



## **City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402**

### **LIBRARY NEWS JULY 2011**

By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

#### **ALICE HALL'S PHOTOGRAPH PROJECT**

Readers of my newsletters know that Alice and Roger Hall are good friends of our Society's library, and they are often in attendance during the Saturday open house. A while back I asked Alice if she would help organize some photographs that we received from the City Redevelopment Agency. They were aerial photographs and I figured there would not be too much difficulty in identifying the approximate time each was taken (based on which buildings were extant) and placing the locations. I thought somebody had taken a camera up in a small airplane, circled around downtown and snapped off a few dozen photos. Well, I thought wrong.



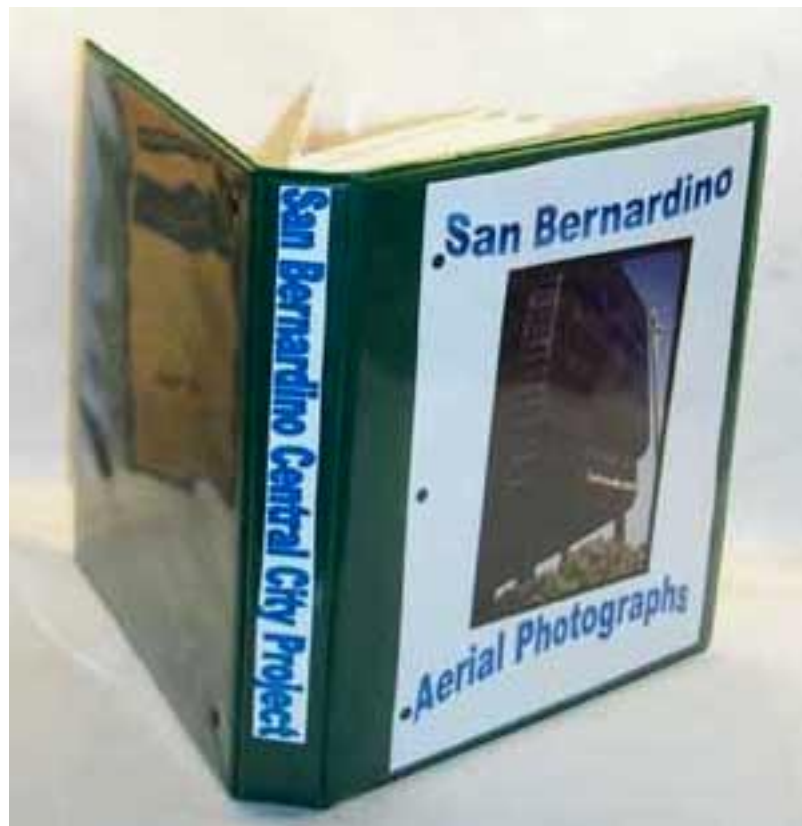
This photo shows early construction of the parking garage for the Central City Mall (extreme upper right corner) and construction of the parking garage for the City Hall (the large oblong lot with pilings, down a bit from the upper left-hand corner)

Alice studied the photographs carefully and discovered they were taken on three separate occasions. As it turns out, the photos depict the reconstruction of the downtown area in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The biggest features were the construction of the Central City Mall and City Hall, and their parking structures.

She also determined which buildings were shown and which direction was north, so that the observer did not have to go through the same exhaustive study that she did. In the photograph above, the Bank of America at Third and D Streets can be seen at the lower left (the bank faces Third Street, which is not visible in the picture). At the upper right are the Harris and Andreson buildings. The supports for the parking garages have been installed for both the Central City Mall and City Hall, but it is a very early stage of construction.

She then placed an overlay on each photo, secured only at the top so it could easily be lifted up. On each overlay she wrote street names, identified buildings, and drew a north arrow. This last was quite useful, because as the aerial photography plane circled around, the direction of each photo changed. The above picture has the overlay on it (the writing you see is Alice's); however, the north arrow cannot be seen in the photo because that portion of the picture (just a big dark strip) was cropped for this article.

Alice then put the photos in a ring binder with the three different years of each set identified. A nice cover and spine label were added, with the following result:



**The Central City Project Collection has over 40 aerial photographs**

Many thanks to Alice for spending so much time on this. I think it was well worth the effort, as the Central City project was very important for the city. The fact that the enterprise was ultimately unsuccessful makes it no less important, perhaps as an example of how not to do things.

## MAP FILES

The library has obtained two large map cases, thanks to a donation from Steven Ray Allen of S. L. R. Engineering of Riverside. The donation was arranged by Vice President Allen Bone and is a much-welcomed addition. The files will be used for both maps and oversized photographs/art work. They have been placed in the meeting hall at the entrance to the kitchen.

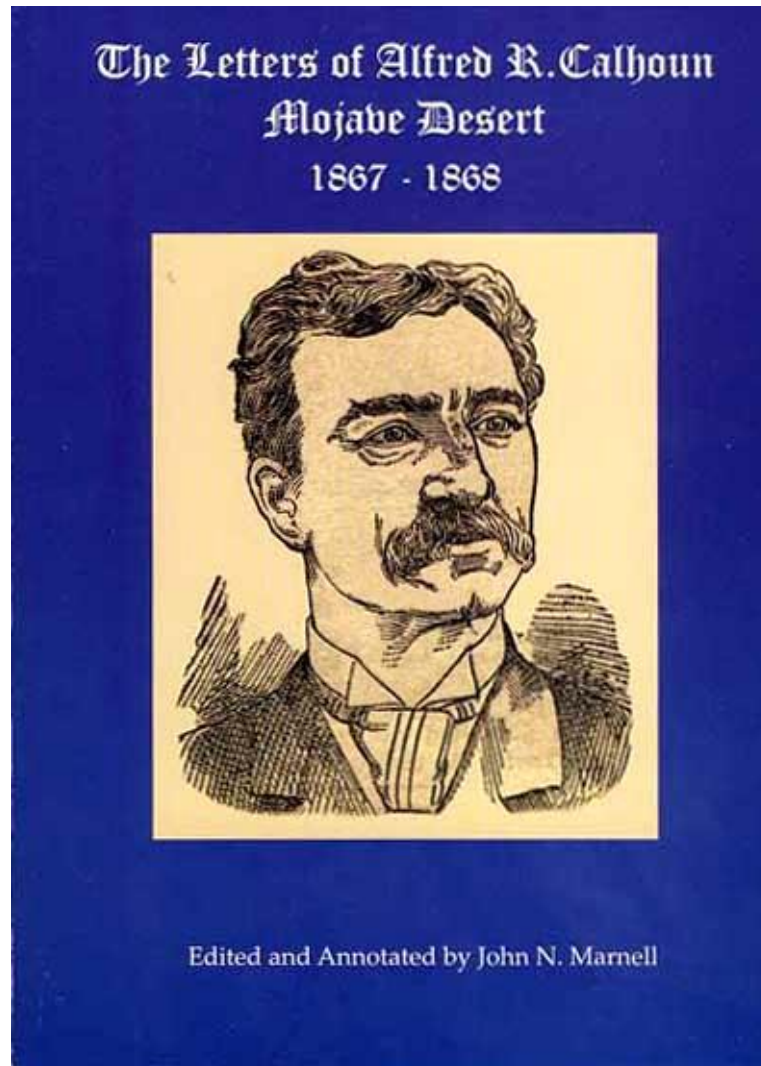


## W. A. VALE PHOTOGRAPHS

In the March 2011 issue of Library News, I did a story on William Adams Vale and two of his photographs that the Society acquired. Phil Nathanson, a Los Angeles collector of historic photographs, discovered my story through a Google search, and he requested a meeting. His specialty is Southern California stereoscopic and *carte de visite* photos, and he had several by Vale that he was hoping we could identify. The *carte de visite* (CDV), or “visiting card,” became popular in this country in about 1859. Dave Rutherford, Steve Shaw and I met with Phil for several hours on a recent Saturday, and discussed photographs. It so happens that Steve has been collecting Vale CDVs and other pioneer photographs, and has an impressive collection. Phil pointed out that major institutions only have a limited number of original Vale photos.

Phil donated a copy of his book, *The Continental Stereoscopic Company* (\$25 paperback, \$35 hard-bound), which consists of stereos of Southern California, including a number of San Bernardino and Arrowhead Springs. He informed us he is planning a book on Vale, so we ran him copies of what we had, and he promised to send us copies of what he had. Later we received from him a compact disc with 26 scans of Vale photographs, although this number includes the back of several of them. The backs contain data that can be used to date the photos. Phil mentioned that he would be most interested in contacting a member of the Vale family, so if anybody has a lead, please let me know. Thank goodness we have saved at least a fairly good representation of this important photographer’s pioneer work.

## BOOK REVIEW



Front cover of the latest book from the Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, this being No. 28 in the series

There is a new book out that is worthy of your consideration: *The Letters of Alfred R. Calhoun, Mojave Desert, 1867-1868*, edited and annotated by John N. Marnell. This book is about a part of the railroad survey from Kansas to California. I am familiar with the subject because of my research on Major Maximilian Franz Otto Von Strobel (my essay on Strobel is due to be published soon by the Mohave Historical Society). I wish the Calhoun book had been available earlier, because in its foreword Dennis Casebier gives a succinct account of issues and events associated with what was intended to be the second transcontinental railroad in the U.S., then called the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division. I had to read through the chapters of many books just to arrive at the facts distilled by Casebier.

Calhoun was a correspondent who accompanied the survey team across the country and wrote of his experiences for his employer, a newspaper in Philadelphia. Seventy of his letters were published, but this book contains only the 14 that pertain to the Mojave Desert, beginning with a communiqué from Wickenburg, Arizona Territory, and ending with one sent from Tehachapi, California.

He was a talented and entertaining writer, and his experiences and exploits across the western half of the continent make for interesting reading. Along the route he writes about the people he meets, and because

those were still pioneer times for most of the remote posts, his narrative fills in some gaps in this important period. Editor John Marnell has provided biographical sketches of the people Calhoun met, and descriptions of the places mentioned, so that the reader most likely is more informed about many of the characters and locales than was Calhoun. Add to this the photographs, maps, illustrations, documents and scholarly references, and it is a *tour de force*.

John told me how he hunted down information for the book. He began with the outstanding desert collection at the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Center at Goffs, an institution established by Dennis Casebier. He then turned to the Internet, to libraries and books, journals and similar references, and he even tracked down descendants and discussed their ancestors with them. All the while, he kept his eye out for illustrations. Two examples of the latter for San Bernardino County are the photographs of Cottonwood Station and Atkinson's Ranch, or Station, both on the Mojave River. These photos are exceedingly rare and their existence was hitherto unknown to local historians.

Another example of a local photo is this one on the right of Indian Agent John Feudge. In the book, Marnell cropped the picture to show only the head, but he forwarded to me the entire photograph for use in the newsletter. During the railroad survey, Feudge resided in Arizona, but moved to San Bernardino in 1868. He had a ranch at Baseline Street and Sterling Avenue, where he lived until the end of his life.

John Marnell also mentioned how difficult it was for him to take all of the information he compiled, much of it on persons of significant local interest, and reduce it to just what was pertinent to the book.



**Colonel John Feudge**

The introductory chapter of the book is fairly brief, but there are important events that lead up to the start of Calhoun's trip, including the fact that he fell out of favor with the head of the survey and was nearly expelled. Also included is a very good biography of Calhoun written by Marnell. This publication is a tremendous addition to the growing literature of the desert, and more particularly of the San Bernardino desert.

## **DAVE RUTHERFURD DONATION**

Dave has been a good friend of the Heritage House, donating photographs, originals and copies, for a number of years. He has also made himself available for his expertise on San Bernardino photos. He has been a docent at the Arda M. Haenszel California Room for many years, and has made it his specialty to identify pictures.

Dave showed up for the Phil Nathanson meeting (see above), and brought along 11 photographs for our library. Nine are of the construction of the U.S. Post Office and go along with the construction photos featured in our May 2011 newsletter. Another is the picture below showing some gentlemen sitting on benches in Pioneer Park. Written on the negative is the date January 7, 1906, which was a Sunday.



**Three gentlemen in their Sunday best, reading their newspapers in Pioneer Park**

The last of Dave's donation is the following picture of the Carnegie Library at 4th and D Streets. It is undated, but it seems to be an early view. Many of you probably remember the building. It was torn down about 1960. Maybe a bit earlier. What is desirable about this photo is that it is by the Jones Brothers, who had a photographic supply store on Third Street, which opened sometime after the turn of the century, and closed about 1920. It is said the stock was sold to Walter Steele, and that many of the photos of San Bernardino from the first two decades of the 1900s are by the Jones Brothers.



**Carnegie Library, 4th and D Streets**

## WILLIAM F. HOLCOMB PHOTOGRAPH

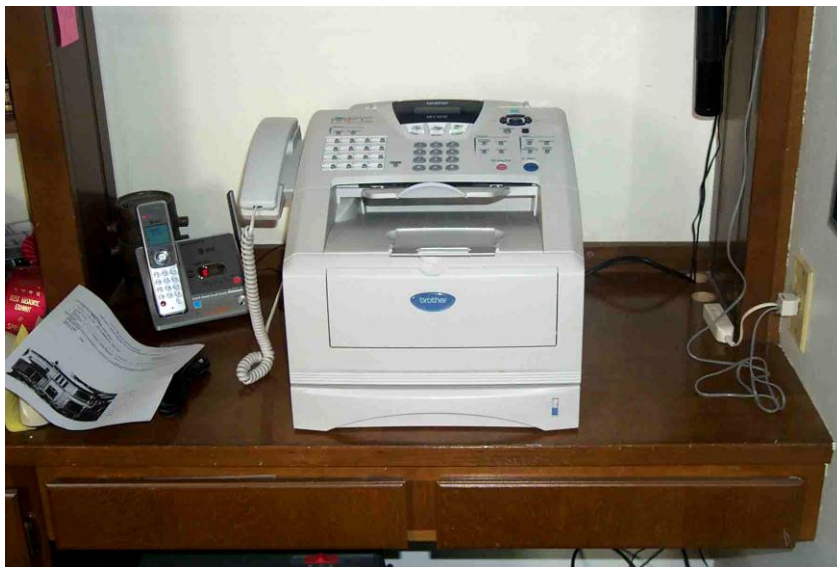
As most readers know, both William Robert (Bob) Holcomb and his wife, Penny, passed away recently. Bob Holcomb, San Bernardino's longest-serving mayor, was the custodian of many of the artifacts of his ancestor, William Francis Holcomb. Included in the collection is a gun, a miner's gold rocker, a photograph and a journal. The photograph (shown below) has been widely reprinted—in fact, it is featured on our website under “Links”—but the Holcomb family's photo is the original and is of such a quality that it can be scanned and enlarged. Greatly enlarged—to life-size.

President Steve Shaw had been looking for just such a photograph. Thanks to the Holcomb family's generosity, he was able to scan the picture at a high resolution, crop it so that only William F. is shown, and enlarge it to about six feet in height. The resulting photo will be used in a display at the Santa Fe Railroad Museum.

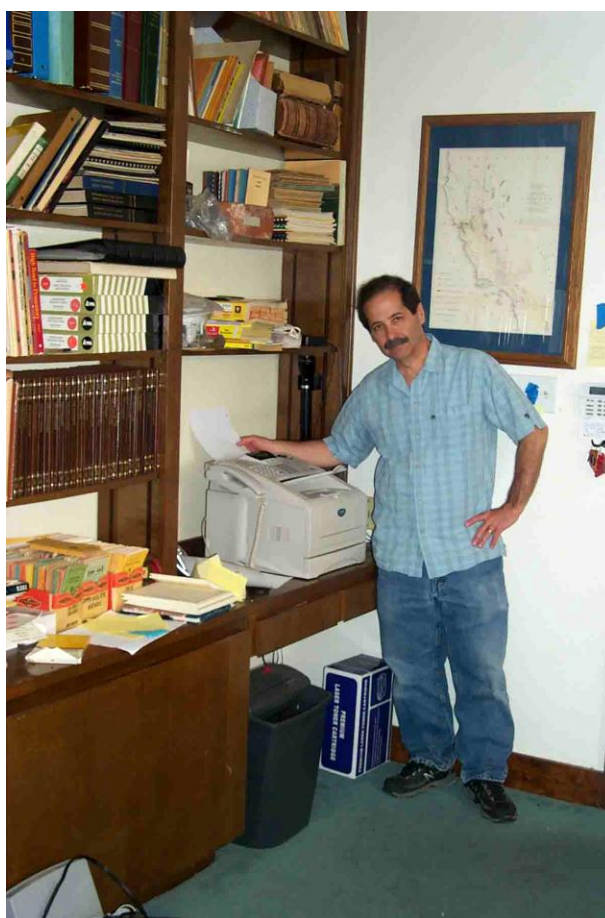


Original photo of five of San Bernardino's intrepid hunters. William F Holcomb is at the far left.

## MARK LANDIS DONATES LASER PRINTER



Above is our new high-quality copier/scanner/fax machine donated by member Mark Landis, another friend of the library. The photograph below shows Mark running a test copy through the printer shortly after he installed it. He also gave us a backup toner cartridge. Thank you, Mark!



**Saving The Past For The Future Since 1888**