

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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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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Part of Area History

Once Thriving Education Alternative, Military Academies for Young Men

An interesting part of Southern California's military history is shared by military academies for boys -- that were college prep boarding schools through the high school level. During the first half of the 20th Century many communities in the Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange and San Diego counties had small military schools. Some of the significant schools were:

Elsinore Naval and Military School

The complex of buildings where the Elsinore Naval and Military School operated was originally built in 1924 to be the Southern California Athletic and Country Club. The Club was meant to cater to the wealthy and famous personalities of the 1920s. Although the facilities were completed, the Country Club never opened due to financial problems, further complicated soon by the Depression. The property originally was composed of over 200 acres and included a golf course, tennis courts, cottages by the lake and a marina.

In the early 1930s, Glenn Conklin bought the property which was comprised of approximately 21 acres with the express intent of establishing a military school. Corporate filing was made on July 29, 1933 and Elsinore Naval Academy was incorporated as a school the same year.

Sometime during its lifetime the school name was changed to Elsinore Naval and Military School, and operations continued with the school until finally closing its doors in 1977. In the early 1940s enrollment was on the upswing after the attack on Pearl Harbor. At that time the school even had its own dairy farm. A curious footnote is the fact that Col. Conklin at one time owned the lake itself.

Today the complex is empty and according to an article in the Press-Enterprise in 2012, the company that owns the vacant Elsinore Naval and Military Academy is working on a plan to prevent it from again becoming an eyesore. Ruth Atkins, president of the Lake Elsinore Historical Society, said in the article that sons of wealthy parents, including foreign dictators, attended the school, as did the son of actor Bela Lugosi, who played Count Dracula on Broadway.

(Continued on Page 2)

... Area Academies

Army and Navy Academy

The Academy was founded by Thomas A. Davis on November 23, 1910. It was originally located in the Pacific Beach area of San Diego, California. In 1936, the Academy moved to Carlsbad, California, where it opened as the Davis Military Academy. Davis Military Academy was renamed San Diego Army and Navy Academy, and in 1944 "San Diego" was dropped from the name giving it its present name, Army and Navy Academy. The Academy was most notably led by Colonel (Hon.) William Currier Atkinson, who served as the Academy's president for fifty years.

The Academy is a boarding school for boys, and organized into a Middle School and a High School. The High School has a college preparatory curriculum that follows the University of California requirements for graduation, and all Cadets participate in JROTC leadership courses. The Army and Navy Academy is still active and operational today.

Brown Military Academy

In 1937 following the relocation of the Army and Navy Academy to Carlsbad, the Pacific Beach location was purchased by John Elward Brown of Arkansas. At that time the academy was named Brown Military Academy. Mr. Brown already had established John Brown University, in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, as well as the Glendora, California School for Girls. Later he also established Brown Military Academy of the Ozarks.

The building complex in Pacific Beach had originally begun as an attempt to create a college campus, but never fully became operational. Later the buildings were converted to a complex known as Hotel Balboa, and promoted as a family vacation location.



Elsinore Naval & Military School Buildings

Circa 1910 "the first military academy" was announced. Over the next few years dormitory buildings were added, and then with the economic downturn of the depression era, and the subsequent relocation of the Army and Navy Academy to Carlsbad – the multi-acre facility became Brown Military Academy and operated until 1958. The school was moved to a Glendora location and continued with the same name. Brown eventually closed all of their private boarding schools in Southern California.

Southern California Military Academy

Located in Signal Hill, California, SCMA was a private, all male military academy that operated from 1924 to 1987. They provided for both daily and resident students. It had classes from kindergarten through 9th grades. The school was known for a highly educated teaching staff and a cadre of experienced former military officers. SCMA stressed high educational standards with military discipline and religious values. The school was not a facility for troubled students, but rather provided an advanced and diverse educational environment for those seeking greater achievement, while grooming them for future leadership. The local hallmark of SCMA was its WWI field artillery pieces which were displayed out on Cherry Avenue, in the Signal Hill area near Long Beach.

Indian “Medicine Water” Lures Early Health Seekers

By Julie Gilbert

When the S.S. Constitution steamed into San Francisco Bay on May 8, 1873, on board were Mr. Charles A. Sumner, his wife and two children. After a six-week voyage from England, the family had arrived in the new land anxious to find a new home. This was soon accomplished when Sumner purchased Rancho La Laguna, now known as Lake Elsinore. The parcel consisted of 12,838 acres, including the lake, then called Laguna Grande.

Undeterred by the fact he had no experience as a rancher, Sumner settled on sheep raising as his chosen profession. One day he noticed several sickly cows drinking from a pool of foul-smelling water, one of the many common to the area. Believing that the water was the source of their illness, he set about building a fence around the pool to keep out both cattle and sheep. But local Indians, who realized what he was doing, explained that the steaming pool was medicine water. The stock came because they were already sick, and the water would make them well.

The Indians were not the only ones to assert the benefits of the hot springs. Other settlers claimed they had wonderful curative powers for rheumatism, and used them regularly for bathing. In time, a small “bath house” was erected. Consisting of nothing more than a wooden shack where the hot Sulfur water bubbled up from a hole in the ground, it was nonetheless the first place campers visited when reaching La Laguna.

By the time it was incorporated as a city in 1888, Lake Elsinore included, along with two banks, two hotels, and a schoolhouse, two bathhouses. One of them, the Crescent Bath House, was promoted during its 1887 construction as “an introduction of the exotic Orient into California”. Upon completion, visitors came from as far as the East coast, enticed both by its purported luxury and the therapeutic properties of its water, which by now had grown legendary. Indeed, it seems there was virtually no affliction for which the magic waters could not offer relief. George Wharton James, author of The Travelers’ Handbook To Southern California, wrote in 1904, “Diseases of the nose, throat and bronchial tubes are surely and quickly relieved. Dyspepsia and derangement of the kidneys and liver improve and grow rapidly better without exception. The hot mud and mineral water baths given by skilled attendants cure la grippe, rheumatism, skin and blood diseases, kidney, stomach and bladder troubles.”

Though Charles Sumner and the early settlers are long gone, Lake Elsinore remains. And, though the mineral springs no longer bubble from the floor, the old Crescent

Bath House also remains. Designated in 1976 as a National Historical Place, it has enjoyed many subsequent incarnations, including as an antique store called “The Chimes” for quite a few years. It was recently purchased and converted into office space.

How much do you know about our local history?

1. Old Town Temecula seems like such a nice setting. Why didn't the people who came to this part of California in the 1800s settle in the Old Town area instead of near Hwy.79 and Redhawk and near Jefferson and Winchester?
2. Last month the lengths of chains, links, and rods, were mentioned. So what about the lengths of a league and a vara?

Answers on page 4

From the President's Desk

Greetings –

Those of you who are receiving this newsletter are to be commended for banding with the rest of us to say that the past matters. We learn from the past and by understanding events and people from the past we make better decisions for the present and future. We cannot and have not saved all the significant sites and buildings in the Temecula Valley, but we have been successful in saving the Vail Headquarters for creative reuse and several of the buildings in Old Town. Instead of whipping ourselves over the losses we need to congratulate ourselves on our successes. At the same time it is good to keep vigilant and to save those buildings that we can still save. Someday we will be gone from this earth and can no longer speak to save history. Will all our work be for naught? Will buildings we saved be bulldozed down, obliterated from the earth? Not if we can help it. That is why so many of us volunteer at the Temecula Valley Museum or at the History Center to inspire the younger generations to revere the legacy we are preserving. That is also why TVHS raises funds for the scholarships we give to young people who aspire to go into history related fields, and it is the reason we write articles and books that will reach farther and will last longer than our individual voices to emphasize the importance of historic preservation.

Thank you for joining the Temecula Valley Historical Society. Together we do great things.

Rebecca Farnbach

Fort Leavenworth: Gateway for U.S. Migration to West

Fort Leavenworth has a storied past, and many of the pioneers who “Passed This Way” and have a history with the Temecula area, also had been through Fort Leavenworth, Kansas at some point in time. Many became part of the historic connection to our country’s migration and expansion west.

Fort Leavenworth is a U.S. Army installation located in Kansas. It is the oldest active United States Army post west of Washington, D.C., having been in operation for over 185 years.

The fort is 10 miles south of the 18th century French Fort de Cavagnal, which was the farthest west fort in Louisiana (New France). Early American explorers on the Missouri River to visit the area of Fort de Cavagnal include Lewis and Clark in June 1804. The fort location had been chosen then because of its proximity to a large Kansas tribe village.

Colonel Henry Leavenworth, with the officers and men of the 3rd Infantry Regiment from St. Louis, Missouri, established Fort Leavenworth in 1827 to be a forward base protecting the Santa Fe Trail. Leavenworth’s initial directions as to where to establish the fort turned out to be a flood prone area, and he recommended a location 20 miles upstream on the west bank on the bluffs above the river.

The first army installation in Leavenworth had an initial strength of 14 officers and 174 enlisted men. The fort almost immediately increased in importance as it became the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail and Oregon Trail. After the Indian Removal Act of 1830 attempted to remove all Indians west of the Missouri-Kansas border, the fort which is west of the border assumed even more importance. A building which today is the oldest building in Kansas was initially used as a bachelor officer’s quarters, and later would be the office of the first territorial governor and thus the first capitol in Kansas.

For three decades following the war, the Army's chief mission was control of the American Indian tribes on the Western plains. Between

1865 and 1891, the Army had more than 1,000 combat engagements with many of the tribes in the central plains and southwest.

The Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery is one of the national cemeteries established by Abraham Lincoln in July 1862. Veterans since the War of 1812 have been laid to rest in the cemetery. One veteran of the War of 1812 is the cemetery's most famous occupant, Brigadier General Henry Leavenworth, who gave his name to the fort, the cemetery, and the town and county where they are located.

In 1866, the U.S. Congress authorized the formation of four black regiments. The 10th Cavalry Regiment was formed at Fort Leavenworth under the command of Col. Benjamin Grierson. Today, a monument stands at Fort Leavenworth in tribute to the "Buffalo Soldier" of the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments. The nickname was given to the "Negro Cavalry" by the Native American tribes they fought; the term eventually became synonymous with all of the African-American regiments formed in 1866.

The United States Disciplinary Barracks, now a maximum-security military prison, was established in 1875. In 1881, Gen. William T. Sherman established the School of Application for Cavalry and Infantry.

World War I was the first opportunity to evaluate the impact of Sherman's school. Graduates excelled in planning complex American Expeditionary Forces operations. As a result, Fort Leavenworth became a major training center for the U.S. Army, and in the years between the world wars, graduates included such officers as Dwight D. Eisenhower, Omar Bradley and George S. Patton. During World War II, some 19,000 officers completed various courses at Fort Leavenworth. By the end of 1943, commanders and staffs of 26 infantry, airborne and cavalry divisions had trained as teams at the school.

Fort Leavenworth was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960.

Answers to local history questions:

1. Old Town Temecula is a great area, but it would not have looked so good to newcomers in the 1800s. It is quite narrow from east to west and the creek running through it was sometimes at risk of flooding the area. If you compare the area on U.S.G.S. Quadrangles with the areas near Redhawk and Hwy. 79 and near Jefferson and Winchester, the differences are quite obvious. Another issue in addition to the danger of flooding was that there was not enough level ground to plant crops. And while crops were irrigated in the other areas near Temecula by diverting water from a nearby creek, diverting water in such a narrow and steep area as Old Town Temecula would not have provided enough water for the crops.

2. Explaining chains, links, and rods was easier than leagues and varas. The lengths of leagues and varas varied depending on the time period and location. Spanish measurements were used in our area. In California, a vara was 33 1/3 inches (or 2.777778 feet). While a league (or legua) was 5,000 varas, it is easier to think of it as 2.597 miles. League was used also for a square league so you may read about a rancho of 50 leagues.

To submit questions or for more information, contact Anne Miller at:

DMEAJM@earthlink.net

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Sandy Bourassa & Michael Reagan

THANKS FOR RENEWING:

Audrey Cilurzo

Mary Corona

Steve Lech

John & Bonnie Martland

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Events

Monday, May 30 – Historic Route 395 Dedication Event, sponsored by the Moreno Valley Historical Society. All day event near Alessandro Blvd. and Old Frontage Rd.

Saturday, June 4 – Western Cultural Heritage Day, **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** in Sam Hicks Monument Park. Displays & entertainment with cultural heritage emphasis.

Society Programs

Monday, June 27 – 6:00 P.M. — Come meet our Scholarship Students. They will tell of their plans to enter history related fields of study. An extended Meet & Greet time will follow their introductions.

Monday, July 25 – 6:00 P.M. — This program will be jointly presented by the Temecula Valley Historical Society and the Temecula Valley Museum, and held in the air conditioned comfort of the Conference Center at Temecula City Hall. Robert Wells, author of “Voices from the Bottom of the South China Sea” will present a largely unknown story of the largest Chinese emigrant disaster in 1874.

Regular monthly programs are held at the Little Temecula History Center, the Red Barn next to Kohl’s Department Store near the intersection of Wolf Store Road and Redhawk Parkway.

Join us for a “Meet & Greet” at 5:30 p.m. prior to the programs. Refreshments are always available. Typically presentations are about an hour in length and begin at 6:00 p.m.

NOTABLE WOMAN, **Julie Gilbert**, gave a presentation as Jean Bethell, (Secretary to Erle Stanley Gardner) for members of the Daughters of the American Revolution at the Assistance League in Temecula.

A few weeks later, Julie gave the same performance for members of the Lake Elsinore Historical Society held at the Museum in Lake Elsinore.