WESTERNERS
LOS ANGELES CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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Citrus Growing— Reminiscences

by Don Pflueger

I grew up on a 25-acre citrus grove a mile east of the village of Glendora. The area was rural until the Fifties, then the groves disappeared and subdivisions took over, creating an urban setting that I still can't adjust to. My childhood in the Twenties, youth in the Thirties, and young manhood in the Forties were encompassed in a setting that was seen as idyllic only at a later time. There is a temptation to dwell on all aspects of life that made up what facetiously might be called "citrus civilization," but in this piece I want to describe principally the operations involved in the serious business of raising oranges and lemons, an industry badly misunderstood by outsiders. A comprehensive history of the industry has yet to be written, yet it was California's largest income producer for half a century, roughly from 1890 to 1940.

So misunderstood was the nature of raising citrus that Easterners coming to California during the boom years of the 1880's, and to an extent even in the 1920's, honestly thought that all you had to do to produce delicious citrus fruit was to drop seeds in the ground, stand back for awhile, pick the golden fruit, then drive to the bank to deposit checks. They were quickly in for a rude awakening.

For the most part, citrus growers were people from the Midwest or East Coast who had at least some experience in general farming. What they didn't know about the highly sensitive citrus tree would fill books; fortunately, growers with keen powers of observation, gradually learned what the trees liked and disliked in the way of care. They learned early on that citrus trees, like pregnant women, needed constant attention. Growers didn't "talk" to their trees, but they did everything else. The trick was determining where economic diminishing returns set in. Some growers "went under" because of excessive care while others were oftentimes negligent without realizing it. Knowledge of the eccentricities of the citrus tree was in short supply and there were instances of growers losing their entire groves by doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. Successful growers were those who were observant and built on their experience and that of others.

Those who started the citrus industry slightly

(Continued from Page Three)

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

by Abraham Hoffman

JULY 1991 MEETING

Professor Ward McAfee of California State University, San Bernardino, spoke to the Corral on "Getting Inside California's Railroad Age," focusing on the second half of the 19th century. Three basic facts governed California's railroad age: 1) the Central Pacific, the first California-based transcontinental railroad, was completed in 1869 *over a poor route,* during the Civil War with a shortage of capital and material; 2) in 1869, the Suez Canal was completed; and 3) railroads were expensive to build, needing government funds as a public utility rather than a purely private enterprise.

These three factors provide opportunity for insight into the state's railroad history. First, the famous Big Four of Huntington, Crocker, Stanford, and Hopkins was an anxiety-ridden group. In fact, they were nervous wrecks because of the problems they faced in construction and funding. They knew another transcontinental line could be built cheaper and over a better route. To prevent potential rivals, they bought up all competing lines because theirs was so poor. The Big Four lost no time in setting up the Southern Pacific as a more profitable route. Second, completion of the Suez Canal meant that expectations of San Francisco's importance as a trade center would be minimized. The Far Eastern trade went *west,* not east, on the way to Europe. As a result, San Francisco real estate values plunged, and people blamed the railroads for the failure of their dreams.

McAfee's third point meant that the state

(Continued on Page Eighteen)

Citrus fruit picking crew in the orchard before the days of the motor truck. The oranges were placed in shoulder sacks and then dumped into boxes in the wagon. — *Donald Duke Collection*

more than a century ago had to clear the land of sagebrush, cactus, oak trees, rocks, and whatever else was needed to lay out an orchard. My father bought a mature grove in 1919, but a decade later he still had to clear rocks that came to the surface. This was done by towing a sled through the grove and collecting rocks that were grapefruit sized or larger, then hauling them to a rockpile which every grower maintained at the edge of his property. Most of these subsequently went to rockcrushers to make the gravel for our highways. The Indian bowl that turned up in our grove is now in the Glendora museum.

Another early memory was riding in my father's Model-T Ford truck to the citrus nursery to buy some young trees, probably a year or two old. These were not for setting out a new orchard but simply to replace older or dying trees. They were carefully selected, paid for in cash, hauled home, and promptly planted in a previously dug hole that was about a yard wide and a yard deep, allowing for plenty of loose soil so the roots could take hold quickly. It was four or five years before the trees produced very much, but in the meantime they had to have a lot of tender, loving care. A grove did not reach maturity until it was 10 or 15 years old, with maximum production beyond that.

Which brings me to my first job in the orchard: My father instructed me to wrap old newspapers around the trunks of the young trees, tying a piece of string around the middle, then using other pieces near each end. It had to be done neatly because it was supposed to last all summer. The purpose was to protect the bark of young trees from being sunburned. I received a penny or two for each tree I wrapped; ice cream cones were only a nickel in those days so those weren't bad wages.

Citrus trees needed vast quantities of water during the hot summer months, so about every two weeks my father spent three or four days irrigating our grove. Before this could be done he made furrows with his tractor—a steel-wheeled Fordson in the 1920's (before I was conscious he had a team of work horses) and a Caterpillar Fifteen in the 1930's and thereafter—pulling a two-gang plow. Tractoring was such a dirty job that when my father came in at day's end the whites of his eyes stood out.

My father was in frequent telephone communication with the *zanjero* (irrigation ditch tender) of the water company deciding when the flow of water would begin and end each day. The rate of flow was also a critical element in the irrigation process because too much or too little water could create a crisis. Our reservoir, perhaps 20x20x8 feet in size, could cushion some of the flow, but it had to be watched closely when the irrigation process was underway. In addition to the water purchased from the mutually owned irrigating company, we also had a five-inch

pipeline coming in from a mountain spring.

From the irrigating company's main line the water flowed through a weir, where the flow could be observed visually. From the reservoir there was an extensive system of pipelines that brought the water to each row of trees; there, by means of a standpipe with four adjustable gates, the water could be made to flow in separate furrows, two near the trunk of the tree on either side and two farther away. The grower had to keep an eye on the flow for several rows of trees, constantly adjusting the stream. Water always had to get to the end trees; since water was terribly expensive not much was wasted. A grower had to be moving constantly to be on top of the situation. But for a young kid, there was plenty of fun to be had on those hot days just going up and down the furrows sloshing in the water barefooted.

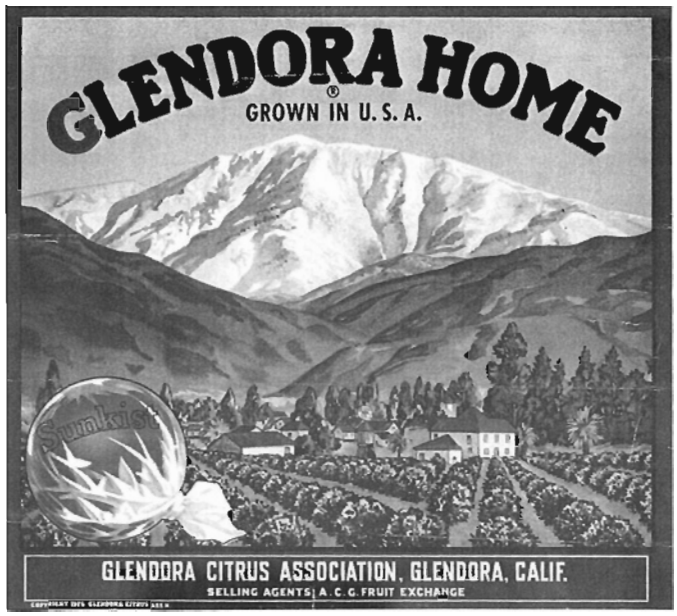
The water in the reservoir was usually too cold for swimming, but after irrigating was completed the reservoir was left partially filled and the water warmed after a few days in the sun. No one bothered with swim trunks unless some girls were invited for a swim.

Those growers who had groves on steeper hillsides used Rainbird sprinklers, invented by Glendora orchardist Orton Engelhardt. Growers on flat land flooded their trees using a system of dikes, but the majority of growers employed the furrow system as we did.

If Southern Californians knew anything about the citrus industry at all, they knew about smudging in the coldest times of the year. The reason was, of course, the blackening of the sky all over the Southland with smoke emitted by the smudge pots which burned crude oil. Some growers used briquets, similar to those used in barbecue grills. In the months of December, January and February, growers religiously listened to the radio broadcasts of Floyd Young who predicted temperatures from the Fruit Frost Service in Pomona. He was amazingly accurate despite the primitive state of meteorology in that era. When he predicted 28 degrees or below for our area we knew we had to keep an eye on the thermometer during the early morning hours. Critical also was the dewpoint and the hour the temperature might be reached. If the freeze came at 4 A.M. there usually was no problem, but if it came at midnight that was serious. Our grove was less subject to frost than neighboring groves because of a peculiar draft that came through Dalton Canyon, hence we didn't even have smudge pots until after the Big Freeze of 1937. In that year much of our fruit was lost and our trees were nipped. My father bought several dozen Scheu smudge pots, a firm still in business in Ontario, and we were prepared thereafter. By this time I was old enough not only to light the pots with a kerosene torch when needed, but to carry five-gallon cans of smudge oil to fill the pots from a tank truck the next day, with little or no sleep in between. After smudging for several nights in a row, total exhaustion set in. It was the dirtiest job imaginable.

Smudge pots held five gallons of crude oil and on top was a two- or three-foot stack with ventilating holes. To light a pot it was necessary to create a flame in the container, wait a few moments for smoke and fumes to rise, then light the fumes at the top of the stack. When both flames were burning not much smoke was created, but if the top flame went out for some reason then vast quantities of thick smoke were emitted. Some people accused the growers of purposely blackening the atmosphere thinking that it would protect the trees, but the vast majority of growers knew the difference between heat and smoke, and they did what they could to minimize the latter.

In the winter of 1937 when the smudge was so thick that people drove with their headlights on in midday, my mother heard from a friend that if you kept your house warm you can keep the soot out. Our furnaces in the basement ran 24 hours a day, sucking up the low settling smoke, then blowing it out the registers, making matters worse than otherwise. Our large kitchen was so sooty that visitors signed their names on our walls with their fingers, constituting a unique collection of autographs. After the smudging season was over it was a big job, before the era of detergents, to scrub it all down. Curtains had to be dry cleaned, rugs sent off to the rug cleaners, and many surfaces simply repainted. During the Forties the Scheu people developed a return-stack smudge pot that was virtually smokeless. The cold spell of 1949 witnessed the last "big smudge" in Southern California citrus groves. We even had snow that year and one could hear the breaking of branches due to its weight. By this time citrus groves were already giving way to subdivisions. High school boys and college



Glendora Citrus Association orange box label with a picture of an orchard in the shadow of Mount Baldy. — *Don Pflueger Collection*

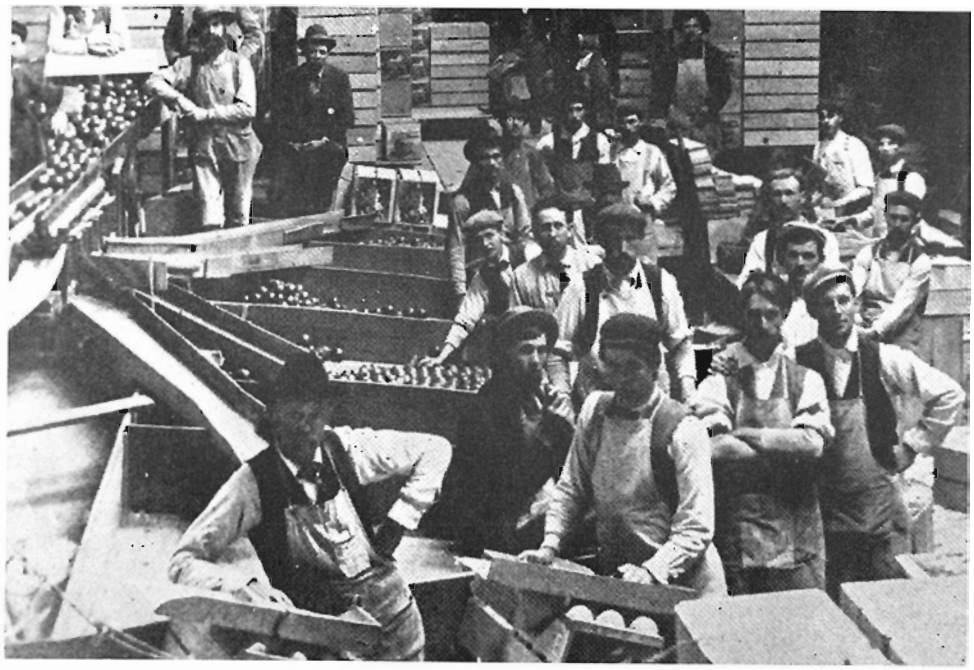
men made good wages as smudgers, but with the passage of time the price of oil as well as wages made smudging so expensive that some growers simply made little effort to save their crops, or even groves. Economics governed much of what growers could or could not do.

Like most domestic plants, citrus trees needed fertilizer about twice a year. At first there was nothing but organic fertilizer that was hauled from dairies, chicken ranches and even hog farms. We tried the last named—once! An exotic type of organic fertilizer was guano, the droppings of seabirds on an island off Central America. Ground fish meal was another. Bone meal provided phosphorus and was used occasionally. Responsible growers disked their fertilizer into the soil immediately to minimize the odor and breeding of flies. About 1940 commercial fertilizers increased in popularity, coming in various combinations of ingredients either in sacks as granules or in liquid form which was dripped into irrigating water. Growers always had to calculate carefully to determine how much to fertilize, again a matter of economics.

Gophers and moles were a nuisance in the early days. My father had some traps that he set out, with great care, every time he noticed some burrowing. Some growers put the garden hose to the exhaust pipes of their trucks in the attempt to exterminate the critters. Family dogs and cats were of little value as exterminators. When I was a kid an occasional gopher snake came into our yard, much to the distress of my mother. My father refused to kill snakes, looking upon the creatures as allies in the fight against gophers, moles, and rodents so he removed them some distance from the house. I must have been conditioned by my mother because I never befriended any snakes, though I enjoyed, as a kid, playing with tortoises, horned toads, and lizards. The latter would do a dance—well, push-ups—if whistled to.

There was other wild life around too. At night, when the 2 o'clock Santa Fe train came through the valley, the coyotes would howl, but we rarely saw the canines. Rabbits were common; once I found some baby rabbits in a tree hole, but my mother let me keep them for only a few days. Deer came down from the foothills during summer months and we would occasionally see them prancing in the grove. Growers closer to the mountains than we were had to put chicken wire over their young trees to save the tender foliage. Foxes, raccoons, and opossums were occasionally seen by growers, but they did no harm. There seemed to be a greater variety of birds than we have today; most dramatic were the V-formations of wild geese passing over the valley each spring.

As a kid growing up on a citrus grove I was exposed to people of many different races and



Citrus fruit packing house in operation early in the century. The oranges were graded by size and wrapped in tissue before being placed in the orange box. — *Donald Duke Collection*

cultures, something I took for granted then but have come to appreciate more fully later. My father did most of his own work, but at times he had others helping him with various grove operations. Every few years the trees needed pruning and this work was virtually monopolized by Italians, since Italy had a sizeable lemon industry. They were skillful in what was regarded as nothing less than an art form; trees had to be pruned "just so" in order to produce the maximum amount of fruit.

I remember Jamo, an East Indian, who wore a turban and rode a bicycle. He was a handyman who could provide most any kind of labor needed in a grove. The county inspector, a visiting entomologist checking up on scale and microscopic spiders, was a mustachioed Englishman with a crisp accent. Fruit pickers were either Filipinos or Mexicans, but the picking boss was an Anglo. Their whistling and singing as they picked fruit seemed to convey the notion that they were a happy lot. From them I learned some cusswords before I knew what they meant. They wore canvas bags over their shoulders, mounted special ladders (with tongues for lemons and without for oranges), and used blunt clippers so as not to injure the fruit. When picking lemons they often carried a sizing ring, so as not to pick fruit too small.

At this point it should be noted that oranges and lemons were hardly relatives in the citrus family. There's only one crop of oranges a year, but lemons are picked about every six weeks throughout the year, turning yellow only in winter months. Green summer lemons were sweated in the packing houses to make them yellow before sending them to market. Lemon trees prefer sandy soil; oranges prefer a heavier loam. Lemons are much more sensitive to cold than oranges. Oranges can be grown in many places, e.g., Florida; lemons can't. And so on. In Glendora, fortunately, we could grow both. Our grove, almost ideal in retrospect when measured in economic terms, consisted of ten acres of Valencia (summer/juice) oranges, five acres of Navel (winter/eating) oranges, and ten acres of Eureka lemons. Over the long haul, lemons paid best, followed by Valencia oranges.

Returning to my exposure to people of diverse cultures, our near neighbors were the Sugitas, a Japanese family with two American-born daughters in whose name they owned ten acres. They grew cut flowers, mainly chrysanthemums and carnations, for the Los Angeles market. Sometime in the late Thirties they planted a small lemon grove. When World War II came along they chose (it is conveniently forgotten that Japanese-Americans had a choice) not to go to a

relocation camp but rather to Chicago where they ran a mom-and-pop grocery store. The two daughters received master's degrees in English from the University of Chicago. While they were gone my father saw to it that their grove was cared for; for this help they insisted on giving us war bonds every so often and at war's end they gave my parents a lovely cloissoné brass vase on a rosewood stand, an inheritance I cherish.

A Chinese vegetable peddler used to drive his Model-T truck up to our back door when I was a kid. I remember his scales dangling from the open truck's top. The Helms bakery man was an Anglo, but his twice weekly visits were special occasions. His distinctive whistle could be heard all over the neighborhood.

Returning to grove operations, the fight against insect pests was an incessant one. There seemed to be no end to the varieties of scale, spider, fungus, and other types of microscopic organisms that attacked either the fruit or trees, or both. Spraying and fumigating were employed to eradicate the pests. My father bought his own 400-gallon Bean spray rig, powered by a Ford motor, and hired helpers whenever he felt the bugs were getting out of hand. This was another messy operation as the spray was a combination of water and an oily insecticide. The operation had to be done when there was little wind and when the weather was cool. Fumigation was performed by a contracting company which came in at dusk, covered the trees with canvas tents, then had a scheduler place the proper amount of cyanide under each tree, a tricky operation. It was effective, but also expensive. For awhile large mechanical dusters were used in the orchards. My father never tried this operation, no doubt out of respect to my mother who had enough dust to contend with from the tractoring, not to mention the soot from smudging. Alone she kept our five-bedroom grove home immaculate.

Theories of raising citrus changed over the years. During the Depression, there was heavy emphasis on soil conservation and my father actually received a government check every so often for having a cover crop of mustard in the grove. This he would disk under with the tractor in late spring, supposedly enriching the soil. He hated Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, as well as the New Deal in general, but he cashed his checks like all the other grumbling growers. They grumbled mostly over the prices they were receiving for their fruit, terribly low throughout the decade of the Thirties. And growers had no use for Secretary of State Cordell Hull whose reciprocal trade agreements allowed Italian lemons to flood the New York market.

The worst that Mother Nature could offer came in the early Fifties when growers of navel oranges noticed that a healthy tree one day could become a sick tree the next, and a week later was dead. Because it all happened so fast the disease was called "quick decline." Its pattern of attack made no sense, but it was noticed early that it tended to hit trees that had been budded, i.e., grafted, on sour stock. Scientists were baffled for years, but ultimately found the culprit to be a virus. By the time it was discovered most of the groves had given way to subdivisions.

Mother Nature gave the growers a hard time with Santa Ana windstorms that blew the fruit off and often broke tree branches. Heavy rains in winter at times caused flooding; torrents of water could play havoc with a grove. Terribly hot summer days caused sunburn damage. Long damp spells created problems with rot. Toward the end of the era of citrus the plague of smog reduced both the volume of production and the size of the fruit. There seemed to be an unending cycle of near catastrophes.

These are only a few of the principal grove operations and some of the sidelights in the raising of citrus. To say that there's more to it than this is an understatement. The stories involved with the processing of fruit and its national and international marketing must be told another time. Raising citrus successfully required canny judgment, hard work, and luck. As one drives through the former citrus belt areas and sees the few lovely big old grove homes that still survive, the conclusion is often drawn that the citrus business was extraordinarily lucrative. Not so, those mansions were built with eastern capital that migrated west. Owners of citrus groves that had all their work done by employees or contractors rarely did more than break even over the long haul; those who owned 10 to 25 acres and did their own work made a fair living, but little beyond that. It was, however, "gentleman farming" at its best, but was never called that. They were "growers" or "ranchers," but never farmers. As a way of life, however, it was hard to beat. Citrus communities were great places in which to grow up.

CARILLON AT SAN FERNANDO MISSION

by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

There are some 600 carillons in the entire world. They are fairly uncommon in the United States, with only 129 true carillons and 36 electric-action carillons known to experts in the field. San Fernando Mission is one of the nine places in California with such an instrument and its 35 electrically-operated bells are familiar to the 35,000 tourists who annually visit the 17th of the Golden State's missionary outposts.

According to the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, a carillon is a musical instrument consisting of at least two octaves of bells arranged in chromatic series. A carillon is a set of cast, bronze, cup-shaped bells whose partial tones are in such harmonious relationship to each other as to permit many such bells to be sounded together, in various chords with a concordant effect.

The earliest carillon consisted of four to eight bells, operated by hand levers. About the 16th century, Belgian, Dutch and northern French carillons began to be built of about 35 bells.

The historical background of the carillon at San Fernando Mission, the only such instrument in a Catholic Church west of the Rockies, can be traced back almost 60 years.

Shortly after Msgr. Nicholas Connelly announced plans to build Saint Monica's Church in 1925, he was approached by Johanna Shanahan, an elderly Irish-born parishioner who had spent most of her life in the employ of Nevada's Senator John P. Jones, founder of Santa Monica. Miss Shanahan offered to give her life savings of $11,000, if the pastor would commission a carillon to be built and installed in the bell tower of the envisioned church.

It didn't take Connelly long to recognize that such a gift would impart a unique feature to his already fanciful designs. He immediately instructed his architect to make whatever modifications would be necessary to accommodate the carillon. (Carillon bells don't swing, they are mounted in a stationary position and provided with clappers inside and a hammer outside if there is an automatic player.)

Connelly then did some research and decided to order the carillon from Felix Van Aerschodt (1870-1943) of Louvain. In mid-1927, Connelly contacted Father Thomas K. Gorman, a student priest attached to the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles who was studying in Rome, and asked him to explore the possibilities of engaging Van Aerschodt for the project.

It was an ideal choice. The Van Aerschodt family name had been associated with bells for centuries. Felix had been at the helm of the business since 1898. Like his father, he was a metallic sculptor, having been educated in the studios of the famed Jef Lambeux. His reputation had elicited invitations to exhibit at the Universal Expositions in Paris (1898), Antwerp (1894), Brussels (1910), and Gent (1913).

Felix was among the many outstanding residents of Louvain taken captive by the invading German forces in World War I. He later escaped and went to England, where the government entrusted him with the management of a munitions factory at Spitalfields. Unhappily, during Felix's absence from Louvain, his foundry was sacked and mostly destroyed. His ancient models and mortars, plans and mechanisms, mountings and bas-relief ornaments, inventories and archives were forever lost. Undaunted, Van Aerschodt returned to Louvain after the hostilities were ended and, by 1920, was again busily at work. Felix entered into partnership with Marcel Michiels of Tournai and it was that latter gentleman who was entrusted with drafting specifications for the Santa Monica carillon.

The casting of the 35 bells took several years. It was decided to use a combination of 78 percent copper and 22 percent tin. They were tuned to the chromatic scale, thus allowing music to be played in all keys. The biggest of the bells weighed half a ton, the smallest a mere 22 pounds.

Miss Shanahan insisted that Michiels accompany the instrument to the United States and personally supervise its installation. Unhappily, she died on October 14, 1931 and was unable to see the carillon operational.

Michiels and Gabriel Castelain spent several agonizing months uncrating and then hoisting the 35 bells into a five-tiered iron frame specially designed for that purpose inside the picturesque tower.

The bourdon bell, weighing half a ton, is the largest of the group and was engineered to strike the hours, while a second large bell counted off the half-hours. From the smallest bells on the top to the largest on the grand tier, they were designed to be tone perfect in their three octave range. The largest ones are made of iron and the smaller ones of soft metal. The tiniest are fashioned from hard steel, all engineered to impart evenness of tone to the ensemble.

Five-tiered frame holding carrilon bells being assembled in the foundry. — *Msgr. Francis J. Weber Collection*

Aside from the clock driver, the bells were played by a mechanical baton in the loft with a wire leading to each bell. Directly under the bells, Michiels provided a huge iron drum which contained numerous perforations. Pegs were placed in the holes to correspond with the notes to be sounded. When the drum revolved, the bells would strike in succession against a mechanism which activated the bells in proper sequence.

The carillon, which one newspaper account said was "unrivalled on the west coast," was solemnly dedicated by Bishop John J. Cantwell on December 22, 1931. Each of the bells had a sponsor for the ceremony and names were bestowed for each unit. While the bishop read the prayers, a priest climbed a ladder into the tower and sprinkled the bells with holy water. Marcel Michiels then gave a short concert. Three days later, Michiels also played carols at the Christmas masses offered in the Church.

Since so few carillonneurs were available on the west coast, Msgr. Connelly investigated the possibility, in the mid-1930's, of having an electronic system installed whereby the bells could be operated from the keyboard of the church's pipe organ. Designed by L.M. Davis and installed by John Clevenger, the automatic device operated with solenoids activating the bell clappers. It was a crude arrangement which, surprisingly, worked quite well.

In 1956, the whole system was dismantled, its metallic frame sandblasted and then repainted and placed back in service. During the following decade, however, the carillon was used only rarely, mostly because of its operational complexity. On at least one occasion, it went off accidentally in the night and aroused the entire neighborhood before being silenced.

From the very outset, Michiels was concerned that the carillon would never achieve its maximum effect because the bells were 60 feet from the keyboard and thus not easily controlled by the overextended wiring. And, partly due to poor tuning and repetitious melodies, the carillon became controversial among local residents and others who outspokenly disliked its "noise." Connelly's dream became "Connelly's folly," and before long the frustrated priest turned off the activators.

During the devastating earthquake of February 9, 1971, the tower at Santa Monica's Church suffered severe structural damage and was judged unsafe to support the massive weight of the carillon. The bells were taken down and placed in storage.

When plans were announced to rebuild the

church at San Fernando Mission, mortally jolted during the same 1971 temblor, it was suggested that the carillon be installed in the mission's newly constructed bell tower. The instrument was crated and carefully moved the 24 miles to Mission Hills. Installation and rewiring of the massive system was supervised by Justin Kramer. After several months of diligent work, the carillon was ready for the rededication ceremonies which took place on December 4, 1974.

In 1987, digital control equipment was installed whereby the Westminster sequence, the *Angelus* and other melodies and hymns could be activated automatically. The carillon was also programmed to play the *Cantica del Alba*, an ancient melody sung by the Fernandino Indians at the Old Mission.

At San Fernando, alone among the missions, one can appreciate the truism which states that "of all the sounds man has introduced into the world, perhaps the most pleasing to the ear and the most adaptable to all cultures are the sounds of bells."

Corral Chips

Several Westerners attended the Book Club of California reception to pay homage to the works of George Wharton James, held at the San Fernando Mission July 24, 1991, with Msgr. Francis Weber as the host.

The wine and cheese party was held to announce the publication of a special book of essays by James. Those attending were *Honorary Members* Glen Dawson, Donald Duke, and Doc. Alden Miller. *Active Members* were Tom Andrews, Fred Bennett, Robert Blew, Siegfried Demke, Jim Gulbranson, Dutch Holland, George Houle, Bill Lorenz, Norman Neuerberg, Ken Pauley, Jerome Selmer, Hugh Tolford, Bruce Walton, Msgr. Francis Weber (the host), and Ray Wood. *Associate Member* Don Snyder drank a little wine, and *Corresponding Member* Ruth Malora sampled the cheese and crackers. Even the peacocks and peahens *were* jumping in and out of the trees over the pearls written nearly 75 years ago by George Wharton James.

Can anyone guess who is the new editor of the Spokane Corral's quarterly the *Pacific Northwesterner?* Yes, you guessed it—Robert Clark. Speaking of one Robert Clark, *Empire Life,* the Sunday magazine supplement of the *Spokane Review and Chronicle* featured Robert and the Arthur Clark Company in their Sunday July 5, 1991, edition. The feature was entitled "Small-scale book publishers aren't looking for best-sellers!"

Abe Hoffman always seems to be in the news. His article "Horace Bell: Southern California's Pioneer with the Pungent Pen," appeared in the March/April 1991 issue of the *Californians.*

Richard Waldo Cunningham met the train at Santa Barbara, and had lunch with the El Camino Real travelers at the Santa Barbara Mission. He appears to have his nose to the grindstone seven days per week trying to get the Ventura Maritime Museum shipshape. He promises to send a brochure on the place for the next issue, giving its location and visiting hours.

Siegfried Demke spent April, May and June in England and Germany. He rented an apartment and took many one and two day junkets to visit museums and bookstores. Arriving back in Arcadia two days after the Sierra Madre earthquake, he was unaware of the occurrence and thought someone had shaken his bookshelves while he was away.

C.M. E.B. Olesen has established a special endowment at the special collections section of the Merrill Library at Utah State University (Logan). The purpose is to preserve, restore and publish documents relating to the settlement of the continental United States west of the Mississippi River between 1700 and 1920.

Come on guys, I am scraping the bottom of the barrel for "Corral Chips." Since the publication of the last *Branding Iron* this is all that has slipped into the mail box. You gentlemen are doing things all the time. Take a minute to fill out the form. Blow your own horn. News of fellow Westerners is always of interest or, otherwise, we will have to give up the column.

In Memorium
John Bartlett Goodman, III
1901-1991

Death claimed one of the five surviving founders of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, John B. Goodman, on June 30, 1991. Johnny, to his friends, was among the 26 men who were assembled by Homer E. Britzman to establish the Corral on December 19, 1946. Johnny served as the second deputy sheriff under Sheriff Paul Galleher in 1948. He was a regular attendee at meetings, rarely missing one except when he was out of town on job assignments. Advancing age and disability precluded him from attendance these past few years, much to his regret. As a token of its' esteem, he was made an Honorary member at the Corral's December 1983 meeting.

He came naturally to his interest in the American West for he was born in Denver, Colorado, August 15, 1901. Interestingly, he was born in a little house on California Street. He would later opine that his birth place "practically makes me a native son as three years later found me in my adopted state, California, which has been my home ever since." The family first located in San Diego and moved to Los Angeles when Johnny was 15 years old. Little is known of those early years other than on graduation from high school he entered the employ of a local architect.

He later recalled that in early 1920 he opted for a career in the fledgling motion picture industry "with the old Famous Players Lasky Company via the art department." Shortly after this, he became interested in maritime history, especially the history of sailing ships. This led him to collecting in that subject field and "building for [motion] picture purposes several full-scale practical sailing ships" from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, no doubt as set locations. In addition, as he later recalled, "Being a Westerner it was natural that I should gravitate towards the history of the West, more especially California."

As the years rolled by Johnny focused his attention on the clipper ship era and their voyages to El Dorado. He also became intrigued with the gold-rush era and assiduously collected in that area, adding overland travel narratives to his bibliophilic concerns. He proved a shrewd and knowledgable collector, especially in collecting elusive contemporaneous items.

John Bartlett Goodman, III

He was one of those lucky few who could blend his bibliophilic interests into his professional career. As he told it: "I have been very fortunate to be one of the few persons favored to recreate those interesting places and scenes of historical interest that form the basis of one's bibliographical collecting and see them brought to life in all their detail. It seems in my case research and book collecting go hand in hand, and my hobby in large manner has become my working tool."

His entire career, before his retirement from the film industry in 1967, was in art direction. By his own testimony, he worked on 252 motion pictures in that capacity. Unfortunately, a complete list of his films has not been compiled, but it would make for fascinating reading to see how many were historical in content. His studio experience was mostly with Paramount where he spent seventeen years. This was followed by association with first Warner Bros. and then Universal. There he served as supervising art director, 1942-1945, before the film company affiliated with International. It was at this juncture of his career, now well established, respected, and recognized in his field, that he became an independent art director, one very much in demand. He was able to achieve that free-lance status because of the honors he received from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. In 1939 his art direction of the film "If I Were King" was nominated for an award by the academy. A second followed in 1942 for his work on "The Spoilers." His third nomination was for his color art direction for the "Phantom of the Opera" in 1943. This proved a winner; he received an Oscar. The last of his films to be placed in academy nomination was in 1944 for "The Climax." His was a reputation well earned, so that turning to freelancing in his cinematic field posed no hazard to his career.

As an art director, he traveled widely for many of the films he worked on were shot on location. Typical of some of his assignments was "Deadfall" in 1950, starring John D. Barrymore, Jr., with location sites on the Rio Grande in Texas, later in Montana. Vermont beckoned in 1955 for Alfred Hitchcock's "The Trouble With Harry." That same year he was off to survey the French, Italian, and Swiss Alps country for Paramount in connection with the shooting of "The Mountain," starring Spencer Tracy; he then returned to Switzerland for the actual filming. "Rawhide" took him to Tumacacori, Arizona, in 1959 for in its vicinity at the time existed the only known large herd of longhorn cattle, some 2,000 in number. That film later led to the immensely popular Western TV weekly series, "Rawhide," which used Johnny's art direction talents from 1961-1965. A stickler for historical accuracy and detail, the series received accolades from Western historians and buffs, much to Johnny's delight. As Western TV series sprouted to meet the public's clamor for that type of media entertainment, Johnny criticized them roundly for playing loose with the authenticity of life in the Old West. He wrote a stinging critique to the Los Angeles *Times* which was published on January 26, 1964, lambasting one and all, except, of course, "Rawhide."

Johnny became a dedicated and talented researcher, not by education, but by doing. He read omniverously in the fields that attracted his interest; he read widely and deeply in those subjects. As a result, he was able to leave behind him as part of his historical legacy an important body of work. His contributions to the Corral were limited to the early *Brand Books.* When the first one was published in 1947, he was one of four members who underwrote it's publication cost. In addition, he contributed a pen and ink frontis plate, the "Plaza Church and Plaza in the 1860s," and a sketch of "Billy the Kid" (p. 33). For the second *Brand Book* (1948) he prepared a foldout "Map of the Vineyards of California" (p. 48), which was later lithographed in 150 copies by Homer H. Boelter and reprinted in an essay, *California and Its Place Among the Wine Nations,* by Marcus E. Crahan.

For *Brand Book No. 3* (1950) he authored the "Sacramento Placer Times, 1849-1851" (pp. 37-52), which was issued as a separate keepsake. He also provided a pen and ink drawing for the text. He designed the title page and drew a group of "Indian Musical Instruments" (pp. 113-114) for an article in *Brand Book No. 5* (1953). He contributed an essay, "The California Gold Fleet" (pp. 35-47), and served as the art editor for *Brand Book No. 10* (1963). But perhaps his most enduring Corral contribution was the masthead he designed for *The Branding Iron* which is still in use.

In 1946 Johnny contributed three titles to the short-lived *California Centennial Series* printed by the Premier Press of N.A. Kovach in Los Angeles. All three dealt with overland travel to California. He also edited and published five Christmas keepsakes for members of the Zamorano Club which he joined in 1947, under the series title, *Scraps of California.* These were published between 1955-1962, all rather illusive items today. Again, these items related to the gold rush, with emphasis on overland travel and were strikingly printed, one by Grant Dahlstrom and four by Gordon Holmquist, noted local

typographers.

In addition, Johnny edited a keepsake entitled *The Schooner Civilian and the Cochituate Mining & Trading Company* for the Zamorano Club (1964). This handsome item was printed at the Plantin Press in Los Angeles. A lengthy edited work was *The Gold Rush Voyage of the Ship Loo Choo Around the Horn in 1849,* published by the Cumming Press, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, in 1971.

However, Johnny's crowning works have not been published. The first is his monumental compilation, "An Annotated Bibliography of California County Histories, 1855-1966." This was revised in 1981 and the coverage extended to 1978. Because of its length and encyclopedic nature, the compiler had to settle with the placement of reference copies in the Library of Congress, Michael Harrison's Western Americana Library, the Bancroft Library, UCLA, and the Huntington Library.

A second major work, again massive and encyclopedic in size and content, was his compilation of "The 1849 California Gold Rush Fleet." This huge manuscript details the history of each ship that sailed to California in that eventful year. To give some idea of the scope of his meticulous research, one may turn to six of these ship histories which were published in the *Southern California Quarterly* in 1985-1986. Others were planned, but Johnny became unhappy with the editor (myself) because, to quote him, "you take the juice out of my narrative." In truth, excellent researcher though he was, he was not a very good writer. He was given to bromidic and trite slang expressions as well as tangled syntax that made for hard reading. Fortunately, a copy of this last tome of Johnny's will be deposited at the Huntington Library.

As the years began to take their toll on his eyesight, mobility, and strength, Johnny had to forego attending Westerners' meetings. He could no longer drive at night and going up and down stairs became a heavy chore. Reluctantly, he had to confine himself to his Beverly Hills home. In the twilight of his life, especially after the death of his beloved wife of sixty-one years, Jessie, on September 4, 1990, he found consolation by immersing himself in research, undertaking to prepare for the Huntington Library an index to gold-rush mining companies as an adjunct to his "California Gold Rush Fleet." It sustained him until failing health carried him to the hospital and to his death on the eve of his 90th birthday. There were no immediate survivors. Without services, he was cremated and inurned with Jessie's ashes in a columbarium in Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills.

As a person, Johnny was very private. He rarely shared any comments on his film career or private life. That was privileged information. However, he could discourse for hours on matters historical, especially in those areas in which he had great expertise. He loved nothing more than to range across the spectrum of maritime, Western, and California history with like-minded colleagues. At the same time, he enjoyed the comradeship of his fellow Westerners and was among the charter members of the revived E Clampus Vitus, an organization known for its fun, carefree meetings. A gourmet, he enjoyed good food and wine. This explains his membership in the Societe de Bacchus et Epicurus. He was extremely knowledgable about California wines and vineyards.

In death, Johnny was exceedingly generous. His will provided that the Huntington Library was to receive his researched manuscripts. His library, however, was bequeathed to the University of California, San Diego, and will be called the Jessie H. and John B. Goodman Collection. The Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum will receive "Custer's Last Stand," the famous Budweiser painting of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, while Sutter's Fort will receive an 1849 painting of that famed historic site. Like bequests to several other institutions and a few select individuals were also included. Guarding his privacy to the end, he ordered the executor of the estate not to place any obituary notices in the local press. No doubt he would have disapproved of this memorial tribute.

It is regrettable that he outlived most of his contemporaries for there were few to mourn his passing. However, there are a handful or two of Westerners who knew Johnny Goodman and appreciated him for what he was: a kind, self-effacing person, a soft-spoken man who was ever the gentleman, nattily dressed and neatly groomed, who next to his cherished Jessie, loved books and history most.

—Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.

Happy hour time in the Southwest Museum patio, prior to dinner. (BELOW) Wrangle Boss Fred Bennett and his crew dispensing liquid refreshment from the portable bar.

Fandango '91

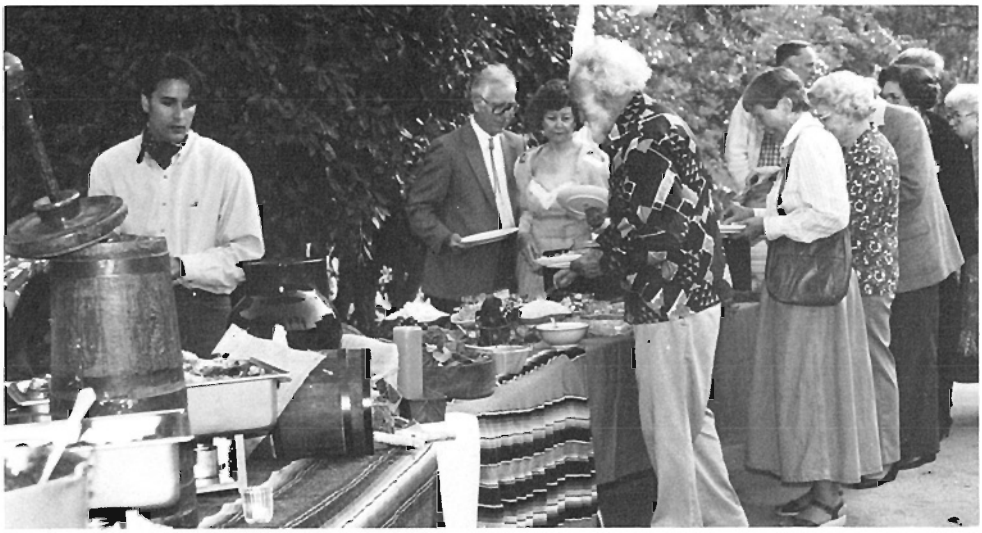
This year's Fandango, held on June 8 at the Southwest Museum, proves once again that our Corral can stage the annual event in such a way that it stands in marked contrast to any such previous festivity. The ingredients were comprised of a lovely setting, an exquisite buffet dinner, and exciting entertainment, as follows:

Most members were already familiar with the Museum and its treasury of artifacts of native American cultures, but few previously appreciated the splendor of its patio which seemed to have been especially designed for our Fandango. The drainage area made a perfect stage and the delivery area and handicapped zone provided space not only for the caterer but for our dining tables. With stucco and red-tiled buildings on three sides of us and with a view of Los Angeles in the distance, all that was needed to complete the effect was a setting sun. Our timing on that was well staged!

Prior to the dinner, Wrangler Boss Fred Bennett and his loyal crew provided members and guests with the necessary liquid refreshments to further enhance the evening's mood. The dinner itself was provided by POSH Caterers of Los Angeles and had a definite Hispanic zing. Serapes and exotic plant materials graced the

table; the waiters wore western garb and seemed to be having a good time as they were serving us. The barbecued chicken was accompanied by a wide assortment of garnishes which added up to a gustatorial delight. As we finished, the table candles were glowing more brightly as evening fell and the lights of Los Angeles flickered in the distance.

Floodlights centered on the stage and Elisabeth Waldo-Dentzel, a corresponding member of our Corral, introduced her troupe from the Multicultural Music and Art Foundation of the Rancho Cordillera Del Norte in Northridge. The



Walt Wheelock leads the buffet "conga line" which featured all sorts of California cuisine. — *Don Pflueger Photograph*

Special guest Keith Lumis (Left), musicologist Elizabeth Waldo-Dentzel (Center), with Deputy Sheriff Don Pflueger.

musicians demonstrated their talents in early California music not only with conventional instruments associated with Hispanic music but with rattles, whistles, flutes, drums and other exotic instruments of native Americans. Several young ladies in colorful costumes danced barefoot on the lawn in an art form that provided an additional innovative experience. Each selection was but a sampling of an extensive repertoire that Elisabeth and her troupe have assembled. The final encore was a violin solo that demonstrated Elisabeth's musical gifts both as a composer and skillful instrumentalist.

Surprise guests were Mr. and Mrs. Keith Lummis from San Francisco. It was Mr. Lummis' father who founded the Museum as well as converting his home into Los Angeles' first salon, a center for cultural and literary luminaries. Keith reassured our Corral that his father would have been pleased with our Fandango's social and cultural interaction.

It was a memorable evening. Thank you, Elisabeth Waldo-Dentzel. Thank you, Jerry Selmer.

And what an introduction to the Hollywood Bowl season!

Santa Barbara Trek

On Saturday morning, July 27th, a group of 85 Westerners, their wives and guests boarded a northbound Amtrak train for a summer outing in Santa Barbara. The outing was scheduled and executed by Former Sheriff Hugh Tolford.

Member Dick Yale boarded the San Diego to Santa Barbara train at San Diego, while Sheriff Don Franklin and others climbed aboard in Santa Ana. A few got on at Los Angeles Union Station, but a large crowd awaited at for the 8:25 A.M. arrival of train No. 771 at the Glendale Station. Several miles up the line, the train made a quick flag stop at Van Nuys Station where Msgr. Francis Weber and the Abe Hoffman family joined the group.

All Aboard! for Santa Barbara. Excursionists board our special car at Glendale.

Our chartered Amtrak coach was at the front of the train, however, the locomotive was located at the rear end of the "Push-Pull" arrangement. Several Westerners moved up into the control cab to watch the locomotive engineer in operation. The train had to slow at Oxnard as a packing warehouse situated next to the tracks was on fire and the fire department had its hoses across the tracks.

Arriving at Santa Barbara Station, the end of the run, the group boarded two chartered motor coaches for a short ride to the Santa Barbara Mission and Archival Library. Former Sheriff Doyce Nunis, president of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Barbara Mission Library for the past 20 years, gave a short history of the library and introduced the group to Fr. Virgilio Biasiol OFM, Director of the library. Westerners were invited to browse around the Archival Library and to view a specially arranged display of rare books, manuscripts, and early artists' sketches of the Santa Barbara area.

As stomachs began to growl we were invited to take a short walk to the Friar's Quadrangle where Westerners were served a sumptuous box lunch catered by Mozart's Table of Santa Ynez. Mozart was not in attendance to entertain the group! Our guest, Marla Daily, president of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, briefed the Corral Members and friends about the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and the special exhibition at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. We then boarded our buses for a short ride around the Mission to the Natural History Museum. The exhibit, "Santa Cruz Island: Paintings of an Island Paradise," commemorated the 100th anniversary of the historic chapel on the island and presented Dr. Carey Stanton's art collection along with the Santa Cruz Island Foundation's new acquisitions. Dr. Stanton, owner of the island, was its only registered voter

Fr. Virgilio Biasiol OFM, Director of Santa Barbara Archives Library, explains the history of paintings to artist Andy Dagosta while CM Larry Arnold looks on. At the right, Dave Gillies listens attentively.

Doyce Nunis explaining the art of book collecting to Elizabeth Crahan.

at the time of his death in December 1987.

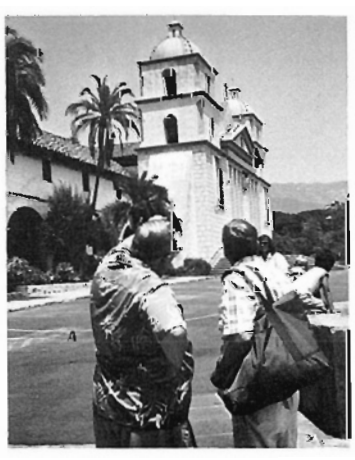
Also on exhibit were paintings by Carl Oscar Borg, Lockwood de Forest, Alexander Harmer, William Louis Otte, DeWitt Parshall and Ludmilia Pilat Welch. Contemporary artists included world renowned Richard Diebenkorn as well as local Santa Barbara artists. Several Corral members located Richard Waldo Cunningham's models of West Coast Indian watercraft which was located just inside the main entrance.

After viewing the art, we once again boarded our buses for a trip to the Santa Barbara History Museum. Here, we inspected a special showing of the art of J.D.H. Koerner, a famed western artist and illustrator, whose works graced the pages of *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines in the 1920's.

From the History Museum, it was only a five-minute bus ride back to the train station. This time the engine was at the front of the train and we returned back to Glendale and wayside points on time.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the outing and asked when the next event was to be held. The following day a Southern Pacific freight train jumped the tracks under a freeway viaduct at Surfside, blocking the tracks for several days. We made our journey in the nick of time!

Hugh Tolford



Doyce Nunis explaining the Mission tower restoration to one of the excursionists.

Monthly Roundup (continued). . .

wanted to regulate the railroads, but railroad regulation bills all met defeat. A fatal flaw in the bills was the desire of California communities to enhance themselves at the expense of others. Los Angeles opposed San Diego, Sacramento rivaled San Francisco, and everyone professed opposition to the railroads but called for rates fair to them and unfair to other cities. The Southern Pacific used divide and conquer tactics to defeat the regulation bills. For the Big Four, it took thirty years before the transcontinental line hauled significant amounts of freight. Passengers provided the main purpose for the railroad for many yars.

McAfee's presentation was followed by a spirited question-and-answer session which demonstrated that the Big Four and their railroads remain as controversial as ever.

AUGUST 1991 MEETING

Corral Member David Gillies, by means of narration and colored slides, presented "The Mission Play and John Steven McGroarty" at the August dinner meeting. The "Mission Play" was one of the most successful plays ever staged in Southern California. It ran for some 3,000 performances, had a 23-year run, and two full theatres were built specifically to showcase the play.

Frank Miller, owner and operator of the Mission Inn in Riverside, believed that Southern California citizens and schoolchildren were forgetting their heritage, the coming of the Spaniards and the founding of the Missions. He set out to rectify the situation by asking John Steven McGroarty to draft a play or pageant describing the establishment of the Mission system.

McGroarty, a Los Angeles *Times* feature writer, poet, and historian, took two years to write and produce the "Mission Play." The production was based on a similar play held in Oberammergau, Bavaria, Germany. McGroarty likened his play to the Oberammergau production and called his play "An American Oberammergau."

The "Mission Play" was first staged on April 29, 1912, at a site alongside the San Gabriel Mission and beside the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad's southern route. Each time a train passed, the cast knelt in prayer until the thundering and rumbling of the train had passed. In a series of three acts, the production had a cast of some 100 participants, many playing other parts during the various acts. Act One: presented the arrival of the Spanish galleons at San Diego Bay, the landing of the explorers, the establishment of the first Mission by Father Junipero Serra. Act Two: took place at Carmel, the headquarters of the Mission system some 15 years later. Here, Father Serra carries on a meeting with the Padres and once this is completed a great fiesta is held. Act Three: was located at San Juan Capistrano Mission some 10 years later. Circa 1844.

Sheriff Don Franklin and August meeting speaker Dave Gillies.

The 1912 edition of the "Mission Play" ran for ten weeks to a standing room only audience. The people came by carriage or rode the Pacific Electric trains to the theatre. The second year the play ran for 26 weeks. During the year 1915, the time of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held at San Diego and the San Francisco World's Fair, the "Mission Play" ran the entire year. McGroarty, feeling the play had more statewide appeal, formed a road company and took the show to San Francisco. It ran to limited audiences. The road company then went on to Denver, and Chicago. It was not widely received. In the theatre they would say it "bombed." The "Mission Play" was misunderstood. The cast returned to San Gabriel where they were welcomed home.

The "Mission Play" remained a Southern California phenomenon. The old theatre of wood and tin was showing its age. A new theatre was proposed, to be called the Mission Playhouse Theatre. It was built west and north of the original theatre on Mission property. The play opened in the new Mission Playhouse Theatre

with its gigantic stage on March 5, 1927, and it ran for five years. It was finally closed in 1932, a victim of the Depression. The play was revived in 1947 and again in 1950, but both editions were financial failures. The Mission Playhouse Theatre was sold to a motion picture chain and remained a motion picture house until 1945. The City of San Gabriel purchased the theatre in 1945 and turned it into a civic auditorium.

Gillies' 45-minute illustrated presentation recalling the origin and run of the "Mission Play" and its author, John S. McGoarty, was well received.

Corral Chips (continued)...

Corral Member *Francis J. Weber* will be honored once again. The awards committee of the California Historical Society will bestow its "Fellow" award to him at their Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony to be held at San Francisco on September 21, 1991.

Doyce Nunis honored Corral Member *Thomas F. Andrews* on Sunday, September 1, on the occasion of his fifth anniversary as Executive Director of the Historical Society of Southern California. Doyce, a gourmet cook, prepared all kinds of goodies and finger food.

Los Angeles Corral's "Roaming Ambassador of Good Will," *Ray Wood*, is off once again to England and Scotland. He will visit Linlithgow Castle, birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots.

The Spring 1991 issue of the *Southern California Quarterly* is dedicated to Robert Francis Scherrer and was underwritten at the bequest of his estate. Bob, a Corral member for years, was at one time active at the Lummis Home, acting as handyman in the garden and keeping the plumbing in first-class condition. Your editor, a friend of Bob's executor, asked what Bob had left the Westerners, knowing his will mentioned a gift to the publication fund. He stated that the amount comes to approximately $1,000 to $1,500 depending on the disposal of his house and contents. Scherrer was interested in photography, gem polishing and bookbinding. He collected a houseful of books on Western History and mining.

Norman Neuerburg is on the speaker's circuit once again. He was on hand for the opening reception of a special exhibition entitled "Mission Memories," featuring contemporary paintings by Ellen Grim and mission-style decorative arts by Norman Neuerburg. The reception was held July 11, 1991, at the Santa Monica Heritage Museum. Norman's topic was "As artists saw the missions, 1790 to the present."

George Houle was interviewed by Brussels BRT-TV for their monthly program on films "Moviola." It was broadcasted March 13th and to be repeated this fall. He was also interviewed for a two page article entitled "Sign Here," for London's *Empire Magazine* dated January 1991. The magazine deals with film autographs and current collecting trends. He attended the 9th Annual Zane Grey West Society Convention held at Kanab, Utah, June 13-17, 1991.

According to the Los Angeles *Times* for Sunday, August 11, 1991, *Doyce Nunis* was mugged and robbed in Madrid. According to Nunis, "About 15 yards away were two security guards who shrugged and turned away when I cried for help. After canceling credit cards and traveler's checks, I went to the U.S. Embassy to obtain a new passport. There were 12 other Americans in need of the same. All were mugged/robbed that weekend. Their stories varied. But one thing was clear: The victims were either women or seniors. Three young women were mugged and robbed by five men who pulled knives. This is a warning to anyone planning a trip to the Olympics in Spain."

Robert Clark attended the Oregon/California Trails Association Conference in Sacramento in August, and spoke to the Book Club of Washington on September 19th on Western Americana. This was prior to the Seattle Antiquarian Bookfair September 20-21 in which the Clark Company exhibited. The Clark Company also moved into new quarters in Spokane. The telephone number and post office box are the same, and the new street address is E. 9017 Euclid, Spokane, WA 99212.

The Great Kite Flight of 1891

by Henry Welcome

This story takes place during the spring of 1891. A group of boys had gathered at the corner of Macy and Lyons streets, near downtown Los Angeles, and the band of boys had decided to make a large kite.

One of the boys involved in the story was my father Virgil Welcome. He was always mechanical, and during his lifetime held a number of patents. He had told me about his kite experience any number of times. Following World War II he told it to me again and I asked him to put down the facts. I found his notes among his papers on his death. Unfortunately, he failed to provide the names of the boys, if he could remember, or the field where they flew the kite. However, it had to be somewhere near the junction of the Arroyo Seco and the Los Angeles River.

There is always wind in the afternoon during the spring season. It was kite-flying time. One of the boys in the group suggested they build their own kite, a large one, bigger than the commercial variety. Perhaps a kite that was six or eight feet high. My father was a machinist apprentice at the time and 16 years of age. He got excited about building the kite. He proposed that they construct a kite 24 feet tall. The other boys were skeptical about a kite this size. After considerable discussion, they decided to go for it.

The following day the boys carefully selected the proper timbers and had them ripped to the proper size at the local planing mill. The dimensions of the kite sticks were one by four inches thick and 30 feet long. The boys carried the timbers about a mile to their work area. After carrying the wood that far several of the boys became skeptical about such a large kite, and began to ridicule my father as if he did not know what he was doing. Some of the boys were convinced that the kite would be impossible to fly. Whoever heard of a kite 24 feet high? For three evenings, the gang had a good time at my father's expense.

Sunday finally came. The boys began to construct their kite. As it was to be a barn door sized kite, three timbers were first laid upon the level ground, and bolted where they crossed. They were then cut to length, the upright at 24 feet and the two cross members a bit shorter. Each was then notched at both ends and a rope was stretched around the perimeter and secured to all notches so that each piece of lumber retained its proper position. As the kite came together, there was a lot of grumbling and some prophesying, particularily by one of the more influential members of the gang. He claimed the wind would never bear aloft such heavy timbers. Little was accomplished that day on account of the constant arguments and skepticism as to whether the kite would fly or not.

The frame was finally completed and the papering of the kite was begun. When the kite was partially finished, the boys discovered that the paper alone would never hold the strain. One of the boys, who was working as a painter and paperhanger, suggested covering the entire paper with a backing of cheesecloth to give it some body. This fellow, now a retired painting contractor living in Los Angeles, had already, at the age of 16, several years experience in the trade. There was no lack of enthusiasm, even though some were skeptical as to whether the kite would ever fly. As the kite lay there on the ground, it took no great imagination to see that the cloth backing would keep the kite paper from tearing apart. Cheesecloth cost very little those days, perhaps two cents per yard. The boys were willing to chip in for the cheesecloth. While most of the fellows were working, few received as much as 50 cents a week from their parents for pocket money. An employed youth in those days was expected to turn over his entire weekly wages to his family. If the head of the household felt it could be afforded, a pittance was returned to the young worker as his allowance. Therefore, it took considerable effort to get together the funds to buy the cheesecloth.

The cheesecloth was purchased and the paper was glued to the cloth. Upon completion of the kite, another pooling of funds was required in order to purchase the rope in order to fly the contraption. All during the following week the boys scraped their money together, until $2.35

was subscribed. With this amount, they walked downtown to the corner of Los Angeles and Commercial streets. Here was located Scovel Iron Company, a dealer in hardware. They looked over the coils of rope very carefully. When the clerk came up they asked him how much $2.35 would buy. He stated that buying the Manila rope the $2.35 would purchase about a quarter mile in length. The rope was bought.

The following day the boys turned out in force to finish the kite. Most of them were so excited in getting the kite into the air that they failed to bring along the requested gunny sacks for the tail. They had to return home for the sacks. The sacks, about a dozen in number, were stripped down and tied together, making a tail nearly 150 feet long. It was quickly found that the tail's weight was insufficient to properly balance the barn door sized kite. For added weight they decided to gather a bunch of weeds from a nearby field and tie them to the tail rope. This made the kite heavy enough to properly balance it in flight.

One of the gang had a rather extensive knowledge of knot tying, The time had come to attach the long rope to the kite. The braggard was rather vain about his ability to tie a hangman's knot. When this was revealed his companions had to have a hangman's knot tying the rope to the kite. With much twisting and turning he mastered the requested knot, which was then examined carefully by each boy in turn.

The first attempt to fly the kite had arrived. The wind was right. It took off then dove back toward the ground and wrapped itself around a house. It then lifted off and then wrapped itself around the chimney. The kite finally landing on its side. It was undamaged. The occupant of the house heard the kite land on his roof and came charging out of his house. It took considerable diplomacy to quiet his anxiety, and to retrieve the kite which was wrapped around his chimney.

The second flight was more successful. It flew for some time, and if the boys had had enough rope it could be flying even today. As soon as the rope was all played out it was hard to hang on to and control. The first big strong gust of wind broke the rope and the kite turned over slowly and fell into a barley field.

The rope had come untied. They ran into the field where the kite had fallen. When they came upon their kite, they were stunned to find a wreckage of paper, cheesecloth, and splinters. For some moments they just stood there looking down at the carnage. As their authority on knots arrived on the scene, he began to rummage through the disaster. He found his hangman's knot still in place and tied tightly. He held it up for living proof. It had held. It was learned that the rope had broken some distance below his knot.

For several nights the boys argued as to what had caused the accident. Every conceivable thought was advanced. Some said the wind was not strong enough. Others claimed the wind had gotten into the kite and separated the paper from the cheesecloth. Some contended the bellyband was too short. Others believed it was too long. The tail was too short or possibly not of sufficient weight. One boy's theory was that the weeds tied to the tail were too heavy. One boy insisted that the constant swinging of the tail in flight caused the unscrewing of the center bolt. To have listened to all these arguments, all delivered with raised voices, would have given anyone a liberal education in what was not true.

By the fifth night, the boys were searching their jeans for the means to purchase more kite timbers. One of the boys was a carpenter's apprentice. He spoke up, stating that the kite wood should be better braced. Also that the wood should be planed and not rough. He gave 57 reasons for this request, especially splinters would tear the paper. Many of the technical terms of his carpenter's trade were not truly understood by the rest of the boys.

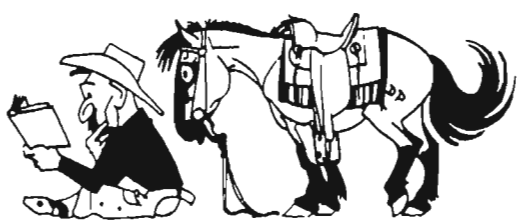
It was decided to start all over again. The following afternoon, when his work was over, one of the boys carried the new timbers, braces, and bolts to the construction site. With great enthusiasm, the gang went to work. The job was much easier this time because of past experience. By Sunday morning the final touches were put on the kite. By 4:00 P.M. the excited boys had their new kite in flight.

Swinging majestically from side to side, it flew well. Its gigantic size caught the eye of many people on the street, and before long a lot of bystanders were watching the kite. Many could not believe that the kite was 24 feet high, and that it was flying a quarter of a mile up in the sky.

As a little wind came up the kite rose rapidly. The rope began to grow taut. More than a dozen boys were desperately digging in their heels like

a tug-of-war team. Every once in a while the kite would get out of control and drag the boys down the street. One small lad, about 20 feet further up the rope than the rest, was all of a sudden lifted several yards into the air. He had to let go of the rope or remain airborne. All of a sudden the rope snapped due to the wind pressure. The kite turned upside down and then dove quickly toward the ground. Dropping the rope the gang ran swiftly into the barley field fully expecting to find their kite in good condition. When they came upon the point where the kite had hit the ground, once again, they found a pile of splinters, cheesecloth, and paper all in a wadded entanglement.

It was the same old story. Braces or no braces, bolts or no bolts, still total destruction. They thought they had engineered it incorrectly. No one ever blamed the rope. It had been a new one!



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

THE CALIFORNIOS VERSUS JEDEDIAH SMITH, 1826-1827: *A New Cache of Documents*, by David J. Weber. Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1990. 83 pp. Fold-out map. Cloth, $34.00. Available from Arthur H. Clark Company, P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, WA 99214-0707.

Historians and admirers of Jedediah Strong Smith will welcome with enthusiasm this new volume by David Weber, for it fills significant gaps in the story of Smith's 1826-1827 southwest expedition in California.

In his journal and subsequent writings Smith describes his treatment by the Mexican officials in acerbic terms and is most outspoken in his contempt for Mexican officialdom. The paucity of solid evidence presenting the Mexicans' side has prompted historians to base their writings on the words of Smith and Harrison Rogers, his second-in-command. However, there is evidence the Mexicans had their own frustrating problems with the strong-willed explorer.

Historians have long sought evidence clarifying these matters. Fortunately, Weber had the good fortune to locate two bundles of documents in the Mexican archives in 1984 and 1985, some of which refer to Smith and his party. They contain correspondence written by both Smith and Rogers, plus testimony taken by California authorities from four of Smith's party. From the Mexican side, there is correspondence by the California Governor Jose Maria Echeandia, as well as from the former California governor, Captain Luis Antonio Argüello, and from various officials at the local and federal levels.

These new records provide direct evidence that Smith was not always forthright and was sometimes derelict in reporting adverse incidents. In all fairness, it should be remarked that some of Jedediah's journal was confiscated and sent to Mexico City; too, Smith did not keep notes during part of his stay, perhaps out of deference to the Mexican officials, or to allay their suspicions that he was there to spy for the United States.

Seven of the discovered documents are reproduced by Weber in his book: four are in English, and three in Spanish. The latter have been freely translated by the author, with the Spanish-language originals reproduced in the Appendices.

In his introduction, explanatory text and in his copious footnotes the author carefully sets the stage for the introduction of the documents. He offers an excellent, concise summary of Smith's expedition and examines the perceived relationship between Smith and the Mexican authorities. He then gives a studied evaluation of the seven documents and how they might contribute to a revised assessment of Jedediah's relationship with the *californios*.

Weber points out there were other significant documents created during that period which could furnish much-needed material to flesh out the complete story of Smith's excursions into California. It is to be hoped Weber will again have the opportunity to introduce us to another valuable cache of papers from the Mexican archives.

The author comments at some length on the particular significance of the seven documents and alludes to others. As a suggestion, and not as a criticism of a work well done, perhaps there

would have been merit in including in the book a fully annotated inventory of all items found in the two packets (assuming this hasn't already been done elsewhere) for use by students of Smith and of that period.

This is Volume number XXII in the Western Frontiersmen Series—another of the fine books from the Arthur H. Clark Company. It is a limited edition of 1,000 copies, of which fifty have been specially bound, signed and numbered. The book was designed by Robert H. Clark.

Robert N. Huntoon

THOMAS O. LARKIN: *A Life of Patriotism and Profit in Old California*, by Harlan Hague and David J. Langum. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. 304 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $28.95. Available from University of Oklahoma Press, 105 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019.

Long overshadowed by the more flamboyant John C. Fremont, Thomas O. Larkin played a quiet but crucial role in the acquisition of California by the United States. The authors have mined the rich lode of Larkin papers at the Bancroft Library, and many other sources as well, to create a vivid authoritative account of a major figure in California history.

Larkin was in many ways a biographer's delight. He kept the letters he received as well as copies of most of the letters he wrote, along with business records, expense accounts, and other personal records. The depth of this material comes through in this study of Larkin's life, down to the prices paid for his real estate ventures, what others owed him, what he owed others, the books in his library, and countless other details that make his portrait come to life. Larkin emerges as a not particularly likeable fellow. Born in Massachusetts, he spent his early manhood years as an unsuccessful businessman in Delaware. It was after he joined a brother in California that he acquired his Midas touch in one enterprise after another. Always a sharp businessman, Larkin was known for his hospitality in Mexican California, but his social generosity was measured by the commercial contacts he could make. Some readers who only know Larkin by his presence in textbooks may be surprised at the circumstances of his marriage, which legitimized an adulterous relationship he initiated.

Larkin's greatest contributions, of course, are in his service to the cause of promoting an eventual annexation of California by the United States. His strategy was to gently persuade his fellow Californios of the practicability of an American connection, given the neglect of the Mexican government. Larkin's program of peaceful persuasion, however, was superseded by events beyond his control. The machinations of John C. Fremont, the arrogance of Archibald Gillespie, and the reaction of the Californios changed the Mexican War in California from peaceful acquisition to violent confrontation. Larkin deeply regretted this turn of events, as many of his Californio friends already favored American annexation. From Larkin's perspective, the arrest and detention of Mariano Vallejo was an absurdity perpetrated by drunken frontiersmen in a plot instigated or abetted by Fremont. History remembers it as the Bear Flag Revolt.

The authors make careful use of the Larkin papers, avoiding the pitfall of quoting too extensively from his letters, yet reproducing the apt quotation when the narrative calls for it. Larkin's spelling, to put it charitably, was unique, a detail that makes him all the more human. The book presents both the personal and political side of Larkin's life, warts and all, and it is highly recommended.

Abraham Hoffman

SESPE GUNSMOKE, by Charles F. Outland. Los Angeles and Ventura: The Arthur H. Clark Company and the Ventura County Museum of History and Arts, 1991. 181 pp.

In this "epic case of rancher versus squatters," the late Charles F. Outland (1910-1988) provides a well-documented account of the notorious

murder of Thomas Wallace More at his Sespe *rancho.*

In their accounts of earlier times, many chroniclers of the West have overlooked, distorted and even suppressed unpleasant events that exerted a lasting importance on succeeding generations. An example would be the vicious murder of March 24, 1877 which was characteristic of the Wild West.

The incident gained national prominence in following decades, even to the point of being discussed in European newspapers. As the trial of the alleged conspirators progressed, the story of conflict between rancher and squatters emerged as one that plagued much of the Southwest in the decades following the Mexican War.

Long obscured by subsequent historians anxious to downplay negative publicity and its effect on boosterism, this murder evolved into a classic account wherein battles over land, water and the rights of the lower class against landlords occasionally resulted in dark deeds carried out in secret.

In this well-written and carefully-researched volume, Outland reveals the names of the conspirators and then pursues them through subsequent years. The treatise is supplemented by illustrations, maps, a detailed list of characters and index.

Msgr. Francis J. Weber

THE COWGIRLS, by Joyce Gibson Roach. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1990 (reprint of 1977 edition). 261 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Paper, $15.95. Available from University of North Texas Press, c/o University Distribution, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354.

As the revolution for female equality was spreading across America in the mid 1800's, the leaders of the parade were the westering women who found themselves learning to cope with isolation and hard work raising cattle on the western frontier. They rode horses astride, inventing appropriate clothes for the purpose. They worked large ranches, with a man or without, in very solitary places. They undertook political responsibility—had the vote in some areas decades before Eastern feminists won their fight. Later one of their breed, Montana ranchwoman Jeanette Rankin, became our first national congresswoman.

Working a large ranch included roping, riding, shooting, branding, herding, castrating, birthing, breeding, trading, slaughtering, vaccinating, cooking, washing, teaching, doctoring cows and cowboys, while raising often very large families. While helping run a business, these ranch women had to carry a gun (or two!) to help bring law to a lawless "wild west."

The necessity for great courage and resourcefulness created a special breed of venturous and plucky women, each doing what was required in her place and time. Roach's research revealed a bevy of these "strenuous dames," as Propst would put it. And then there were the lady rustlers!—not many, but ingenious!

Entertainment for isolated ranchers was homemade—corral fun with roping, horse racing, bronc riding, shooting. In time, as more and more ranchers combined company for these roundups, prizes were collected for event winners. Though outnumbered and outsized, the women performed auspiciously in these rodeo games.

Then in 1882 William Cody was asked to arrange a roundup celebration with contesting cowboys to honor the Fourth of July. The next year Cody became "Buffalo Bill," and the Wild West Show was born; the working ranch women/rodeo queens had a third outlet for their talents.

Teddy Roosevelt once admired the extraordinary performance of a young ranchwoman in a show and coined the word "cowgirl." It stuck. But, as Roach warns, you wouldn't have used it on the original gal fifty years before—not if you valued your health!

This scholarly work is lively and delightfully readable for both buff and academician. It is well annotated and indexed, with an extensive bibliography and a generous collection of old photographs economically placed in the center of the volume.

Joyce Gibson Roach has written in several western fields. One of her two Spur awards from Western Writers of America was for *The Cowgirls.* She is also a recipient of the Carr P. Collins Award for nonfiction from the Texas Institute of Letters, is a member of the Texas Folklore Society as well as the TIL.

Esther Rudkin Novitski