

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

October 2016
Volume 16 Issue 10

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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www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org



Special pyramid tomb for Hi Jolly, made of multicolored petrified wood and quartz. It was dedicated on Jan. 4, 1903. Thirty-three years later the Arizona Highway Department came along and cemented a bronze plaque to the tomb, telling Hi Jolly's story.

U.S. Army History in Southwest

“Hi Jolly” and the U.S. Camel Corps

Compiled from multiple sources by Julie Gilbert

In Quartzsite, Arizona, an odd monument stands just off Highway 95. Erected in 1935, its inscription reads: “The last camp of Hi Jolly.” A pyramid crowned with a copper camel, it seems out of place in the desert of western Arizona. But it stands as a testament to the unusual experience a group of strangers brought to the American west in the mid-19th century.

Hadji Ali (corrupted to “Hi Jolly” by the Americans), the man honored by the monument, landed via ship in Indianola, Texas, on March 14th, 1856, with six fellow Arabians and 34 dromedary camels. The group’s arrival was the culmination of a proposal introduced by then-Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, to solve the ongoing problems the government had been experiencing in transportation and communication across the deserts of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. With efforts using horses and mules proving mostly unsuccessful, Davis had advocated to President Franklin Pierce that importing camels could be the solution to the desired expansion of the Southwest, and Congress appropriated \$30,000 for the project. (Another shipment of 44 camels was imported the following year.)

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... “Hi Jolly, and the U.S. Camel Corps”

So from Indianola, the troupe set out bound for Camp Verde (now in Arizona), outside San Antonio. Arriving there by August 27th, they worked to train the camels and soldiers who would accompany the caravan on its first undertaking: a scouting expedition to survey a wagon road that would run from Fort Defiance, New Mexico, across the desert and Colorado river into California. Chosen to lead this expedition was Lieutenant Edward Beale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada.

Learning only after the fact the nature of his assignment, Beale initially protested vehemently at being encumbered with the camels. However, it was impressed upon him that the government had gone to great time and expense to acquire and train the camels, so Beale finally relented. Traveling in a caravan that included 120 animals, 12 wagons and 44 men – including “Hi Jolly” - they set out on June, 1857. Upon reaching the Colorado River – a distance of over 1,200 miles - Beale’s camel sentiments had significantly shifted. Writing to Jefferson Davis, he said “I have subjected these...noble brutes...to trials which no other animal could possibly have endured. I believe...I speak for every man in our party when I say there is not one of them who would not prefer the most indifferent of our camels to four of our best mules.”

He noted they carried an unheard-of 700 pounds each, didn’t need grass but could eat any and all desert brush, could go up to 36 hours without water, and were “impossible to stampe”. They were, he wrote, “the most docile, patient, and easily managed creatures in the world.”

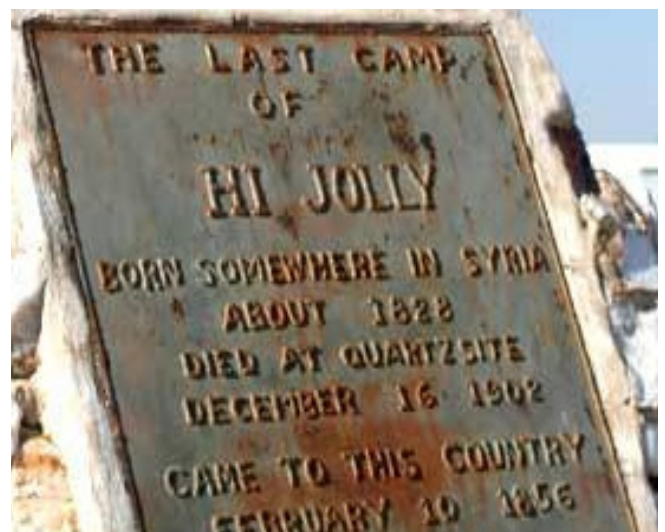
From Beale’s Crossing (so named later), the expedition headed across the Mojave Desert to San Bernardino, following the U.S. surveyor’s trails. From here, Beale decided to surprise the town of Los Angeles – then a flat, dusty little pueblo of adobe houses, populated by about 1,500 people. With 56 miles to cover, they left at 7:00 a.m. via the stagecoach road, and arrived by 3:00 that afternoon. On the outskirts of town, they stopped for “Hi Jolly” to get into his colorful native costume, complete with tiny bells. The entourage then made a memorable entrance into Los Angeles, with throngs of curious natives following them excitedly around town.

After two days of this fervor, the drivers again set off. Following the Camino Real to the San Fernando Mission, then turned toward Fort Tejon – a military post off what is now the Interstate 5 Grapevine – where they successfully arrived. By 1858, Fort Tejon had 25 camels and Camp Verde had about 50. In his annual report to Jefferson Davis in 1858, Beale recommended an appropriation to purchase a thousand camels more. However, his request was denied. Despite their success, the camels’ reception in the west began to cool for a variety of reasons. First, camels could not work in harmony with mules and horses, which balked and bolted when they crossed paths with camels. Also, Congress was also occupied with slavery troubles, and the beginning of the Civil War. In spring 1861, Camp Verde was captured by the Confederates, and many of the camels were released into the wild where they established feral populations. (When Union Troops recaptured the fort in early 1865, there were estimated to be more than a hundred camels at the camp, but there may have been others roaming the countryside.)

By the late 1860’s, both camels and cameleers became scattered throughout the west, and in 1866, the U.S. government sold off the remainder of the camel corps to zoos, circuses, and freighting companies for \$31 a head. In addition, many were also released into the wild. They continued to be used sporadically throughout the west, including as pack animals for a large salt transportation company in Nevada in the 1860’s, and in British Columbia during the Cariboo gold rush. But mule trains crossing the desert dispersed in panic as camels approached, creating such a problem that Nevada passed a law in 1875 making it illegal for camels to be on public roads, and it wasn’t uncommon for men to shoot camels on sight.

As for “Hi Jolly”, wandering between Army work, mule handling, and prospecting for much of his later life, he lamented the loss of his camels. He spent time in California and Arizona, married, divorced, and eventually settled in Quartzsite. Sadly, he was denied a pension from the U.S Army because of his status as a foreigner, and survived his later years through begging and handouts.

He died penniless on December 16th, 1902, and lies buried under the monument in Quartzsite. His last surviving camel died at a Los Angeles zoo in 1934, but reports of feral camels in the California and Arizona deserts persisted into the 1940’s — a poignant end to an exotic chapter in American history.



How much do you know about our local history?

Another post office question: Some of the early authors of Temecula history have mentioned the Pujol Post Office with uncertainty as to its location. Where was it and how do we know?

Answer on page 4.

*** MEMBERSHIP NOTES ***

Welcome New Members

BRAD & CORI DEHORE
JINNY NIEDRAUER

THANK YOU for renewing your membership:

Malcolm & Loretta Barnett
Louise Roripaugh Beesley
Kathleen Casas
Robert & Elaine Culverhouse
Walt Dixon
Darell and Rebecca Farnbach
Dale Garcia
Gary & Judy Giles
Jeffery Harmon
Rhine & Sandy Helzer
Roger & Carol Honberger
Kent & Penelope Johnson
Bob & Suzie Kent
James Lawton
Duane & Judy Preimsberger
Dale & Ann Silimperi
Rosie Vanderhaak
Phil & Char Washum
Steven Williamson
George & Mary Ziegler

LIVING HISTORY

Two members of The Notable Women of Temecula (Loretta Barnett presenting Bessie Barnett, and Pam Grender portraying Helen Hunt Jackson) will be performing on October 10th for the National Association of Retired Federal Employees at the North Town Hall in Sun City.

SAVE THE DATE !

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2016

The Historical Society's Annual Dinner will be held at the City's Conference Center beginning at 5:30 p.m. for Meet & Greet. Invite your family and friends. There will be a catered buffet dinner, raffled gift baskets and a silent auction for decorative items, artwork and memorabilia.

Plenty of mixing, mingling and lots of laughter during a great evening with friends. Invitations will be in the mail soon.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR WEDNESDAY, OCT. 19th.

The Temecula Valley Historical Society is offering a tour of the Myrtle Creek Botanical Gardens, including General Sherman's Plantation House in Fallbrook on Wednesday, October 19th, beginning at 10:00 a.m. The tour fee is \$7.00 per person. You may have lunch on your own at either the Myrtle Creek Restaurant where they offer delicious sandwiches and of course the "not to be missed" Myrtle Berry PIE or have lunch in the Plantation House!

We will carpool and plan to leave the parking lot across from the RED BARN at 9:15 a.m.

RESERVATIONS are important, please call Phil Washum at (951) 201-0020 or contact him via email at pcwashum@verizon.net ASAP.

100 Years Ago

In the very near future a newspaper will be started at the Murrieta Hot Springs. The paper will be called "The Desert Stem-winder". It will be edited by Mr. Austin, and John Magee will be his helper. The editor promises to have all kinds of columns one in particular, the devil's column, but in our opinion the name is not appropriate for any kind of newspaper in our beautiful valley. (From Lake Elsinore Valley Press – October, 1916)

Answer to “What Do You Know About Local History”

While last month, the location of the first Temecula Post Office required considerable circumstantial evidence to document its location, the Pujol Post Office question was quite easy to answer with primary sources.

The microfilms from the National Archives with the records of the post offices in San Diego County (before Riverside County was established) provided most of the answers to the questions about the two, not just one, of the Pujol Post Offices. Those included copies of the applications for the establishment of post offices, the appointment of the postmasters, and records of when the post offices opened and closed. Those applications identified the two locations in terms of township, range, and section, and roughly where in the section. The location was also clear in terms of their locations near roads and the railroad.

The first Pujol Post Office opened on 24 May 1880, with William G. McDuff as Postmaster. That location was east of I-15, just north of Armstrong's Garden Center, in that low area where the car dealerships have some of their cars. The location is across I-15 from Guadalajara's. The Southern Emigrant Trail passed the first Pujol Post office and then crossed what is now Guadalajara's parking lot on its way to the Laguna Station (Lake Elsinore). This first Pujol Post Office was discontinued on 22 November 1881.

The second "re-established" Pujol Post Office opened on 5 June 1882, with Macedonia Machado as Postmaster. That location was west of I-15, south of Winchester, in an area now bordered by Rio Nedo, Aqua Vista, and Avenida Alvarado streets. This location was described in the records as being just east of the railroad at "Temecula Station." On 3 January 1883, Juan Murrieta was appointed Postmaster of this second Pujol Post Office, but five days later, on 8 January 1883, this second Pujol Post Office was discontinued and the mail was delivered to Juan Murrieta's nearby home. While this may seem odd, the other part of the story is that also on 8 January 1883, the Post Office at the Wolf's Store with Louis Wolf as Postmaster was moved to the Temecula Station. So Wolf was taking over as Postmaster at what had been the second Pujol Post Office site and the new name was the Temecula Station.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Saturday, October 1 thru October 23 — New gallery exhibit “Cloth & Paper” textiles show on display; 3D textiles, quilts, and mixed media book art on display by artist Allyson Allen.

Monday, October 10 — Genealogical society Open House at Community Center, City Hall. 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Multiple organizations will have tables with displays and literature.

Monday, October 24 — Regular Monthly Program and Meeting of TVHS. Meet & Greet at 5:30 p.m., Program at 6 p.m. with our own Bob Kent presenting "Murray Schloss and the Utopian Community 'Heart O' The Hills' " .

Tuesday, November 1 — 6 p.m. at the Murrieta Public Library, 8 Town Square, Murrieta. John Hunneman, noted local journalist will talk on the history and changes in Murrieta.

Monday, November 14 — 6 p.m. Murrieta Valley Historical Society regular meeting at Historic Hunt House, 41810 Juniper St., Murrieta. Jeff Harmon to speak on History of Hwy. 395.

Friday, November 18 — Annual Dinner Meeting at City Hall Conference Center, 6:00 p.m. Entertainment, Installation of Board of Directors for 2017, Silent Auction, as always Fund Raising Baskets. Mark Your Calendars for good time.

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 — 1:30 p.m. at the Ronald Roberts Temecula Library on Pauba Road, The Notable Women of Temecula will perform. This is in conjunction with National Women's History Month, and is open to public.

Monday, March 27, 2017 — Join the Temecula Valley Historical Society for a presentation by The Notable Women of Temecula:
Sue Sorg as Catherine Fernald
Lynn Cudé as Edna Swanguen
Mindy Johnson presenting Maria Apis.

Come and learn what life was like for these women who were living in the Temecula Valley in the 1800s.

Sometimes there is more . . .

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Sometimes there is more to the story and sometimes we don't hear about it for a long time after an event passes. At times we only learn about it a long time after all the principal characters of the story have passed away.

I just learned additional information about two of the characters involved in the 1930 Temecula bank robbery, thanks to Roger Honberger, the son the late Agnes Freeman Honberger. Agnes was the teller when the bank was robbed.

Most of us know the storyline, how Miguel Diaz, a ranch hand for the Vails decided to rob the bank to finance flying lessons. He locked Agnes, who was his boss's daughter, and the bank manager John Chisholm into the vault before escaping in a waiting car. Chisholm had slid a screwdriver into the door of the vault and shortly after Diaz left the two exited easily. Chisholm alerted John McSweeney who was lathered for a shave in Ole Larson's barber chair next door, and they sped down the road firing in hot pursuit. Diaz was imprisoned for three years for his crime.

So what happened next? Let's look at Agnes' letters: (edited for clarity) --

Written in July 1981 from John Chisholm of Spanaway, Washington, the grandson of the bank manager, "I've found out that you were in the bank the day of the robbery and were locked into the safe with my grandfather. I know very little about Diaz, but do have one letter that he sent to my grandfather with a poem on the other side. I also have the Colt .45, the gold ring and the watch that the First National Bank gave my grandfather upon the capture of Diaz and the money."

In November 1981, "My grandfather first went to Temecula around 1927 for his health (bronchitis). Upon arriving he linked up with Hugo Guenther and worked at the Murrieta Hot Springs awaiting a posting at the First National Bank. I would like to know the date when he started working at the bank and why and when he quit working there.

CONGRATULATIONS

. . . and Kudos are in order for the Murrieta Valley Historical Society. They have received their 501(c)3 designation and are finishing all other paperwork. They have established a Board of Directors, and are now having regularly scheduled meetings. As part of a community awareness of their presence 11 families were honored with Lifetime Memberships at a recent gathering. Jeffery Harmon is their President. Well done folks.

"He was appointed a Special Deputy Sheriff for Riverside County from July 1931 through July 1934, Badge #245. I have the badge and ID card.

I heard he was married three times but can only come up with two names, Ruth McCusland and Helen Lowell. If you know of another could you let me know?

My grandfather died at 34 years of age in Riverside County Hospital on July 17, 1935. He is buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Los Angeles, Marker #753, Lot #1149, Lawn Myrtle, Gate #14.

As for my father, also named John Chisholm, he went into the army in March 1943 and became very sick in England in 1944 and lost a lung. The doctors said he would be lucky to live for ten more years. He lived twenty more years and died at age 40 in May 1964. He is buried in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

I was only twelve years old when he died and he'd spent most of those twelve years in the hospital. He went to college to study accounting just before he died. He married my mom Mary Silva in 1949. They had six children. I was the second oldest, the others were Mary, Joseph, Jack, Sue and Jerry.

P.S. Please stay in touch with me as you are the only one I know who knew my grandfather."

With the letter he sent a typed transcription of a letter to his grandfather in February 1932 from "Michael Diaz", #8933 in San Quentin Prison:

"Mi amigo - Snow can be seen from the prison, lying on Mt. Tamalpais and also in large quantities on the surrounding foothills, rather unusual I believe. It does my eyes good to see it, for it spells prosperity to all. On back of this page you will find my poem 'The Desert', a subject with which I am very familiar. A great part of my early life was spent in and around Death Valley and the Mojave Desert and also the hills and plains of my native state Nevada. Desert etiquette was my bread of life at times in the past and many times I have been a victim to its grim and relentless laws, but it makes you game, and fills you with a love of respect and appreciativeness, a fearless glory of winning against untold odds that which brings peace and contentment to a manly heart.

When I sit in my cell and allow myself to drift back out yonder amongst the sand dunes and the hot winds fanning my face and the freedom of it all, those magic pictures coming and going that only God's hand can reproduce, the wild and rugged be why of it all, Lord, I feel it consuming my all, and how it calls, ah."

He ends in Spanish "God bless you, all of you."

Diaz' poem fills 2 ½ typed pages, typed by John Chisholm. An excerpt (the first and last two stanzas of thirteen) are on the next page and entitled "The Desert".

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from story on Page 5)

The Desert

Dedicated to Death Valley and Mojave Desert of California

By Michael Diaz, in San Quentin

*"I have learned to love the desert, with its dry and battered face,
With its mysteries and its silence, its vast and open space,
Its gold and purple sunsets, are my life's one great despair,
To write on printed paper the scenes I have seen there.
Though I've thirsted, and I've sweated on your burning shifting sands,
And we fought you to a showdown with my own hard fighting hands,
Though you've choked me with your dust, you taught me to be game,
Though you've burnt me to a cinder, I love you just the same.*

*When you hear the sands a singing 'tis the echo and the strain,
Of the music of a nation that lies buried 'neath the plain.
So the stars they tell me stories of a world, long long ago,
How a nation lived and perished on the burning sands I know.
And I listen to the mysteries that I'm eager for to hear,
As I wander across the wasteland and the face I love so dear.*

*You've put your brand upon me as only the desert can,
You've stole my heart and soul as you have from many a man.
So I'll watch the sunset's glory, with the purple shadows blend;
Till I pass beyond the shadows, in the valley, at the end."*

From the letters we learned that John Chisholm died five years after the robbery, we know where he was buried and about the family he left behind.

Agnes Freeman married, raised Roger, and worked with her husband Francis in the various businesses they owned, including their Signal Oil service station in Perris. During World War II Agnes worked at Camp Haun as an office manager for the transportation department sending troops to the Pacific campaign. She lived a long and happy life, finally passing away when she was well into her nineties and was buried in the Temecula cemetery.

It would be interesting to know what became of Miguel/Michael Diaz. Did he ever learn to fly or did he leave San Quentin to wander forever in his beloved desert? Some reports say he found employment at a ranch in Imperial Valley. Did he marry or have children? Where are his mortal remains?

*"In three words I can sum up everything
I've learned about life:
It goes on."*

— Robert Frost

President's Message

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Paul Macarro from the Pechanga Cultural Resources Department who gave a comprehensive presentation of Native American Rock Art at our September meeting. He showed images depicting the sensitive nature of rock art in areas of population growth and the encroachment of tract homes. I think we all gained a better understanding of these legacy items in our valley. Thanks also to Myra Masiel – Zamora and Lisa Woodward for facilitating his presentation.

Following Paul's presentation on September 26, Dale Garcia spoke to the TVHS board of directors about the Mills Act, a topic some of us have discussed but have not fully comprehended. Dale, who works in the field of real estate titles, did extensive research and provided board members with detailed paperwork explaining it.

The Mills Act was drafted by James Mills, a former State Senator, in 1976 to provide a monetary incentive for ownership, preservation, maintenance and restoration of designated historic properties. In our efforts as a society to identify, protect and preserve historic properties for perpetuity, this is a benefit we want to make available to owners who are the caretakers of these precious commodities in our communities.

In Temecula there are twenty-four properties that were identified as historical in a 1994 survey. Since we are a community that has now come of age we need to do the right thing to help the property owners by giving them a reduced property tax base, which is exactly what the Mills Act does.

In the very near future we will be giving presentations to the Temecula, Murrieta, and Menifee city councils to educate them regarding the value of the Mills Act and we will encourage their passing legislation to put it into practice. In good faith we believe our communities will want to do this as we live in good communities that have the best interests of their people at heart.

It may be that in the coming weeks we will alert you to petitions that you may sign to show your support for the Mills Act to be put into effect in your community.

Let's take what we know about our historic past and provide protection for these properties, whether those with Native rock art and sacred sites or vestiges of our pioneer past. Our city councils want to do the right thing, we just need to acquaint them with the Mills Act so they can put it into practice.

Rebecca Farnbach