

Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

May 2016

Volume 1 – Issue 2

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

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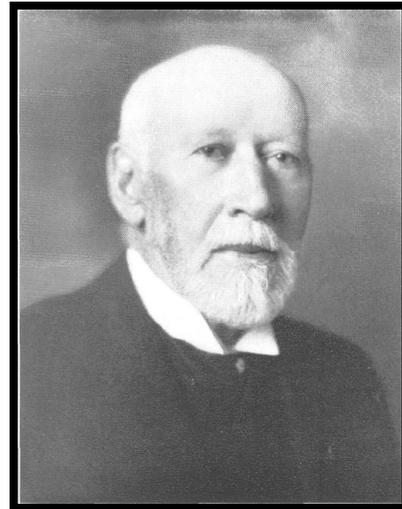
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Newsletter Editor
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Juan Murrietta [sic], Temecula Pioneer, Tells Riversiders of Early Days

(Reprint: May 14, 1930, Riverside Daily Press)

While the Ramona Pageant just now is picturing to thousands in the San Jacinto-Hemet Valley the scenes associated with the days when the Temeculas, the Sobobas and the Cahuillas were wont to assemble at sheep-shearing time, perhaps none of them are aware of the fact that there is still living the person who introduced the sheep-raising industry in the Temecula region of Riverside County.

The man who helped to make romantic atmosphere for Helen Hunt Jackson's fascinating story is now approaching his 90th year. He is Juan Murrietta whose home is in Van Nuys. By special appointment, S. C. Evans, in company with Miguel Estudillo, met old Juan in Los Angeles a few days ago and spent a most interesting season with him in listening to his reminiscences of the early sixties, particularly his recollections of life in the territory that was sliced off from San Diego County when Riverside County was formed.

Mr. Evans states that some very valuable historical material was secured from the interview. It was during Murrietta's sojourn at Temecula that the first white child was born in that region. This distinction belongs to Mrs. Ben Barnett, who resides at Temecula, and whose mother is still living there. It goes without saying that Mr. Evans will lose no time in comparing notes with this pioneer and securing from her more first-hand data of a historical nature, linked as that history is with the glamour of an older day in California.

(Continued on Page 2)

Calendar Of Events

Monthly Meetings

Wednesday, May 4th
at 6:00 p.m. at the
Jennings residence

Wednesday, June 8th
at 6:00 p.m. at the
Jennings residence

Local Events

Murrieta Public Library
Community Room
Monday, June 6,
6:00 p.m.

The Jennings Family
Speaker Presentation:

Annette and Pat Jennings
will present "Murrieta,
Then and Now", a
photograph show of the
area from the 1950s
through current times.
They will also bring
materials from their
collection

Saturday, June 25th, City
of Murrieta's
25th Birthday Bash

Murrietta's property was the Pauba rancho, now well known as a dairy range, owned and operated by Vail Brothers. He employed many Indians on this rancho in the days when roving bands from Sonora made their way from Mexico en route to the pueblo of Los Angeles.

These bands, Murrietta states, numbered from 15 to 20, all armed with long knives, much like the machete. They wore sandals and were clad in pants and shirts of white cotton. They took what food they needed from the ranches through which they passed.

Murrietta revealed his shrewdness by anticipating the needs of the marauders. Upon learning that a band was approaching, he would kill three or four sheep and hang up their carcasses at a distance from the ranch house. The band would cut off what meat they wanted and made no further trouble for the rancher. An Englishman who sought to prevent this practice on the part of the marauders promptly paid for his opposition with his life.

Murrietta recalls the travels of the Franciscan padres, who as late as the sixties were making their journeys along El Camino Real to visit the various missions, planted under the supervision of Fra Junipero Serra. Murrietta was accustomed to furnishing them with food, and at times the fathers would receive a horse at his hands.

The pioneer recalls vividly the events of St. John's Day, which was then observed with games which are seldom seen now. Among these was the burying of a rooster, with only the head left above ground. The efforts of the riders to extricate the fowl as they circled with their mounts were one of the exciting events of the day. The observances were held regularly in San Bernardino and Colton in the early days.

Murrietta left Spain at the age of 17, in company with two brothers, one of whom settled in Brazil and the other in Peru. In making his way to California, Murrietta states that he touched at England, thence sailed to the island of St. Thomas, thence to Valparaiso, sailing to San Francisco after crossing the Isthmus of Panama. His brothers later made their way to California, and the three took up property in the vicinity of Merced and San Luis Obispo.

In those days it was not uncommon, Murrietta states, to see elk in the Kern County district in herds which would require a full hour to pass. Many deer could be seen in these herds. The arrival of the pot-hunter of later days spelled destruction for these animals.

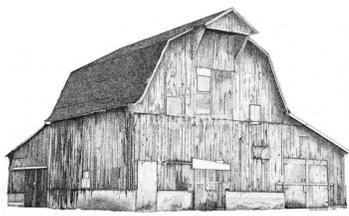
From the San Luis Obispo ranch Murrietta drove sheep in bands of 1500 to the Temecula country, where good ranges were available at that time. Sheep-shearing time became a real event in the life of the Indian tribes round about.

Mr. Evans states that Murrietta's mind is clear and his recollection of the early days vivid. A man who has lived in the California sunshine for most of his life, he is still in good health and in full possession of his faculties.

SAVE OUR HISTORY

Top Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties 2016

1. Burnett/Lakeman House
2. Howard Sykes Ranch on Adams Avenue
3. Raymond Thompson House
4. Doolittle House
5. Judge William Thorne/Curtis Thompson House
6. Hutchinson House
7. Buchanan House
8. 1910 House (24370 Adams Ave)
9. Sadie Thompson House (24570 Washington Ave) built in 1937
10. Murrieta Equestrian Center



We would like to introduce our first executive board members. Left to right: Jenny Mayoral (Treasurer), Jeffery Harmon (President), Annette Jennings (Vice President), and Carol Sierra (Secretary).

From the Murrieta Archives:

By Olive Miller

May 6, 1921

Tuesday afternoon the many friends of Miss June Thompson went to her home and surprised her with a miscellaneous shower. Many beautiful as well as useful articles were given her for use in her new home as she will in the near future, become the bride of George Andrews of Fillmore. After a very pleasant afternoon spent socially, delicious refreshments of cake and tea was served.

May 13, 1921

A home camp meeting will be held on the Holiness church lot while the new church is being erected. The pastor of the church will help with the building. Mrs. Laura Goings and Miss Esther Goings, colored singing evangelists from our Nashville district will be with us and assist during the entire meeting.

The meeting will begin Sunday morning, May 15 at eleven o'clock. Services every night at 7:30, everyone is cordially invited to attend the meetings.

May 20, 1921

Murrieta is having a boom in building, three houses going up within a block of each other – the Holiness church, Tom Freeman is putting up a dwelling house and the Winter ice cream parlor.

May 27, 1921

D.N. Buchanan of Riverside donated a new handmade pulpit for the Holiness Church here.

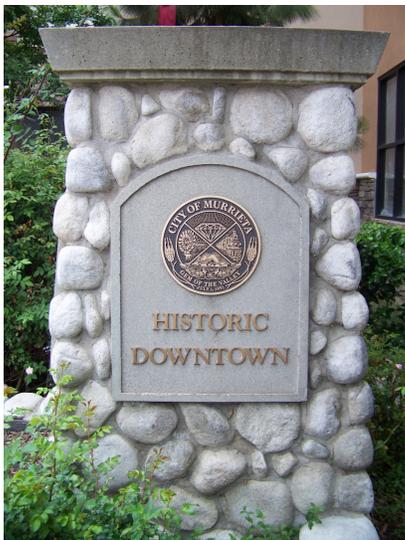
Monthly Meeting Location

The Society is in need of a monthly meeting location that can hold up to fifty people.

The Society has no funds to pay for a location.

If you have a free monthly meeting space, please contact us as soon as possible.

Thank you.



President's Message

Jeffery Harmon

April was a productive month as we moved forward laying the foundation for the society. We have now assembled our executive officers: Annette Jennings, Vice President, Jenny Mayoral, Treasurer, and Carol Sierra, Secretary. I want to thank each of them for volunteering their time and service as we continue to work together in fulfilling our mission statement.

We would also like to thank Pat and Annette Jennings for hosting a booth showcasing some of Murrieta's historic artifacts at the 69th Annual Fireman's BBQ on April 24th. The event provided the society an opportunity to share its vision with the city and the residents about the importance of preserving and promoting Murrieta's rich and diverse history. Over thirty people signed our interests list!

Then on April 28th, the Jennings hosted a booth at the Murrieta Arts Council's first *Earth Day Art Walk* in Historic Downtown Murrieta. The booth was located on the front lawn of Murrieta's historic 1940 post office. More people came to the booth, asked questions and signed our interests list! We would also like to thank the Jennings for establishing our P.O. Box number!

Our Public Relations Committee has been working feverishly to promote our society. Our Facebook page has over 75 "likes" within two months! An Instagram page has been set up, and a phone number established. A makeshift banner was put in place, information flyers created, and the list of activities continues. Thank you to our PR crew for helping us to have a successful launch!

Finally, we need to hear from you. If you have a story to share or a historic property, we would love to know more. Please contact us and let's get together. The more we can document, the more we can preserve our heritage. Thank you for your interest in our society. Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.