising a Charles White art festival held in 1986 at Charles White Park.

The sheet music for *Mt. Lowe March and Two-Step* by Marie Truan, was graciously donated by **Betty Kimball** and it is in excellent condition. Her daughter, **Kelly Kimball** gave us a blank archival scrapbook.

Recently published *Southern California Story, Seeking a Better Life in Sierra Madre*, by Michele Zack, was donated to the Archives library by the **Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society**.

A 1971 sales catalog from Nuccio's Nurseries made its way back to Altadena donated by the **New Hanover Public Library** in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Several Victorian hand crocheted ladies' garments were donated by **Laurie Bilotta**. They were handed down from her grandmother, **Cecelia M. Schneider**, both of Altadena.

Thank you to all.

Please join Altadena Historical Society

Monday, April 19, 2010

7:30 Pm

Altadena Community Center

730 E. Altadena Drive

(626) 797-8016

AHS president Jane Brackman will
present an illustrated program

George Gilbert Green 20 years in Altadena, 1885 -1905

A collection of photographs and stories of Col. G. G. Green, his children, his patent medicine enterprise, his real estate endeavors and the contributions he made to the Altadena community.



Green family and friends picnicking at Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, location of their summer home, about 1900. Their youngest children: G. G. Green, Jr. front left and Altadena Green front center. (courtesy of Lake Hopatcong History Museum)

Goings On

Volunteers from the Society's Archives met on Saturday, March 13 at the Historical Society's office. Attending were Jane Brackman, Sherry Cavallo, Eric Dreizen, Marlane Forsberg, Kathy Hoskins, Laurie Kinsinger, Mary Lou Langedyke and Marc Striegel. Each volunteer spoke to the group about different tasks he/she performs in the cataloging and research processes.

Laurie Kinsinger explained how she uses the computer program to maintain information on our collection. Kathy Hoskins spoke about the procedure she uses to answer research requests, including which resources in our

likely to have answers to common questions. Marlane Forsberg who oversees the main filing system discussed appropriate ways to file newspaper clippings, pamphlets, photographs and biographies of Altadenans. She explained how to find, file and label new items correctly. Questions were encouraged as well as general discussion. Afterward, printed notes were given to each volunteer to be added to their archives handbooks. Volunteer meetings are held three times a year.



Above: Three G. G. Green Manufacturing Company almanac covers, advertising August Flower and Dr. Boschee's German Syrup, 1897, 1892, and 1911 (courtesy of Pasadena Museum of History).

Greene & Greene & Green in Altadena

By Kathy Hoskins

In the last edition of the Echo I wrote about the homes that the eminent Pasadena architects Charles and Henry Greene built in Altadena. We recently discovered that in 1902 this architectural firm also designed and prepared plans for alterations to the home of George G. Guyer in Altadena. This home was the former residence of Col. George G. Green, the patent medicine manufacturer whose carriage house will be open to the public on April 25.

The 23- room home located on the southwest corner of Santa Rosa and Mariposa was built in 1887 as a winter residence for Col. Greene and his family. Called "The Ranch" by the family, the home was designed by Fredrick Roehrig who also designed the neighboring McNally home as well as the Col. Green's Islamic Revival Green Hotel. The Green family spent their winters in Altadena until 1900 when the house was sold to George Guyer and his wife Maria.

The original plans, which are on file at the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University in New York, show alterations to the living and dining rooms of the home. The dining room alterations include the addition of rosettes to be carved into the sideboard. The living room details include the addition of bookcases, new



details for ceiling beams, and a new mantel with carvings of the initial "G" in the woodwork.

A new dining room mantel was inscribed with a line from Robert Browning's poem "Pippa Passes." This inscription of phrases of poems was in the spirit of the American Arts and Crafts Movement popular at the time.

In 1902 the firm of Greene and Greene was just beginning its rise to prominence. The brothers had opened their practice in Pasadena in 1884 and by 1902 were managing two offices. Henry Greene ran the Los Angeles office located at that time in the Potomac Building on South Broadway. Charles Greene worked from his newly built home located at 368 Arroyo Terrace in Pasadena. At the same time the firm was drawing up plans for the Guyers, they were designing and supervising the building of several homes in the area including one for James Culbertson and one for the White Sisters both of which were located near his home.

The picture (above) shows the exterior of the Guyer/Green home on the site of the current Altadena Public Library. Originally the property encompassed the entire block between Santa Rosa and Santa Anita, and Mariposa and Mendocino. The home, like many on Mariposa, had its main entrance facing south to take advantage of the ocean view. The photo (left) shows the interior of the house after the remodel work was completed, including the mantel with the inscribed poem.





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ALTADENA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Altadena, CA 91001

(626) 797-8016

altadenahistorical.society@yahoo.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_____

Phone_____Email_____

_____ \$25 Membership

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

FIND US ON THE WEB:
abacus-es.com/altadena/history/