

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 16 Issue 3

*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](http://www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org)



## Commemoration to Abraham Lincoln on 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Assassination

By Bonnie Martland

I sat on the steps of the building next to the Petersen House across from Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. on the night of April 15. It was the perfect spot to observe and contemplate the magnitude of the day's events. A misty drizzle at times turned into a light rain. Throngs of people jammed the street between



Ford's Theater and the Petersen House across the street. The Petersen House was where President Lincoln had been taken after John Wilkes Booth's bullet entered his skull and where he would spend his last hours. As the clock passed midnight and news of the vigil spread throughout the city the crowd swelled even larger. More and more people came to pay their respects to their fallen President.

Newspaper reporters jotted down notes, hymns spontaneously broke forth and people who had been in the theater at the time of the assassin's shot mingled in the crowd telling their recollections of where they were and what they had seen and heard. Every half hour one of Lincoln's physicians came out onto the stoop of the Petersen House to give an update on the President's condition; his pulse, respiration and so on.

As the rain came down more steadily, umbrellas blossomed as the solemn crowd stood waiting to hear the next update on President Lincoln's condition. We all knew his wound was mortal, but still we waited to hear any news of what was happening in what became Lincoln's death room. Dignitaries came and went. Negro spirituals could be heard plaintively from amongst the crowd. Soldiers came also, to pay their respects to their Commander-in-Chief, their Father Abraham. A sailor from the USS Montauk stood silently nearby. The candles held by many in the crowd flickered through the night as the waiting continued for the inevitable news. Military musicians played music to pass the time.

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The date was April 15, 1865, and it was April 15, 2015. I had sat on that step a great deal on April 14, contemplating the ironies that spanned 150 years: the differences and the similarities. I had planned to go to Washington, D.C. to attend some events commemorating the life of President Abraham Lincoln by the Ford's Theater Society on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his assassination. There was a symposium of Lincoln scholars, a private tour of Ford's Theater by the author of a book on its history, the all-night vigil and other events I was interested in. I had planned to go alone as my husband is not as enamored with mid-19<sup>th</sup> century history as I am. However, at the last minute John decided to come along and I am glad he did. The event was too encompassing, too special not to be shared with him.

He enjoyed a night detective walk that took us several miles around the city to the places important to solving the mystery of who John Wilkes Booth's conspirators were; going backstage at Ford's Theater and other not strictly Lincoln events. The all-night vigil, just as it had occurred 150 years ago was as close to time travel as one could get, my husband agreed it was an amazing experience, as was the wreath laying ceremony in the early morning. However, it was the long hours of the all-night part of the vigil that might have been a tad too authentic for his liking!

All the flags in Washington, D.C. were flying at half-staff in remembrance of President Lincoln. Seeing the lowered flags brought Lincoln from the past to the present and to us that day. He had been gone 150 years and though he is well-known to all Americans, it is through history classes and books. Now he was out of the tomes. The events of his last days were real again and we were participants; participants in events of a day that changed the history of our country. Just beneath the modernity of today's Washington we discovered the Washington of Lincoln's day.

The last time we were in Washington, D.C. Lincoln's Cottage at the Old Soldiers' Home where Lincoln spent a good deal of his presidency, was not open to the public. So I was determined to visit it on this trip. About three miles as the crow flies from the White House, it was Lincoln's refuge. In Lincoln's day it was in a country

setting. It is where he wrote much of the Emancipation Proclamation, he enjoyed visiting with the veterans there, and it gave him respite from office seekers and the hustle of the city. Lincoln had spent the day there the day before his assassination. After a tour of the cottage, we were enjoying the grounds, gazebo and taking photos when a guard of honor with a rider-less black horse, boots reversed in the stirrups, approached the cottage. In tribute to President Lincoln the entourage had left from the White House and was retracing Lincoln's last ride to the place he liked best in Washington. We were lucky to have been there to see it, and again time was washed away and Lincoln brought close.

The year 2015 marks the conclusion of a four year commemoration / reflection of the American Civil War. President Lincoln is often referred to as the last casualty of that war. Arlington National Cemetery and the grounds of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Arlington House is where earlier casualties of the war were the first to be buried in one of our most revered National Cemeteries. There is nothing as solemnly spectacular as looking through the pink dogwood blossoms from the porch of Arlington House on the Hill overlooking Washington and the National Mall at that point when the last afternoon light is about to turn to dusk and you can see lights beginning to flicker through the deepening haze of color. One of the last couples to walk down the hill past those first Civil War soldiers buried in what had been Mrs. Lee's rose garden, and past Robert Lincoln's crypt, we were given a lift by a driver taking his bus to the bus lot for the night.

We had walked past the cemetery section where slaves, once employed at Arlington House were buried. We had spent some time at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and President Kennedy's grave. How different it seemed from the first time I had visited it when it was still encompassed by its original white picket fence and illuminated by a small tiki-like flame. It was no less solemn then in its freshness. We spent some time visiting with one of the young soldiers from nearby Fort Myer, a member of the Old Guard assigned to security at Arlington. He was from the Midwest and his face could have been as any one of those young men buried at Arlington in Lincoln's service.

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We took a day and made a quick side trip to Gettysburg National Cemetery and Battlefield. We had been numerous times previously and toured the battlefield, so we spent time at the new visitor's center, much changed from the earlier version we knew. We also spent some time tracking down some information on Gettysburg memorabilia that I have, and visited the hilltop site where Lincoln gave his immortal address. We visited the markers of the soldiers of our birth states and read all the names of those that were known to have died on that hill. I always have a difficult time leaving Gettysburg. We also took a day to visit again the battlefield at Manassas, or Bull Run. How the country changed from the first Battle of Bull Run, the first battle of the war, when picnicking spectators from Washington drove out in buggies to watch; to Appomattox and Lincoln's assassination!

Maybe to change perspective we took a drive to Mount Vernon which represented a time and group of men who laid the foundation of our country and the bedrock of Lincoln's belief in our founding documents and ideals. It became part of the continuum I had sensed from the firing on Fort Sumter in April, 1861, to First Manassas to Gettysburg, to Appomattox and Lincoln's death in April, 1865 – to the commemoration we were currently attending in April, 2015. As I thought about this, I noticed the Capitol dome. Ironic, I thought that the dome under construction during the Civil War, was again wrapped in construction scaffolding and under a rainy night sky just as it had been 150 years past on the night Lincoln was assassinated. Washington had been a city of much southern sympathies, but then, like now the city mourned and honored their fallen President.

During the all-night vigil of April 14-15, I talked with a reporter from the Washington Post over coffee at one of the local Mom and Pop establishments that stayed open all night. He, like many of us there that vigil night, was trying to discover the essence of Lincoln and what had brought so many of us from around the country to honor his legacy, including himself. "We are of like mind," he said. A young man who skipped some high school classes to be there, was able to recite Lincoln's speeches. There were midshipmen and officers from Annapolis who said they felt they had to be there. Harold Holtzer and other noted Lincoln scholars, re-

enactors, dignitaries, statesmen and ordinary Americans had come to honor President Lincoln. General Colin Powell was there, holding a candle during the all-night vigil. As morning approached there was an emotional reading of Walt Whitman's poem and tribute to Lincoln "O Captain, My Captain" and a wreath was laid at the Petersen House steps at 7:22 A.M., the time of Lincoln's last breath.

None of us honor Lincoln because he is perfect or without flaw. He was a man of his times and prejudices. But he relied on his intellect and compassion to enlighten his thoughts and foster intellectual growth.

Lincoln was grounded in the philosophies of the founding fathers. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights provided his political and moral foundation. All presidents take an oath of office compelling him, or her, to preserve the Union. Lincoln took office at a particularly difficult time in our history and he kept his oath.

There were no fewer states in the Union at the end of his presidency than there were at the beginning of it. If the country had divided, what was to keep it from dividing again and yet again at discontent?

He freed, or set on the road to freedom, thousands of enslaved people, restored faith in our founding documents and institutions of government, and persuaded the people of the United States that no matter the obstacles that, if as a people, we rely on the "better angels of our nature" we, the people of the United States can overcome any adversity to be the kind of democracy envisioned by our founding fathers where all men are created equal and entitled to certain inalienable rights.

I wondered, just briefly, what Lincoln would think of America today; and I also thought that America today could benefit from adhering to Lincoln's political and moral philosophies.

Lincoln's intellect and powers of persuasion kept the Union from dissolving and persuaded the people to put their trust in one another.

As I sat on that step of the building next to the Petersen House, I played some Civil War songs on my flute; my way of saying thank you to Abraham Lincoln and those who fought through those Aprils so long ago.

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## How much do you know about our local history?

1. The Land Commission rejected or approved the early land grants in California. What does all this mean?
2. Who was the first Temecula postmaster and where was that post office located?

Answers on page 5

## Tour Victorian Heritage House and Gardens, followed by lunch. Then a tour of the Jensen-Alvarado Home, Museum and Winery.

Make your tour reservation for Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, by calling Phil Washum at (951) 201-0020.

Meet the TVHS tour group at the parking lot across from the Red Barn at 8:30 a.m. We will carpool, leaving the parking lot at 8:45 a.m.

The first home we will tour is the elegant Victorian Heritage House in Riverside.

Our appointment time is 10:00 a.m. Following that tour we will lunch on our own at a local restaurant.

Then we will take a short drive to the Jensen Alvarado House - Museum where there are also animals to observe.

Our appointment time there is 1:30 p.m. At this museum only there is a charge of \$4.00 per person.

The tour will end by 3:00 p.m. at which time we will return to Temecula.



The second Hand Band Playing at The Merc Theater

Photo: courtesy of TVHS member Julie Gilbert

The Second Hand Band donated their time and talent at the Merc on Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, to help TVHS raise funds for our 2016 Student Scholarship Awards. The event was sold out!

Our sincere thanks to the band members for a terrific evening of musical entertainment.

And, many thanks to Bonnie Martland who not only arranged the evening's event, but also played flute along with the band.

## Historic Documents Class

**Interested in learning more about where to find historic ( or genealogical ) documents and how to interpret them?**

**Anne Miller will schedule a one hour class on this topic for a Sunday afternoon at the History Center. If you want to be notified about this event, e-mail Anne at:**

**DMEAJM@earthlink.net to be added to the list.**

## How much do you know about our local history?

Answers:

1. Many early Spanish and Mexican land grants in California were very large while a few were quite small. After California became a state in 1850, the owners of these land grants were required to present evidence to the Board of Land Commissioners to prove the validity of their ownership of their grant, or they would lose their land. Over 800 claims were filed. Some were approved easily, but others were initially rejected, then appealed, and later approved. Over 600 of the original claims were eventually approved. These case files can be hundreds of pages long, including depositions by others to support the owners. These files are great sources of information about the ranchos and their owners. Because many of the ranchos had been sold over the years, the person named as patentee was often not the original grantee. If someone bought a rancho from the original grantee during this process, that person was at risk of losing the rancho. In the Temecula area, the two large ranchos, Temecula and Pauba, were approved in January 1860. The small rancho, known today as the "Little Temecula Rancho" granted to Pablo Apis, was initially rejected, but was finally approved in January 1873. By that time, the ownership of this rancho had changed hands many times.
2. Louis Rouen was appointed Temecula's first postmaster on 22 July 1859. He was living in the Temecula Indian Village where the Butterfield Overland Mail station was located. The Temecula Post Office (like many others) was discontinued in 1862 due to the termination of the Butterfield Stage Line during the Civil War.

For more information, contact Anne Miller at

DMEAJM@earthlink.net

## *From The President*

It is encouraging to see each committee enthusiastically engaging in activities that make the Temecula Valley Historical society the force that it is in the community. On February 19<sup>th</sup> the Scholarship committee under the leadership of Bonnie Martland hosted a sold-out performance at the Merc that garnered \$645 for our scholarship fund. The musical tribute to US Presidents was interesting and enjoyable in that historic venue. Thanks also to Scholarship Committee members Suzanne Dechert, Lynn Cudé and Cheryl Cady for their part in planning and implementing the fundraiser. As most members know, our society gives four sizable scholarships annually to local high school students who plan to pursue careers in history related fields.

At the January meeting the plaque committee, under the leadership of Bonnie Reed and assisted by Bob Kent, showed a plaque we will give to Dax and Kristen Judy for their home, the historic Casa Loma. We are making arrangements for the formal gifting of the plaque. Bonnie and Bob are currently surveying the number of plaques in the area and will be assembling a data base for our website and will also have a notebook of the information that can be added to as time goes on.

Speaking of the website, Roger Cudé is doing reconstruction on it and requests help from members. Please contact him at rogercude@gmail.com or at 951-695-0517 to volunteer to review the website [www.temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org) and to let him know what may need updating.

Another volunteer activity for folks who may work from their homes at hours of their choosing is to index our past society newsletters by subject, title and author. For more information about this opportunity for service, please contact Roger at the email or phone number above.

Bonnie Martland and Shari Crall are working with Valley News to have a historical article in the paper once monthly. Anne Miller's presentation in February brought a record crowd and we have interesting speakers and topics planned for the upcoming months.

Members of the Temecula Valley Historical Society are fun loving and hard working people who love to serve the community. Thanks for being part of this wonderful organization.

*Rebecca*

## Upcoming Events

Calendar:

**Wednesday, March 16, 2016** Tour of the Victorian Heritage House and a tour of Jensen Alvarado House and Museum in Riverside. Contact Phil Washum at 951-201-0020 for reservations.

**April 16 - May 1** - The Ramona Pageant will perform their adaptation of Helen Hunt Jackson's story about Native Americans in Southern California at the Ramona Bowl.

See [www.riversidecountyhistory.org](http://www.riversidecountyhistory.org)

**Saturday, May 7, 2016** The Riverside County Symposium will be at the Murrieta Hot Springs Conference Center and will include tours of the historic resort. For more information see [www.riversidecountyhistory.org](http://www.riversidecountyhistory.org)

**Saturday, June 4, 2016** The Temecula Valley Museum is hosting the western Cultural days celebration in Sam Hicks Monument Park.

For our regular meetings:

**March 28** - TVHS membership meeting. Social: 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. Program starts at 6:00 p.m. Scott Wolf will present "Walt Disney: Creating Kingdoms", a multimedia presentation about the people who helped to take Walt Disney's dream to a Southern California reality. Scott personally interviewed many of the individuals involved in creating the first Disneyland and will tell little known details.

**April 25** - Christina Perris will present research she has done on her ancestor Fred Perris, the surveyor who designed the train route and laid out the town site of Temecula.

**May 23** - Dale Garcia who is a popular tour guide for the Temecula Valley Museum is going to give a virtual walking tour of Old Town in an audio-visual presentation at the History Center.

Monthly Meetings are held at the Little Temecula History Center in 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, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

We would like to get to know you.

REFRESHMENTS will be served.

## LIVING HISTORY PRESENTATION

On Tuesday, March 15th, two of the Notable Women of Temecula ( Bonnie Martland as Elena Dear, and Elaine Eshom as Freda Knott) will be appearing at the Temecula Library on Pauba Road. The 1-hour program begins at 1:30 PM and is open to the public.

On Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Julie Gilbert as Notable Woman, Jean Bethel, will be performing for the Daughters of the American Revolution, an organization to which Jean Bethel belonged. This is open to DAR members only.

## Membership News

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Dr. Patricia Justice  
David, Sharon, Shea & Brad Mayberry  
Elizabeth White

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

William Culver  
Rick & Vicky Reiss  
Ron & Ann Woodward

**April TVHS Newsletter ... Anyone having items to be included in the April 2016 Newsletter should submit them to me by March 30, 2016.**

**Judy Preimsberger, editor  
Email: [pberger30@verizon.net](mailto:pberger30@verizon.net)**