



# VaRRA News

Newsletter from the  
**Vail Ranch Restoration Association**

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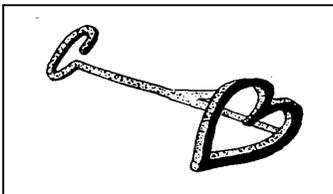
3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017 – Volume 8, Issue 3

*“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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### Local Justice

## Judge Vernon V. Hilliard

*(Originally published in the Guenther’s Gazette monthly publication at Guenther’s Murrieta Hot Springs. This article appeared in the October 1965 – The editor was Arnold French.)*

At the age of 17, Judge Hilliard’s father was six feet two inches tall and weighed 220 lbs. A lean youngster with long deceptive muscles toughened by incredible hard work. Stacked up against some of our modern pretty boys who frequent the various muscle beaches of So. Calif. he could probably have wrung them out without breathing hard, and then gone on to a days work that might have killed any one of them.

The “Rebellion” had just started and Albert was intolerably irked not to be completely part of it. He was a man, certainly in stature, if not in years, and there was only one thing for him to do.

So he lied about his age; said he was eighteen, and the Union Army was glad to get him.

For three grueling years he fought in this bloody mess until finally at the Battle of Pea Ridge Arkansas he got an eye shot out.

Recovering from this disaster he was finally mustered out. They gave him one hundred dollars for his three years’ service, and called it “Bounty”.

During the reluctant peace that followed, Albert Hilliard married a winsome girl whose maiden name was Mattie Proudfit.

At this time he was a man of substance, for he owned 160 acres just fourteen miles from Galesburg, Illinois. It could have made him a good living, but restlessness engendered by the war plus a pioneer spirit caused him to sell this property. And so with a good team hitched to a covered wagon he started on a long slow journey which was to terminate in Kansas.

Relatively speaking, in terms of time, it was not too long ago, and yet these still were pioneer days in the strictest sense. Few creature comforts existed in that Kansas country and hardships were the accepted lot of all who came to this frontier land.

Near the town of Pratt, Albert Hilliard homesteaded 160 acres and for one dollar an acre bought 480 more thus making up one complete section.

Virgin land covered by Buffalo Grass billowing in the restless

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## Judge Hilliard . . .

prairie wind. It was a primitive life, filled with hardship and anxieties, tempered meanwhile by the heavy satisfaction of wresting a living from a land which had known only the brief traverse of Plains Indians and the heavy thunder of vast Buffalo herds.

Judge Vernon Hilliard, one of five children, was born to this background in a sod house, and at the age of 12 was following a team of mules with a heavy sod cutter.

To this day there is a certain heavy emotion in his voice when he recounts the difficulty of keeping a straight line across the endless expanse of all this acreage, and I cannot help but compare his early lot with the twelve year olds on the playgrounds of today.

Hard work was certainly part of his heritage and looking backward, the judge has no feeling that they were grueling years or that any part of this early living hurt him in any way.

Realizing the man's background, it is no wonder that he finds the present Anti-Poverty program, ridiculous. Crisply he told me, "If people were willing to do a little hard work, projects like this would never be needed".

Judge Hilliard is a frequent visitor to the Springs and is a long time friend to all the Guenther family. He has been the presiding Judge in the Murrieta Judicial District since 1950. A district covering 330 square miles. He holds court five days a week in the town of Murrieta.

Before coming to Murrieta in 1940, Hilliard was an Automotive Distributor and Contractor in the Los Angeles area. Then he and his wife, Corinne bought a ranch here and shortly thereafter moved to Murrieta.

The Judge is a lean spare man who carries his seventy five years lightly. Dedicated to his work he told me, he'd never had a vacation in his life. Besides his court in Murrieta he serves on other justice courts of Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino Counties.

Recently Judge Hilliard was honored at an appreciation luncheon given at Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs, and Mrs. Hilliard was presented with several floral tributes.

Two hundred and thirty one friends attended the affair. District Attorney William O. Mackey served as M.C. for the event, and former Gov. Goodwin Knight was also present.

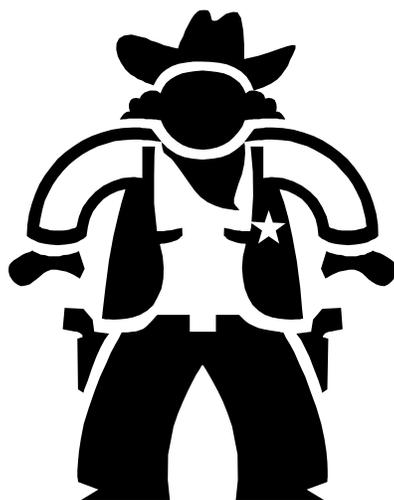
A long list of dignitaries included State Sen. Gordon Cologne, Assemblyman Craig Biddle, County Administrative Officer Robert T. Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors William D. Jones, Marshal Forest Black of Corona and Dominic Tavaglione of Riverside.

During the luncheon, Supervisor Floyd McCall of Hemet presented the Judge with a plaque, which commemorated his services, also a striking portrait of Hilliard, painted on black velvet was given to him.

We who live in the area value his presence highly and feel honored to call this Grass Roots Patriot, Friend.



Judge Vernon V. Hilliard



**VaARRA**

### **Board of Directors**

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# Headquarters' *Haunted* *Events in* *October*

**September 29 – 7 to 11 pm**

Grand opening of Sinister Valley Haunt to run through Halloween, Headquarters' own haunted house.

**September 30 – 6 to 9 pm**

Movie Night –  
“*The Box Trolls*”.

**During October** there will be Haunted Carriage Rides every Friday and Saturday evening.

**October 27 – 6 pm to 10 pm**

“*Starlight Bizarre*” this will be the last Starlight Bazaar event for 2017, having a big Halloween party. Music, Haunted House, Haunted Carriage Rides, Spooky Characters roaming the grounds, Halloween themed market, food truck, Car Show, Halloween Photo Booth, Circus performers.

**October 28 – 12 pm to 5 pm**

Halloween Jamboree, Free trick or treating, costume parade, Free Kid's crafts, pumpkin patch, carnival games, artisan shopping, spooky photo ops, Haunted House and Haunted Carriage Rides.

**October 31 – 6 pm to 10 pm**

“*The Legend of Vail Hollow*”  
Haunted Carriage rides.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Visitors – Thank You Notes

*(Each year a number of classes visit the History Center and Vail Headquarters as part of their 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade studies of local history. We frequently receive “Thank You” notes written by the students. Here are some more unedited.)*

Dear Vail Ranch Volunteers,

In my opinion our field trip was excellent because the weather was great, we got to ride in the Butterfield Stage coach and we learned a lot. First, the weather was perfect. It was sunny with a cool breeze. Next, I enjoyed this field trip because I learned a lot. I learned about Blacksmith's job, how people did laundry in the old days and how the Native Americans got food and clothes. Finally, I got to ride in the Butterfield Stage Coach. It was really cool to experience. I believe that going on a field trip to Vail Ranch was great.  
Sincerely, Paige

Dear Vail ranch,

Vail ranch was a fantastic field trip. I liked the stage coach. The set was so smooth I almost feel asleep. Second of all, when we went to the garden I said in my head this garden is huge. My radish seed is almost grown. Finally, when we got to see the blacksmiths work shop it was amazing.  
From, Phoenix

Dear Vail Ranch Volunteers,

In my opinion Vail was the best field trip I ever had. First of all, it was cool when we saw the Blacksmiths. It was cool when they bent the piece of metal. Second, I liked when we went to the coffee and ice cream shop. I wanted to get some ice cream there. I loved when we went in the Butterfield stage coach. It was cool when we rode in the Butterfield stage coach. I loved the Vail Ranch.  
Sincerely, Ayleen

Dear Vail Ranch,

In my opinion this field trip was great because of all the stuff we got to do. First I loved the garden because they let us get seeds to plant in the ground. Next, I liked the ride on the Butterfield coach because we got to ride on it. Last I loved the blacksmith because we got to see metal bent.  
From AG

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## Mark Your Calendars for a Special Event

Please note a change of date from what was previously promoted, but the Special Event to be hosted by the Temecula Valley Historical Society is still on for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration of “*The Invaders*” TV series to be held open air at the Vail Headquarters on the afternoon and early evening of Friday, November 10, 2017. Plans are in place to show the pilot episode that was filmed in Old Town Temecula. It will be fun to watch for familiar scenes and compare them with now.

## Bits & Pieces From the Headquarters

■ On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month the Temecula Gunfighters will be at the Vail Headquarters to provide valuable gun safety demonstrations.

■ On the fourth Friday of each month is “Starlight Bazaar” with live music, booths, food vendors. Horse-drawn carriage rides are available for \$5 per rider. Imagine the romance of live music and an open carriage ride through the property. This activity will end for 2017 with special Halloween rides in October.

■ Did you know that everywhere you see an old wagon wheel and a slab of granite there is an informative plaque. Take a walk around the property and you will learn a lot from the plaques. We are sometimes asked why we don't have informative brochures. The plaques are a way to eliminate paper waste.

■ If you haven't been to the Headquarters recently and walked around be sure to check out a recent addition. There is an antique gas pump that is now near the old Foreman's office, where one can be seen in an old 1943 photo. Check it out.

## STAGECOACH RULES FOR PASSENGERS

Many stagecoaches running through the primitive areas of the west, including Temecula, Murrieta and Lake Elsinore California, in the mid and late 1800's adopted rules to assist their passengers enjoy a more pleasant trip. The rules were frequently posted in the stagecoach stations and sometimes to the ceiling of the coach itself.

1. Abstinence from liquor is desired in our coaches. However, if you must imbibe, share the bottle and don't overlook the driver. To do otherwise makes you appear mean spirited and selfish.
2. If ladies are present, gentlemen are urged to forego the smoking of cigars and pipes as the odor of same is repugnant to the weaker sex. Chewing tobacco is permitted, if you spit with the wind, not against it.
3. Gentlemen passengers must refrain from the use of rough language in the presence of ladies and children. This rule does not apply to the driver whose team may not be able to understand genteel language.
4. Robes are provided for your comfort during cold or wet weather. Hogging robes will not be tolerated. The offender will be obliged to ride outside with the driver.
5. Snoring is disgusting. When you sleep, sleep quietly.
6. Do not use your fellow passenger's shoulder for a pillow. He or she may not understand and friction could result.
7. Firearms may be kept on your person for use in emergencies. Do not discharge them for pleasure, or shoot at wild animals along the roadsides. The noise riles the horses.
8. In the event of a runaway, remain calm and try to stay in your seat. Jumping from the coach may kill you or leave you injured and at the mercy of the elements, coyotes and highwaymen.
9. Topics to be avoided in conversation include those that have to do with religion, politics and above all, stagecoach robbery and accidents.

Gentlemen guilty of unchivalrous behavior toward lady passengers will be put off the stage. It can be a long, dangerous walk back to the last station. A word to the wise is sufficient.

*(From "Little Known Tales in California History,"  
by Alton Pryor)*