

# Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.

Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies

PO Box 1255 Rosamond, CA 93560

May, 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/

MAY 31, 2021



You will find more information about the day we honor those who have died in service to our country elsewhere in this newsletter. Hopefully, you can find a way to to "Remember and Honor" those who gave their lives for our freedom on May 31, this year.

The following article is from In Love With Life in LANCASTER, HARD TIMES 1927-1932, by Grace Graham Pickus, one of our KAHS books available for purchase. Grace and her husband Arthur Pickus were long-time valley residents. In Chapter Two, Grace recalls the day her parents and siblings 'raced' into town (at forty miles an hour) on **Memorial Day** (May 30, 1927), known as **Decoration Day**, back then. Editor's notes are in italics and indicated by "jlw's note:" in parentheses.

# CHAPTER 2 ARRIVING, SETTLING IN, HAVING FUN

We Grahams sloshed away from a rain-soaked farm in Illinois about the middle of May 1927. We came camping half-way across the continent, seven people and a dog in a 1918 Model T Ford and a 1923 Chevrolet touring car. There were no motels then, although occasionally a gasoline station would have "cabins" around in back to rent to travelers. We had reached our destination on Memorial Day. What rich excitement to race at 40 miles an hour down the recently completed narrow concrete ribbon from Mojave into Lancaster. The formal celebration of that sweetly solemn day was over, but in a sense, our life in California ever since that day has been a kind of celebration; a celebration of sunshine and mountain and sea, of fruit and family, of learning and growth, a celebration of life.

It is interesting to learn there were other oldtimers who arrived in Lancaster on a national holiday. Ethel Oman and her two little daughters, Marjorie and Jean, as well as our family of seven all arrived to swell "Nearing the End of a Two Thousand Mile Trip, Dirty and Tired But Still Going Strong." Illustrated by John Burgess





the population of Lancaster on Memorial Day, May 30, 1927. The town may have numbered 2,000 people at that time.

Dr. Homer Rowell told me yesterday (February 22, 1974) that he was celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their coming to Lancaster. (*jlw's note: Many readers will recognize Feb. 22 as Washington's birthday, but younger readers – not so much, since his birthday is now only celebrated as part of President's Day, on a Monday in February.*) Homer's father, Maurice Rowell, had arrived here in January of 1924 to become principal of the young and growing Antelope Valley High School. As Homer said, "Mother and we boys came to join him on Washington's Birthday." It was a great shock and tragedy to the whole community when Principal Rowell died suddenly during the 1928-1929 school year. Miss Lois Bennink came to take over the office of Principal.

Katherine Nichlos mentioned recently that she and Joe and their two children (Gwenyth and Jimmie) had arrived in Lancaster on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1930. Gwenyth (who was my sister Dorothy's good friend) married Homer's brother Robert Rowell. And here I am going to suggest that it is not only good manners but good face-saving insurance as well to refrain from snide remarks about anyone to anyone in Lancaster. One is apt to find to one's dismay that one is talking to the subject's relative, or a relative of a relative, or at least a dear friend.

Let me digress here to tell you how one young lady learned that important little lesson. About the first place we went, after we located a grocery store, was to the Community Methodist Church on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Street (now Lancaster Blvd.) and Date Avenue. It was just one block from our new home at 912 Date Avenue. We had been brought up in the Presbyterian Church in Ipava, Illinois but in this valley the Presbyterian Church had been allocated to Palmdale, the Methodist to Lancaster, and the Congregationalists had the Protestant Church in Mojave. This had been decided and agreed upon by the Sunday School Alliance of Los Angeles so that such small communities might later develop a strong church with a sizable membership. In Illinois we were used to going to church and Sunday School, so it was a natural thing to do. Besides, you meet the nicest people there.

Now there were, in our newly-found group of church young people, several multiple-sibling participants; or to put it another way, within the church there were several families which had three children of the right age to attend Epworth League, where my older sister and brother and I found a happy fellowship. There were three boys in the Fuller family so a girl, blond, well-rounded and lively, would usually find one of them coming to sit with her if she was foresighted enough to have an empty seat beside her.

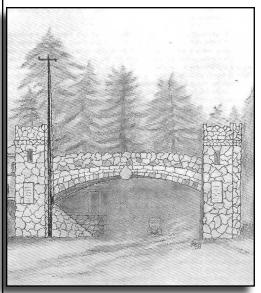
This particular summer Sunday evening, Henry Fuller and I were sitting on the center aisle watching the members of the congregation assemble. While I had gotten acquainted with most of the kids, many of the older people were strangers to me. A middle-aged man came in and saw down a few rows ahead of us on the other side of the aisle. He planted one foot in the aisle and it was a very long foot. In fact I had never seen such a long foot on anyone, so I leaned over to Henry and whispered, "Look at that foot. Did you ever see a man with such long feet?" Henry looked at me in a rather strange way and whispered back, "That's my father." There was little more to be said then, but both Henry and I laughed about it 45 years later.

For the next four or five years we three oldest Graham kids - Madge, Francis and I – had a great group of young people to do things with. Besides the Fullers, Ed, Henry and Judson, there were the three Griffin boys, Frederick, Morris and Gordon; the three Kitchens, Lorraine, Floyd and Hazel; three Savages, Catherine, Henry and Ed; my Rauch cousins, Arthur, George and Paul; and the three Pickus boys, Fredrick, Carl and Arthur. Joel Umsted, Neil Bowser, Chester Wycoff and Paul McClaughry and his sister Kathryn also took part in the church activities pretty regularly. Winifred Huff had come to town in 1927 and shortly after, her folks built a new house three doors south of us on Date Avenue. Other girls in the group were Virginia Furnas, Bernice Lindner and in 1929, Sarah Clark, who is now Mrs. Chester Sinn. Also we had Astrid Olsen, whose sister Blanch (Mrs. Len Lydecker) still lives in Lancaster; Nellie Brittain who also lives in town wither her husband, Harold Parker; and Lottie Lyon who married Morris Griffin. (They continued to run Griffin and Sons Hardware in Lancaster for more than four decades.) When you count Lottie's cousins – Thelma and Ruth Lyon – and Bertha Pendley you can see why there were always several "odd" fellows running around with our gang and they, of course, added to the excitement and fun.

In the winter we drove up to Big Pines for fun in the snow. For several winters in 1928, '29, '30, and '31 as I remember, Los Angeles County maintained a fine recreation area where, besides skating, we could rent a toboggan and take our turn on the snow-packed toboggan run. A ranger saw that all arms and legs were curled around someone else on the toboggan before he let us fly down the chute with breath-taking speed.

When we were ready to dry out and warm up, we could clump into the great rustic lodge building. It was at the top of the pass just inside the massive stone walkway, which arched over the road. This handsome arch used to grace the entryway to the "facilities," restaurant, post office, gas pumps and the lodge. Two huge stone fireplaces, one at each end of the lodge, would be





"The Davidson Arch Over The Entrance to tThe Facilities of the Los Angeles County Park at Big Pines."

Illustrated by John Burgess

filled with blazing pine logs; the rustic chairs and benches would be filled with drying-out kids, and the air would be filled with the smell of wet wool and wood smoke.

We kids from Illinois never ceased to be amazed at how warm it could be in the snow. In Illinois when we went out to slide down hill we wore coats and scarves and mittens and overshoes; then we'd go in and take turns standing on the coal furnace register for half an hour or so, trying to warm up before we went to bed. But in California it was so warm and bright one could easily get sunburned playing in the snow in shirtsleeves. How wonderful.

We had discovered Big Pines soon after our arrival in the Valley. My parents loved this nearby forest retreat for Sunday afternoon cookouts with the family. We would fry pork chops or bacon and potatoes and finish up with cake or cookies and fresh fruit. The drive home around the many curves in the early darkness would enable us to point out the small cluster of lights, which represented Lancaster and the even smaller group, which pinpointed the town of Palmdale.

Our congenial church kids usually had a 4<sup>th</sup> of July party – swimming and eats and fireworks. One 4<sup>th</sup> we gathered at the George Amos Ranch (he raised potatoes and alfalfa) and after swimming in the ranch reservoir and having a weiner [*sic*] roast, we were ready for the fireworks display. Fred and Morris Griffin were to set them off. They had the whole box of incendiaries right at hand, so as soon as one rocket went up the chute with a colorful hiss, another could be set in place quickly. They fired some pinwheels and, as we watched in anticipation, set fire to the fuse of

No. 1 rocket. It sputtered and took off with a great shower of sparks, right into the big box of fireworks. Morris grabbed, but too late; rockets and fountains and fire-snakes and eruptions were everywhere and everyone ran for safety. We ducked behind trees and cars while the night was filled with \$20.00 worth of fireworks all at once. In Depression days \$20.00 worth of fireworks running wild could "scare the livin' daylights" out of anyone. The display was over in a hurry but the excitement lasted for quite awhile.

Halloween parties were fun too. One of the best that I remember was in George and Myrtie Webber's big old red barn on North Cedar Avenue. It had been used as a livery stable by Western Hotel guests when horses were the principal power source for

travel. For this party we went to a lot of work to make it spooky. I thought it was scary enough without any extra effort, but some of the boys fixed it up so that all who came to the party had to climb a little ladder and slide down onto some old bed springs which they had hooked up to a T Ford coil and battery. The resulting shock got everyone off to a flying start! After that you were to follow a string with one hand and use the other to ward off bats. Well, not really, but you felt you might need to defend yourself from something, as strange and awful sounds came from all the dark corners. You encountered a ghost who offered you a handshake with a kid glove stuffed with sawdust and dipped in ice water; you met a devil who gave you a slice of raw liver to take home for a midnight snack; you

brushed against the wing of some wild creature that screamed at you; and you came upon a long box where a shrunken figure in black sat crying loudly. It was awful!

You could hardly settle down enough to eat the doughnuts and cider the refreshment committee served later. But as you took a little



Photo from the Webb Family photos of a reservoir on Grandpa Olsen's alfalfa ranch on Ave A. I think the swimmers include my dad & mom, an aunt & uncle and a couple of friends from 'down below'; country folks know the joy of cooling off in a nice big reservoir!



something to eat to calm your nerves, you circulated among your friends to see who was dressed how, for this masquerade. One time I dressed as a grand lady in my mother's "going-away" wedding suit, which she had carefully preserved and brought to Lancaster with us in the big black box Dad had made to fit the rear of the Chevrolet touring car. It, along with the Model T, were the two vehicles, which brought us and most of our worldly goods to California. Mother's suit was a beautiful blue-striped wool two-piece, with the fitted jacket lined with white satin. Why she ever let us abuse here special treasure like that, I'll never know. I still have the sadly moth-eaten skirt neatly cleaned and pressed in our front closet, but the stylish jacket is long gone.

# **Memorial Day History**

Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day should be observed on May 30. It is believed that date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

The first large observance was held that year at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Various Washington officials, including Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, presided over the ceremonies. After speeches, children from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home and members of the GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation. State legislatures passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities.

It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, as were some other federal holidays.

Gen. Logan's order for his posts to decorate graves in 1868 "with the choicest flowers of springtime" urged: "We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. ... Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic."

The crowd attending the first Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery was approximately the same size as those that attend today's observance, about 5,000 people. Then, as now, small American flags were placed on each grave — a tradition followed at many national cemeteries today. In recent years, the custom has grown in many families to decorate the graves of all departed loved ones.

To ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed and the president signed into law "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," P.L. 106-579, creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission's charter is to "encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity" by encouraging and coordinating commemorations in the United States of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada states: "It's a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day."

Excerpts from: https://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/memday/history.asp

### Things not to do on Memorial Day:

- Don't wish anyone a "Happy Memorial Day", this is not Christmas, it was not founded in joy.
- Don't thank the current troops.
- Don't forget Memorial Day exists.
- Don't let politics keep you from rendering respect.





The last year has been hard for many individuals and businesses. The Kern Antelope Historical Society is 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.

This month, our featured business is Ramon's, owned by Roberto Lopez. His parents, Ramon and Lupe, opened the business in May of 1984. They had been living in Palmdale. They saw a need for restaurants in Rosamond and decided to open one here. Ramon had worked for El Toreo in Palmdale and took his eight-year-old son, Roberto, to work with him on the weekends. Roberto started out washing dishes. This made him more responsible. He enjoyed having his own money. He bought his own bikes and toys. He was fourteen years old when his folks opened Ramon's. Originally they were located next to the Player's Club, but eventually moved to 1431 W Rosamond Blvd, Ste. 9, here in Rosamond. At one time each of his brothers also had restaurants, one in Lancaster and one in California City, but they have each gone in to other work now. The original restaurant held only about thirty to thirty-five people, while the new location holds eighty-five people.

Roberto's two daughters help in the business. Janeth, who is eighteen years old and works two to three days a week in the family business and, also, attends Antelope Valley College, is looking to go



Nice to see Ramon's smile, even with the mask!

into dental work. Claire is twenty-two years old and works at Ramon's a couple of times a month, as well as working full-time at Northrop. When asked something people might not know about him, Roberto answered that he values spending time with his family – "the important thing in life." He spends time with them on the weekends and days off. As a family, they like to go out to eat and his kids love to go for . . . sushi!



Another YouTube Video: Our latest KAHS video is now available. Chavonne has interviewed Terry Burton, relative of the Burtons of Tropico Mine & Mill. In this interesting video, Terry shares photos of the milling process when Tropico was re-opened and operating under lease to the Edco Mining Company. Watch for this unique description of the gold and silver milling process used at Tropico.

https://youtu.be/JEUBy9A2kGw Copy & paste this link into your browser or you can click on this link if you are reading the newsletter in your email.

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".





### 2021-22 Election of Officers

We are pleased to announce that the slate of officers and board members for the 2021-22 year was approved. Thank you to all who responded by email or regular mail.

<u>President</u> - Gretchen Winfrey <u>Vice President</u> - Delores Julian <u>Secretary</u> - Janet Winters

<u>Treasurer</u> - Kelly Gonzalez

Directors-at-Large:

Terry Landsiedel Joe Pauley Chavonne Sladek

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS Please note: the club year is June 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31st of the following year. <u>Membership payments are due June 1st</u>. You can make a check, payable to Kern Antelope Historical Society and mail it, along with the coupon below to:

Kern Antelope Historical Society
PO Box 1255
Rosamond, CA 93560
You may also pay using Zelle!

# How to Pay your KAHS Membership Dues with Zelle®



- 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.

#### KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY Mail to: Kern Antelope Historical Society PO Box 1255 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Rosamond, CA 93560 MEMBERSHIP TYPE Date Type Dues Student & Military Name \$5 Address Individual \$15 City, ST, Zip Couple \$20 Phone Number Family \$30 **Business** \$35 E-mail Club Year - June 1st through May 31st



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

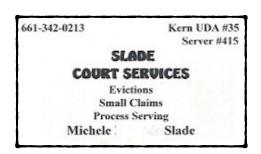




















## For Sale by KAHS

#### 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

<u>Video DVD - \$15</u>: Antelope Valley Yesteryears <u>Maps - \$4 (\*\$3)</u>: 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
Vice President: Delores Julian
Secretary: Janet Winters
Treasurer: Terry Landsiedel
winfrey3314@yahoo.com
ddjulirosa@yahoo.com
poppiesrme@gmail.com
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