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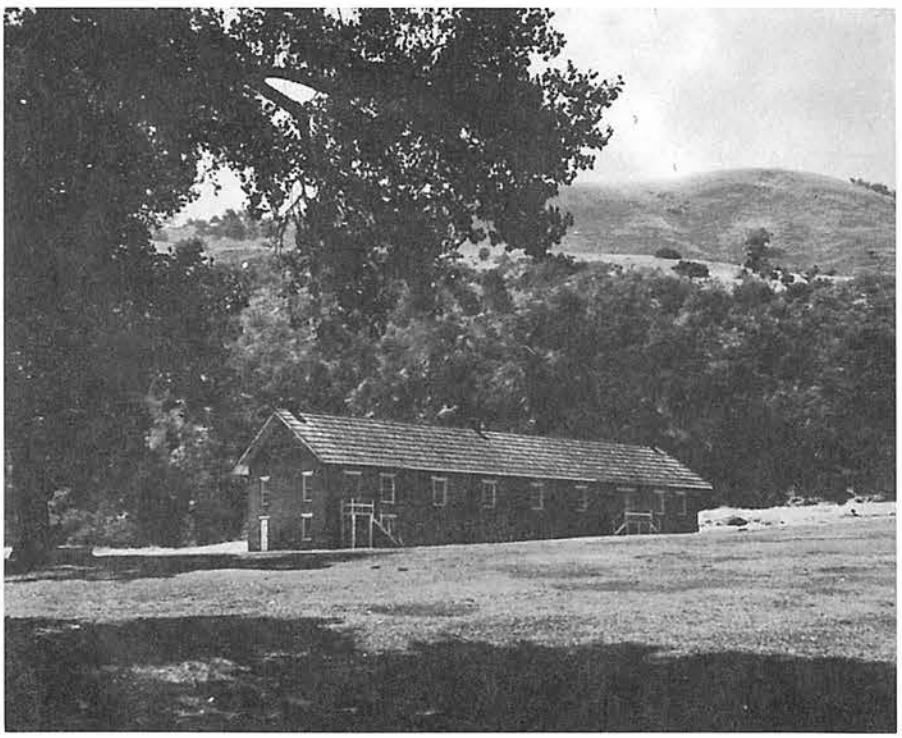

Fort Tejon, barracks after reconstruction, 1954. *The author's collection.*

Fort Tejon

by John Robinson

Fort Tejon possessed as beautiful a setting as any military post in nineteenth century California. It lay in a small mountain valley dotted with magnificent live oaks and nourished by springs of clear, cold water. The surrounding hills were verdant in springtime, turning a golden brown by summer. The deep corridor of Grapevine Canyon was right below the fort, dropping precipitously into the south end of the San Joaquin Valley. Wild game roamed the nearby mountains. Located near an important mountain pass, it stood athwart what was to become the main route between Los Angeles and California's great Central Valley. For seven years preceding the Civil War, Fort Tejon was one of the most important military posts in Southern California. Unlike most nineteenth century frontier forts which were built primarily to protect whites from Indians, a primary

(*Continued on page 3*)

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

APRIL 1995 MEETING

Dr. Gloria Lothrop, who holds the Whitsett Chair at CSU Northridge, introduced the Corral to Richard Gird, one of those many persons who were important in their own times but today are nearly unknown.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

May meeting speaker Dr. Gloria Lothrop.

Richard Gird was a man of many frontiers - not just geographic frontiers but in adopting new technology, new methods and crops. Born in Herkimer County, New York, in 1836, he left in 1852, with a $1,500 grubstake from his father to make his fortune in California. Crossing the Panama Isthmus, he contacted Panama fever which forced him to change his plans and become a farmer. In 1852, he went to Chile to search for copper mines; he failed, but helped build the first railroad in South America. A recurrence of the fever forced him to return to New York, and after recovering, once again he headed for San Francisco. Later, he moved to Arizona where he helped lay out Prescott, helped Josiah Whitney do

(*Continued on page 18*)

(*Continued from page 1*)
purpose for Fort Tejon was to guard native peoples against the encroachment of land-hungry whites.

The genesis of Fort Tejon goes back several years before the post was founded in 1854. The influx of miners and settlers during and immediately after the California Gold Rush led to an inevitable clash with native peoples, rudely forced out of their ancestral homes and hunting grounds. Hostile acts were committed by both sides. Congress attempted to solve the problem by authorizing the appointment of three commissioners who were directed to make treaties with the many tribal groups in the state. Redick McKee, Oliver Wozencraft, and George Barbour, the three appointed Indian commissioners, met in San Franciso in January 1851. They divided the state into three districts, one for each commissioner, and set about to parlay with the various native groups. The result was the forging of eighteen separate treaties with 140 Indian tribal entities which granted the native peoples 11,700 square miles of California's interior lands - seven percent of the state's total area.

When the treaties were made known, a storm of protest erupted from settlers and miners. "The Indian must go!" shouted mining town newspapers, which vigorously protested the commissioner's plan of settling "hordes of savages in the heart of the state." California Governor John McDougal was outraged by the proposal, as were virtually all of the state's legislators, who instructed the state's two senators to vote against the plan when it came up for Senate approval. The U.S. Senate rejected all eighteen treaties in June 1852.

Edward Fitzgerald Beale (1822-1893) played a significant role in California history from 1846 into the 1870s. His California experiences began as a midshipman under Captain Robert Stockton during the Mexican War. Although a naval officer, Beale spent most of his career on land. He joined Stockton's "Naval Battalion of Mounted California Riflemen," and after being transferred to San Diego, he was sent to join Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny as a guide. He fought with Kearny in the Battle of San Pasqual, where Andres Pico's Californio lancers mauled the American forces in December 1846. After the battle, he and Kit Carson snuck through Pico's lines to bring help from San Diego. Following Marshall's gold discovery in 1848, Beale carried the first sample of Mother Lode gold across Mexico to the east coast. In 1849, as a Navy courier, he carried dispatches from Washington, D.C. to San Franciso. Thanks to his friendship with Fremont and Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Beale was appointed Indian Superintendent for California in March 1852 (well before the Senate's rejection of the eighteen treaties).

Beale came up with a plan to settle displaced native peoples on a number of small reservations, each of which would be self-supporting, before Congress. In

Edward Fitzgerald Beale. *Courtesy of the Huntington Library.*

March 1853 Congress responded by passing an act authorizing the establishment of five "military reservations" in California "for Indian purposes," each not to exceed 25,000 acres. To avoid conflict with settlers and miners, the reservations were to be located on public lands with no white occupants.

Beale wasted no time in setting aside a 50,000 acre reservation on the southeastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley in October 1853. (He called it two reservations to get around the Congressional limitation of 25, 000 acres). He named it the Sebastian Reservation in honor of William K. Sebastian, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, but it became more commonly known as the Tejon Reservation, as it was centered around Tejon Creek and partly located on the El Tejon land grant. Before year's end the first 500 Indians were living on the Sebastian Reservation, and by mid-1854 there were 2,500 according to Beale, half that number by other estimations. Beale spent some $125,000 in federal funds on cattle, horses, mules, farm implements, provisions and clothing for the native inhabitants.

As specified by Congress, each reservation was to be guarded by a military post. Although the Army planned a number of military posts in California's interior for the purposes of maintaining order in Indian-white confrontations, it was several months before the first troops arrived.

Charles Mix of the Indian Bureau in Washington first proposed the series of small reservations, each guarded from white settlers by the army. Beale carried it out. Fort Miller, on the San Joaquin River east of present-day Madera, was founded in May 1851. Brigadier General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, commander of the Army's Department of the Pacific, directed

Captain Thomas Jordan to locate a fort site farther south in Tulare (San Joaquin) Valley in 1852. Jordan first recommended a site on the Kings River but this was rejected as too close to Fort Miller. Jordan then made a reconnaissance to the southern end of the valley in the summer of 1853 and located a site along Tejon Creek at the foot of Old Tejon Pass.

Beale approved Captain Jordan's proposed site, and on June 24, 1854, Brigadier General John W. Wool, Hitchcock's successor as Department of the Pacific commander, issued orders for the erection of a post "for one company of infantry and one of dragoons (cavalry) in the Military Reserve for Indians near Tejon Pass designated by E.F. Beale."

The site of this first "Camp Tejon" has long caused confusion among historians and writers, mainly because the original orders called for a post "near Tejon Pass." What many do not realize is that there were, at different times, two passes named "Tejon." The original Tejon Pass, crossed by Francisco Garces in 1776, was some twenty miles east of the present Tejon Pass, which was then known as *Cañada de Las Uvas* Pass (Canyon of the Grapes Pass). The original post site was below Old Tejon Pass, today closed to the public by the Tejon Land Company.

"Camp Tejon" never became a military post. Beale evidently changed his mind and said he did not want the army quartered on the reservation. Acting on his own, Brevet Major James L. Donaldson selected a new site eighteen miles southwest in *Cañada de Las Uvas*, in an oak-studded dale adjacent to the Peter Lebeck inscription, long known to cattle drivers as "Bear Camp Springs." The new site was well watered and on a route used by cattlemen driving their herds north to Sacramento and the Mother Lode country.

Major Donaldson reached the new site on or about August 3 and promptly notified Lieutenant Thomas Castor of Company A, 1st Dragoons of the change in location. The new post was garrisoned on August 10, 1854, when Lieutenant Castor and sixteen dragoons made camp under the oaks. Thus was born Fort Tejon.

On September 14, 1854, Brigadier General Wool wrote to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis:

> *Sir I have the honor to report that a military post is now being built at the Cañada de las Uva, fifteen miles southwest of the Tejon Indian Reservation, which is to be called Fort Tejon to indicate its location. I have assigned Brevet Lieutenant Colonel B.L. Beall, Major 1st Dragoons, to command.*

This dispatch indicates Wool's confusion because Fort Tejon was close to *Cañada de Las Uvas* Pass and nowhere near Old Tejon Pass. When Lieutenant Colonel Beall (pronounced Bell) arrived to assume command in October, he too was confused: he wrote to General Wool asking why the post was named "Fort Tejon" when it was so far from Tejon Pass and the Indian Reservation and suggested "Fort Lebec" would be a better name. Even Secretary of War Jefferson Davis asked Wool why "Fort Tejon" was not at the foot of Tejon Pass. The confusion was lessened in the ensuing years when the name "Tejon" was transferred west to the pass above the fort - first as "Fort Tejon Pass," and finally "Tejon Pass" as we know it today.

The dragoons lived in tents until more permanent accommodations could be constructed. A small army of civilian workers, teamsters, carpenters, millwrights, masons, brick makers, and common laborers, mostly from Los Angeles, appeared at the fort; many of whom were hired to help build the post. Rudimentary foundations were laid and ever so slowly the adobe structure began to rise. Many of the buildings were arranged around a rectangular parade ground. There were barracks for enlisted men, officers' quarters, a commissary, a hospital, and guardhouse. Across the road were a depot compound, quartermaster building, storehouse and stable. A mule-powered portable sawmill was brought from Benecia and installed first on "Pinery Mountain" (Mt. Pinos), nineteen miles west of the fort. In 1855 it was moved closer to the post, into what is today Frazier Park. In early 1859 the sawmill was once again moved, this time to Grapevine Creek just downstream from the fort. But as with so many nineteenth century western military posts, Fort Tejon was never finished.

The fort was supplied from Los Angeles, but not before *El Camino Viejo* , the old horse and carreta trail in use since Spanish times, was converted into a wagon road. The most difficult stretch was over San Fernando Pass, between the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Clara River. Los Angeles businessmen subscribed $2,900 to make the road passable, obviously anticipating a profitable trade with the fort and Indian reservation. A force of twenty men under Gabriel Allen set to work, digging and scraping out a grade only slightly less steep than the old one. (Beale's Cut was still eight years away.) By January 1855 the road was declared passable, and the Los Angeles-Fort Tejon Wagon Road was open for use.

Among the first to take advantage of the wagon road was Phineas Banning, a Wilmington entrepreneur and "transportation king" of Southern California. In December 1854, even before the road's completion, he decided, with his business partner, David Alexander, to open a stage line from New San Pedro (as Wilmington was then called) through Los Angeles to Fort Tejon and onto the newly-discovered Kern River mines. Banning drove the first Concord stage himself. In 1855 Banning won the contract to supply the fort. From March of that year until June 1859, he ran a train of ten freight wagons on the New San Pedro-Fort Tejon run.

By the summer of 1855 there were 135 men of the 1st Dragoons stationed at Fort Tejon. Over the ensu-

ing five years the number varied considerably. The dragoons were constantly busy. Patrols from the fort ranged from the San Joaquin Valley to the Colorado River and Owens Valley. They protected Indians on the Sebastian Reservation. In January 1857 dragoons from Fort Tejon helped Los Angeles sheriff's deputies pursue and kill the murderer of Sheriff James Barton. In 1859 Brevet Major James H. Carleton led a company of dragoons up the Los Angeles-Salt Lake Trail, escorting a paymaster to Salt Lake City; while in Utah he spent several days investigating the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, which had occurred a year and a half earlier. A year later, in May 1860, Carleton led a company and a half of dragoons from Fort Tejon in pursuit of renegade Paiutes who had murdered two whites near Bitter Springs in the Mojave Desert. In several skirmishes five Paiutes were killed. Carleton strung up two of the dead Indians on gallows as a warning, an act for which he was later criticized by his superiors. Before returning to Fort Tejon, he established Camp Cady, near today's Yermo, and set up three small redoubts along the Los Angeles Salt Lake Trail.

Sergeant

First Lieutenant

Uniforms of the first dragoons. *Illustrations courtesy of the author's collection .*

When in full dress uniform, the dragoons were a picturesque sight, later called "the show troops of the U.S. Army." Their outfit consisted of a dark blue coat which reached well below the waist. It was fastened down the front with nine brass buttons. Cuffs and collars were trimmed with orange trousers were gray blue with an orange stripe running down the outside seam. The head gear, when available, consisted of a stiff cloth shako, dark blue in color, with a brass mounted orange wool pompom rising from the front top. The shako had a black leather visor and was fastened under the chin by a black leather strap. Each dragoon enlisted man carrieda percussion lock carbine, and officers were equipped with a long curved sabre.

The 1st Dragoons Regimental Band was stationed at Fort Tejon while the fort served as regimental headquarters from December 1856 until the middle of June 1861. "The splendid regimental band of the 1st Dragoons, mounted on magnificent horses," marched into Los Angeles to help celebrate the 4th of July, 1857, entering the city "amidst the booming of cannon and the salutations of the citizens," reported the *Los Angeles Star* (July 4, 1857). The blue-clad mounted dragoons followed the band in perfect order, greatly impressing all who watched.

More civilians flocked to Fort Tejon and a small community, also know as "Fort Tejon," sprang up three-quarters of a mile south of the post, in what today is Lebec. John Philbin, an Irishman grubstaked by Los Angeles businessman Harris Newmark, opened a general store and saloon; in eighteen months he is said to have accumulated $20,000. Illness compelled Philbin to leave, and Newmark bought the business in 1859.

Newmark hired a clerk to run the business, but dis-

charged him after discovering the new clerk, also named John, was gambling away the profits. George C. Alexander ran a sutler store and also served as postmaster and justice of the peace. C. Witkowsky sold groceries. There were several "low brow grogeries" and a few prostitutes. Living in tents were about sixty construction workers, contractors, and hunters, all trying to make a living off the fort.

Grizzly bears were a regular problem. Before the fort was founded, they had gathered in great numbers to feast on acorns and drink from the creek, and they continued to do so as late as 1859. Several civilians were mauled by the great beasts and one was killed. Bear hunting in the nearby mountains was a favorite sport of dragoon officers.

On the morning of January 9, 1857, the garrison at Fort Tejon and citizens living nearby were jolted awake by a severe earthquake. (Quake measurements were not made then, but seismologists in recent years have estimated the 1857 at least 8.0 on the Richter Scale). Adobe buildings cracked and collapsed, cascading bricks and plaster on those inside. Great oak trees snapped in two and crashed to the ground. Cattle rolled down hillsides. The earth cracked asunder, opening great fissures, then thundered back together, filling the air with dust clouds. A low ridge of pulverized earth, displaced twenty to forty feet, extended a distance of some forty miles, running through Tejon Pass in a southeast-northwest direction. Lesser displacement of the earth's surface ran along a fracture of at least 200 miles. The great San Andreas Fault had made its presence known.

Fortunately no one at Fort Tejon lost his life in the great temblor, but many suffered cuts, bruises, and frayed nerves. The adobe buildings were so badly damaged that the troops had to live in tents for six months. Most of the damaged buildings were rebuilt by summer's end, 1857.

Undoubtedly the strangest procession to ever plod into Fort Tejon were twenty-two camels, completing their journey from Camp Verde, Texas, in November 1857.

The use of camels for Army transportation was proposed as early as 1836, but it remained for Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to put the plan in motion. Seventy-seven camels - both single-humped dromedaries and two-humped bactrians - were purchased in Egypt and Asia Minor and shipped to Texas in 1856 and 1857, where Camp Verde, about sixty miles north of San Antonio, became their temporary quarters.

John B. Floyd, who replaced Davis as Secretary of War in the spring of 1857, appointed Edward F. Beale to survey a wagon road along the 35th parallel from New Mexico to California. Beale was directed to utilize some of the camels from Camp Verde to tote supplies for the survey and road building.

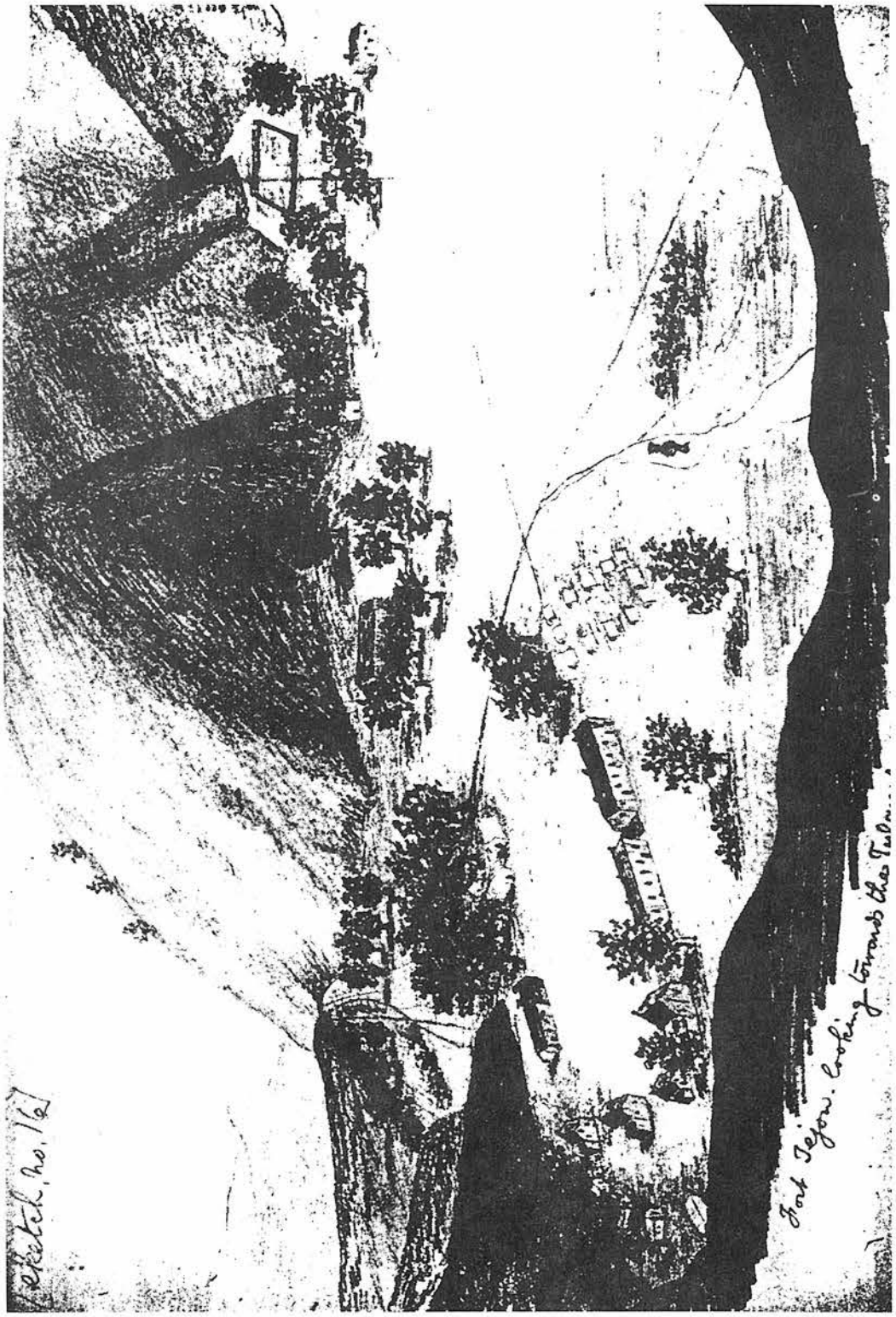
Beale, with his small army of teamsters, surveyors, and laborers, picked up twenty-five camels and started west in June 1857. By the end of October, Beale and the desert beasts had crossed the Colorado River at what became known as Beales' Crossing (fifteen miles north of present-day Needles) and were well on their way across the Mojave Desert. Upon reaching the bend of the Mojave River, the expedition divided. The wagons and most of the camels headed directly for Fort Tejon, while Beale with two of the animals detoured to Los Angeles, where their arrival "caused a great curiosity and scared all the horses, mules and children."

A dragoon attempts to ride a camel while its jolly camel driver watches.
Courtesy of California State Library

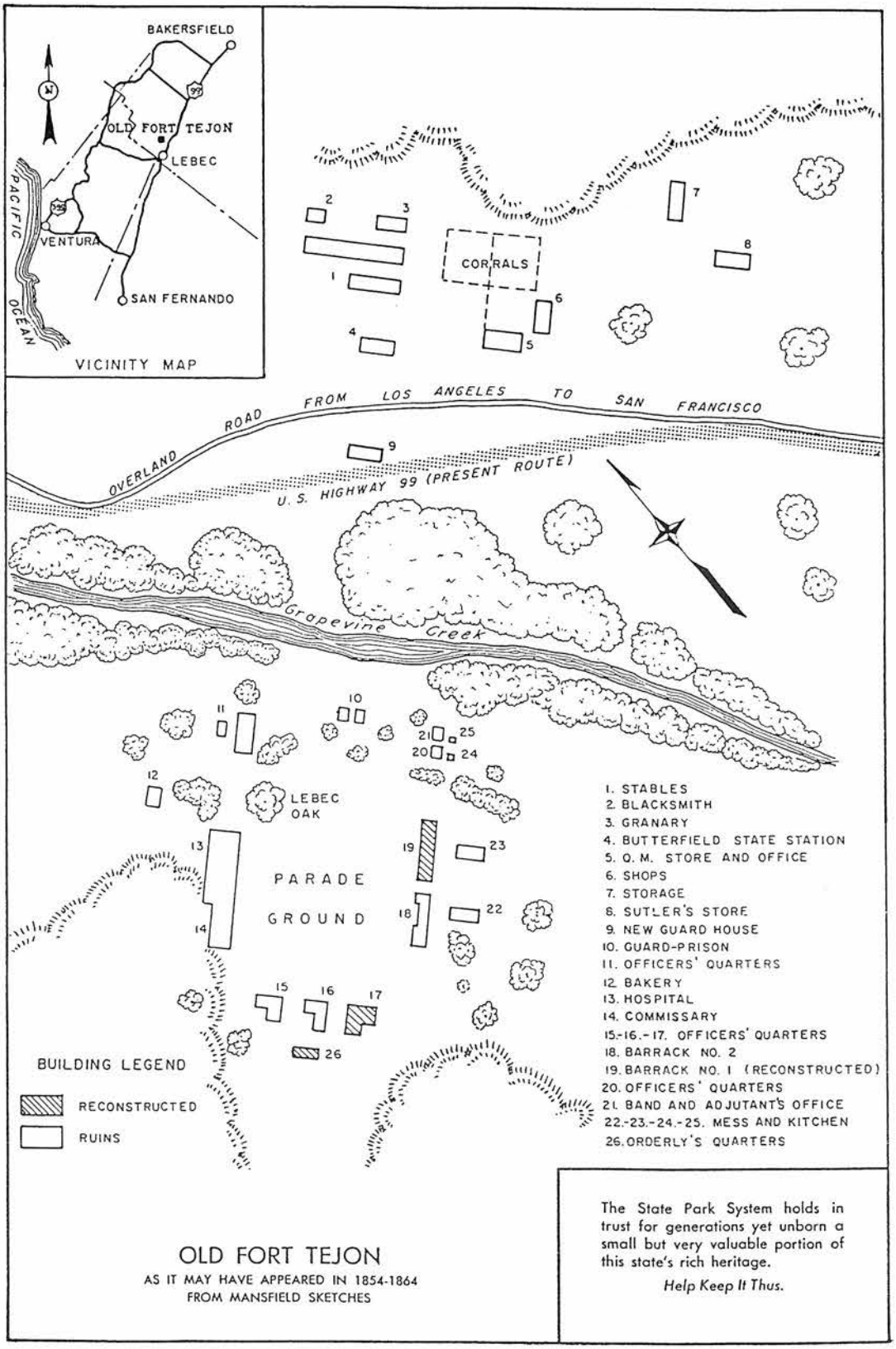
Contrary to what has been often written, the camels were not quartered at the fort; they were place under the care of Beale's stock-raising partner, Samuel Bishop, on nearby Rancho Castaic. Most of the time the animals grazed on grass-covered hills twelve miles northeast of the fort, tended by the Turk, Hadji Ali, known as "Greek George."

The camels were utilized as burden-bearers, able to cover up to thirty-five miles day carrying loads of from 600 to 800 pounds. Beale used some of the animals to tote supplies for the construction of the 35th parallel wagon road in Arizona and New Mexico. Others were used for non-military purposes, to carry provisions from Los Angeles to the town of Fort Tejon. The *Los Angeles Star* (July 21, 1858) reported that "the camels, eight in number, came into town from Fort Tejon, after provisions for that camp. The largest ones pack a ton and travel sixteen miles an hour" a gross exaggeration but illustrative of the wonder the animals caused.

On October 8, 1858, the first west-bound stage of Butterfield's Overland Mail Company pulled into Fort Tejon on its 2,700-mile journey from St. Louis to San Francisco The cross-country mail and passenger service originated when John Butterfield of New York signed a six-year contract with the federal government to deliver the mails. Fort Tejon (the town) became one of the 165 stations along the route. Four



A sketch of Fort Tejon by Captain Edward T. Townsend made in 1855, just before the barracks were completed. The epicenter of the 1857 earthquake was in its vicinity. *Courtesy Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.*



Courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation.

times a week twice westbound and twice eastbound Butterfield stages would pull into Fort Tejon station, located in George Alexander's store. The timetable called for a fifty-three minute stop there, but the schedule was seldom that precise. Butterfield's Overland Mail Company, begun with such fanfare, lasted only three years, a casualty of the Civil War's outbreak.

The outbreak of the Civil War spelled the end of Fort Tejon, which never had been planned as a permanent site. Several times since 1855 the Army's Department of the Pacific came close to shutting it down, only to give in to the pleadings of Los Angeles businessmen and civic leaders. Los Angeles not only wanted Fort Tejon as protection against Indian stock thievery (mainly Paiutes), they also appreciated its benefits to the local economy. Some citizens felt the fort was too far from the city. The *Los Angeles Star* (January 26, 1861) complained that "the annual cost to the government for the support of Fort Tejon is about $55,000 more than it would be were the post located in San Bernardino or Los Angeles. Another reason the Army kept Fort Tejon open so long was that during times of drought, hay and barley was abundant in the area of the fort and could be purchased at reasonable prices to feed the horses and mules.

The electrifying news of the attack on Fort Sumter, relayed across the country by Pony Express, then south via the new telegraph line, reached Los Angeles on April 24, 1861, causing consternation and excitement among the populace, many of whom were secessionist sympathizers. The fear of a secessionist uprising in Los Angeles (probably unfounded) caused Brigadier General Edwin Sumner, new commander of the Department of the Pacific in San Francisco, to order one company of 1st Dragoons into Los Angeles. The new encampment was named Camp Fitzergald, in honor of Major Edward H. Fitzergald who had died in Los Angeles the previous year. Orders to vacate Fort Tejon arrived on June 13, and two days later all but three of the remaining dragoons left for Los Angeles. Fort Tejon was closed down, only an officer and two soldiers remaining to guard government property.

Twenty-eight camels left Bishop's Ranch a few days later, joining three already at Captain Winfield Scott Hancock's quartermaster depot at Main Street near Third in Los Angeles.

A year later, in the summer of 1862, violence broke out between the Paiutes of Owens Valley and the encroaching miners and settlers. As a precaution against further outbreaks, some thousand Indians were rounded up by Captain M.A. McLaughlin and several companies of the 2nd Cavalry, California Volunteers. (The California Volunteers replaced the army regulars in the state during the Civil War). The unhappy Paiutes were escorted out of Owens Valley. Some 300 were sent to the Tule River Reservation east of Visalia; 300 went to Beale's Rancho La Liebre (Beale charged the government rent for the Paiutes staying on his property - one dollar per head per month); and 400 were escorted to Fort Tejon.

To guard the Paiutes, Fort Tejon was reoccupied in August 1863, this time by the California Volunteers, Captain McLaughlin commanding. The Paiutes were treated with indifference at first. Captain John Schmidt, 2nd Company, California Volunteers, replaced McLaughlin as Fort Tejon commander in January 1864. "On my assuming command of this post," Schmidt wrote, "I found 380 Indians located about 300 yards below this fort, as follows: 120 bucks, 170 squaws and 90 children almost in a state of starvation; as they are under no one's charge, and no one to take care of them, they must look out for themselves." Schmidt used Army supplies to feed them. This caused problems because the Army was not funded to feed Indians, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which was so funded, refused to do so because Tejon was not a legal reserve. The problem was solved when the Fort Tejon Paiutes - those who had not escaped back to Owens Valley - were moved to the Tule River Reservation in August 1864.

The Indian removal rang down the curtain on Fort Tejon as a military post. The order for the abandonment of the fort was issued August 2: "The Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the State of California having reported that there were no longer any Indians in the vicinity of Fort Tejon, that post will be abandoned, and the troops garrisoning it will proceed to take post at Drum Barracks, with the last train carrying government property. Measures will be taken at once by the proper staff departments to remove to the Wilmington depot in the most economical way, all the movable public property."

On the morning of September 11, 1864, the California Volunteers marched out of the fort enroute to Drum Barracks. The *Los Angles Tri-Weekly News* (September 17, 1864) wrote the finis: "A company of California Volunteers from Fort Tejon under Captain Smith (Schmidt) arrived here on Thursday evening, last; they made Drum Barracks at an early hour on yesterday. Fort Tejon is now abandoned."

The empty post once again became the property of the Rancho Castaic grant, which at the time was occupied by Samuel Bishop. Bishop petitioned the State Legislature for the formation of a new county, to be carved out of parts of three adjacent counties-Tulare, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles - with Fort Tejon as the county seat. Partly as a result of Bishop's endeavors, Kern County was organized on April 2, 1866. But Havilah, a mining boom town in the mountains near the Kern River, was chosen over Fort Tejon as the county seat.

Fort Tejon became the property of Edward F. Beale when he purchased Rancho Castaic on October 13, 1866.

Beale combined the four ranchos he had bought, along with other bits of property, into his 203,000-acre

Ruins of Old Fort Tejon. *The author's collection.*

Tejon Ranch. The old fort remained part of the great ranch for seventy-three years.

Beale converted the adobe buildings into ranch offices and quarters for his vaqueros and sheep herders. (Beale himself stayed at his ranch headquarters on the La Liebre grant, fifteen miles to the southeast).

The old adobes of Fort Tejon gradually crumbled into ruin. A visitor in 1874 wrote:

> *The fine buildings are rapidly going to decay, and the fine parade ground which was doubtless once the soldiers' pride is now turned into a sheep corral, and the buildings which were formerly officers' quarters are now the humble dwellings of sheep herders. Tejon was once a flourishing place, but its glory has departed forever, I fear.*

In 1939, at the urging of California State Parks Commissioner Newton Drury and interested Kern County citizens, the Fort Tejon Ranch Corporation, now owned by Harry Chandler and a consortium of Los Angeles businessmen, agreed to deed five acres to the State of California for state park purposes. The five acres included the old fort parade ground and the ruins of several buildings facing it. Fort Tejon became the property of the people of California when the deed was signed on January 24, 1940.

World War II intervened before any restoration work could be done. The tedious job of restoring the old adobes and the overgrown parade ground began in 1949. To allow plenty of room for a state historic park, the state purchased an additional 200 acres around the fort from the Tejon Ranch Corporation in 1954. Structural restoration of the original barracks building and reconstruction of the officers' quarters was completed in 1957. Since, then, other buildings and a visitor center and picnic area have been added.

Fort Tejon State Park lies next to Interstate 5 ("The Grapevine") sixty miles north of Los Angeles. It is open daily to visitors. One can return, in spirit, to the days when the fort was a bustling frontier military post, when brightly-clad dragoons in dark blue coats and sky-blue pants patrolled the Tejon country and the sound of bugle call broke the stillness of the mountain air. The old fort - what there is left of it (only one and a half of the original buildings have been restored) - offers today's visitor a glimpse into an era that time has passed by, a look at a treasured piece of California's heritage.

NOTE

The writer wishes to thank George R. Stammerjohan, historian for the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the authority on Fort Tejon, for his generous help. Almost everything written on the fort is, in Stammerjohan's words, "wormy with errors."

SUGGESTED READING LIST:

ON FORT TEJON

George R. Stammerjohan, *A Short Interpretive History of Fort Tejon State Historical Park* (Sacramento: Calif. Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 1989)

Helen S. Giffen and Arthur Woodward, *The Story of El Tejon* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1942)

Clarence Cullimore, *Old Adobes of Forgotten Fort Tejon* (Bakersfield: Kern County Historical Society, 1949)

ON ARMY CAMELS

Odie Faulk, *The U.S. Camel Corps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976)

Harlan D. Fowler, *Camels to California* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1950)

ON EDWARD F. BEALE

Gerald Thompson, *Edward F. Beale and the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983)

Carl Briggs and Clyde Francis Trudell, *Quarterdeck and Saddlehorn: The Story of Edward F. Beale* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1983)

Monument in memory of Peter Lebec, Fort Tejon, California.
Photo courtesy of the author's collection.

Peter Lebec

by John Robinson

Mystery surrounds a man named Peter Lebec, or Lebeck, whose body lies buried under a large oak tree next to the parade ground at Fort Tejon. All we know about Lebec is what was carved into this oak more than a century and a half ago: "In memory of Peter Lebeck, killed by a X Bear, Oct. 17, 1837." Seventeen years later, Dr. William Edgar, assigned to the fort shortly after its founding in 1854, became curious about the oak tree epitaph: "I inquired of the Indians living at the mouth of the Cañada, who were the only inhabitants there at the time, in regard to this matter, and got the information that, many years previously, some trappers were passing through the Cañada, when seeing so many bears one of the party went off by himself in pursuit of a large grizzly and shot it under that tree, and supposing that he had killed it went up to it, when it caught and killed him, and his companions buried him under the tree, upon which they cut his epitaph."

Who was Peter Lebec? We don't know and perhaps never will, but thanks to the work of three Los Angeles Westerners - Raymund Wood, Walt Wheelock, and Doyce Nunis - we can discount some ideas that have been expressed by past writers, and advance a theory that appears to be quite reasonable. Raymund Wood, in his booklet *The Life and Death of Peter Lebec* (1954), examines previous theories concerning Lebec and the circumstances of his death, some of them rather far-fetched, and comes up with his own theory that Lebec was in a Hudson's Bay Company party which is known to have entered California in 1837, the year of Lebec's death.

In the 1960s the Arthur H. Clark Company published their ten-volume *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, giving detailed information on the numerous trappers, both famous and little-known, who roamed the West seeking beaver skins during the first half of the nineteenth century. With this magnificent work, much more became known of "This Reckless Breed of Men," to quote Robert Cleland's book title.

Walt Wheelock diligently searched through the Clark volumes and in "New Light on Peter Lebec," *Brand Book 16*, came up with his own theory. But first he needed to discount the Hudson's Bay Company theory. This he did with the help of Doyce Nunis. Doyce wrote a biographical sketch of Michel La Framboise, leader of that 1837 Hudson's Bay Company party, in the Clark series, in which he revealed that the Company trappers spent the winter in the Sacramento Valley and almost certainly never reached as far south as the Tejon area. Doyce furthermore, at Walt's request, searched the Company employment records in London and found no such name as Lebec or any variant of it.

Walt then proposed that Lebec may have been a member of Jean-Baptiste Chalifoux's Chaguanoso gang of trappers and horse thieves from New Mexico. Chalifoux was almost unknown to historians until Janet Lecompte of Colorado Springs wrote the trapper's biography in Volume VII of the Clark series. Making use of Bancroft, Volume III, and Lecompte's work, a very plausible theory emerges. The Chaguanosos are known to have been involved in a skirmish with Mexican authorities near Mission San Fernando in January 1837 and to have raided Mission Santa Ynez, north of Santa Barbara, in October of that year, the same month Lebec died. It seems reasonable that the gang, with Lebec as a member, may well have been in the Tejon region at the time of the grizzly encounter.

Nicholas Sanson Map 1656, showing California with crenelated northern shore, a featured copied for many years. *The author's collection.*

Early West Coast Mapping

by Bill Warren

Sixty years after Columbus' first voyage European mapmakers were producing fairly accurate maps of the Caribbean basin. Noting these mapmakers had become chroniclers of the Age of Exploration, the Spaniards decided it was not in their interest to release information about what they considered "their domain." Perhaps Sebastian Cabot was the trigger for that decision.

In the late 1530's word of exploration off the west coast of Mexico reached Spain. Cortés, who had been finessed out of Northern Mexico by Nuño de Guzmán, was granted the right to explore for islands in the South Sea. He sent an expedition across the Gulf of California, then known as *Mar Vermejo* (Red Sea). He hoped Baja would be a land of pearls and gold. Needless to say, he was disappointed, although whether it was an island or a peninsula was left unresolved.

Sebastian Cabot was working as Pilot Major for the Spanish crown when Cortés' maps arrived in Spain. Soon thereafter he was fired for attempting to sell state secrets and the Spanish archives were closed to all foreigners. Shortly thereafter in 1543 *Mar Vermejo* and the Baja peninsula appeared on a Baptista Agnese map, probably from information provided by Cabot. Baja was drawn with a vague northern coast. Other mapmakers immediately copied this model as the new gospel.

From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries most of the world's exploration was carried out aboard sailing ships. Roads were almost nonexistent in the New World, commerce and conquest depended on navigable waters. In 1565, when the Spaniards invaded the Phillippines, the expedition's ships were not built in Europe but in Acapulco on the west coast of Mexico. An Augustinian friar and trained navigator, Andrés de Urdaneta, accompanied Commander Miguel López de Legaspi's forces on the voyage of conquest. One of the ships was quickly turned around to complete Urdaneta's assignment - finding a return route to Acapulco. They sailed north almost to the latitude of Japan before finding winds which would take them eastward. Months later they sighted the California coast and turned south, eventually reaching their destination.

This voyage set the route taken by one or more Manila Galleons each year for the next 250 years. One might have expected the returning captains to know the California coast quite well but that was not true. Sailors quickly learned signs to warn they were approaching land. The large jellyfish we now call Portuguese Men of War were one such sign. These regularly began appearing some 200 miles off the California coast. Sighting these, ships would turn south to run with the prevailing coastal winds, escaping the danger of approaching the coast. Their first landfall was often Cabo San Lucas; the island of Paxaros some 200 miles west of Baja's coast, now called Guadalupe, was another. Paxaros first appeared on an Ortelius 1587 map, pointing out that the Spaniards veil of secrecy was still being pierced well after Cabot's departure.

Most of us are familiar with Cabrillo's 1542 voyage up the coast. His voyage was simply exploratory, no maps were produced. Cabrillo died enroute home to Mexico. The ship's report was unimpressive, little water, no gold, few natives. The Spaniards turned to more productive areas for expansion and plunder.

Suddenly from nowhere appeared a pair of thorns named Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish. Drake disrupted and captured coastal shipping from Peru to Mexico in 1578. Nine years later, Cavendish was the first to capture a Manila Galleon. The Spaniards decided to explore the coast for a place of refuge which galleons might seek from these "pirates."

In 1602 Sebastián Vizcaíno was sent north specifically to find a place suitable for Manila Galleons to stop on their homeward journey. He mapped the coastline and found Monterey Bay which he thought suitable. He completely missed San Francisco Bay, probably because he sailed outside of the Farallones. The threat from the English seemed to subside. The idea of establishing a base at Monterey lost its appeal. The exploration of California again slipped backward in Spanish priorities.

Vizcaíno's voyage had an interesting side-light. A Carmelite friar, Antonio de Ascensión, was assigned

to help make maps for the ship's log.

Several years later in piecing together his notes and subsequent conversations with mariners, Ascensión convinced himself that California must be an island. He drew a map showing it as such and sent it off to his superiors in Spain. It never arrived. The ship carrying it was intercepted by the Dutch and the map found its way to Amsterdam and then London. In 1625 English mathematician Henry Briggs was preparing a map to show explorations in Hudson Bay and potential routes for a Northwest Passage. As an afterthought, he included startling information about California in one corner. "Oh, by the way, a Spanish map recently captured by the Dutch proves conclusively that California is an island." A fire was rekindled which burned for over 100 years.

European mapmakers plagiarized each others' works with impunity. What they could not copy, they often made up and many fanciful ideas of our coast appeared. Roca Partida is a small rock protruding 100 feet from the ocean south of Cabo San Lucas. Early maps often show it as a massive island. Both Paxaros and Roca Partida skipped back and forth across the eastern Pacific at the fancy of the engraver.

The Spanish controlled the routes across Central America and the Straits of Magellan. The Portuguese owned the route around Africa. The overland trails to the Orient were dominated by Arab traders. The English, French and Dutch longed for a route of their own. As the Northeast Passage around Russia proved terribly cruel and unforgiving, their great hope lay in the discovery of a Northwest Passage.

For two hundred years the East Coast of America was scoured for inlets which might lead to a passage through the continent. Everyone knew it must exist. Well, if there were an eastern entry to this passage, by default must there not also be a western terminus? Map makers were sure there must be. Vizcaíno's 1602 voyage had proven no entrance existed through California, hence it must lie to the north. Map makers were ecstatic when they obtained smuggled copies of Vizcaníno's crude maps. The northernmost of these showed the land trending (mistakenly) to the northeast above what is now Cape Mendocino. "Aha!" they proclaimed, "this must be the southern shore of the vast outlet of the Northwest Passage." They adopted the name of a body of water earlier thought to separate America from Asia, dubbing it "The Strait of Anian."

Mariners were not always observant and sometimes were even known to bend the truth about their exploits. Juan de Fuca, a Greek sailor employed by the Spanish, spun some fanciful tales for European consumption in 1596. Much later an English tabloid "unearthed" the 1640 adventures of a Spanish Admiral with the unlikely name of Bartholomew de Fonte. Both mariners claimed voyages up rivers and lakes to the north of California leading well into the continent. De Fonte purported to have even met a Boston ship coming from the East. Not only did most maps show California as an island, but speculation on a series of passages through northern rivers and lakes blossomed from the 1650's onwards.

With California as an island many maps showed the Rio del Norte (today's Rio Grande) emptying into *Mar Vermejo* between California and New Mexico, as the mainland was then known. Fanciful cities drawn from Coronado's tales lined its banks all the way to Santa Fe. Sanson's famous 1656 map shows the river emanating from a large Lake Taos. Sanson was probably the first to show the island of California with a crenelated northern shore, a feature subsequently widely copied.

The concept of the western coast of North America slowly changed through the 1600's. Latitude could be accurately measured by forerunners of the sextant. Longitude was mostly guesswork. The location of Cabo San Lucas was an anchor point for maps. The

Porcacchi Map of 1572 showing European concept of Northwest Passage.
The author's collection.

west coast of North America was universally shown trending far westward from its true position. Wishful thinking kept the Pacific Ocean's breadth smaller than reality. Not until the 1700's was this gradually corrected.

Another major player appeared on the scene in 1681. Father Eusebio Kino was a trained mathematician and cartographer before becoming a Jesuit priest. He was assigned to the missions of Baja and Sonora. In 1695 he drew a mission map clearly showing his belief that California was an island.

Supplying the Baja missions was a major problem. Goods were ferried across the often dangerous Gulf of California by ship. Kino set out on foot in 1698 to explore the possibility of an overland route to supply those missions. He found the Colorado and Gila Rivers, conclusively proving California to be a peninsula rather than an island. His 1701 sketch map showing these rivers emptying into the Gulf of California was published in Paris in 1705. It was another forty years before the fact was universally accepted by European map makers.

Until the early eighteenth century the few explorations of the northern Pacific had come from Europe or Mexico. In 1728 an exploration was launched from a new direction, the Kamchatka peninsula of Siberia. Peter the Great started Vitus Bering on two expeditions. The first was to prove or disprove the existence of a land bridge between Asia and America. The more extensive Great Northern Expedition of 1741 reached the coast of what is now British Columbia and Alaska.

Peter the Great established the Russian Academy of Science and stocked it with European experts. One of these was J.N. DeLisle, the younger brother of Guillaume DeLisle, one of France's most respected mapmakers. After a sojourn in St. Petersburg, DeLisle returned to France, bringing with him quantities of smuggled data. DeLisle and his nephew-in-law, Philippe Buache, published rather fanciful maps of Northeast Asia and Northwest America. DeLisle and Buache concocted the "Sea of the West" which covered most of present day Oregon and Washington states. Their 1750's maps dutifully included Admiral de Fonte's apocryphal voyage with various passages from the Pacific through the Hudson Bay.

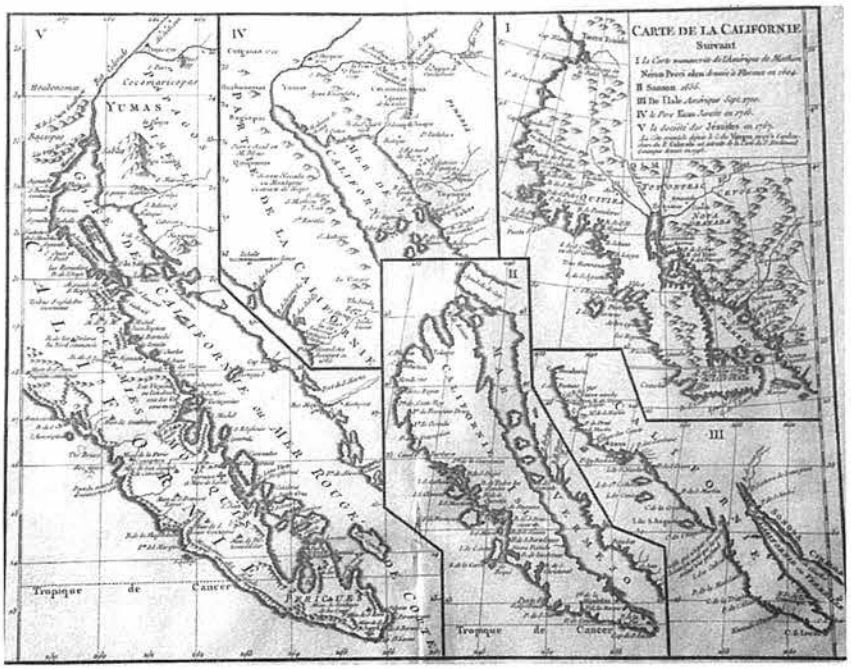
Later eighteenth century maps modified the Sea of the West based on Indian tales of exploration through the western part of Louisiana. Indians told French writers about several great rivers. The *Belle Rivière* was said to closely parallel the Missouri for hundreds of miles but to flow in the opposite (westward) direction. Not until Lewis and Clark ex-plored the Louisiana Purchase did the Rockies finally appear as a solid barrier to a water route to the West.

While California had been firmly secured back to the mainland, the west coast of North America was twisted back and forth by European map makers vying with one another to guess about what was yet to be explored. It was the Russians who finally forced the issue. In the late 1700's Spain sent ships to map the coastline, and incidentally enforce their claims against Russian intrusions. They really did not need to worry. In their normal pattern the Russians were systematically cleaning out the fur bearing animals as they moved southward. By the time they reached Fort Ross, their supply lines were so stretched and the animal supply so decimated they were pretty well played out. Nevertheless the Spaniards decided there must be value left, so they forged ahead to establish their claims to the land. The Bruno de Hezeta (Heceta) expedition of 1775 produced the first accurate map of the coastline of California.

The perfection of the chronometer in 1761 provided mariners with an accurate way to measure longitude . One of the first to use a chronometer was certainly the world's premier oceanic explorer, Captain James Cook. Cook's three voyages encompassed the Pacific Ocean from New Zealand to Alaska. His accurate maps were made from observations, not guesswork. He nailed down the position of the west coast of North America from Vancouver to Point Barrow and revised all eighteenth century ideas of the area.

Cook died in 1779 on his return voyage to a land he had discovered and named the Sandwich Islands. For over two hundred years Manila Galleons had plied the waters between Acapulco and the Philippines. Always they had searched for someplace to land and resupply, particularly on the grueling six month eastward voyage. Both west and eastbound tracks came within degrees of the Hawaiian Islands but they never found them. It remained for Cook to add them to our maps.

Viewing the changing face of our world through the study of antique maps is a pleasure available to anyone. Tracing the history behind those changes is like a detective thriller for those of us who indulge in this speculative sport.



Carte de la Californie Suivant y Vaugondy, 1757, showing five separate maps of California from an island to reality. *The author's collection.*

SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON WEST COAST MAPPING:

Henry Raup Wagner, *Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937)

W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and the Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean, 1580-1630* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1968)

Ernest J. Burros, S. J., *Kino and the Cartography of Northwestern New Spain* (Tucson: Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, 1965)

R.V. Tooley, *The Mapping of America*, Chapter 3 "California as an Island" (London: Holland Press Limited, 1980)

Dora Beale Polk, *The Island of California, a History of the Myth* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991)

Mary Sponberg Pedley, *Bel et Utile, the Work of the Robert de Vaugondy Family of Mapmakers* (Tring, UK: Map Collectors Publications Ltd., 1992)

William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1939)

Lynne Withey, *Voyages of Discovery, Captain Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987)

Ben Abril
1923-1995

Ben Abril, a long-time member of the Corral, died after a long bout with cancer. Although ill for nine years, few knew of his affliction.

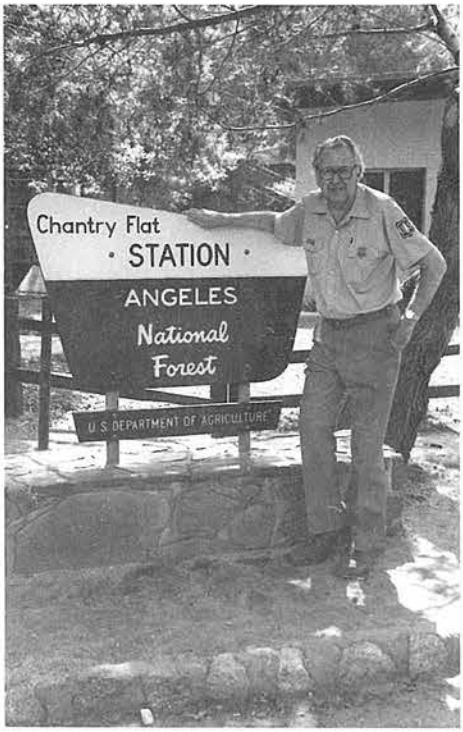
To Ben, an energetic and prolific artist, landscape painting was his passion as well as his career. His paintings reflect the special feeling he had for nature. His expert use of vibrant pigments and texture applied with bold brush strokes and palette knife communicates to the viewer the poetic sensitivity which he captured in his works.

In search of the perfect scene, Ben traveled the length and breadth of California painting the famous as well as forgotten historical landmarks. He painted the seashore, the wildflowers of the inland valleys, and the snow-capped mountains. Among his subjects, Ben recorded the nostalgic scenes of Los Angeles, such as Angels Flight and Bunker Hill. Other scenes included country lanes, oak-studded hills, weather-beaten barns and the gold camps of the Forty-niners.

With his unique style, he made an indelible mark on the art world with numerous one-man gallery shows, art awards, museum exhibits, and by being hung in many private and public collections, including that of a President of the United States.

Ben has been honored with election to the American Watercolor Society in New York and the National Watercolor Society in Los Angeles. He is included in the *WHO'S WHO IN AMERICAN ART*.

The late Alexander Cowie, an art critic and collector, stated, "In his paintings Ben Abril grasps the moment of vision. His art is a series of fresh looks at landscapes painted while the elation still inspired him."



Kenyon DeVore
1911-1995

He was known as "Mr. San Gabriels," and he was a veritable storehouse of knowledge on the mountains he loved. Kenyon DeVore spent his whole life in and around the San Gabriel Mountains. He grew up at his parents' trail resorts on the West Fork of the San Gabriel River, first at Camp West Fork, then at Valley Forge Lodge. As a child he busied himself with camp chores; and campers throughout the mountains. Kenyon spent most of his adult life working for the old Los Angeles Flood Control District, most of the time in San Gabriel Canyon. Being a dam keeper was no easy task. Many a cold, rainy night Kenyon had to make hourly descents into the dam to check gauges, regulate water flow, and inspect for structural damage. After retirement in 1971, Kenyon signed on as Forest Service volunteer, and later as a part-time paid employee. For some fifteen years he was a familiar sight almost every weekend at the Chantry Flat visitor information station, giving advice and imparting knowledge to hikers, backpackers, and picnickers. Always interested in history, he volunteered his services at El Alisal, the Historical Society of Southern California's headquarters in Highland Park. He was a board member of the Big Santa Anita Historical Society, and a corresponding member of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners.

But Kenyon DeVore was much more than a fountainhead of information on the mountains he knew so

well. He was a dear and loving friend to all who knew him. As a person he was unique. There was nothing artificial or temporal in his makeup. His intellect was was straight-forward and captivating, his sense of humor delightfully subtle. He was a gentle and genial person, intensely loyal to his friends and willing to go to almost any length to help a friend or acquaintance in need. Those of us fortunate enough to have crossed Kenyon's path are forever enriched for having known him.

John W. Robinson

Corral Chips

To clarify a mess created earlier, it was ROBERT BLEW who had not attended *Ramona* in fifty-one years, which of course does not come close to RAY WOOD'S seventy plus years of non-attendance. PAT INGRAM like all the others did not say how long it had been since she attended.

Speaking of RAY WOOD, he recently spent time in Utah and Wyoming in pursuit of additional plaques, monuments or natural features named in honor of his truly western hero, Jedediah Smith; Ray found and photographed about a half dozen which he had not seen before.

CM WILLIS OSBORNE recently presented a program on the Historical Old Ridge Route to the San Dimas Corral. He also has been selected to edit the Corral's publication, STAMPEDE. Lots of luck, Willis.

To discover what a true pioneer went through, CMs BILL CURRIER and ERIC NELSON with their wives endured a snow storm in the Donner Pass on their exploration of the '49er Trail. After following Highway 49 from Mariposa to Nevada City, they swung over to Lake Tahoe then down through Bridgeport. In Bishop, they visited with CM BILL FRYAR, who had advised them on the trip.

Our ever active Sheriff, Msgr. FRANCIS J. WEBER, became the editor of the *MINIATURE BOOKS SOCIETY QUARTERLY*, which will be printed by CM REGIS GRADEN at the Nut Quad Press. In another of his positions, Weber accepted RAY ZEMAN's collection of historical newspapers for the San Fernando Mission Archives. Ray collected the papers during his long career as a writer for the *Los Angeles Times*.

The Miniature Book Society continues in the news with former Sheriff Jerry Selmer and his wife, Doris, co-chairing its Grand Conclave XIII at the Doubletree Hotel in Pasadena. This four-day event drew 103 members from all over the world. Corral members GLEN DAWSON, REGIS GRADEN, PAUL SHOWALTER, HUGH TOLFORD, and our Sheriff were among those present. CM GLORIA LOTHROP gave the annual banquet featured talk, "Not So Wild Women of the West."

BOB KERN, Captain, U.S. Navy, Ret., toured the U.S.S *Antietam* as a guest of the Commanding Officer. This ship, one of twenty-seven of her class, carries 122 missiles and other weapons systems.

Our members keep being recognized for their works:

CM MICHAEL HARRISON has been notified that he is the 1996 recipient of the Sir Thomas More Medal from the Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco. The award will be made April 28, 1996.

JOHN ROBINSON and his co-author Phil Brigandi, the curator of the Romona Bowl Museum, Hemet, won the Westerners International Coke Wood Award for the best Western history article of 1994. Their article, "The Killing of Juan Diego: From Murder to Mythology," appeared in the *Journal of San Diego History*. Winter/Spring 1994.

The Spanish Consul General, the Honorable Victor Ibáñez, awarded DOYCE B. NUNIS, JR. the Order of Isabella the Catholic (*Orden de Isabel la Catholica*), bestowed upon him by King Juan Carlos of Spain for Doyce's scholarly contributions to the history of Spanish Alta and Baja California. Fellow Westerners attending the presentation and informal reception at Doyce's house October 8, 1995, were THOMAS ANDREWS, STEVE KANTER, GLORIA LOTHROP, ED PARKER, MARTIN RIDGE, HUGH TOLFORD, and Msg. FRANCIS WEBER, who received this honor two years ago.

Welcome to new members: REGIS M. GRADEN, JOE NARDONE, PHYLLIS B. CHAPMAN, WILLIAM T. DAVIS, JAY R. BESEL, JOHN A. BONK, HENRY P. SILKA, TIM HEFLIN, STEPHEN A. KANTER, M.D., GLORIA LOTHROP, JULIE THOMA, FRANK M. CHAPMAN, PATRICIA ADLER-INGRAM, and NICHOLAS A. CURRY.

(*Monthly Roundup, continued from page 2*)

a resource map, and he mapped the.territory

In addition to these activities, he became a partner in a ferry operation and began doing assays. Through his efforts, the "blue stuff" which lead to a one and a half billion dollar bonanza for Arizona was recognized. Because of his reputation, Ed and Al Schieffelin asked him to assay some ore they had found. It assayed at $2,000 per ton; Gird outfitted an expedition to do further exploration. Their discovery resulted in the Tombstone Mining District with ores assaying at $9,000 per ton. Gird introduced a ten stamp mill as well as other new technology into the area. In Tombstone, he knew everyone, and he and Wyatt Earp prevented the lynching of John Behan. After selling out in 1881, just before the mines failed, for one million dollars which he shared with the Schieffelins, he moved to California.

He and a partner purchased the 35,000 acre Rancho Santa Ana del Chino for $200,000. In addition to running cattle, he diversified and added a slaughter house, meat market and dairy. On the ranch, he built the "Home Place" which had the most sweeping lawn in California. In addition to a bird sanctuary and other amenities he built an one mile race track to complete the paddock and stables.

Like many others in the 1880s, Gird became involved in real estate development. He brought in water from the San Gabriel Mountains to encourage the new settlers to follow agricultural pursuits which resulted not only in a planned community, but one with a solid economic base.

His last agricultural venture was the introduction of European sugar beets. The Oxnard Brothers operated his refinery which was to become very successful when a reduction in the protective tariff on sugar and the Panic of 1893 wiped out the operation. By 1896, he had lost everything. Foreseeing that the development of electricity would create a demand for copper, he later attempted to develop a copper mine in Mexico. He never fully recovered his losses.

Even though he never gained his financial status, he was still admired and respected. In spite of the fact that he and Harrison Gray Otis had had a falling out earlier, even the *Los Angeles Times* printed a glowing obituary. Richard Gird was a man of many frontiers who applied vitality and imagination to change many frontier features.

JUNE 1995 MEETING

New member, Nicolas Curry, presented an introduction to the Doheny Family who contributed much to the cultural and religious life of the Los Angeles area. The Doheny Foundation, located near Saint Vincent

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

June meeting speaker Nicholas Curry.

Church, has contributed to help the Saint Vincent Church, the library at USC, the Doheny Rare Book and Manuscript Collection and Saint John Seminary in Camarillo among many other things

Edward L. Doheny, the founder of the fortune, was born in Wisconsin in 1856 to Scot parents who had migrated here in 1848 due to the potato famine. Edward left home at the age of sixteen to become a hard rock miner in Texas, the Southwest and Mexico. After a couple of successful strikes in Mexico, he came to Los Angeles in 1885.

While in New Mexico, Doheny had fallen into a shaft and broken both legs. During his long recovery, he studied law under the guidance of Albert B. Fall, who would thereafter play an important role in Doheny's life.

In 1892, Doheny and his partner, Charles Crawford, struck oil in Los Angeles. Using mining techniques, they found oil at 691 feet and started the Los Angeles oil boom. Doheny, in order to sell his oil, made arrangements with Santa Fe Railroad to use diesel fuel in their locomotives. This experiment proved very successful and through Santa Fe connections with the Mexican Central Railroad led to oil exploration in Mexico. Prospecting from a completely equipped train, they found oil near Tampico as well as other locations.

Apparently the death of his partner, Charles Crawford in 1913 had an influence on Doheny. In 1906, Crawford's wife was murdered by a disgruntled employee, who, when refused reinstatement in his former position, shot her. After his wife's death, Crawford withdrew from an active role in

business became a philanthropist. One of his outstanding contributions was the funding of the McKinley Home for Boys.

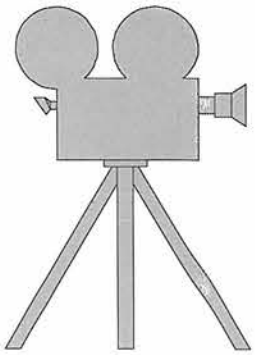
In 1921, Doheny acquired drilling rights to 32,000 acres of the Navy Oil reserve at Elk Hills without competitive bidding. A Senate investigation discovered that Doheny had given the Secretary of Interior, Albert B. Fall, $100,000 which Doheny maintained was a loan to an old friend. Charges were brought against the two as well as Henry Sinclair. The results of the trial found Fall convicted of accepting a bribe, but using the same evidence they were unable to prove Doheny had given it to him. Fall was sentenced to nine months in prison, and Sinclair to six months for contempt of court. Afterward, Doheny began selling off all of his holdings except for those in California

After his death in 1935, Mrs. Doheny continued the philanthropic work. She financed the Doheny Eye Institute, established the Doheny Rare Book Collection, and gave several family mansions , including Greystone, for various uses. Because of the Doheny family, Los Angeles has greatly benefited.

JULY MEETING

Neal Graffy, former Sheriff of the Santa Barbara Corral and member of the boards of the Santa Barbara Historical Society, Landmarks Commission and Mission Canyon Association, gave the Corral glimpse into a little known incident of Santa Barbara's and the movie industry's past - an overview of the American Film Company.

The American Film Company, or the Flying "A," went from a small band of actors and cowboys who in 1910-1912 shot one reel western movies all over Southern California to the world's largest studio. Located in Santa Barbara, they filmed over 1,000 westerns, dramas and comedies. In spite of the company's rapid growth, before its tenth anniversary it was in serious financial trouble facing bankruptcy and by 1921 had ceased to exist Graffy attributes the growth of the company to "A Liar, actor of the company-pany to "A Liar, actor Gilbert 'Bronco Billy' Anderson, A Drunk, director Marshall Nelcard, and a Piano Teacher, cameraman Victor Fleming."



Many early film companies fled the East to avoid paying fees or being sued by the Motion Picture Patent Company. Among those were Anderson and Nelcard who formed a company to shoot westerns. Anderson had earlier played three roles, in *The Great Train Robbery* for which he was hired because he said he could ride - later he did learn. One role was the first person to be killed in a western; Nelcard had been herding a group of cowboys for a movie he planned to produce when he woke up in jail in Chicago and discovered he had been declared the director. To avoid the Film Association and its fees, they moved around Southern California finally arriving in Santa Barbara where they decided to stay.

The original company had a $1,000 payroll and shot a one reel movie in two and a half hours.

By 1916, the company had $45,000 a week payroll and were shooting two major movies a week.

Using Summerland as location and making their own sets the company prospered and soon built the largest movie studio of the time as their home. There, *Oil on Troubled Waters*, became its first quality movie and their star, "Bronco Billy," became the first international western movie star.

Problems soon appeared on the horizon. Hollywood was rapidly becoming the recognized center of the industry, and the Flying "A" found itself outside of the mainstream. Many of the actors, especially one of their stars, Douglas Fairbanks, and technicians elected to go to Hollywood. Distribution methods changed and it became harder to market their films. But the worst was yet to come. Attendance to movies had swollen with the development of elegant movie theaters and better movies. However, the 1919 worldwide influenza epidemic sharply curtailed movie attendance, and the American film Company faced severe financial problems which led to its bankruptcy and disappearance in 1921. For years, the magnificent studio remained as a reminder, but in 1949 it was razed.

Graffy skillfully supplemented and supported his presentation with a wide variety of slides. The slides and presentation gave glimpses to a forgotten past and dimly remembered faces.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

July meeting speaker Neal Graffy.

California History Vignettes

Doña Feliciana

by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

The first woman to emerge as an individual in the far West was Maria Feliciana Arballo y Gutierrez, referred to in the annals as the "merry widow of the Anza colonizing expedition."

Little is known about Doña Feliciana's origins. At the youthful age of thirteen, she had married an equally young soldier of the Spanish empire. Maria and Lieutenant Arballo had two daughters, Tomasa and Eustaquia.

"Dazzled by the promises of the viceroy," the Arballos were among those responding favorably to the invitation issued by Captain Juan Bautista de Anza to accompany his second expedition to Alta California, in 1775-1776.

Suddenly, just before their departure, Lieutenant Arballo died. Undaunted, the widow and her two children decided to continue the trek, against the advice of Fray Pedro Font, the official chaplain and chronicler. Maria and her two daughters were among the 240 men, women and children who left from Culiacan, Sinaloa, on September 30.

During the long, dangerous, sizzling hot and then freezing cold journey, the widow Arballo delighted and encouraged her fellow colonists, much to the annoyance of Father Font. In his diary, the chaplain complained several times about the "somewhat discordant" and "very bold widow who came with the expedition." He was especially upset at the singing during a *fandango* in the Christmas season.

She "sang some verses which were not at all not at nice," according to Font and, what was worse, she was "applauded and cheered by all the crowd." The next morning at Mass, Father Font told his sleepy listeners that "instead of thanking God for having arrived with their lives...it appeared that they were making such festivities in honor of the Devil." Captain Anza later intervened on behalf of Feliciana, explaining that she was a morale builder. (The *fandango* had been celebrated following the safe return of scouts feared lost in a mountain pass).

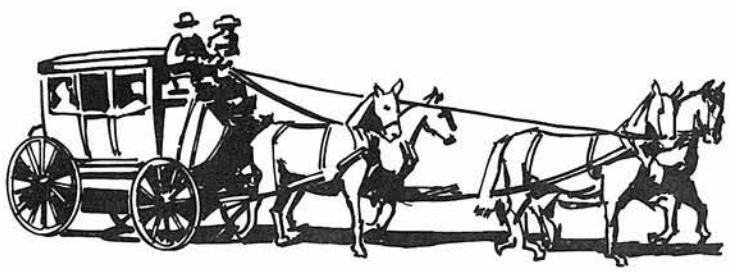
The captain was then lectured on the evils of drinking and dancing. The friar later noted in his diary that his over-reaction may have been occasioned by the "flux" which "kept me very much prostrated."

Doña Feliciana and her two daughters never reached their destination, the shore of San Francisco bay. When the party arrived at San Gabriel Mission, she caused a minor sensation.

A young soldier, Juan Francisco Lòpez, who had come to California with Fray Junìpero Serra, persuaded the lovely widow to remain at San Gabriel as his wife. They were married by Fray Francisco Garces. Even Father Font approved and joined in the week-long *fiesta* that ensued. Doña Feliciana served for a while as overseer for the young girls in the mission's *monjorio* or dormitory.

From "the healthy parent tree grew many, flowering branches," according to Susanna Bryant Dakin. Eustaquia married Jose Maria Pico and one of her sons, Pio, became governor of California. One of their grand-daughters, Trindad Ortega y de la Guerra, was so beautiful that she was known as "La Primavera." Modern-day "Spring" Street in Los Angeles is named after her.

In one of her books, Cora Miranda Older wrote that "no woman has so greatly endowed California's beauty and art as this singing, dancing, laughing Maria Feliciana Arballo y Gutierrez who deserted the Anza expedition at San Gabriel to become the wife of Juan Francisco Lòpez."



How to Find One's Roots

by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

Ever wonder about your ancestors - who they were, where they came from, what they were like or how they got here? In recent times, the study of genealogy has become almost a national past time.

Perhaps the following guidelines will be useful for those interested in pursuing their familial "roots."

It is wise, for practical purposes, to restrict the search to only one of the ancestral lines. Probably the one bearing the family name will be the most appealing.

First of all, search the attic, basement and other areas in the family homestead. Look for names, dates and places. Earlier generations often listed such information in Bibles or prayerbooks.

Interview elderly relatives. Find out where they originated and when they moved to this country, state, or city. Carefully write down marriage and birth dates. Do not presume that memory will serve you infallibly.

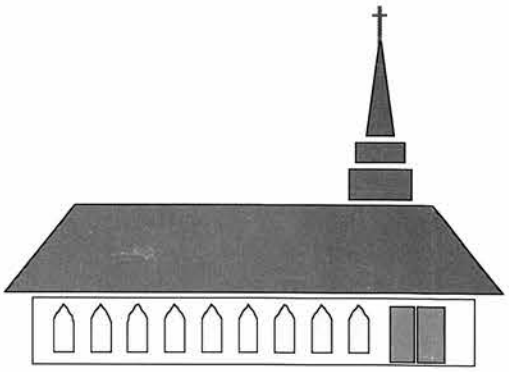
Check out cemeteries. In previous times, families tended to prefer "cluster" graves. Very likely a dozen or so relatives would be buried in the same section. Their tombstones usually disclose dates and even birthplaces. Inscriptions are also useful. The character of a deceased person may be reflected in the epitaph. The simplicity or grandeur of the headstone can provide an insight into the decedent's character.

School and college records may also provide useful information. Fraternities keep membership rosters which are often helpful. School magazines and newspapers are invaluable sources.

Churches are especially useful to genealogists because of their sacramental records. When writing, give name, approximate dates, along with your relationship. (These records are private and access is often restricted to relatives). Always include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

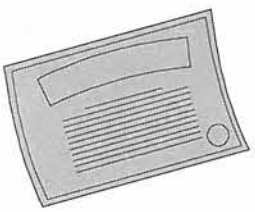
Libraries often have information in their local history department. One of the finest genealogical departments in the nation is housed at the Los Angeles Public Library, at Fifth and Grand. Neighborhood and county newspapers and advertisers often have "morgues" which are exceedingly useful to genealogists.

Do not overlook the National Archives (General Services Administration, Washington, D.C., 20408). Records of every census since 1790 are filed there. They reveal the names of everyone in a given household, the year of their immigration, country of origin and occasionally religious background. The National



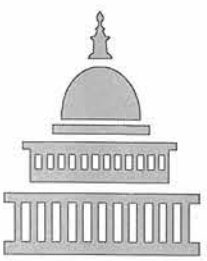
Archives can also provide pension records and military information for those who served in the armed forces prior to 1917.

The names of immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1820 are often listed in the passenger arrival lists of ships (Form GSA-7111, available from the National Archives, is an official request for passenger lists).



The Immigration Office is another excellent source for naturalized citizens. Further information about an ancestor's country can be obtained from writing that nation's embassy in Washington, D.C. Often they will give addresses of foreign records offices. The world's largest collection of genealogical data is on file in the central library of the Mormon Church, in Salt Lake City. They have there the names and data on people who immigrated to America (1538-1885) from over forty countries.

For a minimal charge, the United States Government Printing Office (Supt. of Documents, Washington, D.C., 20402) will send booklets on how best to locate certificates of birth, marriage, divorce or death.



There are professional genealogists who research these materials for a modest fee, but for a satisfying, stimulating experience try on your own. The rewards of a successful search are worth the effort.

ARTICLES NEEDED

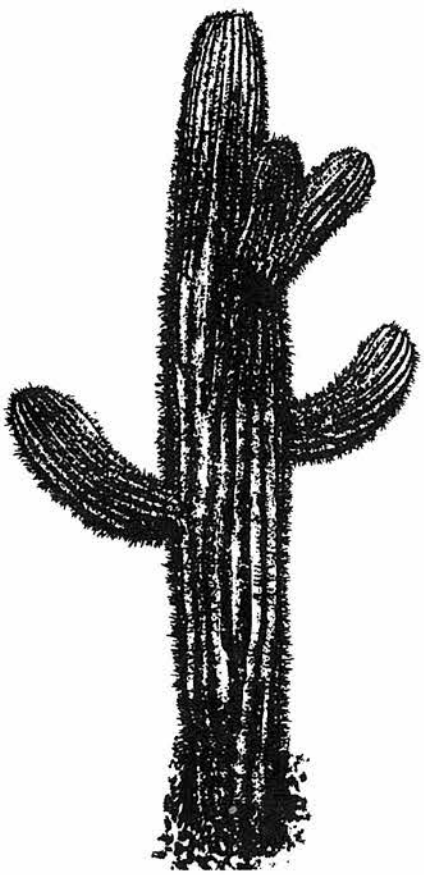
There is a constant need for articles to fill the pages of *The Branding Iron*. Most of the articles should be 2,5000-3,000 words. Although our major topic is the area west of the Mississippi River, very good articles on the trans-Appalachian area will also be considered. Likewise, the major time period is the nineteenth century, but other time periods are also welcome, especially the twentieth century and seventeenth century early exploration.

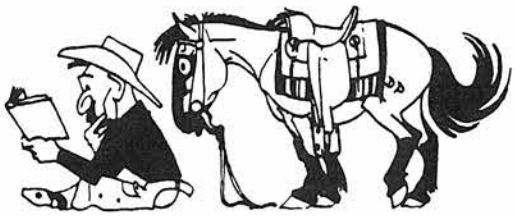
While sources should be indicated in the article, no formal endnotes are requested. However, the editor would appreciate a list of six-eight works one could read if interested in gaining more information about the subject.

If the author has pictorial material to go with the article, the editor would appreciate it. If no material is available, information or suggestions about the illustrations and their location would be very helpful.

Style, grammar, etc. is to follow the University of Chicago, Manual of Style, 14th ed. The one exception is the suggested reading list which should include author's name and title only.

Mail all manuscripts to Robert Blew, Publications Editor, 12436 Landale St., Studio City, CA 91604. You will hear soon whether or not your article is accepted, and this will be followed shortly by editorial comments.





DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

ARIZONA GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS: A Travel Guide to History, by Philip Varney. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. 136 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. Paper, $14.95. Order from University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719-4140

This is not Philip Varney's first ghost town guide book - and it shows! It is well-organized and aesthetically pleasing. It would be delightful reading for dedicated ghost town hunters as well as armchair travelers.

The author groups Arizona's ghost towns and mining camps into eight regions, devoting one chapter to each region. There is one map for each region, and while not elaborate, are well-thought out for the purposes of the book. Each map shows the principal, secondary and minor sites as well as modern day towns.

He also provides directions on how to get to the sites, along with information such as seasonal weather problems and the types of vehicles needed to get to the sites.

The principal text of each chapter is divided between brief, yet informative histories of each town and anecdotes about the people and historical events of the towns. Combined, the histories and anecdotes tell the reader how the towns came to be, who the main characters were and why the towns became ghost towns.

Photographs are generously strewn throughout the book. Many were taken by the author, and the others are from a variety of sources. In addition to the "then and now" photographs which are virtually required in a guide book on ghost towns are a number of ore samples, which have been interspersed throughout the book. I found the index to be very user friendly.

The page numbers for text references are in light face type while photograph references are in bold face. Map references have an "m" following the page number.

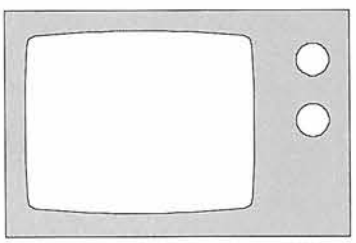
Also included in the book are a glossary of mining terms and a chapter by chapter listing of ghost towns not included in the books. A number of sites were left out of the book because the author found there to be little if anything of historical importance remaining, or for some other reason such as posted no trespassing signs. Since this is a guide book, the inclusion of this list was not only appropriate but another indication that the author put his book together to be used as a guide book and not just read.

With *Arizona Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*, Philip Varney does everything but physically take the reader there. That part is left up to the reader. Whether their vehicle is a high-clearance four wheel drive truck or just an overstuffed easy chair in the den, this book is recommended to all western ghost town enthusiasts.

Glenn H. Thornhill

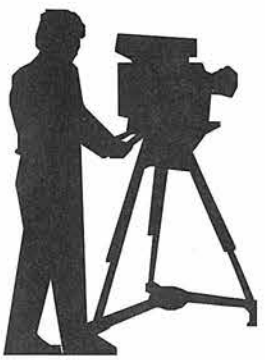
NEWS AT TEN: Fifty Years with Stan Chambers, by Stan Chambers. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1994. 271 pp. Illustrations. Paper, $14.95. Order from Capra Press, P.O. Box 2068, Santa Barbara, CA 91320.

Los Angeles residents between fifty and sixty years of age are sure to have their earliest memories recalled by Stan Chambers' autobiography. The eerie thing about Chambers is that he seems to have always been with TV station KTLA; as indeed he has. A native of Los Angeles, Chambers went to work at KTLA in December 1947, shortly after W6XYZ became KTLA and began commercial broadcasting. Chambers functioned as a self-described utility infielder, working in the sales department, doing news broadcasts, and announcing shows. In the early days he moved props around and helped set up scenery.



The best part of the book describes TV in its formative years. Such early shows as Cowboy Slim, Frosty Frolics, and City at Night, all done live, helped make KTLA a highly rated independent station. tells of the joys and perils of live TV, videotape not being developed until the 1960s. What they did on TV was what the viewer saw, mistakes and all. Most important, Chambers describes the many contributions of Klaus Landsberg, the first general manager of KTLA and a true pioneer in television whose life was tragically cut short by cancer in 1956. Chambers covered such events as the Kathy Fiscus tragedy (the girl who fell down a well in 1949); the Baldwin Hills dam failure in 1963: and innumerable traffic accidents, murders, robberies, forest fires, rainstorms--whatever was newsworthy, as he puts it, not necessarily worthy.

Chambers is less successful in providing capsule summaries of decades of events. His descriptions of the civil rights and antiwar protest movements of the 1960s, for example, are surprisingly weak, and events which occurred at the end of the decade cannot fairly be lumped with what was happening at the beginning. Gene Autry and his Golden West Broadcasting , which owned KTLA for 25 years, gets less than a small paragraph.



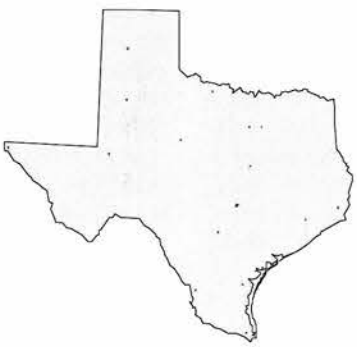
The book is nevertheless of more than local interest as it provides an insider's view of the growing importance of television. KTLA's "News at 10" program has been justifiably praised for years, if only because of the consistency and loyalty of its staff, unlike network affiliates whose anchorpeople play musical chairs on each other's stations. Sad to report, "News at 10" is KTLA' best offering because everything else is syndicated reruns of network shows, (Happy Days, Brady Bunch, etc.) an old feature film in the evening, and Dodger and Angel baseball games. Sure do miss Cowboy Slim.

Abraham Hoffman

TEXAS RANGER: Jack Hays in the Frontier Southwest, by James Kimmins Greer. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993. 237 pp., Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Index. Cloth, $24.50; Paper $12.95. Order from Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843-4354.

This book, an abridgement of the first part of Greer's biography, *Colonel Jack Hays: Texas Frontier Leader and California Builder*, which was originally published in 1952 - at the price of six dollars for the hard back - and reprinted, and executed in 1987, covers Hays' life as a Texas Ranger from his entry into Texas in 1836 until his return from the War with Mexico. The last portion of his life, from his emigration to California in 1849 until his death in 1883, is capsulized into one page.

In spite of his fame and importance in Texas there was no major biography of Hays when this work was published originally. What was available was a pamphlet, possibly published in 1928, and sketches in various articles, manuscripts and works on the Rangers. Greer's research was extensive-digging through local histories, newspapers, government reports, personal memoirs and studies of Texas Rangers. However, he seems to have accepted these sources at face value. Although in the end notes he mentions he used certain sources because they seemed more reliable, more plausible or were more conservative than others. As Walter Prescott Webb said in a review of the original publication, "In Texas because of his fame and the lack of resources Hays is and has long been a somewhat mythical character...The reader feels occasionally that the author did not discriminate in his use of legendary and factual sources." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, June 7, 1952).



The volume centers on Hays' military operations which raises many questions. Since he was in the field so much, how did he make a living? Some of the operations sound like they were protective covers for his surveying. On several occasions, Greer mentions that Hays spent large sums of money to purchase equipment for his troops. But, except for a few mentions of surveying, he never explains whence the money came. Also, he mentions the sale of tracts of land, but never explains how Hays acquired title to the land originally.

The book makes clear the unrest in the Texas-Mexico border region after the Texas Rebellion. The number of operations against military forces from Mexico, marauding Indians, groups of desperados and guerrillas clearly shows why the Rangers were necessary. Another reason for this continual need was that the Republic of Texas was constantly running out of money and had to disband the forces which served as an invitation to the various groups to start their operations again.

Hays is portrayed as a very logical person, a careful planner, personally brave, an inspiring leader, and above all modest. Most of the reports of large numbers of deaths, wild charges and huge successes come from others not Hays. He did not seem to be a dare devil, but one to take calculated risks. While he did not seem rash, he did make use of the the unexpected-like charging when the odds were ten to one.

One becomes skeptical of the battle reports. The odds were never less than five to one and the Texans always inflected casualties of at least ten to one. Of course, the adoption of the revolver did give the Texans an edge. The Indians used a tactic of waiting until the Texans fired and then charging while the Rangers attempted to reload. Another four (and later five) shots must have been a rather rude surprise.

The Texans not only served with Taylor during the War with Mexico but also in central Mexico with Scott. Taylor receives serious criticism for his handling of the battles of Monterrey and Saltillo; one can gather that Taylor did not receive much support from the former Rangers in his bid for the presidency. The battles of Monterrey and Saltillo seem much more personal and fresh than when presented in general accounts. In central Mexico, the Texans served very effectively as anti-guerrilla forces and in protecting Scott's line of supply.

Cruelty, nativism and racism are rampant in the work. Captured bandits are calmly executed-sometimes with and sometimes without a court martial. In Mexico, the Rangers coldly shoot people for attempting to steal their bandannas. The culprit is shot without a word, and the Ranger rode on without a pause or glancing back at the victim. Although certain derogatory words are never used, the hatred is clear. Hays himself seemed to admire Indians and one of his friends was an Indian chief, but he never allowed that to prevent slaughtering them. After one severe attack by Mexican Lancers, one Ranger says he would never consider the Mexicans cowards again.

This interesting work gives insight into problems and attitudes in Texas in the 1830-40 period, presents many of the conflicts, but gives little about Hays. It could be suggested to take all the battle scenes with a large grain of salt, or at least the odds and number of casualties. In spite of the table of contents, there are no illustrations, not even a portrait of Hays. Remember Webb's admonition and enjoy.

Robert Blew