



# Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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*It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Murrieta Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.*

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The Linda Rosa Hotel  
Photo courtesy of the Temecula Valley Historical Society

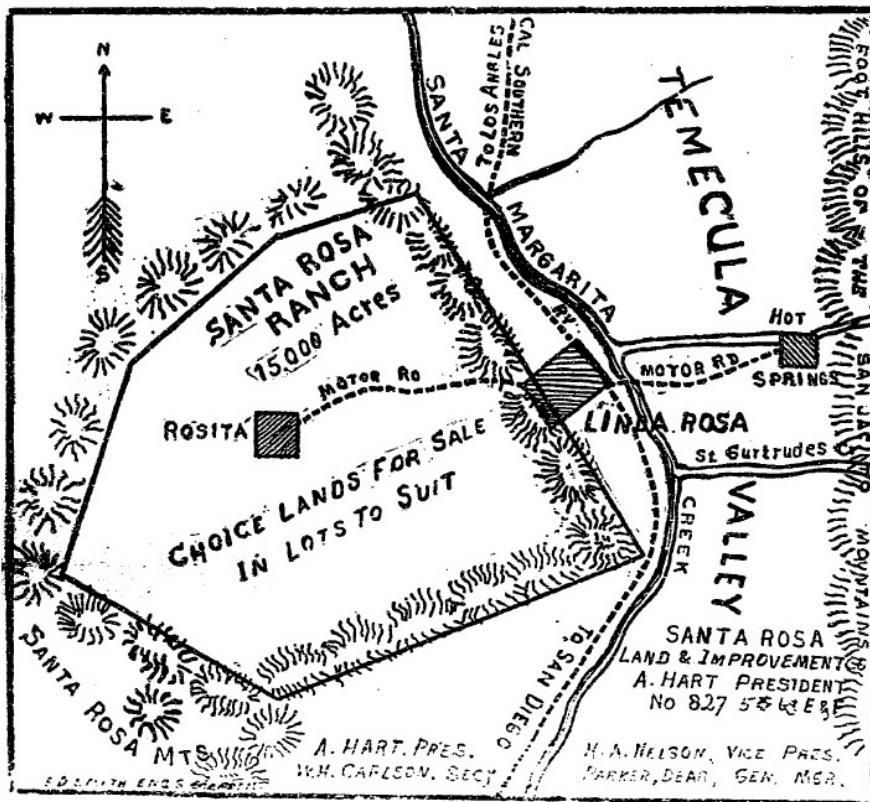
## The Town of Linda Rosa by Jeffery G. Harmon

The town of Linda Rosa was established in 1887 half way between the towns of Murrieta and Temecula. A hotel and a train depot were the first structures built for the new town. An extensive ad campaign was launched in the newspapers. On opening day, a crowd gathered to purchase town lots and Linda Rosa appeared to be a success. However, in a few short years the town went bust and only a few settlers remained in the area. What caused the demise of the town?

Parker Dear was one of the

founders of Linda Rosa. He was born in 1859 in Liverpool, England. In 1876, his father, John Dear, purchased Rancho Santa Rosa, a Mexican land grant west of Murrieta, and sent Parker to California to run the rancho. In 1881, Parker Dear married Elena Coutts, and they raised several children on the rancho.

In 1883, construction on the California Southern Railroad was completed. The town of Temecula was relocated next to the new tracks and a year later the town of Murrieta was laid out.



An advertisement map of the towns of Linda Rosa and Rosita. The Murrieta Creek is labeled as the Santa Margarita Creek, which is incorrect. The railroad is the dotted line following the creek. Source: December 17, 1887, San Diego Union

Three years later, planning began for the town of Linda Rosa.

The Santa Rosa Land and Improvement Company filed articles of incorporation in San Diego on September 23, 1887. The board of directors was Archibald Hart, president, Henry A. Nelson, vice president, William H. Carlson, secretary, Parker Dear, general manager and D. L. Morrill, director.

Archibald Hart was a Louisiana native who moved to San Diego by 1886. He became the special agent of the city department for the Pacific Coast Land Bureau. In 1887, he went into partnership with J. L. Stern.

The Hart & Stern Company sold real estate in El Cajon, and around San Diego. In August 1887, they established Tia Juana City south of San Diego, which is present day San Ysidro.

A month later, Hart purchased a thousand shares, at a \$100 per share, in the newly formed Santa Rosa Company. As president, he believed the successful marketing campaign he used for Tia Juana City, would work well for Linda Rosa. The first ad appeared in the San Diego newspapers asking, "Where is Linda Rosa?"

Linda Rosa was laid out with Washington Avenue on the

eastside and the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains to the west. On the north side was Elm Street and on the south side was Cherry Street. Three streets running north to south were named for Union Civil War Commanding Generals in order of succession: Sheridan, Sherman, and Grant.

A train depot was built at a cost of \$5,000, but the train company only stopped at Murrieta and Temecula. A hotel was also built to accommodate visitors and potential buyers.

The grand opening sale of 200 lots was held on February 2, 1888 at the Hart & Stern's San Diego office. The sales ad stated, "Easy terms on the sale of Linda Rosa lots. Only 10 percent down; balance one-third in thirty days, one-third in six months, and one-third in one year, at 8 percent interest per annum." Another claim stated that forty thousand dollars would be donated for homes in Linda Rosa in sums of \$500 for each twentieth lot sold."

Immediately following the sale, the New York and Santa Rosa Canning and Fruit Packing Company was established at Linda Rosa. Construction soon began on a large cannery. Representatives claimed that they would be employing a thousand men when operations began. Linda Rosa ads had stated that the town was "surrounded by 200,000 acres of the finest orange, grape, and fruit land in San Diego County." However, for the canning com-

pany to be successful, orchards should have already been planted.

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, a train excursion left San Diego and headed to Linda Rosa. A full brass band accompanied the passengers along the route. The train stopped at Temecula where the guests had to disembark. Coaches transported them a few miles down a dusty road to the new town site.

When the spectators arrived at Linda Rosa, they would have seen the new train depot and they may have wondered why the train did not stop there. A grand barbeque was held on the grounds in the "old Spanish style" and people were shown their town lots that they had purchased.

The next month, those that had purchased town lots were notified that their first payment was due. If a \$200 lot was purchased, the buyer had given a \$20 deposit. In March, one-third of the remaining balanced was due, which would have been \$60. It is unknown how many buyers made their first payments. After the barbeque event, many may have questioned their investment.

In April, Parker Dear was named president of the company and Hart was named a director. Sales for Linda Rosa had dropped and the board may have felt that Hart was to blame. Parker Dear had invested heavily in the company, but had little experience in real estate.

Hart & Stern dissolved in June 1888 when J. L. Stern sued his partner. The court demanded to see the ledgers for Tia Juana City. Hart claimed that some of the ledgers contained his personal account information. As the case continued through the summer, allegations came against Stern in regards to some promissory notes. By the end of the court proceedings both Hart and Stern had tarnished their reputations.

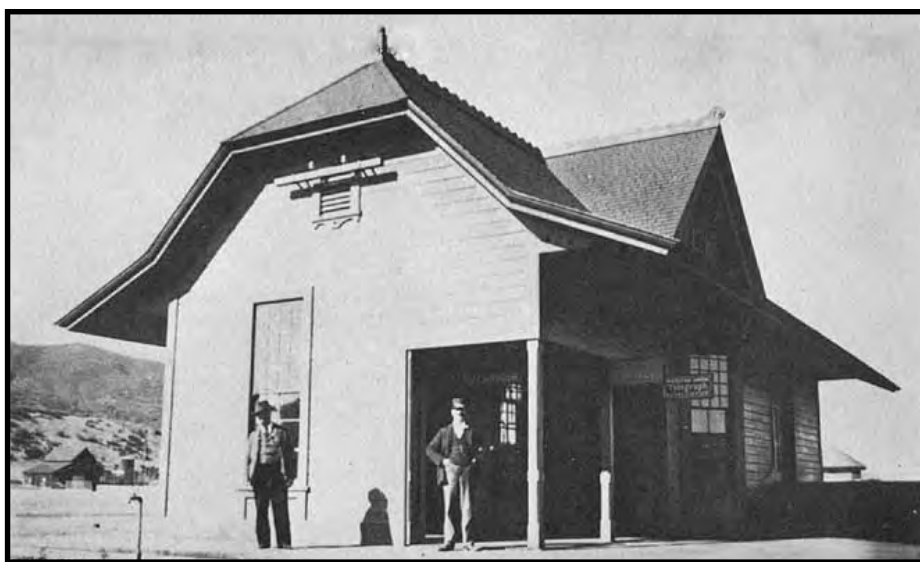
In September, Hart took the Linda Rosa Company to court to recover \$1,650 for services and sales commission. He also asked to restrain the company from disposing of 600 shares of company stock that was being held for collateral for some promissory notes. At the end of the month, the Linda Rosa Company took Hart to court to recover a debt of \$572.10. It is unknown how the

two court cases were concluded.

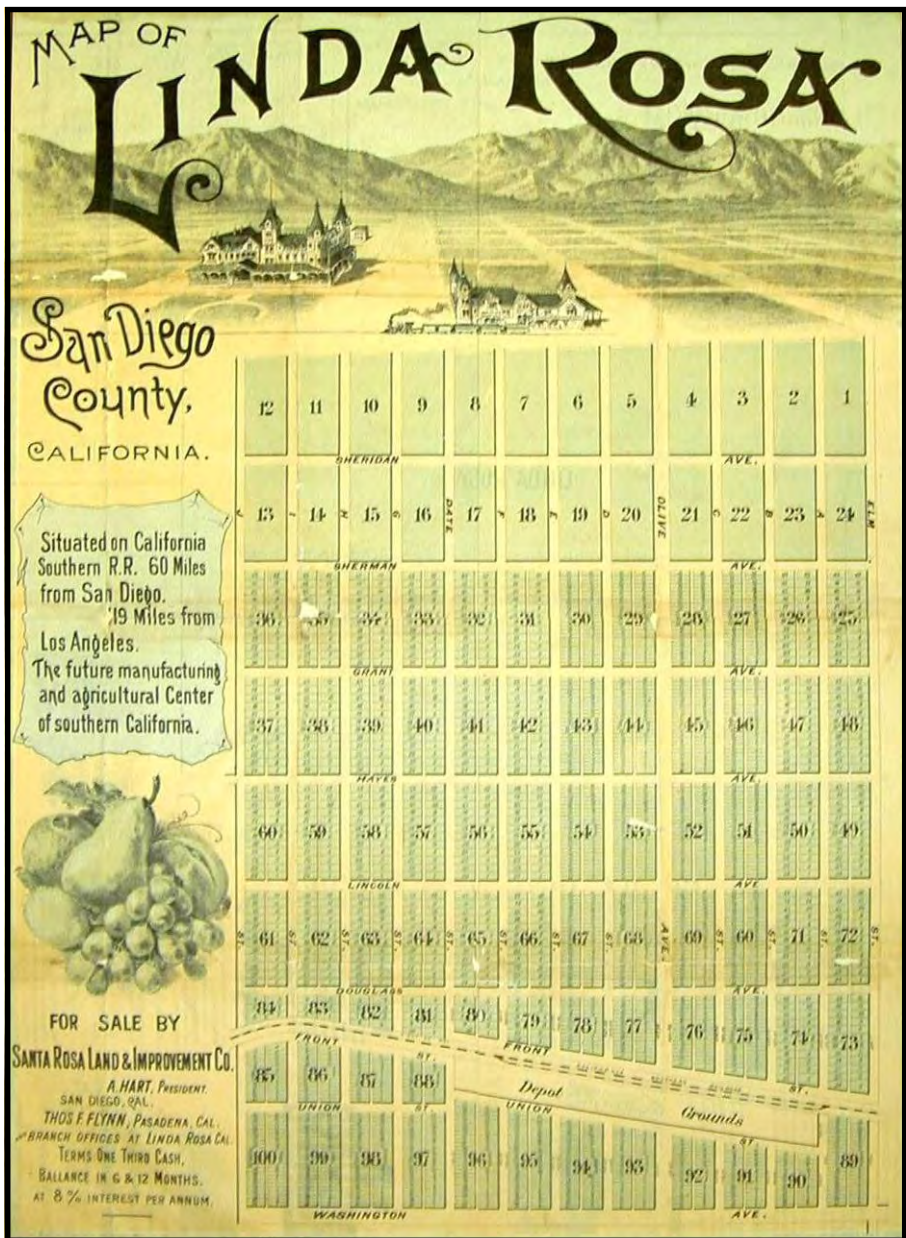
On December 20, 1888 the Linda Rosa post office was established. Samuel A. Lewis was appointed postmaster. Six months later, in July 1889, Lewis resigned and Parker Dear was appointed the new postmaster.

The Santa Rosa Canning Company defaulted on their payment in 1889. Parker Dear took the company to court to recover the money. The case lasted for over a year, and during that time the canning company along with the town of Linda Rosa went bust. The post office closed on March 20, 1890 and mail service was moved to the Temecula station. Within the next ten years, the town began to disappear.

A winter storm in February 1891 washed out the railroad tracks in the Santa Margarita



In July 1898, the Linda Rosa train depot was dismantled and rebuilt as the new Temecula depot, pictured above,  
Photo courtesy of the Temecula Valley Historical Society



Town map of Linda Rosa.

Source: The Huntington Library Digital Library Collection

Canyon west of Temecula, cutting off Linda Rosa from San Diego. Hart & Stern's Tia Juana City was also washed away in a flood during the storm.

Parker Dear was forced to put Rancho Santa Rosa in receivership in 1894. The Linda Rosa train depot was dismantled in July 1896 and relocated to the

Temecula station. In October 1899, the Thompson brothers dismantled the old cannery building and used the building materials to construct a large barn for their farming operations.

On December 25, 1899, the San Jacinto earthquake, estimated at 6.5 on the Richter

scale, struck the area. The former Linda Rosa Hotel moved eight inches off its foundation. A few years later, according to family lore, Eli E. Barnett dismantled the old hotel and used the building materials to build a home on the Murrieta Reserve.

In December 1913, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors voted to abandon the streets and avenues of the former town. Later, the railroad was removed from the area in 1935 and the valley grew quiet. Today the former town site is owned by the Rancho California Water District. There are several evaporation ponds on the property to dispose of waste water.

What caused the demise of the town of Linda Rosa? There may have been several reasons for its failure. President Archibald Hart's marketing campaign and management may have been to blame. Its close location to the established towns of Temecula and Murrieta may have detracted investors. However, the railroad company may have been the deciding factor. According to Riverside County historian Steve Lech, "Just because you build a train depot, it does not mean the train is going to stop." Perhaps if the train did stop at Linda Rosa, the town might still be there today.



# Museum Update

The Murrieta Valley Historical Society would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

We would like to thank the Murrieta Valley Historical Society's Board members, Society Members, Volunteers, the City of Murrieta and donors for your continuous support this past year. Through your support we have been able to host multiple school field trips and tours at our museum. We have provided many walking tours of the Historic Downtown District. Our sidewalk medallion project has been a great success. Through the program we have been able to share Murrieta's history to residents and visitors from around the world.

In 2024, we were able to complete a multi-year project with the City's Parks and Recreation Department in installing plaques at Sykes Ranch Park. Through our joint efforts we were able to honor the Sykes family and to share with the public their rich family history and their contributions to the growth and prosperity of Murrieta.

The Murrieta Museum has grown, and our archives are getting larger. We appreciate everyone that has donated materials, shared photographs, and brought us items related to Murrieta's history. We hope in the coming year that friends, families, and many others will continue to bring donated items to the museum in order that we can

continue to preserve and to educate people about Murrieta.

We have had a busy year and we are excited to see what the New Year will bring to us next. We are looking forward seeing everyone in 2025.

We offer private museum tours by appointment, private walking tours and historic presentations. If you would like to become a volunteer for the museum contact us at

[info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org)

or 951-677-7758.

Thank you,

Annette Jennings,

Murrieta Museum Director

Scan the QR code to visit our website.



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**The General  
Monthly Board Meeting  
is held on the second  
Monday at 5:30 p.m.  
Please join us at  
the Murrieta Museum**



The Murrieta Museum,  
41810 Juniper Street  
at Hunt Memorial Park.

## BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

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