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Foreword

The decision by the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles to produce a new bibliography of works on California’s diverse history and fiction has its own compelling story. The idea of publishing a companion list to the “sacred” Zamorano 80 had daunted Club members for years. At times there would be talk during the monthly meetings about undertaking such a project. After the rush of wine and the effects of dinner had settled in, attention turned to the speaker, pushing thoughts of a new bibliography far away. After a discussion in January 2006, past Zamorano Club president Tom Andrews sent a confidential memorandum to selected discussants suggesting possible titles and a way to begin the project. By March the Board of Governors, led by new president Judy Harvey Sahak, authorized Tom Andrews as Chair to start the project along with nine Club members—mostly those who had mused about a new list and were now called upon to act. The newly appointed committee included Larry Burgess, William Donohoo, Gordon J. Van De Water, Alan Jutzi, Stephen Kanter, Victoria Dailey, Doyce Nunis, Jr., Charles Goldsmid, and Francis Weber. All were Club members, collectors of Californiana, and writers of California history; some were professional historians. These ten began to deliberate at the committee’s first meeting on March 31, 2006.

The committee resolved at the outset that the list should include both history and fiction. They recognized that there would be a preponderance of titles related to Southern California. Members began to present their lists, which were compared and contrasted with selections that had launched the first discussion. In the process they refined the criteria for inclusion. They unanimously agreed that the chronological scope should commence with 1870, the first full year of the operation of the transcontinental railroad. This would complement the majority of selections in The Zamorano 80, which focused on the Spanish, Mexican, and early statehood periods. The selectors recognized that early voyages and the Gold Rush had excellent existing bibliographies, while post-1870 California had been less studied. The cutoff date was set at 1980.
to preserve historical detachment, though some exceptions were made later. After some spirited interchanges, bibliographies were admitted. Another vote that sparked some dissent disqualified some extremely rare books locked away in a handful of repositories and accessible mainly to specialists. It became apparent to the committee that they should seek a selection that would appeal alike to the sophisticated collector, the interested reader, and students who might be seeking “cornerstone books” about California’s history and the illusory “California Dream.” The committee ultimately discussed more than 500 titles during a year and a half of selecting, but the hardest part was grappling with what came to be called “The Big List” of nearly 300 titles.

Like most ambitious volunteer projects, this one suffered attrition of members due to competing personal and professional commitments. Committee Chair Tom Andrews resigned in June 2006 and was replaced by Larry Burgess. The departure of other members several times rocked the committee’s confidence in its ability to carry on, for the members had agreed to share responsibility for writing the entries. On the plus side, Bill Donohoo provided a major boost to the effort when he agreed to create master lists for review. This was a vitally important and singularly complex endeavor. Alan Jutzi’s hosting of the meetings at The Huntington well served the members’ commuter needs and provided access to nearly all the books under discussion. As should be pointed out, Zamorano legend has it that some of the original Zamorano 80 committee members barely spoke to each other during the completion of the project and even after. While the new committee had its share of sharp interchanges, all the participants remained cordial at the project’s conclusion.

In the fall of 2007 the committee began to vote on the final list, agreeing that any book with four votes among the then five members should be included. The task of writing the descriptions began a year later, with the final four members taking responsibility for their respective favorites and dividing up the others.

Being mindful that some of the titles were advocated with expertise and effective presentations by former members, we hope we have done well by them and all of the members of the Zamorano Club. We are grateful to Gary Kurutz—distinguished author, librarian, bibliographer, collector of Western Americana and Californiana, raconteur, and corresponding Zamorano Club member—for contributing his Introduction.
The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Governors and members of the Zamorano Club for backing and encouraging this publication. We thank past president Judy Harvey Sahak (under whose guidance the project was proposed), Michael Gallucci and Patricia Adler-Ingram (who as presidents continued Club support), and Laura Stalker, president in 2009-10, who saw the manuscript completed. We owe appreciation to Susan Allen and Stephen Tabor for seeking a printer and bids for the book’s publication. We also thank the generous donors who helped underwrite the publication costs. Gordon J. Van De Water rendered great assistance in reading and commenting on all of the essays. He recruited his long-time friend William N. Rogers II, a retired professor of English at San Diego State University, to bring his copy-editing and stylistic skills to bear on a substantial number of the entries. Nathan D. Gonzales gave much time to proofreading the entries and putting all into bibliographic consistency. In a sense he became the unofficial fifth member. Janice Jones at the Smiley Library provided office support and kept tabs on all the revisions. In works of this nature errors may be present, and the committee accepts the final responsibility for these hopefully few instances.

We trust that this book will serve diverse interests and a wide readership seeking knowledge about California’s history and culture. We believe that its readers will find the selections enticing and the reading of them satisfying.

Larry E. Burgess, Chairman
William G. Donohoo
Alan Jutzi
Gordon J. Van De Water
The Zamorano 80, that noteworthy compilation of great California books, has achieved legendary status and ranks as one of the most famous bibliographies in the entire field of Americana. Its creation back in the 1940s inspired healthy debate over which titles to include. Any time a vast body of literature such as California history is boiled down to a select few titles, emotions will surface. Ever since its publication, The Zamorano 80 has served as a goal for the astute collector and as an inspiring guide of what a solid collection of Californiana should include. Homer D. Crotty, in the introduction to the first edition, beautifully summed up the value of this list with its superb annotations. “Our emphasis,” he wrote, “has been on distinguished books, not on books of great rarity. We have kept in mind in our selection those books which we believe should be cornerstones of any real collection of Californiana. In the choice of our eighty titles we are convinced that each one is distinguished in the field of Californiana.”

As the decades passed, Club members saw the need to offer an updated compilation to reflect new perspectives and new scholarship. Back issues of the Club’s quarterly newsletter Hoja Volante are replete with friendly debates over titles, inclusion dates, and genres such as ephemera, county histories, periodicals, and pictorial works. Lists were submitted. Despite the best intentions, consensus could not be reached, and that elusive goal of an updated bibliography of distinguished Californiana was never achieved until now.

While members ruminated, The Zamorano 80 continued to have a life of its own. Virtually every important bibliography or antiquarian bookseller’s catalog dealing with Western Americana cited this list of great books. Reflecting its importance and rarity, the Club gave the Kraus Reprint Company permission to publish a facsimile edition in 1969 to celebrate California’s Bicentennial. In 1986 the Henry E. Huntington Library hosted a joint meeting of the Zamorano and Roxburghe Clubs,
and the highlight was an exhibition of the complete Zamorano 80 in first editions drawn from the fabulous collections of the Huntington and of Zamorano Club member Henry H. Clifford. It should be mentioned here that Clifford had scaled that “Mt. Everest” of collecting by acquiring all titles in first edition. To celebrate this gathering of great books, the Huntington issued an exhibition catalog. No doubt reflecting the emotions that high-spot lists provoke, the catalog came with a curious subtitle: “An Annotated Check List Occasioned by the Exhibition of Famous and Notorious California Classics.” Perhaps the word “notorious” referred to the Joaquin Murieta, one of the titles that generated the most heated discussion over the years.

Showing admiration for The Zamorano 80, The Book Club of Washington published the Washington 89 in 1989. George Tweney in his introduction readily admitted that the inspiration for this organization’s book came from the Zamorano Club. Why not imitate the best? Other states need to follow this example.

Interest in The Zamorano 80 reached new heights with the auction of the Clifford collection on October 24, 1994, held at the posh Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Dorothy Sloan issued a scholarly catalog to further entice bidders. This represented an excellent opportunity to achieve that elusive goal of completeness for a lucky institution or collector. Only the Beinecke Library at Yale University could boast of a complete institutional collection; no library in California could make that statement. Bidding was fierce; paddles remained in the air as passionate collectors competed for cherished titles. When the elusive Murieta came up, the tension was palpable. Everyone turned their eyes to Dan Volkmann, the gentle but formidable collector from San Francisco. He needed this work of fiction-written-as-fact to complete his Zamorano 80 collection. Mr. Volkmann calmly raised his paddle but, to everyone’s astonishment, no one else did, and the Murieta was his. Within less than ten years, two private collectors had reached this seemingly impossible pinnacle.

Wishing to let others enjoy the same thrill of acquiring bibliographic treasures at auction, Mr. Volkmann decided to put his Zamorano 80 collection up for sale nine years later. Like Mr. Clifford, he commissioned Dorothy Sloan to handle the auction. Rather than holding the sale in a hotel meeting room, Sloan selected the new Society of California Pioneers building near the Moscone Center in downtown San Francisco.
To build interest in this historic auction, she created a sumptuous catalog loaded with bibliographic detail, supplemented with essays by Dr. W. Michael Mathes and yours truly. Brad Hutchinson of Austin, Texas, designed and printed the handsome 334-page catalog. On the afternoon of February 3, 2003, booksellers, collectors, and the curious gathered at the Pioneers Society to witness history. Predictably, the bidding was fierce, with expressions of joy and disappointment falling on the faces of the attentive audience as Dorothy Sloan brought the hammer down. One could not help but think of the reaction of the original compilers of the 1945 publication if they could look down from their collectors’ Mt. Olympus. By the time the afternoon drew to a close and bidders headed to the bar at the Pioneers, the sale had realized $883,608.25. Unlike the Clifford sale, no one had obtained that elusive title or two to complete another Zamorano 80 collection. It is conceivable that the Clifford and Volkmann collections will never again be repeated.

The same spirit that Homer Crotty outlined years ago characterizes this companion to The Zamorano 80. To put it mildly, much has changed about California since 1945 and this is reflected in the books about our Golden State. Thousands more have been published and others have been reexamined with a new appreciation for their content or format. A group of distinguished librarians, historians, antiquarian booksellers, and collectors have collaborated to create the new selection of cornerstone books featured in these 120 entries. It will no doubt generate welcome discussion, and there will be those who would argue with the choice of titles. It is certainly hoped that these titles will generate debate and develop a renewed appreciation for Californiana. This critical bibliographical guide also fulfills the pedagogical role of the Club as an educator about books. As a librarian, I am frequently asked for recommendations on the best books of California history and literature, and this Club publication will help answer that question. When it comes to selecting a few from a multitude, difficult decisions have to be made—otherwise, a final product will never see the light of day. Our selectors are to be applauded for persevering and overcoming the inertia that can easily beset any volunteer organization, and they deserve another bow for their imagination in the selection. Our four authors deserve further praise for their cogent, sprightly essays. Fortunately, too, our compilers have followed that dictum of J. Frank Dobie, that extraordinary literary sage of Texas and the Southwest, when he wrote: “If I were to do it over,
I would write more about few books. Anyone can rustle up a plain bibliography. What’s needed is the spotlighting of the few best books on a subject or a region. Pick the few and then light them up with everything you’ve got.”

Presented here are titles easily recognized as classics of scholarship, mixed with those that may raise eyebrows. Others are a pleasant surprise, demonstrating the thought that went into making the final selection. All, however, are representative of the richness of Californiana. No other state can match the books of our state in numbers, variety, and brilliance. The gentle reader will immediately recognize many of the titles such as Carey McWilliams’s *Southern California Country*, Glenn Dumke’s *The Boom of the Eighties*, Robert Glass Cleland’s *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills*, and Robert Hine’s *California’s Utopian Colonies*. As the Zamorano Club is a Southern California bibliophilic organization, the books selected naturally emphasize this region, featuring works on water, oil, land booms, climate, natural and manmade disasters, architecture, urban development, fiction with a local color, Hollywood, and even cookery. After all, more than half of the state’s population lives south of Hollywood and Los Angeles is the state’s dominant city. Nonetheless, geographical balance has been achieved. Two periodicals, for example, *The Land of Sunshine* published in Los Angeles, and *San Francisco’s Overland Monthly*, enliven the mix. To be fair, Northern California is by no means left out.

As will be seen, our writers did not ignore publications produced in the early years, but brought to light nineteenth-century titles deserving renewed appreciation, such as José María Guzmán’s *Breve Noticia*; B.E. Lloyd’s *Lights and Shades in San Francisco*; Barry and Patten’s *Men and Memories of San Francisco*; Henry George’s controversial economic study *Progress and Poverty*; the information-packed and spectacularly illustrated *Pacific Railroad Surveys*; the memorable book of that indefatigable pioneer woman Eliza Farnham, *California In-Doors and Out*; and Ben Truman’s effervescent *Semi-Tropical California*. Chronological coverage emphasizes post-1930 scholarship, picking up from the cutoff date of *The Zamorano 80*. Maynard Geiger’s *Franciscan Missionaries in Hispanic California*; the Club publication of George Harding’s detailed biography of California’s first printer, Agustín V. Zamorano; George Hammond’s multivolume compilation of the Thomas O. Larkin papers; Dale Morgan’s compilation, *Overland in 1846*; the magisterial editing of the Joseph Goldsborough Bruff Gold Rush journals by Georgia Read and
Ruth Gaines; the handsome Grabhorn Press publication of H.M.T. Powell’s *Santa Fé Trail*; and J.S. Holliday’s bestselling *The World Rushed In* add much to our understanding of those pioneering decades. Inclusion of Bernard De Voto’s study of American expansionism, *The Year of Decision, 1846* reminds us that California did not develop in isolation.

Bibliography is the portal to the massive literature of California, and the analysis of titles continues to inspire bibliographic study beyond Robert E. Cowan’s seminal work. In 1972, the California Library Association published *California Local History* compiled by Margaret Rocq. She listed over 17,000 titles! Long-time Club member Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. presided over the creation of perhaps the finest bibliographic study ever devoted to a United States city, *Los Angeles and Its Environs in the Twentieth Century*. The natural wonders of Yosemite and the Big Trees have always been a subject of passionate interest for the bibliophile. We are blessed with two bibliographical treatments of the great valley and its environs with the pioneering work of Francis P. Farquhar, spotlighting twenty-five key works, and the staggering compilation of hundreds of titles by Lloyd Currey and Dennis Kruska. Their inclusion of not only great books but also ephemera is a marvel of bibliographic thoroughness.

The interpretation of California, its literature, and its culture has been ably handled by three of the greatest bookmen any state could have. Franklin Walker’s *San Francisco’s Literary Frontier* stands as a tour-de-force in the documentation of our early literary heritage. He followed this up with an equally valuable study of Southern California’s nascent literary scene. Of the dozens of books written by Lawrence Clark Powell extolling the value of regional literature, none is more important than his *California Classics*. So delightfully personal, it is nonetheless the very best introduction to the great books of California. Kevin Starr’s *Americans and the California Dream* is an all-encompassing history of California civilization from the rambunctious days of the Gold Rush until the great Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915.

The present guide highlights books that reflect the Golden State’s unparalleled ethnic diversity. As modern scholarship points out, this was not always a happy story, but rather one marked by prejudice and violence. The interactions of Native Americans, Californios, African Americans, and Asians with the dominant Anglo society are well represented herein. Alfred Kroeber’s work on the ethnology of the native Californians and his wife Theodora’s *Ishi in Two Worlds*; Leonard Pitt’s
Decline of the Californios; W.W. Robinson’s People Versus Lugo; Toshio Mori’s Yokohama, California; Deliah Beasley’s Negro Trail Blazers of California; and Carey McWilliams’s Factories in the Field all are examples of path-breaking studies that should be on every shelf of essential Californiana. The heroic contributions and perseverance of California’s Chinese population have generated an impressive body of documenting material, as brought out by Gladys Hansen and William Heintz in The Chinese in California: A Brief Bibliographic History. Its perceived exoticism was masterfully captured by Arnold Genthe’s Old Chinatown. The Japanese internment during World War II produced both moving verbal and visual accounts of this shameful chapter in our history, as demonstrated by Ansel Adams’s stunning photographs of the Manzanar Relocation Center in his Born Free and Equal and Carey McWilliams’s Prejudice: Japanese-Americans, Symbol of Racial Intolerance.

Our compilers recognized the importance of physical format and the value of pictorial representation. Robert Becker’s two-volume work on California rancho diseños, Carl I. Wheat’s Maps of the California Gold Region, and Neal Harlow’s coverage of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco maps are monumental studies. What remarkable works of reference they are, and our California fine presses so beautifully designed and printed these impressive folios. They are a perfect blending of information and elegant presentation. An essential companion to these carto-bibliographies is Erwin G. Gudde’s California Place Names, which so beautifully elucidates the origins of the colorful names that adorn our mountains, rivers, counties, cities, and other landmarks. Owen C. Coy unraveled the complicated stories behind the formation and evolution of counties in his California County Boundaries. Through maps, charts, and graphs, the vital story of water is graphically documented though Bill Kahrl’s California Water Atlas.

The world learned of California not only through its eyewitness accounts and reports but also through the persuasive power of pictures. Harry T. Peters’s California on Stone offered a detailed study of lithography, highlighted by hand-colored large folio birds-eye views; and Joseph Baird’s California’s Pictorial Letter Sheets recorded a unique form of California stationery with pictorial representations of mining camps, vigilance committees, and natural wonders. The glories of California’s vineyards are breathtakingly represented with the sumptuous folio Grapes and Grape Vines of California, illustrated with ten chromolithographs. It stands
as the most elaborate example of color printing in the western United States. Paul Landacre’s California Hills, with its fifteen wood engravings (including the colophon), stands as a triumph of California book illustrators’ art. While J.D. Whitney wrote a magnificent book on the geology of Yosemite, the rare quarto is remembered even more for the inclusion of original photographs of the granite chasm by C.E. Watkins, the greatest of all pioneer landscape photographers. Brilliant graphic designer Merle Armitage framed the power, precision, and clarity of the black-and-white photograph in Edward Weston.

Of course, many of the above-described books touch on or are devoted to California’s exquisite natural scenery. Its beauty generated interest from scientists, travelers, and authors with the gift to describe the natural world in poetic terms. J.M. Hutchings’s In the Heart of the Sierras, Joseph LeConte’s Journal of Ramblings, George Wharton James’s Wonders of the Colorado Desert, John Muir’s Yosemite and his stupendous ten-volume Picturesque California, Charles Francis Saunders’s The Southern Sierras of California, and J. Smeaton Chase’s California Coast Trails and California Desert Trails all offer unexcelled word pictures describing the region’s sublimity, and several are embellished with exquisite engravings and photographs.

Lawrence Clark Powell once remarked, “I believe a good work of fiction about a place is a better guide than a bad work of fact.” Bibliographer Robert Greenwood likewise noted that the California novel covers a facet of life not found elsewhere. Since 1540, thousands of novels with a California setting have been published, and many have enjoyed international recognition. Its geography and people cannot be matched and have provided a gold-mine of settings and plots. With California being such a fertile ground for the novelist and mystery writer, our bookmen present a choice sampling with works by such now-celebrated writers as Jack London, John Steinbeck, Evelyn Waugh, Jack Kerouac, John Fante, Christopher Isherwood, Edwin Corle, Nathanael West, and Raymond Chandler. These literary titans artfully weave the local setting with stories and plots that frequently uncover the dark, unglamorous, and gritty side of the human condition. A book of poetry was also selected, and to include that son of the Arroyo Seco, Robinson Jeffers, is a perfect and enlightened choice.

As well as fiction, California has generated a plethora of cookbooks, ranging from slender compilations of recipes by ladies raising funds
for charitable purposes to lavish color-illustrated culinary masterpieces by world-renowned chefs or Hollywood celebrities. Recognizing the importance of this vast palate-pleasing literature on our diverse culture, our compilers ingeniously included Charles Lummis’s *Landmarks Club Cook Book*. It combines solid local history with homage to our Spanish and Mexican heritage.

This biblio-Baedeker will serve as a welcome guide to the best of Californiana. It will proudly stand as an admirable companion to the heralded *Zamorano 8o*. Collectors and institutions alike will check their holdings to see how well they stack up. It will be surprising if any one collector or library will have all these titles in first edition, and future auction houses and booksellers will no doubt cite these cogent, lucid entries. Our compilers have created a bibliographic panorama that will delight the scholar, beguile the collector, and stimulate the student.

Gary F. Kurutz  
*Principal Librarian, Special Collections  
California State Library*
Ansel Adams (1902-84) is legendary for his iconic black-and-white photographs of landscapes throughout the western United States. Photographing people was not of prime aesthetic importance to him, yet when his friend Ralph Palmer Merritt, Director of the Manzanar War Relocation Center near Lone Pine, California, asked him to photograph the people and buildings of this government facility, he jumped at the opportunity. He wanted to use his skills in any way possible to help with the war effort—for a time he had taught photography for the Signal Corps at Ford Ord. Now he had a chance to mingle with and photograph people of Japanese descent who had been uprooted from their homes and shut away in ten camps across the United States for fear that some of them might be enemy aliens.

In the autumn of 1943, Adams arrived at Manzanar and immediately began work. He photographed many interned individuals and families at work and play. Surprisingly, most of his pictures—sharp in detail, showing every strand of hair, every nuance of skin-tone—are alive with smiles and show no rage, anger, or resentment at being unwilling prisoners in a barren semi-desert landscape. While he was not permitted to aim his camera at guard towers or the barbed wire that surrounded the camp, the enlarged 2002 edition of his book adds some photographs taken by others, including one showing three boys reaching out to the barbed wire. Because of the constant dust blowing everywhere, even in the interior of the barracks, Adams was obliged to take the exposed film back to his own darkroom for printing.

Given the near-panic following the Pearl Harbor attack, the hate-mongering of the press, and the fear of imminent invasion by Japanese forces, it may be possible to understand what led to the abrogation of the rights of tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans. Ralph Palmer Merritt thought that while the internment was not just, it was justified by circumstances. Adams took a different view, believing that the Constitution had
been violated because of fear of the unknown. He concluded his essay in *Born Free and Equal* with these resonant words: “Only when our foundations are shaken, our lives distorted by some great catastrophe, do we become aware of the potentials of our system and our government.” He went on to emphasize that “we must assure our people that there will be no further human catastrophes such as the destruction of Rotterdam, the annihilation of Lidice, the rape of Nanking, or the decimation of the Jews. We must be certain that, as the rights of the individual are the most sacred elements of our society, we will not allow passion, vengeance, hatred, and racial antagonism to cloud the principles of universal justice and mercy.” For the record, no Japanese-Americans were ever found in the courts of justice to be disloyal enemy aliens. Ultimately, eighteen men were accused of spying for Japan, of which at least ten were convicted—all were white. —GJV

2.


When the British architectural critic Reyner Banham (1922-88) came to Los Angeles and later wrote this book and produced the B.B.C. short documentary “Reynor Banham Loves Los Angeles,” the world architectural community finally took notice of a long-neglected region of the United States. Banham claimed that to understand Greater Los Angeles you had to examine the topographical and historical context that “binds the polymorphous architecture into a comprehensible unity.” No architectural historian had previously attempted such a thing.

In his introduction Banham writes, “I learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original.” Movement is central to his argument. The book is divided into Four Ecologies: Surfurbia (beaches), Foothills, Plains of Id, and Autopia. Banham punctuates his commentary with insights that make the reader wonder why they weren’t obvious before. Although the book is now considered dated because it applauds Southern California’s freeway system and argues for L.A.’s exclusiveness (urbanists now disagree), there is no doubt that Banham created a masterpiece that had an international impact and still is relevant today. —AJ
Imagine walking the streets of San Francisco in the 1850s and 1860s with guides who know the city intimately. This approaches possibility through *Men and Memories of San Francisco* by Theodore Barry (1825-81) and Benjamin Patten (1825-77). They arrived in California before 1850, but rather than searching for gold in rivers or mines, they discovered their own gold by opening a saloon, profiting from the back-breaking labors of those in the gold fields. It became one of the largest and most popular saloons in San Francisco, and it seemed that everyone in the city passed through its doors at one time or another during the Gold Rush days.

*Men and Memories* takes the reader on a street-by-street, house-by-house tour of the city as it existed in 1873, but it also looks back to what the city was like in 1850. The authors describe San Francisco’s boarding houses, hotels, restaurants, saloons, stores, and offices, and profile many significant residents of the city. This was important work since it put on record two cities that disappeared almost entirely. The largely wooden San Francisco of 1850 was swept away by the massive fire of May 1851, and the city of 1873 would be obliterated by the earthquake and fire of 1906. Barry and Patten’s book complements the 1855 *Annals of San Francisco* (*Zamorano 80, #70*), but *Men and Memories* is much more focused on individuals and daily life in the youthful days of this fascinating city.

—WGD

4.

**Delilah L. Beasley.** The Negro Trail Blazers of California. Los Angeles: [Privately printed], 1919.

This rich work took some eighteen years to complete—ten years of research and an additional eight years in the writing. Delilah Beasley
(1871-1934) published it herself in the hope that it would find a place in every public library and in the home of every African American. Although it never achieved that status, it did have a wide distribution, and was probably purchased by many of the hundreds of people named in its pages.

Beasley spent much of her time, as she wrote, “interviewing old pioneers of the Negro Race in every section of California wherever a railroad or horse and buggy could go” to learn first-hand the life they experienced during the last half of the nineteenth century. She voraciously read the many documents and newspapers in the Bancroft Library relating to Black people, and examined county files, poorhouse records, and whatever else offered information on their lives.

The first half of the book gives a brief history of California as it relates to African Americans, touching on the first settlers, miners, and even the homes set up for the aged and infirm. Beasley discusses churches, including the formation of the first African Methodist Episcopal church in San Francisco, as well as education for children, totally lacking when California was admitted to the Union but gradually improving once separate private schools for African Americans were established in 1854. Law and lawyers have a place also, as well as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which at the time Beasley wrote was already a very influential organization in the state. Music is given a chapter to itself praising individuals and groups that made important contributions to the musical life of California.

The book’s second half concentrates on prominent African Americans in the first decades of the twentieth century, mainly army officers, literary people, distinguished women, doctors, and lawyers. One of the most important was the then well-known Lieutenant-Colonel Allen Allensworth, who was able to help establish a town governed by Blacks and free of discrimination. Initially it was a successful venture that saw Blacks from many places in California become pioneering residents in Allensworth in Tulare County, but it reached its population limit by the 1920s because of lack of sufficient water. The book is illustrated with seventy-three photographs of important people—the “Negro trail blazers”—who made a significant difference in the quality of life for the people around them.

—GJV

George (1859-1949?) and Helen Beattie’s meticulously researched history of the Inland Empire—the urban areas of today’s Riverside and San Bernardino Counties—extends from the Indians through the first explorations by the Spaniards, the Mexican ranchos, and the American settlement, to the end of the Civil War. It also touches on the region’s role as a crossroads of trade for the Indian settlements in the Los Angeles and San Diego regions.

In the nineteenth century a key event in the development of the Inland Empire was the arrival of the Mormons. Veterans of the Mormon Battalion returning from the Mexican War brought inspiring reports of the fertility of the land and salubrious climate, and soon a large group of Mormons petitioned Brigham Young for permission to migrate to the area bounded by Rancho de Chino, Cucamonga, and the old mission lands near San Bernardino. While he was not in favor of this migration, Young granted permission, and 150 wagons began the trek. Arriving in Southern California in early 1851, the Mormons bought six leagues of land (close to 30,000 acres) from the Lugo family around present-day San Bernardino. Because the title was sketchy, the Mormons settled in a kind of patchwork, allowing the Saints to intermix with gentiles and raising Brigham Young’s concerns that their faith would be challenged.

The colonists planted over 1000 acres of wheat, which they ground in their own mill and sold profitably to the citizens of Los Angeles. They also built timber mills in the San Bernardino Mountains, providing lumber to build their towns and to help build the city of Los Angeles. At the same time they provided a force to block incursions by Indians through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes. They eventually created the city of San Bernardino and established San Bernardino as a county.

In late 1857, Brigham Young called the Saints back to Salt Lake City, ostensibly because of fears of an invasion by the federal government. The Beatties conclude that the real reason for the recall was Young’s concern that the Saints, in their distant outpost, could lose the fervor of their faith and become apostates. In fact, only about half the Saints in San Bernardino responded to the call, and of those who did go, about half returned to San Bernardino within a year. The Beatties’ book concludes
with San Bernardino in the Civil War and the short-lived gold rush in the Holcomb Valley.

—WG D


Understanding how California was mapped is crucial to fully grasping the history of the state. Significant publications contributing to our knowledge of the state’s cartographic history include The Maps of the California Gold Region and Mapping the Transmississippi West by Carl I. Wheat, and Neal Harlow’s works on maps of San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Of equal importance are Robert H. Becker’s two books on the early diseños relating to Mexican and Spanish land grants, based on the Bancroft Library’s collection of records of the United States District Court in San Francisco. These unsophisticated but charming hand-drawn maps recall the era of Mexican California before the onslaught of American immigration. In the first book Becker selects 37 disputed tracts of land and gives the background on each applicant. The Grabhorn Press beautifully reproduced the diseños in facsimile and included a sketch map outlining the location of each original rancho claim. The second publication, a larger oblong volume printed by Grabhorn-Hoyem, has another 64 maps of disputed ranchos from around the state and provides much additional information on the mapmakers.

—AJ
8.

8A.
[expanded edition:] Los Angeles: Jake Zeitlin, 1931.

Descended from a Maine family that answered the siren call of the Gold Rush, Sarah Bixby Smith (1871-1935) was born on a sheep ranch in the San Benito Valley near San Juan Bautista, over the hills from Monterey and about a hundred miles south of San Francisco. The San Justo ranch had been home for her father and mother since 1855. Sarah's girlhood memories of the place were piquant and unforgettable. The Maine-style ranch house with white paint and green blinds, the old pond, blue sky, and orchards underneath all impressed themselves into Sarah's memory and eventually found expression in Adobe Days. An expanded edition published by Jake Zeitlin in 1931 adds material on the growth of Southern California from the 1870s to the 1880s.

In the late 1870s the family moved to Los Angeles, a place that Bixby Smith describes as “a little city, and there I lived until both it and I grew up.” With Bixby relatives occupying both Rancho Los Cerritos (the “little hills”) and Los Alamitos (the “little cottonwoods”), the families created an “intimate connection of double blood-kinship and of business association [that] made the three families seem like one and us children like brothers and sisters.”

Her memoir includes much about her family and their pioneering role in both Northern and Southern California. She writes with particular sharpness about Christmas at Rancho Los Cerritos, life on the ranchos and the employees who ran them, the relationships with Californio ranch families from the Mexican era, and the drought of 1862-64 that devastated the cattle industry in the south. That drought bankrupted ranchero pioneers Abel Stearns and John Temple. As a consequence, the Bixbys and their extended family were able to acquire thousands of acres of land now largely occupied by Long Beach and surrounding communities.

The growth of Los Angeles in the 1880s and 1890s, the early beginning of Pomona College, and descriptions of many of Southern California's towns and how they began are all discussed by Smith. —LEB
J. Goldsborough Bruff (1804-89) was an extraordinary man. Employed by the Treasury Department, he decided to go west on the California trail with the intent of writing an overland guide book. His wagon train, the Washington City and California Mining Association, received the personal blessing of President Polk before leaving Washington, D.C. Elected captain of the wagon train, Bruff was unusual in retaining the office all the way to California. He was a keen observer; he transcribed over a hundred grave inscriptions, identified over five hundred individuals on the trail, and recorded fifty companies from all parts of the United States. He kept daily records of weather conditions and miles traveled.

Typical of the Bruff style is the following passage written along the Platte River: “In this extensive bottom, are the vestiges of Camps:—Clothes, boots, shoes, hats, lead, iron, tin-ware, trunks, meat, wheels, axles, wagon-beds, mining-tools, &c. A few hundred yards from my camp I saw an object, which reaching, proved to be a very handsome and new Gothic bookcase! It was soon dismembered to boil our coffee kettles.”

While sitting in camp, when he was not writing in his diary, Bruff was making sketches and painting pictures. His artwork, much of which is illustrated in this work, comprises the most extensive extant pictorial record of the overland experience.

Bruff’s train traveled near the rear of the migration. As they neared the Humboldt Sink in Nevada, the trail telegraph, passing messages back up the line, painted an increasingly grim picture of the lack of water and fodder at the sink. Panicky emigrants turned off the main trail onto the untried Lassen Cutoff, taking fully a third of the migration with them. Bruff meticulously records the privations that occurred on this route, and gives the clearest picture of this significant part of the migration.

The Lassen Cutoff was supposed to reduce the length of the trip, but actually added 250 miles to it. As a result, Bruff’s train got caught in an early winter storm in Northern California. Faithful to his duties as train captain, Bruff stayed with the party’s wagons while his companions...
hurried ahead on foot to Lassen’s Ranch. They promised to send a relief party but, caught up in the gold fever, forgot about him. He spent the winter in a small settlement on a ridge overlooking Mill Creek in what is now western Tehama County.

As spring arrived, Bruff, ill and half-starved, finally moved on to the settlements in April. The second volume of this work details Bruff’s adventures in California. He accompanied Peter Lassen and others in search of fabled Gold Lake. They did discover Honey Lake, and Bruff claims they also discovered Eagle Lake. In December 1850 Bruff visited Sacramento, and in January 1851 he went to San Francisco, soon departing for Gold Bluffs on California’s northern coast. He continued to report, sketch, and paint what he saw. In June 1851 he shipped out for home via the Panama route.

Merrill Mattes has described Bruff’s Journals as “without question ... the most elaborate and accurate single record of an overland journey for 1849 or any other year.” This meticulously researched work, edited over a fifteen-year period by Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines, covers events from April 2, 1849 to July 20, 1851. Over 340 pages of notes support this massive work. —WGD


The San Francisco earthquake and fire of April 18-22, 1906, destroyed nearly 80 percent of the city. The earthquake not only leveled San Francisco, but also heavily damaged Fort Bragg, Fort Ross, and San Jose. The downtown area of Santa Rosa was completely demolished.

The vitality of San Francisco was such that rebuilding began even while the ruins were still smoldering. Within ten years the city was sufficiently rebuilt to allow it to host the Panama Pacific International Exposition, planned for the opening of the Panama Canal.

With the same alacrity that citizens of San Francisco attacked the reconstruction of their city, David Starr Jordan (1851-1931), President of Stanford University, compiled this inquiry into the disaster. He might have done so because Palo Alto, and specifically the Stanford campus, suffered a great deal of damage. The resultant book is largely a technical
description written by scientists with expertise in earthquake science. It contains over 125 photographs and diagrams. For the lay reader, by far the most interesting essay in the book is Mary Austin's (Zamorano 80, #2) personal narrative of her experience in the earthquake. She describes the days following the earthquake that she spent huddled with other displaced San Franciscans. She described them as “houseless people, not homeless; for it comes to this with the bulk of San Franciscans, that they discovered the place and the spirit to be home rather than the walls and the furnishings.” Austin gives a true street-level view of those terrible days.

Two observations can be made about the results of the disaster. First, much of the cultural heritage of San Francisco was destroyed. This gave Los Angeles an opportunity to develop its own competing culture. The population growth also shifted south. While San Francisco’s population grew by 74,000 between 1900 and 1910, Los Angeles more than tripled in size from 102,000 to 319,000 in the same period.

Second, the major infrastructural failure in the earthquake was in the municipal water system. Lack of water caused the fire damage to be greater than it should have been. This failure caused the San Francisco government to lobby hard for the building of a reservoir to ensure a water supply under all conditions. The site they wanted was Hetch Hetchy, inside Yosemite Park. Much to the dismay of environmentalists, their lobbying succeeded in 1913.

—WGD


A highly successful 1950 California State Centennial Project culminated in the first publication of *California Local History*. Librarians, writers, historians, and booksellers used it to expand their knowledge of the state’s
published local history. In 1957 an effort began to create a supplement. Margaret Miller Rocq retired in 1958 as chief librarian at Standard Oil Company of California and agreed to chair the effort. The response to a call for entries was overwhelming. When published in 1970, the second edition contained 17,000 entries, a far cry from the 5,342 in the first. No other state had at that time given such attention to compiling a bibliography of local history.

It should be noted that this bibliography excludes fiction, poetry, cookbooks, natural science, journeys or voyages to California, almanacs, broadsides, Psalters, juvenile books, single maps and pictures, school and college catalogs, newspapers and periodicals, federal and state publications, and manuscripts. What are included are histories of counties, cities, and geographical areas; histories of colleges, universities, schools, railroads, businesses and organizations; biographies, diaries, and theses; as well as various other materials.

While the Internet now provides access to information on the majority of the entries included here, this pioneering bibliography remains useful, and a tribute to those who devoted their efforts to California local history. Many of the listed items are long out of print and sought-after by collectors.

—L E B

12.

In 1979, during the administration of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., an 18- by 16-inch publication about water in California was issued by the State Printing Office. William L. Kahrl had assembled a team of experts in the Department of Water Resources to collaborate on this valuable guide to the natural, economic, historical, and cultural importance of water in California. Produced with the approval of Ronald B. Robie, Director of the Department of Water Resources, it serves to confirm Robie’s “devotion to public service” (acknowledgments). The handsome volume is replete with information on the natural endowment, human settlement, urban development, the Colorado River, valley water systems, water operations, economics, commercial and recreational use, water quality,
and ecological matters. With informative graphics and writing that is outstanding in clarity and depth, the presentation rises well above the usual standard for government printing offices. While certain new water issues have evolved since 1979, the book’s enduring strength remains its comprehensive analysis and wide-angle view of California as an interdependent geographical area in terms of water resources. It has been said about Southern California’s water history that it proves that “whiskey is for drinkin’ and water is for fightin’.” That said, The California Water Atlas continues to inform the state’s citizens about the complex and finite nature of water—the one indispensable resource whose importance looms ever larger in the twenty-first century.

—LEB


From the late 1930s to the 1950s, the novels of Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) went far beyond the requirements of the detective story genre to evoke a Los Angeles that had never before been put on the page. Chandler’s L.A. is a city of “mean streets” and over-the-top mansions; box-like houses baking in the sun; Depression-era failures, losers, addicts, and murderers; and a detective, Philip Marlowe, who has been described as a “slumming angel.” The complex, meandering plots, of which even Chandler at times lost track, are much less what lingers in a reader’s mind than the sense of a city—its manners and mores, languid scenery, nondescript buildings, wimpy rains and blazing sun, and corrupt officials and cops, all etched in tough-guy prose with a lyrical element. Just as “Kafkaesque” describes a particular quality of fiction or life, so does “Chandleresque.”

The enigmatic Philip Marlowe is described as moving through a corrupt world without himself becoming corrupt. While he is street-wise, tough, worldly, slightly weary of human foibles, and capable of deep cynicism, he can also exhibit a sense of honor toward women, a hard-edged moral code, and an appreciation for classical music and the implacable logic of a chess game.

In The Big Sleep, the first of Chandler’s novels, Marlowe investigates what initially seems to be a routine extortion scheme, but soon finds
himself entering a tangle of dark motives and actions that lead far beyond simple extortion. Eventually the wealthy and powerful Sternwood family is shown in all its perversity, and Carmen, the errant daughter and blond temptress, is revealed as a murderer. Trying to untangle the strands of the criminal plot is probably beyond the capacity of anyone except Marlowe—but that is really beside the point. What grips and holds the reader is the hardboiled, menacing sense of Chandler’s L.A. and Marlowe’s graphic way of conveying it. It’s definitely not a Chamber of Commerce-approved view of 1930s Los Angeles, but it rings true on the page and is definitely a classic fictional treatment of the dark side of the “California Dream.”

—LEB

14.

This book is essential reading for those who want to envision the California coast as it was at the turn of the twentieth century. Then, it was possible to travel the length of the state by horseback and camp almost anywhere when the day’s journey was at an end. The initial chapters of California Coast Trails describe J. Smeaton Chase’s 1911 horseback trip when he left the rustic village of El Monte with his artist friend Carl Eytel and traveled to San Diego. In later chapters he gives the details of a horseback ride he took alone to the Oregon state line.

Chase (1864-1923) was an Englishman who came to California at age twenty-five and remained for the rest of his life, ultimately making Palm Springs his home. The curiosity and desire for adventure in his blood led him to set out on lengthy journeys to Yosemite, the California coast, and the vast California deserts. He recounted these experiences in several books, but California Coast Trails is generally recognized as the best of them.

While he made a point to visit the missions—or what remained of them—and writes well about them, what makes the strongest impact today is his sharply-etched descriptions of the natural settings of the state, many of which would soon be covered over with asphalt and cement. On one occasion he traveled through a forest on a dirt trail, stopping now and again to rest his horse and take in the natural beauty
around him. “My admiration was constantly divided between the exqui-
site symmetry of the redwoods, the rugged magnificence of the spruces,
and the rich red gleam of the madroño stems. The forest flowers were
long past, but there was no lack for them; for here was a touch of scarlet
or crimson from frost-stained poison-oak, there a yellowing leaf-spray
of tan-bark oak. All was gold, green, purple, and the sensitive warm or
wan tones of autumn.”

As the twenty-first century opens, historic San Juan Capistrano is a
bustling tourist town, the main streets choked with vehicular traffic and
sidewalks brimming over with crowds in search of souvenirs. Contrast
this scene with what Chase saw almost a century earlier. “Darkness was
falling as we entered the little town of San Juan Capistrano. A few tor-
pid Mexicans lounged outside the stores, which had closed for the day,
and gave us Buenas noches as we passed. We camped beside the river half
a mile beyond the town, and enjoyed at night a fine entertainment of
summer lightning that played along the northern horizon. Lightning is
something of a rarity in California.”

—GJV

15.
J. Smeaton Chase. California Desert Trails. Boston and New York:

In this book published some six years after the appearance of California
Coast Trails, Chase records the experience of seeing a California desert as
it was in the first quarter of the twentieth century. He traveled by himself
on horseback exploring the Colorado Desert, coming to appreciate and
understand the often hidden charms, immense solitude, frequent dis-
comforts, and even danger inherent in this largely unsettled region in
Southern California. The Colorado Desert, encompassing some 2,500
square miles, lies south of the Mojave Desert, extending from the San
Bernardino Mountains east and southeast to the Colorado River.

Chase visited dozens of little towns during his perambulations,
some of which have disappeared and a few that have prospered in this
inhospitable land. Blythe, for instance, is today a pleasant city of over
23,000 on the Colorado River in Riverside County. It has an airport, a
general acute care hospital, a high school, and a community college.
There are also twenty-four churches, a library, a museum, and various
businesses—all making it a good place in which to live and raise a family. Chase’s description of the town he saw some time before 1920 presents a less pleasant aspect: “We were soon entering the town of Blythe, which I found to consist of a dozen good stores, a neat little bank, hotel, moving picture theatre, and so forth, and a few score of modest dwellings. But again I rebelled at the slovenliness that makes our new Western cities so deplorable. One picks out the redeeming features, every bit of lawn, every decent job of fencing; but these only give contrast to the general vileness. One would think effort had been made, real ingenuity called in, to achieve this hideous result.”

The population of Blythe today, as it was a century ago, is almost equally divided between whites and Latinos, but fortunately prejudice has diminished greatly from what it was in the early 1900s when Chase could write: “As I stood at dusk talking with the saddler and watching the Mexicans trooping to the baile in chattering family groups, all the femininity in snowiest array, I noticed a few American youths and girls passing in with them, and remarked that it was good to see the two elements so friendly. ‘Huh!’ said my companion, ‘those store-clerks would go anywhere there’s a show for a dance.’ ‘But,’ I said, ‘don’t the Mexicans invite them?’ ‘Sure.’ ‘And then of course the Mexicans are invited when you get up a dance.’ ‘What! Invite the greasers! Well, I just reckon we don’t.’”

—GJV
Robert Cleland’s (1885-1957) classic history of the rise and fall of the cattle industry in Southern California from 1850 to 1870 and the area’s subsequent development draws extensively on the papers of Abel Stearns in the Huntington Library. The Massachusetts-born Stearns went to sea as a boy of twelve and ended up in Southern California seventeen years later in 1827. He married into the powerful Bandini family, and until his death in 1871 played a prominent role in the commerce and politics of Southern California.

Spain and Mexico granted huge tracts of land to a very few recipients. They also granted land surrounding presidios and pueblos to provide crop land for these settlements, as well as around the missions for the Indian population. By terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the Mexican War, the rights of landowners under Spanish and Mexican land grants were to be protected. Nevertheless, many of these grants were nullified and the lands seized by Americans. Once the competing claims were adjudicated by the court of land claims in San Francisco, much of the land was used as pasturage for vast herds of cattle.

In the days of the Californios the main use of cattle had been for hides, tallow, and suet. But the Gold Rush created a demand for beef and led to the glory years of the cattle industry. When competition from the East, beginning as early as 1855, impacted the market, the undercapitalized ranchers found the Southern California market unprofitable. A crisis point was reached by the late 1850s, when ranchers had to mortgage their property at usurious interest rates. When lenders foreclosed, the ranchero system was at the point of collapse. The end came as a result of severe winter floods in 1861-2 followed by extreme drought in 1863 and 1864. Nearly half the stock in the region died during this period of extreme weather.

Cleland’s conclusion is that large land holdings persisted because of “the chronic dearth of capital and the prohibitive interest rates ...; uncertainty and confusion in land titles; the Trespass Act and other state
The Cattle on a Thousand Hills

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - 1850-1870

by Robert Glass Cleland

The Huntington Library
SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA
1941
legislation favoring the grazing interests at the expense of the settlers; restricted markets and lack of transportation; and inadequate facilities for irrigation.” The gradual relaxation of these constraints, accompanied by the large emigration of settlers at the close of the Civil War, began the process of specialized farming and the growth of cities in Southern California. In the second edition (1951), Cleland adds a chapter to tie his book to Glenn Dumke’s *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (see item 22).

—WGD

17. **Edwin Corle.** *Fig Tree John.* New York: Liveright, 1935.

Born in the East but educated at Hollywood High School and the University of California, Los Angeles, Edwin Corle (1906-56) studied playwriting and in the 1930s wrote scripts for Hollywood studios. After publishing his first short story in 1932, he turned to writing novels about the Southwest and California. While he received critical acclaim for many of his works, it is the novel *Fig Tree John,* written in 1935, that is today his most recognized work. *Fig Tree John,* often thought to be an Apache because he spoke the language fluently, was in reality a member of the Cahuilla tribe that once occupied large tracts of the desert in Southern California. He lived to be nearly a hundred years old, dying in 1927. Corle became fascinated by this well-known figure who often wore a frayed blue army uniform and a tall black silk hat, and whose desert home had been trespassed on and largely taken over by non-Indians and the Southern Pacific Railroad. *Fig Tree John* remembered the promise made by the railway: that in exchange for letting the rails go through tribal lands, Native Americans could ride free. He often demanded a free pass from ticket agents and, because of his bearing and dignity, received it.

In Corle’s novel, the historical *Fig Tree John* is transformed into an uprooted Arizona Apache who resettles near the Salton Sea. Isolated, he becomes bitter, and after the rape and murder of his wife by white riffraff, vengeful. When his son is lured away from him by a seductive white woman, *Fig Tree John* is drawn toward the violence that leads to his destruction. While Corle’s writing style can be dull at times, this remains a powerful novel. Its overall effect is both moving and pervasively sad as it presents a tragic interplay of frustrated desires, prejudice,
and an inexorable clash of cultures. It is salutary, however, to recall that
the real-life Fig Tree John was noted for his hospitality to all—a canny
horse trader whose Colorado Desert ranch often served as a haven for
weary or lost travelers.

—L E B

18. 
Owen C. Coy. California County Boundaries. Berkeley: California His-
torical Survey Commission, 1923.

Prior to being a history professor at the University of Southern Califor-
nia, Owen C. Coy (1884-1952) was secretary and director of the Califor-
nia Historical Survey Commission from 1915 to 1923. It was during this
period that he searched public records for information on the bound-
daries of California counties, a project that required extensive travel
throughout the state. The first paragraph of the preface makes clear the
rationale of the work: “The object of this volume is to present a brief but
comprehensive account of the formation of the counties of California,
together with a more detailed study of the location and changes in the
county boundaries. Beginning with the first legislature, in 1849, which
divided the state into twenty-seven counties, the agitation for new coun-
ties and for county boundary changes has continued down to the pres-
et time, when there are fifty-eight counties, with consequent radical
changes in boundary lines.”

The book gives a history of each county's original boundary lines,
with subsequent changes to 1923. Only very minor changes have been
made since that time. Coy relates that one county, Klamath, had the
unenviable distinction of being the only county in the state to completely
disappear. Klamath County was created on April 25, 1851, and was dis-
solved under an act passed on March 28, 1874. Because of its many iso-
lated mountain districts and scanty population—mostly miners who did
not own land—the limited tax base resulted in fiscal problems, a high
degree of discontent, and the subsequent decision to merge it with two
adjacent counties, Humboldt and Siskiyou.

—G J V
Father Juan Crespi’s (1721-82) field drafts and completed journals are important eyewitness accounts by a churchman who participated in a number of significant events in the early history of Spanish California—the discovery of the Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay and the discovery of a land route from San Diego to Monterey, as well as the founding of Monterey, the first permanent Spanish settlement in Northern California. Alan K. Brown’s scholarly labors, which took him to both Mexico City and Spain, resulted in this first full and complete publication of Crespi’s accounts of travel and discovery. This is a bilingual edition with the translation made from the author’s own manuscripts.

In 1765 José de Gálvez was appointed visitador-general to Mexico. In 1768, recognizing that Russia was attempting to establish a position in Alta California, Gálvez was given authorization to send an expedition there. Its purpose was to locate Monterey Bay, which had first been discovered by the seventeenth-century explorer Sebastián Vizcaíno, and to establish a settlement there. Gálvez organized two parties to go by ship and two by land from Baja California. The seagoing party included Miguel Costansó, while the first overland party included Father Juan Crespi, and the second, Governor Gaspar de Portolá and Father Junípero Serra. The parties were to rendezvous at San Diego where a mission was to be established, and then push on to Monterey. The parties reached San Diego in severely weakened condition between April 11 and July 1, 1769. They founded the mission on July 1, the very day the last of the party arrived.

Because the journey had depleted their numbers and their supplies, it was decided to send one of the ships back to Mexico for supplies while the land party was reformed for a journey up the coast seeking a land route to the future site of Monterey. This party, under Portolá and including Costansó and Crespi, arrived at Monterey Bay on September 30. However, they were frustrated because they could not recognize the landmarks that Vizcaíno had described, so they continued further north. As a result they discovered the Golden Gate on November 1, and San Francisco Bay on November 4. On November 11 they decided to return to
San Diego on foot, arriving there on January 24, 1770. They found their Spanish brethren that they had left behind on the verge of starvation. Fortunately, the ship sent back to Mexico the previous summer returned two months later, just days before the party had resolved to give up their quest and return to Mexico. Fortified by the new supplies, the explorers reorganized as quickly as possible and set out once more in a two-pronged attack on the route to Monterey. This time, one party including Serra and Costansó went by sea, while Portolá and Crespí proceeded by land. The land party arrived at Monterey Bay on May 24, 1770, followed a week later by the sea party. Three days later, Father Serra consecrated the site of the Carmel Mission. The building of fortifications and the mission began immediately and were major steps in securing Spain’s claim to Alta California.

Costansó (Zamorano 80, #22) and Portolá sailed back to Mexico, where their personal reports were eventually published. (Their joint report is in Zamorano 80, #35.) Father Serra, as he was dying, expressed the hope that Crespí’s journals would also be published to encourage other friars from Majorca to “take up the labor in this vineyard of the Lord.” However, it was not until this edition by Brown that all of these important journals and field notes would finally see publication.

—WGD

20.

The events of 1846 were arguably among the most significant in American history between the Revolution and the Civil War. The events of 1846 made the 1849 Gold Rush possible. Bernard De Voto (1897–1955) also asserts that “at some time between August and December, 1846, the Civil War had begun.” The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), debate on the Wilmot Proviso, and the Compromise of 1850, all of which surfaced as a result of the Mexican War in 1846, ensured that “slavery was out of the closet, and it was going to stay out.” The events of 1846 joined the West and the East in an alliance the South could not defeat.
In January 1846, President Polk terminated the Oregon Joint Occupation agreement with Great Britain. By the end of that year the United States had taken complete possession of the Washington, Oregon, and Idaho territories. Throughout the spring, John Frémont moved around California helping to establish the short-lived Bear Flag Republic. In April, war with Mexico began, concluding in 1848 with the United States gaining the territories that would become California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.

In March 1846, Brigham Young led the Mormons living in Winter Quarters, Iowa, to their new home in Salt Lake. Along the way, with the only large contingent of male American citizens west of the Mississippi River, Young negotiated with the U.S. government to hire out 500 of his men to march as the Mormon Battalion across the Southwest to San Diego, putting American boots on the ground in the areas the U.S. would later obtain in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

De Voto documents these and other events of that significant year in this anecdotal and accessible history. One of the many threads making up his story is the diary of James Clyman (Zamorano 80, #19). Clyman, born in Virginia in 1792, spent his life traversing the continent in both directions a number of times. After serving in the War of 1812, he headed west and was one of a party who pioneered the Platte River Route in 1823. He served with Abraham Lincoln in the Black Hawk War of 1832 and encountered Frémont in his wanderings across the American West. Such was his knowledge of the geography of the plains and mountains that at one point he attempted to discourage the Donner Party from taking the Hastings Cutoff. They did not heed his advice and soon found themselves trapped by impassable trails and disastrous weather conditions in the mountains of California.

—WGD

21.


Using a pseudonym, Alexander Del Mar (1836-1926), a social historian much respected in his day, wrote three letters to the San Francisco Argonaut in 1878 defending the presence of the Chinese in California, particularly
San Francisco. He describes the history of Chinese civilization, Chinese society in San Francisco, and the economic value of having a work force willing to undertake unsavory tasks that others would not do. Printed toward the end of a ten-year period of rampant prejudice against the Chinese, these letters plead for better race relations. History would repudiate Del Mar’s arguments: in 1881, a bill introduced in Congress suspended Chinese immigration, followed by further restrictions in the 1892 Geary Exclusion Act. These acts sought to end the perceived “threat” to organized white labor, although there were still anti-Chinese riots in Southern California in the 1890s.

—GJV

22.


The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California is a pioneering work that takes up the development of Southern California where Cleland’s The Cattle on a Thousand Hills (item 16) leaves off. The Southern California economy changed markedly when the cattle industry collapsed in the mid-1860s. This forced the land-rich rancheros, who had no cash reserves, to sell their vast holdings to meet tax and mortgage obligations. For the first time, large tracts of land were available in Southern California. It was not long before bumper crops of citrus fruits and grapes were being produced by some of these new landowners.

The coming of the railroads led to the hope, soon to prove illusory, that they would connect Southern California to eastern markets via San Francisco and the transcontinental railroad. However, the Southern Pacific Railroad kept rates high, arresting the development of Southern California and keeping Southern California farmers from reaping the profits on their crops. This economic stranglehold was broken by the coming of the Santa Fe Railroad and the rate wars that followed. With lower freight rates came lower passenger rates, and tourists and land speculators began to come to the area to stay. By 1886 the land boom was on, and over one hundred cities were platted in the Southern California area.

The end of the boom came in 1888 as quickly as it had begun. The first three months saw near normal sales, but beginning in April there
The Boom of the Eighties
IN
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By
GLENN S. DUMKE

Huntington Library
SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA
1944
was a sharp decrease. As Dumke (1917-89) writes, “There was a universal desire to sell—quickly, at any price—and consequently, expanded values deflated like a pricked balloon. ... Worried citizens looked back upon their frenzied existence during 1887 and began to realize that ‘never, perhaps, did a community more completely lose its sense of values and proportion’.”

However, Southern California recovered quickly, one of the reasons being that the banks had maintained a conservative lending policy and almost without exception survived the bust. One of the lasting effects of the boom of the 80s, land value decline notwithstanding, was the opening of the spigot of immigration. From then until now the flow of people into Southern California has never stopped.

—WG D

23.

When it was published in 1969, E.I Edwards’s The Enduring Desert immediately became the definitive bibliography of Southern California deserts. It remains so today. Edwards embarked on a mission “to incite interest” in books about the desert and “to encourage the reading of them.” In all, more than two thousand items are described, including journals and diaries, reminiscences, accounts of journeys, magazine articles, and works on history, flora, and fauna.

While a number of important works on the deserts have been written since 1969, the material assembled and described by Edwards remains a bedrock source. As Edwards wrote, “The book is essentially a directional guide to the superb narrative of our desert country—its flowers and shrubs and trees and cacti, its birds and animals, its canyons and mountains and valleys, its old ghost-town mining camps, its sunrises and sunsets, its penetrant silences. It is an index to the history, drama, philosophy and adventure which are all inextricably woven into the pattern of our desert fabric.”

In his foreword, Russ Leadabrand, a noted writer on California’s geography, emphasizes that Edwards’s enduring achievement was to assemble a large number of texts in a lucid and understandable way. “He had commented on almost every one of these items, assigning it its
place in the pageant of desert history and folklore, comparing ‘this with that.’’ There is no doubt that “Eddie” Edwards’s book is a major contribution to understanding the delicate and precious desert environment that is the shared heritage of all Californians. —LEB

24.

This novel by John Fante (1909-83) offers a kaleidoscopic tour of downtown Los Angeles. Arturo Bandini, a young man of twenty, full of high spirits and the ambition to become a great writer, wanders the streets of the city as a wide-eyed observer:

> Then I went down the hill on Olive Street, past the horrible frame houses reeking with murder stories ...
> And so I was down on Fifth and Olive, where big street cars chewed your ears with their noise, and the smell of gasoline made the sight of the palm trees seem sad ...
> I was passing the doorman of the Biltmore, and I hated him at once, with his yellow braids and six feet of height, and all that dignity.

He also wants to make love to a Mexican girl, any Mexican girl, an Aztec or Mayan princess as he imagines her to be. Not surprisingly, this erotic fantasizing, along with his immaturity and laziness, keeps Arturo from his goal of literary greatness. Nor does he ever truly possess the Mexican girl of his dreams. In Ask the Dust Fante created a minor masterpiece, rich in imagination, emotions, and humor, that captures the experiences of a loser with a dusty typewriter who lived in the 1930s in a fascinating city called Los Angeles.

In 1980, Santa Barbara’s Black Sparrow Press inaugurated a revival of Fante’s works with a new edition of this work. —GJV
Eliza Farnham (1815-64) packed a great deal into her relatively short life. She was matron of the Female Prison at Sing Sing, a phrenologist, and an early feminist. Her death at age 49 resulted from tuberculosis, probably contracted while she was nursing soldiers wounded at Gettysburg in 1863.

Her California years began when she sailed around the Horn in 1849 to reach her inheritance, a farm in Santa Cruz left by her husband, Thomas Jefferson Farnham (Zamorano 80, #36). She experienced the difficulties and pleasures of farming on the raw, unsettled California frontier. Ever resourceful and energetic, she got behind a plow and planted potatoes, asparagus, cabbages, and twenty-five acres of wheat. She repaired irrigation ditches, built fences, and even, with some assistance for the heavier tasks, built a house. As she shingled the roof she would read aloud passages from the religious mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg. She explored the mining country by horseback, and once tried her hand at panning gold. She also raised two sons, divorced and married for a second time—a poor decision, as her spouse was a drunken lout—and still found time to write California, In-Doors and Out, a book that conveys a vivid sense of life in Northern California during the early 1850s.

Finding that “the American is not a working animal like the Swiss, the German, the Irish-man, or the Englishman,” she argued that for the most part Americans in the gold country worked smarter, always on the lookout for a chance to start a business and thus put into their own pockets the wealth others had laboriously gained from the earth. She wrote poignantly of children, particularly the boys who matured surrounded by a rough and ready crowd of men: “I saw boys, from six upward, swaggering through the streets, begirt with scarlet sash, segar in mouth, uttering huge oaths, and occasionally treating men and boys at the bars.” She encountered a mother whose ten-year-old son had just walked into a rum-shop, and asked if anything could be done to prevent this. The mother replied that the boy made three to five dollars a week panning gold and that he was growing old very fast. “There is no school to send them to, and no church, and it’s useless trying to make good
CALIFORNIA,
IN-DOORS AND OUT;
OR,
How we Farm, Wine, and Live generally
IN THE
GOLDEN STATE.

BY
ELIZA W. FARNHAM.

...it is a goodly land, my lord, of richest stores
And most delightful ways. The pleasant sky
Doth never weep upon't thro' all the sunny
Summer months.
Ay, but knowest thou not, good Jacques,
That e'en with precious stores, and smiling skies,
And beauteous earth, there lacketh much.

Peru.—AN OLD PLAY.

NEW YORK:
DIX, EDWARDS & CO., 321 BROADWAY.
1856.
boys of them, when they see men behave so badly, and hear so much swearing and bad language."

Farnham ends her book with two lengthy chapters. One is on the then-recent tragedy of the Donner Party that draws attention to the strength of women in desperate circumstances. The final chapter is a history of the 1856 San Francisco Committee of Vigilance, concluding that its extra-legal activities were necessary to maintain law and order in the absence of action by weak or corrupt city officials. —GJV


The natural wonders of Yosemite and the Big Trees have drawn the attention of the world like nothing else in California. Two books that are essential to the study of the area are the pioneering 1948 work by Francis Farquhar (1887-1974), who was an influential member of the Sierra Club, a book collector, and writer; and the expansive and exhaustive 1992 bibliography by Lloyd Currey and Dennis Kruska.

Farquhar writes that he selected only twenty-five titles for inclusion based “in part [on] their rarity and unusual character and in part [on] their originality and importance as contributions to knowledge.” The descriptions of these works are informative and entertaining. Currey and Kruska's comprehensive bibliography identifies and describes 411 items. Small and obscure pamphlets and broadsides are given attention equal to that given major texts. The introduction, chronological listing, extensive bibliographical entries, information on library holdings, and index make this an indispensable tool for anyone doing serious work on this fascinating topic. —AJ
In 1935, as part of his WPA legislation, President Roosevelt included a special project known as Federal Project Number One (or “Federal One”) to benefit the arts. One element of this was the Federal Writers’ Project. In each state an office was set up to hire people to anonymously prepare a state guide. California had one of the largest of these offices, with locations in San Francisco and Los Angeles. California: A Guide to the Golden State was the result of this effort. It was designed to accompany the traveler, pointing out places of interest throughout the State, and thus get Californians on the road again. It proved to be very popular, and was revised and reprinted a number of times.

The Guide is a treasure-trove of information on annual events, the natural setting, California history, agriculture, industry and finance, the work force, newspapers, radio and movies, education, and the arts. At the end of the general section are write-ups of fourteen cities, with their history and sights. These are followed by fourteen road tours crisscrossing the state. The book also includes extensive descriptions of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks and Death Valley. The first edition has a section on the Golden Gate International Exposition held in 1938 and 1939. The work concludes with a chronology of the history of California, a select list of California books, and a folding pocket road map.

Rigorous editing and re-editing by the Washington office eliminated boosterism and ensured that the guides would have an enduring value. The continual revising frustrated the writers, one of whom suggested that “only God” could call a halt to the endless task. He wrote this plaintive bit of doggerel:

I think that I have never tried
A job as painful as the guide.
A guide that changes every day
Because our betters feel that way.

A guide to which we give our best
To hear: “This stinks like all the rest!”

—WGD
This simply-written novel tells of the first settlers who came to what is now known as Pomona and its surrounding area. In 1837, twenty thousand acres were granted by Governor Alvarado at Monterey to long-time friends Ygnacio Palomares and Ricardo Vejar. They constructed new adobe houses in what they thought might be the approximate center of their new domain. Peering into the windows of the old Palomares Adobe today, a visitor sees nineteenth-century household objects and senses the pleasures and challenges of daily life that its family faced. There were happy times of fiestas and weddings, mingled with the labor of cattle ranching, conflicts with the Indians whose raids would take away cattle and horses, ever-recurring droughts, smallpox, and crippling gambling debts. When Don Ygnacio died in 1864 at age 55, he was secure in the belief that his wife and family would continue living comfortably in the large adobe he had built. But this was not to be, since the land was mortgaged at high interest by his partner Don Ricardo Vejar and, when the terms could not be met, was eventually repossessed by the American lenders. The old adobe became a deserted ruin, overrun with weeds and one surviving wisteria vine.

As American settlers came in ever-larger numbers, the great rancho was broken up into smaller farms and settlements. Some 500,000 olive trees were planted in the vicinity; afterwards came orange groves that replaced vineyards and fields of corn. The Southern Pacific Railroad linked the area to the pueblo of Los Angeles, shrinking to an hour’s ride what had previously been a day’s journey by horseback. By June 1887, Pomona had a population of 3500 and was incorporated as a city with schools, churches, lodges, and hundreds of homes.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century proudly stand the communities of Pomona, La Verne, San Dimas, Diamond Bar, Azusa, Covina, Claremont, Glendora, and Walnut, either completely or partly carved from the rancho. The Palomares adobe still remains, restored by the Historical Society of the Pomona Valley, as an important reminder of the days when it was the center of all social and business activity in an ageless pastoral landscape.

—GJV
Believing that “history is best told within its human context,” Maynard J. Geiger (1901-77) devoted the heart of his professional life to the history of California. Following his investiture with the Franciscan order, and after completing his philosophical studies, he studied history at the graduate level with a concentration in biography, and taught for a time.

Upon becoming archivist at Mission Santa Barbara in 1937, he began writing a series of books that made him the foremost authority on Franciscan mission history, as well as an expert on the Spanish and Mexican periods of California. By the mid-1960s, Geiger’s prodigious efforts had produced biographical accounts of 142 Roman Catholic missionaries. In 1969 he completed his well-regarded *Franciscan Missionaries in Hispanic California, 1769-1848*, the culmination of twenty-five years of labor. One reviewer called it “among the half-dozen most scholarly, useful, and colorfully-presented volumes released to commemorate California’s Bicentennial.” Its essays give insights into each friar’s spiritual, intellectual, physical, and civic contributions to the work of the Franciscans in California in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In summarizing his labors, Geiger noted that the men he wrote about were Franciscan “pioneers who bore the burden and the heat of the day, as well as the solitude of night. A number were outstanding. Many were merely successful. All tried and a few were failures. Each one deserves the niche in history he earned.” Francis J. Weber wrote a tribute to Geiger and a survey of his career in 1971.

—LEB


Exploring this book is to discover what San Francisco’s Chinatown looked like prior to the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906. Photographer Arnold Genthe (1869-1942), intrigued by the people and the shadow-filled byways of Chinatown, took hundreds of photographs—sometimes
openly and other times surreptitiously—of Chinese at work or leisure on the streets of this fabled district. The first edition of Old Chinatown is illustrated with 47 photographs, the second (1913) with 91, including some from the first edition. These are the best-known photographs by Genthe of a time when Chinatown was more of a transplanted city from southern China than part of the large American city surrounding it. Here are photographs of dark alleys (“that tangle of sheds, irregular arcades and flaming signs”), children in holiday finery (“how the Chinese, child lovers from the bottom of their hearts, used to pay them court on the corners”), Fish Alley (“that horror to the nose, that perfume to the eye”), and the Joss House (“where strange Gods were worshipped by young and old”), as well as a sad image of an opium fiend (“as the town drunks to an American community, so were these creeping, flabby slaves to opium to Chinatown”). San Franciscan Will Irwin (1873-1948), who wrote the text for the book, concluded his short foreword with these incisive words about Genthe: “You, the only man who ever had the patience to photograph the Chinese, you, who found art in the snap-shot—you were making yourself unconsciously, all the time, the sole recorder of old Chinatown.” On Irwin’s advice Genthe gave his negatives to a friend, who stored them in a vault. They thus became his only possessions to survive the disaster of 1906.

—GJV


California was growing up at the same time photography was developing in America. Early daguerreotypists used their silver plates to capture the activities in the gold fields; George R. Fardon in 1856 published the first photographic record of an American city with his San Francisco Album; Carleton E. Watkins took mammoth views of Yosemite in 1861; and Alfred A. Hart’s stereos recorded the building of the Central Pacific Railroad. One of the intentions of the early California photographers was to celebrate California’s natural beauty, and perhaps no publication better realizes this than The Yosemite Book.
Published in a small edition of 250 copies, *The Yosemite Book* was the culmination of the regional survey undertaken by State Geologist Josiah D. Whitney (1819-96) and his team. It strove “to call the attention of the public to the scenery of California, and to furnish a reliable guide to some of its most interesting features.” It was designed as an elegant gift book, with twenty-eight original photographs—twenty-four of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove taken by Watkins in 1866, and four others by W. Harris. As historian Martha Sandweiss recently wrote, it was “a masterpiece of photographic bookmaking that exemplified the twinned spirits of scientific inquiry and unabashed boosterism.” A later Yosemite Guide-Book, using the same text and engravings, was produced more cheaply for broad dissemination.

—AJ

33.


Writing in *The California Historical Society Quarterly* in 1963, Kenneth M. Johnson said, “Some may urge that [Henry George’s] *Progress and Poverty* should not be included in any list of California books because it is neither descriptive nor historical. This is obvious; however it is only half true. The creation of the book and its contents subjectively reflect California of the seventies in a manner that pure description could never achieve. Also in a broad sense it is historical; it is a part and parcel of the times which has survived. Just as an old menu tells us what people were eating and the cost of living, *Progress and Poverty* tells us why the seventies were called discontented.” Of all the books written on economics in the nineteenth century, only a few remain in print today, and Henry George’s is the only one that is still in mainstream economic thought. To this day, no other book on economics has been as widely distributed.

Henry George (1839-97) moved to California in the mid-1860s and remained there until 1880. He became a newspaper man and was able to live comfortably. However, before entering that trade in San Francisco he lived in near poverty, at one time resorting to panhandling to support his family. He never forgot the experience and it became one of the events that shaped his career.
George pondered the question of how San Francisco could be so prosperous with many people becoming wealthy, while the average citizen was seeing wages decrease. While out horseback riding around the Bay in 1871, he had an epiphany when he struck up a conversation with a passerby. George wrote, “I asked a passing teamster, for want of something better to say, what land was worth there. He pointed to some cows grazing so far off that they looked like mice and said: ‘I don’t know exactly, but there is a man over there who will sell some land for a thousand dollars an acre.’ Like a flash it came upon me that there was the reason of advancing poverty with advancing wealth. With the growth of population, land grows in value, and the men who work it must pay more for the privilege.” This led to the writing of George’s first separate publication, a pamphlet entitled Our Land and Land Policy, National and State that appeared that same year. He developed this into his masterpiece, Progress and Poverty.

The book was written against the backdrop of the Panic of 1873 and its aftermath. This Panic started in New York. Many farmers fled their homes in the East to try for a better life in California. Within two years the Panic had spread across the country and had caught up with the new emigrants. In California, while the railroads and holders of earlier Spanish and Mexican land grants effectively controlled over 20,000,000 of the best acres of land, the average citizen could not find land to buy at a price he could afford.

George postulated that all economic progress was due to the application of three factors: Land (all natural resources), Labor (physical, mental, and managerial), and Capital (money and tools used in production). He observed that while the improvements due to railroads and industrial technology bring prosperity, this prosperity resulted in rising land values reflected in “rents,” and not in increases in returns to Labor or Capital. Yet all three factors were taxed equally. George’s solution was to apply all taxes to the increases in rent on land. The landowner retains the value of the Labor and Capital inputs—factories, buildings and other land improvements—but the rent component is taken by the government as a tax. Labor and Capital will thus be relieved of any tax burden, with its accompanying disincentive.

Initially, George’s ideas were not well received, and he ended up self-publishing his book in an edition of 200 copies. The following year,
PROGRESS AND POVERTY

AN INQUIRY INTO

THE CAUSE OF INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSIONS, AND OF INCREASE OF WANT WITH INCREASE OF WEALTH—THE REMEDY

by

HENRY GEORGE

Make for thyself a definition or description of the thing which is presented to thee, so as to see distinctly what kind of a thing it is, in its substance, in its quality, in its complete entirety, and tell thyself its proper name, and the names of the things of which it has been compounded, and into which it will be resolved. For nothing is so productive of delusion of mind as to be able to examine methodically and truly every object which is presented to thee in life, and always to look at things so as to see at the same time what kind of universe this is, and what kind of use everything performs in it, and what value everything has with reference to the whole, and what with reference to man, who is a citizen of the highest city, of which all other cities are like families; what each thing is, and of what it is composed, and how long it is the nature of this thing to endure. — Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

AUTHORS EDITION.

SAN FRANCISCO
WH. M. HINTON & CO., PRINTERS
1879
Appleton & Co. published the first trade impression, printed from the original plates. —WG D

34.

34A.

34B.

Fourteen copies are known to exist of the 1877 first edition of this stunning folio produced by Edward Bosqui (1832-1917), and of those only six are complete. In 1980 John Windle, a bookseller in San Francisco, issued sixty-five copies of a facsimile, twenty-five of which were bound up for sale. These also have now become quite scarce on the market. (The colophon claims an edition of 310 copies, but an accident at the bindery reduced the actual number.) To accommodate the many collectors of fine press books with an interest in viticulture, another folio facsimile was published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1981.

Kevin Starr notes in his valuable introduction to the Windle facsimile that this masterwork was published just as Bosqui was going into his decline as a printer of quality books. It contains ten chromolithographic plates that render watercolor paintings of grape varietals grown in California during the nineteenth century. The watercolors were by art teacher Hannah Millard (1827-1900), who was commissioned by the State Vinicultural Society to illustrate grape clusters grown in California as they would appear at harvest time. With impressive artistry she was able to show both sides of the leaves along with the clusters and tendrils on the cane. An informative text gives the description and origin of each grape and discusses where it thrives best in the state. Notes by Kevin Starr (to the 1980 facsimile) and Leon Adams (to the 1981) provide historical backgrounds for the nineteenth-century original.

Both as a work on viticulture and as a color-plate book, Grapes and Grape Vines of California was an unprecedented achievement for a California
press. It was exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1878, where it garnered high acclaim.

—GJV

35.

Having braved the roiling waters of California place name origins, University of California professor emeritus Erwin Gudde (1889-1969) fortunately lived long enough to see his meticulous and important work honored. Joseph H. Jackson, literary editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, declared Gudde's volume “definitive.” Gudde himself preferred to call his book “basic,” knowing full well that an effort such as his was unavoidably a work in progress. With a twinkle in his eye, Gudde noted that “when one of my successors, about A.D. 2000, brings out the tenth edition of California Place Names, that volume may be a ‘definitive’ work—at least on the day of its publication.”

Sure enough, the critics have had their say. Etymologists have dissected Gudde’s Spanish place name derivations, antiquarians have questioned others of his attributions (some of which are still in active dispute today), while others have taken issue with the omission of obsolete names. Nevertheless, California Place Names remains a remarkable achievement even when set alongside more recent works by other noted experts in the field of California place-name history. It provides a place where both the casually interested and the dedicated scholar can find answers that are succinct, well-researched, accurate, and engaging. Colleagues called it “an unparalleled fund of background information.”

Gudde’s stated purpose was “to bring out in the stories of these names the whole range of California history.” In his introduction to the third edition of his work, he amplified this by saying that he wanted to show when, how, and by whom these names were applied, to tell their meaning, their origin and their evolution, their connection with our national history, and their relation to the California landscape and the California people. The delights to be found in California Place Names are suggested by a quotation from Lawrence Emerson Nelson: “Place names are tattletales, like children artlessly blurting out the household secrets of those who named them.”

—LEB
36.

**Douglas Gunn.** *Picturesque San Diego, with Historical and Descriptive Notes.* Chicago: Knight and Leonard Co., printers, 1887.

Newspaperman Douglas Gunn (1841-91) arrived in San Diego in 1868 and soon became involved with various projects having the good of the city in mind. He established the metropolitan police force, organized a company of the National Guard, was instrumental in bringing the Santa Fe Railway to the city, and was mayor from 1889 until his death. He also wrote and published at his own expense this illustrated history of San Diego County, a book that in time attracted large numbers of people to the area. The contents include not only information about geography and climate, but discussions of fruit culture, property valuations, health resorts, and the value of the harbor. Rural areas surrounding San Diego that are highlighted as superior places to live include Del Mar, Escondido, Oceanside, the Julian region, and Mount Palomar—long before the latter became famed for the observatory. What is especially important about the book is the 72 photogravures documenting the countryside and buildings of the county toward the end of the nineteenth century, a time of natural beauty and charm as well as aggressive boosterism and urban growth.

—GJV

37.

**José María Guzmán.** *Breve noticia que da al Supremo Gobierno del actual estado del territorio de la Alta California, y medios que propone para la ilustración y comercio en aquel país, el guardian del Colegio apostólico de San Fernando de México. Año de 1833.* Mexico [City]: Imprenta de la águila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1833.

José María Guzmán’s *Breve Noticia* is the story of “what might have been” in early California history. Guzmán, who was the head of the Franciscan College in Mexico City, was reacting to what he saw as the potential consequences for the secularization of the mission lands—and the distribution of property to the Indians who farmed it—that was underway in Alta California. He feared that secularization would lead to chaos if there were no plan to attune the Indians to European concepts such as responsible land ownership.
BREVE NOTICIA

QUE DA
AL SUPREMO GOBIERNO,

DEL ACTUAL ESTADO

DEL TERRITORIO DE LA ALTA CALIFORNIA,

Y MEDIOS QUE PROPONE

PARA LA ILUSTRACIÓN Y COMERCIO EN AQUEL PAÍS,

EL GUARDIAN DEL COLEGIO APOSTÓLICO

DE SAN FERNANDO DE MÉXICO.

AÑO DE 1833.

MÉXICO:

IMPRESA DE LA Águila,

dirigida por José Ximeno, calle de Medinas núm. 6.

1833.
Although the move toward secularization came to California in 1821, its serious implementation was ignored and delayed for more than a decade. One problem was that the missions were by far the largest generator of income in Alta California. Another was that, while the Indians had terms for concepts like freedom and land ownership, the words had different meanings than their European counterparts. If given the land, would the Indians become “responsible” landowners?

As an alternative to immediate secularization, Guzmán proposed an ambitious five-point program:

1) Bring in teachers to educate missionary Indians at the elementary level, and select promising young men for college education in Mexico.
2) Begin growing hemp and flax as cash crops.
3) Divide the missions into groups of four, and ensure that each group had a ship of its own to allow the missions to earn the profits on sea trading as well as on the crops they grew.
4) Develop the port of San Francisco. There was adequate timber there to set up dry docks and build ships. Further, the port was ideal for trade with Asia, and significant industry there would help secure Alta California’s northern border.
5) Open a highway from San Diego to Sonora via the Colorado River. This would tie Alta California more closely to Mexico City, facilitate commerce, and provide a land route to major cities in Mexico.

Guzmán proposed that the Pious Fund could pay for this program.

Not surprisingly, Guzmán’s ambitious plan, published in April 1833, was never implemented. In August of that year the final order for secularization was mandated.

Breve Noticia is very rare. Until 1945 the only known copies were at Pomona College and the Huntington Library. Since then a few additional copies were found in Mexico City. In 1949 a facsimile edition of 100 numbered copies, plus five lettered copies not for sale, was issued by E.R. Goodridge and Victor Ruiz Meza. —WGD

This still-relevant volume is the second one on water history compiled by William H. Hall (1846-1934). The first concerned irrigation legislation in France, Italy, and Spain. The Southern California volume covers San Diego, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties, each subdivided by “The Irrigable Region” and “Works and Projects” and described in great detail. The San Diego County section is somewhat incomplete since, as Hall notes, he had to use “his own means” to prepare that part because the legislature refused him additional funds.

Hall’s early water system maps are part of his priceless legacy as California’s first state engineer. Appointed in 1878, Hall at first dealt with the damage from debris created by hydraulic mining. Soon his work enlarged to encompass the earliest overall survey of California’s hydrological system. With water there is always controversy, and Hall’s work was not immune, especially his recommendation for more governmental control over the development of the state’s water resources. The legislature became his enemy, and in 1888 refused to provide funding for a planned third volume in the series intended to cover the San Joaquin Valley. He resigned, his office was abolished, and the bulk of his data lay unpublished and little used by state officials for decades. Until his death he pursued a lucrative private engineering practice in the United States and abroad. His work lives on and has been rediscovered by many government entities, groups, and individuals grappling with California’s insatiable need for water.

—L E B


Gladys Hansen (b. 1925), Senior Librarian at the San Francisco Public Library—a major repository of books about or by Chinese—provided William Heintz with the 423 titles in this bibliography. He reviewed
them and augmented each with bibliographical information. In the introduction he also discusses the importance of many of the listed books. He writes that while this is not a definitive bibliography, it is the first attempt to include the most valuable titles ranging from Gold Rush days to the 1960s.

The exact year when a Chinese first entered California society will probably always remain conjectural, but it was certainly well before the Gold Rush. For instance, James Cullerton, in Indians and Pioneers of Old Monterey (1950), noted that a Chinese sailor was baptized as a Catholic in Monterey in 1793 and that Governor de Solá had a Chinese servant in 1815. With the discovery of gold, Chinese laborers flooded into California; Heintz concludes that “the names of the Chinese who deserve the honor of being the first to come because of California’s gold still lie buried in the pages of history.” The contributions of Chinese labor to the development of California were immense, as were the hardships they often faced. They cut through the Sierra while working on the Central Pacific Railroad, accomplishing feats of manual labor that white men spurned. They leveled and graded the streets of San Francisco; they monopolized the cigar industry; they established laundries on practically every corner (over 300 in San Francisco alone); and they were the major manufacturers of boots and shoes. Much of the early economic development of the state was undoubtedly due to their business acumen and unstinting labor.

The place of Chinese cuisine in California goes far back—first as an oddity to be observed and later as fare to be eaten with gusto. Charles Nordhoff, in California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence (1872), observed the wide range of food consumed by Chinese construction workers—oysters, much fruit, and many varieties of vegetables including bamboo sprouts, cabbage, seaweed, and dried mushrooms. He contrasted this with the meals of the white laborer, who was typically satisfied with beef, beans, and potatoes, along with bread and butter. Many American miners would not eat Chinese food because of fear of unknown ingredients and a belief that the Chinese would eat anything that walked or crawled. Examining his soup, William M’Collum wrote in his excellent California As I Saw It (1850) that he was relieved to find “no verifiable rat tails.”

Heintz lists a number of autobiographies, including two fine works by American-born Chinese who describe the often difficult experience of blending their Chinese cultural heritage with the very different values
and standards of American culture. These classic works are *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943) by Pardee Lowe (see item 69) and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950) by Jade Snow Wong.

As of this writing, Hansen/Heintz is still the only bibliography dealing exclusively with the Chinese experience in California. Excellent as it is, however, there is no doubt that a new and much expanded edition is needed to include the thousands of relevant titles published during the last forty years.

—GJV


The first Hungarian to settle permanently in the United States, Agoston Haraszthy (1812-69) was considered by early historians of wine to be the father of the California wine industry. More recent historians have come to view him as an opportunistic self-promoter whose achievements in viticulture were more mythical than real. Nevertheless, his life had many successes, though accompanied by an air of scandal. He was a visionary, but certainly elusive and perhaps devious.

His important role is secure in the annals of American agriculture, and *Grape Culture, Wines, and Wine-Making*—not the first in his lengthy list of publications—is arguably his most important book. As the first notable account on wine in California, it opens with a reprint of Haraszthy’s report to the state legislature on his 1861 mission to Europe, followed by engaging details of his travels through wine-growing regions. Chapter 9 contains a “Report on Grapes and Wine of California,” which he compiled in 1858 and then supplemented with later thoughts on the subject.

Like so many others lured to California by the Gold Rush, Haraszthy found no gold and seized instead upon other opportunities at hand. He became the first sheriff of San Diego, a member of the California legislature, and the first assayer for the U.S. Mint in San Francisco. In 1856 he moved to the Sonoma Valley, fulfilling a long-held dream to grow fine European grapes in America. He built the first stone winery in California, introduced more than 300 varieties of European grapes, and
made his Buena Vista estate in Sonoma into what was then billed as the largest vineyard in the world. In the final analysis, perhaps Haraszthy's most significant contribution was to market or even “boost” wine and wine’s potential in California, rather than to introduce superior varieties of grapes into the Golden State.

—LEB

41.

This is a biography of Don Agustín V. Zamorano (1798-1842), a Mexican civil servant and California’s first printer, whose press was located in Monterey in the 1830s. The book was commissioned, quite appropriately, by the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles—a distinguished book club founded in 1928—and produced by the Los Angeles printer Bruce McCallister. In taking the name “Zamorano” the club honored this remarkable early California statesman, soldier, engineer, hunter, craftsman, painter, and government official.

Zamorano served as executive secretary of the territorial government of Alta California from 1825 to 1836. He worked with the territorial governors, traveled the state, and witnessed and participated in many of the cultural and civic developments of the time. An educated man, he was envied throughout California for his penmanship and his superior organization of the government archives under his care. His efforts to keep the peace during some turbulent times enhanced his professional reputation.

For the members of the Zamorano Club, all of these attributes are eclipsed by his private act of having brought to Alta California the first printing press to be set up west of the Rocky Mountains. On it he produced a series of small books and official proclamations that are today among the rarest of California imprints. Readers of George Harding’s (1893-1976) biography will learn much about Agustín Zamorano, but also about the Mexican period of California and its fluid and often heated atmosphere of political intrigue.

—LEB
Self-portrait and signature of Agustín V. Zumarraga

Item 41


Doubtless the residents of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego might make a case for any of Neal Harlow’s (1908-2000) superb volumes on their city’s maps to be included in a list of significant books about California. Harlow’s trilogy illustrates the cartographic legacy of the Spanish, Mexican, and early American periods of California. The San Francisco volume presents important information on the area’s cartography, and is a definitive work. The San Diego volume discusses some of the most complex land ownership issues involved in the formation of the city and supplies contexts in which they can be understood. The Los Angeles volume makes clear that one hundred years passed between the first entitlement to land and the final adjudication and legitimization of the city’s land title. Such a comprehensive approach to the cartographic history of Los Angeles had never previously been undertaken.

Harlow put in the forty years of research for these three books during his time as librarian at the University of California, Berkeley, and as dean of graduate studies in library science at Rutgers University. For researchers, and indeed for anyone interested in the growth of California’s three largest coastal cities, Neal Harlow’s volumes provide essential information for understanding urban development.

—LEB

Few insights into the transition of Southern California from Mexican to American control are as wide-ranging and penetrating as those found in the diaries of Benjamin I. Hayes (1815-77). Born in Baltimore, he was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-four, and in the 1840s practiced law in Missouri. The lure of the West and the continuing excitement of the Gold Rush brought Hayes to Los Angeles in 1850. Even though a newcomer, he was soon elected as county attorney, although he resigned this post in 1851 to form a law partnership. However, the call of public service was strong and he won election as the first judge of the Southern District of California. Hayes rode the circuit until 1864, presiding over the district courts in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Bernardino.

As a judge, Hayes had a privileged view of the most important and at times controversial legal cases involving the Southland, as well as the colorful characters that were often embroiled in legal proceedings. While the opinions in his Pioneer Notes often reflect his prejudices and those of his circle of friends, there is no doubt that his literate, savvy, and often shrewd perceptions capture well the social, political, and economic pulses of his times. He also found space to vividly describe the beauty and grandeur of the Southern California landscape. From his description of being shot at by an enraged partisan of Californios he had earlier prosecuted to his lyrical evocation of the East San Bernardino Valley in spring bloom, the diary entries open a window into an important time in Southern California’s sweeping transition from one way of life to another.

—LEB
46A.

46B.
[augmented translation:] The Narrative of a Japanese: What He Has Seen and the People He Has Met in the Course of the Last Forty Years. Edited by James Murdoch. 2 vols. Printed by the Japan Gazette Newspaper Company, Yokohama and sold by Maruzen Ltd., Tokyo, [ca. 1895].

46C.

46D.

Joseph Heco’s (1837-97) work is unique in the perspective he brings to mid-nineteenth-century California. He was apparently the only Japanese to have come to California during the Gold Rush period and to have written about his adventures there and in other parts of the United States.

In late 1850, a junk on which Heco was sailing encountered a severe storm, lost its mast, and became a derelict. The American freighter Auck-land rescued the seventeen survivors and carried them to San Francisco. For Heco this experience was akin to being transported to another world. Everything was alien to him: the technology, customs, clothing, and language, as well as the meat-eating habits of the American crew—a practice especially horrifying to him as a Buddhist. Yet Heco was a bright, resourceful, and charismatic young man who quickly learned the English language and adapted to American ways.

On arrival at San Francisco in February 1851, Heco and his fellow crewmen were sensations. He was welcomed as if he had been an invited guest, and quickly became acquainted with American manners and mores. In his Narrative he describes San Francisco and its residents from
the unique perspective of a citizen of feudal Japan. He remained there for about a year.

Along with his compatriots Heco was returned to Japan, but proved so valuable on the voyage that he was encouraged to become an interpreter for the Americans. This was at a very sensitive time in Japanese-American relations, since the United States was attempting to open up trade with Japan, and Heco’s language skills were much in demand. So by December 1852, Heco was back in San Francisco. During his stay he was able to go to school. He made the acquaintance of Senator William M. Gwin, soon arranged to become Gwin’s personal secretary, and accompanied him to Washington, D.C., where he continued his education, converted to Catholicism, and became the first Japanese to become an American citizen. He was even able to meet with Presidents Buchanan and Lincoln.

Ever the traveler, Heco returned to San Francisco and eventually to Japan, serving in the consulate of his adopted country as an interpreter and taking on the role of an entrepreneur by establishing his own trading firm.

The English-language publication history of this work is confusing. Heco’s original 1863 publication only covered his early life, American experience, and return to Japan in 1860. Later he expanded this narrative, and also added a second part in the form of a journal, bringing the autobiography down to 1891. This is the version edited by James Murdoch and published in Tokyo without a date in the 1890s. The facsimile reprint of Murdoch’s edition, also undated but done ca. 1950 (46c) is bound to a very similar design and is frequently mistaken for the original (46b). Volume 1 is in red cloth and volume 2 in tan (though copies are also found bound in one volume). Each part bears the dual colophon of the San Francisco publisher and the Tokyo printer. The Dawson edition translates Heco’s original shorter narrative and reproduces the woodcut illustrations from the 1863 edition.

—WGD
This book serves a memorial to the life of William G. Henshaw (developer of water resources, residential and commercial property, and cement plants) as well as a history of Warner’s Ranch. Late in his career Henshaw purchased Henry E. Huntington’s interests in the former John J. Warner Ranch in San Diego County. Joseph J. Hill (1883-?), a librarian at the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, compiled a history of the famous ranch and got the director of the Bancroft, Herbert E. Bolton, to provide a preface. Bolton, a distinguished professor of the American West, emphasizes that Warner’s Ranch “presents a cross-section of the history of Southern California.” Hill discusses these “sections”, beginning with the Native Americans whose ancestral home the area was for hundreds of years, and continuing with the Spanish period under the authority of Mission San Luis Rey and Mission San Diego, and the Mexican era when the San José Valley became a rancho under Warner’s ownership.

An Easterner who came to California in 1833 as a fur-trapper, Warner acquired his immense ranch as a grant from the Mexican governor of California. The ranch hosted Argonauts crossing its territory during the Gold Rush and American soldiers during the Mexican-American War, as well as outlaws and Americans coming to California following the completion of the transcontinental railroads. However, what is of particular interest is the chapter that details the claims of the Indians who lived on Warner’s Ranch, the details of the legal challenge to their tenancy, and a subsequent appeal that went to the United States Supreme Court. The Indians ultimately lost the case and were removed to lands at Pala. Since a commission appointed by the federal government had previously found in favor of the Indians, the resulting legal eviction was bitter to both the Indians and their American supporters.
The definition of a utopian colony, according to Robert V. Hine (b. 1921), is that it “consists of a group of people who are attempting to establish a new social pattern based upon a vision of the ideal society and who have withdrawn themselves from the community at large to embody that vision in experimental form.”

Religious and secular utopian colonies have flourished in California like few other places in the world. California’s mild climate and an abundance of fertile land have played no small part in this movement that has attracted such communities as Thomas Lake Harris’s Fountain Grove, the Theosophical Society at Point Loma, the Icaria Speranza Commune, the Kaweah Co-operative Commonwealth, and Job Harriman’s Llano del Río.

This small book, which grew out of an undergraduate thesis by Hine, was first published at a time when “utopianism” was aligned with “communism.” Senator Jack Tenney’s Committee on Un-American Activities even wrote Hine and demanded a list of utopians. During the 1960s communes were everywhere and a stampede of sociologists followed their trails. Hine’s work was the first insightful study of early California communitarianism.

—AJ

In 1948, Edward Eberstadt persuaded the recently-graduated J.S. Holliday (1924-2006) to edit and publish the two volumes of the William Swain diary. The research for the job ended up consuming much of Holliday’s time for the next thirty-three years.

Swain traveled from Buffalo, New York, to the gold fields via the Lassen Cutoff, and returned home in early 1851 by way of the Panama route. He was among the most articulate of the 1849 overlanders, and his journals are a significant and detailed resource for historians of the Gold Rush emigrations. He was a member of the Wolverine Rangers, a
company that included several diarists. He traveled in close proximity to
journal-keeper J. Goldsborough Bruff (see item 9) and Dr. Israel Lord,
whose newspaper articles described the overland experience for his fel-
low Illinoisans. In the gold fields he mined near Alonzo Delano, author
of the Old Block's Sketch-Book (Zamorano 80, #29), and Amos Batchelder,
another overland journalist. He maintained his diary until he returned
from the gold fields; his last entry was from New York, only a couple of
days’ travel from his home.

Holliday integrates Swain’s letters to his family with the narrative of
the journal, giving added depth. He also inserts letters written to Swain
from the family members who were patiently awaiting his return, as well
as quotations from the journals and letters of his traveling companions.
All of this is interspersed with Holliday’s unifying narrative. —WGD

50.
J. M. Hutchings. In the Heart of the Sierras: The Yo Semite Valley, Both
Historical and Descriptive: and Scenes by the Way. Published at the Old Cabin,

James Mason Hutchings (1820-1902) was born in England. In the late
1830s he became entranced with America when he saw a traveling
exhibit of George Catlin’s Indian studies then on tour in England. In
1848 he moved to New York where he got caught up in the excitement
of the Gold Rush. Sailing to New Orleans in early 1849, he traveled up
the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to Independence, where he took off
across the plains for California.

Hutchings made several thousand dollars in the gold fields, only to
lose it in a bank failure. He was destined to make his real fortune, how-
ever, with pen and paper rather than pick and pan. Alarmed by the rough
language in the mines, he wrote a parody of the Fourth Commandment.
This drew a lot of attention and led to his publishing a broadside entitled
The Miner’s Ten Commandments, which sold nearly a hundred thousand
copies in its first year.

In 1855 Hutchings read a newspaper article that described a water-
fall in a place called Yo Hem a Te that was reputed to be over a thousand
feet high. Intrigued, he decided to have an adventure and undertook the
arduous trek to then-isolated Yosemite Valley. He found that what he
read was not half the truth: Yosemite Falls is actually over two thousand feet high. Hutchings returned to San Francisco in 1856 and began publishing *Hutchings' California Magazine*, dedicated to travel and to describing the scenic glories of California. In the first issue he wrote about the falls he had seen. This high-quality magazine flourished for five years until Hutchings’s health began to fail. His doctor recommended that he leave the city and look for a healthier climate, so he closed out the magazine after its sixth year and moved to the Yosemite Valley in 1861, where he spent most of the rest of his life.

In Yosemite he bought a wooden building that had formerly been used as a hotel and reestablished it as Hutchings Hotel. To help support this enterprise, Hutchings began farming in the valley and set up a sawmill there. One of his employees in the sawmill was John Muir.

In 1886 Hutchings compiled his experiences and all he had learned into *In the Heart of the Sierras*. Combining articles and engravings from his magazine with original writing, Hutchings includes natural and human history, many personal stories, mining tales, and extended descriptions of seven different routes to the Valley, with ample illustrations. The book achieved four printings in its first two years, retaining the typos but with some changes to the illustrations.

As an interesting sidelight, although John Muir (see items 77 and 87) worked for Hutchings in the sawmill, Muir’s name is not mentioned anywhere in this 496-page book. He is only referred to as a “good practical sawyer.” It is thought that Hutchings may have been jealous of Muir, whose writings in the 1870s were gaining national attention. This was after Hutchings had been writing about Yosemite for nearly twenty years.

—WGD


When Christopher Isherwood’s short novel *A Single Man* was published in 1964, its subject was viewed by many as shocking because it deals frankly and openly with one day in the life of a middle-aged gay man living in the Los Angeles area. Nothing much happens to “George” as he goes through a routine day lecturing in a state university, interacting with
various friends and acquaintances and observing the absurdities of daily life with a penetrating eye. But George is rootless and unsettled, something of a stranger in a strange land, “a single man” cast adrift by the death of his partner. Stephen Spender, Isherwood’s good friend, called this book “unnerving,” and there is probably no better word to describe the emotional atmosphere that Isherwood (1904-86) subtly creates. Anyone from Southern California will instantly recognize the ambiance of this rootless, ever-changing place, caught memorably in Isherwood’s sharply-etched sentences. At a deeper level, whether straight or gay, the reader can find himself or herself entering into George’s loneliness and empathizing with him. This is arguably one of the most powerful novels ever set in Southern California.

—AJ

52.

The opening of the twentieth century brought a new attitude toward the desert in California. While it had once been a feared obstacle between the East and Southern California, the coming of the railroad, among other things, had made the desert more accessible. The drilling of wells to supply the railroads (and later, agriculture) made it safer. The health benefits of desert living and the delightful winter weather became known. Writers of stature in California began to write about the desert. Certainly the most important of these was George Wharton James (1858-1923) and his book The Wonders of the Colorado Desert.

James was born in Lincolnshire, England in 1858, and immigrated to the United States in 1881 looking to regain his broken health. He settled in the wilds of Nevada, where he became a circuit-riding preacher in the Methodist church. Here he gained a love for the Southwest and its climate that he carried with him for the rest of his life.

He later moved to a parish in Long Beach, where he faced the greatest challenge of his professional career. His wife accused him of a series of adulterous affairs. This resulted in a very public divorce that destroyed his reputation and resulted in expulsion from the church. James was a competent writer and sparkling lecturer, and went on a national lecture circuit to rehabilitate his reputation. By 1895 he was able to reestablish
the water supply for the day. I am glad to record that the invalid left Palm Springs perfectly restored to health.

Opposite Dr. Murray’s hotel is the remarkable spring from which the settlement gets its name. Here is the Palm Spring, the *agua caliente*, the hot spring, that to Indians and whites alike has been a source of wonder as well as of health for many years. This spring is unparalleled on the Pacific Coast and, as far as I know, in the world. Through a central shaft, varying in size from a small hole to the dimensions of an ordinary well, hot water and sand rise, sometimes spouting high in air like a geyser, but usually merely bubbling over the surface. The water spreads around in a pool about six feet by ten, to a depth of a few inches. The bottom is hard sand until one reaches the shaft, then it is moving quicksand, kept in an almost constant state of ebullition by the upflow of the water. Immediately the bather reaches this quicksand he sinks with a swift motion that makes the heart leap unless he is prepared. In a moment the warm liquid sand closes around the body and it feels as if he were being sucked in and down by the clinging tentacles of some living creature that had the power to hold the body in a most soothing and satisfactory embrace. Then, suddenly, with a convulsive effort, but as gently
himself in Pasadena. Here he began his writing career with several books on the Southwest. He is best remembered for The Wonders of the Colorado Desert. In its two volumes and 39 chapters, James covers every aspect of the desert. With his eye for detail, James presents elegant word pictures of the desert from the San Bernardino range to the Mexican border and from the Santa Rosa Mountains to the Colorado River. His writing is accompanied by 337 pen-and-ink sketches by Carl Eytel, and James himself acknowledges that these drawings are as important in presenting the desert as the text itself. Since the appearance of this book, with the exception of J. Smeaton Chase’s California Desert Trails (see item 15) there have been few other major works on the desert. The reason? James covered all the territory and there has been very little new material to work with.

The two-volume first edition was printed on heavy stock. Another printing on thinner paper was issued in a single volume in 1911.

—WGD

53.

Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) was at the same time the most famous and the most vilified American poet of the first half of the twentieth century. His portrait appeared on the front cover of Time on April 4, 1932, even while some major critics lambasted his poetry for its pretentious and bombastic language, supposed fascistic tendencies, and dismal opinion of humanity.

Robert Hass wrote that Jeffers saw “something pained, divided, and deeply sick in the human heart,” but he addressed his despair about the human condition by finding sustenance in the “permanence and superb indifference of nature.” Jeffers used the harsh and beautiful northern California coast as a palette from which he painted his conflicted and passionate view of humanity in poems written from 1920 to 1938, mostly at his home Tor House in Carmel.

His poetic vision and command of language are apparent in the ending lines of “Granite and Cypress”: 
I have granite and cypress,
Both long-lasting,
Planted in the earth; but the granite sea-boulders are prey to no
hawk’s wing, they have taken worse pounding,
Like me they remember
Old wars and are quiet; for we think that the future is one piece
with the past, we wonder why tree-tops
And people are so shaken.

While Jeffers will probably always remain controversial and even off-putting for some, there are occasions when his poetry can be deeply felt and wholeheartedly embraced. His 1938 Selected Poetry is the best compilation of his work.

—AJ

54.


Before the hippies came along in the 1960s there was Japhy Ryder, Jack Kerouac’s endearing free spirit in The Dharma Bums. Unabashedly based on Kerouac’s friend, the poet and environmental activist Gary Snyder, Japhy is a mountain man, vegetarian, Zen lunatic, and the “number one Dharma bum of them all.”

The story, as told by Ray Smith (Jack Kerouac, 1922-69), has many memorable episodes. Japhy showing Ray and Alva Goldbook (Allen Ginsberg) the Buddhist sexual Yab-yum rite is hilarious. The all-too-brief account of the 1955 Six Gallery poetry reading with Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, and others gives us a glimpse of this famous event that signaled the revival of San Francisco poetry.

It is the description, however, of the ascent and descent of Matterhorn Peak outside of Bridgeport that stands out. It is one of the most remarkable celebrations of California’s mountains and certainly one of the most unusual and exhilarating depictions of California mountaineering. In the final scene, the tireless Japhy climbs ahead of his exhausted friends and eventually reaches the summit. With a musical and mystical yodel he declares “his triumphant mountain-conquering Buddha Mountain Smashing song of joy.” He then descends the mountain “in huge twenty-foot leaps, running, leaping, landing with a great drive of his
booted heels.” Japhy is one of Kerouac's most unforgettable characters.

—AJ

55.


Alfred Kroeber (1876-1960) received his training in anthropology from the legendary Franz Boas at Columbia University and went on to become the first member of the anthropology department at the University of California, Berkeley. Backed by Phoebe A. Hearst, who provided support for his department and a university museum of anthropology in San Francisco, Kroeber became the leading anthropologist of the American West.

His handbook on California Native Americans, the result of seventeen years of research, was intended as a history “that tries to reconstruct and present the scheme within which these people in ancient and more recent times lived their lives.” Some sections have tedious listings of cultural objects and linguistic features, but others reveal how carefully he observed and recorded information that is still fascinating and readable.

He obviously found some tribes of greater interest than others. One of these was the Mohave. His chapter on “Dream Life” begins, “The Mohave adhere to a belief in dreams as the basis of everything in life ...,” and then elucidates the mythology, ceremonies, songs, and shamanistic beliefs of a complex people. Handbook of the Indians of California is of remarkable historical importance, and although in some ways it is inevitably dated, it remains a true classic of American ethnology. —AJ

In 1911 a desperate and starving Yahi Indian, who had never before interacted with Western civilization and was the last of his tribe, walked out of the Deer Creek wilderness near Oroville, California. Shortly thereafter Alfred L. Kroeber, one of the leading authorities on California Native Americans (*vide supra*), befriended him and brought him to the University of California Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco. He lived there until he died of tuberculosis in 1916. Kroeber named him “Ishi”—“man” in the Yahi language—because among his tribe personal names were never shared except with family and close friends. Ishi’s emergence became a national story and his appearance in the Museum a public sensation.

Theodora Kroeber (1897–1979), the wife of Alfred, wrote this poignant account of Ishi fifty years later, and it has always remained in print. With great care she tells the tragic saga of the withdrawal, concealment, and final dissolution of the Yahi tribe. She recounts Ishi’s desperate efforts to survive in the wild, his interaction with academic friends, and his reactions to modern life, as well as the response of the American public. The most appealing aspect of her narrative is Ishi himself, who was “outgoing” and “interested in people and phenomena.” The gentle, resourceful, and engaging personality of Ishi and the empathy of the author make this an unforgettable book.

—AJ


A collector’s dream list of books covering the important California Gold Rush years, this is a compilation of over 700 titles, each carefully described and assessed in terms of its historical importance. It is based on Carl I. Wheat’s *Books of the California Gold Rush* (1949), which contained 241 entries. In 1986, editor and bibliographer Robert H. Becker invited Gary F. Kurutz, Director of Special Collections for the California State
The California Gold Rush

A Descriptive Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets
Covering the Years 1848-1853

BY GARY F. KURUTZ
Introduction by J. S. Holliday

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO 1997
Library, to co-author this new work with him. Although the collaboration ended within months when Becker died, Kurutz continued with the task himself over a ten-year period. Visiting many research libraries and important private collections, he was able to include guidebooks, collections of letters, diaries, sermons, fiction written as fact, and novels of the period.

While the bibliography encompasses eyewitness and contemporary accounts of the Gold Rush between 1848 and 1853, Kurutz notes that “the range of dates of publication ... is much broader, as it includes works published between 1848 and 1994. For example, if a Gold Rush diary was published for the first time in 1994, it will be included.” To assist researchers, library locations of many of the rarer titles are provided, and reprint and facsimile editions are noted.

—GJV

58.


The Land of Sunshine, a quarto-size magazine, first appeared on newsstands in Los Angeles in June, 1894. F.A. Pattee, Harry Ellington Brooks, and Charles Dwight Willard were associated in this publishing venture, though Willard’s connection was kept a secret. All three had met through the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. The magazine originally lacked a full-time editor and relied on ghost editing by Willard. Later the decision was made to entice Charles F. Lummis (1859-1928) to assume the editor’s chair. A former newspaperman, Lummis had been at Harvard where Theodore Roosevelt was a classmate, and had been a correspondent for the Los Angeles Times. Lummis reigned as sole editor of his magazine from January 1895 to February 1903, finally selling his stock in the periodical in November, 1909. In 1902 he downsized the magazine from quarto to demy octavo and changed the title to Out West. His editorial column “In the Lion’s Den” provided him with a bully pulpit to champion all things Southern California and the West. His magazine, while spotlighting the cultural and commercial assets of the
Item 58
region, also provided historical, literary, and descriptive articles on the region. “We believe it a magazine's duty to teach as well as tickle; and we believe the ordinary intelligent reader’s soul is worth saving.” From presenting translations of basic Spanish documents relating to Western history (many appearing in English for the first time) to taking on issues of water, mining, agriculture, social problems, and tourism, and even giving civics lessons on local involvement and working for the good of the Republic, Lummis created a unique force for defining Southern California. A who’s-who of figures in California arts and literature appeared in the magazine, including artists Maynard Dixon and William Keith, poets Ina Coolbrith (Zamorano 80, #21) and Edwin Markham, historian Theodore Hittell (Zamorano 80, #42, 43), educator David Starr Jordan; and prose writers Sharlot M. Hall, Mary Austin (Zamorano 80, #2), Joaquin Miller (Zamorano 80, #55), and Elliott Coues.

— L E B

59.

Paul Landacre. California Hills and Other Wood Engravings ... from the Original Blocks. Los Angeles: Bruce McCallister, 1931.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, these elegant wood engravings of the California landscape are an essay of 14,000 words. Paul Landacre (1893-1963) captures much of the flavor of the land in his black-and-white compositions.

He was one of the twentieth century's most distinguished wood engravers. Born in Columbus, Ohio, he came to Southern California in the 1920s and spent the rest of his life there. Largely self-taught, in 1928 he entered two of his engravings, “Grass Fire” and “Downpour,” in the Arizona State Fair, where “Downpour” was awarded second place. Both were to appear in his masterwork, California Hills.

In 1930, Landacre and his wife Margaret were invited to take an auto touring trip to Carmel and Big Sur, where he made the studies for several of the engravings in this book. One, “Point Sur,” was honored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts as one of the Fifty Prints of the Year in 1931. (In the previous year his “Physics Building—UCLA,” also to appear in the book, had received that honor.) Later in 1930 the couple visited the Coachella Valley, where Landacre found the inspiration for his “Indi
XI.

EDGE OF THE DESERT

Item 59
Mountains” and “Edge of the Desert.” The other subjects in the book range north and up the coast as far as Big Sur and Monterey.

Landacre continued to produce small editions of engravings during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, and to undertake occasional book work, but it is for California Hills that he remains best known. It was named by the Rounce & Coffin Club as one of the fifty best Western books for 1931.

—WG D

60.
The Landmarks Club Cook Book ... Including a Chapter of the Most Famous Old Californian and Mexican Dishes by Chas. F. Lummis. Los Angeles: The Out West Company, 1903.

Talented, handsome, and charismatic, Charles Fletcher Lummis (1859-1928), who was reared in Massachusetts, left Harvard before graduation to become a newspaperman and explore the West. His famous 1884 walk from Ohio to Los Angeles, during which he wrote dispatches to the Los Angeles Times, concluded in a well-publicized event where Times publisher Harrison Gray Otis greeted the young man upon completion of his trek and gave him a job as a reporter. The journey gave the Yankee Lummis an appreciation of the natural beauty and cultural diversity of the Southwest. For the rest of his life he would be a zealous advocate for California (the “right hand of the continent” as he called it) and for the Spanish and Mexican heritage of the West. Almost always attired in dark green Spanish corduroy, Lummis associated with the learned and important in California, published Out West Magazine, headed the Los Angeles Public Library, founded the Southwest Museum, and managed to lead a colorful and occasionally lubricious social life. In his study of California’s Spanish and Mexican heritage, he knew many of the people who lived in Los Angeles and elsewhere before 1850, kept voluminous notes on their conversations, collected photographs and documentary history, and even made sound recordings of the old songs. Along the way he became impressed with the California missions, then in great decay, and joined with other influential Californians to form the Landmarks Club, dedicated to preserving them. The Club fostered restoration and even secured leases on some of the missions. In addition, the organization
saved the historic Plaza of Los Angeles and preserved several hundred historic street names threatened with “irrelevant new titles.”

The Landmarks Club Cook Book served as a fund-raising project to which Lummis contributed an important chapter on Californian and Mexican cookery. Lummis’s own signed inscription in the copy of the cookbook at the A.K. Smiley Public Library captured his vision for the work: “The home is the cornerstone of human life. The cooking is cornerstone of the home. It is the ‘Little Things’ that determine Life. So I am never ashamed to have learned on the Frontiers to be a good Cook—nor ashamed to respect better ones. We all depend more upon them than upon Doctors, Lawyers, or even Ministers. This book has been enabled by such women as tho’ high in society, were proud to be Good Cooks and Housekeepers. They have given their choicest recipes to the public, herein for the sake of saving the Old Missions—and the sale of every copy of this book goes net to that work. Charles F. Lummis.”

61.


Thomas Larkin (1802-58) came to California in 1832, set up shop in Monterey, and from that time until his death was at the center of commercial and political life in California. Of particular importance was his involvement in American interests in California leading up to the war with Mexico. During the 1830s, a cash-poor Mexico was unable to provide its northern province, Alta California, with the protection and economic stability it needed, which left the territory undefended against foreign governments. These included the United States and the major powers of Europe, England and France.

To provide an inroad for the United States, Larkin was appointed American Consul to California in 1842. Being wealthy, and well connected in business and politics, he was able to act with inside knowledge when President Polk later conferred on him the additional office of Confidential Agent in California. In the letter of appointment written
by Secretary of State James Buchanan, the reader can feel the painful wordsmithing Buchanan used to convey that the United States was not interested in seizing California—unless asked to by the residents of California. Nor was the country willing to interfere with European adventures in California—unless they were not in the United States’ best interest. With a flourish he added, “If the People [of California] should desire to unite their destiny with ours, they would be received as brethren, whenever this can be done, without affording Mexico just cause of complaint.” Buchanan urged Larkin to “exert the greatest vigilance in discovering and defeating any attempts which may be made by Foreign Governments to acquire a control over that Country.” Ultimately the United States declared war on Mexico in 1846, resulting in California becoming an American possession.

Hubert H. Bancroft said of the 4,000 items in the Larkin archive that “this collection is beyond all comparison the best source of information on the history of 1845-46.”

—WGD

62.

Since the early years of the oil industry were not well documented, Frank Latta (1892-1981) spent years accumulating the first-person anecdotes from aging participants and newspaper articles that form the basis of Black Gold in the Joaquin.

Beginning in 1862, the first commercial activity in the West Side fields in southwestern Kern County was the mining of asphaltum, a tar-like or bituminous material. A pit was dug, generally to a depth of about ten feet, and the asphaltum was either removed in chunks, or, if in a viscous form, dipped out in buckets. Put in five-gallon containers and stowed two tins to a wooden crate, it was hauled by mule team to Bakersfield, Stockton, and the San Francisco Bay area. Asphaltum could be refined as lubricating oil, axle grease, skid grease, kerosene, and asphalt. By 1900 the heavy oil was sprayed on the roadways to reduce dust.

In the early days, oil was treated as a mineral governed by placer mining laws. All a miner had to do was to prove oil was present in order
to file a claim on public land. Later, these claims were nullified when the government declared that oil was not a mineral, which forced the original settlers to file under the Homestead Act in order to prevent others from “squatting” on land they considered their own. Eventually the government reversed itself once more, allowing the original developers to reassert their rights.

Latta ends his history in the early twentieth century, just as large deposits of liquid oil were being discovered on the West Side. President Taft put the reserves from these new fields into the U.S. Naval Petroleum Reserve. Later the land was leased to Edward Doheny by Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, who was eventually indicted in the Teapot Dome scandal.

Having produced over twelve billion barrels of oil, Kern County remains one of the world’s largest oil-producing areas and is responsible for 66% of California’s oil production and one percent of the total world supply.

—WGD

63.

In 1855 The Annals of San Francisco was published, a thick book of over 800 pages (Zamorano 80, #70). Eighty years later, an equally important, though much slimmer, volume appeared on Los Angeles. J. Gregg Layne (1885-1952), a leading authority and bibliographer of Californiana, was able to include a surprising amount of material in only 97 pages as he set down “a connected narrative of the city of Los Angeles from the first arrival of the white man to the beginning of the Civil War.” Layne’s research was comprehensive, but what holds the reader’s interest is the skillful editing that ranges from broad strokes of general background to pointillist details such as the changing course of the Los Angeles River, California’s first Vigilance Committee, and “Uncle Sam’s Camels.” Enriching the narrative are many biographical portraits of the figures involved with the City of the Angels, including Fray Crespí, José Antonio Carrillo, Pio Pico, Hugo Reid, Abel Stearns, J.J. Warner, the bandit
64.


In 1870 Professor Joseph LeConte (1823-1901) joined a group of his students from the University of California, Berkeley, for a one-month field trip to the High Sierra. Five years later, LeConte assembled his notes from the trip into this charming little book. While the original edition size is not definitely known, LeConte’s son remembered that there were 120 copies: twelve for each of the ten members of the party. The book is particularly noted for nine mounted albumen photographs within red borders. Eight of these were taken in the Yosemite Valley and are among the first photos of the Valley.

During the camping adventure, LeConte visited James Hutchings’s hotel (see item 50) where he met John Muir (see items 77 and 87), who was then working at Hutchings’s sawmill. He persuaded Muir to accompany his group into the high country by way of Lake Tenaya, Tuolumne Meadows, Mt. Dana, over Tioga Pass, and down to Mono Lake in the Great Basin. Around the evening campfire, LeConte would lecture on the geology of Yosemite. Three of these lectures are included in the book.

While LeConte’s prose lacks the lyrical beauty found in Muir’s later works, any traveler who has experienced Yosemite will delight in the descriptions of the journey from Bridal Veil Falls to Mt. Dana. As LeConte wrote, “I never enjoyed anything so much in my life.” —WGD
Vast tracts of land, once orange groves as far as the eye could see and beyond, are now covered with houses, malls, parking lots, and roads in Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and the Santa Anita Ranch area. But back in the 1880s, citrus was the dominant crop in Southern California, and this important “treatise” by Byron Martin Lelong (1856-1901), Secretary of the California Board of Horticulture, was eagerly received by growers. Lelong describes the best times for the picking, curing, packing, wrapping, and shipping of citrus, as well as preparation of soil, budding, grafting, fertilization, and pruning of trees. Recommending the best varieties of oranges to plant in California, he notes that the most popular one, the Washington Navel (or Riverside Navel), was imported from Brazil. Two of these trees were first sent to California in 1870 through the efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Even today the parent Navel tree, planted in 1873, bears fruit and remains a tourist attraction in Riverside. Another important variety is the Valencia Late, a good keeper, a prolific bearer, and—important in those days of little refrigeration and slow transport—late ripening and available when other oranges were out of market. Additional varieties of oranges were brought into the state from Australia, Siam, and the Azores, while lemons came from Portugal and the best varieties of tangerines from Japan.

For such a technical manual, a few tempting recipes are unexpectedly included—lemon biscuit, lemon pie, lemon drops, and citron cake. Lelong concludes with these forward-looking words: “If my investigations, and the task that I imposed upon myself in the preparation of these chapters, shall aid the progress of horticulture in this State, I am happy and satisfied.” The Treatise was indeed a success, establishing itself as a fundamental handbook for growers.

—GJV
1855 saw the appearance of a significant book on a new and vibrant city—*The Annals of San Francisco* (Zamorano 80, #70). A generation later an equally important volume appeared—*Lights and Shades in San Francisco*—by B.E. Lloyd, about whom virtually nothing is known. With a reporter’s sharp eye for detail he captures a large and mature city in its glory and its shame. He covers many diverse subjects in 76 chapters arranged in no logical order—restaurant life, the topography of the city, public libraries, the county jail and city prison, theaters, street railroads, saloons, the Chinese (eight chapters), earthquakes, street preaching, markets, public schools, and churches. Notable San Franciscans make appearances—Thomas Starr King, William Ralston, Hubert Bancroft, and the popular and beloved Emperor Norton. As Gary Kurutz writes in his introduction to the 1999 facsimile edition, “[This volume] stands as a masterpiece of San Francisciana.”

Cosmopolitan San Francisco has long considered itself to be the most literate and cultured city on the West Coast. A cultural “light,” especially in Lloyd’s time, were the many libraries available to the public. The Mercantile Library, with 2,135 members, was open to any resident upon payment of a small fee. In those days before rapid electronic communication, the building and its contents must have been a haven for many thousands. “On the first floor is the library, reading-room, reference library, ladies’ reading-room, parlor, and trustees and janitor’s room. On the second floor are the chess and smoking-room, writing-room, museum and store-room for periodicals. The basement contains a spacious lecture-room and supper-room, with ladies’ and gentlemen’s dressing-rooms.” The collection of printed material included between forty and fifty thousand volumes “on every department of science, art and literature” and over a hundred magazines and newspapers, some in foreign languages. The average yearly circulation exceeded eighty thousand volumes.

Suicide and insanity are a “shade” in any society and, in Lloyd’s view, San Francisco was certainly no exception. Considering the favorable climate and natural beauty of Northern California, one would expect people to live long and happy lives. “It is, therefore,” Lloyd writes, “an
inconsistency in the fact that California buries more suicides, in proportion to its population, than any other State in the Union.” The main cause of suicide was business failure, followed by domestic and social problems, such as disappointed love and “general dissipation.” The most common method of dispatch was with a pistol; then, in order, came cutting the throat, hanging, drowning, and the preferred poison, opium. The primary cause of insanity was “the excessive indulgence in intoxicating drinks” that affected even children. Lloyd concludes this topic with the sweeping generalization that “insanity prevails to a remarkable extent in California among those in the more humble walks of life. Those whose minds remain year after year almost inactive, the illiterate and unrefined of the laboring classes, furnish more insane subjects than come from the brain-workers and those whose mental labor is most severe and constant. Although San Francisco develops comparatively more insanity, and induces a greater number of suicides, it is withal a pleasant reflection that she has but few idiots.”

While Lloyd attempts to give an impartial view of San Francisco, he is certainly not always balanced and accurate in his interpretations. Yet there is no doubt that he succeeded in painting a colorful and variegated portrait of a unique American city.

—GJV

67.

Jack London (1876-1916) was a child of California and a man of the world. Born in San Francisco and educated in Oakland, as a teenager he was a cannery laborer, an oyster pirate, and a seaman. His adventures included tramping across America, joining the Klondike gold rush, investigating the East End of London, and reporting on the Russo-Japanese War. Writing eventually brought financial success that led to other lives as an innovative rancher in the Valley of the Moon and a skilled yachtsman aboard the Snark in the South Seas.

One of the most public figures of his era, London was known equally for his rugged individualism and his support of socialism. His magazine short stories, novels, and reportage kept him constantly before the reading public. Despite his public persona as a man of action, London was
an obsessive reader his entire life. As an autodidact, he could not do without books—they educated and inspired him, and they became the “tools of his trade.”

*Martin Eden* is about the difficulties of growing up and learning the hard facts of life. Highly autobiographical and set in California, the novel generates much of its power from London’s own agonizing experiences, yet he is able to go beyond unfiltered emotion to engage the reader in deeper questions about innocence, maturity, and society. Although it has never been considered London’s best work, *Martin Eden* has an engrossing vitality that still has great appeal today, particularly for those grappling with adolescence.

—AJ

68.

Historian Doyce Nunis took on a gargantuan task when he assembled a team to create a bibliography of Los Angeles covering the period 1900-1970. The danger of such a large endeavor (9,895 entries) is that the organization and indexing can become unwieldy and unusable. The merit of such an ambitious project, if well done, is that a serious user can uncover obscure publications and resources that were never expected.

As it happens, the organization of this bibliography is indeed functional, and the index is excellent. Just browsing through the volume generates new ideas for historical research. In 1996 the Los Angeles Historical Society published a continuation edited by Hynda Rudd that covers the period 1970-90.

—AJ

69.

Pardee Lowe (1904-96) was a rebel who longed to leave the confining world of San Francisco’s Chinatown and enter into the American mainstream. At the heart of this autobiography of the “glorious descendant”
is the struggle of a son with his father—a struggle sometimes difficult, at times concealed, but eventually leading to Pardee’s success in school, work, and marriage outside Chinatown while still maintaining closeness to his father and his heritage.

Pardee’s immigrant father, a very successful businessman, held on to many traditions of old China. However, he was amenable to some important aspects of American manners and culture, and he cut off his queue, thus confirming his status as an American by preventing his return. His wealth, and the fact that he moved his family from Chinatown to the “white” suburbs, opened new vistas for Pardee and probably fostered the son’s ambition to be his own man in modern America. What is certain is that attending public schools brought Pardee in tune with the lives and ambitions of his white classmates.

He seemingly had all that was necessary to fit into American society and be successful in the 1920s: he was born in the United States, he was intelligent, well-spoken, and well-dressed, and he had an outgoing personality. He only lacked one important thing: his skin was not white. As an adolescent, he aspired to run for president—a dream of many thousands of young boys. When he was thirteen, dressed in his Sunday best and full of confidence, he attempted to find a summer job, but after being rejected from every interview he realized that, in own words, he didn’t have a “Chinaman’s chance” of ever becoming president!

However, Father and Glorious Descendant is not a book that dwells on frustration and racial grievance. Some readers have, in fact, found it a Chinese version of Clarence Day’s Life With Father, full of closely-observed small adventures and humorous episodes. Although the father figures in each chapter, the emphasis throughout is on Pardee Lowe’s struggle to maintain contact with his Chinese friends and relations while at the same time seeking to enter into the larger American society outside Chinatown. At one point, his father insisted that Pardee and a sister learn the fundamentals of the Chinese language, history, geography, and philosophy. He enrolled them in a Chinese school, but between old-style teachers and students more interested in reading American adventure stories than Confucian wisdom, not much learning took place. Pardee was soon back in public school and active in the YMCA and the Boy Scouts. The pull of American culture was too powerful to be resisted by the claims of the distant—even if glorious—cultural heritage of China.
Eventually Lowe graduated from Stanford and attended Harvard Business School. Then he made a bold, even courageous decision in the face of contemporary societal attitudes and miscegenation laws: he proposed marriage to a white woman from an old New England family. They traveled to Germany for the ceremony which, after many problems with government and church strictures, took place in 1931. They returned to the United States but it took two years for Pardee to work up the courage to inform his family of the marriage. Encouraged by female relatives, his father accepted the marriage surprisingly well. As Pardee writes, “Father was tremendously pleased. My wife was adding luster to the family honor. As a born and bred New Englander, she had become unintentionally one of the models for Chinatown’s feminine etiquette, a preserver of its ancient traditions of social intercourse.”

Although the fact doesn’t appear in his autobiography, Pardee Lowe joined the American Army when World War II was at its height and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

The importance of this work should not be underestimated. It was the first book to express the desire of a second-generation Chinese to fight exclusion and become a part of mainstream America. As such, it is a worthy precursor of many later works dealing with immigration and assimilation.

—GJV

70.

70A.

The original German-language edition of this book was an instant success in Europe and with German settlers in Southern California. The very well-traveled Ludwig Salvator (1847-1915) was Archduke of Austria. He wrote detailed accounts of many of the far-flung places he visited, producing some forty travel narratives by the time of his death.

Ludwig spent the winter of 1876 in Los Angeles inspecting much of the region, reading books on the subject, and consulting leading
citizens in order to learn about the city’s transition from a rough-and-tumble pueblo into a sophisticated center of finance and culture. While Ludwig’s account fits into the category of a “booster book,” setting forth the enticements that drew people from all over the world to this “place in the sun,” it also incisively explores the social, economic, and geographical problems of Los Angeles. He touches on such topics as the uneasy relationship of Anglos with Indians and Chinese, the unequal distribution of wealth, land values, the economy, and the availability of water for the growing population of Los Angeles County, then some 30,000 people. Not neglected are the industries of Los Angeles: the carriage-makers, cement-makers, and brandy and wine producers, as well as major exports such as fruit, wool, asphalt, and grain. As Ludwig steamed away from Southern California he mused that “Tomorrow ... the sun will rise once more—this glowing Californian Sun—and bring fresh life and vigor to this delightful land ... And so farewell, Flower of a Golden Land.”

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71.


San Diegan Esther McCoy (1904-89), a pioneer in advancing the serious study of California’s built environment and its creation of a tactile sense of place, wrote this first treatment of five important California architects, four from the south and one from the north.

Irving Gill (1870-1936), having worked in famed modernist architect Louis Sullivan’s Chicago office, was well trained and had a mind open to new ideas. After moving to San Diego in 1893 he became caught up in the aura of the missions and early adobes of the region. These played a role in the later development of his earth-forms in concrete, his stripping away of ornaments, and his use of arcade walks and trellis structures, all of which put his imprint on a new form of architecture in San Diego.

Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957) was born in New York City, but went to Paris to study architecture in the École des Beaux Arts and returned to America in 1886. Seeking opportunity like so many others, he moved to California in 1890, teaching at Berkeley for a time and then opening his
own architectural office in San Francisco. He artfully blended a number of influences—Spanish mission, Gothic, and even Japanese—to create his own idiosyncratic style.

Vienna-born Rudolph Michael Schindler (1887-1953) was trained in his native city, moved to Chicago in 1914, and eventually Los Angeles in 1920. Inspired by his work with Frank Lloyd Wright and other leading practitioners, Schindler dubbed himself a “space architect.” In cubist painters he found inspiration for a modern architecture that would break up forms and light, creating new spatial relationships.

The book includes an important chapter by Randell Makinson, who stresses the importance of the brothers Charles (1868-1957) and Henry (1870-1954) Greene in Southern California’s architectural landscape. The Ohio-born Greenes advocated a new concept of living based on the love of nature and a sense of democratic ideals. Their low-ceilinged rooms and broad porches, incorporating elements from traditional Japanese houses and the Arts and Crafts movement, established one of the grand styles in wooden construction.

Esther McCoy’s trailblazing effort shows how these diverse talents combined to create a distinct and lively period in California’s architectural history.

—LEB

72.

General Alexander McLeod (1895-?) uses the word “pigtail” to identify the Chinese who immigrated to California during the Qing dynasty, when it was mandatory for each male to braid his hair into a long queue. If a Chinese planned to return to China, as most originally did, it was necessary to have a queue to be readmitted. Cutting it off would consign one to great punishment.

During the 1870s in California, anti-Chinese sentiment grew within the lower classes. The political machine that ruled San Francisco made various attempts to curtail immigration. In one notorious instance a regulation was passed, intended to humiliate “the Chinaman” and discourage further immigration, that required anyone jailed to have his hair cut to within one inch of his head. One Chinese so defiled, a certain
Ho Ah Kow, took his case to an attorney and eventually saw it reach the California Supreme Court, where he was awarded a $10,000 judgment. The official cutting of queues then stopped.

This is only one of the revealing episodes McLeod discusses in his comprehensive, illustrated history dealing with such matters as laundries, Chinese medicine, Chinese-language newspapers, opium dens, the slave market, Chinese tongs and their “wars”, religious beliefs, and Chinese opera. While the book emphasizes San Francisco life before the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906, it also delves into other significant events, such as the Great Massacre in 1871 Los Angeles when the slaughter of dozens of Chinese took place, including twenty-one people, one not quite twelve years old, who were hanged by an angry mob. —GJV

73.

Carey McWilliams (1905-80) was an energetic, socially committed journalist who had a long career of investigative reporting on the forms of exploitation and discrimination afflicting Americans up to the mid-twentieth century. In this important book he lays out the appalling conditions of migrant workers in California while indicting the ruthless labor practices of a small, elite group of well-connected landowners.

Approximately two-thirds of Factories in the Field deals with land ownership since 1848 and with the people who worked the fields prior to the Great Depression. The final third documents the farm situation existing at the time Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath appeared (see item 105). The geographical focus is on farming in Northern California, and to a lesser extent in the Imperial Valley.

By the end of the Gold Rush the great bulk of the arable land in California was owned or controlled by a few hundred people. These large landowners maximized the profitability by growing wheat because there was a worldwide demand for it and it required a minimal work force. However, by 1870 the land was overworked and falling in fertility. A drop in the price of wheat then caused the landowners to turn to fruit trees, but the high price of rail freight kept the fruit industry from reaching its full potential. When fruit orchards failed, they were replaced by sugar
beets. This crop has a very short harvest season, is labor-intensive, and requires processing factories near the farms. These factors led to what McWilliams calls “the factory in the fields.”

Large landowners used and then discarded different non-white ethnic groups as a source of cheap labor. First came Native Americans, then Chinese followed by Japanese, and finally Filipinos, Hindustanis, and Mexicans. Each imported group would work for lower wages than its predecessor. When each group learned how to organize for higher wages, the landowners would seek legislation to deport them, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

This cycle was broken in the 1930s because of the Dust Bowl and the emigration of American farm owners and workers. Unlike the imported workers, these immigrants had a high level of agricultural skill and came with their families, which led to a more stable and settled labor force that could not be deported.

—WGD

74.


This fully documented book investigates a subject that has always been and always will be a part of human society: race prejudice, an irrational hostility directed toward a race and its supposed characteristics. The subject of Japanese relocation and segregation, but most important the creation of prejudice, is covered by Carey McWilliams (1905-80), lawyer, journalist, author, and for twenty years editor of The Nation magazine. His narrative provides an historical and cultural background for the Japanese in California and discusses how all 100,000 of them—children, women, and men—lost their civil rights because it was feared they might be spies or show affinity for a dreaded Japanese occupation. Not long after December 7, 1941, they were uprooted from their homes and sent under military guard to various camps in inland America.

Though most Californians lived peacefully with their Japanese neighbors, there was a minority who, either from fear or hate or with an eye to economic profit from the misfortunes of others, were eager to see the Japanese-Americans as a devious “Other” and a perfidious enemy within society. McWilliams covers this subject in detail in the chapter
“The Manufacture of Prejudice.” Several organizations were formed, not only to make sure Japanese remained in relocation camps, but also to campaign for the deportation of the entire Japanese population back to Japan, even to the fourth generation. McWilliams names officials, such as state Senator Clarence Ward of Santa Barbara County, who toured California to organize state-wide agitation against the return of the Japanese. Then there was the Americanism Educational League headed by John R. Lechner, a former clergyman, who organized anti-Japanese sentiment with speeches and printed material, greatly influencing service clubs and civic organizations that in many cases adopted anti-Japanese resolutions.

McWilliams stresses that there were people who wanted fairness for the Japanese, such as Robert Gordon Sproul, President of the University of California; Chester Rowell of San Francisco, the dean of California journalists; and Los Angeles newspaper columnists Bill Henry and Lee Shippey. It was McWilliams’s perhaps overly hopeful judgment that such men spoke for the majority of the residents of California. —GJV

75.

“No migrant ever arrived in the region knowing less about it than I did,” wrote Carey McWilliams (1905-80) in his introduction to the 1973 edition of Southern California Country. When it was published shortly after World War II, he may not have suspected that it would become an enduringly important contribution to the history of Southern California. In configuring Southern California not only as a geographical region but also as a concept, an idea, and even a dream, McWilliams continues to beckon readers seeking to understand the “southern” in California. True enough, there have been huge changes since 1946, but the reader will find himself or herself impressed by the notes that McWilliams strikes and his enduring insights. Whether it is geography south of the Tehachapis, Native Americans, Californios, legends, culture, water, booms and busts, citrus, Los Angeles, fantasies of utopia, Hollywood, diversity, emigration and immigration, climate, and image—all of it is in this book.
In his epilogue, McWilliams writes a poignant summary of the inherent tensions among the dwellers in Southern California who seek their own widely diverse cultural, metaphysical, and geographic destinations. Inspired by the sixteenth-century Spanish text that described California as a mysterious island on the way to the Indies, he muses: “It is then that I realize that this land deserves something better, in the way of inhabitants, than the swamis, the realtors, the motion-picture tycoons, the fakirs, the fat widows, the nondescript clerks, the bewildered ex-farmers, the corrupt pension-plan schemers, the tightfisted ‘empire builders,’ and all the other curious migratory creatures who have flocked here from the far corners of the earth. For this strip of coast, this tiny region, seems to be looking westward across the Pacific, waiting for the future that one can somehow sense, and feel, and see ... Nowadays one can see that the Spaniards were right after all and that we, in our technological conceit, were wrong. For with its planes whirling out over the Pacific toward China and India, California is, indeed, ‘at the right hand of the Indies’ and, in Southern California, it does have a Terrestrial Paradise, an Amazon Island, abounding in gold and certainly ‘infested with many griffins.’”

—LEB

76.

Toshio Mori (1910-80), a Japanese-American, admired Sherwood Anderson’s short stories—especially those published as Winesburg, Ohio—and as a tribute he titled his first collection of short stories in the same manner. Yokohama, California was scheduled to be published in early 1942, but the war with Japan set back publication for seven years. During the war, Mori was evacuated to the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah, returning to his home in San Leandro, California, in July 1945. When his book was eventually published in 1949 it was not a huge success, partly because Mori was an unknown writer, but primarily because his approach to the Asian-American material was unfamiliar. William Saroyan remarked in his introduction, “[Mori is] Japanese, writes about Japanese, but his characters are people first.” His often humorous stories portray small-town California with pre-World War II Japanese-Americans assimilating
into American society, loving baseball and hotdogs, yet holding close to some aspects of their Japanese heritage. Like all immigrant communities, they accommodated their lifestyle to American culture without severing their roots in the old country.

—GJV


John Muir (1838-1914) was the prose poet of the West—most specifically, of the wild lands of California. From 1903 until his death, Muir spent much of his time and energy trying to get the Yosemite Valley ceded to the National Park Service and protecting the Hetch Hetchy Valley. He was successful in the former but went down to defeat in the latter.

In 1864, President Lincoln signed legislation granting the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to California as a state park. In 1890, Yosemite National Park was formed and a movement got underway to cede the Yosemite Valley back to the federal government as the centerpiece of the park. Although this seems a logical step, it took until 1906, with much effort by Muir, to get the necessary legislation passed.

After the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, much of the city burned to the ground. The devastation increased because the city’s water system failed. The leading citizens determined to ensure its future water supply. Their target was the Tuolumne River in the Hetch Hetchy Valley. This pristine valley, a few miles north of and parallel to the Yosemite Valley, had many of the same attractive features. In spite of the environmental illogic of this proposal, and after Muir had expended all his physical, emotional, and political resources to prevent the “land grab,” President Wilson signed the bill permitting San Francisco to build the dam on December 19, 1913. One year later, on December 24, 1914, Muir was dead.

The Yosemite was a book Muir said should have been written years earlier. It includes a number of articles that had appeared in print before, and borrowed chapters from The Mountains of California (Zamorano 80, #56) and Our National Parks. The book is primarily a guidebook for the traveler, but also contains the arguments for saving Hetch Hetchy. As the book appeared in print, the battle for Hetch Hetchy was still raging, and Muir, acknowledging the likelihood of defeat, said, “I’ll be relieved
when it’s settled, for it’s killing me. No matter, for I’ve had a grand life in these divine mountains."

—WGD

78.

To celebrate the lives and deeds of the stalwart stagecoach drivers of the nineteenth century, long-lived Mae Boggs (1863-1963) researched the newspaper morgue at the Bancroft Library for several years, gathering all the articles she could find about Northern California stage coaching. She also consulted with many historians and bookmen of her day, among them Herbert I. Priestley, Neal Harlow, Caroline Wenzel, Edwin Grabhorn, and Owen C. Coy. When she finished, she was alarmed to discover that she had amassed over 7000 pages of manuscript. This was distilled into the 763 pages of My Playhouse Was a Concord Coach.

Aware that a town of any size during the last half of the nineteenth century might well have its own newspaper, Boggs drew on over thirty different papers in putting together a rich and multifaceted social history. The clippings start with entries from volume 1, number 1 of Yerba Buena’s California Star, January 9, 1847 (the January 16 issue praises Captain J.A. Sutter for sending aid to those stranded by severe winter conditions, whom we now know as the Donner Party), and end with articles from 1887-88, primarily from the Yreka Journal, telling of the final days of stage coaching before it was replaced by railway lines.

Many well-known persons are mentioned in these pages (among them General Mariano Vallejo, Robert Ingersoll, and Charles Crocker), along with a wide range of events and facts (accidents, stage robberies, Chinese life, crimes and penalties, values of horses and mules, deep snow, mining camps, and transportation rates). But it is a nine-year string of articles about one stage coach driver that proves to be especially intriguing. Jared Robbins was first mentioned in the San Francisco Bulletin of September 1, 1856, after he had been attacked by a band of Indians: “No less than eighteen arrows were shot at him.” He was wounded, but escaped on a horse he quickly unhitched, leaving the coach behind to be destroyed. He reached safety at a nearby ranch and a physician was sent for, some forty miles away. The article ends with the line “We have since
learned that there is a possible chance for the recovery of [Robbins].” We know he survived because of a short notice in the Sacramento Union in 1858 stating that “Jared I. Robbins was married in Marysville, February 18, to Virginie S. Spaulding.” On May 23, 1863, the Shasta Courier reported that “on Wednesday morning last Jerry Robbins, driver of one of the lower stages, took down twenty-one passengers, being the largest load of the season.” The sad final entry for Robbins is from the Trinity Journal, dated September 30, 1865, “DIED: At Bangor, Butte Co., September 17th, Jerry I. Robbins (formerly in the employ of the California Stage Company), a native of Ohio, aged about 32 years.”

Robbins’s name, along with those of others including his brother Dan, is listed on a bronze plaque unveiled in June 1931 in the city of Shasta. Mae Boggs was a driving force behind this honor for these important early Californians—men who faced many dangers daily as they transported people, baggage, and mail on their often difficult routes. Fitting words of remembrance are engraved on the plaque: “In loving memory to these pioneers who ‘held the ribbons’ but have turned the bend in this road.”

—GJV

79.

It is no exaggeration to say that water is the life blood of Southern California. Even in the earliest days of Spanish settlement, it became apparent that the region’s marriage of climate and geography was ill-suited to satisfy the demands of European colonists. The “mother zanjas” (ditches) which were dug during the Spanish and Mexican periods helped direct the water in Southern California to the needs of missions, communities, and agriculture, but when the American period came, the thirst grew exponentially.

When Remi Nadeau (b. 1920) published Water Seekers in 1950, readers achieved a new understanding of the history of water and water use in Southern California, especially Los Angeles. He explored the subject from the 1870s through the construction of the Colorado River aqueduct (1933-41), one of the “Seven Wonders of American Engineering.” While other authors had previously covered his themes of water development,
water use, and the interplay of politics, Nadeau took into full consideration elements largely outside human control, such as climate, drought, and floods.

At the time *The Water Seekers* appeared, a drought had caused extreme conservation measures to be adopted in New York City, and Los Angeles watched and waited, wondering whether it would face the same crisis. The prevailing feeling was that technology would be able to satisfy California’s insatiable thirst. So far that has been the case. However, since Nadeau’s book, the water history of California has continued to be one of squabbles, litigation, and appropriation by the strong from the weak, with still no long-range solution to ever-increasing water needs on a collision course with nature’s inexorable cycles of drought and plenitude. Nadeau, like a prophet speaking to those in the wilderness of water ignorance, presciently laid out the challenge: “In the Southwest of America the foreseeable future must be founded on far more ingenious water developments than the remarkable projects its people have already seen.”

—LEB

80.

After resigning from the editorship of the New York *Evening Post* in 1871, Charles Nordhoff (1830-1901) spent the next several years travelling in the American West and writing about the virtues of the region. This 1872 publication is perhaps the most popular and influential promotional book written on nineteenth-century California, and its message as described in the first paragraph is simple: “I would like to induce Americans, when they contemplate a journey for health, pleasure, or instruction, or all three, to think also of their own country, and particularly California, which has many delights in store for the tourist, and so many attractions for the farmer or settler looking for a mild and healthful climate and a productive country.”

Rancho,” “Semi-Tropical Fruits in Southern California,” “Anaheim—A Successful Colony” and “Cooperative Farming—How Irrigating Ditches are Made.” The booster message is clear: California is a paradise and an ideal place to live.

When Ten Speed Press republished the entire text in facsimile in 1973, its motivations were twofold: to look back at California and see what it was one hundred years before, and to critique what we have done to our great state over the past century.

—AJ

81.

This significant novel by Frank Norris (1870-1902) was based on historical events in the central San Joaquin Valley. Wheat farmers there had an oral agreement with the Southern Pacific Railroad (the “Pacific and Southwest Railroad” of the novel, and the voracious “Octopus” of its title) that once they had improved the railroad’s land, they would be able to buy it at a reasonable cost. A conflict arose when the railroad decided to keep the improved land. This resulted in the Mussel Slough tragedy, in which five lightly-armed settlers and two members of the marshal’s group were killed. In the jury trial that followed (the main presiding judge was the highly respected Ogden Hoffman—see Zamorano 80, #44), the five “leaders” were found guilty of resisting an officer, but not conspiring to do so, and were sentenced to short terms in prison.

As in a previous work by Norris, McTeague (Zamorano 80, #58), greed plays a central thematic role. The railroad is pictured not only as insatiable, but also as terribly corrupt. One of the characters, Presley, offers this indictment, “They own us, these task-masters of ours; they own our homes, they own our legislatures ... We are told we can beat them by the ballot-box. They own the ballot-box ... they own the courts. We know them for what they are,—ruffians in politics, ruffians in finance, ruffians in law, ruffians in trade, bribers, swindlers, and tricksters.” Ultimately Norris leads the reader to accept that the bloody deaths of the farmers and the avarice of the railroad can in a sense be offset by the harvesting of vast quantities of wheat that will reach starving people of the world at low cost.
The Octopus was the initial work of a planned trilogy Norris called "The Epic of Wheat". The second novel, The Pit (1903), concerns wheat speculation in Chicago. The third work, which was to be titled The Wolf, would have shown wheat reaching starving peasants in Russia, but was never written since Norris died at age 32 of peritonitis from a ruptured appendix. —GJV

82.
On the Ambitious Projects of Russia in Regard to North West America, with Particular Reference to New Albion and New California ... by an Englishman. London: Printed by F. Shoberl, 1830.

82A.
[another edition:] [San Francisco]: The Book Club of California [produced at the Allen Press by Lewis and Dorothy Allen at Kentfield, California], 1955.

By 1830, the major European powers recognized that Mexico had insufficient resources to provide effective government in Alta California. The coastal area from San Francisco Bay north to the Oregon border was up for grabs. The Russians had established a foothold in this area with farming communities at Fort Ross and Bodega Bay. These were self-sustaining communities designed to grow food for the Russian-American Fur Company in Alaska, where that company was harvesting in the rich Alaskan sea-otter grounds. That area was so far north, however, that the Company was unable to supply locally-grown meats and grains to keep the fur hunters in the field. The answer had been to develop farms farther south and to ship the goods to Alaska.

It is against this backdrop that an unnamed author penned a propaganda piece to encourage the English to take an active role in gaining control of the area in California north of San Francisco for the British crown. The author suggests that Russia had “ambitious projects” in mind to gain permanent possession of the entire Northern California coast. He points to Otto von Kotzebue's A New Voyage Round the World in the Years 1823, 24, 25 and 26, which appeared in English in 1830. Kotzebue, in the employ of the Russian crown, painted a glowing picture of the area around San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento and San Joaquin
Rivers, as well as Bodega Bay and Fort Ross, where Russia already had a presence.

The author quotes liberally from Kotzebue, describing the productive farms the Russians had developed that compared well with their European counterparts. By contrast, he describes the abysmal condition of agriculture on the mission lands. He paints an exceptionally grim picture of the weakness of the Mexican military in the San Francisco area. The presidio at San Francisco was manned by only two soldiers and one of them was “away.” Munitions were so low that the presidio had to borrow gunpowder from incoming vessels in order to give them a cannon salute on their arrival. The author bases his argument for English control of this area on England’s original claim to New Albion, which dated back to Sir Francis Drake’s landing at Drake’s Bay in 1579.

Who was the author of this piece? Some speculate that it was Frederick Shoberl, the publisher of the book and also of one of Kotzebue’s travel journals in English. Only a single copy of the original appearance is known, at the Bancroft Library. The 1955 Book Club of California publication is the only later edition.

83.


Charles Outland’s (1910-88) book is a history of the St. Francis Dam in which William Mulholland, the great developer of Los Angeles’s water system, plays a central role. The story begins with the laying of the dam’s foundation in 1924 and continues through March 7, 1928, when the water in St. Francis Reservoir rose to within three inches of the top of the dam. Five days later the dam collapsed, creating the greatest man-made disaster in California history.

Outland’s story focuses on the construction and collapse of the dam. However, it has significance beyond the tragic loss of life and immense property damage. Its roots lie in the problem that has plagued Los Angeles since its incorporation: how does the city ensure its water supply? William Mulholland had recognized this, saying, “If you don’t get it, you
won’t need it.” His vision was to bring water through an aqueduct system from the Owens Valley over the mountains to Los Angeles. Over several years he quietly acquired rights to the Owens River water. When the farmers in the area realized that the loss of this water would turn their farmland into a desert, they were outraged and carried out sabotage on the aqueduct. As a backup measure—and also in reaction to Congress’s developing plans for the Hoover Dam, which would divert vast amounts of water from Los Angeles—Mulholland envisioned a series of reservoirs. Key among these would be one in Long Valley at the north end of the Owens Valley. Unfortunately, Fred Eaton, a former mayor of Los Angeles, became aware of the plan and bought the land in this valley, hoping to work a deal with the city of Los Angeles for his personal benefit. When Mulholland became aware of Eaton’s plan, he was outraged and vowed that Eaton would never profit from it. He therefore selected an alternative site, in the Santa Clara River Valley north of Saugus, on which to build the St. Francis Dam. The wisdom of the principle would be proven in 1927 when Owens Valley farmers blew up a section of the aqueduct, and Los Angeles was forced to draw down significant amounts of water from the new reservoir even before it was full.

But in depriving Eaton of his insider profits, Mulholland sowed the seeds of the destruction of his own career. During the inquiry about the failure of the dam, Mulholland was a broken man. Deeply affected by the loss of life, he made no attempt to deflect the criticism that was turned his way. “Don’t blame anybody else; you just fasten it on me. If there was an error in human judgment, I was the human.” Ultimately, the investigative commission laid the blame on the poor quality of the foundation material on which the dam was built. Investigations in later years would seem to suggest that the site selection and the development of that site were the major factors in the collapse. However, those studies also tend to vindicate the 1920s engineering work as sound, based on geological and engineering knowledge at the time.


—WGD
1846 was the year Manifest Destiny became manifest. While the overall sweep of events of that tumultuous year is covered in Bernard De Voto’s *Year of Decision, 1846* (see item 20), Dale Morgan’s (1914-71) two-volume compilation *Overland in 1846* focuses solely on the travelers on the Oregon and California trail that year. To bind the Oregon Territory and California to the United States, there had to be a viable land route from the settlements east of the Great Plains to the West Coast. Each year’s emigration not only brought more population to the West, but cut deeper ruts and made that road more of a reality. Over one thousand people created the trail on their way to Oregon in 1843. In 1844 the first successful wagon crossing of the Sierra Nevada was made to California, and in 1845 even larger numbers came. By 1846 the well-established trail allowed over 2,700 emigrants to travel on it, over half headed to California. This was also the year when there were eastbound traveling groups. The first eastbound wagon train opened the Applegate Trail through southern Oregon and northern Nevada. The Nevada portion, which became known as the Lassen Cutoff, was useful for those headed to California in 1849. In his usual thorough manner, Morgan details the history of the trail to California, from its first use by Overlanders to the beginning of 1846, in an important 117-page introductory essay.

The first volume of *Overland in 1846* contains nine diaries presented in their entirety. Two of those relating to the Donner party—the Miller-Reed and Patrick Breen diaries—are here, showing the hardships the party experienced. The second volume contains letters and newspaper articles written on the spot, and, incredibly, carried back to civilization by the occasional eastbound traveler, or mailed from California once the writer arrived there. These accounts were salvaged from the dustbin of history by the meticulous efforts of Morgan, who rummaged through hundreds of local newspapers of the period.

The Overland Monthly, California’s greatest literary magazine, will forever be associated with Bret Harte, who served as editor from the magazine’s inception in 1868 until February 1871. Anton Roman, a well-known San Francisco publisher and bookseller, established the magazine to compete with the Atlantic Monthly, and to show that San Francisco writers compared well with their Eastern counterparts. The magazine was to look like the Atlantic Monthly—same size, same color cover, and similar typography. Roman realized that the completion of the transcontinental railway, then only months away, would allow distribution of his proposed magazine to a national audience. Further, the magazine would demonstrate San Francisco’s literary sophistication and help draw a better class of people to the city.

The first issue of The Overland Monthly was received with modest enthusiasm. However, the second issue, which featured Harte’s The Luck of Roaring Camp (Zamorano 80, #40), created a sensation. At a single stroke, this story fulfilled The Overland Monthly’s aspirations for a national audience. It also brought Harte instant fame as a master storyteller. He followed this six months later with The Outcasts of Poker Flat. By July 1870, the magazine sold as many copies in the East as in the states of California, Nevada, and Oregon.

The Overland Monthly was not a one-person magazine: Harte accepted submissions from many major authors and scholars. In an era when flowery Victorian writing was the rage, The Overland Monthly maintained a spare literary style. It published the best San Francisco writers of the day, including Charles Stoddard, Clarence King, John Hittell, John Muir, Ina Coolbrith, Prentice Mulford, J. Ross Browne, Joaquin Miller, Ambrose Bierce, and Mark Twain.

The Overland Monthly reached its zenith in 1870 with Harte’s last contribution to the magazine, “Plain Language from Truthful James.” This poem, better known as “The Heathen Chinee,” had to do with the price Chinese people had to pay for success in a white man’s world. In the poem, an innocent-looking Chinese man, Ah Sin, is persuaded to play cards with gambler Bill Nye. Nye cheats Ah Sin but becomes indignant
and violent when his victim cheats him in turn. The final stanza of this poem reads:

Which is why I remark,  
And my language is plain,  
That for ways that are dark,  
And for tricks that are vain,  
The heathen Chinee is peculiar—  
Which the same I am free to maintain.

Harte was always the champion of minority groups and criticized white men for the way they treated Chinese and Mexicans. Yet, not surprisingly, readers interpreted the poem as an indictment of the Chinese and used it to promote the race riots against them, culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Acts.

On February 2, 1871, Harte boarded a train, ironically named the Overland Express, and left for Boston with his family to become the editor of the Atlantic Monthly, the magazine The Overland Monthly had sought to emulate. With Harte’s separation from California, both The Overland Monthly and Harte himself began a slow decline in popularity and relevance. The magazine needed Harte’s editorial genius, and Harte needed the local color of California to paint his literary pictures. The magazine suspended publication in 1875, was revived in 1880 as the Californian, but reverted to Overland Monthly in 1883. This second series began again with volume 1, number 1, and limped into the twentieth century, a shadow of the original. In 1923 the magazine merged with Out West (see item 58) to become Overland Monthly and the Out West Magazine, finally ceasing publication in July 1935. The issues of most interest are the original fifteen volumes published between 1868 and 1883.

86.

In 1931 Harry Peters (1881-1948) completed the first general survey of the history of American lithography, America on Stone. Four years later he issued California on Stone, a volume containing 112 illustrations of
lithographic plates showing the development of California in the mid-nineteenth century.

Though techniques have diversified over the years, lithography at this time used heavy, flat stones on which the artist drew an image using a greasy substance. By taking advantage of the mutual repulsion of oil and water, the inked image could be transferred to paper. Hundreds of impressions could be created in this manner, and color prints could also be made. In the nineteenth century lithography produced popular art at a very low cost. It could be used to decorate the walls of ordinary homes or to print letterheads, much like postcards of a later day. The reproductions in California on Stone represent the cream of California lithographs. The paper on which they were printed was often quite lightweight to reduce cost when mailed. This may explain why, even though the lithographs were issued by the thousands, relatively few remain for the fervent collectors of these often striking images.

In his short prologue, Peters discusses the pioneers of lithography who came to California to take advantage of the frenzy of economic activity that accompanied a growth in population from 3000 Anglos in 1846 to about 125,000 in 1849. A major San Francisco firm, Britton and Rey, churned out lithographs—pictures as well as letterhead art—that remain important as historical records of their times. The artistic renderings captured movement that early photography could not. Vivid images show the activities of the San Francisco Vigilantes, including parades and hangings; Chinese in their gambling parlors; the bleak landscape of the Modoc Indian War; a bird’s eye view of the City of Nevada, Nevada County, California; and the Mammoth Tree Grove in Calaveras County. Also represented are many prints of the growing metropolises of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego, as well as early political cartoons, one showing honest elections and another ballot-box stuffers.

Included in the text are brief biographical sketches of the most important artists or producers of the lithographs of the day. Among them are J.D. Borthwick, author and artist of Three Years in California (1857); Edward Bosqui, famous for his lithographs of Grapes and Grape Vines of California (1877; item 34); Frank Marryat and his Mountains and Molehills (1855); and Bayard Taylor for the well-illustrated Eldorado, or, Adventures in the Path of Empire (1850).

—GJV
In 1887 James Dewing and his associates conceived the idea of publishing the grandest California pictorial book of the nineteenth century, which would make money while taking advantage of the growing fascination with California and the West. Copying the format and title of William Cullen Bryant’s highly successful *Picturesque America*, they selected John Muir (1838-1914) as editor and a group of artists including Thomas Hill, William Keith, Julian Rix, and Charles Dorman Robinson to help create an elaborate subscription publication in a variety of formats. Muir wrote seven of the chapters; it is unclear how much he was really involved in editorial decisions.

Compared with earlier railroad and government surveys and travel guides, the text and the 600 illustrations (etchings, photogravures, wood engravings, and photoengravings) are less topographical and documentary than nostalgic and evocative. The size and repetition of the imagery recalls the sumptuous illustrations of the fifteenth-century *Nuremberg Chronicle*.

This 478-page work is normally seen in two large folios, but there were other special editions like the ten-volume Connoisseur, with matted etchings on silk and a three-quarter morocco binding with an etched print on silk on each cover. Other special editions were published in parts over a number of years. It is highly unlikely that the publisher made much money from these extravagant offerings, for by the spring of 1891 the San Francisco office of J. Dewing was bankrupt. —AJ

88.


This authoritative study focuses on the Californios—native-born Californians with Spanish-speaking parents—during the crucial years from 1846 to 1890 when they faced an expanding, increasingly assertive
Anglo population. Leonard Pitt sets down their history in terms of both large events and small human incidents, discussing the “Greasers” in the gold diggings, the hanging of the Mexican prostitute Juanita, the perhaps fictionalized exploits of Joaquín Murieta, vigilante justice and strained racial relations, the religious practices of the Californios, and how they were treated as they became ever more marginalized by the growing Anglo population of California.

In the early 1850s in Southern California, the dominant Californios and the relatively few Anglos complemented each other: the Californios owned most of the land, but depended on Anglo traders for the material goods they needed. As time passed, many Anglo/Californio marriages created solid cross-cultural relationships. Until the 1870s, Spanish-speaking Americans remained the majority population in Los Angeles. In 1852, for instance, there were only 75 Americans out of a population of about 2,500. However, even when Americans were a distinct minority, they were able to control both business and government. By 1870, much of the land that had been held by Californios had transferred title to Anglos. The construction of rail lines to Los Angeles by 1873 brought a huge influx of Americans, many seeking either a warm and healthy climate or new economic opportunities. The relatively small number of Anglos who then owned the vast lands of the Californios grew wealthy by promoting agriculture and partitioning land for townships and city lots.

What followed was the final decline of the Californios. Since few had marketable skills or land, they were forced into semi-skilled labor in such areas as mining, sheep herding, and agriculture. Others turned to thievery or murder as the once-proud society of the Californios was overwhelmed. The greatest problems for the Spanish-speaking people of California were the reduction of their numbers in relation to the burgeoning Anglo population, and the loss of sophisticated leadership. By the 1890s a fabled era in California history had come to a sad end.

—GJV

89.

Anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker (1900?-70) wrote the first substantial study of the American film industry. Researching the Hollywood of the late 1940s, the peak years of the “studio system”, was a daunting task. However, Powdermaker’s book holds up well, partly because she dared to interview some very powerful people within the industry, but even more because of her accuracy and depth of inquiry. She interviewed some 300 individuals, especially producers, writers, actors and directors. Some of these were quite successful, others had medium success, and still others had failed. The key to getting information she required was her method of interviewing everyone in a private setting, with confidentiality assured. “A producer would tell me how he worked with his writers, and this would be supplemented by interviews with five or six writers who had worked with him. A director would talk about his relationship with actors; later I would interview a number of actors with whom he had worked.” On movies in general she wrote, “My hypothesis was that the social system in which they are made significantly influences their content and meaning.”

—GJV

90.

In April 1849, H.M.T. Powell, known today only through his journal, was ready to begin his journey to California and the gold fields. Like many 49ers he was unsure whether to take the central route or the Santa Fe route. Fortunately for students of the Gold Rush, he chose the latter, and thanks to his journal we have one of the most thorough and articulate records of this route, and an absorbing account of his subsequent adventures in California.

The Santa Fe Trail route had much to recommend it. It had been in regular use for freight traffic since 1821. It passed near the city of Santa Fe, and was fairly easy to traverse until one arrived at the California border near Yuma. Here the emigrant faced a punishing desert haul from the Colorado River to San Diego. Powell successfully crossed the desert, arriving completely frazzled in San Diego on December 3, 1849, exactly
eight months after departing Independence, yet was still over four hundred miles from his objective of reaching the mines.

At this point the journal picks up interest for devotees of Californiana. Powell’s life on the West Coast was typical of many who came to seek their fortune, only to return to the East poorer but wiser. Like most emigrants, Powell arrived in San Diego destitute. He was able to survive on his skill as a copyist and sketcher. He copied deeds for local lawyers, created drawings of sights, and drew maps for a commission. (Sixteen of his sketches are printed in the book.) All the same, barely scraping by, he determined to join a wagon train heading to the San Francisco area.

Powell’s description of his journey along the coast can be followed in detail by anyone who has traveled that route. It helps that he identified and made drawings of each of the missions, which become milestones along the way.

Powell settled in the Santa Clara area. There he opened a lumber store with the financial backing of Governor Burnett (Zamorano 80, #13). This business did not succeed and Powell went back to work in menial jobs until 1851. Finally in April of that year, Powell left Santa Clara for the Mariposa diggings and began his long-anticipated mining career. It lasted a total of seventeen days. In his diary Powell never mentions making more than $1.50 per day for himself in the mines. On his third day in the diggings he said, “Hands blistered, arms and ankles skinned, and sore all over; back almost broke.” Powell had seen the elephant, and by the seventeenth day, he commented, “Have determined to abandon mining. I find I cannot stand it. I ache in every fiber of my frame.”

Returning to the Bay Area, Powell hired himself out as a day laborer. He wrote, “This is the first money I ever received as a hired man; the first I ever received for the sweat of my brow from my fellow man.” Powell had reached his nadir in California. He remained there for another eight months, taking passage home via Panama in February 1852. Powell’s stay in California was certainly more representative of the life of the average Argonaut than the fabulous tales of great wealth washed out of the hills. This was a hard life, and most emigrants returned home with little money and a wealth of experiences.

The Santa Fé Trail was printed by the Grabhorn Press in 1931 in 300 copies. It is considered one of the most important and beautiful of all their productions, and remains one of the most highly sought after. In

—WGD

91.

Bibliophile Lawrence Clark Powell (1906-2001), a highly respected Zamorano Club member, was a prolific writer in many forms, including fiction and even a play, but mostly non-fiction about the Southwest, a land he knew intimately and loved passionately. Born in Washington, D.C., he was brought to Southern California as an infant and grew up in the San Gabriel Valley. After graduating from Occidental College and getting a doctorate at the University of Burgundy in Dijon, he found work in book stores before joining the library staff at the University of California at Los Angeles, eventually assuming the position of University Librarian. His efforts transformed it into a major research institution.

In the reader-friendly essays in California Classics, first serialized in Westways magazine of the Automobile Club of Southern California, Powell memorably explored the contributions of thirty-one writers who, through their imaginations, creativity, and narrative skills, produced books that gave literary form to California in its physical, historical, and psychological dimensions. Non-fiction titles engage the remarkable geographical diversity of the state—seacoast, mountains, and deserts—and include Manly’s Death Valley in ’49 (Zamorano 80, #51), Brewer’s Up and Down California in 1860-1864 (Zamorano 80, #9), Dana’s Two Years Before the Mast (Zamorano 80, #26), and Muir’s The Mountains of California (Zamorano 80, #56). Classics of California fiction range from Harte’s poignant The Luck of Roaring Camp (Zamorano 80, #40) and Norris’s harshly naturalistic McTeague to Chandler’s unforgettable evocation of 1930s Los Angeles in Farewell, My Lovely. Each essay has a photograph of the author under discussion.

—GJV
The discovery of gold in California lured Americans of all stripes. In the spring of 1849 about 30,000 people—nearly six times as many as had ever traveled the trail before—showed up at civilization’s edge on the western Missouri border to begin the trek on the Oregon-California Trail. Because none could leave the settlements before the spring grass was high enough to provide fodder, and because they had to complete the 120-day trip before the winter snows began in the Sierra, the entire emigration began its march within about a four-week period, creating a five hundred mile-long traffic jam. Nearly all travelers were aware that they were part of something important in this year of the Gold Rush, and many documented their trip for posterity. Among the many diarists and journalists on the trail that year was James Avery Pritchard. He wrote an articulate and interesting narrative of his journey, typical of the many narratives of 1849, that was competently edited by Dale Morgan (1914-71) for this edition.

Because the trail was a single line across the western half of the continent, and because so many emigrants were on the trail at the same time, there was constant interaction among the travelers. Wagon trains would form, then break apart under the strain of the journey, only to reform with new members. Families in different groups would get together around the campfire to swap stories or share trail gossip. Diarists recorded these interactions, creating what could be a rich mosaic of the emigration, but until the publication of this book there was no simple access to all the sources. In an invaluable appendix Morgan describes 132 diaries of the 1849 emigration—all that were known to exist at the time. As he says in the introduction, “The primary contribution of the present book is that for the first time it brings the actual overland diaries of 1849 ... under scholarly discipline. With a chronologically arranged chart [laid into a pocket at the back] and an alphabetically arranged list of diaries, each complementing the other, every known diary kept on the northern route to California during the first year of the Gold Rush has been reported, showing the State and community from which the diarist came, the name of his company (if he had one, or if known), the date on
which he passed more than fifty landmarks along the trail, the effective
terminal date of his diary as a record of an overland journey, and, at least
indicatively, how long the diary was kept afterwards.” The real value of
this book therefore goes well beyond the editing of Pritchard’s diary.
—WGD

93.
P.C. REMONDINO. The Mediterranean Shores of America. Southern Califor-
nia: Its Climatic, Physical, and Meteorological Conditions. Philadelphia and
London: F.A. Davis Company, 1892.

Peter Charles Remondino (1846-1926) arrived in California in late 1873
and was appointed city physician of San Diego three years later. He was
always interested in natural history and anatomy: in his teenage years he
disinterred the body of an Indian who had been shot by an acquaintance,
dissected the remains, and mounted the skeleton for study. During the
American Civil War he served as an assistant to various surgeons and
later graduated from the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. In
poor health as a result of malarial fevers, he was lured to the San Diego
area by booster literature proclaiming its healthy climate. The “miasma-
free” air of Southern California worked, and he spent the next fifty years
vigorously building a career, heading a family, and writing a number of
books.

In The Mediterranean Shores of America, Remondino explains that “one
of the greatest peculiarities or oddities of the Southern California cli-
mate consists in the relative conditions existing between the degrees
of temperature and the degrees of atmospheric humidity.” He observes
that the region’s climatic conditions are much like those of his native
northern Italy, only better, and argues that “Southern California has six
distinct classes of climates, all having a therapeutic value and applica-
tion as follows: 1. A purely insular climate, 2. The peninsular climate,
3. The coast climate, 4. The foothill and valley climate, 200 to 2500 feet
elevation, 5. The mountain climate, 2500 to 9000 feet elevation, 6. The
desert climate, from 360 feet below sea-level to 2500 feet elevation.” To
this day advertising agencies extol the virtues of Southern California’s
climate by boasting that one can take an early morning dip in the Pacific,
snowboard in the afternoon in the mountains, and relax in the evening
with friends in a desert community such as Palm Springs. In what is essentially an advertisement for those seeking better health, especially those with respiratory diseases, Remondino stresses that rest in the long hours of bright sunshine, surrounded by dry warm soil and steady cool winds, will eventually bring one back to health. Numerous charts set forth monthly mean temperatures, barometric readings, and rainfall for the entire region. The book also offers enticing illustrations of many scenic locations in Southern California, including beaches, missions, resorts, and orange groves.

—GJV

94.

The slimness of this book belies its important content. The transition of California politically and culturally after the United States and Mexico went to war in 1846 brought about difficult and often painful adjustments. Under American hegemony, the formerly dominant Spanish and Mexican population saw onerous new laws and procedures put in place.

W.W. Robinson’s (1891-1972) prolific writings about Southern California enlightened his many readers about its geography, people and places. During his research he came across a large bundle of papers in the Los Angeles Hall of Records, “The People of the State of California vs. Francisco Lugo, et al.” These contained a fascinating account of murder, corrupt witnesses, a famous American bandit and gang leader, armed camps of supporters and antagonists, and a judge presiding over a trial with pistols on his bench.

Two sons of Don Antonio Lugo, a major landowner and well-connected Californio, were falsely accused of the murder of two men in the Cajon Pass. They had been participating in the pursuit of a band of mixed-tribe Native American horse and cattle rustlers organized by Chief Walkara, the “Hawk of the Mountains”. The natives had escaped, and the two young Lugos were reduced to walking back without shoes and guns to their ranch in San Bernardino. It was during the retreat that two itinerant traders were murdered, evidently in the mistaken belief that they were spies for the rustlers.
The notorious 1851 trial ended with acquittals and a massacre. Drawing in a diverse mix of Californians including Benjamin Hayes, Joseph Lancaster Brent, “Red” Irving, Antonio Lugo, Chief Juan Antonio, and “Chico” and “Menito” Lugo, as well as the United States Army, the affair demonstrated just how taut and sensitive the cultural clash of the Mexicans and the Americans was in Los Angeles. Robinson’s book is an absorbing account of Southern California’s often painful transition from the Mexican to the American era.

—LEB

95.

This passionate novel operates on more than one level. It is a romance of separated lovers, but, more important in historical terms, it recounts the incursion into California by Americans after 1848 and their seizing of land that was held by a relatively few “dons” who had been its possessors for generations. It is also the first English-language novel written in California by a woman of Mexican origin. María Amparo Ruiz (1832-95) used the non-gender-specific pseudonym of C. Loyal, possibly to enhance the sales of her book to the English-speaking public. The name also had a covert meaning, unknown to those not understanding Spanish: official correspondence in nineteenth-century Mexico was signed Ciudadano Leal, which translates as “loyal citizen.” Ruiz was born in Baja California to an aristocratic family and came to Alta California as a teenager. She added the additional surname Burton after marrying an American army officer. The act of writing this book in English was courageous because it exposed American government policies tied to the railroad monopoly that favored new residents from the eastern United States. These policies did not displace the laboring-class mestizos who owned little, but they comprehensively destroyed the dignity and well-being of the Californios who found themselves evicted from their long-held lands.

—GJV

The Vigilance Committee was formed by prominent merchants in San Francisco “for the maintenance of the peace and good order of Society and the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of San Francisco.” It was a successful attempt to quell the corruption in the city brought on by the Democratic Party machine, powerless courts, and inept protection by a less-than-honest police force. While most offenders were tried by a people’s court and sentenced to imprisonment, the detailed records show there were some executions, the first being that of a John Jenkins who had stolen a safe. Justice was swift in his case. He was captured in the evening, tried, and hanged before daylight the next morning. Corrupt city officials railed against what they saw as injustice, but their words fell on deaf ears.

The detailed documents in this volume were gathered by Hubert Howe Bancroft as part of the research material for the history volumes he produced. When Bancroft’s library was purchased by the University of California in 1906, the documents were in such a disordered state that it took some years to index and catalog them. As the introductory note puts it, “Only one who has seen the papers themselves can realize the irksome nature of the task, and the countless problems that arose concerning the decipherment of handwriting, the spelling of proper names, and the verification of obscure allusions to persons, places, and events. With what pains the editor’s work has been prosecuted is shown by the contents of this bulky volume, and the careful and elaborate index. Miss Williams has made all students, not only of San Francisco history, but of the general history of pioneer conditions, her grateful debtors.” This was the third and last volume of a set; the first two, edited by Porter Garnett in 1910 and 1911, contained only the constitution of the Vigilance Committee and the names of its members.

The minutes, miscellaneous papers, and financial accounts and vouchers in volume 3 are important source documents, mostly dry reading, but with occasional statements that allow “students of social movements and ... political institutions [to] find the material of value as the record of a sincere and conscious effort to remedy an intolerable
condition by the resort to the direct and unauthorized interference with established methods of government.”

Mary Williams concludes, “[The members of the Committee] were honest in their conviction that their course was justified by the condition of their city; while their first trial was hasty and the subsequent execution accompanied by riot and violence, thereafter they were untiring in their efforts to disclose the exact facts in every case before them; they exercised their self-appointed office with justice and mercy, and when the majority felt that their mission was accomplished, they quietly withdrew from participation in public affairs.”

—GJV


In this novel, William Saroyan (1908-81), born in Fresno to Armenian immigrants, weaves a tale focusing on ordinary lives in the fictional city of Ithaca, located somewhere in the San Joaquin Valley. It is World War II, and life continues as well as can be expected under wartime conditions. The primary characters are a child, Ulysses, and his teen-aged brother Homer, a telegram delivery-boy. Among the messages Homer delivers are ones notifying parents of the deaths of their sons in action. Homer detests the task because he is always anxious that one day a telegram will arrive bearing bad news about his own older brother in the service.

Saroyan enters into the lives of people in a small city doing their everyday tasks as the war drags on. A memorable chapter devoted to a high school class session in ancient history includes both the serious student and the class clown who always tries the patience of the teacher. The speech on the human nose presented by a student with a sense of humor is extraordinary in its probing of the American teenage imagination.

When Ulysses and his friend Lionel, neither yet able to read, visit the public library, there is a memorable scene as they tentatively pull one book after another from the shelves. Lionel says, “There’s an ‘A’, that’s an ‘A’ right there. There’s another letter of some sort. I don’t know what that one is. Every letter’s different, Ulysses, and every word’s different.”
On the surface, this appears to be a simply written and even simplistic novel, but it is the abundant depth of human understanding presented so skillfully by Saroyan that gives this book permanence. —GJV

98.


When people think of California and mountains, the image that comes to mind is the majestic Sierra Nevada. But there is a second Sierra—the range of mountains surrounding the urban areas of Southern California—that is easily taken for granted, perhaps because it is close to the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and San Diego and accepted as part of a familiar landscape. In fact, the City of Los Angeles extends right up to the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains and the San Gabriels, and other cities are built along these transverse mountains all the way from Los Angeles to the San Gorgonio Pass.

The Sierra of Southern California rises abruptly without foothills out of the plain near sea level to heights of more than 11,000 feet. It is unique in having some of the steepest scarps and greatest reliefs from plain to peak of any mountains in the United States. Today, good roads make these mountains accessible to the urban explorer who can easily crisscross the range by automobile in a single day. While it is true that ascent of the major peaks must still be made on foot, paved access to trailheads is a boon for dedicated trekkers. In 1923, however, when Charles Saunders (1859-1941) covered the ground that he writes about in The Southern Sierras of California, there were few mountain roads accessible to the automobile. With the exception of an auto trip on the Rim of the World Highway in the San Bernardinos and a road trip between and around Palomar Mountain and the Pala Asistencia, all of Saunders’s wanderings were on foot.

Saunders’s narrative deals with specific sections of the “southern sierras,” combining first-person travel accounts with passages on the people both famous and obscure who helped create the history and folklore of the region. He also casts an observant eye on the surprising number of hikers and residents of his own time who were mining or farming in the mountains, or maintaining tourist camps. A botanist at heart, he
carefully describes the plants and trees he finds along the way. He points out that the climates in these mountains range from those of the Sonoran Desert to the Hudsonian Arctic, creating a diverse range of vegetation. Overall, he was a keen observer who interspersed straightforward descriptions of rugged terrain and trails with enchanting evocations of potreros, cienegas, and pastures, of distant vistas of desert and ocean, and mountaintops above the clouds.

—WGD

99.


Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) is best known for his 1906 muckraking literary success *The Jungle*, an exposé of the abuse of immigrant labor and the horrible conditions faced by man and beast alike in Chicago’s meat-packing industry. Twenty-one years later he published a long and ambitious California novel set in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In *Oil!* he exposes the state’s infant industry that was fueled by the greed of the oil men. In *California Classics*, Lawrence Clark Powell praises *Oil!* as “a novel of high California octane.” Since most of the action takes place in the southern part of the state, Sinclair is able to cast a critical eye on labor strife, religious cults, university life, and Hollywood. But he also goes farther afield to include Europe during World War I, the Russian Revolution, and exploited American soldiers in Siberia who remained there long after the Armistice to guard valuable weaponry belonging to the Wall Street bankers Morgan and Company.

At the center of this sprawling novel is the conflicted relationship of a father and his son, J. Arnold Ross and Arnold Ross, Jr., over issues of social and economic justice. The father, with a working class background, is initially a well-meaning capitalist, but becomes callously manipulative as greed and big business dominate his life. The son, who tries to follow in his father’s footsteps, discovers that, despite his great wealth, his conscience remains on the side of the working man. The novel ends with the assertion that there is “a cruel demon ... an evil Power which roams the earth, crippling the bodies of men and women, and luring the nations to destruction by visions of unearned wealth, and the opportunity to enslave and exploit labor.”
Sinclair never directly reveals the historical people, places, and events on which he bases his novel, writing that “the only personalities to be recognized in this book are three presidents of the United States, who have held office during the past fifteen years.” To anyone with knowledge of Southern California history, though, it is obvious that the character Vern Roscoe is akin to the real-life oil magnate Edward Doheny, and J. Arnold Ross is not unlike Harry F. Sinclair, a close associate of Doheny. Warren G. Harding is mentioned in connection with the Teapot Dome scandal, in which Southern California oil millionaires bribed their way into the highest levels of power in order to make themselves even richer. The place name “Angel City” easily translates to Los Angeles, “Beach City” to Long Beach (Signal Hill), and “Southern Pacific University” to the University of Southern California.

The glut of cheap oil that Sinclair’s novel chronicles contributed strongly to the automobile culture of Southern California. The stifling of public transportation, construction of ever more expanded roadways, and dependence on the auto were not nearly as manifest in other parts of the country. Angelenos pay an increasingly high price for being married to their vehicles, with consequent smog, high operating costs, and “freeways” congested day and night.

—GJV

100.

101.

Gary Kurutz states in his introduction to the Clifford collection catalog that “the California pictorial letter sheet provides the best visual chronicle of the California Gold Rush and the golden decades of the 1850s and 1860s.” Writing paper printed with a wide variety of mining scenes, bird’s-eye views of Sierra towns and a burgeoning San Francisco, humorous depictions, and other illustrations both historic and ephemeral were widely disseminated during the period. The most famous of
these is probably The Miner’s Ten Commandments by James M. Hutchings, who claimed he sold 97,000 copies “in a little over a year, 1853-1854.”

Historian Joseph Baird describes 343 letter sheets and reproduces 60 in a beautiful Grabhorn-Hoyem publication; the Clifford catalog provides more complete historical descriptions and reproduces 132 letter sheets. Together they document a unique California phenomenon.—AJ

102.


This handsomely bound, beautifully printed book by Thomas E. Williams of the Fine Arts Press contains the first publication of the diary of legendary explorer and fur trapper Jedediah Strong Smith (1799-1831). It was long thought lost, but after tracking material about Smith in the Hudson’s Bay Company records in Canada and in the national archives in Mexico City, Maurice Sullivan (1893-1935) came across the only known copy of Smith’s journals, with corrections made in the author’s handwriting. Smith was the first American to cross Nevada, the first to traverse Utah both from north to south and from west to east, and the first American to enter California by the overland route. He also was the first American to cross the San Bernardino Mountains, and the first to make his way overland from Missouri in 1827, discovering the central route from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. As Sullivan notes, “Smith was the finder of paths for the pathfinders.” He was also the first to explore the entire Pacific slope from San Diego to Vancouver. This volume solidifies Smith’s position as one of the greatest of America’s Western explorers. The popular account of Smith’s life later written by Sullivan, Jedediah Smith, Trader and Trail Breaker, became a posthumous accolade to the young writer’s accomplishments. A month before its issue in New York, Sullivan died of pneumonia at the age of forty-one.

—LEB
One of the letter sheets offered in Item 100

SUNDAY IN THE CALIFORNIA DIGGINGS.

The first full-length book on Death Valley, *Illustrated Sketches* was a success for John Randolph Spears (1850-1936), a professional writer for magazines and newspapers. Containing 57 photographs, it was also the first illustrated account of this inhospitable desert. Spears traces the development of the region by early settlers and the establishment of the borax industry. Especially memorable are his detailed descriptions of the huge twenty-mule-team wagons, their rear wheels seven feet across, designed to carry over 20,000 pounds to sites some 150 miles distant. However, he does not neglect the surprising numbers of plants and animals thriving in the extreme temperatures. The grizzled men of Death Valley were often no less resourceful than their wildlife companions. The water they used in summer, kept in wooden barrels, was always hot and good only for the coffee-pot; the wood-cutters in the mountains preferred sweet and cold snow water. As Spears writes, “It is true that warm water would remove dirt better than cold water would do, but the wood-cutter does not want to remove dirt. There is a tradition that a man was once employed on the mountain above Teels’ Marsh cutting wood who washed his hands and face every day; but he did not remain there long. The rest of the gang ostracized the dude.”

—GJV


A native San Franciscan, university professor, and former California State Librarian, Kevin Starr (b. 1940) re-energized the study of California history in the early 1970s with the publication of *Americans and the California Dream*, the first in a series of diverse and rich forays into California’s history. With his expertise in literature and cultural history, Starr set late nineteenth-century California in the context of the American quest for a national destiny, a dream “both utopian and dystopian in the life of the nation.”
Starr presents the “California dream” as a reality based in social, psychological, and symbolic enterprise. Drawing on original narratives, journals, memoirs, novels, poetry, and letters, he describes the players that fashioned a distinct California culture. Starr writes of the famous and infamous, the eccentrics, the writers and artists, and the politicians and businessmen, drawing parallels between the challenges California faced in the twentieth century and those of the nation: population growth, the rise of urban industrial society, race, labor relations, conservation, and public welfare. He also cautions that an “obsession with self-fulfillment” proved one of the dangers of the California Dream.

After providing 444 pages of history and analysis, and acknowledging that his narrative “is an act of memory, a gathering from the California past of some inner strands, understood and obscure,” Starr concludes, “California remains an American hope.”

—LEB

In May 1941, Henry Wagner, one of the contributors to The Zamorano 80, wrote to fellow bookman Thomas Streeter denouncing the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Grapes of Wrath. “In the first place it is propaganda pure and simple, and in the second place it is filthy.” This was a common early criticism of arguably the most powerful fictional work ever written about California.

In this angst-ridden narrative, a testament of the Great Depression, poor dirt farmers travel west to escape Dust Bowl poverty and starvation. The Joad family, with kinfolk and friends, doggedly makes its way to the “promised land” of California’s San Joaquin Valley. Rumor had it that they would find a decent living with work for all. The reality is that there is little food or shelter, and when work is found, it is hard labor at low wages. The Joads find some people generous, some made angry and inhospitable by economic difficulty, but all fearful of the large influx of people even poorer than themselves.

Time and again the “dirty Okies” find themselves struggling to survive. They suffer losses as friends and family members die. They experience fear and sometimes lose faith that things will ever get better. Tom Joad warns, “Don’t roust your faith bird-high an’ you won’t do no
crawlin’ with the worms.” Yet the life-force burns strongly within them, and they endure. The matriarch of the family, Ma Joad, speaks for all when she says, “Ever’thing we do—seems to me is aimed right at goin’ on. Seems that way to me ... Jus’ try to live the day, jus’ the day.” This was a theme that resonated with Depression-era Americans when the novel appeared in 1939, and led many to connect with it. —GJV

106.


If ever a man was overwhelmed and impoverished by the Gold Rush, it was John Sutter (1803-80). A larger-than-life figure, the Swiss-born Sutter was well educated. In his homeland he initially worked in a publishing house and then in a draper’s shop, all in subordinate positions. After his marriage his mother-in-law backed him in a dry-goods business, but young Sutter, with his ebullient personality but improvident nature, ran it into the ground. A trusting man with a free and open spirit, he had a tendency to overreach. These were qualities that helped to make him wealthy and famous in California before the Gold Rush and the wave of immigration that followed; but in Switzerland he lost everything.

After his bankruptcy and failure, America seemed the best option for Sutter. Linking up with Santa Fe traders in Missouri and New Mexico, he eventually set out for California. He finally arrived in San Francisco in 1839 after stopovers in Canada, Hawaii, and Alaska. Bolstered with flattering introductions from a bevy of friends he had made on his journeys, Sutter was welcomed by Governor Juan Alvarado and other prominent citizens. Alvarado encouraged Sutter to seek Mexican citizenship and then ask for a grant of land. Sutter ultimately received land in the broad Sacramento Valley and constructed his own fortress city called New Helvetia.

Through a series of maneuvers he became sole legal chief of his domain. In a sense he had created a sovereign state, an imperium in imperia. Sutter’s Fort became a natural destination for people journeying to California from the East by the overland routes. In the meantime, going
against the policy of the Mexican authorities in California, Sutter forged strong relations with the many Americans who found haven on his estate. Following the war with Mexico, Sutter saw increased immigrant activity at his Fort. All seemed well, but lurking in the shadows were Sutter’s mounting debts. Meanwhile, his employee James Marshall built a sawmill on Sutter’s land at Coloma on the South Fork of the American River, where on January 24, 1848, he discovered gold. Nearing the end of his diary, Sutter noted that on January 28, “Mr. Marshall arrived in the evening, it was raining very heavy, but he told me he came on important business.” That business would change California’s future, impact the United States, and in the end help ruin John Sutter.

—LEB

107.


If one were to casually read the obituary of Ben C. Truman (1835-1916) in the New York Times in July 1916, one might come away with the idea that he was a jack of all trades and master of none, since he held so many positions and did so many things. But this was not so. While he certainly did many things, he did a number of them very well. Some of his early work included being a school principal, typesetter, proofreader, and composer of songs. Eventually he became a major in the Army, a special agent of the Treasury and Post Office departments, a war correspondent for the New York Times, an owner of five newspapers, and confidential secretary to President Andrew Johnson. He was also an early and prolific publicist for Southern California. His exceptional booster book Semi-Tropical California enticed thousands to experience the special qualities of the Southland.

Southern California, Truman argued, boasts a desirable year-round climate, especially for those suffering from lung ailments. “[It] has a dry, clear, bracing, and invigorating atmosphere; and, although the nights are clear and cool, and sometimes cold, the air is too dry to make the depression of mercury sensibly or painfully affect the patient.” He considered “semi-tropical California” to be the counties in the southern...
part of the state that reached from San Luis Obispo to San Diego with its border on Mexico. While Los Angeles and the immediate surrounding area are emphasized, he also writes of the history and geography of communities as far away as Anaheim and San Bernardino. The San Gabriel Valley gets special attention as “the Lombardy” of semi-tropical California, with its fruit belt occupying “an area of about two miles in width and ten miles in length.” Fields of 100,000 grape vines in this region produced about 20,000 gallons of wine and brandy annually. On General Stoneman’s estate of 400 acres were to be found “figs, pomegranates, olives, six varieties of apples, five of pears, three of peaches, four of plums, cherries, nectarines, almonds, apricots, citron, and several varieties of berries.”

A book such as this hearkens back to an Edenic time when, instead of experiencing congested freeways, polluted air, and a house in a crowded suburb, a man and his family could sit on their front porch of an evening, take healthful breaths, and view the still largely empty California landscape at its pristine best.

—GJV

108.


By 1853, when the idea of a transcontinental railroad had reached the halls of Congress, many important sectional and local concerns framed the discussion. Since economics dictated that only one, possibly two, transcontinental railroads could be built, lobbying for local interests became intense. The industrial North, agricultural South, and the newly developing Midwest each had agendas about where the railroads would go and which region would reap the greatest benefit.

The bill that passed in March 1853 authorized four routes to be surveyed. They were a route from the Great Lakes to Puget Sound; a central route from St. Louis to San Francisco via the Bent’s Fort area and Salt Lake City; a Southern route from Fort Smith through Albuquerque to Southern California via the Mojave Desert along the 35th parallel; and
various lines through the San Joaquin and Tulare Valleys and the passes through the Sierra Nevada that would connect them with the southern route. Although Congress originally ordered that the survey reports be returned to Congress within eleven months, it was such a huge undertaking that extensions were granted. Ultimately thirteen volumes of text and maps were published between 1855 and 1861.

In addition to topographical engineers, the survey parties included a host of zoologists, geologists, geographers, botanists, meteorologists, cartographers, and artists. Not since Napoleon had taken scientists to Egypt in the late 1700s had so much data been collected in a single undertaking. Despite its imperfections, the Reports remain one of the great scientific works of the nineteenth century. Volume 5 is of special interest to historians of Southern California because it contains the conclusions that the Tehachapi Pass and the Cañada de Uvas (the Grapevine) were the practical routes between the south and the central part of the state, and the Cajon Pass was the natural gateway from the east. There are also many maps and lithographs of locations in California, including the first lithographic rendition of Los Angeles, and a striking image of the San Fernando Mission standing almost as an island in the then hauntingly barren San Fernando Valley.

The Reports, however, failed in their original purpose of identifying the most economical and practical route for a transcontinental railroad. When, in 1864, President Lincoln approved the route that was actually followed, it incorporated none of those surveyed for the Reports. —WGD

109.

Lawrence Clark Powell, famed for his knowledge of California literature, drew attention to the once popular but now obscure writer Judy Van der Veer (1910-83). He especially admired her novel November Grass. The atmospheric sketches of ranch life that make up this work have been accurately described as “lyrically minimalist” by California historian Kevin Starr.

November Grass memorably depicts the stark semi-desert country east of the city of San Diego as it was during the 1930s. Reading Van der
Veer is to take an autumn walk on brown hills and view an enormous panorama as it unfolds. Through the eyes of the central character the landscape springs to life as she discovers life ranging from tiny lady-bugs and a snake swallowing a field mouse to coyotes chasing rabbits and grazing cattle chewing the brown November grass. Life and death intermingle as each day passes. There are also neighbors, Indian and Mexican, who mesh seamlessly with the land and enjoy life with little time to worry. “Even the poorest were gracious, and their hospitality was genuine.” Van der Veer presents her pastoral world in an evocative and seemingly effortless way. She understands the habits and moods of animal life, and while waiting for the seasonal rains, conveys the serenity of Southern California ranch life.

—GJV

110.

Theodore Van Dyke’s fictional account of the land boom and bust in Southern California during the 1880s uses historical facts as a backdrop for a cast of characters who express the psychology of each stage of the boom. The story is so remarkably contemporary that it could have taken place in the early years of the twenty-first century.

The land boom began innocently enough in 1885. Although the railroad had been bringing winter visitors to California for several years, in the winter of this year more people came and stayed. Speculators then began subdividing large tracts of land and putting them on the auction block. Even though the land was offered at reasonable prices, the auctioneers used “cappers” to make phony bids to keep the auction fever going. Most sales then were for cash, but the time was coming when the market began working hard on leverage.

As the months progressed, the boom began to get legs, and by the end of 1886 the Southern California real estate market was like a commodities futures market with property changing hands without buyer or seller having any intention of occupying the land. The market spread south from Los Angeles to San Diego, and eventually spilled over to Baja California. With each new tract offered for sale, the promoter would
try to develop at least one hotel or common house to seed the project. One of the successful properties developed this way was the Hotel del Coronado.

At the peak of the boom, Van Dyke (1842-1923) observed, “Nowhere else in the world had such a class of settlers been seen. Emigrants coming in palace-cars instead of ‘prairie schooners,’ and building fine houses instead of log shanties, and planting flowers and lawn-grass before they planted potatoes or corn, were a grand surprise.”

By January 1888 the halcyon days were over. The bust that followed was more of an unwinding than a spell of panic selling. Most people who were hurt were reasonably sophisticated investors. Ironically, the boom focused on the less productive parts of Southern California. The choicest lots for making honest money were the hillsides where there was good alluvial soil, and where there was a constant water source that could be used for irrigation. The farms in these areas were exceedingly productive and profitable. They didn’t have a dramatic price rise in boom times, and they didn’t drop significantly in the bust. Even many of the speculators who went bust stayed in Southern California and succeeded in the old-fashioned way.

Reflecting on the boom and bust, and on his temporary flirtation with wealth, one of Van Dyke’s characters comments, “We were a lot of very ordinary toads whirlèd up by a cyclone until we thought we were eagles sailing with our own wings in the topmost dome of heaven.”

—WGD

111.

California’s Gold Rush created not only vast wealth and endless tales of adventure and disappointment, but also a vibrant literary culture in San Francisco that produced a school of journalism and advanced the careers of several prominent American writers. Franklin Walker’s book gives a social and historical summary of the period 1848-1875. It avoids the boredom of many such surveys because Franklin writes with clarity and has a penchant for highlighting outrageous characters and episodes. One of the best examples of this is the long section on John Rollin Ridge
(Yellow Bird) and his recasting of the story of Joaquín Murieta (Zamorano 80, #64).

Walker covers the well-known figures—Bret Harte (Zamorano 80, #40), Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, and Joaquin Miller (Zamorano 80, #55)—as well as lesser writers, and gives attention to the best literary magazines, Golden Era, Californian, and The Overland Monthly. As he states in the foreword, “I have concerned myself with showing how the personality and interests of each subject was reflected in his journalism and how time and place influenced each writer.” —AJ

112.

The states that comprised the Union in 1876 owe continuing gratitude to Congress, which called for local and regional histories to be written in honor of the nation’s hundredth birthday. Los Angeles responded by selecting three men to prepare a history of Los Angeles city and county. Rather than attempt a collaborative “look book,” a gazetteer of local events and names, or a synthesis of their own viewpoints as pioneers, the three decided that each would write a separate section on a period of Los Angeles history.

One of many fur trappers who made important marks upon Southern California in the nineteenth century, Juan José Warner (1807-95) undertook to describe the founding of the pueblo and the inauguration of the American period. As a naturalized Mexican citizen, he acquired title to the famous Warner’s Ranch that occupied 26,000 acres in the then back country of San Diego. He also sought to be a bridge between the newly arrived Americans and the Californios, who became friends of the Americans while at the same time fearing American cultural and legal hegemony. His reminiscences are those of someone who lived through the transition, and as such they remain an important historical source.

Benjamin Hayes (1815-77), the second of the writers, came to Los Angeles in 1850 just before statehood, immediately entered public life,
and took part in some of the most exciting and even dangerous legal cases of the day. He rode circuit among the towns in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties. His observations of the social conditions and the architectural environment, as well as institutional successes and failures, give added weight to his role as an historian. Unfortunately, Hayes did not live to see the result of his effort.

The third contributor, Joseph P. Widney (1841-1938), covered Los Angeles from 1867 to 1876, ending his commentary appropriately on July 4, 1876. A physician trained in San Francisco, he came to Los Angeles in 1867 and developed a successful medical practice that served many of the Californios. As co-founder (with his brother, a judge) of the University of Southern California, and later its president, Widney maintained a lifelong commitment to local history. To the reprint of this book in 1936, the 95-year-old Widney contributed a new introduction. While many of the names, faces, and places have long disappeared from the city and county of Los Angeles, the information brought together by these three men served as a template for future historians to follow. —L E B

113.


While visiting Los Angeles for a short time in 1947, famed English novelist Evelyn Waugh (1903-66) was wined and dined by friends. One of the more interesting of these occasions was a dinner with Hubert Eaton, the founder of Forest Lawn. After writing a comic piece for Life Magazine about this amazingly American cemetery, he turned his attention to the implications of this new paradigm of the necropolis. Although his novel The Loved One bears a disclaimer—"This is a purely fanciful tale, a little nightmare produced by the unaccustomed high living during a brief visit to Hollywood"—it is clear that Forest Lawn is its setting.

Waugh’s story is about displaced Englishmen trying to survive in the strange world of Southern California. Sir Francis Hinsley toughs it out in the stiff-upper-lip tradition, but ultimately becomes distraught and commits suicide. The young expatriate poet Dennis Barlow, after brief employment as a studio writer, ends up working at the Happier Hunting Ground pet cemetery next to Whispering Glades. Among the characters
Barlow encounters are “the Dreamer” who founded Whispering Glades; Mr. Joyboy, the mortician; Aimée Thanatogenos, his assistant; and Schultz, who is in charge of the pet cemetery. A love triangle erupts between Barlow, Thanatogenos, and Joyboy. The novel incorporates actual descriptions of services offered at Forest Lawn: piped-in music, nature sound effects, and corpses called “loved ones.” Throughout the novel Waugh attacks the commercialization of the rites of death and mourning. “The squeamish should return their copies to the library or the bookstore unread,” he wrote. Indeed, Waugh knew that his send-up of the American propensity for product design and marketing would make for uncomfortable reading.

—LEB

114.

Nathanael West’s The Day of the Locust is an icon of the Hollywood novel—an antic and biting work full of social criticism of Southern California’s entertainment capital. West, killed in an automobile accident in El Centro shortly after his novel was published, portrayed a Depression-era city of excess that verged on madness, fueled by alcohol, sensual abandon, and social dysfunction.

A shy, lonely New Yorker, West (1903-40) came to Hollywood in 1933 with a couple of books in print. His experience of trying to adapt one of his novels to a screenplay proved so unpleasant that he left the city. But he returned in 1935 and found work writing for B movies, all the time keenly observing the milieu of the marginalized—stunt men, has-been comics, prostitutes, failed actors, and bit-players. For him, Hollywood was a bizarre place of failed dreams set in a landscape of exoticism and eclectic, fantastic architecture.

West’s novel examines, almost clinically, the deleterious results of mass culture—the “Hollywood Myth”—on individual and group identity. Sustained by celebrity and fantasy, the characters appear solipsistic and frivolous, but on deeper levels they seethe with anger and bitterness. In the novel’s climax, the narrator describes a scene of orgiastic mob violence and sexual assault in a movie palace: “They were savage and
bitter, especially the middle-aged and the old, and had been made so by boredom and resentment.”

West’s lacerating vision of Hollywood was fueled by his negative views of uncontrolled capitalism and consumerism and their ability to manipulate the American masses—a favorite theme of Depression-era writers. His Hollywood is a land not of golden dreams, but of nightmarish fantasies, a view that Billy Wilder adopted in his acid-etched Sunset Boulevard (1950), with a young writer corrupted and then killed by silent-screen star Norma Desmond. While West used exaggeration and fantasy to drive home his dark vision, there is no doubt that his sharp eye discerned much of truth about movie land.

—LEB

115.

In his daybook for October 24, 1932, Edward Weston (1886-1958) wrote that “for these last three months I have ‘lived’ this book, literally.” His complete preoccupation was selecting 39 photographs from hundreds made in the 1920s and 30s, mostly with his 8 x 10-inch view camera. These images reflected his redefined aesthetic of photography. During this period Weston transformed himself into a “realist,” taking detailed, finely-focused photographs of shells, trees, vegetables, rocks, and many other objects, along with portraits. His work represented the beginning of photography’s acceptance as a modern art. Merle Armitage, who designed this book and was a modern art devotee, wrote that Weston’s first concern was with “manifestations of basic form.” José Rodriguez, who perceptively critiqued Weston’s work, called it his pursuit to define “the spiritual unity of a form.”

This was Edward Weston’s first book, and is probably the first publication of a California photographer with a truly modern aesthetic. (Walter Arensberg, a Los Angeles resident and one of the great collectors of modern art, advised Weston on this project.) One of the issues with this landmark work, which did not go unnoticed by Ansel Adams, is the poor quality of the printed reproductions. In fact, it would be another forty or so years before a publisher would do full justice to the technical quality of Weston’s penetrating and artistic images. —AJ
The United States assumed control of California in 1848, and in 1849 the Gold Rush caused the greatest emigration in the country’s history. In spite of these important events, however, the topography of California at that time was still largely unknown. While there were coastal maps drawn in the eighteenth century by explorers such as the comte de La Pérouse, Frederick Beechey, Eugène Duflot de Mofras, and George Vancouver (Zamorano 80, #49, 4, 38, and 77 respectively), and the landmark “Map of Oregon and Upper California Taken from the Surveys of John Charles Frémont (Zamorano 80, #39) and Other Authorities, Drawn by Preuss,” much of the interior remained unexplored.

Carl I. Wheat (1892-1966) reviews a great number of maps drawn in the Gold Rush period, focusing on 323 that show the development of the country’s knowledge of California’s topography mostly between 1848 and 1857. Although the book contains only 26 plates, all the maps have a full description including size, content, and a brief discussion of why each is important. Wheat’s study is not exhaustive, but its scholarship is exacting. Only 300 copies of this Grabhorn edition were printed, and most of them were quickly purchased by libraries and collectors. In 1995 a much-needed reprint was brought out by Martino Publishing and Florian Shasky Rare Books, with an informative introduction by California State Librarian Gary F. Kurutz. An important feature of this reprint is the addition of 27 important maps, annotated by Warren Heckrotte, that were not seen or noted by Carl Wheat. —WGD

Today the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex near San Pedro is the third busiest in the world. In the 1880s few could have foreseen that this
THE
FREE HARBOR CONTEST
AT LOS ANGELES

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LONG FIGHT WAGED BY THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TO SECURE A HARBOR LOCATED AT A POINT OPEN TO COMPETITION

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries."—Julius Caesar.

BY CHARLES DWIGHT WILLARD

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
KINGSBURY-BARRIS & NEUMANN COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
JULY, 1899
port would be so important; in fact, many would have thought there would be no port there at all.

In the 1860s Los Angeles was a landlocked town with no railroads and no developed port. Phineas Banning recognized the need for an outlet to the sea, and in 1869 he built a shortline railway from Los Angeles to the San Pedro area to give the town an access to the ocean. In 1876 the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in Los Angeles and purchased this shortline railroad. Having a monopoly, Southern Pacific charged high freight rates and maintained them until the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad broke open the market. Even after rates from Los Angeles to the East dropped, Southern Pacific maintained exorbitant rates on their shortline from Los Angeles to San Pedro. In response, the local citizens in Los Angeles built a second shortline to Santa Monica. However, when the local business community did not support this line, it too was sold to Southern Pacific. In addition to purchasing the Los Angeles-Santa Monica rail line, Southern Pacific bought all the land along the shoreline in Santa Monica, which gave them a monopoly at a Santa Monica harbor.

The United States needed an outlet to Asia, and Los Angeles was the closest potential port to the Far East. This was particularly important to the southern states, since their only alternatives for shipping off the West Coast were the more northerly ports of San Francisco and Seattle. The federal government had a strong interest in, and was prepared to fund, a port to serve Los Angeles. Southern Pacific favored Santa Monica because of its monopoly there; by contrast, the citizens of Los Angeles favored San Pedro because it was a “free port” where other railroads could obtain fair rail rates. A contest for funds ensued, pitting Collis P. Huntington and the Southern Pacific Railroad against the citizens and business interests in Los Angeles.

Charles Dwight Willard (1866-1914), a newspaper editor, tells this story in a brisk editorial style in The Free Harbor Contest at Los Angeles. Ultimately nearly every prominent citizen in Los Angeles in the 1890s took part in the contest. After nearly a decade of wrangling, and in spite of Huntington’s lobbying, the citizens and San Pedro prevailed. Work on the Port of Los Angeles began at San Pedro in 1899.

—WGD

After contracting tuberculosis at twenty-six, Charles Dwight Willard (1866-1914) left his native Chicago for Southern California, eventually settling in Los Angeles. During periods of remission he worked for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, where he was thoroughly involved with the commercial end of city and county business. On the side, he financed the 1894 beginning of the monthly journal The Land of Sunshine (see item 58), for which he and his wife wrote much of the material for the first six issues.

Drawing on a variety of sources, the lengthy narrative of The Herald’s History of Los Angeles City focuses on many of the events that took place in Los Angeles and surrounding areas from Spanish times to 1900. Its first 33 chapters range from the beginnings of the city in “Sons of the Soil” and “The Mission System” to “The Americans Enter Los Angeles” and “Los Angeles at its Worst,” which characterizes the city between 1850 and 1870 as the toughest in the nation. The high level of violence during this era is indicated by several quotations from newspaper articles, such as one from The Southern Californian of March 7, 1855: “Last Sunday night was a brisk one for killing. Four men were shot and killed and several wounded in shooting affrays.” He thoroughly covers the Chinatown massacre of October 24, 1871, which resulted in over twenty Chinese being beaten and put to death.

The final three chapters are of special importance because Willard could write of the events at first hand, or virtually so. “The Epoch of the Boom” describes the arrival of thousands of newcomers by the newly completed railway lines, many seeking health or recreation, but many more—speculators among them—hoping to turn a quick dollar. “Thousands of acres of farms within the city limits were laid out in residence tracts, and sold off to people that proposed to make Los Angeles their home. In the beginning such lots were to be had at $200 to $300, which yielded a handsome profit to the owner, as he got five city lots out of an acre of ground that cost him originally perhaps $50.”

“The Reorganization” charts the beginnings of the modern city of Los Angeles, with the coming of paved streets, a sewer system, street cars, and an electrical system. “The last horse car disappeared from
the city in 1897, when the Main Street line ... adopted the new power.” Along with the good things there were also some bad, such as con men and professional scalawags, rogues always looking for an easy dollar. “A man who came within one vote of being elected chief of police is now in the California penitentiary for life.”

“The Modern City” covers the decade from 1890 to 1900, during which the city doubled its population to 102,000. Along with the rest of the nation, Los Angeles did not escape economic recession, but the hard times did not affect its population as harshly. The unemployed, for instance, were put to work on park projects with funds raised by public subscription. Willard gives much credit for this and other work to the Chamber of Commerce, whose membership was not confined to men with established businesses, but open to all who were interested in the advancement of the city. Much of this chapter details efforts to construct the deep-water port at San Pedro that ultimately resulted in the Port of Los Angeles, a vital link in connecting Los Angeles to the rest of the world.

—GJV

In 1937, with funding from the Guggenheim Foundation, Edward Weston (1886-1958) began a two-year project of photographing scenic California and several areas outside the state. His consort was the young and beautiful writer Charis Wilson (1914-2009). The transport was “Heimy,” a Ford V-8 sedan. The mode of living was camping and Depression-era frugality.

Wilson kept a diary, rewritten for this publication, of Weston’s work and the experiences of the trip. Her account is detailed and full of anecdotes, giving an insightful view of the ’30s and of the artist at work. Far too few Weston images—64 in total—accompany the text, but one cannot fail to be impressed by the clarity of his vision and by his gift for capturing the diverse forms of nature on film. Weston made 1,400 negatives during the Guggenheim period. This photographic legacy by one of America’s great photographers highlights what makes California’s landscapes exceptional.

—AJ
The drama of the mighty Colorado River breaching its banks and unleashing a torrent of flood waters that created the Salton Sea is vividly described by Harold Bell Wright (1872-1944).

The theme of irrigation as a life-force for Southern California, especially its deserts, is served well by many non-fiction accounts, but bibliographer E.I. Edwards called *The Winning of Barbara Worth* the “outstanding novel on the reclamation of the Imperial Valley.” Through the pen of Wright, the enterprise of reclamation and city building in the Imperial Valley became a tale of heroes and villains that sold more than 175,000 copies in the two years after its publication. By 1922, 2.8 million copies had reached 10 million readers. Set in the progressive era and focused upon profit and loss, idealism and cynicism, the story is presented from the viewpoint of Jefferson Worth, a religious and upright entrepreneur. Worth is based on William F. Holt, the founding father of the Imperial Valley and a close friend of Harold Bell Wright.

Wright conceived his novel as a sermon or parable on the “ministry of capital.” As the story begins, banker Worth adopts an orphan girl, a heroine modeled after Holt’s own daughter. By the time she grows into her twenties, the vivacious, intelligent, and engaging Barbara Worth speaks fluent Spanish, rides horseback upon the desert, and has four men in her life: her foster-father Worth, the savior of private capital; a mystical utopian who sees the desert in terms of a new moral order based on irrigation; a surveyor in love with Barbara; and a New York engineer scouting reclamation projects for Eastern interests. The message at the end of the tale provides an insight into desert thinking and prefigures the environmental concerns that grew ever more imperative in the century to come. As Lawrence Clark Powell noted in *Land of Fiction*, Wright’s novel is the first to tell the public what water means to Southern California, “and that ruin lies both in too much and too little.” Wright’s own assessment of the challenge is clear: “The Desert waited, silent, hot, and fierce in its desolation, holding its treasures under the seal of death against the coming of the strong ones.” —LEB
Often as Barbara sat looking over that great basin her heart cried out to know the secret it held.
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Zamorano Select was designed and produced in an edition of 250 copies by Peter Rutledge Koch with the assistance of Jonathan Gerken. The text face, Quadraat, designed by Fred Smeijers, combines Renaissance elegance with contemporary Dutch ideas on construction and form.