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Diatome shown leaving Fish Harbor, San Pedro. Photo by author.

California Rumrunners

by Dean Painter

I grew up in San Pedro. Shortly after graduating from high school, I went to work for the General Petroleum Corporation (later Mobil) at their marine fueling docks. General Petroleum had three stations there: one at the yacht basin in Wilmington; another in Fish Harbor; and the third close to the entrance of the main channel and opposite what was then Deadmans Island. The Fish

Harbor and main channel stations were open 24 hours a day.

As it happened, during the prohibition era General Petroleum furnished gasoline to a large share of the rumrunners operating off the Southern California coastline. They had this business because the attendants never discussed time of arrival and departure of

(Continued on page 3)

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THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

SEPTEMBER 2000 MEETING

Publications editor Robert W. Blew gave the last of the sesquicentennial presentations introducing the Corral to the actions of the first California Constitutional Convention.



Photograph by Froylan Tiscareño

September Meeting Speaker Robert W. Blew

Blew, who was Keeper of the Chips before becoming Publications editor, received his doctorate from USC under the mentorship of Doyce B. Nunis and retired from the Los Angeles School District after 32 years of teaching.

The Army had had no experience governing an occupied territory when California was conquered, and the General Order which established the procedures was still years in the future. Until the Treaty of

(Continued on page 16)

the boats and were trusted. The boats usually came in around ten o'clock at night to take on fuel. The skipper would order supplies for the "mother" ships, then go home and sleep for a few hours, return, and depart about 4:30 A.M. The skippers, when they came in for fuel, always had a bottle of good scotch whisky for the dock attendant; that was my first baptism to the "good stuff." All business was on a strictly cash basis, and boat names were never shown on the invoices.

In the Fall of 1930, I was working on the dock at Fish Harbor when the *Diatome*, a brand-new, sleek boat, painted gray, came in to take on fuel for her trial run. I was a camera buff at the time and took a picture of the *Diatome* as she was leaving the dock.

Recently I was going through my files and found that old photograph of the *Diatome*, which I had taken more than 60 years ago. Suddenly memories came back, and I felt I wanted to know more about those rumrunner boats and the men who operated them.

In the Beginning

For the first few years after the Prohibition era began, people who could afford it, were allowed to have liquor in their homes for "home consumption". A permit could be obtained to make up to 200 gallons of wine for "home consumption". Distilleries could manufacture liquor for "medicinal use" and, as one might imagine, doctors wrote prescriptions by the thousands. Wine tonic, containing about 20% alcohol, was also legal for awhile until local governments began declaring it illegal. As a young boy in high school, I worked as a clean-up boy and soda jerk in a drugstore near Fort MacArthur in San Pedro. The owner had Virginia Dare Wine Tonic in cases stacked clear to the ceiling; he did a land-office business. I'm sure he retired wealthy.

Smuggling and rumrunning are almost synonymous. Smuggling was taking place almost 200 years ago here in Southern California. An early smuggler was a New England sea captain, William Shaler. He was trading all over the Pacific Ocean and in 1805

stopped at Catalina Island to make ship repairs. To avoid Spanish custom duties, which could be as high as 100% on foreign goods, he began trading American-made products and certain luxury items from the Orient for hides and tallow, which the *rancheros* wanted to sell. It was a very profitable business for Captain Shaler and other captains who engaged in smuggling activities.

The smuggling of alcoholic beverages into the United States on a large scale was not carried on until the National Prohibition Law was enacted in 1920 and would continue for the next 13 years. Moonshine whisky of very poor quality, bathtub gin, and homebrew became available very soon after 1920. When people started demanding the "good stuff" from overseas, rumrunning became big business, with tremendous profits for those engaged in it. The price of whisky from the so-called "mother" ships offshore varied from 15 to 25 dollars a case. On the beach, a cargo of 250 ten-bottle sacks sold for \$10,000. Rather a tidy profit for about 4 hours work.

In the beginning the "3-mile limit" was in effect, and anything beyond that distance was international waters. Ships of foreign registry from Peru, Panama, Canada and as far away as Papeete, Tahiti, carrying anywhere from 2 to 5,000 cases or sacks of liquor, could cruise or anchor just beyond the "3-mile limit". These so-called "mother" ships had on board whisky, champagne, wine, and straight alcohol, which were packaged in cases, sacks, and 5 gallon cans. Ship captains would sell to anyone for cash.

For ease of handling much of the liquor was put in burlap sacks. The bottles were first wrapped in straw sleeves to keep them from breaking and then wrapped in a burlap sack. There was also the so-called "burlock" in which 6 to 10 bottles in straw sleeves were stacked to form a pyramid, then wrapped in burlap. Although seldom used on the West Coast, this latter method enabled a small boat to carry more sacks because they fit the contour of the hull. It wasn't long before boats of all sizes and descriptions took advantage of the situation. They made a

half-hour run from shore, in the dark of the moon, took on anywhere from 3 to 100 sacks and returned to the beach. The liquor was quickly sold and a large profit made, and all for just a few hours work.

In 1924 after discussions with England and other foreign countries, an agreement was reached which established a so-called "12-mile limit," which was based on the distance an average steamer could travel in one hour. This also meant the fast "contacts" had to travel farther out to sea to be safe beyond territorial waters.

Prohibition

Since the founding of the American Colonies, alcoholic beverages were available to those who wanted them, much of it from stills set up in the backwoods; taverns thrived. With this came drunkenness and dissipation and as a result, women temperance organizations began forming all over the country.

Following crusades by various Temperance organizations over the years, the Anti-Saloon League was formed in 1893. The League became wealthy with gifts from people of means, and it hired prominent attorneys and lobbyists who were able to sway Congress that Prohibition would solve all the country's problems.

The National Prohibition Act, enforced by the Volstead Act, was passed by Congress in October 1919, and became law on January 17, 1920, as the 18th amendment to the Constitution. It was to remain in force for almost 14 years, but due to public demand and the inability to enforce the law, it was repealed on December 5, 1933. Enforcement of the Prohibition Act was delegated to the United States Treasury Department, which included the United States Customs Service, Bureau of Internal Revenue, The United States Coast Guard, and Prohibition agents and, in addition, local police departments. Unforeseen was what lay ahead in trying to enforce the amendment and the loss of millions in liquor taxes.

The Coast Guard

The United States Coast Guard, which came into existence in 1790, had the responsibility of saving lives at sea, of giving aid to vessels in distress, and of keeping the sea lanes clear by removing derelicts. With the boats that were available to the Coast Guard over the years, thousands of lives were saved, and they did an outstanding job.

In California, Division Headquarters of the Coast Guard are in San Francisco. Vessels from Base 11, located in Oakland, patrol the northern half of the California coastline, and those from Base 17, located in San Pedro, patrol the southern half of the California coastline, including the Channel Islands. Patrol areas often overlapped, and at times extended hundreds of miles south down the coast of Baja California. The Coast Guard in all their communications, used the term "black" to describe all vessels believed to be engaged in rumrunning.

From 1920 to 1925 a few seizures were made, but as a rule the "blacks" could easily out distance the Coast Guard cutters which then had a top speed of only 12 knots. In 1925, a sizable government appropriation was made to build additional and faster patrol boats as well as to increase the number of personnel. These newly built boats included the 75-foot so-called "six bitter," powered with two 200 horse power Sterling engines and capable of a speed of 17 miles per hour. Also built, were smaller, faster, 38-foot picket boats for inshore duty. All were equipped with the most up-to-date radio equipment and range finders.

Those engaged in the smuggling business were very much aware of what the Coast Guard was doing, and they in turn began building so-called "speed-boats". These boats were from 35 to 60 feet long, and powered with anywhere from 1 to 3 World War I Liberty engines, and were capable of speeds up to 40 knots with a full load of whisky.

There were three types of "blacks" with which the Coast Guard had to contend: "mother" ships, "intermediates" and "contacts."

The "mother" ships were from a foreign country and were laden with many thousands

of cases of various liquors. They anchored or simply drifted well off the coastline and could remain there for long periods of time. In addition to liquor, these vessels also carried supplies for the "intermediates" such as fuel and water. They also were depots for shipments of liquor, a large portion of it on the Pacific Coast coming from Vancouver. Two of the best known "mother" ships were *Malahat*, a six-masted schooner from Vancouver, and the S.S. *Boreas* out of Bergen, Norway.

The "intermediates" were vessels that could carry from 2 to 5,000 cases or sacks of liquor and moved up and down the coast 30 to 35 miles off shore and acted as a shuttle. They would contact a "mother" ship off Point San Isidro in Baja California, take on a load, and then proceed up the coast and meet a "contact" boat at a pre-arranged position and there unload all or part of their cargo. Some of the "intermediates" were ex-sub chasers and capable of 14 to 16 knots fully laden.

The "contact" boats, in later years, were fast, high powered crafts, 30 to 60 feet long that could carry up to 600 cases or sacks of liquor. The smart smugglers always traveled during the dark of the moon, with lights off, if they were coming into shore with a load. They were painted a dark gray, had a low profile not over 10 feet above the water line, and were difficult to see for any great distance. Some had Maxim water-cooled mufflers which quieted the exhaust of the engine to a low rumble. These were the boats that carried the liquor inside the 12-mile limit and were most susceptible to seizure by the Coast Guard.

The Coast guard eventually learned that the only way to slow the flow of liquor onto the beaches was to picket the "mother" ships. The cutters and patrol boats went south to where the "mother" ships were anchored off the Baja Coastline and anchored nearby. They observed which "intermediates" were being loaded, and how many sacks or cases were put on board. This information was radioed to Intelligence in San Francisco, which in turn notified all

patrol boats in other areas along the California coastline.

The United States Coast Guard had a very strict code regarding pursuits and seizures that had been brought about by some bad publicity in the past. Upon sighting a suspicious craft at night, the commander of the patrol boat had to (1) turn a light on the Coast Guard ensign, (2) sound a siren to stop, (3) put a searchlight on the pursued craft, (4) fire warning rifle shots over the pursued if it did not stop, (5) fire a machine gun into the hull to stop the engines, (6) avoid injuring any of the crew, and last, (7) give the exact position of seizure in case of a court trial.

The contact boats rarely returned to the same beach to unload their cargo on consecutive nights, preferring a beach with no lights, very few homes and close to a highway, such as Salt Creek, Emerald Bay, and Sunset Beach in Orange County.

Strandings and Seizures

Oakwood

Sometimes the men operating the rum-running boats made errors or ran into bad luck. Formerly named *Sonny Boy*, the *Oakwood* was built in Wilmington and launched in 1929. She was powered with a 400 horsepower engine, probably a Liberty.

Early on the morning of October 17, 1933, and probably headed for the sandy beach at Salt Creek, the *Oakwood* got lost in a heavy fog and crashed on the rocks at Three Arch Cove in South Laguna. The crew recognizing the hopelessness of their situation, launched their dory, rowed out to sea, and disappeared in the fog.

Three Arch Cove was definitely not the place to land whisky because one had to climb 140 steps to the top of the cliff while carrying 35 pound sacks of liquor. A fisherman spotted the *Oakwood* on the rocks and notified the Laguna Beach police, which notified the Sheriff's Office in Santa Ana, which in turn notified the Coast Guard in San Pedro. While waiting for the arrival of the Coast Guard, what cargo remained in the boat was unloaded to shore under the supervision of

REPORT OF SEIZURE

Seizure No.

United States Customs Service REC'D JUN 5 1931
U. S. COAST GUARD

District No. Section Base 17., Port of San Pedro, California.

~~Seizure Date~~ 2 June, 1931.

Sir: You are hereby notified that Kenneth C. Tharp, Boatswain have this day seized from
the American gas screw DIATOME ~~XXXX~~

from XXXX, arrived XXXX, 192 XXXX, the
property described below, and have sent the same to the United States Seizure Room.

The seizure was made at Approximately 10 miles S x E from Point Buzards. under the
following circumstances:

American Gas Screw DIATOME, equipment and apparel.
Delivered to Deputy Collector of Customs, San Pedro, California.

Describe property here.

State circumstances here.

While patrolling in vicinity of Husman Landing on the night of 1-2 June, 1931, approximately one half mile off shore, a suspicious craft was sighted standing in from seaward without lights. The suspicious craft was allowed to approach within approximately 200 yards, at which time the running lights of the CG-804 were displayed and signals were made for her to heave to, namely, sounding of the siren, displaying the Coast Guard Ensign and training of searchlight upon the vessel. The suspicious craft disregarded these signals and repeated warning shots were fired with a service rifle, these she also disregarded. A burst of machine gun shots were fired over the vessel, these she also disregarded. When it was apparent the vessel did not intend to heave to and was trying to escape, shots from the machine gun were directed into her engine room space in the attempt to disable her engines. The pursuit started at about 11:45 p.m. and continued until 1:15 a.m. at which time the suspicious vessel heave to and upon being boarded was found to be the American gas screw DIATOME of Los Angeles and to have a cargo of liquor aboard. Two members of the crew of the DIATOME were taken aboard the CG-804 and upon further search of the DIATOME, a third man was found dead in the engine room. It is believed the dead man met his death as the result of machine gun fire. The DIATOME was brought to San Pedro and the liquor and boat turned over to the Deputy Collector of Customs. The crew of the DIATOME was turned over to U.S. Customs Agents. During the pursuit the searchlight was kept on the DIATOME and the siren sounded at frequent intervals. The machine gun was used in bursts and every opportunity given for the vessel to stop between bursts.

Copies to: DCC-San Pedro (10); Comd't. (3) Cal. Div. (1); File (1).

Respectfully,

To the Collector of the Port.

Kenneth C. Tharp
Kenneth C. Tharp, Boatswain, U.S.C.G.,
Officer in Charge CG-804,
Section Base 17.
Deputy Collector of Customs.

To the Appraiser: You will examine and appraise the above-described seized goods according to Art. 1025, C. R. 1923, and indorse return hereon. If perishable or immediate sale advisable, so state.

To be prepared in sextuplet; one copy to be retained by seizing officer's department, two copies for use of the Collector, and one copy each for the Division of Customs, the Comptroller of Customs, and the Department of Justice. In cases of customs seizures of boats, a copy of this report should be sent to the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard. 2-11227

Collector.

the police.

The Coast Guard boat arrived shortly after 11 A.M. and took on board 107 sacks of assorted liquors. The liquor was identified in reports as Dewars whisky from Scotland, Creme de Cacao from France, Coon Hollow brand whisky which sounds like bourbon, and a quantity of unlabeled whisky, probably Canadian, made by the British Columbia Distilling Company. The salvaged liquor was turned over to Customs Officials in San Pedro.

Sunset Beach A-139 and A-2193

The CG-811, a 75 foot six-bitter while patrolling off Huntington Beach on the early morning of May 1, 1931, sighted a suspicious craft without lights headed for the beach. The Coast Guard ensign was displayed, the siren sounded, but rather than stopping the craft, probably powered with a Liberty engine, headed eastward along the coastline.

Six warning shots with a rifle were fired and when they did not stop, four shots were fired at the hull. The craft realizing escape was impossible, headed for the surf off Bolsa Chica, hit the beach and burst into flames, a total loss. The crew jumped overboard and escaped. The CG-811 took possession of the A-139 at 3:00 A.M., launched a dory and salvaged 45 sacks of liquor which was delivered to Customs in San Pedro by truck.

A-2193

Here again, the CG-811 was in the right place at the right time on the morning of March 1, 1932. An unidentified craft was spotted heading for Sunset Beach; she stopped just outside the surf line, dropped anchor, and launched a dory. The CG-811 pulled up alongside, displayed the Coast Guard ensign, turned the searchlight on the craft which was found to be A-2193. Realizing she was about to be captured, the A-2193 cut the anchor rope and tried to escape. Warning shots were fired, and when she did not stop, a machine gun was fired into the hull. The craft then headed for the beach, the crew jumped off, and she burst

into flames, a total loss.

The CG-811 stood by for a few minutes then headed back to Base 17 in San Pedro. The crew immediately jumped into cars, went back to Sunset Beach and salvaged 732 pints of assorted liquors from the wreckage which was turned over to the United States Customs. This was an unusual seizure because the contacts normally carried sacks of quart bottles and pints were a rarity.

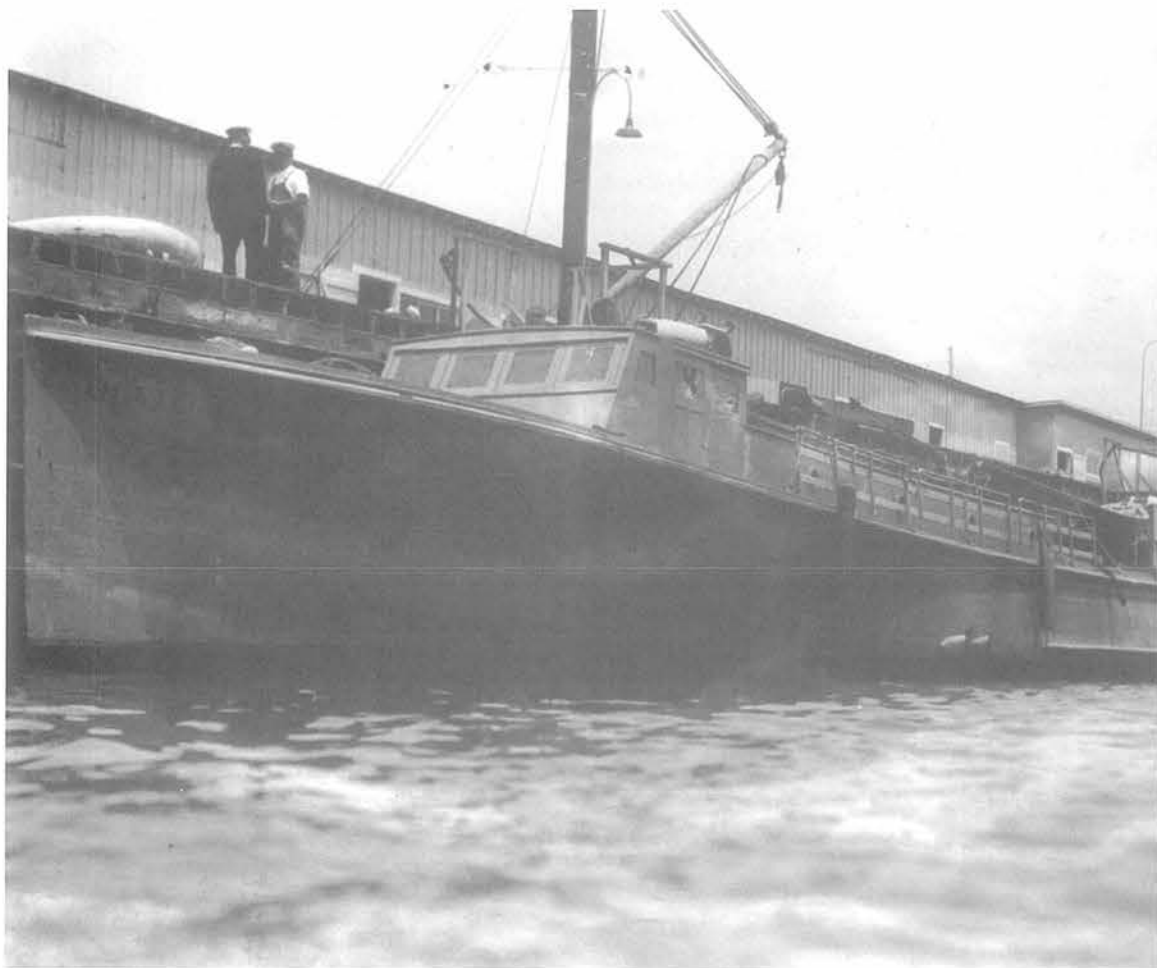
Diatome

The *Diatome* was built by Fellows and Stewart in Wilmington and launched in October, 1930. She was 60 feet long and powered with three Liberty engines which consumed about 100 gallons of gasoline per hour at full throttle. She was considered one of the fastest rumrunners on the Pacific Coast.

On the night of June 1, 1931, a Coast Guard patrol boat, formerly the *Arrow*, a seized rumrunner, was patrolling close to shore off Port Hueneme. A suspicious boat with all lights off was seen approaching the beach. When it came within 200 yards, the patrol boat put her light on the Coast Guard ensign and started a pursuit. The suspicious boat, now recognized as the *Diatome*, turned and headed out to sea in a zig-zag course. A rifle was fired over the *Diatome*, and when she did not slow down, a machine gun was fired at the engine room which finally stopped the boat after an one hour chase. When the *Diatome* was boarded, the engineer was found dead, shot in the head, and the skipper cut by flying glass. The engines were repaired, and she was escorted back to Base 17 in San Pedro. The cargo consisted of 290 sacks of liquor, which was turned over to the Customs officials.

Three weeks later, an Intelligence officer wrote a memo regarding the seizure of two "blacks" with the following excerpt: "I believe such action in these cases will be of benefit to the morale of Section Base Seventeen particularly as these two seizures are the only seizures made by that unit during the past year."

After due process of law, the *Diatome* was absorbed by the Coast Guard in September.



Diatome after seizure by the Coast Guard. Picture taken at CG Base 17, San Pedro, June 2, 1931. National Archives, 26-x-9.

ber and served well as a patrol boat for 16 years until 1947 when she was sold at public auction. A license dated July 1980 stated: "Out of documentation, vessel and owner whereabouts unknown."

The "Contacts" and the Men

Boats were built and the men who operated them were involved in rumrunning for only one reason, money. A boat such as the *Diatome* could be built for about \$35,000, and it paid for itself in 3-4 trips with a full load of whisky. If the boat was seized, it was either absorbed by the U.S. Coast Guard or sold at public auction by the U.S. Customs. Commander Willoughby, in his exhaustive study of the Coast Guard and rumrunning,

lists 440 vessels seized and absorbed by the Coast Guard and used as patrol boats. Of this number, only about 15 were used on the California coastline.

The men, most with some marine experience, came from the Merchant Marine, were fishermen, or yacht caretakers. A deck hand, who had to be strong enough to row a large dory through the surf, was paid 50-100 dollars, and a skipper 2-400 dollars per trip, depending on the load. If they were captured, they were only fined 250-500 dollars in Federal Court, and very few served time in jail.

It was a short span in their lifetime, very few became wealthy, and none of them considered themselves criminals.



Camping in Los Angeles Municipal Auto Camp. Courtesy of USC Special Collections.

Los Angeles Municipal Auto Camp

by Willis Osborne

With the explosion in the number of Americans vacationing by automobile before America's entry into World War I, those travelers found few places to stay at day's end. Downtown hotels were often too expensive for many families who often brought along camping equipment to cut expenses. In the earliest days of auto trekking, vacationers would stop and set up camp wherever they could, sometimes in a farmer's field, often along a river bank, or any other handy place. Motels were still more than a decade in the future. An alternative was needed.

That alternative came when a few enterprising towns began offering special camping areas in their city parks or other convenient locations in their communities. The idea was to encourage campers to stay overnight in town, shop there and, possibly, come back and stay. The idea caught on. Soon there were many municipal campgrounds throughout the United States, especially in the West and Middle West.

In the July 1916 issue of *Touring Topics*, the

Automobile Club of Southern California implored the city of Los Angeles to open an auto camp for tourists. The article stated that Los Angeles and the larger cities of Southern California had "something to learn in the matter of hospitality to visiting motorists." The article continued:

Los Angeles is included in the itinerary of so many automobile travelers that some such provision (i.e., an auto camp) for the comfort of the city's transient should be made. The establishment of such a free camping park would further advertise the hospitality of Southern California and would help to induce travelers to journey by way of Los Angeles on their summer outing trips.

By 1919 dozens of California cities boasted free or inexpensive auto camps, including several Southern California communities as Long Beach, Pomona, Santa Monica, Redlands, and San Bernardino. Los Angeles was not among them. In the January 1919 issue of *Touring Topics*, the Auto Club again

pushed for a Los Angeles auto camp. This time with a suggested site.

What's the matter with Los Angeles? Here is the greatest motoring center in the United States...Here is everything to make glad the heart of the visiting motorist except one thing—and that one thing is a well appointed, conveniently located automobile camp site.

The Auto Club then suggested Elysian Park as the site for the tourist camp.

The park is sufficiently large to accommodate more than a score of camping parties at one time...It is adjacent to markets, gasoline stations and only two miles from the center of the city.

Finally, on July 14, 1920, the grand opening of the Los Angeles Municipal Campground was celebrated. *Touring Topics* proclaimed the camp as the finest campground in the country. It was situated near the edge of Elysian Park "high above smoke and noise of the city and sheltered by enormous trees."

The camp offered tourists running water, gas for cooking and heating, dressing rooms, shower baths, and wash tubs. *Touring Topics* continued:

There are stone ovens for those who like to cook a la wilderness and tables out under the trees for those who don't care for the glorious sensation of rushing their own fodder at one of the local cafeterias.

In order to avoid conflicts over camping space the article continued:

the new camp ground has been provided with mathematically laid out stalls in which flivver may be tethered just like old dobbin used to be on the farm.

Despite campground facilities which led to the campground being labeled "an outdoor hotel," early tourists protested the price of an overnight stay. The Los Angeles Park Commission originally charged 25 cents per day per person. This was considered too much by campers who usually paid less or nothing at all at most community campgrounds. Within a month after the camp's grand opening, the Park Commission reduced the overnight charge to a flat rate of

50 cents "per machine." The commissioners voted unanimously to reduce the charge after they were shown that park expenses cost the city \$20 per day while income averaged \$31.75 a day.

Following the vote, Commissioner Bowen said,

The park department cannot afford to make a profit out of our visitors. Municipal campgrounds are supposed to be free or if not entirely free, at least the charge should be nominal. It would not be a good advertisement for the news to go out that we are making money out of our visitors. Evidently the word has gone out for protests have been made.

Because of the spreading popularity of municipal campgrounds, regulations covering them had to be adopted, many of them statewide. Some of the rules include the following:

Camp grounds be open at all hours, day and night.

No repair work on cars.

No traveling motor salesmen be permitted to use the camp as headquarters and that no sales of any article except provisions be allowed in the camp.

A maximum of two weeks for any one visit, privilege of renewal under local control.

The essential facilities are: telephone service in custodian's house, gas for cooking, electricity for lighting, public comfort stations, water showers or bath.

Wherever possible the ground be beautified by planting trees and flowers.

Too many facilities bordering on luxury should not be installed, in the camp ground competing with hotels, restaurants, etc.

By mid 1922, there were 1,850 municipal campgrounds throughout the United States, according to an American Automobile Association survey, and the AAA predicted the total would surpass 2000 before the end of the 1922 tourist season. California led all states with 168 campgrounds in the survey while Illinois followed with 129. There were 66 camps in Washington, 48 in Oregon, 9 in Nevada, and



Los Angeles Municipal Auto Camp on a busy day. Courtesy of USC Special Collections

14 in Arizona. The middle west states had the greatest concentration of the camps.

"CARS FROM ALL STATES PARK HERE" crowed a *Los Angeles Times* headline in January 1923. The Chamber of Commerce reported that 6,141 cars registered at the Elysian Park camp totaling 18,271 persons. "This is a splendid showing inasmuch as the park can care for only 100 cars at a time," continued the article. The largest numbers of visitors come from Ohio and Texas with Michigan close behind. Hopeful campers had to be turned away at times and building another campground was considered.

However, the handwriting was on the wall for the continued existence of the camp. By the late 1920's, private auto camps which offered more up to date facilities at low cost began to compete with the popular municipal camps throughout the country, including the Los Angeles area. Soon, entrepreneurs began building cottages to rent to travelers which eventually led to the motel. Further, as low cost private facilities began to appear, the middle class tourist left the municipal camp for these improved facilities and the camps were left to a lower income clientele. This group included transients and the out of work looking for jobs.

Searching the Los Angeles City Archives and *Los Angeles Times*, I have not been able to find the exact date the Elysian Park camp

closed. The camp site is shown on the 1927 Auto Club of Southern California map of Los Angeles but is not found on later maps. Apparently it closed without fanfare, a victim of changing times.

The site is easily identified today. By driving east from Chinatown or driving west just over the North Broadway bridge, turn up the hill at Casanova St. A short drive up the hill, with homes on the left and Elysian Park on the right, the seeker will find a park road going to the right. Just above the park road one will notice three grass covered terraces parallel to Casanova St. Leave your car and walk around the area, shaded by huge trees. Imagine the early campers swapping their tales of the road. In the short life of Los Angeles' municipal autocamp, I'm certain there were many tales told.

Note: The author wishes to acknowledge help from Dace Taube, Curator of Regional History Collection University of Southern California; Morgan Yates, Corporate Archivist, Auto Club of Southern California; Hynda Rudd and staff, Los Angeles City Archives Center, for their help in my lost cause in finding the date and official reason for the closing of the Los Angeles campground. For an excellent overall view of the auto camps, see Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road, From Autocamp to Motel*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, paperback, 1999.



Cornelius B. Johnson and the "Sunland Grizzly," October 28, 1916. Courtesy of the author.

The Last Los Angeles County Grizzly

by Peter Hess

In 1941, when the Los Angeles County Museum was an adolescent multi-purpose institution mounting exhibitions of art as well as history and science, the October issue of their publication *Quarterly* featured an article titled "Faunal Changes in Los Angeles County." Only a few hundred words in length, it generally summarized the negative impact on the native wildlife of the region by the encroachment of civilization and laments the degeneration of habitat caused by the relentless onslaught of highways and oil derricks.

Contained in the article, and with only a passing reference in the text, is a lone full-page photo accompanied by an upper-case caption which reads: "The last Los Angeles County Grizzly and its captor, Cornelius B. Johnson. This bear was trapped and shot in Tujunga Canyon, near Sunland, October 28, 1916." Mr. Johnson, a lanky and rugged-

looking individual, wears his hat confidently perched well back on his head and carries a rifle in one hand and a large hunting knife at his belt. He stares straight into the lens, not wearing a celebratory expression but rather a mask of resignation. His left foot is firmly planted on the carcass of a smallish bear, maybe six feet in length. Despite its lack of size, the bear is clearly identifiable as a grizzly by its very long and lethal-looking claws.

Cornelius Johnson was kin to the Johnsons who, in the 1880's, took up homestead in Tujunga Canyon, nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountains twenty or so miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Cornelius maintained the family enterprise by producing honey and fruit and making wine. On Sunday, October 22, 1916, Mr. Johnson and his wife were walking in the rugged ravine about a half mile east of

their lower Tujunga Canyon home when Mrs. Johnson spotted some animal prints in the soft earth. She thought they resembled elephant tracks, but Mr. Johnson knew immediately that a bear had left them although there had been no signs of bears in the area for many years. The tracks made him uneasy. A hungry marauder could raise all kinds of havoc in the apiaries the family kept on the lower part of their farm and the orchards and vineyards which were just coming into their peak. But what really concerned Mr. Johnson was the safety of his seven-year-old daughter, Lucille, who had to walk to the Sunland elementary school every morning. Later that afternoon, discovering tracks in the grape patch, Johnson armed himself and set out to look for the bear but failed to catch sight of it.

Two days later Johnson purchased a 15-pound Newhouse No. 5 bear trap, which he situated in the bottom of an irrigation ditch and baited it with a piece of stale beef. Fearing that a desperate bear might chew off its own leg to escape the steel jaws if they were anchored, he lashed the trap to a 50-pound sycamore log. On the night of the 27th, the trap closed on the grizzly's foreleg. The following morning, Johnson followed a trail of thrashed brush a half mile up the mountainside where he found the exhausted animal, the log having snagged in a thicket of bushes. Taking aim with his .30 Marlin rifle, he killed the bear with one shot behind the ear.

Johnson chained the carcass to a pole and four neighbors helped him carry the bear off the mountain. At the local butcher shop, the mature female bear weighed in at a scant 256 pounds (full-grown grizzlies have been known to reach 1,200 pounds). She was skinned, butchered and the meat either given or sold to the neighbors, some of it consumed late that evening at a communal barbeque. The old-timers liked it, but Cornelius Johnson himself judged the meat too "fevered" to eat and buried the remains near his house.

The photograph made on that Autumn day of Mr. Johnson and his bear—dubbed

the "Sunland Grizzly"—had been reproduced many times prior to its appearance in the *Quarterly*. It ran on the front page of the *Los Angeles Sunday Times* with the banner headline, "Huge Cinnamon Bear Killed at Sunland," as well as in a number of regional papers.

"The Sunland Grizzly" graduated from local legend to the annals of academia in 1937 when Dr. Joseph Grinnell, respected director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, featured the famous photo along with a substantial account of "the last grizzly bear known to have been killed in southern California" in his authoritative two-volume work, *Fur-bearing Mammals of California*. By the time of the photo's publication in the *Quarterly* a few years later, the "Sunland Grizzly" was already a certified icon, the last relic of a species backed into the abyss of extinction.

To contemporary eyes, the photograph is remarkable and haunting. Its effect is not unlike the mesmerizing full-length portrait of the emaciated Indian Ishi, the sole remaining member of his decimated Yahi tribe, who wandered out of the foothills of Mount Lassen—defeated and fully expecting to be lynched—into Oroville in 1911. Viewers of the Sunland Grizzly picture are witness to the purported last gasp of a prolific species which had ranged the state's coasts, forests and chaparral unmolested for thousands of years.

There remains disagreement over whether the grizzly, once plentiful in southern California, constituted its own subspecies, *Ursus tularensis* (one of seven California subspecies including *Ursus klamathensis* in the extreme north of the state and *Ursus magister* in the San Diego area), or if all grizzlies fall under the banner of the single highly variable species *Ursus arctos*. It seems there are too few museum specimens to be certain. Whatever its taxonomic classification or common name (cinnamon bear, silver-tip, brown bear, grizzle bear or red bear), the California grizzly survives today only as the striding symbol on the state flag and seal—so

honored for its virtues of "strength and unyielding resistance."

Before the arrival of the first Europeans in California, the grizzly occupied the top spot on the food chain. The Indians both feared and respected the grizzly, which many regarded as evil and ferocious, unlike the more retiring black bears which were considered sacred. Whenever possible, Indians avoided direct encounters by keeping away from the grizzly's known haunts and trails. In some tribes, men were forbidden to hunt alone before the age of 25 for fear of running into a grizzly while on their own. Meetings were unavoidable, however, because the bears and the natives depended on the same food sources, including the acorns and fish which were staples for both. Though not especially known for hunting large game, the bears were opportunists, not shy about pilfering deer carcasses from Indian traps and hunting grounds. When Native American met grizzly, the man usually bore the brunt of the bargain. Spanish missionaries commented on the deaths and terrible wounds inflicted by the bears, and the dangers the natives faced while gathering berries. One sure way for early Spanish arrivals to curry favor with the Indians was to destroy large numbers of grizzlies.

The first Spanish accounts of the California grizzly came from the expedition of Sebastian Vizcaíno, who undertook the mission to chart California's shores. In 1602, his party reported an aggregation of bears feeding on a whale carcass on the moonlit shores of the newly-named bay of Monterey. Thus began a violent 300-year adversarial relationship with only one possible outcome. The abundant bears immediately became a reliable source of meat for hungry soldiers and missionaries, though they soon learned that dispatching an enraged bear was no cinch. It could take a dozen shots to kill a big grizzly, with many of the bullets only lodging just beneath the thick hide. The Spaniards were surprised by the speed of the hulking animal, and it wasn't unusual for a horse or a couple of mules to be taken out by a charging wounded bear in the time it took

for the fatal bullet to find his heart or brain.

As hunters became settlers they increasingly found bear meat distasteful. Once human activity turned from hunting bears to tilling soil and grazing stock, the wily grizzly found his fortune on the upswing and his numbers actually increased as he took advantage of the tubers and grains propitiously within his grasp. Cattle, too, proved easy pickings and there are many accounts of a remarkable ruse the bear employed to snare curious cows, one by James Capen Adams from 1855, who observed a grizzly in tall grass,

rolling on his back throwing his legs into the air, jumping up, turning half somersets, chasing his tail and cutting up all kinds of antics, evidently with no other purpose than to attract the attention of cattle. These foolish animals crowded around him... In an instant the bear rose upon his hind legs, and, making a leap, caught [a] heifer around the neck, and fixed his jaws in her nose... The bear, with a peculiar jerk of his head, threw her upon her side, and without loosening his hold, turned his entire body upon her and in a few moments she was dead."

One of the more vivid chapters in the history of the California grizzly is the famous bull and bear contests, which took advantage of the natural animosity between two Goliaths. As practiced by the Spanish Californians in the early 1800's, these evolved from range matches staged by the *vaqueros* for their private amusement into spectacles full of pageantry and ceremony held on feast days and during fiestas at the missions and pueblos. More often than not, the grizzly—whose favored tactic was to grip the bull's tongue between his teeth and shred it with his claws—emerged victorious from these bloody bouts, but a strong bull could disembowel a bear with a savage charge early in the match. With the beginning of the Gold Rush, the bull and bear contests shed those aspects which had been rooted in Spanish tradition and degenerated into sordid commercial enterprises. Often one bear was pitted against two

bulls, or a mountain lion was thrown into the mix. Horace Greely, while an enthusiastic spectator at one such event, was said to have coined the Wall Street term still used today.

The Gold Rush and the flood of humanity which accompanied it marked the end of the trail for the California grizzly. Bear meat came back into vogue, bringing as much as \$1.50 per pound in the mining camps, and even fine restaurants in San Francisco began to serve the choicest cuts. Demand surged for grizzly hides and bear fat proved useful for fuel oil, hair pomade, and cooking. The grizzly's taste for cattle, hogs, oxen, and sheep as well as crops spurred farmers and ranchers to hire hunters who destroyed bears by the hundreds, with the most notorious individual animals commanding large bounties. Poison and trained dogs increasingly came into use. At the same time, crude wooden traps gave way to efficient ones made of steel, and muzzle-loaders were replaced by long range high-caliber rifles.

It isn't possible to know exactly when the California grizzly took its last lumbering step on southern California soil. There was one reported sighting near San Diego in 1908, but that is difficult to verify. Chances are they were finished by the turn of the century. As for Cornelius Johnson's "Sunland Grizzly," her fate may have been sealed in Tujunga Canyon in 1916, but she was no southern California native. For one thing, her skull in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology doesn't match the characteristics of any other California grizzly.

A letter by prominent mid-Wilshire urologist Elmer Belt to MVZ Director Joseph Grinnell written in 1939 partly explains the situation.

Johnson informed Belt, who had been a boyhood friend, that the Sunland Grizzly had escaped from the Los Angeles Zoo in Griffith Park. [However] when he trapped it and shot it he did not know that, nor did he find out about it until a considerable time [later.] The zoo keepers were very anxious not to let the public know a bear had escaped and there-

fore said nothing about it until the matter had well died down. Then the zoo keeper told him about it. Naturally intrigued by the revelation, Grinnell urged Dr. Belt to delve deeper into the bear escape on his behalf, but inquiry came to a halt when Dr. Grinnell died a couple of months later.

It isn't clear if the man who confided in Cornelius Johnson was Walter Calhoun, the zoo's first keeper. His tenure began in 1910 and ended in 1916, by which time the menagerie in Griffith Park was a little zoo facing big problems. Only six-years-old and not much more than a handful of wire cages, stockades and an aviary, it housed mainly livestock but also a number of wolves, monkeys, big cats and bears. Critics didn't like the cramped, unnatural settings and some small animals were known to have escaped. Glanders, a contagious airborne bacterial disease, had forced the zoo to destroy a number of its lions, and the Health Department was threatening action over zoo sewage draining into the Los Angeles River.

The zoo's bears lived in three caves set into a hilly incline, a somewhat more naturalistic setting than their fellow inmates endured. It isn't difficult to envision a grizzly making her escape from such an environment. She may have followed the Los Angeles River (which would remain unchanneled for two more decades) flowing past Griffith Park through Glendale and Burbank to its Tujunga tributary. It isn't even much of a stretch to consider that a foundering zoo facing a budget crunch, possible relocation, and impending meat rationing might be tempted to release one or more of its denizens into a nearly native and sparsely populated canyon habitat. If more complete early zoo records ever turn up, it may even be possible to put a name to the bear that was barbequed that day in Tujunga Canyon.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of Berkeley, California, for making Dr. Belt's letter available and to the Little Landers Historical Society of Tujunga, California for access to their archives.

(Monthly Roundup Continued from page 3)

Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed there was some guidance from international custom, but after the peace treaty it became a case of American territory under military law. This pleased no one—neither civilian nor military—and when Congress failed for the second time to establish a government for the area, General Bennett Riley called for a convention to establish a civil government. A total of 48 persons eventually arrived in Monterey to complete the task.

A select committee was appointed to draft an instrument for the convention to discuss and adopt. Although much of the Constitution was borrowed directly from the Constitutions of Iowa and New York and was adopted with little or no debate, several issues caused controversy. The first major issue was should California become a state or a territory and when should the government become effective—when the people adopted the proposed document or when Congress granted statehood. The Hispanics opposed statehood; they wanted more time to learn the American system. Several members joined them because they felt the need to go through a territorial period where the federal government would pay for the needed infrastructure. In spite of the opposition the decision was to try for statehood and to establish the government as soon as practical after the people adopted the Constitution.

The issue that nearly destroyed the Constitution was the state boundaries. Several were suggested, the ridge of the Sierra Nevada and the ridge of the Rockies were the two most discussed. Many objected to the Rocky line, because it would include the Mormons who were not represented in the convention. The present boundary was adopted by a two vote majority just two days before the committee was to adjourn *sine dia* when it was pointed out that the Mormons would be entitled to 1/3 of the representation in the legislature if they were included.

While slavery was banned unanimously and with little debate, the question of freed Blacks coming into the state was argued

viciously. In the end it was decided to leave the final decision of the issue to the first legislature without any instructions.

Who should vote was a major issue. It was decided that white males would have the vote; Indians, Blacks and descendants of Blacks were excluded. The question of who was an Indian caused problems for many years.

The convention made many far reaching decisions. They gave married women the right to own property in their own name; however, they also adopted the common law, which prohibited it. They prohibited the legislature to grant divorces or establish a lottery. They provided all laws and official records would be printed in both English and Spanish.

The two major weaknesses of the Constitution were the legislature was banned to charter any bank or any specific law corporation, only general law corporations. They did have the foresight to limit an investor's liability to his investment.

After the document was adopted it was decided to have the people vote on it within a month. On November 13, the people voted on the constitution, governor and members of the first legislature. They adopted the Constitution by a vote of 12,872 to 811, which represented approximately 13% of the population.

On December 15, 1849, the first state government met in San Jose, nearly nine months before Congress voted the territory into the union.

NOVEMBER 2000

Michael Duchemin, Managing Curator of the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, informed the members how the exhibit "On Gold Mountain: A Chinese America Experience" was developed, how it reflects the Autry Museum's philosophy, and how certain displays reinforced certain meanings.

Duchemin, who was born in Duluth, Minnesota, was raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and received his college education at Arizona State University, where he earned an MA in history and a certificate in



Photograph by Froylan Tiscareño

November Meeting Speaker Michael Duchemin

Public History. After college, he was the Museum Department head of the Arizona Historical Society until coming to the Autry as American History Curator in 1993.

"On Gold Mountain," which will travel and open at the Smithsonian on May 17, 2001, reflects the Autry's philosophy of displaying the historical and mythical west and showing how they relate. In addition to the overall theme the aim of the Museum is to show diversity, relation between people and the environment, and the understanding of the west as a distinct region and its importance worldwide.

The display represents contributions from more than 50 different collections. Among the contributors is the National Archives which loaned 35 documents, a nearly unheard of occurrence. Leslee Leong allowed many items from her store to be displayed.

The exhibit itself is divided into seven sections each reflecting a different state of development from being Chinese in America to becoming Chinese American. The first section, the journey, sets the tone. As you ascend a slight rise into the display you feel you are boarding a ship, and as you go down the incline on the other side, you can imagine disembarking.

Among the things on view in gallery two are the tools of Chinese laborers and examples of how they contributed to the

economic development of California and the West.

One interesting gallery is the one on Angel Island, the Ellis Island for the West, where all Chinese entered the United States. By law, Chinese were excluded except for merchants, scholars, diplomats, and students. Included in the gallery are examples of the necessary paper work (both official and forged) to prove you had the right to enter. Some were detained for two or three years before being allowed to enter or sent back to China.

The other galleries show the development of the Los Angeles Chinatown and the gradual change from Chinese to Chinese Americans. Examples of businesses, especially the Dragon's Den, an early Chinese restaurant patronized by Caucasians, showed the gradual change from serving mainly the Chinese community to serving the greater Los Angeles community.

An interesting section is the display of Chinese American art which reflects American scenes and values with an overtone of Chinese culture. One, "Portrait of a Negro Man" combined with a Chinese American painting showing the Japanese American woman who painted the portrait, shows the diversity and combining of cultures in art schools during the period of segregation.

The section on World War II, when the Chinese had to prove they were Chinese and not Japanese, showed their acculturation as they, both men and women, entered the United States military and defense industries.

The final display shows their acceptance in the arts, entertainment fields, and literature, as well as science, technology, and business. Even here, while successful and in the main stream, there is a touch which reflects the Chinese culture.

Slides of the exhibition illustrated the points Mr. Duchemin was making, giving greater meaning to the display. Understanding the philosophy and meaning of the examples gave a greater depth to the display which is a must for everyone.



Photograph by Ken Pauley

Villainous villains Registrar of Marks and Brands Eric "Shark" Nelson, Sheriff Michael "Big Mike" Gallucci, and Deputy Sheriff John "Rambo" Robinson receiving a fair trial presided by Loren Wendt before the execution.

Rendezvous 2000

Once again, the Corral gathered at Bent's Adobe for the annual Rendezvous. Even though the skies were gloomy, a merry crowd enjoyed the afternoon.

Gary Turner and his crew of wranglers hustled around setting up things for the gala. Vickie Turner provided the center pieces and oversaw their placement. Pat Gallucci prepared the name tags and place cards, and along with Jean Tolford and Elizabeth Nelson greeted the guests. Glenda Thomas and her charming assistant, Dick, prepared the bar and served refreshments all afternoon. Also noted working were Tom Bent and his wife, Hugh Tolford, Paul Rippens, Loren Wendt, Andy Dagosta, Larry Johnson, and the member who traveled the most distance to attend, Tim Heflin from Oregon.

In addition to the usual auction, conducted by Loren Wendt, ably assisted by

Hugh Tolford, and his loyal runners Ken Pauley, Paul Rippens, and Pete Pegler, we also had a special auction for the estate of George Koenig of some of his choice pieces.

Additional entertainment was provided by DJ and Jean who played for the groups' enjoyment.

A more raucous activity occurred after the three villainous villains portrayed on the meeting notice were rounded up and given a fair trial. Some wished to hang them first, but it was decided the American way was to give them a fair trial then hang them. Since no rope was handy, they were forced to wear a plaque that stated "I am a bad boy." Oh, the shame of it all.

After an excellent meal, as the members started to leave and the wranglers joined by Steve Tice began the clean up, the skies opened up and wept to see the end of the festivities.



Photograph by Ken Pauley



Photograph by Ken Pauley

Hugh Tolford with runner Ken Pauley auctioning off items.

Efficient bartender Glenda Thomas with her charming assistant Richard enjoying a break in their duties.



Photograph by Ken Pauley

Members paying close attention to the auction before dinner.



Corral Chips



David Farber, Student Essay Winner, 2000.

DAVID M. FARBER, a student at CSU, Northridge, won this year's Student Essay Contest. His article "Perils of Mining in Bodie" will appear in the Spring Issue of the *Branding Iron*.
The Historical Society of Southern California

awarded **GLORIA LOTHROP** the Carl Wheat Award for the best article of the year in the *Southern California Quarterly*. Her article is entitled "Unwelcome in Freedom's Land: The Impact of World War II on Italian Aliens in Southern California."

JOHN ROBINSON won second place in the Coke Wood Award of the Westerners International for his article "William Bradshaw's Road to Gold."

WILLIAM WARREN'S latest article, "Treasures of the Huntington" is available on the internet, www.mercatormag.com.

ROBERT SCHWEMMER inaugurated the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum Program "Lighthouses and Shipwrecks of the Central Coast," with a presentation on the 1923 naval disaster off Point Pedenales.

Directory Changes

To Honorary

Thomas Bent
Msgr. Francis Weber

To Associate

Dee Dee Ruhlow

New Members

Matthew N. Bryant
1742 E. Calaveras Street
Altadena, CA 91001

David M. Farber
13506 Mercer Street
Pacoima, CA 91331



Edward "Pete" Parker
1934-2000

Ed Parker, an active member of the Los Angeles Corral, passed away in September 2000. He was born in Irwin, North Carolina, on January 24, 1934. After coming to California, he enrolled as a History major at CSU Fullerton where he served as president of the local chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national honor fraternity in History. In 1966, having successfully completed his thesis on Bernard De Voto, Ed received his Master's degree in History from the University of Southern California. While pursuing his doctoral studies at USC, he served as a research assistant to Doyce Nunis, working on the Metropolitan Public History Project, which produced the *Los Angeles Bibliography*. During those years Pete also served as an editorial assistant on the staff of the *Southern California Quarterly*.

Ed had wide-ranging interests and was expert in a number of areas. He was an astute book collector, especially in the field of the American West, which he understood both as a scholar and as an outdoorsman who favored camping, hunting and mountaineering. Those enthusiasms were matched by his devotion to golf. In the true frontier tradition he also knew "when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em."

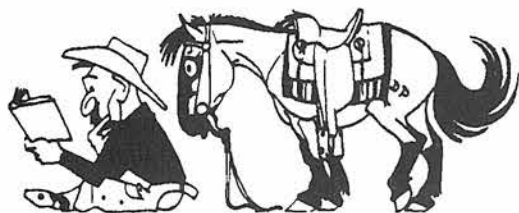
Like the West he loved, Pete conveyed an open expansiveness. With his easy south-

ern drawl he played at being "just an 'ol country boy," but in reality he was perceptive in judging character, authoritative in his knowledge and deft and sensitive in his personal relations. He sometimes feigned a casualness, but was, in fact, a loyal and generous companion who remained a fast friend over the decades, a stalwart in times of difficulty and a boon companion when happy days returned. A favorite photo of ours was a picture I took of Doyce and Ed on Santa Cruz Island standing next to a sign that warned "Beware of Bulls."

In 1963 Ed married his wife, Ruth. Their family soon included Ben and Rachel, and, more recently their first grandchild. With Ruth, Ed was generous in extending hospitality to guests. The ever gracious host also contributed to the cuisine, when, during retirement, he began to pursue his culinary interests.

Ed Parker was a many-faceted person. He was devoted to his family; he was a lifelong scholar; and though transplanted to the West, he was a devoted son of the frontier. Above all, Pete Parker was a loyal and true comrade whose absence represents a deep loss to those who were enriched by his friendship.

—Gloria Ricci Lothrop



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

Damn a man who doesn't read books

—William H. Mulholland

ACEQUIA CULTURE: *Water, Land, and Community in the Southwest*, by Jose A. Rivera. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998. 243 pp. Maps, Documents, Photos, Notes, Glossary, Selected Readings, Index. Paper, \$19.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press, 3721 Spirit Drive S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87106-5631 (800) 249-7737, Fax: (800) 622-8667, email: custserv@upress.umn.edu.

Water has always been a valuable resource in the arid American Southwest. An ideal world might see water shared equitably for the good of the community. Jose Rivera believes that the acequia communities have come close to meeting that ideal. Rural New Mexico has developed an acequia culture over the past four centuries. During that time communities have developed workable laws and customs concerning water for irrigation. This tradition was codified into law by New Mexico through Spanish and Mexican rule, the territorial period, and statehood. For the modern society, however, time does not stand still. Recent population growth and prosperity have placed demands on the acequia communities to yield some control of their water rights. The issue has found its way into the courts, and new challenges insure that more lawsuits will be filed.

Rivera presents a spirited defense of acequia culture's water rights. He argues effectively that the acequia communities have shown a longstanding ability to live in har-

mony with their environment, and that their water rights should be absolute. In this regard Rivera's book makes an important case for the acequia culture and merits respect for his documentation of their water rights.

Unfortunately, this book will have a very limited readership appeal. Rivera presents no anecdotal narrative to bring any of the acequia communities to life, no personal case studies of family life and work. More than half of the book consists of documents, some in Spanish only, others in Spanish with English translation, and others in English only. Scholars will note this documentary sampling and move on to the archival sources from which they came, and research more deeply into the topic. Students may be misled (and how easily they seem to be misled these days!) into thinking these documents are the prime source materials, when in reality they are a representative sample. The subtitle of the book does not inform the prospective reader that the subject is confined to the upper reaches of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, not the "Southwest" as a more general region. Apart from the documents, much of the text consists of block quotations.

In sum, Rivera has written a lawyer's brief, not a history of acequia culture. Readers may wish to see the larger picture in books such as Michael C. Meyers's *Water in the Hispanic Southwest*.

—Abraham Hoffman



COWBOYS IN UNIFORM: *Uniforms, Arms and Equipment of the Rough Riders*, by J. C. Stewart. Showlow, AZ, the Rough Rider Publishing, Co., 1998. 75 pp. Photographs, Notes. Softcover, \$20.00. Order from Rough Rider Publishing Co., 1095 Aspen Way, Showlow, AZ 85901.

In the years since 1898, the Spanish-American war has been a frequent book theme. The focus has been upon the politics, the strategy, the battles, the role of Theodore Roosevelt, and the emergence of the America

as a world power. A few tell also of the Rough Riders—the men of the west and southwest, recruited from the American Territories—Arizona, New Mexico, Indian Territory, Oklahoma—who became the First Regiment, U.S. Volunteers and fought in the Cuban campaign.

J.C. Stewart's book *Cowboys in Uniform* is another Spanish-American war book, one of several published in 1998 the centennial year of what became known as "a splendid little war." However, this book is different. Its theme is the personal possessions of the ordinary trooper: the khaki uniform, the haversack that contained the trooper's food and possessions, the Krag-Jorgenson rifle and its smokeless powder cartridge, and more.

The book explains how these men, originally recruited for service in a cavalry regiment were ordered to Cuba without their horses, to fight dismounted. This order was a significant change. After all, these were men recruited for their horsemanship, experience with firearms, and ability to live and work outdoors—and out of saddlebags—in inhospitable territory. Primarily, these were men who practiced the physical arts and skills of the West.

Here are detailed descriptions of the clothing worn by the trooper, the haversack he carried, and the rifle he fired. Color photographs of the very few known uniform items that have survived time—and countless spring cleanings—enhance the descriptions. Intriguing also is the story of how the uniform and other equipment was obtained through the diligence, political connections, and speedy action by Col. Leonard Wood, the actual commander of the Regiment (Theodore Roosevelt started as second in command—by his own recommendation).

Photographs by 1898 cameramen show how the uniform and equipment were actually worn and carried. They also show how some troopers modified the uniform, either for practical reasons, or simply to express a little individuality. To provide a clearer dimension to how the uniforms and equipment were employed, the author teamed

with several men to model the uniforms and show how the equipment was handled. These are not professional models, but men of the west who are familiar with horses, firearms and rigors of life outdoors. Indeed, the author, who is also a respected Grand Canyon wrangler and professional saddle maker (and who looks like a young Col. Roosevelt) models a replica of the khaki uniform that the energetic future President had made-to-order.

This is a soft-cover work containing much hard detail, with extensive footnotes in each chapter. There are many more loose ends to the Rough Rider story. The author admits *Cowboys in Uniform* is not his final work on the subject. It is however, a good first book. With several more ISBN numbers registered to him, we can expect more writing from him on this subject.

—Richard N. Noonan



MASSACRE AT THE YUMA CROSSING: *Spanish Relations with the Quechuans, 1779-1782* by Mark Santiago. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998. 221 pp. Maps, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$35. Order from the University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719, (800) 426-3797.

As a resident of California during the close of the twentieth century, I sometimes wonder how this land—named after that mythical island of Califia—would be different had it stayed a possession of Spain. The Massacre at Yuma Crossing relates some of the historical events and one fascinating story about why Spain and perhaps Mexico failed to populate and adequately protect its valuable Northern Frontier.

Mark Santiago has written a very readable account of how incidents involving a handful of people in a relatively isolated area affected future movement of population throughout the southwest. The book is well documented using personal diaries and first hand reports by participants. It is a story of bravery and betrayal. It is a classical case

about the clash of cultures and the misunderstandings that can result from people making promises that they did not have the power to keep.

The book specifically covers the attempt of a Franciscan Missionary, Padre Garcés, to establish a series of missions along the Colorado and Gila Rivers. This remarkable individual whose faith empowers his solo treks into unknown Indian territory, gains the trust of the Quechuan Indians. The Quechuans controlled strategic territory surrounding the Yuma Crossing on the Colorado River. The Yuma Crossing is a key segment of a possible trail that would open up travel through the southwest. Spanish dreamers saw this trail growing into a well traveled highway that would lead all the way to the Pacific Coast and across the ocean to China. This trail would allow settlers to fill Spain's Northern Frontier and strengthen Spain's hold over Alta California. Potential foes such as England, Russia or the new upstart, The United States of America, would be put in their place. It was not to be.

The book is well balanced in the way that it treats the different cultures involved. If read in conjunction with Weber's *Spanish Frontier in North America*, the book paints a vivid picture of the problems that Spain faced in trying to hold onto its vast empire.

On a personal note, I was intrigued because one of the personalities presented was a "leather jacket" named José Dario Argüello. This military man survived the massacre. He later led the first settlers to the pueblo called Los Angeles and went on to become a Spanish Governor. Argüello had many descendants. This reviewer happens to be one.

—Brad Macneil

And Other Things

The Los Angeles Public Library has announced its innovative database, *Electronic Neighborhood*, is operational.

Electronic Neighborhood is an information resource unlike any other in Southern California. It provides a comprehensive index and access to information sources available on the many neighborhoods that define Los Angeles. Through its large segments of the Library's extensive collection of materials on the history of the greater Los Angeles area will be accessible to the public via the internet from anywhere in the world.

The database will identify and index such information resources as books, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, brochures, maps, and pamphlets. Many of the items indexed are rare or irreplaceable. Many will be scanned for full and immediate access. If an item cannot be scanned (size, copyrights, etc) instructions will be provided on where and how to locate the information.

The core of the *Electronic Neighborhood* comes from the Los Angeles Public Library's impressive collection of historic materials on local neighborhoods—a collection that was started in the early part of this century and includes information not only on the city of Los Angeles, but surrounding communities as well. Subject areas are wide and varied, including festivals, housing developments, personality profiles, earthquakes, restaurants, fires, and the Olympics. The project directors will work with other libraries, historical societies, and local agencies to identify additional sources of information to be added to the database during the years to come.

The database may be accessed on www.lapl.org.