



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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May 2021

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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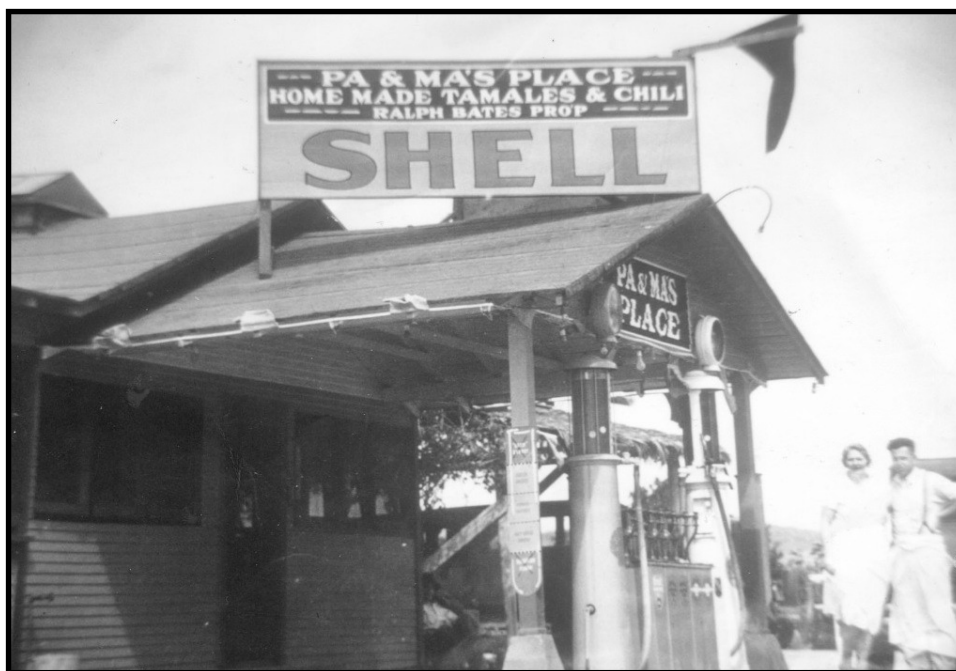
Jeffery G. Harmon

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Ralph and Effie Bates outside their restaurant and service station
(E. Hale Curran Collection)

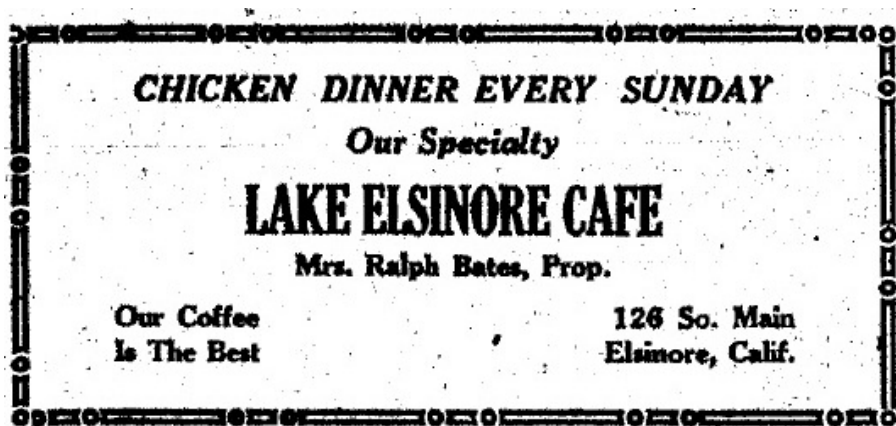
Pa and Ma's Place

by Jeffery G. Harmon

Motorists, who traveled on the Inland Highway in the late 1920s to the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort, may have stopped at Pa and Ma's Place restaurant and Shell service station. Ralph and Effie Bates, the proprietors, were always serving good food and providing great service. The hungry travelers would have stepped inside the restaurant and tried the homemade tamales covered with

chili and beans plus crackers for twenty-five cents a plate. After their meal, the motorist would fill up their gas tank, and continue on down the highway to their destination.

Ralph Pontius Bates was born August 22, 1888 in Nortonville, Jefferson County, Kansas. He was the son of Joseph Frank and Mary (Pontius) Bates. He first married Jessie Walls on November



The Bates' Lake Elsinore Café Ad

Source: November 6, 1924, Lake Elsinore Valley Press

15, 1909 in Jackson County, Missouri. They had two daughters, Margaret (1910) and Betty (1918). The Bates lived in Kapioma, Atchison County, Kansas. The couple may have separated, because Jessie Bates and her two daughters were living alone in Kansas City, Missouri in 1920. No further information has been found about Jessie.

Ralph then married Effie Louella Souder on July 19, 1924, in Butte, Montana. Shortly, after they were married they moved to Elsinore, California. They operated the Lake Elsinore Café at 126 South Main Street from 1924 until 1926.

The Bates left Elsinore in March 1926 and traveled to Kansas City, Missouri to stay for several months. During that time, they visited Ralph's daughters and their families, and many other people. They returned to Elsinore by July and decided to open a new restaurant in Murrieta.

In August 1926, Ralph and Effie Bates built a restaurant and service station in Murrieta at the northwest corner of Ivy Street and Jefferson Avenue. The Pa and Ma's Place opened the next month on Labor Day. The restaurant quickly became a favorite hang out for local teens.

As the years went on, the restaurant's fame continued to spread. Evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton and her husband, David, dined at the Bates' restaurant in April 1932. The couple reported that they had the diner's famous tamales and they enjoyed their meal very much.

The next year, Ralph's mother died on June 14, 1933 in Kansas. Afterwards, his father, J. Frank Bates, moved to Portland, Oregon to live with his daughter, Gelene Bailey and her husband. Sometime after 1940, Frank moved to Murrieta and lived with Ralph. He died August 19, 1943 at his son's home. After a memorial service, his

body was returned to Nortonville, Kansas and laid to rest beside his wife.

Ralph Bates closed the restaurant for a month in February 1934. After completing renovations, the restaurant reopened in March.

"The reopening of "Pa and Ma's Place" today promises to be a jubilee affair. The newly decorated dining room and kitchen, with minor improvements, mark the work of the past month during which the establishment has been closed. The color scheme of cream of green in the kitchen and counter serving room, and orchid and green in the dining room accentuate the freshness of the recent renovation. The same service of the past is promised by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bates, proprietors, and their helpers, Mrs. N. P. Batson and Howard Haskell, the new night man, who arrived here Monday from Oregon to take over his duties. During the past six years, "Pa and Ma's Place has won renown throughout the West for its famous tamales and homemade pies. The Shell Oil Company recently furnished the roadside lunch room and service station in its monthly publication." (March 1, 1934, Elsinore Leader Press)

After the reopening, Ralph leased the restaurant to Virgil Dye. Ralph then established a large turkey farm on his property, which he operated for many years.

In July 1935, Mr. and Mrs. Max Thompson took over

the lease. Two years later, Miss Ethel Jones, of San Bernardino, purchased the Bates restaurant in July 1937. She refurbished and remodeled the restaurant and reopened it on August 5, 1937. She renamed it the Silver Swan Café and Cocktail Room.

Ralph enjoyed his time after he retired from the restaurant. In 1949, he built a new home on his property on Jefferson Avenue. Through the years Ralph and Effie enjoyed visits from their family and friends.

Ralph's oldest daughter, Margaret, married Herbert C. Arthur. They had one daughter, Jeanette (1928). The Arthur family moved from Centralia, Boone County, Missouri to Murrieta around 1937 and lived in the area for about nine years.

Betty Jane, Ralph's

youngest daughter, moved to California to be with her dad in the 1920s. In 1929, she moved to Portland, Oregon to live with her aunt Gelene and uncle while she attended school.

In September 1936, Betty Jane Bates married Wesley T. Collins, of Clinton, Oklahoma at the Murrieta Methodist Church parsonage. Wesley worked at the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. The couple had two children, Larry (1937), and Jack (1938).

The Collins family moved to Inglewood, California by 1940. They returned to Murrieta in 1949 and moved into the original home of Ralph Bates. The Collins then lived in French Valley on Los Alamos Road in 1963.

In September 1966, Mrs. Effie Bates suffered a stroke. She was taken to the Circle City

Hospital in Corona to recover. She lived four more years then died on November 28, 1970 in Corona, California. She was laid to rest in the Elsinore Valley Cemetery. Two years later, Ralph Bates died in Riverside on November 28, 1972 and was laid to rest beside his wife.

Today, little remains of the former Pa and Ma's Place restaurant and service station. Several different restaurants, bars, and businesses have been located at the former Bates' site. Two vacant buildings that have been remodeled several times over the years remain standing. Sometime in the future, the structures will be demolished in order to widen Ivy Street. Then all that would remain would be a few photographs and the secret chili recipe preserved by Walt Cooper, a former employee.



Source: Murrieta: Old Town, New Town A Community History by Mary Alice Rail Boyce

Museum Update

Museum Update:

We have some exciting news!

The Museum will be re-opening on Thursday, starting May 13th from 1-4pm.

Beginning in July, the museum will be open on the first Saturday of every month from 11am - 2pm. Please wear your mask and practice social distancing due to County & City requirements, at this time. (The property is owned by the City and we must follow City guidelines) The museum is offering group tours and private tours by appointment only. To make an appointment please call: 951-397-4862.

The museum has a couple of new displays and has added more information to the resource area. The museum is now selling Historic 395 stickers and tin signs, note cards, books, and postcards. If you are interested in purchasing any of these,

please let us know.

While the museum has been closed, I have been working on receiving and archiving the new donations. The Dunham family has donated the Crazy quilt from their parents, Lawrence and Lucy, (this quilt has an exciting story behind it). We also have new additions to the Fire Department display and aerial photos from Murrieta's past.

The Murrieta Valley Historical Society has a couple of new videos on our YouTube channel. Log into YouTube and search for "Murrieta Historical Society" or Google "Murrieta Valley Historical Society Videos", you will find several useful links and pages.

I would like to thank Jake Henriksen from Sound Image, for his time in video taping the museum segments and the Historic Downtown Walking Tour for the 3rd grade classes so students may be able to learn more about Mur-

rieta's history. There will be more video segments coming soon.

Pamela Malnar, is our new treasurer and chairperson of the membership committee. Pam has helped us with a lot of challenges these past few months during our time of transition and I would like to send her a huge **Thank You** and to let Pam know we appreciate her efforts very much!

The museum will be adding a memorial garden, in memory of our past board member and treasurer, Al Vollbrecht. Al's partner, Yojiro Iba has volunteered to assist with this project. He will be planting the historic rosebushes from the Laurel Cemetery, and a Holly bush from the Peace tree. Al had been planning and designing this garden project for some time.

Hope to see you all soon,

Annette Jennings



WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SPONSORS

“The Crazy Quilt”

Mrs. Inez Hunt donated her home and five acres to the Murrieta Town Hall Association in June 1956. She passed away in April 1957 and her personal belongings were distributed to family members.

However, a few unwanted items remained in the garage and were auctioned off in April 1958 at the Annual Fireman’s BBQ. Mrs. Alice Carr won an old trunk for \$1.50. Inside she found several of Mrs. Hunt’s unfinished quilts.

Mrs. Christine Wright, of Menifee, and Mrs. Hunt’s friend, took the fabric and completed the quilts. One quilt was donated to the Murrieta Volunteer Fire Dept.

In April 1960, eighty people paid \$1 each to sign the quilt as a fundraiser. The completed quilt was then presented to Lawrence Dunham for his service in the Fire Dept.

Today the quilt has returned to Mrs. Inez Hunt’s former home thanks to the donation of the Dunahm family.



The “Crazy Quilt” was quilted by Menifee resident, Christine Wright. The materials were gathered by Mrs. Inez Hunt



E. Hale Curran and Fire Chief Raymond Thompson each signed a square on the quilt.



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Next General Board Meeting TBA

General Board Meetings are virtual in a Zoom meeting format. Anyone interested in joining us, please send an email to info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org and we will email you the Zoom link before the meeting



The Murrieta Museum,
41810 Juniper Street
at Hunt Memorial Park.

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