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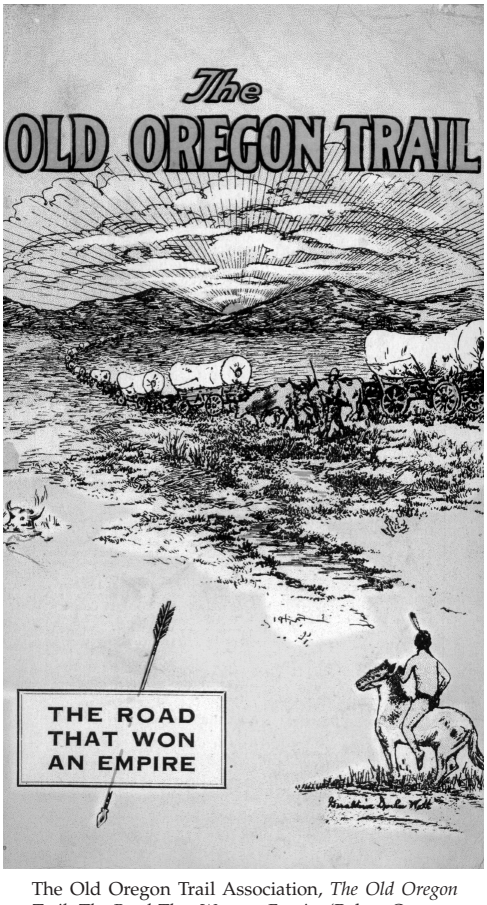
"You Sing 'America,' Why Not See It?" Private Highway Associations & Redefining Tourist Landscapes in the American West 1912-1925

by Peter J. Blodgett



The Old Oregon Trail Association, *The Old Oregon Trail: The Road That Won an Empire* (Baker, Oregon: 1924) Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

The rapid evolution of the automobile into dependable means of long distance travel made it increasingly important in all phases of transportation throughout the United States, early in the twentieth century. In order to realize the promise of enhanced mobility that the fledgling horse-less carriage implied, many Americans devoted themselves to the cause of championing better roads over which to operate this new machine. At the same time, the expanding population of automobiles force fed the expansion of businesses that cared for the needs of both car and driver. By 1910, therefore, an infrastructure to accommodate automotive travel was taking shape across the nation, allowing automobiles to become an integral part of recreational travel for more and more people. That growing acceptance of the automobile's potential, made motor touring a significant element in promoting the development both of the nation's good roads movement and of tourism within the United States. Among the many sources of such promotional activity during the 1910s and early 1920s, those organizations that composed the short-lived but widespread private highway movement represent some of the most intriguing. An exploration of

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Editor's Corner

Several years ago William Least Heat Moon wrote a book entitled *Blue Highways*. At the time the author was an unemployed community college instructor with no job prospects and so he embarked on a very unusual project. Moon had noticed that on most maps the interstate highways were colored red and the secondary roads were blue. His project was to travel the entire United States on only blue highways, stop frequently and meet the local people and see the "real" America. He had saved enough money to buy a cheap van and equip the inside for sleeping and other minimum comforts. He ate at local diners, frequented the local bars, engaging the locals in conversation to find out what they thought. His voyage of discovery took more than a year and resulted in a best seller.

Moon's adventure was an inspiration to travel all over this great country by car, not plane or train, and see the real United States via blue highways. This issue consists of a series of articles dealing with America's fascination with automobile and road trips. We hope you find these entries as interesting as we did and you will be spurred to jump into your "Chevrolet (or whatever)" and travel the USA, or California, or LA County. Azusa anyone?

Tom Tefft
TRTefft@aol.com
P.O. Box 3017
Idyllwild,CA

Ron Woolsey
rcwoolsey@yahoo.com
395 Cliff Dr. #100
Pasadena, CA 91107

their labors highlights their role in redefining various American landscapes, especially in the trans-Mississippi West, for the purposes of travel and tourism.

The pioneering motorists of the pre-World War I era certainly benefited from any help they could receive from any quarter for they confronted a plethora of challenges stemming from the wretched state of the average American thoroughfare. During the 1880s and especially the 1890s, segments of the farm populace grew increasingly vocal in their calls for better roads, in hopes of reducing the costs of transporting their crops to market and reducing the isolation in which so many farm families lived. Over time, their appeals were bolstered by the promotional efforts of the rapidly growing ranks of bicycling enthusiasts. Those individuals, through their national association, the League of American Wheelmen, exerted all the pressure they could in favor of better roads that would carry bicyclists further and faster through new landscapes. As these groups and others began to coalesce around the issue of highway improvement, the Good Roads movement took shape.

Good roads, as a cause, enlisted many different interests to march behind its banner. Bicycle manufacturers, road builders and the nascent automobile industry lent what weight they could to the work. Despite their disparate identities, these champions of highway betterment pressured governments on various levels through public information programs and direct lobbying. With the creation of the Office of Road Inquiry in the Department of Agriculture in 1893, the Good Roads movement had even established a beachhead within the Federal government. Before many more years had passed, various advocates within the movement focused more of their efforts on enlisting more federal support.

Even as the cause began to take hold more deeply, making inroads into the wider public's consciousness, the relationships among its constituent elements altered in response to changing national circumstances. Thus by 1903, one scholar has argued, "automobile interests rapidly displaced bicycle organizations as the dominant force [in support of good roads]," as the new vehicle's popularity expanded. With the upsurge in automobile ownership over the first decade of the twentieth century (spurting from less than 10,000 in 1900 to nearly half a-million ten years later), the influence of the motoring community upon public affairs increased. National good roads conferences drew more attention and wider political support. Even so, the automobile's friends and sponsors struggled for years to push road building into new directions. Laws providing for tax supported construction and maintenance of local roads by counties and states worked their way through more than half the state legislatures by 1913; three years later came the capstone of all these efforts with the passage of the first Federal Aid Road Act.

Enactment of federal legislation made available 75 million dollars over five years for the cause of improving rural roads, though only if the states could match allocated funds, dollar for dollar, and agreed to establish highway departments at the state level. While hardly establishing a dominant role for the federal government in the process, such stipulations clearly inserted it into activities once left almost entirely to the locality. Fledgling state highway offices frequently relied upon the knowledge and expertise of federal engineers not only to frame design and construction programs but for models on which to pattern their enabling legislation and their departments. Just as the federal government made its first tentative foray into the road building enterprise, however, the first of a number of private organizations also took on the task of encouraging highway improvements.

The Lincoln Highway Association, under the flamboyant leadership of Indiana entrepreneur Carl Fisher, represented an example of the application of private means to achieving public purposes. Fisher formed a plan in 1912 to rally support nationally for the idea of a hardsurfaced trans-continental highway to be built according to the most

exacting standards. With his idea for a "Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway" in hand, Fisher turned not to state or federal agencies but to his wide circle of wealthy acquaintances in the automotive and construction fields. Employing all his considerable skills in fund raising and arm twisting, he arranged for endorsements of and donations to his plan from auto makers such as Packard and Willys-Overland, from manufacturers such as the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and from automobile clubs and enthusiasts. Less than a year after Fisher began his campaign in the fall of 1912, he had raised nearly two and-one-half million dollars.

Despite Fisher's first fast lap around the track, his coast-to-coast highway scheme soon encountered potholes and detours aplenty. Although successful in lining up the patronage of friends and associates in Indiana's automotive industry, Fisher proved unable to budge the redoubtable Henry Ford, whose support was obviously critical to fulfilling Fisher's grandest visions. Moreover, the variable scope of those visions may have undermined some of Fisher's efforts on behalf of his highway.

Having laid aside any hopes of being able to pay for the construction of a grand highway across the continent, Fisher by 1913 instead threw his weight behind the notion that his rechristened Lincoln Highway Association could cultivate modern roads by planting what were referred to as "seedling miles" in every state his highway would cross. The funds and the road building supplies that had been donated to the association (the latter consisting principally of great quantities of cement provided by its manufacturers) thus would be turned to an educational mission on behalf of the good roads cause. Meanwhile, the association would also begin to chart its route across the country, using the ready recognition value of the name "Lincoln" to mark its course. Through these means, the association's leadership (increasingly dominated by Henry Joy of Packard) hoped to demonstrate the permanent value that would accrue from its activities.

Like the business concerns that its founders ran, the Lincoln Highway Association sought to convince its potential "customers" that its product would be worthy of their patronage. In the association's case, however, the men who ran it faced an unusual challenge, for they had to capture the interest of several different sets of "clients"" in succession to make their enterprise visible. Not only would they eventually have to convince the motoring public that traveling the Lincoln Highway would be to its advantage, they had to first sell the towns, cities, counties and states along the route on the proposition that it would be worth their while to devote public funds to improving the roads chosen for inclusion. To accomplish both those goals, the association resorted to the same techniques of advertising and self promotion being widely adopted in the business world. While it circulated press releases and letters of endorsement from its Detroit headquarters to a long list of newspapers and magazines, its officers worked hard behind the scenes to persuade the editors of those periodicals to accept articles setting forth the background and the program of the Lincoln Highway. They grasped every opportunity to associate the highway's activities with major news stories such as the completion of the Panama Canal. Above all, aware of the keen public interest that had developed in the road and its progress during the early years after its founding, the association tried to capitalize upon the desire of many communities to have the Lincoln Highway come to town.

Far beyond the reach of the Lincoln Highway, in every section of the country, the alluring prospect of tourist dollars intrigued other civic boosters as well, inspiring the creation of dozens of other private highway associations between 1913 and American entry into World War I in 1917. Ranging in their scope from the grandest trans-continental vision, often in conscious competition with the Lincoln Highway (National Old Trails Road, Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway, Theodore Roosevelt International Highway, Victory Highway), to the thor-

oughly parochial (the Big Four Trail from Terre Haute, Indiana to St. Louis, Missouri or the Corn Belt Route from Effner, Indiana to Burlington, Iowa), these organizations promoted the advantages of their particular routes and the attractions of the communities adjacent to them with the clear intention of profiting from the tourists who would travel these roads. In doing so, they also began to redefine many large swathes of the American countryside. Towns, cities or counties that might once have never imagined they shared any common ground with each other now might discover themselves linked by the Arrowhead Trail, the Dixie Highway or the Old Spanish Trail.

In the West, various highways cropped up throughout the nineteen-teens, either spanning the region as part of a larger trans continental enterprise (the Lincoln Highway, the National Old Trails Road, the Yellowstone Trail) or knitting together western landmarks (the Denver-Yellowstone Highway, the Geyser-to-Glacier Highway or the National Park-to-Park Highway). While some tried to capitalize on the aura of the region's history (the Lewis and Clark Highway or the Oregon Trail) and some were relentlessly pragmatic (the Omaha Lincoln and Denver Highway or the Texas-New Mexico Mountain Highway), still others (as noted above) focused upon one particularly distinctive feature of the region, its national parks. Given the prominent role national parks had already come to play in all forms of tourist advertising for the Far West and especially for the Rocky Mountain states, the frequency with which "Yellowstone" in particular or the general term "National Parks" appeared in the titles of western highway associations is not surprising. The images provoked by references to the nation's scenic crown jewels remained sufficiently compelling that many highway promoters sought the same sort of identification with national parks that other advertisers already had been employing.

Perhaps the most diligent exponents of the national park connection during these years proved to be the group advocating the route known as the National Park-to-Park Highway. Organized at a 1916 meeting in Yellowstone National Park, this association immediately hitched its fortunes to the fate of America's burgeoning national park system. Although similar in its basic structure to such pioneers as the Lincoln Highway Association, the Park-to-Park Highway, like most of its private highway peers, depended upon an assortment of booster-minded individuals who had come to this endeavor from far less lofty positions than those occupied by Carl Fisher and his friends in the automotive industry. Headquartered in Denver, it drew its leadership from business executives and local politicians across Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Under the direction of its president and chief instigator, Gus Holm's [sic] of Cody, Wyoming, it set out during the nineteen-teens to mobilize civic and commercial interests throughout those and other western states in an effort to capitalize upon the region's expanding tourist trade.

With their ambitious concept of a six thousand-mile-long route linking a dozen national parks in nine states, the founders of the Park-to-Park Highway probably championed the most expansive vision of landscapes re-imagined for the needs of tourism and travel. Touted as the "master scenic highway of America," its maps depicted a system of roads that enfolded the entire West from the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean within its domain. Determined, as one statement of purpose put it, "to encourage, stimulate and foster public interest in the national parks, monuments and forests" of the region, the association's founders saw such interest as the best means to bolster use of those roads and thus ensure "the opening of the scenic West for development and progress." Arguing that "a paradise on a poor highway can never become popular," another of the Park-to-Park Highway's backers defined its task as "preparing the way into this great array of scenic and educational wonders, so that all may be reached economically and in comfort."

Reading the guide books issued by other leading associations, one discovers only

slightly less grandiose aspirations at work. Describing travel across the continent on the Lincoln Highway, the association's 1916 guide asserted that "the wonders and beauty of the scenery along this 3331-mile . . . drive are unsurpassed by any to be found in any part of the globe" while its 1924 edition, portraying the route in brief as "the Great American Tour," wrote that motorists "traveling . . . west of Omaha" would encounter "the historic features of that pioneer trail; . . . the countless anecdotes and legends which cluster about the route of the Old Overland Stage and the Pony Express rides which witnessed the gradual western advance of the frontier." The Old Oregon Trail Association, proclaiming its path as "the logical route to California from Eastern points," enumerated its advantages as "the best roadbed in the West, . . . no deserts to cross, passes through a populated and cultivated country with varied scenic attractions, with modern conveniences on every hand, and . . . a road that is kept open the entire year." Not willing to rely solely on such utilitarian appeals, though, the promoters of the Old Oregon Trail also characterized it as "not simply a mixture of earth and gravel and cement over which traffic might easily go" but a symbol embodying "the hopes and ambitions, the vision and faith, the endurance and perseverance of brave men and women who dared the terrors of the long, weary way that an empire might be won for the United States of America." Putting it perhaps more succinctly than any other group, the Park-to-Park Highway posed its argument in the rhetorical question, "you sing 'America,' why not SEE it?"

Although their approaches might vary according to their individual circumstances, nearly all of the private highway associations adopted appeals similar to those just described. In the advertising and magazine articles that they sponsored and in the guide books that they published, they promoted use of their specific roadways by portraying landscapes across America defined by their potential attractiveness to motoring tourists. Many of them, taking a tack resembling that of the Old Oregon Trail Association, extolled the scenic grandeur or the historical significance or the unique recreational resources of the realms through which they passed. The Arrowhead Trail, connecting Salt Lake City to Los Angeles through "scenic Utah," carried the motorist through "a once dead desert [that] has sprung to life" with "rural scenes of richness . . . spread before the traveler in glowing hues of gold and green." Having reached southern Utah, the traveler would approach its glorious national parks such as Zion and Bryce Canyon, located in "an unmatched center of outdoor panoramas."

At the same time that they celebrated the visual splendors so readily accessible to the motorists who used their routes, various guides might also describe the modern-day wonders of the intriguing remnants of history that the travelers would encounter. The National Old Trails Road's guide book could praise modern farm land in Kansas, brought to fruition by the wonders of irrigated agriculture, and then wax poetic about the cowtown days of Dodge City, whose lawlessness "necessitated nerves of iron and proficiency with the revolver" or the Arkansas River in southern Colorado, "a historic stream with a red record of desperate fights . . . between the marauding savages and traders bound for Santa Fe." The Arrowhead Trail guide, pulling out all the rhetorical stops, could paint its prose purple in acknowledging that "the annals of the men and women who founded Salt Lake City . . . contain pages of Homeric struggles with death and desolation . . . fadeless in the memory of those to whom courage and faith are two of the cardinal virtues." The Old Oregon Trail's backers, having fully embraced the revival of an historic route as the rationale for its existence, commemorated "the last great migration, the greatest of them all . . . when all of that country West of the Missouri was subjugated and the last frontier disappeared before the rush of the homeseeker and empire builder."

Even as copywriters, editors and authors applied their talents to sketching the transcendent glories of each route, they did

not neglect more pragmatic appeals to the potential traveler. Guide books for routes such as the Lincoln Highway might highlight not only the scenic and historic points of interest but such practicalities as the numbers of hotels and garages in a given community, the presence of camp sites, and the availability of such basic services as telephones, post offices and water potable enough for either human or automotive systems. Another road from Chicago to Los Angeles across the Great Plains and the desert Southwest, described in the 1915 guide book of the New Santa Fe Trail located such essentials on each of its strip maps, noting where anxious drivers might find the gas, food and lodging to replenish their needs. A 1921 brochure for the Theodore Roosevelt Highway's route across North Dakota portrayed each community through which the road would pass, enumerating the range of businesses as well as the amenities (from parks to Good Road clubs) on hand for the excursionist or the potential emigrant. In like manner, the description of the Arrowhead Trail in its guide would point out the resources of the towns and villages through which the route passed, observing where "supplies and accommodations" could be found.

The accumulation, organization and distribution of such packets of information and advocacy clearly played an indispensable role in the entire process of promoting the automobile's potential for travel and tourism, right from the start. As early as 1901, various entrepreneurs had begun publishing bound volumes of itemized directions, narrating the course to be navigated by a motorist going from point A to point B. Organizations such as the Automobile Club of America and the AAA (the latter drawing its strength from its evolving network of local and state-wide affiliates) provided channels through which such publications could be disseminated. Characterized by one student as "verbal guides," those initial sturdy tomes included lengthy descriptions of specified routes including indications of road conditions, points of interest along the routes and highly detailed descriptions of intersections where changes of direction were necessary. Each change of direction or point of interest was indicated as being at a specific distance from a pre-determined starting point. Thus, even the shortest and most simple route had to be accompanied by hundreds of words of description.

The Automobile Club of Southern California, Arrowhead Trail (Zion Park Highway) from Salt Lake City, UT to Los Angeles, CA. (Los Angeles, CA: 1922) Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

No matter their form, road guides in any incarnation were absolutely dependent upon accurate information gathered through first-hand investigation. To conduct such investigations, organizations such as the American Automobile Association and various private highway associations sponsored a new kind of frontier scout, the highway "pathfinder." Just as these pathfinders laid out the actual routes for many early twentieth century highways, so they also plotted out the directions for motorists using those routes. Such directions soon became the foundation for travel guides of all types, including the increasingly popular cartographic guides that relied upon information assembled in the form of maps. In their pathfinding capacity, these pioneers not only rattled all over the landscape, identifying the best routes for motorists to follow, but they compiled the data and promoted the chosen paths to motorists all over the region and eventually the country through a variety of means. Pathfinders such as W.O. Rishel or A.L. Westgard or Major Charles E. Percival threw their energies into championing what Percival called "a motorized age in which the only use for legs would be to walk out to the garage." Although the resulting roads might have many uses, the pathfinders had particular appreciation for their role in boosting recreational auto travel. Westgard, perhaps the best known of them, proudly asserted that "the preparation of dependable route maps all over the United States has in no small measure helped in their development and the desire to travel over them."

Guide books of nearly any type, of course, had been susceptible to what one student has aptly described as the "impermanence" of the road and the surrounding landscape, especially in an era characterized by continued highway construction. Moreover, given the mass that many early narrative guides achieved, they were hardly handy tools for the driver or even the passenger to manage while the automobile was underway. At the same time, recognized touring experts and road scouts such as Bill Rishel in Utah found more and more inquiries directed to them, sent by motorists seeking to benefit from the hard-won knowl-edge garnered by the pathfinders in their travels.

As a means of compressing great amounts of information into small bundles to reduce the troublesome bulk of existing guides, the sheet map and its cousins, printed in bound atlases, proved an excellent solution. Bill Rishel, for example, claimed that he had begun sending out maps of his own creation soon after the turn of the century in response to requests from curious would-be motorists, pioneering the strip map that AAA would eventually adopt as the "trip-tik." Although many early road maps, especially those printed as illustrative material in traditional verbal guides, were closer to schematic drawings than modern road maps, they still incorporated at least as many if not more details than any narrative guide. The route books of the Touring Information Bureau of America, a guide which debuted in 1914, provided such information in their strip maps as the type of road the motorist would drive, what watercourses would have to be forded and which were spanned with bridges, what counties the motorist would cross and which cities of what size the auto would have to navigate.

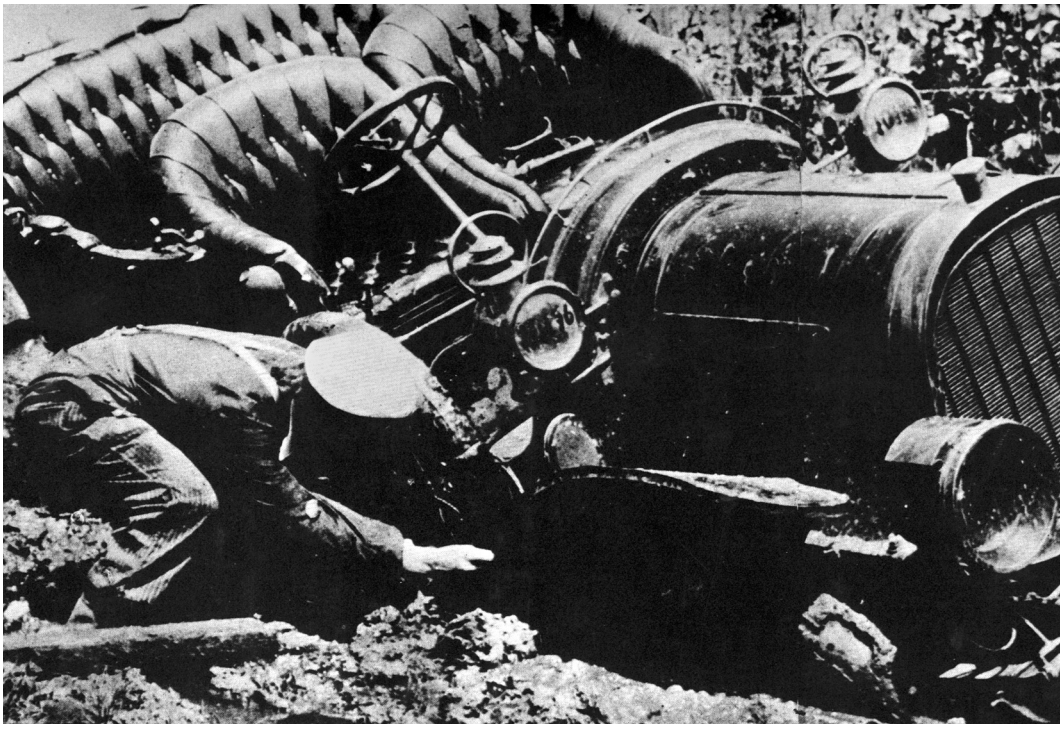
As the era of private highways unfolded, however, some of the individuals and organizations involved discovered that imagining a route, promoting it on paper and capturing it between the covers of a book might prove rather easier than actually fixing it permanently upon a map. Although the proponents of various highways had counted upon building up a reservoir of good will among the general public toward their endeavors, they probably had not imagined the degree to which the members of that public who lived in the states traversed by different highways would come to regard them with a possessory air. In the case of the Lincoln Highway, even as Henry Joy, the principal figure in the highway's activities, argued strenuously for a route based upon the most direct path in engineering terms, a host of interested parties from mayors, state legislators and governors to local merchants,

boards of trade and chambers of commerce bombarded the association with their arguments, proposals and propositions, nearly all of which shared the same agenda—to get their communities on the map (figuratively) by adding them to the actual route, no matter what sort of detours might be required. Particularly in the states west of the Mississippi River, such controversies proved common. At an early stage of its development, the association yielded to pressure from various business and political leaders in Colorado to draw up a loop that would swing down through Denver, rectifying the initial decision to skirt Colorado entirely. Later efforts to bring the highway's segments through Utah and Nevada into alignment ran afoul in 1916 and 1917 of conflicting ambitions. Lincoln Highway supporters found themselves opposed by advocates of other routes who hoped to pull travelers away from San Francisco, the Lincoln Highway's projected west coast destination, in favor of Utah's own tourist attractions or the booming metropolis of Los Angeles. As the association's own history put it, various communities saw that the highway could become "a river of gold to the country through which it passes—tourist gold—for the hotelkeeper, the garage operator, the sellers of gasoline and oil and food. Cities and towns contended for this wealth, seeking by all fair and some unfair means to divert the whole stream, or at least a larger portion of it, into that channel where it would profit them most."

The escalating numbers of highway projects, unfortunately, brought no commensurate improvement in highway quality during this period. The Lincoln Highway had been forced by the realities of fund raising to abandon its most ambitious road building schemes, resorting instead to the construction of demonstration projects (the so-called "seedling miles") along its route in hopes of establishing a standard to which, its organizers hoped, county and state governments might aspire. Other "highways" or "trails," living on far more restricted financial means than the Lincoln Highway, could do little more than promote the notion of good roads through their advertising and try to plot out a route that could attract more backers by accommodating as many local interests as possible. Moreover, despite the best intentions of their founders, the increase in highway projects generated considerable confusion. Forced, in many parts of the country to rely upon a relatively small number of through roads, various associations mapped out the same routes, festooning them with their different signage until, in the words of the Lincoln Highway's history, "it was not uncommon for a single pole to carry the insignia of as many as a dozen routes . . . ." As a later student of the movement has argued, "These roads were usually the product of local boosterism; civic pride on the part of townspeople and businessmen promoted them to climb on the good-roads bandwagon. . . ." With operating funds often in short supply and the responsibility for road construction and maintenance still laid in large measure at the doorstep of local governments, the private highway movement faced great challenges in trying to bring about a new era of highway improvement. Right up through the World War I years, American highways in general ranged from mediocre to disastrous. Such unsatisfactory conditions inspired continued agitation for more federal involvement, resulting in passage of the 1921 Federal Aid Highway Act, with its significant expansion of available funds for roads designated as part of a new national system linking state to state. Immeasurably strengthened by this legislative mandate, the ascendancy of the professional engineers in the ranks of state and federal agencies over the enthusiastic amateurs who had pioneered the named highways was confirmed. By 1925, collaboration between the American Association of State Highway Officials and the federal government's Bureau of Public Roads, through the mechanism of the Joint Board of Interstate Highways, established a nationally uniform system of numerical identifications for the federal-aid highways. Although initially criticized by various individuals and groups for

its substitution of generic identifications such as "U.S. 10" in place of such evocative titles as "the Lincoln Highway," "the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway" or "the Old Oregon Trail," the uniformity and simplicity of the new system quickly won national acceptance. Within a very few years thereafter, nearly all the private highway associations had disappeared.

As fleeting as their time upon the historical stage had been, the various private highways of the nineteen-teens and 'twenties had played a notable part in advancing both the cause of good roads and the concurrent development of a substantial tourist industry in the trans-Mississippi West. Their unceasing promotion of recreational motor touring on the routes they laid out across various American landscapes contributed to the growing public fascination with automobility, lending strength in turn to those organizations pursuing highway betterment throughout the country. At the same time, the tourist travel encouraged by such promotional activities fostered an increasing awareness all over the region of tourism's economic potential—if only the proper lures could be dangled in front of the traveling public. Through the 1920s and 1930s, many of those organizations once allied with the private highways, ranging from local chambers of commerce or tourist bureaus to the National Park Service, continued such promotion for their own purposes. Organizations such as the Denver Tourist and Publicity Bureau and the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce urged potential visitors to use the good roads of the West to "come up to Colorado" or to motor to "the center of scenic America." Corporations such as Standard Oil of California that depended upon ever-expanding recreational travel produced brochures urging Americans to go "adventuring through the National Parks of the West" where "the open highway beckons you" and "nine million acres of unspoiled wonderland offer . . . thrills and adventures without end." Dispensing information about "our national parks . . . the most varied and beautiful playgrounds in all the world" or about Nature's "greatest masterpieces" of "age-old scenic beauty in all its gorgeous color and variety" to be found all across the Western states, these brochures encouraged auto touring throughout the West with the same zest as those produced by the private highway associations two decades earlier. State highway departments and commissions took the same tack, admonishing tourists to go "headin' for the hills" by car to find scenic and historic wonders. Along some routes, chambers of commerce, commercial clubs and other civic groups banded together to promote contemporary roads such as U. S. 93, the self-designated "International Four States Highway." Spanning the nation north to south from the Montana/Alberta border to Baja California, it constituted "a 1500-mile . . . Highway," as one brochure described it, "built by modern engineers [but] landscaped by the gods." By the beginning of the Second World War, the vision of many private highway promoters, of motor-borne tourists speeding their way to tourist attractions in every part of the West, had approached a very concrete reality.



Frustration (circa 1908). Editor's collection.

Selected Readings

Individuals interested in exploring the relationship between highway development, tourism and regional identity as discussed in this essay might consult some of the following works, all of which proved most useful to the author in the course of research and writing.

James J. Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1910* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970)

James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993 paperback edition)

Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1988)

John Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1985)

Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Viking, 1997)

Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade that made Transportation History* (Sacramento: Pleiades Press edition, 1995 from an original publication dated 1935)

Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001)

Original Sandberg Cafe and garage. Courtesy of Bonnie Kane

Sandberg's Hotel on the Old Ridge Route

by John Robinson

It's a ghost highway now, the old ridgetop road between Castaic and Lebec. But once this tortuous snaking roadway, encompassing almost 40,000 degrees of curves, the equivalent of 110 complete circles, and over 4,000 feet of elevation gain and loss, was traveled by thousands of motorists. When it opened for public travel in 1915, it was labeled the Tejon-Castaic Ridge Road, but it soon became known to all who drove it as the "Ridge Route".

Numerous inns, cafes, gas stations, and garages sprang up almost overnight to serve weary travelers and their often overheated vehicles - Ridge Road House, Martin's, National Forest Inn, Reservoir Summit Cafe, Kelly's Halfway Inn, Tumble Inn. The ridge-cresting highway climbed, circled, dipped, and climbed again over the west shoulder of Liebre Mountain to Liebre Summit, at 4213 feet the highest point of the road. Then it descended north slightly more than a mile to the largest, most famous rest stop in the forty-four miles between Castaic and Hotel Lebec—Sandberg Summit Hotel, a three-story log hostelry set amid a magnificent grove of California Live Oak.

Here the tired and hungry traveler could enjoy a hearty meal, topped off with a slice of Mrs. Sandberg's delicious apple pie, relax before the crackling fire in the great stone fireplace, or stay the night in the hotel or in one of the cabins while his automobile was being serviced in the adjacent Sandberg Garage. A travel guidebook in the 1920s listed Sandberg's Summit Hotel as having "25 good rooms hotel and cottages, most with running water and toilet; single $1.50-$2.50, double $2.00 to $4.00; lunch 85¢, dinner $1." Sandberg's Garage offered "nearly complete service; labor $2; after 6 p.m. $3: never closed".

Sandberg's Hotel was a unique structure built of cedar logs, taken from high on the north slopes of Liebre Mountain and hand-hewed by Harold Sandberg himself at his own saw mill. Other lumber was brought in from a sawmill on Mount Pinos some thirty

Harold and Marion Sandberg at Antelope Valley Pioneers annual picnic (circa 1931). Author's collection.

miles to the northwest. Logs, with the bark left on the side facing out, made up the walls of hotel, and the cement foundation was inlaid with large native boulders. The ground floor contained the lounge, the dining room, the kitchen, and a bar. The private lodgings of Harold and Marion Sandberg, when they were not at their nearby ranch or tending their huge apple orchard, occupied most of the second floor. The top floor had several guest rooms. Behind the hotel, under a canopy of overarching oaks, were a log bunkhouse and several small guest cabins. There were more guest rooms on the second floor of the garage. Sandberg generated his own electricity in a small power plant in back of the main building. There was a post office on the first floor of the hotel from 1918, with Harold Sandberg as first postmaster, until 1944.

Sandberg tried to maintain a first class hostelry, catering to those he considered "the better class of citizens". He placed a sign in front saying "Truck drivers and dogs not allowed". Most road tramps were immediately escorted off the premises. Some, who appeared young and healthy, were fed a meal and hustled down to Sandberg's Ranch to work in the apple orchard. Blacks and other minorities were unwelcome (as was so in most California hotels during that era).

Sandberg may have tried to keep his hotel "first class", but he was no prude. "Apple Jack", made from fermented cider and manufactured at his ranch, was offered to travelers and guests, as were other types of alcoholic beverages, even though Prohibition was the law of the land. He kept several slot machines in a back room. Apparently someone in the Sheriff's Department warned him of an impending raid; before the authorities arrived he would hide the booze and slot machines in a locked storage shed behind the hotel.

The parking area in front of the hotel was usually crowded, not only with autos but also with Motor Transit Stage Line buses, which made the six-hour run between Los Angeles and Bakersfield from two to seven times a day.

All of this was due to the initiative and hard work of a small, mustached, white-haired Norwegian. Harald Sandberg was born in Kongsberg, Norway on September 4, 1867. His father, Harold Christian Sandberg,

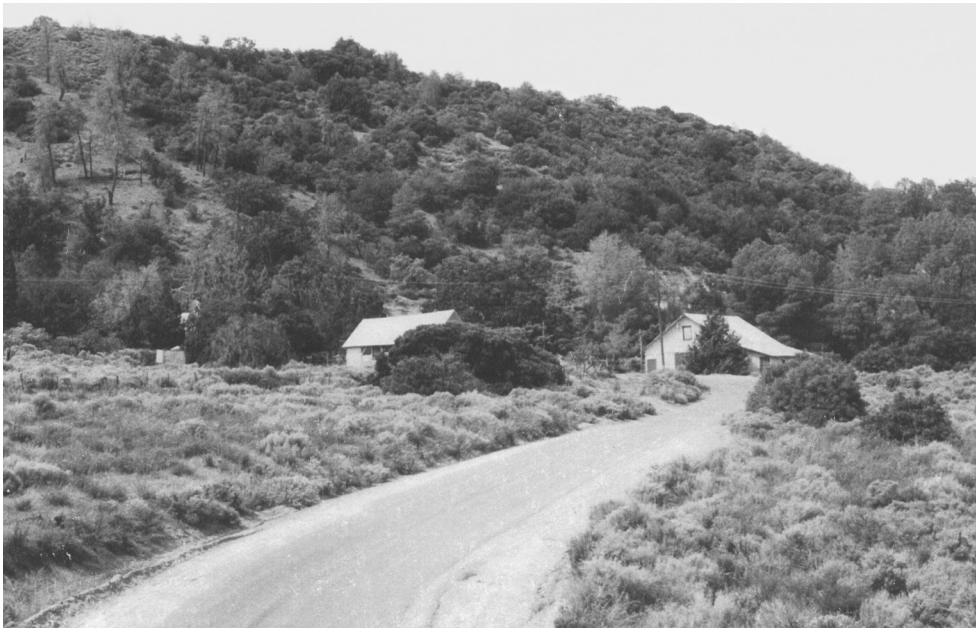
Sandberg Summit Hotel in the heyday of the 1920s. Author's collection.

owned one or more sailing ships and spent several years at sea with his family on board. The elder Sandberg and his three children- Harold, Albert, and Marie - immigrated to California in the 1880s and joined the Kaweah Cooperative Colony, a utopian experimental venture along the North Fork of the Kaweah River extending up to Giant Forest in today's Sequoia National Park. Here the Sandberg siblings learned farming. When the Kaweah Colony failed in the early '90s, Harald Jr. took up farming in Antelope Valley, Albert moved to San Francisco, and Marie stayed with her father until his death a few years later.

Sometime in the mid-1890s Harold climbed up the north slopes of Liebre Mountain, south of Antelope Valley, and discovered beautiful oak-dotted hillsides perfect, in his mind, for growing apples and pears. He persuaded his brother and sister to join him here in a joint farming venture. Each applied for a homestead claim to 160 adjoining acres. The homesteads were approved and recorded by the United States General Land Office on April 2, 1897, and the Sandberg Ranch was born. (Harold had by now Anglized his name to Harold.)

After a few years Albert and Marie Sandberg grew tired of farming and Harold bought them out, becoming sole owner of the vast Sandberg Ranch. Around this time, Harold discovered that apples, grown in the cool mountain weather, were his best and most profitable farm product. He planted his first apple orchard around 1910. Then, in 1913, he hired a work crew from Antelope Valley to greatly expand the orchard, rooting out scores of oak trees and planting hundreds of apple seedlings. He developed the famous "Sandberg Mountain Apple", red on one side and yellow on the other, with "a tantalizingly tangy taste." Boxes of the delicious fruit, labeled "Sandberg's Mountain Apples, Grown in the Snow", appeared in markets all over California. Sandberg sent a box of his mountain apples to every president from Woodrow Wilson to Franklin D. Roosevelt on Inauguration Day.

On September 4, 1905 Harold Sandberg married Marion Grant, a Canadian-born nurse who had moved to Antelope Valley three years earlier. Marion, usually called Mary, took to ranch life with zeal. She is said



Sandberg Ranch as it looks today. Author's collection.

to have helped her husband develop the famed Sandberg apple, and was soon baking scrumptious apple pies and dumplings so popular with Ridge Route travelers.

Around 1912, Sandberg learned that the State Highway Commission was planning to construct a new highway along the ridgeline just to the west of his ranch boundary. Seeing lucrative possibilities, he talked Marion's brother into filing for a homestead on property adjacent to the projected road. As the great ridge top highway neared completion, Sandberg built a small cafe and auto repair garage on his brother-in-law's claim. When the Tejon-Castaic Ridge Road was opened for public travel in November 1915, Sandberg's Cafe and Garage were swamped with business. To meet the needs of travelers, and to make a tidy profit for himself, Sandberg constructed his big log hotel, enveloping his cafe into one side of the structure, in 1917. Cabins were erected behind the hotel and by the early 1920s Sandberg's Summit Hotel was the biggest and best known resort on the Ridge Route, rivaled only by Hotel Lebec.

Unfortunately, Sandberg and his brother-in-law Grant had a falling out and Marion's brother abruptly left, abandoning his homestead claim as well. The land reverted to the Forest Service, leaving Sandberg with his hotel, cafe, and garage on property not his. The problem was solved when the Forest Service, in 1920, granted Sandberg a 20-acre lease and a permit to operate his resort on the federal land.

Busy managing his hotel, Sandberg sold the eastern section of his ranch to Jake Danzinger, a wealthy oil man and developer of Beverly Hills, in 1919. Danzinger spent $100,000 of his wife's money to make Rancho Corona del Valle (Crown of the Valley), as it became known, into a lavish showplace for Hollywood notables. A beautiful villa was constructed under towering oaks on the site of Sandberg's original cabin. The house was built of reinforced adobe with tile floors, covered with colorful Navajo rugs and furnished with splendid furniture from Mexico City. A wine cellar was filled with barrels of the finest wine available. Some of the riotous weekend parties at Corona del Valle featured Hollywood girls of shady reputation, and a scandal erupted when Danzinger's wife found out. She filed for divorce and Danzinger was obliged to

sell the ranch. Franklin W. Robinson of Long Beach (this writer's uncle) purchased Corona del Valle in 1921 and turned it into a beautiful family retreat. (I spent several weeks every summer at the ranch in the late 1930s and early '40s, experiences that helped mold my life.)

Sandberg received a scare when a fire erupted near the hotel on August 21, 1927, apparently caused by someone tossing a burning cigarette from a car. The main front of the conflagration burned eastward up Liebre Mountain, but flames reached within a hundred feet of the resort complex before being extinguished. As with all mountain dwellings, fire was a constant threat.

By the mid-1920s, Sandberg had prospered enough to plan a second resort, this one across Antelope Valley in the foothills of the Tehachapis. He acquired land from several homesteaders within the boundaries of the great Tejon Ranch and constructed ''Sand berg's Castle'', a three-story building made of cedar logs closely resembling his hotel on the Ridge Route. It was intended to be a hunting and fishing resort for Hollywood notables who no longer went to Corona del Valle. This venture was unsuccessful mainly because of its remoteness and difficult access. The land was eventually sold to the Tejon Ranch.

In 1924 Harold and Marion Sandberg, who had no children, built a new home and barn amid their apple orchards near the western end of the ranch. The major industry of the Sandberg Ranch was now supplying vegetables and fruit for the hotel. Here Marion baked her famous apple pies and dumplings. There was said to be a small side room adjoining the basement where cider was processed into bootleg "Apple Jack". Milk and eggs were supplied to the hotel from Rancho Corona del Valle.

Sandberg's major hobby was collecting rare stamps and postal covers, which he often exhibited to hotel guests. Occasionally he would visit schools in Antelope Valley to show and talk about his valuable postal collection.

A notable death occurred at Sandberg's Hotel on September 24, 1929 when San Diego millionaire U. S. Grant Jr., son of the former Civil War general and president, passed away in one of the guest cabins. Grant Jr. was the builder and first owner of the famous U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego.

Sandberg's Summit Hotel continued its popularity with Ridge Route travelers through the 1920s and into the early '30s. The latter were Depression years and, although traffic on curvous highway lessened somewhat, times were still good for Harold and Marion Sandberg.

Then, with startling suddenness, Sandberg's years of fortune ended. On October 29, 1933, the new Ridge Route Alternate, soon to be known as U.S. Highway 99, was opened for public travel. The new three-lane highway, following the Piru River drainage most of the way, cut eight miles off the distance between Castaic and Gorman and had far fewer curves that the old ridge top thoroughfare. The Ridge Route overnight became a ghost highway, and Sandberg's became a ghost hotel.

Sandberg returned to his ranch and apple orchard. The old hotel hosted a few visitors, many of them friends of the Sandbergs, and rooms were rented to sportsmen during the fall hunting season.

The long saga of the Sandbergs came to an end with the death of Harold Sandberg, victim of a heart attack at his ranch, on July 9, 1939. Marion sold the ranch to C. C. Cox, who continued to tend the orchard and produce the Sandberg Mountain Apples. Later ranch owners gave up all but a small portion of the great orchard, and the famous red and yellow apple was no more. Marion Sandberg moved to Los Angeles, where she passed away in 1955.

Shortly before his death, Sandberg sold the hotel lease to Larry Brock. Brock restored the rustic hotel and renamed it Sandberg Lodge and Guest Ranch. Grand opening for Sandberg Lodge was May 28, 1939. Brock provided saddle horses, hunting supplies, good food and drink for prospective guests. To entice people to his now isolated resort, Brock is said to have offered table gambling and slot machines.

The World War II years saw few visitors to the old hotel. The Sandberg Post Office closed in July 1944. There were several owners who tried and failed to make a go of it during the middle and late 1940s. Most colorful was Lillian Grojean, a parolee from Tehachapi State Women's Prison, and her female partner known as "Boots", who established a pottery factory in the old garage just north of the hotel. Some of their pottery was very good and sold in such places as Beverly Hills.

The 1940s were years when legends and ghost stories appeared concerning the lonely, often empty old hotel. Nazi spies were said to have frequented it during World War II. One owner, desperate for business, is said to have housed prostitutes in the four-room bunkhouse behind the hotel. Ghost stories came forward like will-o-the-wisps. Some guests at the old hotel, its floorboards and doors creaking with age, claimed they were awakened at night by strange noises and muffled cries, even though no one else was there. Ranch hands at the nearby Adams Ranch, where Sandberg's old log bunkhouse was moved, said they heard the sounds of a woman's moan and a child's cry emitting from the structure, although no women or children lived anywhere nearby. Some firmly believed the old Sandberg property was haunted, but others dismissed the ghost stories as harmless nonsense.

The last leasee of the Sandberg property, consisting of the hotel and seven outlying structures, was Hollywood actor and stunt man Walter "Lucky" Stevens, in 1951. Stevens spent lots of money restoring the old hotel and cabins, putting in some exquisite woodwork. He had a dream of turning the resort into a summer home for underprivileged inner city children, and in 1960 incorporated the place under the name '"Sandberg Town for Lucky Children". He organized extravagant Christmas parties for inner city kids, complete with Hollywood actors and actresses. But Lucky Stevens was definitely unlucky with his dream project. On April 29, 1961, just before he was ready to open Sandberg Town, the hotel caught fire and burned to the ground. Stevens wanted to rebuild, but the Forest Service, citing the fire danger, disapproved and cancelled the lease in 1963.

Today, only the cement flooring and some of the stone walls remain of the once famous Sandberg Summit Hotel. Occasionally, history-minded visitors driving the old Ridge Route pause here to eat lunch and contemplate what once went on here. If you close your eyes, and listen to the wind softly rustling through the great oaks, you can almost imagine the scene of yesteryear's crowds pulling up in their Cadillacs, Packards, Lincolns, and Dusenbergs, or climbing out of the big Motor Transit Stage buses, enjoying the camaraderie around the great stone fireplace in the lounge, and savoring the delicious taste of Mrs. Sandberg's apple delicacies.

References

Much has been written about the old Ridge Route, but very little, other than the basic facts, about Harold and Marion Sandberg and their hotel. The following persons, contacted by this writer, generously shared their knowledge:

Harrison Scott of Torrance the "dean" of Ridge Route historians, who is finishing up work on what will be the definitive story of the old road.

Bonnie Kane of Frazier Park, historian of the Ridge Route communities, who is writing a book on Frazier Park, Fort Tejon, Lebec, Gorman, and the old road.

Willard Robinson of Boise, Idaho, my cousin who spent many years at his family's Corona del Valle Ranch and once worked for Sandberg.

Otto Sandberg of Port Townsend, Washington, descendent of the Sandberg family of Norway.

Edward and Dorothy Levitt, owners of the Sandberg Ranch since 1960.

And my good friends Willis Osborne, Bill Osborne, and Paul Rippens who accompanied me on many trips over the Ridge Route and its old resorts.

The Ridge Route and Grapevine Grade. Author's collection.

A Trip on the Old Ridge-Route

by Willis Osborne

On Saturday, May 11, forty-one Westerners and guests traveled back in time on the twisting ribbon of asphalt and concrete known as the Old Ridge Route. "It was like old times, a fun-filled day like the ones planned by corral members who are now old geezers and curmudgeons," wrote former sheriff Sig Demke to trip guides John Robinson and Willis Osborne following the corral's Old Ridge Route trip. "I traveled what then remained of the original Ridge Route in 1930. My family was on an outing to drive to Bakersfield and back. That trip took most of the day. My older brother and I took turns driving the family car, a 1924 Essex that had a hood shaped somewhat like a coffin. On that trip we stopped-of necessity-at several of the places you talked about. That boiling and steaming Essex certainly consumed a lot of water," Sig concluded.

Opened in 1915, the Ridge Route made for convenient and fast travel between southern California and the San Joaquin Valley not to mention greater unity within the state. This, in turn led to increased commerce and communication between southern California and northern parts of the state.

Soon after leaving the Autry Museum parking lot at 8 a.m. on a beautiful, clear day, Sheriff Eric Nelson introduced Paul Rippens, who organized the trip, and the previously mentioned tour guides. The first stop was at the Castaic McDonald's for those who may have missed breakfast, desired a cup of coffee, or needed to use "the facilities," since there would be none along the ridge until Fort Tejon, over four hours later.

The journey over the Old Ridge Route begins at the corner of Lake Hughes Road and Ridge Route Road. It is from here that mileage to various sites along the road is taken. The first mile was re-routed through a new housing development. After another mile, the bus slowed allowing passengers to observe the site of Queen Nell's. Cornelia Martinez Calahan sold gasoline and cold pop from the front of her home, which was located in the center of the present, realigned road. The place is identified by several trees and a newly installed tank.

The bus slowed as it passed the locations of Ridge Road Garage, which also offered cabins without water, and Martin's, formerly a gas station and the only building still standing along the old highway. After eight miles, the road drops down to meet Templin Highway, which was built to connect Interstate 5 with a power plant.

Tumble Inn Resort. Only the retaining wall and stairway (right of arch) remain today. Author's collection.

At this point, the realigned, widened road ends and the true adventure on the original pavement began. From Templin Highway until just beyond the site of Sandburg's, our bus followed the original, curvy little road. The Ridge Route opened in October, 1915, and was graded and oiled to keep down dust. By the end of 1919 the road was paved with concrete.

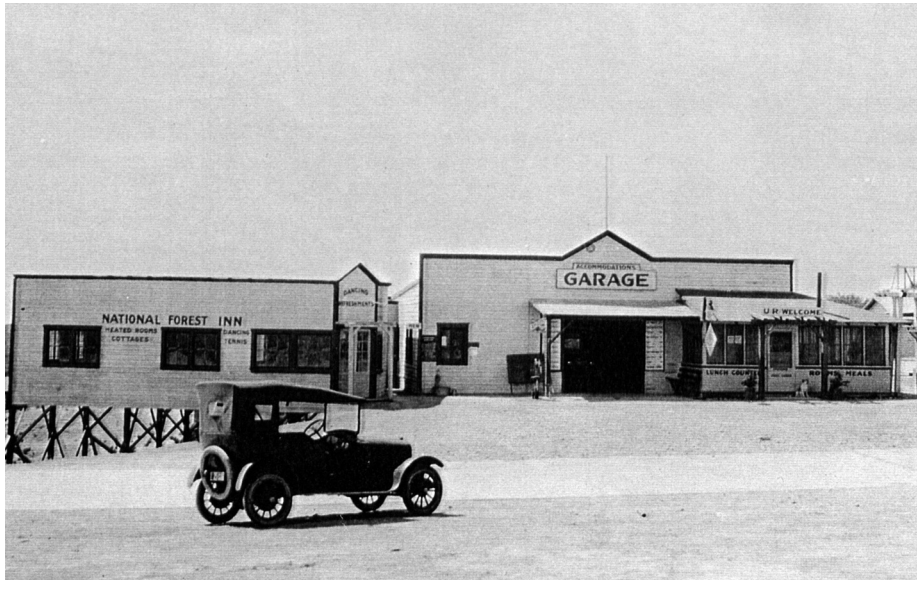
Throughout the 1920's the highway was widened in places and many sharp curves were daylighted for greater visibility. Asphalt covered the concrete throughout the route. Today, most of the concrete remains while much of the asphalt has disappeared.

Following a slowdown by the site of the View Garage, a fine view indeed, the adventurers came to their first stop, the National Forest Inn site, 12.2 miles from the Lake Hughes intersection. All that remains of this once busy place is a concrete stairway, which led from the restaurant and garage to some cabins. Richard, our outstanding bus driver, then steered his bus up the hairpin curves of Serpintine Drive to Swede's Cut, the largest cut along the road, a great feat in its day but quite a minor job with today's road building equipment. Along this part of the drive passengers could look down at I-5 and old US 99, one of the few points from which all three Ridge Routes can be seen.

At 17.5 miles everyone piled out of the bus to inspect Reservoir Summit. The old reservoir, located above the old road, is believed to have been constructed by the forest service for fire control. Also above the road near the reservoir was an auto camp. A cafe was located on the steep slopes on the east side of the road. It is amazing to picture a restaurant and a small garage at this point because of the sharp drop of the slope. However, the foundations on the side of the steep cliff are easy to see. Ridge Route historian Harrison Scott states the Reservoir Summit Cafe was "a high class, popular restaurant with men waiters in solid white uniforms."

At 19.1 miles the bus passed the site of Kelly's Half Way Inn, situated close to the half way point between Los Angeles and Bakersfield, before stopping to explore the remains of Tumble Inn at 21.7 miles., where once stood a restaurant and garage built of round stones with cabins on the upper level. A retaining wall and stairway to the upper level makes Tumble Inn easy to identify. Carved in one of the steps is "Tumble Inn," easily seen today.

Richard steered the bus along the side of Liebre Mountain passing Granite Gate (the



National Forest Inn. This popular resort burned in 1931. Author's collection.

large, upright stone marking Granite Gate is really sandstone), and maneuvered Horseshoe Curve before reaching Liebre Summit, at 4,233 feet, the highest point on the old road.

At 26.0 miles, the bus stopped and passengers filed out of the bus to inspect what remains of Sandberg's Summit Hotel. Sandberg's became THE place. It consisted of a restaurant, lodge, cabins, and garage. The location, at 4,170 feet, is among pines and giant oaks, an attractive site. Sandberg's had a sign "Truck Drivers and Dogs Not Allowed" which indicated the type of tourist the place strove to attract. Like all businesses on the ridge, Sandberg's went downhill swiftly after the new Ridge Route Alternate (US 99) opened in 1933. It eventually burned in 1961 while under renovation by Walter (Lucky) Stevens, who was turning the place into a children's camp. Today, a retaining wall, a stairway to the upper level, and foundations remain making Sandberg's easy to identify.

"My favorite stop was Sandberg's, a beautiful setting with the trees still there," stated Ken Nowels, a guest of Bill Osborne. Many Westerners and guests echoed a similar view of Sandberg's.

Leaving Sandberg's, the Ridge Route descends to Highway 138. We followed this modern highway for a few miles and turned onto Gorman Post Road, which follows the old road. At 32.3 miles we passed Holland's Summit Café and Garage (truckers welcomed), and at 33.0 we passed Caswell's (cafe, garage, cabins, auto camp) before passing through Gorman.

Here the bus turned onto an old realignment of US 99, located on the west side of I-S, crossed Tejon Pass, high point on today's I-S, and slowed down to observe the location of Hotel Lebec. The impressive structure opened in May, 1921 and during its heyday through the mid 1920's to mid 1930's was a high class hostelry with 80 rooms. As traveling from Los Angeles to Bakersfield became easier, the hotel went downhill and fell into decay until it was demolished in 1971. The site is located in a hollow just north of the southbound I-5 rest stop and can be identified by two tall cypress trees. Along the road at the north end of the site, a large paved area indicates the location of the Hotel Lebec's busy gas station and coffee shop.

Finally, about 12:30, the Ridge Routers arrived at Fort Tejon and there enjoyed picnic box lunches under huge oak sycamore, and cottonwood trees plus a tour of the buildings. The fort was built in 1854 to protect the local Indians and to deter cattle and

horse stealing. It became a Butterfield Overland Stage stop in 1858 and was abandoned as a military post in 1864.

The bus returned via I-5 with our final stop at the Vista del Lago visitor center above the Pyramid Lake reservoir. Many journeyers found time went too fast to see everything in the center about the California Aqueduct system. The center also contains large, clean restrooms which proved quite popular.

Richard pulled the bus into the Autry parking lot shortly after 5 PM. Forty-one satisfied passengers piled out of the bus after enjoying an outstanding Westerners tour. Sheriff Nelson stated that three guests expressed interest in becoming future Westerners. Ken Nowels called it "a great trip and one I will share with the rest of the family." Former sheriff Hugh Tolford expressed thanks to the trip planner and guides adding, "It was a great Westerners outing."

Corral Chips

Our very own **MONSIGNOR FRANCIS WEBER**, longtime the heart and soul of the archive center for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, has also been active in the planning of the new Cathedral Archives for Our Lady of Angels Cathedral. The repository is scheduled for completion in the next six months, and it will be located at Mission Hills, adjacent to the current Archive Center.

KEN PAULEY has written a four part series on Weights and Measurements in California's Mission Period. He recently presented Part I on Linear Measurements to the annual conference of the California Mission Studies Association. Ken's presentation can be read on the CMSA website: ca-missions.org (use the articles and report link)

MAGGIE SHARMA has been active working on her passion—the Mount Wilson Observatory. She has given several talks to local historical societies on George E. Hale, Mount Wilson, and related topics. In addition, Maggie is a contributing author to our upcoming Brand Book.

BILL WARREN, past sheriff, has worked nearly two years at the Huntington Library cataloging maps from a 70 year-old collection. The map collection includes works from North and South America (circa 1500s-1800s). Currently, nearly 1200 pieces with complete computerized descriptions and digital images are now accessible to Huntington Library readers. Historical organizations, libraries and community groups interested in learning more about these antique maps may contact Bill to arrange a presentation on this important endeavor.

Through the fine efforts of **ERIC NELSON** and **PAUL RIPPENS**, the Los Angeles Corral offered a special event on May 11, 2002. Beginning with a morning departure from the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, over forty participants traveled the original Ridge Route, which included a lunch stop and tour of Fort Tejon. The Ridge Route was the main artery between Los Angeles and California's great Central Valley from 1915 to 1933. **JOHN ROBINSON** and **WILLIS OSBORNE** acted as guides for the bus tour. Our trusted pathfinders highlighted the site of old inns, garages, and gas stations. Several stops along the route featured spectacular vistas of gentle rolling hills and green countrysides. A visit to the Vista del Lago visitors center at Pyramid Lake provided a final touch to a memorable day. In this issue, Willis and John

write about the bus tour and the historic Sandberg's Hotel once located on the Old Ridge Route.

New Corral Members

Larry & Joy Ames
2109 Rosita Place
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274

Peter Blodgett
405 Cliff Dr.
Pasadena, CA 91107

Michele Clark
226 1/2 Reacon Ave.
South Pasadena, CA 91030

Richard C. Gilman
131 Annandale Road
Pasadena, CA 91105-1405

David Hostetter
815 Via Gregorio
San Dimas, CA 91773-3933

C. Douglas Kroll
534 Fox Park Dr.
Claremont, CA 91711

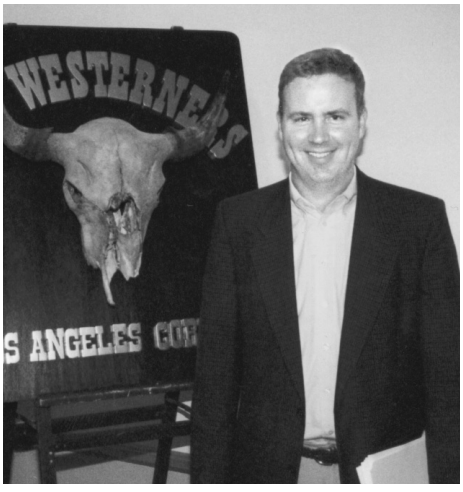
THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

Clark Davis provided a lively discussion on the corporate frontier in the West. Clark is an assistant professor at California State University at Fullerton and has authored the critically acclaimed *Company Men: White-Collar Life and Corporate Cultures in Los Angeles, 1892-1941*. He was recently appointed book review editor of the *Southern California Quarterly*.

Clark's discussion focused on Los Angeles during the Progressive era and the Twenties. The midwestern migration brought pioneers west in search of white collar professions. The Industrial Revolution witnessed the rise of new financial markets, including the growth of insurance and banking interests. It was an era of paper: property and casualty policies, home loans, mortgages and high finance. The corporate culture that evolved made southern California especially attractive for the grassroots entrepreneur. It was a land of everlasting sunshine against a backdrop of urban sprawl, big red cars, and bedroom communities. Within that context, the chamber of commerce proved critical to business promotion and networking.

Professor Davis highlighted several individuals who typified the company man; employees who gave their allegiance to a company and, in return, gained promotions and security for their loyalty. George Ward typified this model. Ward arrived in Los Angeles at the turn-of-the-century, worked

MAY 2002 MEETING



Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

May Meeting Speaker Clark Davis

for the railroad, and eventually climbed the corporate ladder to management of the Huntington companies and Southern California Edison. Clarence Bowerman was another example of a typical corporate employee. As a transplanted midwesterner, Bowerman initially worked as a stenographer in southern California and eventually became a middle manager with First Security National Bank. Bowerman, like so many corporate pioneers, remained committed to the bank for his entire career.

One of the most interesting aspects of the discussion centered on Western Airlines and the evolving role of labor in commercial flight. Professor Davis noted that in 1926 the company expanded from a mail and freight carrier into a passenger airline. With only day travel available, the commercial routes followed the railroad lines throughout California and the West. In those early days of flying the friendly skies the trips were harrowing with flights often ending in emergency landings in an open field, a pasture, or on whatever open space was available. Safety issues were paramount, and passenger concerns often centered on the availability of helmets, parachutes, and goggles for everyone on board. The company made efforts to meet the customer's needs. The advent of flight attendants helped calm passenger anxiety, and a steward's many duties included changing diapers and arranging bridge partners on the journey. The introduction of the female stewardess in the 1930s made the flight even more agreeable to the business traveler.

In sum, Professor Davis provided an insightful look at the pioneer entrepreneur and the emerging corporate culture in southern California.

A Celebration For Glen Dawson's 90th Birthday

The Los Angeles Corral, jointly with the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles and The Historical Society of Society of Southern California, sponsored a celebration of Glen Dawson's 90th Birthday at a luncheon held at the University Club of Pasadena on June 15, 2002. Glen turned ninety years of age on June 3rd. He is the sole surviving Charter Member of the Corral.

Participants in the program included Westerners Thomas F. Andrews and Stephen A. Kanter, Executive Director and Secretary, respectively, of the Historical Society, who made introductory remarks. Patricia Adler-Ingram, a Vice President of the Historical Society and Associate Member of the Corral, spoke on the subject of Glen's devotion to the high country of California. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., Editor of the *Southern California Quarterly* and Active Honorary Member of the Corral, spoke on the subject of Glen's enrichment of scholarship. Sheriff Eric A. Nelson spoke on Glen's contributions to the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. He presented to Glen a plaque expressing the Corral's gratitude to Glen for those contributions.

Following is a transcript of Eric's presentation:

> *I am honored to serve as Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners in the year of Glen Dawson's 90th birthday and to appear before you as part of this celebration. Glen's contributions to the*

formation and continuation of the Los Angeles Corral are many, for which we are grateful to him.

The Los Angeles Corral is dedicated to the study and preservation of the history of the American West.

Glen's interest in assisting in the formation of the Los Angeles Corral had its beginnings in 1946 at Dawson's Book Shop, where Homer Britzman, a publisher and art collector, among other things, and Robert J. Woods, a noted bibliophile, were discussing the possibility of forming an organization on the order of the Chicago Corral of Westerners, formed in 1944. A group of men, including Glen, then met at Britzman's home, the former home of Charles Russell, and before the evening was over, the fundamental principles of the proposed Los Angeles chapter were determined. The organizational meeting was held on December 19, 1946 at the Redwood Cafe in downtown Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Corral was born. Of those charter members, Glen is the sole survivor.

Following his participation in the formation of the Los Angeles Westerners, Glen's contributions to the Los Angeles Corral continued. Glen has served in appointed and elected offices of the Corral, as a Trail Boss and Assistant Registrar and, in 1959, as Sheriff.

Glen's literary contributions to the Corral are also many. His first effort was entitled "West and Pacific (priced catalogue)" which appeared in the third issue of Volume One of the Corral's initial publication The Brand Book in 1947. In 1948, The Brand Book, as a periodical publication, was replaced by a quarterly publication known as The Branding Iron. In Volume One, Number One of The Branding Iron, Glen authored the book review section, entitled "Down The Book Trail". In all, Glen has written 14 book reviews and 5 articles. He has been called upon, sadly, to write 8 memorials of deceased fellow Westerners. He has also given 5 speaker presentations to meetings of the Corral.

The Winter 1996 edition of The Branding Iron commemorated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Los Angeles Corral. The lead article was written by Glen, in which he described the founding of the Corral and gave a biographical sketch of each of the charter members, 26 in all.

His biographical sketch of himself gives us an idea of what he considered as his important achievements. I quote:

Glen Dawson (1912-[date]) was born on the slopes of Mt. Washington, Los Angeles, a partner of Dawson's Book Shop 1936-1995, co-editor with Edwin Carpenter of the Baja California Travels Series. He served as Sheriff in 1959 but is perhaps best known as a pioneer California skier and rock climber.

Glen, we have said a lot more about you today. As for the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, our heartfelt thanks for joining in the formation 56 years ago of an organization so dear to the hearts of your fellow members, and a hearty job well done.

On behalf of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, I am pleased to present to you this plaque as a token of our appreciation for your fine efforts over the past 56 years. Happy Birthday and many more.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

The Tournament House in the background provided a stately ambiance for the Fandango "Social Hour."

Fandango 2002

On a warm and pleasant Sunday evening, June 2, the Los Angeles Corral held their annual Fandango at the Wrigley Gardens, adjacent to the Tournament House in Pasadena. Over 145 people attended the gala, by far the largest Westerners event in recent years. Guests were treated to a sumptuous western Bar B-Q dinner, complemented with fine wine catered by Arbor Crest. Along with plenty of good food and spirits, the festivities included the ambiance of authentic music from the Old West, performed by The Lobo Rangers. **ANDREW DAGOSTA** donated three prized watercolors for auction. Several guests took advantage of the opportunity to visit the historic Tournament House prior to dinner. Docents provided tours of the home, highlighting the elegant decor, updated interior design, rich wood paneling, and the location's importance to the traditions of the Rose Parade.

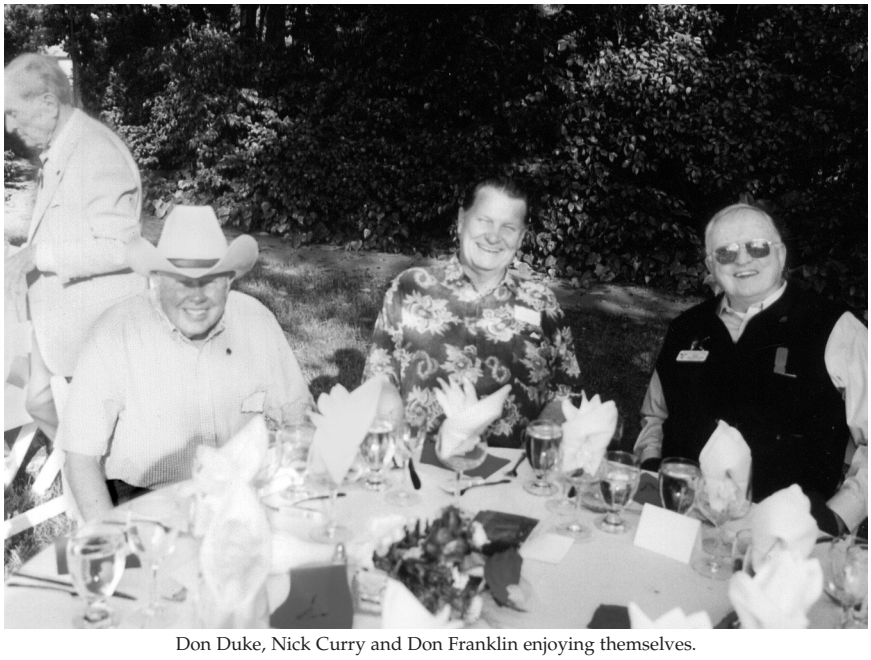
A "tournament rose" should go to **ERIC NELSON**, **PAUL RIPPENS**, **BOB BLEW**, **GARY TURNER** and the rest of staff. They worked behind the scenes arranging the catering service, docent tours, and entertainment. Their efforts made the Fandango a truly special event and one of the Los Angeles Corral highlights of 2002.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Is that Black Bart or our Sheriff Eric Nelson?

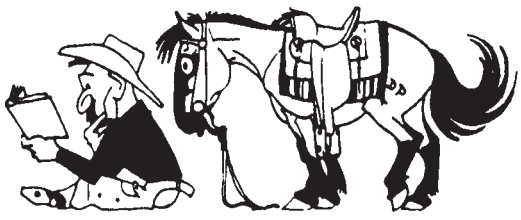
Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

First Place winner Sue Hoffman displaying her Andrew Dagosta original.



Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

Don Duke, Nick Curry and Don Franklin enjoying themselves.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY: *America's Suburb*, by Kevin Roderick. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times Books. 2001. 228 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. Paper $24.95. Order from Los Angeles Times Books, 202 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, 800-246-4042, or at http//www.latimes.com/bookstore.

Kevin Roderick has written a very interesting and informative popular history of the San Fernando Valley. If you want a deep sociological study, this is not the book for you, but if you wish interesting and entertaining information you will love this book. You will find out more about the movie industry than the aircraft industry, but which will be the more interesting to most of the readers? This reviewer has had people who normally do not read history tell him how much they enjoyed and learned from it.

He starts with a physical description including the passes into the Valley. He takes a pragmatic approach and does not over glamorize the area. One subheading is entitled, "Heat, dust, and other forms of torture." Nor does he overly sensationalize the natural disasters of the area such as earthquakes and floods. He presents them as natural disasters with out being dramatic or preaching doom.

After the geographic introduction, he takes up the "Early Arrivals"—Indians, Spanish explorers, and the Californios. He presents each group fairly. One feature, he relates their locations to present ones, such as pointing out that portola entered the Valley near where Mulholland crosses the 405. His emphasis on people is carried throughout the book with much of the information contained in sidebars.

Roderick covers all the various phases of the Valley's development: the agricultural period, the boomtowns, the rise of the movie industry, the War Years, the rapid growth in the 50s-60s, and the final evolution to a metropolitan area.

As informative as the narration is, the photographs add much to the value of the book. The topics run a complete gamut: landscapes; America's first saint, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, who with her Missionaries the Sisters of the Sacred Heart established in the Verdugo Hills; movie stars; a roundup of Jack Rabbits; the first wooden house in the Valley; and various points of interest. Many of the photos are rare and unknown to this reviewer. Included in the illustrations are several maps, one which clearly locates the communities that make up the area (of course it is last year's map and does not include many of the newer creations such as Valley Glen, Valley Vista, and West Toluca Lake), and locates many points of interest and historical sites.

The one thing that is bothersome about the book is the format. One tends to think of books being taller than they are wide instead of being very wide and squat. No book this large should be in paperback. It tends to wobble, fold, and droop which makes it hard to hold and read. However, one can not fault the author for this.

All Valley residents and their friends should read this book. There are minor errors in it and some will question some of the areas stressed, but overall it presents a clear history of the development of the Valley and its people. If nothing else, it explains from where our flocks of parrots came.

—Robert W. Blew

HOOVER DAM: *The Photographs of Ben Glaka*, by Barbara Vilander. Tucson:

University of Arizona Press, 1999. 169 pp.

Photos, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $55; paper, $24.95. Order from University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719, (520) 621-1441.

In 1988 Hoover Dam, by Joseph Stevens, offered a critical examination of the planning and building of the famous dam. Now comes a fascinating volume dealing with the photographic record of the dam's construction. Ben Glaka, a Bureau of Reclamation employee, was assigned to take pictures of the dam as it was being built. Throughout the 1930s Glaka took hundreds of photographs ranging from the construction of Boulder City to President Franklin Roosevelt's visit. The Bureau sent Glaka's pictures to newspapers and magazines to publicize the dam and promote favorable opinion of it.

As a Bureau employee, Glaka did not hold a copyright on the pictures he took. The Bureau circulated the pictures but seldom credited Glaka as the photographer. But Glaka's work was significant enough for the pictures to be exhibited in art galleries and printed in art magazines as exemplifying the "Machine Aesthetic" of the 1930s. Ansel Adams credited Glaka as influencing his own work.

Published in both cloth and sturdy paper editions and with an authoritative essay by Barbara Vilander, the book makes an important visual companion to any study of Hoover Dam.

—Abraham Hoffman

FINDING THE WEST: *Explorations With Lewis and Clark*, by James P. Ronda. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. 138 pp. Maps, Notes, Index. Cloth, $22.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591, (800) 249-7737.

The title here is significant. Note that it is "Explorations *With* Lewis and Clark", not the "Explorations *Of* Lewis and Clark". Much has already been written about the latter. This study explores new ground. It takes us to the attitudes, mind-sets, geography, fantasies, realities and indigenous peoples surrounding the Lewis and Clark adventure. The author is a professor of history at the University of Tulsa and is regarded as an expert in the field of exploration in the American West.

The epic adventure of Thomas Jefferson's "Corps of Discovery" under the joint command of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark is a story worthy of further examination. Jefferson had achieved a great coup in acquiring the Louisiana Territory from a cash-starved Napoleon Bonaparte.

At a bargain price, the United States was doubled in size—well on the road to its "Manifest Destiny". Jefferson believed in the theories of Natural Law. One theory held that nature is symmetrical. Following this notion, the President reasoned the great waterways of the eastern part of the continent, or "communication" as he called them, must be duplicated in the western lands.

This great dream of Jefferson was the primary basis for the Lewis and Clark expedition. As we know, the Corps of Discovery found no such "Northwest Passage". Nevertheless, the expedition accomplished much with a few blunders along the way. Dr. Ronda's book makes a detailed examination of the surrounding events as well as the prevailing attitudes of the time. He does an excellent job of describing the American world at the beginning of the 19th century. His book transports us back in time and details the effect of the expedition on the native peoples of the West, and how that tragic story ultimately played itself out.

We are soon coming up to the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark adventure. Ronda's book is an important document which explains and adjusts the historical record so that the 21st century can better understand the motivations, dreams and realities of early 19th century America. It is a valuable addition to our understanding of the opening of the West.

—Jerry Selmer