



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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May 2024

It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Murrieta Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.

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Murrieta Valley Historical Society

Email:
info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

Phone: (951) 677-7758



A remnant of the Eucalyptus Grove on the Las Brisas Trail in Century Park on August 23, 2020, Photo by Author

The Murrieta Eucalyptus Company by Jeffery G. Harmon

By the dawn of the 20th century, hardwood lumber supplies had grown low on the East Coast, but the demand for lumber continued to increase. The industry began looking to the west for new sources of lumber. Southern California residents saw an opportunity to join the industry by planting thousands of eucalyptus trees. Many believed that fortunes could

be made with these trees and the demand for this lumber would be high.

During this time, several private eucalyptus groves were planted in Murrieta. Rev. George Cocking planted a eucalyptus grove north of the Murrieta Methodist Episcopal Church along 1st Ave. When he retired from the



Eucalyptus lands of Murietta Eucalyptus company, part of 2700-acre tract in Riverside county. All views in cut were furnished by this company.

ministry in the early 1920s, he had his grove cut down for firewood, and sold for profit.

Amos Sykes planted a eucalyptus grove on his farm in February 1908. The grove provided shade for his dairy farm and hay barn. The grove remains today at Sykes Ranch Park just west of Hayes Avenue and Nighthawk Way.

Local merchant Benjamin Tarwater planted a grove of trees behind his house along Adams Avenue. Dr. Lashlee, who was one of the first settlers in the town of Murrieta, also planted eucalyptus trees on a mesa west of town. However, by 1909, large companies were formed to raise capital in order to plant large eucalyptus plantations. The Murrieta Eucalyptus Company was formed that same year.

Dr. John R. Haynes, a millionaire in Los Angeles, had purchased 2,700 acres in Murrieta around 1894. The property was north of the Murrieta Hot Springs and east of the town of Murrieta. The land was an investment and was used for dry grain farming. Haynes sold the land for \$20,000 to Arthur G. Munn in January 1909.

Arthur G. Munn was a Los Angeles real estate man and the former publisher of the San Jacinto Register. In April 1909, Munn sold the land to the Murrieta Eucalyptus Company for \$27,000.

The Murrieta Eucalyptus Company had been organized in Los Angeles. Dr. Frank M. Connor, Shirley L. Thomas, R. M. Miller, William H. Dunn and C. B. Guthrie partnered with

Munn in developing the Murrieta Eucalyptus tract.

Munn subdivided the former ranch into 50 and 100 acre farms. He sunk wells and installed a pumping plant in order to provide water for farmers. He planned on selling the land at competitive market prices. He also planted over 200 acres of eucalyptus trees.

The eucalyptus trees were sold for \$150 per acre with a guarantee of 800 trees at the end of three years. Investors were assured that they would reap a profit within ten years because there was a high demand for firewood. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors approved the Murrieta Eucalyptus tract map at the end of April.

Planting eucalyptus trees was seen as a simple long term



Young eucalyptus trees in the nursery ready for planting.



Lath house where the seed beds are started.

Send for free booklet, "A Story of Eucalyptus."

MURRIETA EUCALYPTUS COMPANY

211 Mercantile Place

Los Angeles, California

investment. The trees grew very well in Southern California's dry climate and with no need for irrigation. The company claimed that the eucalyptus would eventually surpass the California orange industry.

William H. Dunn was the lead salesman for the company. He was listed as the primary landowner of the Eucalyptus tract. Then around 1912, the Dunn land was sold to Robert Connely. Two years later the land was sold to Laura F. Dunn, William's wife.

The land was placed in Laura's name to avoid paying property taxes. During the Woman's Suffrage Movement it was argued that women should not have to pay taxes because they didn't have the right to vote. However, once women

were granted the right to vote in 1920, they had to start paying taxes.

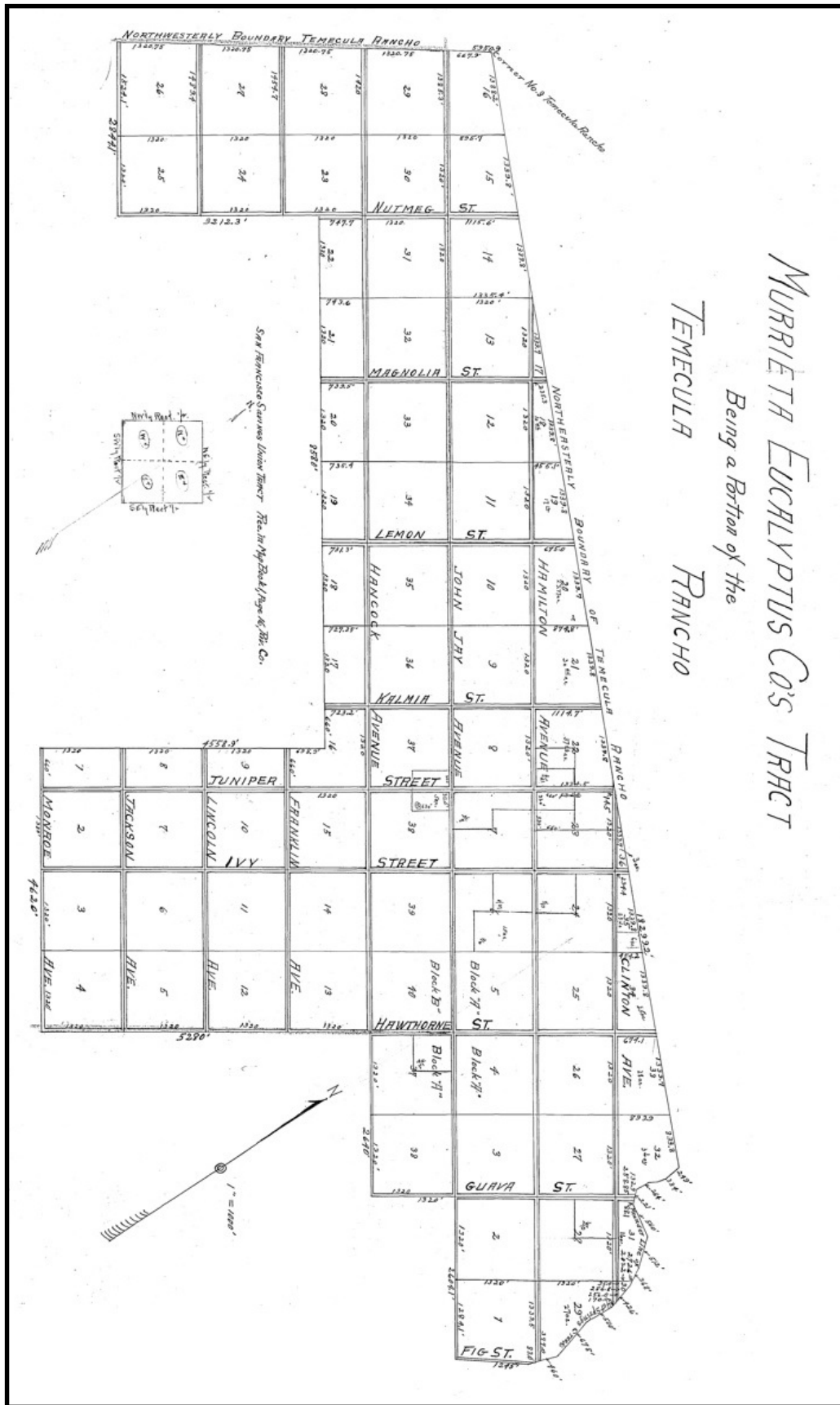
William died in 1933, and then Laura died three years later in 1936. The next year, Maurice and Anita Yoder purchased about 1700 acres of the Murrieta Eucalyptus tract from the Laura Dunn estate for \$20,000. The Yoders began dry grain farming operations on the property.

Without the company's financial records, it is difficult to determine whether the Murrieta Eucalyptus Company was a success or a failure. There was never a strong demand for eucalyptus wood in California. Furthermore, with the multitude of eucalyptus companies that were established at the time, the market may have been oversaturated


with product.

In the 1980s, the original 200-acre eucalyptus grove was removed and the Rancho Las Brisas master planned community was built. A small trail lined with eucalyptus trees was created in the center of the tract. Murrieta residents and visitors can begin their walk of the Las Brisas trail at Century Park. As they stroll through the old eucalyptus grove, they can reflect on the trees' history as they listen to the birds sing, and the leaves rustling in the wind.

(We wish to thank Danny Cervantes, MLIS, Archivist/Records Analyst II at the Riverside County Archives for his research assistance in writing this article.)



The Murrieta Eucalyptus Co.'s Tract Map (1907 ~ 1913) Source: The Riverside County Archives



HERITAGE, HATS AND HANDBAGS

exhibit

Mother's Day Tribute

FEATURING

WHAT "MOM" USED TO WEAR

**MAY 2 -
MAY 30**

Collections of Women's Antique
Hats, Handbags, Clothing, and
Accessories.

VISIT THE MURRIETA MUSEUM
41810 Juniper Street @ the Historic Hunt House

EXHIBIT DATES

Heritage, Hats and Handbags

 THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1 PM - 4 PM
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 10 AM - 2 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1 PM - 4 PM

Special Mother's Day Open House:
Saturday, May 11, 10 am - 2 pm

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1 PM - 4 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1 PM - 4 PM 
SATURDAY, MAY 25, 10 AM - 2 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1 PM - 4 PM


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Murrieta Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 1341
Murrieta, CA 92564

Phone: 951-677-7758
E-mail: info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

**The General
Monthly Board Meeting
is held on the second
Monday at 5:30 p.m.
Please join us at
the Murrieta Museum**



The Murrieta Museum,
41810 Juniper Street
at Hunt Memorial Park.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

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FAMILY

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\$250/LIFE

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