



FALL 2020

LOS ANGELES CORRAL

NUMBER 300

Celebrating 75 Years of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners

Edited by John Dillon



Figure 1: The cover of the first-ever "Brand Book" of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, the January-February issue of 1947. Pictured is Homer Britzman, primary organizer and first Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral. One year later, the issue for March 1948 introduced a new name, "The Branding Iron," and our longhorn masthead logo, which have remained a constant ever since. From collection on Corral Webpage.

Our First 75 Years

Ann Shea, 2020 Sheriff

Branding Iron 300 is more than just another issue of our Corral's signature publication. This particular issue marks the beginning of the 75th anniversary year of the Los Angeles

Corral. It gives the Corral an opportunity to reflect on the past, acknowledge the present, and look forward to future endeavors.

(Continued on Page 3)

The Branding Iron

Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners

Published Quarterly

Winter – Spring – Summer – Fall

2020 TRAIL BOSSES

ANN SHEA	<i>Sheriff</i>
THERESE MELBAR	<i>Deputy Sheriff</i>
MIKE JOHNSON	<i>Registrar of Marks & Brands</i>
JOHN SHEA	<i>Keeper of the Chips</i>
JOHN DILLON	<i>Publications Editor</i>
JIM MACKLIN	<i>Past Sheriff</i>
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For subscription information: Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners, P. O. Box 1891, San Gabriel, CA 91778
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The Branding Iron is always seeking articles of up to around 20 pages dealing with every phase of the history of the Old West and California. Contributions from both members and friends are always welcome.

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See our web site for all the Branding Irons, photos, Corral meetings and so much more!

Editor's Corner . . .

2020, to put things mildly, has been an interesting year. But COVID-19 cannot stop *The Branding Iron*, and this Fall installment is doubly auspicious. It is our 300th issue, which comes on the eve of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerner's 75th anniversary. This special issue features a biography of our oldest member, Ernie Marquez, and reminiscences of good times in the Corral by our members, including all current Living Legends and two former Sheriffs.

Sadly, there are no Roundup summaries due to the Coronavirus-induced drought of meetings. But to slake your thirst for Western

history, see our book reviews of recent titles.

On a personal note, this issue is the sixteenth *Branding Iron* that I have put together, marking four years that I have served as your Publications Editor. Thank you all for your encouragement and for your outstanding literary contributions that make our publication possible. I look forward to producing many more *Branding Irons* to come!

If you would like to contribute an article for consideration, please feel free to contact me at my email address below:

John Dillon
John.Dervin.Dillon@gmail.com

Over the past 75 years the Corral has published 300 issues of the *Branding Iron*, over 50 Keepsakes, numerous other publications, and of course, 24 Brand Books with 3 more in progress. This itself is quite an accomplishment. This current *Branding Iron* celebrates many of our outstanding members, especially our oldest living member as well as our four Living Legends.

At the present time we continue to honor some of our outstanding members by naming newer and younger members as “Fellows of the Los Angeles Corral.” For example, our most recent Fellow is Arkaz Vardanyan, the “Abraham Hoffman Fellow”—both of whom, fellow and sponsor, have contributed writing to this issue. These young members support

the Corral in many different ways at meetings and at other times.

The future of our Corral will include more Roundups, both virtual and actual, with our Fandango in the late spring, COVID-19 permitting. The highlight of our 75th anniversary will come in October 2021 when we host the Annual Gather of Westerners International. We will include events at Mission San Fernando and the Autry Museum of the American West. The event will culminate with a Gala Celebration at the Hacienda Turner (see back page).

We are not resting on our laurels. Our past and present are guiding our future as we look forward to our next milestone anniversary in just 25 years.

Ernie Marquez, *Californio*

Andrew Florez Jr. and Brian Dervin Dillon, 2017 Sheriff

Ernie Marquez is, without doubt, the person most uniquely-qualified to call himself a member of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners International. He is not only, at age 96, our *oldest* member, but is also our *only* member descended from a Spanish colonial soldier who came with the Portolá expedition, served at one of the California missions, was an early *Alcalde* (mayor) of Los Angeles, and became the patriarch of a *Californio* family. Ernie’s forebears invented the *vaquero* way of life in California long before the first cowboy ever bucked a bronc in the United States.¹ Ernie’s earliest California ancestor was Juan Francisco Reyes (1749-1809), who was born near Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Reyes was of mixed Spanish and African descent, and has been classified by some historians as a Mulato. Francisco left Jalisco as a teenager for the West Mexican coastal shipyards of San Blás, Nayarit. He worked on the ships that, eventually, carried *Fray* Junípero Serra and *Capitán* Gaspar de Portolá up the coast towards California. Reyes thought that the unsettled, poorly-known land of California offered greater opportunities than Nayarit, so he joined Portolá’s expedition as a *soldado de cuero* (a “leatherjacket,” or private soldier).

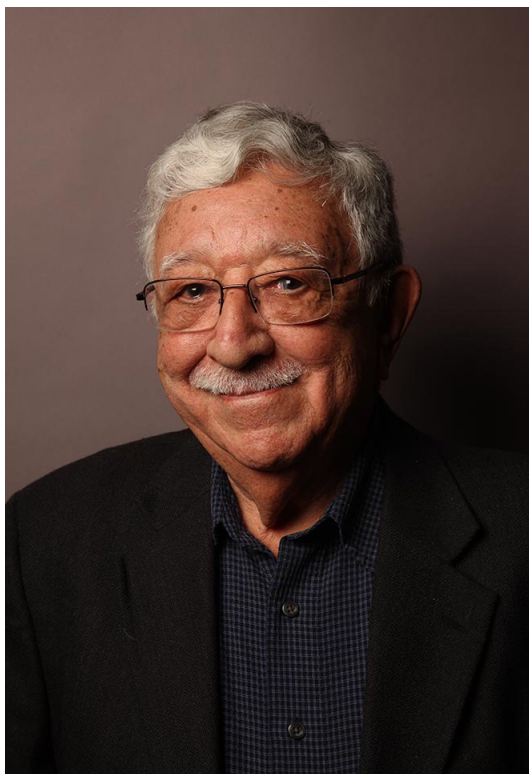


Figure 2: Ernie Marquez, as Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners International in 1993. From Past Sheriffs collection on Corral Webpage.

As a young man of 22, Ernie's great-great-grandfather served in the *escolta*, the small military detachment, at *San Antonio de Padua*, during its initial construction. *Misión San Antonio* was founded on July 14, 1771, and was the third of the eventual 21 California missions to be built. Young Reyes spent fifteen years in the Spanish colonial army in California, and when he took his separation, "in lieu of pay" (of which there was none, since coinage of any kind was scarce to nonexistent in California) he accepted land use rights instead. In 1784 he moved to what later came to be called the San Fernando Valley, then just a very large, poorly watered grassland. There he began raising cattle.

Everybody called his spread the *Rancho de los Encinos* ("Oaks Ranch"). It was not a formal "land grant" in the sense that Reyes actually owned the land he lived on and worked: the absentee owner was the King of Spain. But Francisco's use rights to his land were recognized and uncontested by all, including the Johnny-come-lately founders of the tiny *Pueblo de Los Ángeles* a few miles to the southeast. They arrived in California 12 years after he did. There were only three civil towns in Spanish colonial California, and of the three, one failed. San José was the first to be founded, in 1777, four years before Los Ángeles. The final town, Branciforte, was begun near the Presidio of Monterey and Carmel Mission in 1797, but was abandoned after only a few years.

After nine years of ranching, in 1793 Reyes became the *Alcalde* of Los Ángeles, the undisputed leader of the few dozen families living on the four square leagues (roughly, 27 square miles) of land there, all that the tight-fisted King of Spain would begrudge them. He served for two years, back-to-back. At the end of his second term his possession of the *Encinos Rancho* was contested by the Franciscan *frailes* who, because of the numbers of unconverted Indians still living to the north, especially in the Santa Clara River drainage, thought that Reyes' *Encino* valley was the logical place for their next mission.

Reyes abandoned the land he had been ranching for the preceding 11 years, surrendering it to the ecclesiastics and the neophytes.

Two years later, in 1797, *Misión San Fernando, Rey de España*, was founded at the north end of what had been Reyes' rancho. Reyes married María del Carmen Domínguez, and the couple had 11 children. One of their grandsons was José Ysidro Reyes (1813-1861), who, with his older cousin Francisco Marquez, in 1839 became joint owners of *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica* (Figure 3).

The big Mexican land grant on the southern slope of the Santa Monica Mountains neighboring Reyes' and Marquez's property was the *Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica*, which totaled 30,260 acres. Other local grants were much larger: *Rancho El Conejo*, on the other side of the range, on the eastern margin of what is now Ventura County, was almost 50,000 acres, and the *Rancho Simi*, in and around the hills that still bear its name, was by far the largest: 113,000+ acres. So when the *Boca de Santa Monica* grant of only 6,657 acres was made in 1839, it seemed a little parsimonious, until one realized that it took in the beach along Santa Monica Bay, the essential landing area for the maritime hide and tallow trade. It also incorporated several creeks that bore water most of the year, unlike those gigantic water-poor grants farther inland. Standard histories of what is now Los Angeles County describe better-known Mexican Ranchos like *Los Alamitos* and even some of the lesser-known ones such as *El Escorpión*, but omit those of the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent Malibu Coast like the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica*.²

Ernie Marquez and Ysidro Reyes (1913-2007), the two most knowledgeable surviving descendants of the original Mexican land grant families of the Santa Monica area, were cousins. Ernie was born in Santa Monica and is 96 years old at the time of this writing. Ernie's father and grandfather were also both born in Santa Monica, on the old family *rancho*, but his great-grandfather, Francisco Marquez (1798-1850), was born in Jalisco, West Mexico, and came to Los Angeles in 1820 just as Mexico was severing its ties with Spain after three centuries.³

From 1820 onwards, Francisco Marquez lived in an adobe house on the *Calle Principal*, later renamed Main Street, in the *Pueblo de*

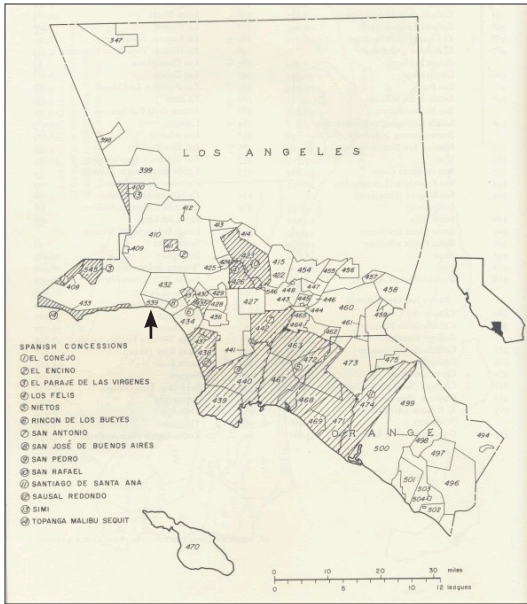


Figure 3: The Boca de Santa Monica Mexican Land Grant of 1839 (No. 539, arrow), at the east end of the Malibu coast, as represented by Beck and Haase, 1974: Map 37. **Figure 4 (Right):** View over the the old Marquez family plot cemetery on their Rancho Boca de Santa Monica, present-day Santa Monica Canyon, circa 1908. All traces of the perishable wooden crosses vanished many decades ago. Photo by George Washington Hazard, Ernest Marquez collection, courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Los Angeles. He later became friends with another young man, his cousin, Ysidro Reyes, a grandson of Francisco Reyes, former *Alcalde* of the Pueblo. Ysidro worked as a harness-maker but also owned a large vineyard and was an early pioneer in the wine and brandy industry that made Los Angeles famous (or infamous, depending upon which side of the temperance line you walked).⁴

Marquez worked as a blacksmith and horseshoer, traveling all over the Los Angeles Basin, as his job required. After mission secularization, beginning in 1833, the two cousins began to explore the possibility of a land grant for themselves, and they chose the flat plain far to the west of the town of Los Angeles, where it met the coastline. Marquez and his younger relative Reyes were jointly awarded the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica* in June of 1839. But long before he was granted formal title by the Mexican government, Marquez had already built a small house within what would later become the town of Santa Monica: this residence was a necessary adjunct to the blacksmith shop he had been

operating there for some years.

The Marquez family lived in what later came to be called Santa Monica Canyon, but their cattle also grazed in Rustic Canyon and as far west as Topanga Canyon. The attraction here was not just the protected valley openings southwards from the Santa Monica Mountains, but the streams at their bottoms offering good water year-round. Indians living a traditional way of life were long gone, having been concentrated at the coastal missions to the west, *San Buenaventura*, (founded in 1782) and even *Santa Barbara*, (founded in 1786) or inland to the northeast (*San Gabriel*, founded in 1771) and north *San Fernando*, (founded in 1797).

What is now Santa Monica was on the western edge of Shoshonean territory, just short of the eastern limits of Chumash land. The easternmost Chumash village was at Malibu, while the westernmost Shoshonean village was in Topanga Canyon. Villages were few and far between while small, seasonally-occupied camps, were ubiquitous. These were in or adjacent to every canyon

carrying water up and down the coast, including Santa Monica, Temescal (named for its Indian sweat houses), and Rustic Canyon. Ernie Marquez told Andy Florez in 2001 that his grandfather said that local Indians worked on their ranch as *vaqueros*. These people might have had connections to pre- and proto-historic Indian sites in the Malibu-Santa Monica area, and drifted back after the secularization of the Missions.⁵

Such Indian *vaqueros* would have learned their trade at the *San Fernando*, *San Gabriel*, or, least likely, *San Buenaventura* missions, and probably arrived on the *Boca de Santa Monica Rancho* with their cattle-herding skills readymade. As was the case in similar situations when California Indians lived with, and worked for, or even married into, *Californio* families, their specific tribal affiliations were either not recorded or not remembered.⁶ If originally from the coastal strip east of Topanga Canyon, these Natives would have been the people that later came to be called *Gabrielinos*, those who were concentrated at Mission San Gabriel as early as 1771. Ysidro Reyes told Andy Florez in 2001 that all of the California Indians working on their *ranch* were good people, and helped guard the livestock against depredations by “bad Indians” from the north, who crossed the mountains just to steal cattle. At one point Reyes-Marquez *vaqueros* ambushed such rustlers and captured one: after some form of unspecified punishment, probably whipping, they let him go, and stock theft stopped.

As late as the end of the 1790s, hold-out Natives in and adjacent to the Santa Monica Mountains were sent to Mission San Fernando. They, like the *Gabrielino* Indians at Mission San Gabriel, were called *Fernandeño*. Within the past three decades, Indian activists, both genuine and fake, have taken exception to these Spanish-derived terms, and have demanded that they now be called *Tongva*. But *Tongva* was the name of only a single village out of many occupied by the same people speaking the same language within what is now Los Angeles County, and it was at the opposite end of tribal territory from the Santa Monica coastline. Any Shoshonean-speaking Native from what

we now call Santa Monica probably would have thought being called a “*Tongva*” 230 years ago was laughable. Nor would they have been called *Topangas* for, despite that being the name of the westernmost large Shoshonean village of the Santa Monica/Malibu coastline, different names, now lost, would have applied to more easterly settlements. Adult Indian *vaqueros* working on the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica* from 1839 onwards most likely were born at the missions, and grew up speaking Spanish. Such Indian cowboys would have been thoroughly acculturated or, as 19th century English-speakers used to say, “detribalized.”⁷

Like all *rancheros*, the primary economic focus of the Marquez and Reyes families at the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica* was on cattle. Their income came from selling hides to Yankee ship captains and traders lying just offshore in the reasonably protected waters of Santa Monica Bay. Cattle were uncounted, and ranged free, but returned to the canyon bottoms to calve. A minimum of 150 head had to be maintained under Mexican law for a *ranchero* to qualify for his grant, and everybody most assuredly had many more than that. Stock was seldom branded, unless the cattle of one ranch mingled with those of another, or until branding became necessary for record-keeping when the hides (identifiable by their brands) were floated off to the ships heading back to Boston, where such “California banknotes” were converted into shoe leather.

The purest cowboys that ever lived were the *Californios* of Spanish colonial, and then later, of Mexican, California.⁸ What modern-day pro-Rodeo bucking horse riders, calf-ropers, and “trick riders” win prizes for at present were daily activities simply taken in stride 180 years ago on the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica*. A common honorific compliment was *que caballero* (“what a horseman!”), the term also being absolutely interchangeable with “gentleman.” Ysidro Reyes IV (the fourth to bear that name, Ernie Marquez’ older cousin) was interviewed by Andy Florez in 2001. Ysidro’s grandfather told him that when the whole family went to the *Pueblo de Los Ángeles*, everybody piled into a *carreta* (a

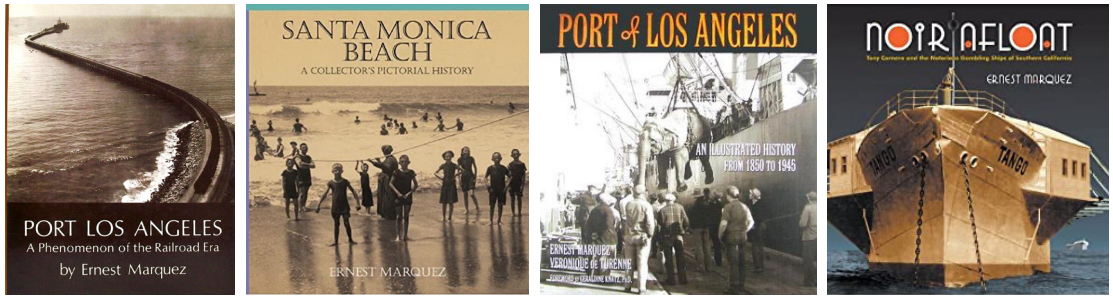


Figure 5: Ernest Marquez's books on local history, published (left to right) in 1975, 2004, 2008 and 2011. Internet images in the public domain.

two-wheeled ox cart) for an all-day trip. If the men and boys went by themselves, however, it was by fast horse, and the journey at a gallop could be made in a couple of hours.

After the Mexican War and the Anglo-American conquest of California, the Reyes and Marquez families petitioned the new government for confirmation of title to their land. Because there were no counter-claims on it either from the years of Mexican authority, nor more recent ones by local *yanquis*, confirmation proceeded at an unusually rapid pace, and was recorded in months, not years. More problematic neighboring properties, such as the *Rancho Malibu Sequit* were tangled up in legal limbo for more than twenty years.

As the two Reyes and Marquez families grew and eventually intermarried, they began a family plot cemetery on their rancho (Figure 4). Not just family members were buried there, but also Indian *vaqueros*, their wives and children, and a baker's dozen unfortunate botulism victims who died from eating badly-canned fruit at a 1909 New Years celebration. Ernie estimates that 30 or possibly 40 people are buried in the cemetery; only a few graves now retain permanent markers. The final burial, of Ernie's grandfather Pascual Marquez, was made in 1916.

As Santa Monica and the Pacific Palisades were developed in the 1920s, the old burial ground became an inholding, completely surrounded by other peoples' properties, with only a narrow footpath for access by the Marquez and Reyes families. Then, after almost a century of cooperation by neighboring landowners, after the new millenium, ac-

cess was denied.

It is sometimes said that Southern California "has no history," an attitude especially common amongst recently-arrived eastern ignoramuses. And in this specific case, a few misguided modern Santa Monica residents seemed not only to be denying the *existence* of history, but doing their best to *eradicate* it as well. So Ernie Marquez, at age 80, went to court to regain the right to visit the graves of his own *antepasados*. The judge, of course, saw things Ernie's way, and the tiny family plot cemetery remains the last remnant of the Marquez family's old *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica*. Despite its small size, it retains an historical significance unique within the City of Santa Monica, and second to none within the greater Los Angeles area.⁹

Ernie's family not only *made* history, but he *writes* it as well. Marquez is the well-respected author of four books on local history (Figure 5), and at present he is hard at work writing a fifth.¹⁰ Ernie Marquez joined the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners in 1972, almost 50 years ago. He was very active and was elected its Sheriff in 1993. In 2018, he was made an Honorary Member of the Corral by popular acclaim (Figure 6). Not only studying the past, but also looking towards the future, six years ago, in 2014, Ernie passed his wonderful collection of historic photographs, many of which have been featured in his books, to the Huntington Library, the foremost research repository of Southern California. Evidence bearing on his own family, on the early Mexican land grant *ranchos* of what is now Los Angeles County, and what became of them, will therefore be

preserved in perpetuity, and be available to future generations of scholars.

Afterword (B.D.D.)

My late co-author, Andrew Florez Jr. (1945-2020), was a third-generation Californian. His grandfather, an Otomí Indian born in Central Mexico, was drafted into Porfirio Díaz' army and sent off to fight the Yaqui of Sonora while still only a teenager. After his Mexican military service, he kept heading north and, in the early years of the 20th century, ended up at the Huntington Estate. In San Marino, California, he helped develop the world-famous Huntington Gardens. Florez turned down an offer of residence on the grounds in favor of a small house in Pasadena instead. During the first years of the new century, Florez used to encounter a very young George S. Patton Jr. on his way to and from work. The future general made no secret of his anti-Latino attitude, hypocritically since his Spanish-speaking grandfather, Don Benito Wilson, had a Mexican wife in Mexican Los Angeles. So the slightly-older combat veteran Florez paid back the intolerant young *gringo* by throwing rocks at him.

Andy Florez was quintessentially Southern Californian. He was a 1960s surfer who drove a British TR-3 sports car. But he was also fascinated by the land of his *antepasados*, so in between surfing safaris he began to explore Mexico. If he and I never met on the beach at Mazatlán in 1967, nevertheless we were both there at the same time. Florez began to read everything he could find on Mexican history, ethnography, and archaeology, and then to take classes in Mexican history and Mesoamerican archaeology, always part-time, in addition to his full-time job as a para-legal.

Andy took every class I offered at both UCLA and UCLA Extension, beginning in 1979. He was still taking them more than 20 years later, sometimes even the same class over again, especially my archaeological field classes, since I located these in different places each time they were offered. One of the proudest days of his life came when, after many years of part-time study, he was

awarded his UCLA Anthropology B.A. Andy Florez was my most unique student and my personal favorite. He always did much more than was asked of him, in reading, research, and volunteering both in the field and the classroom. We were best buddies for almost exactly 40 years.

For my 2001 Public Archaeology Class, each student did independent research on local history or archaeology. As part of the fieldwork element of the class, we surveyed Camp Josepho in Rustic Canyon, familiar to many generations of local Boy Scouts, including my own son. This portion of Los Angeles County had been part of two Mexican period ranchos: *Santa Monica y San Vicente*, and *Boca de Santa Monica*. I told Andy that a worthwhile research project would be tracking down any living descendants of the old Mexican land grant families and interviewing them. So he did just that, visiting Ysidro Reyes and Ernie Marquez, videotaping them and then transcribing that information into the best term paper any of my students submitted that quarter.

I told Andy that he should publish his little gem, and he always intended to, but as the years passed and an ever-lengthening list of ailments (including multiple hernias and West Nile Disease) compromised Andy's freedom of action, he unfortunately never saw it all the way to print. So I am pleased and proud to move Andy's research of 20 years ago out of the shadows and into the light. His work celebrates not only the *oldest* living member of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners, but our *only* member who can trace his lineage back more than 250 years to Spanish Colonial California, long before the tidal wave of gringos flooded in, and *almost*, but not quite, overwhelmed those few remaining offspring of the original *Californios*.

Acknowledgements (B.D.D.)

Many thanks to Ernie Marquez for his interview of 2001, and to his daughter Monica for her care and love of the grand old man, one of the very last living links with our Spanish Colonial and Mexican heritage, as he approaches his 100th birthday. Thanks

also to Leo Florez, Andy's younger brother, for his companionship and enthusiastic support of the present effort. I am grateful to my son John Dillon, for his conscientious proof-reading, and to Dr. Matthew A. Bost and Dr. Abe Hoffman for their comments, corrections, and suggestions, on earlier drafts of this paper. Thanks also to my good friend Michael R. Grauer of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, who tempered my Californiacentric view of 18th-century *vaquero* history with some earlier examples from what is now the Lone Star State.

End Notes (B.D.D.)

1. *California, the Vaquero's Paradise:* generations of American TV babies raised on Tinseltown mythology, concocted by recent arrivals from New Jersey and other points even farther east, have been brainwashed into thinking that American cowboy culture was invented in Texas immediately after the Civil War. This erroneous point of origin is 900+ miles too far north, and 350+ years too late. Cowboy culture actually found its most distant origins in the Spanish-Moorish cattle-herding tradition on the plains of Andalucía, and was much later exported part-and-parcel to Central Mexico immediately after the Conquest of the Aztecs in 1521. Then, during the following two centuries, parts of West and North-Central Mexico, Zacatecas (the "great grassland" from the Nahuatl *zacate*, or "grass") and Jalisco became the *kilometro uno* of *vaquerismo*, or cowboy culture. By the end of the 17th century cowboy culture had expanded up the Pacific coast throughout Sinaloa and Sonora, and had also moved into what are now Arizona, New Mexico, and still-not-yet-gringified Texas. *Vaqueros* were cowboying as early as 1716 in what is now Texas, fifty years before the Portolá expedition of 1769 and the De Anza colonization effort of 1774 brought cowboy culture to Alta California. California *vaqueros*, be they originally from Mexico, or locally-born, were said to have been able to ride long before learning to walk. Proud fathers put their toddler sons in the saddles of gentled horses and walked alongside them, then considered a natural



Figure 6: Ernest Marquez (left) and Brian D. Dillon in 2018, at the L.A. Corral Fandango where Ernie was made an Honorary Member of the Los Angeles Corral after many years of loyal service. Patrick Mulvey photo.

- form of child-rearing. And family patriarchs, after their allotted time on earth, as a point of pride refused to die in bed of old age: a common dying request was to be put in the saddle one last time, tied to it, if necessary, and sent off across the plains on the final ride towards *la más allá*. Californio cowboys as early as the 1770s only counted their *horses*, not their *cattle*. During the following century they did not object when starving gringos "just in from the East" butchered free-ranging steers. The *Californios* only asked that the *gabachos* drape the hide from the cow slaughtered for its meat over a bush or tree branch, with its brand showing, so that its value could be realized the next time the *yanqui* hide-buyers showed up off the coast.
2. *Mexican Land Grants:* contrary to what 99% of all Californians believe, mainly through perpetuation of the error by ignorant grammar school teachers from "back east," there was no such thing as a "Spanish" land grant in California. The Spanish King was so jealous of his prerogatives that he only allowed three (3) civil pueblos to be established in California, the only places where colonial citizens could actually own property. All the

rest of the land was reserved either for the Church or for the Crown. So the hundreds of *ranchos* created after secularization of the missions in 1835 were *Mexican*, not *Spanish*, land grants. Beck and Haase (1974: map 37) is the standard source for the names, acreages, and boundaries of Mexican land grants in the greater Los Angeles area (Figure 3).

3. ***Mexican War of Independence from Spain:*** this long, drawn-out, struggle began in 1810 while Spain was embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars at home on the Iberian Peninsula. Fighting accelerated in both South and Central America after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, but the military attempts to re-establish colonial dominance were too little and too late. In 1821, Mexico became the northernmost newly-independent Latin American Republic, but it took a year for this happy news to reach its own farthest-flung and least-valued province, California.
4. ***Early Historic Los Angeles:*** I have completed historic and prehistoric surveys of places now covered by the urban sprawl of "downtown" Los Angeles. All would have been familiar to Francisco Reyes in the 1790s and to Francisco Marquez in the 1820s.
5. ***Indians of the Santa Monica-Malibu Coastal Strip:*** I have archaeologically surveyed the entire Malibu-Santa Monica coastline and done excavations and surface collections at many of the archaeological sites thereon. I have also investigated the other side of 100% urbanized Santa Monica where the only remnant of what once was a large Indian village was preserved in a narrow railroad alignment pre-dating wholesale grading of all surrounding areas. Urban obliteration is doubtless also responsible for the lack of very early archaeological evidence (Dillon 2002) of the kind present in all less urbanized surrounding areas. I have compared this region with the rest of prehistoric Los Angeles County (Dillon and Box 1989: 138-169). Few parts of Southern California *were* as rich in archaeological sites as the Malibu-Santa Monica coastal strip. Unfortunately, few other archaeological areas have been as badly *damaged* by road-building, cutting and filling, grading, and residential construction. Some of its few pre- and protohistoric site deposits that were not bulldozed into oblivion now lie more than 30 feet below the present level of Pacific Coast Highway. This road has, in some places, been rebuilt four or five times during the past century, over Indian sites occupied when Ernie Marquez' great-great-great-grandfather came to California in 1769 with Portolá.
6. ***Tribal Affiliations Not Remembered:*** this situation is hardly unique for the *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica*. 20+ years ago while doing research on the lands flooded by Castaic Reservoir I interviewed the last living descendants of another old *Californio* family, who were very proud of their Indian great-great-grandmother from the high country now incorporated by the Tejón Ranch. Unfortunately, 160 years later, none of her descendants could remember what language she originally spoke, nor what she called her own people (Dillon 2017).
7. ***"De-tribalized Indians:"*** the California mission system (1769-1835) had as its primary goal the conversion of California Natives to Christianity and their training in standard European economic pursuits (farming, ranching, carpentry, etc.). In all such goals it succeeded, facilitated by the immediate and continuous de-tribalization and acculturation of all neophytes. Many different people from many different locations were thrown together at each mission. Many were culturally different from each other, and often spoke mutually-unintelligible languages. So the new *lingua franca* was Spanish. Within a single generation, monolingual Native language speakers were reduced to a tiny minority of the mission Indian population, and were exclusively elderly. There was also a sexual dimension in linguistic retention: male neophytes "lost" their parent's language more readily than females, since girl children tended to work and talk with their mothers in their traditional language while boys were sent into the fields or pastures with their age-mates, and encouraged to speak Spanish. This is why when English-speaking anthropologists attempted to record the last lingering traces of local Indian language from what is now Los Angeles County, beginning in the late 19th century, their informants were

almost exclusively female.

8. **Californios:** was how the Spanish-speaking people, and their descendants, who came from Mexico to New Spain's most remote and neglected colony, identified themselves. It was a term based upon the standard Latin American concept of *localismo* (pride and identification with your own home). *Californios* considered themselves superior to, and different from, those more timid souls far to the south in Mexico, who they referred to as *Mexicanos*. It was not a racial term for *Californios*, all *Gente de Razón* ("people of reason"—i.e., educated folk) could be White, Indian, *Mestizo*, Black, *Mulato*, or *Zambo*. The last governor of Mexican California, Pío Pico, for example, was *Mulato*, of mixed Spanish and African ancestry, as was Francisco Reyes, the pioneer of the Reyes-Marquez family and early *Alcalde* of Los Angeles. The best book ever written on the *Californios* is the beautifully illustrated classic volume of the same name by the immensely-talented Jo Mora (1994).
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The Old Country Priest Reflects on 70+ Years of the *Branding Iron*

Msgr. Francis J. Weber, Living Legend No. 60

No longer one of the best-kept secrets of Western American history is the *Branding Iron*. During the past seven decades it has become the longest-lived, most diverse, and consistently excellent quarterly publication issued by any of the 70+ Westerners International Corrals around the world. Only *one* of the *three* different publication series of our Los Angeles Corral, the *Branding Iron* is joined by our full-length, hard-cover *Brand Books*, presently numbering 24, and our *Keepsakes* or occasional papers, now numbering 51. After an initial one-year stint as “*The Brand Book*” in 1947, the *Branding Iron* has been in continuous publication by the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners International since March of 1948. The initial issue featured notes and comments from, or about, such local historical luminaries as Glen Dawson, Rodman Paul, Charles Yale, Carl Dentzel, and J. Gregg Layne. The quarterly’s first editor, Dan Gann, in that first issue invited all Corral members to contribute to it, and to use it as a link between themselves and other Westerners both in the Los Angeles and in other Corrals.

Originally published simply as a very short monthly newsletter, by the time *Branding Iron* No. 9 was issued, a major change of direction had taken place. Its editor and contributors decided that it would no longer be offered as a monthly, but now as a quarterly publication and that it should contain much more than just “news and notes.” An increasing focus within its pages would henceforth be short, scholarly papers on historical research conducted by Corral members and book reviews of recent offerings thought to be of interest to the L.A. Westerners. In its new form as a quarterly, each issue of the *Branding Iron* still retained its sequential numeration, but now was also doubly-identified as Spring (March), Summer (June), Fall (September) and Winter (December) issues within each successive calendar year. Despite a few “wobbles” when an issue was delayed past its scheduled delivery date, the *Branding Iron* has had an en-



Figure 7: Monsignor Francis J. Weber, “The Old Country Priest.” Photo courtesy of the L.A. Corral web page.

viable record of publication and distribution by its promised deadlines.

The basic format of the *Branding Iron* has also remained remarkably consistent over its many years of publication. At least one feature article led off each issue, followed by synopses of the talks given at the monthly Corral round-ups since publication of the previous issue. Updates on future Corral activities and sometimes the ongoing research and publication efforts of individual members were also included. In March of 1961, almost exactly 60 years ago, *Branding Iron* editor Robert L. Dohrman codified the increasingly sophisticated direction the quarterly had already been charting in preceding years, specifically noting that it was now, and in future should continue to be, the publica-

tion medium for articles too short to stand alone as Corral Keepsakes, or as chapters in Brand Books.

Nor were *Branding Iron* submissions limited only to Los Angeles Corral members. Early on it was realized that publishing worthwhile articles by potential Los Angeles Corral recruits was a very good way to encourage them to join our Corral. Passing around copies of recent *Branding Irons* at professional meetings, or even at "rival" historical societies also came to be one of our best recruitment tools. From our beginning we have welcomed contributions from amateur and professional historians, as well as archaeologists, museologists, and librarians. Submission topics ranged from cattle and ranching, to mining, western dress, "Old West" firearms and gunslingers, mountain men, miners, Western exploration, Western American Indians, their culture and art, Western writers, Western artists, etc. And, from the outset, *Branding Iron* authors have never been afraid to cross county lines or international boundaries: not only have articles been written about Southern California, but also other parts of the Western U.S., Canada, Latin America, and even "West of the West," Hawaii and the Pacific. Book reviews, sometimes singly, sometimes multiple, rounded out many issues, always to be found on their final pages. After our Corral had been in existence for 50, then even more years, an occasional "back page filler" came to be "From Our Files" noting events chronicled in *Branding Iron* issues published a half-century before.

The external dimensions of the *Branding Iron* were chosen as 10 x 6.5 inches from the outset, "booklet" sized, rather than "magazine" sized. It was also decided that it should be *printed*, rather than mimeographed, photocopied, or, after the invention of the process, Xeroxed. With double-columns, justified margins, and straightforward typeface, the *Branding Iron* has a completely professional appearance, as good or better than any other contemporary scholarly journal. No maximum nor minimum page length was ever stipulated: the shortest, very skimpy offerings numbered only eight pages, while

more usual lengths were 24, 28, or 34 pages. Our Los Angeles Corral Publication Committee recently (during the Summer of 2020) put their heads together to revisit the question of how long the *Branding Iron* could or should be. Each committee member had a different "not to exceed" ideal page count, but since the *lowest* potential maximum number of pages for any issue suggested was 48, our most recent issue, No. 299, preceding the present issue No. 300, conformed to this.

We are particularly proud of our masthead design, which was created by John B. Goodman at the suggestion of Paul Galleher. At the top of each issue's front page is a long-horn steer head, with a banner proclaiming *Westerners* suspended between its horns. On either side of this banner our name and location, *Los Angeles Corral*, is neatly printed in arching letters. The initials for *Los Angeles Westerners*, and, more simply *Westerners*, are shown as cattle brands on either side of our quarterly's name: *The Branding Iron* title appears in the form of a cursive *reata*, or cowboy's braided horse-hair rope. Articles in early issues seldom had illustrations, but as time went on editors began asking for, and getting, maps, drawings, sketches, and historical photographs accompanying submissions. And also, eventually, a wide range of humorous pen-and-ink images ranging from cowpokes reading around the campfire (for the *Down the Western Book Trail* book review section) to inadvertently stepping in cowflops provided inspired visual alternatives to printed text.

In 1966 the Los Angeles Corral published an *Index Guide: A Score of Years and Fourscore Issues* detailing all of the *Branding Iron* issues published up until that year. Then, almost exactly another 20 years later, Anna Marie and Everett Gordon Hager, bibliophiles extraordinaire, completed their *Index to the Brand Books and the Branding Iron, Los Angeles Corral*, in 1985. This monumental task was undertaken in anticipation of the 40th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Corral, celebrated the following year of 1986. Sheriff, and eventual *Westerners* Living Legend, Jerome R. Selmer, praised the *Branding Iron* at that landmark 40th Anniversary for its exemplary job of

preserving Western historical research, tales, ideas, and visual images on so many different subjects, as well as keeping the record of our myriad Corral activities.

Branding Iron editors have come and gone, some of short, others of long, duration. Individual editors who felt that they were getting less than full and enthusiastic cooperation from potential corral contributors have sometimes threatened dire measures unless they “woke up and started writing,” a complaint familiar to all editors and, for that matter, also to all university professors. At one point, in June 1974, a disappointed L.A. Corral Trail Boss threatened to reduce the already slim (16 pages) *Branding Iron* down to a measly 8 pages because nobody had sent the editor anything to publish. He complained that the literary well “was dry” because the Los Angeles Corral membership was too “lazy” to write things for their quarterly. Similarly, the Publication Committee of the Los Angeles Corral, which has the duty of advising the *Branding Iron* editor but also of encouraging the continued high quality of all publication efforts, including the Brand Books and Keepsakes, has gone through periods of activity and inactivity.

During its 70+ years of existence the *Branding Iron* has provided many neophyte

authors the opportunity for their first professional publication. Typically, first-time authors get their feet wet with book reviews, then move on to recapitulations of recent round-up presentations, and finally contribute short articles, sometimes even lead articles. Nowhere has this been more successful and gratifying than with our student fellows over the past decade. All eight of our past and present student fellows (Mulvey, Tate, Dillon, Bermúdez, Martínez, Gochez, Griffin, and Vardanyan) have published round-up writeups in the *Branding Iron*. One of them (Mulvey) has also served as its documentary photographer, two more (Bermúdez and Tate) have also published lead articles derived from their own undergraduate research papers or senior honors theses in history, and, finally, one of them (Dillon) is currently completing his fourth year as the newest *Branding Iron* editor and Publication Committee chair.

I wrote 21 years ago, in the Preface to *Brand Book 21*, that since its inception on December 19, 1946, the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners has excelled in the range and quality of its publications, the flagship of which has been and continues to be the *Branding Iron*. What was true in 1999 is still true today, *only more so*.

Corraling Some Corral Memories

Abe Hoffman, Living Legend No. 61

Corral (v.): to keep or put livestock in a corral

Corral (n.): a pen for livestock

Corral (n.): a defensive enclosure of wagons in an encampment

Corral (n.): a chapter in an organization called *Westerners International*

I joined the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners when Doyce Nunis invited me to a meeting in 1974. Doyce had published two articles I had written for the *Southern California Quarterly*, and he welcomed me back to Los Angeles after I had served a year as a postdoctoral fellow at U.C. Berkeley,

working with famed economist Paul S. Taylor, editing his unpublished field research notes.

At that time the Corral met at the Taix Restaurant on Sunset near Alvarado, not far from the Angelus Temple founded by Aimee Semple McPherson. Later I would write an article for *Brand Book 22*, “Sister Aimee and Fighting Bob: Religious Rivals in 1920s Los Angeles,” but in 1974 such research wasn’t on my horizon. My dissertation had been accepted for publication by the University of Arizona Press, and I was still getting used to being addressed as “Doctor” Hoffman. My

academic affiliation, however, was rather tenuous, as there was a serious job shortage for college history professors in the early 1970s. Thanks to a colleague at Los Angeles Valley College, I had begun teaching at LAVC as an adjunct instructor.

It seemed more than a bit intimidating to come to a Corral meeting and find myself rubbing elbows with prominent historians from local colleges and universities such as Ray Billington, John Haskell Kemble, Doyce Nunis, Warren Beck, and others. Everett Hager was a noted indexer who with his wife Anna Marie had done the index for my first book. We had formed a solid friendship and they had encouraged me to join the Historical Society of Southern California in 1961. Everett was an Active Member in the Corral, but under the Range Rules at that time, Anna Marie was restricted to being a Corresponding Member. Art Clark, publisher of the Arthur H. Clark Company, was a Charter Member of the Corral. Victor Plukas was the Bank Historian at Security Pacific Bank and was the go-to guy for access to the bank's great photograph collection.

I was most impressed by the way Ray Billington offered his friendship to everyone he encountered. At one meeting where I was standing near him, one of the guests was describing his graduate student research to Ray. He was working on a Master's thesis and had some questions about his topic. Ray gave him his full attention and offered substantial advice on books, articles, archives, and additional sources that would enhance his research. During my career as a historian I encountered any number of university professors who wouldn't give the time of day to someone yet to earn an M.A. degree. But Ray was exceptional in giving his friendship and storehouse of knowledge to anyone asking for advice.

Over the past forty-plus years I have heard presentations given to the Corral that ranged from "Outstanding!" to "When will it ever end?" One of the saddest occurred when a guest speaker planned to give a slide presentation on the Angeles National Forest. His slides were housed in a carousel. The Daguerreotype Wrangler took the carousel,



Figure 8: Abraham Hoffman. Hoffman collection.

but before he could place it on the slide projector, he accidentally dropped it. The lid popped off, and slides went flying all over the floor. Unfortunately, the speaker hadn't numbered his slides. He picked them up—maybe a hundred of them—and tried to get them into some kind of order, holding each one up to a light, but to no avail. His presentation was entirely based on the slides, and without them all he could do was ramble extemporaneously on his topic. I learned two things from this episode: one, always number your slides, and two, always have a script.

There were a few presentations that proved excruciating. A non-Corral speaker gave a slide presentation on whaling off the Pacific Coast. Not a bad topic, but he had no script, and when he showed a slide of a whaleboat, he proceeded to identify at great length—for more than half an hour—every single part of the whaleboat, going on *ad nauseum* on just that one slide and curing a few Corral members of insomnia.

Then there was the evening when a screen writer who had one of his scripts accepted for a *Gunsmoke* TV episode addressed

the Corral. He brought this episode as a 16mm film. Now, long-time *Guns smoke* fans may recall that the program originated on radio in the 1950s, and when it morphed into a TV show it was originally half an hour long, later expanded to an hour. The episode the speaker presented was an hour-long one. After half an hour went by it became obvious, even to the speaker, that there wouldn't be much time left for discussion if the whole episode was shown. So, he stopped the projector. I never did learn how the story ended. In the discussion following the halfway-finished film, the speaker answered questions with terse replies. Perhaps a bit too terse. At the time (1978), NBC was running the 26-part miniseries *Centennial*, the story line clearly following James Michener's novel and featuring dozens of outstanding actors and actresses. A Corral member asked what he thought of the series. The speaker said, "Not much." My impression was that maybe he had submitted a script that was rejected. Other Corral members could be heard mumbling comments about the answer. *Centennial* deserved more than a two-word answer.

Perhaps the most embarrassing presentation came when the Corral invited Dean Krakel, director of the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, to give a presentation about his museum. He showed a short film—about ten or fifteen minutes—and then moved on to questions and answers. It soon became obvious that Krakel was an extreme political conservative. When he boasted that his museum was privately funded without any taxpayer money but with money from prominent Oklahoma oil and ranching interests, someone asked him if the sponsors were getting federal subsidies for their oil rigs and ranches. Krakel refused to answer. In fact, he seemed much put out that anyone dared to ask that question.

Now, lest anyone think I am only reciting a litany of terrible programs, I hasten to note that the Corral has enjoyed many excellent speakers on a wide variety of topics. With our quarterly *Branding Iron* digitized and accessible online, it's easy to comb through past issues and recall the presentations the Corral enjoyed.

When I joined the Corral and for many years afterward, we followed a ritual after dinner and before the presentations in which everyone introduced himself and stated his status in the Corral. Membership had three categories: Active, limited to 75 people; Associate; and Corresponding. Whenever an Active member was no longer, shall we say, *active*, an Associate would be selected to move up to Active status. There was no limit to the number of Associate or Corresponding Members, and Corresponding Membership included institutions such as the Huntington Library. To upgrade from Corresponding to Associate, a Corresponding Member had to do something besides show up for dinner: give a presentation; write an article for the *Branding Iron* or a chapter for one of our *Brand Books*; write a book review; or volunteer to help with Corral activities such as the Fandango or the Rendezvous. One of the conditions of being an Associate Member was to contribute a Gold Dust Grubstake of \$25 for which the new Associate received a very nice certificate, suitable for framing. To be eligible to advance to Active status, the Associate was expected to continue to contribute to the Corral activities.

The distinction between the membership levels was made obvious during the introductions at the meetings, e.g., "John Smith, Active;" "Bill Jones, Associate;" "Jack Williams, Corresponding." Some years ago this practice fell out of favor. While the status levels remain, new rankings have since been created: Ranger Active, usually for those who moved away and could no longer attend meetings; Honorary, awarded to members for meritorious service to the Corral; and, most recently, Fellowships that confirmed Corresponding status to young men and women, usually college students, who were given a stipend and took part in writing book reviews, articles, and Roundup lecture summaries, videotaping Corral presentations, and other assignments. In 1997 the Corral Trail Bosses voted to admit women to all levels of membership. Previously, women were limited to Corresponding status. A few Actives felt this would change the Corral in some way, but since then women

have become Associate and Active Members as well as serving as Sheriffs.

When I joined the Corral in 1974 the annual Rendezvous was held at the home of Al Miller, who had and would continue to host the event for many years. His home was originally owned by actress Bette Davis, a strong supporter of Griffith Park a short distance away. A nearby section of the park would be named in her honor. Anyway, the Rendezvous was a major fundraiser for the Corral as books, paintings, and other items were auctioned off. Hugh Tolford was an excellent auctioneer, coaxing Westerners to bid competitively.

During the afternoon Iron Eyes Cody, a long-time Active Member, would set up a large tepee in the front yard. Here an Indian woman baked delicious fry bread, which I enjoyed until someone pointed out to me that it was cooked in lard, lots of it, and it wasn't the healthiest of snacks. So, I had to cut my share of fry bread to zero, but it really was delicious. After the auction everyone enjoyed a Western dinner with large steaks and plenty of side dishes. No one went hungry. This annual event was very successful in building up the Corral treasury, and many members went home delighted with the auction items they bid for.

In 1990 the Trail Bosses decided that the location for Corral meetings needed to be moved from the Taix to another venue that

charged a lower fee for the meeting room and meals. The Almansor Restaurant in Alhambra offered a large meeting room, free parking, and a location near the I-10 Freeway. This change of location meant that while some members had to travel a longer distance to meetings, for others it was a shorter trip. The compromise has worked well.

As the Corral continued its program of presentations and publications, a new feature has brought honors to the Corral. Gary Turner inaugurated a series of annual cowboy poetry Keepsakes that have received numerous awards from Westerners International. Corral presentations have enjoyed similar awards. Once limited to tape recordings, in recent years videos have also been made of the presentations and put onto DVDs for archiving. USC has become a major depository for our Los Angeles Corral records. Digitizing the whole run of *Branding Irons* and maintaining a great website has made it possible for the Corral to share its scholarship and commitment to Western history with the rest of the world.

The Fellowship program has brought us a younger generation of men and women who are already making contributions to Corral activities. Looking back for almost a half century of my Corral membership, I feel honored to have met really wonderful people and to belong to an organization that has done so much for Western history.

Over 40 Years — A Westerner's Remembrance

Gary Turner, Living Legend No. 62

My Early Years

There were no women back then. That is, no women were allowed in the exclusive men's group called *The Los Angeles Corral of Westerners*. The all-male membership took the idea of exclusivity seriously. No non-members could go to a Westerners monthly meeting at *La Taix* Restaurant unless "HE" was specifically invited by an Active Member of the Corral. How times have changed! Having

been a guest on several occasions invited by Don Torguson (retired Sheriff and social studies teacher at Sun Valley Junior High School, LAUSD), I became a Corresponding Member of the corral in 1979, the lowest level of membership. At every monthly meeting all members would stand up and introduce themselves and the corral membership level they belonged to i.e. Corresponding, Associate, or Active Member. These self-introductions became a big part of the evening's

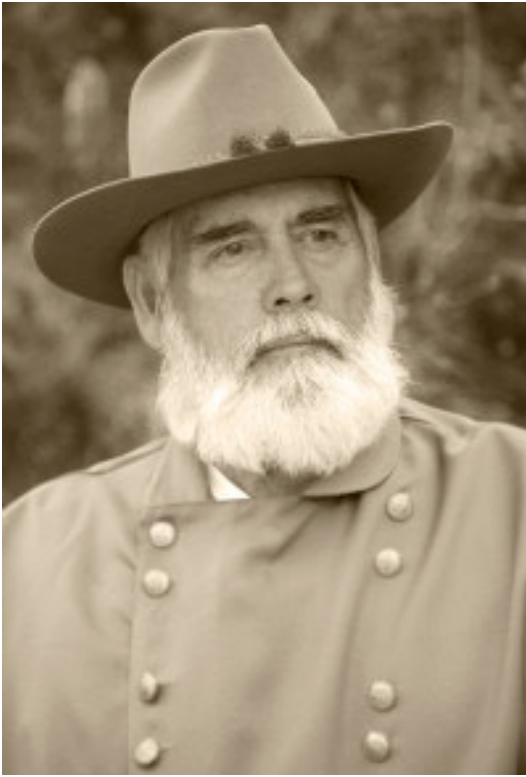


Figure 9: Living Legend Dr. Gary Turner on his way to Appomattox Court House, April 9, 1865, or, just possibly to a Los Angeles Corral Fandango. Photo courtesy of the L.A. Corral web page.

entertainment as comments and jokes were made, and men who had been under control for a month at home, in the office, or in the classroom, were finally free to crack wise and tell off-color jokes and stories. When all the "Old Timers" were "On," the evening began with irreverence and laughter that shook the foundations of the storied restaurant. To be promoted within this esteemed group, one had to volunteer to work at the Fandango and Rendezvous. Set up, clean up, hustling books, checking in members, tending bar, and being ready to do any and all odd jobs were the paths to advancement. I did them all and enjoyed getting to meet and know the membership of the L.A. Corral.

But the one, and probably most important, key to advancement in the Westerners, was to give a talk on a particular Western interest of your own. Talks were presented at every monthly meeting and the speakers

knew that they had better be prepared because the audience always included some of the brightest and most knowledgeable historians in Southern California. College professors, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and individuals with specific historical interests were in attendance at every meeting.

Giving a talk was the easy part. Answering the questions and queries at the conclusion of the talk was where the real excitement began! Any statement that could not be substantiated set the tone for an intellectual grilling that brought self-knowing smiles from the questioner and beads of sweat from the speaker if his facts did not add up. Everyone understood that each talk's presenter better be ready to defend any and all statements made during his delivery! If a speaker was confident and smug at the onset of the talk, he was never that way at the end of the question and answer session that followed. BSers, flimflam artists, and conceited know-it-alls did not stand a chance. Intelligence ruled the evenings. You had to be prepared to back up every statement and every comment or not deliver the talk!

Iron Eyes Cody—My Hero

The year was 1985. Jerry Selmer was Sheriff and Don Torguson was Deputy Sheriff. Iron Eyes Cody was Daguerreotype Wrangler and he attended every meeting and took pictures of every speaker and documented all Corral activities. Don scheduled the monthly speakers and finally persuaded me to give a talk on Hopi Kachinas. I had been collecting Kachinas for almost 20 years and was not worried about giving a talk about them, but was *very* concerned about going through a question and answer session at its end. Presenting was easy! Answering pointed questions would be difficult since I collected as a *hobby*, not as an *expert*.

It was midsummer and I hoped that attendance would be down. It wasn't. I brought along quite a few samples from my collection and hoped that those in attendance would not ask difficult questions about them. I was wrong! I had practiced the talk and was scheduled to go for about

45 minutes. The actual talk lasted for 50 minutes and, I thought, went well. Now came the question-and-answer session. The first question came from Dr. Alden Miller who asked for a picture of the White Bear Kachina. The White Bear Kachina is considered very powerful and is believed to help heal the sick. Dr. Miller had a collection of items and pictures dealing with healing beliefs from around the world and wanted a picture of my bear. I said I would take it myself and send it to him. So this first question was easily answered.

Next came two or three questions about the Kachina Cult, the physical and metaphysical versions of all life forms, and the belief that when the Hopi were in ceremonial dress, they became the Kachina they impersonated. I had not even begun to answer these questions when, unannounced, Iron Eyes Cody stood up, and began to not only answer the question, but explain everything he knew about the Hopi, their lands, and the Kachina Cult. That suddenly ended my time in the "hot seat" as Iron Eyes took "center stage." I never said another word. Thanks to Iron Eyes Cody (*my hero!*) my first talk at the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners was a success!

I Knew the Names—Not the Individuals

During the first 15 years of my involvement with the Westerners I thought that the Corral had a lot of uppity folk. They sat at the same table every month, all the same gentlemen who had sat together the month before. I began to know the names of these members, but did not really get to know any of them personally. Even after 15 years of membership there were tables I never really felt welcome to sit at. As I have gotten older, I realize how hard it is to change long-standing habits. The exclusivity I felt from some older members was just an expression of with whom they felt comfortable. I began to believe that this problem was mine and not theirs, so I decided to become more involved. I made it my mission to really get to know the men of Westerners. Times were changing, and discussions of potential female membership brought out fierce commentary by some members. I really did not care if women were

to become members or not; I just didn't express this view to anyone. The "Old Guard" was much older (if they were still alive) but new leadership energized the entire Corral. Sheriffs Bent, Hoffman, Thornhill, and Gallucci were outgoing by nature and very approachable. They adeptly handled the woman issue, and, with females included, we headed into the 21st Century!

I began to accept more responsibility and got involved in the positions that made decisions for the Corral. I was the Registrar of Marks & Brands; Deputy Sheriff; and, in 2004, became Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral. Eric Nelson was a big help in explaining the duties and responsibilities of each position. Even as a lawyer, he was easy to work with and did much for the Corral.

The new millennium did not bring an automatic improvement in our monthly speakers. During my 40 years as a member there have been excellent presentations and not-so-good ones. I enjoyed them all (the good ones were, of course, *more* enjoyable), but there has never been a "Golden Age of Monthly Speakers." Even very intelligent people have presented very disjointed and uninteresting talks. Some speakers do an excellent job presenting historical facts, but some are just downright boring. However, something new was learned every month, and I always appreciated the bravery of those who stood and presented topics important to them. The one area that has changed is the question-and-answer session at the close of every talk. The old biting, critical questions and heated defenses have long passed. The "questions" that are asked today are mostly "statements" by the members who try to impress their peers with their knowledge of the subject at hand. We live in a "quieter and more gentle" world—at least, perhaps, during the once-a-month Q&A sessions at the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners.

Corral Members I Know and Love

As I got to know Corral members better, I had no problems finding tables to sit at during monthly meetings. Jerry Selmer was a great Westerner, Sheriff, and Living Legend.

He guided the Corral through difficult times and always had a welcoming smile for everyone. I spoke with Jerry a week before he died, and he said that being a member of the Los Angeles Corral was one of the *best* things that ever happened to him in his life. I agreed with him, and we both cried. We are fortunate to have his son, Past Sheriff John Selmer, and his wife Barbara Goldeen as active members. Ken Pauley, a long-time member was always very nice and very smart. I liked Ken even more after I discovered that his wife, Carol, was *even nicer and smarter*. She was also a lot prettier than Ken. Together they produced a great book on California Missions. Msgr. Francis J. Weber is a priest, but so much more than the “priestly stereotype.” He tells funny stories, laughs, is very down-to-earth, and is the premier historian of the California Missions. He does not, however, sing like Bing Crosby in a dog collar nor act like Barry Fitzgerald in “Going My Way.” Paul Rippens is a retired fire fighter who wrote a book on the Saint Francis Dam disaster. Paul worked very hard for the Corral at all the events and became Sheriff in 2005.

As I became more involved with the Corral, I discovered much about individual members that impressed me. Bill Newbro had a great voice! When he spoke the entire room could always hear him. When Walt Wheelock introduced himself, he would always say, “Wheelock, W.W.” I never knew that his full name was Walter Whitman Wheelock. John W. Robinson was not only a great historian but a great man. Hugh Tolford was witty and provided great insight into the many Corral events that transpired from his time as Sheriff, 1977. Denise Ruhlow was our first female member and the first female Sheriff. What a terrific gal. I’m even willing to make her a member of Clampers! I worked with Bob Blew at Sylmar High School. He was a great teacher and friend, and edited the *Branding Iron* for a number of years for the Corral. There are so many close friends in the Corral that I cannot list them all.

Dueling Pianos: The Event that Never Happened

A nice addition to my life was all the events and private parties my wife Vicki and I were invited to. There is a whole social network that goes along with membership in the Corral, and attending outside-the-Corral events is another reason why Westerners is just so great. The Selmers hosted many excellent parties and so did Eric and Elizabeth Nelson and Ramon and Mary Ann Otero. It was at one of these events that I discovered that Eric Nelson could play the piano. He “tickled the ivories” as well as anyone and I proposed that we should put on a monthly presentation of dueling pianos with old bar songs and country music. Of course, what seemed a good idea at a party, upon further reflection the following day, looked just a little lame. But the idea sounded good to Paul Rippens, the Deputy Sheriff! Eric had second thoughts, so I was convinced to go it alone. Hence, the musical program, *Songs of the Civil War*, became a reality in 2005. It was the first musical program that our Corral ever had. I had studied classical piano between the ages of 6 and 18, but quit because *football* was more important to me than *piano* practice. Van Cliburn may have slept soundly the night of my decision but Elroy Hirsch, the great Rams wide receiver, I am told, tossed and turned all night!

My family of Turners had five generations all living at the same time. I grew up listening, learning, and playing old songs, folk songs, early cowboy songs, church songs, and yodels (and I can still play them all!). I already knew many Civil War songs but bought a book or two on the music of that period and began practicing in earnest. I played and talked about the Civil War music to our Corral and to a couple other historical groups. I also did a program on Stephen Foster songs. I learned that what is used to be called “Black Dialect” is really a separate language unto itself. There is much to be proud of with the many mixed cultures and people we have in this country. I sure wish that things weren’t so negative as some folks want to make it!

This Kind of Poetry Was Never Taught at my School

When I became Westerners International Representative, I discovered that a category within the Annual Awards Competitions was the *Fred Olds Cowboy Poetry Award*. Ron Woolsey was the *Branding Iron* Editor at the time, and he published my first poem ever: *Ode to the Pioneers*. I needed that poem published so I could enter it in the Westerners International competition, and I won! The next year I entered another poem: *Why I Drink*. I was disappointed with a second-place finish since I wanted to win first place every year! I discovered that some of our members liked limericks, and from then on our Corral became involved in cowboy poetry and limericks. After Barbara Goldeen won a poetry prize, we began calling the competition Cowboy-Cowgirl Poetry! Thanks Barbara. I knew all along that allowing women to join the Corral would be beneficial!

At first, there were some “grumblings” that Cowboy Poetry was not really a good or proper activity for the Corral. “Academic” authors were not sure if Cowboy Poetry measured up to the strenuous standards that the academicians set for themselves. But many members were willing to try writing a poem or limerick, and the Corral found some exceptional writers. One of the best is Tim Heflin, a real cowboy, and an authentic natural at writing cowboy poetry. He has won numerous awards for his poetry including three 1st Place *Fred Olds Poetry Awards* in the Westerners International competition. Now, that’s mighty good writin’! Every year for the past 10 years or so, the Corral has published a Keepsake dedicated exclusively to cowboy poetry...and cowgirl poetry. Did I mention that I knew all along that allowing women in the Corral was a good idea? A future *Brand Book* incorporating the work of all of the talented Cowboy Poets we have in the corral...and our lone Cowgirl poet, Barbara Goldeen...is presently in progress- so make some room on your bookshelves!

Looking Backward and Forward

Having been a Corral member for so long I am asked if the Corral is better or worse than it was back in the distant past. My usual answer is that it is still the same corral; the same *great* Corral that it has always been! We have wonderful men and women members today but I also miss the greats of the past. Phil Brigandi was one who left us too soon. He was a great writer, historian, Clamper, and all around “Good Guy.” I also miss Froylán Tiscareño who was another good writer and even a better person. Froy was very special!

As within every voluntary organization there were times when disagreements arose, personality conflicts became extreme, and tensions grew high. Such was the situation within the Los Angeles Corral a few years back. Tempers flared over the handling of certain situations, and some folk worried about the ultimate direction of the Corral while others remained unaware of the disagreements. But when problem situations arise so do true leaders. One such individual is Paul McClure. With personal strength, character, and intelligence, he led our Corral through some difficult times and brought the kind of unity back to it which, for a time, had slipped. As one of the senior members of the Corral, I appreciate all that Paul did to ensure and enhance the growth of, and diversity of thought within, our Corral. Thank you, Paul!

The Los Angeles Corral seems to bring in excellent people, especially when they are needed most, and the future is bright for our organization. James Macklin has been a terrific member and an outstanding leader. Brian Dillon writes more than any one person I know, and his son, John Dillon, is an excellent *Branding Iron* editor. They are a great team and are well-known throughout the many individual Westerners corrals. As Westerners International Representative, Brian has brought about much positive recognition to the Los Angeles Corral. His individual effort and hard work are to be commended, and I know his father, Richard Dillon, Westerners Living Legend 46, is looking down on him with a big smile on his face!

As our country rebounds from the 2020

COVID-19 virus crisis, I believe that all of our members will appreciate the time we spend together, both the good and the “need-to-be-better” talks, the monthly interactions we have, the Fandango and Rendezvous, the friendships we have and the new ones we

will make in the future, and all the many positive events that stem from the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners! It is a very *special* group with very *special* people...and it is that very *special* membership that makes it so!



Figure 10: The 1953 painting by Clarence Ellsworth that hung on my father's wall. Robert Clark collection.

The Picture on the Wall: Memories of the Los Angeles Corral

Robert Clark, Living Legend No. 65

An oil painting (Figure 10) hung on the wall of my father's study. It shows a Southwestern scene: in the distance a solitary adobe house rests in the valley, a single tree offering shade in a dry and barren landscape. In the foreground is a wagon road, and on it stands a stagecoach, its driver and his American Indian shotgun partner perched

on the driver's box. They are engaged in conversation with a man standing in the road who has just taken delivery of several stacks of books. In the painting's corner is the artist's signature and date: "Clarence Ellsworth, 1953."

This painting was my introduction to the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners and also,

as a child, helped me learn about my father. It had been a gift: our Corral maintained a tradition of giving a gift of art to the retiring sheriff, and with some exceptions, this has remained so. Ellsworth's painting was presented to my dad upon completion of his term as Sheriff leading the Corral. Though not one of its founders, he was one of its earliest members, brought into the fold by his business partner Paul Galleher, who had, with Homer Britzman, established the corral in 1946. Galleher was the Corral's second sheriff. My father was the seventh.

Clarence Ellsworth, also an early Los Angeles Corral member, was a respected artist specializing in Western scenes and Indian portraits. A close friend of Iron Eyes Cody, his next-door neighbor, Ellsworth painted a number of original works as gifts for sheriffs of our corral in its formative years. But, I digress. Ellsworth's wonderful painting was created specifically for my father. Though Dad never said so, it is obvious that he is the man looking up at the coach driver. The volumes at his feet are a nod to his work in book publishing. And over the years it became equally obvious to me how much the Corral meant to him. Missing a meeting was a rarity. With Paul Galleher he handled the distribution of the *Branding Iron*, the meeting notices, the mailing list, and sales of the Brand Books. Trail Boss meetings were held in the Clark Company offices.

After graduating from college, I joined

Dad and Paul at our publishing company, and I came to know and love the Los Angeles Corral and its members the same way they did. The men I met at *Les Freres Taix* (where we gathered for meals and meetings throughout my years in Los Angeles) became close friends who supported, encouraged, and enabled our work in Western History. The Clark Company could not have survived without that support.

When I joined the Corral, many of the founding members were reaching the end of their trail. However, I well remember meeting Fred Hodge, Horace Albright, Homer Boelter, Iron Eyes Cody, Bert Olsen, Rod Paul, and Loring Campbell. Glen Dawson was still a vital part of the corral's work. I had the chance to work closely with him, and with Ray Billington, Hugh Tolford. Paul Bailey, Doyce Nunis, Don Duke, Jerry Selmer, Ernie Marquez, Jim Gulbranson, John Robinson, and so many others. Younger members Abe Hoffman, Ken Pauley, Joe Cavallo, Brian Dillon, and others remain friends within the Western fold.

The memories of my years serving the Los Angeles Corral are strong. I miss the camaraderie, the insightful talks, and the passion for things Western. Though I've been active in other corrals in the years that followed, and in Westerners International, my recollections of the Los Angeles Corral will always hold a special place in my heart.

Westerner Memories

Bill Warren, 1984 Sheriff

1972 was sort of a mixed year: President Nixon went to China and met Mao Zedong, ex-President Harry Truman died, Watergate occurred, and Dallas beat Miami in the Superbowl. On the plus side, Bill Warren became a member of the LA Westerners. No, wait, he became a *Corresponding Member* of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners. There used to be a big distinction.

In those days we met at Taix Restaurant at the corner of Alvarado St. and Sunset Blvd.

Every second Wednesday of the month fifty to seventy of us met for dinner, camaraderie, and a talk about the West. We met in a long room, officers at the head table, all others by pecking order at parallel intersecting tables. We had soup and then a hearty entrée.

On being seated we were attended by a pretty French gal named Collette. She was our wine steward who sold us red or white for \$4.00 per bottle, cash only please. It was good French wine. We pitched in together for



Figure 11: Bill Warren, upon his promotion to Honorary Member at the October 19th, 2019 Rendezvous at the Royal Oaks. Jim Macklin photo.

shared bottles. We never complained when Collette leaned too close over our shoulder.

After dinner and dessert, we were called to attention by our resident Chaplain. He was, of course, Iron Eyes Cody and he rose to give his standard Indian prayer—"Oh, Great Father, whose voice in the wind I hear..." If you were there then or during subsequent years you probably know it by heart, including the standard ending—"Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls." Of course, there were never any children present, nor for that matter any ladies aside from Collette, but Iron Eyes was programmed to deliver his *schtick*.

There followed self-introductions in a formal, ritualistic format. Members rose and gave their first and last names only. Before there was such a thing as Associate Members there were only full Members and those others in waiting, known as Corresponding Members. Such lowly personages would rise in turn and announce, "Joe So-and-so, Corresponding." Woe be it to the chap who momentarily forgot his lowly status. All eyes would turn on him with looks of consternation and after the meeting he would be warned not to let it happen again. Few forgot

more than once.

So why was this so darned important? Well, because being a member of the Los Angeles Corral was then a rare privilege, available only to those who proved themselves worthy of such recognition. This was not a knife and fork club, where anyone could become a member. Corresponding Membership was by invitation after vigorous vetting and several sponsored visits. Full Membership took several years of participation in giving talks, writing articles on Western history or producing Western art. Even professors or curators were not automatically accepted. Most local men of stature in the Western community were members. Even some lawyers were included if they had proper libraries or art collections. Corresponding members could attend a limited number of meetings, by invitation only.

Once a year we held Fandangos where wives were invited. I don't recall any "significant others" being invited but my recollection may be faulty. The other non-standard meeting each year was our fall Rendezvous. Our artist members were invited to exhibit their creations, which many did. Selected art dealers were issued invitations to attend and join members in purchasing the works of our well-known artists. As I recall, a substantial amount of booze, beer and wine was consumed before the barbeque dinner, lubricating the sale of artwork and the ever-present book auction. Everyone went away happy. For several years I served as Wrangler Boss assuring the availability of liquid refreshments throughout the day and early evening. I don't recall ever carting away much that was left over.

OK, so I am supposed to be writing about the characters I have known as fellow Westerners. I'd be remiss if I didn't start off with the guy who brought me into the Corral, Tony Lehman. Tony was a high school teacher in Covina. He wrote several books about the West, but the one probably best remembered is "Paul Landacre, A Life and Legacy," about the noted wood-engraver, published by Dawson's Book Store. This was a fine publication with lots of illustrations. Tony was a handsome young man, looking a little

like a heavier Clark Gable. He was Sheriff in 1979 and married to a sparkling young lady, but unfortunately that didn't last. Tony saddened, and then moved to Montana to begin his longed-for existence—as a cowboy/rancher. Big dreams, small rewards. After a couple of years, he moved back to Southern California, but things weren't the same. He lost weight, and then one Westerners meeting we were greeted by a large headshot of Tony projected on the front wall. Cancer got him, at about age 45. What a waste. He had lots more books in him. Rats.

One of the people Tony wrote about as editor of the *Branding Iron* was Paul Bailey. A jovial bookman who worked with Art Clark, among others, and wrote a bunch of books about the West. His most endearing work was, *Polygamy Was Better than Monotony*, the story of his grandfather and his Mormon households in American Fork, Utah. Yes, multiple wives, and perfectly acceptable at that time in that culture, and a humorous glimpse at a normally closed literary door. Paul always had a glint in his one good eye and a smile on his face. One of his books was banned by the Mormon church since he mentioned the Mountain Massacre. But they later relented and reinstated Paul as a card-carrying member of the LDS.

Which brings me to Hugh Tolford. He was Sheriff in 1977. Hugh was also a member of the Zamorano Club and had a nice collection of Western books. He also ran the Antiquarian Book Fair when it visited Los Angeles every other year. If you were lucky enough to be selected by Hugh, you became one of the people charged with keeping the book dealers happy. That sounds easy, right? Most dealers were like Glen Dawson, a bunch of sweethearts. But there were always two or three who demanded special attention, like widening their booth or extending out into the aisle in front. There were dealers from all over the world, and it took some diplomacy to keep them happy. Hugh used his engaging smile and quiet persuasion to defuse potentially volatile incidents, and we all learned from his example.

I knew Hugh from another relationship. He was the Treasurer for the Zamorano Club

for many years. He asked me to take over that responsibility, and I agreed to do so. He had an accountant out in the Valley, so I introduced myself. When it came time to file the club's taxes, he was a little taken aback because I used *Quicken*. Everything was in order for him. So I asked him why the surprise. "Well," he said, "I'm just relieved. Hugh used to drop by with a cardboard box, overflowing with receipts and check stubs. It took me days to sort that stuff out." I was glad when his bill came through to note a very significant drop in his fee.

Another Westerner Hugh and I enjoyed working with was Mike Gallucci. Mike could always turn our conversations to football and the significance of the Big Ten Conference. Mike was the sparkplug for the Big10 Alumni Association in Southern California. He and his wife were both Purdue grads, and it wasn't often that his school represented the conference in the Rose Bowl, but he beat the drum for any Big Ten school. He was seriously outnumbered in Westerner circles, but always cheerful.

I told you earlier about introductions, and perhaps this is the point to drop in my most famous story about them. I was Sheriff and a little bored with the simple name announcing process. So, I suggested one meeting during football season that each member include the name of a school he would like to be associated with after his self-introduction. So, of course, UCLA and USC were frequently repeated, with Mike chiming in happily with "PURDUE." All was going swimmingly as we worked down the tables and finally came to Monsignor Francis J. Weber (more on him later, he's too good to quickly pass up). In any case, he rose and announced in a stentorian voice, "Frank Weber, Oral Roberts University!" The Taix Restaurant exploded in laughter which seemed to last for minutes. Everyone admitted Monsignor Francis had provided the highlight of the evening. No one remembers who gave the talk that night—it wasn't important.

Francis was the historian for the Los Angeles Archdiocese and maintained his office at San Fernando Mission. He also said Mass on Sundays, which kept the Mission

open. Otherwise it would have been closed for formal worship. He wrote many books about the history of the Roman Catholic Church in California and his own life in "Memories of an Old Country Priest." If you visit the library of Azusa Pacific University, a rather fundamentalist school, probably closer in thinking to Oral Roberts than to the local Archdiocese, you will find a full collection of Presidential autographs, beautifully mounted and bound. This collection was donated to the school by Monsignor Francis J. Weber. He is a splendid gentleman and a Westerner we can all be proud of.

Everett Hager was, plain and simple, a curmudgeon. If he ever smiled, no one saw it. He and his wife Anna Marie lived in San Pedro and were world famous bibliographers. So, what pray tell is that? Before computers, using three by five file cards, they would comb through publications and list references which would then be published in the back pages of the volume. If you think your life is boring, consider the Hagers' efforts. But they never tired of doing it for numerous historical books. Dedication was the word. As I said, Everett was a typical New Englander type curmudgeon. Anna Marie was a delightful contrast who enjoyed people, particularly Westerners.

As I'm sure you know, the Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners was an all-male organization from its inception. Many members wanted to keep it that way. Times change. Some members who were also members of the Bar and even Judges came under pressure to avoid association with discriminatory organizations. Along about 1987 it became obvious that keeping Westerners single-sexed was not the best long-term policy. Jerry Selmer and I were successive Sheriffs who could read the handwriting on the wall. We undertook the task of "desexing" the Range Rules quietly, because there was some pretty adamant opposition. In the immortal words of Donald Duke, "Over my dead body."

We worked very carefully through several drafts, changing "gentlemen" to simply "members," and striking down "he shall" to become "they will." Jerry had been a part of the City government and had watched law-

yers dip their fingers into the spiny depths of legal documents. Most changes were fairly easy; the hard part was selling the idea to the Corral. The discussion was brought forward slowly and carefully. Finally, it was agreed the idea of change should be presented for a vote of the entire membership, both Full and Corresponding Members. The idea was finally presented to the membership was approved by a vast majority—with some stipulations. The main point was that anyone proposed for membership should be a qualified individual, someone clearly associated with the Western history community and a respected authority therein. The first such proposed member was Gloria Lothrop. She was accepted, with minor grumbling and threats of resignations. Jerry and I were both pleased and relieved at getting through this minor crisis pretty much unscathed and without losing any good friends.

Carl Dentzel, Director and Major Domo of the Southwest Museum, was someone I always characterized as the only person I knew who could swagger sitting down. He was an enormous presence wherever he appeared. He was THE authority on Western Indian artifacts and let everyone know it. He was the successor, several times removed, of Charles Lummis, another vast ego. Carl certainly outweighed Charlie by a good 100 pounds and knew how to throw his weight around.

On the other hand there was Dudley Gordon. This somewhat shy Englishman enjoyed the fact that he was short and slim. He prided himself on the fact that Lummis' corduroy suit fit him to a tee. Dudley had a thin grey mustache, twinkly eyes and when he rose to announce his presence at meetings he was always "Dudley Gordon" with a singular upward singsong intonation. He was fun and knew Charlie Lummis inside out.

Another of my favorite Westerner characters was Henry (Hank) Clifford. He was my sponsor for entry into Clampers, for which most of my friends have now forgiven him. Henry collected gold coins from the 19th century along with books. He had a complete set of the Zamorano 80, the only one in private hands. The notorious book thief Steven Bloomberg tried going through Henry's trash

to find a way into his Pasadena home to steal some of the collection. He was unsuccessful. There are too many stories to tell about Henry, but he was infamous for his ability to tell the most outrageously dirty jokes with a completely straight face. I had the pleasure of picking Henry up at his home for meetings after his night driving ability faltered. His wife Lucy would meet me at the door with one of her special martinis served in an 8-ounce glass. We always seemed to make it to Taix and back in one piece.

Perhaps the best story Hank Clifford told was about the acquisition of his favorite bolo tie slide. When chewing gum magnate William Wrigley's widow died, their house on Orange Grove in Pasadena was turned into the Tournament of Roses headquarters. In so doing, there was an auction of personal effects, and Hank went. Coming away a friend accosted him and asked what he had bought. "Well, I bought two ivory billiard balls, but I don't know why I did," he said. "Ok, said the friend, "give me one and I'll carve you a nice bolo tie slide." So the friend took one, and in due course returned a handsome ivory bolo slide with a relief carved antelope head, very skillfully done. Henry wore it for years at various Westerner functions and each time someone admired it Hank would tell them, "You are looking at the only bolo slide ever carved from one of Mr. Wrigley's balls." When Hank died, Lucy was kind enough to give the slide to me, which I wear now with some pride. I also greatly enjoy expounding on the story of its creation.

A giant in western history was Ray Allen Billington, one of the primary scholars at the Huntington Library. He wrote and edited many books about the Western Frontier. He looked rather stern but was an interesting character. He started his career by being kicked out of the University of Michigan. He quickly recovered and went on to earn a PhD. from Harvard and degrees from Oxford and other prestigious institutions. He was an active member of the LA Corral and Sheriff in 1975. He died in 1981, and shortly after his passing his last book was published, *Limericks Historical and Hysterical, Plagiarized, Arranged, Annotated, and Some Written by Ray Allen*

Billington. This volume was the culmination of 50 years of collecting. As is required of limericks, they are consistently funny and all are dirty. In the acknowledgement Ray noted, "Its compilation has afforded me more pleasure than writing any of the historical works that are my usual medium." What a guy.

There are many more characters I could mention. Jack Kemble was our resident maritime expert. His first round-the-world trip was when he was 9 years old. He collected everything from posters to shipboard menus, and matchbook covers, and left whole bookcases of stuff to the Huntington Library when he died happily on a deck chair aboard a liner in the South Pacific.

Wade Kittell was someone you probably never heard of. A quiet guy who lived with his mother in Long Beach and enjoyed all of our functions. Wade had two loves, the Masons and the Westerners. When he passed away, we were pleasantly surprised to learn he had left his estate to be divided equally between them. The Los Angeles Corral received over 50 thousand dollars. I was one of only two Westerners to attend his funeral. A tip of the hat to Wade, thanks, and farewell.

Don Meadows was the highly revered historian of Orange County. Puffing on his pipe, Don could answer any question about the County he loved and lived in most of his life. His wife finally convinced him that they should move closer to their daughter and her family. After 50 years or so watching Orange County grow, Don and his wife moved to the wonderful garden spot of...Yuba City? *Sic transit gloria*, Don withered and shortly thereafter died, probably of boredom.

It now occurs to me that everyone I have written about is dead, except for Monsignor Weber, who is probably immortal. The good die young, but some of us stick around just to be able to laugh up our sleeves at our memories. I won't step on Nick Curry's toes by writing about Donald Duke. Nick has all the stories and I have run out of space anyway. Suffice it to say, the Westerners has been a wonderful part of my life. I hope to keep enjoying the company of this fabulous group of characters forever.

My Friendship with John W. Robinson and Willis Osborne

Paul H. Rippens, 2005 Sheriff

As I sat at my desk in the Forestry Office of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, I had a clear view of the door and as such, could see everyone who entered or left the office complex. One day in 1988, a figure appeared in the doorway and, even though we had never met, I knew in an instant that it was John Robinson. I jumped, possibly bolted, out of my chair and, before our secretaries could ask if they could help him, I was standing in front of him and said, "You're John Robinson." Little did I know that this would be the start of a thirty-year friendship and an introduction to another new friend, Willis Osborne.

As years passed, John asked if I would like to join the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. Not knowing anything about the Westerners, I said "sure" and he sponsored me so that in 1992 I became a member. After meeting many wonderful people with the LA Corral, I was invited to attend the San Dimas Corral, which my wife Pat and I soon joined and became friends with Willis Osborne.

Over the next twenty years, John, Willis and I spent many great times together. We gave tours of the old Ridge Route, and they came along as I gave tours of the Saint Francis Dam site. We attended postcard shows from San Diego to the San Fernando Valley, and it was John and Willis that got me interested in collecting old postcards—now numbering in the hundreds. When attending the postcard shows in Pasadena (Elk's Lodge), we always had to stop at one of the cafeterias that both John and Willis loved to visit. As I recall, one of them was named "Beadles." Always lots of food at an inexpensive price so there was more to spend on postcards.

One of my favorite stories regarding John was when he was working on his book, *Gateways to Southern California*, published in 2005. John had tried for months to get permission from the Tejón Ranch to enter the ranch property in an attempt to find the old road that was used across the ranch before the use of Grapevine Canyon—the present



Figure 12: Paul Rippens in the Forestry Office, Los Angeles County Fire Dept., 1988. Rippens photo.

location of Interstate 5. The Tejón Ranch people were not too welcoming and would not even return John's calls or answer his letters. We discussed that problem one evening, and I said I would contact a friend with the Kern County Fire Department to see if he could get us access. I made the contact, and, on June 20, 1997, John, Willis, and I met with Fire Captain Jack Ringer and, courtesy of the Kern County Fire Department, spent the entire day on the back roads and canyons of the Tejón Ranch. We never found the old road John was looking for but we sure had a wonderful day.

John was always encouraging Willis and me to write books and to share the knowledge we had about Southern California. When I decided to write a book on the Mount Lowe Railway, John gave me a lot of information he had and told me to use whatever I wanted of his writings. The first chapter in

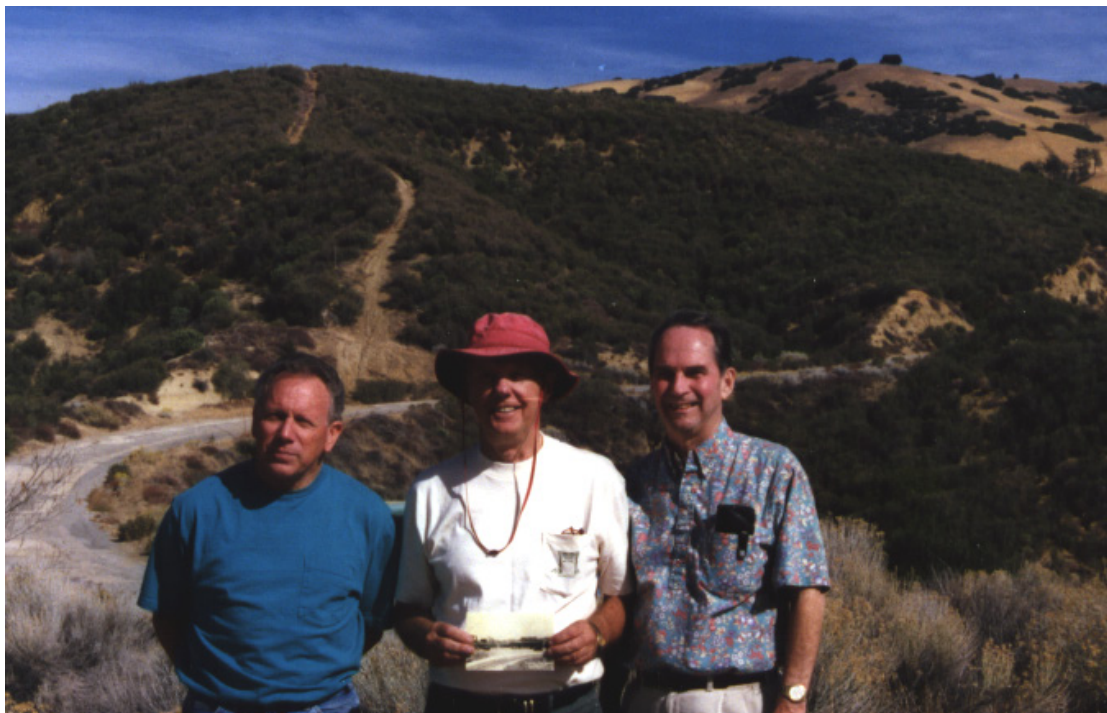


Figure 13: Paul Rippens, John Robinson, and Willis Osborne at the site of Tumble Inn on the old ridge route, c. 1997. Photo from Rippens collection.

my hikers' guide to the Mt. Lowe Railway is by John, used with his permission, and I'm proud to have been allowed to use his story.

John's constant badgering of Willis to write a book on Mt. Baldy and San Antonio Canyon finally paid off in 2005 when Willis published his book on the canyon. I was fortunate to be able to do all the computer work for Willis that made his publication possible. We spent a lot of time together. It was a very special time.

Another special time with John and Willis included other members of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. Ramón and Mary Ann Otero were members and lived in a beautiful 1893 Victorian home in Monrovia. Ramón and Mary Ann used to invite some members of the Westerners to join them for an early New Year's celebration and that included John, Willis, Froylán and Millie Tiscareño, Gary and Vickie Turner, Bill and Jeanette Davis, my wife Pat and myself. We would arrive about 5:00 p.m., have a couple of drinks, enjoy dinner and visit until about 9:00 p.m. before we departed for the safety of

our homes. The next day, New Year's Day, we would all get together again at the home of Bill and Jeanette Davis for their annual gathering of friends. I sure miss those get-togethers.

Willis was a twin and his brother Bill and his wife Carolyn also became friends. They would also attend Westerners but not as often as Willis. When Willis' book on San Antonio Canyon came out, Bill and Carolyn had a celebratory dinner at their home to honor Willis and to thank John and me for our help in getting the book published. It was a memorable evening.

Willis and Bill grew up in East Los Angeles in a home that their father built and continued to add on to, as I understand it. They both attended USC after serving in the Navy at the end of WWII. They were stationed in Hawaii, really tough duty. Bill also became an educator.

The time we spent together at the Westerners, both the Los Angeles and the San Dimas Corrals, were also special times. Many times John would drive to Glendora and

meet Willis and me at the Osborne house and we would ride to the Los Angeles Westerners together. More time to share stories. Later, I would drive to Glendora and pick Willis up to attend the monthly dinner meetings or the Fandango or Rendezvous. When I moved to Las Vegas in 2008, not being around John and Willis was one of the most difficult things to overcome. My move back to Southern California in 2014 allowed us to continue our friendship on a more personal level, but by this time both John and Willis were starting to slow down, an unfortunate sign of things to come.

One of the things that impressed me most about both John and Willis was their way of life. Both men were well educated and spent their careers as educators. I'm not sure about John, but Willis was a good Christian man. He spoke many times about his involvement with his church, but he never pushed his re-

ligion off on anyone. In the time I spent with these two men, I cannot ever recall hearing any disparaging remarks about anyone. If they did not like someone, they kept it to themselves and did not voice their opinion about that person to anyone. Also, I cannot ever recall either man using profanity. It was just not their way, and I greatly admire them both for the way they conducted their lives.

As I write this, it's hard to believe that both Willis and John have passed on. They had so much knowledge stored away in their brains, and I was fortunate to be able to hear their stories and share their love for the mountains and for Southern California history. I will always hold the time we spent together close to my heart, and I will always have a love for these two men. Rest in Peace my friends and enjoy your time together once again.

Corral Memories

Mark Hall-Patton

I joined the Los Angeles Corral in the mid-1980s at the invitation of Stan Malora. I was at a book sale at the Galleria Mall in the San Fernando Valley, at a point in my career when I was founding the Anaheim Museum, and carefully reviewing Western and California history books. Stan started a conversation about what I was buying, and quickly ascertained my collecting interests. He told me about the Westerners, and I accepted his invitation to a meeting. Stan proposed me for membership, for which I am quite grateful.

I remember well, as a Corresponding Member, attending every third month at *Les Freres Taix*, watching Iron Eyes Cody as the daguerrotypist taking photos with his instamatic, talking with historians whose work I knew and collected, and generally enjoying myself greatly.

I would always try to give myself enough time to get by Dawson's or one of the other bookstores in LA to spend a few dollars I shouldn't have—museum directors were not

paid well at new 501(c)3 institutions—but my wife trusted that the bills were still being paid. One of the meetings I remember from that era was an evening when Olaf Wieghorst's son handed out signed prints of one of his works to all in attendance as a keepsake. I still have mine on the wall.

I started my set of Brand Books with number 15, which had been deeply discounted at the time, and over the years completed the set. The *Branding Iron* took more time, but I completed it as well.

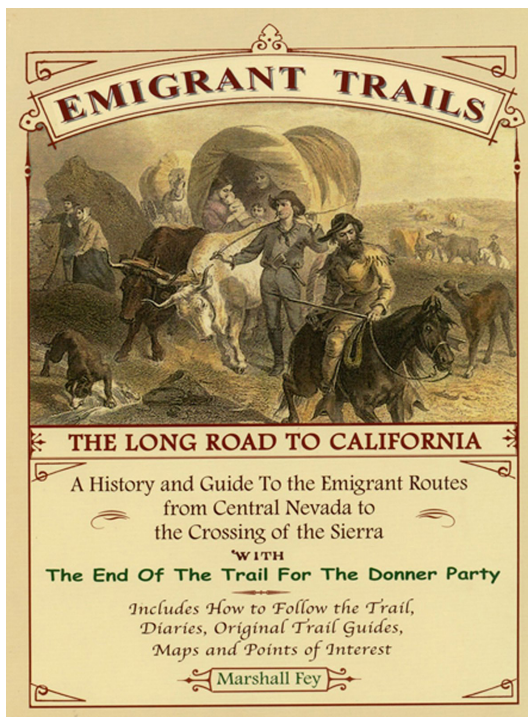
Unfortunately, my profession took me away from SoCal, but I retained my membership throughout the years and started coming back a couple of years ago with my long-time friend, the late Phil Brigandi. I could drive over from southern Nevada, bunk at his place, and have a great evening with the Corral enjoying the camaraderie and history. Though it won't be with Phil, I am looking forward to when I can return to meetings from the wilds of southern Nevada after we all arise from the viral impacts of COVID-19.

Down the Western Book Trail . . .

EMIGRANT TRAILS: *The Long Road to California. A History and Guide to the Emigrant Routes from Central Nevada to the Crossing of the Sierra, with The End of the Trail for the Donner Party* (3rd Revised Edition) by Marshall Fey, Stanley W. Paher, Jack Lepisto and Sam Toll, Nevada Publications, Reno, NV. 224 pages, maps, color illustrations, black and white historic photographs, bibliography, index. Hardbound \$29.95, Softbound \$19.95.

Some of the most compelling kinds of American literature are the “trail diaries” of the Forty-Niners and their many fewer predecessors, detailing their daily travails as they headed overland westwards to California. Some Argonauts made the trek with few problems, others got lost or were even misdirected, while still others perished and were buried by the side of the trail. Their hand-written accounts continue to be “discovered” year after year in musty attics or subterranean archives. These are published as new additions to the ever-growing list of eyewitness accounts of how the “old west” used to be long before interstates, motels, and fast-food chains profaned its landscapes. Fortunately, most stretches of the trails these emigrants traveled still remain far from modern settlements and populated areas. The old wagon ruts can occasionally be found in near-pristine condition as can the lonely cairns covering the bodies of those emigrants who died, chasing their dreams, before they ever reached the promised land of California.

One of the most rewarding activities that any amateur or professional historian can undertake is to retrace the routes these emigrants took, always, of course, taking care to avoid disturbing the physical evidence for them. The essential guide to such peregrinations is Fey et al.’s *Emigrant Trails: The Long Road to California*. This wonderful book maps out the routes cutting across the southern Great Basin towards the daunting barrier of the Sierra Nevada, cataloging historical monuments and permanent trail markers along



the way. Interspersed with its very precise maps and locational photographs are historical vignettes taken from contemporary trail diaries, newspapers, and other sources. These bring the “trail experience” of 170+ years ago back to life in sharp detail. The third, revised, edition of the classic *Emigrant Trails* concentrates on four main pathways: The Humboldt River Route; The Truckee River Route; The Carson River Route; and the Johnson Pass Route. A useful introductory section sets the scene for these westward migrations, and a comprehensive bibliography helps neophyte trail buffs to broaden their historical horizons with references to many first-person eyewitness accounts and later interpretive analyses.

For nearly a hundred years concerned individuals have done their best to direct modern roads and other potentially destructive developments away from fragile trail traces dating as early as the 1840s. More recently, Marshall Fey and his friends and associates of the *Nevada Emigrant Trail Marking Committee* (NETMC), organized in 1967, became the very first conservation-oriented

group to actively protect many stretches of these emigrant trails. They did so by posting the now-familiar “T” markers of railroad track sections with permanent inscriptions attached. During more than fifty years of altruistic, protective work, NETMC has placed more than 600 of these trail markers in Nevada, Oregon, and Idaho.

The Silver State still has the wide-open spaces that used to be so common throughout the west. In fact, by almost any yardstick, Nevada only boasts two true cities, both of them commanding ever-growing suburban sprawls, Reno to the north, and Las Vegas to the south. Fortunately, most of the rest of the state remains thinly populated, and still of-

fers sanctuary for distressed urbanites from all points of the compass seeking solitude. And what better way to commune with nature, away from the teeming fleshpots of the modern world, than by retracing the steps of those hardy pioneers that rode, but almost as often walked, across an entire continent.

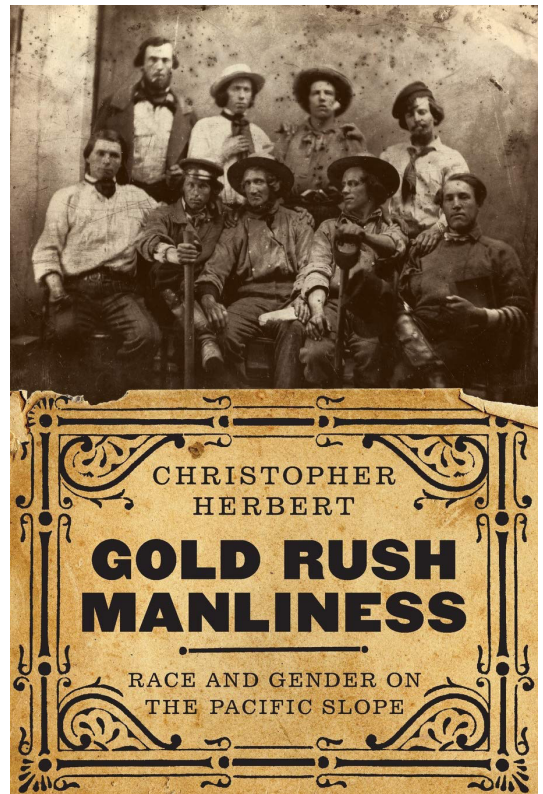
No present-day historian of the California Gold Rush can say their education is truly complete until they have walked at least one of the old Emigrant Trails, and re-lived the experiences of those who headed westward four or five generations ago. Highly Recommended.

— Brian Dervin Dillon, Ph.D.

GOLD RUSH MANLINESS: *Race and Gender on the Pacific Slope*, by Christopher Herbert, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018. 269 pp. Appendices, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Paperback, \$30.00.

Seeking fortunes unimaginable in the monotonous Yankee life back east, many American men showed their ruggedness and hardworking spirit as they caught gold fever. Although this makes for a satisfyingly heroic story, it is a fantasy that conceals the social problems and identity crises of the Gold Rush. In *Gold Rush Manliness*, Christopher Herbert demonstrates how race and gender reshaped modern society on the West Coast. The book examines the gold rushes in California and British Columbia to illustrate the contrasts and compromises that changed the white western man: the seafaring and overland routes of migration; English principles conflicting with American ones; and the ways that men sought to “prove” their manliness in the unfamiliar and “anarchic” ethnic diversity of the frontier. The Californian and British Columbian gold rushes paved the way for the evolution of a new American masculinity that combined elements of dandyism and ruggedness with white supremacy.

Herbert keeps the reader’s focus with a style that lays a solid foundation. The historical groundwork he builds throughout the text shows the inseparable relationship be-



tween race and gender in the West. Herbert describes common social situations that challenged miners’ sense of manliness, which is best illustrated in chapter four, “Pursuing Dame Fortune: Risk and Reward during the Gold Rushes.” This chapter discusses how the gambling hall was a place where the

white miner could prove his fearlessness to WASP peers and non-white rivals, but could also tarnish his reputation by indulging in vice. By exposing the fundamental contradictions of white masculinity, Herbert reveals to what extent the gold rush environment influenced white men and, in turn, set the course for western culture.

Though Herbert clearly shows the evolution of white manliness and its social and political consequences—especially through white supremacy and the fear of emasculation—he misses an opportunity to fully explore other racial and ethnic perspectives. Gold fever was colorblind: Native Californians and Canadian First Nations; Latino *Californios*, Mexicans, and Chileans; and immigrants from faraway China all sought their fortunes in California and British Columbia. What non-Anglo-Americans thought of this white, “manly” posturing is underemphasized. While Herbert’s book discussed different ways that miners might besmirch their good white character, or otherwise be denied the privilege to prove it to begin with, he also does not explicitly cover in-depth and personal examples of white non-conformity. Herbert underplays

how dropouts from the school of white manliness continued to thrive and provoke the so-called “good men,” outside of the reactions of said “good men.” Nevertheless, the logic of Herbert’s argument delivers on a solid frame of reference for a daring chapter of North American history.

Not a dull moment could be found in Herbert’s review of the race for riches in the mid-nineteenth century. Herbert proves himself to be a talented historian worth reading. *Gold Rush Manliness* earns a strong recommendation for students, scholars, and lovers of history, specifically for those who are interested in expanding their social understanding of the gold rushes. For readers in need of a strong start in their own study, Herbert has produced a volume tightly packed with sharp observations and thorough research for further reference. The text reads well and is easy to pick up, in or out of academia. American history tends to focus on the famous Gold Rush, but Herbert’s book is a fresh take on an old topic. In the last echoes of the excitement over gold, the Pacific Slope had changed, for better or for worse, at the mercy of the men that defined it.

—Arkaz Vardanyan

Corral Election News

2020, as the popular saying goes, was a *lost year*. The first rumblings of COVID-19 came in late February, and by St. Patrick’s Day, our Los Angeles Corral was in lockdown mode. Only three monthly Roundups were held at the beginning of the year, and then no more. Nor did we celebrate our annual *Fandango* nor *Rendezvous*, for the very first time in our 75-year history.

After much discussion amongst the Trail Bosses, other Corrals, and the Home Ranch, we determined that since all Trail Bosses had been shortchanged through no fault of their own, it was only fair to extend their term of office by another year. The ballots went out, and the votes have been tabulated. So, as the result of the *only uncontested election* of November 2020, we are pleased to announce

our newly-elected Trail Bosses for 2021:

Sheriff:	Ann Shea
Deputy Sheriff:	Pete Fries
Registrar of	
Marks and Brands:	Michele Clark
Keeper of the Chips:	John Shea
Publications Editor:	John Dillon

We thank the outgoing Trail Bosses for their service and hope that the coming year proves to be more favorable to our Corral activities: better just a *lost year* than a *last year*. We hope to see all of our Trail Bosses and to renew acquaintance with all of our members next year.

— Brian Dervin Dillon, Westerners
International Representative

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE. . .
Los Angeles Corral Winners of the 2019
Westerners International Competitions

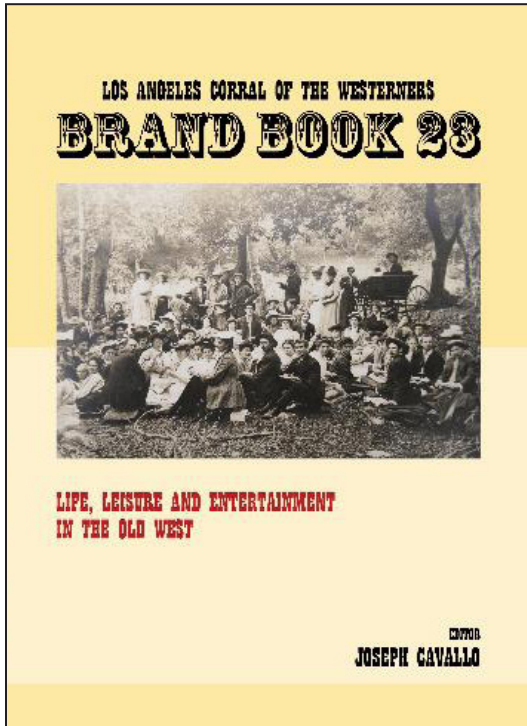
- 1. First Place, Heads Up Award for BEST LARGE CORRAL:**
James Macklin, Sheriff
- 2. Second Place (tie) for the Co-Founders Award for BEST BOOK:**
Geraldine Knatz, for *Port of Los Angeles*.
- 3. Third Place, Coke Wood Award for BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE:**
Brian Dervin Dillon, for Cowboys of Science Say Make Mine Mules,
Branding Iron No. 295.
- 4. First Place, Fred Olds COWBOY POETRY AWARD:**
Abe Hoffman, for Drifter, Work Horse, and Ode to a Western Outhouse.
Keepsake No. 50.
- 5. Second Place, Fred Olds COWBOY POETRY AWARD:**
Gary Turner, for Lonesome Cowboy, The Deadly Northwind, and
Sourdough's Advice. *Keepsake* No. 50.

Our good friend Dr. Bonney MacDonald, Westerners International Chair, wrote:

Please pass along hearty congratulations from the Home Ranch. You folks set the bar, and lots of other corrals can learn from how you organize events, publications, and plain ol' Western enthusiasm!

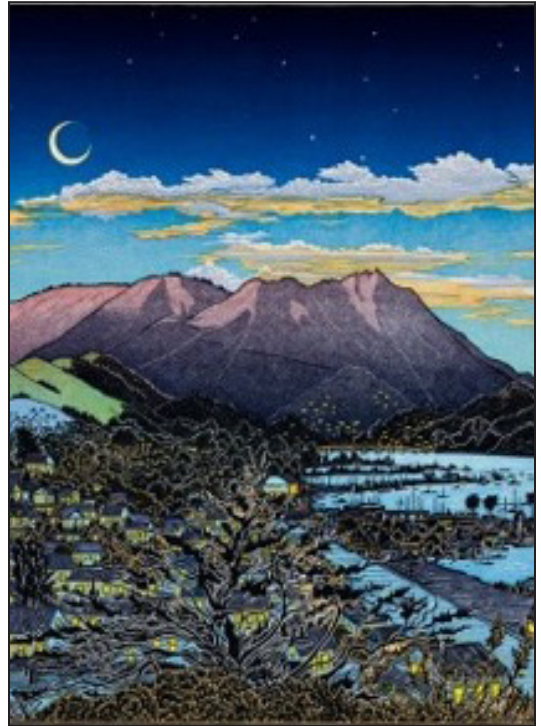


Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners Brand Books:



BB 23 Still Available!

Brand Book 23, edited by Joseph Cavallo, is *Life, Leisure and Entertainment in the Old West*. It contains ten outstanding chapters, all by leading authors from the Los Angeles Corral. Price for L.A. Corral Members: \$40. Non-Westerners price is \$60.00+5.00 shipping. Please send orders, including your return mailing address, to: PO Box 1891, San Gabriel, CA 91778, checks payable to *Westerners, Los Angeles Corral*, including a shipping charge of \$5 for the first copy and \$2 for each additional copy for USA mailings. Questions? Please call BB 23 Editor Joseph Cavallo at (626) 372-5126 to reserve your copy.



BB 24 Just Published!

Brand Book 24, edited by Brian Dervin Dillon, is *Aloha, Amigos! The Richard H. Dillon Memorial Volume*. Dick Dillon (1924-2016) was a world-famous western historian, librarian, teacher, and public speaker. He was the author of dozens of prize-winning full-length books, hundreds of articles, and more than a thousand book reviews. A 4th generation Californian and WWII WIA combat veteran, Dick Dillon was an active member of the Los Angeles and the San Francisco Corrals for more than 60 years, and was named Westerners International Living Legend No. 46 in 2003. *Aloha Amigos* incorporates a biography of RHD, culture-historical studies and paeans by his friends and admirers, and a comprehensive bibliography of his published works. Contributors from four different Westerners Corrals include Will Bagley, Peter Blodgett, John Boessenecker, Matthew Boxt, Phil Brigandi, Robert Chandler, David Dary, James Delgado, Brian Dervin Dillon, Lynn Downey, Abraham Hoffman, Gary Kurutz, Valerie Sherer Mathes, James Shuttleworth, and Francis J. Weber. Foreword by Kevin Starr, cover art by Tommy Killion. Price for all Westerners is \$25.00, plus a \$5.00 shipping charge for U.S. orders. Non-Westerners price is \$35.00 + 5.00 shipping. Please make your check out to *Westerners, Los Angeles Corral*. Send your order, with return address, to the Editor, Brian D. Dillon. Contact him via Email for the mailing address for your order at briandervindillon@gmail.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Friday, October 8 & Saturday, October 9, 2021

Only 11 Months Before (*COVID-19 Permitting*) Our Fabulous

Los Angeles Corral 75th Anniversary/ Westerners International 3rd Annual Gather!

Saddle Up Yer Cayuse, Dowse the Chuckwagon Fire, and
Head Down from the Rimrock!



Photo by Maynard Dixon, Arizona, 1917. Original caption: *More Beans, Mr. Taggart?*

**Join Us at the Autry Museum, San Fernando Mission, and the Hacienda
Turner for Two Days of Educational Entertainment, Music, Dancing,
Dining, Drinking, the Biggest Western Book Auction in the U.S. of A.,
Eskimo Wrestling, Shovel Racing, Hot Rods, Prestidigitation, and the
WI Annual Awards Ceremony!**

**Information About How to Sign Up for this Landmark Event To Be Announced in
the Spring and Summer, 2021, *Branding Iron* Issues!**