

BUCKSKIN BULLETIN



“The Promise of a Good Crop” How’s that for an image title? I did not paint this illustration. I did not find it among stock art on-line. Artificial Intelligence (AI) or more specifically, ChatGPT made it. *The Buckskin Bulletin* needed a cover image for the spring BB and this is the result of my request to ChatGPT to create an image based on my description.

I have a BFA and MA degree in Art and Design and successfully took many painting and drawing courses in college. I always thought that there would never be a machine that could create illustrations. Well, as you see here that is not the case in 2026.

Now there are limits. I could pay the subscription and fix some limitations but this was my fourth shot for free. The horses here are somewhat misplaced and look unattended. I like the depth, the colors and composition. All in all, I think this will work. If you like it well enough, do not credit me.

Kenneth Pirtle

CHAIRMAN'S GREETING



*WI Chairman, Bonney MacDonald
Photo by Rik Anderson, WTAMU*

CHAIRMAN'S GREETING

Is the snow melting? Is the sun setting just a little bit farther north as the days get longer? We hope that you're enjoying the change of season! Spring is around the corner, and warm days are coming. And, yes, soon buds will be on the trees and green on its way.

Delinda King/Secretary-Treasurer, Lisa Jackson/ WI Assistant, and I have continued our work over the last season. As you'll see elsewhere in the Bulletin, the 2026 dues invoices, awards forms, and contact information sheets are being sent out, and the Home Ranch is making preparations for the new season.

Please note that our very own Ken Pirtle, editor of the Buckskin Bulletin, is being awarded the Westerners International Living Legend Award. As always, it is published here in the Bulletin. Since Ken is the editor, he's understandably a bit shy of announcing this in the very bulletin that he produces. But I've tried to convince him that we will celebrate him anyway!

In case you need it all in one place, here's our contact information:

The Home Ranch email:
WesternersHomeRanch@gmail.com

The Home Ranch mailing address:
Westerners International
2200 4th Ave
Box 309
Canyon TX 79015

The Home Ranch phone number : 806-654-6920.

Here's to the coming of spring and to Happy Trails for all!

Bonney

Bonney MacDonald
Chairman, Westerners International

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BIG NEWS



SPOKANE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! 2027 WESTERNERS GATHER WILL BE IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, FALL 2027

Maggie Crabtree, who attended the 2025 Gather in South Dakota, and her fellow corral member, Dick Jensen, Sheriff, will be hosting the next Westerners International Gather in Spokane, WA in Fall 2027. The Gathers are held every other year, which gives corrals and posses time to plan and coordinate. Although, by the looks of things, Maggie, Dick, and fellow corral members are well on their way to planning outings, speakers, historical programs and more! Stay tuned to the Buckskin Bulletin for details on the Gather in Spokane! Thank you in advance to the Spokane Corral!!



REMINDER TO ALL SHERIFFS AND MEMBERS ABOUT SENDING THE BULLETIN!

Sheriffs: Please remember to email the *Buckskin Bulletin* to all of your corral or posse members. And please keep us up to date on your contact information – we want to stay in touch and we always appreciate all of your updates, newsletters, and publications! Please do this by returning the contact sheets that you get in the mail – or you can choose to download/print the copies we email you or even get them from the WI website. Please send them in hard copy. It's much easier for us to keep track of than if you send us contact info by email.

All Members: *** Please be sure that your corral and posse sheriffs/representatives have your current email address so they can forward the *Buckskin Bulletin* to you when they get it from us! We want to be sure you're in the loop!

The *Buckskin Bulletin* comes out four times a year. It's emailed to all sheriffs so that they can forward it by email it to their posse or corral members. The current *Bulletin* is also always available on the front page of the Westerners website; back issues are accessible on the website through the *Buckskin Bulletin* link.

for all Westerners



REMINDER: Annual 2026 Packets (dues, contact sheets, and awards forms)

We are sending out annual packets with the 2026 dues invoice, the contact information sheet, and the awards forms. These will be sent by US Mail to your representative and by email to your representative and sheriff. They will also be posted on the WI website. We want to make them as easy and accessible as possible!

With respect to the dues invoice and contact sheets, please RETURN BOTH OF THESE IN HARD COPY to the address on the forms:

Delinda King, Secretary/Treasurer, Westerners International
16750 Betty Blvd.
Canyon, TX 79015

The contact sheets are especially important so that we can reach you with Buckskin Bulletin, exciting information, and more! If we don't have the accurate contact info, then the Bulletin can't be sent to the right officer and then forwarded to the members! So please remember to return these. Thank you!

With respect to the awards forms, these will also be in the packet sent by US Mail to your representative, in an email to sheriffs and representatives, and on the website. Send in your wonderful work on the West and let your fellow Westerners know what you've been up to!

Important things to know ... for all Westerners:



The next Gather will be in Spokane, Fall of 2027

Sheriffs- please email the Buckskin Bulletin to all of your membership


Members- please keep you emails current as that's the way your quarterly

Buckskin Bulletin comes to you!

Corral/Posse reps- your Annual packets will arrive soon. Please update your info and return by mail by May 1st.



*** ANNOUNCEMENT !! ***



**2026 Dues Invoices, Contact Sheets,
and Awards Form are now available**

They are posted on the Westerners website and are being emailed to all reps.

We will also be sending them by US Mail, so that they are available in the format most convenient for you!

Here are the deadlines:

Dues and Contact sheets are due by May 1, 2026

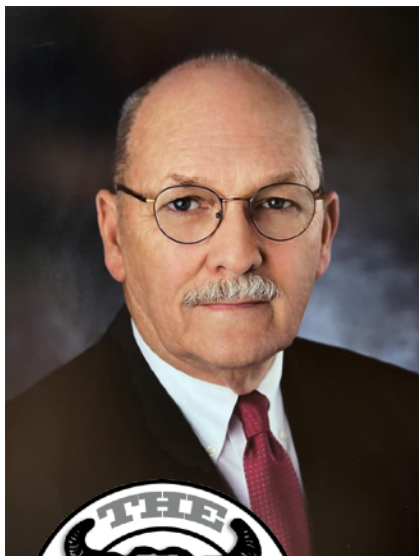
Please be sure that you send them in by US Mail in hard copy. This makes it much easier for recording and distribution. Thank you!

Please remember that these Contact Sheets are absolutely essential for us to keep in touch with you and for getting the Buckskin Bulletin to the right person!

Award Entry Forms are due by May 15, 2026

Congratulations to Kenneth Pirtle

WI's 71st Living Legend Award



A word from Bonney McDonald:

I'd like to offer a word of congratulations to Ken Pirtle, member of the Palo Duro Corral in Amarillo and editor of the Buckskin Bulletin. Ken is deservedly being awarded with the 71st Living Legend Award. Just in case he might feel shy about posting his own award here in the Bulletin, I am riding point on this one and prefacing the award announcement with an insistence that he please set aside his characteristic modesty! Since I've worked alongside Ken with Home Ranch goin's on, I want to add my personal appreciation to the official posting below. In addition to his laudable Buckskin Bulletins, which are professional and appealing by any standard, and in addition to his extensive Palo Duro Corral and Home-Ranch involvement, Ken is simply a valued citizen. He, along with fellow Westerner Rodney Lauhban, proposed and oversaw the 2016 move of the Home Ranch in Canyon, TX – even, literally, doing the heavy lifting of bookcases and furniture! He has been involved in Gathers held at the Home Ranch, providing a ready and steady hand whenever it was needed. His eye for fine layout and visuals is evident in every Bulletin, and it extends to his many public, large-scale installations of beautiful tile murals.

A hearty Westerners thanks for all you do, Ken!

Bonney MacDonald, Chairman

The nomination from the Palo Duro Corral

Ken Pirtle is a driving force in the Palo Duro Corral. He has served as a valuable member of the Westerners International Board of Directors since 2017.

Ken joined the Palo Duro Corral in 2010. Of note among his many contributions to Westerners International was serving as Sheriff in 2014. Over the years he has done at least six presentation programs and has attended three Westerner Gathers. He has served as official photographer for these Gathers. Ken has authored three complete Bylaw Review-Updates for the Corral and recommended the inclusion of female members into the Corral. He also acts as the Liaison between the Corral and the Home Ranch.

In 2016, Ken and fellow Westerner Rodney Lauhban, initiated a proposal to move the WI Home Ranch to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas. They negotiated free office space and even funded the move to Canyon. Ken was instrumental in hiring Dr. Bonney MacDonald to lead the organization.

As is known to all Westerners near and far, Ken has designed, edited, published and distributed twenty-nine Buckskin Bulletin newsletters for the organization, which are of professional grade and quality.

Ken is a graduate of Texas Tech University with a BFA degree in Advertising Art and Design and has an MA in Art from West Texas A&M University. Ken taught for thirty-three years at Amarillo College and served as Chairman of the Visual Arts Department. He was named Professor Emeritus in 2018.

Ken designs tile mosaic in his spare time and has installed eight large murals at Jones Stadium at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He currently has two 5'x6' murals on loan to the (THC) Goodnight Historical Museum in Goodnight, Texas: Quanah Parker and Charles Goodnight.

Ken Pirtle is truly a living legend with Westerners International. The Palo Duro Corral and the WI Home Ranch offer their heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to him for this well-deserved honor.

CORRAL NEWS



CALL FOR CORRAL AND POSSE UPDATES

Please send us your notices and announcements on upcoming or past corral and posse programs and events. We love to spread the good news to other corrals and posses about the activities of their fellow Westerners!



The **Omaha Corral** is alive and well and meets monthly, September through May, for an evening dinner and program. For this '25-26 season, they've enjoyed speakers on A. J. Poppleton (the Omaha attorney active in the Standing Bear case), Laura Ingalls Wilder, and the French fur trader, Francis Boucher. The highlight of the year comes in May with the Corral's annual buffalo dinner at a local state park, with this year's speaker, Mark Gardner, focusing on Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday.



From the **Cochise County Corral**: According to the recent *Fremont Street Mail*, the newsletter of the **Cochise County Corral**, the February gathering featured **Bill Gillespie** presenting "Camp Rucker." This Camp was a remote army post in the Chiricahua Mountains established during the Apache Wars in the late 1870s. Events there may have sparked the feud between the McLaurys and the Earps. Presenter, Bill Gillespie is a retired Forest Service archaeologist.

Sharon Kennedy will present Buffalo Soldiers in Bonita Canyon at the March meeting. On April 1, 1885, twelve troops of the U.S. Army 10th Cavalry left Fort Davis, Texas, headed to the Arizona Territory. Once they arrived, they spread out east and south looking for Geronimo. Two companies encamped for seven months in Bonita Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains. They built a monument honoring slain President James A. Garfield. The complete story will be told at the March meeting.

The adventuresome **Cochise County Corral of the Westerners** also went on a Trail Ride in January. The destination was Stein's Pass Overland Mail

Station. Located in Southwest New Mexico, this is the best preserved of the Overland Mail Stations in New Mexico with an exciting history at the mouth of Doubtful Canyon.

Also, **The Cochise County Corral** is sponsoring the Tombstone Festival of Western Books on Friday, March 13, 2026. The featured author is Anne Hillerman, whose Leaphorn/Chee/Manuelito Navajo Police Mysteries are well known as the series, *Dark Winds*. The festival is held the day before the Tucson Festival of Books, drawing visitors from that source and with wide support of Tombstone merchants and attractions that make it a good day to visit Tombstone.

More information is available at <https://cochisecountycorral.org/books-%26-book-festival>.

Dark Winds is an American psychological thriller television series based on the Leaphorn & Chee novel series produced by Robert Redford and authored by Anne Hillerman and her late father, Tony Hillerman. It premiered on AMC in 2022 and is headed into its third and fourth seasons.



Sad news comes from the **Adobe Corral** of Tucson, Arizona. Two long-time members of the corral recently died. **Richard ("Dick") D. Jones**, aged 93, who was Keeper of the Chips and later the representative to the **Westerners International**, died on December 27, 2025. **Joan Herner**, aged 87, who was Chuckwagon Boss for many years, died on November 1, 2025. Thanks to **Jim Corrick** for sharing this sad news.



The **Flagstaff Corral** has returned to active status after a two-year pandemic pause (Three Cheers!!). The Corral is meeting monthly (except for August) for dinner buffet and cash bar. The past two years the Corral has donated to local non-profits that support learning about local history -- namely the Elden Pueblo Project and the Northern Arizona Pioneer Historical Society. The opportunities for Westerners programs are as rich and diverse as the Northern Arizona landscape and culture.

As announced in last December's Bulletin, **Nathan Dahlstrom**, member of the **Llano Estacado Corral**, Lubbock, Texas, has recently published another book, ***Never Curse the Rain***, now available through his web site: <https://wildergood.com/portfolio/never-curse-the-rain>

more CORRAL NEWS

The **Pikes Peak Posse's** December program was on "Tom Hirt: The Hatmaker for Hollywood." Their December issue of *The Inkspot* featured a very interesting article on **Mel McFarland**, 4th generation Coloradan, fellow Posse member, and one of the founding members of the **Pikes Peak Posse**. The January program featured a presentation on "The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad," and their February program focused on the "Hicksite Quakers' Relationship to Colorado Springs." In March they are offering a program entitled "Silver Dollar Tabor and Pikes Peak Films." Thanks to **Bob DeWitt** for sharing the Posse news and their publication, the "*Inkspot*."



Linda Mazur and **Bill Ellington** of the **Huntington Corral** wrote us about their January program in which prominent Western historian, Bill Deverell spoke on the unfortunately relevant issue of "The West on Fire." Professor Deverell is the Founder and Co-Director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West. The Huntington Corral's February program was from Paul Spitzzeri, who spoke on "Who is Really Spanish, of an Old California Family, With Not a Drop of Indian Blood in Her Veins: Josephine M. Workman as Film Star Princess Mon Darkfeather, 1910-1917." The Corral's March program will be from Cal Tech's Professor David Zierler, who will speak on "To Illuminate Nature: Reflecting on 100 Years of Science Discovery in Pasadena." Thank you Linda and Bill!!!



In December, the **Ft. Worth Westerners'** hosted fellow corral member, **Bob Saul**, who gave a program entitled, "The Buffalo: Dominance: Displaced in Less than 409 Years." The January program was from **Sallie Andrews** on the Native American Peace Circle Statues in Grapevine, TX." In February, they continued their focus on Native Americans, hosting Tom Ashmore, President of the West Texas Archeological Society, who spoke on the "Independence Creek's Indian Hideout."

In March, the Corral will host Donald Frazier, Ph.D. and Director of The Texas Center at Schreiner University.

In addition, as many know, the **Ft. Worth Westerners'** programs are usually held on Zoom. They are currently scheduling for 2026, and they already have a number of programs planned. But, they are seeking speakers for the Zoom programs on the following dates: 19 May, 16 Jun, 21 Jul, 18 Aug, 15 Sep, 20 Oct, 15 Dec. Please contact them if you are interested; and, please note, it's possible, that since our learning of these dates, the Corral may have scheduled speakers for some of those dates. If you have an idea in mind, please contact **Ft. Worth Westerners Representative, Phil Williams** at pg_w@hotmail.com They'd be delighted to hear from you!



At CSAW, we are committed to exploring the rich history, culture, and landscape of the American West and the Southern Plains. Through interdisciplinary research, engaging events, and educational opportunities, we promote regional literacy and cultivate a strong sense of place. Whether you're a faculty member, student, or member of the public, we invite you to join us in celebrating and studying this unique region.

CSAW's purpose is to promote regional sense-of-place and regional literacy, to promote excellent scholarship on our region, to support WT faculty and student research on the American West, and to train students as regional leaders.

*Currently, CSAW hosts several events aimed at engaging a larger audience in topics relevant to the American West. The most prominent of these events is the **Garry L. Nall Lecture Series**, which brings noted regional scholars, authors, and artists to WTAMU for free lectures that are open to the public. CSAW offers a variety of events that will appeal to all audiences. These lectures are on the campus of West Texas A&M University, Canyon, Texas.*

Upcoming Events for Spring, 2026

- **Mar. 4 Clara Sneed, novelist and historian, "Dust to Dust: Summoning Ghosts and Writing Novels" FAC Recital Hall, 7pm**
- **Apr. 9 Nall Lecture: Iris Jamahl Dunkle, biographer and poet, "Riding Like the Wind: The Life of Sanora Babb" Legacy Hall, 7pm**

for more information: <https://www.wtamu.edu/museum/csaw/index.html>



more **CORRAL NEWS**

Have an idea for a fun and interesting Zoom meeting this year? Then contact Phil Williams of the Ft. Worth Westerners! They have some open dates!

The Ft. Worth Westerners' programs are usually held on Zoom. They are currently scheduling for 2026, and they already have a number of programs planned. But, they are seeking speakers for the Zoom programs on the following dates: 19 May, 16 Jun, 21 Jul, 18 Aug, 15 Sep, 20 Oct, 15 Dec. Please contact them if you are interested; and, please note, it's possible, that since our learning of these dates, the Corral may have scheduled speakers for some of those dates. If you have an idea in mind, please contact Ft. Worth Westerners Representative, Phil Williams at pg_w@hotmail.com They'd be delighted to hear from you!



Forthcoming Books by Los Angeles Corral Writers -Author's Update:

Abraham Hoffman's latest, autobiographical, offering is *Schools Dazed, or A Teacher's Recollections of Los Angeles Public Schools, 1962-2024*. Should the planets come into perfect alignment, this rollicking trip through 62 years of Hoffman's teaching in Los Angeles Junior High Schools, High Schools and Community Colleges might just appear as the very next Los Angeles Corral **Keepsake 59** before the end of 2025. This will be Dr. Hoffman's lucky 7th keepsake proudly published by the Los Angeles Corral.

Tracy Johnston's epic work of translation and annotation, the early stages of which she shared with us as the August, 2023, Round Up Presentation, should those same planets be in perfect alignment, also might just be published early next year, 2026, as the very next Los Angeles Corral **Brand Book 27**. If so, it will be something new in two completely different genres in our almost 80-year history. Not only will Tracy's opus be our very first full-length cookbook, but also the first full-length English translation of a volume originally published in Spanish, in California: Encarnación Pinedo's 1898 *El Cocinero Español*.

Brian Dervin Dillon's latest, autobiographical, offering will be, once again should those planets be in perfect alignment, *Lost in the 'Sixties, Coming of Age in Hippie San Francisco*. This is the book-length, expanded version of his two magazine articles published on that subject nine years ago, then most recently reprised as the November, 2025, Round Up presentation made to the Los Angeles Corral. This was one of two books Dr. Dillon set aside to complete his Alice Chong biography, published at the beginning of this year (2025). Completion of Brian's Hippie opus is expected for early 2026. And, as if that was not enough, Dr. Dillon's second literary offspring set aside for him to concentrate on the 2025 Alice Chong biography, is also scheduled for a 2026 birth: this will be his *Shootin' Irons: One Family's Odyssey from California to Asia, Africa, Central America, Europe, and Back Again* book. It contains fifty separate chapters, each one devoted to a Dillon family member shooting a specific pistol, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, or cannon on five different continents over the past 150+ years during six successive generations. The Los Angeles Corral got a taste of the research going into this book when Brian presented his prize-winning February, 2023, Round Up illustrated lecture on *Old West Shootin' Irons*.

Brian Dervin Dillon, Ph.D continues his busy presentation tour with a lecture on his amazing book titled: *Alice Chong, An American Heroine*. Brian will share her heroic story in December to the Wings Over Wendy's Veterans Group in West Hills, CA.

Alice Chong (1909-1972) was the most remarkable American woman of World War II. Born on Kauai, Territory of Hawaii, and one of 32 children, she grew up speaking Hakka Chinese, Hawaiian and Japanese. After moving to Honolulu, she learned her fourth language, English, and her fifth, Cantonese. Alice graduated from the University of Hawaii in 1933, and took a job teaching English in Peking, China. There she learned her sixth language, Mandarin. After returning to the UH to complete her Master's Degree, Alice took a job at Ginling College, Nanking, the foremost women's university in Asia. She boarded ship for Shanghai in 1937 the same day the Japanese launched their all-out war by land, sea and air against China. Alice led the Ginling college girls on an epic, 2,800-mile trek from Japanese-occupied Shanghai to safety, talking her way through roadblocks and surviving numerous aerial bombings. Three years before the Pearl Harbor attack Alice Chong became the only American female war correspondent publishing *Behind Enemy Lines*.

Check out the informative Los Angeles Corral web site at: <http://www.lawesterners.org/>



in memory

of our Westerner Friends



Gary Kurutz 1948-2025

Westerners International lost an immensely talented, productive, and dedicated member when Gary Francis Kurutz left us at the end of last year. Gary was a member of three California Corral: San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles. He was devoted to all three, served as Sheriff of the S.F. Corral, and most recently as a thoughtful and conscientious advisor and sounding-board to the Publication Committee of the L.A. Corral. Kurutz grew up in Southern California, and earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in History from U.C. San Diego, then completed his MLS (Master's of Library Science) at the University of Southern California. Gary's first foray into professional librarianship was as the Bibliographer of Western Americana at the Huntington Library. He then moved north to become the Head Librarian of the Sutro Library of San Francisco. His new position was previously held by his great friend and mentor, Richard H. Dillon, my own father. Gary moved on again to become the Head Librarian for Special Collections of the California State Library in Sacramento, a position he held for 37 years. In his "spare" time, Gary also worked as the Library Director of the California Historical Society, and the Executive Director of the California State Library Foundation. Kurutz won the Book Club of California's Oscar Lewis Award in 1998 and the Hubert Howe Bancroft Award in 2018. The following year Gary was inducted into the California Library Hall of Fame. All three honors were for meritorious service in the ongoing battle against the rising tide of illiteracy in California. Gary was a Hero Librarian in every sense of the term and a "triple-threat" Historian. He employed every literary weapon in the educational arsenal with skill, grace, and good humor. Kurutz was a creator and protector of archives and libraries, and was intimately associated with every one of the best his home state of California had to offer. He was also the erudite author of many articles and books on Western History that were readable, entertaining, and memorable. His publications on the California Gold Rush, on the Klondike Gold Rush, and on Art History and Architectural History have stood the test of time and have become standard references. Somehow in his busy schedule Kurutz found time to edit the California State Library Foundation Bulletin. Gary was also a gifted teacher and public speaker, who spread the gospel of Western Cultural History all his life. His scholarship, writing, and lectures converted many dilettantes into amateur historians, and amateurs into professionals. Gary's wide range of knowledge and constant encouragement inspired many scholars both young and old to research, write, and publish on historical topics overlooked for far too long. Gary disproved the old cliché that brilliant historians were invariably antisocial, curmudgeonly sourpusses. Kurutz was the complete opposite, friendly, outgoing, generous with his time, and supportive of any and all research that might intersect with his own. His enthusiasm was infectious, and he was a very good friend of two generations of my own family for more than 50 years. Gary was one of the Good Guys, and he made his mark on California and on Western America in many different and very positive ways. He never put a food wrong in his research, his writing, and his teaching. The world is a much poorer place without him, but permanent monuments to his vision, energy, and effectiveness are no farther away in California than the nearest public library.

Brian Dervin Dillon, Ph.D.



Abraham Hoffman 1938-2026

Abraham Hoffman left us only a few weeks into the New Year of 2026. He was so active, influential, and productive within the Los Angeles Corral for so many decades that it is difficult to imagine our organization without him. Abe joined the Westerners International Los Angeles Corral 52 years ago in 1974. He became Editor of the Branding Iron, our quarterly publication in 1985, was elected Sheriff in 1997, and was made Living Legend No. 61 of Westerners International in 2016.

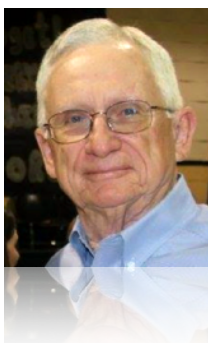
Abe grew up in Boyle Heights and was very proud of his "East L.A." roots. Hoffman attended Los Angeles City Junior College, then obtained his B.A. and M.A. degrees in History from Los Angeles State College, and his Ph.D. in History at UCLA. Dr. Hoffman taught history and other subjects in Los Angeles area High Schools for more than 30 years, and taught History at Los Angeles Valley College for 50 years (1974-2024).

Abraham Hoffman was not only one of our longest-duration members, but also one of our most prolific, both literarily and in public speaking. He published dozens of book reviews in the Branding Iron and only a slightly smaller number of full-length articles in that journal. Abe also published no fewer than 7 full-length Keepsakes through the Los Angeles Corral: his penultimate one, Keepsake 58, was a reflection on his 50 years of membership in the Los Angeles Corral, his final one, Schools Dazed, Keepsake No. 59, appeared in December, 2025, and was distributed to our members at Abe's final scholarly presentation to them. Abe was the member of many different historical associations and published dozens of articles and hundreds of book reviews in them in addition to his steady contributions to Westerners International, but there was always a special place in his heart for our own organization. This commitment was reciprocated and recognized, for Abe was the winner of the Westerners International Best Book Award, Best Article Award on multiple occasions, and even its Best Poem Award.

While Dr. Hoffman was uncompromising in his separation of objective fact in his teaching and writing from subjective interpretation, and scornful of those who either could not or would not distinguish between these two polar opposites, much of his work, including some of his best-known books, was devoted to topics that could only be termed sensationalistic. Abe loved to write wrongs, calling attention to social injustice, to credit people forgotten or ignored by other historians, and he had a well-developed ecological conscience long before this became commonplace in American academia. Some of his better-known books are Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939 (1974); Vision or Villainy: Origins of the Owens Valley-Los Angeles Water Controversy (1981); An Oklahoma Tragedy: The Shooting of the Mexican Students, 1931 (1987); Mono Lake: From Dead Sea to Environmental Treasure (2014); and California's Deadliest Earthquakes, A History (2017).

Abe Hoffman's thought-provoking lectures, almost on an annual basis, were presented to our corral for nearly a half-century: his last was given at our December, 2025, meeting only a few weeks before his passing. In his writing and teaching Honest Abe was always a rigorous and uncompromising battler for the truth, for historical accuracy when too many other writers and, even worse, television documentarians, blended fiction with fact, make-believe with reality, and myth with history. There was only one Abe Hoffman, and we were very lucky to have such an active and distinguished member of our Los Angeles Corral for so many years.

Brian Dervin Dillon, Ph.D.



Jim Jennings



Jim Jennings grew up in Sweetwater, Texas and graduated from Texas A&M University. Jim and his wife Mavis reside in Amarillo, Texas. He is a member of the Palo Duro Corral and the Palo Duro Corral as Keeper of the Chips. Jim is a renowned western writer and a long-time horse historian. Jim is retired as Executive Director of Publications for the American Horse Association and continues to write and is currently writing the scripts for his television show "Somewhere West of Wall Street."

Quanah Parker

There are a few Native American names that almost everyone is familiar with. Names like Geronimo, Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull register with just about everyone, even those who are not familiar with the history of the West. But there is another one, a name that is equally well known, that of the Comanche chief known as Quanah.

The story of Quanah is very well known by the members of the **Palo Duro Corral** in Amarillo, Texas, of which I am a member, because Quanah lived much of his early life in the Texas Panhandle. There is even a



Quanah Parker, Chief of the Comanches

town named for him only 90 miles from Amarillo. However, not all of those who have told the story of Quanah agree on some parts of his life, and I suppose I would fall into that category.

In 2010, writer S.C. Gwynne published the book "Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History." The book was highly acclaimed at the time, however, according to Johnny Boggs in an article in the April 2025 issue of Western Writers of America's Roundup Magazine, the Comanche Nation denounced the book, saying that "Gwynne 'purposefully eschewed use of Comanche sources' and that 'his over reliance on ethnocentric sources' led to 'many

inaccuracies and stereotypes concerning the Comanche people.” Boggs also said in the article that “Tribal programs, etc., were directed not to buy copies of the book unless for education and/or critique.”

Quanah, who is known today as Quanah Parker for reasons that I'll get into in a minute, was probably born in 1845, although he once told rancher and trail driver Charles Goodnight that he was born about 1850 in a Comanche tepee in the shadow of the Wichita Mountains. Those mountains are in southwest Oklahoma near where the city of Lawton is today. However, the chronology of Quanah's life does not fit someone born in 1850; he almost had to be born earlier than that. But no one ever knew for sure because the Plains Indians had no written history—they relied on oral history—so there is no written documentation.

Quanah was the son of a Comanche brave named Peta Nocona and a white captive named Cynthia Ann Parker. Cynthia Ann had been kidnapped in 1836, when she was nine years old, by a war party of Comanches and raised as one of their own. She married Peta Nocona when she was probably 17 or 18, and had three children with him: her first son, Quanah; another son, named Pecan; and a daughter whose Indian name translated was Prairie Flower. Cynthia Ann was recaptured by the whites in 1860 at what became known as the Battle of Pease River and returned to her white family. However, she was never happy without her Comanche family and died only a few years after being recaptured. Prairie Flower, who was with her when she was recaptured, also died.

There are many versions of what happened at the battle, some of which were created for political gain and some out of jealousy, but according to Quanah, neither he nor Pecan were at the battle, nor was their father. Pecan reportedly died of smallpox a year or so later, and Peta Nocona died later in another battle.

After Peta Nocona died, the young Quanah continued to receive training as an Indian warrior by other braves in both the Quahadi and Noconi bands of the Comanche, and participated in raids into Kansas, New Mexico and, in 1868, into Mexico and into the Texas hill country. On one of the raids in the latter part

of the 1860s, the war chief leading the raid was killed and due to Quanah's display of bravery during the battle, he was chosen as the leader of the war party.

In 1874, Isa-tai, a Comanche medicine man, and Quanah recruited warriors for raids into Texas to avenge slain relatives. But during a meeting, other Comanche chiefs said that the buffalo hide merchants were the real threat to their way of life. They said that is where their vengeance should be aimed.

This was the time of the great buffalo slaughter, when commercial hunters spread out across the plains and killed millions of buffalo for their hides. To the Plains Indians, the buffalo was their primary provider, supplying food and more than 100 specific items. Every part of the buffalo was used by the Indians, and they needed the animal to survive.



Adobe Walls

With this in mind, Quanah and Isa-tai decided to attack a trading post in the Texas Panhandle known as Adobe Walls, where the buffalo hunters sold their hides and bought supplies. The morning of June 26, 1874, there were 28 men at Adobe Walls, including several hunters, when Quanah and about 250 of his warriors attacked the post. Three of the buffalo hunters who were outside the post were killed immediately, but the rest managed to get inside the thick adobe walls of the trading post. From there they fired at the Indians with their 50 caliber buffalo guns, but the Indians' rifles and arrows were unable to penetrate the walls.

A number of the Indians were killed, and as they retreated from their initial attack, Quanah's horse was shot out from under him. Hiding behind the carcass, he was hit by a bullet that ricocheted off a powder horn around his neck and lodged between his shoulder blade and his neck. The wound was not serious and he was soon rescued and taken out of range of the buffalo guns.

Prior to the attack, Isa-tai had claimed that his medicine would protect the Comanche, that the buffalo hunters' bullets would not penetrate their shirts. After three days, the Indians realized that Isa-tai's medicine wasn't as strong as he had claimed, and they left Adobe Walls. But the attack led to what became known as the Red River War, which culminated in the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon on September 28, 1874. Colonel Ranald Mackenzie and his troops destroyed several Indian villages in that battle and captured almost 1,500 horses, which they later killed. Realizing they were defeated, and without horses, the Indians walked to Fort Sill in Oklahoma and surrendered.



Quanah and his band of Quahadi Comanches were not at Palo Duro Canyon, but the following spring, he led what was left of the Quahadi band—fewer than one hundred men, women and children—to Fort Sill and surrendered. He had to admit their life of freedom was over. There was no longer any place to hide and no way to survive on the run. At Fort Sill, Quanah identified himself to Mackenzie simply as war chief of the Comanches and son of Cynthia Ann Parker.

At Fort Sill, Quanah became known as Quanah Parker, and government agents recognized his leadership qualities. They designated him a tribal chief over all the Comanches to serve as a liaison between his people and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As such, Quanah became somewhat of a shrewd leader of the Comanche, and encouraged them to take up stock raising and farming, to educate their children in government schools and to sign contracts with the white men. He began dressing in white man's clothes, and traveled widely on business and tribal affairs. Even Washington consulted him on Indian affairs.

His own people respected him too, first because he had proven himself as a warrior, and second, because white authorities listened to him. He served as a judge on Comanche tribal courts and encouraged the establishment of a tribal police force to assist white authorities in maintaining law and order on the reservation. And even though he learned to drive an

automobile and wore a business suit complete with bowler hat, he never completely turned his back on tribal ways. He preferred moccasins instead of boots or shoes, and under his hat he wore his hair in long braids down his back.



“Quanah, assimilated to the white man's way”

One of the biggest deals Quanah was able to negotiate was a grazing lease on 488,000 acres of tribal land. Taking advantage of the lease were some of the largest ranchers in Texas, including S.B. (Burk) Burnett who founded the Four Sixes Ranches, and Tom Waggoner of the famous Waggoner Ranch. Both of those men, and others, were able to run thousands of cattle on the Indian lands that became known as The Big Pasture, and the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache all profited from the cattlemen leasing their lands.

Quanah and Burnett became close friends in 1882, and that friendship lasted the rest of their lives. Both of them accompanied President Theodore Roosevelt when he came to the Big Pasture for a wolf hunt. Later, Quanah was a guest of Burnett's at the Four Sixes Ranch in Guthrie, Texas, and at Burnett's house in Fort Worth, and both Burnett and Waggoner contributed money toward the construction of the famous Star House that became Quanah's home in Cache, Oklahoma.

Besides Burnett and Waggoner, other notable men who called him friend were legendary cattleman Charles Goodnight; banker and businessman M.B. Loyd of Fort Worth, who was Burnett's father-in-law; and President Roosevelt. He was in the president's 1905 inaugural parade.

Quanah followed the Comanche custom of having multiple wives, and it's estimated that he had from six



Quanah with three of his wives

to nine. There is a photograph of five of them in a buggy with him, and two of them were living with him at Star House at the time of his death. At one time, he had as many as seven living in Star House, each with their own room. He was told by various government agents that he could have only one wife, and once, according to a story that has been told for years, one

of the agents told him that he could only have one wife and that he would have to tell the others they had to leave. Supposedly, Quanah turned and pointed to the five wives who were with him and said, "You tell them." He kept his wives.

Quanah's Star House in SW Oklahoma



In 1885, on one of Quanah's trips to Fort Worth, he was accompanied by Yellow Bear, one of his three living fathers-in-law. They were put up in an apartment on the second floor of a building adjacent to the Pickwick Hotel. The apartment was very nice for the time and included indoor plumbing and gas lighting. Quanah left Yellow Bear at their room and went to dinner with a friend. After Quanah left, Yellow Bear went to bed, blowing out the light but not turning off the gas jet. A few hours later, Quanah came in and went to bed.

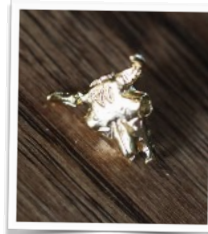
Sometime in the night, Quanah awoke feeling sick and attempted to open a window, but he collapsed on the floor unconscious. It was 13 hours before they were discovered by a housekeeper. Yellow Bear, who was lying in the bed, was dead, but doctors were able to revive Quanah, probably because he was lying on the floor and gas tends to rise.

In 1910, Quanah had his mother's and sister's remains moved to the Post Oak Mission Cemetery on the reservation. Quanah died on February 23, 1911, at Star House, and at his request, he was buried not beside any of his five or six wives who had died, but beside his mother and sister. In 1957, the remains of Quanah, Cynthia Ann and Prairie Flower were moved to the military cemetery at Fort Sill. The inscription on his tombstone reads: "Resting Here Until Day Breaks, And Shadows Fall and Darkness Disappears, is Quanah Parker, Last Chief of the Comanches."

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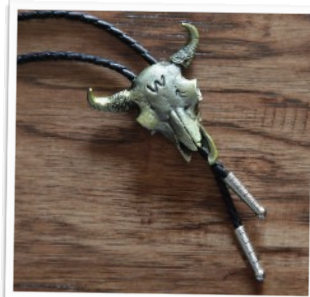
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BOOK NEWS *OF INTEREST TO WESTERNERS*



Bring Me the Head of Joaquin Murrieta: The Bandit Chief Who Terrorized California and Launched the Legend of Zorro

Hardcover – October 21, 2025 by John Boessenecker (Author)

Joaquin Murrieta's story is one for the ages. Fiercely compelling and epically woven, *Bring Me the Head of Joaquin Murrieta* details the bloody saga of the Latino outlaw. In myth, he embarked on a noble career as a rebel, fighting against injustice in the rough-and-tumble Wild West. However, though the "Robin Hood of El Dorado" remains a folk hero to many, his extraordinarily dramatic and violent saga has been obscured by layers upon layers of legend—until now.

available at bookstores nationwide and, of course, from Amazon, hard back \$16.00

See Dr. Brian Dillon's book review on page 18

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Sitting Bull's War: The Battle of Little Big Horn and the Fight for Buffalo and Freedom on the Plains Hardcover –

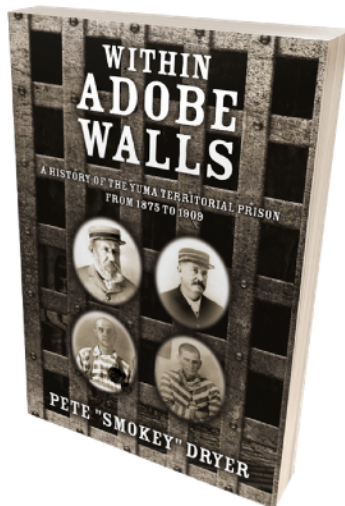
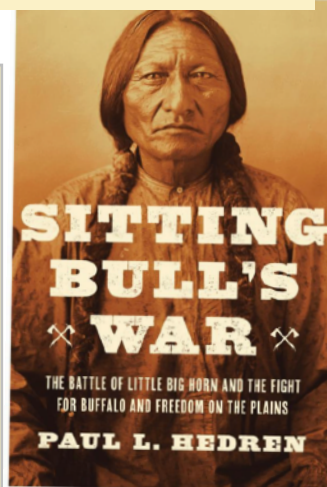
November 4, 2025 by Paul L. Hedren (Author)

The dramatic story of America's greatest Indian war told from perspective of the Lakotas and the Northern Cheyennes, as they fight for their way of life on the buffalo prairie.

A New Yorker Best Book of the Year

In this deeply affecting account of America's greatest Indian war, read in the world of Lakotas and Northern Cheyennes and their struggle in the 1870s to retain their lives on the buffalo prairie. Those impassioned Northern Indians faced a succession of white invaders—railroaders, borderland surveyors, prospectors, and ultimately the United States Army.

available at bookstores nationwide and, of course, from Amazon., hard back \$29.90



Within Adobe Walls author, Pete "Smokey" Dryer

An accurate history of The Yuma Territorial Prison, one of the most infamous prisons of the nineteenth century. Beginning in 1876 with the interesting explanation of how Yuma was picked for the location of Arizona's first prison. Relating, year by year, the construction and growth of the facility as subsequent superintendents strove to make improvements to keep pace with the ever-growing population and ease the hardship of their inmates. Including the stories of many of the inmates, their riots, escapes and deaths as they fought to survive in the place known as "The Hell Hole"

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If you've read a particularly fascinating book that you think might be of interest to other Westerners, please share it with your Buckskin Bulletin inklinger at: kenneth.pirtle@me.com so I can add it to the Book News section of

BOOK & PUBLICATION NEWS

OF INTEREST TO WESTERNERS



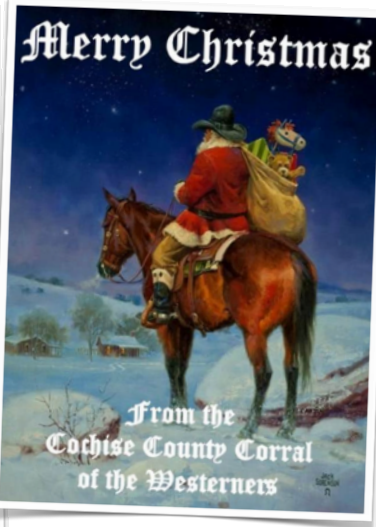
Figure 1: Greetings from Magdalena Bay, Mexico. Vintage commercial postcard in the author's possession.
**Greetings from Magdalena Bay, 1908:
The U.S. Navy in Baja California, Mexico**
By Matthew A. Best

Introduction

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt launched an unprecedented 14-month voyage to showcase America's rising naval capabilities, enhance its international prestige, and equip the Navy with operational experience.

Under the command of Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, best known as "Fightin' Bob," one of the United States Navy's most celebrated officers, the Atlantic Fleet, comprising 16 battleships with freshly painted, gleaming white hulls, color illustrations, and

(Continued on Page 3)

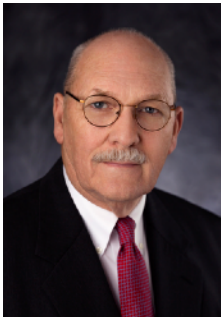


The **WI Home Ranch** is pleased to receive great publications from some of our Corrals and Poses. (far left) The **Los Angeles Corral** has produced another outstanding *Branding Iron*. Thanks to **Brian Dillon** for sharing. The sheriff of the **LA Corral** is **Jim Olds**.

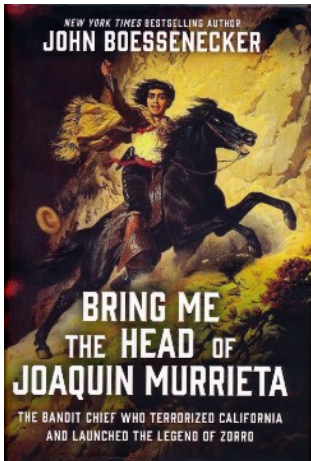
The **Pikes Peak Inkspot** comes to the Home Ranch from the **Pikes Peak Posse**, (lower left) Thanks to **Doug Hocking** for sending the Christmas issue. (left)

The **Freemont Street Mail**, (lower right) is produced by the **Cochise County Corral of Westerners**.

Each of these publications are very well done, full of great stories, informative and fascinating to read. Congratulations! and thanks to you all.



Greetings from your Buckskin Bulletin editor, Kenneth Pirtle. It is with pride that I put together these newsletters four times a year for Westerners International. I regularly check my email for Corral updates and news to include in the "BB" and share with our membership. Please share your WI news and activities to me at kenneth.pirtle@me.com or the Home Ranch at westerners@mail.wtamu.edu so I can include it in the upcoming issue.
The digital Buckskin Bulletin (PDF) is now sent to your Sheriff or Corral representative from the Home Ranch. The Home Ranch is dependent on current email addresses and we ask that you keep your Corral information updated. Hopefully the Buckskin Bulletin is getting distributed among your local membership. I would humbly request that you read your "BB" and share it when you have the opportunity. Happy Trails, KP



BRING ME THE HEAD OF JOAQUÍN MURRIETA: THE BANDIT CHIEF WHO TERRORIZED CALIFORNIA AND LAUNCHED THE LEGEND OF ZORRO, by John Boessenecker.

Hanover Square Press, Toronto, Canada/HarperCollins Publishers, Dublin, Ireland, 2025. 496 pages, illustrations, notes, index.

Reviewed by Brian Dervin Dillon

As a young kid growing up in Northern California in the 1950s I was fascinated by *Californio vaqueros* and *bandidos*. The curtains on my bedroom windows had cattle brands from 1840s Mexican California *ranchos* printed on them and my historian father helped me memorize these brands on flash cards the same way I learned my ABCs. Sometimes, while walking on the grassy hill behind our house, Dad would do a pop quiz, drawing a brand chosen at random in the mud with his fingertip, asking me whose family it belonged to: Peralta, or Vallejo, or Berryessa, and I usually got the attribution right. And thumb-tacked to the wall of my bedroom, right next to my cattle-brand curtains, was a reproduction of the 1850s poster urging Californians to come see the head of Joaquín Murrieta, and the hand of his partner in crime, Three Fingers Jack.

When asked who these two *bandidos* were, my father said that Jack, whose real name was Bernardino García, had lived for a while in my own home town, Mill Valley, Marin County, California, just over a hundred years earlier. He also told me that my grandmother's best friends in neighboring Sausalito in the 1880s were the García kids, most likely distant relatives of the three-fingered bandit. Back in 1958 my father also related that the life and fate of Joaquín Murrieta was shrouded by uncertainty. He noted that nobody really knew if there was only *one* Joaquín, or *two* or even *four*; and whether the head in the jar noted in the poster on my wall was that of the "real" Joaquín or simply that of an innocent shepherd caught in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Little did I know way back then, when Eisenhower was in the White House, that just one mile away, on the other side of the grassy hill behind the wall with the Murrieta poster, lived a kid exactly my own age who would, one day, definitively answer all of the questions I had about Joaquín Murrieta.

John Boessenecker's exhaustively-researched book, just published in 2025, lays to rest once and for all the uncertainties swirling around the life and death of Joaquín Murrieta. Responsible archaeologists like me always separate *evidence* from *interpretation* in our research and writing: if it is not the former, then, of necessity, it must be the latter. Unfortunately, too many historians routinely confuse factual *evidence* (geographic, chronologic, and, especially, biographic) with subjective *interpretation*, and this blending of fact and fiction, either intentional or unintentional, renders their writing unreliable and unbelievable. So it has been with the story of Joaquín Murrieta, California's most notorious badman of the 1850s. Early books and newspaper articles were sometimes true, sometimes false, most often uncorroborated third- or even fourth-hand hearsay: inevitably mixtures of fact and fiction. And then, later writers, generation after generation, simply repeated the make-believe fantasies and outright lies penned by earlier ones. They did this for more than 150 years until John Boessenecker finally revealed the truth of the matter, once and for all, with the publication of his most recent non-fiction book.

John has written a page-turner, destined to be an instant classic. His latest book is immensely readable, and will be the standard source on its subject referred to by all other scholars for years to come. Boessenecker's own background may be unique amongst present-day historians, especially those specializing in *Old West Law and Order*. John is eminently qualified to research and write the objective truth about historical figures like Joaquín Murrieta. He not only grew up in the same town that Three Fingers Jack lived in, but spent much of his early life as a serving LEO (Law Enforcement Officer), tasked not only with upholding the law, but knowing the difference between truth and falsehood in a job where human lives are frequently on the line. And then later, in his second career, John studied the law, and became an Attorney, where his stock-in-trade was knowing and acting upon the finer points of truth versus falsehood in the courtroom. No other modern researcher or writer comes better-equipped to pull back the shrouds of fantasy, falsehood, and uncertainty that have swirled around Joaquín Murrieta for the past century and a half.

Often portrayed as a kind of *Latino Robin Hood* who only stole from the *Gringos* as a justifiable payback for insults and outrages against him and his Spanish-speaking confederates, Joaquín Murrieta was instead a ruthless murderer who victimized just as many *Californios* as he did Yankees in the California gold fields and mining towns. And, contrary to the modern, politically-inspired myth, Joaquín often included *Gringo* badmen in his gang, who delighted in robbing and murdering their own fellow *Gringos*. Far from being a displaced *Californio* himself, as claimed by those writers who could not tell the difference, Murrieta was, in fact, a Sonoran. He was a comparative newcomer to Gold Rush California when he embarked on his notorious crime spree. No honorable gentleman bandit, Murrieta and his gang routinely ambushed and murdered unsuspecting victims then robbed their corpses, a much safer yet cowardly way of stealing than holding up potentially armed adversaries at gunpoint. And, one of the most despicable of Joaquín's homicidal habits was murdering defenseless Chinese miners, singly or in large groups, who were, rightly or wrongly, assumed to always be unarmed, and therefore "easy targets."

Boessenecker evaluates every literary strand bearing upon the Murrieta story, and determines whether each one should be woven into the true fabric of his life, or discarded as just another falsehood. John walked over every location even rumored to have played a part in the Murrieta saga, doing the same kind of "ground-truthing" that all archaeologists do but so few historians ever bother to. In doing so he was able to prove how many "sightings" of the putative Joaquín Murrieta during his 1850s reign of terror were geographically impossible. And, far more than simply the definitive biography of just one man, the bandit chief himself, Boessenecker's new book goes far beyond the story of Joaquín alone, his "before and after" as well as his lingering legacy. It also details the lives and often the violent deaths of every other member of his bandit gang that could be researched.

Another great strength of Boessenecker's new Murrieta book is its many illustrations, including maps, contemporary photographs, etchings, and poster reproductions. Too many historians are what I call *photophobic*: content to crank out reams of text while ignoring compelling photographic evidence that can prove or disprove arguments much more economically. Boessenecker is, unlike so many of his *photophobic* peers, a master of visual historic research. The dozens of illustrations he has found and published in his new Murrieta volume set the scene of one action location after another, and humanize principal players in a complex story that no amount of written description could ever hope to equal.

John Boessenecker, after publishing a dozen outstanding non-fiction books, and especially since the death of his good friend and mentor William B. Secrest, must now be accorded the title of *Foremost Californian Law and Order Historian and Writer*. Supporting this honorific, John's most recent book must also be recognized, after 170+ years of uncertainty, as the *final word* on Joaquín Murrieta. Long ago my own California historian father couldn't answer my questions about *who* Joaquín Murrieta was, *what* he did, and *how* he died; now 67 years later, John Boessenecker has finally done so, and done so definitively. Yes indeed, the head in the glass jar mentioned on the poster on my wall that I looked at every day so many years ago was that of the *real Joaquín*. Thanks, John, for such an