



The Hugo Reid adobe was located on land formerly owned by the Mission San Gabriel, seen here from an 1870s stereoscopic photograph. Courtesy of the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum

## A Tale of Two Adobes: Searching for the Real Hugo Reid Adobe

*by Gary Cowles*

On the grounds of the Arboretum of Los Angeles County, a reconstructed adobe house on the shore of the spring-fed lake there and near the famed Victorian-era cottage of Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin has long been attributed as the site of the adobe of Hugo Reid, a notable early foreign resident of Mexican Alta California. Recent research by the author, however, concludes that the site has been incorrectly identified and that

the adobe house built and lived in by Reid and his Gabrieliño Indian wife, Victoria, was actually much further west, as this article will show.

Reid, was born at Renfrew County, Scotland in 1809. While little is known of his early life, it has been stated by his primary biographer, Susanna Bryant Dakin, that he spent a couple of years at Cambridge Uni-

*(Continued on page 3)*

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Editor's Corner

Our late spring and summer was a busy and fruitful one. We had great Roundups in April, May, July and August with speakers enlightening members on such topics as the Mission Inn, the artist responsible for the famed sculpture, The End of the Trail, some interesting local maps, and the shifting boundaries of the Civil War-era West. In each case, we were not only well entertained, but educated about topics of great interest to those who care about the American West. Meantime, June brought about a successful and fun Fandango at the beautiful Northridge home of Gary and Vicki Turner and between the food, drink, book and auction sales, and great mariachi music (and, perhaps, company and conversation), the event lacked for nothing.

Meantime, the contents of this issue include a couple of interesting and concise articles. One concerns the springtime trip of former Sheriff and prolific book reviewer Abe Hoffman to Prague, Czech Republic, where he had the opportunity to spend time with members of Westerners corals and see first-hand the fascination that many Europeans have with the American West. The other is an overview of some in-depth research conducted in recent years by Corral member Gary Cowles concerning the residence of Hugo Reid and his Gabrieliño wife, Victoria Bartolomea in what is now San Marino.

In June, we lost a very dedicated and devoted Corral member in former Sheriff and longtime auctioneer Hugh Tolford. Hugh, always recognizable in his blue blazer, was not only a leader of our organization, but was also a great friend to many of our members and will be missed.

Finally, 2010 was another great year for the corral as we received two major awards from Westerners International. First, former Branding Iron editor Phil Brigandi took home the Phillip C. Danielson Award for best presentation to a corral or posse and the corral took the Heads-Up Award for best corral formed prior to 1973. To Sheriff Michael Patris, the trail bosses, Westerners International Rep Gary Turner, who prepared the nominations, and to our members generally, congratulations!

—Paul Spitzzeri

versity, but left Great Britain and took sail to South America. Arriving in Peru, Reid gained employment with Henry Dalton, a London-born merchant who later had a long and notable career in Los Angeles County. Reid soon was sent to Mexico to operate a branch of Dalton's mercantile business and first came to Alta California in 1832. He briefly operated a Los Angeles store with Jacob Leese, later a prominent San Francisco merchant, and William Keith, was alleged to have been involved in a revolt against Governor Manuel Victoria and then worked for a short time for Abel Stearns at the port at San Pedro. After a brief return to Hermosillo, Reid returned to Los Angeles to stay.

In his first visit to the area, Reid appears to have met Bartolomea Comicrabit, who was born about 1802 to gentile Indians, but who, from the age of seven or eight, was a neophyte at Mission San Gabriel. When she was about seventeen, Bartolomea married an Indian named Pablo Maria and raised a family of three children with him until his death in 1835.

Hugo Reid was back in Los Angeles not long afterward and it was said that Bartolomea's widowhood was the prime reason for him to return from Hermosillo. Reid and Bartolomea, also known as Victoria and by which she will be referred to in the rest of this article, were married in fall 1837 and soon afterward she gave birth to a son, Carlos (probably named for Reid's father, Charles.)

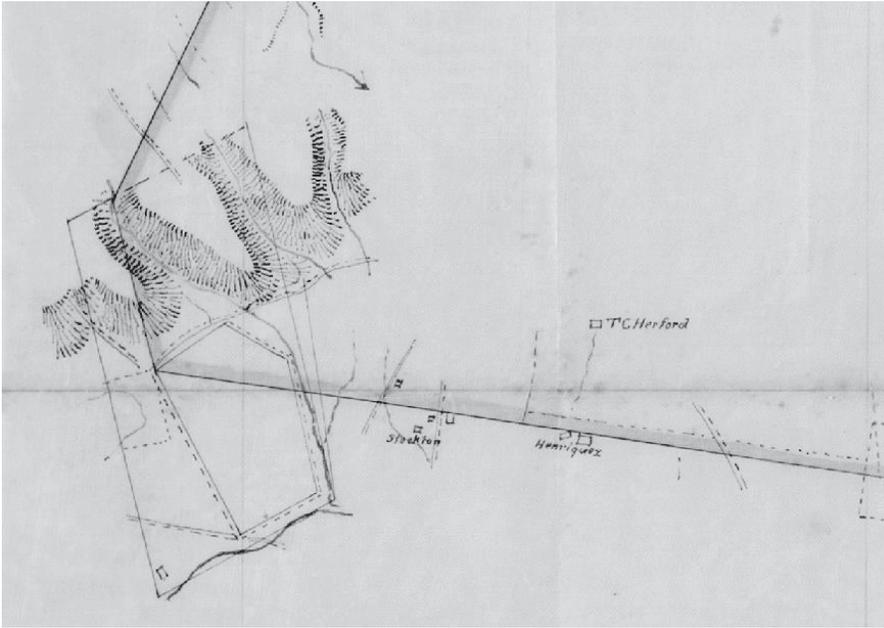
Reid was well known for his high level of education and served in some important political capacities. For example, he was *juez de paz* (Justice of the Peace) at San Gabriel in 1844 and 1846 and was an auxiliary administrator at Mission San Gabriel, with significant responsibility for the maintenance of Gabrieliño Indians associated with the area. His services at San Gabriel were such that he and William Workman, co-owner of the former mission rancho of La Puente in the eastern San Gabriel Valley, were granted the mission and its lands by Governor Pio Pico, though that grant was invalidated by the United State Supreme Court in 1864, long after Reid's death. Notably, Reid was

close to a number of fellow British expatriates, including Workman, Dalton and Michael White, who was a near neighbor. In 1849, Reid was given the honor, by election, of being one of the Los Angeles region's delegates to the convention that wrote and passed California's first constitution.

As a rancher and farmer, he took up wine-making, probably through his wife's influence, and grew crops like corn and wheat, while also raising some cattle. Reid, with his mercantile background, also tried to bankroll two expeditions to Asia to trade goods, but was unsuccessful in the endeavor and accumulated a great deal of debt. In the early days of the Gold Rush, he formed a mercantile partnership with James McKinley in northern California, though it was short-lived and not successful.

Reid's legacy, however, is ensured because of his twenty-two essays on the Gabrieliño Indians, the first written detailed account of their society, culture, religion and lifeways and which was serialized in the *Los Angeles Star* in 1852 and again sixteen years later. In December 1852, however, not long after the publication of his work, which was unfinished, he died, evidently of tuberculosis, at age 43. At the time of Reid's death, he may have been estranged from his wife and children, because Victoria had, in March 1852, created a separate inventory of her private property.

Victoria Reid was well connected to the Mission San Gabriel, though the exact linkages are not known. According to her husband, Victoria was skilled at distilling brandy (or *aguardiente*) and winemaking, and she may have learned the trade from the fathers at San Gabriel. In any case, with the recent secularization by the Mexican government of the California missions, former mission ranches were becoming available to private citizens and Victoria's relationship to San Gabriel appears to have been a factor in the allotment to her and her first husband of two tracts near the mission: the Huerta de Cuati and the Rancho Santa Anita. The first was a parcel that was allotted to Victoria's first husband, Pablo Maria. In the aftermath of the secularization of the California mis-



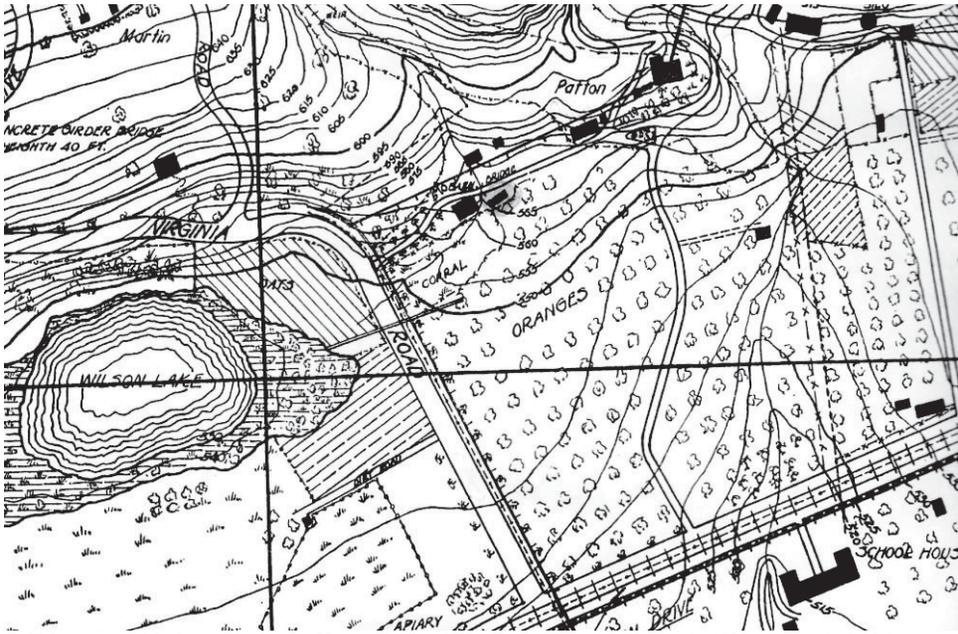
The Huerta de Cuati/Uva Espina parcel is the rectangular section at the lower left, part of it falling within the southwest corner of Rancho Santa Anita. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, Art Gallery and Botanical Gardens.

sions, the padre at San Gabriel gave several such allotments to neophyte Indians who had been affiliated with and served the mission. Notably, however, only the governor, with the confirmation of the legislature, could grant land.

After the Reids' marriage, Hugo sought legal title for their claims and received one from Huerta de Cuati in 1838, followed three years later by one for Santa Anita. The former was described as 850 varas square, or about 125 acres, and its shape, determined by an 1850s survey, was that of a parallelogram with its north and east boundaries touching the westerly portion of the present Huntington Library property. It extended west into today's Lacy Park and east to a point roughly between Hampton and Kensington roads. Its southerly boundary ran almost parallel and just north of Huntington Drive. The Rancho Rincon de San Pascual was west and north of this tract. The Rancho Santa Anita was north and east. Lands to the south were within the San Gabriel Mission domain. There is, however, no locative designation for the original tract's boundaries. No *diseño*, or map accompanying the grant, survives to describe the boundaries. Neither

is its location in relation to Rancho Santa Anita addressed, so it is assumed that it was part of the lands immediately adjoining the San Gabriel Mission.

Victoria also had a claim on the Rancho Santa Anita, which Hugo pursued under his own name "...for his personal benefit and that of his family..." as expressed in the grant petition. There was a competing claim from Tiburcio Lopez and Vicente de la Osa, with the former's father, Mission San Gabriel *mayordomo* (or foreman) Claudio Lopez said to have had grazing rights to Santa Anita during the mission era. Moreover, Lopez family accounts state that Lopez constructed an adobe on the ranch for the use of *vaqueros* working with his cattle. Reid, however, was given permission by Mission San Gabriel administrator Juan Bandini to settle on the rancho in 1839 (although records indicate he was living there by at least September 1838). Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado gave him a provisional grant in 1841 and this was followed by another provisional grant made a few years later by Governor Manuel Michelorena. In May 1845, Governor Pío Pico issued final title for three square leagues of land, comprising over 13,300 acres.



This topographical map shows the Huerta de Cuati/Uva Espina parcel in the early 1920s. At left is the lake at today's Lacy Park and to its right is a colored area possibly representing the Hugo Reid adobe location."
   
 Courtesy of Rep. Adam Schiff's office.

Reid's attempts to develop Santa Anita met with disaster. In a letter to Abel Stearns, dated June 1, 1844 from *Uva Espina*, the beleaguered rancher wrote that, "...the rancho, *por falta del amo* [through the master's fault], does not go right." In a follow up to Stearns a little less than three months later, on August 26, Reid reported that the adobes to build a granary were lost in rains, wheat fermented, and the corn crop ruined, and he lamented that "everything is going wrong."

In addition, the two ill-fated expeditions to sell goods in Asia mentioned above meant that, desperate for relief, Reid, faced with selling the *Uva Espina* orchard tract or the larger, but mainly undeveloped Santa Anita, chose to sell the latter to his former employer, Henry Dalton, in 1847 for \$2,700.

As to the Reid adobe, a vaguely-defined section of the southwest corner of Santa Anita was appended to Victoria's *Huerta de Cuati* parcel and this was called *Rancho Uva Espina*. This was discovered because, in his sale of Santa Anita to Dalton, there was an exception for land behind the vineyard and orchard that Reid considered his was actually part of *Huerta de Cuati* and in Victoria's name. This land was described as 850 varas

in length by 500 varas in width, or about seventy-five acres. As with *Huerta de Cuati*, there is no *diseño* for *Uva Espina*.

The two tracts, which would separately have comprised about 200 acres, were subsequently surveyed ca. 1854, probably by George Hansen, and again in 1857 by Henry Hancock as overlapping - but only containing 850 *varas* square or the original size of *Huerta de Cuati*. These two parcels became virtually one and the same, although the confusing issue of these having been separate properties actually led to them being sold twice: once to Benjamin D. Wilson (*Huerta de Cuati*) and then again to Aaron Pollard (*Uva Espina*. Pollard also took Reid's half-interest in the Mission San Gabriel land claim with William Workman.)

Notably, surviving correspondence of Reid's gives his address as either San Gabriel (indicating close proximity to the former mission) or *Uva Espina*, while none are addressed from Santa Anita. Other clues as to the location of his residence are found in surviving documents.

Most significant is the deed of sale, dated May 29, 1847, from Reid (with the permission of Victoria and her adult children)

to Dalton of Santa Anita. In the retention of the parcel in the southwest corner, it was noted that this was "... a tract of land lying backwards of the orchard and vineyard of the Vendor *which embraces a house recently built* [my emphasis] and ends a little before the trench of water with which the vineyard is irrigated so that the same trench is also included therein answering as a boundary to divide the property." To further explain this property, a notation was made at the end of the document: "Explanatory Note - The tract of land of which mention is made to be lying backwards of the orchard's house known by the name of '*Uva Espina*' (gooseberries) is of five hundred *varas* in breadth to the westward of said property and of length eight hundred and fifty *varas* from the south to the north".

Yet, there are no contemporary references during or just after his lifetime that mention anything remotely related to Reid's construction of an adobe residence in the area of Santa Anita where the county arboretum and its rebuilt adobe house stand today. The assertion that there was such a dwelling comes from Susanna Bryant Dakin's 1939 biography, *A Scotch Paisano in Old Los Angeles: Hugo Reid's Life in California, 1832-1852, Derived from His Correspondence*. This last part of the title is the issue, because Reid's references in his letters to specific locations were misunderstood by Dakin.

For example, she references Uva Espina as separate from Huerta de Cuati, when they were actually joined by the 1847 deed to Dalton and places the former as being across the street from the Mission San Gabriel church. Further, she confused Mission Lake, part of which was eventually surveyed within the Huerta de Cuati tract with the sag pond that is the lake at the Arboretum. Mission Lake is now better known as the lake at Lacy Park in San Marino.

Further, a letter from 1841 from Reid to Governor Alvarado related to the seeking of a grant for Santa Anita makes note of a stone house Reid constructed on the ranch, "where some person assigned by me, would always stay to look after all that is there . . ." Dakin interpreted this to mean that this residence

was, ". . . a slight exaggeration calculated to impress the governor; the greater part was common adobe." Yet, she contradicts Reid's statement for no justifiable reason and provides no evidence that Reid built an adobe house on the Arboretum site. Instead, what was mistaken for the Hugo Reid Adobe was likely a structure referred to in records as the Joseph Rowe adobe (in other words, an existing adobe that Rowe bought and spent a good deal of money in improving) and which may well be the building referred to by the Lopez family in their oral recollections.

A survey of the Rancho Santa Anita ca. 1854 (by my reckoning) from the Solano-Reeve Collection at the Huntington Library shows the Huerta de Cuati tract in the extreme southwest corner of the rancho (but no structures featured, which is identical in format with the Henry Hancock survey of "Plat of a Place Called Cuati", completed in November 1857). Notably, while the earlier survey shows no structures, the Hancock rendering indicates four buildings, including a "ruin" of an undetermined type, the residence of Benjamin D. Wilson at Lake Vineyard (east of the lake), a structure within an adobe wall in the northern part of the vineyard, and a "and a deserted house, formerly owned by Lugardo Aguilar".

By superimposing the circa 1854 map over the later one, all but the latter are clearly within the boundaries of the Rancho Santa Anita. Hancock testified in a land claims hearing that "the house shown inside the wall [the vineyard enclosure] is an adobe house." In the same hearing, Agustín Olvera stated that, "as to the adobe in the enclosure, yes, it was occupied since 1840 or 1842 by Reid & family." Assuming that Olvera was correct in his recollection, this then was the Hugo Reid adobe. It was in Rancho Santa Anita, but in the far southwestern corner near the Mission San Gabriel and not several miles to the northeast in the Arboretum property. Its modern location would be at the junction of Charlton and Euston roads, just east of Lacy Park within the City of San Marino.

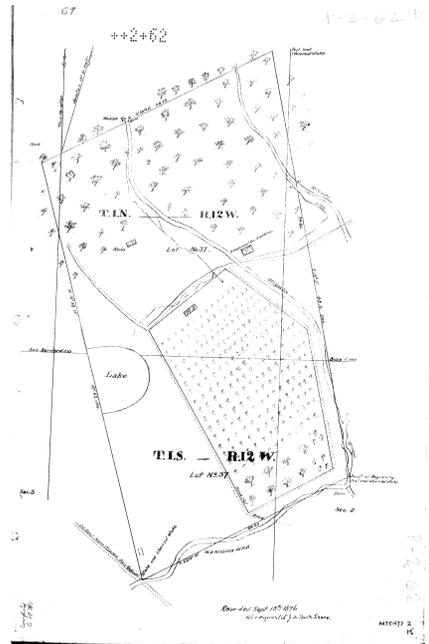
Reid's adobe house was obviously located next to or within his vineyard and gar-

den. Yet, the distance to the Arboretum adobe to the Mission San Gabriel is approximately 4 1/2 miles or almost two leagues. No existing testimonies or accounts as to the location of his residence even approach this distance.

A tantalizing map of San Marino, created by an ROTC engineering class at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 1921 shows an adobe structure as an outbuilding on the grounds of the estate of George Smith Patton, son-in-law of Benjamin D. Wilson and father of the famed World War II general. This seems a very strong indication that the Hugo Reid adobe was still standing at that time as its location and orientation correspond to that of the adobe in the vineyard enclosure in the 1857 map.

Further material that lends itself to the idea that the Reid adobe was closer to the mission comes from a letter Reid wrote to Abel Stearns in October 1838, in which he noted that “ink, paper and health are scarce commodities at the Uva Espina *por ahora* [just now]. The ink was taken from the *mill pond* [my emphasis] fresh this morning, being composed of three parts of water, two of mud, and one of tadpoles well ground.” In addition to Reid’s interesting method of making his own ink, the reference to the mill pond is clearly what became known as Lake Vineyard, now the Lacy Park lake. Clearly, Reid only had to walk a very short distance to the “mill pond” from his house to make his notable concoction.

It might be added that when Alfred Robinson described Rancho Santa Anita in his well-known *Life in California During a Residence of Several Years in the Territory*, he devoted his attention to that portion of it that he deemed “one of the fairy spots to be met with so often in California.” In particular, he lauded the “*Molino*, or grist mill, surrounded with fruit trees and flowers”, as well as the “beautiful lake [which] lies calm and unruffled in front, and all around fresh streams are gushing from the earth, and scattering their waters in every direction.” This was Huerta de Cuati/Uva Espina, which had the water to support vineyards and orchards such as those Reid had, while the



Another map of Huerta de Cuati and Uva Espina, with the semi-circular Mission Lake at the left and some structures to the right indicating where the Hugo Reid adobe stood. Courtesy of Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

location where the Arboretum stands was mostly used for grazing stock, although its sag pond did provide a water source, though not, at that time, for irrigation.

After Hugo Reid’s death, Victoria was evidently unable to manage her own affairs and doted on her grasping son, Felipe (who may be best known as the purported murdered of Joshua Bean, a California militia leader in Indian wars and brother of the famed Judge Roy Bean, at San Gabriel Mission in 1852). Within a few years, Victoria decided to sell, for the considerable sum of \$8,000, Huerta de Cuati/Uva Espina to Benjamin D. Wilson, who renamed his estate Lake Vineyard. Although Wilson was a very prominent citizen, whose heirs continued to own the property into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, Reid has largely been forgotten, except for the misidentified reconstructed adobe house at the Arboretum that has been attributed to him. As to Victoria, she died of smallpox, a frequent killer of native peoples, at about age 66 in December 1868. To the extent that she is remembered, it tends to be in a form of mythology as some sort of native American *grande dame*.

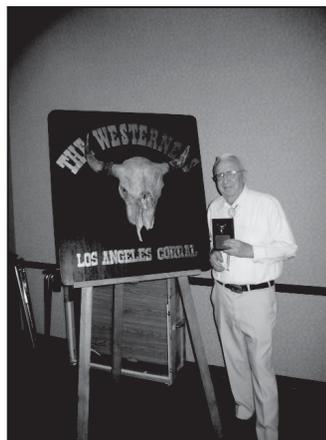


## THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP



**April 2011**

The Corral's Bill Warren, past president of the California Map Society and a volunteer at the Huntington Library, where he has developed a computer cataloging system for that institution's voluminous collection of maps, gave an interesting and informative talk about a variety of local maps. Bill noted that, while maps usually represent an accurate and authentic rendering of geographical spaces, they can often be quite the opposite, representing a sales and marketing pitch to potential land buyers enthralled by "imaginative" renderings of the tract or parcel in question or showing a fanciful rendering of a planned town on a relatively-accurate plat. Using his intricate knowledge and his trademark humor, Bill entertained and informed attendees with just a sample of the some 8,000 maps he has worked with and gave us a good overview of the topic.



**May 2011**

Dave Gillies, another long-time Corral member, provided an interesting and informative overview of the life and work of American artist, James Earl Fraser, whose best-known sculpture is the famed *The End of the Trail*. Dave outlined the little-known story of how the work was cast in plaster by Fraser for the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco, held in 1915, but then discarded at the conclusion of the fair, even though Fraser was awarded a gold medal for sculpture. *The End of the Trail* was rescued by the County of Tulare and moved to Mooney Grove Park, near Visalia, in 1919. After decades, during which the sculpture was degrading in the outdoor elements, a deal was struck to move the original piece to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, where after painstaking restoration, the piece is prominently and beautifully displayed.

**July 2011**

Our annual presentation by the Westerners/Autry National Center fellow featured Emily McEwen, a PhD candidate in Public History at the University of California, Riverside and Curator of History at the Mission Inn Foundation Inn and Museum in Riverside. McEwen's well-illustrated and evocative talk focused on the Mission Inn and its selling of the exotic and eclectic vision of history propagated by its founder, Frank Miller. The talk discussed how this was done through



historical pageants and other programs, as well as through the trade conducted by its Cloister Art Shop. Using primary documents and letters from the Mission Inn Foundation and Museum and the Autry's Braun Research Library at the Southwest Museum, McEwen vividly described how Miller and others developed their concepts to tourists and others visiting the venerable hotel.

### August 2011

It was Hawaiian Shirt Night at the Corral and our speaker, Dave Goracke, gave us a fascinating program that concerned the continuously shifting boundaries of Western states and territories during the period before and after the Civil War. While already fully engaged in massive acquisitions in the West before the War, the Union was also dealing with the political questions that the conflict exacerbated relative to the shifts in territorial conditions. With the importance of Nevada silver, the question of the Mormons in Utah, and Confederate inroads in Arizona and New Mexico among others, there were many questions and issues covered in the years 1858 to 1868. Goracke also covered some



of the notable boundary questions outside of the West during this era, including the reintegration of Confederate states and some little-known boundary disputes elsewhere.

### Corral Honored by WI Again!

Once again, your Corral has taken home two top prizes from Westerners International from the year 2010.

First, Phil Brigandi was awarded the Philip C. Danielson Award for the best presentation or program delivered to a corral or posse during the year. Phil won for his excellent talk given in May 2010 on the Cupeno Indian removal from Warner's Ranch in San Diego County in 1903. Phil discussed this terrible watershed moment in California history in thoughtful detail and skillfully evoked the dramatic and despicable circumstances involved in the incident. It made for a powerful presentation for our corral members and we congratulate Phil on this honor.

Then, the Corral received a letter at the end of August from WI Awards Chairman Rodney Goddard, which deserves a full quotation:

*It is our pleasure to tell you that your corral has won the 2010 Heads Up award for corrals organized prior to 1973. The award will be presented during the WI Breakfast and Book Auction to be held Sunday, October 18, at the Oakland Marriott City Center, Oakland, California, during the annual Western History Association meeting.*

*If you or a member of your corral will not be present to accept the award, it will be mailed to you after the meeting.*

*Once again, congratulations on this fine achievement.*

The Heads Up Award is truly a testament to the dedication and activity of many Corral members, who spent many hours writing articles, book reviews, and other material for *The Branding Iron*; planning and executing

our monthly Roundups and annual events, the Fandango and Rendezvous; serving as editors of our publications, notably Phil's great work with *The Branding Iron*; and giving their time as Trail Bosses; among others. To Sheriff Michael Patris and the other Trail Bosses, including our WI representative, Gary Turner, who gave a great deal of time and energy to compiling Corral materials that were sent in a binder to the WI Awards Committee, an extra thanks for your leadership.

Let's keep the great work of our Corral going and, for those members thinking of getting more involved (and even for those who haven't been considering it), we need more people assisting with our various programs and publications so that we can continue being in top contention for the Heads Up and Danielson awards!

### **New Corral Web Site Launched!**

Thanks to Michael Patris, who secured the services of Web designer Jim Bunte, a vastly improved, visually striking, and very user-friendly Corral Web site has been launched. Log on to [www.lawesterners.org](http://www.lawesterners.org) and you will be greeted by a gorgeous background photograph of a Western landscape with a meadow, soft sunlight and mountains. There is a general welcome and introduction to our special events on the home page. At the left is a menu bar with links to the Corral's history; membership; current event schedule; event photos; Corral leadership for the year; a list of past sheriffs; a page for our Brand Book; and a contact page. At the right is a box with a link to Westerners International.

The site launched in early August, so there is still much that has to be added, but Paul Rippens, our Corral Web master, is working to get the site updated and there will be some lag time to get everything properly calibrated. Meantime, the old site, [www.westerners-losangeles.org](http://www.westerners-losangeles.org), is still higher ranked in the Google search for our corral, so please remind anyone you know that the correct address for the new Web site is: [www.lawesterners.org](http://www.lawesterners.org).



### **Passings**

#### **Hugh C. Tolford**

Hugh, who was Sheriff of the Corral in 1977, passed away on 7 June 2011. Involved in advertising and real estate in California and other western states, he was an aficionado of Death Valley, mining camps, railroading, Nevada history and aviation. He was an active member of the Death Valley 49ers, where he was production chairman of the Death Valley Encampment for 25 years. Other notable associations included his service on the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board; the Zamorano Club, of which he was President in 1984; E Clampus Vitus, serving as Noble Grand Humbug; and the Big Ten Club. He also wrote many publications on the desert, Death Valley, and railroads and ran fairs for the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America for almost fifteen years. He'll be remembered for the above and his trademark blue blazer, which showed his loyalty to The Big Ten Club. He attended Michigan State University.



The mariachi group posing with some of the phenomenal collection in Gary and Vicki Turner's amazing home.

## Fandango 2011

This year's Fandango was held on June 17th at the Northridge home of Gary and Vicki Turner, although unlike two years ago, few were disappointed in the fact that the temperature did not approach anywhere near 117 degrees!

There was, however, plenty of heat with the great food served, as well as the fantastic music played by a mariachi group, whose presence was paid for by a couple of devoted Corral members who prefer not to have too much attention given for their generosity.

As usual, a bounteous selection of beverages was available at the bar, which was staffed by Gary and Vicki's daughter and son-in-law, as well as Corral member Pete Fries. Their efficient and generous dispensing of libations no doubt assisted in the propensity for our members to belly up to the book tables and spend freely both in the fixed price area and with auction items. There were also some special auction items, including a nice cowboy hat won by

Patricia Ingram Adler, who sported it in true Westerners style after securing her bounty with the winning bid.

Members were also treated to a little live cowboy poetry reading by Corral stalwarts Tim Heflin and Loren Wendt and many of those in attendance had the opportunity to tour the Turner abode to see many of their pieces of Western art and artifacts. A visit to the home could hardly be complete without a stop at the famous indoor outhouse, which defies description and, seemingly, gravity (especially after a few trips to the bar.)

All told, the event was a resounding success and it all started with the hospitality and hard work of our hosts and the efforts of many Corral members, including Deputy Sheriff Eric Nelson and Registrar of Marks and Brands Joe Cavallo, who assisted in the planning and kept the reservations, respectively. This year's Fandango was certainly one to remember!



Eric Nelson and his family with Ken and Carol Pauley.



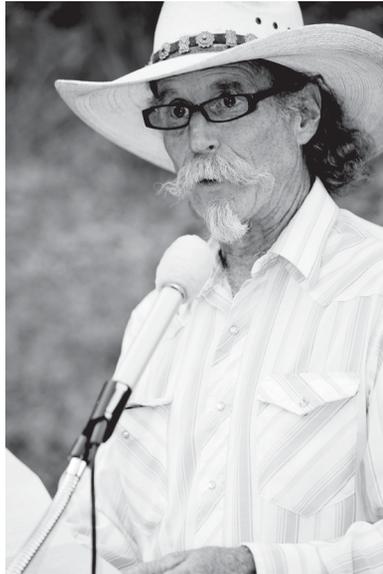
Loren Wendt "recitin' cowboy poetry."



Gary Turner (our host) with Phil Brigandi and Mark Hall-Patton



Hungry Corral members lining up at the 'Chuck Wagon' for some chow.



Tim Heflin, another Corral 'poe-8', unfurls his prose to Fandango guests



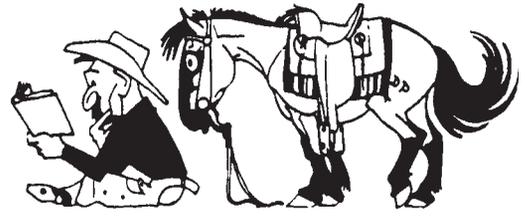
A gut-wrenching [literally] decision to be made at the bar between *aguardiente* and moonshine.



## A Westerner Visits Prague

In April 2011 Abe Hoffman, former sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral, spent a week in the Czech Republic. During his visit he had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Indian Corral and the Rodeo Corral. Carolina Majerova and Milan Mraz of the Indian Corral presented Abe with copies of *Pow-Wow*, their publication, a CD of their activities, and commemorative pins. Petr Binhack and Milan Mach of the Rodeo Corral gave Abe a CD and commemorative pins. Abe presented the Prague Westerners with copies of the Los Angeles Corral's Brand Book No. 20 anthology, the Keepsake No. 33, and items from Westerners International.

The first Czech Corral was formed in 1990 soon after the Czech Republic was freed from Soviet domination. Today there are seven active Corrals, including the Rodeo Corral, Indian Corral, Fur-Trappers Corral, Pony Express Corral, Texas Rangers Corral, Western City Corral, and Bullet Corral. The Czechs are enthusiastic fans of the history of the American West and hold reenactments, do research, and, when possible, visit the United States. They welcome visitors from American and other nations' Corrals, and anyone visiting Prague will enjoy their hospitality and friendship.



## DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL ...

**BANDIDO:** *The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vásquez*, by John Boessenecker. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. xix + 471 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Index, Bibliography. Cloth, \$34.95.

Second only to the shadowy and poorly documented Joaquin Murietta among the legendary *bandidos* of 19<sup>th</sup>-century California, Tiburcio Vásquez might well have been the first true criminal celebrity in the Golden State. While he generally labored in criminal obscurity from his first forays into the world of crime in the early 1850s and spent many years at San Quentin, starting from his first conviction for a Los Angeles County robbery in 1857, Vásquez became famous in the early 1870s. His scheme to ransack the San Benito County town of Tres Piños was audacious, but the unintended killing of three men during the commission of the pillaging propelled the bandit chieftain into notoriety, legend and folklore.

Even as the state placed a bounty on his head and organized the first state-organized police action since the hunt for Murrieta twenty years before, Vásquez continued to raid towns, holdup stagecoaches and commit other criminal acts, culminating in the May 1874 robbery of San Gabriel Valley sheep rancher Alessandro Repetto and other hold-ups. Although Vásquez and his compatriots engaged in a audacious escape through the rugged San Gabriel Mountains above present-day Pasadena and were able to find a safe haven at a ranch in today's Hollywood, he was captured by a posse organized and dispatched by Los Angeles County Sheriff William R. Rowland.

Upon removal to jail in Los Angeles, where he convalesced from gunshot wounds, Vásquez had photographs taken for sale to pay for his defense, granted interviews with local newspapers, and even was the subject of a hurriedly-written and staged play at the Merced Theater. The notoriety continued after his transfer to San Francisco and then San José, where his trial took place and where, ironically, his grandfather had been one of the first settlers back in the 1770s. After conviction for first-degree murder in the Tres Pinos killings, Vásquez expiated his sins by hanging in the courtyard of the county jail in March 1875. With his death came the substantive end of the widespread banditry in Los Angeles County.

The legend lived on, however, fueled largely by sensationalist biographies issued by the newspaper reporters who tracked his whereabouts in the months and years before his capture at Los Angeles. For 125 years after his death, these fantastical tracts formed the basis for all of the work written about Vásquez, although Chicano activism in the 1960s and 1970s greatly enhanced the myth that the bandit was also a revolutionary, in the mold of British sociologist Eric Hobsbawm's controversial theories about "social banditry" *a la* Robin Hood.

Fortunately, Boessenecker through remarkably assiduous and detailed research over four decades, has used newspaper accounts, letters, diaries, public records and other untapped and underutilized sources to debunk all of the most powerful myths about Vásquez the revolutionary, as well as to impressively identify the bandit's genealogy. Yet, the author is also careful to acknowledge and recognize that, whether or not Vásquez was deserving of the appellations of revolutionary or social bandit, it is essential to understand that he was viewed by many *Californios* and Mexicans as a hero, if for no other reason than his audaciousness and charisma. These and his career appealed to many of the people who saw their homeland wrested from them by Americans and Europeans during and after the Gold Rush

and Vásquez came to symbolize some form of resistance, even if that view became grossly exaggerated and enhanced over the decades, including playwright Luis Valdez' farcical, but sympathetic, 1990s play, *Bandido*.

The level of depth and detail that Boessenecker has achieved, compared to the accounts written previously, is stunning, and this may be one of those rare volumes of California history that can truly be called definitive. The style is brisk and Boessenecker imbues the scenes of crimes and the lengthy pursuits of the bandit with enough verve to make the book readable and entertaining. There might be some quibbling about whether the author truly addresses enough of the "times" as well as the "life" of Vásquez and there might be an over-reliance on occasion with the veracity of news accounts. These, however, pale in comparison with the achievement of the author in taking a largely legendary and mythical figure and rendering him into a more fully fleshed-out human being.

Indeed, Vásquez' downfall was, as Boessenecker persuasively argues, more to do with his personal failings in wronging his compatriots by bedding their wives and lovers, as well as the grossest transgressions of moral turpitude in impregnating his own niece, than anything done by lawmen in pursuit. In the end, *Bandido* succeeds because it casts Vásquez as charismatic, provocative, and daring as well as vain, egotistical, immoral and, of course, a criminal who bore responsibility for three lives and a fairly significant amount of property absconded with over two decades.

It is telling that, largely jovial and stoic as he faced death, Vásquez showed flashes of fear and desperation when convicted at trial, collapsing into tears with his last visits with family, and a brief wild glance before the death hood was placed over him before the trapdoors were dropped. Even then, he managed to collect himself and die "game" as he hoarsely yelled "Pronto!" when the signal came.

—Paul Spitzer

MURDER OF A LANDSCAPE: *The California Farmer-Smelter War, 1897-1916*, by Khaled J. Bloom. Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, imprint of University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. 233 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, \$34.95. Order from University of Oklahoma Press, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069; (800) 627-7377; www.ahclark.com.

In the film industry's era of major studios, most of the movies had "Hollywood endings" in which the good guys won and everyone lived happily ever after. History, however, is not so generous, and Khaled J. Bloom's study of the farmer-smelter dispute that lasted for two decades highlights the reality that sometimes it's the bad guys who win, and few people live happily ever after. *Murder of a Landscape* examines the efforts of farmers and ranchers in Shasta County, California, to get the major copper mining companies to stop or at least curtail the emissions of smoke from their smelters. Especially noxious was sulfur dioxide that destroyed vegetation and impaired the health of both humans and livestock.

Bloom begins with farmer protests against the Mountain Copper Company of Great Britain that was, as its name suggests, a foreign company operating in Shasta County near the town of Keswick. Other companies included the Balaklala Copper Company and the Mammoth Copper Company. In a series of frustrating and unsuccessful attempts to stop the smoke pollution that was devastating their crops, farmers wrote letters to government officials, sued the companies, organized the Shasta County Farmers Protective Association, and tried whatever legal means seemed useful in ending the smoke emissions. They were stymied by a combination of factors: the companies employed lawyers who knew how to evade injunctions; the federal government conducted studies that lasted for years while crops died in the fields; judges took the side of the companies, arguing that they provided employment for

thousands of workers and promoted commercial development. Prominent congressmen in Keswick, Coram, Kennet, Anderson, and other Shasta County towns supported the companies.

The farmers always faced an uphill battle. Newspapers in the region generally backed the companies and editorially depicted farmers as inept agriculturalists who sought to blackmail the copper companies. The companies paid so-called experts to testify that withering crops and ailing livestock were victims of arid heat, humid cold, frost, poor farming practices—anything but sulfur dioxide. Judges threw out farmer complaints as anecdotal and dismissed government reports as inconclusive. Throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the copper companies manipulated the farmers, shutting down smelters when prices were down, starting them up when prices increased, and claiming that their mitigation efforts were efficient when they clearly were not. By the end of World War I the copper deposits were played out, leaving the county's businessmen who had supported the companies with a stagnant economy and some thousand square miles of land made barren by sulfur dioxide.

In an important final chapter, Bloom describes the rather tardy efforts of the federal government to reclaim the land ruined by the toxic chemicals. Millions of dollars were spent in the post-World War II period in building check dams, planting pine tree seedlings and other vegetation, and stopping erosion. Bloom observes "that much if not most of the federal government's reclamation expenditure here was misconceived and wasted" (p. 209). The episode provides a stark example of unrestricted and unregulated capitalism run amok, businessmen focusing on short-term prosperity and blind to long-term consequences, and government officials failing to protect innocent people in their belief that rightness should prevail.

—Abraham Hoffman