



Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

Fall 2023

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.



The First Museum in Lake of the Wood

THE MUSEUM'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY

25 Years ago, the "Museum" was first opened. But our story begins in late 1995, when a group of people celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Lebec Post office decided that there was a need for a historical society for the area.

By spring 1996 the name "Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society" was chosen and our first "Rambler" was published that Summer. The name was picked to include Ridge Route (officially known as the "Castaic-Tejon Route" or just the "Tejon Route"), and the communities and people of the area.

Bonnie Ketterl Kane had a vision/dream of collecting and preserving the history of our mountain area north of Castaic (or "Castiac", as written in the articles of incorporation), and south of Bakersfield for past, present and future generations. So, on August 15, 1997, she filed incorporation paperwork with the state of California, and 6 days later RRCM&HS came into existence.

The next year, in 1998 we rented and opened our "Museum" in Lake of the Woods.

In 2003 Bonnie purchased the museum's current property outright. We then purchased it from her on a 20-year mortgage. In 2019 we (with the help of a grant) paid off the remaining balance early.



2003 Opening ceremonies of the current museum

Having the grounds we do now, allowed us to expand into the full-fledged museum we are today, with exhibits, informational programs and tours.

In the coming year we hope to purchase the "Barn Property" next to us that the Kanes currently own.

THE NAMING OF LEBEC, CALIFORNIA

135 Years ago... It was April 1888, when General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, owner of Tejon Ranch, made a speech at a banquet in his honor in Bakersfield, where he proposed a town he called "Lebecque". He said, "The town will be in the vicinity of the grave, on or near the site of the old military post" (Fort Tejon, which closed in 1864) and would divide the lands adjoining it into "villa lots". The town would be named in honor of the trapper Peter Lebec who had been killed by a bear in 1837 and buried near an oak tree on what would become Fort Tejon land.

Beale's dream never came to fruition, however there was already a small community of people who lived in the area. Many of them were civilian workers living in a small settlement south of the (now closed) military post, either working on Tejon Ranch, or trying their luck at mining.

By March 1895 a post office was reestablished (after the one at Fort Tejon was closed) as the Tejon Post Office. That same year, Charles L. Wood made an application for postal service for the community of "Lebec". In September his request was granted, the Tejon Post Office was closed and combined with the new Lebec Post Office. Mr. Wood located the office in a large adobe building next to his home approximately two miles south of the old Fort.



Adobe post office at Fort Tejon

100 YEARS OF GORMAN SCHOOLING

In truth, it's more like **117 years ago**; it was in 1906 when a father of six children living on a wagon road some distance south of Gorman's Station offered the use of his [Mr. Schenberger's] house for school purposes, if the Los Angeles County Supervisor would allow the Manzana School to be moved 30 miles west of the current school.

In 1908 Mary Ralphs became a member of the school board, and continued until 1965, at which time she was honored for her service by Vice President Hubert Humphrey at the National School Boards Convention.

In 1925, according to Harrison Irving Scott, there were only four students, all Ralphs (Glenn, Harry, Albert and Dewey). Later the children went to Quail Lake School in another one-room schoolhouse. It's reported that in 1926 that school was located by the Ridge Route Highway, near Bailey's Lake.

In 1939, Gorman Elementary was built by the Works Progress Administration at its current location as a two-room schoolhouse. In subsequent years the school has been enlarged to its present size.

FOUNDING OF THE LAST MISSION

200 Years ago... In 1823, the only mission built in Alta California by Mexico (after gaining its independence from Spain in 1881) was founded. Mission San Francisco Solano, is also the last and northernmost of the missions.

MEXICAN LAND GRANTS

180 Years ago... In 1843, the 22,178-acre Rancho Castac (or Castec) was made by Governor Manuel Micheltorena to Jose Maria Covarrubias. That same year Rancho El Tejón (97,617-acre) was granted to José Antonio Aguirre and Ygnacio del Valle. These two, along with Ranchos Los Álamos y Agua Caliente and La Liebre, would become present day Tejon Ranch.

THE AMERICANS TAKE OVER

175 Years ago... The 1848 signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American war. The Mexican Cession consisted of the present-day U.S. states of California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, the western half of New Mexico, the western quarter of Colorado, and the southwest corner of Wyoming.

LIEBRE ADOBE LUNCH REPORT

Thank you to everyone who joined us on our Destination Lunch at La Casa del Rancho La Liebre on the Liebre Land Grant portion of Tejon Ranch. We had over 70 people who enjoyed a wonderful afternoon at this secluded location in the western Antelope Valley. We extend a special thank you to Tejon Ranch for allowing us to use the facility. Thank you as well to David Stenstrom for his excellent portrayal of Gen. Edward Beale.



Destination Lunch at Liebre Adobe

“RRPO” REPORT FROM AUGUST

Tropical Storm Hilary Summary from the Ridge Route Preservation Organization: lots of rain (4" in one day) but relatively little damage. What damage was done has been largely cleaned up by RRPO members, except some debris flow in a couple of places, and a pothole and pavement breakup, which they hope to repair in the near future.

For more info:

- RRPO's website ridgeroute.org.

YARD SALE REPORT



Sunset at the Museum the night before the sale

Thank you to everyone who both donated the many wonderful items and those who purchased those items at our annual Great American Yard Sale. And while it did sprinkle both the night before, and again the next day, this year's event was another smashing success, bringing in over \$7,300 and allowing us to ensure that we have our annual insurance paid in full (plus a few other things).



Opening Day of the Yard Sale

NEED A UNIQUE EVENT VENUE?

Looking for a unique venue for your event? Have your next event at the Museum. Contact us for details. We even have great parking for you to use.

OBITUARIES

We were saddened to hear of the recent passing of **Eloise A. Richer**, one of our founding members and former Rambler editor. She was on the Board of Directors until 2012, when her hearing loss prevented her from taking notes at the meetings as Secretary. Eloise was the co-creator of several of the museum books such as *Heap of Livin'* and *Heap of Eatin'*. Those who knew her will remember her loan of her extensive trivet and pencil sharpener collections for rotating exhibits.



We were also saddened by the sudden passing of one of our biggest supporters, **Robert (Bob) Arthur Lame**. He and his wife Lynette of Pine Mountain Club were very generous donors as well as attending many of our events. Bob also served on the Board of the Mil Potrero Mutual Water Company for the past 14 years.



This spring we also lost **Katherine (Kathy) Maud Mack (Swindle)**, one of our founding members, wife of Peter Mack. She died one day shy of her 94th birthday. Kathy was an active square dancer with Mountain Squares and a quilter in the Lebec community where she lived since 1991.



And we lost **Gloria Cuddy**, mother of Donald Cuddy (a descendant of John Fletcher Cuddy).

FALL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

We currently have 158 members. Help us get to 200. Want to join the museum? We offer several levels of membership (see envelope insert enclosed). Purchase a membership as a gift or for your business. Remember that members get the Rambler and discounts in the bookstore.

BEQUESTS, WILLS and ESTATES

With the large donation received from Ellen Fenger in memoriam of her mother Phyllis Gates Fenger, we will be able to enhance and develop our outdoor Chumash exhibit and preserve the 175 year-old log cabin of John Cuddy.

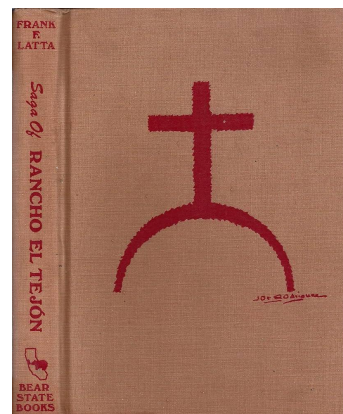
Want to remember the Museum with a gift in your will? Contact us, or just add us to your will or trust.

SIGNIFICANT DONORS

Welcome to our new Lifetime members, Jeff Robins and Will Hutchison. We also appreciate sizable donations from Bob and Lynette Lame. Thank you all!!!

NEW IN THE BOOKSTORE

We are reordering the *Saga of Rancho El Tejon*, along with *Mines, Murders and Grizzlies Tales Of California's Ventura Back Country and Tejon Ranch: Preserving the Legacy of a California Treasure*.



Want one? Order soon, as they will not last long!

NEWSLETTER

Editors:

G Rick

Chandra Sargent Mead

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MANY THANKS TO
TEJON RANCH
C O M P A N Y

NOTICE OF ELECTION

Are you interested in joining our board? Know someone who would be a good fit on our board? Nominations to the Board of Direction can be made at our November 15 board meeting. Nominations may be made by (supporting) members or board members, in writing or from the floor (at the November meeting). A nominee must be a current member of RRCMHS in good standing.

An Election Committee will verify the eligibility of candidates, which will be voted upon at our December board meeting. Our by-laws call for 9 to 13 board members.

BOARD MEETINGS

The **public is welcome** to attend our monthly Board of Director meetings held at the Museum (3515 Park Drive, Frazier Park, CA) on the **third Wednesday** of each month at **2:00 p.m.** The next meetings are October 18, November 15, December 20, 2023.

BOARD MEMBERS

Officers: President: Bethel Billesbach
 Vice President: Kevin Woten
 Secretary: Chandra Mead
 Treasurer: Bonnie Kane

Directors at Large:
 Sydney Croasmun
 Barbara Bouman Jay
 Jim Mason
 Kenna Mattox
 G Rick

GUIDESTAR RATING

We take pride in our **Platinum Transparency** rating from **GuideStar** / Candid (a rating agency for nonprofits). See our report at [guidestar.org/profile/77-0431597](https://www.guidestar.org/profile/77-0431597).



EVENT CALENDAR

SOLD OUT - Sat. **September 30th**, we will be offering our first **lunch tour** to the remote location of **Mutau Flats**, southwest of Lockwood Valley.

We have one more **Ridge Route Tour** scheduled this year on **Saturday, October 14**; cost \$20 per person.



And yes, that is a Model A on our tour.

Sat. **October 14**, 8-11a.m., at the museum we will have a **FREE Solar Eclipse Program**, hosted by Callista Turner of Hungry Valley SVRA.



Miss Gillespie & class ready to observe solar eclipse at the Lebec School April 28, 1930

CANCELED - Nov. 11: Corn Husk Wreath Class

December Lights at the Museum starts on **November 28**, stop by and see our light display.

2024 EVENT CALENDAR

Look for info on basket weaving classes, Ridge Route tours, speakers & more in the next Rambler.

Labor Day Weekend, **August 31 - September 2, 2024**, the **Great American Yard Sale** (1 week only).

MORE MOUNTAIN HISTORY

From the Los Angeles Evening Express, **Oct. 14, 1903; Shipping Ventura Borax...** The Borate Mining Company is now making regular shipments of borax from its property in the Frazier mountains to Bakersfield, a distance of seventy miles. The property is just over the line in Ventura County and the ore is hauled by traction engines.

From Los Angeles Evening Express, **Dec. 6, 1913; Two Men Are Dying as Result of Fight...** Barnard Laco lies dying in Bakersfield with a bullet hole in his head and O[scar] N. Ralphs, a well-known cattleman of Antelope valley, is in his home suffering from concussion. The injuries are the result of a fight yesterday at Gorman station. Neither will tell the details of the battle. Laco, a sheephead, was shot in the neck. The bullet passed through his head and came out above his right eye. [Oscar survived, dying in 1922. It is believed Laco also lived].

From The Bakersfield Morning Echo, **Oct. 2, 1923. Jones declares war on speeders...** Judge Jones in [Kern County's] sixth township court has issued three \$20 fines for speeding on the Lebec curves, or taking them carelessly.

From The Bakersfield Californian, **Oct. 11, 1933. Ridge Route Blocked by Torrents...** In a "freak storm" that brought heavy rains to Kern County several miles north of Lebec and a mile south of Lebec, torrents flooded across the Ridge route highway. Emergency crews cleared the road, but the General Petroleum pump station was disabled and damage was done to the new Grapevine cut-off, which was under construction at the time.

From The Bakersfield Californian, **October 1, 1943. Pinons Nuts Ripe in [the] Area of Mount Pinos...** According to District Ranger William C. Meyer, pinon nuts (pine nuts) are now ripe in the Mount Pinos district of the Los Padres National Forest. It's noted that the public is urged to make use of this part of the forest, but that all persons must exercise extreme caution in smoking and observe all fire regulations. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Limits today are: 25 lbs.

per household per year. Contact the Chuchupate Ranger Station for more details.)

From The Bakersfield Californian, **Nov. 20, 1953. \$60,000 Girl Scout Lodge Scheduled for completion soon;** Near Frazier Park. The lodge, placed near the center of the 40-acre site (some 9 miles northwest of Frazier Park), is built in the shape of a "T". The hall is 72 x 30 feet wide. The interior is finished in knotty pine.

From The Los Angeles Times, **November, 16, 1963. Tejon Ranch Co.** reported increased earnings for the nine months ended Sept. 30 and declared the annual 60 cents dividend on the common [stock] together with 2% in stock, both dividends payable Dec. 20 to stockholders of record Nov. 29.

From the [Van Nuys] Valley News, **December 20, 1973. Community Center Plans Snow Trip...** Young Jewish Adults ages 20-30 in the West Valley Community are invited to a "Get Acquainted Snow Trip" to Mt. Pinos - Frazier Park.

From The Signal, **December 2, 1983. The Snows of San Guillermo...** The season's first snowfall treated the high country residents to a sort of euphoria. [The story goes on about driving up to Frazier Park, to which it's noted:] Most of the route is through the Los Padres National Forest, however there is some private property and owners really get upset with "snow-bunnies" who block their driveways. The Kern or Ventura County Sheriffs will ticket anyone parked on the right-of-way, so get off the road!



From The Signal, **November 22, 1993. Vista del Lago: great view of water history...** After indeterminate delays, Vista del Lago ("View of the Lake") has finally opened its glassy doors to the public,

revealing a circus-like array of exhibits. Designed, built and operated by the California Department of Water Resources, it cost nearly \$8 million dollars

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Richard Atmore, Jr.
President

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Visit youtube.com/@RidgeRouteMuseum.

CONTACT OR VISIT US

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Hours: Fri, Sat, Sun: 12-4pm
Phone: 661-245-7747
Website: ridgeroutemuseum.org
Email: info@ridgeroutemuseum.org



PINE MOUNTAIN CLUB AT 52

In 1971 Tenneco West started lot sales, and by mid-1971 almost 250 homes had been built. By 1973, after selling out the first five sections and doing more than \$15 million dollars in land sales, they opened the sixth and final section of Pine Mountain Club.



The Los Angeles Times - June 1, 1973

More PMC history in future editions of the Rambler.

RIDGE ROUTE COMMUNITIES MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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**PLEASE CHECK YOUR
LABEL FOR MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL DATE!**