



Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
PO Box 1255 Rosamond, CA 93560
November, 2022

Meetings:

Regular Meetings:

- 2nd Thursday of the month (except July, August); 5:30 pm.
- Wayside Chapel Community Church - 2584 Felsite Ave, 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: **Arthur Pratti, Guest Speaker**
- ★ When: **Thursday, November 10th** (Second Thursday as usual)
- ★ Time: **5:30 pm** (doors open at 5 pm.)
- ★ Location: **Wayside Chapel Breezeway**

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of KAHS.
WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org EMAIL: info@kahs1959.org
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/

Veterans Day

When first celebrated as Armistice Day, the day marked the end of World War I, formally recognized on the "11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month" in 1918. Today we continue to celebrate the day as **Veterans Day**, still recognizing the original tie with November 11. That means Veterans Day is on the same day every year -- November 11 -- regardless of which day of the week it falls on. When the date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, government officials or businesses may recognize it on both the official day and the following Monday.

In honor of Veterans Day, **we are happy to welcome Arthur Pratti as our guest speaker** at the November general meeting. He is the father of one of Rosamond's Fallen Heroes, Joseph Pratti. Mark it on your calendar for **the second Thursday of the month - November 10, 2022.**



Lance Corporal Joseph Pratti

Born in Tarzana in 1984, Joseph C. Lopez-Pratti graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Rosamond in June, 2002. In March, 2009, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, at San Diego, California. After graduation from the School of Infantry - West, Lance Corporal Lopez received the military occupational specialty of 0311, Rifleman. He was assigned to Company K, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines in September, 2009, where he served as a Fire Team Leader and was promoted to Private First Class., then Lance Corporal in May of 2010. His personal awards include the Purple Heart and Combat Action Ribbon. Lance Corporal Lopez is survived by his parents Arthur and Tracy Pratti and his brothers Richard, Christopher, Arthur Jr, and Anthony Lopez.

The Joseph Lopez-Pratti Memorial 5K was started to memorialize a local fallen hero but has grown to an annual event that donates 100 percent of its profits to the DarkHorse Lodge. The Dark Horse Lodge will be a 5-guest cabin retreat center located in Paris, TN to all combat veterans to come for rest, fishing and restoration. The Dark Horse Lodge is a project started by the parents of LCpl Alec Catherwood, who also lost his life alongside Joey in the Sangin Province of Afghanistan on October 14th, 2010.

(<https://m.facebook.com/Boysofthreefive/photos/lcpl-joseph-lopez-prattispeak-his-namelance-corporal-joseph-c-lopez-pratti-was-b/2144010455611910/>)

(<https://www.raceplace.com/events/114642/joseph-lopez-pratti-memorial-5k-run-walk-2022>)





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Family Remembrances

Recently, when my dad, George Webb, asked a question about some of his cousins and aunt and uncle (the Hand family), I got to looking for the Hand Family “REMINISCING” pages which I had printed out years ago, by Lowell Hand, the oldest son of Ross and Bert(ha) Hand. This family history was posted online some time ago. So glad one of the nephews posted it for all of us to read, and save. I knew that “Aunt Bert and Uncle Ross”, as my dad knew them, had lived in Lancaster at one time (years before we ever came here) but never thought more about it. When I was re-reading their history, I found it interesting that they came to Lancaster in the early 1920’s and Uncle Ross eventually had a grocery store on Lancaster Blvd. (known as 10th St. at that time) for about ten years.

The following recollections from R. Lowell Hand, Jr. tell of his parents moving the family to Lancaster and, also, describe what life was like, trying to earn a living in the early 1900’s. Eventually he describes events from the Depression era, also.

I have edited the story, sharing the parts that I feel would be the most interesting to our KAHS readers. I’m so glad that my Dad’s cousin, Lowell, recorded his family story and that one of his nephews, Gary Hand, saw fit to post this on a family website for a number of years. I also thank Gary for giving permission to share the story with our newsletter readers!

And if you have stories of your families coming to the Antelope Valley, we would love it if you would share with us. Written stories are great. Also, if you have an oral story you would like to share, we have a ‘video team’ (Chavonne, Gretchen and Mac) that would love to interview and record your family history. KAHS would also like to have you share at one of our meetings if you would be willing. And remember that one day, some of your family will be really happy you helped to preserve their stories too.

Notes italicized and in brackets [like this] have been added by jlw.

REMINISCING

Eighty Years About The Family Of Ross Lowell Hand, Sr.

By R. Lowell Hand, Jr

CHAPTER 5 - UPPER LAKE

During the years 1918 and 1919 a great flu epidemic caused many deaths in America but a strict quarantine kept it completely out of Sugar Pine. [Sugar Pine - near Yosemite National Park - was where the Hands had been living while Ross managed the company store for the Sugar Pine Lumber Company —jlw.] However, on the train, Mom became ill and we had to discontinue our journey at Ukiah. Dad rented a house and one by one we all came down with the flu. Dad got well first and went on to Upper Lake [in Lake County, CA—jlw] to get things started and to find a house. He came back several times in a Stutz roadster, a real heavy car they used for towing. Great-grandmother Johnson [my great-great-grandmother—jlw] died while we were there and Mom cried when she heard about it, the first time I ever saw my mother cry.

Finally we all got to Upper Lake but had to live in a little 3-room shack. At least there was a Methodist church adjacent to the house. There was no minister but we went to Sunday School and every Sunday we sang “Brighten the Corner Where You Are”. That was about the extent of our spiritual admonition. After a few weeks, a 2-bedroom house became available, and while there, brother Melvin was born at the Lake Port hospital, July 31, 1920. The Wehmeyer brother [This was the ‘brother’ of a machinist from Sugar Pine who suggested he and Ross form a partnership for a Dodge agency so they moved to Upper Lake in northern California—jlw.] lived on a farm a few miles east of Upper Lake and his wonderful wife took the three Hand children along with three of her own to stay on the farm until mom got home again [from the hospital]. It was about harvest time and the harvest crew went from farm to farm threshing out the wheat. The threshing machine ran from a steam tractor with a long belt to drive it. The days the crew was at Wehmeyer’s she had to cook for them and they could really eat. The Wehmeyers also had milk cows and a hand-cranked cream separator. She made butter from the cream and sold it. I started in the first grade in September at the age of seven less one month. Well Dad’s partner was a good mechanic when he was sober. This factor, together with the recession, and the fact that Dodge cars cost more than Fords meant things didn’t work out and soon the money was gone. We went on two meals a day and people gave us food. Every morning before school I would go down the road to a lady’s house to get free milk, mostly for Melvin, since she had a cow. One man gave us a sugar sack full of jerked venison. I got so I liked the stuff and would





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chew on a piece whenever I wanted a snack. That Christmas I got a comb which probably cost 5 cents. So Daddy had to arrange a way to get out of Upper Lake. As his share of what they had put into the business he took the new Dodge which was in stock and sold it to a school teacher for \$200 plus her old Saxon. I suppose the new Dodge was worth about \$650.00 in those days. On a dreary winter morning in 1921 we left in the rain for Bakersfield. We made about 55 miles by 9:00 pm and stayed in Cloverdale [northern Sonoma County-jlw] at a hotel. The road was being re-built between Ukiah and Cloverdale and we had to pick our way through the mud and red lanterns for miles. By the next night we had made 80 miles more to San Francisco Bay, and after dark we took a ferry from Sausalito to Berkeley and another ferry back across to San Francisco. The ferries were not permitted to operate directly across the rougher water of the Golden Gate channel. They sat low in the water and could easily swamp in rough water. They were also very unsafe because of their completely open interiors. We stood on the passenger deck and looked over the inside railing all the way down into the engine room. If they had ever caught fire, those old wooden ships would have been a terrible disaster. But they were sure exciting to watch. All the machinery was painted bright red with gold striping and polished brass. The steam engine turned paddle wheels at the sides of the boat and moved slowly with very little noise.



A 1914 Saxon - maybe Ross traded his new Dodge for one like this. Not sure of the model or year.

The next day as I recall we made it to Fresno and from there to Bakersfield over much better roads. We stayed with aunt Ola and Bill Hubbard and I attended first grade for two weeks. By then Dad had rounded up a job as manager of the Sell-Right Grocery in Lancaster, CA. Mom didn't want to move there but beggars can't be choosers.

CHAPTER 6 - UPPER LAKE AND LANCASTER

We came over the Tehachapi Pass in the snow and through deep sand just north of Lancaster. There just was no place to live so we stayed one night at the Lancaster Inn and then went "down home" to stay with Mom's parents, still in their old farm house. [This was at the old Ahlstrom farm in Florence, CA. It seemed to be where the Ahlstrom children gathered when possible as my dad recalls his parents spending many Sunday afternoons up at "Grandma Ahlstrom's, too—jlw.] I went to first grade with my cousin "Freddie" for several weeks. . . . About the end of



The Lancaster Inn about 1920.

March, 1921, Dad had rented a house. We called it the "yellow house" and it was right across the street from the Lancaster Grammar School where I finally finished the first grade. The "yellow house" wasn't too bad after we got rid of the bedbugs. It had two bedrooms, inside bathroom and a fireplace where we burned Joshua tree roots. They are rooted out when farmland is cleared around Lancaster. The family financial condition improved slightly and then one day Grandpa Ahlstrom came bringing a thousand dollar bill in an envelope which he handed to Mom. It was in lieu of one lot in his newly subdivided property at Florence. With the money for a down payment, the folks bought a three-bedroom house for \$3500. It was right on the main highway through Lancaster and, right across the highway, the Southern Pacific trains roared by at 60 miles per hour. But after a few weeks we got so the noise and ground shaking wasn't even noticed anymore.



Lowell must have attended the third Lancaster Grammar School which opened in 1914. Portions of the original building are still viewable on Cedar Avenue, a short walk from the Cedar Center. It is now managed by the Lancaster School District, serving as a warehouse on Cedar Ave.

through town at 9:00 pm sharp. [The OWL was SP's overnight train between Los Angeles and San Francisco/Oakland, which operated from the late 1800's and it's last run was in the 1960's—jlw.]



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Dad thought the owners of the store were dishonest in their business dealings and also charged too much for groceries. This meant that many people were buying groceries in the Los Angeles area and bringing their purchases home in their cars. He got together with brother Tom who wanted to get out of the foggy weather in Santa Paula. All the Hands are inclined toward sinus trouble. They borrowed \$7000.00 from Aunt Lula's aunt who was well-heeled [meaning well-off—jlw.] Then they offered to buy the Sell-Right store but were turned down.



1920 REO - although this one is sporting chains, it may have been similar to what the Hand Bros. had for their supplying their market.



*Haas, Baruch & Co., successor to Hellman, Haas & Co., SE corner of Los Angeles and Aliso St. c.1890s, and a forerunner company of Smart & Final.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellman,_Haas_%26_Co.*

So they opened Hand Brother's Grocery in a rented building recently vacated when Mr. Stege built a new meat market in town. They bought a new four cylinder REO "Speed Wagon" that would haul about 2 tons in a pinch. Uncle Tom went to market in Los Angeles 3 nights a week and brought back produce fresh from the farmers, a great improvement for Lancaster housewives.

The store prospered and, of course, they ordered groceries wholesale through Dad's old friend - the Haas-Baruch drummer. Groceries arrived by Red Line Express, a Lancaster trucking company. A new post office was built in Lancaster vacating the rest of the building so the store was enlarged and a warehouse was built at the back. Hand Brothers had six clerks plus Dad and Uncle Tom. They worked long hours, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, 5 days and until 9:00 PM on Saturday when all the farmers came to town. Soon there was enough money in the bank to pay off the \$7000.00 loan but Aunt Lula's aunt didn't want

to lose her good investment and Lula took her part. But Dad insisted they couldn't continue to pay interest on a loan they no longer needed. Also, Uncle Tom had hay fever on the desert and decided he would like to leave so, after more funds accumulated, Dad bought Uncle Tom out and his brother moved to Placerville.

[Additional notes of R. Lowell Hand not included in the original manuscript provided by Gary Hand: Lowell wrote that his dad, Ross, and his Uncle Tom "were successful and soon had to double the size of the store. (. . . Then Uncle Tom sold his share of the business to Dad. . .) There was Dad, Bill Settle (truck driver), a head clerk and about three others plus a delivery boy. In those days (1924-25) Linder bread was 10 cents, Bradford bread 12 cents/24 oz. loaf. Bananas 3lb./25 cents, cheddar cheese (cut from a 40 lb. wheel) 25 cent/lb. Dill pickles came in a large wooden barrel as did vinegar also. Dad sold to farmers in large quantities: 100 lbs. of sugar, Flour, Potatoes and also chicken feed. He accepted credit business and sometimes didn't get paid. Finally Dad built a warehouse on the back of the building and an evaporative (water) cooler behind that for storing fruit and vegetables."]

Mom also had a terrible time with hay fever, so we went to Port Hueneme several summers to stay in a small cabin Grandpa Ahlstrom had bought. We kids had a wonderful time watching ship(s) load lima beans and citrus fruit and lumber boats off-loading lumber at the pier. We walked for miles along the beach. I also pursued my interest in machinery. This time it was a steam pumping facility about a mile down the beach. Fuel oil, which came by tanker, was pumped to Oxnard where there was a large sugar mill. The pump operator took an interest in me because even at 10 years of age, I knew something about boilers, heaters and pumps. Typically some of the oil is atomized with live steam and blown into the boiler firebox. If you don't use enough steam the oil isn't sufficiently atomized and smoke comes out the smoke stack. But if too much steam is used, a "flame-out" occurs and the wet oil collects on the red hot clinkers and reignites with a bang which can crack up the fire brick. I discussed such things with the day man. Then one evening after supper I went down to the pump house and found a new man on the job. He was having flame-out problems and didn't seem to know why. I said, "Why don't you do something about that fire?" He thought I was just a cocky kid and said, "Well, why don't you fix it?" So I just went over and cut down on the steam valve a wee bit. He was really amazed and we became good friends.

Dad would come to Hueneme on the weekends with the truck and continue on Sunday night to the Los Angeles market then back to Lancaster with a load of produce for his store. Finally, on July 4, 1925, he moved the family to Burbank, California. After



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that, he was only home weekends right around the year. He would get to Burbank about 11:30 Saturday night and leave about 10:00 PM Sunday for the produce market and be back in Lancaster about 7:30 AM. That wasn't as far as going to Hueneme but even that pace couldn't be continued forever. Norris was born at the Burbank Hospital Nov. 26, 1925.

I had learned to drive the Model T delivery truck before we left Lancaster. I would go the back streets to Uncle Tom's house and Dad would come with the REO all packed with empty crates and gassed up, ready for Uncle Tom to leave when he got up about 9:00 PM. Then Dad would drive over to our house with the Ford. I was 11 years old. In Burbank I began to drive the REO trucks at age 13 as long as Dad was with me. During the school year I only got involved on Friday night and Saturday. By summer I was working full-time at age 14. One night I took Bert with me to market and we had to stop for a police inspection in Glendale. The policeman was just about to let me go on but looked again and said, "How old are you?" So I told him, "I'm just past 14 (the minimum age for a driver's license in those days). Then he wanted to see my driver's license and I said, "The truth is doc, I don't have one yet because I'm in Lancaster all week and can't get to Los Angeles in the daytime to get one." Well he wasn't there to hand out tickets so he grinned and said, "I could make it rough for you, so you get a license right away." Needless to say, I said "Thanks," and took off before he changed his mind. I would meet the other truck and Bill Litchfield, who drove it, and between us we would load 4 or 5 tons of produce on each truck and drive them back to Burbank. Dad would sleep until about 1:30 or 2:00 AM, meet us down at the boulevard and take my truck. Bill and I would take turns driving the other truck and be in Lancaster about 7:30 AM.

But that wasn't all. One day each week we made a trip to Randsburg, about 2 hours each way. There was soda pop to deliver on another day (Dad had the Coca Cola franchise). And one day we ran around the egg route picking up cases of eggs which we delivered to Glendale. So when I left home it was almost 24 hours before I got back.

In about 1929 the Continental stores decided to come to Lancaster. They wanted Dad's store but only offered to pay for his stock so he said no and they opened up down the block beyond the alley. Then Safeway decided to put stores in Palmdale, Lancaster, Mojave, Tehachapi, Randsburg, Lone Pine and Bishop. It looked like a price war might ensue so Dad sold to Safeway. They gave him a contract to supply produce for all these stores and he got a similar arrangement from Continental. Then he became the manager for the Continental store. That is when I was involved the most in driving. We had two 1928 model REO trucks, with 50 horsepower and two wheel brakes. They were not easy to drive with 4 or 5 tons on board.

CHAPTER 7 - COLLEGE - NEW YORK - MASSACHUSETTS AND BACK HOME

[Here are a few excerpts from Chapter 7 that also relate—j/w.]

I agreed to work, without pay, one trip on weekends during the school year and three trips a week in the summer when the produce business booms. Dad agreed to see me through college after I graduated from High School in 1931. Then came the stock market crash and the Great Depression of 1930 through 1937. In 1931 there were no other jobs available so I decided to start college and Dad bought me a '28 Chevrolet Coupe for \$250.00 and paid my first year's tuition of \$350.00 Cal-Tech would loan me money after that, if my grades stayed above average. So I continued to work for Dad in the summer of 1932 at a mine in Inyokern in which he had a 1/3 interest. I borrowed the money for the second year at college. Then I stayed out of school through 1933 because I got a job with Mother's Cookie Co. in Glendale and later a better job from my previous Sunday School teacher, Vard Wallace. He paid me 50 cents per hour to run machine tools. We made drafting machines which he invented. I was able to pay off my loan and considered giving up on getting an engineering degree. *[He did eventually finish college—j/w.]*

My first experience with machine tools came about from hanging around Mr. Black's blacksmith shop in Lancaster. I was about 10 years old. Mr Black was our neighbor and seemed to like me and I played with his grandson when he came to visit. A pump repair man occupied space in the front end of the blacksmith shop and I often watched him run his rather large lathe. One day he was making some long cuts on a sell casing and wanted to know if I thought I could watch his lathe while he went to get some cigarettes. So he watched me stop the carriage at the end of a cut, wind the carriage back and start another cut, then he took off. After that, he let me run the lathe quite often.

In the depression years Dad, like many others, had a bad time. He lost his manager's job at Continental and Safeway decided to take over their own produce supply. Everyone was cutting back and a third of the population was out of work. Prices dropped to



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the absolute minimum. Gasoline was 10 cents per gallon. A tire for my car was \$4.50. Sometimes I ate at the "Squeeze Inn"* in Lancaster, two hamburger patties on an open face bun with pink beans ladled over the top, 35 cents. [*See below.]

In 1914 someone had given me \$1.00 for my birthday and Mom started an account in my name at the Security Bank in Los Angeles. Over the years she encouraged me to add to it and I never drew anything out. But on Sept. 21, 1932, I drew out the whole account of \$48.27 and gave it to Mom to buy food. At today's prices that would be about \$750.00. I still have the little bank book and have been a Security Bank depositor for a long time. The recent merger with Bank of America is rather sad since I never knew them to make a mistake in my balance in all those years.

Dad sold his interest in the Inyokern mine for \$250.00 and moved to Burbank in 1932. His only job was as the time-keeper for the Burbank W.P.A. (Works Projects Administration). It was started by Pres. Roosevelt to give a little income to destitute Americans.

[Eventually Ross wound up with a job at the Dundee Egg Farms plant and found a small house to rent. As their sons were getting older they were helping to earn money on their own. Lowell says, "So with various jobs, our family squeezed through the depression years." jlw]

And a special thanks to Dayle DeBry for sharing information she found about the Hand family and old photos and map information!



"In 1929, Guy and Wava May Moore opened a restaurant, next to the Rendezvous Bar, on Antelope Avenue (present-day Sierra Highway) called The Squeeze Inn.

Patrons ate their ten-cent hamburgers on the only three stools that fit inside the tiny five-by-seven foot eating area. Once labeled "the world's smallest cafe" by Ripley's Believe It or Not, Guy would often sell and serve food to people waiting outside as even the door was too narrow to accommodate a large number of customers.

The Inn prospered and eventually grew to a ten-stool establishment with five employees."https://www.lancastermoah.org/single-post/av-diners

Annual Christmas Dinner

Mark **Thursday, December 8th**, on your calendar so you won't miss the **Annual Christmas Dinner**. Plans have not been finalized but are being worked out now. We always have lots of fun, along with a delicious meal, as we get together just to celebrate the season and visit with friends!



Welcome!

New Members for 2022-2023 – We are very happy to have you join us.

- Terry Burton
- Craig & Pam Roberts
- Craig Westfall

And welcome back to several members who have joined us again:

- Don Dyan
- David Kiefer
- Randy Scott

The Kern Antelope Historical Society was very sorry to learn of the passing of long-time member, Eunice Eisebraun in October of this year. Her smiling face was always a welcome sight at our meetings. She will be greatly missed.



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. And check out the KAHS videos which are available on YouTube.

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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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Kern Antelope Historical Society - Membership Application

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

	Type of Membership:	Dues:	Amount Paid:
Name _____	Student/Military	\$5	_____
Mail Address _____	Individual	\$15	_____
City, ST, Zip _____	Couple	\$20	_____
Phone _____	Family	\$30	_____
Email _____	Business	\$35	_____
Date _____			

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.

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*

2022-2023 Executive Board

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General Meetings:

Second Thursday of the Month, September through June
5:30 pm - 2584 Felsite Ave, Rosamond, CA
(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