



Temecula Valley
Historical Society
Newsletter

April 2008 Vol 8 Issue 4

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From your President:

Enjoying our beautiful Temecula spring weather reminds me of how fortunate we are to be living where we do. We are surrounded by beautiful green hills and snow capped mountains and the wild flowers that are gorgeous this year, which brings me to my point in writing a column this month.

Since the world is so keen on "going green" we thought perhaps the Historical Society should make an attempt as well. We would like to start emailing the Newsletter to those of you who have email addresses. In turn you would be able to forward it to your friends and family who may find an interest in our Society. Please email me your email address so we can update our files (barbara.tobin2@verizon.net). We thought emailing reminders of our meetings and upcoming Historical Society events would also be helpful.

We are in the middle of a very busy year for the Society. As you may know, we have been working on a DVD to present to the School District to help with the 3rd grade study of local history. The DVD has been completed and we are now in the midst of duplicating it for the district. They are quite excited by the way! It is a pictorial and sound presentation of the history of Old Town. It is very
(continued inside)

well done and we are proud to have been able to produce it for the community.

We have several events in the planning during the next few months and later this year, so please continue to watch for announcements of things to come.

Thank you for your continued support. We couldn't do the things we do without you!

Barbara Tobin

Upcoming Historical Society Programs:

April 4 – Bill Martin of the Colony Cousins Genealogy group on people buried in the Murrieta Cemetery

May 2 – Gordon Johnson reading from his book "Fast Cars and Frybread"

June 6 – Harmon Johnson on the Magees of Temecula

July 11 – Tifeni Whittington on historical clothing

August 1 – Ann Mauer on MJ Trumble, oil tycoon who owned land in Romoland

September 5 – Anne Miller on Maria Apis, 1830 – 1863

October 3 – Tony Guenther on Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs

Good Media Coverage

Did you see Valley News' coverage of the historical trek we took up to the Temeku site?

Also, the Californian and Press Enterprise run announcements in advance of our monthly meetings.

Temecula School Memories

Sometimes my children question why I archive historical items and file away information. Sometimes I wonder why too! But, a person can't find everything they need to know on the Internet or in old encyclopedias, especially when it comes to local history.

Fortunately, I'm not the only one hanging onto the past. The other day Audrey Cilurzo showed me a newspaper she saved. An article in the yellowing 1968 paper caught my attention.

The Fallbrook *Extraprize* didn't last long, but we can be grateful for an article they ran by Loverne Morris, who continued to interview old-timers and to write for other local newspapers long after the *Extraprize* went out of business.

The following are excerpts from the article. You will recognize the names of many – as parents – of – our current members.
- RMF

Excerpts:

The Pujol Schoolhouse was the first to be built in Temecula in the late 1800s. It stood adjacent to the present site on a knoll above Front Street...just west of the present Highway 395. The Pujol School building was moved and now stands near the Temecula business section as Temecula Community Church.

...next September Temecula children will attend school in a new building on a site at Morago road and General Kearney...The new schoolhouse, however, will miss one thing that has long echoed in the memories of Temecula natives. That is the old school bell. It has disappeared and the whereabouts of the bell is a mystery, which even baffles old-timers. At 8:30 every morning it rang out loud and clear. When recess and the noon hour were

over, a tap on the bell called the children back to class.

When the morning bell rang the children of long ago grabbed their slates and lunch boxes and trudged across the countryside to school, or came by pony cart or rode horseback.

Mrs. Jack Roripaugh was Pearl Barnett in 1896 when her little brown horse, Chappo, carried her to school...[She] remembers that the schoolhouse still looked new when first she saw it...After romping on the playground until the bell tapped, the children stopped in a small ante-room to wash their hands in a basin, get a drink with a dipper from a pail of water, and hang up wraps on a row of hooks along the ante-room wall. Then they demurely filed in to the heavy old-fashioned seats and desks and took out pens and pencils and looked to see whether the ink well was full.

Many a small girl went home with ink at the tip of her braids if she sat in front of a mischievous boy.

Mrs. Alfred Knott has been a resident of Temecula for 53 years and most Temecula residents refer strangers to her as an authority on the history of the town. Mrs. Knott says that she learned much from Mrs. Isabel Gonzalez Barnett who was the first child born in Temecula to settlers of the 1880s when Southern California was the promised land and settlers arrived by every train.

Family members of that period...are still known in the region...Frank Farris is bus driver and custodian...Board members are Thomas Hotchkiss, John Roripaugh, Charles Liefer, president and Vincent Gezewski.

Carl Swanguen says the first school bus was hardly a bus at all – was more like a carryall. It was not enclosed and the youngsters got red noses and ears on

frosty winter mornings. The driver was Albert Otto...Carl Swanguen says that in flood years children could not get to school for days at a time if they lived on the other side of the river. Several early floods washed out bridges, but the granddaddy of them all, the flood of 1916, washed out the highway and railroad bridges and miles of railroad track.

The schoolchildren who did get to school had a vantage point there on the hill from which to watch the torrent sweeping down Santa Margarita River. Swanguen said that at the time the spectacular flood of March 4, 1938 he watched from the top of the schoolhouse hill and saw a hundred of Vail Ranch cattle being swept down the river. He afterward heard that many of them swam out of the torrent.

Swanguen said that his father told him that many people living in the area did their banking in far away San Francisco in the 1880s when San Diego was a village and Los Angeles was still a cow town. Without autos or trucks, transport was by train, and train people were part of the community. Horace Parker, who now owns the Temecula Hotel, attended school in Temecula while his father was depot agent there. Both of his parents were railroad telegraphers.

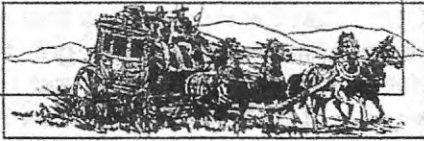
Accompanying the article was a photo of students in 1905, with names Magee, Escallier, Nichol, Swanguen, McConville and Barnett.

Do you want to get involved?

Contact President Barbara Tobin (951-553-9549) if you want to help with the Heritage Luncheon planned for May.

Contact Darell Farnbach (951-552-3516) if you would like to participate in an event at the Historic Vail Ranch commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Butterfield Stagecoach coming to Temecula.

Temecula Valley Historical Society
PO Box 157
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