

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

January 2011

Volume 11 – Issue 1

*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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A Publication of the  
**Temecula Valley Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 157  
Temecula, CA 92593  
951-302-9536  
[www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org)



New Headstone in place at Temecula Cemetery through the efforts of Assistant Sheriff Jerry Williams, Deputy Steve Albert and others to correct name spelling.

### Riverside Sheriff's Association

## Long Overdue Honors For a Local Fallen Hero

**By Jeffery G. Harmon**

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 p.m. members of the Riverside Sheriff's Association, a few reporters, Kenneth Swanguen, and his son, Jess, and a couple of valley residences gathered at the Temecula Cemetery for the unveiling of Constable Swanguen's new grave marker.

Assistant Sheriff Jerry Williams opened the service, "A hundred and three years ago, people gathered around this place, to lay to rest Constable Swanguen, who was killed in the line of duty. Today we honor Constable Swanguen for his sacrifice"

Constable Preston Van Buren Swanguen and Louis Escallier were shot and killed by Horace Magee on December 24, 1907. It was the double murder that shocked the small community of Temecula. The event surrounding the funeral of the two victims and the placing of the grave markers is unknown currently. However, Constable Swanguen had a simple stone placed on his grave with his name mysteriously misspelled. His sacrifice in the line of duty appeared to have gone unnoticed.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, John Hunneman, staff writer for The Californian, wrote a vivid account of the shooting. "The

**(Continued on Page 2)**

# Calendar Of Events

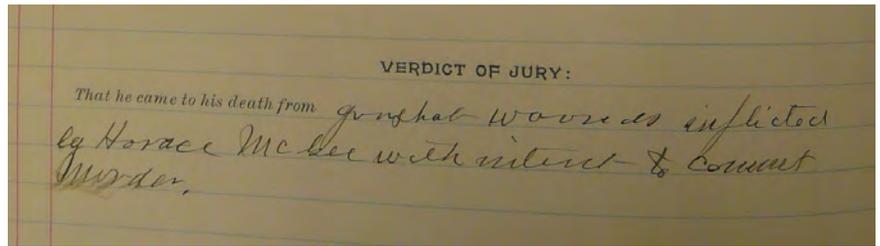
**Monday, Jan. 24, 2011 –**  
Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Marc Hendon, Commissioner with Riverside County Historic Commission will speak on the Earps in Riverside County area.

**Monday, February 28 –**  
Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Steve Lech, will speak on the history of the formation of Riverside County. Plus brief update on National Historic Trail project for So. Emigrant Trail.

**Monday, March 28 –**  
Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Dr. Thomas Long, (TVHS Board Member), and history professor at Cal State San Bernardino will talk about the California Gold Rush.

**Monday, April 25 –**  
Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Murray Lee, Curator of Chinese American History at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum will present "The Story of Ah Quin" patriarch and railroad labor broker within the S.D. Chinese community of the 1880's and beyond.

**Monday, May 23 –**  
Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Presentation on De Anza Trail history, and the annual trail ride event conducted by the De Anza Caballeros.



Copy of Verdict of Jury from Coroner's Inquest Record, showing that the jury found that Constable Swanguen's death came from ". . . gunshot wounds inflicted by Horace McGee with intent to commit murder."

## **Swanguen Headstone** (continued from Page 1)

lawman and the business man who died on Christmas Eve deserves to be remembered, as does the tragic tale of the man who pulled the trigger."

A sheriff department member informed Assistant Sherriff Williams about the article. He was stunned to learn that a fallen officer had been forgotten and misrepresented on his grave marker. The matter was brought to the attention of the Riverside Sheriff's Association. Deputy Steve Albert, a Director (labor union liaison for the Coroner's Bureau), and a committee member of the Deputy Relief Foundation, soon became involved in the case. "The function of the Deputy Relief Foundation is to help Deputies in financial need and to serve as a widows and orphans fund. We authorized the expenditure for the headstone and I volunteered to take care of the details." Deputy Albert explained in a recent email.

Deputy Albert led a research investigation into Swanguen's death. He found the original death registration ledger at the Coroner's Bureau. He scanned the documents and emailed them to Assistant Sheriff Williams, who forwarded them to me.

With the research completed, there was one last thing Deputy Albert had to do. "I contacted Constable Swanguen's grandson Kenneth Swanguen and got written authorization to replace the headstone." Deputy Albert explained, "I also chose a headstone maker (Frank L. Ricker) and gave them all of the necessary information for the headstone including a photo from [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) of Constable Swanguen."

Three years after Hunneman's article, the new headstone was in place. As the wind blew across the cemetery, Kenneth Swanguen and his son lifted the black cloth off of the new headstone. It was a proud moment for those involved. Kenneth Swanguen thanked everyone involved in honoring his grandfather.

What happened to the original headstone?

"The old headstone is still with the cemetery and I have not heard back from them," Deputy Albert informed us, "I have instructed them to hold onto the headstone. It has not been determined what will be done with the old headstone yet."

*(Editors Note: As a direct result of the efforts of all involved in this story, in addition to a new and correctly spelled headstone for Constable Swanguen, his name has now also been added to the memorials in Riverside County, State of California, and the National Memorial in Washington, D.C. honoring Peace Officers killed in the line of duty. Kudos and thanks to all who participated in getting proper and respectful acknowledgement for Temecula's Constable Preston Van Buren Swanguen.)*

## President's Message

Before we kick off the new year and get busy with upcoming activities, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who worked so hard to make our Annual Meeting in November such a wonderful success. The Events Committee worked in overdrive. VaARRA was so accommodating and the "barn" could not have looked better.

As New Year approaches, I find that I am looking forward to 2011 and serving as president of the Temecula Valley Historical Society with a sense of positive anticipation.

It is not yet January, as I write this, and TVHS is already being presented with new opportunities for being proactive in the protection of our historic heritage, and ongoing endeavors are awaiting post-holiday attention.

We have some openings on committees, please consider helping to make 2011 a productive, informative, educational and enjoyable year.

Hoping you all had a wonderful Christmas and that continues with wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!

*Bonnie Martland*

### Membership Activity Renewals

Malcolm & Loretta Barnett  
Bob & Kathryn Curtis  
Doug & Sally Haserot  
Duane & Judy Preimsberger  
Dan Stephenson  
Don & Esther Trunnell  
Donna Webster  
Lisa Woodward



Bob Morris and daughter Belinda in Old Number 33 during one of the early Temecula Tractor Races.

## Expanded Annual Meeting Was Huge Success for 2010

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Temecula Valley Historical Society was held on Saturday, November 13, 2010 at the Vail Ranch Little Temecula History Center. It appears that records may have been broken with dinner reservations for 86. A good meal and free wine will usually get peoples attention, but this year we also had in addition to some wonderful "gift baskets" as part of "opportunity drawings" – a wonderful "California" themed art show.

Over 40 pieces of artwork (paintings and photos) done by local area artisans were on display for the annual meeting / dinner, as well as being available for public viewing the following day at the History Center. Based on attendance numbers at the History Center for Sunday (over 140), then it appears that the art show was a huge success. At least two artists have sold pieces as a direct result of being displayed at our event, plus other inquiries are in the works.

Darell Farnbach emceed the program about the history of the "Great Temecula Tractor Races" started in 1977 by Bob Morris and Tommy Hotchkiss. Bob Morris and Irene Hotchkiss were special guests. Bob provided many humorous insights into the history of the event that ran for 28 years. At the end of the program the attendees saw photos of the many artistic architectural flourishes Bob has created to enhance the ambience of Old Town Temecula. The society awarded Bob a lifetime membership in recognition of his contribution to preserving the historic past.

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## Pauba Ranch Activities from the Past

*(From archives of the Lake Elsinore Valley Press, dated February 11, 1921) –*

McSweeney brothers of Los Angeles have bought the Crew lease on the Pauba Ranch and expect to plant a greater acreage to potatoes.

E.F. Carmichael, assistant master mechanic of the Pauba Ranch, has moved his family to Los Angeles where he will have a much better position.

From the Archives

## 90 Years Ago This Month

*(As published January 21, 1921 in the Lake Elsinore Valley Press and written by Mrs. V. B. Sands)*

Tuesday morning, January 11th, **Jose M. Gonzalez**, one of our oldest and most esteemed citizens, passed away, at the age of 86 years. Mr. Gonzalez came to the United States from Spain in 1868 settling in this valley in 1873.

During all these years, or rather until health prevented him from participating in active work, he has taken a leading part in the development of this part of the valley, having organized the first school district and taking a great interest in all work pertaining to the betterment of our schools.

He also was deputy county assessor for twenty years, conducting the duties of this office in the most efficient manner. He leaves a wife, daughter, Mrs. A. B. Barnett, and son, O. Gonzalez, of this valley and a brother in Mexico.

All this county was one big grant owned by Mrs. Pujol, and Mr. Gonzalez was manager and agent for many years. His ranch is part of the Temecula division of the big grant. He and Mr. Murrieta were partners.

The Summers grant and the Pujol grant join. Mrs. Gonzalez, whose maiden name was Street, came from England with the Summer brothers. Mr. Gonzalez and Miss Street were married in Elsinore.

Mr. Gonzalez was highly educated and spoke seven or eight languages. He was very active in all the early improvements in this valley.

*(EDITORS NOTE: Jose M. Gonzalez and Grace Street are Malcolm Barnett's Great-Grandparents and the parents of Ysabel (Gonzalez) Barnett).*

Remembering the Old Roads

## Wedding Cake Pavement Fed by Local Politicians

**By Bill Harker**

For many years Front Street was just a dirt road as it ambled through Old Town Temecula, only suitable for the traffic at the time, horses, buggies, wagons, and an occasional tractor, but the arrival of the automobile in the late twenties required something better. The Riverside County Road Department finally responded to the need, and laid down the first coating of tar and asphalt. As can be imagined that did not hold up well and after several years of increasing auto traffic it began deteriorating.

Over the years the surface of Front Street became a politicians dream and every time a new Supervisor was elected the folks in Temecula were rewarded with another coating of pavement. Eventually this resulted in the street having a very high crown since each layer of pavement was put in place without any grading.

There were no curbs or gutters and every heavy rain storm caused flooding of the walkways and into the businesses facing Front Street. The situation eventually became intolerable and in 1980, at the prodding by Supervisor Walt Abraham, the county ordered the grading and repaving of Front Street through Old Town. In preparation for the grading a three foot wide trench was dug to the referenced depth of the impending grading. What that trench revealed was almost beyond belief. The cross section of the trench revealed seven layers of pavement or road surfaces.

Starting at the bottom was a layer of compacted dirt, obviously the base of the original dirt road. On top of this was a one half inch layer of tar and gravel, then came a two inch layer of concrete, above of which rested an inch of something that resembled asphalt, then another layer of tar and gravel, another layer of thin concrete topped off by a final layer of asphalt.

A photo of this cross section, which resembled a multi layer wedding cake, was published on the front page of the Rancho News at the time. There was little wonder that the crown of the road was so high. All these layers added up to almost eight inches and was obviously the reason the rain water ran into the stores on both sides of the street. There seemed to be a lot of history in all those layers of road surface, sort of like the rings on a tree stump and a little investigation soon disclosed what had taken place over the years.

Being situated in the extreme southwest corner of Riverside County, Temecula received very little attention. This of course had certain advantages which we won't get into here. Every time there was a supervisorial election in the county, the candidates looking for Temecula votes would ask what they could do for the area if they were elected, and the answer was always the same, "Do something to improve Front Street, it is the main street through town." And so they did. Each new supervisor saw to it that Front Street got a new paving job, but all they did was put another layer on top of what was already there. Six layers on top of the original dirt road adds up to six elections over a period of very many years.

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### Another Silent Movie Filmed in Temecula

*(From archives of the Lake Elsinore Valley Press, dated January 14, 1921) -- Miss Grace Greenfield and Dan Cantarini motored to Elsinore last Tuesday evening to see "His Own Law". Parts of the picture were taken in Temecula.*

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*(Editors Note: "His Own Law" (1920) a silent film, starred Hobart Bosworth a noted actor, director and writer.)*