

THE MURDER OF JOSEPH SMITH OF PALOMAR MOUNTAIN

Peter Brueggeman 2023

Catherine Wood writes [10]:

Until the turn of the century, the accepted name for Palomar was Smith Mountain. That is the name which occurs on all county maps of previous date. The name was applied especially to the east end, where, on a spring-watered slope with a magnificent view over what is now Dyche Valley in the foreground, Warner's Ranch below, and desert mountains in the distance, Joseph Smith of San Diego settled. He was a very tall man, so was commonly called "Long Joe" or "Largo" Smith.



Ruins of the Kimble-Wilson store in the distance.

Smith's murderer was hanged from an oak tree at the base of the hill in foreground

(photo courtesy of South Coastal Information Center, SDSU) [56]

Joseph Smith was born in South Carolina about 1817-1820 [1], and he moved to San Diego from Van Buren, Indiana before or by 1852.

Marion Beckler writes [3]:

Joseph Smith ... came west in 1848 with Colonel Cave Johnson Coutts. He was with Coutts in the survey of California's southern border.

The Whipple survey expedition (Amiel Weeks Whipple) marked the U.S. boundary with Mexico in accordance with the Mexican-American War treaty, travelling from San Diego to the Colorado River, from September 11 to December 11, 1849 [50]. Surveyors and soldiers crossed the Anza-Borrego Desert in both directions to mark a boundary point near Yuma, and Lieutenant Cave Johnson Coutts of the U.S. Army led a company of cavalry and infantry to protect and support the surveyors [50].

In 1974, Joe Stone wrote about Joseph Smith in the San Diego Union [46]:

The consensus seems to be that Joseph Smith came to San Diego County during or immediately after the war with Mexico as a member of the U.S. Army, possibly in the outfit commanded by Lt. Cave J. Coutts. There is public record of his presence here in 1849.

In the 1852 California State Census, with location as San Diego County and dated September 29, 1852, Joseph Smith is listed as male, age 35, occupation carpenter, with South Carolina as place of birth, and Van Buren, Indiana as place of last residence [1]. Listed under Joseph Smith in that census (with 'do' as their place of last residence under Smith's last residence of Van Buren, Indiana, so perhaps they were living with him previous to San Diego?) are: Peter Merrifield, age 25, born Cornwall, England; Thomas Larrimore (spelling?), age 26, born England; John Reynolds, age 38, born Tennessee; Clarke (first name illegible), age 28, wheelwright, born Ohio.

The San Diego Herald published a San Diego County Grand Jury report on June 24, 1854, and Joseph Smith was a member of that Grand Jury; the jury made several recommendations including build a county jail, curb Thomas Fox' violent drunken behaviors, enforce more strict observance of duties by public officers of San Diego County, "put a stop to the riotous conduct of drunken Indians in the public streets," and address a deep ditch dug across the main road making it almost impassable for wagons [30].

For San Diego County and City elections in September and October 1855, Joseph Smith was an election judge [19,25].

SAN DIEGO CITY TRUSTEE AND COUNTY SUPERVISOR

Joseph Smith was on the San Diego Board of Supervisors for the terms 1856, 1857, 1865, and 1866 [13,51]. The San Diego Herald on March 8, 1856, published the election results for San Diego City Trustees, stating [26]:

NEW CITY TRUSTEES. – The election on Monday last, for City Trustees, resulted in the choice of Messrs. T.R. Darnell, Thomas Collins and Joseph Smith. These gentlemen are well known, being long residents of San Diego, and we feel assured they will watchfully guard the interests of the city in their capacity as Trustees, as well as those of the county when they shall be called to act as Supervisors.

The San Diego City Trustees were also the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. The San Diego Herald on December 20, 1856, in the Town Talk section, noted "Supervisor Smith has also made important alterations and additions to his house on Washington street [35]."

The San Diego Herald on March 7, 1857, published the election results for San Diego City Trustees, which included the election of Joseph Smith, stating "The board is a good one. – Amen" [34]

Joseph Smith wrote an amusing response to the Editor of the San Diego Herald of July 18, 1857, to a letter previously published in that newspaper by "Earnest," evidently a pseudonym for the newspaper editor [33]:

Editor San Diego Herald:

I saw, some time since, in one of your numbers, "a few modest enquiries" propounded to "our city authorities," by Modesto, under the assumed name of Earnest. That they were the far-fetched and --- effusions of Modesto, I entertain no doubt, from the peculiar

vanity and school-boy tautology which so beautifully blind themselves with every sentence and paragraph.

He says, in his proemial, "I give the enquiries publicity through your journal with the quest that the answers to the same may come through the same channel." In every well-rounded and harmonious period, good taste precludes the double use of the same word. A repetition is barbarous in a long sentence, but in a short one, like the above quoted, it is exceedingly savage, "where the same" occur, in the first instance, the objective them should have been employed, or the words "to the same" might properly have been entirely rejected.

But Modesto or Earnest simply wrote to be understood, and I think that I have not failed to fully comprehend him. He has an itching to write, to be great, to be admired; he would feign convince the world, but especially this county, about this time, that he is a clever fellow: and this he has had the good fortune to effect. And now, if his fame shall survive the coming September, surely he has not dipped his grey goose-quill in vain.

But I am well satisfied that nature never designed him for a nobleman, and if honored now by his own generation, posterity will blush at the folly.

Earnest will not be accused of plagiarism even in these perilous times, for who would be willing to wear the stigma that would at once brand the man, that had the blindness to say I wrote it? Earnest is evidently of a mushroom growth he must have grown in a single night. The effect is equal to its cause – his writings are ephemeral – "modest enquiries," etc., were long since forgotten. Poor Earnest, again fling your nails into the rugged surface; think on, write on; you may peradventure up the steep of fame. But when you again propose such enquires, let them be proper, consistent, truthful, and I shall believe that you are not only Earnest, but Honest. They will be answered.

Mr. Earnest, or any one, feeling the deep interest expressed by Mr. E. in the welfare of the city, can at all times convenient inspect the books and accounts at the offices of the Secretary or Treasurer, at which places they shall be happy to see them. The following is recapitulation; the particular items can be seen on inspection during the term of the late Board for 1856:

DR.

To amount of Vouchers, -- \$1,266.96

To amount of Balance, -- \$30.81

\$1297.76

CR.

By amount of Net Proceeds of Land Sold, -- \$1,297.77

Trustee, Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith was on the San Diego Board of Supervisors for the terms 1856, 1857, 1865, and 1866

SAN DIEGO DEPUTY SHERIFF

The San Diego Herald reported on June 14, 1856 regarding Joseph Smith [24]:

JOSEPH SMITH, Esq.—We omitted to state, in a brief paragraph last week, alluding to an examination of this gentleman before the Justice's Court, with what he was charged. Mr. Smith, who is one of our most respectable citizens, and holds the offices of City Trustee and Deputy Sheriff, found a Mexican in a fight with a lot of drunken Indians, over a bottle of whiskey, and ordered him to leave, which he declared he would not do; whereupon Mr. Smith picked up a bone and gave him some right smart raps over the head, which started him off. Hence the prosecution for an assault. In a Jury trial, Smith was acquitted.

San Diego Herald, June 14, 1856, page 2, column 1

The San Diego Herald published this notice from Deputy Sheriff Joseph Smith on September 13, 1856 [28]:

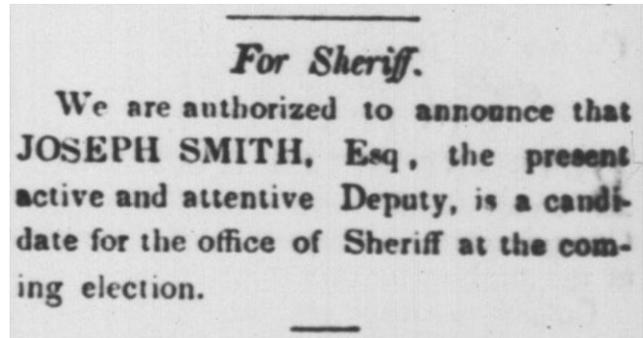
TAXES! TAXES!
I AM NOW PREPARED to receive Taxes due for the year 1856, at my office in San Diego. All taxes not paid by the *third Monday of November* will be returned delinquent and their payment enforced according to law.
JOSEPH REINER,
Sheriff of San Diego County,
by JOSEPH SMITH,
Deputy Sheriff.
San Diego, Sept. 13, 1856. 3t

San Diego Herald, September 13, 1856, page 2, column 6

In the San Diego Herald of September 20, 1856, Joseph Smith is the deputy sheriff on a published notice announcing an upcoming sale of a property in the Plaza of San Diego due to mortgage foreclosure [18]. There are other such notices involving Joseph Smith published in the San Diego Herald in that time period [18].

In the San Diego Herald of January 31, 1857, the San Diego County Treasurer's report for the quarter commencing October 1st and ending December 31, 1856, notes that \$2.76 was received on October 4th from Joseph Smith, Deputy Sheriff, for State Auctioneer duties for September [16].

Joseph Smith was announced as a candidate for the office of Sheriff in San Diego in election notices published in the San Diego Herald from July to August 1857 [21]. George Lyons won the election [42].



San Diego Herald, August 29, 1857, page 2, column 6

SUPERVISED ROAD TO DESERT

Catherine Wood writes [10]:

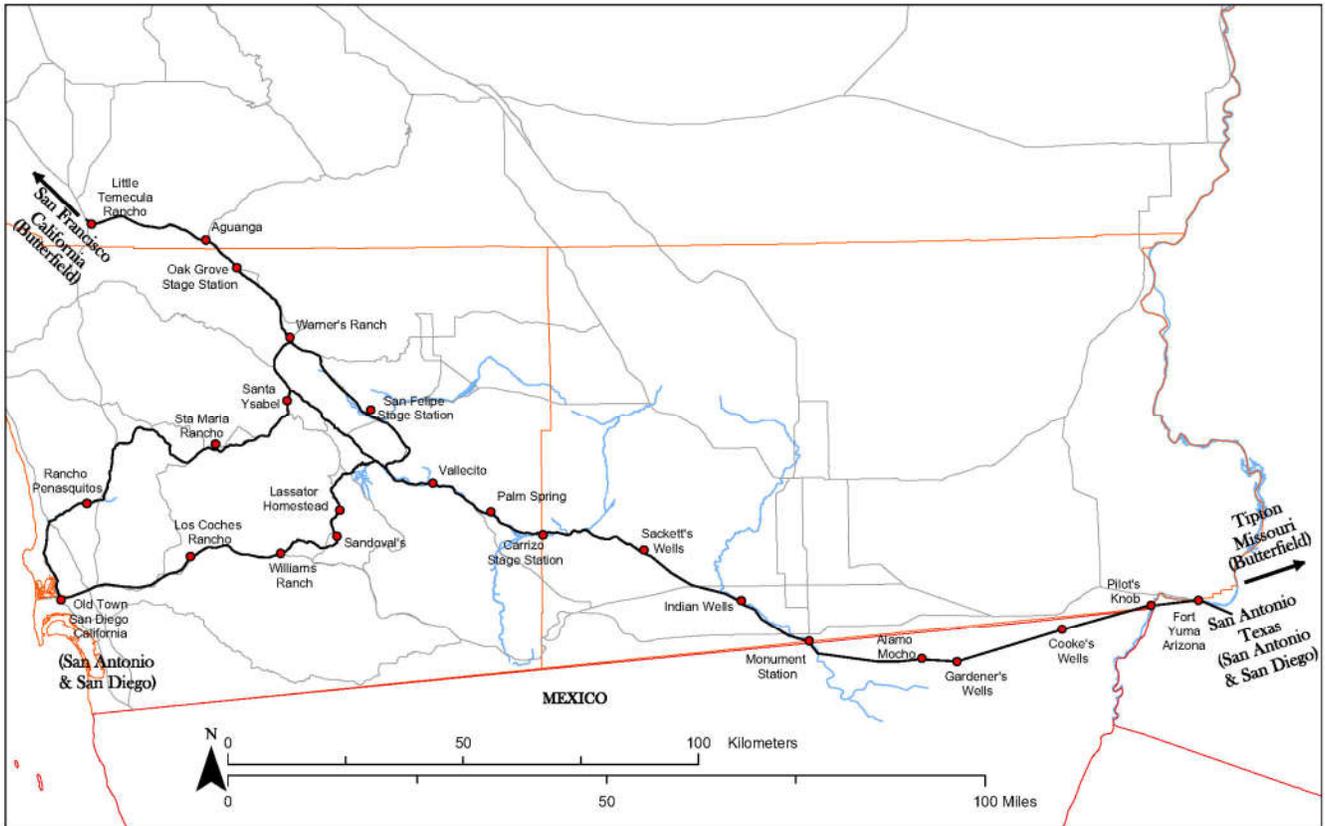
In 1856 Joseph Smith was one of a committee appointed to consider a route to Vallecitos, the first Overland Mail Route... [Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, San Diego County-Book 1.]

Marion Beckler writes [3]:

Smith boosted and helped plan the first overland route, "The Jackass Mail." When the Butterfield line started running, he was put in charge of keeping the roads passable and of watching out for bandits.

The "Jackass Mail" was the San Antonio-San Diego Mail Line, with stagecoaches taking passengers and mail between San Antonio, Texas and San Diego, which ran from 1857 to 1861 [61]. Heading west nearing Palomar, the stage coach route ran from Vallecito in the desert up to Warner's Ranch and then south through Santa Ysabel [60,61]. Heading west nearing Palomar, the mail route (no stagecoaches) ran from Vallecito in the desert, up and then down to Lassator's Ranch in Green Valley, then Julian Sandoval's ranch in Little Guatay Valley in Descanso, then Williams ranch in Viejas, then Ames ranch in Flinn Spring, then Mission San Diego, and then to San Diego [60,61].

The Butterfield Overland Mail and stage service from St. Louis to San Francisco ran from 1858 to 1861 [62]. Near Palomar the route ran from Vallecito in the desert, up San Felipe Valley through Warner's Pass (now named Teofulio Summit) to Warner's Ranch and then continued north of Palomar Mountain to Temecula through Oak Grove and Aguanga [60,62].



**San Antonio-San Diego Mail Line routes to San Diego,
and Butterfield Overland Mail route to San Francisco**

Map from: Overland Mail 150th Anniversary 1857 to 2007. California Department of Parks and Recreation [60]

On March 7, 1857, the San Diego Herald published a report on status of a new Desert road from Guatay to Carrizo Creek, which had been a station on the San Antonio-San Diego Mail Line and was a Butterfield station [31]:

SUPERVISOR SMITH. – It gives us pleasure to be able to chronicle one good thing that the old Board of Supervisors have done for this county during the past year. Mr. Joseph Smith has been intrusted with the disposition of the Road Fund, and the director of the labor to be bestowed on the highways of this township. – He has acquitted himself so far with credit, and has shown good judgment in the selection of such points as most needed repairs. The piece of road at the head of False Bay has been in a most miserable condition for the past two years, and we had no idea that it could be rendered so good a highway was it now is, by the comparatively small amount of labor that Mr. Smith has expended upon it.

Neighbor Smith is a little “hard headed,” in the “board,” sometimes, but we were willing to see him re-elected. We vote for Smith because he is “sound on the road question.”

P.S. “Old Smith” was re-elected on Monday, for another term.

On March 28, 1857, the San Diego Herald published a report of the Road Committee for the proposed new route to the Desert, and the proposed route started at Don Julian’s (Little Guatay Valley in Descanso) and went to Pine valley, then to Oak or Salt valley, then to Mitecaquata valley, then to Rincon valley, then to the summit of the mountain and then to the foot of the mountain, and finally then to Cariso (Carrizo Creek), a distance of 39 miles [36]. The Committee said this “route was a much lower and easier grade than the present travelled road. That it is some forty-five miles shorter, and abundantly supplied with water and grass... [36].”

The San Diego Herald published a summary of the Road Committee meeting of April 11, 1857, which involved “quite an animated discussion” whose participants included Joseph Smith [17]. In the San Diego Herald of February 27, 1858, there was a notice of a public Road Meeting, by a committee including Joseph Smith was a member, "to devise means for the accomplishment" of "the construction of a good Wagon Road between this city and the Desert" [14].

The San Diego Herald reported on November 14, 1857, that [23]:

Joseph Smith, Esq., left town on Monday last for the purpose of overseeing the work on the new road to Fort Yuma, taking with him provisions and the tools necessary for the carrying on of the work. A large number of hands will be put on the road and the work carried on with energy, so long as the funds subscribed hold out.

The San Diego Herald reported on November 14, 1857, on progress with the Road to the Desert [27]:

THE NEW ROAD. – We learn that Mr. Joseph Smith, the superintendent of the work on the new Road to the Desert, is pushing ahead rapidly, having 35 men employed on the work, and has reached Pine Valley, a point 10 miles from the ranch of Julian. A man more competent than Mr. S. could not have been selected to superintend the construction of this road, and we hope our citizens will make prompt payments of their subscriptions, and not allow this important work to stop for the want of means to complete it. To those who have not already subscribed to carry out this project, we would say that the Executive Committee are ready to receive any amount of subscriptions in the shape of money, provisions or labor. So walk up, gentlemen, come out with your means, and accomplish this great work, from which you are all to receive so much benefit.

Since writing the above, we have been informed that some white men in the vicinity of the new road, and who are interested in turning the road in a different direction from that proposed by the Commissioners, have made false representations to the Indians employed on the road and induced them to stop work, but new hands will be obtained immediately.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

On April 9, 1856, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors authorized Joseph Smith to repair the County Jail [22].

In 1849, the California Constitution created a militia as a supplement force to the functions of the US military, providing California with a military for protection of the State [53]. These organized and regulated militia units were uniformed like military but were also fraternal and social organizations with parades, banquets, receptions, etc. [53]. The San Diego Guards were organized in July 1856, and active for several years, as a forerunner of the California National Guard [51]. Private Joseph Smith was on the first muster list of the company, but meetings were abandoned at the outbreak of the Civil War [51].

The San Diego Herald of July 5, 1856, ran a story on a celebration of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist by the Masonic Fraternity of San Diego Lodge Number 35, which included Joseph Smith [32].



MASONIC BALL.



The pleasure of your company is respectfully solicited at a Ball to be given by the Masonic Fraternity of San Diego, at the Gila House, on Monday Evening, 25th instant, in honor of their Patron Saint. Dancing to commence at 9 o'clock.

Committee.

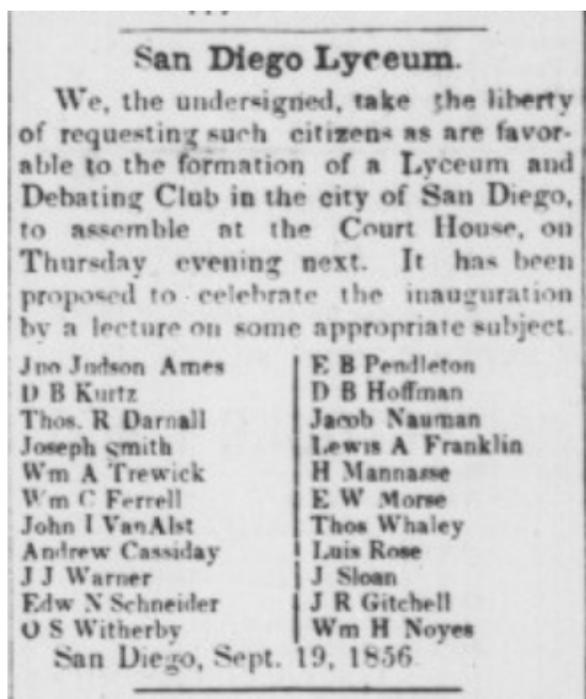
JOSEPH SMITH, T. R. DARNALL, GEO. LYONS,
D. B. HOFFMAN, E. B. PENDLETON.

Floor Managers,

D. B. KURTZ, GEO. F. HOOPER, M. SCHILLER.

Printed card announcing a Masonic event at the Gila House
by committee members including Joseph Smith UCSD Library

In the San Diego Herald of September 20, 1856, Joseph Smith is listed among those proposing the formation of a Lyceum and Debating Club in San Diego [15].



San Diego Herald, September 20, 1856, page 2, column 5

A San Diego resident, eighteen-year-old Victoria Jacobs, wrote in her diary about Long Joe Smith doing work at her house in San Diego on October 26, 1856 [54]:

Tuesday, October 28, 1856.

Long Smith came here to fix the well. Fanny and myself went over to see Mrs. Amador.

Catherine Wood writes [10]:

It may be assumed that Smith was a carpenter by profession, or at least proficient with his tools, for he at one time received ten dollars for making a coffin. A year or so later he was paid twelve dollars each for two coffins, one for an Indian and one for a Cholo (half-breed). He was also paid sixty-six dollars for benches for the Court House at Old Town.

The San Diego Herald on April 18, 1857, published the San Diego County Treasurer's Report for the quarter ending March 31, 1857, noting that in January 1857, Joseph Smith was paid from the Hospital fund \$12.00 for a coffin, and from the Indian Fund \$12.00 for coffin and burying an Indian [29].

The book “History of San Diego, 1542-1907” by William Ellsworth Smythe mentions a Masonic Lodge complaint and trial in August 1857, involving Joseph Smith [51]:

... Joseph Smith preferred charges against (Ephraim W.) Morse for “threatening to blow my brains out.” A (Masonic Lodge) committee recommended that Smith withdraw his charges but he refused, and after an investigation and listening to Morse’s explanation, he was exonerated. Morse’s own account of this affair was as follows:

An officer of the Lodge got into an altercation with another party in my store. I ordered them both out. My Masonic brother, a big six-footer, refused to go and prevented the other party from going. I jumped behind the counter and called out: “Get out of my store, or I’ll blow your brains out!” whereupon he went out. In recalling those old times, I can see where “the even tenor of its way” was often ruffled by family jars and quarrels, charges of brother against brother – the succeeding lodge trials, most of them, it now seems to me, frivolous and childish. I suppose the same principle applied to our small lodge as to small villages and towns.

For an election held on September 1, 1858, Joseph Smith was a voting inspector for the precinct of San Diego [20].

JOSEPH SMITH MOVES TO PALOMAR MOUNTAIN IN 1859



Ephraim W. Morse (at left), undated

On April 2, 1859, the San Diego Herald reported on Joseph Smith and Ephraim W. Morse [37]:

The spirit of improvement is rife among our enterprising population. Messrs. Morse and Smith have located a sheep and cattle ranch about 60 miles from this place. They will not only raise grain enough for their own use, but have plenty for sale.

Ephraim W. Morse’s biography states the year that the Palomar ranch started, and when he left Smith [49]:

[Ephraim W. Morse] formed a partnership with Thomas Whaley,... and they kept a general supply store in one of the old adobe houses in Old Town. Three years afterward they divided their stock, and Mr. Morse took his share across the street and carried on business there alone until 1859. He then engaged in the sheep business at Palomar, in partnership with Joseph Smith; they cultivated about 100 acres of land, and kept about 3,000 sheep and 100 head of cattle. In 1861 he returned to San Diego and resumed mercantile business... on the northwest side of the Plaza.

In 1859, the San Diego Herald ran a humorous item on Joseph Smith [12]:

Saturday Morning, April 9, 1859

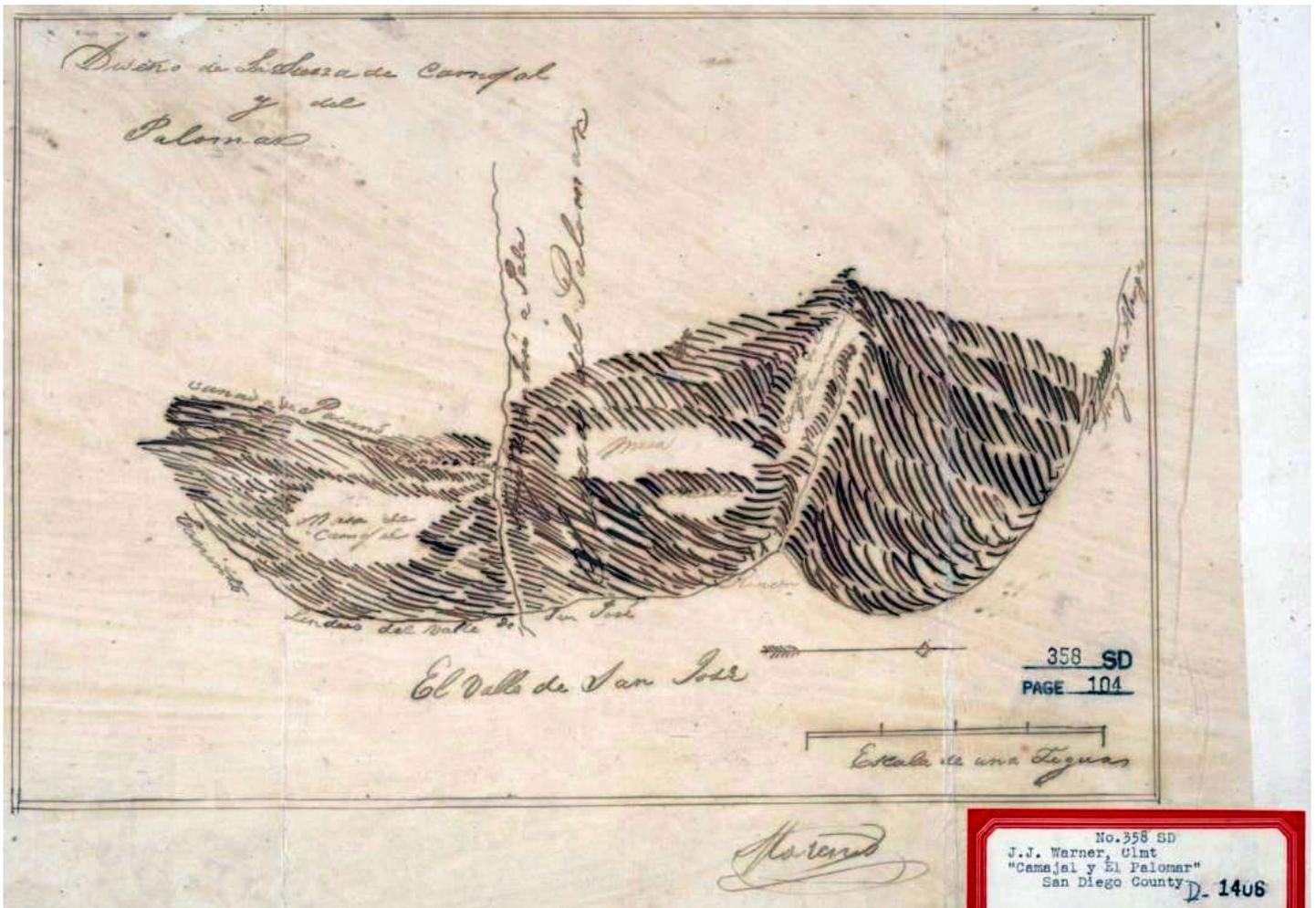
WARM SNOW. – A good story is “out” on our friend Largo Smith, which is worth preserving, in a climatic point of view. His ranch is situated upon a *mesa* about 3,000 feet high. Some of his friends were joking him on selecting such a spot, and thought it must be very cold up there.

“Why Smith,” said one, “you must have perpetual snow on your place.”

“Well, no,” replied he, “we have *some* snow, to be sure; but then, you see, it is not like the snow we have in the States’ ours is a *warm* snow.”

The San Diego Herald poked fun at Smith’s “warm snow” in a later news item [38]:

Our old friend Louis Hauck, who owns a place in our county, near the “Warm Snow Ranch” of Messrs. Morse & Smith, has concluded to remain another season in San Francisco...



**Diseno de la Sierra de Camojal y del Palomar map of 1846
Looking westward at Palomar Mountain from Warner Springs,
Joseph Smith’s ranch was located in the middle area, labelled “Mesa”**

J. J. Warner. U.S. District Court (California, Southern District). Land case 358 SD, page 104; land case map D-1406. From: Online Archive of California

Palomar Oct 30th 1859
Mr Minter
Sir please to pay
the price of the waggon you bought
of me to Mr Morse take
this Receipt for the same and
oblige yours respectfully
Joseph Smith
Excuse me to your intended as it is out
of my power to come in a heap of joy
to you both many children &c

Note from Joseph Smith, dated October 30, 1859, asking Mr. Minter to pay Ephraim Morse for a wagon purchased from Smith. Mr. Minter is probably John Minter of Mesa Grande. UCSD Library

In the 1860 U.S. Census, enumerated on July 27 and 28, 1860, Joseph Smith is listed in the Agua Caliente Township in Dwelling Number 394, as a male farmer, age 40, with real estate valued \$1,000 and personal estate valued \$1,000, born in South Carolina [1]. That 1860 U.S. Census records Joseph Smith's household members as

[1]:

Ephraim W. Morse, age 40, occupation farmer, with real estate valued \$1,000 and personal estate valued \$1,000, birthplace Massachusetts.

Daniel A. Hatfield, age 35, occupation monthly laborer, birthplace New York.

Alexander McLaughlin, age 35, occupation monthly laborer, birthplace Ireland.

Robert Caffel, age 25, occupation monthly laborer, birthplace Ireland.

Anthony T. Dutch, age 30, occupation shepherd, birthplace Germany.

Jose, age 22, Native American (Color Ind), occupation monthly laborer, birthplace California

Diego, age 21, Native American (Color Ind), occupation monthly laborer, birthplace California

Soriaco, age 20, Native American (Color Ind), occupation monthly laborer, birthplace California

Geronimo, age 40, Native American (Color Ind), occupation monthly laborer, birthplace California

Pedro, age 30, Native American (Color Ind), occupation monthly laborer, birthplace California

In a San Diego court case recorded December 16, 1861, Frederico, an eight-year-old Indian child indentured to Joseph Smith, appeared in the court of Justice of the Peace William H. Noyes with his parents, Augustine and Ramona, and the judge noted that no coercion was evident [55]. Smith was authorized in the official indenture document to "have the care, custody, control and earnings of said Frederico, minor, until he obtains the age of fifteen years." Ricardo Carrico, the author of the book "Strangers in a Stolen Land, Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal" in which this case is cited, said about this [55]:

The circumstances leading up to Frederico's indenture are unknown. His parents may have literally sold him into bondage for cash or to pay off a debt to Smith. It is also possible that Smith offered to take care of the child in hopes that he could labor on Smith's ranch in return for a chance for Frederico to learn a trade. Whatever the particulars, there is fragmentary evidence that a type of indentured servitude was practiced in San Diego County and that children were used in this manner.

Catherine Wood writes [10]:

In 1861 Morse returned to San Diego to resume his former occupation of storekeeper, probably when the opening of the Civil War stopped the Butterfield Stages, but Joseph Smith remained on the mountain. ...

Smith was appointed Road Overseer in the Agua Caliente township in 1861-1862, and Judge of the Plains in 1862 and 1863. This office in the San Diego district dates back as far as 1835. In that year Juan Bandini and others prayed for appointment of Judges of the Plains because of "repeated and scandalous robberies of cattle." [Index to Spanish Archives sent to San Francisco-Office of County Recorder, San Diego, Calif.]

The duties of the office as defined in 1857 by the County Board of Supervisors throw a bright light on economic and social conditions of the time. There were three Judges of the Plains for the county at large and one or more for each township. Some of the duties were as follows:

"...to make and attend once a year a gathering of the Horses together and give notice of the time and place."

"It shall be the duty of all persons killing a beef to advise a Judge of the Plains, not a relative, before so doing, to keep the hide at least two days, so that any of the Judges of the Plains, or one authorized by anyone of them, may examine the same, and it is hereby made their duty to make such examination and keep a record of the same open at all times to the inspection of any citizen of the county under penalty of a \$10 fine for the first offense or one month's imprisonment or both fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the Court...

"It shall be the duty of the Judges of the Plains to examine all calf pens and see that calves and cows correspond.

"It shall be the duty of each owner of a ranch to keep a copy of these rules posted upon his premises."

One hundred copies of these rules were ordered printed.

Joseph Smith built a four-room adobe house on his Palomar ranch, a barn, and smoke house, and raised sheep, hogs and cattle. He supplied bacon, ham and other commodities to the stage lines and to San Diego, using Indian and other labor, and ox-carts for hauling

supplies up and down the steep east slope of the mountain over which he had broken a road.

Edward Davis writes [2]:

To the best of my information, Joseph Smith was the first white man to build a house and live permanently on the top of Palomar Mountain. ... Joseph Smith was six feet, four inches tall, and the Indians called him "Jose Largo." "Long Joe Smith." When he settled on Palomar, ..., he owned horses, mules, cattle and hogs. ... His home was located on the north side of what was later known as the Dyche Valley. This valley and surrounding hills were used exclusively by the La Joya Indians for untold generations for harvesting acorns and hunting deer, and they named it "We-a -ma," meaning "Burden basket." This is the third valley through which the road from Henshaw Dam passes. It is a broad, open valley surrounded by oak and pine-clad hills. The grass in the valley is sub-irrigated and is always lush and green - fine feed for stock cattle.

The house was situated on rising ground and commanded a fine view of the whole valley. His house was built of adobe bricks and hewed timbers and roofed with split cedar shakes and, as was the universal custom featured a large stone fireplace at one end of a large living room. No doubt Smith, with the assistance of a few Indians with whom he lived on friendly terms, did all the construction work, as he was a fine mechanic and very handy with tools.



Joseph Smith house, later occupied by George Dyche

Will Dyche, who lived in this house for many years with his father George Dyche, said Smith was a very fine craftsman and from the forest growth, he whip-sawed and cut the rough timber and fashioned it into beautiful finished tables, stands, chairs, bedsteads, etc.

He made all his bee stands out of virgin timber and filled them with wild swarms from hollow oaks nearby. He repaired his wagons and tools with strong-grained native oak, which grew in abundance all over the mountain.

Smith raised hogs as his principal industry and these hogs ranged the country, feeding on acorns and growing fat on the grain he grew in the valley. He had several Indians working for him during planting and harvest, and it was his custom to pay them every week. ... He was unmarried. ...



crop of 1880 U.S. survey map showing Joseph Smith's house, labelled Geo. Dyke's, at middle far left
 Township 10S, Range 2E, San Bernardino Meridian. U.S. Surveyor General's Office, 1880

Abel M. Davis wrote that his father James Davis of Valley Center partnered briefly with Joseph Smith in hog-raising, and that James Davis made bacon out of the hogs, selling it to Machado and Wolf, a merchandising firm in Temecula [52].

Eloise Perkins writes [63]:

Smith built a four-room adobe house, a barn and smoke house on the ranch. He supplied bacon, ham, hay and grain to the Butterfield Stage Lines and to San Diego. Indian laborers, with ox carts, were used for hauling supplies up and down a road he had broken over the east slope of the mountain.

Marion Beckler writes [3]:

Joseph -- "Largo" or "Long Jo" -- Smith hired Indian labor and built an adobe house with a spacious living room which for years was the center of social gatherings. He bought Percheron horses, and built a road so steep in places that pioneers who came after him always walked up to save their horses, and chained their wheels going down to keep the wagons from rolling over the horses.

Smith harvested the natural grass of his meadows. He stocked his ranch with cattle, sheep, horses, hogs. ... James Davis, father of Abel Davis of Valley Center, went into partnership with Smith raising hogs on acorns.

French Percheron horses were imported in great numbers to America, being used by farmers and teamsters as draft horses. Chaining wagon wheels locked them so that the wheels didn't turn, and the wagon slid downhill. The east road down Palomar Mountain was called a slide trail.

John Lincoln Kelly of the Rancho Agua Hedionda area wrote down stories he heard from old-timers including this [65]:

There was another old character whose name was "Manual Durazno" but who went by the name of "Panza Leche" (Milk Belly) from the fact of his having nearly killed himself once trying to drink more milk than anyone else in the camp could. "Panza Leche" (who was a cook) said he was once cooking for some cattlemen up on what is now called Palomar Mt. It was then called "Smith's Mountain"—from the fact that a man named Smith had a ranch on the top of it, where he raised cattle and hogs. These cattlemen that he was with had taken their cattle up onto the mountain to try to carry them through a very dry season, when the grass was very short on the Coast Country. It was the very dry season of 1864. He said there were many bears in the mountains at that time. And while he was up there that summer they were causing this Mr. Smith a lot of trouble by killing his cattle. As a means of preventing further loss Mr. Smith finally had a large and very strong corral built and had his cattle all driven into it every evening, in hopes that the bears would not bother them while they were thus protected by the strong fence.

But to his great disgust he found the corral no protection at all. In fact it made matters much worse, for the bears made a regular circus ring of it. Two or three of them would climb over the fence into the corral and each would seize a cow by the tail, wrap it around his hand, and standing up on their hind legs, chase the cows around and around the enclosure like boys playing horse with one another. And all the time they would be thus chasing the poor cows, the bears would be making a clucking noise with their mouths, like men driving horses. When the cow became tired and refused to play horse any longer, the bear lost his patience and with one big blow of his big paw on the side of her head, scattered her brains all over the ground. Then he caught another and went through a like performance with her until he was himself tired out. Then, after they had all eaten their fill of the dead cattle that now lay about the corral, the bears climbed out over the fence and went their way back into the woods.

But according to “Panza Leche” there was one big grizzly who was the “capitan” of all the bears on the mountain. He was probably as big a grizzly as ever grizzled. And Mr. Smith offered four of the biggest and fattest steers from his herd for this old fellow “deal or alive.” That, according to Panza Leche, soon ended his career; for the next day after this offer was announced, four of the best vaqueros then working for the cattleman for who he was doing the cooking, started out to get that reward. They knew that this monarch of the bear family spent his days hidden in a big tule swamp in one of the damp valleys on the mountain. Whenever he had been scared out of this swamp he would run up a certain smooth green swale to the heavy timber, where he was safe from pursuit. So, two of the vaqueros posted themselves on that edge of the tules, and the other two coming into the swamp from the opposite side, soon started him from his hiding place. As soon as he was well out of the swamp these two “Buenos vaqueros” closed in on him, and it was not two seconds from the time the first “riata Delgada” was around his throat until the other man put his on in like manner and the big bear was strung out between the two horsemen. Then, with one horse back on his haunches on the left, and the other in like position on the right, “what chance did the bear have?” In less than fifteen minutes he was choked to death.

Then they removed their riatas from the carcass and rode up to claim the reward. Mr. Smith when told that they had finished the career of the old cattle slayer, could not believe it was possible. “Come with us,” they told him, “and we will convince you that what we say is true.” So he mounted his horse and they took him to where the dead monarch lay. Mr. Smith was so pleased that he said they had more than earned the promised reward. He not only presented them with four of the largest and fattest steers from his herd, but he had another of the largest and finest slain and the next day it was barbecued in the finest style, and all the vaqueros from the surrounding country with all their friends and relatives were invited to the grandest fiesta that was ever held in the mountains. ... As far as “Panza Leche’s” story of the vaqueros lassoing the bear there was nothing impossible or improbably about that. It had been done many many times as testified to by some of as reliable men as ever lived in California, or in any other state. But his account of the bears playing horse with the cattle in the corral is where he spreads the romance.

In 1872, the San Diego Daily Union published an article on tobacco cultivation mentioning Joseph Smith [58]:

In our own county [San Diego] the first attempt at tobacco growing was made some years ago by a man who has since died. His name was Joseph Smith; he possessed during his lifetime a fine ranch in one of the valleys of the mountain that now bears his name. He came from one of the Southern States that reckoned tobacco among its principal productions, and was quite familiar with the method of cultivating it properly. Among the first things planted by him was a patch of tobacco. He had declared to friends that the soil was adapted to its growth, and the result justified his observation. The plants raised by him were fine, and the leaves large and of an excellent quality.

Winbert C. Fink said this circa 1937, about Joseph Smith [47]:

“[Joseph Smith] was the first white man to maintain a residence and keep stock through the winter. That had never been done by anyone before him. ... Smith, who had some good Percheron draft horses, broke a trail through the brush up the east end of the mountain from Warner Ranch; as he followed the backbone of the ridge to avoid turns and to pull four horses to the wagon to get any amount of the supplies he needed at all

times. This trail was called the slide and all of the pioneers on Smith Mountain went up this route all walking up the steep pull. ... Smith had good improvements on the land, a good adobe house, a log house with smooth walls, an adobe store house at the barn, and a large pasture fenced with rails split from cedar trees... His range was stocked with sheep, cattle and good Percheron horses ...”

Winbert C. Fink said this in 1937, about Joseph Smith [48]:

His adobe house (William Dyche’s) occupied by Joseph Smith is still standing. It has a fireplace. The old log house is gone. Some of the terraces around the house are not quite obliterated yet though the cattle wander around there. It has been a cattle ranch for a great many years. Long Joe Smith was unmarried. He is buried not far from house. There are many stories about Long Joe Smith of Smith Mountain... My story I got from William Dyche himself. Joseph Smith had to come down to Old Town to trade and he may have owned property. Smith employed Indians. There was no other help available. He closed out his sheep and put horses and cattle on the place. The money which was supposed to be the incentive for killing him was never found. The Dyche’s tried to find it but never could. Smith came from the east. He was a Yankee. He had a few tools and was quite a skilled workman with them; he did very good carpenter work. ... To get to the Smith place you go up from Henshaw Dam. When you get into Salmon’s place look due north across the valley and on the opposite hill is where the old Smith adobe still stands. ...

In the Entries in Great Register, San Diego County, California, July 1867, Joseph Smith is listed as age 51, born in South Carolina, occupation farmer, residing in Parloma [sic], and sworn in to vote on August 14, 1866 [1].

MURDER OF JOSEPH SMITH

There are variations in the story of the murder of Joseph Smith. An item in a “Letter from San Diego. [From Our Own Correspondent.],” published in the San Francisco Evening Bulletin dated May 26, 1868, stated [4]:

The citizens here were very much excited last week by learning that Joseph Smith, known everywhere as “Long Joe Smith,” had been assassinated at his ranch “Palomar.” It seems an Englishman, whose name I did not learn, for some reason unknown, shot Smith dead while working at a bench. The Englishman then started for another place to bring some wine Smith had contracted for, leaving the latter as he fell. On his return he found a number of neighbors at the house, and being asked what had become of Joe, he gave no satisfactory answer, but finally, on being accused of murdering Smith, whose body had been found before the murderer returned, he confessed the deed. Quite a sum of money was found in the house untouched, so it is not known whether poor Joe was killed for money or not. Next morning the murderer was found hung to a tree in the neighborhood.

A news article appeared in the Stockton Daily Evening Herald on June 1, 1868, giving more specific information on Smith’s murder and murderer [5]:

MURDER – THE MURDERER HUNG BY A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE –

A correspondent of the S.F. Times, writing from San Diego, Cal., May 22nd, says:

On Thursday morning last, May 14th, Mr. Joseph Smith, one of the oldest residents of this county, was found murdered by being shot twice – once through the head and once through the body – with a large sized Colt's revolver, by Robert Mitchell O'Brien, a deserter of the 14th United States Infantry, who has been to work for him some two or three months. O'Brien was arrested the following day, examined by the people of the neighborhood, who formed themselves into a Vigilance Committee, tried him, and found him guilty, and hung him on the nearest suitable tree. O'Brien confessed that he killed Smith, and said repeatedly before he was executed, that he would do the same to any one that talked to him as Smith did before he shot him. Smith was one of our best citizens, a truly good man, and his loss will be universally regretted by every one in the county. He was about fifty years of age, and unmarried; leaves a fine property, and has no heirs or relations in this part of the State.

A news article appeared in the Sacramento Daily Union on June 9, 1868, giving a bit more information on Smith's murderer [9]:

Letters from San Diego of May 29th say that Joseph Smith, an old resident of that county, was murdered at his ranch by a deserter from the Fourteenth Infantry, from Arizona, who was captured and hung.

Edward Davis writes [2]:

On one of his trips to Kimble's store for supplies, [Smith] met a young man whose name cannot be recalled. This adobe store was located on Warner Ranch, one and a half miles east of the old ranch house and was later operated by Henry Wilson... [PB: Kimble store was built by Cyrus Kimble in 1862. Kimble was murdered in 1865, and Henry Wilson took over the store in 1866.] The young man was poor, bare-footed, and in rags, and was looking for work, so Smith befriended him and took him to Palomar and made him feel at home. He was said to be a deserter from the army. He performed odd jobs and became familiar with Smith's habits; particularly, he managed to be near when Smith paid off his Indian laborers, hoping to see where his benefactor had secreted his money. One day, after the young fellow had been there a month or two, while Smith was busy repairing a bee hive on the porch with his back to the house, the young man he had befriended shot and killed him with Smith's own gun, shooting through the open window from the room inside. After making a hasty and fruitless search for Smith's hidden money, he made his escape on one of the mules, going down the old Indian trail to La Joya. He led a horse packed with two empty kegs. Francesca Maxey, an Indian woman who was Smith's cook, had left that morning to visit her folks at La Joya. On the way down the trail, he passed Francesca and she asked him where he was going. He said Smith sent him to get some wine. Mateo Subish, an Indian from La Joya, rode up to the Smith house that morning and saw the body lying on the porch under a tarpaulin, with feet protruding. Mateo was prevented from making a closer examination by Smith's dogs who stood guard over the body and permitted no one to approach. Mateo immediately rode off the east end of the mountain to the Rincon of Warner Ranch and notified George Dyche, who immediately notified the store.

Word even in that early day spread like wild fire, and that night forty determined men gathered at the Smith house -- from Julian, Mesa Grande, Ballena, Warner's and all settlers' homes. They sent for Francesca, and she told about seeing the man and gave all the information she knew. These men immediately organized a searching party. Smith was a well-known man throughout the mountains and these men were a grim, determined crowd composed of miners, cattlemen, cowboys, freighters and ranchers. Two men were

chosen to track the murderer down and bring him back. He left a plain trail and several Indians who had seen him pass told his pursuers. They, without loss of time, went to the Maxey place, at the far end of the Guejito ranch, and there captured their man. They tied him to his mule and brought him back to the Smith house. Of course, all this took time, as all travel was on horseback. They pulled the canvas from the body and asked if he knew him. He said "yes," but said he did not know who killed him. They said they would soon find out, so they looped a reata around his neck, threw the end over a limb near the house and pulled him up, then lowered him, but he still declared his innocence. [PB: a reata is a long noosed rope to catch animals, a lariat or lasso.] A second time he was pulled up and lowered. Three times he was pulled up, and then he made a full confession. They put chains on him, placed him on a horse and rode him down to Kimble's store. By that time seventy-five men had collected, and they immediately organized a vigilante court and had a trial. The fellow made a full confession and he was condemned to death. He was taken to a live oak tree at the foot of the hills convenient to the store, a noose was fitted around his neck, the other end was cast over a limb, and twenty-five men pulled him up, tied the end of the reata and left him. Old Fred Scholder of Mesa Grande, Nate Harrison, George Dyche and many well-known old timers bore a hand. When the crowd returned to the store, they held a big celebration, whiskey flowed freely all night with whooping, yelling, and shooting. A general good time was enjoyed by all.



Ruins of the Kimble-Wilson store in the distance. Smith's murderer was hanged from an oak tree at the base of the hill in foreground (photo courtesy of South Coastal Information Center, SDSU) [56]

In the Ramona Home Journal, Darrel Beck relates what James Jasper wrote about Joseph Smith's murder [43,44,45]:

James Jasper, a pioneer, editor, historian and county supervisor who settled at Wynola in 1886, documented the story of Smith Mountain about 1935, after hearing it from an Indian woman whom he described as being about 80 years old at the time of her story.

Jasper said, “Maria Beniat Wassak (Guassic) was the old woman’s name. She says that Smith was a very tall, light-complected man. ... he was often called ‘The Texan,’ ... He settled in an attractive valley and built a part of what is now known as the Dyke (Dyche) house. He had hogs, bees, sheep and other stock and raised hay and grain.”

She told Jasper how some of the Indian women from the nearby rancheria would come with their hand sickles to help Smith harvest his grain and help with other ranch chores. One attractive Indian woman, Francisca Palowish, who was keeping house for Smith, caught the eye of one of Smith’s hired hands, a white man and a deserter from a U.S. war ship. The hired man tried again and again to get Francisca to leave Smith and go away with him, but Francisca would have nothing to do with him. Once while attending a fiesta at a place at the base of the mountain called Cuca, the hired man again insisted that she leave Smith and go with him. He used arguments and threats, but she refused and he left very angry.

The following day, Francisca climbed the mountain trail returning to Smith’s cabin and at the house found George Dyche who had come over from Warner to visit Smith. Dyche had discovered Smith’s dead body on the porch where he had been working on bee frames. Soon word got out and a crowd gathered who noticed that the hired man was missing and found evidence that he was the culprit who had split Smith’s head open with an ax.

Maria told Jasper that the men buried Smith in what proved to be a temporary grave and notice was sent to officials in San Diego. When the sheriff and others arrived, they took up the killer’s trail, apprehended him and returned him to Smith’s place. There they disinterred Smith’s body and the entire group, including the corpse and prisoner, made their way down the mountain. According to Maria, they didn’t go directly to San Diego but crossed over to Warner Ranch to a place then known as Buena Vista. Here a “jury” found the hired man guilty of murder committed during his failed attempt to steal Smith’s woman.

He was hanged from a live oak tree that stood about a mile east of the Warner Ranch House and near the old deserted adobe then known as Henry Wilson’s Store, and was buried on the spot. After the hanging, a collection was taken up among the posse, sheriff, officers, jury and spectators to be used to pay an Indian to cut down the oak tree, as it was considered bad luck by the superstitious people to leave a hangman’s tree standing.

In 1974, Joe Stone wrote about Joseph Smith in the San Diego Union, and said [46]:

Smith’s Indian wife was Francisca Pallowish.

Winbert C. Fink, who knew George Dyche, said this in 1937, about Joseph Smith’s murder [48]:

... I think Smith may have stopped trading with E. W. Morse [PB: W.W. in the manuscript] in Old Town shortly before his death. He seems to have begun trading with Louis Wolf at Temecula and it was when returning from his last visit from Louis’ store that he picked up the deserter from the United States Army who shot him a few days later. The men following on the trail hunting for this deserter stopped at Warner’s store and learned of the death of Smith’s murderer, and from the descriptions given them they believed this was the same man there were looking for. He had already been buried. His grave is not far from the store. ... John Place [PB: misspelled Plaice in manuscript] was the constable and he was a very friendly man. He and his cronies went in the store and went up to the bar to

get a drink. At the same time this man was being hanged right back of the store on a limb of a cottonwood tree. They always said that John Place knew what was going on and didn't care what happened to the prisoner. John Place tried to make people believe he was surprised at what was done but they never took him seriously.

Winbert C. Fink, who knew George Dyche, was quoted in successive 1939 newspaper articles, about Joseph Smith's murder [64]:

Attention was called to Smith Mountain by the brutal murder of Joseph Smith in the summer of 1868 [PB: Fink said 1867]. This is what happened: Smith with a load of wool and other products had gone to Pauba Ranch (Temecula) to exchange them for needed supplies. On his way home he picked up a man carrying a bundle and brought him home with a promise of a job on the Palomar ranch. So this man afterwards said – Smith declaring that it would be good to have some one who could talk the white man's language. All his other help were Indians from La Jolla Amago and Agua Caliente, who went to their homes after each spell of work and returned to the mountain when next needed.

The next day after this last trip to market, Smith's neighbor George V. Dyche, foreman at Warner's ranch, came up to see him. On his way up the mountain at Pine Hill Dyche met a stranger mounted on Smith's saddle horse and carrying Smith's rifle. Dyche, who had recently helped in catching some horse thieves, was instantly suspicious of the man. He asked how come he was riding Smith's horse. The answer was not satisfactory. Dyche knew that Smith would never trust his horse and gun to anyone, and he said, "You'll have to go back to the ranch with me." The stranger hesitated. Dyche then persuaded him with the help of his gun. ... When they reached the valley before Smith's house they saw an Indian on his way to work for Smith. Earlier in the day, however, Smith's cook, an Indian woman, had come to the place and, seeing what had happened, went back to La Jolla without anyone seeing her. When Dyche and the stranger got to the house they found Smith lying dead on the porch in front of the door, a bullet through his body. Dyche sent the Indian for John Place, the constable, who lived four miles north in another valley.

When Place came they took the stranger and the rifle out on the trail, headed for the justice court. As they passed the Warner store they stopped for a little restorative. It was also rather unusual to have a murderer to exhibit to the public. The store was mostly saloon and while the constable and his aids were enjoying themselves at the bar, drinking and exchanging stories of their past experiences, a few others, friends of Smith, took the prisoner out behind the store in the cottonwood grove and bound, gagged and hanged him on a limb of a tree. They worked swiftly and quietly. Then they returned to the saloon and interrupted the constable during one of his yarns by inquiring, 'John, where's your prisoner?'

The constable, taken by surprise, said, 'Where have you fellows taken him?' One of the number pointed to the tree outside and replied, 'There he is.' They had promised the murderer that he would be buried in a box and they made good their promise by getting together some boards, making a box and burying him near-by on Boot Hill, where many others lie. It was the custom to bury those overtaken in the midst of their crimes in the clothes they were wearing.

Eloise Perkins writes [63]:

On a trip to San Diego in 1863, Smith was accompanied back to Palomar by James Saunders, a deserter from a British ship. He had hired the Englishman to act as foreman for the Indian laborers. Saunders murdered Smith in the spring of 1868. ... The Englishman left Smith's body in his garden, after shooting him in the back. A group of neighbors found the body while Saunders journeyed to the Lake Wohlford area to pick up some wine Smith had ordered. When Saunders returned to the mountain he was confronted by the neighbors with questions about Smith's death. After trying unsuccessfully to deny his part in the murder, Saunders broke down and confessed. A group of mountain residents volunteered to accompany the constable and Saunders to San Diego, where he was scheduled to stand trial. They made an overnight stop at Warner Springs and the prisoner was left outside, chained to a wagon wheel. The next morning he was found hanging from a tree.

Marian Beckler writes [3]:

For eight years things went well with Smith, till the day he drove to Temecula with a load of wool and picked up a hitch-hiker. The young man was a deserter from a British ship in San Diego harbor, but to the sociable ex-sea-captain he was someone to talk to "who spoke the white man's language." Smith took him home and made him ranch foreman.

The cause of the trouble between Smith and his foreman remains a mystery that still inspires sleuthing. Some have said it was over Smith's Indian wife. Some have believed the man thought Smith had gold hidden away and was trying to learn where it was. Others say they were "having a drunken argument" that ended fatally -- a usual thing in that day. The man was fleeing on one of Smith's horses when he ran into George Dyche coming up the grade. Dyche was suspicious and made the man return with him. He found Smith's body. Dyche sent for John Place. They took the man as far as Warner's Station. They intended to turn him over to the sheriff, but, as the story goes, they stopped to "imbibe restorative for tired spirits." And while they did so, their prisoner was taken out and hanged.

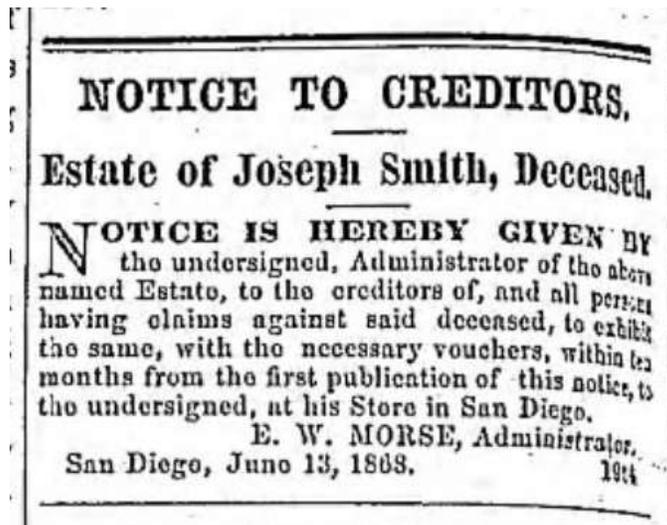
Winbert C. Fink was quoted in a July 1939 newspaper article [64]:

Joseph Smith was buried near his house on Palomar in a grove of black oak trees, a little distance southwest. The incentive for the murder was robbery. The murderer confessed just before his hanging and added that he did not want to go to work for Smith on the ranch. It was supposed that Smith had hidden considerable money somewhere in or near his house, but none was found there or on the murderer. The money in use at that time was gold and silver, which could be hidden without regard to weather conditions.

In 1937, Winbert C. Fink said this about Joseph Smith's gold [48]:

The money which was supposed to be the incentive for killing him was never found. The Dyche's tried to find it but never could.

On June 20, 1868, Ephraim W. Morse, the Public Administrator of Joseph Smith's estate and his business partner, published a notice in newspapers giving ten months for creditors to settle claims against the estate of Joseph Smith at Morse's store in San Diego [6].



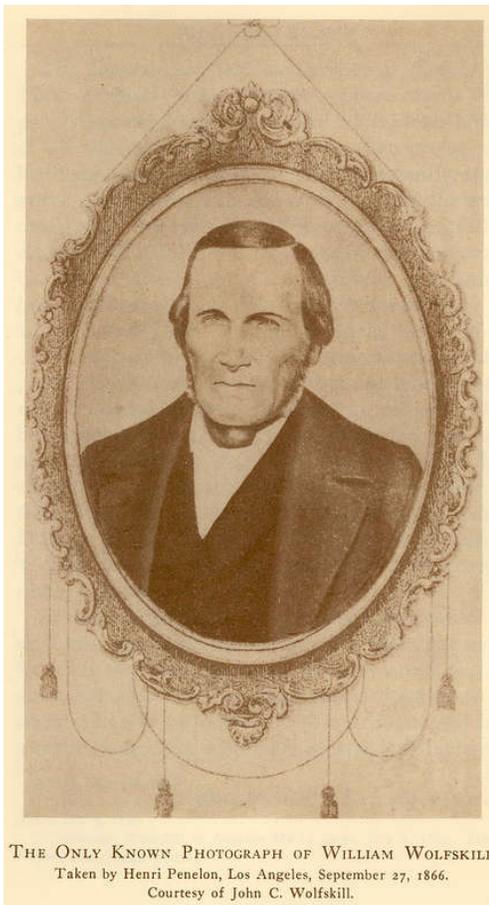
San Bernardino Guardian, June 20, 1868, page 2, column 6

Catherine Wood wrote in 1937, about the sale of Smith's estate [57]:

After Joseph Smith was murdered, a sale of his Palomar property was held at the ranch. Judge Witherby, prominent San Diegan, had charge of it, and Uncle Nate (Harrison) cooked for the visitors, who came far and wide.

In 1974, Joe Stone wrote about Joseph Smith in the San Diego Union [46]:

[Smith] bought property in San Diego and when he died owned 30 parcels, for which he had paid sums such as \$25 for a city lot.



William Wolfskill, September 27, 1866

William Wolfskill purchased the Joseph Smith property for the livestock and squatter's rights, intending to put his son John on it [8]. However his son John would not live there, so William Wolfskill sold it to George Dyche [8].

[PB: Winbert Fink erroneously said the estate was sold to John Wolfskill [64].]

THE ONLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF WILLIAM WOLFSKILL
Taken by Henri Penelon, Los Angeles, September 27, 1866.
Courtesy of John C. Wolfskill.

Edward Davis writes [2]:

... Smith having no heirs, his property reverted to the Public Administrator, who sold it to Wolfskill, who in turn sold it to George Dyche for what he paid for it. Dyche also came into possession of the hogs and cattle formerly belonging to Smith, ... George Dyche had been living in the Rincon of Warner Ranch where it cuts a deep “V” into the east end of Palomar, but on acquiring the Smith holdings in about 1869, he moved his family, horses, cattle and household goods up on Smith Mountain ... the valley thereafter was known as the “Dyche Valley,” for many years Dyche and his family occupied the Smith house.



George V. Dyche, undated

Joseph Smith’s estate was settled in February 1872, and the San Diego Daily Union ran this notice [59]:

In the Probate Court, February 12th, Judge Bush presiding, the following proceedings were had: ... Estate of Joseph Smith, deceased, filed receipts from various creditors, and decree finally discharging Administrator. ...

After Joseph Smith’s death in 1868, Palomar Mountain became known informally as Smith or Smith’s Mountain. In an early usage of “Smith Mountain,” the San Diego Bulletin reported on July 16, 1870, that the Board of Supervisors July 5th meeting included this business item [39]:

Ordered, that the petition for a School District, to be known as the “Smith Mountain District,” be granted, with the following boundaries: Commencing at Warner’s Ranch; thence in a southerly direction to the house of John Striplin; thence to Pala; thence to Temecula; Thence to the house of Charles Thomas and back to the place of beginning.

Though the name Smith Mountain was used in the 1870s and 1880s, it really came into wide use in the 1890s [41]. In 1901, its name was officially changed to Palomar Mountain.

Catherine Wood writes [10]:

The (U.S. Board on Geographic Names) Washington, D. C., says: "In response to a petition from local citizens for a change in name from Smith Mountain, the name Palomar was officially adopted by this organization on December 4, 1901. Palomar was the original Spanish name for the mountain, meaning 'dovecot,' and occurred on early maps. The petition of the local residents stated that Smith Mountain was so designated 'some twenty years ago' by residents in the vicinity, because a man named Smith met a violent death there." (George C. Martin, Executive Secretary.)

That name change decision is recorded in the Third Report of the United States Board on Geographic Names, 1890 – 1906, as follows [40]:

Palomar; mountain, in northern part of San Diego county, Cal. (Not Smith.)

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