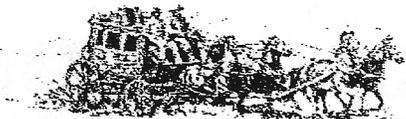


TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

July 2003 Vol 3 Issue 7

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SNAPSHOT'S IN TIME

Floodings on the streams and rivers of Temecula Valley have occurred several times since the 1880s. One such flood was witnessed in 1916 by a teenage boy whose family farm was located on Temecula Creek about 12 miles west of Oak Glen, on what is now Hwy 79S. Provided for us by his sister, Jewell Roberd, we share a first-hand account of the storm from Vollie Tripp's diary.



Memoirs: The Series

The measure of great souls is often in the doing of ordinary things with unusual patience and persistence. Coping with obstacles without collapsing was stock-in-trade for the heroine of our current series.

In this issue, we move quickly over several trying situations in the later years of Mary Jane Welty's life (as well as several joyous marriages and family reunions). As we end, we learn of brother-in-law Joe Welty's very deep life long affection for Mary Jane Singleton Welty, Pioneer, 1841 - 1937.

President's Corner

Member Pamela Voit has been appointed to serve on the Board of Directors. Pamela is active in community nonprofit organizations as well as the Temecula Chamber of Commerce. Welcome, Pamela!

Member Dennis Gallagher has been appointed to an off-board position as coordinator of Eagle Scout and other youth projects for the Society. We are happy to welcome, Dennis, who's background and experience we can draw upon.

Over the last three months, the Board has heard presentations regarding various preservation or restoration projects possible within Temecula Valley. With each presentation we hear more about the events and the people who shaped this region. As this "historical inventory" increases, the Board is faced with tougher and tougher decisions.

Should we commemorate these sites with plaques? Should we volunteer to provide time or material? Should we offer to help obtain state or national registry status? The answers, of course, lie with an introspective look at our available resources. Do we have the manpower? Do we have the money? What should our priorities be? Can we sustain a project if we undertake it?

Members can be heard and are welcome to attend Board meetings.

Charolette Fox



A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Pam Grender

"The tour was nothing like I imagined it would be. It was much better."

"Just getting to see Warner's Ranch alone was worth the trip."

"Thank you for a wonderful day."

These were just some of the comments heard after our excursion down Highway 79S into another century. For those who missed the trip, let me try to recap some of our experiences.

From the luxury of our comfortable, air-conditioned bus we watched as local scenery changed from new storefronts and tract housing to rocky hillsides with an occasional dwelling tucked into a brushy landscape.

Our first stop was Oak Grove, the restored Butterfield stage station sitting just off the highway. Although the caretaker failed to follow through on Phil Brigandi's request for an open gate, we were grateful for less-than-swelting weather as we stood in the sun contemplating the history of that ever allusive place.

The next stop was Warner's Ranch, where we were met by Lynne Christensen, Historian for San Diego County, Parks and Recreation Department. With special permission from the Vista Water Department, she arranged tours of the adobe house and barn believed to have been the station for Butterfield stagecoaches. In small groups she took us through the cool, dark adobe house and explained the purpose of each room. Though she warned us, not one snake made its appearance as we tramped through the high weeds into the magnificent, though sadly deteriorating barn.

Throughout our bus trip, our guide, Phil Brigandi, pointed out the

approximate locations of the actual stage trail that usually stayed close to any water source, but not very far from the present road. Amazingly, the old trail is clearly visible across the desert floor. Looking closely, we could see how it swept straight upwards into an impossibly steep grade, the most difficult portion of the trip into Temecula.

Again, thanks to Lynne, we were able to visit the restored stage station at Vallecito. The old building was constructed using blocks of sod, cut right out of a nearby creek bed. On this visit I heard from one of the rangers about three ghosts who haunt the station and grounds, none of whom are buried in the tiny cemetery on a small hill beyond the building. In the shade of old trees and trellis, we ate our lunches. It was a relaxing time for fellowship.

Though the temperature was into three digits by afternoon, quite a few brave souls made their cautious way down the steep cliff to enter Box Canyon, where the Mormon Battalion had once chopped into incredible rock walls with mere axes to carve out the road later taken by stagecoaches. This unforgettable place reminds us of the bravery, endurance and determination it had to have taken to follow the pioneer's dream of a better life in the West.

As coordinator of the Butterfield stage route tour, I would like to thank those who helped. Charolette Fox, registrations; Martha Minkler and the Arts Council for publishing our flyer in the Festival of the Arts annual booklet; Loretta and Malcolm Barnett for help transporting heavy coolers. Darell and Rebecca Farnbach distributed flyers and were available for help whenever needed. Wendell Ott let us display a poster in the museum and gave me so many leads and pointers. Myra Gonsalves provided the information for the handouts. Dr. Lynne Christensen was

informative and helped make the tour special. Finally, I'd like to thank Phil Brigandi, without whom even the inspiration for such an event would not have happened!

"THE OVERLAND STAGE"

from *I Hear America Talking*
by Stuart Berg Flexner

By the mid 1830s *overland* meant just one exciting thing to Americans, over the Great Plains to the far West, from the mississippi to the Pacific by land -- as opposed to the water route around Cape Horn or via Ships and across the yellow-fever trap of the Isthmus of Panama. The post office was speaking of slow *overland mail* by 1848, but not until 1858 did it contract with expressman John Butterfield to carry overland mail and packages from Missouri to California fast -- within 25 days. To do it, Butterfield started the *Overland Mail Company*, which also carried passengers and became widely talked about *overland stage*.

Butterfield started two *stagecoaches* (a 1640 British term) or *stages* (1772) each way every week, but his mail, freight, and passenger service grew until he eventually had 160 *stage stations*, over 250 vehicles, and 1,800 horses -- employing over a thousand drivers, horse herders, blacksmiths, veterinarians, and wheelwrights to take care of them, plus hostellers to feed the passengers. His stations were scattered along a 2,800-mile route from St. Louis to San Francisco, a route sagging south through Fort Smith, Arkansas, and El Paso, Texas, to avoid northern winters and satisfy southern politicians (during the Civil War the route was straightened out). Most trips took 22-24 days [running 24 hours, 7 days a week], passengers paid \$200 westward and \$150 eastward (there was never enough eastbound traffic), including 40 pounds of baggage free.

Butterfield used *Concord Coaches* much of the way and it is this coach we think about when we say *stagecoach*. It was a 9-passenger, 4-6-horse (sometimes mule) coach with springs, weighing 2,500 pounds and costing about \$1,250. It got its name because it was first made in Concord, New Hampshire, about 1827; it was respectfully and affectionately called *the Concord wagon*, *the Concord stage*, or just *the Concord*.

In 1860 the overland stage was indirectly responsible for creating another much talked-about American term, The Pony Express, which was created to compete with it in carrying mail. In 1866 Butterfield sold the Overland Mail Company to an old business associate, Henry Wells, who had formed *the American Express Company* in 1850 and organized *Wells, Fargo & Company* in 1852. Thus the overland stage became known to millions as *Wells, Fargo* (the passenger service was discontinued soon after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869).

The *shotgun* (1776) was originally considered by most Americans as the weapon carried by express riders and messengers. Thus it was fitting that such a messenger or an armed guard on a stagecoach was called a *shotgun* in the 1880s, the guard riding beside the stage driver said to be *riding shotgun*. The term *double-barrel(ed) shotgun* dates from 1848, *sawed-off shotgun* from 1898, and *shotgun wedding* is a term of the 1920s (meaning the bride's father is forcing the groom to the altar, as with a gun at his back to protect his pregnant daughter's reputation).

THE SOUTHERN EMIGRANT TRAIL

by Phil Brigandi, Historian

In 2001 a remarkable thing happened -- the California/Nevada chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association agreed to come to Southern California, and hold their annual convention in Temecula. One of the many things I learned that weekend is that the naming, classifying, and rating of historic trails is a serious business with those "rut hounds." To the layman, it seems almost like a competition.

Having said that, I still think the Southern Emigrant Trail has not been given its due. The trail crossed some of the most rugged country in the west. It was used by a wide range of travelers, and remained in use for decades. Yet it has been largely ignored when the history of our overland trails has been written.

The Southern Emigrant Trail began as a dozen or more trails crossing Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, gradually merging, and finally becoming a single trail along the Gila River. The trail crossed the Colorado River at Yuma, dipped down into Mexico to avoid the sand dunes east of El Centro, crossed the border again near Calexico, and then set off across some of the bleakest desert I know.

After 45 barren miles, the trail finally reached the alkali trickle of Carrizo Creek. Vallecito was the next important stop, then on up San Felipe to Warner's Ranch. Here the trail divided, one branch leading to San Diego, the other to Los Angeles by way of Aguanga, Temecula, and the Temescal Canyon.

The trail as we know it today first came into use in the 1820s, while California was still a part of Mexico. American trappers followed the route during the 1830s.

Beginning in 1846, soldiers took to the trail during the dark days of the Mexican War. Kearney came through on his way to defeat at San Pasqual. Cooke and the Mormon Battalion pushed through with wagons.

Then gold was found at Sutter's Mill, and for a few years, the Southern Emigrant Trail was a busy thoroughfare -- the only all-year overland route to California. First came the Mexican miners from Sonora and other areas. Then the American '49ers. It has been estimated that roughly a fourth of miners who came overland that year came by way of the Southern Emigrant Trail.

All those hungry miners lured ranchers onto the trail. Cattle by the thousands, sheep by the tens of thousands were driven across the trail in the 1850s from as far away as Texas. Losses were high, but the profits were even higher.

The Butterfield Overland Mail followed this route through Southern California from 1858-1862 -- at 2,700 miles, it was the longest stage route in the world. Soldiers returned with the coming of the Civil War to defend California, while Confederate troops came as close as Arizona.

It was not until the Southern Pacific railroad completed its line through the Coachella Valley in 1877 that travel on the Southern Emigrant Trail finally faded.

But the trail survived as a regional trail through Southern California and Arizona. The last big cattle drive from Arizona was run by the Vails in 1890. When the Imperial Valley opened up after the arrival of irrigation water in 1901, homesteaders set off down the trail; a few others stopped along the way to settle (largely unsuccessfully) around Carrizo and Vallecito.



Modern roads replaced more and more of the old trail in the early 1900s. For more than half a century, the Imperial Highway Association pushed for the creation of a truck route, connecting the rich farmlands of the Imperial Valley with the cities of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Still, it was not until 1962 that the last of the old trail through the Anza-Borrego Desert was replaced by a paved road. Today, the Southern Emigrant Trail is just a memory.

The story of the last American cattle drive, conducted by the Vail family, was reprinted from the Diary of Edward Vail and published as a series in earlier newsletters.

ONE MAN'S STRUGGLES

by Bud Roberds

As often happens whenever the Society sets up an information booth, folks stop by to talk and they often have great stories to share. It was at one of these information booths in San Jacinto that Jewell Roberds and her husband Bud stopped. Jewell's parents, Dan Tripp and Maud Jones, were married in Temecula July 18, 1900, by Rev. H.H. Baker. The following material comes from a speech that Bud gave at a Toastmasters meeting in Fallbrook March 1997.

It was a little past midnight on a Monday in the spring of 1927. Dan heard a roar, he opened his eyes and through the window saw an orange glow. He jumped out of bed and stared in disbelief. He turned to his wife and yelled, "My God, Maudie, the barn's on fire!" He rushed out of the house still in his bare feet and long johns. On the way to the barn he could hear his prize horses screaming in terror and agony. When he finally arrived at the barn, the horses were already down dying of heat and smoke. Because of the intense heat there was nothing he could do -- just back off and watch the barn he had built with his own hands burn to the ground. In the

black of night the glow could be seen for miles around.

In the early part of the century, twenty some years before, Dan had selected this beautiful piece of government land on the Temecula Creek to homestead with his young wife. It was a choice parcel on the alluvial fan that sloped down to the Temecula Creek, which ran through the southern part of the property. To the north were low rolling hills thick with chaparral. It was fertile ground -- like an oasis in this arid country.

At the time of the homesteading Dan was in his early thirties. He was a native Californian born into a family of 49er pioneers. He was not a big man, around 5'6", but he was known for his tremendous strength and was rather proud of it. With his shock of thick black hair, deep blue eyes and ruddy complexion, he cut quite a figure. This, along with his booming resonant voice, which belied his size, he was hard to miss.

His wife, Maud, was born in Iowa. When she was eight, she migrated with her family to California in the great land rush of 1886. At the time the railroads charged only a dollar per passenger as an incentive to bring people west. They settled in northern San Diego County. Maud's schooling was cut short suddenly with the tragic death of her mother who was still in her 30's. Maud was the eldest child so was forced to quit school to run the household and tend to the younger ones. This girl forced into womanhood so early, was also on the small side, 5'1", and a beauty. Even though her education was interrupted, she had a keen intellect (many of her relatives in Iowa were college educated) and an inquiring mind that she would pass on to her children.

So this young couple moved to their new home and enthusiastically began their new life. There was much work

to do -- work that never stopped. First, Dan had to clear the land. Then he constructed a temporary building for shelter; went upstream and engineered an irrigation ditch that was over a mile and one-half in length; built fences and a blacksmith shop; planted over 50 acres of barley; put in row crops and melons and several orchards of different kinds of fruit trees. And of course they had livestock. During these building years, this was a busy place. Maud recalled amusingly of hearing Dan work his team on the bottom land over one-half mile away, "Come on Ben, Come on Prince, pull Damn it, pull!" That was gross swearing in those days, especially within hearing of women.

In a few years the ranch became a garden spot of the area. Their family was also growing. By this time they had six children at home. As the youngsters grew older, they were engulfed in the work ethic. The boys at an early age did man's work in the field, and the girls helped their mother with household chores. This was especially heavy during harvest season when they served three square meals a day to the hired hands. All in all, this was a very successful operation.

Then on January 17, 1916, a warm wind began to blow, which was followed by a light mist. Thereupon came warm torrential rains that continued for days. The creek rose and before long upstream a huge block of the bank about the size of a house broke off and fell in the river. This diverted the stream to the north toward the planted area. Soon the river was cutting itself a new bed. Big hunks of land were breaking off and being washed downstream. In time, all of the orchards were washed away. Finally many acres of prime farmland were washed away. Farmland that had taken years to develop was wiped out as if by a painter's brush.

After awhile the rains stopped. Maud and Dan took inventory of their precious land. "Well, Maudie, we still have the house and the barn. Some of the trees are gone and the irrigation ditch has been washed away, but we still have a lot of good land left. What do you think?"

"Dan everything we have is here, and we've worked so hard. We have a lot of fond memories of this place. However, there is much heavy work involved and you are the one who will have to do it. But the boys are growing up, and they will be able to help -- that's better than when we first started."

"Dang it, let's do it!"

So they began rebuilding. New trees were set out, fields planted, the irrigation ditch was replaced, and a bunkhouse was constructed. In a few years the ranch had taken on a new luster and was more productive than ever. It was easier this time with the help of the boys.

During this rebuilding period, their family was also rebuilding; three more children were born. Sadly though, two of the children died. The couple never fully recovered from those deaths.

Then one night late in 1926, it began to rain again. Again the rain continued for days. Again the creek rose. Again their paradise was being ravished.

Dan and Maud's dream of a luscious beautiful ranch was disappearing before their very eyes. One day the entire family, including their youngest child, a little 5-year old tyke, went down to a small hill overlooking the water -- just watching the mad angry turbulent brown water churning and ripping great pieces of the cherished land away. This time it would be more

difficult to recuperate. The deciding factor came a few months later, while they were still reeling with the pain of the second flood, their barn burned down killing their dear horses.

As soon as the ashes cooled, Dan began digging the graves for what was left of his beloved team and their small saddle horse, Barney. Maud walked down from the house with a canteen of fresh water for him. She found him with a bandanna tied around his face in an effort to keep the putrid stench from his nostrils. He thanked her, took a swig, then paused a moment as if thinking what to say. Finally he said, "Maudie, I'm afraid this is it. I don't believe I can go on here." Burying the charred remains of his animals was just too much. He was devastated.

Dan was 54 years old, his hair still thick but snow white. He had struggled nearly a quarter of a century to provide a comfortable home for his loving wife and large family. Now he looked around and it appeared that there was nothing left -- all gone.

So when someone came along and offered him \$2,000 for what had been a gorgeous and productive ranch, he readily accepted and moved into San Jacinto to be a town person, and opened a mom and pop meat market. He was tired of struggling.

But providence behaves in strange ways, because sometimes out of catastrophes are born good things. Such as how the heat of destructive forest fires releases the seeds of pinecones to start yet another generation of trees. In this case, because of the catastrophe Dan and Maud suffered on the Temecula River, they moved to San Jacinto.

A short time later, I became acquainted with that five-year old

child who had been on the knoll that awful day with the family watching their ranch wash away.

When I grew up, I married her.

Jewell provided the following genealogical background on her parents: Dan was born in San Bernardino in 1873 and lived all his life in Southern California. His father, Samuel V. Tripp came west from Ohio during the gold rush in 1850. He was the real life prototype of Judge Wells in the Helen Hunt Jackson 1884 novel Ramona. Dan's mother, Caroline Covington, arrived from Mississippi shortly after the Civil War.

Maud Jones, born 1878 in Iowa, came with her family to northern San Diego County during the land expansion boom of 1886. Both Dan and Maud died in 1956 and are interred in San Jacinto Valley Cemetery.

CHARLES M. HATFIELD & THE FLOOD OF 1916

*from the diary of Nelson Volturner
"Vollie" Tripp (1901-1994)*

This material from Vollie's 1959 diary has been graciously supplied by his sister, Jewell Tripp Roberds, formerly of San Jacinto but now in Fallbrook. Charles M. Hatfield was a colorful character who roamed the mid-West and arid Southwest "drumming up" rain ... for a fee, of course! In his account of the widespread flooding that occurred in Southern California, Vollie asks rhetorically, "Did Hatfield make it?" Note that the Santa Margarita Creek is now known as the Temecula Creek; State Highway 71, is now Highway 79S; and US Hwy 395 is now the I-15.

The Santa Margarita Creek drains the eastern part of the north side of Smith Mountain [Palomar Mountain], and a considerable area north of State Highway 71, which runs from US Highway 395 to Warner's Ranch. Ordinarily it is a clear brook easily waded, as it runs past our old place [the early 1900s homestead of Dan

and Maud Tripp]. In summer it may dry up altogether. During the hard rains of winter the creek will achieve flood stage for a few days, being three or four feet deep, and maybe 150 feet wide, but running rapidly.

I don't recall that we had much rain that fall, 1915. But about the middle of January, 1916, a hard wind sprang up from the south. It was an unusually warm wind, blowing with increasing intensity for a day and a night. This was unusual weather behavior, and it had an ominous feel.

Soon came the rain, driven as a fine mist. It never let up for a moment for several days. Slowly the river rose as thousands of streams and rivulets drained into it. It was plain this was to be no ordinary "freshet" such as we had seen many times before. We got the animals inside the barn, brought in piles of fire wood, which we stacked on the front porch. But the weather was not cold, the temperature hovering from 60 to 62 degrees throughout the storm.

Sometime during the night of January 16-17, the bridge was lifted from its foundations and carried away. The roar of the angry water was terrific. The stream was cutting a new channel for itself, and had already gnawed away sizeable portions of our fine silt soil.

But the rain now let up, and the river began to recede. Opposite the ranch it had created a small island, splitting the channel. All the time, Father was out in his boots and slicker, trying to protect things as best he could. The rest of us stayed inside, as there was little we could do.

Now he noticed a peculiar object at the water's edge, on the far side of the stream nearest us. It appeared to be a large stone or earthen bowl. We were all very curious as to its nature. The rain had let up now, and in a little while the sun came out.

Rapidly the stream went down. Father carefully waded over and brought the bowl, for so it proved to be, back with him. He made a rope fast to it, and we pulled it up the newly made steep bank, Jim Crossley helping us. It was not of local Indian origin.

This flood had been the worst we had yet seen, and both Father and Grandma agreed it had been much worse than the great floods of 1884 or 1892. But it was a mere dress rehearsal for what was still to come. On January 21st came more of the warm south wind. It blew all day with rain that night. I had never seen such rain. It stung your face like thrown shot. It was all but impossible to stand and face it. Even ordinary dry washes became deep and raging torrents, dangerous to try to cross. Rapidly, the river rose again.

For four days and nights there was hardly any let up in the rain. The river was now a screaming demoniac monster, intent on destroying everything in its path. It was perhaps 600 feet wide, of an unknown depth, and very swift. I remember the stench from it, a strange sour rancid odor, as the debris from hundreds of square miles poured into it. It was now cutting rapidly. Every few seconds you could hear great "plunks" as big sections of our good soil were undercut and fell into it. In terror and fascination we watched it from our south window.

Our house sat on a bench of land, really a part of the hill formation which rose steeply in back of us. Ordinarily we should have felt safe from any kind of a flood. But the wild screams of the river, getting bigger and ever closer, were enough to strike fear to the stoutest heart.' Out in the center were great rip saw waves, five or six feet high. Big cottonwood, oak, and other trees would be caught in these waves,

turning over and over, end for end. About 3 P.M., January 27th, Father came in. He was wet to the skin. He was grim, and set of jaw.

"Pack up what you can. We're getting out." We began the dismal business of trying to get a few essentials into sacks and boxes, things we'd need most and worst. Food, clothing, a box of papers, etc. I had always been the seed saver. Hurriedly I got together an assortment of precious strains of vegetables, melons, and so on, varieties that we had developed through careful selection over the years.

Seeds, the symbol of hope and life, would be needed to begin life all over again, if the worse came to worst, it seemed to me. When Father saw what I had done, he wept. At that moment the future looked black. But we were not yet beaten, not as long as there were seeds -- and hands to plant them.

At a distance of 50 yards from the house, and perhaps fifteen feet higher elevation, was an old unused chicken house. Father battened up an open section to the west, using fruit trays we had. In the frenzy of rain and wind it was difficult work. Once the wind caught a tray and yanked it from his hands, tossing it over the hill to the east.

Now we carried beds, bedding, food, some papers, whatever at the moment seemed most precious and irreplaceable, up into the chicken house, not forgetting my box of seeds. It was a fight to do anything, slipping and sliding, falling in the mud, trying to avert one's eyes from the stinging rain.

Mother had a new Singer sewing machine. We saved that, as it seemed a pity to leave it. In the rapidly growing dark, we ran back to the house for a few more things,

trying to cheat the river of as much as we could. Now Father filled the furnace, and left it burning by a window. As long as the light kept burning we knew the house was still there. When it went out it meant that the river had taken it. In the pitch dark you couldn't see your hand.

What a night! We kept our eyes on the light by the window. The younger children slept, exhausted from the excitement and tension, I suppose. But near midnight, the rain let up, with only an occasional squall coming down. I think I, too, slept a little. As soon as it was light enough to see, Father was out. Soon he came back, in great spirits. "Oh, we have lots of land left!", he cried exultantly.

The river hadn't come much closer, and of course the old house was still there. It was a sodden dreary world that greeted us that morning, but the clouds thinned, and the sun now and then peeked through. That morning we moved our things back.

In a few days it was all over. The river rapidly retreated and receded. But the water continued to carry a flaky mixture of mica. It was two or three years before it cleared up entirely. We considered ourselves lucky to be alive. But the damage had been severe. We lost ten or so acres of our best land. Even worse, our remaining bottom land was now exposed to future floods in a way it had never been before.

All fences across the river were destroyed of course. Even those crossing ordinary dry washes were badly damaged. Several big trees had lain over, as the ground became saturated. Our ditch system was in a mess, either filled with sand, or washed out altogether. A new road had to be built to connect with the county road. But our worst concern was for the water pipe in the

canyon. That represented a lot of hard cash.

That fall we had taken the pipe system out, as in previous years, piling it up far above the highest flood we could imagine. But it was nearly all gone now. The canyon was stripped clean, hardly a sapling of anything remaining, where fine big cottonwood, willow, and alders used to grow.

In a few days we began to stir about, checking on the damage sustained by our neighbors. All had suffered much loss, but none had been as badly hurt as we, chiefly on account of the loss of our pipe. But the Aseltines across the hill had lost much of their apple orchard as raging Wilson Creek cut down through it.

It was a couple of weeks before mail and papers began coming through again. We had no idea how much rain had fallen. Oak Grove, 12 miles east, reported 23 inches had fallen in a 24 hour period. More than 44 inches were chalked up for the entire storm, more than four times the normal for the whole season.

We learned that damage over the entire Southwest had been heavy, with the loss of many lives. The San Luis [sic] River, draining a much larger area than our creek, was miles wide as it entered the sea near Oceanside. Brave men in motor boats risked their lives in the churning, roiling water, and rescued many marooned people. In one case a woman, panic stricken, refused to leave her place, an island now, and rapidly being eaten away. She had a horse, refused to leave it. The men advised her to cling to the horse's tail and he might bring her to land. A horse, on account of his buoyancy, and because his head is high above his body, has a good chance to survive in a flood. We never heard if they made it or not. Quite a number drowned in the San Luis Rey.

The old San Jacinto River, a mean stream during flood, threatened to destroy the town. Art Hazeltine, (not Aseltine) was a boat builder, among other things. He hastily built a boat and assisted in rescuing a number of people, it was reported. The San Jacinto River emptied into Lake Elsinore, filling it to the brim for the first time in the memory of the oldest settlers. The flat eastern part of the lake shore had been developed and sold as small farms. These were all inundated, and houses floated about over the lake. However, there was time to evacuate the occupants and save part of the possessions.

Down in San Diego grave fears were felt for some of the big dams supplying water for the city. Fears mounted for the Lower Otay, an earth filled structure, with a 1/2 inch steel core in the center. On January 26th Sheriff's deputies were sent among the people in the valley below, warning them to get out. Many did.

A few minutes before 5 P.M. January 27th, the dam let go with a great, rending groan. A forty foot wall of water raced for the settlement and the sea. Those who had not heeded the warning to move never had a chance. No exact figures are available on the number of persons drowned in the Lower Otay disaster. Estimates vary from 30 to 50 persons.

The flood did freakish things. Old Man Maddox, a bachelor, had built a little shack perched on the canyon walls about his little homestead in the river. At the height of the flood he stepped out, just as the shack was swept away. With it, along with his small possessions, were several big slabs of home cured bacon. A Pauba Ranch rider found one of the slabs of bacon in a pile of drift weeks later. With the shack also went his big old black Tom cat. This grieved Maddox, as he was very fond of the old cat. Days later old Tom came back, thin

and weak, and covered with mud. He had won the battle of the waters.

The big stone bowl excited much interest, far and wide, as nothing of the nature had ever been found in that part of the country. It was of hard gray stone, well and cleverly shaped, very much like a druggist's mortar. It had an overhanging rim on the inside. The bowl was 11-1/2 inches high, 18 inches across the top, and weighed 86 pounds, holding 4-1/2 gallons of water. It was intact, except for a small crack in one side.

Obviously this utensil was not the work of any contemporary Indian tribe. It was much neater and finer workmanship than any of them did. I wrote the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, enclosing a drawing and description. Their reply was revelatory of the contempt with which scientists generally hold the ideas and intelligence of laymen.

"It's probably a well formed Indian metate. What do you want for it?" wrote these great men. The bowl resembled an Indian metate like a lobster resembles a peacock! Years later, Mrs. Henry Magee of Sage bought it from us. The last I saw of it, it reposed in the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Soon after the water went down, we noticed a strange moss-green deposit forming on the rocks and pebbles in the river. This deposit turned the color of travertine residue left in the bottom of a teakettle, as it dried. I've no idea what it was. The river had cut into new formation, above our place, cutting a new and deep channel in the lower end of the Bergman Valley.

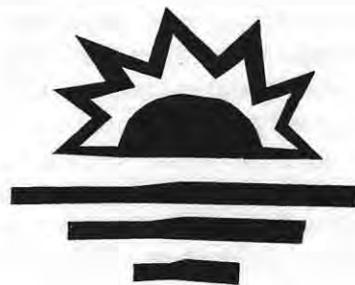
Little by little the fresh water leached away this deposit, and in time the creek became clear, once more. But it was a long time, about three years, before all trace of this green deposit was gone. During that

time, the water had a disagreeable taste but seemed not to cause any trouble.

Back in the hills, north and east of our place were hundreds of landslides, as the sodden earth gave way, and slid to the bottom. A section of the trail that led over to school slid down about 20 feet, for a distance of a hundred yards or more.

This flood, the worst in the recorded history of the south, followed Charles M. Hatfield's rainmaking contract with the City of San Diego, to fill its Morena Lake. The City Council agreed to pay Mr. Hatfield \$10,000 to do this little chore. It never paid him, claiming that to do so would make the city liable for the damage done the residents of Lower Otay Valley. The action seemed niggardly. In contrast, the City of Los Angeles assumed instant and complete responsibility for the St. Francis Dam disaster, years later. With the one exception of the San Diego deal, Hatfield collected in some forty contracts to bring rain, from Alaska to Central America.

*Well, reader, what do you think?
Could this have been El Nino? Or,
was Hatfield just good at his job?
-- Editor*



TOUCHING YESTERDAY

by Wanda MacDougall Place

It was stored in a box in my linen closet until five years ago when I first learned its intriguing pioneer history. "It" is a red and white quilt top made by my great-grandmother more than 100 years ago, much like the Red Work that is popular in quilting circles today. It consists of lovely red embroidery on white squares. Flowers, vases, birds, wishing wells and other outlines adorn 42 squares, each trimmed in red, and sewn together with a red border around the whole. One embroidered square appears to have been made by a daughter. It is an outline of "Mother's Hand" and the date "1893."

When I learned about my great-grandparents from a genealogical book containing a collection of old pictures and old letters dating back to Civil War days, I pulled the box from a shelf. I slowly unwrapped the souvenir and read my mother's inscription pinned to the fabric, "Jane Augusta Phillips Ames, Born 1845, Orange County, Michigan; Died 1895, Custer County, Oklahoma." Suddenly I realized this was more than a piece of cloth, it was a piece of history. As I carefully unfolded the old fabric, I sensed a connection to the one whose hands produced this treasure and felt transported in time as though I were watching her work on this unique creation of yesterday:

I see her sitting by a window on an autumn afternoon, the sunlight falling over her shoulder, her dark hair streaked with silver. Afternoon is the only time she can sew. The oil lamp is not bright enough during the evening hours. Her eldest daughter, Emma, is sitting at her feet. Jane has a sewing basket and two stacks of quilt squares beside her, some finished and some still to be embroidered. She is showing Emma how to achieve this artistry.

In her hand the small needle deftly goes in and out of the material. The stitches are evidence of her skill. She has been a seamstress for many years, even weaving towels for Henry Ford's mother when they lived on adjoining farms in Dearborn, Michigan.

Jane and Stephen Ames met during wartime and married in 1865. They had 13 children. Their lives were a classic story of love and devotion, tragedy and survival following the Civil War. When the 80-acre farm in Michigan didn't prosper they moved to Iowa. Following a great disappointment in Iowa, Stephen dreamed of moving west. In 1892, the government extended the Homestead Act offering 160 acres of land in the Oklahoma Territory to all who qualified. The lure of free land was irresistible to the poor, the courageous, the dreamer. Stephen qualified on all counts.

When and Jane had more than a year to prepare. Stephen built and waterproofed the covered wagons. He chose the animals and equipment needed for the trip and a new start in Oklahoma. Although extremely limited in space, Jane decided to take a few cherished items, her diary, letters, pictures, her Bible and the red and white quilt top, things she just couldn't part with. These keepsakes she wrapped in coarse muslin for protection against dirt and dust, and placed them at the bottom of a large trunk. Jane and Stephen sold their household goods and farm equipment and loaded the sparse necessities on two covered wagons.

Jane said a tearful goodbye to her mother fearing she would never see her again, yet hoping that, somehow, it would be possible. Jane and Stephen Ames then embarked on the 6000 mile journey with six daughters, three sons, two wagons, seven horses and their dog, Bingo. After 30 days they arrived at Seven Oaks in

Oklahoma Territory. Their temporary home was a dugout with four front windows, not uncommon at the time. Soon Stephen left to file a homestead claim in Guthrie, where he was stranded in a bitter winter snowstorm. While he was gone, Jane became seriously ill with pneumonia and died on February 14, 1895, just three months after arriving on the new frontier. When Stephen came home, neighbors met him with the dreadful news. They had done all they could to help the children. They set up a tent on the frozen ground to keep the body. Stephen "was hearbroken for he loved the sweet mother of his children so dearly," according to a daughter. Jane was buried in the Beck Cemetery outside of Thomas, Oklahoma.

A few days after Jane died, Emma opened the trunk looking for warm clothing for her five sisters; the youngest was five years old. Jane's Bible, pictures, letters, diary and quilt top were discovered at the bottom of the trunk, still wrapped in cloth. Emma left them there, where they remained for many years.

The unfinished quilt traveled almost 2,000 miles from Michigan to Iowa, to Oklahoma and eventually to California with my grandmother, Elizabeth Roxana Ames, who was nine years old when her mother died. She kept the quilt top for more than 40 years and left it to my mother, who handed it down to me.

For many years I didn't realise the sentimental or historical value of this treasure. Now I know how fortunate I am to have this keepsake from the past with my great-grandmother's handiwork. I will appreciate it and care for it with the respect it deserves. As I examine each square and lovingly place my hand on the outline of her hand, I feel as though I am touching that yesterday long ago when Jane Augusta Phillips Ames sat in the afternoon sunlight sewing

together the whimsical squares that make up this lovely heirloom.



pow-wow at Pechanga

**dancers
drummers
singers
Indian jewelry
leather items
baskets
food
clothing**

**July 4,5,6
visit the**

**Society's booth
for a cup of coffee
or a slice of
watermelon**

To volunteer to help for 2-4 hours
in the booth, contact Eve Craig @
699-9872.

Mary Jane, Pioneer

a book chronicling the life of Mary Jane Welty

In our last newsletter, we learned that five of the Welty girls were attending school in Aguanga, thanks to a school established by Mr. Tripp and Mr. Birdman." For more about Dan Tripp and the Tripp family, refer to articles elsewhere in this newsletter: One Man's Struggle, and Charles M. Hatfield & The Flood of 1916. This issue ends the story of Mary's life.

While recovering from her devastating attack by lynx, a mid-summer fire raged through Rainbow valley and nearly wiped out the Welty home. Once again, Johnson talked of moving. Johnson purchased a lot in Temecula, planning to build a hotel. He reasoned that there were soon to be many changes in town and that cattlemen, trainmen and government agents would need a place to stay. He convinced Mary the move would be good, saying, "You can boss, and the girls can do the work!"

The venture was a success. Conductors, brakemen, salesmen, and ranchers found a congenial home atmosphere at the Welty Hotel, and good meals. Often the Indian Agent arrived with 40 or 50 timid native children on his way to the government school. Mary was determined this was her last move.

Then, in January 1891, Tilly & Hattie were ironing in the summer kitchen. They saw a group of men running to the hotel from the depot, yelling, "Fire!" Mr. Gonzales had been aboard the train returning from San Bernardino. He had spotted the flames and sounded the alarm. There was only time to save the organ and a kitchen clock. The guests lost everything...and moved to the Escalier Hotel nearby. The Welty family moved into a small cottage that remained at the rear of the hotel.

Mary Jane and Johnson were looking at the ruins when some of the boys who had been with them since the hotel's construction came by. "How about some breakfast." They had brought provisions, as well as pie pans and tin cups for utensils. "You can't get rid of us by burning the place down!" John built a campfire and Mary got busy cooking breakfast. This seemed to decide the matter, and John welcomed the challenge of rebuilding the Welty Hotel. All the guests returned.

In 1887, daughter Tilly went into Indian service and taught school at Pechanga. Later, she went to work at Warner's. A fire there involved the death of the new teacher, Mrs. Platt and her daughter. Eventually, Indians at Warner's were moved to Pala.

Daughter Hattie was assistant to Postmaster Louis Wolf, for 25 years. Nancy was married to William Kincaid of Happy Valley [Rainbow]. Lovica passed away at age 16. Laura married Hugh McConville, on December 31, 1891, in Hemet. Allie married Ray Kelsey. Martha married Warren Binge.

Mary's brother, John Singleton, suprized them coming to Temecula 47 years after they'd last parted company and was given the best room at the hotel. He brought with him a paisley shawl and a blue pitcher that he and Sam had taken back to Iowa all those long years ago when Johnson and Mary had lightened their wagon on the journey west. Johnson remarked, "Mary and I drove oxen across and the trip took 10 months. You and Lucy came by train in a few days. The next generation will use flying machines and cross in a few hours."

On November 31, 1913, Fronie and Ed Bemis were married, On February 6, 1915, Hattie retired as postmistress in order to care for her mother and father. Mary was now 75 years old but continued to visit the sick and help welcome new babies into the world. Johnson passed away November 29, 1922, at age 84, 63 years after he and Mary were married.

The hotel was sold and a home purchased in San Bernardino. The girls, Hattie and Tilly joined Mary and urged Joe to join them.

One evening as they sat by the fire, Joe said, "Mary, do you know...did you ever guess that to me you have always been the one woman in all this world? How I remember the first time I saw you in the grove by Walnut Creek, with your hands full of wildflowers. You looked like some rare woodland blossom yourself."

"And remember the day we buried your pet under the plum tree? We were late for dinner and your place was set next to Johnson. He was always between us. I don't know why I tell you this now. We are old and life is nearly over, but I wanted you to know how dearly I have loved you all these years."

"Joe," Mary said, "Johnson often spoke of your love for the children and your devotion to us all. Dear Joe, you have been lonely, but I'm glad Papa never knew."

"Yes, it has been lonely but it is all over now." He pressed her hands in his own and went to bed. He passed away that night, January 17, 1927, and Mary survived to age 96, passing on April 4, 1937. She's buried in the Temecula cemetery.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!

May 15 to June 15, 2002

New Members

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Dick Kurtz

Steve & Lesley Morico

Robert & Jewell Roberds

Gifts & Donations

Bill, Lisa & Jordan Bellino

Wendy Lesovsky

Please remember us in your will or trust.



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Send a postcard, FAX, or call:

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THE BACK**

\$10

to order, contact

Charolette Fox, 302-0180

Calendar

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| 4th July Parade | July 4 |
| Pow-wow at Pechanga | July 4,5,6 |
| Board tour of cemetery | July 19 |
| Board Meeting | August 1 |

Active Committees:

Research & Preservation

Wolf's Tomb

Plaques & Markers

Public Relations

Board meetings and member programs are held in the Conference Room of the Temecula Library, unless otherwise stated. No RSVP is required.

Date, time and location of committee meetings or special events fluctuates. For information, contact committee or event chair.

When possible, member reminders are sent via email or postcard 10 days prior to the meeting or event. In addition, public service announcements are usually placed in local newspapers.

VOLUNTEER HELP IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED

The Newsletter

Articles must include author's name and contact information. Historical research, biographies, and local history articles will be given preference.

All submissions are subject to editing. Some articles may be held for publication in the next newsletter or in a journal to be published at a later time.

Editor..... Charolette Fox

Assistant Editor..... Sheri Crall

Printing..... Potamus Press

FARM HUMOR

*No wonder a hen gets discouraged.
She can never find things where she
lays them.*

*A farmer wrote to a rural paper to
ask "how long cows should be
milked." "Why, the same as
short cows, of course," replied the
editor.*

www.tvhs.homestead.com/FrontPage.html

CHECK IT OUT !!

4th of July Parade

Volunteers needed for Society's entry.

**Wear a patriotic costume, carry
the Society Banner, help decorate
antique cars, or lead the cheering
squad. You can participate!**

**Call our parade chairperson,
Darell Farnbach at 699-5148 to
offer your time or talent.**

**LET'S BE A WINNER
AGAIN THIS YEAR!!**



Mission Statement

*The mission of the Temecula
Valley Historical Society is 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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 readership. Thank you.*

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A tax exempt charitable & educational organization

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Membership/Donation Categories:

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|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
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Membership is open to anyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

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