



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 2

March 2024

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.

2024 Officers

President Jeffery G. Harmon
Vice President Annette Jennings
Secretary
Treasurer Pamela Malnar

Directors

Connie McConnell, Pat Jennings,
Ashley Jennings Bigay

Committee Chairs

Museum Director

Annette Jennings

Research & Preservation

Jeffery Harmon

Public Relations

Connie McConnell

Membership

Pamela Malnar

Program Speakers

Annette Jennings, Jeffery Harmon

Virtual Assistant

Ashley Jennings Bigay

Events/Education

Pat Jennings

Newsletter Editor

Jeffery G. Harmon

A publication of the

Murrieta Valley Historical Society

Email:
info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

Phone: (951) 677-7758



Construction crew that built the transmission lines to Elsinore in 1912.
Source: The Huntington Library Digital Archives

How Electrical Power came to Murrieta Valley by Jeffery G. Harmon

Electrical power was established in Murrieta by 1923. It was made possible by a contract negotiated by the Guenther family, owners of the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. Residents, businesses, and farmers were grateful to receive electrical power. Through the years, electricity has contributed to the development and prosperity of the valley.

When the Murrieta post office opened in 1885, windmills were a popular item for sale in the valley. Farmers would erect the

windmills to pump underground water for agricultural and residential use. At night, homes were lit by gas lamps.

The earliest development of electrical power in the area began with the Elsinore Light & Power Company. The company was incorporated in June 1906 by a group of Redlands investors. The small power company provided electricity for the Elsinore business district and a few residential homes. The plant operated for seven years, until it was pur-



In 1913, poles were delivered to Elsinore for the construction of the transmission lines. Source: The Huntington Library Digital Archives

chased by a larger company.

On June 15, 1911, the Southern Sierras Power Company was incorporated in Wyoming. A month later, the company announced plans to construct a steam power plant in San Bernardino and to connect it to a Bishop hydroelectric plant by constructing a 250-mile long high power transmission line. By May 1913, the company would be servicing over two thousand customers in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Then power lines were installed from San Bernardino to Corona, and to Moreno Valley and Perris. By October 1912, 175 miles of wire had been installed at a cost of \$1000 per mile. Next, power lines were constructed west of Perris to the

Good Hope Mine. With new-found power, electric pumps began pumping the water out of the flooded shafts, enabling the mine to reopen. Then the power lines were constructed westward connecting with Elsinore.

On March 12, 1913, the Elsinore Light and Power Co. was purchased by the Southern Sierras Power Co. for \$7,500. A power line was constructed from Elsinore to Alberhill in July 1916. By March 1918, Sierras extended the line from Alberhill to Corona, providing power for its lemon industry. Power was also used to reopen the Temescal Tin Mine. With this gap closed, a full circuit of power, 105 miles long, was available in western Riverside County.

While Murrieta residents

continued to wait for power lines to be brought to the valley, several people bought gasoline generators to light up their residents and their businesses. Generators also began to replace windmills as a source of power to run pumps to irrigate crops. Electrical motors were cheaper and more reliable, but there were no power lines in the rural areas. Sierras had the financial capital to reach Southwest Riverside County, but the company didn't expand south of Elsinore.

Then in January 1922, Hugo Guenther, manager of the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort, contracted Sierras to run power lines to his resort.

“The first thing he will hitch up to the new power will be his fine new well which will de-

velop 50 inches of the finest water in the country.” (April 19, 1922, Riverside Daily Press)

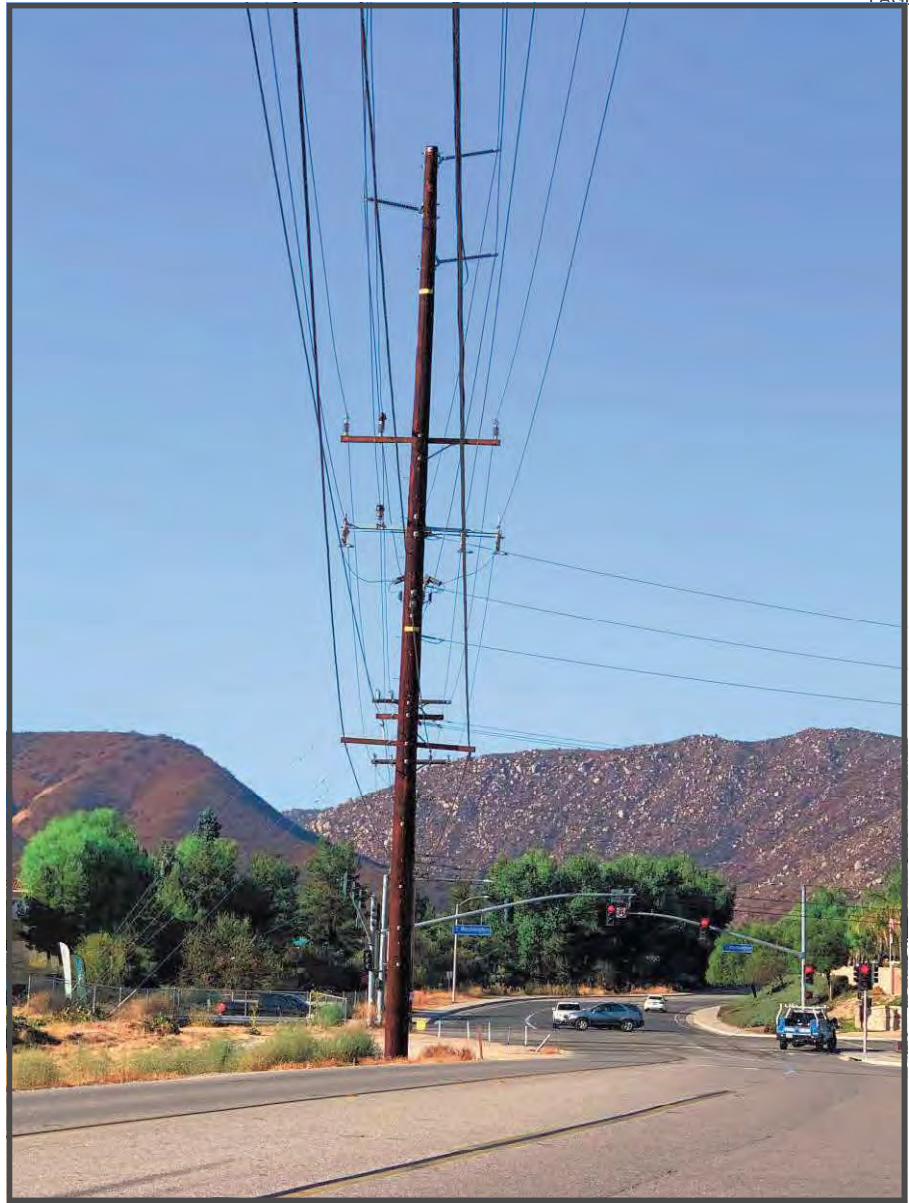
The first carload of poles was unloaded in Murrieta in February. Survey of the line in the valley began in September. A month later the poles were installed along the route. The wires were strung in November and power began to flow to Murrieta by December.

The contract to bring electrical power to the resort did not include connecting the town of Murrieta. The Murrieta Woman’s Club provided the additional money Sierras required to wire the town. However, the contract did not include power lines to the residents west of the Murrieta Creek.

As work began on the transmission lines, residents began to prepare. In September, the town hall was wired for electricity. By December, the Murrieta Grammar school had wires and fixtures installed. Mr. Jones wired the Methodist Church and parsonage. In January 1923, Frank Thorne installed electrical fixtures and renovated the Miles W. Thompson home.

Then in April 1923, Frank and Rose Shupe travelled to Hemet to see an electric stove demonstration. Afterwards, they purchased and installed the first General Electric stove in Murrieta.

By the close of 1923, many Murrieta residents were wired with electricity and by



Transmission lines at the intersection of Washington Ave. and Nutmeg St., October 15, 2020. (Photo by Jeffery Harmon)

1924, Wildomar followed suit. Electric power radically improved irrigation systems, allowing farmers to expand their operations, bringing growth and prosperity to the area.

Southern Sierras Power Company continued servicing the valley for many years. In 1941, it was renamed the California Electric Power Company. Then on January 1, 1964, it

merged with Southern California Edison. Today over three hundred thousand residents and many businesses in Southwest Riverside County continue to receive power from Edison. Today the area’s growing prosperity is a testimony to the pioneers who brought electrical power to the Murrieta Valley over one hundred years ago.



SAVE THE DATE


SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024
TOWN SQUARE PARK
12PM - 6PM



www.MFRBBQ.com



The Historical Society will have a booth at the event and a meet and greet “lounge”. The Museum will also be open.
We look forward to seeing you there!



HERITAGE, HATS AND HANDBAGS

exhibit

Mother's Day Tribute

FEATURING

WHAT "MOM" USED TO WEAR

**MAY 2 -
MAY 30**

Collections of Women's Antique Hats, Handbags, Clothing, and Accessories.

VISIT THE MURRIETA MUSEUM
41810 Juniper Street @ the Historic Hunt House

EXHIBIT DATES

Heritage, Hats and Handbags

 THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1 PM - 4 PM
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 10 AM - 2 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1 PM - 4 PM

Special Mother's Day Open House:
Saturday, May 11, 10 am - 2 pm

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1 PM - 4 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1 PM - 4 PM 
SATURDAY, MAY 25, 10 AM - 2 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1 PM - 4 PM


MURRIETA
Valley Historical Society
MurrietaHistory.org
@MurrietaHistory

Pearl
CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS
BRINGING HISTORY AND ART TO LIFE!
PearlC4CA.org
@PearlC4CA

CALL (951)677-7758 TO SCHEDULE PRIVATE GROUP TOURS




SANTA ROSA WEST
Santa Rosa West Association

THE Shootist

Southern California's Premier
Full Line - Full Service Gun Shop

24910 Washington Avenue
Historic Downtown Murrieta

951-698-7543
www.TheShootistGuns.com



Pearl
Center for Creative Arts
Where history and art come to life.
PearlC4CA@gmail.com
Follow @PearlC4CA



Scan the QR code to visit our website.

Murrieta Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 1341
Murrieta, CA 92564

Phone: 951-677-7758
E-mail: info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

**The General
Monthly Board Meeting
is held on the second
Monday at 5:30 p.m.
Please join us at
the Murrieta Museum**



MUSEUM Hours
**THURSDAYS
1 - 4 PM**
For groups and tours call (951) 677-7758

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

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

CIRCLE ONE

INDIVIDUAL

\$25 / ANNUAL

\$150 / LIFE

FAMILY

\$35 / ANNUAL

\$250 / LIFE

SENIOR / STUDENT

\$15 / ANNUAL

BUSINESS

\$200 / ANNUAL

JOIN ONLINE!

MURRIETAHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

SPONSORSHIP

\$300 / ANNUAL

- Name on our website
- Business website linked to our resource page
- Business logo on all major event press information

First name _____

Last(Family) name _____

Business _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

**CHECKS PAYABLE
TO: MURRIETA VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

murrietahistoricalsociety.org
info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org
(951) 677-7758
PO Box 1341, Murrieta, CA 92564



venmo



Scan. Pay. Go.