

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Wolf Store

October 2023
Volume 23 Issue 10

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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Sunday September 17, 2023 A Celebration 27 Years in the Making.

By Dave Wilson

The Board of Directors of the Temecula Valley Historical Society along with hundreds of valley residents feted The Vail Headquarters as a newly named National Historic Site, and the Butterfield Overland Trail, running diagonally through the headquarters, and earlier known as The Southern Emigrant Trail originating in Tipton Missouri, ending in San Francisco, as a National Historic Trail.

We appreciated the kind words shared by Supervisor Chuck Washington, and the certificate of commendation presented by Betsy Lowery, Assistant to the City Manager.

In 1964, the Vail family sold their holdings of 87,500 acres to Kaiser-Aetna Development Corporation who designed the master-planned community at the time called Rancho California.

The Headquarters buildings then sat empty and unused for decades after the sale.

In April 1997 residents were expressing concerns about the many hazards created by the condition of what had become rundown, abandoned buildings.

Information was also circulating that new owners of the property, MDC Vail planned to demolish all the historical structures with the exception of the Wolf Store.

This is the point that Rita Gentry, Dick Diamond, Richard Busenkell, Tony Tobin, Bill Harker, Rhine and Sandy Helzer and a few others found each other and found a voice.

Their first meeting and subsequent call to action was the foundation for the lofty goals achieved today. In June that year, Rebecca and Darell Farnbach became involved.

This group of preservationists came to be known as VaARRA – Vail Ranch Restoration Association.

In April 1998 MDC Vail bulldozed an adobe portion of the foreman's house. VaARRA members, concerned for safeguarding the remaining structures, filed a lawsuit against the developer and the county of Riverside for issuing permits allowing the destruction.

In a real-life David verse goliath fight, Darell Farnbach and Dick Diamond, two ordinary Temecula citizens, became the plaintiffs and prevailed against the county and a multi-million-dollar developer – ensuring no additional demolition occurred and that subsequent renovation followed US Department of Interior standards enhancing potential eligibility for nomination as a national historic site.

In 2005 the current owners of the shopping center, Kimco, contacted historic renovation expert Jerry Tessier and Arteco Partners who accepted the challenge of renovating this beautiful site. And what a job he and his team did!

The next step; gaining certification as a national historic place.

The first draft of the application was spearheaded by Dick Fox. Subsequently Rebecca Farnbach, Lisa Woodward, and Jim Sappington spent countless hours refining and ultimately pushing this nomination over the finish line.

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This important designation encourages the community's greater awareness of valley history, sense of place, and local pride. It also immediately creates a new audience drawn to Temecula from points throughout the world as a destination for travelers seeking historical American sites.

This designation by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places offers our all-volunteer non-profit a multitude of benefits to help share Temecula's story. Our initial efforts include securing historical markers to be posted on Interstate 15.

Intrigued? Please contact our wonderful volunteer coordinator, Bonnie Reed, grannyofive@gmail.com to join our team of dedicated, passionate volunteers.

We are excited about the possibilities, and would be grateful to have you join us!



Photos courtesy of Deborah Graziano

A Major Cattle Drive in the West The Diary of a Desert Trail By Edward L. Vail

PART THREE (Continued from last month)

It was about ten o'clock at night. The Yuma Indians quit and said they were hungry and tired. I did not doubt them a bit, as we had eaten nothing since breakfast before daylight. So we made it unanimous and all quit and went to Yuma. We were all terribly dirty so we went to the hotel at the depot, got a bath, some supper, a bed and a good sleep!

In the meantime this is the way we were situated. Our chuckwagon, cook and blankets were across the river; our six hundred cattle were loose on the island in the river where we could not herd them; nearly

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three hundred steers were loose on the Arizona side in the thickest brush I have ever seen; and we were in the hands of the Sheriff of Yuma County!

The next morning, C.W. Gates, my brother's partner, arrived on the train from Los Angeles. He went down with us to the scene of the previous day's operations. The first thing we did was to pull out the two steers we had left clinging to the river bank. Then we told Mr. Gates that if he would take what men we could spare and start to gather the cattle we had turned loose in the brush that Tom and I would go over in a boat to the island and swim the cattle over to the California side of the river. We threw our saddles into the boat, led the swimming horses and soon reached the island. The cattle seemed to be alright. We did not have any trouble in getting them over as we found the big steers could wade across but most of the younger ones had to swim a short distance. When we got them all across, we looked up at the best place we could find to hold them, and made camp.

When we got back to where we had left Mr. Gates, we found him and Chappo sitting on a boat on the river bank. Mr. Gates said that we could never gather the cattle in that brush, and I admit it did not look possible. At that time Mr. Gates had been only a short time in the cattle business and had never worked with cattle on the range. So, Tom and I told him if he would go to Tucson and see his attorney about the tax matter we would gather the lost cattle, if possible.

I forgot to say that our Chinese cook left for Pantano on the train soon after we arrived in Yuma. He said that if he crossed the river he would never get back again. The day before he left he bought a large Colorado salmon alive from a Yuma Indian who had just caught it. John took the fish, which was over two feet long, up to Mr. Gondolfo's store and got permission to put it in a large galvanized water tank as he wanted to take it back to the Empire Ranch for Mrs. Vail. When John went to get his fish the tank was full of water. So with the permission of the owner the water was drawn off, but John could not wait for all of it to run out. When the water was still two feet deep he could see the fish and became so excited that he jumped in, clothes and all. I was watching and it was quite a circus. He grabbed at that fish several times before he caught it; then his foot slipped and he rolled over in the bottom of the tank, but when he got up he had the fish. If anything, I think he was wetter than the fish, but all he said was, "Mr. Ned that fish pletty dam quick, but I catche him allite." John wrapped the fish in his slicker and was soon on

his way to the Pantano. When he arrived there, in his anxiety to present the fish to Mrs. Vail in good condition, he telephoned for a team to meet him.

Before Mr. Gates left Yuma he telegraphed my brother who was at the Empire Ranch that we were swimming the cattle and that I was in trouble over the tax matter. When the message reached Pantano it was transmitted over the telephone to the Ranch. The line was not working well and the only thing that my brother could understand was, "Ned trouble, swimming river." He at once concluded that I had been drowned in the river. He saddled his fastest horse, "Lucero," and I am told, made the fastest time on record to Pantano. When he read the message and found that trouble was about taxes, he said: "That word never looked good to me before."

At first, we did not make much progress in gathering those steers. The brush was so thick we could not get through it on horseback. It was screw-bean mesquite which does not grow high but the limbs are long and drooping so that the ends lie on the ground. Between them arrow-weed was as thick as hair on a dog and higher than a man's head. We found that we could run some of the steers out of the brush afoot by starting near the river and scaring them up to the open mesa as the brushy only extends back a short distance from the river. After a few days the cattle commenced coming out themselves and we soon had quite a bunch together.

In the meantime, Mr. Francis J. Heney who at that time was acting as attorney for Vail & Gates at Tucson, decided our tax troubles as follows; viz, that the taxes had been paid on our cattle before they left the home ranch, and that cattle in transit were not subject to taxation any place in Arizona. Mr. Heney also advised the Yuma attorney to read the Arizona Statutes and let Pima County cattlemen alone.

Then the sheriff's deputy wanted us to pay him for holding our cattle but I told him we never hired him and as the sheriff put him there he had better collect from him. The deputy's name was Green. He had a livery stable in Yuma where we had kept our horses ever since we arrived. He was a pretty good fellow. I think Mr. Gates was in favor of paying him as we had worked him like one of our men holding the cattle. Tom and I were pretty sore by that time and said we would see that bunch of Yuma politicians in a hotter place than Yuma – if there was such a place – before we would pay any of them a cent.

After four or five days we had gathered most all the cattle on the Yuma side. Then I ordered cars and shipped them across the bridge. We made a chute of an old wagon box and

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railroad ties and unloaded them. It would no doubt have been cheaper to have shipped all our cattle across the bridge at \$2.50 a carload but we did not like the idea of depending on the railroad in any way on this drive.

We soon got all our cattle together on the California side and were ready to move. We were all glad to get away from Yuma and take our chances on "The Great Colorado Desert," as it was then called. We followed the river and met a man, named Carter, who had a small cattle ranch from whom we bought a half a beef that he had just killed. Our cattle were too poor for beef and a whole beef was more than we could haul and as the days were warm we were afraid it would spoil before we could eat it.

Carter was said to know the desert well and I tried to hire him as a guide and offered him \$20 a day to show us where the water was on the desert but he said he had "not been out there for some time. Sometimes there was plenty of water out there and often no water at all as it depended entirely on whether there had been rain." We decided that Mr. Carter was probably right about the water on the desert and what we saw afterward confirmed that opinion.

We did not travel very far down the river before we were overtaken by two young men with four or five very thin horses. They said they had been following us for some time and were anxious to cross the desert and heard we were driving cattle across to California and asked if we could give them a job. Tom Turner told them we had plenty of help for the cattle with us and they said they were afraid to cross the desert alone as they knew nothing about the country. We told them if they were willing to help us when we required help we would let them go along with us. Tom told them that they could turn their horses in with our horses and he would let them ride some of our mules which came from the Warner Ranch.

We were close to the line of Lower California at that time and soon after we had crossed it we came to a Cocopa Indian Rancheria. The men wore breech cloths and the women wore aprons made out of the bark of willow trees. They were fine specimens of Indians, the men all looking like athletes. I have been told that they came up from Cocopa Mountains in Mexico in order to farm during the summer, raising mostly corn, pumpkins and melons, then in the winter went back to the mountain again. We had not been around their camp long before we got a message from the chief. He sent us word that we were on their land and had no right to pass through there with

our cattle and that "all good people" who passed through gave them two steers. We sent word to the chief by one of the Indians who could speak Spanish that we would like to have a conference with him, so the meeting was arranged and we went to the Indian camp. After a parley in Spanish we told him that we were considered "good people" where we came from but that we did not own the cattle we were driving, therefore we would have no right to give them away.

We told them if they would send one of the men to the chuckwagon we would be glad to give them some sugar and coffee. We were very sorry that we did not have more to spare but as we had a long way to go and no stores along the trail we could not give them more than we did.

We followed the old stage road down to where it left the river. I have forgotten the distance but it could not have been over 20 miles. In this place there was quite a lagoon of water, so we camped there. Next day Tom and I followed the old road into the desert looking for water for our next camp. I never saw so many rattlesnakes in my life as we saw that day. They seemed to be of two varieties. One was the ordinary large diamond-back and the other was a little rattlesnake with horns over its eyes called the "side-winder."

We rode a long way that day and came back to camp late quite discouraged. Owing to the condition of our cattle which had grown quite thin we were afraid of driving them a long distance. When we reached camp we were surprised to find several tents pitched close to us on the lagoon. We inquired of our men who the people were. They did not know, they thought they were engineers of some kind. Tom and I immediately went over to see and introduced ourselves to the head man who proved to be a civil engineer. His name was D.K. Allen, and he told us he was surveying the line for a railroad from Ensenada, Lower California, to Yuma, and that he had been out on the desert all winter. We then told him our troubles about finding water and he assured us there was plenty of water on the desert and that the first water that we would find was only 17 miles from our present camp. This he said was not sufficient water for all our cattle but that ten miles further on just across the line, near the boundary monument on New River there was quite a large charco in the channel of New River which would probably water all our cattle for a week. (Ed. Note: "charco" is Spanish for "pool of water".)

While we were at Mr. Allen's camp his cook was preparing supper and we asked him what he was cooking. He said it was a rattlesnake and he invited us to have some. We passed it along to all our crew who had gone with us to call on Mr. Allen. People were scarce in that country and those men were as much interested in meeting someone as we were. The only man among us who tasted the

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snake was Jesus Maria Elias, who told us that when he was with General Cook as his chief trailer he had frequently eaten it. I had known Elias and his family well for many years but I had never known that he was as celebrated a man as he really was. Afterward I found out that he had been the leader of the celebrated so-called "Camp Grant Massacre". He, with William Oury, eight Americans, several Mexicans and a lot of Papago Indians marched over to the mouth of Arivipa Canyon, which was right in sight of the old Camp Grant then occupied by American troops, and nearly exterminated the band of Apaches. They killed all but the children whom they brought to Tucson as prisoners. This expedition was sent out because of the constant raids the Apaches made against the settlers on the San Pedro and Santa Cruz rivers. A full account of this interesting expedition can be found in the 2 nd volume of Farrish's History of Arizona.

I found Mr. Allen to be a very interesting man. He had traveled extensively throughout Old Mexico and was very much interested in everything that he saw in the wild part of that country. He asked us if we had any beef that we could let him have as he had been eating rattlesnakes for some time because he had not other meat. So we sent him a part of the beef we had bought from Joe Carter. We asked him in regard to the trail across to Carrizo Creek and showed him the maps of San Diego County which then extended to the Colorado River. He marked out all the watering places that he knew about, the last one of which would bring us to within about 40 miles of Carrizo Creek. He also said that he would send one of his own men who knew the country with us if we had any trouble finding the watering places and would send back for the man. He was a very generous man who did not expect any compensation for helping us. Mr. Allen was afterwards editor of a Yuma paper, I think it was The Sentinel.

The next afternoon we bid good-bye to Mr. Allen and the Colorado Valley and drove out 10 miles and camped for the night. Early the following morning we were on our way and in the afternoon we reached the first watering place that Mr. Allen had referred to. We had held the cattle back some distance from this water and Turner and I went ahead and looked at it as we were afraid that the cattle would rush for the water. After looking at the water we decided we would be able to water only the weakest of the cattle. We then cut our herd in two. As the stronger cattle were ahead on the road we drove them on and let the weaker ones have the water. About dark that night we reached the second watering place. This was near the old New River stage station on the old overland road just across the California line, where the town of Calexico now stands. We were quite pleased with the looks of the country thereabouts. The mesquite was beginning to bud out and there was plenty of old grass around. The grass was the kind that is commonly called guayarra.

(Continued next Month)

New Book Now Available!

If you are planning on buying a copy of the "Flavors of Temecula Valley Wineries" cookbook coauthored by **Rebecca Farnbach** and **Martha Culbertson**, please buy it from the Temecula Valley Historical Society so we receive the profit from your purchase.

We will have books available at the Little Temecula History Center on Sunday afternoons and on the evenings of our presentations. The books will also be available at our Antique Store at Vail HQ on Sunday afternoons, Tuesday mornings, and whenever the store is open.

The price is \$50.

Membership News

Welcome New Member:

Gillian Reeves

Thanks to Renewing Members:

Loretta Barnett

Mark Bellnap

Chris & Shari Crall

Sandra Devol

Lorraine Harrington

Lynn Marie Hornecker

Bruce & Jacqui Klein

Mike & Shelly Leddy

Patricia Ommert

Dennis & Karen Sterner

Phil Washum

Nancy Windus

Volunteers Still Needed!

We would like to invite you to join the dynamic group of people who help the Temecula Valley Historical Society provide so much educational fun for people at Vail HQ and the Little Temecula History Center.

Don't sit around feeling bored! Do something fun and make new memories! Please contact our volunteer coordinator Bonnie Reed at 760-484-6019 for details on how to get started!

100 Years Ago in Temecula

Selected items from Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column – October 1923

October 5, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Alfred Knott and some friends were deer hunting near Warner's ranch last Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but the deer must have had some warning of their coming as no game was brought home. Miss Theresa Loretta Hiler and Mr. Alvin McConville, both of Los Angeles, were married September 20, in the Holy Cross Church of Los Angeles. Mr. McConville spent his boyhood days in Temecula, and is a grandson of Mrs. John Welty. The ball game between the Temecula Indians and Banning at Banning Sunday afternoon was called on account of darkness at the eleventh inning.

October 12, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

There was no school Tuesday as it was school children's day at the fair. The Temecula Valley Lumber Company received three cars of lumber this week. Mrs. Irene Pettrie, Miss Cleo Patterson, Miss Sarah Bradshaw and Miss Mabel Thor of San Bernardino were weekend visitors of Miss Ethel Burnham. Miss Burnham entertained her guests with a horse back ride into the mountains southwest of town Saturday. In the evening they all motored to Live Oak Park, for the dance, and Sunday they attended the Indian Fiesta at Pala.

October 19, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

Louis Escallier, who has been quite ill for sometime, is able to be up, but is still in a very critical condition. A.B. Barnett and son, Ralph and Roy Records were deer hunting in the mountains near Aguanga over the weekend. A. Knott has purchased from the Santa Fe, the lot adjoining his garage on the boulevard and in the near future he will install all modern equipment. The sudden passing away of Augustine Servell at his home between Temecula and Murrieta Hot Springs last Sunday, September 16th, was a shock to his relatives and friends, whom had considered Mr. Servell in good health, excepting attacks of acute indigestion which would, at times cause him great pain, but apparently with no ill results. Saturday evening and Sunday morning Mr. Arthur Servell, his brother, remained with him as he had been suffering somewhat during the day and night, and when Mr. Arthur Servell departed Sunday morning on a short business trip to the springs there was no indication that his brother was in any worse condition than he had been experiencing off and on for years, but when he returned in the afternoon accompanied by a friend, Mr. Charles Carstensen, they found that a weakened heart resulting from acute indigestion had failed to function. Mr. Servell is survived by three sisters in France, brothers Leon and Arthur of Temecula and Ernest of Los Angeles. Interment was made in the Temecula Cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. A. Knott and children motored to San Bernardino Tuesday to see the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey combined circus. George Sawday shipped eleven cars of beef cattle to Los Angeles last Friday. This will probably be the last shipment Mr. Sawday will make this season. Mr. Sawday has shipped one hundred and ten cars of cattle since June 15th besides Mr. Sawday's cattle there has been almost one hundred cars of cattle out of here this season.

October 26, 1923 By Mrs. V. B. Sands

The passing of Louis Escallier at his home here last Saturday was no great surprise to his family and many friends who had

witnessed his suffering from an illness which had gradually grown worse for several weeks. So beautiful a character can only be likened to some wonderful flower blooming in a world of trials and tribulations only to be to us in its budding age to demonstrate to us mortals that the mysterious power of God is supreme and to teach us that age has nothing to do with the time when we are called to "That Home made ready for our coming in the Heavens." Louis was born in Temecula, February 23, 1908 and passed on to the Great Beyond at 12 o'clock noon October 20, 1923 at the age of 15 years, 7 months and 27 days. When we realize that one of our young friends are taken from us at this tender age the thought presents itself, "Why", but this only fingers for a moments it is not for us to judge "One" who knows best. We have had the pleasure of following this young man in his short career, as a baby, he was only a baby as other babies are, then his first school days came when he was to have the opportunity of grasping the larger problems of life so important in the development of our boys and girls, he was studious but also took great pleasure in sports enjoyed by his little friends, taking part in all contests with that gentle but firm spirit for which we all loved him. Upon completing his grammar school course at Temecula he attended Elsinore High School for one year and only had the pleasure of attending for a few days at the commencement of the present school year when that weakness assailed him which finally prevented him from acquiring the education, loving friendship and happiness he so richly deserved while traveling through this world. An injury received while playing a game of baseball, no doubt caused the illness which hastened his early departure and deprived the world of a beautiful character as a boy and later as a man, but the reflection of his goodness, justness, and squareness while with us will be a stimulant for all who knew him to endeavor to emulate so beautiful a soul. Louis is mourned by a mother, Mrs. Francis Escallier and two brothers, Ferdinand and Joe, of Temecula, and everyone who knew him. Funeral services were conducted from the Catholic Church in Temecula at 10 o'clock Monday morning. Rev. Father Raley of Elsinore, officiating, who in his sermon, dwelt upon Louis' past life as an example of true patriotism in giving so young a life for his fellow men. The music was in keeping with the beautiful flowers that so many friends had brought to in some way show their love and esteem but the moist eyes and sadness displayed by those present proved more than anything else what Louis was to us. The Elsinore High School baseball team and members of other athletic bodies of which Louis was a member acted as pall bearers, the high school faculty of which Mr. A.J. Barnes is principal, were present as well as the officers of the Student Body and many others from Elsinore. 37 All business houses in Temecula were closed during the funeral services and the high school in Elsinore and the grammar school of Temecula halted all studies for five minutes at 10 o'clock in respect to their beloved school mate. Undertaker W.L. Everett of Elsinore was in charge of the service and interment was in the Temecula Cemetery. A large number of Elsinore people including members of the high school faculty, student body and classmates, went to Temecula Monday morning to attend the funeral of Louis Escallier, who died from tuberculosis, following an injury he sustained while laying ball and in which his lungs were punctured by a broken rib. The lad, who was but seventeen was most popular with all of the young people and his passing occasions much sorrow.