

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Wolf Store

November 2023
Volume 23 Issue 11

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

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Temecula Valley Historical Society

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TVHS Annual Meeting & lunch

Thursday, November 16, 2023 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

At: **Wilson Creek Winery**, 35960 Rancho Calif. Rd. in Temecula. The price is \$45 per member, or \$55 per guest and includes lunch, the program, a complimentary glass of sparkling wine, and musical entertainment by Tony Suraci.

A brief presentation by **Dave Wilson**, TVHS President will be followed by the program's guest speakers : **Martha Culbertson** and **Greg Pennyroyal**.

Martha has been involved in our Wine Country since 1988 and Greg is an entertaining speaker who is the vineyard manager at Wilson Creek.

See Invitation on Page 6

A Major Cattle Drive in the West The Diary of a Desert Trail

By **Edward L. Vail**

PART FOUR

The green shoots grow out of the old roots and come to a head like timothy. Also, there was a great deal of what cattlemen call the "careless weed". All the cattle ate heartily and enjoyed the first good meal they had had for days. We concluded to stay several days and give our cattle a chance to rest.

The next day Turner and I thought we would take a ride over to Indian Wells, the next watering place. We easily found the water and the ruins of the old stage station. This is near what is called Signal Mountain, a very striking peak. It was the only one I saw in the desert as the country all around is very level. The water at Indian Wells was in a round basin with mesquite trees growing all around it. We stretched out under the trees to rest. I soon fell asleep. Some kind of bird cried over my head and made a noise like a rattler. Turner afterward told me it was a cat-bird. I don't know what it was but at the time I nearly jumped into the water. As it was getting late, we concluded that we had better be getting back to camp. While we were there, Turner's horse was taken sick and seemed to be in considerable pain. So, we decided to leave it there and tied it up. I was riding a little horse which, although small, proved to have plenty of endurance. We put both of our saddles on my horse, on top of the other. We took turns riding. One would ride ahead, then dismount and walk leaving the horse for the one on foot to catch up and ride. Alternation in this way we had no difficulty in getting to camp.

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While camping at New River we found many things of interest. Most of the country was covered with very small snail shells. They were so small that at first, I took them to be seeds of some weed. However, they were perfect shells although not larger than the head of a pin. I gathered some of them as curios. In looking around we found signs of cattle herds which had crossed the desert years before. At one place we found where cattle had been bedded for the night and the tracks of the horses and wagons were still distinct. The soil was a sort of heavy clay which must have been wet when the cattle were there. Judging from the size of the bedding ground and from the bones of the cattle that we found scattered around, some of the skeletons were complete, it must have been quite a large herd. We followed the wagon tracks a short distance and found that large mesquite trees had grown up between the wagon tracks. Those tracks must have been made at least 20 years before as the trees were easily that old, judging from their size, as trees have such a slow growth on the desert. Later on, we found a human skull which we put in the wagon and carried the rest of the way with us. We also found a wrecked wagon, with the axle broken, which apparently had been abandoned. Afterwards I heard that it probably belonged to some people who had perished on the desert. I believe if the history of that desert could be written it would prove very interesting reading for anyone who cared for real tragedy.

From our camp at New River we dropped to Indian Wells, north of Signal Mountain. Later on the next day, we started for Carrizo Creek, which makes the western boundary of the desert. This was the longest drive without water we had to make in crossing the Colorado desert. I think it was about forty miles. Our cattle had done well while camped at New River as there was more pasture for them there than at a place on the trail since we left the Empire Ranch. The country was open so we loose-herded them. Strange to say the only steers we lost on the desert were the two that were drowned in the charco at New River. They were young and very weak and probably got their feet fast in the mud of the middle of the pool. In the morning we found them there, dead, with their heads under the water.

We drove frequently at night as the days were warm on the desert. We hung a lantern on the tail-board of our wagon and our lead steers would follow it like soldiers. Before we reached Yuma only one man was necessary on guard; so we changed every three hours, which gave the men more sleep, but it was rather a lonesome job for the fellow that had to watch the cattle.

The road had a decided grade as it approached the mountains and there was much heavy sand most of the way which made it quite tiresome. I am not quite sure how long we were making that part of the drive, as we had to rest the cattle every few hours. When we reached Carrizo we found a shallow stream of water in a wash, the banks of which were white with alkali. Not only the stream but the hills, barren of all vegetation, were full of the same substance. I never saw a more desolate place in my life.

In all of Arizona there is nothing to compare with it that I know of. The next morning the cattle were scattered up and down the creek, most of them lying down, but a few of them were eating what little salt grass they could find. They had come through all right from our last camp, except for one young steer that could not get up. We tried to lift him to his feet but he could not stand, so I told the boys that I was going out to see if I could find bunch grass along the hills and the youngest of the Fox brothers offered to go with me. He was a good-looking young man nearly six feet tall and about 20 years old, I should think. His brother was rather short and heavily built. These boys had worked cheerfully since they met us and were on good terms with all of our men. Young Fox was a pleasant young fellow and said that Tom Turner had offered to give them work on the Empire Ranch if they would go back there with our men.

A little later, I was surprised to see a carriage with four men in it coming toward our camp from the west. One of the men beckoned to me and I walked over to see what he wanted and who they were. They were the first people we had seen since we left the Colorado River about a hundred miles back. He said he was a sheriff from Arizona, and as he spoke, I recognized him. He then asked if we had two Americans with us who had joined us near Yuma and I replied that we had. Then he introduced me to the other three men, one of whom was his deputy, and the other, his driver, who was from Temecula, California, was I think he said a deputy sheriff there. The fourth man, the sheriff told me, came with him from Arizona and was the owner of some horses which he said the Fox boys had stolen from his ranch. The sheriff then told me that he and his deputy had followed the Fox brothers all the way to Yuma and then they had followed our trail after the boys had joined us, until we crossed the line. They then returned to Yuma and took the train for California, as the sheriff could not go into Mexico.

As nearly as I remember I said: "Sheriff, you know the reputation of our outfit; it has never protected a horse thief and has always tried to assist an officer in the discharge of his duty."

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I also told the sheriff that the boys had done the best they could to help us in crossing the desert and that I was sorry to hear they were in trouble. I felt it was my duty to tell him that the boys were well armed and quick with a gun. "You have plenty of men to take them" I said. "Be careful, I don't want to see anybody hurt." He sheriff answered, "If they ask you anything tell them that we are mining men, going out to look at a mine."

I knew if the boys were sure that the men were officers there would be bloodshed at once. It was a very unpleasant position for me as I really felt a good deal of sympathy for the brothers and I knew them to be young and reckless. The older one came to me and said, "Who are those men and what do they want?"

I had to tell him what the sheriff told me to say, viz., that they said they were mining men going out to look at a mine near there. I could see he was not satisfied and was still anxiously watching the sheriff's party. The newcomers then said they were hungry and I told the man who was cooking to get them something to eat. While they were eating, they talked about the mine they were going out to see and I think the boys were less suspicious of them.

Very soon after that while I was standing on one side of the chuck wagon and the elder brother was leaning against the tailboard, with the other brother standing near the front wheel on the opposite side of the wagon from me, I suddenly heard a scuffle and when I looked up I saw the sheriff and another man grab the older boy and take his gun. His deputy and an assistant were holding his brother on the other side of the wagon. They had quite a struggle and young Fox pulled away from them, ran around the wagon past me with the deputy in pursuit. He had run about a hundred yards up a sandy gulch when the deputy who was quite close to the boy suddenly raised his gun and fired. Young Fox dropped and never moved again. I was close behind the deputy, as I had followed him. When he turned toward me his six-shooter was still smoking and he was wiping it with his handkerchief. "I hated to do it," he said, "but you have to sometimes."

I was angry and shocked at his act, as it was the first time I had ever seen a man shot in the back. I then saw the other Fox boy walking towards his brother's body which was still lying on the ground. The officers who had him handcuffed tried to detain him, but he said, "Shoot me if you like, but I am going to my brother." He walked over to where the body lay and looked at it. Then he asked me if we

would bury his brother and I told him he could depend on us to do so.

Then I told the sheriff there was no excuse for killing the boy as he could not get away in that kind of a country. He replied that he was very sorry about what had happened, but said, "You know, Vail, that I got my man without killing him, and that it was impossible for me to prevent it, as I had my hands full with the other fellow at the time."

Tom Turner was not in camp when this happened as he was riding around the cattle. The sheriff and his posse left shortly after and took their prisoner with them but they left the body of young Fox lying on the ground where it fell. We dug a grave and wrapping the young man's body in his blanket we buried him near the place where he fell. It was the best we could do. I saw a man in Tucson last week who told me he was at Carrizo Creek a few years ago where he saw the grave which has a marker with the inscription: "Joe Fox, age 19, Murdered." (Ed. Note: Later determined to be Frank Fox, Age 15.)

We were all glad to leave Carrizo the next morning and be on the way to our destination, the Warner Ranch. The country was dry and barren until we reached Vallecito Creek which is in a pretty little valley with green grass growing in it. Between Vallecito Creek and Warner we passed the San Felipe Ranch and from there on to Warner's the road ran through better country for cattle. Finally, we reached the Warner Ranch and it looked good to us and I have no doubt our horses and cattle enjoyed the sight of it as much as we did. The grass was six or eight inches high and the entire ranch of 50,000 acres was as green as a wheat field.

We had been about two months and ten days on the trail since we left the Empire Ranch. There was not a man sick on the trip. We had slept on the ground all the way except at Yuma for a few nights when our blankets were in the wagon across the river. Our men had been loyal and cheerful all the time and I was glad to have all of them share with Tom Turner and myself in the success of our drive. After we reached Warner, the justice of the peace sent for me and inquired about the trouble at Carrizo Creek. I told him what I saw just as I have related it in this diary; he then told me that the officers were out of their jurisdiction in California as they had no papers from the California governor at that time. I believe they did obtain them later.

We had to hold the herd for a few days until they were counted and received. Most of our men were at liberty and we all went to the Warner Hot Springs and took baths which all enjoyed. The Indian women seemed to be always

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washing clothes and our men would join the groups and wash their own and sometimes borrow soap from the Indian girls. There was a good deal of laughing and joking in Spanish during the performance. The water as it comes out of the ground is hot enough to cook an egg. Close by and running parallel to it is a stream of clear, cold water.

The San Luis Rey River rises on the Warner Ranch and there are large meadows and several lakes as well as beautiful live oaks on the foothills of the mountains that surround the ranch. Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson spent some time here and at Temecula gathering data for her celebrated novel, "Ramona".

Very soon all the cowboys were sent to Los Angeles where they remained a few days to see the sights of the largest city they had ever visited, but after a short time they said their legs and feet were sore from walking and that they were all right on horseback but no good on foot, so we shipped them back to Tucson and the ranch.

A short time after our return, a meeting of cattlemen was called at the Palace Hotel [later the Occidental] in Tucson, which was then owned by Maish & Driscoll who were at that time among the largest cattle owners in Arizona. The object of the meeting was to consider the matter of establishing a safe trail for cattle from Tucson to California. From our experiences I was able to make some suggestions, viz.: to build a flat boat to ferry cattle across the Colorado River; to clean out the wells at the old stage stations on the Colorado desert, and put in tanks and watering troughs at each of them and if necessary to dig or drill more wells. Without delay all the money necessary for this work was subscribed.

When the Southern Pacific Railroad Company heard of the proposed meeting, they asked permission to send a representative and the cattle association notified the company that the cattlemen would be pleased to have them do so. Therefore, the S.P. agent at Tucson was present. The meeting then adjourned to meet at the hotel bar where they found the bartender was absent. At once they saw a chance to have some fun at the expense of Mr. Maish who had assumed his job. Every man agreed to ask for a different kind of mixed drink which they knew the old man could not make. We all lined up at the bar and proceeded to call for various drinks we liked best. Our fine host, Maish, looked along the bar at our smiling faces, stuttered a little and then said, "Damn it, boys, I can't make those things! Take it straight on me." We did not refuse this kind of an invitation and then took a few more on ourselves and on each other and departed.

Soon after our cattle meeting, we received an official letter from the S.P. Company saying that if we would make no more drives, the old freight rate would be restored on stock cattle. The company kept its promise and it held for many years. Therefore, the trail improvements were never made.

(This concludes "The Diary of a Desert Trail")

President's Message

Hello Temecula Valley Historical Society members, friends and interested readers of this newsletter. This has been a tremendous year of achievement, pivotal to accelerating our growth and maturation as a Society, while solidifying our standing as an integral non-profit for this valley with an ever-growing voice that resonates and is heard.

Two noteworthy achievements we can proudly proclaim have occurred in 2023 are the United States Department of the Interior's official designation of the Vail Headquarters as a National Historic site, as well as the naming of the Butterflied Overland Trail – the portion which traverses the Headquarters property diagonally being perhaps the last remaining physically recognizable portion in an urban setting - as a National Historic Trail.

Come celebrate these achievements with us, learn about our other successes, ongoing projects and the Society's future visions on Thursday November 16 at our Annual Meeting and luncheon, 11:30 a.m. in the ballroom at Wilson Creek Winery.

Upon arrival a glass of sparkling wine awaits during social time, with Wilson's never-disappointing extensive buffet offerings to follow.

An intriguing program has, once again, been planned with Martha Culbertson sharing historical wine country antidotes and insights, plus Greg Pennyroyal, vineyard manager with Wilson Creek Winery, lending his fascinating perspective about a multitude of wine and Temecula-related subjects. A fun silent auction will offer interesting, quality items to bid on. Topping off this wonderful celebration will be the amazing voice, guitar playing, and unique musical repertoire of the one and only Tony Suraci. It's going to be fabulous!

Hope to see you on the 16th!

Dave Wilson

Membership News

Welcome New Member:

Nicholas Lavis, Gillian Reeves

Thanks to Renewing Members:

**Arnie & Nancy Frick, Dean George,
Mindy Johnson, Jim & Lori Sappington,
Dave Wilson**

100 Years Ago in Temecula

Selected items from Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column – November 1923

November 2, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Wednesday evening, the following guests: Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cantarini, Miss Myrtle Milburn, The Misses Rita and Peggy Domenigoni, Miss Ethel Burnham, S.G. Veazey, Elmer Hansen and John McSweeney. Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Barnett, Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann, S.G. Veazey, Elmer Hansen, and Mr. and Mrs. V.B. Sands were some of those who attended the “kids” party given by the O.E.S. chapter of Elsinore Monday evening.

November 9, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Ed Records has returned home from Los Angeles where he has been employed in a position with the Temecula Meat Market. Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Barnett, Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann, S.G. Veazey, and Elmer W. Hansen attended the O.E.S. Chapter in Elsinore Monday evening. Elmer W. Hansen has resigned as bookkeeper for the McSweeney Farms and left Thursday for Yuma, Arizona, where he will take charge of his ranch, which is located near there. Mr. C.J. Wheeler of Los Angeles is Mr. Hansen’s successor with the McSweeney Farms. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Greenfield, Mr. and Mrs. Amos Kolb, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cloetta, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cantarini, and Mrs. Eila Sweet were a jolly party who hunted quail near the Warner ranch Sunday. They all got the “limit”. The Tamale dinner and entertainment given at the school auditorium last Friday evening was a big success, a very large crowd attended and everything was sold in the early part of the evening. The proceeds are to be applied on the phonograph which the school has just purchased. The amount taken in was approximately ninety dollars but there are a few small bills still to be paid. Mr Ike Parks shipped one car of beef cattle to Rivera on Wednesday.

November 16, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

H. R. Price leased his filling station at Wildomar and has moved his family here for the winter. Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Nichols of Hyde Park were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. O. Gonzales. Mrs. Nichols and Mrs. Gonzales are sisters. George Sawday received 24 cars, 900 head of feeder cattle from Bonita, Arizona last week. The exact amount cleared from the Tamale supper at the school auditorium November second is \$73.33. Mrs. A.B. Barnett delightfully entertained the social club of the O.E. S. of Elsinore Tuesday afternoon at her ranch home. After the business session a social hour was enjoyed by the twenty ladies present. Delicious refreshments and chicken sandwiches, cake and coffee was served by the hostess. Mrs. W.M. Friedemann, Mrs. A.B. Barnett and Mrs. V.B. Sands were Riverside visitors Thursday.

November 23, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Mrs. L.S. Powell entertained a few of the young folks last Thursday. Dancing was the diversion of the evening. The guests were Miss Ethel Burnham, Mr. and Mrs. George Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Koehler, Mrs. Pierce and the Messrs. Johns, Hicks and Edwards. E.E. Barnett was a Riverside visitor last Thursday. Miss Mable Pope of Los Angeles is visiting her aunt, Mrs. W. T. Barton. Wilson Sommerville was a weekend visitor in San Bernardino. W.M. Friedemann was a business visitor at Sage Tuesday. W.T. Barton is having his residence painted also several other im-

provements are being made. Mr. and Mrs. E. Greenfield entertained over the weekend, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cleotta and children and Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Oegger and baby of Los Angeles. Mrs. A. Cantarini returned from an extended visit in Los Angeles Saturday evening. Mahlon Vail was a business visitor in Los Angeles the fore part of the week. Mr. A. C. Hudson, transportation inspector for the Santa Fe railroad, was a business visitor here Monday. George Sawday received six hundred head of feeder cattle from Winslow, Arizona Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. G.A. Burnham had as dinner guests Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Burnham and children of Elsinore and Mr. and Mrs. F.A. Burnham of Murrieta. Vetsie Cantarini spent the weekend in Los Angeles. Mrs. Harry Walters and daughter, Peggy, are visiting relatives in Los Angeles this week.

November 30, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

A.F. Nienke was a San Bernardino visitor Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. Foreman and children spent the weekend in San Bernardino. Miss Ethel Burnham was a weekend guest of Mrs. Fred Kirkman of Escondido. Mrs. J.M. Nicolas was initiated into the Royal Neighbors at Murrieta Tuesday evening. Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Price spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Thompson of San Jacinto. Eli E. Barnett and Mrs. Lucinda McDonald of Elsinore were married in Riverside last Friday. Charles Johnson, road master for the Santa Fe railroad, was a business visitor here Tuesday. Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cantarini entertained Mr. and Mrs. E. Greenfield at dinner Thanksgiving. Mable Pope, who has been visiting her aunt, Mrs. W.T. Barton, has returned to her home in Los Angeles. George Sawday received three hundred and fifty head of feeder cattle from Winslow, Arizona last Saturday. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walters and daughter, Peggy, spent Thanksgiving with Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Smith at Victorville. Mesdames J.B. Kelly, W.M. Friedemann, F.H. Hall, and A. Knott attended the Royal Neighbors lodge at Murrieta Tuesday evening. Edward Escallier had his arm broken while playing ball at Elsinore last Friday. The x-ray shows the large bone of the forearm cracked. S.G. Veazey entertained his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Frank R. Thomas, and the Misses Dorothy and Jewel Irwin of Glendale Saturday and Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann and Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Barnett attended the reception given in honor of the new members of the Eastern Star in Elsinore Monday evening. Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann entertained Mr. Friedemann’s mother and family, Mrs. B. Friedemann, the Misses Elsie, Elma and Elizabeth Friedemann and Mr. Ernest Friedemann all from San Bernardino, Thanksgiving. Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Vail entertained with a three course dinner Saturday evening, after dinner the evening was spent at cards. The guests were Mr. and Mrs. Frank R. Thomas, the Misses Dorothy and Jewel Irwin of Glendale, Miss Myrtle Milburn, and S.G. Veazey. Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Barton entertained with a turkey dinner on Sunday; the guests were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Shain and children of San Bernardino, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Shain and baby, Mr. Stanley Shain of Los Angeles, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walters and Miss Peggy Walters. The Santa Fe has been unloading rock screenings through their yards and around the McSweeney warehouse the past week. The team track and river loading tracks will be in excellent condition after the screenings are leveled and packed giving the Santa Fe patrons the old reliable Santa Fe service at this station.