

Temecula Valley
Historical Society
Newsletter

January 2008 Vol. 8 Issue 1

We meet at the historical Pujol Schoolhouse on Santiago Road on first Fridays of each month from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

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P.O. Box 157, Temecula, CA 92593

Happy New Year! Be sure to make time for the Historical Society in your plans for 2008. Attending our meetings will keep you informed about issues that threaten precious historical sites and will give you a voice in preserving them. We plan some informative programs to entertain and educate and social events you won't want to miss.

Local historian and writer Nancy Backstrand will speak about the history of the Santa Rosa Rancho after the February 1st meeting.

The Horace Magee Story

On Christmas Day 2007 the Californian featured John Hunneman's 100-year commemorative article about the 1907 Christmas Eve double murder in Old Town Temecula. Editor Lauri Lockwood said although the paper hesitated to run an article like that on Christmas Day, the response from readers was overwhelmingly appreciative.

If you enjoyed the article, you will also appreciate reading the following letter that Tony Tobin wrote in 1987 to Rancho News reporter Greg Normand.

Greg –

Having just read the shooting story about Magee & Escallier in the Mar. 11 Rancho News by Doc Laine I would like to submit the enclosed account. It is self-explanatory.

The Kolbs were my wife's family and they were there at Swanguens' that evening.

In the 60s I served as a deputy constable under Constable Ole Larson. When Ole died, his wife Naomi was appointed to take his place and then Sam Hicks was elected and served as the last constable of the area, until he was made the marshal when Riverside County did away with constables. I served under both Naomi and Sam.

Ole Larson was a barber in the area for over 60 years until his death. Magee's nephew Fred lives in Pala. Fred's grandfather built the original store (Wolf's) and sold to Wolf and then built a home and store on the road to Rainbow southwest of the golf course.

The following is the real story of the shooting of Constable Preston Swanguen and Louie Escallier at the "Blind Pig Saloon" on Christmas Eve, 1907, as told to me by eye witnesses Ole Larson and Amos Kolb.

On Christmas Eve 1907, Horace "Horse" Magee was in Joe Winkles "Blind Pig Saloon" on the corner of Front & Main Streets in Temecula. Among others in the saloon were Louie Escallier and Ole Larson, later the town barber for around 60 years and also the constable until his death at age 80.

An argument started over some differences of opinion between "Horse" Magee and Escallier. Magee told Escallier if he didn't like his opinion he could "kiss my ____." Escallier said, "Lower your britches and I will."

Magee lowered his britches and bent

over and Escallier took his cigar and proceeded to brand Magee on the butt. This so enraged Magee that he threatened to kill Escallier and stormed out of the saloon.

One of the patrons fearing the worst went to the constable's home to get Preston Swanguen to come to the saloon, because of the altercation between Magee and Escallier.

At the Swanguen home that Christmas Eve were Amos & Maggie Kolb and their two children Merrill and Eila. Swanguen the constable, knowing the two men personally, went to the saloon without even putting on his gun. In the mean time Magee came back into the saloon with a gun and was grabbed by Escallier from behind, pinning his arms to his sides. Magee got his gun hand around his waist under Escallier's arm and shot him. About that time Swanguen came in the rear door and walked around the end of the bar and called to Magee, whereupon Magee started shooting at Swanguen. One stray bullet struck Ole Larson on the arm, just above the wrist, putting a bullet hole in his new suit. The next one or two struck Swanguen, killing him. Escallier was already dead. Word got back to Swanguens house that there was a shooting at the saloon and the Kolbs headed for the saloon. Just as Amos Kolb got to the front of the saloon, a group of men were dragging Magee down Main Street. Somebody had knocked him out with a pool cue to hang him on the bridge. Amos Kolb stopped the lynching and Magee was tried and given 30 years in San Quentin prison.

In the early 30s he was paroled to a rancher he had worked for named Garner. Magee had made an all-night horse ride to get a doctor that saved a member of the Garner family from death. Magee went to the Garner Ranch in Garner Valley near Hemet Lake in the San Jacinto Mountains and never left the ranch until his Death on the ranch at about age 84.

You won't find a grave for Horace Magee. His body was donated to Loma Linda University for medical study after he passed away in 1963.
— Editor

Close to the Heart

This anonymous poem was written on a paper tucked inside a McGuffey Reader found in Tony Tobin's collection

Press me closer, all my own,
Warms my heart for thee alone,
Every nerve responsive thrills;
Each caress my being fills.
Rest and peace in vain I crave,
In ecstasy I live, thy slave.
Covered with hope with promise lest,
Thou dost reign upon my breast.
Closer still, for I am thine,
Burns my heart, for thou art mine.
Thou the message, I the wire.
I the furnace, thou the fire —
I the servant, thou the master —
Roaring, red-hot mustard plaster.



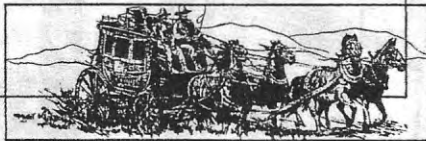
Carol Marsden telling third-grade students about ranching at the Vail Ranch

She Passed This Way

Our former board member Carol Marsden passed away from complications from cancer on December 23. She will be missed by the history community and will be well remembered for her straightforward, no nonsense approach to life. Carol donated her time to many worthwhile projects, including the Temecula Valley Museum and the Temecula Valley Historical Society. She was also an ardent supporter of VaARRA.

We are so glad she passed this way.

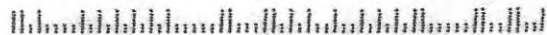
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Dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donations may be designated or undesignated.*

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