

Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 11.

November 2018

It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Murrieta Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.

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A publication of the

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A group of young girls pose for a class photo at the Murrieta Grammar School. (Source: E. Hale Curran Collection)

Early Girl Organizations in Murrieta

By Jeffery Harmon

In a community, social clubs and civic organizations provide opportunities for people to gather together with common interests and to participate in group activities. These groups may form based on age, religious convictions, gender, or other common interests. At the beginning of the 20th century there were a few clubs that formed for young teenage girls in the community.

M. D. G. Club

Mrs. Dodd's Girls, (M.D.G.) formed in July 1908. Mrs. Emma E. Dodd was the wife of Miles Dodd, Jr. and mother of

Harold V. Dodd. The Dodd family moved to Murrieta a year or two earlier. Mrs. Dodd, not having a daughter of her own, gladly welcomed the young girls of the community into her home.

"The club is composed entirely of the young girls, whom Mrs. Dodd has most kindly consented to take under her charge for a few hours' instruction in needle work once a week. They have organized in proper manner, with Miss Pearl Stiffler as president; Freda Rail, vice president; Barbara Deering, secretary, and Anita Hadsall, treasurer." (July 21, 1908, Riverside



Camp-Fire Girls in the Country or The Secret Aunt Hannah Forgot written by Stella M. Francis, novel published in 1918. The Camp-Fire Girls novel series was produced from 1912 to 1930s.
(Source: Internet Image)

Independent Enterprise)

Miss Ada Thompson, who graduated from the eighth grade in May, left the club in October when she moved to Orange County to attend high school. A farewell party was held for her on a Saturday evening at Mrs. Dodd's home. In the same month, Mrs. Dodd traveled to Los Angeles for a visit with family. The club then met at Anita Hadsall's home.

The club held a Halloween dinner in October 1908.

"The young ladies composing the M. D. G. Club met at Mrs. Catt's last Saturday and

were royally entertained. There were games galore, under the beautiful trees in the yard, and an old-fashioned Hallowe'en [sic] dinner. One and all pronounced the meeting a most delightful one and their hostess most deserving of their gratitude and appreciation." (November 7, 1908, RIE)

Pearl Stiffler left Murrieta in December and spent the winter in Los Angeles with her mother. In that same month, Mrs. Dodd began training the club members for an upcoming entertainment. In January 1909, the club performed at the community hall. Proceeds raise from the event were given to the Historical Society.

"Following is the program: "The One Legged Goose," by Walter Thompson; "The Boy Scared of Dying," Sophia Crawford; "Raising the Price of Butter," five old ladies; mandolin solo, Harold Dodd; "Widow Doodle," Evelyn Miller; "Grigsby Station," Mattie Olds; piano solo, Alda Tarwater; "Encouragement," Barbara Deering; "Story of Patsy," Sylvia Miller; "The Sniggles Family," eight beautiful girls and their mother; piano solo, Evelyn Miller." (January 6, 1909, RIE)

In 1909, Miles Dodd, Jr. began having health issues. The club may have started meeting in other homes in order for Mrs. Dodd to care for her husband. In June 1909, the club met at Barbara Deering's home. At that meeting they elected new officers for the coming year. Three

club members, Anita Hadsall, Sylvia Miller, and Bertha Catt, had just graduated from the eighth grade. It was announced that the club would meet next at Mrs. Catt's home out in the country.

A few of the club members were Evelyn and Sylvia Miller, daughters of Postmaster Oliver Miller, Alda Tarwater, daughter of merchant Benjamin Tarwater, and Barbara Deering the daughter of Louis Deering. Eventually, the club slowly disorganized as the girls grew older and moved out of the area or began raising families of their own. Alda moved to Claremont and attended Pomona College in September 1908. In 1911, Barbara Deering married Lewis Rawles, nephew of Benjamin Tarwater in 1911.

The Campfire Girls

The Campfire Girls were informally organized in Vermont around 1910 as a sister organization to the Boys Scouts of America. They believed girls deserved the outdoor learning experiences that boys had.

Mrs. Rudolph J. Brown organized a Campfire Girls Society in Wildomar in April 1916. Seven girls from Murrieta attended the meeting with Miss Verna Rail as their chaperon. It is unclear if the two communities formed one group or two separate groups.

A progressive supper and social was held in Wildomar in May. The Campfire Girls of Wildomar and Murrieta hosted the event. They sold 70 tickets

at 25 cents each in order to raise funds for their uniforms. The first official meeting of the Campfire Girls was held with Mrs. Brown in Wildomar at the end of May.

In June, Mrs. Brown took the Campfire Girls on a picnic to Fairmont Park in Riverside. Miss June Thompson chaperoned the Murrieta girls, who joined Wildomar at the park picnic.

Each month, the Campfire Girls met at Mrs. Brown's home to plan their group's activities. In August, Mrs. Brown entertained her Campfire Girls for two days.

"Miss Prudence Brown gave them some lessons in domestic science and they had a campfire one evening and report much fun during their visit with their guardian. Miss Esther Kiefer and several other girls were up from Murrieta to attend." (August 3, 1916, Riverside Daily Press)

The Murrieta and Wildomar Campfire Girls continued to meet at Mrs. Brown's home in January 1917. Helen Warner, a niece of Mrs. Anderson, joined the Campfire Girls in April. Misses Kiefer, Beeler and Thompson took the noon train to Wildomar in order to attend Warner's initiation into the group.

On Saturday night, May 26, the Campfire Girls of Wildomar and Murrieta held an entertainment at the community hall. Admission was 15 cents, and proceeds were used for their

groups' expenses.

When America entered World War I, no further reports were given on the activities of the Campfire Girls after June 1917.

The Girl Reserves

The Girl Reserves of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) began in 1918. Its purpose was to help girls 12-18 develop a well-balanced personality, grow physically, and to take on social responsibility. Boy Scouts of America organized local clubs in Southwest Riverside County in the early 1920s. A need was seen to organized clubs for the girls as well.

In February 1922, Miss Mary E. Lyman, of the YWCA in Riverside, met with ten girls at the Murrieta Methodist Church parsonage in order to organize a Girl Reserves corps in the area. The corps included girls from Wildomar, Murrieta and Temecula. Club meetings were held every Saturday afternoon at 2:30. Miss Ruth Bormose was the leader, assisted by Miss Verna Rail. Rev. Bormose was the club's sponsor.

The first initiation ceremony was cancelled on account of stormy weather. However, the next Saturday ten girls joined the new club which they named, the Wanoshe Corps.

"The 10 members of the new club at Murrieta are: Misses Mary Sykes, Helen Anderson, Luella Teskie, Myrtle Dunham, Blanche Dunham,

Ruth, Doris, and Verna James, Florence Grayson and Eldred Roripaugh.

Miss Ruth Bormose, the leader, was hostess of the group. Miss Lyman gave a talk on Girl Reservism. Refreshments were served by the Outing and Inning committee." (March 26, 1922, Riverside Independent Enterprise)

On April 1st, the Wanoshe Corps took a hike up to the mountains to have a picnic. At the following meeting, the girls colored Easter eggs and pictures for the children at the Riverside Community Hospital.

The Girls Reserve also held joint activities with the local Boy Scouts. In May, the girls had a party at the parsonage with the local boys. They



Alda Tarwater, age 13,
circa. 1905 (Source:
Ron Wickerd collection)



Girl Reserves recruitment poster
(Source: Internet image)

served ice cream, cake and candy. There were 24 boys and girls present that evening.

At the end of May, a pageant was held at the YWCA in Riverside. "The Message of the Deed" was performed by Riverside club members. Ruth Bormose, and Verna and Ira Rail

took a group of girls to attend the evening event. They brought a picnic supper along as well. Mrs. Barry Brandon, leader of the Elsinore Girl Reserves, brought 15 girls from Elsinore.

The local Boys Scouts invited the Girls Reserves to join them for an outing in June.

"The Boy Scouts gave a hayride and wiener bake for the Girl Reserves last Friday night in the hills beyond Point Lookout. Nineteen boys and girls with Scoutmaster Anderson enjoyed the affair." (June 15, 1922, Riverside Daily Press)

The Wanoshe Corps gave club member, Luella Teskie, a farewell party in August. She was the daughter of Sarah (Waddell) Teskie. They had been living on a farm with Albert and Joannah (Hughes Waddell) Hutchinson. Albert and Joannah had decided to move the family to Riverside.

"Fourteen of the Girl Reserves and their friends with their leader Miss Ruth Bormose and Verna Rail spent a very pleasant afternoon playing games. Refreshments of cake and ice cream were served." (August 11, 1922, RIE)

This was the last event of 1922 recorded in the Riverside newspapers. It is unknown when the Wanoshe Corps disbanded.

The memories and the experiences the girls had, encouraged them to continue to be active within their community. Girl organizations provided opportunities for them to come together, to socialize and to participate in group activities. These organizations provided a strong foundation for the girls to join new clubs and other civic groups as they transitioned into adulthood.

<https://www.gofundme.com/murrietamuseum>



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Museum Update

By Annette Jennings, Museum Director

We have great news this month! We have raised the \$12,000 needed for the construction of the museum's ADA ramp and we have all the needed permits from the City. Construction of the ramp will start in a couple of weeks as soon as our contractor, Jude with *Straight Line Construction* completes his current contract.

We would like to send special thanks to all our donors who have contributed to this project. First we would like to thank the City of Murrieta Mayor Jonathan Ingram for his donation of the ramp blueprint plans that

the City approved and for his help with securing a big donation from Waste Management. We would also like to thank Waste Management for their generous donation. We would like to thank Larry Cottingham, his friends, and his business associates, the Temecula Valley Model A Ford Club, the Murrieta Garden Club and to everyone who made a donation through our Go Fund Me page. The construction of this ramp would not be possible without your contributions.

We would also like to thank Director Connie McCon-

nell for her work on securing a \$500 donation from Lowes for the window coverings for the museum.

We also had three display cases donated for the museum. We will begin putting historic displays together soon in preparation for our grand opening which will be announced later.

Again, we would like to thank everyone for their donations and for everyone's support in working toward opening Murrieta's first permanent museum. Your support is very much appreciated, thank you!



Murrieta Valley Historical Society
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Next Monthly Board Meeting:

Monday, November 5, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

Murrieta Museum

41810 Juniper Street

(At Hunt Memorial Park)

All members welcome to attend

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