

Laguna Beach Historical Society

Murphy-Smith Bungalow
278 Ocean Avenue
Laguna Beach CA 92651



Laguna Life

The Laguna Beach Historical Society
Newsletter: May 2008

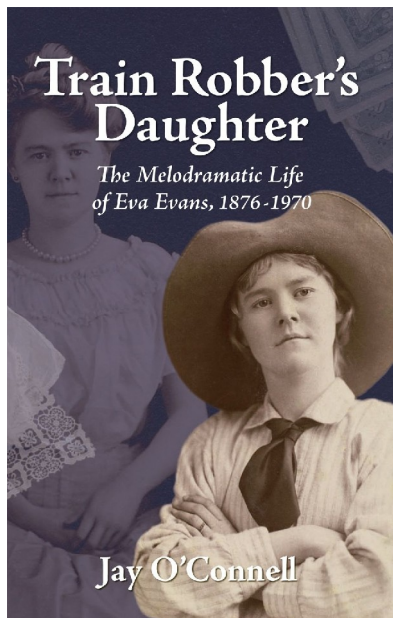
Please attend Historical Society Program to be held at
Laguna Beach City Hall Council Chambers, 505 Forest Avenue
Monday, June 2nd – from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.

**TRAIN ROBBER'S DAUGHTER: The Melodramatic Life of Eva Evans
1876-1970** by the author of the book of the same name, Jay O'Connell

On Monday June 2nd, 2008, author Jay O'Connell will present his meticulously researched biography of Eva Evans, daughter of one of California history's most notorious figures, tells not only the sensational story of train robbing duo Evans and Sontag, but offers a compelling account of one woman's remarkable life. Eva Evans was born and grew up in the Old West, experienced the Champagne Days of 1890s San Francisco, and lived long enough to see men land on the moon.

When Evelyn Kinkela (as Eva Evans was known in later years) passed away in 1970 in Laguna Beach, California, the obituary in the local newspaper was a scant two paragraphs. Although she had lived in Laguna Beach for nearly four decades, none of her neighbors seemed to be aware the colorful life she had lived. Who could have guessed that this little old lady had once been involved in one of the most colorful sagas in California history, that she had been a celebrated actress, that she was once the train robber's daughter? Now her story is finally told.

Book Cover



Eva Evans



c.1900

Evelyn (Eva Evans) McCullough and
sister Ynez (Evans) Jensen in Laguna
Beach in the early 1960s



Laguna Beach Historical Society Board of Directors

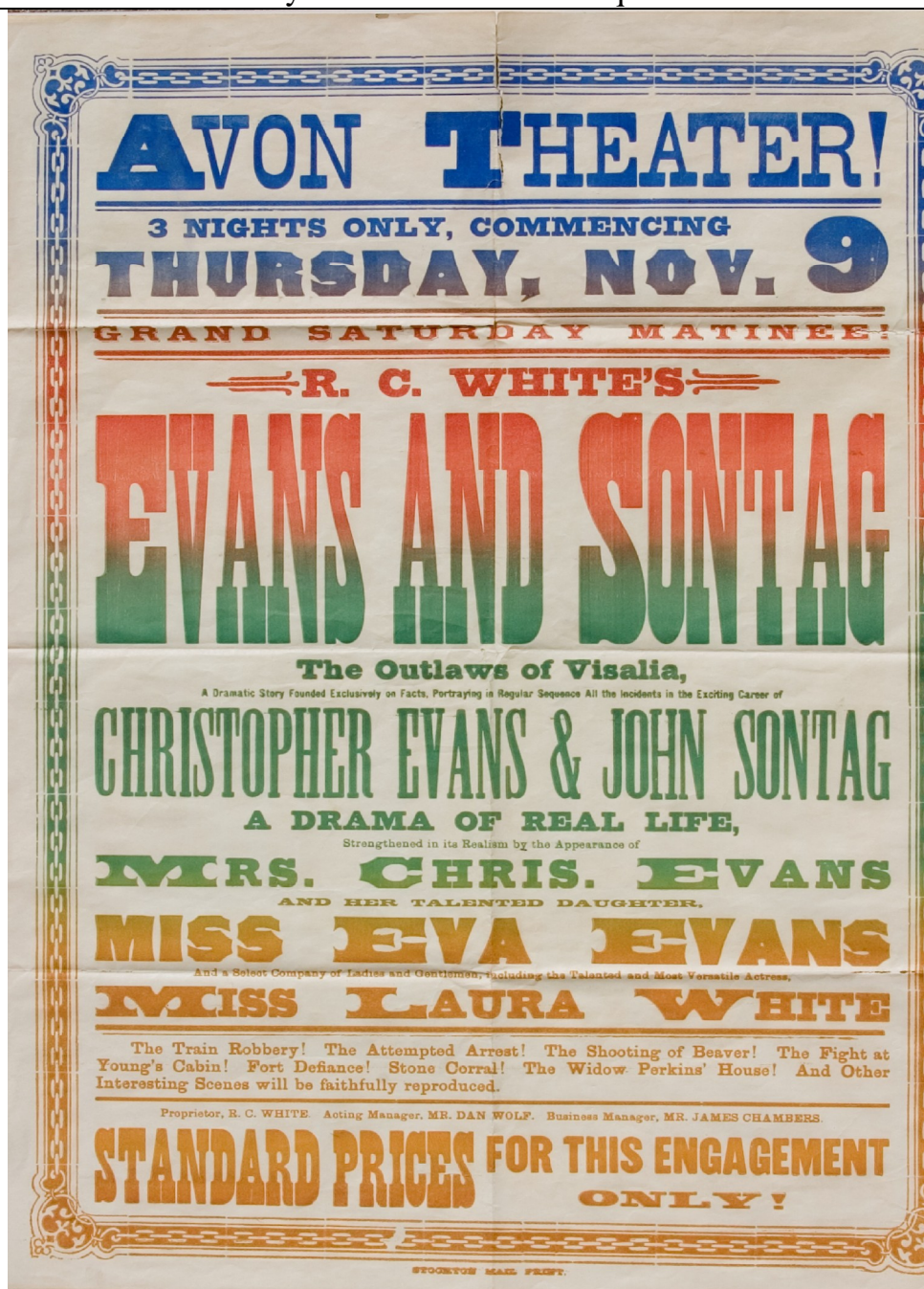
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For those having treasured historic photographs or printed material, the Historical Society is happy to scan them electronically and return them to the owners. This way there will be a record preserved for future generations without the necessity for the owners to relinquish the item.

O’Connell has cut through the layers of hyperbole propagated by the sensationalist media of the 1890s to write the most well-researched book on the story of Chris Evans and John Sontag, California’s most notorious train robbers. The historical accuracy...is unmatched by those who have tackled Evans and Sontag before.

However, this book is not just another story on the Visalia outlaws but rather a biography of Eva Evans, Chris Evans’ oldest daughter and the fiancée of John Sontag. [It] is not only an account of the sensational headlines made by the train robbing duo and their family, but also a look at life in the early years of Tulare County, the life of a young woman who grew up under tumultuous circumstances and above all a love story.

—REGGIE ELLIS, *Exeter Sun-Gazette*



This original lithograph is from the 1893 melodrama that starred 17-year-old Eva Evans as herself

Thurston Homestead
in Aliso Canyon. - 1930



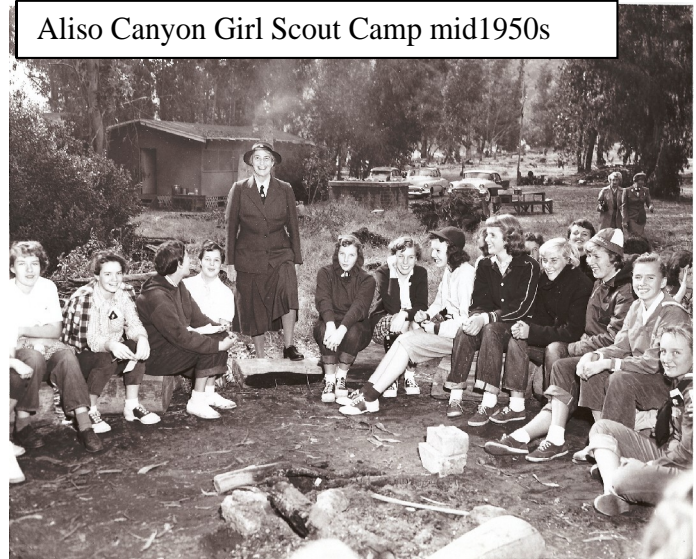
The Thurston homestead ranch in the 1930's. Imagine...just walking into Aliso Canyon, and claiming it as yours. Free and clear.

Dignitaries - Frank Cuprien front 2nd from right
1st Am Title Photo Collection



Will and Annie Brooks, two of the first settlers, are sitting on their porch looking at the Pacific. The feet to the left are unidentified.

Aliso Canyon Girl Scout Camp mid 1950s



Main Beach from the Ocean – see Gum Grove on Top of the World
From the Tom Pulley Postcard Collection
Tom Pulley has been most generous in allowing the Laguna Beach Historical Society
to scan his entire Laguna Beach postcards

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Make Suggestions for Historical Society Future Programs

**Laguna Beach Historical Society information is at
www.LagunaHistory.org**

President's Message by Kimberly Stuart

Please join the Laguna Beach Historical Society on Monday, June 2nd, when we host a lively presentation entitled "The Train Robber's Daughter" by Jay O'Connell. We are looking forward to the intriguing background about Eva Evans, a Laguna Beach resident, who was the daughter of Evans and the fiancée of Sontag. They were the famous train robbers in the San Joaquin Valley.

And be sure to mark your calendar for the next Laguna Beach Historical Society sponsored program which will be Monday, September 29, 2008. Andy Strasberg is one of the authors of the newly published book "Baseball's Greatest Hit: The Story of Take Me Out to the Ball Game" by Robert Thompson, Tim Wiles, and Andy Strasberg.

Andy visited the Laguna Beach Historical Society last year, searching for photographs, personal recollections by some of our long time Laguna Beach residents and baseball fans, and tid-bits that could be tracked down through our archives. It was great fun to work with Andy, and well known locals and history buffs Jane Janz, Gene Felder, and Arnold Hano (who has an incredible personal background with the history of baseball), as we networked with local baseball fans and visited Riddle Field looking for clues about Jack Norworth's influence in Laguna Beach. Jack Norworth wrote the lyrics of the song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and helped found the Laguna Beach Little League in 1952.

Cracker Jacks honored Jack on the 50th anniversary of writing the lyrics by giving Laguna Beach Little League the Jack Norworth Trophy. This was presented to Jack at a 1958 Dodgers game along with life passes to any Major League baseball game. The trophy is still awarded each year to the league champions. Jack's other tradition is still in place after 46 seasons: every ball player is given a box of Cracker Jacks at opening day ceremonies."

Both programs will be at the Laguna Beach City Council Chambers at 505 Forest Avenue and are from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. The public is invited and there is no charge.

We always enjoy welcoming new visitors to the Murphy-Smith bungalow. And, this month board member Ed Perry, 93 years old as of 2 weeks ago, was delighted to host a group of neatly uniformed and curious Cub Scouts. So come visit the Murphy-Smith bungalow at 278 Ocean Avenue. It is open to the public at no charge most every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We need more volunteers to achieve the board's top priority to ensure that the house is open to be enjoyed and experienced by members and the public. If interested, call Gene Felder at 939-7257.

To view photos and more information see our web site at www.LagunaHistory.org.

2008 Dues now due, send \$15 per person, \$25 per household or \$50 per business or organization to Laguna Beach Historical Society, 278 Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach CA 92651

Name _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

FAX: _____ email: _____