



Temecula Valley
Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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From the Editor

I'm back after taking a two-year sabbatical to coauthor three local history books in Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series. It has been a fun experience working pioneer families and viewing their vintage photographs. I have gleaned a number of stories that will appear in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

In case you can't make it to the meetings, upcoming newsletters will tell you what is going on in the Temecula Valley Historical Society, and you will get an article about history in each edition. What you won't find is a lot of graphics - I believe in making room for words.

Thanks to Leslie Karp, Eve Craig, and Bill Harker for keeping the newsletter coming for the past two years.

If you have a great story, send it my way and we'll print it.

Rebecca Farnbach
Sunbrook@hotmail.com

News Briefs

Members are reminded to pay their annual dues and to contact Bill Harker at 951-676-3691 with any questions. The Society is placing historical plaques to honor the Rancho California Airport and the Butterfield Stage Trail. The Railroad Plaque will be repaired and moved to a position where it will not be as easily vandalized. The Vail Ranch Restoration Association is close to signing a lease with the County for a space for a "History Center" on Redhawk Parkway.

**Eve Craig's Report on
Wolf's Tomb**

Finishing touches are being addressed at this time. Darell Farnbach has uprooted two authentic pink rose bushes, indigenous to the time when Louis Wolf was active in Temecula (1857 - 1887.) The bushes were slipped from Ernestine Escallier's backyard of her home in Old Town. Darell put the slips in his garden and nurtured them until he could plant the carefully, with one at each end of the tomb. Jose Sumano adjusted the drip water system with two outlets at each plant, and they are now thriving. Thanks to Darell, for his extra work.

We have just added four white bare-root roses on each end, with the pink ones in the center of them. Jose has the paint and will have his helper finish painting the fence on the north side. Meanwhile, the names of all the major donors are being applied to the bronze plaque, and research is being done on the placement and installation to display it to its best advantage. We await the work that Paul Jay Price is doing to make a mold for a replacement urn to replace the one missing from the top of the marble column. He will fill the mold with concrete and secure it to the top of the marble column. My deep appreciation is extended to all the major donors and volunteers who have worked so diligently to restore what is now a very beautiful monument.

Visits to Temecula Seventy Years Ago

This is an excerpt from a letter written to Society member Pat Ommert from her friend Patricia Murphy, who lives in Santa Ynez, California. When I phoned Patricia to ask for permission to print this, she was delightful to visit with, and still savors memories of her childhood visits to Temecula from her home in Los Angeles. She has fond memories of the Freeman Family and their hound dog. She remembers a 102-year-old Indian woman who collected old newspapers – but that is another story. Patricia lost contact with her cousin Paul Ware, Jr., and would like to know how to get a hold of him, if anyone knows. Thanks to Pat Ommert and Carol Marsden for sharing it.

My relatives were George and Sadie Burnham and their daughter Ethel Burnham Ware. They owned a two-story house that was the first house on the left, after crossing the bridge from town. They owned Burnham's General Store, and during the years that I would visit them with my aunt Ethel R. Burnham and grandmother Jennie Burnham Foote, it was one of the few businesses in town. I remember a bank, barbershop, and a gas station, also. The Vail Ranch people lived across the way, and there were only three or so other houses. This was in the late thirties and early forties.

My cousin Paul Ware, Jr., and I used to fish in the creek and catch turtles. We rode horses in the hills behind the Burnham "Ranch." My fondest memories were of a black horse named Comito. Only one person could ride him, for some reason, but I fell in love with this horse, as only a ten-year-old-girl can, and would spend hours washing and brushing him, and talking to him. One beautiful summer night

there was a full moon, and the adults were going for a ride. Ethel, who owned the horse, asked me if I would like to ride Comito. I was thrilled! I can vividly remember that warm summer moonlit night with Comito's long black mane flying in the breeze. I can even remember the scent of some lilac bushes we passed. I thought I was in heaven.

I had many happy times at the Burnham's during Easter and summer vacations. There was a croquet court, two beautiful grape arbors with hammocks, and a small swimming pool. Near the barn was the water tower, and it had a float attached by a rope to a stick. When the stick was up near the top of the water tower (a big metal container,) the water was low and it was time to turn on the windmill by the well. That was my job.

Ethel Burnham Ware had been injured when she fell out of a cart during her childhood. She was less than five feet tall and had a hump on her back. She was a delightful person and her nickname was "Happy." I am so grateful to the Burnham family for so many happy childhood memories.

An Upcoming Event

The Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaRRA) and the Temecula Valley Museum are hosting events on June 9th to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first San Antonio to San Diego Mail delivery, commonly called the "Jack Ass Mail." VaRRA's event will be at the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters Site next to Kohls on Highway 79 South, which is usually closed to the public, and the museum will have a special display in the upstairs gallery. For more information, please contact Darell Farnbach at 951-552-3517.

She Passed This Way

Anyone who knows anything about the history of Temecula knows who Agnes Freeman was: the teller when the bank was robbed in 1930. She was the daughter of James Freeman, the Vail Ranch foreman, and was one of the Freemans mentioned in Patricia Murphy's article.

Agnes, the oldest of the Freeman children, was born at their house on Pujol Street and was raised in the foreman's house on the Pauba/Vail Ranch. "Aggie" graduated from Temecula Union School and from Elsinore Union High School, where she served on the student council and played softball with Nita Ashman.

Agnes was a capable young woman who graduated with honors from Longmire's Business College in San Bernardino and later married Francis Honberger and moved to Perris, where he became the first fire chief.

During World War II, Agnes worked for the US Army, at Camp Hahn, across from March Field. She made transportation arrangements for thousand of troops going to the Pacific campaign.

Agnes drifted into eternity a few days before last Christmas and now sleeps with others in the Temecula Cemetery who "passed this way."

During the bank robbery in 1930, Agnes Freeman and her boss John Chisholm were shoved into the vault. Times have changed and the bank has been a bookstore, an antique store, and, for the past several years, a Mexican restaurant. She is not forgotten - there is a photograph of her on the restaurant walls. Society members may want to visit the restaurant, which is now under

new management, to eat some food, and to lift a glass to honor this dear lady.

We thank Agnes' son Roger Honberger for coming from Virginia and giving a talk to the Society last year. We also thank him for providing the information needed for this tribute and for the Freeman Family Notebook.

Other News Briefs

Doc and Jane Laine, owners of Doc's Temecula Traders antique store in Old Town Temecula, spoke at the February meeting. They are Temecula history enthusiasts who remember when gunfire sounded at the Long Branch Saloon on Front Street.

Would you like to be more involved with the Society? We need a chairperson for the Speakers & Events Committee. Responsibilities would be to host speakers at each meeting, and to help coordinate two social events each year. Contact Barbara Tobin at 951-303-3114 to volunteer.

Riffle Soup: Rebecca Farnbach's Historical, Family Recipe

Some cookbooks call them "rivals," but my family has always called them riffles. This was a mainstay to the MacCanon Family in Iowa during the depression.

Stew a chicken and save the broth. Add some cooked rice and bring to a boil. Separate an egg yolk from the white, setting aside the white for another recipe.

Break the yolk with a fork and slowly stir white flour into the mixture until small lumps form. Drop the lumps into the broth and cook until cooked. This is a satisfying soup that warms the heart.