

Venice Miniature Railway at the Windward Avenue Loop. Courtesy the Ernest Marquez Collection.

Abbot Kinney and His Venice Miniature Railway

by Donald Duke

Every Westerner has certainly heard about Abbot Kinney and his *Venice of America*. It was a wonderful place with canals for streets, gondoliers, an amusement park and pier. But Venice also had a railroad. Not a full size railroad like the Santa Fe or Southern Pacific, but a miniature railroad that operated around the Venice community, providing transportation for the residents and a sight-seeing medium for tourists.

Abbot Kinney, although born in America, was educated in Switzerland, Paris and

Heidelberg. He became a master of modern languages and probed deeply into the problems of the European economy. On completion of his education, he traveled around Europe before returning to his home in Washington City, Connecticut. One of the stops on his tour was Venice, Italy, *The Queen City of the Adriatic*.

Venice fascinated Kinney. There was no other city in the world quite like this port city of northern Italy. He quickly learned

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that Venice was not built on solid ground, but on a cluster of small mud islands. The place had canals for streets and gondolas for taxicabs. There were picturesque walking bridges crossing the canals; houses and palaces stood along the banks. This colorful city left a lasting impression on young Kinney.

When Kinney eventually reached the United States, he was already financially well off. He was not pleased with the blend of American tobacco, so he spent a year in Turkey developing a rich blend of American and Turkish tobacco and obtained a monopoly on the exporting of all Turkish tobacco to the United States. Eventually, nearly every American tobacco maker switched to American-Turkish blend.

In order to keep busy after he came to California, Kinney engaged in the real estate business in Santa Monica along with a partner, Francis G. Ryan. The Santa Monica area was rapidly growing, and the partnership did extremely well. Kinney decided to build a home on Ocean Avenue because the sea air was very good for his health. As Santa Monica spilled over to the south, he and Ryan founded the city of Ocean Park. Here, they developed a planned community. They laid out streets, established parks and built a small pier.

Just south of Ocean Park was an area of sand dunes, marshland and slimy water. This was where the Los Angeles River once emptied into the ocean; the river had been diverted to its present channel sometime in the 1870s. The area was known as Ballona Creek, and the land was nearly worthless. No one ever gave it a second glance, except for Abbot Kinney. Here, he envisioned his dream city—an American Venice. A city with beauty and culture, a city that could rival the places he so admired during his youthful journey throughout Europe.

In 1904 Kinney bought this marshland, which included two miles of beach frontage. It was here that he would build his ideal city. The newspapers at the time were distinctly skeptical of his plans. Canals for streets? Ryan also began to wonder about his partner

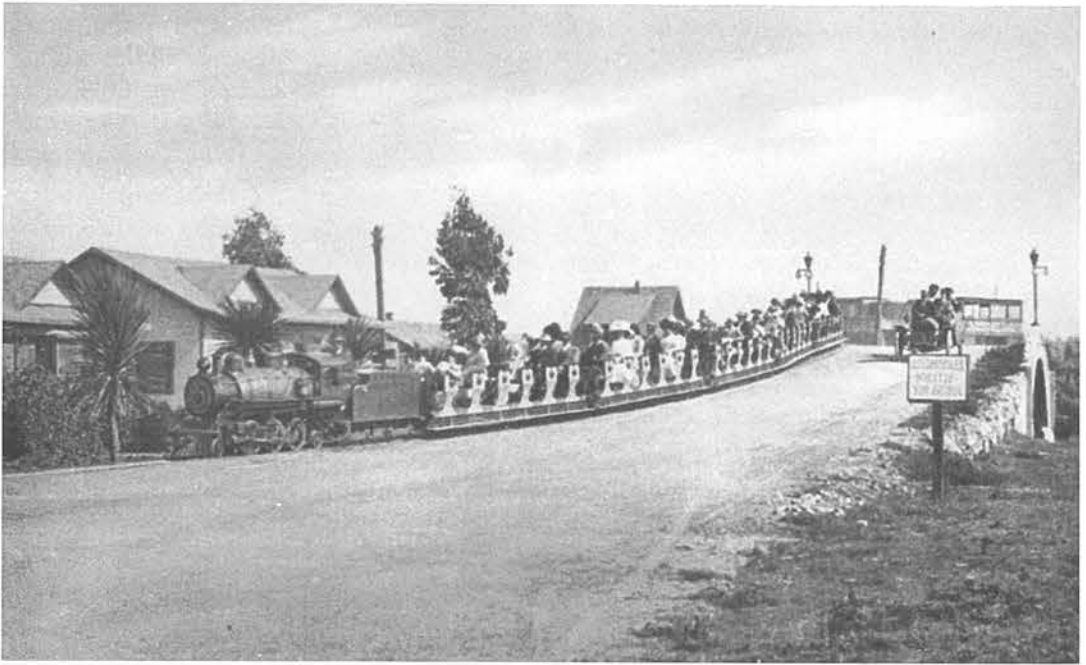
after he had looked at the sand dunes; he was sure that Kinney had flipped his wig. His doubts about this Venice Project were so great that he and Kinney dissolved their partnership.

After some planning, on May 10, 1904, Kinney presented to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors his plan known as the Venice View Tract. It contained some 592 lots, a few facing on a proposed Grand Canal and the balance facing smaller canals. On August 1, 1904, the Board approved Kinney's plan for the division of lots, the building of a 1,700-foot pier and plans for a grand hotel facing the ocean. Although they approved such a wild idea, many of the supervisors believed Kinney was suffering from sunstroke.

On August 15, 1904, the first contract was let for dredging the Grand Canal. The canal was to be 70 feet wide, four feet deep and a half mile long. Branch canals were to stem from this Grand Canal. All the canals were to be concrete lined to keep water from seeping into the soil. Immediately a dredge and an army of men went to work.

During the era of mass transit, it was an important consideration to locate any development close to transportation facilities. Venice owes its shape to the Los Angeles Pacific Railway interurban lines that surround it. The interurban line first extended its tracks south from Santa Monica in 1901. Its route was across the bean fields, the marshlands and then ran into Los Angeles, operating along what is today Venice Boulevard.

Thousands of people boarded the green interurban cars in order to see just what Kinney was building. After seeing the construction, they believed that Kinney was not so "nuts" after all! During November 1904, over \$386,000 worth of lots were sold, proving that the people liked what they saw. Kinney built an electric power plant and installed an electrical system to each lot. The canals were lighted; in fact he put in lights all over the place. He built a novel fire station and installed fire plugs all over Venice; these fire plugs were connected at high pres-



Venice Miniature Railway crossing one of the arched bridges. Courtesy Ernest Marquez Collection.

sure to a salt water pipeline. All types of novel features were found in Venice that could not be found in any other community.

Then came the El Niño of their time. Its high and rough waters wrecked the new Venice pier, the dance pavilion and many other buildings connected with the amusement park. Kinney was not daunted. He got permission from the U.S. Government to build a breakwater, at his own expense, which would protect his property and also that of the other landowners. This was the first private breakwater to be built in the United States, and it stretched for 500 feet just 60 feet offshore. It cost Kinney \$100,000 to build. While it did save his shoreline, it ended up controlling the amount of water flowing into the canals, which proved to be a problem.

The rebuilding of the pier, the amusements and the wrecked buildings along the shore was carried out with speed. No expense was spared. On June 30, water was turned into the canals, and the lagoon was filled. An auditorium, seating 3,600, where plays and musicals could be held, was built in just 28 days and opened July 2, 1905, in

time for the Fourth of July celebration. Also on the same day the first electrical power was generated. At night some 17,000 lamps were turned on, which presented a fairyland of lights. On the Fourth of July, Venice experienced one of the greatest celebrations ever held in Southern California. More than 40,000 people came to visit Kinney's dream come true with many of them arriving aboard the green interurban cars of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway. On the program were band concerts, plays, speeches, contests and fireworks. Salesmen worked through the crowds selling lots with a most modest down payment.

Kinney quickly realized that to keep people coming to Venice they would have to be entertained. Consequently, a contract was let in November 1904 for a Pleasure Pier. A Midway Plaisance was built, consisting of eleven structures which were devoted to amusements, sideshows, shops and restaurants. This would be the Coney Island of the West with a carnival-like atmosphere. Kinney also planned to build a hotel for overnight guests. When it was completed, it was called the St. Marks and was located

next to the pier on Windward and Ocean Front Walk. There was also Marchetti's famous ship restaurant called *The Cabrillo*. Kinney's next step was to develop a cultural center where plays, musicals, concerts and operas were produced. Fortunately, for all concerned, Kinney had the money to carry out all these plans.

Lots were rapidly sold, and Venice soon filled up. There were Venetian Villas with cabins for rent, as well as summer cottages along the canal. The homes along the canals were all striving to capture the atmosphere of a miniature Venice, Italy. Every homeowner had to have his own rowboat or canoe to get around; those who traveled by gondola might have to wait as much as a half hour before they were delivered to their door. As space on the shallow waterway boulevards became congested, it became obvious that some other form of transportation was necessary. The solution to handling the ever increasing traffic congestion was a railroad that would go around and through Venice.

Venice needed a railroad line that would be able to surmount the arch bridges that ran over the canals. However since a standard or narrow-gauge railroad would require the rebuilding of 14 bridges, a miniature railway was the answer.

John Coit, a retired Southern Pacific locomotive engineer, had designed, built and was successfully operating such an amusement railway line at East Lake Park (now Lincoln Park). An 18-inch gauge railway line would be able to make it over the canal crossings and the tracks would fit nicely along the banks of the canals. At his own expense, Kinney commissioned Coit to design and build a two and a half mile railway line around Venice.

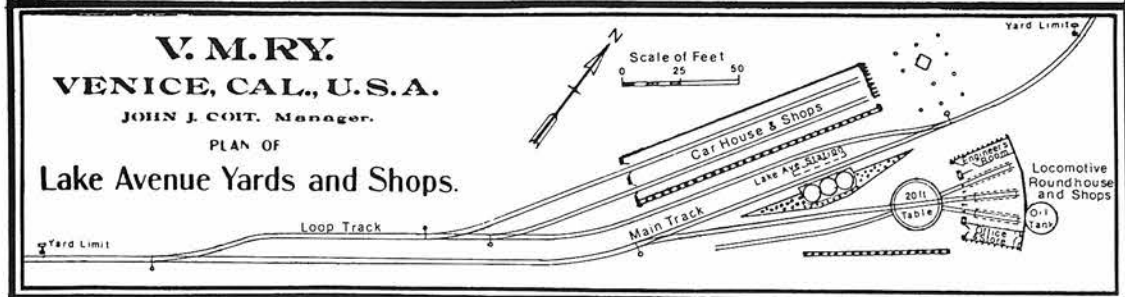
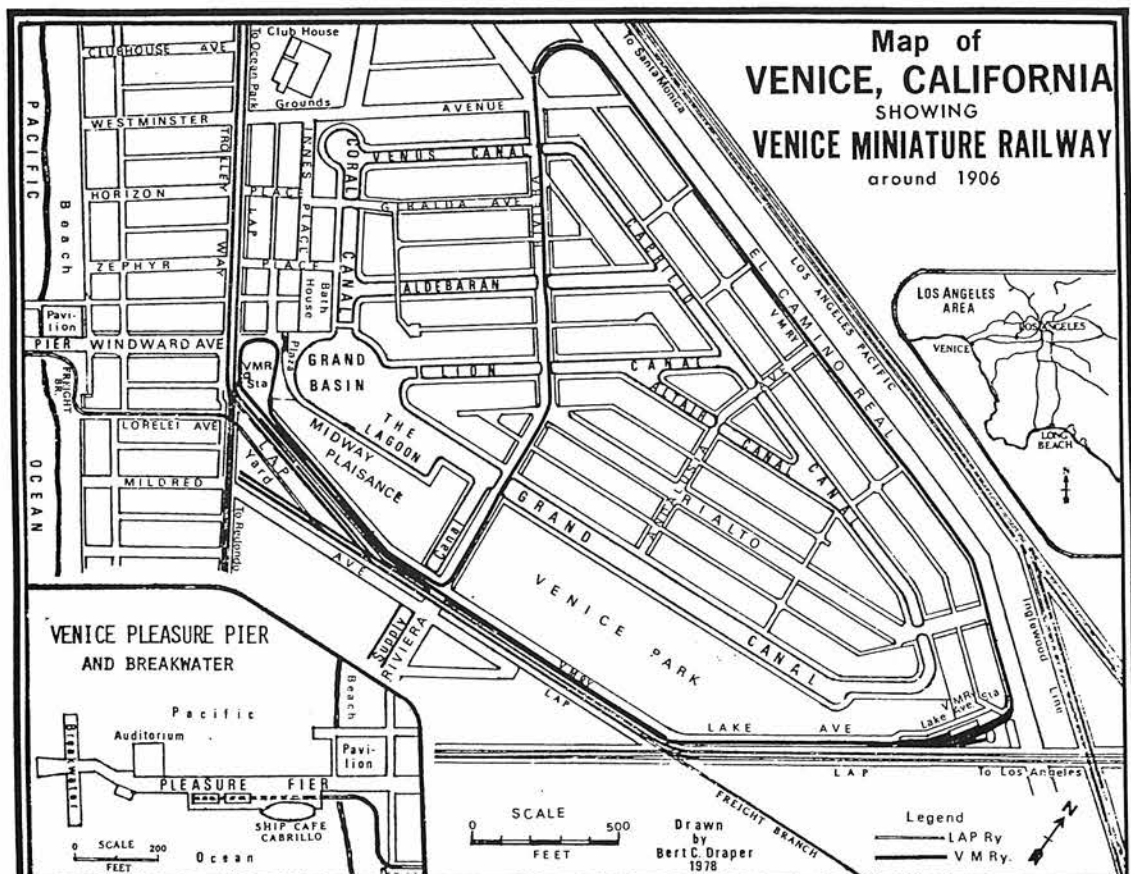
The projected line would provide local transportation for residents; the train could be stopped on call or flag. It also would provide sightseeing for tourists who wished to see what Venice was really like. The rails started at Windward Avenue where a loop was built. Windward Avenue ran directly west and out on the pier. Tracks then ran

east, passed through the residential district and over the many bridges spanning the canals, which had romantic names such as Lion, Venus, Cabrillo and Aldebaron. The rails then would make a circle around El Camino Real (now Washington Boulevard) and return to the Windward Avenue loop station. Along the route around Venice the railroad passed the maintenance yard and shops (see map).

The railroad's service facilities looked just like those on any main line railroad. It had a three-stall enginehouse, a turntable, a machine shop for minor locomotive repairs, a water tank, a fuel oil loading tank and two long storage sheds where the passenger cars were stored at night.

The Venice Miniature Railway operated every 20 minutes, running in one direction only. This was done to prevent any head-on collisions when more than one train was in service since the railroad was not signalled and had no passing sidings. Train service began at 6:00 a.m. and ran until 11:00 p.m. every day, rain or shine, seven days a week. Each train carried an engineer who ran the locomotive, and a conductor who walked along a running board of the passenger cars to collect tickets. If you wanted off at a specific spot, you would tell the engineer in advance. Similar to a regular railroad, the train service required three crew changes per day. Shopmen would fill in when the crew went for a meal, or a member was absent, or a crewman required a pit stop.

Three locomotives were ordered from the Johnson Foundry & Machine Works at 1119 North Main, Los Angeles. Each locomotive was to be built separately in order that service might begin as soon as possible. The first engine was to be completed in the spring of 1906. Each locomotive was to be of the Prairie type or better known as a 2-6-2 steam locomotive. In layman terms this meant counting the wheels only on one side. It had two pilot or guiding wheels, six big driving wheels which produced the power, and a pair of wheels under the firebox. The locomotives were to look just like their big brothers, except in miniature. Each locomotive



tive cost \$6,000 which included the engine and tender. For the technocrat, the cylinder bore was five inches with a seven-inch stroke. The locomotives weighed 8,000 pounds with tender empty, and the engines had Walschaert slide-valve gears. The driving wheels were 20 inches in diameter, and all engines and cars were equipped with Westinghouse air brakes. Each tender held 200 gallons of water and 80 gallons of fuel oil. A locomotive used a quart of fuel oil per mile. There were 55 tubes, each an inch and a half in diameter in the engine boiler. When hot, the boiler produced 100 pounds of steam pressure. Each engine could easily handle the weight of five to eight passenger cars around the circuit.

Engine No. 1 arrived in May 1906 together with ten cars. Each passenger car was 20 feet long and sat between 12 to 14 people, depending on the size of the passenger, with two to a seat, and more if children were aboard. Additional cars arrived during the summer along with locomotive No. 2. The passenger cars had canvas roofs which were used during inclement weather. There were postholes along each car which held the posts that held up a canvas roof, but the cars had no doors or windows. Basically they were just like a convertible except when it rained.

When a locomotive was in for repair, or business was brisk, Coit would provide reserve power from his East Lake Park operation. His surplus engine was a 2-6-0 type and was only able to handle four passenger cars. It was not until fall 1906 that locomotive No. 3 arrived.

The cost of a trip around Venice was five cents, although residents could buy a book of tickets for \$1.00 which made the run only two cents. At that time, it cost 15 cents to ride from Los Angeles to Venice on the Los Angeles Pacific Railway.

John Coit actually ran the railroad, but Kinney was determined to involve his sons, even the youngest, in his resort and amusement enterprise. He appointed his son Carleton, age nine, president of the Venice Miniature Railway. Son Innes, age twelve,

was made chief engineer and often ran the locomotive around the park. When important dignitaries came to see the operation, Carleton and Innes were in full uniform. Thornton, the oldest son, worked closely with his father and was involved in the company's day to day operations.

When first placed in service, locomotive No. 1 ran 3,760 miles around the circuit in 27 working days. The engine ran nearly a year without any major repair or servicing except for oiling the moving parts. There was not a bit of difference between the three locomotives except that No. 2 had a higher arch window in the cab. Why this was done remains a mystery. When the railroad was completed, the cost of the locomotives, the passenger cars, the shop facilities, the laying of the ties and rails came to \$23,000. It remains unknown whether the railroad eventually paid for itself, made a profit or ran at a loss. In any case, at the time it was a matter of necessity.

Trains have always fascinated youngsters, but the Venice Miniature Railway also drew the admiration of adults. Railroad buffs would often ride the trains over and over again. However after each run, the train was vacated at the Windward Avenue loop and then reloaded. This was necessary to keep passengers from remaining on the train for a single fare.

At the time, the Venice Miniature Railway locomotives were the largest of their kind in the miniature class. Each engine had an over-all length of 20 feet and a height of five feet from the rail to the top of the car. The locomotives do not seem big in photographs, but they were quite large.

Kinney must have considered his *Venice of America* a success. As in all real estate ventures, his goal was to sell lots to make a profit, and he did. The last of the Venice lots sold during July 1907. Most developers try to spend as little as possible, make as much profit as possible and then move on. Kinney, however, was in his venture for the long haul. Venice required that he spend vast amounts of money for maintenance and upkeep. Kinney's intentions were to turn a

handsome profit from the park's money-making attractions and venues. The initial cost of *Venice of America*, as originally built, seems small by today's standards. The land, the dredging, building the canals, surveying the lots and making improvements, the pier, amusements and the railroad cost Kinney \$780,000. In current dollars this would have been roughly \$145 million. However, you must remember that initially the land he purchased was considered as worthless.

Although the concept of Venice's canal system was initially sound, the tidal flow through the narrow outlet to the sea failed to circulate the sea water properly through the shallow canals due to the breakwater. Unless the canals were kept clean and free of debris on a daily basis, the canals began to smell. By 1912 the State Board of Health condemned all but the Grand Canal as a public menace. Consequently, all supplementary or side canals were filled in and became roads.

As America entered the automobile age following World War I, many people owned their own cars. Thus on weekends they could find all sorts of places to go instead of returning to Venice time after time. Passenger traffic on the Los Angeles Pacific interurban line began to dip, even though it still served those citizens without cars.

When Venice entered the twenties, patronage on the Venice Miniature Railway began to decline except during the summer season. On November 20, 1920, Abbot Kinney suddenly died. Then, just a month later on December 20, 1920, disaster struck. It was a cool night, and the people in the dance pavilion on the pier were huddled around a huge gas heater. Suddenly, without warning, the heater door flew open and the flames leapt out into the crowd. They drew back, but the flames reached out set-

ting the drapes covering the walls afire. It was not long before the whole pavilion was ablaze, and it soon spread to the entire pier. The dry, wooden buildings were ripe for burning. The fire department had to use dynamite to stop the path of the fire. Damage ran into the millions. When all was said and done, only a few of the structures were insured, and those that had insurance were underinsured. Thorton Kinney, who had taken over after his father's death, made a stab at rebuilding, but *Venice of America* was never the same again.

The Venice Miniature Railway kept rolling through 1924. Early in 1925 the Washington Boulevard Merchants Association called for the abandonment of the railway which ran along El Camino Real. Here, the tracks ran right in front of the shops and stores, so there was no place for street parking of automobiles. The merchants asked that Washington Boulevard be widened to provide parking in front of their stores and went to City Attorney George Acret who listened to their complaint. The railroad's franchise was up, and he decided not to renew it. The Abbot Kinney Company was served with papers to abandon their tracks along Washington Boulevard. Those tracks served as the backbone of the system, and besides, there was no other place to run their tracks. If the line was to keep running it would become a split or two-part system. It was decided to abandon the railroad.

Groups of volunteers who belonged to the Washington Boulevard Merchants Association gathered, on May 26, 1925, with picks and shovels to tear up the tracks along the boulevard. That same day a fitting ceremony was being held at the Windward Avenue loop to recognize the end of service on the Venice Miniature Railway.



Albert Bacon Fall from A. Morgan Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain*.

A Public Servant Without A Conscience: The Wretched Reign of Albert Bacon Fall

by John Southworth

On Saturday, February 1, 1896, an eight year old boy was gunned down on the sunrise side of San Augustin Pass just east of Las Cruces, New Mexico Territory. That boy was not the innocent victim of random gunfire; no, he was murdered in cold blood by three men old enough to be his father. His offense: being old enough to identify and testify against his three assailants. He had watched them murder his father. Worse, he recognized all three.

The murdered boy was the youngest son of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain, attorney and driving force behind the Southeastern New Mexico Stock Growers' Association, an organization of large and powerful cattle companies overly tired of depredations by uncontrolled bands of cattle rustlers. Young Henry had gone to Lincoln,

seat of Lincoln County, with his father who was seeking grand jury indictments against several rustling suspects. The father had already received several death threats concerning his trip to Lincoln. The latest one was quite definite. It read: "If you drop this [case] we will be your friends. If you go on with it you will never reach home alive."

Henry's mother, Mariana Fountain, knew of the death threats to her husband and, failing to convince him to cancel his Lincoln trip, insisted that he take young Henry along, feeling "confident that even the most depraved assassins would do him no harm" if the child were along. She was wrong.

We know for sure that the child was murdered, because his body was rooted from its shallow, temporary grave and man-

gled by hogs at the Dog Canyon ranch of Oliver Lee, a known rustler and a suspect in the murders. The young girl who made the gruesome discovery much later wrote to the Fountain family, saying: "One of the men who killed your father and little brother has just killed my husband." She went on to explain that perhaps, if she had told all she knew when questioned concerning the Fountain murders, especially about finding Henry's mangled body, her husband might still be alive.

The final resting place of the two victims, father and son, was never determined. Without a body or a witness, it was difficult to accuse anyone of murder.

Colonel Fountain's friends had to do all that was done to find the killers. They employed Indian trackers, then the Pinkerton agency and finally bulldog trailer Pat Garrett, recently from the Lincoln County Wars only now there was no Billy the Kid to maintain public interest.

The trackers determined that there were three assailants who split up, then obscured their individual escape routes by driving cattle across any trails they might have left. The Pinkerton agency reported their findings to the Governor in Santa Fe only to have all their documents stolen from the governor's office (they turned up years later in private hands in southern New Mexico). Pat Garrett had limited success for various reasons. In any event, the evidence anyone was able to collect was insufficient for conviction.

The sheriff of Doña Ana County was of absolutely no help in the Fountain investigations. It was his attitude that the Colonel had disappeared of his own free will and, anyhow, the likely suspects in the killings, if those killings really had occurred, were all deputies in his own office and he would not tolerate any such interference.

Actually, the three suspects in the case had been Deputy United States Marshals for Judge Albert Fall who used all three to great personal advantage. When the Judge's federal appointment was rescinded by President Cleveland (after Fall resigned just ahead of the axe), the three were attached to the coop-



Oliver Lee suspected murderer of Albert Fountain. From A. Morgan Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain*.

erative sheriff's office as deputies.

Those deputies, Billy McNew, Jim Gilliland, and Oliver Lee (namesake of the storied, probably apocryphal, grave marker reported to read: "He called Oliver Lee a Liar"), were all eager young imports from Texas who neglected their own cattle rustling sidelines in order to better protect the Judge who so ably protected them. The cooperative Judge took cattle for fees and eventually operated a ranch that controlled some 650,000 acres of New Mexico land.

Lee and Gilliland were finally brought to trial for the Fountain murders in 1899. By the time the newspapers and defense lawyer Albert Fall were through, the two defendants were seen as abused and misunderstood victims of society. The trial lasted eighteen days. The jury took just seven minutes to undo three years of hard work by the prosecution.

Oliver Lee and Jim Gilliland went free, but politics in New Mexico did not return to their old, contrary ways. The people were becoming more and more interested in statehood which could not be achieved in a territory that thrived on the likes of the Lincoln County Wars and the Albert Fountain killings.



James Gilliland suspected murderer of Albert Fountain. From A. Morgan Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain*.

In 1912, Albert Fall was sent to the United States Congress as a Senator from the new state.

Senator Fall might have a new title but that did not require him to change his stubborn ways. Always the opportunist, in the United States Senate he openly promoted his own and other private interests, among them a well financed attempt to take the Mescalero Indian Reservation away from the Apaches and open it to Anglo exploitation. After nine years in the Senate, he moved upward to greater and more shameless accomplishments.

Albert Bacon Fall left his home state of Kentucky at the age of twenty in 1881 after a minimal education in none too adequate county schools. Not in good health, he sought the open life of a cowboy in Texas. He prospected through northern Mexico, worked in the mines at Nieves in the state of Zacatecas, gained a speaking knowledge of Spanish and returned north of the border in 1884.

Fall eventually settled in the rich agricultural area of the Mesilla Valley along the Rio Grande River in what is now Doña Ana County, New Mexico. Las Cruces would

soon be the largest community in the area.

Although agriculture, stock raising and mining were its primary activities, politics was the life blood of Doña Ana County. The mostly Spanish-American population had a religious zeal for politics.

Local political battles proliferated and often escalated into mass demonstrations which ended in bloodshed. Election quarrels promoted bitter personal feuds which divided districts. Rigidly Democratic and Republican newspapers took sides and promoted dissidence. Party politics were active and aggressive, always trying to dominate the voters and the party conventions. Doña Ana politics dominated Territorial politics, and its inherent violence did much to delay New Mexico statehood.

As a southerner from Kentucky, Albert Fall was a dedicated Democrat. With his native inclinations to become a world-class lawyer, he fit well in the ongoing Doña Ana political machinations. According to the opposing *Rio Grande Republican* (October 14, 1892), his arrival in town had only stirred up more "strife and array." "When the Blessed Redeemer uttered that great humanitarian doctrine, 'Blessed are the peace makers,' He evidently did not refer to A.B. Fall."

Albert Fall had not come to Mesilla Valley to make peace but had come to wrest control of territorial politics from the entrenched Republican machine headed by Thomas B. Catron and his so-called "Santa Fe Ring."

He bought a failing newspaper, installed his father and brother as publishers and editors, cultivated the support of the Spanish-American population, and harangued against the Republicans. Just four years after his arrival in Las Cruces, A.B. Fall was practicing law before the territorial supreme court and all the lesser courts, all this without any formal training in the law. He was a self made man with little professional education. He certainly had no background in morals or any training in legal ethics.

Much of his law practice regarded land titles, water and mineral rights, and the legality of Mexican marriages under United

States law. The rest of his working time was spent defending murder suspects (John Selman for the murder of John Wesley Hardin in El Paso in 1895) and innumerable rustling suspects (he claimed five hundred successful defenses before he failed a client by losing a decision).

Through his expertise in defending rustling suspects, he rather changed the rustler ground rules: Make sure of your protection, then do the job. He soon was professionally acquainted with all the serious rustlers preying on the burgeoning New Mexico cattle industry. Many an old New Mexico ranch made its successful start by rustling "seed" herds, under his protection.

In the 1892 national election, Grover Cleveland became the first Democratic president to be elected in many years. For his good works on behalf of the party in the New Mexico elections, Albert Fall was proposed as a Federal Judge for the Third Judicial District. This proposal generated a storm of protest from Republicans. Losing the election was bad enough; having Fall preside over the high court was intolerable.

Amid all the Republican protests, there were even a few from Democratic lawyers. One such Democrat protest read: [In my estimation, Fall is] "entirely destitute of the natural qualities which the holder of a judicial position should have... He is violent in temper and vindictive toward his enemies and would, I believe, be a tyrant on the bench....I am quite sure that he ought not to be a judge."

Despite all the protests, Albert Fall was confirmed as a high court Judge in 1893. All his critics turned out to be correct. Under fire, he resigned in 1895. To protect his person while he served as a federal judge, Fall arranged to have Deputy United States Marshall appointments made for Oliver Lee, Jim Gilliland and Billy McNew, all useful acquaintances from his experiences defending dedicated cattle rustlers. Fall claimed his enemies were out to get him and that he needed armed protection at all times. In this he was not too far wrong. Gunfire often erupted on the streets of Las Cruces. The

town was divided down the middle of Main Street into Democratic and Republican sides. Judge Fall himself took part in at least one of the political shootings.

At the heart of the opposition to Judge Fall and all that he stood for was Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain, tough and fearless Apache hunter, scout for General James Carleton, Republican activist and, worst of all, now chief counsel for the large, legitimate cattle companies, the ones which Fall's rustler clientele had harassed for so long.

The Colonel was already a well established Republican attorney in Las Cruces when A.B. Fall arrived and set up shop in 1887. The opinions of the two were poles apart on every issue of importance. Both were men of action, and they hated each other with a vengeance. Each did everything he could to lessen the influence and effectiveness of the other.

When the legitimate cattle operators organized the Southeastern New Mexico Stock Growers' Association about 1890, Fountain became its chief counsel and by 1895 was devoting full time to its affairs. His diligent prosecution of rustling cases pressed close to the livelihood of Oliver Lee, Jim Gilliland and Billy McNew, now Las Cruces deputy sheriffs under Sheriff Ascarate, a Fall favorite because he did what he was told without argument.

Surely it will never be known just who made the first proposal, but in due time a workable plot aimed at quieting all organized opposition to local rampant cattle rustling and, coincidentally, to the political machinations of A.B. Fall was hatched. The three gunmen would silence the troublesome Albert Fountain, and Albert Fall would see to it that there would be no convictions should the case ever come to trial. The most important legal suggestion offered was to leave no incriminating evidence, no *corpus delicti*. The assassination was handled with dispatch, and no one ever talked.

Fall's newspaper, the *Independent Democrat*, was a great help in diverting public attention from the indifferent and inappropriate attitude of Sheriff Ascarate and his

three accused deputies. That extremely biased newspaper published a long sequence of misleading articles on the subject. It reported that Albert Fountain really was not dead, that he recently had been seen in St. Louis, San Francisco, Chicago, even New York, that he was on his way to Cuba, and that he had finally been found, wholly unharmed, in Mexico City. Albert Fall helped in this regard by dropping several scurrilous hints that, tired of Mariana, his wife of nearly thirty-five years, the Colonel had run off with a younger woman and had taken his youngest son with him to a secret lover's rendezvous in Denver.

After the Fountain murders, Albert Fall's law practice flourished. He represented irrigation and land development enterprises, mining companies and lumber interests, railroads and lesser industrial entities.

His work for the Greene interests about 1900 escalated into a full time, multi-million dollar operation. That colorful border capitalist, Colonel William C. Greene, needed a manager, organizer and general counsel for his vast Mexican operations, and Fall was just the man to oversee the Colonel's extensive mining, timber and railroad enterprises in Chihuahua and Sonora.

His extensive Mexican experiences gave Fall an opportunity to make profitable investments of his own, and he came away with funds sufficient to purchase the old Cogan ranch near Tularosa, New Mexico. Patrick Cogan was reported to be a friend of Billy the Kid and to be another of the many local ranchers who started as a cattle rustler.

As his Mexican interests declined and his private investments prospered, Fall spent more time and money on his Tularosa ranch until it encompassed a reported 650,000 acres and was a self-sustaining operation.

Just before the 1906 elections and without warning or explanation Fall, "the most rabid and intense Democrat in the whole Southwest" switched political parties to become an equally rabid and intense Republican.

In 1910 Albert Fall was a delegate to the convention organized to develop a formal

constitution preliminary to New Mexico statehood. Two years later, in 1912, New Mexico became the forty-seventh state of the Union. No longer political opponents, A.B. Fall and Tom Catron went to Congress as the first senators from the new State.

Fall had a special talent for being the crony of the rich and powerful. He also had a natural passion for the game of poker which endeared him to poker-loving Warren G. Harding, then also in the Senate. After Harding was elected President of the United States in 1920 he appointed his poker playing buddy to the Cabinet post of Secretary of the Interior, a seemingly normal appointment since Fall loved horses (he attended the Kentucky Derby every year), he habitually wore a great black Stetson hat and he operated a ranch imposing in its enormity in the wide open spaces of the Great American West. This appointment was unanimously confirmed by the Senate without reference to committee. (Actually, Harding had wanted to make Fall Secretary of State but was dissuaded by wiser, cooler heads. Harding apologized to Fall for this lesser appointment and promised him a seat on the Supreme Court at the first vacancy.)

The keynote of the Department of the Interior under Albert Fall certainly was not one of conservation as it had been under previous administrations. Instead it was just the opposite. A direct Fall quotation gives an excellent insight into the aggressive nature of the man and how the Department of the Interior would now be run.

Challenged by a National Park Service official for his wide-open attitude toward the public lands particularly the oil lands and asked what sort of heritage his policies would leave for generations to come, Fall replied easily:

I'm surprised at you. You've had a good education. You know something about history. Every generation from Adam and Eve down has lived better than the generation before. I don't know how ... [the next generation will] do it—maybe they'll use the energy of the sun or the sea waves—but ... [they] will live better



Albert Jennings Fountain from A. Morgan Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain*.

than we do. I stand for opening up every resource.

In public recognition of an increasing need for conservation of dwindling western oil reserves, over three million acres of California and Wyoming land already had been withdrawn from public disposition by Presidential Order and Congressional approval in 1910. To ensure an adequate future fuel supply in case of war, the President had, in 1912 and again in 1915, directed that certain of the withdrawn lands be "held for the exclusive use and benefit of the United States Navy." In all, nearly 80,000 acres of western lands became Naval Reserves One, Two and Three, Elk Hills and Buena Vista in California and Teapot Dome in Wyoming.

In early April 1922, just one year after A.B. Fall took office as Secretary of the

Interior, a private citizen in Wyoming wrote to his Senator, John B. Kendrick, stating that private interests were leasing Naval Reserve land under non-competitive bid arrangements directly through the office of the Secretary of the Interior. This citizen asked an important question: "What did the Secretary of the Interior have to do with this disposition of Navy oil reserves?"

Senator Kendrick wrote letters, asked questions and began an investigation which eventually shocked the nation with its disclosures of venality at the highest levels of government. Two civil trials and six criminal trials kept what soon became known as the Teapot Dome Scandals in the public eye for ten long years and eventually restored the naval reserves, less a lot of pumped oil, to its rightful owners.

As accused head of the Department of the Interior, Albert Fall faced his attackers head on in a manner similar to that which had taken him so far in his lifetime. But a congressional investigation was a far cry from Las Cruces politics, and he went down to defeat, a sick and broken man. He was sentenced to serve a jail term and to pay a \$100,000 fine.

The beneficiaries of the illegal Teapot Dome and Elk Hills leases fared better. Harry F. Sinclair spent nine months in prison, and Edward L. Doheny went free. Millionaires many times over, the financial drain of ten long years of litigation had little effect on either Sinclair or Doheny, but it ruined Albert Fall.

Fall resigned as Secretary of the Interior in 1923 after only two years in office. He spent the remainder of his life fighting illness, financial problems, court appearances and a jail sentence.

On July 20, 1931, Albert Bacon Fall entered the hospital ward of the Santa Fe, New Mexico, penitentiary where he remained until his full sentence of one year plus a day was satisfied. While there he filed a "pauper's oath" and his \$100,000 fine was never paid.

Albert Bacon Fall lived in obscurity after his release from prison. He died of chronic tuberculosis in 1944. He probably was very sorry that he ever left New Mexico where confrontational politics were appreciated, even rewarded.

Suggested Reading

Busch, Francis X., *Enemies of the State*.

Gibson, A. Morgan, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain*.

Metz, Leon C., *Pat Garrett: The Story of a Western Lawman*.

Stratton, David H., "New Mexican Machiavellian?" *Montana*, Volume 7, October 1957, pp 2 - 14.

California Vignette An Uncapped Water Pipe: The Tragedy of Kathy Fiscus by William C. Johnston

Fifty years ago, on April 8, 1949, a 3 1/2 year-old girl fell down an uncapped 14-inch water pipe in a vacant field. Within hours, the name Kathy Fiscus became known all over the world. I covered what would become one of the biggest news events in Southern California history as a young reporter for the Los Angeles Times.

I worked out of the old Pasadena police department press room covering the San Gabriel Valley on the nightside (3 p.m. to midnight). When I arrived at the press room, the dispatcher was barking out orders so fast I could not figure out what was happening. When I was told he was too busy to talk to me, I went next door to the fire department. The dispatcher there finally told me that a little girl had fallen down a pipe. When I called the night city editor, Smokey Hale, he told me to "get there."

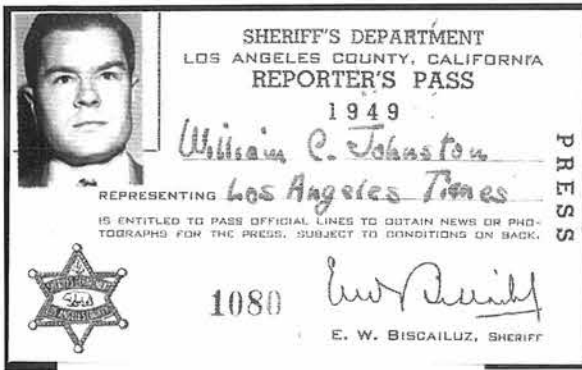
When I arrived at the site, there was a small knot of people standing about half way down the field. As I got closer, I could see Dave Fiscus, whom I had met about six months earlier as a result of a part time job I held, walking away, his hands to his face. "Dave," I said, "I am sorry to bother you but as you know, I also am a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. I would like to ask you some questions."

Dave told me his daughter Kathy was running down the field with her older cousins, the children of Hamilton and Jeannette (Mrs. Fiscus's sister) Lyon. The cousins were running ahead, and one turned back to look and asked, "Where's Kathy?"

They went back up the hill, and five year-old Gus heard her screams coming from the water pipe and told the parents.

The rusty pipe was about 94 feet under ground, and Kathy had become wedged in a bend in the pipe.

I heard her screams when I got there. It



Press pass worn by author during the Kathy Fiscus event.
Courtesy of author.

was the most pathetic sound I have ever heard.

I took some pictures, talked to some firemen, drove to a pay phone and called the city editor. Smokey told me, "Get down here with those plates as fast as you can." Because I was the first reporter there, the *Times* had a tremendous "beat," coming out with my pictures and a "SECOND COMING" banner in its early street edition.

When I returned from the city room, there were hundreds of persons standing behind the police tapes waiting and watching. In those days, there was very little television only radio and newspapers to carry the word. The media was besieging the Fiscus family, who didn't know how to handle reporters. Some reporters can become very aggressive. The family asked me to speak for them, Smokey directed me to do it. I tried to be fair, but I was wearing two hats.

As Saturday dragged on, (no sleep Friday) more reporters arrived, and KTLA-TV became the first Los Angeles station to cover a live international story. People were calling from all over the world, asking about the little girl who fell down the pipe.

The strategy was to dig a huge hole next to the pipe, locate her and cut a hole through the pipe to get her out. They even had a midget standing by to get into the hole. The rescuers labored on through Saturday and into Sunday.

Sunday morning, Jeannette Lyon told me that the family had instructed the fire

department to take Kathy to St. Luke's Hospital instead of the Huntington Hospital which everyone had assumed would be the destination. The purpose was to try to prevent a media circus.

I was told to get to St. Luke's where the Lyons and I watched the final drama on television. As we watched on Sunday evening, they cut into the pipe and took out Kathy—dead. We all wept. A doctor thought she probably had suffocated or drowned within a few hours after dropping down the pipe.

In retrospect that incredible event was a perfect example of a real estate development company not taking proper care of the environment. That water pipe should have been capped years before. Ironically, Dave Fiscus, who was the manager of the San Marino Water Company (now known as the California-American Water Company), had just returned from Sacramento where he had lobbied for a bill to require all abandoned pipes to be capped.

The Kathy Fiscus story was the biggest story I ever worked on (my career as a reporter ended in the fall of 1950, when I was involuntarily yanked back into the army during the Korean War). I received the Reporter-of-the-Month award from the *Times*, which consisted of a typewritten notice on the city room bulletin board and a \$10 bill. I also was promoted to the city room.

However, the greatest award I received was a letter from Jeannette Lyon which Bud Lewis, City Editor, forwarded to me. Bud enclosed a note: "Enclosed is a letter from a member of the Fiscus family. The letter speaks for itself. I think you did a bangup job all the way through on this story and I am glad, as I know you will be, to know that your activities were appreciated by the Fiscus family too. Congratulations."

Mrs. Lyon wrote: "This I feel is a letter that is long overdue, but at a time such as this some things are unintentionally neglected. What I would like to express at this time is the appreciation of myself and Mr. and Mrs. Fiscus for the kindness and consideration of your reporter, Bill Johnson (sic).

"He was at all times a gentleman and we realize now the pressure he was under. It was through his diplomacy that Mr. and Mrs. Fiscus finally posed for a picture at a time when they were under great strain."

I had little pressure in comparison to that of the family at the time of their great loss. I still have that letter and treasure it very deeply.



Corral Chips

The Huntington Library and the Western History Association have recognized the many years of service by **MARTIN RIDGE** to both by establishing a fellowship in his name to study western history at the Huntington. The Historical Society of Southern California has also named its new award for works in local history written before the Pflueger Award for him.

DONALD DUKE'S railroad photographs are on display at Philippe's as part of the Los Angeles Museum of Railroadng recently founded by **JOSEF LESSER**.

Former associate member **R. JACK STODDARD** died in July.

CM HENRY W. WRIGHT died recently.

Directory Changes

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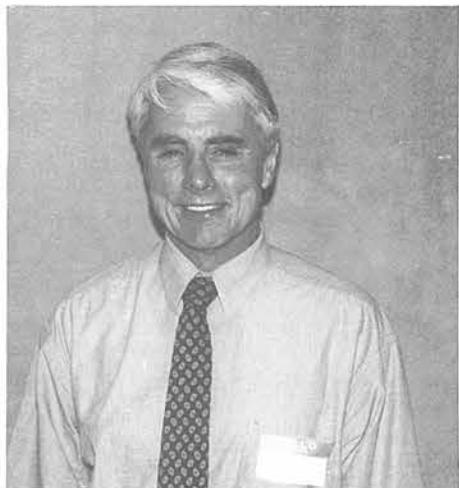
(Monthly Roundup continued from page 2)

gods who come to earth to help in the religious ceremonies. The dolls are representatives of these god figures which are used to instruct the children in religious and other cultural matters.

The Kachinas are important in Hopi history; even the Spanish Conquest and Christianity failed to lessen their importance.

Over the years, the dolls have changed. Originally, they were very stiff representations by unknown artists. In more recent years, they became more artistic until today they are elaborate signed works of art. Today, they are fine art works many of which were created for commerce instead of their traditional purpose.

Ms. Gormly's lecture was supported by a fascinating display of Kachina dolls ranging over various periods and representing many different ones. A valuable addition to her lecture was a bibliography which she had prepared and made available.



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

August Meeting Speaker Dr. Roger McGrath

AUGUST 1999 MEETING

Dr. Roger McGrath, who taught at UCLA for fifteen years and is now at Pepperdine University, introduced the Corral to the new "tribe" who forced the frontiers across the Appalachians and on west, and the man who became the symbol for them: Andrew Jackson.

In addition to teaching, Dr. McGrath appeared in 26 episodes of "The Real West," six segments of "Biography" and a dozen other documentaries as well as being the technical advisor on "The Young Riders." In addition to television work, he is the author of 30 articles and book reviews, *Gunfighters*, *Highwaymen*, and *Vigilantes* and co-author of *Violence in America*.

The Indians discovered a new "tribe" of invaders. These men fought to the death rather than retreat, attacked regardless of the odds and showed no mercy in battle. The Indians did not know it, but they had encountered the Scotch-Irish, a group whose character, culture and morés had been honed by life on the Borderlands in the British Isles.

A symbol for this group was one of their own—Andrew Jackson. Jackson as a youth had suffered a saber cut rather than buckle to authority and shine the boots of a British officer. As a man, he climbed from what many considered his death bed to lead his Tennessee volunteers to destroy the Creek

Indians. In a duel, Jackson received an almost fatal wound, but rather than let his opponent know, he stood, fired killing his enemy and walked from the field before collapsing. Since the bullet was too close to his heart to remove, it remained in his body and finally contributed to his death by lead poisoning. By his own hard work, diligence and perseverance, he became a major planter and the President of the United States, a fitting symbol for the breed of men who conquered a continent.

Dr. McGrath gave many examples of men, women and children who personified these traits. The entire westward movement was full of persons who chose death to dishonor, who refused to retreat, gave meaning to the phrase a man's word is his bond and, above all, defended their honor.

Dr. McGrath ended the session with the question: "Who might be the symbol for our age?"

Brand Book 21

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Lobos Rangers entertaining the Corral from a patio of the Gilmore Adobe.

Fandango 1999

On Sunday, June 13, the members of the Corral flocked to the Gilmore Adobe for the annual Fandango.

Tours through the adobe provided information on the Gilmore family and the building from the original two room adobe to the large building it is today. After several previous owners, the Gilmore family acquired the land intending to use it for farming. Unfortunately in 1905, while drilling for water, they had the misfortune to hit oil. From that the Gilmore Oil Company developed with its famous red lion logo. After selling out to Mobil Oil in 1940, the family centered its interests on the Farmers Market, which had opened in 1935 and continues its success today, Gilmore Field and Gilmore Stadium. Much of the remaining land of the original holdings were sold to CBS in the early 1950s.

Head Wrangler Gary Turner and his assistants did an excellent job of organizing and running the program. He extends his thanks to: Joe Lesser for his efforts in organizing and liaising with the various groups; Mrs. Patricia Gallucci who prepared the place cards which added a touch of elegance; Dick and Glenda Thomas who ran an efficient and excellent bar. Others helping were Vickie Turner, Eric Nelson, Froy Tiscareño, Mike Gallucci, Ray Peter and Bill Newbro. Everyone's thanks go to Mrs. McGee's Catering for the excellently prepared meal.

With toe-tapping entertainment provided by the Lobos Rangers, it was a very pleasant day—good company, good food and an opportunity to visit a site most of us were aware of but few had visited.



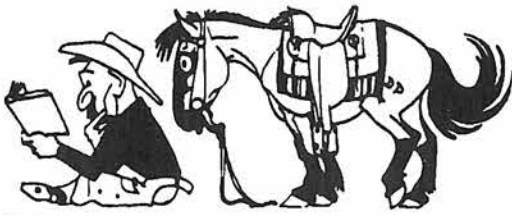
Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Members and guests preparing to dine.



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Official welcome to the Fandango.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

*How many a man has dated a new era in his life
from the reading of a book.*

Henry David Thoreau

BIG DAMS AND OTHER DREAMS: *The Six Companies Story*, by Donald E. Wolf. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. 336 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes. Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$27.95. Order from University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019-6051, (800) 827-7377.

Looking at the modern corporate world where faceless executives without personalities serve as CEOs and focus on the bottom line (Bill Gates, Ted Turner, and Donald Trump may be possible exceptions), we sometimes forget that an earlier generation of businessmen put their imprint on the frontier, thinking big, planning ambitiously (and often ruthlessly), taking risks. Donald Wolf, a civil engineer and a vocational historian, celebrates the accomplishments of this earlier generation, most notably Henry J. Kaiser, Warren Bechtel, Felix Kahn, Charlie Shea and others who built the dams, bridges, homes, and other works now taken for granted in the vocabulary term "infrastructure."

At times competitors, other times working cooperatively, these builders combined to construct their most famous effort, Hoover Dam. Wolf traces the complex path where other projects were built by various combinations of the firms: Grand Coulee Dam, Bonneville Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. With World War II came demands

for shipyards, aircraft plants, naval bases, air bases, and chemical plants. In the postwar era came planned residential communities, office buildings, Kaiser's pioneering HMO (named for the cement company where it originated), projects in foreign countries, oil refineries and open-pit mines.

In retrospect, much of what these builders built would have great difficulty being done today, since they preceded environmental impact reports and concerns about congestion, pollution and ecological issues. What they did, however, obviously influences the way people in the West live today, taking for granted the hydroelectric power generated by the great dams on the Colorado and Columbia Rivers, the industries, the highways and bridges. Wolf treats his subjects rather uncritically as heroes for their time, men with big dreams who built big dams.

Abraham Hoffman



CALIFORNIA DESERT MIRACLE: *The Fight for Desert Parks and Wilderness*, by Frank Wheat. San Diego: Sunbelt Publications, 1998. 337 pp., Maps, Illustrations, Index. Softcover, \$14.95. Order from Sunbelt Publications, 1250 Fayette St. El Cajon, CA 92020-1511, (800) 626-6579.

The California desert sprawls over almost a quarter of the state. For those who pause to sample its delights, it is a stark world of enchanting beauty. The seemingly endless landscapes, the soft hues that change with the time of day, the magnificent sunrises and sunsets, the flowering cacti, sage aromatic after a spring rain—all give the desert a mystique of its own.

The desert's lifeforms—both plant and animal—have superbly adapted to the land's sparse rainfall and temperature extremes. The ability of these hardy living things to flourish in a seemingly hostile environment is one of the wonders of nature.

There is paradox here. The desert is both hardy and vulnerable. What has evolved over centuries can—and has been—ravaged

by thoughtless humans. Witness the tracks made by Patton's tanks in training exercises more than half a century ago. More recently, and far more devastating because of sheer numbers, the agents of destruction have been motorcycles and ORVs, running rampant over large sections of the desert's landscape. The Barstow to Las Vegas race, which began with 650 motorcyclists in 1967, grew to more than 3,000 riders in the early '70s.

Fortunately, there are those who love the desert in its natural state and are willing to work tirelessly to protect it. Their task was not easy. Many were the frustrating delays and setbacks along the way. It required all the grit and dogged determination these desert defenders possessed to finally see the "miracle" come about. This twenty-seven year struggle to achieve passage of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 is the theme of Frank Wheat's book.

This in an epic with many heroes, and Wheat's work is a chronicle of their efforts.

First to voice concern about the substantial damage caused by the motorcycle races was Russ Penny, state director of the BLM, in 1967. Thanks to Penny's initiative, *The California Desert: A Preliminary Study* was completed in 1968. This first ever desert environmental study called for a complete plan to protect the desert. The first congressional bill for desert protection, based largely on Penny's report, was defeated in 1971.

Early efforts toward desert preservation suffered more from apathy than opposition, but this was to change as more substantial campaigns were initiated. Strong opposition to any desert protection bill came largely from ORV groups, mining interests, some desert residents and congressmen whose districts encompassed much of the desert. The Sierra Club entered the fray in 1970 and soon became the leading proponent of desert protection. Wheat details the volunteer efforts of dedicated Club members such as Bill Holden, Lyle Gaston, James Dodson, Eldon Hughes and Judy Anderson, plus a host of others. Senator Allen Cranston became a leading ally in working for a desert protection bill.

The 1970s and '80s were years that saw a succession of delays and moves forward, victories and defeats, elation and frustration. Every effort to get a desert protection bill through Congress failed, and desert defenders learned firsthand how incredibly difficult it is to get protective legislation through Congress, where economic self-interest so often predominates. Probably the best forward move during this period was passage of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*, which called for the BLM to study lands under its jurisdiction that might possess wilderness value. Another forward step, in 1984, was the formation of the California Desert Protection League, a coalition of all the organizations supporting desert protection.

The climax of the multi-year effort to preserve the California desert took place in 1994, in what Frank Wheat calls "The Miracle." The intricacies of political give and take are fully illustrated here, with intense lobbying, public hearings, amendments approved or rejected, compromises, political "horse trading," and threats of filibuster. (Reading this chapter is a lesson in civics.) The cause for desert protection was greatly aided by California's two senators elected in 1992—Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

The California Desert Protection Bill finally passed the House but appeared to be stymied in the Senate, where Malcolm Wallop of Idaho led the opposition and was prepared to kill it by filibuster. The final adjournment of the 103rd Congress loomed on Friday, October 7, with members anxious to return home to campaign for reelection. Out of deference to retiring Senator George Mitchell of Maine, who was respected by all sides, a one day extension was approved by the Senate leadership. But could the sixty votes needed for cloture of debate be obtained? It seemed doubtful. Amid intense discussions, some senators who had previously opposed the desert bill broke ranks with their party. Cloture passed without a single vote to spare. The "miracle" had happened.

President Bill Clinton signed the California Desert Protection Act into law on October 31, 1994. Created was the Mojave National Preserve and two national parks—Death Valley and Joshua Tree—previously national monuments. Sixty-nine small desert wilderness areas were set aside.

One might think this account of the long campaign for California desert protection would make for tedious reading. Not so. Frank Wheat writes well and weaves an insightful and fascinating narrative of the 27-year struggle. Southern California's premier historian Doyce Nunis calls this "environmental history at its superbly crafted best."

California Desert Miracle is a rich treat for those of us who treasure the state's unspoiled wildlands.

John Robinson



VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY: *Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, edited by James P. Ronda. Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1998. 351 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Suggested Reading, Index. Cloth, \$45.00; paper \$19.95. Order from Montana Historical Society Museum Store, 225 N. Roberts, P.O. 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201 (800)243-9900.

This interesting collection of essays is an excellent example of the new approach to history. Instead of discussing the actual expedition, by means of primary sources and essays, it investigates the motivations, the wherewithal, the interactions of the groups, its relations to the native people, scientific information provided and the long range results.

Divided into six sections: Genesis, the Corps of Discovery, the Journey, Mutual Discovery, Homecoming and Looking Back, the contributors attempt to answer the major questions: "how did the small number of men manage the feat and was the expedition successful?"

"Genesis," which starts with Jefferson's instructions to Lewis, explores the geographical knowledge available to the group before its departure and Jefferson's relationship to

Lewis, especially in terms of Lewis' role in the reduction of the army.

"The Corps of Discovery" explores the relationships among the members of the unit. How did such a diverse group cohere to face the gigantic task it accomplished? Military discipline helped, but there was much more.

"The Journey" looks into the most serious decision the officers had to make—which was the true Missouri River. To this reviewer one of the most interesting essays in the book is in this section—what scientific instruments the group had.

One tends to forget that not only were the Americans discovering the native people, but these men were the first examples of Americans encountered by many of the Indians. "Mutual Discovery" evaluates the Indians' reactions to the Americans and the long range results of the encounters.

The last three sections really form one theme, the reaction to the Lewis and Clark Expedition from the time it returned to St. Louis to the present and the history of the publication of the journals of the expedition.

As in any collection, some essays are more interesting than others, there is redundancy and authors apparently disagree about conclusions, but overall the book is a valuable addition to the study of the exploration of the United States. Everyone should enjoy reading this book, and even experts will find material to ponder and discuss.

Robert W. Blew



THE SHIRLEY LETTERS: *From the California Mines, 1851-1852* by Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe; edited by Marianne Smith-Baranzini. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1998. Map, Illustrations, Notes, Index. Paper, \$12.95. Order from Heyday Books, P.O. Box 9145, Berkeley, CA 94709, (510) 549-3564.

As Lily Frémont's diary offered a gentle woman's perspective of frontier Arizona, Clappe, "Dame Shirley," presented her feminine perceptions of the California gold mining camps through a series of letters written to "her sister in the States." Dated from

September 13, 1851, through November 21, 1852, Louise related the events, people and places encountered while she and her physician husband lived at Rich Bar and later Indian Bar on the Feather River. When she joined her husband, Louise was one of only four women in camp, but unlike her feminine neighbors, she employed both cook and laundress allowing her the necessary time to observe, reflect and record those exciting times.

Anthologized from 1853 to 1855 in *The Pioneer: or California Monthly Magazine*, the letters have proved a valuable source for both authors and historians as Louise took great care "...to describe things exactly as I see them, hoping that thus you[sister] will obtain an idea of life in the mines, as it is." Using the rhetoric of the times, she depicted her experiences and observations in painstakingly detailed language.

Through the persona of Dame Shirley, whom readers would view as a woman of both education and authority, her letters reflected her keen observations ranging from the landscape, to the cultural diversity of the camps, to the routine of daily life: menus, amusements, living quarters—all are found within her letters. Encountering Native Americans, she found reason for admiration yet also found them lacking the noble virtues found in eastern literary tradition. Calling mining a "lottery transaction," she detailed both equipment and process as well as her own attempts at panning. Found within her pages are the colorful citizens of Rich Bar including explorer James Beckworth.

While usually lighthearted, her letters also related "gloomy events" and "the darker shades of our mountain life," for "In the short space of twenty-four days, we have had murders, fearful accidents, bloody deaths, a mob, whippings, a hanging, an attempt at suicide, and a fatal duel."

Yet in 1852 when Rich Bar was abandoned due to an unusually severe winter, Louise was reluctant to leave, writing, "My heart is heavy at the thought of departing forever from this place. I like this wild and barbarous life; I leave it with regret."

Organized in chronological order with notes, the detailed introduction and maps provide readers with the necessary background of Louise and the historical context of the camp. Additionally, a glossary of place names and travel advisory make it possible to trace Louise's steps. Whether read as a novel or by individual letter, the reader too will be reluctant to leave the exhilarating world of the gold camps.

Jeanette Davis

And Other Things

The Los Angeles City Records Center and Archives collects, maintains and makes available to interested parties records created by the City Government of enduring historical, political, economic, legal and cultural value.

The City Archives has many key record series from 1827 to the present. They include records of the Mexican *Ayuntamiento*, Los Angeles City Council Minutes, City Council Petitions and Files, past and current versions of the City Charter, Administrative and Municipal Codes, Contracts, Deeds to and from the City, Election Files, Department Annual Reports, maps, photographs and financial reports and ledgers of the City Auditor, City Controller and Treasurer. In addition to the records of the entire City, they also maintain local municipality records from Eagle Rock, Hollywood, San Pedro, Tujunga, Venice, Watts and Wilmington prior to their becoming part of The City of Los Angeles.

Reference service is the top priority of the City Archives. The staff has prepared finding aids and inventories which index the historical records of City Departments, City Council and the Mayor. They welcome questions and invite you to make use of the resources for your research project. The City Archives and Records Center is located in the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center, 555 Ramirez Street, Space 320, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Anyone wishing to use the resources please contact Hynda L. Rudd, City Records Management Officer at (213) 485-3521 or acting City Archivist Jay Jones, (213) 485-3512.