



Antelope Horn

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



The following article is from In Love With Life in LANCASTER, HARD TIMES 1927-1932, by Grace Graham Pickus, which is one of our KAHS books available for purchase. Grace and her husband Arthur Pickus were long-time valley residents. She has a great way of describing events here in the Antelope Valley, during the depression. In a previous Antelope Horn article, she described her family's move in greater detail starting with the loss of the red clover seed crop, taken from another KAHS book - Antelope Valley News and Views during the Great Depression 1925-1935. In this and future articles to be shared, she describes life here through the eyes of a young lady, making the best of the hard times they experienced. And while her book is about life in Lancaster, it would have been pretty much the same for other communities in the Antelope Valley. Also, a number of the people she mentions were in the Kern Antelope Historical Society.

In Love With Life in LANCASTER , HARD TIMES 1927-1932

AUTHOR'S NOTE - 1982

The Introduction and the first twelve chapters of this "memory trip" were written between 1974 and 1976 as one of my Bicentennial projects. Many things in the town of Lancaster have changed since then – the town became a City in November 1977 with mayor, and council and master plan. A few people about whom I have written, and some who helped me with information, are dead now; but as Jean Paul Richter wrote, "Each departed friend is a magnet that attracts us to the next world."

Recalling those essentially happy days of my girlhood I agree with John Ciardi who contends that, "There is no happiness except we take on life-engaging difficulties. The mortal flaw in the advertised version of happiness is in the fact that it purports to be effortless. We demand difficulty even in our games. Without difficulty there can be no game. A game is a way of making something hard for the fun of it. The fun is in winning within the rules. No difficulty, no fun."

Depression days were no game; life for many people at that time was desperately hard, a time of hunger and fear and despair; but I do not remember it that way. It was not that way for us partly because of our parents' attitudes and partly because we lived





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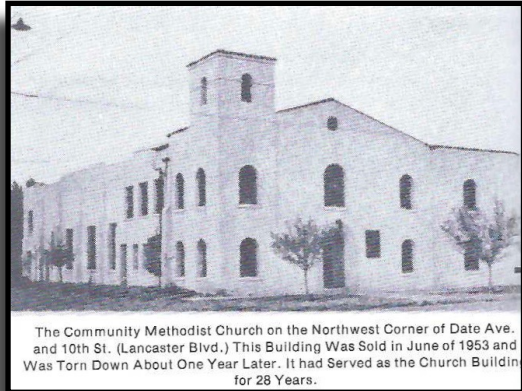
in Lancaster – a place of friendliness and high expectations. As I near the allotted earthly span of three-score years and ten, I am still in love with life in Lancaster!

INTRODUCTION

Written in 1976 – The Bicentennial Year

Lancaster in 1927 was probably a very typical small western desert town, but somehow it has always been very special to me. It was an oasis within an oasis, a neat town in a pleasant valley. The Chamber of Commerce for awhile used the appropriate phrase, “The Heart of Antelope Valley.” The “hart” for which the Valley was named had disappeared; however, even then one would occasionally hear it said that a few antelope had been sighted “a year or so ago” in the Tehachapi foothills.

Our town had the usual highway, recently paved, the customary railroad line with the wooden water tank to service the huge steam locomotives; the great silver water tank on the sturdy tower; and a hardy cluster of business establishments. But as always, the real tone of the town was set by the people – the friendliness of the neighbors, the helpfulness of the merchants and the character of the teachers and leaders. These qualities shape the younger generation and develop in them feelings of stability and worth.



The Community Methodist Church on the Northwest Corner of Date Ave. and 10th St. (Lancaster Blvd.) This Building Was Sold in June of 1953 and Was Torn Down About One Year Later. It had Served as the Church Building for 28 Years.

Small towns have been the birthplace and the seedbed of many great figures. It was the steady stable influence of the rural areas and the friendly towns of this land which nourished a generation of Americans which weathered a devastating Depression and still had the character reserves to gear up to win a war that changed the world.

In Lancaster we had our “cultural events;” because they mostly centered around the schools and churches, they were our spiritual and mental fields of achievement and pleasure. The physical fields were also very much closer to Lancaster then. Alfalfa ranches were as close as Steamboat Bill’s place on 10th Street East and Marble’s Dairy on 10th Street West. As we drove by these emerald fields in the summer heat, the fresh cool breeze sweeping over them lowered the temperature and delighted the eyes and the nose with the smell of growth and greenness.

The town proper was really very small; as you came in from the north at Sierra Madre Road (Avenue I), you found Wilda and Griffith’s Service Station. Clustered nearby were cabins available for travelers or short time visitors “to rent by day or week.” At the very south end of town on the corner of 15th (Avenue J) and Antelope Avenue (Sierra Highway) Burchfield’s Richfield Station offered the gasoline and the cabins to those passing through. There were many who did go through on their way to the Great Central Valleys. In fact, the fertile California valleys – the Sacramento, the San Joaquin, the Coachella, and the Imperial – were magnets for a great army of migrants whose search for work away from their ruined homes in the dust-devastated states was celebrated in the song, “Hey Okie, If you See Arkie, Tell Him Tex Has Got a Job For Him Out in Cali-forn-i-a.” You could say this book is my song about those days!

Only those who have no future live in the past, but each of us has a past and this time-gone-by has helped to make us what we are. I love life and have great hopes for the future, but I am glad I do not have to give up my memories of the times, good and bad, covered by this book.

The Great Depression of the 30’s started for some people about 1927 when small farmers (my father among them) found that due to some unforeseen chance or change, they could not meet the house payment of the mortgage on the farm or family business as they had expected to be able to do. This may have been due to a lost crop of red clover seed in the rainy fall of 1926 as it was with my family in Illinois. It may have been because the selling price of hogs was less than the price of they corn they ate. It may have been loss of a job in the mines or buggy and wagon factories or any one of a hundred



Advertisement for farm workers; <https://footnote.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2020/08/27/dust-bowl-refugees-08-28-2020/>



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factors which bring on hard times, but the Depression snowball had started to roll, and the unwieldy mass of it gathered momentum for several years.

In 1929 this giant snowball rolled, as it were, into the shaded cold north side of our national house and it remained there for a decade as the winds blew dust from the dust bowl and the living human refuse was buffeted about the country. Perhaps it started to melt a bit when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was installed as President and set up his work programs, but the dirty cold core remained until the war in Europe was underway and our country was starting to respond to the call to help support (arm) the Allies against the aggression of Hitler and Mussolini.

During that span of years, many of us living day to day in depression conditions found ways to get along. When Burney Starksen, who had the Chevrolet garage in Lancaster, went out to collect on a past-due bill, he might come back with a couple of field boxes of apples. That week his help would take some apples as part of their pay. If George Bright got a job painting the front room for Gladys Settle (Mrs. William Settle, Sr.), he might well have been allowed a comparable amount of credit at her husband Bill's grocery store. Those who worked in the Littlerock packing sheds often took a box or two of fruit as part of their pay. In this way, the merchant and the grower could dispose of their produce and goods, and the worker would have food and other needed items in the house.

There was a kind of pride here – pride that one could meet his obligations, pride that a person was able to provide for his family. No one seemed too proud to do odd jobs or hard jobs or dirty jobs. During the Depression, people were just proud to have work. Not long ago, I heard the wife of a young man who had been out of work for four months say that she was afraid they were going to have to give up their home and move. He had been offered a \$15,000 a year job, but would not accept it because on his last job he had been getting \$23,000. That was a queer kind of logic and a strange kind of pride in my estimation.

Arthur and I were engaged for one year before he was old enough for us to get married. One June night before we were married in August, we moved 35 telephone poles for Buddy Goodrich from a lot near his telephone office on North Beech Avenue to his ranch east of town. We had to do it at night as the truck we borrowed was in use during the day. We could haul only seven poles at a time as that was as high as we could lift and load them by hand. Together we lifted and loaded and sweated and unloaded. We rested as we drove out to the ranch and back to town. We made five trips and collected \$30.00 for five hours' hard work, and we were proud and happy to do it.

With part of that money, \$8.00 of it to be exact, we bought our plated silverware at J. C. Penney's. The set would have cost \$12.00 but there was one fork missing and the manager let us have it at a bargain. I have liked finding a bargain ever since. It seems to me that life is a beautiful bargain. Just see what satisfaction you get when you are willing to give some work and interested attention to the people and events around you. This book is an attempt to help you see how I saw it then.



Although after the depression, this photo shows: "Two women agricultural workers packing pears in Littlerock, Calif., 1946". Changing Times: Los Angeles in Photographs, 1920-1990. UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library. 1946. Archived from the original on 2012-07-16. Retrieved 2009-07-10.



Note: '21-'22 Elections:

Elections are held in April so it turns out that you still have an opportunity to enter your name for any office if you choose. Please notify me by **March 20th** - see contact info at right!

2021-22 Slate of Officers

The following people have been nominated for the 2021-22 term of office. If you are interested in running for one of these positions, please contact me (info@kahs1959.org) by March 20th so that your name may be added to the ballot and posted in the March newsletter.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <u>President</u> - Gretchen Winfrey | <u>Directors-at-Large:</u> |
| <u>Vice President</u> - Delores Julian | Terry Landsiedel |
| <u>Secretary</u> - Janet Winters | Joe Pauley |
| <u>Treasurer</u> - Kelly Gonzales | Chavonne Sladek |



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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.

Our featured business for March is **Auto Pros II, owned and operated by Mario Gutierrez.** It all started in February of 1984 when Mario and his brother Rudy opened Auto Pros on Covington in Lancaster. Then in August, Mario opened Auto Pros II, here in Rosamond at 1475 Sierra Highway. He was only 25 years old at the time. Mario said he wanted to remain in Rosamond so he would be close to where his kids were attending school in order to make it to all their functions.

Through the years, working on cars has changed a lot because of all the electronics. They are now computer techs, not just mechanics. But Mario says "many customers still bring their hot rods in for repairs".



Mario learned mechanics from his dad who did tractor repair and construction on many local farms and ranches. At the age of ten, Mario rebuilt his first 283 cu in engine and drove a '55 Chevy (with a concocted seat so he could reach the pedals) on the Calandri farm so he could bring his dad lunch. Also, Mario and his children enlarged their original 890 sq. ft. home with an additional 1490 sq. ft. It was truly a family project as his wife, Cathy, drew up the blue prints, which the county approved!



For fun, the Gutierrez family started going to Lake Powell each July and renting a houseboat. It was the only month when there was no school, of course, and no sports or band camp. Now their vacations are scheduled to carry on this tradition with his seven kids, their spouses and 15 grandkids.

Auto Pros II has been a business member of the Kern Antelope Historical Society for many years. I hope you will show your support for another local business. Let them know you read about them in the newsletter when you visit.

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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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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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

Executive Board

Officers:

President: Gretchen Winfrey winfrey3314@yahoo.com
Vice President: Delores Julian ddjulirosa@yahoo.com
Secretary: Janet Winters poppiesrme@gmail.com
Treasurer: Terry Landsiedel visitrosamond@gmail.com
Directors At-Large:
Joe Pauley
Chavonne Sladek
Frances Thompson

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