

LOOKING BACK...



By Russel P. McDonald

A nagging wife was partly responsible for the discovery of San Bernardino Valley. Pedro Fages brought his wife, Donna Eulalia to Monterey where he became the Military Governor of California.

But, Donna Eulalia was not at all happy in the frontier life at Monterey and so constantly nagged her husband to return to Mexico City and civilization.

Don Fages took every opportunity to absent himself from her tongue. In 1772, he made an excuse to journey to the San Diego Mission. There he joined in the pursuit of some army deserters. He followed the party as far as the Colorado desert, then left the pursuit to the others and began the homeward journey to Monterey.

He skirted the San Jacinto Mountains and entered the San Bernardino Valley, made his way up through the mountains to the Mojave Desert.

He noted in his diary that he found nothing of interest. After the second Spaniard to enter the valley in 1776, Fray Francisco Hemenegildo Garces, it would be several decades before any further exploration.

In the summer of 1856, the Mormon Church Clerk registered in his journal: "August 8. The excessively hot weather for some time past has caused several United States surveying parties

to discontinue labors on the plains and come into the settlement, which has added to the idlers about our city. For five years we as a community existed in San Bernardino without a grog shop or place where a man could go and get liquor by the glass; but now we have advanced beyond that point, and have a grogshop with its attendant evils. Today two men, or rather boys, were convicted of petty larceny for stealing two sheep—an evidence of the growing iniquity in our settlement."

Contained in the San Bernardino County treasurer's report of 1859 was the report that the county had \$1,351.41 cash on hand, and the revenue in sight was estimated at about \$7,000.00. The county debt was \$20,168.48. This was deemed, by the Star, a crushing burden by many persons, and worst of it was that it had been incurred largely in the trying by the Court of Sessions of some drunken Indians and a Spaniard. Deep disgust at the conditions of county affairs was described by the Star correspondent as he noted the dilapidated adobe courthouse in dire need of repair.

In 1900, a gallon of ready mixed barn and fence paint sold from 45 to 60 cents a gallon.

Baking powder was 10 cents a can. A three pound box of soda crackers cost 19 cents. Two and a half pound cans of apricots sold for .18 or a dozen for \$1.95.

For the ladies; a corset vest wrapper were on sale for the sum of \$1.59. She could get a Velvet Waist for a mere \$4.50.

A Granitine Combination Kitchen Sink and Laundry Tubs, with high back, soap cup, strain and painted iron legs, but no faucets, for \$11.00.