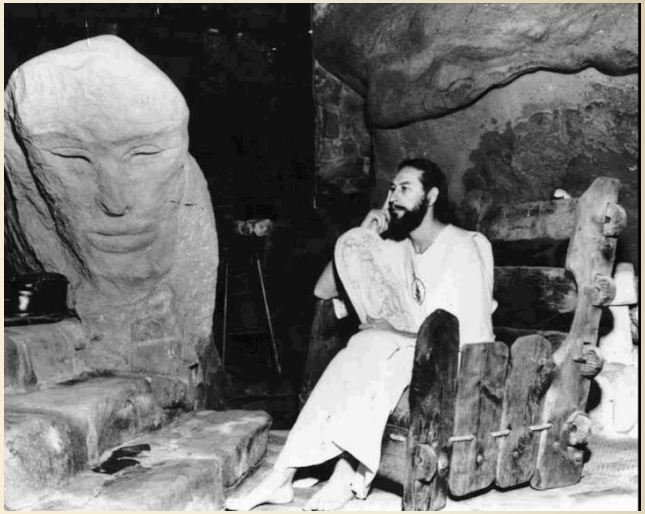
W.K.F.L. Fountain of the World



Krishna Venta in the Boulder Shelter
60 Box Canyon

W.K.F.L. Wisdom Knowledge Faith Love
Fountain of the World
585 Box Canyon, for sale $6.2M, 11.3 acres

Introduction

From 1949 to the 1960's, the cult "The Fountain of the World", run by Krishna Venta, resided in two places in Box Canyon, Chatsworth Lake Manor. In 1958 two suicide bombers, former cult members upset by their leader's sexual misconduct, blew themselves up at the headquarters building, killing Krishna Venta and seven others.

The remains of the site at 585 Box Canyon Road is for sale today, $6.2 million for 11.3 acres.

This presentation will be divided into four parts:

- Krishna Venta's background, born Francis Pencovic in San Francisco in 1911.
- The lower site at 60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter (1950 to 1954)
- The upper site at 585 Box Canyon, The Fountain of the World (1949 - 1970) no mention in newspapers after 1969, stories that Charles Manson stayed at the Fountain for several months in 1968.
- A 25 minute film made by Callie Shanafelt, a daughter documenting her father and uncle who lived as children at The Fountain of the World. Her grandparents and their one year old child died in the 1958 bombing.

This presentation will be posted at our website, chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Presentations.

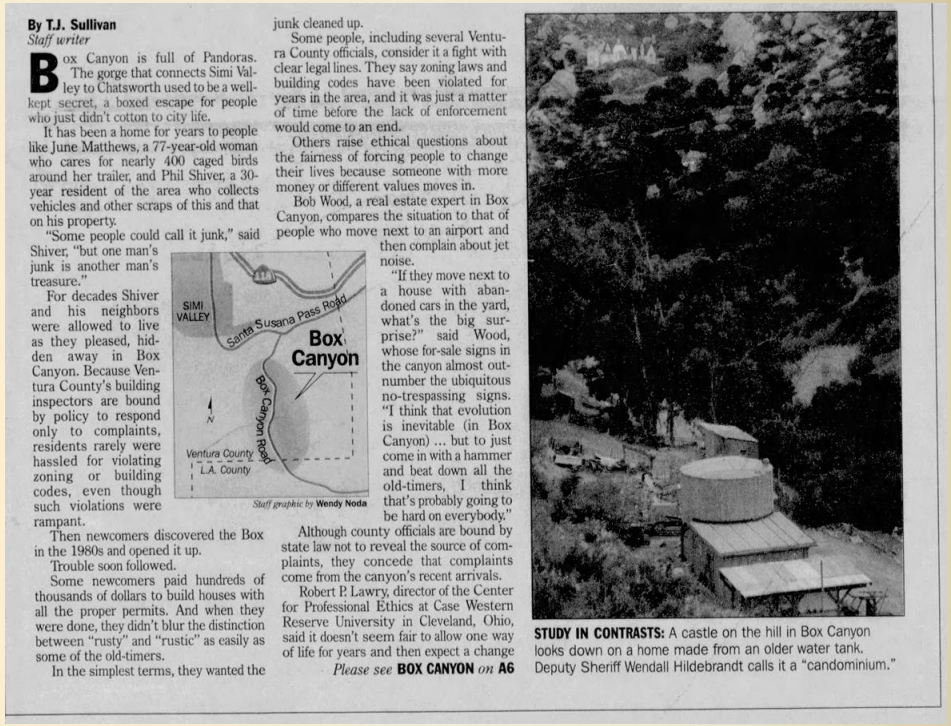
Introduction

"In Greek mythology, Pandora was given a box and told not to open it. She did it anyway and unleashed all the troubles of the world."

Staff photos by Greg A. Cooper

BIRD LOVER: June "Auntie June" Matthews, 77, walks from one of her two aviaries in Box Canyon. A longtime resident of the canyon, she says, "You need to see the good side" of people.

Squeezing the Box



By T.J. Sullivan
Staff writer

Box Canyon is full of Pandoras. The gorge that connects Simi Valley to Chatsworth used to be a well-kept secret, a boxed escape for people who just didn't cotton to city life.

It has been a home for years to people like June Matthews, a 77-year-old woman who cares for nearly 400 caged birds around her trailer, and Phil Shiver, a 30-year resident of the area who collects vehicles and other scraps of this and that on his property.

"Some people could call it junk," said Shiver, "but one man's junk is another man's treasure."

For decades Shiver and his neighbors were allowed to live as they pleased, hidden away in Box Canyon. Because Ventura County's building inspectors are bound by policy to respond only to complaints, residents rarely were hassled for violating zoning or building codes, even though such violations were rampant.

Then newcomers discovered the Box in the 1980s and opened it up.

Trouble soon followed.

Some newcomers paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to build houses with all the proper permits. And when they were done, they didn't blur the distinction between "rusty" and "rustic" as easily as some of the old-timers.

In the simplest terms, they wanted the junk cleaned up.

Some people, including several Ventura County officials, consider it a fight with clear legal lines. They say zoning laws and building codes have been violated for years in the area, and it was just a matter of time before the lack of enforcement would come to an end.

Others raise ethical questions about the fairness of forcing people to change their lives because someone with more money or different values moves in.

Bob Wood, a real estate expert in Box Canyon, compares the situation to that of people who move next to an airport and then complain about jet noise.

"If they move next to a house with abandoned cars in the yard, what's the big surprise?" said Wood, whose for-sale signs in the canyon almost outnumber the ubiquitous no-trespassing signs. "I think that evolution is inevitable (in Box Canyon) ... but to just come in with a hammer and beat down all the old-timers, I think that's probably going to be hard on everybody."

Although county officials are bound by state law not to reveal the source of complaints, they concede that complaints come from the canyon's recent arrivals.

Robert P. Lawry, director of the Center for Professional Ethics at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, said it doesn't seem fair to allow one way of life for years and then expect a change

Please see **BOX CANYON** *on* **A6**

SIMI VALLEY
Santa Susana Pass Road
Box Canyon
Box Canyon Road
N
Ventura County
L.A. County

Staff graphic by Wendy Noda

STUDY IN CONTRASTS: A castle on the hill in Box Canyon looks down on a home made from an older water tank. Deputy Sheriff Wendall Hildebrandt calls it a "candominium."

- This program is timely as the Fountain of the World property in Box Canyon is up for sale. The long-time owner of 585 Box Canyon is Phil Shiver, who has owned property in Box Canyon since 1967. He recently sold it to an acquaintance and it is up for sale.
- The article above discusses how newcomers to Box Canyon have brought County Inspectors. Phil Shiver is quoted as saying "Some people could call it junk, but one man's junk is another man's treasure."

1997-05-04 Ventura County Star pg1

Introduction

Box Canyon: When 2 cultures clash

Phil Shiver went to jail for four months as a result of his violations. He said he would rather serve the time than accept three years probation and pay the $250 fine the court offered him.

"I won't take probation for any reason because you're under contract with the government," he said. "Then all they have to do is allege that I'm a bad guy and they can jack me anytime.

"If your freedom ain't worth fighting for, you don't deserve it."

A6 ■ CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE Sunday, May 4, 1997 FC The Star

BOX CANYON: When 2 cultures clash

Continued from **A1**

overnight.

"I think the courts will have little choice but to say ... the people who have lived there and built at their own risk are going to have to suffer the consequence," Lawry said. "But the system shouldn't just sweep people away like that.

"It is a bit of a dilemma."

Ventura County Supervisor Frank Schillo, whose district includes Box Canyon, said his concern is those who satisfy county codes.

"My heart goes out to the people who live there and obey the law and yet they're living next to people who just don't give a darn," Schillo said.

To help them, he said, it's necessary to beef up the ordinances and make people comply.

Changes in the enforcement of such ordinances will be discussed at the board's regular meeting Tuesday, though a final vote won't be taken until May 13.

The proposed changes would sharpen the penalties that accompany violations of the building code countywide. The proposal provides for fines of up to $500 a day and allows the cost of enforcement to be charged to property owners found guilty by a county-appointed hearing officer.

The county also would be allowed under the proposal to place liens on property to recoup some of the fees. An unpaid tax bill could result in the forced sale of the land by the county.

"We want to make sure they're all obeying the law," Schillo said. "I think what the county is interested in is that the property values are sustained in that area."

Shiver, who said he wasn't notified of the proposal, talks about the move as a Gestapo tactic.

"It's complete tyranny over the people that own their property," he said. "The government we have now is strictly trying to get everybody into a position where they've got to get a permit."

Such notions are foreign in much of Box Canyon. Several people say they have a right to do as they please with their land.

That might explain why many have scoffed at county infraction notices as though they were parking tickets.

County officials even went so far as to take some of them to court, charging them with misdemeanors, a process that can take more than a year and still not resolve the situation.

Shiver went to jail for four months as a result of his violations. He said he would rather serve the time than accept three years probation and pay the $250 fine the court offered him.

"I won't take probation for any reason because you're under contract with the government," he said. "Then all they have to do is allege that I'm a bad guy and they can jack me up any time.

"If your freedom ain't worth fighting for, you don't deserve it."

A rocky past

Box Canyon's sandstone caves and craggy faces were relatively unknown for many years. It was a secluded place that could be accessed only from the Los Angeles County side until 1942, when a narrow, two-lane road was pushed through to Ventura County.

Still, there wasn't much call for travel between the two places. Simi Valley wasn't declared a city until more than 25 years later.

Hollywood found it anyway.

Ventura County Sheriff's Deputy Wendall Hildebrandt, who regularly patrols the area, realized the canyon had been the backdrop for some of his favorite movies when he first visited it 17 years ago.

"Once you were here you realized you'd been here before," Hildebrandt said during a recent drive in the canyon. He'd been there with Gene Autry and Zorro.

Movie crews were hardly the only excitement in Box Canyon. In 1958, a cult that had settled in the area — WKFL Fountain of the World — was bombed by jealous husbands who believed the leader of the commune was sleeping with their wives. The bomb killed the two husbands, the commune leader, Krishna Venta, and five others.

Infamous murderer Charles Manson supposedly spent a couple of uneventful days in the area in the 1960s, but the local gossip is that he was run off because he wasn't well liked.

Those kinds of credentials have given the place the stuff of legends and some myths.

It has been used as a hideout for people processing illegal drugs. Automobile chop shops, where stolen cars are carved up for parts, also have been found there. Occasionally, a dead body will be dropped in the area.

Some people tell tales of a secret Hells Angels shooting range. Hildebrandt said the bikers have a clubhouse nearby in Los Angeles County, but he has never encountered a shooting range.

Rookie deputies have become rattled in the canyon when they mistake the screech of wild peacock screams.

County officials say they feel threatened when they're in the canyon because some residents have expressed anti-government sentiments. This worry is compounded by the rock walls, which block signals from police radios and cellular telephones.

As a result, county workers travel with deputy escorts in the area, a situation that further inflames relations with the old-timers.

City folks just scare too easily, the old-timers say.

Matthews, who's affectionately called Auntie June by her friends, cites her experience with a motorcycle gang in the area as a lesson.

"They hated this woman who lived here because she would complain about them constantly," said Matthews, who purchased her trailer in the canyon 13 years ago. "Whenever they came by they would throw all their junk over here because she caused them so much trouble.

"When they came by one day I waved at them and one of them stopped and said, 'You live here now?' And they said, 'OK, lady,' and they saluted me and they never dumped anything here again.

"They told me, 'If you're ever in trouble, lady, you just let us know and we'll take care of you.' So you see, you just see the bad side of people. You need to see the good side."

John Hand, who has lived in Box Canyon since 1979 on the same land the cult used to occupy, said the media is to blame for some of the stereotype.

"Once in awhile (a Los Angeles newspaper) ... would print an article about all the weirdos and crazies that live up in Box Canyon," Hand said. "They'd print it and the people would come up ... to watch the weirdos and they'd, of course, bring a gun with them.

"Right away you had an explosive situation."

Putting up walls

Creativity abounds in the canyon.

One house is fashioned from a huge water tank.

There's an elaborate castle built beside a cliff.

There even have been a few cave residences over the years, a situation that has puzzled county officials because there were no codes on the books that dealt with caves.

There are ramshackle shacks pieced together alongside trailers or other vehicles.

"It's everything and anything," said Gloria Goldman, a code enforcement officer with the county Planning Department. "You've got people living in leantos."

County officials say they understand the stress it puts on people when the codes are enforced, but they're there for a reason, said Liz Cameron, a Ventura County code enforcement officer, described by some of the locals as a tyrant.

"Sometimes they don't realize that their actions affect other people and their health," Cameron said. "If one house goes and burns down because they went and bootlegged the electrical, who knows? It could spread."

Cameron said drastic measures are not the county's first course of action.

"I'd be more than happy to help them make the connections (for free help), but a lot of them don't want it or are too proud," she said. "I've gone out and gotten free Dumpsters in the area to help them clean up ... and they're not willing to follow through and make the corrections."

Todd Collart, manager of the county's zoning administration section, takes a hard line on the matter. In his opinion, the structures have been on borrowed time since the day they went up, and he'll use "any means available to get them to comply."

The Internal Revenue Service gets a call if the person is suspected of operating an illegal business. Child Protective Services gets a call if the people have children living in shoddy structures. The Humane Society is called if animals are being kept in poor condition. Even the sheriff gets a call if the people look "nefarious."

"The last resort is to go into court (on the building code violations), and ... that's a long, involved, expensive process that still isn't very successful," Collart said.

Some people have been given more than two years to fix a problem and still did nothing.

More moving boxes

Box Canyon is among the county's top five pockets of concentrated building violations, Cameron said.

What makes it a special case is that it has significant appeal to home buyers from Los Angeles because it's secluded and still within a few miles of a major shopping mall.

So the newcomers keep coming, innocently opening the box.

Wood said his real estate office gets about one telephone call a week from people who say they "just discovered" Box Canyon.

"It will be another Topanga Canyon," Wood said, referring to an area near Los Angeles where houses are often priced at more than $500,000 apiece. "Property values will be extremely high, but it will still be imbued with these rustic ... unique model dwellings. Right now Topanga is probably 150 to 200 percent above our values, and we'll get up there."

There already have been homes in Box Canyon that have sold for more than $500,000, he said.

The old-timers say that's all the fight is about — money — and they don't like it.

Billy Hall, who has lived in the area for more than 20 years, said the point was made clear to him a few years ago by a man who bought a house nearby. "He said, 'I didn't pay $372,000 to look at that,' and he started pointing at a rusty car here or something there," Hall said.

It makes Cindy Marlow, a 25-year resident of the canyon, sad.

"Just because somebody wants to build a big house next to you ... doesn't mean that you should have to move your cars," she said.

Wood's advice: "Live and let live."

"There are some who are going to move in who will see it as an opportunity to clean up an area, and I think they're going to see a lot of resistance," Wood said. "There ... are people up there who have been out of compliance for a decade or more and they probably aren't about to change."

Staff photo by **Greg A. Cooper**

THE WATCHER: This large face has been carved into a rock along Box Canyon Road in eastern Ventura County.

1997-05-04 Ventura County Star pg2

Introduction

Next up: A 2-minute video, "Xanadu"

585 BOX CANYON, Ventura County

PRICE RECENTLY IMPROVED TO $6,200,000

BY HOLLY HATCH AND CHRIS JOHNSON

Welcome to Xanadu, a hidden gem nestled within the breathtaking Santa Susanna Hills of Ventura County. For more than 75 years, Box Canyon has remained a well-kept secret, preserving its rich history of life and love, which is truly unique to Southern California. Secluded just far enough to provide the feeling of being in the middle of nowhere, yet conveniently close to everything you need, this pristine landscape awaits a grand transformation.

Upwards of 16.8 acres, and 10 separate APN's, each with its own story to tell. Explore a mesmerizing terrain adorned with mysterious caves, intriguing buildings, and a concealed waterfall, multiple artesian wells, all of which add to the allure of this remarkable property.

Xanadu https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxsaX876N58&t

https://hollyandchrisluxuryhomes.com/box-canyon/

Introduction

- In 1949, Krishna Venta's cult was living at 60 and 585 Box Canyon Road, both properties owned by Floyd and Essie Berry, early real estate investors in Chatsworth Lake Manor pgs 30-35

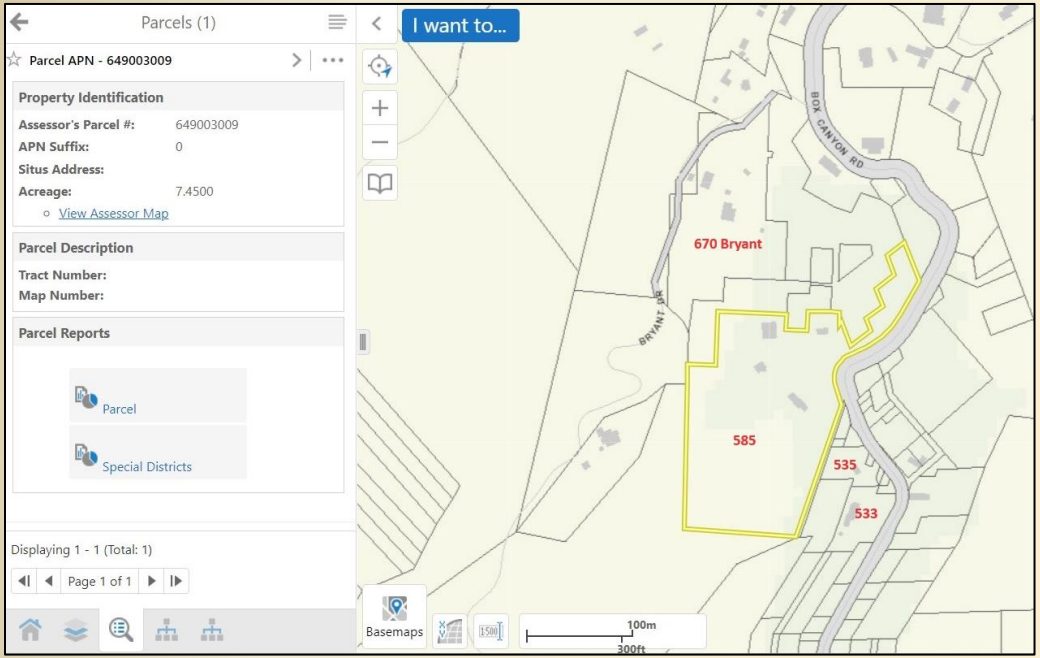
- In the 1950 census, Floyd and Essie were living at 23300 Valley Circle Drive, today's Log Cabin Mercantile Co.

- In the 1950 census, Krishna Venta and his wife Ruth were living at 662 Box Canyon with their 3 children

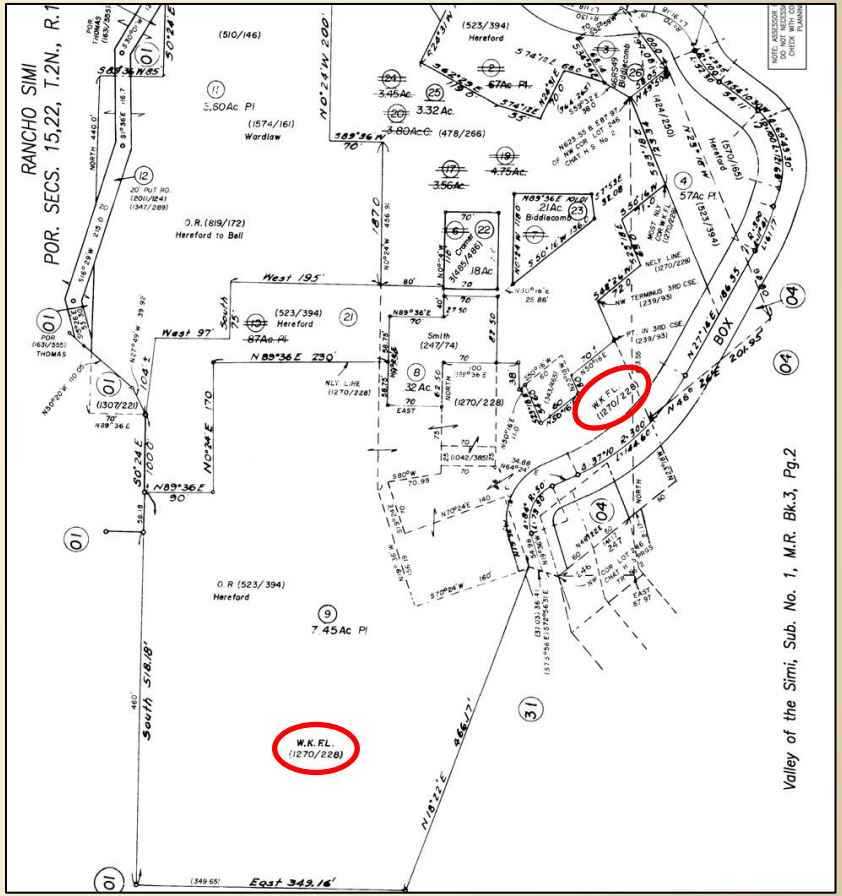
  Occupation: Teacher of Philosophy
  Industry: Spiritual Group

Census Taker notes: This person head of religious cult. Refused to give age & place of birth.
Left an I.C.R. to be sent directly to Bureau of Census.
3 houses also listed under same number, because there is only one "head" the "Master", namely Mr. Venta.

Introduction



585 Box Canyon Parcel map 7.45 acres in yellow. The other parcels north of 585 make up the balance of the 11.3 acres for sale.
The headquarters building that was blown up in 1958 was at today's 535/533 Box Canyon (built in 1960 and 1979)



585 Box Canyon Assessor's map, Lot 9, W.K.F.L. circled in red

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) early timeline

- Francis Herman Pencovic (1911-1958) was born in San Francisco on March 29th, 1911 to Albert Pencovic (1888-1963), a Jewish immigrant from Romania and his wife Maude Busenbark (1889-1981), born in Utah. His father remarried in 1914.
- His mother Maude was previously married to Chester Fenner in Reno in 1909. They moved to San Francisco, Chester ended up in San Quentin, and they were divorced.
- It appears Maude and Albert Pencovic had Francis as an illegitimate child in 1911. At the age of 3 it appears that Maude gave her child up for adoption in Utah to Maggie Jessen. In 1915 Maude married Andrew Hansen in Pocatello, Idaho.
- Note: In a 1949 newspaper article, Krishna Venta said Francis Pencovic was the name of a child who disappeared from San Francisco "miraculously" at the age of 3.
- Maggie Jessen was married to Nephi Jessen in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1905. Nephi died in 1913, before Francis was adopted. Francis was brought up under the Mormon religion by a single mother.
- In the 1920 census (age 9) he is listed as Frankie Jessen, the adopted son of Maggie Jessen (from Utah) in Elko, Nevada. In 1927 Frank Jessen is a member of the Elko High School Glee Club.
- In 1930 (19) in El Paso, Frank Jessen is arrested for burglary, sentenced to 90 days in county jail.
- In 1932 (21) in Los Angeles, Frank Jessen is arrested for petty theft, sentenced to 90 days in jail with 60 additional days suspended.
- In the 1940 census Francis Pencovic (29) is married in Berkeley, Ca to Geneva Webster, they have two children, Peter and Laveta.

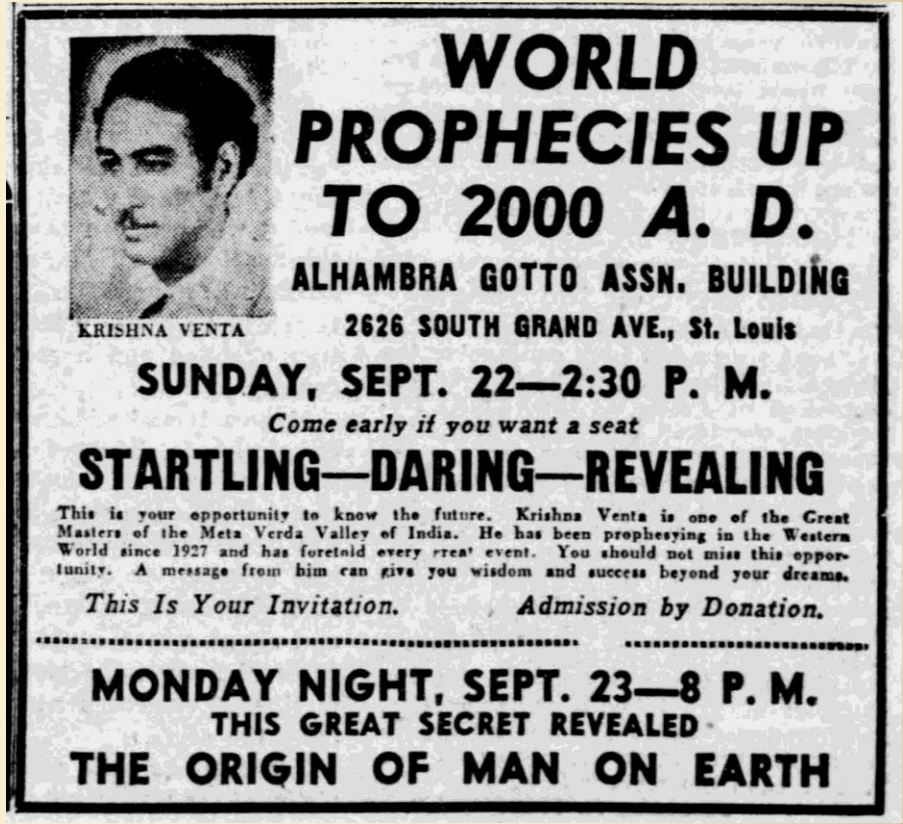
Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- On March 29th, 1945 (34), Francis Pencovic marries Ruth Britzell from Utah. (Note: He was married on the same day as his birthday; in 1945 this was also Good Friday. All weddings at the Fountain will take place on March 29th)
- In July 1945 he enlists in the Armed Forces at Fort Douglas, Utah, and is discharged in December of that year.
- In 1946 (35), he speaks for the first time as Krishna Venta, (no beard or robe)….Do You Want Wisdom?

1946-06-27 Krishna Venta Ogden Standard Utah

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- 1946-09-21 Krishna Venta Speaks in St. Louis, world prophecies, from India
- 1946-11-14 Speaks in Cincinnati, a prophet from India, no accent is proof of his mind power
- 1947-05-08 Speaks in Florida, Evangelist Philosopher
- 1947-06-01 article on Krishna Venta, in Florida writing a book. He is a tall lean man with monogramed white silk shirts and white pants. **Monogramed in a circle of pale blue are the four letters WKFL …his creed, Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith and Love.**
- 1947-06-20 Speaks in Boston, Philosopher from the valley of Shangri-la, India.
- 1947-08-03 Portland Maine -- Nepal-born Krishna Venta, descended from Altantians and Shangri-La residents.



1946-09-21 St Louis Post Dispatch

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- 1948-02-14 Speaks in Arizona, 15-hour program on world prophecies
- 1948-04-03 Speaks in Denver, on a mission to save the world, with Florida license plates
- 1949-03-02 Man in Denver wears no shoes, protected by an “aura”, taught by Krishna Venta (the voice)
- 1949-03-12 London Bound arrives in New York from Denver, with wife Ruth for a series of Lectures in Europe. He is bearded, dresses in shrouds and wears no shoes.
- He leaves for a two month swing through England, France, Denmark and Italy.

The Voice of Brotherly Love
Bearded Krishna Venta, known as “The Voice of Brotherly Love,” waves to group of admirers at LaGuardia Field upon his arrival from Denver with his wife, Ruth. They are en route to London. (Acme)

1949-03-12 arrives in New York from Denver on his way to Europe

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- In London Krishna Venta has come to bring Britain "into the fold"
- Krishna Venta means Christ Everlasting. He calls himself the "New Messiah" and "The Voice". And says he is 1,900 years old.
- He said supporters were paying for his trip to Britain, and that he has 80,000 followers in the United States.

FORWARD WITH THE PEOPLE

O. as a Newspaper.

Krishna Venta has come to bring Britain 'into the fold'

The "Master" and his wife.

"DAILY MIRROR" REPORTER

PALE, his blue eyes shining, he walked into the room. Black hair, carefully "permed," fell to his shoulders. His beard was shot with grey. He wore a powder-blue robe. Whalebone ensured that the dark-blue band round his waist remained a foot wide. His feet were bare.

He said: "My name is Krishna Venta. It means Christ Everlasting."

And that is how yet another American "religion" has come to London.

Krishna Venta calls himself "The New Messiah," "The Voice."

To see him I went to Suite 49-50 (costing more than £35 a week) at an exclusive West End hotel.

I had been warned to bow, to call him "Master."

In vest and zip-fronted trousers, a man was shaving. I went through the drill, but it was a mistake. The man was coloured Robert S. Conn, described by his card as "Foreign and Domestic Correspondent of the 'San Diego Lighthouse,'" and now Venta's Press officer.

He told me the "New Messiah" comes from Los Angeles. He has 70,000 or 80,000 adherents in the U.S. He has nearly two million supporters elsewhere.

Venta, according to Mr. Conn, has come here on inspiration. He wants to bring Britain into the fold. Then Paris. Then Stockholm.

Mr. Conn, sitting on the end of an unmade bed, talked for more than an hour about "The Master."

Then he brought in Venta.

"The Voice's" first words were: "I must

Continued on Back Page

RED GENTRY' GOVERNMENT, BER HARRIS

ber Command veterans went ek-end reunion in London pus- ok to be an attack on Allied

Marshal Sir Robert Saundby, rthur (Bomber) Harris—read from their ex-chief, now in

ONE GLANCE, THE FORGOT THE WEA

DANIEL PURIEY, 28, glanced out of his b dow in Camden-street, Camden Town, terday to see if it was warm enough to go his overcoat.

Then he forgot about the weather, foc elderly woman hanging by her hands from of the bridge over the canal which runs pa

As he watched she dropped into the wate

Mr. Purley dashed out of the house, dived into the water and swam towards her.

But before reach the wo man pushed wards her. S and was pulled

Said Mr. P wards: "I was best suit and Anyway, I sa I hadn't time after I had d

The woman for shock and to return hom

Park murder: Victim is still not known

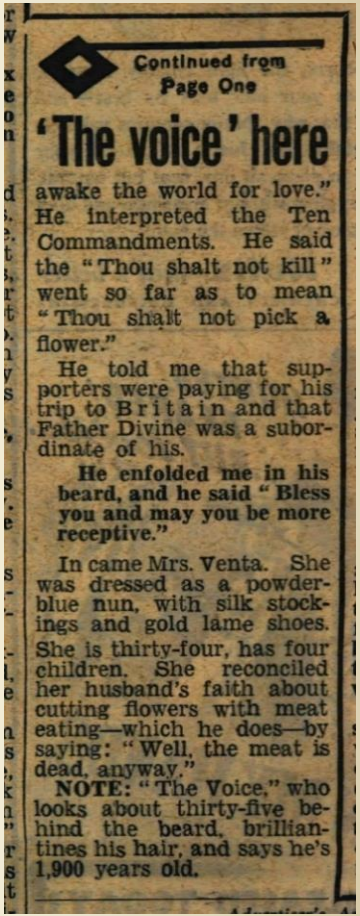
SCOTLAND YARD officers were last night still trying to identify the woman found strangled in Regent's Park, London, thirty-six hours earlier.

The woman, between sixty and sixty-five, had the letters "I.L.V." and "H.C." tattooed on her left arm.

Detectives may today drag a pond near which the body was found.

3s.-A-MIN

Sitting Thomas's C h castle-on-Tyne week-end, the Bennitt colle a minute—to funds.



Continued from Page One

'The voice' here

awake the world for love." He interpreted the Ten Commandments. He said the "Thou shalt not kill" went so far as to mean "Thou shalt not pick a flower."

He told me that supporters were paying for his trip to Britain and that Father Divine was a subordinate of his.

He enfolded me in his beard, and he said "Bless you and may you be more receptive."

In came Mrs. Venta. She was dressed as a powder-blue nun, with silk stockings and gold lame shoes. She is thirty-four, has four children. She reconciled her husband's faith about cutting flowers with meat eating—which he does—by saying: "Well, the meat is dead, anyway."

NOTE: "The Voice," who looks about thirty-five behind the beard, brilliantines his hair, and says he's 1,900 years old.

1949-03-14 The London Daily Mirror

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- In London, American Police tell Scotland Yard that Krishna Venta is a convicted burglar.
- In Rome, he arrives in hopes of seeing the Pope. Vatican guards thought it was an April fools joke.

POLICE SAY "NEW MESSIAH" A BURGLAR

Daily Telegraph Service

LONDON, Sun.—American police have informed Scotland Yard that Krishna Venta, self-styled "New Messiah" is a convicted burglar.

Krishna, also known as "The Voice," is living in a luxurious London suite.

He told reporters that he came to Britain from the U.S. "to awaken the world for love."

He claimed that he had 80,000 disciples in the U.S. and 2,000,000 in the world.

Krishna told London reporters that he is at least 1900 years old.

"I am ageless and I am everywhere," he said.

"I came to earth in a rocket ship with the Caustians, the Golden People, from Neophrates, a planet which has been dead for 6,000,000 years."

But the American police told Scotland Yard that Krishna Venta's real name is Francis Hiedzwatzer Pencovic, and that he was born in San Francisco 38 years ago.

American police said that in 1930 he was jailed for 90 days for burglary at El Paso (Texas).

Then he got another nine months at Modesto (California) for passing worthless cheques.

Krishna is leaving London—"to try his luck in Sweden."

1949-03-21 Police tell Scotland Yard new messiah is a burglar born in San Francisco The Daily Telegraph Sydney Australia

'Messiah' Reaches Rome

ROME (AP)—Krishna Venta, the "Messiah" of a California religious sect, arrived in Rome Wednesday with hopes of seeing the Pope. Venta said he hadn't talked with the Pope for about 1,845 years.

The bearded Venta predicted to reporters a terrible "one-hour war" which only the elect would survive. He was interviewed in Rome's most plush hotel, the Grand, where he is staying with his wife.

Venta, clad in long white robes, told reporters he had been kept alive since the time of Christ by reincarnation.

He said the last Pope he saw was the sixth, but he couldn't recall the name. The sixth Pope was Alexander I, who reigned from 105 to 115.

There was no indication from the Vatican whether Pope Pius would receive Venta.

1949-03-31 Krishna Venta in Rome may speak with Pope he hasn't talked to in 1,845 years

'Messiah' Turned Away From the Vatican

ROME, April 1. (U.P.)—Krishna Venta, self-styled Messiah from Los Angeles, called at Vatican City today but was refused admittance.

Vatican guards thought it was an April fool joke. The white robed, barefoot visitor returned to his swank hotel suite in downtown Rome without an argument.

1949-04-01 Krishna Venta turned away from Pope guards thought it was an April fools joke Metropolitan Pasadena Star News

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- 1949-04-27 Krishna Venta returns to Los Angeles from his trip to Europe.
- He returned to gather his flock of 145,000 faithful to a five-acre plot near Reseda.
- He arrived with a passport bearing the name Francis Pencovic.
- Venta said it was the name of a child who disappeared from San Francisco "miraculously" at the age of 3.

Barefoot messiah comes back to 'city of angels'

Barefooted messiah Krishna Venta tiptoed from a United Air Lines plane today to return from a two-month swing through France, England, Ireland and Denmark.

The self-appointed messiah, his raven tresses blown askew by the propwash of a taxiing airliner, gazed skyward and explained he had "returned to gather my flock of 145,000 faithful to a five-acre plot near Reseda."

Messiah Venta, who lugged along a 10-pound scrapbook of clippings, said he didn't get in to see the Pope at Vatican City, but did manage to squeeze in front of a newsreel camera there.

He arrived under a passport bearing the name "Francis H. Pencovic," which he explained was the name of a child who disappeared from San Francisco "miraculously" at the age of 3.

1949-04-27 Los Angeles Daily News

Krishna Venta (Francis Pencovic) timeline

- 1949-06-25 Krishna Venta builds 4,000 sq ft temple-home at 18829 Saticoy Los Angeles Daily News
- 1949-07-12 Plane Crash in Simi Hills, 33 die, 15 injured

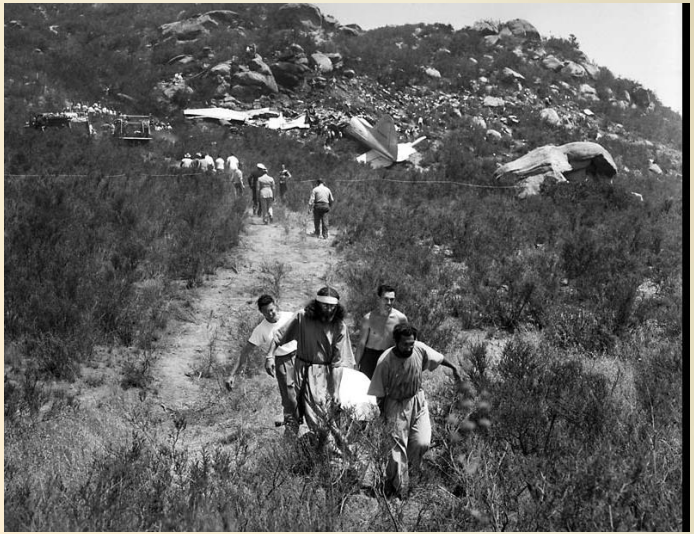
Seer Krishna builds Valley villa-temple

—Daily News photo

KRISHNA VENTA AND SOME OF HIS FOLLOWERS WORK ON FOUNDATION OF TEMPLE
The chain-cigar-smoking prophet claims 145,000 of his faithful in the valley

A postwar development as nor-mal in Southern California as the divinity, but one of his followers swallows returning to Capistrano said she thoroughly believed him applied to Krishna's claim of to be the returned Messiah. "He materialized himself," she explained. "He has no navel."

1949-06-25 Los Angeles Daily News



1949-07-12 Los Angeles Times photo

Krishna Venta, bearded mystic who calls himself "Christ", played a heroic role today by assisting in the rescue of 15 survivors of the tragic Standard Airlines crash in the Santa Susana Hills.

"I heard the plane flying low over my ranch nearby and then heard it crash" he said. "I ran barefooted to the scene with a friend and started doing what I could for the injured".

1949-07-13 Los Angeles Times "Krishna Venta, left, self-styled "Christ", who maintains a monastery in a stone house near crash scene, and Brother Paul, one of his disciples, give aid in carrying one of the victims to an ambulance. They also helped search for the dead.

The crash site was above Thompson Ave and Bell Ranch Rd/Mesa Dr. 1.6 miles from 585 Box Cyn

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1939

- Floyd and Essie Berry owned the home at 60 Box Canyon.
- **They started building the home in the canyon in 1929**, 10 years ago, a house that has for its walls, floors and ceilings the natural rock formations of Box Canyon.
- The Berry's have not cut into the rocks, but have built their home around them, utilizing holes and crevices for bookcases, windows, stairways, doors and fireplaces.
- A heavy iron cable runs from the sun porch to the opposite side of the ravine, carrying an elevator car for freight and passengers.

Ideas and Mortar Build Rock Residence in Valley Canyon

No leaky roof nor termites worry MR. and MRS. FLOYD BERRY, above, in their dream home with its natural rock walls, floors and ceilings. A corner of the living room, with one of the two natural fireplaces of the residence, is shown at top. Berry sits on wooden railing of the landing which leads to the "second story," Mrs. Berry is shown at lower left in the doorway to the unique house in the Box Canyon hills. The rustic beauty of the site is indicated by the giant cactus plant and overhead vines. And, lower right, is the private elevated trolly line by which the Berrys transport supplies and sometimes passengers.

—Robert Kinkus photos.

Unique House of Floyd Berrys Set Among Natural Formations

By ADA WEEKS

CHATSWORTH, June 27. — "A house everlasting" is the dream home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Berry, who for the past 10 years have been building, with ideas and mortar, a house that has for its walls, floors and ceilings the natural rock formations of the Box Canyon hills.

Berry, a native son, chose a spot at the extreme end of a ravine, because of the solid walls of rock, and, with the assistance of his wife, a former Hollywood beauty parlor operator, has built the house, still incomplete.

The large living room, entered through tunnels in the natural rock formations, is on two floor levels and has two huge fireplaces. There are large windows built into rock walls.

On the "second floor" are bedrooms, bath and a bar, all with the natural rock walls and finished with rough, antiqued lumber.

The bathtub is built into the floor, with slabs of rocks cemented together in a semicircle. The kitchen opens onto a breakfast room with windows on three sides, and a sun porch atop a giant boulder. A heavy iron cable runs from the sun porch to the opposite side of the ravine, carrying an elevator car for freight and passengers.

The Berrys have not cut into the rocks, but have built their home around them, utilizing holes and crevices for bookcases, windows, stairways, doors and fireplaces. All their furniture is hand-made with heavy lumber antiqued to look old, bolted together and trimmed with ornamental iron and leather. The rooms are lighted by electricity; water from mountain springs is piped into the house; cooking is done on a big wood-burning stove built into a stone arch. The only "modern convenience" is an electric refrigerator.

Housekeeping problems, declares Mrs. Berry, are cut to a minimum —there is scarcely any dusting to do. They are not bothered by telephone calls; the floors don't crack and the roof never leaks. Once in a while, a curious gopher snake sneaks in. They make a pet of him!

1939-06-27 Floyd Berry Rock House Hollywood Citizen News

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1939

- 1939, A second article…

1939-06-29 Floyd & Essie Berry Rock House
San Fernando Valley Times

The Rocks of the Hills Form Walls of Home

(By ADA WEEKS)

CHATSWORTH — "A House Everlasting" is the dream-home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Berry, who for the past ten years have been building, with ideas and mortar, a house that has for its walls, floors and ceilings, the natural rock formations of the Box Canyon hills.

Berry, a native son, chose a spot at the extreme end of a ravine in the canyon for their home, because of the solid walls of rock, that had been washed and carved with the waters of centuries. With the assistance of his wife, a former Hollywood beauty parlor operator, the house, still incomplete, stands as a monument to the couple's artistic abilities.

Enter Through Tunnels

The large living room, entered through tunnels in the natural rock formations, is on two floor levels, with two huge fireplaces constructed where the Berrys found holes already there; large windows built into rock walls on two sides and a stairway running along a rock ledge to the "upper stories."

On the "second floor," also entered through tunnels, are bedrooms, bath and bar, all with natural rock walls and finished with rough, antiquated lumber, as is all the woodwork throughout the house. The "bar", from which a circular staircase winds up and around through rock crevices into the kitchen, is cleverly

INTERIOR VIEW OF UNIQUE HOME IN THE HILLS

illuminated with a skylight of heavy glass, inserted into a rock "ceiling".

Bathtub in Floor

The bathtub, which might well grace the guest room of any feudal castle, is built into the floor, with slabs of rocks cemented together in a semi-circle, with shower above. The kitchen, on the "top floor," opens onto a breakfast room with windows on three sides, and a sun porch atop a giant boulder, commanding a magnificent view of San Fernando Valley below. A heavy iron cable runs from the sun porch to the opposite side of the ravine, carrying an elevator car for freight and passenger purposes.

The Berrys, who have planned as they went along, have not cut into the rocks, but have rather, built their home around them, utilizing holes and crevices for bookcases, windows, stairways, doors and fireplaces. All floors, where they have been needed to be built, have been constructed of huge rock slabs cemented together and walls are of the same construction and of a foot thick.

Furniture is Hand-made

All their furniture is handmade by them—heavy pieces antiqued to look old instead of new—bolted together and trimmed with ornamental iron and leather. Walls are draped with scrapes, Indian paintings, deer heads and articles of mountain lore. Friends have contributed

er them either—they make a pet of him!

During the heavy rains of a year ago, the waters came swirling up to the second page in their heavy French doors. But the water did not come in until a huge boulder crashed through the glass. Entering their living room from upstairs, they found their furniture all afloat—so they opened the front door (encased in two massive boulders) and let the stream run away.

"We were rather panicky for awhile — but when we looked down on the valley and saw the floor covered, we felt much safer, even though our house is built right under a waterfall!" During the winter and until early spring, a stream runs through their "back yard", which is solid rock, with two-foot deep ledges cut into the sides of a steep rock wall.

Their gardens are their least worry. Moss and flowers grow out of fissures in the rocks; their shrubs, flowers and trees are the native-growing Yucca, Mariposa lily, black and purple sage, greeswood. Lupin, Sycamore, Oak and other mountain growth.

Valley Vista Nursery Gets Sprinkler Job

STUDIO CITY— Smiley Burnette, screen star this week awarded a contract to Valley Vista

lore. Friends have contributed countless nick-nacks, all in keeping with the general theme.

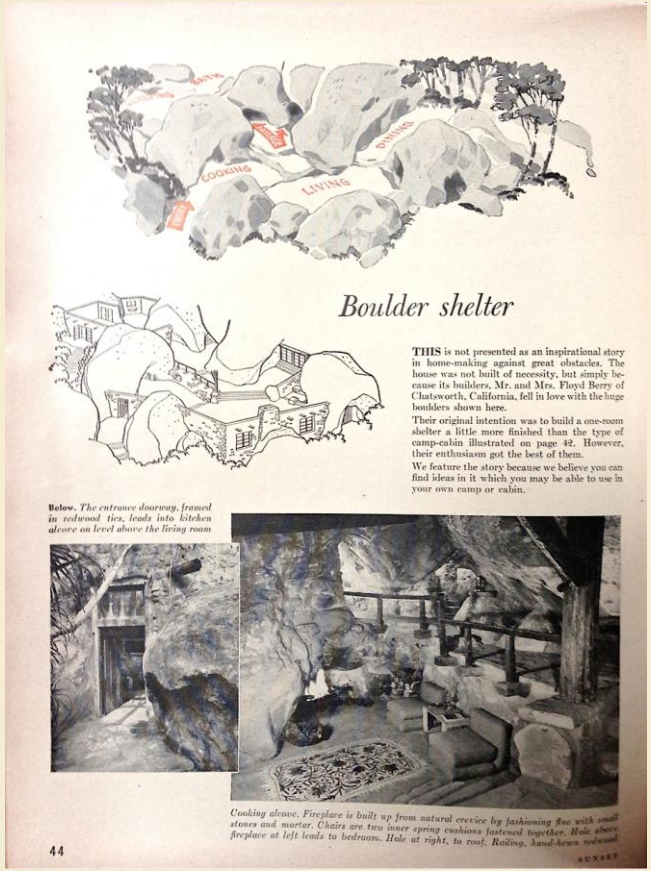
The rooms are surprisingly well lighted by electricity; water from mountain springs is piped into the house; cooking is done on a big wood-burning stove built into a stone arch. The only modern-convenience touch is an electric refrigerator—and it too, has its stone cubby-hole, enclosed with a heavy wooden door on iron hinges.

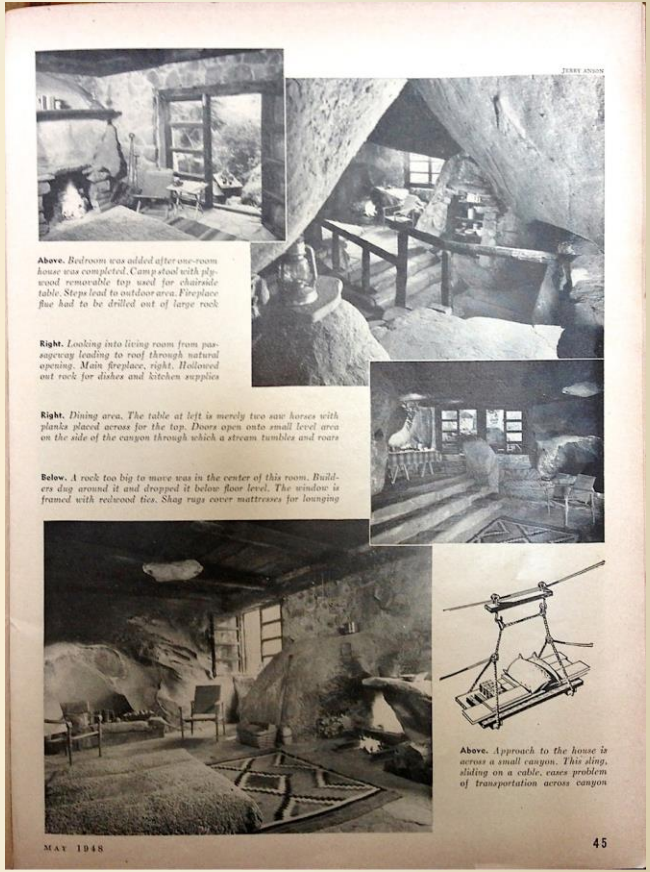
Housekeeping is Easy

According to Mr. and Mrs. Berry, who state that they hope their building is never completed, the rooms are cool in summer and warm in winter. They quote the old Indian saying, "What keeps you warm will also keep you cool." Housekeeping problems, declares Mrs. Berry, are cut to a minimum — there is scarcely any dusting to do; they are not bothered by telephone calls; the floors don't crack and the roof never leaks. Once in a while, a curious gopher snake sneaks in, but that doesn't both-

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1948

- May 1948, Sunset Magazine features the Boulder Shelter.
- "The house was not built of necessity, but simply because its builders, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Berry of Chatsworth, California, fell in love with the large boulders shown here."
- We contacted the Sunset Magazine archives at Stanford University, and they shared with us the original pictures used in the May 1948 Sunset Magazine.

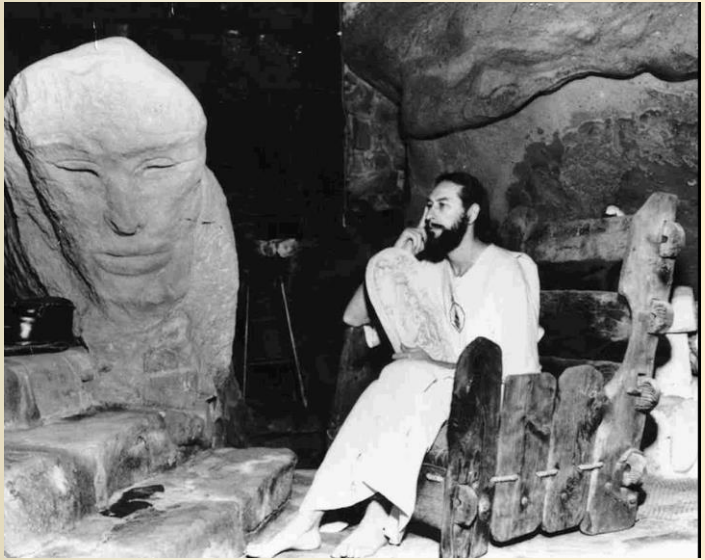




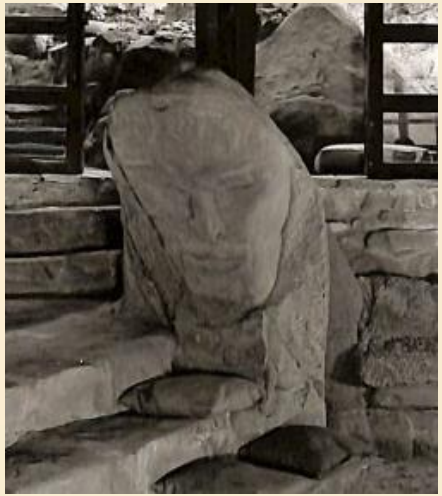
May 1948 Sunset Magazine

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, circa 1950

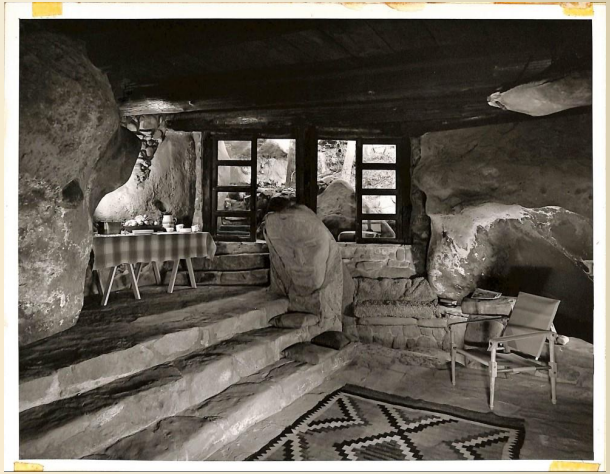
- Krishna Venta at carved face in Boulder Shelter Dining Area
- Notice the lighting, angle and backdrop behind the carved face that brings out the features of the sculpture in the Krishna Venta photo



Circa 1950 to 1954(1)
Krishna Venta at Boulder Shelter



1948 Larger view of carved face

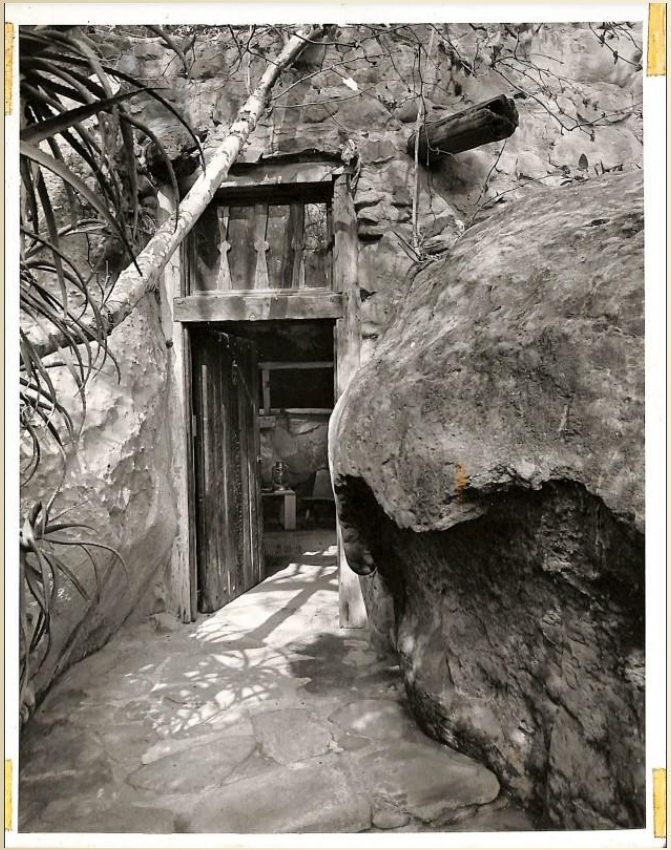


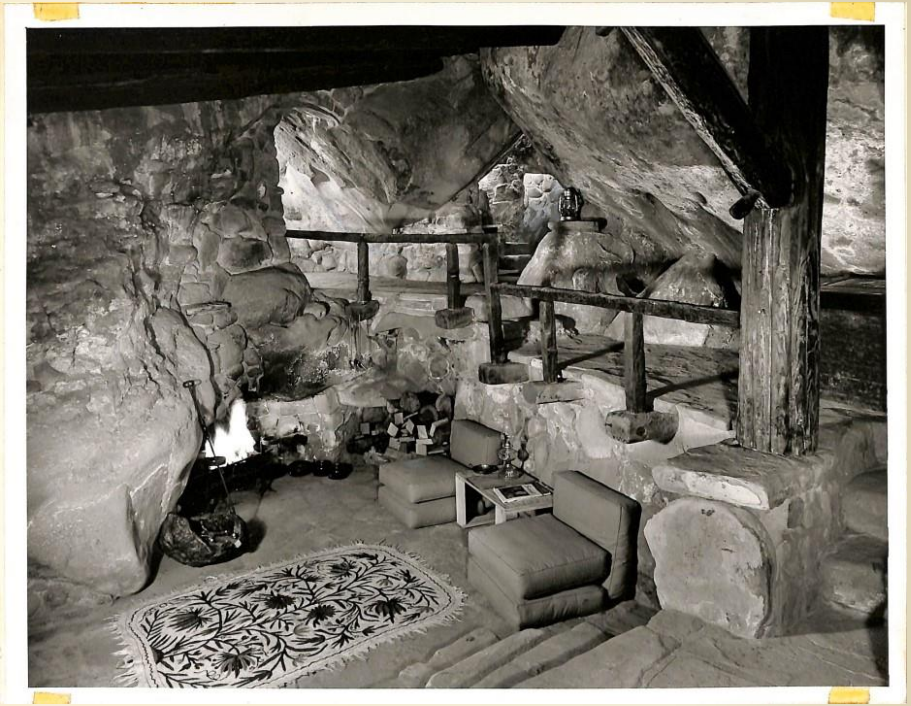
Dining Area photo
May 1948 Sunset Magazine photo from Sunset Magazine archives

The detail of the carved face was not seen in the magazine article, until we received the original photos.

(1) Sister Helena's diary states that they moved into the Rock House Dec 12, 1950, and left Oct 6, 1954.

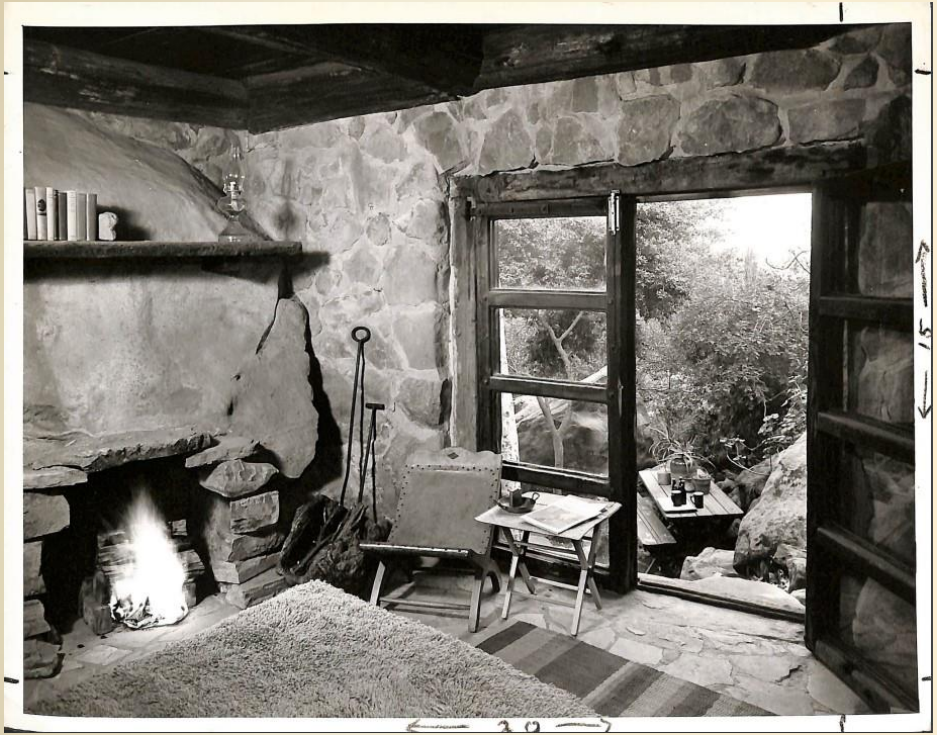
60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1948

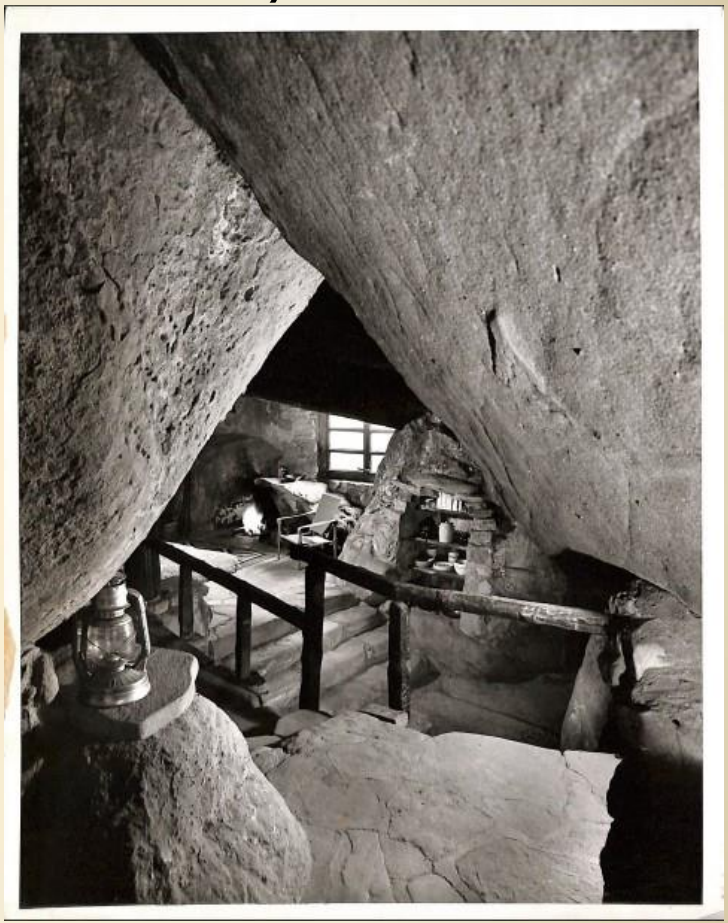




Left Entrance Doorway Above Cooking Alcove
May 1948 Sunset Magazine photos from Sunset Magazine archives

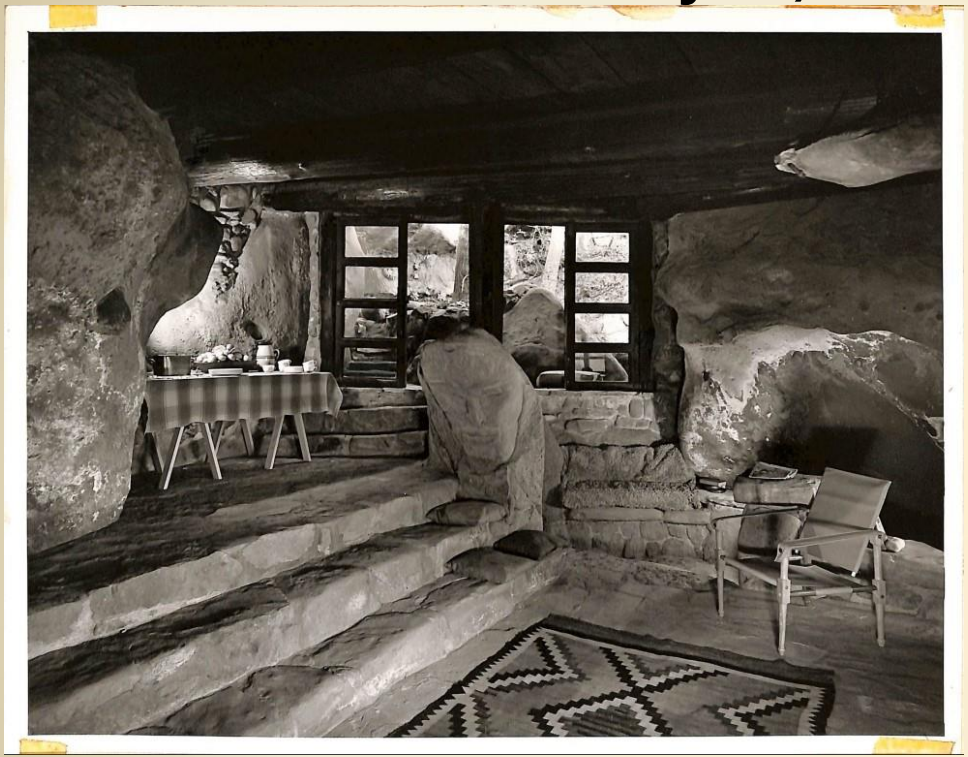
60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1948

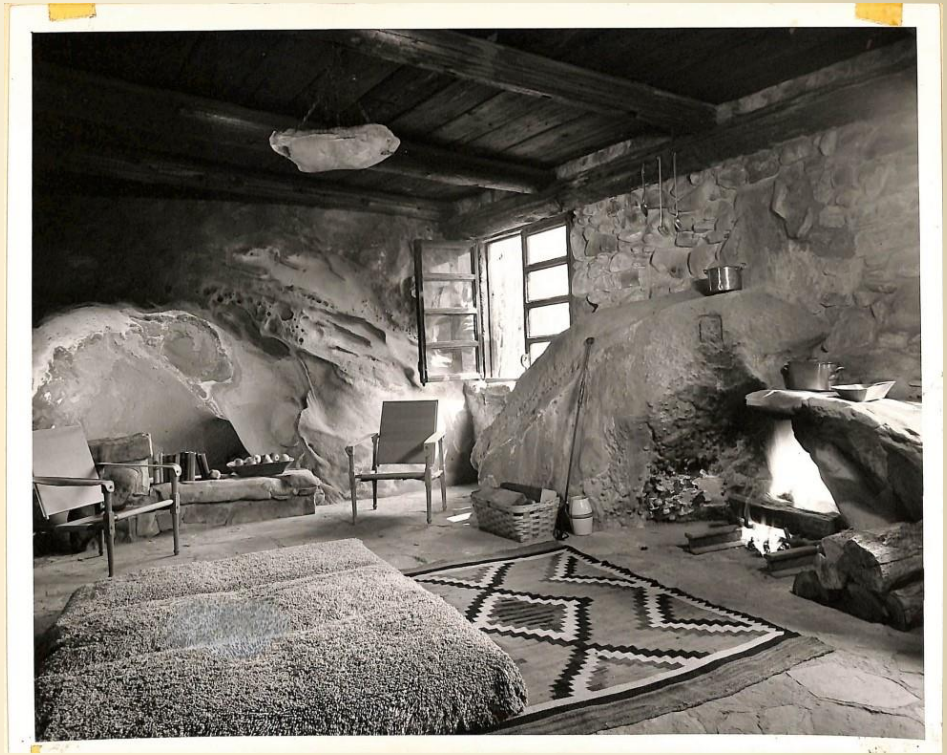




Above Bedroom Right Looking into Living Room
May 1948 Sunset Magazine photos from Sunset Magazine archives

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1948





Left Dining Area Right Living Room
May 1948 Sunset Magazine photos from Sunset Magazine archives

60 Box Canyon, the Boulder Shelter, 1954

CULTISTS PRAY FOR LANDLORD 1954-10-07 Valley Times

Led by "brother" Paul, foreground, members of the WKFL Fountain of the World religious cult prays for Sgt. George Lampson, who forced them to move from one of their Box Canyon camps for non-payment of a year's rent. Owing $2,600, and with their leader Krishna Venta in New York, barefoot women and bearded men later trudged up canyon to other home, which they own themselves. --- AP Wirephoto

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 1963

- March 1963, it is owned by Marvin Rubin and Bill Tara.
- Caption on the photo reads: Weekend outing in Cave -- Artistically inclined group meets Saturday and Sunday afternoons for a bit of music in the main room at Cave Falls, the former home of the Fountain of the World cultists.

1963-03-12 Cave Falls Fountain of the World LA Times pg1

Former Cultists Cave Becoming Art Center

Scene of Krishna Venta Bomb Death Rehabilitated Under New Management

BY ART SEIDENBAUM

Out of a cultist cave comes a new climate for culture, semi-kookie, wholly inspired. So far, not commercial. But promising.

Remember Krishna Venta, the leader of the Fountain of the World, who was killed five years ago in an explosion set by two disaffected members of the cult? Well, this cave is where Venta kept house, high up Box Canyon just over the Ventura County line.

On the same grounds is where the cult kept school, stored its considerable supply of wines and performed a remarkable variety of handicrafts to make the group as nearly self-sustaining as a pack of present-day people can be. Up the road apiece, in a separate area where vestigial members even now carry on Krishna's work, is where the malcontents blew up the monastery and 10 members, including themselves.

Replaced by Squatters

After the explosion, the Fountaineers moved off the 2½ acres around the cave and were replaced by groups of more questionable good faith: squatters who merely moved into one of the seven buildings on the grounds; trouble-bent teen-agers who came to party and pillage. Until two artists bought the area last year, one of the most naturally handsome places in Southern California was rapidly becoming a shambles.

Marvin Rubin, head of the advertising design department at Chouinard Art Institute, saw a classified ad heralding a "community for sale." Curiosity carried him out the Ventura Freeway. He saw the old cultland and called his friend Bill Tara.

"You wanna buy a cave?" said Rubin to art director and illustrator Tara. Tara took a look, fell in love with the primeval sandstone formations, the sycamore trees growing at the base of the waterfall (when it rains) next to the cave, the wild cactuses sticking their needles toward the sky.

No Discussion

"We never sat down and intelligently discussed what we might do with the place," says Tara. "All we knew was that we wanted it and we kidded about how it would make a perfect camp for anything from conferences to nudists."

While Tara was out of town, Rubin made an offer. Neither will admit how much of an offer, but both were amazed at its acceptance. "Had I been left to my own doubts," admits Tara, "I'm sure I wouldn't have bought it. It was senseless. But suddenly it was ours."

They started to police the area. They hauled out two truckloads of beer cans and garbage, messy mementoes left by the previous tenants.

Please Turn to Pg. 10, Col. 1

WEEKEND OUTING IN CAVE—Artistically inclined group meets Saturday and Sunday afternoons for a bit of music in the main room at Cave Falls, the former home of the Fountain of the World cultists.

Times photo

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 1963

- Jerome Bixby is resident manager

CULTISTS CAVES

Continued from First Page

They made structural repairs to some of the hand-built houses. They made a dam at the end of the falls so that water would collect after it cascaded down the rocks. They pruned and planted, restoring natural beauty from amidst the waste and weeds.

Enter Jerry Bixby, science fiction writer and composer in search of a home. Downtown dwellers Rubin and Tara invited Bixby to move in as caretaker-custodian of newly named Cave Falls. In return for rooming his wife and two children rent free, Bixby would have to maintain the grounds, make new improvements as the partners played with their property.

Bixby helped install modern plumbing. He built a rustic entranceway to match the hand-hewn complex. He yanked out debris and kept out vandals.

But none of them fooled with the strange structure built in and above the cave. In the years before Krishna, a family named Berry owned the property, literally made a home in the cave. The sandstone had hollowed out organically, almost miraculously; there were natural areas for a living room, a kitchen, closet spaces. Rocks were used for flooring and stairs. Tunnels became hallways. A bedroom was built above the boulders and a roof sealed off this unusual hillside home.

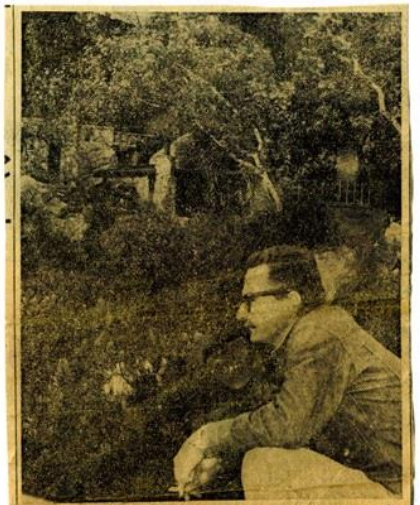
The cave house was where Krishna lived, too, when the cult moved in during the late 40s. His followers made some homemade cabinets, installed a hand-tiled shower and fragments of stained glass.

Not even the wild kids who came later could destroy or desecrate the cave much. But when Tara and Rubin took title, there were only five pieces of furniture inside: one couch, one bench and three mattresses. The mattresses are gone, replaced by government surplus cushions. The cave is cool, can make the most acquisitive man contemplative. From upstairs, you can look down over the sprawling floor of the San Fernando Valley.

Around this unspoiled nucleus, the landlords made plans. Tara drew a picture of the property, assigned functions to the other buildings: workshop, studio, gallery house, residence for Bixby, etc.

An art teacher came into the picture, painter Bob Greenberg, who instructs for UCLA Extension during the week and holds Saturday classes in the studio at Cave Falls. A few colleagues got on the calendar: a meeting of the American Society of Magazine Photographers; a Chouinard party; a class from L.A. Trade Tech. Gradually, the place is becoming a center of the arts and conversation.

There is room—and hope—for additional instructors, in music as well as the visual arts. There is time and space for groups to hold meetings under the most serene circumstances. You can call Cave Falls through Tara's downtown number, DU 2-5096.



MANAGER—Jerome Bixby is resident manager of Cave Falls. At rear center are original rock buildings, with chimney showing the top of main cave.
Times photo

1963-03-12 Cave Falls Fountain of the World LA Times pg2

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 1964

- Per owner Marvin Rubin, the original house took more than 20 years to build, and much of the work was done by Floyd's wife Essie Berry.
- Rubin said Essie, a mystic, built all of the original rooms out of fire-seasoned wood "because she preferred the wood cleansed of any former association".
- Krishna was a friend of the Berry family.

Essie Mae Berry died in 1966 and is buried at Oakwood Cemetery

1964-10-17
LA Evening Citizen News

ARTS, ARTISTS

New Art Center—Revamped Mysticism

Cave Falls, a new art center in Box Canyon, Chatsworth, is located in a house built around, in and through a cave in the hills.

Three months during the year there is a waterfall which cascades over one side of the cave.

The art center offers painting and creative writing classes and there are plans for dancing instruction, too.

Cave Falls is owned by Marvin Rubin, head of the advertising and design department at Chouniard Art Institute, and art director and illustrator Bill Tara. Manager and director is John Thompson.

Mystic Hub

The center was at one time the hub of The Fountain of the World, a religious sect, which now is located farther up Box Canyon.

The original cave house took more than 20 years to build, and much of the work was done personally by the owner, Mrs. Floyd Berry.

Rubin said Mrs. Berry, a mystic, built all of the original rooms out of fire-seasoned wood "because she preferred the wood cleansed of any former association."

Krishna Venta, leader of the religious cult who was killed several years ago in a bombing, was a friend of the Berry family. He lived in the Cave prior to the formation of the cult, and later the cult members erected other buildings at the falls.

The cult moved up the canyon, and during the time the property was unoccupied it fell prey to vandalism.

Rubins said they are still cleaning up the grounds, "hampered by lack of water."

Metro Water

Metropolitan water is expected next month, and Rubin said he hopes to irrigate the 200 trees on the three-acre property.

With water and the clean-up operation completed, Rubin said he sees great possibilities for Cave Falls. "It's primitive and seemingly far away from the city," he said. "It would be a wonderful place for conferences of all kinds."

* * *

"Fireman, Save My Child" . . . and similar dramatic sentiments are the subject of a unique exhibit presented through the joint efforts of the Los Angeles City Fire Dept. and the Municipal Art Dept., currently showing in the Tower Gallery of the Los Angeles City Hall.

On view are paintings, drawings, prints and photographs, both historical and contemporary, on the subject of fire fighting.

Drawn from public and private collections around the country, the display also will include three-dimensional material dramatizing the changes in fire fighting methods that have taken place through the years.

Costumes and equipment used by Los Angeles firemen in the 19th century will be contrasted with that employed today.

A special feature, according to William Miller, city fire chief, will be the showing of a set of Currier and Ives hand-colored engravings on the subject.

The exhibition will be on view through Nov. 4 in the 25th floor gallery. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday; and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. There is no admission charge.

* * *

Artists, both professional and amateur, have flocked to exhibit their work in the third annual San Fernando Valley Festival of Art, to open Monday at 10 a.m. in the Mall of Bullocks Fashion Square in Sherman Oaks.

The exhibit will show the works of 835 artists, done in oils and water colors, pastels and caseins, in fact, in almost all of the available media.

Of the artists, 700 are adult, the rest children. The youngest entrant in the show is a 2½-year-old.

The exhibit is open to the public free of charge. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday, and Saturday, the closing day, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Demonstrations and lectures will elucidate the "unwashed" and make those in the know even more so. Also free of charge, the greater part of these will be held from time to time in the Fashion Square mall.

Presentation of awards in the show will be made Friday at 7:30 p.m., again in the mall. There will be cash awards in classes ranging from amateur to professional, from adult to child. Ribbons and other prizes will be presented. Presenting the awards will be Fashion Square manager R. E. Schneider.

* * *

"Cats, and Their Feline Foibles Captured in Oils, Terra Cotta, Wood, Alabaster and Gold . . . by 23 artists and one fish."

That's the long but explicit title of an exhibit to be presented Monday through Nov. 6 at the Setay Gallery, 371 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills.

Artists from all over America, Italy, Belgium and England are represented in the group. Where the fish came from remains a secret.

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 1968, 1974

- 1968 Advertisement at right
- Circa 1974, Below, old sign from current owner, advertising Fall Session art classes, Hugh Merry Jr. Instructor
- Hugh Merry owned 60 Box Canyon from 1974 to 2006

1968-09-10 Valley News and Green Sheet

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 2015

Ann Vincent, Curt Brock, Gloria DeMuri

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 2015

Ann at carved face, erosion effected

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 2011

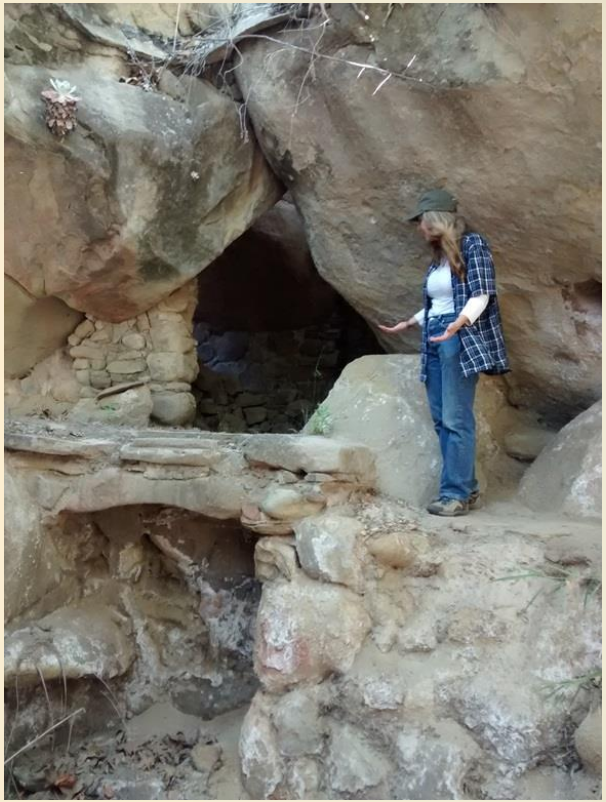
A screen shot from 2011 "The Fountain"
Dick Shanafelt sweeping the steps

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 2015

Top panorama of Ann in the dining area, above carved face
Lower photo shows remains of roof

60 Box Canyon, Cave Falls, 2015

Ray at Entry door



Gloria at the entrance looking into the living room

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1950's

Headquarters Sign outside of the Headquarters building that was blown up in 1958

Today's 535/533 Box Canyon

"Ye who enter here enter in upon Holy Ground"

The Main Entrance to Fountain of the World Leads to Monastery Sign at left of photo points to WKFL Headquarters

Today's 585 Box Canyon Road

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1969

- The Fountain now houses 15 men, women and children.
- The Manson Group first visited in October or November 1968.
- The Fountain group asked the Manson family to leave, and when they refused, they went across the street to the Ventura County Fire Dept Station and summoned a county sheriff.

1969-12-11 Hollywood_Citizen_News, pgs 1 & 3

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1969

Retreat Provided Food, Sanctuary

BY BILL MILTON

EXCLUSIVE

The bizarre Tate-LaBianca-Hinman murder cases took another macabre twist when it was revealed today that members of the accused "Manson Family" frequented and sometimes took refuge in a religious cult retreat with a violence scarred past.

A frightened teen-aged girl, her mother and an aging "sister," who all live at the Fountain of the World commune in Box Canyon, confirmed information that accused murderer Charles Miller Manson and members of his hippie hate cult "several times" visited at the retreat.

Mrs. Ann Todd, her daughter, Virginia, 17, and Sister Nekona, an elder of the commune, recalled how they met Manson and his followers.

In an exclusive interview with a team of reporters and photographers from this newspaper at the Fountain it was further learned that several of the girls from the "family," including Susan Denise Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and possibly Linda Kasabian and another girl, had sought sanctuary in the retreat shortly after the Tate and LaBianca murders in August.

Det. Lt. Robert Helder, key figure in the LAPD murder probes, told the Hollywood Citizen News-Valley Times that investigators knew of the Manson clan's visits to the Fountain. He described an "inner circle" of followers who are alleged to be the perpetrators of thefts, auto thefts and ultimately murder, but he said the group sometimes numbered as high as 60 persons while in the Chatsworth area.

The secluded Fountain community is tucked away in a tree-shrouded roadside deep in the rocky, boulder-strewn Box Canyon about eight miles from the Spahn Ranch where the hippie marauders made their home for almost a year. The area is sparsely settled.

The Fountain, which now houses 15 men, women and children, was the scene of a dynamite explosion Dec. 10, 1958, which killed "Krishna

Turn to Page 3, Col. 1

Staff Photo

REMEMBERS MANSON—Virginia Todd, 17, with her guard dog, Bear. She met Manson and his band of hippie followers.

Pat Buttram

Seems us men these days have as many shoe styles to pick from as women.

And they tell me the latest thing is the square-toe style. I thought I saw a used car salesman wearing a pair of these . . . but it turned out he got that way from kicking tires.

But shoes have gotten to be like everything else. Disposable. For the price of half-soles, heels and one shine . . . you can buy a new pair.

I know one fella who bought a dozen pair of shoes! The clerk asked him, "Now whatta you need with a dozen pair of shoes?" The fella said, "Matching purses . . ."

These are times when you see a guy in a pair of cowboy boots, and you know why he wants to die with his boots on. Probably because his toe nails are painted.

But the worse thing is these men who wear white socks. It

'Fountain' Cultists Fear Manson Clan

Group Defied Order to Go

Continued from Page 1

Venta," self-proclaimed Messiah and founder of the cult, and nine of his followers. The two cult members who assertedly detonated 40 sticks of dynamite were among those killed in the blast and fire, according to Merle Hollis, chief criminal deputy for Ventura County, who headed the investigation of the grisly event.

"Sister Nekona" and Mrs. Ann Todd described Manson and several of his followers as "friendly and polite" during their many visits. They said on several occasions they gave them food and sometimes shelter for the girls and that they ate with the Fountain members a few times in the communal dining hall and worship area.

Mrs. Todd reported that on "two or three" occasions Manson and some of the girls took part in the commune's Saturday night skits and musical shows.

"Charlie would sing and play his guitar for us and the girls would sing and harmonize. I complimented them one time because they did sing so beautifully together," said Mrs. Todd.

Both of the women said they had no reason to fear them at that time but Mrs. Todd confided that she was "very leery of them" and that since the story of the murders have come to light she is "afraid for herself and for the lives of her children."

Her fears are based on rumors that remnants of the clan are still in the area Deputies and police are again combing the community for additional suspects in the mass murders.

Seventeen-year-old Virginia Todd, who has lived at the Fountain with her mother and younger sister Cornelia, 9, for eight years, was more vocal in expressing her fears of the group.

"I didn't like him (Charles Manson) the first time I saw him. He was always staring at me and kept asking me to come with him into his bus and hear him play the guitar. I was really scared of him," said the girl. She referred to the green and white school bus in which Manson and several of the girls arrived at the retreat and lived in for a time.

On several points Mrs. Todd and her daughter disagreed. Mrs. Todd said the bus stayed near the retreat for only "a few days" but Virginia was sure the bus was there "for a couple of months."

Neither she nor Sister Nikona could theorize why Manson had come to Fountain, whose members say they abhor violence and seek to embrace all religious faiths as being equal. However, it is known that Manson studied mysticism in prison and referred to himself as "Jesus" and "Satan." Virginia Todd said that some of the group referred to him as "Charlie the Guru" and "Heavenly Father" on several occasions.

Mrs. Todd again affirmed her opinion that despite her fears she considered the group "friendly" but with Virginia's help she was able to recall an incident in which "Katie" (an allias used by Miss Atkins) called her and two other women "pigs."

(The words "pig" and "piggy" figured prominently in the murders of musician Gary Hinman, who befriended Manson, the Sharon Tate slayings and the death of Leno LaBianca and his wife. Miss Atkins is charged with the murder of Hinman. A girl now in custody also told police that Manson directed his followers to go to the Benedict Canyon home of Miss Tate and eradicate the "pigs.")

"I think it was in September or maybe it was August when it happened 'Sadie' (Miss Atkins) and three other girls came to the main hall of the Fountain and said they were going to stay here," said Mrs. Todd.

THOUGHTFUL PAUSE — Sister Nekona, one of the elders of the Order pauses thoughtfully during an interview with a reporter of this newspaper.

"It was when Sadie was sitting in the car that she said, 'Why, you pigs' and she began to sing a song about pigs," said Mrs. Todd.

Virginia, who was also present at the incident and says that Miss Atkins "hated

won't harbor criminals. It is against our rules and against the law and we had our children to consider," said the worried mother.

After the second refusal of the girls to leave, Mrs. Todd said one of the Fountain members went across the road to the Ventura Country Fire Dept. station and summoned a county sheriff to the retreat. The group went up the hill and sat in their car, according to Mrs. Todd.

"He was the Lord and Master and anything he said they did. They never questioned him or argued with him," said Mrs. Todd of the frail, penetrating-eyed Manson, who is said to have had a hypnotic control over his followers.

They both said that during

erted a very strong influence over the group which they said also included Charles D. Watson, currently fighting extradition from Texas to face the murder charges, and Paul Watkins, arrested for auto theft in the raid on the Barker ranch in Death Valley, where the clan assertedly lived following their departure from the Spahn Movie ranch in late August or early September.

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"I think it was in September or maybe it was August when it happened 'Sadie' (Miss Atkins) and three other girls came to the main hall of the Fountain and said they were going to stay here," said Mrs. Todd.

"Sister Muriel, Sister Barbara and myself told them that they could not stay here. And Sadie said that they had 'been told to come here' or that 'they had been sent here' and they refused to leave. We told her again that she could not stay and would have to leave the private premises," continued Mrs. Todd.

She explained that the Fountain is a humanitarian group and that when Manson and the others first arrived in October or November of 1968 they had helped them. "They were just dirty, nasty looking people. They looked like they needed a bath and some clean clothes and we did not mind helping them," she said.

But she related that at the time of the return of the four girls they had read about the arrest of most of the Manson Family at Spahn Ranch on charges of auto theft.

"We will help people but we

FOUNTAIN CREST — This Greek symbol is used by the religious order as its official crest.

present at the incident and says that Miss Atkins "hated me," said she told her mother and the other women, "You're three pigs, you're the worst pigs I have ever seen." She said the deputy ordered them to leave and they departed.

The fears of Mrs. Todd go beyond concern for the members of the Fountain and her girls to her missing son. Hugh "Rocky" Todd, 15, has been gone since Oct. 1 and his mother fears that he may have joined with the Manson Family before they left. His sister, Virginia, said the boy seemed to be infatuated with Katie (Miss Krenwinkel) and talked with her for long periods of time about horses and motorcycles.

Missing along with the boy were two knives which she said her brother always carried with him. The girl said they were given to him by a man "with a long beard" who lived off and on at the Box Canyon commune.

While Manson professed to be a religious leader, Sister Nekona and Mrs. Todd said that he did not discuss the topic very much with any of their group. Mrs. Todd remembered one instance when Manson observed her correcting one of the younger children and he assertedly told her, "Why correct a child. A child knows what it is doing. You should let them do whatever they want to do."

Virginia said most of the time the Family's conversations were very confused and she felt that they "were usually up on something." She related overhearing a conversation in which Miss Atkins reportedly told another girl that "she hated killing anything, even an animal."

Manson also made this pronouncement about his "philosophy." "Why fear anything? Let Man do anything he wants to do or has the nerve to do."

Both the mother and daughter said that Manson ex-

lowers.

They both said that during the year the clan was in the area they saw several women and men come and go.

Mrs. Todd told of a "Mary" who first arrived with Manson in the school bus and reportedly gave birth to a child on the bus.

Virginia told of a girl named Beau, whom she described as small and petite with brown hair and brown eyes. The girl called Beau told Virginia that when she did something the group did not like they would stick long pins in her.

She told of Mary, a blonde-haired attractive girl with a college education, and Stephanie, a tall girl with kinky white hair and a very bad complexion. And also of a woman about 30 who Virginia said was either an entertainer or "a prostitute."

None of the three recalls anyone but Manson and Watkins using last names.

Both the Todds said that they never heard any of the group mention the names Tate, Polanski, LaBianca or Hinman but Virginia recalled one of the girl's mentioning a "big, rich home in Benedict Canyon."

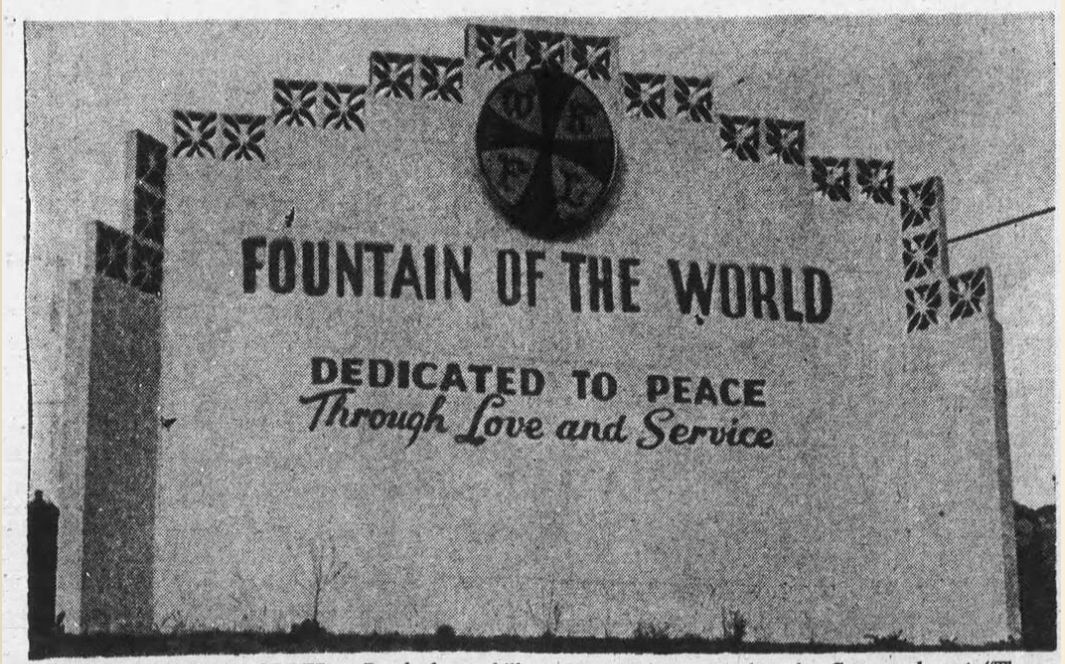
The Todd girl, who at one time attended Valley College, said also that she thought she recognized Terry Melcher, the son of Doris Day, as being with Manson on one occasion but she could not be absolutely sure.

Manson assertedly blamed Melcher for the failure of his songwriting career for the singing group known as the Beach Boys. Melcher, who was visited many times by Manson, lived in the Benedict Canyon home before it was rented by Miss Tate.

Even now as the case progresses in the courts the residents of the Fountain of the World would like to forget the name Charles Manson or that they ever saw him and his band. Mrs. Ann Todd and her children live in fear.

1969-12-11 Hollywood Citizen News, pgs 1 & 3 article words

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1969

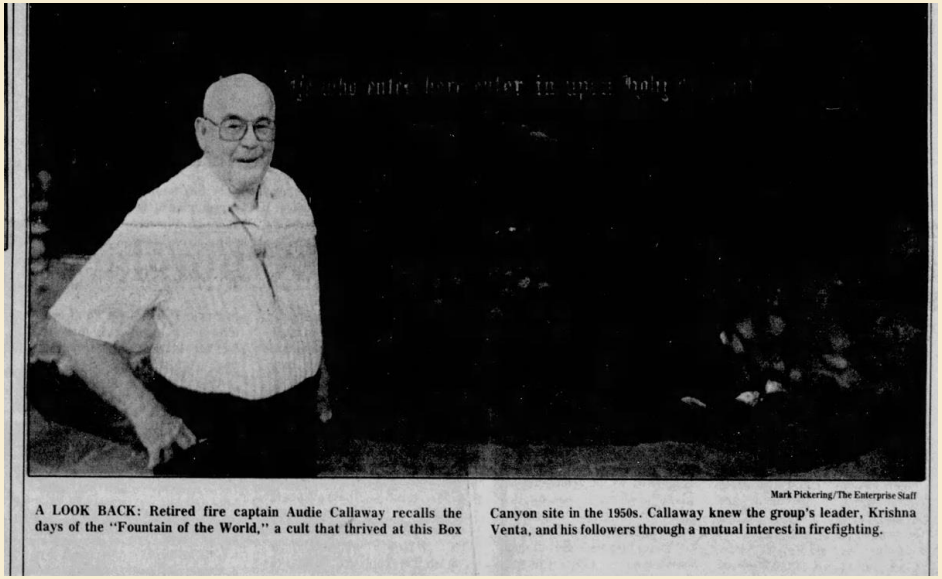


MEMORIAL OF THE ORDER — Perched on a hill above the retreat is a huge memorial of the order whose members' credo is that all living things are precious and that the Commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill" refers to all forms of living things, and is not limited to human beings.

1969-12-11 Hollywood Citizen News, pg 3

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1992 memories

Retired fire captain Audie Callaway liked Venta well enough, but saw the religious leader as taking advantage of his position and earning a reputation as a hypocrite.
Venta, according to Callaway and others, was a gambler and womanizer. According to Callaway, during fire emergencies Venta slept in a car with a different woman every night.



Mark Pickering/The Enterprise Staff

A LOOK BACK: Retired fire captain Audie Callaway recalls the days of the "Fountain of the World," a cult that thrived at this Box Canyon site in the 1950s. Callaway knew the group's leader, Krishna Venta, and his followers through a mutual interest in firefighting.

'Barefoot cult' tragedy holds special place in area history

By Susan Chasen
Special to The Enterprise

In the heart of Box Canyon, a sign that once marked the entrance to a bizarre religious cult still reads: "Ye who enter here enter in upon Holy Ground."

Today it hangs over the driveway to a private residence. Its faded letters and welcoming message compete with "No Trespassing" signs.

And the story behind it is virtually forgotten.

In 1958, the Fountain of the World commune came to a gruesome end. It was described as the worst mass murder case in Ventura County history; 10 people were killed. And it shocked the small Simi Valley community of fewer than 8,000 residents.

Like the recent Rodney King verdict, the tragic episode brought a rare blaze of national attentioa to a community normally well outside the public eye.

But at the same time, the story also shows an aspect of Simi Valley's identity that challenges recent media depictions of it as a last bastion of lilywhite conformity and order.

The cult disaster faded quickly into the background by the early 1960s, when Simi Valley started growing at a dizzying pace, and the booming new suburb was looking more toward the future than the past.

But earlier residents of Simi Valley and the Susana Knolls would never forget the story of the strange sect.

The saga, which includes wife-swapping, some fine baking and a cigar-smoking false prophet, would end in a flash of dynamite. It begins with one man and his mysterious passions.

□

In 1948, a restless young man, born Francis Pencovic, seemed to have finally found his calling.

It was in the beach community of Venice. Pencovic, 37, had assumed a new, religious-sounding name. The one-time boilermaker, drifter and San Francisco orphan was calling himself Krishna Venta. And people were flocking to his spiritual lectures.

Few knew their teacher had a lengthy arrest record in Texas and California. According to several sources, Pencovic had been picked up for burglary and petty theft, writing bad checks and violation of the Mann Act, which prohibited taking women across state lines for immoral purposes.

Once, he was even arrested for writing threatening letters to President Roosevelt.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, Pencovic served at least two jail terms — the longer of the two was for nine months. In another case, he was sent to the state mental hospital in Stockton for observation.

But all this probably wouldn't have meant much to Venta's followers even if they had known about it. Like most cult followers, they did not rank among the world's most skeptical. In fact, they were willing to believe the most outlandish claims from their charismatic leader.

For example, in one published account, Venta was quoted saying that he came to Earth from the planet Neophrates and had lived here for 240,000 years. He said he first arrived on this planet in the Euphrates Valley in Turkey — in the Garden of Eden.

"I have been on Earth all these years," he would say.

At other times, he offered a more mundane version of his past. In this version, he was converted after growing long hair and dressing in robes for a Hollywood Bowl Nativity Play.

Whatever story he told, it seemed to work. By 1952, Venta had convinced members of his flock, which at one point reached about 175, to swear off the luxuries of modern life and retreat to Box Canyon in the hills southeast of Simi Valley.

There was a bookkeeper, an insurance salesman, a teacher, and an actress among the zealots willing to give up their money and property to live on the remote commune with Venta. Doctors and lawyers were even reputed to be among the converts.

In Box Canyon, they built a primitive settlement of local rocks, timber and concrete — 12

(Please see CULT, Page 8)

Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA.

FREE: Krishna Venta leaves jail after an arrest over non-payment of child support.

1992-06-04 Krishna Venta barefoot cult memories Simi Valley Star Enterprise pg1

585 Box Canyon, Fountain of the World, 1992 memories

Cult

(Cont. from Page 1)

buildings in all — and called it the "WKFL Fountain of the World." The initials stood for "Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith and Love."

During most of the sect's six year life, members lived humbly and submitted to Venta's unusual religious practices.

For example, Venta had a unique approach to marriages. First, he arranged them himself — once pairing a 26-year-old man and a 69-year-old woman. Then, he would perform them only at high noon on March 29 because he believed it was the true date of Christ's crucifixion.

□

Afterward, Venta — a strikingly tall, rail-thin figure — raised his glass, offered a toast with pink champagne and admonished the newlyweds to celebrate each anniversary — "No matter how broke you are" — with another bottle.

Couples, however, were not allowed to live together. Housing was in short supply, so they lived in male and female dormitories, as did the children.

Venta, however, is widely believed to have enjoyed cohabitation privileges with women of the cult.

His followers subjected themselves to his authority because they believed he was some sort of Messiah, perhaps even an incarnation of Jesus Christ.

On Easter, Venta acted out his Messiah claim by hoisting himself onto a large cross.

Some claimed that he had no navel and that this proved his divinity.

According to Venta, his Fountain of the World commune was to become a training ground for 144,000 elect souls who would live by the motto "Love in Action" and dedicate themselves to serving others.

Members of this elect group who had already hooked up with Venta took their status quite seriously.

Impressive titles ranging from priest to bishop to cardinal were liberally bestowed upon both men and women, such as Priest Mary and Cardinal Gene. Children and adults without titles were called "Brother" or "Sister," followed by their first names.

Venta was referred to as "Master."

They all wore flowing, color-coded robes, reflecting their positions in the sect and embroidered with the letters "WKFL."

Men grew long hair and beards. Women covered their heads and wore no make-up.

And they became known as "the Barefoot Cult" because they never wore shoes, not even in the rugged terrain of Box Canyon.

The life of cult members included "Concentrations" twice a day, in the morning and evening, when the chapel bell tolled and the entire group gathered for religious observances and lessons.

To support themselves, they worked on farms and did odd jobs in Simi Valley. They didn't ask for pay, but simply accepted whatever they were given.

Also, they didn't believe in killing anything, not even weeds. And they greeted everyone — including outsiders — with a big hug.

□

All this might have seemed pretty harmless. But outsiders who had frequent contact with the group could sense that things were slightly awry at the Fountain of the World. The problem was Venta himself.

"He was one of those 'Don't do as I do, do as I say do' sort of guys," recalls retired Fire Captain Audie Callaway, 72.

Even though Callaway liked Venta well enough, he could see that the religious leader was taking advantage of his position and earning a reputation as a hypocrite.

Venta, according to Callaway and others, was a gambler and a womanizer. He thought nothing of blowing the collective savings of his flock on the tables in Las Vegas or at the Denver dog tracks.

The men in the sect suspected that Venta was sleeping with their wives. And they didn't approve.

According to Callaway, during fire emergencies Venta slept in a station wagon with a different woman every night.

"I guess he needed someone to keep him warm," Callaway said.

Callaway knew Venta because his cult headquarters was in the midst of brush fire country. And Venta, who served in the Army Medical Corp in World War II, had become a conscientious volunteer firefighter.

His followers learned first aid and, even in their bare feet, became avid volunteers for the Fire Department.

When a plane crashed in the Santa Susanas or after the Bakersfield earthquake in 1952, the "Barefoot Cult" members showed up as if out of nowhere. They helped with rescues or with carrying out the dead.

No one would have guessed how oddly ironic this work would seem one day.

Callaway remembers Venta dressed, as always, "like Jesus Christ himself," actively participating in meetings of the Ventura County Firefighters Association.

Callaway's favorite story is about Venta going to Chicago and using his association credentials to take a fire department ride-along.

Venta went on a "resuscitator call." When the heart attack victim was coming to, he apparently thought he hadn't. He saw the Christ-like Venta and said with terrific relief in his voice: "Oh Lord, I made it!"

Despite Venta's shortcomings, Callaway retains a certain respect for the sect as a whole.

"They were damn good firemen."

□

Generally, residents in Simi Valley and the Susana Knolls tolerated and — in some ways — even admired the peaceful cult.

The cult members' children attended Simi Elementary School and were well behaved. The sect even earned a reputation for fine baking, canning and for candles the members made at Christmas time.

Glyndolyn Bradford, a longtime Susana Knolls-area resident, recalls being a little taken in by the group at first. She and her husband had drilled water wells for the sect, and afterward came to know Venta and his followers.

"I liked them very much. The religion was a little different than we're used to, but they were loving people."

Venta could be very charming, Bradford recalls. He was a striking, charismatic figure and he preached a theory of reincarnation.

"He was interesting at least to listen to," she said.

But she also saw a side to Venta that didn't seem to match his religious pretensions.

She tells the story of how Venta, wielding a plastic water pistol during one of his sermons, repeatedly squirted a woman disciple in the face.

"He accused her of not listening. But I couldn't see where the lady had done anything," Bradford said. The woman, who was wearing glasses, didn't even move to wipe them clear.

Other complaints about Venta, according to Bradford and others, included that he rode in an old, government Jeep, while his barefoot disciples walked; that his meals were better than his followers enjoyed; and that he smoked cigars, drank and generally lived higher than his followers.

□

In 1949, Venta had another run-in with the law. He was arrested and spent a few hours in jail for non-payment of child support, and the case dragged on for six years.

At first, the court told Venta to get a job so he could pay $50 a month in support for two children from a past marriage.

But, according to court records, Venta claimed he had no money because he lived in a commune. The state Court of Appeal accepted his argument. It said there was no evidence that Venta had any money or way of getting it.

A dissenting justice objected that this would allow any father to join a religious cult to escape child support payments.

Venta's poverty, however, didn't keep him from hitting the gambling tables in Las Vegas. According to a report published in Newsweek, he eventually ran up a $2,500 debt which he later settled for 30 cents on the dollar.

Most of Venta's disciples accepted his questionable habits, however. Perhaps they even saw religious significance in their leader's erratic behavior.

But not all of them did. And not surprisingly, Venta's womanizing and manipulation of marital affairs, even more than his gambling and legal troubles, were ultimately the cause of his downfall.

□

On the evening of Dec. 9, 1958, Ralph Muller, 33, and Peter Kamenoff, 42, two unhappy, ex-followers of Krishna Venta, took a room in a Tarzana hotel and soberly plotted revenge against the man they believed had betrayed them.

In an hour-long tape recording they left behind, they described their plan.

"We want our motives known. The plan is to go to Krishna Venta and demand a confession of crime, pretense, immorality and hypocrisy — to demand the truth."

They wanted this unlikely confession to prove charges they made two days earlier to a state attorney general's investigator. They had complained of Venta's promiscuity with women in the sect. In addition, they alleged that Venta's claim to divinity was false and that he had enslaved his followers, embezzled from them and illegally practiced medicine on them.

Their recording indicated they were not optimistic about getting Venta's cooperation. They said they were willing to die to "rid society of this man.

"We may have our last night in this world tonight," they predicted. Kamenoff left a separate "goodbye" note to his family.

□

Both men had left the group in 1957. Kamenoff was especially angry because Venta was forbidding him to see his wife, who was still in the cult.

Venta had taken Kamenoff's wife, Sister Nerria, with him to Alaska where he was establishing two new settlements — one in Homer and another at Kachemak Bay.

Venta banned Kamenoff from the settlement, alleging he had been violent toward Sister Nerria. Kamenoff claimed that Venta would not allow his wife and child to leave and was intercepting his mail, effectively blocking him from contacting his spouse.

In the intervening year and a half, Muller and Kamenoff ended up in the desert community of Joshua Tree. Muller, a brick mason, lived with his wife, Patrice. She also had been a Fountain of the World member and still dressed like one, even though she had a teaching job in Twentynine Palms.

Muller was described in published accounts as unstable and short-tempered. His wife was said to fear him. In 1946, he served six months in jail in Santa Monica for burglary.

He and Kamenoff, a native of Russia and former construction worker, reportedly spent long hours drinking beer, playing chess and arguing about religion at Muller's home.

It may have been during one of their chess game arguments and under the influence of too many beers that they conceived their plan to bring down Krishna Venta.

By the night of Dec. 9, 1958, however, when they were speaking into their brand-new tape recorder in that Tarzana hotel, there was no turning back.

Sometime after midnight, one of these two disillusioned men was seen speaking with Venta and Cardinal Gene at the Box Canyon monastery headquarters. He was carrying a canvas bag.

A witness said he heard Venta angrily ordering him off the property. She said she had never heard the cult leader treat anyone with such hostility before.

A short time later, at 1:28 a.m. Dec. 10, there was a deafening blast.

It was heard miles away. Windows shattered at the Box Canyon Fire Station cottage across the road.

The two ex-cult members had detonated 20 sticks of dynamite, each containing 80 percent nitro-glycerin — four times the normal concentration of explosive.

Receipts showed they were purchased at a Los Nietos oil well supply firm. The men had said they needed it for some blasting.

Ten people were killed in the explosion, including Krishna Venta, Muller and Kamenoff. Most of the victims were mutilated or burned beyond recognition.

Two children were among the dead.

Seven-year-old Keela Baker, a Simi Elementary School student, and her father Martin Baker, 40, were killed. Her sister Linda, 9, was hospitalized with severe burns.

The cult's newest member, 11-month-old Brother Ellwyn James Shanafelt, was killed along with his parents Cardinal Gene, 38, and Bishop Jane, 37. The infant's two school-age brothers Robert and Freddy were orphaned.

□

Robert and Freddy were well known. They played on local Little League baseball teams and other sports teams. After the explosion, they went to live with relatives in Seattle.

Robert, who at 13 was the oldest boy in the sect, was a hero on the night of the blast, helping nine other children escape from their burning dormitory.

In five minutes the building was consumed, but as if by a miracle, all 16 boys sleeping inside got out unhurt.

At the time, newspapers quoted Venta's 11-year-old son Sharva:

"The shattering explosion jarred us from our sleep. As we awakened, the roof fell in on top of us. Everything seemed to catch fire — our beds, the walls, our clothes and all of our possessions."

The force of the explosion left a grotesque sight. Bits of flesh and body parts were found hundreds of feet away. A child's nightgown hung eerily from an upper tree branch. A firefighter found that the charred remains he took to be a child's doll were in fact the remains of a real child.

Survivors, stunned by the blast, looked on, dazed, their bare feet bleeding from broken glass and debris, as firefighters fought back the blaze touched off by the blast. It burned 125 acres.

Some of Venta's remaining followers — there were about 40 left in Box Canyon — insisted that he had not been killed, but was living in Nepal at the base of Mount Everest. A local dentist, however, was able to identify a dental bridge he had recently implanted in Venta's mouth.

Followers still refused to mourn though, saying: "There is no loss of life here."

Venta's remains are buried in an unmarked grave at Valhalla Memorial Park in North Hollywood.

□

In the daylight hours following the bombing, a pickup truck parked nearby provided answers to authorities. The tape recording was discovered there, along with a receipt for the dynamite.

Residents of the Susana Knolls and Simi Valley were horrified by the tragedy. But they rallied to help the victims. They raised $500 for food, blankets and clothing.

In an odd footnote to the tragic story, on Dec. 8, before the blast, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors had voted that cult members could no longer work as volunteer firefighters because they would not wear shoes or proper clothing. Insurance considerations prompted the move.

The WKFL Fountain of the World never fully recovered from that deadly night. Without Venta, the Box Canyon cult gradually faded away. However, on the following Easter, some remaining cult members were seen combing the hillsides in the expectation that Venta would return.

In Alaska, a tiny strand of Venta's legacy lives on. Janet Klein, a Homer-area historian, said there's a "Barefooters" trailer park named after the group and a small "WKFL Park." A former Venta follower, Isaiah Bates, donated the park. He runs a janitorial service, is active in local politics and still lives by the teachings of the Fountain of the World.

Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA

"UNION OF THE SPIRIT": Krishna Venta, right, performs a marriage ceremony at the "Barefoot cult" Box Canyon headquarters sometime in the 1950s.

1992-06-04 Krishna Venta barefoot cult memories Simi Valley Star Enterprise pg8

Next….. A 24-minute 2011 documentary

"The Fountain"

By Callie Shanafelt

When Callie Shanafelt was six years old she learned that her father grew up in a religious cult near Los Angeles where her grandparents were killed by suicide bombers in 1958. Before their death her grandparents followed Krishna Venta, a man claiming to be the second coming of Christ. To demonstrate their beliefs they pledged to live communally, go barefoot, wear color-coded robes and grow their hair long until peace and brotherly love spread throughout the world. Callie's father tried to answer her questions about the Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith and Love Fountain of the World cult but he blocked out most memories of his childhood and the night of his parent's death. The Fountain is a documentary following brothers Fred and Dick Shanafelt as they come to terms with their childhood while helping Callie on her quest to understand why her grandparents would join a cult in an era of crew-cuts.

Available on Vimeo to rent ($1.99)
or buy ($4.99)
https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thefountain

Sources and Acknowledgements

References:

- Special thanks to Gloria DeMuri, Chatsworth Lake Manor resident and Historian
- A 2011 Documentary by Callie Shanafelt, "The Fountain"
- Title Search data on 60 and 585 Box Canyon from Jennifer Romero

- Prepared by Ann & Ray Vincent in April 2024

Appendix

The WKFL Crest Insignia, as seen on the Headquarters Sign outside of the Headquarters building that was blown up in 1958

Embroidered on all robes

WKFL in the center,

Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Love

On the Banner KV for Krishna Venta

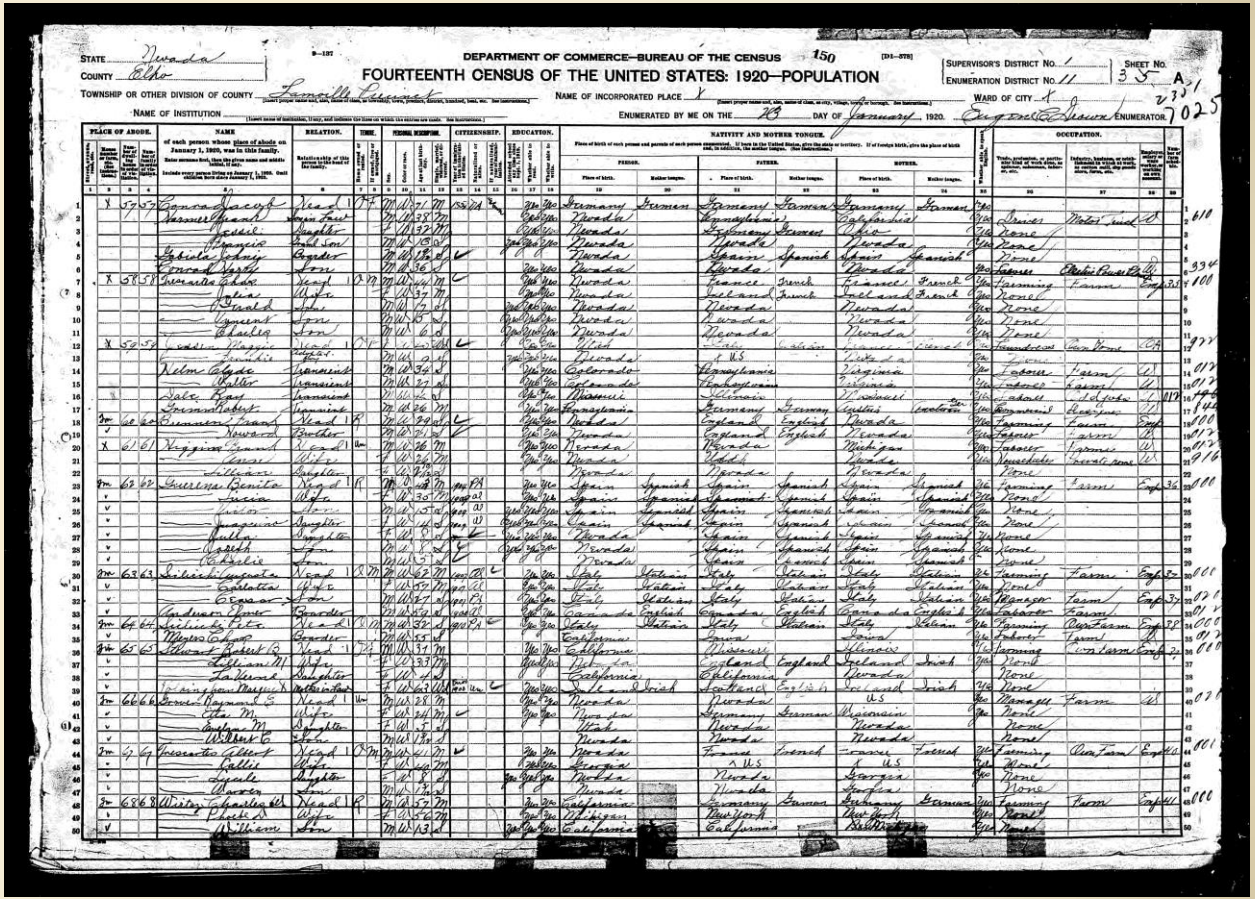
In the center of the Banner

"Christ Immortal", written in Greek

Appendix

1920 Census
Elko, Nevada

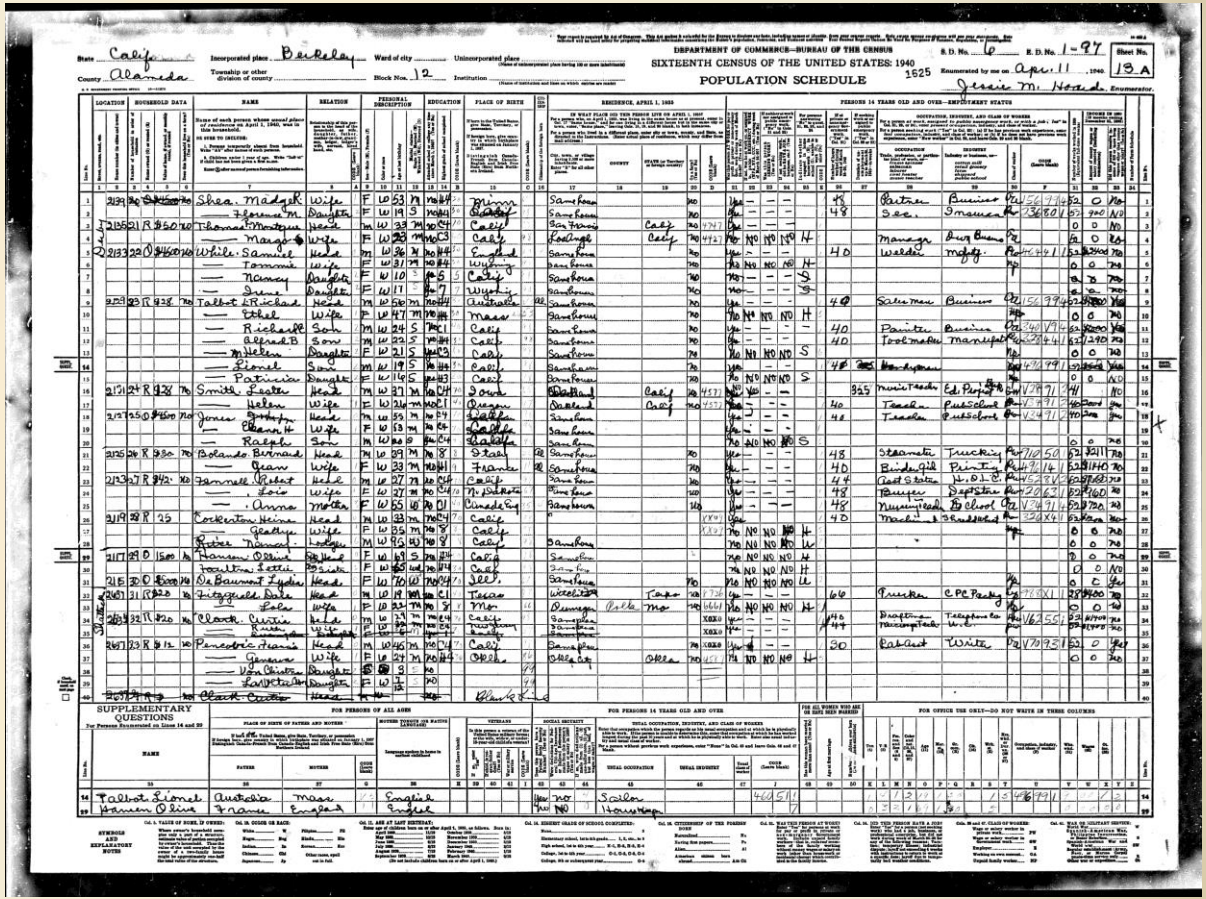
Row 13 Frankie Jessen,
adopted boy age 9
Mother Maggie Jessen



Appendix

1940 Census
Berkeley, CA

Row 36 Francis Pencovic
Wife Geneva
2 children



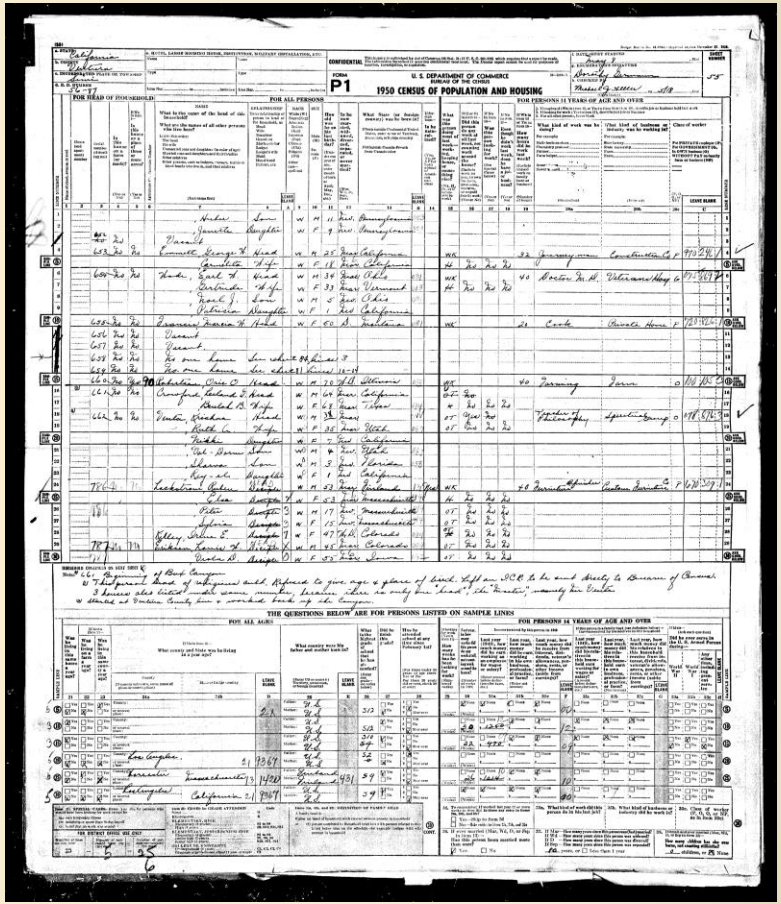
Appendix

1950 Census
Box Canyon, Simi Valley

Row 18 Krishna Venta
Wife Ruth
4 children

Occupation: Teacher of Philosophy
Industry: Spiritual Group

Census Taker notes: This person head of religious cult.
Refused to give age & place of birth.
Left an I.C.R. to be sent directly to Bureau of Census.
3 houses also listed under same number, because there is only one "head" the "Master", namely Mr. Venta



Any

Comments,

Questions, Memories?