

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

August 2016  
Volume 16 Issue 8

*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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## History of...

### The Santa Gertrudis School District

By Jeffery Harmon

The Santa Gertrudis School District was formed in December 1913. It was carved from the Alamos, Hyatt, Pujol, and Murrieta areas. Its formation paved the way for Riverside County's first union district, the Temecula Union School. Its story began forty years prior in 1873 with the formation of Temecula's first school.

*"The Temecula School District was established, constituting the Temecula Voting Precinct, and including to the east the ranches of Charles Thomas and Jacob Bergman and all ranches between them."* (October 31, 1873 San Diego Union)

Early school districts were defined by one school house and the residents within a certain geographical boundary. In the 1875 census Temecula had 92 students. and in 1876, 88 students. In 1878, Cottonwood school was established at the Bergman's Ranch, which reduced the Temecula district in the east. The 1882 census reported 60 students for Temecula.

As more settlers came into the area, more schools were needed. A few of the districts that formed around Temecula were: Pleasant Valley (1882), Menifee (1883), Willow Glen (1884), Elsinore (1884), Murrieta (1885), Pujol (1887), Santa Rosa (1887) Wildomar (1889), Alamos (1889) and Antelope (1891).

In 1888, San Diego County consisted of 86 school districts employing 130 teachers. In 1893, Riverside County was formed and the new county inherited 52 schools from San Diego and San Bernardino counties.

Two school districts became split between Riverside and San Diego, Willow Glen and Santa Rosa. Willow Glen students in Riverside County were transferred to Pujol and Santa Rosa students were transferred to Murrieta.

On occasion there would be boundary disputes between school districts and the matter would be brought before the County Board of Supervisors. For example, in 1894 there was a minor boundary conflict between Alamos and Pujol. The matter was discussed and resolved without any further concerns.

With the growing number of students in the area, Pujol, Murrieta and Wildomar sent a proposal for a union high school district to the Board in 1896. After some discussion, Pujol trustees were against the proposal and the measure was soon dropped. Students who wanted to

(Continued on Page 2)

## Santa Gertrudis School District . . .

attend high school, traveled to Elsinore High School, which was established in 1891. Hyatt was formed in 1899 when residents in the Auld Valley petitioned the county for a school. By 1900, Willow Glen was reestablished as a joint school district with San Diego County.

The following census record shows student populations at the turn of the century:

|             | 1898 | 1899 | 1900 |
|-------------|------|------|------|
| Pujol       | 43   | 29   | 29   |
| Hyatt       | X    | 19   | 10   |
| Alamos      | 45   | 28   |      |
| Temecula    | 23   | 24   | 27   |
| Murrieta    |      | 80   | 61   |
| Wildomar    |      | 41   | 25   |
| Elsinore    |      | 91   | 90   |
| Willow Glen |      |      | 22   |

Eli E. Barnett settled in Temecula and built a house on the north side of the Santa Gertrudis Creek. His home was located where the present day U.S. Bank building is located south of the intersection of Jefferson and Sanborn Avenues. His 1,200-acre farm was within the Murrieta boundaries, but the Pujol school house was two miles closer for his nine children to attend. He traveled to Riverside in February 1905 to petition the Board of Supervisors to enlarge the Pujol district to include his home.

The petition was signed by twenty families, but the new boundaries only affected the Barnett family. The proposed boundaries were beginning at the south end of Cherry Street traveling northeast to Jackson Street. Then it traveled southeast to Apricot (modern day Overland Drive). Then it traveled southwest along Apricot Street to the south boundary of the Temecula rancho. Then the line traveled northwest along the rancho boundary to Cherry Street. Murrieta school trustees were not happy with the proposal. One Murrieta resident wrote, "Too big a slice to suit us."

At the March board meeting, County Superintendent of Schools, Edward Hyatt, recommended a compromise to the members. He suggested the boundary change only include the Barnett property. The supervisors agreed and the petition was granted. Even though Barnett's actions were frowned on by Murrieta civic leaders, growth would continue in the area and his vision would soon be realized.

Eight years later, in February 1913, residents of Murrieta met with the new superintendent of schools and the district attorney to petition organizing a new school district between Murrieta and Temecula. The area included the proposed 1905 Barnett area and areas to the east of Jackson Street. The Board denied the Murrieta petition because no new districts were to be formed until the following fiscal year.

Two new school districts did form in July 1913, Tenaja and Alberhill. Tenaja was formed as a joint school district with San Diego. It is possible it was the previous Santa Rosa. Alberhill was established north of Elsinore and served the miner families in the area.

In November, County Superintendent of Schools Raymond Cree met in Temecula with school trustees from Hyatt, Alamos, Pujol and Murrieta to discuss forming a new district in the center of these school districts. There was also a brief discussion about forming a union district, but no decisions were made.

A.B. Barnett, son of Eli E. Barnett, traveled with his wife to Riverside in December to attend the first monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors. On the agenda was the discussion of the formation of the Santa Gertrudis School District. At the second monthly board meeting John Roripaugh joined A.B. Barnett to hear of a few minor changes that were made to the proposed district. Murrieta school trustees were hopeful that with their district boundary changes, they would be able to keep a large enough student population in their area to continue employing two teachers.

On December 22, 1913, the Santa Gertrudis School District was formed. There were twenty-two children ready to attend the new school. The only family affected by the new district was the Harry Christman family who was transferred from Alamos to the newly formed district. Another issue discussed was

(Continued on next page)

(From Page 2)

## Santa Gertrudis School District . . .

future plans for a union school to be formed at Temecula, with a new building that would employ two teachers.

In January 1914, a special election was held in Pujol and Santa Gertrudis calling for unification. The proposal passed and the Temecula Union School District was formed. It was the first union school district in Riverside County. With 45 to 50 students between the two schools, a new building was planned to be constructed in Temecula.

One supporter explained the benefits of the union. *“The more distant children in the Santa Gertrudis district will be transported to this (the new school building). Better teachers and facilities are provided by the union school than would be possible with two independent districts.”* (January 8, 1914, Riverside Daily Press)

The Pujol school session ended on May 22, 1914. Loren Fernald was the only 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduate that year. On July 1, 1914, Pujol and Santa Gertrudis ceased to exist. In their place would be the newly formed Temecula Union School District.

A school bond election was held on August 27, 1914. \$10,000 in bonds was needed for the construction of the union school building. A.B. Barnett, clerk for Temecula Union, was confident that the election would be favorable. Plans were already made to transport twelve students to the future school building.

On Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Temecula Union Grammar School opened without a new building. New teachers, Mrs. C. E. Walker and Irene Vardy conducted lessons most likely in the original Pujol school house. It is believed that a structure was not built for Santa Gertrudis in hopes of saving funds for the future union school.

The bonds for the proposed new school building were advertised in the county papers throughout September, but by October, the bonds were rejected and a private sale was ordered. On October 21, 1914 Temecula Union bonds were sold to the First National Bank of Riverside. Within a few months, ground was broken and construction of the new Temecula Union School began.

Though Santa Gertrudis only existed for seven months, its formation paved the way for Riverside County’s first union school district. The Temecula Union School would serve the area residents for the next fifty-four years as a school and a community center thanks in part to this little unknown school district.



The society provided many docents and guides during the recent Ribbon Cutting at the Vail Headquarters special event day on Saturday, July 16. Hundreds of people attended this significant celebration, years in the making.

## Major Milestone for Temecula with Ribbon Cutting at Vail Headquarters

Visitors and guests from all around the Southern California area, as well as friends and Vail family members were among the many who came to witness the “ribbon cutting” celebration. A small contingent from the Empire Ranch area in Vail, Arizona were present, along with Vail family descendants to share with others the thrill of the day, which was to witness the realization of a long time dream for many. Especially elated were Darell & Rebecca Farnbach, and Rhine & Sandy Helzer who were part of the founding group for VaARRA.

After appropriate welcoming to all by dignitaries from both Riverside County, and the City of Temecula along with awards and certificates, those present were able to watch the symbolic “ribbon cutting” which included Jerry Tessier, the owner/developer from Arteco Partners in Pomona; our own Darell Farnbach, Chuck Washington representing our district with the County Board of Supervisors, and a member of the Riverside County Economic Development Association (EDA).

Attendees were able to see the inside of many of the structures, as well as historic displays that will become part of the permanent atmosphere of the ranch. Stagecoach rides were free during the afternoon, and other activities included live music, games and activities for children, demonstrations by the Temecula Valley Gunfighters, and of course food.

## *In Memoriam*

### **-- He Passed This Way --**

In mid-July all of Temecula was saddened by word that Jimmy Moore had passed away at his home after suffering a heart attack. Jimmy is survived by his wife of 61 years, Peg.

Born in Fort Smith, Ark., Jimmy served in the U.S. Army, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Most people in Temecula knew Jimmy as the leader and “face” of the Temecula Cityhood campaign that took place prior to the 1989 incorporation and city name vote. Jimmy had been adamant that Temecula retain its historic name and to not adopt one of the Rancho California or Rancho Temecula alternatives being proposed.

In addition to his many years of service to the community, and active membership in our Society as both board member and Past President — Jimmy kept busy and enjoyed the travels he and Peg embarked on yearly. He and Peg were also regulars at music events at the “Merc” in Old Town.

Indeed, Jimmy Moore passed this way, left his mark . . . and will certainly be missed.

## **Smile!**

### **You're on . . . Amazon!**

AmazonSmile is a way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same prices and selections as Amazon.com, but through the AmazonSmile Foundation, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.

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The Temecula Valley Historical Society is registered with AmazonSmile to receive donations, so if you occasionally shop at Amazon, please consider making your purchases through AmazonSmile with the Temecula Valley Historical Society as your selected charity.

# **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Every Sunday** — Sunday Funday at the Vail Headquarters. Noon to 5 p.m. Rides, demonstrations & activities. Consider volunteering.

**Tuesday, Aug. 2** — 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The inaugural Farmer's Market at the Vail Headquarters. Will be weekly event on Tuesdays.

**Wednesday, Aug. 17** — 10 a.m. Memorial Service and Celebration of Life for Jimmy Moore, at Old Town Community Theater. Reception to follow.

**Friday, Aug. 19** — 9 a.m. Meet at Red Barn for Field Trip to Western Science Center in Hemet. See brief announcement with more details on page 5.

**Monday, Aug. 22** — Regular Monthly Program and Meeting of TVHS. Meet & Greet at 5:30 p.m., Program at 6 p.m. will be Nick Cataldo presenting 'The Cajon Pass'. Nick has done extensive research on the history of the Cajon Pass, he has hiked it all. He will take us on a virtual journey. Nick has authored many books, including one on the history of the Earp Family, who resided in San Bernardino.

**Saturday, Sept. 17** — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Idyllwild Home Tour, tickets available thru the Idyllwild Area Historical Society. See the Story on Page 5 about this opportunity.

## **Moreno Valley Hears Historic Route 395 Presentation**



On Sunday, July 17 Jeffery Harmon was the featured speaker at the Annual Potluck of the Moreno Valley Historical Society. This year they had approximately 50 folks in attendance for the event, one of their largest groups for this event.

The Historic Route 395 PowerPoint presentation was well received. After the presentation members bought a total of 4 Historic Route 395 signs from the Society's inventory of small souvenir signs. Good job Jeffery.

# Volunteers Needed

Looking for something fun to do on Sundays? Come on down to the History Center / Vail Headquarters and volunteer . . . to help promote local history; get locals enthused about our Vail Ranch heritage; and also have a good time.

We have an ongoing need for volunteers to staff the History Center to sell tickets for train and stagecoach rides and to answer questions for visitors.

## WHEN:

Every Sunday from Noon to 5:00 pm

## WHERE:

Little Temecula History  
Center/Vail Headquarters

You are welcome to dress in period costume . . . visitors love that . . . however, costume dress is not required.

Let us know if you are interested . . . it should be lots of fun.

Check out this website for Vail Headquarters!  
<http://vailhq.com>

It is very colorful and talks about all the new vendors at the Ranch and activities that will be happening.

Contact us thru:

Sue Blanch

[snb4me@hotmail.com](mailto:snb4me@hotmail.com) or  
[info@vailranch.org](mailto:info@vailranch.org)

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## Field Trip Announcement

A field trip is planned for Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> to the Western Science Center in Hemet. It is located at 2345 Searl Pkwy. near where Searl Pkwy intersects with Domenigoni Pkwy. We will meet in the parking lot by the Red Barn at 9:00 a.m., leaving at 9:15, which should get us to the Western Science Center by 10:00 a.m. Car pooling will be available. Cost will be between \$5 to \$6.50 per person depending on the total number in our party. The entire tour will be indoors and air conditioned. Please contact Phil Washum, events coordinator at 951-201-0020 or e-mail at [pcwashum@verizon.net](mailto:pcwashum@verizon.net).

## IDYLLWILD HOME TOUR

(On your own)

The Idyllwild Area Historical Society is holding their annual home tour on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The Tickets are \$20/person and are available at 9:30 a.m. on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Idyllwild Monument on Village Center Drive, or at the Idyllwild Area Historical Society Museum at 54470 North Circle Drive (corner of Oakwood) in Idyllwild. There are FIVE homes on tour, ranging from a vintage vacation cabin to a brand new residence. To whet your appetite, the tour includes a 70-year-old cabin overlooking Strawberry Creek; and an 80-year-old "tiny house" with bedrooms reminiscent of Pullman Railroad cars; a home that harks back to the Old West of Hollywood films; a house that features a stone-walled garden that transports visitors to jolly old England; and lastly, an expansive modern residence complete with endless mountain views. Refreshments will be available at the Idyllwild Historical Museum throughout the day.

For information, send an email to:

[info@idyllwildhistory.org](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.org). Or visit their website at [www.idyllwildhistory.org](http://www.idyllwildhistory.org).

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## Living History

NOTABLE WOMAN OF TEMECULA, Jean Bethell, who was Erle Stanley Gardner's secretary (portrayed by Julie Gilbert), will do a performance for a private group at the Ronald Roberts Library on Pauba Road in Temecula on Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. This performance is not open to the public.

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## — Membership News —

### Welcome New Members

Patricia Jennings

Mindy Johnson

Richard & Sue Sorg

### Thanks for renewing your membership

Dale Garcia



Sarah Lavin and Bonnie Martland share a moment after Sarah was presented with a certificate noting she was recipient of one of the Scholarships that the Society provides each year.

### **Sarah Lavin, Scholarship Recipient Receives her Certificate and Meets the Society**

Since Sarah Lavin had commitments outside the country, she was unable to attend last month's "meet the scholars" program, where we had an opportunity to meet two of the other recipients. She promised to attend our July program and to personally thank the Society.

Sarah went to Temecula Valley High School where she carried a higher than a 4.0 GPA. Sarah participated in band and was a member of the National Honor Society. She also formed an organization to raise money to fight cancer. A wonderful writer, she was planning to major in English and minor in history. However, her love of history has convinced her to reverse plans and major in history and minor in English. She will be attending the University of San Francisco in September. She plans to pursue her masters and doctorate degrees and become a college history professor. Her early discovery that she is a descendant to American patriot Patrick Henry, and a distant relative to George Washington may have helped spark her interest in history. Sarah expressed her heartfelt thank you to the society for her \$1000 scholarship and promises to keep us up to date on her progress.

## ***Dear Members,***

Local School districts will be starting school this month. The Temecula Valley Historical Society gave four \$1000 scholarships to graduating Temecula and Murrieta students last school year thanks to the generosity of our members in both donations and by participating in our fund raising activities. I'm sure many parents are looking forward to sending their young scholars off to a new school year; but for our TVHS Scholarship committee it signals that it is once again time for us to start planning some fund raising activities for the coming school year. The focus of our scholarship program is to help local graduating seniors who are planning to major in history, or a history related field with their initial college expenses. The scholarship committee (Bonnie Martland, Lynn Cude', Cheryl Cady, Suzanne Dechert, and Elaine Culverhouse) are asking for society members' to put our collective heads together and come up with some thoughts for possible fundraising activities or events. If you have any thoughts, please let us know. And if you are interested in participating on the committee, also please let us know.

***Bonnie Martland***

Chair, TVHS Scholarship Committee

**In Addition to the "help" and ideas requested by Bonnie above, please remember to send in your appropriate content items for the Monthly Newsletter to Dick Fox. Always in need of short stories, poems, items & ideas. Let's hear from everyone.**



## **- 100 Years Ago - Vera & Vernon Knott were born**

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Knott are rejoicing over the arrival of lovely twin babies, boy and girl, born August 11.  
*(From the August 18, 1916 issue of Lake Elsinore Valley Press.)*