WESTERNERS
LOS ANGELES CORRAL
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J. GOODMAN

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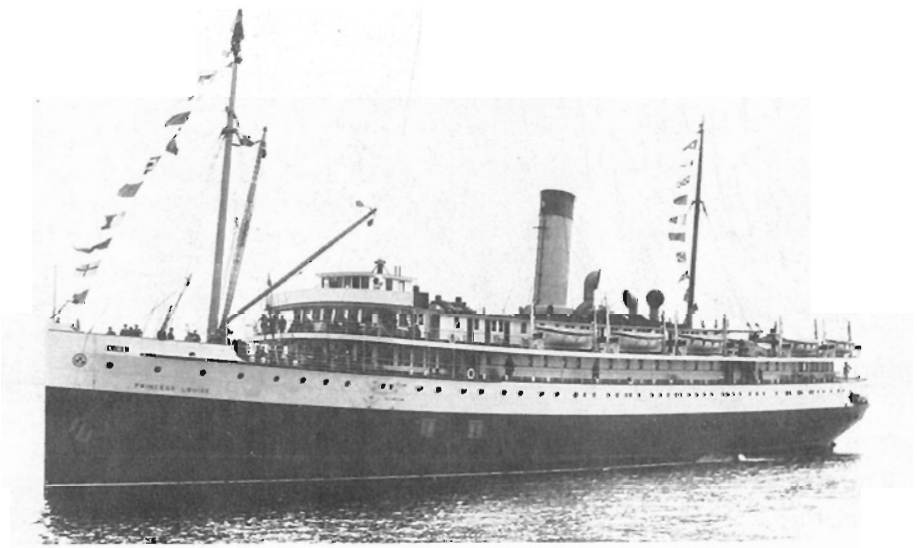

The steamer *Princess Louise* with her tall single funnel, high freeboard, and perpendicular bow. — *Canadian Pacific Archives.*

Death of a Princess

by Robert V. Schwemmer

Five o'clock in the evening on June 19, 1990, I received a phone call from Pat Smith (author, *Shipwrecks of Southern California*) who invited me to witness an historical event, the planned sinking of an ex-Canadian Pacific Railway steamer. With a great deal of time and thought—about three seconds—I agreed to accept the invitation. The first order of business was to make a small investment into the film products of the Kodak Company so that I could document on film the final chapter of this one-time "Queen of the Northern Seas."

On Wednesday, June 20, 1990, just after daybreak we arrived by boat at the Terminal Island facility of Southwest Marine, Inc. located in the Port of Los Angeles. Still securely tied to the wharf's bollards, a ship who's nearly perpendicular bow spoke of her early century design, was being prepared for its final voyage. This voyage was not to be of her own steam because her triple expansion four cylinder engine had long been removed in 1965. When this happened, this once sleek 317-foot ship of the Canadian

(Continued on Page Three)

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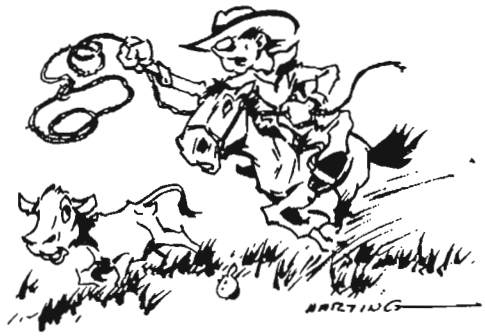
THE BRANDING IRON solicits articles of 2,500 words or less, dealing with every phase of the Old West. Contributions from members and friends welcomed.



THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

by Abraham Hoffman

DECEMBER 1991 MEETING

In keeping with the fiftieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Corral heard Konrad F. Schreier speak on "Remember Pearl Harbor?" His talk focused on events in southern California in the two weeks following the attack. Few military photographs are available to this day from that period, as any pictures of military importance were collected by the authorities. The absence of pictures reflects the foibles and fears of Americans on the Pacific Coast facing an unseen enemy that never showed up.

Just before the fateful date, a military exercise was planned for southern California, set to begin on December 8th. Practice became reality on the 7th. At 11:35 a.m., Fort MacArthur officially learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Most people heard about it around noon. Many of them, however, at first thought it was an "Orson Welles" type announcement. Confusion and wild rumors soon spread. Los Angeles radio stations stopped reporting weather conditions, local newspapers started censoring their news, and reports of ship movements ceased until the war ended. All commercial and civilian aircraft were grounded. Automobile travel was soon restricted, and people traveled by mass transit instead. Armed guards ringed the harbor, critical installations, and water works. The Japanese, of course, were nowhere around, having accomplished their task of sinking U.S. battleships thousands of miles to the west.

New leadership emerged overnight in Cali-

(Continued on Page Fifteen)

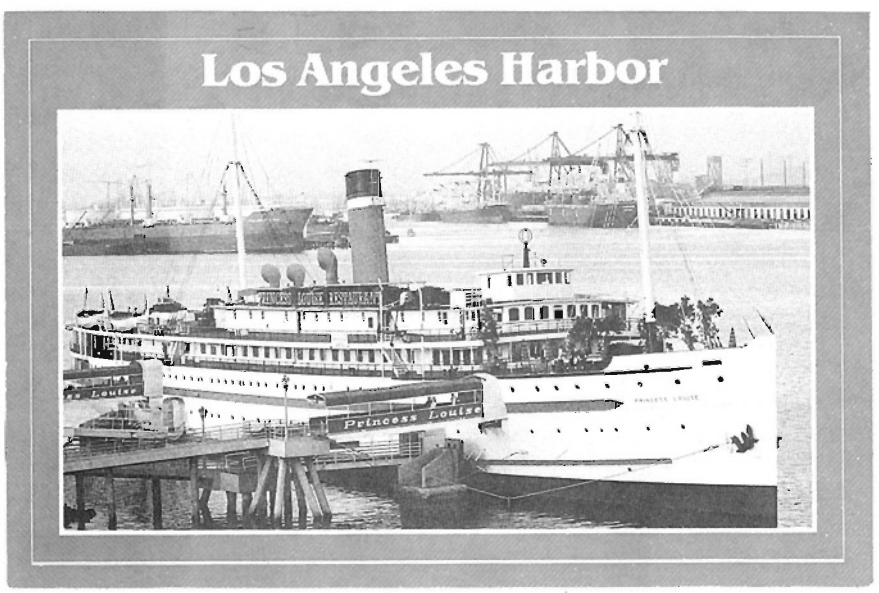
Pacific Railway ended her career as a coastwise steamer. With her engine removed, she remained in North Vancouver until 1966 when she was towed to Los Angeles and moored at Terminal Island, Berth 236, as a floating restaurant. She was operated under her christened name, *Princess Louise.*

In 1979, to allow for expansion of container crane docks on Terminal Island, the *Princess Louise* was relocated straight across the main channel to Berth 94. The *Louise* may have hosted dock side cruises to nowhere, but she still offered nostalgic glimpses into the maritime past with lavish nautical decor and beautiful hardwood appointments.

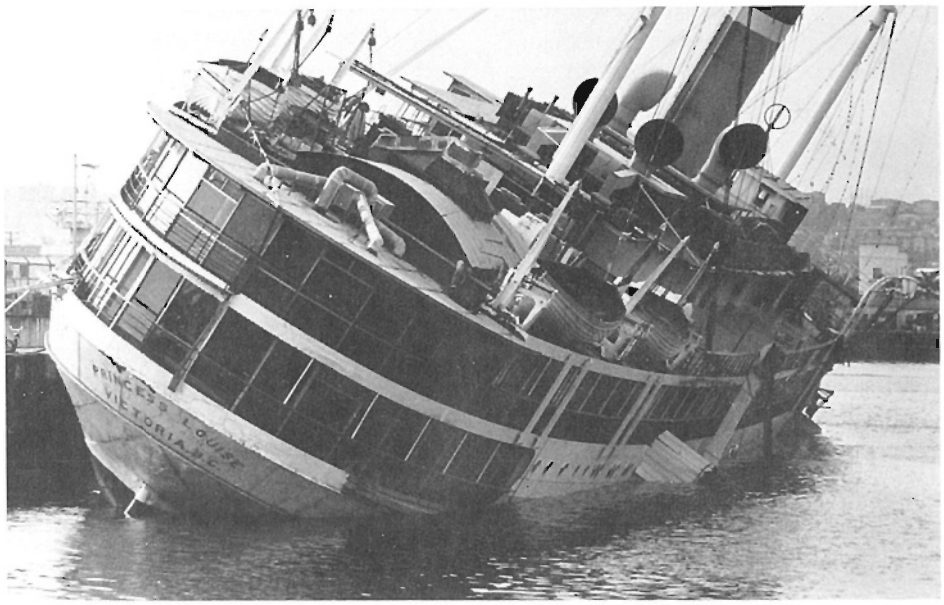
In her new location, the *Princess Louise* continued to offer dinners, banquets and even new beginnings through marriages performed on board. On October 30, 1989, just when the *Princess Louise* was about to receive a new lease on life, she suddenly, without warning, capsized at Southwest Marine's Terminal Island Berth 241. The sinking was thought to be caused by the de-watering of a port side ballast tank to purposely make the ship list, so repairs below her normal waterline could be performed.

With the *Princess Louise* lying flat on her starboard side in 24 feet of water, her owners hired TriNav Shipping, a salvage company based in Vancouver, Canada to attempt to recover the vessel. Surveys indicated that it seemed quite unlikely that the ship could be refloated and repaired for a reasonable sum, so the owners looked for some positive use for the *Louise.* After talks with the Greater Los Angeles Council of Divers (GLACD) and the California Department of Fish and Game, it became the desire of the owners to give Southern California a new artificial reef by sinking the *Princess Louise* off the L.A. coastline at Point Vicente. With the ship placed on the sea floor it would enhance and support a new marine like community. Both scuba divers and fishermen would reap the benefits of this new reef system. The owner's decision did not go without some dissension from various Canadian and United States Historical groups who wanted to attempt towing the *Princess Louise* back to Vancouver for restoration as a floating maritime theme park. But with the lack of guaranteed funding, as well as the ship being unseaworthy for the 1,161 mile trip north, the owners declined their offer.

On June 19, 1990, nearly eight months after the *Princess Louise* capsized at Terminal Island, and many unsuccessful attempts by TriNav Shipping to refloat her, the ship finally was righted. During the time it took to refloat the ship, various antique fixtures (such as brass portholes and the ship's double stern wheel) were looted, supposedly by a small band of local divers.



Postcard of *Princess Louise* as a restaurant at Berth 94 in Los Angeles Harbor. — *Robert Schwemmer Collection.*



Princess Louise capsized on October 30, 1989 at Southwest Marine Terminal Island Berth 241. — *Robert Schwemmer Collection.*

Willem G. Boelman, owner of TriNav Shipping, claimed the items looted from the ship to be valued at $50,000. Working with the Los Angeles Police Department, Boelman recovered some of the items which were reported as removed from the ship.

Discouraged by the vandalization, it became Boelman's intention not to sink the *Princess Louise* as an artificial reef, but to sell the hull to a salvage company in Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico, for $175,000. On June 18, 1990, the Mexican salvage company purchased another vessel and was no longer interested in purchasing the *Louise*. With the loss of the Mexican buyer, Boelman reconsidered and reoffered the *Princess Louise* to the California Fish and Game Department for their artificial reef program for $1.00. With concerns about the structural integrity of the ship for scuba diver penetration, and the limited time to accept, the Fish and Game Department declined the offer. With limited options, Boelman sought and received permission from the Environmental Protection Agency to sink the *Princess Louise* in deep water offshore. The agency directed TriNav to sink the vessel in 5,000 feet of water in an area on the backside of Catalina Island.

As the sun started to peak over the horizon on June 20, 1990, the *Princess Louise's* fantail was illuminated with the golden early morning sun rays, bringing the summer warmth to her wooden decks for the last time. Seeing this once beautiful ship in her now dilapidated condition from the eight month submersion, I could not help but think back to how striking she must have been at her launching almost seventy years earlier.

The *Princess Louise* was the second such ship of the Canadian Pacific Railway to carry the name of Queen Victoria's daughter. The original *Princess Louise*, owned by George S. Wright, was a 932-ton, 180′ x 30′ x 13′ side-wheel steamer built in 1869 by John English & Sons of New York as the *Olympia*. This steamer was sold to the Hudson's Bay Company on July 9, 1878, for $75,000. Almost one year later, on June 28, 1879, HBCo changed her name to *Princess Louise*. Later in 1883, the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co. became the new owners of the vessel when the syndicate headed by Commodore John Irving merged with the Marine division of the Hudson's Bay Co. The little steamer with her single-cylinder walking-beam engine went on to serve a short spell with the Canadian Pacific Railway (1901-1906) after the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co. was bought by CPR in 1901.

In 1901, the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co., with its fleet of fourteen ships was purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in

their attempt to improve steamship service in British Columbia. Captain J.W. Troup was named manager of the British Columbia Coast Service of the Canadian Pacific Railway, due to his experience in setting up the CPR river and lake services. In order to modernize the fleet, most of the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co. vessels where sold and replaced with the soon-to-be-famous *Princess* steamers. The side-wheel steamer *Princess Louise* was sold by CPR in 1906 to Vancouver Dredging & Salvage Co. to be used as a barge. In 1916 she was sold again to Britannia Mining & Smelting Co., who in turn sold her to Whalen Pulp & Paper Mills Ltd. She eventually sank at Port Alice in 1919.

By 1914, Captain J.W. Troup had a fleet of thirteen ships, eleven Princess liners built and two purchased. The two purchased ships serviced the Pacific Northwest from Seattle to Skagway. During the first World War the CPR had two ships being completed at Clyde, the *Princess Irene* and the *Princess Margaret*. These ships were put in the service of the Admiralty and converted into minelayers. They performed this task well because of their speed and maneuverability. Neither the *Princess Irene* nor the *Princess Margaret* were destined to see the British Columbia Coast, for in 1915 the *Irene* sank from an internal explosion while carrying mines and the *Margaret* remained as flagship of the minelaying flotilla.

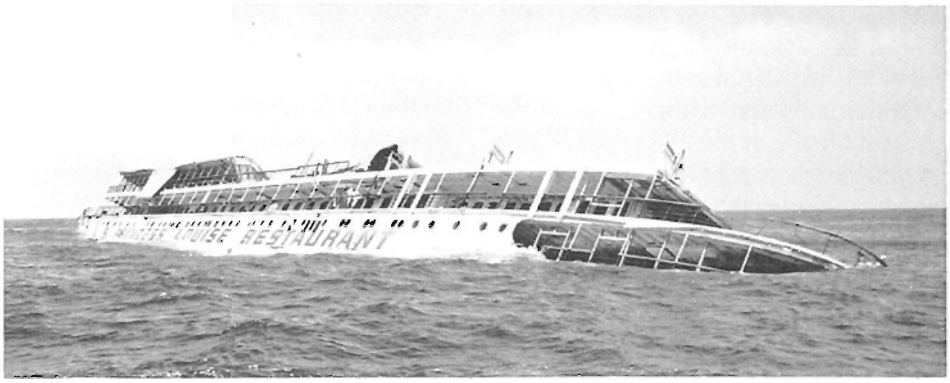
Between the years of 1922 and 1931 eight more passenger ships were ordered to replace half of the Princess fleet that had exceeded their intended life span. Captain Troup was concerned that the British shipyards could not guarantee the dates of delivery on his ships because of the increased shipbuilding activity after the war. British shipyards were also burdened with labor strikes which added to the delays in meeting their completion dates. In 1920 Troup, looking for other ship building resources within Canada's borders, selected a British Columbia based yard to build his next ship. The shipyard had performed well during the war, maintaining good quality control standards. Wallace Shipbuilding & Drydock Company of North Vancouver was awarded the contract in October 1920 to build the new *Princess Louise*, named after the side-wheeler once owned by Canadian Pacific Navigation. This new vessel would replace the *Princess Sophia* on the Alaska run.

Robert Allan, the superintendent of the Wallace shipbuilding yard, completed the detailed drawings based on a preliminary design effort by Troup. The 4,032 gross-ton steel-hulled *Louise* was to have a length of 317.2 feet, breadth 48.1 feet and a depth of 34.6 feet and she included features such as water controlled ballast tanks. Up to 1921, the *Louise* was the largest passenger ship built in British Columbia and included the largest engines ever built there. The dimensions of her steam powered triple-expansion four cylinder engine were 28", 43", & (2) 50"-39". It was designed by A.F. Menzies and built by Wallace Ship Building & Drydock Co. Ltd. Unlike the previous British-built Princesses, she had a higher freeboard and a tall single funnel which set her apart from the three stackers.

Her interior finishes were considered antiquated for the most part. She had a total of 264 berths of which 133 were first class staterooms. The first class staterooms included hot and cold running water, a new innovation among steamers of that era. Overall the *Louise* was known to her passengers as a comfortable ship and offered both a library and an observation room for their relaxation.

The *Princess Louise* was launched on August 29, 1921 and christened by Mrs. Troup. During sea trials in November, she cruised at a steady 17.48 knots with her powerful triple-expansion engine developing 4,805 indicated horse power. This was an outstanding performance by the *Louise* and spoke well for her builder, for her engine was designed to develop only 4,000 horse power and 16 knots.

The first assignment for the *Princess Louise* was not her proposed service route to Alaska. Instead, she was put on the night run between Vancouver and Victoria. This route was only one leg of the famed Canadian Pacific Railway "Triangle route" which served Seattle-Victoria-Vancouver. During the daylight hours, one would find mostly tourists taking advantage of the cruise through the inland passageways to catch the breath taking views. Passengers on the evening run were mainly business people and commuters who took advantage of CPR's "frequent and convenient scheduling." In 1922, during the summer months, the *Louise* left British Columbia with tourists for a cruise to Alaska. This cruise would be only the first of many, for she would plow these soon-to-be-



Princess Louise beginning her descent to the bottom, 600 feet below, outside Los Angeles Harbor breakwater. — *Photo by Robert Schwemmer.*

familiar inland waterways for the next four decades. Throughout that time, the *Louise* was known to her regular passengers as a mellow and friendly steamer. For the 1922 season, the *Princess Louise* was not alone on the Vancouver-Skagway route; she shared it with the 290-foot *Princess Alice.*

Considering the numerous narrow passages, swift currents and frequent fogs that the steamers had to navigate on the Skagway run, it's surprising that the *Princess Louise* was only involved in one major incident during her nearly four decade career. On October 26, 1929, the *Princess Marguerite* and *Princess Louise* were navigating the Haro Strait off Vancouver Island. The crew of the *Marguerite* noticed that the *Princess Louise* had changed direction and was now headed on a collision course with them. Why the *Louise* changed course is a mystery, but had it not been for the *Marguerite's* powerful geared-turbine engines responding to this life threatening predicament, the *Louise's* ramming could have been fatal. Unfortunately for the *Princess Marguerite,* this was not to be her last brush with death. On August 17, 1942 Captain Kraus of the German U-boat, *U83,* fired a torpedo into her hull while she was on a voyage from Port Said to Cyprus in the Mediterranean, which caused her to burn and ultimately sink. As for the *Princess Louise*, she continued to maintain service to Skagway for the Canadian Pacific Railway up until the early sixties.

In 1960 the Provincial Government became a tough competitor with the Princess line, offering "roll on-roll off" ferries with bow and stern loading capacities, capable of more efficiently handling higher volumes of automobiles, trucks, buses and larger cargoes. Port facilities were erected adjacent to new Government built highways. These highways gave access to waterways which were previously restricted and ultimately shortened the ferry ocean routes. Passengers gave up the plush ambiance of the Princess steamers for convenience and faster service of the Government ferries. The Canadian Pacific Railway management found it difficult to compete against some of the Government owned ferry routes and decided to sell off some of their Princess steamships.

In the summer of 1962, the *Princess Louise* cruised her last voyage through the straits and sounds of British Columbia and Alaska. In September she was pulled from service, docked at Lynn Terminal in North Vancouver and put up for sale. A potential buyer for the *Louise* surfaced in 1963. A Vancouver syndicate negotiated to have the ship refitted as a restaurant and relocated to Tsawwassen Beach. The sale fell through. Two years later, in 1965, she was sold to new buyers who also had plans of turning her into a restaurant. A Los Angeles based company, called the Princess Louise Corporation, was formed by the new American owners. A representative of the company, Jerry Sutton, coordinated the removal of the *Louise's* triple expansion four cylinder engine, as well as her four blade propellers that had plowed so many miles through the frigid waters of Alaska and British Columbia. With the machinery removed, the *Princess Louise* left Canada on April 28, 1966 in tow for Los Angeles, never to be seen in Canadian waters again.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles she went through a considerable renovation so that her decks

would be better suited to accommodate Southern California diners. Her cabins along the promenade deck, which were always considered to be too small, were removed for expansion of the dining areas. From the forward observation room the windows were extended to the stern of the ship for additional enclosed dining area. After the *Princess Louise* received a coat of white paint on her exterior, she was ready to open for business at Terminal Island, Berth 236. In September 1966, after four years of uncertainty, a bon voyage party was thrown on her decks to announce her new carreer as a floating restaurant. Once again the *Princess Louise's* gangways were opened to the public.

On June 20, 1990, another bon voyage party of sorts was being prepared on the forward deck of the *Princess Louise*, by the salvage crew that was finally successful in refloating her. With pumps drawing water from the depths of her hull, and plywood patches over her portholes and loading doors to hold out the sea, the *Louise* was ready for her final voyage. Just after 8:00 AM, the *Louise* broke from the dock with assistance from the 61' tug *Swanee* that took her under tow and a second tug that was guiding her stern. A third tug, the 46' *Mule,* was securely tied to the *Princess Louise* and traveled abreast of her port side supplying the needed power to continue pumping the water from her hull. As the *Louise* left Southwest Marine's dock, a United States Coast Guard patrol boat motored on her port side and a Port Police boat moved up on her starboard, both with flashing lights warning other vessels in the area. As the *Princess Louise* cleared Angel's Gate at the entrance to Los Angeles Harbor, it was as though the lighthouse, with its mighty fog horn blaring, was giving tribute to the ship that it had welcomed twenty four years earlier. The seas outside the breakwater were relatively calm with a small swell from the southwest, as the *Louise* continued her trip, now only attended by the tugs *Swanee* and *Mule.* With the small flotilla of boats and the helicopter carrying reporters now gone, there would be few people to witness her last moments. It was as though the *Louise* wanted to die now and not go through with the thirty hour tow planned for her. By clogging the pumps with the debris in her hull she ultimately won this battle. The decision was made only five hours into her journey, to remove the pumps and remaining crew aboard her for the assurance of their safety.

At 2:00 PM, with the tugs now a safe distance away, the *Princess Louise* without the support of her pumps, was exhibiting a more drastic list to starboard. With her port side lower deck portholes well submerged it was obvious that it was only a matter of minutes before the *Louise* would take her final plunge. My emotions were driven by both the adrenaline of the excitement of the moment and the sadness as a part of maritime history was to pass away. All of a sudden, with a moaning sound coming from deep within her hull, the *Louise,* nearly on an even keel, started rolling to starboard and began her plunge to the bottom 600 feet below. As the last ten feet of her structure was about to submerge into the Pacific, a tremendous roar came from within ship, as water pushed by escaping air and, spraying like geysers, shot from her ports thirty feet into the air. Before my eyes the *Princess Louise* disappeared, leaving only a welter of foaming water behind to mark her departure. In the background you could hear the air horns sounding from the tugs *Swanee* and *Mule* paying her a final salute. Suddenly, as the froth of her sinking was subsiding, wooden hatch covers and handrails rocketed into the air like missiles launched from a submarine. I guess the *Louise* wanted to give her own final salute as well.

The *Princess Louise* is a memory. — *Photo by Robert Schwemmer.*

Placerita Canyon
California's First Gold Rush

by John W. Robinson

Plaque commemorating the 1842 gold discovery in Placerita Canyon. Since its placement in 1930, vandals have removed it. — *Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.*

Francisco Lopez was tired. He and his servant had spent most of the morning tracing stray horses from nearby Rancho San Francisco. It was midday as they rode up a shallow canyon dotted with huge oak trees. They stopped for lunch and a siesta under one of the canyon's magnificent live oaks. Upon awakening, Lopez remembered that his aunt, co-owner of the rancho, had asked him to bring back some wild onions. He pulled out his sheath knife and dug up a cluster of onions. He noticed some yellow particles clinging to the roots. Digging into the surrounding soil, Lopez found more flecks of yellow metal. He filled his *mochila* (saddle bag) with the yellow substance and hurried back to the rancho, where he determined that the flecks were gold. Next morning Lopez and his aunt rode to Mission San Fernando and on to Los Angeles with news of his discovery.[1]

The canyon where Francisco Lopez made his discovery was three miles east of present-day Santa Clarita, in the western foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. The date was March 9, 1842. The result was California's first gold rush.

Francisco Lopez was no ordinary *vaquero* (cowboy). He was a well-educated member of a prominent Californio family. His father, Juan Francisco Lopez, was a leading citizen of Los Angeles and a Latin scholar of no mean ability. His mother, Doña Delores of the prominent Salgado family, was a teacher. His aunt, Doña Jacoba Feliz y Lopez del Valle, was the owner, with her son Ygnacio del Valle, of Rancho San Francisco, granted to her late husband Antonio del Valle in 1839. Francisco's brother Pedro Lopez was *mayordomo* (general manager) of Mission San Fernando. Young Francisco himself, displaying a scholarly bent, had been sent to Mexico City for an education. There he had attended the famous *Colegio de Mineria* and learned the technique of prospecting and mining for valuable minerals. Lopez returned to Southern California well versed in mineralogy. In 1840, he accompanied the renowned Mexican mineralogist Andres Castillero when the latter visited Southern California. Castillero found *tepate* (water-worn pebbles of iron pyrite) near San Fernando, which suggested a strong likelihood of placer gold in the area. According to a Lopez descendent, young Francisco obtained mining tools and began searching for placer gold around San Fernando and Rancho San Francisco[2]—a fact which suggests that the traditional story of his accidental discovery of gold while digging for onions may be a simplification of what actually occurred.

News of the gold discovery spread rapidly among Californios from Santa Barbara to San Diego, and within a few weeks scores of eager

Oak of the Golden Dream, by which Francisco Lopez is said to have found gold in wild onion roots. — *Photo by John W. Robinson.*

prospectors were engaged in digging, washing and winnowing the canyon gravels. Historian H. H. Bancroft reported that by May "the dirt, with a scanty supply of water, was paying two dollars per day to each man engaged in mining."[3] The canyon of the discovery became known as "Placeritas" (Little Placers), and it turned into the first mining camp in California. Today, it is still known as Placerita Canyon.

Since Placerita Canyon was within the generally recognized boundaries of Rancho San Francisco, the *Ayuntamiento*, or Town Council, of *El Pueblo de Los Angeles* commissioned Ygnacio del Valle, co-owner of the rancho, as *Encargado Justicia* (Justice in charge), with authority over the mining region. He was ordered to keep order at the mines, empowered to collect a small fee from the miners for pasturage and firewood, and told not to permit the sale of illicit liquor at the diggings. Thus, for the first time in California history, we have a record of law and order being established in a gold mining area.[4]

The first gold from Placeritas was sent by Lopez and two companions to Governor Alvarado in Santa Barbara. Tradition says that Alvarado used this first gold to make earrings for his wife. Lopez and two associates petitioned the governor for mineral rights to the canyon, but there is no evidence that this request was ever granted.

The following year (1843) Lopez discovered more gold placers in San Feliciano Canyon, also on Rancho San Francisco and about eight miles west of the Placerita diggings. A second rush took place.

Also in 1843, Lopez escorted a visitor from Mexico, Francisco Garcia, to the locations of the two discoveries. Señor Garcia returned to Sonora, Mexico, and six months later came back with 30 Sonoran *gambucinos*, experienced placer miners. The Sonorans quickly demonstrated their skill. In San Feliciano Canyon, they reportedly took out 212 pounds of gold, weighed by David Alexander, Los Angeles merchant, who in 1855 made an affidavit to that effect. Sonoran Jose Salazar reportedly recovered $12,000 worth of gold in several years work.[5]

The first parcel of California gold dust ever coined at the United States Mint in Philadelphia was taken from these San Fernando Placers, as the mines became known. A quantity of 18.34 ounces of gold belonging to Los Angeles merchant Abel Stearns was shipped around Cape Horn and deposited at the mint on July 8, 1843. Its value after coining was $344.75, over $19 to the ounce.[6] Abel Stearns continued for several years to receive gold dust and nuggets from the San Fernando Placers for transmittal to the U.S. Mint.

The early mining at Placeritas and San Feliciano was slow, painstaking and wasteful. A sheath knife was utilized to dig up the gold-bearing gravels, which were then washed in a shallow wooden bowl known as a *batea*.

The experienced Sonoran *gambucinos* brought improved methods to the placers. The *gambucinos*, it was said, were able to determine if gold was present merely by looking at the gravels of the streambed. They used a large curved tool made from a bull's horn—known as a horn spoon—to scoop out gold-bearing gravel, along with picks and shovels. Their *batea* was much larger than that used by the first miners. These techniques allowed them to recover placer gold at four times the rate of their predecessors.

Miners working the Placerita and San Feliciano placers were often handicapped by the lack of water. Streams ran only after abundant rainfall, which in some years was almost nil, and in the best of years was sufficient to provide running water for only three or four months. This proved no major problem to the Sonorans, who were well versed in the methods of dry mining they had long used in arid northern Mexico. When the streams disappeared, the *gambucinos* extracted the gold by dry-washing, or winnowing. The pay dirt would be dug up and spread on a sheet of coarse cloth. When completely dry, the soil was pounded into dust and tossed up by the panful. The heavy gold dust would then fall back into the pan and the dirt, in the form of dust, would blow away. There was a variation of this process when the gold-bearing material was gravel. The gravel would be shovelled onto the sheet of cloth. Four men would take hold of the corners of the cloth and, working in unison, shake it vigorously, bringing the pebbles and dirt to the surface. The pebbles would be picked out and the dirt and sand brushed away carefully by hand. The residue would then be placed in large *bateas*. A *gambucino* would then securely hold the *batea*, toss its contents four feet in the air, and blowing at it as it descended back into the bowl. This process would be repeated until the sand and dust disappeared, leaving the heavier gold at the bottom of the bowl. An observer marveled, "Easy as the operation appeared to be, I learned, from inquiry, that to perform it successfully required the nicest management, the greatest perseverance, and especially robust lungs."[7]

Andrew Anderson, who arrived in Southern California in 1844, claimed he was the first American to mine in Placerita Canyon. He also claimed that he was the first miner to utilize a gold-washing machine at the site. Anderson described his machine as a metal cylinder, three feet in diameter, with "crow teeth" on the inside, turned manually by a crank. He stayed at the Placers for 14 days and boasted that he recovered two pounds of gold for his efforts.[8]

The San Fernando Placers were worked continuously until the interruption of the American conquest in 1847, and intermittently after that. No authentic data exists as to the total value of gold recovered. William Heath Davis, in his *Seventy-Five Years in California*, places the amount at $80,000 to $100,000 for the first two years after discovery. Abel Stearns states that from the time of discovery until 1847, "Some six or eight thousand dollars were taken out per annum." Bancroft says that "By December 1843, 2,000 ounces of gold (about $38,000) had been taken from the San Fernando Mines."[9]

Following the distractions of the American occupation and the great Mother Lode gold rush in northern California, prospectors once again drifted into the San Fernando placer fields. In 1855, the Placerita and San Feliciano mining camps once again came to life, and new placers were discovered and worked at *Castaca* (near present-day Castaic). The Los Angeles *Star* of December 3, 1859 reported that "Miners are now at work in the San Fernando hills rolling out the gold. In the hills beyond, discoveries have been made which prove the whole district to be one grand gold placer." But the *Star* was far too optimistic, for the San Fernando placers never again were the scene of gold excitement, although mining on a limited scale did continue for years.

Francisco Lopez's gold discovery site in Placer-

Francisca Lopez de Bederrain (second from right), descendent of gold discoverer Francisco Lopez. -- *Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.*

ita Canyon, tucked within the foothills at the extreme western end of the San Gabriels, has been commemorated on several occasions. On the first anniversary of the discovery, in 1843, a high mass was celebrated at the discovery site. Many members of the Lopez family, as well as many Angelinos, attended. Seventy-one years later, in 1914, members of the Lopez family, headed by Doña Catalina Lopez, niece of Francisco, gathered for a family picnic at the same spot and listened to Doña Catalina relate the story of that first mass, which she had attended as a girl of 14.[10] On March 9, 1930 the Native Sons of the Golden West placed a plaque honoring the gold discoverer under what they considered the very tree where Francisco Lopez dug up the gold-bearing onions. The huge tree was named "The Oak of the Golden Dream." Today the discovery site is within the Placerita Canyon State and County Park, to preserve for posterity the first authenticated gold discovery in California.

While covering these San Fernando placers, mention should be made of the legendary "Lost Padres" gold mine, supposedly worked by Indians to bring fabulous wealth to the padres at Mission San Fernando. The fable of a lost gold mine worked in the early 1800's, located somewhere in the mountains north of Mission San Fernando, has been the object of intense interest for more than a century. One version of the tale has the mine located in Pacoima Canyon, under the waters of the present flood control reservoir. Another version appeared in the Pasadena *Union* of October 29, 1887: "30 miles up Tejunga [Big Tujunga Canyon] is said to be the location of the 'Mina de los Padres,' of which nothing is known save the traditions of the hardships of the peons, the fabulous wealth of the mine and the final revolt of the Indians who massacred the padres and removed all traces of which would lead to the discovery and reopening of the mine." There were those who believed that the padres of Mission San Fernando had hidden away great quantities of gold for their private use. After the demise of the mission and before its restoration, treasure hunters dug extensively on the mission grounds. A 1904 visitor reported huge holes excavated within the church itself; even the main altar was not spared. As late as 1915, vandals were reported searching for golden treasures "buried in the bosoms of dead monks" interred within the confines of the mission grounds.[11] Although the story of the Los Padres Mine is undoubtedly pure fable, it remains a part of the rich folklore of the San Gabriel Mountains.

NOTES

[1]There are many accounts of Francisco Lopez's 1842 gold discovery in Placerita Canyon. I have relied mainly on descendent Francisca Lopez Belderrain, "First to Gold in California," *Touring Topics*, Nov. 1930; Charles J. Prudhomme, "Gold Discovery in California," *Annual Publication of The Historical Society of Southern California*, 1922; and J. M. Guinn, "Early Gold Discoveries in Southern California," *Ibid.*, 1893. For a thorough study of pre-1848 gold discoveries in California, see Emil T. H. Bunje and James C. Kean, *Pre-Marshall Gold in California* (Berkeley, W.P.A. Project, 1938), reprinted, Sacramento, 1983.

[2]Belderrain.

[3]H. H. Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco, 1886), Vol. IV, p. 297.

[4]Arthur Woodward, "First Gold Discovery in California," *History Leaflet*, Los Angeles County Museum, No. 5, 1949.

[5]Belderrain.

[6]J. M. Guinn, "The Gold Placers of Los Angeles," *Land of Sunshine*, July 1896, p. 61.

[7]Bunje and Kean, p. 19.

[8]Los Angeles *Star*, August 11, 1860.

[9]William Heath Davis, *Seventy-Five Years in California* (San Francisco, 1929), p. 159; Guinn, p. 61.

[10]Belderrain.

[11]Msgr. Francis J. Weber, *The Mission of the Valley: A Documentary History of San Fernando Rey de Espana* (Santa Barbara, 1987), p. 36.

A PALA MEMOIR

by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

During the preparation of a book on the California *asistencias* or assistant missions, a rather significant memoir was unearthed about San Antonio de Pala. It was written in late 1913 by Father Peter Wallischeck, a Franciscan once described in the *Santa Barbara News Press* as "a kindly man with an ever ready smile and friendly greeting."

The friar was well-loved and highly-respected in Santa Barbara where, it is recorded, "his habit was silhouetted against the sidewalks of State Street for nearly 40 years."

Born in Weisloch, Germany, April 4, 1852, the youngster was brought to the United States where, in 1868, he entered Saint Joseph's College, Teutopolis, Illinois, as a candidate for the Order of Friars Minor.

The youthful priest taught for 15 years in Illinois before affiliating himself to the Franciscan community in Santa Barbara. In 1896, he inaugurated Saint Anthony's Seminary and remained on as president until 1912.

In that latter year, Father Peter was made superior at San Luis Rey Mission and there he started a boarding school. Three years later, he returned to Santa Barbara, where he labored for the rest of his life.

The kindly old priest lived until May 28, 1936, by which time he had been a Franciscan for 63 years and a priest for 56 years. He is buried in the old mission cemetery.

Sometime in late 1913, Father Peter wrote the following memoir about the *asistencia* of San Antonio de Pala, probably at the behest of Father Zephyrin Engelhardt. A transcript of that document was entrusted to the Archival Center, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, by the late Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M.

> Pala Mission, as it is now generally called, though it was never a mission properly speaking, is situated about twenty miles east of San Luis Rey in a very fertile valley. Low mountains surround this valley forming, as it were, a frame for the beautiful landscape.

In the mission days a great number of Indians lived in this valley. In order to christianize them, and to provide better for their spiritual wants, it was considered expedient to build a church for them.

Fr. Antonio Peyri, the superior of Mission San Luis Rey, therefore, decided that an *asistencia*—that is to say, a chapel with a visiting *padre*—should be erected at Pala.

Fr. Antonio Peyri.

Work on the church and residence was commenced in 1816, and the church placed under the patronage of St. Anthony of Padua, the Wonderworker of the world, as Charles Warren Stoddard calls this saint.

There is one feature that is unique in the construction of this church or chapel. The belfry or campanile is entirely separated from the main building. Two large mission bells are suspended in the openings, the sound of which is carried to a great distance, calling the Indians for divine service.

This mission, like the mother-mission, San Luis Rey, was prosperous from the beginning. Two years had hardly elapsed when the Baptismal Records showed a thousand names enrolled.

Fr. Peyri did not only have the spiritual welfare of his children at Pala at heart, he

also provided for their material prosperity.

Seeing that some system of irrigation was imperative, he designed and constructed an aqueduct, or waterditch, which even now elicits the admiration of our modern surveyors. They admit that no better route could have been chosen.

The act of "secularization" also sounded the death-knell of the Pala *asistencia*. With the confiscation of the mission property and the departure of the *padre*, the Indians were without the necessary means of support, and without a friend and father. Poverty and disease soon decimated their number, so that but few long survived this dreadful blow.

In 1902, the government of the United States decided to remove the Indians from Warner's Ranch to some other locality. Much was done to select a proper place. Finally some property at Pala was purchase for this purpose.

The poor Indians were loath to leave their old homes, the place where their fathers and forefathers had lived and died, the place where their mortal remains were buried. Many preferred death to a change of homes. The sad and sorrowful transportation took place in the spring of 1903.

Many a tear was shed, when the Indians bid a sad and last farewell to the graves of their ancestors; for the Indians retain a sacred memory for their deceased friends and relatives.

Owing to the efforts of Right Rev. Thomas J. Conaty, D.D., Bishop of Monterey-Los Angeles, the old chapel was partly restored and rededicated. Of late years, the Rev. George Doyle, the present pastor of Pala Indian Reservation, has done much to improve both the interior and exterior of this old and venerable *asistencia*, the-daughter of San Luis Rey.

As is the case with almost all of the old missions of California, it is not lack of zeal and energy of the present occupants, but a lack of funds that retards the restoration and preservation of the old landmarks. It is greatly to be feared, that the people of California will realize too late that not good words, but good works—pecuniary assistance—are needed to enable the good work of restoration and preservation to go on.

The United States Government has repaired the old waterditch at Pala and installed a first class pumping plant. This provides the Indians of the reservation with an abundant supply of wholesome water for house and field.

On Monday June 2nd, 1913, the Pala Indians in festive attire celebrated the opening of this old waterditch, built by Fr. Peyri for his Indians almost a century ago.

The Indians from the surrounding reservations attended the ceremony of rededication. The schoolchildren of the reservation sang patriotic songs, and when a salute of three volleys was fired, the superior of San Luis Rey Mission pronounced a blessing upon the flowing waters.

Thus the good work of Fr. Peyri is continued. Let us hope that it may long continue and be productive of many blessings.

Pala Mission.

A Los Angeles Cannon That Got Away

by Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.

In the mid-1970's, this writer helped the *Los Angeles Times* columnist Jack Smith entertain his readers with a bit of the confusing history about the historic cannon of Southern California. The cannon which really spurred this exchange was "The Old Woman's Gun" used in the 1846-1847 Mexican War, and the one that got away.

There are passing references to The Old Woman's Gun as the one used by the Californians in the Mexican War around Los Angeles in early 1847. When the Americans won, it was hidden by "the old woman"—who she was specifically is unknown—and later captured by the U.S. Navy. Then, according to most, it was "lost."

People who were interested in U.S. Naval history knew The Old Woman's Gun was anything BUT lost, having seen it in its present home: The Museum at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. It is a prized relic of the 1846-1847 Mexican War, and is on display there.

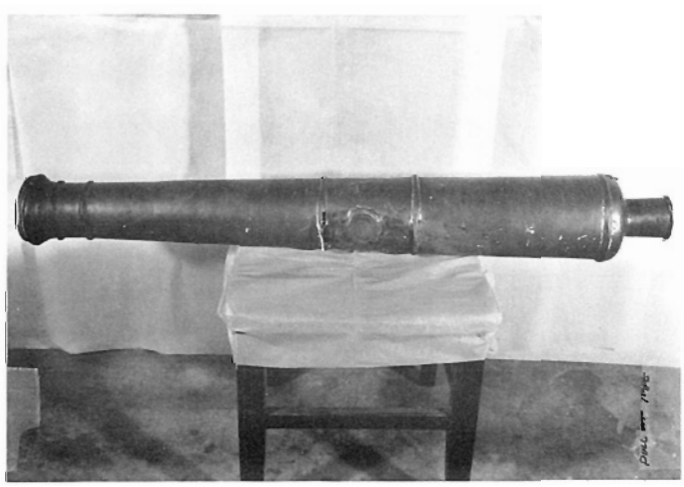
The Old Woman's Gun has been at the U.S. Naval Academy since the 1850's! How this small, bronze, 8-pounder, muzzle-loading gun got to the Naval Academy is best explained by the history that was engraved on it shortly after its arrival:

"Used by the Mexicans in California against the United States at Dominguez Ranch, October 1846, Rio San Gabriel, and the plains of Mesa, January 8th-9th, 1847. Surrendered to Commodore R.F. Stockton, United States Navy, at Los Angeles, January 16, 1847. Used by United States Forces in Mexico at Mazatlan, November 11th, 1847, Urios (crew all killed or wounded), Palos Pretos, December 13, 1847, and in lower California at San Jose, February 15, 1848."

Soon after the last inscribed date, the ship it was on returned to its Atlantic seaboard home port.

The U.S. sailors who used The Old Woman's Gun probably liked her a lot, as it was a light, handy 43-inch long gun, and unlike any the U.S. Navy was using at the time. It was perfect for manhandling on land, and so it acquired its battle record.

Although the Mexicans had very little powder and shot for the gun, the U.S. Navy had plenty of



The Mexican War "Old Woman's Gun" presently on display in U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Anapolis, Maryland. -- *Konrad Schreier Collection.*

both, and could easily supply it with suitable ammunition in the field. It was the kind of gun that was particularly effective in firing canister (a load-like shotgun buckshot) in support of infantry.

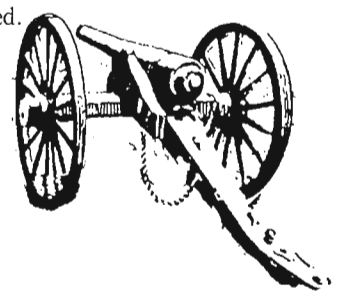
When the ship returned to the East Coast, the sailors renamed the little gun "The Stockton Gun." However, it was an unauthorized, non-regulation part of the ship's armament. It was put ashore when the ship was in for refitting and, fortunately, somebody decided it was a trophy gun which belonged at the Naval Academy. It has been there ever since.

The name, The Old Woman's Gun, appears soon after it went to the Naval Academy. Undoubtedly brought back from California by sailors who had known it in Los Angeles, and were aware of its history.

Although The Old Woman's Gun is an historical artifact that left home, its place of honor in the U.S. Naval Academy Museum assures its future preservation.

Note: for the information of those interested in the details of the historic cannon: The Old Woman's Gun was actually a 2-pounder (2½ inch bore) bronze swivel gun. Its swivel was removed before U.S. Forces captured and used it; however, it has the socket cascabel for an aiming tiller typical of swivel guns. It is 43 inches long, and relatively light. This type of gun was made and used from the late 1600's until the mid-1800's. There are no maker or other marks on the gun, and it is very possible it was once a part of the armament found on all merchant ships of the time. How or when it got to Los Angeles is unrecorded.

Source Note: This gun is mentioned in records of the Mexican War and California histories of the period. The primary records are from the accession files of the Naval Academy Museum, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, who's kind help, including the photo of the gun, are acknowledged.



Monthly Roundup (continued). . .

fornia, with Lt. Gen. John L. De Witt taking charge of the Western Defense Command. But he lacked troops, guns, and information. Fort MacArthur's guns were loaded and ready to fire, but the Navy was rather unprepared for the emergency. Sheriff Eugene Biscailluz put civilian officials into Civil Defense, with everyone on 24-hour duty. Some 6,000 military personnel were on duty in southern California at this time. Few large guns, however, were available or operable.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

December meeting speaker Konrad Schreier and Sheriff Don Pflueger.

By the evening of the 7th southern California was ready for war—but not for the many rumors of imminent Japanese attack by sea or air. Enemy aliens were less of a problem than the thousands of curiosity seekers who flocked to the beaches to see what was going on. A blackout was declared, but no one knew how to turn off the street lights! One false alarm followed another as successive alerts were declared. Search missions found no enemy, and luckily no one was shot by mistake.

Military preparations kept civilians calm, but rumors continued full blast. P-38s took off from Burbank Airport and flew patrols at very low levels, fully armed. Attention soon became focused on the Japanese and Nisei in the area, some 80,000, who proved 100% loyal to the United States. They committed no sabotage whatsoever, a loyalty that counted for little when they were removed from their homes several months later. A few German "agents" were arrested but proved harmless. The FBI already had its roundup list and took 3,000 suspected enemy aliens into custody. People were asked to stay

(Continued on Page Seventeen)

Dime Novels are Scarce

by Ray Zeman

Older men seeking to recapture their reading thrills of yesteryear and younger Americans with the curiosity of amateur bibliophiles in their veins have almost cleared the market of the original dime novels. Sometimes a reprint appears, but the true first editions are becoming rare. If offered at all, they are likely to be tattered and musty but they bring a gleam of conquest into the collector's eyes.

The dime novels' golden age began in Civil War days. Typical heros were Pontiac and Tecumseh, Boone and Crockett, Old Captain Collier, who always got his man, Roaring Ralph Rockwood, the Reckless Ranger, and the great Nick Carter, who figured in stories selling more than four million copies. Many researchers agree that the first dime novel was published in June 1860, titled "Malaeska, the Indian Wife." It is filled with the whizzing of tomahawks, the blazing of guns, the war whoops of the savages like the growling of angry bears and livid passages like: "Heart to heart and muzzle to muzzle, the white man and the red man battled in horrid strife."

From a morality standpoint, the dime novels were clean as a whistle, purer than many best sellers of today. Clergymen wrote some of the Nick Carter stories. Others were produced by a lawyer, and some by a socially prominent New Yorker with the upper crust name of Frederick Marmaduke Van Rensselaer Dye. Many of the dime novels about Buffalo Bill were ground out by Edward Zane, Carroll Judson (Ned Buntline) and Col. Prentiss Ingraham. Buntline reputedly turned out a 610-page job in 62 hours and Ingraham once, according to his own report, finished 33,000 words in 24 working hours. Quality? What do you want for a dime?

Yes, that actually was the price, although that was too much for the public at first. The price was slashed to 5 cents and sales zoomed. In later years the high cost of living hit the dime novels as well as their competitors. By World War I the Horatio Alger books, paper-backed, were 15 cents and later editions with binding brought 40 or 50 cents. Today the hobbyists, collectors, and research libraries are on the lookout for early editions of the dime novels. Many Californians joined the Happy Hours Brotherhood of Dime and Nickel Novel Collectors, headed by Ralph F. Cummings of Fisherville, Massachusetts. The purpose of the Brotherhood was to exchange news of finds and sources through Cumming's monthly magazine titled Reckless Ralph's Dime novel Roundup.

Prices reached a peak in 1922 at the sale of the Dr. Frank P. O'Brien collection in New York. The Doctor had spent 20 years developing four collections of the "penny dreadfuls." He gave one of them to the New York Public Library. Henry E. Huntington bought another collection en bloc and added scattered other copies. They are largely the perishable, papercovered printings of Erastus Flaval Beadle (1821-1894), who for the last half of the 19th century was the greatest publisher of the adventure stories. Huntington's San Marino Library got more than 2,000 of them. These include 80 of Beadle's Dime Novels, 104 of Beadle's Pocket Novels, 185 of Beadle's New Dime Novels, 621 of Beadle's Half-Dime Library, 605 of Beadle's Dime Library, and 20 other series. Col. Prentiss Ingraham's "California Joe" is there. So is Frederick Whittaker's "Diana, the Fair Mountaineer."

Why did Huntington spend $15,000 for this "trash?" Apparently because he wanted scholars to be able to see, in his treasure house of English literature, what the English people were reading about America a century ago. After all, these dime novels went to England, just as American motion pictures and television convey an impression of American life to the English today. If the English thought Americans spent all their time in covered wagons awaiting the stealthy approach of wild Indians with tomahawks and poisoned arrows, perhaps these novels could show why. "They form an adventurous record of the western frontier, local American traditions and manners and adventurous life in New York," the Huntington Library explained. "They form a

tremendous influence in developing the spirit of American homes and in providing a conception of American Life for readers abroad."

One other Los Angeles area collector of dime novels is the Los Angeles Public Library, which acquired a facsimile of Vol. 1, No. 1, of one of the Beadle series, the Beadle's Boy's Library, dated December 14, 1881. It is titled "Adventures of Buffalo Bill From Boyhood to Manhood, Deeds of Daring and Romantic Incidents in the Life of William F. Cody, the Monarch of Bordermen."

Monthly Roundup (continued). . .

home as much as possible. Some ideas were frankly harebrained, such as the Navy considering moving all oil and oil production out of the Los Angeles-Long Beach area. Given the trauma of the Pearl Harbor attack, Schreier noted that the time was an exciting one, made all the more fascinating by the fact that the enemy had no intention of invading the Pacific Coast.

In other Corral business, Hugh Tolford was elevated to the status of Honorary Member. Other promotions included Active Membership for Harold Edgar, Ron Geiger, Bob Kern, Alex Kerr, Don Snyder, and Dick Yale. Ron Woolsey and Tom Bent became Associate Members. An extra poignant moment was added to the meeting as Corral members were asked to rise in recognition of their World War II services, and Don Pflueger and Ray Wood proved that after almost half a century they could still fit into their uniforms.

JANUARY 1992 MEETING

Dr. Wilbur R. Jacobs, Professor of History Emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara spoke to the Corral on "Francis Parkman—Historian as Hero," a subject that is also the title of a just published book by Jacobs.

From a silver spoon birth in 1823 into a well-to-do Boston family, through years as a mediocre student, and years as a voracious reader of early American history, Francis Parkman developed into one of the outstanding historians of the American West. Despite bouts of ill health, he was an historian who believed in having a firsthand look at the historic sites he proposed to write about. His travels covered a great amount of the country bordered by the Rocky Mountains on the west and the Atlantic Seaboard on the east. He put excitement into his writing by putting himself and his experiences into his writings. He wrote about real people. In order to understand Indians, he lived with the Sioux for a time. It has been said that to Parkman, "History was a form of literature." His book, *The Oregon Trail,* is a good example of his philosophy put into practice.

So we have Parkman as hero writer, bold explorer, and specialist on Indian history. Although Parkman thought himself unbiased, he opposed women's suffrage, was critical of the Roman Catholic Church, and believed only men could be heroic leaders. About his many bouts of illness, there have been some historians studying Parkman who felt that he exaggerated them. Parkman himself termed his illnesses the "en-

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

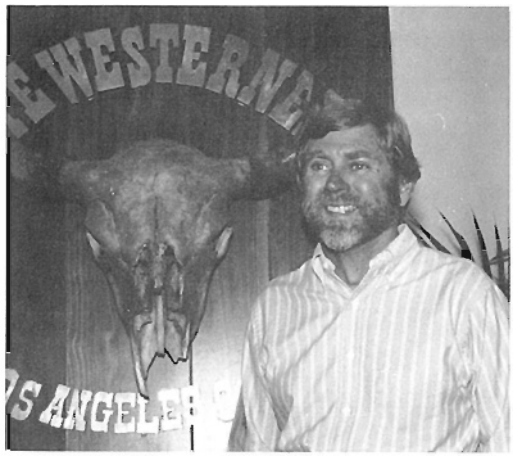
All smiles over winning WWII are, left to right, Ken Pauley, Don Pflueger, Ray Wood, Bob Kern, Todd Berens.

emy," to be fought and vanquished. Be that as it may, he was rugged enough to live to the age of seventy.

A thrill and a scholarly coup for Jacobs was that when he was searching for more information on Parkman in Parkman's study, he uncovered a packet of his letters, still tied with an old corset string. These were letters written to his mother about his prairie experiences traveling with a wagon train. These were experiences that became part of his *The Oregon Trail*. Jacobs published these letters in a book titled *Letters of Francis Parkman*.

Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

January meeting speaker Wilbur Jacobs and Sheriff Don Pflueger.



Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

February meeting speaker Philip Varney and "Old Joe".

FEBRUARY 1992 MEETING

At the February meeting Philip Varney spoke on "Southern California's Best Ghost Towns," illustrating his talk with colored slides of now deserted sites that, in some locations, only he and some nimble native fauna could climb. Many of the places visited by him were as high as 8,000 feet above sea level. Well-known ghost towns were described, like Cerro Gordo, that spawned support industries of charcoal production and freighting that brought economic growth to Los Angeles, and Ballarat—named after an Australian gold mining town—where adobe walls of buildings were poured rather than constructed in the usual way with formed bricks. Other interesting and less-known, sites were Skidoo to which water was brought from 21 miles away and Leadfield, that had 300 inhabitants and everything else except paying ore.

Ghost towns are not only phenomena of the nineteenth century. The speaker told of and showed slides of the remains of sites recently inhabited and abandoned, such as Manzanar and Eagle Mountain. The outstanding remains of the former is the foundation of the sewage treatment plant, "Showing that the U.S. Government went to considerable expense to treat the sewage of people living in tarpaper shacks." The latter, only recently abandoned, with chainlink fences guarding still usable buildings, could be revived quickly if the high grade ore, on which it is located, could be mined profitably in a higher priced market.

Corral Chips

by Donald Duke

Apparently we only hear from Ray Wood when his travel agent has him booked on a camel train across the Sahara desert. Last time the sand got in his shoes and he contracted sandy feet. So this time he went to collect some fresh bananas in Costa Rica. At a conference on history in Death Valley, Wood gave a talk about a man who survived for a year, alone, in Death Valley's summer heat. His talk was "The Bennet-Arcane Escape Trail from Death Valley." Wood also states that *C.M.* John Southworth was sitting on the front row.

C.M. Ray Thomas writes that he was introduced to the Westerners by *C.M.* Lawrence Marshburn of Redlands. He enjoyed the programs so much he also joined.

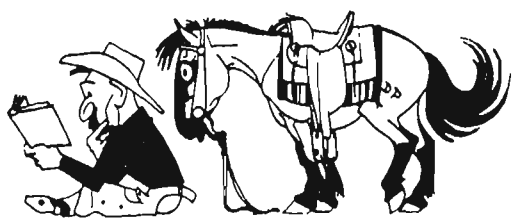
John Robinson was the recipient of the Donald H. Pflueger Local History Award at the Southern California Historical Society's meeting held at the Los Angeles Athletic Club on March 7th. Robinson was among five other Southern California residents who received the Pflueger Award for their books. *The San Bernardinos* was the name of Robinson's award winning entry.

C.M. Perry Deters was elected president of the Death Valley '49ers at their November meeting. Perry, a very dedicated person, had been a director of the group since 1977. Give Perry a pat on the back at the next regular meeting. As many members will remember, Ed Ainsworth started the organization years ago. He conceived the idea and wrote about his project in the Los Angeles *Times*. Little did he know at the time that the first encampment would be such a huge success. If I am not in error, some 15,000 people showed up at Death Valley for this event.

Abe Hoffman served as commentator for KCET-TV's workshop for the Los Angeles History Project television program on December 15th. More than 150 teachers from Los Angeles County schools were in attendance.

C.M. Michael Harrison got his nose out of joint when we spoke last time about *C.M.* Dick Dillon and *Arthur Clark* attending the Western History Association. He was there too, also that he was made an "Honorary" member in 1988. In 1976 Mike was awarded the Association's "Award of Merit." Can anyone top this!

With each *Branding Iron* we include a "Request for News" which concerns the activities of all members of the Los Angeles Corral. My mail box should be loaded with "News" each month, but I have to scrape the bottom of the barrel each time to even do this column. Frankly, I have had it. Unless more come in I shall abandon the column. Turn off that damn TV for fifteen minutes a quarter and write what you are doing. If you are not doing anything you should "pull the plug" and get off the planet.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

WILD WEST CHARACTERS, by Dale Pierce, Phoenix: Golden West Publishers, 1991. 144 pp. Illustrations, Index. Paper, $5.95. Available from Golden West Publishers, 4113 N. Longview, Phoenix, AZ 85014.

Dale Pierce's "Wild West Characters" is an assemblage of 113 one to two page essays on a diverse collection of Westerners. His subjects range from the famous to the forgettable.

A score or so of the selections seemed to be thrown in for filler, usually because the person

either was born, died or killed someone in Arizona. Almost one half of the subjects had some connection with Arizona. I thought the author was reaching to include a Tombstone fireman whose only claim to fame was having been beaten to death by a saloonkeeper. Many of the sketches would be better placed in a volume entitled "Characters of Old Tombstone" instead of in this volume which encompasses the entire west.

There is much to enjoy in Mr. Pierce's work. He includes interesting and often humorous insights into the personalities and lives of his subjects. He presents the reader with a much appreciated level playing field for his characters. The good aspects of his outlaws and villians are provided, when they existed. Likewise, he shows the dark sides to his heros and lawmen.

He is not afraid to use the word psychotic in regard to some of the gunfighters and outlaws whose reputations have in many cases far outgrown their actual misdeeds. One such psychotic was Clay Allison, known widely as a man who would shoot someone for an illogical reason. Allison also had a strange non-lethal habit. He would sometimes remove his clothing while drunk, jump on his horse, ride through town naked and then stroll into a saloon and continue to drink.

The author is not fond of Wyatt Earp. One in six of the persons highlighted deals with the Earp-Clanton feud. In these sections of the book, Wyatt Earp is pictured as an earnest lawman—when it suited his purposes. He is also portrayed as a confidence man, pimp, crooked gambler and murderer. I've never done any reading on Wyatt Earp. Most of my "knowledge" being memories of the sugar-coated television show of my youth wherein Wyatt Earp was pictured as being "...Brave, courageous and bold." Pierce's depiction of Earp has whetted my appetite for an in-depth study of this icon of the west.

"Wild West Characters" is recommended to anyone interested in personalities of the west for light reading or as a jumping-off point for further studies on "characters" which catch the reader's fancy.

Glenn H. Thornhill

PROMINENT VISITORS TO THE CALIFORNIA MISSIONS, by Msgr. Francis J. Weber. Los Angeles, 1991. 220 pp. Charts. Cloth $30.00.

Whether or not intended, this interesting book comes across as a good case against *padre* bashing by presenting the eyewitness accounts of prominent explorers who visited the missions before it became almost fashionable to attribute villainous acts to people of heroic stature.

Twenty-four visitors to the California missions, the first in 1786 and the last in 1842, representing eight different nationalities, report their impressions of the condition of the missions and the work being done by the *padres* at the time of their visits. All of the reports are pages excerpted from larger works, recording their travelers, that describe their visit to the missions. The length of the excerpts—from two pages to thirteen pages—is in direct proportion to the amount the visitor had to say. Most of the earlier visitors traveled only to one or two missions, and often the same missions bordering San Francisco Bay. The reports that repeat what earlier visitors have already said are, therefore, justifiably shortened. Each report is preceded by an interesting, well-researched critical introduction of the author and his work. Both the critical introduction and the visitor's report are supplemented with informative footnotes. Those for the visitors' reports mostly correct errors resulting from the limited knowledge of geography and ethnology of California.

The majority of the visitors were impressed by the accomplishments of the *padres*. In a comparatively short time, without direct governmental help and only initial assistance from the Mexico headquarter of the Franciscan Order, the *padres* built a successful, self-supporting enterprise in an undeveloped country with primitive natives whom they taught all kinds of skills after they had converted them to Christianity. It is on the subject of converting the Indians where criticism of the *padres* arises. The few negative reports—mainly by non-Catholic visitors—show an obvious bias by ignoring the *padres'* phenomenal colonizing accomplishment and commenting, at length, on the *padres* punishing deserting converts. More objective observers, although not denying that deserters were punished—and

sometimes severely—reported that it was a few soldiers stationed at the missions and the trustee Indian overseers that were the most zealous and frequent punishers of backsliding converts. Despite the existance of this punishment practice, the majority of the visitors felt that living conditions for the Indians were vastly improved by the *padres.* Any doubt about the improved conditions for the Indians under the *padres'* care is dispelled by the reports of visitors to California, like that of Eugene Duflot de Mofras, that occurred after the Mexican Government secularized the missions.

The compiler of these reports has included all the visitors to the missions in the time span covered. His editing involves only the length of reports in order to avoid—what could be boring—duplication, as stated above. Even so, the book has a few, short, low spots purely because the prose of some visitors was pedantic. But other visitors, because of their more thorough observations and a better reportorial style, will cause readers of this book to become interested in reading a visitor's full report—if it is not already a familiar work. Then there is the report of James Ohio Pattie. This reviewer confesses to never having read any of the writings of Pattie. But Pattie's account of his visit to California in the years 1828 and 1829 surely makes him a contender for the title of Baron Munchausen of California. In addition to his claim of having vaccinated more Indians in the missions population than the *padres* had converted, Pattie tells of an observation that defies the natural laws of sound transmission. He reports that the flat roofs of Los Angeles are covered with "...bituminous pitch, brought from a place within four miles of the town..." and then goes on to explain that bubbles are formed at the pitch deposit site which "When they burst, the noise is heard distinctly in the town."

Siegfried G. Demke

FRED GIPSON AT WORK, by Glen E. Lich. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990. 126 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $29.95.

The Texas A&M Press should be praised and thanked for publishing this excellent work of southwest Americana/Texana. Fred Gipson will always be remembered as a story-teller of tales from the Texas hill country. Glen Lich has done an excellent job of presenting a criticism of Gipson's literary work and a biography of this flawed, complex, sometimes tragic literary figure. Gipson will also be remembered for his two juvenile stories, "Old Yeller" and "Savage Sam," both produced as movies in 1958 and 1963, respectively.

This book encourages each of us to either read or reread all of Gipson's books, starting with "Hound-dog Man" (1948) and ending with "Savage Sam" (1962). One outstading feature of this book, besides the excellent binding, dust jacket photo and high quality paper, is the "chronology" which the author has inserted for pp. xv to xxvi. This table lists the major events in Texas history on the left side, the year of the event (the table begins in 1900), and the Gipson family history, including his dates of publication, on the right side. We are shown the autobiographical highlights in each of Gipson's books that chronicled the rise and fall of his creative fortunes.

This fine volume, along with all seven of Gipson's books still in print, belongs in the library of anyone who collects southwest Americana/Texana. One critic said "..Gipson has probably been the most widely read appreciated writer Texas has ever produced."

John S. Ferguson, Jr.,

THE ISLAND OF CALIFORNIA: *A History of the Myth,* Volume XIII, Spain in the West Series, by Dora Beale Polk. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991. 398 pp., Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $39.50 plus $2.00 p/h. Available from The Arthur H. Clark Company, P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, WA 99214.

Why did cartographers depict California as an island for so long? Using techniques from various intellectual fields, Polk shows the complete answer involves the Garden of Eden, mythology,

popular literature, international competition and other elements as well as wishful thinking. The author traces the reasons for indicating California on maps as an island in addition to tracing the actual representation by cartographers. In addition to the intellectual, emotional and psychological reasons for indicating it as an island, the author also shows who copied whose map rather than doing more research or actually any research.

Most are acquainted with today's assumption that California was a name drawn from the popular sixteenth century novel, *Las Sergas de Esplandian,* but how many are aware of the connection between the Garden of Eden and the Amazons in medieval mythology? Or for that matter, how many are aware of the complete story of Amazons? After perusing this work, the complete story will be known. It is interesting that the fact the women in the original novel were black was rather glossed over.

After Ulloa completed his explorations, knowledge that California was a peninsula was gradually being accepted when politics entered into the picture. If it were a new land, Guzman would have the right to explore, but if an island, Cortes would have the right. This obviously divided people into camps supporting their candidate for more greatness. Later, conflict between Spain and England further complicated the picture. The English looking for a Northwest Passage, of course, saw California as an island with the opposing land mass rapidly sweeping to the east enabling one to sail over the top of North America to Europe. In reaction, Spain opposed this concept and maintained that California was a peninsula and that the land to the north swept in a solid mass westward making the Pacific an enclosed sea barring the English from entrance. The complete story is much more complicated, and Polk traces it in great detail, illustrating her points with maps, literature and myth. This makes a fascinating story causing one to wonder how nations could engage in such childish bickering. Today's national maps showing the German-Polish, Polish-USSR, Peru-Ecuador, and Ecuador-Brazil borders as these nations interpret them are just modern adaptions of the same thing.

Father Kino finally arrived on the scene and put the question to rest. California was a peninsula. Further evidence was piled up in spite of many relapses to the island idea until 1747 when Ferdinand VI issued a royal decree, "California is not an island." Today we all know that California is not an island. How often have you heard that because of its distinctive flora and fauna California is like an island. Or, have you recently read or referred to Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land?* Yes, the question has been definitely settled.

The book is an excellent example of the bookmaking art as one expects a Clark publication to be. The hard, white paper is a surprize, but it makes an attractive book and enables clear reproductions of the many map illustrations. Two minor things did cause vexation. The author frequently substituted "x" as the first letter of names beginning with "j." While this is correct, one finds it bothersome. Since it was often necessary to refer back to some plate, why not give the page on which the plate was printed? The one occasion that this was done made it much easier to find the plate. In spite of these two minor faults, this is an excellent study which will be useful to anyone interested in cartography, mythology or California history.

Robert W. Blew

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN NEW MEXICO, by Henry J. Tobias. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990. 294 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $24.95. Available from the University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

Numerically an insignificant minority in New Mexico, Jews have historically played a vital part in the state's history and development. Henry Tobias, who did a similar work on the Jews in Oklahoma, examines their contributions to New Mexico from statehood to 1980. The history of the Jews in New Mexico is the story of a few pioneering families based in Santa Fe, Taos, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque. Primarily involved in merchandising, these families established themselves in a pattern echoed by Jews elsewhere, bringing in relatives to work as clerks and to open branches in other towns, becoming involved in commerical and philanthropic work.

Much of the book is an exercise in extrapola-

tion, since little data often exists on Jews in terms of the practice of their religion. As a result, the first chapter is more frustrating than informative, dealing as it does with speculations on Jews in New Mexico in the Spanish colonial period. Information on the topic is so meager that one may doubt whether any Jews lived there during that time at all. Their actual presence dates from the 1840s, and therein lies another form of the same problem. Consider the fact that in 1937 there were but 1,179 Jews in the entire state, rather less than one quarter of one percent of the state's population.

Since the numbers are so small, Tobias's generalizations lack much impact. Attention is paid to the number of Jews in a particular New Mexico town in a succession of years, and the percentage increase or decline in their number, but not much is said about their activities as people. At its most extreme, Tobias gives a bare paragraph to Arthur Seligman, elected govenor of the state in 1930. No discussion at all is given as to his response to the Great Depression, his leadership as governor, or anything Jewish about his term (he died in office in 1932).

The key to understanding what this book is about may well lie in its title. Tobias has written about the Jews *in* New Mexico, but not about the Jews *of* New Mexico. When such a book is written, it may include the personal activities that Tobias omits here.

Abraham Hoffman

THE MEXICAN WAR JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF RALPH W. KIRKHAM, edited by Robert Ryal Miller. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. 141 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $34.50. Available from Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843-4354.

This is not the journal of the hard drinking, rough, blood thirsty officer one sees presented so often on television or in fiction, but rather the journal and letters of a very introspective, religious man. Ralph Kirkham graduated from West Point in 1842 and was assigned to Fort Niagara, New York for a period of six months then transferred to the Indian Territory where, during the next four years, he served at Fort Gibson and Fort Towson. Like many young officers, he possibly only planned to serve the required four years, but the Mexican War extended his service. When his unit was ordered from Fort Gibson, he was joined by his bride of five months on the trip to New Orleans where she stayed for awhile before returning to her family home. Lieutenant Kirkham joined General Winfield Scott's army about one month after it had landed in Vera Cruz and served as the Adjutant General of the Sixth Infantry Regiment and Assistant Adjutant General of the Second Brigade of General William Worth's First Division throughout the campaign to Mexico City and as part of the occupation forces after the war. Instead of leaving the army, he stayed for twenty-two more years, serving in various western posts. His final duty was as Quartermaster in San Francisco during the Civil War. He was promoted to the rank of major and breveted brigadier general during the conflict. In 1870, he left the army and become a "capitalist" in the City of Oakland. After years of a very successful business career, many civic activities and world travel, he died in Oakland in 1893. His epitaph in the San Francisco *Bulletin* possibly summed up his life in stating, "In these days of shoddy greatness it is pleasant to meet a true gentleman."

His journal and letters to his wife cover the period from his departure from Fort Gibson until his return to New Orleans some fifteen months later. Since there were not entries for every day, the editor interspersed letters to his wife for greater detail. While some of the journal entries are vry brief—a mere mention of the weather—many are very thoughtful and clearly limn a very sensitive, thoughtful individual. Frequently, the letters to his wife omitted less pleasant details, but many are very sensitive and show a deep relationship between the two. There is very little detail about battles, but he did mention that a bullet scratched his knuckles in one battle. Interesting that a man who was breveted twice should make so light of his part of the campaign. There is much more about the administrative functions of the army and the way that the men lived. One thing that stands out, in the journal especially, is the relationship with the Mexicans. He shows the obvious prejudice of the time, but he also frequently assesses the problems of the lower classes and

indicates many contacts with the upper classes. While the journal and letters will not be an outstanding source for military affairs, they are excellent to show how the army lived, the problems with mail and food that has plagued armies throughout history, the inner thoughts of the men, and how individuals coped with separation from beloved families.

The editing is excellent. Notes identify every individual—sometimes too completely; the editor gave a valuable summary of Kirkham's life before and after the period of the journal, and the illustrations and map supported the textual materials. This small volume should be on the shelf of everyone interested in the War with Mexico, military history, or just interested in the life of a man who seemed to be a "true gentleman."

Robert W. Blew

LITTLE BOOKS BY BIG PEOPLE, by Msgr. Francis J. Weber. Bradenton, Florida: Opuscula Press, 1991. 143 pp. Appended Bibliography. Paper $22.00. Available at Dawson's Book Shop, 535 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90004.

Although not a book exclusively devoted to western history, it is a delightful book by a prominent member of this Corral on a subject, of increasing importance, that has as followers other prominent members and their wives. Msgr. Weber, the author of over 25 books on California Missions History, reports the phenomenon of miniature books becoming an important bibliographic field in their own right in the short time of nine years. In 1983, the author, Glen Dawson, and a few others—mainly eastern—collectors, authors, publishers, printers, and binders met and formed the Miniature Book Society. That year the membership was a few dozen appreciators of this form of the printers art. By 1990 MBS was an international organization of almost 500 members in fifteen countries.

The development of MBS is actually an incidental subject of the book. Its main part consists of 50 short essays—first printed elsewhere—about prominent collectors, outstandingly beautiful specific books, book size, how to recognize collectable quality, and the author's travels and findings of special gems of miniature books. (One essay is the talk Msgr. Weber gave to the members of this Corral on May 12, 1982.) The essays provide the information that miniature books are not just a miniaturization of previously printed standard size books. They are originals in their size, exhibiting the printers and bookbinders art in a special way. There are even miniature books with fore-edge painting. Also, the creation of miniature books is not a modern development; there were miniature books produced—but not in quantity—many centuries ago. Now, however, the quantity of different titles produced is such that simply to collect all that are printed would be enormously expensive. The author advises specialized collecting by subject, author, printer, binder, or some other category. He has begun to specialize on very early printed books.

The essays are a delight to read. This reviewer, mindful of the ubiquitous warnings the U.S. Surgeon General requires food packagers to print on their containers, began to feel that a warning might have been printed on the back cover that reading the book invited the risk of becoming infected with the miniature book collectors disease. Then, in a few more pages, in essay number 48, the author has this same thought and develops the joke at length in a very amusing way.

In a second part of the book, consisting of 27 pages, Robert F. Hanson has compiled a descriptive bibliography of all—a total of 75—the miniature books written by Msgr. Weber. Here we learn that Msgr. Weber is not only an expert collector of miniature books, he also creates them. The subjects of these books might be said to represent a taste that is catholic both literally and generally, running from Junipero Serra to the Spruce Goose, from the Catholic Holy Year of 1983-1984 to cable cars.

The third part of the book consists of *A Preface to Doris Welsh's Bibliography of Miniature Books.* This two and a half page section is probably important to people who are already collectors. For this reviewer it meant little, as by this time he was distracted by the problem of how to repel the charm of this book and find a possible immunization against the miniature book collecting disease before it was too late.

Siegfried G. Demke