LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
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BODIE
The Last of the Old-Time Mining Camps
by Grant H. Smith

Looking east over Bodie, circa 1910. In the center is the Standard Mining Company mill. The horizontal line, to the left of the mill, is the snowshed of the Bulwer tunnel. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

Bodie is an unforgettable memory, and even after more than 40 years, it still gives me a thrill to speak of it. I was only a 14 year old boy when I went there in June 1879. It was at the time the Camp was in its glory. I left in 1881, shortly before the rapid decline had set in; consequently, I remember only its golden days. It was the most vivid and interesting experience of my life, considering the fact that until I reached manhood, I had lived in various mining camps throughout California, Nevada, Idaho and Montana. This also included "The Comstock," during the "Bonanza Days" in the 1870's, and Butte in the first flush of its prosperity in the early 1880's.

Bodie was unique; it was the last of the old-time mining camps; the last, in type, of the pioneer days of California. There has been no later camp built that was anything like it, and

(Continued from Page Three)

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The Publications Editor
Donald Duke
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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.

THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

by Abraham Hoffman

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

Doc Miller (left) receives a metal lamp, made by a blacksmith, he won in a drawing. It was presented to him by November speaker Bill Miller (right).

NOVEMBER 1990 MEETING

Corresponding Member Bill Miller addressed the Corral on "Strong Hands that Shaped Our Nation"—the role of the blacksmith in American history. Historically blacksmiths were very inventive, providing designs and special tools on request. Pioneers by definition had to use their hands, and blacksmiths had to make what was needed, from plows to utensils.

Miller noted that distinctions are called for in defining the blacksmith's craft. Blacksmiths used iron; whitesmiths worked with pewter; and other specialists earned the titles of silversmith, goldsmith, and tinsmith. Contrary to the popular image, the person who shoes horses is not a blacksmith but is called a farrier. Blacksmiths created utilitarian rather than artistic designs. In colonial times they worked under severe restrictions as iron had to be shipped to England to be made into tools which would then be sold as finished products to the colonies.

(Continued on Page Twenty-Two)

probably never could be. This was strictly because it was the men who made the camps, not the camps the men. And now, the old-time Californians, who gave Bodie its distinctive atmosphere and charm, are all gone. Today, you could no more have another Bodie than you could have another Trojan War, with present-day Greeks as participants. Strange as it may seem, this comparison of the California pioneers with Homer's heroes is not that far-fetched. They had much in common.

Mining camps have a way of settling down and soon become somewhat more conventionalized. The first fever of excitement and disorder passes in a few months, or, at most, in a year or two. This is due to the fact that man can not live at such a high tension pace for any great length of time. The lessening of pressure comes about when the value of the mines becomes better understood—disappointingly so, as a rule. Comforts, conveniences and the rule of law tone down the wilder primitive ways of living. That was true of the old-time California camps and, also, of the early days in Nevada.

"The Comstock"—as Virginia City is known to mining men—stayed at a higher fevered pitch for a longer period of time than any other camp in the West. This was due to the continuous, delirious stock-gambling, which was stimulated by the discovery of successive great ore-bodies in the various mines. Nevertheless, "The Comstock"soon outgrew the crude conditions of 1860 and 1861, but it remained a great and flourishing camp for many years. Although, compared with Bodie, its life was far more ordered and dignified. They had a railroad to serve it, a splendid water supply, many fine buildings, palatial saloons, good hotels, excellent restaurants, comfortable homes, a police force and fire department, churches, theatres, the enjoyment of practically all of the conveniences and even the luxuries afforded by San Francisco.

In order to understand Bodie, one must comprehend the people that it was composed of and the conditions under which they were forced to endure. First, let's take a look at the people: Primarily, they were eager, young adventurers, coming from all corners of the earth, but most of them were Americans. At first, nearly all of the newcomers went to the placer mines, but only those that had optimistic, wide-ranging spirits continued to follow mining. The rest settled down as farmers, merchants, artisans, and other walks of life. The early shallow placers were soon exhausted, and, as a consequence, the miners would move from camp to camp to newly reported discoveries. They often left good 'diggings' to join the wild rush of a new excitement. Out of these conditions arose individuals of a type that were appropriately called "mining-camp men." Their ties to a community were not strong, even though they had families. When a camp began to decline, they eagerly looked about for a fresh field. These men, as a rule, were virile, enthusiastic, and free-living, bound by very few of the rules of conventional society. However, they had their own admirable code of ethics: liberal-minded, generous to a fault, square-dealing, and completely devoid of pretense and hypocrisy. While the mining camps were not entirely composed of this type, it was, in fact, men like this, who gave the camps their distinctive character.

When the discovery of the great Comstock Lode was made at Virginia City, Nevada, in 1859, the placer mines of California were practically all worked out, and quartz mining had hardly begun. The mining camps, therefore, were full of great spirits, who were eagerly awaiting a call from somewhere. The call came from "The Comstock"—called "Washoe" at the time—and the miners flocked over the Sierra Nevada by the thousands. Nevada, as a result, was almost entirely populated by Californians; and they were, in fact, a wonderful set of men, full of energy, accomplishment, and breadth of character. Not only did they create the great camp of Virginia City, but many spread throughout Nevada. They also discovered and developed many other mining districts, helping to swell the flood of gold and silver that the country so sorely needed during the Civil War.

The old-timers in Nevada used the word excitement to describe the rush to a new mining camp. They spoke of the "Washoe Excitement," the "Reese River Excitement," the "Aurora Excitement," the "White Pine Excitement" and others too numerous to mention. It always seemed to me that no other word or phrase, as is mentioned above, could so well express men's feverish, reckless spirit and energy on those 'stampedes.'

Bodie came into prominence in 1878, with the discovery of some extraordinary bodies of gold

Eight boys on a burro in front of the Standard Mill. The boy holding the straw hat is Fred I. Green, who, in the late 1950's, amassed large parcels of Nevada land for a farming venture which failed due to a lack of water. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

ore. It occurred at a time when "The Comstock" was already on the decline, and the same condition was also true of many other camps in the West. Again, the adventurous heard the call, and off they went to Bodie. By the end of 1879, nearly 10,000 people had migrated there. Men came from all over—Nevada, California, and many other western places—all of the adventurous type, although, differing widely in degree and character. While the majority were of the best mining camp type, there was also a gathering of the wildest and most desperate characters that ever infested a mining region. Besides the business and professional men, mine operators, miners, etc., there were hundreds of saloon keepers, gamblers, prostitutes, Chinese, and numerous Mexicans. Also, inhabiting the area was an unusual number of what we used to call 'bad men.' They were desperate, violent characters from everywhere, who lived by gambling, gun fighting, stage robbing, and other questionable means. The "Bad man from Bodie" was a phrase of the time used throughout the West. In its day, Bodie was more widely renown for its lawlessness than for its riches.

Let us turn now to the condition under which these people lived. Bodie was in Mono County, 15 miles east of the Sierra Nevada, and ten miles north of Mono Lake. It was situated in a range of barren, wind-swept hills, entirely devoid of vegetation, save for the ever-present sagebrush. A more uninviting region would be difficult to imagine. The altitude at the town was 8,200 feet; the mines were from five to 700 feet higher. The climate was severe, except for some glorious days in midsummer. In winter, cold winds and snow swept it incessantly and, in summer, dust was the problem. The greater part of the town was built on a flat at the foot of Bodie Bluff, extending, for perhaps, half a mile up and down the flat on either side of the wide main street. Part of the town crept up the hill toward the mines. The mines were all located on the Bluff and on the lower ridge that extended southerly from it.

Bodie was discovered in 1860, during the great excitement at Aurora, which lay only twelve miles to the north. At that time, a limited amount of good ore was found on Bodie Bluff, and some placer gold had washed in the gulches; but the mines, like those of Aurora, soon played out. For many years, the camp was practically abandoned, except by a few hopeful miners. A prospector discovered a small outcropping of good ore, in 1872, on the flat top of Bodie Bluff. He and his partners worked the mine in a small way for four years; packing the ore over the hills to Rough Creek and milling it in an arastra. In 1876, the Cook brothers of San Francisco, who were energetic mining men, bought the mine for $67,500. They incorporated as the Standard Mining Company, and continued the developmental work, building a small mill at the foot of the Bluff. The enterprise was so successful that in 1877, the first year of actual operations, the Standard took out considerably more than enough ore to pay for the mine, mill and all

improvements. Mining men, however, were not impressed, they remembered the disappointments of the first Bodie excitement, years before. Thus they paid little attention until the year 1878, when the Bodie Mining Company, which adjoined the Standard on the south, made a phenomenally rich strike of gold and silver ore at the 300 ft. level. It was so rich that the mining world was startled. Nothing like it had been found for many years. That small mine with its small mill, in August 1878, produced gold and silver bullion valued at $600,000. The stock jumped from .50 cents to $54 a share in a few weeks. Mining men throughout the West were aflame with excitement, and all the prospects for miles around Bodie were located. Many new mining companies were incorporated. The mining stock exchange in San Francisco took on new life, and people flocked into Bodie. In 1879, over 40 mines were in active operation on a large scale, and hundreds of smaller prospects were being developed.

The winter of 1878-1879 was a terrible one. This was because Bodie was located 120 miles from the railroad at Carson City, and all supplies had to be hauled that great distance. Until the excitement arose in the summer of 1878, the camp had been comparatively small and it had the poorest type of accommodations. That winter found thousands of people poorly housed and fed, and very little employment. Consequently, it left them with nothing to do but hang around the saloons, where they would gamble, fight, get drunk and end up laying out in the snow and dying. Hundreds died that winter from exposure and disease, and nearly as many lives were lost by violence. I recall a significant cartoon of the time, it showed a man trudging toward Bodie with a tombstone on his back, and the inscription was somewhat as follows: "John Miner, born Auburn, California, 1860. Died, Bodie, California, 1879."

A Truckee newspaper of that time printed the following prayer of a little girl whose family was about to move to Bodie: "Goodbye God! We are going to Bodie." The editor of a Bodie paper rejoined that the little girl had been misquoted. That what she really said was, "Good, by God! We are going to Bodie."

Such was the common conception of the fate of those who went to that notorious camp.

However, early in the spring of 1879, great quantities of materials and supplies were rushed in, but along with this there was also an influx of thousands of additional people. Fortunately, they had the summer of 1879 to prepare for the forthcoming winter. When I reached Bodie in June 1879, the terrors of the preceding winter had all been forgotten. There was building going on everywhere. Mines were opening, hoisting works were being erected, new mills were under construction, the excitement in mining stock was at its highest level, as nearly everybody had a mine or mining stock that would make them rich, and the region was in a delirium of excitement and activity. Gold and silver coin was as plentiful as sagebrush; everybody seemed to have a pocketful—and it was being spent regally.

Social conditions were the result of the people themselves and the way in which they had to live. They were in a remote, barren, sparsely-settled country; practically without any form of government, and very little law and order, making it a Mecca for the 'bad men.' Along with this, there was no living conveniences, poor housing, no water supply, except wells and water wagons, no sanitary regulations, a harsh climate, and forbidding surroundings. These conditions soon made them seek the only warm, cheerful, comfortable places to go; the saloons, gambling halls, dance houses, or the red-light district; all of which led to drinking, gambling, and excesses of every kind.

My opportunity to observe everything that was going on were exceptional, since I was the only messenger boy employed by the telegraph office at Bodie during the years of its greatest excitement, 1879 and 1880. Necessarily, it was my daily job to deliver messages to the mines, mills, stores, offices, saloons, gambling houses and the red-light district. Even though I would perform all my working duties, basically, I was just an active, inquisitive youngster that wanted to see and hear all that was going on. A fight, or the prospect of one, always attracted me. But the contact that I had with those types of 'goings on,' seemingly, did not affect my conduct. I didn't drink, smoke, gamble, or frequent low-life places, except as a matter of duty or occasionally just plain curiosity. Consequently, everybody thought I was a pretty good little boy and encouraged me to remain so, as no one, man or woman, ever tried to lead me from the straight and narrow path.

The town was poorly constructed, and re-

mained so, with only one or two buildings ever being erected of brick. The saloons, gambling halls and business houses, up and down the main street, were mere shacks, although, some were very considerable in size. The boarding and lodging houses were of the flimsiest character and, except for the vicinity of the stove area, they were poorly heated. The homes of the miners and townspeople were built of rough boards and, as a rule, were very small. At first, many people lived in tents and hillside dugouts, making the ability to heat them very difficult and inadequate. Toilets were out-of-doors, reached in the winter by a trip through the snow. The only lights were coal-oil lamps and candles. Fuel was pine-nut wood, which was knotty and full of pitch, thus making an excellent firewood. There was a fairly good public school, where the three R's were taught, a diminutive church or two, and a well-attended Sunday School.

They were without gas, water, except from wells and wagons, coal, hospitals, nurses, theatres, and entertainment of any sort, save that which the people themselves arranged.

The traffic in the streets was continuous and enlivening. There were trains of huge, white-topped prairie-schooners, bringing freight from the railroads, and each was drawn by 20 or more horses or mules, pulling one or two large, four-wheeled trailers. The ore wagons brought huge loads of pine-nut wood from long distances for the mines, mills and for general use. There were also hay wagons, lumber wagons, prospecting outfits, nondescript teams of horses of all types, spanking teams driven by mine superintendents, horses ridden by everybody, and most exciting of all, the daily stages that came tearing into town and, as quickly, went rushing out. The outgoing stages often carried bars of bullion, that were guarded by stern, silent men, armed with sawed-off shotguns loaded with buckshot, but still did not always succeed in protecting their treasure.

The streets were always alive with men at any time of the day or night, except during inclement weather. A daily horse market in the center of town was a summer feature and, as a result, an impromptu horse race on the main street was not unusual.

The saloons and gambling houses all fronted onto the main street and were always wide-open. Nearly everybody drank, as well as gambled. Boisterous conviviality was the prevailing spirit. Altogether, the street life in Bodie was similar to that of a continuous motion picture show.

As I have said, Bodie was a town of almost no government or law and order. If, in fact, there was government of any kind in 1879 and 1880, I was not aware of it. There were a few deputy sheriffs that had been appointed by the sheriff, who lived at the county seat, twelve miles away and, also, a justice of the peace. The end result was that practically nothing could control the rough element of the town, except the fear of the other fellow's gun or knife. Whiskey was the common drink—beer and wine were too insipid for those tough stomachs—and too much whiskey ultimately led to quarreling and gunfighting. Killings were so frequent that the common expression of the day was, "Well, have we got a man for breakfast this morning?" Indeed, very often there was more than one dead man. Fortunately, the fighting was almost entirely confined to the rough element, and, so long as they killed off one another, the better citizens did not care. Every once in a while an innocent spectator would get in the way of a bullet, but that was considered partly his own fault for being there.

Cold-blooded murders were uncommon. Most men were killed in open fights, where each side had at least some chance; the victory going to the men who were quickest in action and surest in aim. Of one victim, it was said:

> He had sand in his craw,
> But was slow in the draw:
> So we planted him 'neath
> the daisies.

Just off the main street was Chinatown, which was a typical area, except that it was even more congested and viler than most Chinatowns usually were. Fronting that, and running, for a considerable distance, down behind the principal saloons and dance halls, was the red-light district, in which women from all over the world were gathered. Kipling's "Fultah Fisher's Boarding House," with variations, was reenacted many times in Bodie.

Weapons more often were drawn than used. Most of the men that carried guns liked to get them out on the slightest provocation, but they were loath to use them. More than once, I saw a whole crowd of men with their guns drawn and not a shot fired. There were occasions when a

man that had killed another would have a hearing before the justice of the peace, but that was about as far as the matter went. Bodie had a record of hundreds of men killed by violence, but I recall only two cases of prompt and adequate punishment, where in both cases the murderers were taken out of jail by an angry mob and hung. One of them murdered another in cold blood over a woman. The other man was an opium fiend, who had been thrown out of a saloon by a bartender, but later returned with a shotgun and, standing in the doorway, filled the bartender full of buckshot. Almost invariably these killings would occur in the saloons, gambling halls, dance house, or outside in the streets at night. I have no idea of how many men were killed in John Wagner's saloon. It was a typical mining camp saloon, although it was somewhat larger than any of the others in town. Fronting on main street, it was a barn-like room, probably 30 feet wide, 100 feet long, and 15 feet high. To the left of the swinging doors, as you entered, was the bar, which stretched along the side of the room. Opposite the bar, and stretching along in similar fashion, was a chophouse, or short-order restaurant, with a long counter and stools in the front. The rear of the room was literally filled with gambling tables of one kind or another. They were principally faro banks, presided over by silent, watchful dealers, who had hundreds, or even thousands of dollars in gold and silver stacked up in front of them, and a gun was always within easy reach.

The story was told that a wild, reckless, young fellow, who later became a prominent man in the West, lost his arm at a faro table while trying to take back the money he had lost. The dealer was too quick for him and promptly pinned his hand to the table with a Bowie knife.

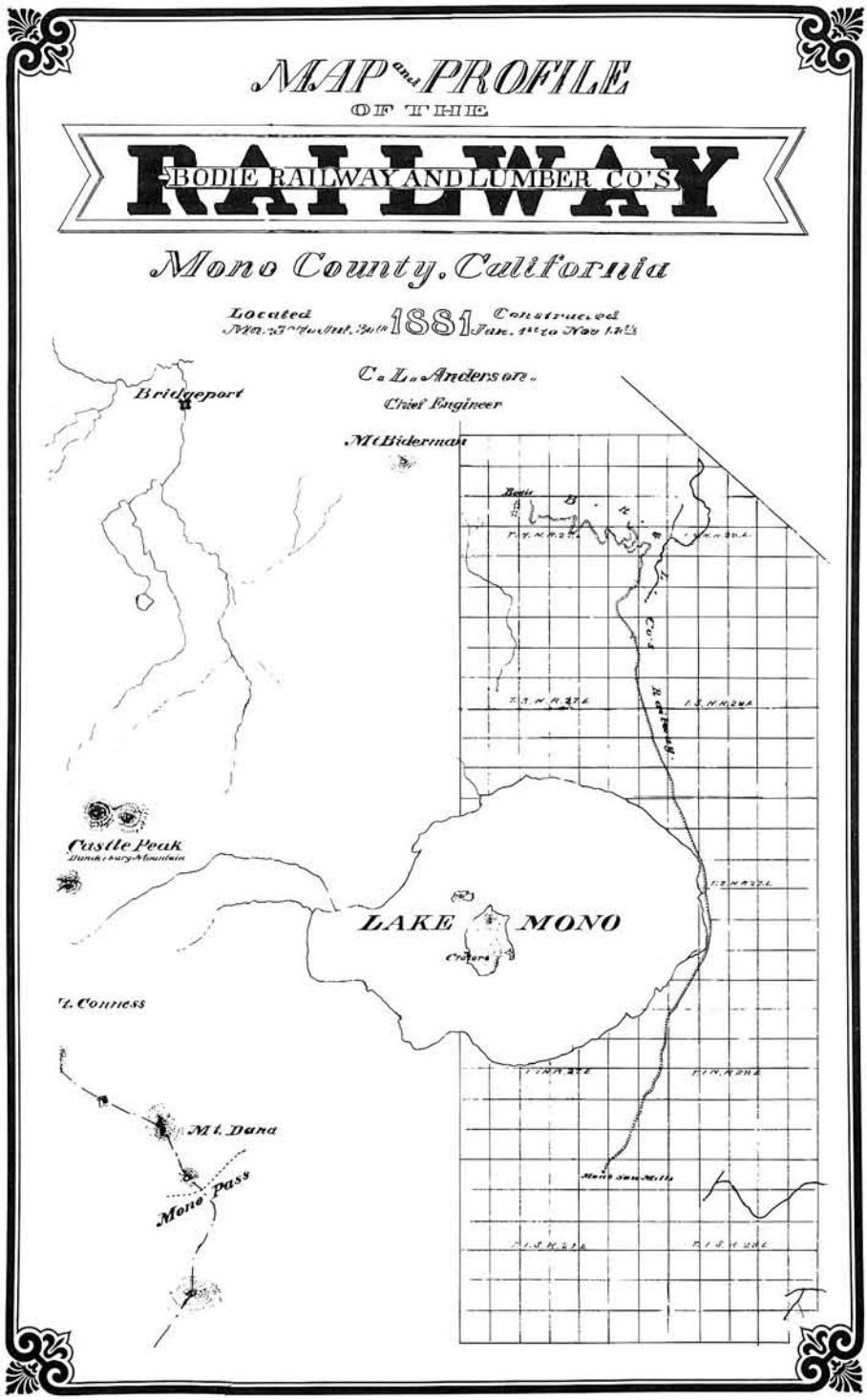
It is very easy for men to quarrel when drunk, but even more likely to, when drinking and gambling. If there is a woman involved, so much the worse. Every night there were hundreds of men in John Wagner's saloon. When a shot would be fired at any time, the crowd would make a mad dash for the front doors. Many is the time that John Wagner's front doors were bodily carried out into the street by the stampeding crowds, eager to escape the flying bullets.

I recall a spectacular fight between a fine young miner, who had gone somewhat wild, and a sure-thing gambler. They had previously quarreled, then, partly, made up, and the gambler had invited the miner to have a drink. As they stood side by side at the bar, the gambler nonchalantly drew his gun and shot the miner in the back. The miner was able to draw his gun, and they stood there holding each other by the coat, shooting until their guns were empty. The miner died instantly; the gambler lived for some years, but he was a physical wreck.

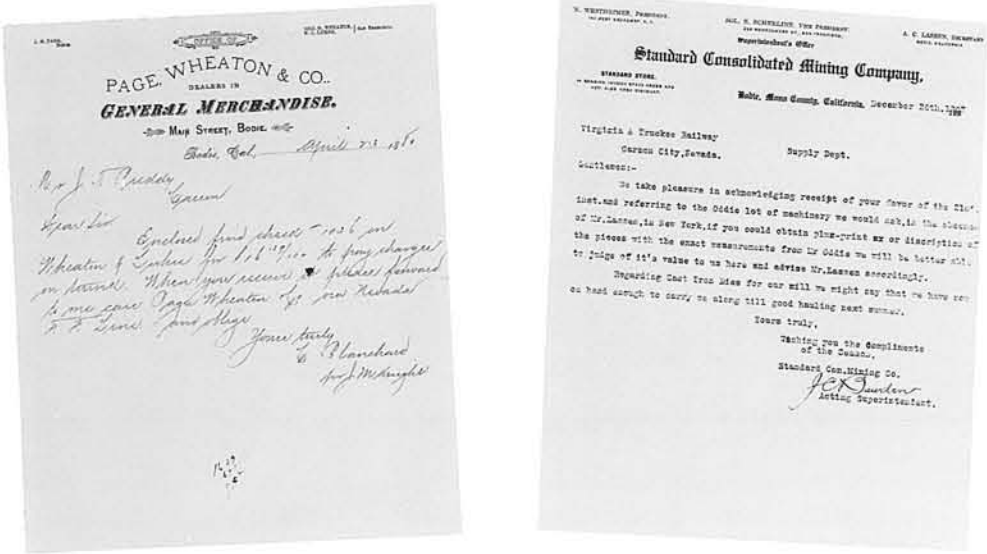
John Wagner was a stolid, sober, thrifty, experienced German saloonkeeper, who remained unperturbed during the wildest of escapades. His wife, one of the best women that ever lived, was a physician, and devoted her life to ministering to the unfortunate and needy, usually without pay. Her home was just back of the saloon, on a short fearsome street that served as the outlet of Chinatown and the red-light district.

While violence in Bodie was the order of the day, every day, nevertheless, there were no bank or store robberies, no housebreaking, and very little petty thievery. Property was safer than San Francisco is today. Men's lives were safer, too, if they kept away from the establishments known to be dangerous. Of course, the bullion stages were frequently held up while on the long road to Carson City, which usually resulted in the killing of one or more men, but that was to be expected. The highwaymen always staked their lives in the game, and men spoke of them with respect for their courage.

Easily the most striking figure in the town was that of a man, who, for many years, was the leading lawyer in Mono and Inyo counties. He was a large, fine-looking, dark-haired, carefully dressed man, about 40 years of age; one that you would notices anywhere, and particularly because of the absence of one arm. He had a commanding personality and great physical strength; a born leader of men. It was common talk, that in the early days of Aurora, his youth had been a violent one. Reports also said that after he lost his arm in some kind of a brawl, his wife, who was an unusual woman, taught him to read and write, and encouraged him to educate himself for the law. I recall that in 1890, when I was admitted to the bar before the Supreme Court at Carson City, the Clerk told me that this fellow had failed twice in his examination for admission, and only succeeded on the third try. I saw a great deal of this man, in the ensuing



In 1881, the Bodie Railway & Lumber Company was organized to haul lumber, poles, and cordwood to the mines at Bodie. The narrow-gauge railroad was 32-mile long and ended at Mono Saw Mills, south of Mono Lake. Here were located the railroad shops, a lumber mill, and logging camps. By December 1881, the railroad was in full operation. In 1882, the name of the railroad was changed to the Bodie & Benton Railway in order to connect with the narrow-gauge Carson & Colorado Railroad at Benton station. A line was surveyed and nine miles of grade prepared, but the extension was never built. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*



PAGE, WHEATON & CO.,
DEALERS IN
GENERAL MERCHANDISE.
Main Street, Bodie.

Standard Consolidated Mining Company,

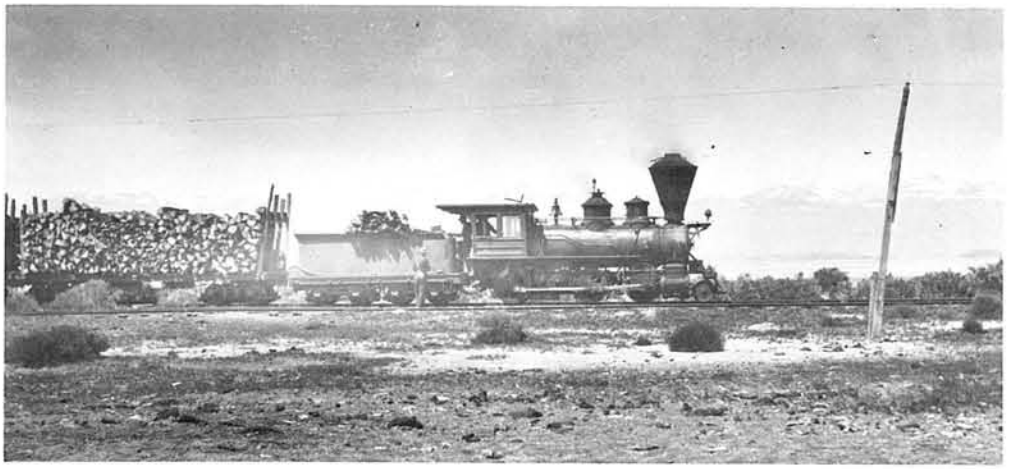
Page Wheaton & Company, based in San Francisco, was a general supplier of merchandise. Many San Francisco firms established branch offices in booming mining towns. A letter from the Standard Consolidated Mining Company concerns machinery and dies. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

years, in his office, on the streets, in the saloons, and in the court. He always treated me in the most kindly way. Outside of his office, he was almost invariably accompanied by a large, quiet, grey-haired man, whom everybody spoke of as a "gun man;" in other words, his guard. While this fellow was a man of strong character, and a forceful lawyer, he was of a dominating, if not domineering, nature, and rode roughshod over all that opposed him. When he went on an occasional drunk, he would proceed from saloon to saloon, accompanied by his "gun man," ordering drinks for everybody, and no one dared to cross him. In the justices' court, which was the only court we had in Bodie, he had things all his own way. He was a most difficult man to deal with under any circumstances, and if he defended a man charged with a crime, an acquittal was almost assured.

He was a man with a warm heart, strong friendships, and great sympathy for the underdog. He tried many cases, giving the best there was in him, without regard to compensation. When his clients were rich and powerful, they paid fees accordingly. Later, he moved to San Francisco, where he was, for many years, a leading attorney. During his lifetime, he was engaged in much important litigation, particularly mining cases. His wife lived with him in Bodie: a white-haired, refined-appearing woman, who never mingled in social affairs.

The people of Bodie were extremely social, but there was no structured society. Living conditions were too hard for that. Social distinctions were lightly drawn, particularly among the men, who themselves were from the highest to the lowest grades of society. Every prominent old-time mining camp contained a large number of well-educated men and women. Even the small, remote places had their quota of intelligent people. That life-style seemed to hold a peculiar fascination for all kinds and conditions of men. One could always find his level of intellect there, whatever is was.

Bret Harte and Mark Twain are shining examples of the literary men that found their inspiration in mining camps, though their decriptions were not always faithful. The latter dealt in humorous exaggeration, while the former wrote in a romantic manner. Mark Twain was a newspaper reporter on *The Comstock,* where an unusual number of talented men foregathered. No other community of equal size in this country contained so many men of great ability in various directions, who had been attracted there by great enterprises and great riches. "Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." There was much luxurious living on The Comstock, and social distinctions were more pronounced. Both men and women dressed exceedingly well, and shiny stovepipe hats were not uncommon. The phrases, high-toned and



The northbound morning train, loaded with cordwood, pauses alongside Mono Lake before taking off for Bodie. The snowcapped Sierra Nevada range presents a winter background. Mill workers often rode the Saturday afternoon train to Bodie for a night out on the town. After leaving Mono Basin, the train began its twisting and turning route to the station above Bodie. The right-of-way was littered with empty whiskey bottles that had been tossed by the celebrating passengers. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

genteel, so often heard at that time, are now almost forgotten.

All of the larger camps had their quota of high-toned gamblers; well-dressed, quiet, gentlemanly men, who conducted faro banks, which required considerable capital. They prided themselves on dealing a square game, and were patronized accordingly. Their profit was in the percentage. Some of these men came from respectable families in the East and South, more particularly the South. Not infrequently, they were married and had children. The men that owned, so-called, first-class saloons were often well-respected family men. In this particular era, men were judged chiefly by their character and ability; not by the ordinary rules of conventional society. The mining camps had their own Ten Commandments, which included very few of those given to Moses.

If a movie were to be made of the town of Bodie of those days, we should be treated to the following scenes: crowds of red-shirted miners, with guns in their belts and trousers stuck in their boots; a villain, represented by a heavily-armed badman, dressed in corduroy trousers, carefully encased in neat top boots, with his hat pulled over his eyes. In addition, we would probably see picturesque cowboys, ladies wonderfully made up, and melodrama without end. But, as a matter of fact, any such picture would be a travesty in Bodie, since the people actually dressed carelessly and in conventional clothes. There was not much of the picturesque in their attire. Many men did carry guns and knives, but were usually always concealed by their coats. There were plenty of men on horseback, and some had beautiful spirited horses, but the riders, as a rule, wore somewhat simple clothes. Women were mostly inconspicuous.

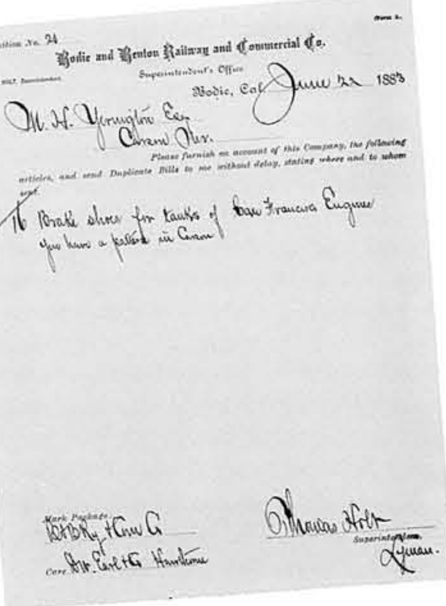
One day, I recall how Bodie had its eyes opened, when a fine-looking, dark-haired, heavily-armed man came riding in at the head of a cavalcade. He was dressed in a silk shirt, wearing a flaming red sash, velvet trousers, shiny top boots, silver spurs, a great sombrero, and mounted upon a handsome, spirited horse. It was later learned that he thought he was coming into Bodie in the conventional style of the day. It turned out that he was only the keeper of a little restaurant in Carson City.

The mines were all located on Bodie Bluff and on the lower ridge that stretched southerly for about a mile. One might compare that line of hills to the back of a buffalo, with the Bluff, constituting the hump, and the lower ridge, the backbone. These hills are largely composed of an intrusive rock called hornblende-andesite, which had a reddish-yellow color on the surface. It was locally known as porphyry. Gold and silver veins occurred frequently along this ridge, but

particularly on the somewhat flat top of the Bluff, where the really profitable mines were developed. None of the 20 or more mining companies that operated along the ridge succeeded in developing paying mines, and, on the Peak itself, out of hundred of mining locations, there were only two notable paying mines—the Standard and the Bodie.

The camp produced about $21,000,000 altogether, of which $14,500,000 was produced by the Standard mine, $4,000,000 by the Bodie, and $3,000,000 by all of the other mines in the camp. It is an interesting fact that nearly all of the wealth of the Standard and Bodie mines was found at a depth of 500 feet from the surface, and that no ore was produced below the 800 foot level. Within the comparatively small area comprising the Standard and Bodie mines, about 100 parallel veins were mined for ore. They ranged in thickness from 20- to 30-foot veins of quartz and clay, to seams of high-grade ore that were less than an inch wide. This mineralized zone, which was extensively mined to a depth of 500 feet, was approximately 1,000 feet wide and 3,000 feet long. Much of the ore, particularly that found in the Bodie mine, was extremely rich. It was so rich, in fact, that perhaps hundreds of thousands in gold were high-graded by the miners and others connected with the mine and the mill. (Like Falstaff, the miners have a distaste for the word steal, when applied to the abstraction of rich gold ore belonging to another, so they coined the milder term, high-grade, to express the same thought.) The richest ore from the Bodie mine did not pulverize readily in the mill, because the gold and silver would pound up into massive sheets under the stamps. Consequently, it had to be shovelled out of the mortar boxes in order that the stamps could do their duty. All of the gold in the district was heavily alloyed with silver, and was rarely more than $12 per ounce. In some of the shallow placer diggings, at the south end of the ridge, the gold was worth only from $3 to $8 per ounce.

A kindly foreman took me down into the Bodie mine to see the 1879 bonanza, and I will never forget one small drift, or tunnel, that glittered on all sides with gold and silver, like the treasure house of Croesus. Illustrative of the liberality of the times was the fact that hundreds of men and women were allowed to visit the Bodie mine when that rich ore was being extracted, and, in fact, were permitted, and even encouraged, to carry away valuable specimens. Visiting the



Requisition No. 24

Bodie and Benton Railway and Commercial Co.

Superintendent's Office

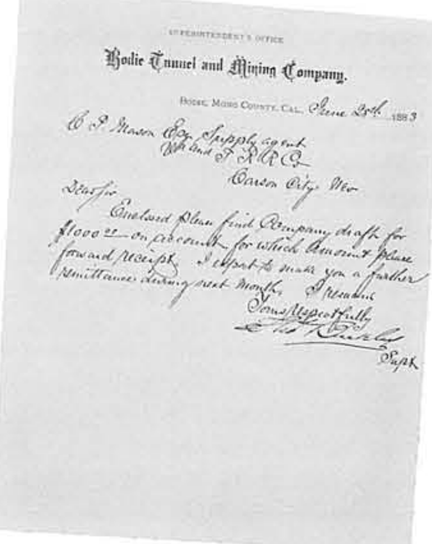
Bodie, Cal June 22 1883

H. H. Yerington Esq
Carson Nev.

Please furnish on account of this Company, the following articles, and send Duplicate Bills to me without delay, stating where and to whom sent.

16 Brake shoes for tanks of San Francisco Engine you have a pattern in Carson

Thomas Holt
Superintendent.



SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

Bodie Tunnel and Mining Company.

Bodie, Mono County, Cal., June 28th 1883

Dear Sir

Enclosed please find Company draft for $1000.00 on account for which amount please forward receipt. I expect to make you a further remittance during next month. I remain

Yours respectfully

Supt

Bodie & Benton Railway letter to Hume Yerington, superintendent of the famed Virginia & Truckee Railroad. Their shops at Carson City could handle about any repair or make any part. Also, an old letter from the Bodie Tunnel & Mining Company. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

Hauling lumber to the railroad at Mono Mills was big business. The Bodie & Benton Railway also built spurs from Mono Mills into the woods. Locomotives would back the train of flatcars into the woods for loading the fresh-cut trees. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

Bodie mine became very popular in those days. Everybody assumed that the riches of the mine were almost inexhaustible.

By 1881, men were beginning to realize that none of the mines in the district were proving profitable, except the Standard and the Bodie. It also became evident that the ore in those mines did not extend to any great depth. The stock market went to pieces, and the other large mining plants began to close down one after the other. After the year 1883, only four or five large mines were working, and the population had been reduced to 2,500. In 1887, the Standard absorbed the Bodie mine and some other adjacent properties, and operated profitably for nearly another 20 years.

"The early collapse of many mining ventures left the hillsides strewn with monuments of reckless expenditures based on wild hopes."

In round numbers, the camp produced $21,000,000 in gold and silver, and paid dividends amounting to $7,000,000. The total assessments levied by the various companies totaled about $5,500,000, and perhaps an additional $500,000 was expended on other mines by individuals. the end result was that the total amount of money paid in by the stockholders and owners nearly equaled the dividends paid. The camp would be termed a financial success, however, because the $21,000,000 produced went into the channels of trade and had a very stimulating and beneficial effect throughout the Pacific Coast.

Everybody gambled in stocks, which kept the excitement of the community at a high pitch. There were over 30 large mining properties in Bodie whose stocks were dealt on the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Every day, the quotations would come in by telegraph. The phrase that one heard most often in Bodie was "Let's take a drink." The next most popular expression was the inquiry, "How are stocks today?" With two exceptions, those mines were failures, but in the period from 1879-1880 it was fully expected that every one of them would prove a bonanza. Stocks moved up and down with startling rapidity. Men were rich today and poor tomorrow, and then rich again. Promising developments of ore were reported from one or more of these mines on a daily basis, causing startling variations in the prices of the stocks, and sudden changes in people's fortunes. It was a fool's paradise. Nearly everybody in Bodie, at one time or another, had a good deal of money, but almost everybody left the camp broke when the bottom dropped out.

The curse of Bodie, as it was of The Comstock, was the stock market. The San Francisco market was manipulated by stock gamblers, strictly for their own profit, with no regard to the merits of the mines, and without any compassion for the thousands who were ruined in that unholy game.

It was sometime said that the mining-stock speculation that characterized The Comstock

and Bodie, on the whole, was beneficial. This was based on the premise that without the money contributed by the stockholders in the way of assessments, many fine ore bodies would never have been developed. That particular statement was wholly untrue of Bodie, because nearly six million was spent on mining properties that, in actuality, did not warrant the expenditure of more than a fractional part of that sum. On The Comstock, it was true that some of the great bonanzas were developed with assessment money, but it was also true that nearly a hundred million dollars was wasted in that manner. It was believed that some of The Comstock ore bodies might never have been found in the course of orderly mining, but that is still a debatable question. On the whole, mining stock gambling, as conducted in those two great camps, was both wasteful and pernicious. The effect upon the people was to unsettle their lives, encourage dissipation, and discourage thrift, leaving them in a state of dependency at old age—if they survived.

To illustrate the methods of the men who manipulated mining stocks in those days, I will recount my own stock-purchasing experience in the Mono mine. The Mono adjoined the Bodie, and the hoisting works were within a stone's throw of each other. Everybody believed that the rich ore of the Bodie would extend into the Mono; the stock was very active and purchased freely, the price being based wholly on hope. The work of developing the mine proved to be very expensive and, in the end, no ore was found. Assessment after assessment was levied on the stock until over $600,000 had been poured in by the stockholders. In 1881, when the stock was at $12 a share, the stock manipulators concluded that the rich Bodie veins did not extend into the Mono, and decided to save themselves by whispering the rumor that "Mono has struck it." Hundreds of people, who thought they alone had received this inside information, eagerly bought stock. When my mother heard about it, she invested her $1,500 savings account, and advised me to do the same, with the $600 that I had saved for my education. As soon as the insiders had unloaded all the stock they could on the public, the price of the shares began to fall rapidly; they dropped from $12 to practically nothing in a very short time. Needless to say, my mother and I never realized a penny from our gamble.

The sensational side of life in Bodie was the most interesting, and I have dwelt a great deal upon that, but there was another strongly contrasting life—that of the good women of the town. Most of the men that went to Bodie were single, but nevertheless, there were, in fact, more wives and children than one would expect to find in such a place. These women, as a rule, had lived in other mining camps, and many of them, like their husbands, were of a superior type. They, too, were notable for their breadth of view, warm heartedness, sociability, and for their good works. In the midst of all the tumult and recklessness, they lived quiet, uneventful, and thoroughly good lives. It would be difficult to find a finer type than those old-time mining camp women. A few of them had been friends in earlier days, and the conditions at Bodie drew them closer together than ever before. They devised practically all of the social events of the camp. It was remarkable how much they were able to accomplish in the way of getting up theatrical performances, dances, suppers, Sunday School picnics, sleighing parties, and other diversions. Amusements were few and simple, and, as such, all the more enjoyable. A very close relationship grew among those women, just as it had among the men.

One of the remarkable things about Bodie; in fact, one of the striking social features of all mining camps in the West, was the respect shown, even by the worst characters, to the decent women and children. Some of the best families in town lived in the immediate neighborhood of Chinatown and the red-light district, and the women and children could not move out of their homes without passing saloons and all sorts of terrible places. Yet, I do not recall of every hearing of a respectable woman or young girl being, in any manner, insulted or even accosted by the hundreds of dissolute characters that were everywhere. In part, this was due to the respect that depravity pays to decency, and also, to the knowledge that sudden death would follow any such action.

Mining camp life had a very unfavorable effect upon the boys as they grew into manhood. The example set by their elders could not have been worse, and the doors to every kind of dissipation were always wide open. Whereby, the good women and the girls, on the other hand, were able to live their lives apart, respected and

The Bodie & Benton Railway station, at Bodie, was built on a stone foundation. It has withstood the heavy storms and high winds which have buffeted the hilltop above Bodie. The first floor contained the depot and offices, while upstairs was a sitting room and four small bedrooms. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

revered. I can recall, with deep satisfaction, the sweet, modest girls I went to school with.

Nothing draws people together like hardships and a feeling of mutual dependence. There you are forced to rely upon one another for all your pleasures, and when you are even more dependent in times of sickness and sorrow. A type of relationship develops that city people could never imagine.

Living conditions in Bodie were the crudest and most primitive, but oh, they had that kindly human feeling, helpfulness, and good fellowship! People were drawn together as I never have seen anywhere else. A friend in Bodie was a friend for life.

It was a small, congested, wide-open town, and people lived and did as they pleased, without any pretense. Their lives were open and known to every man, woman and child. Everybody knew when what woman was living with what man, and they eagerly discussed the sensational news of the day. Gossip was one of the features of everyday life. Yet, people were generous in their judgments; usually making liberal allowances. The absence of meanness, pettiness, and narrowness of mind was one of the striking manifestations of the mining camp spirit.

It has always seemed to me that one learned more about human nature in a mining camp, in a few years, than could be acquired in a lifetime in a city. There, one saw the human animal in the raw; living boldly, no pretense or shame—and yet, on the whole, very admirable. Taking them just as they were, their virtues greatly outweighed their vices. Their sins were mostly against themselves, as their better nature showed in their attitude toward others. Somehow, all of the people—even those without the pale of mining camp respectability—showed some admirable traits. Ordinary men would become transformed in that atmosphere, taking upon themselves, for the time at least, some of the qualities of the greater spirits.

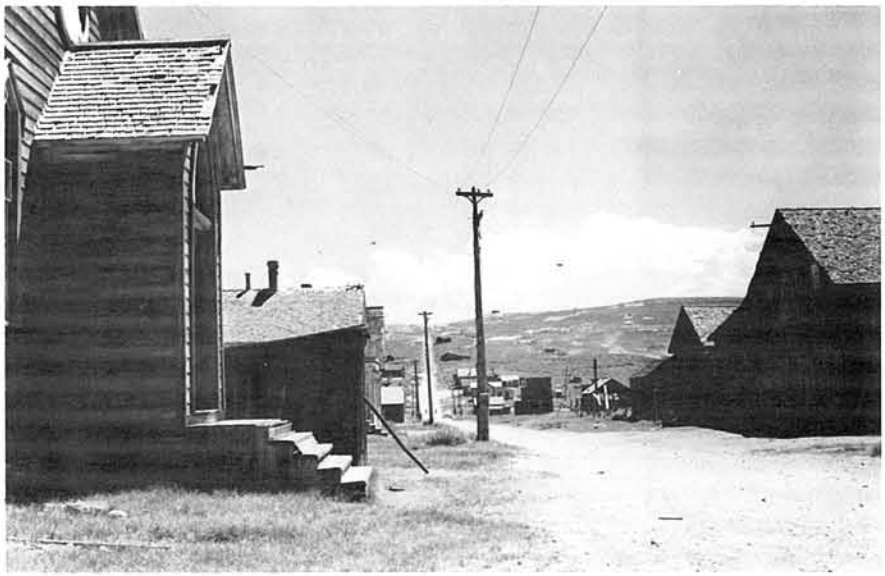
Irregardless of the unfavorable living conditions at Bodie, people found their lives full of interest and enjoyment.

A spirit of youthful enthusiasm animated everybody, similar to people who have embarked on a great adventure.

All had great expectations of one kind or another—chiefly in the outcome of some mines.

Genuine good fellowship and a spirit of mutual helpfulness characterized the time; in case of need, people not only gave freely of their means, but also of themselves.

People were not only liberal in their dealings, but broad and generous in their views; their was no intolerance, littleness, or hypocrisy.



A ghostly street in Bodie on a cold September day in 1969. At the left, stands the Methodist Church built in 1882. The money to support the church was collected by a clever fund raiser who got most of it from brothels and saloons. — *Hugh Tolford Collection*

Freedom and independence were in the air; the absence of conventionalities sweetened human intercourse.

The days were filled with zest and excitement: the news of the mines, the rise and fall of stocks, and the sensations of the camp, following one another in quick succession, kept the interest of the people always at high pitch. Monotony was unknown.

People found Bodie so intensely human and interesting that, notwithstanding the hardships, and the ultimate failure of all their hopes, in after years, they always spoke of it with enthusiasm.

Bodie was the great episode in the life of everyone that was fortunate enough to be there in the palmy days.

Editor's Note

When the Smith manuscript came in, I read it and believed it should be published. I looked in our roster and could not find any Grant H. Smith listed. The envelope had no return address, but it was mailed from Los Angeles. I took it upon myself to publish it, and asked Hugh Tolford for photos. He read the manuscript and also enjoyed it. His question was, "Who is this guy?" I stated I had no idea and explained how I came by it. "Name does sound familiar," Hugh said, "Let's see if I can't find out who he is."

Hugh first looked in *Who's Who in the West* and found out that Grant Horace Smith was born in Sutter Creek, April 13, 1865. He lived in Bodie from 1883-1888, was a school teacher at Battle Mountain 1889-1890, admitted to the Nevada bar in 1890, practiced law in Salt Lake City from 1890-1908, and was a mining attorney in 1908 in San Francisco. He remained in close contact with the Comstock, acting as an attorney for a number of the mines. Ten years of research brought forth a voluminous manuscript entitled *The History of the Comstock Lode 1850-1920,* a political and social history, in particular the life history of the Comstock's outstanding character, John W. Mackay.

Grant H. Smith was more than qualified to write of his life experiences and his interest in Bodie. We also thank the one who sent in the manuscript to the Los Angeles Corral.

Present day view of the last remaining building at Camp Drum, later Drum Barracks. — *William C. Johnston*

Life in Los Angeles During the Civil War

by William C. Johnston

It was Saturday morning, April 15, 1865. At 9:20 A.M., the telegraph started clicking in the little telegraph office in Los Angeles' Temple Block. The operator, slightly bored after the momentous news of Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia on Palm Sunday, April 9, routinely began writing the message. Before he was half through, his face turned ashen.

"President Lincoln and Secretary Seward were assassinated in Washington last night. The president died this morning; Seward still alive but not expected to live."

During the Civil War, Los Angeles had been "the capital of Secesh*" in the West. The defeat of the Confederacy had left a bitter taste in the mouths of many Anglo citizens of Los Angeles. But not all of them.

That morning, Dr. John S. Griffin, a dedicated southerner who was co-owner with Benjamin "Don Benito" Wilson, of the Rancho San Pasqual—now Pasadena, San Marino and Arcadia—was visiting Harris Newmark.

"While we were seated together by an open window in the dining room" Newmark wrote later, "a man named Kane ran by on the street, shouting out the momentous news that Abraham Lincoln had been shot! Griffin, a staunch southerner, was on his feet instantly, cheering for Jeff Davis. He gave evidence, indeed, of great mental excitement, and soon seized his hat and rushed for the door, hurrahing for the Confederacy. In a flash, I realized that Griffin would be in awful jeopardy if he reached the street in that unbalanced condition, and by main force I held him back, convincing him at last of his folly. In later years the genial doctor frankly admitted that I had undoubtedly saved him from certain death."

This fascinating vignette of California history was described in John W. Robinson's book "Los Angeles in Civil War Days 1860-65," published privately by Dawson's, the famous low-key history book store on Larchmont Boulevard in Los Angeles. Dawson's published only 300 copies and I feel fortunate to own one of them.

Someone once wrote—probably an accountant—that more "what if" books have been written about the American Civil War than any other subject except the Bible. If the South had

*A term used in Southern California for secessionists.

won the Civil War, or at least been allowed to secede and had been able to capture Southern California, Los Angeles would have become a major west coast city long before it finally did.

In 1861, Los Angeles had a population of 4,399. Most of the English speaking citizens had come from the southern slave states. Northern California was the opposite. That was because the paths of least resistence across the nation were straight lines to the west. Immigrants from the north went north; those from the south flowed south. You can imagine how Angelenos—whether they were thinking persons or just drunks hanging around a bar in the Plaza—reacted to every Northern action to restrict the spread of slavery.

Even today, the died-in-the-wool Southerner says that it was not a matter of slavery; it was a matter of states' rights. And, no question, states' rights was a major factor in the tragic course that these new United States of America drifted into. Northerners said that there was nothing in the Constitution that sanctioned slavery or the right of a state to secede. Southerners replied that there was nothing in the Constitution that prohibited slavery or secession, and besides, all powers that were not specifically given to the Federal government were retained by the states.

By the late 1850's, tension in Los Angeles was as high as the skies used to be in those pre-smog days. Southerners in Los Angeles believed that Northern Californians, who were sympathetic to the North, had too much power in the State Assembly. Plans were made to split the state in two. The northern part of the state would be known as "California." The southern part would be called—would you believe?—"Colorado."

In those days, California was a state and Colorado wasn't even a territory. In fact, its few inhabitants were talking about becoming the state of Franklin. By then, California had clout. Not only was it the newest state, it was one of the richest states in the Union—thanks to its gold fields. It had enough influence in Congress to make the new name stick. The state we now call "Colorado" probably would have had to settle for "El Dorado."—or, perhaps just plain "Dorado."

"The idea of splitting California was popular in the southern counties, where feeling was strong that San Francisco unfairly dominated the state government." Robinson wrote.

"In February 1859, Los Angeles Assemblyman Andres Pico introduced a resolution to create the 'Territory of Colorado' out of the five southern counties...the legislature approved the bill in April and called for a vote...the measure was passed with an overwhelming margin in the September vote...but because of the growing national crisis and the Civil War, the plan was killed in Congress. Were it not for the Civil War, California would very likely be in two parts today."

When the Civil War began in April 1861, California was one of the roughest, toughest states in the Union. You might say that murder, robbery, and lynching were social pastimes. One-third of the Golden State's citizens came from slave-holding states. Most of the latter lived in the Los Angeles area.

"Los Angeles was an overwhelmingly Democratic town in the years preceding the Civil War," Robinson wrote. "...the drift of the Southern States toward secession was greeted with sympathy and understanding by a large part of the local citizenry."

The study of the Civil War has been a hobby of mine for many years, probably because, as a boy, I remember hearing my father and grandfather talk about my great grandfather, Joseph Collingwood, of Plymouth, Massachusetts, who was company commander of H Company, 18th Infantry, Massachusetts Volunteers. He was wounded on December 13, 1862, at the Battle of Fredericksburg and died on an operating table the day before Christmas. Medical treatment in those days was sparse. If a man was shot in the belly, he was left to die. Captain Collingwood was shot in the leg. He lasted a few more weeks. With modern-day medical treatment, he undoubtedly would have survived.

The Civil War was a slaughter. Over 600,000 Americans were killed, more than in all of our other wars combined. How did we ever get into a position where a new nation, so full of hope and promise, was ready to fly apart after only 75 years of existence? Southerners said it was a matter of states' rights. Northerners blamed slavery. While there were many other factors, in a simplistic way, you could say that, besides slavery and states' rights, two persons caused the Civil War—Eli Whitney and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Until Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, slavery was dying in the south because it was

not economical. Too many mouths to feed and not enough income. Whitney's cotton gin revolutionized the south's economy. Now textile mills could use short staple cotton which could be grown almost anywhere in the south. With cheap slave labor, slaves suddenly became valuable. By 1860, cotton exports had increased to $191 million per year, 57 percent of TOTAL American exports. Cotton truly was king. Slaves—and the cotton gin—were what made it king.

Enter Harriet Beecher Stowe, who published her tremendous best seller *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. Carl Sandburg wrote in his *Abraham Lincoln, The War Years,* that the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came to the White House, and Lincoln, as she related, strode toward her with two outstretched hands and greeted, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war." *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had inflamed an already angry north, and created a bond among southerners, who thought northerners were oppressing them.

James Buchanan has gone down in history as one of our worst presidents—perhaps our worst. Yet, you must feel a little sympathy for the man. Only two days after he was inaugurated as president on March 4, 1857, Chief Justice Roger Tanney delivered the famous Dred Scott decision which said that because a black was an inferior person, he could not become a citizen and thus could not sue for his freedom. It also said the Congress could not forbid slavery in any state—north or south—because slaves were property and the Constitution protected property.

My, how times have changed!

When the Civil War began, Los Angeles and California weren't even the tail wagging the dog. The Civil War could have fought and won—or lost, depending upon your viewpoint—without any help from the Far West.

In 1860, most Angelenos spoke Spanish—even the Gringos. The American coterie in Los Angeles had come, for the most part, from Texas and the southern states east of the Mississippi River. Los Angeles was a wide-open cow town, with a high rate of crime, violence, and drunken brawls. Sound familiar today? Murder was so commonplace that unless the victim was someone of importance, the crime received only fleeting attention in the press. Justice often consisted of necktie parties, sans trials, and hosted by vigilantes.

The big cattle ranches still were in existence, many now owned by Americans like Abel Stearns, the Yankee who came to California in the 1820's, married Arcadia Bandini and became the largest landowner in Southern California, with several hundred thousand acres in his Rancho Los Alamitos, Las Bolsas and Los Coyotes, among his fabulous properties. Others were "Juan Largo" Temple, owner of Rancho Los Cerritos, Benjamin "Don Benito" Wilson and Dr. John S. Griffin, owners of Rancho San Pasqual and William Workman, owner of Rancho La Puente. Wilson, by the way, was the grandfather of Old Blood and Guts, General George S. Patton, Jr., of World War II fame.

Los Angeles had two newspapers—both in favor of the south—the Los Angeles *Star* and the semi-weekly *Southern News.* Henry Hamilton, the owner of the *Star,* was "outspoken and frequently vitriolic" in his political opinions.

Many of the leading citizens were natives of slave states—Wilson, Dr. Griffen, William Wolfskill, Benjamin Hayes, Dr. James B. Winston, J. Lancaster Brent and Colonel E.J.C. Kewen. Kewen's wife was given the famous El Molino Viejo (The Old Mill) by her father for only one dollar and "his natural love and affection," and the Kewens lived in what is now the California Historical Society's Southern California headquarters in San Marino from 1860 to 1879. Kewen was a very vocal supporter of the South, so much so that he was arrested and sent to Alcatraz Prison where he remained until he was bailed out by his friends, who then elected him an assemblyman to Sacramento.

Abraham Lincoln was elected as a minority president. South Carolina already had served notice that if Lincoln became president, the Palmetto State was packing its bags and seceding from the Union. On December 20, 1860, more than a month after Lincoln was elected, South Carolina did secede. In those days, there was a period of limbo from November to early March before the new president was inaugurated.

During those fateful four months, the hand-wringing James Buchanan allowed his Secretary of War, James B. Floyd, a Virginian, to send almost everything but *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (which probably was already there) to the U.S. Army installations in the South. By early March 1861, when Lincoln took the oath of office as President of the United States, six southern states had left

the Union.

Never in the history of this nation has a president entered office with such a crisis!

In California, the turmoil was tremendous. The governor, John G. Downey (as well as two prior governors) was a southern sympathizer. Many members of the Assembly and Supreme Court were strongly in favor of "secesh." The majority of Californians, however, wanted to preserve the Union and Downey and his friends had to go along with a pro-Union program.

For the Union, California was a prize worth keeping. Not only did it have a strategic location on the Pacific Coast, it had GOLD! "California's financial aid to the Union was no minor matter," Leo P. Kibby wrote in his book *California, the Civil War and the Indian Problem,* "...during the years 1861 and 1864 gold shipments from the port of San Francisco were approximately $185 million or an average of over $46 million per year for each year of the war." And that was in 1860's dollars!

After Fort Sumter surrendered on April 14, 1861, the split was complete. Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers. Reluctantly, Downey called for 5,000 volunteers to protect California and the Union.

Robinson wrote: "Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers and a naval blockade to subdue the south unleashed a torrent of abuse from the Los Angeles *Star.* 'In the clash of arms, the American Constitution has perished... instead of a Federal Government composed of a legislature, judicial and executive department, we find the whole power of government seized by ONE MAN, and exercised as irresponsibly as by the Czar of Russia.' "

Until Sumter surrendered, hundreds of U.S. Army officers were on the fence. They wanted to stay in the Union, but in those days, regular army officers (southerners especially) placed their states on a pedestal. Robert E. Lee, then a lieutenant colonel, waited until the last minute. When Virginia finally seceded, he resigned his commission and returned to Virginia. Later, he was appointed a major general in the Confederate Army.

His former boss, Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston, had similar emotions. Born in Kentucky, Johnston considered himself a Texan. When Texas seceded, he resigned as commanding general of the Department of the Pacific in San Francisco and left for Los Angeles. Johnston's wife was a sister of Dr. John S. Griffin, who has already been mentioned as a co-owner with Benjamin Wilson of Rancho San Pasqual.

Robinson tells about Johnston's last night in Los Angeles. Johnston had made plans to join a party of southern sympathizers to sneak through the Federal lines and get back to Richmond. Jefferson Davis, the Confederate president, was a close friend of Johnston's, and as a former Secretary of War, he considered Johnston an outstanding soldier in the U.S. Army. The night before Johnston's group was to leave Los Angeles, Johnston and his wife attended a farewell dinner at the home of Captain Winfield Scott Hancock, the only Union officer then stationed in Los Angeles.

One of the great ironies of military life is that at any given moment in history, there are hundreds of military leaders who could do as good a job in battle as any of this nation's great military heroes did—men like Washington, Grant, Lee, Pershing and Eisenhower. The difference is that they were not lucky, if you consider being in a major war lucky. The men at the dinner—all long time 6th infantry friends—were about to have their major war.

Robinson quoted from a letter: "It was a mournful gathering. All were endeavoring to conceal, under smiling exteriors, hearts that were filled with sadness over the sundering of life-long ties."

Major Lewis Armistead, with tears streaming down his face, presented his new major's uniform to Hancock, then turned to Mrs. Hancock and handed her a small satchel of personal belongings, requesting that they be sent to his family in the event of his death.

By great coincidence, Lewis Armistead died leading Pickett's charge at Gettysburg "within a few hundred feet of Hancock's command post on Cemetery Ridge." By then, Hancock was a major general in command of the Union Army's II Corps at Gettysburg. Two others at the dinner party, Richard Garnett and a man whose name is not now known, also were killed in the same charge. The sole survivor among those five southern friends at Hancock's house was George Pickett. His brigade was almost totally shattered.

When I toured Gettysburg, our tour guide—the chief historian of the National Park Service—led us on a walk across that one-mile wide field

over which Pickett charged. It is a treeless, open farm area, rising slightly toward the Union side, with no cover. As a former World War II combat infantry second lieutenant, I could feel the hair rise on the back of my neck when we reached the ridge. I could almost see the Yankee musket barrels and artillery aimed directly at me and I wondered how anyone could have survived that senselessly heroic charge.

Albert Sidney Johnston reached Richmond in late 1861, after harrowing experiences evading Union troops, and was made one of only five full generals in the Confederacy by Jefferson Davis. In April 1862, Johnston surprised U.S. Grant at Pittsburg Landing, on the Tennessee River, near Shiloh Church and almost defeated the future hero of the Union. Unfortunately, Johnston was wounded in the leg on the first day of the two-day battle and quickly bled to death. Some Southern historians say the South would have won not only at Shiloh but the Civil War had Johnston lived; others say the battle would have come out the way it did—a draw—and that, despite Jefferson Davis' high opinion of Johnston, he just wasn't the superman who could have given the South ultimate victory.

California mustered about 16,000 soldiers during the Civil War, but few of them ever saw combat in the East. A primary reason, according to Robinson, was that unionists in California were afraid the secessionists would take over the entire state unless a large military force was kept here. Many of them were sent to Los Angeles to keep order.

Los Angeles' first military camp was named Camp Fitzgerald, in honor of an officer who had died at nearby Fort Tejon. It was situated at the base of the hill between First and Second streets on Fort Street, now Broadway. Today, the Los Angeles *Times* has a large parking garage in the area.

Later, as more soldiers arrived, Fort Fitzgerald was moved two miles south on San Pedro Street. The site is now the Los Angeles School District bus depot, close to the Santa Monica Freeway and east of the Harbor Freeway.

The Fort Tejon troops had brought camels (remember the WWII radio jingle, "The camels are coming, hurrah, hurrah"), which were kept at Hancock's headquarters (and home) at Third and Main, until the stench and noise became unbearable. Well now, how'd you like to have a herd of camels in your neighbor's back yard? Third and Main, today, is near the new Ronald Reagan State Office Building now under construction. Later, camps were opened at Camp Drum, at San Pedro and at Camp Latham near Ballona Creek in today's Culver City.

Camp Drum, today, is a two-story frame house in the midst of a large blue-collar residential area only a block or two from the Phineas Banning mansion and park. In those days, Camp Drum was the only building in a vast land area. You look at it today and you wonder "where is the camp?" The building is a very interesting relic of life in the 1860's. The camp was a base and training ground for several thousand Californians who learned which were their right and left feet and how to do an about face. If you've never been there, it is worth a fun visit.

Robinson wrote: "Of the three wartime governors, John C. Downey was the only one charged with a degree of disloyalty to the Union cause.... one charge came from 65 businessmen in San Francisco, asserting that Downey had made appointments which revealed sympathy for and cooperation with those who were plotting to sever California from her allegiance to the Union."

Downey did enforce the laws, even though he felt that the war's aim had shifted from one of preserving the Union to one of social change and instant emancipation for 4,000,000 slaves. His successor, in 1862, was Leland Stanford, a strong unionist and the founder of Stanford University.

Kibby wrote that "a majority of the present state officers were undisguised and avowed secessionists...that ⅜ths of the citizens of California were natives of slaveholding states who were never without arms, and that they devoted their full time to plotting, scheming and organizing."

An example of the overwhelming secessionist attitude in Los Angeles during the war, Robinson said, was that Los Angeles County provided more than 250 fighting men to the Confederate Army.

"In contrast, according to Major Horace Bell, only two local men actually fought in the east on the Union side, Bell himself and Charles Jenkins. And Jenkins was obliged to travel to San Francisco before he dared enlist in the Union Army, so strong was local anti-Union sentiment at the war's outbreak."

Robinson discussed Don Benito Wilson, for

whom Mount Wilson is named.

Benjamin Wilson, former Los Angeles mayor and major land owner in Southern California, was a political enigma to his friends. His Civil War loyalties were, at best, ambiguous. He and Phineas Banning supported the Union cause by donating the large tract near New San Pedro for Camp Drum. Yet, his sympathies and those of his second wife (and grandmother of George S. Patton), southern-born Margaret Hereford, were known to lie with the Confederacy.

An interesting sidebar to the Los Angeles Civil War scene was the so-called Battle of Santa Catalina Island. On January 1, 1864, a detachment from Drum Barracks steamed across the San Pedro Channel and took possession of the island. All civilians—mostly a handful of gold miners—were ordered off the island by February 1. The occupation set off wild rumors and speculation that has lasted for years.

There were rumors that the island was to house traitors or prevent Confederate plots. Robinson discovered through research "that the Department of the Pacific wanted to use the island as an Indian reservation. The Klamath, Redwood and Trinity Indians of the Humboldt District...had for some time been in a state of unrest and would not remain on their army-designated reservations...There would have been consternation in Southern California had it been known that the army wanted to colonize the nearby island with hostile Indians recently on the warpath."

Nothing ever happened. The idea was dropped. Although the army never gave an explanation (sound familiar?), the soldiers moved off the island on September 14, 1864, just as mysteriously as they had arrived.

By early 1865, even die-hard secessionists could see that the South was losing. For awhile, a number of Los Angeles secessionists talked about immigrating to Mexico, where they would establish a colony in Baja and offer their allegiance to Emperor Maximilian, the puppet Mexican ruler placed there by Louis Napoleon III of France.

That plan "died aborning," which was just as well. In 1866, their friend, Maximilian, found himself staring into the barrels of a Mexican firing squad.

Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox on Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, brought wild jubilation to Northern California, but less than mild jubilation to Los Angeles. Feelings and hostility were so deep in Los Angeles that it took years before former friends would speak to each other. Robinson told of Major Horace Bell, one of the two locals who fought with the Union Army, complaining that his reception, when he returned home, was distinctly hostile.

"Old friends, with a few honorable exceptions such as Judge A.J. King and Colonel E.J.C. Kewen, turned their backs on me." Bell wrote later. "The idea, said they, of a Los Angeles man of your stamp fighting on the side of the blacks...!"

Time, as in all things, heals all wounds. As the years went by, many former friends became friends again and with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1876, the Great Land Boom began. Angelenos now became more concerned about making money than in re-fighting the Civil War. The great boom of the 1880's brought thousands of new residents and millions of dollars in new business. As President Calvin Coolidge said 50 years later, "The business of America is—business."

The Civil War started 130 years ago. Today, I can't imagine anyone believing in the theory of slavery. The idea of one man owning another human being is repugnant to our thinking. However, we have come full cycle in one respect. One hundred years ago the hotheads had turned their enthusiasm to growth. Today, the hotheads are pounding the drums for slow growth or no growth.

Perhaps the next Civil War will be between the no-growthers and the developers. Let's hope no one starts using guns again.

Monthly Roundup (continued). . .

Blacksmiths performed a variety of tasks, including some not ordinarily thought of as within their expertise. From the 15th to the 19th centuries they made medical instruments. They even pulled teeth!

Some famous names in American history worked as blacksmiths. George Washington spent some time at the anvil, sharpening plowshares. John Deere, a blacksmith, improved the plow by making it out of steel. When he died at age 86, in 1882, the company he founded was a major producer of farm equipment, which it still is. Another blacksmith, Thomas Davenport, developed the first electric motor. The famous Bowie knife, named for Jim Bowie, may have been made originally by a black blacksmith named Manuel. Gail Borden, inventor of condensed milk and Elmer's Glue, was the son of a blacksmith and helped his father in the shop. In modern times, firefighter Red Adair grew up in a blacksmith household. Other famous smiths include John Sutter, Peter Lassen, Paul Revere, and Julia Gordon Lowe, the founder of the Girl Scouts.

Miller, himself a blacksmith, got into the trade during the Great Depression. He told a number of interesting personal anecdotes about the blacksmith's life and the recent renewal of interest in their work. Blacksmithing today enjoys a revival among artists, craftsmen, and architectural designers.

December speaker Martin Ridge stands in front of the Los Angeles Corral's symbol "old Joe."

DECEMBER 1990 MEETING

Corral Member Martin Ridge spoke on "The Overland Trail in Western History," a "cardinal part of the Westering experience." Ridge described the Overland Trail as a historical experience rich in documentation, as the number of diary and letter collections about it are second only to the Civil War in volume. The trip was exceptional and different, and the travelers knew it. Ridge has edited Jesse A. Applegate's and Lavina Honeyman Porter's memoirs of life on the Overland Trail. Both memoirs reflect what their writers best remember about the experience. The hardships they endured are instructive. Lavina, for example, walked from Independence, Missouri to California, covering most of the distance while pregnant.

The Overland Trail was created by the people who moved west. It became the main passageway across the continent, used early by the Ashley-Henry party and Jedediah Smith in the 1820s. At first, from the early 1830s on, the immigrant trail went to Oregon with settlers and missionaries going there. Mountain men led the expeditions, and people like the Whitmans, Lees, and Applegates found it feasible to take wagons as far west as South Pass. West of the pass proved to be very difficult for wagon transport.

After 1841 California became a target for settlers, with the Bidwell-Bartleson and other family groups going west for land. The first wagons to make the overland trip successfully did so in 1844. Two years later, the Donner tragedy became one of stalled wagons and inaccurate guidebooks, a lesson in the fact that the trip offered potentially tragic pitfalls. In 1846 the Mormons used the Overland Trail to find an isolated area away from United States and Mexican control. They found it in northern Utah. The Mormons conducted the most successful of these early expeditions. Utah grew from almost no one to over 4,000 settlers in just a few years.

Trail life involved communities on the move, young families going west prior to the gold rush. On the trail women conceived, gave birth, nursed, and died. The travelers suffered all kinds of illnesses, cholera and Rocky Mountain Fever being especially serious. As a community these pioneers had to make some tough decisions: Church on Sunday, or move on and gain a day? Accidents happened, especially with guns. Near the end of the trail community life disintegrated as tempers grew short and equipment broke down. Taking the Overland Trail can today be seen as a heroic adventure, but those who took it did not feel particularly heroic, nor at times did they act that way.

Ridge recommended several books for anyone

interested in pursuing the topic. These include:

James Unrau, *The Plains Across.*

Irene Paden, *In the Wake of the Prairie Schooner.*

A.B. Guthrie, *The Way West.*

He also warned of a couple of books as botching the job of telling the story, including Emerson Hough's *Covered Wagon* and W.J. Ghent's *Road to Oregon.*

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

"Missions in the Mexican State of Queretaro" was Norman Neuerberg's topic for the January meeting.

JANUARY 1991 MEETING

Norman Neuerberg spoke to the Corral on "The Sierra Gorda Missions: A Little Known Chapter in Father Serra's Life." He described the Sierra Gorda missions in the Mexican State of Queretaro, where Father Serra did his first evangelical work after coming to the New World in 1749. Serra spent eight years at these missions. The churches he served, according to Neuerberg, were styled as "folk baroque"—a single bell tower, and an entrance with an elaborate facade. Many Franciscans who later went to Alta California spent time at the Sierra Gorda missions.

Neuerberg conducted a slide tour of the Sierra Gorda missions, based on his own trip to the district. His first stop was Bernal, on the site of a volcano. From Bernal he went into a desert region, then into the mountains to Pinal de Amores. Finally he reached Sierra Gorda, located in a tropical zone, the "Tierra Calienta." This trip, which he took by bus, lasted all day.

Once in the district Neuerberg visited San Miguel, oldest of the Sierra Gorda missions. All the missions were stripped of possessions during the 19th century but in recent years have been restored. The facades of the churches remain striking in appearance and worthy of study by ecclesiastical scholars. The saints' statuary was done in a folk art style, probably by Indians. Remnants of 18th-century decorations can be found under more recently placed whitewash. There is much evidence in the region of admiration for Father Serra, as statues of him are prominently displayed.

Because of a shortage of missionaries following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, secularization of the Sierra Gorda missions occurred in 1770. The missions declined afterward but, as Neuerberg demonstrated, they can still be visited today.

Corral Chips

C.M. Richard H. Dillon, that noted American history writer, is searching for information about early Napa Valley for his new book. The Napa Valley Heritage has commissioned Dillon to write a book that should include the early settlers, the Indians, and others who have contributed to the valley's heritage. Richard can be reached at 98 Alta Vista Venue, Mill Valley, California 94941.

Memorial services were held January 9, for Jack E. Sherwood, a local historian and former president of the San Marino Historical Society. Jack, the husband of Midge Sherwood, had been Sheriff of the Huntington Corral of Westerners.

Abe Hoffman spent a busy weekend in October. He flew to Reno for the Western History Association Conference where he gave a paper on *The Rebirth of Tumbleweeds,* and then returned on Saturday afternoon to present *William S. Hart on Location* for the Historical Society of Southern California meeting at the William S. Hart Park in Newhall (Santa Clarita). He also received an Award of Merit for 28 years of membership and service to the Historical Society of Southern

California.

C.M. Richard Olson was down from Walnut Creek to attend the Rendezvous. Dick was pleased to meet Iron Eyes Cody. He has been an active member in the San Francisco Corral for years.

Knapp's Rose Bowl Bronze

C.M. Tom Knapp, sculptor of Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico, was commissioned last spring by the Pasadena Tournament of Roses to design and produce a bronze sculpture to be used as the award given to new inductees into the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame. The bronze, a reproduction of a football player dressed in a uniform dating back to the 1920's and standing approximately 13 inches tall, was given to four inductees from 1989 and five named in 1990.

The Southwestern Mission Research Center publishes the SMRC-Newsletter which is a source of information on material published on the missions of the southwest. In the Fall 1990 issue, *Norman Neuerburg* was represented with two listings, one on the island of Mallorca, and the other *Earthquakes and the California Missions. Walt Wheelock* had two entries on Baja California missions, and one on Indian trade routes from Yuma to the Coast.

Looking at Lydia Pinkham: Quackery promoted cures that were 100 proof and addictive was the topic of the talk given by *Dr. Edward Harnagel* before the Huntington Corral of Westerners in January. The "C" section of the *Star-News* of Pasadena carried a story with a half page picture of Ed standing behind snake oil bottles while he is holding up a bottle of Magnetic Oil.

C.M. Ardis Manly Walker died Saturday January 19, 1991, after a short illness. He would have turned 90 years of age in April of this year. Ardis was the Kern River Valley's most famous citizen, a renowned poet, a former newspaper reporter, Justice Court judge and a Kern County Supervisor. He came from famous stock. His ancestors included William Manly, savior of the first party through Death Valley in 1849; Captain Joseph Reddeford Walker, the first white man to cross the Sierra Nevada at the southernmost pass, Walker Pass, in 1834, and famed gunfighters Newt and Tom Walker. At various times he attended some of our Corral meetings and the Rendezvous.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

In other Corral business, Mike Nunn, Craig Cunningham, and Dave Gillies have been promoted to Active Member status, and Bill Miller and Dick Noonan have moved from Corresponding to Associate.

EVERETT GORDON HAGER 1904-1990

Everett Hager was the Registrar of Marks and Brands of the Westerners for ten years. This covered a period of time, in that important position, that was far longer than anyone else had ever served. He was Deputy Sheriff in 1975 and Sheriff in 1976.

Everett Gordon Hager was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on April 7, 1904, and at 5:00 A.M., on December 7, 1990, he was killed by an automobile in Monterey Park. In accordance with his wishes, there was no formal service, and his ashes were scattered at sea. His executrix is his daughter-in-law, Shirley Hager.

Everett was the son of Arthur Hager. He had two brothers, Arnold and Westin, and five sisters; Dorothy, Marjorie, Eleanor, Grace and Eunice. As of his death in December 1990, all of the sisters survived him. Everett attended school in Worcester and took up the vocation of candy maker. He worked for Gilman & Moffitt making candy in the winter months, and in the summer he was a salesman. In 1922 and 1923, he was living in Hollywood with his brother Westin on Hollywood Boulevard. It is known that at least part of the time, while he was in Hollywood, he worked at the trade of candy maker. He later returned to Worcester, and there, in 1929, he married Margaret Ryan. During the depression years of the early 1930's, Everett made an overland trip by automobile to Southern California.

In 1943, during World War II, he was without a job and again traveled from Worcester to Los Angeles. He applied for work at the Los Angeles City Hall and passed the test. This was the beginning of his 31 year career with the City of Los Angeles. Margaret Ryan Hager died in November 1955. Margaret and Everett have two surviving sons: Robert A. and Everett Hager, Jr. There are seven grandchildren; Deborah, Ronald Scott, Marjorie Antonette, Teresa Lorraine, Alison Louise, Glen Michael, Everett Gordon, III and seven great grandchildren.

At his retirement in April 1974, Everett was Superintendent of the Terminal Island Treatment Plant. He made his work at Terminal Island more interesting by studying the history of the area. When he joined the Zamorano Club in 1964, he listed his interests as the harbors of Southern California, principally San Pedro and Long Beach from 1848-1965, and Los Angeles from 1900-1940. Also, the development of trade routes overland by sea to Southern California. (Hoja Volante No. 80)

On September 30, 1956, Everett Hager married Anna Marie Twohey. The reception was held in the home of Dorothy and Duncan Gleason. The Hagers resided in San Pedro at 2639 Peck Avenue. It was situated on the side of a steep hill, and had a panoramic view of San Pedro and Los Angeles harbors. Through the years, they assembled a notable collection of books, pamphlets, clippings and photographs. Everett and Anna Marie were generous in supplying information to historical writers and researchers. Many books acknowledge their assistance.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

Everett Gordon Hager

Until Anna Marie was incapacitated by a stroke, the two would regularly attend meetings and conferences of historical societies all over California and even extending as far as Tucson, Fort Worth, Portland, Oregon, and La Paz, Baja California.

Their special contribution was the compilation of indexes, including the publications of the Historical Society of Southern California, California Historical Society, *Touring Topics,* and *Westways.* They edited the Zamorano Index to the History of California by Hubert Howe Bancroft, and also the Index to the Westerners *Branding Iron.* This Index was helpful in compiling these notes. Anna Marie did much of the detail work, but Everett, through his encouragement and assistance, was an essential partner.

Everett Hager joined the Corral as a Corresponding Member in 1959 (when Glen Dawson was Sheriff). Everett arranged several boat tours of Los Angeles Harbor, when the Westerners were guests of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners. In 1962, he became an Active Member, and in 1987, an Honorary Member. He was President of the Thirty Year Club of San

Pedro in 1964, and on the Board of the Historical Society of Southern California in 1967. He was also an active participant in the San Pedro Historical Society as well as many other organizations.

Everett was a no-nonsense administrator, operating strictly by the book. In December 1975, Donald Duke wrote, "Our new Deputy Sheriff has every program lined up in advance. That guy must eat spinach three times daily to accomplish a feat like that." (Branding Iron 117)

In conclusion, a quote from Branding Iron 97 is appropriate, "The Corral owes a real debt to Everett Hager for the time and effort that he has put into his job. He keeps a remarkable and accurate set of books and statistics."

Westerner Everett Hager lived a long full life which encompassed lots of hard work, skill and great loyalty to all of us. Our hearts go out to Anna Marie.

Glen Dawson

ROBERT FRANCIS SCHERRER 1907-1991

Robert Francis Scherrer was born on a farm at Mendon, Illinois, March 2, 1907. Mendon, a town of about 600 people, was located on the western border of Iowa. Bob's family owned a large corn farm, and his father was also an inventor of sorts. One of his inventions was a machine that would pick the ears of corn directly off the stock. Unfortunately, he was caught in the machine and died two months before Bob was born.

His mother, Clara, attempted to run the farm for a couple of years, but finally sold it in 1909. They moved to Fort Madison, Illinois, which is about 30 miles north of Mendon and also situated on the Iowa border. Since Fort Madison was on the main line of the Santa Fe's Los Angeles to Chicago main line, it followed that his mother, seeking to make a living, became a Harvey Girl in the Harvey House station restaurant. In the meantime, however, his mother's sister, a Mrs. Elizabeth Andrews, had moved to Southern California and was living at 8th and Normandie, behind the Ambassador Hotel. In the correspondence between the two sisters, she would write and tell of the glories of Southern California. It was not long before she enticed Bob's mother to make the move to California.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

Robert Francis Scherrer

In 1910, at the tender age of four, they arrived in Los Angeles and took up residence with the sister. As I understand it, Bob's aunt was either divorced or her husband had died, but, in any case, she was a single woman when they arrived.

His mother got a job at the La Grande Station (Santa Fe) Harvey House. There she met and began to date a drummer, and in due course she married him. Bob, however, did not like him and so remained with his aunt. Eventually, his stepfather was transferred back east, and it proved to be the last time he saw his mother.

In 1919, Mrs. Andrews, Bob's aunt, purchased a small home at 3334 Lowell Avenue, in Los Angeles, on the Alhambra border. Since, at the time, this location was basically out in the country, Bob attended the closest school which was Lincoln High in Lincoln Heights. He took a class in welding and found he liked it, so during the summer breaks he got a job welding. He graduated from Lincoln High in 1925.

Because of the proximity of Lincoln High to Lincoln Park, the home of the Selig Zoo, Bob was able to obtain a job at the zoo welding cages, etc. While still in their employment, another company who wintered there, the Axtel & Castalia Road Show gave him a job welding for them. It was his intention to join the show when they went back on the road. During the time it took before leaving, he found a welding job at Gilmore Oil Company. His work location was at their Santa Fe Avenue/28th Street plant.

When World War II came, he avoided being drafted by joining the Navy SeaBees (same as the Army Corp of Engineers). They sent him to

Umaimsak Island, the end of the Aleutian Island chain of Alaska. The SeaBees were building a base, whereby an attack could be launched on Japan. It was an area that was fog bound ten months out of the year. This condition made the terrain dangerous, for if you fell in the water you would freeze to death before being discovered. He spent the entire war at Umaimsak Island.

Following the war, he returned to Los Angeles, and took on the responsibility of taking care of his aunt, the one who had cared for him in his early years. He went back to work at Gilmore Oil which, in 1947, had been absorbed by General Petroleum Corporation. They had been the company who supplied Gilmore Oil with gasoline. At the time, GP or Mobil was building a refinery at Torrance, so Bob went to work there. He soon became Welding Foreman. It was while employed there that the company doctor discovered Bob had diabetes. He retired in 1972.

Bob joined the Los Angeles Corral in 1972 as a Corresponding member and became an Active member in December 1975. His grubstake number is No. 157. For several years, he held the office of Historian and then was the Tallyman for another 10 years (maker of the roster). He was honored at the 1989 Rendezvous along with Henry Welcome and Dutch Holland.

When his avid interest in history developed or when he began to collect books is not known to this writer. But he was, indeed, a book collector! Every room in his Lowell Street home was buried with books. Once 4-wheel vehicles became available, he quickly purchased one and headed out into the desert just to poke around. He went on many a 4-wheel safari, and made several junkets over the Mojave Road.

His library consisted of mostly Southern California titles. It was comprised of books on ghost towns, old roads, mining, railroads, missions and what have you.

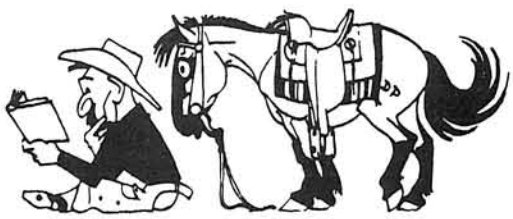
I first met Robert Scherrer when he came to the office of Golden West Books for the purpose of buying a railroad book. Through the years, he was a religious customer of Dawson's Book Shop when it was located on Figueroa at 6th Street, as well as when it was moved to Larchmont Boulevard.

Bob's home was so full of books that there was literally no room to walk down the hallway, and even the kitchen was used strictly for the storing of books. Obviously, as a consequence, he did not cook. As a result, he ate every meal out which, for a diabetic, is not conducive to keeping a regulated diet. As the years passed, he started to have more difficulty in maintaining his insulin balance, and on several occasions this was nearly his undoing. It was in 1988, while working on his car, that he had a heart attack and was taken to San Gabriel Hospital. They eventually put him in a rest home so he could get a proper diet. But time was not on his side, he had gone too long without proper care, and by now it was too late. He died in the hospital on January 21, 1991.

On his Westerner's biographical form, he said, "I am the last of the Scherrers."

Bob will be missed by all his fellow Westerners.

Donald Duke



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

A VISIT FROM FATHER AND OTHER TALES OF THE MOJAVE by Don Worcester. Texas A&M University Press, 1990. 96 pages. Illustrations. Cloth, $15.95. Available from Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843.

This small book proves that a skillful writer can say a lot in a few words. Although at times the style of writing may seem sparse, the author creates an atmosphere of talking to the reader in a straightforward way. There is an air of intimacy between writer and reader. Don Worcester, teacher and writer of western history, has recorded an unusual boyhood to manhood story.

When Worcester and his brother and sister were very young, the father simply left the family. The mother got a divorce, and she, then concentrated on making a career for herself and on supporting her children. She succeeded admirably in building a career, and she had the help of her parents in raising the children. They,

however, were only scraping out a meager living on an Antelope Valley homestead. It is life on this homestead in the rural Southern California of the 1920's and 1930's, without indoor plumbing and electricity, that embodies most of the book.

Worcester tells, uncomplainingly, about a childhood involving only the barest of necessities, supplied by humorless and strict grandparents, and of schooling obtained only through traveling long distances, including many hours of walking and busing. Enjoyment and fun came from reading everything available in a primitive rural branch library, and from riding horses abandoned by farmers who had to give up their Antelope Valley homesteads due to a ruinous drought. Nevertheless, this was atypical growing up, even for the depression years of the late twenties and early thirties. It is a marvel that with such an underprivileged childhood, this much respected and awarded teacher and writer developed.

Siegfried G. Demke

ROWDY JOE LOWE: *Gambler with a Gun,* by Joseph G. Rosa and Waldo E. Koop. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. 188 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $19.95. Available from University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019.

Joseph Lowe embodied a certain folklore of the Wild West, a time of lawlessness and search for tranquility in an unsettled frontier. Rowdy Joe, an adventurer with vagabond credentials, traversed the midwestern plains in the colorful post-Civil War years of guns and gamblers. Herein, Joseph G. Rosa has penned the life of Rowdy Joe Lowe, a biographical sketch based primarily on research compiled by a Kansas historian, Waldo E. Koop.

Rosa captures the context of the westward movement through Lowe's trek from Kansas and Texas, to the Rockies. The boom towns Rowdy Joe inhabited are characterized in the historic perspective of cattle ranching and mining, and as waystations within the larger scheme of westward migration. Lowe participated in that journey amidst the legendary icons of his time. The reader touches elbows with Billy the Kid, Bat Masterson, Edward T. Beard, and Wyatt Earp.

Joseph G. Rosa has considered the gunslinger and myth in past studies, including two incisive works on Wild Bill Hickok. Yet, these past efforts have provided the author with an advantage in research, providing a variety of secondary and primary sources. Lowe is a relatively minor figure of the period. A reconstruction of his life demands painstaking investigation into state archives, court records, and newspaper references. Both Koop and Rosa demonstrate their professional skills in chronicling events and providing insight into the motivations behind Lowe's actions.

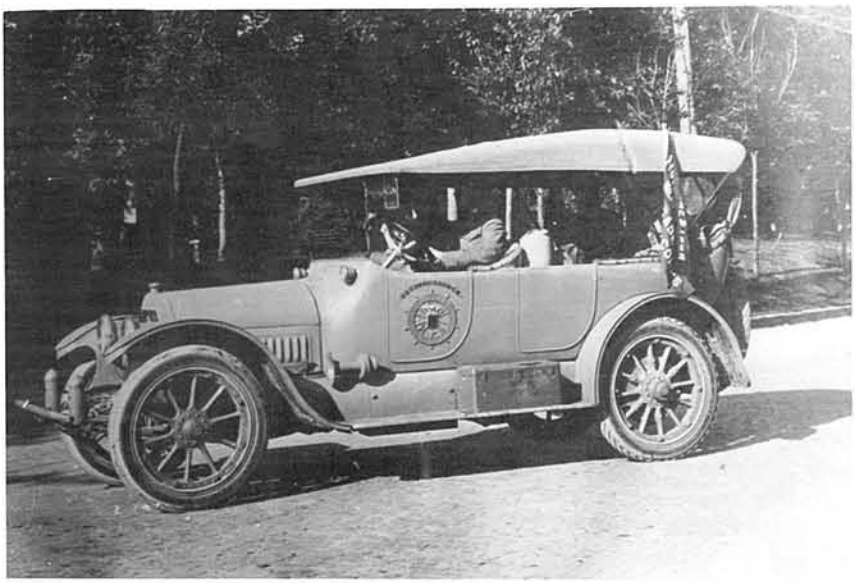
Rowdy Joe Lowe presents both a sympathetic and balanced assessment of Lowe's outlaw reputation. The author tempers any legendary feats assigned Lowe with reasoned analysis. Several contemporary assertions of brutality are dispelled as exaggerations. Indeed, Rowdy Joe often did not carry a gun, ride with a bandit gang, or wantonly shoot innocent victims in saloon-style brawls. An unassuming figure, volatile when challenged, Lowe used force only when necessary.

This neatly bound edition is meticulously footnoted for the readers convenience. The 16 photos and illustrations add visual credibility, although the inclusion of maps that plotted Lowe's movements would have complemented the text. Several lengthy quotes (88 blocked, small-print references in 171 pages) make for tedious reading. Most of these inclusions are newspaper accounts that could be condensed and summarized within the narrative. Nevertheless, these stylistic annoyances do not appreciably detract from an otherwise well-documented and objective biography. Rowdy Joe Lowe, a man of many professions and many territories, offers insight into the nomadic and unruly aspects of the westward movement.

Ronald C. Woolsey

George Huntington's account of the James-Younger gang's attempt to rob the Northfield, Minnesota bank, first published in 1895, has been reprinted by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. ROBBER AND HERO: *The Story of the Northfield Bank Raid* is now available in paperback at the very reasonable price of $5.95 from the Press, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101...

Abe Hoffman



The 1915 Cadillac V-8 command car as used on the 1915 Motor Convoy to California. This touring car was slightly modified for the trek. — *Northwestern Military/Naval Academy*

A 1915 Motor Convoy to California

by Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.

Adventurers began driving horseless carriages across the United States before 1905. They did this over "roads" which were unimproved and unmarked, mostly old-time covered wagon trails.

The horseless carriage had evolved into the motorcar by 1910, and many pioneer automobilists were attempting the transcontinental trip, and surprisingly a number of them made it. Use of motor cars and trucks rapidly expanded and with it a desire for more and improved roads. The real challenge to the transcontinental motorist was the drive from the Midwest to the Pacific Coast.

In 1911, Carl G. Fisher, the founder of the legendary Indianapolis Motor Speedway, conceived the idea for an organization to promote, mark and improve a transcontinental highway. The group proposed the coast-to-coast Lincoln Highway in 1912, and by 1913 they became known as the Lincoln Highway Association, receiving support from automobile manufacturers and private motorists.

Without any governmental support, the Association began work on the Lincoln Highway, using only funds from its members. In July 1913, an automobile industry-backed caravan of motorcars and trucks, with 70 people aboard, traveled the route from Brazil, Indiana, to San Francisco in 34 days. It was not long after this trek that so many motorists were successfully making the trip, it ceased to be newsworthy, but it was still an adventure, requiring skill, stamina, and careful preparation.

Although the Lincoln Highway was in use by 1914, it still needed publicity in order to promote some governmental support. Even though motoring magazines and newspapers reported on trips taken over it, something more was required to achieve a wider interest. What was needed was a spectacular "stunt."

The year after the Panama Canal was completed in 1915, exhibitions and celebrations were held to commemorate this engineering marvel. Panama-Pacific Expositions were held on the Pacific Coast at San Francisco and San Diego, both heavily promoted by California tourism interests.

This was perfect timing for a Lincoln Highway

publicity stunt, if one could be achieved that would draw the desired attention. Colonel Royal P. Davidson, head of Northwestern Military and Naval Academy of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, was drawn into it, but just how and by whom is unknown.

Colonel Davidson's cadets began using Cadillac motorcars in a series of widely publicized, successful, endurance demonstrations. One of the most advertised of these events was the completion of the rugged 3,000 mile Glidden Tour, by eight cadets, in two Cadillacs.

The spring of 1915 found Colonel Davidson and his cadets preparing a fleet of eight Cadillacs for a run from Chicago to the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition, and then on to the one at San Diego. One of the cars involved was the first they had ever procured, a 1910 four-cylinder model, which had 85,000 miles on it!! Two of them were the same 1911 four-cylinder cars, which had made the Glidden Tour run. The other five were brand new 1915 Cadillac V-8's, a model that had just been introduced.

Although the connection is unknown, Cadillac was obviously very interested in promoting their new V-8 model, and the transcontinental trip was a sure way to do it. Cadillac's California distributor, Don Lee, had attended Northwestern Military and Naval Academy, and the Academy's excellent success record with the Cadillac must have helped their promotion.

One of the 1915 Cadillac V-8's was a standard touring model "officer's car," but Northwestern Military and Naval Academy modified all the rest into special military vehicles. One was made into a machine-gun armored car, the first to ever be built in the United States. Another became an ambulance-cum-medical aid vehicle, and one was outfitted as a field kitchen with electric cooking facilities, powered by an on-board generator. The last of the five V-8's was a "wireless-equipped" general purpose car. They also made one of the three 'old fours' into a second "wireless-equipped" machine, and the other two were armed general purpose cars. Equipped and loaded, each weighed in at a thousand or so pounds, more than the weight of a regular passenger Cadillac.

The hard-working cadets, who had modified the machines, had them all running in tip-top condition by the time of the trip, and they, also, had been well-trained to keep them that way.

Colonel Davidson's "military convoy" was manned by the colonel, himself, an officer observer, who had been assigned by the U.S. Army, and 30 of the Northwestern's cadets. They officially started the trek from the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, on June 10, 1915.

For the first ten days the cars battled through "the worst summer rain storms the middlewest had seen in 20 years." The mud on the primitive roads often came up to the cars' running boards, but they were still able to get through without outside help.

They followed the route of the Lincoln Highway: Chicago to Omaha, Nebraska; to Denver, Colorado; to Cheyenne, Wyoming; and then across Great South Pass in Wyoming; to Salt Lake City, Utah; across Nevada to Reno; over the Sierra Nevada to California; then to Sacramento, and on to Oakland.

On July 14th, the convoy took the ferry across the bay to San Francisco, and then drove through the city to their assigned camping place at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Their trip, despite the many interested spectators and local celebrations along the way, had taken them over 2,000 miles in 35 days.

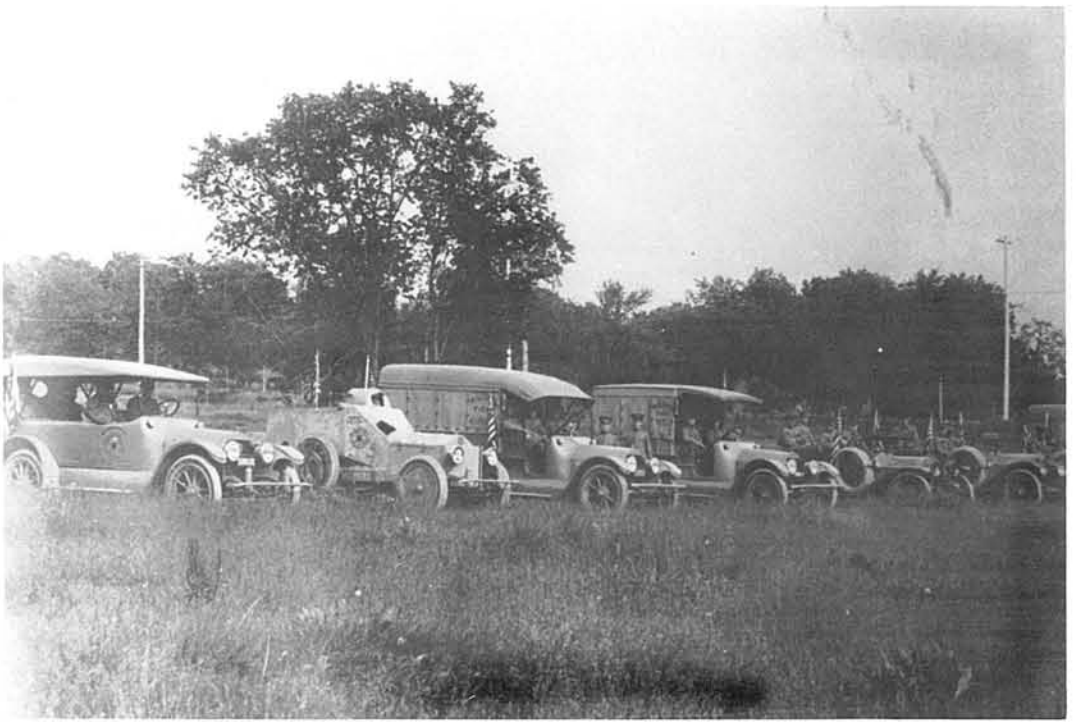
The performance of the cars quickly attracted much interest. There had been no significant mechanical trouble, only three flat tires. Even the old 1910 four had performed flawlessly the entire way.

In San Francisco, the cadets not only got a look at the city and its Exposition, but they, themselves, were part of the show. The Exposition visitors all wanted to see them and their now-famous cars, and they also took part in a couple of parades.

Their stay in San Francisco was a short one, as on July 20th, they were back on the road, headed south to Los Angeles.

When interviewed some years ago, M.L. Cohn, who had been one of the cadet drivers on the trek, said California's El Camino Real was the best road they had encountered on the whole trip. It was, however, still very primitive compared to a modern highway.

Davidson's convoy, arriving in Los Angeles on July 22, was escorted from the San Fernando Valley by a fleet of local motorists, who had come out to meet them. They arrived early in the morning, and their first stop was at Universal Studios. Even back then, touring a movie lot was a "must" on most Los Angeles visitors' lists.



The eight Cadillac cars that made the 1915 Motor Convoy to California are lined up in Chicago shortly before they left for San Francisco. — *Northwestern Military/Naval Academy*

They then drove on to downtown Los Angeles, drawing crowds of curious spectators all along the route. Cadillac distributor, Don Lee, treated the whole convoy to a luncheon at the Los Angeles Athletic Club, but he, himself, was not present since he was in Detroit on business. The Cadillac people back there were probably all gloating over their nationwide publicity due to the convoy's excellent performance.

They bivouacked in Los Angeles that night, and the next day made the run to San Diego, taking a leisurely two days to make the 100 miles. This much time allowed them to visit the Pacific Ocean's beach along the way. They then proceeded past interested spectators on the San Diego Panama-Pacific Exposition grounds where they encamped for the last time. Their adventure was now over.

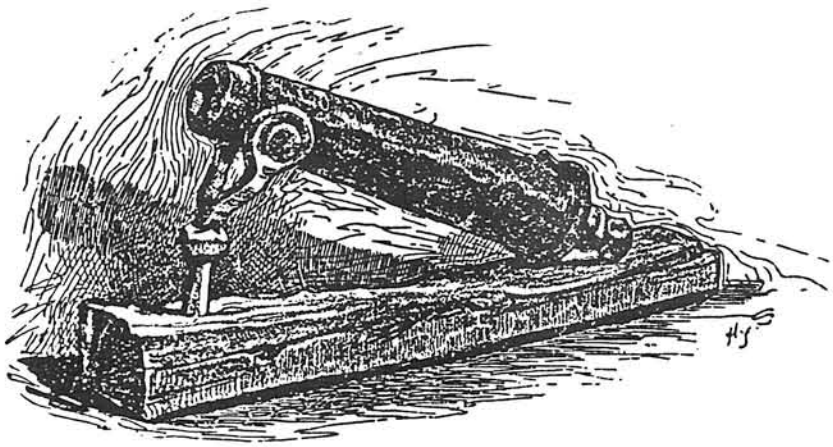
The cadets returned to their homes by rail, and the now-famous cars were shipped back for display at the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition. Eventually, the machines were shipped back to their Lake Geneva home base, where the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy continued to use a couple of the cars clear up to World War II.

The much publicized convoy was rated a complete success and, consequently, influenced several things in the following years.

It was recognized that it had been, by far and away, the most successful and longest distance military motor vehicle operation ever made by anyone. Needless to say, this trip helped convince even the most skeptical U.S. Army people that the machine had become a practical military necessity. In 1916, the U.S. Army, mobilizing along the Mexican border in the face of trouble there, seriously began to motorize in the process.

It also helped to impress the government and general public of the need for improved motor roads and highways. The first Federal Road Act was passed in July 1916, relieving private, local and state authorities from the burden of road and highway improvements. Real progress was, unfortunately, delayed until after World War I.

Today, Colonel Davidson is recognized as a most important military motor vehicle pioneer, and, in no small part, it was due to the great success of his 1915 convoy over the Lincoln Highway.



El Nino, a Los Angeles Historic Cannon

by Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.

El Nino—The Baby—is a tiny bronze cannon familiar to Angelenos since the Rancho days. Today it is on display in the Lando California History Hall of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History where it can even be petted.

Unlike many an historic relic from the time, the history of El Nino is well-known and documented.

The little gun is what remains of a typical Spanish 1½ pounder (2¼ inch bore) naval swivel gun of the type used in the 1700's, and it has its original forged iron swivel. The gun in only 20 inches long, a foot shorter than it was before its barrel was cut off.

El Nino has the date 1711 scribed on it, and is of a type which could easily be that old. Legend says it was brought to San Diego from La Paz, Mexico in the late 1700's. Some claim it was brought by the military contingent which came with the California Mission builders. Others believe it was abandoned in San Diego by a Spanish ship after its muzzle split, something which happened rather often to this sort of diminutive cannon. In any case, it was in San Diego before 1800.

Its barrel was cut off to make it usable, possibly so it could defend early San Diego against the aggressive local Indians.

By 1830 or so, El Nino had become the property of California pioneer Don Antonio Coronel. When he moved to Los Angeles in 1836, he brought the little cannon along with him. By then, it had become a salute gun fired in celebration of feast days, fandangos and fiestas. It remained a part of the lively California rancho life of those days.

El Nino is mentioned and illustrated in a story "Echos of the City of the Angels" which appeared in *Century* magazine in December 1883. At that time, the little gun had accumulated legendary, historic status, and was on display at Mission San Gabriel along with other relics in Don Antonio Coronel's "collection."

After Don Antonio passed away, his wonderful collection of artifacts of early California, including El Nino, was given to the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History about 1920, by his widow. It was on display in the Museum shortly after it opened, and it has been there ever since.

When the Lando California History Hall was built a few years ago, it was decided to display El Nino on a pedestal where visitors would be able to touch it. It is the sort of artifact which can not be harmed by contact, and Museum visitors enjoy such intimacy with historic items.

Note: For the benefit of those interested in cannons: El Nino is a typical Spanish naval 1½ pounder (2¼ inch bore) swivel gun. It has a socket cascabel for a wooden tiller used to aim. The gun was originally about 36 inches long. Spain not only cast guns of this type at home, but also other places including Manila, the Philippines and Lima, Peru. The gun has no foundry mark, and only the scribed date 1711. Guns of this type were used from before 1700 until as late as the mid-1800's.

Source Note: In addition to the writer's library, the archives of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History were consulted.