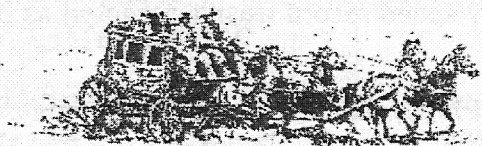


TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

November 2008

Volume 8 – 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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The Demon of Temecula Canyon

I Ran the First Sub-Four Minute Mile

By Eugene Knott

I must confess, I was the first human to run the mile in less than four minutes, but it never was recorded! I did this when I was about eight years old, growing up in Temecula. First, I must tell you about the events leading up to my record-setting sprint.

It wasn't easy being the youngest of the four kids in my family, growing up in the small town of Temecula. You believed anything you were told back in the days before we had television, not to say that we would have watched the news if we had one. Big questions occupied my mind. I wondered what those exotic places I heard about looked like - far off places like Hemet, Perris, and even San Diego. They all sounded like someplace I would want to see, when I grew up. I'm sure you remember what it was like being a little kid.

Getting back to my story, brother James, a family friend Peter and I were planning to make a trip down into the Temecula River to go fishing. We had heard of people catching "big ones" in big pools of fresh, clean, water in the dark canyon, beyond where the Murrieta Creek and the Temecula River merged. "Older Guys" told us these stories, so they must be true, but there was a catch!

They told us of a "Demon" who lived in the canyon that chased you and would eat you, if you didn't watch out! They said he was a devil creature that was black as night, had big black eyes, pointed ears, and would scream and yell, while chasing after you and he could run like the wind! We were taking our lives into our own hands going into that country.

Being forewarned and sensible, I cut down a willow sapling so I could start making myself a fishing pole. I worked that willow into the best fishing pole I'd ever had. I even wrapped a handle on it using some of Grandpa's "Monkey Grip Tape" that he didn't know I had liberated from his garage.

We used to run around everywhere barefooted and had calluses on our feet so thick that you could step on just about anything with no problem. We would walk into Grandpa's blacksmith shop

Malcolm Remembers

Going to Mothers Café

By Loretta Barnett

Eli and Alice Barnett's oldest daughter Sarah married Charles Clogston and they built the Swing Inn in 1927, calling it Mothers Cafe. Malcolm remembers going there with his grandma, "Grams", as they called Bessie Barnett, also known as Aunt Bessie to most residents. (She was born Ysabel Gonzalez, daughter of Jose Gonzalez and Grace Street Gonzalez who built the Gonzalez adobe still standing in the Adobe Plaza on Jefferson Avenue. Bessie married Eli's son Ben Barnett.) Malcolm had no idea why Grams always went to the cafe, but he realizes today that she was visiting her sister-in-law.

Sarah's four older brothers lived in the area, too. Her brother Marcus, or "Mark", the oldest lived in a house that stood where the Lowe's store is today. After he vacated the house, it was used as a Senior Center and for the Temecula Methodist Church for a while. The Promenade Mall sits on Mark's former farmland. Mark had a glass eye and is buried in the Temecula Valley Public Cemetery.



Continued on Page 2

hot metal and wouldn't even know it except for the stink of burning flesh. Our feet were tough! (Being bare footed is why my speed record wasn't accepted as being official!)

I finished making that fancy fishing pole in record time and was ready to try it out in the "Canyon". James, Peter and I started walking along the river. We were going fishing, demon or no demon. Being the youngest, I was playing catch-up as we walked farther and farther towards the "best fishing holes in the country" (that's what we were told by the big guys, anyway).

With me bringing up the rear, I was constantly looking around and over my shoulder. I knew I was the smallest in this safari, so I was the most vulnerable, and had to be alert! The thought had crossed my mind that they wanted me to tag along as a diversion, in case the "Demon" showed up.

We had almost reached the fork where the two rivers came together when we heard the strangest noise. It was a kind of screech, scream that made your blood run cold. We stopped dead in our tracks, eyes big as saucers, looking all around. Then we heard it again! HeeeeYaaaa, the scream seemed to be saying and about then Peter and James decided they had better get the heck out of there. I don't think I was in their thoughts at all as they took off!

It didn't take long for me to figure out that I should do the same, so I took off following them as fast as my legs could go. I looked back over my shoulder, thinking that if I was about to be eaten, I should know what that thing looked like first. I saw the tips of a pair of pointed black ears and black shiny eyes coming after me.

That's when I got inspiration! My little legs turned into a blur, I was reaching out grabbing handfuls of air, pumping my arms and running like hell itself was after me. I thought it was! I was running so fast that I passed James and Peter like they were standing still! I still had a grip on my fishing pole, and as my arms pumped, the fishing line was snapping back a forth, sounding like a bull whip one of those mule skinnners used on a 20 mule team.

When I came to the protection of a barbed-wire fence, I dove under the bottom strand and slid for about thirty feet before coming up on my feet, ready to run some more. James and Peter were still coming about fifty feet behind, when I looked back, and guess what was chasing them?

It was a poor old mangy donkey (jackass to you more mature folks), looking for attention. After they had climbed over the fence, the donkey (jackass) came up to us to have his ears scratched and get petted. He was starved for affection.

The moral to this story is, "Never assume what you're told is the truth, even when told by one of those big guys. Use your own mind to think things through before coming to a conclusion." Grandpa could have told us about that lonesome donkey (jackass), if we would have just asked him. He knew everything.

November's Program

Tony Guenther To Speak at TVHS Meeting

Tony Guenther, the speaker for our November meeting, is a great-grandson of Fritz Guenther, the founder of the Guenther Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. His family owned and managed the Hot Springs until it sold in 1970. Tony and his brothers and sister worked at the resort. He attended military school, then completed a tour of duty with the Coast Guard, graduated from San Francisco State, attended Stockholm University, and started an underwater dive service in Orange County in 1982. He and his wife, Norma, live in Newport Beach, California. He has been on staff for the Newport Beach Film Festival for several years.

Tony worked with Loretta Barnett, Rebecca Farnbach, and Marvin Curran on *Images of America: Murrieta Hot Springs*, which will be released on November 10. The book features over 200 historical photographs, most of which are from Tony's collection. At our November meeting, Tony will tell some of the stories uncovered during research for the book. Tony brings a unique and humorous interpretation of events and people who made the Murrieta Hot Springs the legend it is.

Don't miss this program!

Juan Murrieta's Granddaughter

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Eleanor Ann Houghton, "Ann" (1927 – 2006) descended from two remarkable lineages. Her maternal grandfather Juan Murrieta owned land in the Temecula Valley from 1873 to 1904, before moving to Los Angeles to work in the newly formed Sheriff's Department. The City of Murrieta was named for him. The California Avocado Growers Association also credits him for developing the Murrieta Green and other varieties of avocados from seeds he acquired from a Senor Fuentes in Mexico. Ann's mother was Adelita Murrieta Houghton, Juan and Adele Golsh Murrieta's only daughter.

Her paternal grandmother was Eliza Donner, the three-year-old who was rescued with her four-year-old sister Georgia after the disastrous attempt to cross the Sierra Nevada in 1846-1847. Eliza collaborated with Charles F. McGlashan on the *History of the Donner Party* (1879) and authored her own *Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate* (1911).

Besides the two famous relatives mentioned above, in 1982 Ann became aware of a story published in *The High Country* magazine in 1968 inferring her grandmother Adele Golsh Murrieta was a cousin to both Mexico's Emperor Maximilian and Austria's Emperor Franz Joseph. This information launched her on a quest to affirm or deny the connection, a task that was not finished when she died in Feb. 2006.

Her research, which included exhaustive genealogical inquiries to church and governmental agencies in California and in Austria, seemed to indicate that although the Golsh Family came to Pala from Austria and had ties to nobility, it was not related directly to either of the two rulers mentioned above.

Her widower Bill Smith donated Ann's extensive correspondence and research notes to the Murrieta Public Library in March 2006, along with several keepsakes from her parents and from her Murrieta grandparents. Other Murrieta and Donner memorabilia and records were given to the Huntington Library and are accessible in the "Ann Smith Collection". Thanks to Ann's careful documentation and research and to Bill Smith's generous and thoughtful donation, the Murrieta Public Library has a valuable collection of photographs and documents regarding Juan and Adele Golsh Murrieta.

TVHS Historic Bus Tour

Friday, October 31, 2008

Departs: 7:00 am from the CRC on Rancho Vista Way in parking lot near the swimming pool.

Tour special sites at Camp Pendleton including Mechanized Weapons Museum, Ranch House of the Juarez Rancho, previously Base Commanders residence, plus the Los Flores Adobe near coast.

Departs Camp Pendleton to return to Temecula at 3:30 pm, arrive home approx. 5:00 pm.

Contact: Barbara Tobin at 951-760-6096 **Cost: \$28**
Mail Prepayment Check made out to **TVHS**, send to

Bill Harker, Treasurer,

31130-85 So. General Kearny Rd., Temecula, CA 92591-2033

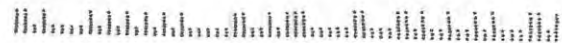


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Calendar of Events

Friday, November 7 -
TVHS Monthly Meeting at
Noon to 2 pm at the Historic
Pujol Schoolhouse on
Santiago Road

Program - Tony Guenther
will talk about his family
And Murrieta Hot Springs.

Friday, November 7 -
Opening Reception of the
Annual Erle Stanley Gardner
Exhibit at the Temecula
Valley Museum. 6 pm with
Refreshments & music to
Accompany the "Days on
The Delta" themed exhibit.

Friday, January 9 -
Monthly meeting with Dr.
Anne Miller speaking on
"The Mormon Battalion
Coming Through Temecula
In 1847."

Save the Date !
Annual Dinner Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 2008
6 pm to 9 pm at The
Community Recreation Center (CRC)
Reagan Sports Park on Rancho Vista Way

Cost: \$30 per person

Program: George Harwood Phillips,
Author and Univ. of Colorado Professor Emeritus,
Speaking on "**Vaqueros and Rancheros**"

Everyone Welcome !
Reservations Call: Barbara Tobin
At 951-760-6096