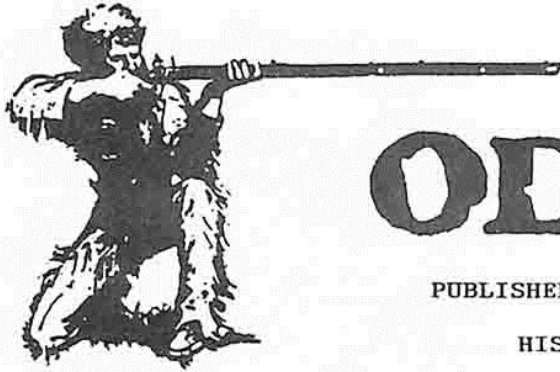


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# ODYSSEY

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HISTORICAL & PIONEER SOCIETY

VOL. 16 NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1994



When one of the most highly respected citizens of San Bernardino passed away in 1931, the man's obituary stated that his life was like a page out of the Old West. A statement like that may seem trite to the casual observer, but to the many old timers who paid homage at his funeral, nobody deserved that tribute more than John C. Ralphs.

A man frequently in the news, Ralphs represented the law in San Bernardino County in the early 1900's when the region was going through a major transition from a wide-open frontier accompanied by booming mining camps into a period of immense growth due to the arrival

## THE LAWMAN.....

### JOHN C. RALPHS

by

Nicholas R. Cataldo

of the automobile, expanded agricultural industries, and the dominance of the railroad. The changes that occurred during this time resulted in a mixed bag of newcomers who brought with them a wealth of problems as well.

A big, powerful man, standing well over six feet tall in his boots, weighing better than 200 pounds, and sporting a big handlebar mustache, Ralphs was often described as fearless, tough, and a real "He-Man," qualifications which made him perfectly suited as an officer of the law. During his career as a law man, serving first as town marshal for two years during the 1890's when San Bernardino was still somewhat of a wild frontier town, and later as sheriff of San

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

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San Bernardino, Ca. 92402

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**HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS**

The meetings during the next five months are as follows:

7:00 P.M., Thurs., February 2  
BILL CALVERT, President of the Highland-East Highlands Historical Society, will present a slide/lecture program on the "Brookings Sawmill" which was in operation from 1898 until 1923.

3:30 P.M., Thurs., February 16  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

7:00 P.M., Thurs., March 2  
ROBIN LASKA, California Historical Resources Information Director at the S.B. County Museum, will give an interesting program on local archeology in the San Bernardino Valley.

3:30 P.M. Thurs., March 16  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

7:00 P.M., Thurs., April 6  
STEVE SHAW and ALAN BONE, local firemen who are long time collectors of memorabilia pertaining to the history of San Bernardino's fire department, will display and discuss their extensive collection with us at their museum ---located on Cluster Ave. ( between Sierra Way and Mt. View Ave. and Between Rialto Ave. and Mill Street ) in San Bernardino.

3:30 P.M., Thurs., April 20  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday afternoon, May 4

JIM HOFER, S.B. County Archivist, will host a tour through the County Archives--which includes numerous interesting documents, etc., since 1853.

3:30 P.M., Thurs., May 18  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

7:00 P.M., Thurs., June 1  
DR. LARRY BURGESS and JAMES SANDOS, authors of the highly acclaimed book, "The Hunt for Willie Boy", will talk about their research into the true story of the famous manhunt that took place in 1909.

3:30 P.M., Thurs., JUNE 15  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### EDITOR'S COLUMN

The field trip out to the Mojave Desert on October 8, was a wonderful experience. Our host, Clifford Walker, showed us traces of the Old Spanish Trail traversed by mule caravans in the 1830's and 1840's, wagon ruts still embedded on the Mormon Trail used back in 1851, and the gold rush route taken by the 49ers. We made numerous stops at historic sites such as the Salt Springs Mine which was founded by members of the Mormon Battalion in 1849, the first permanent house built in Death Valley, old talc miners shacks from the 1920's, the home of Chief Tecopa, the ghost town of Silver Lake, circular depressions of prehistoric Indian huts and remnants of an Indian trail near China Ranch, and the pioneer rest stop of Resting Spring. The twenty people from San Bernardino as well as the dozen or so from the upper desert area who attended this special event thank Cliff for this unique opportunity to "relive the past" and hope to do this again soon.

The fourth annual **ARROWHEAD SPRINGS TOUR** will be held on Saturday, March 25, 1995. Our host on this two hour "easy" walking tour, John Lowe, will once again take us back in time to relive the days when Arrowhead Springs was making the transition from an 1850's health resort into a Hollywood celebrity's retreat in the 1930's, and finally into its present status as The Christian Conference Center for Campus Crusade For Christ. For those interested in attending, please meet at the entrance of Arrowhead Springs Hotel at 12:45 P.M.

One of the articles featured in the recently published 1994 **HERITAGE TALES** entitled "Mother Massetti and the Early Italian Community in San Bernardino, California", is a culmination of many

years of dedication and hard work involving extensive personal interviewing by society member and lifelong San Bernardino resident, Louise Gavuzzi Torta. Her extremely valuable, laborious, and time consuming method of primary research has resulted in the first published in depth study of it's kind that I am aware of.

While preparing Mrs. Torta's article for publication, between the lengthy editing process of her draft and the printer's typesetting proof, I failed to discover more than just a few spelling errors.

I would like all of our members to know that all spelling errors that you will come upon while reading this article are no fault of the author, Louise Torta, to whom I give my sincere apologies. As editor, I take full responsibility for these errors.

Nicholas R. Cataldo

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Bernardino County for twelve years, he brought many a criminal to justice. Despite his huge frame and deep gruff voice, Ralphs was known for his warm heart and kindness to those who obeyed the law; but how that deep voice could rumble out--in greetings to his friends as well as in stern advice to criminals. Those who transgressed the law had a genuine fear of Sheriff Ralphs while good citizens had a genuine regard for his honesty, his ability, and his friendship.

The events that led to the arrival of the Ralphs family into the San Bernardino Valley began during the fall of 1852 when Richard Ralphs, his pregnant wife, Mary, and their two children, bade farewell to their home in Missouri for a trek across the plains in search of a new home in the state of California. While their wagon was making its way through Utah on October 24, Mary gave birth to John Charles Ralphs.

After making the arduous trek across the desolate Mojave Desert and then meandering through the rugged Cajon Pass, the Ralphs clan, who had to endure the death of one child due to illness as they were traveling, gazed upon the beautiful fertile San Bernardino Valley, recently settled by a caravan of Mormon settlers from Salt Lake City. They quickly fell in love with the area and decided to make their new home here.

Soon upon arrival in San Bernardino, Richard Ralphs started buying up land, eventually totalling 191 acres. Meanwhile, he engaged in farming and stock raising in addition to operating a brick yard ( which resulted in producing San Bernardino's first brick-constructed building in 1867). In January, 1857, he bought a five acre lot on what is now the north east corner of Mill Street and Eureka Avenue from Amasa Lyman, Charles Rich, and Ebenezer Hanks. A short time later, Ralphs built a house on that lot for his family which would, in time, include five more children. There he lived out the remaining years of his life which came to an end on September 15, 1877. Nine and a half years later, on April 22, 1887, Mary passed away. They were both laid to rest at San Bernardino's Pioneer Cemetery.

The third oldest of eight children born to Richard and Mary Ralphs, John C. Ralphs re-

ceived only a limited education as a child and began working as a shepherd on his parents' farm when he was just nine years old. He stayed on as a ranch hand until reaching adulthood.



John C. Ralphs, Sheriff, 1903.

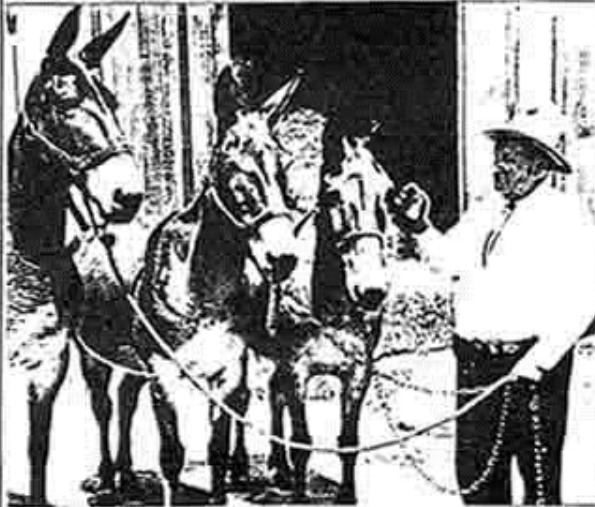
On June 6, 1872, Ralphs married Eunice Samantha Roberds and built a home on a portion of the Jurupa Rancho while working as a farmer and rancher. Although he lost his claim several years later, Ralphs continued to buy up land eventually owning 640 acres in the Imperial Valley as well as thirty acres in San Bernardino, where he built a home just west of his parents' ranch around 1883 for Eunice and their eight children--Mary Angeline, Martha, Richard, George, Ida Maybell, Charles, John Jr., and Dennis.

Ralphs was a strong Republican and became a dominant figure in politics. He was very much involved in civic affairs and was not afraid to voice his opinion on what he felt was the difference between right and wrong. A prime example of Ralphs reluctance to hold back his opinions was a quarrel that he had with Nicholas Earp which triggered an altercation involving a third party. The incident was reported in **THE SAN BERNARDINO WEEKLY INDEX** on December 2, 1881. The news article stated, "A difficulty occurred in front of the Farmer's Exchange Bank this afternoon between Byron Waters and a gentleman named Earp. Earp had

been quarreling with a man named Ralph (sic), and Mr. Waters interfering, he received a torrent of abuse from the old gentleman, which he resented in a lively manner. Earp was led off somewhat damaged about the eye, and badly lamed by falling." Although it was never reported what the argument was all about, it is interesting to note that the incident occurred approximately one month to the day after Earp's sons, Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan were involved in an altercation of their own while living in Tombstone, Arizona...an incident known as THE GUNFIGHT AT THE O.K. CORRAL.

In 1893 Ralphs was elected town marshal of San Bernardino and held the position for two years before being defeated in his bid for reelection and returning to his farming operation. However, he had made such an impressive record as marshal that in 1903 Ralphs was elected sheriff of San Bernardino County, a position he would serve for 12 years.

One of the best known sheriffs of California, Ralphs handled many famous criminal cases that story writers found colorful material in, especially when manhunts--most notably the hunt for Death Valley Scotty and his party in the wilds of Wingate Pass and the search for Willie Boy--were involved.



Walter Scott (Death Valley Scotty)

A man that Ralphs had absolutely no use for was Walter Scott, better known as "Death Valley Scotty". This publicity hungry extrovert had completed a record breaking train ride to Chicago in July 1905 which made his name a household word. On his return to the West Coast, Scotty agreed to star in a melodrama on the San Francisco stage entitled "Scotty, King of the Desert Mine." The con artist, however, never knew whether it would have been a success or not because he was in jail after the first night's performance, arrested on a telegraph warrant from Sheriff John C. Ralphs regarding the outgrowth of a botched holdup near the south end of Death Valley. The skirmish has generally been known as "The Battle at Wingate Pass."

The fiasco started when Scotty did some of his typical bragging to a party of Eastern capitalists about a mine he supposedly owned, which of course, he did not. Unfortunately, the naive gentlemen weren't aware of Scotty's reputation and agreed to grubstake him. When Scotty's long-promised dividends to backers were not forthcoming, the capitalists decided to come out to see this mine for themselves. While leading the potential investors toward the non-existent mine, Scotty was planning to give the men a scare with a fake holdup and have them go back to their homes back East discouraged that they did not find the mine but, nevertheless, with a big story to talk about when they got together with their cronies. If by some chance these men were still willing to go on after the shooting, Scotty would take them up to his friend, Bill Keyes' mine which was located at the south end of Death Valley. Scotty and Keyes would then split up the profit.

The holdup pair, Keyes and an Indian named Jack Brody (referred to by Keyes in an interview many years later as Bob Belt), was supposed to shoot one of Scotty's mules but a wild bullet seriously wounded Scotty's older brother, Warner. In the excitement Scotty temporarily forgot his role in the farce and raced ahead shouting "Stop shooting. You hit one of my men." That spilled the beans. The Easterners, bitter

over being taken for suckers, started prosecution immediately.

Faced with a barrage of charges and complaints, the massive, no-nonsense lawman, John Ralphs, refused to be hurried into taking any rash action. "If the law has been broken," Ralphs told reporters, "we shall see that the guilty parties are brought to justice. Personally, I do not believe that Scott has a mine, rich or otherwise, or that anyone is seeking, or has sought his life which Scotty had claimed. If he will record his alleged mining claim, and it is in San Bernardino County, we shall see that he is put in peaceable possession of it. If he needs protection and asks for it, we shall supply it to him. We are keeping in mind the fact that Walter Scott likes free publicity, especially now with his new show about to go on the road".

Ralphs first asked Los Angeles police to determine whether or not Warner Scott, who had been taken to a Los Angeles hospital, had really been shot. However, the local authorities were refused entrance to Scott's room. This infuriated Ralphs who was no man to monkey with. He promptly dispatched Undersheriff Samuel McNabb to "make them show up or shut up." Arriving at the hospital, McNabb unceremoniously shouldered Scotty's defenders aside, advanced to Warner's bed, and jerked back the covers. The authenticity of the victim's wound was clearly self-evident.

On March 17, after nearly two weeks of investigation, warrants were issued for the arrest of Shorty Smith, Walter Scott, Bill Keyes, and Jack Brody on charge of assault with a deadly weapon. **THE SAN BERNARDINO SUN** of March 3, 1906, broke the story of the Wingate holdup under the headline "Reaching for Scotty's Scalp."

That was all the information that Ralphs needed. Charges were filed, Scotty was arrested in San Francisco, Keyes and Brody were brought in from the desert, and the trial started in superior court. Unfortunately, the trial didn't last long. At the outset Scotty's lawyer raised the question of jurisdiction, contending that the "battle" had been in Inyo County. A survey crew was sent out and sure enough, the fake holdup had been 200 yards or so north of the San Bernardino

County line. The case was transferred to Independence, the county seat of Inyo, but prosecution there was dropped when the disgusted Eastern victims decided to call it quits and go back to New York.

"Our efforts are far from wasted," said a disappointed Sheriff John Ralphs, "Even if Inyo County declines to prosecute, Walter Scott has been exposed as a bunco artist. He will now have to change his field of operations."

The other well known manhunt that Ralphs played an important role in was the search for Willie Boy. This incident had all the drama, suspense, and thrills of the Old West. On the morning of Monday, September 27, 1909, residents of Banning, California, learned that during the preceding night Willie Boy, a local Paiute Indian, had shot and killed 74-year-old William Mike Boniface while the old man and his family were sleeping under some trees on the nearby Gilman Ranch. Willie had not only treacherously murdered the old man but also abducted his 14 year-old daughter, Carlota, and eventually killed her too. This double murder triggered one of the last horseback manhunts in the history of the Southwest, lasting some two weeks and involved another murder, a seriously wounded peace officer, a suicide, and rumors about an Indian uprising.



Riverside, Cal., Oct. 1st, 1909

**Wanted for Murder**

**\$50.00 Reward**

Feelings ran high as several posses at different times scoured the mountains and desert regions of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in search of the outlaw and his captive. Daily press coverage, though intense, was inaccurate and confusing at times, only adding to the excitement and uncertainty. Further, the whole affair was punctuated by being the backdrop for President William Howard Taft's nationally publicized visit to the world-famous Mission Inn in Riverside.

When word was flashed to San Bernardino County Sheriff John Ralphs that Willie Boy was in his county and that Riverside County officers needed help in apprehending the outlaw he responded immediately. He gave the command for the organization of two posses. Ralphs headed one that went by train north from San Bernardino some 80 miles to Daggett where they disembarked, mounted up and rode southeast into the Mojave Desert, and finally headed towards the Bullion Mountains. The second posse, in the charge of Deputy Sheriff Preciado, swept east from Victorville. In the end, however, Willie Boy was never captured as he killed himself with his last bullet and died in his desert hideout.

There was another manhunt that John Ralphs was involved in while holding the title as top lawman in San Bernardino County, again one involving a badman fleeing on horseback before the pursuing posses across the desert wastes and escaping against almost unbelievable odds until he made his way back into civilization. The desperado in this affair was James McKinney, known to some historians as the last of the famous outlaws.

Fired up with bad whiskey, McKinney rode through the streets of Porterville, blasting everyone in sight with a shotgun, killing one man and wounding six others in the process. He then escaped a possible lynching by fleeing to Mexico before slipping back over the border to Kingman, Arizona, where he was recognized while working in a mine.

The sheriff of Mojave County, Arizona, assigned two of his deputies to pick up McKinney. The outlaw, however, beat them to the draw and killed both men.



Ralphs property purchased in 1857  
House built by Richard Ralphs.

The chase was on. McKinney fled westward across the wastelands to Fort Mojave, an Indian outpost 12 miles north of Needles, where he hired an Indian to row him across the Colorado, swimming his two horses behind the boat.

Here, Sheriff Ralphs picked up the outlaw's trail. He telegraphed the operator on the old California--Eastern Railroad from Goffs to Ivanpah at the settlement of Manvel. The operator, R.A. Gibson, was asked if McKinney had come his way.

At the very minute Gibson was receiving the message, McKinney rode by the station, hurrying out toward Rock Spring, deep in the desert. Ralphs took up the chase, joining posses from the then Territory of Arizona and Lincoln County, Nevada.

Ralphs deputized every cowboy in the area and then pushed the hunt, following the fleeing badman through Kingston and on through the Pahrump Valley along the California--Nevada line. After stopping in Resting Springs, McKinney headed for Death Valley ahead of the posses, then went on to Bakersfield where he was wounded. While recuperating from his wounds, his whereabouts were tipped off to Police Chief Tibbett. Still quick on the draw, McKinney killed Tibbett before he himself died in a hail of gunfire.

Even when he wasn't chasing outlaws, Ralphs had to endure some horrendous ordeals. One such case involved an incident that he encountered in January, 1907. Heavy rains had come to Lytle Creek Canyon during that month

and on January 8 a considerable amount of snow fell, increasing the run-off. San Bernardino County Sheriff John Ralphs had a subpoena to deliver to a canyon resident on the 10th. He followed through with his task, but not before removing most of his clothes prior to braving the stream with his team. He was later told that a woman nearly drowned the day before, trying a similar feat.

A tough man on criminals, Ralphs frequently had convicts breaking up rocks to be used for construction, with sledge hammers. However, Ralphs had a compassionate side to his character even to murderers and crooks. An example of this "soft side" of Ralph's personality was recently recalled by his granddaughter, Eunice Johnston, in a letter to the author. Mrs. Johnston mentioned that her "Grandpa" had a short, stout, woman preparing the meals for the prisoners. The menu consisted of meat, fruit, vegetables, salads, and pies. Occasionally, Ralphs would stop by and eat with the prisoners and if the meal wasn't up to the quality he thought it should be, the woman would be in "for some tense moments."

One of the duties that John Ralphs absolutely despised while working as sheriff was taking prisoners by train to the Yuma Prison, a place that he called the "Hell Hole of the Nation." One of the prisoners that was brought to him for the trek to Yuma arrived in chains so tight that his wrist and ankles were swollen to the point that they were cut and bleeding. Ralphs took them off and bathed the cuts in cold water mixed with salt. The criminal was so appreciative of this gesture that he told Ralphs, "I'll never forget you for this and for the rest of this trip you'll have no trouble from me." The promise was not broken.

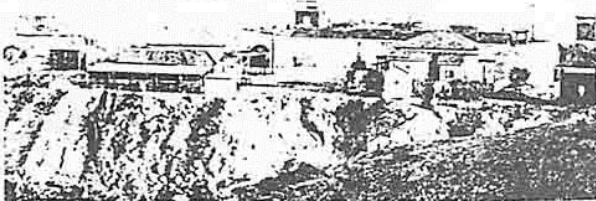
Another encounter that Ralphs had with "that Hell Hole" was recently recalled by Ralphs'

granddaughter, Ethel Hopewell, in a letter recently passed on to the author regarding her earliest memories of her grandfather and the stories he used to tell about when he was sheriff.

"Then there were the summer evenings when we would sit on the front porch at the Third Street home (where Ralphs moved in his later years), each of us would be sitting in rocking chairs while Grandpa smoked his pipe and kept us fascinated while he recounted his experiences capturing the different criminals. There were times when he and his deputies, on horseback, would be gone for weeks living on the land, but they would always return with the criminal they were after. There were stories of train trips to the federal prison in Yuma, Arizona. The outstanding story was about a very bad person; among the many things she had done were several murders. Grandpa was very concerned because on this barren hill where the prison was the cells were carved into the sandstone. The women's cells were on the west side of the prison, where the afternoon sun beat down on these cells making them seem like ovens. The women were actually dying. They were always glad when Grandpa would come to take them back to the jail in San Bernardino. This was a big problem to Grandpa, but when he would try to reason with the officials there, they would just scoff at him."

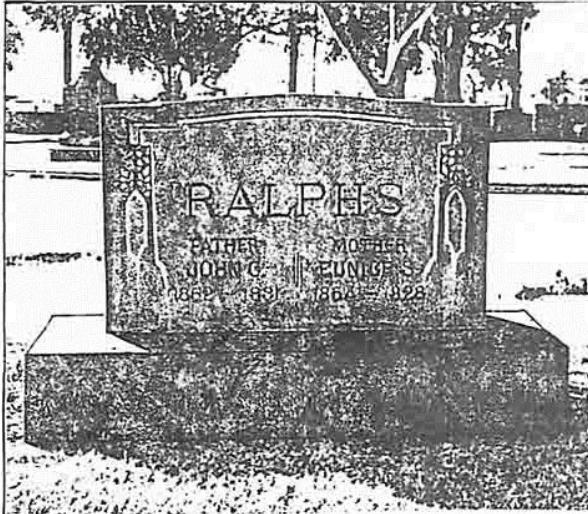
Despite efforts to persuade him to do otherwise, at the conclusion of his third term in office in 1915, John Ralphs decided to call it quits. Serving for a dozen years as the top lawman in the largest county in the nation was enough. He could now take advantage of opportunities to go jack rabbit hunting out where March Field in Riverside County now stands or in the desert with his older brother, George, who not only possessed a number of blood hounds, but had also evolved his small time grocery store in Los Angeles into the lucrative "Ralphs" grocery chain which still flourishes in the 1990's.

Ralphs was also now free to spend more time at the old Mill Street ranch, now taken over by his children. There, his entire family would enjoy frequent summer picnics which would



*The Territorial Prison in 1900.*





nearly always include huge watermelons cooling in well water, tomatoes as big as grapefruit, corn on the cob, and many cakes and pies. During the winter months, the gang would meet out at his Imperial Valley ranch where "Grandpa Ralphs" - with his ever present coffee pot brewing strong, black, and thick coffee-- presided over the picnic activities.

Best of all, with retirement John Ralphs was now able to devote more of his time being with his beloved wife, Eunice. He was by her side until November 5, 1928, when she died at the age of 74.

Despite being surrounded by his eight children and their families, with Eunice gone, Ralphs ceased all active affairs, rarely leaving his Third Street home. His health went steadily down hill during the next three years and his condition eventually became critical. Within a couple weeks, Ralphs lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered.

At 10:20 P.M. on December 27, 1931, John C. Ralphs, "The Lawman", passed away at the age of 79. He is buried next to Eunice at San Bernardino's Mountain View Cemetery.

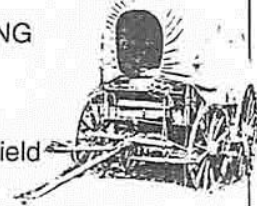


## EARLY DAY PIONEERING

BY

Esther N. Hancock Littlefield

(circa 1965)



A number of people decided to leave their homes in Council Bluffs, Iowa. This was in 1851 when Joseph and Nancy Bemis Hancock and their two children, Alvin and Elenorah, left for the West. The baby girl became very ill and they thought she had passed on. The grief-stricken parents were preparing to place the child in Grandfather's fiddle box for burial. An elderly lady who was also traveling in the same covered wagon train said, "Mrs. Hancock, I do not think the baby is dead. Give her to me." This woman placed her into a basin of warm water and very gently massaged the child and in a short time, the child began to breath and cry. This child was Elenorah Hancock who grew to womanhood and later the wife of George Miller. She raised a large family and lived to be 98 years old. She was also the last survivor of the wagon train.

One of the families that accompanied the Hancocks on the caravan was the Joseph Thorne family. During their journey, Indians kidnapped little Helen Thorne who had blonde hair. A half-breed Indian (half white and half Indian) said, "Mr. Thorne, I'll bring the girl back." This he did and she was unharmed.

Pioneers cooked their meals over camp fire. They baked bread in dutch ovens placed over a bed of charcoal. While they were cooking, a small shovel disappeared. Grandmother knew that the Indian knew where it was, so she made signs and language for her shovel. Grandmother was wearing a colored blouse or waist of bright hue which she offered for a reward. The Indian got busy with his bare feet and uncovered the shovel, so she gave him the colored garment. He then left.

Grandmother told how the Indians were always begging for food because it was scarce. The Indians had trinkets which they wanted to

exchange for food; however, the pioneers did not want to as they had scarcely enough food for themselves. Grandmother found some corn-meal that had become damp and musty, which she cooked and gave to the Indians who ate right out of the kettle. The Indians would come around their camp fires and roast rabbits or snakes...their type of food.

On the trip from Council Bluffs to Ogden, Utah, Grandfather killed a buffalo which the people used for their fresh meat.

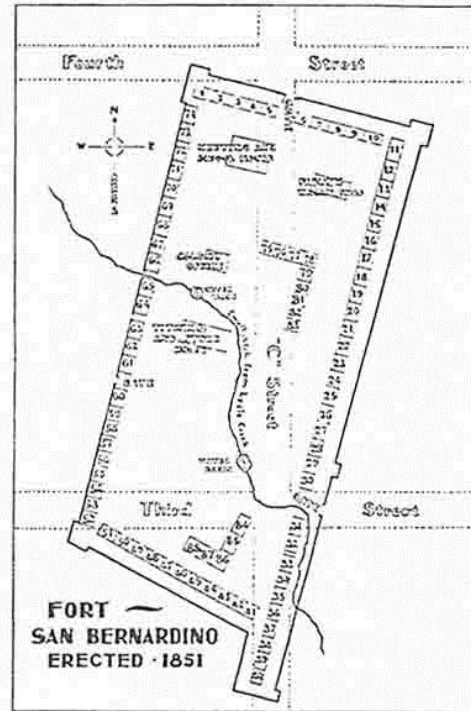
They reached Ogden in 1852 or 1853 and stayed there until March of 1854 as they accumulated provisions for the trip to California. On this trip they nearly died because of lack of water. They got down to one pint of water and Grandfather gave one teaspoon only to each child and the mothers of the train who needed it. He insisted that he do without.

Another time they put out pots and pans and caught a little rain water which saved them while the oxen lifted their heads up to the sky trying to get rain water.

Later, the Bemis boys went to seek water. When they came back, they shouted "Water... water is just ahead!" When they reached the water, the oxen got down on their knees to drink while the yokes were still on their necks. They said that they were nearly gone that time. Later on, they came to another water hole but it was poisonous.

They could look back over the country and see where they had camped the night before with the ox-drawn wagons. Grandfather told how he left to go and hunt for deer. He was on foot and kept in sight of the wagons.

Soon eight or ten Indians came galloping. They had black hair, feathers, and painted faces. Grandfather thought that his time had come. However, he bowed his head and said, "how do you do-- how do you do?" and pointed to the wagon train saying, "El Capitan, El Capitan". The Indians replied, "How, How," and they galloped off. Grandfather ran back to the train and to his friends who were happy that he had not been murdered or scalped.



Grandfather's wagon wheel broke down and he had to make a new hub for the wheel. In doing this he had to get a good tree from which he whittled and hewed this hub. This all happened before they reached Utah. The wagon arrived with its new hub to California. This same hub is now a relic of the Pioneer Society.

Grandmother had to drive the oxen some of the way on the desert to California when Grandfather got sick with the chills and a fever. Abner Bell was the captain of this train of June 5, 1854. It was during this time that they got their first glimpse of the San Bernardino Valley from the Cajon Pass.

The valley was green with grass, willows, and cottonwoods. They said that this looked like heaven. At some places they had to fix the roads and take wagons apart to get over the Cajon Pass.

The families camped where the court house now stands which they called "The Stockade". They kept watch for Indians and Spaniards in case of trouble. Later they camped at the

willows south of what is now Mt. Vernon Ave. and west of today's Lytle Creek Bridge. A daughter named Jerusha was born inside a covered wagon there on August 30, 1854. She lived to the age of 99 years.

A short time later, Grandfather bought some land on west 5th Street on the banks of Lytle Creek. There was a meadow there where they stayed for a few years until a flood came and nearly washed them away. After this travesty, they decided to move to higher ground. In the flood, they lost their hay stacks and other property; they had to chain their house to a large tree and put steps on the tree in case of another flood. During the flood they camped on the Grand Terrace Road a few days until the storm subsided. After releasing all the animals from their pens to shift for themselves and when the family returned after the storm, they found that the pigs had found shelter in the kitchen. This flood was some 92 or 93 years ago.

The place was abandoned property on past 9th Street to Baseline which Grandfather bought for \$1.25 per acre. The old place was in the family for some 60 years. Here a home was built along with other buildings as a granary, a barn, a hen house, a buggy, a shed, and they also had dug a well.

I can remember the old bacon smoke house with the smoking of corn cobs. The pork was cured and salted in brine which, in turn, was ground into sausage. The folks made all of their bread, butter, cheese, dried fruit, canned fruit, chili sauce, catsup, and pickled pigs feet. As a child I was fond of them all.

The folks made their soap from tallow, made their clothes by hand, and dyed yarn from black walnuts which were gathered by the family during picnics in order to color stockings. At home the husks or outside covering was made into a brown dye. Grandmother knitted two pairs of socks for each member of the family per year. They also made their own quilts, feather beds, and pillows from the duck feathers. These things were done over one hundred years ago.

The first Mt. Vernon School was an adobe building of one room which included backless benches that had pegs driven in for legs. The adobe bricks were made on the same grounds as the school. There were two drinking cups--one for the boys and one for the girls. All of the water was carried from a pump belonging to John Garner.

The citizens took their extra produce to Los Angeles which was then hauled by horse and wagons in exchange for needed articles.

The Butterfield Stage went out 5th Street all the way to Los Angeles. They would water the horses in front of my grandfather's home. The stage driver gave a colt to Grandfather and it grew to become a riding horse for the children. The horse was named...STAGE.

My grandmother's brothers were killed in the San Bernardino Mountains. Nephi Bemis was killed by the Indians while rounding up cattle. A Mr. Parrish and a Mr. Whiteside also were killed. The Indians stripped Mr. Bemis of his clothes and used a dull knife to slit the leather off of his boots. The Indians loved home-made socks which they took, but left the boots which were too small. Nephi was killed at the present site of Las Flores Ranch on March 25, 1866. His brother, Samuel, was later killed by a female grizzly bear which had two cubs nearby (according to tracks) on August 14, 1868.

Mrs. Jerusha Guernsey Bemis, my great-grandmother, also came with her sons on the wagon train to California back in 1854. Grandfather said that they came all hand-in-hand.

The old family rests in Pioneer Cemetery in San Bernardino, California. A large family had developed in the county and helped to serve our town.

Fontana and Rialto were called the prairie where these pioneers ran cattle. My family's branding iron of the early days was to identify their stock or cattle. It was a "5-J" sign.

There was a water trough at the corner of Third and "F" Streets. The old Chinese laundries were on the south side of Third where vicious barking

dogs were tied up in the back of the buildings. There were old board walks along Third Street.

The old Urbita Springs was a beautiful sight around fifty-five years ago. They had boating, dancing, skating, and boat rowing. There were swans and alligators and a merry-go-round near the lake. Balloons as big as a house were common and were called balloon ascensions. Beautiful weeping willows, located near the picnic tables, were seen by great crowds. The old street car ran down to the springs.

This story depicts a greater part of my life and have witnessed many changes here over the years. The new highways, freeways, all of the modern buildings, have changed San Bernardino greatly from what I knew it to be when I was a child. Some folks think that the city is getting too big. I hope for progress to continue as time changes all.

From a Native Daughter

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AND BATH HOUSE**

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San Bernardino. August 31, 1867.

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**A GHOSTLY BEAR HUNT**

By

ARDA HAENSZEL

In the early days many grizzly bears lived in the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains, sometimes coming down into the very foothills in search of food.

Reminiscences of American pioneers tell of encounters with the bears. Well known incidents involve the fatal wounding of mountain man and hunter Isaac Slover in the upper reaches of Lytle Creek country, and the discovery and naming of Holcomb Valley when Uncle Billy Holcomb went hunting meat for winter gold miners in Bear Valley. Even now and again a grizzly appears in a San Bernardino GUARDIAN item of the 1860 and 70s.

It is well known also that in 1845 Benito Wilson, chasing Mojave Indian cattle thieves, took a short cut over the mountains, and, at what later came to be called Baldwin Lake, paused with his Californio rangers to enjoy a Mexican bear hunt before heading on down to the Mojave River Trail, thereby giving the name Bear Valley.

Rancheros and their vaqueros enjoyed the popular sport of hunting grizzlies with their reatas instead of guns, roping the bears' legs and then pulling in different directions to render the bear helpless. The bear might then be killed for meat, captured for use in a bull and bear fight, or teased and baited a while and then let go.

John Brown Jr., in his HISTORY OF SAN BERNARDINO AND RIVERSIDE COUNTIES, recorded a great many main line historical facts and events with which most of us are familiar. He also interviewed many old timers whom he knew personally, and tucked away here and there in his biographical sketches some minor incidents that they described to him which are not as commonly known. Among them is a ghost story about bear hunting which might be considered appropriate for Halloween.

Ignacio Reyes, who had been a vaquero for the Lugo brothers, and whose father Antonio had been



Grizzly Bear Hunt

in charge of driving the Lugo herds to the newly-granted Rancho San Bernardino, related a story his father loved to tell. It seems that at that time a favorite area for grizzly hunting was behind Little Mountain and at the mouth of a nearby canyon. As the sport progressed, a mysterious woman on a cream-colored horse would appear from the canyon and join the fun. But always, if the riders approached her to find out more about her, she would retreat on her fleet white horse back up the canyon, and they were never able to find her. According to the senior Reyes, the grizzly hunters concluded that her appearance must have something Satanic about it and so they began to call the canyon Devil's Canyon.

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# Pioneer Page

RACES.--A race came off on Thursday last, on the Agua Mansa tracks, between a grey mare and a brown horse. Distance six hundred yards. The horse to carry a man with a beard and the mare a boy--ie a feather. At the hour of 2 o'clock P.M., those fond of the sport assembled on the track, and in a short time the horses were stripped and the riders mounted. After a few false starts the word was given, and off they went, the grey mare leading easily. Towards the end of the track the horse made a gallant struggle but failing to lessen the gap, the mare crossed the score ten feet ahead and was declared winner. The horse was evidently in a weak condition, unfit for the track, and acted as if he had been 'fissicked' down in order to lose.

### RECAPITULATION

Grey mare, entered by D. Wise.....	1	1
Brown horse, entered by Chas. Hart.....	2	2

After the main race a number of scrub races were run, for small amounts.

The lovers of horse-racing should establish a track, and regulate racing by strict rules. We have a number of the colts that will soon be able to compete upon the turf for victory and a prize. Let us have some decent track to train and run them on.



ANOTHER HORSE THIEF.--On Tuesday last under-sheriff McIntosh arrested an hombre by the name of Manuel Diablo, charged with stealing a horse belonging to Mr. Parrish, which he had sold to Mr. John Garner. He was taken before Justice Miller, and in default of bail in the sum of \$500, he was furnished quarters in the county jail, to await the action of the grand jury.

Mr. John Brown lost a fine cow, in the Cajon Pass, on the 1st last, it having killed by a grizzly.

(Pioneer Page cont.)

PLUMS.--Mr. Thomas Tompkins called on us just as we were "working off," with some ripe plums. Of course, all hands stopped to take a taste. Thanks Mr. Tompkins, you can do the same thing whenever you like, and need not entertain any fear of our wrath.

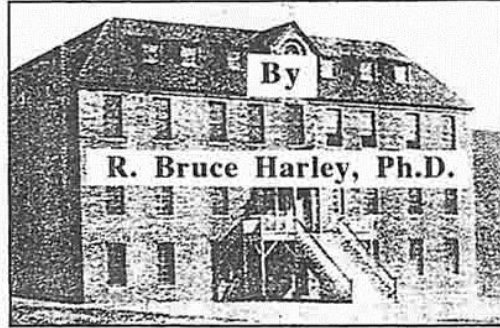
ACCIDENT.--We regret to state that on Sunday last while Mr. Brazleton was working with a horse the animal became frightened, and commenced kicking, and unfortunately struck Mr. Brazleton on the knee joint inflicting a severe and painful fracture. We are glad to learn that he is doing well.

NEW BRIDGE.--A new and substantial bridge has been erected over the creek on Fourth Street, between Camel and Grafton and only requires to be filled in with gravel on each side to render it passable for teams.

HOT WEATHER.--The dog days and nights continue, and are requisite. Not for the demutation of canines, but the fructification of corn, grapes etc. So, if need be, let the thermometer rise.

1867

### SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND: ST. BONIFACE INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL 1888 - 1978



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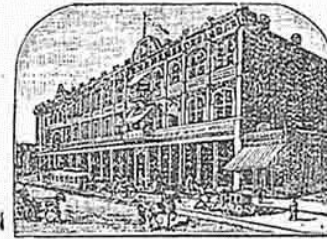
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DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO  
1450 NO. 'D' STREET  
SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92405  
PHONE: (909) 384-8200

#### FIELD TRIP TO MOJAVE DESERT (More pictures next issue)



John Lowe, Nick Cataldo, Emmett Harder, \_\_\_\_\_, Wayne Heaton, and Bruce Harley

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# City of San Bernardino Historical & Pioneer Society



HERITAGE HOUSE  
796 N. "D" Street  
San Bernardino



**Historical Society Meetings are  
7:00 P.M., 1st Thursday of the  
Month, at the Heritage House  
796 N. "D" St., San Bernardino**

June 1, 1995 - 7:00pm

*Dr. Larry Burgess* and *James Sandos*, authors of the highly acclaimed book, "*The Hunt for Willie Boy*", will talk about their research into the true story of the famous man hunt that took place in 1909.

September 7, 1995 - 7:00pm

*Lynn Pasquale* will talk about "*Preserving Your Family Photos for the Future*". She will include a slide show presentation during the program.

October 5, 1995 - 7:00pm

*Nick Cataldo*, local historian and educator, who has done extensive research on Wyatt Earp and his family, will present a slide/lecture program on "*The Earp Clan in San Bernardino County*".

November 2, 1995 - 7:00pm

*Steve Hammond*, Archeologist with Cal Trans, will inform us on some of the "*Historic Trails and Routes in San Bernardino County*".

December 7, 1995 - 7:00pm

*Joel Martin*, whose father owned The Candy Kitchen on the corner of 3rd and D Streets in San Bernardino during the 1920's, will entertain us with an interesting as well as tasty program on "*Old Time Candy Making*".


## Memberships

- Individual* \$25.00 per year
- Student* \$10.00 per year
- Life* \$500.00

*The City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society was founded on November 16, 1977 and incorporated by the state as a non-profit organization on July 20, 1978.*


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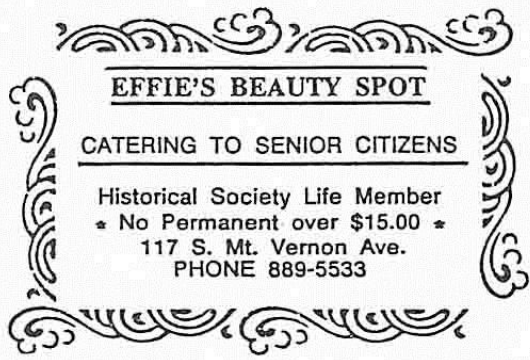
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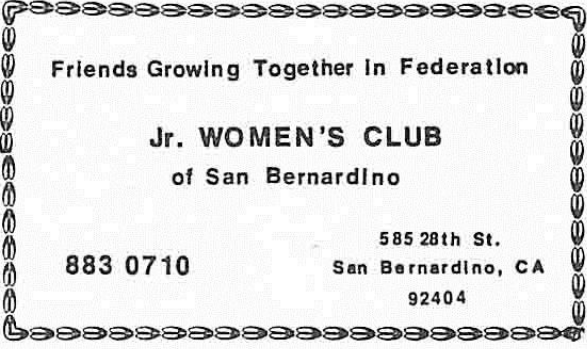
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