



MARCH, 1957

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 37

NEW LOOK . . . NEW OFFICERS . . . NEW PLANS

THE past three meetings of Los Angeles Corral, at Costa's Grill have been as important as they have been interesting, and this timeliness and interest has been reflected in near-record attendance. Speaker for the December gathering was our own "Billy" Dodson, held four days earlier than usual to accommodate some fancy surgery which our beloved old-timer had already scheduled. His talk, which was titled "Trail Herds," turned out to be a sensitive, poetic and delightful journey into the memories and experiences of an honest-to-God cowhand, who knew his work and loved and respected the animals who shared it with him.

At this same meeting the nominating committee, headed by George Fullerton, placed before the group their selection of officers to guide the destinies of Los Angeles Corral for the year 1957. The slate, as given, was unanimously accepted by affirmation of the members assembled. The new officers were: Dr. Harvey Starr, Sheriff; Dr. Steve Dolley, Deputy Sheriff; Charles Rudkin, Registrar of Marks and Brands; Philip J. Rasch, Assistant Registrar; Donald Hamblin, Representative; Robert L. Dohrmann, Clarence Ellsworth, Jack Reynolds, Wranglers. Those continuing in office were: Homer H. Boelter, Deputy Sheriff in Charge of Branding; Bert H. Olson, Keeper of the Chips; Paul Bailey, Roundup Foreman; Carroll Friswold, Assistant Roundup Foreman; and Lonnie Hull, Daguerreotype Wrangler. Committee in charge of the Brand Book: Will Robinson, Editor; Paul Bailey, Assistant Editor; James Algar, Art Editor; and every helpful and willing member of the Corral.

At the January meeting the new Sheriff, Dr. Harvey Starr, and his new and eager posse took over for the new year, knowing full well that they faced a challenge to equal or surpass the splendid year of 1956 chalked up by the retiring Sheriff, Don Meadows, and the fine range crew which so ably aided him. At this same meeting our own Colonel C. W. Hoffmann enlightened those present with "Villa Raids Columbus,



SHERIFFS—OLD AND NEW

From left: Col. C. W. Hoffmann, speaker at the January meeting; Dr. Harvey Starr, Sheriff, 1957; and Don Meadows, Sheriff for the year 1956.

—Lonnie Hull Photo.

March 9, 1916." This play-by-play report of that daring and amazing Mexican raid on U. S. soil, by a man who not only was there, but participated in the town's defense, had the listeners on the edges of their seats. The after-discussion was hot and exciting, and the members came away not only richer in western history but also by the generous distribution of Villa currency by Iron Eyes Cody. *Viva Villa!*

Webster A. Jones edified and enlightened the book-minded members of Los Angeles Corral at the February meeting with his scholarly and fact-packed paper on "The Conflict of Oregon History and the Remarkable Books They Inspired." Every important and significant book dealing with the dramatic exploration and colonization of the Oregon frontier was discussed in its proper frame of history, by an expert who spoke with authority. Many guests were present including Arthur Murdock, secretary of Chicago Corral; bookmen Robert Bennett and Whitney Genns; author Earle Forrest, his son-in-law Thomas P. Brown, Jr., and his grandson Robert Forrest Brown; Walter Gann, ex-sheriff of Denver Posse; Dr. Herbert McLeon Evans; radio

(Continued on Back Page)

THE BRANDING IRON

OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL OF THE WESTERNERS

* * *

Published Quarterly in
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OFFICERS — 1957

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From the Mailbag . . .

DEAR EDITOR:

If you want to use my 2-cents worth about Billy Leroy in regard to what appeared in the December issue of the *Branding Iron*, I have this to say:

Billy Leroy certainly *did* exist, but I have found the spelling Leroy instead of LeRoy. Either would be all right, I suppose. At any rate, I cannot agree with Rasch about this name in connection with Billy the Kid. Billy did use the alias of Billy Leroy when he disposed of stolen cattle around Globe, Arizona. Many Texans knew Billy by the name of Billy Leroy.

I was terribly disappointed in the introduction that Burton Rascoe gave to Fell's Dalton Brothers re-release. He stated there never was a Frank Dalton, much less his being a Deputy United States Marshal. The records in the Attorney-General's office in Washington show that Frank Dalton was killed in the line of duty. There is a telegram to that effect from Judge Parker's Court in Fort Smith, as well as a reply to Parker's Court and the U. S. Marshal's Office there. But this is just one of a number of such glaring errors.

CARL W. BREIHAN.

DEAR EDITOR:

This letter was started back on Dec. 28th when Dr. J. D. Lutton of our city gave me a copy of Los Angeles Westerners *Branding Iron*. The holidays and the year's end of work, tax, etc. will now start over. I am crediting this nice review of our book *Before Barbed Wire* to you, it is a nice piece of work and greatly appreciated. I am enclosing a check for membership in your Society.

In my twenty-odd years I spent in railroad location and construction work, three years were in the southwest and ten in the northwest. About a year ago I read an interesting story in your magazine about Fort Thomas, Arizona. Being on this work for over a year as locating and construction engineer the story was of particular interest. At that time I had many occasions to meet the Indian Agent at San Carlos, who looked well after the Indians' interests, but it was not until two years later that I found out who he was. This happened at Miles City in 1907, when I met Grant Marsh, the famous river pilot, who at the time was furnishing material for the book *The Conquest of Missouri* and was in the town to look into the old copies of the *Yellowstone Journal* to get the date when he landed his boat at Miles City in a snow storm. I went with him to the Library and we found the date—1881. The note read "Captain Marsh landed his boat to day in a snow storm, and the cargo had six barrels of badly-needed whisky."

In the winter of 1908 I was looking at a copy of the book and a footnote of a group of three men stated that the Yellowstone Kelly of that date is now Major Luther S. Kelly, Indian agent for the Apache Indians at San Carlos, Arizona. I wrote him a letter at once, and found he had quit the Indian Department and was mining at Lida, Nevada, and later moved to California, where until his death we kept a correspondence. He knew a lot about the early days in Montana and asked many questions, and as the Milwaukee coast extension passed through the range of his days, the new maps of the state since days of the Indian and buffalo interested him greatly.

Yellowstone Kelly was buried on the rimrock at Billings Montana, overlooking the Yellowstone River valley, as was his wish. One of the last acts of L. A. Huffman, who had taken his pictures in his Scout days at Fort Keogh, was with the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at Billings on Christmas Day 1931, when they drove up to his grave to place a wreath that had been sent up from California. The next day while going up the steps to the Chamber of Commerce Huffman died of a heart attack. Sincerely,

W. R. FELTON.

Members Art Woodward and Lee Shippey landed in St. Luke's hospital, Pasadena, about the same time—Art with a hernia operation, and Lee with a broken left arm.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS?

The following item, unsigned, and concerning a hunt for the Butch Cassidy gang, was found between the leaves of a second-hand western book purchased by Westerner Loring Campbell.

Who wrote it?

Our outfit was camped for the night at the Squaw Valley stone house. The Squaw Valley Ranch was a thing of the past so far as cattle were concerned. . . . The big house was unoccupied and had no windows or doors left. . . . Dick Ritchie, the manager and only employee, lived at Golconda in the hotel with nothing to do and was perpetually, mildly drunk. He was a little, worthless, attractive Englishman; too frail to look right in a cow country, and the only man in 500 miles in any direction who had ever heard of culture. . . .

We did not camp in the house. We pitched our tents, set the grub wagon, and cooked on our own camp kitchen as if we were out in the sage brush 20 miles from a house. It was about two o'clock in the morning and we had all been asleep for hours.

The posse came galloping into the camp, making a lot of noise, sliding their horses to a stop and whooping to wake us up. It wasn't because they were not on the trail and in a hurry. A breach of law and order was nothing for a cowman to get indignant over. But after cantering all night through the dark, it might be worth a laugh to explode into Jim Boyle's camp and make a few sons-of-bitches wet their beds.

We all piled out, built a big fire for light, and listened for half an hour to the recital of the bank robbery. Kelly's story jibes with what we were told. The only road out of Winnemucca to the north ran parallel to the railroad track with a quarter mile of barbed-wire fence on the other side, so the robbers had to ride down this lane to get out. The switch engine was sitting on the track with steam up, and the engineer and a couple of men with guns started in pursuit. The gang were, of course, running their horses at top speed to get to the fence corner and turn north, but in a few seconds it was evident that the switch engine could easily overtake them and head them off, so the engineer had to throttle down quite a bit to avoid cornering them and having them get mean.

When the posse reached our camp their boss was Ed Cavanaugh. I knew him and Shorty Johnson. The other two men were strangers to me and were undoubtedly those named by Kelly, but Ed Cavanaugh was giving the orders, because he was that kind. He was a wiry, hard-bitten middle aged Irishman, with a gun in each eye, but a twinkle when things were going his way. . . . He had arrived unarmed at Clover—our ranch headquarters—the day before the

posse, so Fred Noble, our ranch manager, had given him my 303 Savage and a box of shells. Ed asked me how far this goddamned gun would shoot and then twitched his mustache and gave me a wink.

Shorty Johnson was a genial Swede broncho buster, and an expert in training horses. He was called Shorty because he was six feet eleven inches tall. It was impossible for a broncho to throw him because he tied his legs together under the horse's belly, according to the Nevada humorists.

We started out next morning, about 20 of us, riding two by two up the only road north out of the valley and picked up the horse shoe tracks of the bandits almost immediately. The horse rango had found a strange gray horse in our herd with his head all freshly battered up and limping with exhaustion. He had evidently been turned loose during the night. None of our horses was missing so far as the rango could determine. Jim Boyle, our boss (round up foreman) and I were riding in front. The whole cavalcade was moving along at the regulation canter at which cowmen travel—no one suggested hurrying up. We had been going an hour or so and the sun was just showing over the hills. The road was on a long, slow incline toward the top of a rise in the generally flat valley. The rise hid the next five or six miles of the road, from where we were. All at once Jim pulled his hand to stop the procession. Then he pointed down to the road ahead of us where there lay a little pile of horse droppings that couldn't be more than an hour old. Jim looked at me and gave a chuckle that extended down his fat belly and said, "By god, Bill, we've got a hell of a lot of cattle to work today, and if we don't get going we won't get done by dark."

So we all bunched up around the horse tracks and Jim sent us out in pairs to the east, west and south with orders as to what region each pair was to round up, and where to bunch that afternoon. Then he let out a real laugh and said, "I just found out there ain't no cattle of ours out to the north."

That's the end of my personal participation in purging the state of Nevada of the Butch Cassidy gang. The posse held a council of war around the manure pile that lasted about an hour, then they took up the chase.

My recollection is that all but Ed Cavanaugh and one other man gave it up after a few days more. Ed hung doggedly on the trail at ten dollars a day, and didn't get back for two months. He reported the gang had finally disappeared in the Hole-in-the-wall, and he privately reported to me when he returned my gun that it was a hell of a good shooter and he had knocked over plenty game.



THOMAS T. TOBIN

Tobin is dressed in the buckskin suit presented him by Governor Evans. Photograph, belonging to A. B. Sanford, taken in Denver in 1895.

—From the "Colorado Magazine," March 1932.
Courtesy Colorado State Historical Society.

THE few records containing information on the two Espinosa brothers are somewhat conflicting. Outlaws are not prone to set down anything in writing, let alone their crimes. Therefore this account was put down piecemeal, as garnered from the sources available.

Tom Tobin called the elder Espinosa, Felipe Nerio, though he is generally known as Juan. The younger was Vivian. Their career of banditry is said to have begun when Juan had a dream in which the Virgin Mary advised him it was a duty to kill *Gringos*. A more logical reason is that an inherent hatred was engendered by fancied wrongs, an excuse for killing readily put forth by many another desperado to condone what were usually innate homicidal tendencies. At any rate within a few years the Espinosas' tally of murders was 32, a figure fairly well substantiated.

The story is that at the time New Mexico was acquired by the United States, Juan, Vivian and a sister lived on an ancestral estate near Cucheti (Cuchiti). They are supposed to have had herds of cattle and stock, a hacienda, many peons to do the work. Into this seeming idyllic existence, one time, came a young American, travel-

THE BLOODY ESPINOSAS

By MERRILL KITCHEN

ing alone. He stopped by. Juan seemed to have a liking for him. The American fell in love with the sister. The young fellow had a sum of money which Juan coveted, so one night he tried to withdraw it from beneath his pillow. The American fired, believing it an ordinary thief, and missed. Juan stabbed him in the heart.

The sister, finding her lover dead, became insane and never recovered. The two brothers fled to the San Luis Valley of Colorado and the Sangre de Cristo Range. They rounded up a band of cut-throats and so began their outlawry. Juan's favorite method of dry-gulching was with a dagger or axe and he became known as the axe-man of Colorado.

According to Tom Tobin they lived for a time at San Rafael near Conejos Creek and began stealing horses. It wasn't long before they hid themselves to Ute Pass. Twelve of their victims were ambushed here. It was an ideal spot for bandits, and they infested the canyon. A toll road had been built through in 1860 but the grades were very steep and travel was slow. A favorite procedure of the Espinosas was to way-lay miners and wagon trains. They soon came well-armed, however, and killed many of the gang. Poses were formed. The Espinosas fled.

In the spring of 1863 they killed an old man named Harkens (or Harkins) who operated a sawmill in the canyon, which then became known as Dead Man's Canyon. Harkens had gone to his mill one day and not returned. A few days later his body was found with the head split open. In what is now Park County the brothers killed a man near the site of Lake George. They murdered four near the present town of Fairplay. Two of these were well-known prospectors named Lyman and Seyga of California Gulch (later Leadville). The miners were now aroused. A posse was formed by Capt. John McCannon and Joseph Lamb. The bandits were trailed from Red Hill (in Park County) to Four Mile Creek, about 20 miles south of Florissant, and 15 miles west of Cripple Creek. Following on down the stream the posse found the bandit camp. Vivian was shot by Joseph Lamb, but Juan escaped.

Before Vivian was killed an episode occurred between Santa Fe and Galisteo, New Mexico. Here they stopped a wagon belonging to a priest and driven by a Mexican. They bound the teamster, took what they wanted from the wagon and started the team on. It was met by a man who untied the driver. Before he had driven far he was overtaken by the owner. Al-

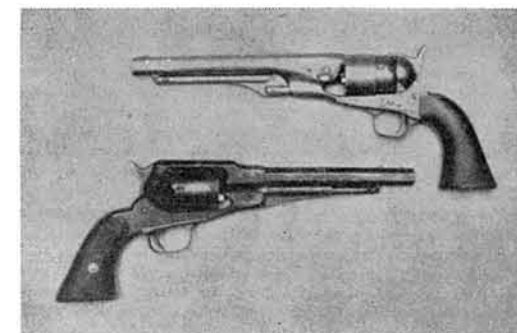
though the bandits had been masked, the Mexican had recognized them, and he apprised the priest of this fact. The priest rode at once to Santa Fe and related the happening to General Carleton.

General Carleton sent orders to Captain Eaton of the New Mexico Volunteers' (Kit Carson's regiment) to capture the Espinosas. Captain Eaton sent Lieutenant Hutt with an American sergeant and 15 Mexican soldiers. At Conejos, Deputy U. S. Marshal George Austin joined them. The Espinosas were found in a log house. They came out and were asked if they would enlist. Both refused at once. Lieutenant Hutt then tried to take Vivian prisoner, but he and Juan ran into the house. A woman handed them guns and they began firing. One corporal (Mexican) was killed, the soldiers scattered, and the Espinosas escaped.

Next they killed a brother of Colonel Shoupe (who later became governor and senator of Idaho). After Vivian was killed and Juan had escaped, Juan killed an old man named Bruce, on Hardscrabble Creek. Another of his victims at Conejos was a man named Bill Smith.

It became known that Juan had acquired another partner, said to be his nephew, a boy of perhaps twelve or thirteen. About this time Governor Evans of Colorado came to Conejos on business with the Ute Indians. Juan and his companion had the intention of seeing the governor and asking for pardons, and, if they were not granted, were to kill him. They did not reach the governor. Instead they chanced upon two men, one a French-Canadian, Leon Constantine, and killed both.

September 5, 1863, a man named Philbrook and a woman, Dolores Sanchez, riding in a buggy, were fired upon by the bandits as they were entering Sangre de Cristo Canyon. A mule was killed. The man tried to escape and Dolores hid behind a rock. Two Mexicans in a wagon drove up and Dolores came up and told one of the Mexicans, Pedro Garcia, who understood English, what had happened. The Espinosas then came up and asked "What people? Answer quick or we will fire on you. We are the Espinosas." Pedro answered "Mexicans." They asked if a *Gringo* had been seen. Pedro admitted seeing a man run down the mountain, but denied seeing a woman. Dolores then appeared from the wagon saying: "Don Pedro, don't perish for me; they are Christians and won't hurt me." Juan told Pedro to drive off, then untied the woman and, according to her



REVOLVERS USED BY THE ESPINOSAS

Upper: Cap and ball revolver used by one of the Espinosa brothers. It was given by Charles Mullin to W. D. Todd of Denver in 1868, and was presented to Colorado State Historical Society in 1897.

Lower: Revolver used by Julian Espinosa, the outlaw killed by Tom Tobin. Both guns are in possession of the Colorado State Historical Society.

—From the "Colorado Magazine," January 1931.
Courtesy Colorado State Historical Society.

own testimony, they abused her shamefully.

They started after Philbrook, but he had reached Ft. Garland and given details of the encounter to Colonel Sam Tappen, commander of Ft. Garland. About twenty soldiers were sent out. They found Pedro Garcia and learned the bandits were the Espinosas. Dolores Sanchez was taken to Ft. Garland.

Colonel Tappen then sent for Tom Tobin. Tom had first come west in 1837 with Lawrence P. Lupton, to a post on the Arkansas called the "Wolf's Den." Lupton afterward founded Ft. Lupton, on the Platte. Tobin met Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Jim Baker and other scouts, joining them in trapping and exploring expeditions. He was hired as a scout by Geo. F. Ruxton, the English writer and adventurer, and later by John Charles Fremont. When Governor Charles Bent was killed in Taos, Tobin was taken prisoner, but later freed. He married a Spanish woman and their daughter later married Kit Carson's son William. Tom Tobin passed away in 1905.

Colonel Tappen told Tom that if he would capture or kill the Espinosas, and bring in their heads, he would be amply recompensed. Tobin left Ft. Garland with Lieutenant Baldwin (adjutant to Colonel Tappen; Baldwin had volunteered), fifteen soldiers, a civilian named Loring Jinks, and a Mexican boy, Montolly, whom Tobin had asked for to lead his horse while he trailed the assassins. Once the Mexican boy saw the bandits and told Lieutenant Baldwin, but Baldwin could not understand, and the bandits disappeared.

They camped for the night with a Tom Barns, followed trail next day, and again camped at night. The second day they came to Pass Creek, crossed the ridge and camped on Veta Mountain. The next morning they went down La Veta

(Continued on Page 6)

THE BLOODY ESPINOSAS *(Continued from Page 5)*

Creek and found ox-tracks. They followed, and soon noticed crows flying in a circle. Tobin told the men he believed the Espinosas had killed an ox. Two soldiers, and the Mexican boy, came up. Tom ordered them to be quiet, to cock their guns, but not to fire until so ordered.

Tobin crept closer and stepped on a stick. Juan jumped for his gun. Tobin fired and hit him in the side. Juan bellowed and cried out: "Jesus favor me" and shouted to his companion "Escape, I am killed." Tom tipped his powder horn in his rifle, capped it and dropped a bullet from his mouth into the muzzle. The nephew came out running. Two soldiers and the Mexican boy fired. All missed. Tobin then fired, and broke the boy's back. He then sent Montolly off with a message for Lieutenant Baldwin.

Juan Espinosa crawled away and braced himself against a fallen tree. Tom went up and asked if Juan knew him. The bandit swore. A soldier came up, and was warned that Espinosa would try to shoot him. He did fire, but missed the soldier. Tobin then caught the bandit by the hair, drew his head back and cut it off. He gathered up the rifles and pistols of the Espinosas, also some letters, and a diary kept by Juan.

This was on the 10th, the fourth day out. The heads were put in a sack. They camped on the Sangre de Cristo at night, and next day arrived in Ft. Garland. Tobin opened the sack and the heads rolled out in front of Colonel Tappen. Tom said "Here, Colonel, I have accomplished what you wished. This head is Espinosa's. The other is his companion's, and there is not a mistake made." This was corroborated by Lieutenant Baldwin who told of finding the papers and diary. This diary showed 22 men killed up to the time of Vivian Espinosa's death (not counting the Mexican corporal). Tobin says, "There was about thirty killed altogether."

In O. S. Clark's version (from *Clay Allison of the Washita*) he has a company of soldiers detailed from Ft. Garland with Tobin as guide. As they approached the hiding place (Tobin seems in this case to have known just where it was) of the Espinosas early in the morning, Tom made an excuse for leaving camp alone. He said afterwards he did not want any soldiers around talking in loud voices. He crawled up at daybreak and waited for the bandits to finish breakfast. Juan soon arose and stretched out his arms. Tom killed him with his first shot and he fell across the camp fire. The nephew made a dash to escape but was intercepted. He pleaded for his life but Tom killed him also. He chopped off Juan's head, but no mention is made of the nephew's head.

Another source states a troop of cavalry was sent out, but was easily eluded by the outlaws. The soldiers returned, and Tom Tobin, a friend

of Kit Carson, was sent out alone. He trailed the desperados to the Sangre de Cristos. One evening he found them encamped under the shelter of a shelving rock near a small stream. He crept close. When Juan stood up and stretched he presented a clear target in the fading light. Tom fired, and Juan, last of the Espinosas, fell dead across the campfire. The nephew turned and ran. Tobin killed him also.

When Tobin claimed the reward, John Evans, the provisional governor, said: "We had always understood that the reward offered for the bad man was very liberal and one account makes the statement it was \$2000 for his body dead or alive. Since Tobin produced only the head, which was only part of his body, we suppose technically he was not awarded the full amount because, you know, the jowl of a hog, likened to Espinosa, never did bring full price."

As the legislature was not in session, Tom kept the trophy pickled in alcohol. It is said a physician stole the head and left for Pueblo. Tom pursued him and recovered the head but the doctor had dropped and broken the glass jar containing it. Tom proceeded to Pueblo where a "most unusual situation confronted him, because for the first and last time in the history of the city there was neither alcohol nor whiskey enough to re-pickle the head." A supply train soon arrived with "strong waters" and the head was satisfactorily taken care of.

Tom never got the reward from the government, but later, Senator Wm. H. Adams had a bill passed by the legislature awarding him \$1000. Tom died shortly thereafter.

SOURCES

- Baggs, Mae Lacy, *Colorado, the Queen Jewel of the Rockies*. Boston, 1918. Brief mention of the Espinosas and some information on Tom Tobin.
- Clark, O. S., *Clay Allison of the Washita*. Attica, Ind., 1922. More information than is usually found and apparently used by writers in later accounts.
- American Guide Series. *Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State*. New York, 1941. Brief mention only of Tom Tobin and the Espinosas. Accurate.
- The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (Jan. 1931). Article in this issue with some information, and rather complete account of Harkens' murder.
- The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (March 1932). This issue contains Tom Tobin's own dictated account, dated March 23, 1895. As he was an old man then his story contains discrepancies, but more to be relied upon than some later versions.
- The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (Jan. 1939). There is an interesting article of Ft. Garland but only two paragraphs on the Espinosas.
- The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (Jan. 1955). Short reminiscences dictated by Timothy G. Graham, scout and soldier, who claims he aided in the capture of the Espinosas. "We put 15 bullets into him and Tom rushed forward and cut off his head and put it in a gunnysack."
- Quinn, Vernon, *War Paint and Powder Horn*. New York, 1929. Contains a fictitious account; interest-
- (Continued on Page 8)*

DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

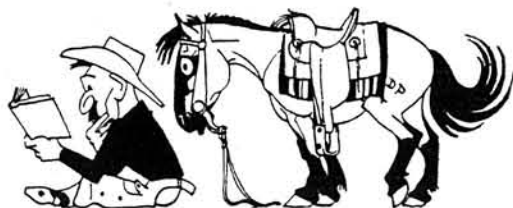
BACK TRAILING IN THE HEART OF THE SHORT GRASS COUNTRY, by John O. Bye (privately printed by John O. Bye, 2743 East 103rd St., Seattle, Wash., 1956, pp. 392. Illus., two loose folding maps. \$6.00).

In the short grass country the remnants of the vast herds of bison barely survived; here was the jealously-held hunting grounds of the Sioux and Cheyenne; here the goal of the longhorns trailed up from distant Texas. There are no metropolises here. There are the fast growing oil-boom towns of Bismarck, Williston, Billings and Casper but none of them yet fifty thousand. Drive out a few miles from any of them. There will be no traffic. There may be badlands, arroyos, draws full of wild plum, choke-cherry, and buffalo-berry, hills, buttes and alkali flats but there will also be the plains and rolling country of the bunch and buffalo grass. Certain areas are farmed, but in general this is ranch country and except for barb wire fences perhaps as little changed from the old west as any part of the country.

Very roughly the short grass country is bounded on the east by the Missouri River, the Canadian Line on the north and the foothills of the Rocky Mountains westward. This area was enriched in literature by the publication of three books in the autumn of 1956. One was the finest American novel of the year, Westerner A. B. Guthrie, Jr.'s *These Thousand Hills*, a story of ranch life in central Montana.

Before *Barbed Wire*, together with the previous *The Frontier Years* record pictorially many of the photographs of L. A. Huffman, who, with a peculiarly intuitive perception of what was to come, photographed cowhands and the frontier life of the short grass country before the advent of the barbed wire fence, before the open range ended. It is scarcely possible, in a few lines, to do credit to two of the most magnificent books ever compiled about the west. It must have been a labor of love for the authors, Mark H. Brown and W. R. Felton, for their accompanying narratives evoke such a pervasive nostalgia as to bring before us the vanished west right down to the grass roots.

The third book being privately printed is likely to be overlooked, but it should not be, as it is practically a compendium, a definitive epitome, of pioneer ranching, settler days, mainly, but not entirely, contiguous to the four-state border area of North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming; the heart of the short grass country as the author calls it. The book is lithographed; there are many photographic repro-



OBSERVATIONS ON CALIFORNIA, 1772-1790, by Father Luís Sales. O.P. Translated and edited by Charles N. Rudkin. Los Angeles, Glen Dawson, 1956. Edition of 300 copies; printed for Glen Dawson by Westernlore Press.

The thirty-seventh volume in the Early California Travels Series is probably the most ambitious and certainly one of the most important of the fine set. An excellent translation, it provides us with the major account of Baja California from the point of view of a Dominican friar, supplementing the classic works of Clavigero, Venegas (Burriel) and Baegert for the Jesuits, and the Franciscan view of Padre Palou.

Father Sales' remarks on the botany, geography and zoology of the arid peninsula are brief but often charming in their naivete, and revealing more of the mentality of the monk than of the natural history of Lower California. His survey of the missions which the Dominicans either founded or took over from the Franciscans, and his description of the Indians, are of far more importance. There is much good information here on the *indigenas*, both the sickly converts and the barbarous heathen, despite the disillusionment—even disgust—with which Sales viewed his "flock." He summed up his feelings in the last of the three letters which comprise this work by saying, "You have seen that all that there is here in California is starvation, nakedness and misery."

RICHARD H. DILLON,
Sutro Library.

ductions, many of them too small to show effectively; these defects limit somewhat the physical appeal of the book, but the contents make up for it. Apparently the author spent many years gathering material— anecdotes, bits of settler history from this source or that, furnished by oldtimers who remembered the old days, and wanted the knowledge to be preserved, be it little and perhaps local, and many hundreds are mentioned in the course of the book. Perhaps for most it will be the only time they are recorded in history and for that reason the more valuable. As for the photographs there are many of ranch scenes and pioneers and their families. There is one of George Axelbee, head of the bandit gang, and another of four of the bunch, though they are not identified. There is an account of the Stoneville fight of 1884. A small

(Continued on Page 8)

The Bloody Espinosas

(Continued from Page 6)

ing only because of its inept mendacity. "When some Denver miners in New Mexico had been murdered by Espinosa, the State of Colorado offered a reward of \$1000. Placards were posted in all stage stations. One came to the notice of Uncle Dick Wooton. 'I'll get him!' declared he. He could read trails like an Indian. Leaving the toll-gate in charge of his partner, Uncle Dick set out. Nearly two weeks later, far up in the mountains, he saw some birds circling in a way that meant food below. Crawling up he discovered Espinosa and a 12 year old boy cooking beef over a campfire. Uncle Dick shot the bandit through the heart. The frightened boy fell behind a log; but was soon persuaded that Uncle Dick would not harm him, and they sat down to the beefsteak supper Espinosa had been preparing. Uncle Dick cut the bandit's head off, put it in a gunnysack, and with the grewsome load swinging in front, and the boy behind, he set out to claim the reward."

Shaw, Luella, *True History of the Pioneers of Colorado*. Hotchkiss, Colo., 1909. Purported to be true history, this book contains the following rather astonishing version: Called him "Est Pinosa. Tom Tobin and a friend were cautiously trailing Est Pinosa. As he (Espinosa) sneaked down a pasture he stole a steer and run it back in the hills at the foot of Spanish Peak. Tom Tobin was closely following watching for an opportunity to get the drop on the Mexican and his companion. When they butchered a steer and dug a hole in the snow and a little in the ground to build a fire and cook the meat, Tobin had crept in back of them and just as Est Pinosa turned his back and fell, shot in the back. And Tobin's friend killed the other Mexican. The shot did not kill Est Pinosa so Tobin took his knife and started to cut off the Mexican's head. He began cutting at the back of the neck and the knife was dull so he made slow progress. The dying Est Pinosa said: 'Tom, hurry up, that knife is dull.' "

Letter from Hon. Luther E. Bean, Member, House of Representatives, State of Colorado, Alamosa, Col., May 15, 1956. I particularly wish to thank Mr. Bean for taking the trouble to interview in my behalf several old-timers in the region in which the Espinosas once held forth. I especially wanted verification of the legend that the Espinosas had hidden a vast store of gold. Interviewed were Kit Carson III, with whom Tom Tobin lived during his last years; Alfred Meder whose father was a bugler at Ft. Garland; Marina Martinez, who, when she was a girl, lived near the Tobins and heard the story many times. None of these place any credence in a hidden treasure.

Letter from Mr. John D. Morrison, Assistant State Historian, State Museum, Denver, Colo. May 7, 1956. Mr. Morrison wrote that he had inquired of Mrs. Agnes Wright Spring concerning hidden bullion. She said she had not heard of any.

My sincere appreciation to all these for their help.

New Look . . . New Plans

(Continued from Page 1)

and TV writer John Dukel; writer Gomer Cool; Don Galleher, and Bob Dohrmann, Jr., sons of members Paul Galleher and Bob Dohrmann.

And so passeth another three months of Westerner history. A profitable and significant three months; filled with interest and the open-handed fellowship which characterizes Westerners wherever they meet.

L.A. Westerners to Again Co-Sponsor Conference

Once again, and for the third year, Los Angeles Corral of Westerners has been asked to sponsor, with other western-minded groups and Occidental College, the Southwest Conference at the College. All-day sessions will be held Friday, March 22 and Saturday March 23, under the general theme of "The Southwest and Mexico at Mid-Century."

As usual, the speakers, and members of the various panels, will be outstanding experts in the fields of interest in which they will explore. A goodly number of Los Angeles Westerners have attended these splendid conferences from their inception, with great enjoyment and profit for the time spent. Since the conference is financed annually by the Rockefeller Foundation, there is no attendance fee, and every member and corresponding member of Los Angeles Corral is invited to attend. Reservations, however, must be made in advance, through Occidental College, Los Angeles 41. Meals will be served both days, at very moderate rates.

Speakers and panelists at this year's session will include such eminent authorities as Señor Carlos Contreras, Anthony Thormin, Raymond McKelvey, Howard Cline, Thomas C. Donnelly, Paul Opperman, Nabor Carrillo Flores of Mexico City, Lawrence Clark Powell, Clifton B. Kroeber, and others of equal caliber.

Down the Book Trail

(Continued from Page 7)

photograph of Sitting Bull is shown, probably original, which was given by Sitting Bull to Mrs. Jacobs of Harding (South Dakota) when she was eleven years old. She remembered the chief as a "kindly, intelligent man."

Many of the old brands are listed here and there and one section of eight or nine pages is devoted to brands from the "Hashknife" to John Chisum's "long rail." There are two folding maps. One shows the longhorn trails, the southernmost beginning at Brownsville, Texas, and the northernmost extending as far as the Saskatchewan River. The other, called the Short Grass Country Ranch map, portrays the areas of the short grass country held by the large ranches and indicated by their brands.

This is a book that, fortunately, caught the record of the heart of the short grass country before it was too late, and will be a choice item in the library of any Westerner.

MERRELL KITCHEN.



CM Carl Breihan's new book, *Badmen of the Frontier Days*, will be released by Robert McBride Co., New York, this spring.