LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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Felipe De Neve Founds Los Angeles -1781. Courtesy of the author.

The Supervisor's Murals

by William J. Warren

It was the early 1930's and the Great Depression was in full swing. The Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County worked diligently to improve the County by capturing and quickly spending Federal funds. Supervisor John Anson Ford asked County Surveyor Alfred Jones for his help with one such scheme. Jones promptly filed an application with the Federal Art Project for ten murals, to be painted by Southern California artists. Jones' cost estimate was just under $1,400 total for materials, an artist, two assistants and a carpenter to install the finished paintings where they were so desperately needed. Curiously, that turned out to be the Board of Supervisor's Hearing Room in the old Hall of Records.

The Hall of Records had been completed in 1910 but the decoration of its principal hall had been deferred. Jones' application was filed with the local chapter of the Federal Art Project. They were housed at the Los Angeles Museum (now the Natural History Museum) as part of a national program employing American artists to help preserve

(Continued on page 3)

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EDITOR'S CORNER

In our desperate attempt to find something in common between "The Supervisor's Murals" and "President Grant Didn't Sleep Here," a flash of genius struck like a comet across the midnight sky. Both articles had to do with missing presidents.

In the "Mural" article, the dispute was whether Washington was really present at the signing of the Declaration of Independence? George Washington was not present at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, nor was he present in the painting of the Declaration of Independence by John Trumbull. This did not stop the painter of the mural, Buckley Mac-Gurrin, from putting Washington in the mural anyway. The painter of the mural first said Washington was in John Trumbull's famous painting that he used as a model. Then he said, no, that Washington was not really in Trumbull's painting after all. Washington was really just there in "spirit." So, Mac-Gurrin did put Washington in his mural of the Declaration of Independence anyway to show that he, the artist, and George Washington, were in the "spirit" of the whole thing. After all of that I think we will go out and have some "spirits" of our own.

President Grant, on the other hand, was not a guest at the Sierra Madre Villa as everyone had been led to believe for so many years. However, his calling card was at the Villa, which proved to most people that Grant himself was present too. Now this author has, in the interest of historical accuracy, blown a good story. Actually, the presence of General William Tecumseh Sherman as a guest at the Villa sounds good enough for us. If we can't have Grant, we will take Sherman.

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Sir Francis Drake's Landing in California-1779. Courtesy of the author.

American art. Nelson H. Partridge, Jr. of the editorial staff of California Arts & Architecture became State Director for southern California.

A contract between the Federal Art Project and Los Angeles County was signed in early 1936. Stanton Macdonald Wright, well known art authority, was appointed to oversee the project for the federal government. John Anson Ford was designated to represent the County's interests.

One of the first tasks was to select a general theme for the murals. "Streams of influence that have affected California, illustrated by historical incidents symbolizing or relating to law or matters of public record" was chosen. Subjects for each of the paintings were to be determined by consulting experts on California History. Among those consulted was Dr. Robert Glass Cleland of Occidental College; Marshall Stimson, President of the Historical Society of Southern California; Phil Townsend Hanna, well known scholar and editor of *Westways;* Miss Althea Warren, Librarian for the Los Angeles City Library; and Leslie E. Bliss, Librarian, Henry E. Huntington Library.

The next task was to identify the primary artist. Buckley Mac-Gurrin was a southern California artist who had worked on movie sets, specifically the set of Cecil B. DeMille's "Crusades." An early suggestion was that one of the murals be of the granting of the Magna Carta. Mac-Gurrin's prior ability to portray knights and the king stood him in very good stead. He was quickly selected to be the primary artist. Mac-Gurrin was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1896. After a two-year stint in the Navy, he graduated from UC Berkeley in 1922. From there he went to Paris to study painting under Richard Miller and Charles Guerin before returning to the United States.

Each mural was to be painted on canvas approximately 6 feet high by 8 to 10 feet wide. These would then to be attached to the walls of the Hearing Room. Each mural was to include a stylized painted frame and a label bearing a description of the scene. The first mural was finished in the fall of 1936 and proudly displayed to the press. John Anson Ford in his white pants and bow tie and a tall intent Buckley Mac-Gurrin proudly gazed at a painting of the founding of Los Angeles for the pages of the *Citizen News.* The bare breasted woman depicted squarely in

Landing of Cabrillo--1542. Courtesy of the author.

the middle of the mural didn't please all critics.

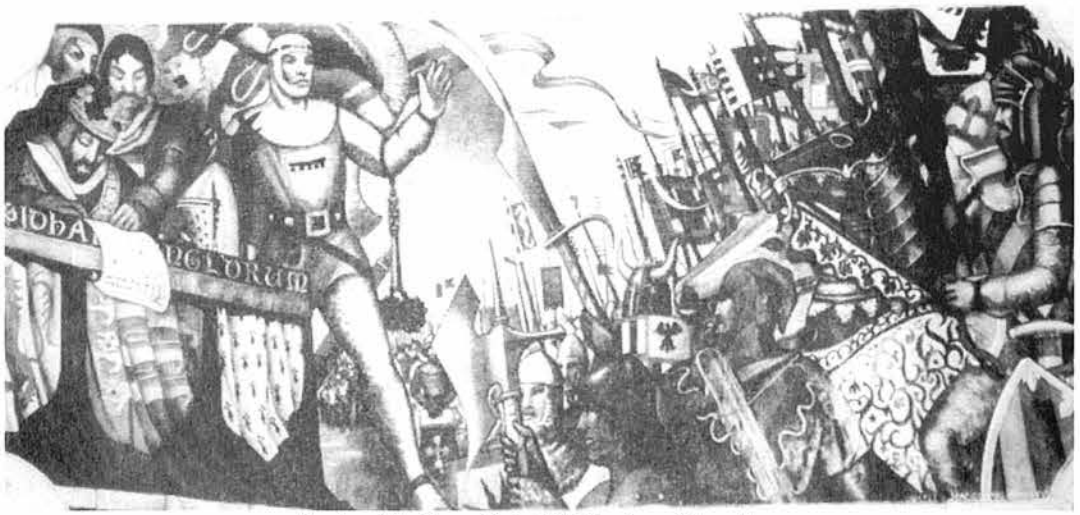
It was 1939 before all of the murals were completed and hung. As with most government projects, time and costs were flexible. The final cost figure turned out to be somewhat over four times the original estimate. A commemorative booklet was prepared and arrangements made for a formal dedication ceremony. Saturday, May 20, 1939 was chosen as the date for the unveiling. County Surveyor Alfred Jones arranged for the ceremony to be broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System. Professor Cleland was asked to make a few remarks during that radio program.

The big day arrived and a grand time was had by all. The murals brightened the room immeasurably. Those visitors trapped in interminable Supervisorial meetings now had a chance to study history rather than staring at boring blank walls. The murals were both historic and heroic in scope. In chronological order they depicted:

Granting the Magna Carta-1215
Landing of Cabrillo-1542
Drake's Landing in California-1579
Declaration of Independence-1776
De Neve founds Los Angeles-1781
Czar issues Russian American charter-1799
Jedediah Smith near San Gabriel-1826
Dana at San Pedro-1835
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo-1848
Butterfield Overland Mail Stage-1858

And that would be the end of the story were it not for the sentiments perhaps best addressed by Robert Burns-something about "the best laid plans of mice and men..." Artists and politicians are sometimes not the best historians and by combining the two, as might be expected, a curious mixture of egos generated some problems.

The Granting of Magna Carta-1215 showed King John seated at a table, pen in hand. As Mac-Gurron described it, "In this painting the historical moment is that at which King John acceded to the demands of the federated barons. He is about to sign the document. The predominating note is intended to be one of intimidation. The barons have reached the limit of their patience and are fully prepared to go to any extreme of civil war in case the king refuses their demands. Consequently the armed forces are shown in full war regalia on a diagonal running from the upper right hand corner of the picture toward the king's platform. This conveys the idea of an arrowhead about to strike. The warrior who stands beside the king carries the menace up to the very person of the king by means of the



Signing of the Magna Carta -1215. Courtesy of the author..

heavy mace hanging from his left arm, while his right hand uplifted signifies the king's assent and so stops the impending disaster. The coloration is in subdued key with a play of deep reds and blues intended to suggest psychologically the mood desired."

Unquestionably this was a strong work of art, and no one questioned its intent. Robert Glass Cleland, taking his first look, may have murmured, "Oh my gosh..," for King John was widely known by historians to have been illiterate. The concept of King John signing the document was a little much, as Cleland later told Alfred Jones. Quietly, underlings were sent scurrying, to come up with an article from the *American Bar Association Journal* of January 1940 authored by Carl L. Meyer, Research Librarian, Law Library of Congress. He wrote, "The Great Charter bears the date of June 15, 1215, the day on which King John sealed and granted the original document, the first of its kind ever to be obtained through force from and English monarch. It will be noted that John did not sign this document or any of the copies which were made of it. He sealed and granted the Charter 'data per manum nostram,' as was the custom at that time."

Mac-Gurrin apparently shrugged - after all a small amount of artistic license was to be expected. And so this tempest in a teapot subsided. Professor Cleland expressed his pleasure when Jones sent him a copy of the Meyer article, confirming his earlier view.

And so all's well that ends well . . . but wait a minute. As sometimes happens, it takes a while for critical comment to surface. On the morning of June 9, 1941, both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Daily News* broke *another* mural story. Perhaps the *Daily News* said it best. Under a headline screaming "WASHINGTON IN MURAL STIRS ART PROTEST" they proclaimed: "The painted likeness of George Washington staring down from one of the historical murals adorning the walls of the County Supervisors assembly room in the Hall of Records has today become the center of heated controversy. The father of his country is portrayed at the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Independence Hall; but the question that today had art and history glaring at each other was: Was Washington really there?"

Gently, then County librarian Helen Vogelson broke the news to the Board of Supervisors. Washington was not only absent from the ceremony but didn't even know about it till days later. The fact that the painting bore the words "Declaration of Independence - 1776" presented a sticky wicket. Supervisor John Anson Ford, he of the white pants and bow tie, characterized by the press as "active in obtaining county sponsorship of the murals project" ordered "an investigation of criticism of the historical exactitude of the painting."

Signing of the Declaration of Independence 1776. Courtesy of the author.

Interviewed by the press, Buckley Mac-Gurrin was furious. "I got my background from John Trumbull's famous painting of this same subject, which shows Washington seated at the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Trumbull's painting has been widely reproduced and has been used in schoolbooks throughout America. Trumbull, an American painter and contemporary of Washington and Jefferson made the first picture of the signing about two years after the event. He knew those present and sketched the interior of Independence Hall." I did the research for the Hall of Records mural and my plans were approved by the proper authorities. If there was any complaint why was the drawing approved?" Mac-Gurrin added that a work of art should have symbols, and that even if Washington wasn't there in the flesh, "he certainly was in spirit."

Three days later he expanded on his remarks for the *San Gabriel Post-Advocate*. "'ABSOLUTELY MAUDLIN!' Thus, with a shrug and a twinkle in his eye to add emphasis, did Buckley Mac-Gurrin, San Gabriel artist, today sum up the current controversy at the Hall of Records regarding a mural painted two years ago by the artist." This was followed by a rehash of the *Times* and *Daily News* articles - but ended as follows. "In reply to his critics, the artist concluded, 'Things must be pretty dull around the Hall of Records when some unnamed 'historical experts' are driven to revive the ancient game of mural baiting. And I think the experts who put forth this sort of petty quibbling are more rich in invectiveness than I could ever hope to be.'"

The Board of Supervisors remained uncharacteristically silent. Privately they reacted as would be expected by ordering another complete investigation to determine who was responsible. Alfred Jones, now County Surveyor AND County Engineer, turned the job over to his assistant, R. B. Heuer, with the suggestion that a quick and thorough answer would be appropriate. A month later Heuer was back with a single-spaced seven page reply. The cover-up had been launched
"The question of George Washington's presence in this mural *was raised several times by Supervisor John Anson Ford* (italics added) after the mural was hung in 1938 and finally was noted in local newspapers on June 9, 1941."

Artist Buckley Mac-Gurrin's original defense on this point was that John Trumbull's (1758-1843) painting of "Declaration of Independence" included the presence of George Washington. R.B. Heuer noted, "I have talked with Mr. Mac-Gurrin in person and over the telephone several times

Richard Henry Dana at San Pedro-1835. Courtesy of author.

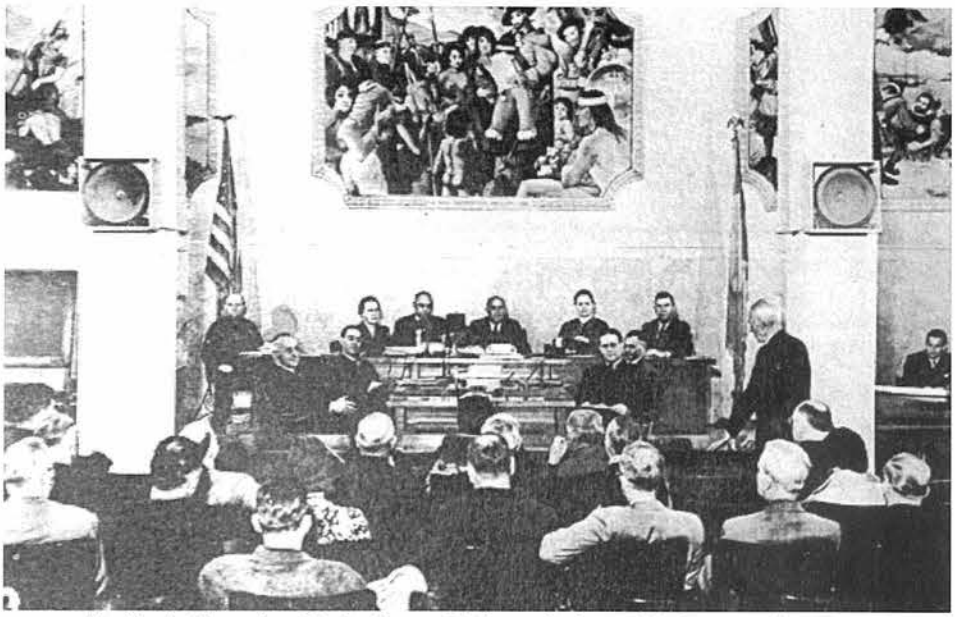
since our checkup was started. Because of our research on the subject Mr. Mac-Gurrin in now satisfied that George Washington was not physically present at the time of signing the declaration and that John Trumbull did not include Washington in his famous painting; however, Mr. Mac-Gurrin now has adopted the suggestion that Washington's presence in the picture may be accepted entirely on an allegorical basis because of Washington's inescapable domination of the successful American Revolution from its inception to its completion, as well as Washington's later founding of the present Federal government organization."

Towards the end of his report Heuer suggested that Mac-Gurrin's mural should be accepted in its present condition because: (a) Washington is not indicated as a signer. (b) Washington's presence could be accepted as a "spiritual force which crystallized sentiment" for the document. (c) blanking out Washington probably wouldn't really detract from the mural, but see (b) for a good reason to not do that, and (d) Washington's domination of the time has fixed him as "the father of his country."

The Supervisors apparently liked the report. They were off the hook, the artist had again confessed to a questionable case of artistic license, and the public debate fueled by the newspapers seemed to have subsided. The war in Europe was escalating and six months later the entire discussion would disappear under the more important issue of America's involvement in World War II.

Well, the war was finally won and time drifted by. Almost everyone forgot about the murals as representation of history. Everyone, that is, except for Supervisor John Anson Ford. It took seven long years to surface again in his mind, probably due to the numerous distractions of running the nation's largest county through the stress of World War II. But the burr under his saddle finally proved too much. In 1948, Supervisor Ford had a vision. The *Los Angeles Times,* somewhat tongue in cheek, covered the earthshaking Supervisorial discussion in its November 10, 1948 issue, under the bold headline, "Supervisors Correct Error - Err Again."

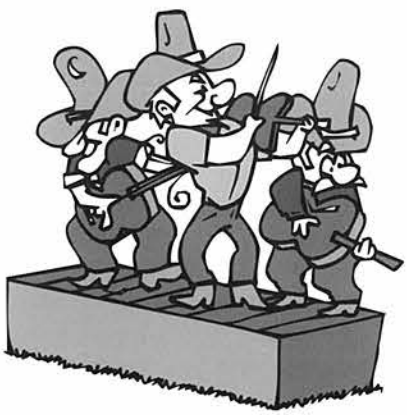
The *Times* reported, "The Board of Supervisors yesterday bent an ear to the voice of history, but didn't catch what was said. The Board changed the title on a mural adorning a wall panel in its Hall of Records chamber. The mural, done by WPA Artist Buckley Mac-Gurrin in 1939, shows George



The Board of Supervisors Hearing Room with the murals above, 1939. Courtesy of the author.

Washington and other Colonial figures in a group. Below is the caption: 'Declaration of Independence - 1776.' Among the group about to sign the document is Thomas Jefferson. The title, the Board learned from Supervisor John Anson Ford, should have been: 'Constitutional Convention 1787.' So the change was ordered. But the decision ignored the presence of Jefferson. Jefferson, the World Almanac states, was NOT a signer of the Constitution, and could NOT have been at the signing ceremony as the mural depicts. The Board is expected to learn of its second error today."

The old Hall of Records sat on an angle between Spring and Broadway, north of First St. It blocked the vista of the new Civic Center from City Hall. So it was demolished in the early 1950's, leaving (what more characteristic of Los Angeles?) a parking lot! And what became of the historic murals, valued "at more than $50,000?" Perhaps mercifully, no one in today's County Government knows (nor apparently cares). John Anson Ford, where are you when we need you most?



Ulysses S. Grant. Courtesy of the author.

President Grant Didn't Sleep Here

By Gregory McReynolds

Through the years newspaper and magazine articles about the Sierra Madre Villa have reported that one of its eminent guests was former President Ulysses S. Grant. However, recent research shows this isn't true. How did the story begin, and what were the circumstances that led to the creation of this bit of fake lore? A mysterious little calling card is the culprit.

A little background on the Cogswell-Grant connection would be helpful. William Cogswell was a prominent painter of portraits, particularly of those in political life in mid-nineteenth century Washington D.C. He painted two pictures featuring President Grant. The first, painted in 1867, is of Grant and his family. The second, a portrait painted in 1868, shows Grant in his military uniform. Almost certainly a friendship developed between the two men as a result of the time required to sit for the paintings. In addition, the two would have likely met at the various social functions that made social life in the Capital. At some point Cogswell received a small card with Grant's signature on it, perhaps a calling card, a required social convention in those days of Victorian etiquette. Only a photo copy of this card survives, which shows just one side of the original card. On it, Grant's signature appears, not dated, but with the time – "2 o'clock p.m." – written above. It is unknown when exactly Cogswell received the card, but it likely dates to the years he spent in Washington D.C.

In 1873 William P. Rhoades, (son-in-law of Cogswell) came west and established the famed Sierra Madre Villa Hotel in the foothills above what would become Pasadena. Rhoades and Cogswell were partners in this venture but Cogswell didn't come out to southern California until the late 1870s. His busy schedule as a portrait painter kept him from the Villa for long periods and he maintained a studio in San Francisco where he spent much of his time. During his stays at the Villa he maintained a guest register for the exclusive use of "dis-

William Cogswell. Courtesy of the author.

tinguished arrivals."

In 1953 the *Los Angeles Times*, San Gabriel Valley Section, ran a retrospective article on the villa bearing this headline: "Gens. Grant and Sherman Slept Here." The story recounted the visit made by William Rhoades' daughter, Anita Rhoades, and her cousin Sarah Cogswell Diem to their childhood home, the Sierra Madre Villa. A picture of a page from the guest register kept by their grandfather, William Cogswell, and reserved for "distinguished arrivals" accompanied the article. Dated September 9, 1883, the register shows the signature of Gen. W. T. Sherman and those traveling with him. So indeed, Gen. Sherman did stay at the Villa, but what about Grant?

Here is where the card autographed by the President, which was once in Cogswell's possession, led to the confusion. Cogswell no doubt kept this with his other keepsakes, possibly placing it at a later date between the leaves of the Villa's "distinguished arrivals"guest register. In the late 1920s, William Lauren Rhoades, son of William P. Rhoades and brother of the above mentioned Anita Rhoades, moved from San Francisco, where he had lived his entire adult life, and retired to Sierra Madre. He became involved in the local Historical Societies and wrote a manuscript entitled: "The History of the Famous Sierra Madre Villa Hotel." One suspects that while going through the family papers he ran across the card bearing Grant's signature and went on to write in the manuscript that Grant was a guest at the Villa. Reporters and authors have picked it up ever since. Recent comprehensive research shows that Grant never visited Los Angeles, and so could not have stayed at the Villa.

The telling of history is replete with these incidents—a story, repeated often enough, becomes accepted as fact and it becomes a difficult task to dispel the myth and regain the truth.

My thanks are expressed to Joyce Wenger whose comprehensive research on Grant and Cogswell led to the solution of the mystery of Grant's Signatures and Phyllis Hansen for her editorial skills.

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton.

Konrad F. Schreier, Jr., 1925-2004

Born December 15, 1925, in Evanston, Illinois, Konnie grew up in nearby Highland Park. In 1944 he graduated from Culver Military Academy in Indiana, on D Day.

Extreme near-sightedness prevented him from joining the Army, so he volunteered as an ambulance driver with the American Field Service. In that capacity he sailed to England on the *Queen Mary* and then on to Burma, where he served with the British forces in the 1945 Burma campaign, often in combat areas. This experience had a profound effect on his interests that lasted throughout his life.

After the war, he attended Lake Forest College, enlisted in the Army Reserves, and completed a course at the Ordnance School at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland. He and his wife, Nancy, were married in 1951 at All Saints' in Beverly Hills, the same little church where his memorial service was held in March 2004.

For over seventeen years he worked in research and development engineering, primarily in the field of pollution control. In the 1950's he became a Research Associate at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. His special interest was in weapons and transportation, and he helped develop the impressive Hall of Arms and Armor. He was also involved in the significant automobile collection that eventually was housed at the Peterson Automotive Museum. Ultimately, one of his Jeepsters became part of the collection. As a museum volunteer, he was proud of managing an archeological exploration the the San Pasqual Battlefield (near present-day Escondido). With the help of aerial photographs and on-the-ground mine detector sweeps manned by a few good Marines, artifacts were found that confirmed the correct location of the 1848 battleground. At San Pasqual, Mexican and U.S. troops fought the only significant battle of the war.

Konnie worked for 20th Century Fox as a technical consultant for *Tora! Tora! Tora!,* the story of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He researched historical details, interviewed men who were there, helped with set design and finding ships and airplanes. One flyable Zero was located: for aerial shots, Vultee trainers were modified with Zero-like canopies and painted with big orange emblems. Careful camera angles made it believable. After work on other films (*Patton, the Wind and the Lion*), he turned to writing full-time. His first book was published in 1969.

Konnie became a Fellow of the Company of Military Historians, a member of the U.S. Military History Commission, and received a number of awards. He became a respected military historian specializing in arms and armor, and collected an extensive library. In the 1970's he joined the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners. He wrote vignettes for *The Branding Iron* and edited *Brand Book #17.*

To Nancy and sons Konrad III and Douglas and their families, thanks for sharing Konnie with us.

—Frank Newton

Mary Gormly
1919-2004

Mary Gormly, Associate member of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners International and a Cal State L.A. librarian from 1962 to 1983, died July 19, 2004 from kidney failure and subsequent disorders. She was 84 years old. Mary was widely knowledgeable about the cultures of many Native American peoples, particularly those of the North American West.

Mary was bom October 14, 1919 in San Francisco. The family's roots, however, were in the Seattle area, and they settled in a house on the property of a family-owned business in Earlington. The Depression years led to the sale of the business property and loss of the house, and the family moved to Seattle. Mary had a twin brother, Jerry, now deceased, and has a younger brother, Cdr. M.J. "Joe" Travers, USN (Ret.). After the move, the children lived with their maternal grandparents. Mary graduated from Holy Names Academy. She then went to live with her aunt, her mother's twin, and attended Franklin High School; it was at about this time that she adopted a surname from her mother's Irish family.

After graduating from high school in 1938 Mary's education was interrupted by World War II. She was in the Civil Air Patrol for a time. Her service in the WAVES from 1943 to 1946 brought her to Washington, D.C. as a yeoman (petty officer), where she worked in the Navy Department buildings now located on Constitution Avenue (now the northern boundary of the Mall). Following that, she completed her undergraduate education in 1947 at the University of Washington with a B.A. in anthropology. She received an M.A. from Mexico City College in 1948 and was an instructor there 1948-9, concurrently continuing her studies at the *Escuela Nacional de Antropologia e Historia*. On return to the University of Washington, she did further graduate work and also served as a teaching fellow and research assistant in anthropology from 1949 to 1952. She taught English in Mexico City from 1953 to 1955. Her interests then led her to librarianship at the Washington State Museum from 1955 to 1959, when she received a master's degree in library science at the University of Washington. She went on to a position as librarian and assistant curator at the Amerind Foundation in Dragoon, Arizona through 1961. In 1962 she was appointed to the professional staff of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library at Cal State L.A. There she became a major reference resource for both students and faculty on ethnohistory as well as art and anthropology of the indigenous cultures in the areas in which she had lived and worked. She also served as consultant for several faculty colleagues whose books dealt with Central America, the American West, and early U.S. foreign relations. During 1973 she taught some classes in art history, covering Latin American, Native American, African and Pacific Islands art.

Mary's life was marked by her military service, her professional expertise, and her artistic preferences. She shared those interests with many friends, through many organizational memberships, including the American Legion, Navy League, U.S. Air Force Association, American Society for

Aerospace Education, the Autry Museum and the Southwest Museum (now merged as the Autry National Center), and both the Cal State L.A. Emeriti Association and CSU-ERFA. She held offices and other leadership positions in all. An enthusiastic member of Westerners, she belonged to Los Angeles, San Dimas and Huntington Corrals, and attended all three regularly. She was a member of many professional societies, including the American Anthropological Association, the Western Historical Association, International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences, International Congress of Americanists, and Western Social Sciences Association. She was an active participant in the Seminar on Acquisition of Latin-American Library Materials, and was interviewed for their oral history project. Her honors include election to Beta Phi Mu (Library Science), Phi Alpha Theta (History) and Pi Kappa Phi; she is listed in *Who's Who of American Women* and *Who's Who in California*. She received the Exceptional Service Award of the Air Force Association for her contributions to the American Society for Aerospace Education.

Mary was buried July 30, 2004 as she had requested, at the Riverside National Cemetery, following funeral Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Monrovia. Following the church services a delegation from the American Legion conducted military honors.

The CSULA Emeriti Association has established a graduate fellowship in her name, designated the Mary Gormly Fellowship in Native Studies, for which the association's fellowship committee will consider outstanding master's degree students in that field of study. When Mary entered the skilled nursing facility where she ultimately died, while she was still able to communicate, she was informed of the proposed fellowship and was delighted by it. Tax-deductible donations may be made by checks payable to "Cal State LA Foundation," with "Mary Gormly Fellowship" designated on memo line: Cal State L.A. Foundation, 5151 State University Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90032.

Corral Chips

Several of our corral members have been actively writing for various publications. **BILL WARREN** has written an informative article on the use of maps in teaching California history. His article appeared in the spring-summer issue of *Social Studies Review*, a major state publication for educators.

ART COBERY had a recent entry published in the spring issue of the *Overland Journal*. Art's letter discussed the various pioneers who traversed South Pass and the government reports regarding the wagons and settlers moving west during the 1820s and 1830s.

KEN AND CAROL PAULEY'S forthcoming book, *San Fernando, Rey de Sepana: An Illustrated history* is currently in publication with the Arthur H. Clark Company. The work will be available at year's end, and a book signing is scheduled for February 18, 2005 at registration for the 22nd Annual CMSA Conference, held at Mission San Fernando, Mission Hills, California.

Ken and Carol also attended a September symposium entitled "Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions," which was held in the Bancroft Research Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

ABE HOFFMAN has been actively involved in several important historical society events and conventions. In June, he participated in the 12th Annual Marie Northrop Lecture Series sponsored by the Los Angeles City Historical Society. He spoke on "Indom-

itable L.A.: Why People Come and Stay." The following month he traveled to San Jose for the 97th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, where he chaired a session on "Silent and Talkie: The Roots of American Cinema Culture." In November, he delivered a paper, "The Changing Perceptions of Mono Lake," to the Autry Western History Workshop.

Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

July Meeting Speaker Nick Curry

July Meeting

Corral member Nick Curry has long maintained an interest in the connection between business and cultural interests in southern California. He has compiled an extensive database on the United States Oil Industry, California's commercial development, including philanthropists, businessmen, and industrialists who have affected the promotion of the arts in southern California. Nick provided an inspiring talk on Franklin D. Murphy, a renaissance man who promoted southern California's cultural development in art and literature from 1960 until his death in 1994.

A Midwesterner, Franklin D. Murphy came to southern California in 1960 after establishing a successful practice in cardiology and teaching medicine in Kansas City. At the advent of the turbulent Sixties, he was appointed the dean of the UCLA Medical School and chancellor of the university.

During his tenure, Murphy established UCLA as a premier institution in the University of California system. He expanded the science programs, enlarged the medical school, and improved the landscape environment of the campus with the development of a sculpture garden. In addition, he created a large endowment fund for the library acquisition of rare books on the history of medicine.

In 1968, Murphy became chairman and later CEO of the Times Mirror Corporation. Meanwhile, he also worked on committees and fund-raising drives to improve the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Music Center. One of his most significant achievements was to help establish a 800 volume collection of rare fifteenth and early sixteenth-century works by Venetian printer, Aldus Manutius.

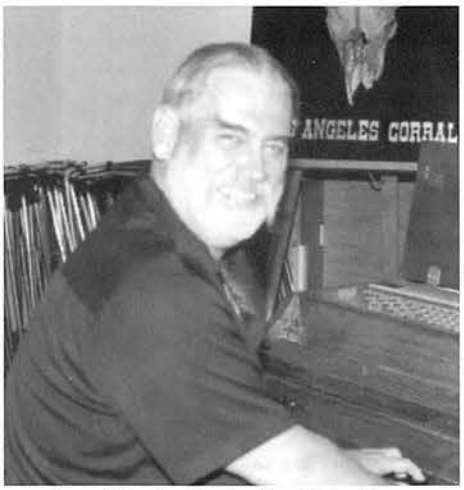
Franklin D. Murphy's vision and energy was important in the development of the region's cultural heritage. The corral's appreciation of Murphy was certainly enhanced by Nick's forthright presentation of this unique philanthropist, administrator, physician, teacher, corporate leader, and "renaissance man."

August Meeting

Sheriff Gary Turner provided a nostalgic look at the sentimental music of a time gone by—the Civil War. Gary is an accomplished pianist, and he provided the corral with a "melodic" insight into the lyrics behind the famous tunes of that era. Corral members were encouraged to sing as Gary played the many songs of period.

Gary showed no bias, providing the corral with a "balanced" presentation, reviewing both Confederate and Union songs. From the melancholy sounds of "Dixie," to the patriotic call to arms of the "Battle Cry of Freedom," Sheriff Turner identified the themes and intent behind these songs while reading various lines that highlighted ideas of abolition, slavery, patriotism, courage, and the human loss that so characterized that war.

Many of the Civil War tunes were a blend of Irish and English folk tunes that were influenced by original sounds and rhythms from freedmen, black slaves, camp meetings



Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

August Meeting Speaker Sheriff Gary Turner

Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

September Meeting Speaker Michael Sanborn

and minstrel shows. As an added feature, Gary supplied each corral member with a booklet of songs in order to sing and read the lyrics during the presentation. Although few new talents and future "crooners" were discovered, Gary's presentation brought a refreshing new understanding of the music that characterized this momentous period of our nation's history.

September Meeting

Michael Sanborn gave a spirited presentation on the significant role of Phineas Banning in the construction of southern California's Los Angeles-San Pedro railroad. Michael is museum director for the Banning Residence Museum. He is responsible for the daily operations of the museum, program scheduling, directing staff, and maintaining the preservation and care of the various museum components.

A nineteen year-old Phineas Banning migrated to southern California during the frontier era, a time when gold fever swept the far West. In 1851, Banning was introduced to frontier transportation, working for a stage line bringing goods to Los Angeles. During the following decade Banning purchased a 2600 acre land parcel from the Dominguez family, and built a hotel and landing at present-day Wilmington. He extended the stage line to Mexico and north to the Owens Valley, carrying dry goods, mail, and a variety of cargo to and from his port depot..

During the Civil War, Banning became a powerful voice in the Republican party, supporting the Union war effort, and developing friendships with Abel Stearns, Benjamin Wilson, and other important figures in southern California. Railroad fever swept the country as the transcontinental railroad became a reality, and Los Angeles became a focal point of interest for the construction of a new railroad line. A railroad bill pass the state legislature in 1868 and Banning was chosen as contractor. Needless to say, his vast land tract became a prime location for the construction of a route from Wilmington to Los Angeles. In a hotly contested battle with John G. Downey, the Dominguez property was selected by a geologic survey as the best route for the construction of a railroad.

Mr. Sanborn noted that the railroad was completed in 1869, and throughout the next decade the line became the dominant method of transportation from the harbor to the city. Banning eventually sold and then repurchased the Wilmington landing and railroad from the Southern Pacific. The family controlled the line until the World War I era, building a trestle that moved the line directly to San Pedro. If anything, Banning's vision of connecting the harbor to the city was realized, which led to boom and growth that so characterized Los Angeles and the surrounding vicinity in the decades to come.

An Eventful Night in Tombstone!

by Loren Wendt

Tombstone, Arizona, called, "The Town Too Tough To Die"
After one eventful night there now I know the reason why
So come along and join me—pretend that you were there

The Posse* came to Tombstone for some culture and some fun
And we had partied hard but now our day was done
So, back to the Lookout Lodge, one of Arizona's best
For some reminiscin' and some good old needed rest

We had seen so much, so many memories we would keep
And my mind was much too busy, I couldn't really sleep
The Posse had bedded down and I heard my Betty snore
So I left a lovin' note and I sidled out the door

My Lord! It was Mother Nature's crowning touch!
The night was filled with beauty, it really was too much
Stars studded the moon-lit sky and it was clear and bright
And the Dragoons stood in bold relief on that awesome night

So I started on my journey not knowin' where I'd go
I realized something was happening, but, what, I didn't know
And then out on the highway that runs by our motel

I saw someone was coming but who I couldn't tell

Then I saw it was old Ed Schieffelin with his pick-axe in his hand
He's the one who staked out Tombstone in this Arizona land
So we walked on side by side and the night was calm and still
As we passed on by that graveyard, the one they call Boot-Hill

And here came Tom and Frank McLaurey, young Billy Clanton, too
There were Spence and Stillwell, and Ringo, just to name a few
Ike Clanton walked behind us as he always did
Like in the big gun-fight when he ran away and hid

We walked on into Tombstone and we didn't miss a beat
Toughnut and Fremont, Allen, and every numbered street
From First on down to Sixth, we covered one and all
Can't speak for the rest of them but I really had a ball

We were joined by Big Nose Kate, surely one of a kind
And we know the deadly one, Doc Holliday, would not be far behind
Here came that "Angel", Nellie Cashman, still had flour on her nose
From bakin' her famous pies, at least that's what I suppose

Past the Bird-Cage Theater where an old-time actor sat
Sporting a diamond stick-pin and dusty old top hat
Soon he was joined by two frowzy dance hall gals
He winked at us as if to say, "these really are my pals"

Then we crossed the street and took an off-beat path
It led up to the building that housed The

Tombstone Epitaph
John Clum came out to see who was making such a fuss
When he saw that famous group he didn't hesitate to join us

We turned the corner and the Crystal Palace came in sight
And who should part the bat-wing doors and stride into the night
Yep, the Earps, Wyatt, Morgan and Virgil, the mighty three were there
I wondered who else might join us but I didn't really care

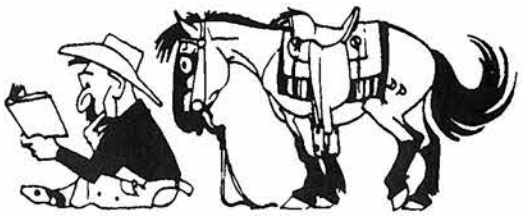
Because we were heading for that place where they had that awful fight
Where the Earps gunned down the Cowboys—now, who was really right?
I don't suppose we'll ever know the truth of this and that
Then I stopped my ponderin' cuz' here were the Masterson, Ed and Bat

Now our group was filled and we walked on for a way
All at once they stopped and showed me that was where they'd stay
They wouldn't go no further, but that wasn't good enough for me
I walked into the O.K. wonderin' what they didn't want me to see

And when I looked behind me they were fading out of sight
Each and every one just disappeared into the night
I guess the memories of that place were just too much to bear
Now you've heard my story, glad you came along to share

Tombstone, Arizona, called "The Town Too Tough To Die!"
After that eventful night I sure know the reason why!

*A volunteer group organized in San Dimas, California in the 1980's.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

WHITEWASHED ADOBE: *The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past,* by William Deverell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. ISBN 0-520-21869-8330 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Index. Order from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California, 94704-1012, www.ucpress.edu.

Whitewashed Adobe is one of this year's important works on southern California. Bill Deverell has written a provocative book dealing with ethnocentrism and patterns of racial privilege that have colored our region's past. This study is as much an academic inquiry as a narrative discourse on race in Los Angeles. For Deverell, institutional racial prejudice in the maturation of city's development, which have created romantic stereotypes of our Mexican heritage, makes the concept of multiculturalism sound like empty words.

Deverell takes the reader from the Mexican American war into the mid-twentieth century, highlighting individuals and events that relegated the Mexican presence into a nostalgic, neatly sequestered, unassuming influence on the city. To be sure, the underlying tensions between Mexican and whites was evident in the frontier days following statehood. However, with the land booms of the late-eighteenth century, growth of agricultural business, population influx, and rise of a commercial economy, southern California no longer felt a Mexican threat. If anything, they celebrated the Mexican heritage in the tradition of laborer, not citizen. For the author, the white, middle-class, suburban Angeleno embraced the Americanization

of the Mexican, evidenced in the Los Angeles La Fiesta parades of the 1890s. The La Fiesta romanticized the fandango, reinforced the images of an indolent people, beckoned to a rancho nostalgia that reinforced cultural distinctions between an industrious American people building a metropolis from a sleepy Mexican town of a time gone by.

The strength of *Whitewashed Adobe* lies in the microcosms that the author highlights in the twentieth century, which illustrated the idealized view of our Mexican heritage against the realities of our past and present. The Los Angeles River became a focal point of the City Beautiful movement, an effort to "pave with concrete" the troublesome realities of Mexican poverty that characterized the Los Angeles River banks during the progressive era. John Steven McGroarty's popular Mission Play, offered a romantic tale of Spanish California, replete with a protective church, threatening Spanish authorities, and a helpless indigenous populace. The Mission Play cemented our local identity, evolved as a morality play, and fed an eager post-World War I audience with the type of sanitized history that a self-congratulatory metropolis demanded for itself. The author points to the Simons Brick Yard, a well-meaning commercial enterprise where Mexicans worked as day laborers but lived in tenements plagued by disease. These Mexican laborers sometimes fought the persistent stereotype of a passive work force, organized wildcat strikes, and somehow survived under a paternalism that often ignored exploitative working conditions.

Deverell utilizes a variety of primary and secondary sources, highlighting the most recent historiography on the subject. *Whitewashed Adobe* is important as a starting point, a reminder of the destructive nature of myth in masking the realities of discrimination. In that sense, it is an impetus for future research into the cultural tensions and socio-economic patterns that have importuned upon our city's understanding of its Mexican-American past.

—Ronald C. Woolsey

NEZ PERCE SUMMER, 1877: *The U. S. Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis,* by Jerome A. Greene. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000. 554 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Appendices, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $49.95. Order from Montana Historical Society Press, 225 North Roberts, P.O. Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201, (406) 444-4768.

This is a story of the assault by the United States Government on the Nez Perce lndians of the Idaho area, culminating in a shameful series of military attacks and the diaspora of native people during the year 1877. Nee-Me-Poo is the name the Nez Perce call themselves. In the years leading up to 1877, the Nez Perce had lived a relatively good life. They had been friendly and helpful to other Indians and whites who came through their land and had gained some fame with assistance to Captains Lewis and Clark in the great exploration of western North America. They had lived in peace with most of their neighbors and had become expert horse breeders noted for development of the now-famed Appaloosa. Lewis and Clark had been the first white Americans officially representing the concept of "Manifest Destiny", the expansion of the United States from "sea to shining sea". This policy would forever change the history of this country, the world, and most particularly, the lives of all native peoples living west of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

The Nee-Me-Poo had created a productive land which they inhabited for many years. Naturally, because it was so good, white settlers wanted it. The trickle of immigrants became an engulfing rush and the natives were continually pushed back to smaller areas of land as the whites demanded more for themselves. Like many tribes, no one person was a supreme ruler among the Nez Perce. Each band had its own chiefs, usually a "war" chief and a "peace" chief. The latter had counseled patience and friendship in the face of white incursions. Finally, the breaking point came in 1877

when white settlers moved in and began taking over the Wallowa Valley. With such continuing pressures certain young braves took it upon themselves to kill some of these new immigrants. The consequence was a decision by the government that it must send the Army to protect the newcomers and drive out the "savages". Civil War hero Brigadier General O. O. Howard led most of the fights and the chase which ensued.

Greene's book is an exhaustive study and recounting of the campaign which followed. There were numerous skirmishes and battles as the "hostile" band of Nee-Me-Poo under Chief Joseph and others made their way east and then north of their homeland in hope of finding peace across the border in Canada. Greene details each encounter in far greater depth than has ever come to light in the past. However, the title of the book must be remembered when reading these accounts: "The U. S. Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis" (emphasis added). Most of the story is told from the Army's side. Admittedly, the Army's records are written down and thus easier for an academic historian to research. However, I could not help but feel the entire manuscript was weighted toward the military. Of course, the native people had some of their story told, but not nearly to the same extent. This was my major disappointment with the book.

Nevertheless, it is a most important addition to the several histories which have been written about this episode. For those interested in the story, I recommend consulting other sources to learn more about the crisis from the side of the Nez Perce. Greene's book is long, 554 pages. However, be advised that only 358 pages are devoted to the story. The balance of the book is devoted to numerous lists, notes, sources, etc. For example, if you really want to know that Sgt. Peter Blumenberg, Battery E, Fourth Artillery, was wounded by a conical ball in the thorax on July 11, 1877, at the battle of Clearwater—you will find this and many other such arcane facts in abundance. This kind of detail, while interesting to some, tends to overwhelm with minutiae. Despite these criticisms, let me conclude by saying the book is truly a worthy piece of work, but not something for the casual reader.

—Jerry Selmer

HORSE OPERA: *The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy,* by Peter Stanfield. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. 180 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Index. Cloth, $37.50; paper, $16.95. Order from University of Illinois Press, 1325 South Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820-6903, (800) 537-5487, www.press.uillinois.edu.

The subtitle of Peter Stanfield's book aptly states the essence of that odd genre of 1930s Western films, the singing cowboy. He persuasively argues that singing Westerns were far more than an aberration appealing to a juvenile audience. Although Stanfield summarizes numerous plots of these films, it is the audience that went regularly to see these movies that commands attention in this book. Major studios gave up on "prestige Westerns" early in the 1930s as returning minimal profit. Smaller studios, however, most notably Republic, found an audience that craved Westerns.

Working-class people in rural areas, along with newly arrived rural migrants in cities, identified with the problems the plots presented and applauded the heroes who vanquished the villains. During the Great Depression, singing Westerns often depicted struggles of labor v. capital, unscrupulous bankers cheating ranchers and farmers, and men who took to the outlaw trail motivated by circumstances similar to the wrongs that Robin Hood fought against. One has only to think of the prejudice against the Okies who lost their farms, the bank failures of the era, and the exploits of Bonnie and Clyde and Pretty Boy Floyd. The plot lines also can be found in the "formula" non-singing Westerns of the era.

Stanfield takes a running start on the singing Western by tracing its antecedents to the silent film era and Broncho Billy, William S. Hart, and Tom Mix, and in the dime nov-

els dating to the late 19th century. He argues that Owen Wister's *The Virginian* attracted an urban readership, whereas working-class readers identified more with the Flying U novels of B.M. Bower that depicted cowboys that actually worked for a living. What set the stage for singing Westerns, however, was more than the advent of sound films. Phonograph records and radio provided important collateral opportunities for a performer (not an actor) who could portray an action hero, right a wrong, and sing a song. The person who became the personification for all these requirements, Gene Autry, dominated the singing Western just as he dominates this book. Autry's films of the 1930s offered something for everyone—women, young girls and boys, men—in short, they appealed to an entire family, usually one that was trying to survive the problems the Great Depression placed on millions of people. Autry's films offered a vicarious victory over those ills.

By concentrating on Autry, Stanfield gives minimal coverage to the competitors and imitators. Roy Rogers (Leonard Slye in his Sons of the Pioneers days) comes in a distant second, with Tex Ritter, Fred Scott, Dick Foran, and a few others eating trail dust far in the distance. Long forgotten singing cowboys Smith Ballew and Ray Whitley never get past a brief mention on page 1, and Stanfield ends his study in 1939 even though singing Westerns lasted until the mid-1950s, with Eddie Dean, Jimmy Wakely, and others joining Autry and Rogers in the 1940s.

In focusing on Autry and the plots, Stanfield neglects the writers of those stories and screenplays that provided the plots for the singing Westerns. A few sentences mention Betty Burbridge, even fewer for Connie Lee and Luci Ward, discuss these writers in terms of their ability to establish stronger female characters in singing cowboy pictures than are found in formula Westerns, but this assertion is debatable. Elizabeth Burbridge began writing for the movies in 1917, and her career continued until the 1950s when she was doing scripts for television, including the *Cisco Kid* series and Autry's TV shows. A brief check of the work of these women, as well as men who wrote for Autry's 1930s films, reveals they wrote much more than singing Western screenplays. In fact, exploring their lives might yield important reasons for the plot lines they created. As it is, readers will find the synopses interesting but won't know much about the people who wrote them.

This book offers considerable insight into the phenomenon of the singing cowboy. More important, it challenges the reader to consider the singing Westerns well beyond the stereotypes under which they have long been known. In order to appreciate them, you need to get past the obvious anachronisms, violations of the historical record, and "cowboy" costumes, and Stanfield can certainly guide you in that direction.

—Abraham Hoffman