

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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An Area Treasure . . .

Why the Mission Inn?

By Steve Lech

Often, visitors to Riverside marvel at the historic Mission Inn hotel, one of many nationally-landmarked historical sites in that city. One question that frequently comes up when discussing the hotel is – Why is a hotel like the Mission Inn in Riverside? What made Riverside have such a special building? The answer, of course, is not easy, but let's explore some of the reasons why.

First, Riverside was a very wealthy community. In 1873, as all local historians in the region know, Eliza Tibbets imported two genetic mutant orange trees that seemed doomed to failure. As it turned out, they thrived in Riverside's climate, and by 1880, Riverside had a source of wealth almost unimaginable. The Washington Navel orange was sweet, seedless, and thick-skinned, so it could be packed and shipped to the population centers of the east coast. From 1880 to 1939, the amount of land dedicated to growing oranges continued to expand. In 1895, according to the Bradstreet Report, Riverside had the highest per-capita income in the country, and that wealth continued for years to come.

The fact that Riverside was the nucleus of the burgeoning orange industry made that city a mecca for tourists. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tourists from the new middle class wanted to travel and see America for themselves. Eager to invest in land and new settlements, these people came by railroad, enticed by advertising brochures, letters from loved ones already here, and a plethora of magazine articles, color postcards, and of course, the myth surrounding Ramona. When they got here to Southern California, they wanted all the comforts of home – and a new generation of hoteliers was here to accommodate them.

Unfortunately for Riverside, despite its wealth and place in the lore of Southern California, there were no grand hotels in that city. The old Riverside House, where Helen Hunt Jackson had stayed, had long since folded, leaving



Why the Mission Inn? (Continued from Page 1)

the institutional-looking Rowell Hotel, the Hollyrood Hotel (little more than a room-and-board style hotel), and the Glenwood Hotel, a slightly more upscale place catering mainly to a more working class clientele and operated by Frank Augustus Miller.

In the 1890s, Frank Miller decided to do something about the hotel situation in Riverside. Having tried many business ventures in Riverside throughout the 1870s and 1880s, he decided to continue with the hotel business he had purchased from his father in 1880. In 1894, having just helped to successfully launch Riverside County, he began to envision a new, grand hotel for Riverside. He and other civic leaders saw what was happening – the wealthy tourists would come to Riverside and marvel at the orange groves, but would then head to Los Angeles, Pasadena, Redondo Beach, and even San Diego to stay, leaving Riverside to only hope to keep those tourist dollars. Therefore, in 1894, he had his architect design a new grand hotel in the likeness of the Hotel Colorado in Colorado Springs. Funding woes kept that hotel from seeing the light of day for nearly 10 years.

By 1901 - 1902, Miller was in much more of a position to fund a new hotel, thanks in large part to Pacific Electric Railway magnate Henry Huntington. By this time, though, Miller had been influenced by another architect that would expound upon a rising new architectural movement.

Arthur Benton, a Los Angeles-based architect, had seen the influences bringing tourists and tourist dollars to Southern California, and had become convinced that much of that draw had to do with the old, crumbling missions of California's Spanish past. Benton saw in the missions the wherewithal to attract tourists, and admonished investors in Southern California to construct buildings that looked like the missions so that Southern California, a unique place on America's landscape, would have its own unique style of architecture. Benton and Miller became friends through several channels, and by 1902, Benton had convinced Miller of the commercial efficacy of building a grand hotel not in the style of those in Boston or New York, but in a style more reminiscent of San Juan Capistrano or Santa Barbara. Miller agreed, hired Benton to design such a structure, and by the spring of 1902, the foundations for what would become known as California's Mission Hotel were being installed brick by brick.

The New Glenwood Hotel, as the Mission Inn was first known, opened with quite a fanfare in January 1903, and immediately became a tourist draw. Over the years, it would be known as the Glenwood Mission Inn, and finally, simply the Mission Inn as it's known today. It is recognized as the leading example of Mission Revival architecture in Southern California from a time when Southern Californians looked to their Spanish and Mexican-era past for identity, both in architecture and romantic lore.

So, why do we have the Mission Inn in Riverside? It's a combination of many factors at work in the late 19th and 20th centuries – the immense wealth of a community that was attracting more and more investment, coupled with an idealistic booster who saw a tremendous niche that had to be filled, wrapped up in the lore of early Southern California history that was centered around a romantic vision of its Spanish and Mexican past that itself was being glamorized in its own, home-grown architectural movement.

To learn more about the Mission Inn, I encourage you to take one of the daily tours offered through the Mission Inn Foundation. The background material I've covered in this article, coupled with the detailed descriptions of Frank Miller, his life, and the many varied facets of the Inn's history described during the tours will give you a much clearer idea of what was taking place at the time, and why the Mission Inn is so prominent in Riverside's and Southern California's unique history.



Mission Inn Docent Led Tour Scheduled by TVHS

The Temecula Valley Historical Society has scheduled a docent led tour of the Riverside Mission Inn, for Wednesday March 15, at 10 a.m. Tour fee is \$11 per person.

Contact Phil Washum at 951-201-0020 to verify that space is still available. Plan to meet at the Red Barn at 8:30 a.m. and we will carpool, leaving at 8:45 a.m.

Lunch is on your own at any of the local restaurants in Riverside. A great opportunity to learn more about this regional treasure.

Did You Know?

1862 Inauguration of Governor Stanford Upset by Flood Waters

According to *Scientific American* the only megaflood to strike the American West in recent history occurred during the winter of 1861-1862, striking California with the brunt of its fury. Flooding so intense that the central valley of California (300 miles long and 20 miles wide), was turned into a massive inland waterway, took thousands of human lives, and forced the state into bankruptcy since its economy was destroyed.

On January 10, 1862, California's new Governor-elect Leland Stanford was inaugurated while a massive flood broke through the levees surrounding Sacramento. The floodwaters covered the city in 10 feet of brown, debris-filled water.

Travel was difficult and Stanford had to travel by rowboat from the Governor's Mansion to the Statehouse for a rushed ceremony. On January 22, the California Legislature had to be moved to San Francisco, where it stayed for months as Sacramento and surrounds dried out.

In 1861, farmers and ranchers had prayed for rain after two exceptionally dry decades. When their prayers were answered a series of monstrous Pacific storms came – one after another – into the West coast from Mexico to Canada.

Los Angeles received 66 inches of rain that year, more than 4 times the normal annual amount spreading muddy water for miles across the area.

— Tour On Your Own —

Adobe Home Tour will be March Event in Escondido

The Sixth Annual Adobe Home Tour will be held on Sunday, March 19 from 11 am to 4 pm. This event will be a benefit for the Escondido History Center. Three adobe homes in Escondido, and two in Poway will be on the tour. Cost will be \$25 each, or \$20 each with a group of five or more. For more information refer to adobehometour.com or contact Gretchen Pelletier at 619-733-4977.

County History Symposium To Be Held Sat. March 4th At Historic Hemet Theater

The Riverside County History Symposium will be at the Historic Hemet Theater beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday, March 4th.

The \$30 registration includes four informative presentations, breakfast and lunch. There are registration forms for the symposium at the Little Temecula History Center visit this website:

www.RivCoHistorySymposium.weebly.com.

Our own Bob Kent will give a presentation on Luther Menifee Wilson and the Menifee Mining District.

Centennial Celebration

Museum to Host 100th Anniversary Event

A community barbecue tasting will be held at the *Chapel of Memories* located in Sam Hicks Monument Park in Old Town on Saturday, April 15, 2017 from 12 noon until 3 p.m. This 100th Anniversary event is to commemorate the fund-raising event held April 15, 1917 to raise the \$1,200 needed to pay off the construction loan for the original Saint Catherine's Catholic Church, which is today the restored *Chapel of Memories*.

The event will be co-hosted by the City of Temecula and the Temecula Valley Museum, Inc., a non-profit museum support group. This 100th Anniversary celebration will offer a barbeque tasting and birthday cake for \$1 per person, while supplies last. Drinks will be a \$1 as well. Live entertainment will be provided by the Second Hand Brass Band during the afternoon event, and the Chapel will be open for viewing. An activity will also be available for children.

"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Benjamin Franklin

President's Message

What is the Temecula Valley Historical Society all about? Maybe it is best for us to say what we are not about. We don't hound members for contributions. We don't have money tied up in a building, museum or archives. We don't have dull or dreary gatherings. So, that must mean that we have fun without a lot of encumbrance!

Well, yes, we have a good time socially at the beginning of our meetings and on our many tours. We have fun serving as volunteers on committees and at Vail Headquarters, doing research and preparing presentations.

Why do we have a historical society? Well, our little town of Temecula was growing and with all the new buildings we were concerned about keeping some of the old ones and we also wanted to compile stories to leave for future generations. So, in 2001 a group of us decided to form the organization. We incorporated in February 2001.

There was discussion of whether to be a commission or a society. If we chose to be a commission we would be linked to the City of Temecula, and as good as our city is, we wanted to be free to have opinions and actions without being dictated to by the city.

It was the right move. We have championed the cause for keeping several old buildings from demolition and have helped to find owners who are committed to keeping others historical. We have also lost a few battles, but at least we have a united voice to be heard and answered to.

Our collected stories appear in our monthly newsletters, which are now available for online viewing.

A focus we have right now is to encourage the Temecula City Council to enact the Mills Act that will reduce local tax liability to owners of historic properties. It is currently under study by the city and we are crossing our fingers and putting in a good word whenever we get a chance.

We are glad you are a member. You can be as involved as you want to be. Stop by for one of our presentations and you will find a friendly welcome and a good time.

Cordially,

Rebecca Farnbach

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every Sunday — Sunday Funday at the Vail Headquarters — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rides, demonstrations & activities. Consider volunteering. Don't forget Tuesday's Farmer's Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 4, 2017 — 8 a.m. Riverside County History Symposium at the Historic Hemet Theater. The \$30 registration includes four presentations, breakfast and lunch. See story on previous page.

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 — 1:30 p.m. In conjunction with National Women's History Month, Mindy Johnson will present Notable Woman, Maria Apis, a Luiseno woman who lived in Temecula during the 1800's. Lynn Cudé will portray Notable Woman, Ramona Wolf, who with her husband, Louis, owned and operated the Wolf Store Adobe. The performance will be held at the Ronald H. Roberts Temecula Public Library. It is open to the public and the program will last one hour.

Wednesday, March 15, 2017 — 10 a.m. TVHS will take A 1-1/2 hour docent led, slow-paced tour of the Riverside Mission Inn. Tour fee is \$11 per person. Meet at the Red Barn at 8:30 a.m. and we will carpool, leaving at 8:45 a.m. Lunch on your own at any of the local restaurants. A sign-up sheet will be at the Feb. 27th meeting, or call Phil Washum at (951) 201-0020.

Monday, March 27, 2017 — 6:00 p.m. monthly presentation & program by Dr. Anne Miller "Maria's Story: A Young Woman in Temecula in the Mid-1800s" about the life of Maria Apis. Regular board meeting to follow, public always welcome.

TVHS Meetings

Regular programs of the Temecula Valley Historical Society begin at 6 p.m. on the 4th Monday of each month at the Little Temecula History Center (Red Barn) next to Kohl's on Wolf Store Road.

-- Meet & Greet --

Prior to every TVHS monthly program, please join us for a "Meet & Greet" time at 5:30 p.m. for refreshments. We'd like to get to know you.

Help Needed with "Meet & Greet"
If you would like to get involved, please call Lynn at 695-0517 to help "Meet and Greet" guests at our monthly programs.

LIVING HISTORY PROGRAMS

Sponsored by the **Temecula Valley Historical Society**.
Available for speaking engagements – From twenty minute to one hour presentations.



NOTABLE WOMEN IN TEMECULA'S HISTORY

(Pictured: from left to right)

JEAN BETHELL: 1902 – 2002 (portrayed by **Julie Gilbert**)

Secretary to Erle Stanley Gardner, author of the Perry Mason mystery novels.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON: 1830 – 1885 (portrayed by **Pam Grender**)

Wife, mother, poet, author, activist, and reformer of Indian policy. Author of the book, *Ramona*.

FREDA KNOTT: 1895 – 1984 (portrayed by **Elaine Eshom**)

Wife, and mother, Temecula librarian and School Board trustee; Bible school teacher.

MARY JANE WELTY: 1840 – 1937 (portrayed by **Bonnie Martland**)

Homestead wife, mother, and pioneer traveler who owned and operated the Welty Hotel in Temecula.

ELENA COUTS DEAR: 1862 – 1952 (also portrayed by **Bonnie Martland**)

Descendant of a prominent Californio family; wife, and mother, who lived at both the Rancho Guajome Adobe and later at Rancho Santa Rosa.

To be announced: (portrayed by **Susan Sorg**)

YSABEL "BESSIE" BARNETT: 1879 – 1969 (presented by **Loretta Barnett**)

Wife, and mother, who was the first Caucasian child born and raised in the Temecula Valley.

MARIA APIS: 1830 – 1863 (presented by **Mindy Johnson**)

Wife, mother, and Luiseno Indian who inherited the Little Temecula Rancho.

RAMONA WOLF: 1846 – 1894 (portrayed by **Lynn Cudé**)

Wife and mother, who with her husband, Louis Wolf, managed the Wolf Store adobe in Temecula.

EDNA SWANGUEN: 1896 – 1973 (also portrayed by **Lynn Cudé**)

Wife and mother, who was Temecula's telephone operator from 1918 to 1961, and with her husband, Carl, operated Mrs. Hall's Café from 1939 to 1954.

For information, contact: Lynn Cudé at (951) 695-0517