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Woman preparing meal using iron tripod and Dutch oven. From Sandra Myres, *Westerning Women and the Frontier Experience*

Bread, Bacon and Buffalo Chips: Cooking on the Overland Trail

by Amy Lebenzon

Winner in the 1997 Student Essay Contest

"I guess you would like to know how we live on the plains," wrote Caroline Hopkins Clark in her diary as she traveled by wagon across the dusty plains of the United States. "We do not get any fresh meat or potatoes, but we get plenty of flour and bacon." This was a familiar tale on the Overland Trail, the trail that over a quarter of a million men, women and children traveled to a new life in the West between 1840 and 1870. Enticed by promotions that advertised land opportunities and a wonderful climate, emigrants from the settled states embarked on a 2,000 mile bone jarring journey that lasted six to eight months.

The decision to go west was monument-

(*Continued on page 3*)

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

JANUARY MEETING

Thomas F. Andrews, long time member and executive director of the Historical Society of Southern California, inaugurated our "Sesquicentennial Series" of programs with a look at our perceptions of the the influences of the Discovery of Gold in 1848. According to Andrews, anniversaries are a

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

January Meeting Speaker Thomas Andrews

time to reflect upon, reevaluate and relive certain events. We are a different state and people than we were during the 1948-50 Centennial Celebration; therefore, our views, attitudes and perceptions differ.

In 1949, Carl Wheat published a biblio-

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 1)
al for families. It meant giving up their homes, the majority of their possessions and leaving behind beloved family and friends. Women had little to say in this wrenching decision to go west. Later on, however, their involvement became key for no one was more responsible for the quality of life on the trail than the mothers, wives and daughters whose careful provisioning meant the difference between regular meals and severe deprivation. Once on the trail, women's ingenuity and resourcefulness fended off disaster. Survival required new ways of preparing food, adapting unfamiliar foodstuffs and the constant gathering of fuel and fresh water.

Sensing the significance of the trek, many women kept trail diaries. Some were intended as a family history; others served as a guide for family members who followed. As such, these diaries were full of useful advice, including lists of food and equipment and clever ways to pack it all into the wagon. Finally, the diaries passed on a wealth of coping strategies for life on the trail.

In addition to the diaries, published trail guides also assisted the women in their packing. The Shively guide of 1846 recommended specially designed utensils and equipment: "You should take with you an iron pan, the handle jointed as to fold up; a kind of knife, fork and spoon, that all shut in one handle..." A Dutch oven, coffee pot, tin plates, butter churn, and, for some, specially designed sheet iron stoves, rounded out the cooking equipment.

Many important details concerned the women when it came time to pack. With limited space, the amount of food was critical: an overloaded wagon was too heavy for the oxen; however, too little food meant scarcity at the end of the trip. They brought the majority of food from home since there was very little in the way of supplies en route. Some women spent the prior winter preparing preserves, pickles and "sea biscuit," a hard cracker that was a mixture of flour and water baked at a low temperature. Pioneer wife Mary Powers took a typical array of supplies: "three sacks of flour, 100 lbs. Bacon [sic], 50 lbs. sugar, 55 lbs. coffee, 7 lbs. tea, half bushel of dried apples, bottle pickles..." Still, the specter of hunger was utmost in the pioneer women's minds. Helen Carpenter, a young bride traveling to California with her family, succinctly wrote: "What we are going to have to eat is going to be of much more importance than how it is served."

The women devised ingenious ways of packing the supplies into the wagon and protecting them from the omnipresent trail dust. Keturah Belknap for example, sewed linen sacks that held 125 pounds of flour each. Other emigrant women stored bacon in bran to protect it from the heat and kept it in the coolest part of the wagon. Coffee, another important staple, was transported green and skillet roasted along the way.

The trip began on the frontier, where travelers "jumped off." St. Joseph and Independence, Missouri, were two of the towns where emigrants gathered and stocked up on supplies. The fortunate embarked in the spring, when the grass was green.

Their goal was to travel 15-20 miles per day. Following a route mapped out by the early fur traders, the first leg of the trail followed the Missouri River to Fort Kearny, on the Platte River. The travelers paralleled the Platte for 300 miles across the Plains until arriving at Fort Laramie. Then, it was on to the Rocky Mountains, where they crossed at South Pass. Next, they came to Fort Bridger and later, Fort Hall. This was the halfway mark. After Fort Hall, those bound for Oregon branched off via the Snake River to Fort Boise in Idaho, to the Columbia River and the Willamette Valley. Those going to California went south, through the Mormon settlement in Utah, then 370 miles along the Humboldt River in northeastern Nevada. At the dreaded Humboldt Sink, they traveled fifty tortuous miles across a desert with no grass, water or fuel. Then it was a grueling 70 miles up the steep eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, hoisting wagons with ropes and pulleys. The Sacramento Valley lay 100 miles downhill on the other side.

Conditions for the travelers were rough. They lived entirely outdoors, with the wagon as their only shelter. As a result, meal preparation took a staggering effort. "Oh, the inconvenience of living this way!" lamented Mary Powers. The women commonly rose at four o'clock in the morning to stir the fire and start the water for breakfast. Afterwards, they washed up and packed all the equipment for the day's travel.

When the travelers made camp at night, the women faced a grueling list of chores: gathering fuel and water (often found miles from camp), milking cows, making bread, stewing fruit and preparing a cold lunch for the next day. All this work was done with little or no help from the men. Helen Carpenter wrote:

> *AIthough there is not much to cook, the difficulty in doing it amounts to a great deal. So by the time one has squatted around the fire and cooked bread and bacon, made several trips to and from the wagon, washed the dishes, (with no place to drain them) and gotten things ready for an early breakfast, some of the others already had their nightgowns on.*

Cooking over an open campfire presented a challenge for women used to their ranges at home. Some practiced cooking outdoors before they left. "Lucy, my oldest sister is cooking our supper for the first time on our new stove in the open air..." Another diarist wrote: "Cooking over a campfire is pleasant when one gets used to it, and know how we [sic] get along verry [sic] well."

Women often fashioned a cookpit out of a three foot long trench dug into the ground, one foot deep. They built the fire in the trench and suspended the kettle and coffee pot over it. Sometimes forked sticks with a pole across supported the cooking vessels. Dutch ovens with lids proved invaluable for cooking soups, stews and bread.

A steady supply of bread was essential since it served as a staple food item. But, making bread proved to be especially time consuming as it needed hours to rise, which the schedule rarely accommodated. In a striking example of ingenuity and adaptability, the emigrant women found ways to keep their families in bread. Keturah Belknap proudly described her method in her diary:

> *When we camped I made rising and set it on the warm ground and it would be up about midnight. I'd get up and put it to sponge and in the morning the first thing I did was to mix the dough and put it in the oven and by the time we had breakfast it would be ready to bake, then we had nice coals and by the time I got things washed up and packed up and the horses were ready the bread would be done and we would be on our way rejoicing.*

Another method involved making the sponge (yeast, salt, flour and water) in the morning and letting the rocking of the wagon stir it. At noon, more flour was added and it was set to rise; during the afternoon, the dough was shaped into a loaf and popped into the Dutch oven to bake when the weary travelers made camp. Bread was often contaminated with ashes or turned black with mosquitoes. They ate it anyway.

In addition to bread, the pioneer women reconstituted dried fruits with water. They turned out fruit pies by rolling the dough out on the wagon seat, wrapping it around the fruit and frying it in a skillet. Mary Powers shared her recipe for dumplings:

> *...I took the last of my dried strawberries and stewed them and wet up some light dough and rolled it out with a bottle and spread the strawberries over it, and then rolled it up in a cloth and boiled it...The dumplings were light as a cork...*

A new method of churning butter also evolved. Those lucky enough to have a cow filled containers with milk and the wagon's bouncing churned it into butter. The butter was later rolled in cheesecloth and stored in the cornmeal or flour barrel.

For some, though, the challenges proved exhausting and frustrating: "It is very trying on the patience to cook and bake on a little green wood fire with the smoke blowing in your eyes, so as to blind you, and shivering

with cold so much as to make the teeth chatter." Most food preparation took place on the ground and women complained of aching backs, singed skirts and burned food. Helen Carpenter noted: "None but those who have cooked for a family of eight, crossing the plains, have any idea what it takes."

For fresh meat and vegetables, the overlanders relied on what they could hunt and gather along the way. When possible, they picked dandelion and mustard greens, wild onions, garlic, hazelnuts and berries. The men fished and hunted antelope, prairie or sage hens and buffalo. "We have had fresh meat but once since leaving the Mississippi River" stated Mary Elizabeth Lightner on the plains outside Fort Bridger. They found antelope fine tasting: "much nicer, I think, than venison," wrote Ellen Tootle. Ruth Shackleford, thankful for the fresh meat, wrote: "July 3: I had some anteloupe [sic] steak for breakfast, the best meal I ever ate."

In the early years, buffalo was plentiful on the Plains. Many women commented on it in their diaries: "July 4: Had some buffalo meat for the first time. Found it very good eating." Abigail Jane Scott summed up the flavor: "it tastes almost exactly like beef but has a considerately coarser grain." The overlanders carefully preserved the excess buffalo, adorning their wagons with the red strips and air drying it as they traveled.

The fresh game and berries gathered along the way helped break up the monotony of the sojourners' diet. The trail diaries brim with complaints about the dreariness of their menus: "How we do wish for some vegetables. I can really scent them cooking sometimes..."mourned Helen Carpenter. "One does like a change and about the only change we have from bread and bacon is to bacon and bread." Amelia Hadley took a strong dislike to sage hens: "...I think a skunk more preforable [sic], their meat tastes of this abominable mountain sage, which I have got so tired of that I can't bear to smell it..." Oftentimes, travelers arriving at the Mormon settlement at Salt Lake were able to trade for fresh food, a welcome relief.

The overlanders preferred monotony to scarcity, however. Precious rations of flour were often fed to the oxen when grass was unavailable: "We were now on the last sack of flour, having been obliged to feed much to the horses...What next? What are we to do I know not..." Meals were improvised out of old ham bones, water and dough scrapings. Sometimes the emigrants went without food until they could trade with another overland outfit.

Insufficient food was not the overlanders only worry. The supply of burnable fuel was a top concern. Accustomed to unlimited amounts of wood at home, they sorely felt the scant supply on the trail. Burnable fuel was vital since nothing was worse for morale than a dinner of raw bacon and cold water mixed with flour. By Fort Kearny, Nebraska, wood was scarce. Along the Platte, the westering women gathered and burned buffalo chips. The Rocky Mountains provided plenty of sage brush. It was the miles along the Platte river with no wood at all, that seemed the most trying. Lucretia Epperson fantasized:"...if I made the country, I would put timber on each side of the Platte, so that poor emigrants could have a few sticks, at least, to cook with."

Cooking over a fire of buffalo chips tested the women, who patiently trudged beside the wagons and collected up to five bushels a day. For some, this was an indignity; to most, it was a necessity. Helen Carpenter praised the chips' ability to fend off mosquitoes. Polly Corn jauntily referred to them by their French translation: "Bois de Vach." Tamsen Donner described them as "excellent" and capable of producing a quick and long lasting fire. Most women resigned themselves to the necessity of cooking with the chips: "had to cook with buffalo chips for the first time. It makes verry [sic] good fuel when dry, it is more prefforable [sic] than wood for the verry [sic] good reason (can't get it.)"

Finding ample sources of clean, fresh water was another difficulty. In his book, *The Plains Across*, John D. Unruh remarks that "overland emigrants were totally dependent on grass and water for survival." Water was

Cooking pot with legs. From Jacqueline Williams, *Wagon Wheel Kitchens*.

an absolute necessity for the thirsty, overworked teams. Without it, the animals perished which meant disaster for the emigrants. They often drove late into the night, searching for water that was not muddy or alkaline. "...we are still traveling in search of water, water..." lamented Amelia Knight. A campsite was suitable only if it provided water, grass and fuel.

Worse than contaminated water were the days without any water. Mary Riddle remembered that, "No one knows how to enjoy a drink of water til they want it as we did." A common saying in the Oregon territory was that emigrants had "eaten a peck of dirt" by the time they arrived. One diarist described the Platte River water as "muddy and warm." Adding cornmeal to the water helped purify it since the cornmeal bound the mud and sank it to the bottom. Nevertheless, when they could not find clean water, the overlanders drank the dirty water, and it often made them sick.

Weather also affected meals on the Overland Trail. Frequent, sudden rain, dust storms or hailstorms, with hail the size of "quail eggs," could cause serious damage. The necessity to keep moving forced the pioneers to trudge on. When it rained, the canvas cover on the wagon offered little shelter. They were wet, often for days. So were their possessions. Camps were mired in mud: "... water was a foot deep all over the camping ground." Cooking in these conditions was trying, at best. Many times, the emigrants ate crackers and huddled under the wagon. One man described a woman kneading bread in the rain and holding her umbrella "over her carefully tended fire and her skillet in which bread is baking for two hours." Jane Gould stoically made the best of a rainy morning:"...made some coffee and warmed some beans and brought the breakfast to the wagon, which we all crowded into. Used a trunk for a table and made out a very comfortable meal." The description sounds cozy but, in reality, it took much effort to make coffee and warm beans in a pouring rain over a sputtering fire.

Sandstorms also played havoc with the meals. After a storm swooped in on her campsite, an exasperated wife wrote: "And our dinner! Who would have eaten it? We could not tell what it consisted of, although before the storm it looked very tempting. So we had to cook another."

After several months of grueling travel, the emigrants arrived. Whether they settled in the Oregon's plush Willamette Valley or in California's fertile Sacramento Valley, their immediate troubles did not always end. The areas they came to were raw. Instead of camp-

Interior of a covered wagon from John Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West*, 1840-60.

ing out of a wagon, the women lived in rough cabins, with few amenities. Emigrants' standard of living was dependent on whether they had any money, tools or seed left. Arriving in the late fall, they hurried to plant a winter crop, if they had the supplies or cash to purchase them.

The diaries reflect a sadness and disappointment that life was not better at the end of the very hard trip. Cooking conditions remained arduous, and many overlanders were short of food the first winter. While permanent shelter was built, the women continued to cook outdoors. Katherine Kirk confided in her diary:

> *With a sinking feeling I realized that I was entering a new kind of life, as rough and full of ups and downs as the road over which we traveled. Would I have the courage and fortitude to stick it out?*

Mary Powers, who crossed the Plains with toddler twins, an older child and a husband who slowly lost his mind, echoed this forlornness in a letter to her mother:

> *I feel I am in a strange land...Oh, my dear mother, if only I could have you with me, to lay my poor weary aching head upon your lap, and feel your dear hand upon my burning brow...*

It took an enormous effort to feed families crossing the United States in covered wagons. With determination in the face of fuel and water shortages, the wives and mothers kept food in their families' mouths. Bowing to necessity, they cooked outdoors over open campfires in all kinds of weather. Using ingenuity, they produced bread and butter, pies and dumplings. They adapted local food stuffs, turning to buffalo meat and wild berries to supplement their meager supplies. At times exasperated, usually exhausted, these women dove deep into themselves for the stamina needed to cook under such conditions. With pragmatism and practicality, they trudged, day to day, to achieve their goal: a better life in the West.

Woman gathering buffalo chips from Sandra L. Myres, *Westerning Women and the Frontier Experience.*

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Dingle Fire Station. Photo courtesy of author.

Smith's Haunts

by B. G. Olesen

Smith, a Mountain Man known as Pegleg to all, then and now, was an unique and most durable person. Having lost a foot in a brush with Indians, he became somewhat less than useful as a trapper, what with the required getting in and out of muddy stream beds and beaver ponds. So legend tells us that he turned to "trading" to make ends meet.

Even today he is superficially, but quite well remembered in southern Idaho, where he had one of his early and more or less enduring residences. Ask long time residents of that area about him, and they will tell you that he was a Mountain Man and had a trading post on an island in Bear River.

What then, might be interesting about this location today? It isn't outstanding in any particular way in its own right. Just a brush covered island in a river. Not an inviting place to traverse, I will guarantee that, since I grew up not more than 50 miles from there and ventured around river banks very similar to those of that island, swimming and, in later years, fishing. That brush is very nearly impenetrable and as tough as any wood in existence. Experience tells you that it is much wiser and more satisfying to view that island from across one arm of the Bear River flowing in front of you rather than trying to visit it.

Perhaps it is best to start at the end then, rather than at the beginning. When one looks up toward the steep hills to the east of island, a branch of the Oregon Trail can be seen descending from the crest of that high, steep and barren hill, down to where it disappears behind one of the low rolling hills between Bear River and the high plateau. With very little imagination, a person can see some covered wagons raising dust plumes as they slowly grind down that slope. That brief glimpse of what was makes the trip worthwhile and brings to life the significance of this spot on Bear River. From that point the

Typical Dingle Scene. Photo courtesy of author.

trail proceeds to Highway 30 which is only a black powder rifle shot away from Bear River.

Pegleg knew where to locate, right by the first water that the travelers could get to after that long, dry plateau to the east. Legends have it that one of the commodities that he traded was horses. Fresh, fat horses that he "obtained" in California and drove back to Bear Lake for ultimate sale to those traveling the Oregon Trail. Those tired and weary souls, who had worn out their stock coming across many miles of harsh Wyoming hills that provided little grazing, traded worn out horses for less good fat ones or possibly oxen that Pegleg had fattened. No doubt a good judge of horse flesh and a trader of long experience with the Indians, he must have made a decent living for a one legged Mountain Man. He also must have been an expert horseman and even better at finding his way around the west.

Several years ago I wanted to locate his trading post in the Bear Lake Valley and thus the trip to that area. While living there I had never been to that side of Bear Lake nor had the inclination to investigate the Mountain Men.

Driving to Montpelier, Idaho, on this trip, I asked around about Pegleg Smith's Trading Post, and while I found many who knew of Pegleg, even that he had had a trading post on an island in Bear River, they did not know the location. Finally I was referred to the local historian; unfortunately he was not at home on that day. Further random questioning of the local citizens revealed a person who knew where his trading post was in addition to who he was. He matter of factly told me to go to Dingle. Dingle? That sounded very suspicious, and I wondered if that was a euphemism for a much better known place. No doubt he could read the look on my face and went on to explain that it was about six or seven miles south of Montpelier on the asphalt road "thataway." I felt sure that "the city dude from California" had been sent on a wild goose chase and that the local was watching me go on down that road with a big smile on his face. After all I had been to the west side of Bear Lake many times, and I had never heard

of this place called "Dingle." But when you are looking for a historic spot that a Mountain Man had been at for some time, anything is worth a try, even if it could end up being an embarrassment. At least no one else would ever know I had been sent down a road to nowhere (Dingle).

After miles and several right angle turns the road did indeed come to a group of huge old cottonwood trees that sheltered a general store on one side of the crossroads there. The crossroad was dirt, little more than a trail.

There was also a sign on a private residence that said " Post Office," so I knew that I had arrived somewhere, rather than nowhere, as I had expected. There was no road sign proclaiming "Dingle" though. I had never seen a town that didn't have at least a sign posted with the name of the town. I have even seen one that said "entering" on one side and "leaving" on the other side of the same sign. But this place had nothing at all. I thought that if this really was "Dingle" I was going to need some proof of that. My less than enthusiastic wife came to the rescue by pointing out the Fire Station building, in the first photo, that had the name "Dingle" painted on the front of it. Best building in sight. So there really is a Dingle, Idaho, honest. The photograph is not a fake. Actually, the second photo better represents the town of Dingle, Idaho.

The general store was certainly from beyond the turn of the century because it had the characteristic large glass front windows, false front and recessed front double doors with a latch that barely worked due to wear. Also lacking was any but a few scraps of paint. Even so, when I went inside, there were two women talking over what could only have been significant local events. No Internet here. All the original old shelves were empty except for a few candy bars located in the scratched old glass topped display cases. Those ladies acted as though I was no stranger or even a new event, so I waited for a break in the conversation and again asked my question. I asked if we were indeed in Dingle and the answer to that was "yup." Then where could I find Pegleg Smith's trading post? Again my question was no apparent surprise to them, even though I must have been only the second or third person to ask that question of them in the last 20 years. They matter of factly told me that it was located on Dean Cook's farm a mile or so to the northeast. When it became obvious that I had never heard of "Dean Cook's" farm, they gave me exact directions of a local type on how to get there.

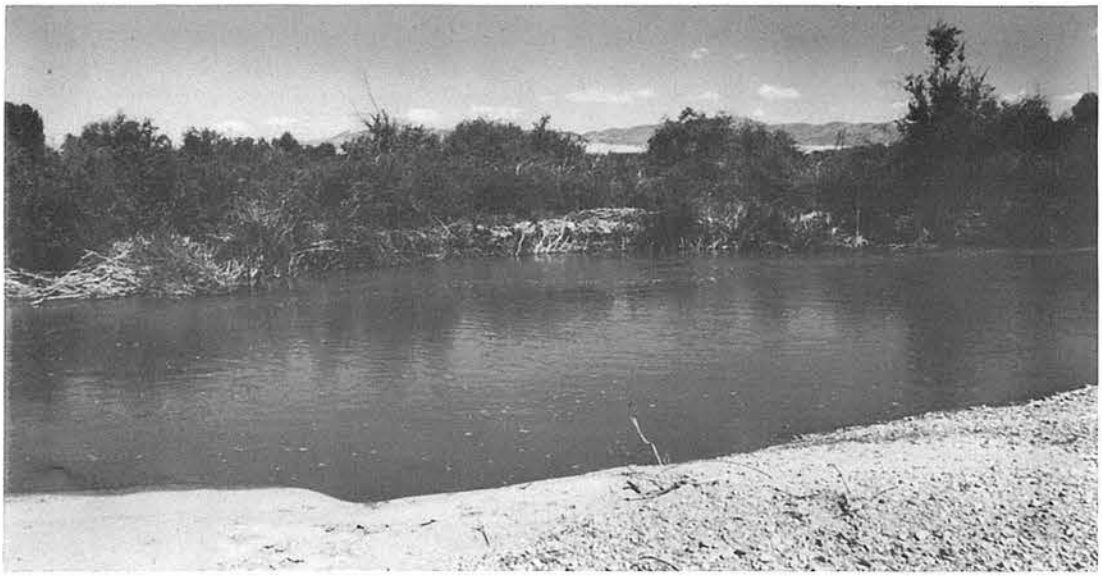
Several left and right turns were involved and to correctly make these turns, a recognition of the right colors of houses was essential, as was positive identification of a certain farmer's barn (well known critical landmark). No street or road identifications whatsoever.

Somehow we made all the correct house and barn recognitions, plus turns and drove into Dean Cook's farm yard. He was in a shed making repairs to some type of farm implement but came out to meet us. I thought it best to explain that I had grown up nearby since I had a California license plate and hoped that having originated as a local would gain me some measure of cooperation. As it turned out, he was a very friendly and gracious person and strangely enough I realized that I had been a classmate of one of his sons when I went to college.

He took us into his house and introduced us to his wife, who was busy baking for a local event. My wife was all too happy to be able to have another to talk to and not have to go further in this foolish quest of "a trading post."

Then he spread a clean blanket on the front seat of his 1950's Ford pickup truck, and we took off bouncing through about a mile of his fields and irrigation ditches to find Pegleg Smith's trading post island in the middle of Bear River. It wasn't the most comfortable ride I have ever had. No seat belt either.

I took several photographs of this island. An example is the photo on page 12. It was not a big island; it may have been 50 yards long and half that wide. But more than that, it was covered with dense brush, which as I



Scene of Pegleg's trading post. Photo courtesy of author.

have said from my personal experience as a youth, was impenetrable! As kids we used to swim in one of the local rivers which had the same dense brush along the banks. Never, never did anyone try to go through that type of brush. It was much wiser and much easier to go around it. Describing the nastiness of that brush to one who has not experienced it is impossible, and a person must try it first hard to appreciate the difficulty of going through it. Cattle do not force their way through it; they have better sense. When alive it is unbreakable and when dead it approximates stone. It cannot be chopped with an ax; it just shakes when hit. The major stems are normally one to two inches in diameter, grow to about 10 feet high and then hang over so that the smaller upper branches tend to interlock with other major bush stems. It winds up to be a tangle of scratchy, rough, living and dead brush. In addition to that it is frequently full of equally tough interlocking vines, wood ticks and stinging nettle several feet high, which is a very discouraging plant. All in all, it is an ideal environment to stay out of.

My best judgment tells me that Pegleg Smith never did have a "trading post" on that island. It would have been nearly impossible to get a significant number of cattle or horses onto that place, and I doubt if it has changed much over the last 100 years or so. But it would have made a good hide out. The water flowing around it was deep on both sides such that a person would almost have to swim to the island or float down from above on the river, for a considerable distance, again through overhanging brush. It would have been a difficult task to approach someone on that island without making some sort of sound that would be detected.

In my opinion, the island was used as an identifying landmark to locate Peglegs' general area of habitation. The area to the south of that part of Bear River is reasonably well watered and grows good crops. It must be assumed that during the time that Pegleg was there, it had lots of good grazing for animals.

Pegleg is indeed an intriguing personality from the Mountain Man period and his presence, even though from a different time, gives that spot a distinctly unique character. With a little imagination, a person can visualize an old irascible, unfettered and shaggy character with a peg leg sitting in the shade of one of those very, very old cottonwood trees watching the current activities and exerting his unruly influence even today.

The Brands of the Hudson's Bay Company

by Siegfried G. Demke

Beginning in Egypt over 4500 years ago, systems of symbols, marks or brands have been used to identify ownership of property. The first known use of cattle brands was in Egypt in the year 2780 B.C. on the animals of the Pharaoh. By the seventeenth century, A.D., the practice of identifying ownership of property with special marks was no longer limited to the property of rulers, but was a system used extensively by English merchants and manufacturers and German and Hungarian horse breeding farms. In nineteenth century America, branding was the only way to establish ownership of intermingled livestock in the vast herds grazing on the western open range. In a world that had many illiterates, anyone could "read" symbols.

The earliest known mark in England was that of the Mayor of London in the year 1213. More than a hundred years later, Chaucer, in his writings, referred to "the marks of merchants." Thereafter, over the centuries, the marks of merchants developed into the trademarks and company logotypes of today.

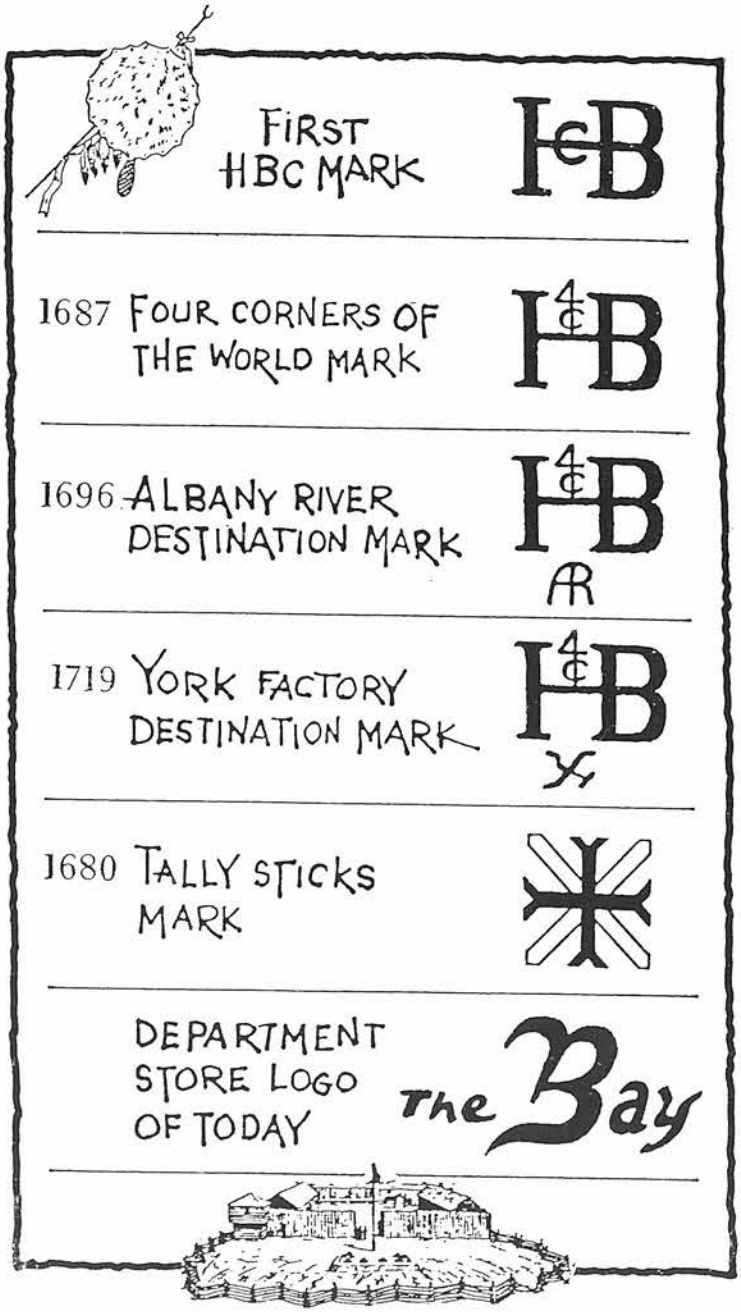
As English merchants became more successful and powerful they used their marks to identify their homes and personal possessions, much as the aristocracy did with the family coat of arms. The aristocracy resented the use of the merchants' self-created emblems to denote importance in the community. The College of Heraldry, siding with the aristocracy, forbade the practice of merchant princes enclosing their marks in the framework of a shield.

The marks of merchants also protected the quality of their goods. As early as the time of Elizabeth I a cloth merchant brought a legal action against another manufacturer who had usurped his mark and placed it on his inferior goods.

With merchants' marks having become so important it is not unusual that the Hudson's Bay Company used them in its operations. The first mark joined the letters H and B with a smaller C centered on the crossline of the H. This was later, in 1687, embellished with the number 4 above the C, probably representing the company's future ambition to do business to the four corners of the world. Company horses were branded with the simple HBC combination. When the horse was sold, usually to an Indian, it was branded again with an S to indicate that it had been sold.

The company mark was placed on bales, boxes, and crates being moved to and from England but mostly on goods containers being shipped to North America. Later, as the number of HBC posts, forts, and warehouses increased in America, precise destination information was added to the marks. The joined letters of A and R under the HBC combination indicated, beginning in 1696, that the container was destined for the Albany River post at the southern end of James Bay. The joined letters of Y and F under the HBC mark indicated, beginning in 1719, that the container was destined for York Factory on the west side of Hudson Bay at the deltas of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers. For almost two hundred years, York Factory was the company's North American headquarters.

In 1680 the company used tally sticks for trading with the Indians. For different pelts and quality, different quantities of tally sticks were given to the Indians, who used them to make their purchases of HBC goods. The design of the tally sticks mark was borrowed from the crosses of the British flag. In later years the tally sticks were replaced by the "beaver" coins. The earliest coins were made out of lead, an inch and a half in diameter, and stamped with the company crest on one side. Used in trading with the Indians and independent trappers, each coin represented the equivalent of one beaver pelt.



Samples of Hudson Bay brands and logos drawn for this article by Andrew Dagosta.

Today's HBC continues to use a distinct mark as part of its shortened name, for its department store business from Montreal to Vancouver. The distinct B in the Bay sign seen from a distance tells shoppers that a Hudson's Bay Company store is there.

Information for this article was obtained, in part, from an article, "Marks of Merchants" by F.E. Evans in the Winter 1965 issue of *The Beaver*, the quarterly magazine published at that time by the Hudson's Bay Company.

(Monthly Roundup Continued from page 2)
graphy of the Gold Rush; it contained 239 titles. More recently Gary Kurutz published an updated bibliography with 706 titles. Not only had the number of books increased, but the range of topics had also expanded. At the Centennial no one would have considered its impact on women, families and communities.

In spite of all the literature, we still do not know when gold was discovered. Diaries and memories of persons present date the discovery between January 19 and 30, 1848. In 1890, the State erected a monument giving the date January 19, but the 50th Anniversary Celebration, 1898, was held on January 24. Rodman Paul in his definitive work *California Gold* basing his judgment on extant diaries and logical deduction opted for the January 24 date. Since then, that has become the accepted date.

The ripple effect of the discovery of gold followed so closely by the transfer of ownership of California to the United States abruptly altered the destiny of the State and nation. We were the first part of the country to engage in large scale mining. This meant that our practices and attitudes were important in establishing the mining laws of the nation. In the 25 years of extensive mining the complexion of mining changed from the individual, free agent to corporate. The miner turned from entrepreneur to a wage earner. The income from mining moved California through its own Industrial Revolution in 25 years. Of course, the lure of wealth increased the population of the area from a mere handful to nearly a quarter of a million (est.) four years later. The flood of riches raised San Francisco to the highest per capita income in the nation. The list goes on of the ways in which the discovery of gold altered the practices and attitudes of the State including altering the topography.

The wealth and growing population attracted culture and the arts to California. In the process California was changed from a pastoral to a modern capitalistic society. Overall, it made California an urban area.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Sue Ellen Chang entertained the Corral with her lecture and slide presentation "Looking East," a history of Los Angeles' Chinese community and seven prominent men of the community. Born in Taiwan, Ms. Chang came to the United States twenty-three years ago as a Fulbright Scholar. Today she is the Curator at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument.

There have actually been several Chinatowns in Los Angeles. They are Old Chinatown, China City, New Chinatown, City Market and the East Adams Area. The original area of settlement was where Union Station is today. The story of the early Chinese community is one of struggle against and victory over anti-Chinese sentiment.

Even in the beginnings of Los Angeles' Chinese community their influence extended beyond their own community, chiefly because of the produce they grew and sold and of their herbalists.

Following various slides of historic scenes in the Chinese community that accompanied Ms. Chang's remarks, her lecture continued with brief biographies of seven prominent local Chinese businessmen and community leaders.

Ng Poon Chew, (1868-1931), traveled across the United States 86 times telling audiences about the Chinese-American community. He published the first Chinese newspaper in Los Angeles. He later moved to San Francisco and there started a daily Chinese newspaper. The next leader she spoke about was George C. Lem, (1862-1951). He owned a restaurant and established the Chinese Telephone Exchange. The third man was Tom Leung, (1875-1931). He left China to search for gold in California. A well known herbalist, he was credited with bringing the Chinese herbal customs to a wider knowledge to the general public. He was so popular with the public that he drew the ire of physicians. As a result, the police came to his home over a hundred times in

the 1920's, without warrants, to advise him that Chinese herbalists were not legal under American law. He encouraged the Chinese community to celebrate their Chinese heritage and American ways and holidays. His daughter, Louise Leung, became the first Chinese-American female journalist.

Low F. Chew, (1894-1953), fought to let the Chinese in the American army in World War I. He was active in the American Legion as well as the Chinese-American Citizens Alliance. He also traveled across America fighting to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, an event which he lived to see, in 1943. Peter SooHoo, Sr., (1899-1945), was largely responsible for building New Chinatown. A graduate of U.S.C. and a civil engineer, he was the first Chinese-American to work for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. He was active in civic affairs and was elected president of the Chinese-American Citizens Alliance from 1937 to 1940.

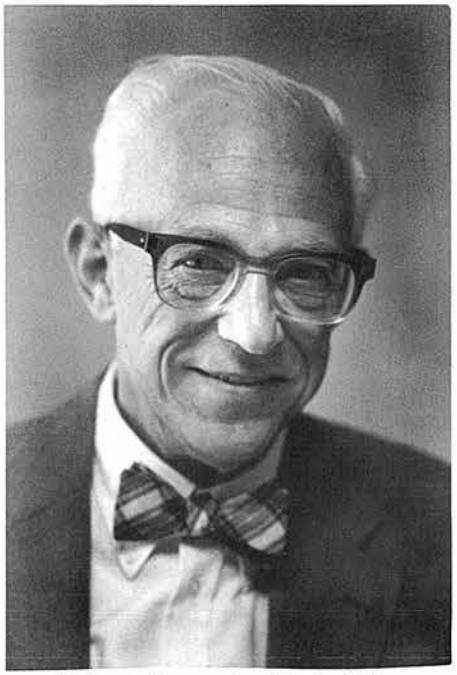
You Chung Hong, (1898-1977), was the first Chinese-American attorney in Los Angeles. He came from a very poor family and could not afford to buy books. So he memorized their contents as well as the lectures he heard. He practiced law first in Old Chinatown and then in New Chinatown. He built the now famous arch entrance to New Chinatown as a tribute to his mother. Tyrus Wong, (1910-), is an artist. He once worked for Walt Disney Studios. He has also been very involved in kite-building and even today flies kites from the Santa Monica Pier.

Glenn Thornhill

MARCH MEETING

Martin Ridge, Professor *Emeritus* of History at California Institute of Technology and Senior Research Associate at the Huntington Memorial Library, reviewed how the legal system responded to the disorder following the discovery of gold.

The early Gold Rush period was fairly lawful, but disorderly. Law enforcement outside the towns was almost non-existent. Mexican land law had been abolished by Colonel Richard Mason, but the Army had



March meeting speaker Martin Ridge, Photo courtesy of Historical Society of Southern California

no authority to enforce laws against civilians, and after the discovery of gold, he had few soldiers to enforce the law, even if he had wanted to, since many went AWOL. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo left California in limbo; it was neither a territory nor a state. The discovery of gold led to another problem: the federal mining laws had been repealed, but tort law protected claims.

The Argonauts, who were interested only in acquiring wealth and returning home brought racial and ethnic prejudices with them as well as their traditional concepts of law. Because of their preconceptions and racist feelings, the incoming Americans expected gold to be readily available, but only to them. As long as gold was easily available there was little crime, and most disorder was directed at the "foreigners." Even if there were a dispute over a claim, the one in the wrong usually backed down because miners protected their property rights.

As gaining wealth became more difficult, a wave of crime lead to the establishment of

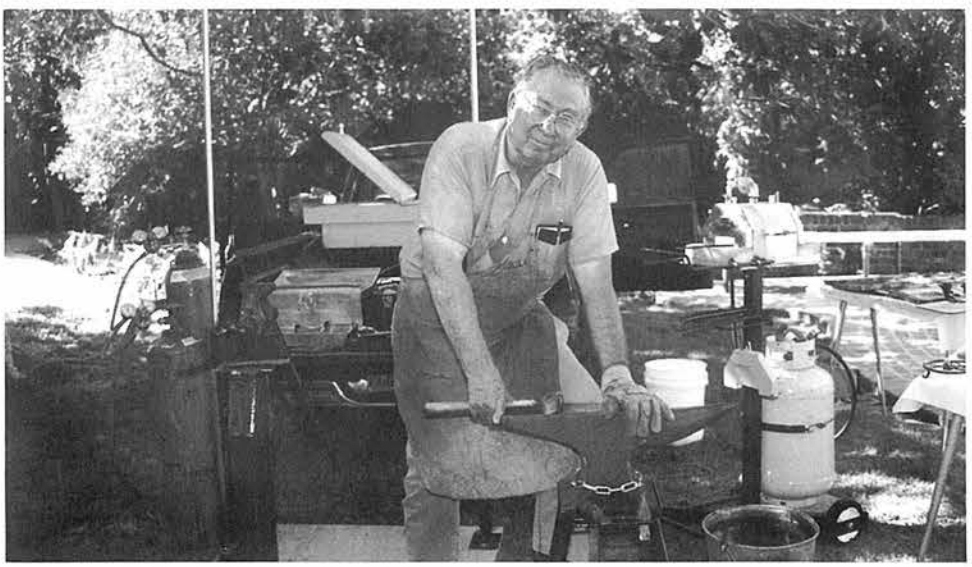
vigilante committees. Because of the lack of facilities, the amount of time involved in taking criminals to town for prosecution and unwillingness to apply the lash, expulsion and hanging became the punishments of choice.

The Constitutional Convention and establishment of a frame of law led to the elimination of *Alcaldes* and the establishment of Justices of the Peace. By 1851, Governor Peter Burnett had asked to have grand larceny made a capital crime. Even with the more strict stance on crime, morals remained a private issue. One of the major causes of crime and disorderliness was alcoholism, but none thought the government should intervene.

Other attitudes influenced law. In Sacramento the belief the land was available to all led to support of the squatters by many. Prejudice against Indians caused bloodshed. If an Indian killed a white, any Indian could be killed in retaliation. Race riots occurred against Blacks, Mexicans, Chileans, Chinese and French. The belief was that the gold belonged to free, white Americans.

Some say that the early lack of crime was because all were armed. Most carried weapons, but they were seldom used in the protection of person or property.

Overall, the early years were disorderly; most lived by traditional concepts of right and wrong and created copies of eastern legal institutions. Worsening economic conditions led to increased crime and violence.



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

William I. Miller

The Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners lost one of its most active and enthusiastic members with the passing of William (Bill) Iredell Miller on March 30, 1998. Bill should probably be called a Man of Iron and and Man of Steel because his hobby was creating useful and ornamental objects by forging iron, and before he retired several years ago he owned a steel fabrication company. Bill will long be remembered for the interesting blacksmithing demonstrations he provided for our Westerners Rendezvous, and he created both a modern and an old fashioned blacksmith shop at the Discovery Museum of Orange County. Bill was an active 33 degree Mason and was for several years the editor and feature writer of the Long Beach *Scottish Rite Reporter*. He is survived by his wife Doris, three daughters and six grandchildren.

Ray Nicholson

Raymund F. Wood
1911-1998

Raymund F. Wood a long time and very active member of the Corral died April 3, 1998. Ray was born in England, and his family immigrated to the United States in 1924. He originally planned to enter the priesthood but decided on an academic career instead. After earning a B.A. from St Mary's University in Baltimore, he taught English Literature at Santa Clara University. Further study earned him an M.A. from Gonzaga University, a Ph.D in Medieval history from UCLA and a Masters in Library Science from USC.

He served as reference librarian at CSU, Fresno. Later he taught Library Science at UCLA from which he retired as Associate Dean of the Library School.

Over the years, he acquired many awards and recognition. Among his awards was one for "Best Historical Writing of 1979" for his work on Ina Coolbrith. More recently, he was invested as a Knight commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great by Cardinal Roger Mahony.

Ray was very active in the Los Angeles Corral as well as many other historical societies. He contributed to *Brand Books* 14, 15, 16 and 20 and was the editor of 16. He contributed frequently to the *Branding Iron* as well as making presentations to the Corral. His last presentation was about Mariposa County in August 1997.

The Los Angeles City, San Fernando Valley, Mariposa County and Fresno County historical societies granted him life membership. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the San Fernando Mission Archives and was president of the Jedediah Smith society.

His death leaves a gap that will be hard to fill in many organizations and in the hearts of many individuals.

Corral Chips

ERNEST M. HOVARD was featured recently in the *Pasadena Star News* for his outstanding collection of Western artifacts.

The Huntington Memorial Library in house publication reports that there is a group known as the "Cowboys" who gather there every Saturday. Among the group of a dozen are LARRY ARNOLD, NICK CURRY, SIG DEMKE, DONALD DUKE, FRANK NEWTON AND TODD PETERSON.

Our own ORMLY GUMFUDGIN was featured in the *WI Buckskin Bulletin* as the "Man of the Hour."

CM PAUL BRYAN GRAY'S book *Forster vs. Pico: The Struggle for Rancho Santa Margarita* has been published by Arthur H. Clark Company.

WILLIAM KIMES a former member, who has not been active the past few years but was the editor of *Brand Book* 13, died in February.

Errata: In *Branding Iron* 210, "Corral Chips," it was reported Michael Harrington had celebrated his 100th birthday. It should have been Michael Harrison.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

NEW MEMBERS:

Sandra Burton Greenstein
714 E. California Blvd., #3
Pasadena, CA 91106

Amy Lebenzon
2312 California Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Winfred L. Lew
5636 Briarcliff Road
Los Angeles, CA 90068

William H. Stone
20463 Rancho Los Cerritos Road
Covina, CA 91724

STATUS CHANGES

Peter Pettler to Active
Mary Gormly to Associate

REMOVED FROM ROLLS

Cornell Norby
CM David Hornbeck
CM Wilbur Jacobs
CM John P. Langellier
Pomona Public Library
Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources

ADDRESS CHANGES

Neal Harlow
216 El Toyonal
Orinda, CA 94563-2121

Michael Torguson
PO Box 3432
Central Point, OR 97502-0016

CM H. F. Blasier
26366 Camino de Vista, #187
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

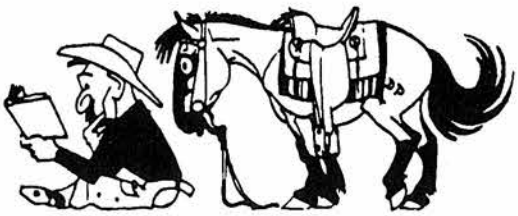
CM John S. Ferguson
1212 Foirmona Avenue
Redondo Beach, CA 90278-4612

CM Tom Knapp
Box 430144
Laredo, TX 78043

CM David W. Pann
5129 Westwood Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90230

CM Steve Tice
301 Arbolada Drive
Arcadia, CA 91006

CM Tiffany W. Warren
2344 Westwood Blvd., Suite 4
Los Angeles, CA 90064-2118



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

"To find just the right book at the moment the soul is hungry for it is a miracle, and not a small one."

Jane Steeger

FIDDLETOWN: *From Gold Rush to Rediscovery*, by Elaine Zorbas. Altadena, CA: Mythos Press, 1997. 136 pp. Maps. Photos. Index. Paperback, $14.95, plus $1.23 CA sales tax & $2.00 S&H. Order from Mythos Press, P.O. Box 6765, Altadena, CA 91003.

There is no name in California which causes broader smiles than Fiddletown. This sleepy, wisp of an old and charming place near South Lake Tahoe has needed attention for decades, and now it has it.

The town's name was once changed to Oleta for some obscure reason until loyal heads regained the original name. She mostly bathes in the sun not far from where Highway 49 crosses the Consumnes River boundary of Amador County.

After years of research and interviews with old timers and present families, Elaine Zorbas has skillfully sorted out mounds of data into an easily read tome that captures much of the flavor of the community. She traces and assembles the earliest information about Fiddletown when it was within El Dorado County. In April 1855 the first of two boundary moves placed Fiddletown outside El Dorado and into the newly created Amador county. Later, a further boundary adjustment placed her even more safely in the new county.

Zorbas, a native Californian and Head of Research at the Pasadena Public Library, brings a rare combination of talents and interest together in a nice volume. The easily read text is pleasantly sprinkled with stories about local characters, events, businesses and relationship to mining. She supplements her story with photos and maps.

Mining in the surrounds yielded enough to support a moderate population, but Fiddletown was also a trading center. With increased stage lines subsidized by mail contracts, the town became primarily a trading place during the 1860s.

The Chinese began to supplant others, mainly Anglos, and today the Chew Kee store so often mentioned in tour guides has been restored as a museum. In the town, a large fiddle shape is found on the front of the Community Hall, not far from the Chew Kee.

Every place likes to claim famous people as having lived there. There are unfounded claims that James Fenimore Cooper was there, but it was his nephew, Isaac Cooper, who owned a mine there. Another person who wrote of the town, but cannot be placed there, was Bret Harte. While not in the icon class, but known in several places up and down California, was Mortimer W. Belshaw, an early jeweler, assayer and Wells Fargo agent in the town, who later, with Prudent Beaudry, acquired control of Cerro Gordo mines northeast of Los Angeles. Remi Nadeau, local freighter of note, who hauled the Cerro Gordo output to Los Angeles, is perhaps Fiddletown's best known personage.

This reviewer highly recommends this charming, paperback publication.

Frank Q. Newton, Jr.

THE GREAT SOUTHWEST OF THE FRED HARVEY COMPANY AND THE SANTA FE RAILWAY, edited by Martha Weigle and Barbara A. Babcock. Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1996. 254 pp. Illustrations, Appendix, References Cited, Index. Paper, $24.95. Order from University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719 or (520) 621-3920.

When I read and hear the names Fred Harvey, the Fred Harvey Company, or the Santa Fe Railway, I think of trains, dining cars, "Harvey Girls," excellent food and fine hotel accommodations. The reader of this volume would have to be at least 60 years of age for the name Fred Harvey to mean anything.

Fred Harvey brought good food to hearty eaters in the American Southwest. I would classify him as a "Civilizer of the West." This attractive volume has nothing to do with trains, or dining cars, or for that matter eating houses. It is about Harvey hotels in Arizona and New Mexico, Indian artifacts, paintings, Indian lore, and Indian detours operated by the Harvey Company. The Fred Harvey Arts Foundation contributed a lot of its holdings to the Heard Museum, located in Phoenix, Arizona.

To back the train up a bit, Fred Harvey began operating dining cars, eating houses and hotels for the rapidly growing Santa Fe Railway system on its Chicago to Los Angeles main line. Passengers found Harvey meals so appetizing that it proved to be a prime drawing card for Santa Fe trains. As tourists looked out of the train window through Arizona and New Mexico they wanted to learn more about the West and the American Indians. The Santa Fe and the Harvey Company waged a huge campaign to come see the West, "Visit the Grand Canyon" and established Indian detours. The Santa Fe embellished Indians on their literature, calendars, playing cards. They offered package tours to various sites.

The Santa Fe built hotels and eating houses patterned after indigenous Spanish colonial, Pueblo, Hopi and Navajo style of architecture. Interior stylings for the Harvey Houses have been credited to Mary Elizabeth Colter, one of the nation's foremost decorators of the time. They were spectacular. Colter promoted and paid homage to Indian art throughout the hotels in Arizona and New Mexico. In 1892 the Santa Fe hired Thomas Moran and Fernand H. Lungren to paint scenes of Indians, the Grand Canyon and Arizona. They used the art for calendars and brochures; the paintings were placed on the wall at El Tovar.

The El Tovar was the flagship for the Harvey System. It was built in 1884 and cost Santa Fe $250,000 at the time of its construction. It is still used today. Hopi Indians were on the spot making jewelry from turquoise, working on rugs on the loom, and painting pottery. Harvey opened Indian stores in all his hotels and eating houses in New Mexico and Arizona. In 1926 Harvey began tours, called "Indian Detours," which took tourists around to Indian sites, the Petrified Forest and Painted Desert.

It is difficult to review this book as it really is not a book, so to speak. It is divided into three parts. Each part has several sections, not chapters authored by different people, more or less a compendium.

The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway is bigger than the standard 8 1/2x11-inch book, is nicely printed, with good reproduction. The price is reasonable for a 250 page volume. As a railroad historian this book is really not my bag. The Fred Harvey Company was big, serving dining cars, hotels, and eating houses. This book is none of this, but the Indian experience of the Harvey Company in the Southwest.

Robert Kern

CAPTAIN RICHARDSON: *Mariner, Rancher, and Founder of San Francisco*, by Robert Ryal Miller, Berkeley: La Loma Press, 1995. 228 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $30.00. Order from La Loma Press, 1636 La Loma Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709-1016.

Robert Ryal Miller narrates William A. Richardson's life. A 27-year-old Englishman, Richardson, after confronting his superior on the English whaling ship *Orion*, was set adrift or "jumped ship" into San Francisco's Bay in 1822. Returning to the *Presidio*, where the previous night's *fandango* had gotten him in trouble in the first place, he found the favor

of *Comandante* Ignacio Martínez and was enamored of his daughter, the *Señorita* María Antonia, whom he later married. Like most Anglo settlers in the mid-1800s, who "make it" in Alta California, Richardson was an opportunist, thriving on the goodwill of the Mexican establishment by his knowledge of the Spanish language and culture. He petitioned and received permanent residency (the first *extranjero* or foreigner) in the Bay region and capitalized on the knowledge gleaned from close associations with neighboring *rancheros* around the Bay. With his valuable maritime experience, he quickly became a central figure in charting the waters of the Bay and was named Captain of the Port. William bought a Mexican brigantine, and for eight years, under Mexican rule, transported supplies from the surrounding missions and *ranchos*. He sailed California ships to and from Alaska and Peru, piloted ships entering the Bay and established the Yerba Buena's first ferry service.

In 1824 Governor Echeandia moved to San Diego, and in 1829, Richardson wanted to petition for full naturalization and for a rancho grant. Since the San Francisco *Presidio* was in decline, and his patron (and father-in-law) was ousted as *Comandante* by a coup, Richardson decided to move his family to San Gabriel. The Richardsons swam in the good life for five years in Southern California, and Miller paints a romantic imagery of dancing, music, varieties of food, picnics, sports and festivities. This frivolity and social life end with his return to Yerba Buena Cove 1835. As if he had never left, William began a maritime transportation service under the watchful eye of the Mexican government.

Serving on the first surveying team in Yerba Buena, Richardson laid out the *Pueblo* and first street, *Calle de la Fundación*, on which he built the first house. In January 1847 Yerba Buena became San Francisco, and an Anglo surge followed on the heels of the gold rush. Richardson, at the time of the "Bear Revolt" and later Mexican War, was at first sympathetic with his fellow *Californios*. In fact some hostility remained in the Richardson family throughout the American "discovery" period after John Frémont had the lover of Williams' daughter killed. Richardson prospered later, however, by supplying the military insurgents with horses, cattle and water.

The gold rush was elaborated on in all its difficulties and the Richardson family disassociated itself from it. The chapter on the Gold Rush Era describes primarily the suitors of daughter Mariana Richardson. These were mostly American military officers whom she held in contempt. Her ultimate choice for a mate was most interesting, but we'll leave this mysterious outcome and her life at Rancho Sausalito for the reader to probe.

The Richardson entrepreneurship thrived with his participation in ferrying goldseekers up the Sacramento River, providing a slaughterhouse from his Rancho Sausalito, managing Angel Island and selling its wood to store owners in new San Francisco, raising livestock at his Rancho Albion on the Pacific, starting a steam-powered sawmill, and providing a clear-fresh-crystal waterworks on the Sausalito rancho. All this in addition to his extensive land holdings in the northern Bay isthmus—and at San Diego!

You might rightly say he should have lived to a ripe ol' age, with all this New World luxury and splendor, but, in fact, the opposite occurred. The reader again will find out how this happened.

This excellent biographical sketch has many stories of notable events and places elaborated upon earlier by historians A. Robinson, H.H. Bancroft, W.H. Davis, R.H. Dana, Jr., E. Duflot de Mofras and others. Many of Richardson's experiences within the sketch are purely speculative, although they were very well presented and extremely interesting. It is this reviewer's belief that all *Westerners* should have and read a copy of *Captain Richardson*, especially those in love with San Francisco. With only a limited edition of 300 copies, it's a shame this will never be possible.

Kenneth Pauley

TEXAS, NEW MEXICO, AND THE COMPROMISE OF 1850: *Boundary Dispute and Sectional Crisis*, by Mark J. Stegmaier. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1996. 435 pp. Maps, Appendices, Notes, Essay on Sources, Index. Cloth, $39.00. Order from Kent State University Press, P. O. Box 5190, Kent, OH 44242-0001.

This extensively researched book is hard to classify. Is it a Civil War history or is it a history of the West? Which ever it is, it indicates that the West may have been more important as a cause of the Civil War than generally conceded.

After the annexation of Texas no one was certain where its western boundary was located. Texas claimed it to be the Rio Grande which would include most of settled New Mexico. For purposes of negotiation, the United States accepted this border, but after the Treaty of Guadalupe, the situation changed.

The Republic of Texas attempted to extend its boundaries to the Rio Grande when President Mirabeau Lamar ordered General Hugh McLeod to occupy the area. Interestingly, the Texas Congress did not support the invasion. Much to the Texas forces' surprise, the people of New Mexico strongly opposed the invasion and soundly defeated them. Because of these actions, President Polk wished to quickly occupy the region, which would provide stabilization until the question could be settled.

At Doña Ana, William Cockburn, abetted by Major Enoch Steen, attempted to establish hegemony over that area. Whether Major Steen was a willing accomplice or an unknowing dupe is still not clear. After learning that Army Headquarters at Santa Fe opposed the actions, Cockburn rather quickly backed down and did not extend his plans.

As President Polk had insisted that only Congress could determine the boundaries of the two territories, Congress began to take an interest. However, the new President Zachary Taylor was taking the stand that New Mexico was right and there could be no annexation made for Texas.

Texas took a new stance and started negotiating a way to give up its claim in exchange for the Texas Republic's debt. To this reviewer, the debt was always the issue and the land claims were just a bartering chip. The author, using political science techniques, traces all the votes in Congress about the border. He carefully analyzes the votes and proves that the extremists, both North and South, worked together to ruin the Compromise of 1850. As he traces the actions concerning the Compromise, one can see that once the Texas border question was settled the alliance between Northern and Southern extremists collapsed.

This book, while presenting a very intriguing concept, will not appeal to all; the vast detail and the intricacies of political maneuvering will overwhelm many. However, the work is very important and should encourage new evaluations of the role of the West as a factor in the causes of the Civil War.

Robert W. Blew

ENDANGERED DREAMS: *The Great Depression in California*, by Kevin Starr. New York Oxford University Press, 1996. 402 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $35. Order from Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 (212) 726-6106.

This is the fourth entry in Kevin Starr's acclaimed California history series. Although the subtitle suggests a rather tight focus, Starr prepares for the events of the Great Depression with ample background for each of the three main themes that he follows: the conflicts, panaceas and public works of the 1930s. In each of these themes Starr shows that while the nation met the Great Depression in various ways, from fascist reaction to New Deal reform, California put its own spin on the problems and cures for economic and social problems.

Almost half of the book deals with the

agricultural and industrial conflicts of the 1930s in California. The gap between management and labor in the state's agricultural fields and in the shipping industry resembled the economic system of the Middle Ages, the workers not much different than serfs, their employers enjoying the status of barons. The plumed knights of the era, however, sided with the workers. Communist labor organizers helped farm workers in their struggle for union status, better wages and working conditions. Although farm owners denounced any challenge to their interests as Communist-inspired, this did not necessarily mean that farm workers wanted to overthrow the established order of things. As Starr notes, the goals of the Communists in the fields coincided with what the workers themselves wanted. His profile of Caroline Decker and Harry Bridges, for example, illustrate the dedication and sacrifice of people who wanted (to use a modern term) a level playing field between labor and capital in the 1930s.

Starr's second theme demonstrates that California owes nothing to other states in coming up with ideas, often harebrained, to cure the Depression. The Golden State spawned the Townsend movement, the Ham and Eggs movement, and Upton Sinclair's EPIC (End Poverty in California) campaign. As extreme as these ideas were, they nonetheless foreshadowed roles for government that are argued about to this day—Social Security, the welfare system, even Proposition 187.

The last part of the book describes the building of great public works projects that were either completed during the 1930s or started during the decade. Hoover Dam, the Golden Bate Bridge, the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge, the Central Valley Project, the Colorado River Project, and the construction of roads, public buildings such as post offices and schools, and the employment that these projects provided, helped pull California out of the Depression and more or less gave the Depression Era story a happy ending.

Even though the focus is on the 1930s, Starr is hard-pressed to include every important issue that was packed into this controversial decade. For example, much more could have been said of the motion picture industry in its "Golden Era," or how the state treated Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans through its endorsement of repatriation policies. A closer proofreading could have eliminated a few confusing typographical errors. Readers will nonetheless find that Starr has presented an historical panorama dramatically highlighting an era of major change and consequences that still affects the lives of Californians.

Abraham Hoffman

"COME ON IN! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR HAPPY HOUR!"