

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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Volume 16 Issue 1

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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Temecula Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 157 Temecula, CA 92593

951-303-6860

www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org



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A VOLCANO DISRUPTS TEMECULA TRAIN SERVICE

by Duane Preimsberger

Few newcomers to the Temecula Valley know that at one time a train ran through here or that the eruption of the Volcano Krakatau near Java resulted in the destruction of our railroad in 1884!

In 1880, Fred Perris, an engineer, for whom the town of Perris is named was given the task of creating a train route from (Colton) San Bernardino to (National City) San Diego. The route was difficult, requiring the building of 241 wooden bridges and traversing a series of bogs and swamps. Hundreds of workers toiled on the project and many were Chinese who'd help to build the Transcontinental Railroad.

The most difficult task was placing the track in the 14 mile long Temecula Canyon between Fallbrook and Temecula. In some areas the gorges were over 100 feet deep and rock slides and falling boulders took their human toll. When the rail link was complete it ran through the Canyon a mere 10 feet above the Santa Margarita River.

The California Southern Railroad Line was completed in April of 1882. It would operate daily on the track, hauling cargo and passengers between the two cities and it would make intermediate stops along the way. Passengers paid \$9.00 for a round-trip or \$6.00 for one way. Travel was speedy for the time considering that most journeying was by wagon, stagecoach, horse back or afoot. Here's the timetable for the northbound train.

DEPART

National City	6:30 AM
San Diego	6:50 AM
San Luis Rey	9:25 AM
Fallbrook	10:40 AM
Temecula	11:35 AM
Riverside	2:00 PM
Colton	2:15 PM

(Continued on page #2)

(Continued from page # 1)

On August 27, 1883 a deadly and destructive volcanic event occurring thousands of miles away would disrupt train travel in the Temecula Canyon several months later. Krakatau erupted with a force so powerful that it blew apart the island upon which it stood. 36,000 people lost their lives and thousands more were injured. The tremendous blast caused huge tidal waves and set off a hurricane like storm of super-heated gases, scorching the earth in its path. The sounds of the explosion were so loud they could be heard 3000 miles away. The eruption shot an enormous cloud of dust and debris miles into the sky and the resulting clouds began to circle the earth, disrupting normal weather patterns.

During February of 1884 it rained over 40 inches in the Temecula Valley, almost the equivalent of three years of rainfall in a single 29 day month. On February 15th a northbound train entered the Temecula Canyon and almost immediately found that the rain had supersaturated the ground causing the engine to sink into the mud. The train stopped, reversed and the same thing happened at the caboose end. The crew and passengers were trapped by the spectacularly wet weather. The engineer managed to get all of the passengers to safety except Wells Fargo Security Agent W.H. Atwater; he stayed behind to guard the train.

After a couple days without food, the gophers and ground squirrels climbing on the train wheels and cow catcher began to look mighty tasty so Atwater conked a few on the head, skinned, cleaned and cooked them in the engine firebox. Soon after, the rising waters made it obvious that he too would have to leave. He built a raft from wood he found on board and some tree limbs and his intention was to put his homemade craft into the river, jump aboard and paddle across the raging water to a farm house on the other side.

Atwater was about to embark on his journey when it dawned on him that he'd be soaking wet when he reached the other shore so he got a leather satchel from the train, took off his clothes and

packed them neatly in the satchel, then he leaped onto his raft. Unfortunately, Atwater was not a good judge of the rivers ferocity or velocity and he immediately lost control of his craft and began a Class V white-water ride downstream.

He was hanging on for dear life, going over six foot high water falls, crashing into boulders and tumbling and turning in the raging waters. Fortunately for him the Good Lord was kind on that day and a sharp-eyed shepherd happened to look into the Canyon and he spied the white, wet, cold, naked fanny of W.H. Atwater hurtling down the Canyon on a makeshift raft. The shepherd hurried ahead to the edge of the river and tossed Atwater a rope and then pulled him to safety. Unfortunately there isn't any record of the ensuing conversation between the two men; I believe it would have been quite interesting and entertaining, nor is there mention of what happened to Atwater's clothing.

In the spring of 1885, the California Southern Railroad hired a San Diego area house mover to rescue its stuck train and take it to safe track. Fred Perris began rebuilding his railroad line in the same exact spot, claiming that the occurrence was unlikely to be repeated. Unfortunately, he was wrong and another wet season washed out the track six years later. The trains ran; one from San Diego to Fallbrook and another from San Bernardino to Temecula. Wagons carried goods between Fallbrook and Temecula bridging the gap in train service. When the coastal train route was completed, the California Southern Line was abandoned.

Today, eighteen wheelers travel up and down the I-15 carrying needed supplies and cargo and the memory of train travel in our Valley has dimmed to a remote memory some 120+ years old. A few of us still pass on the story and smile as we visualize that lonely shepherd squinting through a torrential downpour at W.H. Atwater's naked rear-end and wondering to himself, "What in tarnation is that doing there?"

(Continued on page # 3)

(Continued from page # 2)

Meanwhile today in the faraway sea west of Java, scientists and geologists are studying a recent phenomenon. A small smoking and very active volcano is rising from the waters near where Krakatau exploded. It is almost 1000 feet high and a mile wide. Those who are studying it have named it, Anak Krakatau or Son of Krakatau. Perhaps in years yet to come another volcanic event will impact the lives of the residents of the Temecula Valley.

How much do you know about our local history?

1. Louis Wolf is the first name on the 1860 census in the Temecula Township. This leads some people to insist that Wolf must have lived in Temecula at that time, but Wolf did not live in Temecula when the census was taken. What is the explanation?
2. Why is the 1892 Great Register of Voters in San Diego County of special interest to people who are researching ancestors or others who lived in the Temecula Valley around that time?

Answers on page 4

Happy New Year!!

From The President

I am delighted to be the President of the Temecula Valley Historical Society for 2016. Dick Fox has administered the society effectively and the board members and committee chair people are serving whole heartedly. Much is being accomplished behind the scenes to identify and preserve the history of our area.

I am stepping into the leadership of a thriving organization that we can all be proud to be part of. It was heartwarming at our October meeting to hear each of our new board members volunteer to serve on committees where their skills and past experiences will be of benefit to us all. I look forward to seeing TVHS being more visible in the community and exerting even more positive influence as our numbers grow. At the same time I am looking forward to seeing several smaller research groups form to accomplish tasks of putting in print and online information that may be forgotten if we do not put our hands to the task.

I thank each of you who continue to serve the society, including the Cudés who provide the refreshments and cordial greeting before each meeting, Judy Preimsberger who puts together such a great newsletter, Dick Fox for being our tech guy as well as being president for the past two years, Phil Washum for planning excursions, and Darell Farnbach and the Vail Ranch Restoration Association for use of the facility and equipment. We also thank Dale Garcia the website guy and Jeffery Harmon and Diane LaTulippe for keeping our Facebook page going. Also Peg Moore who is our representative to the Old Town Review Board deserves recognition for her excellent service. Thanks to those who served faithfully for two full terms and are "termed out" for a year's rest before returning to the board: Elaine Culverhouse, Bonnie Martland and Lisa Woodward. We hope you will continue to come to the board meetings. We need your influence and enthusiasm. Fortunately our past president keeps a chair on the board even when termed out. We will benefit from the continuity of Dick Fox's experience and leadership. A huge thank you goes to all those behind the scenes whose names are not mentioned here but are very much appreciated.

We are very blessed to be banded together as like-minded people with unified goals to identify and save the history of the Temecula Valley. We enjoy a lot of good times together while we work toward the accomplishment of our goals. I am looking forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in 2016.

Rebecca Farnbach

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 25 , 2016—5:30 p.m. TVHS membership meeting. Social : 5:30—6:00 p.m. Program starts 6:00 p.m. Bonnie Martland will be speaking on Stories of the Californios.

Monday, February 22, 2016 5:30 p.m. TVHS membership meeting. Social: 5:30 p.m.—6:00 p.m. Program starts at 6:00p.m. Dr. Anne Miller will present “What Was Where When in Historic Temecula.” In her presentation she will show images and map overlays of locations of historical significance in relation to present day streets and buildings.

Monday March 21, 2016 5:30 p.m. TVHS membership meeting. Social: 5:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Program starts at 6:00 p.m. Robert Wells will speak on The Story of Walt Disney: Creating Kingdoms.

Monthly Meetings are held at the little Temecula history Center. The Red Barn next to Kohl’s Department Store, 32085 Temecula Parkway.

Please join us for a “Meet & Greet” time at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting on Monday, January 25th. We would like to get to know you.

REFRESHMENTS will be served!

How much do you know about our local history?

Answers:

1. The answer relates to what was the "Temecula Township" and is apparent when one looks at all 21 pages (with 40 names each) of that census. It encompassed a very large area, much more than just the town of Temecula. The census taker started east of Pauma Valley (with Wolf listed on the 1st page of census). He continued west along the San Luis Rey River through both large Indian reservations to Pala. Then he came to the town of Temecula where he recorded (on the 8th page) names of people who we associate with the town of Temecula. Those included ten people in Vital Ritche's home, including John McGee and Thomas Mulligan, stationmaster for the Butterfield Overland Mail. Nearby was Louis Rouen, the first postmaster in Temecula. The next page (9th) included Daniel Cline, William Moody, and Maria Apis Place. The next 7+ pages were used for those in the "Temecula Indian Village." From there, the census taker went to the San Jacinto area where he recorded 39 names on the last page (21st) for the Temecula Township.

2. In 1892 the Temecula Valley was in San Diego County because Riverside County was not formed until 1893. The 1892 voters' list was the first to include height, complexion, color of hair and eyes, and things like deformities, scars, or missing fingers.

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

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thank you for renewing your membership:

Arlie Bergman
Kathleen Casas
William Culver
Dale Garcia
Judith Hancock
Jeffery Harmon
Kent & Penelope Johnson
Rodney Reynolds

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1910 Newspaper Articles & Gossip Columns May 13, 1910

Announcement: I wish to announce to the people of Temecula, Murrieta, and vicinity that I have purchased of C. J. North the Temecula Meat Market and Ice Plant and hope the community will patronize the new management as well as they have the old. My aim will be a "square deal to all." H. G. Vogel Prop. May 13, 1910

Adrian B. Barnett, who recently purchased a fine new Fairbanks-Morse engine for his well-drilling outfit, is putting down a well on his home place, which looks very promising. At a depth of but thirteen feet the well produces 15 inches of water. Mr. Barnett will go deeper in an effort to secure a supply of at least thirty inches.



David Bradley's Second Hand Band is donating their time and talent in a special benefit concert for the Temecula Valley Historical Society's scholarship fund. It will be held at "The Merc," one of the oldest buildings in Old Town Temecula on Friday February 19th at 7:00 pm.

The program titled "Hail to the Chief" will honor President's Washington and Lincoln's birthdays with chronological selections beginning with Washington's presidency and extending the musical tribute to presidents beyond those whose birthdays are celebrated. The program will include John Philip Sousa marches, music of "The President's Own" Marine Band, presidential favorites and pieces famous musicians performed at the White House in genres including classical, folk, patriotic, hymns, jazz and rock. It is rumored that Band Master Sousa himself may make an appearance at the concert.

The Second Hand Band is well known for their enjoyable performances at "The Merc", an intimate performance venue that seats 48 guests in the historic Mercantile Building at 42051 Main Street in Old Town Temecula. Every seat is a good seat.

To reserve tickets for the two hour concert, please send \$15 per person to the Temecula Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 157, Temecula, CA 92593-0157

Tickets will also be available for purchase at the January 25th, TVHS meeting. Seating is limited so only the first 48 people to respond will receive tickets.

The Temecula Valley Historical Society Scholarship fund gives financial gifts each year to help pay for the education of talented students who plan to go into history related fields. It is a way to perpetuate the Society's interests long after we are gone. If you are unable to attend the concert but wish to contribute to the fund, donations may be sent to the address above.

He Passed this Way:

Raymond Basquez, Sr. passed away on November 1, 2015 at the age of 79. Raymond lived on the Pechanga reservation most his life and attended grammar school in Temecula. As a young man, Raymond worked as a cowboy for the Vails and later told many tales of driving cattle to various areas in the valley. He was a friend to the Temecula Valley Historical Society and other groups in the history community. Many will remember Raymond as the tall, slender man who often came to Historical Society meetings, usually sitting in the back near the Native American display. Raymond was instrumental in the formation of the Historic Resources Department in Pechanga and was one of the most knowledgeable of tribal history and customs. We will miss him.

TVHS November 20, 2015 Dinner Meeting

