LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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JOSIAH DWIGHT WHITNEY and the CALIFORNIA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

by John W. Robinson

PART I:

The highest mountain in the United States outside Alaska honors his name. He was one of 19th century America's most prestigious men of science. He had a long and distinguished career at Harvard, rubbed elbows with the nation's elite, authored a shelf of scientific books. Out west for a brief episode in his long life, this Massachusetts Brahmin directed the California Geological Survey, the first extensive scientific examination of

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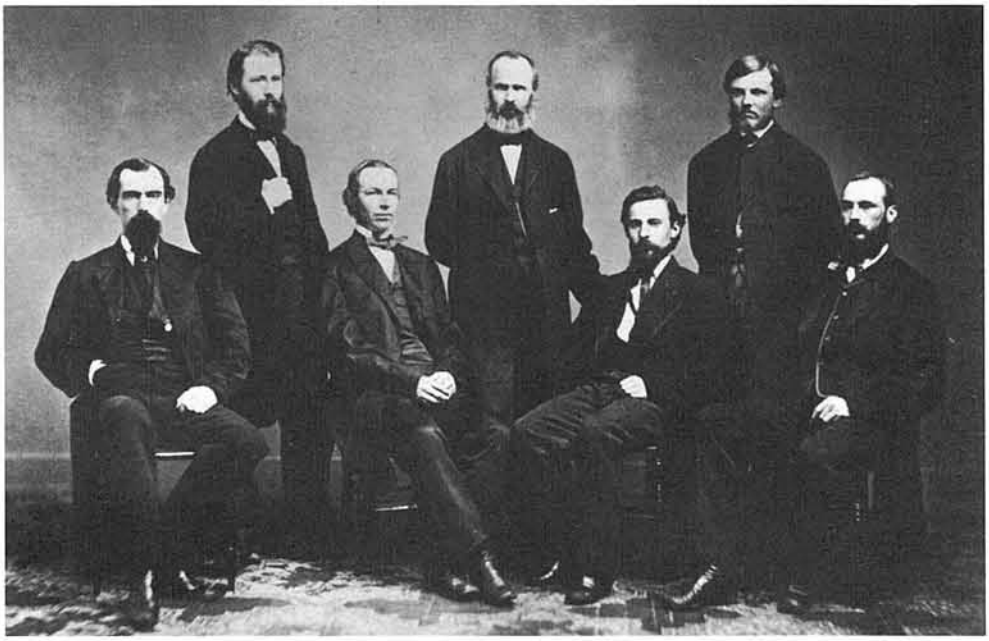

California Geological Survey, 1863. Standing from left: William Gabb, Josiah Whitney, Clarence King, Seated: Avevill, Ashburner, Charles Hoffman, William Brewer.

The Branding Iron

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

George Houle, Deputy Sheriff Jerome Selmer and Sheriff William Warren.

JANUARY

George J. Houle traced the career of Zane Grey, prolific author of Western novels, juvenile stories, and books on sport fishing. Born in Zanesville, Ohio, Grey came from a family whose ancestors arrived in America from England in 1678. A rather poor student but a good baseball player, Grey barely graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1894. He moved to New York to pursue a writing career. Married in 1905, Grey had to have his first major literary effort, *Betty Zane,* financed by his wife, Dolly. *Spirit of the Border,* a sequel, found a major publisher, and *The Last Trail* completed his "Ohio River" trilogy on the American Revolution and his own ancestors.

In 1906 Grey and his wife went to California

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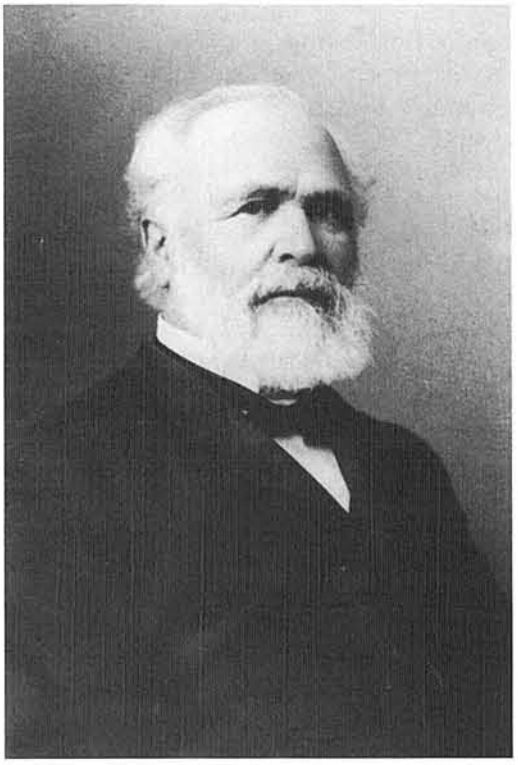

Josiah Dwight Whitney

John Muir

the state and the forerunner of the great federal surveys of the late 19th century. Among his proteges was Clarence King, first director of the United States Geological Survey.

His lifetime accomplishments might seem to guarantee Josiah Dwight Whitney a niche in the scientific hall of fame. Yet historians—particularly California historians—have been generally unkind to Whitney. His stormy years as State Geologist and break with the California Legislature provide a partial reason for his tarnished image, but far more remembered and written about by historians was an acrimonious dispute with John Muir over the origin of Yosemite Valley. Whitney believed, in fact insisted, that the valley was the result of a cataclysmic occurrence, that the bottom had fallen out in some sudden, earth-jarring event. Muir championed glaciers as the carving force, believing a great sheet of ice had gouged the chasm. Absurd! cried Whitney, this upstart shephard should stick to his flock! Subsequent geological research proved Whitney wrong, dead wrong, and Muir essentially right, to the everlasting detriment of Whitney's reputation.

The public controversies of Whitney's life seemed to all revolve around his stint in California. Why did this learned, brilliant and proud New England Yankee with security and status back home pick up stakes and venture out west? The answer lay partly with Whitney's restless spirit and ambition, and partly from a clarion call from the Golden State.

California in 1860 was a decade removed from the gold rush but still very much enamored with auriferous excitement. But the days of '49 were gone forever; the river bottoms had been pretty well picked clean. The placer miner was steadily being replaced by the hardrock miner, financed by San Francisco capital, searching and digging for the elusive "mother lodes" where, he believed, fabulous wealth lay hidden. Occasional rich

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strikes encouraged this belief. 1859 saw the beginning of the Comstock silver boom, and hopefuls by the hundreds swarmed across the Sierra into the Washoe country. If drab and tawny Sun Mountain held a bonanza in its rocky bosom, wasn't it possible, indeed probable, that similar rich veins of gold and silver lay awaiting discovery elsewhere? Moreover, the gold and silver fever had aroused a general interest in all minerals, and there were frequent "excitements" over discoveries of tin, quicksilver, copper and even coal. Vast mineral resources, yet uncovered, seemed to lie all about.

To discover, map and make available these potential riches, many influential Californians came to believe that a thorough geological examination of the state was needed. As early as 1853 the California legislature appointed Dr. John B. Trask to investigate the geology and mineral resources of the state. Trask was a physician rather than a geologist; nevertheless he pursued his task with vigor and, after traveling up and down the state, produced a series of papers that superficially outlined the structure of California. The Pacific Railroad Survey in the years 1853 to 1856 also made contributions. But these were token efforts, sketchy and inadequate. The geology of California was complex, far too complex to yield up its secrets in a few months of hasty reconnaissance by semi-trained scientists.

Foremost among Californians who realized the need for a serious, thorough geological survey of the state was Stephen J. Field, at the time (1860) a justice of the California Supreme Court, later Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Field believed that such a survey, in order to accomplish its goals, should be not only competent in science, but strictly impartial and unprejudiced. He was therefore determined that it should be kept free from politics and local influences. All would depend on the character and qualifications of the man to be placed in charge of the survey. Accordingly, Justice Field and several associates, most notably John Conness of the state legislature, sought advice and recommendations from the leading men of science in the East. Receiving almost unanimous endorsement from the Eastern intelligencia was Josiah Dwight Whitney. (Interestingly, one of Whitney's Eastern advocates was the world-renowned glacialogist Louis Agassiz, ironic in view of Whitney's later views on the non-glacial origin of Yosemite Valley.)

Whitney, in 1860, was 41 years old, one of America's leading geologists, veteran of half a dozen state surveys, brilliant, tough-minded to the point of obstinacy. Physically, he was of shorter than average height but had a muscular build. He had a massive head framed by a steel-gray beard and whiskers, piercing eyes, and a high-pitched voice.

Whitney was born in Northhampton, Massachusetts in 1819, the eldest of thirteen children of Josiah Dwight Whitney, Sr., a well-to-do banker. He grew up under the stern and spartan regimen of religious parents and developed into a rather single-minded young man of unusual ability in science. He graduated from Yale with a degree in chemistry in 1839. He probably would have remained a chemist were it not that opportunity presented itself in the field of geology. The New Hampshire Geological Survey was looking for young men with scientific training and Whitney signed on in 1840. He quickly proved his worth. The life of a surveyor in the field required toughness and stamina, qualities in which young Whitney excelled. His friend and later biographer Edwin Tenney Brewster described him at the time: "In person he is short and strongly-built, tough and enduring, and thoroughly inured to the hardness of a geologist's life . . . He works without respite, goes to bed early and sleeps six hours a night, and has a curious trick of planning his day's work in bed when he first wakes up."

The New Hampshire survey completed, Whitney spent three years in Europe, studying both chemistry and geology at the Ecole des Mines in Paris and the University of Berlin. He returned home in 1847, thoroughly trained by the European masters of science, and immediately signed on as chemist and geologist of the Lake Superior Survey. He was a much sought-after man now, and over the next few years he was eagerly hired for geological surveys in New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa. In 1854 he

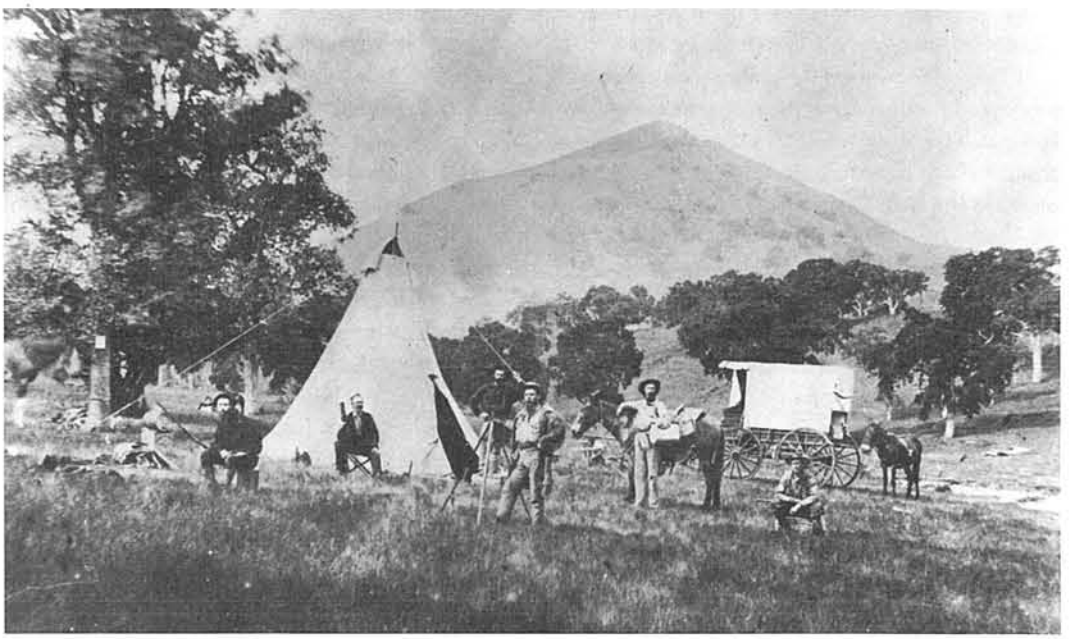
compiled and published *The Metallic Wealth of The United States,* a 500-page statistical tome, described by historian William H. Goetzmann as "A classic work of Gilded Age scholarship, and the standard reference for twenty years on metallic wealth." This volume, more than anything else, solidified Whitney's reputation within the eastern academic world.

He seemed eminently qualified for the California position. Moreover, he actively sought the job, writing to the leading scientists of the country and marshalling their support, and skillfully utilizing family connections to assure the support of Justice Field, then one of the powerful figures in California politics. Small wonder that he got the job!

By the Act of April 21, 1860, passed by the California legislature and signed by Governor John G. Downey, Whitney was appointed State Geologist and directed to "make an accurate and complete Geological Survey of the State, and to furnish . . . proper maps and diagrams thereof, with a full and scientific description of its rocks, fossils, soils and minerals, and of its botanical and zoological productions, together with specimens of the same." He was given a salary of $6,000 a year, a handsome sum in 1860, and authorized to appoint assistants and purchase equipment as he saw fit, within the limits of the $20,000 appropriated for the first year's work.

Whitney called the Act "a most enlightened measure," and he must have been especially gratified since he himself drafted the part of the bill that described the nature and extent of the survey. Significantly, the survey was to have general scientific objectives and was not to be merely a search for gold and silver mines: As Whitney later told the legislature, "It was not the business of a geological surveying corps to act to any considerable extent as a prospecting party." Unforeseen at the time, this was to become a bone of contention with the legislature, impatient for immediate practical results. An even greater weakness in the Act, also not realized until later, was the dependence of the survey upon yearly appropriations. No sum was provided beyond the $20,000 for the first year's work. Whitney would be at the mercy of each succeeding legislature. This would eventually prove to be a fatal flaw, and keep the survey, designed to be non-political, very much involved in state politics.

But these headaches were all in the future. Whitney started out full of enthusiasm and



California Geological Survey Field Camp, 1864

with the goodwill of most leading Californians. One of his great strengths, proved throughout his career, was his ability to choose worthy assistants. He picked an outstanding team for the California survey, led by 32 year-old William H. Brewer, chemist and botanist out of Yale's Sheffield Scientific School, and William Ashburner, geologist trained at the Paris Ecole des Mines. Later he would add William Moore Gabb, paleontologist; Charles F. Hoffmann, a young German surveyor who was destined to become one of the great pioneer topographers of the West; and young geologist Clarence King, destined to become the most famous of all as a noted author, leader of the 40th Parallel Survey, and founder of the United States Geological Survey. No finer scientific team was ever assembled in the 19th-century West.

Whitney and his party departed Boston in October 1860, travelled by ship to Panama, crossed the isthmus, and arrived in San Francisco Bay on November 14th. He was warmly greeted by civic leaders and members of the legislature. A few days later he journeyed to Sacramento and held a cordial meeting with Governor Downey. Whitney had every reason to be optimistic.

Whitney wasted no time. He rented an office in San Francisco's Montgomery Block assembled equipment and purchased supplies, interviewed scores of job applicants. He could hardly wait to get under way.

It became immediately apparent that the survey of California was an immense undertaking. The state was 800 miles long, mostly mountain or desert, with few adequate roads outside the San Francisco, Sacramento and Mother Lode mining areas. "I have found out," Whitney wrote home, "that the State of California is a prodigiously large one. It is as big as Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Hannover and Bavaria put together! If I had a complete map of the state, a corps twice as large as I now have, and worked as fast as the English government surveyors do, I should finish in just 150 years." The lack of an adequate base map of California was a major handicap. So, from the beginning, Whitney's surveyors were obliged to engage in topographic mapping along with their examinations of geological features.

As winter was approaching, it was too late to examine the Sierra Nevada or the northern regions of the state. Whitney opted to begin in the south. In December 1860 the survey party set up field headquarters just outside Los Angeles and commenced exploring outward in all directions. In January they climbed their first mountain, the highest peak in the Santa Ana Range, which they named Mount Downey in honor of the governor (The name failed to take hold; today it is called Santiago Peak). Lugging their equipment up its chaparral-blanketed slope, they began the scientific measurement of California. The view from the top, 150 miles in every direction, revealed to them the intricate terrain of mountain, lowland and coastline that they would be required to map. With the region around Los Angeles surveyed, they made their way slowly northward to Santa Barbara and beyond, mapping as they went. By the summer of 1861 they had explored the New Idria and New Almaden quicksilver mines and were working in the San Francisco Bay area. Topographer Charles F. Hoffmann joined the survey in July and began work on a master map of the Bay region.

The survey's field work was left largely in the capable hands of Brewer. Whitney divided his time among office work in San Francisco, the legislature in Sacramento, and the constantly moving field party. He ran a tight ship. In a letter to Brewer, who was fast becoming his closest friend in California, he revealed his office regimen: "As far as possible, the forenoon should be kept uninterruptedly for writing and miscellaneous business attended to in the afternoon. The hours from 3 to 5 p.m. will be reserved as far as is necessary for attending to out of door business, receiving calls, and answering questions relating to private business."

His biggest problems were not related to office work nor the field party, but in his Sacramento dealings. Already, by mid-1861, his relationship with the politicians was showing signs of friction. When Governor Downey quietly sought his advice on mining stock speculations, Whitney bluntly and indignantly refused. He was not here in California to indulge in favoritism that might

damage the integrity of the survey. No member of the survey, himself included, would use his knowledge of California geology to make a penny for himself. In an age of easy virtue, his integrity was absolute, his moral standards incorruptable. Unfortunately, these admirable qualities, when combined with a tart tongue and blunt manner, sometimes made Whitney appear stubborn, arrogant and conceited. His scorn for expediency, his refusal to yield or compromise in situations that required political give and take, would eventually prove fatal to the survey.

Although Whitney had no marked talent for pleasing politicians, toward his subordinates he was a different man. He was esteemed and loved by almost every member of his party. "At each new camp," wrote his biographer, "he was the first to be out with his hammer, and in the wise and genial talk around the evening fire, he was less the State Geologist of California than the gay Apothecarius of Clover Den." Whitney generated a fierce loyalty in his subordinates that lasted a lifetime.

The year 1862 was ushered in with leaden skies and drenching rain. A dark canopy of cumulo-nimbus clouds moved relentlessly in, wave after wave, and piled high against the might rampart of the Sierra Nevada. Day after day, throughout January and into February, California was pelted with sheets of rain, and snow piled deep in the mountains. Sacramento and other towns were awash in water. Roads were impassable, rivers unnavigable. Survey work was stymied for weeks on end.

Weather was the least of the problems facing Whitney as 1862 began. Far more serious, in the long run, was a dearth of money that threatened to halt or at least severely limit the work of the survey. Although the legislature had appropriated funds, the state treasury was empty and no money was forthcoming. Whitney wrote his father, "Our legislature appropriated $15,000 last year for the survey; but of this, owing to the emptiness of the state treasury, I have not received a cent . . . My account is audited for $10,000, and this the Controller promises me in May . . . The remaining $5,000 still due of last year's appropriation will not be paid before next December. Now, as soon as I get my $10,000 it will all have to be paid out, and I shall have to commence borrowing again at two percent per month . . . or stop the survey." Fortunately, Whitney's father advanced him a loan so survey work could continue on a limited basis.

With such slender resources, the survey's second season of exploration was initiated. Brewer, with Whitney in attendance whenever his heavy office schedule would allow, continued the reconnaissance of the previous year, moving north from San Francisco almost to the Oregon border. Whitney joined Brewer and his men in September for an ascent of Mount Shasta, which they believed to be the highest mountain in the United States. Brewer called its summit "a mere pinnacle of lava shooting up into the air . . . and only reached with some daring." To Whitney it was the most difficult mountain he had ever climbed: "Below an altitude of 10,000 feet, it went pretty easily, but the last 4,000 demanded of me, at least, frequent stoppages to get breath." The survey party returned down the Sacramento Valley, visited some of the raucous northern mining camps, and finished the year examining the region immediately north of San Francisco Bay. By season's end, Whitney and his men had completed a reconnaissance up and down the western half of the state, logging over 9,000 miles, 2,067 of them on foot according to Brewer.

The year of 1863 witnessed even greater accomplishments. Brewer and his men moved to the south end of California's Central Valley, briefly examined the Mojave Desert, then tackled the great Sierra Nevada, starting from Tehachapi Pass and working northward. They explored the lower gorges of Kern and Kings river canyons and passed through groves of *Sequoia gigantea,* measuring their height and marveling at their dimensions. Whitney was able to complete his office work in San Francisco and join the party in June, and together they entered the Yosemite Valley. They were awestruck by the gigantean walls and the pure grandeur of the scene. Brewer described the valley as "not only the great natural curiosity in this

state, but one of the most remarkable in the world . . . I have seen some of the finest scenery of Switzerland, the Tyrol, and the Bavarian Alps, but I never saw any grander than this." Although they saw evidence of glaciation—moraines and glacial polish on rocks—Whitney could not bring himself to believe that this enormous canyon had been created by glaciers and erosion alone. He believed that the valley had been formed be some catastrophic series of events that caused the bottom to fall out. He would believe this until the end of this life.

Ironically, Whitney saw and reported plenty of evidence of glacial action elsewhere in the Sierra. After leaving Yosemite Valley, Whitney and his men headed east into the higher regions of the range. They scaled an 11,000-foot peak which they named Mount Hoffmann after the survey's topographer, then crossed the upper basin of the Tuolumne River and ascended a 13,000-footer on the Sierra crest which they labelled Mount Dana in honor of Yale geologist James Dwight Dana. From Dana's summit Whitney marveled at the panorama: "We are in the midst of what was once a great glacier region, the valleys all about being most superbly polished and grooved by glaciers, which once existed here on a stupendous scale, having a thickness, in the Tuolumne Valley, of a thousand feet, and having left splendid moraines—medial, lateral and terminal. The beauty of the polish on the rocks, covering hundreds of square miles of surface, is something which must be seen to be appreciated."

Whitney returned to San Francisco, while Brewer and Hoffman dropped down the eastern rampart of the Sierra to Mono Lake, moved north to examine the Washoe country and the Lake Tahoe region, and finally recrossed the range via the American River. In early September, the party disbanded and Brewer boarded a river steamer in Sacramento to report to his boss in San Francisco.

By a remarkable coincidence, on the same boat with Brewer were two young graduates of the Yale Scientific School, Clarence King and James T. Gardner. King had read of Whitney's work in California and had journeyed west seeking adventure. In the back of his mind was the idea of gaining employment with the California Geological Survey. This is just what happened. King introduced himself to Brewer, and the latter was so impressed that he hired the young geologist on the spot. Gardner had commitments in San Francisco, but joined the survey a few months later. Both of these men were to prove their worth to the survey many times over, and King was to rise to great heights in later years as one of America's foremost geologists.

Great Canyon of the Sierras-Yosemite (Painting by Thomas Hill)

Clarence King

Before year's end, Brewer and King made a reconnaissance loop through northern California, climbing Lassen's Peak and threading the tangled labyrinth of the Coast Range to Crescent City, before returning to San Francisco by steamer. His initial trip with the California Survey gave Clarence King a full dose of the adventure he had long been seeking.

The returning field party found their chief totally involved in struggles with the legislature. Opposition to the Whitney and his survey was rising and chances looked bleak for obtaining sufficient funds to continue the field work. The legislators were impatient. Where were the practical results, the new gold and silver discoveries to enrich California's economy, they asked? In three years of work, the only concrete accomplishment of Whitney and his men was the publication of William Moore Gabb's technical treatise on paleontology, of little value in locating undiscovered mineral resources. An opponent sarcastically read excerpts from the volume to the derisive laughter of his legislative colleagues. Instead of concentrating his attention on matters of immediate economic concern to California, ran the argument, Whitney had merely studied fossils. He had located no new mineral riches, and, worse, he had dismissed as without value many of the mineral strikes he and his men had examined. Why should California continue to finance a survey that, so far, had not proven any benefit to the state?

Part of the problem was Whitney himself. His lectures to the legislature on the importance of pure research appeared sanctimonious and condescending to many. Clergymen were angered by his vigorous defense of Charles Darwin's new theories. In the face of mounting opposition he curtly refused to compromise any of his principles. He was the victim of regional prejudice: Who was this Eastern-bred outsider who had the gall to tell Californians what to do and how to think? Better a Westerner as chief geologist, some felt.

A discouraged Whitney complained to a friend, "We have escaped the perils by flood and field, have evaded the unfriendly embrace of the grizzly, and now find ourselves in the jaws of the legislature."

Not all was negative. Whitney did not lose faith in the righteousness of his cause and believed the legislature, when presented with all the facts, would eventually support the survey. He had his defenders, too. It was pointed out that, true, only a single volume on paleontology was in print, but several other works, including one on geology and mineralogy which promised to be of substantial help in defining California's resources, were in preparation. Whitney showed the legislature advance sheets of Hoffmann's topographic map of San Francisco Bay. The whole state would eventually be mapped in such a manner, and these maps would be far superior to anything previously done. It would take at least four more years to complete the job, with an appropriation of not less than $40,000 per year, he said. Patience was necessary, Whitney admonished the lawmakers. He was confident the end results

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would fully justify the expenditures required to keep the survey going.

The result was a partial defeat for Whitney and his men. In an act approved April 4, 1864, the California Survey was continued, but appropriations were cut in half and Whitney's duties were markedly changed. The agricultural, botanical and zoological work of the survey was to be suppressed, and Whitney was directed to devote his time to "a thorough and scientific examination of the gold, silver, and copper producing districts of this State, and to make such scientific and practical experiments as will be of value in the discovery of mines and the working and reduction of ores." He was thus to abandon the pursuit of pure scientific knowledge and attend to the "practical" concerns that would make California the richest state in the Union. He was given $6,000 toward publishing two volumes on geology and mineralogy and ordered to see them into print as soon as possible.

(Continued next issue)

Monthly Roundup (Continued)

and toured all the high spots. The following year he met Buffalo Jones and took him back west with him. Out of their acquaintanceship came the nonfiction *Last of the Plainsmen.* While out west Grey had his first experiences riding horses, seeing bears, and camping out; he kept diaries and notes of everything he encountered, and he would base his novels on his direct observations.

Grey's first major successful novel was *Heritage of the Desert* (1910), a book that set the formula of the frail Easterner who gains strength in the West. His most famous novel, *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912), first appeared serially in magazine form, the way writers made their real earnings in those days. Although criticized as being anti-Mormon, *Riders* simply tried to show that every group had its good and bad elements.

Other novels followed in rapid succession, many of them to be made into motion pictures, some more than once: *Wildfire, Wanderers of the Wasteland, Vanishing American, Hash Knife Outift, Under the Tonto Rim, Nevada, Western Union,* and many other Westerns. Juvenile novels, written in the early 1900s, often had a sports focus, such as his book *The Shortstop.* Throughout his career Grey also wrote many books and booklets about sports fishing.

Of particular interest was Houle's discussion of how the Grey estate continues to keep Grey's stories in the public eye long after his death in 1939. Grey made a fortune, but he was also a big spender. His wife shrewdly managed the contracts and retained key literary rights. This made it possible for Grey to obtain royalties every time a story was filmed. Grey also wrote at a prolific rate, four novels a year, but only one was published annually. This made it possible to release "new" Grey stories for many years after he died—the last Grey book to appear came out in 1978. The Grey literary machine also found outlets as comic books, a magazine, films, and even in areas where Grey didn't write, as in the *King of the Royal Mounted* series for the Big Little Books.

Houle highlighted his presentation with slides showing the various editions of Grey books, family scenes, and other pictures covering Grey's fascinating career.

FEBRUARY

In the absence of the scheduled speaker, Active Member Don Torguson filled in at the last moment and received accolades from the Corral for his spirited defense of Hubert Howe Bancroft as historian. Bancroft (1832-1918) was born in Ohio, came West in 1852, and rejected prospecting for a career as a San Francisco bookseller, stationer, and publisher. His success in business made him a wealthy man, and in 1859 he began collecting books and materials on California. At first a hobby, by 1862 Bancroft's collection

Photograph - Frank Q. Newton

Don Torguson

had reached 1,000 volumes. The avocation became a commitment as his collection grew. Bancroft traveled to many countries seeking materials, broadening the scope of his collection to include a West that ranged from Alaska to Mexico.

Bancroft's library came to include interviews, documents, and letters as well as books. He hired assistants to gather materials and recollections. By 1880 the library had grown to some 60,000 books and manuscripts. When the University of California purchased the library in 1905, estimates of its value ran as high as $300,000.

Having assumed his library, Bancroft determined to write a history of the Pacific States. Realizing the immensity of the task, he hired a corps of assistants, created an index system to gain access to the information locked in the materials, and employed people to assist him in writing the volumes. Although he was later criticized for his "factory" approach to the production of the 39 volumes in the *Works,* he did write almost five volumes himself, and he closely supervised the work of his assistants. Lacking formal or academic training, Bancroft accomplished a feat that could never be duplicated—securing the recollections of key participants in historical events and creating a body of work that would stand the test of time.

Despite the accomplishment, Bancroft was vulnerable to criticism, mainly because he was listed as sole author. Ambrose Bierce satirized Bancroft's methods, and the volumes were criticized as lacking unity and coherence. Bancroft fought back, defending his work, and he had the good fortune to outlive his critics. Nevertheless, many reviewers of the books were impressed by Bancroft's achievement, and modern historians still find much of value in Bancroft's *Works*. Torguson observed that Bancroft, in taking on the challenge of the *Works,* was a heroic figure who accomplished his purpose.

MARCH

Corral Member Wade Kittell offered the Corral an enthusiastic and humorous presentation of his slides ilustrating the history of Long Beach, based on his collection of 10,000 slides. The City of Long Beach is located on land originally the ranchos of Los

Photograph - Frank Q. Newton

Wade Kittell

Cerritos and Los Alamitos. William Willmore began what became Long Beach with a real estate development in 1880. Early land developers attracted prospective purchasers through construction of a rather shaky railroad and a hotel that burned down in 1888. Pioneer attractions included a tent school, a Methodist tabernacle used for Chautauqua meetings, and a pier. By 1900 an amusement area was developing which evolved into the famous Pike. The fast-growing town laid the cornerstone for its City Hall in 1899.

With the 20th century came major opportunities for growth, heralded in 1902 with the arrival of the Pacific Electric. Beach attractions for visitors included a Pavilion, bath houses, a city plunge, and a double-deck pier, erected in 1904. The Virginia Hotel went up in 1908, at a cost of $1 million. City growth brought libraries, monuments, a motion picture company, a new City Hall in 1919, and more hotels. Then oil was discovered on Signal Hill in 1921, and oil wells soon dotted the landscape. By 1925 the city's population was over 100,000, and buses and automobiles crowded the streets. Midwesterners, notably Iowans, flocked to Long Beach via the Union Pacific. The Pike offered such attractions as the Bamboo Slide, goat-cart rides, and band concerts. To celebrate the growth of its harbor, the city staged a successful exhibition in 1928 that brought a million visitors.

The famous earthquake of March 10, 1933, destroyed much of the town, but Long Beach quickly recovered. By the 1950s Iowans and streetcars were fading from the scene, while high-rise buildings began going up. Historic buildings met sad ends, replaced by modern structures of dubious quality. The city's uniqueness continued through such fascinating acquisitions as the *Queen Mary* and the Spruce Goose. Wade's presentation brought a considerable sense of nostalgia for lost landmarks, but also a sense of the dynamic change that has characterized the history of the City of Long Beach.

Corral Chips

Past Sheriff *Bill Escherich* completes two years as president of Los Angeles Beautiful in early 1984. He was recently awarded the California Alumni Citation for "loyal and notable service" to the California Alumni Association (Berkeley). . . . *Abe Hoffman* is the author of "The Remarkable Unremarked Career of Samuel Travers Clover: Western Journalist, Author and Editor," in the November/December 1983 issue of *The Californians* . . . C.M. *Mary Gormly* retires as Librarian Emerita from California State University, Los Angeles, as of August 1983. She is reelected Registrar of Marks and Brands of the Huntington Corral for 1984 . . . C.M. *Gene Bear* emcees the 5th Annual Burbank Firehouse Chili Cookoff to honor the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation on May 20 . . .

C.M. *Msgr Francis J. Weber* has been appointed editor for *Hoja Volante,* the quarterly publication of the Zamorano Club. His new book, *Some Fugitive Glimpses of Fray Junipero Serra,* is available at Dawson's Book Shop. He is presently working on a truncated version of Maynard Geiger's *Life of Serra,* to be published in 1984 to mark the bicentennial of Serra's demise . . . *Hugh Tolford* speaks at the Southern Symposium of the Conference of California Historical Societies, meeting in Death Valley on February 2nd and 3rd. He describes the various entrances and passes into the valley and the colorful personalities connected with each of them. Hugh promises the manuscript for the Death Valley 49ers 1985 Keepsake. *Walt Wheelock* and C.M. *Joe Doctor* also attend the meeting . . .

Dwight Cushman presents a talk on the Civil War, illustrated with slides of mock

battles recreated at Fort Tejon in the summer of 1983. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Encino/Tarzana Library on March 15. *Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.* receives the Benemerenti Medal, conferred by his Eminence Timothy Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Los Angeles, at a special Papal Honors Mass in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on February 3rd. The medal is bestowed by Pope John Paul II for Doyce's outstanding contributions to scholarship and teaching, as well as a distinguished record of service both to the secular community and the Church, including his long service on the Board of Trustees for the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library. The Benemerenti ("Well-deserving") Medal was established by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832 as a Papal Honor to be awarded the laity for exceptional professional achievement and public service . . .

The Los Angeles Corral counts many Sierra Club supporters in its membership. At the January 1984 meeting at the DWP building *Hugh Tolford* gives his fabulous slide show, "The Last Great Bonanza: Story of Tonopah, Goldfield, and Rhyolite," to a standing-room-only crowd of the Desert Peaks Section. Meanwhile, C.M. *Ed Carpenter* describes the effects of Henry Huntington's trolleys, subdivisions, power developments, and even dams on the Southern California landscape to the Natural Science Section . . .

Paul Bailey is honored by the publication of A.M. *Ronald Dean Miller's* book, *Paul Bailey and the Westernlore Press: The First 40 Years—With Annotated Bibliography,* a limited edition of 1,000 copies, cloth bound, and available from Sagebrush Press, P.O. Box 87, Morongo Valley, CA 92256 . . . Attending the "Mono Lake: Beyond the Public Trust Doctrine" program co-sponsored by the Mono Lake Committee and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, presented by UCLA Extension at the Holiday Inn Bayview Plaza in Santa Monica on March 30-31, are *Todd Berens* and *Abe Hoffman* . . . C.M. *Robert Weinstein* is the lead-off speaker for the Southwest Museum's 1984 lecture series. He speaks on "Photographing the American Indian in the Nineteenth Century." . . .

JOHN C. FREMONT

by Dwight S. Cushman

John C. Fremont was one of the colorful personalities associated with the San Fernando Valley in early days. A native of Virginia, he spent his youth in Charleston, S.C. and attended the College of Charleston. Later he became a Second Lieutenent of topographical engineers in the United States Army. He married Jessie Benton, daughter of Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri.

Fremont led three expeditions into the West. The first, in 1842, explored the route of the Oregon trail beyond the Mississippi as far as South Pass in Wyoming. The second, in 1943, completed the survey of the trail to the mouth of the Columbia River with the famous Kit Carson as guide. The third, in 1845, was to further explore the Great Basin and the Pacific Coast.

Fremont was camped in Northern California when the Americans there revolted and created the Bear Flag republic. All of the northern region was already in American hands when news came of the declaration of war with Mexico. Fremont accepted a commission as Major under Commodore Robert F. Stockton. This brought him into conflict with General Stephen W. Kearney whose orders he refused to accept. Fremont was tried by court martial in Washington, found guilty, and sentenced to be dismissed. President Polk remitted the penalty, but Fremont resigned from the service.

Fremont gave his personal account of these events in the April, 1891 issue of *The Century Magazine.* Here are two extracts:

> "On the 24th of July, Commodore Stockton received full command, succeeding Sloat. He asked me to join him with the men under me, and act with him and under him, I on land, he by water, as long as he was in possession of the territory. To accept the proposal of Commodore Stockton was to abandon the strong and independent position in which I had left Washington and under which I knew I would have the support of the Government. Knowing, however,

that the men under me would go only with me, I accepted Stockton's proposal to take service under him as long as he required my services; and I adhered to this engagement at the cost of my commission in the army. As I was an officer in the army, he could not command me. Gillespie was also independent, being on special service. Stockton therefore asked us to volunteer. There was no longer for me the clear initiative. The new situation was forced upon me, and for the general good I gave up my independent position which had led only to success, and in that way became later involved with the rivalries of Stockton and Kearny, who threw upon me the decision they would not make themselves, as to which should command. Each gave me the order to act under him. I remained with Stockton as I had agreed. When Stockton sailed for Mexico I was made to feel the revenge of Kearny . . ."

Fremont Campaign Ribbon, 1856

". . . I had led the battalion a second time to the south; carefully making the people sure of our good-will and protection, and arriving near Los Angeles in good time to make with the insurgent Californians there a treaty of peace. They had been irritated by injudicious and petty restrictions which many resented. Their fine horsemanship, their inherent love of combat, and their great familiarity with the country enabled them to carry on a guerrilla warfare as harassing as it was successful. They were succeeding in confining their enemy near his ships when we bore down on them inland. This, and the friendship of some leading Californians, brought about a capitulation to me, arranged during Christmas week at Santa Barbara and compiled on the plains of Cahuenga, January 13, 1847. This was signed by me as Military Commandant representing the United States, and by Don Andres Pico, Commander-in-Chief of the Californians.

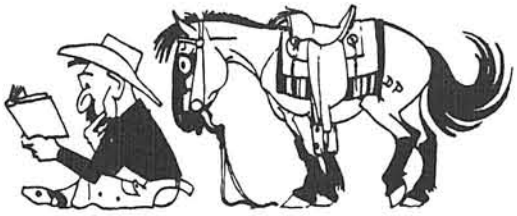
With this treaty of Cahuenga hostilities ended and California was left in our possession, to be finally secured to us by the treaty of Guadaloupe Hildalgo in 1848, thus becoming ours by purchase as well as by conquest and by treaty . . ."

Fremont acquired a large estate in Mariposa County and developed gold mines which made him a wealthy man. In 1849 he was elected one of the first two United States Senators from California. In 1856 he was the first candidate for President of the new Republican Party with the campaign motto: "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Soil, Free Men, and Fremont." He lost the election to James Buchanan.

Early in the Civil War, Fremont was appointed Major General in command of the Western Department at St. Louis, Mo. He issued an Emancipation Proclamation on August 30, 1861, freeing the slaves of rebellious citizens of Missouri. President Lincoln was forced to repudiate this action in order to hold the border slave states in the Union. Fremont was transferred to command the Mountain Department of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee in 1862.

After the war Fremont plunged into railroad construction in the West where he lost his fortune in the collapse of 1870. He served as Govenor of Arizona Territory from 1878 to 1881. He died in New York on July 13, 1890. His beloved wife, Jessie, lived in Los Angeles until her death on December 27, 1902. She had written a fitting tribute to her husband:—"From the ashes of his campfires have sprung cities."

The best biography of Fremont is Allan Nevins' *Fremont, Pathmarker Of The West,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1955. A shorter treatment is "John Charles Fremont And The Conquest Of California" which is one chapter of *West Of The West* by Robert Kirsch and William S. Murphy, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1967. An interesting biographical novel is Irving Stone's *Immortal Wife, Jessie Benton Fremont,* Consolidated Book Publishers, Chicago, 1954.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

Gunpowder Justice: A Reassessment of the Texas Rangers, by Julian Samora, Joe Bernal, and Albert Pena. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979; 179 pp., $10.95.

Although there are echoes of Zane Grey in the title of this book, the authors define "gunpowder justice" in literal terms. The Texas Rangers have long enjoyed a legendary reputation for bravery and a no-nonsense approach to frontier lawlessness. That reputation, embellished through endless dime novels, films, television programs, and, above all, Walter Prescott Webb's famous study of the Rangers, is challenged in this book by three authors who offer a different perspective—the Chicano viewpoint of the Texas Rangers.

To be sure, the legendary Texas Rangers have been criticized in earlier studies such as those by Americo Paredes, Frank Prassel, and W. Eugene Hollon. These books considered the Rangers as part of a larger theme; the book under review is devoted exclusively to the Rangers. The distinction between legend and reality finds the real-life Texas Ranger rather more prone to error than his legendary counterpart. Enough documentation exists to show that the "one riot, one Ranger" mystique rarely applied to actual problems. Mexican Americans have long seen the Texas Rangers not as impartial arbiters of law in lawless places, but as symbols of oppression and prejudice, trespassing on the jurisdictions of local law enforcement agencies and not answerable to the electorate.

The history of the Texas Rangers is disjointed, discontinuous, and vulnerable to political influence, as the authors demonstrate. Arising out of a need to subdue chaotic frontier conditions following the Texas Revolution, the Rangers were periodically disbanded, reorganized, and reformed. By the 1880s it seemed their reason for existence had ended with the passing of the frontier; yet politics and influence kept the Rangers alive, their authority at odds with certain amendments to the U.S. Constitution respecting search and seizure, freedom of speech, and right to a fair trial, among others. In the mid-1930s the Rangers came under the supervision of the Department of Public Safety, and activities since then have embroiled the Rangers in successive political debates and controversies. The actions of the Texas Rangers in restricting the civil rights of Mexican Americans in Crystal City and of farm union organizers in Rio Grande City in the 1960s attracted national attention to the Rangers as anachronistic defenders of conservative interests and exploitative employers of Chicano works—"a relic of a primitive age," as the authors put it.

Obviously the authors, in presenting this portrait of the Texas Rangers, have a definite point of view. But despite its shredding of myths and depiction of the stark reality of recent Ranger activities, the book poses some problems as revisionist history. The documentation is highly selective, particularly in the last three chapters, where the authors rely heavily on articles published in the liberal-oriented *Texas Observer.* They utilize Webb's *Texas Rangers,* including the unpublished revisions at the University of Texas library, both for factual detail but also to contrast Webb's favorable interpretation with their own critical viewpoint. One article, by *Texas Observer* writer Larry Goodwyn, is used throughout Chapter 6, but it was omitted from the bibliography, leaving the reader to guess where and when it was published. There are other difficulties. The multiple authorship—Samora a sociologist, Bernal a former state senator, Pena a municipal judge—makes for an uneven reading style, the more so since the research behind the prose was apparently not done by the authors. Some careless errors mar the book—Juan Cortina's name is consistently spelled Cortinas, "harass" is repeatedly spelled "harrass," Webb dies in the early 1970s on page 6, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* is mistitled. Such editorial sloppiness detracts from the impact of the book's message, a viewpoint long overlooked and overdue for correction in the historical record of the West. In separating myth from reality, the authors brand the Texas Rangers "as a bloody, oppressive force made up of men who were far from fearless or fair."

—Abraham Hoffman

Louis M. Bloch, ed., *Overland to California in 1859: A Guide for Wagon Train Travelers.* Bloch and Company, P.O. Box 18058, Cleveland, OH 44118. Published 1984; cloth, $9.95.

Adults interested in the California Gold Rush have no difficulty in locating quantities of books on the subject, and major libraries readily yield up such source materials as emigrant guides, diaries, and contemporary descriptions. Unfortunately, primary sources on a level accessible to younger students of history are difficult to find. Either they are so watered down as to be without flavor or interest, or else so foreboding in print size and thickness of volume as to discourage their use.

Recognizing the need for a source of information that can be of use to younger readers, Louis Bloch has produced a book that may well entice those readers into the adventure of history. The book is slim—barely 60 pages—but contains hidden treasures. Bloch has drawn material from Randolph B. Marcy's *Prairie Traveler,* Edward Everett Hale's *Kansas and Nebraska,* and several other sources to create a source narrative of what travelers to the West experienced. Most of the information comes from Marcy: what to take, when to go, fording rivers, potential problems with Indians, the routes to be taken. The narrative brings history alive, and young readers—Bloch calculates fifth or sixth graders, but junior high students will also find it useful—should have no trepidation about "looking up" information in this book. Bloch also generously includes contemporary drawings and maps to enhance further the sense of the past.

If the book has a major problem, it lies in the issue of editorial format. Bloch's editorial hand is kept to an absolute minimum; most of the book belongs to Marcy, with just a few pages excerpted from other sources. No biographical information at all is given on Edward Everett Hale. Bloch's preface might have been stronger, certainly less brief than it is, in setting the scene for overland travel in the 1850s. But one probably should not demand too much of a modest book published with good intentions. The acid test for this book is not with a reviewer's evaluation, but whether a student at age ten or eleven will take a book like this one from the library shelf, get involved with the topic, and read it. In that sense, we wish the book well.

Hamlin Haynes