



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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

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Eulogio and Jessie Sotello
Source: Alice Vose Collection

The Sotello Family by Annette Jennings

Both my grandparents' families were from the State of Guanajuato, Mexico. Guanajuato is in Central Mexico and is primarily a mining and agricultural area. My grandfather, Eulogio Sotello was born January 1897 and raised in Penjamo. He came from a hacienda, which is a large estate with extensive land holdings, and diverse agricultural production. Haciendas are known to be grand and elaborate with large courtyards. The family employed a large

workforce including residential help to farm the land.

Jessie Chavez was born in July 1904. She was raised on a rancho near Terra Negra. A rancho is typically smaller and focuses on livestock like cattle for the hides and sheep for food source. Ranchos are often specialized in cowboy culture. On the rancho they also grew flax seed plants to make linseed oil and edible seed. It was used to make fiber for linens, clothes, and rope; they



Jessie's children: Mary, Alice, Alfred and Arthur Sotello

Source: Alice Vose Collection

also grew chickpeas, vegetables, and fruit.

Eulogio married Jessie Chavez in 1921. They met while Eulogio was out riding through the valley on his horse. He saw my grandmother getting water at the local well. He introduced himself to her and they visited. They continued to meet at the well for a few months. One day he met her and told her he was leaving. He was on his horse when he asked her to shake his hand goodbye. She said yes, and when she took his hand, he grabbed her and threw her on the back of his horse and took off with her to his hacienda. Afterwards, she could never go back home or see her family again. In those days, it was disgraceful for a person to

leave the family in this manner.

The young couple was married and had a week-long celebration. She lived at the hacienda until she was able to move to Murrieta. Eulogio and Jessie's first child was Maria Luciana Theresa Sotello born in 1922 in El Rosario, Penjamo, Mexico. Their second child, Augustine, died as an infant.

Their families were heavily impacted by the Mexican Revolution from 1900-1925 with the worst action occurring during 1910-1925. During the Revolution, President Diaz's army and a rebel army led by Peasant General Poncho Villa fought several battles in Guanajuato State. The Revolution ruined the local economy and in-

frastructure and prompted many residents to flee Guanajuato for the United States.

My grandfather's brother, Juan Sotello, was the first Sotello to come to Murrieta. He married Maria "Mary" Carrillo of Pala in 1910. They had three children Marcellino, Antonio (Tony) and Manuela Georgia.

In 1922, my grandfather, Eulogio, moved to California alone to join his brother. Eulogio had been issued a quarantine card before entering the United States on August 4, 1922. At the border in El Paso, Texas, he was deloused, bathed, vaccinated, and his clothing and baggage were disinfected. Once that was completed, he was able to leave the U.S. border quarantined area. He had to pay \$8.00 for the services.

Once in Murrieta, he bought a ranch property and began to farm. He purchased a harvester and he hired ranch hands. The Sotello homestead was located on Ivy Street and New Clay Avenue. The railroad track was located next to their western property line. Several years later when the train went by the property the engineer would throw oranges to Alice and Fred, they thought those oranges were the best. Behind the house there was an old Murrieta railroad boxcar that was used as a bunkhouse to house the ranch hands during the harvest season.

In 1925, Juan went to back to Mexico to bring

Eulogio's wife, Jessie and daughter, Mary to Murrieta. Later, Eulogio and Jessie had three more children. Alfred (Fred) Sotello was born in 1926 at their Murrieta home assisted by the local mid-wife, Maude Buchanan. Their daughter, Alice, was born in Long Beach in 1928. Their son, Arthur (Art) was born in 1932 at the Murrieta home assisted by mid-wife Buchanan.

The Sotello family grew oats, barley, and did custom hay bailing. They also raised rabbits and chickens that they sold in local markets and shipped to markets in San Diego and Riverside. There was a family garden where they grew vegetables, and garlic.

From 1924-1932 Eulogio worked as a miner doing drilling and blasting for Urban Tarwater and George Filo at the Murrieta Silica Mine. They trucked the silica to the grain elevator platform. Silica was shipped to Los Angeles and used for glazing pottery. In those days the miners had no respiratory protective gear and were exposed to contaminated dust.

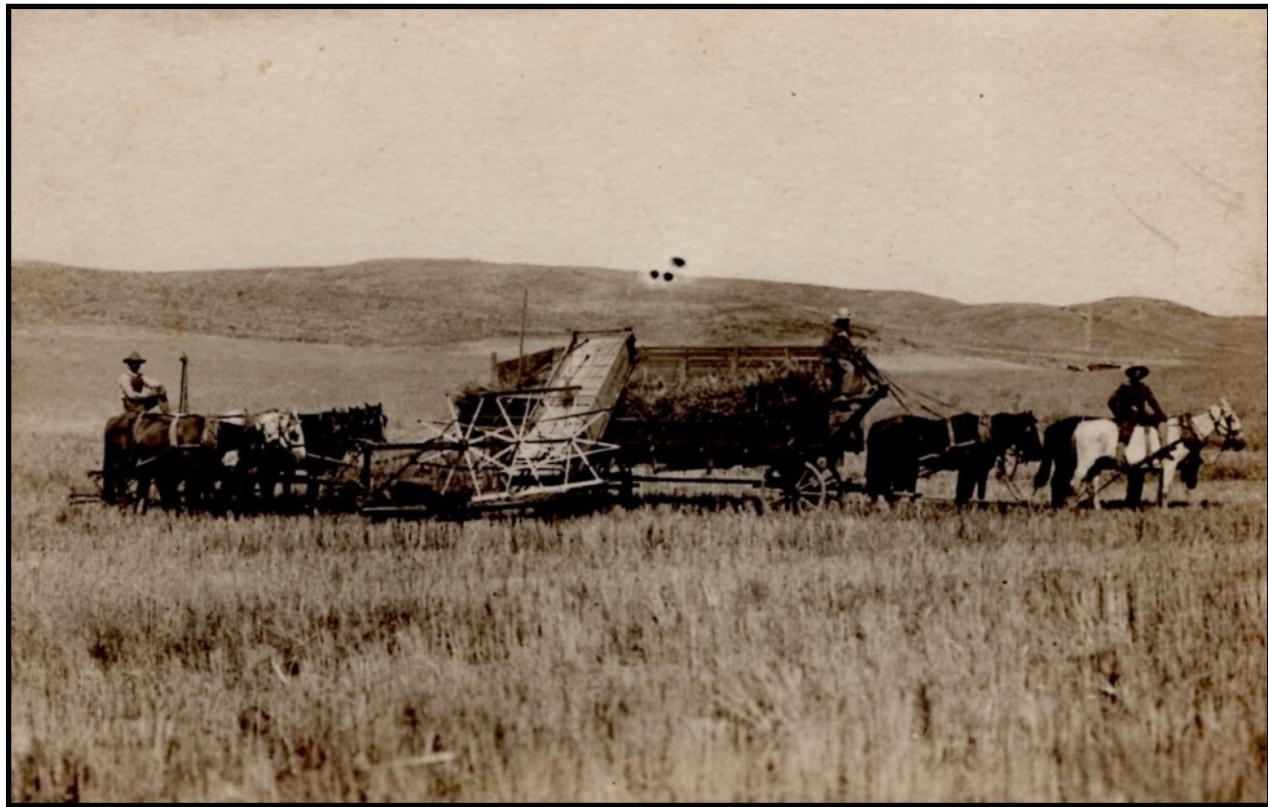
In 1940, Eulogio became sick with silicosis in his lungs from working in the mine. His son, Fred, had to quit school to help with the harvesting and managing the ranch hands. Art helped with the caring and training of the horses for the ranch. Jessie did the cooking for the family and the ranch hands. She

also took care of her husband, the kids, the house and the daily chores.

My mother, Alice, had to quit school after the 8th grade to help take care of the family. She got a part time job with her sister Mary at King's Café on Ivy Street. Mary was the only child to attend and graduate from Elsinore High School in 1942.

Even though he was sick, Eulogio continued to work. He managed the books for the ranch which included the payroll for the ranch hands, expenses, income, and the household finances. He was also able to help with the garden up keep.

The first Sotello house burnt down in 1948. The fire



The Sotello family dry farmed around the valley. They also raised rabbits and chickens to send to market. Source: Alice Vose Collection

was an accident. Our dad, Ray, wanted to keep the house warm after their son, Robert, was born in September 1948. As winter was approaching, on October 1, 1948 Ray took his kerosene can to the local gas station for kerosene for the stove, but the service station attendant accidentally put gas in the can that caused the heater to catch fire.

Everyone was asleep when the house caught fire, Alice heard Robert whimpering and when she woke up the house was in flames. Everyone in the house heard Alice yelling to get out. They lost everything including photos and their documents. They only had what they were wearing the night of the fire. When the Murrieta Volunteer Fire Department arrived, they were unable to save the house.

The Sotello family had to move into the bunkhouse. Afterwards, the Fire Department and the Murrieta Riders Club had a benefit dance to raise money to help rebuild the Sotello house. Soon a second house was completed in 1950.

Mary married Bob Cruz and they made their home in Montebello. Ray Vose married Alice in December 1947. They had three children, Robert, Loretta, and Annette. Art married Ramona Samaniego in August 1956. They had two daughters, Lorraine and Virginia.

Fred served in the US Army in Korea from 1955 to 1956. Later he worked and retired from the Riverside County



Alice Vose visits her father's grave at the Laurel Cemetery in Murrieta in 1949 after a winter snowfall. She decorated his grave with a Christmas spray. In 2025, the Annual Sotello family tradition will mark its 76th year, returning to the cemetery to remember and honor their family and friends. Source: Alice Vose Collection

Road Department. He also had his own business offering weed abatement with his tractor, while taking care of his mother Jessie at their home.

On December 25, 1948, Eulogio passed away. In December 1949, our mother, Alice created a wreath out of branches and various decorations. She took the wreath and laid it on her dad's grave. Every year after that she would make sprays from Christmas tree branches and decorations. She would put one on each family member's headstone and close family friends who had passed. As the years

went by, more names were added to her list. I remember she would sadly say, "I had to add another name to my list today"

In 2020, Alice passed away. Her children continue the annual Christmas tradition in memory of their mother. They have added more names to Alice's list and their family friends have offered to help with the list which has grown to 60 sprays. This December will mark the family's 76th year.

Museum Update

Greetings,

The 3rd Grade school tours have begun. We are expecting seven classes and a couple of charter schools this school year.

Please stop by the museum on Saturday, November 15th from 10-4 p.m. for the Murrieta Museum Holiday Open House. Learn about Murrieta's History while shopping for your holiday gifts. The museum has books, Historic Highway 395 shirts and 395 tin signs, note cards, postcards, hats, stickers and magnets. The Temecula Valley Women's Club will be

having their Annual Festival next door at the Murrieta Community Center where you can see Santa, make crafts, shop vendors' booths, participate in raffles and games.

We would like to thank the Murrieta Rod Run for allowing us participate as a non-profit organization this year. It was a successful event. We would also like to thank the City for an invitation to have a booth at the Annual State of the City Address held at the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. We were able to share Murrieta's history with those that attended and visited our booth.

At our walking tour through Murrieta's Laurel Cemetery, it was a beautiful day to meet new people. We would like to thank the cemetery staff who generously opened up for us and answered questions on the cemetery. It was a great turnout.

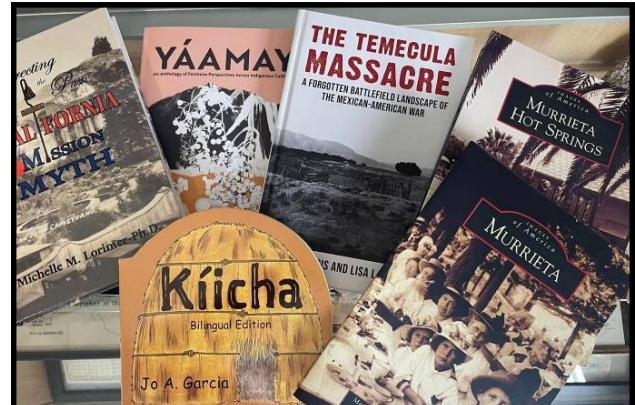
Please follow us on Facebook or Instagram @murrieta museum or on our website at info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

If you have any questions, please call us at: 951-677-7758

Thank you,

Annette Jennings,

Museum Director



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**The General
Monthly Board Meeting
is held on the second
Monday at 5:30 p.m.
Please join us at
the Murrieta Museum**

MUSEUM *Hours*

**THURSDAYS
1 - 4 PM**

For groups and tours call (951) 677-7758



The Murrieta Museum,
41810 Juniper Street
at Hunt Memorial Park.

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