LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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My Longest Day or Some of the Final Days of Mining at Panamint City

By Tim Heflin

In 1981 and 1982, my youngest brother, Matt, and I worked at a silver mine above Panamint City. My brother and I had previously worked together with logging outfits, including helicopter logging two summers earlier.

Matt went to work at the silver mine in the early summer of 1981, while construction of the mill was in progress. He was involved with most of the mill construction, welding and running equipment. Being handy at mechanics, he also kept the miners' equipment in running order, which was no small feat. After the mill was up and running, he ended up as the millwright, and ran the rock crusher when I got too busy in the mill. He actually spent more time working on equipment in the mine once the mill was operating. That was about where I came in.

Around the end of September or the beginning of October in 1981, I was at my parents' home in Kennedy Meadows. The owner of the mine, Dave Pruett, stopped by to pick up something for Matt while I was there. Before the conversation was over, I had a job, and was to fly in to Panamint City the next day in Dave's Super Cub.

When I arrived at the job, my first tasks were to load the ball mill and the rod mill. The mill was ready for its shakedown run. Pruett, Matt, and I spent a week or so working out the flaws and tweaking the flotation cells until running the mill was basically a one man job. That job was mine.

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The Branding Iron is always seeking articles of 2,500 words or less dealing with every phase of the history of the Old West and California. Contributions from both members and friends are welcome.

Editor's Corner . . .

In days gone by in *The Branding Iron*, it wasn't unusual for members to spin a few of their own recollections of the Old West. We don't see as much of that these days, but then, how many of us have worked as hard rock miners? Associate Member Tim Heflin has, and for this issue he shares with us a little glimpse of more recent life at the old mining camp of Panamint City on the western edge of Death Valley.

For more first-hand history, turn to my conversation with the legendary Glen Dawson, recorded earlier this year. Glen is an invaluable connection to people and days gone by. It hardly seems like there is any Southern California historian from the last 70 years that he did not know. My brief visit with him barely scratches the surface of his long and fascinating life.

This issue also marks a new feature for *The Branding Iron*. When I agreed to serve as editor, I immediately began assembling a file of back issues – either originals or photocopies – and with the help of a number of longtime members and a few lucky purchases, am now nearly there. Now I propose to use them for excerpts "From Our Files" of 25 and 50 years ago. For the first installment, see page 17 of this issue.

—Phil Brigandi
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Panamint City . . .

(*Continued from Page 1*)

Two pairs of miners were working two shifts in the mine. Each shift was about 12 hours long, and included mucking out the ore from the previous shift's round, drilling the face of the mine, and popping another round of explosives. It was left up to the partners as to who ran the jackleg drill and who mucked the ore with a small track loader.

With the mining equipment running 24 hours a day, and the mill running ten hours each day, there were plenty of repairs and maintenance jobs for Matt to perform. He got to spend a lot of time up at the mine watching the operation.

About this time another pair of brothers, Nick and Tom Jones, came to work with us. Nick hauled ore down from the mine to the mill. Tom helped with more construction, welding, and wrenching. We all kept an eye on the rock crusher, and loaded and cleared it when necessary. Nick and Tom's parents, Paul and Lil, were living in Ballarat, and ran the little store for the owner. That was where most of us would leave our vehicles and catch a ride in a company truck, or Matt's four-wheel-drive rig. Both Nick and Tom drove to work from Trona every work day. Today, Panamint City is inaccessible by vehicle due to debris and boulders left by a flash flood that swept down Surprise Canyon after we were there.

On our time off, Matt and I would go up to the mine to watch and ask questions about the procedures. We quickly learned the principles of a box burn or circle burn, timing the rate of burn on each roll of fuse, and how to ride the prell gun. Soon we were filling in when one of the miners was sick or gone for one reason or another.

Our living quarters were pretty sparse. There was a row of travel trailers along the airstrip across from the lone old smelter stack. The airstrip was actually part of the road that had been widened and graded. At the head of that row was a small cabin that was Pruett's. Above Dave's was the compound with showers, a bunk room, and a room for an assay office. On the hill behind this row were three shacks. The biggest one had three rooms and was occupied by one of the miners, Doug Bailey, and his wife Cindy. The two smaller shacks were where my brother and I lived.

Matt's cabin was about 10 x 12 feet, with a propane refrigerator, stove, and oven. It also had a sink, with running water but no water heater. Water for dishes had to be heated on the stove. While we were there he built an 8 x 12 addition on to it. My cabin was 8 x 10 feet, and bare except for a naked light fixture. The windows were visqueen, and I had a kerosene heater for the winter. It was over 6,000 feet elevation and got snow in the winter. Luckily, Matt and I had worked and lived together for most of the last four years and had a routine. Matt was the cook, I was the head potato peeler and dishwasher.

The electricity for the camp, when the mill wasn't running, was supplied by a Pelton wheel. A Pelton wheel is a waterwheel with improvements. Pelton's design has each paddle cupped, with a center divider. The water comes out of a nozzle aimed at the center divider. It is still one of the most efficient waterwheel designs to this day. Water was piped down from Thompson camp, about a half mile above Panamint City.

If nobody was an electricity hog we could all have one light on at night for reading, dominoes, or cards. If someone would turn on an electric heater or some other appliance the dwellings would go dark, and all you would see was a little glow of orange in between the filaments of the light bulbs. After a chorus of loud voices, the culprits would turn off the appliance and once again we would have light. We would have parties at Pruett's cabin and fire up the record player. The Pelton wheel didn't turn fast enough for the hertz to be correct, but if we set the record player speed control at 45 rpm it would play 33⅓ rpm albums at the proper speed.

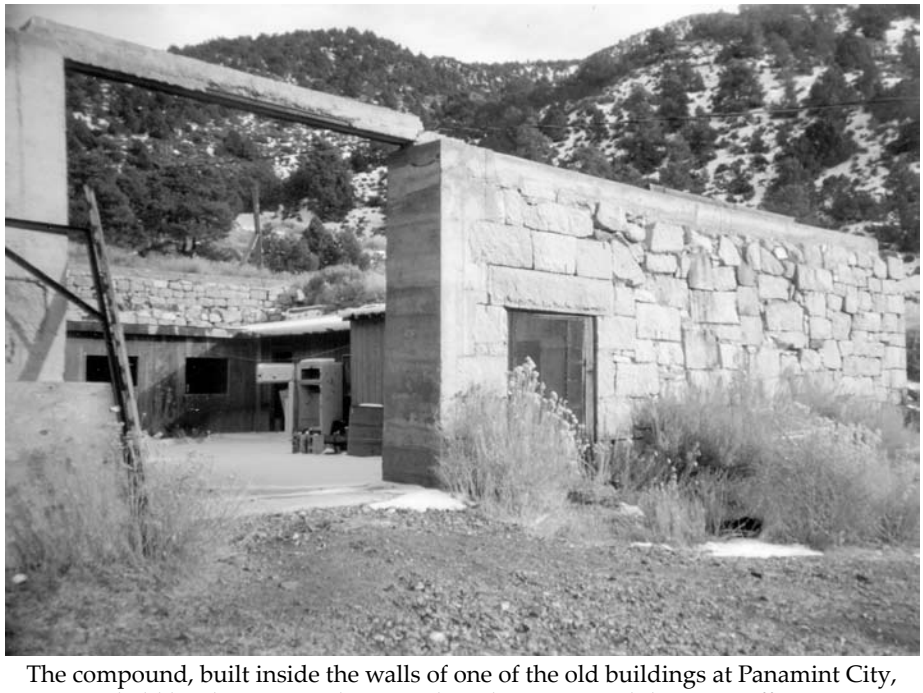
One day after I had shut down the mill I was at Matt's cabin and we were getting ready to make supper. One of the miners, Larry Garcia, came up to the cabin. He said his partner, Dick, had the "bottle flu" and he needed somebody to work underground with him. I volunteered and said I would be ready soon.

I filled a thermos with coffee, made a couple of sandwiches, one of which I wolfed down on the spot, and I was ready for the ride up the mountain to the mine portal.

The mine was over halfway up the peak just east of camp. It was in between several old mines. The plan was to drill in a level drift back to the silver deposits. Dave Pruett had measured and surveyed where the silver vein was, and how it ran inside all the existing mines. Once the drift made contact with the vein we would find out how wide it was, and then follow it up and down. These shafts would be on upwards and downwards angles, and are called stopes. At this time, we were over 1,000 feet into the hard rock with the drift.

Larry got started drilling on the face, and I started mucking out the ore from the other shift's blast. When you drill into the face of the mine you make a pattern. Usually it's a box or a circle from the center out to the edges. The center hole is left open, and the explosives detonate from the closest hole to the center out to the farthest in your pattern. The center hole is left open so the rock has a place to fracture towards. The very bottom row of holes is the last to go off, and these holes are called the lifters. Besides having dynamite tamped in these holes, the lifters are also filled with prell. Prell is basically an ammonia nitrate and diesel mix in the form of small pink balls. It comes in 50 pound sacks. It is put into the lifters by way of an air gun with one plastic tube that goes into the prell sack, and another plastic hose that delivers it to the holes. You stand over the sack while aiming the hose into the holes. This is known as riding the prell gun. The plastic tubing is a special plastic that doesn't collect static electricity. That would make it your final ride! When the lifters go off it directs most of the ore up and away from the face. The following shift then has a relatively clean face to start drilling.

For mucking out the ore we had a small track laying loader with a bucket. For the first 1,000 feet of the drift the mucker had to back all the way out of the mine, turn around, dump the load, and then go back in head first. After we were over 1,000 feet in we blasted out a transfer bay. There the loader could be turned around so the mucker didn't spend half of his shift looking back over his



The compound, built inside the walls of one of the old buildings at Panamint City, held bunk rooms, a shower, a laundry room, and the assay office.
(Photo by Phil Brigandi, 1995)

Most of the mill equipment was still in place in 1995. The ball mill is on the left, the classifier in the center, and the rod mill on the right.
(Courtesy John Nordenstam)

shoulder. As this was always my job when I was underground, I was glad when the time was taken to blast out the bay.

That night I mucked while Larry drilled. After he had all of the holes drilled and I had mucked out the drift, we set to loading the face. When using ignitable fuse you always cut two equal lengths of fuse and attach blasting caps to them. Then you ignite the first one and time how long until the blasting cap goes off. You do this with the second fuse also, just to be sure of the burn rate before you load your holes. You never trust what anyone else tells you about the burn rate. You always test it yourself. Larry loaded the face and I rode the prell gun. We lit the fuse and went outside to wait for the explosion. After the blast we waited a while, then went back in to make sure all was clear for the next shift of miners. By then, we had put in 12 hours and called it a day. At least Larry got to call it a day.

I went to Matt's cabin. He had started cooking breakfast when he heard the blast. We ate breakfast and shot the breeze for a little bit. Then it was time to fill the thermos with coffee again and go start up the mill.

The mill was a two-story metal building with a Caterpillar diesel power plant on the lower level. Upstairs were the ball mill, classifier, rod mill, and flotation cells. Outside and above was the rock crusher.

The ore was loaded into the hopper with a grizzly over it. This is a big grate that keeps oversized rocks from plugging the rock crusher. After the jaws of the rock crusher break the ore small enough it goes down a conveyor belt to the rod mill. This is a big cylinder or drum lying lengthwise that turns. It contains steel rods about eight feet long and about three inches in diameter.

When the ore comes out of the rod mill it goes to the classifier. The classifier looks like two ladders lying in a trough on an uphill angle. There ladders move back and forth and transport the ore up the trough. The bigger chunks go back to the rod mill, and the smaller pieces of ore proceed to the ball mill. This is also a sideways cylinder that turns. It is filled a little less than halfway with approximately three inch steel balls.

After the ore has been smashed fine enough by the ball mill it is washed down to the flotation cells where it is mixed with chemical reagents. This causes a froth to develop which has the minerals in it. A paddle turns over each of the flotation cells. As the frothy bubbles build up, the paddles push them into another trough and then down to our homemade dryer. We ran the exhaust from our power plant into a ten-inch pipe

with an eight-inch screw inside that turned continually. The wet concentrates would go through the pipe, drying from the heat of the exhaust, and then into a storage area. As you can imagine, the noise inside the metal building with a power plant and ball and rod mill smashing ore was deafening.

Once I go the feel for what the flotation cells needed – more or less reagent – and what was happening with the ball and rod mills, it was a pretty easy job. There were times I had to run back and forth between stations, but they got to be less and less as time went on. In fact, it got to the point where I would set a lawn chair up on the expanded metal over the flotation cells, along with a crate for a table. I could see everything in the mill from there. I'd sit up there reading books and looking around every five or ten minutes to make sure everything was going properly.

I ran the mill that day after my night underground mucking. It wasn't too difficult, to stay awake that day, as I had youth and practice on my side. Also, it was an uneventful shift.

After I shut down the mill I went to take a shower at the compound, and then went back up to Matt's cabin for dinner. I was hungry, so we had already started making dinner when Matt looked out the window and told me Larry was headed our way. He showed up, said Dick was still sick, and asked would I go back underground with him? Being a glutton for punishment, I reluctantly agreed. I told him this time he would have to wait until I had my dinner. I filled two thermoses with coffee before we set out for the mine this trip.

We drove up to the mine and got back to drilling and mucking. I caught my second wind and the shift was going smoothly. I've always found that when doing mundane repetitive chores, I daydream – a lot. Before I knew it, Larry signaled that it was time for our lunch break. We went out to the portal and sat in the pickup truck while we ate. I told him that he would have to find another body if his partner didn't pull his next shift. We joked about how bad can a hangover be? Larry and I went back into the drift to finish our shift. Again I helped with the loading of the explosives when the time came. After we blew the round and checked the face, we headed back down to camp.

By now I was looking at my third sunrise without any sleep. It hadn't been bad in the dark, but with the sunlight came the feeling that I had a couple of pounds of sand in my eyes. Matt and I ate breakfast and got ready for work. I thought about not running the mill that day, but my logger's pride wouldn't let me do that. Matt and I would razz the mining crew that they couldn't keep up with a logging crew. This caused friction more than once between us and them. It usually blew over quick enough. If not, so what? Logging and mining camps aren't for the fainthearted and thin-skinned types anyway.

I went up to the mill and started one of the longest ten-hour shifts of my life. I had to stand most of the day or the noises of the mill would lull me to sleep. If I went outside to get out of the noise I had to shield my eyes from the sun like a vampire. The hands of my watch refused to move. When it finally got close enough to quitting time that I didn't feel guilty about knocking off 15 or 20 minutes early, I pulled the pin.

I know I took a shower before I finally hit the sack, but I honestly don't remember if I ate dinner. I don't remember if Larry worked his next shift. All I knew was that it wasn't my problem. I had put in three ten-hour shifts at the mill and two 12-hour shifts underground. Of the last 60 hours, I had spent 54 of those hours working. It was early evening when I fell asleep in my shack. I slept a deep, hard sleep until the following sunrise.

While I've been physically more exhausted after days of harder physical labor, that is the most hours I ever worked without any rest. The job was supposed to be ten days on, and four days off when I was hired. The miners pretty much kept to that schedule, along with some Indian holidays. I don't think Matt or I ever worked less than 15 or 16 days before taking a day off. One time I worked 28 days straight before taking time off. After four days, Dave Pruett was wondering out loud when I would be back with the company truck. Matt just laughed. But that is another story.

A Visit with Glen Dawson

[*Glen Dawson really needs no introduction here. The 97-year-old retired book dealer, publisher, and mountaineer is the last surviving charter member of the Los Angeles Corral. Recently I sat down with him and a tape recorder at his home at Villa Gardens in Pasadena. Here is some of what he had to say. – editor]*

So how did your father come to start the book shop?

As a boy he grew up in San Luis Obispo. When he was about in the sixth grade or so, due to family circumstances, he worked for a place called Goodrich Book Shop, just as a place to have a job. And then when the family moved to Los Angeles, he worked for Henry Ward at his book shop, just as a job.

His mother thought that Ernest should be a pastor of a church, but he got started in the book business. Then in 1905 his father, Thomas Dawson – my grandfather – paid him back for some money that he'd borrowed to go to the Alaska Gold Rush. It was a hundred dollars. And so, with that hundred dollars he rented a little shop at 713 S. Broadway in Los Angeles and started the business. He bought some gunny sacks full of books from the Salvation Army at a penny apiece.

The business became quite successful. He was at 518 S. Hill Street, opposite the park; and that was really a nice location. Then he moved to Grand Avenue. That was where my brother, Muir, and I inherited the business. Then when we lost the lease there, we went to Figueroa Street. And then a fellow offered to build us a building and sell it back to us, but he changed his mind. But we'd gotten so far with the idea that we did it ourselves. So I still own half the property at Larchmont Blvd. But I have no connection with the business. My nephew has it now, Michael Dawson – that's Muir's son.

So how did your father come to specialize in California and the West?

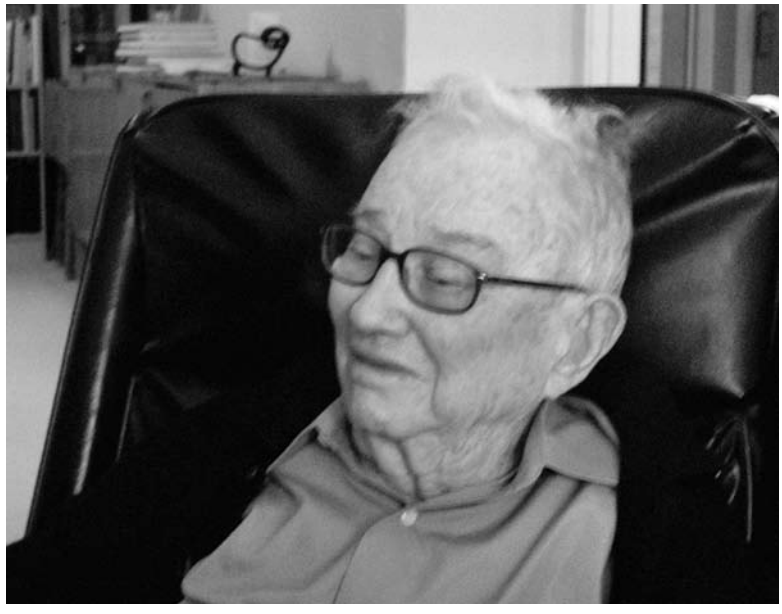
Well, one thing was the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire in 1906. Many of the libraries wanted to replace things that were lost in that catastrophe. So in Southern California people had books on California history and so on, and he had some very good customers in San Francisco area. That's how he got started.

I imagine you grew up in the store.

I played in the boxes down in the basement at the Hill Street store. And many times my father took me along to appraise books, or to buy books. In 1928, when I was 16 years old, he took me to Europe. We'd go into a book shop and he'd say, "Now you look at the mountaineering books, and you look at the Westerner Americana, and pull out what you think we should buy." And then he'd go to other areas – first editions, and literature, and art, and so on. And then he'd look at what I'd picked out, and he'd say, "Well that's good, and this is good, but not this." And he'd give me the reason. So I was trained by my father from the time I could walk.

Then he sent me to Europe after I graduated from UCLA. I was supposed to study under Emil Hirsch in Munich, but he was getting ready to come to the United States, so he didn't have much time for me. But I did spend a lot of time with Mark Cohen of Marks & Co. in London. Also I did a lot of rock climbing and skiing and so on.

I was gone 14 months, came back over the Trans-Siberian railroad, and I bought some things in China and Japan at ridiculously low prices. When I came back my father was very pleased with the two little suitcases of rarities



Glen Dawson
2009

I brought back. He made me a one-fifth partner in the business, and he and my mother went back around the world the other way, and he bought even more books in Shanghai, and Tokyo, and in Moscow. The Soviet Government was selling duplicates from libraries – that is, not duplicates within libraries, but if two libraries each had a rare book, why, they'd keep one and sell one.

I never applied for a job in my life. I never had to ask for a raise, I could always raise my own salary – if there was money in the bank account to do it. I could always set my day off. Thursday was my day off, and Muir had a different day off. We got along as partners very well. But we tried to manage different days off and different vacations and business trips, so normally you could come into Dawson's Book Shop and ask for Mr. Dawson and they could produce one.

Tell me about some of your memorable customers, like Thomas Streeter.

He once told me that when he looked at my catalogs, he never considered anything less than a hundred dollars – that it wasn't worth being put in his collection. So after that, instead of putting things at seventy-five, eighty-five, ninety-five dollars, I would price 'em a hundred or a hundred and a quarter just for him.

At the same time, there was a fellow named Will McPherson, who lived out in Orange County. He had bought books from my father from the very beginning. I would always put some things in the catalogs for one dollar, or two dollars. So every catalog, Thomas Streeter would buy several books – could be five hundred or a thousand dollars – and McPherson would buy all the cheap books, and he'd buy twenty-five dollars worth. Those were my two extremes.

We sold books to Edward Eberstadt, who was a very notable dealer of high powered Western Americana. Whenever my father went to New York he was royally entertained by Edward Eberstadt. I both bought from him and sold to him.

Some of the other big customers I had were W.J. Holliday over in Arizona, Everett Graff of Chicago, and then local customers such as Carl Dentzel, who was very active in the Westerners, and others in the Westerners, like Earl Adams.

I had a lot of high power customers, as well as the Huntington Library, and the Bancroft Library, and UCLA. I tried to make a business of buying at auctions for them. I bid at the Streeter sales, and the Holliday sales, and others for the Huntington Library. They didn't want it disclosed that they were bid-

ding, and so the bids came through me.

I have to ask you the story about meeting Charles Lummis.

My father lived in Highland Park, and Lummis had his home, which he designed and built himself on the Arroyo Seco – this was before the freeway was put through. My father had arranged to buy several of Lummis' books, and that was one of the times that I went along with my father.

Charles Lummis was sitting out in front of his home there. He had the books that my father had ordered wrapped in newspaper. My father's specifications were that they were to be signed by Charlie Lummis. And Lummis' stipulation was that he was to be paid in exact change cash. There was to be no checks, and no change to be made. He got the money and father got the books.

So I was introduced to him. At the time he was having difficulty with his eyes, and so he felt my face to get acquainted with me. I was nine or ten years old, and I had to stand there while this old man put his hands on my face.

At the time of his death, there was a whole list of honorary pallbearers, and my father was one of them, along with a lot of authors and artists. Lummis held parties at his home where there was a lot of music and talk and so on. He was a great entertainer.

So, then, tell me how you got into the publishing business.

My father advised Muir and me not to be publishers. He published a few little books which he mostly gave away to customers. He had some printing done by the Grabhorn brothers and John Henry Nash in San Francisco, but generally he did not publish.

However, there were times when I had something to publish in a small way. And I had printers who were good customers of mine – particularly Will Chaney would print for almost nothing. And there were binders who would bind books. So some books were almost published for one customer on his particular collecting interest. And I would manufacture rarities by having leaf books, taking a leaf of a notable book and binding a copy in with another book. And so it got started.

Muir was a printer himself. He went to Pomona College and took printing classes at Scripps College. It was a college for women, but they allowed men from Pomona College to take classes. He liked the idea of publishing books. We enjoyed doing it, as well as usually making money at it. I've said that book publishing is a very pleasant way to make very little money.

Frequently the printers, or the binders, or the authors, or the editors, or the illustrators were customers of ours. I did an Early California Travel Series where many of the books were done by different printers. Then on the Baja California Travel Series they were almost all done by Castle Press. Grant Dahlstrom designed the early ones.

Who were some of the authors and historians you published?

Well, there was W.W. Robinson. He did some books for us. Mike Mathes was one of my writers – he spoke at the Westerners just recently. Doyce Nunis did quite a few books. He'd always try to get a book in each of our series. And Don Meadows did a book for the Baja California series.

Sometimes people would offer me a book and I would publish it; and sometimes I would ask them, or give them the idea to write something.

So in all, there were probably 300 books published, and another hundred miniature books. The subjects were mainly Western American, but Muir also did books on Oriental art, and books on papermaking – marbled paper. Frequently books that wouldn't stand a large edition. And we picked out some pretty good printers, mostly – California printers.

And you also collected yourself, right?

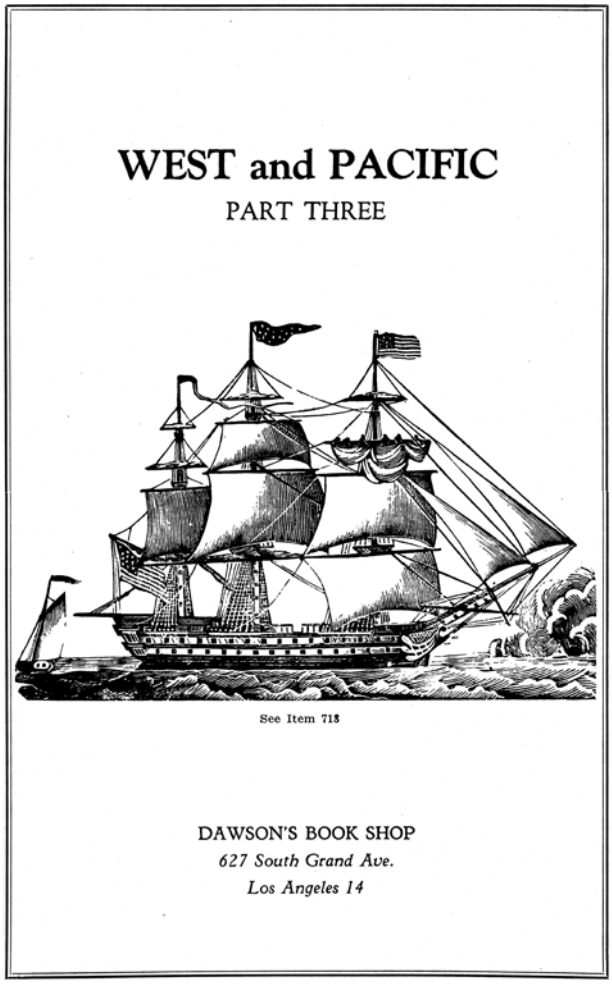
My father's idea was that a book seller should not be a collector, because they were in competition with their own customers. He

had books given to him by authors, and he would bring things home, but then some customer would happen to mention he wanted a certain book, and he'd say, "Well, maybe I can find one," and he'd bring it back from home. I did the same thing.

So we talked about people, but I wanted to ask what you think are some of the interesting books you handled over the years? What passed through Dawson's?

I had a few things printed by the original Zamorano press. We bought a little medical book – *Botica* – which was printed by Zamorano. We sold it to Henry Wagner, he sold it to Thomas Streeter. Then there was a Dr. Moes here in Southern California, and he and some others were interested in building up a collection of medical books. So I bought it back at the Streeter sale for the Los Angeles County Medical Association. That collection was split between UCLA and the Huntington Library, so there are now two copies of it there, but they don't know quite how to sell one of them.

My father bought some very good collections, and I bought some things over the years, and issued catalogs. I issued catalogs on California history and other things. I got the idea of making a series of them. One of my series of catalogs was Californiana, another was Frontier Americana, another was called California and the West. I would save up books. Sometimes I would collect books for a while and issue them as a catalog.


WEST and PACIFIC

PART THREE

See Item 718

DAWSON'S BOOK SHOP

627 South Grand Ave.

Los Angeles 14

A Dawson's catalog, circa 1946.

So tell me about the start of the Westerners.

There's a connection between Dawson's Book Shop and the Westerners. The Westerners was actually started by Homer Britzman. Homer was an officer of the Richfield Oil Company. He had his office in the tall, black, art deco building just a couple of blocks from Dawson's Book Shop, which was then at the corner of Grand and Wilshire.

We had a customer, Robert J. Woods, who was an apartment house owner. He was a great collector. He was a frequent customer of Dawson's Book Shop. Homer Britzman collected paintings and bronzes of Charley Russell, the Montana artist. He even bought the house here in Pasadena on Michigan Avenue that was built for Charley Russell to retire to, but he died before he came down.

Homer Britzman and Robert Woods met each other on the balcony of Dawson's Book Shop, and talked about the Westerners.

First there was an organization interested in the history of the Midwest, and a few of them got interested in talking particularly about cowboys and Indians and the Custer battlefield and so, and they broke off and

started the first corral of the Westerners in Chicago.

And so Homer Britzman invited a group of people in December 1946 to his home, and that was the initial meeting of the Los Angeles Corral. And the people who attended that meeting were the original charter members. There was one fellow that attended, but never attended another meeting, so he had the shortest career of anybody in the Westerners.

It would be interesting to know if the list of people invited who couldn't come for some reason exists. Iron Eyes Cody always claimed that he and Homer Britzman founded the Westerners, but that was a little bit of an exaggeration. He didn't attend the meeting, but he undoubtedly talked about the idea with Homer Britzman, who had quite a wide range of friends and acquaintances in the motion picture business.

Who do you think were some of the key people in the Los Angeles Corral over the years?

One person was Paul Galleher. He was very active. Paul Galleher was quite an organizer at the beginning. And then Art Clark came in quite early.

There was Don Louis Perceval, who was an artist. I've got a couple of his paintings.

Clarence Ellsworth was a painter and very much interested in the Westerners – not so much the organizing, but he started the idea of giving a painting to the retiring Sheriffs. That started out as a gift from him. Later on I claimed the thing with Don Louis Perceval, who gave the painting for a long time.

One of the early members was Charles Rudkin, who was an employee of the Edison Company. He was quite remarkable in that he could translate things from French or from Spanish. So he was the Registrar of the Westerners for quite a little while, I think. He was elected Sheriff, but he became sick and couldn't serve, so he was elected an Honorary Sheriff, and I think is the only Honorary Sheriff that the Westerners have ever had – and he certainly deserved it, because he worked at that job for a long time.

One of the influential members, of course, was Homer Boelter, who ran a printing and lithograph company. He designed the early *Brand Books*, and edited the first *Brand Book*.

Paul Bailey was a publisher – Westernlore Press in Eagle Rock – and an author. He was very active. He edited and printed the *Branding Iron*, and I distributed it from Dawson's Book Shop. *The Brand Book* was distributed by Arthur H. Clark Company.

There was a fellow named Lonnie Hull who would come and take pictures, and then at the next meeting he'd have pictures he'd hand out to people that he'd taken the previous meeting.

W.W. Robinson was very active. He was an author, not so much a collector, but he was a frequent visitor at Dawson's Book Shop. I published a few of his books. Many of the members were customers at Dawson's Book Shop.

A young Westerner, circa 1950.

Fandango 2009

Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
Saturday, June 13

Andy Dagosta
1923-2009

Andy Dagosta and his daughter Karen, 2005
(Troy Tiscareño photo)

Remembering Andy

Our first of his paintings will always remind us of him
That cowboy and his horse resting on the canyon's rim
Just one of his works that you will see in our place
And when we view that cowboy, we see Andy's face

"Smoking Up," the cowboy, the saddle and the rope
Memories, memories but they will help us to cope
Yes, he'll always be remembered in our home
Room to room, as we wander and as we roam

His works depict the desert, the plains and the range
A history of the West, a history that will never change
A background of firsts, he knew just what to do
Each of his works were always so vivid and new

We corresponded back and forth and that was fun
He sent us sketches and cartoons he had done
But we must not dwell on just his masterful art
This humble artist, this Westerner, he had a great heart

Vernice will carry on as we all will soon have to do
Like Andy, she has the courage to do what she has to do
And like all of us, we agree he was one of the very best
This artist, this friend, this real "Man of the West!"

– Loren Wendt

(Artist Andy Dagosta, a 40-year member of the Los Angeles Corral, died May 28. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Vernice, and his loving family.)

The Garden Gem of Northern California

By Nick Curry

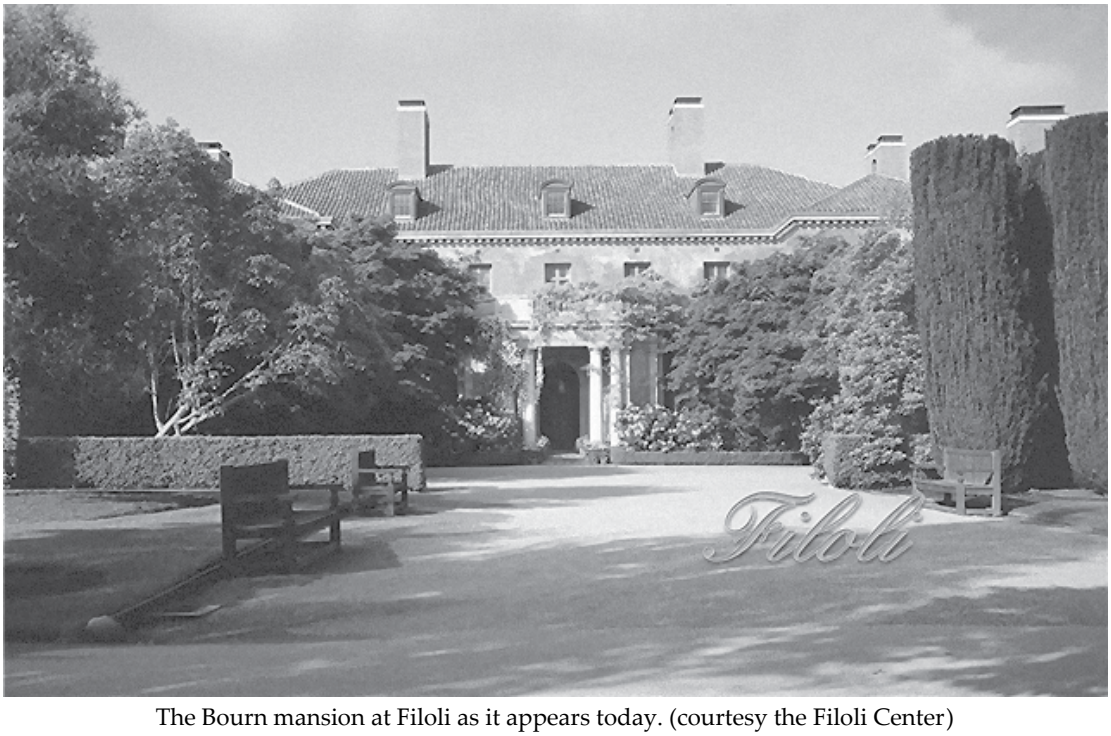
William Bowers "Will" Bourn II (1857-1936), classified as an industrialist, inherited a "cash-cow" which enabled him to make significant contributions to the up-building of San Francisco. This included the founding of the Greystone Cellar in St. Helena, the establishment of the precursor to the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, the building of the Spring Valley Water Company, which was the city's primary source of water, the Panama-Pacific Exhibition in 1915, and finally a grand estate named Filoli, built between 1915 and 1917 in Woodside, California.

Will's father had arrived in San Francisco from Brooklyn, New York, during the early fall of 1850. His wife, Sarah Chase, arrived in 1854. Will, Sr. purchased the Empire Mine, located in Grass Valley, California, in 1852, and developed it into the most profitable gold mine in the state. With the mine's profits he created a large fortune.

In 1874, when Will was 17, his father died from a gun-shot wound at age 61, either by suicide or accidentally. The cause of that tragedy was inconclusive. Will, Sr. had a multiplicity of business interests in merchandising, banking, insurance, mining, real estate, water assets, and other minor investments. His widow, along with her husband's close business associate, took over the management of the affairs.

At the time of his father's death, Will, Jr. was attending the University School in San Francisco. His earlier schooling had been at the College of St. Augustine in Benecia, California, which was a highly disciplined Episcopal military school. In early 1875, Will's mother sent him to Cambridge University in England, where he expected to remain for two years. At the end of 1876, however, Will's mother sent for him to return to California to manage his father's estate. Will forever regretted not having graduated.

Upon assuming his new duties, Will sold



The Bourn mansion at Filoli as it appears today. (courtesy the Filoli Center)

the Empire Mine, but later re-acquired it after the new owners had concluded that the mine had run its course. Will called in the world-renowned mining expert John Hays Hammond to appraise the Empire. The result was that the yield had only just begun.

Simultaneously, Will became involved in developing the Greystone Cellar in St. Helena from 1888 through 1890. This enterprise resulted in the breaking of the San Francisco wine merchants' stranglehold on the wine industry. From 1889 to 1905, Will managed to consolidate the many interests in the various local gas works into one strong company, and functioned as the managing director.

Following the devastating April earthquake in 1906, as president of the prestigious Pacific Union Club, he purchased the remains of the James Clair Flood mansion atop Nob Hill, which resulted in the relocation of the club's headquarters, which remain there to this day. Flood, who died in 1889, was one of the four Comstock Lode silver mining millionaires.

In 1908, Will solidified his control of the Spring Valley Water Company which, by this time, had become the single most important source of water for the City of San Francisco. This was all prior to the Hetch Hetchy water project north of Yosemite Valley.

In 1915, he and William H. Crocker (the son of Charles Crocker of the Big Four transcontinental railroad consortium of the 1860s), along with Phoebe Apperson Hearst (a primary benefactor of the University of California at Berkeley and the mother of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst) embarked upon financing the year-long Panama-Pacific Exhibition, located adjacent to the Presidio in San Francisco.

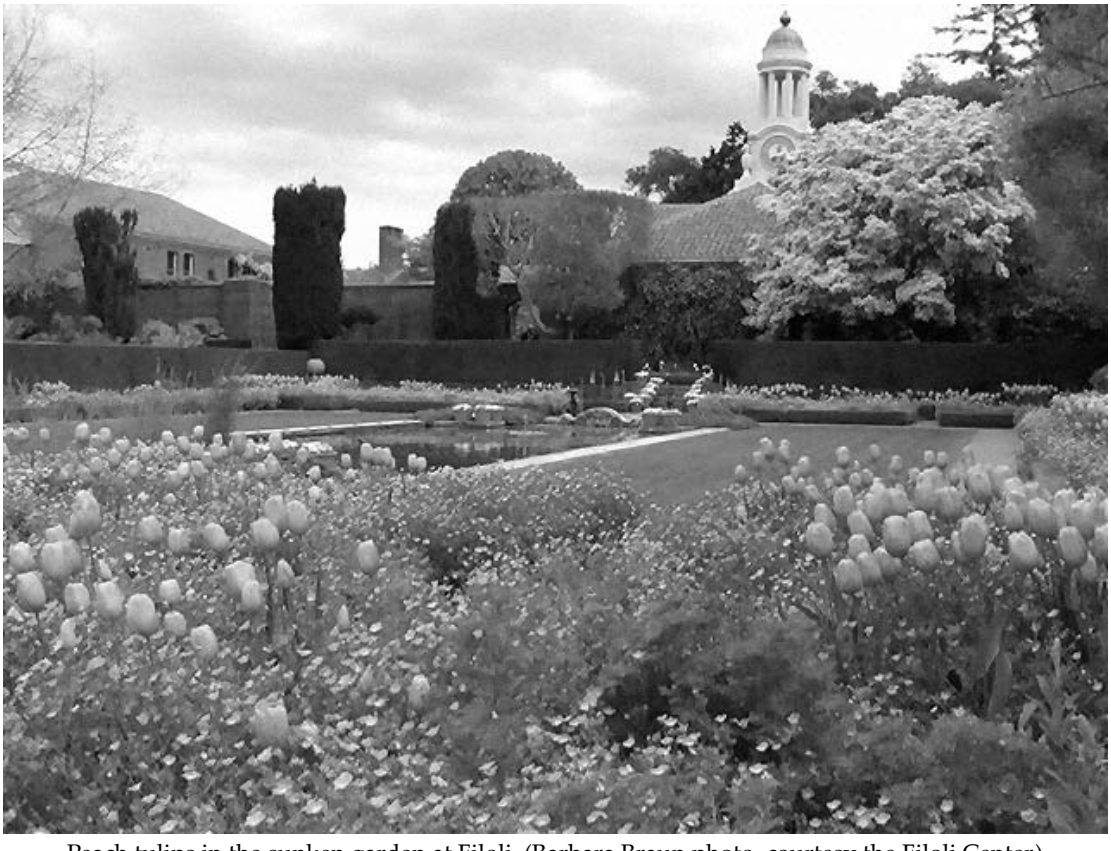
It was also in 1915 that Will and his wife, Agnes Moody Bourn, commissioned Willis J. Polk, who was the primary architect of the Panama-Pacific Exhibition, to build their dream home at Woodside, California. Completed in 1917, the estate consists of a 36,000 square foot house and 16 acres of beautifully manicured gardens of a wide variety of flora and trees. The highlight of the two-story, Georgian-style mansion is the grand ballroom. They called the estate Filoli, which stands for "Fight – Love – Live," a partial reflection of the on-going battles between Will and Michael H. deYoung, publisher of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. For the record, Will won every suit against de Young.

During World War I, Will and Alma (Mrs. Adolph) Spreckels founded the Friends of France, which supplied ambulances and humanitarian aid to the Allies. On August 8, 1921, at age 64, Will suffered a debilitating stroke while inspecting the Empire Mine. This resulted in his being wheelchair bound for the remainder of his life. His hectic business life was over. In 1922, he began to sell off assets including the Spring Valley Water Company to the city and county of San Francisco, and the San Francisco Gas Company to form the Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

The Bourn's only child, Maud, was born in November 1883. She married Arthur Rose Vincent in late March 1910 in San Mateo. Their wedding present was the Muckross Estate, located on Killarney Lakes in Ireland, where Vincent was a lawyer, and a member of the Judicial Service of the British Foreign Office. They had a daughter and a son. In February 1929, while returning from Europe, Maud fell ill with pneumonia and died in a New York City Hospital at age 45. The 17,000-acre Muckross Estate was given to the Irish Free State as a national park in December 1932. It is now known as the Bourn-Vincent Memorial Park. Arthur Vincent remarried in 1933.

In January 1936, Will's wife, Agnes, died at Filoli, and on July 5th that same year, Will also passed on. Several of the Bourn family members are interred within a five acre, private family cemetery located on the estate grounds. Will and Agnes loved their home, their daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren, and enjoyed a reputation for lavish entertainment at Filoli.

In 1937, William P. and Lurline Matson Roth purchased the estate. Lurline Roth was the daughter of Captain William Matson (1849-1917), who founded the Matson Navigation Company. Their ships transported supplies from the mainland to Hawaii, and returned with Spreckels' refined sugar to San Francisco. Matson later added luxury liners, and tourist hotels on the islands. William Roth was employed by the company, became



Peach tulips in the sunken garden at Filoli. (Barbara Braun photo, courtesy the Filoli Center)

president in 1927, and chairman of the board in 1946.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Roth were lovers of the Sport of Kings. They purchased the "Why Worry Farm" in 1927, where they trained and bred thoroughbred horses, which they showed and raced from coast to coast. This culminated in their participation as original investors (along with Dr. Charles Strub, Hal Roach, the Doheny family and others) in opening of the Santa Anita Race Track, on Christmas Day, 1934. The track is located on the former Rancho Santa Anita, once owned by E.J. "Lucky" Baldwin.

In early 1963, William Roth died at age 81. Lurline Roth donated Filoli to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1975, and moved to lesser quarters in Hillsborough, California. On September 4, 1980, Mrs. Roth asked permission to celebrate her 90th birthday at Filoli with her family and many, many friends. Permission was granted, and a regal affair was experienced by all. On September 5, 1985, she died at age 95, and was interred within the Matson/Roth family mausoleum at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park in Colma, California.

Currently, the Friends of Filoli manage the Filoli Center. The primary reason today for visiting Filoli is to enjoy the wide variety of formal gardens, which are on a par with both the Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, and Pierre S. DuPont's Longwood Gardens outside of Philadelphia. Bruce Porter, the gardens' architect, and the Bourns envisioned the house and gardens as complementary units, with the north-south axis of the gardens echoing the line of the Transverse Hall. Showing European influences, the gardens are a succession of garden rooms containing parterres, terraces, lawns, and pools arranged between the two parallel north-south walks. The southernmost point, the High Place, affords views of the garden, house, and fields. Walking through the gardens one notices the fantastic detail work,

with art imitating nature and nature imitating art, which epitomizes the essence of a pleasure garden.

Isbella Worn supervised the planting of the Filoli gardens. When Filoli was purchased by the Roths in 1937, they retained her to continue her work. Under Mrs. Roth's patronage, Worn enriched the gardens with a variety of plants, including hundreds of camellias, rhododendrons, roses, magnolias, and many rare plants. Her ingenious designs and great sense of color were hallmarks of the gardens that Mrs. Roth continued to follow even after Worn's death.

As the gardens gained worldwide renown, Mrs. Roth was awarded several honors, including the Distinguished Service Medal of the Garden Club of America for her achievements as a collector and propagator of plants. The formal garden at Filoli is named the Lurline B. Roth Garden in her honor. Today, the garden is maintained by 14 fulltime horticulturalists, student interns, and over one hundred garden volunteers. Filoli is an example of one of America's finest private garden estates.

Having invested a good portion of a day at Filoli, my wife and I can certainly recommend the trip and self-guided tour. We came away enlightened, enriched, entertained, and educated.

For Further Reading:

Last Bonanza Kings – The Bourns of San Francisco, by Ferol Egan, 1998

FROM OUR FILES

#49 June 1959

"At the May meeting a policy was inaugurated of especially inviting a segment of our corresponding membership to share the fine meetings at Costa's. Result was a packed house on hand to hear CM Harry C. James discuss 'The Cahuilla – Southern California's Most Independent Tribe,' a preview of Harry's important new book…. Harry's talks are always a delight to the Corral, and this one was no exception."

Dr. Andrew Rolle was welcomed as a new Corresponding Member.

#155 June 1984

"Corral Active Member and Former Sheriff Hugh Tolford spoke on the history of Death Valley and its environs. The 120-mile-long valley earned its name when a wagon train stumbled into it in 1849. Once a place to be avoided, Death Valley began attracting visitors in the early 20th century…. Tolford noted that tourism has proved to be Death Valley's most significant industry….

"The Corral meeting was also pleased to have in attendance Honorary Member Horace Albright, now age 94 and still active."

Monthly Roundup . . .

April 2009

Corresponding member Alan Pollack took us on "A Journey Through the Old West" by way of his extensive collection of historic newspapers. Lewis & Clark, the Alamo, the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the Pony Express, General Custer, and a host of Western outlaws from Jesse James to Tiburcio Vasquez all appear in the headlines Dr. Pollack has collected over the years.

Dr. Pollack's collection – some of which was on display – dates back to 1667. Many opportunities still exist for building a good collection, he said. "The really top dollar newspapers have some famous historical event in them," he explained, and can sell for thousands of dollars. But ordinary issues of many early papers can be had for much less (though certain "iconic" newspapers, such as the Tombstone Epitaph, have value no matter what the content).

As in any collecting field, there are a few "fakes" floating around on the market, but much more common are later reprints of historic papers, which are easily identifiable because they are so well known.

Along with the Old West, Dr. Pollack also specializes in newspapers relating to 1930s gangsters.

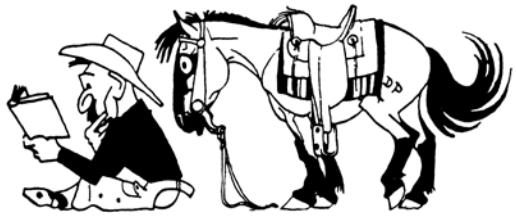
May 2009

Corresponding member Dennis Casebier took Corral members and guests into "an empty land" – the Mojave Desert. It is a place that has fascinated him since his days as a Marine at 29 Palms in the 1950s. In 1990, he purchased the old schoolhouse in Goffs, California, which has been restored as the centerpiece of the Mojave Desert Historical & Cultural Center.

As part of his research on the Mojave, Casebier has conducted about a thousand oral history interviews. "There is layer upon layer of history out there," he said, "but all the people who made it are gone." So he has traveled the country seeking out surviving pioneers. Besides recorded memories, he has also collected a wealth of photographs and documents, now housed in a new million dollar library complex at Goffs.

He began his presentation with some general observations on conducting oral histories – "you can't do a thousand of these without learning a few things." Then he moved into the stories of just a few of the homesteaders, desert lovers, cattle rustlers, and business owners he has met over the years, and showed past and present photographs of many of them.

Down the Western Book Trail . . .



American Lightning, by Howard Blum. New York: Crown Publishing, 2008. 335 pp. Notes, Photographs, Bibliography. Cloth, $24.95. *www.randomhouse/crown.com*

Blum, the author of this non-fiction work, was formerly a reporter at the *New York Times* and is a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*. He has written eight previous books.

This book is centered around the dynamiting of the *Los Angeles Times* building in 1910. Twenty-three men were killed.

It boasts a host of characters centering around the dynamiters, the McNamara brothers: William Burns, the celebrated detective known as "The American Sherlock Holmes;" D.W. Griffith, a producer and director who transformed America and its opinions through film; General Harrison Gray Otis, a Civil War hero who prevailed upon his former comrade, President McKinley, to appoint him a Brigadier General of the Philippine conflict; Samuel Gompers, the president of the AF of L; Lincoln Steffens, the writer who championed the argument of "justifiable dynamiting;" Clarence Darrow, the defense lawyer, who was accused of subornation of perjury in two separate trials; and his celebrated lawyer-defender, Earl L. Rogers.

The explosion at the *Los Angeles Times* is well known, but the circumstances and intentions leading up to it, and the tensions between capitalism and labor, are not well understood. Open shops and union shops were a hot issue in the early 1900s. There were laundry strikes, brewer strikes, baker strikes, butcher strikes. Even buying a loaf of bread became an earnest decision. Thus, following the explosion high feelings arose not only among Angelenos, but among the rest of the nation as well, and thus the celebrated defense attorney Clarence Darrow was called in to the cause from his home in Chicago.

The prosecution of the McNamaras was fueled by the County of Los Angeles, the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, and the American Bankers' Association. The defense was funded by nickels collected from thousands of working people throughout the country who were persuaded that the prosecution of the McNamaras was an outright attack on the American labor movement.

General Otis, who was key to the story, came to California in early middle age after having had earlier careers and modest success in business. At one time he even raised angora goats as a shepherd. He then acquired the editor's position in the *Santa Barbara Press*, and later accepted a position with the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, which was on the verge of bankruptcy. From that beginning came the Otis-Chandler dynasty which up until a few years ago controlled the *Times* for over a century.

Blum has done a wonderful job of illuminating the tenacious sleuthing of Burns and his detective operatives, with an abundance of authorities and references.

This is an altogether pleasant read of Southern California's personalities who moved Los Angeles a century ago. Most of the mentioned landmarks are still here.

— Norman S. Marshall

Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819-1935, by William E. Lass. Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008. 464 pp. Illustrations, Maps, Tables, Appendix, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $45. Order from Arthur H. Clark Company, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069; *www.ahclark.com.*

The Mississippi River may be the largest river in the United States (in terms of volume), but the Missouri River is the longest, its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains in western Montana, running into the Mississippi River more than 2,500 miles downstream. Following the explorations of Lewis and Clark, the Missouri became an important transportation resource for the westward advance of American settlement. St. Louis benefited immediately from the confluence of both rivers. Exploration upstream revealed major tributaries, among them the Platte, Yellowstone, Niobrara, Osage, and other rivers.

William E. Lass, emeritus professor of history at Minnesota State University, has spent a lifetime researching and writing about the Upper Midwest region and its rivers, and especially steamboating. He was motivated to write Navigating the Missouri because there was "no history of Missouri River steamboating that covered the whole river and its major navigable tributaries. So I decided to write one" (p 11). He sure did. Lass covers every steamboat on every river that could accommodate them from the 1820s to 1935. That last date is a bit misleading, for the final chapter, "The Last Years," runs from 1880-1935. The bulk of the book deals with the period 1820-1850s. Although Lass's book is primarily an economic study, there is plenty of social history as well, and his view of the Missouri is wide enough to encompass events in the Black Hills of South Dakota and railroads in Kansas.

In effect, this book contains everything anyone ever wanted to know, and then some, about navigation and commerce on the Missouri River and its main tributaries. Lass loves to make lists. "The freight awaiting steamboat shipment included some 4,000 sacks of corn; 400 barrels and 1,000 sacks of flour; a large amount of medical stores; 400 bales of clothing; about 200 cases of hats, caps, belts, and knapsacks; lumber for warehouses at various posts; wagons, wheels, and spokes; 1,000 muskets with ammunition; tents; kegs of nails; and 'a host of articles too numerous to details'" (pp 268-69). That's a typical example; it reminded me of the cargo in the song *The Irish Rover*. Like the ship in the song, most steamboats had a short life, many only a couple of years before a boiler exploded or the boat hit a snag and sank.

Commercial traffic meant insurance, passenger fares, and intense competition between steamboat companies. Contracts with the federal government called for movement of soldiers and supplies. As technological improvements made it possible for steamboats to travel up the Missouri, new towns were established, some to flourish briefly, others to become state capitals (Bismarck, Pierre, Jefferson City) or major ports (Sioux City, Omaha, Kansas City).

Although photographs and paintings of steamboats illustrate the book, I would like to have seen a schematic profile of a steamboat. Lass does provide a word picture on page 291 of a typical steamboat and its variations.

All in all, this is a comprehensive survey that will be indispensable to anyone interested in Missouri River navigation. Lass seems to have named every steamboat that ever traveled on the Missouri River and its tributaries. My only concern is with the stinginess of the maps. There are six of them, but they contain huge amounts of blank space and are too specifically drawn. More items could have been included in them, such as railroad routes that Lass discusses as competitive and sometimes allies of the steamboat companies.

– Abraham Hoffman