LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL

The Grizzly Bear

J. GOODMAN

JUNE 1979 LOS ANGELES CORRAL NUMBER 135

Law and Order in the Tropics Texas Style: The Career of Ran Runnels

by John Kemble

For two decades in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, there was a surprising extension of the life and flavor of the American West to the Isthmus of Panama. The California gold excitement, which achieved full bloom in 1849, brought thousands of Argonauts to the isthmus since this route offered the shortest passage from the Atlantic states or Europe to the gold fields in terms of time required for the journey. This advantageous time factor continued to bring travelers to Panama throughout the 1850's and 1860's until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 provided a much shorter route of travel; then the Panama route between New York and California fell into disuse. From 1849 to 1869, however, there were not only thousands of Americans and Europeans crossing the isthmus, but also many established themselves there as merchants, hotel keepers, ticket agents, and managers of baggage forwarding concerns. A railroad across the isthmus was completed in 1855, and work on this project employed many foreigners. Such a collection of men engaged in transportation and travel created a highly fluid social situation in which lawlessness flourished. From barroom brawls to attacks on travelers or specie-laden mule trains, the whole gamut of crime was familiar. In the annals of efforts to combat this, the name of a young Texan, Randall Runnels, stands out as a leader in the campaign to restore law and order.

The Panama route was recognized as the speediest means of travel betwen the coasts before the advent of the Gold Rush, and, with the aid of subsidies from the government, steamship lines had been established on both the Atlantic and Pacific. The pioneer vessel of the Pacific Mail Steamship Co., the *California,* had sailed from New York in October 1848 with only a handful of passengers, but by the time she left Panama for San Francisco in February 1849 she carried her absolute capacity of 365, and still left nearly five hundred gold seekers behind.

Demand for passage to California quickly stimulated the placing of more vessels on the run, and the Pacific Mail had plenty of competition. Time and again, however, the newspapers reported crowds awaiting transportation at Panama since the number of ships available on the Pacific side was always less than on the Atlantic. In March 1852, for instance, there were reported to be

(Continued on Page Four)

The Branding Iron

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THE BRANDING IRON solicits articles of 1,500 words or less, dealing with every phase of the Old West. Contributions from members and friends welcomed.

THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

MARCH

The third gathering of 1979 was orientated to the where's and why-for's of feuding — Texas style — as presented by the distinguished southwestern historian Leland Sonnichsen. Styling himself a "feud hunter" (primarily because he is so "peaceful" by nature), Sonnichsen surveyed nearly 46 years of researching Texas "difficulties," highlighting various religious and political fusses and some others whose origins are lost even to the participants.

Describing a feud as a "prolonged quarrel between families or factions which involves bloodshed," most of the Texas feuds started with stealing. Rapidly, however, they usually advanced to "lay-waying" (the Lone Star version of way-laying — Texans insist on being different) one of the opposition in the back after he had ridden past; the spot where the victim's suspenders crossed made an excellent aiming point. This, of course, led to righteous retribution of like measure, and a real rip-snorter was cut loose.

Being privy to the arguments between "Regulators and Moderators," "Jaybirds and Woodpeckers," and several other warring factions not so colorfully named has led Sonnichsen to experience some problems of his own. Anxious to publish his data, several of the people involved have cast jaundiced eyes toward such ambition and have pointedly expressed their displeasure at this upstart who nosed about in affairs which at best were none of his business. One group even invited him to a lonely, out-of-the-way hamlet to "discuss" his findings and plans. He replied that he couldn't make it, which is

probably why he could make it to Taix's, much to the enjoyment of an appreciative Westerner audience.

APRIL

Allan D. Krieg regaled Westerners with stories, tall tales, and folklore of Western railroads and railroad personalities. Many of the anecdotes and situations Allan related have become oral tradition, stories repeated again and again over time, with each succeeding narrator embellishing his version until ultimately the story reached that point where — although it was still grounded on a true occurrence — the rendition bore slight if any resemblance to the actual event. Many a hero of a railroad tall tale was actually nowhere near the scene of the action at the time!

All in all, it was a most entertaining talk, and customers of Freres Taix must have wondered at the loud bursts of laughter that periodically shattered the peaceful ambience of the main dining room. After Allan's delivery, some Westerners reciprocated by presenting a few lusty and amusing tall tales of their own.

MAY

Westerners were treated to a film about the development of the Cowboy Hall of Fame, as well as a compelling talk by Dean Krakel, who vividly described how he took on the job of first Managing Director of it in 1964, at a time when it was merely an empty concrete shell on a hill, with entrance gates padlocked shut, possessed of a million dollar debt and zero assets.

At the cost of utter determination, dedication, abundant energy, and a good fifteen years of his life, Dean Krakel turned the Cowboy Hall of Fame into the reality that now houses the finest collection of Western Art in existence, viewed by countless thousands, of visitors annually.

Dean also stressed his association with and admiration for his mentor, Thomas Gilcrease. On the whole, his talk was both highly informative and emotionally charged. It became obvious that he is an outstanding personality in his own right, and that great appreciation is due him for his enormous and important contributions. His efforts benefit not only those who love to view and study great works of art depicting the West, but also the artists who brought such masterpieces into being. Immortalizing their creations, Dean reminded us: "Great works of art can't die, can't run away, don't have to be fed or bred. They just live down through the ages."

After Dean's talk, Iron Eyes Cody, in a truly generous gesture, donated to the Cowboy Hall of Fame from his private collection a magnificent painting by Clarence Ellsworth and a carving by Andy Anderson.

Corral Chips

In an appropriate nod to his dedicated career as an author and publisher, ex-sheriff *Paul Bailey* is elected as the new president of the Western Writers of America.

Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. presents a talk on his "Adventures in Editing a *Lakeside Classic*" to his fellow Zamarano Club members.

Featured on the KNX-TV program "It Takes All Kinds" is Associate Member *Victor Plukas,* who discusses for the television audience Security Pacific National Bank's outstanding collection of photographs depicting the history of Los Angeles.

C. M. Richard W. Cunningham, outgoing president of the Southern California Chapter of the Nautical Research Guild, has been elected vice-president of the San Francisco Valley Historical Society.

Abraham Hoffman delivers a paper on "Textbooks and Mexican Americans" at the annual meeting of the Community College Social Science Association.

(Continued on Page Thirteen)

between three and four thousand men at Panama awaiting passage to California. Panama City had a total stable population of only about ten thousand, and among that number thousands of transients created a situation which could easily lead to public disorder.

The journey from sea to sea at Panama was about fifty miles long. Nearly four fifths of it could be accomplished in small boats on the Chagres River which rose in the highlands and emptied into the Caribbean. Depending on the seasonally changing depth of the river, travelers landed at Cruces or Gorgona, and still had some ten or fifteen miles to cover on foot or muleback. A journey from the Caribbean to the Pacific took about four or five days, and this under tropical conditions with only the most rudimentary arrangements for food and shelter available.

Despite these handicaps, the Panama route offered such attractions of speed — a month to six weeks from New York to San Francisco, as compared to four to six months around Cape Horn or three months for the journey overland — that it attracted thousands. By the middle 'fifties, between fifteen and twenty thousand travelers a year were coming to California via Panama, and about half that number were using the route for the eastward journey. The completion of the Panama Railroad in 1855 reduced the time of the trip across the isthmus itself to four hours, and by the latter 'sixties the scheduled time between New York and San Francisco was three weeks.

Crowding, confusion, and uncertainty characterized the isthmian crossing until the completion of the railroad. The isthmus itself, however, was not heavily populated, and Panama was the only urban center. Thus the transient flow of travelers formed a considerable proportion of the total human population. Furthermore, during the construction of the railroad from 1849 to 1855, it was necessary to import hundreds of laborers from the West Indies, China, Ireland, and the United States. The total situation on the isthmus therefore was one that had all the elements of instability.

Panama was a province of New Granada (now Colombia) whose capital was far-away Bogotá, and local authority was vested in an appointed governor who resided at Panama. The only connection with the major part of the republic was by sea. Constituted authority on the isthmus was weak, and this contributed to the possibility of disorder and violence.

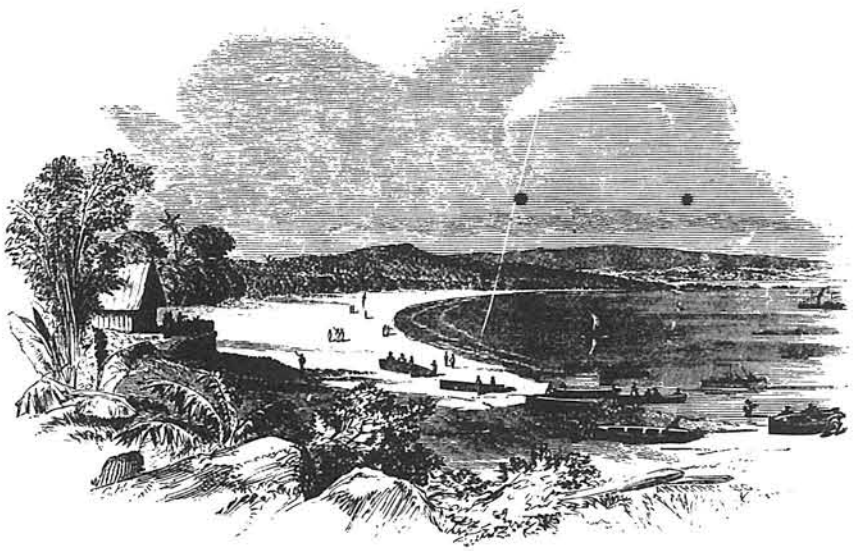
These conditions invited numbers of criminals or potential criminals to descend on the isthmus and take advantage of the situation. Some came from the United States, some from Europe, and others were natives who used their local knowledge and protective coloration to advantage. The chief objects of attack were travelers and goods on the muddy trails between Panama and the Chagres River. Argonauts who had "struck it rich" in California frequently headed home carrying their gold on their persons, and as often as not set out from Panama alone presenting easy targets for gangs of "road agents".

More lucrative prey than individuals were the treasure trains of mules loaded with specie and traveling from Panama to the river or the end of track of the advancing railroad line. These were organized by local express companies or by international concerns such as Adams & Co. or Wells, Fargo. Banks, steamship lines, business houses, or individuals would entrust specie to such a carrier who would agree to transport the gold either across the isthmus or all the way to New York or London for a fixed percentage of its value. The trains were guarded by armed men; but still they were tempting

targets for bands of robbers. Just before Christmas, 1850, the treasure train of Zachrisson & Nelson, a firm of Panama bankers and merchants, was attacked and robbed of $120,000 in treasure. Most of this was recovered in the next few days, however. In September 1851 the train with gold from a Pacific Mail steamer which was under the management of Mosquera, Hurtado & Co. of Panama, and consisting of 70 or 80 mules carrying about $2,000,000 in specie was attacked near the fork of the Cruces and Gorgona roads. Three of the guards were wounded, one mortally, and seven of the mules returned to Panama without their packs — a loss of about $250,000. The guards captured two of the gang, Charles Cromwell and Thomas Summers by name, and they identified six of their colleagues upon threat of summary hanging. Another of the gang, a Dr. Berry of Louisiana, was captured later and brought to Panama. He identified a Dr. Roberts, an Englishman, as the leader of the gang.

In Panama itself there was lawlessnesses and disorder. A reporter for the *Panama Herald* wrote in 1851 that the firing of guns and pistols in the streets had become an intolerable nuisance. The offenders were not only emigrants who might not know that this was against the law, but also were residents who should have been quite aware that there was a heavy fine attached to the practice. At one point a riot developed between Americans and Panamanians, the former accusing a Panamanian boy of a theft which his friends said he did not commit. Two Americans and several Panamanians were killed in the ensuing fight. Policeman in Panama were few and facilities for detaining criminals were unsatisfactory. Frequently the governor reported that the prisons were full. In January 1852, thirteen men escaped from the new "calaboose" in Panama by digging a hole through the rear wall of the building and letting themselves down to the beach behind by a rope.

The isthmian situation was the subject of a lurid, anonymous, paperback novel published in the United States in 1853, and titled: *"The Derienni," or Land Pirates of the Isthmus* . . . It told how a daring gang, apparently all from the United States, attacked the town of Chagres and carried off a beautiful girl before descending on the headquarters of a committee of public safety in Panama. Although the latter event was identified in the book as occurring in July 1851, the Panama press of the day made no mention of it and it was doubtless all fiction. The boldness of the events described, however, was not out of keeping with the situation existing at Panama.



Pacific Terminus of Panama Railroad

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It was to the interest of the steamship companies as well as the officials of the Panama Railroad and local merchants, bankers, and commission houses to correct this disorderly situation, one which the regularly constituted officers of government in Panama seemed unable to manage. In 1850 John Lloyd Stephens, President of the Panama Railroad Co., made a secret agreement with the New Granadan governor to the effect that the railroad might act directly in the policing of the isthmus. Apparently this gave the railroad rights of absolute police power including the imposition of the death penalty without trial or accountability. A secret force was to be assembled to carry out the powers and duties thus assumed by the Panama Railroad.

The selection of the right man to head the force was obviously a matter of the first importance. On the recommendation of Jack Hayes, sheriff of San Francisco and an old Texan, a representative of Howland & Aspinwall traveled to Texas and to a ranch on the Colorado River. Here he interviewed one Randall Runnels, a young man of twenty who had been a Texas Ranger and had served with them in the Mexican War when he was sixteen years of age. A contemporary described him as short and slight. "His hand is small, and looks better suited for a lady's kid glove than to handle a bowie-knife or revolver. His boyish, well-combed head, and delicate features, indicate little of the daring spirit of the man!" Runnels agreed to accept the assignment, and arrived on the isthmus early in 1851.

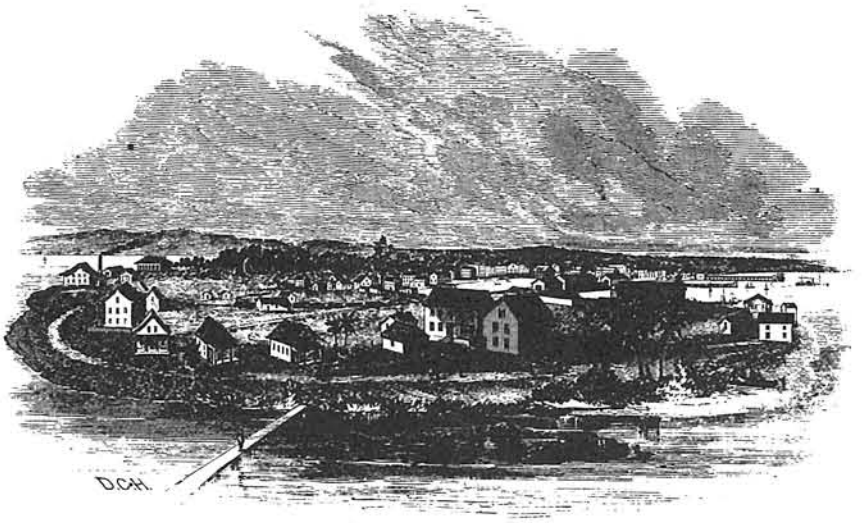
Ostensibly Runnels entered the freighting business operating a mule train service across the isthmus. Covertly he assembled a force of about forty men, a motley lot to say the least. They quietly gathered information in the livery stables, hotels, and bars at Chagres, Gorgona, Cruces, and Panama. Weeks and months passed, and seemingly Runnels would never take action. The railroad officials grew impatient as robberies and murders on the trail continued unchecked. Then, with information finally in hand, the Runnels force rounded up 37 men on a single night in January 1852, and the next morning all 37 were found hanged along the inner side of the Panama sea wall

Ran Runnels

known as the East Battery, a favorite promenade for Argonauts awaiting a steamer for California. One traveler who witnessed the spectacle wrote, "It seemed to be a democratic hanging, all the races of the Isthmus were represented."

Most of the leaders of the Derienni, or isthmian robbers, were removed from the scene by Runnels' mass execution, and many survivors felt that it was the better part of valor to head for other parts. The trails became quiet and reports of violence were rare in the Panama newspapers. Panama merchants felt that the problem had been solved, and Ran went back to his freighting business. He was not as sanguine as many, however, and wrote to William Nelson, United States consul at Panama and a prominent merchant, "There are at least fifty men still at large on the Isthmus who have engaged in murder and banditry in the past, and there is no reason to believe that they will not do so again because a leopard does not change his spots nor a tiger his stripes."

Runnels was right, and trouble developed again in the autumn of 1852. The Wells, Fargo agent at Panama wrote to his home office, "It seems that more bloodshed and funerals is in the offing for your humble and obedient servant on the Isthmus. Please send me by urgent express four (4) additional buck shot guns, with ample powder and ball for same." In October the Panama Railroad

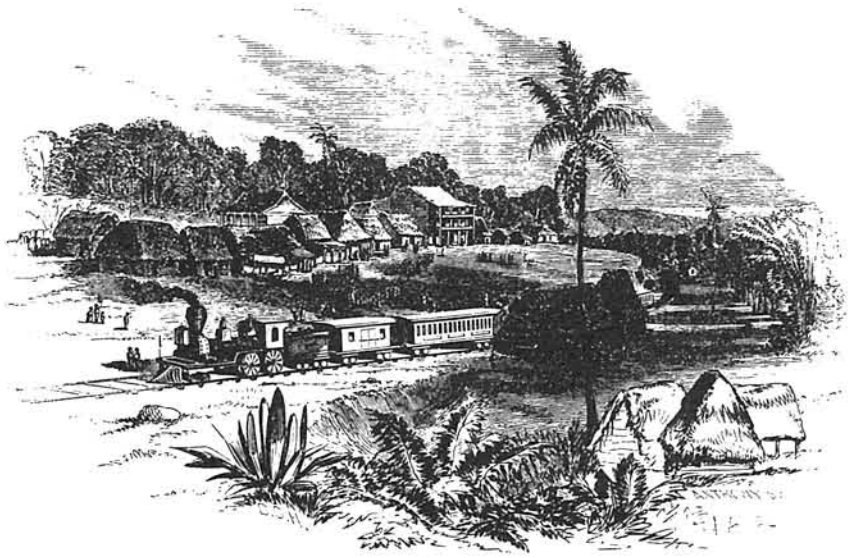


City of Aspenwal

paymaster was attacked and robbed a section gang payroll of $300. Although mortally wounded, he was able to give the name of his assailant before he died. Just previously the same man had murdered a prostitute in Aspinwall. Runnels and two of his men seized the offender in an Aspinwall saloon, and after obtaining evidence of his guilt adequate to them, they hanged him on the railroad wharf.

Not long after, seven miners returning home from California were robbed and murdered on the Cruces trail. Again Runnels and his guard went into action. On one night they rounded up and hanged 41 men. Among these were five men accused of the murder of the Californians. Again the speedy move was effective, and for a longer time than after the first mass-hanging the isthmus was quiet and work on the railroad progressed untroubled by lawlessness.

Improvement lasted for about a year this time, but in September 1853 the *Panama Herald* complained of the inadequte and insufficient police in the town. The streets were filled with filth thrown from houses, pigs, mules, and dogs roamed unmolested, and the sidewalks were so obstructed by merchandise, mules, and chairs that a pedestrian could only make progress on his way



The Summit, Panama Railroad

...*Page Seven*

by walking in the middle of the street. The writer of the article could not recall a single instance where the police force had been of the slightest value. Robberies and murders were again being reported frequently in the press. In January 1854, the consuls of eight nations in Panama addressed a protest to the governor for his failure to provide protection for passengers and goods crossing the isthmus. The governor replied that the public jails were already full of prisoners, and that three men had recently been executed.

In March 1854 a vigilance committee was formed in Aspinwall "to detect, judge and punish criminals to the fullest extent necessary." That body, 23 in number, forced its way into the town jail, and having brought the regularly constituted judges and alcalde as witnesses, identified stolen objects in the trunk of one of the prisoners. The committee grew to nearly 75 in membership, and succeeded in obtaining a promise from the governor to send prisoners to Cartagena rather than keeping them on the isthmus where escape was easy. It continued to be active for at least a month investigating crimes and punishing offenders. At the same time a volunteer night patrol at Panama was successful in reducing the number of burglaries and street crimes.

Robberies on the road, however, continued. In July 1854 Ran Runnels, who had been carrying on his trans-isthmian express business since the last action of his covert guard, came forward and publicly offered to form a force to police the trails. He said that there were twenty men ready to join him in the composition of a mounted guard which would clear the road of gangs of robbers and murderers and keep it clear in the future. The *Panama Star and Herald* wrote that it presumed that the government would gladly give Runnels a free charter protecting his acts, but that if permission were refused "the guard will be formed here and foreigners *will* be protected, even on the Isthmus of Panama, whether the government like it or not."

The guard was organized, the Panama Railroad and the Pacific Mail furnishing most of the money to support it although later the names of 75 local firms and individuals were listed as contributing from one to fifty dollars. By August there was said to be a veritable stampede of undesirables out of Panama, and some thirty men were listed as having been shipped away from the isthmus by Runnels with another eight still in custody.

The Panama Railroad was opened for service from sea to sea in January 1855, and the Runnels Guard was dissolved two months later. Railroad trains seem to have been free from robberies committed on passengers or treasure which they carried. Disorder on the isthmus was not entirely a thing of the past, however, but now it was mainly confined to Panama City itself.

Runnels stayed on in Central America for the rest of his life. He had been appointed Special Inspector of Customs for goods in transit across the isthmus in 1854 while he was still in command of the Guard. He later married a niece of the governor of Panama, and finally died of consumption in Rivas, Nicaragua in 1882 while serving there as United States consul.

It was somehow fitting that in the years when many of the ways of the American West were transplanted to Panama by travelers and temporary American residents, the solution of the problem of law and order should have come through a Texas Ranger whose manner and methods had much about them which was characteristic of his homeland.

Corresponding Members Welcomed by Corral

The Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners welcomes the following new Corresponding Members:

Winifred J. Bundy, Benson, Arizona
Mark Fox, Los Angeles
Dr. Richard F. Logan, Santa Monica
Michael T. Moore, Woodland Hills
Peter J. Panattoni, Simi Valley
Arch F. Reinhold, North Hollywood
Gary D. Turner, Northridge

Owners and Cattle Brands of the Rancho Santa Anita

by Jack McCaskill

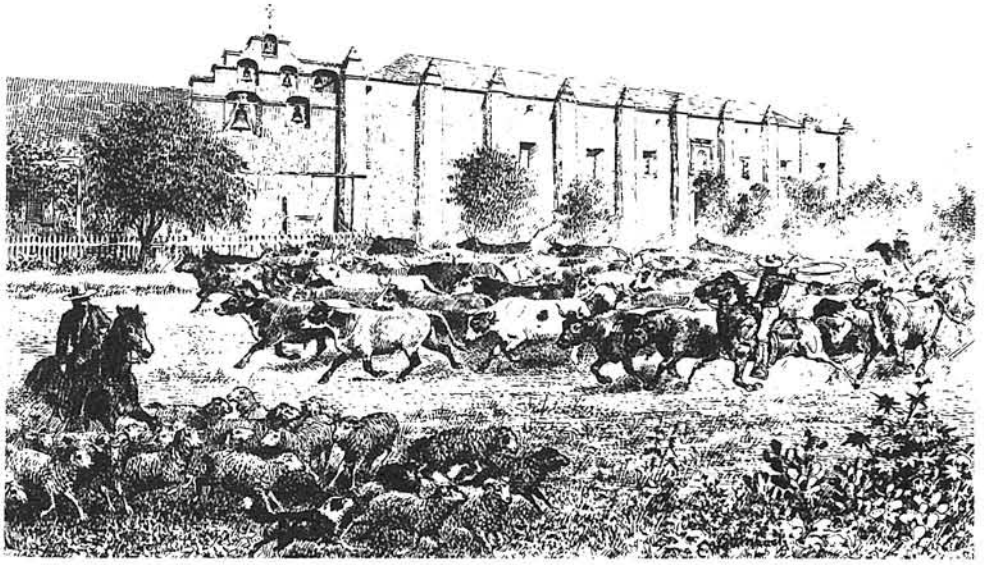
MISSION SAN GABRIEL BRAND

Cattle ranching and branding were introduced into California in 1769, when Franciscan priests arrived, traveling with the Portolá Expedition, and bringing with them a modest-sized herd of cattle for dairy and breeding purposes. Over the years, as missions were constructed, each in turn was stocked with cattle. These animals thrived, and eventually the sale of their hides and tallow represented a source of profit.

The first cattle to roam the area that would become the Rancho Santa Anita were from the Mission San Gabriel herd, which at one time numbered as many as 26,000 head. They were identified as belonging to the Mission by a cattle brand that employed the letters "T" and "S," the first and last letters of the word *temblores* (Spanish for "earthquakes").

By 1784 soldiers stationed at the various missions and *presidios* throughout California were ready to retire from military service. Rather than returning to Mexico proper, numbers of them asked Governor Pedro Fages for land grants on which they could settle and raise their families and which they would stock with cattle. In that particular year, five Spanish land grants were issued in Southern California, all surrounding Mission San Gabriel and the Los Angeles *pueblo* lands.

After 1822, when Mexico won its inde-



Vaqueros drive livestock past Mission San Gabriel

...Page Nine

pendence from Spain, the Mexican government in California continued the practice of issuing land grants. By the 1840's the Los Angeles area was divided into more than forty ranchos, ranging in size from a gigantic 150,000 acres, e.g., the Spanish grant of Rancho Los Nietos, to mere 6,656 acres.

Since no fences separated the ranchos from each other, the cattle and horses with which they were stocked mingled together and roamed freely across vast empty land. At roundup time, in consequence, the *ranchero* had to rely on a quick visual means of identifying his own animals. Such a means was his personal cattle brand and ear mark or cut. Each animal was branded on its hip and had its ears notched in some particular way, thus providing the mounted *vaquero* with recognition of ownerships as he made his way on horseback through a herd. Ear cuts solved the problem of brands' being difficult to see when animals were crowded together or when weeds were so high as to block their hips from a rider's view.

To avoid disputes over ownership, *rancheros* registered their individual cattle brands and ear cuts, and in many families the same brand and cut, passed down from father to son, was duly registered to prove its uninterrupted validity. Nevertheless, perhaps not surprisingly, since the herds ran into the thousands, ownership arguments over unbranded calves, strays, and older cattle flourished. Such feuds were long and heated and not infrequently the source of years of friction between families.

Archivos de Fieros y Senales is the Spanish title of the official register in which the brands and markings were recorded. It is still in existence, kept in the office of the Los Angeles County Recorder. Its pages contain the official description of brand and cut, the name of the *ranchero* registering same, the date of registration, and — in the margin — a free-hand drawing of the brand and ear cuts. Since the quality of these drawings depended on the artistic ability of the Recorder at the time, some are extremely crude and others elaborate. The *Archivos* served as this writer's primary source for researching brands used on the Rancho Santa Anita.

Raising cattle was a prospering business in California when Perfecto Huge Reid, the first owner of the Rancho Santa Anita, came upon the scene. Reid was not a native-born Mexican, but a Scotsman who arrived in California in 1836 and became a Mexican citizen. No doubt eager to get in on so thriving a venture, Reid petitioned then Governor Juan Alvarado for the rancho land, and in 1839 was awarded a provisional grant of 13,319 acres. He married an Indian woman named Victoria, a ward of Mission San Gabriel, stocked the Rancho Santa Anita with cattle, and — in 1840 — registered his brand.

HUGO REID BRAND

In 1845 Governor Pio Pico gave Reid full title to the rancho and, after two years, Reid sold it to Henry Dalton, owner of the nearby Rancho Azusa, for $2,700 (about twenty cents an acre!). Dalton, like Reid a naturalized Mexican citizen, was an Englishman who settled in California in 1843 and married the daughter of Don Agustin Zamorano, California's first printer.

The Daltons made their home on Rancho Azusa, and his brands show up twice in the register between 1844 and 1850 and were registered again in 1855. His cattle were branded on the hip, and when one of them was sold, the *fierro de vente* or counter-brand was burned on its shoulder.

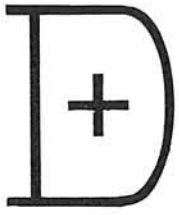
HENRY DALTON BRAND

HENRY DALTON COUNTER BRAND

Rancho Santa Anita changed hands again in 1854, when Joseph A. Rowe, the owner and star performer of California's first circus, purchased it from Dalton for $33,000. Rowe and his wife, both trick riders and expert horsemen, had decided to retire from the circus and raise cattle, performing horses, and a few wild animals. The Rowe cattle brand was registered June 10, 1855. After four years, however, the Rowes admitted to being failures as cattle ranchers, sold out at a loss, and returned to show business.

JOSEPH A. ROWE BRAND

Thus it was that in 1858, after paying Rowe $16,645, William Corbitt and Albert Dibblee became the new owners of the Rancho Santa Anita. Dibblee, a prominent businessman in San Francisco, had bought the rancho sight unseen as an investment, in parnership with Corbitt, a promoter and trader who lived in Los Angeles. Neither of the joint owners ever resided on the rancho, and it was managed by Albert Dibblee's younger brother, Thomas Dibblee. Their cattle brand was registered August 29, 1861, under the names of Albert and Thomas Dibblee. (Incidentally, this brand is still used today by Dibblee descendants on their ranch near Lompoc in Santa Barbara County.)



ALBERT AND THOMAS DIBBLEE BRAND

The owners of Rancho Santa Anita held great expectations for their property until the 1860's ushered in the years of drought that would bring the great days of cattle ranching in Southern California to an end. In 1865 the partners decided to dispose of the land. This time, the rancho was sold in two sections: the first went to Leonard Rose, who purchased 2,000 acres on the west, which he called "Sunnyslope;" the second went to William Wolfskill, who already owned the adjoining Rancho Azusa de Duarte.

Wolfskill, who had come to California in 1831 and was widely known as a horticulturist, paid $20,000 for 11,316 acres (which included the homesite). He planted some eucalyptus trees from Australia and a few date palms, which he is credited with introducing into California. Wolfskill registered an ear mark May 15, 1865, and the brand books also show brands transferred to his name when he purchased herds of cattle and horses. He died in 1866, leaving both Rancho Santa Anita and Rancho Azusa de Duarte to his youngest son, Louis Wolfskill.

WILLIAM WOLFSKILL EAR CUTS

Although Louis, who had been named after Louis Vignes and who married the daughter of Henry Dalton, worked at developing the Rancho Santa Anita, he, too, did not wait long before selling it. First to go were 1,740 acres adjoining the Rose estate, purchased by Alfred Chapman for $19,500. Then, in 1872, Louis Wolfskill sold the remainder of the rancho — then a mere 8,000 acres — to Harris Newmark for the sum of $85,000.

... Page Eleven

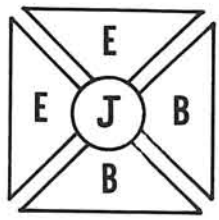
Newmark, merchant and author of *Sixty Years in Southern California,* put more land under irrigation for orchards and vineyards. He pastured sheep in the foothills for a flourishing wool business in Los Angeles. Like the other owners before him, however, Newmark also sold the land in a few years, and he made a nice profit. Purchaser of the 8,000 acres, for $200,000, was E. J. "Lucky" Baldwin.

HARRIS NEWMARK BRAND

"Lucky" Baldwin had made a fortune from the Comstock Lode and owned several enterprises in San Francisco, best-known among them the Baldwin Hotel and Theatre. He also owned Tallac Resort Hotel at Lake Tahoe. Baldwin first set eyes on the Rancho Santa Anita when he passed through the area on his way to check some mining property at Bear Valley in the San Bernardino Mountains. It was he who developed the rancho to its acme of beauty and productivity, raising a variety of agricultural products, as well as livestock. In addition to raising and racing thoroughbred horses, he built a winery and produced both wines and brandy.

Baldwin had no cattle brand, apparently because he considered branding cruel and inhumane, an infliction of needless pain. Instead of burning a brand into the hide of his animals, he relied for their identification on small numerals written on the hoofs of horses and mules and on the horns of his cattle. He did, however, have a recorded "trademark," a Maltese cross bearing his initials, which was molded on all bottles from the winery. The same cross, colored red on a black field and minus his initials, served as his racing insignia.

After Baldwin's death in 1909, his daughter Anita continued raising livestock on the rancho, calling it the Anokia Breeding Farm. In 1934, deciding to retire from that



E.J. "LUCKY" BALDWIN TRADE MARK

business, she sold 214 acres to the Los Angeles Turf Club. In July 1936 she sold the remaining land, with the exception of the nineteen-acre homesite, to Harry Chandler of *The Los Angeles Times,* to be subdivided and sold as residential lots.

In 1947, however, the State of California and the County of Los Angeles jointly purchased from Chandler 127 acres at the heart of the old rancho, which became The Los Angeles and State Arboretum. The old buildings, the Hugo Reid *adobe,* and Baldwin's coach barn have all been restored. Although the practice of burning one's mark or brand onto an animal's hide to establish its ownership no longer exists on the Rancho Santa Anita, the tradition of identifying property by mark is still carried on by means of a recognizable design, called a *logo.* The Los Angeles and State Arburetum has a *logo,* and it may well be the last brand used on the Rancho Santa Anita.

Don Louis Perceval

We regret to report that Don Louis Perceval, Honorary Member of the Westerners, died Sunday, May 13, 1979. A Remembrance written by Paul Bailey will appear in the September issue of *The Branding Iron.*

Corral Chips...

Non-resident member *Byron (Bud) Bailey* is installed as the new president of the Placer County Historical Society, whose current project is to secure and stock a new museum for Placer County. Bud moved to Auburn a few years ago upon retirement from his dentistry practice in Santa Barbara.

Taking both a new bride and a new address is C. M. *Russ Leadabrand,* commuting now from his home in Santa Barbara to the classes he teaches at the University of Southern California. Anybody want to loan Russ a gallon or two of gasoline?

Before last January's Antiquarian Book Fair in San Francisco, Jeff Dykes visits C.M. *Robert Hawley's* Ross Valley Book Company for an autograph party where he signs copies of his books for an admiring group of collectors.

C.M. *Carl Kloos* loans several outstanding western bronzes by Andrew Jackson Richardson to the Fort Pitt Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These are then installed as part of the museum's sculpture exhibition titled "The American Frontier in Bronze."

Acting in his capacity as vice-president of Los Angeles Beautiful, *Bill Escherich* officiates at the annual tree planting ceremony on Arbor Day in Elysian Park's Memorial Grove. Several television stations are on hand for the event to interview our personable and photogenic member.

C. M. *Edgar M. Crigler,* together with Dr. James C. Olson, historian and president of the University of Missouri, has been responsible for the organization of the John G. Neihardt Corral of The Westerners in Columbia, Missouri. The new Corral has had only four meetings, but now boasts more than fifty members. Crigler, tallyman for the new Corral and an active member of the Kansas City Posse, is director of the Gallery of Western Photography, which features original photographs by L. A. Huffman, frontier Montana photographer.

Now writing a monthly Western book column for the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* is C. M. *Jeff Nathan.* Currently, Jeff is also in the process of beginning his own magazine, *Western Trails,* and researching a biography of gunfighter John Ringo.

Corresponding Member, author *Dick House (So the Loud Torrent),* and Kern Valley historian-author Bob Powers *(North Fork Country* and *South Fork Country),* recently convoyed fifty members of the Kern Valley Historical Society across remote desert roads for a tour of Burro Schmidt's Tunnel in the El Paso Mountains above Garlock. Schmidt, for those of you who may not recall the name, singlehandedly dug the half-mile tunnel through solid granite from 1906 to 1938, thus carving a niche for himself in Western history, albeit little known. Ripley termed Schmidt "The Human Mole."

Finally, The Organization of American Historians at their recent meeting in New Orleans officially announced creation of the *Ray Allen Billington* Award. To be presented every two years for the best book on frontier history, the award will consist of both a beautiful medallion and the sum of one thousand dollars. The funds necessary to endow this award, by the way, were made possible by contributions from Ray's devoted cadre of former Ph.D. students from Northwestern University. What a fine way to honor their mentor.

Commemorative Plaque at Channel 28

by Ed Moreno

The acceptance of KCET Channel 28's lot in the register of historical places by the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board, and the locating of the NW corner of the original plot for Los Angeles, close to the studio lot, will be jointly celebrated on June 2nd, at noon, by the Los Angeles Historical Society and Community Television of Southern California. On that date, a commemorative plaque will be installed, to remind Angeleno history buffs that the studio has been in operation since 1912.

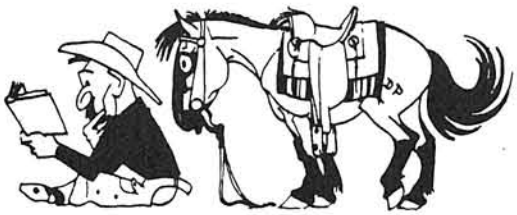
Channel 28's lot is one of the very few remaining original structures of the glory days of "B" pictures, zany comedy, Western melodrama, and Keystone cops. It also has the unique distinction of having been traded from company to company, more than any other movie lot in the city, since the days of Essanay. Each new owner left on it his mark. However, it was the fancy of actor-producer Charles Ray which contributed to the lot its most romantic architectural piece, the large administration brick building running along Sunset Drive and Hoover (formerly Flemming.) This building, described as of "ornate Spanish style" during the early 20's, intensely reflects the architectural passion with the aberrant "Mission revival" concept.

In reality, the building could pass just as easily for some of the large cortijos in northern Spain, as for some of the narrow courts in Central London. But what makes it most attractive and perhaps best interprets the concept of "ornate Spanish" is the interior of the Little Theatre, very recently discovered by sheer accident when poking behind a cellotex false wall which covered the original interior, and which was placed there when movies became talkies.

Now that the covers have been completely removed, the exquisite beauty of the initial version can be appreciated — the red, ornamental, embossed brick, the arched recesses flanked by thin columns, where, it is said, the original architect placed some statuary, and the sunken floor, most possibly decorated with Spanish or Mexican tile when the facility was built.

The accidental discovery of the beautiful interior of the Little Theatre brought to life the need for restoration monies to help it return to the days when Ray and his group must have used it for the lavish parties for which they were famous.

But that is another story.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

Railroads of Hawaii, by Gerald M. Best. 194 pp., large deluxe format, more than 300 illustrations, maps, reproductions, locomotive rosters, bibliography, and index. San Marino: Golden West Books, 1978. $21.95.

Here is a book perhaps planned by author and publisher for only that vast and growing audience of railroad buffs, but which, very likely, will be equally welcomed by Americana devotees and historians tracing the westward trail of America's "manifest destiny." Aside from faithfully recording the physical characteristic of every locomotive, every piece of rolling stock, all the bitter problems of hanging trackage to cliffs and shoreline, and the agonies and bitter struggles of the *haole* entrepreneurs who brought these railroads to the doomed Hawaiian monarchy, it serves also as a major chronicle of the times and events which led to the tragic downfall of this once lovely and peaceful island kingdom, and America's great crime against its inoffensive citizens.

It is very significant that it was King Kalakaua himself who, in 1878, signed "An Act to Promote the Construction of Railways" in his kingdom. The offer of crown subsidies sparked the epidemic of railroad construction in the islands. The railroads became part of the sheaves which later were gathered in with the American-sponsored revolution, short-lived "republic," and eventual annexation. It is significant also that King Kalakaua was almost solely responsible for the "Reciprocity Treaty" with the United States, which permitted entry of Hawaiian sugar into the vast American market, duty free. Gerald Best records that it was expansion of the Hawaiian sugar industry which alone made possible the network of railroads which served the islands so long and faithfully.

The first Hawaiian railroad was built on the island of Maui, in 1879, to serve the

already *haole* established sugar industry there. This was the narrow-gauge Kahului & Wailuku Railroad, originally three miles long, but evolving eventually into the Kahului Railroad, which reached its peak of operation in 1936, with sixteen miles of needed service along Maui's north shore. Two years later this was followed by another narrow-gauge carrier, The Hawaiian Railroad Company, on the big island of Hawaii, pioneered by the Wilder Brothers, and partially subsidized by the kingdom itself. Though it served a vital interest on the north shore and Kohala area, it was a long-time construction problem because of the rugged nature of the terrain it was forced to cross. Also on the big island, from the Hamakaua area, southward through Hilo to the Puna capes, rolled the only standard-gauge railroad to be built in all of Hawaii. This, the Hawaii Consolidated Railway, in spite of many problems, served the vital necessities of the big island down to 1946. It disappeared spectacularly, when the great tidal wave of that year destroyed its tracks.

But the most famous of the Hawaiian lines was the dream of another *haole* promoter, Benjamin Dillingham. The narrow-gauge Oahu Railway & Land Company system, which he built, and which nearly encircled the capital island of Oahu, had a long and venerable service in and out of Honolulu. Its great distinction was the help it rendered to the American nation after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It became the vital wartime martialing link between Honolulu, Pearl Harbor, and the extensive military installations throughout the island.

But now all is changed. In Hawaii, America's 50th state, the chuff of engines, the rattle of cars, the wail of steam whistles, are no more. The locomotives and the cars have become museum pieces, or rendered into scrap along with the rails and the once spectacular bridges spanning ocean-front gorges. Only the rapidly disappearing grades and roadbeds along the green countryside or sea fronts give hint of what it was like in the old days. Gone are the "Kalakaua cars," the noisy and happy excursionists, the "sugar flats" and the cane rigs. Gone are the quaint engines and the smiling Hawaiians who once manned their throttles and fireboxes. It's hard to believe now that Hawaii ever had a railroad era. But indeed it did have.

In the immense spread of photographs, and the nostalgic textual reporting of Gerald Best, we have about all that is left of a time that should stir the heart if not the conscience of every American. It seems strange that in the overtones of this book on railroads, should be carried also a cogent reminder of the rape of the Kingdom of Hawaii, and the almost genocidal destruction of its native peoples. But such it does — at least to this reviewer. But to less perturbed readers, there are plenty of additional things — description and data of rolling stock, a rundown on the philanthropists and political opportunists who built the railroads, and enough pictorial array to gladden the heart.

And, should that not be enough, Mr. Best reminds us that, on the island of Maui there has been re-laid a six-mile stretch of the old rails — between the ancient whaling town of Lahaina, to the resort area at Kaanapali. Now one can actually board one of the three Kalakaua coaches strung behind a refurbished old cone-stacked locomotive. Between ticket-collecting and time-honored duties, the conductor will entertain you with vocal patter, ukelele, and song, while the Lahaina, Kaanapali & Pacific rattles you through the cane fields and seaside, to finally dump you in the back yard of the Sheratan Maui or the Royal Lahaina.

But that's all there is folks — one last little tourist train — and this exceptionally fine and informative book.

—Paul Baily

An Unnatural History of Death Valley: with Reflections on the Valley's Varmints, Virgins, Vandals and Visionaries, by Paul Bailey. 84 pp. illustrations. Chalfant Press, Bishop, Ca., 1978. Autographed limited ed. $10; soft cover ed. $3.50.

In November 1976 ex-Sheriff Paul Bailey delivered a talk at the Author's Breakfast during the Annual Encampment of the Death Valley '49ers in Death Valley. Author, historian, publisher, and raconteur Bailey so captivated the outdoor audience of several

hundred early risers the Publications Committee of the '49ers chose to publish the talk in book form this year. The amusing, factual and sometimes raucous account of the unnatural history of Death Valley, which "just ain't natural . . . It has its own way of flowering out of weird and wonderful characters" who, according to Bailey, "found refuge, comfort and freedom in Death Valley" a "wonderful place to be crazy," has a preface by Walt Wheelock and delightful original pen and ink sketches by CM Bill Bender.

—Katie Ainsworth

The Outlaw Trail, by Robert Redford. Grosset & Dunlap, New York. Illustrated. 223 pp. 1978. $25.00.

In October of 1975, Robert Redford, the actor-conservationist, photographer Jonathan Blair and seven other adventurous souls traversed the rugged wilderness from Canada to Mexico, which formed the Outlaw Trail.

This "journey through time" was financed by the National Geographic Society, for whom Redford was preparing an essay on the Old West. Here, Redford has expanded his article, and joined with Blair's stunning photographs, 48 of them in full color, the result is a book of unusual depth and beauty.

Redford was motivated by his love for the West, all its people and the land: "I wanted to see for myself what remained of the Outlaw Trail before it was too late." What Redford saw was an amazing collection of ghost towns, cabins, corrals and hideouts, once populated by the Wild Bunch and their ilk. Many of these remote structures were weathering away and forgotten, other sites had fallen prey to the march of "progress," thus promoting Redford's trek on horseback to publicize and hopefully preserve these relics of the Old West.

Venturing from Hole-in-the-Wall in Wyoming down to Robbers' Roost and Glen Canyon in southern Utah, Redford encountered many ranchers and assorted Western characters. Redford proves quite adept at drawing out these normally taciturn types, who blame the decline of the West on oil and coal companies, real-estate sharpies and the Bureau of Land Management.

Redford is appropriately shocked by the anecdotes about land rape and exploitation. His description, for instance, of an eyesore power plant amidst the wilderness is both provocative and emotional. The author acknowledges the dilemma between unemployment and development, yet he justly objects to the lackadaisical effort to blend the two elements.

Certainly this book is not the last word on its subject; Redford's euphoria is sometimes overwhelming and he is prone to error, such as his reference to Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, Jed Smith and Marcus Whitman as outlaws! Still, the gesture is noble and Redford's call for the preservation of our Western heritage is much needed.

—Jeff Nathan

The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington, edited by Peggy and Harold Samuel. Doubleday. Illustrated. 1979. 649 pp. $19.95.

Most people remember Frederic Remington as the premier illustrator of the American West. But Remington was also an accomplished and prolific journalist, as shown in this hefty volume of two complete novels and more than a hundred articles and stories.

The Samuels, who are concurrently researching a biography of the artist, offer a critical and biographic sketch of Remington and his times. The remainder of the text is devoted to Remington's quaint period pieces, which represent his supermacho, jingoistic outlook on life. Athletic and powerfully built, Remington was fascinated with the U.S. Cavalry and accompanied them on several historic patrols.

Remington joined General Miles and his black troopers in Arizona and reported on the Chicago riots of 1894 and the Spanish-American War. It is almost ironic to read Remington's appraisal of the battle of Wounded Knee and the "brave fellows defending their country." The Samuels have included 115 black-and-white halftones by Remington, which makes for a very attractive book.

—Jeff Nathan