



Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
PO Box 1255 Rosamond, CA 93560
June, 2020

Meetings:

Regular Meetings: POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

- 2nd Thursday of the month
(except July & August)
- 5:30 pm - at the Wanda Kirk
Library, 3611 Rosamond Blvd.,
Rosamond, CA.

Board Meetings: POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

- 4th Thursday of the month as
needed. All are welcome.
- 4 pm - location to be announced

Next Meeting - Still not Known

The Kern Antelope Historical Society is still here! We hope you are all doing well. At this time, no decision has been made as to when we can resume. Be sure to watch your email, follow us on Facebook or go to our webpage to check on our next get-together.

WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org **EMAIL:** info@kahs1959.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/

In the meantime are you recording your family history? This might be a good time to get to work on it. Remember it doesn't just have to be written, you might organize your pictures to tell the story, or make oral recordings of those people who have been around longer than you, shall we say. Do something to preserve the story of your family - before it's too late.

The article this month has come about because of a book I was reading and a request for information about a valley pioneer. It turns out both of these referred to an area at the western end of the Antelope Valley, up in the Tehachapi Mountains - in the White Oak Lodge or Twin Lakes area.

Place Names

The name of a place is so important. Even in modern times with a GPS, the name of the place helps us find where we want to go. But what happens when names change or even get moved? Well, people get confused!

This has probably gone on forever. In early California history, explorers gave names to places they 'discovered' and a later explorer might give a different name. Sometimes they named places for kings or others back home they wanted to honor. Sometimes places were named for things they found in the area, like Tejon, which means "badger".

So how did El Tejon (the Tejon area) get its name? Well, it took awhile. In 1772 Pedro Fages passed through the Tehachapi Mountains, following an old Indian trail, and may have used the "Old" Tejon Pass. He named the area Portezuelo de Cortes (Cortes Pass). (Sources are contradictory on exactly which pass he used.)

In 1776 Father Garcés definitely discovered the **old Tejon Pass** through the Tehachapi Mountains. But it wasn't until thirty years later, the explorer Francisco Ruiz gave the name El Tejon to the region where the creek of the same name leads into the San Joaquin valley. You probably know where the Tejon Pass goes through the Grapevine Canyon and you've heard of Fort Tejon, or the Outlets at Tejon shopping mall. But that is not the original Tejon Pass. Reading the book, *Men of the Tejon* by Earle Crowe, I began to realize the author was referring to two different passes - an old and a new Tejon Pass. I had to go back and re-read several passages and then spent time searching for maps and other information to clarify.

So where did Garcés actually cross in 1776? After coming from Yuma to San Gabriel Mission, then up through the mountains to Lake Hughes, Crowe says he turned off of the previous route of Fages and went north and a little east towards the Tehachapis. Following an old native trail he came to Cottonwood Creek (which ends around 170th W. and Rosamond Blvd. today) and followed it into the mountains and crossed the divide near the head of another creek, which brought him down into the San Joaquin Valley. It seems he was the first white man to use this trail. He named the mountains the Sierra de San Marcos. But it was Ruiz, in 1806, who gave the name Tejon to the stream and the surrounding area when his men found a dead badger near



*Father Garcés
Landmark, Bakersfield*



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the mouth of the creek.

Other explorers followed Garcés through the **Tejon Pass** and it became the main route from southern California to the central valley. Jedediah Smith, a frontiersman and trapper, was the first American to use this old Tejon Pass through the mountains in 1827. In 1830, trappers and scouts Ewing Young and Kit Carson followed Garcés' route as they went north to trap and explore in California.

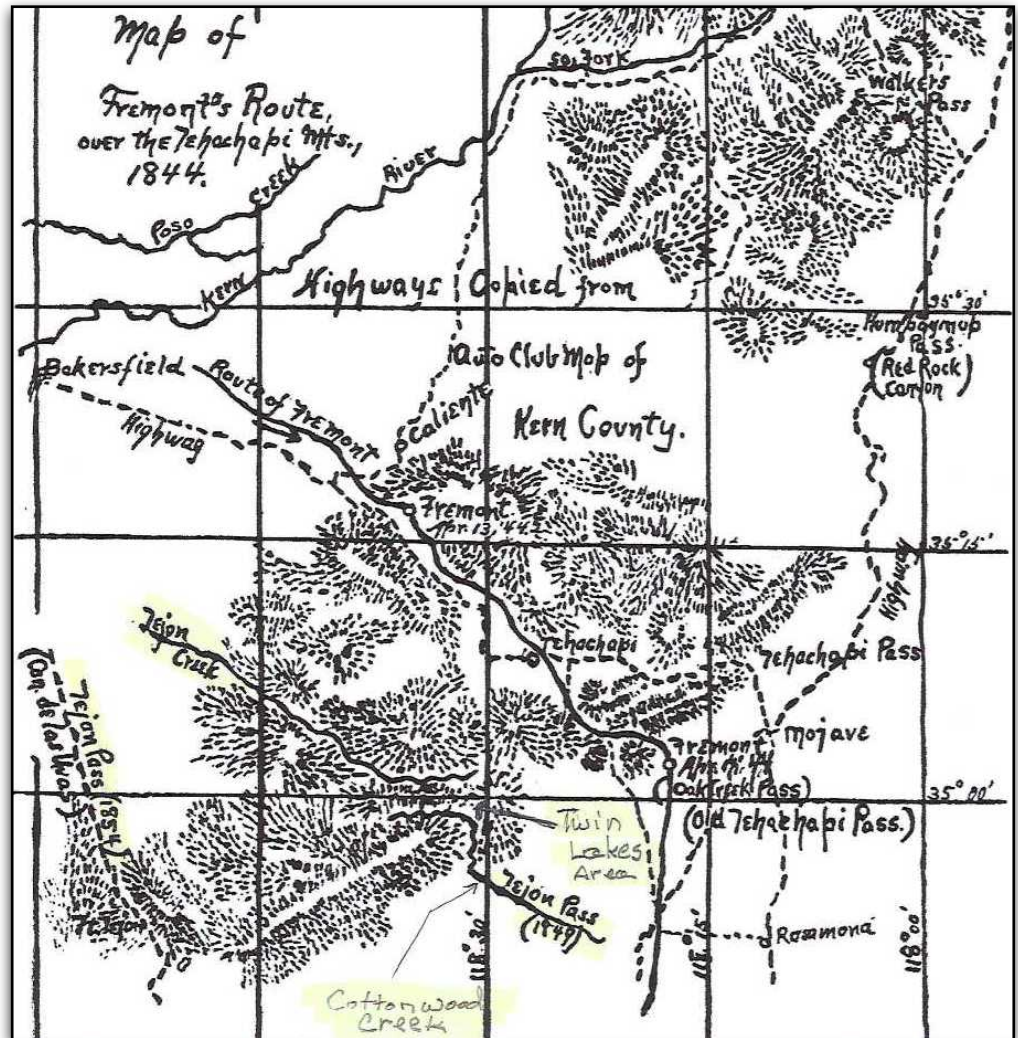
In 1853, Robert Stockton Williamson of the U.S. army was scouting for the planned transcontinental railroad and, after exploring the original Tejon Pass, he called the wagon road "one of the worst" he had ever seen. He preferred the route through the Grapevine Canyon, about 15 miles west. Of course that route wasn't used either and when a railroad finally united southern and northern California, it came through the Tehachapi Pass, farther east, and through the Antelope Valley where Mojave, Lancaster and Palmdale are today.

In 1854, Fort Tejon was established to the west in Grapevine Canyon and was in operation for about ten years. The route through this canyon was known as the **Fort Tejon Pass**. Also, in the 1850's and 1860's General Beale was buying land grants and combined them into his Tejon Ranch, which is still one of the largest ranches in the country. By the time Fort Tejon was abandoned in 1864, the route through the Grapevine had become the main route between Los Angeles and the central valley and "Fort" was dropped from the name, making

this the **new Tejon Pass**. The old route over Cottonwood Creek and Tejon Creek was referred to as Tehachapi Pass, according to Crowe in his 'Men of Tejon' book. And when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through the Tehachapi Mountains in 1876, it "arrogated to itself the name of Tehachapi Pass."

Crowe further says that "The old pioneer pass of Tejon, later Tehachapi, through which Garcés and Jed Smith and the emigrant trains traveled, now carries the uninspired name of Oak Creek Pass."

So while I was trying to find Cottonwood and Tejon Creeks on old maps or other information to verify



This map shows Fremont's Route over the Tehachapis in 1844 - through the valley of Tehachapi. It also shows the old Tejon Pass (1849) which followed Cottonwood Creek up into the mountains, where the divide was crossed, then Garcés and later travelers went down to Tejon Creek and came out in the Central Valley. At the lower left, is the new Tejon Pass (1854) through the canyon "de las Uvas", or Grapevine Canyon, where Interstate 5 runs today. Also, a pointer is added to show the area of Twin Lakes, where White Oak Lodge is.



The brand of the Tejon Ranch



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these places, the Kern Antelope Historical Society was contacted by a descendent of John D. Covington (see the Nov., 2019 newsletter). He and several other family members have been trying to find the old 'home place', the Covington/ Dearborn Ranch up in the Tehachapi Mountains. Looking into some of our historical society books, which tell of John Covington and his family who settled in the White Oak, or Twin Lakes, area, I realized how close they were to the **Old Tejon Pass**. This might explain why there was some settlement in that area near what had been the main route between Los Angeles and points north until the 1860's. Covington and his mother, stepfather and siblings first came to this area in late 1860's or early 1870's.

John Covington's stepfather, Elias Dearborn first built a cabin at Twin Lakes (later known as White Oak Lodge), which is just off of Cottonwood Canyon. Then they moved to an area known as The Rincon, and later he talks about Little Oak Creek. It's unclear exactly where some of these places were, but as Covington said, in a letter in 1915, "Here, within a radius of seven miles, I have lived ever since." John describes ranch life while they lived in the Rincon. They raised hogs and sold the extra lard and meat. They had an orchard, and raised crops, including a hundred to a hundred and fifty sacks of potatoes a year.

The potatoes were sold in Bakersfield – so I imagined driving down into the Antelope Valley and either going west to the Grapevine area or around through Tehachapi to get there. Here's what makes the connection with Tejon Pass. In *Here Roamed the Antelope*, Covington describes the trip to get the potatoes to market, quite a struggle. It sounds like his stepfather used the **Old Tejon Pass**, right near them. "The first year or two Dearborn hauled the potatoes by wagon up to the top of the mountain, unloaded them, sledged them down a very steep mountain, nearly a mile into the canyon (probably the Tejon). A heavy bushy tree was fastened behind the empty wagon and it was dragged carefully down the hill, and the potatoes were reloaded and hauled on to Bakersfield. Usually he came home around by Tehachapi and through Willow Springs, which was then a stage station on the road from Los Angeles to San Francisco."

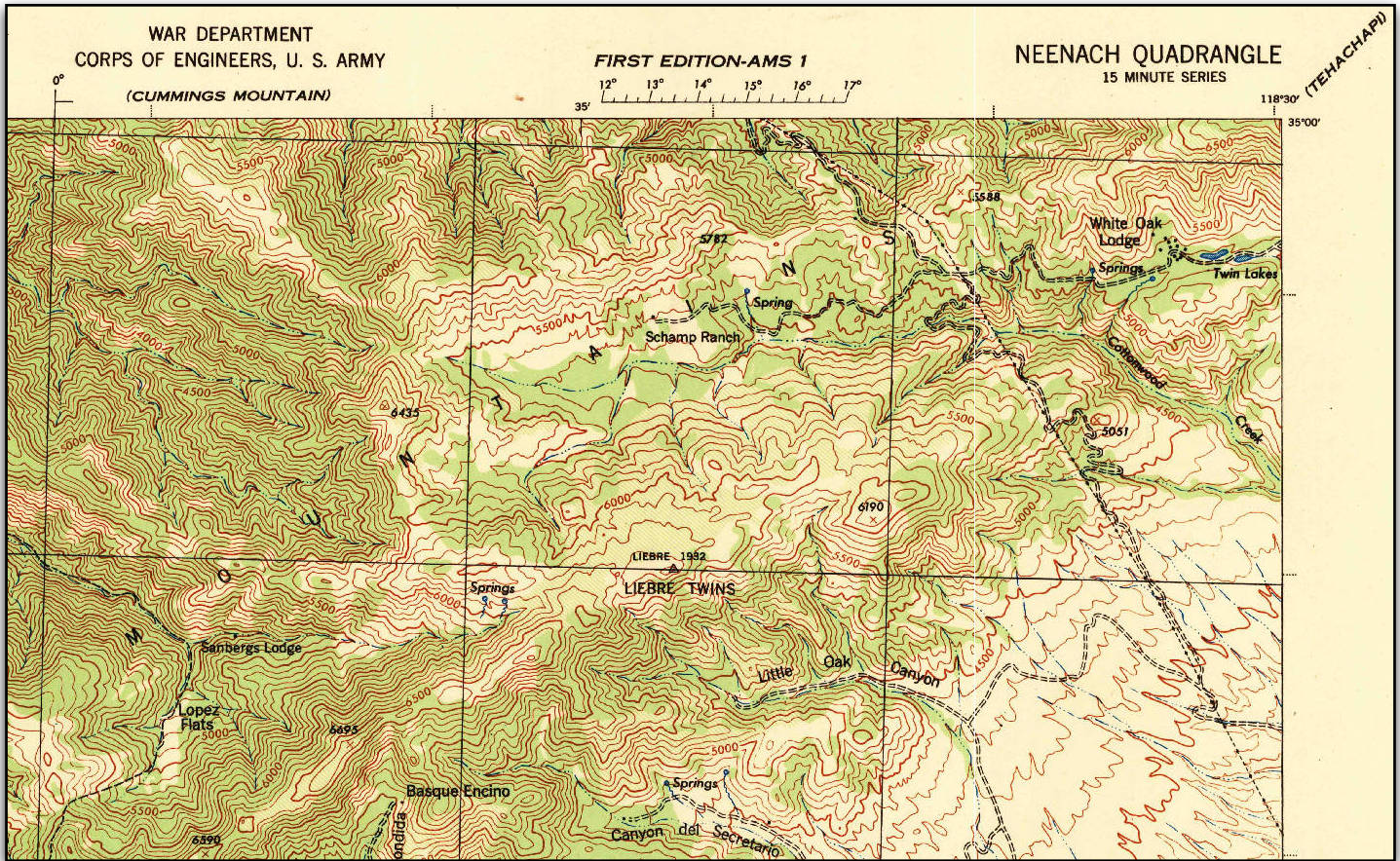
Remembering that Williamson, in 1853, scouting for a good route for the railroad, called this pass one of the worst roads he had ever seen, it's no wonder that Dearborn had such a time hauling his potatoes to market. Speaking of names, the Rincon hasn't be found on a map and family descendants think it may have been a descriptive name for one of the places the Covingtons and Dearborns lived up in the Tehachapis. Names can tell us a lot but they can change on us and they certainly don't tell the whole story.

The caption on back of this photo (taken in 1960) says: "Built by Elias Dearborn became Schamp house 1931." This may have been Dearborn's 2nd cabin in the area. Sadly it has been torn down in recent years.





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This map is cropped from a 1943 USGS topo map. In the upper, right corner Twin Lakes and White Oak Lodge can be see. Cottonwood Creek is seen where it heads southeast to the valley floor. If you follow this creek to the head you will see the Schamp Ranch, which had been started by John Covington's stepfather, Elias Dearborn. If you can follow the trail north between White Oak Lodge and Schamp Ranch, it leads off the map right about the top, center - this is the route over the **old Tejon Pass** and down the Tejon Creek to Bakersfield.

Remember - The new year for KAHS begins June 1st. Membership fees are due. Thank you to those who have already paid! If you haven't, please drop a check in the mail along with the form on page 5. Or you can use Zelle to make a payment, more information about that on page 5 as well.



Website: www.kahs1959.org

Email: info@kahs1959.org

Please visit the website for more information about Antelope Valley history. Copies of recent newsletters are available, as well as other information. The first online KAHS book is now available. *Glimpse of the Prehistory of Antelope Valley*, by Stuart Glennan, is described as "Archaeological Investigations at the Sweetser site".





The Kern Antelope Historical Society greatly appreciates its business members.
We hope you will support them and say thanks when you see them.

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1. **Get started** by enrolling your email or U.S. mobile number through your mobile banking app or with the Zelle app.
2. Enter the KAHS email address - info@kahs1959.org.
3. **Enter the amount** to send and be sure to designate the reason for the payment such as "Sally Smith Individual Membership". KAHS will get a notification of your payment and the reason.



If you are not a member of the historical society, we hope you will consider joining. You can make a check, payable to Kern Antelope Historical Society and mail it, along with this coupon to the address below. You may also now pay using Zelle!

Friendly Reminder

**KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Mail to: Kern Antelope Historical Society
PO Box 125
Rosamond, CA 93560

	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	
Date	Type	Dues
Name	Student & Military	\$5
Address	Individual	\$15
City, ST, Zip	Couple	\$20
Phone Number	Family	\$30
E-mail	Business	\$35

Club Year - June 1st through May 31st

For Sale by KAHS

Books - \$10 (*\$8) Each:

Here Roamed the Antelope
Bears - Borax and Gold
Along the Rails from Lancaster to Mojave
The Antelopes Left and the Settle-ers Came
In Love with Life in Lancaster (Hard Times
1927-1932)
Antelope Valley Pioneers
Castles in the Valley – Shea’s Castle
A Page in the History of Antelope Valley: the Arthur
Pickus Story: His Home for Seventy Five Years
Mojave, A Rich History of Rails, Mining and Flight
Gold-Fever - 40 Years Digging Antelope Valley
History
Antelope Valley News and Views During Part of the
Great Depression 1925-1935

Video DVD - \$15: Antelope Valley Yesteryears

Maps - \$4 (*\$3): Historic Settlers Circle Map

Online Book: *Glimpse of the Prehistory of Antelope Valley*

**Members’ Discount Prices in Parentheses*

2020-2021 Executive Board

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Vice President: Delores Julian ddjulirosa@yahoo.com
Secretary: Janet Winters poppiesrme@gmail.com
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Directors At-Large:

Joe Pauley
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WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org EMAIL: info@kahs1959.org

General Meetings:

5:30 pm-Second Thursday of the Month, September through June
At Wanda Kirk County Library
3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, CA 93560
(Exceptions: June, September & December -
Location to be announced)

Memberships:

\$5 - Student & Military; \$15 - Individual; \$20 - Husband & Wife;
\$30 - Family; \$35 - Businesses

The Kern Antelope Historical Society was established in 1959 for the purpose of learning and preserving the history of California, especially the Antelope Valley, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Kern counties. Speakers are invited to talk at our monthly meetings about aspects of our various cultures. Subjects range from Indians of the past to the Space Age. The Society offers field trips for members to significant locations in and around the valley throughout the year. Come join us to learn more about the wonders of this area we live in and also meet some new people.

**KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1255
ROSAMOND, CA 93560**



Since 1959