

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

April 2017
Volume 17 Issue 4

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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This 1960's vintage photo of Mercantile Store on Main Street was taken from across the street in front of the Hotel Temecula. Mercantile is now known as "The Merc."

Out of the Past . . .

A 1965 View of Temecula

(Editor's Note: This was previously published in a 1965 issue of the Guenther's Gazette, a monthly publication originated at Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs.

The author is unknown. It is being reprinted here with permission of the Guenther family, and appears here as it was published without any editing.)

Six quick miles south of Guenther's, this scattered collection of buildings dreams under a brassy sun and leans with habit against the insistent wind.

Not infrequently some feature writer for one of the Metropolitan dailies discovers the place and shortly thereafter Temecula is dramatized in a Sunday issue.

The treatment is usually typical Sunday Supplement. First a word picture of the place followed by a brief history. Research for this comes from a bartender who's been here six weeks, or some equally reliable source; a little hearty humor calculated to amuse Metropolitan readers and escalate their urban superiority, and possibly a quick delineation of quasi town character presumably typical and suffering from a beer hangover. This heavy nonsense if plentifully larded with dramatic shots by a staff photographer and a complete page has been devoted to this "Historic" hamlet.

Pleasantly enough, Temecula is not on the main highway. A quick right hand turn takes you off this busy thoroughfare descends swiftly to a narrow valley and swinging left again guides you thru the main portion of the town. You are on Front St.; and it has born this name since the township was plotted in the middle eighties.

The character of Temecula varies with each hurried tourist who scans the place in three quick minutes. It is a collection of sun warped shacks, scattered aimlessly around one vacant building which looks like, and indeed used to be a bank.

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. . . A 1965 View of Temecula

It is a town of the “Old West” with an historic aspect, “Wonder where Boot Hill could be?”

Sometimes it’s a quick look and “My goodness what a terrible place to live!”

Frequently some quiet loving soul sees it truly. A lovely narrow valley where a handful of fortunate people live. To themselves they say, “I’d like to live in a place like this.” But the sharp inward sigh tells the true story. They’d like to, but never will.

In a physical sense, Temecula is not neatly ordered. The small business district seems to have packaged itself, while the rest of the town sprawls in a comfortable clutter. A small creek, adequately bridged, divides Temecula and contributes much to its easy charm.

Fifty or sixty years ago this village was home to about 210 persons. Today the population is essentially the same, but quieter. Much.

Sixty years ago all the “brush poppers” from the neighboring ranches rode in on Saturday night.

Sometimes, before the serious business of the evening began, they even got haircuts. They gathered in the restaurant to eat tough fried steaks, stood for minutes in the dust to sip pleasantly at the town belles, glanced in at the livery stable to see if the hostler had comfortably stabled their mounts, then with these preliminaries attended, made for the town saloon.

Not properly a saloon for Temecula was legally dry, and their refreshment came from a “blind pig.”

These early years were often punctuated by brief bloody episodes generated in a swift flaming moment and fulfilled in a red haze of drunken anger.

Some of the buildings, theaters for these dramas, still stand. One, a corner place, bearing a large realtor’s sign, but still holding its flavor of a time gone, quietly dreams on the dusty sunlit street.

Early Temecula was much busier than now. We had a barber shop, a town photographer, bootmaker, a dance hall over the livery stable, a pool hall, bank and railroad. Now these enterprises are only memories.

The railroad! Ah, the railroad, complete with a red depot and a station master. Leaving Temecula on its way to Fallbrook, the roadbed followed thru a wild canyon which also contained the Temecula River.

Disregarding the sage advice of those who knew, they laid the track to close to the canyon floor, and the river, a sundried trickle in the summer, became on different occasions in winter, a raging torrent which poured with hell bent fury thru the canyon and twisted long sections of track like so much spaghetti.

This sort of thing happened with regularity, and reluctantly the roadbed was abandoned.

Sometimes, standing on the bank of the Santa Gertrudis in the pale moon light of a frosty winter night, I like to fancy I can hear the sharp drawn whistle of a Santa Fe engine and the distant echo, mourning down that lonely canyon route.

In a certain sense, Temecula has very little civic spirit. Other small towns so busily organize Chambers of Commerce, town hall meetings, erect the usual signs of “Watch so & so Grow”. Not Temecula.

The town is no larger now than it was 75 years ago. There were no sidewalks or street lights then, and none now, and the town couldn’t care less.

This is the way the majority want to live. Most of us are a low income group and we know that growth brings irritating regulation, conformity and always higher taxes. There is a phrase used by all the competitors in the outside “Rat Race”. It is called the “Good Life”. We have a definite idea what it means and to us the “Good Life” is a pain in the neck.

I have inferred that we are not push button minded.

Some of us know that flush toilets often let you down and consequently you will find many primitive, but practically fool proof “Out Houses” discreetly gracing the rear premises of many houses. Just in case?



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. . . A 1965 View of Temecula



Every home and business in Temecula has its own well. Some have electric pumps, others still rely on windmills. When the power fails, and it frequently does, the electric pumps have a pretty thin time, but the wind is with us always.

The Wind, leaving the sea coast thirty miles away, sings thru the mountain canyons gaining force in each quick mile. With the regularity of a summer Trade in reaches Temecula around 10 in the morning increasing thru the progressive day, until by late afternoon it is half a gale. Abruptly in early evening it stops, almost as if someone had closed a window. A phenomena that seldom fails and a benison to the town. Without this pouring tide of air Temecula would blister like any of its less fortunate neighbors.

I have said that we have little civic spirit, and I mean in the sense of pushing towns that place no value on quiet serenity. We are Mexican, Indian and Gringo and are closely knit together. We have a nodding acquaintance with many of our neighbor's closet skeletons, and perhaps we pick a few nits in private, but certainly we present a solid front to any outside influence that seeks to change our ways.

The most important social center is the General Store. Here at one time or another the whole town gathers, not as one group, but during a day's course almost everyone in Temecula will have paid a call to this cheerful Emporium. Often a purchase which would nominally take three or four minutes extends to an hour when several housewives meet fortuitously and exchange local news and village gossip. There is a warm interest and fellowship not to be found in any urban super market.

Without mention of the dogs my picture of the town would be sketchier than it is. One frequent visitor to the place jokingly remarked that he doubted if we had enough trees to meet their needs. This is debatable and I wouldn't care to come to any quick conclusion. They, the dogs, gather in amiable groups outside the door of the General Store and like the customers within, represent in a day's time the entire canine population. I am sometimes amused when some resident quickly scans this shifting group and audibly remarks, "Well, there's a newcomer, wonder who he is?"

So many years the people of Temecula have listened to the noisy clamor of progress and tiring of this senseless din have gone inside and closed their doors. I would – this could be always so, for I love the town the way it is. Each sun warped shack, the vacant buildings dreaming of the past, the tumble weeds careening down the dusty streets. I would not have it change, but the chimera of growth surrounds us and we stand so alone against the jackals from the urban jungles.

Now and Then . . .

Going to San Diego in the 1850s

Anne J. Miller

Going to San Diego today is quite easy most days, but can be rather trying on some days when the traffic is backed up or stopped due to an accident. Next time you are annoyed by the slow traffic and delays when you are going to San Diego, remember how it would have been many years ago.

Leaving from north of what is Temecula today in the 1850s meant taking the old trail from today's Murrieta, south along near, but not exactly, today's Jefferson Avenue. There was no Murrieta in those days. You would have passed homes and farms of some Native Americans. Cline and Moody's home was just west of Jefferson and just northwest of today's Winchester and Jefferson intersection. Continuing south near today's Jefferson, about where Guadalajara's Restaurant is, the trail crossed the freeway to the east into that low area where the car dealers store their extra vehicles. If there had been much rain recently, the trail might have been a little boggy in that area, not enough to stop your wagon, but slowing your trip a little. And then north of today's Armstrong's Nursery, the trail crossed back across I-15 toward today's McDonalds and into today's Old Town, but there was no Temecula in that area at that time. If you wonder why no one settled in the Old Town area, the next time you are in Old Town, notice how narrow that area is from east to west. There was no level area to raise crops and the occasional flooding of the creek would have always been a concern.

The trail continued through today's Old Town between Mercedes Street and Old Town Front Street, then crossed back across I-15 about where the Santiago overpass is and then south roughly along today's Ynez and continued south toward the intersection of Temecula Parkway and Pechanga Parkway. If you were going east to Temecula or southeast toward Aguanga, Oak Grove, or Warner's Ranch, at the Y in the trail, you would have taken the trail to the left. Because you were going to San Diego, you would continue south toward the Temecula Creek. As you were heading south toward the Temecula Creek, you would see in the distance to the southwest and south of the creek, the ruins of the old Mission complex on the side of the hill. It was southwest of today's I-15 and the bridge that crosses the Temecula Creek. And you would have known that Temecula was a major rancho for Mission San Luis Rey in years past.

Notice that on your way to San Diego, you would not have gone through Temecula in the 1850s because Temecula was the area around Redhawk Parkway and the Temecula creek. One traveler mentioned that Temecula was a couple of miles east of the trail, but he did go out of his way to stop there on that trip.

After crossing the Temecula Creek that hopefully wasn't too deep, you headed toward what was fairly near today's Rainbow Valley Boulevard. Soon there was another trail off to the left. Another chance to go to Temecula. Now you would be on the trail that led from Temecula to Mission San Luis Rey and beyond and the toughest part of this trail was just ahead. It is probably the steepest part of the trail and depending on the conditions at the time, you might have needed to get out of the wagon and walk along side of the wagon up the hill. Soon you would be in today's Rainbow area (east of today Border Station), but no one lived there in the 1850s.

Today I-15 passes the Border Station and then bears southwest past the Rainbow Valley Exit, and Mission Trail (the Fallbrook Exit) and then sort of south-southeast toward Pala Road. But the old trail did not go that way. It was east of today's I-15 in that area; as much as a mile east of the Fallbrook exit.

In the 1800s, the old trail went through the Rainbow area and south pretty much south to the intersection of today's Pala Road (Highway 76) and I-15. It was actually under I-15 for about two miles north of Highway 76. While the segment through the Rainbow area may not seem to make sense to us today, it is easier to see today when we are returning from San Diego to Temecula, driving north on I-15. About two miles north of Highway 76, just as I-15 turns to the northwest, look to your right and notice the small valley below and north of the freeway. That is where the old trail continued north through the Rainbow area to Temecula.

As we continue south on the old trail going to San Diego, the trail crossed the San Luis Rey River about where we do today, but the old trail did not continue straight south like I-15 does



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Now and Then . . .

Going to San Diego In the 1850s

today.

After crossing the river, the trail turned west and pretty much followed the south side of the river all the way to Mission San Luis Rey. While some may question why the trail wasn't along today's Highway 76 (Pala and then Mission Roads) on the north side of the river. The answer is that it was much easier to cross the river upstream near today's I-15 than to cross it further west where the river was wider and deeper.

The trail continued southwest toward Mission San Luis Rey. While today's El Camino Real (from the Mission to San Diego) is sometimes believed to be the route of old trail to San Diego, for the most part, the current El Camino Real is usually not where the old trail was. But it is the closest way to show about where the old trail was. El Camino Real was inland from the coast and always east of the various lagoons that were there, even in the 1700s. Various old ranchos along the route were mentioned in historic documents.

Because San Diego is so populated, the easiest way to see approximately where the rest of the trail was in San Diego is to follow El Camino Real to Manchester in Encinitas. Then west on Manchester to I-5 and then take I-5 South. Continue on I-5 South. When you get to where I-805 heads southeast from I-5, there was a Y in the trail. If you were going to Mission San Diego, then, you would be going roughly where I-805 is today southeast all the way to the San Diego River. The San Diego Mission is just east of there, just north of the San Diego River. Next time you take I-805 southeast in that direction, notice how is it fairly level and straight and often between hills on either side.

If you were going to Old Town San Diego instead, then at that Y where I-805 heads southeast from I-5, you continued on to San Diego roughly where I-5 is today, past False Bay (Mission Bay today) and into Old Town San Diego. In those early days, the San Diego River entered San Diego Bay just west of Old Town San Diego. There were other trails from the San Diego area northeast to ranchos near Escondido and further east to Warner's Ranch and other places.

- 100 Years Ago -

(Out of the archives of the Lake Elsinore Valley Press
Temecula gossip column.)

Friday, April 20, 1917 Issue --

The barbecue held April 15, 1917 at the Pauba Ranch, Temecula was a grand success. On the grounds there were about 800 people and about 200 automobiles. An orchestra of four pieces furnished very excellent music for the dancing. The people were entertained by boxing and wrestling matches from men who came from Los Angeles for the occasion. Bronco busting by men from the Pauba Ranch was much appreciated. Nobody went home hungry, as there was food for everyone. It was a grand time that will be remembered for many moons by all those who were fortunate enough to be present. Owing to the cold and threatening rain the crowd was not there that was expected, but nevertheless, there were some from Los Angeles, San Jacinto, Hemet, Perris, Elsinore and Oceanside. Refreshments of all kinds were served and it required 20 people to serve the food. At the close of the performance, Rev. J. J. Burri made a very pleasing address in which he thanked the entertainers who had come from so far.

Fifteen thousand feet of lumber was used to build the dancing floor, tables, benches and the boxing ring at the grounds where the barbecue was held.

William Friedemann is the happy owner of a five passenger new 1917 car.

The other day Joe Verduga while at the barbecue tied his horse under a tree on the hillside and when he was ready to go he went to get his horse and found him dead.

The Vail Bros. shipped fifteen carloads of fat cattle to market the last of the week.

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 Temecula Valley Museum, Inc., a non-profit museum support group. This 100th Anniversary celebration will offer a barbecue 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.

President's Message

Each season is full of fun for Temecula history folks. At this time of year many Temecula teens realize they need to finish the 40 volunteer hours required to graduate from our public high schools, so this year we are providing them with opportunities to help clean the History Center, paint or do sanding at Vail Headquarters and to sell ride tickets. It is fun to interact with the students and to hear what dreams they have for careers. Many have never handled cash, so it is heartening to see how fast they learn to add up the price multiple train or stagecoach rides are and how to make change for a twenty dollar bill.

There are a number of events coming up when adult volunteers are needed. The Spring Jamboree party at Vail Headquarters is on Saturday, April 15th from 11 - 4. All able hands are welcome to help with the event. We desperately need 200 used cans for children to plant succulents into during the event. Please bring tuna cans, pet food cans, soup cans, etc. to the cookhouse at Vail Headquarters on Sunday afternoons or Tuesday mornings. The other events when we need staffing are for an information and artifact table at the Pauba Valley Elementary School Carnival on their school grounds between 12 to 5 pm on Saturday, April 22nd. Volunteers for two-hour shifts would be appreciated.

We also need help at Vail Headquarters with Third Grade Classroom visits from 9:30 to noon on May 1, 8, and 15. Please contact Suzanne Dechert (951-302-0502) or Sue Blanch (951-698-4355) to sign up.

Cordially,

Rebecca Farnbach

NOTABLE WOMEN OF TEMECULA

Pam Grender to Accept Special Honor

A representative from the Luiseno Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution recently extended an invitation to Pam Grender to accept honors on behalf of Helen Hunt Jackson. The event will take place in the Temecula Valley Assistance League meeting room on April 25th. At that time, Pam, enacting Helen Hunt Jackson, will give a brief presentation.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every Sunday — Sunday Funday at the Vail Headquarters — Noon to 5 p.m. Rides, demonstrations & activities. Consider volunteering. Don't forget Tuesday's Farmer's Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wednesday, April 12th: — 1:00 p.m. the Notable Women of Temecula will perform at the Senior Center in Old Town Temecula. Open to the public.

Saturday, April 15th: — Noon to 3 p.m. Centennial Celebration to celebrate 100th Anniversary of a Fund-raising event held in 1917. See story Page 5 in this issue about this special barbecue tasting event. Proceeds to support Friends of the Museum.

Thursday, April 20th: — 2:00 p.m. the Notable Women of Temecula will perform for residents of the Harveston Chateau in Murrieta.

Monday, April 24th: — 6:00 p.m. Regular monthly Program of Temecula Valley Historical Society. Nick Cataldo will present a program about the family of Wyatt Earp who lived in San Bernardino. In the past Nick was able to interview old-timers who knew the Earps and had first hand knowledge of their lives. Nick's book on subject will be available for purchase.

Wednesday, April 26th: — 1:00 p.m. the Notable Women of Temecula will perform at the Senior Center in Old Town Temecula. Open to the public.

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.

-- MEMBERSHIP NEWS --

*****WELCOME NEW MEMBERS*****

Claire Beamer
Scott & Lynne Sanders

Thank you for renewing your membership:

Alta Pacific Bank: Keith Johnson
Myrna Bagge
Toni Benson
Terry Bracci
Garth & Janice Bricker
Ray, Rebecca & Joshua Brown
Cheryl Cady
Carolyn Cron
Roger & Lynn Cudé
Dean & Suzanne Dechert
Martin Dinsenbacher
Rod & Charlene Fink
Dick & Charolette Fox
Jerry & Darlene Gilbert
Don & Julie Gilbert
Patricia Gollnick
Bob & Pam Grender
Doug & Sally Haserot
Lynn Hornecker
Diane LaTulippe
Mary Lavezzari
Steve Lech
John & Bonnie Martland
Gary & Sally Myers
Dick & Evelyn Norris
William & Claudia Perozzi
Kenneth & Bonnie Reed
Rick & Vicky Reiss
Mike & Carol Strode
Dana Thoman
Gene & Barbara Tobin
Don & Esther Trunnell
Karl Weiler
Ann Woodward
Anthony & Myra Zamora

“They Passed This Way . . .”

Norm Taylor, Museum Tour Docent Extraordinaire

Norm Taylor passed away on Friday, March 24th of congestive heart failure. He was 81 years old. A Memorial Service will be held at England Mortuary in Temecula on Saturday, April 1 at 10:30 a.m. Norm had been a tour docent at the Temecula Valley Museum for more than 16 years, and an active TVHS member about the same number of years. Everyone will miss his good-hearted teasing, and that wonderful Boston accent.

Keith Johnson, Past TVHS Board Member

Keith Johnson, passed away on March 20, while out for an evening jog. Keith was a member of the TVHS Board in 2002, 2003, in 2005 he was VP, & 2007 the Treasurer. Keith also served TVHS on budget and planned giving committees. Those who knew Keith will always remember his friendly smile and warm greetings. Keith was part of the original Mission Oaks Bank founding management team, and stayed with the bank when they merged with Alta Pacific Bank. Keith was most recently the Sr. VP of Alta Pacific Bank. A Memorial Service was held Friday, March 31 at Sunridge Community Church in Temecula.

Nicholas (Nick) Shestople

On February 7, 2017 TVHS member Nicholas Shestople passed away peacefully after a long battle with lung cancer. Nick and his wife Eva moved to Temecula in 2000 after retiring from Federal civil service. Nick was always interested in history so after retiring earned a teaching credential, and taught history in local schools. Services were held February 27, 2017 at the Riverside National Cemetery.

Area Happenings . . . 1903

(Editor's Note: The brief article below appeared in the Riverside Enterprise on July 15, 1903. In those days most newspapers had "stringers" or "correspondents" to provide local first hand information of events. Much of the time it was only "local" gossip. Notice that the "dateline" indicates it was from "Bergman", that area today is known as Aguanga. Also notice the misspelling of "Veil", which should be "Vail".)

Bergman, July 13 – (Regular Correspondence) – Harry Bergman had a narrow escape from a fighting steer yesterday. He was hunting cattle in the mountains and found a lone steer in the bottom of a deep canyon, where it was too rocky to work with a horse, so he attempted on foot to get him out. He succeeded in turning him once, but the second time the animal only lowered his head and made for Bergman, striking him about waist high and knocking him over a ledge of rocks, where he landed on the back of his head, injuring him severely but breaking no bones.

J.Q. Parks and H.F. Bergman, today, started for Temecula with their beef cattle which they sold to J. Oehl of San Bernardino.

Eula Simmons, Vernie English and Maggie Dannon were visiting the Bergman family yesterday.

A thousand head of cattle belonging to Veil and Gates passed through here the 11th on their way to Warner's ranch.