



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 7. Issue 5

September 2022

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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A publication of the

Murrieta Valley Historical Society

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Bob and Nancy White

The White Family

By Jeffery G. Harmon

The White family had lived and worked in both Murrieta and Temecula for many years. Bob White had operated a lunch counter and service station in both towns. He had married into the Gibbons family, and came to the area with them. When Bob White's wife died, he raised their three children on his own. He was a successful businessman and an active member in the community.

Willis "Bob" Alexander White was born on January 29, 1882 in Newbern, Marion County, Iowa. He was the son of Charles

and Rachael (Graves) White. Bob White married Nancy Lulu Gibbons on July 6, 1904 in Lacona, Warren County, Iowa. Nancy Gibbons was born December 22, 1882 in Ackworth, Warren County, Iowa. She was the daughter of William and Fannie (Tidball) Gibbons.

Bob and Nancy had three children. Their first child, Charles Robert White, was born August 12, 1905 in Lincoln, Lucas County, Iowa. Their second child, Lulu Margaret White, was born



Bob's Lunch Counter and Service Station, Temecula, 1927
Photo courtesy of Nancy White Kennedy

December 28, 1906 in Chariton, Lucas County, Iowa.

The White family moved to Sawtelle, Los Angeles County, California in 1911. They lived about a mile away from Nancy's brother, Virgil Gibbons and his family. Virgil and Bob White worked at a store owned by Kegly. Earnest Gibbons, Virgil's brother, operated the meat market in the store.

The White family then moved to La Canada, Los Angeles County, California. Their third child, Stanton Graves White, was born at home on January 18, 1914. A year later, Nancy contracted tuberculosis. She died on August 2, 1916 at their La Canada home. She was laid to rest in the Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena, California.

Shortly after Nancy's death, Bob White and his three

children rented the Salisbury property in Murrieta. Mrs. Fannie Gibbons, Bob's mother-in-law, moved to Murrieta and lived with Bob and his children for a few months. She helped him get his house in order. It is unknown what employment Bob found in Murrieta at this time.

By 1920, Bob White moved his family back to Los Angeles. In the census, he was listed as a shipping clerk for a wholesale grocery company. Virgil Gibbons was the supervisor for the J. A. Daley warehouse, which shipped products to the Rock Bottom grocery stores. Bob was a truck driver for this company.

The White family moved back to Murrieta by September 1922. By June 1923 they moved into the McDonald house, but Charles stayed in Los Angeles. He soon took a job offer in

Klamath Falls, Oregon to work with his uncle, William E. Gibbons.

A year later, in May 1924, Bob White opened up a lunch counter and service station on the corner of A Street and Washington Avenue in Murrieta. "A new innovation has appeared in the Mercantile row of Murrieta in the form of a Coney Island Stand, with the usual line of cold drinks. W. A. White being the proprietor will be glad to welcome all his old friends and the general public, assuring them all they need not go away hungry. He also opened a garage and oil station." (May 16, 1924, Lake Elsinore Valley Press)

Six months later Bob White moved to Temecula where he opened a new lunch counter and service station, and operated the public scales. His new station was on the west side of Front Street between 2nd and 3rd avenues. He successfully ran his business for over 15 years.

His oldest son, Charles, married Helen Cornick on December 31, 1926 in Tioga, New York. Charles and Helen had four children: Jacqueline (1928), Gerald (1930), Judith (1945) and Marcia (after 1940). The family settled in Endicott, Broome County, New York. Charles was an assembly worker in a local factory. He died on August 10, 1954 in Greencastle, Putnam County, Indiana. He was laid to rest in the Riverhurst Cemetery, in Endicott, Broome County, New York.

Bob's second child, Margaret, became a teacher. She

taught in several schools in Southern California, but never married. She visited the Shupe and Gibbons family in Murrieta often. She died on September 30, 1979 in Orange County, California.

In August 1930, Stanton visited the new miniature golf course in Elsinore. When he came home, he told his father about it. Bob then created Temecula's first miniature golf course on his dirt lot. It was a basic layout with the course scratched in the dirt and the holes dug out. Spare wood may have been used to line the course. It was not like the modern setup with windmills or miniature houses. However, when it opened, it became an instant hit and soon tournaments were held.

"At the miniature golf tournament at Bob White's golf course Monday night, Johnnie Cantarini took first, Al Knott, second, and Vernon Otto, third. The competition was very keen between all the players. Johnnie Cantarini making a hole-in-one, twice, to defeat Mr. Knott. Eleven players were competing." (June 18, 1931, Elsinore Leader Press)

Another favorite pastime for Bob and Stanton was traveling all over Southern California to attend sporting events. They attended football, basketball and baseball games in Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego. Stanton played football and was on the track team in high school. Bob attended many of Stanton's games whether they were local or out of town. Stanton gradu-

ated from Elsinore Union High School in June 1932.

Stanton joined the Temecula Bears baseball team when it was formed in 1932. The Bears played the Dripping Springs Prison Camp baseball team, the Wildcats, on Sunday afternoons. Games were played alternately between the camp's diamond and the diamond at the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort.

Night baseball became a favorite pass time, especially in the summer time when the days were hot, and the nights were cool. A Twilight baseball

league was formed in Temecula in June 1933. Three teams competed for the championship in a twelve week series. Bob managed Stanton's team, the Bears. The Bears fought hard against Al Knott's team, the Badgers. By the end of August, the Badgers had defeated the Bears in the final game.

In the fall, Stanton attended Compton Junior College for one year. He then transferred to Oceanside Junior College in the fall of 1935. He was enrolled at the college for two years. Bob began attending



From left to right: Margaret, Stanton, and Charles White
Photo courtesy of Nancy White Kennedy



Bob White, and his dog, Oscar, outside his lunch counter in Temecula.

Photo courtesy of Nancy White Kennedy

football games in Oceanside and visited with his son.

By May 1936, Bob began dating Miss Pauline Carr, a teacher at the Temecula Grammar School. They would attend card parties, picture shows, theaters, and were dinner guests at their friends' homes. Pauline even enjoyed watching a baseball game with Bob in San Diego

Bob and Pauline attended several monthly meetings of the Murrieta Bridge Club. In April 1937, they entertained the club twice at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Friedemann in Temecula.

The relationship ended by the summer of 1937 due to a death in the family. Bob had received word that his father, Charles was very ill in Iowa. Bob and Stanton left immediately, but were unable to reach his father's bedside. Charles White died on June 3, 1937 in Newbern, Marion County, Iowa.

After the funeral, Bob's two sisters, Mary and Sarah White, returned with him to California to visit with family. They visited the Shupe and Gibbons families in Murrieta, and their niece, Margaret, in Beverly Hills. After a month

long visit, Bob White's sisters returned to Iowa.

Stanton got a job as a sign painter in Oceanside in the summer of 1936. Within a year, he opened his own sign and paint shop. In March 1937, he painted some attractive signs on the store windows of his Uncle Virgil's service station in Murrieta.

A big change occurred in the Nighttime Baseball League in the summer of 1940. Girl baseball teams were formed in Elsinore and Temecula. Bob White managed the Temecula team. The Temecula girls' team won their first game against Elsinore with a score of 8 to 7.

By August, the boys' baseball teams disbanded before the League championship. With war raging in Europe, the boys were needed in the factories in Los Angeles. The girl teams played a few more games, but the enthusiasm for the game began to decline.

In August 1940, Bob White married Pearl Crowley. "Mr. and Mrs. W. A. White were chivalried Tuesday evening by forty of their neighbors. After Mr. White wheeled his bride up the street in a wheelbarrow the crowd returned to the White restaurant for refreshments." (October 3, 1940, Elsinore Leader Press)

By December 1941, Pearl White moved to Los Angeles and took a job there. She visited her husband in Temecula for Christmas. It is unknown what happened with Pearl. She was not present for Thanksgiving in 1944 when the extended Gibbons family gathered for the holiday in Murrieta. Afterwards, Bob sold his Temecula business and moved to Orange County, California.

Bob died on August 18, 1946 in Orange County, California. He was

laid to rest in Altadena, California beside his first wife. Stanton wrote, "I remember when he died, I hoped a few people would come to his funeral and there wasn't enough room for everyone who came – farmers, Mexicans, rich men, poor ones – a real mix."

Stanton married Ruth Virginia Homewood on March 5, 1939 in Orange County, California. Stanton and Ruth had two daughters, Roberta (1940) and Nancy (1946).

Stanton and Ruth operated a furniture store in Laguna Beach, California for several years. Stanton also built homes in Laguna Canyon. After the store closed, they moved to Kennewick, Washington in 1973 to be near their daughters, Roberta and Nancy, residents of Bellevue and Kennewick.

Stanton died on November 4, 1985 in Spokane, Washington. He was laid to rest in the Columbia Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Pasco. Ruth died on May 2, 2011 in Renton, Washington. She was laid to rest beside her husband.

Today, the Bob White lunch counter and service station have disappeared without a trace. There are several golf courses in Temecula, but there has never been another miniature golf course. Bob White and his family should be remembered both in Murrieta and Temecula for their contributions and accomplishments in the communities.

Museum Update

The museum will be hosting Steve Lech from the Mission Inn Foundation for a docent presentation. I have invited surrounding museums to attend.

Here is the presentation description:

Docent Dos and Don'ts –

Knowing how to interpret and present your information is just as important as the information itself. If you can't be heard or understood, then your information is lost. In this lecture, Steve Lech, local historian, Certified Interpretive Guide, and Director of Docent Training for the Mission Inn Foundation will go through some of the hazards and pitfalls of interpretation for docents, and give pointers on how to improve your presentation.

The new Murrieta Valley Union School District Superintendent, Dr. Ward Andrus visited the museum and introduced himself. He enjoyed our museum and the educational programs we offer. He would like to partner with the museum in future projects and events. It was great meeting with him and we appreciate his support.

The Temecula Museum donated cases of past issues of the High Country magazine and posters of the Temecula Wolfe Store to sell at our museum as a fundraiser. We would like to thank them for their donation.

The Murrieta Elementary 3rd grade classes have reserved their dates to come to the museum for their school tours. This year we will host six classes with the museum tour, walking tour and hands on displays. If anyone would like to volunteer with these tours please contact us at:

info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

The museum's visitor numbers have gone up and the Downtown Murrieta Market Night outreach booth has been a great success.

Pat Jennings will be presenting the History of the Yoder Family and their Farming Legacy at the Little Temecula History Center on September 26th at 6pm. Please join us!

Thank you,

Annette Jennings

Museum Director



In Memory of Donna JoAnn Brantly (1933-2022)

Donna JoAnn Brantly, 89, long-time resident of Murrieta, California, passed away peacefully due to congestive heart failure on Mary 16, 2022 in Humboldt County. She was born March 11, 1933, in Salina, Kansas to Anna and Russell Stevens. She graduated from Phoenix Union High School in 1951.

Donna began working for her father, a CPA while she was in high school and acquired a great many secretarial skills in and outside of coursework. Her efficiency, intelligence, and skills made her a favored employee of the First National Bank of Arizona where she worked to save money to attend Bethany College in Kansas.

On a vacation to Long Beach with her best friend, Donna met the love of her life, James Brantly while he was on shore leave from the U.S. Navy. A long pen-pal romance during the Korean War led to their marriage on August 25, 1953, after his honorable discharge. In November 1957, as James graduated in the 70th Session at the U.S. Border Patrol Academy in El Paso, TX, Donna gave birth to their oldest daughter, Cheryl. Shortly after that, they moved from Tucson to Southern California where James was stationed at the Temecula Border Patrol Station.

In 1959, Donna gave birth to their second daughter, Susan in Fallbrook. James and Donna both fell in love with Murrieta and moved there in 1960 after living in Rainbow, CA. Because both had moved often as children, they wanted their daughters could grow-up in one community.

She and James joined the United Methodist Church in Murrieta in 1964. Donna spent 10 years as church treasurer, 8 years as Wrightwood camp counselor, decades as auditor and active member of the United Methodist Women. Donna was also leader of the Murrieta Livewires 4-H Club for five years.

Donna worked for several ranches in the area including Hyland Labs. In 1965, she began working as school secretary for the Murrieta Elementary School which was the only school in town. When Donna retired in 1990, she was the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services for the Murrieta Valley Unified School District and had helped manage the growth of the school district from one K-8 school serving 80 students into a district with 4 more elementary schools, a middle school, and the beginnings of the Murrieta Valley High School serving over 4,000 students.

In December 2007, Donna's life changed dramatically with a car accident that took the life of her husband of 54 years, James, and left her seriously disabled. With visits back to Murrieta, whenever possible, Donna lived with her daughter Cheryl Kingham in McKinleyville the past 14 years where she was able to see her granddaughters grow up. Still maintaining ties with the Murrieta UMC, Donna attended services at the UMC of the Joyful Healer in McKinleyville, enjoyed reading, writing, getting letters from friends, seeing movies, and watching her soap opera while drinking Dr. Pepper.

She is survived by her two daughters and sons-in-law, Cheryl and Derek Kingham of McKinleyville, CA and Dr. Susan Brantly and Dr. Scott Mellor of Madison, Wisconsin, and two grandchildren, Eteya and Melissa Kingham.

Memorial services will be held at the Murrieta United Methodist Church at 1:30 pm on Thursday, August 25th. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to one of two charities: the Murrieta Valley Historical Society or to the James and Donna Brantly Fund, c/o HAF, 373 Indianola Road, Bayside, CA 95524. This fund provides grants to rural fire and rescue services.

Murrieta Hot Springs Resort Update

By Jeffery G. Harmon

This summer the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort sold to Olympus Real Estate Group for \$50 million. On August 31, 2022, the State of the City event was held at the resort. This was the first major public event to be held at the springs in 25 years. That night, attendees learned the future plans of the resort. The company's goal is to turn it into a world renowned hot springs resort and wellness center and to be the number one hot springs resort in America.

The company owns another hot springs resort, The Springs Resort, in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. The resort is home to the Mother Spring, the deepest hot spring in the world, whose depth has not been measured. The facility, the hot spring pools and the amenities are breathtaking. It will be exciting to see how the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort will be transformed.

On September 1st, Pat and Annette Jennings and I met with Robert Saunders at the resort to discuss our concerns about preserving the history of the resort. We were assured that the historic structures would remain, with minor repairs and paint. A few changes are in the planning stages.

Several building interiors will be restored and updated. For example, in the Annex, a few walls will be removed in order to enlarge the guest suites transforming them into more comfortable spaces for guests. We have been assured that we would be notified of any alterations so that we can photograph and document be-

fore work begins.

We took a tour of the property with Robert and pointed out a few hidden details that we hope can be preserved. For example, the wishing well next to the Monterey Hotel, and the rock and water feature from the miniature golf course.

Overall, the visit was productive and we look forward to working with the new owners as they prepare to open the resort in 2023. We will continue to provide updates when we can. As we turn the page, we can't wait to see what will unfold in the next chapter of this historic resort.



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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@murrietahistoricalociety.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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