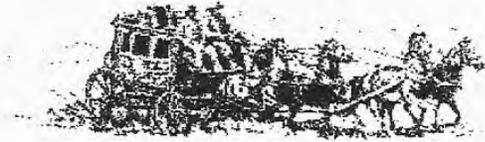


TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

March 2012

Volume 12 – Issue 3

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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The Dripping Springs Murder of 1912

By Jeffery G. Harmon

On December 6, 1912, H. R. Helm, an employee of the Pauba ranch, was cutting wood near Dripping Springs when he discovered partial skeletal remains. Riverside Coroner C. S. Dickson was sent to Temecula to assess the scene. Dickson believed the person was a male about thirty-eight years old and had been dead for at least eight months.

The coroner saw no evidence of violence on the bones and believed the man had died of natural causes. However, Dan Tripp, a Temecula rancher, had examined the victim's clothing. He had found two small bullet size holes in the victim's vest and the clothing appeared to have bloodstains.

There were only a few clues to the person's identity. Inside a pocket there were found two cards of opera singers and a note that read:

"Dear Joe: Please call up Van Wert on phone Broadway 5131 at 951 Olive Street. I came out here twice to see you, but missed you each time. O. L. Van Wert."

(Riverside Independent Enterprise, December 9, 1912)

Through investigative work, the victim was identified as Joseph La Pointe, a 48-year-old bachelor. He was a resident of Los Angeles and for a time operated a moving picture machine for the O'Dettes at the Auditorium Theater in Riverside.

In 1909, Dr. C. W. Bachmann, a Glendale dentist, had installed a couple gold crowns for Joseph La Pointe. Dr. Bachman examined the skull's teeth and confirmed the victim's identity.

Mr. R. A. La Pointe stated:

"My brother left Los Angeles about the middle of July (June) and was going to a point a few miles from Temecula to engage in mining. A friend accompanied him. Joe bought a team to make the trip, and took with him about \$1000 in currency. The last we heard was that he was working on the Pauba ranch, having given up the mining deal."

"There is every reason to believe that Joe was murdered for his money. He had a gold watch and miners' boots and other stuff with him and none of these things were found with the body. We are going to Temecula this afternoon after the body and will have it interred in Los Angeles." (Riverside Daily Press, December 11, 1912)

On January 13, 1912, Edward F. Pettibone was arrested in Los Angeles in connection with murder. He was a mining engineer and had prospected with La Pointe for a few years. Pettibone was born about 1834 in Connecticut and came to California in 1880. He had a wife and

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Calendar Of Events

Saturday, March 3 – 10:30 a.m.
Guided tour of Old Town San Diego. Cost: \$6 per person
More information to follow.
Carpooling will be suggested.

Thursday, March 17 – 7 p.m.
Temecula Valley Museum presents Author Gordon Johnson reading excerpts from his books and poetry

Saturday, March 24 – 10 a.m.
Temecula Valley Museum
A Walking Tour of Old Town Temecula

Monday, March 26 – 6 p.m.
TVHS monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, Jeffery Harmon presenting:
"Take a Drive on Route 395!"

Saturday, April
Guided tour of the Mission Inn
More information to follow.
Carpooling will be suggested.

Monday, April 23 – 6 p.m.
TVHS monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center, Anne J. Miller, Ph.D presenting:
New Information on Temecula History: How to search newspapers Online.

Temecula Valley Museum Exhibition

January 28 ~ April 1, 2012
"Tools of the Trade" featuring Tools, photos and displays of many crafts people from coopers to cobblers to surveyors

Membership Activity New Member

Mary Lavezzari
Terry Bracci

Dripping Springs (Continued from Page 1)

five children residing in Los Angeles.

In June 1912, Pettibone left Los Angeles with Joseph La Pointe and a team of horses and equipment for a joint mining venture. Joseph's family had not heard from him since. On October 22, 1912, Pettibone unexpectedly met Joseph's brothers on the street. They inquired about Joseph's whereabouts and were told that Joseph had given up mining and went to work at the Pauba Ranch.

At the time of his arrest, Pettibone stated that he had left Joseph La Pointe last summer with a man named Yates. However, investigators discovered Joseph's watch, a large silver timepiece with a horse's head engraved on the back, at Pettibone's residence. Joseph's brothers recognized the watch, because it once belonged to their father. When questioned about the watch, Pettibone gave several different stories, including Joseph giving him the watch.

The team of missing horses was discovered in Hemet on January 25, 1913. Henry Ward, an 87-year-old Hemet rancher, had purchased the horses from Pettibone on June 24, 1912 but had lost the bill of sale. When Ward was taken to Riverside to identify Pettibone, he declared, "There is the man that sold me the team." Pettibone admitted to selling the team to Ward, but gave no explanation for his actions.

Alfred L. Maddox, an 85-year-old Aguanga resident, testified that he had met Pettibone in March 1912. In June, Pettibone returned with La Pointe to purchase Maddox's mining claim. As he was leaving, Joseph La Pointe gave Maddox a five dollar gold coin. A few days later Pettibone revisited Maddox and stated that La Pointe had gone with a real estate man to investigate some land. He gave Maddox, an overcoat, grip, tent and other articles and said, "Joe won't call for these things." (Riverside Independent Enterprise, January 27, 1913)

Pettibone denied giving Maddox the items, and claimed that he had cached the equipment near their camp. On January 28, 1913, the court ordered Sheriff Frank P. Wright to escort Pettibone back to Dripping Springs to retrieve La Pointe's gear. Pettibone showed the sheriff the cache location, but Sheriff Wright found nothing.

On February 21, Pettibone pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. He explained that La Pointe had accused him of stealing \$400. He had pointed a gun at Pettibone and tried to force him to sign a \$400 promissory note. When La Pointe became distracted by a bird fluttering in a bush, Pettibone struck him with a wood club out of self-defense, killing La Pointe.

The court did not believe Pettibone's story. On February 25, 1913, he was given twenty-five years in San Quentin prison.

During the sentencing, the court explained the verdict:

"It does not seem possible, that you, a one-eyed man, could have caught this man off his guard and struck him down. Your explanation is not satisfactory to my mind. The fact that you robbed the man after killing him brands your story of the killing as a fabrication." (Riverside Daily Press, February 25, 1913)

(Continued on Page 3)

119 Years Ago

May 1, 1893

Riverside Daily Press
C. F. Smith, superintendent of the Pauba ranch at Temecula, was robbed of \$1200 last Wednesday or Thursday. On Tuesday Mr. Smith received the money - \$1040 in bills and \$160 in gold - from the Bank of California, the owner of the ranch, with which to pay off the hands and to commence building a house. The money was put in a trunk and was there on Wednesday. Thursday Mr. Smith went to the trunk and was horrified to find it had been broken open and the money abstracted. Everything possible was done to discover the thief, but up to the present time no clue has been obtained. The loss will fall heavily upon Mr. Smith, for he is not a rich man, and \$1200 represents many hard days' labor.

100 Years Ago This Month

The Riverside Daily Press
March 28, 1912

Saturday afternoon the older girls of the Pujol School met at Mrs. G.A. Burnham's home to organize a sewing club. A business meeting was held and officers were elected. Miss Ethel Burnham was chosen president; Bessie Escallier, secretary; Miss Alice Roripaugh, ex-officio member and advisory board. After an hour of sewing, the hostess served refreshments and the remainder of the afternoon was spent in dancing on the wide porch.

Dripping Springs (Continued from Page 2)

Edward F. Pettibone died in the San Quentin prison hospital on December 31, 1916. With his death, justice had been served and the Dripping Springs Murder of 1912 slowly faded from memory. Then in 1932, during road construction, another human skeleton was found near the springs, but that is another story waiting to be told.

(Researcher's Note: Alfred L. Maddox, the Hermit of Aguanga, died in 1930 at the age of 103. His biography can be found in the High Country Magazine Issue #26)

50 Years Ago This Month

March 29, 1962 Lake Elsinore Valley Sun

Frank E. Golsh passed away in the Riverside Hospital, March 20. He was born November 26, 1886 in San Diego Co. and has been a resident of this area all of his life. Mr. Golsh is survived by a brother, Marcus Golsh of Pauma Valley and one sister, Mrs. Mary A. Jamison of Riverside. Services were held Saturday, March 24, at 10 a.m. in the Catholic Church Pechanga Reservation in Temecula with interment in the Pechanga Reservation Cemetery.

25 Years Ago This Month

April 1, 1987 Rancho News

(Editor's Note: The commemoration of the "Gonzalez Adobe Restoration" at Old Adobe Plaza with special guest speaker, Pete Wilson, U.S. Senator, California occurred on March 28, 1987.)

U.S. Senator Pete Wilson said, "Restoring history is a vital role for preserving our heritage." . . .

David Lowry, project developer, said restoring the oldest adobe in Southwest Riverside County was a labor of love.

"When we first saw this house, I knew we wanted to restore and make it the centerpiece of this development," said Lowry. "Restoring the old adobe is a good indication of what's possible when you use a little imagination. We're very proud of our development."

Wilson unveiled a commemorative plaque honoring the restoration. David Barnett, a descendent of the Gonzalez family, acknowledged the formal unveiling of the plaque.

"Everyone told us to bulldoze the old adobe and build a shopping center," said Lowry. "The attitude was just generally, 'why bother with it' if it wouldn't have any dramatic commercial value for the center."

With funding for the project coming from Rancon Realty Fund I, a public limited partnership, much of the center's success should be directed towards Rancon founder and general partner, Dan Stephenson, said Lowry.

75 Years Ago This Month

March 18, 1937,
Elsinore-Leader Press

Expect Decision “Any Day” in Case that will decide Fate of John McNeill of Temecula

Supreme Court jurists of the State of California are expected “any day” to decide the fate of John McNeill, village blacksmith of Temecula who was convicted of slaying his wife with a washing machine wringer.

“The Supreme Court has the power to reverse the McNeill conviction and set him free or send the case back to the trial court for a new trial, in case substantial error was committed, or the Supreme Court may modify the judgment heretofore pronounced by the trial court without returning the case,” explained District Attorney Earl Redwine.

.....
McNeill at first denied killing his wife and claimed burglars had broken into his home and administered the fatal injuries to Mrs. McNeill. When brought into court, however, he admitted the crime and claimed that he did it in self-defense. A high point in the trial developed when his own son gave damaging testimony against his father.

After McNeill was sent to San Quentin to await the hearing by the Supreme Court, it was discovered that he had a previous criminal record.

President's Message

Bonnie Martland

Jeremiah Patrick Aloysius Humphrey Scott Maloney, my husband's maternal grandfather, like many of my husband's predecessors, was an Irish Catholic from Southern Ireland. The family homestead was in Limerick. Like many Irishmen who left their homeland in the wake of the potato famine, the Martland, Mahoney and Maloney clan settled in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. My paternal grandfather came from a Scandinavian sea-faring family. He was born in Denmark and raised in Norway. His wife came from Germany, as did my maternal great-grandmother and her family. My mother's predecessors on her dad's side were Quakers from Yorkshire, whose origins can be documented into the 1400's. A number were imprisoned for refusing to tithe to the English Church, and several died in prison. Others sailed from England and settled in colonial New Jersey. Our son-in-law is Navajo. Our youngest son's wife is African-American. Our eldest son's wife was born in the Philippines, adopted and raised in Australia by a Dutch mother and an American father...her name, Annie O'Leary.

The saying goes that on St. Paddy's Day everyone is at least a little Irish, and I think there is truth in that. St. Paddy's Day is a holiday that provides us the opportunity to reflect on our origins and celebrate our diversities. Every March I am reminded of how unique my family is and, thus, how quintessentially, and typically, American. For Jeremiah Patrick, America was the end of the rainbow; and though the treasure was not without wont of polishing, it continues to allure. America is the convergence of many rainbows; a world of colors blended to create red, white and blue; and give an Irish Saint's holiday a very American hue.

“In every conceivable manner, family is the link to our past and bridge to our future”

Alex Haley

Dedicate some time in March to increasing your knowledge of your family's rainbow of stories; and remember this bit of Irish wisdom: Never iron a four leaf clover; you don't want to press your luck.



Bonnie Martland