



# VaARRA News

Newsletter from the  
**Vail Ranch Restoration Association**

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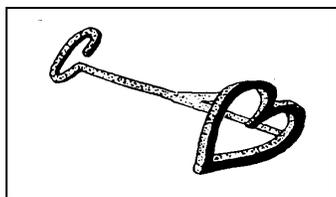
3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2013 – Volume 4, Issue 3

*“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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VaARRA Board at Special Meeting of the Temecula Valley Historical Society sharing the news about the restoration of the Wolf Store. Attendees were also given a tour. -- Photo by Jeffery Harmon

## Celebrating the Renovation of the Wolf Store

The Board of Directors of the Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaARRA) was popping their buttons with pride as they hosted the June meeting of the Temecula Valley Historical Society under a shade tree next to the newly renovated Wolf Store Adobe, the oldest structure standing in the Temecula Valley. Tours were given inside and outside the adobe to point out different features. It was probably the largest gathering at the building since the historic plaque between the two doors was unveiled in 1950.

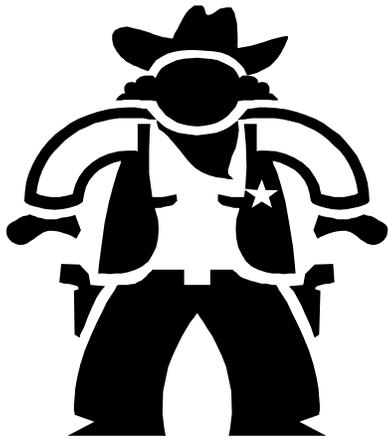
Darell and Rebecca Farnbach gave an overview of the history of the property and told in detail how VaARRA was formed to save the historic district in which the adobe stands and they told the long-running story of starts and stops toward the renovation of each of the historic buildings on the property.

Sometimes referred to as the “Holy Grail” of historic buildings in the Temecula area, the adobe was constructed in the 1860s with Indian labor for use as a general store and stagecoach stop along the Southern Emigrant Trail. The Wolf Store Adobe was the center of Temecula

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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  
Anne Miller & David Elliott  
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  
Charolette Fox  
Malcolm Barnett  
Loretta Barnett  
Dave Wilson  
Toni Benson

## **Wolf Store Renovation**

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before the railroad was put in along the base of the hills and attracted business to locate there.

By 1900, the Wolf Store, once the important center of Temecula, became a place for ranch hands to store grain and after the Vail Company sold the historical site in 1964, all the neglected buildings gradually fell into decline.

Beginning in 1996 a group of concerned citizens started to meet to form a watchdog group to ensure the saving of the Wolf Store and the surrounding historical ranch buildings. After the demolition of an historic portion of the foreman's house, members of the group sprang into action to prevent further demolition and filed a lawsuit that was settled creating the 4-acre historic district as it is today. The settlement set up guidelines for use of the property and gave VaARRA the opportunity to put museum displays in several of the buildings.

The Wolf Store is at the front of the property and is the first of the five buildings to be restored. A new concrete floor has been poured and walls have been retrofitted for earthquake safety. The wooden lean-to on the west side has been rebuilt for restrooms. The former hotel rooms on the south side of the building have been reconstructed and the original doors that were saved in the 1960s by some forward thinking individuals have been repositioned into place.

A cutout was made through the south wall of the adobe to allow access into the former hotel rooms. A wide doorway salvaged from the Old Town mercantile building was placed in the cutout. VaARRA has set up a temporary display of photos in one of the hotel rooms showing the Wolf Family and the adobe through the years. Artifacts found in the renovation are displayed in another of the hotel rooms. A lot of bottles were found under the floorboards of the hotel rooms.

VaARRA has a permanent display in the southeast hotel room depicting how the room may have been furnished for an 1880s traveler. The antique pitcher, wash basin and bathtub add points of discussion when the room is viewed by children who can't figure out where the water would come from to fill those vessels.

The historic adobe is available for lease for retail or for a sandwich or ice cream shop. The owner will finish the interior when he learns the needs of the business that goes in. Until then, private tours can be taken by appointment with Darell (951-552-3516) or on a Sunday afternoon from the Little Temecula History Center, the red barn west of Kohls.

Preparation is being done for future renovation of the cookhouse, bunkhouse and machinery barn. The plan is to have restaurants and retail businesses in a park-like setting with live blacksmith demonstrations and live music in the historical district along the Southern Emigrant Trail where families can enjoy leisure time.

## VaRRA Member Attends Adobe U

Darell Farnbach is participating in Adobe U, a hands-on historic renovation project sponsored by Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO) of San Diego. The group is presently working on what is believed to be the old Kimball-Wilson Store and stagecoach stop where Louis Wolf tended store before coming to Temecula. It is about 1½ miles from the recently restored Warner-Carrillo Ranch house, The Kimball-Wilson Store deteriorated during the 150 years of vacancy with cattle roaming freely in and out, while trees and weeds grew around & inside the structure. Before work began, half of the west wall had fallen out and a third of the south wall had fallen in.

In May, on the first day, "students" first cleaned debris, for example, cow pies, weeds, barbed wire and bits and pieces of wood. Dividing into two crews, the first worked inside and the other outside.

The inside group removed the remains of the fallen in roof and dug out tree stumps. They found the fallen-in wall and melted adobe had raised the floor level by about three feet, so that was leveled by shovel. Outside curious cattle watched the volunteers as they shoveled away melted adobe material.

On the second workday, which was in July, students found a protective barbed wire fence around the work site that was erected by Vista Irrigation, the property owner, to keep the cattle out.

The volunteers donned hard  
**(Continued on next Page)**

## -- 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.)*

Coos Bay, Or

Nov. 21, 1997

Ms. Carol Bell  
The Nature Conservancy  
Murrieta, Calif.

Dear Carol,

I really appreciate the courtesy you showed my son-in-law and me on the day of the fiesta. Thank you so much. I would have liked to have spent more time with you but I know it was a busy time with you that day.

I think you did a fabulist job of coordinating the whole think. I'm glad the conservatory is preserving at least part of the old Rancho. It's too bad that most of the people of Calif. did not see this place when it was a well kept working ranch.

The rest of the ranch is so cut up and run down now.

I tried to take a picture of the bronze plaque but the batteries in my camera went dead, so if you happen to have one would you please send one to me.

The five or six scars in the cement in front of the old adobe bunk house were where our saddle racks were.

Carol, I'm not much of an authority but if you have any questions about the old place, or the Vail family, that I can help you with I will be more than happy to do so.

Again I want to thank you for your courtesy to us.

Sincerely,  
Guy R. Flint

###

Mar. 14, 98

Dear Carole,

Thanks so much for the pictures. My flash went dead while I was there so I couldn't get the plaque.

We had one major fire while I was working on the ranch. It started by a woman burning some trash in her back yard just across the south west ranch boundary and north of De Luz canyon road and burned in a north east direction up to the rim rock across what we called Villicitos. The Forest Service managed to halt it at the rim and on the east at the road that went into Sandia canyon. It burned about 2 miles of fence on the southwest line. I packed steel fence posts from the house to the area on mules & we had four other men putting up the fence.

The fire was actually a good thing, before it we used to run about  
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## Adobe U (Continued)

hats and removed and dismantled verandas from the four sides of the building, saving some of the wooden beams and shingles for possible reuse. They also saved some of the broken adobe bricks for reuse.

In Darell's words, "All this work had now exposed all four sides of the adobe to the world and was a dramatic change. The poor little adobe had no clothes. She had lost her crown of trees and her veranda skirt and had no way to hide her nakedness. She was surrounded by three piles, one of tree stumps, one of dirt, and one of 2 X 4s and shingles, all about 30 to 40 feet from her walls."

On Darell's way home he saw a badger run across the road and into the bushes.

### **To be continued.**

Anyone interested in participating in Adobe U please see [www.sohosandiego.org](http://www.sohosandiego.org) or phone Darell (951-552-3516).

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## **Summer Visitors**

Recent groups touring the history center included students from the Pechanga Youth Program, the Temecula Valley Museum day camp, and teens from Temecula's sister city in Japan. A highlight for the Japanese teens was the surprise visit of Frankie Chavarria and his brother Nacho who are working cowboys. Their grandfather was Reyes Laborin, one of the Vail Ranch cowboys in the Magnificent 7 photo on Kohls. Frankie used a riata from one of the displays and demonstrated roping techniques to some of the teens.

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## Guy Flint Letters

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fifteen mares in the area & the next spring we put in 100 head of steers in there.

I never saw a mountain lion while I was there. I think since the coastal range has become so populated that they have moved into areas such as the Santa Rosa.

There were always was lots of deer in the area in fact they used to come in the yard & orchard. For years was a pinto doe that lived down below the house that you live in, not fawn spots but large splotches of white on her sides.

The Vail's used to have a big hunt every fall in fact Charlie Bell, a brother-in-law of Vail's, used to hunt every day almost during the season.

There were lots of coyotes, bobcats & rattlesnakes & ground squirrels. I killed about 30 rattlesnakes a year while I was there. There was 3 different kinds of rattlesnakes, black diamond backs, California red & a brown colored one.

The Canadian geese used to come in when the vernal pools would fill.

The whole ranch was posted against trespass, probably some of the signs still exist as they were baked on enamel signs & there were six of us that were deputy sheriffs to enforce it on both ranchos. Vail's were adamant about this.

In 1938 we had a flood year. One storm it rained 21 inches in four days & four nites without let up! The road to Murrieta got so bad I had to take a pack horse to get groceries & mail. I had to swim the horses across Murrieta Creek for about 8 ft. In some of the pastures we would see water coming out of gopher holes. Almost all of the water gaps across all the canyons washed out.

You asked about snow & only saw it once but we had just got in 400 head of cattle & put them in the lower country & I spent all day locating them & to deep them from drifting & it snowed all day, only about 2 inches stayed over nite.

Carole if you have any maps of the original ranchos & send them to me I will put in the names of the different areas & the water systems.

Hope this answers some of your questions & you enjoy reading it. In the future I will try to answer any thing that I can.

Your Friend  
Guy

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## **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 at the Little Temecula History Center, which starts at 6 pm with a history related program, followed by a Board Meeting. TVHS meetings are always open to the public.