

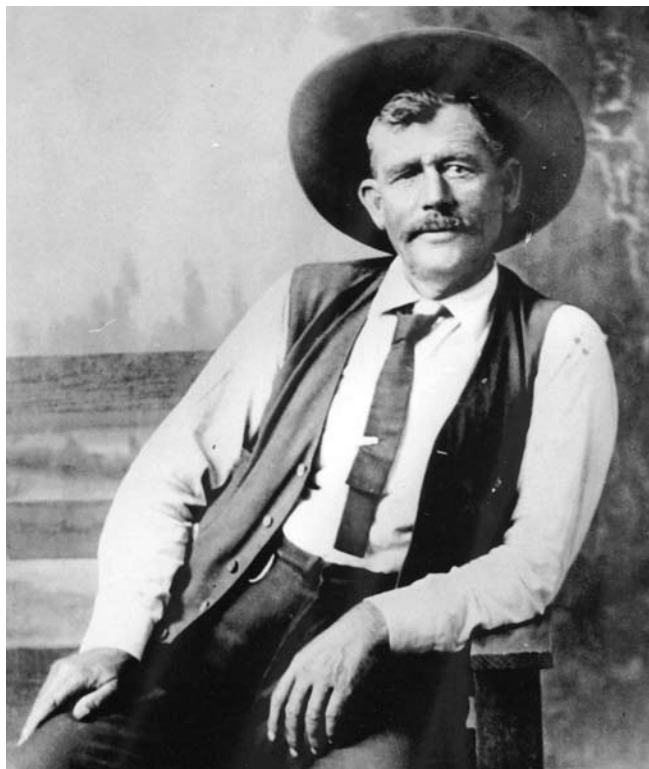


SUMMER 2010

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 259

THOMAS JEFFERSON TURNER



A GREAT AMERICAN COWBOY IN THE TWILIGHT OF THE AMERICAN WEST

by Gary Turner and Tamiko Turner Revel

Tom Turner was a teenage cowhand on the Texas to Dodge City cattle drives in the 1870s, trailed and killed three Mexican horse thieves who had stolen his herd of twenty-some horses in the Arizona Territory, disarmed the town of Nogales as the Sheriff of Santa Cruz

County from 1900-1904, and drove the last major herd of cattle from Southern Arizona to the Warner Ranch in Southern California in order to stand up against the almighty

(Continued on Page 3)

The Branding Iron

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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. Contribu-
tions from both members and friends are welcome.

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Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners

Editor's Corner . . .

If you don't notice a certain family resemblance between the old cowboy on our cover and past Sheriff Gary Turner, you're not looking hard enough.

While I knew about Tom Turner's involvement with the big Vail cattle drive of 1890, it never occurred to me he was related to our own Gary Turner, his great-grandson. It was Gary who discovered our common interest, and we have been trading notes ever since.

That's part of what The Westerners are supposed to be — a place where members can share their interests and their research. Historical research isn't a race, after all, it's a journey; and along the trail we want companions, not competitors.

Phil Brigandi
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Tom Turner . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

power and greed of the Southern Pacific Railroad. He lived 75 years which spanned two centuries of enormous change, but went to bed every night with a loaded pistol on his nightstand. Even in his final few years of his life, living with his wife, Mary, in East Los Angeles, no one would dare enter his room after he retired for fear of getting shot. Turner's exploits and adventures match any of the more publicized lawmen, cowboys, and characters of the late 19th Century and early 20th century Western frontier.

Thomas Jefferson Turner was born in Waco, Texas in 1861. During his early years, the Civil War and Reconstruction made life difficult for the Turner family. When Tom was barely in his teens, he signed on for a cattle drive to Dodge City. Although little is known about his experiences, stories of other Dodge City cattle drives lead us to believe that Tom was exposed to long hours in the saddle, cold nights with little sleep, river crossings, foul weather, rustlers, Indians, the wildness of Dodge City, death by accident or gun play, and the many hardships of driving cattle.

Many of the "Tom stories" that have been passed down through the family cannot be authenticated by the usual historical research, but they cannot be just written off or disproved, either. In this article, Tom Turner's exploits across the border with Pancho Villa, and his friendship with the man will not be discussed. More research must be conducted before these tales of meetings and agreements with the great Mexican bandito and revolutionary are printed. Another article is also needed to recount Turner's relationship with Bob Thurston, and the purchase and search for water on the Thurston property at Tusayan, just outside of Grand Canyon National Park, where the Red Feather Lodge and Café has been owned by the Thurston family for many years.

Another area of Tom Turner's life has been documented by Dennis Casebier at the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association in Goffs. Tom settled in Maruba, on the eastern Mojave, for a while but more infor-

mation is needed on the cattleman who along with his family and 100 head of cattle settled in this area in 1917.

Nor will we discuss Tom's relationship to Wyatt Earp, except to say that Wyatt often stopped by Tom's T-4 Ranch in Southern Arizona. Tom also met his old friend when they were in Los Angeles in the late 1920s, and attended his funeral along with Tom Mix. Yet from those adventures that are authenticated there is no doubt that to underestimate his significance in the late 19th and early 20th century history of the Arizona Territory is to leave blank an important chapter of the American Southwest.

MEXICAN HORSE THIEVES

Upon his return from a Texas-to-Wyoming cattle drive, Tom was ready to set out on his own and make a life for himself in the West, which he believed held many positive opportunities for a knowledgeable, hard working cowboy. Tom left Texas and headed to Arizona. He settled on a ranch on the San Pedro River, south of Benson. He was in his early 20s.

Tom had little money but invested all he could afford in a small ranch and stock. One night a band of Mexican rustlers invaded his ranch, and seeing what they thought was an easy target, ran off with 26 head of horses. Tom took out after them the following morning. After a hard day and a half of riding, he finally overtook the thieves at the north end of the Chiricahua Mountains, over 40 miles from his ranch.

Tom circled in front of the horses, dismounted, set himself up in the rocks, and a gunfight immediately ensued. Tom was an excellent shot with both a pistol and a rifle. Three horse thieves were shot dead and the fourth made his escape. There is no record as to how many shots were fired but one bullet cut a hole in Tom's shirt sleeve and another went through the fleshy part of his leg.

Turner knew very little about the law, but had an almost superstitious regard for it. He did not know what might be done to him, but he feared it would be plenty. He rounded up his horses and penned them up in a natural corral and set out for Willcox, Arizona, the

closest town. He rode to Willcox the following morning and after an inquiry or two was directed to the Justice of the Peace.

Tom told his story to the solemn justice who then rounded up a coroner's jury, and with Turner, set out for the shooting scene. An inquest was held on the spot, the bodies were buried and the party returned to Willcox. Nothing was said to Turner as the party went into a back room of a saloon for adjudication of this affair. Turner was allowed to tell his story to the jury, which he did. No indication had been given him as to his probable fate. I will quote from an article from the University of Arizona Historical Library:

"The old justice removed his spectacles, polished them at length and impressively readjusted them, stroked his long white beard and looked severely at Turner. 'Young man,' said he, 'you have committed a very serious offense, and you deserve the severest punishment this court can inflict upon you. Damned if I don't fine you the drinks for the town for letting that other Mexican get away!'"

Tom Turner immediately began the payment of his fine. It took him all day to round up the populace of Willcox, but eventually he treated every man who could be induced to take a drink. It cost him \$14.

TOM TURNER - SHERIFF

In 1900, Tom Turner was elected Sheriff of Santa Cruz County in southern Arizona. In a time when some of the lawmen had been just one step ahead of the law they were sworn to enforce, Tom Turner was an exception. He was a man of down-to-earth honesty and basic integrity. Tom held a high regard for law and order. His philosophy of life, which was especially seen while he was a sheriff, could be summed up in a simplistic belief to do that which was right over that which was wrong. This basic belief in right and wrong does not imply that Tom Turner was a saint or a man without faults, but it does give us clues to why or how he made decisions.

Tom Turner became a leader of men by his

actions more than his political acumen. He was tough but he was never a bully. Tom did not pistol whip drunks, like another, more famous Arizona lawman had done in the tough mining town of Tombstone. It was more a look from those bright blue eyes and a countenance that suggested that this was a man who would not be trifled with that set those who may have been inclined to challenge him, to step back or rethink their position.

When Tom was elected Sheriff, almost every man in Nogales carried a weapon. In the evenings, the men would buckle on their six shooters and head for the dance halls and gambling houses. Tom decided it was time to break up this pistol-packing tradition. He first issued a notice that it was unlawful to carry a weapon in Nogales and gave warning that the law would be enforced. Shortly thereafter, he walked into the biggest gambling hall in town with a revolver in each hand. He was followed by Deputy Sheriff, Bo J. Whiteside, armed with a gunny sack.

There were about 150 people in the place. Tom ordered them all to stand facing the wall, and Whiteside went along the line frisking every man . . . he found a weapon on almost all of them.

Then Tom and his deputy went to another night spot and collected more weapons. He kept this up for a week until he had a collection of more than a thousand revolvers. So far as he could ascertain, Tom Turner had collected all the revolvers in Nogales.

A century after Tom had collected the town folks' firearms, the advertising magazine *Discover Santa Cruz County* noted that "Eventually a new sense of law and order was established by the sheriff, Tom Turner, along with a brand new courthouse. It still stands in all its Neo Classic splendor on a hill off Main Street. We call it the 1904 Courthouse. It cost \$35,000 to build and was made of stone quarried in Nogales."

THE LAST TRAIL DRIVE

Tom Turner's most famous exploit came in 1890, as a foreman for the Vail Company's Empire Ranch, near Tucson, one of the largest cattle ranches in Arizona.

Like most cattle ranches in Pima County, Empire Ranch near Tucson was strictly a cattle breeding operation. The cattle were then shipped elsewhere to be fattened and sold at market. The main market was in California, and the Southern Pacific was the only railroad between the two points. In 1889, the SP raised their shipping rates from \$65 to \$180 a car for cattle shipments between Tucson and L.A.

The owners of the Empire Ranch, brothers Edward and Walter Vail, along with other cattlemen, protested; but the railroad ignored all arguments and denied all requests to lower the rate.

So with Tom Turner's help, the Vails decided to go back to driving the cattle across the desert, as the old time cattlemen had done before the railroad. They had recently leased the Warner Ranch, in northeastern San Diego County, as a feeding grounds, and needed to move about a thousand head over. As only about 30 cows could be safely shipped in a cattle car, the cost per head would have been about \$6 – or nearly \$6,000 to move the whole herd – a small fortune in those days.

The Turner family oral history says it was Tom who convinced the Vails that a cattle drive would be successful, and would stick it to the Southern Pacific at the same time. Once the Vail brothers had decided that a cattle drive could be successful, it was Tom's job to round up the cattle, gather together a crew of wranglers, hire a cook, purchase a chuck wagon and supplies, locate enough horses for the trip, plan the route, and get started.

The wranglers were eight Mexican vaqueros who had no experience at driving cattle. Nearly all the big cattle outfits along the international border employed Mexican vaqueros.

The Chinaman whom Tom wanted for cook said he didn't want to go, because he was heading back to China. Tom asked, "Where is China, anyhow?" Jim Sing pointed west. Tom said, "Come on, we'll be close to China when we get over the trip."

On January 29, 1890, all of the cattle, horses, vaqueros, and Jim Sing and his chuck wagon were ready to go. Tom Turner would serve as trail boss. Ed Vail came along to look after the brother's interests. He kept a short diary of the trail drive and in the early 1920s

enhanced his notes with more stories and events of the trip.

Tom had learned his trade well. He had been a cowboy his entire life and learned as a teenager driving Texas steers the art of managing a large herd. Just walking the cattle would be too slow; running the cattle was out of the question; driving the cattle at a constant pace, not too slow or not too fast, was the only way to move cattle a long distance. Now it was his job to teach the vaqueros – and fast – or the herd would never reach the grasslands of California.

The 65-day trip across the desert included all the hazards that could beset such an undertaking. Rain, flooded rivers, stampedes, and rounding up stray cattle were just some of the challenges Tom and his men encountered. Keeping the horses off cactus was another concern. As Vail stated in his 1922 "Diary of a Desert Trail":

"The part of the desert we made camp was covered with chollas, a cactus that has more thorns per square inch than anything that grows in Arizona.

"Cowboys say that if you ride close to a cholla, it will reach out and grab you or your horse, and as the thorns are barbed it is very difficult to get them out of your flesh. They also leave a very painful wound. About midnight, our cattle made a run and in trying to hold them, cattle, horses, and men got pretty badly mixed up in the chollas. A cholla under a horse's belly is probably not the most comfortable thing in the world.

"Consequently we had our hands full of riding bucking horses and trying to quiet a lot of wild steers at the same time. Most of the night was devoted in picking out thorns, and therefore none of us slept much"

Samples from Vail's diary include:

January 30 – cattle dry and restless.

February 4 – camped 8 miles east of Casa Grande. Cattle stampeded that night.

February 6 – stampeded again.

February 9 – following the railroad near Old Maricopa to Gila Bend.

February 10 – 110 cattle strayed – all found.

February 21 – Rained steady until afternoon. Traveled 10 miles.

When the cattle drive reached Yuma in the first week of March 1890, the easy part of the trek was over and the real difficulties of the Colorado River crossing and the California desert lay ahead. Turner and Vail rested the cattle on the eastern bank of the Colorado River while they searched for a place to cross. It was a wet winter and the river was running high. A few miles south of Yuma, Tom found a likely crossing point. They hired some local Indians to dig a path through the high bank to the river's edge. An island in the middle of the rushing Colorado would be the first stopping point. But as the stronger steers led the way, over 200 head refused to swim to the island. Of those that did make the crossing, many got lost in the thick brush on the other side.

In a cruel irony, some of the weaker cattle had to be shipped over the SP's bridge at \$2.50 a carload. The next few days were spent rounding up cattle in heavy brush, resting and watering the herd, getting permission from the Mexican Consul to enter Mexican territory and straightening out a little tax matter with Yuma authorities. Turner knew he was not going into Mexico but he also did not want any problems from the Federales if a steer or two wandered away. The Mexican Consul granted the permit and told Tom, "Only the eye of God will see you in that country," and tried to dissuade the foreman from his adventure. But as author Frank M. King said of Turner:

"Tom was a man of iron nerve and never had the word 'fear' in his vocabulary. He always had the nerve to tell the truth and his spoken word was better than a heap of folk's written contract."

In Yuma, Tom also met Colonel D.K. Allen, at that time a United States Surveyor and later a newspaper editor in Yuma. Colonel Allen tried his best to persuade Tom to give up his project. He said there was no water for at least 80 or 90 miles until Carrizo Creek. But Tom had his mind set.

"Well, good bye, Tom," were Colonel Allen's last words. "I never expect to see you again. You'll die of thirst or, if you do get through yourself, you'll surely lose all the stock."

Just before the outfit left Yuma, two young American cow punchers rode up and asked for a job. When Tom said that he already had all the help he needed, they said they wanted to get work in Southern California, but had no money to pay for railroad fares, and that they would gladly work without pay if he let them join the outfit.

Tom had too much experience with cattle and people to not be a little suspicious of these two youngsters, but two extra cowboys would be a big help in keeping the herd together, and Tom would also have someone else beside Vail along who could speak English. He accepted their offer.

A day or so out from Yuma, a band of Indians entered the campsite. After a gift of coffee, flour, and sugar was made to the chief, the location of a water hole was learned. The water hole was reached the next day but there was not enough water for all the herd. The weakest of the cattle were allowed to drink from the mud hole and the drive continued.

Day after day the cattle plodded forward. No water was found and the cattle, horses, and men became weaker and weaker. They rode past bleached skeletons of men and animals. Their water supply was nearly exhausted, even though they had tried to conserve it, and the cowboys' lips began to swell. Tom put lanterns on the chuck wagon and they kept the cattle moving at night.

Carrizo Creek was still 40 or 50 miles away, and so far as could be known there was not a drop of water nearer than there. They walked on through the night and the following day. During the afternoon a hot wind came up and a dust storm engulfed the herd. The cattle huddled together and nothing could be



Tom Turner's six-shooter and holster, now owned by his great-granddaughter, Yvonne Carothers-Reider.

seen but the yellowish cloud of hot dust.

Finally, the storm subsided, the cattle began moving again, very slowly. Tom took his usual place in front of the herd. The limit of endurance seemed reached. The desert was conquering. The herd could not possibly be kept moving through another day and night without water.

What happened in the next few hours could not have been imagined from the pen of a Hollywood screenwriter. As Tom was riding out in front of the herd, he saw one of the leaders, a vigorous young steer, suddenly throw up his head in the air and sniff. Tom reined in his horse and watched the animal. Again it tossed his head, sniffed the air and bellowed loudly and began to move briskly up wind.

Turner knew that the animal had smelled water, and rode quickly into the wind for about two miles. He searched the area thoroughly and was about to return to the cattle when he detected a gleam of green on the gray face of the desert plain ahead. He thought it was a mirage until the last moment when he rode his horse into a great pool of glassy water. In the very heart of what is now the Imperial Valley was a small lake! The cattle were saved. Another water hole was found a cou-

ple days later, and the herd finally reached Carrizo Creek near the end of March.

A long rest was made at Carrizo Creek. For one member of the party, it proved to be a final resting place. Ed Vail writes in his diary of Saturday, March 29, 1890 that about one o'clock, four men drove to camp in a light wagon and asked to see him. On board were Sheriff Gray of Maricopa County, Arizona, a deputy Sheriff named Slankert, a rancher from Phoenix, and the carriage driver. The Sheriff advised Vail that the two young men who had joined the cattle drive had rustled several horses from the rancher. They had tracked the two boys as far as Yuma and then taken the train to Temecula and driven down to arrest them. Vail writes: "I told him there were two boys such as he described with us who said they were going to California and asked to travel with us across the desert."

The Sheriff and his men came into camp and suddenly a scuffle broke out. The Sheriff and one of the men grabbed the older boy, but the younger boy, Frank Fox, broke free. He ran about 100 yards up a wash with the deputy sheriff in hot pursuit. Suddenly the deputy pulled his pistol and fired one shot. The bullet passed through Frank Fox's back and heart. He was shot dead.

Vail told the sheriff that there was no excuse for killing the boy. The sheriff replied that he was sorry for what happened but had his hands full holding Will Fox. The sheriff then took a sobbing and handcuffed Will Fox, and headed out of camp. Ed Vail and Tom Turner buried Frank Fox in the sandy desert wash where he fell.

Several tombstones have marked the site over the past 120 years. The present one reads:

FRANK FOX

Killed

March 29, 1890

Age 15

This tombstone marks the spot where Frank Fox was shot in the back by an Arizona Deputy Sheriff and died where he fell. Frank and his older brother Will had been involved with horse thieves and joined the famous Empire Ranch Cattle Drive headed by foreman, Tom Turner, and owner, Ed Vail, in Yuma, Arizona. Will Fox was arrested and served time in Yuma Prison. Tom Turner, Ed Vail, and the Mexican Vaqueros finished the cattle drive to Warner's Ranch a few days after the murder. This tombstone is placed here by unnamed members of E Clampus Vitus, 2009.

**DO NOT DESECRATE
THESE HALLOWED GROUNDS!**

From Carrizo Creek, the trail to the Warner Ranch was safe and well-watered. Tom and his men had been on the trail for about two months. Seventy-one cattle had been lost; many of those on the west side of the Colorado River. The expenses during the drive were minimal.

It was obvious to all that the railroad had been humbled and now that the exact water hole locations could be found, it would be comparatively easy matter to drive stock on the hoof between California and Arizona. The Southern Pacific, after meeting with Vail, Turner and the cattlemen from Southern Arizona, dropped their shipping rates back to the old price. Tom was well satisfied. He had made good!

This was the last of the big cattle drives into Southern California. It was forced upon the cattlemen by the railroad monopoly of the Southern Pacific. We cannot find a similar circumstance where a few tough, knowledgeable, and nervy men, pushed by railroad greed, fought back in an almost obsolete manner and ultimately forced the railroad to give in. In those days, big business was not pushed around; big business always did the pushing. But this time, a few brave men pushed back and saved the cattle ranchers of Southern Arizona. The Southern Pacific had



Author Gary Turner at the grave of Frank Fox on the Anza-Borrego Desert, 2009.

been beaten and they knew it!

The 1890 Vail cattle drive marked the closing of a wild and wonderful period of Western history and the lore of the desert cattle drive. Tom Turner lived to see the world change many times in the coming years. He died at his home in East Los Angeles in 1937, and is buried along side his wife, Mary, in Rose Hills Cemetery.

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FROM OUR FILES

#53 June 1960

"'The Pants That Won the West' – Levis, of course, – were the subject of May's talk, by Richard H. Dillon of the Sutro Library, San Francisco.... He didn't have any Levis, but he did have his information in a notebook bound in blue denim with a copper-riveted pocket on the front cover."

Bill Kimes and Harry Lawton were welcomed as Corresponding Members.

#159 Summer 1985

"The July meeting led off with Paul Bailey delivering a rousing tribute to Don Meadows who is departing Southern California to spend retirement time at Yuba City. Sheriff Jerry Selmer presented Don with a Certificate of Honorary Membership. Also recognized were new Active Members Dick Logan, Msgr. Francis Weber, and Norman Neuerberg."

"To mark their centennial, the Historical Society of Southern California published *A Southern California Anthology*, edited by Doyce Nunis and featuring articles by *Branding Iron* editor Abe Hoffman, Msgr. Francis Weber, and A.M. Bob Blew."

FANDANGO 2010

Walker House • San Dimas, California



The Mysterious Mountain Cabin

By Art Cobery

When I was a ninth grader my friend and fellow Boy Scout, Ken Reardon, led me to a wonderful camping site which was located far down the northern slope of Mt. Lukens. It was called Grizzly Flat, a reminder from the past when those ferocious bears roamed freely in the San Gabriel Mountains. In those days, with our bulky pack boards, it was an arduous trek to get there. We followed the seemingly endless Earl Canyon fire road above La Cañada to an unmarked dirt road on the other side of the range. This route descended several miles to Grizzly Flat, a protruding bench of land overlooking the steep walls of Big Tujunga Canyon.

Fledgling conifers had been planted here to replace a burned-over forest. A sturdy rock cabin stood under mature pines just above this plantation. It was about 14 x 24 feet, with a chimney rising above its pitched, corrugated roof. Heavy metal-coated doors and shuttered windows barred entrance to all outsiders. East of the cabin, small stone walls terraced the moderate hillside providing level spaces for a number of picnic tables and benches. Above the cabin a small wood-covered water reservoir had been constructed.

We were content to prepare our simple meals (mostly from a can) on a large outdoor stove. At night we spread our sleeping bags on a soft bed of pine needles.

As we grew older, high school friends came to share this sylvan refuge with us. Eventually, a much shorter footpath was discovered which was accessed from the Angeles Crest Highway. Grizzly Flat proved to be a solitary retreat. We never encountered other overnight campers there.

We young outdoorsmen continued to speculate about the history of the old cabin and reforestation project, but to no avail. How could the story of this unique wilderness cre-

ation be completely forgotten? No one from my generation could shed any light on it.

Even though I continued to explore the San Gabriels well beyond my sixtieth year, with occasional visits to Grizzly Flat, the tale of its origins remained obscure. Finally, in 2003, Jean Maluccio allowed me to peruse some original *Crescenta Valley Ledgers* from the 1920s, stored in her Crescenta Valley Chamber of Commerce office. After over half a century of puzzlement, the mystery was solved in a front page story dated September 28, 1928:

"Members of the local unit, Angeles Forest Protective Association will hold their next meeting at the unit's cabin in Grizzly Flat.... The caravan of firefighters will start 'up the hill' early Saturday morning. As soon as the cabin is reached the boys will start to work and finish the inside of the cabin with waterproof cement."

This was my first introduction to the AFPA, and its ties with the old cabin and reforested area. According to M.D. Kemper, an early builder of large, comfortable homes in rural La Crescenta, pioneer residents were on their own when it came to fire and floods. In 1916, the founders formed the La Crescenta Improvement Association to address these problems, and from this group evolved the Angeles Forest Protective Association in 1923, which focused on forest fires.

One of the leaders was Harvey S. Bissell, heir apparent to the Bissell Carpet Sweeper fortune. A close ally once said of Bissell that he was "the answer to all things." He and forester Art Aiken organized the first crew of firefighters from among the young men in the valley. Mr. Bissell provided a truck to car-

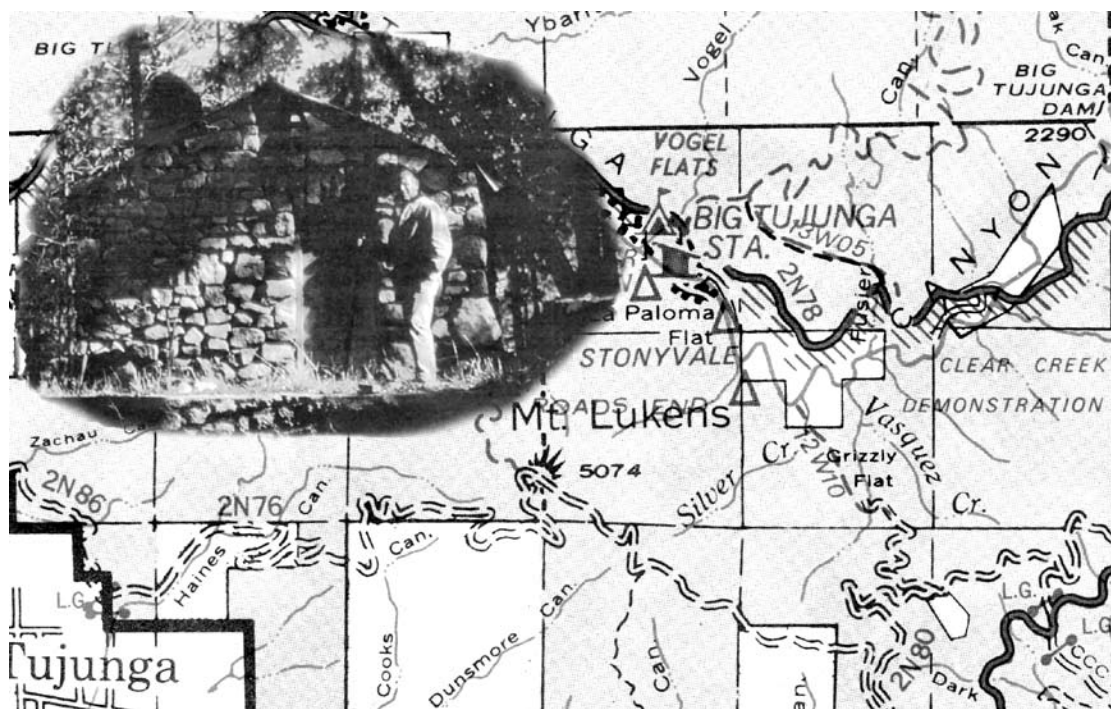
ry the equipment. The volunteers were quick to turn out when the fire bell resounded at the Bissell Ranch, high up on La Crescenta Avenue. Experienced men trained the green crews, who learned to function as well-coordinated "military units." They recruited extra manpower when absolutely necessary by setting up roadblocks and inducting every able-bodied man for the duration of the fire. They were "signed on and dispatched to the fire line with shovel, back pump or other necessary gear" to beat down the flames. After their impressments they received compensation from the U.S. Forest Service amounting to 35¢ for each hour served. Frequently, AFPA personnel from other foothill communities banded together to save the watershed above their homes.

The cabin at Grizzly Flat was largely the inspiration of Harvey Bissell and Art Aiken. Perhaps they chose this remote location, with its steep climb and descent, because it provided a training regimen producing strength and endurance. To reach it in the "old days," the boys started above Briggs Terrace, following the switchbacks "up the hill via the

brow of Sister Elsie Peak" (now Mt. Lukens). After reaching the crest it was all down hill to the cabin site. Pack animals were used to carry the heavy sacks of cement and tools for rock construction.

Most of the rock work on this rustic dwelling was completed in 1925, with the exception of adding a few feet to the chimney. The fireplace was large enough to hold four-foot logs. The Crescenta Valley groups also agreed to cooperate with the county by supplying water for a proposed nursery of pine seedlings to be planted on the scorched soil below the cabin. This water supply was developed by putting a dam across a little canyon stream. A novel hydraulic ram forced the water up the hill to the plantation.

Foothill branches of the AFPA attended collective maneuvers twice a year in various parts of the mountain. The La Crescenta group hosted their first rendezvous in October of 1926, at the behest of Harvey Bissell, at Grizzly Flat. The weekend involved lectures, fire suppression drills and reforestation techniques. At the close of the day, 125 participants feasted on a grand beef barbeque. The



Grizzly Flat lies southeast of Mt. Lukens, in the San Gabriel Mountains.

Inset: The Angelus Forest Protective Association cabin in 1952.

(Photo courtesy the author)

following year, maneuvers were held in San Dimas Canyon.

The heroic efforts of the Angeles Forest Protective Association were to last for only six years. During that period, they earned a reputation that would endure among pioneer residents for years to come. Their last stand took place during the firestorm of 1928, when "a hard-fighting crew of shovels and wetsack men" backed up by a large fire engine, fought valiantly to contain the wind-driven blaze at Foothill Boulevard. Howling gusts eventually carried the flames into the Verdugo Mountains and on over to Burbank. Shortly thereafter, the AFPA was disbanded, passing its mission to the County Department of Forestry. However, as we all know, massive chaparral conflagrations continue to confound the best of our modern fire fighting methods and equipment.

Although no longer an official fire-fighting force, the fraternal bonds of the AFPA remained intact. Members of the group continued to visit their mountain hideaway. In January of 1933, they blazed a new trail which reached the retreat from the floor of Big Tujunga Canyon. The pathfinders were impressed with the ten-foot Coulter and Monterey pines planted seven years earlier under the supervision of master forester Art Aiken.

The La Crescenta unit "staged a big time" at Grizzly Flat in 1934 to celebrate the completion of the new forestry department road extending from Angeles Crest Highway to Mt. Lukens. Naturally, "the boys" used the newly graded vehicle route. According to a story in the *Ledger* dated May 20, 1941, another social gathering and proverbial barbeque was held at Grizzly Flats (an "s" had been added by then). Fifty hungry members and guests attended, and charter member Art Aiken tended to the charcoal fire. Spence Turner, Forest and Fire Warden of the county, was the honored guest. He warned that heavy winter rains had produced excessive volatile natural growth, thus increasing the summer and fall fire danger. More manpower than usual might be needed from Crescenta Valley volunteers since "many younger men are engaged in defense work" (this was six months

prior to Pearl Harbor). Evidently, the old veterans of the AFPA were still on call and ready to serve.

Grizzly Flats is a beautiful place to visit. The pine plantation that you will see was replanted after another major fire in the 1950s. What could be more idyllic than lunching on soft pine needles, and gazing into the awesome abyss of the Big Tujunga? Sadly, the memorable old cabin is gone, razed by the custodians of the Angeles National Forest. It is ironic that this symbolic structure, linked so closely to forest preservation, should have fallen victim to well-meaning latter-day conservationists. Perhaps, like the rest of us, they too were unaware of its unique history.

Go And See

To reach the start of my favorite route to Grizzly Flats, drive up the Angeles Crest Highway from Foothill Boulevard 6.5 miles to a fairly large parking area on the left. Follow the fire road (marker 2N79) approximately 1.0 miles to an unmarked dirt road that leads downhill. Follow this for 1.5 miles to its terminus. The cabin foundation, pine grove, and the view of a lifetime lay a few paces to the right.



Richard Lacy of San Marino

By Nick Curry

Oil, real estate, manufacturing, and 29 years on the San Marino City Council – Richard Henry Lacy's legacy looms large in the history of Los Angeles County.

Lacy was the third mayor of San Marino, following Col. George S. Patton (1856-1927), the father of the WWII General, and William L. Valentine (1870-1942). He was a founding member of the City Council when the city incorporated in 1913, and served 18 years as Mayor, from 1924 to 1942.

Richard Lacy was born August 14, 1866 at Bolinas, in Marin County, California, the son of William Lacy, Sr. and Isabella Rigg Lacy, who were both natives of London. William Lacy's parents had emigrated from Ireland to London prior to the famine of 1845-48.

Richard's older brother, William Lacy, Jr., was also born in Bolinas in 1864. He would become his business partner in later years.

Their father, William Lacy, Sr. (1837-1897) was a true entrepreneur; an architect, farmer, retailer, innkeeper, banker, manufacturer, oil pioneer, gold miner, volunteer fireman, and founder of the Lacy Manufacturing Company in Los Angeles in 1887. At one time, Lacy Manufacturing was one of the largest businesses in California.

William Sr. emigrated from England to Champaign, Illinois in early 1860 where he took up farming with his brothers. On June 11, 1861 he married Isabella Rigg in Urbana, Illinois. The Rigg family had emigrated in 1859. Two years after their marriage, the Lacys moved to Bolinas, a seaside village just north of San Francisco, where William owned and operated a hotel and retail establishment. In October 1869 the family moved to San Diego where William earned his living as an architect, designing many residences and commercial buildings. In 1875 the Lacys moved to Los Angeles, where William and Edward

F. Spence co-founded what ultimately became known as the Bank of Los Angeles. In 1883 he established the Lacy & Viereck Hardware Company, and the following year he co-founded the first sheet iron pipe factory in Los Angeles with John D. Hooker. This was the forerunner of the Lacy Pipe Manufacturing Company, which was formalized in 1887. That same year, William Lacy was also a founding member of the California Club along with several other makers and shakers of that era.

Richard Lacy, along with his father and older brother William Jr., developed the Puente Hills oil fields in the 1880s, which stretched from the San Gabriel Valley into Brea, in Orange County. They also had a refinery in Chino. One of their partners was William Rowland, son pioneer settler John Rowland, who came overland to California in 1841. William Rowland is best remembered for the capture of the notorious outlaw Tiburcio Vasquez while he was Sheriff of Los Angeles County in the 1870s.

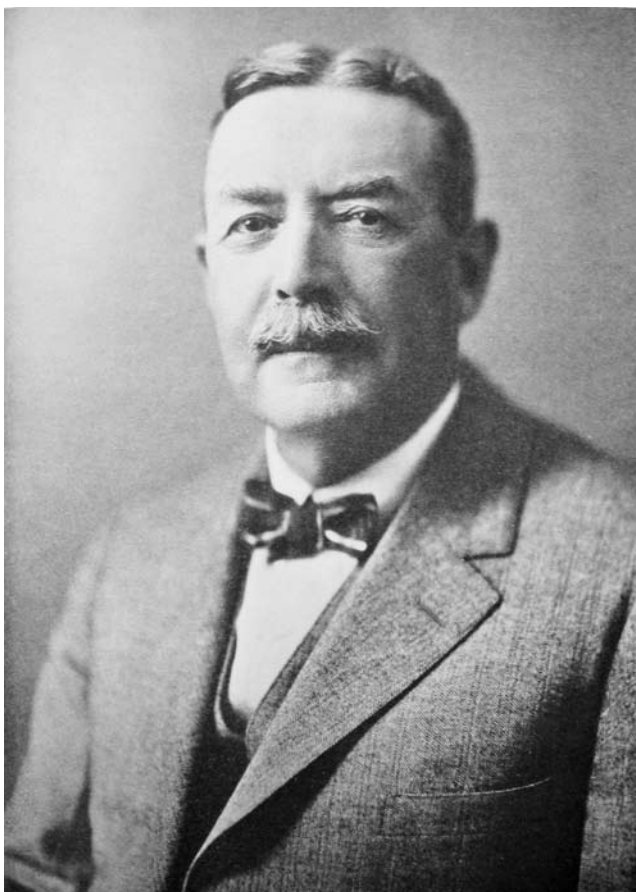
Later, the Lacys ventured into real estate subdivision in the Los Angeles area and gold mining in Baja California, where William Sr. died in 1897, at the age of 60. He is buried there at Molino de Lacy, Punta Final, San Luis Ganzaga, and a cenotaph was erected to commemorate his memory in Evergreen Cemetery in East Los Angeles. There is speculation to this day as to his probable cause of death: appendicitis, or possibly murder.

In 1898, following the unexpected death of their father, the two brothers bought out Lemuel A. Ward, a former partner, and re-organized the pipe business as the Lacy Manufacturing Company, which continued in sheet metal manufacturing and fabrication, steel pipes and tanks, and also expanded into the field of heavy plate metal, boilers, petroleum

refinery stills, storage tanks, waterworks appliances and the like. The firm would also manufacture part of the pipeline for the Los Angeles aqueduct down from the Owens Valley. William, Jr. was the president and Richard was the corporate secretary and vice president. The company was located adjacent to Frank Seaver's Hy-Drill Company (once owned by Los Angeles oilman E.L. Doherty), which manufactured anti-blow-out devices for oil wells, and was also across the street from where Philippe's Original French Dip Sandwich Deli is located today.

Richard Lacy married his first cousin, Maud Sullivan, in 1893 at the Church of Our Saviour in San Gabriel. His father and her mother were siblings. Maud's mother, Charlotte Lacy Sullivan, was married to Frederic Sullivan, the older brother of Sir Arthur Sullivan, of Gilbert & Sullivan fame. Maud's father died in 1877 at the age of 39, and her mother died six years later. Upon her father's untimely death her uncle, Sir Arthur, stepped in and became the guardian and financial support of his late brother's family for the remainder of his life. Sullivan never married and had no offspring. He died of tuberculosis in London in 1900 at age 58.

In 1908, Richard and Maud built a home they named "Wildwood" at 1518 Garfield Avenue, on the border of South Pasadena in



R.M. Lacy, circa 1925.
(From Hunt, *California and the Californians*, 1926)

what would ultimately become a part of San Marino. There, they raised their family of one son and five daughters. The eleven-acre estate has since been subdivided into an upscale residential neighborhood, with the original 7,000-square foot Lacy mansion still intact. It currently faces 1460 Avonrea Road in San Marino.

In June 1932, William Lacy, Jr., mentally distraught and in greatly diminished physical health, took his own life at age 67. Richard assumed the presidency of the Lacy Manufacturing Company. Wil-

liam, Jr., was an important leader in business and a man committed to the upbuilding of the community of early Los Angeles. He was involved with numerous issues affecting the growth of the city. His last contribution was helping to lead the drive for the construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct. He did not live to see his dream come true; the aqueduct was not completed until 1941. He and his family resided in an English Tudor mansion in the Hancock Park section of Los Angeles. In 1949 the family sold it to the renowned entertainer, Nat King Cole.

Richard Lacy's beloved wife, Maud, died of breast cancer in January 1940 at age 68. She was interred within the Lacy family burial plot at San Gabriel Cemetery alongside their only son, Richard William Lacy, a mechani-



The Lacy Manufacturing Company plant at 1000 North Main Street in Los Angeles in 1920s. (Courtesy the Author)

cal engineer who had died in 1927 at age 33.

Due to declining health, Richard Lacy stepped down as San Marino's Mayor early in 1942. His last public appearance was in June 1945 at the gala homecoming of General George S. Patton, Jr., on the front steps of the San Marino City Hall. Richard died of a heart attack at the Huntington Hotel (his last residence) on July 3, 1945, and is buried within the family plot in San Gabriel.

Besides his other activities, at the time of his death Richard Lacy was president of the Appleton Land & Water Company, a director of the Security First National Bank, vice president and director of the Holly Development Company, director of the Electrical Products Corporation, and a director of the Oceanic Oil Company. His club memberships and associations included the California Club, the Los Angeles Athletic Club, the Midwick Country Club, the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and the Merchants & Manufacturers Association. He was survived by his five daughters, Helen Fitzpatrick, Marjorie Williams, Florence Smith, Constance Hayes, and Eleanor Hanna.

The Lacy legacies are reflected in Lacy Park in San Marino, which was first known as Wilson's Lake, and later as Lake Vineyard. It was named Lacy Park in April 1940 following the death of Maud Lacy. In addition, Richard's

father built a vacation home in Pacific Grove, on the Monterey Peninsula, in 1888. It is now a bed & breakfast inn called the Green Gables Inn. After it was sold by the family, it was Roger Post (South Pasadena High School Class of 1953) who developed the property into what it is today.

The Puente Hills oil interests, along with the family's Chino refinery, founded in 1892, were sold to the Shell Oil Company in the 1930s. The management of the Lacy Manufacturing Company was assumed by two sons of William Lacy, Jr., (William and Walter) after Richard Lacy's death in 1945. The firm ultimately ended up in bankruptcy in 1966 due to over-expansion. In 1971, Walter Lacy's son, Fred, revived the company under the name of Lacy Oil Tools Company. He continues to own and operate it today at the age of 81. It is now located in Wilmington, California.

But Richard Lacy's most lasting legacy is the wonderful residential community of San Marino, which he so effectively promoted during his long and successful tenure as mayor.

Monthly Round-Up . . .

May 2010

Branding Iron editor Phil Brigandi (that's me) spoke on the Warner Ranch Indian Removal of 1903. Look for more on the legal wrangling behind this tragic episode in a future issue of *The Branding Iron*.

July 2010

Sarah Keyes, our Corral's 2010 Autry research fellowship recipient, presented a fresh examination of the significance of the overland trail in her talk, "Beyond the Plains: Migration and Reconfiguration of America, 1820-1900."

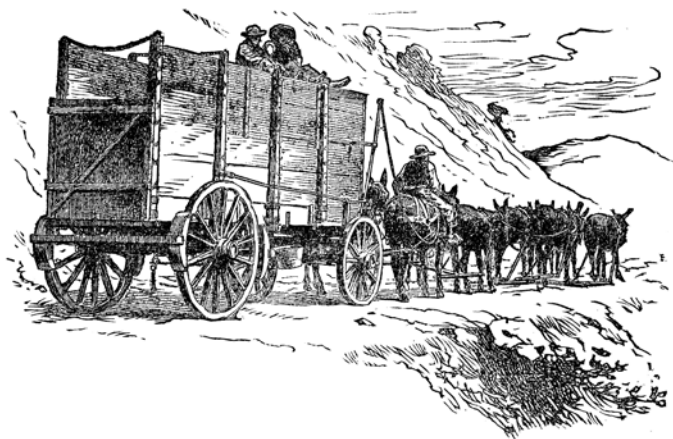
The covered wagon pioneers have become a defining symbol of American westward expansion, fueled by romantic tales of heroic settlers battling Indians and the elements along the overland trails to spread democracy and civilization across the continent. While some recent historians have tried to upset this popular view, Keyes has attempted to re-examine and revise the older view, not simply discard this pivotal American story.

Keyes, a doctoral candidate at the Univer-

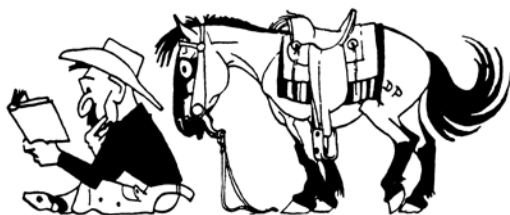


Deputy Sheriff Paul Spitzzeri presents the traditional Brand Book and plaque to our July speaker, Sarah Keyes.

sity of Southern California, finds new implications in the stories of the overland trails, and argues that these stories help us to better understand the American West, and all of 19th century America.



Down the Western Book Trail . . .



Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden, by Douglas Cazaux Sackman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 387 pp. Map, Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$55. Paper, \$22.95. University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. (510) 642-4247. www.ucpress.edu

Growing up in Los Angeles in the 1940s, one of my favorite early memories was listening to the comedy radio show "Truth or Consequences," hosted by Ralph Edwards. It ran on KFI at 8 p.m. Sometimes, however, the beginning of the program would be interrupted by what to me seemed a baffling set of numbers: "Pomona, 31. Riverside, 30. Yucaipa, 32." And so on, sometimes for upwards of five minutes. Little did I know that the Fruit Frost Warning Service was alerting citrus growers of freezing temperatures and that there would be a hard night's work putting out smudge pots to raise the temperature around the orange groves. I did have some idea what smudge pots were; Jack Benny and other radio comedians frequently joked about them.

I also enjoyed the occasional trip to Knott's Berry Farm and its ghost town, though in those pre-Santa Ana Freeway years it seemed to take forever to get to Buena Park, driving by what seemed to be endless groves of orange trees. Fast-forward a dozen years, and I was driving in the late 1950s to Disneyland. As I traveled the Santa Ana Freeway, I now saw endless rows of tract homes. No more orange groves. In the short space of a few years, Orange County's name epitomized a memory rather than an economic reality.

These recollections came to mind as I read Douglas Sackman's excellent *Orange Empire*. It is a masterful work, written with authority and style, and an occasional irresistible pun.

In the first of three parts, "Fabricating Eden," Sackman recounts how Southern California became a year-round producer of oranges, dramatized by the phenomenon of the navel orange in the 1870s. As orange groves grew, so did the California Fruit Growers' Exchange, better known by its Sunkist brand name. Orange production, refrigerated railroad cars, and Sunkist marketing strategies combined to create southern California as an Eden of glowing health and wealth. The advertising campaign utilized images of abundance and prosperity—the cornucopia, crate labels that illustrated the region's bountiful assets, the wealth awaiting potential investors.

Part Two, "Work in the Garden," contrasts with Part One, for here Sackman deals with who it was that did the necessary work of picking and packing the oranges—nonwhite workers, mostly Mexican but also Chinese, Japanese, Native American, and black farm workers, as well as women who were the predominant workers in the packing sheds. The Caucasian growers became managers rather than farmers, though Sunkist strove mightily to preserve the image of growers as men who toiled in the sun. In Part Three, "Reclaiming Eden," Sackman focuses on the shattering of the carefully cultivated Sunkist image during the Great Depression. Sunkist marshaled its forces to combat the threat of Upton Sinclair's EPIC campaign and his call for true farmers' cooperatives. The growers contributed money, smeared Sinclair, and sided with movie-makers who made fake newsreels of tramps heading to California to deceive the public.

At this point Sackman celebrates four people who fought back against the emperors of Eden. They were Farm Security Administration photographer Dorothea Lange, whose searing representations of poverty earned her enduring fame; UC Berkeley economist

Paul S. Taylor, collaborating with Lange to produce the book *An American Exodus*, combining Lange photos and Taylor text to tell the story of displaced Americans; activist-attorney Carey McWilliams, author of *Factories in the Field*, in which he coined the term “agribusiness”; and John Steinbeck, whose novel *The Grapes of Wrath* made people aware of the gulf between rich and poor, and how the rich wanted to keep it that way. At the end of the 1930s the labor strikes, violence, and Sunkist hypocrisy led to Senate hearings that found no Garden of Eden but factories that exploited workers. Sad to note, the U.S. entry into World War II left California’s agricultural problems as unfinished business. Unemployment was no longer a problem with a war on.

Sackman provides a rather truncated epilogue in writing an end to California’s citrus industry, noting in a few pages the demands for postwar housing and suburban growth that eradicated orange groves. He says nothing about Florida and the struggle that still continues in agriculture between labor unions and management. Note that Tropicana, Florida’s Natural, and Ralphs brands all come out of Florida, and Minute Maid and Kroger’s from “U.S. and Brazil.” Nevertheless, this is an outstanding book, and the only afterthought I had about it was whether Sackman will next tackle Sun-Maid and the eternally youthful image of Lorraine Collette, in red bonnet and holding a trayful of “natural California raisins.”

— Abraham Hoffman



On the Western Trails: The Overland Diaries of Washington Peck, by Washington Peck, edited by Susan M. Erb. Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2009. 296 pp. Illustrations, maps. Cloth, \$45. www.ahclark.com.

As the twenty-second entry in Clark’s outstanding Western Trail series, *On the Western Trails*, is mainly about the two 1850s expeditions to California led by Washington Peck, as based on his journals. As interesting as the diaries and, especially, the commentary by Peck’s descendant, Susan M. Erb, are, the book would have been a greater contribution to Western history if more of their story outside of the migrations were more fully explicated.

The 1850-51 diary covers the Peck family relocation from Ontario, Canada to Grass Valley, California utilizing the Oregon-California Trail in one of its busiest years. Notably, the group took a route following the northern side of the Platte River, which was not only lesser used, allowing for more water and grass availability, but the wagon train was spared the ravages of cholera which killed many more traveling on the southern side. It is also significant that Peck’s careful management of his resources meant no loss of human or animal lives and the trip went remarkably smoothly.

After three years back East, Peck and members of his family made a second migration west in 1858, though their experience was dramatically different. Traveling on a southern route, including following a trail opened by Edward Beale (later of Rancho El Tejon fame), the family experienced closed roads, bad weather, lost stock, broken equipment and had to turn back on the Beale road because of Indian attacks that nearly destroyed the party ahead of the Pecks. This group was led by Leonard J. Rose, who later owned the well-known Sunny Slope ranch in the San Gabriel Valley. After a sojourn in New Mexico abruptly ended by the outbreak of the Civil War, the Pecks made their way to California in 1861, using the recently-abandoned Butterfield Stage route.

The years after 1858, because they don’t deal directly with the trails-based focus, are

presented in abbreviated form, although there is much of interest. The Pecks resided in San Gabriel from 1861 to 1864, living next to Michael White (whose San Marino adobe is now threatened with demolition) and were reunited briefly with Rose. The dual destruction of flood and drought drove the Pecks to leave for Washington territory. After a prolonged stay there, the family moved to Prescott, Arizona; Alameda, California; and back to Washington. Mining opportunities lost to shady partners, family tragedies involving disease, divorce and divine agency (a grandson killed by lightning while herding cattle), and other experiences remind us of the fragility of frontier life. Unfortunately, all of this is dealt with in a thumbnail sketch format.

Informative and enlightening as the specific focus on the two trail migrations are, there is a wider story that could, if more developed, have made for an even better book than this fine volume is.

— Paul Spitzzeri

Stan Paher's Illustrated Nevada Ghost Towns & Desert Atlas, Seventh Edition, by Stan Paher. Las Vegas, Nevada Publications, 2009. 208 pp, cloth, dust jacket, illus., maps. \$39.95. Nevada Publications, P.O. Box 15444 Las Vegas, NV 89114

Stan Paher has written a number of books of a similar nature. This new one combines several earlier books into one volume covering both north and south Nevada. This book will be useful for those hardy souls with four wheel drive vehicles who want to scout out the places of legend in Nevada. It seems to cover all of the known sites and the Benchmark Maps are quite good at showing routes and terrain.

Those using this book to search for places to photograph may be a little disappointed. The wealth of black and white photos were mainly shot in the 1950s by well known desert photographer, Nell Murbarger. Many of the buildings are now reduced to foundations, if even those can still be found. A typical comment from a page on Sutro, "A

careless visitor's cigarette caused this irreplaceable specimen of a Nevada stamp mill to burn in 1967."

Most of these sites are accessible only by unpaved roads and unfortunately these are simply shown as dotted lines with no attempt to describe their condition, a rather important consideration for weekend explorers. The map scales vary from one inch equals 3.5 miles to one inch equals 7.5 miles so the user should carefully examine each map's scale when planning a trip. Fortunately there is a keyed map included as the last page which will allow the reader to find the area covered by each of the one or two page detailed maps. The maps are not contiguous, so the book sometimes jumps around a little. However, each site is covered in photos and sometimes minimal text adjacent to a map illustrating the location and other sites grouped nearby.

A place name index would have been useful. The sequence is roughly from north to south covering entries from two previous volumes which split the state. The last several pages give useful hints for desert travel and a list of other titles available from this publisher.

This is a nice coffee table book showing what once was Nevada. Desert lovers and armchair explorers will find the 530 vintage photos included interesting and a fine record of Nevada's historic past. It is suggested that USGS topo maps be used to supplement this book in the field.

— Bill Warren