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Handcolored print by Frank Leslie depicting a train rounding the bend as Chinese railroad workers look on. In the background is the south fork of the American River near Coloma, where gold was first discovered. Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection, 1878. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.

Asian Pioneers: The Chinese and Japanese in California

by Abraham Hoffman

During the latter half of the 19th century, immigrants came to the United States from the Pacific as well as the Atlantic side. Asian immigrants left their countries for motives similar to their European counterparts, and the United States offered attractive opportunities for any ambitious people willing to risk their future in a strange new land. For example, internal disorders in China propelled many young men to leave the Pearl River Delta and the Canton region to try their luck in the California gold fields in the 1850s.

Word of the discovery of gold in California sent thousands of Chinese eastward across the Pacific in search of the elusive metal. However, most of these gold

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EDITOR'S CORNER

As we read Abe Hoffman's article: "Asian Pioneers: The Chinese and Japanese in California," the most remarkable fact that jumps out at us was the incredible amount of time, energy and money devoted to anti-Oriental prejudice in the history of California. The list of legislation alone is mind boggling from the Foreign Miners' tax to the Chinese Exclusion Act to the Stout report to congressional legislation of 1882, 1888, 1894, and 1904 to the Exclusion law to the Alien Land Act and finally culminating in the piece de resistance, Executive Order 9066 or better known as the involuntary relocation of Japanese Americans to camps a long way from the Pacific coast. If we can't send them back to Japan, send them into the interior.

This does not include restricting the Chinese to "Chinatowns" which most non Orientals viewed as quaint, or segregated schools or cutting off queues or endless other attempts to keep people of oriental descent as second class citizens. All this of course was done in the name of racism in spite of the fact that all these people wanted to do was work hard and have a good life.

Prejudice or racism is a powerful force whether directed at Blacks, Mexicans, Chinese or Irish or people from the Middle East and is usually based on fear, of what is not clear to us.

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seekers had no funds to make the voyage. Anglo Americans misunderstood the manner by which the Chinese did come. "Coolie labor" illegally contracted in the old country was illegal in the United States, but the term did not accurately fit the Chinese who went to California. They came as indentured servants, subject to the discipline of a Chinese societal structure that white Americans seldom glimpsed or comprehended. As members of a company or *tong,* the Chinese owed allegiance and a sizable portion of their income to the merchant who had paid their passage across the Pacific. These powerful merchants controlled the Chinese, keeping them in the status of indebted peons. The merchant provided the social outlets by which the Chinese miners could for brief periods forget the drudgery of hard work—brothels, gambling houses, and opium dens. Anglo Americans accepted the merchants as leaders and representatives of the Chinese community and expected them to keep the miners in line. Eventually, as some Chinese moved to areas away from the influence of merchants and tongs, they began looking around and saw the land for what it could be worth to them.

The California Gold Rush attracted gold seekers from all over the world. Although most of the prospectors were English-speaking Americans who came by wagon train, or sailed around Cape Horn or down to Panama and over the isthmus, there were enough people from all the countries in Europe, Hispanic miners from Mexico, Peru, and Chile, free blacks, Californios who were there before the Americans came, and missionized Indians who preceded the Californios, to create quite a volatile mix. Within this ethnic and national amalgam the Chinese stood distinctly foreign in their race, language, clothing, and appearance. They intended to stay long enough to make their fortune in the gold fields, then return to China. This attitude has caused some scholars to label them "sojourner" rather than true immigrants, but in fact most gold seekers felt the same way.

Chinese prospectors were patient in their search for gold. They often avoided problems with white miners by buying their claims when the whites thought the placers were exhausted, then meticulously probed for what had been overlooked. Still, their distinctive appearance made them easy scapegoats and targets of abuse as California's frontier population swelled and gold became harder to find. Chinese prospectors were victimized by the passage of a blatantly racist law called the Foreign Miners' Tax. Initially a proclamation composed by military commander Persifor F. Smith, the California legislature gave it the force of law soon after statehood. The law required "alien miners" to purchase a license every month for twenty dollars. Anyone who didn't pay the tax would be evicted from the gold fields, and repeated violations could result in a jail sentence and a big fine. County sheriffs appointed deputies to collect the tax, and a deputy received three dollars for each license he sold. The law had more than enough loopholes to ensure corruption and extortion. Gold being an item that required a degree of luck as well as prospecting skill, it could elude a miner far more often than the lucky shoveling of a spadeful of dirt with the fortunate nugget in the muck.

Rather than pay the tax, alien miners abandoned the gold fields. Spanish-speaking prospectors, as well as anyone deemed "foreign" (the English language protected Australian convicts from being labeled alien), including the Chinese, stopped panning or digging for gold. Rescue came from Anglo merchants who lost money when prospectors stopped buying shovels and other mining equipment and supplies. The merchants successfully pressured the legislature to repeal the tax. Two years later, however, the tax law was reinstituted, this time singling out the Chinese. They paid it, and until it was repealed in the early 1860s, the Chinese contributions accounted for a quarter of the state's revenue.

By the early 1860s prospecting for gold had evolved from panning for placer deposits in a mountain stream to big busi-

ness, including hydraulic mining, lode mining, and large-scale efforts to divert streams and process huge amounts of earth to get at precious metal. Chinese prospectors lacked the resources and capital needed to construct elaborate extractive processes, much less the credit or funds to bring heavy machinery for stamping mills around Cape Horn from the east. However, an employment opportunity arose that resulted in the active recruitment of Chinese labor. This was the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

A few visionaries had spoken of a railroad across the continent as early as the 1840s, but the first person in California to propose it seriously was Theodore Judah, an engineer who investigated the feasibility of putting rails over the Sierra Nevada Range. He interested only a few investors in his Central Pacific Railroad, but those who became his partners would emerge as ruthless and wealthy railroad barons. They were Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins, soon to be known as the "Big Four." When the Civil War began, the Lincoln Administration needed California on the Union side and was concerned over the degree of Southern sympathy in the young state. One way to bind California to the Union would be with railroad tracks. Led by Huntington, the Central Pacific lobbied for a Pacific Railroad bill, and at the end of 1862 it became law. Under its provisions the Union Pacific would build tracks west from Omaha, Nebraska, and the Central Pacific would build east from Sacramento; the two companies would meet somewhere vaguely in Utah.

The Union Pacific hired thousands of mainly white workers, the majority of them Irish immigrants, and began laying track across the Great Plains, subsidized by the federal government. The Central Pacific, however, found it difficult to retain workers. The Sierra Nevada presented a formidable challenge. Workers would have to dig lengthy tunnels through hard rock and dynamite pathways through the mountains. White workers joined construction crews just long enough to earn grubstake money, then were off to the latest rumor of a gold or silver strike. Charles Crocker, the Big Four partner in charge of construction, needed a more stable work force. When it was suggested he try hiring Chinese workers, he at first dismissed the idea, noting their short stature and alleged lack of stamina. Then it was noted the Chinese had built the Great Wall, so Crocker agreed to hire them on an experimental basis.

The Chinese workers more than fulfilled Crocker's expectations. They patiently picked at the incredibly hard Sierra rock, were lowered in baskets to drill holes in the side of cliffs to tamp in blasting powder, and didn't quit to go elsewhere. They also worked for what to white seemed low wages, but to the Chinese was an amount from which they could save money. Hundreds died in work-related accidents, as when the baskets were not raised quickly enough when the dynamite was set off. Between 1863 and 1869, when the transcontinental railroad was completed, as many as 12,000 Chinese worked for the Central Pacific.

When the railroad had become a reality, many Chinese continued to work for the Central Pacific (later Southern Pacific), doing maintenance work or building spur lines. Others went to work in the Sacramento Delta region, as tenant farmers or migrant laborers. From the 1870s on, large corporations controlled land ownership, utilizing the "boss system" in which a few Chinese supervisors hired and controlled work crews. Chinatowns soon flourished at such towns as Rio Vista, Courtland, Walnut Grove, and Isleton. Most of the Chinese were men, as Chinese women were scarce. Ironically, they lived under conditions remarkably similar to those that caused them to leave the Pearl River Delta in the first place. Chinese workers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta specialized in growing asparagus; eventually its production declined, the Chinese living there grew old, and the Chinatowns gradually faded from the rural communities.

Chinese workers found employment in other areas where they did not directly compete with whites. Between 1876 and 1906 more than 80,000 Chinese worked in the American merchant marine. They filled a variety of positions, including seamen, boatswains, firemen, coal passers, and cooks. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company and the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company (the latter under the British flag) employed largely Chinese crews, supervised by white officers. Despite pressures from American seamen's unions, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and prejudice against Chinese, sea captains found Chinese sailors hardworking and reliable. Eventually restrictive regulations and legislation caused the decline of Chinese in the U.S. merchant marine, and later generations inaccurately considered them of minor importance in the era.

As resentment built against the Chinese, they retreated into large cities, created Chinatowns to minimize hostile contact, and engaged in economic activities that avoided competition with white businesses, such as laundries and restaurants. They were also heavily involved in the making of shoes, underwear, and shoes. Inevitably, whites claimed that Chinese were taking jobs away from them no matter how hard Chinese tried to avoid direct competition. Despite exaggerated claims of a "Yellow Peril" that would bring hordes of Chinese to North America, they were not as numerous as their detractors charged. One reason for this was the disparity between the ratio of Chinese men to women. A successful Chinese might return to China or send for a wife, but most laborers spent their lives as bachelors. Isolated from the general society by discrimination and the control of the Chinese merchant elite, most Chinese remained secluded in their Chinatowns.

The white man's view of the Chinese was a largely negative one, a rejection in terms of race, language, diet, clothing, and customs. To the whites of the 19th century, Chinese were so different that any idea of their assimilation into American society was ludicrous. Those who feared Chinese immigrants did so for a variety of reasons; one of the main ones was economic. California's labor movement was especially strong, particularly in the San Francisco area, and labor unions argued strongly against the presence of a labor force that would work for a very low wage and subsist on a low standard of living. With the preponderance of Chinese in California young and male, whites considered the few Chinese women to be prostitutes, an assertion with some truth in it, since the merchants and tong leaders brought women to America for that purpose. Unwary whites might also be tempted to indulge in Chinese vices, especially the notorious opium dens.

Whites also opposed the manner in which Chinese came to the United States. They saw little distinction between illegal coolie labor and prior indebtedness for ticket costs. On occasion white hostility erupted into violence. On October 24, 1871, a white mob in Los Angeles attacked the town's Chinese residents, killing twenty of them, and stealing more than $40,000 in cash and valuables. The *Los Angeles Star* blamed the Chinese for bringing the tragedy on themselves. "Upon all the earth there does not exist a people who value life so lightly, who practice so many horrors, or who are so unmerciful in their outrages," editorialized the *Star,* in a statement more descriptive of the lynch mob than its victims. Such outrages were not isolated incidents; accounts of attacks on Chinese people recur in newspapers through the rest of the 19th century.

Almost from the first arrival of Chinese in California, whites attempted to restrict their competition through a series of discriminatory laws, most of which higher courts declared unconstitutional. The laws included the notorious Foreign Miners' Tax, taxes on laundries, "cubic air" occupancy laws (limiting where poor Chinese could live), and haircut laws that enabled jailers to cut off Chinese queues, the long braided "pigtail" that seemed to infuriate many whites because it looked so utterly alien to their own customs. The state constitutional

convention in 1849 attempted to deal with the Chinese by denying them the right to own or inherit land, and forbidding Chinese from employment on public works projects.

Wherever settlements of Chinese existed, whether in large cities such as San Francisco or New York, or small towns such as Los Angeles or the hamlets in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, stories spread of how Chinese culture and habits threatened the American way of life. In the 1870s the California Board of Health commissioned Dr. Arthur B. Stout to compile a report on the Chinese population of the state. Stout and Dr. Thomas M. Logan, a former president of the American Medical Association and permanent secretary of the State Board of Health, expressed concern over the health threat posed by Chinese immigrants. Logan fully believed that Chinese accepted filth and vice as part of their daily life. "In view of such inducements to disease and enemies to health," he said, "it is a matter of astonishment that a relentless pestilence does not arise every year and spread dismay and desolation throughout our land."

The Stout report accepted without qualification the idea of the Yellow Peril. "Better it would be for our country that the hordes of Genghis Khan should overflow the land... than that these more pernicious hosts in the garb of friends, should insidiously poison the well-springs of life, and spreading far and wide, gradually undermine and corrode the vitals of our strength and posterity." The doctors warned against the spread of cholera from China and blamed Chinese for bringing an assortment of sexually transmitted diseases to California, as well as "Chinese leprosy." Another disease, "Chinese syphilis," was supposedly a more virulent strain than the European variety.

Other areas of the nation added to California's dire warnings. The *New York Times* noted, "Their religion is wholly unlike ours, and they poison and stab." Missionaries reported that in China girls as young as four or five years of age became prostitutes. Chinamen were preoccupied with gambling, idolatry, and getting innocent (white) people addicted to opium.

Seen in retrospect, the allegations made by whites betray an astonishing level and racism and intolerance. In the end, however, it was politics and economics that most affected the future of Chinese in America. In 1873 a major economic depression struck the United States, resulting in widespread unemployment and labor unrest. In California the joblessness led to the formation of the Workingmen's Party, led by an Irish drayman, Denis Kearney. Speaking in the vacant sandlots of San Francisco, Kearney attracted large audiences with his simplistic solution to the state's economic problems. He exclaimed, "The Chinese must go!"

The Workingmen's Party achieved more than just sandlot oratory. It elected a number of people to various local offices as well as delegates to the California constitutional convention of 1879. Although its influence proved short-lived, it generated considerable publicity beyond the borders of the state. In the 1880s the anti-Chinese campaign received national attention, a result of the failure of either Democrats or Republicans to maintain lasting control of Congress or the presidency. Both parties viewed California as a key state and adopted anti-Chinese positions in an effort to win votes. The 1868 Burlingame Treaty, which had dealt fairly with China, became the victim of hostile treaties and congressional legislation. The intent of these treaties and laws, noted historian Elmer C. Sandmeyer, "was to prohibit the coming of all Chinese except government officials, merchants, students, and travellers; to permit the return of registered Chinese laborers who possessed family or property; to extend these restrictions to the island territories of the United States; and to give authority to the executive branch of the government to make any and all regulations deemed necessary for the effective enforcement of these laws."

The 1882 Exclusion law marked the culmination of the anti-Chinese campaign. Pressures on Congress to prohibit Chinese immigration had resulted in passage of a law

limiting to fifteen the number of Chinese on incoming ships, but President Rutherford Hayes vetoed it. George Seward, U.S. minister to China, was removed because he opposed exclusion. In his place a diplomatic mission to China revised the Burlingame Treaty and, after some hard bargaining, replaced it with the Argell Treaty of 1880. The Argell Treaty ended free immigration and gave Congress the right to "regulate, limit, or suspend" the immigration of Chinese laborers. After some political debate Congress approved, and President Chester A. Arthur signed, a bill excluding Chinese for ten years, with a provision for extending the ban periodically by decades.

The Chinese government, plagued by pressures from other countries and internal problems, could not retaliate. The United States thus successfully used treaties and international law to legitimize arbitrary actions against a weak country. Not all white Americans opposed the Chinese, however. Missionary societies and manufacturers with an eye to the potential Chinese market, and ship companies, opposed restriction and exclusion, as did people who held humanitarian views. But nativism predominated during this period; between 1880 and 1904 numerous bills were proposed, passed, declared unconstitutional, and proposed again in revised form, until restriction and exclusion for China became the law of the land.

Exclusion continued until after World War II. Chinese immigrants remained an exotic transplant in America, living mainly in Chinatowns, surfacing here and there as cooks on cattle ranches or operators of laundries in small towns. The American view of the Chinese changed dramatically when China resisted the Japanese in the 1930s and in the Second World War were allies of the United States. When Madame Chiang Kaishek, fluent in English, addressed a joint session of Congress to a standing ovation in 1943, it was noted this staunch friend of America was ineligible for U.S. citizenship. In 1952 the immigration law was revised, and a token number of Chinese could immigrate to the United States. In 1965 major immigration law reforms were enacted, once and for all removing racist restrictions against Chinese immigration.

In contrast to China in the 19th century, Japan was fast becoming a major player in world affairs. Japanese foreign policy underwent a major change in the 1850s. From 1638 to 1854 Japan had practiced a policy of isolation, excluding foreigners and forbidding emigration. It was awakened from this political slumber when Commodore Matthew C. Perry led a U.S. naval fleet into Yokohama Harbor and made Japan aware of the technological advantages other nations were developing, as well as the political influence those advantages (particularly in a military sense) could yield. In 1868 the Emperor Meiji assumed power over the government, ending the centuries-long rule of the shogunate. Under Meiji's regime Japanese individuals took tentative steps to emigrate, frequently as students. Those who left Japan for economic reasons were not, as is often supposed, the poorest people, but were often middle-class young men who saw little opportunity in agriculture in a country where arable land was limited. The military conscription law served as another reason in causing young men to emigrate. Japanese men immigrated to a number of countries, including such Latin American nations as Peru and Brazil. In the case of the United States, they first immigrated to Hawaii, and thus were already there when the United States annexed the islands in 1898. By the end of the century Japanese immigrants were moving from Hawaii to the Pacific Coast, as well as directly from Japan. Unlike the Chinese, who came first to rural areas and then concentrated in cities, the Japanese began their employment by doing menial work in the cities, but soon became involved in the state's agricultural enterprises.

White Americans soon realized that although Chinese and Japanese might look the same to them, they came from very different societies. China was dominated by European imperialists who had carved out "spheres of influence" there, dividing the country into exclusive trading areas. Chinese

attempts to regain control of their country, as in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, were put down severely by a coalition that included U.S. Marines. Secretary of State John Hay's famous "Open Door Notes" reflected a U.S attempt to gain a place in a potential China market already under European control. Japan, incidentally, was one of the imperialist nations that claimed a sphere of influence in China.

If China in 1900 was under the heel of imperialism, Japan was a country on the make. Its victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, concluding with a peace treaty mediated by President Theodore Roosevelt (who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his effort in 1906), let the world know that Japan was a force to be reckoned with. The country had made up for its centuries of isolation by rapidly industrializing and adopting Western technology and methods, but it retained its traditional culture. This made for an odd blend of modernism and tradition that Westerners often found difficult to comprehend. Above all, Japan was highly nationalistic, and its emigrants came to the United States with a point of view not unlike the Americans who had expanded westward across the continent in the belief that Manifest Destiny was guiding them to do so. The Japanese who believed in "eastward expansion" were shocked to learn that white Americans saw things quite differently.

Statistically, the Japanese, Chinese, and other Asians who came to America made up a tiny fraction of the United States' population, perhaps .001% in 1924. The pre-World War II peak of Japanese population in California was about 112,000. Unlike the Chinese who were excluded as of 1882, the Japanese were under no restrictions until 1907, and it was not until 1924 that they, too, were excluded.

The Japanese had a deep reverence for the land, and they brought this belief with them to America. They worked and saved their money to buy or lease or rent land for their agricultural efforts. When laws were passed preventing them from buying land, they purchased it in the name of their American-born children or formed corporations to evade the discriminatory laws, sometimes in partnership with Caucasian friends. They applied scientific farming methods of cultivation to intensive farming, getting maximum production from minimum acreage. Along with Caucasians who established such agricultural cooperatives as the California Fruit Growers Exchange (now Sunkist Growers), Japanese farmers formed cooperatives and competed successfully against large-scale vegetable growers and shippers. One man, George Shima, became a millionaire by growing potatoes in the San Joaquin Delta region, and was known as the "potato king." Born Kinji Ushijima in Japan, Shima (1865-1926) came to California in 1888, bought up land in the delta area, and by 1913, had some 29,000 acres under cultivation and was producing 80% of the state's potato crop.

Shima provides an example of the Japanese immigrants who were soon known for their ambition and dedication to hard work. Young Japanese men worked as servants were called "houseboys" or "schoolboys," but while they were so employed they went to school. By any standard, Japanese immigrants were doing all the right things that American idealism expected from immigrants—working hard, prospering, becoming successful. But many white Americans made no distinction among Orientals, for them the Chinese and Japanese were the same. So were their children, even though the Fourteenth Amendment clearly stated that children born in the United States were American citizens no matter what their race or background. Even though Japanese farmers were mainly involved in growing rice, potatoes, berries, vegetables, and flowers—areas not necessarily competitive with white farmers—Anglos resented their effort.

If whites confused the distinction between Chinese and Japanese, the United States government knew the difference. In 1906 the San Francisco School Board ordered 93 Japanese students to attend the segregated Chinese school in the city. These children were from Japan, not born in the United

States, so the matter quickly became one of diplomatic importance between the United States and Japan. Labor leaders, congressional representatives, and San Francisco politicians all favored the removal and supported segregated schools. Teddy Roosevelt and legal scholars, however, thought otherwise. With his newly minted Nobel Peace Prize medal, President Roosevelt had no desire to alienate the Japanese government. He pressured the school board to back off, promising he would reduce future Japanese immigration. He then worked out an informal "Gentlemen's Agreement" through diplomatic channels. Japan promised to exclude Japanese laborers from coming to the United States in the future. Merchants, students, professionals, and others of a higher social class were exempt from the agreement. However, the "Gentlemen's Agreement" had no authority over state laws discriminating against Orientals. Neither nation was fully satisfied with the agreement. In 1908 the Root-Takahira Agreement attempted to solve greater diplomatic issues than the exclusion of ninety-three children from public schools. The United States and Japan agreed on the U.S.'s interest in pursuing an Open Door Policy in China and recognized each other's territorial possessions in the Pacific. Both nations also recognized the independence of China, where a revolution in 1911 would end the monarchy.

It is interesting to note that neither Roosevelt nor the Japanese ambassador expressed any concerns about non-Japanese nationals, such as Koreans, East Indians, or other Asians who were segregated. They also omitted any mention of Japanese-American children. These matters were left to the states, and California lost no time in passing a law aimed at depriving Japanese of land ownership.

Technically, the 1913 Alien Land Law applied to anyone Congress had deemed an "alien ineligible for citizenship," a term generally applied to all Asians, but in practice singling out the Japanese as the main target. By 1913 there were two generations of Japanese in the United States—the *Issei* or immigrant, and the *Nisei,* their American-born children who were citizens as provided by the Fourteenth Amendment. The California law forbade the *Issei* from purchasing land in the state, or to lease land for more than three years. Japanese farmers soon found loopholes in the law and got around it by buying land in the names of their American-born children, leasing through intermediaries, and forming corporations.

Japanese bachelors also figured out how to obtain brides from Japan. With the "Gentlemen's Agreement" restricting the conditions under which Japanese men and women could come to the United States, the bachelors received letters from Japan containing photographs of prospective brides. Acceptance of the "picture bride" and a proxy wedding ceremony in Japan enabled Japanese women to join their new husbands. Californians fumed over these loopholes.

By 1920 Japanese farmers owned 11% of California's agricultural land but were only 2% of the state's population. This was due to the overwhelming majority of Japanese in the state being heavily involved in agriculture. Tensions existed in the Japanese community as young Japanese men, encouraged to attend college and earn a professional degree, were still expected to work for their fathers on the farm. Angry Californians unhappy at the evasions of the 1913 law approved through the initiative process the 1920 Alien Land Act. This second law tightened the restrictions but did not prevent continued efforts to evade the discrimination.

In 1924 Congress passed a major immigration law that severely restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The act limited immigrants from Japan and other Asian countries to a token 100 people a year (Chinese immigration continued to be excluded). When the Japanese ambassador protested what he perceived to be an insult to his nation, Congress considered his comments a veiled threat and excluded further Japanese immigration as well. This had the long-term effect of creating a growing age gap between the *Issei* and *Nisei* generations. The *Issei* grew older, but no younger immi-

Japanese Americans arriving at Tule Lake interment camp. Courtesy of the Marriott Library.

grants arrived. Older *Issei* bachelors had to wait until *Nisei* girls grew to a marriageable age, creating problems within the family structure as young women objected to arranged marriages with much older men. By 1940, two-thirds of the Japanese in the United States were *Nisei*, and their *Issei* parents were in their sixties or older.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor brought tremendously negative consequences to the Japanese American community in the United States. Most *Issei* had given up their original idea of making money and returning to Japan (a hope of immigrants from many other nations as well), and settled down in various farm communities, mainly in California. Their American-born children were coming of age in both cultures; many *Nisei* children attended Japanese school in the afternoon following public school, a pattern shown by other ethnic immigrants. The entry of the United States into World War II

put all Japanese, whether *Issei* or *Nisei*, under a cloud of suspicion. The FBI rounded up some 1,500 enemy aliens who were suspected of subversive activity, and questioned many more, but ultimately President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 calling for the evacuation of all Japanese from the Pacific Coast. "All" meant everyone, citizen or alien, infants to elderly.

This controversial action, applauded by Americans generally at the time, traumatized the Japanese American community. White Americans in California in the main applauded the order as ridding the state of a group suspected of disloyalty. Roosevelt's order won approval from Attorney General (and soon to be Governor) Earl Warren and Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron. Historians have examined the motives behind the evacuation. The view proclaimed at the time was "military necessity," with fears of an imminent Japanese attack on the Pacific Coast, especially after a Japanese submarine lobbed a few shells at oil rigs near the Santa Barbara beaches. "War hysteria was another justification, with federal authorities saying they were protecting Japanese people from injury at the hands of enraged whites.

No matter the excuse, the underlying reason for the removal of 112,000 Japanese from their homes, the vast majority of them in California, was racism. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19,1942, but the evacuation process did not beg until April. On short notice—as little as forty-eight hours—Japanese families were ordered appear at assembly centers, public venues that were mainly race tracks such as Santa Anita. They boarded up their businesses, sold their property for pennies on the dollar, or tried to lease it to Caucasian neighbors.

From the assembly centers the families were transported to ten relocation centers, including Manzanar and Tule Lake in California, Poston in Arizona, Heart Mountain in Wyoming, and Rohwer in Arkansas. Although there has been some debate on the term "concentration camps," historians now generally apply the term to the relocation centers. Certainly they did not have gas chambers such as the Nazis constructed, and no instances occurred of starvation, mistreatment, or mass murder. But the centers had barbed wire and armed guards, and the incarcerated Japanese Americans were not free to leave. The centers were located in isolated, barren areas. Inside the barbed wire, the Japanese Americans set about creating a community of schools, health services, and jobs, all under the supervision of the War Relocation Authority.

Many Japanese Americans saw the experience as a test of their loyalty. They endured indignity and ostracism, and young *Nisei* joined the U.S. Army and fought with great distinction against the Nazis. Some served as interpreters in the Pacific theater of operations. Others insisted their constitutional rights had been violated. Interestingly, no general lockup occurred in Hawaii. There the islands were placed under martial law, and everyone—Anglos, Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese—were treated the same. Japanese Americans in California suffered prejudice and resentment. After the war the Japanese Americans could return to their homes, or at least where they had lived. The federal government compensated them for their losses at an average of ten cents on the dollar. Not until the 1980s would Congress pay reparations of $20,000 to those who were still alive. Although some bigots attempted to keep the *Nisei* out of California after the war, prominent leaders rose to the occasion and called for tolerance and understanding. Warren and Bowron, who had endorsed evacuation early in the war, welcomed the Japanese Americans back and saw to it that their right to return had the force of law behind it. The California alien land laws were declared unconstitutional in 1952, and in that year the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act abolished exclusion for Asian immigrants.

Much has been made of the "success story" of the *Nisei* in the years that followed, but the experience left lasting psychic scars on the Japanese American community. *Issei* elders, accustomed to a traditional authoritarian control over their families, lost face when taken away for questioning or showed them-

selves unable to deal with forces beyond their control. Amazingly, public attitude in California changed dramatically after the war. Having fought for democracy and against fascism, it was difficult for most Americans to retain racist views, though issues of racism would continue to challenge the nation. The *Nisei* in the main did not return to the agricultural pursuits of their parents. They entered such fields as dentistry, science, and architecture, and the stereotype of the educated gardener came to an end.

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Son of Satan

Pardner, you see that big black outlaw
The one no hired hand could ride
Well, they call him, "Son Of Satan"
And surely he is the Devil's pride

He really fought that old corral
All he wanted was to be free
He bloodied himself on the fence
We thought he'd kill himself, you see

So one day we opened up the gate
And let that mighty outlaw go
He made two strides to freedom
Then he put on quite a show

He reared up on those sturdy legs
Then cut loose a piercing cry
Guess it was just his way
Of tellin' us cowpokes, "Good-by"

Now he roams out there with his harem
Covers all the spots in this Kansas land
If you are wonderin' why we let him go
When you see him I think you'll understand

Sometimes you'll see him up on the mesa
Framed against the sky on a moonlit night
My God, he is one great old horse
And seein' him up there is quite a sight

There's just one thing I really wish
That I could have had one wild ride
But they still call him, "Son Of Satan"
And he surely is the Devil's pride!!!

—Loren Wendt

Corral Chips

Congratulations to **TOM ANDREWS** on nearly two decades of service as Executive Director of the Historical Society of Southern California. During Tom's tenure, the society has witnessed growth in the endowment to over $1.6 million, additions to staff, along with growth in society membership and community programs. Tom has also promoted the awards program with special emphasis on outstanding teaching and scholarship. His tireless efforts have certainly laid the foundation for a prosperous and dynamic historical society in the years to come. Tom has accepted a teaching and research position at Azusa Pacific University, and the Los Angeles Corral wishes him the very best in his new endeavors.

JOHN ROBINSON presented a paper, "Antonio Maria Armijo: New Mexico Trader to California Ranchero" at the Old Spanish Trail Association's annual conference in Las Vegas in June. Armijo led the first trade caravan from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Los Angeles in 1829-1830. John is also in the process of completing a major work on the horse trails, Indian footpaths, wagon roads, railroads, and highways into the southern part of California. Robinson's "Gateways to Southern California" will be available in October through the Big Santa Anita Historical Society.

PAUL GRAY was appointed a visiting scholar at U.C.L.A. He also received a research grant from the California Supreme Court Historical Society. Paul is completing a book on Francisco P. Ramirez, a important figure in mid-nineteenth century southern California.

NICK CURRY is busy working on a biography of Franklin D. Murphy, who served as the chancellor of U.C.L.A. and with the Times-Mirror Corporation. Last year, Nick gave an interesting presentation on Murphy, and the biography is scheduled for publication sometime in the autumn.

WALT BETHEL is working on an interesting aspect of environmental history. He is currently researching the early traffic congestion in Los Angeles, beginning in an era of electric railways and prior to the age of the automobile.

BOB BLEW is diligently working on a new index to the Branding Iron. In 1996, the decision was made to omit the speakers or events for the 50th anniversary issue. Please contact Bob if anyone can recall the speakers or events for September, October, or November of that year.

Ghost Town

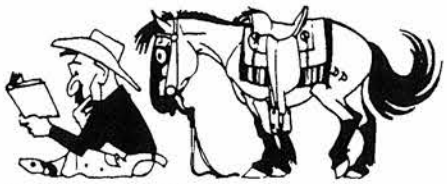
What was it's name?
Discoveries proclaimed, desperadoes fame,
Grubstaked miners, homesteaders came.
Aches of old age and ravages of time,
Shafts and tunnels intertwine.

Buena Vista, lusty spirit now a musty smell,
Raw rusted metal, weathered wood without memory to tell.

Boothill, it's all the same.
You flickered as lantern light,
And are gone, gone to hell.

We've struck'er boys!
They'll change their tune,
Saddle up! for the nearest saloon.

—Paul Showalter



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

1421-THE YEAR CHINA DISCOVERED AMERICA by Gavin Menzies. First Published in 2002; Reprint in 2003, 552 Pages; Photos, Maps, Selected Bibliography and Notes; Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022; ISBN 0-06-053763-9 Hardback; Cloth $20.00.

This is a fascinating journal of discoveries made by four Chinese treasure fleets over seventy years before Columbus set sail for America.

Written by a retired Royal Navy Captain, who visited 120 countries and visited more than 900 museums and libraries over the course of the fifteen year search, causes the reader to remember the role of China in world exploration.

On March 8, 1421 the Emperor Zhu Di sent four fleets commanded by eunich Admirals "to proceed all the way to the end of the earth and collect tribute from barbarians beyond the seas." The journeys took over two years and circled the globe. The sailors used triple hulled teak wood junks some over 400 feet long. In contrast, Horatio Nelson's "fearsome engine of war" HMS Victory was 226 feet long from figurehead to stem post.

Upon their return, the Emperor was replaced and China began a long period of isolation from the West. Hence, most Chinese records of the discoveries were destroyed or lost.

Menzies has built a plausible case by bringing together maps, navigational knowledge and a few surviving accounts of Chinese explorers and European navigators who used Chinese data and maps.

Tangible artifacts recovered from California seas include medieval Chinese anchors and chinaware of a dark blue porcelain containing Persian cobalt predating the paler blue colors shipped during the years of the Spanish China trade. In 2002 the wreck of a medieval Chinese junk was discovered under a sand bank in the Sacramento River at the northeastern corner of San Francisco Bay. Metal fittings aboard the junk predated Spanish exploration and core drillings of wood were carbon dated to 1410. A compacted mass of seeds recovered by the drills was identified as Ketcleria, a conifer, native to southeastern China but not to North America. Also recovered were rice grains unknown to the Americas in the fifteenth century.

Some of Menzies' conclusions may be premature, but his factual evidence causes us to believe that Chinese navigators did sail around the world decades before Columbus sailed, and a full 100 years before Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe. Menzies identifies three California sites where the Chinese probably visited and established colonies.

More solid evidence is needed but the student of history will find this stimulating and thought provoking.

—N. S. Marshall, LTC

CONVERTING CALIFORNIA: INDIANS AND FRANCISCANS IN THE MISSIONS, by James A. Sandos. Yale University Press, in Western Americana Series, 05/10/2004. 251 pp., Contents, Acknowledgments, Notes to Pages, Bibliography, and Index. Cloth, $35.00. ISBN 0300101007. Order from www.yale.edu/yup/.

Converting California is the latest scholarly work of James Sandos, Professor of History at the University of Redlands in California. It is not only thought-provoking but also ground-breaking in its approach. His book has paved the way toward a new way of thinking about the relationship between mission Indians and the Franciscans who "civilized" them. He focus-

es his work on the "...struggle by the priests to impose spiritual and religious change and the Indian desire and struggle to resist." As one might expect, the book has also unleashed the wrath of "defenders of the faith" and the "Indian victims."

For over a century there has been a "log-jam" in California scholarship, as Dr. Sandos so aptly stated. The traditional way of thinking was in opposites: The oppressor/oppressed, free/slave, civilized/barbarian, colonizer/colonized, Christian/pagan, and so on. Dichotomies of thoughts and emotions have so blinded many historians that objective historical analysis has been stymied.

There are two terms that Dr. Sandos uses to describe extremists. One is Christophilic Triumphalism, a term created by David J. Weber, Professor of History, Southern Methodist University. Those in this camp are writers of the longest running pro-mission school. They write of the benevolent Franciscan padres working in bucolic surroundings, training Indians in religion and teaching them various trades. Their endeavors culminated in the triumph of European Christian civilization over indigenous darkness and degeneracy. Some writers who have held the Triumphalists' view are Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., Maynard Geiger, O.F.M., and Francis F. Guest, O.F.M.

On the other hand, there is Christophilic, or Christophobic, Nihilism, terms coined by Dr. Sandos. Those in this camp are anti-mission and sometimes engage in angry attacks on anything Church, Franciscan, or mission. The most extreme of these writers have argued that life at the mission was akin to Nazi death camps, Junípero Serra to Adolph Hitler, and "...that Serra and his coreligionists pursued a policy of genocide against California native peoples." Some Nihilists are Ramón Gutiérrez, Edward Castillo, Robert Jackson, Rupert and Jeannette Costo, and Alejandro Murguía.

In September 2004, *Converting California* was the subject of an illuminating Symposium held in the Bancroft Library, at the University of California, Berkeley. It was jointly sponsored by the California Mission Studies Association, the Academy of American Franciscan History, The Bancroft Library, and the California Historical Society. Over seventy attendees were present, including many academicians and scholars, for the roundtable discussion. The panelists included Edward Castillo, Joseph Chinicci, O.F.M., Lisbeth Haas, and William Summers —specialists in the subjects discussed in *Converting California*. The Symposium began with a ten-minute introduction by Dr. Sandos, who stated his purpose in writing the book. This was followed by a roundtable of ten-minute speeches (all previously prepared) by each panelist. In this format the views held by Christophilic Triumphalists and Christophobic Nihilists were presented and discussed. In all cases, differences of opinion were voiced in a professional manner.

In *Converting California,* Dr. Sandos writes about a growing group of physiologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who pursue a "nothing but the facts" approach to mission studies. He calls them the Material Culturalists. They generally do not take sides with either the Triumphalists or Nihilists but focus mainly on the Indian contribution to the creation of California mission culture. In the first seven chapters, he applies an accepted tool, ethnohistory, and a new one, which he coins Theohistory, to support his thesis.

Ethnohistory is, to Sandos' way of thinking, just as applicable to the Franciscans as it is to the Indians. He uses Theohistory to demonstrate how Junípero Serra's view of the world influenced the spread of evangelism to Alta California. Sandos uses both tools "...to illustrate a complex and contingent past centered around the issue of conversion." He has covered most pertinent factors affecting conversion —in the 18th century perspective— including an extended discussion of two very interesting topics, venereal diseases and music as an element of conversion, which are not typically or extensively covered in books on the missions.

Converting California is a book with a

fresh approach to mission studies and there is no doubt that it will lead to more and fruitful scholarship. Although some panelists of the 2004 Symposium disagreed with Sandos, they all appreciated aspects of his approach and thinking. The Franciscan panelist expressed the opinion that the book is "without a doubt a very, very good starting point for further exploration." The book is a path leading to the highway of the past and understanding of California's mission period.

—Kenneth Pauley

George Harwood Phillips: INDIANS AND INTRUDERS IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA, 1769-1849 Norman; University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. ISBN 0806124466 Cloth, $25.00.

INDIANS AND INDIAN AGENTS, THE ORIGIN OF THE RESERVATION SYSTEM IN CALIFORNIA, 1849-1852 Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. ISBN 0806129042 Cloth, $30.00.

BRINGING THEM UNDER SUBJECTION: *California's Tejon Indian Reservation and Beyond, 1852-1864* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. ISBN 08032377367 Cloth, $59.95.

The Spanish colonization of California had a major impact on the lives of native peoples. The Franciscan mission system required the Indians to abandon their traditional culture and embrace Christianity, learn the Spanish language, and become proficient in agriculture and stock raising. In time, these "neophytes" would become loyal members of an ordered, European-oriented, agrarian society.

The traditional belief, fostered by many writers and pseudo-historians, held that most of the California native peoples— those who survived the white man's diseases— meekly submitted to Spanish, Mexican, and later Anglo encroachment on their lands.

George Harwood Phillips, in his three-volume, intensive study of the native peoples of California's great Central Valley, disputes this belief as an over-simplification of what really happened. He points out that many of the Indians, unwilling to adapt to the mission system, fled into the interior San Joaquin Valley—then known as *Los Tulares* by the Spanish—where they mixed with the native Miwoks and Yokuts, and became, in Phillips' words, "active members of independent, enduring societies." These ex-mission Indians soon became a thorn in the side of the coastal missions and ranches, repeatedly raiding the Spanish and later Mexican Californio settlements and stealing livestock. Military expeditions into the interior valley to retrieve the purloined animals and punish the native renegades met determined resistance and were generally unsuccessful. The interior native peoples retained their own cultural identity during the seventy-seven year era of Spanish and Mexican California.

The American conquest of California and the ensuing Gold Rush brought drastic change in the lives of the interior native peoples. The overwhelming influx of miners and settlers during and immediately after the California Gold Rush led to an inevitable clash with the Indians, many of them rudely forced out of their homes and hunting grounds. Hostile acts were committed by both sides.

Congress attempted to solve the problem by authorizing the appointment of three commissioners, or agents, who were to make treaties with the many tribal groups in the state. Redick McKee, Oliver Wozencraft, and George Barbour, the three appointed Indian commissioners, met in San Francisco in January 1851. They divided the state into three districts and set out together, with a military escort, to parlay with the various native groups. The result was the forging of eighteen separate treaties with 140 Indian tribal entities which granted the native peoples 11,700 square miles of California interior lands—roughly seven percent of the state's total area.

When the treaties were made known, a storm of protest erupted from settlers and miners. The treaties were supported by a few

courageous San Francisco newspaper editors, but their voice was drowned out by much of the enraged white populace. "The Indian must go!" shouted mining town newspapers, which vigorously protested the commissioners' plan of settling "hordes of savages in the heart of the state." The state legislature instructed California's two senators to vote against the plan when it came up for Senate approval. The U.S. Senate rejected all eighteen treaties in June 1852.

Despite the rejection of the treaties, Phillips points out that several Indian reservations were set up by the commissioners—the largest being the Fresno Reservation—and lasted some two years before white encroachment doomed them.

The same year the Senate rejected the eighteen treaties, Edward F. Beale was appointed Indian Superintendent for California, his mission to try to solve "the Indian problem". Beale, no stranger to California, arrived in San Francisco in September 1852. He realized the urgency of the Indian situation. With the help of Benjamin Wilson, Indian agent in southern California, Beale devised a plan to settle native people on a number of small, nonpermanent "military" reservations, each of which would become self-supporting, and each protected by a military post. Many writers have given Beale credit for originating the California Indian Reservation system, but Phillips points out that this is not so. The original three commissioners first came up with the plan when they set up the quasi-legal and short-lived Fresno Reservation and several other small ones. Beale merely expanded and "fine tuned" the agents' plan.

In March 1853 Congress passed an act authorizing Beale to establish five "military reservations" in California "for Indian purposes", each to be located on public lands with no white occupants. Beale and Wilson checked out several desert and mountain sites but found them lacking in water and cultivatable land. They looked with more favor on the southeastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley, well watered by creeks emitting from the Tehachapi Mountains.

In October 1853 Beale proposed three reserves at the southern end of the San Joaquin. Only one of the three was actually established. Beale named it the Sebastian Reservation in honor of William K. Sebastian, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. It was more commonly known as the Tejon Reservation as it lay below Tejon Pass and was located, contrary to Congressional directive, on the El Tejon land grant. To protect the reservation, the Army established Fort Tejon in *Canada de las Uvas* (Grapevine Canyon).

Sparing no expense, Beale successfully launched the Tejon Indian Reservation. Initially there were around 350 Yokuts Indians living on reservation lands; they were soon joined by several hundred more from elsewhere in the great valley and the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. Beale provided them food, clothing, livestock, farm implements, and above all the opportunity to live in self-sufficient native communities. By early 1854 Beale had spent some $125,000 for reservation purposes.

Either from excessive zeal to help the Indians, or from malfeasance, as his enemies charged, Beale fell into disfavor with Indian Commissioner George Manypenny in Washington. Why had Beale placed the reservation on the El Tejon land grant when Congress specified it should be on unoccupied public land? Why had he exceeded authorized expenditures and failed to send an accounting of these expenses to Washington? Had he diverted some of the money for personal gain? Although there was no evidence that Beale used federal funds for his own benefit, his excessive expenditures and sloppy accounting practices resulted in his dismissal as California Indian Superintendent as of May 31, 1854, the order signed by President Franklin Pierce. Beale was succeeded by Thomas Henley, postmaster of San Francisco and a Democratic Party stalwart.

Henley set up a number of small quasi-reservations known as "Indian Farms", leased from private landowners, in the years 1854 to 1856, the major ones being Fresno

Farm, Kings River Farm, and Tule River Farm. Here the Indians were provided with the bare necessities to practice agriculture, but in the end, disputes with the landowners and the increasing numbers of white settlers led to their demise.

The management of the Sebastian (Tejon) Reservation deteriorated rapidly after Beale was relieved of his duties as superintendent. A number of inefficient agents followed, some of them corrupt. The problem was complicated by a revolt of the Paiutes of Owens Valley in 1862. The Army crushed the revolt and removed most of the Paiutes to Fort Tejon, the Tejon Reservation, and later to the Tule River reservation.

The end for the Tejon Reservation came in 1864, the victim of mismanagement, white encroachment, and the fact that the reservation was not on public lands. A federal court decision in July 1863 ruled that the Indian lands were inside the 1844 El Tejon land grant. Beale, appointed Surveyor General of California by President Lincoln in 1861, used his position to help gain him a land "empire". He obtained the patent for the El Tejon land grant in 1863. He combined El Tejon with two other ranches he had previously purchased, and another one he bought in 1866, to form his massive Rancho El Tejon. Living on his rancho, most of them working for Beale, were some 300 Indian tenants, about the same number that lived there when the Sebastian Reservation was created in 1853.

Sadly, as Phillips writes, "The Indians of the San Joaquin Valley, experiencing relocation, dislocation, and subjection, underwent cultural, economic, political, and demographic transformation of staggering proportions...Once managers of their own affairs, they became managed people." It is a depressing story, but one that needs to be told.

—John W. Robinson

THE QUARTER CIRCLE 81: TALL TALES AND MEMORIES PRESCOTT & CAMP WOOD, ARIZONA 1883-1912. Frank Ferguson (Revised Edition researched and edited by C. Robert Ferguson, Illustrated by Susanna Kwan). Upland, California: BAC Publishers, Inc., 2005. 160 pp. Notes, Glossary, Paperback, $14.95. Order from BAC Publishers, Inc. 1749 W. 13th Street, Upland, California, 91786.

The Quarter Circle 81 presents an easy reading memoir of Frank Ferguson and the trials, adventures, and characters that he grew up with on his parents Quarter Circle 81 cattle ranch in the early 1900's near Prescott, Arizona. It is from the heart that this book was written and it is shown in the honest descriptions of a working cattle ranch and the people young Ferguson encountered as a youth. "Any similarity between the characters in this book and real persons is not coincidental, it's intentional." Thus we are taken back to the real West, an honest West, with stories of Vaqueros, Chinese cooks, deer and bear hunts, Prescott Frontier Days, horses, raccoons and dogs, and the stark reality of the hanging of a man named Dilda for killing Deputy Sheriff John M. Murphy.

Of course, young Frank was not allowed to view the hanging and was escorted away from the premises with the Campbell boys. The Campbell boys he speaks of were Alien and Brody Campbell, sons of Tom Campbell, who would become the first republican governor of Arizona some years later.

The ranch life descriptions detail a time that is long past in American history. The stories he tells are amusing episodes that are hard to imagine in today's society: The making of jerky by beating beef strips on an anvil and letting it dry on the fence in the sun; Breeding of longhorn cattle to Hereford cattle to improve beef quality; The "truth" about drinking water from the Hassayampa River.

The Quarter Circle 81 is a fast read with no air of pretentiousness or historical arrogance. Take the short essays and stories for what they are, essays and stories, and enjoy them. Learn from the vocabulary of the day: dally, earmark, hackamore, headstall, muley

bulls, orejana, parade, running iron, sheep dip, stamp iron, tapaderos, and many more. Revisit a time and place from a boy's memory and relive the true West and the ranch life of the early 20th Century in Prescott, Arizona.

—Gary Turner

A RURAL RAILWAY LANDSCAPE: *The Visalia Electric Railroad, Southern Pacific's Orange Grove Route* by Phillips C. Kauke. Introduction by Jeffrey Moreau. Berkeley Wilton, Signature Press, 2003. 168 pp. Maps, photographs, tables, roster, appendix, bibliography, index. ISBN 1-930013-15-9. Hardcover, $55. Order from Signature Press, 11508 Green Road, Wilton, CA 95693, (800) 305-7942, www.signaturepress.com.

This beautifully produced and well-written book will delight rail enthusiasts. The text is supplemented by well-captioned, clear images, and by John Signer's crisp maps. Equipment rosters provide technical data about rolling stock. The book is obviously a labor of love. The author's personal acquaintance with the railroad and with some of people who operated it gives immediacy to the text, which is further enlivened by his insertion of a surveyor's memories of the railroad's construction and by reproduction such ephemera as packing crate labels (in color), tickets, and timetables. The author occasionally expresses nostalgic sentiments for his subject, but he hasn't written a nostalgic or sentimental history. There are a couple of editorial glitches, but the care reader can figure out the author's intent. Kaucke's acknowledgements include many the people who figure in the story, many of them now, sadly, passed on.

But this book ought to appeal to a wider audience than just rail enthusiasts. It describes in some detail the career of California's most rural interurban: why and how was built, how it adapted to changed transportation conditions over time, and why it was finally abandoned.

When the Visalia Electric Railroad (VE) opened in 1908, it provided fast, frequent rail passenger service to people living in the small towns east and north of Visalia ar Exeter, and gave the packing houses of the area's expanding orchard crop industry direct access to refrigerated freight cars. Southern Pacific (SP) financed construction and the VE's choice of low-frequency, high-voltage alternating current may have been guided by the SP's interest in electrifying its routes over steep Donner and Tehachapi Passes. Though ultimately unsuccessful, this technology is interesting in itself, and Kaucke spends some time explaining it. The original route was about twenty-nine miles long and a fleet of six wooden cars (two steel cars were added in 1910) and one electric locomotive were normally sufficient for its traffic, though special events could require five-car trains that hauled as many as 5,000 people in a single day.

Kauke documents that the VE's passenger revenues and car miles grew steadily for the first years of operation, fulfilling the expectations on which it had been constructed. Freight revenues grew too, exceeding passenger revenues from 1915, rural residents adopted automobile transport early, and VE passenger revenues steadily declined after 1912. The VE abandoned passenger service in 1924, an unusually early date for the industry generally, but freight car movements during harvest season required the VE to lease extra motive power.

Kauke devotes a chapter to VE's 1918 construction of a sixteen mile non-electric branch southward through the Sierra foothills toward Porterville. Here VE seems to have been furthering the SP's goal of competing with the Santa Fe for market share rather than pursuing any intrinsic goals of the VE. The branch was never completed planned, and was abandoned, in stages, between 1942 and 1973.

Another service that VE performed for parent SP in the 1920s and 1930s was management of small operations distant from VE's own tracks: a branch line in Chowchilla, a switching line in Fresno, the freight-only remnant of an interurban sys-

tem in San Jose.

The VE's worn-out trolley wire came down in 1946, and small diesel locomotive took over. Kauke charts carloads forwarded from various shippers by year, 1948-1960, showing how VE freight traffic declined as packing houses closed or shifted to refrigerated highway trucks. A final chapter, contributed by another author, John Ford chronicles how as traffic declined, the road became indistinguishable from a branch of the SP, seeing only occasional train movements and without any equipment or personnel of its own. Final abandonment came in 1992, but the track from Visalia to connection with the Santa Fe about a mile beyond Exeter remains in service as a sp off short line, the San Joaquin Valley Railroad.

Thus this book gives us a charming and personal look at an interesting and unusual interurban railroad. It also gives deeper meaning to what we see around us when we see an abandoned railroad grade or a depot made over into a restaurant and wonder, "What was here? Why was it here? What happened to it?"

—A.C.W. Bethel

Photo by Art Cobery

Eric Nelson in one of his shy moments at Fandango 2005.