Meetings:

Regular Meetings: 2nd Thursday, monthly (except July & August).
Business Session: 5 pm, at the Wanda Kirk Library 3611 Rosamond Blvd., Rosamond, CA. All are welcome. Exceptions to this location will be announced in the newsletter and at our website.
Program: 5:30 pm, following the business session.

May Meeting - Officers for 2018-19 will be installed at this meeting. We are also very excited to have the film/photography students of Mr. Justin Armstrong from Rosamond High School who have been working on the history of Rosamond for their project. See page 3 for the "flyer" and be sure to invite your friends.

This article is copied from the KAHS book, Antelope Valley PIONEERS, and tells the story of Charles Graves, an early Rosamond resident, discoverer of gold, postmaster, and supporter of the school system among other things. Charles Graves left quite a legacy in our community and at this time of year with graduations coming up, I'm reminded that the Rosamond High School football field in named in his honor - Graves Field.

Charles Graves Family
By Chris Christopher

Charles Graves was born on February 26, 1856, on a Kentucky plantation, of slave parents, and was one of seven children. His father was killed during the Civil War. Charles was sent to another plantation to live with a cousin. He was not happy there away from his family. When the War was over in April, 1865, which resulted in the preservation of the Union, and the abolition of slavery, President Abraham Lincoln gave an amount of money to each slave. Charles took his money and traveled by walking and 'riding the rails.'

The S.P. train stopped for water and perhaps to leave the mail in the Mojave Desert at a place called Rosamond. Charles got off the train to stretch his legs and to look about. A few unpainted wooden houses lined the dirt roadway. Toward the ring of hills in the distance, he saw "filaree" grass as high as a cow's belly. Shade trees were plentiful. There had to be plenty of water. What a place to raise cattle, Charles thought.

He watched the train go down the track; then turned and walked the dirt road leading to the west, where water bubbled out of the ground from Artesian Wells; and made camp along side a colorful hill.

He filed a Desert Claim on the property which was located aside what we today call Tropico. He built a house, after ordering the lumber from Los Angeles, and had it shipped to Rosamond. He bought a start of a herd of cattle.

One day while herding cattle at the foot of the hills, he saw a rock with streaks of dull yellow. He pocketed it and went on with his work.
Charles knew the "yellow" in the stone was Free Gold. The site became the "Home Gold Mine."

In 1895, September 13, he was appointed Rosamond U.S. Postmaster. There was little mail and being on the go riding horseback, it was no problem to deliver the few letters. With the house completed, he had a good herd of cattle, a job and the gold mine. Charles felt he should look for a wife. He placed an advertisement in the newspaper. In 1900, he took the train to Kansas and married Cordia Anita Roberts, a normal school graduate and school teacher.
To them six children were born: Elizabeth, James, Charles, (who lived just one week) Katherine, Robert and Mary.

In the meantime, Charles did more prospecting and discovered more free gold on one of the middle buttes. He homesteaded 160 acres on Rosamond Boulevard which was then a dual rutted dirt road.

A document on display in the Tropico Mine Museum shows the inventory at the time the Postal duties were transferred from Graves to Ella B. Kenton on November 5, 1903.

More people were moving in and with children. Charles and Cordia talked about a school being needed. He contacted Kern County School System and learned a school had to be in operation at least one year before the System could use it.

In 1908, Charles built a one-room school house with an added room for the teacher’s living quarters. He hired a teacher and paid her wages for one year. The school house was located on the corner of Rosamond Boulevard and 35th Street. It is reported that Kern County built a school house on the site of the present Rosamond Elementary School in 1920. Pleasant Sutton, who had been the Postmaster between the years of 1888 and 1893, was the first teacher for the new school. Because of the distance only a few children attended. In order to keep the school going, Charles and Cordia sent James to school although he wasn’t school age.

Charles built a larger house on the Rosamond Boulevard property in 1912. Robert, Katherine and Mary were born in this house. It still remains today.

Several long-time residents recall Charles riding into town on his horse, usually singing. He made friends with everyone he met, yet he could be stern if need be. Reports are that Cordia was a gentle lady who worked along side her husband to bring growth and betterment into the town. She was a good mother and taught school when a teacher was not available.

Charles life ended on May 7, 1938 while in a Lancaster hospital. Internment was in a Los Angeles cemetery.

After the Rosamond High School was built in 1965 and the football field was completed, dedication ceremonies were held with top dignitaries being present, including Frank Pauly, president of Rosamond Chamber of Commerce and Jess Stockton, superintendent of Kern County Schools. Cordia Anita saw her husband honored posthumously in recognition of his devotion to education and for pioneering Rosamond schools.


Rosamond Grammar School in 1916-1917.

Front row: left is Caroll Webb.
Right is Katherine Graves.

Back row, left to right, second is James Graves, then teacher, Mrs. Hawkes, Alice Greenleaf*, Elizabeth Graves and Helen Converse.

* After high school graduation Alice Greenleaf would marry H. Clifford Burton of the Tropico mine Burtons.
Cataloging Workday - May 17th

If you are interested in looking at old things, maybe even dusty old things (pictures, documents, artifacts and such) make plans to join us May 17th at Gretchen’s Barn. Much of what belongs to the historical society has been stored at Gretchen’s and we are not even sure what all is in there. It could be very interesting to say the least. Contact Gretchen for directions - winfrey@qnet.com.

Bring a clipboard if you can, and pen or pencil, maybe some paper.

We will be starting at 9 am., Thursday, May 17th. Hope you can make it.
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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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”. We hope to be able to add other KAHS books in the future.
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.
Reminder: Elections of Officers at April Meeting

The Nominating Committee, headed by Delores Julian, announced the slate of officers to be voted on at the April General Meeting. They are listed here for your consideration, per the KAHS Bylaws.

- **President** - Gretchen Winfrey,
- **Vice President** - Delores Julian
- **Secretary** - Janet Winters
- **Treasurer** - Jo Kenngott

- **Directors-at-Large** - Chavonne Sladek, Dena DeCaprio & Richard Guethlein