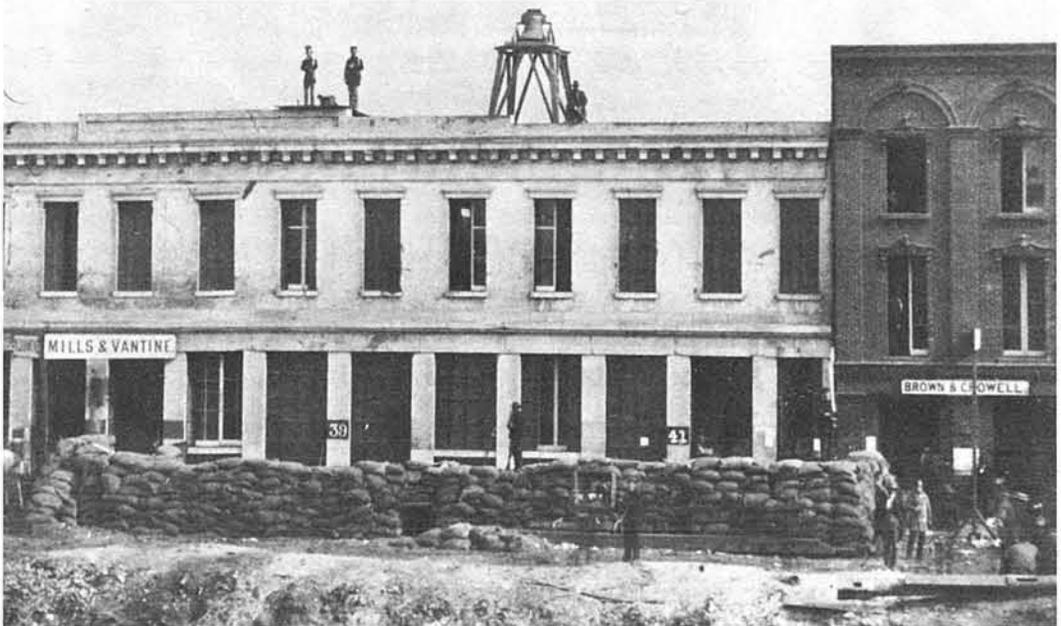




SEPTEMBER 1977

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 128



Fort Vigilance—Headquarters of the Committee of Vigilance—San Francisco in 1856.

THE SAN FRANCISCO VIGILANCE COMMITTEE OF 1856 REVISITED

By Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.

In 1971, to honor its first twenty-five years of activity, the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners published *The San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856: Three Views*. The heart of the volume contained the written statements by William T. Coleman, William T. Sherman, and James O'Meara, eyewitnesses and participants in that mo-

mentous event. In the introduction to the book, I surveyed the more important primary and secondary sources which dealt with the history of the 1856 Vigilance Committee, concluding with the bald fact that a "judicious history" of the movement has yet to be written. I am still of that firm

(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

Certainly one of the more interesting meetings of 1977 was Dennis Casebier's slide lecture entitled *The Mojave Road*. At first thought concerning the program, one could not help but wonder how the speaker could enthrall an audience with slides of a wagon road running across the Mojave Desert. Who wants to see slides of ruts in the sand, lizards slithering from rock to rock, and bits of old junk and a piece of sagebrush here and there? Casebier began with a full description of each trail through the Mojave over the years, and then by means of a slide map, followed by time lapse photography showed what that particular section of the desert country looked like years ago and what the exact same spot looks like today. It was truly fascinating and one could hear wine soaked napkins falling to the floor as Corral members raised their heads from the chin position to view these pictures and listen to the running commentary. The speaker's knowledge, and his great enthusiasm for the desert, turned an expected dull evening into one of overpowering delight.

AUGUST

The old long wharf at Santa Monica was the theme of Associate Member Ernest Marquez for the August meeting. Ernie was born on land that was part of the Rancho Boca de Santa Monica, and with a curious mind wondered what that old wharf was doing on his great-grandfather's property.

His years of research into the former Southern Pacific long wharf, which was

more popularly known as "Port Los Angeles," led to a book covering the harbors of Southern California, and then his tour on the rubber chicken circuit giving talks on the subject. Ernie read some of the history of the founding, building and then demise of the wharf project and then followed with slides illustrating the talk he had presented.



Scene from C. B. Pierce's *Gray Eagle* with Cindy Butler and Iron Eyes Cody.

SMOKE SIGNALS

By Iron Eyes Cody

In June I went to Helena, Montana, to star in the movie *Gray Eagle*, a legend about Cheyenne and Shoshone Indians. It was written, produced and directed by Charles Pierce, who makes good clean movies, to which you can take your children. Last year he made the picture *Winter Hawk* which made 30 million dollars and is still running. I worked with my good friend and cowboy star and Academy Award winner Ben Johnson, in the mountains under the tall pines, in the lakes, thunder, rain and huge mosquitoes. I'm proud to have worked in this picture.

We used two hundred Indians from different tribes: Blackfeet, Sioux, Assiniboine, Shoshone, Cheyenne, Flat Head, Cree, Chippewa and a few other little tribes. I knew quite a few of them. While here Blackie Witzel of the Blackfeet tribe gave me the name of OPO-TAH-SA-PO, an

old traditional name which means "Looking for Smoke." He gave me a hundred year old ermine and a buffalo medicine man rattle.

One of my pet projects is the Hope Ranch at Poplar, Montana, which houses underprivileged Indian children. The ranch has about 24 residents from toddlers to 14 years of age, in two cottages in a family style atmosphere. It has been my task to try and raise funds for this project. A couple of years ago I was fortunate to meet Alisabethe Jergins, of the Jergins Foundation and her husband Peter Forsythe, and spoke to her about the Ranch. She was enthusiastic and has since given more than \$35,000 to help these needy children and in fact they fell in love with a 5 year old orphan which they plan to adopt and name after her father Ja'me. Montie Montana, who came from Wolf Point, plans to put on a rodeo this summer, proceeds to go to Hope Ranch. For our interest, Ted Shining Warrior adopted Alisabethe, Peter, Montie and myself as his brothers and sister. The Assiniboine tribe officially adopted us into their tribe at the Red Bottom Celebration on June 18.

On July 2, at the Sioux celebration at Fort Kipp, an old traditional medicine man and my Uwipi brother since 1948, Felix Green, performed another adoption ceremony into the Sioux tribe for Alisabethe, Peter and myself. Montie was in Canada.

I made a new commercial for the Keep America Beautiful program which was photographed in New York, Connecticut and Virginia, and I'm on a horse again, but I smile this time.

I was appointed a Commissioner by Supervisor Baxter Ward, to the American Indian Commission. It is an organization run by Indians to help the more than 60,000 Indian people in greater Los Angeles and to get proper funding for various projects.

At Dr. Alden Miller's home, on July 10th, we had a meeting of trail bosses and officers to discuss membership affairs, Brand Book report, Keeper of Chips report, September Rendezvous and other items. We were all served a Continental breakfast. Dr. Miller and I smoked our herbal tobacco, Kinnikinnick, all through the meeting. As we Indians would say, "to bless the place."

. . . San Francisco Vigilance

opinion.

During the course of my research on the preparation of the text, I discovered by sheer chance a heretofore unpublished letter by William Tecumseh Sherman to Governor J. Neely Johnson, dated November 3, 1856, which contributes another important piece to the historical mosaic of the train of 1856 events. In 1972, that letter was published in a limited edition as a keepsake for the eleventh joint meeting of the Roxburghe and Zamorano Clubs in San Francisco. It seems fitting that the letter should be republished in *The Branding Iron* so as to make it more accessible to those who have acquired a copy of the Westerners' silver anniversary publication.

The letter helps explain why Governor Johnson finally agreed to withdraw his June 3, 1856, proclamation which had declared the "County of San Francisco in a state of Insurrection." The crux of the matter was the return to state control of the arms which had been seized by the Vigilance Committee. By October the issue was directly enjoined: the Vigilance Committee demanded withdrawal of the proclamation before the surrender of the arms; the Governor demanded the surrender of the arms before the withdrawal of the proclamation.

Sherman intervened to mediate the impasse. On October 29, 1856, he wrote to the Governor, "It occurs to me that you require, before you issue any state paper touching the Proclamation, that you should have before you a written document showing that the last act of resistance to the State had ceased, and therefore though reluctant to mingle again in any public transaction, I am willing for the sake of peace and quiet to do this." The solution proposed was simple: if the arms were surrendered, then the Governor would withdraw his proclamation. Time, however, was of the essence.

Governor Johnson had one ace up his sleeve. An election was scheduled for Tuesday, November 4. If the election was held under the stigma of the June proclamation, the legality of the returns could be challenged in the courts; mayhap the entire

election would be declared null and void. To preclude that possibility, the Vigilance Committee was anxious for a solution.

Telegraphing the Governor on October 31, Sherman asked cryptically: "Will you recall the Proclamation on the unconditional surrender of the State Arms? Answer by Telegraph." In the meantime, Sherman sought positive assurance from the Vigilance Committee. He received that on November 3, when Judge Thomas W. Freelon, speaking for the Vigilance Committee, pledged that the arms in question "will this day be delivered up to the proper authorities." And so they were. That same day, General William C. Kibbe, State Adjutant General, wired the Governor: "The Vigilance Committee have surrendered some 32 cases of State Arms & accoutrements this day to me. . . . These arms I have shipped to Sacramento in accordance with your instructions—The surrendering of the State Arms at this time is a tacit acknowledgment by the Committee that this Country has been in a state of insurrection since the issuance of the proclamation. Consequently an important point has been gained. The Cannon will be forwarded as soon as the Excitement is allayed."

Governor Johnson proceeded immediately to countervene his proclamation. The fact that "satisfactory information having been received by me that combinations for the purpose of resisting the execution of legal process by force, existed in the County of San Francisco in this State and that an unlawful organization styling themselves the Vigilance Committee had resisted by force the execution of criminal process and the power of said County had been exhausted . . . I have this day received satisfactory information that the causes which required the issuance of the [proclamation], no longer exist; therefore I do revoke and withdraw said Proclamation." Thus the conflict was amicably settled, on the eve of election day.

What follows is a letter which undoubtedly played an important part in the peaceful solution to this highly complex and potentially explosive constitutional situation. It was found in the Military and National Guard Papers, 1848-1861, Box 3, in the State Archives, Sacramento.

CONSTITUTION AND ADDRESS OF THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

CONSTITUTION OF THE Committee of Vigilance, San Francisco.

ADOPTED, MAY 15TH, 1856.

Whereas, it has become apparent to the citizens of San Francisco that there is no security for life and property, either under the regulations of society or in its present state, or under the laws as administered, and that by the association of bad characters, our ballot-boxes have been stolen and others subverted or stained with votes that were never polled, thereby our elections nullified—our domestic rights violated—and our other method left only the will of the people can be manifested.

Therefore, the citizens whose names are hereunto attached do unite themselves into an association for maintenance of the peace and good order of society—the prevention and punishment of crime—the preservation of our lives and property, and to insure that our ballot-boxes shall hereafter express the actual and unforced will of the majority of our citizens; and we do bind ourselves each unto the other, by a solemn oath, to do and perform every just and lawful act for the maintenance of law and order, and to sustain the laws, when faithfully and properly administered. That we are determined that no thief, burglar, incendiary, assassin, ballot-box sniffer, or other disturber of the peace, shall escape punishment, either by the威力 of the law—the integrity of persons—the candor or corruption of the police, or a lady of those who pretend to administer justice; and to secure the objects of this association we do hereby agree:

1. That the name and style of this Association shall be the "Committee of Vigilance for the protection of the ballot-box, the life, liberty and property of the citizens and residents of the City of San Francisco.

2. That there shall be Rooms for the deliberations of the Committee, at which there shall be some one or more members of the Committee, appointed for that purpose, in constant attendance at all hours of the day and night, to receive the report of any member of the association.

3. That there shall be Rooms for the deliberations of the Committee, at which there shall be some one or more members of the Committee, appointed for that purpose, in constant attendance at all hours of the day and night, to receive the report of any member of the association.

4. That whenever an Executive Committee has been chosen by the General Committee, it shall have the duty of the said Executive Committee to deliberate and act upon all important questions; and to divide upon the measures necessary to carry out the objects for which this association was formed.

5. That whereas this Committee has been organized into subdivisions, the Executive Committee shall have power to call, when they shall so determine, upon a Board of Delegates, to consist of three representatives from each Division, to confer with them upon matters of vital importance.

6. That all matters of detail and government shall be embraced in a code of By-Laws.

7. That the action of this body shall be entirely and rigorously free from all consideration of, or participation in, the merits or demerits, or opinions or acts of any and all sects, political parties, or national divisions in the community; and every class of orderly citizens, of whatever rank, party or activity, may become members of this body.

8. That no person accused before this body shall be punished until after fair and impartial trial and conviction.

9. That whenever the General Committee are assembled for deliberation, the decision of the majority upon any question that may be submitted to them by the Executive Committee shall be binding upon the whole; provided, nevertheless, that when

the Delegates are deliberating upon the punishment to be awarded in any criminal case, no individual of the death penalty shall be binding, unless passed by two-thirds of those present and entitled to vote.

10. That all good citizens shall be eligible for admission to this body, under such regulations as may be prescribed by a Committee of Qualification; and if any unworthy person gain admission, they shall, on due proof, be expelled. And no officer or member shall be removed from office by the majority of our citizens, we do pledge our credit honor to defend and sustain each other in exercising our determined action of this Committee at the hazard of our lives and our fortunes.

Address of the Vigilance Committee.

The Committee of Vigilance, placed in the position they now occupy by the votes and countenance of the vast majority of their fellow-citizens, as executors of their will, desire to define the necessity which has forced this people into their present re-organization.

Great public emergencies demand prompt and vigorous remedies. The Times—long suffering under an organized despotism which has lacerated their liberties—sundered their property—mutilated their lives—prevented the expression of their will through the ballot-box, and occupied the channels of justice, have now acted in violation of their inherent rights and powers. All political, religious, and sectional differences and issues have given way to the paramount necessity of a thorough and fundamental reform and purification of the social and political body. The voice of a whole people has demanded union and organization at the only means of saving our laws effective, and securing the rights of free speech—free vote, and public safety.

For years they have patiently waited and striven for a reasonable manner, and in accordance with the forms of law, to reform the abuses which have made our city a lawless, cruel and violence have filled every street and alley, and the laws which should protect for protection, while distracted and rendered impotent in practice, so as to shield the vile, have been used as a powerful engine to fasten upon us tyranny and abuse.

As Republicans, we looked to the ballot box as our safeguard and sure remedy. But so effectually and so long was its voice smothered, the votes deposited in it by free men so utterly outnumbered by ballot fraud, in through fraud at midnight, or nullified by the false counts of judges and inspectors of elections at noon day, that many doubted whether the majority of the people were not utterly corrupt.

Organized gangs of bad men, of all political parties, or who assumed any particular creed from necessary respect motives, have perished out our eyes, and themselves, or sold them to the highest bidder.

Have placed themselves with convenient tools and whet their nod, as Clerks, Inspectors and Judges of elections.

Have employed bullies and professional fighters to destroy tally lists by force, and prevent possible citizens from ascertaining in a lawful manner, the true number of votes polled at our elections.

And have used cunningly contrived ballot-boxes, with false sides and bottoms, so prepared that by means of a spring or other contrivance, the votes could be thrown previous to the election, could be mingled with the genuine votes.

Of all this we have the most irrefragable proofs. Felons from other lands and States, and unconvicted criminals equally as bad, have taken control of public funds and property, and have often assumed the mask of freedom without having done an honest day's work, with head or hands. Thus the fair inheritance of our city has been embroiled and squandered—our streets and squares are in ruins, and the miserable entanglement of an enormous debt, will leech upon us and poverty to another generation.

The Jury-box has been tampered with, and our Jury trials have been made to shield the hundreds of murderers whose red hands have crimsoned the streets, and slanted with the bowie knife and the pistol not only the few voices of an indignant press, but the shuddering rebuke of the outraged citizens.

To our shame be it said, that the inhabitants of distant lands already know that corrupt men in office, as well as gamblers, shoulder-stuffers, and other vile tools of unscrupulous leaders, boat men, and shoot-downs with impunity, as well powerful and unscrupulous citizens, as these corrupt influences have been the cause of their own ruin, and with unscrupulous heart have sought, in a lawful manner to reward schemes of public plunder or to weaken investigations.

Entitled to the principles of republican government, and the truth that the majority should rule, and when corrupt officials, who have fraudulently seized the reins of authority, designedly thwart the execution of the laws and avert punishment from the notoriously guilty, the power they usurp leaps back to the people from whom it was wrested. Realizing these truths, and confident that they were carrying out the will of a vast majority of the citizens of this county, the Committee of Vigilance, under a solemn sense of the responsibility that rested upon them, have boldly and dispassionately weighed the evidence before them, and decreed the death of some and imprisonment of others, who by their crime and villainies had stained our fair land. With those that were punished, this comparatively moderate punishment was chosen, not because ignominious death was not deserved but that the crime, if any, might surely be upon the side of mercy and with the hope that penitence to depart voluntarily might induce repentance, and resistance amendment, they have been suffered to choose, within limits, their own time and method of going.

Thus far, and throughout their action, they have been, and will be guided by the most conscientious convictions of impartiality; and they earnestly hope that in embracing the cause of the guilty, their consciences may be so guided by that Power before whose tribunal we shall all stand, that in the vindication of after life, amid the calm reflections of old age, and in the clear view of dying consciences, there may be found nothing we would regret or wish to change.

We have no friends to reward, no enemies to punish, no private ends to accomplish.

Our single, heartfelt aim is the public good; the purging from our community of those abandoned characters whose actions have done evil continually and have finally forced upon us the effort we are now making. We have no favoritism as a body, nor shall there be embraced in any of our acts either partiality for, or prejudice against any race, sect or party.

While thus far we have not discovered on the part of our constituents any indications of lack of confidence, and have no reason to doubt that the great majority of the inhabitants of the county endorse our acts and desire to continue the work of weeding out irreclaimable characters from the community, we have, with deep regret, seen that some of the State authorities have felt it their duty to organize a force to resist us.

Now, because the people have not seen fit to resume all the powers they have yielded to executive or legislative officers, it certainly does not follow that they cannot, in the exercise of their inherent sovereign power, withdraw from corrupt and unfaithful servants the authority they have used to thwart the ends of justice.

Those officers whose mistaken sense of duty leads them to array themselves against the determined action of the people, whose servants they have become, may be respected, while their errors may be regretted, but none can deny the future position of that man, who, while in the heat of malignant passion, or with the vain hope of preserving by violence a reputation obtained through fraud and bribery, seeks under the color of law to enlist the arms of society as a kindred soldier in the service of the State, or urges criminals, by hopes of plunder, to continue, at the cost of civil war, the reign of ballot-box snuffers, subverters of witnesses, and tamperers with the Jury box.

The Committee of Vigilance believe that the people have entrusted to them the duty of punishing evildoers, and after due trial, expelling from the community their ruffians and assassins who have so long outraged the peace and good order of society, violated the ballot-box, overthrown law, and thwarted justice.

Beyond the duties incident to this, we do not desire to interfere with the details of government.

We have spared and shall spare no effort to avert bloodshed or civil war; but undaunted by threats or opposing organizations, shall continue—possibly if we can, forcibly if we must—this work of reform, to which we have pledged our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

Our labors have been arduous, our deliberations have been cautious, our determinations firm, our councils prudent, our motives pure; and while regretting the imperious necessity which called us into action, we are anxious that this necessity should exist no longer; and when our labors shall have been accomplished, when the community shall be freed from the evils it has so long endured—when we have restored to our citizens an honest and vigorous protection of their rights, then the Committee of Vigilance will find great pleasure in resigning that power into the hands of the people, from whom it was received.

Published by order of the Committee.

(Seal of the Committee.)

53, SECRETARY.

In addition to this important letter, another set of unique documents have come to light in the California Historical Society's Library. Gary Kurtz, director of the library, recently called to my attention a cache of five letters written by Robert B. Wallace. Wallace served in the Vigilance Committee movement from the outset. He rose to become chief of its police department. Two of the letters were penned in the Committee's headquarters, Fort Vigilance. These are unusual letters and contain pertinent data found no where else. As such, they deserve publication to help complete the record of the history of the 1856 San Francisco Vigilance Committee.

The author of these newly found letters proved a biographical enigma. Fortunately, an unsigned holographic sketch of his life

turned up in the CHS Library. It records that Robert Bruce Wallace was the eldest child of William Quinn Wallace and Eleanor Wigton Wallace. He was born June 3, 1830, at Sadsburyville, Chester County, Pennsylvania. When seven, his father moved the family to Harrisburg where he took a position in the state auditor general's office. After an ordinary education, young Wallace entered the employ of his grandfather who operated a foundry and store at Rock Hill in Huntingdon County.

In January 1852, when twenty-one, Wallace left Pennsylvania for San Francisco, accompanied by a young friend and his uncle, A. Jackson Wigton. Traveling via the Panama route, they finally reached California. There hardships had to be faced. In 1854, Wallace was employed as supercargo

on a vessel bound for Australia and the Far East. He returned from his overseas voyage to resume his search for a land-oriented career. But his only claim to fame apparently lies in his service with the 1856 San Francisco Vigilance Committee, as attested to in his letters written to Pennsylvania kin.

The year following his stint as "sheriff" of the Vigilance Committee, he married Josephine Lawrence, a young widow with a small son, August 3, 1857. Death claimed him at a young age, thirty-one, on January 23, 1861. He "died from softening of the brain, from over work," and was buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery in San Francisco, survived by his widow and stepson. In April 1885, his remains were sent east to be reinterred in the Wallace family lot at Mt. Kalmia Cemetery in Harrisburg.

To compliment these heretofore unpublished documents, Robert A. Weinstein has prepared a brief essay to accompany five unique photographs of San Francisco and Fort Vigilance in 1856. As a personal aside, two photographs are included here—the graves and monuments of the two men hanged by the Committee, Casey and Cora. Also included is a broadside of the Constitution of the 1856 Vigilance Committee located in the Huntington Library, San Marino. These new documents and illustrations may rightly be labelled as an agenda to the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners' Silver Anniversary publication, for such they are.

* * * * *

The Sherman Letter

San Francisco, Cal.

Monday, November 3, 1856

Governor Johnson, Sacramento

Dear Sir:

On Saturday night last I waited at the Pacific Express office and received your letter of Nov. 1 on the arrival of the Sacramento Boat.

I read your letter with much interest and assure you that I have always and still do believe that your whole desire has been to execute the high duties devolved on you in a manner worthy of your office. I know that you would hold no correspondence with the Vigilance Committee or any men

acting for them, and all I supposed possible was that on an actual delivery to me or to Gen. Kibbe of the State arms, you would say that the Proclamation would be withdrawn. On Saturday the warehouse receipts for 31 cases of arms was placed in my hands subject to a promise from me to return them to the parties from whom I received them, unless at 3½ PM, I would promise that the Proclamation would be withdrawn. When that time arrived, I was in possession of your dispatch dated Nov. 1, 2-5 PM. "I have written fully. In our conversation I stated my intentions, but I shall not in advance make any promises. The withdrawal of the Proclamation must occur without any prior promise to do so."

Signed J.N.J.

I felt certain that if the arms could be sent to you Saturday afternoon, you would withdraw the proclamation, but I would not pass my absolute promise and so answered. I asserted to the Gentlemen that the chances were 999 in 1000, that their object would be attained, but you can well understand that I could not pass my word when I had not the absolute certainty on which to base a promise.

The 31 cases about which I telegraphed you no doubt contain arms, but whether they hold all the arms I could not tell without personal inspection, and on speaking of the six pounders, I found that they had two given to the California Guard, a body of men who are not true to you, and I had good reason to doubt if you would be willing to act as though they were in the custody of the State Authorities.

I take it for granted that it is now too late to do anything further and that the Election will be held tomorrow subject to the Proclamation, and how far it will be binding or subject to the control of the Executive after the result is made known is beyond my understanding. My opinion is that an Election is not inconsistent with a State of War, for I know that Governor Mason ordered Elections in California during the War with Mexico and the successful candidates were installed in office. I do not think the Election will be void, but that your approval after will legalize the whole. It would be a dangerous exercise of your power to annul an Election should the Candidates succeed whom you reject as hostile to your policy.

I believe the Vigilance Committee still retain their Organization and could wield a dangerous power, and I would like to see them put so completely in the wrong as to arouse on the side of the legal authorities

the opinions of the moderate people here and throughout the State—they Still control the Press—Your Brother has just called, and I will stand ready when he returns to provide from Judge Freelon the paper you request—

12½—Your telegraph is received and I have telegraphed you that I have the letter of Judge Freelon which is herewith enclosed. I have also seen Gen, Kibbe and the Gentlemen who is up at Sacramento. I think the delivery to Kibbe and this letter of Freelon is all you need to justify you in withdrawing the Proclamation and I for one will be glad if you can telegraph it down so that it can be published in the morning papers before the Polls are opened—

Sincerely your friend
W. T. Sherman

* * * * *

The Wallace Letters

San Francisco May 21, 1856

Dear Father:

Not a moment leisure. I am aid to Chief of Vig. Committee. Requires all my time. Don't be alarmed for me. The danger is over. We have the hounds or villains as you would call them secured. The Bulletin I send you I took from the murder Casey's room when I was placing his guard over him. Keep it as a sort of relic for every man connected with this revolution will be proud of it. . . .

* * * * *

San Francisco June 20, 1856

Dear Sister Annie:

I have but a few moments to devote to you. Been kept so busy for the past month, day & night. Sleeping in my clothes all the time, ready for emergencies. We are a powerful organization. San Francisco has been ruled by murderers & villains long enough. We are sweeping them from the country. I don't know how long this may last yet but there is every appearance of its continuing some time. The Governor has issued his proclamation calling on the militia. Very few responded to his call and they are the ones we are banishing. We number several thousands. Our army is larger by considerable than Genl. Taylor's at Buena Vista. Among us are several preachers, some old men sixty years of age & all the merchants & in fact all the respectable portion of the community. . . .

* * * * *

Fort Vigilance
San Francisco July 5, 1856

Dear Mother:

I scarcely know what to say to you. The Vigilance Committee are still at work clearing out the Murderers, Thieves, Ballot box stuffers & c. We will send off to-day Six, two of them are from Philadelphia. We have in custody a Judge of the Supreme Court, David S. Terry, now under trial for stabbing one of our men while attempting to arrest a scoundrel, who was an intimate friend of the Judge's. The man who was wounded is still alive and there is a chance now for his recovery; if he dies, the Judge will hang. He is formerly from Texas, has a notorious reputation. Killed a man in Galveston. Stabbed a witness in open court in this country. He can never again take a seat on the "Bench" in California. Yesterday was a peculiar Fourth of July. Some few fire companies & military were parading, but our Six thousands thought it would be bad taste to make any display until our work is done. You should have seen the rush of excited people when the news spread that Terry had killed Hopkins. We surrounded the armories of the "Law and Murder" party, took them prisoners, with arms and ammunitions, thus in an hour completely annihilating them. A man named Andrews and myself took "Terry," put him into a carriage, and guarded by three thousand muskets brought him to our quarters. I don't know when we will disband, but not until we have finished our work. . . .

* * * * *

Committee of Vigilance Rooms
San Francisco, Aug. 19th/56

Dear Father:

Yesterday was a glorious day for *Vigilants* in this city. 'Twas just 3 months since we first appeared on the Streets in arms. On that occasion ('twas a Sunday) we marched three thousand of our men from our Rooms on Sacramento St. (Since known as Fort Vigilance or Fort Gunny Bags) all was silent as the grave, not a strain of music to enliven us, but on every countenance you could read the determination to accomplish our purpose, which was to take from the County Jail & the custody of corrupt authorities, the murderers Casey and Cora. Oscar Smith, "Chief of Police Department," & myself went ahead of the party. He then asked me how I was armed. I said only my revolver. He said I had better get a Bowie knife for "Bob" says he, I will not conceal the danger from you, if we have to fight for those prisoners, you and I will have to enter that Jail to take them. Fortunately

our numbers convinced the authorities that resistance would be madness. Consequently we gained our object without firing a shot. Since then in making the numerous arrests although Pistols have been fired & knives used no lives have been lost. Hopkins who was stabbed by Judge Terry on the 21st June has contrary to all expectation survived and is now able to walk about.

Yesterday as I was saying, was set apart for a *Parade* of our forces. We turned out about 5,000 men under arms. It was the most imposing sight I ever witnessed. I never in my life saw so many persons together (who all appeared to hail us as their deliverers from a worse than a Tyrant's rule, that of the villains whom we have either *Banished* from the *state* with orders never to return, under the *penalty of Death* or already sent on that long journey. The sidewalks, windows, doors, balconies &c. were thronged with old & young. I had no idea that San Francisco could boast of so many lovely faces. Bouquets & wreaths were showered upon us as we marched through the different streets. I paraded 124 of my men, all splendid looking fellows, and most of them real dare-devils, in fact my boys are the only ones who have had any fighting to do, as we had to make all the arrests & ship away the *Banished*. By the way I have not told you of my promotion, from "Deputy Chief" to "Chief of Police." I am now at the head of the Police Department of the Committee of Vigilance. This organization is divided into three Departments, the Executive, Military, & Police. Each one has its own chief. The Military and Police are independent of each other, but both act under the orders of the Executive Committee, which is something similar to a Senate. It is composed of our best men all of them deeply interested in the welfare of our state, all of them men of experience, & most of them over forty years of age. Consequently you hear of no rash proceedings on their part, as would be the case if young men filled their places. The Chiefs of the Military & Police are appointed by the Executive Committee. I consider the approbation & confidence of such a body of men of more value than anything else in this world. The newspaper accounts of yesterdays parade are not altogether correct, as their reporters have no knowledge of the secret proceedings of the Committee and have to pick up their information as best they can. Everything passed off quietly until about 6 o'clock P.M. when we had arrived within a short distance of our Quarters. I had

cautioned my men to pay no attention to anything that might be said of any of the "*Law & Murder*" party as we were passing along, but two of the Ruffians who had been using very insulting language to Ladies & others friendly to us & emboldened by our forbearance approached close to our line & applied a very insulting epithet to one of my men, but the rowdies had calculated a little too much on our good nature. To their astonishment, they received a knock down from a couple of my boys. Their friends rushed to their assistance. For a short time the fight was pretty general. At last got the two I wanted and carried them to our rooms. They have been tried to-day. One of them will take a sea voyage to-morrow. On his trial it appeared that he was a noted scoundrel, but from certain influences had gone unwhipt of justice.

We shall probably adjourn in a few days, but ready to meet again at a signal that we are needed, and woe be to them if they give us cause to assemble again.

I have been so situated for the past eight months that I have not corresponded regularly with my many acquaintances in the states. I recd mother's letter by the last steamer, the first in a long time. Mother asks why I need take such an active part in the present difficulties. She believes the movement is right but does not want me to endanger my life, plenty of others, let them do it. Wouldn't you feel ashamed of me were I cowardly enough to stand back at such a time as this. I could easily have done so, as I was in Nevada (some 200 miles from here) when King was shot (the cause of the present movement). A few minutes after the occurrence, the news was telegraphed all over the State. I knew what would follow & the same night found me on my way to San Francisco, nor was I wrong in my calculations. The day after my arrival we took the Jail. Since then I have devoted my every thought to the welfare of this Organization, & here is where I have found true Patriotism, men risking life & property with the chance of being branded as traitors to our country in case we did not succeed. . . .

* * * * *

Executive Chambers, V.C.
San Francisco Nov. 5th, 1856

Dear Mother:

By the last Mail Steamer I recd your letter of Oct. 3rd. Yesterday was Election day. Buchanan has carried this state. Fillmore has polled a larger vote than Fremont through the State. This City will give Buchanan a small majority. The

People's Ticket has carried in this city, upholding the Vigilance Committee and turning out the rowdies who have had sway. I was agreeably surprised when the Polls closed yesterday without bloodshed. I thought we would either have a bloody day or such a one as I had not before witnessed in San Francisco, for order and quiet. The fact is they feared to commence a row, knowing that if they did, the chances were they might so taken as ornaments for decorating the Lampposts on the streets.

You need have no fear for my safety in the event of my visiting New York. I would feel more secure there than here & the fact is they know well who to attack, and when, I value them as highly as I do a *cur dog*, & would shoot one as quickly as the other, if they should attack me. . . .

Phil Herbert (Keating's murderer) goes to Washington by the Steamer of to-day. He yesterday sent a challenge to Tom King for something displeasing that had been published in the Bulletin. King took no notice of him. Word was brought me that Herbert was laying in wait to attack Tom King as he should leave his office to go home which was about 4½ o'clock P.M. I rather imagine *Mr. Herbert* saw some persons lounging about the neighborhood which did not add to his feeling of *safety* in case he should assassinate King. So he left and that was the end of it.

The Steamer has been delayed for several hours to-day to allow an opportunity of sending Election returns. The time is almost up. . . . Some additional returns just recd make the vote of this State for President somewhat doubtful.

Postscript. As in all works, invariably an author will commit a few errors of commission as well as omission. This is true of *The Vigilance Committee of 1856*. There is one bibliographical entry which should have been clarified more succinctly. Stanley A. Coblentz, *Villians and Vigilantes: The Story of James King of William and Pioneer Justice in California*, originally appeared in 1936. New material, however, was incorporated into an 1957 edition, and in the 1961 edition, which was cited. In my opinion, the latter edition is the best, and that is the one I relied on, rather than the original imperfect 1936 edition. So much for an error of commission.

Recently, in reading a book catalogue, a habit to which I am terribly addicted, I

came across a fugitive governmental document on the 1856 Vigilance Committee, which I promptly purchased. This item should have been included in *The Vigilance Committee of 1856* bibliography—it is important: "Report of the Secretary of War, Communicating, In compliance with a resolution of the Senate, of the 2d instant, correspondence in relation to the proceedings of the Vigilance Committee in San Francisco, California," U.S. Senate, *Executive Document No. 43*, 34th Congress, 3d Session (Washington, D.C., 1857), 29 pp.

One reviewer felt that Stewart E. White, *The Forty-Niners: A Chronicle of the California Trail and El Dorado* (New Haven, 1921), should have been included in the bibliographical discussion because it had been widely used as a textbook. Chapters XIII-XVI, pp. 174-265, center on the 1856 Vigilance Committee. The treatment is sympathetic, but the research is dated.

It should be noted that it was not my intent to cover every book which had dealt with the Vigilance Committee of 1856 either in passing reference or in some detail. My intent was to discuss only major works which focused on that extraordinary event.



The grave and monument to Charles Cora in Mission Dolores cemetery, San Francisco. His wife Belle, whom he married while waiting execution in Fort Gunnybags, lies by his side.



Typical scene of downtown San Francisco in 1856.

SAN FRANCISCO — 1856

By Robert Weinstein

Overnight the California Gold Rush transformed Yerba Buena into a new metropolis, San Francisco; a new name for California, a new and exciting name for the gold-maddened world of that day.

So many tales were told of this fabled city that it began to loom larger than life, a myth that grew more unbelievable with every retelling. Need mounted in all quarters for a believable picture of San Francisco, the flood of words written and spoken about it was proving inadequate, offering imprecision and romance and far too little dependable fact. People needed to see for themselves. Only the newly-discovered photograph, product of an infant art, could offer such images. Nothing could show the looked-for reality better than the new "sun pictures." Why not use it to supply the information needed?

Photographers came to the Bay City from all over the world, some arriving to look for gold they never found. Others came as travelers to report on what they found in Eldorado; some few of these reporters brought equipment to make the new "sun

pictures." Only a few of the professionals that came hoped to make a living selling their photographs and not all of them stayed on in San Francisco.

Hundreds of credible and revealing images were nevertheless taken by such daguerreotypists as Robert Vance, Fred Coombs, Albert Southworth, Carleton Watkins and Mrs. Molly Shannon, midwife and daguerrian. They were followed soon after by the ambrotypists and when the glass negative process was introduced in 1851, a technique that allowed photographers to make as many paper prints from one negative as they wanted, such views of the growing city as are reproduced here mushroomed.

We have shown three typical views of "downtown" San Francisco in 1856. They were paper prints, pieces of writing paper made light sensitive by the photographer in advance of exposure and developed by the naked sun's rays; chemicals were not required as they are today. We know such photographs now as developing-out prints and they were sold then, mounted on



Kearney Street in 1856

cardboards embossed with the photographer's name and address.

These three were photographed between January and June of 1856 by G. R. Fardon and are part of a larger group he made showing most of the streets and significant civic and mercantile structures of San Francisco at that time. They were published by Herre and Bauer in the City at that time under the title, *San Francisco Album, Photographs of the most beautiful views and public buildings of San Francisco.*

Neither cameras nor lenses in those days were "fast" enough to stop motion as cameras can today and inanimate views of landscape as these were popular. *Anything* that moved would blur in consequence of the long exposure required and we can see blurred images in one of these photographs. The daguerreotype had not yet been altogether replaced by the new glass negative process in 1856 and J. M. Ford's well patronized portrait gallery on Montgomery Street can easily be discerned.

The view of Portsmouth Plaza is one of the earliest we have of the historic founding center and some of the familiar buildings, The Bella Union, the Eldorado and the Verandah Store are in evidence, the newly planted saplings testimony to rampant civic pride. The widely sold "knock down" houses prefabbed in the East and brought to San Francisco, round the Horn, in the holds of sailing ships dot the sandy hills in abundance. Look at the varieties of style in architecture we can see in these 1856 views. They are an astonishing reflection of

the cosmopolitan influences that took root in the infant frontier city.

Of the two views of *Fort Gunnybags* reproduced, the cover broadside is the better-known and is well worth close scrutiny, offering the careful observer detailed views of the sandbagged ramparts fronting the hastily occupied "fort," the alarm bell on its temporary wooden structure, the emplacements for the cannon mounted to impress, perhaps more than to fire, and the bayoneted and rifled guards loyally defending the temporary citadel of "Law and Order." The less frequently seen view showing the juncture of Front and Davis streets on Sacramento, the fort's location, has its own interesting revelations. Rarely have we seen better delineation of the wooden streets and sidewalks of Gold Rush San Francisco than this photograph affords. The steel shutters that transformed brick buildings into brick ovens every time they were the victims of fire are evident in the Whiting and Company store on the corner. The unease from building on San Francisco's sandy soil is most clearly apparent by merely sighting along the sagging fronts of the structures gracing Sacramento Street. And this after standing but a few short years.



View over the plaza in 1856.

An interesting note in Fardon's best-known photograph of *Fort Gunnybags* are the remains of the earlier "water lots," relics of when the area was under the waters of the Bay. One can see the driven pilings and the wooden walkways that transformed the shallow Bay into saleable real estate; the very pilings still being uncovered as San Francisco digs into its past to build the city anew.

Robert A. Weinstein

In Remembrance
**GEORGE E.
FULLERTON**

1898-1977

By Paul Bailey

It seems sad, and most difficult to understand, that the taller the tree, the more rugged and stalwart its limbs, the more inevitable is the certainty that it will be severed from life, and be cut down.

George E. Fullerton, especially to his fellow Westerners, was just such a tree—big, rugged, tall, and inspiring—and to us who have known him from the beginning—the felling was a little too merciless, cruel, and prolonged for us to fully comprehend the sometimes necessary edicts of our earthly sojourn.

From the hour of its birth, Los Angeles Corral of Westerners has enjoyed the rugged, faithful, beautiful tree that was George E. Fullerton. Before our eyes we have watched the tree grow to stately stature, and before our eyes we have witnessed its inevitable cutting. For thirty-one years George has been an essential and beloved part of Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. For thirty-one years he sat with us, worked with us, grew stately in our midst, shared our victories, and shared our problems.

One cannot think back to a single hour in those three decades of existence when George was not with us—working and sharing. In thumbing through the nostalgic and proud shelf of every monumental *Brand Book* published by Los Angeles Corral of Westerners—we find the name of George E. Fullerton gracing the published roster of its members. In the first *Brand Book*, published in 1947, there is George's name. In the historical files of the Corral's magazine, *The Branding Iron*, George's name glides everlastingly through in the various posts and activities he shared in his long sojourn in our midst.

In the first formative meetings of Los Angeles Corral in 1946—held in the living room of Homer Britzman's home—the former



San Marino home of Charles Russell, *Trail's End*—George Fullerton shared in the actual setting up of The Westerners—an organization he lived to see grow world-wide. At the first official meeting, held that same year, at the old Redwood House, alongside the Los Angeles *Times* at First and Broadway, he shared one of the fifty Boston sea-captain chairs, with the other founding fathers of our most unique and beloved order. Today there are mighty few left of those oldtimers. The great ones on the roster who have passed on, and now the roster listing our beloved George—reads like a who's who of American historians, notable artists, and bookmen.

In 1960, George Fullerton served the Corral as its Deputy Sheriff. In 1961 he was chosen as its Sheriff. He served faithfully and well in many capacities, filling working posts on boards and committees—and always doing his job consummately well. On *Brand Book* No. 10, in 1963, he served as editor and associate editor. Always with us, he was a vital and essential part of the organization he loved.

Among the writings of George E. Fullerton, no finer example can be pointed to than the historical piece he did for the Westerner's *Brand Book* No. 7 (1957) entitled "The Fabulous Greathouse



Sheriff George Fullerton—1961



George Fullerton and Ray Billington make a toast in 1963.



Harv Johnson, George Fullerton, and LeRoy Hafén at a Corral gathering.

Brothers.” Yesterday, thinking deeply on George, I took that particular *Brand Book* from the shelf, and re-read George’s writings concerning the brothers Great-house, pioneers out of Kentucky, of early Virginia state, adventurers, stage drivers

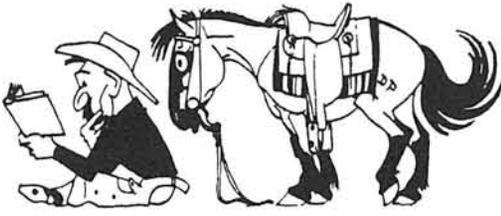
and coach entrepreneurs of Shasta County—whose rollicking exploits included a little California ship piracy in the Civil War. I need not tell you how much I enjoyed it, and the gifted way George had of telling it.

After treating myself to this re-reading of the Fullerton opus—I turned to the rear of the book—to the bibliographical notes on the contributors. I read with interest and delight: “George E. Fullerton—a native of San Francisco—and a product of the schools of Oakland. His grandparents came to California in the early fifties, and his mother was a native of California. He married Isabel Greathouse, also of a pioneer California family.” So George had been unabashedly writing about his fractious kinfolks! And that, in my language, makes George Fullerton truly a Westerner!

For no man who knew him could ever doubt or discount the love he held for the organization his hands and mind had so truly helped to fashion. All one has to remember about George Fullerton’s love and loyalty towards the Westerners are those many many nights when George had to be wheeled into the meetings, his once strong limbs mutilated by surgery, in constant pain, but his bushy blue eyes still alert and dancing to the events, and talks, and camaraderie, which make up an evening at the Westerners. There are few men living with the guts to pay such a painful price to remain in the circle of fraternity with the men of thirty years of close and brotherly association. George Fullerton was a real Westerner—and make no mistake.

And just a thought should be added to the attentive care of another charter member Westerner, and Honorary Member and ex-sheriff—Paul Galleher—in so many times making it possible for the handicapped George to share these precious evenings with his friends, almost up to the last. Can’t you just see those beetle eyebrows of George, wherever he is as of this moment, lifting appreciatively, and his resonant voice saying “That Galleher fellow was a real honest-to-God Westerner.”

And so was George E. Fullerton. Believe you me—he was! It’s not easy or a happy thing to stand by and watch the old trees fall.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

LOS ANGELES IN CIVIL WAR DAYS, 1860-65, by John W. Robinson. Los Angeles Miscellany Series 8, 173 pp., 16 pp. of illustrations, 2 maps. Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 1977. \$20.00.

Corresponding Member John Robinson's contribution to the growing list of monographs published by Dawson's Book Shop and known as the Los Angeles Miscellany Series is not only the heftiest volume in the series thus far, but also one of the most assiduously researched and well-written.

The scope of the book is deliberately narrow, sketching life in Los Angeles and Southern California during the years 1860 into 1865, covering the approach of Civil War conflict and the conflict itself. But by a willingness to digress on germane social, economic, political, and military matters, and relating these issues to what was happening with "the larger drama of state and nation," the author has avoided the danger of historical myopia and has significantly added to our understanding of this fascinating phase of Southern California's past.

The situation in Southern California during the years of the Civil War was clearly one rife with turmoil and dissension. Unlike the rest of the state, our area was heavily in sympathy with the Confederate cause, a natural outgrowth of the fact that so many of the early emigrants to Southern California were from either Texas or border slave states. The election results of 1860, for example, showed Lincoln running a poor third in the Los Angeles precinct.

Helping to fan the coals in this hotbed of

secessionist sympathy and activity was one Henry Hamilton, a native of Londonderry, Ireland, editor of the *Los Angeles Star*, and an avowed negrophobe and Lincoln detractor. Typical of his invective was the characterization of Lincoln as a "corrupt, usurping, bloody-handed despot." Hamilton was ultimately arrested for treason, imprisoned briefly at Drum Barracks, then placed on a steamer bound for Alcatraz, only to be released a mere ten days after his initial arrest. Thoroughly unchastened, his vitriolic and bigoted editorials continued to espouse the Confederate cause.

Not surprisingly, there were genuine fears of a conspiracy to deliver Southern California to the South. A secret organization, dubbed the Knights of the Golden Circle, was active here in efforts to recruit for the Confederate army and to get these volunteers to the Confederacy. And there is little doubt that the Knights might have made a bold move to seize Southern California had Confederate forces from Texas succeeded in reaching the Colorado River. The "Monte Boys," rabid Southerners from the nearby town of El Monte, were another group of armed sympathizers who marched out more than once spoiling for trouble and damning the Union cause.

To control this potentially dangerous situation, Federal troops were hastily assigned here, taking up temporary posts on the outskirts of the city to begin with, then later establishing Camp Latham on Ballona Creek (near today's Culver City), and Drum Barracks down at Phineas Banning's town of Wilmington. The former was used to train Colonel Henry Carleton's California Volunteers; the latter became the major headquarters for shipping military supplies and equipment all over the Southwest. Drum Barracks also housed Beale's famous but shortlived Camel Corps when it was moved down from Fort Tejon.

The presence of soldiers effectively contained Southern California for the duration of the Civil War struggle, but these years remained marked by conflict and unrest between those who adamantly supported the Union and those who just as fervently backed the Confederacy. Fortunately, as Harris Newmark recorded, "men on both

sides grew hotheaded and abused one another roundly, but few bones were broken and little blood was shed."

Today, the old officers quarters at Drum Barracks is the sole tangible memento of the Civil War period in Los Angeles. But thanks to John Robinson's skill and industry, we have in this excellent book a permanent and valuable insight into the events and the people that figured so importantly during this turning point in both our community's and our nation's history.

—Tony Lehman

FORTY YEARS' GATHERIN'S, by Spike Van Cleve. The Lowell Press, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977. \$11.95.

Reading this book is a unique experience. It is the next best thing to spending your vacations on the Lazy K Bar ranch on the fringes of the Crazy Mountains in the Big Sky State of Montana. You get to know Spike, his family, his horses and his fabulous "Melville country."

The book is written in the author's genuine horsey cowboy language, descriptive and salty, just as he talks. Here is a man who likes what he is, what he does, and where he is. His story proves it and tells you why. From start to finish it is full of what Spike terms *joie de vivre*. This part of The Treasure State is off the beaten path and has remained a horse and cattle country hidden away from the modernization of farms and towns.

As Spike puts it, "the region was never easy on people, or horses, and it was tough to get by, but it marked its own with a wry humor, deep toughness of character, individuality, a streak of nonconformity and an innate decency . . . they were good people, and I grew up with, fought with, played with and worked with them all my life."

In describing the book and the title, he says "the old-time ranchhand wasn't exactly top heavy with worldly goods. His horse gear, a bedroll, and a warbag—as a rule a seamless sack holding a few clothes—was about all, and in total it was always spoken of as, "my forty years' gatherin's."

And they are well worth reading.

—Ralph Miracle



HARDLY ANY FENCES, by John Hilton. Baja California Travel Series XXXVI, 189 pp., 8 tipped-in plates of Hilton's paintings. Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 1977. \$36.00.

Feeling sure that this book will be compared with Hilton's earlier work, *Sonora Sketchbook*, I reread that volume, possibly for the fourth time and found it as fresh as ever. We had just returned from an Easter Week jaunt to Sonora and had spent some time in Los Alamos, about which that work is centered. While much of John's writings are concerned more with people than places, we found little changed in Sonora, once one gets away from the modern tourist developments along Mex 15, Bahía Kino and Guaymas. Reading from the *Sketchbook* we could understand John's enjoyment of evenings spent in doña Luisa's parlor and the companionship and friendship of this cool room that opened onto a flower-filled patio. We spent an evening there, though now it is doña Armida's parlor, but the old Steinway and that "most elaborately hand-painted spittoon" are still there. While we discussed Mexico's problems of development, most of our conversation concerned Juanito, and on leaving doña Armida gave me two warm embraces and made me promise to carry them back to Juanito. This I promised, though probably I shall deliver them *a la subrogada*.

By comparison, Baja California has greatly changed since Hilton wrote *Hardly Any Fences* in 1958-59. Reading the text, one has a feeling that it is describing contemporary Baja, California, and that a traveler would have no trouble reconciling the material with the present roadways. This is just not so. Again much of the material concerns the people of the Peninsula, but only a few remain. Alberta and Aida Meling still hold forth at Rancho San José, and this part of the description would be little different today. Doña Anita Espinosa of El Rosario is still as active as ever, are Antero and Cruz Diaz of Bahía de Los Angeles. But Dick Daggetts, *padre y hijo*, are both gone, as are Charley Utt, Ginger Lamb, Hattie Hamilton, and as

we were reading the book, word came of the passing of Arturo Grosso of Laguna Chapala.

This volume contains twelve chapters, each written independently, and each is more or less complete in itself. The first is one of the best and tells of a journey into the Sierra San Pedro Mártir to produce a painting for Braulio Maldonado, newly elected governor of newly created state of Baja California Norte (1956). One will find these upland valleys little changed and still reached only by muleback or on foot.

As *Sonora Sketchbook* is centered about the village of Los Alamos, so is *Scarcely Any Fences* centered about the resort at Bahía de Los Angeles, about halfway down the long slender peninsula. And of course Antero Diaz and Dick Daggett are the lead characters. Daggett has left us, about a decade ago, and Diaz has greatly expanded his operation, but there is still some of that feeling of being at the end of everything when one arrives at Bahía. Three of the chapters concern the rugged trips and the problems of driving over what passed for roads twenty years ago. The modern visitor, who finds that the highway is paved all the way to the edge of the resort, will have some trouble relating to the accounts. His charming story of the Virgin of the Rock is now but a story of past years, as the Transpeninsular Highway bypasses the lonely Virgin by several miles.

If one wishes to attempt to find the Lost Mission of Santa Isabel, he will find it as inaccessible as when Dana and Ginger Lamb were attempting to locate it and the Hiltons were lost attempting to find the Lambs. If you were to stop in Ensenada, you will find that Gaston Flourie is still as sure as ever that he will soon locate the Lost Mission. One of the most delightful incidents related refers to Gaston and his dreams. To quote:

"Recently (c. 1954) one of the authors of a well known and very accurate work came through Ensenada and stopped to see my friend Gaston Flourie . . . and stated that there was positively no such thing as a lost mission . . . and that Gaston was wasting his time looking further.

"Can you image this horrible practical fellow," moaned Gaston, "trying to convince

me that this Mission of Santa Isabel does not exist? It is a crime in this country to destroy a man's property, but, my friend, it should be a crime to destroy a man's dreams!"

Though years have passed, I am sure that Peter is still as sure as ever of his logic, and Gaston of his dreams—and I am still more positive that Gaston will be able to come up with more dreams of his lost mission and that not even a covey of writers could ever destroy them.

Two chapters cover the Hiltons' trips to Isla de Angel de la Guardia and these are two of the most important stories of the volume. This arid island is still as unexplored as when Padre Linck, the Jesuit, first thought he saw lights on the island in 1765 and sailed across the strait to check it out. John made a journey up a rugged arroyo and located groves of blue palms in an upper canyon. They did not find any open or flowing water; still where blue palms flourish, water can not be far from the surface. As far as I know this is the first documentation of the possibility of Indian habitation of La Guardia, though the late Burr Belden had often told me of John's exploration of this island.

Other chapters tell of trips south to El Arco, located at the border between Baja California and Baja California Sur (now reached by a paved highway), and of a foolhardy attempt to drive across the unbroken sand stretches of the Vizcaino Desert toward Laguna Guerrero Negro, which he successfully completed.

All in all it is amazing how a few years have changed Baja California from a last frontier, whose exploration was a challenge to those who ventured into its bare lands, to the tourist haven of recent time. Still there is much of the Central Desert that has not been reached by paved highways, though irrigated farms are becoming increasingly frequent and even much of the range land is now closed by barb-wire fences.

While Hilton's journeys are of a different era than those of such as Linck, Consag and Portolá, some annotation of Hilton's writings would have been as desirable as those of the mission fathers and of the soldiers of the King.

—Walt Wheelock