LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

WINTER 2011 LOS ANGELES CORRAL NUMBER 265

Incorrect Dating for The Branding Iron

With great regret, the editor offers apologies to the recipients of The Branding Iron for the incorrect dating of two recent issues of the publication.

The issue labeled as "Winter 2011" and "Number 265" and which has A. C. W. Bethel's "Between Ship and Shore: California's Beaches as Frontiers" as the lead article should instead have been assigned as Fall 2011 and Number 264.

The subsequent issue, labeled as "Winter 2012" and "Number 265" is correctly identified by the latter, but should be headed as Winter 2011.

The Monthly Roundup February 2012, Jerry Selmer

The editor's summary of Jerry's talk, which appeared in the Winter 2011 [mislabeled as 2012] issue was a significant mischaracterization, for which he apologizes. Here is a recap penned by Jerry to remedy that problem.

Observing the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, former Sheriff Jerry Selmer brought us a description of one facet of that war in the West. It cannot be overemphasized how important was the struggle between the blue and the gray in the New Mexico Territory.

It was the grand design of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, to conquer the Southwest, including all of California, Nevada and Colorado. His purpose was to obtain the mineral treasure in those areas and thus finance the war against the United States. The South suffered from a weak economy. To Davis, the riches of the West were vital to his strategy for victory. When the war began, most of the U. S. Army troops were stationed in the West. They were removed to eastern and southern battlefields and the void they left largely filled with Union volunteers. Those troops in New Mexico were placed under the command of Colonel Edward Canby, one of a small number of officers in the area who remained loyal to the United States. One officer who went south was Major Henry Sibley who received a commission as a Confederate Brigadier General and was placed in command of troops ordered to capture New Mexico and points west. He gathered his troops in Texas and in February of 1862, invaded the neighboring territory. The Confederates initially claimed all land south of the 49th parallel as part of the CSA. Sibley marched to the attack. He had a difficult time moving his forces and was unable to keep the supply train up to speed with the combat troops. The Confederates slowly moved north and in a pitched battle forced the withdrawal of Union troops at the engagement at Valverde. They then moved on to capture Santa Fe. On the way they were confronted by Union regulars and volunteers at Glorieta Pass. Furious combat ensued. The battle was initially inconclusive but when the Union troops succeeded in destroying the late-arriving Confederate supply train, the army in gray suffered defeat and were forced to retreat to Texas. The Confederates were never again able to mount an invasion of the West and their dreams of capturing the mineral wealth of Colorado, Nevada and California evaporated. Without that treasure, a major factor supporting the Southern cause, the Confederate States of America was ultimately doomed. Following his defeat, General Sibley returned to the South in disgrace and was never again permitted to command troops in combat. After the war, Sibley was involved in a farcical episode in Egypt. He returned home, died an alcoholic and was buried in a pauper's grave in Virginia. In his postwar role, Colonel (later Major General) Canby, was placed in command of troops during the Modoc War in California. While on a peace mission, he was killed by the Modoc Chief, Captain Jack.

During the coming three years, it is hoped that more about the Civil War in the West will be brought to the Corral.

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Hank Vaughn (1849-1893) was as colorful a character as any in the American West during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. This is a studio portrait of a nattily-attired Vaughn from about the 1880s. Courtesy of Umatilla County Historical Society.

Hank Vaughn: Oregon's Homegrown Outlaw

by Tim Heflin

Henry Clay Vaughn, known as Hank, was born in the Willamette Valley of Oregon Territory on April 27, 1849. He was one of the first babies born in the newly formed territory and was the first of seven children born to Alexander and Elizabeth Vaughn.

His grandfather, William Tyler Vaughn, had traveled as a cattle drover for Sol Tetherow from Missouri to Oregon in 1845. Their group went with Stephen Meek on his ill-fated trek south of the Blue Mountains and into the Malhuer region in eastern Oregon west of today's Boise, Idaho. There they became lost for three weeks, twenty of the party perished and the legend of the Blue Bucket Mine began. There are a few versions of this tale that members of the Meek party, searching for water in the dry mountainous region, came across pebbles that may or may not have been gold. Later, the legend sparked a gold rush in nearby Baker City.

(Continued on page 3)

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Publication Layout by Katherine Tolford

Editor's Corner

The first few months of 2012 brought the return of Eric Nelson as Sheriff of the Corral, this being a first in the august history of our group. We welcomed Joseph Cavallo as Deputy Sheriff and Joe arranged for a trio of excellent speakers for the first quarter of the year. Our new Registrar of Marks and Brands, James Macklin, has proved to be adept at adapting to the demands of this essential position and it was a smooth transition from Joe to James as well. And, let us not forget the essentials of finance, as Keeper of the Chips Ted Dalton has agreed to keep a steady hand on the Corral's treasury for another year. With this fine leadership team, the year got off to an excellent start and portends well for its remainder.

This issue has a very interesting examination into the life (or, perhaps, lives) of Hank Vaughn, whose several careers in Oregon and other parts of the American West have been related to us by our own cowboy from the nether reaches of Kern County, California, Tim Heflin. Tim's article brings into vivid focus the story of a complex man, who could be charming and cruel, a boon companion and a formidable enemy, and who had business acumen, criminal cunning, courage and recklessness in seemingly equal measure.

Tim also provided an apt poetical rendering of the life of Vaughn that is a nice complement to the essay and another of our Corral "po-8s," Loren Wendt continues to send in fine examples of cowboy poetry, selections of which are here, as well.

Finally, thanks are extended to Abraham Hoffman, former editor of this publication, who has again agreed to give essential assistance to providing book reviews, a few of which are given here. As always, *The Branding Iron* is only as good as the contributions made by Corral members and those whom they recommend. So, please keep the material coming!

—Paul Spitzzeri

In any case and despite the hardships, William Vaughn, or Captain Billy as he was commonly known, fell in love with the Willamette Valley. He wintered there and returned to Missouri in 1846 with just a couple of horses and tack. When he got back he made plans for his wife and nine children to make the trip to Oregon. In 1847, Captain Billy and spouse Phoebe moved their brood over the Oregon Trail to near present-day Coburg, Oregon, in today's Lane County, about eight miles north of Eugene. It was there that eldest son, Aleck, met and married Elizabeth Fields, whose family was also a recent arrival in the area.

As a boy, Hank Vaughn didn't like farming, but he did enjoy being around and tending the livestock, especially the horses. In 1861, when he was twelve and two years after Oregon achieved statehood, the family moved to The Dalles, a town along the Columbia River, over eighty miles east of Portland. It was left up to Hank to sell them extra horses along with milk cows. Dealing in livestock would be his main vocation for all of his life. In 1863, Hank went to stay at Canyon City, in eastern Oregon, with a couple of his uncles herding cattle. The Vaughn family maintained a herd there to supply miners with beef and there, at a young age, Hank started trading and selling horses.

At fifteen, Hank got into a dispute with a miner over partial payment on a horse. When the miner opined that it was a stolen horse anyway, Hank drew a pistol and fired. His shot glanced off the miner's forehead, but didn't kill him. Hank was arrested and then released on bail. After getting out, he started drinking and threatened to shoot the miner or the witness who had pressed charges. When the witness showed up, Hank shot at and hit him, though this person survived his wound. Hank was arrested for this crime and sent to The Dalles to await trial. After four months in jail, Hank's two cases came up on the docket. The matter involving the miner was dismissed, but the one in which he was charged for shooting the witness proceeded, When the jury couldn't agree on a decision, Hank's father, Aleck, made a plea to the judge that resulted in Hank's release.

That same day, Hank, Aleck and two of the Vaughn cousins joined the 1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry and the family hoped that this would straighten out young Hank, but this wasn't to be. He disliked being forced into the service and made the fact well known. Within six weeks, he was mustered out of the guard as unfit for service.

After his discharge, Hank returned to The Dalles and stayed around until April 1865 before he joined up with another youth named Dick Bunton. The two made plans to build up a string of horses to take to the Idaho Territory, knowing they could get upwards of $200 per mount from the miners there and Bunton knew the trails well. The profit from one pony alone was more than Hank would make in a year herding cattle with his uncles. Though he was still quite young, he was more than willing to take the risks.

Vaughn and Bunton worked their way up the Columbia River and set up camp outside of Pendleton, some 125 miles east of The Dalles. They camped there about a month and engaged in trading with the local Indians. When Hank and Dick left to cross the Blue Mountains, a little further east, they stole a couple of horses from a nearby ranch. On May 1, the two were camped near the Burnt River, southwest of Baker City, when Umatilla County Sheriff Frank Maddock and Deputy Jackson Hart caught up with them.

Maddock and Hart crept up on the youths in the moonlight and surprised them in their bedrolls. When told to throw up their hands, young Hank and Dick came up firing their six-shooters. Bunton and Hart were killed in the firefight, Maddock had a severe head wound, and Hank was bleeding from a bullet to his thigh and a scalp injury. Because Maddock couldn't move as a result of his injury, Hank briefly escaped, but was captured shortly thereafter. His second time in court wouldn't go so well as his first.

Easily convicted for his crimes, Hank, at age sixteen, was sentenced to life in prison and sent to Portland, where he entered the penal system. The next year, however, he and the inmates were marched south to Salem, where they built the new state

penitentiary. In the old prison, escapes were frequent, so, in the new facility, the "Oregon boot" was devised to thwart these attempts. Formally known as the Gardner Shackle, the device was developed by the state prison warden, J. C. Gardner. The shackle was only placed on one foot, so that the prisoner was denied balance and agility, making attempts to flee extremely difficult, but also causing immense pain and damage to the prisoner's foot and leg. Hank was certainly familiar with this device, as he and all of his fellow inmates wore the "Oregon boot" on a daily basis, though the practice was discontinued in 1878, except for certain disciplinary uses. In prison, Hank got more formal education in reading and writing while also gaining a criminal education from hardened convicts.

Once again, the Vaughn family rallied to his aid and petitioned Governor George Woods for Hank's release, arguing that Hank thought he was being robbed when Sheriff Maddock and Deputy Hart surprised him and Dick Bunton and that his killing of the deputy was defensible. On February 22, 1870, after nearly five years in state prison, Hank received a full pardon from Governor Woods. That was the only time he spent in prison, though he would be jailed again for short periods of time.

Hank Vaughn wasn't yet twenty-one and had already been involved in three shootings and had served four-and-a-half years in prison, not counting jail time while awaiting trials. His family had moved back to the Willamette Valley while he languished in the penitentiary and he stayed there with them after his release, using that time to help his family ready a herd of cattle for market. A railroad depot was established at Elko, Nevada, some 600 miles away in the eastern part of that state, and that was to be the herd's final destination on the long drive. Hank accompanied his father, uncles and cousins and, with all of his past troubles in Oregon, he decided to try his luck in the Elko area.

In 1875, Hank acquired a ranch on the Humboldt River, east of town, and stocked it with cattle. It was ideally situated, being close to the borders of both the Idaho and Utah territories. This careful planning in proximity to markets was a characteristic that all of Hank's future locations of operation would share. It was handy being within a one or two hours ride from a border when handling stock with questionable ownership. He learned that it was best to have a legitimate business and became known in the community with these while covering shady dealings.

Hank also acquired a wife at about the same time, marrying nineteen-year-old Lois J. McCarty. Her siblings were the notorious McCarty brothers: Tom, Bill and George, whose criminal careers in Utah, Colorado and other locations in the West were notorious. Butch Cassidy rode with Tom prior to his days with "The Wild Bunch." In short order, Hank and Lois had two sons, though he was never much of a father to the boys. For that matter, he wasn't much of a husband either, so Lois left him in late 1877, taking the boys with her.

Not long after, Hank returned to Oregon and chose the Pendleton area as his base of operations. After resettling there, he married Louisa Jane Ditty, although, of course, he hadn't bothered divorcing Lois before marrying Louisa. Hank and his new bride set up home in a cabin on Wildhorse Creek not far from the town. As with his first wife, however, he rarely spent time with Louisa, so the new union would run the same course and only lasted until 1871, when, tired of being alone, Louisa left her absent husband.

While living in the Pendleton area, Hank made a legendary ride. He was in a saloon at Pilot Rock, a few miles south of Pendleton, when he was confronted by four local ranchers and stolen stock. Hank, however, got the drop on them and quickly made his escape. A posse followed him out of town and to the top of the Pilot Rock, a prominent basalt rock formation west of town. With his pursuers closing in on him, Hank put his spurs to the bay horse he rode and went right over the edge of the formation, while none of the members of the pose was willing to take the same risk. Hank rode his horse into the same bar he had just left, got a drink, and was gone before the posse returned. He

This ca. 1880s view of Pilot Rock, Oregon shows the scene of one of Hank Vaughn's notable exploits as he evaded capture by a posse through a daring descent of the town's namesake landform, seen in the background. Courtesy of the Umatilla County Historical Society.

was known to have a keen eye for horseflesh and to keep the finest for his own use. It was also agreed by all who knew him that Hank was an exceptional horseman and this was hardly a meaningless compliment back when everyone rode horseback.

While in eastern Oregon, Hank expanded his operations into the territories of Idaho and Washington. His father and other Vaughn relatives were living outside of Boise and he had uncles and cousins in Yakima, Goldendale and Ellensburg in south-central Washington. He also put up corrals and a cabin near Spokane Falls in the eastern part of the latter state. It was easier moving horses and cattle from Washington into Montana Territory than from Oregon. With these arrangements, Hank was able to move livestock all the way from Elko through Idaho and Oregon to Washington, expanding his network. Notably, no evidence ever surfaced linking his father, or any of his Vaughn uncles, to Hank's illegal activities, though the same can't be said for some of his cousins. Hank's legitimate businesses afforded him cover and also gave him the appearance of respectability. This was affected on one trip to Boise in 1879 when he was involved in a gunfight with Pitt Smith. Smith challenged Hank in the street, drew first and missed. Hank's return slug struck Smith in the hip, but the wound wasn't fatal. As his adversary had drawn first, charges against Hank were dismissed, but his reputation as a tough grew.

In December 1881, Hank entered Prineville, Oregon, in the center of the state northeast of Bend, and the town was enjoying unseasonably nice weather, so horse races were held and this is why Hank showed up. The day after arriving, he was making his way through the bars when he ran into Charlie Long, a local cowboy, at Dick Graham's saloon. There, the two had a card game that ended after a hand won by Long. Hank left, but later met up with Long in Til Glaze's Singer Saloon. Hank offered to buy Long a drink, but the other man declined. With this, Vaughn took off his bandanna with his left hand and offered the other end to Charlie in what is called a "Missouri Duel," a holdover of Old South chivalry from the home state of Hank's father.

[Author's note: I used Jon and Donna Skovlin's account of the Prineville gunfight, which is based on a compilation of interviews and accounts. Whether a "Missouri Duel" occurred or not, the gunfight and

subsequent injuries to Long and Vaughn are factual.]

The rest of the bar's patrons quickly departed as Long grabbed the other end of the neckerchief. Hank pulled his revolver first, but let Long take the opening shot, which put a furrow through the center of Hank's scalp. The two took turns exchanging shots while still clasping the kerchief, as per the rules of the "Missouri Duel." Hank whooped, hollered and jumped around while Long was basically a stationary target. At the end of the gunplay, Long had his six-shooter pressed against Hank's head when the cylinder landed on a defective round.

The combatants were bleeding profusely, with Long carrying four slugs: one over the heart, another in the belly and others in an arm and a hand. Hank only received two other wounds besides the almost-fatal crease to his scalp and both of these wounds were close to his heart. The battle over, each man survived his injuries and they would meet again years later. The gunfight was reported in most of the newspapers of the Pacific Northwest, some even erroneously declaring that the "outlaw" Hank Vaughn had met his match and succumbed. Hank would later visit and intimidate the editors who chose to print word of his early demise.

By the winter of 1881-82, Hank had taken up with the widow, Martha Craig Robie. Her father was William Craig, a well-known mountain man and acknowledged as the first white settler of the Idaho Territory, when he settled there in 1840. Martha's mother, Isabel, was a Nez Perce Indian, the daughter of Chief James and her late husband, A. H. Robie, sold his Diamond Ranch to Peter French before he died in 1878 and the money was left to his widow. Martha had her own ranch on the Boise River near the small town of Star, northwest of Boise, which was not far from the home of Hank's parents and the two obtained their own property closer to Hank's old haunts at Pendleton, along Wildhorse Creek.

Because Martha was part-Nez Perce, they claimed land in her name on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, northwest of Pendleton near today's Athena, and the use of Indian land with Hank's horse rustling operations would vex authorities for years. Because Martha entered the relationship with money, that added to Hank's illusion of integrity. In 1888, Martha legally became Mrs. Hank Vaughn and the two traveled extensively and were together the rest of his life.

Most people would describe Hank as a smaller man with a neat appearance who was reasonable, courteous, and fearless, unless he was drinking, in which case he transformed from fearless to outright reckless. He was also known as a practical joker and an excellent storyteller. Then again, he grew up listening to the tales of his grandfather, Captain Billy Vaughn, and his many adventures. Pendleton was said to be littered with wrecked buggies from Hank's alcohol-fueled escapades, which also spurred him to make "tenderfeet" dance as he was easily bored when imbibing.

On August 8, 1886, Hank was drinking in an Athena (then called Centerville) saloon and chose a newcomer from the South for the butt of his next joke. The target's name was Bill Falwell and he took great offense when Hank made him dance with bullets flying. Falwell traded his horse for a .50 caliber pistol and went looking for Hank. The next day he found him inside Dick Donica's store, talking to the proprietor, and burst inside threatening to kill his enemy and firing simultaneously. Hank, who was unarmed, had his right arm broken by the first shot and he ducked being a spool case, which absorbed the rest of the lead from Falwell's revolver. When the gun finally clicked on an empty chamber, Hank came out from behind the case and started pummeling his assailant. That's when the sheriff showed up and broke up the fight. The broken arm was quite a serious injury because it was his shooting arm, but as with his previous wounds, Hank recovered and was still able to handle his pistol with proficiency.

As he aged, Hank gained stability along with public acceptance, which was probably due to his third wife, Martha. Her landholdings were extensive and Hank took his responsibility for their management seriously. The wheat farming operation on the

Here is another late 19th-century photograph, this one of Prineville, Oregon, where Hank Vaughn engaged in a legendary gunfight with Charlie Long in 1881. Courtesy of the Crook County Historical Society.

ranch located on the Umatilla reservation was quite successful became of Hank's oversight and was considered a prime example of dry land farming. Of course, everything wasn't exactly as it seemed; for instance, much of the capital that went into the operation of the ranch was borrowed. As always, though, creditors had a difficult time collecting on their loans.

On May 30, 1893 Hank rode on of his horses into Pendleton and had it shod and this trip included some stops at the town's saloons. When he left for home, he decided to treat the townsfolk to one of his riding exhibitions. He was racing pell-mell down Main Street when his sorrel stumbled and fell along with its rider. The mount got up but its owner just lay there unconscious. They took him to the Transfer House and sent for a doctor. When Hank came to his senses, his chest, a rib and an obscenely-swollen eye were hurting. At first, it seemed like he might once again recover, miraculously, from another grave injury. A few days later, however, his condition turned for the worse. Hank was in a semi-comatose state and slipping, but held on for a couple of weeks. Daily updates on his condition were posted in the newspapers of the Pacific Northwest and, notably, former adversary Charlie Long was one of the many who paid their respects to Hank while he lay dying in his room at the Transfer House. On June 15, 1893, at age 44, the outlaw Hank Vaughn passed away from his head injuries.

In deathbed conversations with Marshall John Bentley, Hank admitted to killing thirteen men in his lifetime, which, incidentally, is the same number of bullet scars his body bore at the time of his death. Only six of those are accounted for from his documented wounds. Hank was able to live wild and untamed because of the bustling era in which he lived. Horses and beef were in huge demand by settlers, miners and, of course, those employed by the railroads. Hank Vaughn was considered the ringleader of a large band of horse thieves operating throughout the entire Pacific Northwest and was believed to be involved with many

crimes, including a noted bank robbery at Roslyn, Washington Territory, involving his former brothers-in-law, the McCartys, in September 1892.

Hank Vaughn was larger than life and one of the more colorful characters of the Wild West, yet, he is largely unknown to history buffs today. The little bits of information found in books or articles published before 1997 seems to be based on erroneous data from William Parsons, who, in 1902, co-authored *An Illustrated History of Umatilla County and of Morrow County*. Parsons must have acquired most of his information from word-of-mouth, not public records, because most of it is inaccurate or incomplete. Parsons was a lawyer who crossed paths with Hank and, according to him, Hank persuaded him to accept a gift that the attorney did not want. Later, they had a dispute over fees in Hank's divorce proceedings involving his first wife, Lois. Parsons claims that Hank treated him with great dignity from that time on. Still, it appears that his insight isn't entirely objective. It does show that just as many people had strong negative feelings towards Hank as those who liked him. Evidently, when Jon Skovlin started, in 1965, combing through newspaper articles, government records and interviewing relatives, he was the first to do so and utilize the information. He, along with his wife, Donna, spent thirty years researching their subject for their definitive biography of Hank. It's amazing that, in the time of today's movie retreads, nobody has discovered this legitimate, one-of-a-kind, true character of the Wild West.

Suggested Reading

Gale Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco, Vol. 5: And the Juniper Trees Bore Fruit*, Seven Locks Press, 2008.

Jon and Donna Skovlin, *Hank Vaughn (1849-1893): A Hell-Raising Horse Trader of the Bunchgrass Territory*, Reflections Publishing Company, 1996.

John and Donna Skovlin, *In Pursuit of the McCartys*, Reflections Publishing Company, 2001.

The Saga of Hank Vaughn (1849-1893)

by Tim Heflin

He was born in eighteen forty-nine
To a pioneer family.
He was one of the first babies born
In the Oregon Territory.

His name was Henry Clay Vaughn,
But everyone knew him as Hank.
He didn't much care for farming
And he always admired a good prank.

He was herding and trading livestock
While he was still only a boy.
He would do it for all of his lifetime
Sometimes legal or maybe a ploy.

Hank was fifteen in Canyon City
When he shot at not one man but two.
He was forced to join the Oregon Guard.
In lieu of jail it was the best he could do.

Hank mustered out after only six weeks,
For service he was declared unfit.
It was off to Boise City trading horses,
With Dick Bunton the trail he did hit.

They raided a rancher along the way
And stole a couple of horses
To avoid the sheriff and his deputy,
They rode on less traveled courses.

When the law finally caught up with them
They could see the camp by moonlight
The sheriff called out, "Throw up your hands."
Loud gunshots then pierced the night.

All four of the men had been shot
Deputy Hart and Dick Bunton were dead.
Hank had two wounds, the worst in his thigh,
Sheriff Maddock was shot in the head.

Hank got a life sentence at only sixteen,
And was fitted with an "Oregon boot."
He helped to build the new Salem pen,
Where he was to live in the institute.

Hank's father petitioned the governor.
After five years Hank got a release.
He knew that he needed to move on,
It was to Elko in the southeast.

The ten following years Hank was busy.
He got married a couple of times.
He made money supplying horses and beef
To the men who worked in the mines.

They say Hank would only steal a good horse,
And he kept the best for his use.
For when you were in shady dealings
A swift horse would trump an excuse.

More shootings occurred as Hank roamed the West,
In Prescott he was shot in the head.
At Boise City he commenced to shoot Pitt Smith,
And Pitt's hip was struck by his lead.

Pendleton was to be his next home base,
Where Hank made a legendary ride.
Thought there were many in the posse that day,
None of them followed or tried.

Four local stockmen braced Hank one day,
About some missing livestock.
Hank got the drop and made his escape,
They followed him up Pilot Rock.

When the posse was closing in,
Hank looked back then put spurs to his bay.
He jumped his cayuse off Pilot Rock,
And without breaking stride got away.

Hank rode his steed back into the bar.
He had time for a couple of drinks more.
With the posse back up at the bluff,
Hank's ride was now Pendleton lore.

Hank was known as a very fine horseman,
And that was when everyone rode.
He urged his mount across narrow planks
To escape in just one episode.

Lots of cowboys rode a horse in a bar
How many would try with a surrey?
Hank knew no caution when driving a team
He would whip them into a fury.

One winter day in eighteen eighty-one
He was in the town of Prineville.
Hank ran into Charlie Long while there
And before long blood would spill.

They were in Til Glaze's Singer Saloon
When they finally had their gunfight.
With left hands each holding a bandanna,
And drew six-shooters with their rights.

They both took turns exchanging shots,
With the two of them doing their best.
Charlie Long had been shot four times.
Hank took two to the chest.

Though bloodied, both gunmen survived,
And their paths would cross again.
They met once more in Ellensburg.
Their attitudes, "What's been has been."

Hank ran horse trading ventures,
All over the Pacific Northwest.
On Indian lands he kept hideouts,
Meadows where herds could rest.

Desperado, gunfighter and horse thief,
Professions all linked with Hank.
He was called a ringleader and planner,
Like the heist of the Roslyn bank.

Hank was said to be a likable cuss
At least when he was not drinking.
When looped, he wanted to liven up things,
And he cared not what others were thinking.

When drinking Hank was easily bored,
He liked to make tenderfeet dance.
In Centerville he was idle one day,
And picked on the wrong man by chance.

That man's name was Bill Falwell,
And he traded his horse for a gun.
Bill went looking for the joker,
Didn't like being the butt of Hank's fun.

He caught him inside Donica's store
His first shot broke Hank's right arm.
Hank then ducked behind a spool case,
And came to no more harm.

After Bill's pistol was empty,
Hank came out and pounded on him.
The sheriff broke up the combatants.
There was Hank with a broken limb.

They say Hank was a quick healer.
A trait he would need a lot.
Especially when you think about
The number of times he was shot.

A wild ride in eighteen ninety-three
Brought Hank's life to a tragic end.
A wreck on the streets of Pendleton,
And this time he wouldn't mend.

He was riding his sorrel down Main Street
At a very high rate of speed.
They slipped and took a bad tumble,
Hank lay at the feet of his steed.

Hank refused to give up life easy.
His health rallied back at first.
But, after a few more days,
His condition turned for the worse.

Hank bravely held on for two more weeks,
And then he was put to rest.
One of the more colorful characters,
He put the wild in the "Wild West."

Some say that he was no good,
A killer and all round bad feller
Others say that he was an overgrown boy,
A fun-loving storyteller.

He admitted to Marshal John Bentley
Killing men numbering thirteen.
But those who knew Hank Vaughn the best
Would never described him as mean.

Hank's body bore thirteen bullet scars,
By the time that his life was done.
He was a hell-raising horse trader,
This Oregon son of a gun.

Hot Stuff!

by Loren Wendt

It was on a trip to Texas
I was hungry as could be.
The sign read "Paco's Tacos"
That seemed just right to me.

Paco was the one who waited on me
Told him I didn't need a menu.
Rellenos, tamales, tacos and beer
A bowl of chips and salsa, too.

Cleaned my plate in record time
And here came the kindly Paco.
"Señor, what you think now
You like my rellenos and my taco?"

I told him it was fine
But I like my sauces really hot.
He didn't seem to like that
"Let's see what I have got."

"O.K., Señor, can you eat one more?
One more taco with my special chile
Chile pepper you will like,"
That sounded really good to me.

One bite and my brain was fried
My stomach gave a mighty groan.
They say my face was fiery red
Couldn't speak — could only moan.

My legs had turned to rubber
I tried heading for my car.
But my body had given up
Couldn't navigate that far.

Well, they carried me inside
Propped me up against the wall.
And Paco steadied me himself
He was afraid I'd fall.

"Well, Señor, was that hot enough
Or would you like another taco?"
"Good Lord, no!" I managed,
"Thanks for asking, Paco."

So, when you're down in Texas
Put "Paco's Tacos" on the list.
It's a darned good restaurant
One I've never, ever missed.

But, be real careful, mi amigo,
Stick with his regular "stuff".
'Cuz, if you ask for HOT sauce
Before long, you'll have ENOUGH!

The "Elders" of El Cajon

By Loren Wendt

Somewhere just out West of the "Old Muddy"
Lies a sleepy little village they call El Cajon.
I went a-searching down there with Vic, my old buddy
Wanted some company, didn't want to go alone.

I had heard about the village and its fabled mystery
The stories of the old men who never seemed to die.
Tales of their meetings, their awful murmurings and their history
Of how they meet each day and no one has ever found out why.

Vic and I discovered very quickly these old men never talk
At least not to strangers like the sorry two of us.
They would simply look us over, turn away and walk
Looking over their shoulders but never making a fuss.

Perhaps we'll never know what the meetings were all about
A gathering of weird specimens of humanity for sure.
Sunken eyes, brown and peeling skin, ageless without a doubt
But we had to leave before finding out what they *really* were.

A company of stoic, wrinkled old men meeting each and every day
They talked, they laughed, they never ever seemed to disagree.
Well, we finally parted company and we turned and rode away
But no one will ever know the terrible effect on Vic and me.

I still see those sun-dried elders sitting there in the shade
I still have memories of the empty graves in the churchyard.
And those little, weird adobe houses some of them had made
Yes, we left without the answers and that was really hard.

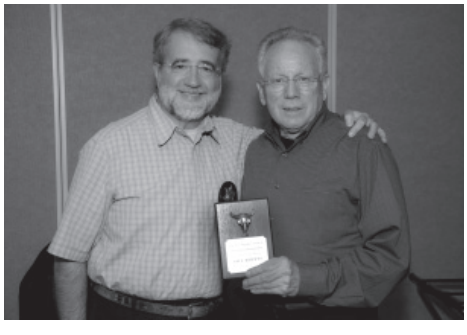
Had they found the oft-sought secret? Would they live forever?
Those eyes that bored into our souls, would they never close?
We didn't find the answers then and I'm sure that we will never.
Some could say we wasted time in El Cajon, I suppose

But, let me tell you, Mister, if you had made that awful ride
Just like Vic and I you would never try to question or to pry.
You see, one of those wrinkled elders took Vic and I aside
He whispered, "there's a difference . . .
SOME DAY YOU WILL HAVE TO DIE!!!!!!

THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

January 2012: Paul Rippens

Rippens, a former sheriff, sound man, and all-around major supporter of the Corral, came down from his home in Las Vegas to share the tragic story of the Mann Gulch Tragedy of 1949. In his powerful retelling of the events, Paul discussed how thirteen men, many in their teens and early twenties, perished fighting a wildfire in the Helena



National Forest in Montana that eventually scorched about 5,000 acres of mostly rugged and difficult-to-access territory. Hot, dry and windy conditions and lightning strikes caused the early August inferno and a fire guard notified United State Forest Service officials, who sent out a team of "smoke-jumpers" to parachute into the remote area, assess conditions, and engage in actions to prevent the spread of the blaze. As Paul clearly laid out, the effort was hampered by changing conditions on the ground, difficulties in getting a clear assessment of how the fire was working the terrain, and an inadequate means of escaping the fire when matters turned dangerous for the men involved. Unfortunately, when scaling a range to flee the flames, the thirteen men were overcome in their tracks. Three men survived, including the supervisor who hastily create an "escape fire" as a last-ditch effort to save the crew and ordered his men to use it, but to no effect. Only two of the men, who were at the head of the crew, survived by taking refuge in a crevice. Paul provided many historic and contemporary images to vividly evoke the conditions of that horrible day and then played a song composed and performed by Forest Service employees commemorating their fallen comrades. It was an affecting and sobering evening as Corral members recalled the danger and sacrifices made by our Forest Service firefighters.

February 2012: Jerry Selmer

It was not too far before Saint Valentine's Day, but it was the sesquicentennial of our topic for the month concerning the little love lost between the Yanks and the Rebs in an aspect of the Civil War not usually discussed in the literature of that awful war that consumed out nation from 1861 to 1865. Corral member and former sheriff Jerry Selmer, whose first talk after over thirty years as a member on the Southwest Museum stirred him to quickly bring us another presentation, led attendees through the events involving an attempted Confederate campaign in the territories of New Mexico and Arizona from February through April 1862. Selmer skillfully described the efforts of Confederate Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley's plan to penetrate the Southwest and control the newly-found gold fields of Colorado and the Pacific seaboard ports of California and the

efforts of Union forces under the command of Colonel Edward Canby to fend them off. Although the Confederates, who had a loyal territory in southern New Mexico and Arizona below the 34th parallel, won engagements at Valverde and Glorieta Pass, they were unsuccessful in seizing key Union outposts and the destruction of their supply train at the latter encounter led to a pullback. This led to a full retreat to Texas and Union reinforcements from California eventually seized some rebel forts in western Texas, preventing any resumption of attempts by Confederates to attempt any further campaigns in the far Southwest. Selmer used maps and other images to carefully lay out the campaign's elements, but also gave members an interesting insight into the characters and personalities of Sibley, Canby and other military officials. Hopefully, there will be more Civil War-themed talks as the sesquicentennial continues for the next few years.

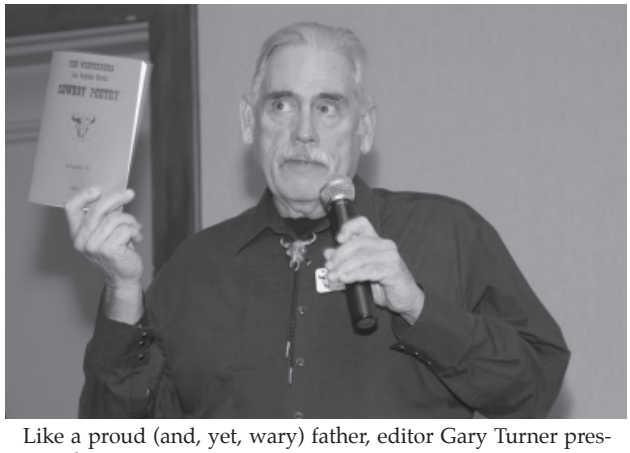
March 2012: Sayre MacNeil

MacNeil, a Santa Barbara attorney and Westerner there, whose cousin Brad is a Los Angeles Corral member, gave a very interesting slide-illustrated talk on an excursion by three young men, who walked from the Bay Area to Los Angeles in 1907. MacNeil's grandfather, also Sayre MacNeil, was a young law school graduate, destined to teach at Harvard Law School and serve as the dean at the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, when he and two friends, Maynard McFie and Stuart O'Melveny, decided to take their eventful trip down the coast. Illustrated by photographs from the MacNeil family collection, as well as journal entries, newspaper articles and other material, the talk discussed the many sights seen, hotels (some barely qualifying as such) and farm houses stayed at, and drinks quaffed by the tramping trio. While MacNeil, a grandson of noted banker and rancher Jonathan Sayre Slauson, went on to a distinguished legal career, his fellows were hardly less prominent. McFie was an executive with Security-First National Bank and president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, while O'Melveny, whose grandfather and father were well-known members of the region's legal fraternity, went on to be president of the important firm, Title Insurance and Trust Company, founded by Henry O'Melveny, Stuart's father, who also founded the O'Melveny and Myers law firm still prominent in Los Angeles today.

Passings: Larry Arnold

Lawrence Walter Arnold, a longtime Associate member of the Los Angeles Corral, passed away on 16 January 2012 after a short illness due to an highly aggressive form of cancer. Born in Inglewood on 27 April 1924, Larry had a career spanning over four decades with Los Angeles Department of Water Power, with his last position there being Senior Electrical Supervisor. One of his true passions, however, was history and Larry immersed himself in that of early California, streetcars, trains, firefighting, and the utility industry. He was also quite well known for his photography. He had much involvement in the United Methodist Church which he attended in San Gabriel, where he lived for many years, as well as with the American Legion and other organizations. Larry is survived by his wife, Ruth, to whom he was married over sixty years and his sons Christopher and Richard and their families. Corral members will recall Larry as a member of the "Duke Table," in the middle of the row of tables at the far left of the room in which most monthly Roundups occur at Almansor Court. It was in this room at the February meeting that his son Richard revived an old Corral tradition of having glasses of wine poured for each attendee there and a toast made, after a few words from his son, in the memory of Larry. This is a tradition that, Richard Arnold noted, should be reinstated. Larry, who was buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, will be missed.

At the January Roundup, Michael Patris, John Gawley and James Bugher share a laugh from the old joke about the beach bum and the Woody. You'll have to ask Michael to tell you that one in polite company.



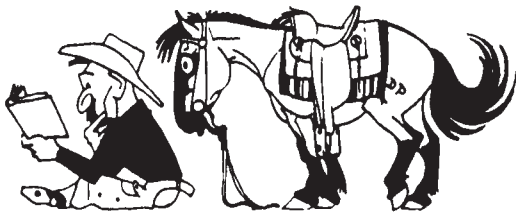
Like a proud (and, yet, wary) father, editor Gary Turner presents the Corral's Keepsake 36 of cowboy poetry to a rapt audience at January's Roundup.

At the February meeting, Sheriff Eric Nelson gently informs Gary Turner that it's not "Kountry Music Karaoke Night" at Almansor Court—that's two meeting rooms down on the first Wednesday of the month.

Rick Arnold brought back a former Corral tradition and leads a toast to the memory of his late father and longtime member, Lawrence Arnold, at the February Roundup.

It's the March Roundup, so, naturally, Dee Dee Ruhlow shows a wee bit of her best chorus girl impression and her St. Patrick's-themed shoes and duds to her fellow Corral members. How's she cutting?

Ruth Malora, Jan Chik and Willis Osborne marvel at speaker Sayre Macneil's explanation of artifacts related to the March Roundup topic of a walk Macneil's grandfather and two chums took from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1907.



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

A LAND SO STRANGE: *The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca*, by Andres Resendez. New York: Basic Books, 2007. 314 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Further Reading, Index. Cloth, $26.95. Order from Basic Books, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016; www.basicbooks.com.

In the annals of North American exploration, none come close to matching the duration, hardships, and peril endured by Alvaro Nunez Cabeza de Vaca. From 1528 to 1536 he and three companions—Andres Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Dorantes's African slave, Estebanico—traveled from what is now Florida, through Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and northern Mexico before reaching Spanish settlements. This quartet of involuntary explorers were the known survivors of the expedition led by Panfilo de Narvaez, composed of 600 people who sailed from Cuba heading for the seaport of Panuco on the northeast coast of Mexico. An incompetent pilot took them far off course so that instead of making landfall on the western side of the Gulf of Mexico, they landed in the vicinity of Tampa Bay, Florida.

Cabeza de Vaca, the royal treasurer of the expedition, wrote a narrative of his epic effort to return to Spanish-controlled territory; a modern English translation is *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, translated and edited by Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz (2003), with a lengthy introduction providing historical context. This edition is taken from their three-volume study of Cabeza de Vaca published in 1999. Andres Resendez's retelling of Cabeza de Vaca's travels and travails, while well-researched and documented (53 pages of endnotes), covers broader ground in dealing with early Spanish explorations and conquest and the events leading to the disastrous Narvaez expedition. His book is intended for the general reader and as such is an excellent introduction to the Cabeza de Vaca story, compellingly written to the degree that readers may find it difficult to put the book down at the end of an evening's reading.

Panfilo de Narvaez was a major rival of Hernando Cortez, and in the competition for the conquest of Aztec-controlled Mexico, Narvaez lost out, even suffering imprisonment for a time. He subsequently returned to royal favor and was authorized to become governor of a huge expanse of unexplored land that stretched across North America from Florida to Baja California, roughly north of Panuco to what today would be the southern borders of Arizona, New Mexico, and points east. When Narvaez realized he was at the wrong end of the Gulf of Mexico he made a fateful decision—send three ships westward while he took some 300 soldiers by way of land. No one had any idea of the difficulties or the great distance. The men had to wade across numerous delta swamplands, their armor rusting and their clothes rotting, fighting Indians or negotiating with them for food. They made it as far as the Bay of Horses where Narvaez decided to build rafts to take them further west by sea.

Cabeza de Vaca disputed this decision but went along with it. Inevitably the rafts separated. Cabeza de Vaca's group dwindled in numbers as the men died of wounds, starvation, and illness. Eventually he met up with Dorantes, Castillo, and Esebanico. The four men lived at the sufferance of the Indians who fed and sheltered them but treated them as virtual slaves. Over time they escaped, took on the role of merchants, and eventually gained a reputation among the Indian tribes as healers. Incredibly, when they reached the Rio San Lorenzo south of the Rio Grande, they turned northwestward and traveled as far north as modern west Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona before heading south along the Pacific Coast

to Culiacan, where they finally encountered Spanish soldiers. Their epic journey had taken a total of eight years.

Cabeza de Vaca had learned many lessons during his ordeal. He realized the Indians were not savages, and he deplored the arrogance of conquistadors who captured and sold Indians into slavery. Resendez ends the book with a rather abbreviated epilogue mentioning the subsequent activities of the four survivors. Readers who wish to know more about Cabeza de Vaca and his companions will find the Adorno-Pautz volumes a valuable complement that in some areas goes beyond Resendez's book.

—Abraham Hoffman

REBELS AND RULERS: *A People's History of California*, 1769-1901 by Lawrence Shoup. Bloomington: iUniverse, 2010. Xxii + 543 pp. Illustrations, Maps, Bibliography, Index. Softcover, $32.95. www.iuniverse.com.

Shoup's title evokes that of the late Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and this, as well as his statements in the brief preface, clearly set the tone for the book, as one that has a Marxist approach to the subject: ruling vs. working class struggles in California from the Spanish occupation to the beginnings of the 20th-century. While some readers might come to this book suspicious of the author's overt political affinities, *Rulers and Rebels* does not make any fundamental arguments that, to this reviewer, are guilty of excessive interpretive overreach. In fact, the larger problems with the book might be more editorial than ideological.

For example, the first part of the work might have been a "setting the stage" for the later sections, in that a cursory review of the 1769-1860 era with the mission and rancho labor systems serves, perhaps, as a precursor to the worker/employer relations of capitalist California after the Gold Rush. This, though, amounts to a recitation of incidents, rather than an interpretation and it might have been just as well to limit the range of the book to 1860 to 1901 with a few paragraphs in a preface or introduction to outline earlier connections to the era.

Shoup's coverage of the last several decades of the nineteenth century is much stronger, being far more substantive and probing. Here, he gets into greater detail about emerging industries and agriculture; changing demographics; the anti-monopoly and anti-Chinese political movements; and major worker strikes in 1877, 1894 and 1901. The book works best in the examination of workers' battles with employers. The author's political views, however, will certainly strike (pardon the pun) some readers as lacking an evenhanded approach. Still, it is hard to argue with Shoup's statements that improvements in working conditions helped expand the middle class and lead to a more balanced social structure and that labor victories form an essential component of state and national history.

If anything, then, the book's shortcomings are more about editorial choices or the lack of them. *Rulers and Rebels* runs over 500 pages and could be a much tighter and stronger work if the author had chosen to limit his subject to the emerging capitalist economy and the struggles within in from the 1860 period afterward. Shoup also relied excessively on over-long citations from newspapers and other sources, especially in a chapter that could have been completely excised, which describes that conditions of the rich in San Francisco during the late 19th-century, but which really plague the readability of the narrative throughout the last three-quarters of the book. It reached a point where this reviewer simply bypassed the extensive quotes, which is a shame, because many of them undoubtedly had short segments that could have been illustrative

Still, for anyone interested in the relations of labor and power brokers in the emerging capitalist economy of California and the United States in the late 19th century, *Rulers and Rebels* may be worth a look if one can deal with Shoup's ideological proclivities and the editorial issues that compromise much of this interesting and often compelling book.

—Paul R. Spitzzeri

TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS: *Hollywood and the Human Sciences in 1920s America*, by Mark

Lynn Anderson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. 223 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Paper, $24.95. Order from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720; www.ucpress.edu.

For the past hundred years the Hollywood movie star system (including TV stars) has continued to fascinate moviegoers, critics, and, more recently, scholars. Mark Lynn Anderson, an associate English professor at the University of Pittsburgh, takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining the early evolution of the star system and its influence on American society. Focusing on the 1920s, he explores the scandals of the era, exemplified by the murder of film director William Desmond Taylor and the involvement of actress Mabel Normand; the death of actor Wallace Reid from drug addiction; the trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb for the murder of Bobby Franks (the source of Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rope* and Meyer Levin's novel *Compulsion*, made into a motion picture); and the ambivalent sexuality of Rudolph Valentino.

This book operates on several levels. There is the need for studios to protect their investments, so a morals clause was inserted into contracts that could effectively end the career of wayward actors and actresses. There were the fans that idolized the stars and doted on their highly fictionalized biographies in such movie fan magazines as *Photoplay*. However, the power of profit complicated matters. Women found Valentino fulfilling fantasies that alarmed many men. Valentino (the subject of two chapters in the book) was the prototype of the Latin lover—dark-skinned, foreign, exotic, playing Arab sheiks that kidnapped women and ravished them. This was the on-screen image. Off-screen, stories and/or rumors of homosexuality, or at best a lack of masculinity, trailed Valentino through two marriages and his death at an early age.

Anderson assesses the films of Valentino and how their themes and his character played to audience fantasies (and fears). The studios provided a vicarious fulfillment in creating so much fictional biographical information that scholars today have a difficult time in dealing with the versions of how Wallace Reid became addicted, or whether Mabel Normand really had the intellectual interests she claimed for herself. At first the inclusion of the Leopold and Loeb trial seems unusual, but Anderson makes the connection to Hollywood in noting the similarities of the masses in following the coverage of the trial and the private lives of film stars.

The chapters stand pretty much as individual essays rather than a continuous narrative, and Anderson does not spare the reader in his use of language (have a dictionary ready for isomorphically, p. 11; synecdochically, pp. 19, 156; subtend, p. 20 and elsewhere; heteronormativity, p. 69; alterity, p. 88, etc.). Jargon aside, this is an erudite book that presents a keen analysis of the star system in its formative years. Given the current antics of Charlie Sheen and Lindsay Lohan, it would have been interesting to read Anderson's comparison of then and now, but the book has no official conclusion. I think Anderson stumbled slightly in overlooking the paternity suit against William S. Hart in the early 1920s, an example of how an innocent person could have his career damaged by false accusations. But then again, Anderson does show some sympathy for the ill-fated Fatty Arbuckle.

—Abraham Hoffman

ARCTIC LABYRINTH: *The Quest for the Northwest Passage*, by Glyn Williams. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 440 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Sources and Further Reading, Index. Cloth, $34.95. Order from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94704; www.ucpress.edu.

For four centuries explorers attempted to find a feasible route through the Arctic north above the North American continent—the fabled Northwest Passage—as a way of crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. Lured by the potential profits of trade with the Far East, explorers hoped to discover a passage that would take them

through the sea of ice that confronted them. After an initial false start in which Martin Frobisher claimed to have discovered gold deposits in the Nova Scotia region, England sent a series of explorers to find a passage north of North America, as did several other nations. Given the difficulties of the challenge, supporters of the passage idea were overly optimistic. At first private companies sponsored expeditions, but eventually the Royal Navy led the challenge.

Glyn Williams, author of *Voyages of Delusion,* in which he examined 17th-century exploration of the Hudson Bay region, traces the almost invariably futile efforts of these expeditions to find a (or the) Northwest Passage. Although other nations such as France and Denmark played minor roles, pursuit of the Passage was a peculiarly English obsession. Williams recounts each expedition's successes and failures. Success was measured by the careful mapping of the straits, rivers, bays, inlets, sounds, islands, and peninsulas of the Arctic region. Although cartography work was invaluable, it didn't produce a feasible route. One expedition after another returned with reports that came down to a lack of success, yet concluded that with more effort, the route could be found.

English explorers had to contend with scurvy, the danger of their ships becoming frozen in the ice, unhappy sailors, incompetent officers, and a serious underestimation of the uncertainties of the Arctic North. A channel clear of ice one year was likely to be frozen over the next year. Trial and error demonstrated the need to provide for the food, clothing, shelter, and morale of expeditions for prolonged periods of time. Naval officers preferred "hard" ships—large vessels to ram through the ice and withstand pressures that could crush them. Another view was to go overland, down the Coppermine, Mackenzie, and Great Fish Rivers, to explore and map the coastline. Arrogant officials ignored the lessons that could be learned from the Inuit who knew how to survive in the Arctic.

By the 19th century Great Britain's merchants and naval experts had to admit that the brief summer season and the unpredictable ice pack made a Northwest Passage impractical for commercial purposes. The obsession with finding such a route, however, continued. In 1845 Sir John Franklin led an expedition to find the passage. When his two ships failed to return, Parliament authorized a series of rescue expeditions to locate survivors—or evidence that all 129 men were dead. Williams covers in detail the efforts to find Franklin's ships and men, examining the scant evidence and making some conclusions that are as good as the evidence will allow.

Williams notes the eventual success of vessels crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific as early as 1851. By the 20th century, cartography and technology combined to minimize the risk to ships, and in the latter part of the century more than a hundred ships have made the voyage. It should be noted that Williams focuses on the Northwest Passage; the race to be first to the North Pole isn't covered in this book. In an epilogue to the story, Williams discusses the effects of global warming in the Arctic. Whether climate change is due to human factors or natural cycles is beside the point. The fact is that Arctic ice is melting, a reality that has important political implications. The United States considers the Arctic region in international terms; Canada disagrees and has laid claim to the numerous islands and waterways as Canadian territory.

Anyone looking at a map of the Arctic—and Williams's book has eight of them—will note the geographic names—Baffin Bay, Davis Strait, McClintock Channel, Barrow Strait, Melville Island, etc. These are more than just place names. They are the men who risked lives and fortunes to find what in the end proved to be an elusive and questionable goal—the Northwest Passage. The wonder of it is in their optimism, stubbornness, and sacrifice. The place names have greater meaning than geography. They record acceptance of a challenge in which the odds against success became known only after the effort to reach the goal had begun.

—Abraham Hoffman

FORGING A FUR EMPIRE: *Expeditions in the Snake River Country, 1809-1824*, by John Phillip Reid. Norman: Arthur C. Clark Company, 2012. 229p. Map, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $29.95.

The fur trade of the Pacific Northwest is an excellent case study in the complex social dynamics that developed among converging populations in 19th century North America. John Phillip Reid identifies multiple levels of cultural differences that occurred between Anglos and Native Americans, the British and Anglo-Americans, as well as rivalries between Native American tribes such as the Shoshone and Blackfeet. Equally important, Reid looks at the tumultuous institutional rivalry between the British owned Hudson's Bay Company and the US-owned North West Company before their merger at the behest of the British government in 1821.

Hunting beaver for their pelts was big business in the Snake River region during the 19th century. As the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company worked to establish dominance in the region, they were faced with emerging legal matters relating to property rights, labor issues, and international law. Reid suggests, "In the History of the North American West, there is perhaps no other topic that can reveal more about institutional or legal behavior in the wilderness" (p. 10). As such, there are multiple examples of legal history throughout the book.

Hired by the Hudson's Bay Company to lead fur hunting expeditions, Alexander Ross became the first chronicler of Snake River expeditions. Reid relies heavily on the official journals Ross kept for the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as his personal memoirs, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*. Commanding a Snake River expedition was an extraordinarily difficult task. Ross wrote frequently of his struggle to maintain control over his racially diverse expeditionary parties. Discipline was a recurring problem for Ross as he found his men deserting on a regular basis. Reid clearly explains the challenges Ross faced in controlling his men, navigating the wilderness and harsh weather, as well as avoiding conflict with Native American tribes that populated the Snake River Region.

Reid argues that Ross's journals were more valuable than his memoirs because they were "written on the spot under the pressure of daily events" (p. 57). This meant that facts were fresh in Ross's mind when he wrote them down, as opposed to his memoirs which were written years later when he was seventy years old. As Reid points out, the Hudson's Bay Company required expedition leaders to keep journals. Ross was different from most expedition leaders in that he was literate and he took the time to thoroughly document his missions while others were unable or unmotivated to write anything at all.

A few criticisms are worth mentioning. The monograph lacks an introduction which, at the outset, leaves the reader wondering about the objectives, arguments, and structure of the book. In Chapter 9 Reid argues the corporate culture of the Hudson's Bay Company was an impediment to Ross's success in the wilderness. This important point gets lost in the chapter's excessive amount of information about the social hierarchy and corporate culture of the Hudson's Bay Company. Surprisingly, Reid gives very little attention to the devastation of the beaver population as a result of 19th century fur hunting.

Overall, this book is an excellent resource for studying early 19th century fur trapping in the Snake River region. Reid provides a well rounded historical survey of the legal, cultural, economic, and territorial issues that developed from the fur trapping industry.

— Jonathan Saxon