

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

November 2011

Volume 11 – Issue 11

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

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Back row left to right: Ed Query (son), Frank & Odessa Query (parents),
Front row left to right: DeeDee, David & Robyn (Ed and Peggy's children).

Query Family Legacy

Family History and Local Monuments

By **Jeffery G. Harmon**

"(Frank was) a colorful, brilliant man, his memory is as everlasting and strong as the granite monument which bears his name in the town he contributed so much." (Peggy Query, Rancho California News, February 1, 1975)

At the base of the "They Passed This Way" Monument, there is a small plaque that reads, *"The Granite and Inscription for this Historical Monument were Contributed by the Query Ranch in Memory of Frank O. Query, 1969"*. The Query surname is rarely mentioned in the Temecula history books. However, the Query family has contributed greatly to the development of Temecula.

Born on an Indiana farm in 1903, Frank moved to Los Angeles in the 1920s. "He had ideas for improving everything he got his hands on; one being a fence making machine." (RCN, 1975)

Manual labor could produce two rolls of chain link fencing per day. Frank invented a machine that could make twenty rolls per day. "He would have patented the machine," Frank's son, Ed, explained, "but to do so, he would have had to patent every nut and bolt. It was a lot of paperwork and Frank wasn't interested in it."

With his new machine, Frank founded the American Chain Link Machine Company. His business increased to such proportions that he

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Calendar Of Events

Saturday, November 5 – 10 am To 4 pm, the 11th Annual Round-up & Open House at the historic Empire Ranch Headquarters in Sonoita, AZ. This years event to be held as part of Arizona's Centennial Celebration of the Cowboy.

Saturday, November 5 – Opening new Gallery Show at Temecula Valley Museum to feature "Erle Stanley Gardner's Baja". Photos and displays of Erle's fascination with Baja.

Saturday, November 12 – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. -- TVHS Annual Meeting & Dinner to celebrate our 10th anniversary. To be held at Pechanga's Eagles Nest. Cost \$25. Raffle & silent auction to be available.

Weekend, Nov. 19 & 20 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. 150th Civil War Anniversary Event at the Historic Vail Ranch. Re-enactment of the discovery and arrest of the Showalter Secessionist Party in November 1861. Displays, costumed soldiers, camps, & demonstrations.

Saturday, November 19 – 6 p.m. event at the Temecula Valley Museum as part of the annual Erle Stanley Gardner exhibit. Public welcome to attend a reception, with entertainment to follow as well as a presentation on "The Case of the Murdered Miner" about a real life mystery reported by Erle Stanley Gardner for Hearst Newspapers.

Membership Activity Renewals

Dan & Beverly Stephenson
Don & Esther Trunnell
Duane & Judy Preimsberger
The Coronas

Query Family Legacy (Continued from Page 1)
needed two airplanes to cover his territory. In the 1940s he was featured in the Stinson Airplane Yearly article, "Businessmen Who Fly."

During his travels he befriended Hank Coffin, a Hollywood stunt pilot. One day Hank invited Frank on a hunting party at Leo Roripaugh's ranch in Temecula. When they met, Leo asked Frank if he would be interested in buying the Simonelli Ranch in Wolf Valley. After careful consideration, Frank decided to sell his Utah ranch and move to Temecula.

By 1956, the Query family bought the 400 acre ranch on Pala Road. The Query Ranch stretched from modern day Loma Linda Road to Via Eduardo and then southwest up into the hill country where the Temecula rock quarries once operated. Their southern neighbors were Erle Stanley Gardner and Sam Hicks' family. Frank's son, Ed, who recently married, moved onto the ranch and built a house near his father's block home.

The ranch was rich in Temecula history and was part of an old Spanish land grant called "Little Temecula Rancho". The remnants of the Temecula brickyard were near the intersection of Loma Linda Road and Pala Road. Bricks from the site were used in the construction of the fireplaces for Frank and Odessa's and Ed and Peggy Query's new home. Both Frank and Ed's homes were built of block and most of the work was done by the two men.

Behind Ed Query's house was the old abandoned Bell House. The Bell family, according to legend, were the original owners of the property. "We were told the small machine shop was the first blacksmith shop in Temecula." Ed remarked.

The Bell property changed hands until it was owned by George and Clara (Howard) Simonelli. When George died, Clara moved out of the house, leaving behind many personal effects.

There was work to be done on the property to make it farmable. Frank and Ed hauled rocks and leveled the ground until the land was ready for planting. On the corner of Loma Linda and Pala Road there was an old well. The Querrys tapped into the water source and built a sprinkler system to water their fields. They added a new pump and were able to produce a 1500 gpm (gallons per minute) well that supplied water to 8,000 feet of sprinkler pipe for their alfalfa fields. Each day Ed changed the pipes manually. After each harvest, the ranch would supply hay to the local dairies.

"Mahlon Vail came over and visited Dad." Ed shared with a smile. "Mahlon asked, 'Are you going to use that water for your fields?' Dad said he was. Mahlon got upset and said, 'You big city folks think you can come out here and buy a postage stamp size property and use up all the water.' Mahlon left flustered." A 400 acre ranch would be considered small compared to the 87,500 acre Vail Ranch and other large ranches in the area.

Then on July 26, 1968, Frank Query died in a terrible accident.

"We had 30 foot metal pipes that were used to irrigate our fields." Peggy explained. "The pipes would get clogged with grass by ground squirrels or field mice and had to be cleaned out occasionally. An end cap had to be taken off each pipe in order to clear out the debris. During the procedure, the pipes had to be kept on the ground horizontally so they would not hit the power lines that ran across the property."

On that day, Frank had a young teenage boy working for him. "We believe the boy lifted one of the poles vertically to knock out the debris." Ed continued. "Dad would never have done that."

"Frank saw the power lines, and knew that the boy was in mortal danger." Peggy added. "We believe he shoved the boy out of harms way. Then the metal pipe struck the high power line and Frank was electrocuted. The electric shock threw his body over the adjoining fence, and he landed face down in a ditch in the neighboring property. That is where Ed found him." This left a huge void in this close knit family.

By 1969, Sam Hicks had conceived the "They Passed This Way" monument. He visited the Query Ranch and proposed that local stones

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Out of the Archives

Temecula Suffers \$30,000 Fire

(From the Archives of the Lake
Elsinore Valley Press, August 7, 1924)

Fire, believed to have been caused by spontaneous combustion, destroyed the large warehouse of the McSweeney Brothers at Temecula Saturday night, and for a time threatened the entire town.

The Elsinore Fire Department sent hose and men as soon as the call for help was received, but little could be done to save the building and the contents, owing to lack of water facilities.

Between seven and eight hundred tons of barley hay owned by Vail Brothers was destroyed. The loss is estimated at \$30,000. The warehouse is reported to be covered by insurance, but the hay was not.

Nearly 200 volunteer fire fighters were fighting the blaze to keep it from spreading to other parts of the village.

Lost in Recent Fire

Temecula Warehouse To Be Rebuilt Soon

(From the Archives of the Lake
Elsinore Valley Press, Nov. 6, 1924)

Vail Brothers, owners of the Pauba ranch, will rebuild the warehouse destroyed by fire there a few months ago, according to information given out this week by A.F. Nienke, proprietor of the Temecula Valley Lumber Company.

The new warehouse will be constructed of corrugated iron. It will be 40 by 180 feet in size and when completed, will be used for the storage of potatoes and hay. The cost of the structure is estimated at \$5000. Construction is to start soon.

Query Family Legacy (Continued From Page 2)

from the historic quarry be used in constructing the monument. Ed agreed. So Sam, Ed and Leo Roripaugh hiked behind the house to the old rock quarry site. Along the dirt road to the quarry were rough cut stones, three feet long. "The stones must have been placed there to stop the erosion along the hill." Peggy explained. Those stones were used for the base of the monument.

Further up the hill, Sam Hicks spotted a granite boulder, standing like a sentinel over the valley. "That's the one." Hicks said. "They paid a lot of money for the crane and equipment to haul the granite out." Ed stated.

As the monument was being constructed, Sam Hicks approached Odessa, Frank's widow, and asked her if she would pay for the pioneer names to be chiseled into the granite boulder. "Odessa agreed to pay for the work," Peggy explained, "with the condition that a plaque be placed in memory of her husband." Sam Hicks agreed.

The monument was dedicated on October 3, 1969.

After his father's death, Ed continued to farm the land. On the ranch there was a grassy knoll where the Wolf Tomb was located. The tomb was surrounded by a rickety wood picketed fence. Cattle were constantly knocking down the fence and rubbing against the monument. At one point, the cattle or vandals knocked over the 4-foot marble pillar that stood over the tomb.

Ed found the pillar lying on the ground. Fearing further damage, Ed placed the pillar in the back of his truck and took it to his house. The pillar was installed in front of the Query house until the tomb could be repaired.

The Query family sold a portion of their property in the 1980s to developers. Tract homes were built between Pala Road on the east, the Pechanga Creek on the west, Loma Linda Road on the north, and Via Eduardo on the south. "Via Eduardo was named after Ed." Peggy explained. "However, his name is Edwin, not Edward. Also another street in the track is named Via Odessa Drive named after Odessa, Ed's mother."

In 1996, after forty years on the ranch, Ed and Peggy sold their remaining property to the Pechanga Reservation and moved to Murrieta. "The ranch was our home." Peggy stated as she remembered the move. Three generations of the Query family worked the ranch and lived off the land: Frank and Odessa Query, their son, Ed, his wife, Peggy and their three children, DeeDee, Robyn, and David, and Frank and Odessa's daughter, Madeline (Query) Roripaugh Thatcher.

Fearing further damage or loss, they brought the Wolf pillar with them to their new home. In 2004, Eve Craig was interviewing Peggy for an upcoming luncheon honoring local pioneer women. During the interview, Eve began discussing the Wolf Tomb project.

"I was excited when Eve told me about the project." Peggy Query smiled as she remembered the conversation. "Eve explained that the pillar and urn were missing from the tomb and a non marble replica was going to be made."

Peggy quickly told Eve that the original pillar was in her front yard in Murrieta, but she had never seen the urn that went on top. She told Eve that the Query family had recovered the pillar and hoped to one day see the Wolf Tomb restored. After being faithful stewards over Wolf's pillar, the Query family was thrilled to see the pillar reinstalled on the monument. In 2006, the Wolf Tomb Restoration project was completed.

The Query family had helped contribute to two Temecula monuments. The family donated the granite and paid for the inscriptions on the "They Passed This Way" monument. They recovered the fallen pillar from Wolf's Tomb, and returned it to aid in the restoration project.

The Query family has given greatly of their time and talents to Temecula, a place they called home for many years. Their legacy is their contributions to both historical monument projects.

(Excerpts from Query Family Interview by Jeffery G. Harmon on August 9, 2011)

Temecula to Celebrate Its Civil War Event

During November there will be another 150th anniversary celebration of a piece of Temecula's history. This time it will coincide with the anniversary of Temecula's Civil War event known as "The Showalter Affair". The Vail Ranch Restoration Association will be the sponsor and host for this two-day celebration, to be held at the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters property and the Little Temecula History Center. Mark your calendars for November 19 & 20 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Little Temecula History Center will be open both days during the event.

In addition to historic Civil War camps complete with costumed soldiers, there will be costumed civilians, displays, demonstrations, a period mercantile sutler and a re-enactment of the discovery & arrest of the Showalter Secessionist Party as it happened in 1861. Plans are also being made for an old fashioned Victorian barn dance on Saturday evening at the Little Temecula History Center. The event coordinator is Steve Clugston who can be reached at 951-235-3608 or steveclugston@yahoo.com.

Volunteers Needed To Work Event

We are still in need of volunteers to help with the weekend event coming up November 19 & 20. Please consider assisting as a visitor guide / docent at the VaRRA History Center either day, or perhaps helping at the historic Vail Ranch Headquarters site.

Contact either Darell Farnbach at 552-3516, or e-mail at darell42@hotmail.com. You also can let Dick Fox know by dropping him an e-mail to fox_r@verizon.net.

President's Message

Thanks to all of you in the Temecula Valley Historical Society who contributed of your time, effort and insight to help make 2011 a successful year. A special thank you to the members of the Board of Directors for (as they would say in the old British navy) showing me the ropes and for helping me navigate my first year as president. Committee chairmen, whose reports for 2011 are due in January, managed the crew and kept the ship moving in the right direction.

The Events and Education Committee crew hosted some excellent tours which included Old Chinatown in San Diego, the historic Rancho Guajome and Rancho Buena Vista adobes, a trip to the historic district in of San Juan Capistrano, and another to the Riverside Branch of the National Archives and Records Office in Perris. An extended trip to the Vail family's Empire Ranch in Arizona was a special treat. Presently committee members are finalizing plans for the Annual Dinner and working on ideas for next year's events.

A major focus for the Projects Committee mates was talking to the public about, and securing funding for the posting of the Historic Highway 395 signs through Old Town. Another major, but very enjoyable undertaking was to work with the Temecula Valley Museum to plan, host and judge the Third Grade History Contest which has grown substantially in number of participants over the years. Committee members are also inventorying and evaluating the society's historic plaques and markers.

Thanks to the Restoration and Preservation Committee, the Wolf Tomb is undergoing a substantial facelift and sprucing up. The gate has been repainted, the watering system up-graded and a gardener hired. Darell, committee chair, brought his 1932 Model T Ford Vail Ranch truck out of retirement and won 2nd place for the historical society in Temecula's Fourth of July Parade. The Newsletter and newly redesigned web site - which both look great - attest to the hard work of the Public Relations Committee, whose members also keep us updated on Facebook. The Membership Committee and Nominating Committee have been busy conducting their business as well.

TVHS co-sponsored, or participated in events, this past year with the Vail Ranch Restoration Association, Temecula Valley Genealogical Society, Temecula Valley Museum, Historic Highway 395 Association, Southern Historic Trails Association, the City of Temecula and the Pechanga Cultural Center. These events, as well as our monthly guest speaker presentations, provided additional opportunities for both society members and the public to learn about the history and heritage of the Temecula Valley.

It has been a busy and productive year. As we take our holiday break, give some thought to joining the crew. Volunteers for committees are always welcomed, as is help with a special event or project. And please, join us for some tours and presentations.

Have a joyous and safe holiday season.

Bonnie Martland

* Reminder to TVHS Committee Chairs *

Before the end of December all Committee Chairs should turn in a brief year-end recap report. We will publish those reports in the January TVHS Newsletter, and they will become the basis for next year's committees to consider expanding, completing or modifying elements, and set new goals for 2012. Have a Happy New Year.