



home > city hall > press releases

## Pioneering Families Honored on Fred T. Perris Day

Hard work, family, service to community and country, love of Perris.

Those were the virtues of the pioneering Villalovos-Pacheco family, who came to the City nearly a century ago and through five generations have contributed to the culture and fabric of the Perris Valley.

About 100 descendants of the family attended the annual Fred T. Perris Day Jan. 30 at the Depot on Fourth Street, where they reminisced about the patriarch and matriarch who left their home in Mexico for the chance to prosper in Perris.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch reads a proclamation celebrating the contributions of the Villalovos-Pacheco families during Fred T. Perris Day at the Depot Building on Jan. 30. Family members Ginny Rund and Pete Pacheco look on. Barry Busch, who represented Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley at the event, holds a proclamation signed by the County Board of Supervisors.

"The Villalovos and Pacheco families have been a big part of the Perris community and continue to be represented by several generations," said Katie Keyes, a local historian and member of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. "Coming from humble beginnings, they have left a legacy in Perris of devoted and hard-working family members."

Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilmembers David Starr Rabb and Mark Yarbrough represented the City, with the Mayor presenting a proclamation and certificate of recognition to the family. Riverside County Supervisors also honored the family.

Busch said the City's Fred T. Perris Day, named in honor of the chief engineer of the California Southern Railroad who mapped out the City, preserves the contributions of residents who might otherwise be forgotten.

"This day helps bring out the history of our City and those who contributed to it," Busch said. "When you have great families, you have a great City."

Rabb said the City has done a great job in preserving its physical past through restoring the Depot, the Bank of Perris, the art deco Perris Theatre, City Hall complex and helping renovate many businesses along D Street. But it's just as important to remember the people who occupied those buildings and persevered to leave their mark.

"Honoring our history is about honoring the people who contributed to the development of the Perris Valley," Rabb said. "As we grow, we must remember our history. I would like to thank the Villalovos-Pacheco family for being part of the Perris fabric."



Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb, who grew up in Perris and attended school with descendants of the Villalovos-Pacheco families, chats with a pair at the annual Fred T. Perris Day.

Yarbrough noted that Perris took shape at the Depot on D Street, where the annual celebration of pioneering families takes place. Years of work have restored the original 1892 building, making it the perfect spot to honor a pioneer family.

"It is an honor to recognized the people who came here, worked here, raised their families here and contributed to the growth and greatness of the Perris Valley," he said.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough (right) attended Fred T. Perris Day and chatted with longtime resident Vincent Magana, Christina Perris (great-granddaughter of Fred T. Perris) and local historian Katie Keyes.

### Seeking a better life

Manuel and Francisca Villalovos immigrated the California from Michoacan, Mexico in 1922. Francisca arrived first and earned money for her husband to emigrate by selling tamales and working as a domestic cook. The couple purchased three lots on Street just north of Third Street and built an adobe home.

The couple worked in the agriculture business while Francisca earned additional money by working outside the home cooking, cleaning and washing clothes.

Four children—Frank, Manuel Jr., Hazel and Isabel—followed.

Manuel Villalovos died in 1931 at age 51. Francisca continued providing for her family through an assortment of jobs, including traveling around California to harvest potatoes and other crops.

She became a well-known figure in the small, close-knit Perris community, where she attended St. James Catholic Church. She died in 1975 at age 87.

Hazel Villalovos married Pete Pacheco after World War II and the couple became parents to 13 children. The other sibling married and raised families as well. Several grandchildren and lots of great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren of Manuel and Francisca returned to accept the honor as descendants of the pioneer family.

"To be honored by the City of Perris is a special thing," said Ginny Rund, who lives in Menifee. "We've been around the Perris Valley all of our lives."

Rund is the daughter of Manuel and Jessie Villalovos.

### An idyllic childhood

She and her cousins, Linda Weeks and Pete Pacheco Jr., talked about growing up in a Perris dominated by agriculture, small-town charm and family. Many folks worked sorting and packing potatoes at the Smith Bros. packing shed a stone's throw from the family residence.

A water tank near Fourth and D streets kept the steam train humming as it loaded up potatoes to take to market. The Rexall Drug Store sold cherry Coca-Cola for 15 cents a cup. Groceries came from Kirkpatrick's Super Market on D Street south of Fourth.

Kids played baseball and roller skated for fun. Boys sometimes hunted rabbits in the open fields north of Nuevo Road, now home to businesses and subdivisions. For entertainment, they crowded into the Perris Theatre on Saturday afternoons for a double-feature that costs 25 cents. Adult entertainment came from the Kool Kove.

American Legion Post 595 on D and Eighth streets offered brunch. When the community got sick, Dr. Bruce Reid was there to cure their ills.

"You knew everybody," Weeks said. "You knew where they lived. When someone got married, everybody got invited. When there was a funeral, everyone attended. Perris was a great place to grow up. Our dad always said he was proud to be from Perris. Our whole family feels the same way."



Pictures taken through the decades helped tell the story of the pioneering Villalovos-Pacheco families and their impact and contributions to the Perris Valley.

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