

RANCHO CAPISTRANO

# ANECDOTES

1968-1995

*Memories of happy times and exciting or unusual events we have experienced during the twenty six years we have lived at Rancho Capistrano. I have not written them in chronological order, but only as they came back into my memory.*

*Bessie Chapin*

## **RANCHO CAPISTRANO ANECDOTES**

*"Let's turn around and go back. There can't be anything on this road worth looking at."*

*We had just come from Oregon, and after the evergreen forests of the mountains there "Cleveland National Forest" seemed like a ludicrous name for this desert like country with its occasional live oak or manzanita amongst the native brush.*

*"We might as well go on." replied Sherman. "We're almost there." I was tired of this narrow winding road and the high rocky embankments. It didn't seem to lead anywhere. I was sure that the bright promise of the newspaper ad that had enticed us there would never be fulfilled. But suddenly it happened! The sign on the gate said "Rancho Capistrano", but inside was Shangrila! Beautiful green meadows, great rock formations, clumps of native shrubs and wooded areas of century old live oaks.*

*By the real estate office was a beautiful clear lake with shining blue water. On its bank were two small rowboats, complete with oars, which seemed to beckon to us to take a ride on the placid waters. In the nearby meadow horses grazed peacefully, proclaiming to prospective buyers that this was indeed horse country.*

*Graded roads of decomposed granite ran by the entrance to each lot. Unpaved roads were more suitable for riding horses and the ranch was designed to attract those who might want to keep horses there. There were only two buildings on the ranch besides the real estate office. One was a small stable near the gate. The other was a four room unfinished building on Lot Eleven. A house had been started by the previous owner of the whole ranch property, but it was left unfinished when he sold it to the developers. The lot had the advantage of having a year round spring which, according to the old timers who had grown up in the area, had never gone dry.*

*It was my husband and our daughter Sharon who were so impressed that they wanted to come back the next weekend. I did not*

like the idea of traveling that lonely road again, but their wishes prevailed and after another tour of the ranch we ended the day by both of them signing on the dotted line and Lot Eleven was to be our daughters and ours for many years to come.

We really had no intention of moving to California, but Sharon's family made good use of the ranch. They came out almost every weekend and camped or picnicked. The children hiked the trails and climbed the rocks. They spent much time at the lake swimming and paddling about in one of the boats. They treasure the memories of the good times they had here when they were growing up.

In the spring of 1969 Sherman was between jobs and Sharon suggested that he come to the ranch and start developing the property. The land next to the spring had been used as the homesite for generations. We found artifacts that showed where an adobe house had been and also some that proved that Indians had spent much time there in an earlier century. Later farmers had cleared away the trees and shrubbery to make room for fields and gardens. We needed to plant trees and also to build up the soil. There was much work to be done. However, before Sherman could come to California Nature went wild. There were sixty nine inches of rain, almost all at once. Roads were flooded and huge rocks blocked both the Ortega and the South Main Divide and they were closed, so he waited for them to be reopened. The weather was beautiful but the ranch was a disaster. Water had roared down the waterways washing out the culverts. They were so mangled that almost all of them had to be replaced. The roads within the ranch were washed out and needed to be rebuilt. The floors in the real-estate office were covered with inches of silt that the water left when it ran through there. There was much work to be done in order to get the ranch back to normal.

When Sherman's employer called him to go back to work he decided not to go. He liked the climate here and for the first time since he was a child his ears were healing. Scarlet Fever had left him almost totally deaf and with a chronic ear infection which made it impossible to use a hearing aid.

The developers were desperately trying to get the ranch back into

shape after the terrific rains and they were happy to hire Sherman as, because of his experience in construction on the Columbia River, he had the expertise needed to supervise the replacing of the culverts, the repairing of the ranch roads and the building of the spillways needed on the lakes. They also wanted a ranch manager who would live on the ranch and safeguard it against the hunters who seemed to take delight in shooting up the buildings and the motorcyclists who believed that the ranch roads existed for their particular pleasure. Hib Stewart, who had been acting as caretaker, did not want to live on the ranch so Sherman was asked to take the job.

At first there was not much money for operating the ranch because of the expense of rebuilding the roads and waterways. Sherman furnished his own pick-up and gas and often bought supplies for the clubhouse, such as light bulbs and paper for the rest rooms. (The real-estate office was now the clubhouse.) There were now enough property owners to form an association and the first annual meeting was scheduled.

In order to get ready for the meeting Sherman hired a young couple to clean the clubhouse thoroughly and to paint the fences at the front entrance. As there was yet no money available from the association he also paid for this himself. He was so happy here and he enjoyed the ranch so much that he wanted everything to be right for the meeting.

The meeting was a great success. All the new owners were there; officers were elected, committees were appointed and plans were discussed. All the members got acquainted with each other and everyone was friendly and excited about his new venture. Andy Salat, a prospective owner, showed plans of a house he wanted to build and he was assured that his plans would be accepted so he bought the lot on the hill, which is now the Wishon estate. Sherman was asked to stay on as caretaker at a small salary, as they expected him to augment his income by helping absentee owners. Several of them had horses that would need to be fed daily and some had planted trees that needed weekly watering until they became established.

Some owners were beginning to build. Stephens were building an adobe house and Bob Lang was building an adobe stable which he

later turned into servants' quarters. Michels were getting ready to build on

Andy Salat presented his plans to the architectural committee. That was our first big discord; the committee turned down his plans. The chairman of the committee showed pictures of rows of English cottages, all very much alike. That is how he had pictured the ranch to look. The board felt that since they had assured Andy before he bought the property that he could build his house according to the plans he had shown them then, that his plans should be accepted. The architectural committee resigned.

In the meantime Sherman was coordinating everything on the ranch, keeping up the clubhouse daily, and the lake, smoothing the edges of the roads which had been left with big burms on each side, feeding any animals that were left here by absentee owners, repairing broken water lines, watering any plantings, and in the meantime trying to get his own place ready to live in. Since water was not readily available to all the plantings he filled large barrels with water and carried them on his pick-up from the pump house to the areas that needed water. He helped with the building of Stephen's house and with the stable at Langs. He managed to find time to plant a small garden and amazed the old timers when he had ripe tomatoes in June. That is the only year since we have lived here that we haven't had a late freeze in the last of May or in early June. That year he had beginner's luck.

When the property was sold the developers claimed that our local well would provide sufficient water for household use for all the lots. However they sold the water rights to the Elsinore Municipal Water Company. When that happened we had to discontinue pumping water to keep the lake up as the cost was prohibitive. When we had plenty of rainfall the lake held water fairly well until late summer but sometimes went almost dry before the rainy season began again.

The developers had envisioned this remote ranch as ideal for weekenders who wanted to keep horses and ride the forest trails. The dirt roads and the distance to available work made it very inconvenient for any one except retired people to live here full time. Elsinore was a sleepy little town that was completely closed up at five thirty. After that

time one couldn't even buy gas there, let alone groceries.

There would be no school busses come up to the ranch and no mail delivery. At first many of the lots were sold to people working in aerospace but when that industry slowed down most of them lost their jobs and had to give up their lots. Gradually there were buyers who wanted week end homes that would be suitable to live in when they retired.

In rainy weather the South Main Divide became a problem. There were two places that had a large amount of red clay and when it rained those spots became very slick and the cars tended to slide around. That is what the young men with four wheelers liked and as soon as it began to rain they were up there with their vehicles, spinning around and tearing up the road. One time I got caught in town during a rainstorm and when I tried to come back up the road it was almost impassable as the four wheelers had made huge ditches in it. I got in one of the ruts and couldn't get out but six big fellows in a van who wanted to get by me just lifted my car out of the rut and I happily went on my way home. I remember several times when Sherman went down the road with his pickup and pulled out neighbors who had got stuck in the clay. One neighbor even lost his chains and they got buried so deeply in the mud that he never could find them.

The board began to negotiate with the county to improve the road. They had arrangements all made with the county road commissioner for the county to take it over, but the commissioner retired. The new commissioner came up to the ranch gate, stopped and looked all around. Then he said "I see no reason for doing anything to this road"; and they didn't. We just had to live with it or take care of it ourselves. We were able to get the forestry to grade it about once a year, but it was still a problem, especially in the rainy season.

It was hard to keep the motorcycles from coming onto the ranch. The winding roads were ideal for them to race around and Sherman was forever chasing them out. We kept the front gate locked with a padlock but that didn't deter them. They just came in any place they could find an opening. Sometimes the cyclists were very aggressive, especially Hell's Angels, who usually came in groups. Sherman would jump in his pickup and go after them and once even threatened them with his rifle. Luckily

they didn't have guns, and finally turned back and left.

There was a gate at the back entrance but the property was not entirely fenced. In most places there was enough forest growth to prevent vehicles from entering, but they found a spot where they could cross. Sherman put a quantity of broken glass there hoping that would keep them from coming in, but they picked up the glass. Often the cyclists and four wheelers gathered in the meadows beyond Sanfords and entered the ranch there. Sherman used the tractor to drag huge rocks over to the ranch boundary. He thought they would have no way to move them, but they did! They pulled them clear out of the way. To them our ranch was an off-road vehicle park. Sherman finally decided that the best that he could do was just to get in his pick-up, run them down and order them off.

When Sherman decided to stay at Rancho Capistrano I realized that unless I wanted to live alone for the rest of my life I would eventually have to go there to live too. His glowing accounts of life at the ranch were beginning to make me anticipate living there. However I wanted to teach long enough in Oregon to qualify for my Oregon teacher's pension and my social security, so I signed my contract for another year. I drove down each summer and spent my vacation with him and also flew down for my Christmas and Easter holidays.

Until I came down the first summer Sherman had really camped out. The house was just a shell. He had no electricity, no water nor heat. He cooked his food in the burn-barrel, a large metal barrel that had been used by the developers to burn trash. Early visitors at the ranch still tell about the wonderful stews and beans he cooked there and shared with any who came by. He carried all his water from the pump house. He went to our daughter's in Irvine to bathe, wash his clothes, get his mail and make a weekly telephone call to me. He did his banking and shopping there. He could do those things after work at Irvine, but Elsinore had nothing to offer after five o'clock.

As soon as school was out that first summer Sherman came to The Dalles to get me. He took a pick-up load of essential furnishings from our Eugene house and I followed him in my car. It was a long lonely trip but only one of several which I made before I retired.

*I was happy to find that Sherman had been able to get the house wired for electricity. The water was piped into the house, and we had a septic tank. I was able to use the refrigerator, the washer and drier that we brought from Oregon. Sherman had installed a bathtub; my birthday gift was a toilet; and I must say that under the circumstances I couldn't have received a better gift. We didn't have a water heater but we attached the long garden hose to the faucet and curled it up in a sunny spot where it produced solar heated water daily to fill the bathtub. We had no kitchen range but I used my several electrical cooking appliances to cook our meals, and heated water in my electric coffee pot to use for cooking and for kitchen chores.*

*There wasn't much activity on the ranch during the week. We saw very few people except for occasional strangers who had ventured too far off the Main Divide into the hilly and rocky terrain and needed help to have their vehicles rescued. Sherman took his pick-up many times to help them out of their predicaments and get them back on the road, usually for a brief "Thank you." In rainy weather we even had four stranded boys sleep on our kitchen floor. Now, we feel threatened if a stranger comes to our door. We always stopped on the road to help people with car trouble, or to take them to a telephone. We even picked up strangers and took them to town. Since then our whole world has changed. We now quickly pass up any one that we do not know.*

*When we went on the South Main Divide during the day we often met hippies and flower children on their way to the falls in the forest several miles beyond us. One day we came back home and found a couple of them stealing gas from our emergency supply. They said they had planned to leave money for it, but we doubted it since they didn't pay us for what they had already taken. We were glad to help people out who needed it, but not to the extent of giving them free gas to go joy riding.*

*Almost every weekend our daughter and family came up to the ranch and I kept busy cooking for them and helping to supervise the smaller children. In good weather they liked to sleep outdoors in their sleeping bags, but when it was cold or rainy they slept inside on the floor and we had wall to wall grandchildren, for there were seven of them.*



On the Fourth of July the ranch was deserted so we went into Irvine to spend the day with our family at their association celebration. At that time Elsinore had a small airport, and they had a plane that brought gliders up into the air over the lake and set them loose. While we were in Irvine one of those gliders lost altitude as it went over the ranch and one wing sheared the top off a large oak tree in Lot 116. It pancaked onto the ground and the impact severely injured the pilot. He was taken to the hospital, and though he lived for some time he never recovered. When we came home the glider was still there with a guard, and wasn't removed until the next day.

When the owner of Lot 48 was visiting his lot he was shot by someone who was hunting in the adjoining forest. It did not kill him but he was so frightened by it that he immediately decided to sell his lot. One day a bullet from a hunter came through the clubhouse wall and barely missed a man who was using the restroom facility. The ranch wasn't always a safe place to be.

A beautiful young Doberman had strayed from the forest to our house, and since Sherman had been unable to find its owner it continued to live with us. Our grandchildren had named him Ichabod, and had become quite attached to him. One late afternoon he came to see me as I was resting, brushed against me affectionately, and then went away. We never saw him again. We hoped that his owner had returned to the ranch and found him.

Early the next morning we were awakened by the barking of a dog at our doorstep. We hoped it might be Ichabod, but it was not. There were frequent hunters in the woods around us, and some of them brought their bloodhounds to track down bobcats. When the hound was able to get the scent of one it would follow it into the woods until it treed its prey. Sometimes the hunter was not able to retrieve his dog by the time he had to go home, so he would leave and return at a later day to get it. The dog usually could be found where it had first been turned loose. The dog at our door was a hound, and obviously its owner had not returned to pick him up. He seemed quite worried and finally convinced Sherman to follow him. Sherman went with him and found another hound caught in a rocky embankment in the brush. Both dogs came home

with him and he tried, unsuccessfully, to get in touch with the owners whose phone numbers were on their tags. After two weeks we decided that we had permanent boarders, but finally one dog's master turned up. He was also caring for the other dog, which belonged to a friend. We hadn't been able to get in touch with him because he'd been out of town. We were sure we were out of dogs again. The next day when Sharon and Guy came up with their family they went for a ride beyond the ranch and found a small dog, lost and very frightened. We were hoping we might have another dog but the owner's address was on the collar. Shortly after our family left for home a very unhappy family came to our house to report the missing dog. It had apparently jumped from their car when they stopped for a few minutes, and they didn't notice it at the time.

No more stray dogs came to the ranch so Sherman decided if he was to have a dog he wouldn't be able to depend on strays; he would have to get one of his own. Our grandchildren wanted him to get one as they were not allowed to have a dog at their townhouse. They searched the want ads until they found one that offered to give a registered beagle to someone who lived on a farm where there were children. They contacted the owner and soon Augie, a beautiful male beagle, came to live with us.

Sherman now had a telephone so after I went back to Oregon for another year of teaching I was able to keep in touch with him more easily. Gary Wright, who owned the lot next to us, was working on our house, putting in the ceilings, the inside walls, and building on a small addition in the back. Mike Goodbody, who had an adobe plant in Escondido, was building a house for the Stevens and Sherman helped with that. He still continued as caretaker and attempted to keep all trespassers off the ranch.

The next summer that I spent at the ranch was disappointing in one respect, for I expected the house to be finished that summer. However, day after day Gary failed to show up to work on it and when he did come for a day his wife would usually appear the next day to take him home.. He worked less than three days all summer. It was almost impossible to get any one to come to the ranch to work.

The next winter was so cold that Sherman bought a Franklin Stove

and also installed a gas furnace. The lake at the clubhouse froze over so that he could walk on the ice and the fire hydrants froze and many had to be replaced.

The Franklin Stove proved very useful. Sherman cooked his beans and stews in a Dutch oven on the stove, and broiled steak over the coals. The grandchildren roasted wienies and toasted marshmallows during the winter evenings.

Several property owners were spending almost every weekend at the ranch. Bob and Nettie Strain, Lot 58, had a small trailer on their place. They were devout Baptists and almost every Sunday they conducted church services there for several other Baptist families who were also property owners here. The Strains tried to get more Baptists to buy property here as they hoped to make this ranch into a Baptist colony. Their plans didn't work out and they finally sold their lot to the Turners.

On Saturday night the clubhouse was filled with the voices and laughter of many of those who came to spend the weekend. There were a few drinks, dancing to the music of the radio and much conversation as all relaxed after a busy day working on the land.

Bob Strain had a small tractor which he allowed some of the other property owners to use, but after one person tipped the tractor over on himself and another almost succeeded in doing so Sherman knew that the terrain here was too rough for those with no experience to operate such a large piece of equipment safely so when the association finally bought a used tractor the board ruled that only the ranch manager might use it. Because he had been an operating engineer for many years Sherman had had experience with many such types of machinery.

Interesting events took place at the ranch that year, some happy and some disastrous. New homes were started; the first ranch wedding took place on Lot 60 which is now owned by the Darringers, and one of our board members had a tragic accident.

Gary Wright and Sherman were working on Bob Lang's stable, but at noon another property owner came by and Gary and he went for a ride out into the forest. They were on a cliff and turning back required expert maneuvering to turn around. Gary's companion was unsure, and got out of the car, but Gary proceeded, and the car went over the cliff. The friend

*hiked back to the ranch for help. A helicopter was sent to the scene of the accident and Gary was taken to a hospital where he lay in a coma for several months before he finally died.*

*Another event that made the year memorable was that the meadow just south of the ranch was the scene of a small Woodstock. The forestry gave permission for the gathering; a small bandstand was set up, and though the event was very limited compared to the original Woodstock in the east ,several hundred hippies attended. Elsinore sent up a single police officer to stand by, and he and Sherman watched the activities from within the ranch. There were a lot of drugs being used, especially the smoking of pot. The policeman was afraid to go to the meadow alone but he finally said "I've just got to go over there." When he appeared there a cry echoed through the crowd, "Here comes the fuzz!" However the officer was careful, he made no charges , and finally left with no incidents.*

*San Francisco had become the western center for the hippies but we had our own small center at the hot springs on the Ortega. There was often a congregation of them there, flowing out into the road. Some always got in the way of the cars, but we found that it was best to just keep going slowly and they would finally get out of the way. One day Rose Marie Michel managed to catch one on the hood of her car, but she kept moving and he finally tumbled off, unhurt. Since they were always "on pot" it was a little frightening. We never knew what they might do.*

*Sherman was quite sure there were regular drug drops in the meadow near the ranch. There were frequently small planes which flew low over there, and very soon afterwards he saw cars visiting the area briefly. Drug dealers seemed to consider this isolated area a safe place to do their business .Because the roads were much like the wagon roads of the early century the police did not patrol the area regularly.*

*Several years later one of the ranch residents who was having trouble sleeping some nights noticed an unusual amount of late night and early morning traffic on Calle Grande. Some of the cars were quite dilapidated and she was sure they did not belong on our ranch. It wasn't long before a neighbor discovered that the attraction was a patch of marijuana that was being cultivated by the owner of Lot 57. The*

authorities were called and the night time visits to Lot 57 ceased.

When I finally retired and came to the ranch to stay the house was still unfinished so I rented my house in Oregon until we could get the ranch house ready to move into. A contractor had agreed to finish the ceiling and walls while Sherman was in Oregon helping me get ready to move. Sherman had cleared the rooms and put everything on the patio under a large canvas but when we got here from Oregon nothing had been touched. However I had a really good surprise waiting for me.

Sherman thought that I might be lonely on the ranch after giving up my teaching. His dog, Augie, was the perfect mate for Streng's registered female beagle and Sherman was offered his pick of the puppies. He selected one for me and I was eager to see it. I had decided to name it Obadiah, Obie for short. The names Obie and Augie seemed to go well together. On the Sunday after we arrived at the ranch the weekend visitors were relaxing and visiting in Steven's front yard and Sherman wanted me to meet his friends so we joined them. We sat in a circle and suddenly Rod Streng appeared and placed a small puppy in the center. The puppy looked very frightened. Several people held out their hands to it but it didn't move. I said "Here Obie", and beckoned to him and he perked up just as if he knew his name, and bounced right over to me. I knew right away that we belonged to each other.

Obie slept in his little house on the patio but every morning when Sherman opened the door he came bouncing in and jumped on my lap. I was sorry when he grew old enough to start roaming the forest with Augie. It is a beagle's nature to wander and our dogs were often seen in the woods quite far from home but they always came back at night. Our TV reception was not good and we had no daily paper so Sherman spent his evenings removing the ticks that our dogs gathered in their wanderings.

We waited for some time for the contractor to come and finish our walls and ceilings but he kept putting us off, so I decided if it were to be done I would have to do it myself. Sherman had so much to do on the ranch that he couldn't help me. I gathered together a ladder and the necessary tools and materials and went to work. I did all the ceilings and then Ray Garland, a friend of ours helped me finish the walls and built

our cupboards but he didn't want to paint or varnish the woodwork so I donned my paint clothes and climbed my ladder again.

Sherman had not lived at the ranch very long before he began to accumulate animals. Some of the property owners who thought they wanted animals found that having them is not only expensive but very confining and they often tire of the responsibility. One property owner gave his rabbits to Sherman and our rabbit population increased so rapidly that fried rabbit became a frequent item on our menu and one that was very popular with our dinner guests. One night we came home and found a small pen of full grown chickens in the middle of our driveway. A former neighbor gave us a milk goat. He had recently moved to a small farm and when his mother pig had more babies than she could handle he also gave two baby pigs to Sherman. It was a cold day and Sherman turned the oven on low and laid the pigs in the oven on a towel, with the door open. When I arrived home from town I found that we had one warm lively little pig and one slightly roasted and not so lively one.

Garland Stevens had chickens at his place and since Sherman went there every day to care for them Garland said he would buy a small pig to keep our surviving pig company and Sherman could care for them both at Garland's place. Stevens were there only on weekends and the pigs would be far away from anyone living on the ranch. It wasn't long before we had baby goats. and Sherman had to build some fences. We had thought that perhaps the goats would help to keep the weeds down and clear the brush but we found that they much preferred our plants and flowers. Goats became very popular on the ranch. On weekends a familiar sight was Virginia Stevens walking with her goats around the ranch. Turners and DeMars also had goats ;they make interesting pets.

While Ray Garland was working on our house the doors were usually left open for his convenience. One day I was sure I heard a hen cackling in the bedroom and when I went in to look I found an egg in the middle of my bed. Sherman's pet hen had invited herself in and made a little round nest there for herself. She seemed so happy with that soft little nest that I was sure she had visions of hatching a brood of baby chicks right there on my bed and .I decided to put an end to that plan.

I watched carefully whenever the door was open to be sure she didn't repeat her performance. One day I left our grandchildren in Sherman's care while I went to town and when I came back I was met by the exuberant children. "Nanny!" they exclaimed. (Nanny was our goat.) "Nanny got loose and came in the house. She was on your bed!" I would have really preferred having the chicken on the bed rather than the goat, but it seems I don't have choice in those respects.

I was glad to get the cupboards finished but I didn't like the concrete floors with their splotches of varied colors of paint. (The developers had stored and mixed paint there), so we tried at several places to buy floor coverings, but as soon as the stores found out where we lived they refused to come to our ranch to install either rugs or floor tile. I finally bought several bundles of self sticking tiles and laid the tile myself. It was a busy summer. We bought a water heater and a new gas range, and the next summer we sold our Oregon home and moved what furniture we needed to the ranch. Our long camp out was over!

Living without our house properly furnished had not interfered with our social life. Every Friday evening several owners came for the weekend to work on their property. I watched eagerly for them to come in the gate. They usually arrived about supper time, so I always had plenty of food ready to share. They dropped by our house, brought in something to add to the meal, and I added another place setting to our makeshift table. Sometimes when the Saturdays and Sundays were cold and dreary I would take some hot soup or homemade doughnuts and coffee around to those who were working on their lots. They were happy for the interruption. Several families were building, and because it was hard to get contractors to work up here they had to do much of it themselves.

Very few of the original owners live here now. Harrimans started building early. Mike Goodbody supplied the adobe and Dean planned and built the house in his spare time. We, of course, are still here. Abbots bought their lot early but did not build until he retired. Many of those who live here now either bought their lots after the association was formed or purchased homes from previous owners. Some of the first owners who built and later sold were Stevens, Langs, Salats, Fran

De Mars, Michels and Paul Nissan who built the barn that later became Maxwell's house. As the population and industry has moved toward us the atmosphere of the ranch has changed and there are fewer horses and more commuters. The new homes are beginning to look less like mode st rural homes and more like posh suburban residences. The one thing that has not changed is that we are still above the smog that many city dwellers have to endure.

Although the South Main Divide was a rough road it did not keep the hunters out of the forest. An elderly friend who has spent most of his life in the Elsinore area tells of the wonderful experiences he has had hunting and fishing in the woods beyond our ranch. Although there were no longer year round streams where fish could thrive when we moved here, the forest still attracted hunters. At the opening of hunting season the road was alive with cars, from early morning until late at night. A neighbor adjoining the ranch had invited friends to hunt here for years, and some of them were under the impression that the ranch belonged to him. Sherman had a hard time making them understand that they could no longer hunt here.

One night after midnight I was awakened by shots very close by and my first thought was that my grandson who was visiting was watching a late war movie. When I found that he was sound asleep I was concerned and awakened Sherman. The shooting was taking place just outside our bedroom. There was a jeep load of hunters in our back yard, probably firing at our goats. Sherman went after them with his gun and his pick-up and fired at their tires, but they didn't stop. They went down our road and out the back gate. They had taken down the ranch gate and were using it to feed a large bon-fire. Sherman followed them and got his pick-up stuck on a bank so he couldn't leave. He was frightened but he pretended to them that he was just another hunter, and two of the men came and lifted his car off the hump. Sherman went back to the house and called the sheriff. He met the two police who came to the gate and tried to get them to go down to the fire, but they just turned around and went back to town. That was typical of the service we got from the Elsinore police. Sherman probably should have called the forestry and told them about the fire in the forest. They might have come.



Except for during the hunting season the ranch was usually quiet and peaceful. We felt very close to nature here. Sometimes it seemed as though we were living in a wild animal park. During the day a flock of wild pigeons could be seen drifting like a gray cloud above us and below a mother quail guided her small offspring through the tall meadow grass as she searched for food. In the evenings. As Sherman patrolled the ranch we saw deer and fox and sometimes a raccoon or a badger and at night we could hear the yipping of the coyotes as they gathered in small packs in their search for food. Our chickens had to share their food with the squirrels and mice that visited daily and one day we saw a long narrow trail of ants so close together that it appeared as if the road was moving; and each ant was carrying a grain of wheat. One night I heard a chicken squawking and as we looked out the window we saw a bobcat carrying off one of our chickens; and one day, as Sherman was working on our patio, a bobcat grabbed one of my kittens that was playing right beside him.

One warm day in early spring Sherman took me up near the ranch's border, and I counted seven large rattlesnakes that were sunning themselves on the rocks after their winter hibernation. I was glad we didn't have any rocks close to our house to attract them and I was totally unprepared when Sherman later caught one and put it in a cage near our back door. I had survived thirty years of first grade science classes without a snake being brought to school by a pupil for our observation. I'd had spiders and lizzards and crawdads and frogs, but no snakes. I knew that boys liked snakes but I thought Sherman had outgrown the urge to collect them.

Sherman fed his snake mice, but one day he was so busy he hadn't caught any and the snake was hungry so when I went to town he asked me to pick up some at the pet store. I dislike mice almost as much as snakes, but I bought two of them. On the way home they worked their way out of their container and started playing tag around my feet. I knew that I had a choice of attempting to keep the mice away from me, or keeping the car on the road, and since I didn't want to wake up at the bottom of the cliff I kept my eye on the road and my hands on the wheel and tried to forget about the mice. They finally disappeared and when I

finally got home Sherman had to practically dismantle the inside of the car to find them. He put one of them in the pen with the rattle snake and it immediately dropped dead. That was a live demonstration to me of the meaning of the term "frightened to death."

There was a roadrunner that made his home near us that Sherman also fed mice to. He began to depend on Sherman for his breakfast and since he was an early riser he sometimes was ready to eat before Sherman was up. He would come and tap on the sliding glass door of our living room to let us know that he was waiting. One day he didn't eat his mouse right away but instead used it to bribe his lady love to confer her favors on him, but she didn't cooperate so finally he gave her the mouse. She relented, and before she could consume the mouse he had what he wanted from her, grabbed the mouse back, and ran away.

We didn't have to go to San Juan Capistrano to see the swallows return. Not only were there swallows that built their nests under the eaves at the clubhouse, but we had a pair that built its nest under our own eaves. We saw them carry the mud from the creek beds and later watched them as they hunted food for their young ones. Someone destroyed the nests at the clubhouse and now we no longer see swallows here. However Sherman made bluebird houses and gave them to all of the residents, and most of them are occupied. Some of us put out humming-bird feeders which attracted those small birds to our yards. One male bird came to our feeder almost before daylight to protect the feeder from other males that he thought were invading his territory. He was so vicious toward the other males, and was so noisy that he wakened us much sooner than we liked and we finally took the feeder away and let them seek their food themselves from our many flowers.

Bats invaded some homes by way of the chimneys and although they are beneficial birds when they remain in their own territory, because of the great number of insects they consume, they are very undesirable house guests and it is difficult to make them vacate. Rose Marie Michel had one that lived with her for some time, but not from her choice.

The board wanted to encourage the wild ducks to stay at the ranch so money was budgeted to buy feed for them and Sherman scattered wheat along the lakeshore every morning. When it became nesting time

Sherman built an island out in the middle of the lake for the nests so the coyotes couldn't destroy them and kill the mothers. Coyotes do not ordinarily swim. After the spring rains the water in the lake was so high that it was about to cover the duck's nest, so he took his boat out and rescued the eggs that the mother was sitting on. He lined a large coffee can with a soft cloth, put the eggs in, and set it on top of the electric water heater. We totally forgot about them. Two weeks later I was awakened by loud chirping. I shook Sherman awake. "Sherman, there's a chicken in the house!" I announced. He sat up quickly, then jumped out of bed. "The duck eggs!" he exclaimed. "They're hatching!" They did hatch, everyone of them. As soon as he felt they were old enough he took the young ducks to the lake to be with the other ducks. That may well be the first time that baby ducks had an electric water heater for a mother.

Our children brought a tame duck out to put on the lake with some other domestic ducks that a property owner had brought here. It had been an Easter gift to their friend, but had grown up and the parents who had given it to their children found that ducks cannot be house broken. We called the duck Petunia because she was addicted to eating our petunia blossoms. Sherman took her to the lake every few days and she would swim around and clean her feathers, but she wouldn't join the other ducks. She thought she was a person. When she had finished her bath she would run back to the car and wait to be taken home. We had to move her off the patio and across the road. (She wasn't patio broken either) but she knew better than we did that it wasn't safe there. She came back and knocked on our door to tell us so several times but we refused to let her move back, and that night she disappeared. We felt guilty for not listening to her for we knew that some wild animal had taken her.

One summer we had an invasion of little frogs. There were thousands of them. Everywhere we went on the ranch there were frogs. The roads seemed to be alive. When Sherman mowed, the mower blades turned up as many frogs as it did blades of grass. It was exciting for little boys like my three year old grandson, but not so great for the rest of us. Luckily that never happened again. However we did have bull frogs in a later year and though their noisy voices were disturbing at night to some,

others found that frog legs make a tasty meal. I like the night sounds here, the frogs and the crickets, even the yipping of the coyotes. They are restful sounds. The city sounds of cars and fire engines and ambulances are disturbing to me; they keep me awake at night.

A few years later we had an invasion much worse than frogs. Grasshoppers came to us in numbers so great that they devoured our gardens. Nothing that we did would stop them. They ate their way from the meadow all through the ranch. There was no foliage left on our shrubs and vines. Luckily the trees and bushes were not completely destroyed and they all leafed out again the following spring.

Sherman patrolled the ranch each day to check for any problems and one day he was surprised to see people on one of the most secluded lots. They claimed ownership but were not friendly as most of the property owners were. A day or so later Obie and Augie came down the road from the direction of that lot each with a piece of a white T-shirt that had been saturated with blood. Sherman went to the lot to look around and he found evidence of recent digging and also broken parts of what appeared to be a gun. He took the blood stained shirt to the sheriff and was told that they would run tests to see if the blood was human. It was some weeks before he finally contacted us. He said they had had no reports of missing persons in the area and they had been too busy to test the blood stains. We will never know what happened on that lot. Our forests probably hold many secrets.

Not only did Sherman care for the horses during the week but some property owners also left other animals, including their dogs which roamed over the ranch and often came by our place, especially at night. One evening Obie came home alone very frightened. and though we looked and looked for Augie we never could find him. We thought the other dogs might have killed him. The coyotes always soon took care of any dead animals. Obie stayed close to home for several days, and then, one morning, he was gone. I called and called and finally he came and dragged his poor battered body onto his bed. He was so injured that we had to have him put to sleep. We thought he might have tried to avenge Augie's death. Some years later those dogs attacked our dog Oliver and also Salat's dog, Doty. They believed in protecting the territory far beyond

their own property especially when their owners were not there.

In the fall Sherman's pig was ready to butcher and he and Garland decided that they would have it butchered and invite all the property owners to share it with them at a barbecue and potluck. Invitations were issued for the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Sherman dug a barbecue pit right across from the clubhouse on what is now Killen's lot. He and the grandchildren gathered rocks to line the pit and they built a fire in it and fed the fire all night. The next day the rocks were red hot. The fire was extinguished; the pork, wrapped in wet canvas and in a wire frame, was lowered into the pit. It was covered with another canvas and earth and left to cook until time for the barbecue.

When they took it out of the pit and removed the canvas the meat fell off the bone but it was delicious. I had made barbecue sauce and the other ladies had all brought their special dishes. We had a good time exchanging recipes and getting acquainted while the men visited and discussed the ranch. The barbecue was so successful that the board decided to have another one after the annual meeting.

Andy Salat and some of the other men made a barbecue oven and each year for the annual meeting we bought a shoulder of beef to cook and the ladies brought the other food. The men took turns watching the beef at night, and with a jug of wine and frequent samples of the roasting meat they made a lark out of it. After several years some of the cooks moved away and not many others wanted to help so for a few years Wallie Nilson barbecued for us, but now we have the meal catered.

The first people who built homes here occupied them only during weekends so I was glad when two families moved mobile homes on to their lots and were here during the week. However mobile homes were not legal here, and the board attempted to make them move out.

Taylors, who owned the lot where Larssons now live, finally built their home, but the Anderson's daughter and family, the Bannings, who had their mobile home on Jack Anderson's lot across from Fritchies, decided not to build and finally moved out. They had children of school age and getting them to school was a problem. The mother had to take them to the Ortega to get the bus, and when it rained the South Main Divide was often impassable. I had to take all their phone messages because they

didn't have a phone, and the school called me often to find out why the children were not in school.

One night we were awakened in the middle of the night by a very sick Mrs. Banning. Her husband worked nights and she and the children had become ill and needed help. Sherman took them to the hospital emergency room and they recovered fortunately, for it turned out that their gas refrigerator had leaked gas and they had been breathing the poisonous fumes as they slept.

For several years Sherman was the one whom everyone depended on in case of emergencies. One winter day two children of a visiting property owner fell in the creek and they sat on our hearth wrapped in blankets while I dried their clothes in my drier. My supplies were almost exhausted after the weekend so I fed them waffles for their supper. We usually went to town only once a week, especially during winter weather. When some of the lumber arrived to complete Fran De Mars' house she had no one to unload it so Sherman went to town and rounded up some help, but then Fran didn't have food for their dinner so I raided my supplies. After those emergencies I decided I'd better keep extra food on hand, and I still do. Now that Sherman raises a garden every year and our fruit trees are bearing my freezers are always full.

We were so saddened by the deaths of Obie and Augie that for some time we didn't get a dog, but finally Wallie told us of a doctor in Santa Ana who was looking for a good home for his registered Dalmatian. He was too confined in his small yard and needed more space. The owner brought him to us with the stipulation that if in six weeks he seemed content here he would give him to us. He was a beautiful dog-he was from a long line of champion Dalmatians, but he had small defects which would keep him from winning prizes. He didn't mind; he soon became happy with us. Also our grandchildren were happy to have a dog again. For some time we kept him on a leash for fear he might run away. "Let's call him Oliver," said Pier. "He 'twists' all around when I lead him, and besides he has spots 'olover' him; so Oliver he became. He loved the ranch-the lake with the ducks, the ponies in the lot by the gate and the rabbits in the brush but he did not chase the ponies nor the ducks. He ran with the ponies and he wagged his tail in

appreciation of the ducks that flew up when he appeared..

Oliver loved the ranch but he was constantly looking for his former master. When I finally let him run free I several times luckily caught him getting into a car with strangers who were attempting to take him. He soon became adjusted to life with us and when his former owner returned ,although Oliver was glad to see him , he took him around to all his favorite spots to show him how happy he was here The doctor was pleased that Oliver was happy and was glad to have us keep him. He soon became Sherman's dog and rode with him in the pick-up whenever Sherman drove around the ranch.

Oliver had an exciting but usually happy life here. His first day at the ranch was not happy for me, and I had misgivings about some of his habits. I had invited Salats for a steak dinner and had the steaks on the table ready to cook when I was called outside. When I came back in the steaks were gone and Oliver was licking his chops. He always wanted a place at our table when we ate, and always stood close although he never touched anything and happily ate from his own dish on the floor. He had a warm bed by the stove but always was on the davenport when I got up in the morning. I never could break him from that so I finally put his blanket up there.

The other dogs on the ranch didn't like Oliver and several times they attacked him and injured him so that we had to take him to an animal hospital. One day he caught a rattlesnake and it bit him in his mouth. It was late and the vets were all closed, but Gene's son was working part time for a vet and he was able to get help for him.. We didn't think Oliver was going to make it. For several days he could hardly swallow water because his mouth and throat were so swollen, but on Sunday I was cooking a roast and when he sniffed it he got up and walked to the oven. He ate the piece I gave him- and all the rest of the roast too. I was so happy that he finally could eat that I didn't mind at all.

Although all of the male dogs on the ranch attacked Oliver he had one friend- Salats' little wire haired female mongrel with long skinny legs in proportion to her body, but with beautiful brown eyes. We took care of her for a while when Salats were building and Oliver grew fond of her, so when Salats moved out here for good Doty came down

here often to visit Oliver. One day some ranch dogs attacked and injured Doty so after she was able to walk again Oliver would go to Salat's house by a back road, escort Doty safely to our place where they would chase rabbits until they were tired and then lie in the shade until evening, when Oliver would escort her home again. It was a strange combination, the stately Dalmation and the scruffy little mongrel.

One day Sherman left Oliver in the pick-up while he was at a meeting at Turners. Suddenly Doris alerted Sherman that the pick-up was going down the hill backwards. It crashed upside down at the bottom. When Sherman arrived at the scene there was Oliver, standing on the ceiling of the upside down pick-up, wagging his tail and grinning as if to say "Look what I did! I drove the car."

Oliver's most exciting adventure was his kidnapping; or should I say dog-napping? It was a foggy day. Sherman had done his rounds and was back home when Gene came hurriedly over. "Is Oliver here?" he asked. "I think I saw a couple of guys tying him up in the back of a pick-up." Sherman and Gene hastily started down the South Main in an attempt to catch the pick-up but it was so foggy they couldn't even see the license plate. After two or more weeks of searching for him we had finally given up when Lo! We were at the Turners when Bud answered a knock at the door and in walked Oliver, with Warren Schmidt. Warren had answered an ad in his local Orange paper and found our dog. The people claimed that he had kept jumping in their pick-up when they were at work. They finally took him home but they had trouble keeping him as he kept running away. They thought he was a valuable dog and that the owners would pay a big ransom, but they finally accepted the thirty dollars Warren offered them. They were happy to get rid of him.

Oliver's escapades never seemed to cease making our life here interesting and exciting. Now he lies peacefully in his favorite spot under an old oak tree where he often slept. We miss him. We have had other dogs that we loved- beautiful Beau and darling little Rascal, but none that could replace Oliver. Now we do not have a dog as because of the many homes on the ranch a dog can no longer run freely, and we do not want a dog that must be confined.

As people finished their houses there were more permanent



residents as well as some who came every weekend. Fran married Don De Mars and they moved into her new cedar house. They were the first couple to have a baby born to ranch residents. Virginia Stephens had a shower for her and we were all excited about the "first" ranch baby. Michels sold their house and her beauty shop in La Guna Beach and moved into their house. Rose Marie set up a small shop in her basement which was convenient for a neighbor who might need a quick haircut or a set.. The Salats moved into their unfinished house and they lived in it as Andy did the finishing touches. Turners were living part time in a motor home as they worked on their house. Paul Nissan built a barn, and spent almost every weekend in the apartment over it. Gene Holder had purchased two lots and built a small cabin which they occupied much of the time while they built their house. They had a cow and pigs, which were against our deed restrictions, but Gene wanted them so he had them. There was building going on all over the ranch, but much of it was being done by the owners as it was still not only difficult but very expensive to hire help up here. Sherman and I were now no longer alone on the ranch during the week but we were busier than ever.

After several years there were enough families living here so that the Post Office put up some mail boxes for us on the Ortega. Later we succeeded in getting them off the highway and on to the South Main Divide near the entrance. We each had to pay close to forty dollars apiece for our box but at least we could get our mail every day without going clear to town. It wasn't until the road was paved that the postoffice supplied boxes for us at the ranch gate without cost to us, and delivered our mail daily.

Those who had children had to transport them to the Ortega to catch the school bus as it did not come up here. Some of the mothers took turns bussing the children back and forth. That worked fairly well until the schools got so crowded that they had different shifts, which required many trips back and forth on the South Main Divide because of the varied ages of the children here. It was particularly difficult for those who had children that were involved in after school and evening activities. For those students who were old enough for driver's licenses it was

often dangerous because of the frequent fogs. Some families sold their homes and moved rather than take those risks.

When Sherman became eligible for social security he had to choose between retiring or not accepting his social security as then one could not receive both wages or salary and Social Security. He liked working for the ranch so he decided that he would accept his social security and also continue to manage the ranch but without pay. He really enjoyed the ranch work and also he was not ready for life in an armchair. He was still furnishing his own pick-up as the ranch wasn't able yet to buy one. Not paying a manager's salary would help the ranch get in better financial state. They had purchased a used tractor which was very essential and they wanted to buy a pick-up.

When Sherman wasn't working for the ranch he was busy developing his own property. He had planted trees which he hoped would soon supply us with fruit and he had a yearly garden and raised not only all the vegetables we needed but plenty to share with our friends here. We had a large freezer which we filled every year with the vegetables and fruit and the meat from the animals we were accumulating. We had started with a few chickens and rabbits and a goat that had been given us by friends who found them more trouble than they had expected. Animals require daily care.; they also multiply, and we found we soon had an over abundance of eggs and of goat milk. When we were given a calf that developed into a cow that produced five gallons of milk a day my ingenuity for using the milk was stretched to its limits. I made butter and cheese and custards, ice cream and yogurt and cottage cheese and fed the pig. But there was still milk, so finally we took several gallons at a time to Wallie to feed his baby pigs that had lost their mother. When our goat population increased to twenty seven we decided it was time to stop. We gave away some of the goats and sold some goats and the cow. We stopped raising rabbits and now keep only a few chickens. Even those few chickens are confining as they need to be fed and watered every day

Our goat milk was delicious. There is a great deal of difference in the flavor of goats' milk according to the breed. When our grandchildren hesitated at drinking the goat milk we just poured it for them out of a

regular milk carton and they didn't know the difference.

When they brought a friend out to the ranch she drank our cow's milk until she saw the cow being milked, and that was it! Her milk had to come out of a carton. When I served fried chicken she asked if it was one of the chickens she had seen on the ranch, but foreseeing the problem I told her "No. It isn't one of those.", and she was satisfied and enjoyed her chicken dinner.

Most of the new residents wanted to have animals and to raise gardens but some of them were very inexperienced. When De Mars' goat had babies they took the babies from their mother and bathed and cleaned them thoroughly. The mother goat wouldn't have anything to do with her kids and De Mars were afraid they would starve, so Fran came to Sherman for help. They had cleaned the kids so thoroughly that they no longer had the mother's odor so they had to be bottle fed until they could be weaned. Animals know their babies by their odor and they usually reject any others. Fran got some hens, but they were young and hadn't started to lay eggs regularly so she didn't get eggs every day. "I'm teaching those chickens to lay," said Fran. "On the days that they lay eggs I feed them, but if there aren't any eggs they just don't get anything to eat. I'll teach them".

The man who owned the property by the gate had two ponies and though Sherman fed for him he never offered to pay Sherman but every time he came to the ranch he stopped at the candy store and bought some of their delicious candy to bring to me. Perhaps he thought that was pay enough. I enjoyed the candy, but now as I work to shed extra pounds I think he was wrong. When he finally sold his place he gave us the ponies. We thought our grandchildren would be happy to have the ponies to ride, but the boys preferred climbing the rocks and playing at the lake.

The first summers that we were here were very hot for us. There were no trees around our house and we had no shade as there was no roof on our patio. I bought a swimming pool from Sears and installed it near the back door. I worked in my bathing suit and whenever I got too hot I just jumped in the pool for a while and cooled off. Then I worked in my wet bathing suit until it dried and I was too warm and into the pool I went

again. The grandchildren enjoyed the pool too when they came up for week ends. One summer we had a water problem; the water company was having trouble with the pump and the ranch residents had to carry water for a while. I filled the pool from our spring, but I not only brought the water but the algae and two tiny frogs, and try as I did I could never catch the frogs nor get rid of the algae. Since by then we had trees growing and a roof on the patio it was much cooler in our house so I removed the pool and planted a flower garden in its place.

I also had a number of house plants which I kept on the patio in the summer. One fall I brought all the plants in side to keep them from freezing. Suddenly I realized that I had small tree toads hopping around in every room of the house. They had been hiding under the leaves of my plants. We had a busy evening as we tried to rid the house of those active little creatures.

In the early years here I spent most of my summer hours out of doors working with the many flowers and plants that I wanted to have. I found that some of the favorite plants that I grew in Oregon did not thrive here, so I finally settled for the ones that did. I've had to give up tending my flowers but Sherman still grows his fruit and vegetables, and I try to can and freeze much of the surplus. I grew up on a farm where we raised most of our own food and we always had our cellar full, and that is a custom that I find hard to give up..

Life at the ranch seemed so ideal, but Time goes on. There were changes. There were marriages and divorces, births and deaths. People moved away and new people came.

A spectacular wedding took place when the members of a wedding party dropped from a plane onto their family lot, No. 24. They were dressed in traditional wedding array, and as soon as the entire party had assembled they moved to The Point above Lake Elsinore for the traditional ceremony.

There were births and deaths. We were first saddened by the untimely death of Anne Salat in 1977 and there have been others. The ETI plants an olive tree at the clubhouse in remembrance of each and there are now seven trees.

When Andy started building his house he and Anne were looking

toward a long and happy life there. They had moved into it and Andy was putting on the finishing artistic touches . He designed and molded all the columns for the Grecian styled home. When he needed some beams raised several of the other owners helped him but most of the work he and Ann did themselves. Ann loved parties and she liked to dress for them so there were often "long dress" dances at her house. I don't care what you wear" she would say, "but I'm wearing a long dress." However, those who came in jeans and sweatshirts never felt out of place. Andy wired the house for music and the large living room was designed to accomodate the parties that she planned. When she had a party everybody on the ranch was invited and most of us brought food to share. The ranch people enjoyed many a formal or informal Saturday night there.

Gene Holder divorced his wife and married Patricia (Pat as we called her) and their participation in ranch activites was very beneficial to our community life. They finished their home and there were many ranch parties in their house, and on their patio. They participated in most of the ranch activities and donated their time and efforts and sometimes some of their farm products toward the success of various ranch projects. Their property became one of the favorite places for the Play Days which took place after the inception of the ETI to which almost everyone on the ranch belonged.

One of the best contributions to the ranch was made by Doris Turner when she promoted the Equestrian Trails, [ ETI for short) Turners belonged to the club in Fullerton and when they disbanded Doris arranged for us to take their number so our club became Number 28. . The ETI is a national organization and by joining it our members had access to and could participate in the activities of other ETI clubs. Although some of our members did not have horses they joined the club because they liked horses and were interested in its activities.

Our ETI was organized in 1975, and from that time on many of our ranch activities were sponsored by the the ETI. There were thirty two charter members, seven of whom were juniors. Dues were \$15.00 a year for a family . Most of those who lived on the ranch joined, and some who didn't live here but had horses here were also membeRs. Doris Turner

was the first chairman, Bud was the Trail Boss and Doris appointed me as hospitality chairman. Doris said that when they got back from the trail rides they were usually hungry and I should have food for them so after their first ride I planned to serve hamburgers and drinks at the clubhouse. We set up a grill there but the power went off immediately. The clubhouse wasn't wired for cooking facilities. That didn't stop us. I made the hamburgers at my house and Pat kept the road busy between my house and the clubhouse, delivering the hamburgers as I made them. For several years we depended on cooking at the outside barbecue when we had parties and until very recently we didn't have hot water but we had good times there in spite of its inadequacies.

Our ETI provided the people on the ranch with an opportunity for many interesting activities. Besides short rides on weekends there were overnight rides and poker rides and some of the members participated in functions planned by the county or state chapters. Our club invited the Fullerton Riders to spend a weekend at our ranch every year and planned rides and entertainment for them. Each fall we had our Octoberfest, which included a craft show and a dinner. We exhibited the things we had been making during the year; art, handwork, sewing, canning, baking, gardening, and small carpentry projects. Some of it was sold and some of the proceeds were given to the club. In the evening we had our harvest soup, which the ladies made from the final gleanings from our gardens. For dessert each family brought a pumpkin pie. After the dinner we usually had square dancing outdoors; until we built on to the clubhouse there was not room inside. We hired a caller to come up and teach us the steps. One year we invited the Fullerton riders to bring their crafts up and share the day with us and one time when they came up for a weekend we invited them to an early breakfast before they went on their ride. Several of the ranch women helped me and we served breakfast on our patio. There were homemade rolls made from freshly ground wheat, jam made from our raspberries only the day before, and newly laid eggs. Some of them still talk about how good the fresh farm food tasted. Sherman likes to joke and when one woman said to him "They say she grinds her own wheat. How does she grind it?" he took her over to a shelf where we keep some artifacts we have found on

our property and showed her the small Indian grinding stones that we found here. "Oh, my!" she exclaimed. "Doesn't that take a long time?" I 've often wondered if she really believed him.

The club sponsored several trips for its members .Besides overnight rides up the South Main Divide to a small camping place in Rancho California there were rides to the candy store on the Ortega and shorter rides into the surrounding forest. Bud Turner took the group in his motor home to watch a demonstration of a project in which disabled children were helped by riding horseback. Our club donated a saddle and other equipment for use in the project. A generous donation was made to the Riverside Humane Society. We had an interesting trip to several wineries in the region and besides generous samples of wine we were able to listen to a very interesting explanation of how the various wines and champagnes were made.

Much of our entertainment centered around activities sponsored by the ETI . There were holiday parties and dinners and square dancing on the concrete slab that the ETI had built in 1980 at one end of the clubhouse. In 1982 it was decided that it was time to enlarge the clubhouse and several property owners donated their labor to extend the existing room over the slab. The women did their share. They furnished refreshments for the workers; lemonade on the hot days and homemade doughnuts and coffee on the cool days. Sherman felt sorry that he wasn't able to help. He had fallen and hurt his shoulder badly while he and Garland were trying to catch one of Stevens goats<sup>1</sup>. However he did furnish the heavy beams for the addition. Bud Turner furnished the hoist from his rental business to lift the tiles on to the roof. Larry Bathe was hired as a working superintendent of the project and for this he was paid \$1600. Several people have donated furniture and recently the association installed a new heating system both of which make the clubhouse more comfortable.

As the ETI grew there were other activities which became traditional. Our Christmas parties were so popular that we had them every year. There was a Christmas tree and presents for the children. We finally purchased a Santa Claus suit and every year before Christmas Santa

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<sup>1</sup> It is just in the last year that he has finally become able to move his arm up above his shoulder.

visited the homes around the ranch and handed out candy to the children. Gordon usually plays Santa. At first Harry drove him around in a pony cart, but he has become modernized and now he goes in a golf cart.

We used to plant the Christmas tree by the clubhouse, but later we sold chances on it and gave it to the lucky winner. Recently Sherman donated one of our large fir trees and proceeds from the drawing were given to an unfortunate neighboring association which lost its clubhouse in a recent dastardly fire on the Ortega.

A favorite activity was the playday, the first of which was held in Steve Evan's corral. (Lot 100) in the summer of 1980. Almost every resident who had a horse participated. Entrance fee was \$5.00 and the proceeds were donated to the Therapeutic Riding Program for Handicapped Children. There were ribbons for prizes and events for both adults and children. There were hotdogs, soft drinks and beer for sale. Everyone had a great time. Since it was so successful another playday was held at Holders the following year on the fourth of July.

Gene Holder's place was the setting for many of our ranch social affairs, both outdoor and indoor. Gene had a soft icecream machine, and we often went there for icecream socials. In the cool weather Pat opened their home for special parties. Everyone on the ranch was invited there to celebrate Sherman and my fiftieth wedding anniversary. We had made a trip to Washington and Oregon in our motor home to visit friends and relatives and our children had had a family celebration for us too so when our ranch friends had a party for us we felt that our anniversary was well remembered. We celebrated Sherman's seventieth birthday at a party at her house but when my seventieth birthday came Tim Archer and I celebrated together at a party at Archer's house as Tim and I have the same birthday.

Harry Hodges was elected president of the ETI after Doris Turner and was such an effective president that the members just kept reelecting him. He and Bud arranged to have a veterinary clinic at the ranch every year for horses, cats and dogs. Harry and Bud made the rounds of the ranch with him and those who wished could have not only horses but dogs and cats have the necessary inoculations. Harry also



started a class to teach children how to "safely care for yourself and your pony" and had eight children in the group. For a time we had a [rofessional teacher come to the ranch every week to give riding lessons. I went to Irvine every Friday evening and brought two of my granddaughters up for lessons. At that time most everybody at the ranch had horses.

Keeping feed on hand for the horses was a problem for the owners. Two or more of them sometimes went together and ordered several tons of hay and we stored it on our lot as Sherman did much of the feeding. He often brought up feed for other animals and sold it at his cost to those who needed it. Those who came up for a weekend were happy not to have to spend their time driving to the feed store. We still had that rough mountain road to travel.

The Fourth of July is always a day for celebration and we have always observed it in some way at the ranch, often with a picnic at the clubhouse, games and sometimes a parade around the ranch. Then, at night most of us went to the point and watched the fireworks over the lake and in the neighboring towns. That has become a tradition. The bicentennial called for something special and Harry Hodges arose to the occasion and planned a very special fourth which those of us who were here will always remember.

Gerv Kestin, of Corral Fourteen, a pony wagon club, brought his covered wagons to the South Main Divide the afternoon of the third and with permission of the forestry camped all night at wide spots on the road. On the fourth members of our corral met them and some of the women and children, in colonial costume, rode back to the ranch in the pony wagons. The wagons circled the ranch roads and our corral members took turns riding in the wagons. In the afternoon there were games for all and in the evening a beef barbecue and square dancing. Harry presented awards and prizes of belt buckles and ribbons, some just for fun, but all were mementoes of a wonderful celebration. The next morning Red Darringer served a gourmet breakfast at the clubhouse; the pony wagons departed for a fifty mile pony wagon drive in the mountains north of Ventura, and we at the ranch settled down to our normal life.

*The ranch was changing rapidly. Because of the growing number of residents there was need to make our water supply more adequate and also more dependable. When the pump to our ranch well broke down we were forced to carry water from other sources in order to have water to drink. It took some time and effort as, because of the cost, absentee owners were not as eager to do so as those of us who lived here. However, by the continued efforts of Doris Turner, there were finally enough signatures and the water company installed the pumps and laid the line at a cost of \$9000 plus interest for each lot. Now, if our pump breaks down or if our well doesn't provide enough water Elsinore Municipal Water takes over.*

*Our roads were particularly inviting to motorcyclists and to young adventurers who liked to explore the forest trails or try their jeeps out on the rough terrain, so our front gate was kept locked, but it was a real nuisance. The property owner had to get out of his car, unlock the gate, get back in and drive through and then get out and lock the gate again. At least that was what he was supposed to do, but many didn't. so there were often intruders on the ranch and Sherman was constantly running them down. I hated that gate myself, as I was always the one who had to unlock it. My dislike of it was a carry over from the days of my childhood when I always had to open the gate to our farm. Our farm was fenced with barbed wire, and the gate was an extension of that barbed wire fence, but with a loose post that fastened to another post by means of a wire loop..Gates have improved since then and so have locks, so now we have a gate that opens automatically when we click the opener, without even getting out of the car. In my estimation that is one of the most useful inventions of the age and a definite improvement to our ranch.*

*Although our gate kept some trespassers out during the hunting season we often had hunters wandering over our property, many of them as guests of our neighbor "Whistle", as he was affectionately called. It was difficult to make them believe that Whistle didn't own this property as they had hunted here freely before the developers bought it. Whistle had also given permission to a fertilizer company to remove the fertile soil from around the trees on the ranch property and Sherman*

had a hard time convincing them that they had no right to remove soil from the lots on the ranch.

Once Sherman was surprised to find about fifty hives of bees on one of the lots across the south Main Divide. Whistle had given the beekeeper permission to move them there. Sherman had had a previous experience with bees one summer when he was picking up rocks along the South Main Divide. There were usually fifty or more stands of bees parked there during the buckwheat flowering season but the beekeeper had just moved them. Usually the hives are moved at night while the bees are all at home, but this time they had been moved during the day when many of the bees were gathering honey, and when they came home and found the hives were gone they were angry and vented their anger on Sherman. Besides receiving numerous bee stings he developed shingles and suffered with them for the rest of the summer. He wasn't about to repeat that experience, but it took several stormy sessions on the telephone to persuade the beekeeper that Whistle's permission was not valid.

One night in early fall we were awakened by the sound of heavy traffic on the South Main Divide. There was a steady stream of jeeps and pick-up, and loud voices and laughter of the drivers as they exchanged greetings. Hunting season was about to begin and the hunters all wanted to be ready with their guns cocked when the hour struck. There were many deer in the area then; we often had them on the ranch, as evidenced by the cropped young trees or the grazed gardens. We fenced our new orchard, but even the highest fences didn't always keep out the deer.

One Sunday morning during hunting season two hunters wandered onto our ranch. Having no luck finding game they amused themselves by shooting off the faucets on the outdoor plumbing of two houses under construction., and also shooting around the children of one weekender who were riding their small motorcycles around on their property while their parents were sleeping. Several property owners called the Elsinore sheriff, but it was about two o'clock before the police finally came. The hunters were still wandering around on the edge of the ranch, but the police insisted that they needed to get the

names, addresses, ages , birthdays, parents' names and family histories of every one who had called- so the hunters, who had spotted the police, had plenty of time to get away. Sherman was so unhappy about the cooperation that we received from the Elsinore office that he finally contacted the county sheriff at Riverside. They investigated, and it wasn't long before Sherman received a letter of apology from the Elsinore office, and after that we had much better service from our local police.

Hunting season was so difficult for us that the board decided to hire an off-duty policeman to patrol our ranch roads on the week-ends during the hunting season. There was shooting in the forest around us, but we felt some degree of safety with no hunters on our ranch property.

One Sunday afternoon Sherman stopped a motorcyclist who had somehow invaded the ranch. He asked him to leave, but the cyclist couldn't get his motor started again. Sherman went up the road to get jumpers , but in the meantime the hired policeman started down the same road. He had been watching the ranch from Salat's verandah where he had been having a cool drink . Anne had invited him in assuring him that he could see the whole ranch from there. He came down the road much too fast. Sherman saw him coming and pulled to the side and stopped in time, but the police stopped too quickly and his car spun around and over to the side where it hit Sherman's pick -up and mashed the side in. The State Police were called and our hired policeman was declared totally responsible. The ranch did not press charges but he was suspended without pay for two weeks, much to his dismay, and our insurance paid for having the pickup repaired.

Jerry Duncan, whose property is more remote than some, called the police rather often because of shooting near his place, but now we have very little gunfire near the ranch. We still have an occasional deer, but the hunters have moved on.

As new homes were built and as the ranch became more populated there became more concern about protection from forest fires. There had been a fire in the adjoining forest when Sherman was living on the ranch alone but several years without fires had allowed the hills to

be covered again with its natural growth of shrubs and plants.

Bob Lang donated a pick-up to the ranch to be used as a fire truck and Sherman and several other ranch residents each donated \$100.00 to buy a 250 gallon water tank and hoses for it. During the war Sherman worked as a lieutenant on the fire department at the Unmatilla Ordnance Depot in Oregon and trained the firemen at both stations, so he held several training sessions on the ranch to teach the property owners to use their new fire equipment. Almost all the residents attended, even the women, as any one who could drive a car was qualified to drive our new fire truck.

There was also a first aid class at the clubhouse and most of the residents participated. However, since there was no equipment here for the final life-saving lessons those who wished to complete the course had to go to El Cariso for the last sessions. Sherman had always carried a first aid card and he wanted to renew it by passing the exam, and he did, but he was the only ranch resident to do so.

When we first came here we were allowed to build fires to burn trash and brush cuttings on certain days with the permission of the forestry. Our new fire truck was very useful because it was brought to the spot where the burning was to take place and was available for the containment of any fire that started to spread out of bounds. Though we now have a regular fire engine stationed here it is not as accessible as our little fire truck was as only the operating engineer is allowed to drive it and if he happens to be at work away from the ranch it is not available.

I can't help but remember when we had a fire in our house in Oregon when I was away from home. The neighbors called the fire department but they did not respond so the neighbors put the fire out and there was very little damage to the house. However, the insurance company canceled our insurance because we had only a volunteer fire department which was not available when we needed it.

It was 1980. We had had a hot dry summer and October and November had not brought any rain to relieve the situation. The hillsides were covered with highly volatile shrubs. The board decided we should have some plans in case of a fire. Gene Holder's property was in the

central part of the ranch .His fields had no trees or shrubs and his animals kept them well grazed so the fire was not apt to invade his property. It was decided that we should all take our horses there

Although there had been several small fires in the county I was totally unprepared when I was awakened in the middle of the night by the alarming ring of my bedside telephone and heard Pat Holder's frightened voice announcing, "Bessie, there's a fire coming up the hill !"

We immediately dressed and after assessing the situation we started loading our motor-home with important papers and family pictures. The fire was already burning close to Vogel's house just across the South Main Divide and coming toward us; but miraculously the wind suddenly changed and started traveling toward Elsinore Peak. We were saved for the moment.

That fire, called the Turner Fire and set on Turner Street in Elsinore by an arsonist , burned over 2800 acres of the national forest . Only one house and one automobile were destroyed, but thousands of dollars were spent as hundreds of firefighters fought it.

The fires close to us had subsided when we went to Riverside the next week. Sherman had an appointment with the hearing aid specialist which he didn't want to give up but when we got there we could see fires burning in all directions. As soon as his appointment was over we decided to hurry home. We stopped only to pick up a turkey for our Thanksgiving dinner. When we got to Elsinore we were relieved to see that the hills just below the ranch were still green. No fire there yet!

We were just sitting down for dinner when the telephone rang. "There's a fire coming up the hill ! Pass the word on." We called the Olsens and they called Cioffis but by that time we had to leave. The fire, blown by Santa Ana winds, was coming too fast. Our motor home was still packed. Sherman moved it to safety and I took the dogs in the car and went to Holders. I passed some of our friends leading their horses to the designated area and there were a number of cars lined up in the road in front of Holder's house. A forest ranger had told them to go up to Elsinore Peak and that is where they were going!.

From Elsinore Peak we could watch the path of the fire. Every little while we would see a big burst of flame like an explosion, and we thought houses were being burned.

The wind was cold and several of us took refuge in Carol Boelter's motor home which she had driven up the hill. To help us relax she offered wine to us in plastic cups. We got our only laugh of the evening

when Rose Marie Michelle refused. "I can't drink wine out of plastic," she said. Her home might be burning but she still demanded a crystal goblet for her wine! Carol was equal to the occasion. She went to the cupboard and found a wine goblet for Rose Marie.

After the explosions of fire quit one of the men went down to assess the situation, and he came back with the message that Joe Cioffi and Jerry Duncan might save their houses if they hurried. They had barely got away before the fire threatened their houses. Jerry had had to abandon his car and run up the hill. Luckily when they returned both houses were still standing although there was fire in Jerry's basement.

Sherman had stayed with our house. Cinders were falling on the roof but he got the ranch fire engine and sprayed our roof with water. He also went across the field and saved our neighbor's house. Our fence in the back of our house caught fire and also one of our big pine trees but Sherman was able to save them. Warren had also stayed and saved his house although the fire came up almost to his door and damaged the trees close by.

The forestry had a fire engine parked right back of our house, but the driver said they were not supposed to save houses. Their job was to save the forest so they just sat in their truck. There was not much damage on the ranch. Noble's fences were burned and the lot across the street from them lost a small building. Jerry Duncan's dog suffered some burns as it was in Jerry's car when he had to leave it and run. One of Joe's cars had some tires burned.

The fire went on for several days. Firefighters were brought here from several states. They slept in sleeping bags at the park near the forestry station. Every morning they were brought here by truck and then taken by helicopter to the fire in the forest beyond us. Helicopters dipped water from our lake to put on the fire, but it burned clear over to Camp Pendleton. There were other fires in the county, some quite near. Many homes were evacuated in Trabuco Canyon and Hickey Canyon. and evacuees went to a rescue center at El Toro.

For several days we were isolated at the ranch. We had no electricity and our telephones were out. We could not go down the South Main Divide. On Thanksgiving day we had a community Thanksgiving dinner at the clubhouse. Each of us brought the food we had available. I had a gas stove so I cooked my turkey and Andy brought a ham. There were about twenty families living here at the time, and

there was food for all. There were several foresters still working in the burnedout area and they came to our dinner too. We allowed them to eat first and they had hearty appetites. After their second and third helpings it was a miracle that there was plenty of food left for us, but it was like the story of the loaves and the fishes; there was enough for all. That Thanksgiving we had really a great deal to be thankful for. We still had our homes.

Since that one disastrous fire there have been other fires that threatened us, but none that burned on the ranch, and none as destructive. One fire came up the South Main Divide but was contained before it reached the ranch. We had some of the forestry fire department guarding our property until it was stopped. Several years before we had allowed them to practice drawing water into their tanks from the lake on the property next to us. That was at a time when there were very few people on the ranch and we were happy to have company so I cooked them a farm dinner with fried chicken and fresh vegetables from the garden. They really enjoyed it and remembered it so now they were returning the favor. Since the trip over our road was so slow I sometimes gave lunches to workmen who came up expecting to find a close restaurant where they could get their noon meal. We were concerned about our ranch when a fire came up the Ortega from San Juan Capistrano. Luckily for us it was controlled before it came this far, but there was much destruction at Rancho Correo.

We had an exciting evening just this last year when an arsonist set a fire on the hillside above the lake. Mark and Jennifer and I were coming home from the hospital where Sherman was confined because of injuries in a car accident. When I saw the fire I insisted on foregoing our grocery shopping and we hurried up the hill for fear the fire might reach the South Main Divide and keep us from getting home.. By the time we got up the hill the helicopters were dropping fire retardants there. All of the ranch residents were out on the point watching. It wasn't long before the fire was out, and the arsonist had fled.

Mark went back to town after the groceries, but soon after he left Jennifer and I were alarmed by a helicopter circling the ranch at a very low altitude. I called a neighbor and learned that the arsonist was hiding on our ranch. He had been seen and was armed. Jennifer and I locked all the doors, turned off the lights and hid in the back of the house. The helicopter finally gave up the search and it was decided that the culprit had gone on into the forest. I never heard whether they



caught the arsonist.

When Bud Turner finished the work on his house his friend 'who was doing the work came down and built our patio. We were happy about that as it gave us more shade and helped to keep the house cool on hot sunny days. We had several parties on the patio including a farewell champagne breakfast for the Holders. Bob Schablein, a friend from town who owned property next to the ranch , surprised us with the champagne. It was a cool morning and we had to wear our sweaters but everyone on the ranch came and we had a wonderful time. Several of the ranch ladies helped . We had a gourmet menu, fruit cup with plum wine, eggs Viena, lyonnaise potatoes, sausage links and home baked cinnamon rolls. That was my last ranch party After that we always had our parties at the clubhouse.

My first party there several years before had been very special too. It was on the Labor Day weekend. We thought that some property owners who lived off the ranch would be up here working on the three day weekend and that we could make some money for the ETI. By Monday they would want a rest and would be glad for some good food. We planned for about thirty, but when they learned about the barbecue most of them invited friends or family to come. Luckily they let us know ahead of time and I made another trip to town for hamburger, and then another one, and I baked two more batches of buns. Some people called from town for reservations and a family looking for property saw us on the patio having a good time and asked to join us so instead of the anticipated thirty we had about sixty. Besides the hamburgers some of our members furnished home made pie and home made icecream and Harry brought watermelons .Prices were much lower then; hamburgers were only fifty cents, but we took in more than a hundred dollars. Those first and last barbecues on our patio are the most memorable.

The club had other breakfasts; Faye Sanford hosted a delicious breakfast at the clubhouse. We also had a great icecream social there with everything from chocolate sundaes to banana splits. Everyone on the ranch always attended every function and we always had wonderful times..

There were some bad times on rhe ranch , too, such as when Anne Salat was diagnosed with cancer, and the time when Ellie's beautiful horse was hurt and had to be destroyed .and also the times when Sherman and then Oliver were bitten by rattlesnakes. Sherman saw a huge rattlesnake in the road and picked it up to show it to the

Harrimans. He thought he was holding it so it couldn't bite him but he released his hold long enough for it to reach his hand and it bit him on the thumb. Harrimans took him to the hospital down here but fortunately they didn't have any anti venom so they sent him in an ambulance to Los Angeles. The doctors there found that he was allergic to the anti venom and had they given it to him that would have probably killed him. He suffered a lot of pain, and sweat the bed full of water ,but they kept his arm in ice and watched him carefully and in about three days he recovered and was able to come home.

Oliver evidently grabbed a rattlesnake's head and it bit him in his mouth. It was late and all the veterinary offices were closed, but Gene's son worked part time for a vet and he took him in there. It was several days before he could eat and I was so worried that he might die, but Sunday he smelled the roast I was cooking and went and stood by the oven. I gave him some and he wanted more. He finally ate the whole roast, but I was so happy that he could eat that I didn't mind a bit.

As the years have passed I haven't kept abreast of all the happenings on the ranch. I know that Gordon Sanford was bitten by a rattle snake..There may have been others.Also I know that the ranch has lost several valued friends. We plant an olive tree for each one and there are now trees for Anne Salat,:Louie Michel,both Gail and Bill Rose, Harry Hodges, Warren Schmidt,Bob Abbot and Vernon Childs. We miss them all very much.There have been a number of births ,new houses have been built and there are new property owners Sherman has been on the board but he no longer works for the ranch . He did work for a number of years without reimbursement after he became old enough to collect Social Security, and he also furnished his pick-up (two pick-ups in fact) and the gas and insurance for it. Most men,when they retire, spend money on recreation- fishing or golfing or perhaps traveling. Sherman's recreation was working on the ranch. He loved growing things and caring for animals and he received some pay from owners whose animals he fed during the week when they were not at the ranch. Several of them worked and were here only on week ends. cHe watched for problems such as leaking water pipes, broken fences, and loose horses, and roving motorcyclists who thought the ranch roads were made for racing..Every evening he patrolled the whole ranch watching for trespassers and problems of any kind. New residents can never know how much of his time and of himself he gave to help this ranch become what it now is.

Because he donated his wages and his pick-up the association was soon able to buy a tractor which could be used on the ranch roads and also on the South Main Divide. The forestry graded there once a year but it needed frequent repair. Even Dorothy Vogel was seen helping Warren to fill up some of the deep ruts with patching material.. The road was particularly hard to travel over in the rainy season.. Whenever it rained the four-wheelers from town hurried up there to try their vehicles out in the mud and their wheels chewed the road up so that passenger cars could hardly get through. After a rain it really needed an additional grading. Since our deed restrictions did not allow us to raise our dues we didn't always have the money to do everything we wanted to do. Now state laws allow us to raise dues a small percentage each year.

At last the board decided that it could afford to buy a pick-up. The board members knew it wasn't fair for Sherman to donate his labor and his pick-up to the association. They suggested that he trade his pickup in on a new one; the association would pay the balance and also take care of the insurance and other expenses.. The title was to be kept in the association name as long it was used for the ranch but if Sherman stopped working for the association they would give the title to him. It was a friendly agreement, but it turned out to not be a very wise one for Sherman. It was a verbal agreement, and when the board members moved away the new residents were not aware of it and when he resigned as manager Sherman did not get the title to the pick up.. The first board ran its business like a friendly family instead of a community. When Sherman bought supplies or hired labor he paid for it himself and turned in an itemized bill at the end of the month. However one of the the treasurers was not an experienced book keeper, and although she was honest and kept track of the money very well, when she wrote out the reports she did not itemize the costs, but only wrote "Paid to Sherm." As a result new board members thought Sherman was being paid a large salary. There were hard feelings among ranch residents at the time. It is good that the financial reports now all have to be audited by a professional .

Since Sherman did not have a title to the pick up he could not license it and it sat on our property for two years, unused. Finally Bob Killen promised him the title and Sherman bought a new battery and other new parts and had it all ready to use, when it disappeared. Warren finally told us that our neighbor's boys had driven it away. He thought that we had loaned it to them. We reported the theft to the Elsinore

We still have a bobcat in this area; it has been seen on the ranch several times.

When we first came here we used to have a nightly chorus of coyotes as they roamed the ranch. They always seemed to be in a different area. One night when we were coming home we found Oliver standing at a safe distance and watching a group of coyotes which were howling as they encircled their prey. We had a mother coyote who had a den on the property near Korbet's house. She raised a brood there every year.

After I lost one kitten to the bobcat I never let the other one out until she learned to come the minute I called her. One evening we let her out and left the sliding door open slightly so she could come in and out as she pleased. She was so happy with her freedom that she brought in several small mice, one at a time, and laid them at Sherman's feet. She must have wanted to show appreciation for the freedom. One day we found two kittens alike in the house. She had evidently found a friend that looked just like her. It wasn't too much longer before we found she was pregnant. Sherman made a good safe house for her and her kittens but when it was time for the kittens to be born she disappeared. We looked all over for her and finally discovered that she had made her nest on a cupboard shelf in my bedroom, behind a stack of blankets. We put her and her kittens in her house and the kittens grew to be quite large before we let them out. There were five and they were all male. They were too much for the poor mother. She couldn't get them to leave so she left, and they also left, one by one.

We didn't plan to have another dog, but one day a beautiful stray came here and Sherman couldn't bear to send him to the pound, so we just continued to feed him until we finally felt that he was ours and I named him Beau. At first I was frightened of him, his bark was so challenging, but I finally realized that he just wanted to make friends. We couldn't let him stay in the house as he managed to knock everything over that he came in contact with, but in the early morning, if Sherman happened to leave the door open, he would come in and say hello to me and after he had received a welcoming pat he would go out. He died not too long ago and I miss him. We were glad to have him after Oliver died. Although I doubt if he would have hurt anyone he had a sharp bark and frightened strangers and always alerted us when anyone came near, especially after dark. Sherman will not get a dog now, as he does not want to have a dog that must be confined. Our dogs always

had the run of the ranch before so many people moved here. There are some dogs on the ranch now but but they are required to be controlled.

In 1988 our ETI decided not to renew its membership in the national organization because the dues had increased so much due to the cost of the insurance that was carried for members in case they were hurt on their rides. We retained our organization but named it the Sundowners. We did many of the same things that we did as the ETI .We celebrated the holidays as usual and retained our traditional events. We always celebrated the fourth with a picnic and a trip to the point to view the fireworks and had our usual hallowe'en and Christmas festivities. On Cinco de Mayo we raise money for our club by selling Mexican food and drinks and by contests and we sometimes have an auction. We bought olive trees for each one of our members who died, and have installed plaques in the clubhouse with their names. We have donated money for the garage to house the new fire engine.

Our clubhouse is very comfortable now in the winter time with the new furnace. After we added on the new room it was gradually furnished with donated furniture. There is a small library with books that have been donated. With Jim Fritchie's help a video club was organized and there is a collection of several hundred videos for lending to members at a small fee. Gary Maxwell built the beautiful cupboards where they are stored.

There are now sixty or more homes on the ranch and many of them larger and more luxurious than the developers had envisioned . They had thought of this property as a community for retired people, or for people who wanted to have weekend homes and horses and who would come up here for weekends or vacations to ride. on the forest trails.

The first residents , most of us elderly and with grown families,were surprised at the number of younger people who bought and built homes, especially those who had to travel to work or who had children that were of school age. Some of them taught their children at home. Some mothers took turns taking them down to the school bus. As the Elsinore community became more populated and the schools more crowded sessions had to be staggered, and there were mothers on the road much of the time The road remained a problem and paving the road became a priority. At last we were able to get enough votes from property owners to allow the paving, and with the help of one of our ranch resedents,

Bob Killen , who had the expertise to contact the right people, and at the cost to each property owner of about \$9000 per lot, plus interest, we now have a road that the school bus and the mail man will travel on, and that allows the wage earners to get back and forth to their work more easily. The school bus comes to the gate daily, and the mailboxes are just inside the gate and we get our mail there every day. We now have no trouble getting deliveries of any kind and we can get workmen to come here. Gone is the primitive area into which we first moved. in 1969.

There is constant traffic on the road and those of us who used to enjoy a lieisurely drive looking at the distant snow capped mountains, the unmatched sunsets, the full moon which seemed to welcome us home at night after a busy day, the sudden appearance of a mother deer and her fawn or even a cougar crossing the road-- we are the ones who miss the old road.

Sherman still loves our own property, but the ranch itself is much different than when he came in 1968. The spacious new homes and some of the manicured yards and the constant flow of traffic make it seem like a city suburb instead of the forest domain it was. His pioneer spirit tells him that he should move on but his age reminds him that it is time for him to sit down and smell the flowers.

