
February-March 2017 Newsletter

Oro Valley Historical Society

P.O. Box 69754, Oro Valley AZ 85755

www.ovhistory.org

Speaker on Monday, February 6th

Sandy Chan will discuss "The History of the Chinese in Tucson" at the Oro Valley Library from 2-4 pm. Sandy has published articles on this subject and will share stories from the lives of Chinese-Americans in our community. This event is open to Society members and the general public. Bring a friend!

Building Committee

At their January 26th meeting, the Board of Directors agreed to establish a Building Committee to research possibilities for a permanent home for the Society. Paul Loomis volunteered to chair this committee. The group will conduct research and report back to the Board at a later date.

Fundraising Committee Volunteers Needed

Do you have ideas for ways to raise funds for the Society? We have some exciting prospects for raising money. Please volunteer to help with the fundraising committee. Contact Jo Di Gennaro at jojosamdg@gmail.com.

Membership Now Due

The Board of Directors has decided to resume collecting dues for the 2017 year. All members (except Life) who joined before January 1st are asked to pay dues (\$ 20 individual, \$ 30 family) for 2017. The Board also agreed that new persons who join for the first time after January 1, 2017 will be exempt for dues for one year. Please support the work of the Society! Additional donation contributions are most welcome! You can pay by completing the form at the end of this newsletter and mail it to the OVHS post office box.



Upcoming Events

February 6

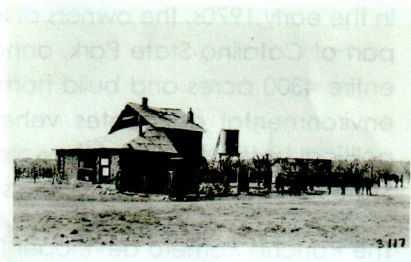
Speaker at OV Library 2:00 pm

February 11

Second Saturday at the Ranch 9:00 to 1:00 pm

February 23

Board Meeting – Steam Pump Ranch 3:00-5:00 pm



More Important News

March 23rd Annual Meeting

The OVHS annual meeting will be held on March 23rd at 3:00 pm at Sunset Room in the OV Community Center (Steam Pump Ranch is not available due to a historical display in the Ranch House). Local historian Robert Simpson will discuss "John Nelson and the Last Chance Ranch," a property just north of Rancho Vistoso. We will complete the election of board members at that meeting. Please plan to attend!

Society News

Volunteer coordinator Jo Di Gennaro asks that all volunteers submit their 2016 record of hours as soon as possible....The Society will participate in a Wine Festival at Steam Pump Ranch on February 18....The Collections Committee has received a storage cabinet and it is located in the Ranch House. Funds for this came from a grant from the Arizona Historical Society....The Nominations Committee is working on a slate of candidates for the Board for our March annual meeting...Oro Valley will sponsor an adobe-making workshop at Steam Pump Ranch on February 11....Board member Joyce Rychener will offer a workshop at the June state preservation conference to be held at the Hilton El Conquistador Resort...Society members will present local history talks at Splendido and the Oro Valley Lions Club in February...Thanks to the following individuals who volunteered at the January Second Saturday: L. Nagy, J. D Gennaro, E. Guyer, C. Koeller, P. Spoerl, P. O'Connell, S. Chambasian, P. Loomis, J. Williams, L. Pritchett, Mariah R., L. Keenan, C. Keenan, C. Bull, J. Rychener.

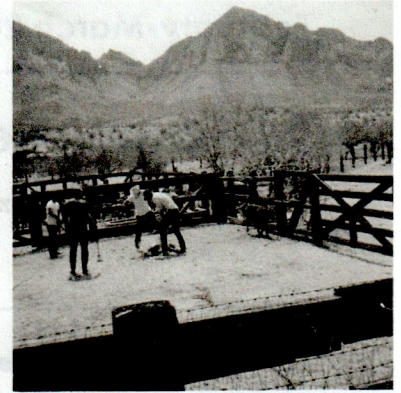
Tales of Yesterday...

Origins of Rancho Vistoso and Catalina State Park

By Jim Williams

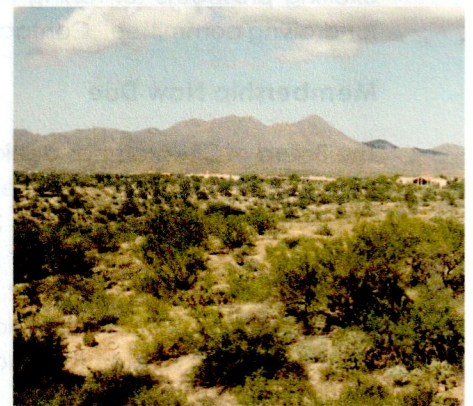
In the early 1970s, the owners of Rancho Romero, what is now the northwest part of Catalina State Park, announced that they planned to develop the entire 4300 acres and build homes for 17,000 people. Local residents and environmental advocates vehemently protested this proposal. A long political battle ensued. A key argument in keeping housing out of Catalina State Park was the safety of the small herd of big horn sheep in the area.

The Rancho Romero developer (Ratliff-Miller Investment Company) agreed to exchange the land in Catalina State Park for a similar number of acres of state trust land within the boundaries of the nearby Rancho Vistoso. This



**Join Us at the
Annual Meeting
On March 23rd**

Below – Rancho Vistoso



swap was completed in 1981. Ratliff had previously purchased a separate 4500 acres in Rancho Vistoso, directly across Oracle Road from the future park. This acreage had formerly been held by Walter McDonald and then the Golder family after 1957.

The addition of the state lands from the swap with Catalina State Park property provided the large, contiguous property that Rancho Vistoso is today. Soon after the swap, Ratliff sold Rancho Vistoso to the Wolfswinkel Group from Phoenix in 1985. Now 7700 acres in size, Rancho Vistoso was approved for development by Pima County in March 1986. The Wolfswinkel Group quickly convinced the Del Webb Corporation to purchase 1000 acres of Rancho Vistoso to begin developing Sun City Vistoso (now Sun City Oro Valley). This was the first construction in Rancho Vistoso. The development of Rancho Vistoso was controlled by regulations passed by Pima County. The Town of Oro Valley, established in 1974, did not annex Rancho Vistoso until 1987. Even today, Sun City Oro Valley and the other subdivisions within Rancho Vistoso are governed by Pima County developmental regulations as well as Town of Oro Valley standards.

So, the histories of Catalina State Park and Rancho Vistoso are closely entwined!

Membership and Donation Form

Oro Valley Historical Society

Please Select Appropriate Category:

☐ Individual \$ 20/year ☐ Family \$ 30/year

☐ Corporation or Institution \$ 100/year ☐ Donation \$ _____

Memberships and Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Please enclose a check payable to "Oro Valley Historical Society" and mail to

OVHS, P.O. Box 69754, Oro Valley, AZ 85737.

Please Print Membership/Donation Information: Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone number: (____) _____ - _____ Amount Enclosed : \$ _____

Email address: _____

Are you willing to volunteer on Society projects? ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, indicate areas of interest:

☐ special events, ☐ oral history, ☐ research, ☐ archiving, ☐ SPR, ☐ membership,

☐ education, ☐ docents, ☐ fundraising, ☐ publicity

Thank you for supporting the Oro Valley Historical Society!