

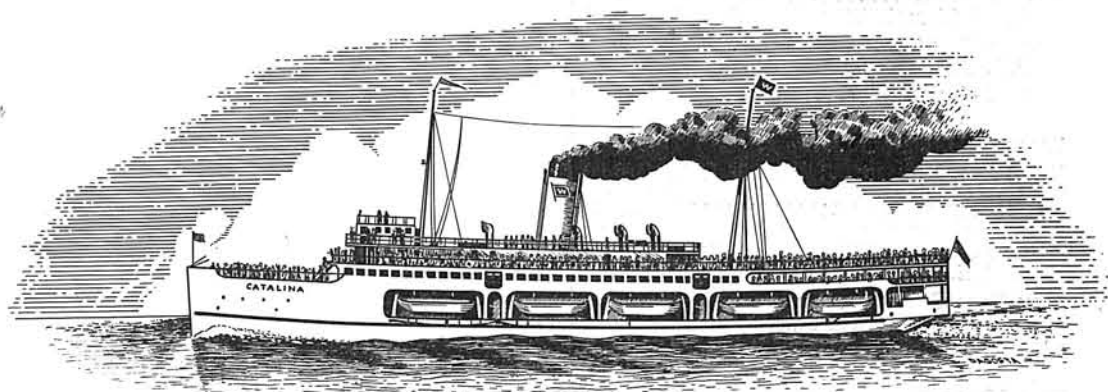
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JUNE 1971

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 101



The Big White Steamer

By LESTER GLENN ARELLANES

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo discovered Santa Catalina Island in 1542 — and tourists found it soon after 1919, when William Wrigley, Jr. bought this serrated mountain range rising out of a sapphire sea and turned it into a first-class watering place.

"We'll have to go to Catalina one of these days." Southern Californians have been saying that ever since one square mile of Timm's Landing became the town of Avalon in 1887 — long before the modest resort coined the immodest but unassailable slogan "In All The World No Trip Like This." The island will remain forever, but this may be your last chance to ride S. S. *Catalina*, the last honest to goodness steamship of her kind under United States Registry. And by the way, getting there is more than half of the fun!

In an age when passenger liners are fast

disappearing like the proverbial passenger train, it gladdens the heart to know this vessel still runs. From Berth 95 in San Pedro, S. S. *Catalina* swings into the morning tide. She steams slowly down the Main Channel, between the massive piers of Vincent Thomas Bridge and the mellow, touristy waterfront of old San Pedro. Huge vessels with canted bows and tapered funnels also take this way in and out of the West's busiest port, but for the moment the big white steamer, *Catalina*, immaculately groomed, is mistress of the channel. Instead of straining forward, she leans rakishly backward, and cleaves both water and air impartially.

Ships play an important role in the development of any island and it was the flagship of Cabrillo that first hove to off the

(Continued on Page Four)

The Branding Iron

OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL OF
THE WESTERNERS

Published Quarterly in
March, June, September, December

OFFICERS—1971

ALDEN H. MILLER*Sheriff*
1705 Rancho Dr., Glendale, Ca. 91201
EARL C. ADAMS*Deputy Sheriff*
1386 Orlando Rd., San Marino, Ca. 91108
EVERETT HAGER...*Registrar of Marks & Brands*
P.O. Box 3006, Terminal Island, Ca. 90731
HUGH C. TOLFORD.....*Assistant Registrar*
of Marks & Brands
14226 Runnymede St., Van Nuys, Ca. 91405
TAD LONERGAN*Roundup Foreman*
12911 Olympia Way, Santa Ana, Ca. 92705
DONALD DUKE...*Assistant Roundup Foreman*
P.O. Box 8136, San Marino, Ca. 91108
BERT H. OLSON*Keeper of the Chips*
619 N. Rexford, Beverly Hills, Ca. 90210
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207 Avenue G, Redondo Beach, Ca. 90277
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1011 E. Lexington, Glendale, Ca. 91206
IRON EYES CODY*Daguerreotype Wrangler,*
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2013 Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles, Ca.
90026
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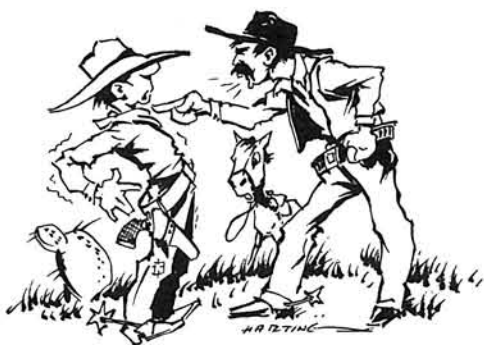
The Roundup Foreman

TAD LONERGAN

12911 Olympia Way, Santa Ana, Calif., 92705

THE BRANDING IRON solicits articles of 1500 words
or less, dealing with every phase of the Old West.
Contributions from members and friends welcomed.

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The Westerners



The Foreman Sez . . .

Ted Littlefield whose art is familiar to all Westerners had his own show at the Shadow Hills Gallery, 9678 Sunland Blvd., Sunland, California, during the month of March. Over 30 Littlefield paintings were on display from his palette.

Robert Cody, the son of Westerner Iron Eyes Cody, was picked out of his class at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, to join a troop of American Indians for a trip to London on a cultural exchange program. Robert will be meeting the Queen and the Princess and the group will show their abilities with Indian dances, song, and beadwork. His father, Iron Eyes Cody, is the well known artist, movie actor, raconteur and general handyman with his camera at all Corral meetings.

Westerner Bill Hendricks, the busy and talented Director of the Sherman Foundation at Corona del Mar, has his name in print once again. His thorough research has produced an excellent sketch of Moses H. Sherman, a pioneer railroad builder and developer of the Southern California scene. This beautiful production issued by the Sherman Foundation is well illustrated with many rare photographs and the production under the able hand of Grant Dahlstrom is well done.

Your Round-up Foreman can think of nothing erudite to say this quarter. No great waves of journalistic passion have swept him off his feet and no momentous movements in history have been witnessed.

Many courteous, thoughtful and unselfish actions have occurred within the corral.
(Continued on Next Page)

Corresponding Members Welcomed by Corral

The Corral welcomes the following new corresponding members: Lester G. Arelanes, Kenneth A. Campbell, William W. Giles, Verner A. Johnson, John A. Popovich, Lauren C. Post, and William J. Warren. Dr. Post is the current sheriff of the San Diego Corral.

The Los Angeles Corral grows in virility and strength as all members participate. The fraternity that exists between the most sophisticated academician and the wide range of laymen — historians in the Corral — is pleasurable for all of us.

You are a great bunch of guys!



THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

JANUARY

The first meeting of the new year was held January 13, and our new Sheriff, Alden Miller, presented a short talk entitled the *State of the Corral*.

The speaker, Doyce Nunis, a long-time member of the Corral, was introduced by Earl Adams this year's Deputy Sheriff. Earl mentioned several of Doyce's contributions to western history including his honors from the academic world and his publication of more than twelve different volumes in the field of western history! Nunis required no introduction to the Corral and as Earl Adams stated, he was presented rather than introduced!

During several trips to England, Nunis located a diary that had been kept by a Dr. Heinz, a member of the crew of the *HMS Sulpher*. This diary, whose existence had been unknown up till this time was reviewed in detail, and plans are afoot to have this excellent diary published in the future.

This erudite presentation was an appropriate sendoff for the 1971 Corral season. In addition to the formal presentation, Nunis exhibited a number of other books and diaries that were applicable to this same period — some of which are unobtainable today in book form and are in rare

book shelves of the libraries from which they came. It was a real treat for the Corral to see and examine these rare volumes.

Guests included Wally Edkins, a guest of Tad Lonergan, who is Captain of the Orange County Division of the California Highway Patrol. Edmund Tumlinson who is associated with the Orange County Library, a guest of Bill Hendricks. Ed's particular area of interest is stamps, coins, and mollusca. A hearty welcome to both of these guests.



Deputy Sheriff Earl Adams, Mr. Frank, speaker, and Sheriff Alden Miller at Taix Restaurant for March meeting.

—Iron Eyes Cody Photo.

FEBRUARY

The evening of February 10, marked a most interesting and instructive program presented by Westerner Dwight Vance. For years Dwight has had an interest in bronzes and has done considerable research in the field. He began to experiment with the making of molds and casting bronzes himself and has produced some creditable pieces, several of which, he has presented to the Westerners for use on their plaques. Dwight learned the secret of the lost wax process and by patience and diligent effort has been able to master this technique.

Accompanying Dwight's presentation was a tremendous array of bronzes not only from the Vance collection, but other Westerners. It was a memorable occasion made even more significant by the fact that the speaker was one of our own.

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Steamer . . .

shores of this paradise just 21 miles off the Southern California mainland. The year was 1542 and in 1602, Viscaino arrived and gave it the name Santa Caterina. Soon to follow were the vessels of pirates, Chinese slave traders, Yankee fur traders, smugglers and, of course, rum runners. It was in 1863 that General Phineas Banning, the Southwest's stagecoach king, began the operation of the little steamer *Cricket* to the island in irregular service. The first real passenger ship on a regular schedule came in 1880 when Banning introduced the side-wheeler *Amelia*. In 1884, the Wilmington Transportation Co., also a Banning enterprise, was incorporated and under its houseflag a whole fleet of small steamers would find their way into the history and hearts of local residents. Names like *Ferndale*, *Falcon*, *Hattie*, *La Paloma*, *Oleander*, *Hermosa*, and *Warrior* were often heard in pleasant conversation and passenger traffic steadily increased. On July 4, 1902, a new steamer *Hermosa II* made her maiden voyage, an event made spectacular by the burning of the earlier, first *Hermosa*, as she lay in Avalon Bay. An even larger ship, proudly called *Cabrillo*, was placed in service in 1904. She would be around for a long time, too.

When control of Santa Catalina Island passed to Wrigley in 1919, even greater development of the island ensued. A much larger vessel was immediately required and a search was undertaken. The *Virginia*, a former Great Lakes vessel, was found in Boston and navigated to San Pedro via the new Panama Canal. On April 15, 1920, she made her first voyage in trans-channel service as *Avalon* and was very popular because of her size, comfort and speed.

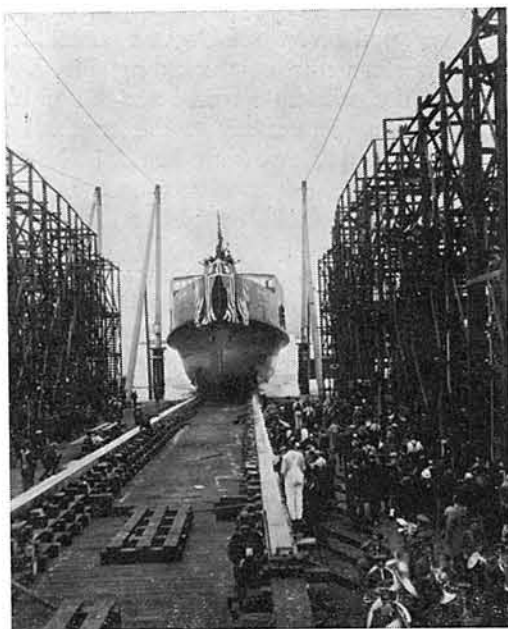
For years Santa Catalina Island had been popularly known as the "Enchanted Isle," but under the Wrigley ownership the mysterious land afloat on the blue sea was publicized as "The Magic Isle" and business boomed as never before.

Avalon and *Cabrillo* operated at full capacity, but could not handle the traffic. *Cabrillo* was a good ship, but too small. Wrigley announced a new ship would be built especially for the Catalina run and plans were made for a new steamer to be the finest of them all. A contest held among

the leading marine architects and shipyards resulted in a vessel designed like no other steamer afloat. Moreover, a local shipyard, the Los Angeles Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. was awarded the construction contract.

On December 26, 1923, Wrigley presided at the keel-laying ceremonies. Just 17 weeks later, on May 3, 1924, she slid down the ways as Miss Marcia A. Patrick christened her *Catalina*. Taken to the fitting-out dock, work was quickly completed for the maiden voyage.

What a great ship she was. From her sharp stem to her graceful, rounded stern she measured 301 feet 7½ inches with a width of 52 feet 1 inch. Of 1,766 gross tons, she could carry 1,950 passengers and a crew of 71 on three passenger decks that boasted of every comfort and facility for the two hour voyage. Two massive, triple expansion, reciprocating steam engines, developing 2,000 indicated horsepower each, enabled her twin screws to drive her at a cruising speed of 15.5 knots. Steam for the main engines and auxiliaries was supplied at a pressure of 225 lbs. per square inch from four, oil fired, Babcock & Wilcox, watertube boilers. Even the great steel rudder was turned by a steam steering-engine which responded to the helmsman's slightest touch.



On May 13, 1924, the S. S. *Catalina* slid down the ways at the Los Angeles Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. yard.

—Todd Shipyard Photo.

Catalina was pure white from her waterline to the bridge, except for the guards which presented a fine black stripe almost her full length. The two tall, graceful masts and the huge funnel were a smart buff with black trim and there was a large, melodious steam whistle of gleaming brass that emitted an endearing tone, along with clouds of billowing steam. The latest in navigating equipment included an electric Sperry gyroscopic compass, along with a powerful wireless radio-transmitter and receiver for added safety. The passenger accommodations were particularly spacious and included a lunch counter with completely equipped galley and a ballroom with a real live orchestra. No one, mercifully, had ever heard of a "juke box," or coffee served from a thermos bottle. Because of Prohibition laws then in effect, there was no bar, but the middle deck was called the Saloon Deck, meaning "parlor," and it contained luxurious leather upholstered settees and chairs. On the Promenade Deck was even a super de-luxe stateroom fitted out for Wrigley's exclusive use when he traveled to and from his impressive Mt. Ada mansion, overlooking Avalon, on the mighty business occasions that symbolized a multi-millionaire of the period.

William Lambie was one of the leading naval and ship designers of that period and submitted plans for the vessel. While he did not win acceptance with his design, he went on to greater achievements, one being the famous Lambie propellers which received worldwide acclaim for efficiency and were later installed on *Catalina*.

Bruce Newby was chosen as her designer and the finished product showed that he had excelled. One of the most unusual and special features of his design had been the removal of all lifeboats and launching gear from the top deck and locating them on the second deck below. This placement served the dual purpose of clearing the top deck of all obstructions so that a clear view could be obtained forward, aft and to seaward by passengers occupying the vast seating and deck space, plus providing the ship with greater stability by shifting the weight of the 20 large steel lifeboats to the lowest possible point. Supposedly, too, they could more easily be boarded and

launched from this location in case of an emergency. Fortunately, this never became necessary.

On June 30, 1924, under command of Captain A. A. Morris, *Catalina* sailed for the first time down the main channel of Los Angeles Harbor with every ship in the harbor saluting her with their whistles and she replying with hers. As she rounded the lighthouse on the end of the breakwater, her full dress flags floating in the breeze, 600 guests and officials enjoyed the full orchestra carried aboard and explored this fabulous new ship that bespoke the fact that it was indeed a "Million Dollar Ferry-ship to Fairyland."

Approaching Avalon many small craft came out to meet this newest and greatest addition to the fleet, the official greeter being the *Blanche W*, a sightseeing vessel that had achieved great fame because of her 40 million candlepower searchlight that caused flying fish to leap out of the sea by the hundreds. Today she had aboard the full Whittier Brass Band and they tootled lustily as *Catalina* tied up to the Steamer Pier on Crescent Avenue at the foot of Metropole Street. The entire town was on hand to do honor to both ship and passengers and from this time on *Catalina* was to be essential to the prosperity and success of the island. Now the new slogan was to be, "Two Ships A Day To The Isle of Play."

Traffic to Catalina Island boomed. All three vessels operated with capacity loads, the *Cabrillo* sailing via the Isthmus (today known as Two Harbors). Many extra sailings were required in addition to the regular schedules.

Since 1905, the Pacific Electric Railway had operated boat trains to dockside with passengers from the inland communities en route to Santa Catalina. Now extra sections of the "Big Red Cars" were running at high speed direct to the new Catalina Terminal in Wilmington. The famous Bird Park was opened and on May 29, 1929 Wrigley celebrated his first ten years of ownership by dedicating the new \$2,000,000 circular Casino, built on Sugar Loaf Point, where it would become Catalina's most famous landmark. Avalon was truly a place where "Every Minute Had Pleasure In It."

(Continued on Next Page)

The Depression caused some temporary slump in business and in 1932, William Wrigley died, leaving further development in the hands of his son, Philip Knight Wrigley, who continued to make improvements. By 1934 the worst was over and traffic was again on the rise. Prices were reasonable and the crowds returned, again taxing the steamer capacity. The slogan was "The Price You Won't Remember — But The Trip You Can't Forget." Then it was forgotten — quickly. It was December 7, 1941.

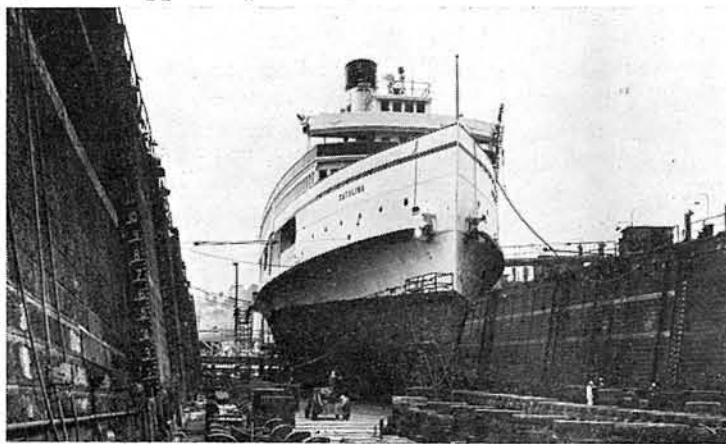
Santa Catalina Island was closed to the public and became a training area for the war effort. The channel was considered highly unsafe for *Catalina* and she was withdrawn from service, along with *Cabrillo* to protect them from possible Japanese torpedos. With hundreds of Merchant Marine and Armed Forces personnel on the island, it was necessary to have a daily steamer to transport and supply them, and to *Avalon* fell the task. Painted war-time gray, ports blacked out and with life rafts slung over her sides, she did a magnificent job. After a short lay-up, both *Catalina* and *Cabrillo* were requisitioned by the government and steamed, under their own power, to San Francisco. There they served throughout the War carrying troops between Fort Mason and Camp Stoneman and other points on the Bay and lower rivers.

Avalon was first to return to civilian service when in 1945 the commercial run was re-established. *Cabrillo* never returned and today, at the honorable age of 67, she slowly rots away in the Upper Napa River,

a ghost of her former beauty. *Catalina* came home in 1946 and was fully restored to her peacetime condition.

But all was not well. People no longer came to "Stay A While at the Magic Isle." There were new places to go. Palm Springs, Las Vegas and other new names were on the lips of travelers who were also clamoring to be shot like food from guns on the new, so-called "air liner" to various destinations at home and abroad. There were other reasons, too. Some simple and some complicated. But "the Magic Isle" could seemingly produce nothing to restore the crowds that once thronged the decks of the big white steamers. Even worse, the ship operation became involved in a series of labor disputes and union-management relations went from bad to terrible with all the incidents common to such conditions. *Avalon* was removed from service and sold in 1960 for scrap. *Catalina* no longer flew the blue and white houseflag of the Wilmington Transportation Co. after all these years. She had been leased to another operator and was run only during the Summer seasons. While no longer permitted to haul mail, freight or express, the cost of operations, none-the-less, continued to rise each year. Passenger fares eventually had to be increased, but it did little to increase revenue and even less to attract new business. Fortunately, many loyal customers continued to sail each summer.

In 1968 *Catalina* experienced her darkest hour. The unending demands of labor caused her owner to place her up for sale and she did not operate at all that year. While the merchants of *Avalon* had the



A 1971 scene of the S. S. *Catalina* in drydock at the place of her birth.

—Donald Duke Photo..



Westerners and members of Pacific Maritime History Society on special cruise of *Catalina* held June 10, 1971. (Front L-R) Lester Glenn Arellanes (author), Everett Hager, Bill Hendricks, George Geiger, Jack Kemble, Hugh Tolford, Carl Dentzel, Lindy Currie, Donald Duke, and Ed Carpenter.

worst year in history, it was rumored that this proud ship had been sold for scrap or for some undisclosed service in Mexico. She was towed from her dock to an anchorage in the outer harbor. All of the so-called "transportation" together could bring nothing approaching the 2,100 persons which *Catalina* was now licensed to carry to Avalon each trip. Perhaps something was learned from this experience, because she resumed her sailings in 1969 and has sailed each summer since.

This year, *Catalina* celebrates 47 years of service. It could well be her last. Not because she is too old, worn out or otherwise unsuited. It would be because of still rising labor costs, forced ever upward by the maritime unions who insist upon a completely unrealistic wage scale and formula for this one-ship operation on a 21 mile run. The same that is applied to operators of deep-sea fleets that sail on the oceans of the world and with the same results; elimination of American flag vessels from the high seas.

Each morning this summer, she'll stand down the harbor, newly painted and spot-

less throughout, sounding that beautiful whistle to signal an oncoming ship. Below decks those same impressive steam engines throb as piston and crank rods flash and whirl, still turning those famous Lambie propellers that speed her along at 15.5 knots. In addition to the gyroscopic compass, there is now a new radar set. The stateroom, once used by Mr. Wrigley, is still luxuriously furnished and used occasionally by VIP's. The tall masts are gone, along with the wireless radio set. In its place is a high-powered radio-telephone that can establish instant voice circuit communication whenever needed. The old life boats have been removed and replaced by the latest type, self-inflating life rafts, which the Coast Guard considers much safer. More deck space was gained thereby, too. Far aft, on the stern, a new Fantail Bar serves the thirsty passengers, while others dance to a small but still "live" orchestra. The "Big Red Cars" run no more, but a giant parking lot is provided for the popular transport to the new Catalina Terminals in San Pedro. Over in the shipyard that gave birth to *Catalina*, William Lambie's son, R. C. "Bob" Lambie, holds a top position with Todd Shipyard, formerly Los Angeles Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., and affectionately supervises some of the care *Catalina* receives on her yearly visits for inspection and overhaul. Shipyard workers are amazed that she is in better shape than some vessels scarcely three years old. Wrigley built his prize ship to last forever.

The important thing is, her new owners want to keep her running as long as she is seaworthy. Already, tourists, steamship buffs and historians are coming from around-the-world to sail on her and feel the roll of the long Pacific swell as *Catalina* rounds the lighthouse as she did that first morning so long ago. They'll know, and so will you, that there is "In All The World No Trip Like This."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Lester Glenn Arellanes, a new corresponding member, is a name well known in the blue book of ship historians. He is a member of the Steamship Historical Society, and a founder of the Pacific Maritime History Society. Commodore Arellanes is currently completing a history of the Los Angeles Steamship Company and welcomes information and illustrations from Westerners.)

In Remembrance

COL. CHARLES HOFFMANN

1891 - 1971

Funeral services were conducted for Westerner Colonel Charles Wentworth Hoffmann, U.S.A. (Retired) April 1, 1971 at All Saints Episcopal Church in Santa Barbara. Interment with full military rites were held the following afternoon at Fort Logan National Military Cemetery at Denver, Colorado.

This past November, Hoffmann suffered a coronary thrombosis, and after some weeks in the hospital, he was released and made satisfactory recovery. Death came at home on the morning of March 29. Dressed to attend the funeral of a friend, Charley sat down in his favorite chair in his study, and remarked to his daughter Patricia, "Isn't this a beautiful day? It is so lovely out there." These were to be his last words, for within minutes life had left the "Old Soldier" at age 79.

Born in Morganton, North Carolina, June 19, 1891, Charley was the son of the Reverend Charles L. and Mary (nee Richardson) Hoffmann. Following his service in the Spanish-American War, the Reverend moved with his family to Natchez, Mississippi; and about two years later on to Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Charley attended the New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell. Before his eighteenth birthday, he helped organize Company B of New Mexico National Guard at Carlsbad, and was appointed as its 1st Sergeant.

Hoffmann worked on ranches as a cowboy; later owned and operated his own ranch; was proprietor of a restaurant; was employed by the U. S. Biological Survey; and as a deputy U. S. Marshal assigned to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In this latter capacity he was on the trail of the alleged murderer of a Navajo Indian girl which led him to Columbus, New Mexico, the day before the well-remembered Pancho Villa raid, later to be wounded in the arm by a Villista bullet. He resigned from the National Guard and enlisted in the regular Army and served under General Pershing in the Punitive Expedition. Upon comple-

tion of this mission, he was mustered out April 6, 1917. That same night the U. S. declared war on Germany, and the following day he re-enlisted in the New Mexico National Guard. He was assigned as 1st Sergeant of the 1st Infantry — New Mexico National Guard.

Transfer was shortly made to Camp Kearney, San Diego, and the Guard was reassigned to the 40th Division. On October 17, 1917, Charley was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. In June 1918, the Division went overseas. By September he was transferred to the 131st M.G. Bn., of the 36th Division.

The Division moved October 8 to the Champagne Sector to relieve the decimated 2nd Division, and went into battle at St. Etienne-a-Arnes. Within less than two hours the Division lost 2,250 men, and had undergone its first contact with gas warfare. Other heavy fighting followed and the Division was in the Argonne when the Armistice was proclaimed.

Hoffmann returned home June 1919, and was mustered out at Fort Bliss, Texas, on July 7. He was admitted to the Veteran's Hospital at Santa Fe, and was there for four years. On discharge from the hospital he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant U.S.A. Reserves.

He traveled to Los Angeles and was married to Miss Geneva Edwards, a native of South Carolina. That same month he was assigned to the 160th Infantry (Los Angeles Own) and early in 1925 promoted to Captain.

In 1936, Charley graduated from the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and from the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1939, reaching the grade of Lieutenant Colonel. During those Los Angeles years he worked up to be chief investigator for the City Attorney's Office.

In January 1941, the 160th Infantry was placed on active status at Camp San Luis Obispo and on June 30, 1942, just 24 years later, Charley again sailed for England. Upon arrival at Liverpool, he hastened to London and was assigned Provost Marshal for that city. In 1943 transfer was ordered to Cheltenham and he took command of the Prisoner of War Camps nearby and in

(Concluded on Page Fourteen)



Someone Counted 29

By E. I. EDWARDS

Deputy Surveyor Henry Washington on May 29, 1855, sat in the shade of a palm tree oasis far out on a desolate spread of unexplored desert. We may reasonably assume he sat in the shade of a palm tree oasis for, in that early day, the oasis provided about the only shade available in all that vast expanse of desert. But whether he chose to sit in the protective shade of a fronded palm tree or relax under a warm spring sun is of little historic importance. Our interest in Washington relates solely to what he wrote on this memorable occasion. For not only did Henry Washington conduct the first official survey in this relatively unknown segment of desert country; he also achieved the distinction of having recorded the first known written description of the oasis. In his field notes of May 29, 1855, he wrote: "From this corner an Indian wigwam (near a spring of good water supposed to be permanent) bears N. 51° W. and a small cluster of cabbage Palmetto bears North 27° West. From the last $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. Post the same Indian wigwam bears North 25° W. and the same cluster of cabbage Palmetto as noted at the last Sec. corner bears N. 25° East."

One gathers from these painfully brief notes that the surveyor cherished no fond affection for the desert. He could have provided us with an historically important description of both desert and oasis as they

appeared in that early day. But he didn't. If ever a man muffed his opportunity, it was Deputy Surveyor Henry Washington. And the age-old oasis was first referred to, in writing, as a "small cluster of cabbage Palmetto."

In what circumstances, then, and from whom, did the oasis first receive the name by which it is known today — the "Twenty-nine (or 29) Palms Oasis?" And when was this name first used to identify it?

The logical inference, of course, is that there are — or at one time were — twenty-nine palm trees in the grove. It is possible, but quite improbable, that at some time during the sixteen-year period between 1856 (when "some 26 fine large Palm trees" were reported) and 1872 (when the name "29 Palms" appeared for perhaps the first time in print) there were, by precise count, twenty-nine palm trees in the oasis. What may be the earliest photograph of the oasis — one taken in 1889 — shows sixteen tall palm trees. A later photograph — taken in 1909 — shows fifteen. Still another — published in a 1919 book — reveals fourteen.¹

Important as these early photographs are, for assisting us in an attempted identification of the remaining original palms, they are not necessarily indicative of the total number of trees in the oasis at any given time. Rarely does a photograph of

(Continued on Next Page)

this oasis depict more than only a portion of the trees in it. The grove stretches over a quarter of a mile, and along an unusually narrow growth margin. Unless provided with special equipment the photographer must sacrifice palms in certain sectors of the grove. Even with a wide angle lens, and photographing at an angle along the length of the tree line, I found it impossible to position every individual tree separate and distinct from the others.

Perhaps the generally accepted belief among the majority of present-day visitors is that the oasis takes its name from the town of Twentynine Palms in which it is located. In actual fact, the very opposite of this theory obtains. The town, and its adjacent desert, take their name from the oasis. Years before there was a town, or even a homesteader's cabin, the oasis bore the name of Twenty-nine (or 29) Palms.

Nor can we extend credit to the Indians for bestowing this unimpressive name upon their lovely oasis. They chose a more picturesque designation. "Mar-rah", they called it; and the word signifies "little springs and much grass." The nearest the white man could get to the Indian pronunciation of the two-syllable word "Mar-rah" was "Mara," or "Maru." Frequently we hear reference made today to the "Oasis of Mara."² Section 33."

Insofar as we can determine, it was not until fifty-one years following Surveyor Washington's visit that the oasis received its first printed description by an eye-witness observer. In 1906 there was published a book that, even today, is paramount in its field — *Wonders of the Colorado Desert*, by George Wharton James. In it we read: "It is a long, wearisome journey from Chuck Warren's well (the present Yucca Valley) to 'Twenty-Nine Palms,' over twenty-two miles of sandy road, and we welcome the sight of those long, slender stems clothed with their mysterious crown of rich, dark-green leaves that denote the end of our day's tramp. . . . A number of the palms have been cut down, but the old name remains and doubtless will, even though every palm disappear."

It should be noted that the two items of historic significance are couched neatly in this early account by James, and it shall be our purpose briefly to explore them.

First. By 1906 the name "Twenty-Nine Palms" had become definitely established and for a considerable period of time also, judging by James' comment — "the *old* name still remains." At what time, during the fifty-one years' interim between Washington's survey and James' book, did the name originate? And by whom? According to James, it was an "old name" in 1906, well known and uniformly applied.

Of one fact we may quite certain. The name did not exist in 1855 when Washington made his survey. Nor, in the absence of supporting evidence, may we infer that he supplied the name; although some writers have inadvertently given him credit for doing so. It must be remembered that the only name he could offer was "a small cluster of cabbage Palmette." Not only did he neglect to venture a name for the oasis; he failed to mention the number of trees in it. Historically, he contributed nothing, either by way of description or by casual comment. He didn't see an inviting oasis of beautiful palm trees standing in majestic isolation far out on a barren desert. He saw only "a small cluster of cabbage Palmetto."³

Fortunately, this penchant for brevity did not altogether characterize the findings of that other surveyor — A. P. Green — who came to the oasis during the following year of 1856. His powers of observation were more acutely developed, enabling him to elevate his vision above the prosaic concept of "cabbage Palmetto." He saw palm trees; and, to an extent, was impressed by their beauty. In his survey notes of March 1, 1856, he wrote: "There are some 26 fine large Palm trees in Section 33 from which the Springs take their name, 'Palm Springs'. Near the springs the land has the appearance of having been cultivated by the Indians. There are a few Indians huts in Section 33."

Of purely collateral interest is Surveyor Green's chance remark that our oasis was once known as "Palm Springs"; for surely no distinction attaches to this grossly over-worked name. It has been applied indiscriminately to several other oases in California. To a tired and thirsty wanderer, trudging over hot desert sands, a grove of beckoning palm trees clustered about springs of fresh water would quite naturally suggest the name — *Palm Springs*. Of

more than passing interest, however, is the fact that the glorified pleasure resort, sprawled rakishly at the foot of San Jacinto and presently claiming the distinction of being the proud possessor of this often-applied name, certainly has no prior right to it. Far back in 1856, when this now plush community answered to the name of *Agua Caliente*, and was perhaps thankful for such dubious distinction, the picturesque Twenty-nine Palms oasis was known as *Palm Springs*. And, for that matter, so was a little oasis located midway along the Carrizo Corridor in what is now San Diego County. This particular oasis, incidentally, continues to be known by this name. And rightly so. It was called *Palm Springs* as long ago as January, 1847; and it is perhaps the first palm tree oasis in California ever to have been discovered, and described in writing, by a white man.⁴

Seventeen years following Surveyor Washington's historically inarticulate visit, there is record of the name "29 Palms" appearing for perhaps the first time in print. In 1872 this name is said to have been applied in describing a mining claim, by two gentlemen known as McKenzie and Germain. On May 31, 1873, and again on July 19, of the same year, notices appeared in the San Bernardino *Guardian* of the commencement of mining operations by Frink, Noble, Voshey, and others "near Twenty-nine Palms," and "In the Twenty-nine Palms District." From 1873 to 1888 there may be found occasional records of mining claims and land claims employing, variously, such designations as "Palms District," "Twenty nine Palms Springs," "29 Palm Springs," "Twenty nine Palms," "29 Palms," and so on.

Lindley and Widney in their guide book *California and the South*, published in 1888, briefly mention the "Twenty-nine Palms District," located "east of Bear Valley."

In 1890 the State Mineralogist published his annual report for 1889. In it he makes reference to a mining claim in the "Twenty-nine Palms District."

In 1892, when the pioneer Frank Sabathe journeyed to this desert, we again find reference to "29 Palms." The figure "29" was spelled out many years later when the post office came to the newly-formed village located a short distance from the oasis.

So the origin of the name "Twenty-nine Palms," as applied to this northerly oasis, remains unknown. No authentic record tells of its christening, nor reveals the identity of the person or persons who first named it. It appears reasonable to believe that someone, sometime, varied the monotony of his desert pilgrimage by attempting to count the palm trees growing in the oasis, and finally succeeded in coming up with the number 29. It is understandable that no one bothered to challenge his count. Surveyor Green, back in 1856, was himself a bit uncertain as to the exact number. He was content to say there were "some 26 fine large palm trees," and let it go at that. And little wonder. There are many shapes and sizes of palm trees scattered over the oasis today and, in all probability, this was true in 1856.

Sometime between the years 1856 and 1872 a daring soul announced there were 29 palm trees. He stuck to this figure with determined persistence, eventually inducing others to accept his count, doubtless because it required less effort to accept his count than to attempt one of their own. So then and there they bestowed upon the oasis the name that "still reminds and doubtless will, even though every palm disappear."

Second. James makes it clear there were not 29 of the original palms in the oasis in 1906, when he states: "A number of the palms have been cut down." By whom, we wonder. Certainly we know of an individual who cut down some of them. An early prospector by the name of Wilson (variously referred to as Quartz, Charley, Johnny, and Chuckwalla) cut several to construct the framework of his *arastra*. This was a device used to pulverize gold ore. James mentions that Wilson showed him the remains of this *arastra* in 1906.

It may be that Indians (who lived off and on at the oasis until 1913) burned a few of these trees for ceremonial purposes. The late Edwin Corle, in his *Desert Country*, expresses some belief in this theory. Personally, I think the Indians had better sense. They knew how to preserve their wilderness.

In any event, it must be emphasized that all the palms would probably have disappeared years ago had the oasis been located

on one of the recognized routes of desert travel to California. Indeed, it is little short of a miracle that any of them survived the ravages of time — and man.

The oasis, located only a mile distant from the central business section of the desert town of Twentynine Palms, is near the entrance to — and is itself a part of — the increasingly popular Joshua Tree National Monument. The Monument headquarters and museum are located here. Trapped by an underground fault, some of the percolating waters from the Pinto Mountains at the South come to, or near, the surface for a distance of about three-quarters of a mile in a narrow line extending west to east, thus providing life and beauty in the heart of what was once a desolate spread of barren desert. At the westerly end of the oasis, where the 29 Palms Inn now stands, the Indians formerly lived and grew their small crops. Here also they planted cottonwoods and willows. At the east end grow the palms of the Government-owned oasis; and here, too, may be found the cottonwoods said to have been planted in 1888. We know the cottonwoods did not originally grow here, for in that early photograph of 1889 there is none showing.

Until recent years an old, historic adobe building stood at the extreme east end of the line of palm trees. Conflicting dates are given as to the year of its construction, these ranging from 1878 to 1900; but the late Wm. McHaney, the oldest old-timer, set the date as 1888, and names the builders as Billy Neaves and Jack Rankin. The "Old Adobe" served in many capacities — dwelling, hotel, saloon, dental office, and bunk house for all passers by. The historic old building was destroyed several years ago when it became a safety hazard. It deserved better treatment.⁵

A pleasant diversion for the researcher is to attempt identification of the remaining *original* palm trees or, more accurately, of those that stood in the grove when Henry Washington gave us our first written account of it in 1855. While this cannot be determined with absolute accuracy, it is possible to identify a few of the very old palm trees now living with trees showing in the 1909 and even the 1889 photos. And although identification beyond the 1889

photo is essentially conjectural, we are not entirely without guide lines. In our own research my friend, Dr. Melvin Gainer, and I have endeavored to photograph the grove during recent weeks from precisely the same positions and angles of the many photographs we had taken in the late 1930s and during the 1940s and 1950s. If little or no change has asserted itself over the past thirty-five or forty years of our own personal observation, then we can be reasonably certain that no essential change occurred in the trees during the thirty-four year period between the earliest known photograph of 1889 and the year 1855 when the trees were initially discovered.

In our study of the *Washingtonia* palms presently found in the grove, it has proven helpful to consider them under three major age classifications. First, there are the young trees which, obviously, are of no concern to us in our immediate study. Second, there are those belonging in the intermediate age group. These are all beautiful trees, with luxuriant live frondage covering the entire upper third, or even the upper half, of the palm; and with the skirting of dead fronds bulging out from the tree, sometimes the entire distance to the ground. These palms display a substantial trunk girth wherever the bare trunk is visible and some of them are as tall, or nearly as tall, as the very old trees. These intermediate-age trees, like the very young ones, have no direct bearing upon our study.

Our effort to determine the trees presently growing in the oasis that were also there in 1855, concerns itself with the third age group — the "ancient ones." These are readily distinguishable in almost every instance. Mainly, they are distinctive because of their height. These are the tall trees and they usually stand conspicuously above the others in the grove. Another characteristic, common to all of them, is the relatively narrow crown of live green fronds with a correspondingly narrow fringes of dead frondage protruding from underneath it. The long stems, from ground to fronds, are barren of all foliage. The stems appear almost completely smooth in their nudity, lending the impression that they might well be lifeless were it not for the beautiful green crown they so proudly wear.

It should be mentioned that the Park

Service is also of the considered opinion that these trees, or some of them at any rate, knew existence when Henry Washington first discovered the grove. How old they really are, one cannot determine; for the Washingtonias have no annual rings by which age can be computed. We can only surmise how very ancient they surely must be.

A careful count revealed twelve of the old trees in the oasis, plus the dead and frondless trunk of another still standing upright. We also noted the prostrate trunks of two of the old trees, both fairly well preserved and measuring — by estimate — thirty-five or forty feet. The bottom and top of each appeared to have been cut off. A few years ago a sizeable palm stump was visible in the grove, but this could not be located on our most recent visits. The Park Service informed us this had been removed.

Our count also disclosed fifteen trees of the intermediate-age group within the walled boundaries of the park area. In other words, twenty-eight trees (including the upright dead trunk) are clearly visible in the oasis, although some of the intermediate-age group growing on lower elevations are to be seen only upon a closer approach to the west end of the grove. The Park Service stated that, as of January 1971, there was a total of forty-four palm trees — old, intermediate-age, and young — in the oasis.

By a detailed and painstaking comparison of a very considerable number of photographs dating back over the years, we could identify most of the twelve old trees that continue to flourish. That only twelve live trees remain today of the "some 26 fine large Palm trees" that grew there in 1856 is understandable. We can account for at least an indeterminate number of the fourteen that are missing. Visible is the dead trunk of one, still standing bravely in the grove, and the prostrate trunks of two others. We know of the recent existence of the stump of one; and we are not forgetting that Quartz Wilson cut down several for his arastra. No doubt others helped themselves just as freely over the years gone by.

Among the trees in the oasis are two magnificent palms growing close together

and removed some little distance from the others. They remind one of the sentinels, standing guard at the outskirts of the main encampment. In a sense they are just that — sentinel palms standing guard, not over the other trees in the oasis but over a lonely grave. It is the grave of a girl who, in the early days of this desert (as we measure time by the white man's knowledge of a thing), came into the region with her mother in the forlorn hope of improving her health. This was in the year 1903. Only a few Indians and an occasional prospector passed over this relatively unknown desert when Mrs. Whallen, the mother, made her toilsome journey. She was traveling by horse-drawn freight wagon to accept employment far out in the vicinity of the Dale mines. Maria Eleanor, the daughter, was only eighteen. The girl passed away there at the age-old oasis. The Mexican freighter prepared a grave for her sick little body at the foot of the two ancient palm trees that stand apart, over toward the east end of the grove. These sentinel palms still keep their silent vigil; and the once lonely grave now tends to hallow the place.

Thus we have the story of the 29 Palms oasis, and of the mystery that enshrouds its naming. The appearance of a secluded desert oasis with its retinue of stately palm trees seldom fails to evoke in the mind and heart of an attuned desert lover a meditative sense of awe and wonder. Most of our remaining oases are hidden in obscure mountain canyons. The grove at the 29 Palm oasis, said to be the most northerly of all the California oases, is of singular beauty and appeal in its splendid isolation far out on the open face of the desert. From time immemorial the weary, thirsty traveler has beheld from a distance these venerable palm trees with a surge of gladness and relief. They have given him welcome assurance of water and shade and rest.

1. *California Desert Trails*, by J. Smeaton Chase.

2. We have this on the authority of the late Maude Carrico Russell, brilliant student of Indian affairs and customs, who first came to the desert in 1909.

3. Interesting, in this connection, is the statement of Clara D. True, Agent for the Indians living at the oasis in 1908-1910. Says Miss True: "I went to Los Angeles and got the field notes of the
(Continued on Next Page)

very early survey made by Colonel Washington. We were never able to verify his claim of making a survey. The notes did not fit anything we were able to find. I came to the conclusion that he made the notes from information second hand."

4. Pedro Fages, in April of 1782. See Edwards, *Lost Oases Along the Carrizo*.

5. Significantly, the 1889 photo does not show the "Old Adobe" although the site of the building is clearly shown in the photograph.

Monthly Roundup . . .



Former Sheriff Ernie Howard, Deputy Sheriff Earl Adams, speaker Dwight Vance, and Sheriff Alden Miller at February meeting.

—Iron Eyes Cody Photo.

MARCH

Oliver W. Frank, a full blooded Nez Perce Indian, the Grand Nephew of Chief Joseph, was our speaker for March 10. In his introduction to this fascinating speaker who was wearing Chief Joseph's own neck ornament which was a beautiful piece of art. Westerner Al Hammond mentioned that Corresponding Member Frank had served on the tribal council for two terms and was one of the few people who spoke the native tongue fluently. He mentioned that Frank previously worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and at times became somewhat disillusioned with their policies. Frank grew up in Idaho and now lives in Los Angeles and works for the National Youth Opportunities Board.

During Frank's early life on the reservation he came under the influence of a Presbyterian Minister. This Presbyterian influence was noticeable in his presentation — it was almost as if one was sitting in church. Frank ended his most moving discourse by singing a hymn in his native tongue, the lyrics of which none of us could understand but whose tune was that old

Bible hymn *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*.

Deputy Sheriff, Earl Adams, made some very cogent remarks at the end of the presentation — asking us whether or not the same fate that overtook the Indian civilization over a century ago — is going to overtake us in the future?

The art display was prepared again in part by Westerner Tom MacNeil and Allen Woollett. Allen brought some beautiful watercolor drawings of the current motion picture *Little Big Man*. Allen's sister, Dorothy Jenkins, is the artist who did all of this background work for the film.

It is of real interest that this meeting had the largest attendance with 95 Members and Corresponding Members present. There is no question that they came to hear Oliver Frank and take home his message about the Nez Perce.

Guests of the meeting included Gil Di-benedetto who is an engineer with Northrup Corporation and was one of the powers behind the Mariner probe. Old timer, Jim Fasero, was also present and it was good to have him back after his serious illness. Hank Clifford brought as his guest Milford Chandler, whose interest is Indians. Al Hammond brought two special guests, one was Bob McKenzie, a full blooded Kiowa, previous paratrooper, and now working with the OEO. Al also introduced Reynolds Howe, a Sioux, whose grandmother was a witness at the Wounded Knee Massacre. Reynolds has a "Scalpin Tepee" where hair cuts are provided! We welcome you gentlemen as guests of the Corral.

Hoffmann . . .

Ayr, Scotland, the home of Bobby Burns.

Shortly after D-Day, Charley was landed on Omaha Beach, and was placed in command of the Prisoner of War Camp under British command at the time.

During the Battle of the Bulge, Charley's command was trapped and ordered to take the prisoners off the hands of the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne, Belgium. Charley was then placed in command of a Corporate Division as a line officer.

At the conclusion of World War II he was ordered to clear up the black market

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operations in Europe, principally at Le Havre and Marseilles, and was placed in charge of a prison for U. S. Military offenders at Courances, 30 miles from Paris. He finally returned home in 1946 to Claremont for Christmas.

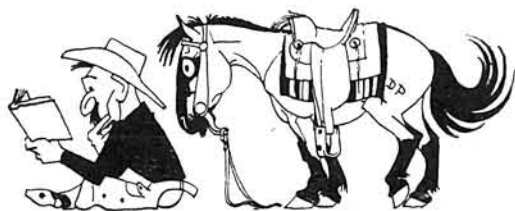
Until August 12, 1948, Charley was in charge of Army and Air Force Recruitment for Imperial and San Diego counties. Up for promotion, he failed the physical and retirement was ordered due to physical disability.

Hoffmann returned to the City Attorney's Office for nearly two years — enrolled for three semesters at Claremont Men's College in the History Section, and then he and Miss Geneva went to Morelia, Michoacan. He became a student of the Spanish language, Mexican History, and expressed an interest in the history of the Purepecha Indians.

Prior to World War II, Hoffmann had been president of the Host Club-Los Angeles, Lions International. He became the recipient of the Gold Card, his was No. 5. He was a 51 year member of Eddy Lodge No. 21, F. & A. M., Carlsbad, New Mexico.

In 1956 Charley became a member of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners, and in 1958 was made Deputy Sheriff. Even after the home in Claremont was sold in 1959, and a new home was built in Montecito near Santa Barbara, the monthly Westerner meetings were seldom missed.

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DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

THE EVERGREEN FLEET: A Pictorial History of Washington State Ferries, by Harre Demoro. San Marino: Golden West Books. Royal octavo; 136 pp.; 270 illustrations; art

jacket in color; bibliography; index. Price \$10.

Those of us who are old enough to nostalgically remember the chugging, moaning ferry fleet of San Francisco Bay, or who, perchance, may have experienced the leisured luxury of breakfasting aboard a moving restaurant as the great ships glided between Oakland or Sausalito and San Francisco's busy Ferry Terminal, will claim this new book as their own. The long-span Bay bridges wiped out the ferry system of San Francisco and her sister cities. The bridges also wiped out a way of life that is still remembered with an ache in the heart.

The ferry system of Puget Sound is apt to sustain a greater longevity, in that it is going to be extremely difficult to span the watery expanses of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca with construction steel. The airplane, and, more lately, the helicopter are nibbling away at the watery route, but, Washington State, God be thanked, recognizes the fact that the ferry ship is apt to be a matter of life for some time to come, and have had the courage to upgrade its great fleet with modern superferries such as the *Hyak*, *Elwha*, *Kaleetan*, and *Yakima*. These traverse the Sound's wide green expanse at more than twenty knots speed. Many of the graceful old craft who once glided back and forth across San Francisco Bay, have been moved up to Puget Sound, to augment the Evergreen Fleet. These ships have been given new names, and unbelievably refurbished to end out their years in beauty and service.

Here is one place in this world where you can still drive your car aboard a great vessel, and eat food, while still traversing an expanse of water and green forests in a setting of such beauty as to grip the throat and mist the eye. On Puget Sound is the last moaning sound of the mighty ferries.

The battle to keep them running is a costly, losing one. Go to Seattle or Tacoma — ride them while you can. No fast traverse by bridge or plane will ever answer for the loss, when the end does come.

In the meantime get your hands on *The Evergreen Fleet*. There will never be another book like it. Its hundreds of dramatic

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photos, its illuminating text, its deep historical perspective, makes this book the testament of an unforgettable era. Its craftsmanship, feel, and great beauty, make it a volume that belongs in every Westerner's library.

— PAUL BAILEY.



GHOST DANCE MESSIAH by Paul Bailey, Westernlore Press, 206 pages, 1970, cloth, \$6.95.

Our own Paul Bailey has written another book, not that there is anything unusual about that since Pablo has written fourteen others in the last twenty-five years, but his latest book is about an Indian. It is the true story of Wovoka, a Paiute who thought he was Jesus and preached a gospel of love and harmony between all mankind, Indians and whites. His message of fellowship was distorted by other Natives to a point that the white man believed that the Indians were in revolt. Tragedy resulted. The story is told with warmth and understanding and is a real addition to Western Americana.

— DON M.



THROW HIS SADDLE OUT By Charles G. Newcomb, 246 pages. Northland Press, cloth, \$8.50.

Throw His Saddle Out is, I am confident, just the sort of book that most Westerners will eat up.

Eighty-nine year old Charles Newcomb began his apprenticeship as an Indian trader at Guam near Coolidge, New Mexico. From there he went on and up to Crystal and Naschiti and many another trading post in the Navajo country.

Although written as a novel, a great deal of *Throw His Saddle Out* would seem to be biographical — just how much, it is difficult to tell. Certainly only a trader who had been long in the business could have collected the number of tales, both amusing and otherwise, that make up the major part of the book. Considering Newcomb's excellent reputation we presume that his choice of a title for the book came from experiences other than his own.

Many of his accounts of the Navajo seem to have been included to disillusion

our romantic "hippie" Indian lovers of today, for their stressing, so much of the decidedly unromantic side of Navajo life as it was during the author's early days as a trader.

The jacket blurb of ex-Governor E. L. Mechem of New Mexico states that Charles Newcomb, "has been one of the strongest forces for development and improvement of the Navajo people." In reading his book it is difficult to see that this could be true if it is, as we so strongly suspect, autobiographical.

"Never give a sucker an even break," seems to have been the rule of the game for the many traders Newcomb depicts and the suckers were, of course, the Navajo.

It is astonishing that in going to such lengths to stress the ugly and seamy side of Navajo life, and that of the white trader a lot of the time, too, Newcomb fails to compensate by giving any account of their many cultural assets. Surely he must have been a spectator at some of their healing ceremonies and witnessed the making of their unique sand-paintings. He must have attended some of their great "Chants" such as the Mountain Top Way or Yeibichai. Despite in all his years in the spectacular Navajo country he has not written a word of its majesty in his book.

Charles Newcomb is a good story-teller, why he has attempted to write a novel, rather than a straight-forward factual account of his life as a trader, is a puzzler.

Throw His Saddle Out is illustrated with a series of black and white drawings by Robert Jackson and as usual Northland Press has done a most attractive job of book production.

— TAD LONERGAN.

Hoffmann...

He is survived by Geneva Edwards Hoffmann, daughter Patricia, and a son Charles Wells Hoffmann of Denver, Colorado.

At the suggestion of the family, those who so desire may make a memorial contribution to the Publishing Fund of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners in the memory of Charles Wentworth Hoffmann.

— HARVEY E. STARR.