

4th Qtr. 2011 – Volume 2, Issue 4

# VaRRA News

Publication from the  
**Vail Ranch Restoration Association**

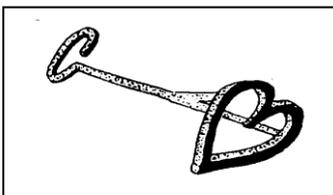
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*“Dedicated to the preservation  
and restoration of the Historic  
Vail Ranch Headquarters.”*

**Little Temecula  
History Center is  
Open on Sunday –  
In Red Implement  
Barn next to Kohl’s  
At Margarita and  
Temecula Pkwy.**

**Sundays 12 – 5 pm**  
*Or by Appointment*

***Come see the results of  
our efforts, and perhaps  
volunteer to be a docent.***



## Vail Ranch Restoration Association

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## *A Major Cattle Drive in the West*

# Desert Trail Diary Ends

*(Editors Note: Edward, brother of Walter Vail, wrote a series describing a cattle drive that began January 1890 from Vail, Arizona to Temecula, California. The first 3 parts of this printing were published earlier this year in VaRRA News. The series was originally published years ago in a magazine and later in The Arizona Daily Star. The saga continues as they bury the young Fox boy, and reach the end at Warner’s Ranch.)*

**By Edward L. Vail**

Tom Turner was not in camp when this happened as he was riding around the cattle. The sheriff and his posse left shortly after and took their prisoner with them but they left the body of young Fox lying on the ground where it fell. We dug a grave and wrapping the young man’s body in his blanket we buried him near the place where he fell. It was the best we could do. I saw a man in Tucson last week who told me he was at Carrizo Creek a few years ago where he saw the grave which has a marker with the inscription: “Joe Fox, age 19, Murdered.” *(Ed. Note: Later determined to be Frank Fox, Age 15.)*

We were all glad to leave Carrizo the next morning and be on the way to our destination, the Warner Ranch. The country was dry and barren until we reached Vallecito Creek which is in a pretty little valley with green grass growing in it. Between Vallecito Creek and Warner we passed the San Felipe Ranch and from there on to Warner’s the road ran through better country for cattle. Finally, we reached the Warner Ranch and it looked good to us and I have no doubt our horses and cattle enjoyed the sight of it as much as we did. The grass was six or eight inches high and the entire ranch of 50,000 acres was as green as a wheat field.

We had been about two months and ten days on the trail since we left the Empire Ranch. There was not a man sick on the trip. We had slept on the ground all the way except at Yuma for a few nights when our blankets were in the wagon across the river. Our men had been loyal and cheerful all the time and I was glad to have all of them share with Tom Turner and myself in the success of our drive. After we reached Warner, the justice of the peace sent for me and inquired about the trouble at Carrizo Creek. I told him what I saw just as I have related it in this diary; he then told me that the officers were out of their jurisdiction in California as they had no papers from the California governor at that time. I believe they did obtain them later.

We had to hold the herd for a few days until they were counted and received. Most of our men were at liberty and we all went to the Warner Hot Springs and took baths which all enjoyed. The Indian women seemed to be always washing clothes and our men would join the groups and wash their own and sometimes borrow soap from the Indian girls. There was a good deal of laughing and joking in Spanish during the performance. The water as it comes out of the ground is hot enough to cook an egg. Close by and running parallel to it is a stream of clear, cold water.

The San Luis Rey River rises on the Warner Ranch and there are large meadows and several lakes as well as beautiful live oaks on the foothills of the mountains that surround the ranch. Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson spent some time here and at Temecula gathering data for her celebrated novel, “Ramona”.

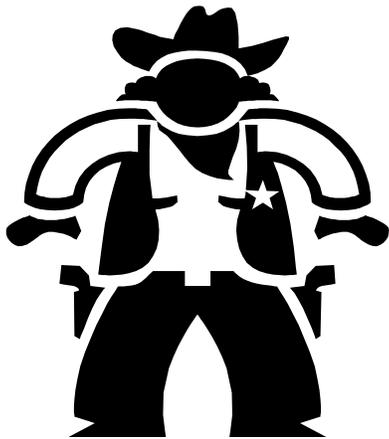
Very soon all the cowboys were sent to Los Angeles where they remained a few days to see the sights of the largest city they had ever visited, but after a short time they said their legs and feet were sore from walking and that they were all right on horseback but no good on foot, so we shipped them back to Tucson and the ranch.

A short time after our return, a meeting of cattlemen was called at the Palace Hotel [later the Occidental] in Tucson, which was then owned by Maish & Driscoll who were at that time among the largest cattle owners in Arizona. The object of the meeting was to

**(Continued on Next Page)**

## Friends of VaARRA Associate Members

Robert & Carol Anderson  
Otto & Nancy Baron  
Audrey & Vince Cilurzo  
Robert & Kathryn Curtis  
David Elliott & Anne Miller  
Walt & Jean Dixon  
Elaine Eshom  
Dale Garcia  
Phil & Connie Harris  
Pat Lallou  
Bonnie Martland  
Jimmy & Peg Moore  
John Moramarco  
Duane & Judy Preimsberger  
Lyz Quinn  
Rosemary & Ray Smith  
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**VaARRA News 4th Qtr. 2011  
Page 2**

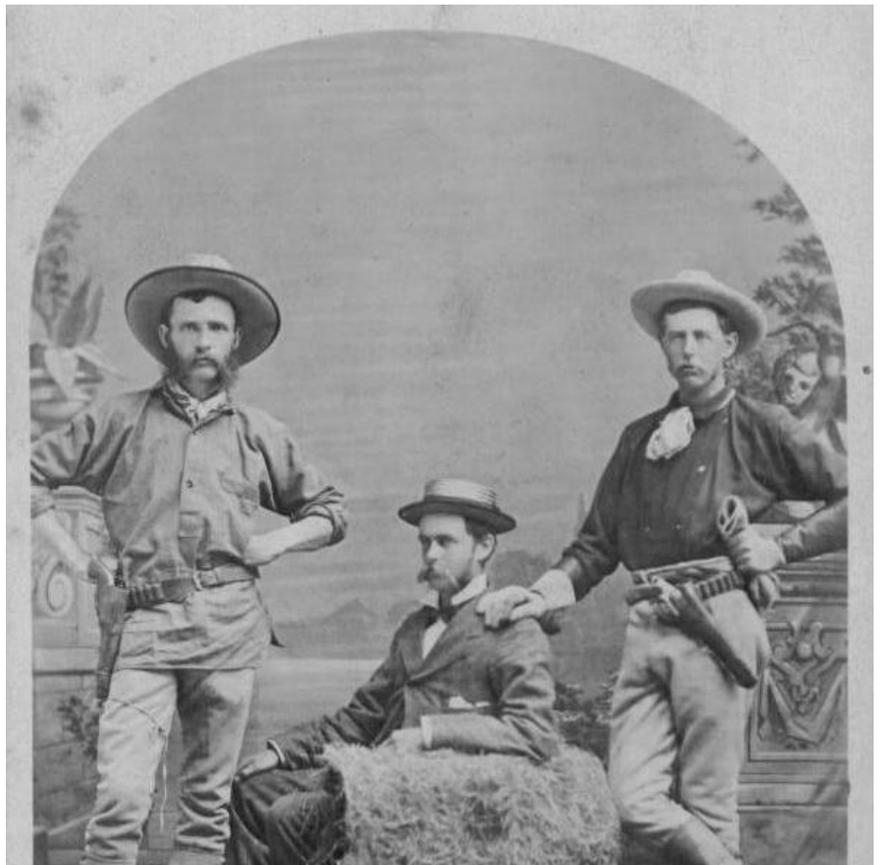
### Desert Trail Diary (Continued from Page 1)

consider the matter of establishing a safe trail for cattle from Tucson to California. From our experiences I was able to make some suggestions, viz.: to build a flat boat to ferry cattle across the Colorado River; to clean out the wells at the old stage stations on the Colorado desert, and put in tanks and watering troughs at each of them and if necessary to dig or drill more wells. Without delay all the money necessary for this work was subscribed.

When the Southern Pacific Railroad Company heard of the proposed meeting they asked permission to send a representative and the cattle association notified the company that the cattlemen would be pleased to have them do so. Therefore, the S.P. agent at Tucson was present. The meeting then adjourned to meet at the hotel bar where they found the bartender was absent. At once they saw a chance to have some fun at the expense of Mr. Maish who had assumed his job. Every man agreed to ask for a different kind of mixed drink which they knew the old man could not make. We all lined up at the bar and proceeded to call for various drinks we liked best. Our fine host, Maish, looked along the bar at our smiling faces, stuttered a little and then said, "Damn it, boys, I can't make those things! Take it straight on me." We did not refuse this kind of an invitation and then took a few more on ourselves and on each other and departed.

Soon after our cattle meeting we received an official letter from the S.P. Company saying that if we would make no more drives, the old freight rate would be restored on stock cattle. The company kept its promise and it held for many years. Therefore, the trail improvements were never made.

### End of the Desert Trail Diary



*It is possible this photograph may have been taken in May 1879 when Walter Vail (left) and his business partner Jack Harvey (right), an Englishman welcomed Edward Vail (center) to Arizona Territory. When Edward read letters Walter wrote to him in New York, he longed to share in the Western adventures. The diary presented in this newsletter proves Edward found the adventures he was looking for. Edward never married and died an old man in Tucson. He served for many years as the President of the Arizona State Historical Society and it was said he regaled listeners for hours with his stories of the Old West.*

*“Gentlemen on Horseback”*

## De Anza Trail Caballeros

A group of Riverside area horsemen decided to honor De Anza's expedition by re-enacting his trek along a portion of the De Anza Trail. That first ride was in April of 1937, and it has continued to take place every April since. The particular section of trail chosen varies from year to year; it may lead through desert sand, over cactus covered foothills or beneath pine trees in the high mountains. At the end of the week, the lights burn late and the “De Anza Trail Caballeros” are joined by their wives for an evening of dinner and dancing.

There mission is not only to commemorate Juan Bautista de Anza, but also to encourage the development and use of the De Anza trail and the other historical trails between Riverside and the Mexican border. They believe that trail riding is a noble and fascinating sport, a way to share companionship, horsemanship, love of nature and love of history with friends old and new. Riding together fosters the best qualities of a “Gentleman on Horseback”.

## Doc Laine, Old Town Business Owner Passes Away

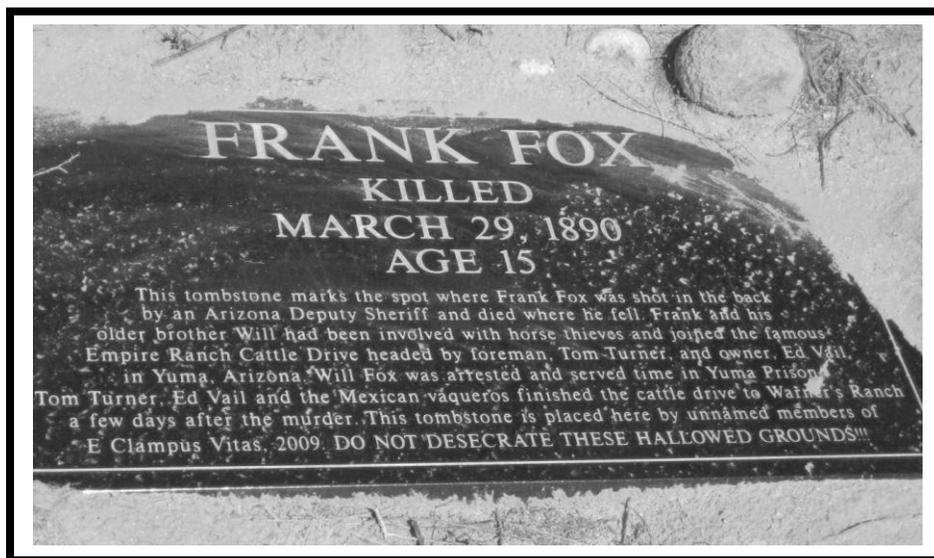
Doc Laine, long time owner of Temecula Traders in Old Town and a friend of VaARRA passed away a few weeks ago. VaARRA will miss Doc who provided appraisals for items donated to us. Brian Bleecker has taken over Doc's store and is adding the name Old Town Framers to his shingle when he opens in his new location in Butterfield Square.

## Recent Volunteer Service

We appreciate recent volunteer service from Charlie Ortiz, the owner of Rehab for Real Estate ([www.rehabforrealestate.com](http://www.rehabforrealestate.com)).

Between jobs with clients Brian has helped VaARRA with heavy work, including putting in a gate at the front of the historic Vail Ranch site and moving hundreds of sheets of plywood and 2X4s into a storage shed.

**VaARRA News 4th Qtr. 2011**  
**Page 3**



*Near the old Carrizo stage station location in the Borrego desert, is the Fox boy's grave site. Historians from the area have indicated that the Vail cowboys could not get over the injustice of the killing and mourned for years about it. They placed a marker on the grave, which along with other less durable ones disappeared over time. The permanent marker shown in the photo above was placed in 2009. In February 2011 VaARRA members Rebecca and Darell Farnbach hiked to the grave and took this photo.*

## Civil War Anniversary Event To Be Held at Historic Vail Ranch

On the weekend of November 19-20, 2011 there will be a 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of a piece of Temecula's history. In November, 1861 California Assemblyman and Secessionist Dan Showalter and 20 of his fellow “rebels” were attempting to leave California to join the Confederate Army which had units in the New Mexico area at the time. They were detected in Temecula and intercepted by a unit of the California Volunteers near Warner's Ranch, where they were arrested. This episode has become known as “The Showalter Affair”.

Join us as this important local California Civil War event is recreated. A Civil War encampment will take place at the historic Vail Ranch headquarters site in Temecula (next to Kohl's). The Vail Ranch Restoration Association will be the host and co-sponsor for this two-day celebration. Activities will be held at the Historic Vail Ranch property and the Little Temecula History Center. Mark your calendars for November 19 & 20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

In addition to historic Civil War camps complete with costumed soldiers, there will be costumed civilians, displays, demonstrations, a sutler and a re-enactment of the discovery and arrest of the Showalter Secessionist Party as it happened in 1861. The event coordinator is Steve Clugston who can be reached at 951-235-3608 or [steveclugston@yahoo.com](mailto:steveclugston@yahoo.com).

## Get Your Holiday Family Photo In Historic Setting at VaARRA

The Vail Ranch Restoration Association has announced that they have engaged a professional photographer to take photographs of individuals or family groups with historic backdrops at the Little Temecula History Center. A Stagecoach, wagon, buggy, or old car could be the backdrop for a fun family photo at a reasonable cost.

For a \$20 donation participants will receive 3 copies each of 2 different poses in covers suitable for Holiday greetings or gift giving.

# Recent Activities

With the assistance of some college students fulfilling a community service requirement for a History Class, VaARRA has been able to complete a significant project. We have a copy of an Accounts Payable Ledger from the Vail Ranch covering dates from 1920 through the 1940's. Months ago we embarked on a project to get each of the entries entered into an Excel spreadsheet database. By doing this we can display the details of date, check number, payee and dollar amount for each check in the ledger. The majority of the checks were to pay employees, but some were to vendors / suppliers such as the railroad.

Printed reports can be sorted alphabetically by name as an example, and inquiries made directly into the computer to search for all checks for a given person. Many times VaARRA has visitors to the History Center that are relatives of a cowboy who once worked on the ranch, and with this completed project we are able to display or print a list of all checks made out to a given person or vendor.

## Visiting Group Tours

In recent weeks we have had multiple group tours. On Wednesday, October 5 we had 40 seniors on an area bus tour stop by the History Center. After a brief orientation they had a chance to roam through the facility and remember out loud all the items they say. Each had an interesting memory and story to tell.

On the next Wednesday we had a home school group with 16 children and 6 adults spend 2 hours at the History Center, with a special visit to the Ranch Headquarters site to get their "E" ticket ride in the back of Darell's Model A Ford pickup truck.

## Genealogical Society Event

VaARRA along with the Temecula Valley Historical Society and numerous other area organizations participated in the annual Open House of the Temecula Valley Genealogical Society. Special emphasis this year was on Civil War related interest groups. Attendees were enthusiastic about the variety of groups to network with and talk about items of mutual interest.

# A Handshake With A Hero

By Duane Preimsberger

A while back, on Memorial Day, my wife Judy and I weren't doing much to celebrate the occasion but we did head to In & Out Hamburgers on Temecula Parkway for our weekly carb overload for which I have a many years long addiction. While we were munching on our burgers I happened to see a fellow in his 80's come in the door and walk up to the counter where he ordered his food. As he walked past us I happened to read the back of his blue/grey windbreaker and I was touched by what I read. It bore the name of a United States Navy Vessel, "The U.S.S. Indianapolis."

Some years back I'd read a story about the sinking of that ship in the Philippine Sea after she was torpedoed by the Japanese. She sunk so rapidly that her crew of 1200 had little time to get overboard and as a result there were almost no lifeboats in the water. It is estimated that 300 crewmen went down with the ship. The remainder spent over four days without food or water, floating in life jackets in shark infested waters. Due to a directed radio silence, the ship didn't send an SOS and so wasn't missed. Amazingly the secret mission was to carry an atomic bomb. It was just by happenstance that a U.S. aircraft flying overhead spotted the survivors and the few lifeboats that contained the wounded. The plane radioed their position to rescuers who responded to pick up those still alive. Only 317 remained, almost 600 were either drowned or killed by shark attacks.

Seeing the words on that windbreaker and remembering a little about the events surrounding the demise of the U.S.S. Indianapolis made me wait until the wearer of that jacket was finished with his meal and was heading for the door. As he walked away I approached and asked, "Sir, did you serve aboard the Indianapolis?"

"Yes, I did, I was one of the fortunate ones who was managed to survive. We bobbed around for days in our life vests." He spoke quietly for just a few moments, recalling the tortuous experience of floating helplessly, without food or water while his shipmates died as he looked on. "Sometimes, even now, especially at night, I remember the screams of those taken by the sharks. Luckily, we were spotted by U.S. planes and they dropped rafts and supplies to us. I crawled into one and helped a shipmate come aboard as well. He was in bad shape and later he died in my arms. After a total of over 4 days we got picked up by Navy ships"

As I looked into his care worn eyes I knew then that I was in the presence of a man who had given more than just a little for his Country, here in front of me was a survivor of a terrible incident in which uncommon courage and uncommon bravery became a common commodity.

I was awe struck and it was not easy to speak to that man. There was much I would have loved to have said but I was humbled in his presence and all that I could muster was: "Thank you for helping to assure our Nation's freedom and thanks for your service and your courage, God Bless You; have a well earned Memorial Day." As he turned to leave, I had a thought and so I asked a favor. "Sir, not many younger folks know the story of what happened out there. Would you be willing to let me interview you about your experiences and write a story about it?"

A sad look and a slight shake of the head gave me my answer even before he spoke; "I can't do that," he said. "I did it a few times but it brings back so many things I can see in my minds eye that makes me feel real bad. I'm sorry; I just don't want to talk about those days in detail anymore."

Then he smiled and we shook hands and introduced ourselves, I learned I'd been talking to Lloyd Barto. Sadly, I watched him drive away and as his car grew smaller in the distance I wished I'd done more, perhaps I could have bought him a gift certificate for his next hamburgers. And on this Memorial Day Judy and I pray for that Hero and all those American Heroes aboard the U.S.S. Indianapolis and elsewhere who gave all to maintain our freedoms. We hope they will always be remembered. May God Bless Them!

America lost one of her courageous Heroes on June 28, 2011 when Lloyd Barto, of Temecula passed away at the age of 85.