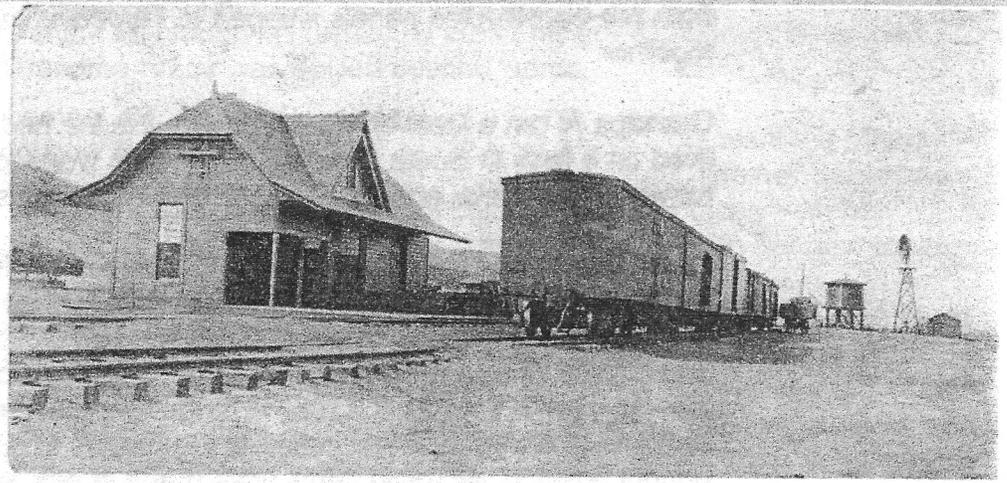


Temecula Valley Historical Society

OCTOBER 2008

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10

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.



We meet from 12:00 to 2 p.m. on the first Friday of each month at the Historic Pujol Schoolhouse on Santiago Road.

This photograph of the Temecula Train Depot was given to John Moramarco by Pete Escallier. None of us have seen this image before, or any other photograph with the depot, train, tank, and windmill all in one picture. Thank you, John, for sharing it with us.

Be sure to arrive before noon so you don't miss the most interesting part!

Historical Outing: October 31st

Tour of Rancho Margarita & Rancho Las Flores

On October 3rd, Joshua Fox, Murrieta's new Historian & Archivist will be telling about the newest historical institution in the valley and about the Storytelling Grant they just received from the State of California. Don't miss it!

Sign up today for an informative and enjoyable early California history tour of Ranchos Margarita and Las Flores, now parts of Camp Pendleton. The cost is \$28 per person for seats in a modern, air-conditioned bus, an historian guide, and lunch at Iron Mike's Banquet Room in the South Mesa Staff NCO Club.

The bus leaves at 7 a.m. from the Temecula Community Center on Meadows Parkway, and will return around 5 p.m. Seats are limited to the first 57 reservations.

RESERVATIONS / QUESTIONS: Barbara Tobin at 951-760-6096
Paul Price at 951-244-5937

Grandma Freda Knott's Table

By Eugene Knott

My grandparents Al Knott and Freda Rail married in 1914 and made their home in Temecula. Like most newlyweds, they started out with very little. Grandpa Al bought a piece of property with a small house on it across Front Street, which was State Highway 395, in those days. Grandma Freda used to call it her mobile house because it was built from pre-constructed panels shipped to Temecula by train, then bolted together.

Grandpa Al ran a local blacksmith shop. He learned his trade when he lived on a farm in South Dakota. He grew up working with his hands, turning scrap metal and wood into useful implements.

When Grandma Freda wanted a dining room table, it was only natural for him to collect what he had in his blacksmith shop and make one for her. He took a wooden wheel about 6 feet in diameter from a wagon and covered it with rough cut 1-by-12-inch wooden boards to use as its top. He used a section of a wagon tongue for the center post and four sections of a wagon wheel bolted to the tongue to support the table in an upright position. All these items were made of oak, except for the tabletop. Anything Grandpa Al made was not going to break, he was a blacksmith and his work was strong.

Grandma had to use a tablecloth on it, because the top had never been sanded or finished. I remember playing under that table when I was young. I would try to slide down the section of wagon wheel used to keep it upright.

There were only about four televisions in town in the early fifties. When one of the more popular programs came on, people would gather at someone's house to watch. Gathering around a seven-inch screen always left someone unable to see the program. One local bought a large magnifying lens that attached to the screen to make the picture larger.

Around 1952 or so Grandma Freda got a call from a television station asking her to be on their show. She was a very modest person and couldn't understand why they called her. They said they would send a car to Temecula to pick her up and take her home again, so she accepted their offer.

What she didn't know was that some of the citizens wanted to do something for her tireless work she did for the Temecula and Murrieta area. When someone was sick, she was there. She not only ran the little church, she was the librarian. When anyone needed anything, all they needed to do was contact Mrs. Knott. She provided meals to strangers who broke down traveling through the area. We never knew who we were going to meet when we went to visit Grandma Freda.

The name of the television show was Truth or Consequences. They asked Grandma Freda some off-the-wall question that really didn't have an answer. Of course she got it wrong, to which they said her consequence was behind the curtain.

When they opened the curtain, about 75 or so local citizens from the Temecula area were standing there. She almost fainted. They changed the format of the show to "Queen for a Day" and presented her with gifts. Some of these gifts were a new dining room set and a 12-inch television that got 99 channels (Temecula area only got 7 channels back then.) Grandma Freda was thrilled beyond words.

When the truck with her new furnishings arrived, out went the dining room table she had been using for all those years. The new table had two leaves to add when she had company, so it fit nicely with her lifestyle. She had many fine meals and gatherings with her new table.

As with everyone, change came and Grandma and Grandpa Knott sold their property and moved to Rainbow in 1967. What Grandma Freda didn't know, was that Grandpa Al had someone make a new tabletop for her old table. It was cut out of a sheet of plywood, sanded, stained, and finished with a smooth, shiny coating.

I didn't quite know why Grandma Freda got faint when she walked into her new house, until she explained the story about her table. She didn't know Grandpa Al had stored their table in their barn for all those years, let alone made it look so pretty. It was the icing on her cake to make their new place feel like home. It was their first move since they married and she didn't know whether she liked the idea of starting over.

They were married until Grandpa Al's death in 1982. Isn't it funny how something that began by lack of funds becomes the thing you cherish most!

News Briefs:

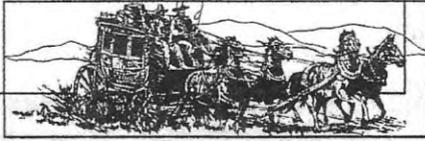
September 15th marked the 150th Anniversary of the first trip of the Overland Butterfield Stage.

October 1st is the 100th Anniversary of the Model T Ford. Between then and the end of the car's production in 1927, more than 15 million Model Ts were sold. The car, a sturdy, practical car, and the first reasonably affordable car available, changed America.

Thanks to Dick Fox for designing the template for this newsletter, the first available electronically to the Society. If you did not receive this electronically and would like to receive future newsletters by email, please contact Barbara Tobin at Barbara.tobin2@verizon.net

- Rebecca Farnbach, editor

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