LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
JUNE 1962 LOS ANGELES CORRAL NUMBER 61

"GIT A HOSS"

The Finger In The Flivver

By CM IKE BLASINGAME

The Corral enjoys hearing from Westerner Blasingame, who is remembered as the author of *Dakota Cowboy.*

I was young then, so were those early cars. Like most cowboys, I knew far more about horses than machines. For a while I swore the horse would always be good enough for me but I finally bought a Ford. I lived in South Dakota then—roads were still little more than buffalo trails west of the Missouri. I guess I figured that if a horse could follow them, this darn machine could, with me there to steer it over the worst places.

One chilly fall day I drove it cross-country to see a neighbor about helping me with a cattle drive the next day. He was agreeable and I headed homeward. About halfway there I heard a loud "knock" under the hood. I'd tried hard to understand this machine and every time a garage man worked on it I watched the whole procedure. Finally they'd get me on my way and I'd feel pretty sure that if the same thing happened again I could fix it. So when this knocking persisted I was convinced it was a loose connecting rod—not the first time either, but after a mechanic tightened up a few bolts all was fine once more.

GET OUT AND GET UNDER

So I stopped, crawled under the machine and took off the "pan." I wanted to investigate the "wrist pin" that joined the piston and connecting rod. If I could tighten it I'd stop the noise and possible damage, if it was loose.

My five year old son was with me. While I felt exploringly around, up in that engine, I told him to turn the crank a little, which he did very well. I'll never know how it happened, but a considerable part of my finger got pinched between the piston and the wall (shaft) and I could not get it out. It was painful and with my efforts to get it loose it began to swell. The air grew colder as dark came on. I couldn't send my little boy out into the night to hunt help for me. It was unsettled country, not even a road to follow. He was cold and so was I, and getting extremely nervous lying under there.

STRANGE THOUGHTS

Strange what thoughts cross a man's mind, flat on his back with his finger stuck in a place like that. I remembered a gray wolf brave enough to bite his foot off to escape a trap and log "set." A coyote dragging a steel trap until suffering gave him the courage to cut through his ankle joint, win freedom and wear a stub leg the rest of his life.

I knew I was going to have to rustle up something of that sort of valor to free my finger. I took a deep breath and pulled, and swore and pulled some more until my finger came loose, stripping the skin and flesh to the bone and nubbing the end clear off. The wound bled a lot but didn't pain much right at first. I wrapped my scarf around it, tossed the "pan," nuts and bolts into the back seat, "cranked up" and got in the seat.

About an hour later my son and I reached home, with the engine 'knocking" all the way like it was about to fly apart. And I've worn the stub-ended finger ever since. I had a lot of adventures with those old cars but I remembered this one the longest.

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THE WESTERNERS

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THE BRANDING IRON plans to publish more original articles, up to 3,000 words in length, dealing with every phase of the Old West. Contributions are solicited from active members, CM's, and friends.

1962 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

Regular meetings of the Los Angeles Corral for the last six months of the year, as worked out by Deputy Sheriff John H. Kemble, will be held as follows:

July 28—HORACE M. ALBRIGHT, "The National Park Service and the Restoration of Historic Sites and Structures." Also, Indian dancing by Iron Eyes Cody & Tribe.

Aug. 18—JAMES C. FINDLEY, "The Boom of the Twenties in Southern California."

Sept. 22—HARBOR CRUISE aboard the "Angel Gate" (afternoon), and dinner at Cigo's in San Pedro.

Oct. 18— W. W. ROBINSON, "Myth-making in the Los Angeles Area."

Nov. 15—DOYCE NUNES, "Joseph Lancaster Brent: A California Confederate."

Dec. 20—MERLIN STONEHOUSE, "John Wesley North and the Founding of Riverside."

The three summer meetings will be held outdoors on Saturdays evenings, as usual.

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L.A. Scores Among Best Western Books

Two authors and three publishers who are members of the Los Angeles Corral are represented in the 1961 list of "Best Western Books," a selection made annually by the Chicago Corral of the Westerners after polling its membership. The honored authors are E. I. Edwards and CM Paul I. Wellman; the publishers are ex-Sheriffs Paul D. Bailey, Arthur H. Clark, Jr., and Paul W. Galleher.

Thirty-four books were nominated, and 14 appear on the list as adopted by Chicago's monthly *Brand Book*, due to a five-way tie in the balloting for second place. There was agreement on first place; the next five books (tied for second) are listed alphabetically; and the final eight, also alphabetical, made strong showings. The list follows:

Ramon F. Adams, *The Old-Time Cowhand,* Macmillan Company.

Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee,* Arthur H. Clark Company.

Mark H. Brown, *The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone,* G. P. Putnam's Sons.

George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk,* University of Oklahoma Press.

John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages,* Univ. of Oklahoma.

John Francis McDermott, *Seth Eastman, Pictorial Historian of the Indian.* Univ. of Oklahoma.

Harry E. Chrisman, *Lost Trails of the Cimarron,* Denver.

E. I. Edwards, *Lost Oases Along the Carrizo,* Westernlore.

Nick Eggenhofer, *Wagons, Mules and Men.* Hastings House.

Robert H. Fletcher, *Free Grass to Fences,* The Montana Cattle Range Story, University Publishers, Inc.

W. Eugene Hollon, *The Southwest,* Old and New, Alfred A. Knopf.

J. Leonard Jennewein and Jane Boorman, editors, *Dakota Panorama,* Dakota Territory Centennial Commission.

Nyle H. Miller, Edgar Langsdorf and Robert W. Richmond, *Kansas: A Pictorial History,* Kansas Centenial Commission and the State Historical Society.

Paul I. Wellman, *A Dynasty of Western Outlaws,* Doubleday.

Los Angeles CM Merrell Kitchen, now an active member in Stockton and also a CM of the Chicago Corral, turned in the winning single list, nominating four of the six top books and two of the others. His prize is a choice of any Caxton book.

The same Los Angeles books appear on the Potomac Corral's list of the best Westerns, which is similar to Chicago's but not identical.

AUCTION MAKES TREMENDOUS HIT; NETS $1,740

Perceval and Harding Feature Other Meetings

The depleted Publication fund was rebuilt in a couple of highly enjoyable hours on May 17 when the Los Angeles Corral staged its first full-dress Auction Sale of historical and artistic rarities donated by the membership, and netted $1,740.78, feeling no pain in the process.

About 150 separate items, appealing to collectors, were knocked down to the highest bidders at prices which ranged from higher-than-market in some cases, to real bedrock bargains in others—as in most auctions attended by specialists. "We should do this again," was the standard remark, when there was nothing left to sell.

Ex-Sheriff Glen Dawson, as chief auctioneer and business manager of the successful event, kept the ball rolling with the aid (when his voice weakened) of ex-Sheriff Paul W. Galleher and Dr. Harvey S. Johnson. Throughout the long list, competition remained keen and interest seldom flagged; a more pleasant technique for money-raising would be hard to find.

Space does not permit itemization beyond two highlights: Three drawings by famed Westerner Don Louis Perceval, donated by the artist, were sold in a "package deal" to ex-Sheriff Henry H. Clifford for $170; and an original water color of the San Ildephonso Corn Dance, donated by Assistant Roundup Foreman Ervin Strong, went to Don Boelter for $75. Numerous donations brought prices of $20 to $40, and cash contributions by Westerners who donated no items for sale came to $165, included in the above total.

"It's easy when everybody cooperates," said Auctioneer Dawson (although we know it wasn't exactly easy). "The best thing about it was that so many items had been painted, or written, or published, or otherwise produced by Active and Corresponding Members of the Los Angeles Corral. This is proof that we are holding our own in the Westerner world, actively producing valuable material to preserve the Old West."

Like the other two meetings of the quarter, the auction was held at Costa's Grill. Guests included Herbert Johnson, a visitor from the Denver Posse; and Melvin E. Gainder, desert specialist.

"GOING, GOING, GONE!"

Ex-sheriff Glen Dawson, hardworking auctioneer, knocks down a collector's item at the spectacular May event which raised $1,740, and replenished the Corral's Publication Fund.

—Lonnie Hull Photo.

Don Perceval, a stalwart of the Corral, was the headliner of the April 19 meeting also. His "Sorting Out the History of the Navajo Trading Posts" turned out to be a whimsical and authoritative de-bunking of the tales told by old-timers when most of their contemporaries have passed away.

"History then becomes capable of infinite expansion," said Don, naming names and citing government traders' licenses, contemporary writings, and other records in substantiation. "Taking their own say-so, old-timers become 'the first in here, the first in there,' and the same event is ascribed to six or eight different dates as much as 20 years apart. This is the 'bull-factor.'"

Many of these invaders of the "hitherto unvisited country of the Navajos," said Don, were guided in by "French halfbreeds whose mothers had never left home." These bogus "me-firsters" actually date as late as the Gay Nineties, although there were traders in Navajoland as early as 1582, and "French and Spanish all over everywhere long before 1800."

Don gave us only a "progress report," his arduous search being far from completed

(Continued on Page 8)

The Mystery of Death Valley

HOW IT WAS NAMED

By E. I. EDWARDS
Author of *Desert Voices, The Valley Whose Name Is Death, Into An Alkali Valley, Lost Oases Along the Carrizo,* etc.

(A master of desert source-material applies comprehensive research, logic, comparative evaluation, psychology, considerable soul-searching, and twinkles of humor to a moot question. Editor).

A favorite practice among some of our more imaginative Death Valley writers is to make trite reference to the element of mystery that supposedly haunts the place.

Actually there is nothing particularly mysterious about Death Valley, either now or at any time during its known past. Nor is there to be found anything notably glamorous or romantic about it unless—perhaps—in the fabric of its 20-Mule-Team Borax saga and in the exploits of its incomparable Scotty. But these are merely man-made adornments to an already sufficient natural pattern. The basic appeal of Death Valley rests upon surer foundation than the heritage afforded by an all-but-abortive commercial venture and the fictive yarns of an entertaining but not overly-veracious desert character.

If, indeed, a suggestion of mystery does enshroud Death Valley, it may well repose in the naming of it. Who first called this desolate region "Death Valley?" And why? With but one quite understandable exception, no known deaths occurred there until well after the somber name had fastened upon it.[1] None of the original emigrant parties of 1849 suffered from heat (they enjoyed beautiful desert-winter weather); nor, so far as we know, did any of them experience thirst or extreme hunger. Neither did the Indians nor the wild animals molest them.

The name itself is both drab and commonplace. It often has been applied, particularly to desert regions; and its application, whenever and wherever used, denotes a complete absence of imagination. Any barren and desolate desert valley holds within its borders the constant threat and terror of death. Thus the name frequently brought to mind and applied indiscriminately by early travelers to so many desert areas was, invariably, Death Valley.

While we cannot wholly understand why this particular desert should be referred to as Death Valley, it is sufficiently clear why these early travelers called some of the other desert regions along their trail by this expressive name. It was not without reason that they applied the name to one segment of the vast desert country several miles and several days prior to the time they descended into the present Death Valley. Likewise, it was quite generally applied to the Searles Lake desert encountered after they passed through the present Death Valley. And all this is completely understandable. The mystery is why the name endured as it referred to this one kindly valley; disappeared in others where it connoted a more realistic character.

Thus it is fascinating to speculate upon the identity of the person or persons who first applied these words to our now-famous stretch of desert. For we know someone had to do it. The name didn't just materialize out of thin air. And there were no subdividers exploiting our deserts in 1849 to give it this publicity. That's for sure.

Very definitely, one of two things is certain. Either the valley received its name from one of the original groups who passed through it in 1849, or the name was bestowed at a later date—perhaps by some heat-crazed prospector, or a disillusioned miner, or an imaginative reporter, or any one of an infinite number of other possibilities. If we admit of this latter supposition, however, we don't have much left to argue about. We will have come to an impasse that precludes us absolutely from running down the culprit responsible for this august christening.

So we'll play it safe and assume that original emigrants first uttered these somber words. This sounds plausible. What isn't quite clear, though, is how this early pioneer or group of pioneers made the name stick. We can visualize how he, or she, or they, may have apostrophized in this fashion to the quiet desert air, or even to a next door neighbor at some later date. It does pose something of a problem to figure how this name could have been bandied about by word of mouth for more than a decade without being lost in the shuffle. There is an hiatus of over eleven years between 1849 and the first printed appearance of the words

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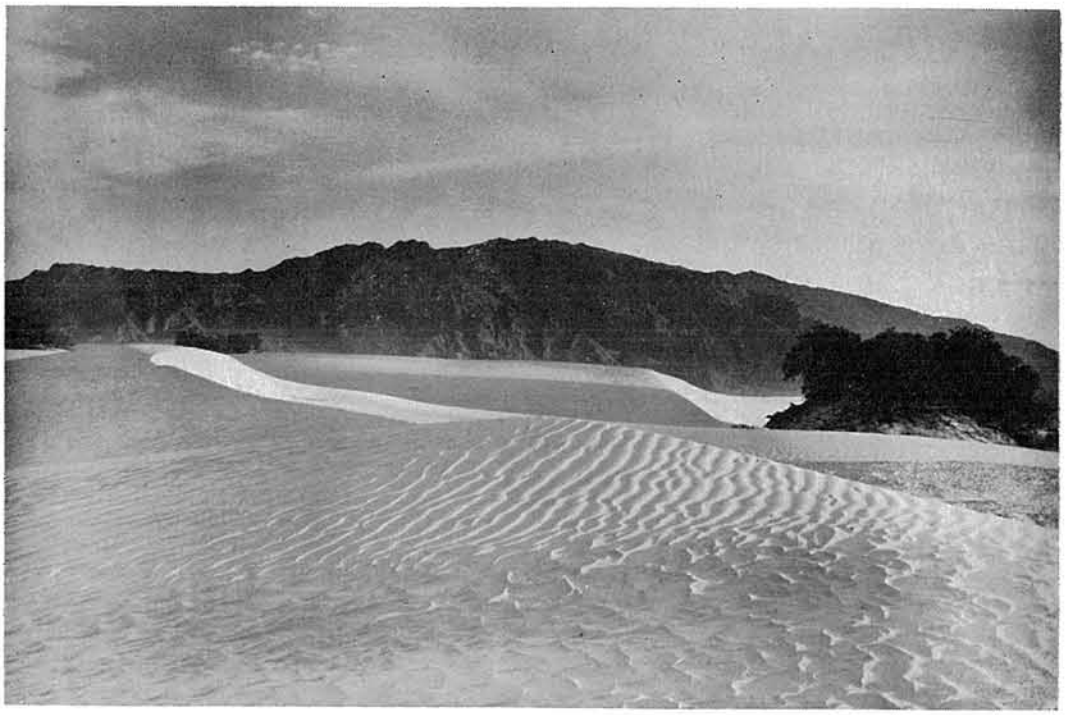

THE SPIRIT OF DEATH VALLEY

Tucki Mountain, seen from the sand dunes near old Stovepipe Wells, several miles south of the Manly-Bennett-Arcane "Jayhawker" track. In later times, Montgomery's camp of Skidoo was on the other side of Tucki, and the Bullfrog Trail crossed the valley from Stovepipe to reach it, becoming the Rhyolite-Skidoo road. —*Photo by Harold O. Weight.*

"Death Valley." Mr. Carl I. Wheat, eminent authority on this region, tells us the first printed mention he has been able to find is in an old newspaper published early in 1861.[2] Our earliest known book mention is in 1863.[3] And in the Boundary Survey notes, published in certain of the July 1861 issues of the *Sacramento Daily Union*, the name "Death Valley" was being applied as early as February of that year.

There are writers who contend brilliantly that the Jayhawkers, one of the original 1849 groups, are entitled to this distinction. Unfortunately (for those who favor them) this just cannot be. Proof of our assertion appears in the experiences and in the words of the Jayhawkers themselves. For this group, composed mainly of husky, care-free young men, didn't encounter anything in this desert that would even remotely suggest the name. Quite the contrary. During the week they camped there—it was Christmas week of 1849—they had enough to eat and an abundance of pretty good water to drink. Matter of fact, the week's rest was a welcome one both to the men and to the beasts. The weather was pleasant, and the food not bad. It was after they left Death Valley that their troubles began. Panamint Valley was tortuous enough; but the Searles Lake region was intolerable. They providentially discovered a spring of water in the nearby mountains; and this is all that saved the life of every man and ox in their party. Actually, three of them didn't make it. Two men died someplace out on the Slate range,[4] and a third perished near the desert approach to Soledad Canyon.[5] To the Jayhawkers, the region round about Searles Lake was "Death Valley." They called it that; and they persisted (some of them) in this name for years to come. Even as late as 1916, one of their number—L. Dow Stephens—wrote a book about their experiences.[6] And in this book he refers to the Searles Lake area as "Death Valley." By the same token, when he mentions the real Death Valley where they burned their wagons, he has no name for it.

And there's another prominent Jayhawker who also wrote an account of their

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experiences. His name is Sheldon Young, and his "Log" is a day by day recordation of their journey. In fact, Sheldon Young writes the first known description of Death Valley, and he entered this on-the-scene account during that memorable Christmas week of 1849 while he and his group camped there. Does he call it "Death Valley?" He does not. Not even once does he refer to it by this name. To Mr. Young it was always "an alkali valley."[7]

So we'll just drop the Jayhawkers from our list of possibles. For if any mother's son of them had ever spoken this name louder than a whisper, both Young and Stephens would have known and written about it.

Then there were the Briers—the militant old preacher, his heroic wife, and their three children. Much has been written, and deservedly so, about the courageous Mrs. Brier. Unfortunately, some of our most dependable historians go hell-bent-for-chivalry, right off the foundation of fact into the quick-sand of fancy, whenever they get started glamorizing Mrs. Brier. Her name suggests a romantic escape from the inevitable commonplace incidents the historian encounters when he endeavors to write what actually occurred in Death Valley in 1849. The name of Juliet Brier offers departure from the somewhat unexciting chronicle of the Death Valley debacle. So—why not bulge the facts a little and give this good lady credit for naming the place?

We'd love to go along with the crowd on this. Our failure to do so is not attributable to the possibility that we love Mrs. Brier less, but that we cherish facts more. We refuse to fictionize, even in the tiny instance of the still tinier Mrs. Brier. We started out looking for facts, and—to us, at any rate—the most obvious fact of them all is that neither Mrs. Brier nor the irascible old preacher named this desert. That worthy gentleman was too busy preaching to name it; and Mrs. Brier was too busy looking after her unpopular and loquacious husband to conjure up a name for the place. Mrs. Brier may well be remembered as a great and noble lady; and all Death Valley writers—even the pioneers themselves—pay her generous tribute. She was not the heroine of Death Valley, however. She was one of the four heroines. In the Death Valley groups, so far as we know, there were four grown women—Mrs. Brier, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Arcane, and Mrs. Wade. Whenever one thinks of Death Valley, he had best think of four equally wonderful women—heroines all. As to Mrs. Brier, one of her sons pays eloquent tribute when he speaks of his mother as being "fit alike for adversity or prosperity." In ill health at the beginning of their journey, she grew strong under its hardship and peril, living to be nearly one hundred years of age.

Now let's get back to the Reverend. In a figure of speaking, he had scarcely succeeded in accomplishing his floundering exodus out of Death Valley—with the help and comfort of his good wife—before he was dogmatically urging their route through this and other deserts as a feasible pathway of travel westward to the Pacific. Writing in 1853 he had the temerity, or the audacity, or both, to exalt this route despite the fact that he and his family all but lost their lives in crossing over it.[8] But the significant feature of this earliest published article or reference to Death Valley—for our purpose—does not repose in what the egocentric minister so foolishly said, but in what he failed to say. Brier was a great talker; the "principal blower," as one of his fellow travelers describes him. The fact that he always said so much (in quantity, that is) tends to make conspicuous that which he doesn't say. Certainly such a condition obtains in this instance. For when Brier described this desert he had no name for it. How he would love to have thundered that name with all his clergical eloquence down through the ages. And one can bet every grain of sand in Death Valley that the only reason he didn't use the name was because he had never heard it spoken with reference to this particular desert—neither by his wife, nor by anyone else.[9]

However, there is a group among these emigrants of 1849 that just may qualify for the signal honor of giving Death Valley its name; a group that, historically, has builded for this desert a heritage of honor and chivalry that will never pass from it. The party of Manly and Bennett and Arcane. The party whose members broke bread at the table of destiny, and now claim kindred with the great and daring of all ages. It was this historic group who came truly to know Death Valley and to bestow upon it all the high tradition that abides there. They lived in it, suffered in it, all

but died in it for five long, dreadful weeks. They could never forget it; and, because of them, the world has come to know and remember it—and will continue to be responsive to its appeal until both time and desert no longer remain. There is recorded perhaps no single act of devotion in all history that can surpass in magnitude the heroic performance of Manly and Rogers —those young men so courageous—who deliberately turned their backs upon their own hard-won safety and returned over the long, terrifying desert to the rescue of the little group of men, women and children huddled forlornly together—deep in the "white heart" of Death Valley.

One of these young heroes—Lewis Manly —wrote, in his old age, a book about Death Valley and the true experiences of the group who discovered and passed across it.[10] It is the most authentic, the most completely informative book that has ever been written concerning Death Valley's early history. It will continue to remain so. Manly, in his book, is factual. He is accurate, reliable, and through it all—refreshingly modest. What he writes is source material; and it invites reliance.

Manly informs how this valley was named, and precisely who named it. I believe him. Whether—during the ensuing years—the name fell into disuse and was finally forgotten, later to be revived by one who had no knowledge of this early christening, I do not know. I know only that to me, Manly's words are true words. Whether the name we recognize today can be traced to this original source in unbroken sequence of usage, is something about which we can never be sure. But I think we may safely assume these identical words were spoken far back in that day when the first white man trudged across this valley; and we know these words are used to designate it today.

Lewis Manly claims the honor of selecting this name for his own party. And who could better and more logically have been responsible for its inception? The men, women and little children in this particular group—for five long, dreadful weeks —remained encamped in the desert awaiting rescue. To them, death was ever imminent—by day and by night. It beckoned and lurked in the close presence of Indians, in the steadily-declining food supplies, in the serious illness of the children. True, the desert itself did not fail them. But it threatened. And in the confines of this narrow valley, death was closing in rapidly with relentless and awful precision. To these untrained and helpless people the desert did, indeed, become a valley of stalking death.

Manly tells us the actual naming took place on the morning of the second day after they had climbed out of the valley into the Panamints, on their one last effort to escape into safety. In describing this historic incident, Manly says, "While waiting for the women (referring to Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Arcane, who were completing final preparations for their third arduous day on the trail),[11] Bennett and Arcane wanted to go out and get a good view of the great snowy mountain I had told them about (Telescope Peak).[11] The best point of view was near our own camp (that is, their first over-night camp on the Panamints,[13] perhaps three or four hundred yards away, and I went with them." The actual naming, Manly informs us, occurred just before these three men—himself, Bennett and Arcane—returned to camp. Thus it is clear that one of the three, likely Mr. Manly himself, supplied the name. Further support of the Manly naming appears in an 1877 article supposedly dictated, but not written, by Manly wherein the credit is directly extended him.

Finally, it must be remembered that Manly, in depicting this event, is not writing from hearsay. He was actually present and heard the words spoken; may reasonably have spoken them himself. Perhaps not elsewhere in his entire narrative is the conservative and modest old hero more emphatic, more definitely assured, than in this description of how Death Valley received its name:

> "Just as we were ready to leave and return to camp we (referring specifically to himself, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Arcane),[11] took off our hats, and then overlooking the scene of so much trial, suffering and death spoke the thought uppermost saying:—'Goodbye, Death Valley!' Even[12] after this, in speaking of this long and narrow valley over which we had crossed into its nearly central part, and on the edge of which the lone camp was made, for so many days, it was called 'Death Valley.' Many accounts have been given to the world as to the origin of the name and by whom it was thus designated; but

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ours were the first visible footsteps, and we the party which named it the saddest and most dreadful name that came to us first from its memories."

FOOTNOTES

[1]Old "Captain" Richard Culverwell died, likely as the result of over-exertion brought on by his wandering off from camp alone without food or water.

[2]San Francisco Alta California (April 12, 1861).

[3]Hittell—*Resources of California.*

[4]William Isham and "Father" Fish.

[5]William Robinson.

[6]*Life Sketches Of a Jayhawker of '49.*

[7]See Edwards—*Into An Alkali Valley,* (1948).

[8]See Appendix in Heap's *Central Route To The Pacific,* (1854).

[9]In his personal letters, written many years after their Death Valley exodus, Brier refers to "Death Valley, *as it is now called.*"

[10]*Death Valley in '49,* (1894).

[11]The parentheses are mine.

[12]Perhaps a typographical error. The word could be "Ever." I am inclined to accept it as it appears in this first-edition quoting.

Perceval and Harding Feature Other Meetings

(Continued from Page 3)

after years of devotion. There were 186 trading-posts in the Navajo country, plus a large number of unexplained ruins—and 320 different names to be fitted into their correct positions in time and space.

Santa Barbara, Don's home town, sent a contingent to hear his talk, including CM W. T. Genns; Fallus Oliver, who joined up as a new CM; Bill Center, and G. A. Gallagher.

At the June 21 meeting CM George L. Harding of San Francisco, member of four Westerners outfits "and almost everything else," gave us a then-and-now excursion over the trail of Tiburcio Vasquez. It was veteran Westerner Harding's third appearance before the Los Angeles Corral.

Dismissing Murrieta as "a myth," George declared that the most far-famed and solidly substantiated Western badmen were Billy the Kid and Vasquez. Then he mapped the capers of Tiburcio, who was the black sheep of a large and otherwise highly respectable family—now remembered only for its renegade.

From a lair near New Idria in still unspoiled San Benito County, and from 1857 until he was hanged at San Jose in 1875, Tiburcio and assorted henchmen raided California north, south, east and west. They terrorized the populace so thoroughly that a mere pair of them held up a stagecoach, loaded with 20 armed men, and escaped with the loot. Three short hitches in San Quentin, totaling five years, gave the Golden State its only rest periods.

It seems doubtful that his operations showed a profit; he had an unlucky knack of raiding a spot where a large payroll was expected to be found—and finding that it wasn't there, whereupon he would wreck the premises and escape with peanuts.

DATE UNSCRAMBLER

Don Louis Perceval, eminent Westerner, reveals that some early Navajo traders were inclined to get their arrival dates mixed.

—*Lonnie Hull Photo.*

Major examples of this were Tres Pinos and the 21-Mile House, both near Gilroy.

At last in 1874 Tiburcio was wounded and captured on Rancho La Brea in Los Angeles. From there the trail led to the gallows, with an audience of formally invited guests. The chase had cost California more than $40,000—without, so far as CM Harding mentioned—coming anywhere near "Vasquez Rocks" of local fame.

Guests included Gilberto de Benedetto, A. L. Deatrick, Tom Duvall, George Koenig, Stan Nash, Dr. John H. Urabec, and Al Wesson.

Corral Chips . . .

"It takes Burr Belden to keep track of everything," concluded Westerner Ed Ainsworth *(Los Angeles Times, June 4)* in a column-long appreciation of CM L. Burr Belden, historical researcher, writer, and organizer of the *San Bernardino Sun*. "Burr has hunted lost mines, traced the routes of dying explorers, located the sites of battles, saved historic adobes, and given the vivid memories of pioneers an outlet in print." He is also a director of several historical organizations, including the Death Valley '49ers, a large and active group.

Ex-Sheriff Arthur Woodward, veteran Westerner and outstanding southwestern historian and author, was elected an Honorary Member by the Los Angeles Corral, following his departure for a new home in Arizona and his brief tenure as Corresponding Member. Dr. Woodward was a Westerner in spirit and achievement long before the group was organized, and it is safe to say that he will always remain one.

Under the leadership of ex-Sheriff Don Meadows as NGH and Westerner Sid Platford as GNR, Platrix Chapter of E Clampus Vitus held a reverberating meeting at Camp Woodchuck, near Temecula, on May 5. As usual the participants were loaded—with members and CMs of the Los Angeles Corral.

Ex-Sheriff Don Meadows, Ex-Sheriff Paul Bailey and Westerner Sid Platford attended the Grand Council of Clampatriarchs, May 6, at Murphys, California. This group, the guiding body of E Clampus Vitus throughout the state, is composed entirely of the eminent Noble Grand Humbugs, and Ex Noble Grand Humbugs of this illustrious and ancient order. Don is present Noble Grand Humbug of Platrix Chapter; Sid is Noble Grand Recorder of the exalted Patriarchs; and Paul is the Platrix Chapter delegate. They all three returned thoroughly edified and sanctified . . . and Murphys has been returned to the Mother Lode for another year.

Next Time, An Auction?

Experimenting with a raffle as a method of raising a Special Publications Fund, the English Westerners' Society netted $49.14. Three prizes had been donated, but less than half of the tickets found buyers.

Indian Smoke Signal . . . from Iron Eyes Cody

(Custer buffs will note that memories do not always produce sound History, but they may find "interesting" this presentation of the Indian version. Editor.)

As told me by old time Sioux friends of mine, in 1868 the United States government guaranteed all of the Black Hills and the Big Horn region to the Sioux Indians.

It was agreed that no white man should enter it without the Indians' consent. It was the only buffalo country left to them. What happened, gold was discovered and trouble began. While Crook lingered upon Goose Creek, Custer was ordered out from the mouth of the Tongue river to follow and locate the Sioux.

For fifty years certain old men would sit in a circle on the dry grass and pass the long pipe while they told their stories of their battles. One old Indian said he was told that Custer was coming with 700 men. We had a few thousand ourselves.

The Indian knew he divided his command in four, Benteen with 90 men, Reno with 200, Custer with 280 and the rest with Godfrey, to follow with the pack mules. His progress was concealed by a series of ridges. While Reno went forward as directed on the creek, since named after him, when Reno reached the river he found the camp partly hidden by the bend of the stream and he ordered his men forward. Then they heard war whoops.

The first volley from Reno's men went whistling through the Sans Arc Circle, there were five different bands, four Sioux, one Northern Cheyenne. Young braves were quick to mount and meet the attack. Soon as enough men were mounted the charge was made and Reno was driven across the stream, soldiers leaped from a high bank and some fell in, while others to the opposite bank and fled over the hills, where they rejoined Benteen and Godfrey. Of course Reno was called a coward. The Indians didn't think so, as you know he was cleared many years after these Indians told me all those soldiers were good fighters, even Custer's bunch. Although a victory for the Indians this was really their defeat and the end of their freedom and wild life. There was nothing to do but hunt them down and put them on reservations and the buffalo too, were doomed, now we eat the white man's beef and not bad.

. . . *Page Nine*

BOB-TAILS . . .

By CM Bob Robertson

To "stage," to "stage it" or to "stage along" is to travel at a fast gait. These terms were usually applied to the manner of driving a team or to the pace of a team travelling at a smart clip.

° ° °

Tan tieso como un mingo or "stiff as a stage horse" were common comparisons for "stove up," stiff and lame or rheumatic, from the fact that horses of stagecoach teams soon became decrepit from the hard pulling and fast gait required of them.

Los mingos were the stagecoach horses driven between the "pointers" and the "leaders" in the teams of the *diligencias* of the Mexicans who did not "string out" their teams in spans (pairs) but worked the pointers and leaders abreast. On a "mud wagon," the Mexicans worked a span of wheelers and a span of leaders as did *los yanquis* but, on nine-passenger stagecoaches, they drove a span of wheelers hitched to the tongue of the coach and, ahead of the wheelers, two leaders with two *mingos* hitched between them.

On the heavy twelve-passenger *diligencias, Mexicanos* worked two wheelers, two *guias* and two *mingos* in the point and two *contraguias* and one *mingo* in the lead.

° ° °

To "hog" or to "crow-hop," in cow-corral lingo, is to buck in a lazy or half-hearted manner or to try, clumsily, to buck.

Many "broke" saddle horses of the old mustang stock would hog a little in the mornings when they were "cold-backed" and would crow-hop when they caught a rider "asleep on the job" or "loosened up" in the saddle.

° ° °

"Original," a corruption of "ridgel" or "ridgeling," was the universal name in the West for a cryptorchid horse. Other names were "flanker," "high flanker" and, in *ranchero* Spanish, *chiclán.*

As a slang expression, an old man who imagined he had great appeal for young women, was also called an "original" or a "stag" because of his ego and impotence.

° ° °

A "stag," in cow-corral English, is a male animal which has reached sexual maturity and acquired masculine character before being castrated. Also, an old animal which has lost virility is called a "stag." In *ranchero* lingo, a bovine stag is called *un toruno* (from *toro,* bull).

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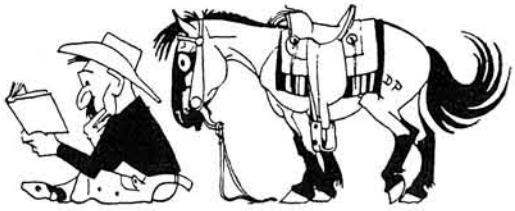

Western History Conference Set for Denver, Oct. 11-13

Westerners of the Denver Posse will take prominent part in the next annual meeting of the Conference on the History of Western America at the Albany Hotel, Denver, Colorado, October 11-13, 1962, with the University of Denver as the host institution. Robert G. Athearn, of the University of Colorado, is the program chairman, and Allen D. Breck, of the University of Denver, is in charge of local arrangements. A preliminary program will be available.

"Rodeer" was a common corruption of *rodeo* (roundup) among English-speaking buckeroos in the Far West before the Wild West show and Hollywood corrupted the word and its meaning into "rodé-ee-oh."

° ° °

Spanish spelling does not permit *bronco* to be spelled "broncho." So spelled, it would have to rhyme with *poncho.* So, in Spanish, there "ain't no such animal as 'broncho'."

° ° °

Broncar, the verbal Mexicanism (from Spanish *bronco* [fem. *bronca*], untamed, untrained; unrefined, crude) means to abandon home, husband or family. Applied to women, it is the Mexican expression for deserting home and "stepping out."

° ° °

Asoleado (fem. *asoleada*) is a Spanish adjective which describes a "wind-broken" (asthmatic) horse. The Spanish word, which was corrupted into "salado" and "sollyow" by gringos, is literally translated into English as "sunned" (from Spanish *sol,* sun).

° ° °

H. L. Mencken (*American Language*) defines Spanish *mocho* as "bob-tailed." In Spanish, a bob-tailed animal is called *rabón* (fem. *rabona*), *rabimocho* (fem. *rabimocha*) or *colicorto* (fem. *colicorta*). *Mocho* (fem. *mocha*) simply means "stubby" or anything cut, broken, worn or grown to a "stub" ("stob" in Texas).

The Western Presses

By PAUL BAILEY

Space does not allow mention of all the important titles being issued from the west. More than ever are the virile, new publishing centers of the west thumbing collective noses at the sterile, ossified eastern book houses. Here is a sampling of some of the west's significant late offerings:

Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, Calif. *Forty Years on the Frontier*, by Granville Stuart; *The Bozeman Trail*, by Hebard and Brininstool; *Sacajawea*, by Grace Raymond Hebard. New facsimile editions of these frontier classics in the usual fine Clark format.

Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, Calif. *El Morro, Inscription Rock, New Mexico*, by John M. Slater. 106 collotypes of the inscriptions, and about the travelers who made them. *Overland In 1849*, by Gustavus C. Pearson. Another priceless overland journal, edited by Westerner John B. Goodman.

Howell-North, Berkeley, Calif. *Rio Grande, Mainline of the Rockies*, by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg. A big, beautiful 380-page book on this most fascinating of western railroads.

Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, Calif. *Ancient Animals of America*, by W. W. Robinson. Another children's classic by this gifted and versatile Westerner. *Photographer of the Southwest: Adam Clark Vroman*. A living portfolio of this great photographer's best, with text by Ruth Mahood.

Sage Books (Alan Swallow), Denver, Colo. *Boom Towns of the Great Basin*, by Frank C. Robertson and Beth Kay Harris. Here is a different kind of ghost town book, with plenty of maps and illustrations.

Superior Publishing Co., Seattle, Washington. *Western Indians*, by Ralph W. Andrews. Andrews has rounded up the cream of the famous Curtis pictures and text in this condensed volume of the large and now rare work.

The Talisman Press, Los Gatos, Calif. *California Imprints*, 1833-1862, edited by Robert Greenwood. A much needed bibliography, in fine format.

University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif. *Personal Sketches of California Pioneers I Have Known*, by Rockwell D. Hunt. Limited edition of 500 copies, by this noted historian.

New Corresponding Members

During the past quarter, the following new Corresponding Members have been welcomed into the Los Angeles Corral:

Mrs. Virginia L. Cochrane, P. O. Box 25, Kansas City, Mo.

Michael Ginsberg, 671 River St., Mattapan 26, Mass.

Stanley W. Nash, 646 Luton Drive, Glendale 6, California.

Fallis L. Oliver, 1705 Lasuen Road, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Cedric Robinson, 597 Palisade Ave., Windsor, Conn.

William N. Tuttle, Box 52 C S, Pullman, Wash.

Howard W. Vesey, 990 Camino Medio, Santa Barbara, Calif.

William J. Wagner, 561 Alisal St., Solvang, Calif.

John Youell, P. O. Box 9524, Portland 10, Oregon.

DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

EARLY TRAVELLERS IN MEXICO, 1534 to 1816. William Mayer, Mexico, D.F.: 1961: [c. 1961, William Mayer]. [8], x, 177 pp., illus. & maps. $4.00.

This little book by an amateur historian, a business man in the City of Mexico, is a rather curious mixture of inadequate accounts of the travels of well-known figures such as Father Kino, Woodes Rogers or J. J. Baegert, and highly interesting, but often too short, accounts of more obscure, but for that reason perhaps the more interesting visitors. Names such as Thomas Blake, Job Hortop, Sieur Bully left the writer completely blank until he had read the book.

There are twenty-seven accounts, from Thomas Blake, a Scotchman and a member of Coronado's expedition to New Mexico and Quivira, to William Davis Robinson who came from the United States to buy tobacco in 1799, got mixed up in a revolution, was captured and whether he deserved it or not, given a life sentence to be served in Spain, where he escaped to Gibraltar.

While it is hardly to be expected that Mr. Mayer's book will set the world on fire, it can make a light, entertaining, factual and low-cost addition to the library of any Westerner interested in things south of the Border. —C. N. RUDKIN.

WARNER: THE MAN AND THE RANCH, by Lorrin L. Morrison. Los Angeles: Published by the Author: 1962. 88 pp. Illus. $2.00.

For the first time, the complex and consistently frustrated career of Juan Jose Warner is drawn together—with a wealth of new detail and solid documentation—within one (paper) cover. No phase of "Colonel" Warner's life is slighted; he is here as a trapper, merchant, *ranchero*, accused "mule-stealer and traitor," victim of Indian depredations and landsharks and unprincipled politicians, newspaperman, historian . . . and he comes through as an unlucky "George Washington the Second," a foremost citizen but not prosperous.

In most phases of the man, and many particulars of his San Diego County ranch, the book goes far beyond Joseph J. Hill's *History of Warner's Ranch and Its Environs*, answering questions which Hill did not approach; the two books complement

(Continued on Next Page)

Down the Book Trail

(Continued from Page 11)

each other. Epicureans of the book trade will not thrill to the inexpensive and unpolished format, but history-conscious people who "just want the facts, ma'am," should find it adequate and enlightening. It has a special value, in that it breaks away from the muddled neighborhood gossip which has kept Warner's Ranch in the mists of hearsay, not history.

—W. L. WRIGHT.

SHORT STIRRUPS, the Saga of Doughbelly Price [with an introduction by Richard G. Hubler, pen-and-ink portrait by Holcomb on the title page, and thirteen bucking horse sketches by Don Louis Perceval, used as chapter headings]. Los Angeles: Westernlore Press: 1960: 205 p.: cloth: $5.75.

BUCKING HORSE PORTFOLIO, by Don Louis Perceval. Westernlore Press; Los Angeles: 1960: 13 sketches, 5¼ by 8 in., in a stiff printed folder: $2.50.

Except for the facts that Doughbelly Price is personally known to the writer, that he now operates "Doughbelly's Clip Joint" in Taos, and that most of the events of the "saga" can be confirmed without too much effort, one might take the book for an elaborate fiction. I cannot guarantee that Doughbelly cannot write a more conventional brand of English than he has used here, but we are assured by no less than Westerner Paul Bailey himself, backed up, if that's necessary, by Introduction Writer Richard Hubler, that the orthography and style are strictly Doughbelly's own, delivered without any impertinent editorial tampering.

(NOTE: Mr. Price is well satisfied with his orthography, but concedes that he knows no punctuation. "So," says he, "I hires a student to spread them damn fly-specks wherever he wants 'em." ED.)

Doughbelly, at least for the last twenty years or so, has made most of his living as a professional "character," and as such has built a reputation spread over most of the Southwest, at least. Whatever there may be of artificiality in his life after the period covered by the book, his career up until sometime near 1933 (when the Noble Experiment was repealed) when the saga ends, is clearly a true to life account of the life of an itinerant cowman, camp cook, and performer in *rodeos* and "wild west shows," once even in a medicine show.

Doughbelly's English may be unconventional, perhaps purposely so, but his storytelling ability is tops, and his organization of his material into a tale which holds the reader till the end, is evidence of real skill, however he came by it.

The thirteen pen-and-ink sketches by Westerner Don Louis Perceval used in the book as chapter head-pieces, by themselves would make the book an item for the collector. Paul Bailey has made separate collecting of these little masterpieces possible by publishing the whole series in a small portfolio. Unfortunately the writer of this bit is not an art critic, or I might say more. As it is I can only say that for my money these sketches rank with those of the other best western artists.

—C. N. RUDKIN.

LOWER CALIFORNIA GUIDEBOOK: a Descriptive Traveler's Guide. By Peter Gerhard and Howard E. Gulick. Third Edition, revised and enlarged. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co.: 1962. $6.50.

Sometimes a revised edition of an old publication is equivalent to a new book on a specific subject. This is especially true of Gerhard and Gulick's Lower California Guidebook which first appeared in 1956. The book has been expanded by 25 pages, new and additional maps have been drawn, additional photographs are included and a new chapter on Places to Stay will remove some of the inhibitions of those who want to visit Baja California but are allergic to roughing it.

Baja California has been illuminated in many ways during the last decade. Now, with the aid of the Guidebook the places, people and things below the border can become a part of personal experience. Historians and scientists will find the publication a necessity for reaching localities that need to be examined.

A journada through Baja California forty years ago was a slow, uncertain undertaking. Today with improved roads and accomodations travel is rapid and pleasant, but one fact is obvious when notes and maps made years ago are compared with those in the Guidebook: Mexican burro drivers and engineers have always followed the line of least resistance.

The new maps of the peninsular roads can be obtained as a separate publication for $1.50.

—DON MEADOWS.

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