

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER



Wolf Store

April 2021  
Volume 21 Issue 4

*It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Temecula Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.*

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## The Little House in Temecula

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Roger wanted that little house. He really wanted it. It was so cute. He wanted to move it onto his property. He had eyed it with envy for several years. He would circle around to drive by it a second or third time going very slowly, studying every detail. He planned how he would move it and pictured how it would look at his property across town.

It wasn't that he needed the building. His lot near Old Town already held his historic 1880s house, an old tank house, a barn, and a firehouse. Every time he thought about the little house, his doubts argued against his intense desires to own it. He reasoned the city officials would never issue a permit to move it and it would never be approved for its original use.

But the little house was so cute and so unique. It was probably the last of its kind in Temecula. Roger reasoned that if he didn't ask for it, someday it would be torn down and lost forever.

One day Roger stopped and knocked on the door of the bigger house at the front of the property. While he waited for someone to answer the door he thought about leaving for fear the owner would laugh at him. Roger practiced how he would say he was a member of the historical society and had a special interest in preserving old buildings. He cleared his throat nervously and pasted a smile on his face.

His smile must have been contagious, because when Ernestine came to the door, she smiled back. Roger stammered his pre-rehearsed lines, and before he could finish. Ernestine assured him that he could have it.

"It is a nuisance, and it is old. I have meant to remove it for the past

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# The Little House in Temecula

several years,” Ernestine told him. “I guess I’m a little sentimental about the little house my dad built back in 1927.” She laughed. “It served the family well, but hasn’t been used for about twenty years.”

She told Roger the door wasn’t locked and offered him a look inside. He struggled with the weathered door and kicked a few weeds and stones out of the way. When his eyes adjusted to the dark, he stood and stared in awe. What a perfect little house it was. It was just the right shape and size. It even had a vintage metal bracket attached to one wall.

Roger had a song in his heart as he walked away from the little house. It was his! He called a friend, and they made plans to move the little house with a big pickup truck.

On a cool morning, Roger and his friend went to move Ernestine’s little house. They had straps and braces and nails. In no time at all they swept away the 8-legged occupants. They braced the little house and tipped it up onto the truck bed of the pickup. They smoothed the ground where the little house had sat and started toward Roger’s place on Pujol Street.

They didn’t have a pilot car with a *wide load* sign. They didn’t have a permit or a police escort. The two men just drove the pickup truck carefully through the streets of Old Town Temecula, with the little house lying on its side in the back of the pickup truck on the way to its new home.

The two men placed the little house on Roger’s property, at a distance from the main house, positioning it so the door opened toward the hill. Roger felt proud. He finally owned the little house that Ernestine’s father built.

The little outhouse had a new home.

**Note:** The “little house” has been moved again, this time to the backyard of our Little Temecula History Center



where it is undergoing restoration. It is sure to be a delight to our many visitors. Come by and see it on a Sunday afternoon.

The little structure originally stood at the northwest corner of Fifth and Mercedes Streets.

We also salvaged a vintage rose bush from the property that now thrives at Wolf’s Tomb.

There is one more outhouse in Old Town located behind Hotel Temecula.

## BOOK REPORT

### “Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer – Nathan Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend”

This book is primarily about the multiple archaeological digs that took place in and around the homestead cabin property that Nate Harrison occupied for years on Mt. Palomar. Nathan Harrison, a legend in San Diego County especially in the Mt. Palomar region, is also part of the lore of this area.

The author Dr. Seth Mallios, is an anthropology professor at San Diego State University, and director of South Coastal Information Center. Dr. Mallios was involved in the archaeological evaluation and supervision of the sites known to have been part of Nate Harrison’s years on Mt. Palomar and the surrounding area.

This is not a novel, but rather the appropriate docu-

mentation of the efforts and findings during the explorations which covered multiple focused on-site excavations beginning in 2003, and then again in 2007 and beyond. Photographing, analyzing and documenting their findings was a big part of the overall project. Lots of footnotes, and references. Many photos of the objects they found including his notable watch chain and fob, along with remnants of his ever present pipe.

Certainly Nate’s personal history and life’s adventures are recapped as best as can be, given the tales and larger than life lore that surrounded him, especially in his later life in the Mr. Palomar, Rincon and north San Diego County area. – **Dick Fox**

# The Little House by the Side of the Road

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Call it an outhouse, latrine, privy, or the little house by the side of the road, it is the same. Say you are going to take a pit stop, see Uncle John, Aunt Mary, Mrs. Murphy, or to see a man about a dog, you are joining the rest of the human race in taking care of business. Midwesterners who planted lilac bushes outside the outhouse door would say they were going to smell the lilacs.

While people in remote areas of the United States still rely on outhouses, most of us have experienced primitive substitutes for plumbing only when camping, or when in dire straits during travel. Backpackers carry a small shovel to cover what they leave behind, using trees and shrubs to provide shelter and privacy.

Cleaning supplies kept in little houses include catalogue pages, newspapers, corncobs, leaves, or the soft wrappers from peach crates.

While building an outhouse, one may question how large to make the holes in the seat plank. Little holes were made for children to reduce their risk of falling in. Family outhouses often had two holes, and some were outfitted with privacy barriers between the two. Some fancier outhouses featured comfortable seats and lids, decorative paper holders, or flower vases.

Outhouses are quaint reminders of an American tradition. There were often a couple of multi-hole versions behind schools and country churches. Only in America they were decorated with star or crescent moon, to guide the illiterate. The moon indicated the little house for the ladies, and the star marked the one for men.

Lest an enemy sneak up on a man while his pants were down, gun ports were put into latrines during the settlement of the Old West.

The usual setup for American outhouses was a wooden structure with a two-hole plank over a pit, set as far from the main house as possible, but within a practical walking distance. Often a screen was put in the eaves for ventilation, and a large bush hid the door, in case occupants wanted to leave the door open for air and to let out flies and hornets.

Frequent trips to the outhouse made a well-beaten path to follow. A faithful dog would accompany his master as far as the door, waiting patiently outside. A cat would come inside, if allowed, and show its affection by rubbing the ankles of the person preoccupied with other matters.

Lye was used to keep insect population in check, to neutralize odors, and to disintegrate solid material. Ashes, a plentiful commodity in homes where wood was burned for cooking and warmth, turn into a rich alkaline source of lye. When fireplaces were swept, ashes were put into a bucket and placed in the outhouse to shovel into the pit when needed for sanitation.

Sometimes family members complained about how long others spent in the outhouse, when they were anxious to use it. Perhaps the occupant wanted to read the wiping material before disposing of it. Or perhaps it was the only place a person could enjoy some privacy and solitude.

Oceanside author Victor Villasenor tells how his mother would meditate while sitting in their rustic *bano* in a Corona, California barrio. With a Bible in one hand, a cigarette between her teeth and a glass of whiskey in the other hand, she would visit with God and the Virgin Mary and get direction for guiding her family.

About thirty years ago, portable outhouses became big business. Today, these facilities are available for short or long leases, and are semi-permanent in some locations. The companies offer pickup and delivery of the portables, and they provide paper supplies and weekly maintenance and cleaning. Although some are simply plastic variations on the theme of the traditional outhouse, some companies offer chemical disinfecting tanks and sometimes feature small sinks for hand washing.

Whether we call our indoor facilities the reading room or the bathroom, memories of the room with the porcelain throne and experiences in modern portable potties will never compare to the stories of the historical little house by the side of the road.



# President's Message

April, 2021



Spring 2021 and we have made it to the red tier! For those in the future, that means many activities can again be held indoors, even if at reduced capacity. Our properties at the Vail Ranch Headquarters and the Little Temecula History Center (the red barn west of Kohl's) are open.

One of the greatest pleasures of serving as president has been to work with some of the nicest, most reliable, and interesting people in our valley. I want to thank our volunteers for maintaining our Antique Store, History Center, and kiddie train at whatever capacity was allowed this past year, all while attending to strict CoVID protocols like taking temperatures, mask wearing, and sanitizing surfaces. We have had wonderful volunteers not only staff our locations this year but also folks with online skills help with graphics and indexing.

Our Facebook page has thrived and we have now completed a year of meeting by Zoom. We just funded and completed a video tour of the Vail Ranch Headquarters to be used for our local school children when their annual in-person tours were postponed. We may be old folks but the pandemic pushed us into technology that has provided video documentation we may never have gotten to otherwise.

If you would like to become more involved, consider joining the Society. Your dues go toward our mission of identifying, preserving and promoting the history of our valley. If you are interested in volunteering at our history sites or in some other way, please let us know. We look forward to renewing in person presentations and our regular tours of area historic sites and we can't wait to see you all again.

— Shari

## Membership News

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

*Tom Frew*

### THANK YOU FOR RENEWING:

*Manny Robles & Linda Del Castillo*

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**Friday, April 2** — 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. VW Club meeting. VW car club will park their cars on property during Hours of the event.

**Saturday, April 3** — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Spring Jamboree Vendor market, music, scavenger hunts, photo ops and lots of spring décor.

**Sunday, April 4** — 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service by Reliance Church — open to the public.

**Tuesday, April 6** — Every Tuesday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Farmer's Market at Vail HQ. Come get fresh veggies, tamales, empanadas, and artisan craft items.

**Sunday, April 11** — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vail HQ open Sunday Funday, with activities and vendors.

**Sunday, April 18** — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday Funday, Event with activities and vendors.

**Monday, April 26** — 6 p.m. TVHS invites all to watch Zoom presentation by Steve Williamson about Murrieta Hot Springs history. Check TVHS Website for the link to Zoom.

**Friday, April 30** — 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Starlight Bazaar With vendors and activities.

## Vail Ranch Virtual Field Trip Video Finished

The project to create a virtual video tour of the Vail HQ and History Center has been completed. The intended target audience was to be those grade school students who normally visit and tour both facilities as part of their local history studies. With pandemic restraints an alternative was needed, and once again Rebecca Farnbach went into action. She created, organized and directed the efforts of many society members, while camera crews from JDS Studios captured the action. The end result is a wonderful 23 minute video of the legacy of early Temecula and the Wolf Store / Vail Ranch eras.

A copy of the video was provided to the Temecula Unified School District for their review. We received the following thank you letter from Anna Tapley, Director of Curriculum: *"On behalf of TVUSD, THANK YOU for creating the Vail Ranch Virtual Field Trip! Your passion and dedication for our community to know and understand our history comes alive through this heart-project. You have created a learning experience our third graders will enjoy and learn from for years to come. Thank you for leaving your legacy with our future community in the students we serve. I have to share that I have also learned a tremendous amount from watching this video! The learning experience is exceptional and we are truly grateful to have your expertise shared with our students.*

*With great appreciation,  
Anna Tapley*

# 100 Years Ago in Temecula

Selected items from Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column – April 1921

## Issue of April 1, 1921

By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Mrs. W.M. Friedemann was the hostess in the Whist club last Wednesday evening. The home was beautifully decorated with California poppies and ferns. Mrs. Friedemann and William Sommerville won the beautiful prizes. Refreshments of ice cream, cake and punch were served.

Hampton Watts is the guest of A.F. Nienke and family this week.

Dr. and Mrs. Froom and family, Mr. and Mrs. Bemis and Miss Hattie Welty picnicked at Pala on Sunday.

George A. Burnham and family motored to Escondido Sunday.

James Nienke of Los Angeles spent the weekend with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Nienke.

Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Barton and O. E. Lawson motored to Santa Ana Sunday.

Another of those big dances Saturday night, everyone welcome.

Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann and son, Billie, motored to Oceanside Sunday.

Mrs. A.F. Hall was in Los Angeles several days last week.

V.B. Sands and family attended the Knights Templar Annual Easter Service at San Bernardino Sunday afternoon.

A. Knott and family spent several days the first of the week in Long Beach.

The Temecula ball team played the Oceanside team at Oceanside Sunday afternoon. The score was three to two in favor of Oceanside.

Mr. Place will open an ice cream parlor in the old lumber yard office the first of April. Mr. Nienke is now remodeling the building for this purpose.

Frank Burnham and wife were Los Angeles visitors several days last week.

*(Researcher's Note: This is the last entry by Mrs. V.B. Sands for 1921. Unfortunately, there is no Temecula gossip column from April 8, 1921 – May 13, 1921. On May 20, 1921, Elizabeth "Libbie" Nienke makes her Temecula gossip column writing debut. Mrs. Sands resumed writing the column on February 10, 1922 after Elizabeth Nienke went to Junior College in Riverside.)*

## Temecula Boy Married

(Author Unknown)

Charles Escallier, son of Jacques Escallier of Temecula was married April 27th in Los Angeles to Miss Vivian Agoure of that city. Charles and his bride will return to Detroit, Michigan, where he was formerly employed for over a year with the Ford Motor Company. The event is particularly interesting to the people of

Temecula and Elsinore valleys as the Escallier family are known over all of this section, Mr. Escallier Sr. having resided in Temecula over thirty years. Charles had a most interesting and exciting experience in service during the world war, having been eighteen months in France, his father's native country, where he served in the Motor Transport Unit. He was with the Cique of Verdun and has a war record which, in itself, would make an interesting story. He is said to have one of the finest collections of war souvenirs that has been brought home by any of our soldier boys. Congratulations and best wishes are being extended to Mr. Escallier and his bride by his many friends here.

## This Month in History

**April 3, 1860** - In the American West, the Pony Express service began as the first rider departed St. Joseph, Missouri. For \$5 an ounce, letters were delivered 2,000 miles to California within ten days. The famed Pony Express riders each rode from 75 to 100 miles before handing the letters off to the next rider. A total of 190 way stations were located about 15 miles apart. The service lasted less than two years, ending upon the completion of the overland telegraph.

**April 3, 1865** - The Confederate capital of Richmond surrendered to Union forces after the withdrawal of General Robert E. Lee's troops.

**April 6, 1917** - Following a vote by Congress approving a declaration of war, the U.S. entered [World War I](#) in Europe.

**April 8, 1913** - The 17th [Amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution was ratified requiring direct popular election of U.S. senators. Previously, they had been chosen by state legislatures.

**April 9, 1865** - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in the village of Appomattox Court House. The surrender occurred in the [home of Wilmer McLean](#). Terms of the surrender, written by General Grant, allowed Confederates to keep their horses and return home. Officers were allowed to keep their swords and side arms.

**April 12, 1945** - President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) died suddenly at Warm Springs, Georgia, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He had been President since March 4, 1933, elected to four consecutive terms and had guided America out of the Great Depression and through World War II.

**April 14, 1865** - President [Abraham Lincoln](#) was shot and [mortally wounded](#) while watching a performance of *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater in Washington. He was taken to a [nearby house](#) and died the following morning at 7:22 a.m.