

August 2011

# La Lavandería



Rancho Guajome Adobe County Park

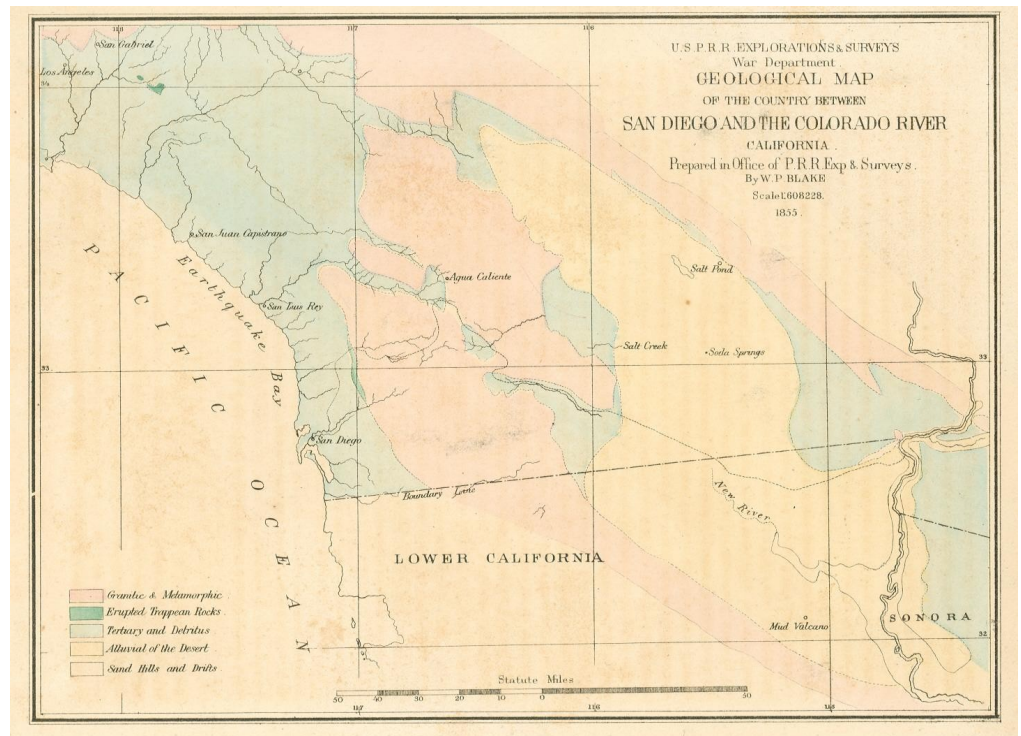
## The Colorado Desert Crossing and Camp Salvation

The Colorado Desert was one of the most daunting challenges that emigrants faced when making the trek to Southern California. Travelers faced hundreds of miles of dry desert and unrelenting heat as they crossed the area between the Colorado River and the coastal ranges of Southern California. The region is now known as Imperial county and is characterized by its irrigated farmland. However, during the period of 1849-1852, the region was more of a desert wasteland, with unreliable access to water at a few scattered wells. According to Blaine P. Lamb, Division Chief of Archaeology for California State Parks, there were 22, 24 and 28-mile crossings that travelers would make between water sources.

For a short period of three months, Lt. Cave Coutts established relief stations at Camp Salvation and Camp Calhoun in 1849. Camp Salvation was located near present day Calexico, and Camp Calhoun was located near the confluence of the Gila and Colo-

rado rivers. The camps offered a chance for weary travelers to regroup and partake of the rations doled out by Coutts and his men. In addition, livestock could graze in the nearby fields.

A plaque was placed at the Camp Salvation site in Rockwell Plaza City park, Calexico on October 3rd, 1965 and latter disappeared. Later it was replaced at the Calexico Civic Center on April 19th, 1996, and was designated a California Registered Historical Landmark. The plaque was placed by the Squibob Chapter of E Clampus Vitus® that represents San Diego and Imperial counties.



## Ranger's Report: Pesticides

Many people think of pesticides as chemicals used to kill insects, or insecticides. However, pesticides include many different toxic substances used to control a pest. A pesticide can be a herbicide, fungicide, rodenticide, insecticide, bactericide and a number of other “-ides”. Basically, a pesticide, according to state and federal law is, “any substance that is used to control, destroy, repel or attract a pest” (California Dept. of Pesticide Regulation). A pest can be any living organism that damages commodities, creates financial loss or spreads disease. Pests can include, mice, cockroaches, aphids, rats, rabbits, weeds, fleas, microorganisms (e.g. bacteria and viruses) and many other organisms. The majority of pesticide use takes place in agricultural production, which is where most of the federal, state and county regulation and enforcement occurs. Growers must keep records of all pesticides they apply to crops and they must ensure their employees are protected through the use of safety equipment and training. While it may seem obvious, the best place to find information, such as, safety equipment, first-aid treatment

and active ingredients is on the pesticide label. In fact, it is illegal to use any pesticide without a label.

Most pesticides in parks consist of herbicides and rodenticides, which are used to control weeds and rodent problems (e.g. ground squirrels). While the goal is to use a wide variety of control measures, sometimes it is necessary to use a pesticide; but typically as a last resort. A pesticide will not eradicate a pest problem and in many cases it can aggravate a pest problem by killing off beneficial insects and predators. One of the best control methods is simply prevention, followed by biological and cultural control. Planting pest resistant plant varieties is considered a preventative measure, while the introduction of beneficial insects like lady beetles is a biological control. Finally, cultural control is important since these are the non-chemical methods, such as, pruning, proper watering, sanitation and exclusion (e.g. installing wire mesh in planter beds to exclude gophers). Even having a cat around to keep mice numbers in check is a sustainable control method, unless you're a dog person of course!

## ***RGA's Story & Clark Grand Piano***

People admire the beautiful, 120 year old Story & Clark square grand piano in the parlor of Rancho Guajome Adobe. It's an exact twin of the original piano there during the Rancho era. Over a year ago, Abel Sanchez of San Diego masterfully refinished its cabinetry. However one bass note was so vulgarly out of tune that its sour pitch was a distraction to every song that was played.

Fortunately our docent Chris Magallon spent a couple of hours before "Adobe Days" and brought that B flat an octave below Middle C back in tune. So, Chris delighted many folks at "Adobe Days" playing Scott Joplin rags on that piano, as well as traditional songs on the big organ in the adobe and the little organ in the chapel.

Chris is a piano teacher, organ and piano restorer and piano tuner. Also, don't forget Barbara, who sent him to the docents' potluck with that great chocolate cake. Chris's main profession is real estate. He actually found Ranger Jason and his wife Elizabeth a great house near the harbor in Oceanside.

Anyway, the incredibly sour note was a "b" flat below

middle "C" that has two strings that are supposed to sound in harmony at the same pitch, called a unison.

One string was so out of tune it sounded four and a half notes flat, which make a dissonant sound called a tritone. Centuries ago, it was considered to be a forbidden sound, called "the devil in music." See Westside Story for an example of this use of the tritone.

***Submitted by docents Jerry Colling and Chris Magallon***

*Thanks as always to Chris and Jerry for keeping the music alive at the adobe, and thanks for exorcising us of the devilish tritone!*



**Chris Magallon at the Story & Clark square grand piano in the parlor**

## Important Dates and Events @ RGA

**August 2nd: Docent Meeting @ the Graham House @ 10am.**  
Park staff will provide snacks and refreshments



**August 10th: Furniture Committee Meeting @ the Graham House @ 9:30am**

\*Sign up now for school tours, weekend tours and gift shop shifts! Make it simple, just call the park or email us. 760-724-4082/ [Jason.schwartz@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Jason.schwartz@sdcounty.ca.gov)

### New Interpretive Stop for RGA Tours

The farm equipment, stagecoach and breaking carts have been rounded up and situated under the overhang next to the RGA gift store. The new layout will



give tour guides an opportunity to start or end their tours at the site. Also, as Jean Rath pointed out it is a good chance to explain the meaning of restoration to school groups, since we have a restored breaking cart, next to another one in original condition.



- ◆ Docent Meeting @ the Graham House @ 10am on the 1st Tuesday of every month (except July, the meeting will be in the Victorian Garden)
- ◆ Furniture Committee @ the Graham House @ 9:30am on the 2nd Wednesday of every month

## Park Projects & Updates

### ◆ New Guajome Regional Supervisor

Kevin Benson will be the new Supervising Ranger at our sister county park, Guajome Regional. Kevin was most recently stationed at Agua Caliente County Park. Welcome to North County Ranger Benson!

### ◆ Road Improvements

We have been working on creating a trail that can also be used by our park vehicle and other large vehicles (tractors, wagons, utility vehicles etc.). Lots of gravel, grading and mowing have helped create a more functional open space road.

### ◆ Fence Painted

The rancho's triple rail fence received a new coat of white paint. After two years of weathering, the old paint had lost its bright white appeal.

### ◆ Patrols Increased

Several minor incidents have caused us to step up patrols of the open space area. We believe the increased patrols have helped deter some of the unsavory activity occurring inside the park. In other words, we have not been finding as many piles of empty beer cans strewn about the open space.

## FYI: Old Town Docent Activity

From Pat Obetz: "I hope I haven't missed the Aug. newsletter! On Aug. 27 Old Town, San Diego is having an reenactment of a 1850 cattle drive. We can also see demonstrations of hide tanning, tallow making, chuck wagon cooking, roping, branding, saddle making and more. Several of us thought it would be fun to carpool and have lunch together." I can be reached by email at [pat@obetz.com](mailto:pat@obetz.com)

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### Message from Beverly Thomason

I've enjoyed my July newsletter and want to thank you for sending it. I remember Marshall Button and an encounter I had with him. I was a volunteer for the first tour of the day on a Sunday when the time had changed. I arrived and he greeted me at the parking lot. He said, "Glad you are here although you are an hour late. No one else has shown up". I had spent the night in San Diego and he couldn't have reached me at home even if he had my number. He was a lot of fun and gave us at least two of our Branding irons. I had never heard the story about the flag pole. The "Adobe Days" photos were great. Looks like it was a fun day. I hope to be able to come in for a tour this summer. There are changes in the adobe I must see. Hello to everyone and see ya. -Beverly Thomason



# General County Info



## **Main Office Address:**

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Department of Parks and Recreation  
5500 Overland Dr. Suite 410  
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## **General Information & Questions:**

Dept. Phone: (858) 694-3030  
Park Office: (760)724-4082

## **County Parks History Office**

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History.DPRCenter@sdcounty.ca.gov

## **E-mail:**

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Jason.schwartz@sdcounty.ca.gov

## **San Diego County Parks Society**

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## **Reservations:**

(877) 565-3600; M-F 8am-5pm  
or on-line at: [www.sdparcs.org](http://www.sdparcs.org)



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*A legacy preserved*