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The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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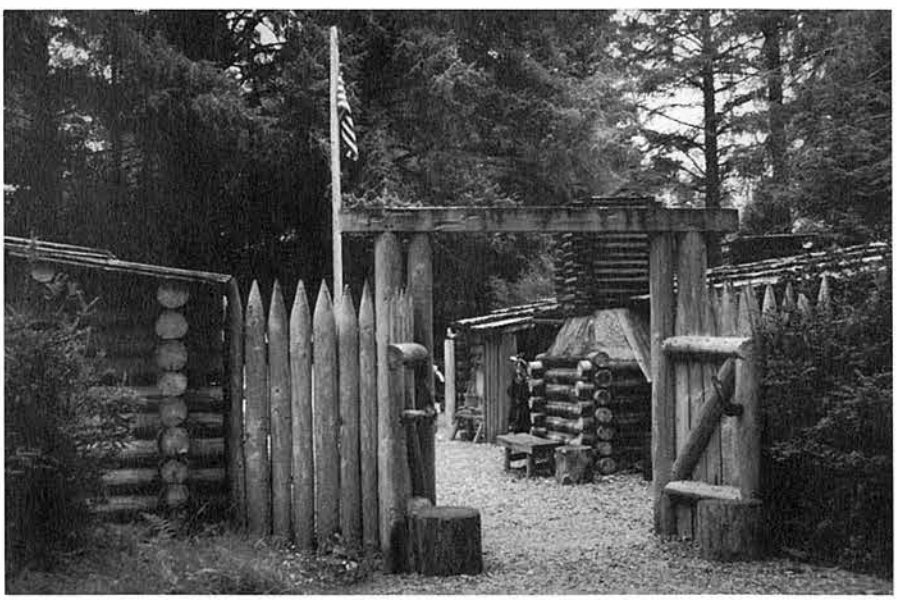

Modern replica of Fort Clatsop at Astoria, Oregon - *courtesy of Jacqueline R. Blew*

# York the Black Explorer with Lewis & Clark

*by Nicholas C. Polos*

*"Nussed by stern men with empires in their brains."*

The North American continent north of Mexico had no Aztec treasure or Incan civilization. Its land was wild and heavily forested; and the native Indians were often aggressive and not easily subdued. The continent did not quickly yield up large hordes of precious metals. Its early explorers were often disappointed because they did not manage to find a passage through it, but their explorations have, in time, become the heritage of our nation.

*(Continued on page three)*

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# THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

## AUGUST 1995 MEETING

When one thinks of Fiorello La Guardia, one thinks of the ultimate New Yorker - the mayor who read the comics over the air during a newspaper strike. Not so says Corral Member Abe Hoffman. La Guardia was raised on an army post on the Arizona frontier. This experience greatly influenced his political views, and was an experience which he remembered with great fondness in his later years.

*Photograph by Frank Q. Newton*

August meeting speaker Abraham Hoffman

La Guardia's father, who emigrated from Italy to the United States before his son was born, enlisted in the U.S. Army as a band

(*Continued on page 24*)

(*Continued from page 1*)

In his didactic poem, "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," Bishop George Berkeley wrote: "Westward the course of empire takes its way." John Quincy Adams, in his "Oration at Plymouth" (1802) reaffirmed Berkeley's observation by saying: "Westward the star of empire takes its way." In a 1975 UCLA study, it was found that as early as 1800 Americans seemed convinced that their future was to be found someplace West of where they were at that time.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was one of President Thomas Jefferson's lifetime dreams. He had been obsessed with what John Logan Allen called in *Passage Through the Garden* "the Northwestern Mystery." Allen claims that: "It was through him [Jefferson] that formulation and implementation of the images of the Northwest that the first American transcontinental exploration became a reality." The object of the Expedition was quite simple. President Jefferson forwarded a rough draft of the official instructions of the proposed expedition to the Pacific to the youthful commander, Meriwether Lewis, who had once been his secretary, in which he stated: "The object of our mission is to explore the Missouri River and such principal streams of it, by communications with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent, for the purpose of commerce..."

In his message to Congress, January 1803, President Jefferson asked for an appropriation of two thousand five hundred dollars, to "explore the whole line, even to the Western ocean..." However at this juncture Albert Gallatin, Jefferson's assiduous Secretary of the Treasury cautioned him that the proposal for western exploration ought to be the subject of a confidential message, "as it contemplates an expedition out of our territory;" however, the Louisiana Purchase did away with this Gallatinian concern. Gallatin applauded Jefferson's intentions, and quickly observed that the lands in contemplation would be the first to be settled by Americans. Congress passed the legislation that President Jefferson requested on Februrary 22, 1803, and six days later it became law.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was one of the most significant and monumental episodes in the history of the American people. It fired the imagination of the American people as did all great events involving land. From 1804 to 1806, almost two and a half years, the party under Captains Lewis and Clark carried the American flag up the Missouri River, over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and then all the way back to St. Louis. It is not necessary to live day by day on each leg of the long and dangerous journey to appreciate the herculean efforts of the entire expedition. That story is familiar and is well described by Reuben Gold Thwaites in his famous multi-volume series, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.

From the very beginning the entire project was brilliantly planned and carefully executed. Few comparable explorations have been so free of blunders, tragedies or even minor miscalculations. Only one individual, Sergeant C. Floyd, lost his life, and the relations between the two leaders, Lewis and Clark, though each one was of a different temperament, were most harmonious throughout the entire trip. This was also true of the expedition party, which consisted of a mixture of "White, Black, and Indians from various parts of the country."

When the expedition assembled at its starting headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, a frontier outpost of just three streets, it consisted of the two Captains, nine Kentucky volunteers, fourteen soldiers (also volunteers), two French rivermen, one hunter, and Clark's Negro servant York. There were twenty-nine persons officially recognized on the rolls at the outset, and with the later additions and the Indian woman, Sacajawea, the party numbered forty-five. York and Sacajawea were the only two members of the Party who were not official members; they received no pay, were not rewarded with land warrants at the end of the

Expedition, and yet both made important contributions to the success of the Expedition.

One of the most unique and overlooked facets of the famous Expedition overshadowed by the distorted and overblown myths about Sacajawea was the role of York, the "Ebony Explorer." Dale Van Every in *The Final Challenge* wisely observed that: "Negroes, either as companions of their migrating masters or as runaways to Indian towns, had always played a significant role in frontier history. That race, too, was represented. Clark took with him his Negro slave York." John Hope Franklin in *From Slavery to Freedom* presents the case more strongly when he wrote:

Peace talks with the Indians were one of the Expedition's major activities

> *All too frequently, students of history overlook the role of Negro Americans in the exploration and settlement of the American West. Whenever white Americans undertook the task of winning the West, there were black Americans, slave and free, who were involved in the process.*

The nineteenth century was the age of many fantastic and exciting historical mysteries. None, however, were more intriguing than the exploits of York. Even many historians have had to ask who was York? In spite of the mystery surrounding this "huge, ebony, herculean giant" (York was reputed to have been 6 feet, 5 inches and over 200 lbs.), we have the original journals of the Expedition which shed light on York's life and confirm his achievements and activities as a western frontiersman and explorer.

York was Clark's servant, but he was more than this. They had grown up together, were about the same age when the Corps of Discovery set out from St. Louis on May 14, 1804, and were more like brothers than master and servant. York admired William Clark, the "Big Redhead," as did Meriwether Lewis and the entire Discovery Party. Clark must have been "a giant among men." Will Henry wrote in *The Gates of the Mountain* of William Clark:

> *That was William Clark: engineer, doctor, soldier, frontiersman, midwife, chemist, mechanic, boatman, cartographer, Indian fighter, Indian lover, explorer, plainsman, river pilot, simple believer and captain of American Presidents. What Clark could not do, was not worth doing.*

Richard Dillan wrote that Clark in turn was very fond of this "kinky-haired, obsidian black man;" a jolly giant of a fellow whose wit made the long hard journey "through life a pleasant trip." Clark knew that York was a natural clown who laughed easily, was a wag who liked to sing and dance - the delight of any party - and, that York was a dependable guide, a good cook who knew how to hunt if he had to, and in general a very hard worker who was fiercely devoted to him since their boyhood days. Besides all these many talents York also had acquired some language ability, which although not fluent, was useful. Neta L. Fraser observed that: "York can speak French, and sometime (sic) serves as interpreter since neither Lewis nor Clark had learned the language." The latter statement should be taken with a grain of salt for the simple reason that York did not have any formal education, consequently if he knew any French he probably picked it up hanging about the trading posts in and around St. Louis.

Besides York's great physical prowess, his

acting ability, and the Indians', who had never seen a black, curiosity about his blackness (they considered him "Great Medicine," along with the air gun that Lewis carried into Indian villages), did much to smooth relations with the Indians. In describing this David Halloway wrote:

> *For the first time the party discovered that it had a secret weapon in dealing with the Indians, one that they were often to use later. The Indians were fascinated with York,... They could not believe that he was not painted black, though they were convinced of his naturalness when he took of his hat and showed them his wooly hair...*

Halloway was convinced that the Indians stood in awe of York, and he claimed that York's sexual prowess was even admired and sought after by the Indian womenfolk. The Expedition *Journals* confirm this.

One of the strange developments in the history of the West is the fascination of historians with the truth and fiction surrounding Sacajawea to the complete neglect of York. If theirs was a separate story one could understand this, but their lives were interwoven during almost the entire trip. York was her constant companion, indeed Captain Clark gave York continued custody of Sacajawea with instructions to care for her needs. York was her protector, interpreter, guardian and cook too. One of the problems that a historian faces when researching the Lewis and Clark Expedition is sifting through the maze of the voluminous literature which is riddled with reiterated untruths and assorted facts and perpetuated errors. Paul Russell Cutright makes this point when he observes that:

> *No one can rationally disagree with the enthusiasm expressed for Sacajawea; she was a girl of rare courage and spirit, but - and this is our final word about Sacajawea - it is unfortunate that so many writers have over-emphasized her role as a guide which was negligible, and have done her an actual disservice by failing to stress her aid as an interpreter, which was considerable.*

Note how distorted fact is perpetuated as in an elementary history where this amazing sentence appeared: "How lost the group would have been without Sacajawea, Charbonneau, and York. Of this triumvirate only York really deserves serious consideration here for the role of Sacajawea has been so distorted and exaggerated that it has almost lost its historical shape, form, and meaning; while Charbonneau, the lazy, hard-drinking *coureur de bois* who claimed boastfully to have won his wife (Sacajawea) in a gambling bout was never highly regarded by Lewis and Clark. Indeed, Lewis wrote in his "Official Roster of the Men," at the end of the Expedition next to Touissant Charbonneau (which he spelled "Charbono"): "A man of no peculiar merit."

One of the strange and unique features of the experience of the Corps of Discovery was the subtle change in York's role. He started the trip as a slave man-servant, but by the time this adventure of discovery was over two and half years later he was accepted by the entire Corps as an equal, accorded respect and admiration and lived to become free.

Late one rainy afternoon May 14, 1804, under a flag of fifteen stars the party pulled away from the Wood River Base. For the next two years, four months and ten days, the explorers would be beyond all advice or support; something like our astronauts only the Corps of Discovery had no Houston NASA ties. They were literally going beyond the edge of the known world. Indeed, Richard L. Neuberger claims that: "Their eventual destination was so indefinite that Jefferson gave them papers bespeaking the good offices of 'our consuls in Batavia, in Java and at the Cape of Good Hope'." Neuberger insists that geography ended at St. Louis and that from there myth began, and that twenty-nine year old Meriwether Lewis, the former Secretary to President Jefferson, and thirty-four year old artillery lieutenant William Clark did not know where they were going - but they got there. Both of these contentions, of course, are exaggerated; the Expedition was very well

prepared, and even though some of the maps were inaccurate the Corps did not get lost. Also, the Corps members were aware of the earlier developments along the northwest coastal frontier, and were able to obtain assistance from hunters, trappers, and guides who knew each area. From St. Louis, the edge of American civilization, Sergeant John Ordway of the United States of Army wrote to his parents in New Hampshire:

> *Honored parents: I am now on an Expedition to the westward with Captain Lewis and Lieutenant Clark, who are appointed by President Jefferson to go through the interior of North America. We are to ascend the Missouri River and then go by land to the Great Western Ocean.*

Actually the voyage into the so-called unknown was really a race for empire. One government report states: "The fact is unquestioned that the American claim to Oregon territory was the prime motive of this great expedition, while the purchase of Louisiana was a secondary but immensely stimulating excuse for its immediate prosecution."

C.M. Wilson offer us this apocryphal but interesting version of the beginning of the Expedition. he writes:

> *The Kentuckian (Clark) grinned and waved his hat, then he noticed that he was no linger the center of interest, that York, his manservant, had taken the spot light.*
>
> *York, monstrous and shiny black, capered to the foredeck, resplendent in an outfit of baggy blue denim cloth,...the Negro fell to a clog dance, an uproarious cadence of hard leather pummeling hard wood. The Corps of Discovery made commensurate applause.*

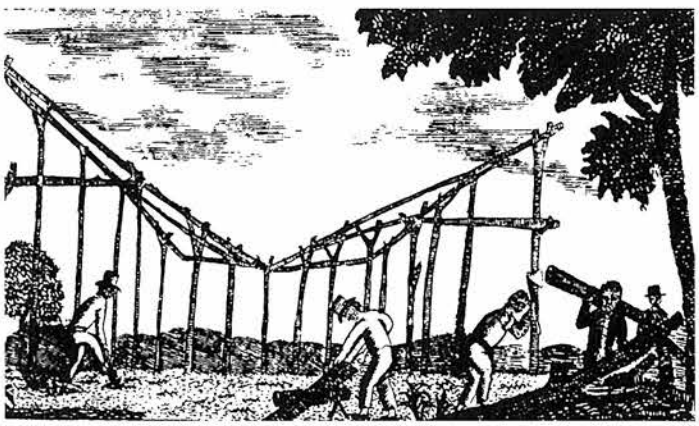
York was obviously the clown of the Expedition who kept the spirits high even in most desperate times. York's status began to undergo a subtle change as the Corps moved west. As the party moved further west and encountered the various tribes of Indians it became clear that York was in fact one of the most important individuals in the group. In the *Journals* kept by the Captains there is an entry dated 10 October, Wednesday, 1804 by William Clark - it is easy to recognize any of Clark's entries because his orthography is so poor. To leave the flavor of his spelling, all sics are omitted from passages quoted from the *Journals*. "Those Indians were much astonished at my Servent they never saw a black man before, all flooded around him and examined him from head to toe he Carried on the joke and made himself more turribal than we wished him to doe."

Lewis had an air gun which he used in his aggressive approach to Indian diplomacy. "When he's shoot his air gun the Indians would flee in fear and examine the ball holes in the tree with astonishment." Jeannette Mirsky insists that it was not the guns, nor the goods brought by the Corps, "that made the greatest stir among the Indians, but York, Clark's servant - the first Negro ever seen by them." The "Ebony Explorer," of course, relished this attention, and he enjoyed being called "Big Medicine," a term applied by the Indians to anything impressive and mysterious. York was quick to make the most of his social success; besides feats of strength he told the Indians that he had once been a wild animal who had been captured and tamed and painted black. The Indians, naturally, proceeded to rub York's skin to attempt to get the paint off. This is understandable because the custom of Indians, especially Flatheads, who had been victorious in battle had been to paint themselves with charcoal before reaching camp. So the Indians viewed York as a great warrior. York was popular with the Indian men, and the children with whom he played games, and especially with the attractive Arikara women who because of their liberal sex practices and numerous contacts with the traders had contracted veneral disease. The Mandan women were as promiscuous as the Arikaras, and Clark wrote in his *Journal*: "The Sioux had offered us squaws, but we having declined while we remained there, they followed us with offers of females for two days."

Clark described one incident in which one

of York's comrades went looking for him, but the Ricara husband would not let York's friend disturb him while York was visiting with the Indian's wife. Clark wrote: "The black man York participated largely in these favors; for, instead of inspiring any prejudice, his color seem to procure him additional advantages from the Indians, who desired to preserve among them some memorial of this wonderful stranger."

K.D. Curtis, in his "York, the Slave Explorer," would have us believe that York spent his entire time in the tribal tents of the Sioux, Shoshoni, Mandan, and Arikara repopulating the Indian West. He wrote: "One historian reported several kinky-haired Nez Percés resulted from York's visit. Indeed, legend is that chiefs tried to borrow York for mating purposes to preserve his attributes of wonderfully lustrous skin, great strength, and fascinating agility."



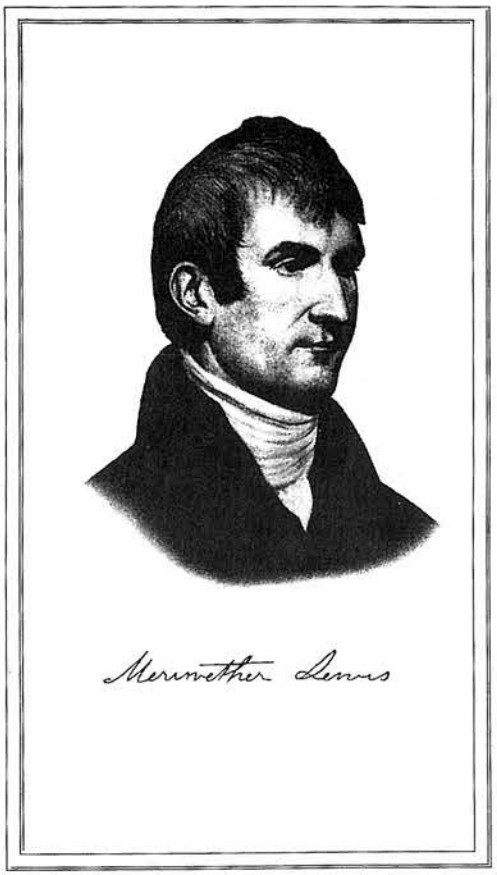
Members of the Expedition constructing a row of cabins.

This statement is exaggerated. While there is no doubt that York got along well with the Indian tribes this was mainly due to the fact that he was black and also because of his diplomatic skill. John Bakeless, a reliable author claimed that York like other members of the expedition had a temporary wife. The *Journals* and other documents do not confirm this. The Nez Percés dubbed York "Tse-mook-tse-mook To-to-kean" or "Black Indian" a name still used for African Americans. While York enjoyed playing with the Indian children who followed him about like Pied Piper, he soon tired of the Indian interest in his blackness. Legend had it that when Le Borgen (the "One-Eye" Indian chief) who was "bad medicine" tried to rub the "black paint" off York's body York threatened him with a knife. This hard to believe because York had a good sense of humor, and he was not given to violence-besides he would rather dance than fight.

York enjoyed dancing and doing jigs. C.M. Wilson claims that York was double-jointed at the knees and ankles which helped "with his prowess at jigging, and pigeon-wing cutting." Potts insisted that "Negro York he do lots dance with feet and looks funny." On holidays such as Christmas Day, Cruzette would get out his violin and York would dance. One Christmas Day, Clark wrote in his *Journal:* "I found them (Indians) much pleased at the Dancing of Our men. I ordered my black Servent to Dance which amused the Crowd verry much, and Somewhat astonished them, that So large a man should be active..."

When the Party was at Great Falls, York had become separated from Clark when a heavy storm unleashed huge torrents of rain and large monstrous hailstones. A huge wall of water had deluged Clark and his party, Sacajawea, Charbonneau and York. York managed to drag Sacajawea and Clark out of the swirling waters. Clark later recalled that York "was greatly agitated for our wellfar."

York was a hard worker and a builder. he carried the heavy timbers and built the shelters for the party. C.M. Wilson states that "York and Patrick Gass took the laurels for industry. They were the official woodcutters." This hard work and the severe wilderness winters took its toll on even a physical giant like York. In the winter of 1804, Clark wrote in his *Journal:* "My servant nearly exasted with heat, thirst, and fatigue, he being fat..." At another time Clark wrote of York's illness: "My Servent's feet also frosted and his P_s a little."




When he was not sick York constantly helped to take care of the sick acting as the expedition's nurse. He waited on Sergeant C. Floyd the entire time that he was sick and was sad and grieved when Floyd died.

York served the Expedition in a great many important capacities. For example, he was a resourceful and shrewd trader and swapper. When food supplies were low, the Expedition always cashed in on York's talent for getting on well with the Indians. Once in late spring York was even able to trade some buttons from an old uniform for some food. He often served as a scout gathering up flora and fauna for Lewis and the expedition's botanical collection.

Although York was not a soldier he could handle a gun very well. Hunting was a major function on a long trip in the wilderness since the party lived off the land. York hunted for deer, antelope, elk, buffalo, and even the ferocious bear. This meat was often supplemented by vegetables obtained from the Indians. York was also the chief fisherman of the party. Clark made this entry in his *Journal*, at the Osage River, June 5, "...here my Servent York Swam to sand bar to geather Greens for our Dinner, and returned with a sufficient quantity wild Greases or Tung grass." No cooking was done in the daytime during the entire trip. The whole party was divided into two messes; Lewis, Clark, York and Drouillard ate with either mess while York always did the cooking for the Captains and Sacajawea.

While York excelled in the frontier skills of hunting, fishing, trading, scouting, swimming, woodcraft, even open-fire cooking and dealing with the Indians, he had another important skill-interpreter; here he worked with Sacajawea and her husband Charbonneau. Messages from the Indian tribes went from the Indian woman to her husband to York then to Lewis or Clark. Although William L. Katz observed that: "One member of the Party(Discovery Corps) felt that York spoke bad French and worse English." The original *Journals* do not stress York's role as interpreter; however, Charles Mackenzie of the Northwest Fur Company maintained that York could perhaps have been one of the most important members of the expeditions since: "...actually, as is much of what Lewis and Clark recorded in their priceless logs was the interpretation of a negro slave."

By the time the Corps of Discovery had reached what Captain Clark called "the Pacific Ocian" York had been accepted as a full member of the expedition, not as a slave or servant, but as a woodsman with equal rights. For example, when the Party considered camping on the south side of the mouth of the Columbia River (at Fort Clatsop in the winter of 1805), the officers and men held a council in which even York and Sacajawea, joined - and for regular army officers this was desperately unorthodox expedient. The expedition was almost unanimous in favor of the plan to cross and look for a site on the southern shore.

Kenneth W. Porter compares the progress of York with that of Estevanico, minus the

tragic element: that York had a profound influence upon the Indians. He wrote:

> *But a careful perusal of the original journals of the expedition will reveal that , far from being a mere body servant, who on occasion assumed the role of a circus exhibit and entertainer, and quite aside from his useful activities in these connections, York was in other respects one of the most valuable members in the party.*

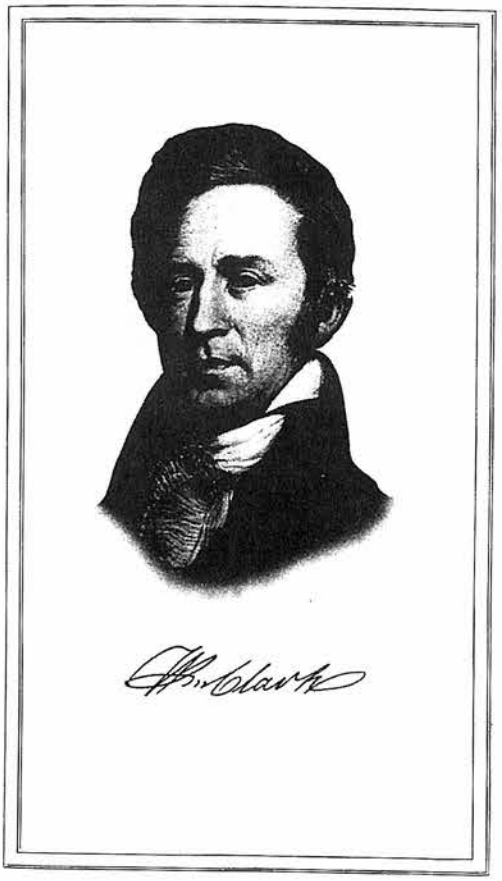
If historians were to carefully weigh all the roles that York played on the Expedition there is little doubt that the most important role was that of the Expedition's "statesman for Indian affairs." This really was York's great contribution to the success of the Discovery Corps.

When Clark first sighted the Pacific Ocean at Pillar Rock, below Jim Crow Point on November 7, 1805, the unsentimental Captain shouted with glee: "Great joy in camp we are in view of the Pacific Ocian, this great Pacific Oction which we have been so long anxious to see, and the raveing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky shore may be heard distinctly."

Clark was also happy when on March 23, 1806, the Corps turned eastward and began the long journey home, following on the whole, the same route it had traveled westward. The arrival of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at St. Louis, on September 23, 1806, brought to a close a journey unique in the history of territorial exploration. The Expedition had followed closely the motto of the Corps: "We Proceed On," and Clark wrote his last entry in his Journal: "a fine morning we commenced wrighting."

The men of the expedition had been gone so long on their voyage of discovery that they had long been given up for dead, and the men looked like American versions of Robinson Crusoe. They had traveled almost 7,689 miles and had found a way west and had obtained accurate annotated topographical sketches showing Americans how to get to the Pacific.

Two days later to celebrate the return of the explorers the citizens of the exploding



mini-village of St. Louis held a gala ball and dinner at Christy's Inn. What a feast this must have been for the wilderness men who had run out of both whiskey and tobacco very early in the trip.

Except for York and Sacajawea, all of the members of the Corps were well rewarded for their long and arduous service, the only two non-whites received no pay or land warrants. Lewis and Clark each received double pay and land allotments of 1,600 acres. All the other men each received 320-acre plots in surveyed public lands east of the Mississippi River, granted by Congress in 1807, and at the same time a grateful Congress awarded them double pay.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once insisted that: "There is properly no history but biography." The question remains what happened to York? The basic theme in Guy de Maupassant's delightful short story, "A Normandy Joke," is: "Who goes on the chase loses his place." York had been a

slave, so he had no place to lose and immortality to gain, so in the long run York was the biggest winner of them all. In the beginning of the long voyage York had remained as inconspicuous as a dusky shadow, but in the end the entire adventure placed him in the "Explorer's Hall of Fame," along with the other giants.

Some of the writers on Black Americans in the United States argued that York was abandoned, that he died a slave, that he was neglected and maltreated. All of this is not only distorted history - it is pure fable. Clark did not abandon York. After freeing him, he often hired him and paid him well for his work. In addition to York Clark freed his other slaves and provided for all of them. One he placed at a ferry, another on a farm giving him land and horses, and he gave York a large wagon and a team of six horses and set him up in the draying business between Nashville, Tennessee, and Richmond, Virginia; a fine start for York. Sadly, York was not a successful business man. Washington Irving writing in his *Western Journal* tells this story as Clark told it to him:

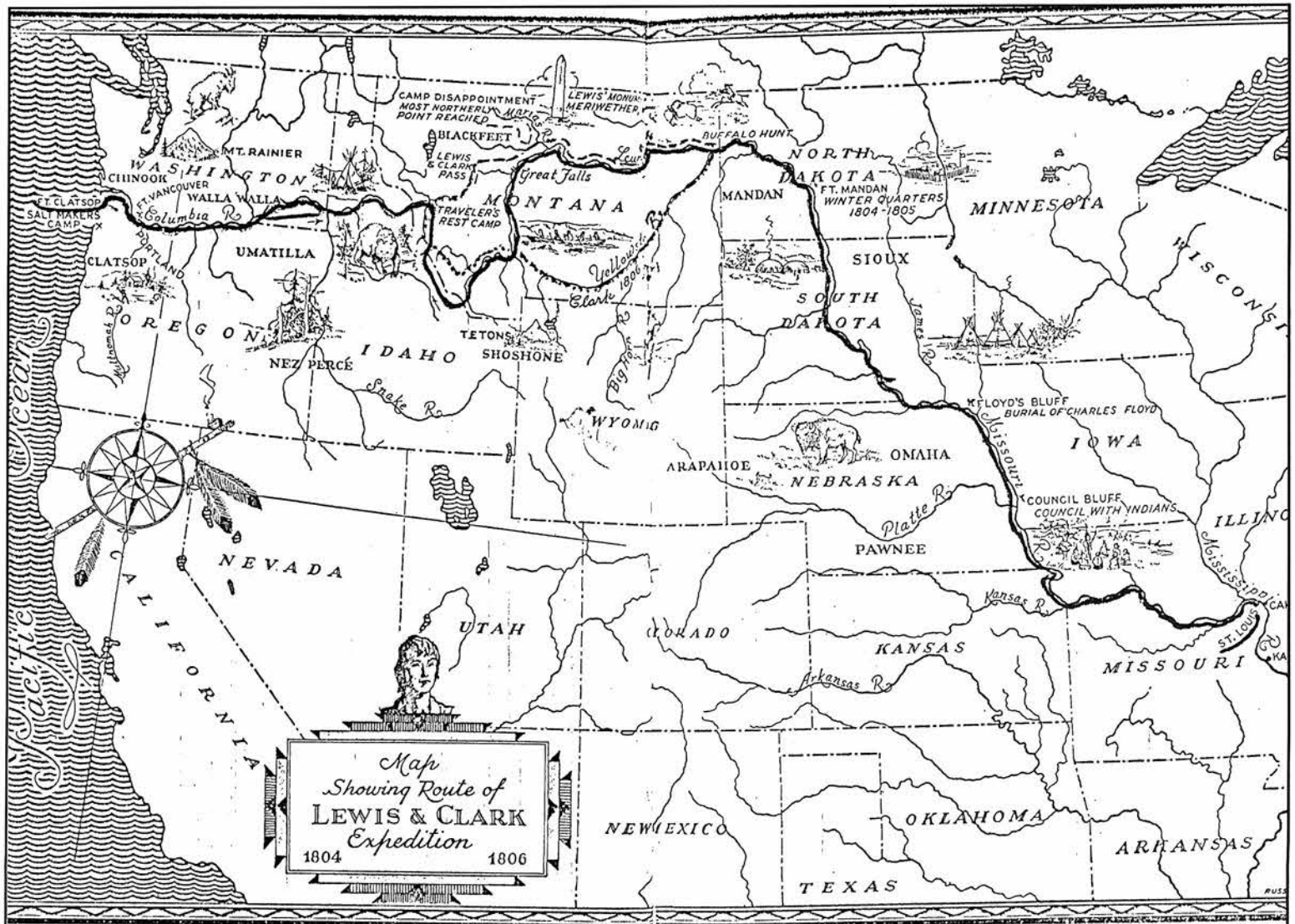
> *The wagoner was York, the hero of the Missouri Expedition and adviser of the Indians. He could not get up early enough in the morning - his horses were ill kept - two died - the others grew poor. He sold them, was cheated - entered service - fared ill. 'Damn this freedom,' said York, ' I have never had a happy day since I got it.' He determined to go back to his old master - set off for St. Louis, but was taken with cholera and died. Some of the traders think they have met traces of York's crowd, on the Missouri.*

There is no doubt that York lived on his past glories and found freedom a difficult condition in which to survive since early nineteenth century American was hostile toward Negroes - especially free Negroes. York liked to dwell on his expedition experiences and was a bit of a comic about it all. After he had been freed he used to enjoy a drink or two while telling funny stories of the time he saw a whale on the Pacific Ocean beach, of fights with the Indians, with wolves and bears, and hunting the buffalo, and how he looked after Captain Clark.

> *York's stories grew up with every glass that went down, till Mr. Biddle might have wondered what his History of the Expedition had to do with that multitudinous host who conquered the land, under the leadership of a black drum-major about ten feet tall.*

The Lewis and Clark Expedition clinched the title not only to the vast Louisiana territory but later to the Oregon lands as well. For York, there were many "firsts." He was probably the first American Black to see the Pacific Ocean from the Pacific shore, and the first Black to see the Great Falls of the Missouri, the Snake River, the Yellowstone Rivers, and other Western wonders. He was also the first Black to be listed as an official part of a United States frontier exploration in the West, to be seen by many important North American Indians, to become a skilled hunter and fisherman beyond the Rocky Mountains, and to perform as a trader, scout, and agent with the American Indians for a an official American governmental agency. There is little doubt that: "York's skill entertaining the Indians accounted for the fact that the Expedition was carried off without a major Indian encounter."

Many writers insist that this is understandable since the Indian had an affinity for the Negro. Kenneth W. Porter, for example, states that: "The Negro's occasional attainment of leadership in the Indian society further denies the naive assumption that the Indian felt any hostility for the Negro on a racial basis, or otherwise than as a representative of an alien and hostile culture." Porter also insists that Colonel James Stevenson's (of the Bureau of American Ethnology) theory of the strong affinity of the Indian for the Negro is well supported by John H. Kinzie, the Reverend Edmund D. Neill and the official journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. William Loren Katz argued that for many black migrants the frontier became "the place for me." He points out that by 1806, when York returned to St. Louis from




Map showing route of Lewis & Clark expedition.

the Expedition and was granted his freedom, governments in the Old Northwest had already begun to pass black laws or codes; then Katz concluded: "Had they been of a mind to, whites might have learned from Indians how to live peacefully with black people." Katz is here placing strong emphasis upon the contention supported by many western historians that there was a strong affinity felt by the American Indian for the American Negro.

American history has on the whole neglected York, the "Ebony Explorer," thus presenting a distorted picture of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. For as Richard Slotkin pointed out the real founding fathers of America were not the "eighteenth century gentlemen" who met in secret Philadelphia enclave, but: "Rather they were those who...tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness - the rogues, adventures, and land boomers; the Indian fighters, traders, missionaries, explorers, and hunters who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness;..."

The proper procedure to rectify this historical error of omission is not the erection of many statues in America, as has been done with Sacajawea, but the inclusion of York's proper role as one of the important explorers in the long story of this unique adventure.

The initial spur to westward expansion was the news the explorers brought back about the rich potential of the West. The Expedition made major contributions to the fields of geography, cartography, ethnography, and natural history. But, in the long run, it did more than this. Frederick L. Paxson wrote in his *When the West Is Gone:* "The American frontier presents a paradox in imperialism. It mutilated an English empire and turned it toward a process of slow disintegration, but it made an American empire upon which the effect of years has been that of intense nationality and closer union."

Van Every described the Lewis and Clark Expedition "a great arch of American sovereignty," from the Mississippi to the Pacific which perhaps explains in part the reason for the "Great Arch" in St. Louis; the village now grown to a sprawling metropolis.

Walt Whitman, in his *Leaves of Grass*, under the title "Starting from Paumanok," proudly proclaimed:

*See vast trackless spaces,*
*As in a dream they change, they swiftly fill,*
*Countless masses debauch upon them,*
*They are now covered with the foremost people, arts, institutions, known.*

What Radisson had begun in 1659-1660, what De La Verendrye had attempted when he found the way barred by the Rockies - was completed by Lewis and Clark in 1805. What they conquered we have inherited. It is the Great Northwest; a rich and resourceful part of America. Over and above the huge acquisition of the Louisiana Territory the adventure produced some American

heroes who belong in the Explorers Hall of Fame - Lewis and Clark, and perhaps it would not be unreasonable to add the name of York because American needs its heroes.

## SUGGESTED READING LIST


John L. Allen, *Passage Through the Garden: Lewis Clark and the Image of the Northwest.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwhether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

Robert B. Betts, *In Search of York, the Slave Who Went to the Pacific with Lewis and Clark.* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1985).

Eldon G. Chuinard, *Only One Man Died; the Medical Aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1979).

Bernard De Voto, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark.* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflen, 1953).

Richard Dillon, *Meriweather Lewis; a Bigoraphy.* (New York: Coward McCann, 1965).

David F. Hawke, *These Tremendous Mountains: The Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.* (New York: Norton, 1980).

David Lavendar, *The Way to the Western Sea: Lewis and Clark Across the Continent.* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988).

Gerald S. Snyder, *In the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark.* (Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1970).

Jerome O. Steffan, *William Clark: Jeffersonian Man on the Frontier.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977).

Getty House today. *Photo courtesy of author's collection.*

# Getty House

*by Joseph F. Ryan*

The beautiful 6,300 square foot English Tudor home at 605 South Irving was built on two lots purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Paulson in 1920. The one-acre parcel stretches from Lorraine to Irving Boulevard along Sixth Street, and comprises the entire north end of the block. In the early 1900's the most fashionable area for Los Angeles' elite was much farther south along West Adams Boulevard. This area had been built up between 1900-1920 with such notable locations as Chester Place, West Adams Heights, and Berkeley Square. Each of these exclusive residential neighborhoods succeeded one another, progressively moving farther west along West Adams Boulevard to the western edge of the city, which at that time was Western Boulevard. In the late 1880's residential communities began to grow up on either side of Wilshire, most notably the Westlake Park area (now MacArthur Park) a "must see" for any tourist. A garden-park of unprecedented Southern California beauty with its exotic plants, fairy tale bridges, and boating lake, all designed to enchant the sensibilities of the late Victorian populace. Tens of thousands of penny postcards were sent all over the world depicting this Southland paradise. It wasn't long before the westward migration trend of Los Angeles' wealthy was noted by real estate developers. In true Los Angeles fashion, developers speculated on the land farther out on Wilshire Boulevard past Western Boulevard and beyond the city limits.

The area was not exactly a prime residential location as oil had been discovered along Wilshire. Between 1900 and 1915 over 350 oil wells had been drilled on Captain Henry Hancock's *Rancho La Brea* by his son George Allan. The area was a forest of homemade oil derricks and there was not a tree in sight. Wilshire had not been paved at this time nor was it the continuous thoroughfare from downtown to the ocean as it is today. The street was interrupted by the lake at Westlake Park. However, the Pacific Electric Railway was extending its streetcar lines along the north and south of the area. A group of speculators, seeing how fast gated neighborhoods like Berkeley Square (lost to the development of the Santa Monica

Freeway) and West Adams Heights sold out, decided to stake out fifty-three acres of barren land next to Hancock's oil fields. In 1911, at great expense, they built four granite gateways to their development, laid out streets and lots for fifty homes, and named this development Fremont Place (ostensibly after the great *Pathfinder* John C. Fremont). The lots sold quickly to speculators but nobody built! It was five years later that three grand mansions sprang up. One of the first inhabitants in was Martin H. Mosier, an oil and natural gas tycoon from Pennsylvania. Although the air was rank with sulphurous odors from the oil wells, Mosier found the sound of the oil pumps and accompanying stench to his liking.

As the 1920s started, the oil was drying up and Hancock began to turn his eye toward development of his land as a residential park. In similar fashion, Windsor Square (bounded by the streets Third to Wilshire, Irving to Plymouth) was laid out by Robert A. Rowan in 1911. A large stand of bamboo had to be removed before the streets could be graded and planted with palms and deciduous trees. Through the vision of millionaire, inventor, and socialist, H. Gaylord Wilshire, Wilshire Boulevard became the 1920's American equivalent of the Champs Elysee. The boulevard was widened, gaps in the thoroughfare were closed, and it was eventually paved.

Into this exciting western expansion of Los Angeles came the successful and far-seeing Leta and Paul Paulson. They invested in an entire acre of property in the fast developing Windsor Square. In 1920 they contracted with the Milwaukee Building Company, one of the most prominent building contractors of the early 1900's to build them a mansion. This builder, noted for its plush large-scale residences, had built many of the grandest homes in the city, and already had homes under construction in the Windsor Square area. Gabriel S. Meyer and Philip W. Holler were employed as the company's resident architects. Fame would come later to Meyer and Holler when they struck out on their own and designed the Chinese and Egyptian Theaters on Hollywood Boulevard and several Art Deco masterpieces. The Paulson's contract for the Paulson home called for a "two-story frame and brick veneer residence... containing eleven rooms and four bathrooms, ...oak and enameled interior finish, oak floors, [and] three tile mantles." This contract also featured a central vacuum system with an estimated total construction cost at the princely 1920 price of $83,000.

Paulson was forty-five at the time and had immigrated to the United States from Sweden in 1885, at the age of eleven. He came to Los Angeles in 1903 and worked at the Portsmouth Hotel, becoming the proprietor of its "Portsmouth Cafe." After years of successful enterprise in the restaurant business, Paulson sought to reward himself and family with the building of their dream house. Choosing the stately English Tudor style, he spared no expense in its construction or decoration. Using the cross timbering typical of this style, he included a brick veneer in a distinctive herring bone pattern. The brick was so beautifully executed that the Simons Brick Company used sketches of the house to advertise their product. The home was surmounted by elegant blue-green slate roof shingles. The crowning glory of the Paulson dream home was the landscaping of the one-acre plot. This garden was masterfully planned and designed by the eminent A.E. Hanson, one of the most noted landscape designers on the West Coast.

In 1928, Leslie and Jeanne Lockhart bought the home and immediately went to work adding additional space and redecorating . Having two toddler children, Jeanne Kay and Leslie Jr., they remodeled the attic space into a child paradise with kid-sized play houses built into the dormers and tiny windows and doorways too small for any adult. At one end of the room they built a raised stage, replete with curtain, for performance of their own imaginary dramas. "Dad" built his own recreation room in the basement - which had to be excavated at great expense. Since prohibition was in full effect at the time, he also decided to include a bar and

wine cellar. He chose American oak paneling for his hideaway and commissioned a handcarved frieze, depicting himself in the many activities he enjoyed, including tennis, golf, fishing, sailing, and hunting. The most telling of these characterizations is right over the entrance to the "bar." Here, carved in oak, is Leslie Lockhart making a champagne toast with a gushing oil derrick in the background. Obviously Leslie had good reason to make the toast!

Jeanne meanwhile was busy redecorating all of the existing living spaces in the home. She called in Netzel & Netzel of the Standard Furniture Company as designers of her new interiors and Commercial Fixture Company to build the required cabinets. When the project was completed she called *Architecture Digest*. They were delighted with Mrs. Lockhart's discriminating taste and ran a spread of the home including photographs of the living room, entry, dining room and library. The Lockhart household included Jeanne's infirm mother Mrs. Kay Borlini and two nurses, Vinetti Primm and Marie Johansen. Although the Lockhart's owned the property for thirty years, they lived there for only a short time, renting the house possibly as early as 1930. It is during this time that local legend has it that John Barrymore and Dolores Costello lived in the house.

John Barrymore first met Dolores Costello when she was living with her family in a small house on Ivar Street in Hollywood. The Costello family life was in turmoil over the sudden success of their two daughters. This success was particularly exacerbated by John Barrymore's infatuation with their daughter Dolores. Barrymore was forty-three when he met Dolores, who was in her twenties at the time, and he was still legally married to his second wife. Dolores' father, a noted Shakespearean actor in his own right, was adamantly opposed to his daughter seeing Barrymore, while her mother was somewhat enchanted by the prospect of her daughter's romantic involvement with the dashing movie star. The stress culminated with Mr. Costello attempting to throw Barrymore out of his house and Mrs. Costello slapping her husband in a rage. On June 1, 1926, John and Dolores set sail on an extended cruise aboard John's new yacht, *The Mariner*, with Mrs. Costello aboard as chaperon. By September 1927, Dolores' parents were divorced and Dolores had a new home leased for her mother and sister. Barrymore purchased a three and half acre estate on Tower Road from King Vidor. He named this estate *Bella Vista*, and set out to buy the four acres to the north adjoining his property. There he built a house he called "The Marriage House" for his bride-to-be. Dolores Costello and John Barrymore were married November 24, 1928, in Dolores' home. The couple had two children, Dolores Ethel Mae, born April 8, 1930, and John II, born June 4, 1932. Their rocky marriage lasted, in spite of numerous drinking spells and long absences, until the fateful voyage aboard John's latest yacht, the *Infanta*. While on a cruise in early June 1934, John Barrymore, in desperation, drank "Dolores' perfume, some mouthwash, and a pint of spirits of ammonia." He got angry with an accompanying nurse and slugged her, breaking her nose. That evening Dolores, the two children, and the nurse went ashore at Vancouver and took a train to Los Angeles. Dolores returned home, collected her belongings and most of the furniture. She left John's personal possessions at *Bella Vista* and moved with her children to the Paulson house. Gene Fowler, in his book *Good Night Sweet Prince*, states "Dolores and the children took up residence in the Wilshire district of Beverly Hills;" a more accurate geographical statement would indicate "the Wilshire District of Los Angeles." Fowler, a personal friend of Barrymore's wrote the memoir two years after his friend's death and ten years after these events. Several oral histories and interviews with those who played with John Barrymore Jr. (and recollections of neighbors who lived on the street at that time) constitute evidence that 605 South Irving is the home that Dolores and her children fled to when she left her abusive husband.

A touching story is told by Dolores Ryan Brown who owned the home at 554 South

Irving and had infants of similar age to the Costello children, Dolores Ethel Mae "Dede" and John Barrymore Jr. who was then two years old. Within a few days of Dolores Costello's move to 605 South Irving, she introduced herself to Mrs. Brown. Costello's excitement and pride were evident in her statement, "This is the first thing that I have ever done by myself! I found this house and rented it myself!" Local legend over the years has blurred the facts concerning John Barrymore and Dolores residence at the Irving Boulevard address, confusing the fact that it was Dolores without John who lived here after their separation. Dolores and her children lived there for approximately four years. During this time, contemporaries of John Barrymore Jr. remember being his playmate in the third-floor romper room. Dolores enjoyed the neighborhood with her children enrolled in the local schools, and Dede was attending Marlborough School and could walk to school. Deciding to stop paying rent, in November 1936, Dolores bought the home on the northwest corner of Fifth and Windsor, only a few blocks away. Dolores remarried in 1939 to Dr. John Vruwink. During this time her film career was grinding to a halt. Ten years later, she divorced Vruwink and went to live in Fallbrook, California, where she died in 1979.

The South Irving house had a series of renters until 1958 when an associate of Getty Oil Company, E.D. Buckley, bought the property. He held title to the house for exactly one year to the day before the title was transferred to Tidewater Realty, the real estate arm of Getty Oil. J. Paul Getty, "The Richest Man in the World," had lived in Los Angeles since the age of twelve. His parents, George and Sarah, had moved to Los Angeles in 1904 and resided at their home on the corner of Kingsley and Wilshire Boulevard. J. Paul attended Harvard Military School graduating in 1908. He went on to U.S.C. and Oxford. In his twenties he had become a millionaire, making his own shrewd investments in Oklahoma oil.

The Getty Oil company had purchased a huge mansion that occupied the lot facing Wilshire Boulevard between Irving and Lorraine. The mansion had been built by Marion Fletcher but never fully completed. Fletcher was residing in Mexico and his plans to move into the grand home never transpired. The home was immortalized in the movie "Sunset Boulevard." Getty Oil purchased this property and began to clandestinely purchase lots on the block behind the old mansion. Beginning in the 1930's through the 1940's, the oil company quietly bought home after home. The company's intention was to build the corporate headquarters of Getty Oil on the site, however, a commercial building would require a variance to the single-family residential zoning that had existed in this area since the Rowan Company laid out the tract in 1911. The oil company was well aware that the Windsor Square Homeowners Association would not be in favor of the company's plans to demolish the entire block and raise a more than twenty-story building and parking lot. The area had one of the most detailed Codes, Covenants and Restrictions (CC and R's) in the city. When Getty's plan became known to the area's home owners, they were aghast. How could this happen without their knowledge? Fortunately the zoning laws require the notification of property owners within 500 feet of a proposed development. The original appeal for a zoning variance was denied. Once they became the majority property owners Getty Oil approached the Board of Zoning Appeals again to obtain a zoning variance to build the company's headquarters at 4201 Wilshire Boulevard. The Windsor Square Homeowners Association raised almost $25,000 to fight the variance, hiring O'Melveny and Myers law firm to represent them at the hearing, but the oil company won obtaining the variance. The neighborhood succeeded in trimming the height of the building and the size of the proposed parking area. Tidewater Realty (Getty Oil) retained ownership to many of the properties on the block for the next fifteen years. They allowed the homes to deteriorate, and the once beautiful lawns and

carefully crafted landscaping was left to become overgrown and shabby.

Lee and Ann Strasberg - the artistic directors of the Actors Studio were the Tidewater Realty's tenants in 1975, when the firm offered the home to them for purchase which the Strasbergs refused. On November 14, 1975, Stuart W. Evey, vice-president of Getty Oil, wrote to the City Council:

> *Getty Oil Company offers to donate to the City of Los Angeles the residence located at 605 South Irving Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, for use as an official home for the Mayor of Los Angeles and to be officially referred to as the "George F. Getty II House." In donating this property, Getty Oil Company also agrees to expend an amount not to exceed $100,000 for the purpose of restoring and renovating the residence in order for it to be in appropriate condition for its intended use.*

George F. Getty II had unexpectedly died two years previously at the age of 48. George was the eldest son of J. Paul and Chief Executive Officer of Getty Oil. Eventually the company reconsidered the naming of the home. They dropped the requirement to name it in honor of their deceased CEO, and ever since it has been known as "Getty House." The oil company also increased the restoration amount to $160,000. Other donors stepped forward with donations to furnish and decorate the home and in total over $200,000 was collected. George F. Nishioka, landscape contractor, donated over $50,000 in his services to renovate the grounds, including repair of the decorative pond and the sprinkler system. The grounds had been badly neglected as a City Hall report noted that "much of the shrubbery is overgrown and the lawn needs replanting." Cannell and Chafin was the firm used for the interior renovations, with Jerry Alsobrook, A.S.I.D., designated the official designer. Albert C. Martin, of the noted Los Angeles family of architects, was a member of the Committee to Secure a Mayor's Residence. This committee had been in existence for eleven years, and it was largely through their efforts and its Chairman, Emmett McGaughey, that the property came to be owned by the city. On July 13, 1977, the home was officially dedicated as "Getty House, official residence of the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles." Mayor Tom Bradley and his wife Ethel moved into the home as soon as the renovations were completed. Since that time, the home has been host to numerous dignitaries. In its first official year, a formal dinner was held on October 25, 1977, for the Prince of Wales, His Royal Highness Prince Charles. Gregory Peck was one of the attending celebrities, in addition to the Council members. The following years brought President Kaunda of Zambia, 1978; His Excellency Fang Yi, Republic of China, 1979; the mayor of West Berlin, 1980; Archbishop of Canterbury, and the list goes on.

Following the retirement of Mayor Bradley, he moved from the Getty House. The new Mayor Richard Riordan chose to remain at his existing residence in Brentwood and to support the restoration of the home for use by visiting dignitaries. In 1994, the *Getty House Restoration Foundation* was formed to carry out this mission; the home reopened in October, 1995.

# An Enquiry into the Origins of "GAMBUSINO"

*by Raymund F. Wood*

The origin of the word gambusino (or gambucino), meaning a Sonoran gold miner or prospector who came to California early in the gold Rush days, seems to be lost in mystery. Of four current dictionaries of the West that I consulted, only two had any mention of the word. Even the doyen of Western terminology, Ramon Adams, omits it in his most recent *Cowboy Dictionary* (1993). Nor does Robert Hendrickson mention it in his *Happy Trails: A Dictionary of Western Expressions* (1994). Peter Watts, *Dictionary of the Old West* (1977) does include it, defining it as "A gold prospector; one who hunts for gold in a small way; possibly a gold thief." Winfred Blevens, *Dictionary of the American West* (1993) repeats the information in slightly different words. Both of them say or imply that the word, taken from Spanish, is "of unknown origin."

If none of these scholarly researchers can find any explanation or origin for so common a word in gold Rush days, is there any use in trying to suggest an origin? Perhaps; even though the scholarly *Breve Diccionario Etimológico de la Lengua Castellana* does not include it.

It is tempting to suggest that the origin might be found in the Spanish-American common name for the surface-feeding minnows (*Fundulus natatus*), introduced into North America's rivers and lagoons as a means of controlling mosquitoes, and commonly called gambusinos, from which taxonomists have devised a generic name *Gambusia*, for these larva-eating minnows in America.

No doubt this is all scientifically correct, but it begs the original question, what is the real origin of the word? And it asks another, what is the connection, if any, with the Sonoran miners?

To answer the second first, I suggest that the connection between the name for the miners and the name for minnows is accidental and without significance. In English we have many such incidental similarities. Wattle is not connected with Watt (named for James Watt); nor does a warlock have anything to do with a warlord; and the maritime word spar has nothing to do with sparring as used in the sport of boxing. (And boxing itself, a term from Middle English, has little to do with the rectangular container that we use for storage or shipping, which derives from the Greek word pyxos, which still survives in the ecclesiastical word pyx. Etymology is fascinating!

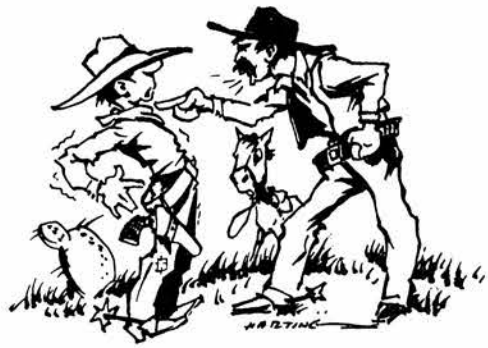
So we come back to the first question - where did gambusino originate? I suggest that the origin might be found in the classical Spanish word gambaj or gambax (the last consonant sounded as a rough H). meaning a warm, perhaps quilted, woolen jacket. From this word came another word, gambesina (fem.) or gambéson (masc.), meaning a warm, sleeveless garment, originally designed to be worn under a suit of armor, but in modern times would be worn under an outer jacket, similar to what we would call a sleeveless pull-over. Such a garment would be ideal for gold panning, as it would keep the upper body warm while allowing free movement of the hands and arms into flowing streams without wetting the clothing.

It is no great verbal shift from gambesina to gambusino. I suggest that when the townsfolk of Alamos or Hermosillo saw these rough mining characters, who occasionally came into town for a drink or two, clad in their pull-overs, with their outerjackets slung over the pommel of their saddles, they were glad to see them and glad to be able to make a few pesos selling them aguardiente to relieve their thirst. So the word would go around the *zocalo:* "The gambusinos are coming!" Recalling the contemporary (1843-1848) Red Shirts of Garibaldi's army, and the later Black Shirts of Mussolini,

and the Brown Shirts of the Nazis, one could point out that if the Sonorans did so invent or popularize the term gambusino for their miners, it would not be the only time in history that a group of men have been identified by their clothing.

Later, when the California mines beckoned these Sonorans to a wealthier land, they still wore the same kind of clothing; and as their efficiency in locating good placers and their willingness to work for the *gringos* made them desirable associates, the slang name that the Sonorans had given them became their proud title; and they have passed into the history of the California gold Rush as a significant contribution of manpower. Most of them returned to their homes and families in Mexico, and have left no lasting impression on our State, other than a name of mysterious origin.

This is my solution. Does anyone have a better one?



# The Foreman Sez . . .

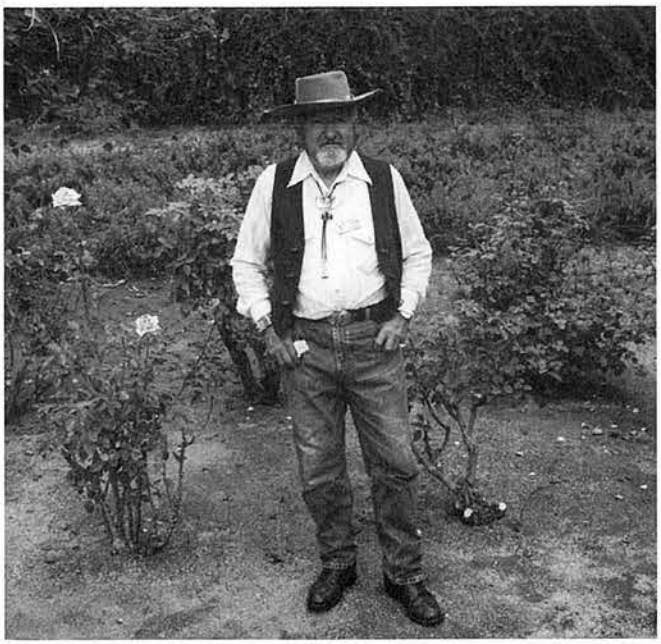
## NEW AWARD

The Trail Bosses announced a new award to be granted by the Corral. Starting this year, the Corral will award three cash prizes-first place $500; second place $300; and third place $150 - for articles of approximatley 2,500 words on Western History written by students enrolled in any college or university located in Southern California. In addition, the first place article will be published in the *Branding Iron* and other winners will be considered for publication.

The articles may be on any phase of history of the American west and cover any time period. All articles will be judged on the basis of readability, accuracy, and contribution to history. The articles must be submitted to the Chair of the Awards Committee by June 30, 1996. The awardees will be notified by the end of October, and the awards will be made at the December meeting.

The Trail Bosses expressed the belief that the award will encourage younger historians to take an interest in western history insuring that the field will remain viable and continue to grow. The present controversies in the field indicate a lively interest in phases of western history, and the Corral hopes to encourage more study to bring greater understanding of the past and the area.

The Awards Committee will consist of Robert Blew, Chair, Abraham Hoffman, Gloria Lothrop and John W. Robinson.



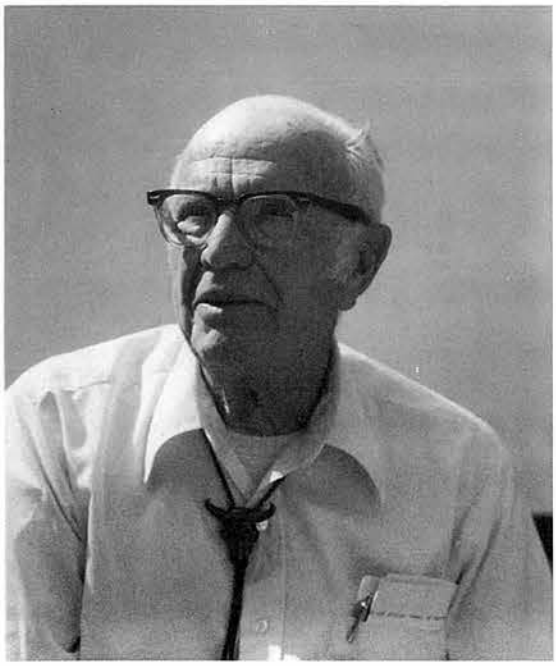
# Victor R. Plukas

## 1918-1996

Victor R. Plukas, who died January 24, 1996, was born in Lithuania from which he migrated after World War II to escape the occupation of his native land by the Soviet Union. Before migrating, he earned a Bachelor of Economics degree from the Swiss School of Economics and Business Administration in St. Gall. He continued his studies at the University of Toronto and UCLA from which he earned a Certificate of Professional Designation in Systems Analysis.

The freshness of California history caught his imagination, and he became active in several local history organizations. He was a board member of the Conference of California Historical Societies, a research associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, and for four years, he served on the Historical Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica where he resided. He also served as a member of the board of directors and as president of the Historical Society of Southern California; he was proud to have been the first naturalized citizen from Eastern Europe to be so honored.

He joined the Security Pacific National Bank and was appointed Bank Historian and administrator of Security's extensive collection of photographs of early Los Angeles and California. Two of the exhibits he created for Security - a California gold mining display located at the Lola Montez home in Grass Valley and a Civil War exhibit in the County Museum of Natural History - are on permanent display. His love of history and stewardship of the Security Pacific collection helped preserve an important visual record of Southern California history.



# Elwood W. "Dutch" Holland

## 1907-1995

Elwood W. "Dutch" Holland was a native Los Angelino born on Gage Avenue just west of Figueroa. He attended local schools, graduating from Manual Arts and receiving a BS in Civil Engineering from USC. While at USC, he studied California history under Dr. Owen Coy.

His first engineering job found him assigned to the Metropolitan Water District Office in Beaumont. As part of his job, he worked on the early mapping along the aqueduct, and, later he was chief inspector of construction on the San Jacinto Tunnel and other channels.

"Dutch" was called to active duty with the Corps of Engineers in 1939. One of his assignments was surveying the Colorado Desert. He later went to Alaska and led a Topographic Battalion in New Guinea in 1944. He was the Chief of Maps and Charts, Armed Forces Far East in Manila in 1945-46. He served in Korea as the the Executive Officer of the 409th Engineer Brigade in 1951-52.

After World War II, "Dutch" was employed by the City of Glendale as design engineer, storm drains. When he returned from Korea, he returned to the City of Glendale, holding several positions including City Engineer which he held for fourteen years until his retirement in 1971.

"Dutch" was very active in several organizations. He was Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral in 1978 and served as the President of the Historical Society of Southern California for three years.

We will miss him for his charm, warmth, and dedication to history and books.

# Jackson Norwood

## 1913-1995

On October 21, 1995, the Westerners lost one of our most colorful members. Jackson Norwood died peacefully at home after a prolonged illness.

Jack had attended Westerner meetings infrequently in recent years so may not be well known to some members. Those around him, however, were always aware of his wry smile and searing wisecracks.

Jack retired in 1992 after 51 years of practicing internal medicine in Pasadena. The esteem of his colleagues was manifest by their election of Jack to be Chief of Staff of the Huntington Memorial Hospital Medical Staff in 1976. Other evidence of the confidence of his peers was the fact that he was physician to many of his colleagues, such as Westerners Bob Stragnell and the undersigned.

Jack was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1913. His family moved to Pasadena in 1923. After graduating from Pasadena Junior College he obtained degrees in liberal arts and medicine from Stanford University. He also married the Queen of the campus, Lenore Albertsen. They later had three sons and a daughter.

Jack began the practice of internal medicine in Pasadena in 1941, the same year I began the practice of Urology there. He was a brash young man - and this is not used in a pejorative sense. He was smart and had the courage of his convictions. He was often the only physician who had the temerity to question and dispute with Alvin G. Foord, the dictatorial director of laboratories at the Huntington Hospital, during clinicopathological conferences. He always sat in the front row to contend with the professor.

Jack was also an ardent Clamper. he had served as Grand Noble Humbug (*The Pasadena Star News*, in their obituary, referred to this position as "president"). Tom Bent, our sheriff, was one of those who memorialized Jack at the service held on the lawn of the Huntington Memorial Hospital. He told the crowd of at least 150, mostly grey-haired, former patients and colleagues, of Jack's love of the outdoors and devotion to E Clampus Vitus, among other things. He received a warm chuckle from the crowd, on this otherwise solemn occasion, when he told them of Jack's enjoyment of the clampouts, when the brethren sat around the campfire singing songs, toasting marshmallows and drinking hot chocolate.

Those of us who knew Jack well, when we think of him, will always do so with a smile and remember him as someone we enjoyed being around.

Earl Nation

*(Monthly Roundup, continued from page 2)*
member, and after a series of posts was stationed in Arizona a mere six years after Geronimo surrendered. It was in this frontier situation in which Fiorello grew knowing soldiers, Indians, pioneers, miners and the other people drawn to the developing region. Here he attended school not only post schools but also civilian school at Prescott which at that time was a community of 7,000 with three breweries and twenty saloons. The life in the community provided more than an academic education for the young boy.

Here the youngster learned about discrimination, corruption and many things that he opposed in later life. Although, his father only allowed English to be spoken in the home and was called "Professor" by many to whom he brought music and a taste of culture on the base and in Prescott, discrimination and the caste system were always present. The military hierarchy of officers and their ladies and enlisted men and their wives left an impression on the lad that lasted throughout his life.

One of the greatest influences on his life was the corrupt Arizona politics which he witnessed. It influenced him to the end of his life making him an opponent of corrupt political machines and an advocate of honest government.

In addition to political corruption, he became aware of the ruthless exploitation of workers which made him an advocate of workers' rights which culminated in the La Guardia Anti-Injunction Law while he was in Congress.

All in all, reaction to Arizona politics made him a Republican, but one who supported Franklin Roosevelt. Throughout his life, La Guardia remembered his experiences as a military dependent on the Arizona frontier and credited it with influencing his ideas and positions.

*Photography by Frank Q. Newton*

September meeting speaker Michael Dawson

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Michael Dawson, who holds a BA in photography and who developed the photographical department in Dawson's Book Shop, examined the first fifteen years of Will Connell's life as a professional photographer in Los Angeles. This career deeply involved him in the circle of Los Angeles intellects which included bookseller Jake Zeitlin; architects Lloyd Wright and Ken Weber; designer and promoter Merle Armitage; painter Staton MacDonanld Wright; and authors Lewis Adamic and Carey McWilliams.

The slides accompanying the lecture fully documented the development of a photographer and also provided a visual record of a little known period of Los Angeles intellectual life - a small group of individuals who centered around the Zeitlin Book Store.

Connell dropped out of school to join the Signal Corps in 1918, but before he learned to fly, the war ended. While he did not win his wings, he became interested in photography and worked in a photo supply store until he decided to become a professional photographer. Unfortunately, most of his earlier works were lost, but he was known to be selling photographs in 1926-27. As he said, "I am a photographer, because photography lets me talk to people. Professional photographer? Sure, I like to eat."

His photographic style changed over the

years gaining maturity and depth. His works illustrated the cultural life of Los Angeles during the late 1920s and 1930s. Beginning with a series of portraits, which he called "small photographs," he recorded many of the intellectual leaders of Los Angeles and their many moods.

In addition to shots of many individuals, including some of the Santa Fe Circle, he left a portrait of Los Angeles and its architecture which contributed greatly to its intellectual meaning. One of his works was a photo study of Hollywood during the 1930s, entitled *In Pictures: A Hollywood Satire.*

As the accompanying slides showed, words alone do not do justice to Connell, but his photographs add a depth of understanding.

Honored Guests Dick Yale, Walt Wheelock, and Earl Nation with Deputy Sheriff Tom Bent.

## RENDEZVOUS 1995

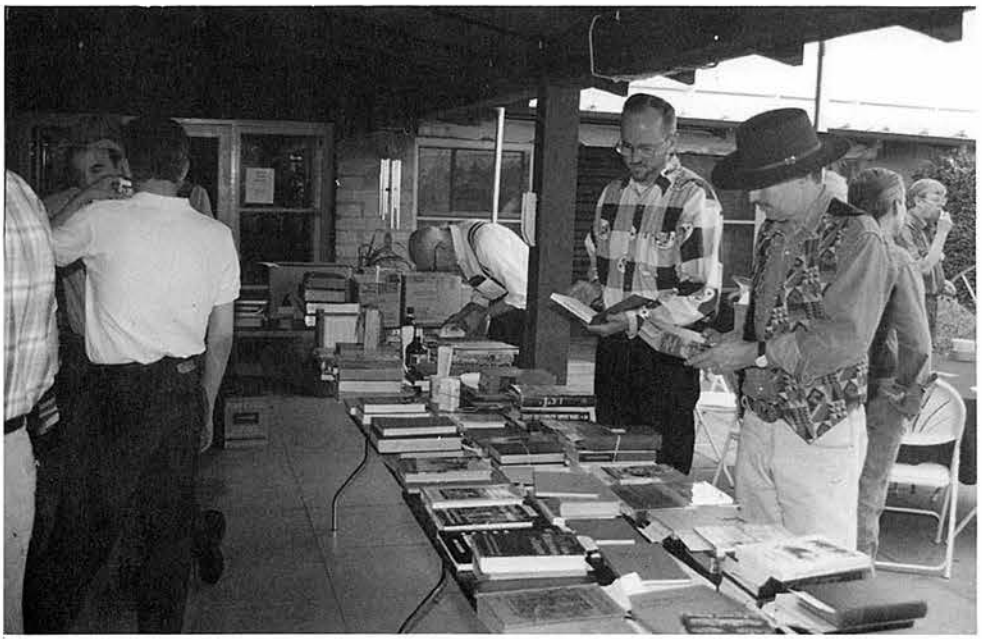
On the beautiful Saturday, October 14, 1995, the members of the Corral and guests met once again at the annual Rendezvous to enjoy companionship, good talk, good feelings, good food, an opportunity to bid on rare items in the auction, to risk the raffle - now that all the plastic cigar store Indians are gone, and above all to honor long time members Earl Nation, Walt Wheelock, and Richard Yale.

This year, Deputy Sheriff Tom Bent added a new feature to the Rendezvous to help speed along the afternoon - a barbershop quartet, the Quadraphonics. The group provided background music and encouraged nostalgia with the rendition of many old favorites. Other activities included the silent auction, the regular auction, enjoying conversation and refreshments with friends and new acquaintances, and, of course, purchasing raffle tickets and waiting with baited breath to see who had won, especially the Andy Dagosta painting. Art Clark was the lucky winner of the painting, and Christine Bourdet will have the pleasure of enjoying the ten dinners with the Corral.

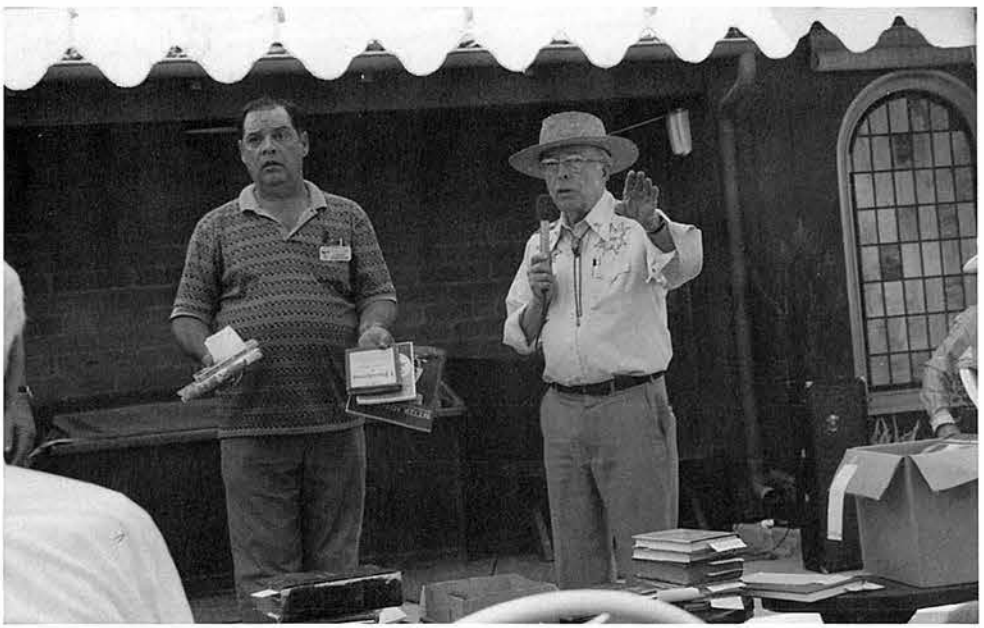
Hugh Tolford, ably assisted by Larry Johnson and his wranglers, auctioned off this year's collections of books and memorabilia to the eager audience. During the day members signed up to purchase outstanding bargains at the silent auction. Once again, the silent auction offered a wide variety of items from what is this to valuable artifacts.

The high light of the program was when Deputy Sheriff Tom Bent presented the honored guests Earl Nation, Walt Wheelock and Richard Yale with the "Old Joe" plaques recognizing their many years of service to the Corral and contributions to western history. One of the honorees, Walt Wheelock and CM Pat Adler-Ingram presented the members with a keepsake.

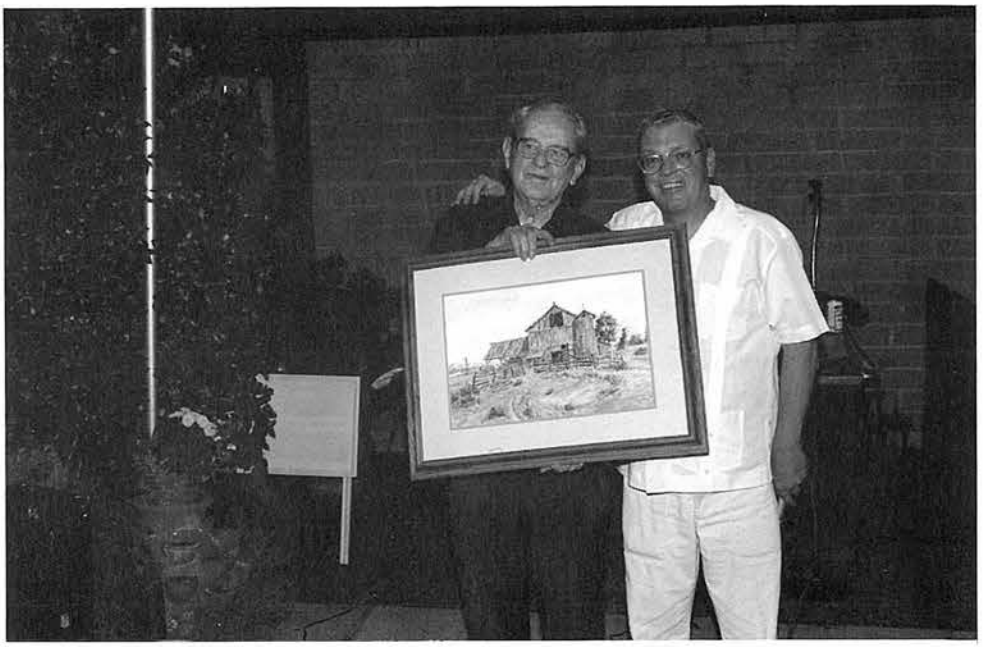
Deputy Sheriff Tom Bent expresses his thanks to the wranglers headed by Mike Gallucci who helped organize, set up, assist in the day's activities and carried out other duties to insure a successful Rendezvous. And members of the Corral, in true western style, are beginning to plan and anticipate next year's.



Corral members peruse the offerings of the silent auction.



Head auctioneer, Hugh Tolford, and Wrangler Larry Johnson, offering a mixed lot.



Art Clark, winner of the Dagosta painting, with Deputy Sheriff Tom Bent.

Bob Kern politely offering guest Christine Bourdet a puff on his stoogie

# Corral Chips

The Book Club of California recently honored **Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.** with the Oscar Lewis Award for his contributions to Western History.

Members **Abe Hoffman, Glenn Thornhill** and **Steve Born** attended a historical plaque dedication by the Lost Dutchman Chapter of the E Clampus Vitus in Tombstone. Possibly, they were not run out of town because of Hofffman's recent contribution to the *Tombstone Epitaph* of an article about Fiorello La Guardia.

Speaking of Clampers, **Phil Nadler** has been elevated to the post of Noble Grand Humbug of Platrix Chapter No. 2.

Belated notice has been received that **Iron Eyes Cody** celebrated his 91st birthday at the Sportsman's Lodge in Studio City last spring.

**Abe Hoffman** recently was recognized for a career as an outstanding teacher when he received the O'Flaherty Award from the Historical Society of Southern California.

**Peter Mauk** has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Southern California.

**CM Gloria Lothrop** presented a session on the demographic changes in Los Angeles at the recent Los Angeles history conference, "Old Venues, New Vistas" held at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage.

**CM Joe Nardone** delivered a talk on the Pony Express to the Tuleburgh (Stockton) Chapter of E Clampus Vitus.

**Thomas Andrews, Steve Born, Glen Dawson, Michael Gallucci, Regis Graden, James Gulbranson, Rinard Hart, Bill Hockinson, Patricia Ingram, Josef Lesser, Ruth Malora, Peter Mauk, Earl Nation, Norman Neuerberg, Doyce Nunis, Michial Nunn, John Osborne, Martin Ridge, Jerry Selmer, Hugh Tolford, Msgr. Francis Weber, William White, Dick Yale and Jirayr Zorthian** were in the crowd that met to honor Ward Ritchie on his 90th birthday shortly before his death.

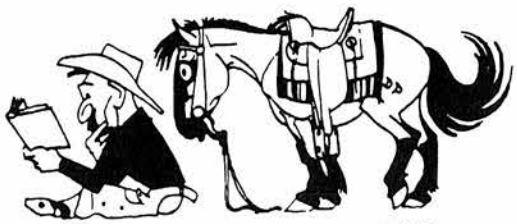
**Walt Wheelock** has re-retired. In 1965, after serving twenty-seven years on the Glendale Police Force, he retired and established La Siesta Press to meet a need for adequate training guides for a Search and Rescue Group that Walt helped form. Its first publication was *Ropes, Knots and Slings for Climbers* which after 200,000 copies is still in print. For several reasons he has now phased out La Siesta Press and retired from active publishing. Over the years, many Corral members have written for La Siesta Press, but only John W. Robinson, Walt himself, and Pat Ingram are still active in Corral.

**Michael Gallucci, Dudley "Bud" Runnels** and **Gary D. Turner** have been advanced from Associate to Active status. **Josef K. Lesser, Eric Nelson, Richard H. Thomas** and **Warren M. Thomas** have been raised to Associate.

A **CHS Fellowship** was awarded to **CM Gloria R. Lothrop**, for her distinguished contributions as a leading scholar on the history of women in California.

## ERRATA

Due to a typographical error in the Fort Tejon article (Branding Iron 200, page 6), Hadji Ali was incorrectly identified as "Greek George." The sentence should read: The two men who tended the army camels on Bishop's Ranch were Jadji Ali, known to the Americans as "Hi Jolly," and Georgias Caralambo, known as "Greek George."



# DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

*I had been a bookseller's clerk for a while, but the customers bothered me so much I could not read with any comfort, and so the proprietor gave me a furlough and forgot to put a limit to it.*

Mark Twain

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER by Charles F. Steffes. Old World, 1992. 305 pp. Map, Illustrations. Order from Old World Publishers, P.O. Box 81688, Bakersfield, CA 93380.

I recommend this biography to anyone interested in railroading in the steam-diesel transition period. This book brought back fond memories when I was a student fireman on the Los Angeles division of the Southern Pacific in the late 1940's. Also, I rode in the caboose of one of the rail laying trains from Summit to Alray when they were building the Palmdale cutoff. I wonder if Steffes was the engineer on that train?

In this book you will be in the cab of a working steam locomotive in all kinds of conditions and situations that have inherent elements of fast action, noise, heat, weather, and excitement, plus the opportunity to realize how a well skilled team works together - the engineer and fireman. Taken as a group, this country's railroad operating crews are the finest bunch of hardworking people who ever earned wages!

As engineer Steffes states several times in his book, the Southern Pacific Railroad has had very poor management for almost forty years, which has left it in a deplorable condition financially and physically. A very good example of how not to run a railroad!

An excellent statement made by Steffes on page 241 is in regard to the status of women. I have never read or heard a better dissertation on this problem, which is tearing this country apart, thanks primarily to the egocentric news media.

Among the few issues of concern one could have with this biography, I will offer two. First the drawings used in this book are very poor and good photographs (and there are many) should have been used in place of the drawings. Secondly, whoever did the proofreading did a very poor job! There were technical errors, such as, Engine 4297, when the highest number was 4294, which, by the way, is on display at the California Railroad Museum in Sacramento. There were also far too many typographical errors to even discuss. Proofreading is the biggest weakness of this book.

Well, let's get up in the cab with Engineer Steffes with his pipe and roar up the grade as he spins tales about railroading on the Southern Pacific. I sincerely hope you enjoy the ride as much I did.

Bob Kern

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: ***From Lindbergh's Landing Strip to World Air Center***, by Tom Moran. CCA Publications in cooperation with the Los Angeles International Airport, 1993. 176 pp. Illustrations, Selected Bibliography, Index of Sponsors. Cloth, $29.95. Order from CCA Publications, 7355 Topanga Canyon Blvd., #202, Canoga Park, CA 91303

If you can get past the overt commercialism (a third of the book is devoted to glowing descriptions of its sponsors in a "Partners in Excellence" section) and the glitzy layout (four different type fonts on the first two pages), there are some interesting nuggets of information to dig out of this book. Tom Moran traces the beginnings of commercial aviation in Los Angeles from the

1920s to the present, highlighting such events as air meets, the visit of the *Graf Zeppelin*, the constant need to expand facilities, and the arrival of the jet age.

Lindbergh's brief appearance after his famous solo flight across the Atlantic hardly merits his name in the subtitle. Of far more interest are the efforts to develop a Los Angeles airport facility to provide for the growing metropolitan region. Old-timers will recall, and younger readers will learn, that Inglewood was by no means the only site for the proposed airport, and that competing airports in Glendale, Burbank, and other areas hoped to become the main location for commercial aviation. Los Angeles emerged the winner, and Mines Field evolved into the Los Angeles Municipal Airport and, ultimately, LAX.

Moran for the most part tells a straightforward story, more descriptive than analytical or critical. Occasionally he stumbles: he states the Doolittle raid "Helped change the tide of the war in the Pacific," rather an overstatement, and he claims that Northrop was "famed for his flying wing." Maybe now, but not in 1932. There's no such plane as an A20 Dauntless - it was an SBD. The Army A20 was the same as the Navy's SB2C. Some names are misspelled. None of this really harms the book, and there are plenty of historic photographs (though some are much too small). This book will do for now in providing an outline for the development of LAX, but this important airport still awaits major critical study.

Abraham Hoffman

**TEJANOS AND TEXAS UNDER THE MEXICAN FLAG, 1821-1836** by Andrés Tijerina. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. Illustrations, Maps, Tables, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth $29.50; paper, $14.95. Order from Texas A & M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354. (800) 826-8911.

In this book, a student of the late, lamented (and inimitable) Joe Frantz discusses the Mexican period of Texas history, squeezed

into just fifteen years between Spanish and *Yanqui* hegemony. Spain saw Texas as a frontier, a *despoblado* or unsettled buffer zone between Mexico proper and the Apaches and Comanches, even the far off French of Louisiana. However, without much planning, the province, like Topsy, just grew. By the time of Mexican Independence, it was lightly settled via its missions, presidios and a few great ranchos. For want of enough Hispanic volunteers, Mexico City now even welcomed Anglo-Saxon colonists, the followers of Stephen Austin, in order to hold, to civilize the old *frontera.*

The period of transition and cultural interchange was important to Texas and national history. It laid the base for the West's ranching tradition (along with California's contribution), Dave Dary's "Cowboy Culture," which has become stereotypical of the entire West and even, to some extent, the whole United States. *Tejanos,* that is, Texans of Mexican descent, taught ex-Tennessee hunters in buckskins and coonskin caps and Missouri Pewk sodbusters in homespuns how to herd cattle. The *Tejanos* speeded up a process of adaptation that would have taken these newcomer-cattlemen decades longer had the *vaqueros* not been there. Once the Civil War was out of the way, these "students" of the *Tejanos* revolutionized ranching with their rangeland grazing and long trail-

drives of stock to Kansas railheads.

Tijerina fills us in on all aspects of provincial life, not just land grants, livestock handling, water rights, etc. He covers the racial makeup and demographics of the population, politics and government, and the mounted militia that anticipated the Texas Rangers.

The heart of the *Tejano* community was Béxar, or San Antonio, and La Bahía (Goliad), but even Nacogdoches, in piney woods East Texas, played a role. (El Paso, remote and little-changed by pre-Mexican War American emigrants, does not figure in this story).

This is a solid piece of historical research and writing. It is readable enough, but more scholarly than lively. Tijerina reminds us that we must not forget to add a "Boltonian" (for Herbert E. Bolton), or Borderlands, amendment to the so-called Frontier Thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, even after it was modified by Walter Prescott Webb's Plains Thesis.

Richard H. Dillon

ADVENTURES ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER: ***Major General John Gibbon***, edited by Alan and Maureen Gaff. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 256 pp. Illustrations, index. Cloth, $24.95. Order from Indiana University Press, 601 Morton Street, Bloomington, IN 47404. (812) 855-8054.

The western travels of General John Gibbon touch only a small part of his brilliant military career, from his graduation at West Point in 1847 to his last position as commander of the Division of the Pacific in 1891.

Gibbon's Civil War record was one of great courage and bravery. His Civil War experience was published as "Personal Recollections of the Civil War" in 1928, long after his death.

The fine writing of his travels in the west leave you with the thoughts of a narrative written by Washington Irving, describing the beauty of the country and the rugged hardships of travel as described by Ruxton. His military writing style compares with Lt. A.W. Whipple's travels. The chapter on the "Wonders of Yellowstone" first appeared in the *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* in 1873 and "Rambles in the Rocky Mountains" appeared in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* in 1876. Both were well received by the public at that time. Commanding the 36th Infantry and companies of the Second Calvary, the Indian campaigns proved great hardships on his men, the long treks are written clearly and with compassion.

One notable experience was coming onto the site after the battle of the Little Big Horn and burying the dead, also caring for the wounded men of Reno's Command and getting them to the steamer *Far West.*

Gibbon's endless pursuit of the Nez Perces and his battle with them at the Big Hole in Montana, relates the great toll taken on his troops by the good marksmanship of the Nez Perces. He wrote an article "Enemies Become Friends" sometime in the 1890's expressing admiration and bringing notice to the suffering of the Nez Perces. General

Gibbon and Chief Joseph became friends in their later years.

John Gibbon's career may have advanced faster in rank if he had the political friends and allies that Custer did. However, with perseverance and dedication to duty, he overcame many obstacles in his later military years and into retirement. Gibbon wrote and brought many changes in military tactics, equipment and weapons.

The editors did a fine job of bringing us such great insight into the life of General John Gibbon. They have been researching American history of twenty years and this book is a fine reflection of their work.

Richard F. Olson

**INDIAN POPULATION DECLINE:** ***The Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687-1840,*** by Robert H. Jackson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. 229 pp. Maps, Graphs, Tables, Appendices, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $29.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591.

Jackson's book is a massive study of statistical data covering the mission period in three regions: Sonora, Baja California and Alta California. This book is not for the casual reader. It will have appeal only to the specialist. While some of the general history of mission building, purposes and administration is well presented and interesting, most of the material is awash in statistical tables, charts, graphs, numerical comparison, etc. This is not in any way to denigrate the work of the author. He has done a superlative job in compiling this material.

Jackson's conclusions break no new ground. The mission Indian population decline can generally be attributed to disease brought on by European contact, either directly at the missions or through travelling varieties carried along trade routes. He also believes that the socio-psychological atmosphere created by the missionaries at each mission established conditions for relative infertility. Such practices as the imposition of feelings, of guilt, unworthiness and a general destruction of traditional Indian culture and teaching fed the general decline. The imposition of often severe punishments. by the missionaries and the frequent separation of males and females into conditions of servitude added to the psychological bondage felt by the native people and thus diminished their capacity and desire to reproduce.

Ultimately, with the change from Spanish to Mexican rule, the mission system fell into decline. By then, so many of the Indians had become dependent upon the system they had endured that they knew no other way of life. When that too was taken from them, they had no place to go but to oblivion. Those left survived the system as best as they could, but in ever decreasing numbers.

Jerry Selmer