

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

September 2016
Volume 16 Issue 9

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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A Publication of the

Temecula Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 157
Temecula, CA 92593

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Fausto Reyes (left), and Alfonso Fragozo from Chandler, AZ recently visited the renovated Vail Headquarters complex. Both had worked on the ranch as young men, and one of the Magnificent Seven is a relative of both.

Surprise Visitors

A Horse is a Horse . . . Until It Has A Name

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Many times Darell and I find former residents of the Vail Ranch returning to visit the place that remains dear in their memories. It was about a month ago when two trim, aging men stopped by the newly renovated Vail Headquarters. They wore cowboy shirts, hats, and boots, looking much like ranch hands who were all dressed up to go to town.

Alfonso Fragozo and Fausto Reyes are cousins, and drove from Chandler, AZ to see the renovated Vail Headquarters. They had both spent some time in their early years working at the ranch before it was sold in the mid-1960s. They looked lovingly at the Magnificent Seven picture on the east wall of the Kohl's store and laughed when I showed them the names we had worked out for the men in the photo.

The rider on the far right of the photo, who we've labeled "Chappo Labato" is the uncle of Fausto and the father of Alfonso. They informed me that "Chappo" was his nickname – his given name

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... A Horse is a Horse —

was “Presiano”. But what do girls from Iowa like me know about Mexican-style nicknames?

As much as we appreciated the name correction, we nearly dropped our jaws when they started naming off each of the horses. So for purposes of adding to what we all know, here are the horses’ names, from left to right: Moron, Pirulis, El Gallo, El Tomate, Kantaky, Machete, and Pronto. One would speculate the reasons each received their respective names.

I had always supposed the cowboys had their own horses to ride, work with, and groom. That theory was also corrected. Alfonso and Fausto said the Vail Company owned about twenty work horses that were corralled at the feedlot across the road from the headquarters, located about where Home Depot is today and where the Magnificent Seven photo was taken.

Each day the ranch hands received assignments and those who needed horses would select one from the corral. They had favorites, but everyone shared.

Another “treat” came from Alfonso and Fausto when they saw the desk in the made up bunk-room closet. The desk was made from a shipping crate for two gallon tins of honey. They laughed and said Jesus Ruiz made it, that he was “always making something”.

While none of us set out to revise history to suit certain situations or to manipulate outcomes, sometimes new information comes our way and we have to factor in the new information with what we already know and it changes our ideas about people and events.

It is good to gain better understanding of our local history. There is another story that I’ll share with you at another time, to add to what we already know, but to change our perceptions, of course without being revisionists.

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— Membership —

Welcome New Member

Betty Condren

The Passed This Way

Wine Country Pioneer John Moramarco Succumbs at 93

In late July, Temecula once again received sad news when informed of the passing of John Moramarco. For a half-century John’s name has been synonymous with the success of our nationally renowned wine country. John had a quiet and genteel nature, and a sincere caring and support of history efforts in the community.

John's father and three uncles had all been winemakers in Italy, and a short time after immigrating to America, they began to work for the Old Mission Winery in Los Angeles. John began cultivating grapes using horses and mules, at his family's vineyard during his childhood. From 1942 - 1967 John was the vineyard manager of the Moramarco family's Capistrano Vineyards in Fontana. In his later years he visited his ancestral homeland of Italy, along with trips to other regions of the world.

Having been introduced to the Temecula area in the mid-1960’s, John became a decorated vineyard manager, and was at the heart of the development of the Temecula Valley as a world class wine-making region. In 2002 John received a lifetime achievement award from the Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce to honor his work in establishing the Temecula Valley Wine Country.

John is survived by his wife Bev Moramarco, two sons, a daughter, two stepchildren and many grandchildren.

Vandalism in Old Town, 1922 Style

"G. A. Burnham and Son’s store was broken into last Tuesday night. The culprit broke the glass in one of the big windows in front of the store, and then smashed the small door opening into the store from the display window off its hinges. Knives, cigarettes, candy and other small things were taken. A few dollars had been left in the cash register but apparently the register had not been tampered with, which leaves the impression it was the work of amateurs."

(August 18, 1922, Elsinore Leader-Press)

Smells like A Dead Guy

By Duane Preimsberger

I got up at 6 am and tried not to wake up my wife and two little girls as I prepared to work the day watch from 8 am – 4pm at Firestone Sheriffs station in south central Los Angeles. The drive from Seal Beach wasn't too bad and I was at the station and dressed in my uniform well before the start on my shift.

I was assigned to car 17, a one man unit assigned to the south end of our stations area. Usually, the days began with a flurry of reports from the victims of thefts and a number of calls to persons injured or sick who needed medical attention. I loaded up my patrol car with my patrol box that contained all the blank report forms I might need as well as addition ammo for my service revolver and the shotgun that was held in a rack along the floor in front of the front seat, additionally I had some personal items like breath mints, a tape measure, heavy duty gloves and a jar of Vicks.

The first few minutes of the shift were quiet with little two way radio traffic for me or units adjoining my area. Then the usual happened and the work for the day began. The dispatcher gave me three calls and advised me to handle them in the order they were dispatched. First was a possible 927d (a dead body), next up was a residential burglary report and last was a petty theft report. I headed for the dead body call expecting that a family member had gone to bed feeling fine and had passed away in their sleep. That was not to be the case. Instead, I found myself in a run down trailer park where a sleepy eyed manager stood outside the office trailer awaiting my arrival.

She filled me in and told me that the trailer in space number 10 was unlocked with the door wide open and no one answering her knock. In addition the smell emanating from the inside of the trailer was nauseating and she was pretty certain that the single guy who lived there had died. I thanked her and explained that I'd check things out and let her know what was to be done.

Space number 10 was filled with a small aluminum travel type trailer. Perhaps 15 feet long and maybe 8 feet wide, it had a single door and as the manager had advised it was fully open. After parking my patrol car I got out and began to approach the open door and as I got close I smelled something bad and I hoped it wasn't a decomposing human being. It was pretty powerful and I decided to employ a technique I'd learned from an experienced homicide detective. I got the jar of Vicks out of my patrol box and applied a goodly portion to the inside of both of my nostrils and –presto- the smell was covered by the aroma of Vicks.

I knocked and yelled but got no response so I let my self into the front room that served as part living room, dining area and kitchen. A narrow hallway led to a bathroom area and tiny bedroom and it was in the bedroom that I found a body and the source of the pungent odor. A white male, probably in his late 30's, lay fully clothed on his back on the bed. He had on a blue sweat shirt, blue jeans, work boots and a rubberized apron that reached to his knees.

I began inspecting the body to confirm that it was in fact dead. The first thing I wanted to do was to check the guys eyes with my flashlight to assure that there wouldn't be any pupillary response to the light beam. Since his eyes were closed I opened one of them and immediately got the hell scared out of me. The guy on the bed wasn't dead and instead he was quite alive and grumpy that some stranger was fooling around with his face. His scream, coupled with his grabbing my hand caused me to vault backward and in doing so I destroyed the thin sliding particle board door that served to conceal a small closet. It took a minute before the two of us were able to gain control of our emotions.

Since I was standing up I got to tell my story first and I explained how I had arrived at his home. I was amazed when he started to smile at my tale and then he began to laugh. It was then that I realized that my activity there wasn't going to end with a citizen's complaint against me and I breathed a sigh of relief. Then it was time to hear the "I ain't dead" guy's story.

Larry Anderson lived in the trailer and had been there for a couple of years. He worked in San Pedro at a fish cannery and over the last two days had been dealing with a crisis at work. Some miserable, low-life,

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... Smells like a Dead Guy

creep had dumped a couple of tons of rotting fish in front of their loading dock, and this stunt had almost closed down their operations. Larry was one of the guys who shared the responsibility of cleaning up the mess by loading the rotten fish in a big dumpster, hauling it away to an incinerator, burning it into ashes and then taking the ashes to the dump. He smelled especially bad because of his close contact with the rotten fish. He apologized for upsetting his landlady and having the cops come out. He was exhausted after having worked two consecutive 16 hour days at hard labor and that's why he had crashed on his bed.

I too smiled and laughed at Larry's tale and I was especially glad that he was OK and that I would not be writing a person dead report. I was on my way out of the trailer when Larry stopped me as he opened up the freezer compartment of his small refrigerator and provided me with two big lobster tails to make up for having to stick Vicks up my nose!

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AmazonSmile is a way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same prices and selections as Amazon.com, but through the AmazonSmile Foundation, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from your purchases before you begin shopping. Your selection will be remembered, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to that charitable organization.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every Sunday — Sunday Funday at the Vail Headquarters. Noon to 5 p.m. Rides, demonstrations & activities. Considering volunteering.

Thursday, Sept. 8 — 6 p.m. at the Temecula Valley Museum, Steve Williamson will do a presentation on "Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs" — see story on Page 5 also about recently opened Gallery Exhibit.

Monday, Sept. 12 — 6 p.m. Historic Hunt House 41810 Juniper St., Murrieta; the Murrieta Historical Society will honor 10 longtime residents with Lifetime Memberships.

Saturday, September 17 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Idyllwild Home Tour, tickets available thru the Idyllwild Area Historical Society. See Story on Page 5 about this opportunity.

Monday, September 26 — Regular Monthly Program and Meeting of TVHS. Meet & Greet at 5:30 p.m., Program at 6 p.m. with a member of the Pechanga Cultural Center who will be talking about Native American Rock Art.

Monday, October 24 — Regular Monthly Program and Meeting of TVHS. Meet & Greet at 5:30 p.m., Program at 6 p.m. with our own Bob Kent presenting "Murray Schloss and the Utopian Community 'Heart of the Hills' " .

Friday, November 18 — Annual Dinner Meeting at Temecula Community Center, 6:00 p.m. Entertainment, Installation of Board of Directors for 2017, Silent Auction, as always Fund Raising Baskets. Mark Your Calendars for good time.

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 — 1:30 p.m. at the Ronald Roberts Temecula Library on Pauba Road, 2 of The Notable Women of Temecula will perform. This is in conjunction with National Women's History Month, and is open to public.

Monday, March 27, 2017 — Join the Temecula Valley Historical Society for a presentation by The Notable Women of Temecula. Come and learn what life was like for these women who were living in the Temecula Valley in the 1800's.

“Guenther’s Murrieta Hot Springs, California’s Greatest Health Resort”

In October of 1902 German immigrant Frederick “Fritz” Guenther purchased 294 acres of land which surrounded a natural mineral hot spring near the town of Murrieta. On the property were the remnants of an abandoned steam laundry service which had been launched 15 years earlier as well as evidence of a previous attempt to create a health resort.

Over the course of the next ten years Fritz Guenther developed a health spa reminiscent of European spas he had seen during his childhood.

For nearly seventy years the Guenther family owned, managed, and grew the resort to become what has been called “California’s Greatest Health Resort.” During the 1920s, before the development of Palm Springs, Murrieta Hot Springs was the weekend destination of the rich and famous of Hollywood and Los Angeles.

The Temecula Valley Museum is proud to announce a new temporary exhibit opening Saturday, August 20. “Guenther’s Murrieta Hot Springs, California’s Greatest Health Resort” will feature photographs and artifacts on loan to the museum from members of the Guenther family. This exhibit tells the full story, in photographs and text, of the Guenther family and the creation and development of the resort that brought so many people to Murrieta and the Temecula Valley during the better part of the twentieth century.

A gallery talk on the topic is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, September 8 beginning at 6 PM at the Temecula Valley Museum, 28314 Mercedes Street in Old Town Temecula.

How much do you know about our local history?

Where was the first post office in Temecula? We can find articles and sketches suggesting it was at the Magee Store near Redhawk Parkway, but other locations have been mentioned. How do we know where it really was?

Answer on Page 6

IDYLLWILD HOME TOUR

(On your own)

The Idyllwild Area Historical Society is holding their annual home tour on Saturday, September 17th, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The Tickets are \$20/person and are available at 9:30 a.m. on September 17th at the Idyllwild Monument on Village Center Drive, or at the Idyllwild Area Historical Society Museum at 54470 North Circle Drive (corner of Oakwood) in Idyllwild. There are FIVE homes on tour, ranging from a vintage vacation cabin to a brand new residence. To whet your appetite, the tour includes a 70-year-old cabin overlooking Strawberry Creek; and an 80-year-old "tiny house" with bedrooms reminiscent of Pullman Railroad cars; a home that harks back to the Old West of Hollywood films; a house that features a stone-walled garden that transports visitors to jolly old England; and lastly, an expansive modern residence complete with endless mountain views. Refreshments will be available at the Idyllwild Historical Museum throughout the day.

For information, send an email to info@idyllwildhistory.org. Or visit their website at www.idyllwildhistory.org.

99 (or so) Years Ago

George Hall and Philip Magee are employed as cowboys by the Vail Bros. at the Pauba Ranch.

James Tortuga left Monday morning for San Marcos with freight for (Mrs. Eliza) E. Alvarez.

The Vail Bros. of the Pauba Ranch shipped ten carloads of cattle the first of the week to their ranch near Santa Barbara. They were looked after by George Hall. This is the second shipment of cattle the Vails have made to this particular ranch.

Lewis J. Utt, attorney-at-law at Pala, was in town one day last week with all his family on a pleasure trip. Mr. Utt is proprietor of the Agua Tibia Ranch six miles east of Pala.

Mrs. M. A. Welty is spending a much-needed vacation at Los Angeles with her sister and friends.

Last Saturday Mahlon Vail, George Studley and Cal Wagoner of the Pauba Ranch killed a large lion at the Santa Rosa Mountains. It was brought to town. The lion measured about seven feet from tip to tip and is a fine specimen.

(January 12, 1917, Lake Elsinore Valley Press)

Local History Answer . . .

So far, no primary (firsthand) information has been found. That would be something like an 1859 diary or surveyor's notes stating the location of the post office. Therefore, we have to use a number of pieces of indirect evidence from that time period to find its location. If we have enough of this circumstantial evidence and we have ruled out any contradictory evidence, we can be fairly sure of the location.

The original post office record (hand-written in 1859) named Louis Rouen as the first postmaster on 22 April 1859. We know from a number of 1858-60 diaries that the Butterfield Overland Mail Station was in the village (southwest of the Temecula Creek and Redhawk Pkwy). The 1860 census indicates the Butterfield stationmaster Thomas Mulligan lived in the village and kept four horses for the stage. We also know from the 1860 census and from Postmaster Rouen's 1860 deposition in a divorce case that he was in the village. The 1850 census and other information provide evidence that the Apis Adobe was not in the village and was not the location of the post office. The circumstantial evidence used above is primary information, meaning it was from people who were actually there during that time period.

It is also necessary to rule-out any contradictory evidence. An example is the plaque on the Wolf Store building stating that it was a Butterfield stop. This is considered secondary information because a group of people almost a hundred years later, in the 1950s, assumed their information was accurate and apparently did not look for any primary information. More recent research has proven that the Wolf Store was not built until 1867. There is proof that the building known as Magee's Store near Overland and Redhawk did exist before April 1959, but it was not until August 1859 (months after the Post Office was established in the village) that after the death of her husband, María Antonia Apis Holman leased that building on 1/2 acre to John Magee for five years. The lease required that he construct an addition to it. Later archeological studies indicated it had two sections, built at different times, so apparently Magee added an addition.

Due to the Civil War, like many other post offices along popular routes to California, the Temecula Post Office was discontinued in November 1862.

For more information or questions, contact Anne Miller at DMEAJM@earthlink.net

President's Message

We have a lot of fun history functions going on. Besides our monthly presentations, field trips and weekly events at the Vail Headquarters, we are looking forward to our annual dinner. The dinner will be in the Temecula Civic Center conference room on Friday, November 18th. Please mark your calendars now so you won't miss it. We are planning a good meal, entertainment, and some great gift baskets to bid on. It is a great time to get together and enjoy each others' company.

Paul Macarro of Pechanga Cultural Resources will give a presentation on Native American Rock Art at our September meeting, and our own Bob Kent will present "Murray Schloss and the Utopian Community 'Heart of the Hills'" in October.

Those are the only board meetings and presentations this year, then the Annual Dinner in November and we keep December free for holiday gatherings.

Do you see the monthly articles Bonnie Martland writes to benefit TVHS in Valley News? If you don't subscribe to the paper, be sure to pick up copies when you are out and about. Her articles are informative and entertaining.

If you are free on a Sunday afternoon, VaRRRA appreciates extra hands and voices at either the History Center or Vail Headquarters.

— 100 Years Ago —

The Temecula baseball team met the Elsinore team at Hot Springs ballpark. Elsinore was defeated by the score of 11 to 1 being a one sided game.

Mr. Crooks of Rainbow lately has been very unfortunate. Three weeks ago his horse ran away with the buggy and Thursday afternoon his team ran away with the wagon. They broke loose and started for home but were caught about a mile south of town. No one was hurt.

Paul Clark is hauling and shipping some very fine sugar beets.

A social party was given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Cantarini Saturday night, a good many of the young people from Temecula attending and report a very good time.

(August 18, 1916, Lake Elsinore Valley Press)