



Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
PO Box 1255 Rosamond, CA 93560
January, 2021

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: **Temporarily - to be scheduled as needed.**

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

Hello to all our Kern Antelope Historical Society Members,

As we are still under restrictions for gathering in California, there will be no regular monthly meeting. Please watch your email (or posted mail if you don't have email) for news on when our next meeting will be held. Also, we are looking into alternative ways to bring interesting speakers to you until we can meet together. Thank you for your continued interest in and support of KAHS.

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

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/



Below is a portion of the article by Mr. Gerblick. He does a great job of describing what it was like traveling and living in the Antelope Valley in the 'early days'. As you read, keep in mind that it was written in 1963, recalling life and events in the early 1900's. Things have changed a lot since then. Watch for more of his story in future editions of the Antelope Horn.

ANTELOPE VALLEY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY by C. J. Gerblick

Italicized comments in parentheses are mine.

Here are some facts, figures, and first hand recollections concerning Antelope Valley – and Rosamond in particular – in much earlier days.

My father, mother, two sisters and I arrived in Rosamond by train from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 3:30 A.M. on April 16, 1904. The man who was supposed to meet us at the depot didn't appear, so my father went across the road and wakened "Uncle John Stuckey," as he was known to his many friends. Uncle John hitched a team to a light wagon and we started off on the last leg of our journey and our final destination: a gold mine five miles distant. My father was in charge of the development of this mine – a gold prospect – located at what is now the Willow Springs racetrack. The large dump is still visible from the Rosamond-Willow Springs Road (*now Rosamond Blvd*).

Rosamond was not very large in those days; consisting of about five homes, a meat market, blacksmith shop, and the Uncle John Stuckey-Ella Kinton place of business. This establishment comprised the General Store, dining room, post office, livery service, and last but not least, the hotel. Everyone, whether coming or going, visited this building for supplies and mail. Miss Kinton – Miss Ella – as she was generally known (a niece of Uncle John's) came to the Valley in the early days on a stretcher in very poor health. Miss Ella lived to a ripe old age, passing away about 1939.

The only homes between Rosamond and the mine where we lived was an area known as Olive Ranch. This area is known now as the Thunder Bird Trailer Court. (today – the trailer park southeast of Tropico Middle School, on Rosamond Blvd.) West was the E. M Hamilton property which consisted of a gold mill, four homes, a barn, bunk house, and a boarding house. I would imagine the Olive Ranch was developed in the 1880's. The trees were still in existence, although dead. Black locust trees, alive at the time, lined the Rosamond-Willow Springs road. The home in



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good condition and was surrounded by large cotton wood trees. Some of the tree trunks measured as much as fourteen inches in diameter. The founders of the Olive Ranch attempted the use of windmills in their irrigation system. Several dirt reservoirs used on the place at that time are visible from the road today. Apparently there wasn't enough wind for successful operation – unusual for Antelope Valley – anyway the project failed. (*Long-time valley resident, Cecil Burton, often commented on how little the wind blew here when you were relying on it to pump water.*)

The Hamilton Mill was built about 1897. It was run by steam, and operating on a twenty-four hour basis at the time, it produced a fortune in gold. The site of the old mill is gone now but the tailing pile (the rejects from the mill) are [sic] still visible from the Willow Springs Road. This waste deposit is located about one-fourth mile west of Avenue 60W and one hundred yards south of the road (Rosamond Blvd.).

The next place of residence was Willow Springs. Owned and developed by Ezra M. Hamilton, this was truly a gorgeous desert oasis. I lack words to describe its beauty. There were several running springs, beautiful trees of many varieties, alfalfa, watermelons, grapes, peanuts, and various other fruits. Mr. Hamilton was a Stone Mason by trade and a genius in the line of development. He had built several stone cottages, three large reservoirs, and had made many other improvements on the land, commencing along about the year 1896. Nearly everyone within a radius of ten miles would meet at Willow Springs on a Sunday afternoon, weather permitting. There they had a beautiful swimming pool constantly fed by a cold running spring, a big grove of shade trees, and tables and chairs for all. Mr. Hamilton also built an auditorium where many traveling road shows would stop and give entertaining performances. Church services were also held in this auditorium.

The first school to be started in this District was in the fall of 1904. It, too, was held in the Willow Springs auditorium. We had ordinary kitchen tables and chairs in place of school desks and one teacher for all eight grades. The following year, 1905, Mr. Hamilton built the school which is still standing today a short distance northeast of Willow Springs. Time has taken its toll of this school. However, although the roof and floor have rotted away, the stone walls remain more or less as they were. To mention but a few of the teachers who taught there: Edith A Burnette, Minnie K. Bisbee, Margaret Barger, and Mrs. Ingersoll. Probably all have passed over the great divide, as this was fifty years ago. (More like a hundred years ago now. And sadly, much of the Willow Springs school walls have now collapsed.)

In the early days in the Valley, a trip from our home to Lancaster was quite an event. It was discussed a day or so in advance. Then on the morning of the contemplated trip, the team of horses were [sic] well fed, watered, hitched to the wagon, and we were off. We always started very early, as it took three hours to make the trip one way. Our home was located on what was called "Milwaukee Hill," about a mile and a half east of Willow Springs, and about a half mile north the Rosamond-Willow Springs Road. Upon our arrival in Lancaster, the team was placed in the livery barn where they were watered and fed again. As a rule our first stop thereafter was the barber shop, where my father got a haircut and shave for forty cents. My haircut was twenty-five cents. There were two general stores in Lancaster at that time. One on the corner of Sierra Highway and Lancaster Boulevard, the other one located north of this point at what is now the Lancaster Inn. The first was run by Mr. Paul Bachert and the other by Mr. R. L. Cram. In addition to these two stores, Lancaster at this time was comprised principally of a large blacksmith shop on Sierra Highway, about one hundred yards south of Lancaster Boulevard, a barber shop, meat market, a church, the Southern Pacific Depot, approximately forty homes, the Western Hotel, and Mrs. Everett's Maternity Home. The Western Hotel still stands (*as a museum today*) and is operated by Mrs. George Webber, a young ninety-three years of age in August, 1960, and whom I met in 1907. She was a good friend of my mother's. I stayed in the Hotel many times in the early days. Mention must be made of "Ma"



A crowd gathers with Ezra Hamilton at his auditorium, or recreation hall, at Willow Springs



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The Western Hotel Museum today

Everett, as she was known to her many, many friends. Ma conducted a maternity home. Most of the babies in the early days were born there, assisted only by Ma. In fact, one of my sisters made her worldly entrance there. This home was located on the corner of Lancaster Boulevard and Beach Street. Now the County Engineers Office is situated on this spot. The road from our home to Lancaster in the early 1900's went along what is now Avenue 60 west for about two miles and then in a southeast direction across the desert to Lancaster. Except for large herds of cattle, there were no signs of life over this route. It was indeed wilderness compared to today. Very seldom did we meet anyone on this trip, other than an occasional cowboy.

There was an artesian well flowing about a mile and a half west of Lancaster and although the road was not flooded, the surrounding country was. Wild ducks

and many other species of water birds were in abundance.

The nearest home or ranch to our place of residence was the Senior Burton ranch adjacent to what is now the Mira Loma detention home on Avenue 60 W. and Avenue I. We used to purchase hay for our stock from the Burton ranch.

I would like to mention but a few of the old time cattlemen I knew in those days: Rawley Duntley, Harry Butterworth, Emery Kidd, Forrest Patterson, R. B. Burns, George Kinton, Bill Talbert, and J. Flavio.

The present highway between Rosamond and Lancaster was seldom used in the early days, as it was flooded with running artesian wells. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company had a water tank about half way between Rosamond and Lancaster called Oban. Locomotives were filled with water from this tank. The tank was filled with artesian water without the use of pumps of any kind, attended only by the section crew. The well was active up to about 1942.

(to be continued in a future newsletter)

A Challenge

I got a text from a cousin this week, asking about long-time friends of our grandparents. I could answer some of her questions, but not all and decided to check with my dad. He was able to fill me in with some interesting narrative about these friends and how my grandparents first got acquainted with them. I started to call my cousin, rather than trying to text and then had a change of mind. I decided to type it out in a Word document and email it to her so I could save it as a reference for all of us. She emailed back with some more information which I also added to my document. Had she not asked, I wouldn't have learned some things about my dad and our family story. And if I hadn't saved it in a document, I would almost certainly have forgotten sooner or later.

Another example - a picture was shared on Facebook of an old Rosamond building - you may have seen it. There were many comments about what it had been. I was even mistaken at first, but I found some old photos which showed it to be the old drug store, later a motorcycle shop and a real estate office.

My point is that we need to be documenting. It can be simple and brief but I see a lot of instances of where people "mis-remember" facts. And the "Challenge" - I would like to see as many of you as possible write a paragraph or two to answer about the topic - "How I Happened to come to Rosamond". For many, it was probably for work. Some may have come for health. But dig a little deeper. Get the story behind the move. Here are some ideas:

- Why Rosamond, why not somewhere else?
- What was your experience when you first came.
- Was it easy to leave home?

If you were born here, then find out why your parents came or a spouse. Try to verify with other family members, look written documents, photos, etc. Then write out your story of coming to Rosamond and send it to KAHS and it may be included in a future newsletter. Email to KAHS at info@kahs1959.org. And to start it off, I got Rae to tell the story of how he happened to come to Rosamond. Your story may be shorter. Maybe longer. It doesn't matter. You can include a picture if you have something that helps tell the story. Just do whatever you can to record the story. Future generations will be interested in what it was like "back in the day".

Another example is the story of Mr. Gerblick, above, who came to Rosamond with his parents and sisters. He gives a lot of interesting details, and someday your story will be just as interesting. Things were a lot different in his early days, but your early days will be a lot different than life for your children. Get it recorded before it's too late.



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How I Happened to Come to Rosamond – Rae Winters

After high school, I had plans to go to a machinist's trade school in West Virginia. But after working a year to earn money to help pay for school, I saw an ad in a sports magazine to learn to be a gunsmith at a junior college, so I went back to see my high school counselor and he said I would be learning the same skills, but by going to a junior college and taking gunsmithing, I would also have college credits. And going to college in the Colorado Rockies sounded pretty exciting to me. So I applied and **to my surprise**, they accepted me.

That fall I went to Trinidad State Junior College, in Colorado, and got an Associate Degree in gunsmithing. My instructors were very good at advising us what would happen being a gunsmith – the first six or seven years would be tough financially, as we established a reputable practice. So as a backup, I decided to transfer to Adams State College in Colorado to major in Industrial Arts to be a teacher, since I had enjoyed my shops classes in high school. All through high school, I had never wanted to be a teacher but after graduation from gunsmithing school, it seemed like a good back-up plan.

As I was about to graduate from Adams State in August, 1968, and after sending out numerous applications, the best offer I had was a job for \$4800 a year teaching in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. I kept delaying signing that contract because there was a good possibility of a job for \$6000 yearly, in Rock Springs, Wyoming, but two of the three board members were busy with haying or cattle operations and they couldn't get together to actually offer me a contract.

On graduation day, a Friday in the middle of August, I went to the teacher placement office at Adams State and saw a job opening at Edwards Air Force Base for \$6200 a year. Checking with Muroc School District, the superintendent asked me to send a transcript. That same Friday afternoon, I airtailed it, special delivery, to the district office in North Edwards. The following Monday morning I got a call from Dr. Everly offering me a contract. I looked at \$4800 in Colorado and \$6200 in California, and said, "Yes, send it." Wednesday I had the contract, signed it and sent it back.

An hour later, Rock Springs School District called me and said, "We're meeting this afternoon to approve you and will send a contract." I was very disappointed, as this was my first choice, and I had to tell them I had just signed a contract with another school. They asked where and I said, "California", and he said "Oh!" He was very disappointed, too. So two weeks later I was on my way to California.

I got in to Barstow late that night, slept in, and left for Edwards about 1:30 in the afternoon. I couldn't believe the heat (105 degrees) and the dryness and desolation of the desert. I grew up in Ohio, and thought Colorado was dry but nothing like this. I kept thinking I must be going to the Tehachapi Mountains I could see in the distance - it can't be here! Nobody could live here. I saw the sign for the north gate and thought it was a mistake. After driving several more miles, I decided I better turn back and, sure enough, this was Edwards! I never intended to become a teacher and California was the last place I wanted to live, and here I was. After a couple of years of teaching the janitors told me that if you're here more than three years, you'll be here forever. Pretty much true. I stayed - and the fourth year here, I met Janet, and I've come to enjoy the desert!



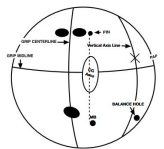
Mr. Winters in Auto Shop at Desert High School about 1970.



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2020 was a hard year for many individuals and businesses. The Kern Antelope Historical Society will be paying tribute to many Rosamond businesses, whether they are members or not, in the next months. A KAHS member will be going around and talking to owners or managers and getting a little history of the business, and a photograph if possible, to help us promote Rosamond commerce and trade. We hope you will help support our local entrepreneurs and enjoy these bits of Rosamond history.

For January, our featured business is Karl's Hardware, located at 2700 Diamond St. Eric Landsgaard purchased the business from his parents, Art and Marion Landsgaard, in 2001, making this his twentieth year as owner. When asked what brought them to this area Eric explained that his dad had retired from the Air Force and was working at JPL in Pasadena. Then he went to work at Edwards Air Force Base and the family relocated to Rosamond. The original Karl's Hardware was located across the street in the small building. Art Johnson originally owned the hardware store and sold it to Joe Karl. Art and Marion Landsgaard bought the store in 1978 or '79. Next, Mr. Landsgaard moved the hardware store into its present location, which was originally just the store site, but it has expanded over the years and each section has its own history. The main building was a Western Auto, where they changed tires. The hooks for that activity are still on the walls in the knife department. At the key location next door, Jerry and Skip Williams operated the kegger clinic. Kegler is the art of fitting and drilling bowling balls. Eric related that his folks originally bought the hardware store for the eleven children to learn a work ethic. The tradition continues with Eric and



Debbie Landsgaards' children – all twelve of them have worked in the store. And what does Eric do for fun? He likes to play play golf if he gets a free moment.



A Bit of Rosamond Trivia: It's interesting that at one time there was a bowling alley in Rosamond which drew people from all over the valley.
"Juanita's Indian Lodge (now the Zebra Club) - Originally the Hamilton Hotel. In 1942 it was called Juanita's Bowling Alley. Wives of the bowlers manned the pins. Popular place with service men as Juanita let them use the phone, Local miners bowled here also." (<http://www.rosamondca.us/>)



CORRECTION: In the December issue, the caption regarding the Wayside Cafe's origin as the Post Office in Rosamond incorrectly identified the man in front as Mr. Vial, but the picture is of Bill O'Neill, a subsequent postmaster.

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 also available. *Glimpse of the Prehistory of Antelope Valley*, by Stuart Glennan, is described as "Archaeological Investigations at the Sweetser site".



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We hope you will support them and say thanks when you see them.

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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 1255
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

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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 - ***temporarily postponed!***
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