

The Kittilson Family - In 1882 by Horse-drawn Wagon

Written by Bill Zimmerman, Menifee Valley Historical Association

Andrew Kittilson, a native of Norway, lived in Los Angeles with his wife Myra from Louisiana. To earn money, Andrew herded sheep and cut wood in the hills while Myra cooked for the crew. Their daughter Norma was born April 16, 1877 one year after they were married. Andrew was 40 and Myra was 26.

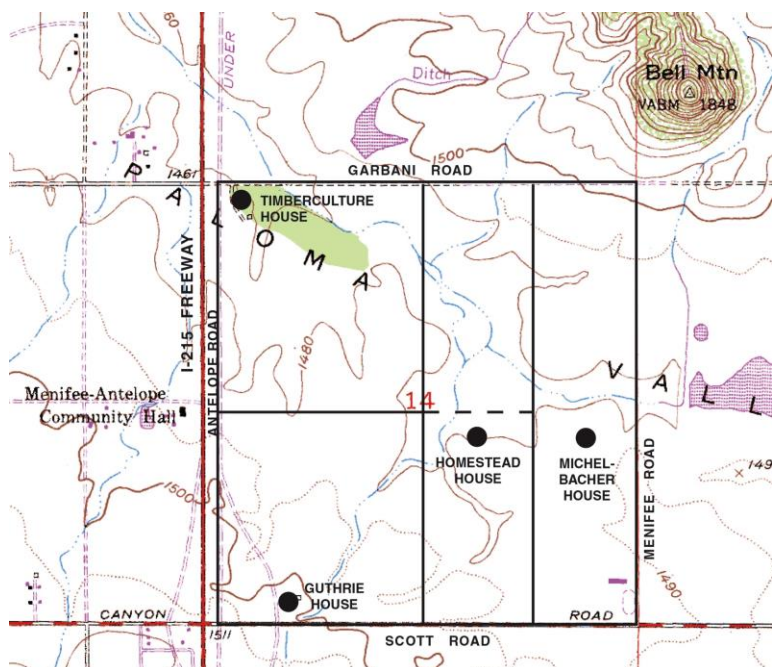


Andrew Kittilson



Myra (Morrell) Kittilson

After learning that the government had opened land in our area for homesteading, Andrew Kittilson left Los Angeles with his neighbor to find an ideal piece of property, which he found in the Menifee Valley. He filed a Homestead Claim on 160 acres on Section 14, which is at the corner of Antelope and Garbani Roads.



Soon after Andrew Kittilson arrived in Menifee, he dug a well and built a small board and batten house from lumber he obtained from San Jacinto Mountain. He went back to Los Angeles in the fall of 1882 to get his wife and daughter. Together, they made the journey to their new home in Menifee. They came by wagon pulled by two horses, *Fanny and Shylock*, bringing their chickens, cat and their dog *Benny*. Their household goods were shipped by rail to Colton, as that was the nearest train station. When they arrived at their destination on November 26, 1882, Myra said “there was nothing but sage brush and jack rabbits”.

The Kittilsons proved up after five years of residence and obtained the deed to the land. They also obtained an additional 160 acres through a Timber Culture Claim. To qualify for this, they agreed to plant 10 acres of “timber”. Mr. Kittilson obtained tiny cottonwood saplings from nearby Cottonwood Canyon and transplanted them onto the property south of Garbani Road. The trees are still evident today.

Myra was an excellent seamstress and artist. She operated the valley’s first post office called “Anon” from their home. The mail was brought once a week from Murrieta. The name Anon was derived from the first and last two letters of Andrew KittilsON.



Their daughter Norma attended the first Paloma and Antelope schools. In 1899, Norma married William Brown, a local wheat farmer from Winchester. In 1906, the couple moved to the original Kittilson timber culture claim property at the corner of Antelope and Garbani roads and raised four children Walter, Margaret, Hazel and Rosamond.



Brown family on Thanksgiving Day with Grammie Kittilson in 1913



Mr. Brown’s 100-lb. sacks of grain in 1944

Andrew Kittilson lived to be 71 years old when he passed away in 1906. His wife Myra lived to be 81 and lived until 1931.

This article was prepared by Bill Zimmerman, Vice President - Menifee Valley Historical Association and was based on a family narrative written in 1954 by Norma Kittilson-Brown.

