LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron

MARCH 1963 LOS ANGELES CORRAL NUMBER 64

NEW OFFICERS...EXCITING MEETINGS

The January Meeting, held at Costa's Grill, was opened up by Sheriff Jim Algar reading a letter from Honorary Member Ed Carter, who celebrated his 90th Birthday on December 20. Jim then presented the Silver Star to John Kemble, thereby installing John as Sheriff for 1963. Sheriff John Kemble then introduced William T. Kimes and Everett (Ed) G. Hager as new Regular Members, both past Corresponding Members, and well known in the L.A. Corral. The meeting then continued with an illustrated talk by Iron Eyes Cody on the use of Peyote by certain Indian tribes in sacred ceremonies. Dr. M. R. Harrington, Honorary Member, and Holling C. Holling, both gave their own experiences in using Peyote and the unusual dreams in living color as a result.

LIBRO DESIERTO

To those who attended the January meeting of the Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners, our esteemed member and Editor of the coming Brand Book, Eddie Edwards, presented an inscribed copy of his latest book *Desert Harvest*. This old bibliographer and desert lover has probably read just about everything on the desert and out of this wide reading and familiarity with the desert has culled and culled until he arrived at what he considers the very best twenty-five books published on the desert, as being the most factual according to his strict standards. Just to read the index will give you some idea of the amount of research required to produce this little gem.

Sheriff John Kemble started off the February meeting at Costa's Grill by introducing the guests: Paul Andrews, historian, Petroleum Production Pioneers; George Koenig, Clyde Nevis, Carl Kellog; and Mr. Hackett, of the Chicago Corral. The Sheriff then introduced the speaker of the evening, Eddie Edwards, who Lawrence Clarke Powell refers to as "Death Valley Eddie." The subject of the evening was "The Mystery of Death Valley's Lost Wagon Train." Seldom has an audience listened with so much interest, and rather than dwell on a description of his talk will hereby list his source of information:

Retiring Sheriff James Algar pins the badge of office on incoming Sheriff John Kemble, at the January meeting. —*Lonnie Hull Photo.*

James H. Martineau's account, written in 1910 and appearing in the *Improvement Era* issue for July 1928, relating to a statement made to him back in 1858 by a "Mr. Bennett." The magazine entitles its article "A Tragedy of the Desert."

Robert E. Rinehart's article, "Naming of Death Val-

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THE BRANDING IRON
OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL OF
THE WESTERNERS

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OFFICERS—1963

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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.

From the Mailbag . . .

"This letter is to wish you the *Very Happiest of New Years* and to express my deep appreciation to you for making my birthday the best ever. I have often wondered why I've lived so long and now I know. The more than 100 persons who sent me Greetings for my 90th birthday, on December 27th, gave me the reason why I'm still around!

"Even the postman conspired to help my daughter keep the wonderful cards a complete surprise. She tells me that she wrote him a note and asked that he deliver all the cards and letters addressed for me to the side door, since I would be having a surprise 90th birthday party. About 3:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the 27th I walked unsuspectingly into a group of relatives and friends who had gathered silently at our home. When they all chorused, "Happy Birthday," I was completely taken by surprise. Even my nephew and his wife had come all the way down from Napa to join in the festivities.

"Then I was literally showered with cards and letters, which I shared with the assembled group, amid much hilarity. And with a few tears, I must admit. Never in all my 90 years have I been so deeply touched, and I thank you, each and every one, for your notes of good cheer. There was one wonderful big envelope which contained a delightful drawing signed by 45 members of the Westerners of Southern California. That will be framed and hung in my rogues gallery where it will be a constant reminder of my active days as a Westerner. My thanks to each of you fine fellows. You don't know how much just signing your names has meant to an old fellow Westerner. After the cards had been opened and thoroughly enjoyed, we all pitched into a beautiful cake which was inscribed 'Happy 90th Birthday, Dad.'

"My surprise didn't end even then. After the guests had gone, a dear little friend of my 18-year-old granddaughter made a special trip to the house to bring me a very beautiful card which she said was for "Grandad." Then, early in the evening a special cousin from Southern California telephoned to offer her greetings, a next-door neighbor who had been unable to attend the party sent a gorgeous bouquet of roses, and to top the day off—my son called me from West Virginia to wish me Happy Birthday.

"To each of my other dear friends and relatives who took the time to send greetings, I just want to say, 'Thank you, and God bless you all!' "

EDGAR N. CARTER

Proposed Regulations

Mr. Leland Case, "Founder of The Westerners," has written Sheriff John Kemble regarding the future status of The Westerners. It is in his opinion time for a gathering of the minds to formulate a set of regulations to be established for the protection and welfare of The Westerners. Of late there has been a few Corrals popping up without rhyme, reason or qualification. The next issue of the Branding Iron will contain Mr. Case's suggestions and our reply as to the results of the Los Angeles Corral Committee meeting.

Members and guests of the Los Angeles Corral, at the January meeting, were treated to a study and discussion of the controversial peyote religious ceremony, as practiced with the vision-producing drug by Indians of the western tribes. Speaker of the evening Iron Eyes Cody (left), and Dr. M. R. Harrington of the Southwest Museum, demonstrate some of the tools used in conjunction with the drug to produce the peyote trance. —*Lonnie Hull Photo.*

New Officers For 1963

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ley," appearing in the Sunday issue of the *Los Angeles Times* for August 16, 1908.

John Randolph Spears' *Illustrated Sketches of Death Valley*, published in 1892 (2 years before Manly's book).

Henry G. Hanks' *Third Annual Report of the State Mineralogist* for the year ending June 1, 1883.

J. Ross Browne's *Adventures In the Apache Country*, published in 1869 and containing perhaps the earliest written *book* account of Death Valley.

Oliver Roberts' *The Great Understander*, written and published by W. W. Walter in 1931, and relating to Roberts' experiences on the Mojave during the 1870s and 1880s.

Capt. James Hobbs' *Wild Life In the Far West*, published in 1872.

Second Darwin French Expedition into Death Valley in 1860, as recounted in Hanks' book.

The Dr. George Expedition into Death Valley in 1860, as recounted in Hanks' book.

The Hugh McCormack Party into Death Valley in 1861, as recounted in Hanks' book.

The Boundary Survey Group, from the 1861 *Sacramento Daily Union* issues (mentioned in Art Woodward's *Camels and Surveyors In Death Valley*).

The Blasdel Party of 1866. Blasdel was the first Governor of Nevada. From *The Territorial Enterprise* of June 22, 1866. The letter was written April 21, 1866.

Westerners Rewarded

Our very popular member of the L.A. Corral Dwight L. Clarke was elected a "Fellow," and Ed Ainsworth and Russ Leadabrand received Awards of Merit at the annual meeting of the California Historical Society. Dwight is the author of *Stephen W. Kearney, Soldier of the West.* This issue of the *Branding Iron* also contains an article by him.

Journada

The following members of the Los Angeles Corral will be leaving April 11 on a Journada over the Old Spanish Mission Trail from Ensenada to La Paz, traversing the full length of Baja California. Wagon boss will be Burr Belden and the Trail Herd will include Ex-Sheriff Arturo Woodward, Sid Platford, Horace Parker, Al Ferris, and Ex-Sheriff Don Meadows. The train will consist of five four-wheel drive cars, and the trip is expected to consume several weeks.

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KEARNY'S HOWITZERS

by
DWIGHT L. CLARKE

When I wrote the biography of General Stephen Watts Kearny, the chapter on the Battle of San Pasqual required considerable research.[1] One constantly recurring question was the ultimate fate of the mountain guns so laboriously transported by the First Dragoons from Fort Leavenworth to California.

When Andrés Pico made the Capitulation of Cahuenga with Frémont, the field gun which the Californians had captured at San Pasqual was part of the arms then surrendered. The other howitzer in all probability had been brought from San Diego by General Kearny and his Dragoons when he marched with Commodore Stockton to seize Los Angeles. All the booty captured by Lt. Colonel Frémont was parked at the Plaza in that pueblo and later taken to San Gabriel.

Before leaving the south on his famous breakneck ride to Monterey to interview General Kearny, Lieutenant Colonel Frémont on March 15, 1847 ordered Captain Richard Owens of the California Battalion "to take the best possible care of the public arms and munitions belonging to the command and turn them over to no corps without my special order." This formed the basis for Captain Owens' refusal to allow Lieutenant Colonel Cooke to haul the howitzers into Los Angeles, although Cooke had express orders from General Kearny to return these guns to the First Dragoons. Because of this refusal, Colonel Richard B. Mason was sent south by General Kearny in the following April and finally succeeded in gaining possession of this artillery from the obdurate Frémont. Mason turned over the guns to the Mormon Battalion at Los Angeles. The record is silent as to what became of them after their stay in the Pueblo.

Few material things are more durable than bronze cannon. Nevertheless, despite considerable correspondence with persons interested in this subject, the final destination or present whereabouts of Kearny's mountain howitzers remains a matter of surmise.

Through the interest displayed by Colonel George Ruhlen, U.S.A. (Ret.) of San Diego, the assistance of Mrs. Clara S. Beatty, Executive Director of the Nevada Historical Society at Reno, Nevada, was enlisted. She in turn mentioned the problem to Mr. F. I. Green of Reno. They had both investigated the question of the famous gun supplied Frémont for his 1843 Expedition by Colonel S. W. Kearny from the St. Louis Arsenal.

Frémont himself has left us the explanation of why he had to abandon the gun, while attempting to force his way westward over the Sierras from the Nevada deserts. On January 28, 1844 he writes: "Tonight we did not succeed in getting the howitzer into camp. This was the most laborious day we had yet passed through; the steep ascents and deep snow exhausting both men and animals." The next day he writes: "The other division of the party . . . had not succeeded in getting the howitzer beyond the place mentioned . . . and in anticipation of the snow banks and snowfields still ahead . . . I reluctantly determined to leave it there for the time. It was of the kind invented by the French for the mountain part of their war in Algiers . . . and . . . proved . . . well . . . adapted to its purpose."[2]

In the Museum at Carson City there has long been displayed a small field piece which for years has been generally accepted as being the one which Frémont abandoned in the mountains.

Among the John C. Frémont papers at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles is a letter written by Westerner Arthur Woodward to F. W. Hodge (then the Museum's director) on March 25, 1949. Referring to a photograph of a twelve pound bronze mountain howitzer, Mr. Woodward identified it as the howitzer lost by John C. Frémont's party on January 29, 1844, and the one furnished the explorer by Colonel Kearny.

Mr. Woodward in a letter to the writer dated Tucson, January 31, 1962 comments on the lost cannon. "The Los Angeles Star reported December 17, 1859 . . . that the gun lost or abandoned by John Frémont in 1843 had been found by two miners near Genoa, Carson Valley. It was described as a small U.S. howitzer." He goes on to quote from another early newspaper:

"The gun . . . has quite an interesting history. The piece, a twelve-pounder mountain howitzer was brought across the plains by Colonel Frémont in his surveying expedition in 1846; and by him lost or aban-

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doned somewhere in the Owens' River country. It was found there some years later by J. S. Whitton and party while on a prospecting tour and brought to California. Afterwards it was purchased from Mr. Whitton at a cost of $250 by Captain Pray of Virginia City who valued it as a historic relic. . . ."[3]

Mr. Woodward also mentions other accounts of the finding of the lost cannon.[4]

Mr. Green in the course of his research developed some interesting facts. Three models of mountain howitzers were in use in the United States between 1836 and 1876. Two of these were of American manufacture, the 1836 and 1841 models. The field piece in the Museum at Carson City is plainly marked 1836 on the left trunnion and was the third casting of a series of twelve delivered by Cyrus Alger and Company to the government in 1836. Mr. Green thinks it quite significant that the Carson City 1836 gun is a plain casting with only single band fillets at the muzzle and base and no dolphins or "ear" handles.

Mr. Green referred me to Dr. Carl P. Russell, lately of the National Park Service, who has also studied the problem of the cannon left in the mountains by Frémont. Some of the evidence inclines him to believe that the relic at Carson City may not be the lost cannon. In his book *Guns on the Early Frontiers*[5] appears a reproduction of Charles Preuss' drawing of "Frémont Cannon in Camp at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, January 13, 1844." The mounted cannon in that picture plainly shows dolphin handles or "ears." However, Dr. Russell suggests that Preuss may have improvised when he made his finished drawing, or the engraver may have taken liberties when he made the plate. (See also the plate opposite Page 216 of Frémont's Report cited under Note 2.)

Mr. Green points out that because of the statement on Page 226 of Frémont's "Report of the Exploring Expedition, etc. . . . 1843-44" it has been sometimes assumed that the howitzer issued to him by Colonel Kearny came from France. The First and Second Dragoons were presumably supplied with some imported cannon. The piece issued to the then Lieutenant Frémont at St. Louis Arsenal, if it had dolphins, must have been one of these. This model had double fillets and the dolphin handles previously described. Just as certainly it would seem that the two field pieces hauled by the "Army of the West" from Fort Leavenworth to California were of European make.

On all of the above Arthur Woodward comments in the letter earlier referred to: "My good friend, Carl Russell, of many years has been bird dogging the Frémont gun along with Mr. Green. Carl and I have had several friendly discussions concerning this piece of ordnance but until they find another 12 pound mountain howitzer in the area where Frémont abandoned his gun, bearing the 1836 casting marks of Cyrus Alger & Company, I prefer to believe that the cannon now in the museum at Carson City is the Frémont gun."

The following paragraph from Mr. Woodward's letter seems to reinforce his view:

"From correspondence I had in 1941 I learned that Captain Pray had taken the cannon to Glenbrook, Nevada where it was used on various occasions for saluting purposes and about 1900 while some miners were celebrating on one occasion they overloaded it and the explosion swelled the breech. . . . Part of this yarn seems accurate because the 1836 twelve pounder mountain howitzer in the Carson City Museum *does have* a swelled breech! I have examined it several times. When Dr. Russell wrote his book on 'Guns of the Early Frontiers' he sketched the cannon in the Museum but didn't realize that the breech had been swelled out of shape, hence he and his co-researchers kept on looking for a twelve pounder mountain howitzer having the same shape."

The writer is also indebted to Dr. Russell and Mr. Green for some details about the howitzer supplied Lieutenant Frémont by Kearny in 1843. They supplement the story told on Pages 87-89 of the writer's biography of General Kearney.[5] Because of the exigencies of space they were not included in the book, but since the present article concerns ordnance, it seems in order to present them here.

Dr. Russell's research disclosed Frémont's original requisition:

"In the course of the service I shall be led into countries inhabited by hostile Indians, so that it is absolutely necessary to the performance of this service that my party, consisting of about thirty men, be furnished with every means of defense which may conduce to its safety."

(signed) J. C. FREMONT, 2d Lieut.
Topographical Engineers.

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The items requested were:

1 mountain howitzer
1 carriage and harness
4 pistols
2 pairs holsters
33 carbines
5 kegs rifle powder
500 pounds artillery ammunition
200 filled tubes (Dr. Russell believes these were probably friction primers.)

Some years ago a friend of Mr. Green called his attention to a Senate Resolution regarding Frémont's use of the mountain howitzer in 1843-44. Dr. Russell found the report made by President Tyler to the Senate. On Lieutenant Frémont's requisition appears:

> Endorsement from Headquarters 3rd Military Department. Jefferson Barracks, May 8, 1843.
>
> "For the foregoing reasons as given by Lieutenant Frémont and as he is to leave to-morrow, and therefore has not time to hear from Washington, Captain Bell, ordnance department, commanding the St. Louis Arsenal, will issue on the foregoing requisition—the whole responsibility of which is assumed by myself."
>
> S. W. KEARNY,
> Col. U.S. Dragoons.

Among the documents submitted by Tyler was the complaint of Colonel George Talcott, Chief of Ordnance, that the transaction was irregular. This precipitated the administrative action taken against Frémont. Captain W. H. Bell's explanation that he had peremptory orders from Colonel Kearny to supply the equipment was also included. The Secretary of War, J. M. Porter endorsed the file: "I cannot sanction the proceeding."[6]

Obviously the cannon abandoned on January 29, 1844 in the Sierras could not have been one of the two howitzers hauled from Fort Leavenworth to California by the First Dragoons in 1846-47. Therefore, all the foregoing detail about Frémont's lost gun does not carry us very far on the dim trail of Kearny's howitzers and may seem irrelevant. I have, however, included it because it lets us know more clearly just what sort of cannon we are seeking. In addition, all three pieces of ordnance possess curiously related points of interest. In one way or another both Stephen Watts Kearny and John C. Frémont were connected with all three guns. But the parallel does not end even there. The last thing *positively* known of the earlier gun locates it close to the California-Nevada boundary. A lot of folk believe it rests today in the Museum at Carson City, Nevada. Lastly, whatever evidence we have—though it is not conclusive—indicates that the other two howitzers found their way eventually to that same land of Nevada.

Both Mrs. Beatty and Mr. Green have uncovered clues. It seems probable, though by no means certain, that soon after the Mexican War the howitzers were removed to Alcatraz Island or Benicia Barracks. These were two of the earliest Army posts in California. Mrs. Beatty informs me that detachments of Companies A and F of the First Dragoons were at one time stationed at Fort Churchill, Nevada. They were probably part of the forces ordered by General N. S. Clark from Honey Lake Valley, California to Carson City to aid the punitive expedition against the Paiutes in 1860. General Clarke also directed Captain Joseph "Jasper" Stewart of the Third Artillery at Alcatraz and Captain F. F. Flint of the Sixth Infantry at Benicia Barracks to proceed to Pyramid Lake *and bring two howitzers.* These units and the Dragoons from Honey Lake made up the force under Captain Stewart that established Fort Churchill in 1860. Mrs. Beatty feels sure that at least three mountain howitzers a little later formed part of the arms of the Nevada National Guard units along the Comstock Lode.

Mr. Green has traced nine or more bronze mountain howitzers bought between 1836 and 1866 and now on display in various museums and courthouse grounds. However, all of these, with the exception of the Alger gun at Carson City and the one abandoned by Frémont (assuming they are not one and the same) were bought too late to have been at San Pasqual.

Mr. Green's research probably justifies guess that the two Kearny howitzers may have ended in scrap heaps and melting pots during the First or Second World War. A good authority on Virginia City told him that "a cannon with ears," considered to be the real Frémont howitzer, but possibly one of the two which Kearny had at San Pasqual, was taken from a scrap pile by a private junk dealer and sold in 1917. Mr. Green says the Nevada National Guard

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JOHN B. STETSON

by
E. HUBBARD

The word "Stetson" has passed into the current coin of expression. If a man asks for a "Stetson" in any civilized country in the world, the dealer knows what he wants and will possibly try to pass him out "something just as good." Wherever hats are mentioned and discussed for even five minutes the word "Stetson" is used. If a man wants to express the supreme excellence of a hat he tells his customer, "It is a Stetson," or "Just as good as a Stetson," or "Exactly like a Stetson."

John B. Stetson was born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1830. He died in 1906. His was a life of constant activity. He ran the gamut from poverty and hardship to wealth. His father was an employing hatter, and a successful one according to the standard of the times. Stephen Stetson lived over his shop and worked at his trade in the good old-time way. It was an age of handicrafts. All manufacturing was once done in the homes. The entire family worked at the business, and the trade was passed along—whatever it was—from father to son. The sons, daughters and the mother all worked too, at the business. Spinning, weaving, glass-blowing, wood-carving, and the making of lead-pencils, cutlery and utensils of every kind and sort were done in the homes. The complete separation of the home from the factory is a thing which the modern man has seen evolved. Men in middle life now can remember a day when the principal merchant in every town and village lived over his store, shop or factory.

Stephen Stetson was making money, for he had centered on that one thing. He lived in New Jersey, but he had the true New England instincts. He saved, and saved eternally. He worked and he compelled every one else to work, and in his life there were very few play-spells.

When he had accumulated fifty thousand dollars he was accounted one of the richest men in the business. He was fifty years old, and he decided he would retire from business and enjoy himself. He did not realize that to retire from work is to retire from life; so he sold out his prosperous business and the money he had made in a business that he understood, he invested in one he knew nothing about. And the result was that his investments which he had expected would bring him ten per cent or more without effort, melted into thin air.

The elder Stetson passed away, whipped out, discouraged, a bankrupt man, and his sons took in hand the raveled shreds of his business and endeavored to build it up.

John B. was one of the younger children, and the older ones, filled with the thought of primogeniture, naturally took charge. His father had taught him the trade. But education outside of one's trade among the hatters was then regarded as quite superfluous, so the lad never attended school a day in his life. His mother taught him to read and write, and being possessed of a hungry mind he acquired knowledge as the days passed. Life was his school. John B. Stetson was working for an older brother by the day. He made hats, taught others how, sold the product, bought the raw stock—and the brother absorbed the profits and the honors. Then calamity came in the way of ill health. The doctors said John B. Stetson had consumption and that his days on earth were few. He was slight, slim, slender, nervous, active and the type of person who goes quick, or lasts long, as the case may be.

But John B. Stetson was not to die just then. He studied his own case and he came to the conclusion that he would have to quit the exacting business of making hats and get out in the open. He struck out for the Far West, which then, in the late 1850s, meant Illinois. Fever and ague were then the one crop of the Middle West. There were not trees enough to absorb the humidity, and the overturned sod created a miasma, and this transformed the prairies into a Campagna of "shakes." Stetson shook, and shook dice with Destiny. If he was going to die, he would die in the West, and he pushed on across the Mississippi River, through to the rising city of Saint Joseph, Missouri. Saint Joseph was a trading post where the parties fitted out for Pike's Peak—750 miles away. At Saint Joseph, Stetson worked in a brickyard; then he became manager of the brickyard, then part owner. He made money and invested it all in the business. His brickyard was on the banks of the Missouri, when lo, the fickle and finicky Missouri went on a rampage, overflowing its banks, kept rising until it drove the firemen out of Stetson's brickyards. It put out the fires, undermined

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the arches; and the bricks made without straw tumbled in a mass. Stetson fortune, the result of two years of hard work, swirled and swam away to the south.

The Civil War was on, and Stetson tried to enlist, but his physical disabilities were too apparent and he was rejected. There was a party fitting out for Pike's Peak, and Stetson was invited to become one of the members. He accepted the invitation and they started away on foot, a dozen young men headed for the Rocky Mountains. And so these young men tramped, following the trail to the West, always to the West, and as they journeyed, health and happiness came back to John B. Stetson.

Soon the storms came, and the plains and prairies were windswept. At night they had no shelter. In this extremity they resorted to a plan of sewing the skins of animals together; muskrat, rabbits, beaver, coyote, were plentiful, but our friends had no method of tanning the skins, and there is a certain, serious objection to using green skins for clothing purposes in the summer time, that need not be cited. Shelter-tents, just big enough to crawl into, were easy enough to make with the help of skins. But these skins were thrown away when the sun came out, and the hope and prayer was that the storms would not again come. Then it was that Stetson showed his companions an object lesson in science one fine day as they were sitting on the banks of the stream with their feet dabbling in the water. The thing that Stetson explained to his friends was something they had never heard of, and and at once it caused a big argument. The question turned on securing cloth for shelter-tents. One man made the flat, dogmatic statement that cloth was made by weaving, and that it could not be made in any other way. Stetson stood out that there was another scheme for making cloth. So, to prove his case, Stetson expounded to them the science of felting. This is a branch of knowledge that is as old as glass-making. It goes back to the time of Moses. It was known to Homer and Hesiod, for they mentioned the scheme in their writings. Pythagoras, 600 years before Christ, made cloth by the felting process, and as far as we know, the first fabrics were made of felt, and weaving came as an afterthought.

Stetson took some of the skins that his friends had discarded, sharpened up his hatchet on a convenient stone, and shaved the fur off the skins. He then cut a bit of hickory sapling; sliced off a throng from one of the skins, and made a hunters bow. With this bow he agitated the fur so as to keep it in a regular little cloud in the air. Here is a process known to all old-time hatters, but which can only be done by an expert. It requires about as much talent and skill to manipulate a hunters bow as it does to play a violin. Nowadays the fur is manipulated by a machine fan and allowed to settle, but the principle is the same. Stetson kept the fur in the air, and then it fell gently by its own weight, and was very naturally distributed over a certain space. As it fell, Stetson, with a mouth full of water, after the manner of John Chinaman, blew a fine spray of moisture through the fur. Soon there was a mat of the fur that could be lifted up and rolled. It was like a thin sheet of wet paper. There was a campfire near, and a pot of boiling water, and into this boiling water Stetson dipped his sheet of matted fur. It began to shrink. By manipulating it with his hands, and rapidly dipping it into the hot water, he soon had a little blanket, woven soft and even of perfect cloth. There was the actual thing—cloth made by the felting process—one of the oldest devices of the human mind. And the story goes that Stetson's traveling companions were so delighted with his experiment that they immediately went to work killing jack-rabbits, beavers and skunks and any other of the fur-bearing animals they could get. Then under Stetson's directions they made felt tents that effectually turned the water, to the delight and astonishment of the troopers on horseback and afoot, and in the prairie-schooners, that were wending their way to the West. To amuse his friends, Stetson made a hat out of felt. It was big and picturesque. It protected the wearer from the wind and rain, as well as from the scorching sun. Besides all of this, it attracted considerable attention. It made the wearer the object of envy, ridicule or admiration, as the case may be. But the ribald ones ceased to revile when a bullwhacker on horseback, gaily seated on a silver-mounted saddle from Mexico, looked upon Stetson's hat with envious eyes and then offered the owner a five-dollar gold piece for it. This was the first genuine Stetson hat made and sold. That it would eventually lead to a great industry, no one guessed; but it was the germ of an enterprise that was to be worldwide in its influence.

A year passed, and health and strength

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had come back to Stetson. He was big and strong, able and ambitious—full of ideas. He decided that he would go back East—back to the city that Benjamin Franklin had done so much to make. There he would work out his dream and, if possible, build up a business. He could do this one thing. He was a feltmaker and a hatter. He had the skill of fingers and talent to do. And so back to Philadelphia he went, with his scanty earnings made in the diggings. Reaching Philadelphia, he had one hundred dollars left. He bought the tools of his trade, rented a little room at Seventh and Callowhill Streets, and started to work making hats. To buy the fur and make the felt was the thing to do.

Finally, one day, he went out wearing a hat made of very fine, soft felt. He had made this hat from the finest fur that he could procure, and his endeavor was to make the lightest hat possible. A felt hat weighs anywhere from two to four ounces. This hat that Stetson wore weighed two. Stetson gave a vicious curl to his moustache and a cock that matched the hat, and twisting his hat over one eye, he started again on his rounds among the dealers. He assumed a roudy, Beau Brummel appearance, aping the ultra-fashionables; and as he swaggered into a store his dapper appearance got the attention of a customer who eyed him with approval. Stetson took off his hat and showed it to the dealer in the presence of the customer who stood by. The customer became interested and bought the hat on the spot. The dealer gave Stetson an order for a dozen. This was the first order for a dozen hats that he had received, and he had been working the market for six months. He hastened back to his shop, took all the money he had, went out and bought the finest fur that he could procure, and started to fill the order. From this time on he had plenty of work. The margins, however, were very close. Customers would not pay more than two dollars for a hat, and they said that this was such a little one anyway, that it was not worth more. The bullwhacker on the plains who had separated himself from a five-dollar gold-piece for a very crude kind of hat, rose before him like an apparition. Instead of depending upon the local trade of the hatters of Philadelphia and haggling with them as to prices, Stetson decided to take all the money he had and make a big, fine picturesque hat for the Cattle Kings. He would call his hat "The Boss of the Plains" He had gotten a list of the clothing and hat dealers in every city and town of the Southwest, and he would send each of these one of his big hats with a letter asking for an order for a dozen. This would either make or break him, but he believed that destiny was with him. So he spent all his money for material and then ran into debt to the very limit of his credit. He made his big, natural-colored hats, four-inch brim and four-inch top, with a strap for a band—and out went the hat to the West by express or by mail. Whether the hat, or orders, would ever come back was the question. Two weeks passed and the orders were coming,"Send a dozen hats just like the sample." Some of the men sent cash with their orders, saying that they wanted their orders given the preference. This new hat. "The Boss of the Plains," was made of one-grade material and retailed at five dollars; then in finer material to sell for ten dollars; then in extra-fine fur made from pure beaver or nutria. These hats sold for as much as thirty dollars apiece. Money came, and the orders were piling up. From this time on the story of the business of John B. Stetson reads like a romance. The hat known as the "B.O.P." was a modified Mexican Sombrero. It was a sombrero with a college education.

EDITOR'S NOTE

John B's son Henry, who is well known to many of us, and lives at Rancho Sombrero on Foothill Blvd., San Fernando, narrowly escaped losing his home on Sunday February 10. 1963, when an avalanche of mud almost inundated it, the debris came to the tops of the windows as a result of the large brush fire of last fall at Olive View and the rain storm of February 9. S. P.

Bob-Tails

Many men gave their names as synonyms for things used in the West. More than almost anything else, firearms were named for their inventors and makers. Among the gun makers and designers whose names, out west, were better known as guns than as men, were Jake and Sam Hawken, Eliphalet Remington, Sam Colt, Henry Deringer, Ethan Allen, Horace Smith, Daniel Wesson, Tyler Henry, Christopher Spencer, Christian Sharps, Oliver Winchester, C. H. Ballard, John Marlin, John and Matthew Browning and Arthur Savage.

Eli Whitney was a gun manufacturer but was better known as the inventor of the cotton gin and Rollin White is better remembered as the designer of a sewing-machine than as a firearm inventor.

—CM BOB ROBERTSON.

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DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

FOUR NEW ARTHUR H. CLARK IMPRINTS

FIRST WHITE WOMEN OVER THE ROCKIES, by Dr. Clifford M. Drury. 2 volumes. $21.00.

SAN FRANCISCO Y.M.C.A., 1853-1953. ONE HUNDRED YEARS BY THE GOLDEN GATE. by Dr. Clifford M. Drury. $8.00

MILITARY GOVERNMENTS IN CALIFORNIA, 1846-1856 by Dr. Theodore Grivas. $8.50.

FROM NEW SPAIN BY SEA TO THE CALIFORNIAS, 1519-1668 by Dr. Maurice G. Holmes. $11.00

Ex-Sheriffs Paul Galleher and Art Clark have been busy boys since the first of the year. The above new publications have emerged from their press and are ready for your purchase.

Dr. Clifford Drury is responsible for two of the books. He is the prime authority on the Oregon Protestant mission and this whole sphere of Pacific Northwest history. Several years ago, this same press produced his *Diaries and Letters of Henry H. Spalding and Asa Bowen Smith Relating to the Nez Perce Mission, 1838-1842.* Now in a solid two-volume work, he has skillfully merged the diaries, letters and biographical sketches of six women of the Oregon Mission who made the overland journey in 1838 and 1838 under the title *First White Women Over The Rockies.* The volumes overflow with human interest with all the appearance of a Robinson Crusoe or a Swiss Family Robinson. Narcissa Whitman, Eliza Spalding, Mary Walker, Myra Eells, Sarah Smith and Mary Gray. They were the first white women to venture on such an unheard-of journey, seven years ahead of the first Oregon migration.

Dr. Drury's second book is actually in the privately-printed class. He was commissioned by the Y.M.C.A. of San Francisco to write this history because of his eminence as a capable historian-author. Much about San Francisco and California life and times is revealed in this story of an institution during the latter half of the last century and the first half of the twentieth century. Here is not only a history of the activities of a fine western agency, but a glimpse of San Francisco and the West, channeled through an entirely different source. There are grim reminders of frontier conditions, civil and world wars, earthquake and fire, real estate and building activity, financial problems and a veritable host of subjects all skillfully woven together to produce a fine book.

Dr. Ted Grivas is not new to our Corral. He has visited us several times. He is an associate professor of history at Sonoma State College in Cotati. This book is an objective account which helps unravel and place in proper perspective, the heretofore troublesome events connected with the true nature of occupation governments. In addition to a wide range of subjects woven into the story, there is an excellent chapter on Alcalde rule. Grivas has been careful in his research, and presents his story in an interesting and pleasingly readable style. There is also a very thorough bibliography.

The final volume in this quartet is a story of exploration, treasure-seeking and search for Manila Galleon bases in the 16th and 17th centuries. Dr. Holmes, a retired Brigadier-General of the U.S. Marine Corps, served for several years in the Spanish-American areas. His naval and marine backgrounds are readily evident as he begins with the movement toward California initiated by Cortes, Narvaez and Alvarado in their invasion of the Aztec empire. The well-known, as well as the obscure voyages are reported. Ship building in New Spain is dealt with in detail. Spanish information security receives a full chapter treatment, also political rivalries of the period. This is a brilliant study, well documented and very well told. There are reproductions of Vizcaino's charts of Monterey and San Diego bays, and some modern survey charts to add to the value and interest of this most worthwhile publication.

JOHN DOBLE'S JOURNAL AND LETTERS FROM THE MINES—MOKELUMNE HILL, JACKSON, VOLCANO AND SAN FRANCISCO. Edited by Charles L. Camp; published in 1962 by The Old West Publishing Company, Denver, Colorado. 321 pages, 5 plates and 3 folding maps. $22.50.

Fred A. Rosenstock, the well known Denver book dealer and former Sheriff of the Denver Posse of the Westerners, has published the writings, including a long distance literary courtship with one Lizzie Lucas, back in Pennsylvania, of what is believed to be among the most revealing of the personal Gold Rush records. John Doble

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meticulously goes into the details on the aspects of life in the Mother Lode.

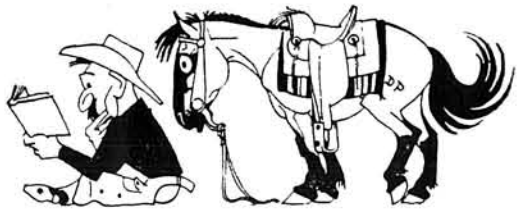
Doble's life is a sample of what many a young miner endured in his struggles to succeed in the placers of California. His record is an honest and reliable narrative.

He tells of fights, fires and murders; the coming of the emigrants; Kit Carson and the Bixbys drive their sheep and cattle down the overland trail; the social life of the village is quaintly described.

Dr. Camp, well known for his historical works; for example, his "James Clyman, Frontiersman;" has done a splendid job in editing the Journal and Letters, and produced a remarkable map of the region from San Andreas to north of Plymouth. He not only studied all the maps of this area, but walked over the countryside interviewing the "old timers." The result is the locating of many places which have never before been mapped and which have long since disappeared from the land.

It has been printed, superbly as usual, by Lawton Kennedy of San Francisco, in an edition limited to 1000 copies.

ALBERT SHUMATE, M.D.



DESERT HARVEST, by E. I. Edwards. Los Angeles: Westernlore Press: 1962. 128 p. (8 are full-page illustrations): 600 copies, of which 500 for sale: $7.50.

At the December 1962, meeting of The Westerners, Los Angeles Corral, all the active members present were surprised and delighted by the receipt of an inscribed and signed copy of Eddie Edwards' latest book. These must be from the 100 copies "not for sale," still leaving 500 for the market.

It is not easy to criticize (this does *not* mean to *find fault with*) another man's selection of a small group of most desirable books from among many on the same general subject, and I won't try it. In any case I cannot think of any substitutions which I would be inclined to propose. Of course if I were selecting books to be saved from a general elimination due to some compelling cause, such as, perhaps, a financial collapse, I might save more reading matter by, for example, selling a first edition of Mary Austin's *Land of Little Rain*, using the proceeds to buy the Doubleday Anchor Book Series paper-back and the surplus to fatten my remaining library.

Since this is not the cause for the selection, and since the book purports to be a selection from Eddie's own library, the comment in the previous paragraph may as well be skipped.

In fact Eddie has given us, not merely a descriptive list of twenty-five favorite books on the desert but careful critical descriptions of some two hundred books. For one who is beginning to acquire an interest in the western deserts, nay for one who has already a well-developed interest in them, this little book can be a source of real inspiration. It is to be hoped (or feared?) that the remaining 500 copies for the trade will soon vanish into the "O.P." class. If it does, and no matter how many reprints follow, my own inscribed copy will be one of the last in my little collection to be eliminated for any cause.

C. N. RUDKIN.

THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE, by Juanita Brooks. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963. 315 pp. $5.95.

"Perhaps when all is finally known the Mountain Meadows Massacre will be a classic study in mob psychology or the effects of war hysteria. It seems to be a clear case of how a group, stirred and angered by reports perhaps only half true, frenzied by mistaken zeal to protect its homes and families and to defend its church, was led to do what none singly could have done under normal conditions, and for which none singly can be held responsible."

These words by Juanita Brooks still stand as the thesis of this the second publication of her monumental study of one of the darkest and most infamous tragedies of western history—the slaughter, at Mountain Meadows, in Utah, of a company of California-bound emigrants by Mormons, with the half-hearted help of their Indian allies. More than a hundred years have passed since that day of blood and horror, with a hundred different versions of what actually took place.

In 1950, Mrs. Brooks, a Mormon, courageously told the truth about the affair—bolstered by years of research in church archives, pioneer journals, and personal in-

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KEARNY'S HOWITZERS

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records indicate that three mountain howitzers previously on the Comstock were stored in Carson City in the 1870s. The prevailing opinion is that they were either returned to Benicia Arsenal or scrapped prior to 1900. However, Correspondence with the Benicia Arsenal throws no light on the question.

A mountain howitzer was displayed for many years at the Courthouse in Winnemucca, Nevada. In 1917 it was moved to the lawn of the High School where it remained until about 1936. As its wheels were falling apart, the tube was stored under some steps and it is said to have gone to the scrap pile in the Second World War. Mr. Green is still hunting for some picture that should identify this gun.

He also discovered official reports showing that there were two mountain howitzers at Fort Ruby. He thinks it likely that there were more in out-of-the locations than is generally realized. Perhaps a few may have eluded the junk dealers during the two world wars.

Mr. Green in his most recent letter on this subject adds some spice to it by suggesting one possible, although not probable, answer. Referring to the howitzer in the Carson City Museum, he says:

"As you know, it is my contention that it is not the Frémont, and as the very best testimony indicates it was a tube abandoned at Fort Churchill, because it 'had a swelled place' due to overcharge. It was taken to Lake Tahoe and later brought to Carson City . . . a dragoon unit came on to Fort Churchill and they can be traced backward to Kearny . . . . It is my estimation that from five to eight Mountain Howitzers reached Nevada. The Carson City [gun] is one of them, thus the odds of [the] Carson City [gun] being Kearny's are fractional but not impossible."

Not many pieces of ordnance have as much stirring history associated with them as the two howitzers which General Kearny brought to California. If still in existence, it is hoped they can be identified and preserved as especially interesting relics of the pioneer West.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Dwight L. Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny: Soldier of the West* (Norman: 1961).

[2]Brevet Captain J. C. Frémont, *Report of The Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44* (Washington: 1845), pp. 225-226.

[3](Austin, Nevada), *Reese River Reveille*, June 10, 1864.

[4]*Pioneer*, San Jose, California, May 10, 1879 and letter P. B. Ellis, Secretary of State of Nevada, Carson City, Nevada, April 26, 1887 to Capt. A. W. Pray, Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

[5]Carl P. Russell, *Guns on the Early Frontier* (Berkeley: 1957), p. 286.

[6]28th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Document XIV*, pp. 1-4.

Down the Book Trail

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terviews with the families and descendants of the Mormons who actually were present on the field. This classic, valuable and informative, has been out of print for ten years, and very scarce. This new printing, made available again by Oklahoma, is welcome news indeed. The new material the author has added, based on additional research, makes the new edition doubly valuable.

PAUL BAILEY.

THE ANATOMY OF A LIBRARY. [A description of the Sutro Library at San Francisco by Richard H. Dillon, Sutro Librarian. Sutro Library; 1962. 20 p., printed stiff wrappers, 6 pl.]

This little brochure is issued, apparently, to give possible users a quick idea of the material available. The writer has analyzed the contents of the library by giving a brief sketch of the material dating from each century represented, from the 13th to the present. Of the plates four are facsimiles of items in the library and the Sutro bookplate, the other two are portrait studies of the founder.

C. N. RUDKIN.

Bob Tails

By CM Bob Robertson

Some men whose names were well known by Westerners as names of stock saddles and saddle-trees were the two partners, Main and Winchester, J. B. Sickles, George Lawrence, E. L. Gallatin, Aleck and George Taylor, Frank and Tom Meanea, Tony Ladesma, S. C. Gallup, Dave Walker, R. T. "Bob" Frazier, Clarence Nelson, Tom Flynn, Guadalupe García, Sam Myer, Newton Porter and the Hamley brothers.