

A GLIMPSE AT ASPENDELL HISTORY

How did this community located at 8,500 feet in the Eastern Sierra, as so aptly stated by Ken Stroman as his “Home of Heavenly Heights,” get its start?

Around 1961, Gene Scherer of Sierra Development Company (located in Long Beach, CA) visited the area and fell in love with the Bishop Creek Canyon area. He purchased 120 acres of land and named it Sierra Estates. One of the investors, Dick Aldcroft, suggested that they change the name of the development. He wanted to call it Aspendell because of the beautiful stands of aspen in the area. The name was changed and remains today.

On December 19, 1961, the California Secretary of State granted Articles of Incorporation to Gene Scherer to establish the Aspendell Mutual Water Company. E.L. Scherer, Charles Scherer Jr. and Gordon Holmes served as the first directors.

Gene started developing the area with monies from a group of investors from Southern California. They laid out the tract and built a few “spec” houses to see how sales would go. In developing the land they put in underground utilities and a community sewer system with two large septic tanks (below the pump house behind the present firehouse). They put a leach field below the reservoir on the other side of Highway 168. In July 1969, they turned the water company over to the Aspendell residents. This is the water company that serves Tracts 1 & 3 today. Sales went very well, and in June 1978 they were granted Articles of Incorporation for the Alpine Water Company that serves Tract 2, and lots in that area were sold.

The first purchaser of property was Sherman Stein in December 1962. The Steins still own their property today. The first full-time resident was Claud Gitchell, who moved to Aspendell in 1967. In 1970, Jim and Lois Archer bought a home in Aspendell. In July 1972, the firehouse was built. Jim and Lois Archer drove a fire truck they acquired from La Jolla to the new firehouse in Aspendell.

For a period of time the Aspendell Mutual Water Company was the only group to represent the community. Jim and Lois Archer saw the need for a separate independent entity to better represent property owners in important decisions. The Aspendell Property Owners Association was formed and remains a voice for the entire community today.

For more information about the area, read: “The Cardinal Mine, A Ghost of the Past” by Signe E. Nakashima. Also recommended: *Tales of Aspendell*, a CD with interviews from Jim Archer by Aspendell resident Laurel Walters. It has many interesting facts about the area, and gives a detailed look at the community, its history, organizations, plants and wildlife.