



Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
January, 2025

Meetings:

Regular Meetings:

- 3rd Tuesday 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: **Regular Meeting**
- ❖ When: **Tuesday, January 21st (3rd Tuesday)**
- ❖ Time: **5:30 pm**
- ❖ Where: **Wayside Chapel Community Church
2584 Felsite Ave, Rosamond, CA**
- ❖ Program: **Mike Amorelli & WATER**
WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org EMAIL: info@kahs1959.org
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/



Important Notice - Date Change: As discussed at the December Christmas Dinner and Meeting, It has become necessary to change the date of the **regular meetings**. For now, we will meet on the **third Tuesday of the month**. Please make sure to mark your calendars.



And Remember: Beginning in January, the KAHS will be **meeting at Wayside Chapel Community Church** due to renovations that will be taking place at the Rosamond Library. They expect to be done by May or June. We will be **meeting upstairs**. (Elevator is available.) Same room as before.

We are privileged to have **Mike Amorelli** join us **in January**. Some of you may remember seeing him working quietly in the background at some of our KAHS meetings, digitizing historical documents belonging to KAHS or on loan to us. Mike will be talking about **the importance of water in making Rosamond and the rest of the Valley what they are**. Mark your calendars for the **third Tuesday** of the month.

Mike Amorelli's Background

Born in Los Angeles and raised in the Inland Empire, Mike pursued careers in professional wrestling, carpentry and radio, before earning a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology and a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies from the University of California, Riverside. Mike had his sights set on Ancient Greece and Rome, until landing a job at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) and redirecting his attention toward the study and protection of California's archaeological and historical resources. Mike is currently finishing his Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Management at Johns Hopkins University, where he is also pursuing a Certificate in Digital Curation.

After the EIC, Mike went from the repository to the field, working as an archaeologist for several environmental firms across Southern California. His work has taken him across California and Nevada, though the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts have been the primary focuses of his career. Mike currently works for WSP USA where he has led over 100 cultural resource investigations, including ongoing studies for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center, just north of Rosamond.

In investigating this corner of the Antelope Valley

Mike and others on a recent dig at Hydrostor





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for the last couple of years, Mike has learned a lot about the way it formed and the people and animals who have lived here over millennia. Mike’s presentation will take us on a trip through the geologic history of the Antelope Valley from the seismic uplift that created the mountains around us, to the filling of Lake Thompson, through the first peopling of the valley and the arrival of Spanish missionaries, Californios and American settlers who shaped the Valley’s history and culture.

The Importance of Water in Making Rosamond and the Rest of the Valley What They Are

The Antelope Valley used to be a much cooler and wetter place, but the uplift events that formed the Tehachapi and Transverse Ranges during the Miocene Epoch left the Valley and the rest of the Mojave Desert in the rain shadow of the mountains and led to rapid drying and a gradual change in the desert’s flora and fauna.

The bowl shape of the Valley, however, created the perfect conditions for a massive catchment basin which became known to paleoenvironmental researchers as Lake Thompson, long after it dried. The two most prominent playas that Lake Thompson left behind are better known to locals as Rogers Dry Lake and Rosamond Dry Lake.

Though the lakes dried out, they left much ground water behind, which came to surface in the form of springs and those springs helped to sustain populations of Kitanemuk, Kawaiisu, Tataviam and Serrano peoples for generations, throughout the hills, valleys and surrounding desert. Frontiersmen, stagecoaches and eventually the railroad all took advantage of the precious resource that laid beneath their feet and emerged from the ground at various locations around what eventually became Rosamond and its surrounding hills.



A flake of chalcedony

What is believed to be a historic period pit house



A Large historic can dump



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In Love With Life in Lancaster - Hard Times 1927-1932 is the title of one of our KAHS books, written by Grace Graham Pickus, in which she gives a good picture of life during the hard times of the Depression. In Chapter 6, while still in high school, she describes, among other things, meeting a Rosamond resident who would become fairly well-known in the community, working for the Gumm family (of Judy Garland fame) at their theater, how people earned money, what they did for entertainment and more. Keep in mind that this book was published in 1983 and many of the people, including Pickus, are no longer living but I think you will find it lots of fun to look back at life during the “Hard Times”.



Grace Pickus at 17

CHAPTER 6 MUSIC, MOVIES AND MAKING MONEY

The summer of 1927, soon after we moved into the little grey house on Date Avenue, Madge had started to work for George Pyle in his dry-cleaning plant. He gave her on-the-job training (although we didn't call it that at the time) and she became a “fancy” presser, and a good one too. She also made a little money on the side one winter by playing the piano for dances at the old Muroc school. She, along with Ed McKenzie onboard the sax and drums and Gordon Modie on the clarinet, made up a jazzy little combo.

The really good part about it, though, was that Mother wouldn't risk Madge's reputation by letting her drive way out there to Muroc alone at night with the two fellows, so I had to go along! Also a few times brother Fran took his trombone and added real class to the group with it and his euphonium (*a brass wind instrument, with valves, an octave below the trumpet-jlw*). We had a real old-fashioned mother, but sometimes it worked out very nicely. While Madge and the boys worked playing “Button Up Your Overcoat,” “Bye Bye Blackbird,” “Drifting and Dreaming,” “Yes Sir, That's My Baby” and such, I two-stepped, fox-trotted and waltzed with the men who came in from Boron where they worked at the Borax mine.

I met Albert Pauley (he's a businessman now in Rosamond) and he must have fallen for me because he wrote me a letter. I already knew his brother Joe as we were in the same class at A.V. High. The trouble with the letter was that Albert didn't spell very well and since I didn't either, but even then had hopes of being a writer, I could see Al would not be the perfect helpmeet I needed if I didn't plan to consult the dictionary frequently each time I was visited by the urge to write. As it turned out, the man I married wasn't an outstanding speller either, but that's another story.

I also met a real good-looking fellow named Louis Gould, who had done some prizefighting and had broken his hand doing it. He came in to Lancaster several times to see me, got acquainted with the family, borrowed \$10 from my cousin George Rauch and left for parts unknown. Well, he was a real good dancer and he obviously knew some fancy steps which he never taught me!

Mother insisted that if we went out on Saturday night, we had to get up and go to church on Sunday. That was no great hardship for me—so after dancing until midnight and driving the 30 miles home, I'd be up for Sunday School and church next morning. Perhaps part of the fun was telling Bernice Lindner and the other girls about the exciting time I'd had the evening before. Yes, I did learn a few things at the old Muroc school. Besides dance steps (doing the Hesitation was a thrill), I learned that when some of the fellows went outside between dances for a breath of fresh air, their breath smelled different, but not really what you'd call fresh when they come back in. As the evening advanced, it got so that instead of “tripping the light fantastic” better, some of them simply tripped more. During Prohibition it took a little while before a nice girl learned to recognize what that odor on the breath was.

I found ways to earn a little money too. I did some babysitting, but in those days most people took their children along or stayed home. I helped clean the parsonage a few times, but as Mother said, that was for “free-gratis.” I did get paid when I helped Gladys Settle (Mrs. William Settle) clean house two or three times. While I was a Junior and a Senior in high school, I had two part-time jobs which I just loved. The first was selling tickets for Frank Gumm at the Antelope Theater on Antelope Avenue (Sierra Highway). The other was working in the new Ten-Cent Store for Wallace Ward, and we'll come to that a bit later.

For a year or so after we were settled in Lancaster, Madge sometimes played piano at the theater for the silent pictures. “Talkies” had not yet been produced so she made musical background for the silent screen. She still remembers that the written



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score was sent along with the film for the excellent silent version of "The King of Kings". The research librarian at the local county library tells me that this film was reviewed by the New York Times Review screen editor on April 20, 1927, so it very likely was shown at the Antelope Theater that same year as "Talkies" came in 1928.

"The King of Kings" was one of the first "big" pictures put out by Cecil B. DeMille, and because of the subject matter, many well-known actors of the time took bit parts in it. H.B. Warner took the part of Christ; Rudolph Schilkkraut [sic] acted the part of Caiphas and his son Joseph was Judas. Dorothy Cumming was Mary and William Boyd (Hop-Along Cassidy) was St. Andrew. The music was selected and arranged by Dr. Hugo Riesenfeld. He incorporated many hymns into the score, one of them being "Lead Kindly Light." The hymns made it easy for Madge as she played for the church, choir practice, and Epworth League for several years.

Mr. and Mrs. Gumm had ways of making money on the side too. They played (and entertained) for lodge and society dances throughout the Valley. They appeared at the Munz dance hall in Leona Valley and in the Social Hall in the recreation park at Lake Hughes. Lots of people drove to the Lakes for dances and parties and picnics; some even came up from the Los Angeles area as Lake Hughes was quite a resort in the late 1920's.

The Gumms both played piano (she sometimes played for the silent movies shown at the theater); he sang very well (would do a solo at our church occasionally) and they also sang duets. When they were away entertaining, the Gumm girls went to the show and Madge walked them home and stayed until their folks came home. The girls usually wanted her to tell them ghost stories before they went to sleep, but she was not good with ghosts and admits that she was probably a sad disappointment when it came to giving them movie-like thrills and chills.

When Mr. Gumm brought talking pictures to Lancaster (in 1928 I believe), Madge's job ended, but I had very often been the one to go with her when she played as Mother didn't want her to walk home alone at night when the show was over. I must have shown up so often that they decided I had just as well be useful; anyway I was called in when Clara Wilda, the regular ticket girl, could not be there. I'd wash my ash blonde hair (just like Ann Sothern's), put on a dress with a pretty neckline, then go sit in the little well-lighted ticket office making change and "hoping to gosh" I didn't make any mistakes. I was no better in math than I was in spelling!

Sometimes one of the Gumm girls would come by and dip into the till for some change and I was always afraid Mr. Gumm might think I had snitched a quarter or two. I did not want to mention it to him because it would look like I was tattling on the girls, but it did make me uneasy. I always told Mother about it so she could vouch for my honesty if it became necessary. Another frightening thing was that some nights the Gumms would be out of town and I had to take the money home with me until one of them came by our house the next day to pick it up. However, after I got home with it, Mother would help me hide the cloth bag with the money inside under her mattress where we knew it was perfectly safe!

If it happened that I was working on a night when the sisters were to perform at the theater, I would stand in the doorway where I could see the stage and also keep one eye on the ticket window. I usually got to see most of their performance as few people came late when the Gumm Girls were going to sing and dance. Of course, Baby Frances was cutest and most talented and she later changed her name to Judy Garland and sang and danced for people all over the world.

Before we leave the Gumms, let me tell you how it happened that I saw almost every movie at the Antelope Theater from about August 1930 well into 1932. Arthur Pickus, the man I married in 1932, also got a little job on the side. Whenever it needed cleaning, he washed and waxed the Gumm's new dark blue 1931 "Bathtub" Buick. In return he was given two passes, good anytime, to the theater. Both Arthur and I are frugal by nature so we couldn't let those passes go to waste even though he would sometimes go to sleep when the excitement lagged, as he still does while watching television. In an old diary I find many times the notation that "we went to the show," but only a few times did I record what we saw. However, some of the most notable movies which we enjoyed by courtesy of car-washing were "Let Us Be Gay," with Norma Shearer, "Sins of the Children," the Marx Brothers in "Animal Crackers," and several of the comedies of Amos and Andy.



King of Kings - [link to article](#)



Animal Crackers - [link to article](#)



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As nearly as we can figure, it was the Christmas of 1931 that Mr. Gumm asked Arthur to paint a doll bed for Baby's Christmas gift. It was nice long basket, [sic] the kind we used as a bassinet for a real baby, so it must have been for a life-sized doll. Arthur took it down to Griffin and Sons Hardware store and used a spray rig they loaned him to give it a couple coats of pale blue paint; and that's how he was able today that he made a baby-blue basket for Baby.

The other job which I liked so well was salesgirl at the Five and Ten. Wallace Ward had opened Lancaster's first ten cent store some time before I went to work for him, and it was a busy place. I would wait anxiously each week to see if I was going to be called in for Friday afternoon after school and maybe for all day Saturday as well. By this time, Ethel Oman had quit work at the Jazz Candy Shop and was working for Mr. Ward. He was a gentle generous man and Ethel remembers that he helped many people in need both with money and goods from his store.

Because I was extra help, my work would often be changed from one department in the store to another. I liked to work in the dish department best; and the job I liked least was cutting oil cloth to someone's specifications and figuring up the cost. In those days oil cloth was something like our sheet plastic, but heavier and prettier. It came in plain white, in bright patterns, and the more expensive rolls sometimes had scalloped borders. It was used for kitchen table covers, splash boards behind sinks, as rubber sheets on sick beds, and in many other ways.

Mr. Ward had a yardstick mounted on the wall beside the place where one placed the chosen roll of oil cloth and rolled it down to the desired length. It was cut off neatly at the top with a razor blade. All went well if the customer wanted a yard or a yard and one foot, but if she asked for something like a yard and seven inches or just twenty-two inches, I was never quite sure I didn't cheat her or my boss when I rang the money up on the cash register.

Sometimes, after figuring a particularly difficult sale, I would wander up to the candy counter to find solace in an old fashioned chocolate, a jelly bean or a soothing piece of peppermint. That was one of the fringe benefits in working for Mr. Ward. Another was knowing that you were one of those "delectable dolls" celebrated in the popular song, "I Found A Million Dollar Baby In A Five and Ten Cent Store."

Mr. Ward had lived in Cuba for a time and spoke Spanish beautifully. Mrs. Tallemantes, who came up to visit a granddaughter (a member of the Andrada family) in Leone Valley, would pay a visit to the store occasionally, and Mr. Ward always came out to greet her and converse for a while in Spanish. I loved to listen—at a distance, of course. I was taking Spanish in high school; during the second semester of my senior year I was President of the Spanish Club, Las Brasas (The Firebrands) and I hoped to improve my accent. Mary Measor was the Spanish teacher and she reinforced my own belief that everything Spanish was romantic.

Annual Christmas Dinner and Meeting

WE had so much fun at our annual Christmas Dinner and Meeting which was held at Diamond Jim's Casino in Rosamond. Delicious food and great company, among other things. At right, Gretchen is greeting folks signing in. Far right Delores, Terry and Kelly are selling raffle tickets to guests.

Speaking of the raffle, it was very successful! The Kern Antelope Historical Society would like to sincerely thank all of our individual and business members who donated so generously! You are AWESOME! And then people bought lots of raffle tickets to try for the gifts of their choice. We had a variety of gift certificates, crafts, Christmas decorations, jewelry, boutique items, candy, pears, and more. Thanks again to all who donated and all who purchased tickets! This helps the KAHS as we continue to gather, preserve and share historical information from our local area.





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The following is a list of donors - we couldn't do it without you!

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And a special thanks to Char for coordinating the raffle AND for bringing the cute pinecone Christmas trees to decorate the tables!



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.

- ★ Website: www.kahs1959.org
- ★ Facebook: www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/
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Kern Antelope Historical Society - Membership Application

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

| | Membership Type | Dues | Amount Paid |
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| Name _____ | Student/ Active Military | \$5 | _____ |
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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*

2024-2025

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WEBSITE: www.kahs1959.org **EMAIL:** info@kahs1959.org

General Meetings:

Third Tuesday 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 & 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. 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

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Since 1959