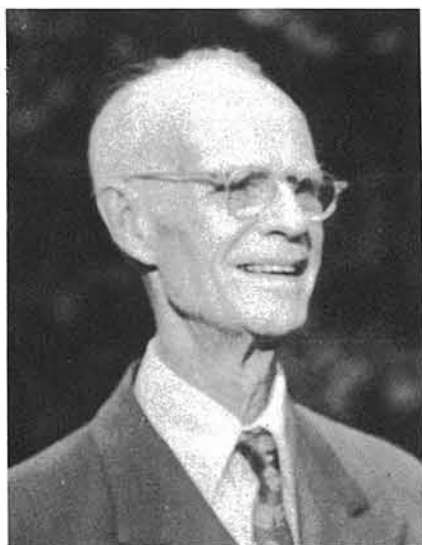


AUGUST ROUNDUP



Edgar N. Carter

The 34 possemen responding to the call for the August meeting will have many pleasant memories of another high spot in our first year's activities.

As guests of Ernest Sutton and Dan Bryant in South Pasadena you roamed at will through homes and grounds admiring the out-of-doors patterns which nature and weary muscles had produced. One path lead over a rustic bridge to the Big Horn Saloon where Wrangler Noah Beery, Jr. in still another barkeep costume, blended the elements for the boys. He was ably assisted by a long white aproned posseman in the person of Lindley Bynam, and between the two the crowd was amply and skillfully served.

An unusually well cooked dinner of sufficient quantity so that each and every one had plenty of ham, meat loaf, beans, salad and the rest of the trimmings was served in the delightful Bryant patio.

The treat for our ears was furnished by 75 years young posseman, Edgar N. Carter and what a job he did on Old Fort Bridger days. He had many interesting slides to show in connection with his talk.

When asked later if the old fort was the same today as when he lived there, Carter reluctantly admitted that he had no desire to return because so many changes had been made and it never would be the same to him. Most of the "after glo" of the meeting tried desperately to put Jim Bridger in his rightful place and only the lateness of the hour prevented this accomplishment to the satisfaction of all.

Many of the boys tarried in Ernest's library to see his fine Western collection and many Indian relics.

—Another refreshing evening with good friends was spent!

Ernest Sutton THE PERFECT HOST

THE SALOON



SEPTEMBER ROUNDUP



Paul Galleher

Our genial Paul Galleher really lightened up the September roundup with his hilariously humorous and most interesting talk on Oofy Goofty of the old Barbary Coast days of San Francisco. The title of his paper was "Stern Whacks at a Famous Westerner."

There has never been much material written about this old-time character, or stumble bum as you will, who for a modest fee would expose his anatomy to terrible punishment. But San Francisco had a way of humoring these hangers-on of the bars and dives. In fact they were kind to them. Oofy was but one of several of these characters of Old San Francisco—Emperor Norton is perhaps more widely known.

The corral owes Paul its thanks for a nice presentation of a very difficult research job, on an obscure and interesting phase of the Old West.

THE BRAND BOOK

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY AS THE OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION OF THE LOS ANGELES
CORRAL OF THE WESTERNERS

Communications to the Corral:

ROBERT J. WOODS

Registrar of Marks and Brands

320 So. Manhattan Place

Los Angeles 5, Calif.

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Roundup Foreman

828 No. La Brea Ave.

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POSSE OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL

OF THE WESTERNERS

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Round-up Foreman HOMER BOELTER

Registrar of Marks and

Brands ROBERT J. WOODS

Representative ARTHUR WOODWARD

Wranglers NOAH BEERY, JR.

PAUL GALLEHER

PROGRAMS AHEAD

Due to the fact that speakers are entitled to ample time for research and preparation of papers it has been found necessary to maintain a schedule six months ahead of meeting dates.

For the balance of 1947 the schedule is as follows:

Oct.—*Col. Kosterlitzky*—Noah Beery, Jr.

Nov.—*"Notes on some artists in the Early West"*—Don Hill

Dec.—*The Garra Revolt of 1851*—Arthur Woodward

For the first few months of 1948 the tentative schedule is as follows:

Jan.—Mr. "X"

Feb.—*The Bandini Family*—Charles Yale

March—*Charles Lummis*—Dr. Homer Morgan

April—*Al Sieber*—Frank Schilling

May—*Old-time Gun Fighters and their Technique*—Dwight Franklin.

As rapidly as various of the members indicate their willingness to undertake subjects of general interest to the group the schedule will be added to.

DOWN THE BOOK TRAIL

By Paul Galleher

Elaborate plans are underway for the celebration of California's history marking the 100th anniversaries of the discovery of gold in '48, the gold rush in '49 and the admission to the Union in 1850. There are many publications on these subjects already, but it is a safe bet that there will be a good many more before 1951 rolls around. In fact, the avalanche is already beginning to pile up and among a few that are either out, or scheduled for almost immediate publication, you will find the following:

SAN FRANCISCO PORT OF GOLD by William Martin Camp. Slated for fall publication in the Ports of America Series.

SILVER KINGS by Oscar Lewis will be published in October. It will be the story of Flood, Fair, MacKay and O'Brien, the men who milked the Comstock.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CITIES. With photographs by Josef Muench and a foreword by Joseph Henry Jackson is a publication of Hastings House.

Completing the history of California begun in **FROM WILDERNESS TO EMPIRE**, Dr. Robert Glass Cleland's, **CALIFORNIA IN OUR TIME** (1900 to 1940) is now available.

VOYAGE TO CALIFORNIA, 1849, published for the first time in the United States, but re-published from the first edition as printed in Germany in English. It is the story of a group of emigrants originally published 100 years ago. \$4.50 is the price.

In the American Trail Series, Jay Monaghan has done **THE OVERLAND TRAIL** to be ready in late October. It is the story of the trail that gained

Oregon, Washington and California for the United States, the trail that settled the West.

PICTURE MAKER OF THE OLD WEST, WILLIAM H. JACKSON compiled by his son, C. S. Jackson, is now ready. There are 393 photographs, sketches and paintings of this famous photographer.

CALIFORNIA GOLD by Rodman Wilson Paul is the history of gold mining and miners 1848-1873. (Paul will be remembered by the Los Angeles posse when he was Neill Harlow's guest a few meetings back.)

Watch for announcements from some of the local university presses; both Stanford and California will have a good list to choose from.

There will be many reprints and many new fiction items to find favor with our enthusiastic California book buyers.

More about specific items on this three year program will be brought to your attention in later columns.

MEMBERSHIP

With the addition of several new resident members at the last two roundups, membership now stands at the full mark of 50. There is of course no limitation on non-resident or corresponding memberships.

Due to the rapidity with which the membership limit has been reached a resolution was unanimously passed at the last roundup whereby members missing three consecutive meetings are to be dropped or placed in a non-active category. This will make available seats at the monthly roundups for new members who wish to take an active part in the meetings.

Westerners enjoy Ernest Sutton's hospitality





OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

BY EDGAR N. CARTER

IF WE GO by what the biographers and historians tell us, Fort Bridger had its beginning as a swaddling trading post in about 1843, when one James Bridger located there

to do business with the emigrants and Indians. The Indians, by the way, had already been doing this very thing among themselves, and at this very same spot, for many years. The Shoshonies, Utes, Bannocks, Crows, Arapahoes, Snakes, and possibly members of other tribes, had met here before the first white guides and scouts (haloed by biographers) had put in their appearance.

It was the Indians who were the first comers to the great West. They were the ones who really "discovered" the lakes and landmarks, the passes and peaks. They could read "signs" under any and all conditions. They knew first where to find the beaver, the bear and buffalo, as they did the deer, the elk and the mountain sheep.

It was the Indians who *made* the trails and who were guides to the first white guides who "guided" the emigrants and troops and biographers over the trails and passes which the white guides are said to have "discovered." The "famous, fearless, intrepid" white man has been given all the credit for *discovering* what the red man had long known.

Following these Indian-trained guides, trappers, and hunters, came the Pony Express riders; then the stage coaches and emigrants, bringing in the future settlers. The poor Indians were made to retire to restricted reservations to make room for these newcomers.

As early as 1847 the Mormons, on their way to Zion under the leadership of Brigham Young, had passed through and had coveted this (so-called) pole and picket, fort of Bridger's, and especially, the valley in which it was situated.

It was to curb this covetous state of mind, which was taking violent physical shape under the legions of the Latter Day Saints, that United States troops were sent to Utah in the fall of 1857. They came out under the command of Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston and holed up for the winter at a spot in the Valley called Camp Scott, a mile south of the post's final location. Colonel Johnston was an efficient, experienced officer well worthy of the trust placed in him by the War Department. He gave evidence of that trust during a very severe winter by his care of the troops under him. His determination, in face of strong opposition, not to undertake a dangerous march to Salt Lake City, knowing the route had been strongly fortified by the Mormons, was an evidence of his good judgment.

With Colonel Johnston's command came William Alexander Carter who had been selected for the responsible post of sutler by his old friend of Seminole Indian War days,

OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

General William Sibley Harney. He had been known to General Harney in Florida where he operated stores at three locations in that state from 1837 to 1839, inclusive. Carter was naturally endowed with the ability to meet and cope successfully with frontier conditions; this was his second trip across the plains, his first having been made in 1850 to California.

While Bridger's name was given the post by Colonel Johnston, it fell to the lot of Judge Carter to develop it into one of the best known spots in the entire early West. By example he encouraged many activities that gave impetus and purpose to the loosely conducted existence that prevailed before his coming.

His first requirements were a home, a store and warehouses. To build these, he had logs cut and hauled down from the Uinta Mountains fifty miles to the south. He located a deposit of excellent limestone a dozen miles to the west, where he established a quarry from which to supply his need in building. He soon had built in the Uintas his first of three sawmills, known as "Steel's Mill," after the man he employed to install and operate it. From this source he supplied his own lumber and that used in government buildings. Into the construction of his own home went many adobes to eke out the supply of scarce lumber. Poles were used for rafters, and heavier ones for floor and ceiling joists. Only cut nails were known in those years.

Judge Carter's first stock of goods was bought in St. Louis on credit, with the backing of his very intimate friend, Robert Campbell, and amounted to over \$100,000 including farm machinery and implements. The goods were shipped to Atchison, Kansas, the end of the rail line, and from there to Fort Bridger by ox-teams. The cost of wagon transportation alone was over \$50,000. In six months the Judge had paid off this amount by the sale of goods and in the meantime had found bed and board for the owner of the ox train and his men, and pasture for his animals.

When the shipment arrived the store had not been entirely completed and Judge Carter spent more than a few nights out in front of the building guarding, with loaded firearms, the goods that could not be housed. It was a precious stock of goods, dearly bought, and he was justly proud of the assortment which he boasted was better than any in his home town in Missouri.

The following items are selected at random from a supplementary order for goods he had failed to include in his original purchase. The list is fairly indicative of the sort of merchandise required for the trade in those first years in the life of the new store: 8 doz. blue and grey blouses; 30 doz. blue, grey, checked and Rob Roy woolen over shirts, wool socks, bleached muslin for shirts, Linsey woolens, fine toilet soaps, chest locks and mill saw files, fine linen handkerchiefs, side and circular combs, womens shoes, whisk brooms, German cologne, shot pouches, woolen undershirts and drawers; the latter presumably for men.

In addition to the dry goods there were thousands of pounds of staple groceries. Articles such as sugar, flour, coffee and bacon sold readily at one dollar a pound. Dried

OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

apples, currants and raisins came in barrels, pressed down it would seem, with a pile driver. On June 10th, 1860, the supply of postage stamps was nearly exhausted and, as postmaster, the Judge ordered 3,000 three cent stamps sent him from Washington as soon as possible.

The demand for a wee bit of something to warm the cockles of a man's heart prompted the Judge to address an order to "Messrs. Branham Keiser & Co.," St. Louis, Mo., in May 1860. But let the order speak for itself: "The Langton whiskey purchased from you last season has been pronounced the finest whiskey in Utah. I would be obliged to you to send me forty barrels of Bourbon whiskey of the same quality and price . . . Please be particular as to the quality as I would not have the poisonous compound generally brought into this country."

In addition to the responsibilities imposed upon him by his private business interests, as Pony Express Agent and as Postmaster, he was custodian of government funds which he disbursed regularly to officers, soldiers and others. He was his own bookkeeper in those first trying years, and a very exact and careful one. He was Probate Judge and Justice of the Peace, offices which it seems would require a man's whole attention.

The old store was the center of activity for miles around and for many years. The departure and arrival of the daily mail, first by Pony Express and then by stage coach, brought together here a characteristic mixture of races, creeds and colors; individuals who took advantage of this opportunity to conduct their business. The Shoshonie Indians from the North and the Utes from their reservation to the southeast, passed through here twice a year on their exchange visits and always stopped for a day's trade.

Among the Indians, Judge Carter came to be known all through the West as "Totesee-Motesee," meaning greybeard, because of his flowing white beard. He and Chief Washakie of the Shoshonies, were fast friends, each holding the other in high regard. In Washington, D. C., Major Andrew S. Burt, retired, who had been commanding officer at Fort Bridger in 1866, told me this story:

At a time when government troops were engaged in northeastern Wyoming in a battle with Indians of several tribes, Washakie kept his warriors from joining in the fight. In recognition of his services, the War Department sent out a fine saddle to be given the Chief for his friendly cooperation.

A day was set for the presentation. A mixed crowd was assembled in front of Judge Carter's store, and the officer delivered his prepared speech. He then placed his hand on the saddle and proclaimed it a gift from the Great White Father in Washington. But Washakie would have none of it. He made no move to accept the gift nor did he make any reply to the big talk. It was finally discovered that he would receive the saddle only if it were tendered him by his long-time friend "Totesee-Motesee."

Judge Carter, who came to be so respected by the Shoshonies and other tribes of Indians, was born April 15, 1818 at Pittsylvania, Virginia. The last twenty-four years of his

OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

life were spent at his home at Fort Bridger, where he died November 7th, 1881. He is buried in the small cemetery, as are his wife, a sister-in-law and brother-in-law, a few hundred yards from the site of his old home.

In this same cemetery is buried John Robertson, widely known as "Uncle Jack Robinson." Uncle Jack, Southern born in 1801, came to this locality before Jim Bridger and here built for himself a cabin home. It was he who persuaded the "Indispensable Jim Bridger" to start a trading post here in the early forties and I have heard that he contributed financial aid for the purpose.

Uncle Jack was always a gentleman to the tips of his fingers. I liked to talk with him because of his attentive and courteous interest in a young boy. I admired his deftness in the matter of spitting between sentences. It was a quick, snappy, polite expectoration. Just a pursing of the lips with sound effect but with no visible result.

He seemed always to be in a happy mood and was ever ready to relate some impossible yarn of which he had an ample supply. Many of his stories have been credited to Jim Bridger by Bridger's biographers, but I doubt old Jim's originality in this direction.

Unlike Bridger, Uncle Jack never left alone an old man who had been clawed nigh unto death by a grizzly, taking with him the old fellow's rifle and practically everything he owned. He never stood concealed in heavy timber and watched a band of supposed hostile Indians carry off the partner with whom he was trapping, then gather up the partner's trapping outfit and leave.

Although he built his cabin on what was afterwards the government reservation, Uncle Jack laid no claim to a thirty-square-mile grant from the Mexican or Spanish government. Nor did he sell this grant to Brigham Young for \$8,000 and, a month later lease the same land to Colonel Johnston for use as a fort. And finally, he had no sharp attorneys to obtain signatures to phoney affidavits for presentation to Congress in support of his "long neglected" claim to a grant he never owned.

Judge Carter said of Jim Bridger that his excessive egotism was wearying. That he told many stories of his encounters with Indians and bears and that he thought himself rightly entitled to credit for all the explorations carried on in the country this side of the Missouri River. Again the Judge wrote of Bridger that he was densely ignorant, being unable to read or write, and that he had lived so long with the Indians that he had absorbed all their cunning and duplicity.

I recall a very gruesome event which occurred at Fort Bridger. In the early days the common graveyard—we never called it cemetery—was in the valley where water was within a few feet of the surface. Because of this condition a new site was selected on the hill near the Fort.

Shortly after the post was finally abandoned, orders came from Washington to take up all the bodies of officers and soldiers from the two graveyards, pack them in plain wooden boxes two feet long, a foot wide and a foot deep, and ship them down to the

OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

National Cemetery at Laramie.

Because of the nature of the work, no visitors were allowed to view the operations. But here again the curiosity of some of us boys was aroused and we "snuck" up the hill to see what was going on. And we saw plenty! In the valley the men found easy digging and water-soaked, rotting coffins. One of the men said later "We could just as well pumped 'em out."

But on the mesa, conditions were different. Here the ground was tough hardpan. When the coffins were opened the bodies were found to be mummified, with skin like trunk leather. They just wouldn't come apart. So, it was necessary for one man to lift a stiff up to a standing position while the other chopped him into suitable lengths with a sharp hatchet. As was done in the valley graveyard, the skulls and such other parts as could be fitted into the boxes, were packed in hay and the top nailed on for shipment to Laramie.

Due to its isolation, the old army post was obliged to provide its own amusement. Occasional shows were put on by the soldiers, among whom a good deal of talent was often found. Once or twice a year a roving boxer or foot racer would turn up and, after some dickering, would challenge the champ among the soldiers for a fight or race.

I recall a foot race between a big buck private of Company H, of the 21st Infantry, and one of these civilian racers. The event was widely advertised and a large crowd assembled, including women and children. The visitor appeared in blue trunks and with running shoes, while the soldier turned up in a one-piece suit of long underwear buttoned down the front, and I do mean down. They toed the mark, got set and the sixshooter barked. The first heat was a doubtful tie and the race was run over. Up went the betting and again they were off. Now the private had to exert every ounce of his strength even to keep anywhere near the blue trunks.

Half way down the track a roar of laughter went up. The army man had snapped off half a dozen buttons down the lower front of his white union suit; and again I do mean *down*. Nothing daunted he flip flapped his flanks to the end of the run, only to lose the race. (Webster's definition of f. f. is revealing.)

A portion of the old store is still standing and is being used as a State Museum. The chimney of the office used by Judge Carter, as agent of the Pony Express Company, has been left in place as a monument to those days. The original Pony Express stable and long, walled shed, and the buildings used by the Judge as mess hall for his employees, the butcher shop and warehouse, are in their original location. So are the last of the officer's old log quarters and a remnant of the old Mormon cobblestone wall. The Carter residence, for so many years the social center of the post, burned to the ground on December 7th, 1931.

If flinging open stage coach doors and inviting one and all into his home for meals was my father's custom, as my mother contended it was, planting trees was with him an obsession. Among my earliest recollections are the tall cottonwood, and widespreading evergreen trees he had planted around our house many years before. Along the foot of these trees ran an open ditch in which I used to fish with bent pins. The ditch was not

OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS

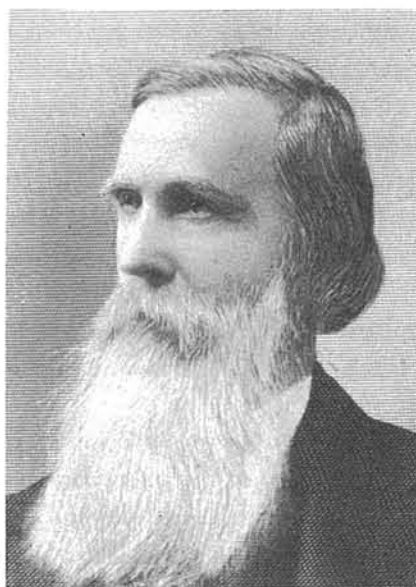
stocked with the two-pound trout I pretended I was catching, but occasionally a long greenish sucker would glide from beneath the bank where he had been hiding.

Then, with the lust of the hunter stalking big game, I would slither back from where I was lying flat on my belly in the grass, and plan my next move. First to drive some pieces of board across the ditch to prevent sucker's escape, then chase him down stream and grab him. But he always eluded me in a whirl of muddy water.

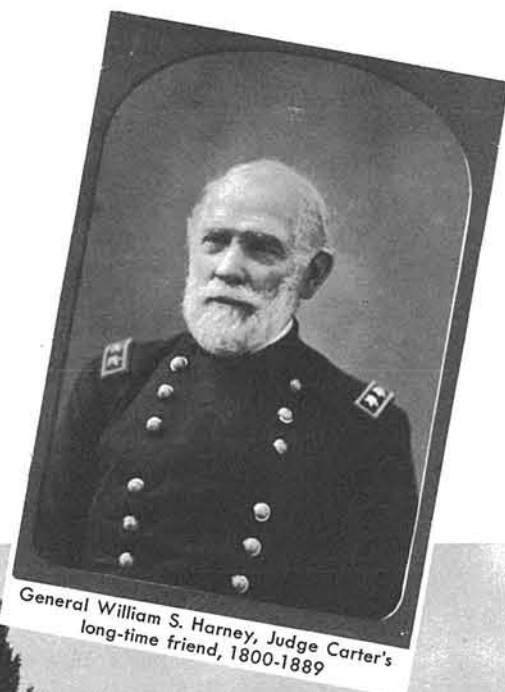
This seems a trivial matter to recall, but *then* it was an event along with many others that made up my happy boyhood days. And do not all of us at one time or another like to recall our childhood experiences, and take pleasure in reliving them? I have chased away many worries in the dark hours of a sleepless night by switching on the light of memory that brought into clear focus hidden pictures of—OLD FORT BRIDGER DAYS.



Chief Washakie, of the Shoshonies



Judge William Alexander Carter, 1818-1881



General William S. Harney, Judge Carter's long-time friend, 1800-1889



Old Pony Express stable and wall of shed



STERN WHACKS AT A FAMOUS WESTERNER

BY PAUL GALLEHER

THE SUBJECT ASSIGNED to me for this evening's paper is one which will enliven our imaginations and quicken our pulses a little as we go back into the San Francisco of

the latter half of the nineteenth century. It concerns a little fellow, an insignificant almost worthless character in so far as his contribution to the history of the west is concerned. Yet, there is a certain amount of humor and pathos and a philosophy of his time which is our legacy that we as Westerners should perhaps try to understand. George R. Stewart, Jr. once said, "The more I study the West, the more I come to see that humor is one of its most important qualities and it is just this humor that most histories of the West ignore or fail to demonstrate."

Our modern term "red light" instantly brings to mind the traffic signal on a busy thoroughfare, but if you think that it is all it means, there is a lot about the Barbary Coast history that will puzzle you. Much that is reported of the Barbary Coast is veiled in misty legend. Here in dens of iniquity with depravity and corruption on all sides, in lawlessness and dangerous living, many interesting characters emerged. Some of sufficient interest to have had a few pages of their lives recorded.

OOFTY HELPED WESTERNERS RELAX

Ooofy Goofty was one of these. He was a comic destined to help people laugh and forget their troubles as society plowed through the mire of their own corruption. There were many strange characters of that day including George Washington Coombs who imagined himself to be the father of his country and paraded the streets in full Washington costume, even to the black velvet breeches and the cocked hat; then there was "Old Rosie" who followed the trail of the refuse cans from street to street gathering his meals bit by bit and always had some sort of boutonniere, usually an old rose in his lapel.

There have been comic characters down through the ages, some typifying trends and conditions, some progress and development, and some even races themselves. There has recently been printed for the first time in America, though published and reprinted in England a few years ago, John Palmer's *Comic Characters of Shakespeare*. Probably the most provocative study in the book is that of Shylock. Palmer believes that Shylock represents to Shakespeare the entire Jewish race.

There were many characters of Barbary Coast days who received fragmentary mention,

Courtesy—San Francisco Public Library

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE PAVILION

STERN WHACKS AT

but Oofy Goofy by virtue of his accomplishments inspired journalistic endeavor to a point where there are several versions of even some of the minor incidents of his life. Before we go into these interesting episodes it might be enlightening to get a mental picture of this mirthful entertainer.

OOFY'S ANTECEDENTS (IF ANY)

Most writers of the period claim that he had no other name and that even the tiny headstone marker on his grave bear simply the two words, "Oofy Goofy." However the late bibliographer, Robert Cowan, who wrote several articles on this character states that "His proper name was Marks, a Hebrew of dubious antecedents." Short snatches of his conversations, especially those which are mentioned when he was participating in certain pedestrian activities, seem to bear out the fact that he was a German-Jew. He was a stringy little man, very small, very thin and always very hungry. A demented genius known to all San Franciscans of his day. Perhaps no other such character enjoyed greater fame even tho' from a historical aspect he was just another unimportant street character.

THERE WERE OTHER OOFIES, TOO

Oofy Goofy as a name was not original with this San Francisco character, for it appears that a Dutch comedian many years before this time had called himself Oofy Goofy Gus. In fact, since the San Francisco hero's time he has had counterparts in several sections of the West, notably in Texas. There doesn't seem to be a satisfactory explanation of this curious appellation. One version stems from a story of an early dramatic venture when he assumed the character of the "Wild Man of Borneo" in a Market Street side show. He would scowl and grimace at the passing throng who paid ten cents to gaze upon this jungle beast and into his cage an attendant would occasionally toss a large chunk of raw meat which the Wild Man would gluttonously consume, at the same time shaking the bars, beating his breast and roaring "Oofy Goofy." He was quite naturally christened Oofy Goofy and was thus identified to his dying day. His costume in this Wild Man act was as wild as the act itself and it almost led to his untimely end. With a coating of home-made glue or road tar applied to his body from head to toe he rolled into a bed of fur, feathers and horse hair. A more fantastic, weird man would have had to be a Hollywood make-up creation and so well did he characterize the part that many dimes were paid to view him. All went well for a time, but unhappily it was in the heat of the summer and the costume was so dense that he was unable to perspire and became ill. He was given a hot water treatment and some of the fur and glue did give way, but carried with it part of his skin. Then there was the theory that exposing him to the sun would melt the glue and Oofy was carted off to the hospital where his costume

A FAMOUS WESTERNER

underwent a solvent and sun treatment on the roof of the hospital. This treatment too was only partially successful but he ultimately recovered, although he probably carried some patches of that fur to his grave.

TO LIVE BY HIS WITS

Oofty lived largely by his wits and of course his acting ability, and never depended upon a handout for his living. One of his amusing stunts which paid off rather well was the episode of the long leg. He strapped a ten inch board to one leg, fastened his shoe to it, and wearing a specially made pair of trousers proceeded up Market street almost falling over sideways with every step. People howled and laughed, but his idea worked. He brought attention to himself and the sign he had pinned to the back of his shirt which read "FIND OUT WHAT EVERY YOUNG WOMAN SHOULD KNOW FOR FIFTY CENTS." He had a stack of small books under his arm and when the crowd became sufficiently large he held the sale and the books sold like hotcakes. When the customers opened them they found a collection of cook book recipes.

Once under the conditions of a ten dollar wager he was put into a packing box and shipped as ordinary freight to Sacramento, one hundred miles away. He hadn't bothered to study how packing crates were handled. The box was banged, rolled, tossed and dropped in best baggage smasher style and when they finally unpacked him, Oofty was a sorry mass of bumps and bruises and battered within an inch of his life, but he collected the ten dollars. He had overlooked one detail however, and that was that the return fare from Sacramento was ten dollars!!

Oofty Goofy played many character parts and often performed as a singer and dancer. From the stage of one of San Francisco's most famous theatres, The Bella Union, his theatrical fame reached a new high in a performance of the romantic drama, "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare.

The Bella Union was built in 1849 as a gambling palace and after a rugged existence, several times gutted by fire and rebuilt, it was finally closed after the Vigilante uprising of 1856. It was re-opened as a melodeon, and many famous artists appeared to delight San Francisco theatre-goers. The Philadelphia Minstrels staged the first minstrel show ever held in San Francisco at this famous theatre.

In the eighties, two hundred and eighty pounds of lady arrived in San Francisco claiming to be a wealthy Jewish widow. Big Bertha, the only name by which she was known, victimized kindhearted gentlemen interested in protecting her legendary fortune. Her plan was simple: men were to be put to a test of trust to determine their own worth and financial standing. Each one was required to give her a sum of money to be matched by an equal amount from her funds and the whole to be invested in a venture of which she alone knew the nature. In this manner she collected several thousand dollars, none

STERN WHACKS AT

of which was ever returned to those lovelorn males. She was finally arrested, but none of her gentlemen friends were willing to face ridicule and the charges were dismissed. It was then that the Bella Union established her as "Big Bertha, Queen of the Confidence Women" in a store on Market Street and for ten cents you could hear her relate many harrowing crimes she never committed. Her success and popularity increased by leaps and bounds and she was moved into the Bella Union with a song and dance act. To invigorate its already receptive bill the Bella Union's management conceived the idea of offering the Shakesperian epic as an added attraction.

Here it was that Oofy Goofty came upon the scene again to play Romeo to Big Bertha's Juliet. Big Bertha was too heavy to ascend the balcony stairs and the balcony itself was too frail to support her. It has been said that the management constructed an enormous reinforced balcony from which she could emote as the great Juliet, but most accounts of this production state that in this balcony scene Oofy Goofty as Romeo took to the balcony while Big Bertha herself read Juliet's lines standing firmly upon the stage. This production ran a week when Big Bertha complained that as a lover Oofy Goofty was entirely too rough and she flatly refused to continue the part. Oofy's training as the Wild Man of Borneo gave him a cave man complex which was too much for Big Bertha and so ended Oofy's days at the Bella Union.

OOFY AS AN ATHLETE (?)

One accomplishment of which little has been recorded was Oofy's participation in athletics. In his old home town of Milpitas, California boasting of some 300 or 400 people he had been the champion pedestrian. Athletic contests have always created interest and the one which started in Mechanics Pavilion in San Francisco at ten o'clock on the night of February 21st, 1889 was no exception. It was called a "go-as-you-please six day race" and there were twenty nine contestants on the starting line when the gun was fired. Oofy was one of them and the peculiar antics of he and his two clown friends, "Gus" Brown and "Old Sport" Campana, kept the crowd amused. They watched each other closely and seldom parted company. Oofy's desire was to defeat "Gus" Brown and every time Gus would speed up Oofy would put on a dash to meet it. At one time Oofy stumbled and fell; when he regained his equilibrium he turned to the spectators and said "Boys, I only hits the ground in high places. I gets there all the same, you bet." About eleven o'clock, one hour after the starting gun, some of the contestants took their walking rations. "Old Sport" drank a cup of coffee, while Oofy limped along with a saucer of ice cream. Shortly after midnight "Gus" Brown charged the scorer with cheating him on the number of laps and retired from the race. While he was in his dressing room he was arrested by the police on a warrant sworn out by a woman who accused him of battery. Twenty-seven hours after the race had started Oofy was seventeenth in a field of

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twenty-two with seventy miles to his credit.

It was not unusual for contestants to receive many interesting gifts during the progress of the race. Oofy was called to the stand and presented with an immense paste diamond ring of which he was supposed to be a great judge. "Old Sport" was given a roasted turkey and a bundle of fresh vegetables by one of his admirers. One night about nine o'clock as Oofy was nearing the grandstand a gentleman handed him a plate of oysters on the half shell. Without stopping he thanked the gentleman and during the lap feasted on the succulent bivalves. Another time he was presented with an enormous doughnut by one of his lady admirers. It wasn't only for these tasty morsels however that this shrewd little man entered the contest. He won considerable money for himself and his backers by covering two hundred miles in the six days. It was reported that a prominent Market Street saloon-keeper won over a thousand dollars on Oofy's ability to stay the two hundred. In the six days he actually covered 222 miles.

There is also recorded a similar race the following spring in which he and his particular friend "Old Sport" Campana were the drawing cards. He was dressed like a full-fledged prince wearing a handsomely ornamented white suit, decorated with gold and silver trimmings and imitations worked in tinsel of Southern California butterflies. His pants were done up a la vaquero. All together he was a most grotesque character and wore across his breast the insignia, "The White is King," meaning that there would be many pale faced braves when the match was finished. Once again he went through the race clowning, usually as lively as a cricket and although he was counted out because of the new rule for not doing one hundred miles in the first twenty-four hours he still kept in the race to win some bets. Even money was offered that only Oofy Goofy would overcome 225 miles, while some of the downtown sporting resorts had wagered he could not cover 250 miles in the six days. Although he seemed always to be the freshest man in the race he lost his bets finishing with only 211 miles to his credit. As a note of interest the winner was one James Albert with a record of 533 miles.

OOFY LEARNS TO TURN HIS STERN

Oofy Goofy's story continues as he went from theatre to theatre and from melodeon to melodeon doing his song and dance act. It is from this next episode of his life that I have framed the title of this paper—"Stern Whacks at a Famous Westerner." Oofy was broke, his dancing was bad, and his singing was worse. He was booked at Bottle Koenigs, a disreputable dive on the Barbary Coast. One night in a rage he was, with great ceremony thrown into the street by the management. He landed on the sidewalk with a crash that would have broken the back of most men, but it turned out to be a rather fortunate experience for after he recovered he made the discovery that a certain portion of his anatomy was devoid of sensation. This gave him an idea on which with monkeyish

STERN WHACKS AT

cunning he proceeded to capitalize. Every San Franciscan knew him and his reputation. For a dime you could kick him as hard as you pleased. For the modest amount of fifty cents he would stoop and permit any interested individual to strike him with a club or baseball bat.

These kicks and wallops on his desensitized stern proved more remunerative than anything he had undertaken. It was an easy job too—no work involved—simply taunt the populace by pointing his alluring haunches skyward and invite the ten to fifty cent customers to do their best. He carried with him a sawed-off billiard cue to help his customers take advantage of the better fun at the higher price. From clubs and theatres, from saloons and dives, from disreputable and respectful corners of San Francisco he became well known. Everybody hit or kicked him, but none could hurt him. It was a glorious satisfying employment. He was a success, he was financially independent and his popularity was unbounded.

OOFY MEETS HIS WATERLOO

Several versions of his retirement from this rather profitable enterprise are told, but it is quite apparent that he invited destruction once too often. One day the world's heavyweight champion boxer John L. Sullivan came to San Francisco to fight. It was a great card and all San Francisco turned out to see the mighty John L. hammer his opponent senseless in four rounds. Waiting for Sullivan to come from his dressing room after the fight Oofy managed to squirm through the mob and as the battler emerged he called in a shrill, excited voice for the champ to hit him for twenty-five cents—a special reduction for the world's champion. There are contrasting opinions of this encounter. One records John L. and Oofy shaking hands in true pugilistic fashion, then Oofy assumed his pose and the champ let him have it with all his weight behind the well-directed billiard cue. The blow would probably have killed an ordinary man, but Oofy merely limped away with a fractured spine and never really recovered from that terrific swat. He always walked with a limp after that and the slightest jar would make him cringe and whimper.

The most popular version of this final episode in Oofy's somewhat erratic career is that Sullivan looked at the harmless little man with a contemptuous sneer and sent a crushing blow to the little wild man's ribs. Oofy staggered back. In the crowd a tall, lean lad pushed his way through and yelled, "Let him alone!," but Sullivan not to be bothered by an outsider, took up Oofy's challenge and was handed the baseball bat. The club was applied by the mighty pugilist and little Oofy crumbled to his knees. It was a blow under which the average man would have died, but not Oofy. The tall youngster made his way through the crowd to where poor Oofy lay and said, "Come on old timer. I'll square this rotten deal for you some day." Eight years later in a New Orleans prize fight arena a tall, graceful lad from Hayes Valley in San Francisco danced around John L. until the champ was dizzy. There was no pity in the young man's heart as he

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slashed, cut, ripped and smashed John L. to a beaten fighter. As the fight ended ringsiders heard him mutter, "There he is Oofy, just like he walked off and left you." And out of the ring climbed the new world's champion, Oofy's pal, Gentleman Jim Corbett.

Oofy disappeared from the city streets and died a few years later, a pauper. The story of one of San Francisco's most famous and most unimportant characters was ended.

BELLA UNION — SCENE OF OOFY'S
SHAKESPEAREAN EFFORT



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"OOFY GOOFTY"
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"Composite sketch of Oofy" prepared from the text of the paper and personal research of Los Angeles Westerner, John B. Goodman.

THE LOS ANGELES POSSE OF THE WESTERNERS

Announce Publication

The BRAND BOOK ★ ★ ★ VOL. I

Numbered Edition

BRAND BOOK IN THE WORKS

Sheriff Britzman announced at the last roundup that the full committee of eight men are already at work preparing the material for the first Los Angeles Westerners Brand Book. And, believe it or not, it is being planned for publication prior to Christmas—and we mean Christmas 1947!

The date of publication has been advanced by planning and preparing the necessary material for the last two meetings of 1947 ahead of schedule.

Sales of the 600-copy, numbered edition have progressed very satisfactorily, and it is expected that no copies will be available after date of publication. The price was advanced, on October first, to \$6.00 per copy and orders will be accepted as long as there are any unreserved copies. There could be no finer Christmas gift than this limited edition book, which is certain to be worth many times its cost.

Members of the book committee, announced by the Sheriff are as follows: Homer Boelter, production; Bill Weber, binding; Martin Johnson, title pages, jacket and end-paper design; Clarence Ellsworth and Noah Beery, Jr., illustration material; Bob Woods and Gregg Layne, appendices and related material; Paul Galleher, bibliography, biography and index matter.

The book is planned to contain many pages of illustrations, heretofore unpublished material and hard-to-find material, in addition to the 14 papers presented before the group from December 1946 through 1947.

CHICAGO'S SECOND

Volume II of the Brand Book of the Chicago Corral was announced recently through the issuance of an attractive folder. The prospectus was most interesting, and the Los Angeles Corral looks forward to its appearance.

The First Annual Brand Book Will Contain:

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