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James and Juliet Brier, and daughters, about 1860. — *Courtesy Carolyn Schorr Hind.*

The Brothers Brier In Goldrush California

by John Southworth

By the time gold was discovered in California early in 1848, the whole of the West Coast was widely, though thinly, populated by emigrants from every part of the globe, notably South America and Europe. Among those early settlers were a few missionaries arriving in response to a general need for God's Word among the voluntarily displaced.

After John Marshall announced his golden dis-

covery, the headlong flight of optimistic men into gold rush California overwhelmed the small contingent of missionaries already on the ground. A few additional Men of God moved in from Oregon and the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii) to augment the ranks, but they were soon outnumbered, thousands to one.

By June of 1849 approximately 10,000 people,

(Continued on Page Three)

The Branding Iron

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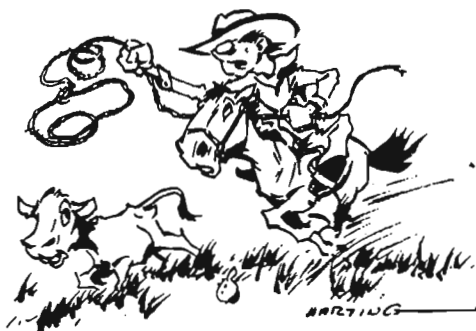
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THE BRANDING IRON solicits articles of 2,500 words or less, dealing with every phase of the Old West. Contributions from members and friends welcomed.

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Los Angeles Corral

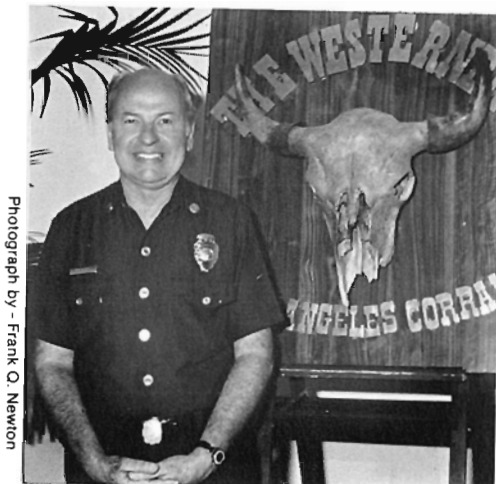


THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

by Abraham Hoffman

JULY 1992 MEETING

At the July meeting, with outside temperature and humidity at unusual highs, members heard Captain David Boucher speak about the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Boucher, author of *Ride The Devil Wind*, the just published history of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, recited many interesting facts about the nation's third largest fire department. Its services are spread over all the unincorporated areas of the county, that portion of the San Gabriel Mountains foothills area not included in the U.S. Forest Service jurisdiction, and 46 incorporated cities, most of which are too small to support their own fire departments.



Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

July meeting speaker L.A. County Fire Department Captain David Boucher.

(Continued from Page Eight)

mostly young men, had entered the gold districts from the sea. Those same sea routes would later bring 4,000 new emigrants each month. Meanwhile, the overland rush had hardly begun since the wagon trains had to wait for Spring before they could begin their trek and would not reach California for an additional six to nine months. The slow-starting overland migration would become a virtual torrent of people, all in search of gold and all needing help from the Church.

California itself was ill prepared for the flood of humanity that was about to invade its shores, to work its inland rivers and streams, and to overrun private and public lands alike. There would be little food and no lodging, except at ridiculously inflated prices. The conditions of life would be extremely difficult for the hordes of newcomers.

The personal price paid by many men who arrived in California with such high expectations was appalling. Many reverted to the primitive, living little better than animals, living violently and unrestrained. The destruction of morals was beyond description. The Rev. L. O. Grenell, pleading for help, wrote from California: "Satan has already entered with vice in all its gigantic forms."

According to Major-General Persifer F. Smith, commandant of the Pacific Division of the United States Army: "The real difficulties lie in the hardships to be encountered, in the remote uninhabited spots where the gold is found. Want of food, overworking, excited by success, bad water, exposure and dissipation, all combine to exact a heavy tribute for the wealth when found. Many die unheeded, many come off sick; but there are ten arriving from each quarter of the globe to replace every one who goes. Chinese, Sandwich Islanders, Chileans, Peruvians, Prussians, Mexicans, French, English, Irish outnumber as yet the Americans, but the latter will soon have their share."

Into this crude and difficult environment came an outnumbered but dedicated group of missionaries from every Protestant denomination, each prepared for a lifetime service, each expecting to see home and friends no more. (Similarly dedicated Catholics were already well established in the string of Missions extending from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the north.)

Two young brothers from the Midwest were among the many who responded to 'His Kingdom's Sovereign Call' for additional manpower to combat sin in the West. Both men were securely

established as ordained Protestant ministers, one in a small Methodist church on the Mississippi River at Marquette, Iowa, some forty miles north of Dubuque, the other with a similarly small Presbyterian church in Romney, a few miles north of Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Of diverse nature, even to their choice of religion, the older brother, the Rev. James Welch Brier, chose to go west, overland to California, while the younger brother, William Wallace Brier, chose to go east to New York City and thence by sea via the Isthmus of Panama. Both were going to California, not for gold but to save souls.

These two men were sons of James Malcolm Brier and Mary Lodge Brier who were married in Pennsylvania but raised their twelve children in Stillwater, near Dayton, Ohio, and later near Crawfordsville, Indiana. James Welch Brier was born October 14, 1814, the fourth child of this union. William Wallace Brier was born November 6, 1821, the seventh child. Their mother, Mary Lodge, was a relative of Henry Cabot Lodge, who could track his name back to John Cabot, the explorer given credit for discovering the North American continent.

The Brier name came from Scotland, originally spelled MacBrair, with three, possibly four, brothers of that name settling in southwestern Pennsylvania while it was still Indian country. Family tradition holds that some members changed their name to Brier while others, to the utmost horror of their staunch Presbyterian relatives, began distilling good Kentucky whiskey. Others, perhaps more reasonably, blame the family rift on divided loyalties during the Revolutionary War.

James Welch Brier was a graduate of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, and the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. By 1839 he was a circuit-riding Methodist minister based in Kalamazoo, Michigan. That year, on September 29, he married Juliette Wells in her father's parlor in Mottville, Michigan. He was a tall, blond man who loved to preach. She was twelve months his senior, having been born on September 26, 1813. She was small, hard working, and well educated, a graduate of the Bennington Academy located a few miles south of her birthplace near Manchester, Vermont. She thought her first name too long or pretentious so she called herself Juliet. But she was Julia to all her friends and 'Little Jewel' to her husband.

By 1849 James and Juliet had three sons, Christopher Columbus (named for an uncle on his father's side), John Wells, and Kirke White (named for the then well known poet who wrote some of their familiar church hymns).

Change, travel and the unknown intrigued both James and Juliet so when a Methodist Board of Missions request for volunteers to go to California came their way, it did not take long for them to make their decision to go.

Spring of 1849 found the family of five packed and moving south through Iowa to join one of the many trains of covered wagons already moving westward across the state from Fort Madison on the Mississippi to Council Bluffs on the Missouri. They were soon moving northwestward along the North Platte River, and on into lands that would later become Wyoming and Idaho, along the well traveled Oregon Trail.

Through August their trip was routine, long, hot, tiring, mostly uneventful. It only became unusual when their train of wagons, each pulled by two or four yoked oxen and trailing several more, turned south and reached Salt Lake City in what is now Utah. Their journey had gotten off to a late start, continued slow, and was late to arrive in Salt Lake City. The train of which they had become a part encountered other, similar trains delayed in Utah by indecision. The fate of the Donner Party, in the overwhelming snows of the Sierra Nevada three years earlier, came forcefully to mind. With such a dangerous range of mountains still ahead and the traveling season about gone, few wanted to continue toward a possible similar fate. Yet they could not stay where they were. Salt Lake City, that new, struggling, not yet fully established Utah outpost, just could not support several hundred visitors, all requiring food, clothing and shelter, through the coming winter.

So an experienced Mormon guide was provided, and about one hundred wagons, including that of the Brier family, started a wide swing around the south end of the Sierra Nevada through Los Angeles. It would be a long detour but better than any of the other options available to them.

Unfortunately, the detour was but well started when the long train of wagons, already chafing under forced delays and internal dissensions, was overtaken by a mule train whose leader showed a map of a shortcut to California, straight west. Most turned west, but wagons could not directly follow the more mobile pack train. The wagons took a



James Brier family early 1850s, with the three sons who survived Death Valley crossing. — *Courtesy Carolyn Schorr Hind.*

separate, parallel route but had no way of knowing that the mule train had quickly abandoned the proposed track as impossible and had returned to the known way, southwest to Los Angeles.

Again the wagons, with Jefferson Hunt, their Mormon guide, turned southwest along the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. But about twenty, including that of the Briers, persisted in continuing westward directly through what would later be called the dead heart of Nevada, a district sparsely populated to this day. That lost and struggling emigrant group is credited by history with the discovery of Death Valley.

Their westward trek soon disintegrated into a rout but the determined emigrants would not give up. They did not have provisions to return the way from whence they had come. They abandoned their wagons with all the good things that might have made their new life in the West more comfortable. They walked. They came close to dying of starvation and thirst. But they persevered and survived through incredible good luck and determination. Most of them ended up in Los Angeles anyway, six weeks behind the train from which they had separated in Utah because it was too slow. Some of them, fourteen good men, did not make it at all. And not one of them would have survived had it not been an unusually rainy season on the desert.

But the Briers were survivors. They walked the last three hundred miles after abandoning their wagon with all their household goods and burying their precious books and silverware somewhere east of present Beatty in Nevada. Across the untracked wastes they walked, the parents often carrying the two youngest boys. The oldest son was but nine years of age.

They arrived in Los Angeles ragged, sick and emaciated, but began their recovery immediately. In fact the Rev. Brier preached the very first Methodist sermon in Los Angeles on June 5, 1850. Apparently the first Protestant preaching of any kind in Los Angeles had been but a month or two earlier by the Rev. Frederick Buel, the Secretary of the American Bible Society. But his words were Gospel preaching, not denominational preaching, so the Rev. Brier was really first.

As were all the surviving emigrants who traveled through Death Valley, as 1849 turned into 1850, the Briers were destitute of funds on arrival in Los Angeles, then a village of perhaps two thousand inhabitants, most of them of Spanish descent. Using their dozen or so remaining oxen as payment, they purchased a half-interest in a small hotel and worked there to support themselves for some months. The records do not show if the Briers received rescuing monetary support from their sponsoring missionary group. Presumably they did, however, for they were soon able to proceed up the coast directly to Santa Cruz, where the Rev. James Welch Brier became the very first full-time pastor of the Methodist church, organized there two years earlier by the formidable Elihu Anthony.

At Santa Cruz the Rev. Brier no doubt had church contact with Isaac Owen, energetic organizer and circuit rider through all the California districts, as well as with Elihu Anthony, equally vigorous organizer of the Santa Cruz church. One or both of those dynamic men recognized in the Rev. Brier a great and kindred interest in education, as well as in religion, for they invited him to join them at the first Methodist Church Conference Meeting to be held in San Francisco in mid-August of 1851. He attended that meeting, though he was but a local preacher, recently arrived, and took part in momentous affairs, for that meeting laid the groundwork for three institutions that continue to this day. That gathering of pioneer churchmen projected a book depository, the

Methodist Book Concern that today prints and distributes religious works; it founded a newspaper, the California Christian Advocate; and it accepted responsibility for a college, originally the California Wesleyan College at Santa Clara but now the University of the Pacific at Stockton. The name J. W. Brier is prominently listed, along with that of Elihu Anthony, Isaac Owen and several others, on the original July 10, 1851, charter of that California university. It was later said of the ubiquitous Isaac Owen: "He would have established a high school at every crossroads and a college in every county." In this interest the Rev. Brier was not far behind.

James W. Brier organized, established, built, or pastored many Methodist churches, almost one a year, in Napa-Sonoma, Columbia-Sonora, Ione, Volcano, Martinez, and on the Santa Clara Circuit. He was a very busy man for his first ten years in California. Some of his new churches, especially those in the grubby gold camps, required preaching in hotels and gambling rooms before an interested group could be assembled to meet, first in a private home or tent, or out in the open, perhaps on a river bank.

Preaching in gambling rooms had its unique hazards. Other circuit riders reported going armed, though none reported use of their ready but concealed weapons. One reported that it was difficult to remain unsurprised when voiced 'Amens' were echoed by shouts of 'Kenol!'

There was always preaching in the gambling rooms, for that was the only place where extra, discretionary money could be found. The acquisition of hard cash was always a problem, a difficult complication in the lives of frontier preachers. Local merchants were usually generous with their stock, hotels would often provide free rooms, freight lines would offer free transportation, even water transportation sometimes came at reduced rates for the Men of God. But money or its substitutes was hard to come by. And it was most difficult to convince sponsoring missionary agencies in the East that gold was not as common as water in California and that everyone there was not rich.

But another problem was brewing for the Briers. For many years the whole nation had been arguing the volatile question of slavery. Many wanted their churches to take a stand in the political arena. Methodist Annual Conferences tried to compromise, to denounce but not outlaw. The outspoken, fiery Rev. Brier would have none of com-

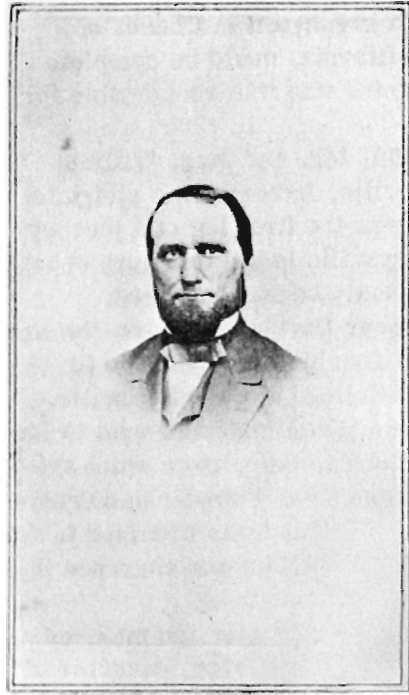
promise. He tried to form a politically active American Wesleyan Church in San Jose. He succeeded only in dividing the church for which he had worked so long. He stepped aside in defeat and transferred his allegiance to a reactivating Congregational Church.

The 1859 rejection and defeat of the principles he thought correct, and promoted to the best of his extensive capabilities, were difficult blows to the Rev. Brier. He continued his church work, but much of the joy of conquest was gone. He accepted more permanent assignments and continued his labors with the Congregational Church until he was well over seventy-five years of age, the last of the Forty-niners of any denomination still active in the ministry, as pastor, in any church in the entire State. His pastorates during this long period included Grass Valley, San Francisco, Marysville, and San Jose. He continued active in state and national political campaigns as long as his health allowed. One 1889 account stated: "He delivered thirty speeches in the state canvass, traveled about 1300 miles, and won golden opinions from all classes." His last years were spent with Juliet, in Lodi, California, at the home of their second son, the Rev. John Brier, who was pastor of the Congregational Church in that community.

James Welch Brier died on November 2, 1989, at the age of 84, a revered old-timer. An obituary in the *San Francisco Call* two days later said: "The deceased had for many years taken an active part in politics, having stumped the State for Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Blaine and Harrison. He was a charter member of the Republican party in California and his speeches were fiery utterances, he being a veritable 'Old Man Eloquent.' Two years ago he would have stumped the State for McKinley, but failing health prevented; nevertheless he aroused local audiences by his words of wisdom."

Juliette Wells Brier died on May 26, 1913, just four months short of her hundredth birthday. She almost outlived her three sons, all of whom perhaps suffered unknowingly from the effects of their strenuous desert crossing so many years before. Such exertions and privations certainly had no salubrious effect upon immature young bodies.

This branch of the Brier family, well founded by James Malcolm Brier and Mary Lodge Brier in Pennsylvania, went to California in 1849 to do God's work and succeeded admirably. The abid-



William W. Brier 1851. — Courtesy Carolyn Schorr Hind.

ing interest in religion and education, as held by James, Juliet, and their five children, was not always understood or appreciated by their contemporaries.

The second Brier brother, William Wallace, did not begin his long journey to California until late January of 1850. Both he and his new bride of but a few weeks had read the Richard Henry Dana, Jr., account written much earlier in which Dana claimed California to be a "half-civilized coast at the ends of the earth." But the Church had called and the newlyweds were on their missionary way.

William Wallace Brier was a younger brother of James Welch Brier. He was born at Stillwater near Dayton, Ohio, on November 6, 1821. He graduated from Wabash College in Indiana in 1846, studied theology at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati and was ordained by the Presbytery of Logansport, Indiana, in 1848. He was soon appointed pastor of a small Presbyterian church in Romney, close to his family home near Crawfordsville, Indiana.

He married Elizabeth Ann Naylor, whom he had met while at Wabash College, on December 19, 1849. Her father was a prominent circuit judge in Indiana. Her family on both sides came to America before the Revolution. They had battled the



Elizabeth A. Brier 1851. — *Courtesy Carolyn Schorr Hind.*

French, the Indians, and the Loyalists, and they ended up close to Washington's Revolutionary Army. She was born August 20, 1830, in Charleston, Indiana.

The newly married couple traveled eastward by sleigh, river boat and train, happily visiting cousins and friends along the way. In New York, because the city was full of hopeful men following the call of gold to California, all needing transport, the Briers had to wait more than six weeks before cabin space to Chagres, Panama, became available. Their original plan had been to go all the way by sea, around Cape Horn, but the shorter route across the Isthmus of Panama was their final choice, and for a very good reason. The now pregnant Elizabeth should have land-based care when her time for delivery came.

When a ship, the *Panama*, was finally found, ticket prices were outrageous, each costing the entire sum the American Home Missionary Society, their sponsoring agency, had provided for a complete trip to California. A stuffy, cramped and crowded six weeks at sea brought the two safely to the "fever port" of Chagres at the mouth of the Chagres River in Panama. In the words of the Rev.

Wheeler, a capable writer landing a year earlier at the same port for the same purpose: "We landed and commenced the endurance of trouble to which we were hitherto strangers."

Forty miles of wet and disagreeable travel up the river in log canoes poled by near-naked natives, with no decent food and little rest, brought the Briers and their traveling companions to the beginning of the "torture trail," eighteen miles by muleback through jungle mud and water over the Continental Divide to Panama City. This was the Royal Road, the way Aztec gold had gone to Spain. Morgan, the British buccaneer, came the same way with his cutthroats to ravage the city of Panama. For everyone, the Royal Road was a week of misery overshadowed by the ever-present threat of "Panama Fever." The Panama Canal later found a lower, much easier crossing some miles on the other side of town.

For 300 years the old, high route was a terror. Still, in 1850, it carried a continuous stream of traffic. Panama City became a crowded, vicious place where two or three thousand idle gold seekers waited for sea transportation to carry them to California.

The Briers also waited. For almost two months they waited, first in the town, later on a nearby island called Tobago, where they lived in a rented tent and subsisted mostly on fish. Elizabeth came down with "Panama Fever" and was delirious a few days, temporarily losing all her hair. It was the end of July, a full six months after leaving home, before they found transportation up the West Coast bound for San Francisco with stops in Acapulco and San Diego.

Their ship, northbound along the eastern shore of the Pacific Ocean, again was crowded. Many passengers, including William Wallace, suffered terribly from tropical diseases contracted on the Isthmus. The four hundred passengers allowed on board slept on the deck and in accommodations designed for ninety.

With a dearth of adequate accommodations and long, close association with a class of men described earlier by the Rev. Wheeler as "none on this earth need the Gospel more," the three-part journey, New York to San Francisco, must have had nightmare qualities for the young Brier family.

Their long, uncomfortable voyage came to a welcome end in San Francisco just four days

before the arrival of their firstborn on September 9, 1850, the day California became the 31st state in the Union. From San Francisco they traveled by local steamer down the bay to Alviso on their way to San Jose. They did not quite make it. Short of town, a daughter, also Elizabeth, was born in the San Jose Mission under Catholic auspices. Elizabeth Ann must have approved of the care given her there, for she returned to the Mission on the occasion of the birth of her second child, daughter Mary, two years later.

Will and Elizabeth Ann had been headed for Marysville to their first church assignment but had gone by way of San Jose because brother James and Juliet were close by and could help during Elizabeth's confinement. James had a church in Santa Cruz and apparently soon requested transfer to Marysville, for the two brothers were together there in 1851 and 1852, both involved in building new homes and new churches, one church for the Methodists, another for the Presbyterians.

In addition to his duties in Marysville, a transshipment point for men and equipment going to the mines, William Wallace became a circuit rider through the remote mining camps, holding worship services in hotels, saloons, and gambling rooms. This rough work, traveling by horse through the mountains, with little or no protection from the elements, proved too much for his health. Suffering severely from malaria and fatigue, The Rev. W.W. Brier moved with his growing family to Centerville, now a part of Fremont, on the southeast corner of San Francisco Bay.

In addition to the Marysville church, he helped organize and build Presbyterian churches in Centerville, Livermore, Hayward, Pleasanton, Milpitas, and Alvarado. He was the pastor of the Alvarado church for its first eight years. He resigned this pastorate to accept an appointment as District Secretary for Home Missions in California and Nevada, a position he held until he retired. By the time of his retirement he had organized and established 27 Presbyterian churches in California and Nevada. And he found time in between to be Missionary Chairman for the San Anselmo Theological Seminary.

The Rev. W.W. Brier died near Centerville on June 3, 1887. Elizabeth Ann, a strong and faithful missionary wife, died in Los Angeles January 16, 1920. They were survived by five children.

Thus ends the saga of the two Brothers Brier in gold rush California. However, it by no means concludes the influence of the well founded Brier family across this continent, for the many direct descendants of James Welch and William Wallace Brier continue to be outstanding, well educated, hard working citizens, each an advantage to his country.



Monthly Roundup (continued) . . .

The first county organization to guard against fire—among other duties—was the Board of Forestry established 1885, with Abbot Kinney influential in its formation. By 1908, to guard against shepherds setting ring fires to guard their flocks and ranchers setting fires to brush to clear land for future grazing, the county supervisors appointed W. B. Morgan as its first fire warden. In 1919 two large fires, possibly started by steam engines' cinders, caused the supervisors to approve Stewart Hintham to head the County Forest Department. Hintham brought order to what was still mainly a volunteer organization.

By 1923 the County passed a law that enabled it to collect money from cities to cover the cost of fighting fires in the county. By 1953 the separate Forest Service and the County Fire Service merged into the now known Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Many innovations of fire fighting are of relatively late date, and on many the County can take credit for having been "first." Some special innovations and their year's beginnings: 1923 first two-way radio use (successful only if there were no obstructions between the sending and receiving points); 1956 first aerial water drop (on a La Crescenta area fire); 1956 first helicopter water carrier; 1957 first paramedic service. The installation of a first, that covered the period of 1927 to 1944, that could be appreciated by firemen involved in the recent riots set fires was the issuance of firearms to firemen for protection against belligerent crowds.

AUGUST 1992 MEETING

At the August meeting Dick Cunningham addressed the Corral on the first ships to be built on the Pacific Coast. Cunningham noted that it is

(Continued on Page Ten)

LAX's Landmark Hangar

by Don Pflueger

As one flies in or out of Los Angeles International Airport, most often referred to simply as LAX, the surroundings seem notably modern, a place ostensibly without a history. Actually there's more there than meets the eye. The land is historic and the early years of LAX are deserving of more attention than is given by the "frequent flyer."

In 1833, Ignacio Machado established the Rancho Ajuaje de la Centinela where LAX would one day be built. The Machados were a prominent southern California family and there are descendants currently living in the area. No doubt the rancho was typical of other nearby ranchos during the Mexican era. On the eve of the Mexican War, Machado traded his property to the Avila brothers, Bruno and Antonio, the latter the owner of the nearby Rancho Sausal Redondo. The Centinela Rancho comprised approximately 25,000 acres, an area that was later developed into LAX as well as the community of Inglewood. The old adobe still stands, now the headquarters of the Inglewood Historical Society; its annual open house/barbecue is a major event there.

The land changed hands several times apparently, but in 1858 it became the property of Robert Burnett, a Scottish aristocrat. He, in turn, sold it to Canadian Daniel Freeman in 1885. It was Freeman who developed what later became the City of Inglewood, the famous hospital bearing his name a reminder today of the area's pioneer. And, there is a Los Angeles Corral connection: CM Louis Bourdet's wife, Christie, is a granddaughter of Daniel Freeman and still runs the family ranch near Lake Cachuma in Santa Barbara County.

Beans, wheat, barley, and perhaps other crops were grown by Andrew Bennett on 2,000 acres of land leased from Freeman, right where the runways and buildings at LAX are presently located. Bennett farmed the land successfully for three decades, increasing his acreage to 3,000 along the way. While this was going on, the Wright Brothers were experimenting at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The aviation industry was spurred on by the first World War; soon thereafter, in the early 1920's, William M. Mines decided that a landing strip could be staked out between the fields on flat land leased from Bennett. It became known as

Mines' Field. It was the era of barn-storming.

The City of Los Angeles took an interest in the growing aviation industry long before the federal government was to play a role in airport development. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce was a big booster for a municipal role in the creation of a city-owned airport. Mines' dirt airstrip was selected by the Chamber for the 1928 National Air Races, giving the site the boost it needed for selection as a municipal airport. A section of ranch property was leased for ten years starting on July 25, 1928, and the airport was officially opened the following October 1. Dedication came on June 7, 1930, and at the same time the lease was extended to fifty years.

The "aeroplane" came into its own during the 1920's, the feat of Lindbergh stimulating enthusiasm for the coming air age. Virtually every little town put in an airstrip, W.K. Kellogg even putting in one on his Pomona horse ranch. Southern California and the aviation industry were made for each other, primarily because of our climate. Small aircraft factories were built near airstrips, nowhere more dramatically than in the Los Angeles area. In 1930 California had over 150 airports, more than a thousand pilots and nearly as many mechanics who kept the aircraft running. More than two dozen manufacturers of airplanes and aircraft motors were located in the Los Angeles area. The Ontario International Airport, ONT the moniker, dates from 1929, but it wasn't until after World War II that it became a part of the Los Angeles airport system.

First known as the Los Angeles Municipal Airport, LAX received international attention as the site for the National Air Races in 1928, 1933, and 1936, tens of thousands of spectators coming from far and near for the thrilling shows. The depression slowed down progress for the entire aviation industry, nonetheless the city purchased the airport property in 1937.

At the time of the purchase there were only a few permanent buildings dating back to the days of Mines' Field. A permanent runway had been built in 1929 and a permanent hangar, appropriate dubbed Hangar One, was built the same year by the Curtiss-Wright company.

Still standing, Hangar One is truly an historic building. Most hangars are simply big barn-like structures made out of corrugated steel, but Hangar One was architecturally designed to blend in with southern California's then popular Mediterranean-style buildings, Spanish Colonial Revival to be exact. That translates into a red-tiled brick building, complete with bell tower, arches, and parapets; it would blend in nicely with the Santa Barbara Mission. Successively it has been a storage site for a maximum of 18 small planes, cargoes, a flying school, dormitories, lounges, and space for a series of aircraft companies.

At one time or another, nearly all the famed pilots of the early years checked in at Hangar One—Charles Lindbergh, James Doolittle, and actor Jimmy Stewart to name but a few. One of the most exciting events at the airport in the early days was the arrival of Germany's Graf Zeppelin from Japan on a round-the-world flight. As a kid, I remember staying up one night hoping to see it glide by on its eastward flight, but it seems not to have chosen a route by our home.

During World War II, Hangar One was used by the Army Air Corps. After the war, the Los Angeles Municipal Airport had its name officially changed to Los Angeles International Airport on October 11, 1949, when increasing numbers of planes arrived from abroad. In more recent times Hangar One has had a series of lessees—North American Aviation, Rockwell International, Golden West Airlines, and Los Angeles Airways, the latter operating an interurban helicopter service. An unfortunate series of accidents kept it from becoming an airborne Pacific Electric.

Hangar One's historical significance was recognized in 1966 as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #44 as "a symbol of the beginning of an airport now ranked one of the three busiest in the nation and for its architectural integrity as an intact example of its style and type." In May 1992, the California Historic Resources Commission recommended Hangar One for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The commission's staff is investigating the possibility of its nomination to the international list of historic sites, joining the California Missions and the gold discovery site at Coloma. Hangar One is the best candidate for being a symbol of California's great aviation industry.

The next time you drive along Imperial Blvd. on the south side of LAX keep your eyes peeled for

Hangar One. It is a landmark known but to a few.

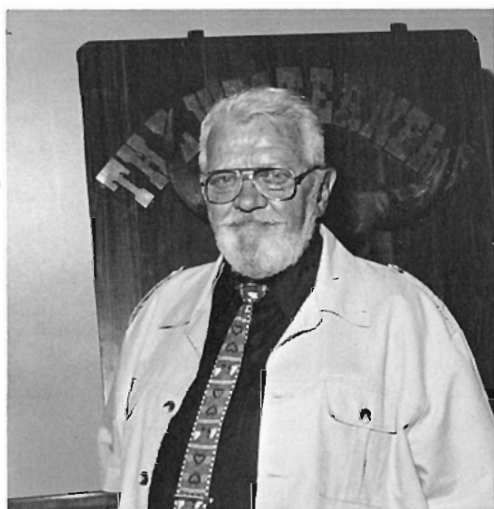
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Much of the foregoing factual information was gleaned from the application for the National Register, prepared by Christy Johnson McAvoy of Hollywood Historic Resources Group.



Monthly Roundup (continued) . . .

hard to do research in this field because of the many erroneous claims made by historians about "the first ship built," or "the first ship built of native materials," and just plain poor research. Errors of fact have been reprinted and perpetuated over the years. Cunningham hoped to set the record straight for ships on the Pacific Coast.



Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

August meeting speaker Richard Cunningham, AKA Captain Ahab.

Earliest accounts of Pacific Coast shipbuilding date from the late 16th century when Sebastian Cermeno wrecked the Manila Galleon and had to transport 70 shipwrecked crewmen back to Mexico. In 1587 the *Santa Ana II* was built on the Pacific Coast as a Manilla Galleon, weighing 600 tons and capable of carrying 125 passengers. *Santa Ana II* ran into English freebooter Thomas Cavendish who captured the vessel, took off the treasure, and burned the ship. Such events occurred years before English colonists got into shipbuilding on the Atlantic coast.

(Continued on Page Twenty-One)



General George S. Patton, Jr., Mayor Fletcher Bowron, General James H. Doolittle, left to right, on City Hall steps, June 9, 1945.

How LAX Almost Became a “Doolittle” Airport

by Abraham Hoffman

La Guardia. O'Hare. Dulles. John Wayne. Kennedy. Doolittle.

Doolittle?

In the closing months of World War II the City of Los Angeles came very close to naming its municipal airport after war hero Jimmy Doolittle. On June 9, 1945, Mayor Fletcher Bowron and the people of Los Angeles welcomed General James H. Doolittle and General George S. Patton, Jr., with a parade and reception ceremony. Both men were homegrown products; Doolittle was a graduate of Manual Arts High School, and Patton had grown up in San Marino. “It’s sort of a long time between my visits here, but I always feel right at home the minute I land,” said Doolittle, the leader of the first

bombing mission over Tokyo, as he faced a large crowd on the steps of City Hall. “And it’s a mighty good feeling too,” he told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter.

The warm reception accorded the famous general prompted several members of the Los Angeles City Council to propose changing the Los Angeles Municipal Airport to “Doolittle Field, Los Angeles Air Terminal,” with all city officials and employees instructed to use the new name. On July 12 the City Attorney was instructed to draft an ordinance to that effect.

The City Council quickly discovered that sentiment for the name change was far from unanimous. Letters and reports preserved in the Los

Angeles City Archives indicate the strength of this opposition. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce responded with its own resolution opposing the proposed new ordinance. Los Angeles voters had recently approved two bond issues for airport expansion. Aviation policy of listing pilot flight charts by the name of the airport, however, meant that "the city would be placed under a very real handicap in that it would be less, rather than better known as a center of aviation and world commerce."

The proposal also found little favor with the Los Angeles Board of Municipal Airport Commissioners. Understandably upset at not having been consulted about the name change, the commissioners passed their own resolution urging the City Council not to adopt the Doolittle name. The commissioners said that while they had "the greatest respect and admiration for Lt. General James H. Doolittle, it nevertheless is not considered good policy and is contrary to the best interests of the City of Los Angeles to name its Airport for any individual."

Other protests were also filed as the Downtown Business Men's Association and the Miracle Mile Association, along with private citizens, registered their complaints. Said one woman, "Three of our very oldest parks here under the stress of wartime emotion lost their original names and Los Angeles thereby lost much of what was of very real historic value." One of the few supporters of the idea felt that Doolittle deserved the honor because he had attended local schools, led the raid on Tokyo, won many air races, and was the first pilot to do an out-side loop, among other achievements.

Foremost among the opposition, however, was Fletcher Bowron, the city's feisty and outspoken mayor. Elected in 1938 in a recall and reform election that ended corruption in city government, Bowron came to office intending to redeem the image of Los Angeles. Although Bowron was an unabashed admirer of Doolittle and his exploits, he had no intention of allowing the city's airport to be named after a living person, or, for that matter, a dead one.

Aviation was still a young industry, and the airport's official existence dated back less than twenty years. In the 1920s the Los Angeles area was dotted with small, private airfields. The City Council expressed interest in acquiring land for a municipal airport. The Los Angeles Chamber of

Commerce suggested thirteen possible sites, including a portion of what at the time was the Bennett Rancho. This property included the old Rancho Centinela which had been subdivided by several land companies. In 1927 William W. Mines, a real estate agent acting for the Los Angeles Extension Company, offered 640 acres to the city on a lease basis. "Mines Field" at the time contained no facilities—only a dirt runway. But in 1928 the field was selected as the site for the National Air Races, and on July 25 of that year the City Council Accepted Mines' offer with an option to purchase.

Bowron had long detested the persistence with which the name Mines Field had stuck in the public mind. "Each time I hear that name I am reminded of what I consider to be one of the most unsavory deals that has been put over on the City of Los Angeles in recent years," he complained, recalling how the city had bought the property at a more than generous price. He had backed the change from Mines Field to Los Angeles Municipal Airport in 1941, and he was still distressed that the Post Office had for years put the airport in Inglewood, until pressure from congressmen and chamber of commerce officials successfully put the address back in Los Angeles where it belonged.

An ardent aviation supporter, Bowron keenly felt that commercial aviation in the postwar period would become increasingly important. By 1945 the City of Los Angeles had completed an extensive program for improvement of airport facilities, including a state-of-the-art instrument landing system, lighting, and drainage. The lease was converted to a purchase, the city paying \$2,240,000 in 1937 for the airport property. In 1943 the airport's first master plan had been published, calling for 4,600-foot runways, plus future expansion.

When word of the City Council's proposal to name the airport after Doolittle reached Bowron, he quickly responded with a statement that indicated his awareness of the importance for long-term planning for the city. "Pride in the achievements and the honor we feel for our nation's heroes should not in all cases guide us in the naming of so important an air transportation center as the Los Angeles Airport," he said. Bowron believed that a metropolis such as Los Angeles merited an airport named for itself so that there would be no doubt in the minds of travelers as to their des-

mination. "With all due respect, and it is a profound respect and great personal admiration and friendship for General Jimmy Doolittle, I feel that the name Los Angeles should be the name and the only name affixed to our municipal airport." Bowron asked the City Council to delay its vote on the ordinance until he could contact General Doolittle personally on the question, and the council acceded to his request.

Bowron wrote a gracious letter to Doolittle acknowledging his contributions and heroism, but he also asked him for a statement declining the city's proposal. "The entire nation honors you," he said. "Los Angeles honors you. Your name will have a secure place in American history and I am sure that the lasting lustre of that name will not be increased or diminished in any manner or at all by whatever action we may take in changing the name or retaining the name of the Los Angeles Airport." Bowron reviewed the recent history of aviation in Los Angeles, noting that the city's voters had approved the expenditure of more than \$17,000,000 to improve the airport, and that the city showed every promise of becoming a world leader in commercial aviation after the war ended.

General Doolittle responded heroically to Bowron's request, stating that "while I appreciate deeply the honor which my friends there sought to bestow on me, I agree that your Municipal Airport should carry the name of a permanent locality, not that of an individual who is, at best, temporary."

On August 28 the City Council received Bowron's argument against the change, along with Doolittle's letter and other communications opposing the ordinance. One letter supplied by Bowron came from a Texas aviation supervisor who advised that Houston's airport had briefly been titled the Howard Hughes Airport after his around-the-world flight, but the name was soon dropped as it violated a local tradition of not naming public places after living people.

Mayor Bowron offered a broader argument. "Our airport, when developed and completed, should be and undoubtedly will be one of the outstanding features of the city to carry the name 'Los Angeles' to all countries in various sections of the world. The name of the city should appear on schedules of all commercial airlines, foreign as well as domestic; in travel information, time tables and aviation maps of the world," he wrote to the City Council.

Having run into such heavy flak, the City Council, by a 10-3 vote, aborted the mission.

As commercial aviation developed, many other cities succumbed to the temptation of naming airports after notable people, and few travelers today would register confusion about the location of Dulles, John Wayne, or O'Hare, which was named after Lieutenant Commander Edward Henry O'Hare, who was killed in action in World War II aerial combat. Most recently, an attempt to change the name of the admittedly awkward Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport to Bob Hope Airport was defeated. One way of avoiding controversy is to name a part of the airport complex after the person so being honored rather than the entire airport; so it is that Bradley International Terminal was named for Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley in 1984.

Fletcher Bowron's optimism for his city's future in aviation was confirmed in 1950. Bowron had correctly assessed the Doolittle proposal as a spur-of-the-moment idea which in the long run would have diminished the city's commercial identity. Just five short years after beating back the Doolittle suggestion, he had the satisfaction of seeing his predictions validated as the City Council did authorize a name change—to Los Angeles International Airport, or, as almost 50 million passengers annually notice on their luggage tags, LAX.



Fandango at El Molino Viejo

by Don Pflueger

The 1992 Fandango of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners was held on June 13 at El Molino Viejo in San Marino. Members showed up in Levi's, cowboy boots, plaid shirts, and ten-gallon hats while the fairer sex added color with bright skirts, blouses, Indian jewelry, and Spanish shawls. The scene was early California at its best, the weather was perfect, and the long June twilight afforded ample opportunity for extended conversation with friends.

museum as well as offices.

Constructed in 1816 under the direction of Padre Zalvidea, this first water-powered grist mill in California was located at the confluence of two arroyos—Los Robles and Mill Canyon. Our fellow Westerner, the late Robert Glass Cleland, thought the millstones, now seen in the garden, came from the San Gabriel Mountains, but later historians are convinced they came as ballast on sailing vessels, either from Latin America or Spain. Because of a recurring problem of dampness the mill was used for only seven years, after which operations were moved closer to the Mission.

Those wishing more details on this historic structure should read Cleland's *El Molino Viejo*, published in 1950, or a later printing (1971) to which an Epilogue was added by our fellow corral



Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

Low flying bird's-eye view of corner of El Molino Viejo and of Fandango participants.

The setting for the San Gabriel Mission's old mill is in one of today's nicest neighborhoods of San Marino, a community known for its lovely homes. The city owns the property and for several years the old mill has served as the southern California headquarters of the California Historical Society. The adobe walls, five feet thick at the base and three at the top, once supported a waterwheel, drive shaft, and millstones, and now house a small

member, Rodman W. Paul.

The Fandango featured fine wines selected by our Deputy Sheriff Ernest Marquez and poured by our sommelier and Wrangler Boss David Gillies. The highly decorated tables featured a scenic mountain of hors d'oeuvres, leafy salad, barbecued beef and chicken, stir-fried red peppers and string beans, rice pilaf, several dishes defying description including a wide variety of interesting



Closeup view of Fandango sociability.

saucers and relishes, and a cream caramel dessert with fresh berries.

As the candles on the tables began to glow more brightly, a trio of musicians provided us with early California songs and dances led by Casilda Amador Thoreson and her son Erik, once members of the famed Padua Hills Players in Claremont. The sheriff presented Casilda with a

bouquet of mixed flowers following the notable performance. The inherent charm of the setting, the music of the classical guitar, Spanish songs, and castanets, and the bubbling patio fountain created for all those present an unforgettable ambiance of early California culture that subtly transmitted itself to today's world. It was a memorable evening. Ole!



Casilda Amador Thoreson group entertained with songs, dances, and guitar music.

Railroad Outing of 1992

Once again Hugh Tolford was the able impresario who arranged an interesting train trip, on August 8, that was enjoyed by a group of 74 people consisting of members, their wives, and guests. This time the destination was San Diego. Tolford was assisted on train arrangements by Associate Member Todd Peterson, an expert on such things who even owns a vintage private railway car parked on a siding in Arcadia near his business and home.

Although most of the train riders boarded in Los Angeles at the Union Passenger Terminal, some loyal Corral members boarded at Fullerton, Anaheim, and Santa Ana for the resultant shorter

remainder of the trip. Regardless of distance traveled, all participants enjoyed the program arranged by Tolford in San Diego. The latest thing in buses transported the travelers to the historic Del Coronado Hotel for a delicious lunch in the Crown Room, a carpenter's dream of construction.

Later the buses took tour participants to Balboa Park to visit the Aerospace Historical Museum, where that descendant of the Iron Cross tradition, Siegfried Demke, could refresh his knowledge of Von Richthofen, Immelmann, and Count Zeppelin.

This was followed by visits to the harborside nautical museums on board the square-rigged sailing ship *Star of India* and the Southern Pacific Railroad's San Francisco Bay ferry *Berkeley*. Nobody became seasick; nobody fell overboard.

Then, as the overworked cliché had the sun sinking in the west, the train—with the specially reserved car for the Westerners—headed north for home.

The Editor

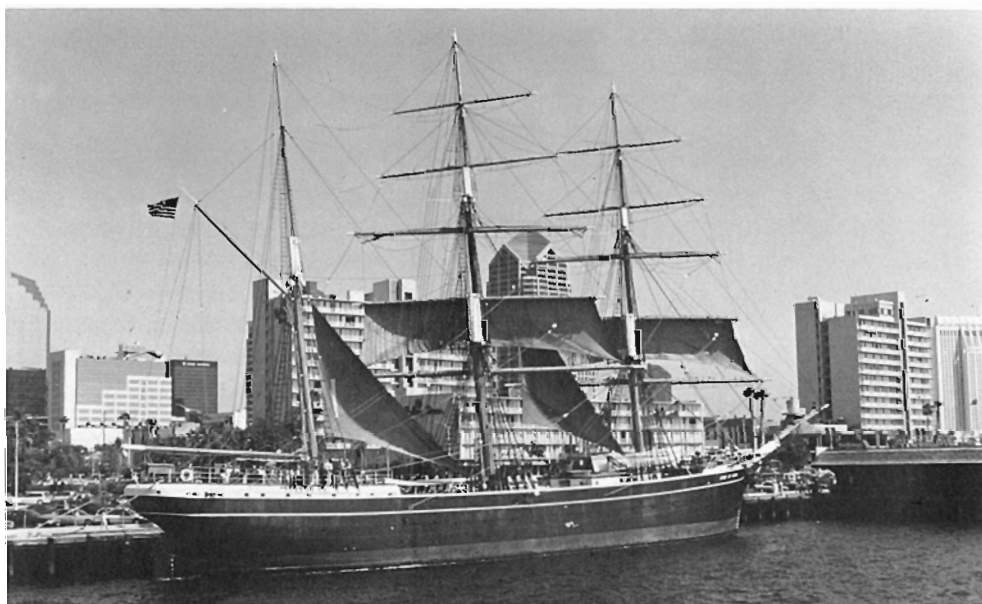


Photograph by - Frank Q. Newton

Boarding the car reserved for Westerners for homeward ride. The many smiles testify to the success of the outing.



Del Coronado Hotel, site of the scrumptious lunch.



The *Star of India* at her San Diego permanent mooring.



Southern Pacific Railroad San Francisco Bay ferryboat *Berkeley* with the steam yacht *Medea* alongside.

George L. Geiger

1912 - 1992

George L. Geiger was born February 2, 1912 at Salt Lake City.

The family came to Santa Monica when he was five. There he lived for the next nineteen years and graduated from Venice High School. During these years he learned to swim at the age of six, spending his spare time in the Venice canals. At the age of seven he built his first boat, a canoe. When he was ten he built a ten-foot sailing skiff which he named "Daisy R" after his mother. During his high school years his favorite sport was water polo and he captained the school team during his senior year.

George graduated from UCLA in 1934 with a B.A. degree in Zoology. He took graduate study in Biological Science and Educational Administration.

His teaching experience began in Needles where he taught the fifth and sixth grades in an Indian-Mexican school. He was Vice Principal at Redlands and served as Principal and District Superintendent at Etiwanda.

He came to Long Beach in 1942 as a teacher in Los Cerritos grade school and became Principal in 1944. In August 1947, he was elected Director of Elementary Schools for the Long Beach system. The title was changed to Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools in 1951, and he served in that capacity until his retirement in 1969. He saw the system go from 19,000 to 43,000 students and

the number of schools from 28 to 53.

George had the sea in his blood. In 1968 he bought a 26-foot teak sailboat which he named "The Thelma" after his wife. His spare time was spent cruising the Southern California coast, particularly the area around Catalina Island. The Geigers spent so much there that two coves are named after them, Big Geiger and Little Geiger coves. George organized the Bluewater Cruising Club, which was a group of some 50 sailboat owners.

After retiring, the Geigers enjoyed driving across country to attend the Western History Conference. Along the way he would visit book dealers to add to his vast book collection.

George was a member of the Founding Board of the Historical Society of Long Beach and served as its President. Other memberships included the Pacific Maritime History Society, California Academy of Science, International Oceanographic Foundation and Friends of the Bancroft Library. He was a member of Kiwanis since 1947 and served as President as well as editor of the club weekly. He became a member of Westerners in mid-1960 and an Active Member in 1976.

George died on June 17, 1992. He is survived by his wife Thelma, four daughters and two sons. One son, Ron, is a member of this Corral. Services were private.

Wade E. Kittell

George Koenig 1918 - 1992

Although born in the east—Detroit, Michigan—George was a practicing westerner to an outstanding level. He researched the west, he wrote about the west, and he explored the west.

One of George's many writing projects started with his discovery of the journal of a German immigrant who camped in Death Valley in December of 1849. Titled *Valley of Salt, Memories of Wine: A Journal of Death Valley 1849* and published by the Bancroft Library, the book received the Rounce & Coffin Club Award in 1967. Jim Holliday, Executive Director Emeritus of the California Historical Society, who wrote the foreword for the book, said: "George Koenig is an avid and knowledgeable historian who hiked over more of Death Valley, the Panamint and Argus-Inyo Mountain ranges than many old prospectors."

There were other books: *Lost Death Valley 49er, The Journal of Louis Nusbaum; Death Valley Tailings; Beyond This Place There Be Dragons*, published by member Robert Clark and the Arthur H. Clark Company; *The Mother Lode—Route #49*, published by member Walt Wheelock and his Siesta Press, a self-directed tour guide of the Mother Lode country that has enabled many tourists to enjoy that historic section of California.

There were magazine articles, special writings for the Death Valley 49ers and for our Corral. For the Corral, he wrote for the Branding Iron, was editor of the highly successful *Brand Book #12* in 1966, and authored the interesting Keepsake #27, *Panamint City*. That keepsake contained a facsimile of a rare newspaper, *The Panamint Mining News*.

George joined the Los Angeles Corral in 1964

and later received Grubstake number 83. He belonged to five other historical societies, including the Death Valley 49ers, in which he was as active as he was in the Westerners.

Employed by a Los Angeles based advertising agency, George handled the advertising for the Union Pacific Railroad through the U.P.S. Advertising Manager, John Forbes, who was also based in Los Angeles. For an advertisement of a new U.P. train that was to run to Las Vegas and back, George made up four ads and submitted them. One had a headline that tied in with Hoover Dam, reading MORE FUN AT A DAM SITE. Forbes wasn't sure it should be submitted to U.P. headquarters in Omaha. But George urged that it be submitted. It turned out that headquarters liked the humor of the title, and the ad was approved.

The love of traveling to out of the way places was not confined to California. There were many trips to other parts of the world. Perhaps the most unusual trip taken by George and his wife, Birdie, was to Timbuktu, in Mali, and Ougadougua, in Upper Volta. This trip was planned when their son, Steve, was stationed in Abidjian, Ivory Coast, in western Africa, as an attaché to the American Embassy. The enjoyment of traveling to these out of the way cities had occupied George's mind so much that he had overlooked arranging a passport renewal. The expiration of the passport developed complications—eventually overcome—that prevented making the Ougadougua part of the trip. But Timbuktu was a success.

George was a person seen by different people in different lights. But all saw him as a person who lived life to the fullest.

Hugh C. Tolford



Corral Chips

by Donald Duke

Willis Blenkinsop, for the past two years, has been carrying the creed of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners to citizens of Long Beach by presenting talks on the American West. His approach is presenting little known facts about well-known events in history. Under this basic concept, he has six topics covering biography and event ranging from informational, to notorious, and tragedy. Blenkinsop, as you will remember, spoke to the Corral in May about William Wolfskill.

Ray Wood has been busy lately adding to the coffers of travel agents. After a week in Tucson, hobnobbing with Arizona historians and C.M.'s Don Bufkin and John Gilchriese, he took off for two weeks in Northern Italy inflicting his bad German and worse Italian on long-suffering inhabitants of the Dolomite and Lake Garda regions.

Raconteur C.M. Dr. Albert Shumate has a new book out, published by the Society of California Pioneers. Entitled *Captain A. A. Ritchie, California Pioneer*, it is an account of his life, family and ranchos. Ritchie ran away from home at the age of 13, shipping aboard a vessel bound for China. A scant six years later he was commanding his own brig. Pretty good for a 19-year-old. By the time he arrived in San Francisco he was a wealthy man, investing in land rather than digging for gold.

Old map collector *William Warren* talked to the members of the California Map Society at their annual meeting at Cal State-Los Angeles last June. His topic was how early cartographers got the coast of California far out of line. Corral members will remember his talk on the maps of California a year ago May. In the audience were *William Escherich* and *Siegfried Demke* who, by the way,

found Cal State-Los Angeles without an Auto Club map.

Pots and pans maker *William Miller* attended the California Blacksmith's Association conference in Auburn this past March. In attendance were some 150 smiths vying to keep their charcoals hot. Did anyone bring the marshmallows?

Iron Eyes Cody was master of ceremonies at Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial June 5-7 held at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. On display was turquoise and silver Indian jewelry, rugs, baskets, pottery, and paintings. And yes, Bill Escherich gave the Indian Prayer!

C.M. Glenn Thornhill states in a letter dated April 7, 1992: "Your impassioned plea for news items got me off my butt. Having edited a couple of volunteer newsletters over the years I know how hard it is sometimes is to get something (anything) from someone to fill up space with something meaningful." Trouble was, Thornhill forgot to include what he was going to include in his envelope. Your heart is in the right place, Glenn!

Andrew Dagosta had a two-page feature in *Lens Magazine* for July 1992. It states that Andy is a distinguished Western artist and has always had an eye for detail. We all know that! The article told of Dagosta Advertising Art, how he got started in painting Western themes, and shows examples of his work. The feature even gave a plug for the Westerners.

John Robinson, our prolific author on Southern California's mountain country, appeared in "The Rim of the World" newspaper-type guide published by the San Bernardino National Forest and printed by the Big Santa Anita Historical Society. This guide explains how the automobile traveler can find nature, culture, and historical treasures in the San Bernardino mountain range.

Msgr. Francis J. Weber and *Martin Ridge* were made "Fellows" of the Historical Society of Southern California at their 6th Annual Awards Gala entitled "Celebrating the Rich Tapestry of History in Southern California." The awards were presented at a dinner held Thursday evening, the 24th of September, at the Huntington Library.

Rick Arnold, a San Gabriel police lieutenant, while poking through the junk in the basement of the police station, ran into a costume that some "Man from Mars" could have worn. Curiosity got the better of him, and he wondered what kind of bandit would wear a sort of Batman-type costume

to rob grocery stores. It appears that in 1950 a Forest Ray Colson began to rob San Gabriel Valley markets in his garb of a helmet with skull on it, goggles, a black vest, black boots, and carrying a pump shotgun. He held up ten markets over a ten-month period of time and got away with it. On his eleventh robbery, a policeman shot him in the head. Only upon unmasking the robber did they realize that Colson had served as a policeman at Monterey Park for a short period of time and knew exactly when the markets counted their cash.

Monthly Roundup (continued) . . .

Triunfo de la Cruz was built on the California coast in 1720. Built by Juan de Ugarte, S.J., a talented Jesuit who could farm, do carpentry, and design and build ships. Ugarte used the ship to explore the Gulf of California to verify California was not an island. Ugarte died in 1730 at age 70, but the ship continued to perform service for Spain.

In 1769 the *San Carlos* was used in connection with the Sacred Expedition and, notes Cunningham, is probably the most miswritten and misdrawn ship in California history. Twenty years later the Spanish government built a ship that was the first of any size to be government-constructed, an oddity given the fact that Spain was a maritime nation. This ship had a single sail and was needed in San Diego Bay to supply a Spanish fort with potable water.

Fort Ross in the early 19th century functioned as an early shipyard. Six ships were built there, all with a short lifespan because they were constructed of the wrong type of oak wood. Nothing remains of this historic shipyard. William A. Richardson trained Indians to build boats in the 1820s. He operated in San Francisco Bay but made a daring trip to and from Sitka.

Other early ships included the *Santa Barbara* and the *Guadalupe*, the latter launched in 1831 in San Pedro under unusual circumstances. The *Guadalupe* was built by Joseph Chapman, a former crewman under the notorious Bouchard, with the sponsorship of Fr. Jose Sanchez, O.F.M. To get the ship from San Gabriel Mission to San Pedro, they had to dismantle it and then reassemble it for launching. Its last known date on the Pacific Coast was 1833; it may have been sold after that for the Hawaiian trade. One final ship of interest in the pre-American period was called the "Better Than

Nothing." Built in 1834, this ship was connected to San Nicholas Island and the famous story of the abandoned Indian girl that became the novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

New Members

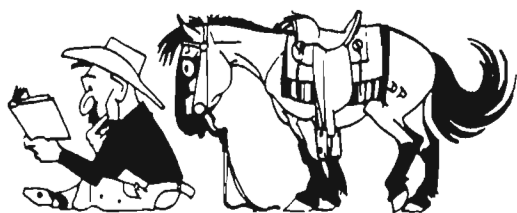
In their meeting of August 1, 1992, the Trail Bosses voted to raise the following Associate Members to Active status: Tom Bent; Robert Ebinger; William Miller; Richard Noonan; Ronald Woolsey.

Also, the Trail Bosses voted to raise the following Corresponding Members to Associate status: Lawrence Arnold; Steven Born; Larry Johnston; Jackson Norwood; Todd Peterson; Peter Pettler; Robert Schwemmer; Thomas Tefft; Glenn Thornhill.

This action was taken in recognition of these members having participated in various activities and programs that further the interests of the Corral. The areas of participation—and some members have been involved in several—are: serving as wrangler at the Fandango, Rendezvous, and special events; presenting an evening program at one of the monthly meetings; writing an article for the Branding Iron; writing book reviews for the Branding Iron; assisting elected and appointed officers on special occasions. Stated another way, these are members who have not been content simply to attend monthly meetings.

The Editor





DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

WRITING WESTERN HISTORY: *Essays on Major Western Historians*, edited by Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. 370 pp. Notes, Index. Cloth, \$37.50; paper, \$17.50. Available from University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591.

CREATING THE WEST: *Historical Interpretations, 1890-1990*, by Gerald D. Nash. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. 318 pp. Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$15.95. Available from University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591.

The past decade has evidenced a growing interest in the historiography of the West. Most of the works are evaluations of the state of the field, but these two works are in-depth investigations of the entire historiography. Nash's book surveys the field since 1890; Etulain's book, which starts earlier, presents biographies of ten major authors.

Creating the West, the Calvin P. Horn Lectures in Western History and Culture, given at the University of New Mexico, September 30-October 3, 1990, is a very personal, intense, amusing and perceptive work evaluating interpretations of western history in light of the Turner Thesis and the fact each generation interprets history through its own milieu.

Each lecture presents a different aspect of Western History. "The West as Frontier, 1890-1945" evaluates Frederick Jackson Turner and his early disciples and starting with the 1920s his detractors. Nash posits that many early Turner supporters saw the United States as an open society with unlimited progress. The economic catastrophe of the 1920s and 30s created the illusion of a closed society and led to attacks on any optimistic interpretation. Another factor

was that this later group was further from Turner and did not choose to ignore or understand his omissions.

The second lecture, "The West as Frontier, 1945-1990," demonstrates how disillusionment with the country's purposes and actions led to closer and more negative reflections on the frontier process. Many challenges were made on the validity of the Turner Thesis because of its forest frontier orientation, the absence of minorities, the lack of understanding of the Indian relations, and the idea that this was an initiator rather than an imitator. Others took different avenues of attack, but basically, "... historians of this era [did not] reflect the nationalistic pride of the earlier generations. No longer did they find the American frontier unique." (p. 99)

In "The West as Region, 1890-1990" (personally a better title would have been "West Seen by Social Scientists, Minorities and Other Crusaders"), Nash reviews the many attacks on the Turner Thesis because it ignored women, minorities, Indian relations, cultural aspects, and the exploitation of the environment. Nash deftly rationalizes Turner like his attackers reflected his times; his age did not consider any of these issues. Further, Nash points out that Turner did not write in the twentieth century and would have found it difficult to consider the current outlooks. Turner himself reflected on the Frontier Thesis, and if he had written it in the 1930s, the end of his career, it would have been different from what he presented at the beginning of his career in the 1890s.

In "The West as Urban Civilization," Nash considers the authors, including Turner, who felt that towns were more important than the frontier in the development of the West. Since most of the urban growth occurred during the twentieth century, Nash's major field of study, the author is able to give some very insightful interpretations on the literature.

"The West as Utopia and Myth, 1890-1990" evaluates how the West worked on the imagination and how the imagination helped create the West. One of the major theses of this section is that the West is as much of a product of the entirety of Western Civilization as of local conditions. The intellectual baggage of the settlers played an important role in the development of the region.

The "Conclusions" carefully summarize the arguments of each group, shows how events in the present influence our interpretations of the West, and how our present biases reflect on the interpretations of the past. Although Nash never states it, one clearly understands that when Turner stated in his speech, "This paper will make no attempt to treat the subject exhaustively; its aim is simply to call attention to the frontier as a fertile field of investigation, and to suggest some of the problems which arise in connection with it," he started an avalanche of historians who fulfilled his intent.

The Etulain book is completely different. It is not the work of one person, but is a collection of twelve essays by eleven different authors which scrutinize the works of ten different historians of the West—rather a *Pastmasters* of Western History. The Twelfth essay is a general evaluation of the authors working today and the many interpretations they represent. The biographies are presented in three groups. The first discusses the precursors of Turner, Josiah Royce and H.H. Bancroft. The second, Turner and the Classic Western Historians, has two essays on Turner. One an evaluation of the significance of one of his earlier presentations, "The Significance of American History;" the other studies Turner as a regionalist. Frederick Paxton, Walter Prescott Webb, Herbert Bolton and James Malin complete this group, an interesting combination of Turner advocates, expanders and critics. The final section, "Recent Historians," includes studies on Henry Nash Smith, Ray Allen Billington and Earl Pomeroy.

While the overall rating of these essays is excellent, all the contributors gave evidence of a thorough knowledge and understanding of their subjects and presented the information in a thoughtful and readable manner. Like any collection, some were more attention grabbing than others. Most of the essays in the first two sections were straight biography and an evaluation of a completed body of works. While each author gave a fair evaluation of the works, Cronan's "Turner's First Stand" and Bogue's study of James Malin made the greatest impact on this reviewer. In both cases, it was probably because of a relative ignorance about the materials. The articles on the recent historians, especially Lee Mitchell's on Henry Nash Smith

and Patricia Limerick's on Ray Allen Billington, were more critiques and critical. To prove Nash's point that each person's biases and world view influences interpretations of history, the essay on Billington, although very fair, balanced and thoughtful, caused this reviewer some mild irritation. It has all been said before, but . . .

When reading any work, one wonders why so and so was included but so and so was not. One can not fault the authors or editor for the inclusions or omissions. It would be easy to develop a list of personal favorites who were not included, but at the same time be thankful for the inclusion of many who are generally ignored.

These two works nicely compliment each other. One gives a sweeping overview; the other gives specifics about some of the major players. The Nash book is more personal with several themes running through the narrative; the Etulain book is more detached and does not have any major theme running through all the essays. Both authors drew heavily on each other. Nash mentions Etulain's assistance in preparation of the speeches, and Etulain dedicated his work to Nash. In short we have two major works contributing to a better understanding of historiography.

Both of these books belong in any collection on Western History. They are informative, readable, thoughtful, current and valuable collections. Trying to choose between is like trying to choose between two desserts. Take one of each; but, if you can not, reluctantly opt for the Nash book.

Robert W. Blew



LAKOTA RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CUSTER FIGHT: *New Sources of Indian-Military History*, edited by Richard G. Hardorff. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991. 211 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$32.50. Order from The Arthur H. Clark Co., P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, Washington 99214.

The engagement at Little Big Horn, perhaps as much as any singular event, was emblematic of the cultural tensions inherent to the westward movement. It is not surprising then, that historians have debated the battle scene scenario with as much veracity as there exists scholarly

disagreement over the dubious leadership of George A. Custer himself. Confusion over Custer's "Last Stand" has resulted from the lack of eye witnesses, reliance only upon military reports, and conflicting evidence found at the battle site itself. Richard Hardorff's *Lakota Recollections of the Custer Fight* is a refreshing new entry into that discussion, offering an alternative perspective based upon several Indian warrior interviews. These "kill talks" both support and clarify many of the speculative details concerning the actual battle.

The Indian narratives specifically address several points of contention about the battle. The various accounts corroborate existing hypothesis about soldier suicides, identify the troop deployment of Major Reno and Captain Benteen's forces, and provide a stark description of the last rush of troops from Custer's Hill toward the Deep Ravine. The Native American versions also consider the duration of the conflict, the size of the Indian contingent, and the quality of Custer's fighting force. Hardorff's meticulous annotations highlight these issues, and provide a reasoned analysis based on an abundance of bibliographical sources. In addition, the reader is swept into the battle scene itself, gaining insight into the obvious confusion, panic, and hopelessness of the soldiers' predicament. One also learns of the Native American perspective; broken treaties and raids on Indian camps explained why, as one Cheyenne brave confessed, "our hearts were bad."

Hardorff has compiled over a dozen Indian interviews conducted by several respected scholars and western enthusiasts. These oral accounts are suspect on an individual basis since they were recorded between thirty and seventy years after the battle. In total, however, the collection presents a compelling description of the battle scene, which offers coherence to the chaotic events that surrounded the conflict. Hardorff's comments are particularly valuable in determining time, location, and a description of the skirmishes. The editor's map and Indian drawings provide a vivid basis for understanding the sequence of events.

This study is Richard Hardorff's third entry on the Custer battle. His use of several archives and the generous assistance of the Nebraska State Historical Society provides the basis for a

fresh approach to this subject. This attractive edition is part of the Frontier Military Series edited by the Arthur Clark Company. *Lakota Recollections* should challenge the serious scholar and interest a general readership on this often misunderstood and provocative subject of the American West.

Ronald C. Woolsey



ARIZONA LEGEND AND LORE: *Tales of South-western Pioneers*, by Dorothy Daniels Anderson. Phoenix: Golden West Publishers, 1991. 176 pp. Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. Paper, \$5.95 + \$1.50 p/h. Available from Golden West Publishers, 4113 N. Longview, Phoenix, AZ 85014.

In a story telling style put to paper, the author tells the reader about fifteen Arizona historical events in just 160 pages. The subjects of the stories range from the experiment to use camels in American desert crossing transportation to the first use of an automobile to chase and capture two Phoenix area train robbers before they could reach the Mexican border on horseback.

It should be stated, before anything else is said, that Dorothy Daniels Anderson is a good story teller who makes expert use of a good vocabulary. Her background for her craft consists of a masters degree in education from Columbia University and a position as teacher of American and Arizona history in the Phoenix Union High School District. As a master story teller she has been chosen by the Arizona Commission on the Arts to be a member of its performing artists roster.

But this is brief, fictionalized history, intended to entertain, reporting conversations in verbatim and the thoughts running through the minds of the stories' protagonists. With its modest price, it is a good book to read on a crowded airplane trip, when it is difficult to concentrate on anything.

Siegfried G. Demke

