

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

May 2011

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### The Oorang Indians (1922 – 1923)

## Locals Played on Early NFL Team with Thorpe

By Jeffery G. Harmon

*"Reginald Attache and Pete Calac have left for LaRue Ohio, where they will play on an all-star football team managed by Jim Thorpe." (By Mrs. V.B. Sands Temecula Gossip Column, Lake Elsinore Valley Press, September 15, 1922)*

Pete Calac was born on the Rincon Indian Reservation near Valley Center, California. He attended grammar school in Fallbrook. At age 15, he attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. There he was introduced to Jim Thorpe and the game of football.

Reginald "Reggie" Attache was born on the Pechanga Indian Reservation near Temecula. He played baseball for a number of years for the Temecula team. He attended the Sherman Indian Institute in Riverside, California where he played football.

In September 1922, Pete Calac recruited Reggie to join him in LaRue, Ohio to be a part of a new football team called, The Oorang Indians. The Oorang Indians were an all Native American NFL team sponsored by Walter Lingo. He was the owner of Oorang Kennels and a breeder of Airedale terriers. According to Lingo, his dogs' lineage traced back to an Airedale terrier owned by King Oorang, of Sweden. Lingo needed a way to promote and sell his terriers. In June 1922, he paid \$100 for a NFL franchise. His company would provide the money to support the football team in exchange for the publicity for his kennels. Jim Thorpe, a Native American and a nationally recognized athlete, met Walter Lingo in 1919 when Thorpe played for the Canton Bulldogs. While on a hunting trip, Lingo laid out his promotional plans to Thorpe for an all Native American NFL team. Thorpe would be paid \$500 a week to coach, play, and manage the kennels.

Jim Thorpe had played football at Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania in 1912. During that time, he developed lifelong friendships with teammates Pete Calac and Joe Guyon. Thorpe recruited several other players from Carlisle, from Haskell Indian Institute in Kansas and the Sherman Indian School in Riverside, California. Twenty-five Native Americans from as many as ten different tribes were recruited to play in the 1922 season.

To earn their keep, the football players had to care for and train the Airedale terriers. At the football games, the players would put on pregame shows. The players would show the terriers to the crowds and have the dogs do tricks. Sometimes Jim Thorpe would do punting exhibitions before the game, kicking a football over the goal from the fifty foot yard line. However, Walter Lingo knew that the spectators wanted to see more.

Walter Lingo is credited with creating the first football half time show. Instead of allowing his players to go to the locker rooms, he would have them change into costume and perform on the field during halftime.

*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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# Coming Calendar Of Events

## **Saturday, May 21 –**

A special Walking Tour of San Diego's China Town, followed by a visit to the San Diego Chinese History Museum and a special "tea" in their garden for our group. Reservations & prepayment of \$5 required. Group size limited.

## **Monday, May 23 –**

Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Dick Fox will do a presentation on the De Anza Trail history, and show a brief video of one of the annual trail ride events conducted by the De Anza Caballeros.

## **Saturday, June 11 –**

Flea Market in the Park to Benefit the Temecula Valley Museum. 8:30 to 3:00 p.m. Approximately 100 vendor booths will be available with a variety of items.

## **Monday, June 27 –**

Monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Presentation by Steve Allen and Alan Brubaker on the History of Photography.

## **Monday, July 25 –**

Monthly Meeting at Little Temecula History Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Darell Farnbach will do a presentation on "Ranching California Style".

## **1922 Oorang Indians** -- (Continued from Page 1)

Dressed in Indian regalia, the players would enter the field and do war dances and weapon exhibitions. During one game, a Chippewa named Nick Lass amazed crowds as he wrestled a bear.

Leon Boutwell, the team's quarter back stated, "(Spectators) had a misconception about the (Oorang Indians). They thought we were all wild men, even though almost all of us had been to college and were generally more civilized than they were."

To promote the dogs further, an elaborate World War battle scene was performed by the players. Dressed as Germans and Indian Scouts, the mock battle would commence until soldiers were "wounded". The Red Cross Airedale terriers would rush to the trenches delivering medicine to the soldiers while the battle continued around them.

Walter Lingo was more interested in promoting his dogs during the pregame and halftime activities than winning games. After awhile it became difficult for the players to take their football seriously. The two shows would sap their energy and focus. By the end of the 1922 season, the Oorang Indians had only won three NFL games and two nonleague games. After the season, the players returned home.

*"Reginald Attache has returned from a tour throughout the east. He was with an all-star Indian football team and reports that out of fourteen games, they . . . (won) three."* (By Mrs. V.B. Sands Temecula Gossip Column, Lake Elsinore Valley Press, January 5, 1923)

Pete Calac remained in Ohio with Jim Thorpe. A second team of players was assembled for the 1923 season. The team didn't score a touch down until its seventh game. The Oorang Indians only won one game during that season. Crowds grew tired of the Wild West Show farce. They had come to see a football game, but were sadly disappointed. Walter Lingo disbanded the team by 1924 and began pursuing new advertising venues for his kennels.

Jim Thorpe and Joe Guyon were inducted into the Football Hall of Fame. Pete Calac continued playing for different football teams in the east. He settled down in Canton, Ohio with his family. The Oorang Indians faded into history. Their only significant legacy was the football half time show. Many years later, players recalled those games and smiled. They were paid to play football and train dogs. They enjoyed every minute of it.

Although "the records tell you differently," wrote John Short in the Marion Star, "the passing years have given them a powerful image." But they will be remembered, not for their record, but because "they came and gave the game incredible color at a time when it needed color badly."

### **NFL 1922 Final Standings**

Team	W	L	T
Canton Bulldogs	10	0	2
Chicago Bears	9	3	0
Chicago Cardinals	8	3	0
Toledo Maroons	5	2	2
R.I. Independents	4	2	1
Racine Legion	6	4	1
Dayton Triangles	4	3	1
Green Bay Packers	4	3	3
Buffalo All-Americans	5	4	1
Akron Pros	3	5	2
Oorang Indians	3	6	0
Milwaukee Badgers	2	4	3
Minneapolis Marines	1	3	0
Louisville Brecks	1	3	0
Rochester Jeffersons	0	4	1
Hammond Pros	0	5	1
Evansville Crimson Giants	0	3	0
Columbus Panhandles	0	8	0

*(For references & more information Google the Oorang Indians. Also at [www.profootballresearchers.org](http://www.profootballresearchers.org) under The Coffin Corner: 1980's – scroll down to the article located in Vol. 3, No. 1 (1981) The Oorang Indians, by Bob Braunwart, Bob Carroll & Joe Horrigan.)*

*(Editors Note: During his research and transcription efforts of the old "Temecula Gossip Column" feature in the Lake Elsinore newspaper, Jeff will run across a little "gem" which when pursued reveals a fun and little known story of the history of the Temecula area and its past residents. Hats off to Jeffery.)*

# President's Message

I am continually amazed at how much Temecula third grade students know about Temecula history; and with their enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject. I was taking a group of students on a walking tour through Old Town and the Temecula Valley Museum recently, and *they* were telling me about the history!

A lot of questions are asked about the names on the *They Passed This Way Monument* in Sam Hicks Monument Park, but I was taken aback when asked about the names that are *not* there. Chronologically, Walter Vail was the last name added. Looking back from today to Mr. Vail, I was asked, what names would I add? Great question!

Thanks, of course, goes to the teachers for all their hard work, and for making history relevant, interesting and enjoyable for their students. From the teachers, a thank you to the Temecula Valley Historical Society members who visit classrooms, volunteer at the Temecula Valley Museum and the Little Temecula History Center, and help organize and judge the Third Grade History Contest. The teachers with touring students frequently comment, as I hear quite often, on how much your efforts are appreciated.

*Bonnie Martland*

## Membership Renewals

Garth & Janice Bricker  
Bill & Barbara Dosta  
Ron & Ann Woodward  
Bill Harker  
Gene & Barbara Tobin



1922 Oorang Indians with player/coach & manager Jim Thorpe, played in NFL representing Ohio town of La Rue. Internet photo no source credit.

## STAGECOACH RULES FOR PASSENGERS

Many stagecoaches running through the primitive areas of the west, including Temecula, Murrieta and Lake Elsinore California, in the mid and late 1800's adopted rules to assist their passengers enjoy a more pleasant trip. The rules were frequently posted in the stagecoach stations and sometimes to the ceiling of the coach itself.

1. Abstinence from liquor is desired in our coaches. However, if you must imbibe, share the bottle and don't overlook the driver. To do otherwise makes you appear mean spirited and selfish.
2. If ladies are present, gentlemen are urged to forego the smoking of cigars and pipes as the odor of same is repugnant to the weaker sex. Chewing tobacco is permitted, if you spit with the wind, not against it.
3. Gentlemen passengers must refrain from the use of rough language in the presence of ladies and children. This rule does not apply to the driver whose team may not be able to understand genteel language.
4. Robes are provided for your comfort during cold or wet weather. Hogging robes will not be tolerated. The offender will be obliged to ride outside with the driver.
5. Snoring is disgusting. When you sleep, sleep quietly.
6. Do not use your fellow passenger's shoulder for a pillow. He or she may not understand and friction could result.
7. Firearms may be kept on your person for use in emergencies. Do not discharge them for pleasure, or shoot at wild animals along the roadsides. The noise riles the horses.
8. In the event of a runaway, remain calm and try to stay in your seat. Jumping from the coach may kill you or leave you injured and at the mercy of the elements, coyotes and highwaymen.
9. Topics to be avoided in conversation include those that have to do with religion, politics and above all, stagecoach robbery and accidents.

Gentlemen guilty of unchivalrous behavior toward lady passengers will be put off the stage. It can be a long, dangerous walk back to the last station. A word to the wise is sufficient.

*(Info from "Little Known Tales in California History," By Alton Pryor)*

## Annual 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade History Contest Results Announced

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade History Contest was a huge success in more ways than one. The staggering number of entries (230) was more than double the total entries from last year. But what was also "huge" this year was the number of diorama's submitted, and the physical size of many of them. The "Bank" and "Butterfield Stage" were popular subjects for this years entrants.

The entries came from 5 Temecula schools, with Crowne Hill Elementary and Paloma Elementary providing the majority through class project requirements. Some individual entries also came from students at Abby Reinke, Redhawk and Ysabel Barnett Elementary Schools.

The 1<sup>st</sup> place award went to Sophia Schroll from Crowne Hill Elementary for her entry which was a book entitled the "ABC's of Temecula History".

Two students tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place: they were Jake Garrett from Paloma with his Butterfield Stage diorama, and Weston Mayfield also from Paloma with his own Butterfield Stage diorama.

Likewise we had a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup>, with both Kira Holgren from Crowne Hill displaying a diorama on the 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of Temecula circa 1930, and Kyle Gaily from Paloma getting the other 3<sup>rd</sup> place award with a Butterfield Stage poster.

At the reception on Thursday afternoon, April 21 we had approximately 140 attendees to applaud and cheer when the winners were announced and presented with certificates.

The Annual 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade History Contest is co-sponsored by The Temecula Valley Museum, VaRRA and Temecula Valley Historical Society.

## Out of the Archives

# Louis Escallier Dies at 15

*(From the Lake Elsinore Valley Press, October 26, 1923)*

TEMECULA, October 24 -- The passing of Louis Escallier at his home here last Saturday was no great surprise to his family and many friends who had witnessed his suffering from an illness which had gradually grown worse for several weeks. So beautiful a character can only be likened to some wonderful flower blooming in a world of trials and tribulations only to be to us in its budding age to demonstrate to us mortals that the mysterious power of God is supreme and to teach us that age has nothing to do with the time when we are called to "That Home made ready for our coming in the Heavens."

Louis was born in Temecula, February 23, 1908 and passed on to the Great Beyond at 12 o'clock noon October 20, 1923 at the age of 15 years, 7 months and 27 days. When we realize that one of our young friends are taken from us at this tender age the thought presents itself, "Why", but this only fingers for a moments it is not for us to judge "One" who knows best.

We have had the pleasure of following this young man in his short career, as a baby, he was only a baby as other babies are, then his first school days came when he was to have the opportunity of grasping the larger problems of life so important in the development of our boys and girls, he was studious but also took great pleasure in sports enjoyed by his little friends, taking part in all contests with that gentle but firm spirit for which we all loved him. Upon completing his grammar school course at Temecula he attended Elsinore High School for one year and only had the pleasure of attending for a few days at the commencement of the present school year when that weakness assailed him which finally prevented him from acquiring the education, loving friendship and happiness he so richly deserved while traveling through this world. An injury received while playing a game of baseball, no doubt caused the illness which hastened his early departure and deprived the world of a beautiful character as a boy and later as a man, but the reflection of his goodness, justness, and squareness while with us will be a stimulant for all who knew him to endeavor to emulate so beautiful a soul.

Louis is mourned by a mother, Mrs. Francis Escallier and two brothers, Ferdinand and Joe, of Temecula, and everyone who knew him. Funeral services were conducted from the Catholic Church in Temecula at 10 o'clock Monday morning. Rev. Father Raley of Elsinore, officiating, who gave his sermon, dwelt upon Louis' past life as an example of true patriotism in giving so young a life for his fellow men. The music was in keeping with the beautiful flowers that so many friends had brought to in some way show their love and esteem but the moist eyes and sadness displayed by those present proved more than anything else what Louis was to us. The Elsinore High School baseball team and members of other athletic bodies of which Louis was a member acted as pall bearers, the high school faculty of which Mr. A.J. Barnes is principal, were present as well as the officers of the Student Body and many others from Elsinore.

All business houses in Temecula were closed during the funeral services and the high school in Elsinore and the grammar school of Temecula halted all studies for five minutes at 10 o'clock in respect to their beloved school mate.

Undertaker W.L. Everett of Elsinore was in charge of the service and interment was in the Temecula Cemetery.

*(Editors Note: This Louis Escallier was the son of Louis Escallier (Sr.) who was killed along with Constable Preston Swanguen on Christmas Eve, 2 months before the younger Louis was born).*