

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

July 2015
Volume 12 Issue 7

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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2015 TVHS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



2015 Scholarship recipients attended the June 22nd TVHS membership meeting held at the History Center on Temecula Pkwy, Temecula. Pictured left to right are: Chad Spear, Bennette Donine, Sara Lathrop and Zoe Coker.

The Temecula Valley Historical Society is looking to the future when their efforts will be history. Temecula Valley Historical Society members donated and raised enough money to award two \$1,000 scholarships to two students in both the Murrieta Valley and the Temecula Valley Unified School Districts.

Part of our criteria was to award scholarships to students planning to go into history or history related fields. The four Temecula Valley Historical Scholarship recipients were invited to attend our June meeting where members could meet them and they could tell us about themselves and their plans for the future.

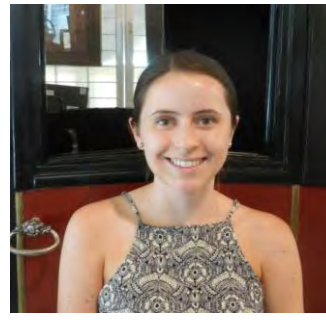
(Continued on page 2)



Zoe Coker



Chad Spear



Bennette Donine



Sara Lathrop

The two Murrieta Students receiving scholarships in 2015 are Zoe Coker and Chad Spear. Both students attended Vista Murrieta High School and participated in a number of extracurricular activities. Zoe was on the cheer squad and was cheer captain. She also participated in ASB (Associated Student Body) or student government. Zoe plans on majoring in history, with an emphasis in European history, at California State University, Fullerton. Her goal is to become a museum curator.

Chad is a self-styled military brat. His dad retired with over 20 years in the United States Air Force. Chad is an Eagle Scout and participated in Air Force ROTC in high school. He plans on attending the University of California at San Marcos in the fall. He says he has an extensive interest in US and world history and plans to be a high school history teacher.

Temecula Valley Unified School District sent us two wonderful scholarship winners as well, Bennett Donine and Sara Lathrop. Bennett Donine attended Chaparral High School. She will be participating, in the upcoming year, in the Global Citizen / Eugene Lang College Joint Fellowship. She will be living in Ecuador for nine months working as an apprentice while simultaneously enrolled as a freshman taking corresponding courses with Eugene Lang College in New York City.

Sara Lathrop enjoys playing the violin and kickboxing. Also a graduate of Chaparral High School, she will be attending the University of California at Irvine and majoring in history. She would like to join the Peace Corps after college. She has worked with Animal Rescue and the Assistance League of Temecula Valley as well as teaching Sunday School classes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **July 27** meeting will NOT be at the Little Temecula History Center. Instead it will be in the air conditioned conference room of the Temecula Civic Center and will be held in conjunction with the Temecula Valley Museum, beginning with refreshments at 5:30 pm. Our speaker will be Glenna Matthews, Ph.D. who is considered the expert on the subject of California and the Civil War. See page 6 (Special Joint Meeting and Field Trip) for more information.

Our **August 24** meeting will be back at the Little Temecula History Center where Bob Kent, one of our members who is a retired geologist, will give a report of his extensive research on hot springs and water in the Lake Elsinore area.



(Photo courtesy of the Andrew Sevy Eagle Project Website)

The 1952 Freeman Tragedy

By Jeffery G. Harmon

Joe Freeman was born February 7, 1918 in Orange County, Texas, the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Freeman. In 1938, Joe came to Temecula and a year later, he married Dorothy Knott. They had three children, Donnie, Gwen and Ricky. He made a living operating a service station in Temecula.

On July 23, 1952, at 5:30 p.m. the Temecula unit of the state forestry was called to the Freeman house to put out a fire. By 6 o'clock, the fire was under control, but when the smoke cleared, only the bathroom and rear porch remained intact. Fortunately, no one was at home when the fire occurred. Gordon Knott, Dorothy's brother, offered to have her family stay with him in Murrieta until their home could be rebuilt.

A benefit was soon planned for the Freeman family.

"Temecula 4-H club, churches and other clubs throughout the valley are planning benefits to aid Mr. and Mrs. Joe Freeman and their three children whose home were destroyed by fire last week. Believed to have been caused by a cigarette, the fire caused the loss of all furniture and personal belongings of the Freeman family."

(July 31, 1952, Lake Elsinore Valley Sun)

A week later, on August 7th, the Freeman family was returning from Oceanside when their automobile was demolished in a wreck near Vista. The two vehicle accident occurred on East Vista Way at 1:30 a.m. The other car was occupied by five Marines from Camp Pendleton.

Mrs. Freeman received a broken ankle, broken ribs and other bruises. Mr. Freeman suffered back and head injuries and both were hospitalized in Oceanside. Their children, Ricky and Gwen, received multiple bruises.

A public benefit dance was planned by the Temecula residents on August 15th at the Temecula grammar school with all funds going to the Freemans. The 4-H girls sold tickets, 75 cents per person for the dance. Musicians from the Murrieta Hot Springs orchestra donated their time in providing music for the dance. Joe Freeman, while in a body cast, was the guest of honor that night. \$450 was raised and was applied to a new home being built by the men of the community.

The next day construction began on the new Freeman home. The lot had been cleared and the cement foundation was poured. However, Joe Freeman would never see the completed home.

Four days after the benefit, Joe died of a blood clot on August 19th while in route from Murrieta to a Fallbrook hospital. His mother, Mrs. Mattie Goer, came by plane from Warren, Texas to attend her son's funeral. He was laid to rest in the Temecula Cemetery. After his death, Dorothy and her children moved into Mr. and Mrs. Al Knott's home in Temecula.

On August 28, 1952, a request was made to assist in finishing the Freeman home: "All persons able to donate labor, material or money toward the new home for the Joe Freeman family now being built by residents of Temecula, are asked to contact Jack Martin at the M and M market in Temecula." (Lake Elsinore Valley Sun)

The men worked on the Freeman home on Saturdays, Sundays and after hours. The new home neared completion in October. "Mrs. Dorothy Freeman, who is recovering from an automobile accident, was able to inspect her new home under construction last week. The house is nearly ready for the stucco and soon we hope to have Dorothy back home again." (October 9, 1952, Lake Elsinore Valley Sun)

The new Freeman home took almost two more months to complete. "Dorothy Freeman's new house, being built by residents of the community, is in the final stage of being completed. Dorothy hopes to move in the last part of this week. At present, she and two sons are staying at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Al Knott." (December 18, 1952, Lake Elsinore Valley Sun)

By Christmas 1952, the Freeman family was settled in their new home, a gift and a labor of love by the residents of Temecula and the surrounding area. Though Joe Freeman was no longer with them, they were reminded that they were part of a great community that would rally together to take care of those in need that called Temecula home.

How much do you know about our local history?

1. When did the Butterfield Overland Mail stage first come through Temecula? 1855, 1858, 1861, or 1867?
2. How much time did the little town of Temecula have to prepare for the arrival of Overland Mail's first stage? About 6 months; less than a month; about a year; or 15 months?
3. For a short time in the 1880s, there were two post offices named Pujol in the Temecula area. Where was the first one located? Near the intersection of I-15 and Temecula Parkway; In Old Town Temecula; North of Armstrong's Nursery; or West of Old Town Temecula across the creek?

Answers on page 5

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome new member:

Margaret Melton

MEET AND GREET:

Please join us for a Meet & Greet time with refreshments at 5:30 pm on Monday, July 27th, prior to the meeting at 6:00 pm. We'd like to get to know you.

The TVHS monthly meeting this month will be held at the Community Room (with air conditioning) at Temecula City Hall, 41000 Main Street, Temecula. You can park in the attached parking garage for free.

President's Message

Here we are at the mid-point of another year, and beginning plans for such things as our Annual Dinner Meeting in November, along with elections to fill those Board of Director positions that will be open at years end. We have formed a Nominations Committee that will be meeting in July to begin the work of creating a list of candidates.

Our next TVHS meeting is Monday, July 27 – and will be held at the Temecula Community Center at the City Hall complex. This will be a joint meeting with the Temecula Valley Museum, and have a special speaker – in a nice air conditioned space. As usual we will have “meet & greet” at 5:30 p.m., with the program starting at 6 p.m.

In the morning (Monday, July 27) -- the Temecula Valley Museum will be hosting a regional history group, and special arrangements have been made for a City of Temecula bus to transport those who are interested to Oak Grove to see the remaining Butterfield Stage station, and be able to stroll around and visit the complex.

The U.S. Civil War Camp Wright location is also at this special place. The bus will be ready to board at 1 p.m. in the Temecula Valley Museum parking lot. It is expected that the bus will return to the Museum by about 3 p.m. TVHS Members and Guests are welcome, and the price is right – FREE! The bus has a limit of 40, so space will be available.

Contact Rebecca Farnbach (951) 775-6057 or the Museum at (951) 694-6452 to reserve your seat.

Dick



Happy 4th of July!

How Much Do You Know About Our Local history?

Quiz Answers:

1. September 1858
2. Less than a month. Warners, Temecula, and Chino were not on the originally planned Overland Mail route that was to have gone from Yuma, west of today's Salton Sea, through today's Palm Springs' area, and then to San Bernardino. The lack of water in the Palm Springs area forced the last minute change.
3. The first Pujol Post office was located just east of I-15, north of Armstrong's in that low area just southwest of car dealerships.

For additional information or questions, contact Anne Miller at
DMEAJM@earthlink.net

August TVHS Newsletter

Anyone having items to be included in the August newsletter should submit them to me by July 28th.

Judy Preimsberger, editor
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p/n (951) 699-6619

Quote of the day.....

"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."

- Elmer Davis

Early Entrepreneur

Selling Cars in Colorado At Age of Eleven in 1907

By Rebecca Farnbach

Early automotive history is interesting reading. The problems drivers faced then were so different from what we experience today. The following story is about an automobile entrepreneur who faced some of the problems that were also typical in Southern California.

What is unique about his story is that Floyd Clymer was eleven years old when his father set him up as an automobile dealer in Berthoud, Colorado. In 1944 he published his first of eight volumes of his "Historical Motor Scrapbook" items that are sometimes found in car swap meets and online.

In 1907 - I was then eleven and Dad decided if I was ever going to get into business I had better start. He gave me a large office room in the front of his building. (His dad was a doctor in their small town.) This room had originally been built for a dentist, but the town was so small most dentists got hungry after a few weeks and went to more fertile fields. So I had the office originally used by dentists. A sign "Berthoud Auto Co." was placed on the window.

I was selling cars – quite a number of them. I would go to Denver with each buyer, usually with as many members of his family as the car would carry, and we drove home. On the way home I taught the new owner how to drive. All sales were for cash.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

In those days there were no roads – as we know them now – just winding trails, through sand and sagebrush. We carried wide strips of canvas sewed together, 100 feet long. The sand was so deep in places that those strips had to be placed down for the car to run on.

One day we made seven miles – slept on the prairie that night and we were two scared kids – coyotes howled and prairie dogs, though harmless, were everywhere.

Now and then a cowboy would ride by and greet us the next day, or we would meet a sheep herder with his wagon. We had a few good meals with the sheep men. Water was a problem. We could not carry enough at times to keep the Model 20 Flanders automobile satisfied – even with two 5-gallon cans and three water bags.

Our progress was slow. Then, near Fort Steele, Wyoming, the rear end went out – the sand was just too deep. We stayed there until the factory sent a mechanic out with a new rear end.

Cowboys helped us – covered wagon drivers towed us at times. We kept at it – but finally in western Wyoming, after another transmission failure, we gave up the ghost.

Reports were that roads we had passed over were far better than those ahead. We lost six days. We were even reported “missing” and as having died on the “desert” when we left the car to walk to the nearest town for help when the rear end left us the second time. We shipped the car back to Denver and went to Washington by train.

In his first volume, Clymer reprinted two photos of the boys and the Flanders with the banner “Two Boys age 11 and 14, Flanders “20” Denver to Spokane” and an American flag.

The caption under these photos from Motor Field Magazine 1910 read “... the boys are experienced automobilists. Floyd is known as the ‘kid agent’ and has been selling automobiles in Berthoud since he was eleven years old.”

Announcement For Special Historical Society Meeting & Field Trip, July 27th

The Temecula Valley Historical Society and the Temecula Valley Museum would like to invite the public to a free of charge afternoon and evening event on the subject of California's involvement with the Civil War.

At 1 pm on Monday July 27, a bus will leave the Temecula Valley Museum parking lot to transport interested individuals to the Oak Grove Stage Station and Camp Wright where a Civil War incident took place.

On board will be Glenna Matthews Ph.D., who is considered an expert on the subject of California's involvement in the Civil War.

After returning to Old Town Temecula, a joint meeting of the Temecula Valley Historical Society and the Temecula Valley Museum will begin at 5:30 pm in the Civic Center Conference room where Dr. Matthews will give a presentation.

For more information call
Rebecca Farnbach 951-775-6057.

