

## THE KOSMON COMMUNITY IN SACRATERO VALLEY

“Sacramento Valley is under water now. They’ve built a dam near where the Indian Burial Ground used to be. It took decades to silt the coarse sand to hold water, and dramatic changes in weather patterns have prevented the Sweetwater from going dry as it used to every summer. So, with several dams, a large bit of the Sweetwater valley has become part of the San Diego water supply system. But, in 1949, a young man showed his family the valley, still much as he remembered it, except that ranch houses, windmills and water towers had been hauled away. The only familiar man-made sights: the ancient metates where the ghosts of squaws still seemed to grind their corn and the four standing timbers, each some 14 inches square, which had once supported the Kosmon windmill.”

Victor Head, now ninety years of age, wrote the above passage in one of a series of articles he wrote about the area once known as Sacramento Valley—located at the northeast of what is now Loveland Reservoir. Bell Bluff Road, or trail, crosses the Sweetwater River and goes east just north of the reservoir; perhaps well up the slope of the north ridge bounding the valley. Leland Fetzer, in his book *San Diego County Place Names A to Z*, states the correct spelling is Sacramento Valley—opening to Japatul Valley and further states that it is not shown on the USGS maps. The Spanish spelling is Zacatero. Beatrice LaForce calls it Sacramento Valley and refers briefly to “The Kosmon Home” in her book, *Alpine, History of a Mountain Settlement*. Referring to the community, she states “...few, indeed, know that it began as the homestead of the Micheler family from old Bohemia.” The Micheler family was one of the first families to settle in Alpine.

Spending some years of his youth, following the divorce of his parents, in the Alpine area during the 1920’s, Mr. Head has written priceless documents recalling the time spent here. One of the most interesting of these recollections deals with the Kosmon Community which for some decades was located in Sacramento Valley. A group of Faithists had built a ranch which was used as a refuge for children from a San Diego orphanage as well as children like Vic and his siblings. The Kosmons (Faithists) cared for and nurtured the children and allowed them the wonder of growing up surrounded by nature and beauty. The following are the lyrics to one of the Kosmon’s lovely hymns, sung to the tune of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” a Christian hymn.

There is a light that cannot fade,  
a light forever true,  
It knows not time by sun or shade,  
but thrills all nature through.

It thrills all nature through with love,  
it thrills all nature through.  
It knows not time by sun or shade,  
but thrills all nature through.

Mr. Head recalls hearing the Christian hymn, at age ten, when he attended church with Joe and Bertha Foss and being shocked at the very different lyrics. The Kosmon Faithist Bible is called Oahspe, which means sky-earth-spirit. One of the teachings in Oahspe is to set up communities with “fallen angels” and orphans and to teach them about what is achievable, beyond the normal five human senses. The Kosmons in Sacramento Valley did just that.

Sister Mary Elliott and Brother Tate cared for the children. Mr. Head’s rich stories recall that Brother Tate was perhaps 88 years old--his chin was never far from his knees and he always had a twinkle in his eyes. Brother Ed Brower tended the vegetable garden that was grown with water provided by a 70-foot

high windmill and water tower. Brother Raymond Lampet was the bigger-than-life cook who sometimes frightened, but always loved, the children. Sister Mary, about 80 years of age, was very much loved and would cradle the children in her arms to comfort them. The Kosmon Community left its mark on the area and the children who were raised there left with an enduring spirit of respect for all of nature.

Check out our website: [www.alpinehistory.org](http://www.alpinehistory.org) for more of Mr. Head's writings—and check back often for updates! Be sure to mark your calendar—the annual Alpine History Day celebration will be held on Saturday, June 7, 2008, from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the museum on Tavern Road. There will be food, fun and fellowship—don't miss it!

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