

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Wolf Store

April 2022
Volume 22 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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Dick Fellows: Hapless Highwayman

By Julie Gilbert

(Julie Gilbert wrote this story years ago for the Fedco Reporter (Fedco's monthly catalog) which they published. It's a true tale about a southern CA bandit.)

On a windy California afternoon in 1870, a horse backed outlaw pointed his pistol at the Santa Barbara stage driver and ordered, "Throw down the box and don't make any sudden moves!"

The old driver struggled to comply, but wasn't fast enough to suit the bandit. "I said be quick about it!" the outlaw growled. To encourage the driver's cooperation, he fired a shot into the air.

Unfortunately for the desperado, his panic-stricken horse reared, tossing him into cactus. Gingerly he extricated himself, only to tumble down a rocky slope to the bottom of a canyon where, moments later, he found himself looking up the business end of the guard's Winchester.

To his dismay, such was atypical day in the criminal career of Dick Fellows. Only months before, he had successfully pulled another stage heist. After the coach had rolled out of sight, he had gleefully shattered the strongbox lock with his pistol. But his frightened horse galloped off, stranding him 15 miles from town, with a chest too heavy to lug.

Earning no sympathy for his calamity in these and similar efforts, Dick served four years in San Quentin, where prison records showed he was a Harvard graduate. Upon his release, the parole board admonished, "Try to live within the pale of society". Briefly, Dick did. But soon thereafter he decided his aptitudes and work ethic, if not his equestrian skills, were far more suited to his previous line of employment.

So on December 4, 1875, he again found himself lying in wait for a noon stage, bound south for Caliente. This time he rented a horse from the livery. Everything went like clockwork until, just outside of town, Dick's mount bucked him into the dirt, where he was knocked unconscious.

When he came to, the horse was gone. Never one to panic, he pondered his options and decided, resourcefully, to rob the northbound stage headed for Bakersfield instead, due in two hours, thus keeping all the loot for himself. All he needed was a horse.

Striding into town, he found one, stole it, and pulled the heist - during which it is reported he surprised the stage passengers by whistling "The Arkansas Traveler". ("A most credible performance," wrote the San Francisco Chronicle later.) Once the stage had disappeared, however, Dick made the sad discovery he had forgotten his lock tools, as well as a sack for the loot.

With darkness falling, and his options dwindling, he laboriously began lugging the strongbox toward the horse. But when the animal saw the weighty chest headed his way, he bolted. So, in time-honored outlaw tradition, Dick buried the treasure, then started for town on foot.

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Dick Fellows: Hapless Highwayman

As he began his slow and painful downhill descent, he spotted an unsaddled horse grazing nearby. Taking heart at his seeming good fortune (simultaneously revealing a streak of admirable optimism), Dick managed to hobble to it, mount and ride away.

Regrettably, this particular horse had thrown a shoe that had been replaced by a mule shoe. The distinctive tracks led a posse to Dick directly.

On June 8, 1876, Dick was sentenced to eight years in prison. Miraculously, however, he managed to escape by tunneling under the jail floor with a crutch.

He spent the next few months recuperating from his harrowing experiences, but then, undaunted by his close call and displaying remarkable perseverance, he resumed his career more industriously than ever (after several months leave to recuperate from his injuries). Virtually declaring war on the stage lines, Dick held up dozens of them throughout California over the next six years. Wanted posters offering \$800 were tacked on every tree and fence post. But he eluded all comers, including the Wells Fargo agents.

Finally, one cold December morning in 1881, Dick accosted a stage heading through Bakersfield, California. Pride apparently boosted by his growing notoriety, he shouted, "Throw down your weapons and the money box and live to tell your grandchildren that you were robbed by Dick Fellows!"

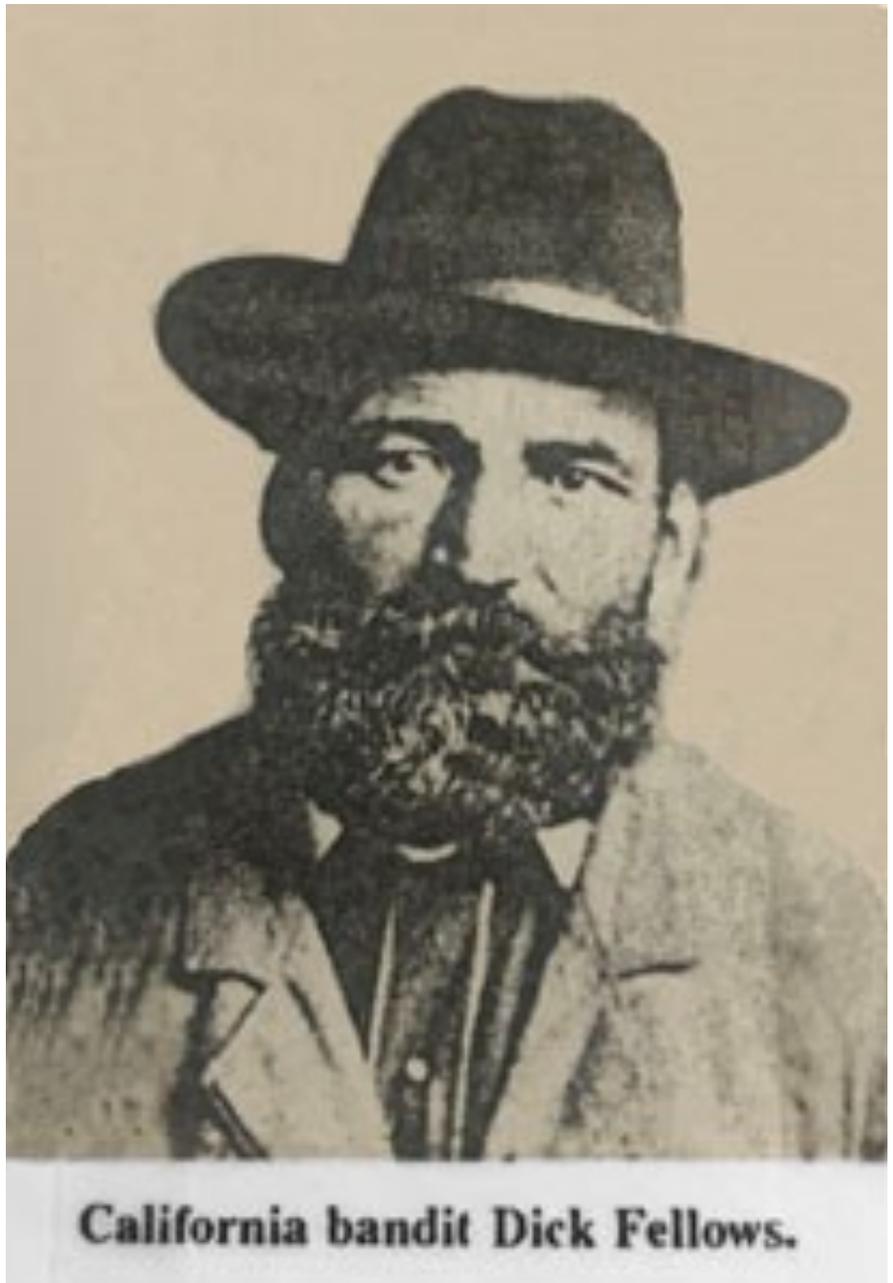
He got the loot. Unfortunately, with a posse on his heels, he was caught after his horse stepped in a gopher hole and broke its leg.

Things looked unquestionably bleak when Dick was sentenced to life at Folsom prison. But en route there from jail on February 4, 1882, he made one last desperate attempt for freedom. Overpowering his jailer, he grabbed his gun and fled down an alleyway.

There, he spotted a horse.

Leaping bareback on the mangy animal, he raced madly – for about 50 yards. Then the pony started a frenzy of bucking, with Dick holding on for dear life. Finally the filly won, launching him airborne. Somewhat less spry after landing, Dick was led quietly back to jail by waiting lawmen. For weeks, the townspeople could do nothing but laugh about the outlaw who'd mounted the horse that had been awaiting recovery from eating locoweed.

At Folsom Prison, it was said Dick was a model prisoner and could converse engagingly on any subject – save one. When the topic drifted to horses, Dick got a glazed expression and excused himself.



President's Message

April, 2022

This is the time of year when Temecula third-grade students study local history. We want to thank the wonderful team of volunteers who gave tours to two groups of students from Rancho Elementary School in March. The students look forward to their trips to Vail HQ and the History Center to learn outside of the classroom and to have experiences like riding in a stagecoach, watching a blacksmith, and learning how to use a rope like a cowboy. Many thanks to Bonnie Reed, Eve Cannella, Jeremy Garzon, Bill Veale, Toni Benson, Dave Wilson, Suzanne Dechert, John and Shelley Leddy, and Bryant Rich. For anyone else who is interested in helping with student tours during April and May, please contact Rebecca Farnbach at rebfrnbach@aol.com or 951-775-6057.

— Dick Fox

Oregon-California Trails Group Symposium at History Center in April

The Temecula Valley Historical Society is pleased to be one of the host organizations for a no cost history symposium April 25 - 27 put on by the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon - California Trails Association (OCTA).

On Tuesday, April 26 the group will take a caravan following the old Butterfield Trail from Temecula to Warner and on to Vallecito.

On Wednesday, April 27 the group will meet at the Little Temecula History Center in the morning for some presentations about our local history by Rebecca Farnbach, Steve Lech, and others.

For more information and to sign up, go to <https://southerntrails.thetaleofthetrail.org/>

Spring Cleaning?

Our store at Vail Ranch HQ takes donations of everything but clothing and furniture. Sales support the mission of the Society to identify, preserve and promote the history of the Temecula Valley. And come visit us! We have amazing, constantly changing inventory at very reasonable prices. Open Tuesdays 9-1, Sundays 11-4 and during special events at Vail Ranch HQ, you will find something to fit your fancy. Email us at info@temeculahistory.org to arrange for donations. PS -- we are looking for a few more volunteers so we can open the store on Saturdays too. And PPS, volunteers get a first look see at the new donations.

EVENTS CALENDAR

- Every Tuesday — 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vail HQ Farmer's Market. Antique store open and train rides for kids. Same schedule every Tuesday.
- Friday, April 1 — 6 to 8 p.m. Herrkooled VW Club meet, 20-30 cars parked on property.
- Sunday, April 3 — 11 s.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday Funday. Family fun, entertainment and vendor market. Antique store open and rides on train or stagecoach available for kids.
- Saturday, April 9 — 3 to 8 p.m. Thistle & Sage Vegan friendly vendors and food, activities and Entertainment.
- Sunday, April 10 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday Funday Family fun, entertainment and vendor market. Antique store open and rides on train or stagecoach available for kids.
- Friday, April 15 — 6 to 8 p.m. Herrkooled VW club meet. 20-30 cars parked on property.
- Saturday, April 16 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Spring Jamboree. Egg hunts, crafts, petting zoo, vendor market, other family activities.
- Sunday, April 17 — 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Reliance Church Sunrise Service. NO SUNDAY FUNDAY TODAY.
- Thursday, April 21 — 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Temecula Middle School Jazz Band Performance. TMS Jazz Band performances at 6 and 7 p.m. 20+ families in Attendance.
- Sunday, April 24 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday Funday. Family fun, entertainment, and vendor Market. Antique store open and train rides for kids. History Center also open.
- Monday, April 25 — 6 p.m. monthlu history presentation, IN-PERSON at Little Temecula History Center (the red barn next to Kohl's). Learn about History of baseball in Southern California.
- Thursday, April 28 — 6 to 8 p.m. Herrkooled VW Club meet, 20-30 cars parked on property.
- Friday, April 29 — 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Starlight Bazaar. Local maker's market, live music, and family entertainment.

Membership News

Renewing Members:

Kathleen Casas	Barbara Tobin
Pat & Annette Jennings	Nancy Mize
Tom & Michelle Elling	Toni Benson
Martin Dinsenbacher	Max Cantu
Rod & Charlene Fink	Dale Garcia

100 Years Ago in Temecula

Selected items from Lake Elsinore Valley Press, Temecula Gossip Column – April 1922

April 7, 1922

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

As the little write up about the track meet at Wil-domar Wednesday, March 22nd, failed to appear in this column last week we will try again. Temecula Union had only twelve entrants, but they brought home thirty-two ribbons, six first place ones. Louis Escallier won four of the first place ribbons.

The Vail Brothers have appropriated five hundred thousand dollars to develop their Pauba ranch property here. They are going to build the long talked of dam and plant deciduous fruit trees. Temecula is surely going to be on the map, as this is one of the finest and best valleys in Southern California, and all that has been needed in the past is the opening of this large ranch.

A.F. Nienke received a car load of lumber from St. Johns, Oregon, last week.

Temecula ball team played the March Field nine on the Murrieta Hot Springs diamond Sunday afternoon and beat them 5 to 4, but it took eleven innings.

The Eastern Star Social Club held a box social at the dance hall last Tuesday evening. Cards, games and dancing were enjoyed. A large number of members and guests from Elsinore attended. Mesdames Mattie, from the Murrieta Hot Springs, A.B. Barnett and W.M. Friedemann were the hostesses. The boxes represented spring time and were indeed beautiful.

Mrs. W. H. Haynes has been quite ill with the flu, but is much improved at this writing.

W.M. Friedemann was elected trustee for the Pujol district and A.B. Barnett for the Saint Gertrude district. The retiring members are Mrs. Myrtle Roripaugh and Joseph Welty.

April 14, 1922

By Mrs. V. B. Sands

The Temecula Indians journeyed to Corona Sunday and crossed bats with the Corona baseball team, winning the game by a score of 7 to 0. The score would indicate that the game was a ragged affair, but to the contrary, it was one of the hardest fought games of the season. Woods, for Corona, struck out 14 of the Indians, while Tano, for Temecula, got 13 scalps of the Corona boys. Hoge, behind the bat and Tano in the box, played their usual good game; Newman, on first, froze to the ball when it landed in his territory; Anderson, on second, played like a leaguer; Sharp, on third and Escallier, on short, forgot that they had fielders and handled everything their way; Escallier, Banks, and Caboose, in the field were always on hand and rendered a good account of themselves. R. Escallier "busted" the fence for a homerun with two men on bases, also nearly "busting" the game. Caboose, our grammar school boy and youngest on the team, landed on the ball for a two-bagger, but acknowledged later that if he had known that the opposing pitcher was an ex-Vernon Coast

Leaguer, in all probability he would never have seen the ball, and for a pleasant ending of the day's sport, on their way home, the boys lined up in one of the popular Elsinore restaurants, and did justice to their big juicy steaks.

C. B. Bayley, county assessor, was a business visitor here Monday.

G. H. Ring, of Claremont, is the new meat cutter at the Temecula meat market. Mr. Ring is not planning on bringing his family here at the present time, but possibly will do so in the near future. By annexing so capable a man to his already efficient force, Mr. Friedemann is endeavoring to handle his increasing business and serve the public in the best manner possible, as has been his policy in the past.

Mrs. W.H. Haynes, who has been ill, is still confined to her home, but is much improved.

William M. Friedemann left for Imperial Sunday to buy a car of cattle.

April 21, 1922

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

There will be a big dance at the dance hall Saturday evening. Los Angeles music, everybody welcome

Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Nienke and daughter, Mabel, spent the weekend in Riverside.

Mrs. J.B. Kelly left Friday morning for Fellows, California, where she will visit her sister, Mrs. Carr.

Mahlon Vail was a Perris visitor Friday.

A.F. Nienke received a car of lumber and also a car of cement last week.

April 28, 1922

By Mrs. V.B. Sands

Temecula got her share of ribbons at the county field meet in Riverside Saturday. She brought home six ribbons with eleven points. One first place ribbon, one third and four fourth place ribbons. Louis Escallier got first place in the broad jump, jumping 15 feet, 4 inches, also fourth place in Soccer kick and fourth place in the high jump. Mary Roripaugh got fourth in Soccer kick, Leo Roripaugh third in the potato race and Bruce Clogston fourth in the potato race.

Russell Vail came out from Los Angeles several days ago to let the contract for piping the "Ludy" track for irrigation.

C. H. Jacobs started the work on Friedemann's new bungalow Tuesday.

Sam Seiple attended the races at Tia Juana.

The Misses Welty and Rogers, teachers at Alberhill were guests at the hotel last Wednesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Friedemann attended the O.E.S. dance at Elsinore last Wednesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Haynes motored to Elsinore Saturday.

Mrs. R.S. Roripaugh was rushed to the hospital at Riverside Saturday morning and operated on immediately. At this writing she is doing nicely.