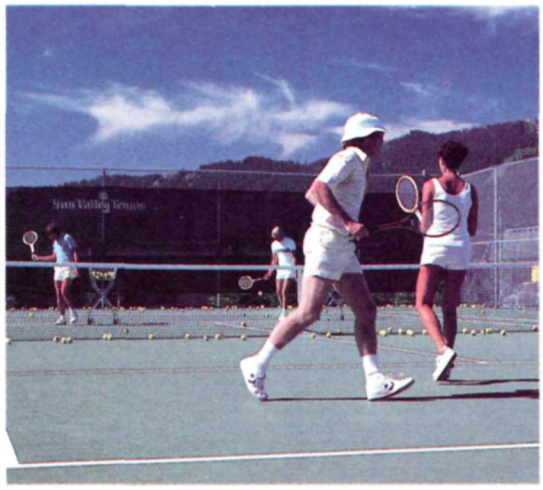
# American West

The land and its people

May/June 1984 $3

## Cape Alava yields Indian treasures
## A new look at Laura Wilder's Little Houses
## Marshal Wyatt Earp goes to Hollywood



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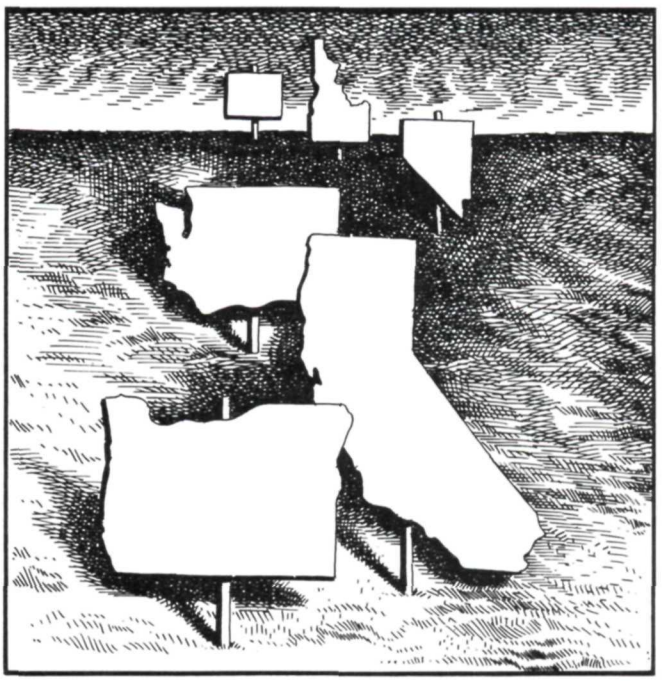

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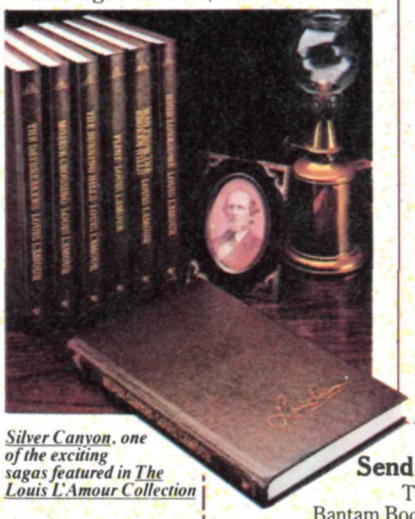

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May/June 1984 Vol. XXI, No. 3

# American West

PAGE 52 PHOTO BY JOAN NEARY

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PAGE 22 PHOTO BY RUTH KIRK



PHOTO BY RUTH KIRK

Cover

This dramatic figure stares imperiously across the centuries, one of the treasures recovered from an ancient Indian village at Cape Alava in northwestern Washington state. A finial on a wooden club, the carving is an example of the strong influence of art in the daily lives of the Makah tribe, whose men braved the waters off this stormy coast to hunt whales in their small boats. Stemming from a chance discovery by backpackers on the beach, the archeological dig at Cape Alava has unearthed numerous layers of the village of Ozette, the oldest one dating back about 2,000 years. Enjoy the story of this dramatic discovery that uncovered "the greatest treasure trove of Indian artifacts ever found on the West Coast."

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Dolls of these costumed dancers, made by Hopi men, are used to educate the young about different Kachinas. The challenge of obtaining these dolls has inspired collectors worldwide. Because the Hopi tribe is small and quite remote, high quality Kachina dolls have been limited and costly. But now, through an *exclusive agreement* we are able to offer these hand-painted, highly detailed bisque porcelain Kachina figurines by internationally known award-winning Hopi artists Lowell Talashoma and Neil David.

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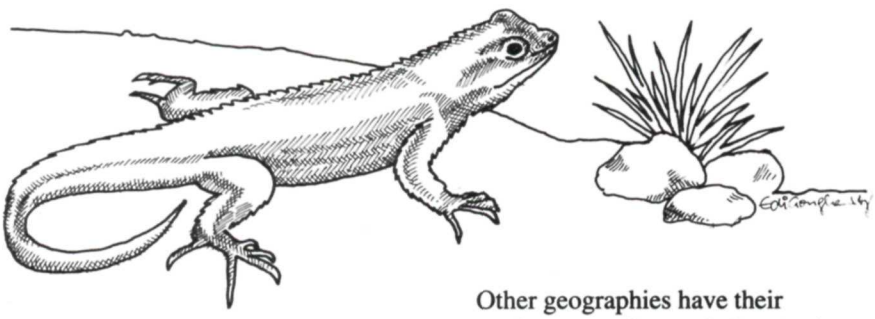
# View from the West



Other geographies have their emerging groundhogs, their returning geese, and their nesting swallows as harbingers of Spring, but here where we are, just below the Colorado Plateau in the highlands of the Sonoran Desert, the first creature of Spring is the lizard. I spotted my first Spring lizard in a place called Soldier Canyon on the south face of the Catalina Mountains this year.

Soldier Canyon got its name, I'm told, because it was the trail that cavalry soldiers of the 1870s to 1880s used to ride into the high country from Fort Lowell to escape the heat and take a rest between intermittent campaigns against Apache Indians. The trail is no longer a popular route into the mountains for backpackers and hikers; so it makes a fine place for an afternoon walkabout to escape the small print of magazine editing and publishing.

Spring lizard was a little, gray-green, camouflaged fellow who didn't require a lot of sunshine on his rock to inspire him to climb out of the underworld and into the heat of the day. How long he'd been performing his lizard-ritual-pushups atop the hot rock somewhere in the tail of my gaze, before I took direct notice of him, I cannot say. When I did finally focus on him, though, it was as if he had been working away on me for a long time. It was as though he had been using desert sign-language with his little ritual, subliminally contacting me through some unknown eye of my own; for once I took notice of him, a whole new world popped into focus all around me. Just as a warped slide in a projector, falling into the correct focal plane of lens and light, will produce a picture on a wall out of what was a misshapen blur of odd lines and fuzzy colors, suddenly I could see the vivid scene outside my head.

With Spring lizard as conductor atop his podium of rock, the sweep of the canyon came into view: a red-barked manzanita bush hung with miniature, bell-like flowers stood out behind the lizard, a patch of desert verbena purpled the sand between my feet, and some unknown, little, yellow flowers targeted the cracks in the canyon wall across the way. The space overhead came aloud with the cries of birds as though some hidden hand had turned on a sound track at lizard's bidding: "he sees; now let him hear and smell!"

The ordinarily dry creek bed began to burble and twist its way past in a show of sound and sparkle, massaging the slick granite rock with aromas of wet herbs. The water itself was shockingly cold: snowmelt that ran the fast course from the mountains somewhere out of view overhead down to the great, sloping, alluvial bajadas where it was absorbed into the dry desert floor.

Thus, Spring lizard and I found ourselves companions for an afternoon in a kind of natural terrarium: a singular place between mountain and desert that holds a secret formula for first capturing Spring, a right wrinkle in earth's body where canyon and compass are oriented so that here the angle of the sun brings the full season ahead of its alotted time elsewhere in the land.

Even as I put these words down, of course, Spring has climbed out of Soldier Canyon and is greening her way northward into other hollows and canyons of the land, finding those other cups of the warm stuff of flowering, breeding, and the rebirthing of everything living of leaf and flesh, moving other creatures from their winter lairs and dreams.

It all began this year, I like to imagine, in that little twist in Soldier Canyon. It all began, I like to imagine, with little Spring lizard emerging and catching the attention of a man who had almost forgotten to take notice of the season.

Tom Pew

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# On the Trail of Chief Joseph

## by James P. Jackson

*Famous as an able leader of his people, Chief Joseph led his band of Nez Perce through the wilds of the Northwest in search of freedom. Widely publicized by the press, he soon became a symbol of the "noble red man."*

This was a pilgrimage into Indian history, a search for the least-known portion of the legendary Chief Joseph trail. Across the Yellowstone backcountry, then through the rugged Absaroka wilderness, in the Shoshone National Forest, my son Keith and I pursued that lost trail with backpacks for more than one hundred miles.

In 1877 a sizeable group of Nez Perce fled from their homes in the Wallowa Valley in northeastern Oregon to escape United States army forces that were attempting to move them to a reservation. Nearly a thousand strong under the leadership of Chief Joseph, and trailing a large herd of Appaloosa horses, the Indians escaped eastward and outwitted the federal forces across 1,600 miles of unfamiliar mountainous terrain. Their tragic reward for seeking freedom in Canada was final defeat and capture in northern Montana, just forty miles short of their goal.

Part of that epic flight was across Yellowstone National Park. With General O. O. Howard in eager pursuit, the Nez Perce passed through the west entrance of the Park on August 23, 1877. Either they raced up the Madison River or hastened directly over heavily forested Fountain Plateau to the mouth of what is fittingly named Nez Perce Creek. Keith and I made our pilgrimage a century later, beginning on July 4. We chose the Plateau route to avoid the riverside tourist highway.

When we started after lunch, the sun was hot, and we nearly emptied our canteens by late afternoon. Stopping to cook dinner on the Plateau, we fretted about water. But over the infernal buzzing of mosquitoes, we soon heard the rasping calls of tiny frogs. The pesky insects had hinted of water; now the frogs led us to a pool of tea-colored snowmelt—not the clearest brew but quite drinkable. After eating, we packed up and hiked another mile before tenting for the night, a practice we would follow nightly to elude any grizzly bears that might sniff our camp cooking.

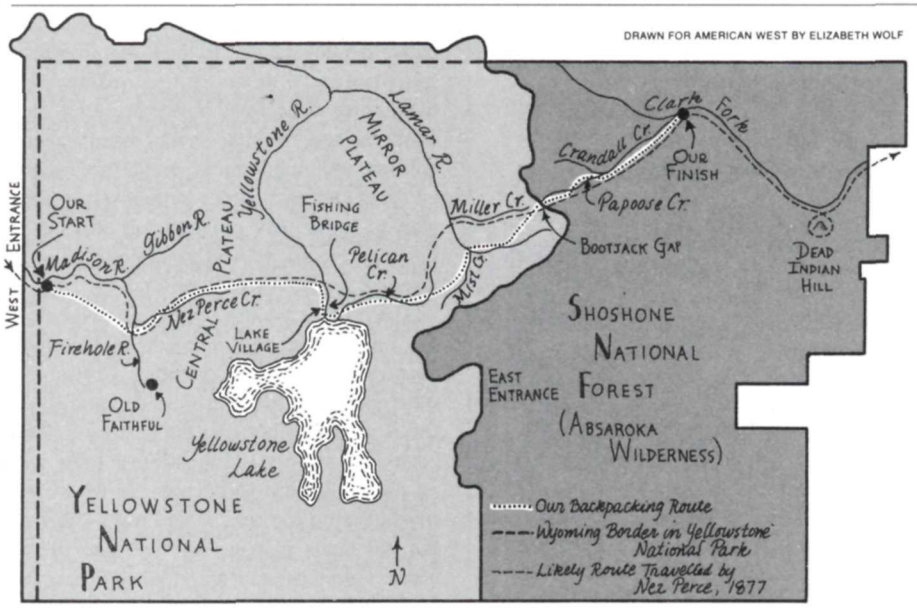
Next morning, reinforced with frog-pond tea, we moved on to Nez Perce Creek and waded through its delicious, crystal-clear water. Crossing the Park's loop highway brought us back into the realm of history. There, a large sign told how the Indians had captured a prospector named John Shively and forced him to guide them to the Yellowstone River; also, how they detained a party of frightened tourists. It was mind-boggling to note that all this happened five years *after* official designation of Yellowstone as this country's first national park.

Nez Perce is a lovely creek. In July its wet meadows are a tapestry of wildflowers, and the surrounding area abounds in wildlife. We tented close by and were awakened by the bugling of elk. Though General Howard chased the Indians upstream with a forced march of his troops, in our case Park rangers kept us moving with warnings that the entire Central Plateau was prime habitat for grizzlies. We traversed it in one day, passing two herds of elk and one of bison, plus numerous signs of *Ursus horribilis*. And yet, probably because we stayed together and carried a noisy cowbell, not one bear did we see. The first lap of our trek ended at the Yellowstone River. After two days of resting at Lake Village, we were eager to push on.

After Chief Joseph's people outdistanced General Howard across the Central Plateau, they crossed the Yellowstone into country unfamiliar even to John Shively, who by this time had been released. Here the Indians lost their pursuers; their exact route eastward to the Clark Fork, where they were next discovered, is debated to this day.

We crossed the Yellowstone the easiest way, over Fishing Bridge. Keith and I hiked up Pelican Creek and crossed a divide to Mist Creek that led us to the Lamar River. The Nez Perce had travelled in late summer when streams were low; we did so in early July after a winter of particularly heavy snow, when streams were swollen. We found the Lamar quite turbid, like a glacial stream, and we each gripped a pole for tripod security while wading across.

According to some historians, the Nez Perce crossed the Lamar downstream from the point where we crossed, then went up Miller Creek to the Absaroka crest. Park rangers warned that we would not have that option because Miller Creek, partly entrenched in a canyon, would be impassable with high water. Consequently, we decided to go up the Lamar, leave the established trails, and make our way by compass to the Absaroka crest where we would find a pass known as Bootjack Gap. The most visible pass over the high crest, this is very possibly the route taken by Chief Joseph and his people. The next morning at the Gap, we noticed a national park boundary registry box. In it was a notebook with the last entry




dated August 18 of the previous year. Obviously, this country was as wild as in the days of Chief Joseph.

We still had some thirty miles to go down Papoose Creek, which proved to be a rock-filled funnel of melting snow. The terrain was so rough that we wondered how the Nez Perce ever managed to travel such wild, rocky country with all their horses, squaws, and children. At one place the creek led into a box canyon, forcing us to back out and go around; on the ridge above we became temporarily lost in snowbanks. After two days of skirting downstream, we finally reached the last of many stream crossings at Crandall Creek. It was so high and turbid that we dared not cross without a belay, but fortunately we had a stout rope just for that purpose. Leaving the icy water behind us, we ended our pilgrimage one hour later at the ranger station where Crandall Creek runs into Clark Fork.

Allowing for deviations, we had spent eleven days traversing the wildest portion of the Chief Joseph trail. This was on foot during the flush of early summer snowmelt, not with horses when streams were at an ebb. Yet we had no reason to feel smug; this was especially brought home to us later, when we visited the Nez Perce surrender site in northern Montana. The 1,600-mile odyssey of those Indians was remarkable enough; what they suffered in defeat accentuated our humbling experience.

**James P. Jackson** *is a free-lance writer and photographer in Marthasville, Missouri. He is the author of* Pulse of the Forest, *an American Forestry Association publication.*

DRAWN FOR AMERICAN WEST BY ELIZABETH WOLF

# Down-Home Molasses

## by Kandi Harrison

On the O'Dell farm in Elkhorn, Missouri, we know molasses. Making it from sorghum—a grass related to sugarcane but easier to grow in a temperate zone—has been a tradition in our family since 1910, when my great-grandfather David O'Dell bought his first cane mill.

In those days, several farmers in the area grew small crops of sorghum. Great-grandfather's mill was the only one around. He mounted it on a wagon frame, and at harvest time in the fall took it from farm to farm. The horses that pulled the wagon also powered the mill. They were attached to a long pole called a sweep, which was in turn attached to the mill. As the animals walked in a circle around the mill, three heavy rollers crushed the murky juice from the cane. Because the horses required a little encouragement, the neighborhood children got to ride them round and round. In the 1930s this happy merry-go-round was finally replaced by the power of a new gasoline engine.

Today, Elkhorn is a small dot on the map of Ray County, Missouri—just east of Excelsior Springs. A once-famous mineral-bath industry in Excelsior Springs has all but disappeared now, and old coal mines that made things hum in the county during the late 1800s are nearly exhausted. At present, feed grains (like some varieties of sorghum) and livestock are the county's principal products. My parents, Ralph and Darlene O'Dell, raise cattle and hogs. I like to think that they have held onto the best of the old ways—butchering their own hogs, grinding their own sausage, making savory head cheese, chitlins and many more good foods—and carrying out each process themselves from start to finish. My grandmother still makes her own lye soap. And molasses-making is an event for the whole family.

The process we use is little different from the open-kettle boiling methods employed centuries ago, when Columbus, Cortes, and other explorers first introduced sugarcane to the Americas. Choosing the best cane heads each year, we dry and then thresh them with an old washboard and screen. In May, with my father on the tractor and my mother on the old horse planter, we seed one to two acres. One year, my grandfather Ernest and his brothers seeded ten acres. They worked long and hard that year—from four or five in the morning until nine or ten at night—and produced about 2,000 gallons of molasses.

By early September, as the plants mature, the cool weather raises the sucrose. When the crop is ready, we—like most of the sugarcane-growing world today—harvest it by hand. Using walnut paddles, we strip the leaves from the stalks, cut the cane down, lop off the heads, and stack the stalks in piles. It takes us about eight hours to cut enough cane to produce juice that will fill an eight-by-three-foot, ten-inch-deep cooking box. Then we load the cane into our truck and take it to our mill—a 1903 model from the Cincinnati Iron Works that is powered by our tractor.

The next morning we start grinding. While we take turns hand-feeding the cane into the mill, the three big rollers crush the stalks and squeeze out the juice, which is strained through a clean burlap bag into a tub. From there it passes through a pipe and is strained again through a muslin sack before flowing into the tin-bottomed box. Meanwhile, one of us, using a pitchfork, removes the crushed stalks, or pummies, from behind the mill. Inside the molasses house a long-standing, good-sized dugout area has been prepared to create a furnace. Here the box of juice is set upon a wood-fire.

During the long hours while the juice is cooking, many of our friends and neighbors stop to visit and watch. My grandfather, who has made molasses since his father first bought a mill, is always there to stir the juice. His brother George used to come over

and whittle while he watched, carving little paddles that we used to taste the syrup. Impurities that boil to the top we remove with a skimmer—a pan with holes in it that is attached to a long pole—and throw them into a bucket.

When the molasses makes threads off the pan instead of falling in clumps, it is done. Then we lift the box off the furnace onto rollers on the ground. After the syrup has cooled we dip it into gallon containers. When it is all canned up, we use our little wooden paddles to "lick the box." It is very sweet and sticky, and my three-year-old daughter, Carrie, really enjoys it. I guess she will be the next one to start helping. The one-gallon containers are sold to friends and neighbors who have been on our molasses list for many years (although the family once sold it at a circus, three buckets for a dollar—a real bargain).

These are our two favorite recipes for using the molasses, but the best way to eat molasses is to mix a little butter in a small pile of the syrup and then spread it on hot biscuits or cornbread.

## Gingerbread

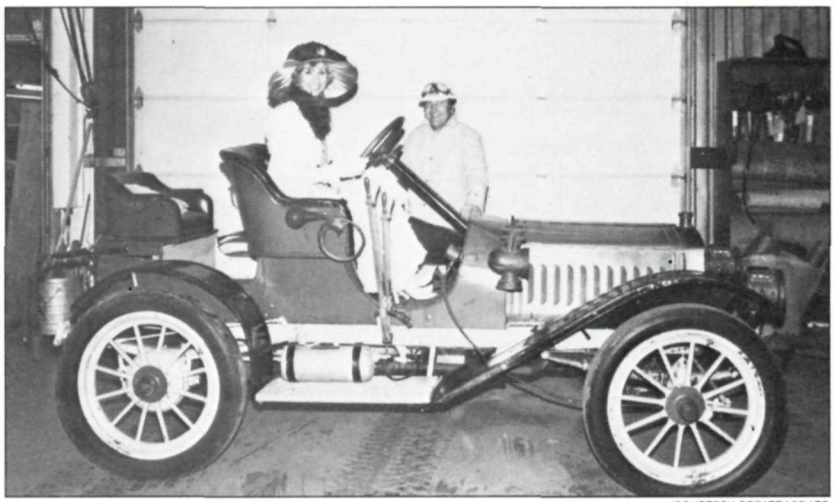
Cream ½ c. shortening with ½ c. sugar. Add 1 egg and ½ c. molasses. Sift together 1½ c. flour, ¾ tsp. salt, ¾ tsp. soda, ½ tsp. ginger, ½ tsp. cinnamon. Add the creamed mixture alternately with ½ c. boiling water. Bake in a greased and lightly floured 8" x 8" x 2" pan at 350° for 35 to 40 minutes.

## Molasses Taffy

Butter the sides of a heavy 3 qt. saucepan. In it combine 2 c. sugar, 1 c. molasses, and ¼ c. water. Heat slowly, stirring constantly till sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil, add 2 tsp. vinegar, cook to soft-crack stage (270° on candy thermometer). Remove from heat. Add 2 T. butter and sift in ½ tsp. soda. Stir to mix. Pour into a buttered 15½" x 10½" x 1" pan. Use spatula to turn edges to center. Cool till comfortable to handle. Butter hands. Gather taffy into a ball and pull with fingertips. When it is a light tan color and hard to pull, cut into fourths. Pull each piece into a long strand ½-inch thick. With buttered scissors, snip into bite-sized pieces.

**Kandi Harrison** *of Elkhorn, Missouri, participates in her family's long tradition of molasses-making.*

# Western Lookout



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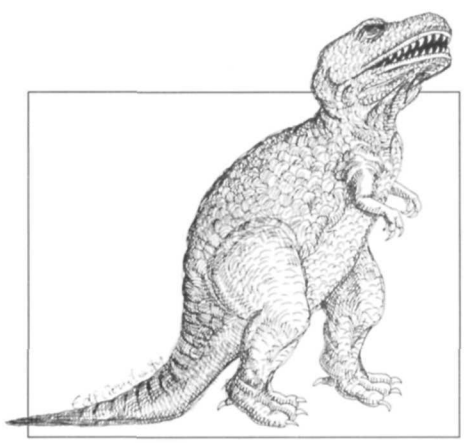
## Back on the Road Again

In the spring of 1983, the lure of adventure—and a purse of $235,000—drew vintage car buffs out on the roads with their prized possessions for a one-of-a-kind, 3,000-mile, time-speed-distance rally from Anaheim, California, to Indianapolis, Indiana. Again this year, antique autos more properly suited to museum display are being revved up and polished in preparation for this Great American Race. The response has been so furious that models built after 1936 have had to be eliminated from the competition. The range of makes represented is still wide, however. There are plenty of Fords and Packards, a few Cadillacs, Rolls-Royces, Overlands, Peugots, Stutzs, and Auburns, as well as antique Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

Many of those who participated last year are returning for more of the challenge—which is not to arrive *first*, but to arrive at exactly the right time at a series of stations along a predetermined route. If you're late, or early, you lose points. David Hetzel of Albuquerque, New Mexico, drove a 1939 Buick four-door sedan in last year's race. Hetzel assures us that driving at a constant, prescribed speed all day for a week—even with a navigator—is physically and mentally grueling. But he wouldn't miss it. And, in view of certain rule changes (like tamper-proof tape fixed over the odometers, and the absence of digital time pieces and calculators), he expects this year's "seat-of-the-pants" race to be considerably more difficult. Jennifer Goodhart (AKA Ginni Withers of Santa Ana, California) adds that the excitement of the whole affair heavily outweighs the fatigue. In 1983 she drove a support vehicle for her husband, but this year, she wants more. This year she will be driving the 1906 Mitchell roadster with which she is pictured, above.

Although each car has its own starting time and set speed, the vehicles run together rather compactly in a group and might pass a given intersection a moment apart for an hour or two. It's a parade of chrome and color passing through small towns and big cities, and for the drivers, no small part of the charm of this race seems to be the warm and festive receptions they are given along the route. On one occasion last year an old man with tears welling in his eyes approached Ginni Withers's husband saying, "I never thought I'd ever see this kind of car again." The nine-day endurance test, sponsored by Dallas-based Interstate Battery System of America, leaves Los Angeles May 17 and travels through Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Amarillo, Dallas, Wichita, St. Louis, and Chicago, ending in Indianapolis on May 25. For more information contact LeRoi Tex Smith, Public Relations, Greatrace Ltd., 9304 Forest Lane, Dallas, Texas 75243.

**The Women's West.** Did women on the Western frontier share the democratizing force that helped keep American society free? This and other investigations into the history of women in the West will be presented and discussed July 11 through 14 at *The Women's West 1984*, a conference cosponsored by the Institute of the American West and the Coalition for Western Women's History and Culture. Zeroing in on specific aspects of the woman's place in the Western experience, presentations will contribute ideas and insights to help get women's history in secondary- and post-secondary-school classrooms. Those who cannot attend the free presentations in Park City, Utah, may benefit from tapes and prepared radio programs to be distributed after the conference. *The Women's West Teaching Guide*, based on material from a 1983 conference, will be available in late 1984. In years to come, we may find that children are teaching their parents and grandparents a revised history of the American West. For more information on the conference, tapes, or texts, contact Marcia Jones, project coordinator, Institute of the American West, P.O. Box 656, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353.

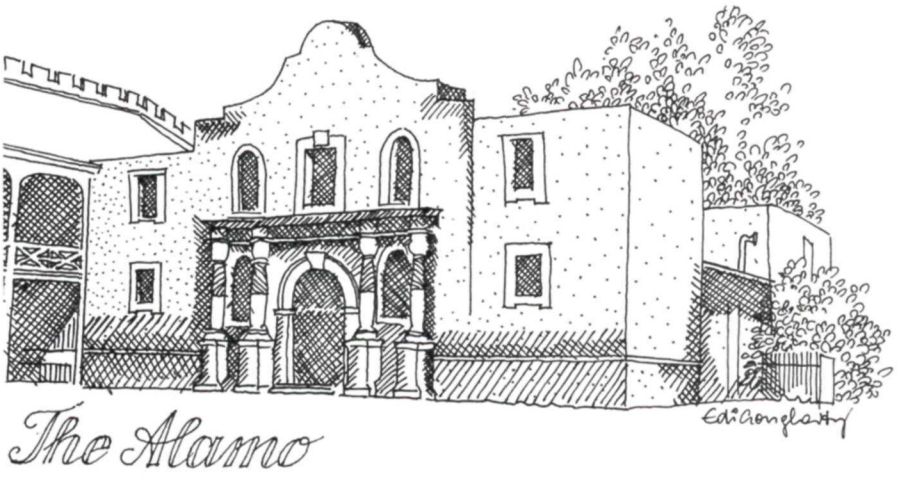


**Reptilian Review.** Over the last few years, the cottonlands of northwest Texas have been yielding an unusual harvest. A team from Texas Tech University has been digging up old bones and acquiring new knowledge from a quarry in Post, a small town not far from Lubbock. From a mass burial site, team members have uncovered the skeleton of an adult *Postosuchus*, along with bones of several juveniles and babies. Named for the site of its discovery, this reptile of the Mesozoic Era was "nearly identical to a miniature tyrannosaurus." Except for its size (it was thirteen feet long and weighed a mere six hundred pounds), it differed significantly from the tyrannosaurus only in the structure of its ankles. Mike Nickells, of the Texas Tech team, tells us the similarity is striking considering a nearly sixty-million-year gap that separated them.

Other fossil finds in the Post quarry paleontological cornucopia include the jaw of the earliest-known snake, the oldest lizard yet found (it resembled a modern-day iguana), and a microsaur. Until this discovery, the microsaur, a small mammal-like reptile, was thought to have become extinct during the Permian period (late Paleozoic Era), millions of years earlier. The grouping of the *Postosuchus* skeletons is also of note because it suggests that this species had a family-like social structure—an unusual characteristic for reptiles. Hoping for fresh finds, the Texas Tech team, under paleontologist Sankar Chatterjee, expects to return to Post again this summer.

**Ten faces.** On a red-rock canyon wall in the Needles district of southeastern Utah's Canyonlands National Park, the colors and shapes of a thirteen-face, Anasazi pictograph survived centuries of exposure to the elements. Late last summer three of the thirteen faces—set apart from and slightly lower than the others—were washed away by flash floods. To prevent further deterioration of these ancient paintings, the resource department of Canyonlands is assessing the possibility of diverting the wash bed or constructing a reinforced embankment in front of the canyon wall. Luckily, the thirteen-face pictograph is one of a few that had been documented by photographs and drawings previous to the flooding.

**Remember the Alamo?** That famous and revered symbol of courage in Texas's fight for independence is visited by thousands of tourists each year. In spite of its apparent popularity, there has been discussion recently about making changes to enhance its appeal. Suggestions, like adding a palisade fence with cannons (similar to one that once existed on the grounds) and possibly restoring a second floor once used for barracks, have been relatively well received by Centro 21 (San Antonio's downtown development task force) and the Daughters of the Texas Republic, appointed guardians of the Alamo. But both groups feel that closing off traffic on adjoining streets, a measure recommended by a Chicago consultant, is just asking too much.




Most people are probably unaware that the facade we now associate with that famous site did not exist at the time of the battle of the Alamo. Originally intended as a chapel in the mission complex, the structure partially collapsed during its construction and remained a roofless ruin through the 1836 battle. Not until the second half of the nineteenth century did the United States Army add a roof and the current facade.

**Crying wolf?** Approximately 1,200 eastern timber wolves are now living in the forests of northern Minnesota. This group is the last viable community of this species in the contiguous United States: with the growth and spread of human populations, all but a scattered few have disappeared from other areas in the lower 48 states. And, although the eastern timber wolf is officially labelled a "threatened" species by the United States Department of the Interior, in 1983 the same department proposed a limited hunting season that would have allowed hunters to trap between 50 and 160 wolves per year. This number, in addition to the 250 or more taken by poaching each year and the 50 or so trapped by federal rangers under a program designed to protect farmers from livestock losses, could easily amount to one third or more of the wolves in Minnesota.

In response to the new regulations, environmental groups (including the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society) filed suit against the Interior Department in the federal district court in Minneapolis. The presiding judge supported the environmentalist protest, and for the time being eastern timber wolves will be safe from trophy hunters.

Karlyn Atkinson Berg of Bovey, Minnesota—who has spent the last six years studying timber wolves and following political controversies that have raised the hackles of both farmers and environmentalists—sees the court ruling as a positive step toward a necessary coexistence between man and beast. Although Berg concedes that wolves can be a threat to livestock, she believes that this situation could be controlled without resorting to overkill. She sees the biggest problem today as that of old attitudes—the big-bad-wolf syndrome that has carried over from a different time. One local group in northern Minnesota, whose members would like to see wolf-killing legalized, has produced wolf-facsimile carrying cases. Muzzled and corked, these cases effectively convey their message. In order to combat old prejudices and bring about better ethics toward wild animals, Berg lectures and writes on wolves. She has recently helped with the preparation of a major exhibition, "Wolves and Humans," now at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul. This show, which leaves St. Paul on July 29, is expected to travel to other science and natural history museums around the country.

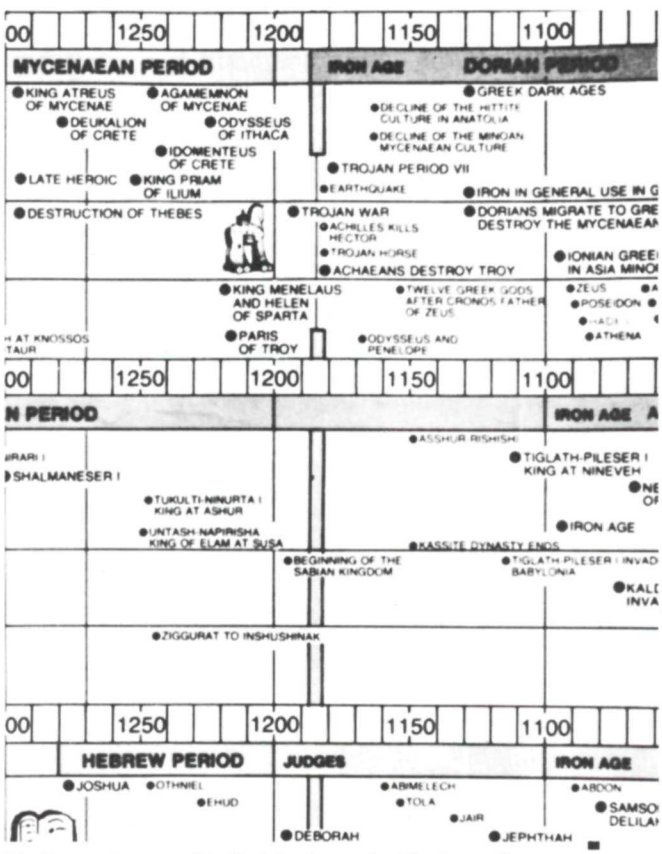
**Some people pay** for the privilege of getting sore and stiff as they slap against a saddle. The Boot Hill Museum in Dodge City, Kansas, counts on such folks, who pay $75 to $175, to enliven their annual historic Longhorn Steer Drive. Each year more than 100 urban and rural cowboys ride side by side along the Old Western Trail, punching a herd of ornery longhorn cattle through the elements to the "wickedest little city in the West." After forty miles of starlit biscuits, festivities cheer the weary drovers at trail's end. This year's drive to keep history alive in the West takes place June 6 through 9.

**Calving in Alaska.** Columbia Glacier, which terminates in Prince William Sound near Valdez, Alaska, has been receding at a steadily increasing rate since 1978. But this year scientists are watching an exceptionally rapid retreat, as well as heavy iceberg calving from its 250-foot-high cliffs. Generally, the Columbia Glacier advances in winter, or at least stays constant, melting down only in summer or fall. But in 1984 the edge of the glacier was retreating as late as January 15. According to Mark F. Meier, who heads Project Glaciology for the United States Geological Survey in Tacoma, Washington, this acceleration is part of a predicted recession which, after several decades, should leave the face of the glacier twenty to twenty-five miles up-stream from where it is now. The forming and discharge of icebergs from the lip of the glacier causes some concern of damage to super-tankers carrying oil from the southern end of the Alaska pipeline at Valdez. Luckily, last year almost all the multi-ton bergs flowed unobtrusively westward, away from the shipping lanes.

Meier assures us that the dramatic recession of the Columbia Glacier is not part of a massive, accelerated glacial melting trend. Although sea level has risen ten to fifteen centimeters over the last century, one half of that rise has been due to "thermal expansion" from warmer water temperatures. The other half, he says, *can* be explained by the melting of glaciers—not of the major ice sheets of the world (Antarctic ice is still growing and Greenland's is holding its own), but of the secondary glacial sheets in Central Asia, the tip of South America, and North America—with the greatest portion of the sea-level rise resulting from the melting of glaciers in the Alaskan ranges. Meier expects the rapid retreat of the Columbia Glacier to continue for five to eight years.

**More maps.** The United States Geological Survey reminds us that topographical maps are good silent guides for hikers, hunters, fishermen, and all lovers of the out-of-doors. USGS maps show shapes and elevations of wilderness landscapes and locate roads, trails, and natural features. Indexes of maps available for lands west of the Mississippi can be obtained by writing the Western Distribution Branch, U.S. Geological Survey, P.O. Box 25286, Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225 (tel. 303-234-3832). For educators, students, and history buffs, another USGS publication maps the physical and cultural territories of Native Americans before the arrival of Europeans on the North American continent. Entitled, "Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas and Linguistic Stocks," this map may be obtained from the above address for $2.50 The title must be included in the order.


# History comes alive. On The History Chart.




The history shown in this block is all contained in the small square indicated on the chart above.

The chart is produced in full color.

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# Letters to the Editor

**Photo disqualified**

One of our readers has called our attention to the fact that the photograph that won second prize in The Land category in our 1983 Photo Contest had been previously published. The photograph submitted by Louis F. DeSerio of twisted rail and broken ties at Rochester, Nevada (on page 49 of our March/April 1984 issue), appeared on page 56 of *A Last Look,* photography by Louis F. DeSerio, text by Glen H. Greenwell, Jr., published by Louis F. DeSerio, Beckwourth, California, in 1979. This disqualifies that photograph in our competition, as eligibility rules plainly state that photographs previously published are not eligible to compete. We regret that this occurred, and we thank our reader for informing us of this circumstance.

**Include us in**

Dear Mr. Josephy,

Having just read your "View from the West" in the March/April AMERICAN WEST, I say a hearty hurrah! For years I have been amazed at the total disregard for the West. We all in the West are subjugated to the Easterners going on and on as though the U.S. stopped at Manhattan. Your views, put on paper, expressed everything I have ever felt.

One word of caution, let's not really let them *know* what we have. As I sit at my dining room table and look over an unspoiled panorama, all I can say is—let 'em guess.

Cathy Elmore
Deer Park, Washington

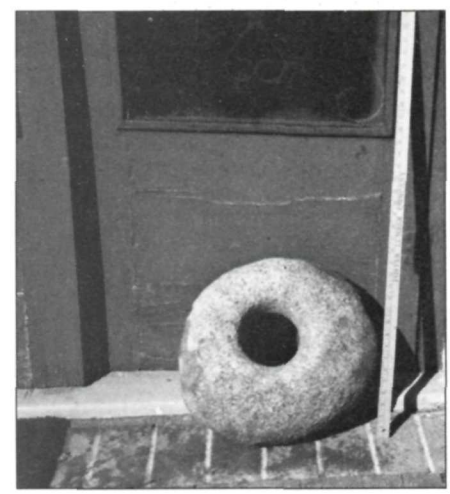
**Mystery stone**

I read with interest your article "Mystery of the Eastern Connection" by Brian McGinty [AMERICAN WEST, November/December 1983]. Because I found a somewhat similar doughnut-shaped stone several years ago, I am wondering if these might have been used by other peoples for other purposes besides Chinese seamen.

I inclose a photo of a 75-pound stone approximately 16 inches in diameter which I discovered on our ranch about 30 miles southeast of Tucson. It was in a creek bed at an elevation of about 3200 feet. I do not believe it could be an over-used metate (Indian grinding stone) because the reverse side is finished the same as that shown in the photo. Obviously a metate would have been discarded if a hole was worn completely through the stone.

I showed this stone to a local archeologist a few days ago, and at first inspection he had no idea as to what purpose it served. Perhaps either you or Mr. McGinty can enlighten me about this.

Henry W. Jackson
Vail, Arizona



AMERICAN WEST *consulted Dr. Bernard L. Fontana, field historian at the University of Arizona Library, for his opinion regarding the mystery stone. His reply follows—Ed.*

I regret to say I have no idea what the "stone doughnut" object is that has been

unearthed by Mr. Jackson. Neither does Julian D. Hayden, a Tucson archeologist with more than four decades' experience in dealing with prehistoric stone artifacts in southern Arizona and northwestern Sonora. Julian's remark: "I've never seen anything like it before."

Mr. Jackson might like to know that many mortars (not metates) were purposely made with a hole in the bottom. This way the mortar could be set on two or three rocks, a basket placed beneath it, and the mortar used as a gyratory crusher. Seeds, corn, or other grains could be ground by rotating a large stone or wooden pestle in the hole, the flour falling through into the basket below. Such gyratory crushers are fairly common in this region, but Mr. Jackson's stone does not at all appear to be one of them.

That it's a Chinese ship's anchor seems unlikely too, doesn't it?

Bernard L. Fontana
Tucson, Arizona

**Keep the caboose**

I am writing to the AMERICAN WEST in regard to the fine article entitled "Farewell to the Caboose" by Philip Hyde [March/April]. I am a retired locomotive engineer off the Southern Pacific with thirty-six years' service as clerk-fireman and engineer. I worked from Yuma to El Paso by way of Phoenix, Arizona.

I can say I am thankful we had the little red caboose, the conductor who was in charge of the train, and two rear brakemen. One rear brakeman's job was to walk back one-half mile when we made an emergency stop, carrying a red flag so he could flag down and stop another train before a collision could occur. The other brakeman walked the train toward the engine, to find the cause of the emergency stop.

How in the world could the engineer from his right-hand side of the cab ever see a hot box on the rear end of a 100 or 200 car train going around a long "S" curve? Impossible even in good weather. I would not pull a throttle on any engine or train unless that caboose, conductor, and brakemen were on the rear end.

Clyde D. Butler
Cross Lanes, West Virginia

Have just read Philip Hyde's "Farewell to the Caboose" in the March/April issue. I never rode the Missouri Pacific Colorado Eagle to Chicago on its way from Denver. It always went to St. Louis when I rode it. Two sets of tracks?

Jeanne A. Witt
Missouri City, Texas

**Cowboys**

One comment made by a letter-writer in your March/April edition had my senses clouded for a minute. She implied that "the real American cowboy was a gentleman" because he did not use profanity. Then it struck me that she really was kidding, using a bit of subtle humor. So I, too, laughed at this very clever approach.

The real American cowboy always did and still does use stinging cuss words powerful enough to wilt tomato plants at fifty paces and debilitate the normal growth of sagebrush at 200 yards. This is why all of this vegetation is stunted.

Art Reid
Yakima, Washington

I would like to answer the concern of two letter-writers that nothing is known about black, Mexican, and Indian cowboys. Aha, and yeah man, any public library with jillions of books on its shelves, has what these good people seek. I think there are hundreds of books dealing with black, Mexican, and Indian cowboys who not only helped win the West, but established their right to work in that category.

Mexican Vaqueros helped John Chisum on his many trail drives, as did vaqueros help many of the far West cattle kings establish their empires. Indian

cowboys rode in rodeos and trained and broke many wild mustangs for their own use or for the cattle kings. My research has shown that the Shoesole spread in northeastern Nevada was cowboyed by all blacks, one of whom, "Henry," was the honcho.

Donald E. Getz
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Arbuckles' and pasties**

I remember the Arbuckle coffee [January/February], and I was just a little tyke. My mother saved the cards, and I still have the one on page 67 for Nevada. It is brittle, yellow with age. I didn't know they were so valuable, as I gave one to a friend who collects cards and has them in card albums.

Regarding the Gourmet & Grub article, "Cornish Pasty: A miner's meal" [November/December 1983], not all pasties were eaten by the Cornish miners. The main diet of English miners used to be mutton stew, and the lady of the house would make the crust without the filling, as she would fill a container with hot mutton stew and place it in a dinner pail.

In Scotland the coal miners carried a beef pasty filled with vegetables, much like an apple dumpling except it was sealed in a pie-like crust and baked.

Ms. Georgie Daugherty
Sonoma, California

**Forestry Building**

I was delighted to see the picture of the Forestry Building in your March/April issue. It so happens that my father, Charles E. Banister, was the foreman in charge of cutting this order of logs for the McCormick Lumber Company at McCormick, Washington. The company town no longer exists, but was located two miles west of the town of Pe Ell, on the road between Chehalis and Raymond on the coast. His crew felled the trees and cut the logs to specified measure, saw them high-leaded to the spar-tree and loaded on log-carrying railroad cars.

The Old Man, as everybody called him, made a special trip to Portland with my mother, to see the Exposition and the use to which "his" logs had been put. He never tired of telling about it.

Manly Banister
Portland, Oregon

**Chisum and Chisholm**

Regarding your March/April 1984 issue, page 70, "Western Snapshots Today": Should we not give John Chisum credit for his long rail and Jinglebob-marked cattle and remember Jesse Chisholm for that long cattle trail and the songs it brought forth? "Woke up one morning," etc. Just keep publishing this terrific magazine.

Fred T. Jacobi
Colorado Springs, Colorado

"Shoe's untied!"

**Early Yellowstone**

I had hoped that I had old snapshots of a trip into Yellowstone National Park in 1914 that might contribute to an article I might have written. At that time automobiles were not permitted to enter the Park. So at Cody, Wyoming, my father engaged a guide and a covered horse-drawn vehicle and another vehicle to haul the luggage and tents for the fourteen-day tour. It was just grand from beginning to end, for our guide knew everything that one person could know about the Park, and gave most freely any information that he had. I have been back to the Park three times since that time, but the former thrill was not there. Too many people, cars, speed, and

climatic changes have altered the Park in many ways, and the sort of guide we had is not available nowadays. Cars were admitted in the Park in 1915. I am glad we went earlier!

Fern Lemaire
Reno, Nevada

**Those wonderful collies**

My husband and I thoroughly enjoyed the article "Hairy Partners" in the November/December 1983 issue of AMERICAN WEST.

I am enclosing an article, "Call of the Wild" by George Milton, which was published some twenty years ago in the *Dillon Tribune,* Dillon, Montana, relating the remarkable feats of a Border-Line Collie named Blackie.

Border Collies are special dogs, there is no doubt.

Mrs. Mervin Kerr
Dillon, Montana

**Protestant Ladder**

I was delighted to see in your January/February 1984 issue the article under Western Lore concerning Mrs. Henry Harmon Spalding's painting, "Protestant Ladder to Heaven." My delight was prompted by the accuracy of the article. The Spaldings were my great-great-grandparents, and many and many are the times I've been irritated by the "historical facts" that seem to have been "researched" in a vacuum.

My direct-Spalding-descendant cousins have sent me a box (a bit smaller than a bread box) full of copies of letters, recollections, and data on this history. And somewhere among my things I have a picture of my mother holding Mrs. Spalding's Protestant Ladder to Heaven as my younger daughter and I stand by.

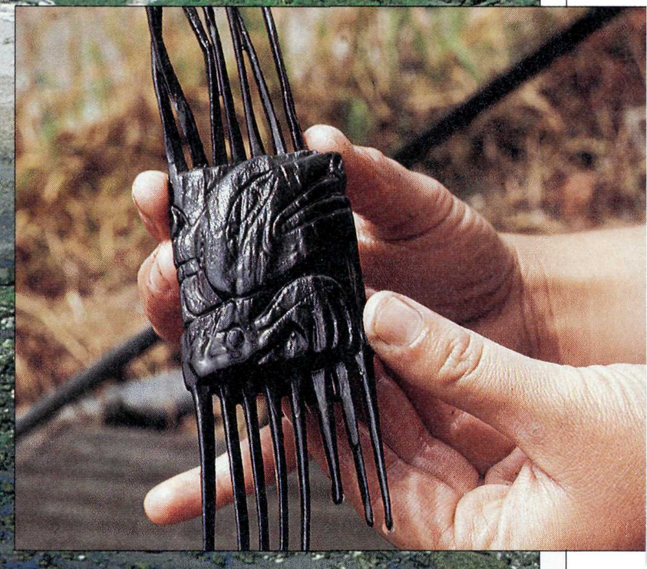
Maxine Olmstead
Phoenix, Arizona

AMERICAN WEST welcomes letters from its readers. Some editing of letters may be necessary in order to print a cross section of those we receive. Please address: Letters to the Editor, AMERICAN WEST, 3033 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson, Ariz. 85719.

# Cape Alava Uncovered

## Exciting dig reveals prehistoric culture of Washington coast

by Earl Clark



*At beautiful Cape Alava on Washington state's Olympic Peninsula, archeologists have uncovered ruins of an ancient Indian village, Ozette, founded at least two thousand years ago. The inset displays a carved comb discovered at the site, a reflection of the importance of art in the daily life of these people.*

PHOTOS BY RUTH KIRK

AT ABOUT THE TIME THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS REACHing its apex, a settlement was founded that would eventually become one of the largest Indian villages on the Pacific coast. It paralleled for about a mile the storm-lashed beach near what is now the northwest corner of the state of Washington.

Today the abandoned village site is known only as Cape Alava, and to anyone traveling along this forbidding rocky coast it must look no different from its appearance when Spanish explorers visited it five hundred years ago. For no roads penetrate this last stretch of wilderness beach between Mexico and the Canadian border. Nor is there any visible trace of the village that occupied this idyllic spot for at least 2,000 years, because for all the Cape's wild beauty and easy access to the sea, its ancient dwellers overlooked a significant drawback. Namely, that the clay bluff directly behind them was prone to ooze down to the waterline during the soggy winters that are a hallmark of the Pacific Northwest. Slide it did, not just once, but many times during the twenty centuries or more that the village was occupied. Yet after each catastrophe, the stubborn Indians built another village over the one buried by slides—much as Italy's modern Pompeii took shape atop the ash-covered ruins of the ancient city interred by the eruption of Mount Vesùvius in A.D. 79. And so for several millenia the inhabitants lived a good life in this village they knew as Ozette, or Hosett, with the bounty of the sea before them and the world's most productive forests behind them.

The Indians (we know they were Makahs at an early date) could cope with the mudslides that periodically rumbled down the bluff and flattened their longhouses but not with the white man who invaded their land. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Hosett had declined to a shadow of the thriving settlement that had started up at Cape Alava before the time of Christ. By 1900 most of the Makahs were settled at Neah Bay, about a dozen miles north. In fact, the Bureau of Indian Affairs wrongly assumed that the Indians at Hosett were a separate tribe, and in 1893 had set aside some seven hundred acres around the Cape as the Ozette Indian Reservation. A few years later the Bureau ordered the Ozettes to send their children to the school at Neah Bay, an action that sealed the fate of this ancient village. By the 1920s only a few small houses remained. Even these had disappeared by 1970 when some backpackers hiking along the beach spotted wooden boxes, wedges, and canoe paddles washing out from a storm-eroded bank.

A few years earlier, Washington State University archeologist Dr. Richard Daugherty and his crew had dug a trench back from the beach about a quarter-mile north of this spot, with interesting but unspectacular results. Mostly they found kitchen midden—basically a garbage dump composed largely of shell and bone fragments nearly four meters deep, proving that people had dined on seafood at this site for many centuries. But the alert hikers' sighting which was reported to the Makah tribal chairman, brought Daugherty back to the beach for a look-see in February of 1970. The archeologist's excitement grew as preliminary probing began to uncover a very old structure that apparently was perfectly preserved in a time-capsule of moist clay.

That chance discovery led to unearthing the greatest treasure trove of Indian artifacts ever found on the West Coast—more than 50,000 in all. For more than a decade the exploration went on, inch by patient inch, until the dig was finally closed down in the late summer of 1981. By then almost $1.5 million had been spent on the excavations by the National Park Service, a sum that is doubled when you add in support services given by Washington State University and military air units.

The only way for outsiders to view the wealth of artifacts pouring out of the site was to hike through the forest three-and-one-half miles from the nearest trailhead at Lake Ozette out to the remote beach. And an average of about ten thousand visitors did just that each summer. The discoveries have been much more accessible to viewers since the tribe opened its beautiful new Makah Cultural and Research Center in 1979 at Neah Bay, where the best of the recovered artifacts are tastefully displayed in exhibits that also explain the newly learned history of the ancient village of Hosett.

Center Director Grieg Arnold explains: "We don't regard this as just a museum for tourists, although of course we welcome them, but primarily as a place where the Makah people can preserve our heritage."

DR. DAUGHERTY TELLS HOW THE CAPE ALAVA explorations enlarged our understanding of that heritage. "It has given us an entirely different view of Indian prehistory," he says. "Cape Alava has added a totally new dimension to our understanding that we couldn't have imagined before, of how art permeated that prehistoric culture."

What made this understanding possible is the unique character of the Cape Alava discoveries—for this is the first time so many ancient artifacts composed of perishable materials have been found, many of them preserved intact through the centuries. These include baskets, blankets, hats, mats, capes, and robes woven from bark and other fibrous materials; thousands of other artifacts including wooden combs, boxes, bowls, and decorative pieces; and instruments of the whalers' art such as harpoons, clubs, paddles, floats, hooks, and lines.

The residents of Hosett were wealthy by comparison with many of their counterparts across the continent. Behind their village towered the great evergreen forest yielding a limitless supply of logs, bark, roots, herbs, berries, and game. From the beach came clams and mussels; from the sea came halibut, salmon, seals, sea lions, otters, and above all, whales. Even into this century the Makahs were renowned among Northwest tribes as fearless hunters of these great sea mammals.

Much of this was known in a general way before the Cape Alava revelations, but the dig has vastly expanded our comprehension of this earlier civilization. Dr. Daugherty explains:

PHOTOS BY RUTH KIRK

(Clockwise, beginning at top) ***At the Ozette dig, timbers that formed a wall of a 500-year-old house are uncovered. Skillful attention by archeological workers brings out other well-preserved wooden artifacts—a loom, paddles, clubs. Remarkably protected by the clay landslides that periodically covered Ozette, a burden basket is examined. Dr. Richard Daugherty, chief archeologist at the site, and Meri Flynn open a basket found inside a larger one. Ms. Flynn is a member of the Makah tribe, many of whom volunteered to help recover and interpret their heritage.***

We didn't really have any detailed knowledge of their technology. And this has added a whole new dimension to our thinking, as for example, the utilitarian articles they used in their everyday life, and their technology in wood, bone, and basketry. We learned that they had metal long before we ever thought they had, probably transported across the Pacific by drifting on the currents.

More than a hundred ships have come to grief on this hazardous coast just in modern times, and anthropologists conclude that iron and steel, known in Japan by the eighth century A.D., could have come ashore from wrecked Japanese junks.

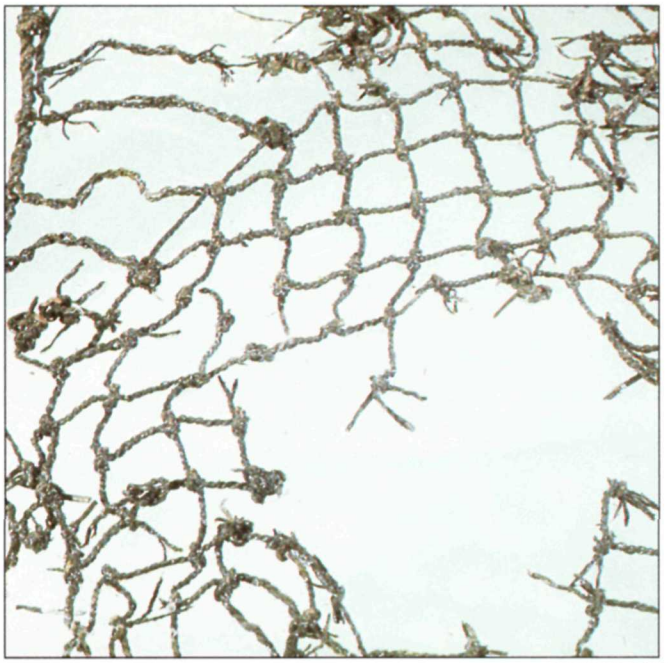
The Makahs displayed their genius not only as whalers but also as woodworkers, and for this they drew heavily upon one of the West's most valued trees—red cedar. Because it splits so straight and easily, the Makahs were able to make it into dimension lumber without the benefit of saws. Cedar seldom warps, is lightweight, and contains toxic substances that make it resistant to rot and insect attack. Understandably, the walls and roofs of the longhouses uncovered by the excavation were constructed of this prized wood, which also went into canoes, boxes, and arrow shafts.

The ancient woodworkers were able to pick and choose whatever they needed from the lush forest, each wood having its specific uses. Yew is dense and heavy; so they fashioned it into harpoon shafts and clubs. They gathered spruce from the undersides of branches and trunks hardened by the relentless buffeting of winds off the ocean, wood so tough that it could be used for wedges. Hemlock held its shape so well that it was made into halibut hooks.

The Makahs' longhouse (replicated in the museum at Neah Bay) was about sixty by thirty-five feet, divided into six living areas, each with its own fire pit. The excavations even revealed who occupied these separate areas. Chips, tools, and goods in various stages of manufacture when the slide smashed the house revealed where the woodworker lived. Harpoons, clubs, and benches inlaid with shells denoted the whaler's quarters in another area, while bows and arrows in still another marked the home of a hunter.

Because of their comparative wealth, the Makahs had the leisure and the materials to handcraft things of extraordinary beauty simply for their own enjoyment, as well as for symbolism. Many artifacts uncovered at Cape Alava defy identification, even by present-day Makah elders. But what museum visitors may consider as simply decoration probably was much more meaningful to the ancient Makahs. Thus the owl, the wolf, the whale, the thunderbird, all had deep symbolic overtones to the villagers, a symbolism that carries over in current Makah art.

The astonishing wealth of basketry that the Cape Alava dig brought forth—more than a thousand baskets, mats, and hats—illustrates how the Makah women also made use of the forest resources that surrounded them. In the spring they stripped off the smooth inner bark of cedar trees, then took the harvest to the longhouse to be dried, folded, and stored.



PHOTOS BY RUTH KIRK

PHOTOS BY RUTH KIRK

***The dig at Cape Alava has yielded more than 50,000 artifacts, many of them of perishable materials. Pictured here are*** (counterclockwise, beginning at top of opposite page): ***a 500-year-old fish net; a carved wooden dish with a braid of human hair, for holding oil as a condiment; resting in a cedar bark pouch, a whale harpoon fashioned of bone; a six-inch-high wooden figure; and a magnificent effigy of a whale fin carved of cedar and inset with over 700 sea otter teeth.***

Most of the baskets discovered at Cape Alava came from such bark, although the Makah women also made use of roots, branches, and even weed stems.

The weavers preferred wild-cherry bark for binding tools; cattail fluff was added to dog wool for making yarn; while cedar and spruce roots were painstakingly shaved and twisted into cords and ropes strong enough to tow in a whale. From the forest also came food to supplement the bounty of the sea, providing a hearty and varied diet of relishes and side dishes as well as the staples of fish, game, berries, sprouts, starchy roots, and greens.

THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS RESIDENTS OF THE VILlage were the whalers, whose high rank was distinguished by hats with knobbed tops as well as wide brims to fend off the sun's glare on the water. The whale hunt came after months of preparation during which the whalers went off in solitude to pray, fast, and take ceremonial baths. When the whales began their annual migration along the coast in the spring, the men went out, eight to a canoe hollowed out of a single cedar log. Harpoons were shafts of yew up to eighteen feet in length. Once the harpoon struck, sealskin floats attached to it kept the threshing whale afloat, while the crew paddled backwards to put a respectful distance between themselves and the wounded animal until the kill was made with a special lance. Then came the task of towing the huge whale back to the village, a journey that could be as much as ten miles. There the Indians gathered to salute the victorious whalers in song, not neglecting songs welcoming the whale and praising the power that made the feat possible. Literally tons of whalebone were unearthed around the longhouse, mostly used as riprap to provide drainage and to protect against erosion—vainly, as it often turned out.

Much of this knowledge was learned from Makah elders, based on the lore handed down from generation to generation. And some came from many hours of detective work by the scientists—putting artifacts under the microscope to ascertain their materials and to find evidence, perhaps, of how they were used. Sometimes the walls of the researchers' cabins at Cape Alava echoed far into the night with intensive debate and speculation on just how the latest discoveries might have fitted into the village's daily life.

Of course what preserved these artifacts was the same clay that buried them, acting as a perfect sealant by providing a moist preservative that kept the fragile materials intact, so much so that diggers unearthed wooden bowls still smelling of fish oil, baskets with their contents still in place, a woven paint pot with unused paint still at hand.

The Cape Alava dig also helped develop new methods of archeological exploration, for the material was far too fragile to withstand the traditional pick and shovel or even dental picks. But right out front was the sea, and Dr. Daugherty's crews took full advantage of it. They flew in gasoline-powered pumps to bring water to the site, and used hoses exclusively for the excavation. They first brought into play a heavy hose such as firemen use, to clear away the sterile overburden. Once they got to the longhouse ruins, they used an ordinary garden hose with fine-spray nozzles to explore the delicate artifacts. Electrical power for the field laboratory and houses came from a portable generator flown in by military airlift.

The WSU team benefitted from the experience of Swedish scientists. Just a few years earlier, when the Viking ship *Vasa* was dredged up from its long resting place at the bottom of Stockholm harbor, the Swedes preserved the recovered ship timbers in a bath of polyethylene glycol against the otherwise instant disintegration that would follow as soon as the waterlogged elements were exposed to oxygen. This same chemical was put to use at Cape Alava, and it is still used at the warehouse-laboratory in Neah Bay where the thousands of artifacts are being analyzed and catalogued. Even so, everything changes color the instant it is exposed to the air.

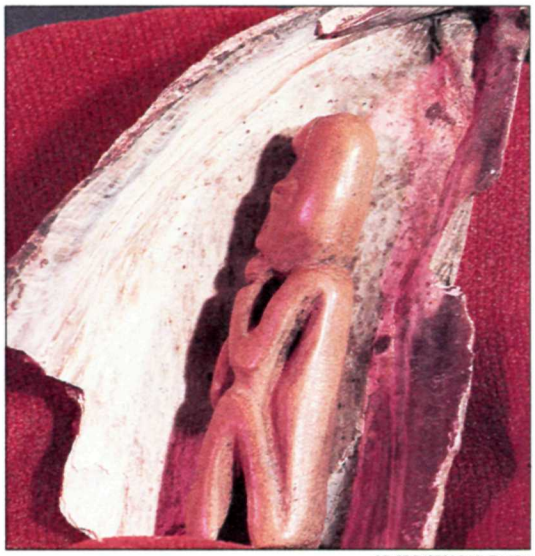
According to Gerald Grasso, first project conservator, some artifacts made of cedar are a light yellow when they are first uncovered. "Then within a matter of minutes the color will change to tan, then to light brown, and finally to a dark chocolate." So while the shape and original materials of the artifacts are astonishingly well preserved, the uniform dark hues that visitors see in the museum give little indication of the original brilliant coloring.

When the dig first got underway in 1970 no one had any real idea how long it would take, how much it would cost, or what would be found. As the site lay within Olympic National Park's Pacific Ocean strip, the project immediately got administrative and logistical help from the Park staff. The Bureau of Indian Affairs came up with a $70,000 grant to start the dig, while the Coast Guard base at Port Angeles, seventy-five miles east, provided a helicopter that flew in 30,000 pounds of supplies to the roadless beach that first summer. Later, the Marine Corps Reserve made good use of practice-flying time to airlift supplies to the site. Funding continued on a hand-to-mouth basis, a variety of government grants usually arriving just in time to prevent closure of the project, until the faucet was finally shut off in 1981. Layers of artifacts still remain beneath their centuries-old seal, but one gathers in talking with Dr. Daugherty that he is not too upset about the shutdown, for enough was brought out during the past decade to keep the scientists busy for years to come just analyzing what they have.

DURING THAT FIRST SUMMER IN 1970 ABOUT NINE archeologists were employed at the site. By the time the digging ended, more than three hundred researchers from all over the United States had shared in the exploration. Although they might not be sure from week to week when the next check would come, there were fringe benefits, for they enjoyed year-round the same magnificent view that attracted the Makahs in the beginning and still draws thousands of hikers to the beach today, a panorama of pounding surf, isolated rocky pinnacles, and an astonishing variety of marine life when low tides bare the rocky beach. They could smack their lips over fresh crab for dinner if they were lucky in setting out their crab pots, and the makings of a clam chowder were there for the digging, with

COURTESY BERT KELLOGG COLLECTION

(Clockwise, beginning at top) ***Ozette villagers lived in these ramshackle wooden houses when this photograph was taken about 1889. The community was in its last years, only a remnant of the thriving society that had settled here before the time of Christ. Two carvings demand attention, one of them a small figure resting in a shell where some Indian artist placed it many years ago. A beaver tooth forms the knife of this small chisel; its handle ends in a wooden head with a knobbed hat, the symbol of high rank worn only by whalers in Ozette society.***



COLOR PHOTOS BY RUTH KIRK

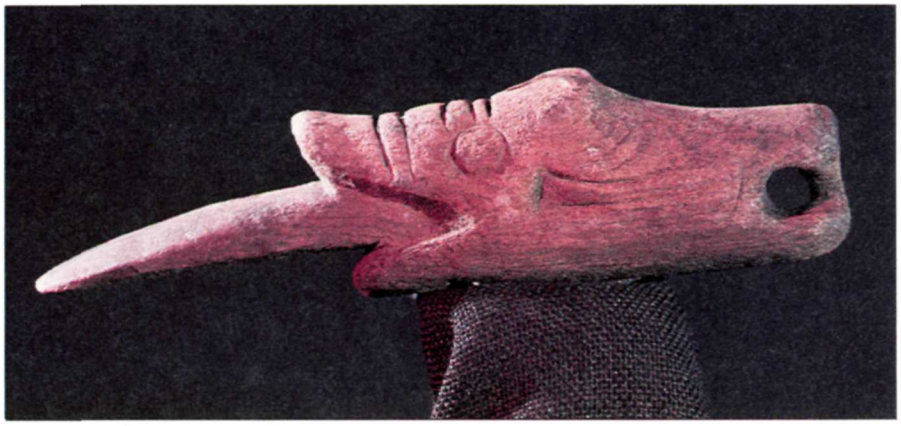


PHOTO BY RUTH KIRK

fresh salmon and bottom fish out in the water. Nine anthropologists have earned their Ph.D.'s at the site, and another two are in the making; and seven or eight master's degrees came from the dig. The researchers gradually built a tight little compound of weatherbeaten cabins at the site, much of the material delivered to them by the accommodating ocean. They took turns at housekeeping chores and at showing guests through the works. When winter rains halted excavation, they caught up on paperwork, feeding information gathered from months of digging into WSU computers.

The dig is all closed up now, with only Makah watchmen on hand to guard the covered longhouse site from vandalism. So many visitors hiked out to the dig in the eleven years the project continued that the Park Service made a virtual boardwalk of the trail to the beach, spiking down rough planks on log stringers—a far cry from the old trail of mud and rotting puncheon on which hikers used to slip and fall. It's still a rewarding jaunt, for this stretch of beach may be unrivalled on the Pacific coast for its spectacular beauty.

Of course the place to see the results of this exploration is the museum at Neah Bay, headquarters of the Makah Reservation. The center was built at the cost of $1.4 million, with the cost of the displays bringing the total to $2 million. Backing up the museum is a laboratory where most the 50,000 artifacts are stored. Another 10,000 house-timbers, planks, and fragments have been cataloged, and computers have also logged about 105,000 shell pieces and more than 200,000 bones, not counting the tons of whalebone uncovered. Dr. Daugherty estimates it will take from ten to twenty years to analyze this treasury of artifacts. Many different studies are involved, such as identifying types of materials used, how the artifacts fitted into the village's scheme of things, the source of materials, and how shellfish, birds, and land animals all contributed to the daily life at Hosett. Usually about five people are at work on this, most of them completing Ph.D. dissertations.

In the area of the site where the buried houses were found, the archeologists labelled the first layer of artifacts that they discovered as Unit 1. Radiocarbon dating of the bottom layer, or Unit 8, dates back at least 800 years. Most of the artifacts being worked on in the laboratory now are from Units 4 and 5, or three to four hundred years old. By the time operations ceased, the project had unearthed five longhouses, each encompassing about a hundred year span.

Now the excitement of the discovery is over, and the laborious work of cataloging and analyzing will go on for as many years as did the excavation itself. Meanwhile, visitors to the Makah museum come away with a new appreciation for the rich culture of these prehistoric seaside dwellers, while the present-day Makahs have derived a new dignity and pride in their ancestral heritage from evidence of what could have well been the most prosperous and artistic prehistoric settlement on our Pacific coast.

**(Opposite)** ***A wooden figure only eight inches high confronts us with authority from the past.***

## To visit the Makah museum

*The Makah Cultural and Research Center at Neah Bay, Washington, is open from 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Admission is $2 for adults, $1 for students. Neah Bay is at the northwest tip of the Olympic Peninsula, sixty-six miles west of Port Angeles via State Highway 112. Cape Alava can be reached by turning south off Highway 112 about two miles west of the fishing resort of Sekiu; follow this county road for twenty-one miles to Lake Ozette; from that point you must walk the three-mile foot-trail to the Cape.*

DRAWN FOR AMERICAN WEST BY ELIZABETH WOLF

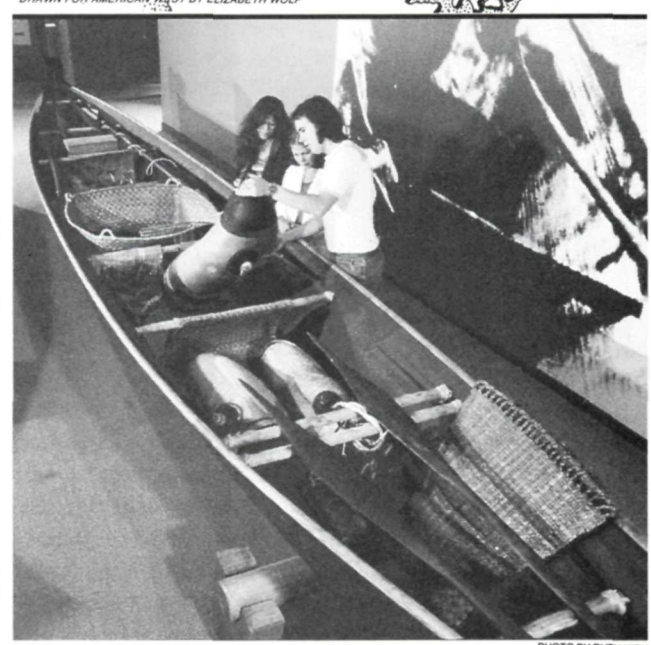


PHOTO BY RUTH KIRK

***Among exhibits at the museum is this replicated Makah canoe with replicated sea mammal hunting gear, all crafted by present-day members of the Makah tribe.***

**Earl Clark,** *a free-lance writer living in Port Angeles, Washington, has been interested in the Cape Alava explorations since the project got underway. His last article for* AMERICAN WEST *was "John F. Stevens: Pathfinder for Western Railroads" (May/June 1971).*

# Saki Karavas

## Taos hotelkeeper collects paintings and friends

### by Irene Rawlings

PHOTOS BY JAMES MILMOE

***Saki Karavas and his mother, Noula, relax in the lobby of La Fonda, the family's hotel in Taos for almost half a century. More than a business, La Fonda has been a way of life for them, the paintings on the walls reflecting friendships with many of the great in Taos artistic history. Saki directs his affairs from the large desk in his office where he hangs his canvases by D. H. and Frieda Lawrence, considered too erotic for public exhibition in London in the late 1920s. In Saki's bedroom the walls are literally covered with a great variety of paintings by a variety of artists, important for the personal relationships they represent.***

SAKI KARAVAS DISPENSES HOSPITALITY AND RECOLLECtions at La Fonda, the venerable hostelry built by his father and uncle in 1937 on the Plaza in Taos, New Mexico. Hotelkeeper and friend of the famous, Saki has been a part of Taos life since the 1930s and 1940s when eccentric artists and writers made the village a center of cultural excitement. That heyday has long since passed, but with his memories and mementos, Saki can make those bohemian times live again.

On a winter evening Taos Plaza is covered with a powdering of snow. Each shopkeeper has swept the walk in front of his store, brushing the flakes into little heaps near the curb. The hitching posts are gone. No one needs them anymore. So are the brightly blanketed Indians. They wear blue jeans now. Otherwise, the Plaza has not changed much in nearly fifty years. La Fonda de Taos, in the Spanish hacienda style, is still the largest building on the Plaza. The setting sun now gives its stucco facade a pinkish cast, darker where the snow has melted and run down in little rivulets.

In the lobby of La Fonda a blaze burns cheerily in the bright-red adobe fireplace, set in a corner of the room in traditional New Mexico fashion and decorated with geometric designs from Indian sand paintings. It takes the chill out of the evening air and reflects invitingly off the deep leather chairs, the smooth Indian pots, and the terracotta floor. From floor to ceiling, the walls are hung with Indian rugs, Spanish religious pictures called "santos," animal skulls bleached into artworks by the desert sun, photographs of friends, painted animal skins, and many, many paintings. The largest of the paintings—some over five feet high—are by Emil Bisttram who lived in the hotel and exchanged these works for his room and board. Other artists have contributed landscapes of the Taos area, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and portraits of people that Saki has known.

Noula Karavas, mother of Saki, sits by the fire greeting guests. Although she is in her eighties and sometimes bedridden, one can still see traces of the great beauty that made her sought after as a model by many of the artists who lived in Taos. Leon Gaspard, the Russian painter who is best remembered for his bright palette and his swift, impressionistic brushstrokes, painted Noula again and again. A portrait by Gaspard, for which she wore her native Greek costume, hangs on the wall over her head. Her flashing eyes, translucent skin, and abundant blue-black hair must have been the envy of many. "You have come to see Saki? He is in his office with his dirty pictures. I will have him called." She smiles, and her eyes still flash.

Saki emerges from his office. He is not a tall man but he possesses an indefinable "presence." Hair graying at the temples, a small mustache, an ascot—in all an impression of culture and confidence. His handshake is firm. Still holding my hand, he winks and says, "For a quarter, I will show you my dirty pictures." His wide grin encompasses both his mother and me. This is the man who has entertained ambassadors and artists, poets and princes. Their affectionately signed photographs are a tribute to his hospitality. In the town of Taos, which is nearly as difficult to reach now as it was when the Karavas family came in 1930—by winding road over the mesas from Santa Fe or from the train depot at Lamy—Saki Karavas has spent a large part of his life quietly keeping a hotel, entertaining the great and near-great, and acquiring a fine collection of Southwestern American paintings as well as a very personal, eclectic collection of every era and school of art imaginable. His range of knowledge and appreciation is well known. He keeps up with the auction prices, sales in New York, and what the art critics have to say. But, being his own man, he buys what he likes and having acquired a painting, never parts with it.

The room Saki calls his office is filled by a massive desk. The walls are covered with paintings that were considered erotic in a more innocent era—a lot of Renoir-like fleshy people either bathing nude or clinging to each other. Some are painted in the lumpy, WPA style made famous by Diego Rivera. The people appear tortured by passion, by life. Their faces have a brooding, unhappy, hopeless look. The backgrounds are all straight out of Cezanne's provincial French paintings, with spare windswept trees and desolate landscapes.

These pictures were painted by D. H. Lawrence and

his wife Frieda when they were in Taos as guests of Mabel Dodge Lujan [in the 1920s, Saki explains]. Remember that Lawrence was not an artist. He had never painted before. He was a well-known writer given to dark, powerful images. He had written *Women in Love* by this time. Mabel summoned him to Taos, hoping that he would write *the* Indian epic. He didn't. Mabel was, you know, the local patroness of the arts. She came from New York, married an Indian, and built "The Big House." It is still standing—over by Taos Pueblo. It has about thirty rooms. She was the only one around here with money. Times were harsh. So, she supported many of the local artists. So did my father. He did not have any money but he could feed them. Periodically he would empty his coat pockets and his desk drawers to collect the numerous IOU's. He bundled them up and burned them. So you see, it was cheaper for the artists to eat here than to eat at home.

But, back to the pictures [says Saki, gesturing to the walls]. In 1928, when Lawrence tried to exhibit these paintings at the Warren Gallery in London, Scotland Yard raided the place and closed it down. They seized the pictures, labeled them obscene and banned them from England. If the paintings ever returned, Scotland Yard threatened to burn them. After Lawrence's death, one of the Rothschilds and Aga Khan tried to buy them from Frieda. She would not sell. She moved back to Taos with her new husband Angelino. After eighteen years, when Frieda died, Angelino agreed to sell the paintings to me. I borrowed the money and bought the lot. There are ten. Some people thought I had wasted my money. My mother still thinks so. [Another grin].

Saki's father and uncle brought the family to America from their native Greece in 1930 and settled in Taos because the landscape and climate reminded them of their homeland.

When they arrived, they did what all Greeks do [Saki says, shrugging and gesturing with his palms out]. They built a restaurant and a hotel. Business was brisk. The coffee shop was always full of "characters"—Indians, poets, gamblers, artists, prospectors, moonshine makers, and notables like Leopold Stokowski, Tyrone Power, and Aldous Huxley. Once Prince Philip of Greece came. My father used to throw wild parties for the artists. Elk and wild turkey—game that could be hunted in the hills—were the mainstay. And venison. Thickly sliced vension masqueraded as steak, ground up venison was used in the chile. The artists drank. I mean, they really drank. Then they would stay up all night talking, arguing, painting on the nearest clean surface, raging at each other, breaking dishes. These artists were emotional men. [Saki pauses. Then, he continues a bit sadly.] All the characters are gone. Only the landscape and the clouds are still the same.

WHEN SAKI CAME TO TAOS IN 1930 HE WAS an eight-year-old in knee pants. He carried in his pocket a treasured collection of marbles. The local boys—who all wore bell-bottomed trousers—made fun of his knickers and stole his marbles. Young Saki complained to his father. The reply was, "Think like a Mexican, not like a Greek."

First, Saki went to the local village school. He remembers that some of the teachers wore spats and that the floor was often littered with shells from the pinon nuts the students ate in the classroom. After a while, this chaos became too great for Noula Karavas to bear. She transferred Saki to a Catholic school where the discipline was as much a part of the curriculum as math and catechism.

After school there was not much to do, but it was never monotonous. Explaining this apparent contradiction, Saki says:

Well, the gambler John Dunn had four very attractive daughters. One day we all got drunk on chokecherry wine and they gave me a home permanent. Or, when it rained, you could watch the horses and wagons get stuck in the mud in the Plaza. The air was blue with curses of the stagecoach and wagon drivers. Really, when it rained, the Plaza was impassable. You could not get from one side to the other without sinking up to your ankles in mud. Boardwalks were set up.

There was one movie house in town. It had about fifty seats—rocking chairs in the balcony. Walter Ufer, one of the members of the historic Taos Society of Artists, always sat in the balcony. When a film was not to his liking, he would shout "Get rid of it" or "Cut it" and the projector operator always did. Some of the others in the theater did not appreciate Ufer's critical taste. Once Ufer gave me two dollars' worth of nickels to play the slot machines my father had in the coffee shop. I lost all of it. And I felt so guilty because my father had strictly forbidden me to play these machines. Ufer said, "If you are going to feel guilty about something, don't do it. If you do it, it is too late to feel guilt."

Sometimes I posed for the artists. Ward Lockwood painted me in a coonskin cap—sort of a young Natty Bumppo. Gaspard dressed me in a red cossack coat and an enormous fur hat. These artists painted from life. Slowly. I was really sore after holding a pose for what seemed like several hours.

The artist Leon Gaspard used to take me riding. We would gallop our horses all around the surrounding countryside—trying to avoid the gopher holes. He had lived in the most exotic places like Russia, China, Outer Mongolia. He had traveled through the Gobi Desert, been captured by Mongolian bandits (they let him go after he painted the chief's portrait), been presented to the Dalai Lama (or living Buddha), and had crossed the Himalayas into Tibet. He could tell stories

*Continued on page 68*

COURTESY LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET

# "It is better farther on"

## Laura Ingalls Wilder followed her Western vision to the Little Houses on the prairie

by William T. Anderson

*The Ingalls family is pictured here in the early 1890s. Seated are Ma and Pa Ingalls and daughter Mary. Standing are daughters Carrie, Laura, and Grace.*

*During those years Laura was gathering impressions from her Western odyssey that would bear fruit in her Little House books published over forty years later.*

IN AN AMAZING, DURABLE WAY LAURA INGALLS WILDER, still clad in calico with the strong western wind whipping at her hated sunbonnet, is alive, well, and speaking to generation after generation of today's readers through her classic "Little House" saga. Though Wilder died at ninety in 1957, after an incredibly full life as frontierswoman, farm wife, journalist, and finally author, her vivid reminiscences of life on the prairies continue to captivate legions of devout followers who remain "Little House" aficionados long after most childhood reading is forgotten. Often the tales about the Ingallses and Wilders and their pioneer homesteading recounted in the ten "Little House" volumes are passed down in families like a precious legacy. The appeal of the Wilder writings has steadily spiraled since publication in the 1930s and 1940s, but adaptation as the long-running television series "Little House on the Prairie" has garnered a huge new following, many of whom discover the original books far superior to the watered-down, atypical, pioneer plots turned out by the network.

Of central interest in Wilder's life is the fact that her "Little House" books are essentially autobiographical, and as she firmly emphasized, "The names, dates, circumstances of all the books are actually true—all true—written from my memories." Her first, *Little House in the Big Woods* (written when Wilder was sixty-five) was simply a tribute to her father and an effort to preserve family stories. Later, prompted by her experienced author-journalist daughter Rose Wilder Lane, the neophyte writer conceived a plan to develop "an eight-volume historical novel for children covering every aspect of the American frontier." "I realized that I had seen it all," she explained, "all the successive phases of the frontier, first the frontiersman, then the pioneers, then the farmers and the towns. Then I understood that in my own life I represented a whole period of American history."

Wilder's childhood experiences formed the themes of her books—the carving-out of wide-open spaces west of the Mississippi, promises of government "free land" for homesteading, and creation of new lives in raw Western territories. "It is better farther on" was the pronouncement Laura Ingalls heard all through her childhood. She shared her father's enthusiasm for pushing west. Charles Ingalls, a fiddler, farmer, carpenter, storyteller, and sometimes public official, told his daughter more than once, "You and I want to fly like birds." Pa Ingalls's itchy foot was balanced by his wife's civilized,

COURTESY LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET

COURTESY LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET

***Laura and Almanzo Wilder posed for this portrait shortly after their marriage in 1885 at De Smet, Dakota Territory. On a motor trip to the west coast in 1925, Laura*** (right) ***and her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, were prepared for winter weather. As snow-covered peaks rose ahead, the ladies stood bundled up in overcoats by the side of their automobile, equipped with chains.***

home-loving influence. Caroline Ingalls was cultured, steeped in puritanical virtue, and steadfast in providing a secure environment in the uncertain atmosphere of the rough frontier. The parents and four daughters—Mary, Laura, Carrie, and Grace—forged a unity that was often challenged as they battled weather, disease, crop failure, poverty, blizzards of snow and dust, and suffered back-breaking toil during a succession of six, major, covered-wagon moves within a decade.

Those prairie-schooner treks and attempts at homemaking in dozens of temporary "little houses" comprised the plots of the books Laura ultimately published. Her first memories were of her log-cabin birthplace near Pepin, Wisconsin, close by the Mississippi River, which signified the dividing line between East and West to Pa Ingalls. Wilder summed up her family's move "farther on" in the resulting sequence of book titles.

> I was born in the *Little House in the Big Woods* in the year 1867. From there, with my parents and sisters, I traveled in a covered wagon across Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas and into Indian Territory where we lived in the *Little House on the Prairie*. Then traveling back to western Minnesota we lived for several years *On the Banks of Plum Creek*. From there we went West again to live *By the Shores of Silver Lake* and through *The Long Winter* in Dakota Territory. We lived at De Smet, *Little Town on the Prairie*, and I married Almanzo Wilder of *Farmer Boy*, just as I told in *These Happy Golden Years*. [An additional manuscript, *The First Four Years*, describes the Wilders' early married life as homesteaders; it appeared in book form fourteen years after the author's death.]

In some private notes, Wilder wrote, "Everything came at us out of the West...storms, blizzards, grasshoppers, burning hot winds and fire...yet it seemed that we wanted nothing so much as we wanted to keep on going west." Constant battles with fierce obstacles emerge in the "Little House" books, alternating with tranquil scenes like the one Wilder recalled from her first journey west to southern Kansas:

> All around them to the very edge of the world, there was nothing but grasses waving in the wind. Far overhead, a few white puffs of cloud sailed in the thin blue air.
>
> Laura was very happy. The wind sang a low, rustling song in the grass. Grasshoppers' rasping quivered up from all the trees in the creek bottoms. But all these sounds made a great, warm, happy silence. Laura had never been in a place she liked so much as this place.

The Kansas prairie was compatible with Pa Ingalls's idea of the West, but unwittingly he settled on the Osage Diminished Reserve—Indian territory. Fears of massacre and Indian war-cries finally dislodged the Ingallses from that land and sent them north again—for a brief return to Wisconsin omitted from Laura's narrative—and then west again to Walnut Grove, Minnesota.

While at Walnut Grove, the family endured the 1874 grasshopper plague, "the worst since the plagues of Egypt," Wilder noted. "I have lived among uncounted millions of grasshoppers, have seen clouds of them darken the noonday sun and destroy every green thing on the face of the earth. There are unforgettable pictures of those grasshoppers in my mind."

As refugees from the grasshopper seige Pa Ingalls and his girls "back-trailed" to Burr Oak, Iowa, in 1876 where they were innkeepers at the Masters Hotel, then a popular stopping place for covered wagons heading west. This sojourn, including the death of an infant brother and Mary Ingalls's prolonged illness that resulted in her blindness, are all omitted from the "Little House" chronicle, but Laura fortunately recorded them in her autobiography entitled *Pioneer Girl*. This manuscript has long languished among the present author's papers, but it is being edited and prepared for publication at this writing.

THOUGH MARY'S BLINDNESS CURTAILED PA INGALLS'S ultimate dream of the Pacific coast, the handicap forced Laura into an apprenticeship as interpreter for her sister. Her early experience in description and lively storytelling gradually honed her perceptions and served her well as an author. "You describe things so clearly, Laura. It's almost as if I could see them myself," was Mary's sisterly tribute that is echoed by readers today.

Back in Walnut Grove, the Ingallses started their final

westward exodus, following the railroads being built into Dakota Territory. Though Charles Ingalls was hired as timekeeper and paymaster for the railroad construction camps of the Chicago and Northwestern line during the big building year of 1879, he resented the institution that provided the necessary link for marketing crops and returning goods to the Western territories. Like most frontier farmers, he objected to high charges for transport, government graft that encouraged the companies to lay track, and the civilized image that the iron horse imposed on the landscape. In charge of the company store at the Silver Lake camp, Pa was caught between duty and fair play when contractors made off with company goods to offset the railroad's underpayments. In a letter to her daughter, Laura Wilder recalled the situation: "The contractors expected to be cheated on the surveying and the R.R. company expected the contractors to steal all they could get away with. This *was* the way the R.R. was built!"

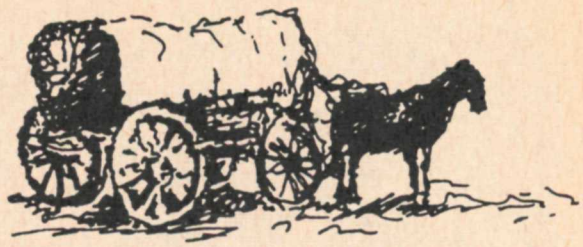
As the railroad continued westward, the final Ingalls homestead was established near De Smet. The Ingallses' lives took on civilized trappings of church, school, socials, and for Pa a combination of small-scale farming, carpentry, and public offices. Mary entered the Iowa School for the Blind, and Laura taught school to pay the tuition.

In De Smet the family nearly starved during the infamous "hard winter" of 1880–1881. Huddled in their store building they warded off cold by burning twisted slough hay and gained their daily bread by grinding wheat. Supply trains were cut off for six months. "There is something about living close to the great elemental forces of nature that allows people to rise above small annoyances and discomforts," Wilder once noted. She was amused when sixty years later New York editors cringed at her choice of *The Hard Winter* as title of the book. They thought *The Long Winter* was more suitable; nothing must be labeled "hard" for an audience of children. But accounts depicting Laura and her sisters sleeping in the unheated attic at forty below and Pa foraging for hay to make a feeble fire transcended the milder title and portrayed a prairie winter in its fiercest form.

At eighteen, following three terms as a rural schoolteacher, Laura married the New York farmer-boy-turned-homesteader Almanzo Wilder. By 1885 standards, the marriage was modern: Laura did not promise to "obey" her husband in the wedding ceremony, and both were equal members of a team as they worked their homestead acres near De Smet.

COURTESY LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET

***Rose Wilder Lane, daughter of Laura and Almanzo, posed as a sweet girl graduate in a long white dress trimmed with lace. Rose became a well-known author before her mother was famous and helped Laura plan and polish her manuscripts about the Little Houses.***



Tragedies even surpassing the Ingalls family's struggles filled the Wilders' early marriage: their home burned, a $3,000 wheat crop was leveled by hail, a baby son died, drought and debts troubled them, and a diphtheria attack left Almanzo with impaired health. The promise of lands "farther on" soured for Laura. Dizzy and despairing during pregnancy with her daughter Rose, she gloomily observed, "They that dance must pay the fiddler." She could find little to pay for. "How heart-breaking it was," she remembered, "to watch the grain we had sown with such hope wither and yellow in the hot winds. And it was back-breaking, as well as heart-breaking to carry water from the well to my garden only to see it dry up despite all my efforts."

Pa Ingalls still longed for the Pacific, but he was old and weighted with responsibility and a pledge to his wife to roam no more. He sold his homestead, built a permanent home in De Smet, and settled there with his womenfolk as a journeyman carpenter, town clerk, justice of the peace, and town patriarch. His dreams of success "farther on" were never realized. For the Wilders came the realization that "farther on" meant not distance but time. After Almanzo's recuperation in Minnesota and Florida and some talk of emigrating to New Zealand, the Wilders decided to move south, not west. The mild climate of Missouri's Ozark Mountains and a huge red apple from that region were the bait that changed the Wilders' priorities from migrating west to a period of working and waiting in the Ozarks.

In 1894 the Wilders and their seven-year-old daughter Rose headed south. The 1893 panic had filled the roads with the homeless, and Laura and Almanzo felt lucky to leave Dakota with team, wagon, and a secreted $100 bill. "That's your last sight of Dakota," Laura told Rose grimly as they crossed the Missouri River in the midst of a violent dust storm. Along the trail Laura jotted down a trip diary and enjoyed the brief pleasure of publication of her travel letter in the *De Smet News*, which she later identified as her first published work. Her succinct comments first reveal the curiosity and dry wit that later emerged in her books. Four years after the Wounded Knee Massacre she voiced unusual empathy for American Indians and wrote, "If I had been the Indians I would have scalped more white folks before I would have left."

This last migration took Laura to a region not much different from the Wisconsin woods where she had started her westward odyssey as a child. Settling in Mansfield, Missouri, the Wilders were surrounded with hills and dense woods. They bought Rocky Ridge Farm, an unpromising-looking forty acres of ridge land. Grudgingly, over the years, the land became productive as the Wilders toiled at dairying, poultry raising, and orcharding. The first home was a log cabin—again like Laura's Wisconsin birthplace—and for a while the sole income came from the sale of firewood.

As finances improved, a ten-room farmhouse was constructed from materials gleaned from the land. The farm grew to 200 acres and was locally known for its modern methods and productivity. Content in the peaceful hills Laura became active in upgrading the lives of farm women by forming clubs, helping to establish a county library, and fighting for rest areas for country women when they came to town.

WHEN THEIR GIFTED DAUGHTER, ROSE, DECIDED to leave Rocky Ridge for a telegrapher's career in the city, the Wilders were cooperative. An active suffragist, Rose traveled the country with Western Union and ultimately reached San Francisco. There her determination and abilities landed her a niche as one of the first women real estate salespersons in California. She met and married Gillette Lane and soon after began a new career as star reporter for the San Francisco *Bulletin*.

At home, Wilder had started her own writing career. In her midforties she became Household Editor for the *Missouri Ruralist*, a country weekly that eagerly printed all the poetry, features, essays, and interviews that "Mrs. A. J. Wilder" could supply. Between home duties and running a farm loan company that she had founded, Laura worked at her writing and longed to expand her markets. In 1915 Rose invited her to San Francisco to see the World's Fair and to learn more about Rose's style of writing for the "big markets."

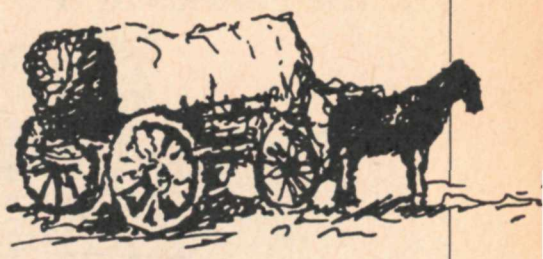
As she waded in the waters of the Pacific, Laura Wilder realized that time was far more tangible than she had imagined while a pioneer girl so concerned with places west. "The waves rolled in regularly," she wrote to Almanzo, "but the skies above them were unmeasured—so vast and far reaching that the mind of man could not comprehend it. A symbol of time and eternity—time spaced by our counting into years, breaking at our feet as the waves break on the shore and eternity blending one into the other at the farthest reach of our earthly vision."


COURTESY LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET

***Always generous with regard to her fans, Laura Ingalls Wilder autographed Little House books for attentive children at a Springfield, Missouri, bookstore in 1952. Close to her eighty-sixth birthday, Mrs. Wilder was making her last public appearance.***

Despite sessions with Rose examining writing techniques and marketing possibilities, Wilder returned to Rocky Ridge satisfied with her regional press outlet and the success of the farm. Though Rose had begged her parents to move to California, Laura confided to Almanzo that she would not trade all of California "for one Ozark hill."

Vivid memories of pioneer days continued to haunt Laura, and periodically her *Ruralist* columns steered away from farm talk and included vignettes of prairie remembrance. Rose constantly begged her mother to pursue writing full time. Rose had carved a niche in the profession with her first novel *Diverging Roads* and a biography of Henry Ford; next, the Red Cross assigned her as a publicist to cover post–World War I relief work in Europe. Following her mother's break into *McCall's* in 1919, Rose advised: "Here is your chance, Mama Bess, to make a real income... get yourself free to go after this.... sidetrack anything that can be sidetracked



. . . there is no reason why you should not be making four or five thousand dollars a year.'' Through the 1920s, with Rose constantly traveling across Europe and the Near East, there was little chance for further mother-daughter sessions on writing. But when Rose returned to live at Rocky Ridge in 1928, the long-discussed pioneer book took shape.

After *Little House in the Big Woods* was published in 1932 and the plan was perfected for a continuing series, Rose was constantly involved in dealings with agents and editors, in research and editing of her mother's penciled manuscripts. Together they drove to southern Kansas searching for the site of *Little House on the Prairie* and looked endlessly for a record of Soldat du Chene, the brave Osage who had quelled Indian massacres during the Ingallses' stay in the area. Rose counseled her mother on themes for each book, titles, and characterization. Her professional touch helped polish the final manuscripts so expertly that Harper and Brothers found no editing needed when they received the completed drafts. As the books increased in number and Rose moved to Connecticut, Wilder became more independent. ''I was in hopes that I had profited enough by your teachings that my copy could go to the publishers, with perhaps a little pointing up of the highlights,'' she wrote her daughter. ''If it could, then perhaps I could do the following two books without being such a bother to you.''

The literary production within the Wilder family was very much a cooperative effort, with Almanzo pooling his memories with Laura's, Rose offering her opinions, and Laura busily penciling the pages of her nickel tablets. Three times during the 1930s Laura and Almanzo drove to De Smet to visit and refresh their memories. They were warmly welcomed as famous personages—as much for Rose's writings as for Laura's. Rose Wilder Lane's two best-sellers, *Let the Hurricane Roar* and *Free Land*, as well as her frequent magazine contributions, had brought much attention to the De Smet area. When *Free Land* was serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* during 1938, De Smet residents found numerous local references and names in the Dakota-based fiction.

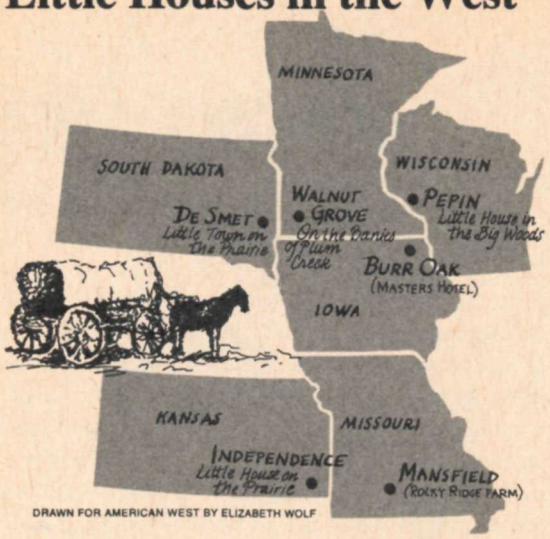
Laura was seventy-six when her final book appeared in 1943, and in *These Happy Golden Years* readers had the satisfaction of concluding the series with Pa's dreams of life in the West realized. But in fact, that brief respite was shattered by the Dakota dust bowl of the late 1880s, and Laura's original plan to continue the saga with the account of those grim years was abandoned. Instead, she and Almanzo enjoyed the unexpected bonanza of royalties and affectionate renown. Daily, Almanzo brought in armloads of fan mail, gifts, and greetings—which Laura patiently answered. Much of the mail came from schoolchildren, but older readers who had lived the frontier life wrote as well. ''Strange,'' Laura mused, ''how old timers would all go back to those old hard times. They had something that seems to be lost.'' Both Wilders keenly felt the loss of independence that they blamed on mechanization and bureaucracy. Of her young fans, Laura mourned: ''They are poor little rich children. The children of today have so much that I sometimes think they have lost the power to truly enjoy anything.''

After Almanzo's death at ninety-two in 1949, Laura steadfastly remained on Rocky Ridge Farm. Flashes of the old pioneer girl sparked when her friends and her daughter objected to her living alone. ''I have a shotgun and a pistol and I know how to use them,'' she sputtered. But all the visitors were friendly ones; each summer brought its quota of wide-eyed children whose parents detoured to Mansfield to meet a living heroine. Laura joked that tourists outdid farmers in early rising; one family arrived at her door at seven in the morning. But she was cordial, just as she was faithful in answering her heavy mail load. On her eighty-fourth birthday in 1951, 900 greetings arrived.

''When writing down those memories of my long ago childhood,'' she wrote in accepting the first annual Laura Ingalls Wilder Award of the American Library Association, ''I had no idea that they would be so well received, and it is a continual delight to me that they should be so well loved.'' Part of her satisfaction stemmed from her belief in the pioneering principles of the era she recorded. Before her death at the age of ninety in 1957, Laura voiced her regret at the passing of the old ways and the development of a complex, technological society.

> We all depend too much on others. As modern life is lived, we have to do so, and more and more the individual alone is helpless. A conflict with nature and the elements is a clean fight, but a struggle against man and his contrivances is something very different. At times I have a homesick longing but there is no turning back. We must go on. . . .

# Follow the odyssey of Laura Ingalls Wilder to her Little Houses in the West




Though her pioneer West was largely tamed and the frontier she knew existed only in the "Little House" books, Laura Ingalls Wilder's spirit lingered on in the places she had written about. Even before Laura's death readers were trickling through her old hometowns and writing-locales, hoping to find remnants of the Ingalls legend. Each season now an increasing stream of visitors comes from all parts of the world to see "the little houses"—such as the Australian family who came to America only to see "the little houses," the German mother and son who used their life savings for the trip, and a specially chartered tour of Japanese admirers.

Immediately after her mother's death on February 10, 1957, Rose Wilder Lane enthusiastically supported Mansfield friends who wished to preserve the Wilder home. She assisted in organizing the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association and made a gift of the Rocky Ridge Farmhouse and its contents—all the accumulated treasures and furnishings of a lifetime. Nearby, a contemporary museum contains nearly everything the family owned and many of the heirlooms that traveled on the covered-wagon journeys through Laura's girlhood. Pa's fiddle, a leitmotif of the "Little House" stories is a prized relic, along with Laura's penciled manuscripts, her needlework, family photos, Almanzo's tools and handmade cane collection, and a lifetime of curios and memorabilia collected by Rose Wilder Lane before her death in 1968.

Many latter-day pioneers drive to Independence, Kansas, searching out the 1870 cabin that was home to the Ingallses. The original house is long gone but careful research of bookseller Margaret Clement identified the site, and an authentic replica of the cabin now stands on the ranch of Bill and Wilma Kurtis.

Another cabin replica stands in the now-cleared "woods" of Wisconsin that was home to the Ingalls family before their pioneering travels began. Streams of traffic drive in and out of the "Little House Wayside" all summer long, and in the nearby lakeside village of Pepin, members of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society keep the Ingalls flame alive.

Residents of Burr Oak, Iowa, population 100, felt cheated when they learned that the famous "Little House" clan had lived in their community for a two-year period in the 1870s. Determined to share in the history though no Wilder book recorded the sojourn in Burr Oak, townspeople located the long-derelict "little hotel in the village" and arranged to restore the Masters Hotel where the Ingallses once lived.

Walnut Grove, Minnesota, was never mentioned by name in *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, an omission Wilder later apologized for. "I had no idea I was writing history," she explained. But her readers searched for and found the dugout site along Plum Creek where she lived in 1874. Since the 1940s the former Ingalls farm has been owned by Harold and Dell Gordon who good naturedly allowed visitors to roam their farm and gaze at the creek, the dugout remains, and other landmarks familiar from *Plum Creek*. But when TV fame hit Walnut Grove and hordes of sightseers descended on the peaceful Gordon farm to catch a glimpse of Hollywood actors, Walnut Grove woke up to its heritage and established a visitors' center and museum. Each summer over a hundred Walnut Grove residents grow beards, don calico, sunbonnets, and fashions of the 1870s to perform the annual "Fragments of a Dream" pageant. The play is performed in the open air during July and portrays the struggles and joys of the Ingalls family and their friends over a century ago. The plot climaxes with the essence of pioneer life: Pa Ingalls's decision to move the family "farther on"—west to Dakota Territory.

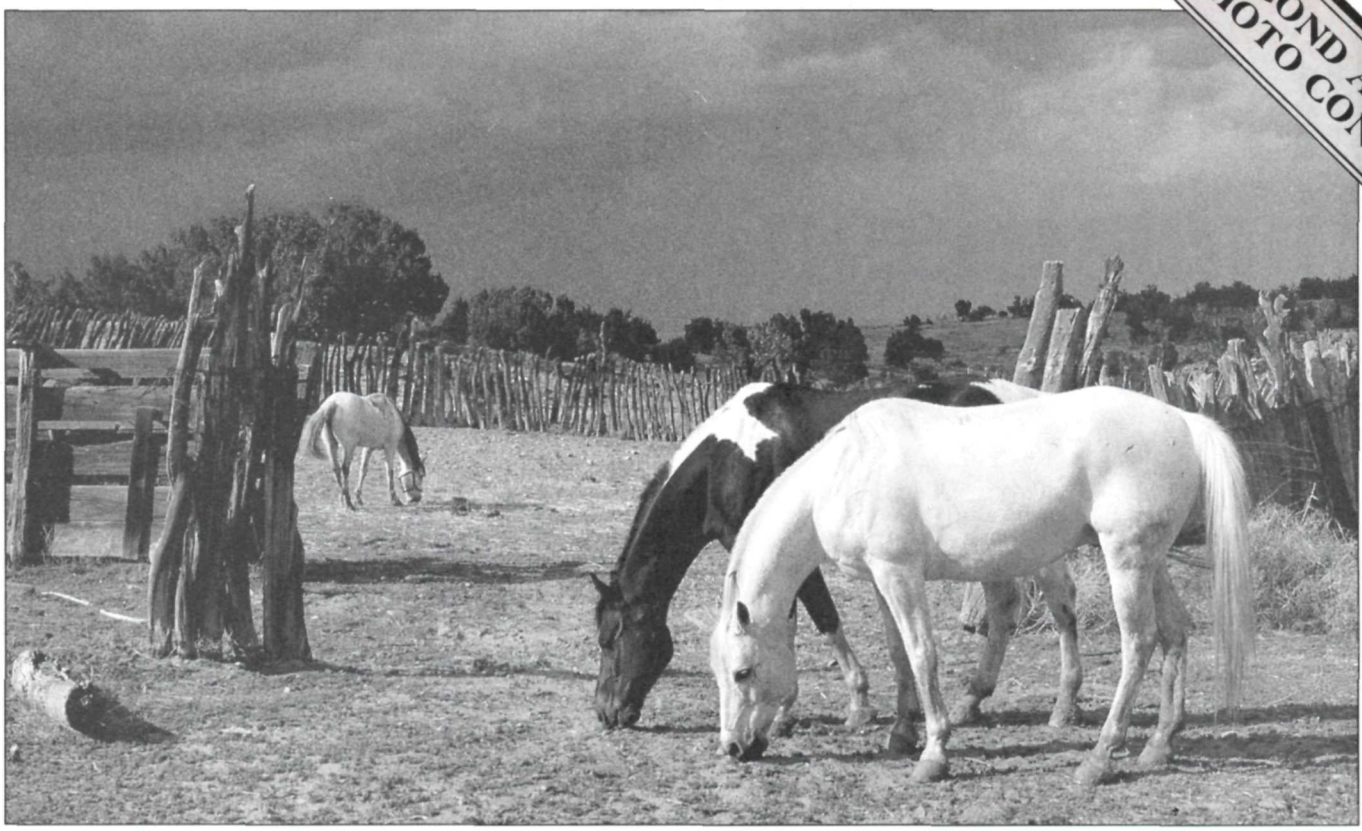
A hundred miles west of Walnut Grove is De Smet, South Dakota, where the "little town on the prairie" now abounds in "Little House" nostalgia. The most important sites to see are the restored Surveyors' House and the Ingalls family's permanent home in town. Heavy tourist traffic fills the narrow rooms of both the 1879 railroad house where the Ingallses spent their first winter in Dakota and their final home of forty years.

Eighteen sites mentioned in the five books written about De Smet and its environs are marked for visitors. There's a replica of the schoolhouse where Laura taught, the original school and church that she attended, old store buildings on Main Street, and the homesteads of Pa and Ma Ingalls and of Laura and Almanzo Wilder.

An annual summer pageant adds to the Ingalls traditions in De Smet. Since 1971 these productions have acted out the lives and characterizations Laura recorded in *The Long Winter* and *Little Town on the Prairie*. The plays begin at sunset at a natural amphitheater in sight of the Ingalls homestead memorial and the rustling cottonwoods that Pa planted. Somehow, a century "farther on," Laura Ingalls Wilder's vision of her prairie West still holds true: "The first stars were pricking through the pale sky. A few lights twinked yellow in the little town, but the whole great plain of earth was shadowy. There was hardly a wind, but the air moved and whispered to itself in the grasses . . . and Laura almost knew what it said."

**William Anderson** *has long been involved in research, writing, and restoration of the Wilder homes. He is the author of* The Story of the Ingalls, Laura Wilder of Mansfield, Laura's Rose: The Story of Rose Wilder Lane, The Ingalls Family Album, *and* A Wilder in the West. *His editing of the last unpublished Wilder manuscript,* Pioneer Girl, *is due to appear in book form.*

SECOND ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST



*1983 Grand Prize Winning Photograph by Wendy Shattil of Denver, Colorado*

# American West and its readers celebrate the unspoiled West

**"AMERICAN WEST** and its Readers Celebrate the Unspoiled West" is the theme of the second photography contest in our magazine's twenty-year history. Photos will be judged in two categories: "The Land" and "The People." We deliberately kept the categories simple because the West is a land that offers limitless possibilities to photographers.

Last year our contest drew 1,000 beautiful pictures of the West, and this year we are looking for even more. Winners will be published in the 1985 January issue of **AMERICAN WEST.** Please watch future issues for further information on this year's contest!

Deadline for entries is September 15, 1984. There is still plenty of time to shoot the West's summer and early fall. Read the contest rules and get your entries in the mail!

## CONTEST RULES

### ELIGIBILITY

The contest is open to everyone except employees of AMERICAN WEST and their relatives. All entries must be available to the magazine for use on a first-right basis; previously published photos or ones pending publication will not qualify. **AMERICAN WEST** acquires the right to publish, use for exhibit or promotion, all winning photographs.

### ENTRIES

You may submit up to 5 entries in any combination of the two categories: "The Land" or "The People." Be sure to enclose the official entry form (or a 3" x 5" facsimile) with your name, address, phone number, and total number of photographs entered. There is a single entry fee of $5 per participant, whether one or five photos are entered. Make checks or money orders payable to **"AMERICAN WEST** Photo."

Photographs may be either black and white or color, and are not to exceed 8" x 10" in size. If your color photograph is judged a winner, you will need to provide a color transparency to **AMERICAN WEST.** Do not send photos mounted in glass.

Each entry must be clearly marked on the back with the name and address of the photographer, the contest category, where the photo was taken, and if possible the type of camera and film used, along with any special lenses, equipment or techniques. Model releases must accompany all photos that include identifiable people.

### LIABILITY

A stamped, self-addressed envelope must accompany your entries for them to be returned. **AMERICAN WEST** is not responsible for materials lost or damaged in the mail.

### DEADLINE

Your entry must be postmarked by midnight of September 15, 1984. Late entries will be returned unopened. Send to: **AMERICAN WEST** Photo Contest, 3033 N. Campbell, Tucson, AZ 85719

## 1984 AMERICAN WEST PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Official Entry

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

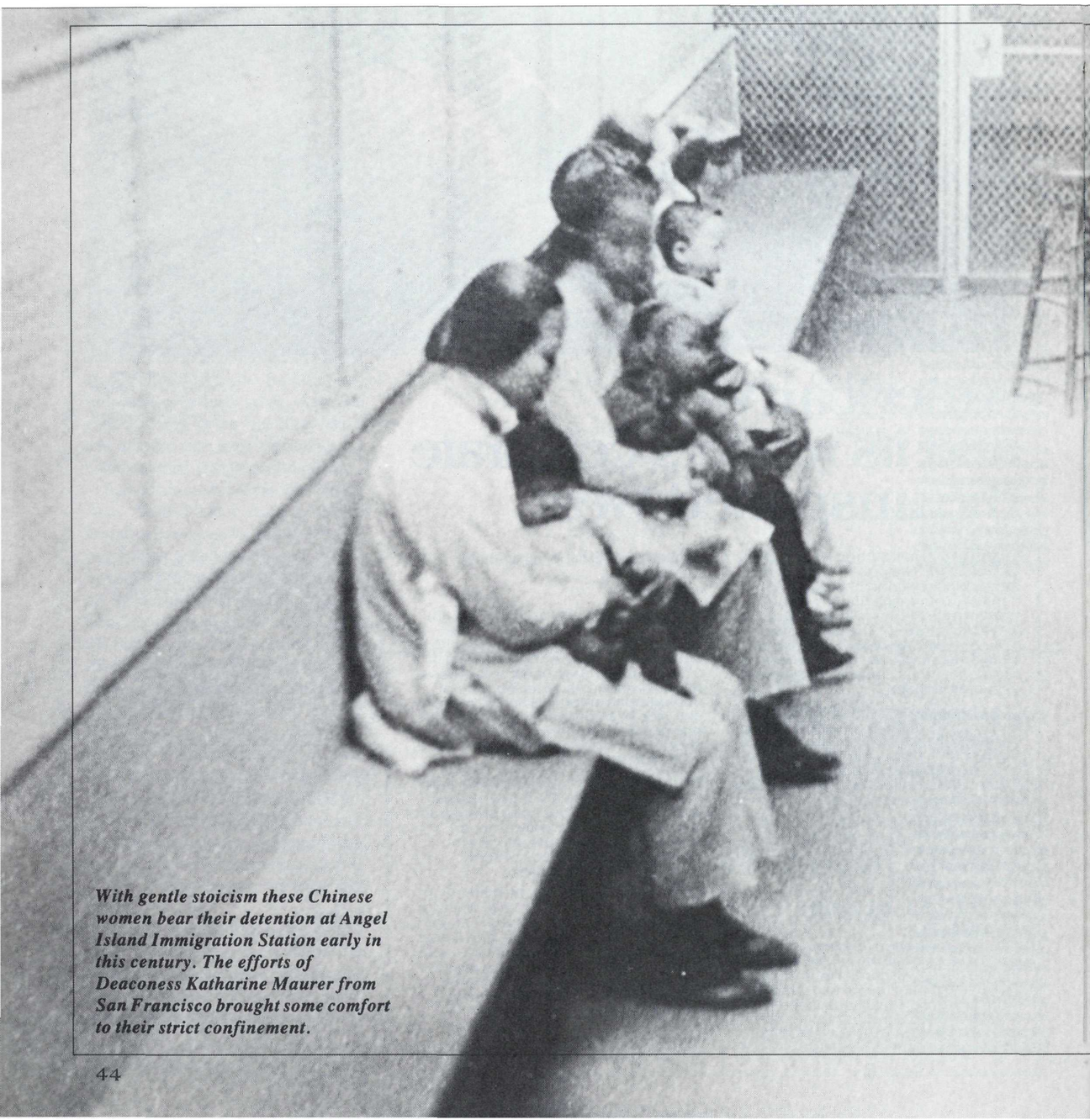
Number of entries _____

Please read the contest rules carefully and enclose the $5 entry fee.

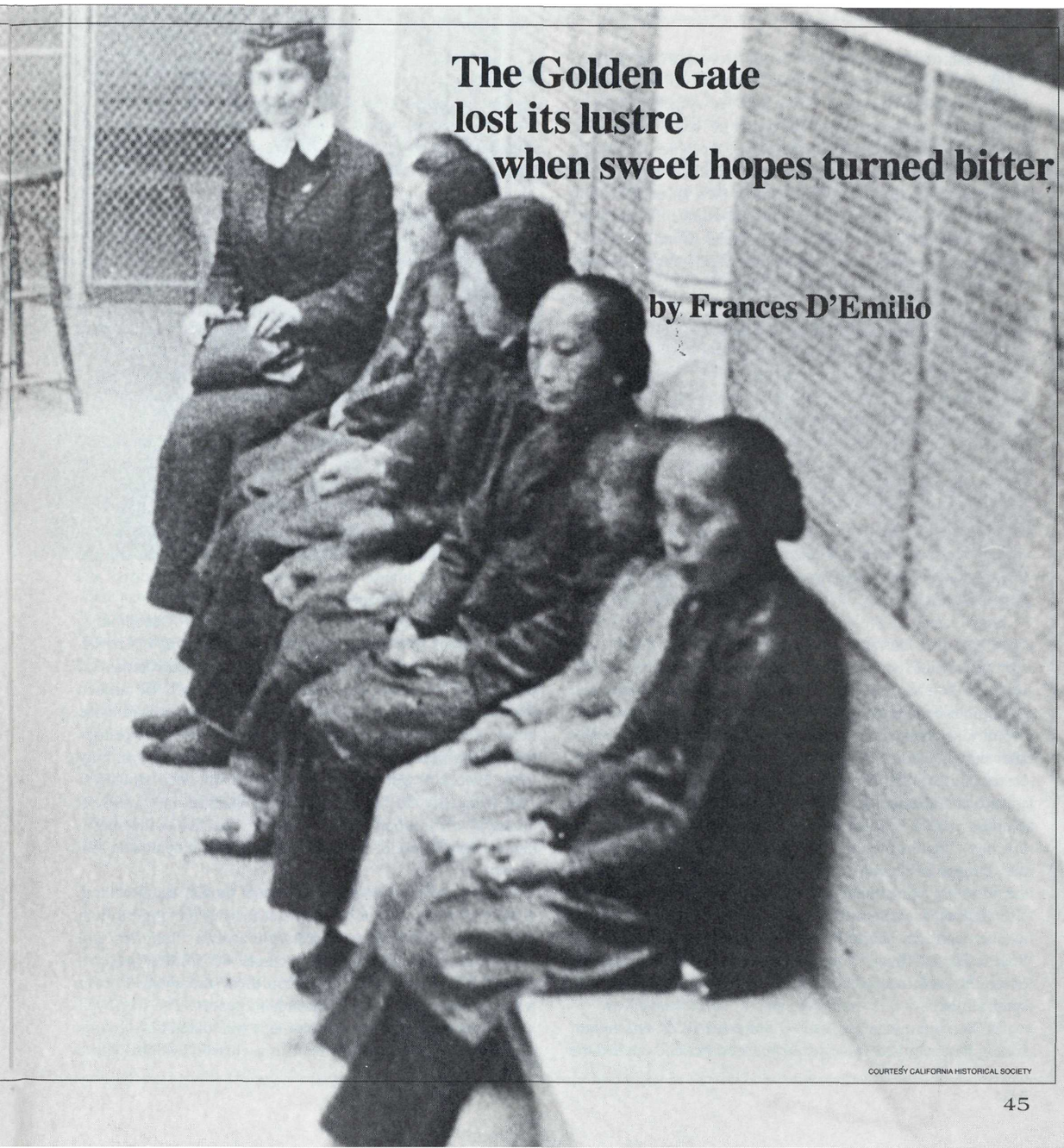
# The Secret Hell of Angel Island

## The Golden Gate lost its lustre when sweet hopes turned bitter

by Frances D'Emilio



*With gentle stoicism these Chinese women bear their detention at Angel Island Immigration Station early in this century. The efforts of Deaconess Katharine Maurer from San Francisco brought some comfort to their strict confinement.*



COURTESY CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Bewildering days spent on Angel Island brought haunting memories to Chinese inmates.

As the cable car edged over the crest of a hill on Hyde Street in San Francisco, the young Chinese-American boy could see Angel Island, its forested hills an emerald in the sapphire bay. When Paul Chow asked his father about the place, the elder Chow admonished: "Angel Island. Shhh. We don't talk of it."

Almost fifty years later, Paul Chow, now an engineer for the California Department of Transportation, remembers: "Angel Island. Shhh. I heard that so much from my father, it's almost like one word: AngelIslandShhh! When I found out what the island was, I was flabbergasted."

Instead of remaining a citizen of China,
I willingly became an ox.
I intended to come to America to earn
a living.
The Western styled buildings are lofty; but
I have not the luck to live in them.
How was anyone to know that my dwelling
place would be a prison?

*—Poem carved in the detention barracks of Chinese immigrants at the United States Immigration Station, Angel Island*

Half a century ago, Tet Yee copied ninety-six similar poems into his notebook. Like Yee, the authors were young Chinese men who left family and belongings behind to sail the Pacific to find work and a better life in Gam Saan, the Golden Mountain of California. But after they landed on Angel Island, the immigration detention center in San Francisco Bay, optimism and ambition dissolved into despair and bitterness. In America's eyes, the Chinese were a "yellow peril"—they worked long hours for low pay, "stealing" jobs from white citizens. Consequently, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had been enacted to stop the virtually unrestricted immigration of Chinese laborers. Yee and many comrades languished for months in drab, wooden barracks before authorities let them enter the United States. For hundreds of others, fate was more cruel; denied entry, they returned in shame and poverty to their villages in south China.

Tet Yee arrived in the United States in 1932. His father, Chung Pingyee, had come seven years earlier and opened the Canton Market, a poultry store on Grant Avenue—a narrow street that is the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown. Yee planned to work in his father's place and live frugally in a crowded tenement while saving enough money to send for his wife and baby daughter. But his dream was dashed when his steamer docked at a San Francisco pier and authorities ferried him and fellow immigrants to Angel Island, his "prison" for the next six months. Companions in the dormitory told Yee that chances of seeing his wife soon were slim at best. Under the Immigration Act of 1924 no Chinese women—not even the wives of citizens—could enter the United States to take up permanent residence.

Yee endured without comfort of family and without ever knowing just why he was detained for six months. Even his father was not allowed to visit him. "I never see anybody," Yee remembers. "That doesn't seem right. You can't protest for nothing there. Just like in jail. You couldn't speak to anybody outside the building." His father's lawyer carried messages back and forth. Because Yee stayed so long, he won the trust of his companions. They elected him chairman of the Angel Island Liberty Association, which tried to make life more bearable for the detainees. The association started lessons for children and pooled the little money among the adults to buy Chinese newspapers from San Francisco and records for a phonograph.

A yellowed clipping from the *Chinese World*, December 7, 1932, tells of Yee's accomplishments as chairman. The diminutive Yee confronted immigration officials and demanded that the Chinese be given soap and toilet paper. He argued that the few non-Asians who were briefly detained had those items. Yee could not persuade authorities to lift other restrictions. Detainees were allowed to go to a storage room only once a week to get what they needed from their suitcases. And their only fresh air came during exercise in a yard enclosed by a wire-topped fence. Through the fence, they had a tantalizing glimpse of the bay which separated them from San Francisco.

For long hours the men lay on steel bunks, stacked three high, and stared out the windows at the fog moving through the Golden Gate. They pined for far-away families and grieved for dying dreams. They cursed the Chinese government for being too weak to rescue them and swore to take revenge upon the bullying internment guards. The men well knew the punishment given comrades who dared defy guards or otherwise rebel: confinement in a closetlike room with a

COURTESY NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

***Immigration officials inspect documents of Chinese passengers on the crowded deck of a ship that has just arrived in San Francisco Bay.*** (Below) ***More than half a century ago Tet Yee was confined on Angel Island. He is pictured today with his wife, Wing, in their home in Oakland, California.***

bench and a four-by-four-inch screen for air and light. So, some men used a pocket knife to scratch their sentiments on walls and wooden door-frames in the barracks and lavatory. For the most part, says Yee, the guards paid little attention to the carvings, which they could not decipher. Indeed, the guards tried not to take more than a few steps inside the crowded room.

The men also passed the time memorizing answers for their interrogations, sessions that often lasted for days and determined their destinies or at least whether they would have a chance at a better life in America. Today Yee vividly remembers his several confrontations with skeptical officials.

> They ask me all kinds of nonsense: "When you go to sleep. Who do you sleep with. How many steps to your house." All those nonsense questions. Different questions each time. If your answers didn't meet with your father's or brother's, they'd just deny your case. Everyone heard about America's democracy and liberty and all these things. When they came over, it was just the opposite way.

After seventeen years, including service in the United States armed forces, Yee managed to bring his wife, Wing, and daughter to America. They raised three more children, and together the family toiled in their grocery store in Oakland. Yee bought a house at the foot of a winding street near the hills and filled it with photographs of his grandchildren.

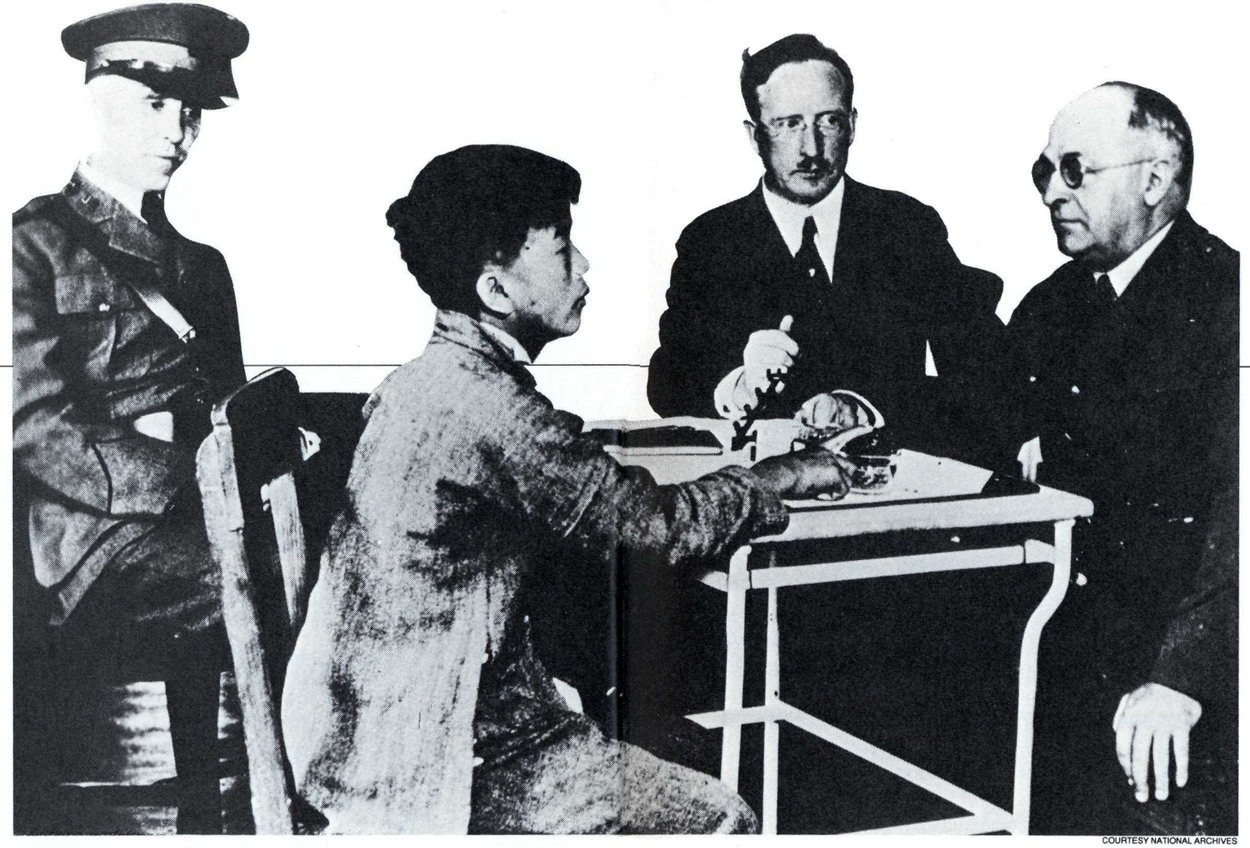
Always, the memories of bewildering, senseless days spent on Angel Island haunted Yee. In 1976 he visited the rotting barracks. As he stepped inside the dormitory where he had stayed and saw the peelng, gray walls, every outrage, shame, and doubt he had felt there shook him again. Later, he expressed his feelings in a poem: "The first night, those buildings, I never forget. And when I go there, those poems on the wall have mostly disappeared."

IN HIS THIRTEEN YEARS AS AN INTERPRETER FOR THE immigration service, the Reverend Edward Lee watched thousands of young men match wits with their interrogators. "I used to think it was easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a Chinaman to pass through the Golden Gate." Lee sits with his spine straight up against an armchair in a sunny corner of his pink stucco house about a mile from the University of California campus in Berkeley. Now over eighty and a part-time pastor of a church in Vallejo, Lee speaks with a preacher's resonance and frequently chuckles at his recollections of those days on Angel Island.

In 1927 Lee was an ambitious young man with a master's degree in economics from the University. But he soon discovered that prejudice against Chinese-Americans like himself thwarted plans to start his own business. He did some church work and met Katharine Maurer, a missionary known as the "Angel of Angel Island." She knew that Lee was fluent in four dialects of the Pearl River delta region, homeland for the majority of the Chinese immigrants, and urged him to apply for a job as interpreter. He did so and was immediately accepted.

Each morning, Lee took the ferry from Berkeley to San Francisco where he would board a government cutter for the dock at Ayala Cove on the north side of Angel Island. In the administration building there, officials interrogated and cross-examined immigrants from morning till late afternoon. "The new immigrant would face a Board of Special Inquiry —two inspectors and a stenographer, who was also considered a member of the board. Generally, the chairman asked questions. The others, including the stenographer, could,

**"I wanted to talk to someone. It was just like in jail. I banged on the door. I wanted to get out of there."**



COURTESY NATIONAL ARCHIVES

***A youthful Chinese is fingerprinted in preparation for a lengthy interrogation by immigration officials on Angel Island during the 1920s. Many of the Chinese detainees were in their early teens. Some were valid immigrants, but some were "paper sons."***

too.'' An initial interrogation might last one day or two or three. How long depended on how many witnesses were called and ''if you ran into snags—by that I mean how many discrepancies in testimony.''

Inspectors would ask the immigrant his ''true name, who the parents were, and when and where they were born, the names of uncles, aunts and so on.'' Lee continues:

> Then the questions about where he lived, in what village, kind of house, how large the village, how far to nearest marketplace, name of marketplace, what school he attended.... They first take testimony from the father or whoever is sponsoring this person. Then they bring in the applicant.... and see if the answers match up. If there are glaring discrepancies, then he'd be denied admission.

Lee estimates that at least half the time there were discrepancies. Even if an immigrant's claim for admission was valid, he might trip on a question that was unclear because of language or cultural barriers. The immigrant's attorney would ''try to explain away'' the variations in replies. If authorities were still unconvinced, the immigrant could appeal his case to Washington. Authorities in Washington ultimately sustained fifty to seventy percent of the appeals, Lee says. ''So, a number of the immigrants got through the sieve.''

Lee remembers one inspector who would say, ''I don't care if he's a fake. If he can answer my questions, good luck to him!'' Some inspectors were ''fair and kind and would not ask overly tricky questions.'' And then there were others who would be ''very strict and try their best to eliminate as many applicants as possible because, at that time, there was still quite a bit of discrimination against the Chinese.''

Lawrence Sinclair believes that such intense scrutiny was fair. Now over ninety and retired to his native state of Montana, Sinclair was an inspector on Angel Island for thirty-odd years. ''I may be prejudiced because I know the background [of the applicants for admission to the United States]. I think the questions were fair. If they were who they claimed to be, their answers would match those of the witnesses.''

In a telephone interview from his home in Cascade, Sinclair points out that it was often impossible to verify the claims of the immigrants because the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 had destroyed countless documents. What's more, birth certificates were not commonly issued in Chinese villages at that time. ''Whether they were who they were supposed to be or just a friend—if they agreed we couldn't do anything.'' Sinclair would question applicants at great length. ''You understand they came not as aliens, but as potential alleged citizens.'' He estimates that, ultimately, no more than ten percent of the Chinese on Angel Island were deported.

The Reverend Lee recalls a ''double-header,'' a case when two young men sought admission as the sons of a merchant.

> They [the inspectors] ask the first applicant if there was a dog in the house. He said, ''Yes.'' Later they ask the second if there was a dog in the house. He said, ''No, no dog.'' The first applicant was recalled, and that question was put to him. He said, ''Yes, well we had a dog, but we knew we were coming to the United States, so we ate the dog.''

Lee remembers one heart-breaking story:

> I might tell you one case, very sad. A mother brought in two sons for a triple-header. Her husband and father lived in Chicago. The application was denied. They suspected one of the sons was a ringer [a ''paper son'': one with false papers alleging him to be the son of a United States citizen]. The woman probably felt her chances of admission were nil, and she couldn't face the idea of having to return. She sharpened a pair of chopsticks and put them through her ear. When Washington was wired of the suicide, immediately the sons were landed.

Chinese detainees speak of other suicides, especially by women who feared they would have to prostitute themselves to pay for their deportation to China. But official records do not mention such suicides.

America has power, but no justice.
In prison, we were victimized as if we were guilty.
Given no opportunity to explain, it was really brutal.
I bow my head in reflection but there is nothing I can do.

WHILE SOME OF HIS COMRADES VENTED THEIR rage in poetry, Chack Chan protested his forced detention with a storm. In 1939 Chan, a native-born United States citizen, and his two young sons were held on Angel Island for one night, and ''what a terrible time'' that was. ''If I had stayed on Angel Island for a week, I'd have a book of complaints.'' More than forty years later, indignation still steams out of Chan, a seventy-two-year-old, retired Bechtel engineer.

Chan lives in a flat a few blocks west of San Francisco's Chinatown. The son of a labor contractor who hired hundreds of Chinese men to build California's roads and railways, Chan grew up in Oroville, a Sacramento valley town whose 16,000 Chinese at that time made it one of the state's largest Chinatowns. When the Depression struck, even Chan's degree from Berkeley in mechanical engineering did not help him find work. So he traveled to China where he worked in an aircraft factory about one hundred miles from Canton City and later, for a steamship company. He married Victoria Ting Keng, and the couple had two sons and a daughter.

When Chan wanted to take his wife to America for a year's visit, officials at the American consulate rejected his request. ''It was 1938 or 1939. I forget the exact date. At that time, the Japanese were fighting China. I could hear the Japanese gunboats downstream. It was quite an adventure.'' Chan pondered what he should do with his children. He decided to leave his oldest child, a girl, with his wife. ''I was worried the immigration people would give me too much trouble if I took three.'' Chan's lightheartedness is broken as he speaks of his daughter. ''I lost her.'' He explains that the little girl died in China of malaria.

''We didn't get first- or second-class berths,'' relates Chan in recalling the ocean voyage with his young sons. ''We took two rolls of bedding and two suitcases with us.'' When Chan learned that he, an American citizen, was to be detained on Angel Island, he let out a howl. ''I wanted to talk to somebody. It was just like in jail. I banged on the door.''

''What do you want?''

''I want to get out of here.''

''We'll let you know when your interview comes up.''

Chan tended to his children, boiling water for powdered milk. ''What a terrible time,'' he says now, with a chuckle. He banged at the door again. ''I want to know when I have an interview.''

''Take your time, Chan. We'll interview you. Maybe tomorrow, if your turn comes up.''

The next morning Chan cleaned up the children and started banging again. ''I'm not supposed to be here. I'm a United States citizen. Keep my kids here. I'm not going to stay here.'' Finally his turn came.

His interrogators asked him why the little ones were without their mother. ''I told them, you guys wouldn't let her come.'' Chan was landed. When diplomatic appeals failed to get his wife here, Chan bought false papers for a ''couple thousand dollars,'' and she soon came to the United States.

Chan has returned to Angel Island ''once or twice'' since that awful night. ''I just hate to see the place—the carving on

**He stood before his bunk and cried, "Now I can walk in and forgive America." He went home free.**

the wall, all those writings. Some of those people were paper sons, but most were not." Chan feels discriminatory immigration policies "weren't the work of one person, but the majority of people of that time. People are different now. They know more of the history of the Chinese people in this country."

HIM MARK LAI DEDICATES HIS LIFE TO TELLING that history. Clippings and reports about his work at the Chinese Cultural Foundation in San Francisco clutter the narrow kitchen in his North Beach home.

For his own peace of mind, Lai searched to learn what caused the shameful story of Angel Island and to understand the experience of his father who came to America in January of 1910 on the *Siberia*, the first ship to carry Chinese to Angel Island. From the 1870s, states Lai, Chinese laborers became scapegoats. Large employers hired them in mass, exploiting the Chinese willingness to work hard for low wages. This gave "politicians and demagogues" the excuse to "pour oil on the fire" of "racial antagonisms already permeating the country."

In reality, says Lai, the Chinese were never a threat. At the peak of their immigration, they numbered about one percent of California's population. They played a vital part in shaping California, dynamiting Sierra granite to make way for the transcontinental railroad and aging their bones while building levees in the Sacramento San Joaquin delta.

But after the Chinese completed those dangerous jobs and competed with white workers in fields and factories, they were beaten, lynched, or run out of town—sometimes shipped out in railroad boxcars. When the Chinese took refuge in California's Chinatowns, white men harrassed them with discriminatory laws. In San Francisco, for example, regulations forbade people to live in rooms with less than 600 cubic feet of air per person. In Chinatown's crowded tenements, that was an impossible standard to meet. Says Lai:

> They arrested the tenants.... It was just as crowded in jail.... A lot of people did not know we had these laws. This phase of history must be told because it shows liberty and democracy in this country is not all it's cracked up to be. You have to fight for it.

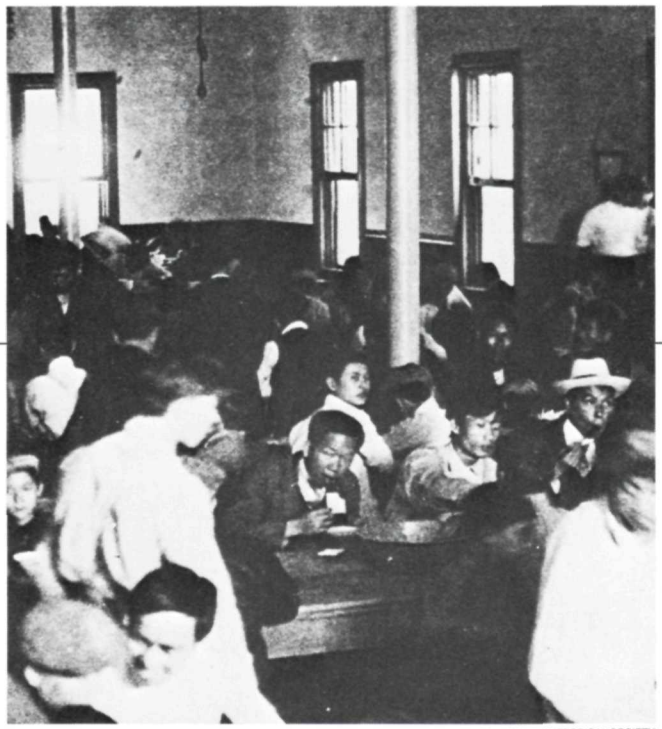
When Genny Lim, a daughter of Chinese immigrants, researched the history of Angel Island, she met elderly men and women who found it too painful to talk about. One "older, prominent woman" was shocked to think tourists would someday wander through the place of her shame. And Mrs. Lim's own parents at first could not understand why she wanted them to speak of Angel Island. She persevered, however, and was rewarded with "a clue to how they [her parents' generation] perceive America.... Chinese have been known for being apolitical, passive. We realized very late that this passiveness was not a cultural trait but because they were accustomed to being aliens." Mrs. Lim's play *Paper Angels*, telling the story of the Chinese detention on Angel Island, ran in New York's Greenwich Village in the spring of 1982.

> There are tens of thousands of poems composed
> on these walls.
> They are all cries of complaint and sadness.
> The day I am rid of this prison and attain success,
> I must remember that this chapter once existed.

If Alexander Weiss had not been so curious, the poems may well have disappeared forever. And with them, a shabby chapter in American history might have been ignored. But the calligraphy inside the crumbling barracks intrigued Weiss, an affable California state park ranger with an avid interest in history. On that day over a dozen years ago he excitedly told his superiors about his discovery of oriental characters on the walls of a dilapidated building on Angel Island. They did not share his enthusiasm.

Undaunted, Weiss invited an Asian studies professor from San Francisco State University to inspect the writings. Dr. George Araki concluded that they were not the work of Japanese prisoners-of-war held on the island during World War II but were the efforts of some of the nearly 175,000 Chinese detained at Angel Island from 1910 to 1940, when the immigration station was abandoned. Asian-American college students, hungry for the story of their ancestors, painstakingly copied, photographed, and translated the poems.

The publication of the poems in an Asian-American literary journal sparked a determination among San Francisco's Chinese-Americans to pry loose the story of Angel Island and tell it, in the hope that no one would ever relive such an era. One of the most determined is Paul Chow, a native San Franciscan who is helping to raise funds to convert the old



COURTESY CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

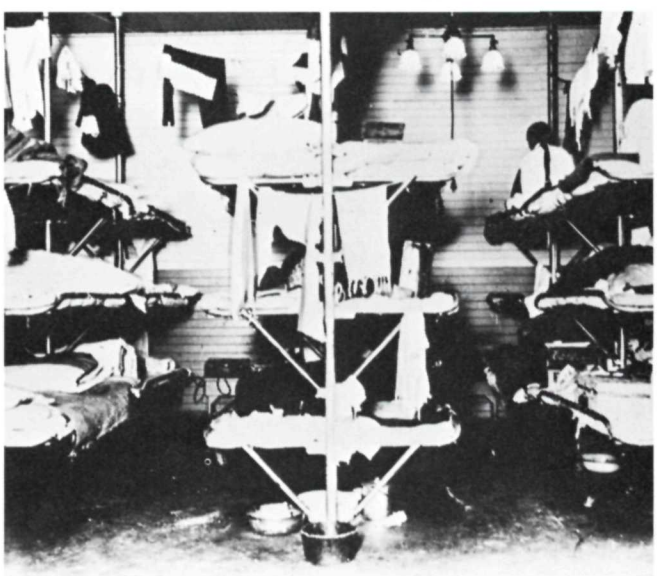
***One of the main complaints of the detainees was about the meals served to them in this dining room. After disturbances over the poor quality of food, immigration officials posted a sign in Chinese, warning inmates not to cause trouble or to spill food on the floor.***

barracks on Angel Island into a modest museum honoring the Chinese who were detained there. On May 2, 1982, the one-hundredth anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chow and others who share his dream rode ferries from Tiburon and San Francisco to dedicate such a museum at Angel Island State Park.

For Chow, the ceremony affirmed a quest to unearth his heritage, a search that has nagged at him since childhood in Chinatown. Chow's father, Hing Gai Chow, and thousands of his generation, slipped through the knot of United States immigration policies as "paper sons." They sold their possessions to purchase false documents that declared them to be sons of merchants or of United States citizens, about the only exceptions to the exclusionary laws. Even in their late years, the oldtimers shunned talk of Angel Island because they feared deportation.

Paul Chow hopes that the museum will be completed before his father's generation dies, but restoration of the barracks goes slowly because of lack of money. Chow visited Angel Island in 1976 with his father. "He stood before his bunk and cried, 'Today, I can walk in and forgive America.' He walked home with me, and he was free."

**Frances D'Emilio** *is a writer for the Associated Press.*



COURTESY PAUL Q. CHOW

PHOTO BY LELAND WONG

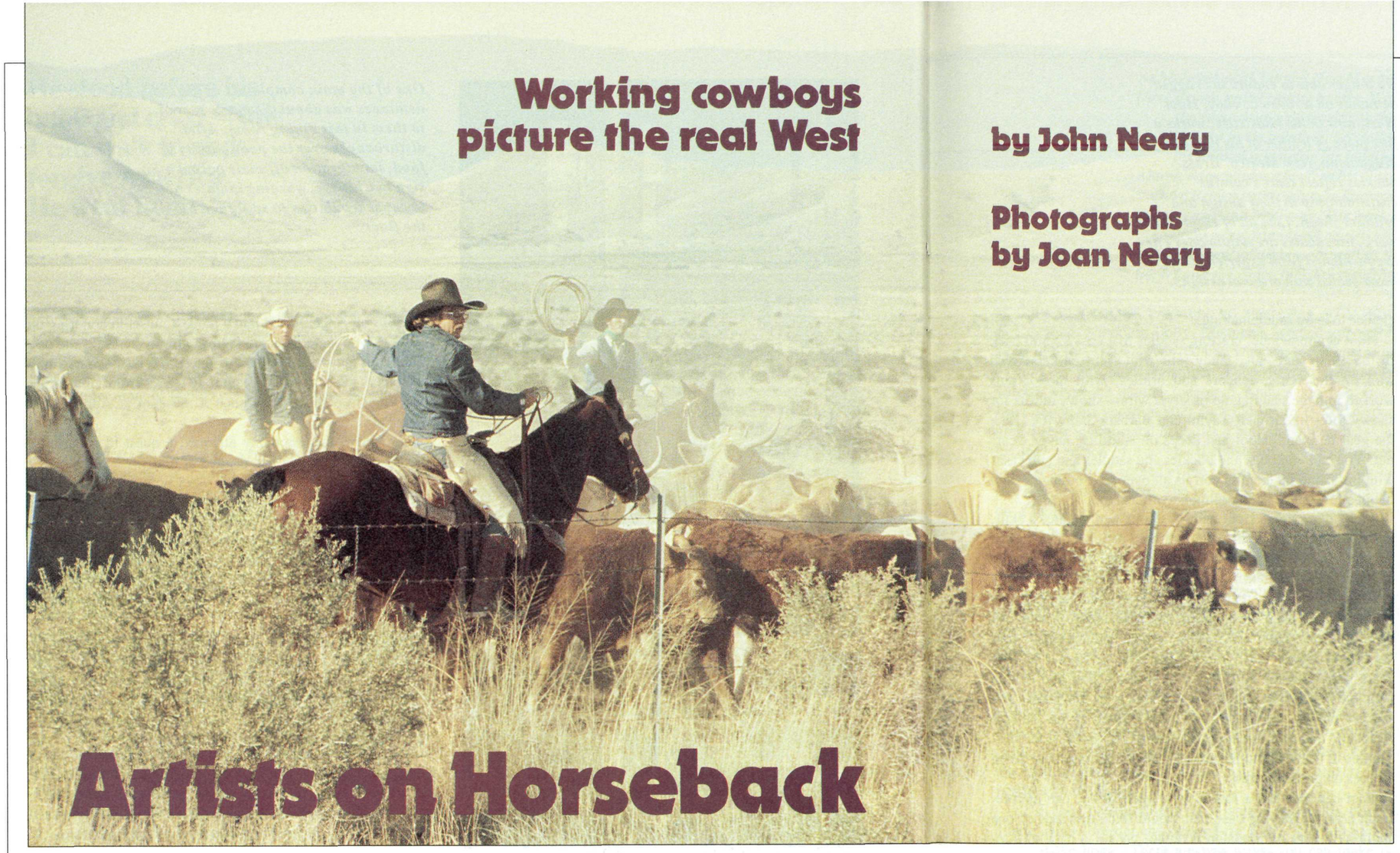
***With limited opportunity to use the exercise yard at Angel Island, Chinese detainees spent most of their time lying on triple-deck, steel bunks, crowded close together in their barracks. On the walls they carved poems expressing their anger and humiliation. The deserted barracks today bring memories of a time of shame and bewilderment to men and women who spent troubled days there.***

# Working cowboys picture the real West

## Artists on Horseback

by John Neary

Photographs by Joan Neary



*When cowboy Curtis Fort is not at his workbench modeling figures to be cast in bronze, he is on the range doing what comes naturally—cowboying. Here, Fort prepares to use his lasso while he helps out at a roundup on the Johnson Ranch near White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.*

THERE IS A WICKED GLEAM TO THE GUN BELTS, buckles and harness that come off saddle-maker Hoot Hart's bench in Magdalena, New Mexico, a quality foreign to the world of mass-monogrammed glitter in the Western boutiques.

There is honesty and accuracy in the bronze sculptures that come from Curtis Fort's workroom in Bosque Farms, New Mexico, alien to those comfortable icons you see in the airport gift shoppe.

And there is faithful verisimilitude in the paintings and sketches that Dave Brown produces in his studio near Tinnie, New Mexico, so true to life that cowboys of the area coming upon them can trace the lineage of the horses depicted and the riders atop them, and tell the range and the season of the year and the time of day. These pictures are the art of a working cowboy, which Dave is—which Curtis is, and which Hoot was, and at heart still is.

Deep love of the West inspires these three men. Curtis Fort often drives a half-day to work a roundup for the sheer fun of it. Hoot Hart, retired after a lifetime of cowboying and saddlemaking, can't stay away from his bench, where he works out in rawhide and brass the designs that keep blossoming in his mind's eye. And Dave Brown, ordered to stay off horses years ago by doctors who put a steel plate in his leg after the last bull tossed him, keeps saddling up horses to train just the same.

Their art springs from the life it represents: a tiny bronze horseman stretching in the stirrups, scouting a lost calf, was first shaped in wax, then cast in metal to stand forever just the way Curtis saw it on the range; a gun belt richly tooled is buckled with a brass medallion that Hoot hand-carved with a burin the way he has for decades; a painting of a cowboy friend, hunkered down for one last smoke at sundown before going in to dinner, is worked out by Dave Brown on his easel after the horses have been fed and watered for the evening.

This is art from a tradition, a way of life, and an outlook that can only be labelled as Western. Having confronted hard times, prevailed in spite of injury and pain, and thus acquired the cocky self-assurance to assume that they will just naturally continue to do so, these cowboys have achieved a kind of grace, a winsome, wryly humorous, lanky personal style that is the very essence of Western, and that cannot help but be manifest in their art. Taut economy of line, competence and functionality, preparedness, grit, jokes, tragedy, the handing-on from generation to generation of hard-won know-how, are inseparably intertwined in the men and what they do and make. Remington saw it; Charlie Russell perceived it, and a host of others have striven to catch it, too. These men seek to embrace the life they love in what they do, making them part of an old tradition of Western art so powerful it has itself become a part of the West.

Hoot Hart looks part elf, part aging brigand. He has, at sixty-six, bright blue eyes, a shock of iron-gray hair that is forever falling over them, and a quick and terrible smile that does not quite mask the boyish deviltry behind it. Hoot lives in a time capsule entirely of his own devising, a tiny adobe house on the edge of Magdalena, New Mexico, which itself seems poised on the far edge of modernity. Hoot heats his adobe with wood, boils his water before he drinks it "because of all the chemicals they put into it nowadays," and keeps his rifle handy, its muzzle capped with tinfoil to keep corrosion out of the barrel. In an age of sitcom-video caricatures of humanity, Hoot looks almost grandfatherly—but not quite. Look closer and in his battered features is a discernible tough competence ready to handle whatever comes along. The iris of one eye sprang a leak and ran down into the pupil, souvenir of a dogie's horn that jabbed him in some long-ago rodeo. Hoot walks with a slight stoop, too, relic of another horn that gored him through the abdomen, ending his rodeo days and launching his career as a leather worker. He sustained a shrapnel wound during World War II in the Pacific, and his left hand, as he puts it, looks "as if it's gone through a crusher" from all his years of work on ranches and at his bench.

Hoot's been down a few roads in his varied life. Still a teenager, for example, he was climbing a rope ladder from the back of a galloping horse some fifty feet to the cockpit of a hurtling biplane as a stuntman in a traveling air circus. After the authorities halted that act, he became a parachute jumper, for the same pay: $100 a week for one performance. Once, Hoot made all kinds of harness and tack for buggies and carriages and wagons, knew all the names of myriad pieces of equipage, worked in shops in Great Falls, Hollywood, San Francisco, Llano, Texas, Des Moines, Pendleton, Oregon, Phoenix, and finally settled down in Magdalena after running a shop in Socorro. "You don't get no credit when you work for the other guy," Hoot says. "You do better to work for a song—and go sing it yourself."

Son of a Texas Ranger killed in a border gunfight, Hoot ran away from a cruel aunt, who prophesied he would be in the penitentiary before he was twenty-one, and got a job on the Four Sixes, near Guthrie, Texas. "I was jingling horses," he recalls, "milked one milk cow, and cut that damned mesquite wood. I was about fourteen or fifteen, and I got fifteen dollars a month." Hoot took to working scrap brass into buckles to kill time in the line camps, and when the rodeo accident ended his cowboying days, he jumped at the


***No longer able to endure the rugged demands on a rodeo cowboy, Hoot Hart, now in his midsixties, works a fine piece of leather at his home in Magdalena, New Mexico. Brass buckles reflect Hart's careful craftsmanship in their design and brilliant sheen. Like all of Hoot Hart's work, his saddles are handmade. They are fashioned from experience and hand-tooled with original designs.***

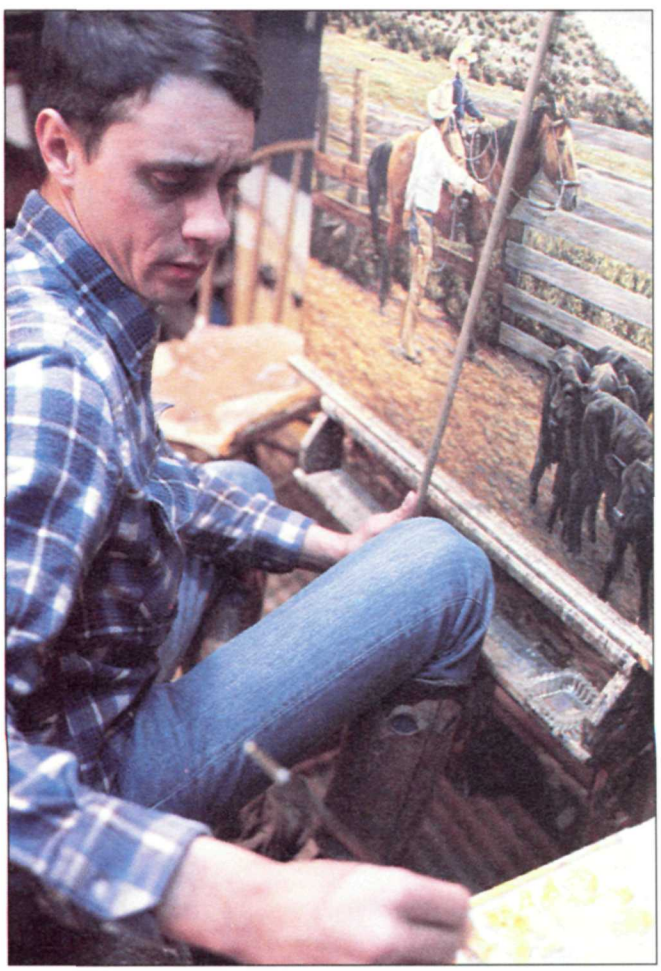
chance to learn saddlemaking.

Hoot can remember crafting saddles that cost $2,500 back in the 1930s and '40s, fancy jobs with eighteen-karat gold trim on the skirts, fenders and bridles, with monograms worked into the seat in gold or silver wire—showy outfits for showy folks like Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck. Like the gear he made, Hoot just keeps on working, never wears out. You can find belts and buckles and saddles and gun cases with his stamp on them in corrals all over the Southwest, and in not a few bankers' and oilmen's offices, too.

All of these items Hoot hand-fashions with a care, a skill, that constitutes a fine art, stitching with patience, cutting the buckles out of brass windmill pump casings, hand-engraving his designs with a burin the old-fashioned way, achieving a quality and durability that is virtually unimaginable to anyone who has seen only the modern, machine-made versions of these articles. "Hoot's a cowboy through and through," says his friend, Curtis Fort, "and that's how he knows how to make good cowboy stuff." Curtis wears a belt and buckle with the Hoot Hart brand on it to hold up his jeans, and another one on his chaps, and still another on his horse's headstall, and two more on his spurs. He gives Hoot Hart buckles to friends, and he carries a Hoot Hart briefcase when he goes on business trips.

Hoot can turn out a saddle in a week or so, can double-stitch a travel shaving case that would fetch upwards of one hundred dollars on Madison Avenue, but he is officially retired, doing only favors for friends these days. "God," he says, "just gave me the gift, and I'm proud of it. I try not to copy anyone else. When somebody asks me to make something, I try to picture what *he* wants. I'm still learning. It may take me another thirty years. A lot of times," he says, "I'll get something in my head and I'll set down and make a bunch of stuff, draw it out to how it'll work. I'm always figuring out something. I'll just grab me a piece of leather and whittle, to see how it's going to look. I've *got* to do that, and picture it up in my mind." But as for cashing in on the boom in Western regalia with, say, a contract with a department store, forget it. "Blowin' and a-goin' and runnin' over one another? Hell, no! I had an ol' boy say, 'I'll set you up in New York, you'll make a million!' I said, 'No thanks, I can't pack that much.' I don't care about being rich. I'd rather have friends. If you're a millionaire, someone's always trying to kidnap you. If I wanted to be like that, I'd be an outlaw. I don't have to look over my back for no one."

*At his home near Tinnie, New Mexico, Dave Brown trains cutting horses. With the same degree of sensitivity that he brings to his painting, he "talks" the animal into doing his bidding. Above, Brown rides a fence at his place. Dave Brown paints what he knows—horses, ranching, rodeoing. His work is so lifelike that friends recognize each other in Brown's paintings, as well as the horses and the range they are traveling.*

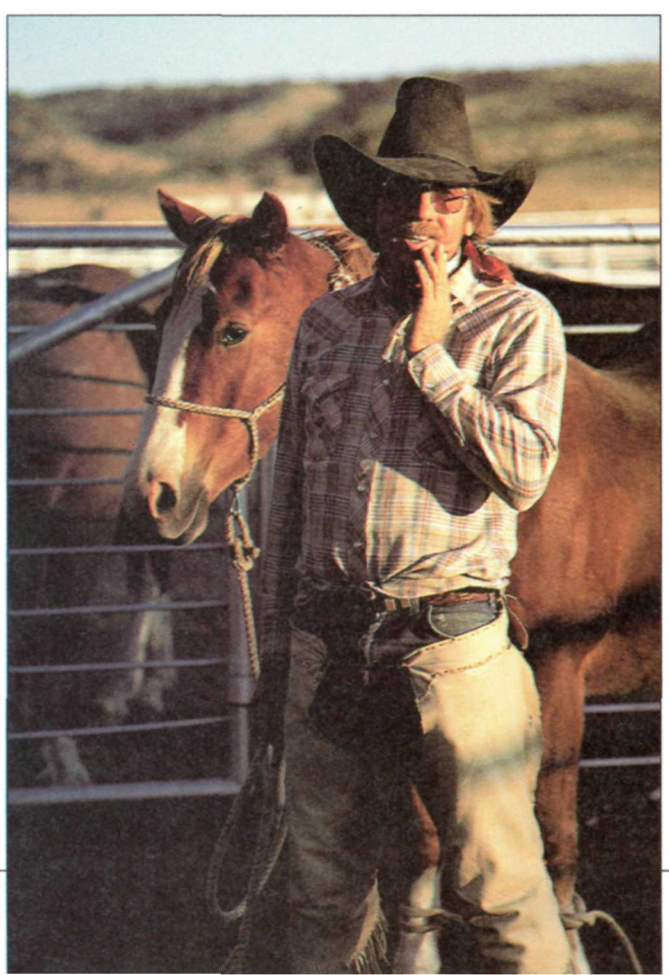


LIKE HOOT HART, DAVE BROWN RAN AWAY FROM HOME young. School in Holly, Michigan, seemed impossibly dull to a sixteen-year-old boy who had loved horses for as long as he could remember. Dave headed straight for Texas, where he started rodeoing. And, again like Hoot, Dave found his vocation after an accident. In 1972, he spent nine weeks in a hospital bed after a bull threw him, breaking his leg. The son of a technical illustrator, Dave discovered himself sketching scenes of the world he liked best: horses, ranching, and rodeoing. The next year, Dave "got hung up on a bull again," and wound up with a steel plate and ten screws holding his leg together. This time, the doctor told Dave, his rodeoing was over: no more riding, period.

"But," says Dave, "we all have to do what we got to do." So he took up breaking horses and training them for a living, not only to earn cash, but to stay in touch with the cowboys and horses that are his life, and that inspire his art. Several times a day Dave selects one of the horses brought to him for training and leads it to the round corral in his front yard surrounded by fifty sections of mesquite and sage and lonely loveliness some thirty miles northeast of Roswell, New Mexico, with the rugged Capitan Mountains for a backdrop to the west. There, patiently, not like a drill sergeant but with the kind understanding of a man who loves animals, Dave works with the horse.

"I'd call it natural ability," says one of his clients, quarter-horse breeder and dealer Billy Key. "Getting into the mind of the horse. There are two ways: you can make the horse do it, or you can talk him into it. When you talk him into it, you're going to come out with a better horse. It's nothing but psychology. Watch Dave's hands. You'll run into two kinds of trainers: jerk-the-spurs, or Dave. He'll ride her with his little finger. What this is, is an expression of his art work. In his horses, it'll show up as level-headed horses, real calm."

Getting aboard a ton or so of horse that has never been ridden before is a fearsome adventure, but Dave, despite the steel plate and the ten screws and the wife and three sons to support, shows not a quiver of emotion as he mounts up to begin this phase of training a quarter-horse. A rooster crows in the distance, the wind ruffles an old saddle blanket folded across the top pipe rail of the corral. The horse stands and waits and the tension passes. "Boy," Dave says with a grin afterward, "I like it when you step up on 'em and they're not halfway across the county!"

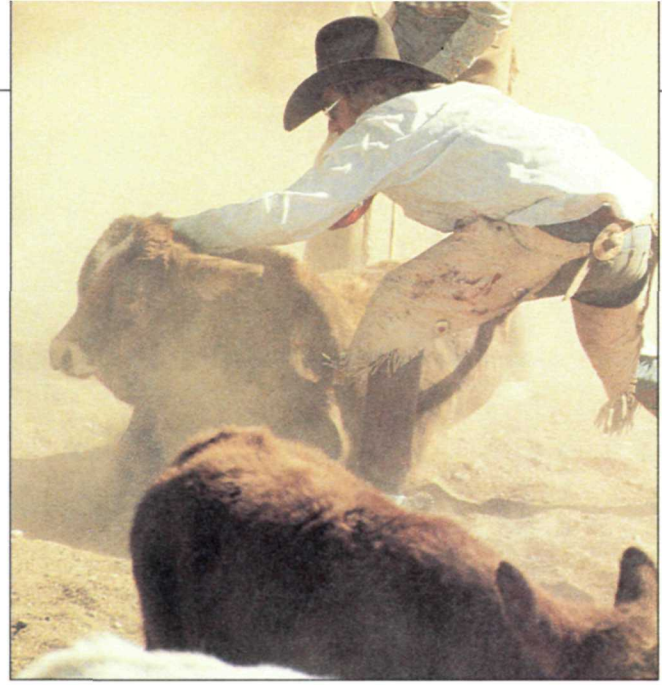


***From his many years of cowboying, Curtis Fort knows what a horse looks like. Unfinished, a wax model stands on his work table. With skillful hands, Fort uses his hot knife to carve the final touches on the wax model, readying it for a bronze casting. In a corral with a friend, Fort prepares to carry on his work in the saddle, his occupation since he was old enough to sit a horse.***

As skillfully as he turns rattle-brained colts into hard-working cutting horses, Dave does his art, sitting down in front of his easel still clad in his chaps, working under fluorescent lamps that simulate daylight—because he has used up the daylight for his training. On the stiff board come briskly to life the brightly hued scenes that make up Dave's working life, men he knows and works with, their families, their houses, stables and corrals, their horses, and their dogs. Friends who stop by instantly recognize other friends, spying their unmistakable likenesses on Dave's easel. ''That's what really makes it all,'' Dave says. ''You have to *know* what you're painting, like old Charlie Russell did. Most of the artists I know are doing the contemporary cowboy, but you still have to savvy what you paint. A lot of these guys are good illustrators, but to be worth something, it has to be *right*. Everything I do is all real people. In a way, I see myself as a kind of historian. I'm recording these people as they are. I could sell a lot more paintings if I painted to sell—longhorns and windmills and sunsets and bluebonnets and that kind of crap. But I don't. There's a whole different cowboy today, and not that many people who are painting them know what they are painting.

''Things are changing,'' Dave says. ''The West is different from what it was fifty years ago, and it's still changing now. Eventually all these people will be gone, too.'' In the meantime, there are horses to be trained, pictures to be painted, good times to be savored. Dave loves every minute of it. ''You have to know what's inside those shadows,'' he says, ''and the fun and the feel. I can't live without those horses, those old sorry, hammer-headed horses. I wouldn't be able to do what I do if I hadn't done what I did. Happily,'' says Dave, ''the West is still the West. There are still Curtises.'' Dave and his wife Donna named their third son after their friend, sculptor-cowboy Curtis Fort.

Curtis is the cowboy whose name other cowboys invoke when they want to illustrate just how woolly the West still is, telling about the time that Curtis roped the bear, or the time that Curtis tied his neckerchief onto the antlers of the buck, on and on into the bunkhouse night. I met Curtis up on the vast Vermejo Ranch in northern New Mexico about ten years ago, when he was just beginning to sculpt seriously. He had been cowboying seriously ever since his father had hoisted him onto a saddle, when he was too small to get down by himself and had to stay there all day. The little figurines of coyotes and broncs and cowboys that he carved in the wax he



***Helping out on the Johnson Ranch, Curtis Fort wrestles an animal in place during the routine of a roundup. Fort's sculptures are based on such experiences, as his chief aim is to portray reality. He maintains that he is not an artist, only a cowpuncher who sculpts "because he just can't help it."***

heated in his kitchen toaster-oven had kept him, he said, from getting homesick when he had been in ag school and he had kept at it.

Nowadays, Curtis is settled closer to the bright lights outside Albuquerque so his wife Jackie, a nurse, can pursue her medical career. But several times a month Curtis tosses his saddle into the back of his pickup and goes off to help a rancher friend round up and brand and handle the rest of the chores that make up the endless toil of running an outfit. Curtis has met many other artist-cowboys in the course of working around the Southwest: he bumped into Hoot Hart while working on a spread near Magdalena, met Dave Brown when he was helping out on a ranch just a hundred miles or so down the road, and he has tried to set up shows, arrange gallery exhibitions, even tried his hand at establishing a gallery himself. But all the while he has remained first of all a cowboy who does art because he just can't help it.

"What I'm trying to do," Curtis says, "is mostly things that mean something to me, that I've done a lot of myself." One sculpture that Curtis envisions would depict a range branding, an event that still occurs whenever a cowboy with the savvy to perform the operation comes across a stray calf that somehow eluded the roundup. "Normally," says Curtis, "you brand in the spring and then spend months riding those pastures. It'd be hard on that calf, driving it, say, eight miles back to the corrals. So we carry a cinch ring, and just heat it, take two green sticks and brand him with it, ear-mark him, give him his shots. It doesn't take too much of a fire if you've got the right kind of ring."

That's a simple event, but one that every working rancher and cowboy would instantly recognize, and the recognition of peers is what artist-cowboys like Curtis seek more than salon accolades. "What I harp on," Curtis says, "is authenticity. Bronze or a painting, everything in there ought to be right." As he talks, Curtis heats his sculpting knife in the flame of a candle and works on a wax horse. His bench is rough pine, scarred with the burnt-in brands of all the ranches where he has punched cattle. The horse, when complete, will be part of the running-iron tableau. Curtis talks about the vast difference between today's sleek pedigreed horseflesh and the rangy critters that old-time cowpokes worked with—and he snorts in disgust at how some of what he calls "band wagon" artists, capitalizing on the boom in Western themes, will anachronistically employ today's impossibly fat and well-groomed stock in an allegedly historic scene. "It's hard to build one of them crumby-looking horses like they used to have," Curtis says, but if it is verisimilitude you're seeking, "you can't hardly spend too much time on them suckers."

Curtis can't stay away from cowboying. "There's action there," he says. "You're working with cattle and horses and good people—good, hearty people. There's a lot to being a cowpuncher. It's not just getting on a horse. You don't learn it by coming out every Saturday. There's an art to it. *Whatever* they drag out and catch, you know how to handle it. You feel good. You're doing something that's skilled. What percentage of the American population has that kind of skill anymore? Most cowboys have a really big heart and will do most anything for you. You can leave stuff in the bunkhouse and nobody's going to steal it. They'll do a half-million dollars worth of business on a handshake. There are not many businesses like that any more.

"And I like that big old country. I love the mountain men, wish I could have seen what they saw. That's the same kind of feeling that you have cowboying, those big open spaces and that good air. I'm not an artist. I don't even like that term, because I'm not. All I'm doing is having fun." He pauses and recalls growing up on a ranch. "Till I left home," he exclaims with delight, "baloney was a delicacy, because all we ever got was steak!"

The feeling of those times is what he is trying to embody in his work, and he tells the story behind a sculpture that shows a rancher teaching his young son to catch and saddle a horse, a skittish, coltish critter not unlike the boy himself. Curtis calls it "Dad Starts Two," and he recalls the morning that inspired it. "Before I knew it," he says, "he'd rolled her over and had all four legs tied! 'Maybe this is going to be a little more than we bargained for,' were my thoughts exactly. I had a hackamore, and he said, 'Let's see how she'll do.' I rode her in my sleep, trying to figure out how to ride her!

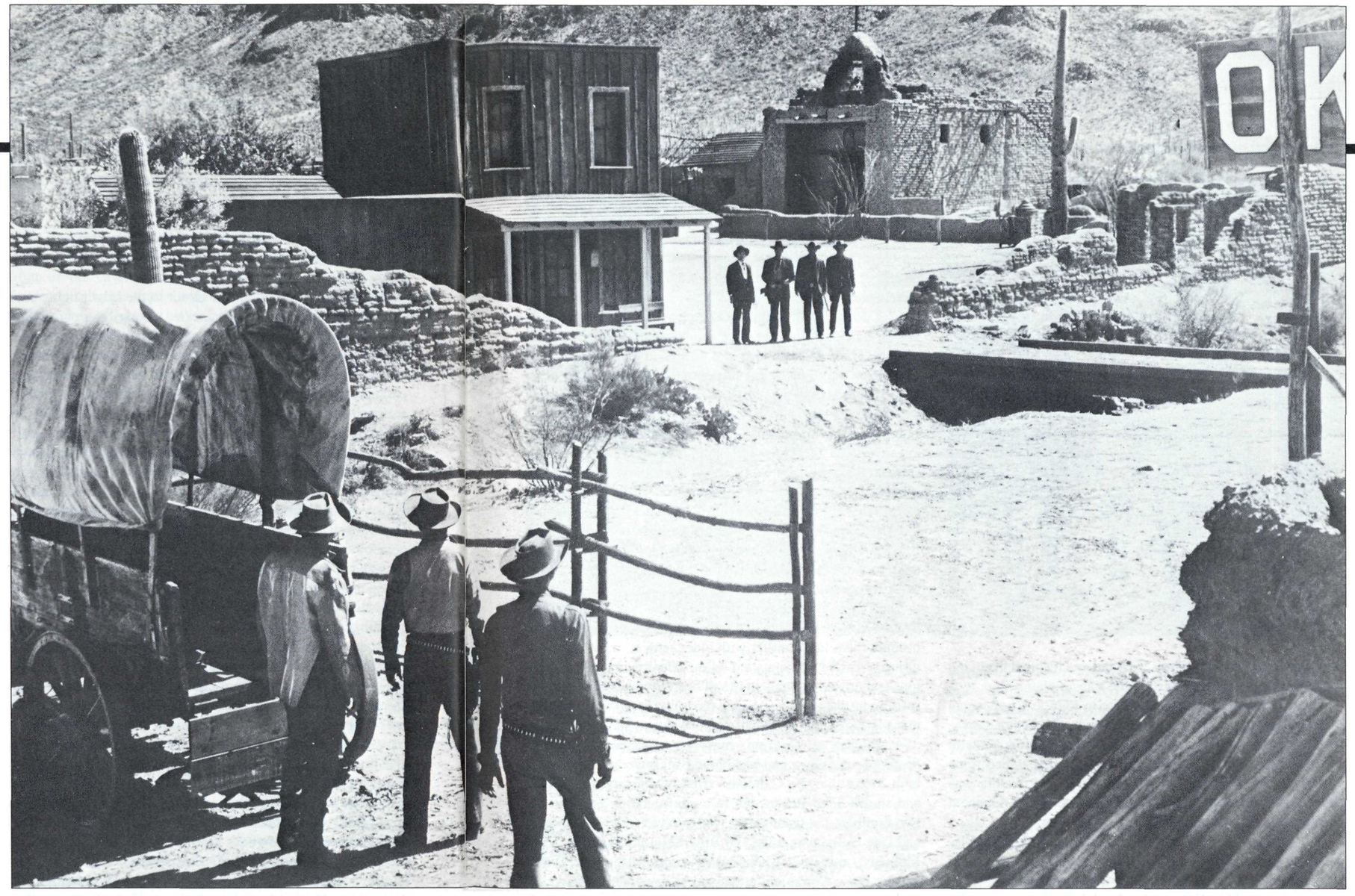
"That's the kind of thing I'm trying to get into, something that is real, and that means something to me."

**John Neary** *is a free-lance writer who lives and works in New Mexico.*

## Wyatt Earp goes to Hollywood

# Celluloid Lawman

**by Paul A. Hutton**




***This showdown between the Earp brothers and the Clanton clan is from Paramount Pictures'* Gunfight at the O.K. Corral *(1956), starring Burt Lancaster as Wyatt Earp and Kirk Douglas as Doc Holliday.***

NO NAME IS MORE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH OUR image of the frontier lawman than Wyatt Earp. In countless novels, popular histories, television programs, and motion pictures, he has brought law and order to the wild and wicked frontier. Yet Earp's reputation—now almost a national myth—was essentially invented. While Earp did indeed live an interesting and sometimes dramatic life during the final days of the frontier, the image of the town-taming marshal that surrounds his name is as much fiction as Deadwood Dick or Hopalong Cassidy.

Western films and television programs have been the most important elements in fixing Earp in the public mind as a representative hero-type. With gleaming badge and blazing pistols Wyatt has marched through twenty films and a long-running television series. Of late, as a result of changing social attitudes, the badge has become a bit tarnished even though the lawman image has remained firmly fixed in the national consciousness.

Wyatt Earp was born in Monmouth, Illinois, in 1848, the third of farmer Nicholas Earp's five boys. He turned to law enforcement early, winning election as constable of Lamar, Missouri, in 1870. The sudden death of his young bride, however, turned Wyatt away from the badge, and he struck out for the Indian Territory. Soon he was behind bars for

horse stealing, but he escaped from jail and blended in among the buffalo hunters then infesting the Kansas plains.

Wyatt returned to sporting a badge in 1875 as a policeman in Wichita, Kansas. The Earp family had a stake in the town, for brother James Earp worked as a bartender while his wife ran a nearby brothel. Having a relative on the police force was good for business, but Wyatt's career in Wichita was short-lived. After an 1876 fistfight with a political opponent of his boss, he was dismissed.

The young itinerant lawman moved on to Dodge City where he was briefly employed on the police force before being caught up in the Black Hills gold-rush fever of 1877. He found no gold in Dakota, but he did develop a talent for gambling, and for the next year he drifted about plying this new trade. The steady income of a lawman proved more attractive than the fluctuating fortunes of the gaming tables, and Wyatt returned to Dodge in 1878 to accept a position as assistant city marshal.

His best friends were not the solid citizens of Dodge's business community, but rather the saloon proprietors, gamblers, prostitutes, and pimps that plied the visiting Texas cowboys. These included such notable frontier characters as Bat Masterson, Luke Short, Ben Thompson, and John "Doc" Holliday. Earp's close friendship with Holliday has been the inspiration for numerous novels and films, all turning on the irony and tension of the bond between outlaw and lawman. "The strangest alliance this side of heaven or hell, between the most famous lawman of them all and the most feared of all gambler-badmen," was how Paramount promoted the glossiest of all the Earp films, *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*. In reality their friendship was not strange at all, for Earp and Holliday were similar in most ways and both made a living by exploiting the underside of frontier boomtown life. Far from being an attraction of opposites, their friendship was built on mutual interests.

Several members of the Earp clan drifted to the silver boomtown of Tombstone, Arizona, and they persuaded Wyatt to join them in 1880. For a while Wyatt rode as a shotgun messenger for Wells Fargo but soon pinned on a star as deputy sheriff for Pima County. His brother Virgil was town marshal of Tombstone, brother James tended bar in a local saloon, and brother Morgan worked for Wells Fargo. Bat Masterson, Luke Short, and Doc Holliday drifted into town to work the tables of the Oriental Saloon, where Wyatt was part owner.

The Earps became firm friends of the new business and Republican political establishment of Tombstone. This brought them into conflict with older settlers, most notably a group of rural Democrats led by the Clanton clan. The Clantons and other small ranchers had been engaged in a lucrative rustling business for years, and the brand of law enforcement that the Earps brought to Tombstone threatened their future.

A complex set of events involving a stagecoach holdup, beatings, shootings, and bad blood over a woman courted by both Wyatt and the Clantons' friend Democratic politician and sheriff John Behan, led to a confrontation between the two families. On October 26, 1881, Wyatt, Virgil, Morgan, and Doc Holliday met Ike and Billy Clanton, Tom and Frank McLaury, and Billy Claiborne in a vacant lot near Tombstone's O.K. Corral and attempted to solve their differences with guns. The McLaurys and Billy Clanton were killed, the other cowboys ran away, and Virgil and Morgan Earp were wounded. Controversy immediately began over whether the Earps had murdered unresisting and innocent ranchers or fought a classic gun duel with hardened outlaws, with town Republicans supporting the Earps while rancher Democrats backed the Clantons.

A hearing before a judge favorable to the Earps ruled the case justifiable homicide, but the ranchers were far from finished. In December of 1881, Virgil was shot from ambush and crippled for life; the following March, Morgan was mur-

dered. Wyatt, who was now a Deputy U.S. Marshal for Arizona, packed Virgil and the Earp women off to California and began a bloody vendetta against the Clanton gang. With Doc Holliday and several friends he scoured the countryside for his brother's killers, leaving at least three dead men in his wake. Murder warrants were issued for Earp and his party, who quickly fled Arizona.

**(Opposite)** ***Johnny Mack Brown (center) as the marshal is aided by James Craig (left) and Fuzzy Knight in the second version of*** **Law and Order,** ***entitled*** **Man from Cheyenne** ***(Universal Pictures, 1940).*** **(Above)** ***As the marshal in the 1953 remake of*** **Law and Order** ***(Universal Pictures), Ronald Reagan confronts Russell Johnson.***

WYATT'S DAYS AS A LAWMAN WERE OVER, AND HE turned to gambling and saloon keeping as full-time occupations. He followed the last Western mining frontier from boomtown to boomtown in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Alaska. Eventually he settled in Los Angeles where he spent the last twenty years of his life.

In Los Angeles a colony of southwestern cowboys worked as stuntmen and extras for the infant film industry. Several of these men were old friends of Earp's. He took to hanging around the movie sets, became fascinated with the new medium, and made the acquaintance of the great western star William S. Hart. Hart admired Wyatt and attempted to get the studios to film an Earp biography, but the producers saw no box-office potential.

Wyatt did make it into the movies, however, but only as an extra in a crowd scene of the 1916 Douglas Fairbanks feature, *The Half-Breed*. The film's director, Allan Dwan, found Earp a rather pathetic figure. "Earp was a one-eyed old man in 1915," Dwan recalled. "But he had been a real marshal in Tombstone, Arizona, and he was as crooked as a three-dollar bill. He and his brothers were racketeers, all of them. They shook people down, they did everything they could to get dough." Earp's friends tried to persuade Dwan to use Earp in other movies, but the director found him "timid about being photographed, about acting and pretending."

Wyatt had no future before the camera, but he was convinced that his story could be sold as a movie if only he could find the right author to help him set it down. He finally found his man in Stuart N. Lake.

Lake had been a reporter for the New York *Herald* and

press agent for Theodore Roosevelt before taking up freelance writing as a full-time occupation. He was an avid, frontier-history buff and first heard of Earp from Bat Masterson, by then a famous New York sportswriter and personal friend of President Roosevelt. Lake traveled west, determined to find Earp and write his biography. Friends at Universal Studios put him in touch with Earp, and a year-long collaboration began.

Lake came too late, for he found Earp monosyllabic in speech, feeble in mind and health, prone to spin tall tales while at the same time unable to recall many names, dates, or actual events from his past. Nevertheless, Lake's manuscript was almost complete when Earp died on January 13, 1929. Among the pallbearers at his funeral were film stars William S. Hart and Tom Mix.

Lake's book, *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal,* was published in 1931. An immediate success, it was serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Lake transformed the itinerant gambler and occasional lawman into a paragon of virtue, devoted to law and civilization, who single-handed had cleaned up the worst hell-holes on the frontier. "More than any other man of record in his time," wrote Lake, "he represents the exact combination of breeding and human experience which laid the foundations of Western empire."

Lake carefully nurtured the hero he had created. He wrote short stories and children's books on Earp, ever broadening the audience familiar with his story. Besides peddling his Earp biography to the film studios, Lake wrote three screen treatments featuring Earp that were made into films: *Winchester '73* (1950), *Powder River* (1953), and *Wichita* (1955). He also originated the popular television series, *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp,* wrote over two dozen scripts for it, and acted as consultant during its long run.

Stuart Lake, however, was not responsible for the first Wyatt Earp film. William R. Burnett's 1930 novel *Saint Johnson* was used as the basis of Universal's 1932 film *Law and Order.* Burnett is best remembered for gangster stories like *Little Caesar, The Asphalt Jungle,* and *High Sierra.* His novel of the Earp-Clanton feud (with all the names changed) reflected the hard characterizations and cynical world view of his other work. The elastic ethics of Burnett's Earp character, called Wayt Johnson, were tightened up by screenwriter John Huston. The script was nevertheless dark and moody, reflecting little faith in humanity. Walter Huston as Johnson brings law and order to an ungrateful Tombstone, with his brothers and best friend dying in the effort. Realizing that the people are not worthy of this sacrifice, he rides out of town after the final shootout at the O.K. Corral. It was a novel western for its time.

Lake sold his biography to Fox, and that studio brought out *Frontier Marshal* in 1934 as part of a series of George O'Brien budget westerns. Although set in Tombstone, the film was a traditional, action western with only a slight resemblance to Lake's book. The marshal's name was changed to Michael Wyatt, and his gambler friend became Doc Warren (played by Alan Edwards). Wyatt cleans out a nest of outlaws led by the town's mayor and rides off into the sunset with the banker's daughter.

Closer to Lake's book was the 1939 version of *Frontier Marshal,* directed by Allan Dwan. This time Earp and Doc Holliday, as played by Randolph Scott and Cesar Romero, were at least named. Gone, however, were Earp's brothers and all other historical characters. The plot concerned a well-bred girl from the east who comes searching for her vanished fiancé, the brooding, desperately ill Doctor Holliday. Earp falls in love with her. The way is cleared for their romance by the convenient demise of Holliday in the last-reel shootout with John Carradine's outlaws at the O.K. Corral.

"We never meant it to *be* Wyatt Earp," confessed director Dwan. "We were just making *Frontier Marshal* and that could be any frontier marshal." Earp's widow was not impressed by this explanation of the way her husband's life had been portrayed, and sued Fox for $50,000. She was particu-

larly grieved over the romance between Earp and Holliday's fiancée. Dwan squared it by convincing her that she was being portrayed by the film's leading lady.

THE EARP STORY WAS BACK THE FOLLOWING YEAR when Johnny Mack Brown starred in a remake of *Law and Order* and was featured again in the 1942 film *Tombstone, the Town too Tough to Die*. In the latter film Wyatt (Richard Dix) and Doc (Kent Taylor) are finally joined on screen by the rest of the Earp clan as well as assorted historical "good guys" and "bad guys." The image of Earp as the classic example of frontier lawman settled in on Hollywood.

The best of all the Earp films came in 1946 when Twentieth Century–Fox remade Lake's *Frontier Marshal* for the third time. In *My Darling Clementine* director John Ford used the Earp story to shape a classic parable of the confrontation between good and evil, civilization and savagery, that is at the heart of the frontier myth. Wyatt (Henry Fonda) reluctantly accepts the job of marshal after his younger brother is murdered by rustlers outside Tombstone. He suspects Old Man Clanton (Walter Brennan) and his sons of the crime but is unable to prove it until his new friend, the tragic gambler Doc Holliday (Victor Mature) provides the evidence. The inevitable showdown at the O.K. Corral follows, in which the Clantons and Holliday are killed. Wyatt then departs for California, leaving Tombstone a peaceful village where churches have replaced saloons and schools stand in place of gambling dens.

When he was just a prop boy, John Ford met Wyatt Earp. He liked the old man and would bring him a chair and cup of coffee while plying him with questions about his wild west days. Ford later recalled that Earp "told me about the fight at the O.K. Corral. So in *My Darling Clementine*, we did it exactly the way it had been." In spite of Earp's stories, or because of them, Ford's version is wildly inaccurate. Ford, however, would be the first to testify that national myth transcends fact.

After the success of *My Darling Clementine* several Earp films were produced, usually as budget westerns, as that branch of the western genre made its futile last stand against a horde of television horse operas. The Earp story was perfect for the budget western since it required a relatively small cast and could be filmed entirely on a western town lot. The third remake of *Law and Order* in 1953 was representative of these last B-westerns. Ronald Reagan made a stalwart marshal, but the film lacked the cynical mood and realistic edge of the first version. Despite the fact that Reagan made only six westerns during his career before moving on to television and politics, he came to be identified with the genre. Political cartoonists repeatedly featured him in cowboy garb, and in one of his television commercials during the 1980 presidential race President Jimmy Carter solemnly reminded the American people that Reagan's stance on arms control was reckless, since "we are not dealing here with another shoot-out at the O.K. Corral."


**(Opposite)** ***In*** **Hour of the Gun** ***(United Artists, 1967) Jason Robards played Doc Holliday and James Garner was Wyatt Earp,*** **(Above)** ***Ronald Reagan portrayed a disguised Wyatt Earp in Universal Pictures'*** **Law and Order** ***(1953).***

***As Clay Blaisdell in* Warlock *(20th Century Fox, 1959), Henry Fonda (right) portrayed Wyatt Earp, while Anthony Quinn played the Doc Holliday character.***

Television permanently fixed Wyatt Earp in the national consciousness as the prototypic frontier lawman. The ABC series, *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*, premiered in 1955 with Hugh O'Brien in the title role. For six years the program followed the marshal's career in soap-opera fashion as he moved from town to town, always leaving law and order in his wake. After an incredibly successful run that initiated a wave of television "adult" westerns (there were thirty-two on the air by 1959), the series concluded in 1961 with a climactic five-part rendition of the showdown at the O.K. Corral.

All across America youngsters were soon sporting gold vests and black, flat-top hats, and blazing away at imaginary outlaws with toy buntline specials. Now the buntline special was a Colt .45 revolver with an eighteen-inch barrel, supposedly presented to Wyatt Earp by an admiring writer, Ned Buntline. This frontier excalibur had been fabricated by Stuart Lake, who realized that legendary heros must have mystical weaponry. The pistol never existed, but after the success of the television show the Colt Firearms Company began to produce them for a public captivated by Wyatt Earp and his weapons.

If Earp lovers did not get enough of the marshal on the home box, there were eight films released in the 1950s presenting the bold town-tamer. This mania culminated in 1957 with John Sturges's *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*, an overblown epic written by Leon Uris and featuring Burt Lancaster as Earp and Kirk Douglas as Holliday. Lancaster's lawman, as in most post–*High Noon* westerns, anguishes over the violence he is required to perform for an uncaring, callous society. Finally, after killing teenager Billy Clanton at the

O.K. Corral, he throws down his badge in disgust. Also in deference to *High Noon*, Lancaster's frequent moments of mental torment are accompanied by a nerve-shattering Frankie Laine ballad on the soundtrack.

The psychological pressures portrayed in *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* broke forth as uncontrolled neuroses two years later in *Warlock*. Based on Oakley Hall's novel of the same title, the film treats Earp (called Clay Blaisdell and played again by Henry Fonda) not as a representative of justice, but as a hired gun who employs violence to set himself up as the law. However, he is still a nerveless, heroic character true to his code even though cynical and world weary. Doc Holliday, as portrayed by Anthony Quinn, is a club-footed psychopath, latently homosexual, who finally commits suicide by forcing his friend into a gunfight in order to prove to the doubting town that Blaisdell is still the fastest gun in the West. The film treats Blaisdell as a transitional, instantly anachronistic figure who establishes order with his guns but then has no place in the new society because of his reputation for violence. Fonda finally throws his pistols into the dust and rides out of the town he has tamed in disgust.

"WYATT EARP—HERO WITH A BADGE OR COLD-Blooded Killer?" asked the ads for *Hour of the Gun*. Twenty years before, filmmakers would not have dared ask such a question, but by 1967 Americans were questioning the violent nature of their society and searching for its historical roots. A new type of western film was emerging, dominated by alienated, violent characters moving about in a festering world of corruption. Clint Eastwood's "mysterious stranger" in Sergio Leone's phenomenally successful, spaghetti horse operas best exemplified the new western antihero. The heroism and self-sacrifice of the old westerns gave way to greed and self-interest as national division, mistrust, and alienation found expression on motion picture screens.

*Hour of the Gun* begins with the gunfight at the O.K. Corral and then more or less accurately traces the Clanton's campaign of revenge that left Morgan dead and Virgil crippled. Wyatt, played convincingly by James Garner, then puts aside his badge and a lifetime of service to the law in order to hunt down and slay his brother's assassins. His vengeance is complete, but he destroys his own sense of identity and self-worth to achieve it. The cold, calculating killer of *Hour of the Gun* is far removed from the shy, laconic Earp of *My Darling Clementine*, but nevertheless remains a symbol of the law. It is from this perspective that the audience observes Earp's moral suicide.

The next logical step in the travail of Earp's image came in 1971 with Frank Perry's *Doc*. This time the ads left no room for ambiguity, for over a picture of Earp was written: "On a good day, he might pistol-whip a drunk, shoot an unarmed man, bribe a politician, and get paid off by an outlaw. He was a U.S. Marshal." Harris Yulin's Earp is self-righteous, hypocritical, and sadistic. His version of law and order is entirely self-serving. His relationship with Doc Holliday, played by Stacey Keach, is clearly homosexual. At the O.K. Corral the Earps and Holliday use shotguns to murder the Clantons—whose only crime seems to have been a rejection of Earp's values and a tendency to wear their hair long.

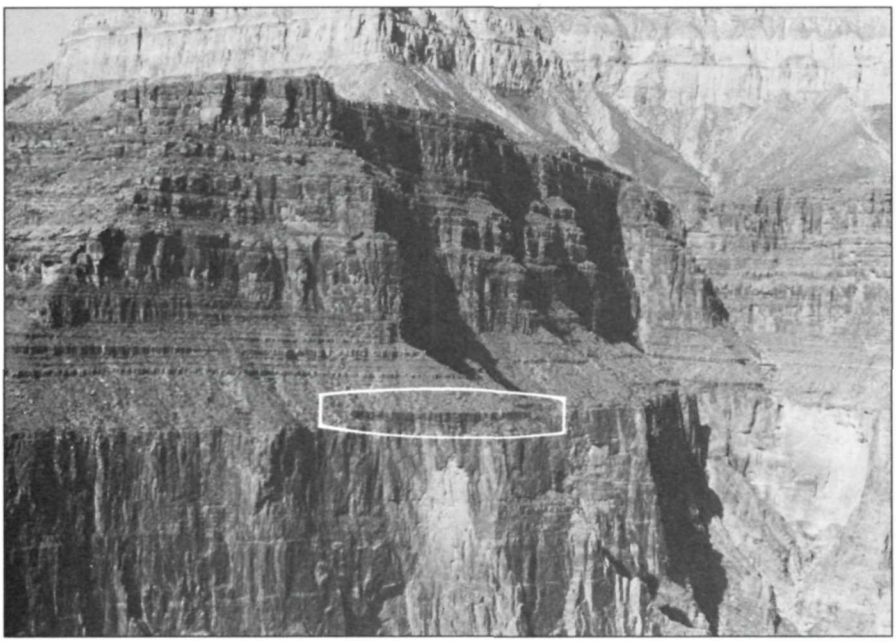
Screenwriter Pete Hamill made his reasons for debunking Earp explicit:

> I went to Vietnam in 1966, and it was evident to almost everyone except the military that the war was wrong, but that we were continuing to fight because of some peculiar notions of national macho pride, self-righteousness and the missionary spirit. I started to realize that within Lyndon Johnson there was a western unspooling. In that western the world was broken down into White Hats and Black Hats. Indochina was Dodge City, and the Americans were some collective version of Wyatt Earp.

Hamill, of course, was not attempting to come to terms with the real Earp, but rather with the legendary town-taming marshal—a man who never existed. Although Hamill's view is rooted in the paranoid cynicism of the late 1960s it is no different from all the other versions of the Earp story in that it plays off the same false premise. All the Earp films react to the frontier marshal myth constructed by Stuart Lake, for the *real* Wyatt Earp has lost all importance.

Each generation of movie makers has brought a new outlook to the same old false story, an outlook shaped by the peculiar social milieu in which they lived. Wyatt Earp has proved to be a durable, if flexible symbol of the American frontier in the movies. In all of these films the perceptive viewer will find that the historical Earp has less and less importance—even when historical details are closely adhered to—as movie producers attempt to come to grips with a preconceived and powerful myth while at the same time adjusting to the shadowy consciousness of a changing America.

**Paul A. Hutton,** *an Assistant Professor of History at Utah State University, is Associate Editor of* the Western Historical Quarterly. *In the fall of this year the University of Nebraska Press will publish his* Phil Sheridan and His Army.



AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

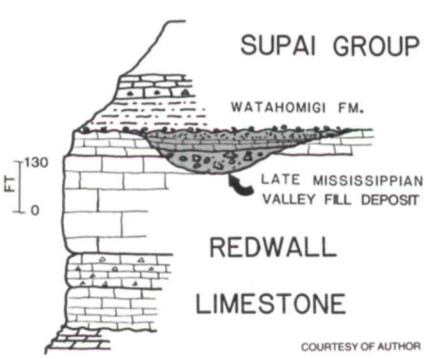
# Grand Canyon's Surprise Formation

## by Stanley S. Beus

We had spent the early morning picking our way carefully along a narrow, rocky shelf some 1,400 feet straight up above the Colorado River and 2,000 feet below the Grand Canyon rim. Our goal was an outcrop of yellow-orange, "rust-colored" limestone that we had spotted from our helicopter the day before. By midmorning we reached the site and became happily engrossed in the diligent and single-minded search for fossils. The fossils we sought were numerous but small; so we lay sprawled out on the slope, eyes to the ground, savoring the warm April sunshine, the quiet solitude of our perch, and the excitement of discovery. The invertebrate marine shells we gathered were richly abundant here —some still partially encased in limestone and some weathered out in perfect form, even after more than 300 million years in the rock.

The shelf that provided our perch is the top of the Redwall Limestone, and the rock we sampled is a newly discovered sedimentary layer atop the Redwall in the middle of the Grand Canyon section. It was first recognized by my companion of this expedition—George Billingsley of the United States Geological Survey. George is a long-time friend and colleague. His original study was of another remote part of Grand Canyon, and he has been hooked on southwestern geology ever since.

In 1976, while doing geologic mapping in western Grand Canyon, George spotted from the air, and located on aerial photographs, outcrops of something previously unknown in the Grand Canyon section. More than a year later he finally stood on an outcrop of this unknown unit after scrambling down a narrow tributary canyon near Bat Tower. The outcrop he sampled, and others nearby, yielded rocks and fossils of a different character from those found anywhere else in Grand Canyon. The rocks are exposed as discontinuous lenses between the Redwall Limestone below and the redbeds of the Supai Group above. George knew he had a significant new discovery. He made a preliminary report but was unable to do more for several years for lack of affordable transport.




COURTESY OF AUTHOR

Some time later, with modest additional travel support available, George asked me if I would like to go with him by helicopter to visit some additional sites in central Grand Canyon. That is like asking an eager football player who has sat on the bench for the first half if he would like to play. Of course I wanted to go. Shortly thereafter eight of us, including six senior geology students, George, and me were delivered by helicopter, in pairs, to four lonely sites high on the walls of central Grand Canyon and abandoned there for three days. We were there to survey selected outcrops of this "new" unit to see if it had significant features that might justify further study. It did. So now we had come to this fossil site near the mouth of National Canyon on this gentle April morning.

There is a fascination about sampling rocks and fossils that have never been seen close-up before. That day's adventure was one of the most memorable in my experience. At the end of our morning collecting, we had bags full of brachiopods, mollusks, blastoids, bryozoans, corals, trilobites, and other invertebrates. Some of the forms are new to Arizona and a few, perhaps, may prove to be new to the world. Additional traces of ancient life have since come to light—shark teeth, bits of bone, coral heads, spherical algal stromatolites and *Lepidodendron* logs—all attesting to a variety of ancient environments in northern Arizona during Late Mississippian time.

The distribution and nature of the outcrops suggest that they are remnants of the filling of an ancient west-flowing stream valley system. These ancient valleys, some up to 400 feet deep, were eroded into the top of the Redwall Limestone which must have formed a limy lowland platform near sea level some 300 million years ago. The lower valley-fill beds are almost everywhere composed of chert and limestone cobbles cemented into conglomerate, and suggest deposition from vigorous stream currents. The middle limestone beds of the valley-fill contain marine fossils and in-

dicate that the stream valleys became flooded by the sea to form a great estuary system in which salt-water-loving creatures swarmed in abundance. At the top of the section are beds of rippled sandstone and algal structures like those on a modern tidal flat.

Preliminary identification of index fossils from this unit by paleontologists of the United States Geological Survey indicates an age of latest Mississippian. The dating comes from tiny multi-chambered endothyrid shells and from brachiopods and corals that are known to occur elsewhere only in Late Mississippian age rocks. In the geologic time scale the Mississippian Period spans a time interval of some 40 million years—from about 360 to 320 million years ago. Until this new discovery the Redwall Limestone was the single, substantial, known record of Mississippian time in northern Arizona. The Redwall forms a magnificent and formidable 600-foot cliff midway up the walls of Grand Canyon. It records deposition of limy sediments in a shallow sea during most of Early and part of Late Mississippian time, from about 360 to 330 million years ago. At the top of the Redwall is a major unconformity—an old erosion surface now buried by the basal redbeds of the Supai Group of Early Pennsylvanian age. The unconformity registers on the time scale as a 10-million year gap. The newly discovered unit occurs at the unconformity and fills part of that gap.

Why had this formation not been seen before, considering the intensive studies and extraordinary geologic interest in the Grand Canyon this past century? The answer is in the remoteness and difficult access of the outcrops. The best exposures are in western and central Grand Canyon, in places where one almost "cannot get there from here." Moreover, the unit is not a continuous sheet of rock as are the others in the Grand Canyon stratigraphic section, but exists only in elongate valley-fill "shoestrings" that we see exposed in isolated lens-shaped patches atop the vertical cliffs of Redwall Limestone. Thus it had been missed until now. Even today we have access to most outcrops only by virture of air transport and the generous cooperation of the National Park Service and the Hualapai Tribe.

Part of the excitement of this discovery is the added view it gives us of earth history. It fills part of a major gap in the rock record of the Paleozoic Era in northern Arizona. When adequately studied and interpreted it will provide data for another chapter in the geologic story of the Grand Canyon. Thanks to financial support granted by my home university and the National Science Foundation we may now pursue the studies and attempt the interpretation.

To achieve permanent status in the geologic literature a mappable unit such as this must be given a formal name. By convention, rock formations are named for a local geographic feature associated with a representative outcrop. That outcrop then becomes the type of section for the formation. One of the best exposures of this "new" unit is in upper Surprise Canyon, a north tributary to western Grand Canyon. Perhaps it should be called the Surprise Formation.

**Stanley S. Beus** *is Professor of Geology at Northern Arizona University.*

about his adventures by the hour. He told of a barbaric and beautiful world which no longer exists. And I listened. I was a romantic and impressionable boy. I grew up to be a romantic and impressionable man. [Again that lazy grin, that effortless charm.]

In 1953 when Saki was thirty-one, he took over the operation of La Fonda. He had only $500 in cash to pay the help and buy provisions. It was winter and business was slow; so he went to Europe to "escape the creditors."

I had so many checks coming back that it was like getting fliers in the mail [Saki recalls]. Finally, the bank began sending them in twos and threes to save postage. I had no idea how I was going to make it, but the Greeks have a saying about "making something out of air" and wouldn't it have been a disgrace for a Greek to go broke in the restaurant business. Well, we were bailed out that first winter by the arrival of a film company which was in Taos making a movie called "Make Haste to Live" with Dorothy McGuire. They rented all my rooms for $5.00 each and stayed for two weeks. I loaned them my old Buick to use in the film. I do not remember who the leading man was or anything about the movie. It was definitely a "B" picture.

I have thirty-one rooms. This is an unusual hotel. It is probably the only nonprofit hotel in the world. Nearly half of the rooms are filled with my guests. Sometimes they stay for months. I give the rooms away. What does it matter? I have the rooms anyway. Well, you might say that I don't make money; I make friendships. That's more my line. I have always been a bit of a dreamer. I think that, early on, the fairy touched me with her magic wand and gave me the ability to laugh at myself—at my ambitions. If life teaches you nothing else, my dear, it should teach you that you cannot take anything too seriously. Particularly money. One of my loves of life is the tango. Surely there is nothing less serious and more romantic than dancing the tango? I just received two tango records—one from a lady in Germany and one from a lady in Japan. Each one had been a guest in this hotel. Another passion of mine is Disraeli, you know, one of the prime ministers of England under Queen Victoria. He was such a great diplomat, a great romantic *and* he could charm a snake. I have a photograph of him in my room.

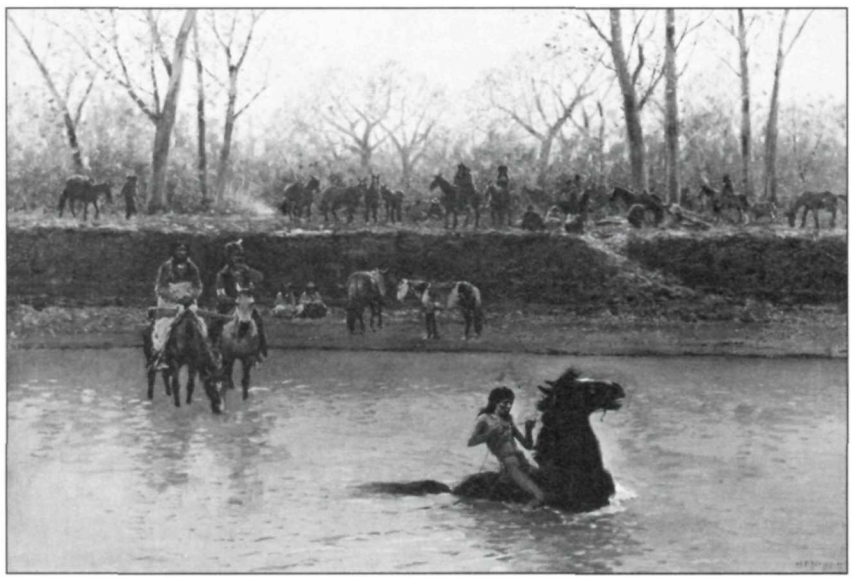
We walk up to Saki's room, and Noula Karavas joins us. The room is Spartan—a single bed, a small stereo, a large collection of records, a crucifix, books. But the walls here, as elsewhere in the hotel, are covered with pictures. Not more than one inch of wall shows between them. The variety seems endless: portraits, landscapes, still-life paintings, and genre scenes by artists like Cook, Lockwood, Gaspard, Ufer, Bisttram, Dasburg, Jacob, Brett, and Gollings. These are not the kinds of paintings that are called "important" and given a hefty price by New York galleries. They are not the kind for which museums vie to fill their vast walls or to draw record-breaking crowds. They are paintings created by artists for other artists, for family, for friends. They are intimate sketches. They are pictures on which there can be no price since they were made to consummate a friendship or commemorate a great love. "All my memories," Saki says, pulling a face and nodding to indicate the pictures filling the walls. He begins pointing and explaining. I can barely keep up with the flow of words.

Here is a photograph of Millicent Fenwick and Frieda Lawrence. I took it myself. Millicent signed it.... This is a sketch of my mother by Gaspard. Here is another one. She posed for him a lot.... The powerful flowers are by Bisttram. He had a way of making even a poppy look massive.... The Indian is by Ned Jacob. He is a contemporary artist out of Denver; he has a great eye.... The icon above my bed is over two hundred years old. It was already a relic when it belonged to my great-uncle who was a bishop in the Greek Orthodox Church.... Here is D. H. Lawrence's portrait by one of the Danish artists who lived with him and Frieda on that broken-down ranch property Mabel Dodge gave to Lawrence. That's where Frieda lived with Angelino after Lawrence's death. Look at Lawrence's eyes. They look like a hawk's.... The white-haired man is Leopold Stokowski. Dorothy Brett painted him. You know, she was the daughter of an earl and took dancing lessons with Queen Victoria's grandchildren. Brett came to Taos with the Lawrences and stayed on when they left. She was "The Honorable Dorothy Brett." That is why Mabel Dodge Lujan called her "The Brett." This is her coat of arms. She gave it to me....

I have failed to keep pace with Saki's reminiscences. I stop writing and just listen. The warm glow of friendship colors his recollections. Saki has known them all—the gamblers, the artists, the millionaires. They have all crossed his threshold and warmed themselves at his hearth. The characters are *not* all gone. Through Saki it is still possible to feel in touch with them and with the past. It is possible to enter the charmed circle of the Taos Ten and to hear Gaspard tell of bandits sweeping across the Mongolian steppes. It is possible to dine with Mabel Dodge Lujan in "The Big House" and to witness the elaborate Indian ceremonial dances that she arranged for her many notable guests. Words come easily to Saki Karavas. He is a modern-day Homer, an artist who can create a mood, paint a picture with words. And his paintings, which fill every available wall space, are worth traveling by winding road over the sage-brush-covered mesas of New Mexico to see.

**Irene Rawlings,** *an art consultant who lives in Colorado, frequently writes about Western art. She is executive editor of* The Illustrated.

# Western Art Notes



FORDING THE STREAM BY HENRY F. FARNY — COURTESY THE THOMAS GILCREASE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART

## Treasures of the Old West

Beginning in the late 1930s, Thomas Gilcrease, a successful Oklahoma oil man of Creek Indian ancestry, avidly collected works of Western art and Indian artifacts. Over a period of twenty-five years, he gathered more than 8,000 works of art and 41,000 artifacts as well as 80,000 books and rare documents, chronicling the life of mankind in North America from ancient times to the present. From this collection, the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art has lent seventy paintings and ten sculptures to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, for a summer exhibition. The pieces represent renowned artists of the midnineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, including George Catlin, Seth Eastman, Alfred Jacob Miller, John Mix Stanley, and Carl Wimar.

Paintings by Henry F. Farny, Charles Marion Russell, Frederic Remington, and others evince the fascination held for the Indians and their ways. Masterpieces by Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran—with idyllic lighting on a grand landscape or powerful forms and delicate mists—express the awe and inspiration that the artists found in the natural treasures of the West. This exhibition examines the lure of the West for these artists and reflects what this new land meant to them. The works will be on display at the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming, from May 5 until September 20.

**Colorado Archeology: Riddles from the Past, Resources for the Future.** Artifacts and photographs trace Colorado prehistory beginning with the nomadic Paleo-Indians who lived over 11,000 years ago. This show will run through May 20 at the Denver Museum of Natural History.

**Masterpieces of the American West: Selections from the Anschutz Collection and The Gund Collection of Western Art.** Two major exhibitions at the New Orleans Museum of Art trace the development of the American West since Europeans first arrived. Colorful impressions of the Old West by anthropological painters, naturalists, Romantics, illustrators, and all those drawn to paint the new frontier can be seen from May 8 through July 15.

**Mark Klett: Searching for Artifacts—Photographs of the Southwest.** Twenty black-and-white photos document sites first captured by the burdensome cameras carried on geographic surveys of the West in the 1870s. Time, scale, and man's relationship to the land is emphasized in this exhibit running through May 27 in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

**The Pomo: Gifts and Visions** has been organized by the Palm Springs Desert Museum, California. Early nineteenth-century paintings by Grace Carpenter Hudson depict the Pomo Indians of California, while gift baskets woven by the Pomo display their artistry. The show will continue through June 3.

**Recent Acquisitions at the Museum of the American Indian.** An exhibit of Native American artifacts donated within the last three years will show through June 24 at the Museum of the American Indian in New York City. Also, as part of their "So the Spirit Flows" series, the sculptural work of Hopi artist Delbridge Honanie will be on display May 8 through 11.

**Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision.** "The most important and comprehensive exhibition of works" by Grant Wood, including *American Gothic*, will be on view at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, from May 12 through August 12. Capturing rural life of the midwest in the early twentieth century, Wood exemplifies the concept of Regionalism in art.

**Taos Spring Arts Celebration.** Taos, New Mexico, is still an active art colony, and its resident artists will be turning out for the second annual Arts Celebration May 15 through June 21. Meetings with artists, lectures, poetry readings, music, and dance will round out the exhibitions schedule. Honorary Chairman of the celebration, R. C. Gorman—in conjunction with master-engraver Ed Morgan—will produce a limited edition of embossed prints especially for the occasion. For more information, write P.O. Box 3163, Taos, New Mexico 87571.

**Quilts** of all kinds—heritage or contemporary—pieced, appliquéd, and embroidered are on view through June 3 at the Western Heritage Center in Billings, Montana.

**Botanical beauty.** An Illinois woodland, the Rocky Mountains in summer, the seacoast of Maine, the Amazon river basin, and the Namib Desert in Africa—you can see them all in their three-dimensional splendor in just one visit to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. "Plants of the World," a new permanent exhibit, features these five lifelike dioramas, all constructed in fastidious detail. More than 600 models of plants shown in the exhibit are the result of decades of research and model-building at the Field Museum. This is the "largest museum exhibit anywhere devoted solely to plant life" and offers an intriguing look at exquisite blossoms and tropical verdure.

**Western Art Classic.** A benefit sale and barbecue for the Art Center of Minnesota, Crystal Bay, will feature painting and sculpture of forty-six artists working with Western themes. Olaf Weighorst, renowned artist of the Old West, will be guest of honor at this event, Friday, July 13. The exhibition of works opens at the First Bank Atrium, Pillsbury Center, Minneapolis on June 25. For more information call the Art Center of Minnesota, (612) 544-4500.

**The Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art** is a major international exhibition that includes paintings and sculpture with the theme of the Buddha image. Sculpture in stone, bronze, stucco, jade, wood, and ivory as well as paintings on cloth, wood, and paper have been gathered from collections all over the world. Lectures, films, and performances are being held in conjunction with the show. Following its premiere at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (through May 20), "The Light of Asia" will travel to the Art Institute of Chicago and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

**Black Folk Art in America: 1930–1980.** A folk art called "ecstatic individualism," created over the last fifty years by little-known, self-taught artists, is highlighted at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, through July 15.

**American Works on Paper** includes drawings, prints, and watercolors of some of America's greatest artists from the late nineteenth century to the present. This show, which is on a national tour, will be at the Wichita Falls Museum and Art Center, Texas, from June 1 through July 1.

**F. Jay Haynes, Photographer** highlights the career and works of a prominent nineteenth-century photographer. This is a new permanent exhibit at the Montana Historical Society in Helena.

A forty-piece collection of views of the bucking horse by renowned artists such as Weighorst, Remington, James, and Borein will be on permanent display at the Prorodeo Hall of Champions in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**Coming of Age: Omaha 1880–1898** is the new permanent exhibit at the Western Heritage Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, featuring the nostalgia of Omaha's bygone years.

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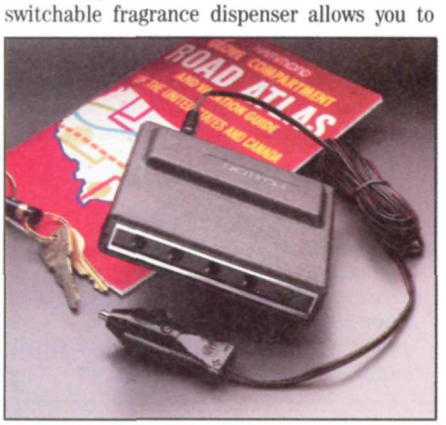


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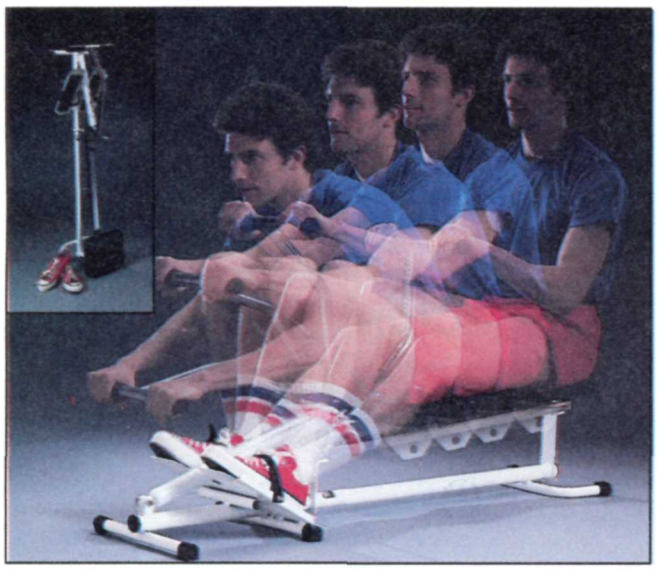

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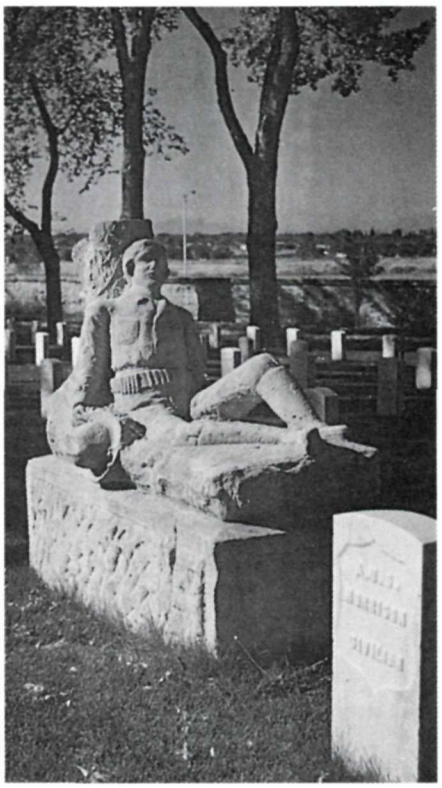


# The Legend of Private O'Leary

Private Dennis O'Leary, United States Army, died at Fort Wingate in New Mexico on April 1, 1901. He was nearing his twenty-fourth birthday. Not a particularly remarkable event on the surface, but in fact there are aspects of his death noteworthy eighty-three years later. For one thing, Private O'Leary carved his own tombstone.

The legend says that Dennis O'Leary was a lonely and sickly soldier, somewhat lost at the frontier outpost of Fort Wingate, New Mexico—a man who did not mix easily with his fellow soldiers. One day O'Leary disappeared from the fort and was reported AWOL. After several weeks he showed up without a word to explain his absence. A routine court martial sentenced Dennis to a stay in the guardhouse, and he served his time without complaint. No one asked further about his unexplained absence. That is, no one asked further until April 1, 1901, when Private Dennis O'Leary shot himself to death.

A suicide note explained that he had left "a memento" of his death in the mountains and asked the Army to send a troop and wagon to retrieve this memento. Perhaps out of curiosity, a troop and buckboard were sent into the mountains to follow O'Leary's directions. There they found a tombstone showing an almost life-sized reclining soldier. Carved in sandstone, he was leaning against a tree trunk, wearing boots and a cartridge belt. Behind the trunk was an inscription: DENNIS O'LEARY, Pvt., Co. 1, 23 Infty, died Apl. 1, 1901, Age 23 yrs & 9 mo. Private O'Leary had not only carved his own tombstone several weeks in advance, but had included the date of his death.

The soliders dutifully loaded the monument onto the buckboard and hauled it back to Fort Wingate where it was placed on Private O'Leary's grave. In 1911 the fort was closed, and a short time later all of the graves were moved to the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, including Dennis O'Leary's tombstone. It is still there today.

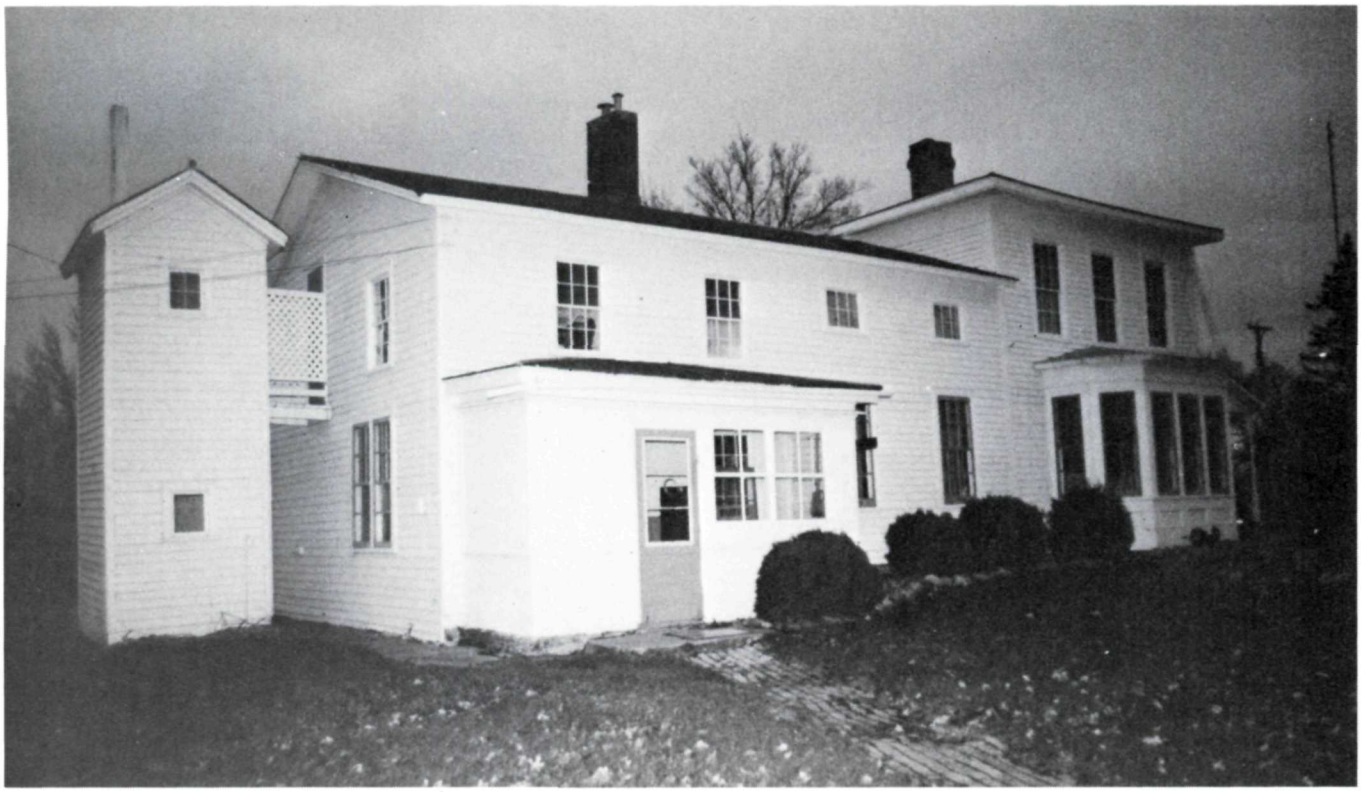
The Register of Enlistments for February 1899 contains the service records for Private O'Leary. Next to his name it notes, "Died April 1, 1901. Fort Wingate. N.M. Pulmonary Tuberculosis, Pvt." Although this might seem to discredit the legend, the official record could have been altered to cover up a tragic death. By 1901 Fort Wingate was a minor, isolated outpost destined for closing. It had a complement of seventy-six men—Company I, 23rd Infantry—a small contingent of Signal Corps, and a few Indian Scouts. The fort was under the command of Second Lieutenant Charles L. Woodhouse. While waiting for something to happen to his sleepy outpost, it is possible that the young second lieutenant might have wanted to avoid a review concerning a suicide in his ranks. A falsified death report may seem unlikely, but it isn't impossible.

In order to believe the legend, one has to assume that Dennis O'Leary was a talented sculptor with a motive for suicide that was falsified in United States Army records. The problem with discounting the legend is the tombstone. No explanation is offered for the existence of this monument. It is unlikely that the United States Army would provide such a stone for an ordinary private. Who else would have done that for a lonely private at the dusty, forgotten outpost of Fort Wingate in 1901? Perhaps we will never know.

The story of Private O'Leary was contributed by Dan Morgan of Cincinnati, Ohio, who first heard this legend and saw this gravestone as a boy of twelve.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any reader whose suggestion is accepted for publication in Western Lore. We seek information (with relevant pictures, if possible) about unusual artifacts, unusual and little-known happenings, unusual and little-known people, as well as little-known facts about well-known people—all in Western history. What do you have? Space is limited; so, we have to be selective. We'll take good care of your pictures and return them promptly. Be sure to pack pictures carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Lore, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

# Western Snapshots Today



The outdoor privy, once discreetly tucked out back has disappeared from the city scene and is fast disappearing from rural areas as well. But the folks of Belle Plaine, Minnesota, take great pride in preserving and pointing out the privy of the historic Hooper-Bowler-Hillstrom House. This landmark structure is, "as far as we know, the only useable two-story outhouse in the United States," says Ed Townsend, editor of the Belle Plaine *Herald*. Still tucked out back, this engineering wonder of the late nineteenth century provided an upstairs and a downstairs "necessary" for the home's residents.

The mother of this invention was a father of twelve. With nine daughters in his brood, Sam Bowler was inspired to provide a number of convenient features in addition to the double decking. The upper portion is connected to the second story by a latticed walkway—convenience, safety, and privacy in this forerunner of the modern skyway. The spacious six-holer (three up and three down) features Mamma Bear-, Papa Bear-, and Baby Bear-sized holes. And both floors have windows on either side dressed with lace curtains.

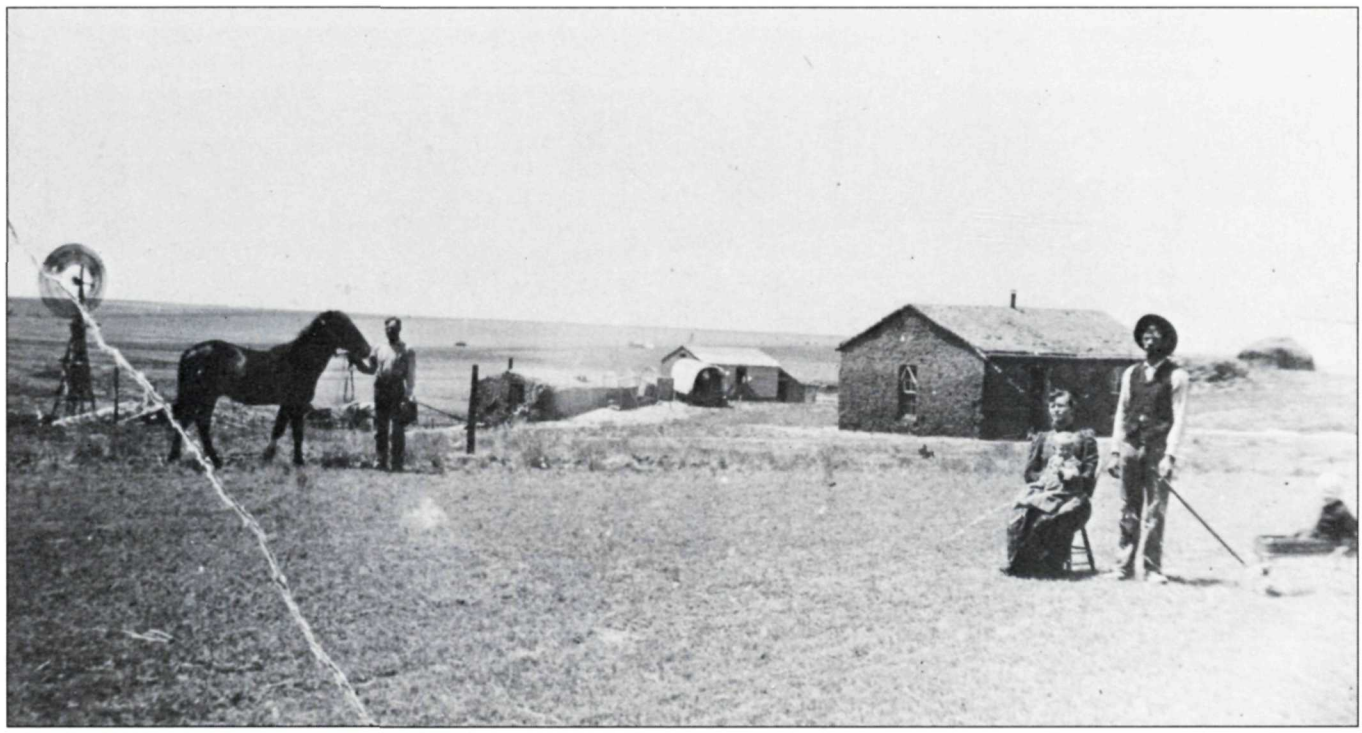
The design of the structure is simple but inventive. The upstairs seat bench is against the outside wall while the downstairs bench is backed by a false wall. The outside wall and false wall form the chute from the upper facilities. But the true wonder of the structure is not how far it goes up but rather how far it must go down. The traditional, one-story outhouse was located some distance from, and unconnected to, the house for a very good reason. Whereas the structure itself was semipermanent, the location was not, and the outhouse was moved to a new place when the sewer system became overloaded. Plumbing tools consisted of a shovel, a strong back, and a hefty apprentice to help lift the privy to its new location. And yet, Mr. Bowler designed an outhouse with a permanent location, an engineering feat of some magnitude when one considers the arrangement was in continuous use from the late 1880s through 1975.

It is the outhouse which brings visitors to the restored Hooper-Bowler-Hillstrom House where fourteen rooms, decorated and furnished with period pieces, provide a fascinating journey into Minnesota's past. Belle Plaine is about a forty-minute drive south of the Twin Cities on Highway 169. The house is open for tours on summer Sundays or by appointment.

Betsy Eykyn of Mankato, Minnesota, contributed the snapshot and story of this most inventive piece of Western architecture.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any photographer, amateur or professional, whose Western Snapshot Today is selected for publication on this page. Pictures portraying today's West —the land and its people—in black-and-white or color, will be accepted for consideration. Please specify the type of camera, lens, film, paper, and techniques as well as light conditions used to obtain your photograph. Prints will be handled with care and returned promptly after use. Be sure to pack the snapshots carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Snapshots Today, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

# Western Snapshots Yesterday



In 1890 newly married George and Vina Moore joined other Americans seeking the good life on free Western land by settling on their homestead near Bird City in northwestern Kansas. They came to farm those low-grass plains, part of a dry region once called The Great American Desert by explorer Stephen Long. Grassy plains or desert, the land yielded subsistence only to those who followed a regimen of unremitting work.

Those years brought hard times for Kansas farmers. A spell of unusually dry years and an economic panic caused great distress and spawned Populist orators like the redoubtable Mary Elizabeth Lease. That extraordinary farm wife traveled the byways of Kansas exhorting farmers to "raise less corn and more hell."

The photograph shows the Moores on their homestead some time in the early 1890s. George and Vina are at the right with their son and daughter, while George's younger brother Bill stands by the family's horse. Evidence of their industry abounds—the sod dwelling, the large hay mounds, the windmill that was an ever-present symbol of the plains. George Moore's chief occupations were farming and raising cattle. For several years he also raised grain and operated a grain separator.

Many years later the Moores' third son, Chester, reminisced about his childhood on the homestead: "Thousands of cattle trailed by our place every spring. The cowboys would trek through our yard to the well and pump water for their parched throats and wash their dust-covered, suntanned faces.

"It was something to watch the minister baptize people in the small creek that ran west of the homestead. I recall there were range wars between the homesteaders and the stockmen. Some of the names I remember were the Deweys who were cattle kings and the Berrys who were ranchers."

The photograph and reminiscences of a time long past were submitted by Irene Moore Sorrels of Paradise, California, whose father, Alonzo Moore, was the little boy in the wagon above. He is now ninety-three years of age and living in Whittier, California.

AMERICAN WEST offers twenty-five dollars to any reader whose Western Snapshot Yesterday is accepted for publication on this page. We seek old photographs that tell stories of bygone times. Especially welcome are pictures depicting some forgotten aspect of Western life, serious or amusing. Space is limited; so, we have to be selective. We'll take good care of your pictures and return them promptly. Be sure to pack the snapshots carefully and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send submissions to AMERICAN WEST, Western Snapshots Yesterday, 3033 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

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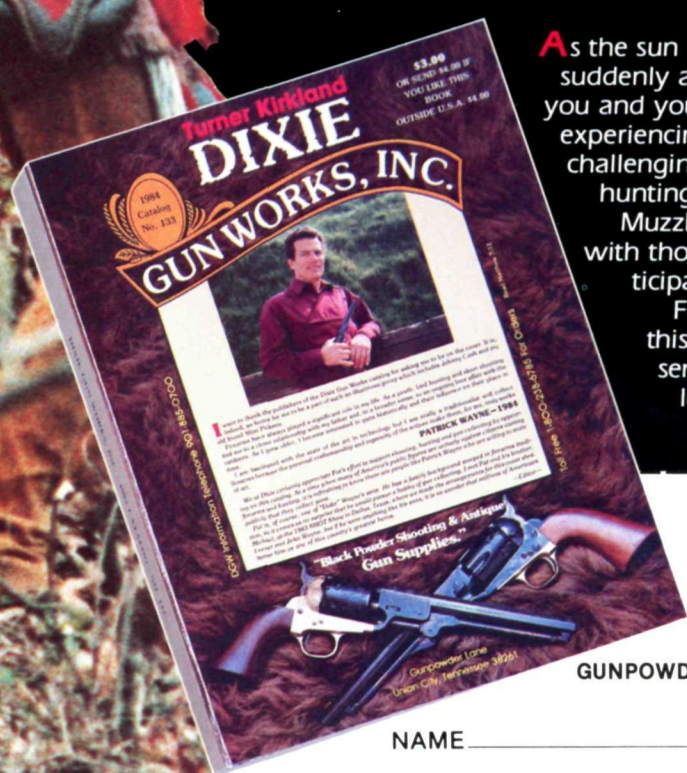


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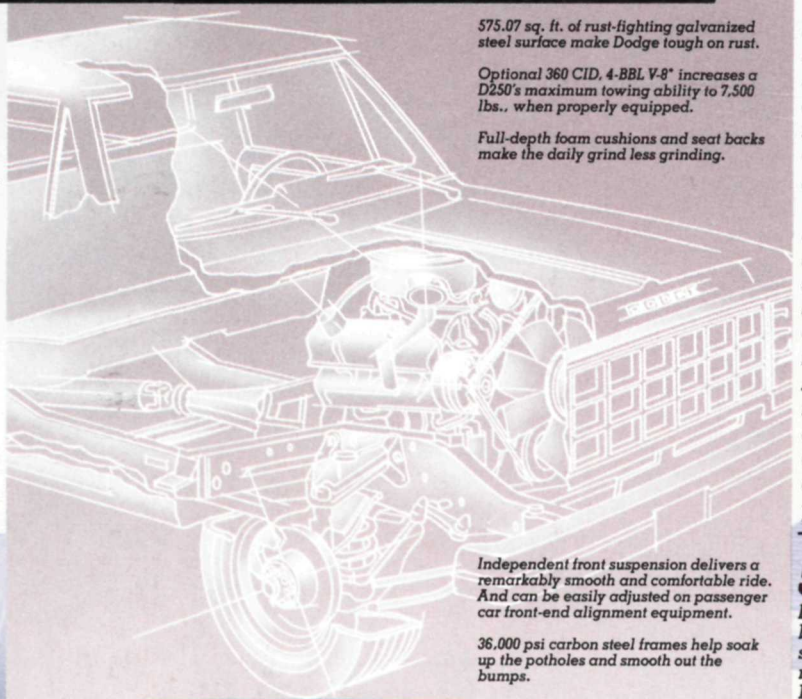

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