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SUNSET RIDERS

THE LATER CAREERS OF KEN MAYNARD AND WILLIAM BOYD

By Abraham Hoffman

By the year 1943 two veteran film actors found themselves riding into the sunset of their careers. Ken Maynard and William Boyd began acting in silent films and became highly successful motion picture stars, appearing primarily in Western films. In their heyday they had attracted legions of fans, Boyd in his alter ego of Hopalong Cassidy and Maynard as a white-hatted hero. Each rode white horses, Boyd on Topper and Maynard on Tarzan. Both men were known for their distinctive outfits, Boyd dressed in black and Maynard in stylized Western shirts influenced by Tom Mix.

Unfortunately for Boyd and Maynard, their heyday had passed, and as the budgets for their pictures shrank, so did their salaries. Yet both of them had enjoyed great success and popularity. The years 1943-44 proved pivotal and crucial for them, literally as well as metaphorically. After making the film *Harmony Trail* in 1944 Maynard made only two more pictures, playing a minor role in the 1970 film *Bigfoot* as a storeowner. On the wall in one scene is a poster for one of Maynard's old films, a sad reminder of his earlier illustrious career. The other film, *The Marshal of Windy Hollow*, offered Maynard a final opportunity to recapture his old hero image. He co-starred with veterans Sunset Carson and Tex Ritter. Made in 1972, the film was caught in litigation over finances and was never commercially released. Maynard died less than a year later, and Ritter passed away shortly afterward.

Maynard's career began in the 1920s and for about a decade he starred in highly successful Westerns. Born in Indiana on July 21, 1895, he acquired a reputation as a young daredevil who joined carnivals, Wild West shows, and circuses. Between 1911 and 1917 he learned stunt riding and became an accomplished horseman. He also competed in rodeos, possibly winning as much as $42,000. He would later claim he won the All-Around Champion Cowboy title at the 1920 Pendleton Rodeo, but there is no record that he actually did so.

In 1923 Maynard went to Hollywood and secured a contract at Fox Studios, making less money than rodeo work paid, but gaining experience in movie acting. A breakthrough part came in the 1925 film *Janice Meredith* in which Maynard played Paul Revere, doing a fine job of horsemanship on Revere's famous ride. His salary went from $100 to $1,000 a week. After working on low-budget Westerns, Maynard signed with First National

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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 . . .

2010 is already flying by, and our new officers are hard at work to keep our Corral on the upward road. I hope the *Branding Iron* will continue to do its part – with your help, of course.

Abe Hoffman's article, "Sunset Riders," is based on his 2008 talk before our Corral, which was awarded 2nd Place in the Westerners International's annual Philip A. Danielson Award for the best presentation to a Corral or Posse.

Steve Lech, Riverside County's leading historian, joins us again with the story of a desert ranch that is steeped in local history.

Hope you enjoy the ride!

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Sunset Riders . . .

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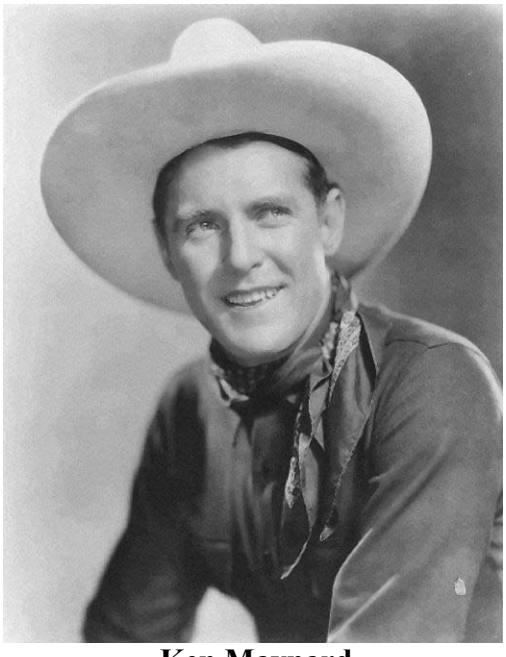
and made eighteen Westerns with budgets of $75,000-$80,000, and location shooting in Arizona, Montana, and South Dakota, as well as in California. These were quality films in which Maynard displayed remarkable athletic ability, riding his horse Tarzan to capture runaway stagecoaches, descending steep hillsides, and jumping off a cliff into a lake. By 1929 Maynard had become a major film star, more for his equestrian skills than his acting ability. In that year Warner Brothers bought First National and phased out Western pictures. Without missing a step, Maynard moved to Universal and made eight Westerns in both sound and silent versions in 1929-30.

When motion pictures moved into the sound era, Maynard easily made the transition. A self-taught musician, he could play several musical instruments, and this talent paid off when he recorded several Western songs and put musical interludes into his films. Maynard composed both music and lyrics for *The Trail Drive* (1933), sang "Strawberry Roan" in the film of the same name, and composed music for other films. It was Maynard who introduced Gene Autry to motion pictures by giving him an uncredited part in the 1934 film *In Old Santa Fe*. Autry never forgot the opportunity Maynard gave him and helped him out financially when Maynard fell on hard times.

Universal did not renew Maynard's contract, so he spent a couple of years making films for independent studios. In 1933 Carl Laemmle, head of Universal, looking for a replacement for Tom Mix, rehired Maynard and gave him a sweet deal: his own production unit, a $100,000 per picture budget, and control over script, casting, and choice of director. Professor Raymond White, in his study of Maynard's career, observed that Maynard tackled multiple responsibilities to turn out eight Westerns "filled with action, music, and unusual plots." The films included everything from stampedes to gunfights, plus his horsemanship skills.



Ken Maynard

Although the period 1929-34 may have been his most successful period in which he worked as an actor, producer, writer, and director, during that time he was running into increasing problems, most of his own making. His films for Universal ran way over budghet, he earned the enmity of Carl Laemmle, Jr., over expenses, and his consumption of alcohol interfered with his work. The final straw for Universal occurred when Maynard concocted a film script, *Smoking Guns* (1934) that went in several odd directions, with scenes set in South America as well as the West, and Maynard fighting alligators. Old man Laemmle hated the film and reprimanded Maynard for doing such poor work. Maynard and Universal parted company.

Maynard had no trouble getting work as Nat Levine of Mascot Pictures hired him to do several films. Unfortunately, Maynard's drinking was out of control. On location to film the serial *Mystery Mountain*, a drunken Maynard brutally treated his horses, including Tarzan, went over budget, and left Mascot after completing the film. Levine warned him that if he didn't change his behavior and kept drinking, it would ruin his career. Maynard ignored Levine and quickly found work

with Columbia Pictures, doing eight pictures. He quarreled constantly with producer Larry Darmour, since at this point Maynard did not have the control over his films he had exercised at Universal.

The Columbia pictures marked the end of high-budget Westerns for Ken Maynard. His personal life also had its problems as his marriage to Mary Leeper, his third wife, was falling apart. Maynard also gained weight, a problem he never overcame and which was painfully obvious in his last films. After leaving Columbia he formed the Diamond K Ranch Wild West Circus and Indian Congress, a show that closed down quickly and cost him a great deal financially. Maynard had not worried too much about expenses when the money was rolling in. He bought airplanes and a yacht, and he made trips to Mexico and Central America to view Mayan ruins, a subject that became a hobby.

Needing money now, Maynard made eight Westerns in 1937 for Grand National, getting $2,400 per picture, a sum far below what he had made in his peak years. He also signed on with the Cole Brothers Circus. Grand National cooperated with Maynard by setting up a shooting schedule that accommodated his circus tours. Ending his marriage with Mary in August 1939, he soon married Bertha Rowland Denham, a high-wire circus artist.

Although his name still had some star power, Maynard was on a downhill slide. Overweight, he couldn't perform the athletic feats he had done earlier in his career. Raymond White notes, "Maynard was only forty-three years old, but he was no longer the darling daredevil." The studios willing to offer him work no longer included the major ones. He made four films for Colony pictures between November 1939 and June 1940, and they weren't very good. Tarzan died in 1940. For the next two and a half years Maynard made no picture. With the United States entering World War II, he went on tour urging people to buy war bonds.

* * *

At first glance the life and career of William Boyd closely resembled Ken Maynard's. Born on June 5, 1892, Boyd was only seven weeks older than Maynard, and he died on September 12, 1972, less than seven months before Maynard passed away on March 23, 1973. Like Maynard, Boyd was married five times, the last marriages for both enduring for many years. Both men enjoyed success in the silent film era, Boyd beginning in 1918 as an extra. Cecil B. De Mille spotted Boyd and gave him the lead role in the 1926 film *The Volga Boatman*. Several months later Boyd starred in his first Western film, *The Last Frontier*. Between 1925 and 1935 Boyd made some two dozen films in genres that included comedy, romance, and drama.

By the end of the silent film era Boyd was an established star making $100,000 a year. He had no difficulty making the transition to sound films, revealing a rich baritone voice. He starred in the 1931 film *The Painted Desert* with Clark Gable as the villain, the action comedy *Suicide Fleet* (1931), and *Lucky Devils* (1933), about Hollywood stunt pilots. Aviator, jungle explorer, submarine sailor—it seemed he could play any type of action hero. Then the doors of opportunity slammed shut in a bizarre turn of events.

Boyd made *Flaming Gold*, released on September 29, 1933, for RKO Pictures. His next film was released on May 11, 1934, for Liberty Pictures. Boyd had expected to sign a contract with RKO, but the deal was abruptly canceled. It seemed Boyd was getting some very negative publicity in the newspapers—arrested for gambling and drug abuse.

Or was he? It turned out that Bill Boyd wasn't the only William Boyd in town. RKO had hired a Broadway actor named William Boyd who appeared in the RKO film *State's Attorney* in 1932. Actress Helen Twelvetrees, who had starred with Bill in *The Painted Desert* a year earlier, was also in *State's Attorney*. In order to clear up the confusion about the two Boyds, the Broadway actor inserted the word "Stage" in parentheses as a kind of middle name. The confusion persisted, however, for Bill Boyd. William (Stage) Boyd had a record of poor public behavior that included arrests for alcohol, gambling, and possession of drugs. Newspapers loved it when an actor or actress was caught sinning, and Boyd's name and photographs appeared

in the press. Unfortunately, the newspapers printed Bill Boyd's picture instead of Stage Boyd's.

Bill Boyd had just signed the lucrative contract with RKO. Contracts with actors and actresses at the time and long afterward contained a morals clause that terminated the agreement if the actor or actress behaved in an immoral manner. Seeing that it was Bill Boyd's picture in the newspapers, RKO took no chances and canceled the contract. William (Stage) Boyd left the scene when he died of a liver ailment on March 20, 1935, but his death didn't help Bill Boyd. He made two films for minor studios. Then came an opportunity to resurrect his career and to reinvent himself as a Western actor.

Producer Harry Sherman was looking for an actor to star in a series of Westerns based on the novels of Clarence E. Mulford, featuring a character named Hopalong Cassidy. Paramount would distribute the films. Sherman first chose Boyd to play the part of Buck Peters, foreman of the Bar-20 ranch, a feature rather than starring role. Boyd's hair had gone prematurely gray when he was still in his thirties, giving him a patrician look. However, he persuaded Sherman to cast him instead in the starring role of Hopalong Cassidy. Boyd had some interesting ideas about the role. He had no intention of playing Cassidy the way that Mulford had depicted him in the novels. Mulford's Cassidy chewed tobacco, swore, smoked, drank whiskey, spoke in a semiliterate manner, and shot people indiscriminately. Boyd may have felt that some of these attributes sounded too much like the off-screen activity of the recently deceased Stage Boyd. He revised the character, making him into an action hero with clean habits.

Hop-Along Cassidy (as it was originally spelled) was released on August 23, 1935, and made Boyd a popular star again. The film began a long series of Hoppy films, 44 for Paramount and another 22 for United Artists by 1948. The first film featured characters from Mulford's novel *Hopalong Cassidy*, including Johnny Nelson, Buck Peters, and Red Connors, all ranch hands on the Bar-20. Mulford had written six Bar-20 novels, and eventually all were used as sources for the movies, with

William Boyd

Mulford contributing another 28 stories. By then the films credited Mulford with creating "characters" rather than the stories. Of note in the first film is the information that Bill Cassidy got his nickname from a gunshot wound in the leg. For trivia aficionados, Charles Middleton, best known for his role of Ming the Merciless in the Flash Gordon serials, played foreman Buck Peters.

Boyd adopted a few gimmicks to make the Cassidy character distinctive. This included his all-black clothing and wearing a black hat, a notable contrast to the stereotypical good guys who always wore white hats. At age forty with gray hair, Boyd had Hoppy accompanied by younger actors as sidekicks, among them Jimmy Ellison, Russell Jenkins, and Rand Brooks. He also utilized the formula of what were called "trio Westerns," three partners in the story (and three Western actors to advertise instead of one). The third was usually a grizzled old owlhoot to dadgum cuss about whatever he didn't like—George "Gabby" Hayes and Andy Clyde filling this role.

In 1942 Harry Sherman moved his production company's distribution to United Art-

ists. By that time a number of Cassidy films had used the Alabama Hills by Lone Pine, California, for location shooting. Boyd made friends with Father John J. Crowley, known as the "Desert Padre" who promoted the recreational opportunities in Owens Valley. Crowley died in an automobile accident in 1941; Crowley Lake is named for him. Boyd liked the Lone Pine area so much that he and his wife, Grace, whom he had married in 1937, moved there. Boyd bought a homestead that served as headquarters for the films he would make in the 1940s.

As seems inevitable when a film idea becomes a series of sequels, the later Hoppy films were made on reduced budgets. Despite the spectacular scenery of the Alabama Hills, Boyd's pictures after 1942 demonstrate an indifferent sameness. So do the actors: Victor Jory and Douglas Dumbrille cast as villains so obvious they might as well have worn a sign saying "bad guy" in their first scene. Robert Mitchum, just beginning his career as an actor, played various outlaws or gunmen with such monotonous regularity that he wore the same clothes in different films. Some surprises show up in these 1940s films: George Reeves before he became Superman, Duncan Renaldo before he became the Cisco Kid, and a stock company of character actors.

The directors were usually Lesley Selander or George Archainbaud, journeymen directors who would do dozens of TV episodes in the 1950s. Boyd's films in 1943-44, with titles such as *Border Patrol*, *Colt Comrades*, *Bar 20*, *False Colors*, and *Texas Masquerade*—ten pictures in two years—were sporadically entertaining, the trio idea getting stale as Jimmy Rogers, son of humorist Will Rogers, proved unappealing as the young pal who supposedly falls for the leading lady.

* * *

While Boyd was making films in the Alabama Hills, Ken Maynard found an opportunity to revive a career that had all but faded from the silver screen. Now pushing fifty and weighing more than 200 pounds, he bore little resemblance to his image as a Western cowboy hero. Nonetheless, he still had some drawing power, and Monogram Studio wanted him for a new series of low-budget Westerns. The studio had made money in the *Rough Rider* series starring Buck Jones, Tim McCoy, and Raymond Hatton. This series of trio Westerns had ended with the tragic death of Jones in a nightclub fire. Monogram producer Robert Tansey proposed a new series, *The Trail Blazers*, to star Maynard and veteran actor Hoot Gibson. Like Boyd and Maynard, Hoot Gibson had achieved stardom in the 1920s, earning up to $14,500 a week in Western films. Like Boyd and Maynard, he had gone through multiple marriages and divorces. He had also gone through all his money by making bad investments and buying airplanes and fast cars. He was in poor health and needed work to pay his medical bills. As Maynard had done, for the previous six years Hoot had started an unsuccessful rodeo show and appeared in circuses and Wild West shows.

As a low-budget producer Robert Tansey knew no close rivals. In a famous episode where he was asked why he was tearing the pages out of a Western movie script that was behind schedule, he answered, "Most horse operas run roughly sixty minutes. That means twenty minutes of riding, ten minutes of shooting, ten minutes of fighting, and twenty minutes of plot. If you're in trouble, starting cutting the plot!"

Gibson was glad to have the job, and he and Maynard were old friends and friendly rivals, the latter in aviation. At the National Air Races held in Los Angeles in 1933, they had flown their planes in a race during which Hoot's plane crashed. He was seriously injured and took months to recuperate.

In the first film in the Trail Blazer series, *Wild Horse Stampede*, released April 16, 1943, the two played U.S. Marshals Ken Maynard and Hoot Gibson, with no problem remembering the names of their characters. A third marshal, played by Bob Baker, rounded out the trio and provided the necessary love interest for the leading lady. Hoot and Ken could no longer plausibly play romantic parts. Neither Maynard nor Gibson cared much for Baker, and this was the only film in which Baker would be a Trail Blazer. The

plot involved Hoot and Ken helping Baker get horses to the Army that was protecting a railroad construction crew from being attacked by Indians and renegade whites.

Wild Horse Stampede set a pattern for subsequent Trail Blazer movies that reveals Tansey's ability to milk to most out of the least in producing low-budget films. Each of the six Trail Blazer pictures begins with a tracking shot of Maynard (on Tarzan II) and Gibson galloping toward the camera which, mounted on a truck, moves ahead of the horsemen. The riders streak along a road lined with telephone poles and tire tracks. Tansey thus economized by reusing the same footage for the six films.

It is also obvious that the films were shot on Corriganville property in the Simi Valley as the scenery never changes from film to film. As for the sets, the same place seems to serve in different films as a hotel lobby, bank, or saloon, depending on what the counter has on top of it. Financially, the films were quite a comedown for someone who had once earned $10,000 a picture, as Monogram paid Maynard only $850 a film.

In 2007 the Turner Classic Movies cable channel ran the six Trail Blazer pictures that starred Maynard. It becomes painfully obvious in viewing the films that Maynard was not enjoying himself. His acting is stilted; he speaks his lines without conviction. By contrast, Hoot Gibson was clearly enjoying himself playing off an obtuse Maynard. Gibson's tag line, used repeatedly in the Trail Blazers series to further the plot, was "I've got an idea," a proposal that as often as not proves unworkable. Each time Hoot makes the suggestion, Maynard rejects it and, by doing so, implies he is rejecting the story line. Without Gibson's "ideas," the story line would have nowhere to go. Maynard may not be trying to keep his gut in, but he is clearly overweight and not in prime condition.

The supporting cast of the films is worth noting. Emmet Lynn played Eagle Eye the Scout, a grizzled frontiersman in the Gabby Hayes, tradition, in *The Law Rides Again* and *Blazing Guns*, the second and third films in the series. Rather surprisingly, Lynn is killed off in the violent gunfight at the end of *Blazing Guns*. It may be that Tansey thought Lynn could be a third partner, making the series a trio Western, but decided that a younger man needed to provide the romance interest opposite the leading female role.

Women were incidental to the plots in many if not most B Westerns, but Betty Miles proved an exception to the rule. Born Elizabeth Henninger in Santa Monica in 1910, Betty was a graduate of the University of Southern California where she excelled on the intercollegiate debating team and staffer on the *Daily Trojan* and yearbook. After a dozen years as a radio program producer and director, she worked as a drama coach at several Hollywood studios. Betty had learned to ride horses at an early age, and her skills attracted notice from Robert Tansey. The story needs verification, but apparently she saw an actress having problems controlling her horse in an action scene. Betty doubled for the actress so well that Tansey offered her a contract. She costarred in three of Maynard's six Trail Blazer films, showing her considerable athletic skills in *Westward Bound* and *Sonora Stagecoach*, the latter film the first one in the Trail Blazer series made without Maynard. Betty Miles made one more film, with Tex Ritter, and then disappeared from the screen.

Among the journeymen actors who played the bad guys in the Trail Blazers series, Charles King stands out. King appeared in more than 400 pictures, starting with *Birth of a Nation* in 1915 and ending with a serial about pirates in 1953, when he retired from acting. Immediately recognizable for his beer belly and black walrus moustache, King was often called "Blackie" in the pictures and played a sort of lead henchman to the main villain. King, it has been claimed, was killed or knocked out by more actors than anyone else in Hollywood history. Among those who did him in were Maynard, John Wayne, Buck Jones, and dozens of other stars. King appears as Blackie in *Blazing Guns* and is resurrected, same clothing and name, in *Death Valley Rangers*. He also was in *Arizona Whirlwind*, Maynard's last film as a Trail Blazer, and in *Harmony Trail*, the last film starring Maynard and, it turned out, the last film Maynard made between 1944 and 1970.

For the fourth film in the Trail Blazer series, *Death Valley Rangers* (which was filmed in Simi Valley, not Death Valley), Tansey brought in Bob Steele. At age 36 Steele was a dozen years younger than Maynard, and looked youthful enough to play the lover and make the series a trio Western. However, Maynard didn't care much for the introduction of Steele. Maynard and Steele costarred in *Westward Bound* and *Arizona Whirlwind*, and at that point Maynard had enough of the Trail Blazers. Hoot and Bob made two more Trail Blazer pictures, with actor Victor Daniels, better known as Chief Thundercloud, as a sort of faithful Indian companion.

Harmony Trail would prove to be Maynard's last starring role in motion pictures. Eddie Dean, known more as a country-western singer than an actor, costarred in the film, the two of them playing U.S. marshals named—Ken Maynard and Eddie Dean. Max Terhune played another marshal who carried his ventriloquist dummy, Elmer, around with him. Glenn Strange, successor to Boris Karloff in the Frankenstein movies, also was a marshal. Charles King played his usual bad guy. A young Ruth Roman, just starting her acting career, was the love interest. In the film Maynard seemed to look as if he were somewhere else, and he was still overweight. *Harmony Trail* was his swan song even as it featured young actors like Dean and Roman. Robert Tansey produced the film, another standard work in the genre of low-budget Westerns.

Most historians who have written about Maynard's career sum up the last quarter-century of his life in a few sentences, mentioning the alcoholism and trailer park existence. Although Maynard would be out of movies until 1970, he had some business ventures that still kept him in the public eye, including the Ken Maynard Circus and appearing as a guest star with other circuses and Wild West shows. In 1951 Maynard hosted and narrated a series of fifteen-minute radio programs, "Tales of the Diamond K" (some sources call it "Tales from the Diamond K"). The program was sponsored by Ken Maynard Phono Records and Ken Maynard "K" Shirts. Another sponsor later listed was the Ken Maynard Wild West Personalized Phono Records. Any information on these enterprises, clearly thought up by Maynard for his show, would be welcome.

Information on the program is pretty sketchy. There are claims that a thousand episodes of the program were made, but this figure seems greatly exaggerated. More realistically, only about three dozen of the episodes are known to exist. It was long assumed that the programs were very rare or unavailable, but the Internet has brought the shows out of hiding. Several web sites present up to 37 episodes, making it possible for people to recapture the experience of Maynard telling stories about the Old West.

Similarly, recordings of Maynard singing Western ballads are available. These date from his early sound films and have been packaged with vintage Gene Autry and Roy Rogers hits on CD. One such favorite is Maynard's recording of "Streets of Laredo." After the radio episodes were made, Maynard seems to have disappeared from public view until August 27, 1962. A television series, "Here's Hollywood," visited actors and actresses at home. It's unknown to me whether Maynard in 1962 was in such reduced circumstances that he would admit an interviewer and camera crew to a mobile home in a trailer park.

Maynard did find employment at Corriganville where he did trick shooting demonstrations. Writer Stephen Lodge, who as a young man began working at Corriganville in 1959, recalled how he met Maynard. Maynard, too out of shape to do fancy horseback riding or trick roping, was shooting a .22 rifle at clay plates tossed into the air and thrilling the audience by his marksmanship. A boyhood fan of Maynard, Lodge commented to a stuntman about Maynard's dead-shot ability. The stuntman informed a disillusioned Lodge that Maynard's rifle was loaded not with lead bullets, but with bird shot, making it almost impossible to miss hitting the clay plates.

Although the date is uncertain, Lodge recalled that later that summer, Maynard drove into Corriganville while extremely drunk. He smashed into building posts and almost hit several people. When he climbed out of his

Ford station wagon, Lodge could see that his shirt-tail was out and buttons in the wrong holes. His voice slurred, Maynard called out, "W-where in the h-hell's that old fart Corrigan?' Refusing any help from anyone, he returned to his car and drove out of town, bashing through a chain link fence. Corrigan surveyed the damage and then called on Maynard, but before he could say anything a drunken Maynard told him that he could still "out ride, out shoot, out fight, out rope, and out do you with the ladies back in the old days and I still can today….So if you're thinking of suing my old leather ass, you might just as well kiss it. Because I don't have a last penny left to give you." Corrigan left in anger but later reconciled with him, and in 1963 he honored him with a "Ken Maynard Day" at Corriganville.

Seven years later came Maynard's film role in *Bigfoot*, followed by his last starring role in the ultra-low budget *Marshal of Windy Hollow*, a film that was never released. Even low, low-budget movies, it seems, can get caught up in litigation.

In 1968 Maynard's wife Bertha passed away. They had been married for 28 years. The loss hit Maynard hard, and his alcohol consumption increased. Then he met a would-be actress, Marilyn Marlowe, who basically took over Maynard's life. She claimed they were married (not verified) and sold his collection of cowboy gear, from his lasso to his boots. Nothing was left for him but to ride off into the sunset. Ken Maynard died of stomach cancer on March 23, 1973, at the Motion Picture Country Home in Woodland Hills, California. He was done in by his ego, his extravagance, the stress of living up to his screen image, and his alcoholism, an off-screen performance that shadowed and ultimately ruined his acting career. A quite different destiny, however, was in store for William Boyd and his alter ego, Hopalong Cassidy.

* * *

Bill Boyd made ten Hopalong Cassidy films in 1943-44, produced by Harry Sherman for distribution by United Artists. "Pop" Sherman was well known for his use of good character actors, choice of locations, and action scenes, but he ended his connection with Boyd after the release of *Forty Thieves* in June 1944, having made 54 Hoppy films.. Boyd formed Hopalong Cassidy Productions. He had bought the movie rights to the Hopalong character from Clarence Mulford in 1943, and he proceeded to make a dozen more films between 1946 and 1948. Even fans could note the skimpy budgets, lack of action, and thin plots. William K. Everson noted that there was even a lack of livestock. "Boyd, older, went out of his way to turn over what action there was to his younger cohorts," said Everson. "Even the best of his own Hopalong Cassidys was barely up to the standards of the weaker Sherman produced entries."

Everson's criticism may sound overly harsh, but it seems that after more than five dozen Hoppy films, Boyd may have felt he was beating a dead horse. Other commentators on the last theatrical Hoppy films find them uneven, some more successful than others. Given the $10,000 per film budget and a ninety-hour shooting schedule, the problems in putting out a quality film are understandable.

Still, Boyd had put his life and career into the Hopalong Cassidy character. After 66 films and fourteen years, Boyd felt he owned the character, and in 1948 he took the legal steps necessary to make it so. Scraping together the money needed, Boyd purchased all the rights from Mulford and Sherman on the Hopalong character. Boyd proceeded to create 104 radio programs to be syndicated by Commodore Productions and Artists, Inc. Some of the shows were based on Hoppy films, others were original scripts. The programs were recorded in 1948-49 but were not broadcast until 1950 when the Hopalong Cassidy craze began to sweep the nation. In an incredible coincidence of timing, Boyd gained control of the Hoppy rights just as television became commercially viable. The new medium demanded product to fill air time, and old B-Western movies gained a new life. Boyd was astute enough to recognize the merchandizing possibilities, and he licensed Hoppy for lunch boxes, cap pistols and holsters, clothing, and bubble gum cards. The

cards used stills from old Hoppy films. Boyd collected all the royalties.

In 1952 Boyd began production of 52 episodes of new Hopalong Cassidy adventures. These were half-hour programs and featured veteran actor Edgar Buchanan as Red Connors, one of the original Bar 20 ranch hands. The episodes ran between September 1952 and April 1954, with a few programs telecast in January 1952. Boyd made recordings about Hoppy in the new LP medium, telling stories with a male chorus offering background musical accompaniment. Boyd also cut deals with comic book publishers to produce Hopalong comics. In an odd twist of life imitating art, there was also a series of Bill Boyd comics in which Boyd himself became a Western action hero.

Boyd was very conscious of his fan base being children. He spoke excellent grammatical English in the TV programs, a contrast to the cowboy dialect found in old Westerns such as William S. Hart's intertitle cards. Boyd rode in the Rose Parade and made numerous public appearances before audiences that numbered as high as 40,000 people, mostly children.

Boyd's death in 1972 left a legacy that endures to the present day. There are numerous web sites, led by hopalong.com. The Hopalong Cassidy Museum in Cambridge, Ohio, where he grew up, has held an annual Hopalong Cassidy Festival since 1990. At the height of the Hoppy craze in the early 1950s, a young Louis L'Amour wrote several Hopalong Cassidy novels (licensed by Boyd) under the name Tex Burns. In 1971 singer Don McLean, best known for his song "American Pie," composed "So Long Hopalong Cassidy." Today everything Hoppy is copyrighted and trademarked.

* * *

William Boyd and Ken Maynard enjoyed similar careers as stars of B-Westerns in which they played action heroes. The characters inspired generations of young children who looked to these screen images as role models, a personification of integrity that entailed a heavy responsibility for those who played them. Boyd experienced latter-day fame and fortune while Maynard languished in a trailer park. In retrospect it seems easy to note the differences: alcohol and an overactive ego ruined Maynard's career. For Boyd, a faith in the character he played combined with luck and good business acumen to make an enduring and endearing reputation that exists to the present day. A little research on the Internet, however, allows us to visit both men in their heyday as many of their old films are available on DVD. The sun has long set on these Western actors, but they still ride.

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THE GILMAN RANCH
EARLY DAYS IN INLAND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Steve Lech

The Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum in Banning, California has seen many owners and many changes in its roughly 150 years. Although its long ownership by James Marshall Gilman is honored in today's name, activity in the vicinity of the Gilman Ranch started long before its namesake came to the area.

The San Gorgonio Pass is a natural divide between the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountain ranges, and has been a major trade route for most of the 10,000 years that people have been living in Southern California. On the site of the present-day Gilman Ranch, scores of Indian artifacts unearthed during archaeological excavations and construction attest to the fact that the area has been in use for centuries. The year-round stream just northeast of the house served as an attraction for the local Indians who established both temporary and permanent villages in the area, as well as used the area as a travel stop where water could be obtained for the journey into or out of the desert.

Non-Indian ventures into the area started as early as 1815, when Franciscan missionaries in San Gabriel began what was termed the Jornada para Sal, or Journey for Salt. During these journeys, they traveled through the San Gorgonio Pass to what is now the Salton Sea to bring back salt for the missions. Since the missionaries used Indian guides, the likelihood that they would have stopped at what is now the Gilman Ranch for water is quite high. It is also around this time that Spanish missionaries stationed at San Bernardino incorporated the San Gorgonio area into the lands of the Mission San Gabriel and gave the name San Gorgonio to the pass.

Mexico broke from Spain in 1821, and the new government soon abolished the missions and divided up much of California's lands to petitioners. The new land grants encompassed thousands of acres and allowed for greater settlement of California. In the Pass area, three Americans who had become naturalized citizens of Mexico, Powell Weaver, Isaac Williams, and Wallace Woodruff, petitioned California's Mexican governor for ownership of the San Gorgonio Rancho, which probably stretched from the Badlands west of Beaumont to the Cabazon area. They never officially received it, but that did not stop them from dividing and selling off portions of "their" holdings.

One of these petitioners, Isaac Williams, was a Pennsylvanian by birth who had been in California since 1832. He already owned the Chino Rancho just west of Jurupa. The *mayordomo* on the Chino Rancho was José Pope. Pope undoubtedly saw the San Gorgonio area when pasturing sheep for Williams, and in 1854, expressed an interest in establishing his own ranch there. In that year, Williams sold Pope a portion of his supposed holdings of the San Gorgonio Rancho, and this became the genesis of what is today the Gilman Ranch.

Pope had selected a prime location for his ranch, nestled against the foothills and supplied with a good, year-round stream. He built an adobe structure for his home, the foundation of which can still be seen. Pope kept sheep on his ranch and had a blacksmith shop too. It is during this time that Pope's becomes a way-station on the San Gorgonio branch of the road to Yuma.

As previously mentioned, the San Gorgonio Pass has been a travel route for many centuries past. With California statehood, and the gold rush of the 1840s and 1850s, many people were coming into California from all

points. One of the lesser-used routes went from Yuma across the desert of what is now Imperial County, and up the Coachella Valley to the Pass, then through San Timoteo Canyon to San Bernardino and eventually to Los Angeles. Travelers on this road needed supplies for both themselves and their livestock, and people such as José Pope obliged with water, food and any other articles that could be procured. With its year-round stream, Pope's ranch became a major stopping point because it represented the last stop for reliable water before going out onto the desert (if traveling east), and the first such when coming off the desert (if traveling west).

In 1862, use of this road was greatly increased when Powell Weaver discovered gold in the La Paz district of Arizona (located along the Colorado River several miles north of present-day Blythe). A mini-gold rush was on, and hundreds of men from Los Angeles and the surrounding areas were soon on the road east for La Paz. One such person was William Bradshaw, who convinced a local Indian guide in the Coachella Valley to show him a shortcut through the present-day Chocolate Mountains. This new route, termed the Road to La Paz or Bradshaw's Road, made for even more traffic coming by the ranch.

Pope, however, did not see much of this increase. In 1862, wanting to return to his extended family in Napa, Pope sold his holdings to Galutia S. Chapin, a merchant and sheep rancher from San Bernardino. Chapin used the ranch for his sheep, and continued in the tradition of helping travelers along the road to the desert. Chapin, however, soon tired of this and just a year later sold the ranch to Newton Noble.

Noble, a farmer, rancher, stagecoach driver, and later sheriff of San Bernardino County, brought cattle to the property. Noble greatly expanded the ranch and made it the true large-scale stage stop that it was to become. Noble, along with his partner Byron Waters, founded the first successful stage line to go through the area after others had failed, so it was not just a willingness to help travelers that inspired Noble to make the ranch into a large-scale way station. Because of the prominence gained by Noble's property, it was fitting that the first post office in the San Gorgonio Pass would be established on his ranch in 1868.

In 1869, Noble ran for sheriff of San Bernardino County and won. While campaigning, he desired to sell the ranch in the San Gorgonio Pass and move closer to San Bernardino. It was in San Bernardino that Noble met up with James Gilman.

James Marshall Gilman had come to California from New Hampshire in 1863, probably in an attempt to avoid compulsory military service during the Civil War. He worked for his cousin for a while in the Dalles, Oregon, but then decided to move to Southern California and establish a cattle ranch. While in San Bernardino, he met Newt Noble, who was eager to sell, and within a few days the two had worked out a deal. On May 8, 1869, Gilman paid Noble $2,000 for the ranch, improvements, horses and cattle, moving into the adobe ranch house shortly thereafter.

Gilman eagerly jumped into ranching, and worked tirelessly to improve his holdings. He also continued the tradition of assisting travelers, and opened what is considered to be the first general store in the Pass area. On January 11, 1871, he married Martha Smith, the daughter of Dr. Isaac Smith, who owned the Smith Ranch located west of Gilman's (the Smith Ranch would later become the Highland Springs Resort north of Beaumont).

Change came quickly to the Gilman Ranch. James and Martha began a family, which eventually totaled eight children. In addition, the area in which their ranch lay saw a tremendous influx of people. When James Gilman bought the ranch, the nearest town was San Bernardino. That began to change in 1875 with the building of the Southern Pacific railroad through the Pass. By 1883, this became the second transcontinental railroad, and with its construction came more people and more settlements.

One such settlement was Moore City, which started in 1877. Early Pass resident Ransom Moore started subdividing land around the railroad at the end of a logging flume that had been set up north of present-day Banning. Moore soon left, and Dr. Welwood Murray, later of Palm Springs fame, recom-

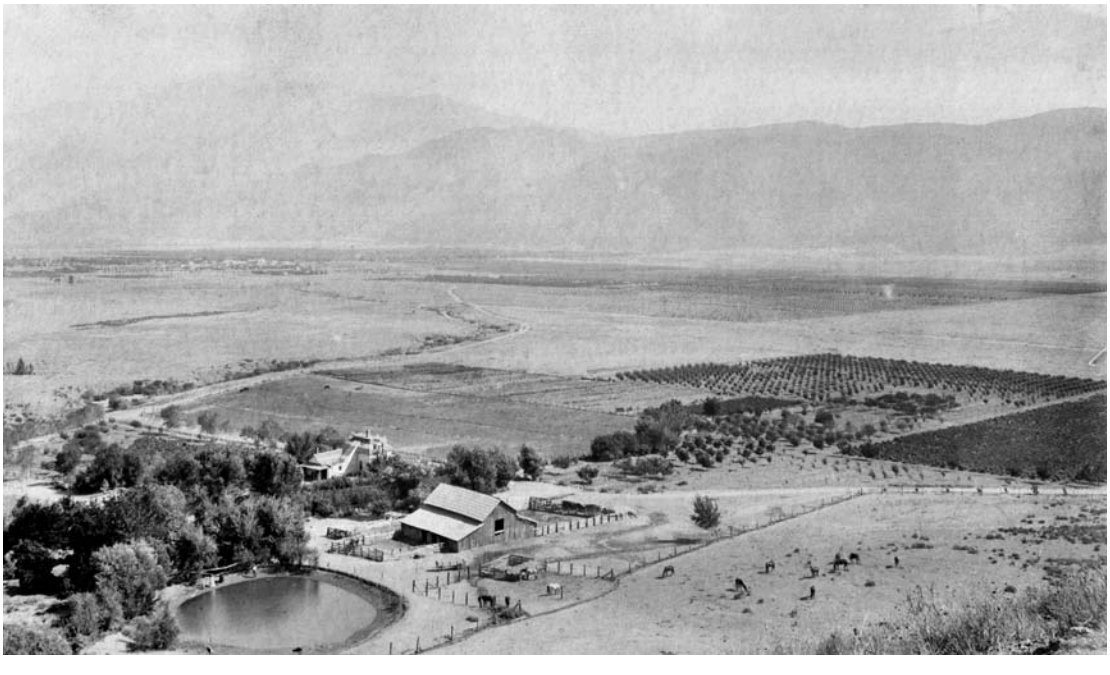
mended that the town's name be changed to Banning in honor of Phineas Banning, who had pastured sheep in the area. Gilman welcomed the new settlement, and worked with his new neighbors for the betterment of the town.

Over the years, the Gilman Ranch slowly went from a cattle-raising operation to growing grain and alfalfa, and then later a fruit growing concern. Orchards of apricots, figs, walnuts and even some citrus took over some of the acreage that had earlier pastured cattle or raised grain. However, the most famous crop to come from the Gilman Ranch was olives. Gilman's olives, which he grew and cured himself, became a staple in stores throughout the Pass area, and were even in demand in hotels in Riverside, San Bernardino, and as far away as Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The Gilman family continued to live at the ranch until the late 1950s. Later, the property was sold by the family. In 1966, local realtor Lucille Boyer petitioned Riverside County's newly-formed Historical Commission to designate the ranch as a county landmark because of its ties to the earliest history in the Pass. Although the site was designated a County landmark, that did not stop a potential development proposal from seeking to subdivide the site into housing lots. In 1975, the Gilman Ranch Hands, a volunteer group, was started to help lobby for the site to be purchased by the County for use as a historic interpretive site. The initial purchase of the southernmost parcels was made on March 20, 1977.

Three days later, the Gilman ranch house burned to the ground, negating the site's listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Due to its importance, though, the site itself was re-listed in November 1978, allowing the County to receive additional historic preservation grant monies to purchase the remainder of the site in 1979. The Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum has been an integral part of the County's park system ever since.

One of the most famous, or perhaps infamous, episodes to take place on the Gilman Ranch was the murder of William Mike. Mike was an Indian laborer who was living on the ranch temporarily with his family. Another Indian employee, Willie Boy, had



Looking from the Gilman Ranch across the San Gorgonio Pass, circa 1890.
(Courtesy the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District)

taken a liking to Mike's daughter Carlota and wanted her for his own. William Mike would not allow them to see one another; so on the night of September 26, 1909, Willie Boy took Arthur Gilman's rifle from the ranch bunkhouse, shot Mike in his sleep, and took the girl away with him.

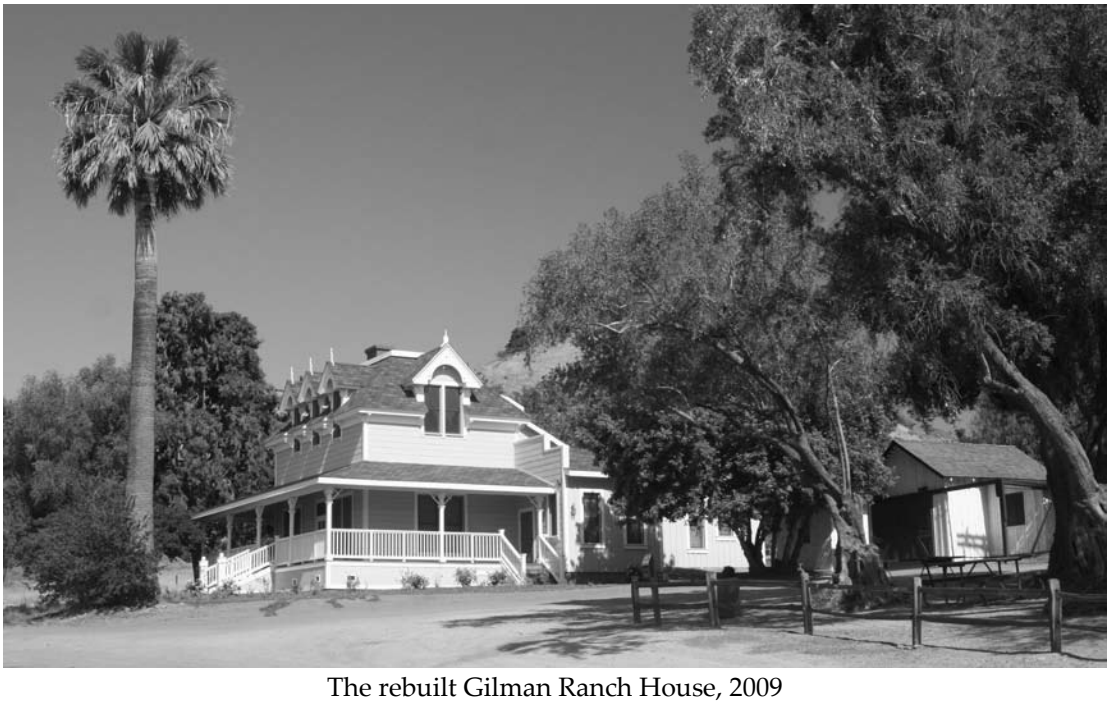
Over the next two weeks, an intensive manhunt took place throughout the eastern San Gorgonio Pass and into the Mohave Desert. Eventually, Carlota was killed (some say it was Willie Boy, others contend it was at the hands of the posse that was chasing them). When his luck and ammunition had about run out, Willie Boy took his own life on Ruby Mountain.

What made this episode so memorable was that the local media hyped it as one of the last true manhunts of the Old West. It also occurred right during a visit by President William Howard Taft to Riverside and the Mission Inn. Hoping to sell more newspapers, many of the Eastern papers told of the manhunt, and even insinuated that the president might be in danger from renegade Indians.

This tale of the "Last Western Manhunt," as Sheriff Frank Wilson termed it, was recounted in true Hollywood fashion in 1969 with the release of the movie *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here*, starring Robert Blake and Robert Redford. Some scenes were shot on the Gilman Ranch, but the producers changed the outside appearance of the old ranch house by adding decorative pieces to the porch. The house can be recognized in the scene just after the murder when the deputy sheriff, played by Robert Redford, is convening with his posse on the porch of the house at night.

The Gilman Ranch House

The Gilman Ranch House was built by James Gilman, starting in 1879. His growing family necessitated the need for a larger home, so in that year, Gilman constructed a two-room board and batten house south of the old adobe. Four years later, he was doing well enough to add on a two-story addition to the existing house. This new addition housed a parlor and two bedrooms on the first floor and four smaller bedrooms on the second floor. The two rooms of the original 1879 home were converted to a kitchen and dining room. At roughly the same time,



The rebuilt Gilman Ranch House, 2009
(*Author Photo*)

a small pantry and porch were added to the northern end of the home. This building served as the Gilman residence for nearly 80 years. After the property was sold by the family, the home continued to be used as a residence until 1977, when it was completely destroyed by fire.

Almost immediately after the fire, the Gilman Ranch Hands began a long-term effort to raise funds for the reconstruction of the house. This nearly 30-year endeavor led to a sizable portion of the funds for the reconstruction of the house being donated by the Ranch Hands. In 2003, planning began for the reconstruction, which took place in 2005 thanks to efforts by the Ranch Hands and the Riverside County Parks District committing Proposition 12 grant monies to the project. The building is currently used as a museum to house some of the many artifacts that have been procured by or donated to the Ranch over the years.

The Gilman Ranch Wagon Museum

The wagon museum at the Gilman Ranch has its own story, and one that is very much rooted in community spirit.

Stagecoach Days, the city of Banning's annual community festival, got its start in 1957. This festival is meant to celebrate Banning's history along several stagecoach lines. In order to add some authenticity to the event, several people, including Frank Raney, Guy Wood, and Harry Boyer, began locating authentic wagons from the area to be used in the parade and other festivities. Since the Banning area was known for its many ranches, finding wagons was fairly easy, but they were becoming scarce.

In 1959, Raney, Wood, and Boyer formed a group called "Stage Coach Days, Inc." for the purpose of running Stagecoach Days on an annual basis. The group, led by Guy Wood's efforts, also collected more wagons for the parade. Throughout the early 1960s, wagons were either purchased by or donated to the group to help preserve them.

The wagons soon became a burden to the group, as many of them were stored at private residences, exposed to the sun, wind, and rain. Therefore, in 1964, Harry Boyer approached the City of Banning about a permanent place to display the wagons. The City in turn offered to lease a portion of Repplier Park to the group for $1 per year, and build a 3-sided shelter in which the wagons could be housed and displayed. This shelter, built in 1965, became the nucleus of a growing wagon collection.

For the next 25 years, the growing wagon collection was housed in Repplier Park. Many in Banning felt that these wagons were an important part of their history and should be the center of a much greater plan to market Banning as a stagecoach town to tourists. During the 1960s and 1970s, Raney and Wood (both of whom had grown up on ranches), and others continued to maintain the wagons and offer tours of what was then called the Banning Wagon Museum to anyone who would listen. Just before Guy Wood's death in September 1968, he donated his share of the wagons to the group. Frank Raney took over care of the wagons and continued their care until his death in January 1976.

By the 1980s the wagons were falling into disrepair and were the targets of vandals who continually tried to set them on fire. All of the original founders of the group had died. They were the ones primarily responsible for and knowledgeable about the upkeep of the collection. Concerned citizens wanted something to be done about the situation, so the idea was raised to house them in an enclosed building at the Gilman Ranch. Negotiations with the County followed, and in June 1988 all of the wagons and tools were transferred to the County Parks Department for display at the Gilman Ranch. A year later, a metal building was constructed to house this important collection of historic wagons from not only the immediate area but as far away as Kentucky and New York.

As an interesting aside, one large stagecoach in the collection has its own story to tell. Originally it was one of the Overland Stage Line coaches that traveled the famous "Road to La Paz." It was described as going from Wickenburg, Arizona to Blythe, then to Mule Springs and west to Salt Creek where it skirted the Chuckwalla Mountains. From

there it would head northwest through what is now Palm Springs, Whitewater, the Gilman and Smith ranches, and eventually to San Bernardino and Los Angeles.

Knowing this history, the people of Banning had a true affinity for the old stagecoach. So in early 1968, when then-owner Guy Wood was offered $7,000 for it to be used as part of a development in Colorado, people became incensed. Wood, who had purchased many of the wagons in the collection himself and indicated that he had a lot of money tied up in the wagons, was receptive to the idea. To counter the offer, Lucille Boyer, Harry Boyer's wife, started what was described as a "one-woman campaign" to raise the $7,000 to purchase the wagon for Banning. For about a month her exploits were documented in the papers. Donations poured in from around the Pass area, and as far away as Oklahoma, Florida, and New York, and even from France and Venezuela. Eventually, she raised the money and purchased the stagecoach on behalf of Stage Coach Days Inc., and the stagecoach, so important to the history of the San Gorgonio Pass and desert regions of Riverside County, became a permanent artifact in the collection.

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CORRAL CHIPS

Corresponding member **George Throop** died April 11th at age 86. A longtime Pasadena businessman, he is survived by his wife, Nancy, his daughter Ann, and his sons George and Jeff, who is currently serving as President of the Tournament of Roses Associaition.

A big crop of new Associate Members were welcomed at our February meeting: **Carol Baldwin**, **Doug Brutsche**, **Michele Clark**, **Robert Ebiner**, **Richard Gilman**, **David Kimes**, and **Alan Pollack**. Certificates were presented to those in attendance. By our math, that's another $175 for the publications fund.

That Old Hay-Rack

See that old hay-rack standin' out there
Just rotting away in this hot summer air
The spokes are all broken, the metal's all rusty
The whole thing's decrepit n' dirty n' dusty

But we're not gonna move it, no, we wouldn't dare
Just listen up and I'll explain why we care
You see, a whole bunch of critters are livin' in there
N' that lively old bunch live together and share

That pile of old straw in the corner over there
That's where Mr. Mouse is raisin' his family with care
That hole by the wagon wheel is home to a hare
Yep, Peter Rabbit is livin' it up right under there

There's a nest in the hub of that old wagon wheel
Every morning the Meadow Lark let's us know how he'll feel
Down by the wagon tongue is another small hole
Where the prairie dogs enjoy the milk in that bowl

So, there's a lot of life goes on in that decrepit old thing
N' we're gonna leave it for the comfort it'll bring
All them critters we feel are our best friends
Yep, it's a wonderful message that old hay-rack sends!

– Loren Wendt

FROM OUR FILES

#52 March 1960

"At the February meeting, held at Costa's, CM Fred Vaile spoke on 'The Burro Prospector – the Last of the Pioneers.' The paper was based on his personal recollections of ten years of desert mining and prospecting, from 1907 to 1915."

John H. Kemble and Edwin Carpenter were made Active Members of the Corral.

#158 Spring 1985

"Corral Active Member Sig Demke spoke on cattle drives of early California. Texas-to-California cattle drives preceded

the much more famous drives north from Texas after the Civil War. The earliest drives, however, dated back to the Anza expeditions of the 1770s."

Abe Hoffman assumed the role of editor of *The Branding Iron*.

MONTHLY ROUNDUP

February 2010

The Los Angeles Plaza is "a symbol of multi-ethnic Los Angeles," according to Dr. William Estrada, author of T*he Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space*, and Chair of the History Department at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. For his talk, he related the history of the plaza area to the broader history of the city.

Los Angeles has always had a plaza, from its founding in 1781. The location of the first one is still uncertain; the current plaza (the second or third site) dates to the 1810s, and remained the center of downtown until the 1870s.

As the area went into decline, it became home to many of the new immigrants who were pouring into Los Angeles in the early 1900s. These new arrivals also brought new ideas, and the plaza became a center for free speech and sometimes radical politics. These ideas flowed back and forth, with some of the planning of both the Chinese and Mexican revolutions of the 'teens done in Los Angeles, with the resulting unrest in Mexico pushing even more immigrants across the border.

The plaza area also became part of Los Angeles' tourist industry, with the creation of Olvera Street (1930) and China City (1938). Both presented a homogenized, romanticized image of two of the city's most prominent ethnic cultures.

Dr. Estrada illustrated his talk with historic photographs and even film clips of early Los Angeles.

March 2010

Southern California's Cleveland National Forest was born out of the conservation movement of the late 19th century, and survives in the environmentalism of today. "Environmentalism is really a 20th century thing," our speaker, Jim Newland, reminded the audience. "Conservation is about management and how we can use those resources."

Newland, a former historian with the Forest Service and the author of a new pictorial history of the Cleveland, traced its story back to 1893, when the Trabuco Canyon Forest Reserve was established in the Santa Ana Mountains. Other reserves in Riverside and San Diego counties were later set aside, and in 1908 were combined to form the Cleveland National Forest.

The first rangers were hired in the 1890s, and patrolled largely on horseback until the 1920s. A series of fire lookouts were established on local peaks beginning in the 1910s, and the 1930s saw a host of construction projects, with twelve CCC camps operating in the Cleveland.

Since World War II, Southern California's rapidly increasing population has put more and more pressure on the forest. At the same time, changes in legislation and public attitudes have provided new challenges. Law enforcement now plays a bigger role, and while multiple uses are still welcome, they are confined to certain areas.

April 2010

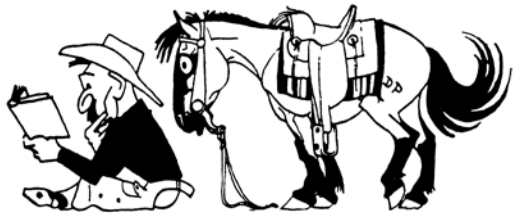
Glenna Dunning took the Corral on a trip to Bodie, by God, and traced the early history of the famed mining camp.

The first strikes in the area were made in 1859 by W.S. Bodey (though no one is exactly clear how he spelled his last name), but it was not until the mid-1870s that the area began to boom. There were about 25 mines opened up in the surrounding hills, and about 65 saloons in town, along with an equal number of gambling halls. Bodie enjoyed a "wicked reputation" for violence, murders, and robbery, Dunning said. "The Bad Man from Bodie" was a watchword around the American West. At 8,400 feet in elevation, the town also boasted some of the worst weather in the state.

The biggest mine in the district was the Standard, which produced both gold and silver. The boom peaked around 1879, but some mines operated on into the 1940s. In later years, the old tailings were also reprocessed with the new cyanide technique that recovered gold and silver the earlier mills had missed. In all, Bodie produced about $34 million in gold and another $8 million in silver.

A fire destroyed much of the town in 1932, but the remains were carefully preserved by pioneer resident James S. Cain. In 1961, the state purchased the town for a state park. It stands today in a state of "arrested decay," a monument, said Dunning, to "the lure of gold."

Glenna Dunning receives her speaker's plaque from Deputy Sheriff Paul Spitzzeri.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL

Lone Star Lawmen: The Second Century of the Texas Rangers, by Robert M. Utley, Oxford University Press, 2007. 400 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, sources, index. Cloth $30. Order from Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, or *www.oup.com*

This book picks up the story of the Texas Rangers at the turn of the century where Mr. Utley's *Lone Star Justice* ended. The era of the legendary "four great captains" was closing, and the black days of the "bandit war" were near. The Mexican Revolution was in progress, causing tensions along the Texas border. The book follows the history of the Rangers into the new millennium. During this time the Rangers would evolve from six-guns and horses into modern day criminal investigators.

The "bandit war" of 1915-16 would breed contempt and hard feelings towards the Rangers among Hispanic residents on the border for years to come. High racial tensions, coupled with poor leadership within the Rangers, led to atrocities committed against Mexicans on both sides of the border. Many of the so called "bandits" were law-abiding citizens of the South Texas border country. Rangers frequently "evaporated" large and small groups of "suspicious" Mexicans.

The 1920s and 1930s brought a new set of problems for the Rangers. Oil boomtowns sprang up overnight, and with them came large scale gambling, prostitution and associated crimes. Prohibition was still in effect during much of this time, and stills in Texas

were plentiful. Often these towns didn't want Rangers interfering with their burgeoning enterprises. As soon as the Rangers would leave town, the illegal operations would flagrantly re-open. During most of these years the Ranger Force numbered between only 30 and 36. Besides all of this, this period was also when bank robberies were on the rise.

The year 1935 was a watershed year for the Rangers. The Ranger Force was officially designated as the Texas Rangers for the first time. The Rangers became part of the newly formed Department of Public Safety. Prior to this, Ranger positions were political appointments. As such, every two years after the election of a new governor, their appointments were subject to the new governor's whim. With the forming of the DPS, this meant they could now make a career of the Rangers without worrying about political infighting.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Rangers got more bad publicity during the Lone Star Steel strikes and the farm workers' strikes. The farm workers' strikes brought to light old animosities between Latinos and Rangers. Old memories of the "evaporations" of innocent Mexicans were rekindled. Rangers were labeled as "Connally's strikebreakers" by a senator of the time. After learning from these experiences that strike duty was a no-win situation, they avoided strikes whenever possible.

In the 1990s a couple of significant events occurred in Texas. The first was the raid on the Branch Davidian compound outside of Waco. Luckily for the Rangers, the Feds wanted complete control of that action. The second event was the siege at the "embassy" of the Republic of Texas in 1997. During this seven-day standoff a captain in the Rangers was the incident commander. Unlike the Waco incident, this affair ended peacefully. The Rangers garnered praise for this handling of this potentially volatile situation.

Throughout the book the author does an excellent job of unraveling the political wrangling behind Rangers' appointments and dismissals. The fact that the Ranger Force survived at all attests to the fame and folklore of Rangers of old. Men like John Coffee Hays, Ben McCulloch, and Rip Ford left a legacy that others were proud to follow. Even in the 1910s and 1920s when leadership was questionable, there were Rangers who showed their mettle and rose to the occasions. Mr. Utley tells of both the highs and lows fairly, with an open mind and in an interesting manner. The evolution of the Texas Rangers in this century is almost unfathomable. It spans from horseback days of bending six-shooters over suspects' heads, to the days of helicopters, forensic labs, and computers. In 2023 the Texas Rangers will celebrate their 200th anniversary. There is a very strong chance that they will still be around for the next century.

– Tim Heflin