

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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Our Family, Part Two

By Floyd Rail

I will go back to my boyhood and try to recall some of my early memories. With the Hochhalters living in Los Angeles, we would go to see them. I'm not sure if we went to see them when we still had to go by team and wagon, but I have a faint memory of making at least one trip to Los Angeles with the team and wagon. It took two or three days to make the trip one way. I remember one time we went through Pomona at the time of the fair and I saw a man riding a unicycle. I thought that was really something.

I also remember part of the family had gone to the city for some reason and I had stayed home. When they got back, they had a tricycle for me and that was a great day. Toys didn't come very often.

I didn't go away from home very often so when I started to school I was very shy. It took awhile for me to learn to stand up for myself, but as I grew older I gradually earned the respect of my classmates.

I used to go to the field with Pop and drive the horse to cultivate the corn or maybe drive the team to harrow the ground. I



Floyd Rail, High School graduation
(Source: The Homer Rail Collection)

also remember it was my job to take the cows to pasture and bring them home at night. We used to pasture them on the twenty acres that Clarence now has east of King's corner.

One evening I was brining the cows into the barnyard and I was riding my burro. Ira came up behind her and started swatting her and she started to run and as we got by the horse stable, she dodged in the door and I hit the ground. It knocked the wind out of me and I sure thought I would never get my breath again.

My first pay job I can re-



Isabella Robertson, school photo (Source: The Homer Rail Collection)

member was driving the team that went round and round all day long to furnish the power for the hay baler. Ever so often one of the old mares would kick up her heels in protest. I received one dollar for nine hours of following that team all day with the dust from the hay falling on me every time I passed the feeder. Later, I moved up the ladder and got the job of poking wires into the blocks to make the bales. All day long I would be covered with hay that fell from the table.

I went to the same school that you kids started in. It was built in 1920 and we had a temporary school that year. I used to sit on the west side of the school building and watch as the workmen built the elevator storage tanks never dreaming of how much hard work I would have to put in there in later years.

I remember the first track

meet I ever attended. We had no training. We just went and participated. I got blue ribbons for the dash, brood jump, high jump and a white ribbon for three for strike. Temecula, Murrieta, Wildomar, Elsinore and Alberhill participated. All through high school the only thing I accomplished was a letter on the varsity basketball team (and a baseball knee)

While I attended high school, I worked at Burnham's store in Murrieta. I started sweeping floors and filling shelves and washing windows. I continued to work there and learned to cut meat and do the bookkeeping so that when the boss left I could take charge. After graduation I took a full time job for Burnham's in Temecula. They promised me \$18 a week, 57 hours. The first week I received \$20 and almost popped my buttons. We worked 12 hours on Saturday and I mean work. We worked from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. with an hour off for lunch and supper.

In high school I took a commercial course. I took typing, bookkeeping, and shorthand. I went to Hemet one time to compete in a typing contest and I won an accuracy medal, not much speed thought. When I was ready to graduate I had talked to my teacher about jobs. She said I could work at the Elsinore bank as a teller. When I found they only paid \$60 per month I decided to be a grocery clerk.

I took drama classes in high school and was in several

plays. I was Red Jack Smith in Spreading the News. I was Spoofy in Three Live Ghosts, and Raymond Thompson still calls me that. In our senior play I was Berisford and had to kneel on a handkerchief to propose to my girlfriend in Babs! Lots of fun.

One thing I was proud of and also disappointed in was the fact I became a life member of the California Honor Society, but because of my grades in the last semester, there was some question if I would qualify and so I did not get the seal on my diploma.

I graduated from high school on Wednesday, June 4, 1927 and went to work the following Monday at Burnham's in Temecula. I worked there until 1931 when the Depression took my job. The other guy married the boss's daughter, so I had to start farming. I already bought a case wheel tractor and had started farming with hired help.

One thing I did while working at Burnham's was to buy my mom an oil burner range. It was wickless and I was real proud to surprise her. Later when Isabella and I were married we got the range after Mom passed away. Before I bought this range, my mother did her cooking on a wood stove.

After leaving the store I farmed for about twelve years. I raised hay, barely, wheat, and Egyptian corn. We called it gyp corn. It grew on cultivated land during the summer and was harvested in October (usually).

There was lots of hard work and very little pay. I would keep busy after finishing my own work by working for other farmers and any odd jobs I could do. I did some custom work with my tractor.

I was a Boy Scout master for several years. I enjoyed working with the boys. Some of them are still around. Raymond and Curtis Thompson and the Barnes boys are still in the area.

Our minister served the Wildomar church as well as our Murrieta church. One time when our churches were having a combined young peoples program, I saw a real cute blond girl that got my special attention. I asked the minister later who she was. He told me her name was Isabella Robertson. I asked my cousin, Helen, about her and she said she was a real nice girl. I decided I wanted to meet her.

Our MYF was planning a beach party at Oceanside and I thought this was a good opportunity to invite Isabella to go along and get better acquainted. I took Helen and Irma with me and we went to see Isabella. We found her at her neighbor's home. She had seen me a couple of times before and decided she would like to go to the party and her mother agreed to let her go. We had a good time, but of course, by the time our party was over and we got home, it was a bit late and that wasn't the best way to start on a new date. But somehow we survived our first date.

I am sure your mother will testify that I was no great Romeo, but she put up with my clumsy courting ways for which I have been very grateful. We would go to MYF on Sunday evening and occasional parties, but as I look back I don't remember any outstanding occasions that would thrill a young girl and make her remember the date and place.

The one time that probably stands out in her mind above all others was when I took her and some other girls up to Idyllwild. After sightseeing for awhile, I decided to come home by the old road which had been a one way route and was rather steep and crooked. By the time we reached the bottom of the grad, I had not only worn out the hand on the brake pedal of the Model T, but had to rely on the reverse pedal and needless to say your mother's nerves were more frayed than the backs on the brakes. She later revealed just how close that had come to being our last date. Oh boy!

After Isabella graduated from high school she and Grandma Stollar left home and moved into Grandma's apartment in Elsinore. Charlie, Isabella's step-father, had made life so miserable they decided they could not stay any longer. After a short period of time, Isabella went to help and Ira and Marion as babysitter and housekeeper. Grandma got a job at the Hot Springs as a maid. Soon Isabella also got a maid job.

Grandma and Isabella lived in a little cabin in back of the dance hall. Ira told me one day if I was serious about Isabella I should get busy before I was too late. One evening I went over to see her and found the front yard full of young guys. I decided Ira was right. I began to try and tie things together, but Isabella kept stalling. I think if Grandma hadn't been pushing, I would have had quite a time getting her to say yes.

1932 was very much a Depression year, but we decided to try to prove that two could live as cheaply as one could. So we decided to get married on November 30, 1932. To this day I really can't remember how we paid our bills. All I am sure of was that it wasn't easy. I worked at Burnham's on Satur-



Cora Lee (Ashley) Robertson Stollar
(Source: The Homer Rail Collection)



Floyd Rail sitting on his Model-T. This was the car he drove Isabella in on their harrowing journey traveling down the old grade from Idyllwild. (Source: The Homer Rail Collection)

day for \$4 and that was sure cash for the week.

It was somewhat of a custom in Murrieta to try to steal the bride or at least scare a newlywed couple. So we planned to outsmart the local boys. Isabella's homemaking teacher came to our rescue. She parked her car at the back of the parsonage. After the wedding ceremony we marched out the front door of the church and hurried to the parsonage and slipped out the back door into the waiting car and quietly disappeared into the night. We were driven to where our car was and then drove to Grandma's apartment in Elsinore. We had breakfast the new morning with Miss Glasgow, the home ec teacher. As we were about to leave, Mary Sykes came in. She wondered how we got away from the church and then to Elsinore and that is the story of our big hon-

eymoon.

We returned to Murrieta and went to work trying to get our new home established. Later Miss Glasgow told us she thought we had a lot of nerve to try to make a home in the little old cottage we fixed up. But eventually, it was quite comfortable (for those days).

We started out with no running water in the house. We had no bathroom at first. I later piped water into the house and eventually built a shower room

that even had hot water. What a luxury. I had no such luxury in my old home. As a boy we would heat water on the kitchen wood stove and carry it to the bathtub. When I came home from Temecula on Saturday nights, I would get home about 10:30 and get into the bathtub and more than once I woke up when the water got cold. Burr – The good old days, Wow!

We began to plant flowers and trees and vines and I built trestles for the roses and honeysuckle vines and our little shack began to look like home sweet home.

We hadn't been married long before tragedy came into our lives. My mother got sick and in just a few days she passed on to her reward. She had pneumonia and we didn't have penicillin then and there were no really good drugs to deal with pneumonia. I was in bed at the same time and the shock of hearing of my mother's death was terrific. Four days later, Grandma Parker passed on. I didn't get to attend her funeral. What a sad time.

To be continued



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Museum Update

By Jeffery Harmon, President

“Today, we make history!” declared Mayor Pro Tem Randon Lane. April 28, 2019 was a historic day in Murrieta. After three years of hard work, grit and determination, the Murrieta Valley Historical Society opened Murrieta’s first museum at the Historic Hunt House and former Town Hall.

Alice Vose, 91, and Marvin Curran, 90, the oldest lifelong residents in Murrieta were given the honor of cutting the ribbon and officially opening the museum. When the door swung open, the crowd poured in.

“It truly was an amazing experience to be a part of. People couldn’t get into the museum quick enough. The excitement on everyone’s faces was priceless. The excitement on our pioneers’ faces was even better!” Jenny Mayoral, Treasurer.

The museum was instantly packed beyond capacity as visitors came in and viewed the exhibits, the photos and the timeline. Many conversations could be heard as the people toured the museum from one end to the other.

“It may be small,” one donor commented, “but it is mighty!”

Soon the initial crowd began to leave, making room for more visitors to enter the museum. Young, old, long time

residents, new residents, and pioneers strolled from one exhibit to the next. Questions and comments abound, and the museum volunteers shared their knowledge with the guests.

“It was so satisfying to see the reactions and comments we received from the community and our City staff and council.” Connie Cain McConnell, Board Member.

After the Grand Opening ceremony, people participated in the 72nd Annual Murrieta Fireman’s BBQ. Children created and flew paper airplanes at the Society’s booth. They also dug for dinosaur bones, or ground acorns in two hands-on exhibits that were created as part of an Eagle Scout project. We are grateful for the Society volunteers who spent the day operating the booth.

At 4:00 p.m. the festivities came to a close and the last visitor left the museum. Within an hour, volunteers cleaned and packed up, and the historic day came to a close.

The museum will now be open on Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. Tours are also available by appointment. As soon as we secure public restrooms, we will open on Saturdays as well. In the near future the Society will be renting a Port-a-Potty on a monthly basis as soon as funding is secured.

This historic day would not have been possible without the thousands of volunteer hours, the financial donors, the supporters, and those that shared their family histories with us. We wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all those that have assisted in making this dream a reality.

When we look towards the future, the possibilities and the opportunities are boundless. As we embark on this new journey, I look forward to the great things to come. I want to thank the Board members for all their hard work. As your president, I count it an honor and a privilege to serve with such an incredible team.

The Murrieta Valley Historical Society dedicates this museum to the children of Murrieta. It is our hope that they will come and learn about the rich and diverse history of this City and strive to make their mark in their future endeavors.



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Monthly Board Meetings

Held on the first Monday at 5:30 p.m.

At the Murrieta Museum

41810 Juniper Street

(At Hunt Memorial Park)

All members welcome to attend

The Amazing Story of the Santa Rosa Plateau 35 Years Later

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019 | 6 PM

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