



VaRRA News

Newsletter from the
Vail Ranch Restoration Association

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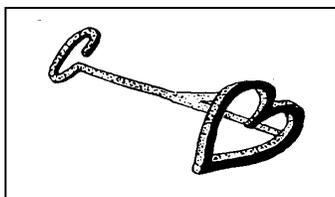
1st Quarter 2014 – Volume 5, Issue 1

“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.***



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Samuel W. Hackett

Samuel Warren Hackett
***Stagecoach Driver
From San Diego
To Temecula***

1878 – 1886

By Jeffery G. Harmon

“Warren Hackett has taken charge of the mail route from San Diego to Temecula.” (October 19, 1878, San Diego Union).

Samuel Warren Hackett had led an adventurous life before he began driving the mail route between San Diego and Temecula. He was born December 27, 1836 in Middleboro, Massachusetts. At 16, he joined a ship’s crew and sailed to California, landing in San Diego in 1859.

For the next ten years he travelled the California coastline hunting whales, eventually owning his own boat and company. He sold his whaling interests in 1869 and began cattle-raising in Lower California. In 1878, he sold his cattle and bought the San Diego to Temecula mail route.

On October 9, 1878, Samuel Warren Hackett purchased mail route 46366 from A. J. Knight. Hackett requested permission to run the 72-mile route without changing drivers. His request was granted. For his mail delivery services, he received an annual salary of \$1,700.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Hackett would leave San Diego and travel north to Temecula. He would stay the night and then leave Temecula the next morning. Sundays were his days of rest.

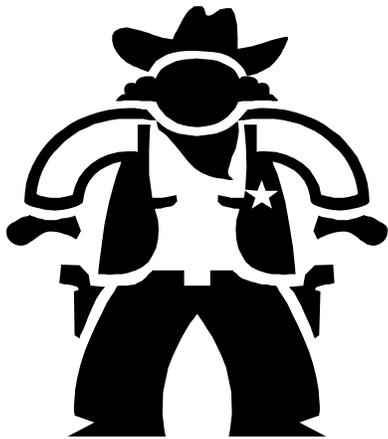
Samuel Hackett would travel north out of Old Town San Diego, ford the San Diego River and travel over the Poway Grade into the town of Poway. Then he would travel through what would become Escondido and into Bear Valley, where Valley Center is today. He then travelled north, fording the San Luis Rey River and entered Pala. Next he would take the steep Pala Road into Temecula, after fording the Temecula River.

During his first five years of service, Hackett delivered mail to Temecula’s post office at Louis Wolf’s store. When the railroad came through the Temecula Valley, the post office was relocated to the Temecula Station. For the next three years Hackett travelled an extra three and a half miles to the new location to deliver the mail.

After driving the stage line for a few months, Samuel Hackett soon
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Friends of VaARRA Associate Members

Robert & Carol Anderson
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Rosemary & Ray Smith
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S.W. Hackett

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gained a reputation for always being on time. *"The obliging and popular Hackett still holds the "ribbons" and is always on time with the mail."* (June 12, 1879, San Diego Union). His nickname was "O.T." Hackett or "On Time" Hackett. People claimed they could set their watches to Hackett's arrivals and departures.

The winters were not always kind to the stagecoach driver. Rain storms washed out roads, and flooded streams and rivers. San Diego County civic leaders had not seen the need to build bridges over many of the area's rivers, because they were easy to cross during the dry seasons. However, during the wet season, fording rivers was difficult, sometimes impossible.

The toughest challenge Samuel Hackett faced was the winter storm of 1884. The first rain began in February.

"Every drop of moisture has soaked into the ground and the soil is thoroughly saturated." (February 3, 1884, San Diego Union).

As the rains continued, the San Diego River began to rise.

"Warren Hackett who drives the Temecula and Bear Valley stage, who left here yesterday morning, was compelled to return to town not being able to cross the San Diego River. Mr. Hackett says the river was higher than he has seen it in six years, or since he began carrying the mail." (February 5, 1884, San Diego Union).

Samuel Hackett attempted to cross the San Diego River each of the next two days, but had to turn around. By February 12th, he was still unable to deliver the mail to Temecula.

"Warren Hackett and Frank Frary (San Diego to Julian stage line) both had to return with their stages yesterday, being unable to cross the San Diego River. They say it was considerably higher yesterday than it has been at any time since it commenced raining this winter." (February 12, 1884, San Diego Union).

By the end of February the first storm had ended, and Samuel Hackett was able to resume his route. The Eastern mail usually came to Temecula by rail, but since the storm had washed out railroad bridges and portions of the track in the Santa Margarita Canyon, the mail had to come to Hackett by a different route.

"Warren Hackett brought in another Eastern mail last evening from Temecula, which had come via Bergman's mail route from Colton" (March 2, 1882, San Diego Union). (Researcher's Note: Jacob Bergman operated the Julian to Colton stage line.)

The short reprieve didn't last long; soon another storm struck the region. On March 6th, Samuel Hackett did not return to San Diego from Temecula and many believed he had been weather bound. The storm lasted for several days, and Hackett had to wait till the river levels went down before he could travel.

"Warren Hackett reached town about ten o'clock Sunday night with the Temecula mail, after having been absent a week. He was detained in Temecula, being unable to ford the river at that place. He reports all of the country's streams are booming" (March 11, 1884, San Diego Union).

After a few days Samuel Hackett headed north to Temecula, but failed to return to San Diego the next day. The newspapers also reported that the telegraph lines were down, and that steamers were the only communication San Diego had with the outside world. Though his deliveries were sporadic because of the storms, the county residents were grateful for Hackett's continued services.

"Hackett of the Poway route, and Frary of the Julian route have

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Special Event To Be Held In March

As part of the March 27 - 29 Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA) regional meeting in Temecula, VaARRA will hold a two-day open house at the Little Temecula History Center and the Historic Vail Ranch site on Saturday, March 29 & Sunday, March 30. The facilities will be open on both dates for the OCTA meeting attendees, as well as available to the general public. Antique vendors will also hold a flea market at the historic property. On March 29th several authors of local history books will be at the History Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to sell and autograph their works.

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History Center Notes & Activities

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. During your visit to the History Center, note that in our gift shop we have VaARRA T-shirts and other items including many books on Temecula area history.

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.

S.W. Hackett

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braved many dangers and suffered much exposure in their efforts to keep the mails running, for which they deserve great praise." (March 16, 1886, San Diego Union).

Once again, because of the storm and the high rivers, Hackett was in Temecula for a week. Even when the rains let up, the ground and riverbanks were covered in mud. On his return trip, Hackett's team became mired down in the San Diego River.

"He was floundering around in the river for an hour last evening and came to town with his clothes soaked through." (March 26, 1884, San Diego Union).

A few days later, Samuel Hackett experienced a large hail storm in the town of Bernardo, near modern day Rancho Bernardo. On March 29th he was unable to cross the San Diego River and turned back. Again the storm receded the first days of April and Hackett resumed his route.

"Supervisor Rainbow, of Fall Brook, came in with Warren Hackett last evening, to be present at the meeting of the Board tomorrow." (April 6, 1884, San Diego Union).

On April 12th, Hackett didn't return from Temecula, but the next day he returned to San Diego and reported that within 24 hours, 3.14 inches of rain had fallen in Bear Valley. During this time, Hackett began making plans to expand his stagecoach business.

"J. W. Wescott, of the "Boss" carriage and wagon shop, has just finished a splendid light three-seat stage for Warren Hackett. It is now being painted and will be out of the shop in about a week when we suppose Mr. Hackett will run it on his Temecula mail line." (April 20, 1884, San Diego Union).

The rains continued to fall through the first week of May. On May 2nd, Hackett hadn't returned to San Diego. On May 16th, Hackett reported that it had rained the hardest he had ever seen it on the route. He stated the San Bernardo River was very high but he succeeded in fording it.

By June, the winter storms had ended and the summer sun had begun drying up the land and the rivers. Samuel Hackett began a passenger service on his stage line to recover his financial losses.

"Warren Hackett, our energetic mail carrier, now drives an elegant new turnout, and seems to be doing a good business in carrying freight and passengers as he deserves to make up for the losses sustained by him through the interruptions of last winter." (June 19, 1884, San Diego Union).

He continued to operate the stage line until July 1886. He sold his mail route to J. V. Hicks, a real estate man from Oceanside. Hicks formed the Inland Mail Company and its first stage left San Diego for Temecula on Monday, July 5, 1886.

After retiring from the Temecula route, it is believed that Samuel Hackett developed a stage line between San Diego and the new town of Escondido. In May 1886, Hackett had posted an ad for an Escondido passenger stage line. After he sold his mail route, Hackett bought property in Escondido, possibly to be used as a stage stop on his route. It is unknown how long he operated this shorter stage line.

By the end of the 19th century, Samuel Hackett entered San Diego's civic services. Then on November 28, 1920, at the age of 83, Samuel Warren Hackett died. He was buried in the Masonic Cemetery in San Diego.

Today the legacy of Samuel Hackett lives on. His name can be
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Brief Notes -

Native Peoples Library Update

As reported in our last VaRRA Newsletter, work continues on our Native American library. The majority of the books have been known as the Cherry/Parr Collection, but this original core collection has been augmented in recent times by other donations. We have finished with the labeling, sorting and organizing by groupings on shelves at the History Center is complete. We are finalizing printed reports for review with listings sorted by author and general categories. We are rapidly approaching the point of completion.

Are You 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 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 website, Local History tab, scroll down click on Historic Vail Ranch, then scroll to links for past issues.

S.W. Hackett

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found on Temecula's "They Passed This Way" Monument. It is important to never forget his dedication, courage, and sacrifices to deliver the mail to the residences of Temecula.

(Researcher's Note: To learn more about Samuel Warren Hackett check out The High Country Magazine #11, Article, "Post Office Competition".)

-- Recollections of a Cowboy --

(Editors Note: We are sharing with you some letters that Guy Flint sent to Carole Bell of the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, in answer to her questions about his experiences as a cowboy for the Vails on the Santa Rosa Ranch. Entries in the Vail payroll book show he was employed by the Vails from 1937 through 1942. Mr. Sandy Vail Wilkinson said Flint left to serve in World War II. One of Flint's saddles is on display at the Little Temecula History Center. Letters reproduced with permission of Carole Bell. Any misspelled words were left as originally written.)

Dear Carole

(Undated)

It was sure nice to hear from you. I guess you are having some old time rain down there. It was time according to the news. We had rains like that when I was on the ranch 1928. I had to swim the horses across Murrieta Creek to get the mail at Murrieta.

We had no Christmas Celebration most everybody either had somewhere to go or something to do. I don't know of any berries along the creek. In fact the only thing eatable was fruit & olives in the small orchard north of the bunk house.

We did have one lemon tree that someone had planted in Walker Basin that grew wild. I used to go by there when the lemons grew ripe and take some to the cook. They were the nicest lemons I have ever seen. They grew so big they were about 3 1/2 to 4 inches long & about the size of a no. 2 can in diameter. They had no human care just grew kind of wild.

I sure liked the picture of the Bobcat.

Well Carole I hope you can read this. I just passed my ninetieth Birthday in Sept.

Love to hear from you & about the old Ranch.

Love Guy