



VaRRA News

Newsletter from the
Vail Ranch Restoration Association

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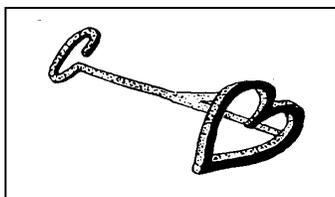
2nd Quarter 2014 – Volume 5, Issue 2

“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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Pictures Offer Insight into the Past

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

“Seeing is believing”, but it is also sometimes deceiving. And, a second look is often warranted to clarify a first impression.

Two local historians were studying a drawing found among Tony Tobin’s things. Tony collected many of the artifacts now in the Temecula Valley Museum. “Look, there is the Temecula Creek, and the Apis dwelling, and folks traveling the Southern Emigrant Trail.” As we scrutinized it over the next twenty minutes, it all worked except for the scrubby brush vegetation in the foreground. One of us decided to reach for a magnifier to read the small script under the drawing. To our surprise and embarrassment, it was not a drawing of the Temecula Creek, but of the Pecos River in Texas!

Many times when we historians look at an image we see only the main subject of the photograph and sometimes when we pick up the same photo later we find the very thing we are looking for in the background. One such instance is what we call the “River Crossing” photo given to VaRRA by Sandy Wilkinson, the grandson of Walter Vail who owned the huge Vail Ranch that dominated the Temecula Valley.

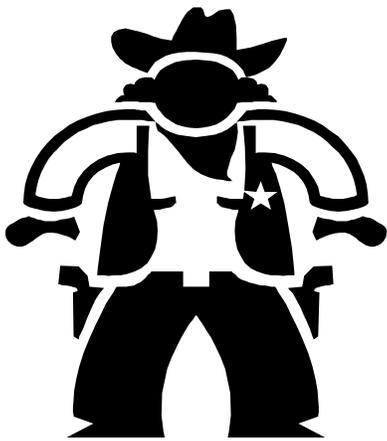
It was exciting for us to have documentation of the ford of the Southern Emigrant Trail where it crossed the Temecula Creek just southeast of where the Vail bunkhouse sits today. . It shows the ruts in the road where stagecoaches pulled up out of the creek.

Just recently two historians were looking at the photo (above) and to the right side they saw the faint outline of a corral fence and of a

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Insight into past

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triangular device suspended from a pulley attached to one of the trees. Knowing about old-time butchering as they do, they identified the mechanism as one that would hold livestock to be dressed. This may be gruesome to our present-day sensibilities, but it was just one more valuable clue to everyday life and how food was prepared during active ranching eras at the Historic Vail Ranch.

We historians try to put into writing what we have gleaned from analyzing images so the next folks to view them won't make the same mistakes of identification or miss some of the details depicted. Also, we try to remember to label all the modern photographs we print so in time to come people will know who is in the picture and where it was taken.

Restoration Progress

Update on Ranch

By Darell Farnbach

There are two things you may have noticed if you have been by the Vail Ranch Headquarters site lately. Number one is the trees. VaARRA has been very protective of the old trees on the property. There are six trees left from the early ranching days. One of the old sycamore trees behind the bunkhouse had to be removed, but that has been the plan for over ten years. The tree is now gone along with all the bees that were living in its hollow trunk. The bees were last seen leaving in a swarm heading for the river.

The largest of the old fellows is the big mulberry tree between the Wolf Store and cookhouse. It has had a major pruning and looks great. Hopefully it will live another 100 years. All of the newer trees, planted around 2001, were also pruned and a few of them were removed to make way for new construction.

The second change you may have noticed is that the stucco has been removed from the cookhouse. Sometime after World War II the ranch buildings underwent updating and some needed repair work that included new foundations, roofs, and stucco. The stucco that provided good insulation has been removed on the cookhouse, revealing the original redwood siding in a wonderful state of preservation.

If you stop by the historic site on any Sunday from noon to 5 pm., the gate will be open and you can enter to admire the beauty of the newly trimmed trees and see the dramatic change to the appearance of the cookhouse. While you are there, please come see me at our ongoing estate sale in the Wolf Store where you just may find some items you want to purchase to support the Vail Ranch Restoration Association. The funds gleaned from the sale will provide materials for historical exhibits in each of the remaining ranch buildings.

Are “U” VaARRA Supporter or Member ??

To all of our long-time and faithful supporters, friends and Associate members we Thank You for staying the course. We are finally realizing that the dream of having all of the buildings at the old Vail Ranch Headquarters complex once again be an active and vibrant part of the History Community in Temecula.

As you read through this quarterly newsletter the “Ranch Update” by Darell Farnbach you will get a sense of what the “watchdog” efforts have attained at the ranch.

Associate memberships are only \$15 for a single, or \$25 for a family. Please contact us at info@vailranch.org to join our efforts.

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.

A Calving Experience

By Tony Tobin

(Editor’s Note: The manuscript for this story written by Tony Tobin was found in among some old documents, and is being reprinted as found.)

In September of 1919, my parents, Mr. & Mrs. M.V. Tobin, homesteaded 440 acres in an area called Chihuahua Valley in northeast San Diego County, California. There were my parents and four children: ages 6 months, 3, 5 and 6 years. I am the 5 year old. Our house was one room, 14’x20’, with no ceiling nor interior wall covering, just 2’x4’s. We had no horses or wagons or a car. We borrowed animals and equipment in order to do what little farming we did.

After about a year my father bought a 1918 Dodge touring car. We also bought a Holstein cow with a calf. We planted the usual garden and some fruit trees.

My father hunted deer and rabbits for meat. We also got meat and milk from the neighbors, before we had the cow.

My mother was an extra fine seamstress. She had worked for a company that made wedding outfits for the very wealthy, in San Francisco, before she married and moved to Los Angeles with my father, brother and me in 1916. My sister was born that year and my younger brother was born in 1919, the same year we moved to Chihuahua Valley.

In the latter part of 1920, my mother decided she needed her old treadle sewing machine, so we packed up the old Dodge and went to Los Angeles, about 150 miles and a six to eight hour trip. I don’t remember how long we were in Los Angeles, but when we were going to return to the old homestead my folks decided to take a long way around and go by way of San Marcos where an old navy buddy of my dad’s lived. San Marcos is between Oceanside and Escondido.

We had no problems getting there and stayed a couple of days and then headed home to Chihuahua Valley by way of Escondido, Ramona, Santa Ysabel and Warner Springs. The road from San Marcos to Santa Ysabel was paved and crooked with lots of hills.

As we left Escondido and headed for Ramona we went through the San Pasqual Valley (where the present day San Diego Wild Animal Park is). We came upon a large sign on the highway that read “10 day old pure bred Jersey Calves for sale -- \$10”. My dad always wanted a Jersey coe because of its rich milk. Soooo what does he do but stop to check out the calves. Well here’s the picture: An open touring car with 2 adults and 4 kids, a sewing machine in the back seat with 3 of the kids, rolls of blankets over the fenders and boxes on the running boards.

Now just where and how are you going to add a ten day old calf? My mother was quite apprehensive but my dad figured it out. Put my 4 year old sister in the front seat with my folks and put the calf in the back seat (on the seat; there was no room on the floor, because of the sewing machine) between my brother and me. Now how do you keep a 10 day old calf from thrashing around and wanting to stand up? Between my dad and the dairyman they came up with a solution: Put the calf in a large burlap (gunny) sack and tie the opening around the calf’s neck. This they did and put it on the seat between my brother and me and we were on our way.

We probably had a 3 or 4 hours ride to home . . . we thought. Now remember, this is not a housebroken animal and it didn’t wear diapers.

Everything went fine, except for the calf relieving itself at

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Brief Notes -

Native Peoples Library Update

Essentially we are finally finished with the work on our Native American library. All of the books that have been become known as the Cherry/Parr Collection, plus some that have augmented the original collection in recent times through other donations, have labeled, sorted and organized by groupings on shelves at the History Center. We have extracted the database into Excel spreadsheets for reference & referral. Now working on ways to provide this reference to researchers.

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.

Calving Experience

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will, until a mile or so out of Santa Ysabel (it consisted of an old general store, gas station, lodge, and garage-blacksmith shop and several houses). The car quit. It was fortunate we had come over the last hill and we coasted all the way to the garage. The mechanic couldn't get the car fixed until the next morning so we set up camp behind a nearby large billboard and staked out the calf. We bought canned milk and mixed it with water for the calf and we ate in the lodge.

The next morning, we packed up and headed for home. From here to home was about 40 miles. We got 12 to 14 miles and the car quit again. We sat around and Dad tried to fix the car with no luck. Traffic on the road was almost nil. As luck would have it along comes the rural mail carrier and he had a big Marmon touring car and said he would tow us to Warner Springs where the maintenance mechanic could help us. Imagine, if you will, riding in an open car on a dirt road being towed about 15 feet behind another car.

It was so dusty you could hardly see the other car. Well, we made it to Warner Springs which was and is today a resort for the wealthy with a Hotel and very nice cabins, (adobe and concrete) 2 large swimming pools fed from the hot sulfur springs, etc. My folks cleaned us up as best they could and went to the hotel dining room to eat. They wouldn't let us in because we were so dirty from the ride behind the towing car.

They did let us rent a cabin and use the bath house at the swimming pools to shower and wash up and then they let us in to eat. My brother and I didn't smell too good after riding in the back seat with the calf. We had to stay all night and Dad and the mechanic got the car going again in the morning and we took off again for home, another 20 miles to go. We got home without any more trouble and I guess the calf was just as happy to get out of the sack as we were to get out of the car after almost 3 days.

I don't know how long it took Dad to get all the calf residue and odor out of the car but the calf grew to a fine milk cow and a real pet and everyone lived happily ever after.

Estate Sale

*On many Sundays and an
Occasional Saturday*

Watch for "Estate Sale" signs in front of the Wolf Store, plus the presence of the Vail Ranch Model A Pickup parked in front

Items available for sale include Tobin family estate pieces, plus items from VaRRA's Collection of items donated by other families.