

Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

June 2016

Volume 1 – Issue 3

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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Alice and her brother, Fred Sotello
(Source: The Jennings Collection)

Alice and the Duke

After Alice Sotello was born in Long Beach, she was brought to her parents' home in Murrieta. The family home was located near the corner of Third and Ivy Streets. When she was a young girl, she would hear the train whistle as it passed through town. Her older brother, Fred, would race to the tracks in hopes of catching an orange that the train engineer tossed out the window. She laughed as her brother missed the orange and it splattered on the dusty ground.

Her father, Eulogio, had worked in the Murrieta Silica Mine until he contracted silicosis. He became paralyzed and was out of work. He was a man of pride and refused to take welfare or a handout from anyone. He believed in hard work, and taught those principles to his children. He did not have money to buy a wheelchair, so he built a chair using two car wheels from an old Ford Model T. To make ends meet, his wife, Jessie, and his son, Fred, went to work in Elsinore. Alice, and her older sister, Mary, age 17, went to work at King's Café in Murrieta.

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Calendar Of Events

Monthly Meetings

Wednesday, June 8th
at 6:00 p.m.

Local Events

Murrieta Public Library
Community Room
Monday, June 6,
6:00 p.m.

The Jennings Family
Speaker Presentation:

Annette and Pat Jennings will present "Murrieta, Then and Now", a photograph show of the area from the 1950s through current times. They will also bring materials from their collection

Saturday, June 25th, City
of Murrieta's
25th Birthday Bash

(Alice continued from Page 1)

King's Café was located at the present day corner of Ivy Street and Jefferson Avenue. By 1939, King's Café had become a popular bus stop on Highway 395. The restaurant was full of tourists heading to Murrieta Hot Springs or San Diego. Because of the large number of customers, the restaurant was in need of assistance. It was difficult for the café owner to find workers in the area, because many Murrieta residents either farmed or were employed at the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. When Alice and Mary asked for a job, they were hired immediately.

The two sisters usually walked over a half a mile along the busy highway to work. On occasion, their father or a neighbor would give them a ride. When they approached the café, they had to sneak into the back kitchen. The restaurant served alcohol and there was a law that prohibited Alice, age 11, from working there. If a concerned citizen saw a young girl slipping into the restaurant, the authorities would have been notified.

Alice would stay in the kitchen washing dishes and prepping food. She was always cautious to remain out of the public eye. Mary was a short order cook, hustling to meet the growing stack of orders coming in. Alice doesn't remember getting a paycheck, but the girls were given a portion of the tip pool. It is believed that the owner paid Alice cash in order to keep her off the books.

On Saturday night the girls were allowed to go to the movies in Elsinore in order to unwind from a week of hard work. They would catch the bus at the corner of Washington Avenue and Ivy Street. When the bus arrived in Elsinore, it would stop at the corner of Graham Avenue and Main Street, just a few feet from the Elsinore Theater. There on the silver screen, the girls would be whisked away to another place, another time. There would be adventure and romance with heroes and villains.

When the curtain closed, the girls would rush to the bus stop. It was late at night as the bus would travel south along the highway back to Murrieta. When they were dropped off at the Murrieta bus stop, the bus driver would wait for them to reach home. There were no street lights on Ivy Street. Their only light to guide them home was moonlight. The neighborhood dogs would bark, announcing their arrival. Their father would come out to the corner and watch as they ran the three blocks home.

At the intersection of Ivy and 2nd Street there was a dip in the road where water collected. The girls would take a running leap to cross the water obstacle. When they finally reached their father, the bus driver would close the door and drive on down the highway. The girls were home safe from their weekly outing.

One day while working at the café the staff began stirring, sharing whispers as the excitement built. Alice asked what the commotion was about. She was told that the actor, John Wayne, just sat down at the counter. Alice knew that she couldn't be seen in public, but she also knew she may never have the opportunity like this again. She asked if she could meet the star. Reluctantly, she was allowed to come out of the kitchen to greet the famous customer.

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From the Murrieta Archives:

By Olive Miller

June 10, 1921

The Holiness people expect to dedicate their new church Sunday afternoon, June 12th. L. A. Clark of Los Angeles and other officials of the church will be here to have charge of the dedication services. A.J. Sykes and son, Howard, went to Corona and brought home a harvester to care for their crop of grain.

June 17, 1921

Mr. Ramage and family returned to Los Angeles Tuesday. Mr. Ramage has been here for several weeks building the Holiness church.

A number of Murrieta people visited the cherry orchards Sunday.

Vernon James shipped two carloads of hay this week.

June 24, 1921

The voice of the thresher mowing machine and bailer is heard in the valley this week. The ranchers are kept busy caring for their crops.

Born – To Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Wicker, Tuesday, June 21st, a 9-pound son

(Alice continued from Page 2)

The celebrity reached for her hand and shook it. Their meeting was brief. They exchanged greetings and he wished her good luck. She smiled and was then ushered back into the kitchen. As she returned to her duties, she smiled as she realized that she had just met someone she may have seen only in the movies. Alice continued to work at the café for about a year.

In the autumn, the family went to harvest olives at the Olive Tree Ranch across the street from the Murrieta Cemetery. To reach the orchard the family would have to cross the river (Murrieta Creek). First Alice would wear boots and wade through the water to the other side. Then she tossed the boots back over to her mother so she too could wear the boots during the crossing.

Immediately after the olive harvest, Alice, her mother and Fred went to Elsinore to work the walnut harvest. They gathered the walnuts in large gunnysacks. She doesn't recall what she was paid. It was probably whatever the boss felt was a fair day's wage.

As the years passed by, the family continued to work hard. Though it was nice meeting John Wayne, it paled in comparison to Alice's most memorable moment at the café. One day a sailor was passing by and caught a glimpse of her from the café's window. He commented to the owner, "She is so pretty, I want to squeeze her!" At that moment, she was the celebrity. In later years she would quote that mysterious sailor's words, and her husband would get flustered. Thoughts of those words continue to this day to bring forth joyous laughter and sparkles in her eyes.

Research Note: Interview with Alice Sotello Vose conducted on May 18, 2016 in Murrieta, CA



The Former King's Café (Source: Jeffery Harmon, photo taken 7-23-2011)

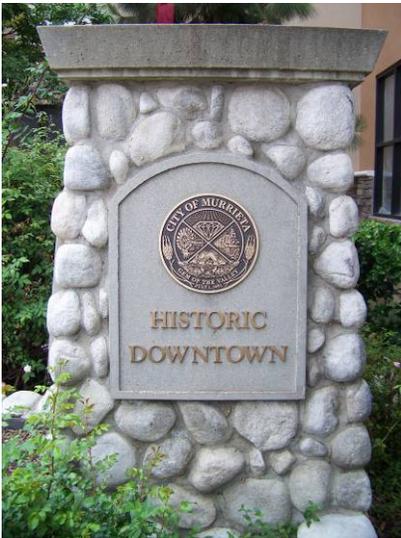
Monthly Meeting Location

The Society is in need of a monthly meeting location that can hold up to fifty people.

The Society has no funds to pay for a location.

If you have a free monthly meeting space, please contact us as soon as possible.

Thank you.



President's Message

Jeffery Harmon

In May, Murrieta was honored to have a distinguished guest visit us from Vienna, Austria! Once a year, Inge Haeupler comes to California to visit Virginia Fenske, a Golsh descendant who just celebrated her 100th birthday. Inge is the leading researcher on the Golsh family from Austria. She conducts research in many historical archives within the area.

Adele Golsh was the wife of Juan Murrieta. Adele's father was Albert Golsh, who emigrated with his family from Austria and lived at Pala. The Golsh family history is rich in stories and legends. One legend states that the Golsh family was connected to the famous Hapsburg dynasty. The legend has been printed in multiple historical publications to the point that it is considered fact. Inge's exhaustive research has proven that this Golsh legend is nothing more than a tall tale.

During her visit, Inge shared her knowledge of the village of Gainfarn where Adele was born. Today the village is part of Voeslau. The similarities between the village and Murrieta are uncanny. The village, like our valley, boasts a mineral hot spring resort and world renowned vineyards. With the similarities between the two towns, why doesn't Murrieta claim the town as a Sister City? It is something for us to ponder I suppose.

In other news, we continue to look for a place to meet. We would like to thank Keith Johnson of Alta Pacific Bank for offering the bank's conference room as a place for small committee meetings.

We continue to wait on our 501c status in order to open up membership. Like most government agencies, the process does take time. So we wait patiently as the process plods along.

Thank you again for sharing in our passion for preserving and promoting the history of the Murrieta Valley. We look forward to sharing all our stories in the months and years to come. If you have any questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints, please send it along. Thank you.



Inge Haeupler and me at the Little Temecula History Center,