THE

BILLY HOLCOMB CHAPTER

OF THE ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ORDER OF

E CLAMPUS VITUS

PRESENTS H.E.M.O.R.R.H.O.I.D. XXX

THE PERRIS VALLEY P.T.A.

(Planes, Trains and Automobiles Tour)

MARCH 13, 14, 15, 2015

(OR, IN THE RECKONING OF OUR ORDER, 6020)

HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF KARL WHITE, V.N.G.H

HISTORY COMPILED BY

KARL WHITE, V.N.G.H.

EDITED BY PAUL RENNER, X.N.G.H

THE BILLY HOLCOMB CHAPTER 1069

OF THE

ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ORDER OF

E CLAMPUS VITUS

PRESENTS

HOLCOMB'S**E**XTRAORDINARY**M**EMBERS**O**NLY**R**EDSHIRT

RENDEZVOUSAND**H**APPENING**O**F**I**NSANE**D**OINS

HEMI XXX

THE PERRIS VALLEY P.T.A

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

Held under the Tactical and Adroit Influence of
Karl "Pretty Boy" White
Vice-NGH, Billy Holcomb CY 6020

- *Semita Trinus et Vapor e Caelum Vivamus –*

HELD ON

MARCH 13-15, 2015

(OR, IN THE CLAMP-RECKONING, 6020)

ARTICLES COMPILED BY KARL WHITE, V.N.G.H.

EDITED BY PAUL RENNER, X.N.G.H.

ASSISTANCE by BILL PEARSON X.N.G.H. and NEAL SAMSON X.N.G.H.

Fred T. Perris and Perris Valley

Fredrick Thomas Perris was born in 1837 in Gloucester, England to Thomas Perris and his wife, Hannah Rebecca Spiller Perris. Fred's father was a well-respected commodities broker who made a good living buying and selling goods from ships landing at the docks in Gloucester. The couple had Fredrick and three other children (all the rest daughters) and the entire brood may have stayed in southwest England for generations to come had it not been for the typhoid epidemic of early 1849.

Tom's brother John (Fred's uncle) had two children die in quick sucession to the dreaded disease, caused by unsanitary drinking water and a general lack of hygiene. In this day though, the cause was unknown and in many religious circles various plagues and deadly diseases that were so sadly common were the handy-work of the Devil himself or of unknown individuals who had conspired to keep the general population under the control of unseen forces and persons. In this day, epidemics bred not only illness and death but panic and thoughts of conspiracy. Tom Perris was smart enough and experienced enough to well understand from his long years at the docks that once a plague took hold of a city or town, merchants, vendors, traders and the ships that conducted their business would simply stop coming out of fear, prejudice and prudence.

So, in 1849, the year of the start of the greatest Gold Rush on Earth, Tom Perris sold all his family's material assets that they could not reasonably travel with and headed to Australia. At the time Australia was still directly under the control of the British Monarch and was offering generous incentives to British subjects to settle the continent-sized former penal colony. Sea travel in the mid-19th Century was rough and turbulent. The youngest of Tom and Hannah's children, daughter Ida Perris, died enroute to Panama at barely 38 months of age. The family was grief stricken and by the time landfall was made on the eastern shores of Panama and the preparations for overland travel to Panama City were begun, the parents were tired, the remaining children scared and confused and the entire group already worn down by death, rough seas and ill health.

To make matters worse for little Fred Perris and his family, by the time they reached Panama City the Gold Rush of 1849 was at its peak. Ner-do-wells, thieves, scoundrels, get-rich-quick artists, profiteers, dreamers, convicts, adulterers and all types of undesirable souls from the eastern hemisphere were doing everything possible to get to California before the "good" claims were taken and all the gold was plucked from the riverbeds. Mining gold was "as easy as picking flowers on the way to church" at least that was the belief at the time. Naturally, the sailing and steamship owners and captains of the day also saw the possibility to profit from the Gold Rush without having to do anything other than raise the fares and schedule all available ships directly to California. This was horrible news for a family heading to Australia to escape a European Plague. No ships were leaving for Australia. No ships were leaving for anywhere except California, not for a while anyway. Given the circumstances and the choice of staying with his grieving wife and three remaining children in a dastardly town, full of roughnecks and thieves, (*many soon to be Clampers most likely*) or to wait, perhaps weeks or months before a worthy ship would see fit to sail to Australia, Tom Perris, being a pragmatic man, changed plans in mid-course and secured passage to San Francisco on the next available ship. This is how Fred Perris first came to California in 1849 at age twelve and landed in San Francisco. After a few months' time it became apparent that the riverbeds were not studded with gold and in due course the ships again began to sail to Australia taking with them the dispirited dreamers and not-yet-so-rich miners. The Perris Family left San Francisco and headed to Melbourne where Tom opened a successful furniture store and his oldest son, Fredrick, the hero of this tale, became apprenticed.

Next, the damndest thing happened…

One day two missionaries of the Church of Latter-Day-Saints (Mormons) knocked on Hannah Perris's door while her husband was away operating the store. History does not tell us what was said, but it does tell us that Tom returned home that evening to find his wife "saved" and petitioning to up and move the entire family back to America to be closer to the seat of the one-true-church. Tom, being a 19th Century man with 19th Century values and a 19th Century way of doing things, told his bride in no uncertain terms, "You may stay here with me and enjoy the life, money and luxury I provide or you may go, you choose." Hannah chose the LDS Church, filed for divorce, gathered up her three remaining children, including 15 year old Fredrick, and on April 6, 1853 Hannah sailed for America. Fred would never see his father again. Upon arriving at the San Pedro Port, Hannah decided to forgo the long overland journey to Salt Lake City and instead settled in with the small Mormon population living within Rancho San Bernardino. Within a year Hannah remarried Mathew Stewart, a redoubtable member of the church who originally hailed from Ohio. Fred was now sixteen, considered a full grown man at the time, and his new step-father, aware of his apprenticeship in Australia and mindful of Fred's skills in math and geometry, got him work as a "chain boy" on a survey crew run by Mr. Henry Sherwood, another LDS member. The work the crew did was used to map new towns, roads, mineral rights and land boundaries in the San Bernardino area. Fred and his mother were offered, and purchased, choice lots of land on the very first day the city plan was made public and available. San Bernardino prospered, land was sold by the lot to homesteaders, timber was cut and brought down from the San Bernardino Mountains in great quantities for building, a civil government was organized and Fred Perris went to work for the newly created San Bernardino County Recorder's Office as a clerk. He was still not twenty years of age.

It is documented that Fred Perris wrote, literally, thousands of Land Titles by hand and in his more sophisticated handwriting he many times abbreviated the county name to **San Brdo**. Naturally, many times new land owners would be issued their paperwork and titles, see the ***"Brdo"*** moniker and crack, "What's the name of the place -San Ber-DOO?" The name has stuck to this day.

The San Bernardino community grew and the local Mormon Church continued to grow. The economy was good, people were at work, and land was cheap. All should have been well, but it was not and on July 4, 1857 it came to a head. The LDS Church was in debt at the time due to various reasons. The new arrivals to the community were not all Mormons and of the ones that were, some were not as dedicated as others would have liked. The result became a presumption of "good" church members and "not-so-good" members. At the annual Fourth of July City Picnic, it all came to words, which lead to arguments, which led to yelling, which led to threats, which led to fist-ta-cuffs, which led to a near riot. Reports of the day chronicle drunkenness and rowdies from out-of-town along with political disagreements that got far too heated for a patriotic celebration. Remember, this was in the years directly preceding the US Civil War and politics was a touchstone throughout the country. By the next year San Bernardino had two separate celebrations for the Fourth of July, one for LDS members in good standing and another for the remainder of the community. That remained a pattern for many years to come.

By now, the 15th President of the United States, James Buchanan, had taken office and he was no friend of the Mormon Church, its leader, Rev. Brigham Young, nor of Young's plans to annex a large portion of the western territories and create a religious state to be called Deseret. Hence, the "Mormon Wars" of 1857-1858 threatened the west and Union troops were sent into Utah to "quell" any potential "uprising."

How does this affect our story? Well, Fredrick Perris was now a land owner, an established community leader and a member in good standing in the LDS Church, in which his step-father was on his way to being an Elder. The Church was contemplating "rebellion" in one form or another and perhaps preparing to literally secede from the Union. Fred was right in the middle of this mess. Brigham Young had sent a letter to the San Bernardino Church leaders requesting assistance in the form on new settlers to the Utah Territories. It was thought the more church members that are established in Utah, the more unlikely Union troops would be able to move them out by force.

So, Fred, his mother Hannah, her new husband and Fred’s two sisters all loaded up the wagon and headed towards Salt Lake City in November 1857. They made it as far a Las Vegas before winter. Here, on December 29, 1857, Fred’s 15 year-old sister (Fanny) married Mansfield Jennings, a prominent LDS member. Some records show Fred married Mansfield’s sister, Mary; this would have made him a polygamist later in life when he did marry Mary Edwards of England, but the records are unclear and our hero most likely did not marry Ms. Mansfield.

In the spring of 1858 the Perris’s and their now extended family moved on towards Salt Lake City, making it as far as Springville, on the border of the Utah Territories. Union troops advancing into Utah had made further travel east problematic. After federal troops made preparations to burn Salt Lake to the ground, including stacking hay bales on main streets, cooler heads finally prevailed and actual war was averted. The Perris family was stranded to an extent. No longer needed in Salt Lake, no longer members of the San Bernardino community, they made separate paths. Fred and his mother matriculated to Beaver, Utah to try farming. His younger sister and her husband headed north. Fred turned out to be a lousy farmer. Records show he did become a U.S. Citizen on August 30, 1858 while in Beaver.

Now, another twist …..

A letter was received by Fred and Hannah from Fred’s sister Fanny who was now settled in Montana with her husband and her children. It contained a “want-ad” from a newspaper in Gloucester, England concerning the fact that Tom Perris, Fred’s father, had passed away and left a relative fortune. Apparently he’d returned to England after his wife left him. On the 19th of November, 1858, Fred boarded a steamship from the east coast and headed back to his boyhood home to claim his fortune. His mother followed after taking care of some family business. Fred and his mother had to petition the English Court and jump through numerous hoops to finally prove they were valid relatives and true, legal heirs to Toms’ estate. While awaiting the results of the legal proceedings, Fred Perris married Mary Edwards, an English girl from Gloucester. The marriage license shows 22-year old Fred’s occupation as “land surveyor,” 19 year-old Mary is listed as a “spinster.”

In the spring of 1861 Fred, his mother and his new wife returned to the United States, just in time for the start of the Civil War. Fred and Mary made for Salt Lake City, his mother Hannah and Fred’s step-father Mathew made for Ohio. Mathew enlisted in the Ohio Volunteer Cavalry and died in 1864, a prisoner of the Rebel Army at Andersonville, South Carolina. Hannah joined her son and daughter-in-law in Utah.

Salt Lake City was growing rapidly. Fred Perris may have dabbled in the new science of photography and he did regain his surveying skills as Salt Lake and the Utah Territories were divided up amongst thousands of new land owners determined to make it big “Out West” (and probably avoid the war). Fred Perris also had joined the “Nauvoo Legion” which functioned as an LDS-sponsored National Guard unit for the region. When Joseph Morris renounced Brigham Young as a false prophet and attempted to begin his own church and community near Ogden, Fred was one of the legion members tasked with stopping Morris. A fight ensued. Morris and his wife were killed by the Mormon Legion, as were men and women of the Morris clan. This violence was the start of Fred’s dissatisfaction with the Church.

By now, Brigham Young was both the leader of the Mormon Church and the Governor of the Utah Territories as the “Mormon Uprising” had faded into the past. A surveying error had placed an LDS community a mile north of the Utah boundary (into what is now Idaho) and the local Shoshone Indians took exception to the new colony. On January 29, 1863 the California Volunteers, a Federal Battalion based near Ogden, led by a Colonel Conner attacked and massacred 225 Indians over this land dispute. 90 women and children were amongst the dead. Brigham Young and the leaders of the church were very aware of the poor PR value of such a slaughter and even though the Church was not directly involved, it was close enough to underlie the need for more serious attention to such details as surveys. Charles C. Rich was enlisted by Young to start a new, properly located colony at Bear Lake Valley in northern Utah and Fred Perris was appointed the party’s surveyor. Brigham Young himself was so impressed with the work that when he visited the new colony he himself changed the name to “Peris” in appreciation of the work done. *(Yes, it was misspelled, but it’s the thought that counts, right?)*

Next, Fred was given the task of surveying Echo Canyon in Northeast Utah to see if a railroad was feasible. Joseph Young, the Prophet’s son, was the foreman. Issues arose, and Fred led a strike over wages. Brigham Young took the issue personally and after much back-and-forth finally settled the issue by firing Fred Perris and his crew. Fred was unemployed, but not for long. By 1866 Fred found work as a commodities buyer (like his dad in Gloucester). During a trip east he met and became acquainted with a George Cronyn, a wealthy merchant. By 1867 Fred Perris had become a partner with George and was listed as employed by the Company of Cronyn and Perris with a business location on West Temple Street in Salt Lake City. Even this success was short lived. Due to Church edicts aimed at other specific merchandise emporiums and an issue with the Union Pacific Railroad, all revolving around Mormon

Church doctrine attempting to outlaw business not controlled by LDS Members, Cronyn and Perris were drawn into the fray and in 1869 went bankrupt. Fred was again unemployed.

In October that year Fred again took employment as a surveyor, paid in railroad stock, for a rail project slated to move coal between Coalville and Salt Lake. Records show that through his new employer, a W.W. Cluff, Fred Perris became friendly with William Godbe and L.T. Harrison. I will not spell out the details here but Harrison and Godbe crossed swords with Brigham Young and the Zion Elders and were eventually excommunicated. Young took note of the fact Fred Perris was friendly with the newly anointed sinners.

Fred's relationship with the LDS Church was deteriorating. Discovery of high quality coal in Wyoming made the Coalville Railroad obsolete before it was completed; Fred's employment picture was again grim.

On January 21, 1870, Fred and Mary Perris were also excommunicated by the LDS Church.

Fred became very involved in a new start up newspaper, The Mormon Tribune, which was begun by the recently kicked-out church members. By May 1870 Fredrick Perris was listed as the paper's Business Manager. By July 22, 1871 Godbe and Harrison had left the paper for other ventures outside of Utah and Fred Perris was listed as the sole name on the paper's masthead (dangerous thing to do in these times of conflict). Men carried guns on their hips and it was not uncommon for prominent persons to disappear off the street in such a relatively lawless setting. During Fred's reign as editor, the Tribune covered in great detail the divorce of Brigham Young from *his fifty-first wife*, a 23 year old lass named Ann Eliza Young (Brigham was 67 for those keeping score at home). The Tribune opposed admission of Utah into the Union. It exposed Utah's Women Suffrage movement as an LDS ploy to supply voting rights to the dozens and hundreds of wives married to Church Elders. In general, The Tribune was an immense pain-in-the-ass to Brigham Young. All this in-fighting took its toll on the 36 year old Fredrick. In 1873 he sold the newspaper to the first taker, printed a final farewell editorial and left Utah, never to return,

By spring of 1874 he and his family, mother Hannah included, were back in San Bernardino. He received and took an offer to become the County Surveyor of San Bernardino County. Within a short time he was appointed Chief Engineer of the County. He took charge of surveys of the Cajon Pass, Death Valley, and water systems in the San Bernardino Mountains, locating reservoir sites and rail lines for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Rail Lines. Most importantly to our story, he led the survey parties of a string of towns established in Riverside County and on south.

One of these towns now bears his name. ***(Perris,…. there is no town named "Fred")***

One of Fred Perris's "co-workers" was Sheldon Stoddard who wrote many years later of the time; For over sixty years have I known Fred T. Perris and with him I have traveled hundreds of miles over mountains and over deserts. When he was a surveyor for San Bernardino County, I was with him when he made the county line survey, during which we traversed the desert some two hundred and fifty miles and experienced some thrilling adventures and many hardships. At one time Mr. Perris was taken very ill and we thought sure we should have to return to San Bernardino; so we rigged up a buckboard, made bows of willow limbs, stretched canvas on it for shade and made it as comfortable as possible. But he refused to allow us to take him back. Later he commenced to mend, so we just kept in camp for a few days, by which time Mr. Perris was able to continue the survey, completing the work to the state line.

During our work we drove into a little valley known as Horse Spring Valley, and there we found the ground literally covered with the bones of animals. We afterward learned that this valley had been the hiding place of Indians, who drove there hundreds of stolen horses, mules and cattle, where they killed the animals and dried the meat for food. They were most active in such depredations during the fifties, but even at the time we made the survey, in 1874, as we entered the valley a band if Indians fled from the opposite side.

Now, this is where Fredrick Perris makes his bones …..

In 1879, the second transcontinental railroad was being completed; its main run was from Springfield Missouri to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Boston-based rail tycoons incorporated under the name California Southern Railroad were looking for the most profitable route to the coast and at the time a direct route to San Diego was the favored end-of-the-line. The citizens of San Bernardino appointed John Isaacs and Fredrick Perris to meet these railroad men and change their minds. Isaacs's knowledge of economics and Perris's knowledge of local topography led to a successful meeting and the new railway would run through the San Gorgonio Pass through San Bernardino and on to Los Angeles and San Diego. The first Southern California Railway train arrived in San Bernardino on September 13, 1883. Next a rail line from San Berdo to Barstow was completed running through the Cajon Pass. Fredrick Perris was credited by the publication "Southern California" as being the driving force behind a total of 264.2 miles of track by 1890.

Our own L. Burr Beldon documented Fred Perris's many accomplishments in the book "History in the Making" and chronicled how Perris and his crew, and how they knew they were being followed by competing railroad agents looking to sabotage Southern California RR plans for expansion. Perris outsmarted the trackers by feigning tracks to Old Woman Springs, Warrens Well and the Lucerne Valley, rather than Cajon. By making competing railroads believe the Southern California RR was contemplating tracks built on old wagon roads to the south, he was able to delay any attempts to purchase blocking parcels of land near Cajon until the Southern. California RR had completed their surveys and prepared their offers.

Fred Perris also had time for his family and other civic duties. Fred and Mary had a large family, three daughters and three sons. He served on the San Bernardino Board of Water Commissioners, the San Bernardino Board of Trustees (City Council); he took a lead in advocating for Andrew Carnegie's gift of funds for a public library. Fred persuaded Carnegie, one of the wealthiest men on the planet at the time, to increase the original offer of $15,000 to $20,000 allowing for a hugely expanded library. Fred also took a lead in planning many of the reservoirs in the county, the Arrowhead Reservoir included. As a thank you for his efforts, the city fathers named Perris Hill for the now well-known surveyor.

Perris was credited for acquiring the funding for construction of shop buildings, a depot, and a divisional office for the Santa Fe. The city furnished the land; the railroad built the buildings and soon San Bernardino as a major western rail and shipping center. Naturally, employment was up and the general standard of living for many citizens was greatly advanced. In 1894 Fred’s office was given oversight of property purchased by the Santa Fe Railroad for the sole purpose of drilling for oil to be used to supply fuel to its trains. By 1900 the now 63-year-old Perris was made outright manager of the properties and the oil business built upon them. By this stage of life, Perris was a well-known executive and was appointed to the Board of Directors to both the Farmers and Merchants Bank and the San Bernardino Valley Bank. On November 1, 1914 Fredrick T. Perris officially “retired” from his various positions. He received a pension of $75 a month from the railroad, *(not enough to keep a Clamper in beer for a weekend).* He passed away at home, his bride of 52 years at his side, on May 12, 1916.

Epilogue

Much the way William Mulholland is credited with pioneering the city of Los Angeles by bringing water to the basin, Fredrick T. Perris is responsible for the success of cities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties by bringing in railroads, planning reservoir systems and building the foundations of the logistical systems used to this day to supply these counties with everything needed for modern life.

The Good Hope Mine

Contributed by Paul J. Price

Authors such as Brete Harte and Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) wrote of the Gold Fever stampede into Central California. A little later the gold rush hit Perris Valley, then called Pinacate (Spanish for a type of beetle—today called a stinkbug). Now that doesn't qualify as Mark Twain material, but then, who would have thought that a frog race would? The Pinacate mining district was in the dry rugged high desert, and those who came for "easy pickings" soon moved on. Shortage of water and transportation to the gold fields made the economics none too profitable. To those few men who adapted, fortunes were made. Travel four and half miles southwest of present-day Perris on Highway 74, and enter the heart of the Pinacate Mining District.

Prior to the new four lane Highway 74, this road was a twisting Indian trail which became a wagon road, then a concrete slab highway and today an asphalt four lane ribbon that snakes its way to Lake Elsinore and is known by locals as "Blood Alley." This road has linked the Good Hope mine to the outside world for over one hundred years. The first indication you're near Good Hope is a highway marker naming the village of Good Hope. A few miles further south before Meadowbrook Heights is the gold mine called "Good Hope." Look for the man-made hills to the right. These tailings are all that remain above ground of the operation. But below ground are levels of tunnels that extend over four miles.

Who discovered the mine has been fuel for campfire debates for decades. Chance, however, always plays a large part in finding mineral deposits. The Good Hope discover stories are hatched by men on other errands, as rounding up burros or hunting game or camping on an outcrop or an accidental dynamite discharge. The names change with each story; some say it was a Frenchman, others a Mexican, or an Indian, and even a burro.

We know that around 1870 Mexican miners were working the gravels and gullies to the east of the site for placer gold. The method for prospecting is ageless. Having decided upon some area for investigation such as a the dry creek beds of the Good Hope area, the first step is to look for "color" in gullies and washes, following them upstream as far as they will go. Thus the seeker after ore looks for "float," the bits of mineral or vein-matter that eroded from the main outcrop and has washed into the creeks and gullies. Sprinkled throughout the Highway 74 area are the remains of numerous mines and arrastras first used by the early Mexican miners to process ore.

Ore was worked with arrastras consisting of a pivot pole around which a work animal pulled heavy stones over the ore. The ore was thus crushed and ready for panning. Most of these old arrastras were destroyed by people seeking gold that might have sifted down between the dragstones and the rock floor.

Location notices and papers filed in patent proceedings were kept in the Pinacate General Land Office. Information as to status of lands or any particular tract of land could be found by the records. If a prospector wished to have his ore samples assayed he would go to the local assayer's office or to a larger mine or smelter, and usually for a small fee (sometimes for free) the prospector would be given the type and value of the ore. If time were on the prospector's side, he could send a half pound sample to the state Division of Mines in San Francisco for free identification and qualitative analysis.

The Pinacate General Land Office must have had a lot to talk about in 1880. Their records show that "T.M. Minto," discoverer, filed his claim on May 14, 1880 on what he specified was "to be known as the Good Hope Mine and Ledge and Good Hope Company."

It sounds clear enough as to who the discoverer was, but on that same day, Thomas Arago and Doroteo Trujillo also claimed "Good Hope Lode." To mix something else into this miner's tale, within a few days two more filings, T. Rofe (or Rosse?), A. Tiburon, and M. Cheney filed their claim with the same name and title. Oh, one more carrot for the pot: on June 8, 1880, Antonio Atencio filed a claim to extension No. 2 northerly on the Good Hope Mine. And let's toss in an onion: on January 28, 1885, "in favor of R.M. Moor (or Mooer or Moore), F. Sheffin, L. Hoffman, and H.E. Bacon…one mining clame (sic) situated in Pinacte Mining District…known as the "Good Hope."

Meanwhile, back at the diggings, a small Mexican town was founded, on a hill just south and west of the mine.

In 1881, a five stamp mill was constructed by H.J. Booth and County of Marysville, California to replace the outdated arrastras. The processed ore was reported to be extremely rich. In 1888 the California State Mineralogist reported that the "Good Hope…has the reputation of a good mine and it is said that the large new South Pacific Hotel at Oceanside was built out of one-fourth of its proceeds."

The mine was troubled by distance, shipping, and receiving. It was generally conceded that the average burro would carry 150 pounds and cover 15 miles a day regularly. Under such conditions, 15 miles was about the limit for a man. First, the burros in caravans hauled the necessities, then came the freight wagons, and finally the California Southern Railway (later the Santa Fe) was built through the area from San Diego to Colton via Box Springs grade in 1882. The mining town of Pinacate (soon to be replaced by Perris) was laid out on the rail line at the present site of the Orange Empire Trolley Museum (Tom Patterson P.E.). The tracks followed the San Jacinto creek bed as it dropped toward Lake Elsinore. One mile east of the Good Hope mine, the train would stop and unload passengers, usually miners and families, and, of course, mining equipment. The train then continued down present-day Railroad Canyon (the track bed is under Canyon Lake) to the Elsinore station near present Interstate 15. This station was washed in a major flood, and was never rebuilt.

The station platform east of the Good Hope was at the end of River Road. Several hundred people lived and worked along the sloping foothills. In 1894 George A Doyle started work on a day school. Colonel J.M.S, Egan made a gift of the land and that same year, 29 pupils were enrolled. Today the school is gone, but if you look opposite the tailings to the east, you will see a grove of pepper trees that once circled the school.

As early as 1894, the mine was equipped with a 20-stamp mill and the mine had been developed to a depth of 485 feet (California Journal of Mines and Geology, 1945). The powerful 20-stamp mill was steam powered, and its iron stamps roared 24 hours a day, crushing as much as 150 tons of gold-bearing quartz to fine powder each day. Residents of Hemet, 20 miles away, reported that on a still night the distant thunder of the stamps could clearly be heard. During 1894 the mine was in full swing. The miners went into the mine early each morning and emerged at sunset. Guys like Jim Cheatman and Fred Watts worked the tunnels. It was said two men are still buried in a collapsed tunnel.

A Massachusetts corporation operating as the Good Hope Mining Company constructed the 20-stamp mill. That firm dug and worked the main shaft to 485 feet. The first level was 250 feet deep by 800 feetlong, the second level was 350 feet deep and 800 feet long, and the fourth level was 450 feet deep and only 60 feet long. A 35 foot sump extended below the fourth level. However, in 1896 the mine was shut down and went into litigation. A purchased contract secured the mine to the Good Hope Development Company (1896). This new company took on the battle that would eventually take the mine's life.

Water was a major problem for the Good Hope—too much of it. The tunneling struck water and flooded the lower tunnels that were producing gold ore. But the new company had faith that by dewatering and re-timbering the shafts to the 350 foot level and installing a mill where several thousand tons of ore from the old dumps and from current development could be processed, the mine would come back to life. But before the plan could be undertaken, litigation once more stopped the operations. At this time, it was estimated that over $2 million worth of "reported" ore had been recovered. The figure is probably wrong because some gold in newly established Riverside County was not reported. During this period, the county reported $7 million in recovered gold.

Born in the 1890's, Arthur Sill spent his childhood on his family's homestead about two miles from the mine. He reported to Sandy Stokes of the Press Enterprise (2003) the following: "The distant roar of the stamps and the sound of the ore cars dumping into the 20 stamps that pulverized the rocks into powder ran 24 hours a day. Cyanide was used to extract gold from the crushed ore." Sill attended Good Hope School in the one-room building across the road from the mine. "Highway 74 had little traffic then, "Sill went on. "Automobiles were just beginning to make their appearance and excitement mounted as we heard one coming. If we were in class, we would run to the window and watch it go by in a cloud of dust."

There was a period from 1900 to 1903 when the cyanide operation was able to recover about $11.00 per ton from the tailings left by former operations.

In 1909, Perris civic leaders such as the Hook brothers formed the Perris Gold Eucalyptus Corporation and bought the rights to the water in the Good Hope mine. They pumped it out to irrigate eucalyptus trees they planted for timber. The leaders speculated the wood could supply the mines for support beams and the railroad for cross-ties, fencing, and other uses. However, although the trees were tall, straight, and fast growing, they split easily and attracted beetles. You can observe to your right as you travel southwest on Highway 74 the large eucalyptus that are in their original irrigation rows.

In 1922 the mine came into the possession of Sellio Trujillo, the man whose grandfather had originally claimed to be the discovered and first operator. The stamp mill and smelting furnaces of the old operation used coal mined from the Alberhill Coal Mines near Lake Elsinore. At one point, the coal mine was in operation 24 hours a day to keep up with the Good Hope's needs.

According to Mr. Sill, the mine was sold for $450.00 to the Hook brothers of Perris at a property tax sale. The machinery was dismantled and sold for scrap to provide metal to World War I industries. However, the mine re-opened and new machinery was built in 1933 by the Good Hope Development Company.. However, this company soon bowed out, finding that although it was possible to recover several hundred ounces of gold, safety regulations and union wages prohibited a profitable operation. Next came the Panamint Mining Company, who took a whirl between 1947 and 1953. But again, inaccessible shafts, flooded cave-ins, and more deaths closed this operation as well. In 1962 Howard J. Hunt and Adam Natalie, mining experts, estimated they could capture $20.00 per ton by running the tailings through the mill again, using more advanced methods. With and estimated 200,000 tons above ground for starters, it looked good. But once again the deal fell through

The stamp mill and a few out buildings stood for a few mores years but fell victim to a rolling brush fire. The corrugated siding was stolen for corral sheds, and the even the state's bronze monument disappeared. The mine entrance was concealed by brush, and little evidence remained of its former activity. However an open shaft, with dried and rotten timber was an accident waiting to happen. When Kathy Fiscus fell into an abandoned well near La Puente in 1948, a plea was made to cap old wells and seal abandoned mine entrances. The Good Hope's neighbors, working with Harry J. Price (caretaker) and Ed Payne (heavy equipment operator) sealed the main entrance. Today, only the man made hills give mute testimony of the long and erratic history of the Good Hope Mine, one of Riverside County's biggest gold producers.

History of Pinacate and the Orange Empire Train Museum

Pinacate was at one time, briefly, a growing town of almost 500 full time residents located with its center exactly where the Orange Empire Railway Museum is now located. The only real remnant of the town (which dates back to the 1880's) is a stone building. This building served as the general store and post office for Pinacate; over the decades it has sunk a few feet into the soil.

The town was established in 1882 when the California Southern Railroad was built between San Bernardino/Colton and San Diego. The original rail stop served the Pinacate Mining District; at the time, some of the most productive gold mines in the entire western U.S. were located in the area (See Good Hope Mine). The name derives from the Mexican Pinacate Beetle (known by us now as a "stink bug,"), the large black beetles have a tendency to raise their rears and produce a stench when threatened or disturbed. That-being-that, the town was doomed almost from its inception when poor surveys and ungoverned homesteading in the area created land ownership issues. These became so prevalent and caused such severe disputes between neighbors and town fathers that after only a few years the town was pretty much "moved" north a couple miles to start over with the new name of Perris. Only the train depot (Pinacate Station) remained as an operating business. Over the years it too was abandoned. By the mid-twentieth century the land was deserted except for the stone building noted above, the crumbling train station and a scattering of old foundations. This land eventually was reclaimed and is now the Orange Empire Railway Museum, whose story begins below.

By 1956, a group of young men, all under 21 years of age, had formed the Electric Railroad Historical Association of Southern California. The group formed what they called an "Equipment Committee" tasked with locating and negotiating the procurement of trolleys that had been either abandoned or out of service due to the need for repair. These men were motivated by a love of all-things rail. They'd grown up in an era in Southern California when not everyone owned or used a car as daily transportation. *(I know,…. but it's true….).* Los Angeles and other major cities in the U.S. were scattered with light rail systems, trolleys, cable cars and thin gauge Inter-City rail systems of all types and sizes. People, freight and commercial goods were transported throughout the country mostly by rail as the interstate highway system we know today was not yet developed to the point of taking over the task. Airports were not yet in every mid-sized town and automobiles were an expensive luxury for the upper classes.

Before the mid-twentieth century fully arrived, things started to change. The heyday of the railroads was long in the past and the heavy equipment was being scrapped at high rates. The group mentioned above saw their beloved trains were going the way of the dinosaur and that few seemed to care. In late 1956 the Orange Empire Traction Company was formed and accelerated the procurement and preservation efforts with the thought of preserving as many trains as possible for posterity.

The group's first home was at "Travel Town," an already-established (and still existing) display of retired railway equipment located in Los Angeles' Griffith Park. By 1958, the group had changed their name to the Orange Empire Trolley Museum and had brought 10 pieces of equipment to Travel Town. Then came the event that started the wheels in motion to form what would become today's OERM. Ironically, it was the same type of event which had hastened the demise of the equipment they were collecting: the construction of another of L.A.'s famous freeways! The group was informed that the new Ventura Freeway (Hwy 134) would cut directly through Griffith Park, isolating the site from access to major roadways. It was leave now, or remain forever. The latter turned out not to be true, but leave they did.

After months of searching, the trolley museum found a new home on an abandoned railroad right-of-way just outside of rural Perris, California, some 70 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Another group, the

Mt. Rubidoux Chapter of the Pacific Railroad Society, was leasing the right-of-way from the Santa Fe Railroad. The trolley museum purchased eight acres of adjacent potato patch and began the process of moving equipment there. Except for a small two-room farmhouse and a rock dugout dating from the 1880s that at one time served the town of Pinacate as a post office and then a small general store, the site was a lonely, semi-deserted field. One can only imagine the thoughts of the locals who saw this collection of rail equipment appearing in the middle of the field! There was no running water, no indoor plumbing, not much of anything but trolley cars and youthful enthusiasm.

The early years at Perris were a time of intense activity, though mostly on weekends only, as almost all of the participants worked regular weekday jobs. Track was hurriedly extended as more and more trolleys arrived, eventually evolving into a yard arrangement. The few visitors that found the place thought of it as “the trolley farm” and this moniker would stay with the museum for years to come. By late 1959 a used Cummins diesel generator power plant was acquired and set up to provide the 600 volt DC electricity for trolley car operation. Overhead wire followed and limited operations were soon possible on a short stretch of track.

As the 1960’s began, tracks were extended further, and more trolleys and hardware acquired. With streetcar service ending in Los Angeles in 1963, (the famous Red Cars) the loosely-run organization began to gather momentum. Museum members travelled to sites throughout the region salvaging abandoned railway infrastructure that could be reused for the museum. Meanwhile, the group with the lease on the site’s right-of-way had become the California Southern Railway Museum. The two groups shared the site, and mainline railroad equipment continued to appear in large numbers. It still didn’t look like much of a museum, but by the mid-1960s, enough time had passed for a core group of dedicated volunteers to emerge. From among this core emerged leaders who began planning for the museum’s future. They identified more land, protective carhouses, a public restroom and a gift shop as priorities.

By the end of the 1960s, several of the site’s defining features that visitors see now had taken shape. A trolley line had been constructed along the periphery of the original property, and the Pinacate Station gift shop and a public restroom building both opened in 1968. In 1969 construction started on the first “Carhouse,” used to provide protective cover for the growing collection and to allow volunteers to restore the equipment out of the weather.

Harvey Girls ….

Additionally, the museum also began to archive rail-related history and collect artifacts of goods and services directly related to railroads. The Harvey Girls are an excellent example. Trains in the west did not offer meal service, leaving the passengers to fend for themselves at mealtimes. This situation gave rise to exploitation, and passengers were many times victimized by poor food and high prices if they could find anything. *(Kinda like air travel now, but I digress ….)*

Fred Harvey, a successful restaurateur of the day, decided there had to be a better way and established a series of restaurants on the Santa Fe lines. Trains would stop, allowing passengers to get a good meal for a reasonable price in clean surroundings. The Fred Harvey Company recruited women via newspaper ads from towns and cities across the United States. The women had to be of good moral character *(dang*!), have at least an eighth grade education, display good manners and be neat and articulate to work in his restaurants. In return for employment, the Harvey Girls would agree to a six month contract, agree not to marry and abide by all company rules during the term of employment. If hired, they were given a rail pass to get to their company-chosen destination. Harvey Girls were the women who brought respectability to the work of waitressing. They left the protection and poverty of home for the opportunity to travel and earn their own way in life while experiencing a bit of adventure.

And the Museum Grows ….

The 1970s were another decade of tremendous growth. In 1971, the Santa Fe Railway donated the historic 1892 Perris depot to the museum. Although at the time the museum could not yet operate its trains there, the building would later become a focal point in downtown Perris for both the museum and the city's redevelopment efforts. Back at the main site, more adjacent land was purchased, completion of a continuous trolley "loop" occurred in 1973, and a second carhouse was completed in 1975. In order to combine the efforts of the site's two groups, the California Southern Railroad Museum was merged with the Trolley Museum in 1975 forming today's Orange Empire Railway Museum –OERM. A major extension of the standard gauge "mainline" track in 1977 permitted a better demonstration of the growing collection of mainline railroad equipment. In 1978, regular steam locomotive operations began, together with the concept of holding a large "Rail Festival" event in an effort to draw more visitors.

The 1980s saw a continuing pattern of expansion. A third carhouse opened in 1983, and construction of an ambitious shop facility progressed significantly. Carhouse #4 opened in 1986, raising to about fifty the number of railcars in the collection with an indoor home (representing about one-third of the total collection at that time). This same year also saw electrification extended for several blocks over the tracks connecting the museum's "main line" to the Santa Fe track in downtown Perris. As the decade drew to a close, the city of Perris was also changing dramatically. New housing was beginning to appear throughout the city, including a major new development adjacent to the rail right-of-way north of the museum. This pattern of growth has continued into the present day, forever changing the once rural feel of the area north of the museum site. The good news in all this expansion was the city's continued interest in OERM, reflected by the prominence of museum operations in the city's downtown redevelopment plans.

The 1990s further accelerated the expansion of the musem. Most notable was the donation by Ward and Betty Kimball of their 3-foot gauge "Grizzly Flats Railroad" along with major funding to help assure its continued preservation. The four track Grizzly Flats Engine house opened in 1992, with additional related artifacts acquired by the museum to help interpret a more complete history of 3-foot narrow-gauge railroads in the West. Concurrently, a major new system of water mains was started to help protect the entire museum site from the ever-present danger of fire. In 1993, a landscaped park was added, connecting the center of the museum with the new engine house. In 2001, Grizzly Flats was further expanded with the addition of a replica Southern Pacific "gallows" type turntable, built on site by museum volunteers with financial support from the Kimball's.

For a period beginning in the mid-1990s, the museum also operated excursion trains on the former Santa Fe Railway San Jacinto branch and began regularly calling at the historic 1892 Perris Depot, now containing the Perris Valley Historical Museum, some 1.5 miles north of the OERM site. As freight railway operations increased on the branch line, the museum's excursions ended, but the goal of a rail connection between the OERM and the Perris Depot remained. When it was announced that the Metrolink commuter rail system would be extended from Riverside to Perris, the museum and the City of Perris were able to establish an agreement that would finally permit a permanent presence for the museum at the depot. Concurrent with the construction of the new Metrolink facilities in 2013-14, the museum will construct a short extension of its track and overhead wire that will reach into the new Ward Kimball Transit Center located adjacent to the historic depot. Museum trains will arrive and depart directly across the platform from the new Metrolink service, though for safety reasons the two operations will be on separate tracks.

The museum celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006, and soon after embarked on the development of a formal Strategic Plan for the organization's future. Recognizing the importance of providing financial stability for the future, the 2000's also saw the organization's endowment fund grow to over $1 million dollars. In 2007-08, the historic 1892 Perris depot (which had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995) was completely restored by the City of Perris to become an improved home for the Perris Valley Historical Museum as well as a northern terminus for the museum's railway operations.

Throughout the 2000's the museum also made major improvements to its visitor areas, adding paved walkways and roadways and additional landscaping, as well as more restroom facilities and other visitor amenities. The museum also made major improvements in its ability to care for its collections. In 2001, the museum acquired 19 additional acres of adjacent property, which gave it the ability to site a major new collections storage facility. Completed in 2007, the 62,000 square foot Ron Ruffulo Carhouse has six tracks inside, each 600 feet long. This facility doubled the amount of indoor storage space for the museum's collections, permitting a major cleanup and reorganization of the entire site.

The 2010's have seen continued growth. In 2011, the main visitor parking lot was paved and the front entrance remodeled. The two main 18^{th} Century styled "ticket booths" at the main entrance gate are originally from Disneyland and were donated to the museum about this time. Several generous gifts also allowed the museum to begin a focused program of car and locomotive refurbishment using a contracted painter to supplement its volunteers. The program has turned out beautifully repainted railcars and locomotives at an impressive pace, encouraging additional donations to support a continuing program. In 2011, the museum hired its first full-time executive director, and in 2012 moved to expand its Board of Directors through the appointment of "Community Directors" that will help to expand its outreach and fundraising efforts. In 2012, construction started on both a Harvey House exhibit building and the new Thomas F. Grose Library, and a recreation of an historic water tank is being added to the Grizzly Flats Railroad.

Almost 60 years have now passed since the museum's inception, and although a much smaller percentage of the population remembers riding on the Red and Yellow trolleys of days past, Los Angeles is once again busy building one of the nation's largest rail transit systems. A new generation of Southern Californians is growing up with trains, and the Orange Empire Railway Museum is in a better position than ever to continue its work of "bringing Southern California's railway history to life".

The Orange Empire Trolley Trip- In 1912, $3.50 bought a ticket on the all-day 150-mile "Orange Empire Trolley Trip" from downtown Los Angeles into the far-flung "Orange Empire" along the tracks of the Pacific Electric. Leaving Sixth and Main in downtown Los Angeles in the morning, highlights of the trip included stops in San Bernardino, Riverside (with lunch at the famed Mission Inn) and Redlands before returning to Los Angeles in the early evening. The last Orange Empire excursion ran in 1929, by which time hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world had taken this famous trip through the orange groves.

Today the "Orange Empire" is known as the "Inland Empire," and houses have replaced the orange groves. The Orange Empire Railway Museum's collection of more than 200 streetcars and rail vehicles provides an opportunity to experience the early days of electric- and steam-railway transportation in and around Los Angeles.

History of March Air Force Base

Built and established as Alessandro Flying Field in February 1918 this base was one of thirty-two training air fields built after the United States entry into World War I in 1917. Almost immediately, on March 11 1918, the base was renamed after Second Lieutenant Payton C. March Jr., the son of then Army-Chief-of-Staff Peyton

March who had been killed in an air crash in Texas on February 18, 1918 just two weeks after being commissioned. Second Lieutenant March is interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

March Air Force Base was built at a time when the United States was just beginning to extend its reach overseas and was becoming a true “super power.” The advent of the First World War in 1914 gave the opportunity to, as General George O. Squier, the Army's Chief Signal Officer put it, "put Yankee punch into the war by building an army in the air.” Frank Miller, owner of the Mission Inn in Riverside, Hiram Johnson, and other prominent citizens acquired War Department approval to construct an airfield at Alessandro Field located near Riverside, an airstrip used by aviators from Rockwell Field on cross-country flights from San Diego and by local early crop dusters.

By April 1918, construction of the new field had progressed to the point that the first troops arrived. The commander of the 818th Aero Squadron detachment, Captain William Carruthers, took over as the field's first commander and for a time operated out of an office in the Mission Inn. Within 60 days, the grain and gravel covered plain of Moreno Valley had been partially transformed to include hangars, barracks, mess halls, a machine shop, post office, hospital, supply depot, repair building, officer's quarters and a residence for the commanding officer. Eventually March Field covered almost 700 acres. Wooden buildings served as headquarters, maintenance facilities, and officers’ quarters. Enlisted men had to bivouac in tents.

The first flying squadron was the 215th Aero Squadron, which was transferred from Rockwell Field, North Island, California. March Field served as a base for primary flight training and accommodated a maximum of 300 students. In 1918, flight training occurred in two phases: primary and advanced. Primary training consisted of pilots learning basic flying skills under dual and solo instruction. After completion of their primary training at March, flight cadets were then transferred to another base for advanced training. Training units documented as stationed at March at one-time-or another were: 68th Aero Squadron (II), June 1918 / 215th Aero Squadron, March 1918 / 289th Aero Squadron, August 1918 / 293d Aero Squadron, June 1918 / 311th Aero Squadron, June 1918 / and Flying School Detachment (Consolidation of Squadrons A-E), November 1918 – November 1919. The signing of the armistice ending the Great War in November 1918 did not halt training at March Field. Initially March was used by several combat tested Air Service squadrons that returned from France. By 1921, the decision had been made to phase down all activities at the base in accordance with sharply reduced military budgets. By the spring of 1923, March Field was deactivated as an active duty airfield, and a small caretaker unit was assigned to the facility for administrative reasons. The field was also used by the aerial forestry patrol.

March Field remained quiet for only a short time. In July 1926, Congress created the Army Air Corps and approved a five-year plan which called for an expansion in pilot training and the activation of tactical units. Accordingly, funds were appropriated for the reopening of March Field in March 1927. *(This was back when*

Congress actually did stuff …..) . Major Millard F. Harmon was the base commander as March Field began to take on the appearance of a permanent military installation. The basic mission changed, and it became an operational base. The 7th Bombardment Group, commanded by a Major Carl A. Spaatz, brought its Curtiss B-2 Condor and Keystone B-3A bombers, and the 17th Pursuit Group and several other air groups were stationed at the facility, all mission ready. March Field became associated with the Air Corps' heaviest aircraft as well as an assortment of fighters. Aircraft on the flight line in the 1930s included Keystone B-4, Martin B-10/B-12 and Douglas B-18 Bolo bombers; Boeing P-12, P-26 Peashooter, and Curtiss P-36 Hawk pursuit aircraft, Northrop A-17A attack aircraft (dive bombers) and Douglas O-38 observation aircraft. The variety of aircraft was due in part to the large amount of land available. Runways were constructed with concrete thicknesses able to handle the heaviest of aircraft and could be extended to excessive lengths to accommodate even the largest of bombers, cargo planes, troop carriers and later, re-fueling aircraft. March Field was becoming one of the more well equipped and diverse bases on the west coast.

In the decade before World War II, Lieutenant Colonel Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, base commander from 1931 to 1936, began a series of well-publicized maneuvers to gain public attention. This resulted in a visit by California Governor James Rolph in March 1932, numerous visits by Hollywood celebrities including Bebe Daniels, Wallace Beery, Rochelle Hudson and others, and visits by famous aviators including Amelia Earhart. Articles in Los Angeles newspapers also kept March Field in the news and brought to it considerable public attention.

The Attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 quickly brought March Field back into the business of training aircrews. Throughout World War II, many soon-to-be-famous bombardment groups performed their final training at March before embarking for duty in the Pacific and European theatres. Bob Hope's first USO show was held at March on May 6, 1941. Hope had been asked to do this show on location by his radio producer Albert Capstaff, whose brother was stationed there. Jack Benny later broadcast his own original radio program from March Field beginning in January 1942.

After World War Two ended, the Army's Air Force Tactical Air Command (TAC) Twelfth Air Force, 1st Fighter Group was stationed at March under the command of Colonel Frank Perego and flew Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star aircraft, America's first operational jet fighters. None in authority seemed to foresee subsequent difficulties in the summer of 1946 as they trained with their new jet fighters. Lockheed had designed and manufactured the F-80 with the idea that it would be well suited for bomber escort, counter-air, and ground support. Pilot inexperience with the new jets and mechanical difficulties combined to give the P-80 a high accident rate, while parts shortages curtailed operational training. Even so, the 1st Fighter Group maintained a heavy schedule of public relations demonstration flights and training missions. The jet was here to stay and commanders knew that the only way to gain experience and increase efficiency was to fly, and keep flying, the new aircraft.

In 1947, the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group (later Reconnaissance Wing) was activated and assigned to March. When the wing “system” was activated, standardizing the operational set-up of each Army Air Force unit, only the 67th Reconnaissance Group was fully operational. By now, the group was equipped with Douglas FA-26 Invaders (RB-26 after 1948) and modified Lockheed FP-80's (RF-80s after 1948) and was integrated with the 1st Fighter Wing. In December 1948, the Twelfth Air Force and March AFB were assigned from Tactical Air Command (TAC) to come under the jurisdiction of the Continental Air Command (ConAC), established in December 1948. ConAC was an early version of what would become NORAD and assumed jurisdiction over both TAC and the Air Defense Command (ADC). A large contingent of F-86 Fighters (approx. 100 aircraft) were stationed at March; again, all were mission ready 24/7. This move reflected an effort to concentrate all fighter forces deployed within the continental United States to strengthen the air defense of the North American continent. The Cold War was on the horizon.

Strategic Air Command

On May 1, 1949, March became a part of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and the Fifteenth Air Force. The 22nd Bombardment Wing was reassigned to March from Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas. The 22nd was equipped with the Boeing B-29 Superfortress, one of the most effective long-range bombers ever conceived. The 1st Fighter Wing was subsequently attached to the 22nd BW later in 1949. The mission was changing from fighter aircraft capable of defending U.S. soil to long-range bombers, stationed near the U.S. coasts with a mission of neutralizing enemy military facilities during offensive operations.

The second generation F-86A fighter had numerous reliability and dependability issues when it was introduced into service, but 1st Fighter Group mechanics gradually overcame these difficulties. When the different squadrons found themselves able to launch large formations on schedule, they competed to establish various formation records. The purpose of this exercise became clear in early January 1950, when the 1st Fighter Group deployed a sizable contingent of aircraft to participate in the filming of the RKO Pictures film “Jet Pilot.” Eventually 24 operational aircraft were filmed for the movie, at the time a record for fighter jets in formation. Ironically, the movie was not released until 1957 and by then the F-86A was obsolete. However, the efforts expended by the mechanics and ground crews while working on the film provided a great training and proving grounds as these units became more professional and effective.

The 1st Fighter Group formed its own aerial demonstration team in January 1950. The team, dubbed the "Sabre Dancers," was composed of five members of the 27th Fighter Squadron. The Sabre Dancers made what was probably their most widely viewed flight on April 22, 1950, when they performed before an Armed Forces Day audience at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Then President Harry S. Truman and a large contingent of his Cabinet and other political leaders were present and many of them saw the aircraft in flight for the first time that day. Naturally, as you may have guessed, the Saber Dancers begat the current Blue Angels and other similar flight demonstration teams so popular at modern air shows.

Soon, American involvement in the Korean War would change the mission of the bombardment and fighter groups stationed at March. In April 1950, the 1st Fighter Wing was redesignated as the 1st Fighter-Interceptor Wing and that summer they were reassigned to George AFB in Victorville, California. At the same time, the 22nd Bombardment Group deployed its B-29s to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, where it came under control of FEAF Bomber Command. On July 13, 1950, the group flew its first combat mission against the rail and ship yards and oil refinery at Wonsan, North Korea. By October 21, they had run fifty-seven combat missions against the enemy, attacking bridges, factories, industrial targets, troop concentrations, airfields, marshalling yards, communications centers, and port facilities. During four months of combat in the Korean War, the group flew 335 sorties with only fourteen aborts and dropped over 6,500 tons of bombs before being redeployed back to the United States in late 1950. In January 1951, the 44th Bombardment Wing was activated and assigned to Fifteenth Air Force. It was equipped with refurbished B-29 and TB-29 bombers drawn from mothballed World War II storage at Pyote AFB in Texas and Davis-Monthan AFB in Arizona. It was reassigned to the 12th Air Division of Fifteenth Air Force and then the 21st Air Division within the Fifteenth Air Force. The Wing moved to Lake Charles AFB, Louisiana, in August 1951.

In March 1951, the California Air National Guard 106th Bombardment Group was activated and assigned to March and put on active duty. The group was initially equipped with B-29s and its mission was to train reservists to backfill rotating B-29 combat crews serving in Korea. The group was re-designated as the 320th Bombardment Wing replacing the 106th in December 1952. At March, the wing conducted global bombardment training and air refueling operations to meet SAC commitments. Trained bomber pilots and aircraft were then deployed across the globe, from the U.K to Korea, and from Alaska to bases in South America. Also during the Korean War, the Air Force Reserve 330th Bombardment Group was ordered to active duty on May 1, 1951 at March. The 330th flew borrowed B-29s from the 106th Bomb Group to train the reservists on the aircraft. The group was deactivated on June 16 and its personnel were sent to bases in Japan and Okinawa as replacements for active-duty personnel with B-29 groups.[

The Cold War Heats Up

Following the return of the 22nd Bombardment Group from Korea, the Group began training for proficiency in "global strategic bombardment". That is just as scary as it sounds. In 1952, the wing took delivery of Boeing KC-97 tankers, adding aerial refueling to its mission. The following year, they replaced the aging B-29s with the new jet powered B-47 and a few of the new B-52 Stratofortress bombers, still one of the largest and heaviest aircraft ever built. The Group now had the equipment to fly faster, due to the jet engines, fly farther (up to 9500 km) due to refueling capabilities and to fly routes over cooperating countries and through airspaces that were closed in the past, due to the recently signed NATO Treaties. In short, the 22nd Bombardment Group could "reach-out-and-touch" just about any place on the globe in record time. General Archie Old, the Fifteenth Air Force commander, led a flight of three B-52 Stratofortresses in a flight around the world. Remember too, these were nuclear capable aircraft. Actual payloads were, and are, classified, but common sense dictates that warheads capable of mass destruction were stored, loaded and ready to be "delivered" from March Air Field.

In 1960, the 452nd Troop Carrier Wing was activated at March. This established the presence of the Air Force Reserve on the base with their Fairchild C-119, a unique cargo aircraft built to carry as many troops as possible. Known by the troops as being a completely "no-frills" aircraft, most seating was stamped metal with no padding, becoming a hot plate during desert training or on hot days; the C-119 was known as the "Flying Boxcar." In 1963 the 22nd Bombardment Squadron converted to Boeing B-52B bombers and KC-135 jet tankers replaced the KC-97s.

Vietnam War

In 1966, the 22nd Bomb Squadron converted to the B-52D fourth generation bombers and were deployed to the Pacific and engaged in combat and other operations during the Vietnam War. In 1966, the wing absorbed the B-52Ds and added the 486th Bombardment Squadron from the 340 Bomb Wing at Bergstrom AFB, Texas when Bergstrom converted to a TAC Reconnaissance base. The addition of a second tanker and bomber squadron made the 22nd a "Super" wing.[6] From 1967 through 1975 the 22nd Wing was assigned in one form or another to supporting the American efforts in Vietnam with all tactical resources and most support resources loaned to SAC organizations involved in combat operations in Southeast Asia from Thailand to Laos to Indonesia and Andersen AFB in Guam. The wing continued to support SAC operations in the Far East and Southeast Asia through 1975.

Base Closures and Redeployments

The Base Closure and Realignment Policy was put into effect in March 1993 and was intended to cut military spending by closing redundant bases and deploy military assets in the most cost efficient ways possible while still keeping the armed forces at top effectiveness. We may all debate the consequences of this policy and its true achievements, however the fact is the policy became the law of the land and it resulted in the following complicated realignments of Wing Groups, Squadrons, base closures and deployments that all affected March AFB directly.

In August 1993, March AFB was chosen for realignment under the Base Closure and Realignment Policy with an effective date of March 31, 1996. The 445th Military Airlift Wing transferred to March from the now closed Norton AFB in nearby San Bernardino. In January 1994, the 22nd Air Refueling Wing was reassigned (without aircraft) to McConnell AFB, Kansas, replacing the inactivating 384th Bomb Wing. The Air Mobility Command 722nd Air Refueling Wing moved into March and absorbed the assets of the reassigned 22nd. March's KC-10A aircraft assets would later be transferred to the 60th Airlift Wing re-designated as the 60th Air Mobility Wing, at Travis AFB, California. Due to realignment, the 445th Military Airlift Wing was transferred to the 452nd Air Refueling Wing operating the KC-135 Stratotanker which was re-designated the 452d Air Mobility Wing (452 AMW) in April 1994. At approximately the same time, the 163rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group also changed its mission plan and became the 163rd Air Refueling Wing operating KC-135s. Two years later, in April 1996, March AFB officially became March Air Reserve Base under the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), ending a 78-year active duty military presence.

In 2005, the 452nd retired the venerable C-141 Starlifter cargo plane and commenced transition to the C-17 Globemaster III as the first AFRC unit to operate the aircraft as an independent wing not associated with an active duty C-17 wing. March is currently home to nine C-17 Globemaster IIIs, which belong strictly to the Air Force Reserve Command, as well as twelve KC-135R Stratotankers. ***(You should be able to see these aircraft easily from the Museum, they are hard to miss).***..

In 2007, the 163rd also saw a change in mission plan, transferring its KC-135R aircraft to other Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units, with the majority of its aircraft transferred to the 452nd AMW at March. The unit was then re-designated as the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing (163 RW); operating the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial system (drones). With this change, the 163 RW also changed operational nomenclature from Air Mobility Command (AMC) to Air Combat Command (ACC).

In 2010, the 912th Air Refueling Squadron (912 ARS) was reactivated and assigned to March. An active duty squadron of the Regular Air Force and the Air Mobility Command (AMC), the 912th ARS is part of the 452nd AMW under the "Active Associate" concept, working in tandem with the Air Force Reserve Command's 336th Air Refueling Squadron and 452nd Maintenance Group, while remaining under the administrative control of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing (92 ARW) at Fairchild AFB in Washington. This is an example of the Total Force Integration (TFI) concept at work by which various military bases and groups operate as interchangeable units, ready to assist and back each other as needed in the most efficient way, depending upon the specific mission, mission goals, mission theatre and the missions' expected duration.

The March AFB Museum

December 19, 1979, Lt. General James P. Mullins, 15th Air Force Commander, delivered an address at the dedication ceremony for the new March Air Force Base Museum. The new museum was initially housed in the March Air Force Base's 1930-vintage base theater located just north of the base's parade ground. There, the museum's 2000 square foot main exhibit area was filled with photographs depicting the history of the base from its founding in 1918. Model airplanes and paintings were also original display items. An aircraft park, featuring aircraft that once flew from March, was also established near the main gate at Cactus and Graham Streets. "It's important to capture the essence of our past and to portray and illustrate the history of March Field," said Major Brian Daly, the museum's first director.

In 1980 the March Field Museum was officially recognized as an Air Force Facility and the March Field Museum Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to support the museum, was established. Later that same year, the display area for museum aircraft (featuring three aircraft) was opened to the public. The Heritage Courtyard**,** located by the main entrance of the March Field Air Museum, is home to the Freedom Wall, The Distinguished Flying Cross Memorial, the West Coast War Dog Memorial, the 15th Air Force Wall, and the P-38 Lightning Memorial. Annual Santa Maria Barbeques and other events are frequently held to raise money for this 501(c) Non-Profit endeavor. During the early years the March Field Museum grew by leaps and bounds, so much so that within a year the museum quickly doubled the number of artifacts in its possession and filled the theater building to capacity. So rapid was the growth that the museum outgrew its original building and needed to be moved to new quarters.

As an Aside ….

The motion picture Space Cowboys, starring Clint Eastwood, Tommy Lee Jones, James Garner and Donald Sutherland all playing old-school, ex-astronauts who are brought out of retirement to save-the-day was filmed in large part here at the March AFB Museum in 1999 – 2000.

Bibliography and Acknowledgements

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Books and Videos:

Perris, A Place to Remember
Authored, Photos and Permission by the Perris Valley Historical Society

Fred T. Perris in Deseret
Authored by Neil Jensen

History in the Making
Authored by L. Burr Beldon

Indian Rock Art
Authored and Permission by Wilson Turner and Gerald Smith through Paul Price

Good Hope Copyright 2008. Used with permission. Paul Price

Brush Country Journals
Authored and Permission by Dr. Horace Parker through Paul Price

Websites:

Wikipedia
The March AFB and AFB Museum Sites
Orange Empire Railway Museum Site
Perris Valley Historical Museum Site
Perris Chamber of Commerce Site

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