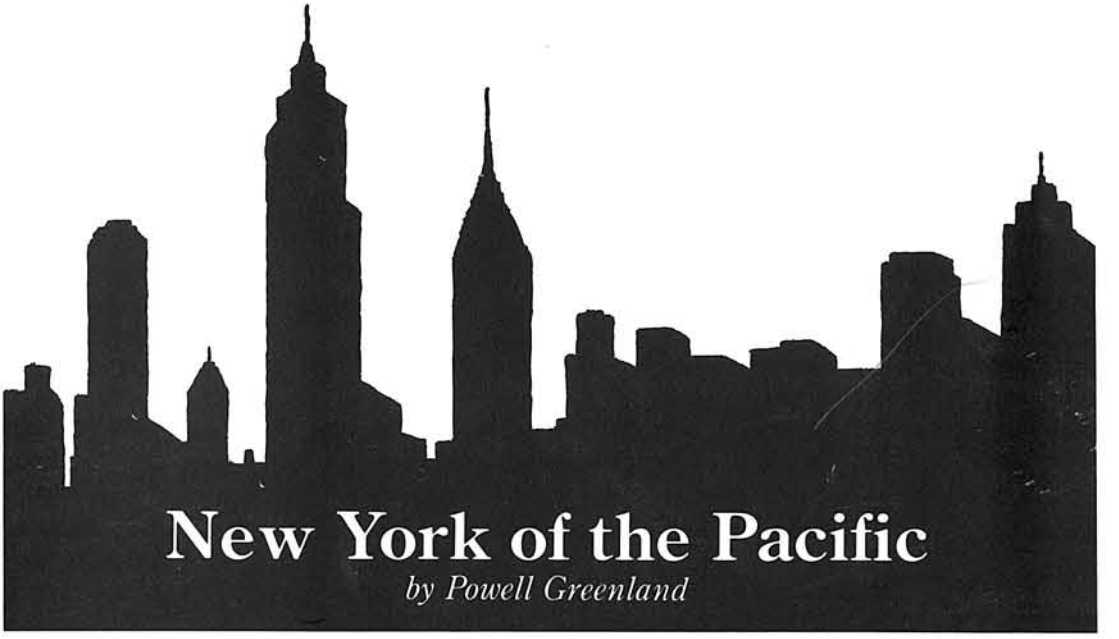
LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

FALL 1988 LOS ANGELES CORRAL NUMBER 173



New York of the Pacific

by Powell Greenland

In the early days of the California gold rush more than one discouraged miner returned to San Francisco to find, during his absence, he had made a fortune. His quest for gold may have been a failure but a half forgotten purchase of land had made him wealthy. As shipload after shipload of Argonauts funneled into San Francisco, then traveled up the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the price of real estate soared. In 1847 lots, in what would become downtown San Francisco, had been purchased for a mere $12 to $20. By 1849 these same lots were selling for as much as $30,000 to $50,000. The acquisition of land in San Francisco became a frenzy. Vast fortunes were being made by men like Sam Brannan and Robert Semple — men who happened to be in the right place at the right time. Also included in this lucky group were a number of discharged members of the New York Volunteers. The most notable of these was Charles Russ who laid the cornerstone for his family's wealth by his early land purchases. The block he had the luck or foresight to buy was bounded by Montgomery and Kearny streets and located between Pine and Bush streets, one of the most important in downtown San Francisco. A revealing description of this gold rush created land boom is preserved for us in a letter written by the French consul to California in June 1849.

> . . . land speculations are now being carried to an extreme approaching madness. Land values all over the country have increased

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THE WESTERNERS

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

Published Quarterly in
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Address for Exchanges
and Material Submitted for Publication:

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P.O. Box 80250
San Marino, CA 91108-8250

THE BRANDING IRON solicits articles of 2,500 words or less, dealing with every phase of the Old West. Contributions from members and friends welcomed.

Corral Chips

Two respected historian members of the Los Angeles Corral, *Doyce Nunis* and *Abe Hoffman,* were appointed to the Advisory Board of the Los Angeles History Project.

CM *David Kuhner's* article "Herbert Hoover, a London Book Collector" has appeared in the *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review* of Oxford, England, one of the leading journals in the rare book field.

The Utah State Historical Society Library is the recipient of the papers of our late, talented, and beloved member, *Paul Dayton Bailey.* The collection consists of over ten cubic feet of material, primarily correspondence and research material gathered in the preparation of Paul's numerous and admired publications, both non-fiction and novels that had a keen and accurate historical focus.

A fascinating article on booze running during Prohibition, written by CM *Richard Arnold,* appears in the summer 1988 *Branding Iron.* It is mirrored by a write-up in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune,* noting that the plaques, honoring the intrepid law enforcement officers who lost their lives, were installed at the San Gabriel Police Department and the Sheriff's Hall of Fame.

The Municipal Officers Association of California's publication, *The Siren,* also published a similar article by Arnold. It was entitled "Fallen Comrades: Lest We Forget," and was based on the same topic as his *Branding Iron* feature.

At the Annual Meeting of the California Historical Society, *Doyce Nunis* receives the prestigious Henry Raup Wagner Medal for his scholarly contributions to California history. At the same meeting, *Norman Neuerburg* is presented with the V. Aubrey and Irene Neasham Award for Historic Preservation for his notable

(Continued on Page Nineteen)

New York (Continued)...

a thousand percent. At Yerba Buena lots somewhat near the shore or toward the center of town bring from four to ten dollars the square foot. At Benicia on Carquinez Strait lots sell for three thousand dollars and it is the same with all the new settlements that are being formed on the Sacramento and San Joaquin under the names of Sacrament City, Sutterville, New York and Stockton. Farms that sold from two to five thousand dollars some twelve or twenty months ago, are now worth from thirty to one hundred thousand.

Instant cities grew around San Francisco Bay, and along the San Joaquin, the Sacramento and even the Feather rivers. Towns such as Suisun City, promoted by C.V. Gillespie and Thomas Douglas, sold lots from $250 to $800. Benicia advertised lots from $500 to $2,000. On the Sacramento River the town of Sutterville, with Lieutenant Governor John McDougal and Captain John Sutter as proprietors, were doing a brisk business in land sales. Nearby, at the community of Boston, at the junction of the Sacramento and American rivers, a speculator named Hiram Grimes was selling lots from $200 to $800. Farther up the Sacramento, three enterprising gentlemen were getting rich from lot sales at the fledgling town of Vernon. On the Feather River, the settlement of Nicolaus proudly proclaimed the "head of navigation" by its promoters was attempting to emulate the success of Marysville, its neighbor, in real estate values. Others, nearby, bearing such names as Oro, Plumas City and El Dorado City, the latter located near Sutter's Hock Farm, were all caught up in this land sale madness.

A few of these new communities such as Marysville and Stockton were destined to become thriving towns but most were mere "paper cities" or speculator's dreams and rapidly faded into oblivion. One of the most blatant and highly promoted of these paper cities was Colonel Jonathan D. Stevenson's magnificent city he named New York of the Pacific.

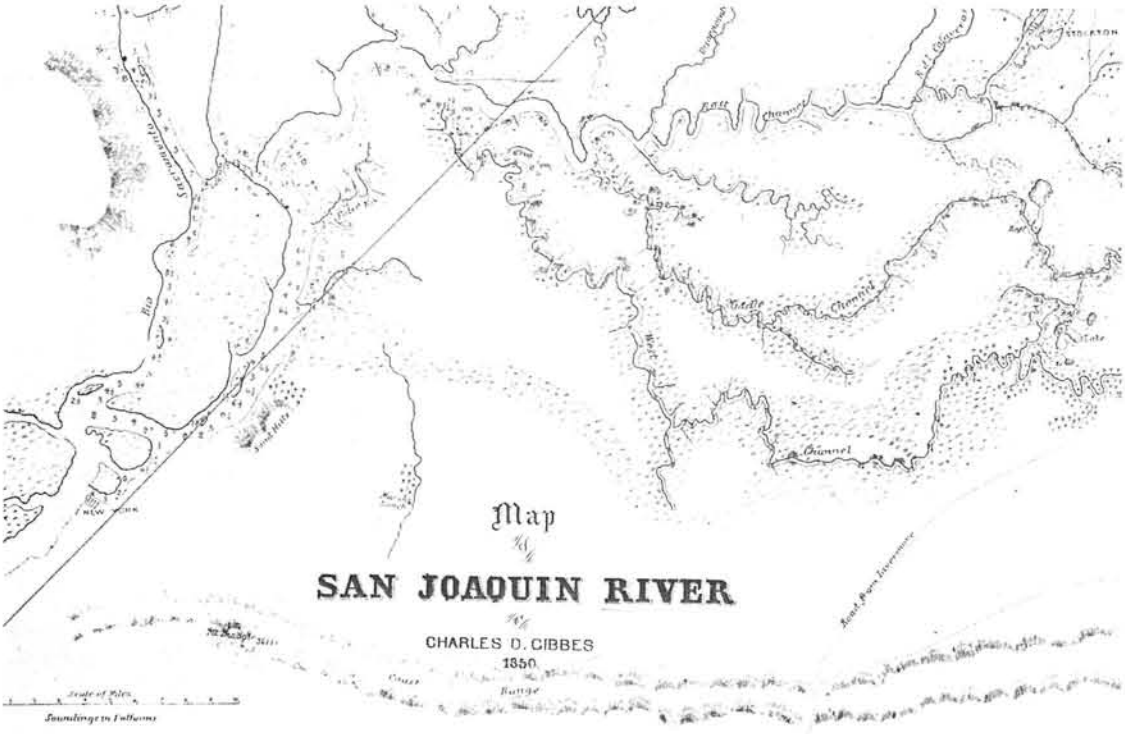
The townsite was located on Suisun Bay near the mouths of the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers in what would become Contra Costa County. The area had first been sighted in 1772 by Pedro Fages, accompanied by Fray Juan

Colonel Jonathan D. Stevenson

Crespi and a small squad of soldiers, who were endeavoring to find a land route around San Francisco Bay to Point Reyes. While they never succeeded in this attempt they did view the great rivers emptying into Suisun Bay from the slopes of Mount Diablo. Later, in 1817, Lieutenant Luis Arguello explored the area by boat and mentioned "los medanos" or sand dunes which characterized much of the landscape. The name Los Medanos was subsequently kept by the original Mexican grantees, Jose Antonio Mesa and Jose Miguel Garcia, who established a ranch in 1839. In 1849 two leaues of the Rancho Los Medanos were purchased by Colonel Stevenson and a business partner, Dr. W.C. Parker.

On May 17, 1849, in an alluring article in the *Alta California,* the citizens of San Francisco were first informed of a great opportunity that awaited them. The article proclaimed New York of the Pacific to be a contender with San Francisco as the leading city on the bay and would live up to all of the expectations the name implied.

From the beginning, the promotion of New York of the Pacific was an assured success, for the proprietors at least. No more prominent a personage could have been found to promote a real estate scheme on such a grand scale than the former commander of the New York Volunteers. Colonel Stevenson was well-known and admired throughout California as well as his home state of New York. He had a commanding presence with a craggy countenance and a military bearing. He was a man who inspired confidence. Stevenson had recently returned



Map of the San Joaquin River drawn by Charles D. Gibbes in 1850. New York is located at the lower left of the map. The small numbers in the river are soundings in fathoms. — Powell Greenland Collection

from the mines where apparently he had been successful for he had money to invest. His partner, Dr. W.C. Parker, was also a former New York volunteer. He had been one of two assistant surgeons of the regiment and an old friend of the Colonel's. Parker had entered the real estate business in San Francisco on the ground floor and had become wealthy from the sale of large numbers of waterfront lots he had acquired. This was a period in San Francisco history when city officialdom was at its corrupt worst, a time when the city's patrimony was sold to a good friend or the highest bidder. Parker appears to have been an "insider" from the beginning.

Colonel Stevenson immediately hired two other former members of the regiment, R.P. Hammond and James Blair along with a well-known army lieutenant, William T. Sherman, to do the survey, lay out the townsite and make soundings of Suisun Bay. Sherman noted in his memoirs that their compensation consisted of 10 to 15 lots and $500 cash for each of them. Years later Stevenson would petition the United States government for payment for the soundings made in Suisun Bay.

The soundings in the bay were important to Stevenson as some of his detractors were claiming the site could not accommodate deep sea shipping. In an effort to counter such charges, the colonel solicited and received a letter from W.F. Fountleroy of the United States Navy, expressing the desirability of New York of the Pacific as a port for deep water shipping.

> Dear Sir, I have taken the ship *Sabina* with cargo, 16 feet draft, to this place, 48 miles, and not less than four and a half fathoms during the run. I could take the largest ship from this place to sea. Excellent anchorage for five times the number of vessels at San Francisco.

New York of the Pacific was not without fierce competition. The city of Benicia, located on the Carquinez Straits between San Pablo and Suisun bays, was an impressive rival. Founded and promoted by the respected pioneer, Dr. Robert Semple and former United States consul to California, Thomas O. Larkin, and later joined by Thomas ap Catesby Jones, Commander of the Pacific fleet, Benicia started with an advantage New York of the Pacific could never overtake. Semple had negotiated the purchase of Benicia from General Mariano Vallejo when the latter was a prisoner of war at Sutter's Fort. The town

was laid out in 1847 and given the name Francisca in honor of the wife of General Vallejo, but when Yerba Buena adopted the name San Francisco it was thought best to change the name to Benicia, another name carried by Senora Vallejo. The name change for Yerba Buena took place in January 1847, that of Benicia, some time later. Semple took a very active role in the promotion of Benicia and succeeded in having Commodore Jones make the new city headquarters for the Pacific Squadron. He was also successful in persuading General Persifor F. Smith to establish the headquarters of the Pacific Division of the army at the site. Dr. Semple even enticed settlers away from Sonoma, Benicia's greatest rival at the time, by offering every household $1,000 if they would move to his new city and build a house within 30 days. The promoters also established a ferry across the Carquinez straits in 1847 which proved to be a very lucrative operation. Benicia was thus a thorn in Stevenson's side he could never extricate.

A galling defeat for Colonel Stevenson, at this time, was the thwarting of his attempts to bring the state capitol to New York of the Pacific. When the state lawmakers decided to leave San Jose after the first session of the new legislature, Stevenson grasped at the opportunity. In a letter he appealed personally to Governor Peter Burnett and used all his influence to bring the capitol to his new city. He even made promises of a stately new capitol building, which because of time constraints would have been impossible for him to fulfill. When the eventual choice of Vallejo turned to disaster he had to witness Benicia winning the honors in 1852.

Colonel Stevenson made it a practice to personally meet as many arriving ships in San Francisco as possible in order to persuade new arrivals to settle in his new community. His first success came on July 6, 1849 when the *Forest* arrived, bearing W.W. Smith and Joseph H. Smith, twin brothers, together with their wives, all fresh from New Hampshire. The Smiths were ideal candidates to settle at New York of the Pacific as they were carpenters by trade and looking for a place to live. Both were ordained ministers of the Christian denomination determined to establish homes in the wilderness. Stevenson won them over completely, offering them free lots if thy agreed to build houses within 30 days. The deal was quickly completed and the two families set sail aboard the schooner *Rialto* arriving at their new home July 11, 1849.

The following day the Smiths were greeted by the owner of the neighboring ranch, the noted pioneer, Dr. John Marsh. With uncharacteristic kindness he invited the two families to move in with him until they had completed their homes. At Marsh's suggestion they also took up two quarter sections of nearby land on the San Joaquin River. Ultimately the area would become known as Smith's Landing. In the meantime, the brothers stuck to their agreement and completed the two houses, making New York of the Pacific their abodes. L.M. Schaeffer records seeing the structures in September 1849. "As we sailed on we saw two shanties on the shore, which I was told constituted the city of New York of the Pacific." Toward the end of the year the Smiths constructed a hotel that they named the New York House which became a popular stopping place for passengers and crews travelling from San Francisco to the mines. It soon became apparent, however, the Smith's had made up their minds to leave. In December 1849, they erected canvas tents and began to plan a community of their own at Smith's Landing while still maintaining their homes at New York of the Pacific.

In February of the following year Joseph H. Smith died. His grieving brother was now more determined than ever to leave. The place was beginning to have bad memories for him and the future looked dismal. It had become obvious that Colonel Stevenson never really intended to proceed with his professed plans to make New York of the Pacific a model community with churches, schools, broad avenues, civic buildings and public squares. He knew it would never be more than a jumble of shanties and tents.

By August Rev. Smith's opportunity presented itself. He learned of a shipload of immigrants from Maine who had sailed to California on a ship they had constructed themselves for the purpose of establishing a permanent settlement. Hurrying to San Francisco he persuaded most of the group to accompany him back to Smith's Landing. Taking a leaf from Stevenson's book, he offered each family a free lot if they agreed to settle there. The following year, on July 4, 1851, Rev. Smith invited the entire community to his home for a picnic. It was during this celebration that he suggested the name "Antioch" to replace

that of Smith's Landing. It seemed very appropriate to him as it was a name mentioned in the Bible and the Syrian Antioch was a city built at the junction of two great rivers and perhaps the new Antioch, also at the crossroads of river commerce, would endure as well.

New York of the Pacific was ridiculed as early as 1849 as an outright fraud created for the sole purpose of enriching the promoters. Leonard Kip recounting a trip from San Francisco to Stockton in the early fall of 1849 gave this impression of Stevenson's young city.

> "There's New York," said the helmsman, as we came to the mouths of the rivers.
>
> "Where?"
>
> "Don't know if you can see it now, by reason of a ship before it."
>
> We looked and did see it — a bare piece of timberless land, with two little houses built upon it. In front were seven empty ships; probably bought up at a low price, as being worth nothing but to stand in front of a new city for effect. We looked in vain for the four public squares as were advertised, nor did we see anything of the city hall and other buildings which were to be constructed from the proceeds of the land around them.

At the time Stevenson and Parker selected the location and purchased the land, they did have some justification for their choice. Sea going vessels with deep drafts could not navigate the rivers at the time and it was hoped New York of the Pacific would serve as a port of call for these ships and become a stopover place for Argonauts going to either the northern or southern mines. After spending time and money, buying supplies and outfitting themselves they could then engage a schooner, or other small boat, for the trip up the river. On the other hand, if a small boat was engaged in San Francisco, it would still be necessary to put into land somewhere for the night and it was hoped the choice would be New York of the Pacific.

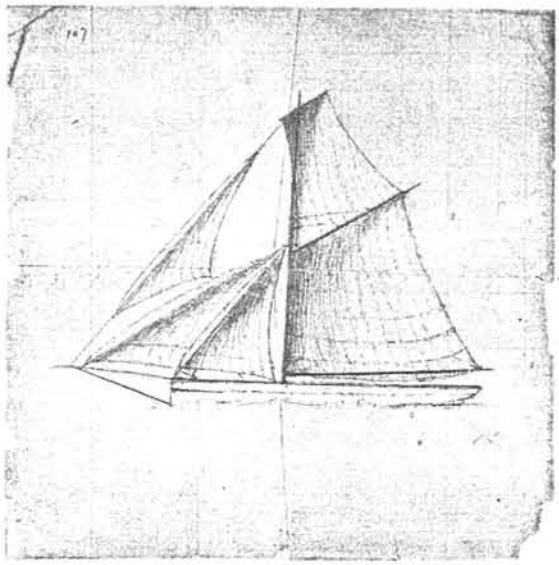
To some extent this was the case. Adolphus Windeler on February 10, 1850, related in his diary how the boat he took passage on sustained some damage and after sleeping aboard all "then went ashore, took breakfast & bought an ironrod & a wooden sprint... New York is at present a small place, a few houses and tents & some old whalers, but good level land." Captain Baker in his *Journal of the Proceedings of the San Francisco Company* recorded in January 1850, his ship anchored opposite New York of the Pacific which at the time consisted of a "good sized wooden hotel called the Kennebec House and a few shanties."

It is apparent very few large ships made the new townsite their anchorage. One exception was the *Sabina*. Howard Gardner, one of the passengers, related the harrowing story of a night he spent aboard her.

When the shades of evening close around us, the mosquitos closed in on us, and made things exceedingly lively. The day had been sultry, and they had been laying off in the shade, but after sunset, they came out strong. It was sort of an insectorial convention where every delegate was present bent on vivesection. The air was actually black with them, and they formed a perfect wall above and around us. Mosquitoes were a cont inuing problem at New York of the Pacific and no doubt contributed to its failure.

The most perceptive account of Colonel Stevenson and the promotion of New York of the Pacific has been preserved for us in the fascinating autobiography of Steven C. Massett titled, *Drifting About*. Massett was a ballad writer, poet, author and singer. A man of exceptional and varied talents. He had first met Stevenson while serving as a clerk in a law firm in New York City. Upon meeting him on his arrival in San Francisco, he was flat broke, so Stevenson siezed the opportunity and hired him at the magnificent salary, for the time, of $150 per month plus board. In recalling the meeting Massett quotes the Colonel as saying: "you are just the young man for me. You, of course, understand drawing deeds, mortgages, etc.; in fact, the general routine of a lawyer's office. You've been in a good school, and I think we can get along well together. I have just purchased a tract of land — am going to build a new city — a second New York, sir! I call it, sir, New York of the Pacific, sir. I'll make you Acalde, sir, Notary Public, sir! Mayor of the city, sir!"

The office of this enterprise was located on Montgomery Street in what Massett describes as a "wooden shanty." A sign on the outside informed the public "that that was J.D. Stevenson's Land Office and Agency of Lots New York



Sketch of the *Growler* which stopped at New York for repairs in 1850. This drawing appeared in the diary of Adolphus Windeler and this sketch was made aboard the ship by a fellow passenger named Carl Friderich Christendorff. — Powell Greenland Collection

of the Pacific." Shortly there was appended Stephen C. Massett Notary Public and Commissioner of Deeds. Massett relates the rush to purchase lots was "magnificent."

> It was something in his style: — Man just from the mines comes in, and wants to invest his surplus "gold dust"
>
> "Got any good lots Col?" Col S——— rises, and with a long stick points to the map, offering a few remarks like these to the astonished and bewildered purchaser.
>
> "You see, sir, these lots are what we call water lots, sir, I couldn't part with these under $1000 a lot, as from their position — this being the head of navigation, sir — that is a fixed fact, sir, they will command shortly a very high figure. Now these on 'F' street I have reserved for the 'public school.' I am determined to have an institution of this kind properly cared for — and — next to this, sir, I have placed these lots on A.M. and A. for the 'Court House,' 'City Hall,' and the 'Hall of Records and Mayor's or Alcalde's office.' (pointing to me and remarking that I have just arrived from New York to take charge of this highly responsible, lucrative, and dignified position!)
>
> The excited miner, with visions of prospective wealth, in the rapid and astounding advance of real estate in this golden land, pulls out his buckskin bag, and away rattles the gold into the Chinese scales; he takes two lots, pays the $500 (they are $250 apiece). I make out the "deeds:, record them immediately, in fact do everything that in such cases in usually done, made and provided.
>
> The man leaves his gold dust, and takes his deed — neither one nor the other to be heard of afterwards.

A tragicomedy episode related by Massett involved a newly arrived minister of the gospel with his wife and two infant children who presented a letter of introduction to Stevenson. The Colonel made the offer of a free lot if he would build a house within 30 days "with the prospect of being the very first clergyman settled in that delightful locality; and the additional promise of the 'Col.,' that the particular church ordered by himself, and which was then coming round the Horn would be his." The family immediately departed for their new home taking seven days in an open boat. Upon their arrival they were almost consumed by mosquitoes, the wife and children falling severely ill and later dying of "chills and fever," Weeks later the stricken minister was back in the office "his face covered with blotches and pimples" inquiring of the whereabouts of the church, Massett then

relates. "After muttering to himself — that it was the 'Lord's doing, and marvellous in his eyes,' he left the office, and was never seen or heard of afterwards."

Massett tells of another incident of a sea captain who decided to make New York of the Pacific his headquarters for carrying passengers in his schooner up the San Joaquin River. "Upon my pointing out five available lots — lots that would certainly double in value in two months — and as the purchaser promised to build within thirty days (the old dodge), the 'Col.' in consideration thereof put at the surprisingly low figure of $1000." After landing at New York of the Pacific and being nearly eaten alive by mosquitoes, he stormed back to San Francisco rushing into the office demanding to be compensated $600 each for the lots. Stevenson readily agreed. Massett noted "the 'captain' walked off — the first and the last man that was ever known to have even realized a portion of the money invested in this 'scheme.'"

Not everything that was written about New York of the Pacific at the time was negative. Colonel Stevenson must have been pleased when reading a book written by a former member of the regiment, a Pole by the name of F.P. Wierzbicki. This book, published in 1849, titled *California As It Is & As It May Be* has the distinction of being the first book, written in English, published and printed in California. For this reason alone it is certain to have come to the attention of Stevenson. Part of the book deals with Wierzbicki's ideas about the future of California. In forecasting the building of the transcontinental railroad he relates:

> The point of the terminus of the railroad is by an accident, so to speak, already selected with a good deal of decernment; it is called New York of the Pacific, situated at the upper part of the Bay of San Francisco, known as Suisun Bay. An enterprising company, at the head of which is Colonel Stevenson, have bought a tract of land at the mouth of the San Joaquin where it mingles its waters with those of the Sacramento, and are already building a town. Its situation for the terminus of the railroad is very advantageous; it is level; has abundance of land to expand upon; it is in the neighborhood of grazing farms; its climate is healthy, as is the rest of the south bank of the San Joaquin. Well water can be there within a few feet of the surface; the river is deep enough to admit large vessels close to shore, and its water here is fresh and sweet; ships can water here with the greatest facility. The vessels going up the Sacramento pass within sight of it. It is a spot very judiciously selected for a town, and we have no doubt it will grow, as the proprietors spare no efforts to make it acceptable to new settlers.

Colonel Stevenson, himself, couldn't have done a better job extolling the superior qualities of his townsite. One wonders at the strong loyalties the New York veterans seem to have for their old commander. E. Gould Buffum, a former lieutenant in the New York regiment, and an experienced journalist, writing in his journal, *Six Months in the Mines* is equally enthusiastic in his praise of the place.

> At the junction of the river San Joaquin and the bay of Suisun, lies New York of the Pacific. The town is seated in a broad and well-watered plain, covered with many groves of magnificent oaks, extending from the waters of the bay and the river San Joaquin to the hills some three miles back. So gradual is the slope that it seems a perfect level, viewed from the river's bank; but standing at the base of the hills looking toward the water, the slope will be found to be perfect and regular to the waters edge where it terminates upon a fine sand beach, from five to ten feet above the level of the highest tide. New York is beautifully laid out, with large reserves for churches, a university, and other public edifices and is perhaps one of the most healthy points in the country, being free from fever and ague and the prevailing fevers usual on fresh-water rivers below and between the mining region and San Francisco, But the great advantage which New York of the Pacific possesses over other places above San Francisco is, that it is at the head of ship navigation, as two regular surveys, published by distinguished military and naval officers of Suisun Bay have demonstrated. Ships of the largest class can sail direct from the ocean of New York, where

Map of Central California showing important localities as they appeared in 1857. New York is located just above the "Costa" of Contra Costa County. This map was based on Britton & Rey's map of the State of California which was drawn by George H. Goddard in 1857. — Powell Greenland Collection

they will find a safe and convenient harbour, and where at this time are lying a number of merchant ships from different parts of the union, directly alongside the bank upon which they have discharged their cargoes.

It is difficult to explain either Wierzbicki's or Buffum's assessment of New York of the Pacific. Both are in direct contradiction to other eyewitness accounts and seem to be completely at variance with reality. Perhaps their perception was colored by the glowing accounts they undoubtedly had read or heard about Stevenson's grandiose but unfulfilled plans. It almost appears these two gentlemen had never really seen Stevenson's city but were quoting from his promotional handbills.

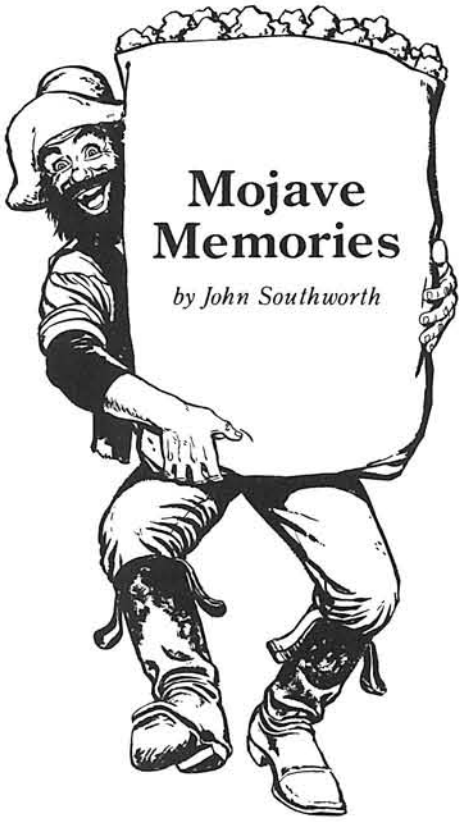
Bayard Taylor, a much more perceptive journalist, summed up his impressions very succinctly. "There never will be a large town there, for the simple reason that there is no possible cause why there should be one."

The one justification Stevenson and Parker had in accepting money in good conscience for the lots they were selling was the rationale that the site was at the head of navigation for ocean going vessels. But this was a very shortsighted position. As early as 1849 there were several small steamers carrying passengers up the Sacramento River and the newly arrived steamer *McKim* was capable of navigating the bay from San Francisco and continuing up the river as well. Early the following year there were a growing number of steamers designed to ply the rough seas of the bay and with a light enough draft to navigate either the Sacramento or San Joaquin rivers. Soon these ships would enter into exciting competition with each other actually racing on many of their passages to win the reputation of being the swiftest steamer in the fleet. The arrival of these ships capable of running from San Francisco to Sacramento or Stockton spelled the end of Stevenson's dream. As early as 1850 it was finished. Owen Coy capsulized its finality thus: "the eclipse of New York of the Pacific was as sudden as its rise — one might say it was contemporaneous with its rise."

With the demise of New York of the Pacific, Colonel Stevenson abruptly abandoned the promotion and turned his attention exclusively to San Francisco real estate. He and his partner, Dr. W.C. Parker, continued their association until 1852 when they agreed to go their separate ways but they remained lifelong friends. Significantly, Stevenson never mentioned his ill-fated venture again.

In the late 1850's the area had a rebirth of sorts. Low-grade coal deposits had been discovered on the slopes of Mount Diablo as early as 1852 and by 1858 several mines were in actual operation. Stevenson's old site was now known as New York Landing and became a shipping point for the coal mines. The Black Diamond mine became the most successful and gave its name to the district. Wierzbicki's prophesy of a railroad terminal was partially fulfilled. It wasn't the terminus for the transcontinental railroad, however, but 16 miles of narrow-gauge track from the mining town of Nortonville. Even the name New York Landing wouldn't remain. Hoffmann's map of the Bay Area (1873) shows the site labeled "Pittsburg Landing," named after the Pittsburg Coal Company. By 1881 the coal mines played out and the mining towns became deserted, the landing fell into disuse. The town of Pittsburg Landing never attained any significant growth until after the turn of the century when it became a manufacturing center for heavy industry, particularly steel. In the year 1911 the name was officially changed to Pittsburg.

Many historians, dealing with the California gold rush, resist any mention of New York of the Pacific. Some might devote a sentence or two or give it footnote status. Owen Coy best summed it up this way, "Its location and even its name are remembered by only a few antiquarians interested in the Days of Gold." However, New York of the Pacific might be characterized as the quintessential "paper city" of 1849 and as such serve as a microcosm of rampant land speculation in that period, a significant component of the California Gold Rush.



Mojave Memories

by John Southworth

Mojave, a well-known desert outpost some 70 miles north of Los Angeles, had been a boom or bust frontier town. It now boasts about 4,500 inhabitants. The town was established by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1876 as a division point at the southern terminus of the steep Tehachapi grade (complete with its famous Tehachapi Loop). Mojave grew from 200 to 230 inhabitants during its first 30 years. By 1906 it had become an established trans-shipment center of the Mojave Desert, due to the arrival of the Santa Fe Railway in 1884 from the east and the Borax 20-mule teams from Death Valley. There were also horse-drawn passenger stages, freight wagons from mining activity on nearby Soledad Mountain, booming gold camps in Garlock, Goler and Randsburg, not to mention Inyo and Mono counties activity farther to the north.

Railroad construction crews in 1876 included many part-time prospectors who reported good gold signs on Standard Hill, that Soledad Mountain outrider closest to Mojave. By 1900 all of Standard, Soledad, and other nearby buttes were totally covered with mining claims. The *Queen Esther* and *Elephant-Eagle* developed into first-class producers. The *Queen Esther,* a silver property, went on to become the keystone of the Harvey Mudd fortune. All of this activity helped to keep Mojave, and neighboring Rosamond to the south, alive.

In 1907 construction crews came with their thousands of mules and tons of earth moving equipment in order to build the Owens Valley to the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Those raucous aqueduct crews helped to support the many Mojave dance halls and saloons, and along with their need of female companionship, it kept the town lively. Meanwhile the Southern Pacific built a branch north out of Mojave towards Owens Valley in 1908 to carry aqueduct supplies. Shortly after the aqueduct was completed, much of the Mojave business district burned to the ground (1915).

For 15 years Mojave depended on its railroads and highways for sustenance. Gas stations, restaurants, and 'dry' bars lined one side of its downtown main street, with railroad tracks on the other side. After the Great Depression hit in 1930, mining claims on nearby Soledad Mountain took on unaccustomed activity due to an increase in the government price of gold to thirty-five dollars per troy ounce. The result of all this was that Mojave began to move a bit and appeared more lively.

George Holmes and his father, both long-time prospectors, had tracked a trace of gold float high up a gully on the northwest face of Soledad Mountain, and then spent two years determining old claim boundaries and digging deep hardrock holes. The father and son team were not only energetic, but they were also lucky. They found an unclaimed fraction of ground wherein they exposed the top of an ore body which, by apex rights, they could mine downward under adjacent properties. They called their new fractional claim the *Silver Queen* and got a large South African development corporation interested in the whole area. When diamond drilling proved the ore body to be extensive, a new organization, the Golden Queen Mining Company, began full scale operations.

A haulage tunnel was driven low on the hill into the base of the hidden ore body and a large, modern cyanide mill that could crush, grind and treat 300 tons of ore per day was built at the tunnel portal. The underground mine stopes were simultaneously developed for efficient ore removal. The newly opened property operated 24

hours a day, seven days a week, until the War Emergency Act cut off all sources of equipment, materials, and supplies so necessary to such a facility, an operation deemed totally unnecessary in the early years of World War II. Thoroughly stripped, the tunnel portal, the mine and mill dumps, and the mill foundations are all that is left today of the *Golden Queen* mine.

As a newly graduated mining engineer, I went to work in the assay office of the *Golden Queen Mine* in 1938. The pay was $3.50 per day, the work was seven days per week. My assignment was to start the fires in two big assay furnaces early each morning and prepare the ore samples for the two assayers who would arrive later. It was an extremely dusty job, but the shop itself was situated in such a way that I could watch the big mill tailings dump grow and the seasons come and go across the wide desert below. Those seasons would bring thousands of acres of wild flowers, and just as many acres of jostling sheep which were being herded to seasonal ranges. Most memorable was the non-stop "Mojave Zephyr," a wind that continues to blow to this day, and the same one that has caused two or three thousand power generating windmills to sprout along 10 or 12 miles of mountain ridges northwest of town.

That wind also spawned several stories, probably apocryphal. One story claims that old-time Mojave residents were easily recognized by their peculiar tilt which they seemingly acquired to accommodate the perennial flow of air. Another alleged that at one time the zephyr suddenly quit blowing, causing several well-established buildings in the area to fall over.

The wind stories are not all fictitious. One concerns the wide, low fuel storage tanks the Southern Pacific Railroad had established around

The *Golden Queen* mill tailings with Soledad Mountain in the background. Note the extent of the removal of tailings on the near face.

Downtown Mojave as it looks in 1988. The railroad is at the left. (BELOW) The Southern Pacific main line between Los Angeles and Oakland. Note the start of the Tehachapi grade in the distance.

town. A particularly strong zephyr lifted the lid from several tanks and spewed oil all over property and inhabitants alike. The railroad's first reaction was to restrain all remaining lids with great clamped cables; they then accepted all local cleaning bills with no questions asked. Those old tanks are gone now.

The second wind story concerns the old Harvey House which stood on the east side of the main highway through town directly opposite of the then and present railway station. When the zephyr blew unusually strong, highway traffic was detoured and ropes would be stretched between the two buildings, working as stabilizing aids to the hungry travelers who, out of necessity, had to brave about 200 feet of open ground in order to reach the welcome meals laid out by those wonderful "Harvey Girls."

Two unrelated items of interest come to mind. First, in order for the great *Golden Queen Mill* to run properly as a well controlled cyanide plant, constant chemical analysis of the dissolving solutions was necessary. Money was at stake. Lime and cyanide balances had to be exact or gold and silver would be lost forever into the tailing pond. So the mill foreman augmented the slower official laboratory control by making their

own personal, on-the-spot chemical tests. They became very proficient at using wine-tasting techniques to taste solutions for lime and cyanide content. No mill foreman was ever lost to cyanide poisoning nor was much gold or silver lost to the dump. That enormous dump, all ground to 200 mesh or less in order to free its close-bound metallic values, is now being marketed as a pozzolanic additive which reduces the requirements for more expensive cement in new concrete.

The second item of interest is that somewhere in Mojave, probably in a poorly lit back room of some local establishment, must still reside that outrageous painting, the "Drunkard's Dream." I remember it to be about 36 by 48 inches in size and of a quality that would never rate a Smithsonian showing. But nevertheless it was of more than a passing interest to many and well deserved its write up in the *Reader's Digest*. It was painted during the time of the construction of the aqueduct by an itinerant artist who had promised a "world class" painting. For his work, he was to be given unlimited booze over a specified period of time. The finished work was prominently displayed in various Mojave bars during the 1930's.

Some 30 miles north and east of Mojave, beyond Red Rock Canyon, but along the south side of the El Paso Mountains (opposite old Saltdale on now dry Koehn Lake) you can still see, if you look high up on the correct spur projecting from the main mountain, the dumps that spewed out when old Burro Schmidt drove his lonesome tunnel straight as a die through the mountain. He must have finally decided something was amiss and teed the tunnel off in two directions to exit on both sides of the projecting ridge whose axis he found his tunnel traversing. So now two small dumps are dimly visible from the highway, one for each of his two exits. It is a long, steep drive back around to Schmidt Camp and the tunnel entrance.

Old Burro Schmidt had no good excuse for driving that 3,500-foot tunnel all by himself except that the mountain was there and tunneling provided something challenging to do during the long winters. He habitually worked all summer in the alfalfa fields of Kern County, and carefully saved his money to buy mining supplies, so he could work all winter in the mine. He worked night and day, forging his own

The *Kelly Mine* and tailings as they appear in 1988.

The town and peak of Red Mountain as they looked in 1988. The *Kelly Mine* dump is on the left.

Downtown Johannesburg as it looked in 1988. The kern County Line is in the foreground. Note the difference in the quality of the pavement as the road moves into Kern County.

The arrastra, or a crude drag-stone type mill which was used for the pulverizing of ore. This appears today at Garlock. — All photographs by John Southworth

personal memorial to perseverance through a nondescript mountain. The mailman who drove the Star Route as far as the almost abandoned (then as now) camp at Garlock, returned to this home base in Mojave one day to report that "that crazy old man" was awaiting his arrival at the post box along the Garlock road. Burro Schmidt had walked the several miles from his mountain camp, with an old alarm clock in hand, to get the correct time. His only comment, when he found the clock was some four hours fast, was that he thought he had been getting up awful early in the morning. Then he trudged back up the mountain for another go at the tunnel face with hand, steel and dynamite.

Farther east along the El Pasos, a road crosses the wide valley diagonally and climbs up to Randsburg where, for many years, the great *Yellow Aster Mill* dropped more than a hundred stamps around the clock in a peace-rending clamor, and the old *Kelly Mine* broke all sorts of records for its richness. As luck would have it, the *Yellow Aster Mine* and its two supportive towns, Randsburg and Johannesburg, were barely within Kern County, the eastern boundary of that political jurisdiction being but a few yards further on. The *Kelly Mine* was over the line in San Bernardino County.

Sometime after the free and easy days in Mojave when the aqueduct construction crews pretty much ran that frontier town, the law came to Kern County and all open red light districts were abolished, or at least dispersed. So most of the local talent moved east into San Bernardino County where the old way survived for many more years.

The girls of eastern Kern County built a brand new town to their liking a mile or so southeast of Johannesburg, along Highway 395 and barely within San Bernardino County. They called their new town Red Mountain after a local landmark. This move did not matter much to the lonesome men of Randsburg and Johannesburg, but it generated a lot of travel between Mojave and Red Mountain.

One tale told about the new settlement bears repeating. All the cribs had little signs announcing the girl's name, some with an additional invitation such as "Ring Bell for Service." But one sign reflected a lot more imagination. The "girl" was an old hand, in her late seventies, and her sign read "It is All the Same in the Dark."

Motorized Soldiers on El Camino Real

A Pioneer 1915 motor march from Los Angeles to San Diego and back

by Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.

Southern Californians have been car crazy ever since the machine was invented. Many called on their "motors" to meet early day challenges, and despite the appallingly bad roads they generally made it to their destination. One of these early day adventures was the 1915 military motor march from Los Angeles to San Diego and back. The inspiration for this expedition, and during this period it really was one, belongs to Watt L. Moreland, a pioneer Southern California motor truck manufacturer.

The Moreland Motor Truck Company started as a one-man operation around 1912. By 1915 he had built it into a respectable little company, achieving a reputation with his machines.

Moreland was both a firm believer in the future of the motor truck, and in publicizing what he built. In late 1914 motorized actions during World War I proved the utility of the motor truck in many ways. Thus, Moreland became one of a growing number, advocating the motorization of the U.S. Army.

Advocates of military motorization had two major difficulties to overcome: One was that the really practical motor truck was only five or so years old, and still largely unproven. The other was that most military minds still thought only in terms of horse and mule transportation.

This is not to say that the U.S. Army was blind to the progress of motor vehicles. They had experimented with them extensively since 1900, either borrowing or purchasing them. By 1915 the U.S. Army owned upwards of 100 motor vehicles of many assorted makes, models and types.

Just what caused Battery A, 1st Battalion, California National Guard, Captain Jesse McComas commanding, to become involved in their historic 1915 motor march to San Diego is not recorded. It would appear that many of the men in this unit could drive motor vehicles. Consequently, they may have been out simply to try something new, and probably did not realize they would set the number of records that they did.

Battery A was a typical National Guard outfit with four horse-drawn standard U.S. Army 3-inch Field Guns of Model 1902. Of course the Guard didn't actually own any horses since the expense of keeping them standing around doing nothing during the week would have been prohibitive. So when they went out on maneuvers they would hire, beg, and/or borrow the 50 to 75 horses required to be mobile.

As a result of the problem of securing horses, somebody from Battery A got together with Watt Moreland with the idea of moving the guns by motor trucks. This sort of experiment had previously been tried by the Army, but it was just the sort of demonstration that appealed to Moreland, and he agreed to lend the motor trucks for the trial.

Next came the problem of just where Battery A might go on its motor march. In those days the choice was obvious: to San Diego and back over El Camino Real — The Kings Highway. This route dates back to Spanish times, and today's Santa Ana and San Diego freeways loosely follow its original path. Even back in 1915 this route was considered a good road, and one of the few intercity highways truly fit for motor vehicles.

The route was from the downtown Los Angeles National Guard Armory east to Santa Ana, then to San Juan Capistrano, through Oceanside to Del Mar, up the Torry Pines grade and on to San Diego. The distance was 114 miles each way. The plan was to run to San Diego one day and return to Los Angeles the following day, and needless to say this was considered a most

This impressive structure at 1701 North Mail was the Los Angeles home of the Moreland Motor Truck Company. In the mid-1920's the firm moved to South Santa Fe Avenue where there was more room. Later Moreland Truck became a part of Crown Coach. — Konrad F. Schreier Collection

ambitious plan for the time.

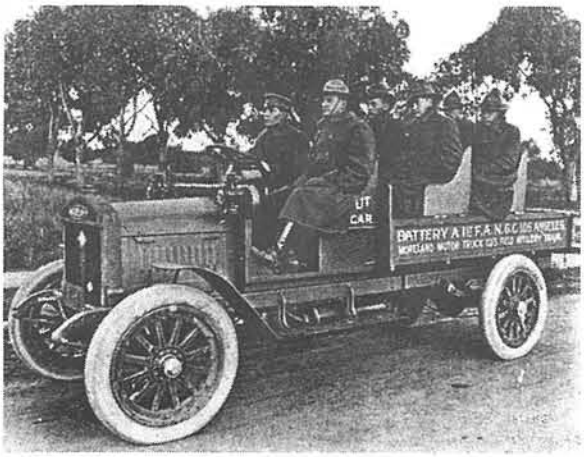
When the U.S. Army officers who had to approve the motor march plan were told, to say the least, they were astounded. It was probably more than twice the mileage that any motor march had gone before. Also as many miles as most motor vehicles ran in tests! And the National Guard artillery battery was proposing to do it with their guns!

Permission was granted with a "good luck to you." Retired U.S. Cavalry Colonel J.C. Graham was the official U.S. Army observer, detailed to go along and make a report.

Battery A, its guns, and the Moreland trucks were assembled at the Los Angeles National Guard Armory on Saturday morning, December 18, 1915. There were five Morelands: four 2½ tonners to pull and carry the gun battery and a 1½ tonner fitted with seats as a command and scout car. At least one private motor car accompanied the expedition.

The 2½-ton Moreland truck was fitted to pull a gun and its cassion on their own wheels, a good two-ton load. One of the 2½ tonners was loaded with the battery's service vehicles and several spare artillery wheels which were never used. The other three carried the men, their kits, and all the stores the battery needed for the trip.

Battery A moved out smartly at 10:00 in the morning. Much of the road was a good 20-foot concrete paved thoroughfare, the rest a firm Macadam stone surface. This first-class roadway allowed the battery to tow its guns along at 15 to 20 miles per hour — a good five times as fast as horses could have made it. It is entirely possible that this was the longest stretch of such good paved road in the United States, if not the world!



The high command rode this Moreland built "Scout Car" which made the run from Los Angeles to San Diego in 4 hours and 12 minutes. — Konrad F. Schreier Collection

Battery A, 1st Battalion leaves Los Angeles bound for San Diego on Saturday morning, December 18, 1915. — Konrad F. Schreier Collection

It allowed Battery A to set a new long distance speed record for motor trucks.

Since the guns and cassions were originally intended for horse draft at speeds of 3 to 5 miles per hour there was some concern as to how the guns would stand up to track at speeds of 15 to 20 miles per hour. Therefore, the battery stopped (military term would be halted) every hour, so that every gun and cassion wheel could be inspected. Fortunately, no trouble with dry or overheated bearings was found, and there was no sign of wheel failure. After each inspection every wheel was oiled prior to being remounted.

When Battery A rolled up to the venerable San Juan Capistrano Mission it wheeled into a battery firing front, and fired a salute in honor of Junipero Serra, father of the California Missions. The bugle then sounded a call, and the battery hooked up and was rolling again toward San Diego.

When the battery came to a halt at Oceanside they received a telegram. It informed the battery that their command and scout car was already in San Diego, 35 miles down the road! The reason it made such record time was due to its pneumatic tires, allowing it to travel much faster than the solid-tired trucks towing the field guns.

The battery moved through Del Mar, then up the old Torrey Pines grade. From the heights which overlooked the Pacific Ocean, the battery let off a 21 gun Presidential Salute and then moved on to San Diego where they fired another salute to honor the great crowd of citizens who greeted their arrival.

The run from Los Angeles to San Diego had taken the battery some ten hours including halts. The command and scout car had made the run in a record time for trucks of only 4 hours and 12 minutes — today it takes about that long to make the run on the freeway.

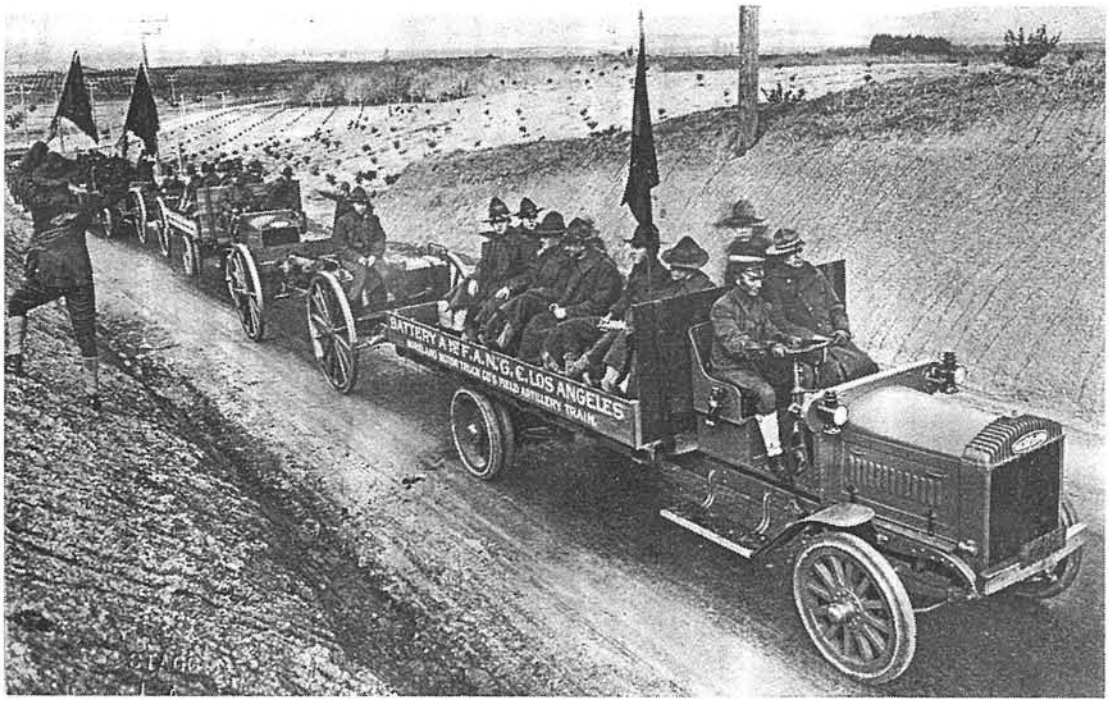
The run had been made with no mechanical problems, due in part to the careful preparation of the trucks before the run and the inspections at the hourly halts.

The next day Battery A made the trip back home to Los Angeles and the run was accomplished without equipment problems. Surprisingly the motorized column found unexpected crowds all along its route, as the press had gotten wind of the experiment. It was almost a parade all the way home, and certainly as satisfying to the artillerymen as if it actually had been one.

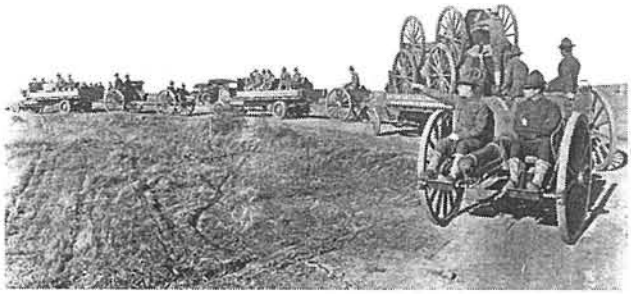
The run home had taken about the same length of time as the trip to San Diego. If Battery A had made the same round trip with horses it would have taken them at least a week, and more likely ten days! With trucks they did it in two!

After this remarkable exploit the officers and men of Battery A had become celebrities. The story of their motor march made all the local papers, and shortly the story was picked up by the news wire and their adventure was in the papers all over the United States.

This had become the longest motor march by a military unit, to say nothing of having done it as a field artillery battery with their guns. This



The California National Guard artillery train on El Camino Real highway somewhere between Los Angeles and San Diego. — Konrad F. Schreier Collection



The artillery train climbing the Torrey Pines grade a few miles north of San Diego. — Konrad F. Schreier Collection

was also the fastest long distance march ever made by a military unit without using railroad flatcars. And one fact which impressed soldiers and civilians alike was that Battery A had made the march without any trouble with trucks, cannon or cassions. The impression this march made on the military world started an important change in military strategy.

When Poncho Villa's Mexican force raided Columbus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916, the U.S. Army was ordered to respond with a punative expedition into Mexico. The success of Battery A's well publicized motor march helped the U.S. Army decide to use motor trucks to supply its troops along and below the Mexican border.

On March 16, 1916, the U.S. Army organized its first two motor truck companies of 27 machines each. Within a month several hundred trucks were in use along and below the border. By the end of the operation in mid-August 1916 the U.S. Army had about a thousand motor vehicles in service, and its commanders were convinced the machines should and would replace animal transportation. By the time World War I came to a conclusion, military transportation was on the road to motorization.

Battery A's contribution to the modernization of America's military, their 1915 round trip motor march between Los Angeles and San Diego, has been forgotten. It was but one of the many important landmarks in the early history of motor vehicle transportation.

Source Note: Magazines of the time which include *Out West, Everybody's, Scientific American* and *The Field Artillery Journal.* Various newspapers along the route.

work in the restoration and preservation of California missions and the restoration of the Santa Barbara Presidio.

Coins magazine runs an abundantly illustrated feature article on the Wells Fargo Museum and its adjunct Children's Museum in San Francisco replete with a fitting tribute to *Richard Cunningham*. He put together and set up the elegant projects that display the Wells Fargo collection of historical artifacts — gold nuggets, coins and paper money of the gold rush period, tools, correspondence and, of course, the ubiquitous Wells Fargo stage in both lifesize and scale-model versions.

Our balding, razor-tongued, but genial editor *Donald Duke* attends the Lexington Group of Transportation History meeting in San Diego, a confab characterized by intriguing talks on railroad lore coupled with Amtrak excursions between Los Angeles and San Diego.

Iron Eyes Cody serves as the Master of Ceremonies for the Little Big Horn Indian Association Pow-Wow convening on the first Saturday of every month, October to June, at the Eagle Rock Recreation Center.

Pope John II has elevated Msgr. *Francis J. Weber* to the rank of "Prelate of Honor to His Holiness" for his recognized leadership and many talents, not the least of which are his numerous historical contributions.

In honor of his 30th year of involvement in the field of Country Music, the California State Senate presents a resolution to CM *Gene Bear.*

CM *Richard Dillon's* latest and beautiful book, *Texas Argonauts,* is published by the Book Club of California. The volume, edited and annotated by Dillon, is an excellent narrative by Major Isaac Duval, leader of one of the first parties journeying across the Gila Trail to California in 1849. Dillon also joins two other Corral members, *Tony Lehman* and CM *Al Shumate,* each of whom severally authors a keepsake as part of the Book Club of California's 1988 series on our state's Historic Wayside Inns.

The Annual Meeting of the Rancho Los Alamitos Associates is conducted by its President *George Geiger.*

Abe Hoffman speaks on "Fletcher Bowron and Japanese Relocation in World War II" at the 14th Annual Southwest Labor Studies Conference at Loyola-Marymount University.

The Book Club of California elects *Hugh Tolford* to a position on its Board of Directors.

Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. receives, for the second time, the University of Southern California Associates Award of Excellence in Teaching. As the commendation notes: "Doyce Nunis reminds us what great teachers are supposed to be: superb lecturers, energetic teachers with a sense of drama; innovators in the classroom." Obviously, USC, no less than the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners, has been enriched by Doyce's luminous presence.

Henry Clifford, better known to most of us as El Muerto, has after 35 years completed his Zamorano 80. He completed his collection this year when he bought the last two books. The only other complete collection is at Yale University. The University of California (Berkeley) has approximately 70 volumes and the Huntington Library, 79. It is believed that only three or possibly four first edition copies of the two books Clifford acquired are in existence. A complete collection of these 80 rare books was originally declared in 1945, by the Los Angeles-based Zamorano Club of bibliophiles, as being the best works that were representative of early California history. Henry's accomplishment was featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and the Pasadena *Star-News* in mid-September, consequently, the story was picked up by the national wire service and broadcast across the nation.

Past Sheriff Ernie Hovard Visits Channel Islands

I recently returned from a very exciting 6 day expedition to the island of Santa Rosa. I was asked by the Channel Island National Park Service to accompany their archeologist, Don Morris, and paleontologist, John Cushing, to the island to conduct a survey of the prehistoric Indian sites and the fossil remains of the dwarf mammoths.

Santa Rosa Island has recently been purchased from the Vail Vickers Company who owned the island since 1902 and used it as a cattle ranch. It is almost 62,000 acres with the main ranch located at Beacher Bay.

After flying to the island, we spent our time at the west end working out of a remote cattle line camp. Most of the exploration was spent in the rugged canyons and along the sea coast. We

discovered the remains of ancient dwarf mammoths that had roamed the island around 29,000 years ago. It is believed that at that time portions of the coastline sank and the elephants became stranded and that in course of time, became dwarf through inbreeding and lack of vegetation. Some of these remains were removed for further study.

Numerous prehistorical Indian village sites were also located. Although no excavations were conducted, we photographed and mapped each location and documented the material, comparing the sites with a previous archeological investigation expedition that I had been on 30 years prior with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Radio carbon tests indicate that the island was first inhabited by prehistoric man around 8,000 years ago.

The island is so remote and unspoiled it is a veritable warehouse for archeological and paleontological research. Being privately owned, little has been disturbed. The National Park Service has opened part of the island for restricted visitation by the general public. It is in the process of allowing the public access to some of the wonderful natural resources as it brings the island into a status of a National Park.

While on the island I visited the original ranch buildings and talked with one of the owners, Al Vail, who will still continue cattle operations on the island. We were also fortunate to meet with Mr. William Mott, Director of the U.S. National Park Service who was touring the island with Director Bill Ehorn.

The Channel Islands are truly an unspoiled part of the California Coast and will be preserved through the park efforts allowing the public to share in their beauty and history.

THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

by Abraham Hoffman

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

May speaker Doyce B. Nunis

MAY 1988 MEETING

"Medicine in Spanish California," an illustrated talk by Westerner Doyce Nunis, underscored the role disease and medicine played in the early history of Spain's last colony. One major deterrent to California's development until the last five years of the 1790's decade was the mariner's curse at sea, scurvy. Not only did that disease plague the Vizcaíno expedition, but it also claimed one-third of the first wave of the Portola expedition which came by sea in 1764. And the curse remained unabated until the introduction of citrus in the mariners' diet in the late 1790's. Although California was served by royally appointed surgeon generals, their skills failed to stem the tide of epidemical diseases which periodically swept the Californian population; especially hard hit were the Indian peoples. Although Spain introduced smallpox innoculation into the province in 1786, it was not until the last five years of Spanish rule that William Jenner's more effective vaccination method was employed. Since surgery was at a low ebb throughout the world in the 18th and early 19th centuries, California, like other Spanish possessions, did witness the use of ceaserian operations on deceased pregnant women in a vain effort to insure the salvation of the child in the womb, a mixture of theological and medical practice. To sum it up, medicine in Spanish California was no better than medicine on the American western frontier. It was crude and primitive, compounded by a scarcity of physi-

cians to meet the needs of the missions and the settlers. Thus many, both Spaniard and Indian, practiced their own do-it-yourself medicine, folk medicine. So did many a westerning American pioneer.

Photograph by - Iron Eyes Cody

Deputy Sheriff Bill Lorenz, speaker Norman Neuerberg, and Sheriff Robert Clark

JULY 1988 MEETING

Corral Member Norman Neuerburg addressed the Corral on Mission San Borja in Baja California. Located in a barren and isolated part of Lower California, the mission was founded in 1759 by Jesuits with money provided by the Borja family. The Jesuits successfully converted 1,600 Indians at this mission, but the area could not sustain such a large population. Christian Indians came in alternate groups and were loyal to the mission. With the departure of the Jesuits and exposure to European diseases, however, the Indian population declined and disappeared. The Franciscans took over in 1769, but in 1773 the Dominicans took charge, since the Franciscans were more interested in Alta California. By 1818, with the elimination of the Indians, the mission was virtually abandoned.

Neuerburg showed slides illustrating his recent visit to the San Borja mission. A four-wheel drive vehicle is necessary because of the poor road conditions. Along the way ruins of old missions, petroglyphs, and interesting plant life can be observed. On the day of the drive to San Borja, Neuerburg and his companions made only 20 miles in 4½ hours. The San Borja mission is surprisingly well preserved; some restoration work has been done. The ornamental work testifies to the energy of the padres and Indians who built the mission in such a remote place. Neuerburg noted he had a chance to apply his own energies as the car's gas tank was punctured and his group had to spend a freezing night at the mission. Fortunately, they obtained help at a nearby ranch, and Neuerburg returned to tell the tale.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

August speaker Paul A. Hutton

AUGUST 1988 MEETING

Professor Paul Hutton of the University of New Mexico, author of *Phil Sheridan and His Army* and other books on the West, spoke to the Corral on the life and legend of Davy Crockett, focusing on Crockett as an example of the extremes of American hero worship. Born August 17, 1776, Crockett achieved fame as a Western frontiersman, member of Congress, and defender of the Alamo. The 1955 Walt Disney/Fess Parker portrayal cemented the modern view of Crockett, impressing American boys with how Crockett must have looked, acted, and died — clubbing enemy soldiers to the very end. In fact, Crockett may have served as a prototypical hero model for generations of Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, inculcating Crockett values of fighting for freedom, even in distant lands. Hutton notes a connection between Crockett and Texas and Kennedy/Johnson and Vietnam.

Considerable national interest continues in Crockett as the "baby boomers" buy books on Crockett ranging from terrible to very good. Interestingly, Crockett defenders oppose works which attempt to separate fact from legend about the famous frontiersman, even attacking the authors of such books as unpatriotic. Their minds are made up, and they don't want to be confused with the facts.

Hutton's research on the Alamo has exposed him to Crockett partisans. Historians recognize David Crockett as a talented, self-made man, honest and dedicated to freedom, with the details

of the legend being unimportant in view of Crockett's contribution to history. Nevertheless, Crockett, as described by Hutton, was unacceptable to Crockett fans in Texas. They said to challenge the legend was blasphemous, scurrilous, and cowardly. Despite six eyewitness accounts that Crockett surrendered and was subsequently executed at the Alamo, defenders of the Crockett legend insist that he died fighting — a view prevalent only since Disney's 1955 film. Readers in the 19th century, however, accepted the historical view of Crockett surrendering and made little fuss about it. His fame lapsed after the Civil War and stayed that way until the 1940s. Disney revived Crockett and, much to his surprise, a national Crockett craze swept America in 1955. Seekers for the truth about Crockett have ever since revealed themselves only at their peril.

In other Corral business, Mike Torguson was accepted as the Corral's newest (and youngest) Active Member.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

September speaker Don Bufkin

SEPTEMBER 1988 MEETING

Corresponding Member Don Bufkin, visiting from Arizona, addressed the Corral on Port Isabel, old Arizona's unusual seaport on the Gulf of California. The lower delta of the Colorado River is one of the most barren places on the planet. After the acquisition of the Southwest through the Mexican Cession of 1848, reaching California across the Sonoran Desert became a matter of great concern to those who would attempt it. The most feasible route across the Colorado River was at Yuma Crossing, surrounded east and west by desert. An army post was set up at the crossing, and settlers found Camp Calhoun a welcome place for relief and supplies. Camp Calhoun later became Fort Yuma. The isolation of the post made it difficult to supply the place, so the U.S. army considered supplying it by ocean connection. In 1850 Lt. George Derby sailed from San Francisco down the Pacific Coast, around the Baja Peninsula, and up the Gulf of California to the mouth of the Colorado. There he encountered the tidal bore, a wall of tidal water sweeping upstream. Derby's exploration proved the river, though treacherous, was navigable.

Attempts to supply Yuma by this route proved difficult. The first steamer to do so successfully, the *Uncle Sam,* arrived at Yuma in December 1852. George Alonzo Johnson launched the *General Jessup,* a steamboat powerful enough to bring supplies to Yuma. But Lt. Joseph E. Ives and his *Explorer,* in 1857-58, gained the most attention, surpassing Johnson's trip up the river by reaching El Dorado Canyon. Johnson, however, ran steamboats up the river for the rest of the 19th century. Port Isabel developed as a port on the American side of the border and flourished from 1865 to the late 1870s. In their heyday steamboats made it as far as 500 miles up the Colorado.

The establishment of a Southern Pacific Railroad line in 1877 ended Port Isabel's importance as a facility, though it continued to provide supplies to Yuma until the early 20th century. As for Yuma, the town served as a port of entry, an unusual role for a settlement in the midst of the desert.

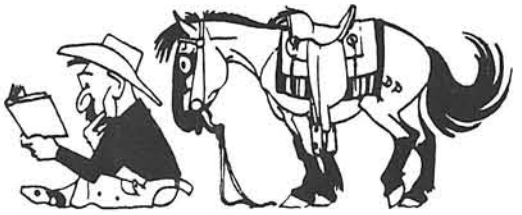
In April 1975 Bufkin and some friends visited the site of Port Isabel. He showed the Corral slides of this visit, noting that diversions of the Colorado River have made it little more than a vast mud flat at its mouth. Other pictures demonstrated the rich history of the region and the steamboats that once traveled on the Colorado River.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As we go to press with this issue, it is with deep regret that I must announce the passing of Active Member Tony Lehman on Monday evening, October 24. Tony had had massive surgery for cancerous glands in the neck area about a year ago, and along with that he had months of therapy treatments and believed all was taken care of. In fact, in September, he had returned to

teaching literature at Chaffey High School in Ontario.

Tony was a very active member of the Los Angeles Corral. He had been my right arm for 12 years on the *Branding Iron,* authored the "Corral Chips" column, was Deputy Sheriff in 1978 and Sheriff the following year. He continued to write the "Corral Chips" and his last column appears in this issue. The Corral recently honored him for his many contributions at September's Rendezvous with a beautiful plaque and Honorary Membership. Via con Dios Tony.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

Kirchner, John A. *Baja California Railroads.* San Marino, California: Golden West Books and Dawson's Book Shop, 1988. 350 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. $29.95

With only the index volume (No. 50) remaining to be published in Dawson's Book Shop's prestigious and well-received Baja California Travel Series, John Kirchner's penultimate contribution provides yet another valuable glimpse into the colorful history of the peninsula to our south. It should be noted that this volume was a joint effort of Golden West Books, who specialize in Railroad Americana, and Dawson's Book Shop as part of their Baja California Travel Series.

Surprisingly, over twenty-five railroad enterprises have existed, if not flourished, in Baja in the span of roughly a century. Only a few of these were common carriers however, with the majority representing lines constructed for mining or related industrial purposes.

San Diego's desire for a direct railroad link to the east led to many of the earliest proposals, including that of the Peninsular Railroad (1887) designed to connect San Diego with Yuma, Arizona, via Ensenada. An extension was to run from Ensenada south to San Quentín. Inexplicably, construction on the entire project began at the remote San Quentín terminus. Twenty-seven kilometers of track were actually completed, and Baja's first standard gauge steam locomotive, logically dubbed Peninsular Railroad No. 1, was put into service before the undertaking foundered because of financial, right-of-way, and other problems. Ultimately, locomotive No. 1 was sold in 1908 to an Arizona mining company and, in the process of being transferred from the wharf at San Quentín to an awaiting ship, the engine was inadvertently dropped and lost in the sea.

The *Ferrocarril Inter-California* fared much better. After some eight years of construction, service on this international railroad began in 1909, running from a juncture with the main line of the Southern Pacific at Niland in California's agriculturally rich Imperial Valley, to Calexico, dipping down in Baja at Mexicali, thence across Mexican territory quite a distance until reentering the United States at Andrade and joining eastbound connections at Yuma. This useful and successful line remained in service until 1959, with as many as six passenger trains travelling over its route daily at the height of its operations.

Another border railroad was the *Ferrocarril Tijuana y Tecate,* part of the epic effort to build the famous San Diego and Arizona Railroad. With backing by such industrial giants as John Spreckels and E.H. Harriman, the company was begun in 1906. After the expenditure of nearly $18,000,000 and twelve years of herculean labor, the SD&A's first through train from San Diego to Yuma made its journey in December 1919. The Baja portion of the line, from Tijuana to a few miles beyond Tecate, had been completed three years earlier and was chosen because going on the Mexican side of the border provided gentler grades approaching the western slope of the Peninsula Ranges. Interestingly enough, one of the most popular segments of the route, particularly during the Depression, was that favored by passengers embarking at San Diego and headed for the racetrack and resort at Agua Caliente just outside of Tijuana.

One other common carrier is notable in the growth and development of railroad transportation in Baja. After three abortive corporate attempts beginning in 1918 to link Mexicali by rail with the Gulf of Mexico, the *Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California* was formed, successfully

battling the formidable obstacle of the Colorado River with its penchant for periodic flooding and its ever present quagmires, and reached Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, in 1940 with further connections to Guadalajara and Mexico City — a route still in active use today.

Lesser rail ventures, namely those created for industrial use, are also duly chronicled in this extraordinarily complete book. Silver operations at the Progreso Mining Company at El Triunfo on the La Paz-Cabo San Lucas Highway and at the San Juan Mining Company fifteen miles south-southwest of Bahia de los Angeles used rolling stock to haul silver ore. Salt works at San Quentín and Carmen Island employed rails to move their product from the evaporation ponds to the piers. Gypsum on San Marcos Island was transported in ore cars. The incredible Colorado River floods of 1905-07 were fought from levees and trestles that supported trains (sometimes!) which dumped as much as 5000 cubic yards of rock per day in order to stem the rampaging waters. And, lastly, the best known and by far the largest of Baja California's industrial railroads was that at Santa Rosalia, a network built, commencing in 1885, to carry copper ore from the town's productive mines to the smelter and thence to the port.

Scholars, railroad buffs, and Baja addicts alike will all surely appreciate this volume for a multitude of reasons. Besides telling the fascinating tales that surround the building and utilization of railroads in Baja, California — stories replete with heroism, ambition, foolhardiness, and a multitude of travails such as labor problems, hostile weather, inimical terrain, even revolution — the book contains copious and informative footnotes, liberal and extensive quotations from a plethora of primary source materials, and is abundantly illustrated from various photographic archives in both private and public collections.

Though it is printed and bound in a non-uniform format (just a tad taller) when compared to the other volumes in the Baja California Travel Series — a fact that is at first disconcerting and is also likely to put off some purist collectors — this remains a notably well-written and well-researched book, not to mention an essential one in understanding the complex and varied history of the Baja peninsula.

Tony Lehman

Wright, Jr., J. Leitch. CREEKS AND SEMINOLES: Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. 383 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, $35.00. Available from University of Nebraska Press, 901 N. 17, Lincoln, NE 68588-0520.

This is a book written by a scholar, to be read by scholars, of the history of the Muscogulge people, a label that covered several southeast Indian tribes — Creeks, Seminoles, Alabamas, and a few more minor tribes. Not only does the author cover practically all the movements and counter-movements of this large tribal mixture, he also covers the movements of the leaders and the would-be leaders.

It is interesting, and shameful, that in following its manifest destiny America's Indian relations as early as the latter part of the eighteenth century and the earlier part of the nineteenth century already involved broken promises, broken treaties, and the taking of Indian lands by guile, by force, and by law. Also, it is ironic that the Muscogulge people were the first to be treated in this shameful way despite the fact that many had begun to adapt to white ways to the point of using Christian given and family names, wearing white man's clothing, and living by farming supplemented by hunting. It was an ethnic amalgam of Indians, mestizos, and blacks of both freed and runaway status. The blacks were completely accepted by the Muscogulges.

There are two features of the book that make it a lot less enjoyable than it might have been; one results from the author's style of writing and the other results from the publisher's make-up of the book. In tracing the movements of individual Muscogulges, the author keeps switching back and forth between the Indian names and the Christian names. At times this creates confusion as to who is his subject. With all the tribal movements and American and English armed forces movements over an area consisting of today's states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi it would help a great deal to have readable maps available. The book's two maps are so small they are useless. It is impossible to read the place names without a strong magnifying glass.

Sigfried G. Demke