



*Town of Apple Valley*

*"A Better Way of Life"*

*Historical Points  
of Interest  
in Apple Valley*



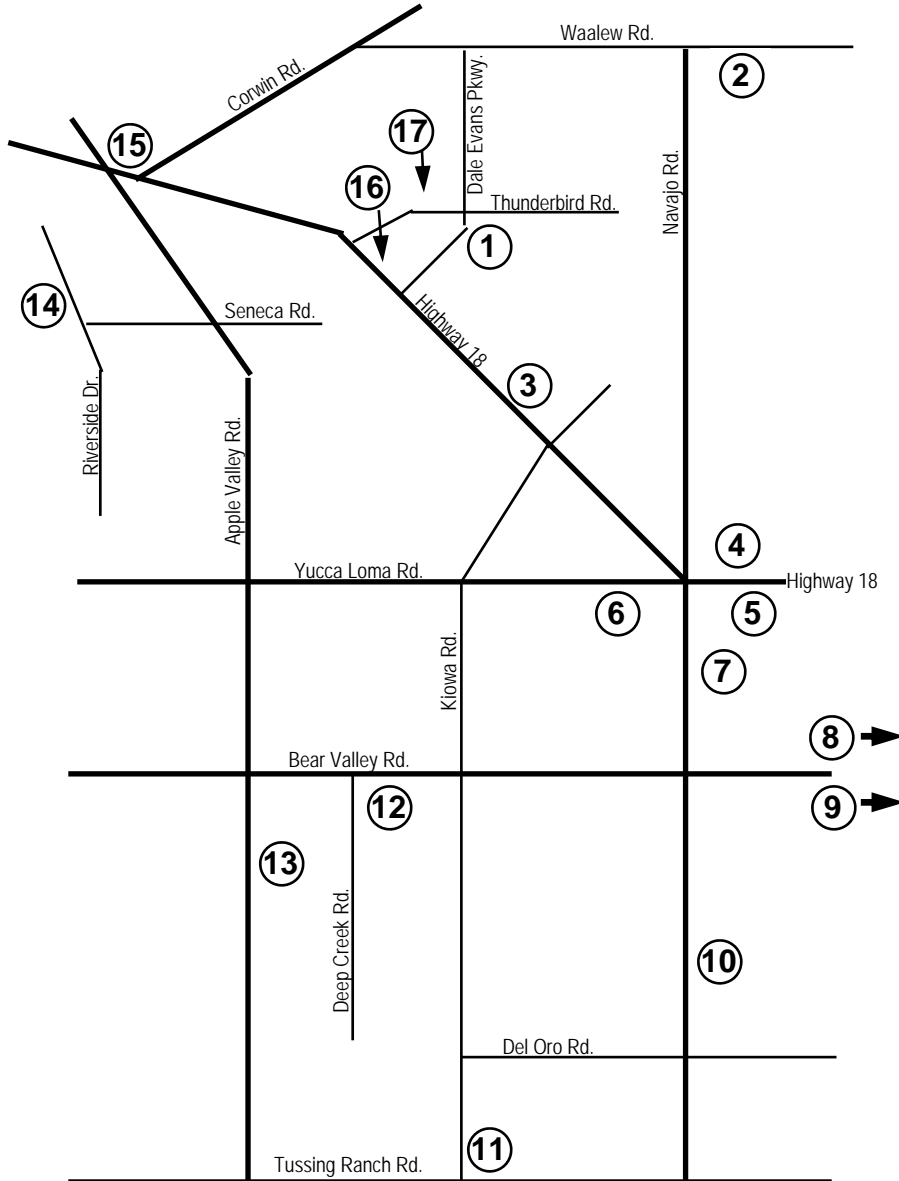
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Second Printing—2005

First Printing—2002

Map not to scale.



*On the cover: Newton T. Bass and B.J. “Bud” Westlund,  
modern-day founders of Apple Valley.  
Mrs. Dorothy Westlund was the model for the cowgirl on the sign.*

## *Introduction*

This booklet is intended to provide a brief glimpse into the rich history of Apple Valley. The sites listed are in no way meant to be a comprehensive list, nor is omission of a site meant to place less historical value on it. Information has been provided on the back cover to submit suggestions of other sites to consider for future editions. The Town of Apple Valley wishes to thank the committee members and many others who researched sites and provided photographs.

## *How it Began*

There are many stories as to how Apple Valley acquired its name. According to the late Mary Hampton, local historian, the name arose from the abundance of apple orchards that existed here in the 1920s. Unfortunately, with the Great Depression and the expense of pumping water for irrigation, the orchards withered. Some say the name originated from The Appleton Land Company that was based in this area in the early 1900s. Appleton was an early surveyor of the area. Ursula Poates is credited with saying, “There were apples here, but not by the ton!”

A temperate climate led to the establishment of many health retreats in the early 1900s. They touted the dry desert air as a cure for ailments of all sorts, including tuberculosis and asthma. Other ranches provided a haven for shell-shock victims of World War I, while still others developed into guest ranches. The modern developers of Apple Valley include realtor Newton T. Bass and B.J. Westlund, who were partners in the oil and gas industry in Long Beach, CA. Westlund and Bass formed the Apple Valley Ranchos Land Co. in 1946 and marketed the area as a destination resort and quality residential community. They also constructed the former Apple Valley Inn and Hilltop House, providing a recreational outlet for the rich and famous celebrities of Hollywood.

## ***Dedication***

*This first edition of the Apple Valley Historical Points of Interest booklet is dedicated to the memory of Eva Conrad. A pioneer in Apple Valley, she was the fiery and often outspoken editor of The Apple Valley News from 1950 to 1983. A member of the Apple Valley Historical Advisory Committee for many years, her newspaper archives provided a rich source of history for our research.*

*Throughout this publication you will find tidbits of information gleaned from her archives. The dates represent the date the story was printed in the newspaper. They provide a window into Apple Valley's past as seen through the eyes of Eva Conrad—reporter, photographer, pilot, politician and businesswoman—a part of Apple Valley history herself.*

### ***Apple Valley Town Council (2005)***

*Scott Nassif, Mayor*

*Mark Shoup, Mayor Pro-Tem*

*Timothy J. Jasper*

*Rick Roelle*

*Mark Shoup*

### ***Historical Advisory Committee (2005)***

*Art Bolding, Chair*

*Debi Trudeau, Vice-Chair*

*Al Bush*

*Carl Mason*

*Joan Lopez*

*Kate O'Rourke*

*James A. Woody*

## ***Terri Lee Doll Factory***

15001 Wichita Road, cross-street Dale Evans Parkway

The Terri Lee Doll factory operated in Apple Valley from about 1952-60. The Apple Valley plant offered several new ideas that helped make a world-renowned name for the Terri Lee doll. The site of the Terri Lee Doll Factory is currently used as the Apple Valley Library.



The Terri Lee Doll was an innovation developed by Violet Lee Grahwohl in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1946. A fire destroyed the original plant, and the company moved to Apple Valley. The dolls were based on Violet's daughters, Terri Lee and Connie Lynn. Grahwohl said her goal was to develop a doll that was indestructible. Terri Lee was the first doll with hair that could be washed and set and had a complete, good quality wardrobe, with costumes ranging from a cowgirl to ice-skater. There was even a specially designed pattern for her clothing so you could sew your own outfits.

Another first was the lifetime guarantee. If your Terri Lee Doll was broken or damaged, you could send it to the "hospital" located in Apple Valley. This location on Wakita Road was used to design and make the Terri Lee clothes, hand paint the dolls' eyes, curl the dolls' hair and do other finishing work. The molds for the dolls were made in metal buildings on Central Road and Highway 18.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Bob Paluzzi, owner of the building for the past 30 years, is a former vice-president of Terri Lee Dolls.

## *Railroad Tie House*

21849 Waalew Road



This very unique building was built entirely from used railroad ties which were purchased from the Cement Company in Victorville by Dr. Roscoe C. Steele, a local chiropractor. He designed and built the building by himself. When completed in 1951, it became his office for the next several years. Although the building is very small, it presently has a kitchen, living room, bedroom and a bath.

Dr. Steele and his wife, Lois, lived in the main house next to the railroad tie house. Mrs. Steele was nationally known as the Desert Weaver, weaving fabrics of unusual beauty for skirts, ponchos, stoles and also tableware. Her shop and looms were in the small house on the west portion of the property.

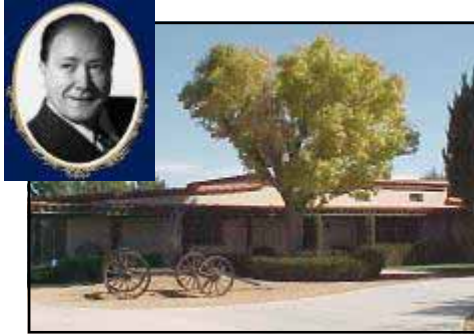
Since being vacated by Dr. Steele, it has been used for many years as a rental unit.

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January 27, 1950: The first edition of the first newspaper printed in Apple Valley hits the stands. The *Apple Valley News* was published and written by Eva and Bud Conrad.

## ***John Charles Thomas' Romany Hall***

21066 North Outer Highway 18



John Charles Thomas was born in 1891 in Meyersdale, PA. He studied at the Peabody Conservatory from 1909 – 1912, after which he became an established star of Broadway

musicals. A baritone, he made his operatic debut in 1924, singing with the Royal Opera in Brussels and the Metropolitan Opera House. In addition to his opera performances and frequent radio broadcasts, he sang over 70 recitals a year all across the country. During WWII, Thomas performed at military bases and at Victory Bond rallies.

A pioneering figure in radio, Thomas' long broadcasting career made him a favorite across the country. He performed with radio greats such as Jack Benny, Bing Crosby and Al Jolson, and hosted his own popular *Westinghouse Hour*. Thomas introduced *Home on the Range* and many popular songs familiar to Americans today. He was also the first to sing “The Lord’s Prayer,” put to music by his friend Albert Hay Mulatte. Thomas was one of the foremost patrons of women composers in the twentieth century, with the works of 92 women composers in his library.

After his concert career ended in 1955, Thomas remained active in light opera, continuing his radio and television career, and becoming director of the Music Academy of the West. He continued teaching and championing young artists until his death in 1960.

This house was constructed in the early 1950s with five bedrooms and five baths in a U-shape, with a large



## *John Charles Thomas Romany Hall*

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hall in front. He never lived here, but used it to teach music to youth of the area, and also formed the “Apple Valley Romanies Singers,” using the house for practices. The Romanies performed at the Apple Valley Inn and for early Apple Valley Pow Wow Days. John Charles Thomas also started KAVR, the first local radio station, with broadcasts from the Apple Valley Inn.

The station signed off each day with Thomas singing the Lord’s Prayer.

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April 28, 1950: Apple Valley Country Club opens the golf course for play. It was initially opened to the public, but they were warned, “cowhand boots were taboo.”

August 4, 1950: Public-spirited citizens met at the Branding Iron to hear the results of a report that took nearly a year’s preparation by the Fire Protection Committee. This report marked the beginning of the formation of the Apple Valley Fire Protection District.

February 24, 1951: Apple Valley Ranchos marked their 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by announcing a \$250,000 expansion of the Apple Valley Inn. The Inn was just over two years old and its popularity and capacity spurred the expansion.

May 5, 1951: Chamber of Commerce absorbs the Businessmen’s Association. This action permitted individuals as well as businessmen to participate. Individual membership will be \$5.00 per year.

## *El Pueblo Shops*

21810 Highway 18



The El Pueblo Shops in the Village of Apple Valley were constructed in the late 1940s of two strip-type buildings facing each other across a lawn and trees. Frequently visitors enjoyed picnics and rest periods there.

The buildings themselves contained a variety of shops and businesses, among them a restaurant, dress shop, yardage store, beauty parlor, barbershop, massage parlor, dentist and insurance agent. An influx of antique stores has marked a recent revitalization of the complex.

March 8, 1952: Terri Lee Doll Factory announced plans to open a new, modern factory on Central Road just south of Highway 18. By year's end, the company projects there will be 250 jobs available, ranging from artists, wiggers, sanders and grinders.

October 17, 1952: Lewis A. Martin was named Apple Valley's new Fire Chief. He and his wife will live in the fire station building. One or the other will be on duty 24-hours a day to take phone calls.

February 13, 1953: First Lt. Joseph McConnell, Jr., shot down an MIG-15 in Korea, the fourth time McConnell had scored against enemy jets.

August 7, 1953: Builders Bennington & Smith set a record for home construction by building a 1,208 square-foot home with a 225 square-foot covered patio in less than 48 hours. The "Appreciation Home" was built for Captain McConnell and family.

***Conrad Publishing House*** (BJs Health Corner)  
21825 Highway 18

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Warren White constructed the original portion of the building at 21824 Highway 18 in 1951, for Lloyd R. Conrad's printing and publishing business. Additions were made

as business grew. In addition to *Apple Valley News*, the publishing business printed newspapers for the Marine Base in Twenty-nine Palms, Big Bear, Running Springs, Lake Arrowhead, Wrightwood, George Air Force Base in Victorville, and the Marine Corps Base in Barstow. It also printed business stationery, four-color brochures, annual reports and catalogues and other miscellaneous products.

The original weekly newspaper in Apple Valley, *Apple Valley News* had as their motto "A Very Independent Newspaper." Eva Conrad covered local news exhaustively, including high school sports and "society" events. A look through the *Apple Valley News* archives is a first-hand account of the boomtown days of Apple Valley.



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September 25, 1953: The FCC approved a 5000-watt radio station for Apple Valley which will extend from Needles to the Cajon Pass. KAVR goes on the air in May, 1954, broadcasting from the Apple Valley Inn. The grand opening is attended by Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, John Charles Thomas and other celebrities.

## *Yucca Loma Elementary School*

21351 Yucca Loma Road



In 1950, the original Apple Valley school building (see page 20), was moved from the Deep Creek/Bear Valley Road site to the new Yucca Loma School site on 10 acres donated by Newton Bass and Bud Westlund of Apple Valley Ranchos Development Company.

De Witt Construction was awarded the bid to relocate the facility. There were 174 students attending in 1950 and the school principal, Bob McKim, thought the school would take care of the Apple Valley students for the next 100 years. When Mariana School opened in 1959, the school name was changed from Apple Valley School to Yucca Loma School, as they didn't want one school to bear the Town name and not the other. Floyd Wright, Frank Allen, and Don Julseth, school board members at that time, decided that the schools would be named after a ranch or a person of historical significance.

A second phase of construction began in July of 1952 with H. L. Gogarty, architect. He tried to hide the "unsightly" old building by putting the kindergarten wing, half of the present office and kitchen unit in front of it.

In 1955, to qualify for new construction monies from

## *Yucca Loma Elementary School*

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the state, the district had to move the original structure off the property to near the current parent pick up area. Bass and Westlund bought the building from the district for \$100 and leased it back to them for \$1 a year. At a cost of \$10,000, they moved it and added heating and cooling.

They continued to use the structure for schoolrooms until 1956, walking the students to their classrooms off school property. After that, it was used as a youth center for Boy Scout troop #157 and other recreational programs. In 1978 it was sold to a private individual who dismantled it and shipped the lumber to Mexico. The wood lacked a grade stamp, so could not be used for construction in the United States.

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August 5, 1954: *Apple Valley News* celebrates its expansion with an open house, displaying new printing equipment.

August 26, 1954: Captain McConnell died on August 25<sup>th</sup> while testing an F-86-H jet. He crashed at Edwards Air Force Base. Captain McConnell claimed Apple Valley his home.

November 4, 1954: The owners of the Circle M Ranch drilled for oil just north of the main gate (near Kiowa and Tussing Ranch Road). Unfortunately, oil was never found.

March 17, 1955: A huge crowd gathered to witness the burning of the mortgage papers for the AV Community Center. The building opened in 1948, and the crowd celebrated paying off the mortgage in just seven years with a potluck and official burning.

## *James A. Woody Community Center*

13467 Navajo Road



The community center was started in 1950 with the formation of the Community Services District. Newt Bass and Bud Westlund donated land, and members of the community provided much of the material and labor. Fund raisers were held to finance the construction under the direction of the Community Services District board: Herald Bertolotti, president; C.A. Smith, vice president; and, Harriet Junior, George Scott, Ralph Edwards, Zeke Cornia and Bill Partiage.

Volunteers worked together to build the facility. Blocks were “borrowed” from the local Tingley Lumber Company, and then sold to community members for \$1.00 each, which entitled them to have their name placed on the block. Construction was completed in 1951, and it became the social gathering place of Apple Valley, hosting dinners, dances and the annual Pow Wow Days.

A portion of the building was destroyed by fire in 1954 but rebuilt soon after. The Arts and Crafts room was added later and named for Ms. Esther Brown, a founding member of the Apple Valley Art Guild. The Les Ward room was built in 1971. Today, the Town of Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Department uses the facility for classes and activities. It is also available to rent for wedding receptions, birthday parties, fundraising events,



banquets and more.

***Western White House*** (AVUSD)  
22974 Bear Valley Road



This building was Richard Nixon's Western White House. It was located on a U.S. Coast Guard base next to Richard Nixon's home, "Casa Pacifica," in San Clemente. Within the confines of these nine modular units, decisions were made that affected lives around the world.

This complex was declared surplus to the government and was purchased and moved to this site by the Apple Valley Unified School District in 1979 for use as the school district offices. The cost was \$150 per modular unit, plus approximately \$10,000 in relocation costs; still less than one third the cost of new construction.

Art Bolding, Apple Valley School District business manager at the time, said the District needed more space as the Board was meeting in a barn used to house buses.

The current Board Room was President Nixon's office. The original teakwood paneling is still in this room, and indentations from the flags of the military branches can still be seen in the carpet. Others who worked in this building include John Erlichman, Chief Domestic Affairs Advisor, Bob Haldeman, Chief of Staff, and Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State.

## *Lone Wolf Colony*

23200 Bear Valley Road



Sam Coldwell (Indian name, Lone Wolf) came to the Victor Valley in 1922, looking to establish a retreat for World War One vets recovering from mustard gas. He lived in Victorville in a one-room cabin and worked for Home Telephone.

In 1926, with 250 volunteers from Pacific Bell, the colony was developed in its present location. The living quarters consisted of six tent houses, moved in one day from the original location in Dry River Flats. A 6,000 square foot ranch house and 10 one-room cabins were also built. The cabins were rent-free to the employees and included meals.

Food was grown on the colony's 20 acres. Fund-raisers such as boxing matches supported the colony. Sam died in 1934 of tuberculosis and the colony was sold to Pacific Bell for \$1.00. Pacific Bell sold the colony to their employees in 1967 for \$1.00. United Way funded the colony from 1967 to 1983.

The Ranch is still used for recuperative purposes, free of charge, to those who qualify. A letter from your doctor stating a stay would be beneficial to your health is all you



## *Lone Wolf Colony*

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need. It is also available for families and group camping. There is a reservoir used as a pool, a fully improved camping area that will accommodate 57 units, an activities building, exercise equipment, sauna, spa and library.

Currently, United Way and voluntary contributions from telephone employees and families fund the colony. Additional income comes from rental of the hall and grounds for camping, weddings, company picnics and more.



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November 24, 1955: Chamber of Commerce census reaches:

- 3,295 permanent residents
- 618 non-permanent residents
- 59% of permanent residents are employed in AV
- 394 people go through Narrows every day to work
- 95% of permanent residents have radios
- 75% of permanent residents have televisions
- TV reception is rated as Fair to Excellent

January 12, 1956: Local golfer Lloyd Mangrum wins \$6,000 in the \$30,000 LA Open. He shot a 272 for the 72 holes. This was his fourth win at the LA Open, previously winning in 1949, 1951 and 1953.

March 29, 1956: County Department of Agriculture shows that over \$1 million in crops was recorded in Apple Valley this year. Crops included: turkeys, alfalfa, dairies, chicken fryers, corn, alfalfa seed, grain hay and nutria breeding stock.

## *Ranchos Del Oro Sign*

Navajo and Wren



In early 1946, the government opened areas of Apple Valley for “recreational homesteads” of five acres each. Local ranchers, who had leased the land for grazing, challenged the homestead claims.

Ed Stine, George Wallior and Walt Umhoefer organized the original homesteaders to protect their claims, appealing to Congress and the Bureau of Land Management. It took several years, but in 1951 the U.S. government issued three-year leases, offering time to build a cabin of at least 18’ x 20’ (costing approximately \$300) to “prove-up” a homestead. Each homesteader also paid \$35 which covered a land survey and roads graded to each property.

This original property owner’s association was instrumental in forming the Ranchitos Water District. Headed by Don Holmes for 17 years, and operating on a tight budget, the board of directors themselves dug ditches, built well houses and installed water meters and storage tanks.

With dues of \$5.00 a year, the Ranchos Del Oro association also helped organize landowners in surveying land, grading and maintaining roads, and securing R-1 zoning. The association still exists today, covering much of what is now known as the Mariana Ranchos.

April 19, 1956: Circle M Ranch is subdivided from 190 acres to ½-acre and 1-acre lots for residential units. The Ranch is one of the most popular in the area and dates back to 1913.

## *Mendel Ranch*

Kiowa and Tussing Ranch Roads



In 1939, Florence Mendel of San Francisco moved to Apple Valley with her son, Albert, and purchased 3000 acres. Albert and his first wife, Berenice, obtained

government grazing leases for 15,000 additional acres and established Circle M Hereford Ranch where they bred a top strain of purebred white-face cattle. Their two sons attended the original Apple Valley school.

The Circle M Ranch telephone was the only one on a 10-party line between Victorville and Lucerne Valley, and it was not until after Al had paid a substantial sum to bring the line to the area that other local ranches and homes started to join the line.

In 1945 the ranch was opened as the Circle M Guest Ranch, whose guests included Mr. Newton T. Bass. As the federal government began withdrawing grazing leases, the ranch was put out of the cattle business. Guest ranch activity diminished and the ranch became inactive in 1954. Later, the Mendels established the Golden Land Printing Company on site. A Roy Rogers Museum brochure and the Victor Valley College yearbook were among their products.

As the ranch was sold off, a portion was bought by the Apple Valley School District for Mariana School. With this parcel, Mr. Mendel donated an additional five acres with the condition that it be used as a park. The school district later deeded the property to the Parks and Recreation District for development of Mendel Park. A portion of the park was deeded to the Fire District for a much needed fire station.

## *Original Apple Valley School Site*

Southwest corner of Bear Valley and Deep Creek Roads



The Apple Valley School District was formed in the 1908-1909 school year. The first classes were held at the John Carroll Ranch. In 1913 the school moved

to the Bear Valley/Deep Creek site on land donated by the Westphals. In the 1930s, community members and the Grange added to the school as part of a WPA project (Works Progress Administration—a work relief program developed under Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt as part of the “New Deal”). The new kitchen, stage and large meeting room served the students and also provided a community center for meetings and activities. It occupied this site until the buildings were moved to Yucca Loma Road in January 1950. The building was in use on that site until 1955 when it was moved to a site east of the school campus where it continued to be used for school purposes and as a youth center until it was dismantled in 1978. The bell was preserved at the District Office site on Bear Valley Road.

In 1992, an excavation of the site was conducted by Dr. Lee Kinney with the Historical Preservation Committee, Victor Valley Museum and Victor Valley College. Besides old school supplies, the excavation provided a construction history of the school.



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January 3, 1957: A groundbreaking is scheduled January 11<sup>th</sup> for the AV Country Club. The club will include a swimming pool and large clubhouse. Bennington & Smith will be the building contractors.

May 9, 1957: Reverend Hansen will be installed on May 19<sup>th</sup> as Pastor of Church of the Valley. Reverend Hansen is returning to his native state of California from Wamega, Kansas. He and his wife, Mary Ellen, will make their home in Apple Valley.

May 30, 1957: The Lions Club dedicated two baseball fields behind the Community Center on Navajo. Newton T. Bass threw out the first ball. The Lions Club raised \$7,000 to pay for the bleachers, backstops, sprinklers and grass.

May 22, 1958: Apple Valley Little League's first night game scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. pits the Apple Valley Kiwanis (manager: Pep Proulx) vs. Apple Valley Salesmen (manager: Dr. Gilliland)

June 26, 1958: Part of a brand new building at Mariana School was burned. Apple Valley, Victorville and Forestry fire departments responded, with seven minutes elapsing from the time Mrs. Albert Mendel, Sr. called.

December 31, 1959: State and County have reached an agreement for the construction of a 4-lane highway and curbed frontage roads through the Village. The State will pay \$125,000 and property owners between \$50,000 and \$70,000, to be advanced by the County and repaid within the next 24 years.

June 23, 1960: St. Mary's to open Junior High in September by adding a 9<sup>th</sup> grade to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes/combination is the first one of its kind in their Diocese.

## ***Jess Ranch***

11000 Apple Valley Road

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Jess Ranch, named after Stoddard Jess, the original turkey farmer, has a varied history covering over 90 years.

Stoddard's uncle, Dr. Harris Garcelon, and his wife homesteaded the original 160 acres around 1910. They advertised the ranch as an ideal climate to cure asthma and tuberculosis during the early 1900s, and then as a sanitarium for World War I shell-shock victims. He built the first hospital in the entire valley, treated patients for barter, and drove his buggy for miles to deliver babies and visit patients. He later built a guest ranch where early cowboy movies were filmed, including Tom Mix and Williams S. Hart films.

Dr. Garcelon had a vision of his ranch as a master-planned community, with a golf course, swimming pool and more. Architectural plans dated 1926 can be seen in the Jess Ranch sales office today. However, the Great Depression put an end to those plans, and Stoddard Jess, Harry's nephew, bought the ranch in 1932.

Stoddard teamed up with neighbor Gay Lewis, who homesteaded his property in 1901, and began a turkey farming operation that would span 50 years. From a modest start of 200 turkeys, Jess Ranch became one of the largest integrated turkey ranches in the Western United States, raising nearly one million turkeys a year. Ranch operations covered everything from laying the eggs to packaging and shipping the turkeys to consumers.

## *Jess Ranch*

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Wanting to make maximum use of his water rights, Stoddard built a series of 19 impound lakes. The lakes were used to farm rainbow trout, raising about 500,000 pounds of live and dressed trout for Southern California markets, as well as offering fishing at the angling ponds. The water, fortified by the presence of fish, also served as a nutrient-rich irrigation source for agricultural uses on almost 1500 acres of ranch land. Using the most advanced technology and methods available, Stoddard produced his own turkey grain pellets made from the alfalfa and other grains he raised.

Falling victim to the energy crisis and the many farm conglomerates springing up throughout the country, the ranch began losing money in the early 1970s. Jess Ranch ceased turkey production in 1977, and closed the trout farming operation at the end of 1994.

Rather than selling the land for a regular subdivision, Stoddard sought out a developer that would develop his land as a master-planned retirement community. Opened in 1986 as a gated community for people 55 and over, Jess Ranch today also includes adjacent retail and entertainment centers, non-senior estate homes and an RV resort park. Dr. Garcelon's dream of a resort community was realized with the opening of the golf course in 1993. The Jess Ranch Lakes are still open four days a week for fishing, stocked with trout and catfish, and trout farming was reinstated in 2000.

## *Adobe House*

14546 Riverside Drive



Designed by Mr. Douglas McFarland of McFarland & Bonsall, Los Angeles architects, construction of the house began in November 1958. Mr. McFarland also designed the Apple Valley Ranchos building (most recently used as Town Hall) and Union Bank.

The Apple Valley contractor was Gibbs, Clark and Mangrum, (the Lloyd Mangrum of golfing fame). The home was the first one built on Riverside Drive, and now is a portion of a fenced six-acre estate property. The main house is about 4000 square feet, with over 6000 square feet of roof coverage, and includes a pool/guest house of 900 square feet. The design for the house was the inspiration of Mrs. Adelaide Newton, deceased in 1963. The present occupants of the house are Ede and George E. Newton, the son of the original owner.

The house is constructed of wood and adobe brick, and the interior is adobe brick accents and rough-cut cedar. Originally the house was intended to be unpainted, and it remained so until 1990. There is no refrigerated air conditioning in the house as the high roofline, large over-



## *Adobe House*

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hang and open-air circulation in the attic was always adequate to maintain comfortable temperatures in the living areas.

Beams in the main room are solid, kiln-dried hard pine, 10" x14", up to 25 feet long. There was no natural gas available in this part of Apple Valley, so the house was originally designed as a "Gold Medallion Home," an all-electric house featured by the Edison Company. The home was also featured in advertisements for Apple Valley Ranchos Development, and in the Home section of the *Los Angeles Times*.

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October 27, 1960: The Apple Valley Village Association, Inc. is formed to handle the final stages of the Apple Valley Village Paving Program. They will take the plans for the widening of Highway 18 and the installation of frontage roads to the Board of Supervisors in November. The completion of the project should make Apple Valley Village one of the most beautiful shopping centers in the High Desert.

December 15, 1960: John Charles Thomas died. The world-renowned Metropolitan Opera baritone, passed away in his Apple Valley ranch home December 13<sup>th</sup>, following a lengthy illness. Thomas and his wife, Dorothy, who was at his bedside when he died, came to Apple Valley in 1954, and from 1955-59 managed the Apple Valley radio station KAVR.

January 18, 1962: The two bridges that cross the Mojave River and are the only gateways to Apple Valley from the west, will soon be replaced by modern new spans and wider, finer roads. Highway crews with tons of dynamite and heavy equipment are chewing through the granite mountains at the Narrows. Construction is also occurring on a new bridge, going in right next to the old one on Bear Valley Road.

## *St. Mary's Regional Catholic School*

18320 Highway 18



St. Mary's Regional Catholic School was opened in 1953 by Msgr. Van Garssee as St. Mary's Academy, with an enrollment of 120 students. The school site is located on land donated by Newt Bass and Bud Westlund.

The Immaculate Heart Sisters took over operation of the school in the spring of 1954. Later, in 1968, the Benedictine Sisters took charge, along with a strong lay staff. In the 1970s the school expanded its curriculum to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and in 1974 added kindergarten. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum was discontinued in 1983, but preschool was added in 1987.

The school has gone through a number of name changes. In 1974 the school's name was changed to St. David's, to coincide with the new Apple Valley parish of St. David. Shortly thereafter, the school reverted back to St. Mary's School until 1983 when it was renamed Our Lady of the Desert Catholic School, in conjunction with the Church of Our Lady of the Desert built behind the school.

On October 12, 1992, his Excellency, Bishop Gerald Barnes, rededicated the facility as St. Mary's Regional Catholic School, which is directly under the auspices of the Diocese of San Bernardino, Office of Catholic Schools. The school will celebrate 50 years of quality Catholic education in 2003.

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July 19, 1962: Ground was broken for the construction of a 16-lane bowling center, complete with cocktail lounge and coffee shop. "Apple Bowl" will be located on a 2-acre site behind Security First National Bank and will feature the new "Sparemaker," an electronic device to show beginners how to pick-up spares. (Apple Bowl opens March 2, 1963.)

December 13, 1962: A 2,700 square foot club room has been added to the Community Center, making it the largest community building of any Recreation District in San Bernardino County. In attendance were Mr. George Stott, an Apple Valley resident from 1947-60 and first Chairman of the Apple Valley Community Center Board before coming under County control, and Herald Bertolotti, current President of the Parks and Recreation Board. Edna Hollenbeck, represented the Apple Valley Women's Club, the only club in the Valley organized with the express purpose of lending assistance to the men who gave of their time, energy and finances to build a community center.

October 24, 1963: Groundbreaking ceremonies took place for a \$90,000 school maintenance facility on Bear Valley Road. Facility will house bus and maintenance operations. The front five-acres will be developed later for administrative use.

November 12, 1964: On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Apple Valley Inn will be known as the Roy Rogers Apple Valley Inn. A 25-year lease was signed this week. The Inn, built in 1948 by Newt Bass and Bud Westlund, has 101 guest rooms, cottages, bungalows, executive suites and honeymoon cottages. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans will continue their careers in TV, state fairs and rodeos. Roy Rogers and his family are considering moving to Apple Valley.

## *Family Home of Bud Westlund, Roy Rogers*

19900 Highway 18



Along outer Highway 18 in Apple Valley sits an old adobe home which has a history as diverse as the desert landscape view from the back yard.

Built in 1949, the original four bedrooms and two baths were first occupied by Bud Westlund, co-founder of Apple Valley and partner of Newt Bass. It was a beautiful home, large for its time, with beamed ceilings and custom rock roof. Newly revised covenant restrictions kept the surrounding Joshua trees in place.

In the olden days, the Westlund home was an Apple Valley landmark. From Victorville, visitors were told to “travel quite a ways across the narrows bridge until you come to the adobe home on the left side—that’s where Apple Valley begins.”

During the early 1960s extensive renovation was completed, turning the home into an estate property. A master suite, bath and dressing rooms were added. A floor-to-ceiling aviary was built in the hall going to the master bedroom, which also contained a grand piano. The original garage became a den.

Planning to buy a home in Palm Springs, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans visited Apple Valley on Newt’s invitation. They purchased the Westlund home in 1965 and

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May 27, 1965: The world premiere of the motion picture “Saturday Night Bath in Apple Valley”, filmed in Apple Valley, will be held at the Roy Rogers Apple Valley Inn. The movie stars Mimi Hynes, Phil Ford, Cliff (Charlie Weaver) Arquette and Red Granger.

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lived there until 1980. They added a large garage for limos, a workshop, stables, corrals and a practice ring for horsemanship on the outlying property.

Highway 18, as the location for the Rogers' home, Roy Rogers Inn (Apple Valley Inn) and the Roy Rogers Museum (now Gold Strike Lanes), was renamed Happy Trails Highway in 1994, in recognition of the contributions Roy and Dale have made to Apple Valley.

Memories of Roy and Dale linger. Fans can see the storage rooms where Dale hung her costumes, the wagon wheel and tack Roy placed in the front yard, and Roy's central sound system with instructions in his handwriting.

The current owner bought the home in 1990 and has kept the traditional antique and western décor. The owner has also purchased items from sales of the famous couples' belongings, including costumes, furniture and other memorabilia, bringing history back home to roost. This home is an important part of Apple Valley's heritage.

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August 19, 1965: Roy Rogers was the Grand Marshal of the Pow Wow Days Parade.

December 2, 1965: Reserve Oil and Apple Valley Building and Development company merger announced. Real estate activities in Apple Valley will now be conducted under the name of Apple Valley Ranchos, as a division of Reserve Oil.

January 12, 1967: The Hilltop House, built in 1960 at a cost of \$250,000, was found ablaze at 4:00 a.m. Vandalism is suspected. On January 26, a 24 year old and 17 year old from Summit Valley are arrested on two counts of burglary and one count of arson.

## *Lewis Center for Educational Research*

20702 Thunderbird Road



While not a “historical” site, the Lewis Center for Educational Research has been included here as a facility unique in the entire United States.

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (formerly the Apple Valley Science and Technology Center) was developed by teachers, parents, students and business partners who worked for five years to raise money to build the first phase. The concept was developed in 1985 by Rick Piercy, a kindergarten teacher. Groundbreaking ceremonies occurred in 1987, and the grand opening was in October of 1990. In May of 1997, the Center was granted a Public School Charter, the Academy for Academic Excellence (AAE). The Center was expanded and renamed in honor of Congressman Jerry Lewis in 1998.

The facility features a full observatory with computerized telescope, a T-40 Jet Flight Simulator from the U.S. Air Force, a digital television studio and amateur radio station, and a greenhouse that is climatically con-

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trolled.

A premier program of the Lewis Center is GAVRT (Goldstone Apple Valley Radio Telescope). A partnership between the Lewis Center, NASA, Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Apple Valley Unified School District, GAVRT allows students across America to control a dedicated 34-meter radio telescope. Schools can connect via Internet to Mission Control, located at the Lewis Center, to assume command of the massive telescope located at NASA's Deep Space Communications Complex at Goldstone. Students perform actual scientific observations in radio astronomy. The data are compiled and made available by JPL for use by scientists, astronomers, teachers and students around the world.

A second campus offers additional class room space, as well as an enhanced technology center.

This may well be one of the most unique and beautiful school campuses in the country. Nearly one hundred

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June 27, 1968: On May 15, 1953, Captain Joseph McConnell, Jr., became the world's first triple jet ace when he shot down 3 MIG-15s, bringing his total to 16 destroyed in the Korean Conflict. His F-86 Sabrejet was named after his wife, "Beautiful Butch." A similar plane will be dedicated as a memorial to the Apple Valley pilot on June 30<sup>th</sup>, at the entrance to the airport.

March 5, 1970: John W. Conrad set a new record when he became the youngest Commercial Pilot and Flight Instructor in the country on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 27<sup>th</sup>. (John is the son of Eva Conrad).

A “Point of Interest” is partly defined as an historic, cultural or natural building, structure, site or object that is associated with events or persons who made a significant contribution to local, state or national history, and/or exemplifies a particular period of history, and/or displays unique or significant location, design, workmanship or aesthetic feeling. To suggest a point of interest in Apple Valley, please forward the address, significance of the location, and property owner information if known. Send to the Apple Valley Historical Advisory Committee, c/o Kathie Martin, PIO, 14955 Dale Evans Parkway, Apple Valley, CA 92307. For questions or comments on this publication, please call (760)240-7000 x 7072.