



# City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402

## **LIBRARY NEWS October 2007**

By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

### **Santa Fe Depot Interior Photos from 1920s**

The Historical and Pioneer Society was recently contacted by the Mayor's Office to see if we had any interior photographs taken of the Santa Fe Depot in San Bernardino in the 1920s. Evidently a movie studio is planning to do some filming and wants to recreate the right look. I contacted a group of railroad fans headed by John Thompson of Seattle, model builders actually, and was pointed to the following site.

[http://harvey.library.arizona.edu/finding\\_aid/3cal/10/welcome.html](http://harvey.library.arizona.edu/finding_aid/3cal/10/welcome.html)

There was some discussion among the group as to whether the photos were of the existing depot, or of the original wooden depot destroyed in a 1916 fire. If you click on "next thumbnail group" you see six photos, three of which depict the early depot. Asked to comment on the interior views, Ed Von Nordeck came up with the following:

Not much change from the way the waiting room is now.

The restrooms had wooden rocking chairs that were still on hand until mid 60's. Sure they went to management homes, just like the rocking chairs did from the Riverside station. At the east end of the waiting room was the Fred Harvey News room, for magazines, newspapers, snacks. Window opened into waiting room, as well as window opening to the outside platform. Basic ticket remains, but the individual window dividers were changed and then removed during the remodel. Spent a lot of time around the station in the 40's, then worked it 1965-67.

Ed

There is a photo on Page No.1 that is labeled "demolished San Bernardino." That might refer to the Harvey House, which evidently was added on sometime after the depot was finished. It was demolished in the 1950s. However, it appears that someone recognized the curved window (see "lunch room" photo), and states that it still exists. I've never been in the depot that I can remember. It is on the National Register of Historic Places, so there is probably an analysis written of its architectural features somewhere. Need to chase that down. Put that on the to-do list.

Recently we received the following email from a descendant of a pioneer San Bernardino family:

**From:** Beverly Parker <[ofthemeadow@san.rr.com](mailto:ofthemeadow@san.rr.com)>

**Date:** August 24, 2007 10:34:15 AM PDT

**To:** [sbhistoricalsociety@mac.com](mailto:sbhistoricalsociety@mac.com)

**Cc:** 'larry folks' <[laf740@hotmail.com](mailto:laf740@hotmail.com)>

**Subject:** Pioneers Jesse and May Folks

Dear Persons: I am a descendent of the Folks family that includes Jesse and Mary Folks, Mormon Pioneers of San Bernardino. I am Beverly ( Folks) Parker of San Diego. We have a large branch of Jesse Folks' family here in San Diego. I am wondering if your society has any information of my great great great Uncle. How would I go about finding out more about the life Jesse and Mary Folks in the early days of San Bernardino., I have a family history that gives the family lineage from 1806 until 1910 that includes Mr. Folks heritage and history as known by his family members. Would that be helpful to your society. Please contact me. My husband and I are making plans to come to visit and do more family research. We maybe include some our cousins. Thank you again for your kind consideration.  
Beverly A. (Folks) Parker

First thing I checked was the Covered Wagon Families series that the San Bernardino *Sun* published in the late 1930s, and the Folks family was one of those fortunate ones on the list. I found a few other things and mailed them off. We did have photographs of the Folks and I sent those off, but it turns out Beverly had already found them on the Feldheim Library's new web page, the "San Bernardino Pioneers." More about that site later. Here are the photos:



**Mary and Jesse Folks**

These reproductions come from the box of negatives salvaged from the Pioneer Log Cabin fire of 1973. You can see the frame on Mary Folks' photo, and it is one of those common in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. I say common, but these were (and are) expensive, and would have been quite an outlay for the typical pioneer family.

Beverly was very interested in finding out about her ancestors, and a few days later she and her husband showed up in San Bernardino. I met them at the Heritage House Library. We discussed the family in general while I copied her family histories for our files. Then we did a tour of our 1891 house and its furnishings, and of our meeting hall/museum.

After that we drove over to the bronze monument at the courthouse, but the Folks family was not listed. That's a bit odd, because Jesse and Mary are thought to have arrived in 1851; at any rate they are shown on the 1852 census of Los Angeles County (SB County was formed in 1853). After that we drove over to Pioneer Cemetery, and found the gravestones of Jesse and Mary and other Folks family members. We then went to the Folks' property located at the southwest corner of Tenth and F, where we found a fairly old frame house. The original Folks house was an adobe, but this appears to have been destroyed quite a while ago (before the 1906 Sanborn's Fire Insurance map).

Returning to the Historical and Pioneer Library, we did family research for about an hour, maybe more, and then we went to the California Room, where I left them in the good hands of Paul Garrity and several of the docents. They were elbow deep in the past and having a great time.

### **Nelson Green Gill**

Paul recently gave me a copy of an obituary for Nelson Green Gill. He had been researching the microfilm for somebody else, and was kind enough to run a copy for me. Gill had been an officer in the Union Army during the Civil War, a captain, and he usually went by his initials, hence Capt. N. G. Gill. Now I don't think Paul would have known, but Gill was a charter member of the San Bernardino Society of California Pioneers. Joined Jan. 21, 1888.



**Captain N. G. Gill**

The photo of Gill is not very good quality, but not all that bad seeing as how it was taken from a photocopy of a microfilm copy. It is always nice to get photographs of our early members. A good biography of Captain Gill can be found here:  
<http://www.calarchives4u.com/Biographies/sanbernardino/sber-gill.htm>

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## 200 SAN BERNARDINO PIONEER PHOTOGRAPHS NOW ON LINE

As many of us know who have followed the activities of the California Room at the Feldheim, the library has added a new on-line feature consisting of photographs of pioneers of San Bernardino. The web page can be found here: [www.sbpl.org/index\\_pioneers.html](http://www.sbpl.org/index_pioneers.html)

In order to celebrate the launching of this new site, Millicent Price organized a party at the library. She gave a nice talk at the last meeting of the S B Historical and Pioneer Society, and invited members to attend. She also issued a news release, which reads in part:

The [California State Library](#), through a program called the *Local History Digital Resources Project*, is helping people in California libraries learn how to make their collections part of this virtual window on California's history.

A grant from the California State Library's *Local History Digital Resources Project* assisted staff at San Bernardino Public Library to digitize precious historical photographs. It paid for library staff members to attend trainings on digitizing artifacts and gave access to a cataloging tool. It provided scanning services for 200 images and it allowed \$5000 for costs related to the library's project.

In addition to the San Bernardino Pioneer photographs, photos that are currently available online at the San Bernardino Public Library are the **Historical Treasures of San Bernardino**. **Historical Treasures of San Bernardino** is an enhancement of the **Shades of San Bernardino** project in which city residents were invited to bring family albums and personal photo collections to the **Shades of San Bernardino Photo Day**, June 19, 1999. The photos that were collected at that time and others that were added to the collection later were digitized in 2004 and now are accessible through the library's website [www.sbpl.org/index\\_historical.html](http://www.sbpl.org/index_historical.html). In addition there is a collection of oral histories developed by California State University at San Bernardino history professor Dr. Joyce Hanson.

Ellen Lanto, Technical Services Librarian, says, "The experience gained by participating in the *Local History Digital Resources Project* has proven essential to our efforts in moving forward in this digital direction. Patrons are happy that they can access these photos from home."

The Institute of Museum and Libraries Services provides the funds for the *Project* through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered in California by the State Librarian.

The party was attended by many local history fans and everybody had a great time. Our thanks go to Millicent and all of the librarians and docents who make the California Room such a treat. California Room founder Arda Haenszel would be very proud.

**Another email inquiry about a San Bernardino ancestor:**

From: "PHYLLIS DICKERSON" [lapd701@msn.com](mailto:lapd701@msn.com)>

To: <[sbhistoricalsociety@mac.com](mailto:sbhistoricalsociety@mac.com)>

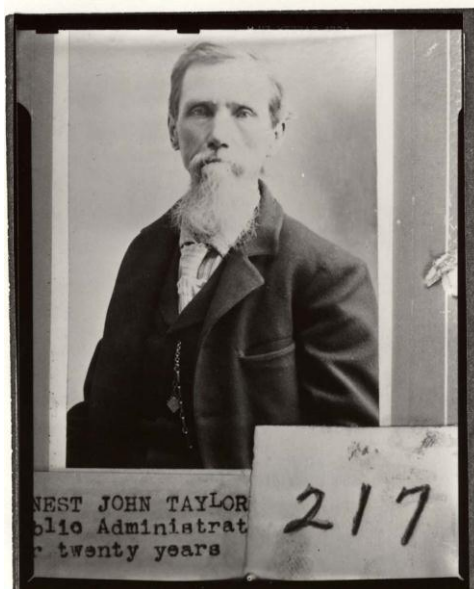
Date: September 05, 2007 12:09:38 PM PDT

Subject: John Taylor

My name is Phyllis (Taylor) Dickerson. My great grandfather, John Taylor, born 1830 in Ohio, was Public Administrator in Chino. I am trying to find as much information as I can on his life in San Bernardino County. I live in Yucaipa, so I have easy access to area libraries etc where I might obtain information. I am also interested in joining the Historical Society. Any information you can provide on John Taylor would be greatly appreciated. Sincerely Phyllis Dickerson

After an exchange of emails, Ms. Dickerson wrote me back:

Richard, thank you so much for the reply to my email. I do have a copy of the Burr Belden story. He was quite right. John did keep a journal of his trip to California. I have a copy of the journal. I have not been able to find out who ended up with the original journal. My copy was given to me by my father, John Taylor, (grandson of John Taylor). The last entry was written July 31, 1889. A portion of the journal is quoted in Lester Reed's first book. I would be glad to give you a copy if you would like one. Our family records do not have a date of death or place of burial for John Taylor. I have been trying to get this information for many years. I have tried the Hall of Records, the Sun Archives, etc. So far, I've had no luck. I believe he may have died about 1903. Again, thank you for the information, and if you think the journal would be of value to the Historical Society, let me know. Phyllis Dickerson



**Pioneer John Taylor**

As it turns out, John Taylor was an early member of the Pioneer Society and we have this photo, which was from a negative saved from the 1973 log cabin fire.

Mrs. Dickerson had done extensive research on her family, but she did not have a death date (or burial location) for her great-grandfather. Following our email exchange she found that Taylor was buried in Mt. View Cemetery in 1908. I thought that the Historical and Pioneer Society library should have an obituary, so I went through the minute notes of 1908. I didn't find an obit, but there were clues in the minutes, namely references that Taylor's health was failing, and the last entry about him was in late April of 1908.

I took this information over to the California Room, intending to search the microfilm beginning from the last known date that he was alive. Fortunately I was intercepted by docent Sue Payne, who inquired about what I was looking for, and then said she thought she could get the exact death date from the cemetery. Meanwhile I was distracted by another patron, and, in the few minutes of discussion with him, Sue had gone over to the microfilm reader/printer, found an obituary and two other notices in the vital statistics column, copied everything and handed it to me before my conversation with the other patron was finished. Incredible competence. The staff and docents in the California Room are a wonder.

Mr. And Mrs. Dickerson did come by our library and donated a copy of John Taylor's diary.