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The Branding Iron

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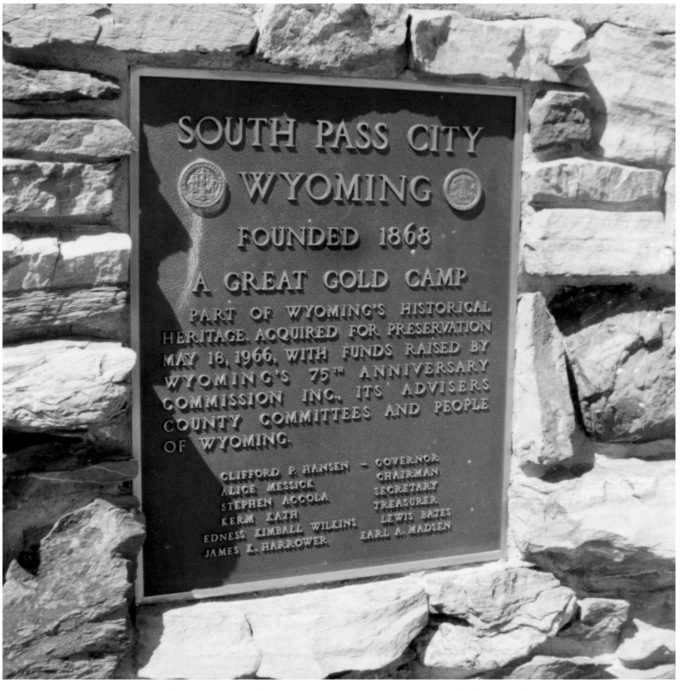

Marker at South Pass City. Courtesy of the author.

South Pass

By Art Cobery

The all important key to the wagon route over the Oregon Trail was the discovery of South Pass, a broad gentle saddle in present-day southwestern Wyoming which provided easy access over the Continental Divide. This singular geographic configuration became the linchpin that made the overland journey possible and accelerated the process of our much touted "Manifest Destiny."

The year 1843 inaugurated the era of the large wagon trains. Within several decades, approximately 300,000 souls would wind their way over the "Great Divide" via South Pass. The Pony Express and overland stage made brief appearances, the first to be eclipsed by the telegraph and the latter to be ousted by the Indians.

Geographically, South Pass is uniquely

(Continued on page 3)

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Both of the major articles in this issue deal with roads. South Pass is an amazing geographic phenomenon providing an easy pass for wagons through the Rocky Mountains and it provided the only route of it's kind between the Canadian border and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Dale Morgan in his book, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*, mentions that Smith, working for the Ashley/Henry company in 1824, first realized the significance of this major route through the Rockies. From that time on South Pass was a major route for trappers and immigrants. Eventually the Mormon, Oregon and California trails all came through the pass as it was the only practical route for wagons in the Rocky Mountain chain. Goldseekers headed for California, although once they were through the Rockies they were in for a big surprise when they ran up against the wall of rock called the Sierra Nevada.

Following old trails by auto has always fascinated us. A few years ago we followed the Old Spanish Trail planning to write a book on the experience. We procrastinated too long and lo and behold a book on that very subject appeared about two years later. There are excellent books following the Oregon Trail and the Santa Fe Trail by automobile, and they provide an excellent way to see the American West and learn something at the same time. We would encourage the author of, "Driving the King's Highway," to expand his article into a book that we could use in touring California. Naturally it would contain lots and lots of maps to be effective.

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All the design work in this issue was the creation of artist Andrew Dagosta.

situated: "It bridges the almost imperceptible watershed dividing the waters of the Missouri-Mississippi system from those of the Gulf of California". The pass follows the Sweetwater branch of the North Platte River over the divide to the Big Sandy on the western slope, which is a tributary of the Green River. The Big Horn River also originates in this vicinity. In this sense, it is situated at the headwaters of some of the most important rivers in the country. The pass itself is part of a plateau within the Wyoming Basin between the northern and southern Rocky Mountains.

The journals of John Charles Fremont, the acclaimed "Pathfinder of the West" clearly illustrate the difficulty in discerning the apex of the pass. He admits to relying on Kit Carson, a bonified pathfinder, in ascertaining the exact separation point between the eastern and western watersheds. Fremont had this to say about the experience on August 8, 1842:

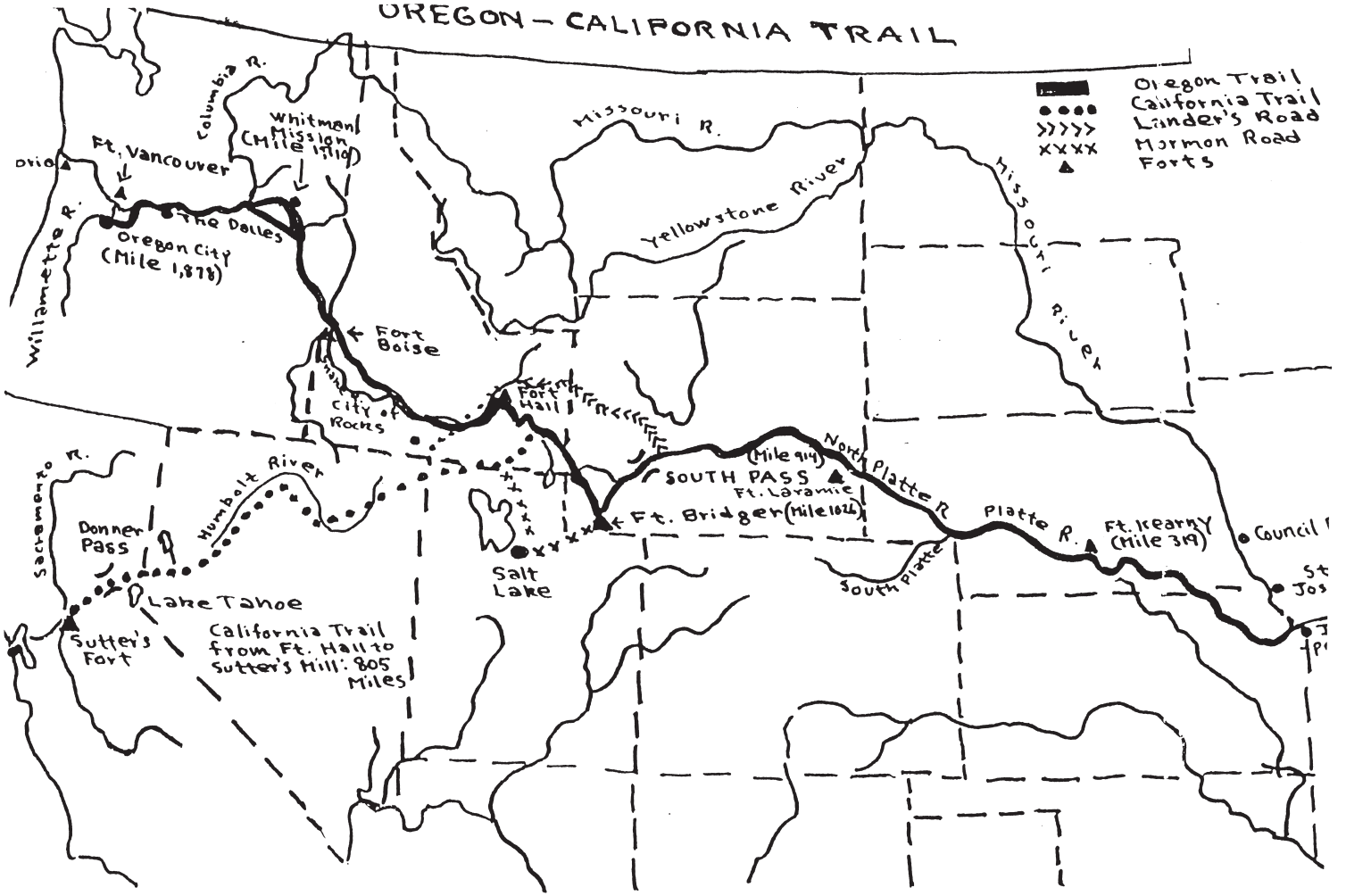
> *About 6 miles from our encampment brought us to the summit. The ascent had been so gradual that with all the intimate knowledge possessed by Kit Carson... we were obliged to watch very closely to find the place at which we had reached the culminating point... I should compare the elevation which we surmounted... at the pass to the ascent of Capital Hill from the avenue at Washington... From the broken ground where it commences at the Wind River chain, the view to the southeast is over a champaign country, broken, at the distances of nineteen miles...*

Fremont further explained that South Pass did not fit the traditional concept of a pass as such. He described the 120 mile ascent by way of the Sweetwater Valley. When they finally reached the summit, which was estimated to be about 7,000 feet above sea level, the endeavor was somewhat anti-climactic. As Fremont recorded, there was "nothing of the gorge-like character and winding ascents of the Alleghany passes in America; nothing of the Great St. Bernard and Simphon passes in Europe."

A novel group of travelers utilized South Pass in 1841. Their goal was the fertile interior valleys of Mexican California. Prior to this date American passage to California had been by sea. American interest in this Pacific province dated back to 1808 when Captain Shaler, a sea otter trader, publicized its mild climate and agricultural potential. He added that "...the conquest of this country would be absolutely nothing..." Other popularizers followed, including trappers James Ohio Pattie and Antoine Robidoux. Richard Henry Dana's highly influential book, *Two Years Before the Mast,* was published in 1840. It described the life of a young Harvard student and seaman whose ship collected hides and tallow along the California coast. He was taken with the salubrious climate "... free from all manner of diseases... and with soil in which corn yields from seventy to eighty fold."

Such boosterism launched the first modest effort to bring "pioneer settlers," bent on establishing permanent settlement in California. During the early 1840s, emigrants to Oregon outpaced California ten to one. Nevertheless, this more rapid influx of Americans into the Great Central Valley presaged annexation to the United States. A mere trickle at first, it was followed by a deluge at the close of the decade.

This first pioneer movement with California as its goal began to take shape when a group of Missourians fell under the seductive blandishments of the trapper Robidoux, and formed the *Western Emigration Society*. More than 500 pioneers signed a pledge to set out for California in the spring. This number would soon be reduced to a single person, John Bidwell. Fortunately, sixty-eight non-signing enthusiasts did show up in season to participate in the venture. Unfortunately they selected as captain, John Bartleson, who was clearly the least qualified. Thus, it fell to the erstwhile school teacher, John Bidwell, to assume unofficial command. At the onset he was dismally ignorant of the challenges that lay ahead, but time and again he would rise to the occasion, earning him the title "Prince of the California Pioneers." Interestingly, the greater part of them decided later in the jour-



The Oregon-California Trail. Author's rendition.

The summit of South Pass. Courtesy of the author.

ney to proceed to Oregon instead. Early on this hapless group joined a Catholic missionary party under the able direction of the ever resourceful Captain Thomas Fitzpatrick. This fortuitous circumstance enabled them to reach the Sweetwater relatively unscathed, and as Bidwell remembered, across the Great Divide "at or near South Pass where the mountains were apparently low." Some ignorance of trail history seems to have persisted in Bidwell's mind. As late as 1890 he maintained that he was the second person to have led wagons over the legendary pass. It is obvious from the available evidence that others had preceded him.

Near the present Pocatello, Idaho, thirty-two of the Missourians split off and stayed with Fitzpatrick and the clerics, preferring the known road to Oregon rather than the vague path to California. Soon after the parting of the ways, Bidwell and his loyalists abandoned the wagons to improve their speed and mobility. Pushing southwest on an uncharted course they came upon the Humbolt and followed it to its sink. After a painful desert crossing they confronted the great wall of the High Sierra. At this point they were close to despair, yet managed to muster the strength to scramble over this last obstacle and enter the rich San Joaquin Valley. The first overland migration to California had been consummated. South Pass now served as the gateway to both Oregon and California.

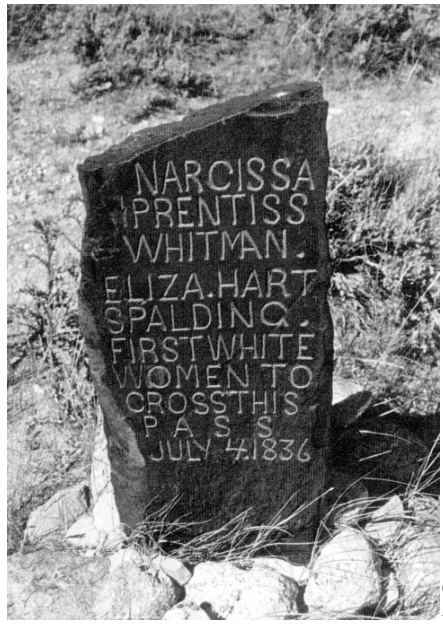
Presidential politics brought the military to South Pass in 1845. The bellicose rhetoric of James K. Polk in the campaign of 1844 was reaffirmed in his first annual message to Congress. He recommended ending British-U.S. joint occupation of Oregon within a year. This stance rallied the expansionists around their motto "54° 40′ or Fight." Privately, the President had been more than willing to compromise on the 49th parallel but Britain resisted. Many Americans thought that war was a distinct possibility. Consequently, troops under Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny were dispatched to the strategic pass in the spring of 1845. They were directed to "reconneiter the land as far as South Pass, discover the disposition of Indians, and return by the Santa Fe Trail in order to lend support to the rich caravans anticipated that year." Philip St. George Cooke was Kearny's second-in-command, with Thomas Fitzpatrick as the regiment's guide. They left Fort Leavenworth on May 18, 1845, joining the wagon trains moving toward South Pass.

On June 30, 1845, the dragoons crossed the divide and were amazed to see nothing more than a gentle rolling plain. Most of the soldiers expected to see a narrow cleft or gorge similar to the Cumberland Gap in the Alleghanies. Here Colonel Kearny held regimental muster, the first such event on this western watershed by United States troops. They remained in this area until July 1. By that time it was evident that no war would erupt. The Senate ratified the Oregon Settlement a year later on June 15, 1846 extending the forty-nine parallel from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. No blood was shed in concluding this generous

treaty.

While moving down the Sweetwater River, Kearny's troops came upon an emigrant train on this stream. It was July 4th and the captain of the wagon train offered drinks to Kearny and his men if he would fire a salute to commemorate Independence Day. The military commander agreed to perform this service although he was a non-drinker himself. The men in the ranks, however, took liberal advantage of the offer. The officers had a dry celebration since they were obliged to emulate their commander. Rather than proceed south to the Santa Fe Trail, Kearny chose to return to the North Platte, and arrived at Fort Laramie, 281 miles east of South Pass, on the thirteenth of July. Kearny would go on to win laurels in the war with Mexico, accepting the surrender of Santa Fe and pacifying the rebellion in California.

The greatest use of South Pass took place between the years 1850 and 1851. By this time, the vast majority of travelers were heading for California where they hoped to make their fortunes. During the early months of 1850, some 60,000 gold seekers with 90,000 animals poured over this broad breach into the Great Basin on their way to the diggings. The trickle of settlers initiated by John Bidwell's party in 1841 had become a torrent a decade later. Fortunately, by 1850 they could depend on a well-worn wagon road to Fort Bridger where they picked up the Mormon road to Salt Lake City, the only settlement that could adequately replenish their skimpy rations. The route turned north from the Mormon capital to join the California Trail at City of Rocks. From here the trail cut southwest to join the Humbolt River, flowing 300 dreary miles to the sink. This ordeal was followed by a forty mile desert crossing littered with dead animals and abandoned wagons. Upon reaching the towering Sierra Mountains, they found no gentle South Pass to deliver them to the land of riches. Only a small minority were able to drag their wagons over the jagged backbone



Marker at South Pass summit in honor of the first two women to cross the Continental Divide. Courtesy of the author.

of the Sierra. The vast majority struggled to their destination on foot leading their pack animals over the crest.

Some attempts at delivering the mail were made in the early 1850's between Fort Laramie and Salt Lake, via South Pass. By and large, they met with small success. In July of 1851, a man named Woodson and Fernandez Little, agreed to carry mail over this route for a mere $8,000 a year. These deliveries proved to be very unreliable, and during the winter months the mail seldom got through at all. Little and his Indian helper had a bitter experience in the winter of 1852-53. During a November snow storm they became lost in the vicinity of South Pass. For nearly a month they were forced to fight their way through heavy snows. Finally, they cached the larger portion of their load, and managed to drag several sacks of letters to their destination at Salt Lake.

Prior to 1858, the federal government provided only military protection for the innumerable homeseekers and adventurers who passed over this trail. Most harbored painful memories of the difficulties encountered on this torturous road. They were even-

Main street in present-day South Pass City. Courtesy of the author.

tual-ly able to persuade the federal government to make a number of necessary repairs, and even remove some of the more formidable obstacles. Another problem confronted the emigrants soon after crossing South Pass. Those destined for Oregon had no choice but to detour in a northerly direction to avoid the Wasatch Mountains to the south. They usually followed the beaten path all the way to Fort Bridger, then headed north again to Fort Hall. Those who attempted to avoid this delay had difficulty in making the more direct desert crossing. Although the desert crossing known as Sublette's Cutoff, saved fifty to seventy-five miles, most preferred to take the well-watered route. To remedy this situation, a United States engineer, Frederick W. Lander, supervised the work on a graded cut-off just north of the arid crossing. The Department of Interior gave Lander ample authority and discretion in carrying out the project.

Lander's construction party left Independence, Missouri on April 29, 1858 and arrived at South Pass, some 950 miles distant, on the fourth of June. A blockhouse was constructed here to store the expedition's equipment. Lumberjacks and bridge builders from Maine provided their skilled t a l-ents while Mormon workers from Salt Lake were hired for the common labor. The short-cut, when completed, started at Gilbert's Station in the South Pass area, followed the base of the Wind River Mountains, and crossed the Little and Big Sandy streams near their headings. The road then went to the Ross Fork on the Snake River, thence down to the Raft River, and up this valley to City Rocks on the California Trail. This terminus was 345.54 miles from South Pass. The work was completed toward the end of September, 1858. Sixty employees were discharged at City Rocks, and most of these returned to Salt Lake. The remainder left for the States.

Although the road was completed, Lander had this warning in his *Emigrants' Guide* for the first travelers:

> *You must remember that this new road has been recently graded, and not yet trodden down, and, with the exception of grass, water, wood, shortened distance, no tolls, fewer hard pulls and descents, and avoiding the desert, will not be the first season as easy for heavily loaded trains as the old road and not until a large migration has passed over it.*

In 1859 Lander returned again and

The Carissa Gold Mine. Courtesy of the author.

supervised further improvements on the 1858 construction. When he reached South Pass, he discovered that traders along the old route had been diverting traffic from his new road. A former soldier was therefore stationed at Gilbert's trading post to give accurate information concerning the new road and to distribute printed guides. Later, a permanent blacksmith was established here to provide the dual function of repairman and direction agent.

The dedicated engineer spent a third season on his creation, acting as a public relations representative, disseminating guides, and obtaining signatures of travelers on petitions attesting to the superiority of the road. It is interesting to note that these petitions indicate that, at this time, three out of four of the emigrants were California bound. Long wagon trains and large animal herds were a common sight. When a highly touted route farther south was completed under the direction of Captain James A. Simpson, Lander was quick to come to the defense of his own road. He displayed two petitions signed by over 9,000 of the 13,000 emigrants who traveled the Lander Road in 1859, which would seem to redeem its builder. One such petition read:

> *We, the undersigned emigrants to California and Oregon, having just passed with our wagons and stock over the new government road from South Pass to Fort Hall, (called Lander's cut-off), do hereby state that the road is abundantly furnished with good grass, water, and fuel; there is no alkali and no desert as upon the old road, and while upon it our stock improved and rapidly recovered from sickness and lameness...*

There are those who feel that the construction of the Lander Road was an "ill-timed enterprise" because after 1859 there was a substantial decrease in wagon traffic. The year 1859 was truly a "banner year" for the Oregon-California Trail with over 80,000 using this well-trodden path. However it is worth noting that only 13,000 out of that 80,000 actually used Lander's innovative road. Perhaps it would have fulfilled its promise had the federal government sponsored the project a decade or more earlier.

The Pony Express made its brief debut through South Pass in April of 1860. It accomplished the run between St. Joseph and Sacramento in only ten days. Several stations were built along the South Pass route, one in the Sweetwater valley to the east, and one at Pacific Springs on the western slope. When riding through here the mounted mail carriers would often apply an extra burst of speed as they passed the wagon trains in order to impress the plodding emigrants. The riders were fortunate in

having the protection from the Indians afforded by slow columns of wagons during the summer months. It was more hazardous for the riders when winter approached.

The flamboyant activities of the Pony Express came to an abrupt end when Edward Creighton had a telegraph line completed over the pass on October 24, 1861. Some troops were stationed here in 1862 and 1863 to protect the stations from Indian marauders. The precautionary measure proved to be well-founded when in November 1862, the Pacific Springs Station fell under attack and one man was killed.

The Indian threat was responsible for the abandonment of the Overland Stage through South Pass. Shortly after buying out Russell, Majors, and Waddel, Ben Holladay formed the Overland Stage Line and moved it to a more southerly location. He had good reason for this move. Just prior to the purchase in 1862, all stations in this area had been destroyed by Indians.

William Henry Jackson, one of the later travelers on the Oregon Trail, had some interesting observations concerning his tour over South Pass in August 1866. He complained of fierce, cold winds from a westerly direction as he came within sight of the Wind River Mountains some miles distant. On one evening he was forced to eat supper in the wagon by candle light. It seems evident the weather in this region could be foul, even in the early spring and summer months. Perhaps, this was Mother Nature's way of compensating for the easy wagon pull over this wide breach in the Rockies. Joel Palmer appears to substantiate this con-clusion when he traveled through the pass from west to east in May of 1846. "The ride from the Little Sandy to the Sweetwater was extremely unpleasant on account of wind and snow." He was forced to walk his horse in order to keep warm.

Gold discoveries within the South Pass plateau and below were reported as early as 1842, but the Indians had managed to keep the prospectors from establishing permanent claims. In June 1867, a party of men; Redell, Harris, B. Hubbel, Joshua Terry, and others, discovered what was later to be known as

A marker of the historic route. Courtesy of the author.

the Carissa Ledge, about fifteen miles northeast of Pacific Springs. An article in the Cheyenne *Leader* dated March 7, 1868 had this to say about the event:

> *These gentlemen hastily threw up a log cabin, lining it on the outside with turf, as a protection against Indians, and commenced pounding out gold in their rock...*

South Pass City came into being with the Carissa strike. The town was located about one-half mile below the mine itself. Building commenced in the summer of 1867, and by October genuine growth had taken place. Within a matter of months it became the seat of newly organized Carter County.

No one has been able to determine the number of mines that were in this region. The United States census indicated there were over 1,106 people living here in 1870. Gold mining never entirely ceased, for as late as the 1930's the E.F. Fisher Company was having some success with dredge mining. All told, it is estimated that over $6,000,000 worth of gold has been extracted

since the first discovery.

South Pass made its greatest contribution to western growth as a wagon road which enabled thousands of weary emigrants to cross the Continental Divide with a minimum of difficulty. The fur trappers were the first to see its great potential while the missionaries, gold seekers, and settlers were the ones who gave it a significant role in the story of the movement westward. The activities of the trappers, army, Pony Express, Overland Stage, and miners provide colorful episodes in its past. Although used to some extent in the early and later years of the nineteenth century, this remarkable portal fulfilled its destiny in the two decades following the Great Migration of 1843, when approximately 300,000 pilgrims traversed its plain.

The factor that most marked its decline was the coming of the trans-continental railroad, which was completed over a more southerly route in 1869. South Pass had a monopoly on westward travel because of the availability of water along its approaches. With the advent of the steam engine, water ceased to be a problem and South Pass ceased to be the gateway to the far West. For a time it appeared that the pass would be the most logical choice to accommodate the rails that would bind the nation together. However, when the United States acquired vast stretches of territory in the Southwest as a result of the Mexican War, coupled with the 1848 gold strike at Sutter's Mill, a more direct route was inevitable. Not only was the route to the south more direct with easier grades, but the fine centrally located bay of San Francisco, was now an American possession, and a more logical terminus for the railroad.

Thus, South Pass was relegated to comparative insignificance as a gateway for future pioneers. However, by 1869 it had already fulfilled its purpose by opening the far West to multitudes of emigrants seeking new beginnings in the virgin territories beyond the formidable mountain barrier. In summing up its true significance, the great historian of the West, Frederick Jackson Turner, put it aptly when he wrote, "what the Cumberland Gap was in the advance of settlement across the Alleghanies, South Pass was in the movement across the Rocky Mountains; through it passed the later Oregon and California trails to the Pacific Coast."

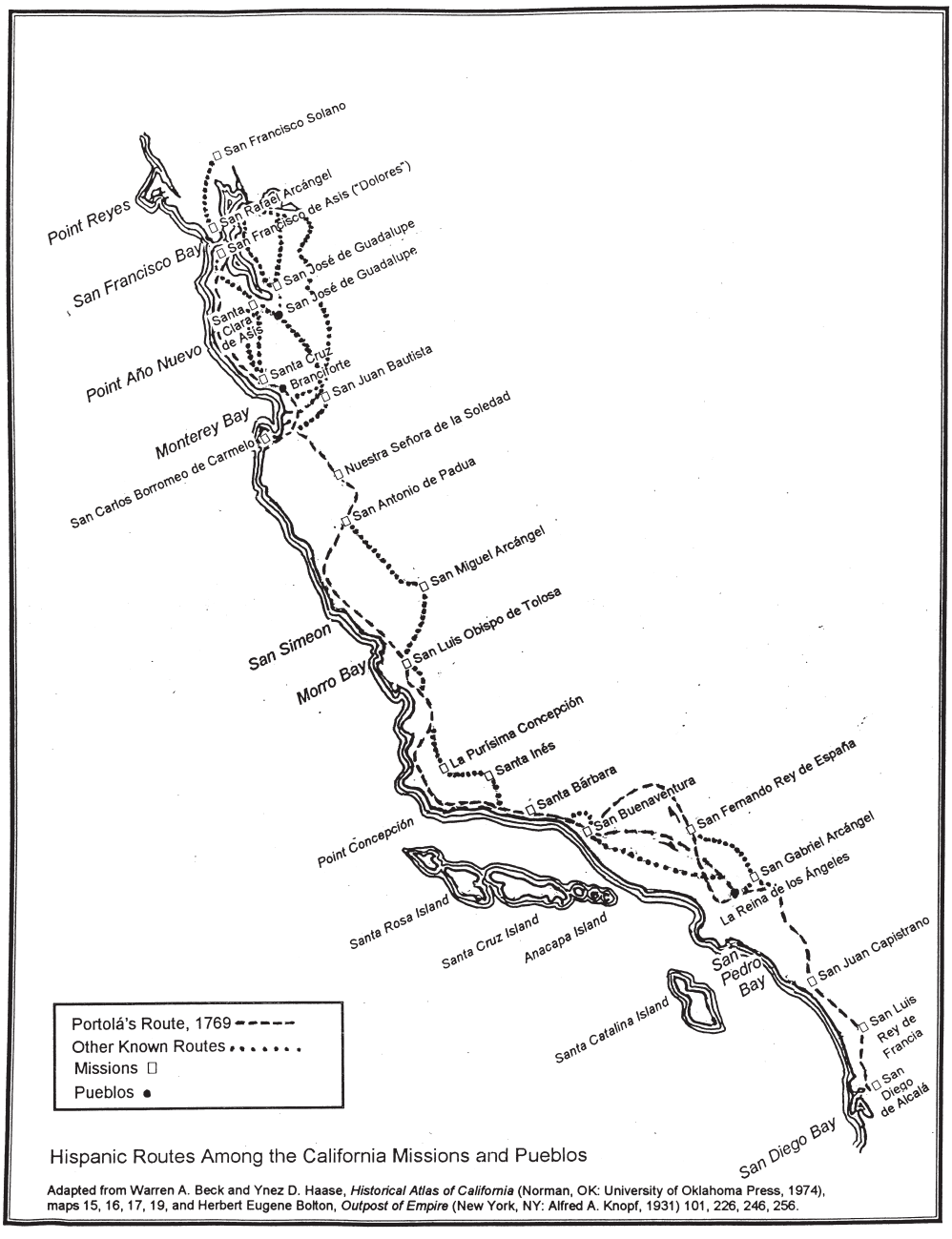
Signposting and mission bell on El Camino Real, near the Los Angeles-Ventura county line (circa 1928). Courtesy of the Automobile Club of Southern California.

Driving the King's Highway

by Walt Bethel

A long time ago, I thought that the mission bells that we see on crook-necked poles alongside the highway were relics of California's Hispanic past, and I imagined frantic padres ringing them for assistance as they dodged Indian arrows. But they are not relics; they are commemorations, installed from 1906 onwards by such civic minded private sector organizations as the Landmarks Club and the California Federation of Women's Clubs, and they were part of the emerging nation-wide Good Roads movement. The idea was to mark the route of El Camino Real, the grand sounding name for the loose collection of pack trails that connected the missions, presidios, and pueblos of Hispanic California, and to identify it with a hoped for concrete state automobile highway to be built west of the coast ranges. The highway, begun in 1912 and financed with a series of state bond issues, is the ancestor of today's US 101, but the route has since been much modified using modern construction machinery that can set landform obstacles at naught, and many parts of it are a long way from the routes that the padres followed.

Schoolbook maps usually show the camino as a single route with a few side branches, but the Spaniards, often guided by Native Americans, soon understood California's coastal geography thoroughly, and they traveled by whichever routes best suited their purposes. For example, if some-



Hispanic routes among the California Missions and Pueblos. Referenced in W.A. Beck and Y.D. Hease, *Historical Atlases of California*.

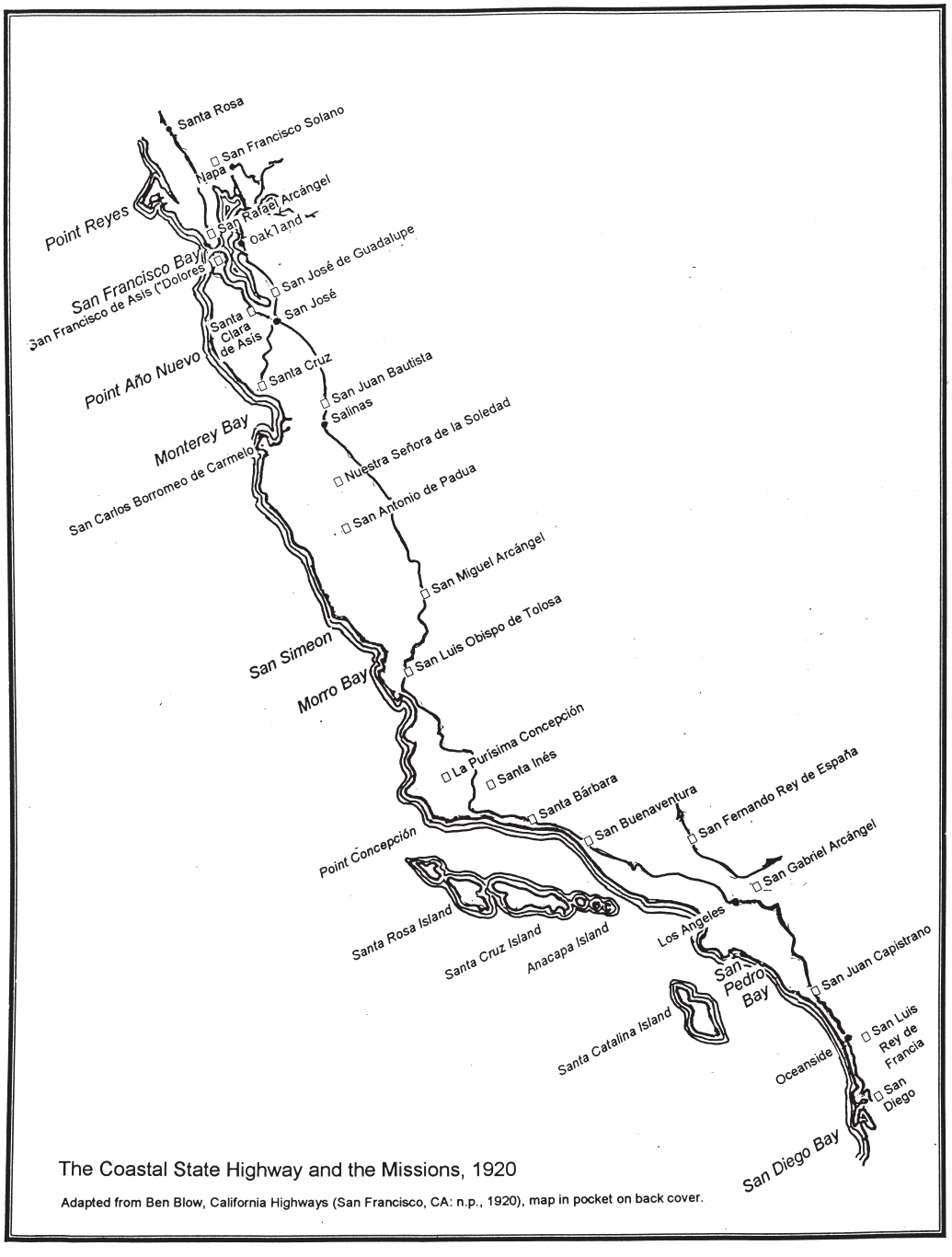
one at San Gabriel had wanted to go to San Fernando, he could have hiked up the La Crescenta Valley east of the Verdugo Hills without making a detour to the pueblo at Los Angeles; and if he had wanted to continue on to San Buenaventura, he could have crossed the steep ridge at the pass between the Santa Susana and San Gabriel ranges then followed the Santa Clarita River to the coast. The choice of route could vary with the season, too. For example, between Ventura and Santa Barbara, where steep bluffs edge the coast, travelers followed the beach in good weather, but rough seas shifted travel to a dog-leg through Casitas Pass. Finally, new missions added detours: San Luis Rey de Francia, about five miles upriver from today's Oceanside, was founded late, for example, and it maintained an important branch mission, or *asistencia,* at Pala, twenty miles farther on. And some routes were altered because missions were relocated: Carmel and San Diego, for example. By 1800, detailed itineraries listed distances, travel times, and geographic features.

In the California's Spanish era, Camino Real was used mostly for local travel and transport. Pack mules forwarded cargoes from the annual supply ships to the inland missions, and carried agricultural products and manufactured goods such as cloth and leather between missions and presidios. Indian drovers and *vaqueros* herded livestock, and padres, their Indian neophytes, soldiers, and, occasionally, settlers traveled along the road. Locally, roads were sometimes improved for ox-drawn two-wheeled *carretas*, but much of the trail would have been too rough for them. Opening a road consisted in clearing brush and prying away boulders, for which purpose Spanish exploring parties carried axes, mattocks, picks, shovels, and broadswords, and the roads were thereafter maintained in the same manner by their users.

To approximate the Hispanic alignment of El Camino Real, start at Mission San Diego, about six miles up Mission Valley, and follow 1-8 past the presidio to 1-5 north. No highway follows the railroad grade where it loops to the east away from the highway at La Jolla to get around the hills, but the railroad is closer to the trail. North of San Diego the trail stayed far enough inland to avoid the numerous tidal sloughs along the coast, then fumed inland at San Juan Capistrano, as does Interstate 5. Past the Puente Hills the trail turned away from 1-5 toward the Whittier Narrows where massive flood-control works now constrain the channels of the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo. You get a better view of these landforms by taking the 605 north from 1-5; exit at Valley Boulevard and follow it west to Mission Boulevard and San Gabriel Mission. The mission is marked by a commemorative highway bell though it never was on the state highway route. The padres would have continued west into Los Angeles; Mission to Alhambra to Valley Boulevard to North Main Street is an approximation, but it is easier to turn south on Ramona Avenue and take 1-10 westbound. Early Auto Club maps identify downtown as a congested area, without tracing any particular artery through it.

From Los Angeles the Spaniards knew a choice of routes. They could go north through the gorge of the Los Angles River (the Puertezuelo), then follow the river west into the San Fernando Valley; this is approximated today by taking the 1-5 to the 134. Alternatively, they could go west roughly along the alignment of Sunset Boulevard and cross Cahuenga Pass north into the San Femando Valley. At the exit from Cahuenga Pass was another choice of routes: to the north was San Fernando Mission, reached today by following the 170 freeway to the 1-5 again; to the west along today's 101 was the Calabasas grade and the Conejo Valley, then a steep descent to the Oxnard Plain and on to Ventura.

From San Fernando Mission travelers could continue over San Fernando Pass, through stark, knotted terrain that not even encroaching suburbia can disguise, then turn west down the Santa Clarita Valley to Ventura. To approximate this route take San Fernando Road to the Sierra Highway, which parallels the Antelope Valley Freeway (14) on the north; a turnout at the summit



The Coastal State Highway and the Missions, 1920

Adapted from Ben Blow, California Highways (San Francisco, CA: n.p., 1920), map in pocket on back cover.

The Coastal State Highway and the Missions, 1920. Referenced in Ben Blow, *California Highways*.

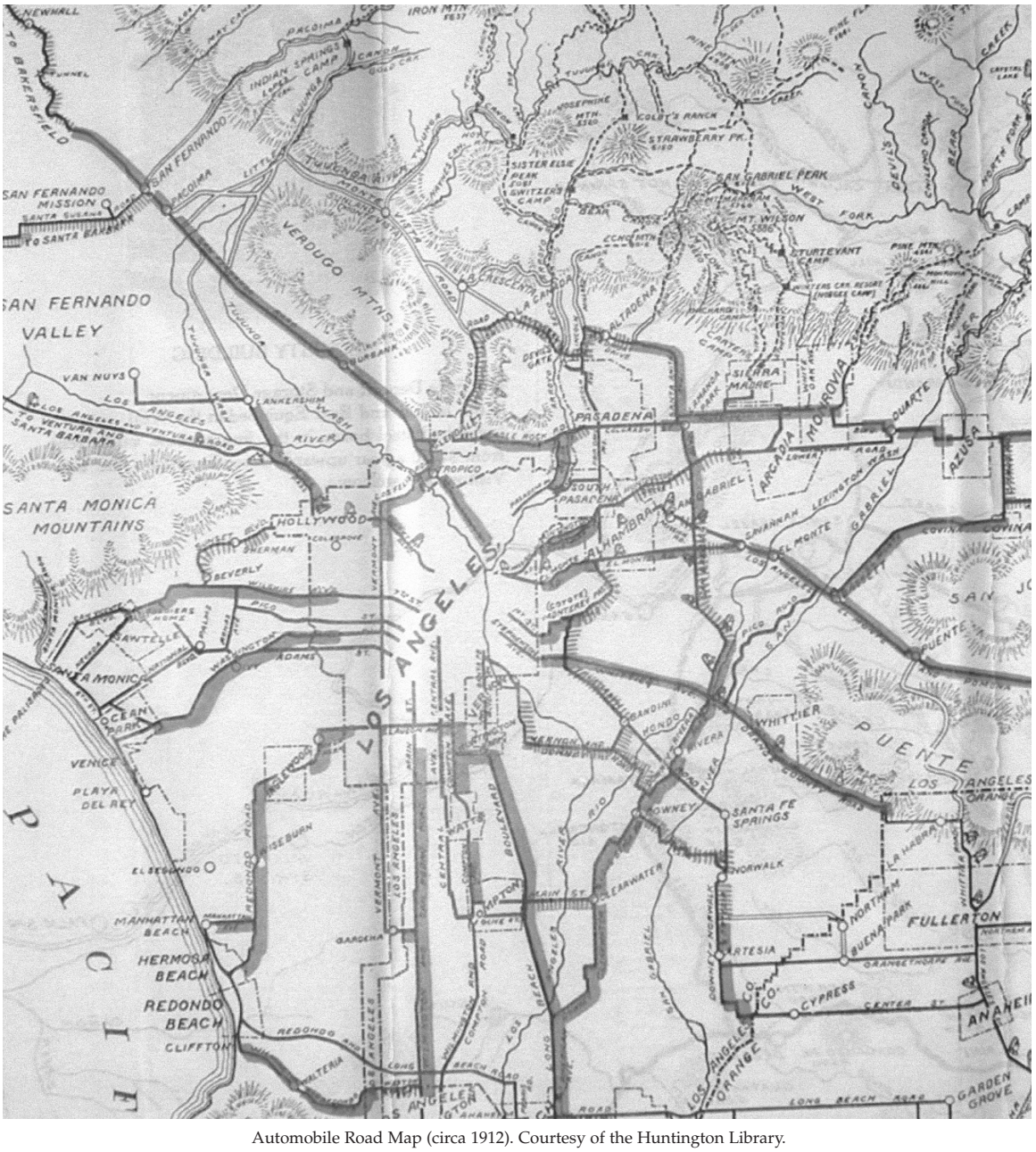
gives a view of the wagon road below the highway grade and the deep cut through solid rock that opened the pass to stagecoach travel in the 1850s. The first modern highway tunneled under the ridge here. In Hispanic times, travelers would have climbed over the ridge. Follow the Sierra Highway to San Fernando Road again, then take the Newhall Ranch Road left to Rye Canyon, to 1-5 and exit west on 126.

In Ventura, the mission is close to US 101, on the original state highway alignment. Continuing to Santa Barbara on US 101 gives a better view than the access road that lies closer to the beach where the Spaniards would have walked. In Santa Barbara, the partly restored presidio is downtown, straddling a busy intersection; the Santa Barbara street grid is an American period innovation, but getting through it to the mission is easy, and the mission portico gives a fine view south over the Pacific. The coast runs east-west here, so that the sun rises over the water in the winter. Continue west along US 101 and turn inland at Refugio Pass. This is not a first-class road today; steep and, in parts unpaved, but passable by ordinary autos. This route was adopted after Mission Santa Inés was founded near Solvang in 1804. Previously travelers had continued along the coast past Point Concepción, which is now a railroad route. Across Refugio Pass, turn left onto Highway 246 to Mission Santa Ynez, at Solvang, and continue west on 246 to La Purisima Concepción, outside Lompoc. Buckner Road and Harris Grade Road lead north from La Purisima to a junction with Highway 1, which takes you past Oso Flaco Lake to Pismo Beach. At Pismo Beach, take Hines Avenue across 101 and follow Price Canyon to Highway 227, then turn left and follow 227 north into San Luis Obispo and the mission there.

North of San Luis Obispo, Cuesta Pass has been a transportation corridor over the Santa Lucia range since mission days. The padres would have followed the canyon floor to a steep climb at the end; an easier, more gradual grade was cut into the west side of the canyon for stagecoaching in 1875-76, and the Southern Pacific railroad cut a right of way higher up the canyon wall in 1894. The first state highway looped up the east side, its tight curves bisected today by the newer 101 alignment. Once over the grade follow 101 north to Mission San Miguel, then take Jolón Road north to Mission San Antonio and continue on Jolsón Road to rejoin 101 just west of King City. Jolón was once a town on the stagecoach road, but it withered away after the railroad and then the state highway by-passed it. At Greenfield, take Arroyo Seco Road to River Road, which follows the west bank of the Salinas River to Mission Soledad, and take Highway 68 west from River Road to Monterey and Highway 1 south to Carmel Mission.

North from Monterey, Highway 1 leads to Santa Cruz, where the replica mission is on a hill to the left beyond the Highway 17 exit. A padre wrote that from Santa Cruz there was both a long, rough road and a shorter, but rougher one north to Santa Clara. The tight turns and steep grades of highways 9 and 17 provide modern equivalents. If you take 9 to Saratoga, follow Saratoga Road to Santa Clara University, where the restored mission is; if you take 17, exit at Bascom Road and turn north to the campus. Northeast from Santa Clara 17 becomes 1-880 which you can follow to the Warm Springs exit and Mission San Jose, which is not in the city of San Jose at all, but on the east bay shore near Fremont and the entrance to Niles Canyon. Although the Franciscan padres established no further missions in the east bay, they explored the east bay and along Carquinez Strait as far as the Delta and across the Contra Costa Hills into the Central Valley.

Another route from Monterey to Santa Clara led east across the Gábilan range to the San Benito Valley, even before Mission San Juan Bautista was founded in 1797. Old Stagecoach Road follows an early route, but it is more interesting to exit US 101 at North Main Street in Salinas then follow San Juan



Automobile Road Map (circa 1912). Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

Grade Road and Salinas Road. You will be driving on the alignment and in some places on the pavement of the first bond issue highway, laid down here in 1915. From San Juan Bautista, highway 156 offers an easy return to US 101, which will take you north through the valley to Santa Clara.

To continue from Santa Clara to San Francisco, take the street now called El Camino Real, located just north of the Santa Clara University campus, and follow it northwest up the San Francisco Peninsula. This is the alignment of the first state highway, but it lacks the scenic attractions of 1-280. Past the airport ECR turns west toward today's Daly City to avoid the San Bruno Hills; so did the padres, the stagecoaches, and the first railroad grade, and so will the new BART extension to SFO. At Daly City, ECR becomes Mission Street; follow Mission east and turn north onto Guerrero to Mission San Francisco de Asís.

San Francisco's mission proved to be an unhealthy place, and Mission San Raphael, north of the bay, began as a hospital for San Francisco Indians, becoming a mission in its own right in 1817. Travelers would have crossed the bay in launches or on native tule rafts, timing their voyages to avoid the powerful tides at the Golden Gate. There is ferry service now to Saulsalito and Larkspur, but it doesn't carry autos, and the spectacular Golden Gate bridge from the presidio is a happy alternative. Spanish and Mexican era explorers crisscrossed the terrain beyond San Raphael before founding the final mission at Sonoma in 1824. A good approximation would be US 101 north to the Lakeville exit (highway 116), then east on Frates Road —a side trip to General Vallejo's Petaluma adobe is rewarding—then Adobe Road to 116 again, north to Watmaugh Road and north again into Sonoma.

As in Hispanic times, this itinerary is best done in short installments, leaving time to visit the restored missions and presidios. Of course these routes and places are overlaid with subsequent history too: the Gold Rush and the railroad era shaped and reshaped California's land use patterns and even the land itself, as did the automobile and urban sprawl in the twentieth century. Driving, say, Valley Boulevard today it is hard to imagine an era when travelers took their bearings there in open country and walked where they pleased. But they did.

I am indebted to Morgan Yates, the archivist for the Automobile Club of Southern California, for the opportunity to trace the changes in the routing of State Route 2, later US 101, over time as shown in their collection of highway maps. The route that Juan Bautista de Anza followed in 1775-76 has been sign posted by the National Park Service. The maps and commentary on their website (www.nps.gov/juba) are informative but omit many of the relevant secondary roads.

Suggested Readings

Erline Tuttle, *California's El Camino Real and Its Historic Bells* (San Diego: Sunbelt, 2000).

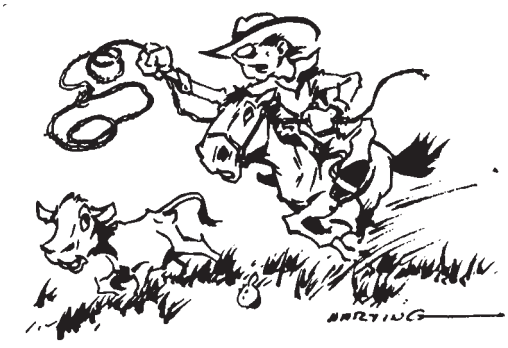
"El Camino Real: The King's Highway," *Journal of the West* 1, 2 (October, 1962).

J.I. Priestly, *Franciscan Explorations in California* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1946).

W.A. Beck and Y.D. Hease, *Historical Atlas of California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).

Eugene Bolton, *Outpost of Empire*. New York: Knopf, 1931.

R. Archibald *Economic Aspects of the California Missions* (Washington D.C.: Academy of Franciscan History, 1978).



THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

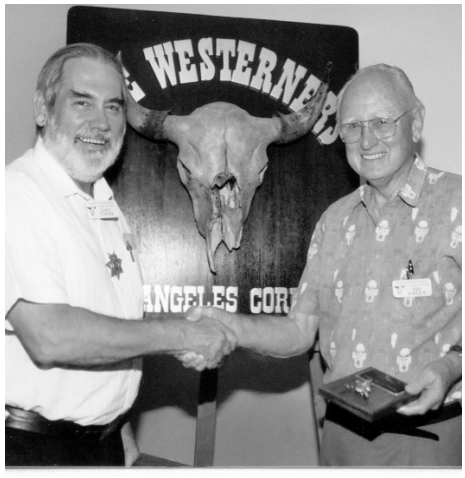
AUGUST MEETING

Sid Gally presented an interesting program on some of the most influential figures in Pasadena history. Sid is a longtime corral member, graduate of California Technical Institute, and worked many years for the Southern California Gas Company. His presentation was based upon research conducted at the Pasadena Museum of History.

Pasadena has a rich history dating to the great land boom of the 1880s. Several important personalities in California's progressive era had a firm connection with the city. Writer Upton Sinclair, socialist Kate Crane Gartz, feminist Clara Bradley Wheeler Burdette, and conservation activist Minerva Hamilton Hoyt were former residents of Pasadena and the vicinity.

The city of Pasadena was on the cutting edge of southern California trends and reform. Women's organizations, activist clubs, cultural centers, and the festivities surrounding the Tournament of Roses flourished at the turn-of-the-century. Stately homes and mansions reflected the wealth and opulence of the Industrial Revolution. The Gamble and the Wrigley homes are two of the more prominent residences from that era.

The Mount Lowe Railway was an international success and reflected the advent of the Great Hiking Age, the organization of the Sierra Club, and the progressive spirit of conservation that was embodied in the national efforts of Theodore Roosevelt. Indeed, the city of Pasadena was an important stop for many national leaders, including former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, civil rights leaders Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez, President William Howard Taft, and Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey.



Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

August Meeting Speaker Sid Gally

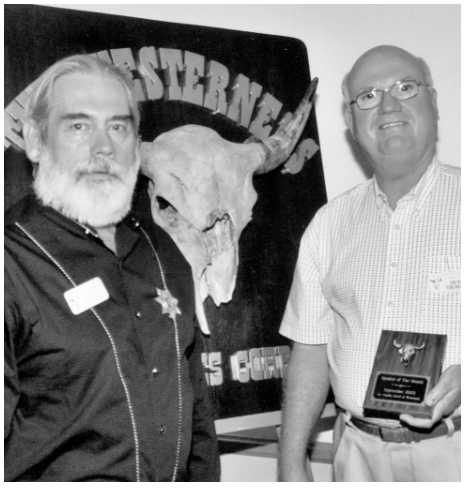
Sid also highlighted several prominent twentieth century Americans who had roots in the Pasadena area. Famous names included Olympic sprinter Charley Paddock and Arie Jan Haagen-Smog, the scientist who articulated the origins of air pollution as a mixture of sunlight, ozone, and exhaust fumes.

Sid's presentation was complemented by a rich display of Pasadena memorabilia, which included photographs, newspaper clippings, and articles on important men and women in the heritage of Pasadena.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Corral member Dick Thomas, gave a lively presentation on the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. San Francisco had been crippled by the 1906 earthquake and the civic leaders believed the organization of a great exposition would galvanize local support, bring international prestige, and improve the fortunes of the Bay city for years to come.

Thomas provided an interesting slide presentation on the various exhibits, buildings, and attractions at the exposition. Many



Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

September Meeting Speaker Dick Thomas.

of the architectural designs celebrated Gothic, Romanesque, Byzantine, Indian, and Asian designs and styles of distant cultures. Canals and walkways weaved through a maze of spectacular buildings, including the stately Palace of Education and elegant Palace of Fine Arts. The Yacht Harbor was filled with a flutter of white sails and tiny boats that captured the ambiance of the great city of Venice. The Exposition included an air show, but was marred by the death of one pilot who crashed shortly after takeoff.

One of the most interesting aspects of Dick's presentation was his discussion of the organization and creation of the exposition. Reuben Brooks Hale galvanized the business community to help finance the event. A Portola Festival held in 1909 proved a fund-raising success, attracting nearly 480,000 people. Donors included famous names such as Crocker, Ralston, and Ghiradelli. A door-to-door campaign garnered six million dollars, the state provided five million, and two campaign drives totaled four million. In all, fifty million dollars would be needed to finance the total endeavor.

The displays were magnificent at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Along with trains, airplanes, and steamships, the Bell Telephone exhibit drew wild raves, and the livestock display and race track were popular attractions. At night, the grounds were illuminated by a spectacular stream of lights surrounding the Tower of Jewels.

Ironically, despite the splendor of the architectural designs, they were temporary structures composed of travertine facades. Today, the exposition survives in the photos and memorabilia of that time gone by. Fortunately for corral members, Dick Thomas artfully captured the magnificence of that event, and provide his audience with an appreciation of the exposition's importance to California's past.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton.

Glen Dawson and Earl Nation, two of our most respected members, having a festive moment at the August meeting.

Corral Chips

Welcome to new corral member, **ALICE ALLEN**. Alice is a Burbank resident and a friend of **BOB BLEW**. Her interests are in nineteenth century California. We hope to see her at the upcoming dinners and that she becomes an active participant in the Corral.

Congratulations are extended to **ROBERT CLARK**. Bob is a past Corral sheriff, and his widely-respected publishing operation just received a prestigious award from *True West Magazine*. The Arthur H. Clark Company was selected as the "Best National Publisher of Western Nonfiction." This past year, the company celebrated its hundredth anniversary of publishing nonfiction American history. In addition, *True West Magazine* also selected the company as the "Best Western Bookstore" in the state of Washington. The Arthur H. Clark company has an extensive inventory of rare and collectible materials on the frontier.

Branding Iron co-editor, **TOM TEFFT**, took an ambitious Fall trip to the head of the Saline Valley, camping with friends in the Grapevine Canyon. From there, his group traveled down into the Panamint Valley to Darwin Falls, and then onto the ghost town of Darwin itself. After spending a night camping in the Alabama hills, Tom and his companions headed to Lone Pine, the site of several dozen movies from *Gunga Din* to recent sci-fi thrillers. Lone Pine hosts the annual "Movie Days" event—a gala that allows visitors to see many films and visit the exact locations of some of the well-known pictures that have been filmed in the locale.

ABE HOFFMAN and **BOB BLEW** attended the October Historians Workshop at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage. These monthly workshops are hosted by Steve Arum, a past speaker to the Corral, and the discussions cover a wide range of topics on American history and the West. Anyone interested in attending these fine workshops may contact Bob Blew for more information.

WALT BETHEL, a contributor to this issue of *The Branding Iron*, has been active in several projects. Aside from writing reviews for the *Southern California Quarterly*, Walt teaches college courses in philosophy and pursues his research interests in California transportation. Currently, he is working on an article on airport planning in the Los Angeles basin between 1928-1947.

The Corral is happy to announce that **ERIC NELSON**, a past sheriff and active Corral member, has volunteered his expertise to oversee Brand Book Twenty-Three. The theme will involve the history of aviation in California. Please contact Eric if you are interested in contributing to this project.

On a sad note, longtime Corral member **MARTIN RIDGE** passed away in September. Martin had been suffering from an extended illness. He was a respected friend of many scholars, students, and members of historical organizations such as the Los Angeles Westerners. A more complete tribute to Martin will be provided in the Winter Issue.

ERNIE HOVARD, a longtime Corral member and former sheriff, has a rich collection of Native American artifacts that is now on display at the Los Angeles County Arboretum. In coming months, Ernie will also develop an exhibit of cowboy and western lore from his private collection.

You should take a look at the Fall issue of the *Southern California Quarterly*. **GLORIA RICCI LOTHROP** has an interesting article on the origins and development of the Italian community in Los Angeles. Gloria has written extensively on this subject and recently was decorated by the Republic of Italy with the Award of Merit for her con-

tributions to our understanding of the Italian imprint on California.

New Members

Alice L. Allen
2631 N. Myers St.
Burbank, CA 91804-2128

Gregory McReynolds
1954 Oakwood St.
Pasadena, CA 91104

Robert V. Pierre, M.D.
1519 Majestic Way
Glendale, CA 91207

Shadow Riders !!!

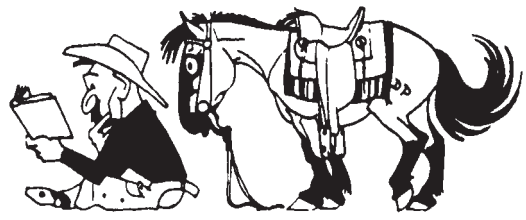
They ride and hide among the stars
They race from Jupiter to Mars
They soar through the Northern lights
And romp and play on Southern nights

We only see them from afar
Never knowing what they are
When'er we see a shooting star
We're apt to think, "there they are "

Shadow Riders searching always
What is that they hope to find
They sleep away the sun-lit days Shadow Riders- one of a kind !

They have been summoned by the Master
These sacred riders-one of a kind
Shadow Riders-riding ever, ever faster
To Heaven's Gate- this is what they hoped to find !!!!

—Loren Wendt



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

ON THE GOLDEN SHORE: *Phineas Banning in Southern California, 1851-1885,* by James J. Yoch. Wilmington: Banning Residence Museum, 2002. 172 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Paper, $19.95. Order from Banning Residence Museum, 401 E. M Street, Wilmington, CA 90748 (310) 548-7777, www.banningmuseum.org

Phineas Banning was an ambitious, energetic, generous entrepreneur who founded the community of Wilmington, pioneered the development of San Pedro Harbor, and promoted a wide range of business interests from agriculture to transportation. He was dedicated to making the Los Angeles region a major urban and economic center on the West Coast. Had Banning's life not been cut short in a traffic accident, he would possibly be as familiar a name in the public mind as Huntington, Mulholland, and other movers and shakers in the development of southern California. Even so, he should be regarded as one of the most important early entrepreneurs in the region, one whose talents and ambitions made a perfect match for the potential the region offered.

It has become a somewhat disconcerting fashion for some California historians to disparage Los Angeles as a city that should never have developed where it is, lacking as it did in water, harbor, and transportation connections. Banning's efforts provide a healthy antidote to such negative views. On arriving in Los Angeles from his home state of Delaware, he quickly grasped the profitable link between the available land and the fledgling economy of the region. He esta-

blished stagecoach lines, ran a railroad between San Pedro Harbor and Los Angeles, and began improvements the federal government would later expand upon to make San Pedro one of the great harbors of the world. He was quick to aid fellow merchants such as Harris Newmark in their endeavors, and he loved to combine business with pleasure in hosting parties at the residence he built in Wilmington, the community he named after his home town.

James Yoch has written a study of Banning and his times that includes biography, economics, architecture, and a bit of genealogy. His profile of Banning is strongly grounded in primary sources at the Huntington and Bancroft Libraries. However, it should be noted that while he updates Mamie Krythe's 1957 biography of Banning, *Port Admiral,* his study of Banning's life comprised less than half of the book, some sixty pages including vintage photographs. Fully half of this book is concerned with the house that Banning built in the 1860s and which stands today as the Banning Residence Museum. Yoch is an expert in landscape and architectural design, and he puts this expertise to good use in his description of the Banning residence and grounds and how they changed over time though succeeding generations of the Banning family. However, a floor plan illustration would have been helpful to the reader.

Yoch concludes his study with an epilogue that whets the appetite more than it satisfies. There remains much to be written about Phineas Banning and his descendants, their involvement in the ownership of Catalina Island, and their service to the southern California community. Scholars should see this book as an opportunity for further research into the Bannings. Visitors to the Banning Residence Museum will find it a welcome guide to one of the oldest and best examples of nineteenth century architecture. And if all one wants to do is read the book and enjoy the dozens of historical photographs, that's good too.

—Abraham Hoffman

THE DESERT TRAINING CENTER/CALIFORNIA-ARIZONA MANEUVER AREAS, 1942-1944: *Historical and Archaeological Contexts*, by Matt C. Bischoff. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. 146 pp. Maps, Illustrations, References Cited. Paper, $25. Order from University of Arizona Press, 1230 North Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719, (800) 426-3797.

This is a reference for those having an interest in the military history of World War II. It is a compendium of photos, maps and drawings of every encampment of the Army in the Nation's largest military base.

Few of us have visited the Desert Training Center (DTC), except for the Patton Museum at Chriaco Summit just east of Indio, California. Only cement slabs and stone-lined walkways remain.

In 1940, the U.S. Army stood 18th in the world, behind even the Netherlands and Belgium which fell within a week after the Nazi invasion.

Italy had invaded Libya and Egypt in 1940, and when the Italians ran into trouble, Rommel came to assist them; he seized Benghazi in January of 1942 and in the Spring took Tobruk and the Suez Canal was threatened. It became apparent that the United States would have to assist Britain, but the U. S. Army had never fought a full scale war in a desert environment since the war with Mexico. Even Pershing's 7,000 men, marching back and forth across the Mexican deserts in 1916, did little fighting.

George S. Patton, a native of San Marino, California, had tank experience in World War I and continued to be an advocate of the Tank Corps although he had returned to service in the Cavalry. He was fearful of being passed over as being too old, but he was promoted to Brigadier General in 1940, then Major General in 1941 and awarded command of the First Armored Corps. Patton established the DTC and was its first commanding officer. He established the fourteen week training program which included individual and small unit field ex-

ercises and finally divisional exercises.

This site is an immense desert wilderness, occupying 31,500 square miles. It includes a portion of the Mojave Desert east of Indio to the Colorado River and north from Yuma, Arizona to Searchlight, Nevada. It measures 238 miles by 116 miles, and was well used by the Army for a short period during World War II.

Fourteen camps were established, each three miles by one mile wide, each housing approximately 15,000 men. It opened on April 30, 1942, and was declared surplus on April l, 1944.

It had hard use, training twenty-three divisions out of the Army's total of eighty-five divisions. More than 10% of all service personnel serving in World War II were trained at the DTC.

Patton had driven and trained his men hard and when I Corps left in the late summer of 1942, Patton abandoned for later use and recycling some 230 broken down armored vehicles, and 270 general purpose vehicles.

By 1943, the DTC was changed into a training area so vast that it was a separate Theater of Operations where equipment was tested and tactics and military doctrines developed.

One cannot fail to be impressed that the DTC was a tribute to American energy and genius in opening a huge camp shortly after the start of the war, training an immense number of soldiers, moving them overseas (fully trained and equipped) and landing them on the beaches of North Africa by November 1942.

—Norman Marshall

RIDGE ROUTE: *The Road That United California* by Harrison Irving Scott. Torrance, self published, 2002. 326 pages, photographs. Hard cover, $25. Order from Harrison Scott, 908 Patronella Ave., Torrance, CA 90503-5242.

For the better part of two decades, from 1915 to 1933, the famous "Ridge Route" was the main artery of automobile travel between Los Angeles and the Central Valley of California. A ghost highway today, this tortuous, twisting ridgetop road was once traveled by thousands of motorists. Numerous gasoline stations, garages, cafes, and hotels lined the narrow roadway, all of them gone now.

Harrison Scott—"Scotty" to his many friends—has been captivated by the old Ridge Route over the past eight years. He has driven it countless times, examined every historic site along its path, sought out and interviewed scores who drove it during its heyday or are descendants of resort owners, and done exhaustive research. Thanks mainly to Scotty's efforts, the old highway is now on the National Register of Historic Places and protected for posterity.

What Scotty has produced here is the definitive history of the Ridge Route, as nearly complete as humanly possible. The book is encyclopedic in nature, touching upon the road's precedents such as Fort Tejon, the Tejon Ranch, Beale's Cut, the Butterfield Overland Mail, and covering in detail the highway's construction, all of its gasoline stations, garages, cafes, and hotels, and the petroleum, natural gas, and electric power lines that parallel the road's course. Hundreds of photographs enhance the volume.

There is probably more here than the average reader cares to know, unless he is a Ridge Route "regular" who drives it, like this reviewer, time and again. The greatest value of the book is as a reference source. Almost every conceivable question a reader might ask is answered somewhere within the 300-plus fact-laden pages of this volume. The one major shortcoming is the lack of a good map. Scotty tells me he will add one in future editions.

—John Robinson

THE ARTHUR H. CLARK COMPANY: *An*

Americana Century, 1902-2002 by Robert A. Clark and Patrick J. Brunet. Spokane, WA:

Arthur H. Clark Co. 2002. Illustrations, Index, Bibliography. 303 pp. Cloth $75.00; "Centennial" edition of 100 copies, bound in leather, $350. Order from Arthur H. Clark Company, P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, WA 99214-0707.

This is an extraordinary volume that any collector of fine books must have for ready reference. In addition to a foreword by Richard M. Weatherford, this book contains a history of the company in terms of its people, its publishers, editors and authors, as well as the most complete bibliography of the company's publications. The bibliography contains complete entries of author, title, place of publication and date. In addition, each entry includes a physical description of the work and the number published.

The history of the enterprise is more than interesting. It is a loving portrait of a most important publisher whose founder Arthur H. Clark, Sr. focused on North American history, found authors, worked with authors, and created a respected press. His vision of books securely founded in fact, facts interpreted in a scholarly manner, and written for readability made the press respected. His notion of scholarly quality carried over into production quality and the distinctive Clark style that continues today. Arthur Clark, Sr.'s connection with LeRoy Hafen deepened his interest in the American West and his commitment to publish the best on the West. Hafen would ultimately publish thirty-one books with the press. Clark's eye for solid history also brought Fred A. Shannon's *Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1862* to the press in the 1920s. Rejected by thirteen publishers before it arrived in Clark's hands, the book won the 1929 Pulitzer Prize in History.

Clark retired in 1947 and the company was in the hands of Paul W. Galleher and Arthur Clark, Jr. Galleher and others were founders of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. In 1972 Robert Clark joined the company and assumed full control of the firm in 1986. Three years later the company closed its doors in Glendale and relocated in Spokane. There the Clark legacy of quality production of the written word continues.

—Gordon Morris Bakken

Briefly Noted

The University of New Mexico Press has published a volume containing fifteen papers reporting on the Roosevelt Archaeological Project on the Tonto Basin in southern Arizona. SALADO, edited by Jeffrey S. Dean, contains essays on the Salado culture from many disciplines. Essays discuss irrigation, demography, politics, migration, religion, and many other topics. The volume provides an opportunity to become immersed in the culture and society of a people who flourished in the Southwest before the European discovery of America. In cloth at $49.95, the 389-page book can be ordered from University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591 or (800) 249-7737.

—Abraham Hoffman