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LOS ANGELES CORRAL

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# The Valley's Versatile Vindex

by JOSEPH E. DOCTOR

Those of you who have labored through the pages of California history may have never heard of Vindex, or of Brigham James, or of David Bice James, and there's no reason, really, why you should have. While he was probably known to everyone who could read a newspaper in the South San Joaquin valley between 1851 and 1900 and to many who read the San Francisco newspapers and the Mining and Engineering Review, he never really made his mark on history.

But he barely missed. He was one of the many who never quite arrived, despite the da Vinci-like versatility of his brilliant mind and his vigorous health. He could have struck it rich and been another Lucky Baldwin as a miner and mining promoter; he could have made it as a townsite developer; had it not been for the flood of 1862 and the erratic behavior of the Kaweah river, his town might now have been a thriving county seat.

It was as an inventor that he wooed fame and fortune most enthusiastically, and with a little luck he might have been the rival of the Big Four, endowing libraries and universities. Had he chosen to enter the field of journalism instead of lurking on its fringes, he might have become another John Squibb or a Mark Twain. Had he not been quite so inclined to speak his mind bluntly, he might have been drafted into politics. Had he been able to stabilize himself into a single occupation instead of following his will to wander, he might even have made it as an industrialist or a merchant.

He tried them all, and with varied success, but his greatest was as a prophet of the future, which has seldom paid off for its devotees. James would have sunk into complete obscurity had it not been for the proliferation of his writings extending over more than half a century and which are destined to pique the curiosity of future historians who have a sense of humor and can catch the serio-comic aspect

of James' desire to make it big while never quite catching on. His generation, delighted by his personality and perhaps respecting the near-genius that led him into attempts to modernize the techniques of his day far ahead of the times, never took him quite seriously. Obviously, however, old Brigham was character, and to have been on speaking terms with him must have given status to men of his day.

Although it is possible to know Brigham James through those who wrote about him, it is through his own columns that one may know him best. As the earliest of these were identified only by the *nomme de plume* of Vindex, and he may have had others, it is well to know at the start that Vindex was David Bice James. It is also well to know that references to Brigham James or just plain Brigham, are references to David Bice James. Vindex is listed among the non-words in Webster's Unabridged as meaning "avenger of wrongs," which James was, although he probably committed a few, too.

Editors of the Visalia Delta and the Visalia Times thought enough of his readership in the 1860's and '70's to hand peg perhaps a galley and a half of eight point type of his writings for a single issue in a day when it was lots cheaper and easier to stick to short local items and reach for the boilerplate box for long fillers.

From the great registers of Tulare county and San Francisco one may learn that James was born either in 1827 or in 1833, and either in Ohio or in England. In all his writings about himself, he hasn't revealed, to this chronicler at least, how he came to California, or how many wives and children he had. One may only suspect that he had two, possibly more, of the former, and two, possibly more, of the latter. There is evidence to suggest that Brigham was quite a lady's man; if the snapshot

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## THE BRANDING IRON

OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL OF

THE WESTERNERS

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

## CORRAL CHIPS...

Dr. Coke Wood just sent up a smoke signal which said . . . The Stockton Corral has started collecting material for their first Brand Book to be called "Valley Trails" to be published this year.

CONGRATULATIONS to Henry H. Clifford who has been elected to the office of El Presidente of the California Historical Society.

Coincidence . . . The last issue of The Branding Iron contained an article on John Muir and now comes the announcement that on April 29th, 1964 will see the first day sale in Martinez, Calif. of a 5¢ commemorative honoring John Muir, distinguished American Naturalist and Conservationist.

Dudley Gordon and Arturo Woodward put on two half hour programs on T.V. at the University of Arizona December 4th on the life and activities of Charles Lummis.

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## CORRAL MEETINGS...

Our Dec. 19th meeting was held at Roger Young Auditorium with Ex-Sheriff Jim Algar in the saddle . . . Paul Galleher distributed about 100 copies of Brand Book No. 10 . . . Editor Eddie Edwards was accorded a big hand for a job well done . . . Jim pinned the Sheriff's Star of Office on Harvey Johnson and then presented him with Percy Bonebrakes Belly Gun for guardianship during his term of office . . . Don Luis Perceval presented a beautiful painting of Navajos to our Honorary Sheriff, Charlie Rudkin, and, Homer Boelter presented Charlie with a handsome Certificate of Honor . . . the meeting was then turned over to David Lavender, an author of many accomplishments and awards, Daves illustrated talk was on the history of Telluride, Colorado, the scene of his boyhood.

Our January 16th meeting was held at Roger Young Auditorium with Sheriff Harvey Johnson in the saddle and presented his guest Richard Laugharn, West Coast Representative for Doubleday, our own Ex Sheriff Paul Bailey entertained the Corral with an entertaining discussion on "Westerners Look At Western History." This subject was widely acclaimed when he addressed the last Western Historical Conference at Salt Lake . . . (It might be well to inject here that Dawson's gave Paul an autograph party Feb. 14th on the release of his new epic "For Time And All Eternity" which was completely sold out before the party was over.

Our February 20th meeting was held at Roger Young Auditorium, Sheriff Harvey Johnson in the saddle. The speaker of the evening was John Upton Terrell who enthralled the largest attendance we've had for many moons. The subject of his discourse was Father De Smet (Black Robe) who was an emissary to the Indians by three different Presidents . . . John has been the recipient of several awards for his "Furs by Astor" and "Journey into Darkness." Leland Chase wound up the evening with a discourse on the origination of The Westerner Corrals.

The September, 1963 issue of Arizona Highways featured our Companero Don Luis Perceval's book "A Navajo Sketch Book." The laudatory article was by Lawrence Clark Powell.

For those Westerners who maintain a file of their Branding Irons and Keepsakes, the March 1953 issue of the Branding Iron should be changed from Publication No. 17 to Publication No. 18. This is because Pub. #17 was a Keepsake dated 1952 . . . It was entitled "The Daily Gazette" a reproduction by Glen Dawson.



Inauguration of Dr. Harvey S. Johnson as Sheriff and presentation of the late Percy Bonebrake's Bellygun, seated is David Lavender speaker of the evening. — Photo by Lonnie Hull

## Clamproclamation!

### SNOWSHOE THOMPSON CHAPTER

*WHEREAS*, the State of California has unjustly retained the control over several counties along the disputed border between the State of California and the State of Nevada, which said several counties were previously a geographical part of and are still in heart attached to the Great and Sovereign State of Nevada; and

*WHEREAS*, the year 1964, Nevada's Centennial Year, demands the return to our Great State of the said several counties, including Nevada County and Nevada City, California, which noble cause has been revived by the Snowshoe Thompson Chapter of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus; and

*WHEREAS*, the said Snowshoe Thompson Chapter is being joined in this distinguished effort by the Julia Bulette Chapter and the Chief Truckee Chapter of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus; and

*WHEREAS*, lowly California Clampers have retaliated to our reasonable and sensible task with the outrageous threat to annex the Mighty State of Nevada and call it "East California"; and

*WHEREAS*, our Strong Clamper Governor Grant Sawyer, whose courageous stand against the outrages of California Clampers

we all support, is in need of our might to back him up and to fulfill our high cause;  
*NOW THEREFORE*, We, the Noble Grand Humbug, Past Noble Grand Humbugs, Venerable Clampatriarch, Gold Dust Receiver, Grand Imperturbable Hangman, Grand Musician, Roisterous Iscutis, Royal Platrix, Clamps Petrix, Clamps Matrix, Clamps Vitrix, Damfool Doorkeeper Number One, and Damfool Doorkeeper Number Two, respectively, individually, and collectively, by the powers bestowed upon us by the exalted members of the Snowshoe Thompson Chapter of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus,

*DO HEREBY PROCLAIM* that all Clampers in the State of Nevada are called to active duty and are hereby alerted for pending forceful military action in an emergency situation to invade California, repulse the weak California Clampers, and return to and reclaim for our Fair State of Nevada the said several counties, including Nevada County and Nevada City, which have always been rightfully ours as Nevadans;

*AND WE FURTHER PROCLAIM* that Governor Edmund Brown of California shall be permitted from the date of this Clamproclamation until the second day of May, A.D. 1964, to return to Nevada the said several counties, on which date all Nevada Clampers will swarm on Sacramento, California,  
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## Clamproclamation . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

for a final and conclusive Summit Conference and Showdown, at which time the said Nevada Clampers will parade through the streets of Sacramento in celebration of our great victory.

*GIVEN UNDER OUR HANDS* and the Seal of our Ancient Institution this the 5th day of January, in the year of the present era the 1964th, of the Statehood of Nevada the 100th, and of our Order the 5969th.

## The Valley's Versatile Vindex . . .

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of him before the tunnel of the Bald Mountain mine at White River in the 1880's is authentic, he was in his fifties still youthfully handsome, with riglets of grey hair and a curly grey beard.

Because one editor suggests that James earned the nickname of Brigham because he had spent much time with the Mormons, and was able to tell delightful stories about them, one may interpolate into the facts as known that he crossed the plains from Ohio in 1849 or 1850 too late to make it over Donner, spent some time in Salt Lake, and then came south to Los Angeles. He picks up the thread of his own story writing for the Mining and Engineering Journal in a series of articles in 1903. He tells us he was in Los Angeles in 1851 and joined the company of Col. Barbour which went into the San Joaquin valley to trade with the Indians, and with this group met both James Savage and Col. Fremont. They saw not a single Indian until they reached the Four Creeks country, the delta of the Kaweah River, where they found gathered 1,000 surly Indians, so poorly armed that "one man with a Winchester could have killed the lot of them from behind a tree" James suggests that in the light of what had been done by the redskins to the John Wood party only a few months before, this would have been fitting and proper.

James apparently left the party at the San Joaquin river and took off up the stream to try his luck at mining. He had the usual experiences of the untried miner but later began to make a few strikes. He relates that on one occasion he and a partner he identifies only as "Kentuck" were mining at Coarse Gold gulch when a couple of Indians sauntered by. One of them patted James' poke and commented, "Mucho oro," whereupon James backhanded him across the mouth. It soon became apparent to James and Kentuck that these fellows were at home and among friends, while they were not. The place was literally crawling with redskins peering hostilely through the brush. James and his partner took off hastily up the trail and

hoofed it for a dozen miles across the hills to Texas Flat, where Jim Savage was working about 150 natives at a placer mine.

Savage, said Brigham, was clad only in a breechclout and wore his hair almost to the ground. James goes on to say that Savage and his partner, Bishop, had two mules but no saddles, so with two men to a mule, the four of them set out for Savage's trading post on the Fresno River, where they arrived so sore from riding sans stirrups that they could hardly alight.

James says he witnessed Savage's method of trading for gold with the Indians. They balanced their ration of flour and raisins with gold on the scales.

James hung around the San Joaquin river and old Fort Millerton for a couple of years with occasional forays into the mines to the north. Once, he says, he saw an 18-foot rattlesnake, although he did not really measure it. He tells of one journey to Hornitos where, he remarked, the dance hall girls were very beautiful. He also made an expedition into the Kern river country and is said to have been one of the earlier discoverers of gold there.

By 1853, James was weary of digging, and as he had made at least a part of his pile, he moved into the new town of Visalia, which was the supply point for the Kern mines, and set himself up in the brewery business. This meant keeping a saloon and manufacturing the goods it sold. Meanwhile, he ballyhooed the Kern mines by writing to the newspapers in the Mother Lode, for every man who stampered south was a potential customer.

James built the first brick house in Visalia, a two-story affair which later became the house of Col. Bequette, and it was here that at least two of the grandchildren of Mary Graves of Donner party fame were born, for she became the colonel's daughter-in-law.

James had had enough of Indian fighting around Millerton, and when the tragic comedy called the Tulare county Indian war occurred in 1856, James is not listed among the volunteer militiamen. He remained in Visalia and, like a true Clamper, took care of the women and children. When other men of the settlement decided to liquidate the harmless Indians who were camped nearby, James and a couple of other wise heads, to their everlasting credit, went out and brought the Indians into town where they could be protected against bloody massacre by hotheaded whites.

In 1857 James, a Republican in the midst of radical Democrats, decided to build his own town. He sold his house to Col. Bequette and moved out to a more scenic and less malarial site near the Venice Hills, where the first settlement in the county had been established. He



soon promoted it into a thriving town with a saloon, general store, blacksmith shop, hotel, and even a furniture manufacturing business.

The high water of 1862 liquidated James' dream. The fickle Kaweah carved out a new channel down the course of a little creek until it hit Venice, which James had named his town because of the many canals and streams nearby. There the river chose to follow the wagon ruts that went down the main street. When the flood receded, nothing was left but the broad course of the new St. Johns river.

James went back to digging, first in Kern county and then in the years that followed probably in many places, including as far away as Iowa City. As a Republican in Kern county, the refuge of Secessionists, James must have kept his mouth shut. His observation of the roaring town of Havilah is again that the girls were beautiful and that among them were two of Kit Carson's dark eyed daughters.

By 1869, old Brigham was back at White River in Tulare county, mining gold and penning letters to the Visalia Delta. In 1872, when the Southern Pacific reached Tulare county and stopped for a breather, he wrote as Vindex that the railroad should go up Kern river and out over Walker Pass instead of over the Tehachapis. He started his article as follows:

"Did you ever have a bitter disappointment such as hearing that your heaviest creditor was dead and then meeting him the next morning coming at you full tilt with all your notes in his hand?"

He concludes the correspondence with a comment on the effect at White River of the Inyo quake that had destroyed Independence:

"It shook my wife's chickens so that the hens won't lay and the yeast so that the bread won't rise."

That same year he went to San Francisco by train as soon as the tracks had extended to within six miles of Visalia. He had to ride a dirty cattle car to Fresno. Under the title, "Vindex Traveleth," he told not only of the trip but of his subsequent stay in the metropolis. He had a low opinion of it. "Thou Mecca of busted pilgrims and ye assorted bums," he called it.

"The latest sensation (in San Francisco) is the killing of a man named Cummings by a Mrs. Keney. He had by slander caused her husband to leave her and she deliberately closed up his business with a double barrellled shotgun. She has the sympathy of the community, as she is young and good looking. The moral is, a woman must never shoot the top of a man's head off unless she has youth and beauty to back her action."

In 1873, James wrote of the Southern Pacific's new town of Tulare, which it hoped

would wrest the county seat from old Visalia, "Tulare is not a success, nor will it ever be as a commercial center, but will in time perhaps be a good quiet place to have the county hospital or asylum for those who succumb to bad whiskey." Tulare never became the county seat, but is today the site of the county hospital, where a lot of indigent alcoholics pass their final hours.

By 1873 James was back in Visalia, running a hotel. The next year he had a contract to furnish the courthouse and several other buildings with water, and he put his inventive genius into devising a steam pump. He advertised that he had a 22,000 gallon "swimming tank" with heated water which no doubt would never make the sanitation requirements of today. Next we find him as the proprietor of the skating rink.

In 1876, he took over the gas plant that furnished the new Masonic-Odd Fellows building with gas light and which did not work very well. James piped gas into several business buildings and added the gas works to his utilities. When he first turned the gas on he forgot to shut off the jets, and the result, said the editor, "smelled like forty polecats." James made gas out of coal oil he refined from crude oil from a well west of Tulare lake. "The gas gives the best light of any ever tried in Visalia, and two burners will cast a shadow on a chandelier of a dozen oil lamps," reported the Delta. "Brigham doesn't know whether he has a white elephant or a bonanza."

Meanwhile, he continued his Vindex columns. In the hard times of 1877, we find him carping against buying out of the state and urging the subsidization of any industry that would care to come to Visalia. He went on to say that hard times were due to too many labor saving devices, thus too much overproduction. Automation in 1877? James thought so.

But while he was fooling around with his steam irrigation pump 20 years ahead of his time and also figuring out a steam wagon to haul the grain to the railroad, James had another bee in his inventive bonnet. In 1878 he demonstrated a model of a single track railroad in Visalia. Such a road, he claimed, could be built and equipped for about one-third the cost of a standard railroad and would reduce the freight from the interior to tidewater by \$3.85 a ton.

In a day when the railroads were monopolistic and charged all the traffic would bear, this sounded great to all the haters of the Big Four, and they were numerous. By 1880, James moved up to San Francisco and began to promote his idea in earnest. That same year he demonstrated the locomotive and several cars

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## Versatile Vindex. . .

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at Antioch, then making its bid as a deep water port, by giving 97 passengers a ride over 900 feet of track.

There are drawings of the railroad, which James patented, in existence. The principle was to have a broad drive wheel in front of the engine to run in a trough-like track made of wood. The engine and cars balanced on small dolly wheels on the raised sides of the groove in which the driver wheel traveled. James claimed he could build a locomotive for \$3,500.

A company was formed to build the road 167 miles south to the Mussel Slough country, but nothing ever came of it. James fished for offers to build branch roads into the foothill towns, but nothing came of those, either.

He remained in San Francisco, advertising himself as an inventor. His list included not only railroads, but also household gadgets and, of course, a dry gold washer which every mechanical minded miner in California was trying to invent at the time.

He remained in San Francisco, with occasional returns to White River as mining company superintendent when he could promote enough capital to open up the old mines there, until 1907, when he dropped out of the directory in which he had been listed in later years as being in "notions." The Visalia paper reported that old Brigham was running a second hand store on McAllister street.

His travels to Tulare county were reported as those of a local boy who had made good. In 1896, the Delta commented that "Brigham is talking of going to Alaska, although he is 73." In 1903 he wrote reminiscences of his experiences in the mines for the Mining and Engineering Review, a series well worth the perusal of today's historian, despite the 18-foot rattlesnake. In 1907, he wrote a biting letter against the San Francisco corruption, saying, "Throw the boodlers out!"

In 1896 he wrote prophetically to a San Francisco newspaper his thoughts on the efforts of man to conquer the air.

"The day will surely arrive when the air will be navigated by aerial machines as safely as carriages drawn through the streets, but inventors will have to discard the use of steam and electricity as motive power as they involve too much weight.

"A rocket soars into the air to great height with great force. What does it? It is simply the combustion of the material used turned into gas as it is forced out of the tube as it is created, and the expansion creates an impact against the atmosphere while the rocket is speeded by continuous recoil until the explosives are consumed.

"It has occurred to my mind that gas exploded in a chamber and discharged out of a bell mouthed tube against the atmosphere would propel the vessel in proportion to the amount of gas used at each explosion."

He went on to describe how he would build a cigar shaped cylinder with the bell shaped tube on one end and a rudder on the other, with aeroplanes which would open out when the gas was exhausted to permit a gliding angle of descent. "No matter how fast the machine was going through the air, it could not create any vacuum," he closed.

Old Brigham's idea isn't too remote from the principles that send the X-15 and Saturn on their way.

Of the Spanish-American war James also had his say. "It is a thing of jingoists and journalists," and "war is a barbarous way of settling international disputes."

Once, in his many writings, James recalled an incident which occurred when he was operating his "brewery" in Visalia. A young vaquero came in and took on quite a load of refreshment. After James had closed for the night, the vaquero returned, broke in, consumed some more and tore the place up considerably. He was arrested and brought into court. James, the victim, became his defender. James told the judge that as the young vaquero usually conducted himself very well, there must have been a reason why he behaved so badly in this occasion. James said that he had just produced a new batch of brew and had not sampled it himself when he began serving it to the young vaquero. Later, he said, he had sampled it, and it was so full of lightning that had he drunk as much of it as had his young customer, he would have torn the place apart himself. The judge fined the young man \$15, and James paid the fine.

After 1907, James dropped completely from sight. He disappeared from the San Francisco directory, and there is no David B. James in the state's registry of deaths. Where did he go? What happened to him?

Frankly, this chronicler hasn't the heart to check out the death of a David James in Los Angeles in 1921 at the age of 94. It might be our old friend, Brigham. It is sad to think of him ending up in the heartland of promoters and latter-day prophets in which he might not be able to compete. We'd rather think of Brigham as having hatched in his fertile brain, maybe from home brew and coal oil, an elixir of life which he is keeping from the rest of humanity until the day it can be trusted with such a dangerous concoction. Maybe he has gone Above or Below; if so, maybe he'll say a good word for us when we join him, just as he defended the errant vaquero.

## U Given Photographer's Early Tucson Collection

Earle R. Forrest Rode Range in 1902

By BOB THOMAS

The 7,800-photograph collection of pioneer Arizona photographer Earle R. Forrest, including about 800 priceless glass plate negatives of early Arizona scenes, have been given to the University of Arizona.

Forrest, now 80, took the pictures in his youth while working on cattle and sheep ranches throughout the state.

Author of numerous books on Arizona and the west, Forrest is a retired newspaper man who applied the reporter's interviewing techniques to gathering and compiling the history of the state while the makers of the history were still alive.

He wrote *Arizona's Dark and Bloody Ground*, the story of the sanguinary Tewksbury-Graham vendetta in Pleasant Valley just under the Mogollon Rim, *Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest*, an authoritative story of the Spanish attempt to civilize the southwest, and co-author of *Lone War Trail of Apache Kid*, the history of Arizona's last wild Indian.

Most of the information for his books came from early settlers and cowboys whom Forrest often interviewed while sitting beside a campfire.

He knew such Arizona characters as Will C. Barnes, soldier, rancher and a historian in his own right, Edwin Tewksbury, the only survivor of two feuding families in the Pleasant Valley war, Jim Roberts, a participant in the feud who killed his last man (a bank robber) in 1928 at the age of 70, the widows of Tom Graham, Sheriff Commodore Perry Owens and many others.

While he was deeply interested in Arizona's bloodier happenings, his favorite book is still "Missions and Pueblos . . ."

In the book's preface, he said:

"My interest in and studies of the Indian pueblos, missions and ruins of this section began more than 25 years ago (1902), when as a cowboy I rode the cattle ranges of the great southwest.

"I was little more than a boy then, out from decorous old East in search of adventure; and the opportunities for a study of the ancient civilization of that little-known land, afforded

by my wanderings with cow outfits, were almost without limit . . .

"I had always associated missions with California, but when I saw San Xavier del Bac, the finest in North America, and heard some of its history my interest was aroused. Then I stood before the great ruin of San Jose de Tumacacori, magnificent in its loneliness amid the mesquite, and a cowboy comrade pointed out an adobe wall that had once been San Gabriel de Guevavi (all located between Tucson and Nogales) . . . I realized that this southwestern land had a wonderful story to tell that our English histories do not contain."

Forrest photographed early Tucson ("a Mexican mud village of about 7,000"), ranches at Oracle and at Redington (where he worked on the Carlink Ranch of Bayless & Berkelew in 1903) as well as ranches in northern Arizona.

In 1902 he was the first person to photograph Shiprock on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico Territory. Billie Meadows, operator of a trading post on the San Juan River, helped him take some of the earliest pictures of the Navajos.

But it was a paroled Indian murderer named Nickolas who overcame the Indians' superstitious fear of being photographed (they thought that if the picture was destroyed they would die) and gained him access to the Navajos' hogans.

In 1906 he photographed the Hopi snake dances and is believed to be the third photographer to do so.

In 1908 he graduated from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pa., and obtained a job on a newspaper. Most of his life, except for repeated sojourns into Arizona, has been spent in Washington, Pa., as a newspaper court reporter.

Forrest donated his photograph collection to the Arizona and Western Collection of the U of A's library special collections.

Forrest, still tall and gaunt despite his years, now lives with a daughter in San Marino, California.

Visiting in Tucson recently, he told an interviewer that he feels uncomfortable being interviewed because "it seems I should be asking the questions instead of answering them."

He said gathering the facts on the Tewksbury-Graham war was one of the most difficult jobs he had encountered.

When he talked to those familiar with the story they were reluctant to discuss the feud. Some refused altogether and others would only talk for publication on the promise that their names would not be used.

"I talked to as many people as I could and dug up all the records available. No one ever denied the facts in the book," he said with pride.

# Bob-Tails . . .

BOB ROBERTSON

Speaking of hair ropes and such stuff, we rode over to Reno during the Washoe County Fair and had a look at the braided rawhide and leather work that Luis Ortega builds, Luis hangs out at Cottonwood, California, and this year he took a notion to show some of his Reatas, Jaquimas, Cuartas, Cabezadas, Riendas, Maneas and other old-time vaquero's riggin at the fair. I've seen fine rawhide work all the way from Mexico to the stuff the Eskimos make out of oogrook hide but I've never seen anything that can skin the kind Luis plats. The first thing that puts that old vaquero's work ahead of any other I've seen is that it is the work of an artist—not just an ordinary mechanic. The next thing—and to me, it seems most important—is that his patterns and designs are original, true to type models of the Menesteres de Jinetes which had their origin in ancient Arabic countries and were developed by Moros, Espanoles and Californios into the most scientifically designed and artistically wrought rigging ever designed by horsemen . . . Luis is no pilgrim in his part of the range and that gives him the edge on a lot of shorthorns who have tried to "interpret" the West. The country of California and neighboring States had been the Querencia of his folks since the time one of his Parientes rediscovered La Ensenada Dorada after Queen Bess' pet pirate, Drake, found it and then lost it again.

"To sack the rooster," in the lingo of Anglo-Californian vaqueros, was to lean from the saddle to pick up anything—hat, glove, handkerchief, reata, etc.—from the ground. The phrase was a misinterpretation of Spanish *la saca del gallo*, the pulling of the rooster, a game in which a live rooster was buried to the neck in the ground and riders on running horses tried—and usually succeeded—to reach down, catch the chicken by the neck, pull him out and return to a starting place before oponents could snatch him away. The game, with variants, was popular in Mexico and all the border States.

\* \* \*

*Fierra*, the archaism, for *hierro*, was the vaquero name for branding iron and the old axiom for its use was —

*A la bestia, al pelo;  
a la res, al cuero.*

The rule instructed that the hot iron should be applied to horses only enough to burn the hair and to cattle until it seared the hide.

*La fierra* (feminine form of *fierro*) was a general term meaning "a branding," "branding place" or "branding time."

The spineless cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* and related species) of the Far Southwest, now commonly known as "beavertail," was called "deer tongue" by old timers. Both names are suggested by the flat, spatulate shape of the "pads" or leaf-like stems of the plant.

The deer-tongue cactus and similar species of Texas and Mexico were called *cegador* by Spanish and Mexican stockmen.

*Cegador* (fem. *cegador*), in Spanish, means a thing which causes blindness. The cacti were named thus because of the clusters of *aguates* or hair-like spicules borne by the plants. These *aguates*, being easily detached, at times get into the eyes of grazing animals and cause blindness.

\* \* \*

In Mexico, the Spanish word, *remuda* (from *remudar*, to change), is applied to a *caballo repuesto* (refreshed horse) changed for a jaded one. In Texas, *remuda* is the name given the band of extra (change) horses which, in the West, is called *la caponera*, *la caballada*, the "cavvy" or the "saddle bunch."

\* \* \*

*Caponera* is a "bunch" of *capones* (geldings). The bell-mare which was sometimes placed with saddle horses or an *atajo* of pack horses or mules to keep them "bunched," was also called *la caponera*; in South America, *la madrina*.

Before the stock saddle with attached *bastos* (skirts) and built-in seat was developed, the skeleton-rigged Spanish or Mexican saddle was often covered with a removeable leather seat cover called a *coraza* (corrupted by gringos into "corus"). When pockets were attached to *la coraza*, it was called a *mochila* (from the Spanish word for a knapsack). Anglos corrupted *mochila* into "machere."

Pony Express saddles were furnished with *mochilas* to expedite quick changes of horses at relay stations.

Charlie Russell's paintings, *Deadline of the Range* and *Carson's Men*, show details of the Spanish saddles rigged with *corazas*. His *Discovery of Last Chance Gulch*, *The Wagon Boss*, *When Mules Wore Diamonds*, *The Pipe of Peace* and *The Warning Shadows* show the pocket-rigged *mochila*. Charlie's painting, *Ambushed*, illustrates both *coraza* and *mochila*. His pen-and-ink sketch of Jim Bridger's discovery of Great Salt Lake depicts a Spanish saddle with seat covered with an apishamore.



When Anglo-Americans adopted methods and customs of their Indian, French, Mexican and Spanish neighbors, words and names were among the adoptions.

Ears untrained to strange phonics and tongues without the ability to pronounce correctly new sounds caused many misinterpretations, mispronunciations and, finally, a number of misspelled words, which, through common usage, came to be accepted as "correct."

Some of those "cripples," those mal-formed terms, have gained admittance to formal lexicons and many of them are to be found in the vocabularies of authors of popular writing.

Among Westernisms, some of those cripples are:

"bosál" for *bozal*, noseband of a hackamore; "chaparajos" or "chaparejos" for *chaparreras*, hip-high, belted, leather leggings (these cripples were not heard in the West but were seen in Western saddlery catalogs);

"chinks" for *chingaderas*, a name for *armistas*, apron-like leggings worn by *vaqueros* (*chingadera* is also the pornographic name of a female who commits adultery or fornication);

"corona" for *carona*, formerly, (1) a leather saddle-pad used before the invention and adoption of "skirts" attached to the saddle; (2) the part of a horse's back where the saddle is placed; now, (3) a fancy saddle-pad trimmed with *chomite*, varicolored, clipped yarn (placed under the saddle);

"corus" for *coraza*, a leather saddle cover used before the adoption of built-in seats and saddle-skirts (la *coraza* was placed over the saddle after it was in place on the horse);

"javelina" for *jabalina*, feminine of *jabali*, peccary;

"machere" for *mochila*, a "corus" with attached pockets;

"riata" for *reata*, "lass rope" (from Spanish *atar*, to tie, and *reatar*, to re-tie);

"romal" for *ramal*, whip attached to riding-bridle reins (from Spanish *rama*, a branch);

"rosadero" for *rozadero*, fender of a saddle (from *rozar*, to rub, to chafe, to scrape);

"sacaton" for *zacaton*, rank grass, coarse hay;

"salado" or "sollyow" for *asoleado*, wind-broken (asthmatic condition of horses);

"savvy" for *sabe*, part of the Spanish verb *saber*, to know;

"serape" for *zarape*, blanket used for a cape or cloak;

"tamale" for *tamal*, the well-known Mexican pasty wrapped in corn-shucks;

"theodor" or "Theodore" for *fiador*, throat-latch and noseband fastener of a hackamore;

"toreador" for *torero*, bullfighter "toreador"

is literary rather than Western; actually, it is a "dude" word);

"vamoose" for *vamos*, we go, and *vamonos*, let us go.

Besides cripples, there is a number — a growing number of "dudisms," modern expressions which are being accepted as "authentically Western." These are heard at shows, seen in the funny-books and are appearing more and more in "legitimate" writing.

BOB ROBERTSON

## From the Mailbag . . .

### GREETINGS FROM HONORARY MEMBER---EDGAR N. CARTER

Dear Art and Paul

This year is's just too much for me (only a couple of weeks from 91) to send out all the cards I have in the past, so, if it isn't asking too much, would you have put in the next Branding Iron a small word that I am wishing all the Westerners a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, . . . please use your own words and make it worth printing.

Thank you so much —

Ed.

\* \* \*

A beautiful card was also received from Barry Johnson of the English Westerners . . . Best Wishes and Regards to you and all at Los Angeles Corral.

## Down the Book Trail

KANSAS IN NEWSPAPERS, 17½x12½. By Nyle H. Miller—Edgar Langsdorf—Robert W. Richmond, published by the Kansas State Historical Society—Topeka, Kansas, 1963—\$9.95.

Kansas should be proud of this mammoth compilation of facsimile pages from over a hundred early Territorial Newspapers from as far back as 1830 describing Indian Massacres—letters from Overland Wagon Trains—Santa Fe Trail—Cattle Trails—Pony Express—Range news and Cattle Brands—Dalton Gang—Proslavery vs. Abolitionist—Civil War Newspapers—Quantril—Injuns fighting for their rights—and on and on. You never had so much interesting reading of the early West as she was for ten bucks . . . It's a book you will find hard to lay down.

SID PLATFORD

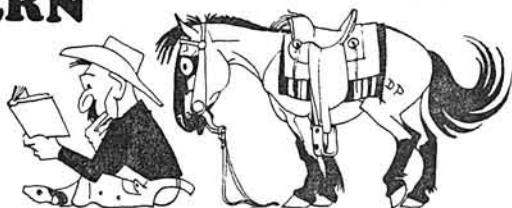
# DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL...

MAN-MADE DISASTER, the Story of Saint Frances Dam, by Charles F. Outland. (Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, Calif., 249 pp., photos, maps, bibliography and index, \$9.50).

On the night of Monday, March 12, 1928, the Saint Frances dam in San Fransquito canyon north of Los Angeles collapsed and 38,000 acre feet of water swept down Santa Clara valley bringing death and destruction to orchards, towns and villages. Four hundred and twenty lives were lost and \$14,000,000 of damage was done. Thirty-five years later Charles F. Outland of Santa Paula has written a graphic, analytical and un-biased account of the great disaster.

Emotions were aroused when the City of Los Angeles raided the Owens Valley and usurped a water supply. More discontent was created in the Santa Clara valley when a 185 foot high dam was erected in San Francisquito canyon to store Owens Valley water. Farmers claimed the dam endangered the local supply of irrigation water. The failure of the dam started rumors of sabotage, bad engineering and negligence. Mr. Outland has assembled the facts and leaves conclusions to the reader. Though not a trained engineer the author handles technical details with logic and clearness.

The five hours and thirty minutes of havoc that followed the collapse of the dam as water rushed from the mountains to the sea are reported with drama and in sequence. At 11:57 p.m. on March 12 lights went out in parts of Los Angeles. A power line was down. A few minutes later a mighty wall of water snuffed out twenty-five lives around a power house below the Saint Frances dam. At 1:18 a.m. one hundred and fifty men in a labor camp seventeen miles below the dam were routed from their beds, but only sixty-six escaped a raging wall of water. The flood rushed through Fillmore and Santa Paula carrying away bridges, highways, houses and people. Five hours and twenty seven minutes after the dam broke the water reached the ocean at Oxnard fifty-four miles from the dam site. When the sun rose on the morning of the thirteenth it lighted a wide ribbon of wasted land. The Red Cross, uniformed men, Los Angeles officials and help from all over the state of California poured into the devastated area. For months clean up work and legal problems occupied the attention of hundreds of people. The City of Los An-



geles paid all of the bills. Even today some marks of the great tragedy are visible. Those who were there, and Mr. Outland was one of them, will never forget the tragic night.

*Man-made Disaster* is the definitive work on the causes and results of the Saint Frances dam failure. It is a great book, well done.

—DON M.

CHARLES KING, AMERICAN ARMY NOVELIST by C. E. Dornbusch. Foreword . . . Don Russel, Hope Farm Press, Cornwallville, N.Y. Price \$3.

This small brochure of nineteen pages in a stiff blue wrapper is a most welcome edition to the ever growing volume of western Americana.

Here for the first time (to my knowledge at least) is given a bibliography of the numerous works of General Charles King, who was during his lifetime the foremost fictioneer of the United States Army. His own service record ranges from the Civil War, through the western Indian campaigns, the Philippines and World War I. He was born in Albany, New York, October 12, 1844. He died on March 17, 1933 with seventy years of army life on his service record.

Personally, I do not believe General King has received his due credits for his novels of life in the United States Army. Criticisms of his works have centered mostly around his errors on factual occurrences, which from an historian's academic viewpoint, are inexcusable. About eight years ago this reviewer defended General King's novels, against such criticism. The critic was right, of course, but I still believe that the first hand glimpses of frontier army life, from the northern Plains to southern Arizona, as given factually in King's novels, are worth all his errors.

The compiler of the new bibliography has gone to considerable expense and spent time as well in rounding up the various editions of General King. I know from personal experience how difficult it is to acquire all the works of any author, especially those of such a prolific writer as General King. Of the fifty-nine titles listed I have a miscellany of only thirty-seven, and these include only one copy

of each, not *all* the copies of the different editions. Hence this particular bibliography is most welcome to any reader or collector of King's books.

General King occasionally added personal touches to his presentation copies of his books. Mr. Dornbusch refers to having acquired one such item as did Westerner Don Russell.

I have one or two such volumes. For example in the copy of *Tonio, Son of The Sieras*—issued June 1906 is this inscription by the General, dated Milwaukee, February 17, '29, four years before his death.

"Tonio was a pet of mine—a Fennimore Cooper sort of a savage and I remember that it gave me genuine pleasure to tell the folks about him. Yet now, not a word can I recall of the story woven about his wigwam—notone. I only remember that he was the hero of it all.

—Charles King."

In a copy of *Captain Blake*, Philadelphia, 1891, which edition by the way contains four wash illustrations by our well known Santa Barbara artist Alexander F. Harmer, who had served with the cavalry in Arizona about the same time that King was there, is a brief letter.

This note, written from Hotel Carlton, Milwaukee, Sept. 15, 1929 was sent to a Mr. Lorenzo D. Walters, then a resident of Tucson. King wrote:

"My dear Mr. Walters:

It will interest you, I feel sure, to know that from several different and distant points, and from men who are prominent in public affairs, there have come to me letters that *ring* as do yours with denunciation of that low fellow, Blake, and his contemptible book.

Have I your permission to send your letter of April 18th (*to me*) to Cody's sister, the Secretary of the Cody Museum at Cody, Wyo.? Her married name is Mary Allen, and I feel sure it would be a welcome addition to the large and growing collection of "expressions" of what may be termed the sentiment of this day and generation as to the man we of the old 5' Cavalry held in honor and respect—to say nothing of the comradeship born of many a stirring campaign in the long ago.

I am confined to my room just now—weak from pain. The clippings herewith will explain.

Sincerely

Charles King."

Unfortunately the clippings were not in the book when I acquired it.

One last note on a presentation copy and I'll quit. On the fly leaf of *A Conquering Corps Badge*, a collection of short stories, Milwaukee, 1902, is inscribed:

To

Elwell S. Otis

Major General U.S. Army

Our commander in days when the emblem of the 8th was indeed

"*A Conquering Corps Badge.*"

With the affectionate regards of

—CHARLIE KING

*Christmas 1903*

General Otis in this case was an officer under whom King had served during the Civil War.

Again, I repeat, this bibliography of General King's works is well worth keeping on the shelves of any collector of western Americana.

—ARTHUR WOODWARD

XOCHIMAPICTLI [A Branch of Flowers], Colección de Poemas Nahuas, paleografía, versión, introducción y notas de Angel Ma. Garibay L., de la Academia Mexicana de la Lengua. Mexico: 1959. 191 p., 10 Aztec hieroglyph p., 23/8"x3 1/16". (Colección Epyolotli [Collection of Precious Pearls], Ediciones Culturales Mexicanas de la Academia Cultural.) \$2.00.

This dainty little book includes the Nahua and Spanish Versions of the earliest 15th and 16th century poems. There are 40 poems, 22 Anonymous, 10 by the author Nezahualcoyotl, 3 by Tecayahuatzin, 2 by Cacamatzin, and 4 by other authors. Personally I find the poems of Nezahualcoyotl the finest but the others can be considered as well. Nezahualcoyotl (Hungry Coyote) had fled from Texcoco after his father's death and defeat by Tezozomoc and eventually began as an ally of Itzcoatl of Tenochtitlan. He resumed to power as ruler of Tezcoco, holding his position until Montezuma I and Axayacatl of Tlacopan and he ruled the Aztec area.

All of the poems are taken from "Cantares Mexicanos," found in the Bibliotheca Nacional de Mexico, and from "Romances de los Señores de la Nueva España," a manuscript found in the Library of Austin, Texas.

This little book might well be read and enjoyed by any reader of Spanish or Nahuatl.

—C. N. RUDKIN

FOR TIME AND ALL ETERNITY. Paul Bailey. Doubleday & Company, Inc.: Garden City, New York: 1964. [8], 400 pages. \$5.95.

Ex-Sheriff Paul Bailey again gives us a history of Utah, but this time a magnificently powerful historical novel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with the personal lives of a number of Mormons. Although the period of persecution of the Mormons runs

from 1865 (end of the Civil War) until 1890 (Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto) it deals mainly and very actively with the principal characters.

Here begins the story of Nancy Corey. She has refused to accept the Principle. Her mother's suffering had convinced her. Nancy and her half-sister climbed the wall of the town and there met two soldiers, one of them Joel Scott, who eventually wanted to marry her. Of course he was a Gentile and an educated army officer retired from the Civil War, who became a Utah teacher. Nancy was courted by an Apostle, and as the result of his already eight wives she rejected him and married the Gentile. But the Gentile eventually was converted to Mormonism, and much later (five children later) he became a "pluralist," much to the disgust of Nancy.

The detailed lives of Nancy and Joel are indeed a thrilling tale, absorbingly told of the persecution of the Church as well as the doings and sufferings of the story's characters. His people, as well as the historical characters, are told with a remarkable realism. The lively story must not be revealed here, but should be told in Paul's own words.

Bailey has given us practically the whole history of Utah and of the Latter-day Saints. We hear of the Federal Army and the character of the private soldiers. There is a little about Indians (about 1865), about the riots at Provo (1870), the abolition of the Nauvoo Legion and the arrests of important polygamists (1871), with the law of 1862 and the Poland and Edwards amendments of 1874 and 1882, which jailed "cohabs" and forced them to leave other states with a single wife, and with the Manifesto of 1890 of President Wilford Woodruff. Of course there are many historical events brought into the tale, from the time Joseph Smith's founding of the Church down to the ending of the First World War.

Bailey's life has been familiar with Utah and the small places in which he lived. He uses familiarly much of the Mormon dialect which began in the 1830's. Much of the speech of Vermont and upper New York can be found today in the small towns of the outlying areas of Utah, with which I am especially familiar in Dixie and the southeast parts of Utah. Here are a few of the expressions which I have found: "It *pleasured* her . . .," " . . . tenderly *peeling back* her black hair from her eyes," " . . . ordeal made Joel as nervous . . . as a bull with rump scabies," " . . . [in the stoves] laid new wood to their *feebling* interiors," "like a *punctured bustle* the air went

out of her," " . . . a dozen families stuffed the place as *tight as a sausage gut-sock*." But there are to be found many other bits of the dialect and of course many of the metaphorical expressions which are expressly Paul's.

Of course every Westerner who has read Paul Bailey's *Grandpa Was a Polygamist* will discover its autobiography in *For Time and All Eternity*. "Grandpa" was Joseph Barlow Forbes, of Bangor, like Joel Scott with an ambition to go to sea, became a real navigator, came back for the Civil War, was wounded, discharged, again commissioned in California, returned eastward and eventually became a teacher in American Fork. And Grandma Nancy told Paul (or Jody) of her courtship: "First time I saw your grandpa . . . was from the top of the 'dobie wall that used to surround this town." "You mean the wall went clear around American Fork?" I asked. . . . "Oh, yes, Jody. We had Indian troubles in those days. All towns had to 'fort up.' I was a slip of a girl; curious, full of the devil, and barefoot as you are. As kids, my half-sister Florinda and myself, used to walk to the top of the big wall for fun. One early morning we heard voices outside the wall. We climbed to the top, peered over, and here were these two soldiers . . . And they were cooking breakfast. We lay flat on our bellies, and watched 'em. They'd gotten four hen's eggs. . . . One thing I can remember . . . is that they made their coffee in the very water they'd boiled their eggs in. . . . I said, 'Flo, here are our husbands. I choose the one on the left.' . . . The first thing I knew, here was my soldier hired as school teacher. Boarding with my stepfather, Isaac Cooper. . . . When he asked me to marry him, I hesitated. . . . He was a Gentile but I was kinda glad about that, too. I'd seen a lot of marriage sadness. I had a horror about plural. And Gentile didn't marry plural."

At another point Paul says: "I don't know at what age Grandma revealed it (plural marriage) to me. . . . 'I didn't know your Grandpa was courting another woman . . . until one night, after a hard day with a sick patient, I came upon my husband and Janey Gardner, sitting on the creek bridge, with their arms about another. I was so damned furious, I pushed the pair of 'em into the creek.'"

Did Nancy Corey marry Joel Scott?

*For Time and All Eternity* will furnish you with 400 pages of the finest reading. In it you will find all the wonderful events that filled the long lives of a triad of Mormon lovers, involved with the most atrocious persecution known to the United States Federals.

I'd like to see the story on the screen, too.

—C. N. RÜDKIN