



July

1951

PUBLICATION 14

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

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THE ANNUAL ROUNDUP AT HICKSON'S

It has now become tradition with the Los Angeles Corral to hold the June meeting at Ernie Hickson's colorful and historic Placeritos Ranch, with the old stage route to the west, the "Oak of the Golden Dream" to the east, and the black gold beginning to flow on all sides.

On June 24th, over half a hundred Westerners and their guests walked up to the bar and staggered out to see Ernie's western frontier town so familiar to those who have seen the Hollywood "Westerns." The costumes of several of the Westerners proved as picturesque as the scenery.

Highlights of the day's program included a very short 90 minute discussion with Col. William A. Graham and Gen. Frank Ross concerning the factual history of the Custer Fight on the Little Big Horn. The Westerners could pick no greater authority than Col. Graham with whom to discuss this subject.

The speaker of the evening, Sam Garrett of Newhall, told of his personal experiences as a cow-hand, and as a top performer in the western show business. His associations with Will Rogers, Buffalo Bill, and others, provided interesting listening for the Corral. Following his talk, Garrett exhibited his skill in the gentle art of roping.

The finale of the program was the showing of a documentary film produced by the Standard Oil Company, entitled "Injun Talk." This technicolor picture is a demonstration by our Los Angeles Westerner, Tim McCoy, of the Indian sign language, and was photographed with the

Indians on their own grounds. Tim is to be congratulated for thus preserving a bit of this method of communication which is fast becoming a forgotten art. Carl Dentzel's guest, Tony Lawrence of Standard Oil did the honors in furnishing and projecting the film at the meeting.

During the dinner, the group was entertained in excellent western fashion by fiddler Clyde Lindsay and his accompanist Carl Morrison.

Among the legitimate *Western* Westerners at this year's round-up were Ed. Carter via Fort Bridger, Percy Bonebrake via Los Angeles city jails, Buck Weaver, Don Perceval and Clarence Ellsworth of the western artists, Billy Dodson, Iron Eyes Cody, Pidge Beery, and our guests LeRoy Hafen, Sam Garrett, and Col. Graham.

To Ernie Hickson, the thanks of his fellow Westerners for his hospitality and our regrets that his health prevented his attendance at the round-up.

THE 1950 BRAND BOOK

Those fortunate members on the book committee were recently given a little preview of the material and setup of the forthcoming Brand Book. It is going to be without doubt another publication which every member will be justly proud of and if the enthusiasm shown at the meeting is any indication, the edition will be sold out before it is off the presses.

Progress on the volume is now reaching the final stages and the committee will soon be in a position to announce its date of publication.



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Elmo Scott Watson 1892-1951

The passing of Elmo Scott Watson was an event of exceeding regret not only to the Westerners but to all interested in the history of the great and magnificent West. For it was Elmo Scott Watson who, together with Leland Case, was responsible for the founding of the first chapter of Westerners, the Chicago Corral, in 1944. No respect or commendation can be too great for the man whose efforts resulted in the eventual organization of two more chapters.

For some brief facts concerning Elmo Scott Watson, I quote from the Westerners Brand Book, Chicago, of June 1951, with permission of the editor and author, Don Russell:

"He was born in Colfax, Ill., April 2, 1892, the son of Scott and Charlotte Smith Watson, was graduated from the high school there, and from Colorado College, Colorado Springs, in 1916. He became a member of the editorial staff of the Colorado Springs Gazette and in 1918 became an instructor of journalism at the University of Illinois, where he continued his studies. He became a feature writer for the Western Newspaper Union in 1920, and in 1924 became editor of the Publishers Auxiliary. He received the degree of Master of Science in Journalism from Northwestern University in 1935 where he taught for 26 years, becoming associate professor in charge of the Chicago Division of the Medill School of Journalism. He also taught a class at Illinois Wesleyan from 1948 to 1950, and that institution awarded him the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1948. He was president of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalism fraternity, in 1939-40, and was active in many other journalistic and historical organizations. In 1950 he became dean of the school of journalism of the University of Denver. I never met one of his students who did not rate him as the greatest of teachers . . ."

"What was mortal in him rests in soil he loved, which could have been almost any spot in America. What is immortal abides in us who knew him."

THE SANTA MARGARITA RANCHO

By PERCY L. BONEBRAKE

Long before the occupation of California by the Americans, an Englishman, John Forster, came to Southern California as a sailor, and sailed out of San Pedro for a number of years. Later he married the sister of Pio Pico, then the Mexican Governor of California. Forster had joined the Catholic Church and had become a Mexican citizen.

Being of a thrifty nature he prospered, and in 1864 he purchased from Pio Pico the Santa Margarita Rancho and the Los Flores Rancho, together comprising 140,000 acres together with 25,000 cattle, 3000 horses, and about 7000 sheep.

On August 6, 1866, he received a patent to the Mission Viejo Rancho which contained 46,432 acres, he having acquired title from Augustin Olvera, and on the same date received a patent to the Rancho Trabuco comprising 22,184 acres and later on he bought about 17,000 acres from the Government. This gave him ownership of 225,000 acres, an Empire in itself, all in one body of land. The Rancho began at a point near El Toro, and extended south to Oceanside. From San Juan Capistrano the Pacific Ocean was its Western boundary, and on the east it extended well up on the sides of the Santa Ana Mountains.

The word Trabuco has two meanings in Spanish. One is a surname, the other means a bell-mouth musket. I read an article the other day which said a Spanish expedition of early days, I believe it was De Anza but am not sure, passed through that country on its way north, and a soldier lost his musket there—hence the name.

As a matter of fact, a discharged Spanish soldier named Trabuco, who had married an Indian girl from the Mission at Capistrano settled there, and the Canyon was called Trabuco Canyon and Trabuco Creek after him. Some of his descendants live at La Jolla, a small reservation on the San Louis River between Pala and the dam on the west slope of Palomar Mountain.

Away back in early days, an Irishman named Tim O'Neil, a sailor, jumped ship at San Diego. I think it was sometime around 1850.

After hiding out in the hills until his ship sailed, he came down to the Pueblo and settled there, looking around for something to do. He got two oxen, a caretta or two-wheeled cart, and started peddling water by the bucketful to the people then living there.

The early day Spaniards never dug any wells. Their settlements were always on the banks of a stream or near springs.

The original Pueblo of San Diego was not where it is now, but was situated where the San Diego River enters the bay. The old adobe you see by the side of the Highway at that point,

THE SANTA MARGARITA RANCHO

(Continued from Page 2)

now labeled "Ramona's Home," was the town house of the Estudillo family of San Jacinto, and is, I believe, the only building of the original town of San Diego now standing.

When the Comstock Lode was discovered, and San Francisco was in the throes of wild excitement, speculating in mines and mining stocks, O'Neil went to San Francisco and met two saloon-keepers, Flood and O'Brien, both shrewd and daring gamblers in the stock market and both destined to become millionaires many times over. He threw in with them and soon made his pile.

Juan Forster died on the Santa Margarita Rancho in 1882 and his wife a month later.

O'Neil and Flood bought the Rancho and O'Neil managed it, and after his death, his son, Jerome, handled the huge property.

My father owned a Ranch at Capistrano and I generally spent my vacations there. The village is almost surrounded by the Santa Margarita Rancho except on the ocean side, and I knew the Rancho and Jerome O'Neil well, both when I was a small boy, and later as a grown man.

Jerome was a cripple, one leg being much shorter than the other, and he was blind in one eye and deaf in one ear. He ran the Rancho as his father had before him and his range boss was Ambrosio Valenzuela, a Mission Indian.

When I first knew the Rancho, I was so small, I used to go to the Round-ups near Capistrano on a Shetland Pony, and years later often went there to buy cattle when I was a livestock buyer for the Cudahy Packing Company. Jerome would not sell his beef cattle to anyone else but Cudahy.

I went there in the Spring for about three weeks and again in the Fall.

Cudahy Packing Company was using about 125 head of cattle a day, and we shipped about 300 cattle at a time. The stockyards there would not hold over that amount, and besides we did not want to ship too many at a time and hold them in the yards too long, as cattle taken off grass and fed in stockyards shrink too much in weight.

At that time the Rancho carried about 20,000 cattle, including calves, and were all Durhams. Most of them were a dark red with a few roans among them, and they were the meanest damned cattle you ever saw.

At one time, many years before, a severe drouth struck Southern California and the Rancho lost many cattle, and only saved the remainder by selling them off and shipping them out of the country.

The Rancho was re-stocked with cattle shipped from Texas, bringing with them the dreaded Texas fever tick.

As a result, in my time, the entire Rancho was quarantined, and no cattle were allowed to be

shipped from the Rancho except for immediate slaughter, and the stock cars which carried them were carefully washed and cleaned after each shipment, and it was some years before the ticks were eradicated.

Early in the World War II, the greater part of the Rancho was acquired by the Government and is now used as a training base for the Marines, and is known as Camp Pendleton.

I have been told that some 50,000 acres near Capistrano were reserved and are still owned by some of the heirs of Tim O'Neil and is operated as a Cattle Rancho.

Tim O'Neil had two sons, Jerome and Richard, and two or three daughters. The latter I never knew. Both Jerome and Dick are dead. Dick's wife now lives in Los Angeles, a highly regarded and very handsome matron. She has, I believe, several children. We used to attend the same schools and were always good friends.

She was the daughter of Walter Moore, Chief of the Los Angeles Fire Department for many years. They lived on the west side of Figueroa Street, just four or five doors south of Pico Street.

Next door to them lived Major Horace Bell, well known as the Author of the book *Reminiscences of a Ranger*.

Major Bell owned an orange orchard of several acres there, and subdivided it into lots during the Great Boom. He put in streets and sidewalks, and one of them he named Georgia Bell Street after his wife. It is now known as Georgia Street.

I knew his sons well. We were about the same ages and went to school together. I recall they used to steal a half a gunny sack full of the book *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, and go around from house to house peddling them for \$.10 to \$.25 apiece.

Daisy Moore's mother was one of the three famous and beautiful Lanfranco sisters. One married Walter Moore, another, Walter Maxwell of this city, and the other married a man by the name of Arthur Bretano.

Their father, John Lanfranco, built the old Lanfranco building on North Main Street between Commercial and Requena.

In the days when I knew the Santa Margarita, when Jerome O'Neil managed it, he ran it old California style. There was little change from the old days, quiet, peaceful, isolated from the rest of the world. It was a bit of Old California of the days of 1820 to 1840, the days of the Dons, when the wants of the people were few and well supplied, when everyone was contented and happy and California was a Utopia.

Today it is a super-College, where picked men are scientifically taught in the art of destroying their fellow-men.

And so passes the old Santa Margarita . . .

THE PLACERITOS SUMMER ROUNDUP



"FROM THE LOOKS ON THE FACES" ...

From the looks of the faces as portrayed above one can easily see that every hombre present was enjoying a good time. In one of the scenes we might think our good Deputy Sheriff was running a little auction on the side, but such was not the case, he was merely pointing out the

virtues of his prized Currier & Ives print. We wonder just what it was that Jim Gardiner was intently staring at. Was it the reclining lady on the leopard skin so charmingly revealed in the painting which hung over the bar? Our handsome and dashing chief custodian, Percy Bone-

brake places a fatherly hand over the shoulder of mint julep drinking Hugh Shick. Notice the loungers on the porch of the Last Chance Saloon, waiting to trap any newcomers for a free trip to the brass rail. The mad antics of Trapper Dwight Franklin and Yankee soldier Noah Beery were temporarily subdued as they gaze with evident pleasure at the wonderful

exhibition of roping being done for the group by internationally famous Sam Garrett. Mr. Garrett was the guest speaker of the evening and gave the Westerners a very interesting account of his life when he played in the Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Wild West Shows. All in all it was a big day!

LIFE ON THE PLAINS IN THE DAYS OF CARVER

By CHARLES R. NORDIN



CHARLES R. NORDIN
in Doc Carver's saddle in the Union Pacific
Diamond Jubilee Parade in Omaha in 1929.

The following article was given to me by Charles R. Nordin of Omaha, Nebraska. Mr. Nordin has, without a doubt, one of the finest collections of western historical artifacts in the United States. It is one of my proud pleasures to call Charles Nordin a friend. I believe his contribution to the preservation of western history by rescuing many thousands of western relics from destruction and oblivion will be appreciated only in the future when such trophies can be fully studied by our coming generation of western historians.

It would be impossible here to enumerate the contents of the Nordin collection. However, I might mention a few items in his possession. Doctor Carver was a personal friend of Mr. Nordin's. Upon Doc Carver's death, Nordin acquired all of Carver's personal relics, including his saddle for which the late Belle Starr once offered Dr. Carver \$10,000. (That was when a dollar was worth 100 cents.) The collection contains hundreds of original photographs of plainmen, scouts, Indian fighters, outlaws and peace officers. Among his many guns are such authenticated pieces as Sheriff Dan Farrell's gun with which he stopped Polk Wells, Jesse James' Remington .44, and one of Cole Younger's guns.

Mr. Nordin's museum of personal memories could fill a sizable and exciting book. Among his friends were Deadwood Dick (Richard W. Clarke), the Black Hills Stage Guard; Luke North, captain of the famous Pawnee scouts; long-haired Idaho Bill (Col. W. B. Pearson); Pawnee Bill (Major Gordon W. Lillie), leader of the Oklahoma "Boomerangs"; Buffalo Bill, and many others too numerous to mention. Our own Dr. Arthur Woodward will be interested in knowing that Mr. Nordin was a personal friend of California Joe's son.

I have barely touched the surface of the Nordin collection, and feel that any further description would be only a poor outline of the results of Mr. Nordin's years of painstaking collecting.

In passing, I might add that Mr. Nordin has given many lectures before interested groups. A few years ago the Nebraska State Historical Society at Lincoln invited him to lecture on the plainsman's life and he was received with great enthusiasm. It is my hope that some time in the near future we of the Los Angeles Westerners can have a similar privilege.

The article reprinted here, written in the manner of Ned Buntline when Dr. Carver was still living, was given to Mr. Nordin by Carver himself.

JACK E. REYNOLDS.

Among the hundreds of thrilling experiences through which the former great scout and hunter, Dr. W. F. Carver, now of Montoe, passed, perhaps the following is not only among the most interesting, but vividly illustrates the resource, coolness and daring in the face of great and imminent danger of the big, handsome, polished gentleman whom we know as Dr. Carver, premier showman and champion rifle shot of the world.

The following is the story of the doctor's last experience on the vast plains of the then "wild and woolly" West.

Carver, known among the Indians as the "Evil Spirit of the Plains," and his partner, "Blue Bill" were trapping and had established their camp in a valley. With their usual caution they had circled the camp without discovering any Indian signs or trail leading into their snug retreat.

"Blue Bill" had gone to look after the traps, leaving "The Evil Spirit," who among other accomplishments had a French chef beat seven ways when it came to preparing a real feed, to get supper.

Carver was alone in the dugout with sleeves rolled up, making biscuit, preparing a beaver tail for the fire and "fixing up chuck," so that when Bill returned the grub would be steaming hot. Now, although Carver was all to the hand-made lace trimmed when it came to getting a meal, he hated cooking. He was mentally kicking himself that he hadn't accepted the offer of an old Indian made a few days before, to trade his daughter—a dusky beauty of some twenty summers—for his buffalo horse. He had about reached the conclusion that he would rather not have a horse and walk than to make biscuit and roast over a fire with his hands in the condition of a pastry cook's, when his thoughts were interrupted by a shadow cast by some one in the doorway.

"Hullo, pard, you back?" he asked cheerfully.

He turned on his heel in a flash, his hands besmeared with dough, when his query was greeted by "How Kola"? — the "How-do-you-do"? of the Sioux. Standing in the door were three Indians in full war paint. They were Whistler, Fat Badger and White Antelope. Take them by and large as desperate, inhuman and blood-thirsty trio of human red-skin hell-hounds as the great untamed West ever knew.

At a glance Carver concluded it was "all up" with him. The blood-thirsty warriors noted his occupation, sniffed the deliciously redolent atmosphere, gave grunts of satisfaction and motioned him to proceed with his culinary efforts. The Indians were satisfied they had

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DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL.



THE ALBUM OF GUNFIGHTERS

By J. MARVIN HUNTER and NOAH H. ROSE.
Hunter and Rose, Bandera, Texas, 1951.
\$10.00.

Reviewed by EUGENE CUNNINGHAM,
author of *Triggernometry*, *Diamond River
Man*, etc.

Amigos, conciudadanos, aficionados! Here it is and this is it—at last! Reading from left to right, the only book of its kind, stirred together by just the only two men I know capable of doing such. For—well, something less than a century, Marvin Hunter has been roaming the prairies and the chaparral, more shot against than shooting, gathering up Texas fact and fiction. His findings he has published in country newspapers and that inimitable little magazine *Frontier Times* and in many a book and pamphlet. For even longer, Noah Rose has criss-crossed Texas with a bird in his hand, taking pictures of everything and everybody, hunting out and preserving rare frontier photographs. Actually! Add the years of these two and the know-how score tallies almost a century and a half.

This big, beautiful book offers for the first time in one place likenesses of the Tall Ones, the Medium Men, the Gun Dogies, whom everyone has heard more or less about, with something of their background, their records. In every detail of "bookmanship" the volume is outstanding: binding, paper, cut-work, printing, Warren Hunter's splendid cover-drawing and inner decorations. At just four-bits apiece, the 300-odd pictures represent more than \$150 value in photography alone!

I have gone over every page, every face, with that special interest only natural to a Southwestern historian also a long-time admiring friend of these collaborators.

Here are pictures copied and clarified years ago by Noah Rose, for my own gallery of gunfighters: *TRIGGERNOMETRY*; pictures discovered by "Brother Noah" and announced to me in the Long Yell of enthusiasm; pictures we questioned and which we all of us checked by every means available—like the "Sam Bass Group" on page 75 which is not a Sam Bass group; pictures of those old Oklahoma outlaws, Bill Cook and Chicken Lucas, who used to chase my Indian-trading father-in-law's wagon above Red River, long ago; pictures of old friends and companions now gone—General Lee Christmas, Billy Breakenridge, George Coe,

Jim Gillett, Captain John Hughes and many another . . .

Errors there are in the captions, here and there; not many of real importance, all easily cleared up by a small sheet of Errata. I mention them only because the enthusiast wants his reference books as nearly as possible 100% correct—and so do Hunter and Rose. But all in all here is the book for the Westerner, virtually a give-away at ten dollars. Over the years, in my book-sections in magazines and newspapers, I have said it a hundred times—at least! Noah Rose, the Old Pictures Man of San Antonio, Marvin Hunter, the History-Hunter of Bandera—"when they was made, the mold was busted!"

It is a real pleasure to say it again, today, in connection with this book they've done, for the hundred-and-somethingth time!

I'LL DIE BEFORE I'LL RUN

The Story of the Great Feuds of Texas.

By C. L. SONNICHSEN. New York, Harper and Brothers. \$3.50.

Reviewed by WAYNE GARD, author of
Sam Bass, *Frontier Justice*, etc.

Here is a lively book on the day when Texas had two kinds of men—the quick and the dead. It is packed with gunsmoke and has a few hangings tossed in. Yet this story of Texas feuds is a true account, except for a few speculations and legends tagged as such. The most gory of the pulp Westerns and Hollywood horse operas are pale in comparison.

C. L. Sonnichsen of El Paso has been digging into these feuds for a decade or so. Sonnichsen, who has a Ph.D. degree from Harvard, heads the Department of English at Texas Western College and is a past president of the Texas Folklore Society. He completed this chronicle of Texas feuds, his fourth book on the Southwest, with the aid of a Rockefeller Foundation research grant.

The earliest feud which he describes in detail is that which broke out between the Lee and Peacock factions right after the Civil War. The locale was the Cross Timber country between Dallas and the Red River. Although this feud didn't involve as many people as some, or last as long, it was bitter and full of gore. As in the Smoky Mountain ballad, the feudists died but never ran.

The author fills seventy pages with the shootings and hangings of the famous Sutton-Taylor feud that made a shambles of DeWitt County for a couple of decades. He tells of other vendettas, including the Horrell-Higgins feud, the San Saba troubles, and the Jaybird-Woodpecker feud. Several others, including the Mason County troubles and the War of the Regulators

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In the Days of Carver

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Handsome Frank to the bad. Carver didn't like the looks of things a little bit, but kept right on slapping biscuits into shape and shooting 'em into the oven. He threw the beaver tail on the coals and then started to go for some more wood—which he really needed. But Whistler, chief of the bunch, was wise to the move, stopped Carver and Fat Badger got the wood. Carver built up the fire and watched the supper slowly cook. It couldn't cook any too slowly for him, for well he knew that when those three red devils had filled their filthy paunches there was like to be a scalping bee with Carver as scalpee.

Through all his weapons were beyond his reach Carver's nerve never left him. Cool as the proverbial cucumber, he covertly watched for an opportunity to turn the tables on the redskins. They were a foxy trio, however, and knowing the character of the man they were dealing with their treacherous, lynxlike eyes noted his every movement. They hated this pale face, this "Evil Spirit," this handsome, powerful representative of a despised but feared alien race, with all the intensity of their savage natures. His very heart's blood alone would appease their fury. Carver knew this and the red devils knew that he knew it; and so with that refinement of cruelty known to them they thought to prolong the agony. But they reckoned without their host.

True, it was a desperate situation for Carver; plan after plan flitted through his fertile brain, only to be rejected. Finally, when almost in despair, inspiration came to him. With an outward stoicism worthy of the Whistler himself, but inwardly seething with an inborn hatred for these treacherous, hell hounds, he proceeded to carry out his plan.

First he picked up a good sized stick of wood, poked up the fire and left it with one end sticking in the blaze. When supper was cooked he placed the savory food on the dried buffalo skin he used for the festive board, and the "noble red men" were soon getting outside of the beaver tail and biscuits at a rate that made Carver grind his teeth for flour was worth \$10 a sack, and Fort McPherson an hundred miles away. Still he might have no use for flour soon.

With longing eyes Carver eyed his repeater which hung on the wall: his gaze next wandered to his saddle, just back of Whistler, behind which reposed his cartridge belt and trusty 44 "smoke wagon." Meanwhile the treacherous trio "chawed on," eyeing Carver with a brutal sardonic complacency that was maddening. Then—

HELL BROKE LOOSE!

Suddenly in the midst of their joy, the long stick which the trapper had placed in the fire flashed through the air and directly into the paint-smear'd visages of Fat Badger and Ante-

Down the Book Trail

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and Moderators, he is saving for a possible later volume. In writing of Frontier Texas more brave than wise, Sonnichsen tells his stories in a way that holds attention.

DOUBTFUL VALLEY

By GEORGE GARLAND. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CHUCK (CHARLES M.) MARTIN, Author of *Arizona Sheriff, Range Law*, etc.

George Garland is the pseudonym of Garland Roark, heretofore writer of sea stories, and *DOUBTFUL VALLEY* is his first western novel. It deals with the Apache wars, fifteen years after the close of the war between the States. The old Sixth U. S. Cavalry is trying to return Zu, chief of the Apaches, to the arid reservation. The Apache, one of the best strategists of his time, had escaped to the Mogollon mountains in high New Mexico. The author is not a Westerner, evident by discrepancies in nomenclature, but has done an amazing job of book research. The theme stresses what most of us know, that the Redman never broke a treaty and the white man (U. S. Government) never kept one with poor Lo.

The hero, Jeff Call, had been a Johnny Reb, but accepts a commission (civilian) from Col. Burnside, the top brass in the army outfit. His nephew, Captain Russell Edler, is a first class heel, and a gentleman. Gilbert Norris is the wealthiest man in Doubtful Valley, and his daughter Cathy is the fiancee of Edler. Then Call falls in love with her. But another luscious wench, Vivian O'Grady, wife of an Army Sarge, is in love with Call. When he refuses a clandestine invitation to "Why not take all of me", Vivian starts the Indian war all over.

Some one is running rifles to the Apaches, and sabotaging those supplied to the troops. To find out who is doing this is Jeff Call's chore. The writer handles an amazing number of characters with fidelity and fine delineation. You can tell he has "lived" with his characters in his creative mind. His idealism in not punishing those he likes best, betrays his own age. He does show the best and worst in both white men and red, and tells a story of love which is tempestuous, true to life, and highly intriguing.

lope. Simultaneously, the trapper landed a twenty mule-power kick in the pit of Whistler's distended diaphragm, and amidst the howls of the half blinded Fat Badger and Antelope and the gasps and grunts of the windless Whistler, Big Carver reached his 44. Three shots rang out like three ticks of a clock. Three dead Indians lay on the dug-out floor. It was indeed the last supper for the chiefs of the cut-off band.