

WHO WAS JANE S. PINHEIRO

Compiled by Mrs. Vernon (Augusta D.) Thompson
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Jane S. Pinheiro was born September 19th 1907 in Denver, Colorado. She received her formal education in Salt Lake City, and was graduated from the University of Utah with a teacher's credential. She moved to Los Angeles and later to Pasadena. It was in Pasadena that she met her husband, Joseph Pinheiro, to whom she was married on September 25th 1930. They were married for forty eight years until her death October 14, 1978. In 1941 her husband's work brought the Pinheiros to Antelope Valley and in 1945 to Quartz Hill.

Mrs. Pinheiro began to paint wildflowers even before she came to Antelope Valley. She received her first blue ribbon award as a painter at the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona in 1930. The painting was a wildflower scene. In the Antelope Valley the profusion of wildflowers inspired her to create more and more pictures, and to become obsessed with the desire to protect the areas where they appeared. Strictly honest and forthright in character her pictures portray that same characteristic. They are both artistically and botanically accurate. It is this quality that makes them so valuable.

"A prophet or artist is often without honor in his own country." So it was with Jane. It was many years before the people in Antelope Valley recognized the value of the works of this self taught botanist and artist. Eventually some learned botany professors from the University of Cal. At Davis visited the Wildflower Center, at that time on Sierra Highway. After closely inspecting the display that Mrs. Pinheiro had arranged they whispered in the ears of an attendant, "This collection of wildflower paintings is vary valuable and should be preserved for future generations. You people should do something about it." The attendant was a member of the Lancaster Woman's Club who relayed the message to the club members. The club soon formed an ad hoc committee called the Wildflower Preservation Committee and invited other groups of interested persons to join. At one time there were 23 organizations represented in this committee.

At about the same time as the above incident, the Theodore Payne Foundation and Nursery in Sun Valley purchased one hundred of the paintings. At last the talent of Jane Pinheiro began to be appreciated. The Wildflower Preservation Committee decided to negotiate for 135 of the paintings. This number has been added to and the total is over 150. The collection has been donated to the Department of Parks and Recreation of Antelope Valley and will be displayed in the Antelope Valley for the education and enjoyment of all who visit here.

The California State Parks Foundation is a nonprofit statewide volunteer organization. In cooperation with the Wildflower Preservation Committee and other organizations throughout the State enough money and donated lands were given to begin the State project of the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, and eventually also the Jane Pinheiro Wildflower Interpretive Center. Matching funds were secured from the State and National Governments "Open Space Funds" to complete the project to date.

Although credit for the success of this project is due many individuals and organizations Jane Pinheiro was the guiding light and inspiration for many years. She was able by cajoling, pleading, working, and sometimes by sarcasm to awaken people to the threat of the loss of the natural beauty of the fragile desert environment.

She was an ardent conservationist and did many things. One of her outstanding accomplishments was to help secure Seven Los Angeles County Wildflower Sanctuaries in the Antelope Valley. She chaired the committee which established the Saddleback Buttes State Park on 170th and J Streets East. As a result of her work as an outstanding environmental volunteer she received many awards local, state and national. Some are as follows: The First Feinstone Environmental Award in 1967 from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry in the amount of \$1,000.00. In 1975 she flew to Washington D.C. to receive the National Oak Leaf Service Award presented in recognition of her conservation efforts.

Beside her interest in the desert environment, Jane was also a tireless civic leader. She had an innate sense of service and was a hard worker so she found many areas where her talents and abilities were needed, such as: She served on the Antelope Valley Fair Board for ten years; she was on the original board of the Antelope Valley Medical Center; she was a past president of the Quartz Hill Chamber of Commerce. She rated “Woman of the Year” from both the Lancaster and Quartz Hill Chambers of Commerce. She served as President of both Lancaster and Quartz Hill Woman’s Clubs. She started the Almond Blossom Festival in Quartz Hill, served as Chairman of the Antelope Valley State Park’s Citizen Advisory Committee for several years. The list could go on and on. Her philosophy was, “The world should be a better place for each of us having been here.”

In an eulogy by Mrs. Doyle (Adelaide) Taylor, she said, “Innumerable lives have been made richer and more meaningful because she walked among us.” She taught many of us to see the radiance spread out before us if we but look.”

It is altogether and fitting and proper that this Wildflower Center should bear the name of Jane S. Pinheiro

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