



# The Kern Grapevine

Kern County Historical Society  
Post Office Box 141  
Bakersfield, California 93302

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## Kern County Historical Society 2018-2019

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Ken Hooper, President  
John Stegall, Vice-President  
John Codd, Treasurer  
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Kitty DeArmond, Corresponding Secretary

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Landmarks/Buildings – Stephen Montgomery, Fatima Bugarin, Ken Hooper  
Education – Ken Hooper, Elise Sotello, Mike Warner, John Doll, Pat Carlotti  
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Kern County Library Liaison – Vacant  
Kern Genealogical Society Liaison – John Codd  
West Kern Oil Museum Liaison – Steve Bass  
CSUB – Christopher Livingston

### In this issue:

- Schedule of Programs
- Historic Route Highway 99 Sign Project
- Historical Marker Project
- Anniversary of the end of the “War to End All Wars”
- Book sale at Five & Dime Antique Mall
- Membership Renewal Reminder
- Welcome New Members
- Local Historical Interest Events Calendar

### Schedule of Programs

#### 2018-2019 Season

- September 15** — “Historic Highway 99 Sign Project” with Fatima Bugarin, Stephen Montgomery, Ken Hooper
- October 20** — Field Trip to Rankin Ranch
- November 17** — Francisco Javier Llamas – “Dawn of the Great War: Assessing America’s Military and Domestic Policies, 1848-1916”
- January 19** — Donato Cruz – “Earl Warren and the Civil Rights Era”
- February 16** — Ken Hooper – Downtown Bakersfield Walking Tour
- March 16** — Steve Collett – History of the Kern County Mineral Society
- April 20** — Field Trip to Tracy Ranch
- May 18** — Christopher Livingston – Clarence Cullimore

## September Program: “Historic Highway Route 99 Commemoration”



From idea to reality, Historic Route Highway 99 has now received the recognition it deserves. Six “Historic Route 99” signs have been installed to mark the route of this important road through the city limits of Bakersfield. The signs have been placed on opposite sides of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Chester Avenue. Ten signs for the remainder of the county have been received and will be installed in the near future.

This historic route is now identified so that locals and travelers alike may appreciate its importance. We want to thank the Society's Hwy 99 Historic Route Committee who worked to make this project possible. To celebrate the newly placed signs on Bakersfield's main streets, we invite our officers, trustees, and members to join us and observe the completion of this important accomplishment.

We'll meet on Saturday, September 15, at 11:00 am in front of Bill Lee's Restaurant at 1203 18<sup>th</sup> Street and walk to one of the nearby Hwy 99 Historic Route signs for photos. On our return to the restaurant the Highway 99 committee will explain the details of how this project came about and was completed. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a lunch of wonton soup, egg rolls, broccoli beef, orange chicken, fried shrimp, fried rice, and a fortune cookie for the reasonable price of \$17.50.

If you plan on attending, please complete and return the reservation form on the last page of *The Grapevine*.

### Great News Regarding the Kern County Marker Project!

The Historical Society has been awarded a \$13,400 grant by the Virginia and Alfred Harrell Foundation for Phase One of our Historical Marker Project.

Phase One will replace, repair, or enhance the following historical markers:

1. GARCÉS BAPTISMAL SITE – California State Historical Marker #631, located on State Hwy 155, 16 miles east of Delano. Replace missing marker and remodel concrete base. Estimated cost: \$3,000.
2. POSEY STATION OF THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL LINES – California State Historical Marker #539, located on the NE corner of the intersection of the Bakersfield-Glennville Road and Round Mountain Road, 11 miles north of Bakersfield. Replace missing marker and remodel concrete base. Estimated cost: \$3,000.
3. KERN RIVER SLOUGH – California State Historical Marker #588, located on the south side of Panama Road, 3.3 miles west of Lamont. Re-attach marker, remodel and repair concrete base. Estimated cost: \$1,950. Note: This concrete base was hit by a drunk driver, but the

marker is intact and in our possession.

4. McKITTRICK BREA PIT – California state Historical Marker #498, located on the SW corner of State Hwy 58, 0.5 miles west of McKittrick. Replace missing marker and remodel damaged concrete base. Estimated cost: \$3,000.
5. DISCOVERY WELL, located on Chevron Corp. property on the south side of Round Mountain Road, 0.8 miles east of China Grade Loop. With Chevron's permission, attach to the fence a descriptive metal sign.
6. EAST BAKERSFIELD – Marker for the Union Pacific Railroad needs to be re-attached. It was part of the International Park boundary wall at Baker and Sumner streets. The marker may need a base installed if the Union Pacific is unresponsive to attaching the marker to the depot building. Estimated cost: Pending.

Phase Two of the Historic Marker project includes all of the Jedediah Smith markers and the East Kern Markers.

The Historical Society greatly appreciates receiving this grant and the members who have previously donated to this project. We gladly will continue to accept donations for Phase Two of our Historic Marker Fund.

## Centenary Year of the End of the “War to End All Wars,” The Local Connection:

### (September) Part 1 — The Liberty Bell Travels Through Kern County

In 1915, in an effort to finance the World War I war effort, the United States Treasury Department organized a cross-country train trip for the iconic Liberty Bell. Hoping to promote patriotism and contributions to the war bond drive, the Bell traveled on a specially constructed open car which allowed for its viewing. With the aid of an appropriately designed generator system, the Bell was capable of being lit and seen after dark.

In July, the Bell left Philadelphia on the “Liberty Bell Special” and traveled west by the northern railway route. It remained for four months in San Francisco at the Pan-Pacific Exposition, and then returned home in November via the southern rail route.

The Liberty Bell drew crowds of on-lookers who gathered along the tracks as it passed through the countryside. During its journey it visited 275 cities and towns. It traveled through Bakersfield and Kern County on, or about, November 11, 1915.

Officials estimated that one-fourth of the nation's population came to see the Bell as it traveled across the country. This journey helped to establish the Liberty Bell as a national symbol.

On Flag Day, June 14, 1917, the bell was carefully rung again, the first time since 1846. This event was to signal for all bells in the country to do the same. Telegraphers set to work sending messages to any place that had an active bell tower. The national reverberations were a signal for citizens to head to their banks and buy war bonds. This they did, surpassing their \$2 billion (\$40 billion today) goal!

In his article, “The Fourth Liberty Loan and the *S.S. Bakersfield*,” Richard E. Brown writes, “An extraordinary effort by Bakersfield residents to help finance Uncle Sam's needs at the close of World War I literally put Bakersfield on the map - a nautical map - for the next two decades. To reward the Kern County community for oversubscribing a fund-raising drive known as the Fourth Liberty Loan by 254%, the U. S. Shipping Board named an 8,000-ton, 425-foot cargo-carrying steamship under construction in San Pedro in 1919 *Bakersfield*. During the 1920s and 1930s *Bakersfield* carried cargoes between east and west coast ports of the United States, by way of the Panama Canal.

“Basically, *Bakersfield* was a plodder. She seems to have led a life sheltered from news-making events. As yet we can find no record of her having participated in any daring rescue. On the other hand, we have not heard of her disgracing herself in a shipwreck. Shortly after she went into service, *The Bakersfield Californian* on December 3, 1920, reported *Bakersfield* was ‘plying between eastern and western waters for the U. S. Steamship Company, formerly the American-Hawaiian line. Captain Townsend was ‘master of the ship.’ The reference to *Bakersfield* came after a local firm ‘received a shipment ... of rivets which came from Boston to the port of Los Angeles on the steamer, which made the trip much more successfully than a steamer bearing the first shipment of rivets.’ That ship sank before it reached the Pacific Coast.” (Part 2 will appear in the October *Grapevine*.)

## Reminder —

### It's Time to Renew Your Membership!

Individual memberships are \$25.00, Families \$35.00, Organizations \$35.00, and Businesses \$55.00. Life Memberships for individuals are \$250, and the member must be 50 years of age or older to qualify. Membership in the Kern County Historical Society includes these benefits:

~Annual subscription to our newsletter The Kern Grapevine

~Annual subscription to our quarterly publication Historic Kern

~A 10% discount on all publications purchased from the Kern County Historical Society

~Invitations to all meetings, field trips, and events

~Participation in a growing county wide network of persons and organizations committed to preserving Kern County's rich heritage.

Meetings and field trips of the Kern County Historical Society are held monthly from September through May, with the exception of December. The meetings feature speakers discussing subjects pertaining to county history, historical sites, and Kern lore. The Kern County Historical Society continues to believe the past is the light that will illuminate our future. Please join us in our efforts to preserve and present our county's rich and diverse history.

### Welcome New Members to the Historical Society

Life Membership: Robert Walker

Individual Memberships: Robert Mebane and Dennis Stiles

### Mark Your Calendars!

The Kern County Historical Society will be selling our publications on September 8 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Second Saturday monthly event. You can find us at the Five & Dime Antique Mall, 1400 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Publications available for purchase:

- ◆ Basques to Bakersfield by Mary Paquette
- ◆ Curtis Darling's Postcard Collection by Don Arnot and Jeff Nickell
- ◆ Historical Site Markers of Kern County by William G. Hample and Robert Crabtree
- ◆ Inside Historic Kern, II, by the Kern County Historical Society
- ◆ Jedediah Smith & His Monuments by Raymond F. Wood
- ◆ Kern County Place Names, 2nd Ed., by Curtis Darling
- ◆ Kern County Wayfarers by William Harland Boyd
- ◆ Kern County's Desert Country by William Harland Boyd
- ◆ Land Policies in Kern County by Paul W. Gates
- ◆ The Life of Richard Hudnut (1828-1903) by Herbert B. Hudnut, Jr., M.D.
- ◆ Stagecoach Heyday in the San Joaquin Valley, 1853-1876 by William Harland Boyd
- ◆ The Basques of Kern County by Stephen Bass and George Ansolabehere

### More Events of Local Historical Interest:

#### KERN COUNTY MUSEUM:

The Fall Lecture Series will take place on Wednesdays at 6:00-8:00 pm in the Standard School Building. The price for admittance is \$10.00 per person and is free to Museum members. Lori Wear, Museum Curator, will be the presenter unless otherwise noted. For more details, please visit the Kern County Museum website.



September 5 -- "The Caliente and Tehachapi Creek Flood of 1932: Losing a Railroad Locomotive"

September 19 -- "Learn About Pancho Barnes: A Legend in Her Own Time" by Barbara Schultz

October 3 -- "Clairvoyants, Occultists, and Palm Readers in Kern County, 1895-1950"

October 6 -- "Walking Tour of 'Eastchester'" by Ken Hooper

October 17 -- "Civil Rights History in Bakersfield" by Dr. Oliver Rosales

November 7 -- "The Great War: Kern County Mobilizes for World War I"

November 14 -- "A History of the Kern River Power Plant" by Duane Ament

*(Continued on the next page)*

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD:**

“The Great War” is examined in the Historical Research Center located in the Walter Stiern Library, open Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, and Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00pm. Using CSUB’s archival collection this exhibits explores the local connection to WWI.



CSU Bakersfield



**KERN GENEALOGY SOCIETY:**

“Discover the Beginnings of Kern County” with Gregory Mudge, Curator of West Kern Oil Museum, Tuesday, Sept. 18 1:00 pm. – Beale Library

**FORT TEJON STATE HISTORIC PARK**  
**FRONTIER DAYS:**

Take a step back in time to 1856. Experience the life of the soldiers and civilians. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (Adults \$5.00, Children \$3.00) Saturdays: September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1. Demonstrations may include 1850s Army Barracks Life, Blacksmith Shop, Artillery Drill, Open Hearth Cooking, Army Horsemanship, Military Drill, Carpentry Shop, Laundry/Candle Making, Weapons Demonstrations, Officer’s Quarters. For details visit the website at [forttejon.admin@parks.ca.gov](mailto:forttejon.admin@parks.ca.gov).



California Department of  
Parks and Recreation

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**Reservation Form**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Reservation for \_\_\_\_\_ guests at \$17.50 per person (includes tax & tip) for the September 15 Luncheon.

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your reservation form and check by Wednesday, September 12, to:

Kern County Historical Society

P.O. Box 141

Bakersfield, CA 93302

*Please observe the reservation deadline and send your check for the full amount by Wednesday, September 12.*

*We need to receive your payment by Friday, September 14. Contact Jayne at 661-867-2414 with questions.*