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The Pomona Assembly Center and Japanese American Internment During World War II

by Nicholas C. Polos

In his foreword to Bill Hasokawa's *Nisei*, Edwin O. Reischauer astutely observed, "No immigrant group encountered higher walls of prejudice and discrimination than did the Japanese." This thread of hostility against the Japanese started around the turn of the century when they began to arrive in America in large numbers. In California particularly, the Japanese were under constant attack motivated purely by racial hostility, instigated in part by distorted newspaper accounts and California nativist groups. Roger Daniels and Spencer C. Olin, Jr. observed:

> *It is sometimes argued that California and Californians are more prejudiced than most of the rest of the nation. Perhaps. What is more certain is that in California there have always been greater numbers and varieties of people against whom to discriminate, or against whom to be prejudiced.*

A truly special aspect of California racism was anti-Orientalism and a fear of the "yellow peril."

The Japanese stereotype was not created at Pearl Harbor but over the years. The fifty years prior to Pearl Harbor saw a continuous parade of racial discrimination against the Japanese. The events of December 7, 1941, brought to a head the many years of "anti-Orientalism," or what Carey McWilliams called "The California-Japanese War, 1900-1941." Paul Bailey wrote that the Japanese Americans surely had many sanguinary reasons to remember Pearl Harbor. In a most vivid description he wrote:

> *Indeed they do. For the 112,000 Japanese-Americans living on the Pacific Coast, this rallying cry initiated a campaign of hate, violence, and indifference that will never be forgotten. Uprooted from their homes, herded into unsanitary and insufficient detention camps, concentrated behind barbed wire enclosures — they were brutally accused of sabotage, aid to the enemy, and lack of patriotism. Their story offers a warning and an everlasting lesson for Americans today.*

This came about because of racism or xenophobia, the myth of military necessity and the failure of political leadership coupled with a hostile and strident press obsessed with racial prejudice. By 1941 it was quite apparent to historians of immigration that neither the "melting pot" theory nor the concept of "cultural pluralism" applied to the Japanese. This is the important point made by H.L. Kitano who sadly wrote:

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

JULY MEETING

Powell Greenland, former Sheriff and contributor to *Brand Book #20,* drew on his years of research to familiarize the Corral with the techniques of hydraulic mining.

One tends to think of hydraulic mining as a modern innovation, but historical evidence traces it back to medieval Germany. Written records and drawings depict a primitive form of it.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

July Meeting Speaker Powell Greenland

Very early, California miners turned to hydraulic mining. By 1853. Edward E. Matteson introduced effective hydraulic mining into the northern mines.

Placer mining is basically taking dirt and washing it to separate the valuable from the dross. Hydraulic mining is the same. One

(Continued on page 15)

He (the Japanese-American) was non-white, Oriental, non-Christian...It was no wonder that life in the United States was one of continuous hardship and discrimination. It can truly be said that he came to the wrong country and the wrong state (California) at the wrong time (immediately after the Chinese problem), with the wrong race and skin color, with the wrong religion, and from the wrong country.

In the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Californians lost little time in reviving all the nightmarish stereotypes attributed to the Japanese and the Japanese Americans (the *Nisei*) who were citizens of the United States! Americans were very angry after Pearl Harbor at this "stab in the back," and it was only one step away from scapegoat time. In his concise analysis Jacobus ten Broek wrote:

But the enemy bombs of Dec. 7th., exploded the mixture on a monster scale, and with more far reaching consequences than ever in the past. The rumors that emerged from Pearl Harbor gave a new sustenance to racist beliefs in the yellow peril, to romantic movie-fed ideas of the treacherous and inscrutable Asiatic, to undefined feelings of hostility and distrust compounded of the xenophobia of super-patriots and the rationalizations of competitors.

From this moment on began the real nightmare for the Japanese in America and one of the darkest pages in our legal history. The story of Executive Order #9066 and the manufacture of the myths that ultimately led the evacuation of the Japanese Americans, such as "war necessity, protective custody, the possibility of sabotage, etc.," are familiar to most of us and well-documented.

On March 18, 1942, President Roosevelt created, within the Office of Emergency Management, the War Relocation Authority. Under the terms of the order, the Director of the Authority was authorized to provide for "the relocation, maintenance, and supervision" of the persons designated for removal by the Military Commander. We know a great deal about the Japanese Americans and the relocation centers, but very little has been written about the initial Assembly Centers where the Japanese were first sent in their tragic adventure of incarceration. There have been several misconceptions about the seventeen Assembly Centers.

In 1941 there were in the United States 126,947 Japanese of whom roughly one-third were *Issei* or Japanese born. Of American born or *Nisei* (roughly 80,100) only 9,789 (*Kibei*) had spent any time in Japan furthering their education. Of the 113,000 Japanese on the West Coast, nearly 95,000 lived in California. The *Issei* were in the 50-60 age bracket, and the *Nisei* were mostly children and teenagers.

These then were the *dramatis personae* who went to the 17 assembly centers. However, many Japanese did not go to these assembly centers because they had moved quickly out of the west coast zone. S.L. Hopkinson called this "voluntary migration" and pointed out that "from Feb. 29th., to March 29th, 1942, the Japanese Americans were free to resettle on a completely voluntary basis." This has been ignored by critics of the federal government's policy. While "voluntary migration" on the surface seemed to supply a solution, as hostility toward the Japanese Americans spread it became increasingly difficult to find a locality that would accept them. There were also some special groups, like the *Nisei*, who did not remain long in the Assembly Center or the Relocation Camp because they were admitted to colleges and universities, many went on work furlough, some were admitted to the military service and many were later relocated in other parts of the United States. The latter was the objective of the War Relocation Authority whom some called "sympathetic keepers," and others called "the wardens." There was, however, no question as to where the mainland military

leaders stood as exemplified by Lt. General John L. De Witt, West Coat area commander. To him the "Japanese race is an enemy race..." Testifying in San Francisco before the House Naval Affairs Subcommittee (April 13, 1943), the General repeated this theme by stoutly maintaining:

> *A Jap's a Jap. They are a dangerous element, whether loyal or not. There is no way to determine their loyalty.....It makes no difference whether he is an American; theoretically he is still a Jap and you can't change him...You can't change him by giving him a piece of paper.*

Unlike General Dewitt, Hawaii's military commander, General Delos Emmons, proved to be both tactful and level-headed. Rumors were carefully investigated and quickly quashed thus decreasing the possible war hysteria, and General Emmons showed a very high regard for the rights of citizens and most of the Island institutions. Martial law was immediately proclaimed in Hawaii. There was no incident of any kind of sabotage and no internment or mass evacuation of the Japanese.

It is this author's thesis that the loss of constitutional freedom, all citizen's rights and the forced detention of any American citizens—while the civil courts are open to redress—is a form of unjustified imprisonment which was not only illegal but set a very dangerous precedent that could also easily lead to another Auchwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald or even Bergen-Belson. No one thought the Japanese Americans would become "Uprooted Americans." Mine Okubo explained it in this way:

> *We had not believed at first that the evacuation would effect the Nisei, American citizens of Japanese ancestry, but thought perhaps the Issei, Japanese-born mothers and fathers who were denied naturalization by American law, would be interned in case of war between Japan and the United States. It was a real blow when everyone, regardless of citizenship was ordered to evacuate.*

One of the saddest chapters in American history was not the havoc the Japanese inflicted on Pearl Harbor but what happened at home on the mainland, in California especially. Executive Order No. 9066 was signed by President Roosevelt on February 11, 1941. This order was destined to send 110,000 persons of Japanese descent, more than two-thirds of whom were American citizens, to assembly and relocation camps. Roger Daniels stated sadly, "This was the real 'Day of Infamy' as far as the Constitution was concerned." In their colorful and powerful photo essay two very shrewd writers, Maisie and Robert Conrot, wisely observed:

> *The Oriental had long been an enemy in the eyes of many Californians. The proof of an inherent Japanese depravity (Pearl Harbor) was now at hand...The rights of citizens against the wrath and passions of more numerous fellow citizens are fragile...Thirty years after the argument seems absurd, but it did not seem absurd to Franklin Roosevelt when he signed Executive Order No. 9066, and did not seem absurd to those who inspired the order for 'removal' or to those who carried it out.*

The Japanese Americans knew that mass removal and deportation was not due to any military necessity but was instead the result of the earlier California campaign for exclusion and were not at all comforted by President Roosevelt's promise when he said, "We shall restore to the loyal evacuees the right to return to the evacuated areas as soon as the military situation will make such restoration feasible."

The exodus from the West Coast began with the Assembly Centers, which many writers confuse with the Relocation Centers and about which little has been written. The rapidity with which this vast movement was effected represents a miracle of efficiency. One must recall that this movement represented, as Dr. Paul S. Taylor observed,"the largest, single, forced migration in American history." The forced uprooting of the 110,000

Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 3, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

All of that portion of the City of Los Angeles, State of California, within that boundary beginning at the point at which North Figueroa Street meets a line following the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence southerly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence southerly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence northwesterly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northerly on Main Street to First Street; thence northwesterly on First Street to Figueroa Street; thence northeasterly on Figueroa Street to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 33, this Headquarters, dated May 3, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Saturday, May 9, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Southern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at:

Japanese Union Church,
120 North San Pedro Street,
Los Angeles, California.

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday, May 4, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday, May 5, 1942.
2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:
   (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
   (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
   (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
   (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
   (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.
5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 500 P.M., Monday, May 4, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., Tuesday, May 5, 1942, to receive further instructions.

J. L. DeWITT
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

SEE CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER NO. 33.

Untitled-2

Public order directing the Japanese to report to assembly points. Courtesy of the author.

peaceable people who abided by the "*enryo* syndrome," which emphasized reticence, restraint and a desire to be inoffensive—and numbered more than the whole population of the Five Civilized Indian Tribes who were similarly dealt with a century ago—has become, like the Indian "Trail of Tears" before it, a theme in our literature and history. The "impounded people," as Roger Daniels called the Japanese were subjected to what Paul Bailey called "the Big Roust." The evacuation proceeded on an area-by-area basis. First was the establishment of civil control stations for each area having a minimum of 1,000 persons to be evacuated. The evacuees registered at these stations and reported on a specific date for movement to the Assembly Center. The latter activity was under the control of the U.S. Army and Wartime Civilian Control Agency. Permanent relocation camps were under the jurisdiction of the War Relocation Authority.

In choosing these assembly centers, the Wartime Civilian Control Agency showed both resourcefulness and ingenuity. The Agency made use of race-tracks, parks, fairgrounds and public areas. In California, assembly centers were established at Manzanar, Tulare, Pinedale, Stockton, Marysville, Sacramento, Tanforan, Merced, Turlock, Salinas, Fresno, Santa Anita and Pomona; in Oregon, at Portland; in Washington, at Puyallup; in Arizona, at Cave Creek and Meyer Camp. Generally, residents of a community or particular area went to the same assembly centers. This policy of preserving "community patterns," was also followed by the WRA.

By the time "E" day, as Carey McWilliams called it, arrived there were overt signs of hostility toward the evacuees. He wrote:

> *Signs posted in shops read: 'This restaurant poisons both rats and Japs'; barbershops carried signs reading 'Japs Shaved: Not Responsible for Accidents'; cards were placed in automobile windshields reading 'Open Season for Japs'; stores, filling stations, restaurants, refused to serve evacuees.*

Yoshiko Uchida, in his excellent and vivid description of the "Desert Exile," tells how the local police had broken into his house without a search warrant under the guise of "military necessity" and all constitutional safeguards were ignored. This was a dangerous period for the Japanese Americans, many of whom were cruelly exploited and "suffered great financial losses." Yet, the Japanese Americans made every effort to cooperate with the government regarding wartime regulations; they even bought defense bonds and signed up for civilian defense.

Writing with a bitter note Ushida sadly concluded:

> *Radios with short wave, cameras, and binoculars and firearms were designated as 'contraband' and had to be turned into the police - they took our Brownie box Camera to the station. From that day on we became Family #13453.*

The movement to the Assembly Centers was quick and efficient. One writer, Mine Okubo, a real authority on this subject gave a colorful description of the beginning stage of evacuation:

> *When the evacuees were gathered at their departure points, many did not always know just where they would be sent. Families gathered together at railway stations to go by rail or staging areas to be bussed to the centers. All the window shades had to be pulled and kept down for the entire trip. Soldiers were on the train and accompanied the evacuees to the center.*

One of the supreme ironies about the evacuation and incarceration was not only that there was no reason or necessity for it, and it was illegal to incarcerate citizens of the United States without due process, but that many Americans, especially Californians, considered this mass movement as one of the most popular wartime acts. But what can one expect from a state whose rural newspapers printed doggerel poetry such as this?

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,

Where Japs accumulate day by day.

This little gem was printed in the Elk Grove *Citizen*, January 18, 1913, and the Californian attitude did not change over the years. In spite of this overt hostility the Japanese Americans operating under their principle of *shikata nai*, or "What happened—happened. There was nothing we could do about it!" co-operated with the federal government. Carey McWilliams praised them:

> *Nor did the cooperation of the Japanese end with their arrival in the centers. Many of these centers were not complete when the evacuees began to arrive. The evacuees helped to build them, assisted in making them livable, and quickly assumed major responsibilities in their administration.*

Since very little has been written about the Assembly Centers it is necessary to provide a general description then how they were organized and how they were governed. Two assembly centers, Santa Anita (one of the largest) and Pomona Assembly Center, in Pomona, California (one of the smaller centers) have been chosen as models. In general, however, as one might expect hardships were bound to result due to the hastily improvised character of those temporary shelters. In places like Santa Anita, a former race track, where the stables were used for housing quarters the Japanese sign read *Neowasa* or "Place of Bad Smell." At the Pomona Assembly Center, which was located at the Los Angeles Fair Grounds, conditions were much better as housing was especially built for the evacuees. At first there was some over-crowding, shortage of conveniences and, inevitably, great confusion. It should be pointed out, however, that the assembly centers were never intended (with the exception of the Manzanar center) as permanent relocation or internment camps. The holding time factor for most of the assembly centers was very short. The Pomona Assembly Center was in full operation from May 7 to August 24, 1942, and Santa Anita Assembly Center was only occupied from March 27 to October 27, 1942.

By June 8, 1942, the movement from points of residence in Military Area No. 1 to assembly centers had been completed, and the assembly center population totaled 99,770. By this date, virtually every Japanese, citizen and alien, in the three west coast states and parts of Arizona was in an assembly center. In a short time those remaining in Military Area No. 2 had likewise been moved into assembly centers. The only exceptions to be noted were those "few Japanese confined to institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, insane asylums, orphanages, and sanatoria."

In describing the mass movement to the Assembly centers Anthony J. Lehman, in his *Birthright of Barbed Wire: The Santa Anita Assembly Center for Japanese*, concluded:

> *Thus a movement of human beings in unprecedented proportions was begun, a movement that in a period of one hundred and thirty-seven days was to uproot the lives of, and virtually imprison, more than 100,000 Japanese men, women, and children.*

Thus began life in the assembly center known as "the Barbed Wire City," centered around what many Japanese called "The Dungeon" or stable bedroom. Yoshiko Uchida observed that: "We seemed to be at the long end of every line that formed." It is important to note at this stage of the Japanese incarceration the phrase "Life in a California Concentration Camp" had not become prevalent. In recent years it became the fashion in internment literature by angry writers (Roger Daniels, Michi Nishiura Weglyn, Wm. Bosworth, Gary Y. Okihiro, Wm. Peterson, Raymond Okamura, et al.) blessed with hindsight to describe the relocation centers as "concentration camps." Assembly centers did not have large barbed wire areas patrolled by armed military, nor were there guard tower with military sentries for around-the clock surveillance to insure that none of the evacuees escaped. The ten War Relocation Authority Camps were outfitted with such so-called safeguard methods but not the Assembly Centers. We know that hindsight is a science, but it should be accurate in its details.

A harsh condemnation of the use of the phrase "concentration camps," was written by the famous semanticist S.I. Hayakawa, who wrote:

> *Calling the relocation centers 'concentration camps' is a highly propagandistic use of the language, comparable to calling blacks ('niggers') or the Japanese ('japs'). The evacuees were not beaten, starved or tortured...To call the centers 'concentration camps' is to make a mockery of the tragic experience of the Jews under the Nazi.*

Even the *Nisei* objected to the use of the phrase "concentration camp." Edison Uno, Sue Embrey and Toshi Yoshida thought the term too harsh. The main issue here is that this term cannot be properly applied to the assembly center. Carey McWilliams tried to temper this picture by contending that "it would certainly not be accurate to characterize Santa Anita Assembly Center or Pomona Assembly Center as a concentration camp." He points out quite sharply that there were few discipline problems at either assembly center, and that the Japanese "handled themselves with great restraint," and put out American flags and service flags with one or two stars in the windows of the housing units.

The Japanese Americans, on the whole, complied docilely and obeyed almost without complaint the many bureaucratic regulations. The *Issei* tried to preserve the customs they felt were important such as *ojigi* or bowing between friends, and *jicho*, or the *nihonjin (Japanese)* pattern of self-respect from parent to child, and from child to parent.

At the early stages of the assembly centers there were some complaints, but most of these were not from the Japanese evacuees. Roger Daniels observed that:

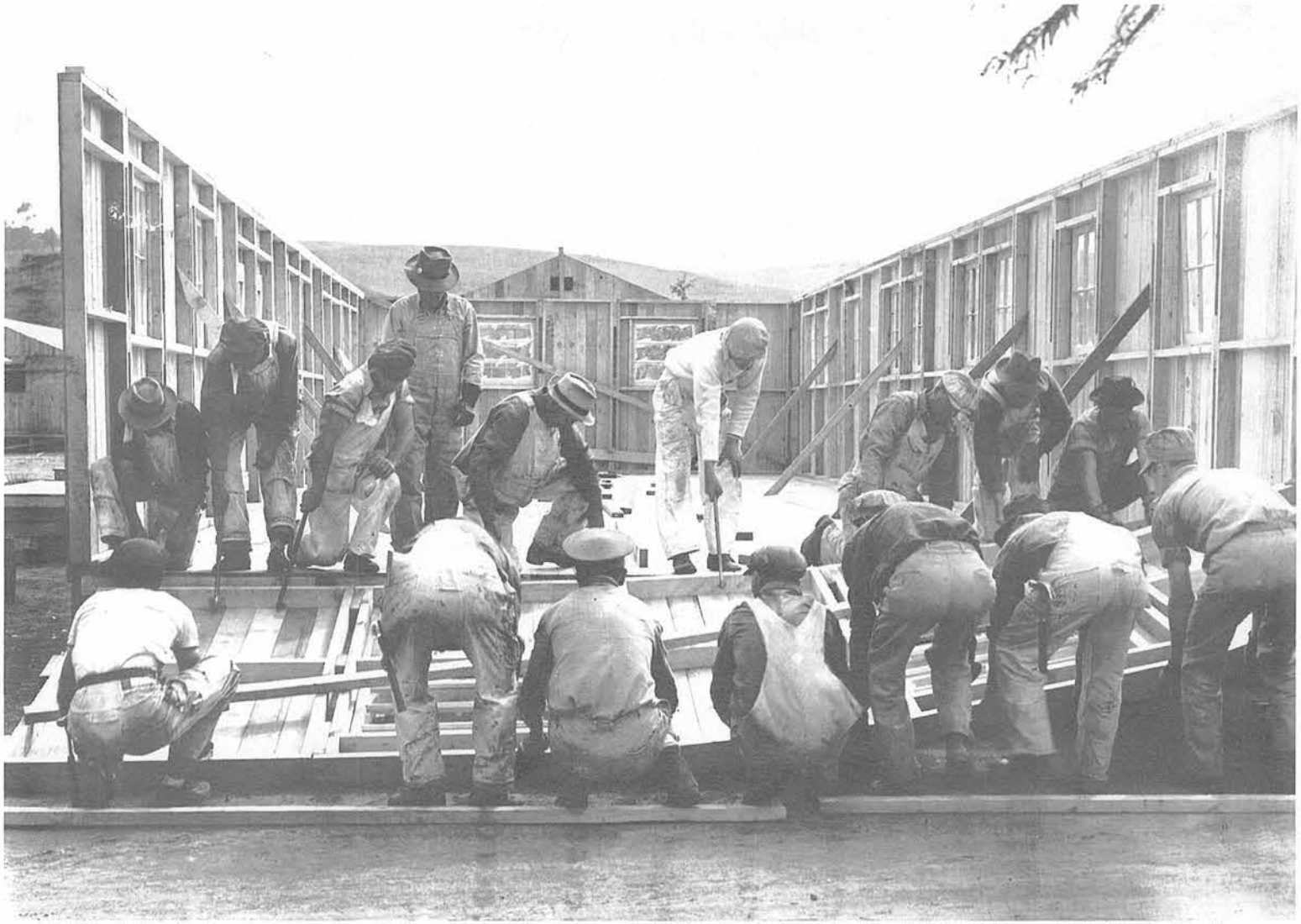
> *Although the Army always boasted that, under the circumstances, conditions in the Assembly Centers were ideal, the contrary is true. An official report of the United States Public Health Service, for example, concluded that sanitation was bad.*

Daniels concluded that the fact that few epidemics occurred in the center was due to the valiant efforts of the center managements, the County Health Departments and the Japanese medical staffs.

Estelle Ishigo, a caucasian lady who had married Arthur Ishigo before World War II, went with him to the Pomona Assembly Center. Looking back on her experiences at the Pomona Assembly Center, she wrote a very harsh description of daily life there. She described the barrack-like apartments (usually horse-like stalls, one family per stall) the food lines and the quality of the food.

> *There was rarely enough to eat so some of the young people would run from one mess hall to another to get enough food. Later, we found out that our meat supplies were being diverted by camp officials and sold outside the camp.*

The last charge never was substantiated. She also pointed out that the evacuees were assigned jobs to maintain the camp at very low wages, between $12.00 to $16.00 a month. She charged: "Those who refused to work were blacklisted and threatened with being sent to the worst future camps." The latter charge also is without true foundation because, in many instances, the evacuees were willing to work in the camp; indeed, many of them created their own gardens and did their own repair carpentry work. There is no doubt that the Assembly Centers were hastily and crudely made, but it must be remembered that different evacuees reacted differently. The older folk, especially those from rural areas, seemed to adjust more readily to diverse conditions than the younger urban people. The vast literature of the evacuees' experiences showed that for many of the *Issei* women the assembly center was the first time in their lives that they were not subject to constant daily toil. There was also some resentment of the fact that all the Japanese citizens were thrown together; but the greatest demoralizing factor was not the physical discomforts, the camp atmosphere, or the social discomforts, but the effect on the loyalty of the *Nisei* evacuees. One *Nisei*



Building the Housing Quarters, Pomona Assembly Center, Spring 1942. Courtesy of the National Archives Trust Fund Board (NNSP), Washington D.C., 20408. Archives Photo No. 210 G33-90.

leader wrote Los Angeles Supervisor John Anson Ford: "Many of the Isseis are now saying, 'You see, we were right; no matter what you say you are not going to be accepted as full fledged Americans.'" The "assembly center" early period was one of disbelief, confusion and suspended expectations. The assembly centers, in a sense served as a form of induction for the evacuees, many of whom went on later to relocation camps.

The Pomona Assembly Center was one of the smaller assembly centers and the evacuee enrollment never exceeded 5,434 evacuees. When the evacuees arrived, they were swiftly inducted into camp life. First they were given a superficial medical examination, a baggage inspection, a social-case history was taken, the rules of the camp were explained, each member of the family was given a badge with his number on it and the family then taken to its quarters. The main work of processing the arrivals was done by volunteer evacuees. The Center was governed by the evacuees, and every adult member of the camp whether citizen or alien was eligible to vote. There was a city council which functioned fairly well, and for the first time in their lives the *Issei* had been permitted to vote in an election. For the short time that it was in existence the Center was often cited for the good feeling that existed between the camp residents and the management. The internal policing of the Camp was done entirely by the evacuees; the auxiliary police force was made up of volunteers who functioned under the supervision of a deputy sheriff. People moved freely about the camp, and they enjoyed their own social life.

Fortunately, it is not difficult to obtain complete data for the Pomona Assembly Center since complete editions of the *Pomona Center News* were kept by the Special Collections, the Honnold Library of the Associated Colleges, Claremont, California. The *Pomona Center News* described in detail the daily life of the Camp, including the problems such as eating in shifts, the long lines, etc. On the whole the food was good and there was enough to eat. The evacuees even made their own tofu cakes (bean curd) and *Mochi* (or rice cakes). There was also a large Canteen and a Consumer's Co-op where one could shop. The Center was not fancy, but it had all the basic facilities even a barber shop, a radio repair shop, two movie houses, a gym, special stage hall, recreational facilities, adequate classrooms and educational facilities and a hospital including a dental facility staffed by Japanese doctors, nurses and attendants. An honest appraisal would have to concede that "there was a military censorship on out-going and in-coming mail," but this is a far cry from the German concentration camp.

The main thrust of this paper is not to extol the Assembly Center but to present a picture that has been neglected or often distorted in the literature on the Japanese American internment. The Pomona Assembly Center had an advantage over such centers as Tanforan or Santa Anita where the evacuees were housed in racing stables. The housing for the evacuees at the Pomona Assembly Center was specially built as proper housing, and since the Center was used only from May to August 1942, cold weather was not an unpleasant factor.

The Center was not "a barbed wire city," nor was it an Eden of any kind. The evacuees had no illusions by now that the *hakuijin* or white man would respect their rights; albeit R.D. Spencer, the first manager of the Center, treated the evacuees with utmost respect. His "policy of consideration," was also followed by the new Center Director, Mr. Clayton E. Twiggs, who was formerly at the Owens Valley Center (later Manzanar Relocation Camp), who knew the Japanese culture and was "simpatico" to their problems. Many of the evacuees were not given to "instant judgement" or what they called *Kenjinhai*, however, their lament had great validity. Samuel Nagata in his poem "O' California, Dear California," wrote:

> *May is a memorable month for Japanese evacuees. It was in this month, 1942, that most of us 110,000 law-abiding residents...were uprooted from our homes and possessions, and made to*

The Pomona Assembly Center, completed April 1942, in Pomona California. Courtesy of the National Archives Trust Fund Board (NSSP), Washington D.C. Photo No. 210-G3B-88. Assembly Center file.

start a new paternalistic life in the centers under the Stars and Stripes.

Carey McWilliams wrote: "Strolling through the streets of Santa Anita and Pomona Assembly Centers is indeed an amazing experience." He pointed out that the Centers had American Legion Posts, victory gardens, two movie houses, a theater, a gymnasium, bowling alleys, a good hospital and dental clinic and even a PTA. In the Center one saw the passing of birthdays, anniversaries, marriages, births and even death.

The Japanese not only had a unique sense of humor (their streets were named "Dusty Inn," "Burlap Row," and "Jerk's Jernt") but also a strong talent for creativity and adaptability. They provided for talent shows, classical music concerts, musicales, town Hall discussions, Saturday night dances, hobby shows, a music school and an art school. The evacuees had hardly settled in at the Center when they created a Little Theater Group, a miniature park with trees, a lake with waterfalls and a wooden bridge to an island. They also built wooden boats to sail on the small lake in front of the grandstand. The people of Pomona who visited the Center were amazed at the variety of flowers in the many gardens. The evacuees who wished to show their gratitude for the help and support given to their programs by the citizens of Pomona often invited the citizens of the city to their marionette shows, art displays, flower display programs, Obon & Ondon Festival, Kite Festivals, to the Harmonica Band Concerts and even the wedding receptions. Reading *Pomona Center News*, which was published every Tuesday and Friday, one wonders how the Japanese Americans at the Center had time for all these programs. When Col. N.R.Bendetson, Chief of Staff, Civil Affairs Div., WRA, visited the Center on July 17, 1942, he marveled at the many viable and unique programs that flourished there. He found that it boasted a good library, barber and beauty shop, optical services, a manual training program and clubs galore. The Center had an orchestra, a band, a Thespian Club, Glee Club (Pomona Singers) and craft classes. The education of the children was not neglected either. There was a solid and basic elementary school, junior high school and senior high school supervised, serviced and supported by the Pomona Unified School District.

Contrary to popular American belief, the Japanese belong to a variety of religious faiths. Religious services were conducted in the Center by various groups—Buddhist, Catholic, Community and Protestant. Nor were civic holidays neglected. The Center celebrated Memorial Day, Flag Day, the Glorious Fourth, and "I Am An American Day," which was indeed a bit ironic to say the least! One 15-year-old girl from Hollywood High School, May Horiucki, wrote:

> *'I Am An American Day.' Let us all join the 130,000,000 patriotic Americans who, for the past two years have observed this day. The fact that this nation is at war with Japan should not shake our loyalty to the United States.*

When Helen Gahagen Douglas, a member of the Democratic National Convention, visited the Center in June 1942, she was very much impressed with the morale of the residents and with the diverse activities conducted under the Center Recreation Department. Even some of the newly arrived evacuees like the 36 members of the Nakao Family, who lived in Barracks #239 said that "the camp" was much nicer than they had expected. They were especially impressed by the *Pomona Center News* article which described the graduation of over 200 students from elementary, junior high and high school.

For many of the evacuees the "Camp Center Experience" was a real hardship because of the impact on family life, lack of privacy and the alienated feeling of uprooteedness. Much has been made of these psychological factors by many writers who wrote later on the relocation centers, but they missed bringing the entire picture into proper focus. In many of the Centers and

1990 aerial view of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, site of the Pomona Assembly Center (May-Aug., 1942). The Center buildings were on the other side of the Race Track. Courtesy of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, Fairplex, Pomona, California.

especially the Pomona Assembly Center, for many of the children and even the women "the Camp Center Experience" was a relief from the constant daily toil they had experienced before they came to the camp. The children particularly found much freedom from parental supervision and family obligations since it was difficult to observe these in an Assembly Center.

On August 12, 1942, the exodus from the camp began, and 531 camp residents left for the Heart Mountain Relocation Center (near Park City, Wyoming). The evacuees knew where they were going, but they had no idea what the place was like. The *Pomona Center News* cartoons showed that the evacuees had not lost their sense of humor; that came later when they lived in the relocation center for a while. It was "relocation camp" experience that was to be the source of later bitterness. This is not to say that the Pomona Assembly Center was any Garden of Eden, but the administration was both humane, competent and experienced. When the Pomona Assembly Center was in the process of closing Mr. Clayton E. Twiggs, the Center administrator praised the evacuees, and said:

> *Upon the closing of the Pomona Assembly Center, it is my sincere desire to express to the residents and workers here my deep appreciation for their splendid co-operation given the management throughout the life of this Center....Here at Pomona, you have made a remarkable record along those lines...*

The internees in return were anxious to give "Beaukeis" to all who had been considerate and kind to them during their short stay at the Center, and in the *Pomona Assembly News*, under the heading "THANK U CITY OF POMONA," the internees wrote: "The Center residents now have one regret that in their present status they cannot repay the kindnesses shown them by the City of Pomona."

When George Kiriyama, the principal of the Gardena Community Adult School in Gardena, spoke at Claremont McKenna College, he said that the word "Manzanar" (the relocation center, not the assembly center), was synonymous with "prison." I asked him about this; recalling the barbed wire, the threat of being shot and poor facilities, he concluded: "It was racist and discriminatory to incarcerate us and not the Germans and Italians. It was only because of the way we looked." He did point out, however, that his 102-year-old mother is not bitter even today because she was glad that they were not killed as happened to those imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps.

When one looks back on the entire experience of the Japanese Americans during World War II one must admire them. When one reads the story of the 442nd Combat Team and their exploits in the Italian Campaign, and the efforts to find their place in American society after such a serious rejection even generous reparations would hardly cover the huge losses suffered by the Japanese Americans both economically and psychologically. The evacuation and internment of the Japanese Americans during World War II will stand as a tragic monument reflecting the excesses of democracy, and all in all, the internment of the West Coast Japanese was the worst blow our liberties have sustained in many years. It is not necessary to rehash the fictions (war hysteria, military necessity, custodial protection, etc.) used to excuse the illegal actions of those Americans responsible for the Japanese American "Trail of Tears" because it will prove little. What is important here for all Americans is that the American legal system rests on the time old concept that the idea of punishment only for individual behavior is basic to the Anglo American system of law. It is difficult to believe that such a great principle was lost so easily and casually in war time stress. While George Kiriyama admits that the United States is the only country to pay reparations for its war time mistakes, this is not enough. If one is to have faith in the American legal system and in American democracy safeguards should be built into the American system to preserve freedom and liberty in the future.

(*Monthly Roundup continued from page 2*)
uses water pressure to wash vast quantities of dirt from its original location. As the water and dirt run through sluice boxes riffles cause the heavier gold to settle to the bottom while the balance runs off. In regular placer mining, one needs very valuable dirt to make the operation worthwhile, but using hydraulics one can profit from dirt containing as little as three and a half cents of gold per yard of dirt.

As hydraulic mining was used, the equipment and techniques were improved. Originally, simple, small nozzles were used; by the 1860s the monitors, which could produce extremely high pressures and rapidly wash away entire hillsides, were in use.

While very effective in obtaining gold, hydraulic mining was very destructive to the environment. Entire hills were blasted away changing the landscape and water sheds. The debris clogged rivers and on occasions caused floods and diverted river courses. Because of this destruction, hydraulic mining was prohibited in California in 1884.

The informative lecture was reinforced by an excellent selection of slides that showed the techniques and results of such mining. Many of the mining sites still show the scars.

AUGUST 1998 MEETING

GLORIA MIRANDA, Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences at El Camino Community College in Torrance, presented to the Corral an overview of *Chicanas* in the Mexican American community. Dr. Miranda, a graduate of USC, did pioneering work on the marriage patterns and child rearing practices in Spanish and Mexican California.

Hispano-Mexican women have only recently become the subject of extensive research by *Chicana* scholars like Antonia Castaneda and Vicki Ruiz. During the northward movement into the present-day Southwest that began in the sixteenth century, women were major participants in the settlement of the far northern regions of the Spanish empire in North America. Names

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

August Meeting Speaker Gloria Miranda and Sheriff Ray Peter

like Maria Feliciana Arballo (member of the 1775-6 Anza expedition) and Apolinaria Lorenzana (housekeeper of the San Diego mission) represent some of the earliest female pioneers venturing into southern California. The first female residents of the pueblo of Los Angeles frequently performed diverse roles in their service to their traditional cultural communities.

While scholars today have frequently attributed to these early pioneers a female resistance to the patriarchal society they lived under, in truth the Hispano-Mexican patriarchal culture of the late 18th and 19th centuries allowed them the flexibility to participate in the social life of the community. Eulalia Perez, *llavera* of San Gabriel Mission devoted her energies to service of the Church. Perez represented working class women. In contrast, Eloisa Martinez de Sepulveda, who came to Los Angeles with her mother in the 1840s, can best be identified as a middle class woman eager to succeed in business during the 1880s boom years in the city. The Sepulveda block establishment she constructed did not make her wealthy, but nonetheless, was indicative of the expanding activities of Mexican American women.

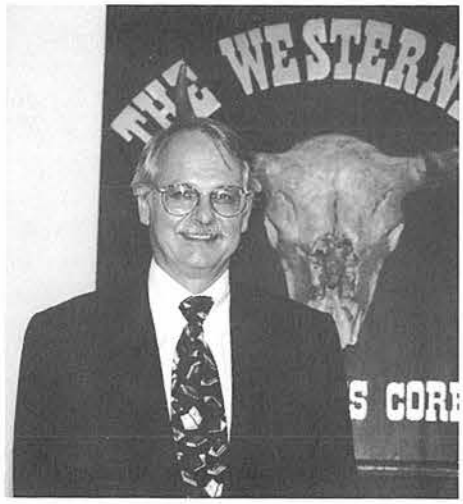
In the early 20th century another major northward movement brought immigrant Mexican women into Los Angeles. An unusual Mexican woman in the period prior

to 1945 is Josefina Fierro de Bright. Her family were political radicals who fled Mexico; Josefina continued the tradition of radicalism as she assumed a major leadership role in the Spanish Speaking Congress of the 1930s as an advocate for immigrant rights, champion of unionization and women's rights. Bright (who was married to a Hollywood screen writer) represents the non-traditional woman within the Mexican community of that period.

In the post World War II era, many cultural changes took place that altered traditional Mexican culture. More intimate exposure to the American way of life broke down the isolation of the barrio as countless families moved away from those traditional enclaves and socially mingled with Anglo American culture. The results produce a more diverse Mexican American society. Traditional roles were modified and women increasingly were influence by American material and political culture. Grace Montanez Davis and Gloria Molina exemplify United States born women of Mexican origin who are products of a less traditional cultural upbringing. While Montanez Davis, who became Mayor Bradley's deputy mayor, was a community activist before the *Chicano* civil rights movement, Molina directly benefited from the movement. The latter has fewer traditional ties to her community than Montanez Davis and typifies changed gendered and group self-identities characteristic of the *Chicana* experience in Los Angeles over the last four decades. Nonetheless, they are part of the legacy of the northward movement of Hispanic and Mexican women into the southland for over two hundred years.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Dr. Charles B. Faulhaber, the James B. Hart Director of the Bancroft Library, discussed the past, present and future of the famed library. While trained in Latin American studies and Spanish with a doctorate from Yale in Romance Philology, Dr. Faulhaber early became interested in using computer



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

September Meeting Speaker Charles B. Faulhaber

technology to catalog and make accessible the primary sources of medieval Spanish literature. He cataloged the medieval manuscripts in the Library of the Hispanic Society of America (4 volumes), directed the data base of the Bibliography of Old Spanish Texts and collaborated in a program to publish CD-ROM digitalized facsimiles of early Spanish works.

The core of the Bancroft is the Hubert H. Bancroft Library which Bancroft had amassed to assist in the preparation of his 39 volume history. The Bancroft collection, which grew from a handful of books to 50,000 volumes, was sold to the University of California in 1905 for $250,000 of which Bancroft contributed $150,000.

In addition to its original book collection, the library has acquired the University of California archives, a regional oral history project, the Mark Twain papers of over 1,000,000 documents, and the ancient documents collection in which the oldest item dates to the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty. The holdings are 3-4,000,000 tomes and 50,000,000 documents. In addition, it has started the California in the 20th century and Berkeley in the 60s collections. There is also an art collection of works as historical documents of western history.

The major problem facing the library is the changing demographics of California. By 2020 the population is projected to be 25% Anglo, 50% Hispanic and 20% Asian. Already

there are 240 languages spoken in the state. How do you provide for the needs of all?

The future will be met by adding a new dimension of popular culture. They will purchase one copy of anything applicable to the state. Also greater use will be made of the internet. The library already has a web site and on line catalog.

Another of the projects planned is an union list of all UC Library Special Collections. By just using the topic you will have access to all references to that subject. Also, there will be web sites on the "Young Wild West" and "California Heritage." This last is already operating with 250,000 images about California history.

The Bancroft will keep apace of the changes and provide services to all needs and tastes.

Corral Chips

POWELL GREENLAND and **JOHN W. ROBINSON** received the Historical Society of Southern California's Donald H. Pflueger Local History Award. The award, named for late Sheriff Don Pflueger, is for an outstanding work in Southern California History published more than three years ago. Greenland received the award for *Port Hueneme: A History* and Robinson for his work, *The San Gabriels*. Other Corral members who have been honored are Sheldon Jackson, Abe Hoffman and John Robinson for his previous work, *The San Bernardinos*.

DOYCE B. NUNIS inaugurated the "Gold Fever" lecture series at the Autry Museum with a presentation on "The Gold Rush and Its Effects on the *Californio*."

Former Sheriff **JERRY SELMER** received a four year appointment as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Arcadia Public Library.

CM RICHARD DILLION spoke to the Friends of the Mill Valley Library on "Exploring the Napa Valley."

Former Sheriff Msgr. **FRANCIS WEBER** was recognized by the California Preservation Foundation for "Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Historical Preservation."

Ranger Active **ROBERT CLARK** made a presentation to a Mormon history study group in La Canada. He discussed the history of the Arthur H. Clark Company and its role in publishing Mormon history including the new series. **STEVE BORN** was among those present.

Sheriff **GLENN THORNHILL** and **STEVE BORN** attended the Oakland Museum presentation on "Gold Fever." They also saw the other parts of the show that did not come to Los Angeles.

CM DR. CHARLES ALBERT "AL" SHUMATE died September 30, 1998, at the age of 94.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

NEW MEMBERS

W.T. WITHERS ASHBROOK
6316 West Sixth Street
Los Angeles, CA 90048-4806

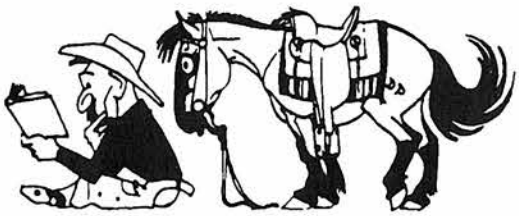
BRADFORD MACNEIL
80 Grace Terrace #3
Pasadena, CA 91105

ADDRESS CHANGES

JACK MCCASKILL
1125 Arcadia Avenue, #4
Arcadia, CA 91007

CM BILL HOCKINSON
12 Mission Bay Drive
Corona Del Mar, CA 92625

CM VICTOR E. LAREY
1421 Bay Pointe Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

The Good Book says: God helps those that help themselves, but I say God help the man that strays off the ranch with this book.'

Tom Mix's Bookplate

THE YOSEMITE GRANT, 1864-1906: *A Pictorial History,* by Hank Johnston. Yosemite National Park: The Yosemite Association, 1995. 278 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Appendices, Index. Cloth, $29.95. Order from Yosemite Association, (209) 379-2648.

In 1864 Congress ceded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the State of California "for public use, resort, and recreation." Over the next forty-two years, this most beautiful mountain valley in America and the nearby grove of *Sequoia Giantia* were administered by California through a board of nine appointed commissioners.

Hank Johnston's book is a comprehensive history of Yosemite's preservation and development during the period of California's stewardship. He describes in detail the origin of the Yosemite Grant, the development of roads and tourist facilities, the efforts by private individuals to claim land in the valley, and the eventual creation of Yosemite National Park and the re-ceding of the valley and big trees back to the federal government.

The twin objectives of preserving Yosemite's natural beauty and developing facilities for public use were at odds then as they are today. How do you preserve a marvelous creation of nature and still allow hundreds, later thousands, of tourists to trample all over it? This issue was faced — not always successfully — by the Yosemite Commissioners.

One of the first problems facing the commissioners was how to deal with nine preemptive land claims filed in accordance with the Pre-emption Law of 1841 (not to be confused with the Homestead Act of 1862). James Mason Hutchings, owner of the major hotel in the valley, along with the other private land claimants vigorously defended their claims in the courts as well as before the State Legislature. The Legislature actually passed an act over the governor's veto supporting the claimants. Hutchings traveled to Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress on the claimants' behalf. The long, bitter struggle lasted until 1872, when a federal court decision rejected the private claims and upheld the public rights as specified in the Yosemite Grant. Had this decision not been made, Yosemite Valley today might be mostly in private hands.

Johnston details the history of the many hotels in Yosemite. Most of them were in the Yosemite Valley: Hutchings', Black's, Leidig's, and the Stoneman House being the major ones. In 1899 David and Jennie Curry, came, and the long saga of Camp Curry, Yosemite's most famous hostelry, began. Above the valley were Snow's La Casa Nevada, the Glacier Point Mountain House and Clark's Station at Wawona, later the Wawona Hotel. The author includes many illustrations of these hostelries and their proprietors.

Tourists originally made the long trip into Yosemite via horseback. In the 1870s three wagon roads were constructed into the valley: The Big Oak Flat and Coulterville roads from the northwest, and the Wawona Road, with its spectacular view from Inspiration Point, from the southwest. Over the next three decades, most visitors came in via horse-drawn stage.

As Yosemite and the Big Trees gained in

popularity, efforts were made to enlarge and better protect the scenic wonders. Many believed Yosemite should follow the example of Yellowstone, which became America's first national park in 1872.

Due largely to the writings of naturalist John Muir and to the efforts of Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of the influential *Century Magazine*, the vast mountain region around Yosemite Valley was set aside by Congress as Yosemite National Park in 1890, but the original Yosemite Grant remained under state control.

In response to growing public sentiment, the California Legislature finally passed a bill to re-cede Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the federal government in 1905. On June 11, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an act incorporating the valley and the big trees into Yosemite National Park. So it has remained, with minor boundary adjustments, to the present day.

Hank Johnston ends his story with the recession of 1906. He has done a magnificent job with a thoroughly researched and well written volume, profusely illustrated with rare photographs and maps. This belongs in the library of all with a deep interest in California history. It is truly one of the half-dozen or so best books on Yosemite, destined to become a classic.

John Robinson

A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF *THE TIDINGS*, by Msgr. Francis J. Weber. Mission Hills: Saint Francis Historical Society, 1995. 131 pp. Illustrations, Appendices. Paper, $12. Order from Saint Francis Historical Society, 15151 San Fernando Mission Blvd., Mission Hills, CA 91345.

This history of the oldest continuously published Catholic newspaper on the west coast is written by a pre-eminent church historian with a distinguished record of publication himself.

Msgr. Weber, archivist of the Los Angeles archdiocese, is well acquainted with the craft of journalism. He has produced a column, "California's Catholic Heritage," regularly for the *Tidings* since 1963 and served as the paper's interim editor for three months in 1990. Additionally, he knew personally many of the writers and clergymen who are chronicled in the book.

The 51 chapters are snapshots of history; each originally appeared as a column in the paper in anticipation of the *Tiding's* centennial on June 29, 1995. Each vignette focuses on an editor, a columnist, a journalistic innovation, interactions between the paper and the community, and, especially, effects upon the paper of various clergymen who have headed the diocese through the years.

The weekly column format leads to some repetition, as readers are reminded of points made earlier, but not intrusively so

Weber touches upon some of the precursors of the paper in the years 1858-1895, most of which were short-lived. The *Tidings* was born in part as a reaction to the propagandistic activities of a local Know-Nothing organization, the American Protective Association, but it soon evolved into a multipurpose publication serving Los Angeles' Catholic population. Its counterpart in the San Francisco area, the *Monitor*, once accused it of passivity, but the *Tidings* long outlived its now-defunct rival.

Many colorful personages dot these pages: e.g., John Steven McGroarty, who advised that the paper should avoid controversies with non-Catholic brethren; Alice Stevens, the only woman editor, who also was a founder of the Catholic Press Association in 1911; Msgr. Patrick Roche, editor from 1957-73, who encouraged Weber to begin his long-running historical column.

Among the most supportive clergy were Bishop John J. Cantwell (1917-47) and Archbishop J. Francis A. McIntyre (1948-70), who allowed the editors full discretion. Weber credits Archbishop Timothy Manning as being the best writer, as reflected in various homilies, addresses, and pastoral letters from 1946-1989; Manning also created the Archival Center, a major historical repository.

The *Tidings* first was printed in an office on New High street and since has emanated from 15 different Los Angeles sites. In addition to the paper, its press has published directories, anthologies, compilations of essays, and pamphlets. In 1956 it was honored as the best Catholic newspaper in the United States. Its circulation peaked at 125,000 in 1964 but shrank to 27,000 by 1994 (a trend nationally), although readership in Los Angeles has been enhanced since 1991 by a Spanish-language affiliate, *Vida Nueva*.

The book contains 16 pages of appropriate photographs and ten appendices. Its only handicap is the lack of footnotes, bibliography and index. Otherwise, it fully defines the *Tidings'* important role in the history of California journalism.

Judson A. Grenier

WALLACE STEGNER: *His Life and His Work*, by Jackson J. Benson. New York: Viking, 1996. 472 pp. Illustrations, Notes and Documentation, Index. Cloth, $32.95. Order from Viking, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014 or (212) 366-2000.

Benson, a prize winning author who teaches literature at San Diego State University, knew Wallace Stegner well and talked with him often about his personal life, his approach to writing, his ideas and his work. As a result Benson's book presents both a literary study and in some ways an intimate portrait. Stegner's family is described. Benson treats with compassion Stegner's response to his father's failures and ultimate abandonment of his dying wife and later suicide. Stegner's occasionally strained relationship with his own son is mentioned rather than analyzed. In fact, only late in the book do readers learn that Stegner's wife, Mary, to whom he was truly dedicated, was chronically ill.

Benson captures with considerable skill the physical settings of Stegner's world and reconstructs his life from letters and personal contact but primarily from analyzing Stegner's novels and short stories, almost all of which were in part autobiographical. Because Stegner wrote with such poignancy and power about his childhood on the Canadian prairie as well as his later life, Benson has a virtual embarrassment of riches. Quotations from Stegner, especially descriptive passages, enhance the narrative.

He worked his way through the University of Utah, earned a doctorate at Iowa, and became part of a small group of untenured faculty at the University of Wisconsin that included such future powerhouses at S.I. Hayakawa and Claude Simpson, but there is little evidence in the book of their intellectual interaction. More is said of his University of Iowa mentors, social, financial and scholarly, especially Norman Foerster and Wilbur Schramm, who introduced him into the world of high culture and creative writing. Benson stresses Stegner's experiences at the Middlebury's Bread Loaf Writers Conferences, where he met Robert Frost, Bernard DeVoto and other luminaries and where he taught, drank and played poker. This was an important part of his maturation. He was heavily influenced by DeVoto as a westerner, historian and environmentalist. But Frost profoundly influenced his thinking and writing.

Success as a writer and teacher, excellent recommendations and the chance to achieve academic distinction brought him to Harvard where he earned tenure. But he always felt like an outsider (and he was one) in that elite academic and financial world to which he was not born. He moved from Harvard to Stanford when the opportunity was offered to him. It takes little reading between the lines of Benson's book to figure out that Stegner was a sharp academic negotiator. Most scholars of his generation would have killed for his salary, teaching requirements and control over fellowships. During virtually all of his lifetime Stegner pursued a rigorous routine, rising early in the morning, writing until noon and teaching his courses in the afternoon. The list of writers who passed through his seminars at Harvard and Stanford would be a credit to any professor.

Departing Harvard for Stanford removed

Stegner from the New York literary scene. Most important, his attachment to western themes defined him as a regionalist. Like many authors who write about the West and others who live in the West, Stegner felt unappreciated by the literary critics centered in New York. This was especially hard on Stegner, who felt that he was playing catch-up in a cultural sense because of depriva tions of his youth. Even after he received the Pulitzer Prize for *Angle of Repose*, he suffered the indignity of seeing the editor of the *New York Times Book Review* criticize the judges for not giving the prize to John Updike. Benson speculates too that Stegner was probably hurt to see his students, Norman Mailer and Larry McMurtry, achieve a degree of public attention denied to him.

Benson promised Stegner that if he wrote his biography it would be like Stegner's studies of John Wesley Powell and Bernard DeVoto: it would stress their work and not the intimate details of their lives. Therefore, Benson wrote a literary biography. Stegner's best short stories and novels are analyzed and his key characters and authorial voices are examined. Benson is at his best in dealing with Stegner's longer fiction. Although the chronology of the books is at times uncertain, the reader comes away with a clear understanding of Stegner as novelist. Since Stegner's nonfiction does not easily lend itself to the same kind of treatment, the avid reader of history may be a bit disappointed when books that moved him most deeply do not get elaborate examination. But they are there and placed in context.

Despite his promise to Stegner, Benson found the man and his work inseparable. Stegner wrote best about what he knew best and what he had experienced. He knew his people and he knew his landscapes. As a result his characters are genuine and his scenes compelling. He can find truth, beauty, and meaning in even the starkest environment. In Stegner's stories his narrator is often surrogate for the author and the knowledgeable reader grows close to the author.

Benson's biography provides the literary, social and intellectual context for anyone who wants to say something more about Stegner. Whatever tack future authors may take, Benson's work will be indispensable.

This is a fine book about a man I find troubling. I appreciate his integrity; I share many of his values; but his West and mine are not the same. I do not think that we must dig in and hold the line against change, that in the past nature was always despoiled by man or that new neighbors threaten our space and ruin our vistas. I believe that there is plenty of West to go around, that most of our predecessors did the best they could, that many were successful given their social and economic origins, and that with common sense we can still build a better society and protect the environment that Stegner wrote about with such elegance and passion.

Martin Ridge

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOLHOUSE, by John Martin Campbell. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. 150 pp. Illustrations, Bibliography. Cloth, $60; paper, $29.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591 (800) 249-7737.

For the generations born in rural America before or during World War II, this is a most evocative book of image, representation and text. The images of one-room schoolhouses cast about on barren or plowed ground pulled my mind back to rural Wisconsin and the one-room schoolhouse where three generations of Andersons and Jacobsons found knowledge. Schoolhouses built of stone or wood, wind-whipped exteriors, and patriotic interiors heated by a single wood stove drove my memory back to the solitary educational sentinels of Montana and North Dakota I too often frequented in decades of research. Image, memory...but also text and representation reside in this book. John Martin Campbell's narrative and Tony Hillerman's foreward remind us of much

more. Together text, image and representation remind us of much of what made America a vibrant land.

America's prairie schoolhouse era began in 1885 with the settling of the Great Plains by farmers bent upon living the American dream through production and profit. To support enterprise, America needed an educational system of basics to equip the next generations for the complexities of the next century. Most students never progressed beyond the eighth grade, but they learned the basics of English composition and grammar, arithmetic, geography, penmanship, physiology, reading, spelling and United States history. The schools offered agricultural science for boys and domestic science for girls. To obtain an eighth grade diploma most states required a two-day examination. Oklahoma's 1912 examination asked 140 questions including "explain why colonial Massachusetts and Virginia adopted different forms of government; give the composition of blood; name six powers of Congress; write sentences showing five uses of the nouns" and the like. Many of these graduates continued the advance of capitalism on the Great Plains without higher education, but some went on to professional degrees and careers.

This book's excellent photographs of schools, books, pictures and other artifacts give fantastic image to a lost time. The educational system that most of the pre-World War II generations experienced resonates with the experience of the prairie schoolhouse, and we know not what else has been lost in the advance of education in our modern times. This book will help us to remember, but others will need to study the advances we have made when we abandoned the one-room school house and now ask our eighth graders to do arithmetic and recite the six powers of Congress.

Gordon Morris Bakken

HOMICIDE, RACE AND JUSTICE IN THE AMERICAN WEST, 1890-1920. by Clare V. McKanna, Jr. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997. 206 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Figures. Notes. Index. Cloth, $40. Order from University of Arizona Press, 1230 North Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719-4140. (520) 621-3920.

By changing the ground rules slightly McKanna shows that the West was a violent place and more so than the East. Previous studies have been based upon criminal indictments; McKanna based his study on any death in which there was a coroner's report submitted. This enabled him to bring in vigilante actions, industrial strife, police shootings and any death in which no arrest was made. One question remains. Did he apply the same standard to the eastern statistics when he made his comparisons?

To see if there were a racial element in the violence, he chose Douglas County, Nebraska, with a large African-American element; Las Animas County, Colorado, which had a large immigrant population; and Gila County, Arizona, with its Apache population as centers of study. In Douglas County, he found an interesting statistic. Usually, homicides are between individuals of the same race, but in Douglas County there were an unusually high ratio of inter-racial homicides. He concluded that this was because the saloons, which were located in the Black neighborhoods or on the borderline between the two areas of the community, were occupied by members of both races which gave more opportunity for inter-racial conflict.

In each locale, he found that the whites received better treatment in the courts; racism was rampant. This was especially true in Gila County where murder of an Apache by a white was considered a worthy deed. Personally, this finding is akin to reinventing the wheel.

McKanna showed that former culture influenced the violence in the West. The African Americans in Douglas County were mostly from the South, a social clime that condoned violence in the defense of one's honor (this was assumed and not proven), and therefore reacted violently when faced

with challenges of a threatening situation. The accepted view on violence where one originated was carried to the West.

The author made other very insightful conclusions. One that he repeated throughout the book is that booze and readily available weapons make a deadly combination. Alcohol seemed to be a major factor in most homicides.

This thoughtful book will add fuel to the debate about the amount of violence in the West. The research seems excellent, the conclusions sound and many of his conclusions have been supported by other studies. What ever one's views are about the amount of violence in the West, this book should be read and given careful consideration.

Robert W. Blew

LEGACY: *New Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn*, edited by Charles E. Rankin. Helena; Montana Historical Society Press, 1996. 332 pp., 58 Illustrations, Notes and Index. Cloth: $45.00; Paper $19.95. Order from Montana Historical Society Press, PO Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201.

This is a collection of sixteen essays from the proceedings of the Little Bighorn Legacy Symposium held in Billings, Montana in August 1994. They examine contemporary, and sometimes "revisionist," views of many aspects surrounding the loss of Lt. Col. George A. Custer, 7th U.S. Cavalry and Brevet Major General of Volunteers, and half of his regiment on 25 June 1876.

The well organized and illustrated book is divided into three sections: The Context, The Battle and The Myth. Essays discuss a wide range of topics including an environmental appreciation of the Northern Plains in 1876, the results of recent archeological investigations of the battlefield, the battle in art and motion pictures and current opinion of the battle's legacy.

Custer's last fight is among the most famous incidents in U.S. Army military history, and its popularity with the general public has led a life of its own since it happened. There are innumerable books and popular and learned journal discussions of it. There are numerous illustrations of it including the Anheuser-Busch brewery's 19th century garish chromolithograph "Custer's Last Fight" of which some 200,000 copies have been distributed. There have been dozens of theatrical motion pictures based on it. All have combined to influence contemporary opinions of the incident.

There are many mysteries about the battle which will never be satisfactorially resolved: the number of hostile Indian warriors engaged is typical. It was in the thousands and they overwhelmed Custer's tiny command of some two hundred, all of whom were killed in action according to most, but not all, authorities.

Thoughtful U.S. Army people have always wondered why Custer, an experienced and battle hardened veteran officer, led his column to its destruction without scouts in advance or on its flanks in an area occupied by a hostile force of large but unknown size and composition contrary to proper military tactics then and now. Ever since he did, military leaders have considered this a prime example of how NOT to do such a mission.

Unfortunately the symposium did not include a qualified military combat historian's view of the battle. Possibly this was because there are so many conflicting accounts, many recorded long after the fight when they were clouded by subsequent events, and discussing them would have distracted from the basic objectives of the symposium.

However, like it or not, this book is one every collector or reader of Custeriana should have and read as an appreciation of contemporary opinions of the tragic battle.

Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.

MASSACRE ON THE LORDSBURG ROAD: *A Tragedy of the Apache Wars* by Marc Simmons. College Station. Texas A & M Press. 256 pp. Hardback, $27.95. Order from Texas A & M

University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 78843-4345. (409) 845-1436.

This is a well-written account of an important historical incident (the brutal murder of Judge H.C. McComas and his wife Juaniata and the kidnapping of their six-year-old son Charley) that marked the final phase of the extinction of the Chiricahua Apache as a fighting force. This is one of the only books that I have read where the preface is as interesting as any other chapter and that is certainly not intended to cast any unfavorable light on the rest of the book.

The author's well documented background description of the Apaches' customs and tribal rivalries which is central to the understanding of the events of that time makes clear the subtitle, *A Tragedy of the Apache Wars.*

The part that luck played in the incident is carefully brought out, explained and documented in great detail from the reason for Judge McComas' taking this particular trip to the chance stopping under a walnut tree for a picnic.

The classic definition of a tragedy is fulfilled here for both the McComas' family and the Apache nation, which the author explains in great detail.

This single event made the newspapers of all of the major U.S. cities with indignation and revenge; calls for the extermination of the Apache were commonly voiced.

Through this single incident the reader is given an insight into some of the conditions, problems and prejudices that were common at that time and is better able to understand as well as know the history of this period.

Simmons concludes in chapter eleven with a photograph of a revised politically correct official scenic historical marker that now reads "McComas Incident" rather than the McComas Massacre, which attempts to interpret a 19th Century event in light of late 20th Century morals.

Ramon G. Otero

AND OTHER THINGS

This new section will be used to announce and review periodicals, computer programs and equipment, websites, and music.

For Charles M. Russell affectionados, the Montana Historical Society has two mouse pads with Russell's works ("Kecoma" and "I Rode Him") for $14.95 each. They also have a screen saver of Russell's works for $29.95.

The University of Cincinnati Digital Press (1-888-297-3799 or www.ucdp.uc.edu) has released a two volume CD of the printed works of George Catlin. In addition to the 600 printed works, there are biographic and bibliographic materials and indexes. Each CD is $299 or $499 for the set. System requires Windows 95 or Windows NT, 40 mb available hard drive space, CD-ROM drive, 1024 Vidio display capacity and a 20-21 inch monitor.

Tour the California Trail by the Oregon-California Trail Association includes 45 sites with information about them, quotes and photographs: http://calcite.rocky.edu/octa.trailmap, htm.

The NW chapter of OCTA does the Oregon Trail: http://members.aol.com/octanw/maps/clickable.htlm.

Follow the Pony Express at: www.ccnet.com/~xptom.