

# TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

June 2017  
Volume 17 Issue 6

*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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### Temecula's 'Queen for a Day'

## Grandma Freda Knott's Table

*(Editor's Note: This article previously ran in the Temecula Valley Historical Society Newsletter, October, 2008)*

**By Eugene Knott**

My grandparents Al Knott and Freda Rail married in 1914 and made their home in Temecula. Like most newlyweds, they started out with very little. Grandpa Al bought a piece of property with a small house on it across Front Street, which was State Highway 395 in those days. Grandma Freda used to call it her mobile house because it was built from pre-constructed panels shipped to Temecula by train, then bolted together.

Grandpa Al ran a local blacksmith shop. He learned his trade when he lived on a farm in South Dakota. He grew up working with his hands, turning scrap metal and wood into useful implements.

When Grandma Freda wanted a dining room table, it was only natural for him to collect what he had in his blacksmith shop and make one for her. He took a wooden wheel about 6 feet in diameter from a wagon and covered it with rough cut 1-by-12-inch wooden boards to use as its top. He used a section of a wagon tongue for the center post and four sections of a wagon wheel bolted to the tongue to support the table in an upright position. All these items were made of oak, except for the tabletop. Anything Grandpa Al made was not going to break, he was a blacksmith and his work was strong.

Grandma had to use a tablecloth on it, because the top had never been sanded or finished. I remember playing under that table when I was young. I would try to slide down the section of wagon wheel used to keep it upright.

There were only about four televisions in town in the early fifties. When one of the more popular programs came on, people would gather at someone's house to watch. Gathering around a seven-inch screen always left someone unable to see the program. One local bought a large magnifying lens that attached to the screen to make the picture larger.

Around 1952 or so Grandma Freda got a call from a television station asking her to be on their



Freda Knott in retirement

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*Temecula's 'Queen for a Day'*

## Freda Knott . . .

show. She was a very modest person and couldn't understand why they called her. They said they would send a car to Temecula to pick her up and take her home again, so she accepted their offer.

What she didn't know was that some of the citizens wanted to do something for her tireless work she did for the Temecula and Murrieta area. When someone was sick, she was there. She not only ran the little church, she was the librarian. When anyone needed anything, all they needed to do was contact Mrs. Knott. She provided meals to strangers who broke down traveling through the area. We never knew who we were going to meet when we went to visit Grandma Freda.

The name of the television show was Truth or Consequences. They asked Grandma Freda some off-the-wall question that really didn't have an answer. Of course she got it wrong, to which they said her consequence was behind the curtain.

When they opened the curtain, about 75 or so local citizens from the Temecula area were standing there. She almost fainted. They changed the format of the show to "Queen for a Day" and presented her with gifts. Some of these gifts were a new dining room set and a 12-inch television that got 99 channels (Temecula area only got 7 channels back then). Grandma Freda was thrilled beyond words.

When the truck with her new furnishings arrived, out went the dining room table she had been using for all those years. The new table had two leaves to add when she had company, so it fit nicely with her lifestyle. She had many fine meals and gatherings with her new table.

As with everyone, change came and Grandma and Grandpa Knott sold their property and moved to Rainbow in 1967. What Grandma Freda didn't know, was that Grandpa Al had someone make a new tabletop for her old table. It was cut out of a sheet of plywood, sanded, stained, and finished with a smooth, shiny coating.

I didn't quite know why Grandma Freda got faint when she walked into her new house, until she explained the story about her table. She didn't know Grandpa Al had stored their table in their barn for all those years, let alone made it look so pretty. It was the icing on her cake to make their new place feel like home. It was their first move since they married and she didn't know whether she liked the idea of starting over.

They were married until Grandpa Al's death in 1982. Isn't it funny how something that began by lack of funds becomes the thing you cherish most!

*(Editor's Note: Follow-up and read the original "script" of this radio show which has been reproduced on Page 3.)*

## President's Message

The month of May was a big volunteer month for TVHS. A big thanks goes to Suzanne Deckert who coordinated with several wonderful, willing and talented high school student volunteers who helped at Vail Headquarters and the History Center selling ride tickets, dusting, sweeping and washing windows. Many society members helped with the VaRRA third-grade history tours on three Monday mornings. During the tours we divide sixty students into eight groups who rotate through four interpretive centers at Vail HQ and four more at the History Center, before enjoying their sack lunches at the picnic benches at Vail HQ. It is a fun way to highlight points of local history for them.

I want to thank our Historical Society members who participated in this: Julie Gilbert, Gerry & Andrea Nichols, Robert & Elaine Culverhouse, Bonnie Reed, Mike & Shelley Leddy, Loretta Barnett, Rhine & Sandy Helzer, John & Bonnie Martland, Dick Fox, and Darell Farnbach. The Leddys taught the laundry station, giving students the experience of scrubbing clothes by hand on an old-fashioned scrub board, putting them through a wringer and hanging them on a line with clothespins. Students love that station! The Leddy's neighbors children Noah and Levi assisted them and also toured the other stations. When they returned home, seven-year-old Levi designed a series of learning stations for his family, including laundry, cooking, transportation and blacksmith stations. Don't you love it! Thank you to all of you who volunteer for our society in so many different capacities.

*Rebecca Farnbach*

## Tour Planned of Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum

A TVHS tour is planned for Saturday June 24th at 10:00. The cost will be \$5.00. We will meet at the parking lot across from the Red Barn at 8:30 and leaving at 8:45. Carpooling will be available if you want, or you can elect to drive yourself and meet us there at the ranch. The address is 1901 W. Wilson St., Banning, see directions below. If you would like to go please email Phil at [pcwashum@verizon.net](mailto:pcwashum@verizon.net) or call him at 951-201-0020.

*(Directions to Gilman Ranch: Margarita to Winchester Rd. turn right to Dominigoni Pkwy. Right to Sanderson turn left go to Interstate 10 go East. Take 22nd St. exit then 99 toward downtown. Turn left onto 22nd St. Turn slight right onto Sunrise Ave. Take the first right onto W Wilson St. Turn left onto north 16th St. Then turn slight left. Address is 1901 W. Wilson St., Banning Calif. 92220)*

# Transcript of “Truth or Consequences”

Live on Radio #10

Hollywood, California

Tuesday, September 2, 1952

6:30 to 7:00 p.m. PDT

*Sponsor Pet Milk*

**Surprise Consequences**

**Call Home Town -- Mrs. Freda Knott, guest.**

**RALPH:** Here's another lady in our PET MILK audience this evening. How do you do? Where do you live? (ANS: Temecula, California a very small town.) Would you like to reverse the procedure and pull a Surprise Consequence on someone in your home town tonight? All right – we have a telephone on stage. Come on up, Mrs. Knott. We will get Temecula, California on the phone. No, Mrs. Knott we want you to call someone – anyone you want – in your home town and tell them you are on TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES here in Hollywood. We will give you a one minute time limit to contact one person in you own home town.

**RALPH:** If you can contact any one person in Temecula and make them believe you are on TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES we will give you an Arvin Television set.

All right, one minute time limit. You're connected with Temecula. You're on.

*(Woman tries to get someone in her town. Operator has been instructed to try briefly but to report that no one answers. Ralph gets her to call old friends, constable, postmaster, etc.)*

Well, Mrs. Knott, your time is up. One minute – (as a matter of fact, we gave you an extra ½ minute or more) – and no one is home in your home town of Temecula. Well, we have a consolation prize for you anyway . . . Come over here and open our PET MILK “DOOR OF SURPRISES” and let's see what we are going to give you for effort, anyway.

*(RALPH AD LIBS AS THEY GO ON STAGE TO DOOR)*

Just open the Door of Surprises and receive your consolation gift.

SOUND: (SOUND OF DOOR AS DOOR OPENS)

My goodness – there seems to be several people behind this door – do you recognize any of them?

*(WOMAN RECOGNIZES THEM AS SOME OF HER TOWNSPEOPLE)*

**RALPH:** Why, yes – here are your postmaster, constable and several of your friends – all from Temecula – no wonder you couldn't get anyone at home. Well look! – they keep coming out of this door. How many of your townspeople are here anyhow?

**STAGE CUE:**

*(CURTAIN GOES UP BEHIND DOOR AND ALL RESIDENTS OF HER HOME TOWN ARE THERE EN MASSE).*

**RALPH:** There goes the curtain up behind the door and – well, what do you know! Hundreds of people! Your whole town of Temecula is here on our giant stage. What do you think of that?

**OLD FRIENDS:** Yes, I am Alice Machado, an old friend of Mrs. Knott's. I am the oldest resident of Temecula and certainly no one deserves the love of her fellow citizens more than you, Mrs. Knott.

**CONSTABLE:** That's right, I am Bob Beauchamp, Constable of Temecula. Mrs. Knott has collected back issues of old magazines for the inmates of the Prison near our town. On her own, she cleared out a corner of an old building and made a library where she acts as Librarian two days a week!

**MINISTER:** I am Floyd Leasure, Minister of the Temecula Union Church. For over 30 years Mrs. Knott has taught Sunday School in our town. Every Sunday she has opened the Church, built a fire, even though in the early days no one would show up.

**POSTMASTER:** I am Postmaster, Betty Otto of Temecula. Mrs. Knott is a great mother.

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## Radio Transcript . . .

**TOWNSPERSON:** Yes – she worked hard to see that her own son and daughter received an education . . . and she wouldn't want me to say this, but she is always the first at the sick bed of a fellow townsman. Ever since she's lived in our town, she has taken in motherless children. And at the present time she is raising two boys – 10 and 12 – whose father was killed in an automobile accident and whose mother is in the hospital.

**RAPLH:** Yes, Mrs. Knott, we could go on and on – but here they are the people of your own home town – 298 strong, here to honor their Sunday School teacher, housewife, mother, wife of the blacksmith Al – brought in by specially chartered Greyhound buses to surprise you tonight. Thank you, Greyhound.

**RALPH:** In your honor, PET MILK is giving your Church, the Temecula Union Church, a set of beautiful Brockware smartly styled in modern Provincial, by Brock of California and the new FRYRYTE, the original Deep Fryer . . . remember, the Fryryte will cook any food automatically! . . . for their church suppers and socials, a set of EkcoWare stainless steel cookware, America's finest cookware is made by EkcoWare – and a beautiful TAPPAN gas range with many outstanding features . . . the divided top and chrome-lined visualite oven which have made Tappan famous.

We have been told that you are saving money to make a down payment on a television set. Well, Mrs. Knott PET MILK would like you to have this beautiful new 1953 21" inch ARVIN Console television set with Arvin's Modern tuner which receives all 82 new television channels.

(REACTION)

Good night, Mrs. Knott, and good night to all you wonderful people of Temecula.

(APPLAUSE)

*(Acknowledgements go to Robert Beauchamp, a former Old Town Temecula resident for providing the transcript.)*

*"Before your criticize someone,  
walk a mile in their shoes.  
That way, when you do criticize them,  
you're a mile away,  
and have their shoes."*

— Author Unknown

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Every Sunday** — Sunday Funday at the Vail Headquarters — Summer hours are 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Rides, demonstrations & activities. Consider volunteering. Don't forget the Tuesday's Farmer's Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Saturday, June 3** — 2:00 p.m. Fallbrook Historical Society Open House, 1730 So. Hill, Fallbrook. See new displays and additions. Refreshments and kid activities. Open to public and free admission.

**Wednesday, June 14** — 1:00 p.m. Elaine Eshom will portray Notable Woman Freda Knott at the Mary Phillips Senior Center in Old Town.

**Thursday, June 15** — 2:00 p.m. Bonnie Martland will portray Notable Woman Elaina Coutts Dear at the Harveston Senior Center. TVHS members are welcome.

**Saturday, June 17** — 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bazaar in the Park at the Temecula Valley Museum. Dozens of booths with a variety of items, from antiques, crafts, personal care products, plants and services. TVHS in booth #15.

**Saturday, June 24** — TVHS tour planned to Gilman Historic Springs. See article on Page 2 for more details. Be sure to contact Phil Washum via e-mail [pcwashum@verizon.net](mailto:pcwashum@verizon.net) or call him at 951-201-0020, to confirm a spot.

**Monday, June 26** — 6 p.m. Monthly TVHS program with board meeting to follow-up. "Newspapers in the Old West" will be the topic of Dick Fox's presentation. The challenges & hardships of the migrants were shared by young printers who also set out seeking a new life.

**Wednesday, June 28** — 1:00 p.m. Mindy Johnson will talk about Notable Woman Maria Apis, a Luiseño Indian woman, at the Mary Phillips Senior Center in Old Town.

### TVHS Meetings

Regular programs of the Temecula Valley Historical Society begin at 6 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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.



# 100 Years Ago . . .

*(From the Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column, June 1917)*

## **Issue of June 1, 1917**

Miss Irene Vardy, our principal teacher here for the past three years, has finished her term and will leave for her home in San Bernardino this week. She will spend her vacation this summer partly at San Bernardino, Los Angeles and at places in the northern part of the state. Miss Vardy will be missed by her many friends who are sorry to hear of her leaving. She is one of the few teachers who have held the position as a teacher here for a long time and took a great interest in the children while teacher. Many are the hearts that are wishing for her to stay, but Miss Vardy thinks that she has been here long enough. All her many friends wish her success wherever she is and whatever work she undertakes.

Saturnino E. Calac of the Wolf Valley left for Riverside Sunday noon by auto stage. While there he expects to attend the closing exercises of the Sherman Indian school, which is being held this week, beginning Sunday, May 27 to 30.

James E. Crew, potato king of the Pauba Ranch, left for Los Angeles the first of the week with a load of fine potatoes.

The dance at Alamos given by Mr. and Mrs. John Cantarini was attended by many from here.

Ole Larsen, who has been ill a few days, is able to be around again and attend to his business.

Mrs. Francis McCarrell of Tripp Valley, who was doing the barbering for Mr. Larsen, has been on sick list.

## **Issue of June 8, 1917**

For the past week wagonloads of Mexicans with their families have been going through town to the Pauba Ranch to work for James E. Crew digging potatoes. Many more are expected to arrive soon. Mr. Crew expects to be digging spuds for the next few months.

Robert J. Magee, who has been doing stonework at Cahuilla for the past four weeks, returned home last week and is now digging spuds.

Frank Magee has gone to Julian to work in the mines.

Frank L. Fernald, proprietor of the Temecula Valley Garage, was taken to the hospital at Riverside ill Monday afternoon and the same evening an operation was performed.

Joe Uribes, who has the contract for picking spuds at the Pauba Ranch for James E. Crew, says that they will employ this week about 60 men picking spuds. He has some of the finest potatoes in the country.

Joe Ackerman of Rainbow has the contract to haul the spuds to the station for shipping and has already shipped three carloads.

This year the Vail Company is having more work than

at any other time during harvest. They have about three thousand acres of grain to make into hay and they have about fifteen mowers going every day.

## **Issue of June 15, 1917**

Frank L. Fernald, who a week ago was taken to Riverside hospital ill with an attack of appendicitis, after an operation the following Tuesday, June 5, died. Funeral services were held from his late residence at 2 o'clock. Internment was made at the Temecula cemetery. The services were conducted by the Masonic lodge of Elsinore and the pallbearers were the M. W. of A. Frank was doing business here for a good many years and the only garage here was owned and operated by him and his two boys. It was a great shock to his many friends to learn of his untimely death. He was 51 years of age and leaves a wife, a family, and an only brother to mourn his death.

James E. Crew, spud king, is not only engaged in the potato industry, but also is planting tomatoes. He will have about 15 acres in tomatoes of several varieties.

Last Sunday afternoon at the Hot Springs baseball park, the Temecula baseball team crossed bats with the colored baseball team of Riverside. The game was very interesting from start to finish and both teams were in fine trim, but Temecula won the game by the score of 14 to 8. Richard Escallier, who is one of the crack players of the Temecula team, made five hits and brought in three men, which decided the game.

## **Issue of June 29, 1917**

Rajaela Hoac of the Pechanga reservation, who for the last few years has been around Hemet, San Jacinto and Soboba, died on the 20th of June. She died at her daughter's home at Soboba and was brought over and buried at the Pechanga cemetery. She leaves a sister, and daughter and two sons to mourn her death.

Eighteen carloads of cattle arrived for the Vail brothers. They were taken to the Pauba Ranch, where they are to be fattened for market.

Mr. and Mrs. Mac Machado, proprietors of the Mission Store, spent Sunday at San Diego.

Next Sunday, July 1, the Temecula Braves will cross bats with the Colored Giants' baseball team from Riverside. The proceeds will be for the benefit of the Red Cross. It is expected that the game will be very interesting. It will be played at the Murrieta Hot Springs ballpark. Everybody should come to see this game because if you do not, you will lose the fun of your life.

A very fine quality of granite has been discovered at the ranch of Jim Abel and Joe Winkels in the Rainbow country. In the near future they will have men at work that will quarry it.