

# FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson

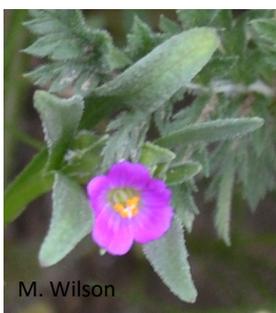
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Rainfall from November 2020 to January 29, 2021 has only been 1.80-inches at the Poppy Reserve. I recently went out to see if anything was coming up and only found some patches of grasses and filaree.

## RED MAIDS

*Calandrinia menziesii*



Recent genetic analysis has led to the reclassification of this plant. It had been known as *Calandrinia ciliata* and was changed to *Calandrinia menziesii*. *Calandrinia menziesii* is native to California as well as into New Mexico and up to British Columbia. *Calandrinia ciliata* are now classified to be found in South America.

It received its Latin name *Calandrinia* from Spanish botanists on a late 18th century expedition to Peru and Chile. The common name Red Maids or Fringed Red Maids refers to the bright red flowers, (which to an 18th century European mind) are like beautiful, delicate maids.



Red Maids are tiny annual herbs that like grassy or disturbed areas and will grow from 4 to 8 inches tall and up to a foot wide. The flowers are about 3/4-inch in diameter with five petals and numerous white-yellow stamens. The flowers appear at the tops of the stems and the lance-shaped leaves are light-green from 1 to 3 inches long, are hairless, and spaced sparsely up the stems. The fruit is a thin, papery capsule with three slits for opening. Each capsule contains 10-20 seeds, which are small, flat and black. Small wildlife such as birds, insects, and small mammals enjoy eating the seeds.

The magenta red flowers are open during the day but close at night. They bloom from February to June. When looking for this flower look at the edge of a trail and look for a small color red/magenta. Jane Pinheiro called them “belly flowers” (you practically had to be on your belly to see them). This plant is known to be a “fire follower” and will begin their growth cycle soon after the fire is out, especially once the rains come. The Chumash were known for setting fires to the grasslands to encourage the growth of Red Maids.

All parts of the plant are edible from the roots to the succulent leaves and flowers and seeds. The leaves, especially the young leaves and young shoots can be eaten fresh, although due to their content of oxalic acid, should be eaten sparingly. Cattle graze on this plant and are undisturbed by the oxalic acid. The Red Maid seeds were highly valued and eaten by Chumash and other native people. Seeds are known to be rich in dietary fats. The plants were pulled out of the ground, left to dry and then threshed to remove the seeds and stored in baskets. The seeds could then be eaten raw or ground into flour. The seeds were also used in ritual offerings. The seeds could also be eaten with the tender young greens of the plant. Red Maids are related to Miner’s Lettuce and the two plants could be used together to make a salad.

## Don Jose Jesus (J.J.) Lopez

1852-1939

By Mary Wilson



Don Jose Jesus Lopez was one of the most colorful pioneers to operate a stock ranch in California. His ancestors were from Spain and records show the name of Lopez when Cortez came to explore Mexico in 1540. His Great-Great-Grandfather Ygnacio Lopez was born in Mexico in 1716, married Maria Recunda who was of noble birth and related to the Duke de Medina of Spain. They had two sons, Juan Francisco who was a soldier escort and guard at the founding of Mission San Gabriel and Claudio who helped put down a revolution in Mexico and was placed in charge of thousands of Indians while the church was building the Missions in California. Don Jose's Grandfather, Esteban Lopez was a successful businessman, a freighter of ox drawn carts in Los Angeles.

Don Jose's father Jeronimo (son of Esteban) was the proprietor of a local stage stop called Lopez Station, was the first postmaster in San Fernando and he organized the first public school there. Don Jose's mother was Catalina De Lopez and her father was Pedro Lopez. Pedro's brother Francisco Lopez was the man who first discovered the placer gold in Placerita Canyon. Don Jose stated he often heard Francisco tell about the discovery of the gold among the roots of the wild onions he dug up in Placerita Canyon. Francisco saw the onions growing and pulled some. He took them to the women folk at the ranch kitchen and the gold was not discovered until the onions were being washed. Catalina De Lopez also had a cousin named Tiburcio Vasquez – the outlaw.

Don Jose Jesus was born in Los Angeles in 1852 to Jeronimo Lopez and Catalina De Lopez and was the eldest of sixteen children. He married Mary Winter on May 27, 1885 in Bakersfield, California. They had one daughter named Margaret (Maggie) Pearl. Although their life had been endangered many times by Indians in the early days, they were both active in Indian welfare work after white men had taken over Kern County.



In 1872 when Don Jose was 21, he made a trip to the San Joaquin Valley in Kern County. He returned again in 1873 with a herd of sheep. Edward F. Beale who was a naval officer and served with Fremont during the Mexican War and owner of El Tejon Ranchos, purchased part of the Lopez sheep and employed him to handle all the sheep on the ranchos. When Don Jose arrived at Rancho El Tejon the country was still wild where elk roamed, along with antelope, grizzly bear and Indians. Edward Beale asked Don Jose to stay on the ranch and be the Majordomo (the person who oversees the day-to-day responsibilities of a business enterprise) of the sheep and cattle.

In 1879 Don Jose, was 27 years old, and he with twenty-two Vaqueros (Spanish speaking cowboys who were accomplished horsemen) drove a heard of 16,000 sheep from rancho El Tejon, through Inyo County, Death Valley, Piper Ranch and Stone Cabin in Green River, Wyoming. Water was very scarce for the men and the sheep. When they reached the Green River they had to swim a stream where it had never before been possible to cross the sheep. That trip took 6 months.

Don Jose hated to face General Beale because he had lost almost 4,000 head of sheep and thought he should retire. However, General Beale was so glad the Vaqueros were alive and the amount of sheep that survived he wanted Don Jose to go back to Rancho El Tejon and continue as his Majordomo.

The sheep at Rancho El Tejon at one time totaled ninety-five thousand head, ranging more than 300,000 acres of land. Don Jose continued to be in charge of the sheep operation until 1885, after that Beale had sold most of the sheep and stocked the ranchos with cattle. Don Jose was in charge of the entire stock operation and continued to be employed by Beale until Beale died and the ranchos were sold to a Los Angeles company. Don Jose continued with this company as active, and later as consulting cattle boss until his death in 1939.

Don Jose, his wife Mary and daughter “Maggie” are buried at Union Cemetery, Bakersfield, Kern County, California. In 2014 a memorial marker was placed at the gravesite. One of the items on the memorial states: What type of a man was J.J. (Don Jose)? Well, how much of a man would it take to be standing at the train station in Tehachapi when a nurse opens the door of the train and asked, “Would anyone like a little girl?” (her parents were recently killed in a Typhoid epidemic back East). J.J. & Mary (Winter) Lopez took in Margaret Pearl and raised her as their own.



### SOME CANDY HISTORY

History of candy dates back to the cavemen when they discovered honey (they also found out that bee stings really hurt). The ancient Egyptians also used honey but added figs, nuts, dates and spices, put these ingredients into a mold to make “honeycakes”. Mayan people were growing cacao (cocoa) as early as 1200 B.C. India was growing sugar cane and were making brown sugar around 250 A.D. and when they were attacked by the Persian army, the army worked with the Indians and started exporting the sugar to other civilizations and that made candy a public domain. Farmers in Spain began to grow licorice in the 5th Century. Sugar cane was then grown in Europe and when the Spanish and Portuguese settlers came to the New World in early 1500’s they planted sugarcane. North American colonists also learned that Native Americans had been tapping trees for sap for hundreds of years giving us maple syrup and maple sugar. In the 16th century the candy industry was becoming more organized. By the 17th century “hard candy” became a favorite in the American Colonies. Chocolate started to spread from Spain to other parts of the continents. A Dutch man invented the first hard chocolate candy in 1844 and the chocolate bar was born.

1847—Joseph Fry invents the first “modern” candy bar in England by mixing cacao butter, cocoa, and sugar into a paste and placing in it a mold.

1854—The first packaged box of Whitman’s Chocolates were available.

1868—Richard & George Cadbury, the second generation of Cadburys, makes the first Valentine’s Day box of chocolates starting the tradition that continues today.

