



DECEMBER 1982

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 149

TIBURCIO VASQUEZ IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PART II: THE CAPTURE

by John W. Robinson

Sometime in early April 1874 Vasquez emerged from his hideout in the San Gabriel Mountains, rode south across the eastern San Fernando Valley and arrived at the ranch of one George Allen, better known as Greek George. Greek George, a native of Syria, had been employed by the United States Army as a camel driver during the years 1857 to 1863, when the army attempted to set up a "dromedary line" to carry supplies across the Southwestern deserts. When the experiment was abandoned, Greek George settled on this small ranch at the southern base of the Hollywood Hills, on land belonging to Rancho La Brea.

The precise location of Greek George's ranch has long been a subject of disagreement. Various writers have placed it at such diverse sites as the mouth of Cahuenga Pass, the Hollywood Bowl, the Hollywood Fire Station and Laurel Canyon. The best source as to the ranch's location is a map provided by Ben Truman in his 1875 book on Vasquez's capture. A study of this map, along with Truman's description, clearly reveal that Greek George's ranch was well west of both Cahuenga and Laurel canyons. Most recent scholarship places the site very close to the

intersection of Fountain Avenue and Kings Road in West Hollywood, an area now crowded with apartment houses.

Vasquez decided to utilize Greek George's ranch as a hideout. The reason is obscure. Some accounts say he was invited there by Greek George himself, an allegation George strenuously denied after the bandit's capture. It is possible Vasquez knew some of George's ranch-hands and believed they would safeguard him from the law. The explanation most often heard involves a woman, no surprise considering Vasquez's long record of amorous affairs. By this account, the bandit was attracted to the ranch by a comely, tawny-skinned senorita who lived there, supposedly a friend of George's wife. In any event, Greek George's ranch was Vasquez's refuge during his final weeks of freedom.

One of Vasquez's new recruits was an enthusiastic young lad named Lebrado Corona. Impatient for action, Vasquez sent Corona to case the nearby ranches for a possible robbery attempt. After several days of searching, Corona returned and reported a sheep raiser near San Gabriel Mission a likely candidate. Alexander Repetto, the

Continued on Page Three

The Branding Iron

THE WESTERNERS
LOS ANGELES CORRAL

Published Quarterly in
March, June, September, December

OFFICERS

TRAIL BOSSES

WILLIAM W. ESCHERICH Sheriff
P.O. Box 2890, Terminal Annex,
Los Angeles, CA 90051

POWELL GREENLAND Deputy Sheriff
1583 Wildwood Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90041

JEROME R. SELMER Registrar of Marks
and Brands
55 E. Arthur Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91106

WADE E. KITTELL Keeper of the Chips
519 Cedar Avenue, Apt. 10, Long Beach, CA 90802

ERNEST MARQUEZ Roundup Foreman
24213 Hamlin Street, Canoga Park, CA 91307

DONALD DUKE Past Sheriff Trail Boss

WILLIAM O. HENDRICKS Past Sheriff
Trail Boss

APPOINTED OFFICERS

ORLEY E. LAIRD Asst. Registrar of Marks
and Brands

BILL LORENZ Asst. Keeper of the Chips

ABRAHAM HOFFMAN Asst. Roundup
Foreman

DWIGHT S. CUSHMAN Representative
800 Lena Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304

DONALD E. TORGUSON Wrangler Boss

JACK McCASKILL Asst. Wrangler Boss

CORNELL NORBY Exhibits Wrangler

IRON EYES CODY Daguerreotype Wrangler

FRANK Q. NEWTON Asst. Daguerreotype
Wrangler

THOMAS S. McNEILL Librarian
207 Avenue G, Redondo Beach, CA 90277

ELWOOD W. HOLLAND Membership
Chairman

RAYMUND F. WOOD Editor, Brand Book
No. 16

JOHN D. KEMBLE Historian

ROBERT SCHERRER Tallyman

Address for Exchanges
and Material Submitted for Publication:

The Roundup Foreman
ERNEST MARQUEZ
24213 Hamlin St., Canoga Park, Ca. 91307

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.

Copyright © by the Westerners
Los Angeles Corral



Corral Chips

A.M. Don Pflueger addresses the Southern California Local History Council at the W.K. Kellogg mansion on the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona campus. Don's talk focuses on historian Myron Angel, principal founder of Cal Poly, argonaut, and author of the definitive histories of Nevada and San Luis Obispo Counties . . . Dwight Cushman, while spending the summer in northern California, speaks to the Genealogical Society of Siskiyou County on August 27, and to the Salmon River Association on August 8, on "A Visit to Plymouth, Mass." . . . G.M. Msgr. Francis J. Weber's presentation to the Corral on "The Miniature World of a Catholic Archivist" has been published as a miniature book by Opuscula Press. . .

A.M. Dick Logan spends a busy spring and early summer conducting tours to New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi, to Hawaii, Yellowstone, northwestern Oregon, and Sequoia. He will be visiting professor of geography at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, for the Fall 1982 semester. . . G.M. Gene Bear emcees the Valley Pledge Center portion of the 1982 Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Telethon. He is commended by the City of Glendale for his community service activities. . . A number of Corral members have been asked to serve on the editorial and advisory committees of the new magazine, *The Californians*. Martin Ridge is a consultant, and committee members include William O. Hendricks and C.M.s Patricia Bowie, Robert W. Blew, and Midge Sherwood. . .

C.M. Father Barry Hagan, C.S.C., is a

Continued on Page Nine

intended victim, had recently sold a large quantity of wool and was in possession of a considerable sum of money, Corona had been told.

Next day Vasquez and his gang left Greek George's, crossed into the San Fernando Valley and rode northeastward under the spurs of the Verdugo Hills. That night they camped at the foot of "Pietra Gordo" — literally "Fat Rock" — described by Vasquez as being "at the head of the Arroyo Seco." Some historians assume that Pietra Gordo is Eagle Rock, which certainly fits the description of "Fat Rock" but is not at the head of the Arroyo Seco, being some two miles southwest of the spot where the broad wash emits from the San Gabriel Mountains. Another possible location of Vasquez's camp is near today's Devils Gate Dam, between Pasadena and Flintridge. The old Devils Gate was a rugged area of huge boulders, just below the portal where the Arroyo Seco leaves the mountains, and more nearly matches Vasquez's description of *at the head* of the wash.

The following day Vasquez rode alone to the Repetto Ranch, located in the hills south of the San Gabriel Valley where Monterey Park lies today. He told a shepherd at the ranch that he was missing a horse and would pay \$15 for its return — a ploy to allay suspicion. Then he slyly surveyed the ranch layout and returned a roundabout way to his Pietra Gordo camp.

Just after sundown Vasquez and his men — now numbering four by most accounts — rode to the outskirts of the Repetto Ranch and bedded down for the night. Next morning the bandit and his gang, posing as sheep herders, approached the ranch and inquired about employment. The unsuspecting Repetto invited them into the house where he was suddenly confronted with drawn pistols and a demand for money. Repetto could produce only \$80, a sum which failed to satisfy Vasquez. After tying up the frightened rancher and threatening him with bodily harm, the bandit prevailed upon him to write a check for \$800 which, Vasquez claimed, was merely a loan at 1½% interest! Repetto's thirteen year old nephew was dispatched to the Temple and Workman Bank in Los

Angeles to cash the check. Vasquez warned the boy that if he informed anyone of what was transpiring at the ranch, he would find his uncle dead upon his return. Bank officials became suspicious when the lad, appearing unduly nervous, presented the check. They gave him the money, then notified Sheriff Billy Rowland. Meanwhile, the boy hurried back to the ranch with the ransom and handed it to Vasquez. A posse led by Sheriff Rowland was a mere half hour behind. One of Vasquez's men spotted the posse's dust as the riders neared the ranch; whereupon the outlaws quickly mounted their horses and raced north toward the Arroyo Seco. Pursued by the Sheriff's posse, Vasquez, after pausing to hold up three men near the Indiana Colony (Pasadena), galloped up the broad wash of the Arroyo Seco and into the mountains.

At that time the old Soledad Turnpike, a rough wagon road built in the 1860's by a Los Angeles syndicate for the purpose of providing access to the gold and silver mines in Soledad Canyon, climbed up the west slope of Arroyo Seco Canyon, slightly below and paralleling today's Angeles Crest Highway, as far as Dark Canyon. From road's end, a trail zigzagged up Dark Canyon to the top of the divide separating the Arroyo Seco and Big Tujunga watersheds. Here the trail abruptly ended, as the syndicate had run out of money and abandoned the project. By 1874 the roadbed and trail were badly overgrown but still passable.

Vasquez and his men raced up the old turnpike into the mountains, with the Sheriff's posse close on their tails. The sun was setting as the bandits reached road's end and started the rough climb up Dark Canyon, with the lawmen less than a mile behind. Darkness overtook both parties a short time later, and as it is next to impossible to follow a poor mountain trail on a moonless night, they both made camp, the posse at road's end in Dark Canyon (slightly above today's Oakwilde picnic area) and Vasquez and his gang in a grassy nook just below the crest of the divide, 700 feet above. Vasquez stated after his capture that he could easily have ambushed and killed the entire posse but that he restrained his men because he "never wanted to kill anybody."

With daylight the chase was resumed. The bandits reached trail's end on the crest of the divide, then plunged down through thick chaparral toward the bend of Big Tujunga, visible far below. About two-thirds of the way down this thorny maze, just below what is today called Grizzly Flat, Vasquez's horse stumbled into a steep gully and broke a leg. The bandit chief was able to leap off the animal as it was falling and avoid injury. Vasquez reluctantly shot the wounded animal and continued downward on foot, carrying his saddle and two guns. Thrashing through the dense brush, he was soon obliged to abandon his saddle and either threw away or accidentally lost one of his pistols before hitching a ride with another gang member. (The pistol, with the initials "TV" carved on the barrel, was recovered by 16-year old Phil Begue of La Crescenta in 1883. Years later his son sold it to Will Thrall, who in turn sold it to Westerner Ernie Kovak. Vasquez's saddle is presently at the L.A. County Museum.)

Meantime, Sheriff Rowland and his men struggled to the top of the divide and looked down over the ocean of thorny brush. They could occasionally spot the bandidos threading their way through the high chaparral, far below and out of rifle range. Rather than risk the dangers of a trailless descent, the Sheriff and his posse backtracked down Dark Canyon and the Arroyo Seco and raced around to the mouth of Big Tujunga Canyon. But they were too late. Vasquez had once again eluded the arm of the law. Unknown to authorities, the crafty bandit retreated to the Lyons Station area in Soledad Canyon, possibly camping among Vasquez Rocks, before returning to Greek George's ranch.

But the seemingly charmed life of Vasquez was close to running out. The Repetto Ranch raid and subsequent chase was big news all over California. Renewed efforts were launched to snare the elusive outlaw. Hundreds were enrolled as sheriff's deputies or volunteer vigilantes. The \$8,000 reward was providing an irresistible lure. Sheriff Harry Morse was diligently searching the mountain country between Soledad Canyon and Fort Tejon. Sheriff Bill Rowland and Undersheriff Albert Johnson, both of Los Angeles, were

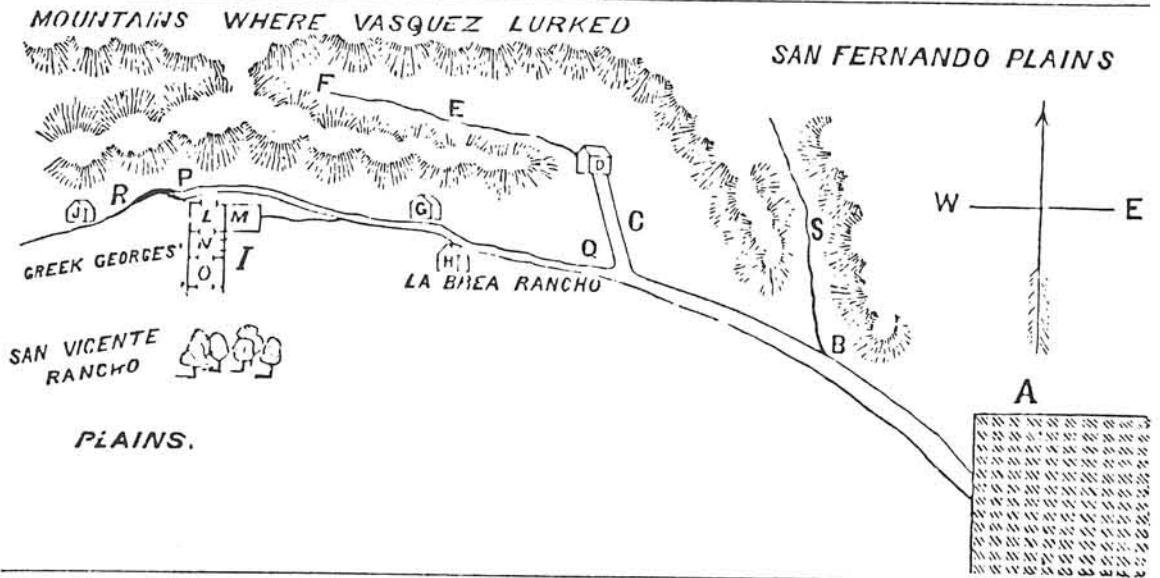
running down every possible lead and scouring the mountain country from Big Tujunga east as far as San Gabriel Canyon. It was only a matter of time.

Vasquez made a fatal mistake when he did not flee to Mexico, as his friends urged him to do, or hole up in the heart of the San Gabriels. Instead he remained at Greek George's, sleeping in the hills right above the ranch-house and descending for meals and to visit his *senorita*. Then, in early May 1874, came the big break the lawmen had long awaited. Sheriff Morse, while hunting Vasquez near Fort Tejon, was told that the bandit was hiding in the Cahuenga Mountains (present-day Hollywood Hills) at the ranch of Greek George. There are two conflicting stories as to how the Sheriff gained this intelligence. One is that he was approached by a former Vasquez gang member who "for a consideration" dispensed with the information. Another source claims that Vasquez's own relatives "ratted" on the bandito because he had disgraced his own niece, Felicia Vasquez.

Sheriff Morse immediately took the stage to Los Angeles and presented this knowledge to Sheriff Rowland, in whose bailiwick the alleged hiedout was located.

What happened next is shrouded in controversy. According to Morse, Rowland laughed and dismissed the informant's story, saying he knew the man and would not trust him. The disappointed Sheriff of Alameda County then returned north, his role in the great hunt ended. Nevertheless, several days later, after Morse was safely out of the picture, Sheriff Rowland dispatched a deputy named D.K. Smith to stake out Greek George's ranch. Smith, disguised as a *ranchero* looking for work, hung around the ranch for several days before he finally spied Vasquez, whereupon the deputy hurried to Los Angeles to inform his chief. Thus was set in motion the chain of events that netted the infamous outlaw. Soon after Vasquez was securely behind bars, Sheriff Rowland received a check for \$8,000 from the State Treasurer. Sheriff Morse, who had provided the vital first clue as to Vasquez's whereabouts, received not a cent of the reward money. Rowland later defended his right to the money, claiming he acted solely from

SCIENCE OF VASQUEZ' CAPTURE.



- A—Los Angeles City.
- B—Road to the west.
- C—Arroyo (creek.)
- D—Mitchell's Bee Ranch.
- E—The Trail to the Lookout.
- F—The Lookout where the party commanded a view of Greek George's house and the approaches.
- G—Thompson's house.
- H—Hancock's house.

- I—Greek George's house.
- J—The house of Valdez.
- K—Clump of willows.
- L—Arenal, with window on north end, commanding view of the east and west.
- M—Wing of Greek George's building.
- N—Room in which Vasquez was eating when discovered, with door on the east through which Harris entered.
- O—Room used as kitchen, with window in the

- south end, whence Vasquez jumped as Harris fled.
- P—Spot where the wagon halted.
- Q—Spot where the wagon was pressed into service.
- R—Spot where Vasquez' horse was picketed.
- S—Cajunga Pass.
- T—Mountains in which Vasquez lurked, with numerous trails leading to San Fernando plains.

information obtained after Morse's departure. Although Sheriff Morse never made an issue of the matter, many of his defenders, then and in recent times, have suggested that Rowland was deceitful, inferring that the Los Angeles Sheriff acted out of greed and a desire to cheat his more famous fellow officer out of glory and reward.

Sheriff Rowland's motives notwithstanding, Tiburcio Vasquez's capture was executed with consummate planning and skill. On the evening of May 13, 1874 Rowland appointed Under-sheriff Albert Johnson leader of a hand-picked posse of six to apprehend the bandit. The chosen six included, besides Johnson, city detective Emil Harris, Los Angeles Police Chief Frank Hartly, policeman Sam Bryant, deputy D.K. Smith and attorney Henry Mitchell. Allowed to accompany the posse were George Beers of the San Francisco *Chronicle* and Walter Rodgers of the Palace Saloon. Sheriff Rowland regretfully stayed behind out of fear that his absence from Los Angeles would be noticed and communicated to Vasquez.

The group assembled shortly after mid-

night at Jones' Corral on Spring Street near 7th in downtown Los Angeles. They stole out of town unnoticed in the wee hours of the morning. By daybreak they were encamped near the mouth of Nichols Canyon in West Hollywood, a mile and a quarter northeast of Greek George's. A morning ground fog obscured their vision of the ranchhouse.

Around noon the fog lifted and the lawmen were able to clearly see the ranch, nestled serenely against the foothills and surrounded by fields of tall mustard grass and clumps of willow. A short while later a solitary figure, mounted on a white horse, was seen riding away from the ranch. Thinking it might be Vasquez, the posse pounced on him as soon as he was out of sight of the ranchhouse. But the surprised rider proved not to be the outlaw.

Johnson now faced the dilemma of how to approach Greek George's without being observed. An open frontal attack was out of the question; Vasquez would see them coming and have time to escape into the nearby hills.

An hour later the problem was solved. Two Mexicans in an empty wagon drove by the

mouth of Nichols Canyon. Sheriff Johnson stopped them and asked their business. They replied that they were on their daily wood run into the hills. The Sheriff decided to commandeer the wagon and its two hapless occupants. Six of the posse climbed in and concealed themselves on the floorboard. The drivers were ordered to make for the ranchhouse and warned not to alert Vasquez on pain of death.

Vasquez noticed the wagon approaching the ranch but, knowing the drivers, suspected nothing. As the wagon drew up outside the ranchhouse, the lawmen leaped out and took positions. They had no specific plan of attack; each man was to act according to his own judgment. In seconds the house was surrounded. Just then a woman opened the door, saw the officers and shouted the alarm. Vasquez, who had just sat down to lunch with his young henchman Lebrado Corona, sprang to his feet just as Johnson and Harris burst through the front door with guns blazing. The bandit, quick as a cat, made a flying leap out the kitchen window, right into the drawn pistol of George Beers. Beers described the ensuing action:

"I stepped into the path leading along the west side of the house, and the next instant the agile form of Vasquez came flying toward

me, and I fired. He threw up his hands, at the same instant crying out, 'No shoot! No shoot!' and Hartly gave him a charge of buckshot from his double-barrel gun. Johnson and the others closed in upon him immediately. He was led around to the east end of the building. Finding that no more bandits made their appearance, I passed around and found Vasquez and Corona standing side by side against the east end of the house, with the balance of our party standing around watching them, on the alert for any of the gang that might put in an appearance at the eleventh hour. I went at once to the wounded man and began dressing his wounds. My shot had struck the shoulder, while the buckshot from Hartly's double-barrel gun had struck him in half a dozen places, making painful flesh wounds in the left arm, left forearm and shoulder blade, but none of the shots had penetrated the vitals. Whatever may be thought of this man's courage, he certainly, on that occasion, at least, exhibited astonishing self-possession and command of nerve. There was not the slightest tremor in his voice, and his heart beat steadily and calmly. He admitted his identity as soon as I began dressing his wounds."

Vasquez had suffered six wounds, none of them serious. After his wounds were dressed,



Vasquez pistol, initials "TV" on barrel.



W. R. Smith.



W. R. Roulant, Sheriff.



W. E. Rodgers.



Albert Johnson.



*Scene of the capture of Vasquez.
Luttrell & Lee, Photo.*



*Mr. Boers,
Chronicle Reporter*



Emil Harris.



TIBURCIO VASQUEZ



Sam Bryant.

Vasquez and his Captors.

he was gently lifted onto a mattress placed in a spring wagon brought from the barn. Corona, unwounded, was allowed to sit next to his disabled chief for the ride to Los Angeles.

As the posse and prisoners approached Los Angeles, news of the capture leaked out and excitement spread throughout the city. Throngs surrounded the jail as the notorious outlaw was hoisted out of the wagon and carried inside. Corona was placed in the cell next to him.

Vasquez spent nine days in the Los Angeles jail, the object of state-wide attention. Scores of newspaper reporters sought to interview him. The bandit granted interviews to only three: Ben Truman of the *Los Angeles Star*, George Beers of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and Eugene Sawyer of the *Chronicle*. To each he insisted that he had never killed a man, and that his motives had always been honorable, that he had just cause for fighting the *gringo* who had wronged his people.

On May 23 Vasquez, in the custody of Under Sheriff Johnson, was taken aboard the steamship *Senator* bound for San Francisco. From there he was escorted to the Salinas jail and charged with the murder of Leander Davidson at Tres Pinos. He was moved to San Jose to stand trial. Meantime, Lebrado Corona was tried in Los Angeles for his part in the Repetto Ranch robbery, found guilty and sentenced to seven years at San Quentin.

In the eight months preceding his trial, Vasquez was something of a celebrity, a hero to hundreds of his fellow Spanish-speaking citizens. Scores of visitors every day brought him flowers, wines, notions and other tokens of esteem. While awaiting trial, he posed for the famous photos of himself — the only ones we have — and sold autographed copies of it to the public. He seemed to enjoy his notoriety.

Vasquez's trial for murder finally took place in January 1875. The trial lasted four days and the jury took two hours to reach a guilty verdict. Judge David Belden, after a moralistic speech in which pointed references were made to the expense incurred by the state in capturing the bandit, sentenced him to death by hanging.

As the day of his execution approached,

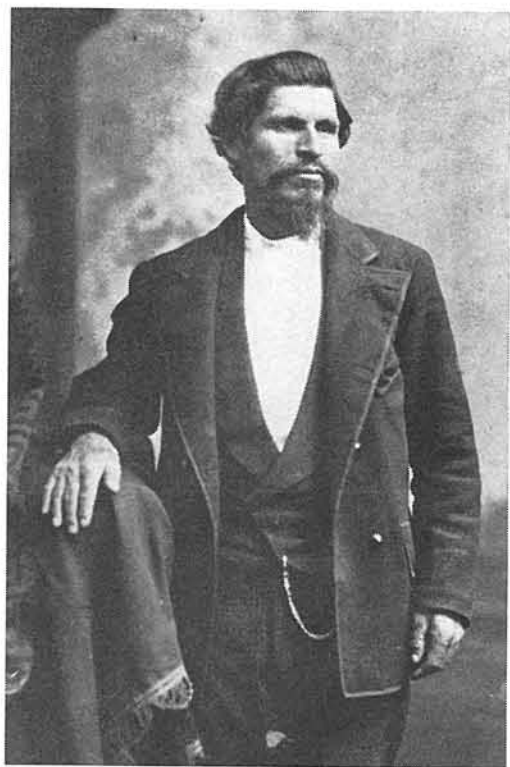


Westerner Ernie Hovard with Vasquez gun, found by Phil Begue in mountains in 1883.

the number of visitors to Vasquez's cell increased. An appeal for clemency was denied by Governor Romualdo Pacheco. On March 19, 1875, in San Jose, California, Tiburcio Vasquez, bandido and folk hero, calmly met his death by hanging.

Vasquez's loyal lieutenant, Clodovio Chavez, fled to Arizona after his chief's capture. On November 25, 1875, near Yuma, Chavez was shot to death by two deputies who sought to arrest him.

Tiburcio Vasquez is "honored" today by two place names in southern California. Vasquez Canyon, the Big Tujunga tributary used by the outlaw in his getaway, immortalizes the Repetto Ranch raid. Vasquez Rocks, above Soledad Canyon, now a Los Angeles County park, marks one of the bandido's favorite hideouts.



University, Los Angeles, on October 16. . . .

Doyce Nunis spends an active Sabbatical leave in London. He is elected to membership in The Athenaeum, one of the city's most prestigious men's clubs. During his leave time no less than four books under his editorship appear: a revised edition of W.W. Robinson's *Los Angeles from the Days of the Pueblo*; two volumes in the Baja California Travels Series, *The Letters of Jacob Baegert, 1749-1761*, *Jesuit Missionary in Baja California*, and *The 1769 Transit of Venus*; and most recently, *Men, Medicine & Water: The Building of the Los Angeles Aqueduct 1908-1913, a Physician's Recollection*, by Raymond G. Taylor, M.D. Doyce is also reelected president of the Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library Board of Trustees and serves as founding president of the Friends of the Archival Center, Archdiocese of Los Angeles. . . .

C.M. *Joe Northrop*, President of the Los Angeles City Historical Society, along with his wife, Marie, receives certificates of recognition on Saturday, September 4, 1982, the 201st birthday of Los Angeles, from El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park for their efforts in the gathering of the descendants of the original founders of El Pueblo in 1781. . . . Joe and Marie also attend the XV International Congress of Genealogy and Heraldry at Madrid, Spain, September 17-25, and then visit various archives in Andalucia. Joe presents gifts from Los Pobladores 200 to the King of Spain. . . . The Western History Association's Twenty-Second Annual Conference, held at Phoenix, Arizona, October 20-23, attracts corral members *John Caughey*, *Bill Hendricks*, *Abe Hoffman*, *Doyce Nunis*, *Rod Paul*, *Martin Ridge*, and *Ray Wood*; A.M.s *Todd Berens* and *Bob Clark*; and C.M. Msgr. *Francis J. Weber*. *Abe Hoffman* presents a paper on "Martin Aguirre, Chicano Sheriff of Los Angeles County," and *Todd Berens* presides over a session on "Humanities on the Frontier."

SHERIFF'S OFFICE,

County of Santa Clara. }

San Jose, March 18th 1875.

To *A. C. Bassett Esq.*

SIR.—Pursuant to the Statute in such cases you are hereby invited to be present at the execution of Tiburcio Vasquez, at the Jail of said County, in San Jose, on the 19th day of March, A. D. 1875, at 1:30 o'clock P. M.

J. H. ADAMS, Sheriff."

PRESENT AT JAIL ENTRANCE. NOT TRANSFERABLE

COURTESY WELLS FARGO HISTORY ROOM

Corral Chips continued...

delegate to the 3rd National Assembly, Order of the Indian Wars, meeting at Sheridan, Wyoming, in September. . . . C.M. *Paul de Fonville* works to create a Cowboy Memorial and Library in Walker Basin, profiled in the *Kern Valley Chronicle* of June 24 and August 5, 1982. . . . *Abe Hoffman* and C.M.s *Robert Blew*, Msgr. *Francis J. Weber*, and *Katherine Ainsworth* participate in the California History Conference sponsored by the Los Angeles Network for Education in Local and California History, held at California State

Revised version of remarks of Glen Dawson at Annual Rendezvous of Westerners September 11, 1982



Photograph - Frank Newton

A few weeks ago a letter arrived from Sheriff Escherich with the rather ominous news that I had been selected to be honored tonight. Later came the printed invitation. Mary Helen looked at the drawing by Andy Dagosta and said it is a very good likeness of me.

Of course, I still consider myself a young man and still work five days a week, but during my lifetime I have seen some remarkable changes. Paul Bailey is very good at writing the "In Remembrance" columns, but I appreciate the fact that he has not yet published mine. I am therefore taking the liberty of giving you tonight some selections from my Obituary.

I have had many blessings which cannot be attributed by my worth, but to the providence of God and being in the right place at the right time.

I was born on the slopes of Mt. Washington, not far from here, in my parents' home. I was delivered not by a doctor, but by a midwife. For Bill Hendricks benefit I mention that that event was contemporaneous with the first subdivision of Balboa Island.

When I was a boy my father took me to Palm Springs. The streets were not paved. My father paid an Indian a quarter to let us sit in a hot mud pool. There was a brush fence around the pool, but open above to the clear sky.

I have participated in the beginnings of technical rock climbing in California; in the beginnings of modern skiing in Southern California; in the beginnings of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. I have handled many wonderful books and met many wonderful people. I can remember selling an oil painting to Earl Adams for \$25.00 by someone named Borein.

I can even remember when a grubstake ticket to eat at Dr. Miller's was \$5.00.

Shortly after the end of World War II Robert J. Woods and Homer Britzman met on the balcony of Dawson's Book Shop. At this point I do not know if I introduced them — or my father — or Miss Eleanor Reed, but that meeting led to the formation of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners.

For Dick Cunningham's benefit I will mention that in the first article in the first Westerners publication author J. Gregg Layne's name was misspelled and a correction slip had to be printed.

Paul Galleher and I were part of the first nominating committee and nominated Homer Britzman as the first Sheriff. So far as I know, of the 26 Founding Fathers of the Westerners, there are just six surviving: Col. C.E. Benton, Glen Dawson, Paul Galleher, John B. Goodman, Neal Harlow, and Arthur Woodward.

There has been a royal succession of 36 Sheriffs of the Westerners. I do not consider it unlucky that I am No. 13 out of 36. I have known all of the Sheriffs of the Westerners plus our honorary Sheriff, Charles Rudkin. There have been 34 American Governors of California and 40 Presidents of the United States. (By order of the State Department, President Grover Cleveland gets counted twice). Although Ronald Reagan has been a Governor of California and President of the United States of America — he has not been a Sheriff of the Westerners.

At one time I counted that I belonged to 40 Historical Societies, Friends of Libraries and Westerners organizations. But none have meant so much to me as the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners.

The Westerners was incorporated when I was Sheriff and the Southwest Museum designated as the repository of our archives.

Over the 36 years I have sold books to you and your predecessors, I have also bought books from you, have appraised your books and have sold the books you have written and illustrated. I have published some of your books.

I have shared in some of your joys and sorrows. A few of you I have offended and for that I am sorry. I have been reprimanded on occasion — usually with cause. I have shared in the formation and some cases the distribution of your libraries. I have shared and benefitted from your enthusiasm for the preservation and publication of Western History material.

The Westerners is a notable example of a group of men of both great diversity and great unity. We come from different backgrounds, different vocations and avocations, different degrees of wealth and talent, different life styles — and yet — a great unity.

There has been a remarkable degree of willingness to contribute in many ways to the common good. To prepare and carry out this gathering tonight has taken much planning and much dedicated hard work. I thank our Sheriff, Bill Escherich and our gracious host, Dr. Al Miller. I thank you all for your participation today and in the past.

As long as we have diversity, unity and a spirit of cooperation and work, the future of the Corral is bright.

Perhaps I can best explain the privilege and honor I feel tonight by naming a few of the members and guests of the Westerners I have known.

There are the Old Timers who participated in and recorded the Old West. These are some of the men who have given me a living connection with the past: E.A. Brininstool, Ed Carter, John K. Rollinson, Billy Dodson, Earl Forrest, Ernie Sutton (who was born in 1862), Frank King (born in 1863), Percy Bonebrake.

Then there are great collectors:

Thomas Streeter, Everett Graff, E. DeGolyer, George Harding, Francis Farquhar, Ramon Adams, J. Frank Dobie, Robert Woods, J. Gregg Layne, W.W. Robinson, George Fullerton, Carl Dentzel.

A number of artists including:

Dwight Franklin, Clarence Ellsworth,

Holling C. Holling, Burt Proctor, and Don Luis Percival (who I knew as a boy).

Other Westerners include:

E.I. Edwards, A.R. Van Noy, Homer Boelter, Harry James, Harvey Starr, Lonnie Hull, Sid Platford and George McMannus.

and all of you who are here tonight. Each of you can name some additional Westerners of note.

Horace Albright sent me a message regretting he could not be here tonight. I have known Horace Albright for 56 years.

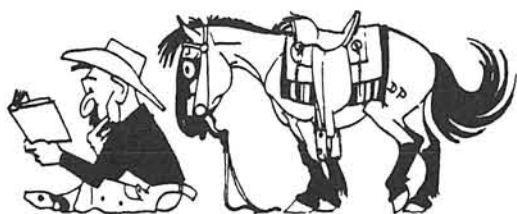
I have been speaking in the past tense, but I am also interested in what the next 36 years of the Westerners will be like. That depends to a great degree on those of us who are here tonight. There will be changes, but we still need guide lines and goals.

New editors will be guided by the high standards of the past editors of the Brand Books and the Branding Irons.

I hope someone here tonight will — 36 years from now — in the year 2018, reminisce about knowing a charter member of the Westerners.

I accept the honor tonight on behalf of all the charter members and all the Sheriffs.

My deepest thanks to all of you. And may Almighty God bless you all.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

Days of Vintage, Years of Vision by Midge Sherwood. San Marino: Orizaba Publications, 1982. 509 pp. \$20.

Really good books on 19th century Southern California are few and far between. Robert Cleland's *The Cattle on A Thousand Hills*, W.W. Robinson's *Ranchos Become Cities*, Harris Newmark's *Sixty Years in Southern*

California, along with a handful of biographical works on such pioneers as Hugh Reid, William Wolkskill, Henry Dalton and Phineas Banning, lead the scanty list. The recent spat of pictorial histories honoring the L.A. bicentennial, while presenting credible overviews, offer little in original research.

Midge Sherwood, founder and first sheriff of the Huntington Corral, has gone a long way to remedy this. Her masterful *Days of Vintage, Years of Vision* is one of the most thoroughly researched local histories of the decade. While ostensibly the story of San Marino, it is actually a much broader study covering Los Angeles County in its formative years, an era of rapid change that saw the county grow from a pastoral "backwater" into an economic stronghold of the Far West. The era is presented through the careers of two prominent businessmen: James De Barth Shorb and Benjamin Wilson, along with their extensive families and associates.

James De Barth Shorb, born in Maryland in 1842, arrived in San Francisco in 1864, just in time to participate in California's first, short-lived "oil boom." While visiting Los Angeles he was invited to Benjamin Wilson's Lake Vineyard, a beautiful rancho with acres of orange groves and vineyards located in what is today San Marino. The visit changed his life. He met and fell in love with Wilson's oldest daughter, Maria de Jesus, affectionately known as "Sue," and they were married in 1867. As Wilson's trustworthy son-in-law, Shorb gradually took over the responsibilities of managing Lake Vineyard and its great winery while Wilson was off pursuing Los Angeles' interests in Sacramento and Washington.

Benjamin Wilson, known as "Don Benito" to his many Spanish-speaking friends, arrived in Southern California with the William Workman party in 1841 after a career as a fur trapper and trader in the Santa Fe area. He quickly established himself as a leading citizen and land owner, and was elected first mayor of Los Angeles in 1851. His beloved Lake Vineyard rancho not only produced fine wines and fruits but was one of the social centers of Los Angeles County. He performed his most valuable services as state senator, bringing the railroad to Los

Angeles and getting harbor improvements for Wilmington. Amid these years of accomplishment, Wilson suffered a series of personal tragedies, not the least of which was the suicide of his alcoholic son John at the age of 24.

Throughout these trials and tragedies, James De Barth Shorb stood steadfastly at his father-in-law's side, raising his own large family and building his San Marino Ranch, named for his old homestead in Maryland. After Wilson's death in 1878, Shorb took over as "the sage of Lake Vineyard" and continued the former's tradition of wise stewardship.

The supporting cast of characters, all prominent in the history of the times, include hefty Phineas Banning, patriarch of Wilmington; strong-willed Dr. James S. Griffin, co-owner of Rancho San Pasqual; banker Isaias Hellman; F.P.F. Temple, whose life ended sadly after the failure of the Temple and Workman Bank; newspaperman and Southern California booster Benjamin C. Thurman; and the vitriolic Edward J.C. Kewen of the neighboring El Molino Ranch.

Midge has been working in this book for more than a decade. Most of her extensive research has taken place at the Huntington Library, where she found over 10,000 pieces in the Shorb collection alone. She also waded through all available Los Angeles newspapers from 1851 until the turn of the century. With her husband Jack, she traveled to Maryland, Tennessee and New York to study the origin of the Shorb and Wilson families.

Days of Vintage, Years of Vision is only the first of two volumes on the Shorbs, Wilsons and Rancho San Marino, carrying the story to 1880. Volume two, which Midge is busy writing now, will continue the career of Shorb down to his untimely death in 1896, trace the rise of George Smith Patton and his war-hero son, and see the San Marino Ranch purchased by Henry E. Huntington in 1903 and the subsequent rise of the Huntington Library and Art Gallery.

Midge Sherwood's magnificent volume is a "must" for all those with an interest in the rich heritage of Southern California.

— John W. Robinson

The works of some of our best local Western writers are on display in the Los Angeles Westerners' "Brand Book No. 16" (P.O. Box 230, Glendale, CA 91209, \$27.50). Expertly edited by Raymond F. Wood, this handsomely designed anthology contains eleven original articles on diverse aspects of Western Americana, though the focus is naturally, California.

Subjects range from Jayne Bernard's straightforward account of "Sunbathing In Southern California" to Richard W. Cunningham's breezy discussion of "Independence 74", California's prize battleship in both war and peace times. Kristine Fredriksson summarizes "Sixty Years of American Rodeo In England", and finds the British had little patience for bronc riding or steer wrestling. The English preferred "Wild West Shows" and enforced animal protection laws which sufficiently harnessed Texans and other "great, big slow-speaking fellows from the open plains who have learned . . . to fall hard and get up grinning."

Iron Eyes Cody, Willis Bellkinsop and Walt Wheelock offer respective biographical sketches of Gen. Hugh L. Scott, explorer William Wolfskill and Peter Lebec, a mysterious bandit of the Spanish era. The best portrait is John W. Robinson's "The Ordeal of Gen. Wright: A Study of Secession In California". Here, Robinson reminds readers that California gold and silver financed the Union cause during the Civil War.

The most interesting article in the "Brand Book" is Abraham Hoffman's dramatic essay on "Griffith Park's Greatest Tragedy". Hoffman brings alive the summer of 1933, when a terrible fire engulfed Griffith Park during the height of the Depression. The event is little more than a footnote actually, but thanks to Hoffman's deft skills, the reader quickly becomes absorbed.

The final stories concern Canadian Mounties, master saddle makers and an investigation of California place names. Most chapters are illustrated with photographs, line drawings and half-tones, while artist Andy Dagosta has contributed a full-color insert of 15 paintings, which are as spright and varied as the articles they accompany. The Los Angeles Westerners are a tradition

in these parts, and their heritage has been greatly enriched by this keepsake "Brand Book".

—Jeff Nathan

The San Fernando Valley Past and Present. Lawrence C. Jorgensen, Ed. Pacific Rim Research. 1982.

Reading the pitch on the inside folds of the just jacket of *The San Fernando Valley Past and Present*, edited by Lawrence C. Jorgensen, Pacific Rim Research, 1982, might suggest the \$22.50 hardback as worthy of purchase. However after agonizing through its 243 pages I'm inclined to even question its first draft.

Fortunately, my copy was a gift so my only loss was the time spent wading through the jumbled content and the time it takes to hoist a caveat emptor pennant.

The arrangement or lack thereof is the handiwork of editor and principal contributor, Lawrence C. Jorgensen, professor of History and Political Science at Los Angeles Valley College. His confused, muddled, unsettling sense of organization marks the book as a milestone in contrived contemporary socio-historical communication.

The mechanical layout and art would be hard put to compete with a tank town high school annual and Jorgensen's endless use of quotes suggests he has ODed on *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*.

As an example in addressing the lot of the Mission Indians one is treated to,

"Shakespeare once placed in the mouth of Mark Anthony the words, 'The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones.' Perhaps. But then, as someone else said, 'Virtue is its own reward,' and we have no need to build monuments to those who did what was right."

The hodge-podge is divided into three books, Beginnings, Yesterdays and Today's and is the work of 18 contributors.

If one is a serious observer of Valley affairs much time and aggravation can be saved by focusing on Book Two — Yesterdays, starting at page 92 and reading to page 135, then skipping to page 154 and putting it

down at 164.

Exclusive of Jorgensen, who contributed two chapters in Book Two, the content, both reprint and original, is organized and straight forward. Here material from *Out West* 1904, *California Coast Trails* 1913, *Sunset* 1914 and *East of the High Sierra* 1975, together with Elva Melines' *Historical Sites of the San Fernando Valley* and Jennifer Mitchells' *City of San Fernando: Promise and Present*, offer worthwhile reading.

Much of the balance of the content reads like a conspiracy. As an example, there is Jorgensen's coverage of the Chumash Indians which puts one in mind of stuff left over from the "roach clip 60's."

"Ironically, that ancient village site and the cave are on lands now owned by the United States Government's National Aeronautics and Space Administration and are under current lease to Rockwell International. In addition to being a major government contractor in the development of missiles, the Space Shuttle and other symptoms of what Loren Eiseley has called 'the swarming stage' of civilization, a subsidiary of that corporation operates a nuclear reactor near that ancient ceremonial site. And while that corporation possesses an 'on-site burial permit,' let us pray to the gods of the Chumash that their sacred cave, and other caves in the area, are not being used to store the by-products of that reactor."

But Jorgenson is not alone as is evident in the contribution of Peace Wilson, author of *Chapter 18/East Valley Muse*. Peace really gets it on man, like,

"... despite genocidal fear reasonably based on a factual view of the apparent political-economic world: wishy-washy machine government, cruel stupidity, loveless manipulation of money, criminally insane nuclear power plant, waste, and weapon proliferation; an ugly energy crunch that is the direct outgrowth of compulsively cramped neurotic/psychotic political/financial 'leaders' (as well as their sheeplike constituency) who never read William Blake and would never in a millenium understand 'Energy is pure delight.' Underline pure, as in opposite to polluted. Ah, 'Damn braces, bless relaxes,'

and back to your myriad trenches and stages o ye troopers and troupers. We've all felt and been the taint, one time or another."

Finally, in the acknowledgements, Jorgensen thanks, "Professor Farrel Broslawsky, my long-time partner in the crime of teaching," which is an apt identity. Broslawsky's slanted views regarding pseudo Valley Jews suggest he is unaware of a considerable Valley population of Orthodox, Sephardic and a sprinkling of Ashkenazim Jews who still walk to their temples on the Sabbath ignorant of his Valley College model.

The most redeeming feature of the book is its contribution to aspiring authors and publishers. If this one can make it, any author or publisher can.

— R.W. Cunningham

In The Shadow of Fremont: Edward Kern and the Art of American Exploration by Robert V. Hine. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman, OK. 1982. 199 pages. \$18.95.

During the war with Mexico, Edward Kern, a talented young artist found himself in command at Fort Sutter, where he continued painting landscapes. His adventures are sharply rendered by Hine, a history professor at UC, Riverside. How Kern, who served as Fremont's artist, topographer and cartographer landed such an incongruous position makes for delightful reading. Examples of Kern's illustrations are interspersed with Hine's text, which dutifully follows Kern's later expeditions to Japan, Siberia and numerous Pacific islands.

—Jeff Nathan

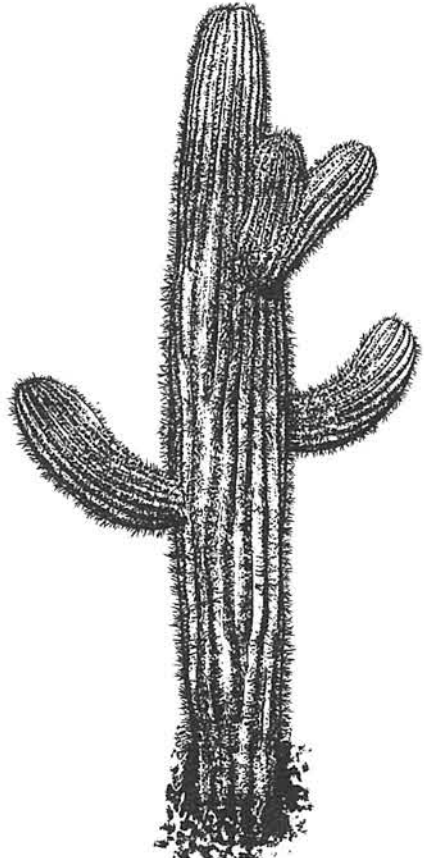
California Conquered: War and Peace on the Pacific, 1846-1850 by Neal Harlow. University of California Press. Berkeley. 1982. 499 pages. \$19.95 until 12/31/82; \$24.95 thereafter.

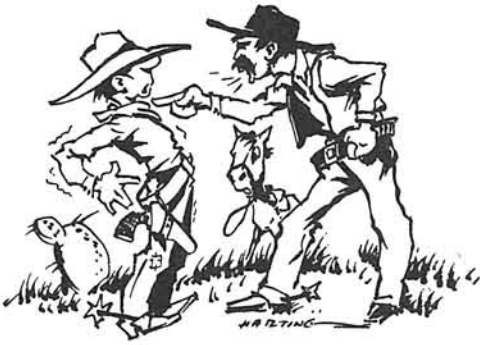
Our notion of empire, which percolated under the guise of "Manifest Destiny" is skillfully reconsidered by Harlow. This military-political study gets off to a rousing start with Commodore T.C. Jones' aborted

capture of Monterey in 1842, a move which caused the United States more than a little embarrassment, as no war had been declared and there was no enemy to fight. No matter, says Harlow, that fiasco was a mere dress rehearsal for the actual invasion of California. Immersed in source material, Harlow has an historian's scholarly approach, tempered by a sharp eye for the absurd.

On one side were the *Californios*, who felt small allegiance to Mexico and couldn't decide among themselves how to respond to the intrusion of foreigners. The Americans were equally confused, as a procession of generals played musical chairs. Fremont, Stockton, Kearny and Shubrick make appearances and their now-familiar campaigns are given much attention. The discovery of gold, the clash of cultures and California's rush to statehood are also analyzed in Harlow's meticulous, yet lucid narrative. Maps, illustration and notes are included.

—Jeff Nathan





The Foreman Sez . . .

Roundup Foreman can be an interesting, fulfilling and rewarding job, if there is an adequate supply, suitable for publication, of articles, letters, photographs, drawings or any other information dealing with the old west.

On the other hand, it can be an extremely difficult, disappointing and frustrating task especially after continually making appeals for contributions — only to have them ignored. One can easily say, "To Hell with it all, if nobody else cares why should I?"

Recently while looking through back issues of the *Branding Iron*, with the intention of reprinting a good article, I came across the following, written July 1948 by Paul Galleher, who was sheriff at that time. Even though some thirty-five years have elapsed since the article first appeared it is still a clear, concise, challenging and pertinent message for all Westerners. It is reprinted here verbatim.

From The Sheriff

by Paul W. Galleher

I was chatting the other day with a friend and we fell into a philosophical exchange on the kind of history that should be written to help stem the swelling tide of communistic trend and mirror more of the true democracy our forefathers fought to preserve. We all

have our pet theories and are pretty fair critics of the other fellow's stuff. How about our own contributions? Are we wide awake — alert to explore the past with a view to making it last — to make it real for the younger generation to study and understand? We may not win Pulitzer prizes for literary finesse but studies of people, customs, manners, places, ideas and the like are intriguing and have moulded the creation of American democratic tradition, and should be ever continued.

Here in the west we can study and record our findings in language that may not be flowery but still can be understood. Much that was western that was good, wholesome and worthy of record is hidden away and still remains a mystery or is beclouded with untruths in popular writing or motion pictures. Here is a job for us Westerners to ferret out such material and get the truth. Here is a challenge that can create some infectiously lively and exciting research. Here is the purpose of our existing. Here is our opportunity to be aware of the kind of history that should be written and help to write it. A heritage woven of the kind of stuff which characterizes westward progress and development won't be worth much if we cease to study and write of it. If some of the "tripe" which clutters up the market is allowed to form the basis of our conceptions and to become part of our school curricula, it will mean we have ceased to be vigilant and unmindful of the efforts of those who preceded us.

If democracy is to be strengthened and invigorated, this strength and vigor must arise out of our study of and appreciation for it. Nothing teaches democracy like living it and there is no better way to live it than to absorb the truth in study and research in phases of our not too imperfect past and pass it on to others. If we as Westerners are willing to accept such a challenge we have the medium by which to express our thoughts in the pages of our *Branding Iron* and *Brand Book*. These publications should disseminate true western literature not glamorized for entertainment, but rather serious considerations of lasting worthwhile history that those who follow us will find it interesting, valuable and meaningful.