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LOS ANGELES CORRAL

PUBLICATION 21

## THE AUDUBON DRAWINGS

— see page two —



THE BRANDING IRON  
OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL OF  
THE WESTERNERS

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The Roundup Foreman  
DON MEADOWS

640 Terraine Avenue, Long Beach 14, Calif.

## The Audubon Drawings

Through the courtesy of our fellow Westerner F. W. Hodge of the Southwest Museum two original drawings of John Woodhouse Audubon are published in this issue of the *Branding Iron*. In a note from Dr. Hodge he says, "Regarding the pencil sketches by John W. Audubon, younger son of John James Audubon, the noted ornithologist and artist, I wish to say that the collection consists of thirty-four items drawn in 1849 and 1850 and presented to the Southwest Museum in 1910, through Mrs. Eva Scott Fenyes, by Miss Maria R. Audubon, daughter of our artist. John W. Audubon is perhaps best known in these days by his *Western Journal: 1849-1850, Being the MS. record of a trip from New York to Texas, and an Overland journey through Mexico and Arizona to the gold-fields of California*. (Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland, 1906). The volume is prefaced with a biographical memoir by Miss Audubon, with introduction, notes, and index by Frank Heywood Hodder of the University of Kansas. In addition to a map of Audubon's route, four of the drawings were reproduced in the volume."

The two sketches reproduced in this issue of the BI have never before been published. The cover drawing, captioned "Night Watch" by Audubon, also contains the following penciled notation: "John Stevens. On Guard, 2 o'clock a.m. July 11, 1849. Concepcion, Western Mexico." Stevens was Audubon's closest friend among the one hundred gold-seekers that set out from New York for California in February 1849. When Audubon returned to New York in 1850 he left 200 sketches of his western journey in Sacramento to be returned to the East coast by Stevens at a later date. Stevens and the sketches were lost at sea in the wreck of the *Central America*. Consequently Audubon's western drawings are extremely rare.

The center spread in this issue is a sketch dated Tuesday, October 23, 1849. After crossing the Colorado river Audubon writes in his journal under the date above, "Three days of sunny road, and three nights of freezing cold, have brought us to San Felipe, and a pretty valley it is." The Indian village drawn by

## Corral Chips

Phil Rasch found this one in the *Arizona Weekly Star* under date of May 11, 1882: "O'Neal, the man murdered in the recent Tombstone shooting, is recovering."

A program to look forward to is coming up in a few months when CM Philip Johnston of Flagstaff, Arizona, will talk on "Navajo Language Code for Secret Communication in the Marine Corps." Phil knows his Indians and the West, and has written extensively on the subject.

*The Complete and Authentic Life of Jesse James*, by CM Carl W. Breihan will appear sometime this Fall. (Frederick Fell, Inc., N.Y. \$3.95)

Bob McCubbin of Stillwater, Oklahoma, is only 16 years old, which makes him the youngest CM in the LA Corral. Bob's hobby is researching his home frontier days, and he has picked up quite a bit about the Doolin Gang.

CM R. J. Wilkinson of England has sent some more fine books for auction to the Corral.

CM Jeff Dykes is not only a fine letter writer but his *Billy the Kid, Bibliography of a Legend* (University of New Mexico Press) is a powerful blast of buckshot around the young outlaw. His book is as exciting as the doings of the Kid. Jeff is Assistant Chief of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service in Washington, D.C.

CM Paul Sann has issued an SOS to the Corral. He is after early photographs of Rattlesnake Dick, Black Bart, Lola Montez, Tom Bell, Dick Fellows, Joe Stokes, Joaquin Murietta, etc. for a pictorial story he is writing about early western figures. Drop him a line if you can be of help.

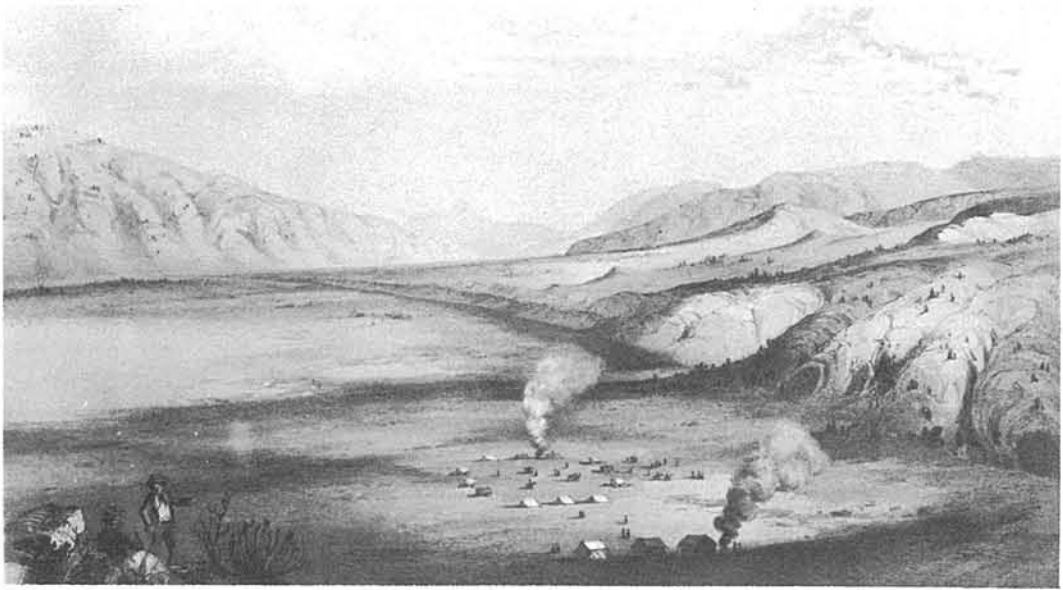
The summer trek to Placeritos Rancho on June 14 was the annual event that is always remembered by the LA Corral. Along the street and in the buildings that have been lifted from the past it is easy to get into the spirit of the old west. After the chuck wagon was well patronized Iron Eyes Cody told the story of "General Hugh Lenox Scott, Sign Talker and Indians' Friend."

Colonel Edward N. Wentworth, who writes so well about the woolies and other range critters was the speaker at the Redwood House meeting on July 18. His subject was "Sheep Trails in California," especially a long drive made in the 1860's from Red Bluff, in California, to Helena, Montana. The talk was illustrated with colored slides.

LeRoy Hafen of the Denver Corral is editing a series of volumes on the Far West for the Arthur H. Clark Company.

Audubon is dealt with in another article in this issue.

Most of Audubon's sketches are filled in with color notations indicating that they were to be reproduced in oil or water color at a later date. There are two original water color sketches in the Southwest Museum collection.



## SAN FELIPE A FORGOTTEN SPOT ON THE COLORADO DESERT

by . . . . . DON MEADOWS

When John Woodhouse Audubon made his pencil sketch of the Indian village of San Felipe reproduced on the following pages he was a sojourner in a spot well known in California. From 1782 to the 1870's San Felipe was a name repeatedly mentioned in the annals of southern California. Now, the area only a few hundred acres in extent, is uninhabited, neglected and practically forgotten. It lies at the edge of the Colorado desert in an acute angle formed by the junction of State Highway No. 78 and the gravel road that drops to the desert from Warner's Ranch, in San Diego County.

Governor Pedro Fages heading eastward on his Colorado River campaign camped here on April 18, 1782 and gave the spot the name of San Philipe. An extensive Indian village was ranged along the south side of a little creek. Today many pot sherds, chipped stones and manos are found on the site of the old Indian village. During mission days the locality was visited by explorers and padres on their entradas into the desert. Fathers Payaras and Sanchez stopped here in 1821.

In November 1846, during the Mexican War, General Kearny and his Army of the West marched from the Colorado River toward San Diego. On the night of December 1, 1846, he and his troops camped by the San Felipe Indian village, which at the time was temporarily abandoned. Six weeks later the Mormon Battalion, 500 strong, and with many wagons, under the command of St. George Cooke camped in the same position. The Indians had returned to the village. Cooke had opened a wagon road across the desert.

The Gold Rush brought a horde of Argonauts to California. Many routes were followed, one being the Sonora, or Mexican trail. It entered California along the path blazed by Kearny and Cooke. The name of San Felipe

appears in most of the diaries kept by those who came by the southern route. George Evans, one '49'er recorded: "Sept. 9. Left camp early and at the end of seventeen miles found ourselves at San Phillipe, an Indian town, buildings all huts or sheds. These Indians wear clothes enough to hide their nakedness, but otherwise are extremely poor, many of them having no corn and no wheat. The grass at this camp is poor and the water very good and cold, but sulphurous. Here we shall remain until morning, and then we will move forward to Agua Callientas."

John W. Audubon, with another party, camped at the same place on October 23, and made the drawing of the Indian village published on the next page.

With the acquisition of California by the United States it was imperative that overland communications be established with the east coast. In 1853 Lt. Williamson was sent west to discover and survey a practical route for a railroad across the continent. One feasible way was by the southern route, and in November 1853, an Army Engineering Corps under Williamson was camped for a few weeks at San Felipe while surveys were being made. A drawing of his camp, made from a low ridge that crosses the lower part of San Felipe valley was published in a report of the railroad survey, and is reproduced at the head of this story. The Indian village, not shown, was just outside the lower left hand corner of the picture.

The proposed railroad was never built through San Felipe pass, but in March 1857, when Congress authorized a transcontinental mail route and awarded the contract to John Butterfield and his associates the southern route was selected. A stage station was built at San Felipe.

Roscoe and Margaret Conkling in their definition  
(Continued on Page 8)



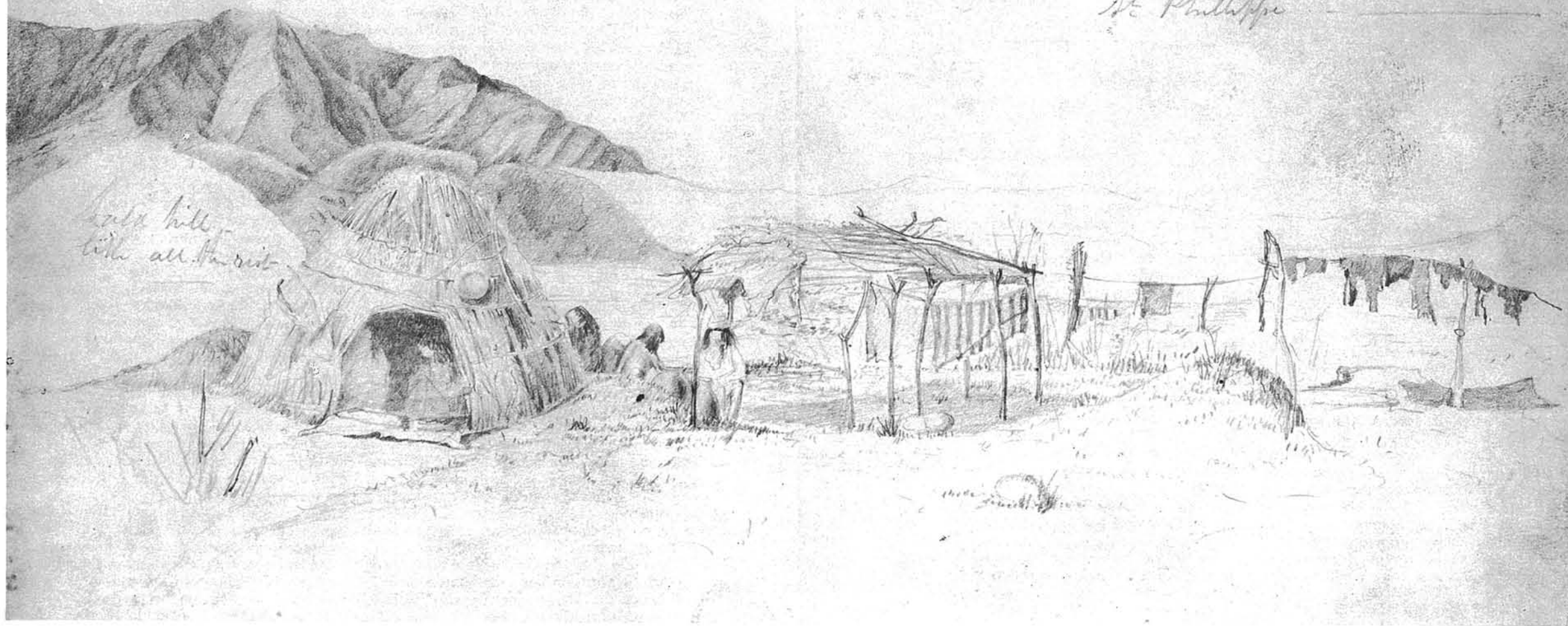
Ceguero - Indians

hut. very like those of the former times  
varying only in the materials used in  
putting them up -

hut of Willow - and half dried grass  
mountains dark in deep mistral haze -

Leo Anderson  
Tuesday Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> 1899

on the west side of the desert - near  
St. Philippe



hills  
like all the rest



**A. H. Van Noy**  
1896 - 1953

The Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners has lost a great and good friend. No man was held in higher regard than A. H. Van Noy who took the trail toward the setting sun on June 12. And no man ever gave the Westerners greater loyalty than he. Except for a few meetings early this year, when a bad heart kept him confined to his home, his attendance at the Corral activities was a perfect one. Even vacations were scheduled so as not to conflict with doings at the old Corral. And as Assistant Registrar of Marks and Brands he faithfully gave his time and talents to the welfare of the organization. For Van was a Westerner by birth and in spirit.

Born on a farm near Argo, Nebraska on July 7, 1896, he was the son of pioneers who helped to make the West. His father, a friend of William F. Cody, traveled with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and helped to keep alive the color of the old days and ways. Van grew up in an environment of western lore. When a young man he became claims adjuster for the Union Pacific Railroad. With headquarters in North Platte, Nebraska, he traveled over the western plains and in the Rockies, where he learned to know the Indians and pioneers of the old West. In 1936 he came to southern California.

Away from the open country, he turned his out-of-door activities toward golf, but in time his doctor advised a less strenuous hobby. Then vicariously, he went back to the land of his boyhood and began reading and collecting western Americana. His library was extensive and well selected. It covered the land and people he knew so well.

Van's love for the Westerners is best shown in several scrap-books in which he treasured all the Branding Irons, the Keepsakes, the meeting notices, the pictures and the ephemera that was associated with the Los Angeles Corral. He prized his membership in the organization and he gave to it all that was in him. His genial companionship and wise council will continue to be missed.

So long, Van. Vaya con Dios.

C. B. BENTON *offers*

## A Note by Col. Larter

For our members who are interested in brands the following item was sent me in a letter from Colonel Harry C. Larter, President of the Company of Military Collectors and Historians:

"In a letter from the Secretary of War of the Republic of Texas, William S. Fisher, written to Charles Simms, a Government agent, dated Columbus, January 8, 1837, Fisher writes that Simms is to confiscate all live stock and other property "to which is affixed the public brand

TA, AT, T, Tc,

or the Single Star."

Colonel Larter found a law passed in March 1836 requiring all live stock, wagons, etc., purchased by the Government to be branded, and later the same year further instructions placed responsibility on the QMC to see that this law was enforced.

Colonel Larter needed this information for a painting showing a mounted unit of the Republic of Texas. The painting would not be right if the horses did not have the proper brand. Needless to say, and is so acclaimed, Colonel Larter is one of our country's finest military painters.

## Corral Chips

(Continued)

The Corral really made whoopie at Hank Clifford's diggings on the north fork of the Arroyo Seco Saturday afternoon and evening, August 15th. Westerner Dwight Franklin brought part of his gun collection along and shot the breeze about "Guns of the Gold Rush." Hank and Clancy Holling revealed a hidden art in their management of barbecuing chicken over a charcoal fire. Man, were they good! Four ladies, Mesdames Peck, Holling, Gardiner and Clifford hovered in the background and prepared the trimmings. When belts were tight, that famous Sage of Azusa (USA) and Clamper Sedley Peck told about "Gold in the San Gabriel Canyon," and a little bit about the Porter girls. It was a fascinating program.

A delightful book that lies between Bancroft and Engelhardt in its treatment of the California mission period is James Culleton's *Indians and Pioneers of Old Monterey*. Scholarly and unbiased, it presents the little details, good and bad, that make up the beginning years of California history.

In *The Years Between*, Brooks D. Gist of Tulare, California, has sympathetically told the story of pioneering days in the San Joaquin valley at the time when the railroads were opening up that fabulous agricultural country. Factual, well illustrated, and good reading. (Sierra Printing Co., Fresno, 1953.)

PHIL RASCH *presents*

## A Sidelight On Doc Holliday

Through the most lurid pages of Tombstone's history stalks the gaunt, overcoat-clad figure of Doc Holliday, the murderous dentist. Uncertain of temper and equally adept with knife or gun, the good doctor was quite possibly the most dangerous man of his time. Of him Bat Master-son wrote, "Holliday had a mean disposition and an ungovernable temper . . . While I assisted him substantially on several occasions, it was not because I liked him any too well, but on account of my friendship for Wyatt Earp who did. Holliday had few real friends anywhere in the West."

Why this sinister character has never had a full length biography is not clear. Certainly one will be written some day, and when it is the author will find an interesting sidelight in an article which appeared in the Las Vegas *Daily Optic*.

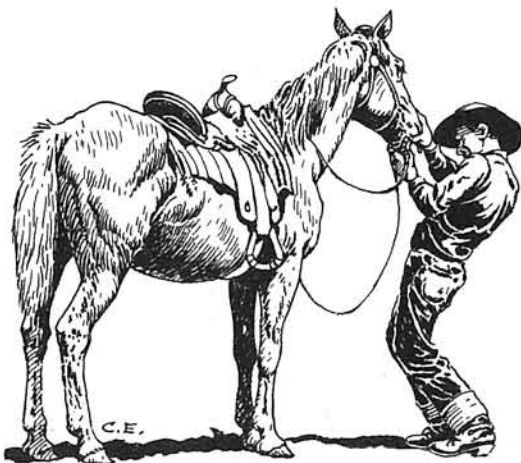
On March 15, 1881, an attempt was made to hold up the Sandy Bob stage near Drew's Ranch, six miles from Contention, Arizona. The stage was carrying \$80,000 in bullion, and in the ensuing fight Bud Philpot, the stage driver, and Peter Roerig, a passenger, were killed. The anti-Earp faction in Tombstone seized upon the opportunity to cast suspicion upon Holliday, who had certainly indulged in some actions which were difficult to explain. They received assistance from an unexpected quarrrer when Holliday and his inamorata, Big-Nosed Kate Elder, quarreled. Kate went on a spree, during which she was persuaded to sign an affidavit accusing Holliday of complicity in the crime.

When the news reached Las Vegas, the *Daily Optic* for July 20, 1881, published a comment which constitutes a fascinating bit of forthright frontier journalism:

### HOLLIDAY'S HOLIDAY

TOMBSTONE.—Kate Elder, mistress of Doc Holliday, has charged him with stage robbery whereby Budd Philipot lost his life. He is under bonds.—*Arizona Democrat*.

Here we have it again. The above item, clipped from an Arizona exchange, contains much of interest to the oldtimers of Las Vegas. It will be remembered, especially by the pioneers of the East Side, that Doc Holliday was at one time the keeper of a gin-mill on Centre street, near the present site of the Centre street bakery. Doc was always considered a shiftless, bagged-legged character—a killer and professional cut-throat and not a whit too refined to rob stages or even steal sheep. He is the identical individual who killed poor, inoffensive Mike Gordon and crept through one of the many legal loop-holes that characterized Hoodoo Brown's judicial dispensation. The woman, Elder, who now figures on the aggressive principle, was a Santa



## How Old's Your Horse?

To tell the age of any horse,  
Inspect the lower jaw of course.  
Two middle nippers you'll behold,  
Before the colt is 2 weeks old.  
Before 6 weeks, 2 more will come,  
12 months the corners cut the gums.  
At 2 the middle nippers drop,  
At 3 the second pair can't stop.  
At 4 years old the side pair show,  
At 5 a full new mouth he grows.  
Black spots will pass from view  
At 6 years from the middle 2.  
The side 2 pair at 7 years,  
And 8 will find the corners clear.  
The middle nipper upper jaw  
At 9 the black spots will withdraw.  
At 10 years old the sides are light,  
11 finds the corners white.  
As time goes on the horseman knows,  
The oval teeth 3-sided grow.  
They longer get, project before,  
'Till 20 when we know no more.

—*Author Unknown.*

—"The Cattleman," Sept. 1950.

Fe tid-bit and surrounded her habiliments with a detestable odor before leaving "the Ancient" that will, in itself, make her memory immortal. We have no particulars of the stage robbery in question, nor do we know how much of a "clinch" will be brought to bear against the inconsequential "doctor." We do know, however, that he needs a solitary "holiday," and our faith in Arizona officials is strong enough to believe that he will at least get a few days' rest.

Ramon Adams has been a welcome attendant at the round-ups this summer.



## San Felipe (Continued from Page 3)

tive three volume work *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869* (Arthur H. Clark Co., 1947) has this to say:

"San Felipe ranch the next station eighteen miles northwest of Vallecito, was located in the San Felipe valley. The station was an adobe house and stood, according to the oldest inhabitants in the valley, near the road on the west bank of San Felipe creek about three hundred yards north of the present Julian-Kane Springs road. The building or buildings were destroyed many years ago by flood waters of the creek which have cut a broad and deep gash in the alluvial flat on which the station originally stood. A large section of the old road likewise suffered destruction. The stream now flows in a somewhat lowered and altered channel, and trees that have attained considerable size are now growing in the eroded bed."

The information furnished by the Conkling's can now be amplified and corrected. The San Felipe stage station was located further up the valley than was suspected, and parts of the old Butterfield road have not been completely destroyed. It is easy to understand why the exact location of the station was lost and forgotten. The ruins lie in the heart of a dense growth of mesquite trees that cover an area of several acres. Now there is a fair opening through the brush that makes the lost station accessible, but when discovered it was reached by crawling over the ground under a low canopy of thorny branches.

The station was rectangular in shape; its axis running north and south. It was built on a foundation of grey granite slabs and was forty-nine feet in length and twenty-three feet in width. Some brief excavating inside the ruins revealed that wooden planks had covered the floor and that the structure had been erected on part of the Indian village site, for pot sherds were found in the soil. At the back center of

the building, toward the east, a room thirteen by thirteen feet in size was attached. About seventy-five feet northeast of the foundation was the stump of an old cottonwood tree, and in the soil around it bits of scrap iron and nails indicated it might have been the site of a blacksmith shop. A good spring of water still bubbles up in the deep barranca cut by San Felipe creek about a hundred yards north of the station. Clear signs of the old stage road pass close to the south side of the hidden foundation, and in the valley, a thousand yards east of the station the marks of the ancient highway can be traced across the rocks at the north end of a hill that partly closes the valley.

The Civil War put an end to the Butterfield Stage line, but the station continued to be occupied and held by Union troops stationed there to prevent Southern sympathizers from using the pass in going and coming from the rebel country. Sometime in the 1870's San Felipe began its fall into forgotten oblivion. High water in the creek melted down the walls of the station, an easier and better passage across the mountains was opened up by way of San Gorgonio pass, the Indians were moved to a reservation near Pala, and desert cloud-bursts tore out the old stage road. Within the last twenty-five years new roads by-passed the historic spot, so that today San Felipe is only a scrubby, forgotten flat, at the edge of the Colorado desert.

W. H. Hutchinson, a CM from Chico has an article in the August Quarterly of the Huntington Library on the subject of Western Fiction. Hutch feels sartin that if he is laying himself open to loud howls of opinion from all the Westerners who read it. Incidentally, he is the 'Gene Rhodes authority who was on our range last year working at the Huntington Library on the Rhodes letters. Also, he does reviews of Western Books for Joseph Henry Jackson.

