

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

February 2013

Volume 13 – 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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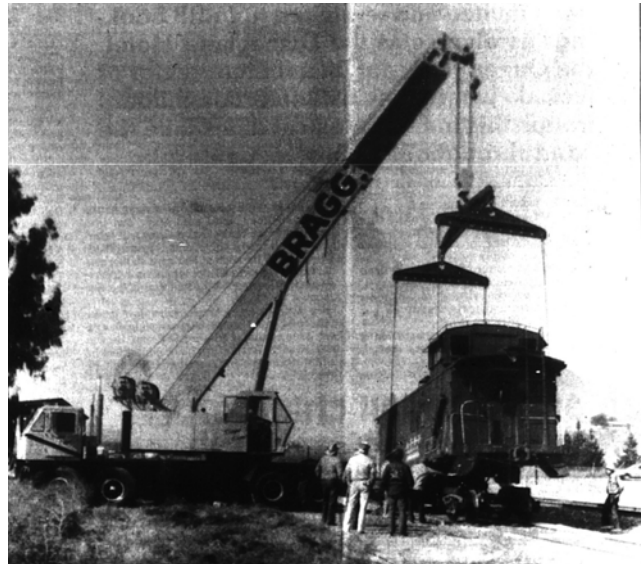
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Installation of the caboose

Source: Rancho News, November 23, 1983

A Caboose on Pujol Street

By Jeffery G. Harmon

The last train left the Temecula depot February 11, 1935. Within a month, the tracks were pulled up and the train whistle was never heard in this town again.

In the 1980s, the railroads discontinued the use of cabooses due to new technologies. Suddenly, these train relics were being sought after by museums and collectors. Soon the railroad companies began auctioning the cabooses off.

The Temecula Town Association (TTA) had built their community center on Pujol Street. The architectural design was a replica of the old Temecula train depot. However, there were no train relics to compliment the new building. The TTA decided to purchase a caboose for Temecula.

Value prices for the cabooses, depending on condition, were between \$2,000 and \$2,500. However, at auction, the cabooses sold on average for \$4,000. In 1983, the TTA began raising \$5,000 in order to purchase a caboose at an auction. With that amount in hand, the TTA believed they would hold the winning bid during the auction. In August 1983, Caboose Chairman Al Wallbank and his wife, Mary announced that TTA had raised \$3,500 for a purchase of a caboose and they only need six more donors at \$250 a piece to reach the association's goal.

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Calendar Of Events

Monday, February 25 – 6 p.m.

TVHS monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center
Dick Thomas will present
"The History of the Butterfield Stage" dressed as a stagecoach
"Conductor", better known as a shotgun rider.

Monday, March 25 – 6 p.m.

TVHS monthly meeting at Little Temecula History Center
President Bonnie Martland will give a presentation on *The Civil War*.

Monday, February 11– 6:30 pm

Temecula Valley Genealogy Society at Temecula City Hall Conference Center
David Lewis presents
"Early African American History in Julian"

Saturday, February 16- 10 a.m.

Temecula Valley Museum
A Walking Tour of Old Town Temecula

Temecula Valley Museum Exhibition

January 12 – February 24
"Gold Fever! Untold Stories of The California Gold Rush"

Thursday, February 21-7 p.m.

Temecula Valley Museum Gallery Talks presents
"African American Trailblazers"
Celebrate Black History Month With an original performance by E. P. McKnight.

Welcome New Members:

Cheryl Cady, Temecula

Sharon Martland, San Diego

William & Claudia Perozzi,
Temecula

Caboose (Continued from Page 1)

"The next two years will see the end of cabooses used on railroads," Wallbank explained. "It cannot be over stressed that they are now rapidly becoming collector's items, and that time is of the essence." (August 18, 1983, Rancho News)

After reading the news article, George Buhler, a retired Santa Fe train master living in Meadowview, became interested in the project. He contacted Larry Cena, president and chief executive officer of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company and made a request for a caboose. The railroad company found "Caboose No 999640" in the Barstow train yard. On September 13, 1983 the caboose was donated to Temecula. The caboose was transported by rail from Barstow to Winchester, the closest railroad tracks to Temecula.

The \$5,000 collected for the purchase of the caboose was then used for site preparation, transportation, installation and restoration. In October 1983, George Buhler called the railroad company and requested materials for the caboose site. The railroad company donated two sections of steel rail and railroad ties, plates and spikes in order for the caboose to be installed correctly.

The caboose arrived in Winchester in November 1983. TTA member, Steve Patton was in charge of coordinating the move. A 40-ton crane provided by Bragg Crane Company, hoisted the estimated 25-ton caboose off the side track and placed it on a "lo-boy" provided by the Blackmore Company. The caboose then traveled fifteen miles from Winchester to its final stop in Temecula.

The caboose traveled west on Main Street across the Murrieta Creek and then south before reaching Pujol Street in order to avoid low hanging overhead wires. Based on this description, it appears the caboose traveled along the vacant fields where the original California Southern Railway was once located.

During a Sunday ceremony, a silver spike was hammered into place by George Buhler, Al Wallbank and TTA President Duane Balfanz. Then the crane hoisted the caboose from the lo-boy and placed it on its final resting place. A piece of train history had returned to Temecula.

Once the installation was completed, the restoration began. TTA member and volunteer Ron Frye, a retired government painter and a member of Temecula's VFW Post 4089, painted the caboose a bright "international red". He sprayed the undercarriage with black, rust resistant paint. Mary Wallbank and Pat Birdsall worked on the interior restoration. George Buhler presented a railroad memorabilia exhibit, period furniture and Birdsall hung photos documenting the caboose's journey to Temecula.

On April 11, 1984, during the TTA's monthly meeting, the association honored the many people and organizations that made the caboose acquisition possible. Twenty-one individual plaques were presented with bronze railroad spikes obtained from the rail line that once ran from Elsinore to Corona.

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Temecula Union School

Class of 1951

June 7, 1951

Lake Elsinore Valley Sun
By Dick Otto

The Temecula Grammar School ended another year with an outstanding graduation program presented at the auditorium Friday evening. An eighth grade play started the program, with Martin Phillips, Alena Schuck in the cast and Nida Ashman as director.

At short intermissions the intermediate room sang "On Top of Old Smoky," and "Skip to My Lou." Miss Ardell Knott's primary room then presented a Mother Goose skit. A Gypsy dance with Anna Moore added gaiety and a boys' trio added comedy.

The eighth grade graduates then marched down the two aisles and up on to the stage where they were seated in a semi-circle. The girls wore formals and the boys, full dress suits. Valedictorian Bobby Barnett welcomed and thanked the people of Temecula, the parents and teachers, for all their help throughout their grammar school career. James Schuck read the class will and the highlight of the evening came when Miss Patricia Prowdy, music supervisor of Riverside County schools, presented diplomas to seven serious graduates.

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Caboose (Continued from Page 2)

A 12' x 46' wood station platform was built in front of the caboose in October 1984. The platform's intention was to hold small community and entertainment venues with the caboose as a backdrop. The caboose was to be used as either a small museum, or a place for board meetings, but neither vision was fully realized.

The land the caboose resided on was donated to the city of Temecula on September 13, 1996. Improvements were made on the site and it was named Rotary Park.

In 2005, thirteen year old Bubba Riggins, an eighth grader from Vail Ranch Middle School and a member of Boy Scout Troop 148, saw the need for the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest County's Old Town clubhouse to utilize the abandoned caboose. For his Eagle Scout project, he converted the caboose's interior into a quiet place for children to do their homework and read books. St. Clare's, a thrift store in Escondido, donated tables, chairs and over 1,000 books for the project.

Riggins' remodeled caboose served the Boys and Girls Club for several years. Then on June 9, 2010, management employees from Temecula's Promenade Mall, made repairs at the Boys and Girls Club as part of their annual Community Day activities.

"Our biggest challenge was the train caboose located outside the clubhouse," said Jeff Kurtz, mall manager. "This was a real train (car) converted into a gathering place for the teens at the club. We washed and painted the walls, repaired the bathroom and redecorated the train with new furniture to make the room more safe and fun for the teens to hang out." (June 25, 2010, Valley News)

The little red caboose on Pujol Street may be a reminder of Temecula's railroad history, but it is also a reminder of the community's generous spirit. Today if Temecula wished to purchase another caboose, its current market value is 10 to 20 thousand dollars. There is no doubt though, that if the community wanted another train relic, there are those that would be willing to give to make the dream a reality.

Researcher's Note: Due to limited space, not all names and organizations who donated time, money and resources for the caboose project could be mentioned. If you have a story related to the caboose, please send it in so that we can share it with our readers.



The Caboose, November 17, 2012
Photo by Jeffery G. Harmon

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A gift from the eighth grade class was presented by Alena Salas to their teacher, Nida Ashman, whom the students hold in high esteem. After the program a dance was held in honor of the graduating class. It was truly an evening they will never forget.

Grammar School Graduation

June 7, 1951

Elsinore Leader Press

The Temecula Grammar School held graduation exercises on Friday, June 1. The program opened with the Intermediate room singing, "There was a Man", "Old Smoky", "Sweet Bella" and "O Savior Sweet". The primary room presented "Mother Goose Shows the Way" and Anna Moore sang "Brown Eyes". The class will was read by James Schuck and Robert Barnett was valedictorian. Alena Salas presented Miss Nida Ashman with the class farewell gift. Mr. M. Harback introduced Miss Patricia Prouty of the county office, who addressed the class and gave the pupils their diplomas. Following the ceremony a dance was held in honor of the graduates with Dick Otto's band providing the music.

The graduates were Alfred Arviso, Robert Barnett, Elsie Escallier, Marion Phillips, Gloria Rodriguez, Alena Salas and James Schuck.

President's Message by Bonnie Martland

Frosty temperatures outside might have seemed a bit ironic to the bundled up crowd inside the Little Temecula History Center listening to Steve Lech give the first Temecula Valley Historical Society presentation of 2013. He held us all rapt talking about how Southern California's warm and sunny weather drew multitudes from colder climes and led to the development of Riverside's Mission Inn. A docent at the Mission Inn, historian and author multiple times over, Steve gave a wonderful presentation.

It was great to see so many of you in attendance at Steve's talk, as noted by the extra seating required! Hopefully we will be able to fill as many seats every month. Steve is but the first in an excellent group of speakers Rebecca Farnbach, Program Chairman, has lined-up for the year. Lisa Woodward, Chairman of the Events and Education Committee, is putting the final touches to arrangements for some excellent early-year tours and excursions. Each committee is working on continuing projects and setting goals for this year. Additionally, on April 6, Temecula Valley Historical Society will be partnering with the Vail Ranch Restoration Association and the Temecula Valley Museum as co-sponsors of the 2013 Reality Rally History Challenge.

I like to encourage members, at the beginning of each year, to help with a committee or activity that matches your interests. We have always been lucky in getting wonderful volunteers, and we are looking forward to the same participation this year. If you are among those who haven't volunteered previously, or if you are a new member, 2013 would be a great year to start. Please take a look at the committees and activities and join us in making 2013 a successful year in carrying on TVHS' important mission to preserve, promote and educate the public about the wonderful history of our area.

Upcoming Excursion

Saturday, March 23rd– 10a.m.

San Diego Presidio

1 Hour Tour

By Richard Carrico

Free to Attend

For more information contact

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