



# Archeology in Valley Center

Volume 13 Number 2

June 2013

## The sad and bloody story of the Hellhole massacre: 1906

By Welda Johnson

Johnson wrote the first version of this story while working for the original owner of The Roadrunner, Van Quackenbush from 1980-1983. The story won a Friends of the Valley Center Library Award, and inspired by last year's

Sesquicentennial Celebration she was inspired to write a new one.

Mrs. Johnson says, "I am still amazed by the facts of what happened, and the many ironic circumstances that left three people dead. Hope you enjoy reading about life in Valley Center in 1906."

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In the 1870s Maria Sutter, a woman of German descent, who lived on Paradise Mountain, reportedly gave Hell Hole its name when she looked down from her home at the top of the mountain and said of the canyon below, "It's good for nothing, and in the summer it's hot as

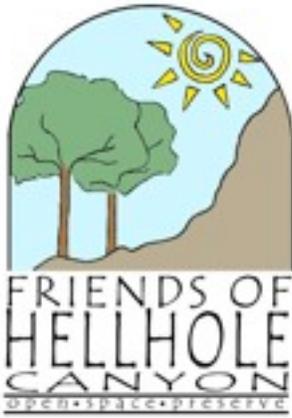
you know where!" (1)

Located southeast of where present-day County Road S-6 corners above the Rincon Grade, the northeastern area of Hell Hole, with its brush-covered hills and valleys, was the spot Fred Bady, 52, chose to homestead in 1906. Of Irish heritage, Brady worked half of each year on a cattle ranch at Del Mar, for Colonel M. James, and lived at his cabin in Hell Hole the rest of the year, to fulfill the residency and work requirements needed to claim his 160 acre homestead. Mr. Brady had married Anna Adams Kelly, who owned land and an orchard next to his land in Hell Hole, and he had four children by a previous marriage.(2)

The couple had been steadily clearing brush from the land and from around the little wooden house that Mr. Brady had built there. They also had plans to plant an orchard of fruit trees on the homestead.

In February, 1906, though, when Fred Brady returned to his home and property in Hell Hole Canyon, he found quite a surprise. Howard

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**Friends of Hellhole Canyon  
Open Space Preserve**

P.O. Box 221  
Valley Center, CA 92082

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**Board of Directors Meetings**  
are held on the second Tuesdays of every  
month. If you would like more information  
about our meetings please contact  
Joaquin Aganza 760-533-6821

*The Friends of Hellhole Canyon is a non-profit land trust  
and environmental education. We are dedicated to protecting  
natural open space at the Preserve and in our community.*

**County of San Diego Parks Staff Rangers  
assigned to Hellhole Canyon:**

Bill Lipowcan, Supervising Ranger  
Nick Sloan, Ranger

Offices at Wilderness Gardens Preserve

760-742-1631

14209 Highway 76  
Pala, CA 92059

## Hellhole in Western Days

This year for the Western Days the Friends participated in the Parade with 5 Equestrians and numerous people riding on our float. We were even lucky enough to Debra Duncan and her horse Spirit join our group. Debra and Spirit have ridden in the Rose Parade for years and they helped to ‘class up our parade entry.



Debra Duncan riding her horse Spirit



## About Heroes

Cox Conserves Heroes is an awards program created by [Cox Enterprises](#) and [The Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) that honors Heroes among us who work to create, preserve, improve or enhance the shared outdoor places in our communities. The program takes place in multiple Cox locations across the nation. To determine if the program is taking place in your community, please visit the market navigation on the left.

### Phase One: Nominations

To select the Hero, each community is encouraged to nominate eco-friendly individuals. A Hero should be someone who has helped to create, protect and/or care for an outdoor place available for public relaxation, reflection or recreation by the community. [Learn who is eligible.](#)

### Phase Two: Finalists

TPL screens the initial applicants to a pool of twenty. The Heroes Judging Circle, a panel of civic leaders within the conservation field, then selects the top finalists (the number may vary per market).

### Phase Three: Voting

The finalists are profiled on the Cox Conserves Heroes website and in local media, during which, the public is asked to vote online for their favorite. Each finalist is encouraged to spread the word and ask friends, family and co-workers to vote.

### Phase Four: The Hero

At the conclusion of the voting period, the finalist with the most votes will be selected as the Cox Conserves Hero for his or her market. A donation will be made to the Hero's environmental charity of choice.

## Who Is Eligible

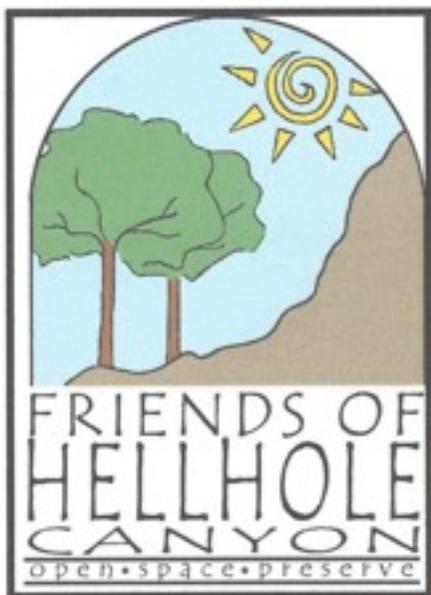
Individuals of all ages are eligible to become Cox Conserves Heroes. You may nominate yourself or someone else. Heroes and their projects must meet the following criteria:

- The activity cannot be part of one's job.
- A Hero should be someone who has helped to create, protect and/or care for an outdoor place available for public relaxation, reflection or recreation by the community.
- The activity or project must be located within the community as defined by the local Awards Program (select the market near you to learn more).
- The Hero's story should inspire others to act.
- The activity should be something that anyone could do.
- The activity cannot be pre-existing, such as a recycling program.
- Previous Cox Conserves Heroes and finalists who received donations for their environmental nonprofits of choice are not eligible.

Types of projects considered:

- Cleaning up/refurbishing a park or public place
- Helping to provide public access to a previously inaccessible place

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# Archeology in Valley Center

**Saturday June 22, 2013**

9:00 am

Valley Center Library

29200 Cole Grade Road

Valley Center, CA 92082

The Friends of Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve  
Presents Program Coordinator, San Diego Archeology Center

**Annemarie Cox**



Friends of Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve

[www.HellholeCanyon.org](http://www.HellholeCanyon.org)

760-533-6821

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Gore, a reportedly "brutish" man in his forties, who hailed from Oklahoma, along with his wife and a "senile" elderly man named George P. Harris, had all moved into Brady's house, and they had brought a large menagerie of dogs and cats with them, as well. Gore was said to always carry a rifle, and Valley Center residents of the day were aware that the threesome had been living under trees and in abandoned houses for several months, and some residents had made it their express aim to avoid contact with the group.

When Fred Brady told Howard Gore that he owned the house, and it was time for Gore and the others to leave, the intruder is said to have laughed in Brady's face, and told him to leave. Brady went to Escondido, where he sought legal help from Justice of the Peace Ed Hatch, who issued an eviction notice. Brady then went with Constable White Farmer back to the homestead to carry out the eviction order. White barely complied with the order, however, when he allowed the three intruders to take their animals and move a few hundred feet from the Brady property, where the group erected a makeshift tent under the trees.

In late November, 1906, Valley Center rancher Joe Woods found some grain missing, and accused Gore of being the one who had taken it. Judge Hatch entertained Woods' allegations, and a warrant was issued for Gore's arrest. Mr. and Mrs. Brady were scheduled to testify against Gore at the trial.

On Saturday Dec. 1, 1906 Constable White Farmer arrested Gore, who then appeared before Ed Hatch. The Justice of the Peace ordered Gore to be jailed, but, instead, the lenient Constable released the squatter Gore, who returned to his makeshift home under the trees in Hell Hole.

At 8 a.m. two days later, on Monday, December 3, 1906, Howard Gore appeared on Fred Brady's property as the homesteader was plowing his land, and the intruder began cursing at the Irishman. Mrs. Brady and a neighbor, Virgil Woods, 16, were nearby, clearing brush at a ravine near the house. Gore threatened to shoot Mr. Brady, and as he raised the rifle he always carried with him, Mrs. Brady and Virgil saw what was happening and ran toward the house. Gore suddenly shot Mr. Brady two times—once in the back as he tried to get away, and a second time, in the head, as the already severely wounded Brady fell down the land and into the ravine.

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Next, Gore turned the gun toward Mrs. Brady, who was running toward the house behind Woods. Gore's next shot hit Mrs. Brady's leg, and the next shot hit her left hand, blowing off a finger. Mrs. Brady managed to follow Woods into the house, where the teenager hid, and she reportedly begged him to take her husband's rifle and shoot the quickly approaching Gore. Woods refused, and Mrs. Brady grabbed the old .44 Winchester herself. Gore was circling the house, shooting into the wooden structure. One bullet hit near where Woods was hiding, but the youth was uninjured. As Gore came past the front door, Mrs. Brady aimed at him and fired the Winchester, as he ran toward her and fired his gun. Mrs. Brady's bullet hit Gore in the heart, killing him instantly, but, as he fell, only six feet from the front door, the bullet discharged from his gun reached Mrs. Brady, hitting her in the head and killing her.

Virgil Woods ran out the door and through the brush-covered hills of Hell Hole to the nearest neighbor a mile away, to report what had happened. When the Sheriff and Coroner arrived to investigate the killings, they found Mrs. Gore and Mr. Harris huddled in their tent, with reportedly a dozen dogs and more than that number of cats, who scattered as the investigators approached. It was said that Mrs. Gore later returned to Oklahoma.

The killings at Hell Hole occurred over 100 years ago, but Mr. Brady's plow can still be found at the site, having been left where it fell, and now grown into a nearby tree, a silent reminder of the shootings and deaths that took place in Hell Hole Canyon that early winter morning in 1906.

Sources:

(1) Perkins, Eloise, Daily Times Advocate, June 16, 1972

(2) Stone, Joe, February 20, 1959

Article Courtesy of the Valley Center Roadrunner

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- Beautifying a public place, e.g. planting/ tending to a community garden
- Volunteering at a local park
- Water conservation/protection-related projects
- Creating a program that gets people to public places
- Donating and/or assisting in the acquisition of land for public use
- Advocacy, education and/or community outreach for parks and open space

Please select your market in the left navigation to learn more about the program in your community and to nominate an individual. Questions can be sent to [elizabeth.olmstead@coxinc.com](mailto:elizabeth.olmstead@coxinc.com)

For background about the program: [www.coxconservesheroes.com](http://www.coxconservesheroes.com)

And to nominate someone: <http://www.coxconservesheroes.com/san-diego.aspx>