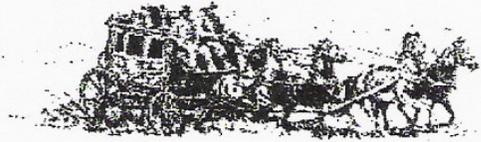


# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

March 2014

Volume 14 – Issue 3

*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 Swing Inn Café

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

When 7<sup>th</sup> grader Brooke Kale did a recent school project on an historical building, she set in motion a flurry of research among the owners of the restaurant and a couple of us historians..

The quaint old-time Swing Inn Café at 28676 Old Town Front Street, at the northeast corner of Third and Old Town Front Street, is the oldest building in Old Town Temecula with its original business still in operation.

Old newspaper photographs show author Erle Stanley Gardner meeting outside the café with actor Raymond Burr, who played Gardner's fictitious Perry Mason in the popular TV series. During the 1960s and 1970s James Vail "Sandy" Wilkinson, the grandson of Walter Vail, the cattle baron who owned most of the land in the valley, would meet there every workday morning to plan the day's activities with engineers working with the newly established Rancho California Water District.

(Continued on Page 2)

# Calendar Of Events

## **Monday, March 24 – 6 p.m.**

Rebecca Farnbach and Tony Guenther will present the History of the Murrieta Hot Springs, once a resort and spa For healing and recreation that attracted tourists to our valley.

## **Monday, April 28 – 6 p.m.**

Patrick Mitchell will speak on The little known history of the Santa Ana Mountains that form Temecula Valley's western Border.

## **Temecula Valley Museum Exhibition**

*Women & Spirit: Catholic  
Sisters of California*  
February 22 ~ April 6

## **Thursday, March 20-7 p.m.**

Temecula Valley Museum  
Gallery Talk  
Terry Larson presents:  
"Women and 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Medicine"

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### **Welcome New Members:**

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Chuck & Nancy Abts  
Lisa Noll

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### **Thank you for renewing Your membership:**

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Diane LaTulippe  
Robert & Julie Ulrey  
Karl & Jan Weiler

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## **TVHS WALKING TOUR OF OLD TOWN TEMECULA FOR NEW MEMBERS:**

Join a Docent-led walking tour on Wednesday, March 19th, at 10 AM. The tour begins at the Temecula Museum at 28314 Mercedes Street in Old Town. If you plan to join us, please RSVP by Mar.16th to Lynn Cudé at (951) 695-0517.

## Café (Continued from Page 1)

In the 1970s artist Ralph Love ordered a piece of pie and a cup of coffee each afternoon before returning to his Art Shack studio across the street to resume work on his latest painting. Even today historians meet up at the eatery and until recently ordered from the menu that had Andy Andersen's version of Temecula history printed on it.

When Charles and Sarah Clogston first opened a restaurant at that location in 1927 it was called Mother's Café. Sarah was the daughter of Eli Barnett, one of the founders of the Temecula Bank. They bought the property for \$700. The original building was razed and rebuilt by the Clogstons in 1932. They lived in the house behind the café that is still standing and used as an office presently.

Harold "Andy" Andersen and his wife Florence owned the Richfield Gas Station to the north of the café. In 1952 he built a lunch counter and cabins for employees .

Sometime before 1955, a motel called the Swing Inn was constructed across the Third Street from Mother's Café where Butterfield Square is now. It had three double and two single units, an office, and living quarters for the manager. A porch swing in front, near the rental units inspired the name.

Mother's Café was owned by a Mr. and Mrs. Fred King of Laguna Beach when the Andersons bought it in 1955 and renamed it "Andersen's Café". Anderson was a local realtor. During the time they owned the café, gas station and motel, there were very tall signs visible to travelers on Highway 395 which had been rerouted outside town.

Tommy Hotchkiss bought the café from the Andersens in 1964, and eventually enlarged it from a burger place with seven stools to a full service restaurant the size it is today. Between Irene Hotchkiss's good management and Charlie Hall's good cooking, 15 employees, renovations, and several additions to the building, they were soon capable of serving busloads of hungry customers.

In 1969 Tommy Hotchkiss was part of a group of folks who decided to promote tourism to Temecula by adopting an 1890s Western architectural motif throughout Old Town. True to his vision, Tommy made the Swing Inn the first in Old Town to redecorate with the new Western theme.

One of the endearing features Tommy designed was Boot Hill, which is back from the street and between the Swing Inn and the former Richfield Arco station. Tommy sponsored a contest for people to write funny epitaphs. Those whose epitaphs were chosen, not only were rewarded by seeing their work painted on faux tombstones, but the winner for the best entry also received a free dinner for two at the Swing Inn. Two of the epitaphs read, "Here lies Uncle Ken, No wonder he is dead, The wheel of a wagon, Rolled over his head" and "John Brown, A song writer, Now de-composing".

**Murrieta News**  
**100 years ago**

March 14, 1914

Riverside Daily Press

Mrs. Sleeper has bought a fine cow of Mr. Wagon.

Dr. Sturgess has moved his drug store and now occupies half of the old Tarwater building with Mr. Anderson, who has the other half.

H. S. Garrison is planting olive trees, filling out his orchards where missing.

Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Black have lost their best cow, a fine Jersey.

March 28, 1914

Riverside Daily Press

Murrieta is putting on city airs these dark nights, being lighted up by several splendid gas lights.

The good roads surveyors moved from Temecula to Murrieta on Thursday and will board at the Fountain house.

A serious accident happening up on the Santa Rosa mountain on Thursday when A. V. Wilson's little son, 11 years old, was shot through the leg by his older brother while they were out with the gun.

Mr. Hending, one of the first residents of this valley and quite an old man, was brought here last week for interment.

***Café*** (Continued from Page 2)

On March 1, 1977 Samuel and Gloria Hasson purchased the restaurant, the Arco station, adjacent apartments, and leather shop. The establishment is still owned by members of the Hasson family: Ken, Diane, Alissa, and Randall Rauton. The dedication and hard work of Samuel and Gloria Hasson and Ken and Diane Rauton has made the business the success it is today. Sam was one of the founders of the Temecula Valley Museum. Sam and Ken were activists in the movement for cityhood in 1989 and promoted keeping the name "Temecula" instead of "Rancho California".

A barber with a colorful personality named Bob Spaller, affectionately called "Butcher Bob", rented the unit attached to the restaurant for many years. According to Ken Rauton, men would come to eat at the Swing Inn while waiting to get their hair cut.

Several of the old buildings from the Clogston and Andersen eras are still standing. The old Arco Station became a temporary site for the Temecula Valley Museum in the 1980s before the present museum building was constructed. Then the station was home to Walter and Helga Bergers' The Chocolate Florist candy store. It is presently a produce store run by Tom and Becky Bevel who used to have the produce stand in an old Vail Ranch barn on Temecula Parkway near Pechanga Parkway. After the Bevels' business burned down a few years ago, they have found a permanent location in the former gas station. Two of the motel units are standing, one is a store on Third Street in Butterfield Square and the other is a classroom for Kid's World next door to the east.

On warm Friday evenings visitors to Old Town pass vintage cars staged outside the Swing Inn by members of the Drifters and Axle Dragger's car clubs, recreating a scene from the past. You can still order traditional meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, but the prices have gone up a little from the days when the Clogstons ran Mother's Café. In the 80 years the establishment has been in continuous business, the price of a hamburger has gone from ten cents to five dollars and twenty-five cents.

Ken Rauton relates that many customers tell about memories of eating at the Swing Inn with their parents and grandparents. Those customers beg the family to preserve the building as it is, especially now during the rapid changes going on in Old Town.

The Temecula Valley Historical Society is grateful to the Hasson/Rauton Family for their continuous feeding of the community for more than half of the time the restaurant has been in service. It is a good place to meet with friends and to get a feel for our historic past. And, we are thankful for local schools that encourage students to learn about Temecula's history.

*We give a special thanks to Ken Rauton for supplying information for this article.*

# Southern Trails to California

**March 27-30, 2014**

Open to the Public ----- No charge

A two-day symposium March 27-28 about Southern California history presented by the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) at the City of Temecula's Conference Center is followed by other events in Temecula on Saturday and Sunday (see below). The two-day symposium is open to the public\* free of charge, but they should sign-up before March 15th because the number of seats is limited. If you want to attend Thursday and Friday, please email Anne Miller at DMEAJM@earthlink.net to have your name put on the list. Your name, but not your email, will be provided to the STC members handling the registration table.

## **VaRRA's Open House Event**

March 29<sup>th</sup> ~ 10 am ~ 4 pm

March 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Noon ~ 5 pm

Located at the Little Temecula History Center and the nearby Historic Vail Ranch site. This event is free and open to the public. A number of authors will be autographing and selling their books.

There will be a Southern Emigrant Trail display.

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## President's Message by Dick Fox

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The month of March is certainly developing into a busy month. Plenty of quality items are on the calendar for those interested in history. The Riverside County Symposium on Saturday, March 8; in San Diego their Congress of History is having an annual get together Fri. & Sat. March 7 & 8; and then near the end of the month Temecula will be the locale for the annual symposium meeting of the Oregon-California Trails Association hosted by the Southern Trails Chapter of their organization. The program will be 2 full days (Thursday & Friday, March 27 & 28), of quality presentations by knowledgeable scholars, many who have written books on a specific area of history. This event is free to the public, but prior registration is requested. On Saturday, March 29 will be an "open house" at the History Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This will include an opportunity to meet the authors, buy books, and get them signed. The symposium attendees will have the opportunity to see and perhaps actually walk the segment of the Southern Emigrant Trail that goes through the Old Vail Ranch Headquarters site and in front of the Wolf Store. If possible the Wolf Store will be open for visitors also. The Open House at the History Center will continue on Sunday from Noon to 5 p.m.

We continue to have interesting quality programs each month, and that will continue in March with a presentation on the history of Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs.

Sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm of our wonderful history can always be served by volunteering to help as a tour docent at the History Center on an occasional Sunday afternoon, or for special events. If your schedule is better served by volunteering during the week, then the Temecula Valley Museum is in need of additional docents. During the spring months many of the area 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes make field trips as part of their curriculum to learn about local history. Step up and give of your time and energy, it is very stimulating & rewarding.

Dick Fox

Please join us for a  
"Meet & Greet" time  
At 5:30 PM on Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>,  
prior to the meeting  
at 6:00 PM.

We would like to get to know you.  
REFRESHMENTS will be served!

Meetings are held in  
The Little Temecula History Center, the red barn next to Kohl's near the  
intersection of Temecula and Redhawk Parkways.