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# A look back/ Family home once had 12 Halls

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Courtesy of El Cajon Historical Society

This photo of the Hall family was taken in the late 1880s at the J.P.R. Hall ranch located along the present East Madison Avenue in El Cajon. Jessie P.R. Hall and his wife, Charlotte, and family came to the El Cajon Valley in May 1886 and purchased 40 acres of land. They raised wheat the first year and then planted their acreage in vineyard and orchard. Wilson D. Hall was the eldest of their 10 children. Shown in this photo are: (left to right) W.D. Hall, 18 years old and riding his horse "Old Bird"; Ed Nosler; Julian D. Hall; J.P.R. Hall; Sam Hall; John Rumbold Hall, grandfather; Marie Hall; Miss Mosler; Burdette Hall; and Rose Hall.

Ever wonder what El Cajon was like in its infancy? How streets or areas came to be named? What kinds of people were important to the early growth of the community?

Anybody who has lived in the area for even a short time has probably been curious about these subjects.

This column aims to help answer those questions and instruct us a little bit about our history. It is being presented by the El Cajon Historical Society and The Californian. The photos and artwork shown with each column are from the society's collection on display at the Knox Hotel on Magnolia and Park avenues in El Cajon.

The feature will appear monthly.

By Chloris Scott

of the El Cajon Historical Society

If you were told that, before the turn of the century, there was a house in El Cajon with 12 Halls in it you'd probably think that some eccentric builder had been at work.

his family south, renting a house near Eighth and Broadway, then considered the suburbs of San Diego.

A millwright, but foremost a farmer, Hall decided the city was no place for him and his family, so he looked to El Cajon valley for land. An account in the June 15, 1892, issue of the El Cajon Valley News (the first year of publication of the paper that now is The Daily Californian) has an account of J.P.R. Hall's fruit ranch.

The article relates that Hall paid \$60 an acre for the 40 acres he purchased in 1886 from the Pacific Coast Land Bureau. The first year he planted wheat. Learning that raisin grapes were a good crop he planted 32 acres in grapes, the rest was planted with a variety of fruit trees, peaches, apricots, pears, apples, figs and oranges, and vegetables. Another 20 acres, purchased a year after the Hall family arrived, was in hay for his horses and cattle.

In addition to working his own ranch, with the aid of the rest of his family, Hall earned some money by doing carpentry

some money from his work in Coronado. Wilson (better known as W.D.) bought a 29-acre tract of land east of his parents. The story of W.D., his marriage to a niece of Gen. U.S. Grant in New York state, his return to El Cajon and his start in the lumber business is another story, for he and his family of eight children have made a great impact on El Cajon through the years.

The Jesse Halls' other children included Marie Elizabeth, who taught school from 1893 to 1914, then returned home to care for her parents; Julian D., who ranched in the Bostonia area; Samuel C., who was longtime secretary of the Los Angeles Athletic Club; Jesse R., who was supervisor of Stanislaus forest; Arthur, who lived in Berkeley and worked as an engineer with Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., and Helen who taught in Los Angeles city schools. Three daughters, Burdette, Rosa and Mary died in their late teens and early 20s.

Most of the Hall family, including Jesse's parents, John and Mariah, are buried in El Cajon.