

Pablo Apis' Little Temecula Grant

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Pablo Apis and his family were early owners of the land that now includes most of the Redhawk subdivision, some of the Vail Ranch subdivision, the Pechanga Entertainment Center, the Wolf Store area, part of the neighborhoods southwest of Pala and Loma Linda Roads, and some of the area known as Wolf Valley. The Apis name has been associated with Temecula since at least 1836, if not before. The land was first given to Pablo Apis, a Luiseño Indian, in 1840. In 1845 Governor Pio Pico formally approved the grant of approximately 2200 acres. The property, known as the Little Temecula Rancho, still appears on current maps.

In the early years, there were many Indian villages in the Temecula Valley. One village on the Apis grant was located south of the Temecula Creek. The "Apis Adobe" was also south of the creek not far from the Indian village. Between the Apis Adobe and the Indian village, John Magee established a store in the late 1850's, leasing some property from Pablo Apis' granddaughter. Remains of the Indian village, the Apis Adobe, and the Magee Store are now covered by development.

Another Apis home, probably their first home, was north of Temecula Creek near where the old Wolf Store is still standing. Also north of the creek were the planting fields, a ditch to retain water, and an orchard. There were other adobes in the area as well as an Indian graveyard.

In the early 1850's the U.S. Government rejected the Apis grant. The validity of the grant was argued in court for years. In 1872 the U.S. Land Commission finally determined that the 1845 grant had been a valid grant. By then Pablo Apis and many of his children had passed away and most of the property had been transferred to others. Numerous deeds and several lawsuits resulted in a long paper trail, but eventually Louis Wolf owned much of the land where he had a home and a store.

When Louis Wolf purchased property from Pablo Apis' widow in 1872, she was to keep her home and three acres of cultivated land around the home. A few years later the Indians were forced from their homes and off the land they had lived on for generations.

For many years, a popular route to California came across the Little Temecula Rancho. The Mormon Battalion came through the area in 1847. A number of trails came through the Temecula Valley, including the Emigrant Trail and the Butterfield Trail. The Apis, Magee, and Wolf families provided supplies to the travelers along these routes.

In the mid-1880's Louis Wolf drew up a subdivision plan for the western portion of the land and called it "Louisville," but apparently this idea was ahead of its time. When the railroad was built through the valley near Murrieta Creek, Temecula's center of business shifted to the area now known as "Old Town." After several more changes of ownership, the Vail Ranch owned much of the land that once belonged to Pablo Apis. The Wolf Store and the surrounding buildings became part of the Vail Ranch headquarters.

The Wolf Store area, north of the creek and east of Redhawk Parkway, is a reminder of Apis family, the Little Temecula Rancho and others who followed. Some of Pablo Apis' descendants live in the Temecula Valley, not far from where Pablo Apis lived more than 150 years ago.