



# VaRRA News

Newsletter from the  
**Vail Ranch Restoration Association**

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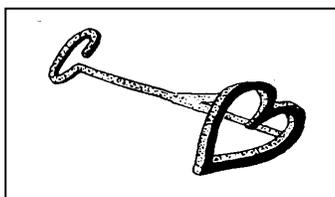
1st Quarter 2013 – Volume 4, Issue 1

*“Dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters.”*

**Little Temecula History Center is Open on Sunday – In Red Implement Barn next to Kohl’s At Margarita and Temecula Pkwy.**

**Sundays 12 – 5 pm**  
*Or by Appointment*

***Come see the results of our efforts, and perhaps Volunteer to be a docent.***



## **Vail Ranch Restoration Association**

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An interior view of one of the rooms at the Warner-Carrillo house described below.  
(Photo by Darell Farnbach)

## History Day Trip Ideas

# **Backcountry Rich in Local History**

**By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach**

For an enjoyable day trip to the backcountry, you can follow the trail some of the VaRRA members and directors took a couple of weeks ago. Be sure your gas tank is full and dress in layers for changing temperatures as you climb from the morning cool to the afternoon altitude.

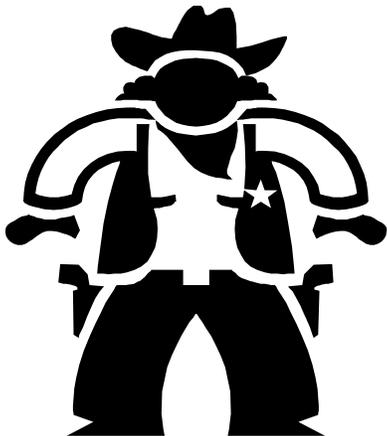
From the Little Temecula History Center head out of town on Temecula Parkway, which is also State Highway 79 South. Six miles from the History Center you will see the entrance to the Vail Lake Resort where the Dripping Springs watered horses pulling stagecoaches and where Mahlon Vail would frequently hide out in his hunting cabin. Today, besides being a membership resort, metal artist Ricardo Breceda has a studio. You can enter the grounds and meet the artist and view his sculptures, or you can pass by and enjoy his artful stagecoach and horses pose to jump across the roadway.

In another six miles, look to the right and see the rustic structure of the Aguanga stage station along the creek. This was a swing

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## **Friends of VaARRA Associate Members**

Robert & Carol Anderson  
Audrey & Vince Cilurzo  
Robert & Kathryn Curtis  
Walt Dixon  
Elaine Eshom  
Dale Garcia  
Phil & Connie Harris  
Sue & Jim Jeffrey  
Pat Lallou  
Bonnie Martland  
Jimmy & Peg Moore  
John Moramarco  
Duane & Judy Preimsberger  
Rosemary & Ray Smith  
Karen & David Strauss  
Roger Weber  
Lisa Woodward



### **VaARRA Board of Directors**

Darell Farnbach, President  
Rhine Helzer, Vice President  
Rebecca Farnbach, Secretary  
Sandy Helzer, Treasurer  
Dick Fox, Newsletter Editor  
Charolette Fox  
Malcolm Barnett  
Loretta Barnett  
Bill Harker  
Dave Wilson  
Toni Benson  
Anne Miller  
David Elliott

## **Back Country Day Trip**

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station during stagecoach days, meaning it did not provide food or lodging, but supplied a stop for fresh horses. To the left across the road you will see the Bergman family gravesite inside a fence. The Bergmans were early pioneers of the Aguanga Valley whose descendants are still there.

Seven miles down the road you will see the Oak Grove Stage Station on the right, which is said to be one of the few remaining Butterfield Overland Stage station standing. If you visit during a weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day the property will be open and you can view scenes through the windows depicting activities of times past. It will encourage the owner to keep it open if you will put some green in his donation can.

Just beyond the Oak Grove Station you will see a California State Historical marker for Camp Wright. The camp was a Union Army outpost during the Civil War, guarding the Fort Yuma Road.

Fourteen miles farther you will see the Chapel of St. Francis on a hill on the left side of the road just as you enter Warner Springs. It is worth taking the time to enter the chapel and pause for meditation. You can look down the hill behind the chapel and see the Indian graveyard from the days before the natives were evicted from the area in 1903.

Continue down the highway four miles and turn left on State Road 2 or "S2". In one mile you will see the Warner-Carrillo Store and Stage Stop. This is the newest historical tourism location in the backcountry. Championed by SOHO (the San Diego Save Our Heritage Organisation) this and the Santa Ysabel Store have just recently been restored and opened to the public.

Pull in and park at this National Historic site where you will learn a lot by touring these buildings and interacting with the docents. You can see and touch things you've only read about. The site is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 – 4 with an entrance fee of \$5 per person.

After leaving the Warner-Carrillo stop, continue down the road another mile and make a U-turn to park on the other side of the road. If you will look down into the valley, you will see the ruins of a building, the former Kimble-Wilson Store where Louis Wolf was once a postmaster.

Head back to Highway 79 and turn left. In ten miles you will reach a T-intersection and the Santa Ysabel General Store and Backcountry Visitor Center. Take the time to tour the store, and then treat yourselves to some lunch or pie at the restaurants across the road.

At this point you can either head back to Temecula, or, on a weekend you can take the road to the right and head into the town of Ramona. Watch for the Guy Woodward Museum on the right side of Main Street. You can take a guided tour of an old house, beekeeper building, blacksmith shop, etc. It is all very interesting and you won't be disappointed.

From Ramona you can turn back to trace your path homeward

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## ***New Books Available at History Center***

The Little Temecula History Center is always open on Sunday afternoons 12 – 5. During your visit note that in our gift shop we have VaARRA T-shirts and other items including our two most recent books on Temecula area history. These books, “The Southern Emigrant Trail through Riverside County” by Anne J. Miller, Ph.D. and “Images of America: Old Town Temecula” are both full of images and history information unique to Temecula.

### ***Morrissey Paintings***

We thank the Morrissey family and all those who participated in the fund-raiser which netted \$1000 for VaARRA. We have a few more paintings available for purchase, if anyone is interested in them.

### **Tours & Events**

In addition to the visitors at the History Center during our regular Sunday afternoon hours of operation, we have many other activities and events, including private group tours by appointment.

On the fourth Monday each month the Temecula Valley Historical Society has its monthly meeting, which starts at 6 pm with a history related program, followed by a Board Meeting. TVHS meetings are always open to the public.

## **Back Country Day Trip**

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or you can continue down the road to the Highway 78 turnoff to Escondido where you pass the San Diego Archeological Center at 16666 San Pasqual Valley Road, where there is presently an exhibit on the excavation at Nate Harrison’s cabin on Mount Palomar. The center is open for a few hours on Thursdays through Saturdays.

As you travel northward to connect with Interstate 15, you will pass the San Pasqual Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center. They have interesting exhibits that relate to the prelude to the Temecula Massacre, a part of the Mexican-American War.

If you are going to take this entire trip, you’ll have to start early or even take a two-day tour with a stay at a Julian bed and breakfast overnight. I would recommend checking the websites for the times and fee for each of the attractions.

After a tour like this, you will be glad to be home and you will long remember all the wonderful experiences and rich history of your day in the backcountry.

### **Board Expanded**

## **New VaARRA Board Members**

The VaARRA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that we have expanded the board and have two new members. Anne Miller and David Elliott have been longtime members and supporters of VaARRA, and were voted onto the board at our February monthly meeting. We are pleased to have Anne and David join the board to help guide us with our continuing efforts of protecting and preserving the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters site, which includes the Wolf Store.

## ***Exploratory Work Begins at Wolf Store***

Preliminary work is taking place at the Wolf Store on the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters property. Examining the condition of various areas of the store including the foundation, floor, doorways, and wood structure additions are part of this initial evaluation and exploratory efforts. It appears that many pieces of wood will need to be replaced due to age, weather and termite damage. As this project evolves we will make appropriate announcements.

## **2013 Ramona Pageant Scheduled**

With the strong historical connection between the Wolf Store and the Helen Hunt Jackson’s story of *Ramona*, VaARRA wants to remind our readers that this year’s production outdoor play in Hemet will celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> year. *The Official California State Outdoor Play* for 2013 will be performed at the Ramona Bowl Amphitheatre April 20 & 21, April 27 & 28, and May 4 & 5 with show time at 3:30 p.m. with one show each scheduled day. If you’ve never seen this production we strongly urge you to make plans for this year.

# Brief Notes -

## **Library Progress**

As reported in our last VaARRA Newsletter, over 800 data sheets for the books in our Native American library have been entered into our database. The majority of the books has been known as the Cherry/Parr Collection, but this original core collection has been augmented in recent times by other donations. Labels with call #, title, author and subjects have been printed and placed on acid free paper. These will be used to identify each book. Sorting and organizing by groupings is nearly complete. Finish work will include having shelf labels to designate groupings by region. Additional books continue to be donated to VaARRA.

## **On our E-mail List ??**

Our primary method of distribution of this newsletter is through our growing e-mail list, but if you have not received a copy of our newsletter and would like to be added for e-mail distribution, drop us a note at [info@vailranch.org](mailto:info@vailranch.org) and we will be glad to add your address. Printed copies are usually available at the History Center during each quarter. In the event you missed an issue then go to [temeculahistoricalsociety.org](http://temeculahistoricalsociety.org) website, Local History tab, scroll down click on Historic Vail Ranch, then scroll to links for past issues.

## Preservation Activity

### **Old Assessor's Map Reproduced**

One of the items which has been on display at VaARRA's History Center next to Kohl's Department Store is an old Assessor's Map which was rescued from an office in the old school house as a fire was in progress in 1971. This old map needed to be cleaned and preserved as well as copied for future reference. VaARRA is especially thankful for the effort of Don Conibear who made arrangements with a neighbor and friend, Nick Johnson of California Watercolor. Both are from Fallbrook. Mr. Johnson has the equipment and expertise to scan this large document, and be able to produce a "copy" that looks like the original. It is digitally captured and hence other copies can be produced for interested parties. For more information, see [www.californiawatercolor.com](http://www.californiawatercolor.com). Stop in the History Center and see for yourself that the copy looks just like the original, and the original is now archived in a protective environment.

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## **Update on Casa Loma**

**By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach**

The historic adobe house Mahlon Vail built on the hill overlooking the ranch in the 1920s has once again sold.

I recently interviewed David March whose mother Stella worked for Louie and Hedy Roripaugh when they lived there and he filled in a few unknown details on the history of the property.

There has been a rumor that Paul Tibbets (with two b's) who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima had lived there. With David's help I found that Ed and Liz Tippets (with two p's) owned the house for a while. Since Ed had a military background, locals speculated his involvement with the bombing.

David also clarified the location of the hidden staircase was accessible from both bookcases from the living room and the bedroom. While some believed it was built for Mahlon Vail's wife to escape possible intruders, David believes it was to give her undisturbed sunbathing on the roof.

After the most recent owner Siegfried Pikschus succumbed to cancer last August there were several yard sales and the home was auctioned on October 2. While Sig and his wife Louise were living there they welcomed historians to tour their lovely home and property. By the time of the auction everything had been neglected.

Ten minutes before the bidding began an El Segundo realty company called Wedgewood Enterprise Corporation learned of the upcoming opportunity. Site unseen, they called in the only bid, which was one cent more than the opening bid of \$550,000.

Within three weeks of the purchase, Casa Loma and the grounds were restored to their former glory and is back up for sale.