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The Four Husky Fellows: Andy Dagosta, Dick Yale, Tony Kroll, Ray Billington. Courtesy of Author.

## Successful Search for Old Joe's Birthplace

by Frank Q. Newton

December 1997 was the Los Angeles Corral's 50th Anniversary. It is not necessary here to extol our record of publishing which stands high on the best of accomplishments, but when reflecting over some of the lesser things, an often overlooked but omnipresent symbol is *Old Joe*, resident Buffalo (Bison if you prefer). Quite a shaggy creature by whatever name. Joe has been quite content to stand silently up in front, meeting after

meeting in apparent amusement, taking in the scene before him. Who else, one might ask, can claim near perfect attendance with the tolerance that comes with age?

Thankfully, his "thinking" end is almost intact from outward appearance. But, alas, he cannot frolic, nor grunt, nor paw the dust. All this is but a memory. A fellow his age and stature must try to put forth a happy

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Address for Exchanges & Material Submitted for Publication:

**The Publications Editor, Robert Blew**  
**12436 Landale Street, Studio City, CA 91604**  
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# THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

## JULY MEETING

Raymund F. Wood, long time member of the Corral, entertained the group with tales of Mariposa: Mother of Counties. Ray is a former librarian and professor of library science at UCLA where he also earned a doctorate in history.

After writing the State Constitution in five and a half weeks, the Constitutional Convention appointed a committee to establish the boundaries of 18 counties. They took much longer and ended up with 27 counties,



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

July meeting speaker Raymund Wood

the largest of which was Mariposa, which occupied about one fifth of the state. North to south, it extended from north of Mammoth

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face at all costs.

To chronicle our 50th, it was my initial intent to crank out a short, breezy article, thanking several members for their efforts in once making and twice remaking our *Old Joe*. A short article it was not to be.

At the risk of becoming a pest, I asked around how we got Joe, whence he came, and how he got his name. Thus it became far more than a matter of a picture of four husky members unloading a heavy assembly one Saturday in 1977. Asking questions of all I could buttonhole released a torrent of replies and led to more questions. Will I ever learn? Could I stop the thing short of studying Darwin's *Origin of Species*?

I found that there is no monograph on *Old Joe*, the closest being two early articles in the Chicago Corral's bulletins, then called *Buckskin Bulletin* (that title would later be taken for use by Westerners International). This present article quotes freely from both these 1971 issues and others.

Soon I was awash in *Old Joes* from everywhere: skulls, sculptures, trinkets, plaques, book covers and print images. As was pointed out in one of the Chicago articles, the early L.A. Corral's first five issues of what we now call our *Branding Iron*, was once called *Brand Book*, used a buffalo head logo, but soon John Goodman designed the present Texas longhorn style heading.

Putting all the data together in hopes of finding the source of the *Old Joe* image, we find the road persuasively leads to C.M. "Charlie" Russell's work. Don Russell, Chicago Corral's editor (no apparent relation to C.M.R.) recognized the similarity to the CMR skull but hedged somewhat.

The two Chicago articles cited are the first in their Winter 1970/Spring 1971 issue titled "Old Joe: The Evolution of an Emblem" by Don Russell, much of which was later repeated in the *W.I. Buckskin Bulletin*, so I will only paraphrase it here. The second article was in the Summer 1971 issue. Their rituals of yelling "Hello Joe, you old Buffalo!" and a sing-song "Joe, Joe broke his toe, riding on a buffalo!" reminds one of the antics of E. Clampus Vitus.

Coincidentally, as you will soon learn, the skull at Chicago came from a source similar to ours in Yellowstone circa 1947. Forgive me: You have to go wherever the buffalo roam.

It's sufficient to repeat that our design, presumably the one with a skull having "The" between the inward pointing horns, and "Westerners" in a circle below is a registered trademark filed in Washington, D.C. September 20, 1945, and was later verified as in use since 1944. It was the added words to a ubiquitous skull that precludes any infringement claims. Our *Old Joe* is, thus, in distinguished company.

As noted, Chicago's Don Russell was rather cautious in fully proclaiming CMR as the true source. David Dary, scholar at the University of Oklahoma and Westerners International board member, authored an article in the Winter 1992 *Hoofprints* titled "The Westerners: An Informal Chronicle." He was far more positive; a position I heartily support.

So no stone will remain undisturbed, our Corral's "resident" wordsmith (and phrase-smith), Ray Wood determined that *Old Joe* had not yet reached the specialized world of dictionaries and references such as Adams' *Western Words*, *Rampaging Herd* and others.

How many of the herds totaling an estimated 23,000,000 strong at peak were left when teenager Charlie saw them on all four hooves cannot be said, but the herds were mostly gone. In 1896 at age 32 his image was crystal clear. His reputation and exposure grew with his artworks and letters sporting his now recognized buffalo skull. An interesting article on CMR is found in the Summer 1996 issue of *Montana Magazine* titled "The Curse of the Buffalo Skull," by John Taliaferro.

The origin of the Westerners in 1944 is well illuminated by our member J.E. Reynolds who wrote a chapter in our *Brand Book* No. 7, and as a monograph was reprinted in November 1957 by the press of Homer Britzman. Entitled "History of the Westerners," with illustrations of our founders and others, it includes copious notes and source references. The cover of this publication sports a skull,



CMR Head.

as do many *Brand Books* and a wide range of stationary, pins, etc.

Homer Britzman, an organizer and first sheriff of our Corral, was a notable collector of Russell art; so it did not take much for us to embrace *Old Joe*.

Also recognized is the common denominator between the Chicago and Los Angeles groups in the person of Ray Billington, a most avid booster of Westerners. While teaching at Northwestern University, Ray was "recruited" as a member of the Chicago Corral soon after its beginning and quickly assimilated. Surely he became aware of *Old Joe* and the fun rituals that included "Hello Joe, you old buffalo."

Chicago's loss was to be our gain. Ray came West in the early 1960s, and he followed a distinguished line of sheriffs to become one himself in 1975.

Ray Billington and wife Mabel settled down in a very comfortable San Marino home, formerly owned by the Bullocks of the prestigious Southern California department stores. The location was ideal for the transition from teaching to researching at the Huntington Library where he spent much effort and time interpreting and writing about such theorists as Turner.

Ray, with wife Mabel at times, had the freedom to visit the entire West, attending the Western Writers and the Western History Association events, and it was seldom he missed our Corral meetings.

As the story goes, it was Mabel who was casting about for an idea of what to give Ray, a husband who had about everything. It was at Billings, Montana, while she attended a convention that a buffalo skull was suggested to Mabel. It was through the good work of Bob Smith, ex-sheriff of the Yellowstone Corral, this information was learned. It's best that John Willard, longtime member of Yellowstone and editor of their *Hoofprints*, tells it in his own words.

Westerner Robert T. Smith has called to my attention that the Los Angeles Corral, in deference to Old Joe at each meeting felt they would appreciate some historical background to the symbol of the West. In mutual discussion of Old Joe's ancestry and his acquisition by your Corral the names of Ray and Mabel Billington, Don Duke and finally John Willard surface as possible sources.

Yes, I do, after considerable soul-searching recall the incident. I cannot now recall the exact date or who requested me to find a genuine Old Joe as a birthday gift for Ray and as a symbolic presence for the Corral, but I believe it was Don Duke.

I then had in possession four bison skulls in various phases of deterioration, plus a horn shell from the banks of the Tongue River in Montana. Among these was a mountain or Athabascæ bison skull from a spring on Flint Creek in Western Montana and three plains bison skulls from the east of the Continental Divide in Montana. The best preserved of these was boxed and sent either to Don Duke or to the corral my memory fails to advise which.

My recollection is that the one you now prize is a fine plain bison skull from my father's homestead ranch on the Rocky Mountain Front. It came to light in a mud bank created when the trout stream crossing the ranch was completely dried by the years of the 1930's. The mud on the creek bottom which was all that remained of the creek fortunately preserved the skull you now possess.



*This bison was part of the huge Sun or Medicine River herd in North Central Montana, long hunted by the Blackfoot or Pikuni Indians, and first recorded in print by Meriwether Lewis June 13, 1805, when his journal reveals he discovered the 'sublimely grand spectacle' of the falls of the Missouri at the mouth of the Sun River. Lewis also records seeing several bison skulls at the foot of the falls, victim of their plunge over the cataract, and he that night relished dining on the bison hump steaks from the kill made that day by his hunters.*

*Old Joe and the Los Angeles Corral can take pride in that each meeting commemorates appropriately an individual who met his demise in an unknown manner less than 50 miles from where his ancestors were first noted by Meriwether Lewis.*

Don Duke disclaims knowing how the skull was transported to San Marino, but he is certain it was a full head—hair, snoot and all.

Perhaps it's drawing the long bow, and I cannot certify that that has not happened elsewhere in this article, but it's probable that Mabel, with a touch of the Irish elfishness, swore everyone to secrecy, causing more than the hoped for surprise when presented. With every nook, closet, shelf and wall covered by Mabel's owl collection, where to put the skull became a, well, shaggy problem. Mabel had at last outdone herself, and there were rumors that Ray might have been, should we say, somewhat taken aback by it all.

Doyce Nunis, who was very close to the events, said that a taxidermist was soon found and reduced it to a manageable condition followed by it being relegated to the Billington's garden as an ornament. Thus was avoided thought of divorce, or worse.

One day the Billingtons threw a barbeque. Among the guests were Doyce Nunis, Andy Dagosta, and Tony Kroll. The ringing of the ranch triangles signaled "soups on." Where to park Tanya, the Billington

German shepherd, was thought solved by relegating her to the garden patio, where slumbered *Old Joe*.

Those experienced in the penchant for owners to spoil pets, know pets get revenge when left out from the center of focus. Also, nobody knew beforehand that Tanya was really Dr. Dog Billington, renowned buffalo surgeon. With an acute sense of smell, it did not take any time for her to target the skull. Dr. Dog was fully up to the task at hand—surgery was eminent. This operation did not take hours on the table, and even today one can see the loss on one side. It compares in an astonishing degree with the Russell head, except in reverse. In this instance, dog bites buffalo is news.

Dick Yale reports that a sort of "advisory board" gathered upon Ray's announcement of his desire to present the skull to the Corral. A provision was that it be displayed at our meetings, but a suitable mounting had to be designed and built. Tony Kroll and Andy Dagosta teamed up to create the basic design, and Dick Yale did the actual fabrication. Ordinary materials would not do. Boards were salvaged from an original carriage gate of the circa 1830 Estudillo House, Old Town, San Diego. Strap iron and chains came from the Old Town blacksmith shop, and Dick cut the letters in his type shop. People at the Balboa Park Museum of Natural History did an expert job of restoring the dilapidated skull.

During our perennial Rendezvous at Al Miller's home in the autumn of 1977, a very heavy assembly was carried in from Dick Yale's wagon by Andy Dagosta, Dick Yale, Tony Kroll, and Ray Billington.

People at Taix Restaurant, our "home" for many years, kindly inserted hook-eyes in their ceiling directly above the podium. The weight of the assembly required two men to lift and hook it up. The Taix staff graciously took it down for storage. As many hundreds of photos show, nothing went on without *Old Joe's* presence. Even he became used to the red wallpaper.

For two and one-half decades (1964-1990) we enjoyed Taix's comfortable and convenient



Kudos for Old Joe from David Gillies and Sig Demke. Courtesy of Author.

location, ideal for our size, but it was not to last forever. Diminished food quality and rumors of possible sale of Taix's, maybe leveling it, led to our moving to the present Almansor facility in Alhambra.

It was in 1990, with Sig Demke emerging as sheriff, that Almansor learned about *Old Joe*. They advised that no holes for hook-eyes would pierce their walls. Clearly it must now be self-supporting and rebuilt much lighter. Both needs were undertaken by Sig who used much lighter plywood, salvaging the old letters. The old boards and iron were returned to Dick Yale. Sig also made an easel which did good service until two changes of managers at Almansor failed to pass our needs on to the new ones. Our easel was replaced by a very frail affair that collapsed, causing damage.

Yet another remounting was dictated, and Dave Gillies kindly volunteered. The old plastic coated backboard was replaced, the old letters reworked and screwed on. The recent picture above shows Dave and Sig in a jovial mood, congratulating each other, or perhaps Joe for his persistence. Joe has never complained about tank wine, cold

chicken, tough beef, strong onions, too little dressing, spoons too small, no coffee, high price of booze, etc. He just keeps his fixed expression, perhaps feeling smug for not being on that oft shown 20 foot high pyramid of bones of yesteryear along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. There is no evidence that he ever felt the sting of an Indian arrow or had to run to escape the heavy slug from a far off Sharps rifle.

That buffalo image and the Westerners will endure forever and was proven again in March when the topic for the Ray Billington Memorial Lecture at the Huntington Memorial Library was the bison. In a speech entitled, "Icons On the Hoof: Bison and the Meaning of the American West," Elliot West, a professor of history at the University of Arkansas, showed an awe inspiring number of pictures of the bison. The subject was fully exhausted, and no bison picture was overlooked.

Withal, we come full circle. I have tried to bring together all the significant information on the development of the *Old Joes* and how ours came to us. Thanks are extended to all those who contributed.

Happy Birthday Joe, you old Buffalo!



"Pancho" Barnes and her Mystery S. airplane she flew to set the women's speed record in 1930. Courtesy of Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

## PANCHO BARNES: Legend in her own time

*by Jeanette Weissbuch Davis*

Pancho Barnes packed more adventure and living into her life than most people could ever hope. Though her life has been dramatized in the television production of "Pancho Barnes," her high living adventurous spirit and zest should not have needed rewriting. Her life, as actually lived, makes for a more entertaining script than any Hollywood effort. A complex woman, Pancho's strong personality never let convention and societal expectations guide her path.

Called "rough as a cob" and an "authority on profanity" Pancho was a minister's wife and a mother who was educated in such fine schools as the Ramona Convent, the Bishop School for Girls (graduating in 1919) and, while awaiting her first marriage, the Stickney Art Institute.

Never known as a beauty, she "looked tough and carried herself like a man" with slim hips and heavy shoulders and jowls

giving her a "distorted, elephantine shape." Yet, she married four times: of her husbands, the first was the handsome, highly esteemed Rev. Rankin Barnes of St. James Episcopal Church in South Pasadena, father of her only child, William Emmert Barnes, and her last, the handsome, dashing World War II pilot, Eugene (Mac) McKendry, sixteen years her junior.

Born into the socially prominent, wealthy Lowe and Dobbins families of Pasadena-San Marino, Pancho was a "rebel" and "black sheep" who was "tolerated for her families' sake." "Nothing she did was acceptable" ranging from her public smoking to her ever present leather jacket, boots, and jodhpurs to her often outrageous public behavior.

In 1926 Pancho emulated her much traveled grandmother, Leontine Lowe, by booking a cruise to Latin America. Leaving her son Billy in the care of his nanny, Pancho en-

joyed the usual tourist sights but added a leper colony and a brothel to her itinerary. Among her souvenirs she included a shrunken head she named Susie. This trip was just the beginning, for in 1927 Pancho, disguised as a man, booked passage to Mexico only to find herself on a banana boat among gun runners for the Cristero uprising. She and companion Roger Chute bribed their way off the boat, and with Pancho still disguised, they traveled throughout Mexico, gaining her famous nickname, Pancho.

Returning home, Pancho threw herself into enjoying her new home, the home of her birth, which she had had refurbished in a Spanish motif. Entertaining with flair, the home was often filled with good food and liquor and a crowd eager to enjoy them. However, Pancho was at loose ends and when her cousin, Dean Banks, took up flying she had finally found an outlet for her abundant energy and need for adventure. After she bought her own airplane, a reluctant Ben Catlin, whose flying school was at Ross Airfield where Santa Anita Track is now located, taught the eager Pancho to fly and soloed her in September 1928. Her life was forever changed.

However, it is Pancho's own colorful life and notoriety that has overshadowed her varied accomplishments. Among them are:

- 1) setting the women's speed record of 196.19 mph in 1930 in her Travel Air Mystery S.

- 2) winning three consecutive Tom Thumb races.

- 3) participating in the first Women's Air Derby (dubbed Powder Puff Derby by Will Rogers) in 1929.

- 4) co-founding secretary of the Association of Motion Picture Pilots.

- 5) ferrying planes and providing fly-bys for the sound effects for Howard Hughes' "Hell's Angels."

- 6) determining load limits for the J-5 Lockheed Vega through flight testing.

- 7) flying to the interior of Mexico, the first woman to do so.

- 8) campaigning, by writing her name in the sky, for Los Angeles County supervisor, and in her desert years, for constable of

Randsburg.

- 9) writing hit songs such as "Moon Crazy" and holding ASCAP membership.

- 10) co-founding the Women's Air Reserve whose members prepared for civil emergencies.

- 11) running a flying school (CPT) at Rancho Oro Grande.

- 12) running a well known business: Pancho's Fly Inn (Rancho Oro Grande) near Muroc.

This last accomplishment has eclipsed Pancho's other achievements. In 1933 Pancho's money had run out, and no longer able to maintain her San Marino mansion nor her Laguna Beach property, she traded inherited property for 80 acres in the Antelope Valley community of Muroc. Already separated from the Rev. Barnes, she and son Billy built up the property to include a dairy, hogs, stables, swimming pool and, of course, an airstrip. Friends often flew in to ride, swim and hunt. Eventually growing to 360 acres, the ranch also included a new pool, motel and fountain.

As Muroc, later Edwards Air Force Base, grew, so did its relationship with Pancho. A good place to unwind from the tense atmosphere of the test pilot, Pancho's was the only place to ride, swim and eat a good steak. Pancho hauled the base garbage, fed her hogs and sold the meat back.

As any good business woman, Pancho realized a need, and soon hostesses helped the men fill their lonely hours. While strict rules governed the hostesses' behavior, local gossips imagined all sorts of wild times. Along with her fourth husband, foreman Mac McKendry, she put on hunt breakfasts, barbecues and rodeos, and the Happy Bottom Riding Club was born with Jimmy Doolittle and Chuck Yeager receiving the first membership cards.

However times were changing, and a new base commander, Brig. Gen. J. Stanley Holtoner, put her place off limits and began what the papers dubbed the War of the Mojave. Claiming the runway needed to be extended, which has yet to occur, the government wanted her property. Pancho counter-sued, and although she won a judgment of



\$414,000, she lost her property. Before she moved, an explosion and fire destroyed many of her personal possessions and buildings. The Happy Bottom Riding Club was no more.

What followed was a downhill road for Pancho. She and Mac tried to start up a similar club, Gypsy Springs Ranch, at nearby Cantil; but times had changed, and it never became what Rancho Oro Grande had been. Pancho successfully fought cancer, but she and Mac separated and divorced.

Pancho spent her last years in Boron, living alone in her small house raising chi-

huahuas. Pancho was found dead in her home March 30, 1975. But she has not been forgotten. Though Billy was killed in an air crash in 1980, his widow still runs Barnes Aviation at Fox Field in Lancaster. The Flight Test Historical Society has held Pancho Memorial Barbeques at the ruins of the Happy Bottom Riding Club to raise funds for its historical museum.

If Pancho were here, she might end with this, "Jackie Cochrane was the wealthiest, Amelia Earhart got the most publicity, but I was the best."



The face of a woman who knows she is the best. Courtesy of Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.



Ross Coon, seated on right, provided Samuel Clemens with the jumping frog story that launched Mark Twain on the road to fame.

## California Vignette

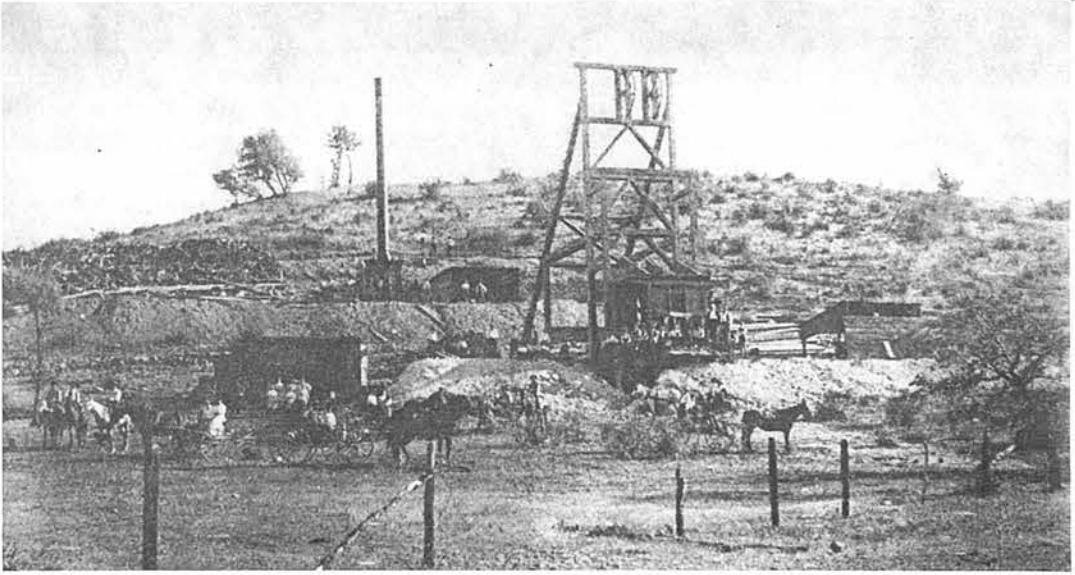
### Calaveras Skulls

*by John Southworth*

California has both a river and a county named Calaveras. Spanish explorers searching for a site for an inland mission church discovered the river in 1806, but it would be another thirty years before Yankee wanderers found a great many human skulls and skeletons in the area and called the place Calaveras, Spanish for skulls. Just how Yankees came to apply a Spanish name is not explained. In any event, because of this language switch, the title of the present piece

becomes badly redundant.

That aside, it is entirely appropriate, though probably totally coincidental, that Calaveras County should be the locale of one of the great scientific hoaxes of all time, a hoax involving an almost complete human skull purported to be over one million years old. That skull became so famous that Bret Harte wrote a long poem, now available in his collected works, and the original skull itself ended up in the Peabody Museum of



This was the Mattison Mine in 1866 when the Calaveras Skull was "discovered."

Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. Established scientists of the day became involved and several dozen scientific papers discussed the pros and cons of the legitimacy of what became known as the Calaveras Skull.

Entertainment was hard to come by in the gold rush days of early California with the result that hoaxes and practical jokes were developed to a considerable degree. For example, consider the well known story of the Calaveras Jumping Frog as recounted by Mark Twain. That story originated in the same district as the present skull story and perhaps, just perhaps, had the same perpetrator, one Ross Coon who is known to have first proposed the frog story to Mark Twain.

The ingenious originator or originators of the present bit of foolishness concerning an ancient human skull soon to be found in an ancient mine had to know his geology and choose his surroundings with care. Just any old mine would not do. The appearance of a human skull in a standard, underground, hard rock mine would be labeled a fraud at the outset. The perfect mine had to be chosen, one compatible with the presence of a human skull along with legitimate fossil artifacts. Such an unusual mine, an under-

ground placer gold mine, just happened to be available in Calaveras County. But first, short lessons in history and geology are in order.

Many millions of years ago the mountain range known today as the Sierra Nevada, the backbone of California, looked much as it does today, high granite crags, lower slopes covered with timber, and canyons cut deep by running streams of water. Just as today, the canyon bottoms collected animal remains and tree stumps washed down from the hillsides along with gold eroded from the surrounding rocks. Eons of erosion reduced the entire range of mountains to little more than a series of rolling hills and released literally hundreds of tons of indestructible gold into ancient stream channels.

Then came a long period of intense volcanic activity. Hot ash and molten lava overran the land, running down the canyons until those canyons were filled, then over the intervening ridges until, across great areas, every surface trace of the old, original erosion patterns were obliterated.

Later, the vulcanism died away. High mountains were again tilted up and new erosion patterns were established. Entirely new

canyon configurations cut down through the lava beds, to and through the old, original, and mostly still buried river channels. They rearranged gold concentrations and left sections of primordial stream beds, originally rich in placer gold and with some fossil remains, untouched and abandoned, buried under many feet of lava and erosion debris, often high up in new canyon walls.

According to legend, sometime in the 1850s, after all the obvious placer ground in the California Diggin's had been staked and diligently worked, and hundreds of bored and disappointed hopefuls were doing their very best mining in the bar rooms and hotel lobbies, a new man, a totally inexperienced greenhorn, arrived in one of the down-slope placer camps asking directions to some unstaked ground, rich in gold, that he might claim and work.

Seeing a fine opportunity for some fun and games at the newcomer's expense, the old hands, with long and sincere faces, directed the man straight and far up the steep slope behind the camp, about as far afield from any known placer ground as they could get him. Their instructions were explicit. He should dig his new hole straight into the mountain at the base of "that high lava cliff."

When a tired, frustrated and irate newcomer did not come back down the hill in due time to explode and create some much needed excitement in the camp, concerned old hands went up to check for a possible accident. They found only a rich and happy newcomer who thanked them all profusely for their excellent directions to a very productive gold mine. Their practical joke had backfired. That newcomer had stumbled upon an ancient stream bed placer under a lava cap and was operating the very first drift mine in all of California.

Such drift mines (a drift mine is a substantially horizontal opening that follows the twists and turns of a stream bed based on barren rock and filled with alluvial and other debris) scavenged gold-rich gravels from geologically abandoned stream beds deep under ancient lava flows. Each drift, usually

reached by shaft or adit, followed the bed of what was once a living stream. Only the bedrock gravel and its contained gold which at times could reach impressive proportions was mined. Only in such an environment would a fossil skull feel at home.

The old Mattison Mine on Bald Hill a mile north of Altaville in Calaveras County provided the perfect setting in which to find an ancient skull. James Mattison had sunk a shaft 130 feet (some say 230 feet) vertically through barren lava rock to intercept the deep, blind and ancient Douglas Flat-Slab Ranch-Dogtown river channel. Soon he was busily and innocently engaged in hoisting gravel rich in placer gold.

On February 25, 1866, workers in the drift brought up through the access shaft a sediment-encrusted, fossilized human skull they claimed to have found in the compacted, gold-bearing gravels being mined at the time. They gave their precious find to Mattison. Unimpressed, Mattison gave the skull to the local Wells-Fargo agent who in turn gave it to a Dr. William Jones of Murphys who maintained an extensive collection of local relics and curios. Much interested in his new artifact, Dr. Jones notified J.D. Whitney, then State Geologist of California and also a professor of geology at Harvard University, of the unusual revelation.

Whitney cleaned and studied the skull, investigated the conditions of its reported origin and announced at the July 16, 1866, meeting of the California Academy of Science that the new-found skull represented ancient man well over one million years old because it was found in gravels known to be at least that ancient. His claim that the skull represented Pliocene Man was immediately challenged by scientists and the religious press. Bret Harte composed his verse ridiculing the skull as a hoax. There is every reason to believe that Bret Harte had inside information on which to base his assertion.

The scientific controversy raged, ebbing and flowing for many years. It never would have even started had modern capabilities for carbon dating been available at the time. Also, geologic dating was not well advanced





Altaville—Looking north 1889.

in California in 1866 with the result that the term Pliocene probably did not have the restricted application that it has today.

P.W. Putnam, who became curator of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard in 1875, became the leading proponent of the old-age theory. Others continued to insist that the skull was "planted." Important men continued to take sides in the controversy. The introduction of a second skull, this one white with calcium deposits while the original had been black but had not been cleaned, soon confused both sides. Eventually no one was really sure if the skull originally brought from the Mattison shaft was truly the one studied and reported by Whitney.

In 1948, R.F. Heizer published a bibliography of 45 scientific references, all reporting on the Calaveras Skull, legitimate or hoax, take your choice. He concluded, in 1962 after almost one hundred years of controversy, that Calaveras Skull "was one of the most notorious archaeological hoaxes perpetrated in the nineteenth century."

The Calaveras Skull hoax, begun in 1866

by professional California hoaxers, developed a life of its own and was good for a century of scientific infighting that far eclipsed the parochial interests of the original perpetrators. The Calaveras Skull became famous, but the several men who planned so well, whoever they were, were, to a man, forgotten in the scientific glitter that their original good work had generated. Mark Twain would have been proud.

### SUGGESTED READING

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*(Continued from page 2)*

Mountain down to San Diego county, and east-west it extended from the border to the Coastal Mountains. Over the years, it has been pared down and all or parts of ten counties have been created from its territory.

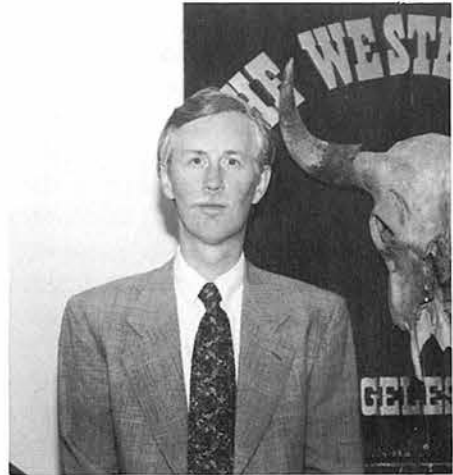
Until 1851, when Mariposa was designated to be, Agua Fria was the county seat. Unfortunately, the only building in the county considered strong enough to be a jail was in Agua Fria and the court house was in Mariposa. The sheriff made so much money transporting the prisoners from jail to the court, housing them and providing other services for their benefit that the county nearly went bankrupt and had to be bailed out by the state. After the new Court House was completed in Mariposa in 1854 this problem was solved. The 1854 Court House is still in use and is considered to oldest active court house in the state; it also remains one of the most attractive.

In 1850, the Indians, probably justifiably, attacked some miners and John D. Savage's trading post. Savage raised a posse and convinced Governor John McDougal to deputize them as State Militia. The Mariposa Battalion hunted down the 350 Miwok, Yohut and Chowchilla Indians led by Chief Tenieya. The Indians finally surrendered after many were killed including the Chief's son. The major accomplishment of the battalion was the effective discovery of Yosemite Valley. The Valley was named "Yosemity" by Lafayette Bunnell who thought the word meant "grizzly bear" in the local Indian dialect. Among other names they bestowed was Bishop Creek in honor of Sam Bishop, for whom the city is named, when he fell off his horse into the creek. Both the troopers and Indians found this to be very amusing and amazing.

All gold rush counties have legends and Mariposa is no exception. According to the tale, the tax collector was returning home with thousands of dollars of taxes in fifty dollar gold hexagonal slugs minted at Mount Ophir. He was murdered while crossing Agua Fria Creek, and the money disappeared. Every since, treasure seekers

have been searching the area for the trove. Like most legends there are some factual problems with this tale. Fifty dollar gold slugs were octagons not hexagons; also Mount Ophir was an assay office, and no coin was ever minted there. In 1994, Ray found a letter written in 1851 from the tax collector's brother. He wrote that he had been called to Agua Fria to identify his brother's body. The tax collector had accidentally drowned crossing the creek, and the entire \$900 he was carrying was recovered. The fact there never were any gold slugs might explain why they have not been found.

The lecture concluded with the showing of slides of some of the Mariposa County landmarks. Among those included were Sequoia, King's Canyon, Death Valley, Mammoth Mountain, Yosemite, the Devil's Post Pile, the crest of Mount Whitney and the John Muir trail.



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

August meeting speaker Steve Tabor.

## AUGUST MEETING

Steve Tabor of the Clark Library spoke to the Corral on Ward Ritchie and his famous press. Ritchie ran his own private press as well as commercial work and was famous for his designs. He enjoyed reading from childhood on, kept a journal throughout his life and was a good cartoonist. Although he weighed only 135 pounds in high school, he was a star athlete. At Occidental College he

met Professor Carl McIntyre, who inspired him to read and write poetry.

After graduating from Occidental, Ritchie became interested in fine printing and bookbinding as preferable to a career in law. He learned the bookbinding craft from Ed Grabhorn in San Francisco and the art of fine printing from the firm of Young and McCallister in Los Angeles. Ritchie published limited editions of fine printings of poets and essayists. He used metal type and woodcuts. Ritchie also went to France in the early 1930s for further study.

In the late 1930s Ritchie started his own press, and business prospered until World War II. Keeping the press operating under

his staff, Ritchie worked at Douglas Aircraft during the war years creating training manuals. He then worked for Foote, Cone, and Balding Advertising Agency. Ritchie continued to design books during his "lean years of absence" from his press. His advertising experience led to better integrations of text and design. After retirement, Ritchie printed many small books and ephemera in the last twenty years of his life.

Tabor highlighted his presentation with numerous slides that illustrated Ritchie's fine printing and bookbinding work as well as scenes of Ritchie at various points in his life and career.

Abraham Hoffman



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Honored guest, Robert W. Blew, receiving plaque from Sheriff Abe Hoffman.

## RENDEZVOUS 1997

Bent's Fort on the Arkansas never became the home of the mountain man rendezvous, but Bent's Casa is rapidly becoming the traditional site of the Los Angeles Corral Rendezvous. Once again on a gorgeous September day the members and guests appeared there for the annual rendezvous. Members came from long distances to attend—Las Vegas, Desert Hot Springs,

San Diego, but the record for distance was Tim Heflin from Prineville, Ore.

The day went smoothly due to the efforts of the the Wrangler Boss, Eric Nelson, and his helpers. Bartenders Gary Tuner and Dick Thomas and money takers Ray Peter, Bob Schwemmer and Bill Davis kept the group sufficiently refreshed.

The highlight of the day was the auction



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Money takers Ray Peter, Bob Schwemmer and Ernie Marquez.



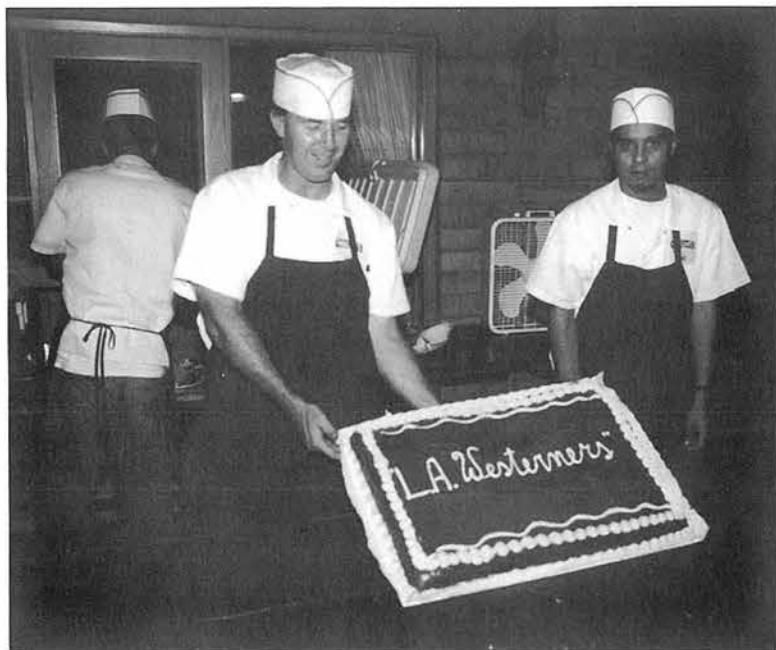
Providers of refreshments Gary Turner, Dick Taylor with customers Bill Newbro and Alex Kerr.

conducted by Hugh Tolford and Loren Wendt with the valuable assistance of runners Warren Thomas, Reese Benson, Pete Pettler and Ken Pauley and tally men Glenn Thornhill and Steve Born. The raffle of Andy Dagosta's painting and the gift baskets prepared by Elizabeth Nelson and Patricia Gallucci was nearly as active as the auction. In addition to the gift baskets the active

ladies prepared centerpieces for the tables. These baskets contained some very tasty "longhorn cookies." Along with the place cards prepared by Mrs. Gallucci these gave a touch of elegance to the dinner.

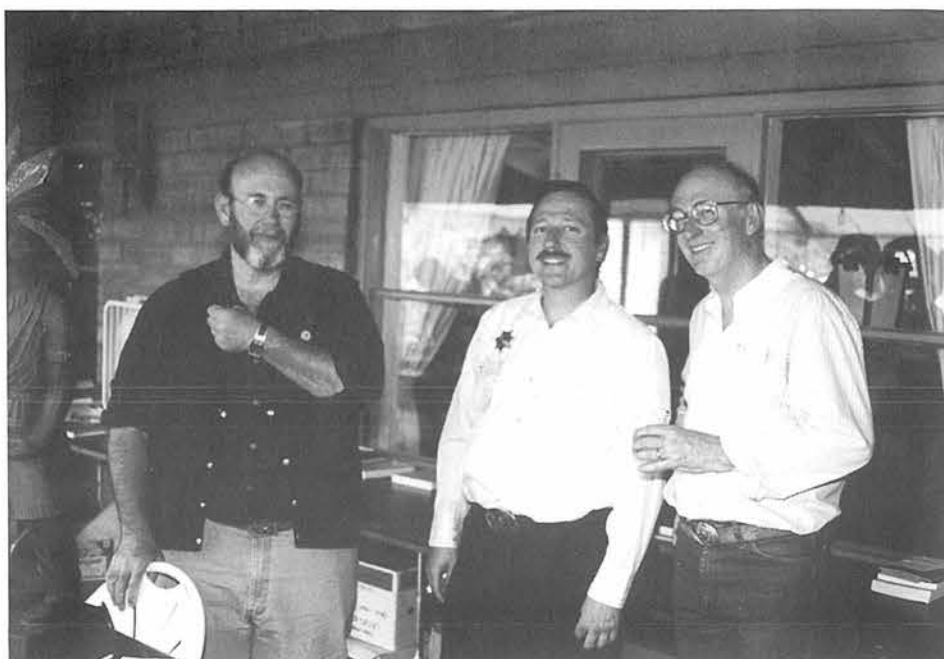
After presentation of the honored guest, the members settled down to the enjoyable task of eating dinner and conversing with their fellows.





*Photograph by Frank Q. Newton*

Dessert is served.



*Photograph by Frank Q. Newton*

Head Wrangler Eric Nelson and tally men Steve Born and Glenn Thornhill hard at work.



## Corral Chips

Recently, **JOHN ROBINSON** was the Celebrity Guest of the Historic Trail Hike to Wilson's Peak. The other highlight of the day was retracing the journey of the first telescope up to Wilson's Peak.

**CM RICHARD H. DILLON** has semi-retired. He is teaching a class on the history of Napa Valley at the University of San Francisco. In addition to teaching the class, he is also writing a history of the Napa Valley.

**NORMAN NEUERBURG** made a presentation on the "Indian Via Crucis from San Fernando" at the CSUN Valley Pioneer Lecture held at the San Fernando Mission. In attendance were **GLORIA LOTHROP, PAT INGRAM, MSGR. FRANCIS WEBER, RAY PETER, ROBERT BLEW** and **PAUL DENTZEL**.

**RAYMUND WOOD** made a presentation to the Ridge Route Communities Historical Society on Peter Lebec. Among the audience were **JOHN ROBINSON, WILLIS OSBORNE, PAUL RIPPENS** and **RAMON OTERO**.

**CM DON P. MULLALLY** has recently published a book, *Series and Subseries of Woodlands in the Santa Susana Mountains of Los Angeles County*. Anyone interested in more information about this ecological study may contact Don.

Associate member **JERRY ZORTHIAN**, noted local artist, was the grand marshall of

this year's Doo Dah Parade.

In *Branding Iron* #207 **DR. TAD LONERGAN** was identified as a new member. He is a long time member who held Ranger Active status.

In the same issue, page 21, there appears a photograph of E.A. Brininstool without an explanation. He was one of the founding members for whom there was no individual photo in BI 206. If we uncover photos of the the three others without photos, they will be printed at a later date.

### New Members

Jeffrey Gailium  
15 Whitman Ct.  
Irvine, CA 92612

John Gawley  
330 Alta Vista Ave.  
So. Pasadena, CA 91030

Timothy J. Good  
2501 Via La Selva  
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 92274

Norman S. Marshall  
1735 Chelsea Road  
San Marino, CA 91104

Denise N. Ruhlow  
1809 Peyton Ave., Unit #101  
Burbank, CA 91504

Jack G. Wong  
P.O. Box 1346  
Monterey Park, CA 91754

### Address Changes

Victor W. Buck  
HC 332 Box 1339 Oak Knoll Drive  
Prescott, AZ 86303

Walt Geisen  
76 Navajo Circle  
Pegosa Springs, CO 81147

William Hockinson  
12 Mission Bay Drive  
Corona Del Mar, CA 92625

David Hornbeck  
8901 Zelzah  
Northridge, CA 91325

Larry Johnson  
50 Calle Aragon #B  
Laguna Hills, CA 92653-3594

Paul Rippens  
1314 Calle Ceceila  
San Dimas, CA 91773-4366

Mike Ryan  
10615 Chandler Blvd.  
North Hollywood, CA 91601-2906

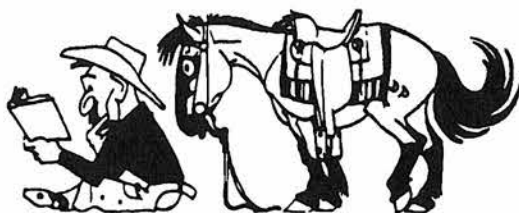
Michael Torguson  
P.O. Box 3432  
Central Point, OR 97504

Donald Torguson  
3330 Blackthorn Way  
Medford, OR 97304

Tiffany Warren  
5054 Woodman Avenue #210  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

### Deceased

William Burkhardt  
Richard W. Cunningham  
Norman Neuerberg  
Walter Wheelock



## DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

"When you read a book you do not merely read about the world - you invent it. And what you invent you own."

—James Robertson

ANTRIM IS MY STEPFATHER'S NAME: *The Boyhood of Billy the Kid*, by Jerry Weddle. Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1993. 96 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Soft cover, \$16.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591. (505)277-2346.

Jerry Weddle has extensively researched the early years of Billy the Kid (1873-1877) in his book *Antrim is My Stepfather's Name - The Boyhood of Billy the Kid* and cuts away much of the folklore that surrounds the Kid's life as a youth and puts to rest the mythmaking that has been popularized over the past 100 years in song (Marty Robbins, Bob Dylan, et. al.) and cinema (Johnny Mack Brown, Buster Crabbe, Paul Newman, Kris Kristofferson, Emelio Estevez, et. al.). There has been little written for the serious Billy the Kid scholar or armchair historian regarding his boyhood (age 11-16)—the years in Silver City, New Mexico, and the Arizona interlude. Jerry Weddle revisits all the known resources on The Kid and digs deep into old mining records, newspapers, eyewitness accounts and interviews, government records, manuscripts, unpublished materials and even a *Brand Book* or two in his search for historical documentation of William Henry McCarty, a.k.a. Henry Antrim, a.k.a. Billy Bonney, a.k.a. Billy the Kid.

When Catherine McCarty, a widowed

mother of two young boys (William Henry McCarty and Joseph Bonney McCarty) learned she had tuberculosis, she moved her family from Southern Indiana to Wichita, Kansas. After a two-year stay, her health suddenly took a turn for the worse, and she moved the family to Denver and then on to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she married a long time acquaintance, William Henry Harrison Antrim. The family now had two William Henrys and to avoid confusing the boy with the man, Catherine started calling Billy by his middle name, Henry. The youth had always answered to Billy McCarty, and he never quite grew accustomed to being called Henry Antrim.

Catherine and William Antrim traveled the small mining towns in New Mexico and finally took residence in Silver City a more "progressive community." William Antrim did not like Silver City or raising step-children and although he prospected, found work as a carpenter and as a butcher, he mostly gambled. He mostly lost, and it is doubtful he did much to support his family. Catherine took in boarders for income and baked pies and sweetcakes that sold easily to townsfolk. She was a good mother who loved her children and taught them to sing and dance. The boys also played marbles, wrestled and raced with other Anglo youths (whites were the minority in Silver City). Although he looked younger, William Henry McCarty was about 12 years old when he arrived in Silver City. Slender built, delicate hands, small feet, soft high-voice, Billy was undersized (75 pounds) and girlish looking.

Young Billy had a neat appearance, clean habits, and a taste for sweets that resulted in bad teeth (two incisors also protruded slightly). He appeared as a dancer in minstrel shows, but as his mother's illness worsened, Billy was left to his own doings. Catherine died in September 1874; her death proved catastrophic to Billy and his brother. Billy worked many odd jobs for room and board; he worked as a bell boy and cleaned tables at the Exchange Hotel. He killed steers, skinned and gutted the carcasses and chopped them into meat, but abject poverty

was always with him. Billy increasingly took to gambling for an income. Because of his size and youthful appearance Billy was able to con older men in poker and monte. He worked at cards and picked up many a cardshark trick and would bet on anything from dog fights to weather. It was noted that even as a youngster Billy never lacked nerve.

Growing up in poverty pulled Billy into larceny. He had many schemes to make money and stole easily. He was also caught easily; at the age of 15 he climbed a chimney in the jailhouse and made his first escape. With a friend's help, Billy was put on a stage for Globe City, Arizona. It was said of Billy at this time, "He was generous and kind to everyone until someone did him dirt; then he would seek revenge."

Later when dime novelists wrote up the adventures of Billy the Kid, they imaginatively filled in the next two years with border raids into old Mexico, a jail break in San Elizano, and the mass slaughter of Indians, Mexicans and Chinese, all in the flowery and racist dime-novel tradition. He did not kill Chinese laundryman Charlie Sun as was reported years later.

Billy earned the nickname "Kid" with his youthful looks, slight build, and spirited personality while learning to pull his own weight among grown men. He worked gathering hay, herding cattle and as a cook, but gambling enticed Billy to the saloons near Camp Grant. He refined himself at the card tables and gained quite a reputation as a gambler.

In 1876 he finally settled into an occupation that suited his physical abilities and sense of adventure—horse stealing. He stole saddles, blankets and horses from preoccupied customers of the Hog Ranch (red light district near Camp Grant). He also stole army horses. He was arrested twice but escaped each time. Billy changed his name from Antrim to William H. Bonney. His Arizona stay ended with another jail break (he was shackled at the time) and his first documented killing—a blacksmith named Windy Cahill who called Billy a pimp. Billy left Arizona and lit out for Silver City, New



Mexico.

Old friends who saw William H. Bonney in the fall of 1877 observed a new maturity. The boy who fled New Mexico for the offense of wearing stolen clothes now returned a seasoned survivor of the frontier—hardened to violence, a horse thief, card shark, fighter and murderer. He was eager for adventure and had a willingness to do anything. Lincoln County awaited his arrival.

Jerry Weddle has filled in, with scholarly diligence, a much needed time period in the life of Billy the Kid. His research gives ample evidence of the poverty and hardships that faced a young boy and the consequences of the decisions he made. Weddle's book weaves an interesting and fact-filled story. To understand about Billy the Kid, one must understand his childhood. *Antrim is My Stepfather's Name: The Boyhood of Billy the Kid* is must reading.

Gary D. Turner



**LITTLE WHITE FATHER:** *Redick McKee on the California Frontier*, by Ray Raphael. Eureka: Humboldt County Historical Society, 1993. 213 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes. Paper, \$15.95. Order from Humboldt Co. Historical Society, P.O. Box 8000, Eureka, Ca. 95502 or (707) 443-3515

Under the leadership of Redick McKee, U. S. Indian Agent of Northern California, and his co-committee members, O.M. Wozencraft and George Barbour, some 18 treaties were negotiated with the Indian tribes north of San Francisco. The Indians never heard any more about them as they were all negated by a vote in the Senate on January 7, 1852. McKee could not believe it.

Senator Weller from California moved to allocate \$100,000 for relief of the displaced Indians but was told "might vote for it, but didn't want to make a habit of it." With 70,000 to 100,000 Indians, the vote meant about \$1.00 per Indian displaced and their land taken from them.

The book's references cite neglect, murders and the rescinding of McKee's appointment. His good intentions without backing, no lobbies, nor practical solutions, left it to crude vigilantes, child slave gatherers, and "volunteers" to save the Indians.

McKee wrote indignant letters to the newspapers trying to salvage his treaties, but he ended up accused of "abuses and fraud in office" because of contracted debts that were repudiated, with his work unsatisfactory and the committee abolished.

In 1944 the U. S. Court of Claims finally awarded the Indians of California some compensation but after "expenses" etc.—the Indians "received a payment of \$150—the most concrete legacy which McKee, Wozencraft, and Barbour left for all the native inhabitants."

Robert Heizer portrays the affair "as a farce from the beginning to end." The author sees McKee "as full of noble intentions," whose feeble efforts would have been comic if the consequences had not been so tragic. Raphael also lists a fine bibliography covering letters, Senate documents, newspaper coverage, Smithsonian material, maps, etc.

But the Indian was doomed by man's greed for gold, land and power. The worst tragedy was the blindness to the ancient cultures, even their artistic skill in basketry, etc. plus their native good humor and trust was overrun and changed to last-ditch defense as done by the Modocs. We should all be ashamed!

Rosa Keehn



**FOUR SELECTIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS' CALIFORNIA FICTION SERIES.**

The University of California Press has launched a new series of paperback novels, "California Fiction," including such themes as California settings, history, people and controversies. Books long out of print as well as recently published novels are included. Prices vary from \$11.95 to \$14.95. The good

news about this series is that it gives readers the opportunity to enjoy some classic fiction as well as sample the talents of a new generation of writers. The Press plans to release new books in the series twice a year.

Two novels in the current batch provoked considerable controversy when they first appeared. Mary Austin's *The Ford* (\$13.95), first published in 1917, combined the water-seeking efforts of both Los Angeles and San Francisco in a story of politics and intrigue. Personally, I think Austin blunted her argument when she mixed the two cities instead of taking Los Angeles head-on, but the novel still is hard-hitting. Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* (\$14.95) took on Southern California's oil speculation mania of the 1920s when it was written in 1926. Mild by today's standards in that Sinclair didn't need to use obscenities or gratuitous sex in his novels, the book was banned in Boston because he advocated birth control. Go figure. Knowledgeable introductions are supplied for these novels. John Walton, author of *Western Times and Water Wars*, introduces Austin's novel and places it in historical context. Jules Tygiel, author of *The Great Los Angeles Swindle*, a study of the Julian oil scandal, does the same for *Oil!*

The other two novels were recently written. *Skin Deep*, Guy Garcia's first novel (\$11.95), was published in 1988. Garcia's protagonist is a Mexican American and, wonder of wonders, it's not about Chicano gangs. In fact, it's a story of a young man searching for his cultural roots and identity. Garcia writes of a Los Angeles not to be found in the pages (or ads) of upscale *Los Angeles* magazine. *In the Heart of the Valley of Love* by Cynthia Kadohata (\$11.95), first published in 1992, is an imaginative foray into a Los Angeles of the mid-21st century. It's a frightening novel in many ways, because there's a hint of a suspicion that by the time we get to 2050, it won't be fiction at all.

Taken together, the novels in this series provide an interesting mix of past, present and future and an opportunity for readers interested in California to see how novelists have interpreted the state and will continue

to do so. Books may be ordered from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94220 (510) 643-0682.

Abraham Hoffman



CALIFORNIA FORESTS AND WOODLANDS: *A Natural History*, by Verna R. Johnston. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. 222 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. Paper, \$14.95. Order from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720 or (800) 882-6657.

*California Forests and Woodlands* is an informative and interesting book that takes the reader through the various ecosystems of California in such a way that you feel you are there among the flora and fauna. Beautifully illustrated with lovely colored photographs of plants and animals indigenous to California, it is a book that anyone interested in the forests and woodlands of the state should read.

The book starts by telling the reader how to recognize the various coniferous forest species. It continues by moving through each forest type in the state with each ecosystem discussed in great detail. The author not only discusses trees but also the shrubs, flowers, ground covers, birds, mammals and reptiles one will find in the subject forest. It is easy to feel as if you are sitting right there in the forest while reading.

The illustrations and maps are very well done but could provide more detail and reference points that would assist the reader in locating and identifying the various trees and shrubs. However, this point does not detract from the book because it is more of a factual story about the forests and woodlands of California than a book to be used for research or for educational purposes.

As a Forester, I was interested to find that names I had become familiar with over the years were being changed. Names of trees and shrubs are being changed in an attempt to take away any reference to subjects that

might appear to demean or alienate anyone or any group of people. I'm not sure this is necessary, but it's being done. For example, the Digger pine, *Pinus Sabiniana* found in the foothill forests of California's Great Central Valley, provided important food for Indians of the western Sierra foothills. The Miwok and Yokuts tribes also dug for roots and corms causing the Gold Rush pioneers to call them "Diggers," hence the Digger pine. This name is now considered to be offensive and has been changed to Gray pine because of the gray appearance of the tree's foliage.

The forests of California have suffered through years of neglect, overuse, the effects of acid rain and acid snow and the overprotection from fire. This has resulted in the disappearance of certain species and subspecies of plants and animals. The author addresses these concerns in an effort to enlighten the reader and, hopefully, encourage communications with agencies attempting to protect our precious natural resources.

For lovers of our wonderful forests and open spaces throughout the state, I recommend the reading of *California Forests and Woodlands, A Natural History*, and let yourself drift away to the pristine valleys and mountains of the Golden State.

Paul H. Rippens



**BLACK BART:** *Boulevardier Bandit*, by George Hoeper. Fresno: Word Dancer Press, 1995, 168pp. Map, Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Paper, \$9.95. Order from Word Dancer Press, 950 N. Van Ness Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728. (800) 497-4909.

The author takes his reader through one of the most colorful periods of California history. A time when folklore and fact became intertwined. A time when realism was mixed with sensationalism. It was a period that produced legendary figures whose exploits continue to grow in fiction. This is how the author presents the events in the life of the California bandit Black Bart.

The book is a mixture of historical data and unsubstantiated assumptions. Mr. Hoeper appears to have started to write a biographical account of the life of Charles Boles, alias Charles Bolton, alias Black Bart. His efforts, however, are hindered by the many gaps in the documented information available. He resorts to other historical data to fill these gaps and make the book plausible with the hope that the reader will not be able to distinguish between fact and his assumptions.

A large part of the information Mr. Hoeper uses is obtained from what he feels is questionable journalism. In this book, he explains the competitive nature of the San Francisco newspapers yet he quotes these very newspapers and their questionable journalism to lend credence to his book.

Do not think that the book is all bad. There is much factual and interesting historical information on the subject of "Mud Wagons." It seems, according to Mr. Hoeper's sources, stagecoaches were not used in the hill country of Northern California, but instead, lighter coaches called mud wagons with wider wheels and fewer horses. This information seems to permeate throughout the book when the need arises to fill a space.

Much of the book is filled with biographical information on James Hume and the Wells Fargo Company. There is far more available historical data in the book on Hume and other figures who had much to do with bringing Black Bart to justice than on Bart. This is the essence of the book as very little was known about the bandit.

Most of the written documents reproduced in the book are poor quality and require magnification to read. Many of the photographs are not central to the story, although interesting. They lend only color that detracts from the book's theme.

The author should have written about California lawmen or bandits of that period alone. A chapter or two on his subject would have been sufficient, rather than stretching his work and representing it as a factual account.

Barry Greenberg

WEBER! *The American Adventures of Captain Charles M. Weber*, by James Shebl. Lodi: San Joaquin Historical Society, 1993. 176 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Appendixes, Index. Cloth, \$35.00; paper, \$19.95 + CA tax \$1.75 p/h. Order from San Joaquin Historical Society & Museum, P.O. Box 21 Lodi, CA 95241 or (209) 368-9154.

Even without the unnecessary exclamation point in the title, this work comes well upholstered; it has four items of prefatory matter, Acknowledgments, Foreword, Author's Note, and Introduction, as well as thirteen Appendixes, the former group mostly laudatory, the latter mostly documentary. However, the textual matter proves worthy of its burden, for it is the first biography of Charles David (Maria) Weber that covers his entire life, and it does it well.

The author mentions his 1814 birth in the Rhenish Palatinate, an area that was then a protectorate of the Kingdom of Bavaria. The precise place was Steinwenden, near Homburg, in farming country west of the Rhine. In August 1836, at the age of 22, he received a passport and traveled to New Orleans. He stayed there a while, but contracted yellow fever and left to join a relative in Illinois. However, he got no farther up river than St. Louis, where he turned off towards Independence, Missouri, where he joined the Bidwell-Bartleson party and eventually reached Dr. Marsh's ranch in Contra Costa County, California. Being well educated and quickly learning to speak English, he became a leader among the Anglo immigrants, and after the wars were over in California, he and his partner William Gulnac applied for a grant of land near the San Joaquin River. There he put up a few huts, calling the place "New Albion" after his partner's native land. This was soon changed to Tuleburg and finally to Stockton,

honoring the Commodore.

Author Shebl has written all this, as well as a good bit of the history of Stockton, in an engaging style. An interesting feature of the book is his use of what might be termed "side-bars," except that these are a full page or more, printed in a different font and with slightly tinted ink. These explain biographical or other details without interrupting the text. The book is well illustrated, with one color painting of the Captain and many other photos of his family and their homes, as well as facsimiles of documents, passports, maps, and related items. One of the Appendixes is a List of Sources, and there is an index.

One could wish for better editing. The author states that Karl Weber was born in Bavaria. This is like saying that a native of San Juan, P.R. is "born in the United States." On a technicality this might be true; but it is confusing. The attempt to attribute the naming of the Weber River and Weber County in Utah to Charles Weber, based on the unsupported evidence of a librarian in 1934, is contrary to common historical opinion. Both were named for John M. Weber, one of the Henry/Ashley party of trappers of 1824 (when Charles Weber was only ten) who were with Smith, Ogden, Bridger and others, trapping in the streams flowing into the Great Salt Lake. (*Utah Place Names*, p. 392; also Thrapp, *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography*, v.3, p. 1527). The only significant typo noted was in the date of Jedediah Smith's death, 1831, not 1833.

Despite these somewhat minor points, the book is a very good biography of a man whose integrity, business acumen, and far-sighted vision enabled him to found a community that has become an inland sea port and a thriving city of homes and businesses with a population of over 200,000.

Raymund F. Wood