



Volume 2, No. 2

Antelope Valley Rural Museum

JUNE 2018

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CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

Giovanni Simi



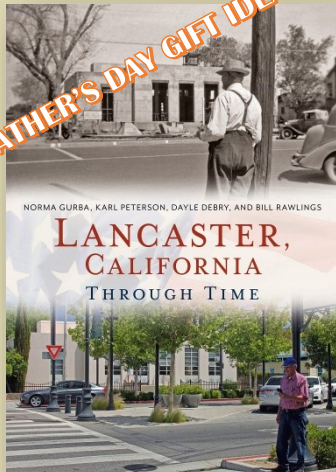
The year has gone by far too quickly. Plans and approvals for our new building are moving along at a good pace. We are all looking forward to the groundbreaking for the new building, construction, and then the big move. We will have more space to display items, a beautiful meeting/library/community room, and plenty of storage.

Past events include the normal 1st and 3rd Saturday openings and the fantastic Kids’ Ag Day sponsored by the Farm Bureau. It gave 800 students a good look at how they get their food and other farm produced materials. All of the kids appeared to have a wonderful time. If you are available next year, make it a point to come to this event. Frog Fest, the poker motorcycle ride to celebrate the life of Sgt. Steve Owen, will be June 9th. The museum will again be a stop on the ride so people can see the first responders display.

Thanks to two of our members, Stan and Chris Ulvin, our “barn find” Carter Jeep restoration is moving along and will be ready for the Fair - another piece of AV History reborn.

The Fair will soon be here and we will be setting up for Fair displays. Come join us on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to help out. Thank you!

FATHER’S DAY GIFT IDEA!





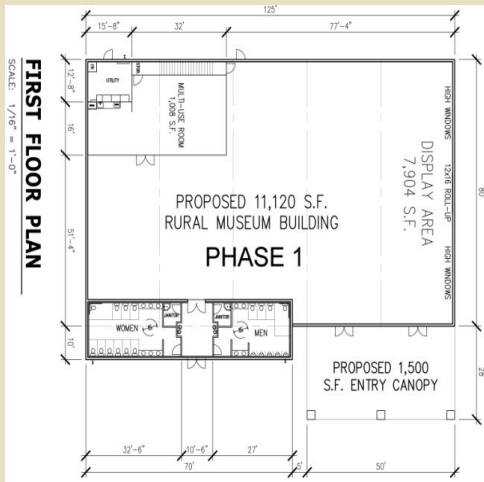
RAWLINGS' REVIEW

Look at us! (See photo below) We've signed our contract and paid a retainer to AV Engineering for the development of plans for our new building. It will be located on the AV Fairgrounds.

This Phase 1 floor plan shows the large display area, along with the Multi-Purpose room, which will house our Library and Meeting Room and a small kitchen area. Large restrooms will accommodate large fair time and other event crowds. Large canopies on the east side will shelter our outside equipment displays. The 2nd floor will house storage for our supplies and not currently displayed artifacts and collections. Phase 1 will nearly double our current interior display area. Phase 2 will give us an additional 8,000 square feet. We are now fundraising for Phase 2.

I want to thank those who delivered donated items to our sale at the Lancaster Chamber Flea Market last month. We added nearly \$1,000 to our Building Fund that day. Thanks also to our Flea Market volunteers who helped me with the sale and in the museum: John & Christine Calvert, Jared Adams, Jeff, Pat, and Annie Godde, Sheila Sola, Barbara & Jerry Sterk, and of course my wife Pam Rawlings.

Thanks to all who continue to support our efforts to preserve Antelope Valley History!



Bill Rawlings signing the agreement/contract with AV Engineering to create plans for our new building. L to R with Gary Van Dam and Directors Barbara Sterk, Sheila Sola, Ruth Godde, Lynn DuPratt & Jerry Sterk.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2018—2019

JUNE 2: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month. Museum open 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

JUNE 9: 2nd Annual Frog Fest Festival and Poker Ride—stop at the AVRМ for a poker card. *Riders are expected to arrive between 12—2:00 p.m.*

JUNE 16: Museum open 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

JULY 7: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month. Museum open 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

JULY 13: Fair Kick-Off dinner.

JULY 21: Museum open 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

AUGUST 4: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month. Museum open 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

AUGUST 17—26: “Holy Cow, We’re 80 Now!” 2018 Antelope Valley Fair & Alfalfa Festival.

SEPTEMBER 29: Annual AVRМ fundraising dinner. **SAVE THE DATE!**

BEAUTIFUL CHEST/BENCH BY KEN SWAPP



What an amazing handcrafted bench built & donated by Ken Swapp for our raffle this year!

Raffle tickets are \$5 each. Tickets may be purchased at the museum or mail a check to the P.O. Box. You may also purchase tickets on the AVRМ website to be entered in drawing. Winner will be announced at our September 29th Fundraiser. Good luck! This is a beauty!

CLEAN SWEEP BROOM CONTEST

Clean Sweep Brooms are available for decorating and entry in the 2018 Fair with a \$20 entry at the Entry Office or the AVRМ. Use a corn or straw broom with 5' or close handle.



Decorate the top of the broom only. Co-Chairperson's are Lisa Luthern (661) 435-2766 and Joy Luthern (661) 722-2888. Entries close July 7, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

**PAINTING OF PIONEER AVIATOR PANCHE BARNES
DONATED BY DONNA WEIL**

What a wonderful surprise at our meeting on May 19th at the Museum! Artist Donna Weil stopped by to donate a brilliant painting of the well-known pioneer aviator Pancho Barnes (1901—1975).

Weil was born in Washington, D.C. and grew up in North Hollywood. She attended North Hollywood High School and Los Angeles Valley College. After moving to Del Mar, California, she attended the Interior Design Guild of San Diego. She now resides in Three Points, California. Three Points is an unincorporated community at the northwestern edge of Los Angeles County, southwest of the Antelope Valley.

Donna's career began in the first grade when her teacher and the principal of Fair Avenue School called in her parents and discussed her getting formal art training. She was an apprentice under James Mastropietro, a noted California watercolorist and fellow artists, in the back room of a paint store in Burbank, California.

Weil is also a member of the "Portraits of the Fallen Memorial," a public art project to honor the fallen with portraits painted of the faces of the men and women who have died while serving our country. Donna is pictured below with a portrait of U.S. Army Pvt. George Delgado. Delgado was killed on Easter Sunday, 2008, by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad, Iraq.

Her work may be seen at Calico Gallery, Calico Ghost Town, the Graphic Experience and Outwest Western Boutique. Donna is currently the President of the Lakes and Valley Art Guild. Her studio is open by appointment only. Awards include Pacific Art Association, Santa Clarita Excellence, Lakes and Valleys Art Guild and Antelope Valley Fair. E-mail at dweilartist@gmail.com. THANK YOU DONNA!



JAPANESE FARMERS IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY

By Dayle DeBry



*Japanese girls on the west side of Lancaster next to fields of alfalfa.
Photo colorized by Earl Specht.*

As well as being the AVRMDirector of Military and Aviation, I am also the manager of Antelope Valley Cemetery District where I have worked for almost eleven years. I was hired in 2007 to research the occupants who are laid to rest at the cemetery. That may sound a bit strange, but most people who live in the Antelope Valley don't realize the incredible amount of history that exists within the boundaries of the cemetery walls and how it relates to our past and to the present here in the Antelope Valley.

In the early nineteen-teens, thirteen Japanese families settled on the Westside of Antelope Valley in the

Rogers district which is located on Ave. D between 70th and 80th St. West. On the early maps of the AV from the 1920s and 30s, this area was designated as the "Japanese Section." Other Japanese families came later and some settled on the Eastside of the Valley near the Roosevelt area. After trial and error planting fruits, nuts and many types of vegetables, both of these farming communities thrived with alfalfa as their main crop. The optimism, hope and strength over adversity within these communities would become the thread that would join them together during World War II and after.

On May 30, 1938, these thirteen families held a dedication ceremony at Lancaster Cemetery in honor of a new monument erected in memory of the Japanese citizens who had died in the Antelope Valley.

The "promoters" or leaders of this memorial were Atsuichi Okimoto and Yohei Ekimoto. The "supporters" were S. Ishikawa, Fred Kobayashi, Henry Kobayashi, S. Matsubara, S. Nishimoto, Saburo Sakaguchi, K. Sugimoto, S.M. And S. Uyeda, Y. Wakamiya, U. Watanabe and J. Yamanaka. This group of Japanese families donated \$250 towards the construction of the memorial in 1938. Atsuichi Okimoto donated the plot of his daughter, Tomiko Okimoto, for the memorial.

After the onset of WWII in mid-1942, 85 Antelope Valley citizens were taken to the internment camp at Poston, Arizona, leaving their homes, farms, classmates and many friends behind.

Shortly after they were taken to the camp, the beautiful Japanese memorial was toppled over by vandals and broken into pieces. The original memorial stood over 10 feet tall but was reduced to less than 4 feet in height.

In 2003, Yoshio Ekimoto, son of Yohei Ekimoto contacted the cemetery to see if it was possible to repair the memorial or possibly move it to another location. At the same time, Tom Shokari, step-son of Fred Kobayashi, contacted the mayor of Lancaster to ask for help in restoring the monument but did not receive a favorable reply.

In 2007 I came across a file at the cemetery labeled "Japanese Monument." It was then the search began to locate family members who might be interested in restoring the monument with our help. I was lucky to contact Tom Shiokari and struck up an instant friendship with him. He began calling all the remaining family members telling them what was happening with the monument. They met and all agreed it was time to finally get the monument restored. Tom rallied all the families together and letters, stories, photographs and donations began to arrive at Lancaster Cemetery.

Fast forward to 2008 when the memorial was restored by Lancaster Cemetery with the help of many people and organizations including: Friends of the Lancaster Cemetery; Cemetery trustees Norm Hickling, Dave Owens and Jared Pearce; former manager Barbara Little; Teacher Jeri Rather and the Del Sur School 7th grade students; Lancaster West Rotary; Permeco Monuments; L.A. County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich; West Antelope Valley Historical Society; Tom Shiokari and all of the Japanese families.

My message to those who attended the re-dedication ceremony in 2008 was that we wanted to let the Japanese American community know we understood what was done to the monument was not right and that we were truly sorry. We were extremely sad that it took 70 years to try and fix what was done wrong to our own Antelope Valley citizens, their heritage and their community.

Strangely enough, the focus of the Japanese families was not on things that were taken away, but the opportunities that were presented to them. They made the best with what they had and didn't focus on what they could not change. The common thread showed up again and again - strength over adversity.

Two families returned to the AV after the war – Ekimoto and Nishimoto. Both families were able to continue and go on to develop successful farms. I continue to keep in contact with Akiko (Nishimoto) Yagi (pictured below on the right) who will be 94 this year.



Left: Yohei Ekimoto with his crop of celery ready for Safeway stores in 1938. Ekimoto was the first Japanese farmer to purchase land in the AV in 1912. Ekimoto family photo.



Below: Akiko (Nishimoto) Yagi with horses on the Nishimoto farm in west Lancaster.

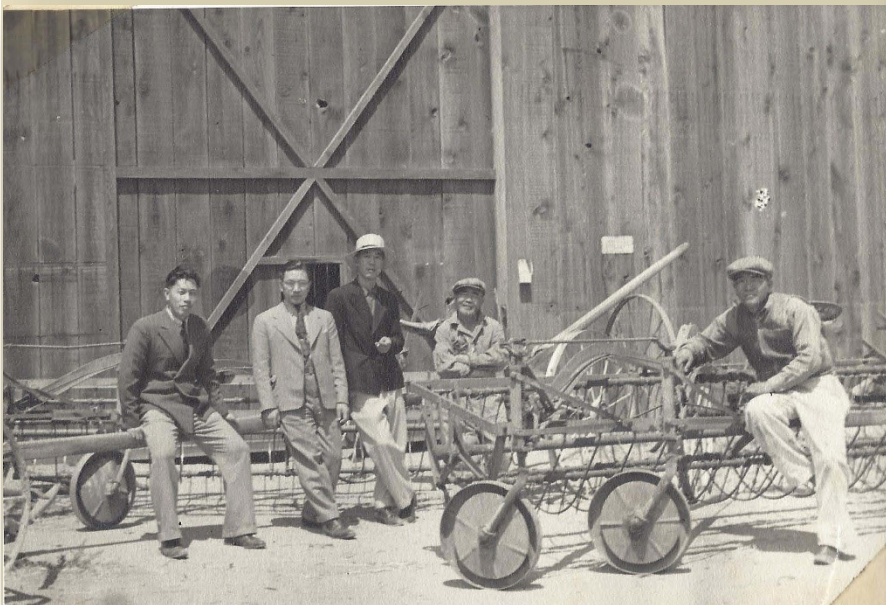


Above and right: Jimmie Nishimoto in the fields on his ranch in east Lancaster after World War II. Photos from Jimmie Nishimoto's scrapbook.

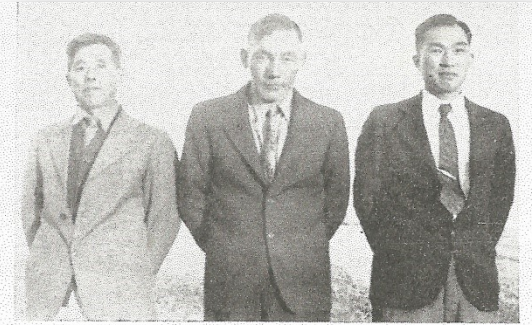
Tom Shiokari recalled: "In the early days few Japanese migrated to the AV as railroad laborers or farm hands. In 1916 the Japanese Farmers Association (JFA) was formed in the East Side called the Roosevelt District and moved later to the West Side known as the Rogers District. The goal of the JFA was to find the vegetable that would grow like vegetables produced profitably in the Imperial Valley. The local farmers and businessmen were very appreciative for this search of other farm products. The finding was that vegetables would grow in AV but unfortunately, other factors that add to the cost were not encouraging.

"The first Japanese farmer to purchase land in the valley was Yohei Ekimoto in 1912 and he let the land stay idle for seven years before developing the property in 1919. He had the foresight that the *Anti-Alien Land Law* would be passed in 1913. By purchasing the land in 1912 he was able to purchase the land under his name as an alien. Other Japanese farmers that purchased land after the passage of the Alien Land Law used the eldest sons name if he was born in America. It is believed that other Japanese farms were purchased in the 1913-1920 time period from F. Rutledge real estate agent for the Southern Pacific Land Grant in Section 21, northwest of the town of Lancaster.

"It is interesting to note that most of the 13 families purchased land on adjoining properties in this vast valley. The most probable reason for being adjoining land is that the area was not developed with roads and they probably did not know each other until the real estate agent showed the land. They all became neighborly as the properties were developed. A community hall was developed was built to further the friendship. The community hall was built to hold meetings for the JFA, conducting Japanese language class, observe holiday events, and conduct Buddhist Church service. The JFA findings indicated that alfalfa can be stored and sold when the price was near the top, and also alfalfa can be hauled in large quantity to keep the transportation cost down."



L to R: Unknown, unknown, Tatsuo Inouye, Katsutaro Sugimoto and Shizo Sugimoto at 7846 West. Avenue D, Lancaster. Photo from Nancy Oda.



S. Nishimoto Fred Kobayashi Roy Sakaguchi
Treasurer President Secretary

Japanese Ranchers Experiment With New Products

The Japanese Farmers' Association is one of the oldest organizations in this valley. According to the old records, this organization formed in the year of 1916, but the early settlers came into this valley as early as 1910. The story told by Mr. U. Watanabe of Rogers District that at that time their settlement centered around Roosevelt District.

In the early days these Japanese farmers' aim was to produce the green vegetables as Imperial Valley is now, which they thought would improve the valley much faster and better. The business men and farmers of this valley applauded this enterprize and gave it a warm welcome.

Among these workers U. Watanabe was to volunteer the pear and asparagus, and besides tried about 100 varieties of green products. One of the large seed companies in Los Angeles was very interested in the valley green gardens and supplied all the seeds he tried.

Through lack of the transportation and fair distribution of the products and difference in climates in summer and winter, they abandoned green produce and turned to alfalfa as they are now doing.

As the time goes on the membership of this organization increases larger and better because the number of Japanese people started to come into this valley and improved the lands in the Rogers District, where most of the Japanese people are now. The year from 1920 to 1925 was the most expanding period in Rogers District and the newcomers also tried various vegetable crops, some planted fruit such as peaches, pears and almonds and others asparagus, white beans, potatoes and dry onions, but none of these trials were continued because it is difficult to obtain cheap labor, lack of transportation, and high rate in hauling.

In 1927 this organization built the community hall in Rogers District to use as their regular meeting place, Japanese language school, and the community church. There now are only 12 members in this organization, but they are very strongly united and they are keenly interested in the growth of Lancaster, just as much as their organization. From time to time they answer the call of the Red Cross membership drive, Antelope Valley Alfalfa Festival, and hold one membership in the local Chamber of Commerce.

1,000 CRANES FLY IN TO AVR

Thank you to Pam Rawlings' sister, Linda Adams, and a myriad of friends from around the country who took the time to make these 1,000 paper origami cranes to be displayed by our Japanese family items. In Japanese culture the 1,000 cranes are a symbol of longevity. When 1,000 cranes are presented to someone "they convey a very strong sentiment for sincere good wishes for health and long life."

Thank you to the Sugimoto family for donating many beautiful items from their family collection. Pictured below are just a few of those treasures we are enjoying at the AVR.



Bookcase/desk from ErnieJane (Inouye) Sugimoto and Nancy (Sugimoto) Oda for our research library



AVRM HAPPENINGS



AVRM meeting with (l to r) Janine and G Simi, Sheila Sola, Bill Rawlings, Kristi Word and Karl Peterson (front).



Identifying photos with (l to r) Pat Duhart, Jerry Sterk & Dayle DeBry.



AVRM at the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce Flea Market. Thanks to the volunteers for helping at the booth we made close to \$1,000 for the building fund.



Nancy Cory Elementary School visit to the AVRM. Second grade classes visited on May 16th.

**FOR SALE - 1955 OLIVER SKIP LOADER
WITH REAR BLADE - RUNS GOOD!**

**Donated by Debby Swapp
to raise money for the AVRM
Building Fund**

**\$5,000 O.B.O.
DRIVER NOT INCLUDED**

The AVRM is a 501(c)(3) Public Charity
EIN: 27-1002922



Membership Application for the **Antelope Valley Rural Museum**

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

2018 Annual Dues \$20/person _____


Special Interest as a volunteer? _____

Tax deductible Donation \$ _____

Bronze = \$100 Silver = \$1,000 Gold = \$10,000

Please make checks payable to: AV Rural Museum

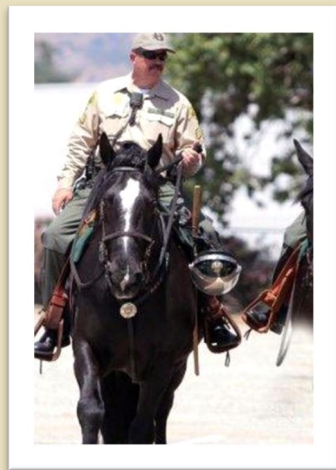
Mail to: AVR M P.O. Box 1316, Lancaster, CA 93584

Donate and pay dues via PayPal or credit card on our website: www.avmuseum.org 

Join us at the AVR M for the second annual “Frog Fest” AV Festival and Poker Ride in honor of Sgt. Steve Owen.

Riders will stop at the Museum on Saturday, June 9, 2018, between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. to pick up their poker cards.

We had a great turnout last year so if you can volunteer to help at this event you are more than welcome to join us.



Website: www.avmuseum.org
[www.facebook.com/Antelope Valley Rural Museum](https://www.facebook.com/AntelopeValleyRuralMuseum)

Mailing address:

AVRM
 P.O. Box 1316
 Lancaster, CA 93584



Contact us:
avmuseum@verizon.net

Donate and pay dues via PayPal and credit card on our website

ANTELOPE VALLEY RURAL MUSEUM GIFT STORE

- Annual membership dues \$20.00
- Hats—all baseball hats (Members) \$10.00
- Hats—all baseball hats (Non-members) \$15.00
- NEW! Lancaster, CA Through Time** \$25.00
- History books—all books are priced at:
 - Images of America “Lancaster” \$20.00
 - Images of America “Palmdale”
 - Legendary Locals of the AV
 - (Above AV history books signed by Norma Gurba)
 - P-38 Lightning
 - Images of America “Edwards Air Force Base”
- DVDs Listed DVDs are priced at: \$20.00
- Jane Pinheiro Wildflowers NEW!
- Yester Years—AV History 1876—1942
- 1987 Rural Olympics (narrated)
- Evolution of the Rural Olympics book
 (On DVD—Excel & Word Doc format)

The AVRM is a 501(c)(3) public charity
 EIN: 27-1002922

DONATIONS

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pickus Challenge 2018 Building Fund | \$1,000 |
| Honor the Past Plaques and Display Sponsorship (Custom laser cut wood plaques with Personal memorial or message) | \$1,500 |
| Bronze Sponsorship Donor | \$100 |
| Silver Sponsorship Donor | \$1000 |
| Gold Sponsorship Donor | \$10,000 |

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