



# Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 9.

September 2018

*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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The former Murrieta Woman's Club Clubhouse  
24941 Washington Ave (Photo: June 7, 2016)

## The Murrieta Woman's Club

By Jeffery Harmon

The Murrieta Woman's Club was a civic organization that served Murrieta for over forty years. Many women residents were members and volunteered their time and services for the betterment of the community and their families. The Woman's Club supported many causes, raising funds in the time of need, and provided a social outlet for the women to find strength through good times and bad.

The club began in 1915 when fourteen young married women gathered one evening at a

home. It was an informal gathering, where the ladies talked about their children and the concerns of the day. The women enjoyed their time together so much that they decided to begin meeting once a month.

As the meetings progressed, they began to study and discuss child welfare, home economics and domestic science. When America declared war on Germany and entered World War I in 1917, the women volunteered their time and talent for the Red Cross and for other war related causes. For exam-



Mrs. Alda Tarwater Wickerd  
(Source: Ron Wickerd Collection)

ple, the Young Married Women's Club met in March 1918 at Mrs. Blanch Thompson's home to hold an all-day meeting in order to sew items for Belgian children.

The club changed its name to the Entre Nous Club in May 1918. Entre Nous, which mean "between us", was the name of a college sorority. It is possible one or more club members may have belonged to the sorority.

The Riverside County Federation of Woman's Clubs held their annual meeting at Fairmount Park in Riverside on October 25, 1918. At that meeting, it was announced that the Murrieta Entre Nous Club was to be admitted into the regional organization. Six months later, on April 25, 1919, the federation

held another meeting in Beaumont to elect officers. Mrs. Alda Wickerd was named the director for Murrieta.

The Entre Nous Club conducted a benefit supper and entertainment in March 1919. The menu consisted of fresh oysters, coffee and cake. The club raised \$40, of which the net proceeds were given to the local Murrieta grammar school for improvements on the playground.

Two months later the club hosted a May festival fundraiser.

*"The Entre Nous club had a May festival at the hall Saturday night, the decorations were very nice. The baskets and flowers were sold at auction. Coffee and sandwiches, and ice cream and cake were served. Homemade candy was sold and the fish pond was soon dry of its contents. Fortunes were told. Over \$30 was taken in."* (May 9, 1919, Riverside Daily Press)

The Entre Nous Club held their annual elections in June 1919. The officers elected were: Mrs. Bess Thomas, president, Mrs. Alda Wickerd, vice president, Mrs. Elma Steinbaugh, secretary, Mrs. Allie Thompson, treasurer, and Mrs. Alda Wickerd director.

The club held monthly meetings at Guild Hall, which was owned by the Episcopal Church. It was announced in October 1919 that the club was going to purchase from Mr. Garrison two lots, one facing Washington Avenue, and the adjoining

lot facing 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue for the purpose of building a clubhouse.

In the same month, the club changed its name to the Murrieta Woman's Club. At the annual federation meeting, Murrieta club president Mrs. Bess Thomas announced the members' plans to build a concrete block clubhouse for its organization.

Mrs. Thomas explained, *"It is a great undertaking for such a small place, but we are determined to have it. We are going to manufacture our own cement blocks, to make a little money go as far as possible. Our only expense connected with them will be the cement, as the sand and the hauling of it will be donated. The forms for the blocks will be loaned to us. Then our husbands and any others, who may want to help, will put up the blocks for us. By constructing our building of these blocks we can make a few whenever we can spare the money for cement, and when we get enough for even one room, we can put it up and meet in it until the whole building is completed. The inside we will finish just as we can."* (November 11, 1919, Riverside Independent Enterprise)

For the back lot the club envisioned a playground with swings, a slide and a basketball and tennis court. When the women held their meetings at the clubhouse, they wanted a place for their children to play nearby under adult supervision.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, the club held a bazaar and cooked

food sale at the hall. They also served coffee and doughnuts for 10 cents. The proceeds received were \$25.75 and went for payments on their two lots.

A club meeting was held at Mrs. Max Barnnetto's home in February 1920. A new club constitution and bylaws were adopted. The membership age requirement was changed in hope of increasing club membership.

The next month, the members voted to file Articles of Incorporation. The five elected directors were Bess M. Thomas, Alda Wickerd, Nora Bryant, Allie Thompson and Celia Chrisman. The club was organized for the "*study and investigation of questions pertaining to public welfare. . . The club also engages in charitable, social and literary work as part of its program.*" (March 18, 1920, Riverside Daily Press)

A delegation from Murrieta attended the annual federation meeting held at Banning in April 1920 when new county officers were elected. Mrs. Alda Wickerd was named the federation's new auditor. Mrs. Charlotte Tarwater, Alda's sister-in-law, was appointed the new director for Murrieta.

Next, the Women's Club

organized the Murrieta Athletic club and the Out-Doors class for children under 18. The chief promoters were Mrs. Lulu E. Stiffler, and Mrs. Alda Wickerd.

*"The object of the class is nature study, civic improvement and domestic art in the school. It expects to take up manual training and have a military drill in the near future. It is planning a glee club for boys and girls."* (May 22, 1920, Riverside Daily Press)

An ice cream social was held at the hall at the end of May. The proceeds enabled the club to purchase three portable gasoline lamps for the newly built school auditorium.

Mrs. Elma Steinbaugh operated a county branch library in her home between 1919 and 1920. In June 1920, the library was moved to the Guild Hall. The Women's Club, through member volunteers, continued the library operation. The library was open from 2 to 5 on Thursdays and Saturdays.

The Murrieta Woman's Club did not meet during the hot summer months because they were busy. Their children were out of school and their husbands were in the fields preparing for the coming harvest.

On October 27, 1920, the county federation held their annual fall convention at Murrieta. The meeting was held in the new grammar school auditorium. The theme for the meeting was "Good Citizenship". A chicken dinner was served by the Murrieta club members. Nearly 100 club women from all over the county attended the meeting.

At the Murrieta Woman's Club November meeting, a report was given related to the topics presented at the annual meeting. Members also discussed the current political candidates, the daily issues, and the political organizations. Earlier that year, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was ratified on August 18, 1920 providing national voting rights for women. The Woman's Club provided a forum to educate and strengthen the women's voting power.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Woman's Club held a bazaar and tamale supper at the hall.

*"The main features of the bazaar were the fancy work booth presided over by Mrs. Alice Bruns, Mrs. Alice Thompson, Mrs. Edith Small, and Mrs. Celia Chrisman. Mrs. Rose Tarwater and Mrs. Orphia Miller presided over the candy booth. The apron booth was in charge*



*of Mrs. Edith Small, Mrs. Chlora Stoner, and Mrs. Nettie Lloyd. Other club women managed the supper which was served in the early evening.*” (December 19, 1920, Riverside Independent Enterprise)

The event netted the club \$155, which allowed them to pay off their debt for the two Garrison lots that they had purchased for their future clubhouse. Unfortunately, it took fourteen years before the clubhouse was built.

In January 1934, the Woman’s Club began holding monthly benefit dances, called “Old Timers’ Dance” at the school house in order to raise money to build their clubhouse.

*“More than one hundred dancers were on the floor during the evening and all remained to partake of the delicious refreshments of sandwiches, coffee and cake served at its conclusion.”* (January 25, 1934, Elsinore Leader Press)

The 24x40 feet assembly room was to be the first unit constructed. At the rear of the

building a 10x24 feet kitchen was planned. Frank Shupe was named the supervisor of the construction project and local volunteers provided the labor.

Ground was broken the first week in March. Local men gathered and poured the cement foundation. At noon, the club ladies served a potluck luncheon in picnic fashion under the trees on the grounds. The ladies continued to provide lunch for the volunteers during the several weeks of construction.

The Murrieta Woman’s Clubhouse was dedicated on Saturday, May 12, 1934. At the event there were games and sports for the children. At 5:00 p.m., a barbeque supper was served to 226 attendees. Assemblyman John Philips of Banning gave a short address. Afterwards there was a musical number, followed by an evening of dancing. At midnight a mock wedding was held in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Maurie Stoner’s thirtieth wedding anniversary.

After the celebration, a group of young married women

met at Mrs. Sylvia Stowell’s home. They discussed organizing a club for the younger women in the community. They may not have known that they were following in the club’s founding members’ footsteps.

By the 1950s, the Murrieta Woman’s Club had disorganized. Members had either moved out of the area, joined the Elsinore Woman’s Club, or became members in other local civic groups. The clubhouse was sold to the church next door, and was used for Sunday school classrooms. Even though the club was no more, Murrieta women continued to volunteer their time and services for the betterment of their community.

The Murrieta Woman’s Club provided a place where the women could come together in order to improve themselves, the lives of their families, and to work together for the needs of the community. Murrieta owes a debt of gratitude to the club members, because through their efforts, Murrieta continued to grow and prosper throughout the years.

<https://www.gofundme.com/murrietamuseum>



## Museum Update

By President Jeffery Harmon

Annette Jennings was nominated to be the museum director. She has met with museum personnel and has conducted research into policies and procedures. She has been making extensive preparations for the coming exhibits. A museum committee has been formed and each month committee members meet to discuss exhibits and museum matters.

We are excited about our upcoming fundraiser dinner and tour at the Historic Murrieta Hot Springs Resort on September 12<sup>th</sup>. The tickets have been selling quickly and we are very grateful for all those that

will be joining us for this special occasion. Funds from this event will be utilized for the new ADA ramp and for needed archival equipment at the museum.

Repairs on the historic home have continued during these hot summer days. Larry Cottingham and his team replaced several damaged boards around the foundation and Annette painted the boards. The repairs make it look good as new.

Pat Jennings made more repairs on the roof ensuring that there are no other leaks before the coming "rainy" season.

Annette and a group of LDS volunteers cleaned the donated furniture and display cases. The furniture was then moved into place in preparation for the coming exhibits. We are currently soliciting for donated window coverings.

Again, we would like to express our gratitude to all those that have donated funds, or volunteered their time and services. We are confident that we will have this museum open in the near future. We look forward to welcoming all our guests and sharing with them the vibrant history of the Murrieta Valley. Thank you.

We wish to say thank to the businesses and individuals who made recent donations for the museum: Temecula Valley A's, Model A Ford Club of America, Pro-Fast, Inc, Pioneer Doors, Frames, Hardware, Inc, Bear Creek Realty, Larry Cottingham, Katherine Cottingham, Jason Corey, Mary Lebsack, A.S. Coyte, Jr and C.M. Coyte



# Remembrance Walk Among Pioneers



A WALKING TOUR OF MURRIETA'S  
LAUREL CEMETERY

## Monday, September 24th at 5:30 pm

42800 IVY STREET  
MURRIETA, CA 92562

Join the Murrieta Valley Historical Society as they take a tour through the Murrieta Cemetery. Hear stories of Murrieta's Pioneer families while paying tribute to their contributions to the community.



Comfortable shoes are required. Tour will walk along grass and gravel.



MURRIETA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO BOX 1341, MURRIETA, CA 92564  
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**Next Monthly Board Meeting:**

Monday, September 3, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

Murrieta Museum

41810 Juniper Street

(At Hunt Memorial Park)

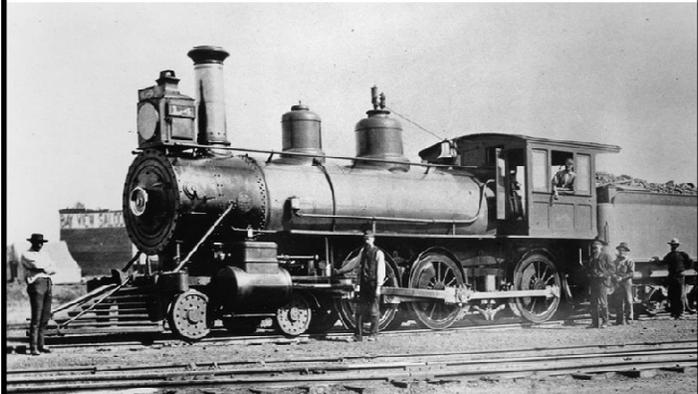
All members welcome to attend

THE MURRIETA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS,  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MURRIETA PUBLIC LIBRARY:

# MURRIETA'S RAILROAD

HISTORIAN AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NATIVE, PAUL J. PRICE, WILL SPEAK  
ON MURRIETA'S RAILROAD HISTORY FROM CONSTRUCTION TO DESTRUCTION.

**Monday, September 10, 2018 | 6 PM**  
**Murrieta Public Library, 8 Town Square**



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