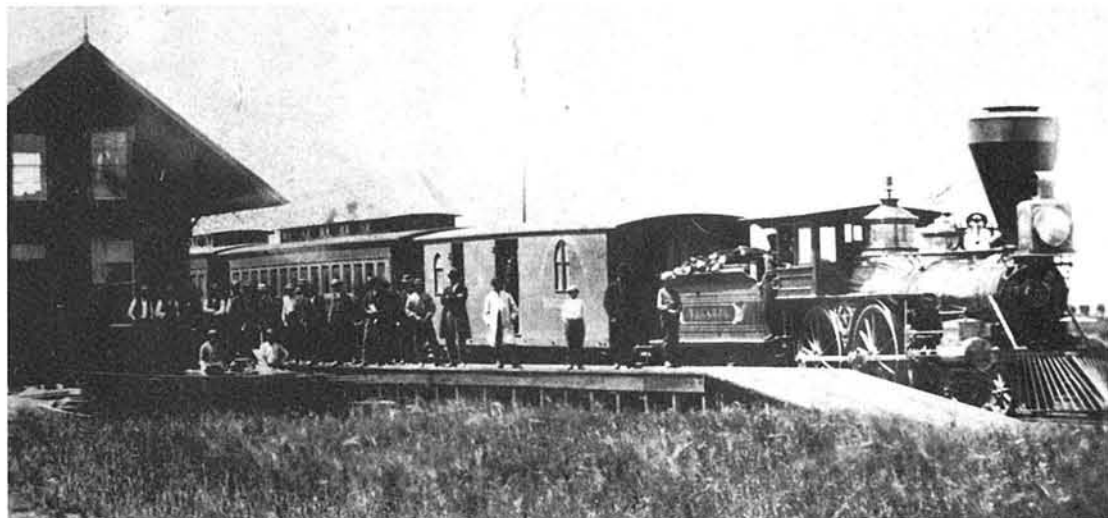




SEPTEMBER 1975

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 119



California Pacific train at Woodland in 1871. — GERALD M. BEST COLLECTION.

THE SHORT-LIVED VALLEJO RAILROAD

By WILBUR HOFFMAN

During California's gold rush era, Marysville was the state's third largest city in population and trade. Situated at the confluence of the Feather and Yuba Rivers, she maintained lucrative trade with the Sierra Nevada gold mining camps and towns. To obtain supplies for this trade, Marysville merchants were dependent on water transport from San Francisco and Sacramento. Steamers hauled these supplies from San Francisco to Sacramento on the Sacramento River, and on the Feather River between Sacramento and Marysville.

After the formation of the California Steam Navigation Company in 1851, the company gradually drove competition off the Feather River by outright purchase of opposition steamers or by bankrupting their owners. By the late 1850's, the company was in virtual control of shipping on the Feather. Freight rates were then relatively high, but when an occasional opposition steamer ran, rates were lowered — sometimes by one-half to two-thirds. High freight rates on the Feather caused Marysville merchants to lose mountain

(Continued on Page Four)

The Branding Iron

THE WESTERNERS
LOS ANGELES CORRAL

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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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Los Angeles Corral



THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

JULY

Movie historian, Charles G. Clarke, is no stranger to the film industry of Southern California and Hollywood. He spent a good portion of his working career as one of the industry's top cameramen. For nearly an hour Clarke held his audience while he related some of the early beginnings of the film industry, and personalities of the silent screen.

AUGUST

The August program lacked only the ticker-tape parade as Eddie Edwards came through the door. The walls were hung with banners and signs like Lindbergh were returning from his famous trans-Atlantic flight. Paul Bailey introduced Edwards to the Corral and was so excited he nearly pushed the podium off the head table.

Edwards, a former Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral and ex-Brand Book Editor as well, told about his thoughts on "The Old Home Town." In a bit of reminiscent moments he returned to his Idaho home

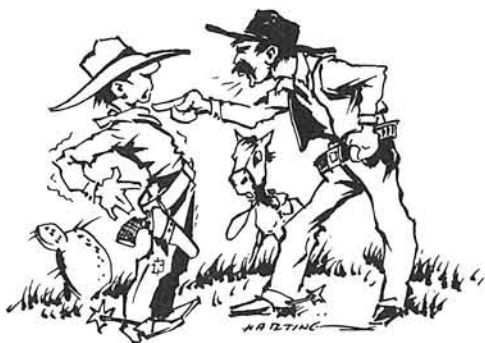


Pioneer members of the Los Angeles Corral gather around the head table for this portrait during the August meeting which honored former Sheriff Eddie Edwards.

— IRON EYES CODY PHOTOGRAPH.

town—it just was not the same. He read one of his stories entitled “The Lonely Ghost” in which he recalled his old school days and how nothing was left of the old structure except the walls. He also read a story about trying to find his father’s grave in the old graveyard, etc.

In appreciation for all his labors over the years in behalf of the Corral, Edwards was presented a “Certificate of Appreciation” by Sheriff Ray Billington.



The Foreman Sez . . .

For several years now the Westerners International has issued a news quarterly entitled *The Buckskin Bulletin*. Copies have been passed out to those attending meetings as they were issued. Due to increased costs, and some Active and Associate Members not getting a copy, *The Buckskin Bulletin* will be mailed to this group as part of membership in the Los Angeles Corral.

Corresponding members wishing copies should obtain their own personal subscription by sending \$2.50 to Westerners International, P.O. Box 3941—University Station, Tucson, Arizona 85717.

Corresponding Members Welcomed by Corral

The Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners extends the hand of friendship to the following new Corresponding Members.

They are: William W. Escherich, Pasadena; Bill Lorenz, Long Beach; and Charles W. Wise of Los Angeles.



Corral Chips

The Printer, a monthly journal devoted to covering news of the printing trade, features an article on C.M. Dick Yale entitled “The Richard B. Yale Collection of Types.”

Westerner artists Andy Dagosta and C.M. Joe O'Malley have their work displayed at an art show held on the grounds of Rancho Los Cerritos in Long Beach. Incidentally, Joe has been elected president of the group known as the Artists of the Southwest.

The annual Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada, finds Tony Lehman whooping it up at the ten full days of rodeo and old-fashioned chuckwagon races, with a subsequent sidetrip to Banff National Park. Back on the home front, he rides on his new Appaloosa with the San Dimas Posse of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office in the opening day parade at the L. A. County Fair.

Westerners were abundantly present at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Conference of California Historical Societies. Doyce Nunis spoke at one of their dinner meetings on the subject “Alta California During the American Revolution,” while Clifford Drury and Associate Member John Caughey teamed up as participants in a panel discussion devoted to “The Art of Writing Local History and Biography.” Others who attended the three day affair included Dutch Holland, Sid Platford, Dwight Cushman, and Henry Welcome, along with the following Corresponding Members: Max Johnson, Jack McCaskill, Frank Newton, Jr., Mrs. M. R. Harrington, Peg Cassidy, Billie Robinson, Victor Plukas, and R. Coke Wood, who

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

Vallejo Railroad . . .

business to their Sacramento competitors.

Branding the steamer company as that "monstrous, corrupt, soulless monopoly," Marysville, therefore, agitated for a railroad to the San Francisco Bay area to compete with the California Steam Navigation Company. One terminal point on San Francisco Bay under consideration was Vallejo.

The California Pacific Railroad was organized January 10, 1865, to construct a railroad from Vallejo to Sacramento. Knights Landing on the Sacramento River twenty-two miles from Marysville was a planned station en route. The California Pacific had no funds nor apparently any plans to build a branch line from Knights Landing to Marysville. But, sensing that here was an opportunity to realize their cherished dream of a railroad to San Francisco Bay, business men of Marysville who had in 1857 organized the Marysville-San Francisco Railroad again agitated for tracks from Marysville to Knights Landing to meet the California Pacific at that point. Yuba County (the county in which Marysville is located) agreed to issue \$200,000 in bonds to help finance the Marysville-San Francisco Railroad, and citizens of Marysville agreed to contribute \$50,000. Solano County also issued bonds.

Several attempts had been made to lay right-of-way, but inadequate financing halted construction. Yuba County had issued only \$100,000 of the bonds, refusing to issue the remaining \$100,000 until the road had been constructed to Marysville. Finally in the late 1860's, as the Central Pacific's subsidiary, the California & Oregon Railroad, was building toward Marysville, the California Pacific, in order to compete with the Central Pacific, agreed to lay tracks from Knights Landing to Marysville. The California Pacific apparently thought that Yuba County would provide the railroad with the remaining unissued bonds.

According to Marysville newspapers, individuals of that city had acquired and owned the right-of-way through Sutter County where most of the twenty-two miles of the proposed railroad would run, and had supplied most of the rails. Evidently the newspaper's claim is correct

since the records of Sutter County indicate that no railroad company had ever been deeded land in that county to be used as a right-of-way to Knights Landing.

By May 1869, the California Pacific Railroad, now commonly called the Vallejo road, had laid rails to Knights Landing and proceeded to bridge the Sacramento River and lay tracks across Sutter County with Marysville as its destination. (The California Pacific had already completed its right-of-way into Sacramento.) The *Marysville Daily Appeal* now enthusiastically proclaimed:

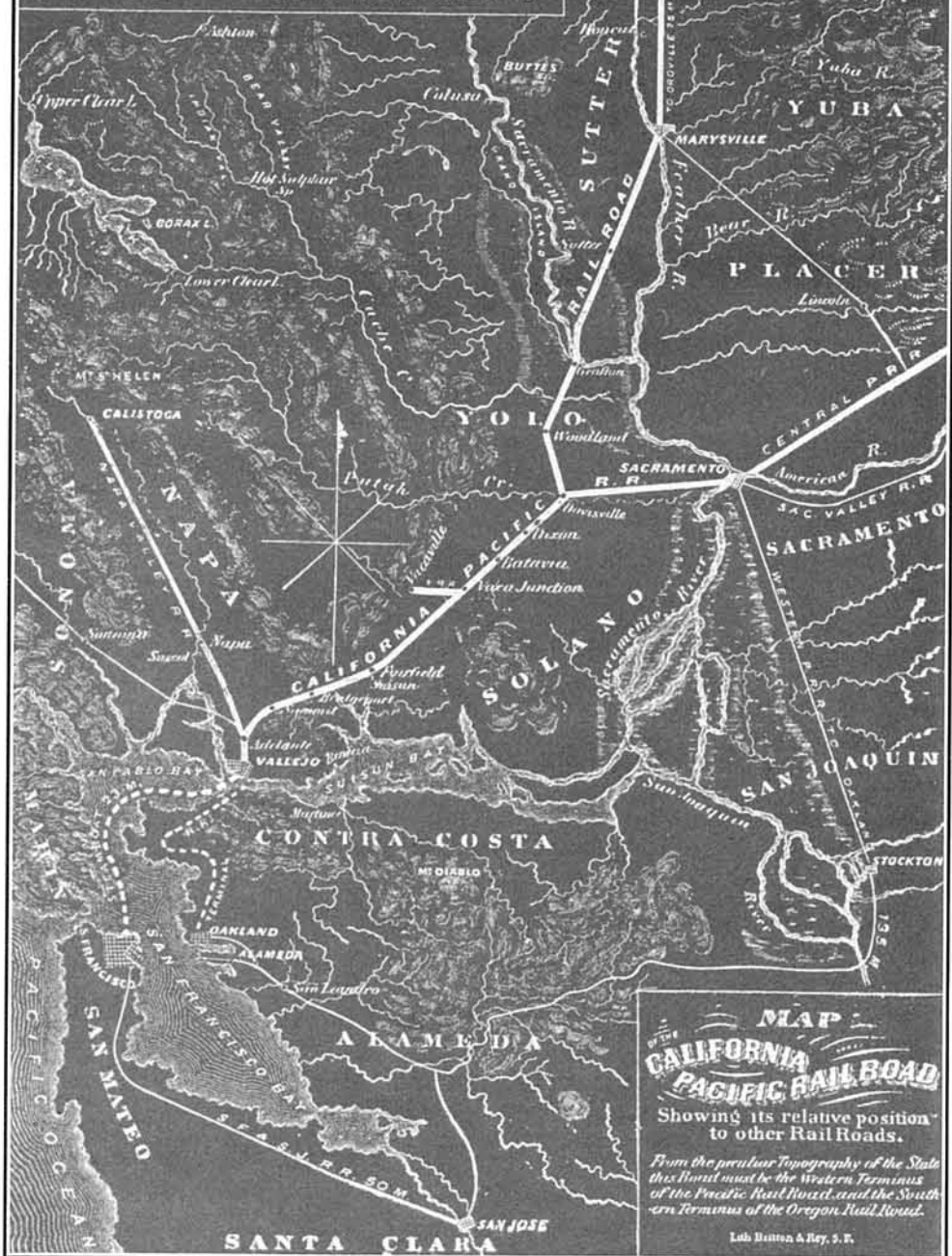
In a few weeks the thunder of an approaching train will electrify our people and stimulate them to renewed energy. Still upward! And onward! the watchword will be . . . then it will prevent its people from being longer held with their noses to the grindstone by the Navigation Company and by a soulless, rotten and corrupt railroad monopoly, the Stanford and Crocker monopoly.

The Central Pacific, through its subsidiary the California & Oregon, had already laid tracks to Marysville from Sacramento, hence the reference in the above quotation regarding the Stanford and Crocker monopoly.

By November 1869, rails had been laid to within five miles of Yuba City. Three hundred Chinese and one hundred and eighty teams were pushing the right-of-way three quarters of a mile a day nearer to Marysville. Stagecoaches now left Marysville at 9:30 a.m. daily to the Vallejo road terminus where passengers could board trains for San Francisco. This route was two hours faster to San Francisco than by the California & Oregon via Sacramento.

On November 26 the Vallejo road had been completed to Yuba City. Since there was no turntable, the locomotives had to run backwards in one direction. Tickets could be purchased in Yuba City at the store of Garrett and Marcuse and apparently passengers boarded trains near the store. From Yuba City, the railroad hauled passengers and freight by stagecoach and wagons over the wooden bridge to Marysville. This bridge across the Feather River was built and controlled by Sutter County, that charged tolls for its use.

Distances from San Francisco.		
BY WATER.		
To Vallejo	.....	MILES. 23
Sacramento	.....	125
Marysville	.....	190
BY RAIL ROAD.		
From Vallejo to Sacramento	.....	60
Vallejo to Marysville	.....	86
Vallejo to Colusa	.....	42
Sacramento via C.P.R.R. to N.Y.	.....	3000
Marysville to Oroville	.....	30
From San Francisco to San Jose	.....	50
Stockton	.....	125
Sacramento	.....	175
Via Oakland to Sacramento	.....	135
From SAN FRANCISCO via VALLEJO to Sacramento	.....	83



The Vallejo road, meanwhile, had commenced building its own bridge over the Feather River. Construction of this bridge led to a strange confrontation between the city of Marysville and the California Pacific (Vallejo) Railroad that the *Marysville Daily Appeal* labeled the Railroad Embankment War. Apparently to save the cost of pile driving, the Vallejo road proposed to erect a sand embankment about six hundred feet long instead of a trestle across the river bottoms from the bridge that spanned the stream to the levee on the Marysville side. This embankment was vehemently opposed by Marysville and also by the Yuba City *Sutter County Banner*.

The mayor of Marysville and a civil engineer had examined the construction of the embankment and concluded that in the event of high water on the Feather (an ever threatening danger), the embankment would act as a dam increasing pressure on the Marysville levee upstream from the embankment. Since the Yuba City levee was deemed stronger than the Marysville levee, the mayor and engineer feared that this increased pressure would wash out the Marysville levee. Consequently, in October 1869, the Marysville City Marshal ordered construction of the embankment suspended.

The Vallejo road retaliated by threatening not to extend its line to Marysville but to make Yuba City its terminus. The *Appeal* bluntly replied that if that was the attitude of the railroad, that was fine; that Marysville had one railroad connection with San Francisco and also had steamer service to that city. The *Appeal* also said that these competitive services would suffice; that the Vallejo would not be missed; and that the newspaper was interested only in what was right for Marysville. The railroad then cancelled its advertising contract with the *Appeal*.

An impasse now existed between the railroad and Marysville until February 1870, when the railroad decided to defy the city and began constructing the embankment. Marysville immediately took action. Armed with a court order, the mayor, a city councilman, and several policemen, along with workers, teams and scrapers, descended upon the construction site. Quickly Marysville workmen pro-

ceeded to tear down the embankment with their teams and scrapers as fast as railroad workers raised it. Marysville officials charged that the railroad was trespassing and violating an injunction to halt construction.

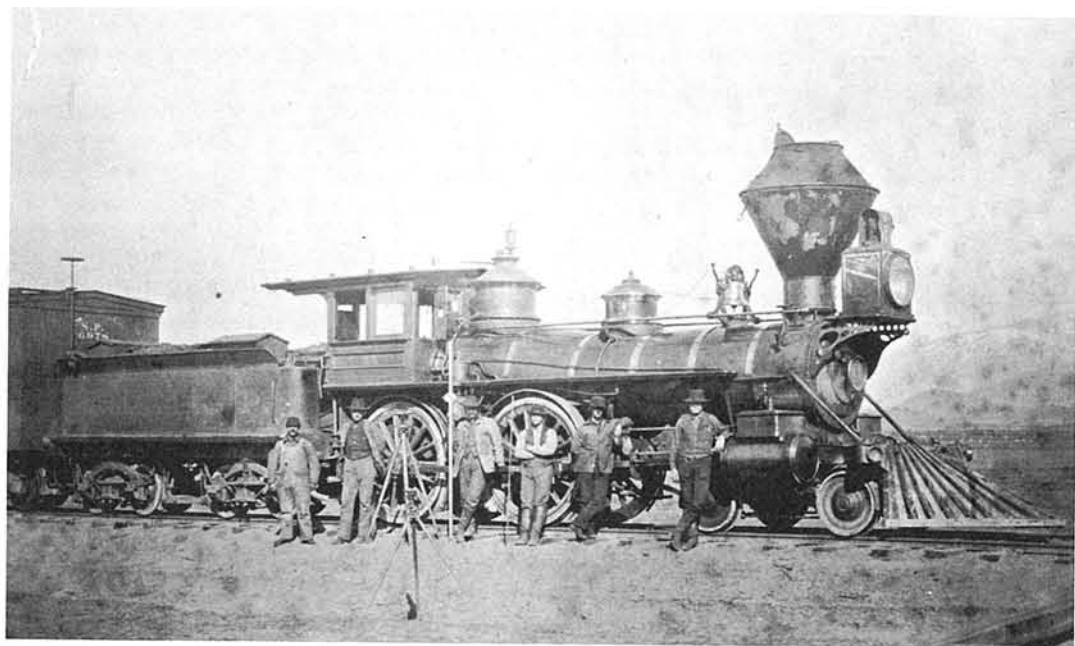
Moods on both sides became belligerent. Tempers flared. Acrimonious epithets were exchanged between railroad foremen and workmen and Marysville officials and workmen. Finally, enraged railroad men attacked the city workmen in an attempt to stop them from tearing down the embankment. Marysville police moved in and promptly arrested the offending railroad workmen and booked them at police headquarters. Both sides cooled off, but the building up and the tearing down of the embankment continued.

The railroad now turned from violence to legalities by ordering the arrest of the mayor, the councilman, and the city attorney for malicious mischief. Undaunted, however, the city brought reinforcements (more men, teams and scrapers) and continued to destroy the embankment all day and night, when the railroad workmen retired to their bunks.

Marysville won the battle. By mid-February 1870, the railroad was building a trestle instead of an embankment across the "disputed territory" to Sixth Street. And on February 22 the Vallejo road's first train into Marysville rumbled across the Feather River and rattled down Sixth Street to Lafayette Square where passengers disembarked and freight was unloaded.

Several days later passengers and freight were being unloaded at a depot under construction near the corner of Ninth and J Streets. Meanwhile, the California & Northern Railroad, the short independent line running between Marysville and Oroville, had widened its narrow-gauge tracks to standard gauge. These tracks were now connected with those of the Vallejo road making Oroville the northern terminus of the Vallejo road. The locomotive shops, however, were maintained at Marysville.

The Vallejo road served Marysville and Yuba City well. Two trains left daily for San Francisco and two arrived from there. The one-way trip took six hours including the steamer ride across the bay from Mare Island to San Francisco. This was more than two hours faster than the California



California Pacific locomotive No. 11, the *D. C. Haskins*, on a construction train near Hornbrook.

— GERALD M. BEST COLLECTION.

& Oregon schedule via Sacramento. Then too, the California & Oregon offered only one train daily each way between Marysville and San Francisco. As many as fourteen cars of freight began arriving daily at Marysville via the Vallejo road, thus offering the California & Oregon Railroad and the California Steam Navigation Company stiff competition.

The editor of the *Daily Marysville Appeal* rode the Vallejo train one day in 1870 from Marysville to Sacramento. The wooden coach he rode was brand new and had cost the line \$6,000. The interior walls of the car were constructed of polished laurel wood. Overhead the ceiling was artistically painted then highly varnished until a shaft of sheen stretched the length of the car. The sheen was only punctuated by two oil burning lamps suspended from the ceiling. The aroma of fresh varnish and red plush upholstery permeated that car along with a cigar or two. Sixteen double seats ran the length of the car on each side, accommodating sixty-four passengers. At one end stood a round pot-bellied stove, while at the other end was the familiar toilet closet. The door to the outside of the car opened onto the open platform at each end of the coach.

The train stopped at Yuba City where several passengers boarded bringing the

total now to twenty. The conductor shouted, "All aboard!," and brake wheels squeaked and metal clanked beneath the car as brakemen released the brakes. The engine expelled a subdued puff and simultaneously the car gently lurched forward and violently jerked as couplings clanked taut. Another puff and another lurch; the puffs slowly accelerated. The train gradually increased speed, and the buildings of Yuba City drifted away under clouds of smoke and steam. The train jerked and swayed and bounced along at eighteen miles per hour. Oil lamps suspended from the ceiling vibrated at times as wheel flanges grated against the rails. At a crossing the high pitched whistle wailed a warning. The editor was aware that the roadbed was rough and poorly ballasted, but he optimistically declared that "all this will be remedied in due time."

The train headed south from Yuba City and then rolled parallel with the Feather River whose levee drifted past the left side windows. Approaching Knights Landing, the train ran on the top of a fifteen foot high embankment for over a mile and then rumbled across endless tules and marshland on a wooden trestle 4,700 feet long. At Knights Landing twenty more passengers boarded the car. Upon reaching the next stop, Woodland, more passengers boarded

the car, overcrowding it. At Davisville, San Francisco bound passengers boarded a train arriving from Sacramento, and the Marysville car proceeded to Sacramento.

Though the Vallejo road served Marysville and Yuba City well, its tenure of service was relatively brief. Periodic high water combined with faulty roadbed engineering doomed the line's Sutter County operations. First indication of trouble came on March 1, 1870, when swirling waters of the flood swollen Sacramento River eroded dirt around the ties for about a mile on the embankment through the tules east of Knights Landing. Trains were temporarily routed via the California & Oregon roadbed through Sacramento. To overcome the threat of future erosion, the Vallejo road later raised its tracks five feet on the embankment through the tules.

A year later high water again plagued the road. The *Sutter County Banner* of Yuba City reported that raging waters of the Sacramento washed away the levee in four places at Knights Landing, washing out the tracks on the levee. Three weeks later the highest water of the season gushed down the Sacramento overflowing the east bank and flooding the tules and ranches in that part of Sutter County.

The railroad rebuilt its damaged right-of-way only to be plagued again by the curse of raging flood waters eight months later. Shortly after Christmas of 1871, the Parks levee broke flooding the tules. This time surging waters swept away more than three miles of track. The *Appeal* reported that waters of the Sacramento were flowing around the north end of the Buttes in what was known as the old French Crossing and flooding that part of Sutter County. The railroad promptly attempted to repair the damage but just as promptly was forced to halt repairs because of deep mud, muck, and heavy rainfall.

Rain continued to fall in torrents until on January 4, 1872, water of the Feather River ripped apart the Sutter County levee above Geizhauser's ranch. Waters gushed from the gap and down the slough that ran back of and partly through Yuba City. The town's streets became very muddy but were not actually flooded. The hapless Vallejo road, however, lost more track. The railroad had built an embankment to the trestle that ran across the

slough. Water eroded the embankment and the right-of-way on the embankment.

The river level was seven inches lower than in 1867, when Marysville was flooded. But the Feather was treacherous enough to gouge out 456 feet of the Sutter County levee. To fill the gap before more rain fell, twenty-eight teams and scrapers manned by as many men desperately scraped soil off Geizhauser's grain fields. By February 10 the levee was secure.

But damage to the railroad was not so readily repaired. Therefore the road discontinued operations in Sutter County. In January of 1872, railroad employees stationed in Marysville, except the station agent and the telegrapher, were suspended. Operations, however, through Sutter County to Marysville were never resumed; the tracks were never repaired.

At first Marysville hopefully felt that service would be resumed. Later the Hub City and the *Appeal* agitated for renewal of service, but in vain. Marysville needed the competition of two railroads to keep freight rates down. But this competition was washed away by flood waters and by the Big Four of the Central Pacific. The Big Four had been buying sufficient California Pacific Railroad (the real name of the Vallejo road) stock to gain control. The Big Four had also purchased the California Steam Navigation Company in April 1871, and had withdrawn steamers off the Feather. These railroad moguls were rapidly monopolizing major transportation arteries in California.

After the Central Pacific had gained control of the California Pacific, the new controlling company tore up the remaining tracks of the Vallejo road and used the rails on other lines the Big Four were constructing. According to Marysville newspapers, those people who had originally purchased the rails were never compensated nor did they even protest. Farmers in Sutter County leveled the right-of-way and began farming it. Yuba County fortunately had never issued the additional \$100,000 bonds, but the county lost its original \$100,000 bond issue. The county, however, redeemed the bonds ten years after they were issued. In all, the taxpayers of the county were out the \$100,000 plus \$68,000 in interest. This amount was in addition to the \$50,000 that individuals

of Marysville had donated to the railroad and subsequently lost.

With steamers off the river and the only competitive railroad off the map, the Central Pacific raised freight rates to Marysville, forcing local merchants to charge higher prices to mountain merchants. Marysville consequently lost some of its lucrative trade with the gold fields. Opposition steamers did later sail the Feather River, sometimes spasmodically, sometimes regularly. And when they did sail, down came the railroads' freight rates; but when these steamers did not sail, up went the Central Pacific's freight rates.



COWBOY'S LAMENT

Words by HOWARD J. CARROLL

Art by LLOYD MITCHELL*

This here warm weather sure does some-
thin' to a feller—

Kinder makes him feel sorta mild and
mighty meller;

Then some gal comes traipsin' 'long and
starts him in a-pinin'

For things he never use-ta think of—next
he's jinin'

The culled-out herd of tamed and branded
married critters—

It's his last round-up when he's tied up
with sock knitters!

There's one less mavrick on the range to
whoop and beller,

Yep! This here warm weather sure does
things to a feller.

*The *Cowboy's Lament* was written by my friend Howard Carroll after he saw my painting shown above. I thought it would be of interest to the members of the Los Angeles Corral.

SMOKE SIGNALS

By IRON EYES CODY

I had the pleasure of being the guest of artist Lloyd Mitchell, a member of the Collegium Western Artists, at Clearman's Northwoods Inn. I met some interesting people and once again old-time artist Sam Hyde Harris who had some tall stories to tell. I was surprised to see so many members of the Los Angeles Corral there. There was Earl Adams, Larry Robinson, Andy Dagosta, Tom McNeill, Tony Kroll, Cornell Norby, Bill Branson, Joe O'Malley, and Bob Stevens to name those I remember. After a fine meal, we journeyed to Lloyd's for a few drinks (a little fire water), where he pulled a Clarence Ellsworth by bringing out most of his paintings and talking about them.



My wife and I were the guests of Mr. Roger W. Powers, President of the Keep America Beautiful organization, and Mr. and Mrs. Meakin at Taix's recently. Powers stated: "... we conservatively estimate you have through 1974 actually had in excess of ten billion total home impressions on both networks and local stations. As well as in Europe, Japan, and other foreign countries." He was speaking about my anti-pollution commercial about the "Crying Indian."



DEAR...JESSE JAMES

By R. J. WYBROW
Bromley, Kent, England

He died less than a hundred years ago in his early thirties. For most of his adult life he was an outlaw, first hunted by the military then by the civil authorities. His name was Jesse James; possibly the archetypal train and bank robber.

Jesse was born in September 1847, to a Baptist preacher father and a mother educated in a school for genteel young ladies. Robert James, the father, travelled to the California gold fields, there soon to die. Much of Jesse's teens was spent in guerilla warfare during the Civil War where he probably learned the value of quick shooting and a good fast horse. Some of his saddle-chums at this time — including his brother, Frank — were destined to join him after the war in a more lucrative, though just as sanguinary, trade.

The years following the Civil War were spent, among other things, in robbing banks mainly in Missouri with one in Kentucky. After almost four years of such robberies, Frank and Jesse were named for the first time in connection with a robbery and murder in Gallatin, Missouri, on December 7, 1869. They were described in the reward notices as:

Jesse — About 6 feet in height, rather slender built, thin visage, hair and complexion rather light and sandy.

Frank — About 5 feet 8 or 10 inches in height, heavy built, full in the face and hair and complexion same as Jesse.

In a letter to Missouri's Governor Mc-

Clurg, dated June 1870, Jesse claimed to be innocent of the charge:

"I and my brother Frank are charged with the crime of killing the cashier and robbing the bank at Gallatin, Missouri, December 9, 1869. I deny the charge. There is not a word of truth in it. I can prove, by some of the best men in Missouri, where I was on the day of the robbery and the day previous to it, but I well know if I was to submit to an arrest, that I would be mobbed and hanged without a trial. The past is sufficient to show that bushwhackers do not have any show in law in Missouri. Several bushwhackers have been arrested in Missouri since the war, charged with bank robbery, and they most all have been mobbed without trial. I will cite you to the case of Thomas Little of Lafayette county. A few days after the bank was robbed at Richmond (Missouri), in 1867, Mr. Little was arrested in St. Louis, charged with being one of the party who perpetrated the deed. He was sent from St. Louis to Warrensburg . . . a mob was raised, which broke in the jail, took him out, and hanged him.

"Governor, when I think I can get a fair trial, I will surrender myself to the civil authorities of Missouri. But I will never surrender to be mobbed by a set of blood-thirsty poltroons. It is true that during the war I was a Confederate soldier, but since that I have lived a peaceable citizen, and obeyed the laws of the United States to the best of my knowledge . . ."

In view of the cultured style of this letter, particularly when compared to later correspondence we know to be Jesse's, this was almost certainly written by a newspaper friend. The theme, however, of "they" will not let me live in peace was one that Jesse was to return to in the future.

A second, shorter letter dated July 1870, was soon sent to Governor McClurg:

"Since my letter to you of June, I have been influenced by my friends to prove on alibi, and let those men (know) who accused me of the Gallatin murder and robbery that they

have tried to swear away the life of an innocent man.

"Governor, the testimony of my witnesses will be published through the columns of the Kansas City Times in two or three weeks, and it will be such as you and all men can believe."

With great alacrity the promised alibis were duly published — half of which were presented by Jesse's kinfolk.

For eighteen months after the Gallatin robbery and murder the boys seem to have gone into semi-retirement. Then in June 1871, the bank at Corydon, Iowa, was robbed. Yet again, on being accused of the crime, Jesse quickly brought his denial into print:

"I have just seen an article . . . charging myself and my brother Frank with robbing a bank in Iowa of seventy thousand dollars . . . As to Frank and I robbing a bank in Iowa or any where else, it is as base a falsehood as ever was uttered from human lips. I can prove, by some of the best citizens in Missouri, my whereabouts on the third of June, the day the bank was robbed, but it is useless for me to prove an alibi. One year ago I proved an alibi by some of the best citizens in the State, and proved enough to satisfy every honest man that I was innocent of the killing of Captain Sheets, at Gallatin . . ."

And so the letter continued, repeating the brothers' innocence and the unlikelihood of their receiving a fair trial.

The following year, in April 1872, the gang struck at the bank at Columbia, Kentucky, killing the cashier and getting away with around \$1,500. In September of the same year three men robbed the ticket-office of the Kansas City Exposition grounds of just under \$1,000. Being linked with the robbery, Jesse, almost inevitably, put into print his claim of innocence in a letter closely resembling his Corydon piece:

"I have just read an article . . . charging Frank and myself with robbing the ticket office at the Kansas City Exposition grounds. This charge is baseless and without foundation . . . I can prove where I was at the very

hour the gate was robbed, and, fortunately for me, there were several persons close by with whom I am very well acquainted, and who will testify that I was miles away from Kansas City . . ."

Once again Jesse claimed "if I could have a fair trial I could prove my innocence before any jury in the State." Protestations apart, however, the boys were back in their nefarious business the following year.

In May 1873, the Savings Association in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, was robbed, then in July it was back to Iowa but a new departure for the gang: their first train robbery.

On July 21 a train near Adair Station was robbed and Jack Rafferty, the engineer, killed. Five months later yet another letter from Jesse appeared. Again he wanted "a little space . . . to say a few words on my own behalf, and in that of my brother, Frank." He denied being implicated in a recent robbery of a store in Cass County, Missouri, also of being involved in the Gallatin murder, the Kansas City robbery, the Ste. Genevieve robbery, "with robbing a train in Iowa" and "with robbing two or three banks in Kentucky and killing two or three men there; but, for every charge and on every charge we are willing to be tried."

He also wrote that "any communication addressed to me at Deer Lodge, Montana Territory, will be attended to." We shall probably never know if anybody did take up Jesse's offer of corresponding.

Eighteen seventy-four was a particularly busy year for the gang with four robberies in January alone! In mid-March the first major member of the band, John Younger, was shot to death in a fight with detectives. Two of the detectives also died. At the same time another detective was killed in another part of Missouri.

Other robberies followed at the end of the year. Then at the end of January 1875, an event occurred that possibly ended any hopes there might have been for an end to the Jameses reign of terror.

Around midnight of January 25/26 an attack took place by Pinkerton detectives on the home of the Samuel family (Jesse's step-father's name). It is almost certain

that the boys were not at home at the time. However, a young step-brother was killed and their mother lost an arm in an explosion caused, it was said at the time, by a bomb.

In mid-April a neighbor was shot to death as he went to fetch some water from a well. It was rumored that he had been killed as a reprisal for giving information to the detectives involved in the raid. In a letter written in the following July, Jesse was once again putting forth his innocence: "If a robbery is committed in Kentucky today, detective Bligh, of Louisville, would telegraph all over the United States that the James and Younger Boys did it . . ."

Jesse was also astute enough to mention in his letter the attack on his mother's home: "We have not only been persecuted, but on the night of the 25th of January 1875, at the midnight hour, nine Chicago assassins and Sherman bummers, led by Billy Pinkerton, Jr., crept up to my mother's house and hurled a missile of war (a 32 pound shell) in a room among innocent women and children, murdering my eight-year old brother and tearing my mother's right arm off, and wounding several others of my family, and then firing the house in seven places."

He then denied being involved in the Russellville, Kentucky, robbery of 1868. Pinkerton, however, being mentioned by Jesse as the leader of the raid, wrote in return that he had been appearing at a trial in Chicago on the day in question. This denial from Pinkerton stung Jesse into producing another letter, the grammar and spelling of which the newspapers did not correct.

A long, rambling letter, it read in parts as follows:

"Pinkertons force . . . crept three miles through the woods to mothers residence and fired it in seven places & [sic] hurled incendiary balls in to the house to kil [sic] & cripple the entire family & then gives them over to the mercy of the flames. But Providence saved the house from being burnt . . . This is the work of Pinkerton the man that sed [sic] in his card he just wished to set himself right in the eyes of the world. He . . . will meet the fate his comrades, Capt. Lull & Witcher, meet."

Further on he wrote, "He may vindicate with some, but he better never dare to show his Scottish face again in Western Missouri, and let him know he is here, or he will meet the fate his comrades, Capt. Lull & Witcher, meet & [sic] I would advise him to stay in New York but let him go where he may, his sins will find him out." "He can cross the Atlantic, but every wave & [sic] white cap he sees at sea will remind him of the innocent boy murdered and the one armed mother robbed [sic] of her child (and idol)." Jesse even went so far as to claim divine protection: "I hope and pray that our Heavenly Father may deliver you (Pinkerton) into my hands, & [sic] as I believe he will, for his merciful and protecting arm has ever been with me, and Shielded me, and during all my persecution he has watched over me & protected me from workers of blood money who are trying to seak [sic] my life . . ."

Possibly the most extraordinary letter Jesse wrote was one written after a minor store robbery in May 1875. Its recipient is at present unknown other than "My Dear Friend"; in all probabilities a local law officer who befriended the outlawed Jameses. First, he stressed his innocence: "I believe Gov. Hardin would give me an impartial trial if it was in his power, but don't you know that I have been lied on and persecuted so long that the public prejudice is so great against me that it would take one hundred thousand dollars to defend me of all the charges that would be brought against me, and I am a very poor man . . ." He claimed to have had "a corps of Detectives at work . . . feriting [sic] out the robbers who have been disgraceing [sic] Mo. in the name of the James & [sic] Youngers."

He then proceeded to name the robbers of the store in May, and the group that robbed a train at Muncie, Kansas, the previous December. Also implicated were various friends of the band who had given them aid and shelter, all of whom Jesse was prepared to toss to the law.

Perhaps prophetically, one of those mentioned by Jesse was subsequently killed after a raid on a bank in West Virginia in September, and a second of Jesse's nominees was arrested. Only Frank James and Cole Younger managed to escape completely.

Second only to Pinkerton on Jesse's list of those he loathed was one "Bligh, the incompetent detective of Louisville, Kentucky," who Jesse contemptuously dismissed as being "unworthy of the title of detective," and who, in ending a letter, he called "an unnecessary liar, a scoundrel and a poltroon."

In April 1876, two of the gang robbed the bank at Baxter Springs, Kansas, then the band were back in Missouri and train-robbing in July. Two suspects were arrested, one of them making a lengthy confession implicating the Jameses and Youngers, among others. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Jesse denied knowledge of his former saddle companion: "this so-called confession is a well-built pack of lies from beginning to end. I never heard of Hobbs Kerry, Charlie Pitts and William Chadwell until Kerry's arrest. I can prove my innocence by eight, good, well-known men of Jackson County, and show conclusively that I was not at the train robbery."

In a second letter after the robbery, Jesse turned his attention to "Detective Blythe (Bligh) . . . one of the biggest liars and poltroons that ever lived" and "Bacon Montgomery, the scoundrel who murdered Capt. A. J. Clements." He claimed, rather late in the day, "if we had been granted full amnesty, I am sure we would of been

at work, trying to be good, lawabiding citizens!"

Even the highest in the land was not safe from Jesse's vitriolic pen: "Why don't President Grant have the soldiers called in and send the detectives out on special trains after the hostile Indians? Arm Pinkerton's force, with hand-grenades, and they will kill all the women and children . . ."

The following September three of the gang were killed and three Youngers captured in a disastrous raid on Northfield, Minnesota. Only the two Jameses escaped.

At the end of 1877 the brothers moved to Tennessee, but Jesse found himself in financial problems: on one hand being owed money, on the other being pressed for some he had borrowed. In one of his letters to an attorney he spoke of "two of his children, twins, dying, and his wife being in bad health." Impudently, Jesse gave brother Frank, under an assumed name, as a bondsman.

In October 1879, the boys were back in the train robbing business, followed by a stage coach in September 1880, and a store, both in Kentucky. Six months later three of the gang were in action in deep-south Alabama and one of the trio ended up behind bars, sentenced to 25 years.

The James' cavalcade of crime continued through 1881 with a train robbery in July. A conductor and passenger were killed. In August, some coaches were robbed, then, in September, the gang's last crime, a train robbery, took place.

In October, in a letter allegedly written by Jesse, "he" claimed to be sailing from San Francisco to Spain; a journey "he" later denied in a letter dated January 18, 1882. In this letter, a model of illiteracy, "he" wrote "I have lately bin Reading so much about me and my friendt in your Paper som is tru and som is fals I do denie writing the Statement." He promised "we are giting our men together you can look out you will hear from us soon."

In his last letter, dated March 2, Jesse made an enquiry regarding a plot of land in Nebraska. Perhaps he was going to attempt to settle down to a quiet life after one final job. We shall never know, for on April 3 one of his gang ended his life, and his writing, with a bullet in the back.



Old print showing the killing of Jesse James by the Ford brothers. While looking at a picture, one of the Ford brothers slipped in between Jesse and his guns, while the other shot him at close range.

Corral Chips . . .

had the honor of being elected President of the Conference.

C.M. *Ralph Miracle* of Santa Barbara authors the feature article in a recent issue of *Hoofprints*, the publication of the Yellowstone Corral of The Westerners. His piece on "Ghost Hunting on the Missouri" deals with the early trading posts and military forts along this historic waterway.

The library of Corresponding Member *R. D. Warden*, consisting of nearly 10,000 volumes in the field of Western Americana, has been sold to the University of Texas in San Antonio and will be shelved in a separate section of that institutions new library.

Maritime historian *John Kemble* addresses a combined meeting of the Steamship Historical Society of America and the Pacific Maritime History Society at a dinner aboard the *SS Princess Louise*.

Associate Member *Lloyd Mitchell* tours Colorado and points north, selling some nine of his oil paintings along the way.

Armed with tape recorder, copy machine, and files carried in the truck of his Chevrolet, C.M. *Phil Kavinick* spends his summer gathering the last bits of information for his forthcoming book, *Women Artists of the West*.

Former active member *Bob Huntoon* sends greetings to all of his friends in the Corral from Redding, where he has been fishing, writing, and doing a bit of traveling since selling out his camper business to his former partner. We miss you, Bob, so why not drop on down some second Wednesday?

Paul Bailey has been busy at his typewriter lately with two recent books being published, one a work of fiction and the other a piece of non-fiction, though both focus on aspects of Hawaiian history. His novel is titled *The Bulls and Queen Lil*, while the non-fiction work is dubbed *Those Kings and Queens of Old Hawaii* and traces the fascinating story of the Hawaiian monarchy.

The Western Writers of America, a group of professional writers of movie-TV scripts, fiction and non-fiction authors of the American West, presents *Donald Duke* with a "Spur" award for his editing, text, and illustrations for *Trails of the Iron*

Horse, an anthology produced by the members of the group and published by Doubleday.

C.M. *Russ Leadabrand* has been named the new Associate Director of the University of Southern California News Bureau where Russ has been on the journalism and cinema faculty for the past three years. His new book, *Yesterday's California*, will be published as a part of a photo/history/nostalgic series.

Speaking of U.S.C., *Doyce Nunis* has received a distinguished teaching award from that University. And two publications have emanated from Doyce's prolific pen recently as part of his original paperback study on *American Political Thought*. The two volumes are subtitled *The Search for Nationhood* and *The Search for National Strength*.

Santa Barbaran C.M. *Harold Davidson* has received the National Cowboy Hall of Fame's award for the best Western art book of the year, *Edward Borein, Cowboy Artist*. Hal wrote the text and selected the illustrations.

Prepared especially for the Custer Battle Centennial in 1976, C.M. *Richard Upton's The Custer Adventure* reconstructs the battle by drawing upon original journals, diaries, and other primary source accounts of this famous misadventure.

Yosemite and Its Innkeepers, written by Shirley Sargent and with a foreword by *Horace Albright*, adds to our understanding of this great National Park and the people who helped shape its history.

C.M. *Harriet Weaver's Adventures in the Redwoods* has been published by Chronicle Books and has been receiving splendid reviews from press, radio, and TV. She is now at work on a book devoted to her twenty years with the California State Park Service, where she served as the Service's first lady ranger.

Down San Diego way, *Walt Wheelock* enlightens the S.D. Corral with the talk "Noroeste de Mexico," dealing with Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, and Baja Sur.

The International Congress of Historical Sciences met in San Francisco during August for the first time in the United States and several thousand distinguished historians came from all over the world. Sheriff *Ray Billington* had the honor of being asked to deliver the keynote address

on this occasion and he called it "Cowboys, Indians, and the Land of Promise: The World Image of the American Frontier."

Finally, C.M. Paul Borcharding traveled to Missouri and visited such historic locations as a Lewis and Clark campsite (La Charette) and the restored Daniel Boone home near Defiance, Mo., where the notable trailblazer died in 1820.



A TRUE PAUL BUNYAN STORY

By MICHAEL HARRISON

In the 1930's, I was in the United States Indian Service and stationed in Santa Fe, New Mexico. One evening, a friend — we'll call him Rusty — came to the house and during the course of conversation we had been discussing the impossible feats of a New Mexican. I ventured to remark that the character in question couldn't hold a candle to those performed by Paul Bunyan. My friend had never heard of Paul, which meant that I had a free rein. I told him about Babe, the Blue Ox, Johnny Ink Slinger, why there are no trees in Kansas, the "real" story of how the Great Lakes were formed. The more stories I told the farther his eyes bugged out. Rusty was a writer and he became so interested in Paul Bunyan he said he would like to learn more about the man and to write about him.

As luck would have it, a few weeks later we were visiting with a mutual friend, a

mining engineer for an operation on the Pecos. Before we returned to Santa Fe, Rusty had been promised a job come summer in the logging camp taking out mine timbers. When the proper time came, Rusty left for camp.

When he returned some time later, I asked Rusty how he had fared and whether he had learned any new Paul Bunyan stories. This is what he told me.

The Bull of the Woods was a smallish man but like a piece of rawhide who didn't have much to do or to say to the crew other than to give orders for the day. In the cook shack, the idea was to "eat and git" so that the flunky could get things cleared for the next meal. The men were housed in small cabins rather than in a bunkhouse. The Bull of the Woods had a cabin to himself. Rusty says he tried to get the men talking about Paul Bunyan without success. One evening, having finished supper, he found himself following the Bull of the Woods from the cook shack. No word passed between them until they reached a fork in the trail — one fork going to the Bull of the Wood's cabin and the other to where Rusty bunked.

As they reached the fork, Rusty plucked up enough courage to speak to the Bull of the Woods for the very first time. He said, "Have you ever heard of Paul Bunyan?" Without breaking stride the Bull of the Woods kept on walking and as he did so, tossed over his shoulder "Hear of him? Hell, I worked for him for 125 years."

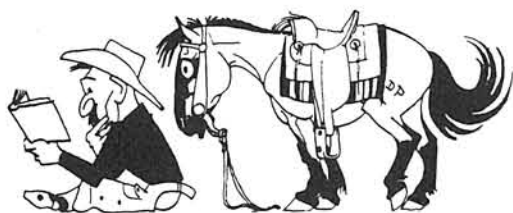
And this was the only story Rusty came out of camp with.

Brand Book Articles

WANTED

Tony Lehman, editor of *Brand Book 15*, would like to remind all members that contributions are still being sought for this on-going publication program of the Los Angeles Corral. The chosen theme of *Brand Book 15* will be the history and culture of the Los Angeles/Southern California area, and articles dealing with this subject are being actively solicited.

Please send your manuscripts for consideration to Tony at P.O. Box 923, Claremont, Calif., 91711.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

THE LOST DEATH VALLEY '49ER JOURNAL OF LOUIS NUSBAUMER, by George Koenig. Published by the Death Valley '49ers, Inc., and printed by the Chalfant Press, 1974. \$2.25 paperbound — \$5.00 hardbound.

Westerner George Koenig has written and lectured extensively on our California desert areas. He is recognized as one of our leading authorities on Death Valley, and has authored several books and articles on this subject including his classic *Valley of Salt — Memories of Wine* published in 1967 by The Friends of the Bancroft Library. Also included is his informative '23 *Skidoo and Panamint, Too* published in 1971 as Keepsake No. 11 for the 22nd Death Valley '49ers Encampment. His excellent article on the Bigler Initials, appearing in the Los Angeles Corral's *Brand Book No. 10*, and his Gunsight Lode article in the Corral's *Branding Iron*, No. 69, are indicative of his penetrating insight into this historic background of Death Valley's fascinating history. Koenig also edited the Corral's *Brand Book No. 12* in 1966. Moreover, he is intimately familiar with the Mother Lode Country and has authored its two outstanding Guide Books — *The Mother Lode* (1957) and *Ghosts of the Gold Rush* (1968).

He has flown, jeeped and hiked over the trails of the 1849 emigrants. It was he who finally located and acquired the original journals of Louis Nusbaumer which provide this pioneer's experiences and emotions during the strenuous Death Valley trek in 1849-50.

In his most recent book he correlates the significant contribution of this little-known Death Valley '49er with the other individuals and groups constituting the historically famous Death Valley parties of 1849. As a result, this book becomes one of our

dependable and informative items on Death Valley history. It is certain to capture and hold the reader's interest. The text is vitalized by the inclusion of well-chosen photographic plates.

— E. I. (EDDIE) EDWARDS.



WESTERN YESTERDAYS, by Forest Crossen. Boulder and Fort Collins Publishers. (Nine Volumes) 1963-1973. \$1.95.

Some observant and fortunate Westerners have followed these unique personal stories of the Old West since inception through the last volume (IX) with stories told by those who knew Charlie Russell. The 8½ by 5½ inch paperbacks, attractively covered and adequately illustrated, have instant and certain appeal for everyone interested in the early frontier.

Crossen, after a youth spent on the last holdout of the frontier in the Milk River country of northern Montana and headquartering after that in Boulder, Colorado, the heart of the end of the prairies and the beginning of the Rockies, tells these stories he has gathered from old-timers with an understanding pen and sympathetic heart. They cover the West from Mexico to Canada and contain tales to satisfy every interest — told by the people who lived those days and in their own words . . . by muleskinners, teamsters and bullwhackers . . . ranchers, railroaders and Indian-fighting soldiers . . . by hunters of buffalo, bear, game, wolves and two-legged varmints . . . name any participants in the conquering of the western frontier and you will find one of them telling his story in these fascinating little books. And in such a way that it is like listening to them yourself.

These compact volumes belong in your library. Don't miss the chance while they are still available (some have been reprinted several times). A note to *Western Yesterdays*, Box 1433, Boulder, Colorado 80302 will bring one volume as a sample or the complete set or more information if you should so desire. Just tell Forest Crossen you are a Westerner and you will meet as friends. You may recall him as the author of the best-selling *Switzerland Trail of America*, which has become a collector's item.

— RALPH MIRACLE.