

The Arcadia Bulletin

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ARCADIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Arcadia Bulletin was Arcadia's first newspaper

Volume V, Edition 1

Mid Winter 2025

Full Speed Ahead into 2025 !

President's Pen



As we turn the corner into the new year, I foresee a year filled with promise and opportunity. This past year we made many new friends with people and organizations in our community and beyond. I was honored to share our story in such far-flung places as Turlock, California and Sherman Library & Gardens in Corona Del Mar. We were also invited to make presentations at The Huntington Westerners and Monte Cedro in Pasadena, Westminster Gardens in Duarte, and Sierra Madre Rotary Club. We are regular presenters at Arcadia Woman's Club, The Arboretum, Arcadia Travelers, Arcadia Public Library, Arcadia Rotary Club, and other local groups and organizations.

One of the special new friendships that blossomed last year was with Adams Pack Station and owner Maggie Moran. Our joint presentation, "Adams Pack Station and the Old Camps of the San Gabriels" in October at Floretta Lauber Education Center, was one of the highlights of the year. Our board of directors allocated \$500, so the pack station could recondition and remount "History Lives Here" Historical Marker #7.

Our biggest challenge this year will be to grow our membership and find the next generation of leaders who will carry Arcadia Historical Society forward into the future. If you know someone who wants to get involved, please contact me directly at 626-422-7969.

It has been a privilege to serve as president of our wonderful organization and its dedicated board of directors. Thank you for your support and here's hoping 2025 will be another banner year for Arcadia Historical Society and for you.

Ed Andersen

PRESIDENT, ARCADIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Bev Street & Ed Andersen honor Gene Glasco at the April 16, 2024 City Council meeting

Celebrating Gene Glasco

Gene Glasco, whose Arcadia connection spans more than 70 years, retired in 2024. Gene's contributions to civic life and Arcadia history are legion. As the elected City Clerk, he served our city admirably for 12 years prior to his retirement. Gene is a past president of Arcadia Historical Society.

As a Vietnam Veteran, Gene is featured in a special display at the Gilb Museum. Perhaps he will best be remembered for bringing his dream to life when he dedicated the Arcadia Vietnam Veterans Monument at County Park in 2018. Happy retirement, Gene, and thanks for all you have done to preserve the history of our great community. ◆

Electronic Payments to Arcadia Historical Society

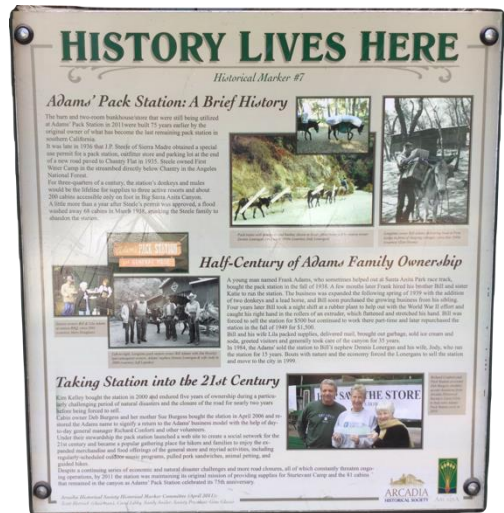
Did you know that you can now renew your membership and make other payments securely at our website: arcadiahistoricalsociety.org

Membership in A.H.S.

Membership fees are used to support our programs and services. If you have not sent in your renewal for 2025, or if you wish to join A.H.S., please fill out the enclosed form and mail your check to Arcadia Historical Society, P.O. Box 661332, Arcadia, CA 91066.

Membership Rates:

- Single – \$35
- Family (2 persons) – \$50
- Corporate – \$250
- Student – \$10



"History Lives Here" Marker #7 was dedicated at Adams Pack Station at Chantry Flat in April 2011. The marker chronicles the remarkable history of the last operating pack station in Southern California. Arcadia's beloved historian Carol Libby is pictured making a \$500 donation from A.H.S. to the former owner on a visit to the pack station in 2010. ◆



ADAMS PACK STATION

~ A Brief History ~

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Photograph by Craig Baker, 2018.
Pack station entrance during the road closure

In 1936, J.P. Steele of Sierra Madre obtained a special use permit for a pack station, outfitter store, and parking lot at the end of a new road that had been paved to Chantry Flat a year earlier. Steele owned First Water Camp in the streambed just below Chantry Flat in the Angeles National Forest. He built a barn and two-room bunkhouse/store that, after nearly 90 years, are still being utilized at Adams Pack Station, the last remaining operation of its kind in Southern California. For three-quarters of a century, the station's donkeys and mules have been the lifeline for supplies to three resorts (now only Sturtevant Camp) and some 200 (now about 70) private cabins that were, and still are, accessible only on foot in Big Santa Anita Canyon.

A devastating flood washed away 68 cabins in March 1938, sparking the Steele family to abandon the station. A young man named Frank Adams, who sometimes helped out at Santa Anita Park race track, bought the pack station later that year. The business was expanded the following spring with the addition of two donkeys and a lead horse, and Bill Adams soon purchased the growing business from his brother. Four years later Bill took a night shift at a rubber plant to help out with the World War II effort and caught his right hand in the rollers of an extruder, which flattened and stretched his hand. Bill was forced to sell the station for \$500, but continued to work there part-time and later repurchased the station in the fall of 1949 for \$1,500. Bill and his wife Lila packed supplies, delivered mail, brought out garbage, sold ice cream and soda, greeted visitors, and generally took care of the canyon for the next 35 years. In 1984, they sold the business to Bill's nephew Dennis Lonergan and his wife, Jody, who ran the station for 15 years. Kim Kelley acquired the station in 2000, but suffered through five difficult seasons of ownership during a particularly challenging period of natural disasters and the closure of the road for nearly two years. Kelley was forced to sell to cabin owner Deb Burgess and her mother Sue Burgess, who bought the station in April 2006. They restored the Adams name, and with the help of day-to-day general manager Richard Conforti and other volunteers, they returned the station to Bill and Lila's former business model. A website was launched to create a social network for the 21st century and the station became a popular gathering place for hikers and families to enjoy the expanded merchandise and food offerings of the general store. Myriad activities included regularly-scheduled outdoor music programs, pulled pork sandwiches, animal petting, and guided hikes. Despite a continuing series of economic setbacks, natural calamities, and more road closures, Adams Pack Station had maintained its original mission of providing supplies to Sturtevant Camp and the 81 cabins that remained in the canyon when it celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2011. The current owners are Maggie Moran and her husband, Adam, who have persevered despite the Covid-19 pandemic, fires, flooding, and nearly three years of road closures in Big Santa Anita Canyon. To this day they continue to operate one of the unique and historic venues in all of California. For more information, please visit adamspackstation.com.

ARTICLE ADAPTED FROM HISTORICAL MARKER NO. 7

ON THE CALENDAR FOR 2025

- ❖ March 5th at Arcadia Woman's Club: Presentation – "Parker Lyon and His Zany Museum". The story of Arcadia's first museum, established in 1936 by one of the oddest men in Western lore.
- ❖ March 28th at Arcadia Travelers: Presentation – "Early Views of the San Gabriel Valley"
- ❖ May 3rd: Kentucky Derby Garden Party – Live broadcast of the "greatest two minutes in sports," featuring a special five-race card. Fun wagering, prizes, food & refreshments. Members event!

If there is a topic of local interest that you would like to see covered in the *Arcadia Bulletin*, contact our editor, Ed Andersen via email: eandersen@arcadahistoricalociety.org