FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson

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POPPIES ARE STARTING TO BLOOM!

Poppy Reserve by Visitor Center

View of the Tehachapi Trail

View of the east side of the Poppy Reserve

JOSHUA TREES ARE HAVING A GOOD YEAR ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE VALLEY

JUST A LITTLE BIT OF CALIFORNIA HISTORY

CALIFORNIA POPPY HISTORY

SPRING 1983

By Gladys Cunningham, Lancaster Woman's Club

Encholzia Californica – The California Poppy. In 1816 – 1824 a Russian scientific expedition was sent to explore our Pacific coast. On this expedition was a surgeon/naturalist by the name of Dr. J.F. Escholz. On seeing this beautiful golden flower in the shape of a poppy he gave it his name, Escholzia Californica. This same golden flower blossomed all up and down the State of California.

About one hundred years ago in the 1880's John Muir said, "One shining morning a landscape was revealed that after my wanderings still appears the most beautiful I have ever beheld. At my feet lay the Great Valley of California, level and flowery, like a lake of pure sunshine forty or fifty miles wide, five hundred miles long, one rich furred garden of yellow compositae. And from the eastern boundary of this vast golden flower-erbed rose the mighty Sierras, miles in height and so gloriously colored and so radiant it seemed not clothed in light but wholly composed of it like the wall of some celestial city." We know this as the San Joaquin Valley as it once was.

In 1903 the California State Legislature designated the poppy as the State Flower. About forty years later, in 1942, the State recognized a need and intention to establish a location in California a Reserve to preserve forever for the enjoyment of the people an area of land on which the California Poppy thrives in its pristine habitat. Then time passed on, and things move slowly in the government.

With the fast and steady growth in California in industry, housing, speculative development, indiscriminate and illegal grazing and recreation abuse, started to use up the land where the wildflowers once grew.

By 1965 they felt they could wait no longer if they were to save these beautiful flowers. So the Department of Parks and Recreation did a five-year study of the region for the best possibility of a Poppy Reserve. Although the poppies grow abundantly in many areas of California the Antelope Valley was chosen as the area where the flowers attain their most spectacular development and affords the most extensive display for the longest season.

As usual the State moves slowly but our people wanted to move quickly. The Lancaster Woman's Club decided to take action in 1971. Knowing the undertaking to establish a Reserve was too large for one organization, they developed and ad hoc committee made up of many individuals and organizations called "The Wildflower Preservation Committee". Now Lancaster Woman's Club had joining their forces many strong groups. For many years the Chamber of Commerce had co-sponsored with Woman's Club a Wildflower Center in Lancaster as a place to dispense information and displays of wildflowers and where to find them. This brought a lot of interest and visitors to the Valley. Now this Center became a place to raise funds for the purchase of land to preserve the wildflowers. Many projects were developed, one of which was the

recognized need for the preservation of the water color paintings of Jane S. Pinheiro to be displayed and also for use in educational ventures. At the present time over 150 paintings have been purchased at a cost of more than $5,100.00.

Another step and an important one was becoming a part of the California State Parks Foundation. This organization is a private Foundation but could be used as a holding place for our funds and used as we designated them to be used by State Parks Recreation Department.

A recognized need for an Advisory Council appeared and this need was met by the State appointing a council of 15 members. This Council continues to be of great assistance.

All over the State of California there became a consciousness of the need to preserve the wildflowers. The State Federated Women's Clubs, the State Garden Clubs, the State P.T.A's, the D.A.R., were just some that joined with us. This became a great boon to our cause.

Here at home in Lancaster, educational needs were being met. Slides of the Pinheiro paintings were made and with Jane herself narrating them, cassettes were made and given to all ten school districts in Antelope Valley. Another contributor was Lillian Kasson and her photography. The beauty of her pictures and the use of them in slides for education in the class rooms and assemblies were well received and developed more interest and fund raising. With this and the sale of the California Quail Poster, the Pennies for Poppies, over $18,000.00 was raised by the students alone.

With all the wildflower books on the market, none of which met the needs of the Antelope Valley, the Antelope Valley Environmental, Energy and Education Council out of the Los Angeles County Schools Office, developed our book and Lancaster Woman's Club financed it. Again, a gift of one of these books was made to all 40 public schools in the Valley, and all profits from the sale of the books went to the Poppy Park. Decals, thousands of them, were sold saying "I gave to save". It was a sticker with a poppy. There was also the selling of symbolic 'deeds' from the State Parks Foundation, $10.00 for 600 square feet to $650.00 for an acre of wildflower land. With all of these projects, by 1976 we were able to purchase 960 acres of land (The Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve).

The Lancaster Woman's Club has continued through the years with other cooperative groups and organizations in the Antelope Valley to having an annual wildflower Center. This houses beautiful displays of the Jane Pinheiro paintings, information tables where maps are available and directions are given to different parts of the Valley where the flowers are in bloom, housing and food information is also available. Beautiful displays of specimens are to be viewed and discussed with very knowledgeable people. This last year, displays of the wildlife of the Valley were also included, such as birds, animals, and reptiles. One of the important fund raising activities is the gift center where books, stationery, cards, slides, jewelry, and souvenir items may be purchased, and all profit going to the Poppy Park. Here there is always a welcome smile, helpful advise and information. There are many points of interest in our Valley and staff is always happy to serve the visitor.

The Woman's Club also formed a section for the purpose of studying the wildflowers so we would be an informed group. Many times through the wildflower season these persons have served as tour guides. It is nothing on opening the Center to find as many as ten buses waiting. We have had over 60,000 visitors in one good year, as high as 49 states represented, and 12-13 countries the same year.

Through the efforts of the Lancaster Woman's Club, the Wildflower Preservation Committee, the State Parks Foundation, this 1700 acres was dedicated and given to the State of California during the Nation's Bi-Centennial year, 1976.

Our work was not yet done because of the recognition of the need for an Interpretive Center. So with continued effort last year in April 1982 was the dedication of the Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center.

So here we are after years of the work of many organizations and individuals with fund raising projects and outright gifts of money and land – the Forrest Godde family a gift of over 240 acres, the Munz family another 960 acres at a very low price. A total value was raised at the local level of $227,194.00. We now have the Antelope Valley California Wildflower Reserve and the Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center. It was our pleasure to serve.

MARCH 14TH IS NATIONAL BUTTERFLIES DAY

National Butterflies Day encourages us to look and learn more about butterflies. This is a day to learn something about them and appreciate their beauty. There are over 20,000 types of butterflies worldwide. Their wing spans can range from 1/2-inch to 11-inches. The lifespan of a butterfly varies by species. Some butterflies live only a day while others may live several months. They drink the sugary sweet nectar from flowering plants. However, their larva (aka caterpillars) eat the leaves of plants. A butterfly cannot fly if its body temperature falls below 86°F. Many butterflies migrate over long distances and the most famous migrations are those of the Monarch butterfly from Mexico to the northern U.S.A. and southern Canada, a distance of about 2,500 to 3,000 miles.

Butterflies play an important role in pollinating the plants, flowers and vegetables that we need on the earth. Butterflies taste their food with their front feet. There are four lifecycle parts to a butterfly: egg, larva (known as a caterpillar), pupa (known as a chrysalis and adult (known as a butterfly). A butterfly will use their long tongue like a straw, called a proboscis, and they will suck up the nectar with their tongue.

So if you are going to plant a garden this year make sure to have some flowers available that butterflies like and they will reward you with their beauty.

Hairstreak

Painted Lady

Sulphur