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# JOHN MUIR, THE MAN

APRIL 21, 1838 . . . DECEMBER 24, 1914

*By* WILLIAM F. "BILL" KIMES

The contrbutions made by John Muir during his life-time in the area of conservation, have become increasingly significant with the population explosion. The work of John Muir as a conservationist is general knowledge, but little is known of the man, John Muir. I want to introduce you to the man John Muir as it has been my pleasure to learn to know him.

Not much is known of the forefathers of John Muir except that they were from the group of bold clansmen who took part in the uprising of 1745. One member of the clan was banished from Scotland in 1793 for espousing the rights of the submerged classes.

According to Linnie Marsh Wolfe in her book *Son of the Wilderness,* John's father Daniel, "grew up a restless, hot headed, tall, handsome lad, endowed with musical talent, a fine tenor voice, and deft hands that were always whittling and carving." When Daniel was fourteen he was "converted." The Bible became to him, text book and teacher—the only book a man needed from birth to the grave.

When Daniel left home he went to Glascow to find a job—failing to find employment he finally joined the Army. He lost none of his religious fanaticism, he simply added the stern military discipline to his fundamental religious beliefs— a discipline that in the future years would make of his home a veritable concentration camp.

The first marriage of Daniel Muir was to a rich, young heiress of a thriving grain and food store business. This union was early cut short by the untimely death of Mrs. Muir, leaving a well-to-do young widower.

Daniel's second marriage was to Ann Gilderoy, daughter of a wealthy, retired "seller-of-meat" who was of the gentry. Ann's father, David Gilderoy objected as much as a father can, but Ann had a mind of her own and in 1833 she married Daniel Muir, moving into Daniel's three-story store and and home that stood across the street from her father's house.

Mrs. Wolfe writes that Ann was a tall, quiet, gray-eyed girl who loved nature and took long, solitary rambles about the country-side. In a modest way she was gifted and painted and even wrote poetry.

John Muir was the third of seven children—the oldest son. As such he felt a keen responsibility for all the family, which he manifested as long as he lived.

From his father he acquired an eager questioning mind, a beauty loving spirit and deft hands. From his mother he came by his sense of humor and an inner stability as if anchored upon a rock. There is much more to the story of the Muir family both in Scotland and Wisconsin. You should read the book, *Son of the Wilderness.*

With all the stern and strict discipline, the Muir boys had their fun. John outfought the roughest, out-ran the fleetest, and accepted every dare. He would climb out the third story dormer window and hang with one hand. It is claimed that he sometimes supported his weight with "just one finger."

As John grew older he became part of a gang of boys bent on adventure who became a terror to the countryside. The story

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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.

# Corral Chips . . .

Iron Eyes Cody sent up a Bad Medicine Smoke Signal stating he had his scalpin' knife all sharpened up iffen I didn't correct a case of lousy reportin when we made the mistake of quoting that the tape recording at Hank's garden party, on July 20th was that of the late Ernie Sutton . . . Holy Cow! How did that happen when everybody knew it was Old Nebraska Marble Clarence Ellsworth. So, rather than wear a knot on my head, my humble apology, confusion overcame me.

C.M. LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen were recently granted an Award of Merit by the American Association for State and Local History. The honor was accorded to their "The Far West and Rockies Historical Series, 1820-1875," published by Arthur H. Clark Co.

# CORRAL MEETINGS

Through the efforts of Regular Member, Everett Hager and the courtesy of the Los Angeles Harbor Department, Los Angeles Corral members enjoyed a guided tour on September 14th through the Los Angeles Harbor, after which we retired to Cigo's where we enjoyed a Yugoslavian dinner of Muscachola, spare ribs and Dalmatian wine. Ex-sheriff Art Clark being in the saddle for this meeting, then introduced the speaker Andrew W. (Andy) Wall, President of the Al Larson Boat Works, one of southern California's oldest boat building companies. Andy gave a wonderful account of the development of the harbor.

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The October 17th meeting was held at Roger Young Auditorium with Hank Clifford in the saddle. Hank had as his guest and speaker for the evening, Bob Mullin, a member of many Westerner groups. Bob who spent his early days at Las Vegas, New Mexico, was instrumental in the production of historical films prepared at the University of Michigan, "Lincoln County War," "Billy the Kid;" and it was upon these that he elucidated upon.

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The November 21st meeting, also held at Roger Young Auditorium was presided over by Ex-sheriff Paul Bailey, who introduced Bert Fireman, Sheriff of the Phoenix Corral and Vice President of the Arizona Historical Foundation. Bert, who weighs about three pounds short of a ton, threw his weight and the years of research into his most interesting study "Restoring the Fremont's Fortune." This paper disclosed letters and replies by the great Pathfinder never before disclosed, and the facts presented reminded one of the late Harry Carr's remarks, that "Fremont had a very talented wife and a very very influential father-in-law, without which he would have been a nonentity." And Harry was far from being alone in those thoughts.

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At the third annual Southern California Children's Literature Awards banquet in Los Angeles State College, W. W. and Irene Robinson were awarded a plaque for the most significant contribution to the field of children's history. His latest is *Key to Los Angeles.* W. W. is the author *of Beasts of the Tar Pits* and *Book of Elephants,* both illustrated by his wife.

# JOHN MUIR, THE MAN

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goes that it was during this time that John learned to swear. According to his older daughter, Wanda Muir Hanna, he never got over his addiction to purple language. This, however, is not substantiated by his younger daughter, Helen Funk Muir or by his neighbor, Frank Swett. Both Helen Muir and Frank Swett are living.

In order to serve his latest religious sect —"The Disciples of Christ," Daniel Muir decided to migrate to America. Without any prior discussion with his wife or family, he came into the living room one evening and announced to the boy, "Barens it will not be necessary to study your lessons tonight. We are going to America tomorrow."

Grandpa Gilderoy was able to convince his son-in-law that he shouldn't take the younger children and his wife until he had located a home for them in America. David Muir finally agreed to this and when the boat set sail February 19, 1849, only the children, Sarah, John and David were aboard with their father.

It was a great adventure for the two boys who never missed a meal. The father was ill most of the time and Sarah never left her bunk for the six weeks and three days of the trip.

A homestead was taken-up near Kingston, Wisconsin. David Muir named the farm, Fountain Life. In later years John Muir wrote of this home, "Nature streaming into us, wooingly teaching her wonderful glowing lessons—every wild lesson a love lesson, not whipped, but charmed into us. Oh, that glorious Wisconsin wilderness."

At twelve years of age, John was put to work plowing. As a matter of fact, the entire family was used in the farming operation. John, being the oldest, bore the brunt of the toil. The health of Daniel, Margaret and Sarah was permanently damaged. Mr. Daniel Muir gave his time to preaching, praying, and bible reading.

John Muir early revolted against religion as he saw it practiced.

When the father was home, all was quiet, however, as soon as Mr. Muir started down the road on a soul saving trip, the family became an active, fun loving, ballad singing group. John had long since decided that when he was of age he would leave home.

As a youth John paid no heed to his appearance. One of his sisters, in a letter to a friend wrote that "John looked as wild as a loon." This, however, was not the only family embarrassment. John was full of Scottish barbs pointed towards those he didn't like.

The Muir children were prohibited by their father to spend any time after the evening meal in reading. It was to bed so as to be ready for work in the fields by sun-up. On one occasion, after John and his father had had words about wasting his time reading when he should be in bed resting so that he could do a day's work, John asked if he could "read in the morning." To this Mr. Muir agreed. For the next five years John Muir arose at 1:00 a.m. and went to the basement to read and work on his inventions. It is to the credit of Daniel Muir that he did not go back on his word. It was during this time that John worked through algebra, geometry and trigonometry. He learned his mechanical laws by whittling his ideas into working models.

Among his inventions there was a clock that not only registered the hours, days of the week, and date of the month, but also could be set to tip up the end of a bed as an "alarm." This he called his "early rising machine." One clock was made to start a fire—a clock he used during the year he taught school so that he could enter a warm school room.

Because of his strong feeling of responsibility for his mother, brothers and sisters, John did not leave home the year he was twenty-one. It was a year later that upon the suggestion of William Duncan, a neighbor, John left home for the first time, taking some of his inventions to the Wisconsin State Agriculture Fair in Madison. John managed to ride the cow catcher of the train from Pardeville to Madison.

When John left for Madison his father refused to bid him goodbye.

To demonstrate his "early rising bed" at the Fair, John secured the services of two small boys who happened to be loitering in the exhibit tent. The boys were sons of professors from the University, Professor Carr of the Science Department and Dr. Butler of the Latin Department. It was Mrs. Jean Carr who presented the Fifteen-Dollar award money to John Muir. This was the start of a lifetime friendship.

After a series of odd jobs, John enrolled in the University, taking chemistry and geology from Dr. Carr and Greek and

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Latin from Dr. Butler. His room in the dormitory developed into a show place. He added a "loafer's chair" to his accumulation of clocks, early rising bed, barometer, and what-not. There was an old pistol under the seat that fired when anyone sat in the chair.

John's family hoped he would "spruce up" a bit when he went to college. He dashed their hopes by writing home that one of the fellows in the dormitory had said to him, "If I had a beard like yours, I would set a fire in it." Incidentally, John Muir never shaved during his entire life. He probably never had a barber hair cut, but instead trimmed his hair with aid of a mirror.

During his years in college, John's father sent his son fifty dollars on one occasion and forty on another—but only when his son was destitute.

From Dr. Carr he learned the technique from nature. From Dr. Butler was learned of field observation—of learning directly the skill of keeping careful notes on all his observations as well as to set down his ideas as they came to him. To Mrs. Carr must go the credit of changing a backwoods immigrant boy into a college man.

The Carr's took a personal interest in John Muir. He later wrote that the Carr library was "filled with books, peace, kindliness, patience."

Many persons influenced Muir—suffice to mention three. From Louis Agassiz he learned the basic principles of the glacier theory. It was from Ralph Waldo Emerson that he came to his conception of the "Unity of Nature." It was from Humboldt that he came to the conclusion that man must conserve the natural resources.

Until March 1867, Muir worked as a mechanic and machinist. His last job was in a sawmill where he almost lost the sight of his right eye through an accident. After a month of darkness, he resigned his factory job "that I might be true to myself."

When John left home for the last time, his father asked him if he had not forgotten something? When John wanted to know what he had forgotten, his father responded that John hadn't paid his bill for board and room. John handed his father a gold piece. He saw his father only once more—as his father lay dying.

At twenty-nine, John Muir started to "tramp" a 1,000 miles to the Gulf. His plans were to go to South America to follow the trail of Humboldt. A severe attack of malaria in Florida and the fact that a South American-bound boat was not readily available from Havana, Cuba, caused Muir to decide to go to California.

John Muir landed in San Francisco March 28, 1868. No sooner was Muir off the boat than he was asking directions on how to get out of the city. The carpenter he asked wanted to know where he wanted to go. John Muir's answer was, "out of the city." The carpenter responded, "Cross the bay on the ferry and start walking. You will soon be out of the city." In company of a passenger companion, Muir headed down the Santa Clara Valley to Pacheco Pass. Once over the pass, he walked in a wide swinging curve as he crossed the San Joaquin Valley to Merced. He simply couldn't get enough of the sights and feeling of walking through the lush growth of poppies, lupin, clover, and the hundred other wild flowers that then carpeted the floor of the Valley.

Since it was too early to enter the Yosemite Valley, and because his funds were nearly spent, John Muir took a ranch job near Snelling with a Mr. Delaney. Muir's opportunity to get into the Sierra came when he was offered the job of taking a band of sheep to the "back country meadows."

The following year, 1870, John Muir was asked by Mr. James M. Hutchings of Yosemite Valley to assemble a saw mill for him. The year before a tornado had blown down a number of large yellow pine trees. Hutchings needed lumber to erect a hotel, and he wanted to get the downed trees removed. When the assembly job was completed, Muir was asked if he would operate it. This was the opportunity Muir had been seeking—to live in Yosemite.

About this time, the Carrs moved to Berkeley where Dr. Carr had a teaching position. As guests would come to the University Mrs. Carr never let an opportunity go by to tell them to ask John Muir to be their guide in Yosemite. Mr. Hutchings resented the fact that his guides were left without customers while his saw mill was idle because the operator was out guiding. The employment was finally terminated after two or three years of intermittent operation. Hutchings fails to mention the name of Muir in his book, *In the Heart of the Sierras.*

Mr. Carr would tell visitors that having Muir as a guide would be "kinship with kindred minds." John Muir wrote to Mrs.

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Carr, "You have sent me all my best friends."

It was during this period that Muir began to take exception to Whitney's catastrophic theory of the formation of the Yosemite Valley. Muir felt that the Yosemite was the result of a glacial action. Whitney dismissed Muir as "a mere sheepherder—an ignoramus." Time has proven Muir as being on the right track—there were several glacial periods.

Ten years later, April 14, 1880, John Muir and Louie Wanda Strentzel were married. It was an interesting marriage—Muir was forty-two years of age, his wife was thirty-three. He was a laborer and magazine contributor; she was the daughter of California's most well-to-do horticulturist. John Muir was a traveler, thrilled at new sights; his wife had no desire to travel. During all her married life, she made one trip to the Yosemite where she was frightened by the bears and one boat trip from San Francisco to Portland. Mrs. Muir was uncomfortably ill for the entire trip and traveled no more.

Muir wrote following the wedding, "I am now the happiest man in the world." A year later he wrote, "We are five now; four steadfast old lovers around one little love. Bloomtime has come and a bloom baby has come and never since the Glacial Period began on earth were happier people."

Rev. S. Hall Young in his book *Alaska Days with John Muir* relates an interesting anecdote. Rev. Young was hiking with John Muir on a glacier in Alaska and slipped, falling and sliding some distance before miraculously coming to a stop just short of a high ice cliff. The fall had dislocated both of Rev. Young's shoulders. John Muir worked his way down to Rev. Young, offering him encouragement all the way. He managed to pull one shoulder into place before they started back up the slick face of the glacier. At one point Muir needed both his hands to hold on to the ice—he held Rev. Young in front of him with Young's shirt collar between his teeth. "Muir held me in his teeth by my shirt collar and dragged me up a cliff. My arms were helpless; my feet of little help. Never have I known of such strength." Muir never weighed more than 148 pounds.

The day following his marriage to Miss Louie Strentzel, April 14, 1880, John Muir started working in the orchard and vineyard of Dr. Strentzel. Although not trained or experienced in fruit culture, he was a person who understood agriculture and enjoyed working with growing plants. It was not long until the ranch had increased in production. According to Mr. Muir, he cleared ten thousand dollars a year for the ten-year period 1880-1890 which he felt was sufficient to take care of his needs so as to permit him to travel and write.

There were two daughters born to the John Muirs; Wanda, March 29, 1881, and Helen, January 23, 1886. The family lived in the old Strentzel house until sometime in 1890 when they moved into the Strentzel Manor following the death of Dr. Strentzel. It was in this house that the girls grew to maturity and where John Muir resided until his death December 24, 1914.

John Muir published nothing that did not meet his wife's approval. When Mrs. Muir passed away August 6, 1905, it was almost a mortal blow to her husband. For several years he would allow nothing that she had used to be moved from where she had last placed it.

At seventy-three he took a trip to South America, Africa and southern Europe by himself. He couldn't understand why there was always someone on hand to help him with reservations, the press, and his every need at each stop he made. It was after he returned to the United States that he learned that President Taft had instructed the Consular Service to see that Mr. Muir was quietly but carefully "taken care of."

In John Muir's letters we find some of his finest writing, sincere and representing his feelings and personality. He seldom corrected his letters, whereas his writing for publication was written, re-written, and polished to a sometimes sterile perfection.

Feb. 6, 1908

"I'm at home in my old den all alone cooking and eating in camp style trying to clear off my desk of accumulated letters, one from the President is exceedingly kind and hearty and flattering.

"My stay with you has almost spoiled me for this severe Spartan life here. Have made no progress as yet on confounded ranch affairs, but have set a friend to begin to work on them.

"Our roads are sublime marvels of mud."

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Dec. 27, 1909

"I'm pegging penning away in my old library den, with an eye to new books. All alone often mud bound, but fairly lowlandly well. I'll be mighty glad to see you.

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Heaven be with you. Ever faithfully affectionately yours,

JOHN MUIR

* * * * * * *

Aug. 2, 1911

"—and though death is as natural as life, none the less is the pain of the last parting. This sorrow we all must bear, sustained by the blessed hope of meeting again in the deathless world beyond the grave and in the meantime trust our heavenly Father to guide and sustain us.

"Ploding on our way, doing our every day duties as they come with Heaven's graces is our only way of escape from crushing sorrow.

"I have been working very hard here at my desk every morning at five o'clock finishing a Yosemite book before leaving for the other America."

* * * * * * *

April 22, 1914

Dear friend Mrs. Sellers. As I sit here working away at my Alaska travels the thousand grand views I've enjoyed in that icy flowery wilderness are lived over again, while slowly returning health after three months of grippe enables me to hold on at my desk. And never a day passes without thoughts of the thousand good times I owe to the Sellers recalled many times every day and lived over again as I converse with your pictures on my mantel.

One of the best of life's late afternoon blessings is the nearness of friends ever coming nearer as the years fly faster and dearer however far separated."

* * * * * * *

"About the beginning of the year I had a severe atttack of grippe and have been half sick or more ever since, making me unfit to travel though I was at my desk every day tracing old travels in Alaska. Soon however I hope to venture south to see you and Helen and her band of merry boys.

"Wanda also had another boy nine months ago, her 4th making 7 grandchildren in all.

"With many dearly cherished memories and all good wishes I am dear friend ever faithfully yours.

JOHN MUIR"

# SALT LAKE CONFERENCE

The Western History Association meetings on October 17-19 were held in the city where Brigham Young queried, "This is the place?" Many Westerners were present, both as participants and as knowledge-hungry observers, at a well organized and interesting series of meetings, as well as at less formal social sessions.

Thursday morning's Session No. 1 opened the series with L.A. Past Sheriff, Paul Bailey, giving the first talk, "A Westerner Looks at Western History." Chicago Corral's Harry Anderson followed with a talk on Deadwood's Early Local Government, and comments were added by Westerners Roy Dunne (Chicago) and Harold Dunham (Denver). Chairman of this all-Westerner session was the respected wheel-horse of the Chicago Corral, Don Russell. Later sessions found Bert Fireman (Phoenix Sheriff, and our November speaker), Jack Carroll (Tucson), and Fred Rosenstock (Denver) as participants.

Among some 500 attending the sessions were other Westerners, amigos, and celebrities including Art Woodward, Paul Galleher, Augie Schatra, Glen Dawson, Everett Hager, Art Clark, Bill Kimes, Roy Hafen, Andy Rolle, Manuel Servin, "Hutch" Hutchinson, Mike Harrison, Paul Gantt, W. L. McPherrin, "Bob" Robertson, Erl Ellis, "Dock" Marston, George Eichler, Royce Sickler, Bill McGaw, Russ Mortensen, Carl Carmer, Juanita Brooks, Alfred Knopf, Leonard Jennewein, Waddell Smith, Noel Loomis, C. L. Sonnichsen, and the association's president and president-elect Ray Billington and Oscar Winther. A number of these were accompanied by their No. 1 wives.

Some fine talks were given on such subjects as "Popularizing the West," "Immigrants," "Turner, Bolton, Webb as Interpreters of the West," "Hudson's Bay Co. in Opening of the West," "Museums," "Cartographic Resources," "Western Americana: Profit or Subsidy," "Southwest Borderlands" and lively luncheon talks on spicy folklore and on bibliography making.

Lobby displays from some two dozen publishers and booksellers graced the tables in the meeting area.

A pleasant interlude was an afternoon trip to the Bingham Copper Mine, to old

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# WARREN FREDERIC LEWIS

NOVEMBER 21, 1963

Warren Frederic Lewis, close to the Westerners who have known him and loved him, has left us. He departed November 21, 1963, as the result of a sudden heart failure. The memorial service was held at Eagle Rock on Tuesday, November 26, at 10:30 A.M.

Warren Lewis, born in Logan, Utah, became a youth in Montana, where his interest developed in all western lore. He was educated in the public schools of Butte, Montana, and those of Portland, Oregon. He began as a freshman at the University of Utah, but he had to leave at the outbreak of World War I, as volunteer of the Medical Corps with the 65th Artillery. With the war over he went to Stanford University, and after graduation worked his way to Yokohama, Hongkong, Manila and other places in the Orient.

He has been a publisher at Los Angeles, but during the last few years he has managed to keep in hard luck, with various serious accidents, and then with cateracts to both eyes.

Besides the Westerners of Los Angeles Corral he has been a member of the Zamorano Club and of E Clampus Vitus, of which he was Noble Grand Humbug in 1951. As a Westerner he joined in 1948, served as Round-up Foreman in 1951, gave a "brilliant and scholarly paper" at the November, 1950, meeting and a Brand Book for the same year with the same subject, "Chief Tendoy of the Bannacks" (B. B. No. 4, 1950).

The following books published at Los Angeles by Warren Lewis are primarily of western interest:

Da Silva, Owen: *Mission Music of California,* a Collection of Old California Mission Hymns and Masses. Introduction by John Steven McGroarty. 1941.

Manly, William Lewis: *The Jayhawkers' Oath and Other Sketches.* Selected and edited by Arthur Woodward. 1949.

Webb, Edith Buckland: *Indian Life at the Old Missions.* Foreword by Frederick W. Hodge. 1952.

Dexter, F. Theodore: *Forty-Two Years' Scrapbook of Rare and Ancient Firearms.* 1954.

WARREN FREDERIC LEWIS
*—Lonnie Hull Photo.*

*Fool's Gold.* Platrix Chapter of E. Clampus Vitus. Illustrated by Don Louis Perceval. 1957.

Ellis, Henry Hiram: *From the Kennebec to California,* Reminiscences of a California Pioneer, 1829-1909. Arranged by Lucy Ellis Riddell. Introduction by Robert Glass Cleland. 1959.

All the members of the Westerners' Corral who have known him must now regret this loss. The sympathy of all of us is extended to his sorrowing family.

CHARLES N. RUDKIN.

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# Historical Convention

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Camp Floyd, and on to B.Y.U. for dinner and entertainment.

Despite last year's prediction in Denver, there was no appearance of Joseph Smith, nor did Father Bannon's boss show up this year. However, next year in Oklahama City we may expect to see a Dalton, Doolin, Sequoya, or Alfalfa Bill Murray.

ART CLARK.

# REDSKIN NAPOLEONS

*By* Carl W. Breihan

Every age, every race, has its leaders and heroes. In speaking of the Indian, there were over sixty distinct tribes of Indians in the United States, each of which boasted notable leaders. Names and deeds of some of these men will live in our history, yet it is true, in one sense, that they are unknown, chiefly because misunderstood.

I hope to present herewith some of the greatest chiefs of modern times in the light of the native character and ideals, believing that the American people will gladly do them tardy justice.

During the early part of the 19th century, chiefs such as Wabashaw, Red-Wing, and Little Six among the eastern Sioux, Conquering Bear, Man-afraid-of-His Horse, and Hump of the western bands, were the last of the old type. After these, we have a coterie of new leaders, products of the new conditions brought about by close contact with the conquering race.

The vast majority of the American people misunderstood the Indian. They expected him to be a white man; he is not, and never will be. To teach him what is good of the white man's culture, that is different and good. Many Americans are quick, nervous, effusive, agressive, but the Indian, no, he is not that way. He may feel as deeply about things, also as enthusiastic, but he never will be so demonstrative about it. An Indian has an inherent, native politeness that many a white person with all his training and tact never comes up to.

The matter of questioning is typical of us. We meet a chance acquaintance, and before he has time to adjust his bifocals we are firing questions at him. No, an Indian never would do that. He doesn't ask you a thousand-and-one questions; he doesn't expect you to ask them of him. Somehow it seems to me that the Indian must have some Oriental strain in them in some of these matters. As a lot of us know, when you make a business call on a Chinese, you spend the first hour or so discussing the weather, the second hour, the state of world politics, his family and friends, and only when you are half the way to the door you say: "Oh, yes, about that business matter, etc. . . ." You don't leap in *medias res*. These people are most polite.

To some Americans the Indian is a dumbell. Probably the American strikes the Indian the same way. An Indian is not stupid, but he is shy and reserved by nature. He will not speak freely until he knows you—he simply is not a white man. We are immediately and usually confidential, after a fashion; the Indian is cautious. The Indians are lazy, contends the white man. In some respects, I suppose they are; yet, we have many Americans who follow the same pattern when it comes to laziness.

No doubt the old-time Indians of the North American plains were the finest and most magnificent people the world has even seen. The power of the Sioux as a fighting people was a comparatively late development. Before the Spaniards brought the horse into the plains country and left the animal there, the Sioux had been rather a shiftless, futile lot, clinging to the fringes of the forest country in Minnesota and ranging down the western bank of the Mississippi into what is now Iowa. Father Jogues heard of them at the Ojibway Festival of the Dead in the northern peninsula of Michigan in 1641. They lived eighteen days journey farther away, the good priest was told. To themselves they were Dakotas; to the Algonquin tribes, Nadouessioux —"vagabonds." The Ojibways and the Sauks and Foxes held them rather lightly and feared them like. Pontiac seems to have ignored them entirely in the formation of his great confederacy. When the Spaniards, all unwittingly, set the Sioux on horseback and turned him loose against the buffalo, which now became his chief food supply, he put him in the way of being a great man among the savage predecessors.

More has been written about Sitting Bull than about any other famous Indian, perhaps more than about all the others put together. Was Sitting Bull a great leader, a clever, devious schemer? Was he an able, undaunted war chief, striving to lead his people toward the realization of an impossible but heroic dream, or was he merely another plotting medicine man, stimulating other Indians to deeds of which he was incapable? Was he a hero or a coward?

These are a few of the questions that have been argued over the connection with the famous or infamous Sioux leader. Sitting Bull's courage, like the courage of Pat Garrett when he put an end to Billy the Kid at Fort Sumner, has been the subject of debate in post canteens, in officers' quarters, corner grocery forums, and even Pullman smokers and club lounges . . . Yes! No!

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The most sweeping claims of all in behalf of Sitting Bull are made by Stanley Vestal in his biography of the old leader. He says that Sitting Bull was head chief of all the Sioux, duly installed at a ceremony held, apparently on the Yellowstone in 1868. In general, students of the Sioux have denied the existence of such a single headship.

As to Sitting Bull, who was killed by Indian Police on December 15, 1890, he may have believed what he wanted to believe, as many other men have done. But he was distinctly a man with an idea and a relentless will, quite possibly the ablest man the Sioux produced, without the organizing ability of Pontiac or the patient endurance and the quiet day-and-night courage of Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce, but still a man of marked ability. His wars are done and his wild dreams laid by, along with the hopes of other Indian leaders. Whatever he was, in his wayward, sinuous, scheming mind, he held fast to his one idea to the end and with it he drew his people to him and sent them into battle. Sitting Bull was a Hunkpapa Sioux.

Chief Red Cloud of the Oglala Bad Faces was one of the most outspoken of the southern Sioux, who had first to bear the brunt of white invasion after the discovery of gold in California, Idaho, and Montana. The Oglalas were the largest tribe of the Teton or Prairie Sioux then living west of the Missouri. Their home was along the Platte River and the Oregon Trail and near the Black Hills. Therefore, they were first to come into serious conflict with the white pioneer. Because of this fact and because Red Cloud was so outspoken in his defiance of the white man, most of the hostilities in the '60s were laid at his door, and the war ended by the Treaty of Laramie in 1868, is known as Red Cloud's War.

During these wars, when Sitting Bull was far to the north and engaged in fighting Indian enemies, newspaper men, perhaps under the prompting of military officers who may have wished to drag the whole Sioux nation into the wars, created a legend according to which Red Cloud was the great war chief of the Sioux nation and Sitting Bull was represented as the medicine man who misled his people into opposing the occupation of their hunting grounds. Red Cloud, the war Chief; Sitting Bull, the medicine man, that was the legend, and of course, a mere legend. As a matter of fact, Red Cloud seems to have begun his career as a medicine man. Sitting Bull was not a doctor, though he knew how to use the remedies of his doctor father. Sitting Bull, however, was a prophet, and had far more foresight than Red Cloud, who signed on the dotted line only to find later that he had been swindled.

"Friends," said Red Cloud, "it has been our misfortunte to welcome the white men. We have been deceived. He brought with him some shining things that pleased our eyes; he brought weapons more effective than our own; above all, he brought the spirit water that makes one forget for a time old age, weakness, and sorrow. But I wish to say to you that if you would possess these things for yourselves, you must begin anew and put away the wisdom of your fathers. You must lay up food and forget the hungry. When your house is built, your storeroom filled, then look around for a neighbor whom you can take at a disadvantage, and seize all that he has. Give away only what you do not want; or rather, do not part with any of your possessions unless in exchange for others. My countrymen, shall the glittering trinkets of this rich man, his deceitful drink that overcomes the mind, shall these things tempt us to give up our homes, our hunting grounds, and the honorable teaching of our old men? Shall we permit ourselves to be driven to and from—to be herded like the cattle of the white man?"

Among later-day chiefs, Red Cloud was notable as a quiet man, simple and direct in speech, courageous in action, and ardent lover of his country, and possessed in a marked degree of the manly qualities characteristic of the American Indian at his best.

The whites never understood this unwillingness of the Indians to realize that the white way was the better way. So the whites fought and wormed their course westward from the Atlantic, sometimes bribing the Indian with a civilization he could not use, sometimes fighting him with troops, sometimes with white men who met the Indian on his own terms, sometimes negotiating fairly and trying to live in peace. The end was always the same—the musket, the scalping knife, and the torch; in the end, white supremacy.

Each of those Indian chiefs—for a longer or a shorter time—was a voice to lead his people on a hopeless crusade. The end of all was failure, which is according to the best classical tradition. Pontiac's life was sold for a barrel of whiskey. Captain Jack,

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the Modoc, was hanged as a murderer. Black Hawk, the futile dupe of the unscrupulous White Cloud, died peacefully enough, but the white man denied him even the lasting ownership of his own grave. Chief Joseph, the wise and merciful Nez Perce, died in exile, and Geronimo, the implacable Apache, dragged out his last long days in the peace of a white man's jail. Fate was kind to Tecumseh in the end.

All these leaders appeared great in their brief time, first to their own people, and then in a different way to the whites who fought them or fled from them.

One of the most serious mistakes that the whites made in their dealings with the Indians was in the failure to understand the tribal organization and its consequent effect on the power of the chief and his ability to represent the tribe. From the beginning, the whites dealt with the Indian chiefs as though they were petty kings, or at least envoys of their race, with power to negotiate and enforce cessions of land, adjustments of mutual rights and privileges, and in general to carry on the kind of bargaining which civilized nations had agreed to call treaty making.

Shall we not think about those Indian chiefs who saw America before any white man saw it? For the Indian too loved it as it was. He knew it when it was untouched, savage, cruel, and beautiful!

# Down the Book Trail

FORT UNION IN MINIATURE, by Robert M. Utley. Copyright 1963 by Stagecoach Press, . . . Santa Fe, N. M. Printed type handset actual size. All work and binding by hand. Art by Stephi. 40 pages, illus., 1"x1⅛", full leather. $1.89.

Jack Rittenhouse claims this the "smallest book in the west." It may well be so.

But we must consider what Robert Utley has done. Fort Union now is a National Monument in New Mexico, and Utley has set forth its historical life. The first and largest fort in New Mexico, the three early Indian wars, the trail, the Civil War, and further Indian wars are covered remarkably well, as well as the ending of the old fort, and all done only on the size of a postage stamp.

It is all there, although the whole life of the fort can be covered very rapidly.

C. N. RUDKIN.

# From the Mailbag . . .

36, Randolph Ave.,
London, W. 9.
13 October 1963.

"Dear Mr. Platford,

"Many thanks indeed for sending us the Indian Basket, which arrived here in excellent condition yesterday.

"It was certainly a very kind thought to send us this gift, and we should like to have our appreciation conveyed to whoever is responsible for this fine piece of generosity. We have a little cluster of members who specialize in Indian ethnology, and who collect all kinds of Indian dress and artifacts, and I feel sure that this basket will be appreciated by them. One of the activities of a group of these enthusiasts, who all live in counties south of London, is the holding of displays of Indian artifacts during the summer months, when members of the general public are invited to inspect the exhibits and to question the members present. This basket will no doubt be added to these displays, and so will be appreciated by quite a wide audience outside the English Westerners.

"Thank you again, and our best regards and good wishes to all at Los Angeles,

"Sincerely yours,

"BARRY JOHNSON."

"Please remember us to Paul Bailey, Dudley Gordon and Harry James—who have attended London meetings—and extend to all Los Angeles Westerners our cordial invitation to visit us at any time they happen to be in the British Isles."

WHY THE WEST WAS WILD—Published by the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, 1963, 685 pages. $7.95. Authored by Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell. Printed by the State Printer.

This book explodes many myths regarding Dodge City, William Cody, Earps, Hickok, Holliday, Mastersons, Thompson, Tilghman and many many other famous characters and to quote Paul I. Wellman "it is a veritable encyclopedia, the most authentic and primary source possible to obtain on these personages of the Old West."

The book is profusely illustrated with many historical photographs, contains many biographies, well indexed, and, probably cost the State eight bucks to print.

SID PLATFORD.

# COPPER BRANDING "IRONS"

By Phil C. Orr

Every TV viewer knows what a branding *iron* is, but few historians and less cow waddies know about the branding *coppers* that were in use in Montana in the early days.

The late Ed Borein, artist and cowboy historian made a bet with the late Major Max C. Fleischman that there was no such thing as a copper "branding iron"—and lost. Max, had the edge on Ed, because he had seen three of them in my collection. Ed paid up the bet and then displayed these copper "irons" in his studio in famous, historical Street of Spain in Santa Barbara—it was quite a job to get them back!

On May 3, 1859 in the County of Siskiyou, California, William Orr recorded a brand which was later to become famous throughout the west as the "Square and Compass." He later became associated with Philip Poindexter and founded the Poindexter and Orr Live Stock Company which ran cattle near Yreka, California; Reno, Nevada, the Dalles, Oregon, Sweetgrass Hills, Canada, the Powder River, Montana. But it was in 1863 that they settled in Blacktail Deer Creek, Beaverhead County, Montana and built up a spread, eventually covering some 100,000 acres.

Montana at that time was booming with the gold camps of Bannock and Virgina City and the main occupation of Poindexter and Orr was to provide beef for the miners. The Square and Compass brand was number one on the Montana brand books.

When gold began to peter out, copper was discovered on the "richest hill on earth," Butte, Montana, a scant 80 miles from the P & O Home Ranch, and perhaps as an experiment, copper branding "irons" came into existence.

In 1919, a badly beaten and tropped copper Square and Compass was found in the dust of the old log corral of the P. & O. Cow Camp in Centenial Valley, but that was not the only copper "iron." Another, an O C which stood for "Orr's Chinaman" also turned up in an old corral, this was owned by Tommv Orr, better known as Tommy "Haw" a Chinese who had been rescued during the Modoc war in northern California by Tom Orr, brother of William, and raised as one of the family, but was locally known as "Orr's Chinaman." Having difficulty in pronouncing the double "r," he called himself "Haw." But that is another story.

The third copper "iron" is a huge S for the Selway Sheep Company of Beaverhead County, Montana who ran a few cattle along with the sheep and whose property adjoined the P. & O.

There may be other copper "irons" but in 50 years of collecting these are the only ones I have seen. An unconfirmed report

*Square and Compass*
*Poindexter & Orr*


*OC*
*Thomas Haw*


*S*
*Selway Sheep Company*

is that Texans used small copper "irons" to jaw brand high grade horses.

The advantage of the copper "iron" is its ability to hold heat, and to require a smaller fire for heating. While the average iron brand has an iron handle from three to six feet long, the OC copper "iron" or Orr's Chinaman has an iron handle, riveted to the copper only about 18 inches long. The S brand of Selway has a pointed iron shank about 18 inches long which was obviously attached to a wooden handle.

There are branding irons and branding irons, but how many copper "irons?"

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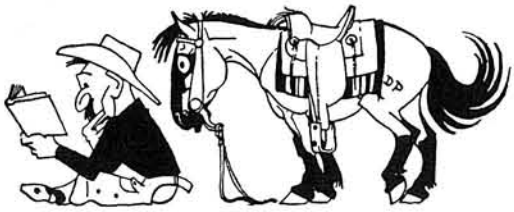
# DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .



THE ARTHUR H. CLARK COMPANY, PUBLISHING OF THE WEST, a Review of Sixty years of Service, 1902-1962, by Theodore Grivas. In *Arizona and the West,* a *Quarterly Journal of History,* edited by John Alexander Carroll. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson. Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 63-78. (Issued in September, 1963.)

*Arizona and the West* has the very interesting history of our own Arthur H. Clark Company, which began in 1902, in Cincinnati, continued in Glendale, California, and now tells of sixty (or more) years of history.

Arthur H. Clark, Sr., born in England in 1868, was in the publishing business by the age of 16, and acquainted with such authors as Tennyson, R. L. Stevenson, Kipling and Ruskin. Ending his apprenticeship he left London for Chicago, and the Company of A. C. McClurg. Three years kept him there, then he returned to London. He got some financial help from his father and took to Chicago a selected stock of books, issued some catalogues, and made a failure.

In 1895 he began in the rare-book department of Burrows Brothers Company and made acquaintance with his historical author, Reuben Gold Thwaites, who convinced Clark of the value of the Jesuit papers. The Burrows Brothers published between 1896 and 1901 *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610-1791,* seventy-one text volumes plus two volumes of index, with the help of Clark and Thwaites.

As the result of this, Clark went into business for himself with a substantial capital furnished by others, amounting to $75.00. With rare and old items he started a book store, but also began such publications on his own. A series of 16 volumes on the *Historic Highways of America . . .,* and a single volume on political economy made a good start for 1903. The next 54 volumes of documents from the Philippine Islands were translated and completed in four years. Here also began in 1904 the *Early Western Travels,* edited by Thwaites, 30 text volumes plus an index.

Here Dr. Grivas tells us the names of hundreds of books published and well known to many Westerners. We cannot begin to include all of the volumes listed in the *Branding Iron.*

In 1947 Arthur H. Clark, Sr., retired at the age of 78, to be followed by Paul W. Galleher and his son, Arthur H. Clark, Jr., although the senior Clark remained as a wise counsellor until his death, in 1951. We need not here tell about the active Westerners, so known to all of us.

Every Westerner who reads the story of the sixty years knows that he is reading the history of American western history.

C. N. RUDKIN.

LITTLE HISTORY OF A BIG CITY, LOS ANGELES, by W. W. Robinson. Drawings by Irene Robinson. Los Angeles: 1963: Dawson's Book Shop. IV, 36 p., 10 color drawings, 1½"x2", printed by The Plantin Press, $6.00.

First, a tiny book, written by our well known W. W. Robinson, beautifully drawn by Mrs. Robinson, printed by The Plantin Press and bound by Bela Blau, includes all the lovely features of this miniature.

But, secondly, this "Little History" is included in Robinson's book. It covers rapidly, it is true, with the "History" from the "farm village, a Spanish pueblo" to the "metropolitan spread that believes in universities, libraries, art galleries, bookshops, museums, and musical as sport activities, in work as well as in play, in high-rise as well as low-rise, a city that hopes to be great as well as big."

And in between we find the missions, the Indians, ranchos, buying and selling, gold, railroads, a harbor and freeways, while the American growth goes on after that of the Spanish.

W. W.'s history does cover Los Angeles in a thorough way, and the "Little History" is well worth reading.

C. N. RUDKIN.

Ex-Sheriff Art Clark has just completed a six months' chore compiling an index for the new Brand Book . . . Muchas Gracias Señor . . .