

Victoria Pedrorena An 1879 Teacher in the Fall Brook District

We all know that Reche is the name of the pioneer family in Fallbrook, and most of us know that Reche Road through Live Oak Park was named for this family.

Amelia Reche and her husband Vital Reche homesteaded their 160 acres adjacent to the northern boundary of Rancho Monserate in the 1870s. Amelia ran the hotel, consisting of a few cabins near Live Oak Park, where surveyors, travelers, and other early settlers stayed while they looked for land to homestead. Amelia's own family name was Magee, and like her husband, she had grown up in the state of New York. Amelia's Magee family epitomizes the mix of cultures which existed in early Fallbrook.



Amelia Magee's brother, Henry Magee, had volunteered with the New York troops in 1846, and was part of the military force which took California from Mexico. He was stationed in San Diego in the 1850s, and there he met Victoria de Pedrorena. She was a granddaughter of Jose Antonio Estudillo, a political leader in San Diego, both when it was a town of the Mexican state of California, and after it became a part of the United States. Her Spanish born father, Miguel de Pedrorena, an Oxford educated sea going merchant, was one of the founders of New San Diego. Miguel de Pedrorena died in 1850, and Victoria went to live with her maternal grandparents. Following their marriage, Henry and Victoria Pedrorena de Magee homesteaded a quarter section of land near today's Main Ave and Fallbrook Street. In July 1875, San Diego County approved the Fall Brook school district, but it would be several years, in 1886, before a schoolhouse could be built on land in West Fallbrook at the corner of Elder Street and Hill Street (Now Mission Rd). In the meantime, Victoria Magee taught the children in her own adobe home. Back at Live Oak Park, Amelia Reche likewise taught school in her home in the 1870s before the Reche schoolhouse could be built on their land in 1886.

John Magee, Amelia and Henry's brother, arrived in California in the early 1850s. John Magee settled near the Indian town of Temecula, on the Butterfield stage route, and opened a store. He married a granddaughter of the San Luis Rey educated Luiseno leader, Pablo Apis, grantee of the Little Temecula Rancho. Their daughter, Louisa, went to live with her Uncle Henry and Aunt Victoria Magee in the Fall Brook District, where she attended the school taught by her aunt. In 1879, names on the honor roll of the Magee adobe school included seven Magee children, and one child each from the families of Reche, Neff, Vines, and Starr.

Thus it happened that Mexican, Indian, and Anglo Magees were part of West Fall Brook's early public school population, while a Mexican lady, Victoria Magee was the first teacher.

Victoria Ynez de Pedrorena Magee

born: 1842, San Diego

married: 1860, San Diego

died: 1886, San Francisco, buried in San Diego

Written by Elizabeth Yamaguchi, former Historical Society historian.

Edited by Tom Frew Historical Society historian