



Figure 1: Cochise Council Rock in southeastern Arizona. Atop this rock treaty talks were conducted in 1872 between U.S. Army Major General Oliver O. Howard and Cochise, one of the most famous of all Apache war leaders. The Apaches agreed to end their depredations and the Army agreed to end its pursuits. Unfortunately, the fragile peace negotiated here did not last. Brito photo, October 6, 2014.

Cochise Council Rock

By Frank J. Brito

Introduction

Over the past forty-plus years I have made semi-annual visits to New Mexico and Arizona. The primary purpose of these extended explorations of the American Southwest was to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors and research my family's roots.¹

My interest in Southwestern history was broadened to study other noteworthy events, sometimes related to family, sometimes not. My field research often resulted in discovering sites and locations where historic events occurred, many of them geographically distant, remote, and difficult of access. Equally

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Editor's Corner . . .

This summer has been hot, but so too have been the presses of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners! In this 311th issue of *The Branding Iron*, Frank Brito explores the history and long-forgotten location of Cochise Council Rock in Arizona, the scene of a peace treaty between the U.S. and the Chokonen Apaches in 1872. In the next article, Abe Hoffman destroys California vicariously through the terrible tremors of Tinseltown. Drop and cover!

If you missed any of the meetings this summer, you can still experience our Fandango and Roundups through summaries

written by Gary Turner, Arkaz Vardanyan, and this editor. Looking to expand your book collection? See our book reviews by Brian D. Dillon and Deke Keasby.

Many "Attaboys!" to the L.A. Corral members and friends of the Corral who contribute articles to *The Branding Iron*. It is their passion for history that makes this publication one we can all enjoy. Can't do it without you! If you have ideas for articles you would like to publish in a future publication, feel free to contact me.

John Dillon
John.Dervin.Dillon@gmail.com

often, I didn't find what I was looking for, or results were not clear-cut. I have learned over time that failure is always an option in historical field research.

My research trip of October, 2014 was one of my last due to advancing years. Despite a very ambitious agenda this trip was unusually successful since all of the goals listed below were achieved. These were to locate the sites of, or to visit:

1: The 1882 Battle of Big Dry Wash in Arizona that ended the Western Apache Wars with the defeat of Na-ti-o-tish, the White Mountain Apache.

2: The Globe, Arizona cemetery to see the headstones of Al Sieber, Chief of Scouts during the Apache Wars; and Glenn Reynolds, the Gila County, Arizona Sheriff killed by the Apache Kid.

3: York's Ranch in Eastern Arizona and offer to my companions my conclusions as to where the Apaches Naiche and Gerónimo's 1882 attack occurred, and show them the remnants of the old wagon road. Berndt Kühn and I previously researched this location.

4: The Chihenne Apache Chief Victorio's May 1880 attack on the Lyon's and Campbell wagons on the Overland Mail Road in Cooke's Canyon, New Mexico.

5: Confer with Jody Lyons-Cline, Pinos Altos, New Mexico researcher and author.

6: The 1851 Royce Oatman Family Massacre site in Southern Arizona on the Southern Emigrant Trail, also called the Mormon Battalion Road. Then, via four wheel drive vehicle, conduct a Billy Fourr family representative to the Oatman graves and the pioneer Fourr homestead and family cemetery on the Gila River.

7: Try to locate Council Rock in the Dragoon Mountains of Southern Arizona. This was the site of General Oliver Otis Howard's 1872 treaty with Chokonen Apache Chief Cochise, which temporarily ended the Apache Wars. Some authors call it the Treaty Rock or Rocks.

All seven of the above objectives were realized. making this research trip a rare and complete achievement. In the coming years, some of these adventures will be memorial-

ized in print. The present study is devoted to the seventh and final one on the list, my visit to Cochise Council Rock. General Howard's peace Council with Cochise is well-documented, has been much written about by historians and even portrayed in films. The Council Rock site, on the other hand, is not generally known. In fact, its exact location was uncertain until my historian friends and I confirmed its position through what archaeologists call "ground truthing" as a follow-up to extensive preparatory research by local expert Dr. Douglas Hamilton.

Cochise and the Apaches

All western Americans recall that Cochise² was the great Chief of the Chokonen Band of the Chiricahua Apaches. Books, Hollywood films and television episodes have portrayed him as handsome, strong, wise, honest and fair. This is an assessment without controversy because both Americans and his own tribal members described him as such. In the 1840s and 1850s, Cochise was troubled by the incursion of Americans into *Apachería*. These were visits of short duration, by explorers and military groups passing through, not staying to exploit nor deplete the natural resources the Apaches utilized.

This situation began to change when permanent U.S. Army forts were established and John Butterfield's Overland Mail Company began erecting stations in areas near the same permanent water sources the Apaches relied upon within this generally arid region (Figure 2). During the construction of buildings and corrals, Overland Mail employees were instructed not to build their stations immediately adjacent to the springs, but to establish them several hundred yards away. This created a buffer which did not impede the Apache's traditional access. In one example of cooperation, Overland Mail Company employees at Apache Pass hired Chokonen tribal members to cut hay for their mules and horses.

Present-day urban Americans think of "home" as a shelter inside walls, with a roof protecting them from the elements, windows to look through and a door with a strong



Figure 2: Apache Country. The Chiricahua Mountains of Southeast Arizona, which became part of Cochise's Reservation in 1872, after the treaty was concluded at Council Rock. The Dragoon Mountains are farther west. Brito photo, taken from Bill Cavaliere's ranch in 2014.

lock. However, to a Native American living in the American Southwest in the mid-19th century, "home" could be several locations at different times of the year, depending on the specific group's customary way of providing refuge and sustenance for itself. Weather, the presence or absence of game animals and food plants, and especially the seasonality of water sources, security from enemies and the ability to observe terrain were important factors in the location of settlements. An escape route was vital in the event of attack. The primary home of Cochise in the Dragoon Mountains had many of these advantages and it was there that General Howard and Lieutenant Sladen met that famous chief of the Chokonens to negotiate the peace agreement of 1872. It is also where Cochise died peacefully in Tom Jeffords' presence in 1874.

The Chokonens are one of four bands of the Chiricahua Apaches. The others are the Chihenne (the Red Paint People or Warm Springs Band), the Bedonkohe and the Nednhi. Each band maintained its own territory, but boundaries were fluid and overlapped. In aggregate all of these allied people lived in a very large part of what is now

Arizona, New Mexico, and adjacent Sonora and Chihuahua, what was called *Apachería*, first by the Spaniards, then the Mexicans. The Chokonens were located near the middle of *Apachería*. Their neighbors were the Nednhi to the south in Mexico, the Bedonkohe to the northwest in Arizona, and the Chihenne to the Northeast overlapping into New Mexico.

Good relations between the four bands usually existed and cooperation in hunts, war, and religious ceremonies maintained these bonds. Marriage between Apaches further strengthened their social, political, and military ties. The Apache were an historically nomadic people that built temporary shelters of brush sometimes covered by leaves and animal skins. These shelters were later called *wikiups* by the Anglo-Americans. Their temporary or semi-permanent locations were called *rancherías* by the Spaniards and this name continued in use by the Mexicans, then the Americans: the term is best translated as "temporary camp" in English.

When his band was not traveling, Cochise's preferred *ranchería* was at the base of a boulder-strewn range in the Dragoon Mountains in Southern Arizona (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The boulder-strewn base of the Dragoon Mountains in the Cochise Stronghold, near where the 1872 treaty was concluded at Council Rock. The lack of local landmarks makes locating Cochise Council Rock and Cochise's ranchería extremely difficult, and ensures site preservation. Brito photo.

Cochise had a favorite boulder that had a miles-long view in three directions of the valley below. In back was a steep and rugged incline filled with large boulders. This made escape possible should his band come under attack, with many safe obstacles from which to hide, defend, return fire, and retard enemy advancement. His home *ranchería* was a safe and defensible site. Cochise's boulder also had a niche behind it that provided shelter from the cold, rain and snow. In the winter, temperatures in the Dragoon Mountain can drop to the low teens, far below freezing.

War and Peace in *Apachería*

The delicate peace between the very few Whites and Cochise's Apaches ended after a young U.S. Army officer, Second Lieutenant George Bascom, perpetrated a grievous insult to Cochise and his followers in 1861. Falsely accusing Cochise's band of kidnapping an American youth, Bascom trapped Cochise in a tent, but the Apache leader escaped. When peace negotiations failed, Bascom captured, and then hanged, Cochise's brother Coyuntura.³ These brutal and thoughtless ac-

tions incited the Apache Wars which lasted more than a decade, until 1872.

The 1950 Hollywood movie *Broken Arrow* introduced the historical protagonist Tom Jeffords (Figure 5) to the uninformed and misinformed movie-viewing public. Loosely based on actual events, the film was an inaccurate portrayal of the primary characters in the historical events it dramatized. Poor casting and a contrived love interest were among the movie's shortcomings. The real Tom Jeffords, however, played a vital role in ending the Chiricahua Apache Wars with the United States, a goal he worked towards for three and one-half years. While the peace achieved was only temporary, and the Apache Wars resumed later because of misguided Interior Department policy, that of reservation concentration,⁴ the truce Jeffords helped broker came about through a series of extraordinary events.

Tom Jeffords had established a firm relationship with Cochise as an Overland Mail Employee as early as 1858. It could be considered a close friendship, as both men spoke the truth to the other. Honesty was an important attribute in Cochise's values. With the

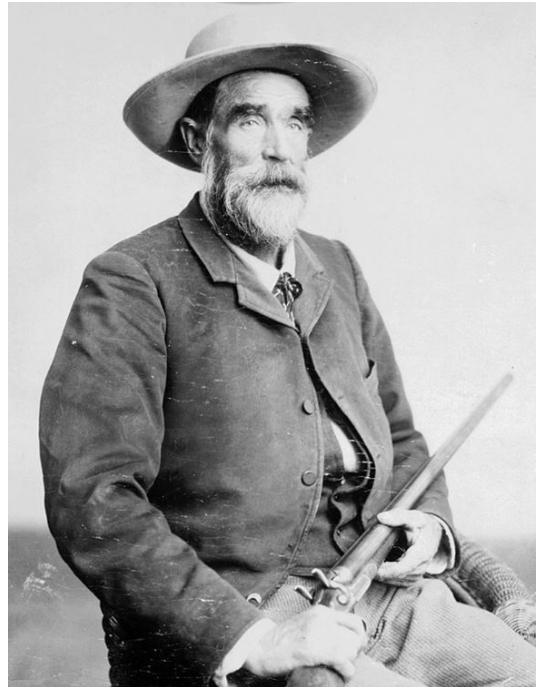


Figure 4 (Left): Naiche, the youngest son of Cochise, and an hereditary Chokonon Apache chief. He was said to greatly resemble his father, of whom no reliable photograph is known to exist. Naiche called himself the Bueno Amigo (good friend) of Lieutenant Sladen. Figure 5 (Right): Thomas Jeffords, scout and good friend of Cochise. Jeffords led General Howard and Lieutenant Sladen to Cochise's camp in the Dragoon Mountains of Arizona. Both photos from the internet, in the public domain.

peace broken at Apache Pass by Lieutenant Bascom, Cochise took to the warpath. For his part, Jeffords followed other pursuits when the Overland Mail's southern Route was rerouted due to the new, Civil War, political and military realities.

By 1871, however, ten years after the Bascom incident at Apache Pass, both the Americans and Cochise were weary of conflict. Each sought to end it, but Cochise was cautious because his father-in-law, the great Chihenne Chief Mangas Coloradas, had been lured into a peace talk and was despicably murdered by California Column General Joseph Rodman West. The Americans were equally hesitant to contact Cochise because his band had attacked and killed many American ranchers, soldiers and travelers. A way to bring the two sides together without spilling blood was problematic. Thomas Jeffords was eventually recognized as the only non-Apache that enjoyed Cochise's confidence. A method to exploit their previous

relationship obviously had to be explored.

The President and the U.S. Army Choose Wisely

During the Civil War, United States Army General Oliver Otis Howard (Figure 6) was the commander of General Sherman's IV Corps that helped defeat the Confederate Army in Georgia. Howard was a devout Christian and sometimes ridiculed with the nick-name "Old Prayer Book." He was more politely called "The Christian General." Howard lost his right arm during the Battle of Fair Oaks, and had been awarded the Medal of Honor. President Ulysses Grant had faith in Howard as a man that might bring peace to the Southwest. Howard was known to be fearless and implicitly believed that under the direst of circumstances when there was good to be accomplished, God would protect him. During President Grant's administration, General Howard headed the Freedmen's

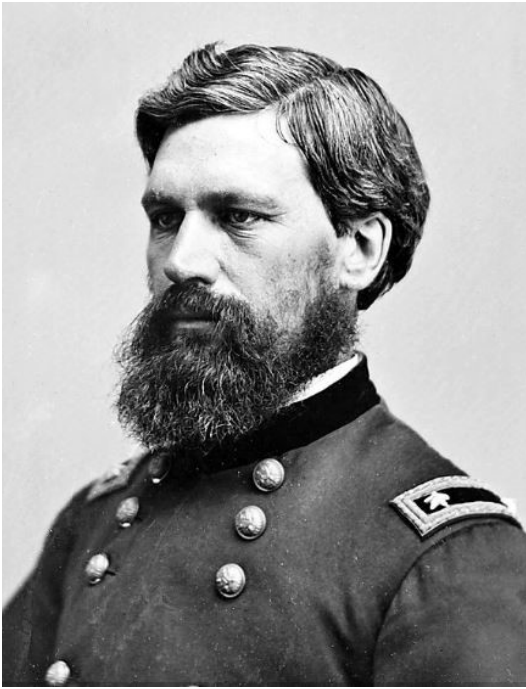


Figure 6 (Left): Major General Oliver Otis Howard. He was a Corps Commander under General W.T. Sherman during his Civil War “March to the Sea.” Photo by Matthew Brady, courtesy of the Library of Congress. **Figure 7 (Right):** Lieutenant Joseph Alton Sladen, Aide de Camp to General Howard. He kept a journal of the U.S. Army’s search for Cochise in order to negotiate a peace treaty. Photo in the public domain.

Bureau, the post-Civil War reconstruction agency. In 1871, seeking a peaceful end to the Apache Wars, President Grant chose Howard to formulate a plan to meet with Cochise. He granted the general broad powers to ensure a peaceful outcome. This included authority over Arizona and New Mexico military commanders and the power to approve a reservation suitable to Cochise and his sub-chiefs. The latter creation, of course, would be subject to the needs and preferences of other, civilian, branches of the U.S. Government.

One of General Howard’s Civil War enlisted men was Joseph Alton Sladen (Figure 5). Sladen, like his commander, had also been awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism during the Civil War and received a battlefield commission as a lieutenant. General Howard chose him to be his Aide de Camp. This was an important position, for the ADC assisted his general in all of his duties and communicated his orders to all subordinates. After the War, General Howard chose Sladen to assist him in his work with the Freedmen’s

Bureau. During this period, Sladen attended medical school and earned his degree as a medical doctor. When Howard was chosen to negotiate the peace with Cochise, Sladen was again assigned as General Howard’s Aide de Camp. Lieutenant Sladen kept a journal of his travels including a two-week stay with Cochise and the negotiations which ended the Apache Wars. Sladen’s writing is an invaluable document, essentially the only detailed record of the peace process. Howard mentions the meeting with Cochise in his autobiography, but he was absent from the Apache Stronghold *rancheria* for two weeks, communicating with his superiors while arranging the treaty at nearby Fort Bowie.

Consequently, Sladen’s two-week stay with Cochise’s band was vital to the peace negotiations successfully concluded. Cochise first asked Howard to remain, but when the General said his presence was required to order a suspension of military patrols throughout the region, Cochise relented and insisted that Sladen remain instead. Sladen at first

felt he was being held hostage, but his situation soon became comfortable. In a very humane and unusually objective way, Sladen described his interactions with Cochise, with other members of his band and their lifeways. He developed a warm friendship with Naiche (Figure 4) the youngest son of Cochise. All historical writings about Cochise draw upon Sladen's journal, as it is the only substantive primary source.⁵ Unfortunately, Tom Jeffords kept no journal, although in later years he reminisced to a close female friend about the important events in which he played a part.

On July 25, 1872, General Howard and Lieutenant Sladen arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico to carry out President Grant's orders to treat with the great Apache Chief. On September 5, after messengers from Howard failed to contact Cochise, General Howard met Tom Jeffords at Fort Tularosa in New Mexico, just east of Fort Apache in Arizona. The General explained the importance of their mission and obtained Jefford's agreement to conduct them to Cochise.⁶ In advance of any geographical location settled upon, Howard appointed Jeffords as the Apache Agent for the proposed reservation, to which Jeffords agreed.

On September 13, 1872, Howard's party met Chie, an influential Apache who immediately understood the magnitude of this desire for peace and joined the group. Howard and Sladen did not know at this time how significant Chie would become to achieve success. It was later determined that Chie was the son of Coyuntura, Cochise's brother who was murdered by Lieutenant Bascom in 1861. Therefore, Chie was Cochise's nephew. Adding to these attributes, Chie was good-natured, friendly and intimately familiar with the terrain. He did not discourage easily and his Native American outdoor skills were constantly utilized.

On September 20, 1872, Ponce was added to the group. He was a Chihenne band leader and Chie's brother-in-law.⁷ Before starting out for Cochise's Stronghold, Howard's group had become burdened with wagons, accompanied by a soldier escort, pack mules, packers and drivers. Jeffords told Howard

that a group this large would never achieve success in meeting Cochise. He advised that a small group only including Howard, Sladen, himself, Chie and Ponce would improve their chances in meeting the great chief. The small party accordingly split off from the main body, which continued on to Fort Bowie at Apache Pass. The remaining five-man peace delegation proceeded to the Dragoon Mountains.

On September 30, Howard, Sladen, Jeffords, Chie and Ponce were met with emissaries from Cochise some miles before arriving and they were questioned about their mission.⁸ They were told Cochise would not meet them until the next day. It is my opinion that Cochise needed time to consider his demands and that a council was held with senior Chokonon band members. Cochise exerted absolute authority, but likely wanted his band's counsel and consent.

The meeting with Cochise was conducted atop Cochise's *ranchería* rock and a peace protocol was established. From the Anglo-American perspective, two major unanticipated flaws existed in the agreement, giving Cochise the upper hand. The newly-established reservation included the southeast corner of Arizona with its southern boundary adjoining the international border with Mexico. Cochise wisely had not agreed to ending Apache depredations in Mexico or against Mexicans, whom he disliked. His new reservation allowed easy access to Mexico, and after several Mexican government protests, Jeffords attempted to halt these Apache forays with mixed results. A little over three years later, the reservation was closed, and its Apache residents were moved. The foolish concentration policy virtually guaranteed that depredations in the U.S. would begin again. Several of the most violent Apache raids were led by Naiche and Gerónimo.

Aftermath

When Cochise died, presumably of cancer in 1874, his good friend Tom Jeffords was the sole American present at his death and burial. Many years passed and with the Apaches exiled to the Southeast, and General



Figure 8: Cochise Council Rock, a photograph taken in 1895 by Alice Rollins Crane. That year she was taken to this historic location by Thomas Jeffords (Figure 5). Jeffords was a good friend of Cochise and served as the Apache Reservation Agent in 1872. Compare to Figure 1, the contemporary image taken 120 years later.

Howard and Lieutenant Sladen long since returned to the east, Jeffords became the only remaining local person familiar with Cochise's old *ranchería*. He never revealed Cochise's burial location and it remains undisclosed to this day. The old scout could keep a secret from almost anyone. He was often asked to guide people to Cochise Council Rock and sometimes agreed, but then, mischievously, took gullible visitors to the wrong place.

In 1895, Jeffords initiated a friendship with Alice Rollins Crane. He agreed to conduct her to the actual Council Rock where the 1872 peace agreement was negotiated, and she took a few photographs of the location (Figure 8). Crane's photos match the description in Sladen's journal and for reasons that cannot be revealed in the interest of site protection, we are certain this is the site of Cochise's *ranchería* and Council Rock.

Ms. Crane's photos have been used by three different groups attempting to identify the historic site. Locating it may appear uncomplicated, but the area is filled with thousands of large, rounded boulders in many

sizes and shapes, all of the same color sandstone. The Dragoon Mountains stretch for miles in an east and west direction. During a research visit by historian Dan Aranda and myself, many years prior to our 2014 expedition, we spent an entire afternoon attempting to locate the site. Our search ended, unfortunately, in failure. Carrying Ms. Crane's photos on an electronic tablet for constant reference in the field did not help.

In 2000, an independent researcher spent several days searching for Council Rock and eventually found it. He published a photo of the vicinity, but, understandably, did not reveal its specific location. In 2005, Dr. Douglas Hamilton of Tucson and Kearny, Arizona, spent an entire week during the cold winter trying to find Council Rock. Hamilton noted that it was 15 °F when he finally discovered the rock by lining it up with a copy of the 1895 Crane photo. Dr. Hamilton, "Doug," is a close friend and member of our history group. His proximity to the location and free time enjoyed during retirement facilitated his reconnaissance of the area. Doug shared

his findings with me, providing both photos and precise location information.

In October of 2014, Dan Aranda, Bill Cavaliere, President of the Cochise County Historical Association, Craig McEwan, Vice President of the Association, and I set out to locate the site. Like me, Cavaliere had searched for it once before, but was again puzzled by the many rocks: too many potential candidates for the one being looked for. Bringing my electronic tablet again, I located the distinctive rock by comparing it to Doug Hamilton's front-facing photo that must remain unshared in the interest of site protection. Adding to our difficulty, we arrived the day after a hard rain. Water had collected in *tinajas* (natural bedrock basins) and we were constantly assaulted by mosquitos. My over-the-shoulder camera bag is well-equipped and being a veteran of many such exploratory hikes, I carry a mosquito net that goes over my hat and covers me to my shoulders. During our trek, Craig McEwan offered me \$20 for my net.

Conclusion

Very few people have ever visited Council Rock since the historic 1872 treaty was concluded there. We have consciously decided not to reveal its precise location in the interest of protection and preservation. Although just a rock, it retains very great cultural significance not only to the Apache people, but to all of the residents of the American Southwest, and, in the larger scheme of things, to Americans of all ethnic backgrounds wherever they may live. As an important historic archaeological site Cochise Council Rock (Figure 1) must be protected from any kind of development, and from the kinds of vandalism and "wear and tear" that are an inevitable result of even casual visitation by careless tourists. The site, unlike so many in even the most out-of-the-way parts of Western America, remains pristine. No trails lead to it, no plaques deface it, and no signs guide the curious towards it.

Cochise Council Rock is important to modern-day Apache people because it represents a critical turning point in their tribal his-

tory. It is revered, and any damage to it would be tragic and irreversible. For these reasons, it is my desire that its location remains undisclosed. I consider it a privilege to have walked the site, to have sat down there and pondered the events and people that made Council Rock important in Southwestern American History. It should remain as it was on the day Cochise sat upon his rock with General Howard. Though the treaty was short-lived, Cochise's intentions were pure and his memory must be respected. Had he not died so shortly afterwards of illness, his influence might have changed the fates of many Americans and of his tribe. Very possibly, the Chiricahua people's deadly exile to Florida might have been prevented.

End Notes

1. *Forty-Plus Years of Southwestern Research*: have been documented in my book, just published (Brito 2023).
2. *Cochise*: the late author Edwin Sweeney (1991) has covered Cochise's life in exceptional detail. Consequently, the present study does not repeat biographical information already presented. Sweeney was chosen by the grandson of Lieutenant Joseph Alton Sladen to edit Lieutenant Sladen's 1872 journal, and this work was done brilliantly. Sweeney's end notes add much needed context to the journal.
3. *On February 18, 1861, Just East of Apache Pass, Army Surgeon Bernard Irwin Found the Bodies of Four Americans mutilated by Cochise's Band*. Six Apache male prisoners were hung in retribution, some thought to be relatives of Cochise, one of them, Coyuntura, was his brother. Sweeney 1991: 163.
4. *Reservation Concentrations*: In their wrong-headed concentration policy, Washington officials decided that placing all Apaches on a single reservation (San Carlos) would keep them under close observation, save money and open the recently-vacated lands to mining and settlement. These bureaucrats were mistaken because San Carlos was environmentally unsuited for the Chiricahuas. Even worse, deep cultural differences between the various bands forced upon it led to conflict,

bloodshed, and to their eventual defeat and appalling subsequent exile to Florida. With an unhealthy climate so different from Apacheia, many sickened and died. Some radical historians are convinced that this may have been a governmentally-sanctioned exercise in genocide. Sadly, the Apache were not the only AmerIndian group subjected to concentration on too-small reservations with other groups they felt ambivalent towards: California's Modoc Indian War was the result of exactly the same bureaucratic stupidity, and the defeated Modocs, like the Apache, were also exiled far from their homeland—to Oklahoma, not Florida.

5. **Captain Joseph Alton Sladen:** was a Civil War veteran, Medal of Honor recipient, and mustang Lieutenant (promoted up from the ranks as a reward for heroism). Sladen was a lieutenant during the Cochise encounter and retired as a captain. His journal of the mission to find Cochise was preserved by his descendants and entrusted to historian and scholar Edwin R. Sweeney to edit and publish. The foreword was written by Captain Sladen's Grandson, Frank J. Sladen, Jr. who had the privilege of knowing his grandfather. Sweeney performed a superb job in his role as editor.
6. **Thursday, Sep 5, 1872, Tom Jeffords was Located at Fort Tularosa.** He agreed to conduct General Howard and Lt. Sladen to Cochise to negotiate peace. Sladen 1997: 121. For more on Tom Jeffords, see Hocking, 2017.
7. **Thursday, September 19, 1872, Ponce, a Chief of fifty-nine Chihenne Apaches Agreed to Accompany General Howard's Party.** They left from the small village of Cuchillo, New Mexico. Ponce was an essential contributor to their success and was Chie's brother-in-law. Both Apaches in General Howard's contingent were key additions without whom the meeting would have surely failed.. Sladen 1997: 123.
8. **Monday, September 30, About 4 Miles from Cochise's Stronghold, Howard's Party was Met by a Small Group of Chokonon Apaches with Instructions for Howard.** The group was asked to enter the *rancheria* and told Cochise would meet with them in the morning. Sladen 1997: 125.

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Next Special Issue: *Cookin' Irons!*

Engage your tastebuds vicariously in our next culinary special edition of *The Branding Iron*, to be published in Winter 2024! Corral members and friends are welcome to share their Western American food histories, dining stories, and rustic recipes. *How 'bout some more beans, Mr. Taggart?*

To be considered for publication in this special issue, please observe a deadline of February 15th, 2024 for submissions about *cookin' irons*. Additionally, articles on other topics are always welcome and encouraged for future non-themed issues.

For submissions and inquiries, please contact *Branding Iron* editor John Dillon at John.Dervin.Dillon@gmail.com. Thank you!



Figure 9: The secretly-“Chinese” villain Chris Buckwell, played by Swedish-American actor Warner Oland, is crushed to death in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake in the climax of the 1927 silent film, Old San Francisco. This was the first major Hollywood blockbuster to feature earthquakes as a plot point. Public domain movie still.

Hollywood Movies and the Destruction of California: A Short History of Earthquake Films

or

Will the Big One Be as Bad as the Movies About It?

By Abraham Hoffman

Despite the best efforts of seismologists, earthquake prediction has yet to be developed to the point where ample warning is given to people in a region where an earthquake may (or may not) strike. Seeing your dog or cat act strangely may give you a few seconds’ warning that a calamitous event is about to occur, but all you get is a few seconds, barely enough time to get under a table or brace yourself for the shaking of the earth under your feet. Tornados and hurricanes can be tracked, as also with major storms, but technology giving an hour’s notice on earthquakes remains elusive. There’s also an economic issue involved. A meteorologist on the

local television news may predict rain, sun, snow, hurricane, or tornado, and viewers will know what to do—take out umbrellas, sunscreen, heavy coats, or head for shelters until the hurricane or tornado has passed. A prediction of an imminent earthquake, with some degree of accuracy such as within two days or 24 hours, would likely induce mass panic as people storm grocery stores and jam freeways trying to escape from the coming catastrophe.

One has only to see an earthquake disaster movie and watch as hundreds or thousands of people run around like headless chickens while buildings fall on top of them

to suspect that film hysteria could translate into unacceptable reality.

The motion picture industry has found that earthquakes have box office value. In 1927 Warner Bros. released *Old San Francisco*, in which a nasty Chinese villain (portrayed by White actor Warner Oland who later made a career out of playing Chinese characters, especially the successful *Charlie Chan* detective series) attempts to seduce a young girl who prays for his destruction. The prayer worked perhaps too well, as San Francisco is destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire, the stereotypical villain and the evil city paying for their sins with the powerful earthquake. What worked for Sodom and Gomorrah, apparently worked for San Francisco.

There's some disagreement about a short clip, less than thirty seconds long, in which W.C. Fields urges other actors during a scene being filmed to get out of the building when an earthquake starts shaking everything—it's the Long Beach earthquake of March 10, 1933. Skeptics have argued that the film clip shown on Youtube of the Long Beach earthquake interrupting a movie shoot is a fake. The clip shows W.C. Fields and Franklin Pangborn along with other actors performing in a scene when the shaking starts. Decades later, Dick Cavett evidently believed the clip was real when he ran it on one of his television programs. The clip doesn't identify the movie. However, a search on the Internet Movie Data Base (IMDB) reveals that the film was *International House*.

That earthquake occurred on March 10, 1933. Paramount Studios released the picture on May 27. The film clip runs only 26 seconds. Arguing for the clip's reality is the fact that it abruptly ends—the cameraman must have stopped filming and left the set, as did the actors in the scene. Forty years later A. Edward Sutherland, the film's director, is said to have claimed that he and Fields cooked up the brief scene as a joke. Such a claim ignores the fact that the actors—at least four of them in the scene—plus the film crew would not likely want to be involved in a recreation of a tragedy that killed 120 people. In the clip an actress's scream of fright sounds too real to have been staged. Youtube does

have a number of newsreel films that show the actual damages caused by the 1933 quake.

In 1936 MGM produced *San Francisco*, starring Clark Gable as an amoral gambler and Jeannette MacDonald as a singer. The film did a credible presentation of the earthquake and subsequent fire, though exaggerating things a bit as when a huge chasm opens up and victims fall into the abyss. Unlike the villainous Oland in the 1927 silent film, Gable reforms, getting religion and the girl. The 1936 film ends with an incredibly improbable scene where someone comes to the refugees and yells, "The fire's out!" as if the flames stopped all at once. Everyone grabs picks, shovels, hoes, and other tools, and the crowd marches down the hill singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" [!] and finally the hit tune "San Francisco" with MacDonald as the lead singer.

Fast forward to 1974 and Universal Pictures' *Earthquake*, starring Charlton Heston and Ava Gardner. This movie was the first of a long series of pictures in which Los Angeles gets destroyed. Of note is the scene where the Lake Hollywood Dam, near the 101 Freeway and the Hollywood Bowl, crumbles under a temblor, and a huge flood comes down and wipes out Hollywood: a fascinating example of the movie industry consuming itself. Audiences watching this film laughed inappropriately at some scenes such as the one where a man lights a cigarette despite warnings of gas leaks and goes inside his house. BOOM!

Also in 1974 ABC presented a television movie, *The Day the Earth Moved*, starring Jackie Cooper and Cleavon Little as aerial photographers who discover that their camera has malfunctioned and somehow can predict an imminent earthquake, this time in the Mojave Desert. As often occurs in "disaster" movies, no one believes them until it happens. Despite its low budget, the film earned some positive reviews for the quality of the acting and the feasibility of the science (assuming that broken cameras will somehow be able to make earthquake predictions).

In 1990 NBC offered a four-hour miniseries, *The Big One: The Great Los Angeles Earthquake*, a film considerably better than

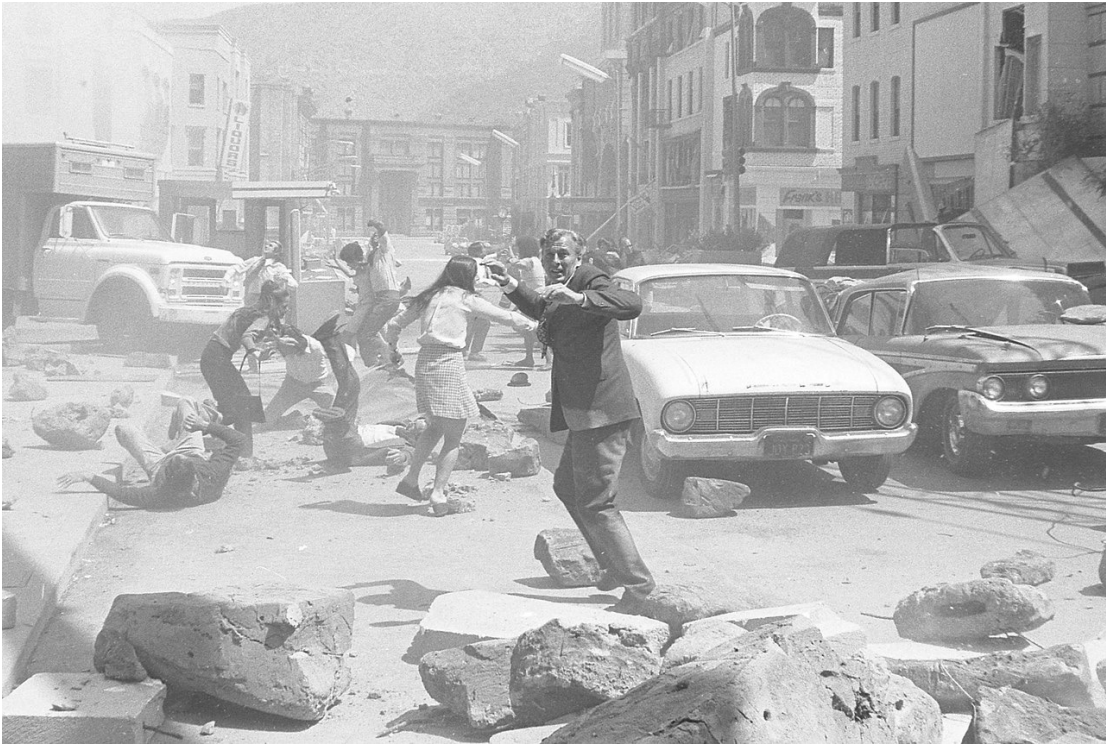


Figure 10: Los Angeles crumbles in the 1974 film, Earthquake. Note the overuse of concrete boulders in the street, while the surrounding buildings remain standing with only cosmetic damage. Movie still in the public domain.

most in this genre. The character of seismologist Clare Winslow was apparently modeled after real seismologists Lucy Jones and Kate Hutton.

20th-Century Fox produced *Volcano* in 1997 and, while not actually an earthquake movie, erupting volcanos do cause earthquakes, and one such volcano erupts in the center of Hollywood Boulevard. Los Angeles is improbably saved from flowing lava.

Another TV miniseries, the four-hour *10.5*, deals with the destruction of California in a film panned by reviewers as one of the worst earthquake genre films ever made, with improbable plot, terrible photography, and bad acting. That same year ABC aired *Earthquake*, yet another California disaster film of interest because of its mainly African American cast.

As if audiences still had the patience (or stomach) to see a sequel to *10.5*, in 2006 *10.5: The Apocalypse* picked up where the first one left off, only this time almost destroying the entire North American continent. Again,

the plot was as improbable as its predecessor's. In 2009's *Earthquake LA*, a low-budget disaster film, the action takes place mainly inside of an apartment while Los Angeles is destroyed. Considerably more special effects money (if not scriptwriter's time) was devoted to destroy Los Angeles in the 2009 film *2012*. While this movie portrays a global cataclysm brought about by the supposed Maya Long Count calendar prophecy, the action kicks off with none other than a devastating earthquake in SoCal. Los Angeles icons are destroyed around the fleeing protagonists, without regard to their geographical positions. Returning to leaner budgets, *10.0 Earthquake* wiped out LA yet again in 2014 with unconvincing computer-generated effects and acting.

More recently, Hollywood pulled out all of the stops to destroy both Los Angeles and San Francisco in 2015's *San Andreas*. Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson stars as a firefighter/superhero who steals (sequentially) a helicopter, pickup truck, airplane, and motorboat



Figure 11: Randy's Donuts' signature roof ornament pursues the protagonists of the disaster movie 2012 as they flee their Manhattan Beach neighborhood in a limousine. To appear in this improbable location two minutes after the start of the earthquake sequence, the big donut would have had to roll here from Inglewood roughly seven miles away at an average speed of about 210 miles per hour. Movie still in the public domain.

to take his daughter with him from Los Angeles to San Francisco to rescue his ex-wife while California icons—the Hollywood Sign, Golden Gate Bridge, Capitol Records Building, etc.—crumble all around him in a smorgasbord of destruction. Despite the odds against his finding her, he does—after all, this is a movie.

A common thread runs through most of these disaster films. One of the characters is a seismologist who has figured out through computer movie-jumbo that a massive earthquake is imminent. No one, not even other seismologists, and certainly not the news media or greedy businessmen, believe him (or her). It turns out the seismologist, of course, is correct. In *San Andreas* Paul Giamatti plays the lone, rather introverted seismologist, apparently ignored by everyone except a few interns working with him, even though he has written a book (published in hardcover!) predicting a quake very, very soon.

Special effects in this film are great if the viewer enjoys seeing thousands of people killed or injured as skyscraper buildings fall on them. At the end, asked what will happen next, Dwane Johnson says, "Now we rebuild." After seeing all this horrible death and destruction, viewers might well ask, What for? Who's going to pay to clean up this mess?

Type "earthquake" into the Internet Movie Data Base and in addition to movies you also get numerous television programs in which some sort of earthquake takes place. The IMDB doesn't usually give plot summaries for TV programs, so it's hard to tell what these shows were about. It should also be noted that Japan and China have made earthquake disaster films, which is understandable in a way since those nations have experienced catastrophic earthquakes.

And while we're at it, don't forget the *Godzilla* films with their monster's ancillary appearances as a metaphor for nuclear bomb tests and as the destructive power of megaquakes. Meanwhile, the proliferation of smart phones and security cameras have made it possible for seismologists, news reporters, and just about everyone else to make a visual record of earthquakes as they occur throughout the world. When (not *if*) the "Big One" finally hits, Hollywood's special effects experts may find that their work, for all the incredible scenes, can't substitute for the real thing.

Fandango, June 10, 2023 . . .



The history of Southern California is rich and varied with many wonderful places found in almost every neighborhood that reach back to the days of the Spanish and Mexican occupation of the land. These areas, many of which were thousands of acres of land grants from Mexico, are now filled with homes and businesses that have almost eliminated the old historical haciendas. One such area that still has a connection with its' past roots is the Neff Estate, located in the City of La Mirada.

Deputy Sherriff, Mark Mutz, and his wife Dorothy, had the old Windermere Ranch barn, The Neff Barn, ready for the Westerners and guests. The Neff Barn, which displays an extensive collection of historic memorabilia, is used for group meetings, summer and holiday day camps, and special events. The special event of the day was the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners Fandango. And, the event was very special indeed.

La Mirada was created by Andrew McNally, a printer and mapmaker from Chicago, and his son-in-law Edwin Neff. In 1888, Mc Nally purchased over 2,200 acres of Rancho Los Coyotes for \$200,000. He developed 700 acres into the Windermere Ranch and surrounded it with olive, orange, and lemon groves. At its peak, the ranch became the largest olive orchard in the world. The 11-room Neff Home, with a red-tile, Spanish style roof and shingle exterior, was built by architect Frederick Roehrig in 1894. The

house was named after McNally's son-in-law, Edwin Neff, the first manager of the ranch.

Deputy Sherriff Mutz, spoke about the history of the ranch to those in attendance and why it was of historical significance to La Mirada and Southern California history. The Neff Estate includes the George House, the Neff Home, and the Neff Barn. All those in attendance had a great time with the book sales, courtesy of Brian Dillon, and delicious food and drink that was provided for the occasion. Beer and wine were the most popular beverages sans Bud Lite.

The only disappointment of the day was that many of the LA Corral members did not show up for the occasion. Much planning and hard work went into the Fandango and it was a disappointment that so few were in attendance. Those that came had a wonderful time and I encourage all members to support the Corral in all the activities throughout the year.

The Neff Estate Fandango was a day well spent. Deputy Sherriff Mutz and Sherriff Shea are commended for providing an excellent event. The food and drink were tops and all who attended learned another part of the history of Southern California. What a beautiful place to live!

— Gary Turner



Previous Page: The Neff ranch home (left), and the George House (right), home of the Neff's superintendent. Both pictures courtesy of the City of La Mirada website, and are used for Fair-Use educational and non-profit purposes.

Above: Denny Thompson, Gary Turner, and Tami Turner-Revel enjoying lunch in the Neff Estate barn. Right: Brian Dillon presides over the Corral book sale. Below: Deputy Sheriff Mark Mutz and Dorothy Mutz. Bottom: A gaggle of Westerners. Photos by Pete Fries.



Monthly Roundup . . .



July 12, 2023

Justin Estreicher

Justin Estreicher reminds us that those who teach history don't always have a good memory. His presentation "'Impossible . . . to Read the Past History of North America': Archaeology and the Denial of Indigenous Heritage, 1876-1906" challenges the American traditions of archaeological conservation and research. Estreicher argues that Native Americans' connection to their past was severed by a White American mythos that emerged in the late 19th century. This mythos combined with academic literature, law, and public history to insist that only the White imagination could envision ancient American civilization.

Our national memory relied on the myth of the Native peoples "disappearing." Estreicher describes a disconnect between

Americans' ideas of today's Native people and their ancestors. Indigenous arts were hoarded by White collectors. Ceremonial dances were reproduced for Whites' amusement. Ancient sites tended by Native peoples were taken over by White interests. These activities created nostalgia for a *national* history, instead of recognizing a *Native* history. This mindset denied the connection between ancient American civilizations and present-day indigenous cultures. This enforced the idea that Native Americans were incapable of recalling their own past or protecting it.

Although some scholars recognized Native continuity with the past, the prevailing academic literature, laws, and public history of the time pushed the idea that ancient civilizations could not have been created by the ancestors of modern Native people, who were deemed unworthy stewards of surviving monuments. Laws denied Native people access to their own land. This included "An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities" (1906), which gave non-Native institutions control over Native archaeological sites. The U.S. government took control of Native homes and burial grounds for research rather than returning them to Native peoples. The average American learned the mythos not through books and policy, but in public. White Americans celebrated "long dead" ancient civilizations but compared them unfavorably with their still-living Native descendants. Artificial archaeology exhibits, exaggerated "tribal" displays, White people peddling indigenous artwork—all capitalized on the romance of a dying Native American West.

At the end of his presentation, Estreicher said there is more work to do. Although we now have the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), repatriation is a slow process that still favors our institutions. Estreicher asks us to question if traces of the old racial prejudices remain within us, and he urges that more collaborative work needs to be done. I would argue that the past haunts us to this day. We are more than capable of making amends.

— Arkaz Vardanyan



August 9, 2023

Tracy Johnston

For our August Roundup meeting, the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners were treated to a feast of culinary knowledge by guest speaker and food history hobbyist, Tracy Johnston. Author of the historical cooking blog *Goode Eats* and a chef at many “living history” reenactments, Ms. Johnston is no stranger to recreating recipes and serving the platters of the past. After thoroughly exploring Elizabethan English edibles, Johnston decided that for her next project it was time to appreciate the food heritage of California. She recounted the research behind her upcoming book in her presentation, “The Spanish Cook Without Equal: My Adventures in Translating Encarnación Pinedo’s 1898 Cookbook.”

Encarnación Pinedo was a *Californio* woman born in Santa Clara in 1848, the fateful year of California’s annexation to the United States and the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill. She never married, but wanted to preserve the meals of her childhood for the benefit of her nieces, who were growing up in a California that was increasingly Anglo-American in culture. Pinedo was the first Latina in U.S. history to publish a cookbook, *El Cocinero Español* (“The Spanish Cook”) in 1898, which had never before been fully translated into English until Johnston made that her mission.

Translating this cookbook was quite an adventure for Johnston, considering that she doesn’t speak a lick of Spanish! She used the

trusty unpaid robot intern Google Translate to do the initial grunt work, and then manually checked each line by consulting “dead tree” Spanish-English dictionaries and live human linguistic experts. Yet just translating all of the *words* did not necessarily convey Pinedo’s original *intentions*, which were still sometimes concealed behind obscure references or unsaid implications. Luckily, Johnston was still fluent in *cooking*, and was able to infer the meaning of the more puzzling instructions by cross-referencing other historical cookbooks and exercising her own culinary intuition.

The recipes this effort revealed were wildly inventive and diverse. Some foods were cooked over open flame, others baked in ovens, and a few were buried in a pit with hot coals *luau* style. Although most recipes were of Mexican origin, *El Cocinero Español* also featured Spanish, Italian, German, and other meals, while English cooking was singled out for scorn as “insipid and tasteless.” Sometimes the same recipe had different instructions for regional variations that have become homogenized today. For example, Spanish-style meatballs were made with veal and poultry breast meat, and used butter as a binder. German meatballs used beef or pork, combined with lard. The Italians favored meatballs made of “leg meat,” bound with cheese.

The final step in Johnston’s project was, of course, to try out some of Pinedo’s recipes! She prepared dried chiles, cooked a giant tamale in a bundt cake mold, roasted quail wrapped in ham over flame, and boiled a milk and pineapple *cajeta*, a dessert similar to flan. The latter recipe required much trial and error to get the right consistency.

Although we had already eaten dinner, this foodie presentation left us all feeling hungrier. Many thanks to Tracy Johnston for the fascinating lecture, and we all look forward to checking out *The Spanish Cook Without Equal* when it is published!

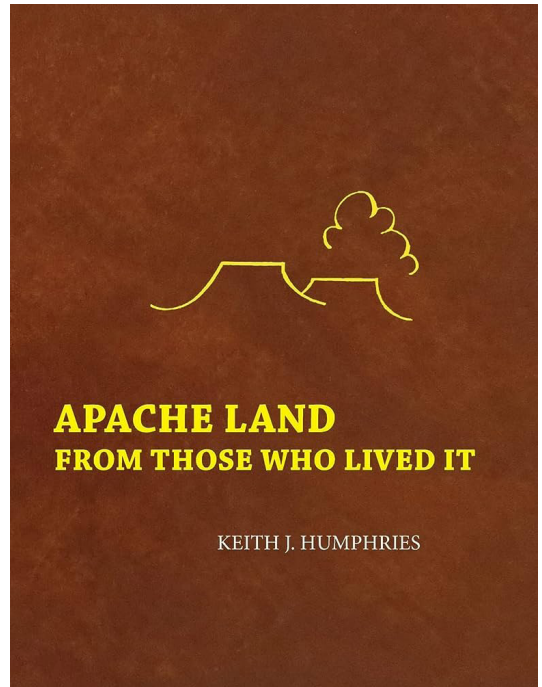
— John Dillon

Down the Western Book Trail . . .

APACHE LAND, From Those Who Lived It, by Keith J. Humphries, Geronimo Springs Museum Edition, Sierra County Historical Society, Truth or Consequences, NM, 2016. Soft bound, 221 pages, illustrations, index. Available from Amazon.com, \$23.98.

Apache Land, From Those Who Lived It, is a unique labor of love. Keith J. Humphries (1907-2002) was born in Oklahoma, grew up in Texas, and after his WWII service, moved to New Mexico. He worked at the White Sands Missile Range as an engineer while pursuing his amateur historical interests. After his retirement in 1972, Humphries took up painting as a second hobby, and soon began to combine his two passions. Dimly-remembered Southern New Mexico historical events, both real and legendary, were now transferred in color onto canvas. The artist/historian became active within a number of Southwestern historical associations and also published several short articles but Humphries' *Apache Land* was his life's work and magnum opus. First self-published in 1988, as a limited, hard-bound edition offered at exorbitant cost, few copies were sold. The present edition, published 28 years later, makes Humphries' anecdotes and artwork available to a much wider readership than did the first. Every serious student of Southern New Mexico's border area will find the dozens of historical photographs and accompanying historical sketches in the book useful. And, the dozens of oil paintings in which specific events are interpreted through Humphries' own "mind's eye" are thought-provoking.

Moving on to what might seem hyper-critical nit-picking, *Apacheland* is many different things between two covers, and suffers greatly from a lack of organization. Dueling mini-biographies of the book's late author are to be found both at its *front* (Page V, *Keith Humphries As I Knew Him, a Foreword by Karl Laumbach*) and *rear* (*Appendix, Biography of Keith J. Humphries, Daniel D. Aranda*, pages 201-204). If Aranda's very clear exposition of



who Humphries was, *what* he did, and *how* and *why* the book and its contents came to be had been placed *at the front* of the book, 90% of all the mysteries inflicted upon the reader and the frustrations engendered by the numerous starts and stops, u-turns and descriptive dead-ends within its pages could have been much more easily tolerated.

Redundancies are followed by gaps, and some entries are uncredited, inserted seemingly at the whim of anonymous contributors. For example, Laumbach's *Foreword* on page v is followed by a *Preface* on page xiii, but then a second *Preface* is also to be found on an *unnumbered* page following page xvi yet preceding *numbered* page 2. And then, on page 25, is a *Prologue* inserted after 22 preceding pages of text and illustrations. Is this insertion "son of Preface?" Or possibly "grandson of Preface?" And it doesn't stop there. A separate page of *Photograph Credits* appears in the *front* of the book, on page ix, as does an untitled credit for *Typing* on xvi, yet a second, competing, entry, entitled *Assembly, Editing, and Typing Credits* also appears on page 197. This is followed by yet another page simply

entitled *Illustrations* on page 198, in which KJH (presumably Keith Humphries) thanks his “inspirations” yet makes no specific reference to what *he actually did* in terms of illustrations.

Apacheland is almost unusable for scholarly comparative research since none of the historical photographs within it are numbered—how can you *cite* something if you cannot precisely identify it?—and within its text specific dates and locations, and information about who was interviewed, and when, are often missing. And none of the more than 50 fanciful color illustrations that make the book so unique are even credited as to artist within their captions. In a few of the less murky images the signature “K. Humphries” can be detected, so by default, those wondering who might have painted them can assume that Humphries himself did them all. Occasionally a color image also has what might even be a date: “77,” for example, probably indicates “painted in 1977.”

All the images are highly fictionalized, dramatized, and appear influenced by generalized *Tinseltonian* “Old West” myth-making. A great many of them reproduce shoot-outs, ambushes, and other forms of gunplay. The serious historian will view these polychrome recreations in much the same way as he or she does “re-enactors:” those people who dress up in historical costumes and act out

past events, routinely confusing fiction with fact. Both, despite pretensions to accuracy, will always be make-believe, for history can never be “re-enacted” nor can it be “re-painted,” only *studied* and *documented* objectively. Finally, for a book focused upon the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, the absence of accent marks and tildes on all Spanish words that take them—easily-corrected errors that are repeated constantly—are embarrassing.

Apacheland in its present reincarnation from the 1988 original was obviously produced “by committee.” Different individuals, none of whom either knew what the others were doing, or perhaps who simply did not communicate with each other, contributed disjointed and disconnected elements to it. Had a single editorial czar unified the collective effort, streamlined it, kept all of its contributors on a single track, and clearly identified its disparate elements as to author, artist, photographer, chronology and location, then actually *proofread* and *corrected* it, a much more polished and useful final product would have resulted. Despite its many shortcomings, in the ultimate assessment *Apacheland* is more entertaining than frustrating, and would be a one-of-a-kind addition to any library devoted to the American Southwest.

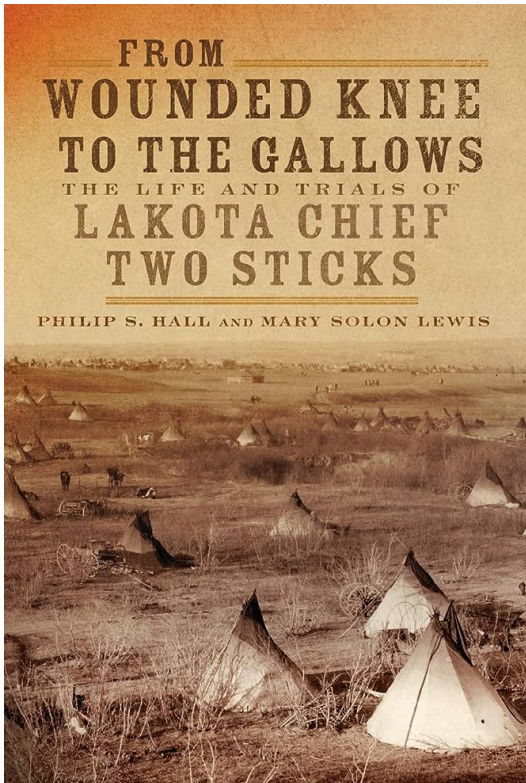
— Brian Dervin Dillon

FROM WOUNDED KNEE TO THE GALLOWS: *The life and trials of Lakota Chief Two Sticks*, by Philip S. Hall and Mary Solon Lewis. University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. 21 chapters, 280 pages, with illustrations, bibliography and index. Paperback, \$24.95.

This book takes readers into events leading up to and after the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Told in vivid detail is the culture of the Lakota Indians of the Pine Ridge Reservation and the injustices they received, particularly the execution of Chief Two Sticks on December 28, 1894, four years after the massacre.

Years after Two Sticks swung from the gallows, convincing evidence was uncovered supporting his innocence. The authors take Two Sticks’s story into the details of wrongs and hardships suffered by the Indians. Indian unrest continued after the Wounded Knee blood bath. The narrative tells of the government’s actions of mismanagement. These events haunt the Lakota today.

The Sioux Indian Wars, as they are known, were a series of clashes over thirty-six years, 1854-1890. Tensions escalated in 1876, as Whites sneaked into the Black Hills looking for gold. This was Sioux sacred land protected by treaty. Nevertheless, the Lakota gradually realized they were not going to be



able to stop the White man's intrusion into their land.

Many Lakota sought solace in religion, through the Oglala Ghost Dance. The book describes its rituals in detail. The Indians danced clockwise in a circle like the sun across the sky, continuously until each fell to the ground of exhaustion. They believed that their dancing would bring forth a messiah and when he arrived he would cause all Whites to die.

There are examples of promises not kept. Rations were reduced and were of poor quality, often rotten. Indians became malnourished. Infections, disease and death set in. Unrest and despair followed that led to the battle on December 29, 1890 by the creek known as Wounded Knee, the last major conflict between Indians and U.S. troops.

The narration emphasizes abuse by unethical self-serving reservation managers. Their attitude was "to get rid of the Indians one way or another." Supply records were falsified and money pocketed by taking kickbacks. Corruption was rampant.

White agents were seriously frightened

by the Indians dancing in the snow, "wild and crazy." Some fled, some wanted the Indian leaders arrested. There was a skirmish and Indians were killed. Police rode into an Indian village and fighting broke out. Chief Sitting Bull was killed. More killing followed, culminating in the Battle of Wounded Knee.

Fearing an Indian uprising, ranchers and homesteaders poured into town and asked for arms to protect themselves. Indians ran off hundreds of head of cattle. Militia and National Guard were mobilized. Indian outrage grew out of injustices done to them.

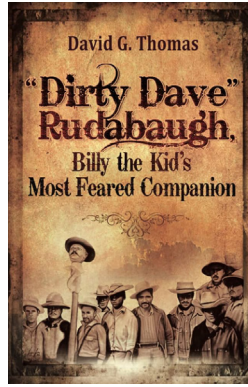
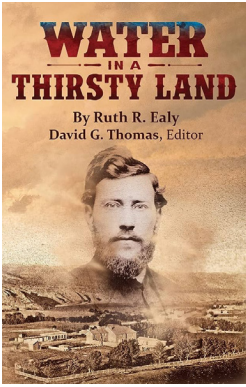
The book's narrative continues with details of a murder trial that this reviewer thought was tedious. The defense argued that Indian actions were the result of the government's failure to keep its treaty agreements to furnish supplies. Many Indians were starving until hostilities broke out.

In 1891 the Sioux sold nine million acres in exchange for guaranteed rations and resettlement onto a reservation. Indians complained of lack of food. They resisted becoming farmers. There was little prospect for them to develop a viable economy of their own. The narrative goes into arguments and counter arguments. Distress and depression on the reservation increased. Chapter 15 tells of government dealings with "the Indian problem" with "just enough rations and annuities to keep the unrest from becoming an uprising." There is a chapter on American society and the economy in the 1880s and 1890s.

A core theme of this book is Two Sticks being accused of killing four White men and tried for their murder. A ponderous description of the trial follows. In conclusion the defense attorney reviewed the evidence and related that Two Sticks had a crippled leg. The foot tracks leading to the shack where the murders took place did not show such an imprint in the snow, making it impossible for Two Sticks to have been there.

The book provides a good overview of Lakota culture, and their struggles and conflicts with American settlers. From a modern perspective the reader is left with a forlorn sense of injustice suffered by the Indians.

— Deke Keasbey



WATER IN A THIRSTY LAND, by Ruth R. Ealy, Edited by David G. Thomas. Mesilla Valley History Series, Volume 10, Doc45 Publishing, Las Cruces, NM, 2022. 192 + 9 pages, illustrations, notes, appendices, index. Softcover at \$21.95, hardbound at \$27.95.

DIRTY DAVE RUDABAUGH, Billy the Kid's Most Feared Companion, by David G. Thomas. Mesilla Valley History Series, Volume 11, Doc45 Publishing, Las Cruces, NM, 2023. 176 + 9 pages, illustrations, notes, appendices, index. Softcover at \$24.95, hardbound at \$35.00.

Outstanding Southwestern historian David G. Thomas has done it again, with the two most recent offerings in his Mesilla Valley, New Mexico history series. Volume 10 is the diary of a Presbyterian missionary's daughter and eyewitness to the Lincoln County War, whose father was a friend of one of the victims of that bloodbath. He later moved his family to Zuñi Pueblo, where he was as unsuccessful at converting one of the most traditional American Southwest Indian peoples as he was persuading the largely Mexican and Irish population of Lincoln County to give up Catholicism. Ruth Ealy's on-the-spot observations provide a vivid window into the past.

Volume 11 is the first factual, non-sensationalistic, biography of "Dirty" David Rudabaugh, the sometimes lawman, sometimes badman, and ally, friend and cellmate of Billy the Kid. He got his insalubrious nick-name from wearing the same clothes and going unwashed for weeks on

end *al estilo Francés*, as the old Spanish saying goes. Finding the New Mexico territory too "hot" for him, Rudabaugh headed south into Mexico proper. There, to his sorrow, he found the locals, even inoffensive shopkeepers, much tougher than the *Gringos* he was used to intimidating. One such merchant shot him dead, cut off his head, socketed it atop a broom handle, and paraded the grisly trophy around the plaza of Parral, Chihuahua, in 1886. So even though he outlived his partner in crime Billy the Kid by five years, "Dirty (*Decapitated*)" Dave Rudabaugh outdid the more famous badman in his spectacular mortality. Both volumes are well-written, captivating reads by myth-buster Thomas. Both are highly recommended.

— Brian Dervin Dillon

Congratulations, Winners of the Westerners International 2022 Competitions!

1: Co-Founders Best Book of 2022, 1st Prize:

Brand Book 25, *Award Winning Cowboy Poetry* by Gary Turner and Tami Turner-Revel.

2: Fred Olds Award for Best Cowboy Poem of 2022, 1st Prize:

Keepsake 56, *Boothill Anthology* by Abraham Hoffman.

3: Fred Olds Award for Best Cowboy Poem of 2022, 3rd Prize:

"Woe is Me, PBC" by Patrick Mulvey, in Keepsake 57, *Cowboy & Cowgirl Poetry*.

4: Coke Wood Award for Best Article of 2022, 2nd Prize:

"Cherokee Miners on the Kern River" by Brian Dervin Dillon and Richard H. Dillon. *Branding Iron* No. 308, Fall: 1, 3-24.

5: Philip Danielson Award for Best Presentation of 2022, 2nd Prize:

"Old West Shootin' Irons" by Brian Dervin Dillon. Hosted by the Valley of the Sun (Fresno) Corral, 12/14/2022.



**INDIANS, LATINOS, AND CONFEDERATES,
A WESTERN FAMILY: 1598-1973
Frank J. Brito**

**Brand Book 26, Los Angeles Corral,
Westerners International**

Los Angeles Corral Brand Book 26, *Indians, Latinos, and Confederates, A Western Family: 1598-1973* has just been published. By Frank J. Brito, it is the story of what must be the most remarkable and unique Western American family any present member of any of the 70+ Westerners International Corrals around the world is descended from.

Within the old Spanish Colonial borderlands of New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Chihuahua, Sonora and both Californias, Brito's diverse family incorporated Native Americans from three different Pueblo Tribes and Apaches as well as Spanish, Irish, Polish, Dutch, and other Europeans. At a single time one of Brito's great-grandfathers was a bugler in the Mexican Army, while another great-grandfather was a bugler in the Confederate States Army. Brito antecedents were on a first-name basis with historical figures as different as Teddy Roosevelt, Pat Garrett, and Pancho Villa.

Price: \$30.00 (includes tax and postage). Make your check out to: **Westerners, Los Angeles Corral**, and send your order, with your return address clearly printed to:

Southern California Orders: Brand Book 26, 16007 Lemarsh St., North Hills, CA 91343

Northern California Orders: F. Brito, BB 26, 142 Hazel Dr., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523-2916