

TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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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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O.T. Hackett Recalls the Great Flood . . .

Perilous Days of Pioneers

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint of an article that appeared in the Lake Elsinore Valley Press, October 15, 1915 and is based on an interview with Samuel Warren (O.T.) Hackett late in his life. Mr. Hackett was so reliable that he attained a reputation for always being On Time, hence the adopted initials of O.T. Hackett. He was a regular in Temecula, staying overnight by renting a room at the Wolf Store. He is remembered with an appropriately appointed room in today's restored Wolf Store.)

At the recent grape day exercises at Escondido the registry of old residents of San Diego County showed that S. W. Hackett, whose home is at 1534 First Street is the oldest resident of the county who has continually been resident in this city. He has been a citizen of San Diego since 1859 and during the intervening has followed various occupations, having at one time been the owner of the stage and mail route between this city and Temecula, member of the city council and superintendent of streets, which latter position he resigned the office of councilman or alderman as it was called at the time. He is on the eve of four score years, says the San Diego Examiner.

In all these years Hackett says he has not voted outside the limits of San Diego. There are other old-timers here whose date of coming was about contemporaneous with that of Hackett, but they left the place and for a number of years resided in other parts of the county or country.

Hackett was asked if he remembered the storm during which a great part of the line of the Santa Fe in Temecula canyon was washed out.

It is this destroyed line which has since remained out of existence and which the people of this city have asked the state railroad commission to order the Santa Fe company to rebuild, an order which has just been made by the commission.

In answering the question Hackett said: "I should say that I do remember it because I was right in it. I was running the stage and carrying the mail at the time between this city and Temecula. The rain commenced to fall in Temecula on Saturday, February 3, 1884, just about as I was leaving Temecula for this city. The washout took place on the following day, February 4. The rain was like a deluge and swept everything before it. That was the first time the track



Samuel W. Hackett
1919

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Hackett recalls the Flood

was washed out. The second washout occurred, I think, in 1890.

“I started to return to Temecula on Monday. The rivers were all swollen, I was compelled, with the help of another man, to draw my stage across the railroad bridge over San Diego near Old Town and then swim my horses over the river. The section man refused to give me permission to cross on the bridge, but no trains came along while I was crossing.

“All the rivers were full of running water and although I left San Diego on Monday morning I did not get my mail into the post office at Temecula until just midnight on the following Sunday.”



Michele Elling portraying the colorful character Edna Swanguen. There was a great turn out for her premier performance.

Upcoming Merger Will Blend 2 Sister Groups

Many of you are familiar with the complementary relationship between the Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaARRA) and the Temecula Valley Historical Society (TVHS). You may even know that there was no historical society when there was a real threat of demolition of all the buildings at Vail Headquarters except the Wolf Store in the mid-1990s, prompting VaARRA's formation that started the long process to save and protect the Vail Headquarters and to develop it into the living history site it is today.

In 2000, many of the same people with the addition of others decided there was a need for another historical group with a broader vision of historical entities to protect, and formed the Temecula Valley Historical Society. A couple of months ago, with the Vail Headquarters site nearing the completion of restoration, the VaARRA board of directors asked TVHS to consider merging into one organization, the Temecula Valley Historical Society.

After a legal consultation by representatives from both organizations, VaARRA has asked TVHS to file a DBA to also do business as the Vail Ranch Restoration Association, effective September 1, 2019. This is beneficial in several ways, especially in reduction of duplication of efforts. TVHS will receive a building and a steady income from the antique store, train and book royalties previously earned by VaARRA alone. VaARRA benefits by not having to file separate tax paperwork, and the insurance owed by the two organizations together is less than what has been paid separately. Starting immediately only one newsletter will be produced.

TVHS will gain responsibilities in taking care of the Little Temecula History Center and there will be a VaARRA committee to continue watching over the historic property.

Both boards of directors welcome these as necessary changes and believe it is a positive move. We hope you also feel the excitement of this significant upcoming happy union.

Assistance Needed From Members for Varied Tasks

The Temecula Valley Historical Society has several volunteer opportunities. If you can assist with any of the following, please contact us at: info@temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org, and to give you more information or answer your questions.

..# Annual Banquet Committee. The banquet is held in November and meetings are held monthly, beginning June 17, 12:30 pm @ Panera

..# Data entry

..# Sending e-mail notifications to society members

..# Community events.

..# Helping to clean the Little Red Barn

We appreciate all our volunteers and members!

Notable Men & Women of Temecula Activities & Presentations



Gerry Nicholas as NOTABLE MAN, O. T. HACKETT, will appear on SUNDAY, JUNE 2ND, AT 2:30 P.M. at the Little Temecula History Center (Red Barn). Mr. Hackett was Temecula's favorite stagecoach driver who bought the mail route from San Diego to Temecula. Come and hear about this fascinating time in our history. (See story on Page 1).

— Membership News —

Thank you for your membership support.

**Welcome New Member:
Michael Nelligan**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, June 1st — 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Civil War Conference at Temecula Conference Center. *“The American Civil War - 1864: Fighting to Survive”* Six knowledgeable and distinguished speakers plus Displays. Lunch included with registration.

Sunday, June 2nd — at 2:30 p.m. Gerry Nicholas will Portray O.T. Hackett at the Little Temecula History Center. Hackett was the stagecoach driver who delivered mail to Temecula.

Sunday, June 2nd — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendor Fair at Vail Headquarters.

Friday, June 7th — 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Live music at Vail Headquarters. Scheduled for every Friday evening during the month.

Saturday, June 8th — 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Annual Bazaar in Sam Hicks Monument Park. Booth reservation proceeds go to support programs of the Temecula Valley Museum. Visit the Bazaar, and support them.

Saturday, June 15th — 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Vegan Fair Event at Vail Headquarters.

Sunday, June 16th — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendor Fair at Vail Headquarters.

Wednesday, June 26th — 1:00 p.m. at Mary Philips Senior Center in Old Town, Michele Elling will Portray Edna Swanguen for the Senior Golden Years Club. Edna's family owned and operated the first eating establishment in Temecula. Edna was the telephone switchboard operator for the local telephone company. This program is free and open to the public.

Friday, June 28th — 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Starlight Bazaar At Vail Headquarters. Last Friday each month thru Summer time.

A How to Guide . . .

Donate to Historical Society While Shopping on Amazon

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable non-profit organization (hint TVHS).

And, YES you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Consider this and remember TVHS during your shopping ventures. For more information and helpful links go to our website www.temeculahistory.org and scroll to the bottom of the Home Page.

Recipients of Temecula Valley Historical Society's 2019 Scholarship Awards

Many Thanks to our scholarship committee for their outstanding selections:
Elaine Culverhouse, Cheryl Cady, Suzanne Dechert, Bonnie and John Martland



Monica Wong, a graduate of Great Oak High School, is the recipient of a \$1000 scholarship from the Temecula Valley Historical Society.

She will be attending UCLA, and is majoring in Economics. This photo of Monica with her proud parents, Mr. & Mrs. Wong.



Benjamin Garner, a graduate of Chaparral High School, is the recipient of a \$1000 scholarship from the Temecula Valley Historical Society.

He will be attending UC Santa Clara, with a double major in History and Political Science. With Benjamin are his proud parents, Mr. & Mrs. Garner.

She Was The Only Woman To Get The Medal Of Honor

(Editor's Note: Although both Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day were in May, it seems appropriate to acknowledge, note and remember a special Military Service veteran from the Civil War era.)

In all of American history, only one woman has been awarded the Medal of Honor — and Congress tried to take it back. Her name was Mary Edwards Walker, and she was a doctor at a time when female physicians were rare. She graduated from the Syracuse Medical College, and at the outbreak of the Civil War traveled to Washington with the intention of joining the Army as a medical officer. When she was rejected, she volunteered as a surgeon and served in that capacity for various units through the war years, continually agitating for a commission.



Walker was captured by the Confederate Army in April 1864 and held for a few months at Castle Thunder prison near Richmond, Va. Finally, that October, she was given a commission as acting assistant surgeon, the first female physician in the U.S. Army.

President Andrew Johnson signed a bill awarding Walker the Medal of Honor in 1865, because she "has devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and has also endured hardships as a prisoner of war."

She continued to practice medicine after the war, and took up the cause of women's rights with a passion. Walker had long preferred to wear men's clothing, and was even arrested several times for "masquerading" as a man.

In 1917, Congress changed the criteria for awarding the Medal of Honor, restricting it to those who had engaged in actual combat with an enemy. Hundreds of medals, including Walker's, were rescinded. She refused to return hers, however, and wore it proudly until her death in 1919.

Fifty-eight years later, President Jimmy Carter reinstated Walker's Medal of Honor, recognizing her "distinguished gallantry, self-sacrifice, patriotism, dedication and unflinching loyalty to her country, despite the apparent discrimination because of her sex."