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My Dear Friend:

I received your letter some time ago. Although I was born in Palmdale 77 years ago, I hardly qualify as a real pioneer as we moved away from Palmdale in 1899 when I was just six years old.

I know my father arrived in Old Palmdale (Old Palmdale was two miles east of the present Palmdale) from Fairbury, Illinois in 1882 with his wife and four children. (He had emigrated to the U.S. from Switzerland some ten years earlier.) I was the eighth child, born Aug. 7, 1893. One more child - a girl - was born after I was. When my folks first lived in Palmdale my father operated a general merchandise store. He wasn't a good storekeeper, so he sold his store to Ferdinand Tetzloff. We had a nice little farm, just 10 acres. We raised some alfalfa and had a nice orchard. At that time everybody had plenty of water, but for some reason or other a new water company was formed and all of those first settlers lost their water rights and they were really out of luck. My father dug by hand and windlass a well 250 feet deep. One thing I will assure you, he wasn't at the bottom doing the digging - he was on top working the windlass. How he ever got anyone to go down there and do the digging was always a mystery. They got plenty of water for domestic use and he put up a windmill and that part worked out fine. Well things went from bad to worse - trying to farm without irrigating water, but then the real tragedy happened. My mother passed away when the last child, my little sister Lotte was born. Then my father was in real trouble. Nine children to raise and no mother.

Something had to be done as there simply was no chance to make a living in Palmdale. Somewhere along the line my father got in touch with a French slicker by the name of Leon Vicett. Vicett's nephew was supposed to have filed on a 160 acre homestead at Elizabeth Lake - 20 miles west of Palmdale. Vicett made a deal with my father to trade his homestead right ( which he never had in the first place ) for the 10 acres of land in Palmdale ( which wasn't any good either. )

So in 1898 the family proceeded to move to Elizabeth Lake. We had four boney, but faithful horses and an old wagon, and how we ever got the moving job done is another mystery. The homestead had no buildings of any kind, no water. The land was solidly covered with brush and timber of all kind. Put yourself in that spot and try and see how it must have felt. My father



got some old friends from Palmdale to help him build a house. I remember the carpenter's name was Byer. He was German. They dug a well not 250 feet but got fine drinking water at 20 feet. There wasn't much water in the lake at that time. Our land joined the lake, and there were about two acres of very moist and rich soil which we raised about everything you could think of. In fact we just about lived on the stuff we raised in that garden. Next began the job of clearing the timber and brush off the land. That really turned into something right quick! My father decided to try to burn the brush, and burn it he did!! He started the biggest forest fire of all time. It burned for five days and nights. None of those mountains had ever been burned, so you can imagine what a fire it made. It burned all the neighbors' fences for miles, so my father wasn't very popular with the neighbors about that time. If a person started a fire like that now he would probably be safely put in the Hoosgow for at least 20 years. Even then about a week after the fire was out the Forest Service sent a ranger up from Newhall. His name was Douglas, a very fine man. Mr. Douglas rode up on a big mule. All of us kids were scared to death when we saw him coming. We thought sure they were going to put my father in jail. Mr. Douglas talked for a while, watered and fed his mule, and he sized things up around there and I guess he figured that John Munz had troubles enough trying to raise all those kids. Then he shook hands and rode back to Newhall, and that was the end of that.

Things started getting a little better from then on. My father was instrumental in getting the first Post Office. He operated it for at least 25 years right at the ranch. We all stuck together and worked hard. We never had any money. In fact, I didn't know what money looked like until I got a job when I was 12 years old driving the horses on a haybailing crew. I received 75¢ a day for a ten hour day, and my meals. The man I worked for was a real oldtimer in the valley; his name was Frank Frakes, a fine friend and neighbor.

My father would work at anything he could get besides working on the homestead. In the summertime he would work for Max Godde or Bill Radloff, two of the real oldtimers in the valley. On the haybailer job he would get \$1.50 per day, and on the thrasher \$2.00 a day. For a ten hour day that was the standard pay. Of course his meals were included. These people were all great friends and they used to really celebrate on New Years Eve at the John Ritter Winery located eight miles west of Palmdale.

Another tragedy happened in 1911 when our good friend and neighbor Gottlob Ritter's daughter, Martha, 15 years old, was accidentally shot with a shot gun and it practically shot off her left elbow. Had that happened in this day and age the worst would have been a stiff arm. The accident happened at four o'clock in the afternoon, and no doctor within 30 miles. My brother, Eli, got his best team of horses and drove most of the night to meet the four o'clock train in the early morning. The Los Angeles County Hospital met the train in L.A. with an ambulance and inside of two hours a fine surgeon operated on the arm. But it was too late. Blood poison had set in and he had to take the arm off at the shoulder. The doctor gave her one chance in a thousand to survive, and luckily she did. She is the most remarkable



girl in the world and I should know as she has been my wife for 47 years.

So, that is the way we go through life. My three brothers Emil, Eli, and Eric are all gone. I have one sister in a Convalescent Hospital in Pasadena, who was 88 years old last Wednesday. She is Mrs. Ingeborg Holland, and she lived all her life up in the Antelope Valley. She is the one that is most responsible for raising all of us kids, and she also took my baby sister, Lotte, to Switzerland when she was 13 years old. My baby sister was adopted by some very wealthy folks in Switzerland and she has always lived there. She is 75 years old. She visited all of us about 10 years ago.

The last good life-long friend that I had was Emil Ritter and he is gone too. So one by one we slip away.

I retired from my garage business in 1958. I hope this letter won't be too boring, as it is quite long. If it is throw it in the waste basket.

Your friend,

Arnold Munz

P.S. The old original house that my father built is now on exhibition at Glen Settles' Gold Mine at Rosamond.



About 1910... Mrs. Nye was the teacher.

The old Belleview School, S.E. corner 45th West & Ave. N. - Quartz Hill.