



Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
March, 2024

Meetings:

Regular Meetings:

- 2nd Thursday of the month (except July, August); 5:30 pm.
- Rosamond Public Library -
3611 Rosamond Blvd, Rosamond, CA

Board Meetings:

- 4th Thursday of the month as needed;
4 pm; all are welcome, email for
directions to location.

Hello to all our Kern Antelope Historical Society Members and Friends.

- ❖ **What: Regular Meeting**
 - ❖ **When: Thursday, February 14th (2nd Thursday)**
 - ❖ **Time: 5:30 pm**
 - ❖ **Where: Rosamond Public Library, Rosamond, CA**
 - ❖ **Speaker: Margaret Rhyne, accompanied by Lynn DuPratt, presenting: Jane Pinheiro - The "Great Poppy Lady"**
- WEBSITE:** www.kahs1959.org **EMAIL:** info@kahs1959.org
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/

Happy Saint Patrick's Day
greetings to you all with this
vintage card.



One of Jane Pinheiro's
many paintings

The KAHS is very pleased to welcome **Margaret Rhyne**, president of the Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Interpretive Association (PRMDIA) and long-time volunteer at the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, to our March meeting where she will be presenting information about one of Antelope Valley's great community supporters - Jane Pinheiro. Margaret is a local retired teacher who loves the Antelope Valley, especially the flowers and wildlife and enjoys volunteering at the Poppy Reserve where she can share her knowledge with, and gain inspiration from, visitors near and far. As PRMDIA president, Margaret has also done her share of working on community causes, such as working many hours to keep wind turbines from being installed adjacent to the Poppy Reserve where the giant structures, along with noise and shadow flicker, would have disturbed the peace and natural environment of the Reserve.

Margaret has gathered a lot of information about Jane Pinheiro, although she never knew Jane personally. So she has invited **Lynn DuPratt**, Secretary of PRMDIA and fellow Poppy Reserve volunteer, whose mother was a local artist and owned Crothers Fine Art Gallery, to come and share her perspective. Crothers' gallery displayed Jane Pinheiro's artwork along with that of many other well-known, local artists. Also, Lynn's mother oversaw the Art Department at the AV Fair for many years while Jane also worked in a number of AV Fair departments, including crafts, gems and minerals, ceramics, photography, fine arts and floriculture.

Be sure to mark your calendar so you won't miss this wonderful opportunity to learn more about "The Great Poppy Lady" - Jane Pinheiro, presented by Margaret Rhyne, along with Lynn DuPratt. The **KAHS meeting** is at the **Rosamond Library, Thursday, March 14, at 5:30 pm.**



Jane Pinheiro's self-portrait appears to be smiling down on Lynn DuPratt and Margaret Rhyne standing in front of several Pinheiro paintings; photo taken in the Jane Pinheiro gallery at the Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center located at the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.



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The Poppy Lady

Jane Pinheiro, born in Colorado, came to Pasadena, California at an early age. Her mother ran a boarding house where Jane met Joseph Pinheiro, one of the boarders. They married in 1930 and eventually came to the Antelope Valley. Early on, Jane became fascinated by the native plants and began sketching and painting them. As a self-taught artist her watercolors were so botanically correct that they have been used for identification purposes. She was known as "The Poppy Lady" and could often be seen out in the desert painting flowers. She called some flowers 'belly flowers - you had to be on your belly to see them.'

Besides her wildflower pictures for which she is known, she became involved in trying to protect the natural beauty of the desert and worked tirelessly to help establish a park to preserve the poppies (the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve), the Joshua trees (Saddleback Butte State Park) and at least eight other wildflower and wildlife sanctuaries in the Antelope Valley.

She also worked many years to support the Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival, organized what came to be the Antelope Valley Allied Arts Association and helped form the Antelope Valley Universalist Fellowship Church, of which she was a member.



As a follow-up to Gretchen's great presentation on the Rosamond Hotel (formerly the Hamilton Hotel). This article was recently shared with KAHS by Nancy Dees Lucas, niece of Juanita Dees.

The Dees Years 1930-1975

In 1928 Rayford Dees bought a Union service station in Mojave, but in 1929 a high wind blew the roof off of both the Dees' home and the gas station and Janie said "We are moving!" Rayford sold the Mojave station and bought several city lots in Rosamond. He also bought a vacant house from the railroad and had it moved onto one of the lots by placing telephone pole "rollers" under the structure and pulling it with a mule team. He then traded all of the remaining lots for the Gold Quartz Hotel (Rosamond Hotel at that time). Rayford also leased a garage just down the street from the hotel which was owned by the Webb Family.

The Hotel was a majestic two-story structure constructed of cement, plaster and white quartz rock from Tropic and steel mining cable for reinforcement. It dwarfed all structures present at the time and was quite a sight with the bright white stonework. There were five indoor fireplaces made of quartz and some had visible gold ore and the guests were encouraged "not to mine the fireplaces".

According to Noel's brother Jim, the Gold Quartz Hotel was a "cash cow" because the miners at Tropic Mine needed a place to live. Gold was selling for \$18 an ounce and the miners had money to spend. And the core pieces and parts of the Hotel are still in use today having survived a massive earthquake, a partial demolition and two attempts by arsonists to burn it down.

There are many stories of Juanita during prohibition, running bootleg liquor from Kern County down into Los Angeles. And if she had ever been caught, she was very attractive and could talk her way out of many a tough situation. She just had a way with men and one time she got a fellow to take her home in his plane, landing on the dry lake across from the hotel. And another time she sweet talked the engineer on the train to make an unscheduled stop in Rosamond, and let her off right across the street from the hotel.

At the same time that Rayford had the garage in 1931, he also set up a fireworks stand just below where the water tower for Rosamond is located now. He didn't sell all of his inventory, so he gave the town a free Fourth of July show by firing off every thing that was left.

But there were more fireworks to come. Ford Motor Company had decided to do an endurance run to show how well their new 1932 Ford V-8 could run. Famous race car driver Eddie Pullen and his crew drove the Ford 33,000 miles in 33 days, on a course through the Mojave Desert, and used Rosamond and Rayford's garage as their home base. According to news accounts, temperatures in Rosamond during the run reached as high as 114 degrees. Ford had to have a constant supply of gas for the endurance run and had a large supply stored in Rayford's garage.

But the fellow who was managing the gas supply was a smoker, and, well the rest is history. The garage was burned to the ground in minutes including two cars that were inside. Ford finished their test, but Rayford had lost his garage business. An account in the A.V. Ledger Gazette stated that, "A volunteer fire brigade fought successfully to keep the flames from spreading to adjacent buildings". "Mr Dees and R.J. Angell receiving painful burns."

Rayford was always looking ahead and was aware of the possibility of prohibition being repealed, so he started planning for a section of the hotel to be turned into a bar. And in December of 1933, the repeal came and the building was converted.

But the addition of liquor had its consequences. In 1934 when Noel was 16, Rayford was shot in the parking lot of the hotel by a stranger who was drunk. The bullet entered under his chin and lodged in his brain. The only hospital was in Tehachapi and they said there was nothing they could do to help him.

(cont'd, p3.)



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Before he died he wanted to go back to Oklahoma and see his family. Janie drove and took Noel and Eloise. Rayford had become somewhat deaf and blind from the wound and Janie had never driven up to this point. They had Rayford laid out in the back seat and there were mostly very bumpy dirt roads. Rayford lived long enough to see his family in Oklahoma, passed away and was buried August 22, 1934.

Janie had married Rayford at 13, which was not that uncommon at the time. She was only 14 when Juanita was born and a "much older" 24 when Noel was born.

After Rayford died, Janie decided she'd had enough of serving alcohol and running a bar. She had agreed to drop the charges against the man who had shot Rayford for a settlement of \$10,000, and in 1937 she sold out her equity in the bar and hotel to Juanita and took the settlement money and equity money and bought Walker Pass Lodge.

Juanita had opened a restaurant of her own in Rosamond but cashed out her business to assume ownership of the hotel. And just like her father, Juanita always had a plan and a keen sense of business and she packed a lot into her 71 years. She was a dancer and chorus girl, a Hollywood stunt double, and a business visionary. She had a charm and presence that attracted suitors from Hollywood elites to Edwards test pilots. She was always changing and adapting her business endeavors to match the times. She had a card room, dance hall, bar and lounge, pool hall and liquor store.

And in 1939 Juanita also opened the Antelope Valley's first bowling alley. The alley was a popular place with the servicemen from Muroc base (later Edwards) because Juanita allowed them the use of her phone to call their wives and girlfriends.

In 1932 Juanita and her friend Doreen Settle McNamee were working in the hotel and the cook's son came up from Los Angeles to help his mother in the kitchen, and come to find out he had smallpox and exposed Juanita and Doreen.

Juanita did not want word to get out about the smallpox or the whole hotel would have been quarantined and she had 6 miners living there at that time.

The ladies immediately went up to Tehachapi to a cabin at White Oaks Lodge. Noel, who was safe from the disease because he had been vaccinated, became their supplier of food and supplies. Juanita got bad blisters on her feet and could hardly walk. The man who ran the cabins knew something strange was going on at that cabin but never found out the reason.

Noel, who had no drivers license at the time, made his secret runs from the hotel to the cabin using a car belonging to a famous Hollywood stunt man, Billie Jones. Billie was a "close friend" with Juanita, and Noel remembered his car as a "very sharp roadster". He said every time Billie came up from Hollywood to Rosamond he was driving a different car.

Billie was an amazing and renowned silent film stunt man in the 1920's. He was the fellow in the chariot in the silent movie of Ben Hur. He would drive cars off a cliff and place his body on the floorboard (passenger side) and roll into a ball to ride it out. Juanita met Billie while she was also working as a stunt double and they became quite close and Billy was a regular visitor to the hotel's Gold Quartz Club, along with many Hollywood celebrities. And the Hotel was a favorite hangout for test pilots and military personnel from Muroc AFB, including Neil Armstrong. Zane Grey's fishing partner and boat captain, John Vitalich, was also a close friend of Juanita in the 40's, and they eventually married.

On December 7, 1941, Glen Settle's bowling team was practicing at the bowling alley and when Juanita brought the news, everyone at the alley gathered around the radio as the Antelope Valley learned of the attack at Pearl Harbor.

And in April of 1944 Juanita even hosted a special dinner for Charles Lindbergh and his wife and a number of Marine officers. Lindbergh was a consultant for the Vought Aircraft Division of United Aircraft Corporation. He had flown to Mojave in an F4U Corsair to have a conference with the officers regarding their Corsair operations.

In September of 1955, 17 test pilots met at a "Little Bar and Grill", in Rosamond California (Juanita's) to form the Society for Experimental Test Pilots (SETP).

In the 1960's Juanita wanted to travel so she leased out the operation of the building with the agreement that the leasing party was to buy the property. The folks who had the lease changed the name to the Player's Club and decided that all of the quartz stone work on the front needed to be demolished to add more parking. Noel was not able to locate Juanita for approval and the lessee was insistent and Noel assumed they were buying the property anyway so he gave the go-ahead in Juanita's absence and all of the front rock work was destroyed. And when Juanita returned she was furious, both with the lease holders and with Noel. This was not a good day for Noel. And she was equally furious when the deal to purchase the property fell through. Juanita regained operation of the property as the Player's Club.

And at this same time, while Juanita was away on her travels, she had met Joe Coe in Hawaii and they were married. Joe was an avid pool player and with his encouragement Juanita had the dance hall converted to a pool room in 1962.

In November of 1971 Juanita faced one of her hardest challenges with the property when arsonists destroyed the newly opened card room. Five fire units responded and controlled the fire but 25% of the 15,000 square foot structure was declared a loss with smoke and heat damage to the bar, restaurant, liquor store and dance hall.

Juanita was able to have all of the damage repaired and replaced in two months time and reopened in January of 1972. But the arsonists returned and cut a hole in the roof above the card room and used liquor from the bar to accelerate the flames. The loss to the building was the same as the first fire, but again a determined Juanita had the damage replaced and reopened for business, including the targeted card room.

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The arsonists were never caught but Juanita had opened her card room for legalized poker in direct competition to another nearby card room and that was always her suspicion that the fires were an attempt to stop her poker activities. 1975 Juanita decides it is finally time to retire from her many endeavors and sells the building but continued to live on the adjacent property until 1980 when she dies of cancer at the age of 71. She is survived by her husband Joe Coe. In 2020 Noel passes at the age of 101.

The Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center at the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve is open March 1st through Mother' Day, 9am to 5pm weekends and 10am to 4pm, daily.

Here are several links to help you find information about the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve opening date, hours, cost and, most importantly, how the flowers are doing.

- https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=627
https://www.prmia.org/
https://www.facebook.com/PRMDIA



New Members for 2023-2024 - We are very happy to have you join us.

- * Craig & Sherri Timm
* Gail Lofdahl & Martin O'Brian
* Dawn DiSomma
* Steve Sterk
* David Winfrey

Click on the link below for ALL the KAHS videos!



Check out the KAHS videos which are available on YouTube. Or visit the website for more information about Antelope Valley history. Copies of recent newsletters are available, as well as other information. Follow us on Facebook for reminders about meetings and other items of historical interest. You can always contact us by email.

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★ Email: info@kahs1959.org
★ KAHS YouTube Videos: http://kahs1959.org/Videos/videos.html



Kern Antelope Historical Society - Membership Application

Mail to: Kern Antelope Historical Society; PO Box 1255, Rosamond, CA 93560

Table with columns: Name, Mail Address, City, ST, Zip, Phone, Email, Date, Membership Type, Dues, Amount Paid. Rows include Student/Active Military, Individual, Couple, Family, Business.

Note: • Club Year is June 1st through May 31st of the following year; new members, paying after February 1st, pay only half.
• Zelle: info@kahs1959.org You may now use the following cell number for Zelle payments, also: (661) 609-8757.



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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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Books - \$11 (*\$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*

2022-2023 Executive Board

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Vice President: Delores Julian ddjulirosa@yahoo.com
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WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org **EMAIL:** info@kahs1959.org

General Meetings:

Second Thursday of the Month, September through June
5:30 pm - 3611 Rosamond Blvd, Rosamond, CA
(Exceptions: June, September & December -
Location to be announced)

Memberships:

\$5 - Student & Active 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