

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Wolf Store

February 2023
Volume 23 Issue 2

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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*One example of flooding that occurred in San Diego during rains January 1916.
Photo appeared in Chicago Tribune courtesy of San Diego Historical Society.*

Had Contract in San Diego

Hatfield, "The Rainmaker" Worked Area in 1916

(Compiled from Internet Sources)

In December 1915 the San Diego City Council agreed to pay Charles Hatfield, the Rainmaker – who preferred to call himself a "moisture accelerator" -- \$10,000 if he filled Lake Morena a city reservoir in the mountains east of San Diego.

In early January Charles and his brother, set up a tower beside Lake Morena and began their efforts, using secret formulas that Charles never disclosed, they mixed and released various chemicals into the air by a variety of means. Four days later, he reported rain at Morena. A series of storms followed one after the other in torrents, and had by January 27th resulted in a deluge that had reached epic proportions.

The floods that came after the record-breaking rains of January 1916 are still considered the biggest weather disaster in San Diego County history. Twenty-two deaths were attributed to the storms. Bridges, roads and rail lines were washed out. Area dams and reservoirs overflowed or collapsed, sending huge waves crashing through area communities below. Houses floated away to their destruction on devastating flows of water. One account in the San Diego Union described a wall of water 5 feet flowing down Broadway in downtown San Diego. With the destruction of railroads and ability to bring in needed supplies to support everyday commerce for some time they had to rely on supplies brought in by steamship freighters.

Even though the "atmospheric river" guided the brunt of the storm into San Diego County, certainly other areas in Southern California were seriously affected. All of the creeks and rivers in the area overflowed, and the Santa Mar-

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Hatfield, “*The Rainmaker*” Worked in Area in 1916

garita Canyon once again roared with water toward the ocean. The train depot and remaining track facilities serving Fallbrook were totally destroyed, and never rebuilt in the same place to serve its agricultural businesses. All of the counties in the area recorded extraordinary levels of rainfall.

San Diego had just finished a very successful World Exposition in 1915, and was anticipating a continuation of the tourism they had experienced. These storms caused huge economic impacts just in property damage as well as loss of normal business flow of commerce.

After the storm had subsided, Charles Hatfield expected to be paid by the City of San Diego. Many of the citizens including the City Attorney took the position that if he was taking credit for the rainfall and expected to be paid, then he likewise should be held liable and responsible for the damage incurred. Eventually the issue found its way into the courts and a judge ruled that the rains were not due to the efforts of Mr. Hatfield, but rather an Act of God, claim denied.



**Above —
Eric on horse crossing Santa
Margarita 1916.**



**Above —
Fallbrook station after January 1916 flood. Rails
twisted and useless for miles. Trains never ran again
in canyon. (Fallbrook Historical Society Photo used
with permission.)**



**Right —
Building garage flooded OCT 1916.**

100 Years Ago in Temecula

Selected items from Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column — February 1923

February 2, 1923

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

Mr. and Mrs. E. Greenfield delightfully entertained at a 6 o'clock dinner last Thursday. The guests were Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cantarini and Miss Rita Domenigoni.

Mrs. W.T. Barton is on the sick list this week.

Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Barnett motored to Elsinore last Thursday evening to attend the Masonic installation of officers.

Charlie Mendenhall received three cars of cattle from Yuma, Arizona, last Thursday.

The Misses Serena and Angelina Cantarini of Los Angeles were the weekend guests of relatives here.

A.E. Escallier was installed as master, W.M. Friedemann as senior warden and Lynn Smith as marshal of the Masonic lodge at Elsinore last Thursday evening.

Mrs. Walters of Los Angeles is spending a few days here with her sister, Mrs. W.T. Barton.

Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Smith and Mr. and Mrs. V.B. Sands and son attended the Masonic installation of officers at Elsinore last Thursday evening.

Mrs. Mahlon Vail is spending a few days in Los Angeles this week.

Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann and Mrs. F.H. Hall attended the card party given by the Eastern Star chapter Monday evening.

February 9, 1923

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Barnett motored to San Diego Sunday, where they visited friends for several days.

G.A. Burnham and son have purchased A.K. Small's general merchandise store at Murrieta and will take charge about March 15th.

G. W. Varnum of Glendale was a business visitor here several days last week. Albert Otto took G.W. Varnum to Warren Springs last Wednesday & returned Friday.

Mrs. W.T. Barton, who has been quite ill at her home here, was taken to San Bernardino Sunday, where she can have better medical attendance.

John McSweeney is a business visitor in Los Angeles this week.

Miss Alta Domenigoni and S.A. Seiple motored to Idyllwild Sunday to participate in some of the eastern winter sports among the snow-capped pine trees and the several inches of snow.

February 16, 1923

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

Mrs. W.T. Barton was operated on at the Ramona hospital in San Bernardino last Tuesday evening and at the writing is still in a very critical condition. W.T. Barton spent Sunday in San Bernardino.

Albert Otto and Charlie Carstensen are working on G.A. Burnham & Son's new store at Murrieta this week. The interior is to be entirely renovated.

Mrs. E. Greenfield delightfully entertained for her husband and son-in-law, Dan Cantarini Saturday evening. Dancing, cards, and various games were enjoyed by the large number of guests until a very late hour. Dainty and delicious refreshments of sandwiches, cream puffs, pickles and coffee were served. Among those who were present are Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cantarini, Mr. and Mrs. F.A. Burnham, Mr. and Mrs. G.A. Burnham, Mr. and Mrs. A. Knott, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Smith, Miss Ethel Burnham, Mr. and Mrs. V.B. Sands, Mrs. F.H. Hall, Mrs. Lila Sweet, Mr. and Mrs. Vern Spivey, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cantarini, Miss Rita Domenigoni, Messrs. Henry Gray, G. McSweeney, Chester Barton, Vetsu Cantarini, John Cantarini, S.E. Veazey, W. Sommerville, A. Escallier and E. Greenfield.

Mesdames W.M. Friedemann and V.B. Sands attended the O.E.S. social club at the home of Mrs. James Stewart at Elsinore Tuesday afternoon.

Western Union men are here repairing their line between here and Fallbrook.

Frank A. Burnham is on the sick list this week.

February 23, 1923

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

Mrs. Lila Sweet, who has been visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Amos Kolb, left for her home in Riverside Tuesday.

Mrs. W.M. Friedemann delightfully entertained a number of Eastern Star friends at a four-course, 6 o'clock dinner last Friday. The dining room was beautifully decorated with red geraniums and maidenhair ferns. After dinner cards and music were enjoyed. The guests were Mr. and Mrs. John Egeland of Murrieta, Mrs. Kimball of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. N. Matick, Miss Margaret Davidson of Murrieta Hot Springs, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Smith, Mr. and Mrs. V.B. Sands and W. M. Friedemann.

McSweeney farms shipped a car of seed potatoes to Los Angeles last week.

Mrs. A. Knott entertained her Sunday school class and their mothers with an old fashioned taffy pull last Wednesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann and son, Billie, attended the Orange show in San Bernardino Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. F.A. Burnham, Mrs. Laughead and son, Kirk, E.E. Barnett and Mrs. Lila Sweet were a few of a party who motored to Julian Sunday to frolic and play in the snow.

Miss Rita Domenigoni, Mrs. F. H. Hall and S. A. Seiple attended the picture show at Elsinore last Thursday.

The annual track meet will be held at Wildomar, instead of Murrieta as first announced, on March 9th.

Mrs. A.B. Barnett has been quite ill but is much better at this writing.

Mrs. W.T. Barton, who is in the Ramona hospital at San Bernardino, is slowly improving.