

road into Los Angeles. Following the San Bernardino road from there they may have turned off into the San Gabriels where San Gabriel Canyon was an important mining area. Otherwise they could have continued to and through San Bernardino and then taken the road up into the mountains to Holcomb Valley, a mining community of some prominence at the time. This valley had also served as a gathering place for Confederate sympathizers during the Civil War.

The Jameses were following the Butterfield route because of prior knowledge of it which they had obtained from a man they had known apparently in Missouri and who had worked for the line until the war closed it in 1862. This man also knew the owner of the ranch at Temecula towards which the brothers were heading. This knowledge could have allowed the boys to take a side trip into the mountains, return to the main road in haste, travel it east or west depending on which mountain community they had been in to the town of Chino. Here the Butterfield route turned east to and through Temecula as opposed to the main road which continued easterly to San Bernardino.



Confirmation of the James brothers visit to the Temecula region of San Diego County comes in the published work of Lester Reed, grandson of Asa and Naoma Reed who came by wagon train to Southern California from Texas in 1867. Settling in Cahuilla Valley, near Cahuilla Indian Reservation in the Santa Rosa Mountains in what is now Riverside County, the Reeds became a permanent ranching family of old California. Because of his diligent efforts at gathering historical data of central Riverside County, San Diego County and Imperial County, Lester Reed was selected Historian of the Year in 1981 by Riverside County Historical Commission. This was a year or so before his death at over 90 years of age.

In his book Reed tells the story of another early ranching family, the Rawsons. James Rawson worked for the Butterfield Overland Mail Company until it folded. While working for the company he became friendly with the man who would also come to know the James brothers. Coming to Southern California over the Butterfield route, after the line closed, Rawson found and settled a ranch in Glen Oak Valley near Temecula. He met and married Mary Zuniga, a descendant of an early Hispanic Californian family.

The Jameses appeared at the Rawson ranch with about ten head of horses; how and where they obtain them is not explained. While resting there for a few days Frank took a black horse owned by one of the Rawsons. However, the owner did not want to sell. The horse had come to him from Tiburcio Vasquez, the California bandit, through a mutual acquaintance, Teofilo Fortenio. Despite his being in San Quentin from June 18, 1867 to June 4, 1870, Vasquez maintained sufficient sympathy among much of the Hispanic population for such a transference to be possible. That Vasquez was to know in the back country of the counties mentioned above is also confirmed by Reed. A member of the Reed family actually met and exchanged words with the famous transgressor in Cahuilla valley.

Frank James told the owner of the black that if he could buy it the horse would again belong to a great bandit as he was Frank and his brother was Jesse James. At that time Rawson would only know what their mutual friend had told him of the Jameses. But whatever that had been it was enough. When the brothers were ready to leave James Rawson handed the lead rope of the black to Frank, telling him simply it was now his and then wishing them luck.

Apparently while at Rawson's ranch the Jameses gathered some additional information about southern routes out of California. Actually at that time there were only three.

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