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Front Cover: Parachutes fill the air as a mass drop of approximately 1000 troops takes place during exercise Bright Star 1982. C-5 Galaxy aircraft are being used.


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CONTENTS

VOLUME 60  SUMMER 2014  NUMBER 3

ARTICLES

San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers: Visionaries and Entrepreneurs
Wallace R. Peck
121

Red Paradise: A Long Life in the San Diego Communist Movement
Toby Terrar
145

“Our Souls Are Equally Precious:” Edward Harvey Davis, Benevolence, Race, and the Colonization of Indigeneity
Christian Gonzales
181

“Born of Horses:” Missionaries, Indigenous Vaqueros, and Ecological Expansion during the Spanish Colonization of California
Paul Albert Lacson
207

IN MEMORIAM
230

BOOK REVIEWS
237

EXHIBIT REVIEW
245
San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers: Visionaries and Entrepreneurs

By Wallace R. Peck

More than once in San Diego’s long participation in conquering the air, parachute innovation and manufacturing were major industries. Although somewhat overshadowed by the region’s concentrated involvement with the development and production of both civilian and military aircraft, several parachute companies flourished for a time in San Diego. The men involved were daring pioneers in their own right—and some became business entrepreneurs with varying degrees of success.

The idea of floating to earth underneath a tent-like contraption was conceived possibly as early as 1483 by the Renaissance genius Leonardo da Vinci, who had drawn a sketch of a rigid pyramid-shaped device along with specifications of its dimensions, a description of the composition of its materials, and the notation that by using his design a man “can jump from any great height without injury to his body.”1 But the contrivance was not tested until over five centuries later, in 2000. The test

Wallace R. Peck is a retired San Diego attorney. He is a native San Diegan, a graduate of the University of California Berkeley (A.B., LL.B.), and was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. His interest in parachutes arises from both his flying experience and the fact that his mother worked in San Diego for the Russell Parachute Company in 1929.
in South Africa successfully demonstrated the viability of his concept, but the long delay has given him only passing credit for the idea.² Even centuries before da Vinci, it has been reported that the Chinese were jumping off buildings and towers with umbrella-like apparatuses to mitigate their fall, and in Siam it has been said that acrobats entertained the king using similar parasols, but such feats have never been verified, nor do we know what happened to the jumpers when they hit the ground, so they are given even less recognition today.³

Development of the Parachute

The first practical parachutes began appearing in the late 1700s, when daredevils in France and England took to demonstrating their own creations, sometimes successfully, other times not so successfully. Long before the advent of airplanes, parachutes were often seen floating down at local fairs, carnivals, and shows during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where exhibitionists in Europe and the United States would drop from hot-air balloons to thrill the spectators below.⁴ Parachutes became so commonplace that by February 1912 a bored New York steeplejack made a parachute jump from the observation platform of the raised arm holding the torch of the Statue of Liberty, floating safely to the grounds below, but then declining to be interviewed by the media.⁵

Tiny Broadwick demonstrates an early parachute, 1913.
©SDHC UT #85:h6090.

The U.S. armed services became fully aware of the parachute’s potential for saving lives as the result of demonstrations over North Island near San Diego. The first of these took place on February 23, 1914, when Charles Broadwick exited from a biplane flown by Glenn L. Martin, the future designer and manufacturer, at an altitude of 1,500 feet, with a cord attached to the fuselage of the plane. The cord released the restraining straps of the innovative backpack Broadwick was wearing, allowing the chute to open after about six seconds, gently depositing him on the ground before the awed spectators. While descending beneath his personally designed “aerial life preserver,” he coolly lit and smoked a cigarette to demonstrate his nonchalance.⁶
The next demonstration for the Army on North Island took place the following year, on March 8, 1915, when Charles Broadwick’s foster daughter, Georgia “Tiny” Broadwick, whose last name she had adopted, showed the assembled military onlookers what was possible. Tiny was experienced, having started parachuting from hot-air balloons in 1908, at the age of fifteen, and she had made hundreds of jumps before thousands of spectators at county fairs, circuses and other public events while barnstorming throughout the country with her father, including performances before over 5,000 San Diegans at Wonderland in Ocean Beach.7 Her first jump from an “aeroplane” occurred over Los Angeles a year earlier on June 21, 1913, when she became the first woman to perform such a feat, a man having done so just one year before.8 “Jump” is not entirely accurate, as she usually sat on either a board or a sling that hung from the right wing or side, and using a lever released the restraint allowing her to fall clear of the plane, relying on a cord or rope attached to the aircraft to pull open her chute. Similar feats over Los Angeles the following year generated considerable publicity.9

Watching the North Island demonstration from the ground was Brigadier General George P. Scriven, the chief signal officer of the Army Signal Corps to which the fledgling Army air units were attached.10 On one such jump Tiny’s biographer said she had to cut her entangled attachment to the fuselage and pull by hand the cord’s connection to the parachute on her back, thereby unexpectedly creating the first manually operated ripcord, if this really happened. There is no mention of this harrowing experience in the newspaper reports of the day, so it may have taken place at another time. In any event, the general was most impressed and recommended the purchase of a number of chutes. Only two were bought, however, and the concept’s possibilities were ignored for many years.11 The following week Tiny repeated her demonstration at North Island before a group of congressmen and their wives, but it did little to expedite the general use of parachutes.12
With the advent of World War I in Europe in 1914, parachutes were so well developed that they were supplied to vulnerable observation balloonists, who would use them to escape from fiery gas-filled balloons that had been attacked and set ablaze by enemy aircraft. Usually, the parachute canopy was stowed in a bag or canister attached to the balloon basket or the parachute hung loosely below the basket, and the observer would wear a harness that could quickly be connected to lines leading to the chute. Jumping from the basket, the lines and chute would be pulled free and, hopefully, the observer would drift to earth free of the conflagration raging above. Hundreds of balloonists were saved by such devices.¹³

Common sense should have dictated that the occupants of combat aircraft—the pilots, gunners, and observers—would be equipped with a similar means of escape. But common sense was long in developing. It seemed that little thought was given to the safety of the aircraft crews by those in command on the ground. Their concern appeared more for preserving the flimsy airplanes, as it was feared that pilots in battle would prematurely abandon their planes to save their own lives, thereby leaving a perfectly good government machine to plunge to its destruction. The catastrophic result of this warped policy was the unnecessary loss of many pilots who plummeted to their deaths unable to leave their disabled planes, although some would accelerate their fate by jumping from their burning cockpits to avoid being cremated alive.¹⁴

For years, this blind policy persisted on both sides of the conflict, with the French, British, German, and American pilots having no means of escaping. Only in the latter part of the war did Germany start equipping its pilots with parachutes, much to the surprise of their opponents. Many lives were saved, but not on the Allied side.¹⁵ General William “Billy” Mitchell, the commander of all U.S. air combat units in Europe, readily appreciated the need for such a safety device, and insisted that the matter be investigated and that parachutes be supplied.¹⁶

The result was the formation by the Army Air Service of an experimental group, called the U.S. Army Air Service Parachute Board, at McCook Field near Dayton, Ohio, to come up with a safe and workable parachute for use in planes. Unfortunately, it was too late to help the fliers at the front as the war ended in November 1918, before the group could get started. Under the command of Major Edward L. Hoffman, an engineer, the team members, all civilians, consisted of its leader James Floyd Smith, his assistant Guy M. Ball, Leslie L. Irvin, James M. Russell, and two others. Hoffman, Smith, and Russell were to have close contacts with San Diego.

Floyd Smith, who usually dropped his first given name “James,” already had a long history with aircraft, parachutes and parachuting. He started as
San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers

a circus trapeze artist, then with his wife Hilder financed and built his own airplane. Smith taught himself to fly, becoming a test pilot for the designer and manufacturer Glenn L. Martin, establishing altitude records over San Diego in 1915, and two years later making the first simulated aircraft carrier landing on North Island. Both Smith and his wife made parachute jumps in 1914 utilizing Charles Broadwick’s backpack with an opening cord tethered to the aircraft. Smith later designed a manually operated parachute, one that the user could carry on his or her back and deploy with a ripcord in hand instead of a static line attached to the plane. With great foresight, he applied for a patent on June 27, 1918, which was granted in 1920.

The McCook Field group tested seventeen different types of parachutes from around the world, finally settling on Floyd Smith’s design with some modifications. After using dummies for eleven trials, the first human test occurred on April 28, 1919, when Major Hoffman reluctantly authorized twenty-three-year-old Leslie L. Irvin to leap from a DeHavilland DH 9 piloted by Floyd Smith, the disappointed inventor who was hoping to be the first. The great unknown, at the time, was whether a human being would be able to pull the ripcord, or whether he would lose consciousness or become too disoriented. “Everyone knew...that a falling man lost his senses or was suffocated as he hurtled through space.” Irwin was an experienced parachutist, nicknamed “Sky-High Irvin” or sometimes “Ski-Hi Irvin,” and had worked as a stuntman and assistant casting director at the Universal Film Company. But all his prior jumps had been with a static line attached to an airplane or balloon to open the parachute. This would be the first time the jumper would be in control. He leaped from a plane flying at 1,500 feet altitude at a speed of about eighty miles per hour. The test was considered a great success. The ripcord and backpack worked perfectly, opening in less than two seconds after the ripcord was pulled, but Irvin broke his ankle on hitting the ground. While recuperating, he called his associate George Waite, a manufacturer of silk in Buffalo, New York, and in less than two months, they incorporated the Irving Air Chute Company (a “g” having been mistakenly added to Irvin’s name) and were ready for business. The scramble to reap profits was on.

In the meantime, further modifications, experimentation, and testing took place, with jumps by Floyd Smith, then James Russell with his first ever jump, followed by others. The result was the “Type A” backpack parachute model, which with various alterations became the standard for the U.S. Armed Forces. Based upon that design, others were configured to be worn as seat and chest types. The War Department immediately ordered 300 from the Irving Air Chute Company, which was the low bidder. Floyd Smith was unable to prepare a bid in time to meet the bidding deadline, he said.
The same year that Irvin incorporated the Irving Air Chute Company, Floyd Smith formed the Floyd Smith Aerial Equipment Co., which immediately brought suit for patent infringement against Irvin’s company. Smith won a pyrrhic victory. The judge ruled that although Smith’s patent was valid, and Irvin’s company was an infringer, damages would be minimal as substantially all of the sales by Irvin were pursuant to a U.S. Government contract, which insulated him from damages for those sales. Another suit directly against the United States would be necessary to recover any money. Such a suit was prepared but not filed, with the federal government paying Smith $3,500 for his manufacturing rights. The patent then was assigned by Smith’s company to Irvin’s company. These events led to the Irving Air Chute Company becoming the principal supplier of parachutes to the military for years to come. Leslie Irvin is often given credit for the invention, but it was really Floyd Smith’s idea and design that prevailed, although he reaped few monetary rewards.

The selected parachute, often called an “Irvin,” the name it was labeled by the manufacturer, was a tremendous success. The first military operational use took place in October 1922 when Lt. (later Brigadier General) Harold R. Harris used it...
to save his life when his plane started to disintegrate during mock combat. In March 1924, an order was issued requiring all military pilots to fly with parachutes attached to their bodies. This was ten years after Tiny Broadwick’s successful demonstrations above North Island, and over five years since the end of World War I, a long and deadly delay. But finally it was proven worthwhile. An informal “Caterpillar Club” was created in 1922. The sole requirement for membership was an emergency use of a parachute. By 1939, the club had over 4,000 members; by the 1950s, it had over 80,000, a true testament of the life-saving qualities of the parachute.

Russell Parachute Company

In June 1924, James “Jimmy” Russell left the McCook Field organization in Dayton and headed to San Diego with the goal of forming his own parachute manufacturing company. Financial assistance was apparently forthcoming from H.R. McClintock, a well-known and well-respected local businessman who, having made his fortune in the outdoor advertising business, was now planning to build a warehouse on Kettner Boulevard at the intersection of B Street near the Santa Fe Station. The Russell Parachute Company was incorporated in December 1925 to manufacture “aerial life preservers” with McClintock as president, and Russell as vice president. The six-story, 67,000 square-foot McClintock Storage Warehouse building, at 1202 Kettner Boulevard, was completed in June of that same year and, after being used as an exhibition site, part of it became the home of the Russell factory at the end of that year. An article in The San Diego Union reported the company’s start-up and stated: “Naval aviation officials here announced yesterday
that they will do everything possible to make San Diego’s newest commercial industry a success.”31 There were high expectations for the enterprise.

Jimmy Russell was brimming with innovative ideas. In 1926, he designed and patented a “valve” type parachute that featured openings in overlapping parts of the parachute’s panels to make for easier deployment, but it was never put into production.32 That same year, he came up with a new device that attached to the ripcord for releasing the parachute faster.33 He also patented his new aviator’s leather helmet.34 He even designed and successfully tested a very large parachute to bring an entire plane safely down to earth.35 And he pushed his idea of supplying parachutes to all passengers on airliners, a dream that never caught on.36 But his biggest contribution was his design and patent of what became known as the Russell “Lobe” Parachute. Having participated in the investigation of the death of a parachutist at McCook Field, Russell was seeking ways of reducing the severity of a chute’s opening force and the oscillation while descending. He came up with a parachute that minimized these problems. It had a slightly different appearance, with an almost flat top canopy and an inwardly curved skirt, and no small pilot chute was required to assist in opening the main chute.37 This product became the centerpiece of the company.38 It utilized a pack designed by Major E.L. Hoffman and was produced in a variety of sizes and in forms that could be worn on a person’s back, seat, or chest, made from white or pongee silk or even cotton cloth.39

The Lobe led to expansion of the Russell Parachute Company, physically growing from occupying 800 square feet to 10,000 square feet of the McClintock building. Sales boomed. Nationwide, about sixty dealers were appointed; an eastern sales office was established; a new plant was opened in England, the British Russell Parachute Co., Ltd., to comply with the requirements of British law; and construction of a new facility was contemplated east of the Mississippi, although it was never built. Numerous demonstrations and extensive advertising ensued, with the slogan “For Safe Descent.”40 When Charles Lindbergh came to San Diego in 1927, five months after his famous solo flight to Paris, he was presented with a Lobe parachute.41 When Lindbergh Field was dedicated the following year on August 16, 1928, three Navy enlisted men jumped with Lobes in full view of the thousands in the crowd below.42 Pretty young ladies wearing, but not using, Russell parachute, 1929. ©SDHC #PA 202.
San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers

San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers

Charles Lindbergh relied on a parachute not once, but four times, in the three years before his famous flight to Paris. Pictured with his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, 1929. Shorpy. ©SDHC #17645.

chutes were featured in publicity photographs. That same year, Russell met in Washington, D.C. with Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, head of the Bureau of Aeronautics, to try to interest the Navy, while McClintock toured Europe with a company jumper to demonstrate the Lobe to prospective buyers there.

The price to dealers was between $250 and $350 each, depending on the size and the materials used, with the cotton version being less expensive than the silk and thereby more attractive to private pilots. A number of airlines and flight schools adopted the Lobe, and such sales mushroomed, but contracts with the military were not forthcoming. After government testing in the United States and in Britain, it was concluded that it did not offer substantial advantages over the standard parachute being produced in great quantities by the Irving Air Chute Company. This stark disappointment, undoubtedly aggravated by the onset of the Great Depression, was a major blow to the company. Even though it received government contracts for the manufacture of anti-aircraft target sleeves and other items, the survival of the company was tenuous.

The coup de grâce was a devastating court ruling. Seeing the inroads being made by the Lobe in the civilian market, notice was given to the Russell Parachute Company on December 28, 1928, of alleged patent violations, and about five months later on June 1, 1929, the Irving Air Chute Company and the Floyd Smith Aerial Equipment Company jointly filed a patent infringement suit against the Russell
Parachute Company for violation of Smith’s original patent. The trial between the companies of the three former McCook Field colleagues took place the following year in Wilmington, Delaware, the state of incorporation of Russell’s company. More than fifteen witnesses appeared, including Irvin, Ball, and Russell from McCook Field days, supplemented by Floyd Smith’s testimony from a prior case. George Waite, the silk dealer who was president of Irvin’s company, testified that the company had no competitors for military contracts, having sold over 7,000 chutes to date, with another 1,000 on order. Civilian sales had reached 1,502, and sales to foreign governments from its British factory were between 3,500 to 4,000 units. But, he said, sales had fallen since 1929 due to competition from Russell and another company.45

One of the principal issues in the case was the existing “state of the art” prior to Smith’s 1918 application for his patent, a common defense in patent disputes to demonstrate that there was no real innovation and, therefore, no valid patent. The defense tried to show that “free parachutes,” that is, parachutes that could be carried and operated manually, were publicly known and used earlier. The history of airplane parachutes was reviewed. Other patents, newspaper articles, and testimony were presented. Tiny Broadwick, then married and known as Tiny Brown and a resident of San Diego, testified as to her use of the Broadwick backpack over North Island and elsewhere. She asserted that she had used a manually operated ripcord several times, including her demonstrations at North Island, but her memory of her jumps over fifteen years earlier was somewhat confused, and the judge could give little weight to her testimony. Nevertheless, after hearing all the evidence, he ruled in favor of the Russell Parachute Company, dismissing the case, declaring that even if the Broadwick backpacks were not actually used independently from a plane, they were “capable of being readily converted into the ‘free jump’ type.”46

It was a great victory for Russell. Unfortunately, there was an appeal.

The Court of Appeal saw things differently. It reviewed the immediate and outstanding success of the Smith packs since the time of their testing and approval at McCook Field, emphasizing that during the ensuing eleven years, “the government bought over seven thousand, twenty five; foreign governments have bought or ordered eight-thousand five hundred; the sales generally have been twenty thousand, and, until the defendants entered in competition, the plaintiff company had the exclusive trade,” with 250 lives being saved by Smith parachutes. Substituting business success for innovation, the court concluded, “We have reached the firm conviction that the Smith patents and the Smith pack made a signal contribution to aeronautics, and the defendant has wrongfully trespassed on Smith’s rights.”47 This was the death knell of the Russell Parachute Company. The appellate court’s decision was rendered on February 3, 1931. Russell’s company
was still listed in the 1932 San Diego City Directory, but was absent from the 1933 directory, having dissolved or at least wound down. It may have continued for another year or two to fulfill other contracts, but its heart and soul were gone, as were its profits.

**Hoffman & Russell**

Major Edward L. Hoffman, the military head of the Parachute Board at McCook Field, was recognized for his leadership when he was awarded in 1926 the prestigious Collier Trophy “for development of a practical parachute,” the trophy being awarded annually “for the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America...during the preceding year.” While still in the Army, he was inventive in his own right, designing a parachute that was more maneuverable and could be glided in different directions. His version was in the shape of a triangle, with two rounded corners and one cut-off corner to allow air to be exhausted resulting in controlled horizontal movement of the chute. He patented this idea, and upon leaving the Army he, too, formed a manufacturing enterprise, the Triangle Parachute Company, with operations centered in Cincinnati, Ohio. He obtained in 1930 several other patents, but was careful to provide that the government could use all of them free of charge, since he was on active military duty when the inventions were designed. The U.S. Army Air Corps bought some of his parachutes, but despite Hoffman’s hopes to replace the standard parachute, the Air Corps phased out usage of the Triangle in the late 1930s, primarily due to the cost of manufacture and the difficulty in packing, and the company was forced to close.

After his discharge as a lieutenant colonel from the service in 1937, Hoffman made his way to San Diego County, settling in El Cajon. He and Jimmy Russell resumed their relationship and started to work together, joining by 1938 into a partnership or association called Hoffman & Russell with facilities located at 808 Fourteenth Street in San Diego. Across the hall was a ladies garment factory with available sewing machines, enabling them to continue their long-standing mutual interest in parachutes. They focused on designing parachutes primarily to save entire airplanes, and ground-tested at Lindbergh Field a chute sixty feet in diameter purportedly capable of supporting 24,000 pounds. They had plans for even larger behemoths measuring up to 225 feet across, ten times the diameter of personnel parachutes, and were actively seeking material suppliers to implement their idea, but nothing came of the venture. They were ahead of their times, as comparable parachutes are used today to drop heavy loads and to recover space capsules and other orbiting heavy objects to return them safely to earth.
Hoffman & Russell worked on other innovations, and in 1941 they jointly applied for a patent for a new design to reduce a parachute’s oscillation and rate of descent, especially for large loads. Apparently unable to personally profit from their ideas, they assigned the patent to the Standard Parachute Corporation, where Russell was then working.53

Standard Parachute Corporation

The approaching war brought substantial parachute manufacturing back to San Diego. In May 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in an address to Congress, called for the production of 50,000 new warplanes and, in September 1940, Congress created the Selective Service System requiring the registration of all males between the ages of 21 and 36 for a possible draft into the armed forces.54 War for the United States was on the horizon, and thousands of parachutes would be required. In reaction and anticipation, Jimmy Russell, John Speaks, and others formed the Standard Parachute Corporation and opened for business in December.55 They were joined by Col. C.E. Fauntleroy who became president of the company.

Col. C.E. (for Cedric Errol) Fauntleroy would warrant a separate article about his colorful life. Born in Mississippi in 1891, he joined the Lafayette Flying Corps before the United States entered World War I. The members of the corps were part...
of the Aviation Section of the French army, and consisted of American volunteers that ultimately totaled about 269 pilots, with many of them losing their lives while training, flying, and fighting in the unreliable planes of the day. With the U.S. entry into the conflict, the pilots were transferred to the Army Air Service where they continued as Army pilots. Fauntleroy was assigned to the famous 94th Hat-in-the-Ring Pursuit Squadron, attaining the rank of major. In 1920, following the war Fauntleroy formed and became commander of a flying unit supporting newly independent Poland in its war with revolutionary Russia. The unit, consisting of twelve to fourteen American pilots, was named the Kościuszko Squadron, in honor of Tadeusz Kościuszko, a Polish patriot who served in the Continental Army of George Washington during the American Revolutionary War. Fauntleroy was promoted to colonel and was awarded several medals for valor. In early 1921 he briefly returned to the U.S. to recruit pilots. That war ended the following month with the signing of a treaty that fixed a new border between Poland and Bolshevik Russia, and the mission of the American volunteers terminated in May 1921.

The new parachute company in San Diego was launched in December 1940 and soon moved into 371 Eighth Avenue, the three-story building that was formerly the first factory of Rohr Aircraft Corporation. Initially, the World War I veteran
pilot John Speaks, another member of the Polish squadron, was designated as the president, but soon his former commander Col. Fauntleroy assumed that position and served in that role for the next two years. The experienced Russell was named vice-president and production manager of the new enterprise.

The business was a great wartime success, starting with thirty employees, ultimately employing hundreds in San Diego, mostly women, while producing over 150,000 parachutes solely for the military. To meet growing demand, a subsidiary manufacturing plant was established in 1942 in Manti, Utah (population about 2,500), with its first employees being brought to San Diego for training to then return and train others. The parachutes produced for the Armed Forces were designated as coming from “Stanpar,” and several advertisements emphasized that name. Sadly, unlucky Jimmy Russell did not live to participate in the rewards, having died of a heart attack on September 13, 1941 at the age of 43. Unquestionably, he was a true pioneer. The company closed in September 1945 with the cessation of hostilities, having fulfilled its role admirably.

Pacific Parachute Company

Officers at the Standard Parachute Corporation must have been surprised when Howard “Skippy” Smith asked for a job, not in a menial position, but one of real involvement in the enterprise. Surprised, because Skippy was African-American for whom such non-menial openings at that time were almost nonexistent. But he had unique credentials—he was an accomplished parachutist.

Arriving in Los Angeles from the Deep South in the late 1930s, he became infatuated with parachuting and, with his close friend Mack Gravelle, purchased parachutes and enrolled in a school for novices. Having learned the rudiments, they joined a group of barnstormers, calling themselves “Skip and Skippy.” A publicity brochure described their performance as “Courageous delayed chute openings, free falls, breakaway jumps and spot landings are some of the feats which won great acclaim for the two Negro boys.” Tragically, the team of Skip and Skippy came to a sudden finale in 1939 when Skip Gravelle was killed when his parachute failed to open. Skippy Smith continued on.

Soon after Standard Parachute Corporation started in business, Skippy was knocking on its door. Despite some misgivings by other employees, he was hired as a drop tester and a packer working in the field with other men. He later became the company’s first Black supervisor, being promoted to be assistant inspector, overseeing the production of the hundreds of predominately white women that were employed in the factory manufacturing parachutes. While working there, he also was still involved in the “Hollywood Air Show” which later became
We hope you prove to the public that Parachutes are one of our greatest means of National Defense

WALKERS DEPT. STORE
1014 Fifth Avenue

SKIPPY SMITH
formerly Hollywood Airshow

Skippy Smith poses with his parachute for Parachute Circus Show, 1941. ©SDHC #94:19228.
known as the “Parachute Circus,” presenting, with a number of other performers, jumping demonstrations over the vacant land between Linda Vista and Camp Elliott in the vicinity of what is now Miramar Marine Air Station.

Having augmented his aerial skills with ground-level production knowledge, and recognizing the huge wartime demand for parachutes of all sizes, Smith proposed to Col. Fauntleroy, the president of Standard Parachute, that he become a subcontractor for the manufacture of small chutes. Impressed with his abilities and perseverance, Fauntleroy agreed. But Skippy Smith had no funds to finance his dream. So immediately he went to Los Angeles to see if an acquaintance, African-American actor Eddie “Rochester” Anderson (known to almost everyone as Jack Benny’s radio foil), would be interested. He was, and he invested $3,000 in the enterprise, which was named the Pacific Parachute Company. For his new venture, Smith rented all three floors of the building at 627 Eighth Avenue near Market Street, a couple of blocks north of the Standard Parachute facility, and the 28-year-old was in business. A week after opening, two formal dedications of the undertaking took place on March 26, 1942, one ceremony being in the afternoon at the plant, attended by white paratroopers, Negro guardsmen, religious and civic leaders, and another was held that evening at the Memorial Junior High School Auditorium in Logan Heights with a similar turnout. Speaking at both events were Col. Fauntleroy, Skippy Smith, and Eddie “Rochester” Anderson, who was met at the Santa Fe station with great fanfare and then led by a police escort to the plant. The business was dedicated to Skippy’s close friend and jumping partner, the late Skip Gravelle.

Personnel at the Pacific Parachute Company consisted mainly of women

Left to right: Skippy Smith with Mayor Harley Knox and boxer Joe Louis, July 1943. Sefton family collection.
operating sewing machines, cutting silk and cloth, and performing related tasks. As one of the first, if not the first, African-American war material manufacturer in the nation, Smith was urged by others in the minority community to hire only blacks, but Smith refused, stating in effect that he would not be a party to perpetuating prejudice and discrimination. The result was a diverse workforce of African-Americans, Mexicans, Brazilians, Filipinos, West Indians, and Caucasians, a truly integrated group in an era when desegregation was rare. His venture has been described as “one of the most ambitious entrepreneurial endeavors by an African-American in San Diego up to that time.” In 1943 he was awarded the National Negro Business League’s Spaulding Award for achievement in business at a ceremony held in Baltimore. That same year “Rochester” was honored with a trophy from the San Diego Merchants and Manufacturing Association for achievements in manufacturing and for the promotion of racial understanding.

Full-sized personnel parachutes were not produced at Pacific Parachute. Instead, manufacturing was concentrated on small parachutes, usually about eighteen to thirty-six inches in diameter, intended for service as pilot chutes to expedite deployment of larger chutes, and others for use with bombs and flares. An estimated 50,000 such parachutes were produced during its first year of business. By the second year, however, production contracts slowed as the end of the war was on the horizon, and Pacific Parachute Company closed its doors in 1944 and moved its operations to Los Angeles, terminating its unique contribution to San Diego, racial relations, and the war effort.

Smith Parachute Company and Prevost F. Smith Parachute Co.

As with most of the participants in the original McCook Field group, Floyd Smith, its civilian leader and the inventor of the manually operated parachute, maintained a life-long passion for improving that life-saving device, repeatedly patenting new ideas while working with a variety of companies, both nationwide and in San Diego. He has been described as “Mr. Parachute,” and as “the father of the parachute industry,” having “designed more parachutes, for more companies, than any other human being.”

Floyd started by forming the Floyd Smith Aerial Equipment Company initially to manufacture parachutes in Chicago. It soon
became the vehicle for bringing lawsuits to protect his patents, as previously described. Although he assigned his first ripcord patent to the Irving Air Chute Company after one such litigation, he seldom was absent from the burgeoning new industry. In the mid and late-1920s, he was involved with the newly formed Switlik Parachute Company in Trenton, New Jersey, where he developed new ideas and tested parachutes. He created a better ripcord and he patented a superior packing method which were relied upon to make that company become one of the largest parachute manufacturers in the nation, promoting the “Floyd Smith Safety Pack.” Perhaps his most creative invention was an ejection seat for airline passengers, with the passengers being ejected in their seats through the bottom of the fuselage on activation of the mechanism by the pilot and then, supposedly, gently floating to earth in attached parachutes. He not-so-modestly described the “Floyd Smith Safety Seat” as “the greatest of all life-saving devices.” The novel idea was successfully tested in 1929 but for some reason it never caught on. For a time, he also renewed his association with Jimmy Russell and became involved with San Diego’s Russell Parachute Company, probably in an advisory capacity.

Joining with the Cheney Silk Mills in Manchester, CT, Floyd Smith was one of the founders of the Pioneer Parachute Company in 1938, where he became vice president and chief engineer. Smith was later described as having “made more contributions to parachute engineering and design than any other man in history.” He continued to obtain new patents for improved packing methods, pilot chutes, and stiffeners for more comfortable packs, plus a novel tower for low-cost testing. Pioneer produced thousands of chutes during World War II and continues in existence today.

Prevost Smith, his son, joined Pioneer as an engineer in 1942, working on a variety of innovative projects. In 1947, after the end of the war, Floyd Smith and his son left Pioneer and went into business for themselves, founding the Smith Parachute Company. They located their operations at Gillespie Field in San Diego County. Gillespie Field had been established by the U.S. Government in World War II as a training base for Marine paratroopers, a new concept for that arm of the military. Some 3,000 marines were graduated after training at that field from 1942 to 1943, with over 20,000 jumps being made without a fatality, but the idea of parachuting marines was abandoned as being impractical. No marines ever jumped in combat, and the trained chutists were relegated to ground units. The property was turned over to the County of San Diego in 1947. Besides establishing a general aviation airport, the county sought industrial development, and the Smiths were one of the early tenants.

Floyd Smith died in San Diego in 1956, after which the name of his company was changed to the Prevost F. Smith Parachute Company. It continued under the
San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers

direction of his son.\textsuperscript{78} Nearly five years later in 1961, the Board of Supervisors, in his honor, renamed a street on the south side of Gillespie Field as “Floyd Smith Drive,” where his name joined other local aviation pioneers with similar honors at that airport.\textsuperscript{79}

Prevost Smith was a visionary, too, with a bachelor’s degree in aeronautical engineering. He followed in his father’s footsteps and, some would say, went far beyond. While at Pioneer Parachute Company, he designed a new canopy, subsequently concentrating on large canopies, deceleration chutes for planes, and the use of clusters of parachutes.\textsuperscript{80} He was lauded at the time of his death by admiring associates as “the world’s foremost parachute designer.” He is credited with creating the first parachute testing whirl tower, which was later installed and used for years by the Joint Parachute Testing Center at the Naval Air Facility in El Centro.\textsuperscript{81} Among his other achievements, Prevost Smith determined a method for using fine calico material, instead of silk, for the manufacture of parachutes; he also designed and manufactured chutes in a multitude of sizes for astronauts, drone aircraft, and for dropping military weapons and equipment, while fulfilling contracts with NASA, the Navy, the Air Force, Teledyne Ryan, and many other large defense contractors. He passed away in 1991, ending, at least until the present, San Diego’s important but varied history with parachute manufacturing.\textsuperscript{82}

Conclusion

Since the demonstration over North Island by Charles Broadwick in 1914, parachute development over the ensuing hundred years has continued unabated, with more innovations and new patents galore. Originally, the billowing umbrellas were variously described by their creators as “life packs,” “aviatory life buoys,” “aeroplane life belts,” “life vests,” “aerial life preservers,” “Guardian Angels,” “air chutes,” and even “lifeboats of the air” for those intended to save an entire airplane. Today they are often referred to as “decelerators” and they come in a vast myriad of shapes and sizes, fulfilling a great variety of purposes, from their original goal of rescuing imperiled aviators to deploying paratroopers, delivering heavy military equipment and cargo, supplying emergency relief to ravaged areas, stopping high-speed jets during landings, recovering drone aircraft and spacecraft, and even facilitating the sports of skydiving and paragliding. Well over fifty companies in the United States have been involved over time in their development and manufacture, and there have been many others worldwide. San Diegans have been an integral part of that story—Floyd Smith, Jimmy Russell, H. R. McClintock, E. L. Hoffman, C. E. Fauntleroy, Skippy Smith, Prevost Smith—all visionaries and truly entitled to be honored and remembered as modern “pioneers.”
NOTES

1. Estimates of the date of the original sketch vary from 1483 to 1500.


8. Capt. Albert Berry is generally thought to have been the first man to successfully jump from a plane in March 1912, the parachute being stored in a metal cylinder attached to the underside of the plane’s fuselage or the skid of a three-wheeled pusher biplane. Mumma, *Parachutes*, 14. See also *Parachutist*, “Leap Year 1912.”


12. For a description of her leap, see last paragraph of “Inventor Will Overturn Airship To Prove That Parachute Is Efficient,” *San Diego Union*, March 16, 1915, 2.

maintains the Dave Gold Parachute Collection; they willingly supplied me with copies of many of his writings.


25. There were others, especially Solomon Lee Van Meter, Jr., who had patents and lawsuits to support his claim to have developed the concept earlier with his Patent No. 1,192,479, issued July 25, 1916. See *Van Meter v. Irving Air Chute Co.*, 27 F.2d 170 (WDNY, 1928); *Van Meter v. United States*, 47 F.2d 192 (2d Cir., 1931). He prevailed in both cases. See also Aviation Museum of Kentucky Hall of Fame, http://www.aviationky.org/halloffame.asp (accessed December 3, 2013).


28. Charles Lindbergh relied on a parachute four times before his flight to Paris. His first was during his student training, the second during a test flight, and the third and fourth while flying the U.S. Mail, all in a period of two-and-one-half years. Lucas, *The Big Umbrella*, 88-90. Irwin, with some 300 or more jumps, never qualified for membership, as none was for emergency purposes.

29. For an earlier biography of McClintock, see, *City of San Diego and San Diego County* (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1922), II:385-86.

33. H.R. McClintock is named as the inventor in the patent application, dated January 5, 1926, and he is described as having assigned his rights to the Russell Parachute Company. It is unclear whether Russell himself collaborated on the project, but it must be assumed he was the guiding force and probable designer. The final patent (No. 1,712,307) was issued May 7, 1929.
38. Patent No. 1,621,766; application February 17, 1926; granted June 7, 1927.
40. See ads in *Western Flying* (magazine), June 1929, 95; *Aero Digest* (magazine), March 1930, 157.
42. Scott, *Air Capital of the West*, 81.
43. Ibid., 68.
47. *Irving Air Chute Co., v. Russell Parachute Co.*, 47 F.2d 139 (3d Cir. 1931), 132, 134.
49. Patent Nos. 1,757,247, 1,774,513, 1,780,190, all issued in 1930. He was granted additional patents in 1932 and 1933, one for a parachute harness (No. 1,909,176) another to make it easier for crew members to quickly attach a parachute to a harness (No. 2,051,044), another to improve ripcord assembly (No. 2,042,066), and in 1936 for a parachute to lower an airliner’s cabin safely to the ground with its passengers inside (No. 2,050,324).
51. Interview with Robert L. Fronius, San Diego Historical Society Oral History Program, June 29, 1991, 23. Fronius was the operator of the San Diego Parachute Company, which repaired, packed and sold parachutes, but did not manufacture them.
San Diego’s Parachute Manufacturers

54. For the text of President Roosevelt’s address to Congress, see http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15954 (accessed November 16, 2013); the Selective Service System was a creature of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 signed September 16, 1940 (Chap. 720, 54 Stat. 885).

55. “Parachute Manufacturing Plant Opens Here; Only Five in Nation,” San Diego Union, December 8, 1940, 3A.


57. This led to paraphrasing the World War I declaration, sometimes misattributed to General Pershing, of “Lafayette We Are Here,” with “Kościuszko We Are Here.” Janusz Cisek, Kościuszko We Are Here: American Pilots of the Kościuszko Squadron in Defense of Poland, 1919-1921 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 200-01.


59. Scott, Air Capital of the West, 111. The building is still there, beyond left field of Petco Park and adjacent to the Park at the Park. It now houses a restaurant and several other businesses, but its address has changed to 815 J Street due to the closing of Eighth Avenue for easy access to the park. It is called The Schieffer and Sons Building, named after the original owners.

60. Crawford, “Pioneer parachute maker dropped in at right time,” 3.


64. Crawford, “Pioneer parachute maker dropped in at right time;” Crawford, “The Pioneer of Parachutes.”


76. It is now called Pioneer Aerospace and is a subsidiary of the international conglomerate Zodiac Aerospace.


78. “J.F. Smith, Parachute Inventor Dies,” San Diego Union, April 20, 1956, A4. He is buried with his wife at the Portal of Folded Wings Shrine to Aviation at Valhalla Memorial Park in Los Angeles County.


Red Paradise: A Long Life in the San Diego Communist Movement

By Toby Terrar

In December 2013, San Diego resident Milton Lessner, who has been a dues-paying member of the Communist Party, USA, since 1931, celebrated his 100th birthday. Like most of his comrades, he never held a leadership position in or publicly identified himself as a party member. He sees no purpose in using his last name now, but is otherwise happy with sharing an account of his life in the party’s San Diego branch. For much of the twentieth century San Diego had a small community consisting of Communist Party members and their non-party friends. Milt comments that they lacked both the glamorous Hollywood connections enjoyed in Los Angeles and the large numbers of party members in New York and Chicago. They were practically invisible when compared to San Diego’s local military-industrial complex. But in an earlier period their work on behalf of the city’s trade unions, civil rights, peace movement, consumer empowerment, and housing contributed positively to the city’s history and should not be totally forgotten.

Milt was born on December 11, 1913, in New Haven, Connecticut, where his 24-year-old father Henry worked in a watch factory. Henry and his wife Bessie were of Jewish heritage. His father, although not political, was a member of Workmen’s Circle, which was a Yiddish language, American Jewish fraternal organization. Soon after Milt’s birth, they settled at Scienceville near Youngstown, Ohio, and started a mom-and-pop grocery store. Milt had an older brother Herbert, born in 1912, and a younger brother Eugene, born in 1920.

Toby Terrar, a native San Diegan, attended UCLA where he studied Catholic church history with Gary Nash. Terrar was motivated by Davis, Mayhew and Miller’s Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See to write the present essay. Terrar’s website is www.angelfire.com/un/cwp.
In 1921, when he was 8 years old, Milt’s father developed an infection in his foot that led to gangrene and the amputation of his leg. Then the other foot became infected. He let the infection take its course rather than endure amputation, resulting in his death at the age of 31. The family was not religious, but a rabbi came to the funeral. Bessie then took over operation of the grocery store. She was assisted by her brother Joe Kozakoff (1890-1960) and by her children who began waiting on customers when they were barely able to look over the counter. Bessie, who learned English as an adult, always spoke with an accent. She worked hard, from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, seven days a week.

The store was in a black neighborhood where most of the men were employed in the steel mills. The Youngstown workers had a history of attempting to organize trade unions. Their activism took off in the late 1920s and during the Depression. The main union organizer, a black man, traded at Bessie’s store. Milt points out that being an organizer was a dangerous business. He had to go in secret at night to the homes of the workers to hold meetings. There was always the threat of betrayal. Milt experienced the pervasive hostility and constant fear promoted by the company towards the labor movement and its organizers.

Milt’s uncle Joe Kozakoff was influential in his political development. Joe was no stranger to dangerous politics. He had engaged in clandestine activity in Russia as a member of the Social Revolutionary Party, an organization that eventually became part of the Communist Party. His activities had resulted in his imprisonment by the Czarist police, torture, malnourishment, and being bitten by rats. He escaped and, with the financial help of a brother who had arrived earlier, came to America in 1910 where he continued to be politically active. As Milt puts it, “Joe used to read progressive journals and books. He was always supporting the underdog. He never had any use for the capitalist class, because it exploited and obtained its wealth from others.” He believed dogmatically in the Bolshevik Revolution and talked much to Milt about it. Joe eventually joined the American Communist Party. Milt describes him as a closed person with a secretive, paranoid side.

Milt became acquainted with the union people who traded at Bessie’s store. Some were communists and, in 1931, Milt himself joined the party at age 17. The Communist Party of America had been formed in 1919 after a split with the Socialist Labor Party. The two groups merged in May 1921. He notes that his mother allowed him freedom to make his own decisions. She herself was never involved with the party. There was a steel workers club but no youth section, so Milt did not go to regular party meetings. Milt admired Joe Dallet (1907-1937), the Youngstown chair and liked to visit his downtown office. Milt’s sponsor was full-time party organizer Johnny Gates (1913-1992). Both 17-years-
old, they became close friends. Milt assisted him in activities such as helping with the organizing of unemployed workers, working in the campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys and running unsuccessfully for the Youngstown city council. Milt also worked with Gus Hall (1910-2000) who later was the party’s general secretary from 1959 to 2000.

When he joined the party, Milt was still attending Rayen High School in Youngstown, Ohio, where he was an average student. His favorite activity was playing the violin in the school orchestra. His mother paid for him to take music lessons. He continued to play throughout his life. Only at age 90, needing to put more time into caring for his invalid wife, did he stop performing classical compositions with an amateur San Diego philharmonic group.

After graduation, Milt enrolled at Ohio University in Athens, but remained there only one semester. He went back home and obtained a bachelor’s degree at Youngstown College in 1933. Established by the YMCA in 1908, the school is now known as Youngstown State University. Following college Milt went to Ohio State University at Columbus. He wanted to study medicine and took a pre-med course. But he was prevented from entering medical school because of the prejudice against Jews. There was a quota system. Instead, as the next best thing, he obtained a master’s degree in psychology in 1936. He comments, “I was interested in people and found their behavior intriguing. The more I understood, the more I liked them.” He also felt this would lead to a good career. For a time while still at Ohio State but back home for a period, he taught psychology at Youngstown College, which allowed his younger brother to take classes there for free.

Milt was politically active while in school but he did not find allies among any of his teachers. Illustrative was the time when the right-wing, former preacher Gerald L.K. Smith (1898-1976) came to the campus to agitate for white supremacy. Milt took issue with him, but received no support from the faculty. In 1929 Smith had become the national organizer of Senator Huey P. Long’s “Share the Wealth” movement, a type of Nazism based on anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and racism. Father Charles Coughlin, a popular radio broadcaster, was an ally.

While in Columbus, Milt worked in a New Deal program run by the National Youth Administration (NYA), part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was paid $12 per month. This was a generous amount, since meals cost only 25 cents. He also worked in the kitchen of a fraternity house and in a restaurant. This allowed him to obtain free meals. He did not live in a dorm but shared a room with other students in a house that they rented. He had female friends but no romantic relationships.
California, 1936

Milt was still at Ohio State in a PhD program and working in the Juvenile Bureau of Research when he became ill with the flu during the winter of 1936. This developed into pneumonia and put him in the hospital for several weeks.24 Those were the days before antibiotics. To recuperate, he moved back to Youngstown. The doctor warned his mother that he should move to a warmer environment. As a result, she sold her store and moved to Los Angeles with her brother-in-law Joe Kozakoff and her children, minus Herb, who was playing in a Cleveland dance band.25 They owned a Chevrolet and Milt did most of the driving. Joe never learned to drive. They initially lived at 5822 Willoughby Street. Bessie opened up a liquor store in Los Angeles and, later, she ran a restaurant for a short time.26 Milt’s older brother Herb later became professional musician in Los Angeles, joining both the musician’s union and the Communist Party.27

Milt recovered his health in Los Angeles and became acquainted with the local communist organization, which, as he puts it, “had a wide following.”28 He worked in, and later became chair of, the party’s educational department. There he became acquainted with the fulltime party workers, Slim Connelly who “had a good personality;” county secretary Paul Cline “who was an exceptional leader;” and Max Silver who “I never could stand.”29 In early 1937, some of Milt’s friends, including his first cousin, Nathan J. Abramowitz, volunteered to help the Popular-front led Republican government of Spain in its armed struggle against Nationalist forces led by Franco. Nathan was reported as missing in action in March 1938 and his body was never recovered.30 Milt did not volunteer because he felt his mother needed his help and his health was doubtful.

Upon coming to California Milt obtained employment as a welfare worker with the State Relief Agency (SRA).31 He interviewed and counseled people seeking public assistance. His colleague at the SRA and an activist in the local unit of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America (SCMWA) was Frank Wilkerson (1914-2006). Wilkerson spent a life-time advocating for the city’s working people. Only later did Milt learn that he was a party member.32

With only a master’s degree in psychology, Milt’s future in welfare work was limited. As a result he enrolled in 1939 in a social work program at the University of California, Berkeley. The government was anxious to attract men into this field.33 He found that his teachers at Berkeley all supported the system. He received no political encouragement. There was no party unit within the university. He met with a club in Berkeley.34 Milt earned a certificate in social work which led to his employment at a Berkeley detention center.35

With the approach of World War II, Milt attempted to enlist, but the army
would not take him because he had an inguinal hernia. He asked them to perform surgery on the problem, but they refused.36 Wanting to help with the war effort, he went to work for the United Services Organization (USO). This was a coalition of six organizations that included the YMCA, Jewish Welfare Board, National Catholic Community Service, Travelers Aid, and the Salvation Army.37 The focus of Milt’s work was to help give morale support to the troops. He initially worked at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, California, which was near Walnut Creek and the Bay area. This was a point of embarkation for the troops.

**World War II in San Diego**

In 1940 Milt transferred his USO employment to Southern California. He wanted to go to Los Angeles, but ended up in San Diego. During part of the war the USO center was at 635 C Street.38 There, just as up north, he organized programs to help keep up the morale of the new soldiers. This included a weekly combination talent show and educational series with political discussions such as “Understanding Native Fascism” and “Small Nations Outlook.”39 In the latter discussion, Milt worked with Harley Knox, San Diego’s mayor from 1943 to 1951. Also on the panel was local Catholic pastor, Joseph Luther, S.J., and the secretary of the Federated Trades and Labor Council, Robert E. Noonan. The featured guest was the Czech counsel Bohus Benes who came down from San Francisco.40

Through the USO, Milt became involved with both Travelers Aid and the
Goldberg (1896-1994), the first rabbi commissioned as a Navy chaplain. Goldberg coordinated interfaith services with Protestant and Catholic clergy at naval bases around the world.

After a period with the USO, Milt became a probation officer for San Diego County. He published several articles in academic journals that took a class-conscious approach to the social problems facing the country during the war. In an article for the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, he advocated that the San Diego community take more responsibility for delinquent youth by providing better vocational training, decent schools, housing and recreational facilities. Instead of blaming single, working mothers for the problems of their children or expecting the youth to rise up by rugged individualism, he suggested that schools were at fault. Many youths had no interest in, or aptitude for, pure academics but desired the kind of vocational training not offered by public schools at that time. Milt worked with the Eleventh Naval District in San Diego to expand its apprentice course for boys between the ages of 16 and 17½. The boys got jobs working forty-four hours per week with pay, assembling and repairing airships at its plant. In another article, Milt advocated that the military allow probationers and parolees to enlist. He thought that military life could provide young people coming from “broken, poverty-stricken homes” the structure they needed to successfully adjust to society.
Following the probation work, Milt took a job with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as a “project services advisor.” He helped provide and supervise public housing projects and did community organizing for the people who were coming to San Diego from all over the country to build airplanes. He points out that decent, affordable public housing had been an unmet demand of the city’s workers during the 1930s. With World War II, the military overwhelmed the opposing landlords, banks, and construction industry. By 1945 there were 75,000 people in the county’s public housing.

Milt worked mainly on the Los Altos and Bay View Terrace projects in Pacific Beach. As he describes it, the projects lived up to the communist ideal. They included schools, childcare, health clinics, adult education programs, libraries and religious facilities. Their recreation and cultural centers featured athletic fields, swimming pools, tennis courts, movie theaters and auditoriums for political events, plays, talent shows, dances and card parties. The housing projects were governed by tenant councils that operated like New England town meetings.

As a government worker Milt was active in his local of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America (SCMWA). His activities with the union included working for political candidates who favored public housing. Several days before elections, he helped put up posters in the housing projects, at bus stops and throughout the city. He worked to elect candidates who would support public housing and social programs that benefited the community.
The posters had messages like “Save Your Home” and contained statements from candidates such as Harley Knox. A dairy farmer who literally built his own house, Knox helped establish the San Diego Housing Authority and rent controls in his role as city council member and mayor. Landlords criticized him for having “quite a lot of reds in his district.” He countered that most occupants of substandard housing could easily be convinced by the arguments of an agitator.

Milt’s work with the FHA was cut short when, as he puts it, “A Trotskyist took issue with me and had me fired.” Seeking to hold on to his job, he went for help to San Diego Congressman Edouard Izac (1891-1990). Izac had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1915, been a hero in World War I, worked on a San Diego newspaper in the 1920s, and served as the city’s congressman from 1937 to 1947. He was quite knowledgeable about the Navy and gave Milt a sympathetic hearing. He said that the Navy had a file on Milt an inch thick.

Party work during World War II

The Navy’s file on Milt’s political activity reflected his work with the Communist Party during the period that he had been employed with the USO, the San Diego County probation department, and the Federal Housing Administration. When Milt came to town in 1940, he came into contact with a communist organization...
that had been functioning for twenty years in the labor and unemployment movement.\textsuperscript{55} During the war the party continued its activity, doing what Milt calls “good progressive work.”

Progressive work involved holding regular club meetings, leafleting, fund raising, distribution of the \textit{Peoples’ World}, picnics, educational and social events, and engagement in various labor, government reform, civil rights, housing, health care, and civic activities.\textsuperscript{56} In the early part of the 1940s Milt patronized a party bookstore run by Lolita Bunyard (Gibson), the daughter of a preacher. Her husband Howard Gibson ran a liquor store and was not a party member but came to meetings and supported the party. They were what Milt calls an “excellent couple.”\textsuperscript{57} Eventually the comrades decided to shut the store down because it did not make enough money.\textsuperscript{58} Among Milt’s activities that ended up in a government file was his attendance at party functions such as the annual “Lenin Memorial Dinner” in January 1942 at the U.S. Grant Hotel. He went to a similar function later that year at the Fraternal Hall.\textsuperscript{59}

In the 1940s, the party press appealed to Milt, among others. The party’s then district organizer remembered:

\textit{Peoples’ World} was a respected and influential newspaper and had a mass following outside the ranks of the Party. It was especially popular with the labor movement. The \textit{PW} was a daily while I was on the coast, and it was the kind of paper that anyone could pick up and read. There was a constant stream of fund raisers for the \textit{PW}, some hosted by labor unions who saw the paper as an ally worth supporting.\textsuperscript{60}

San Diego’s Communist Party had approximately 100 active members and friends during the war years.\textsuperscript{61} Milt knew some of these well. Others, depending on where they lived or worked, he knew only superficially or not at all. There were eight or ten neighborhood and trade union clubs.\textsuperscript{62} An African-American group met in Logan Heights while many Mexican immigrants who could not speak English joined a Spanish-language group.\textsuperscript{63}

At this time Milt met Sol and Hermine Hilkowitz who had a ranch in Mission Valley that the party’s Los Angeles-based district organizer, Pettis Perry, liked to visit.\textsuperscript{64} The Hilkowitzes owned real estate in North Park and made financial loans to Milt that helped him in his business. Milt was also close to Mort and his wife Ester, who came into the party during the 1930s and remained active for the rest of their lives.

At the Federal Housing Administration, Milt worked with long-time political
activist, Daisy Lee Worthington Worcester (1882-1960). She and her husband Wood “Woodie” F. Worcester (1873-c.1950) came to San Diego in 1917. A 1907 Vassar College graduate, she became a social worker and school teacher. Woodie was a lawyer who worked as the county’s chief probation officer for forty years. The Worcesters were liberal in their political views, not Communist Party members or participants in its activities, but friends to many in the organization. In 1954 when the party was under government attack, Daisy defended it, pointing out the positive nature of its program:

Those who attack Communism unintentionally pay high tribute to it. If workmen’s compensation, old-age pensions, aid to dependent children, decent housing, social security, better education, adequate medical care, are all unquestioned parts of the communist program, there is no doubt that Communism will make a stronger appeal to the hungry and needy of the world than we shall, in whose country these benefits are under continuing attack from powerful groups that may assume majority control at any hour.

Leading the San Diego party during the war period was a part-time, paid county organizer named Roberta. Milt notes that “much of the stress of being part of a minority party that was looked down upon fell on the organizer as the public face of the organization, so that there was frequent turnover in the position.” However, the war period was one of those rare times when industry, unions, media, police, and politicians were focused on defeating Germany and Japan, not working against the Soviets and the party.

Toward the end of the war, Steve Nelson was assigned as the Southern California district organizer. Milt only saw him occasionally. Nelson worked out of Los Angeles, the district headquarters, but San Diego County was under his purview. Being from the East Coast, he was impressed by what he called San Diego’s and the state’s working class traditions. In his biography he commented that there was “a freshness and vitality” that made it an extra special place to be a radical.

The Left and the Communist Party in California had an authentic niche in the state’s cultural and political heritage and reflected the vibrancy of its working-class movements. California was known even then as a sort of maverick state. All kinds of people drifted there during the Depression, and they provided the basis of support for a variety of populist and radical ventures. And there was a clearly
identifiable financial and industrial class to target for responsibility for the state’s problems. The labor movement had tackled these interests time and time again…. The Left had participated in these struggles, and it prospered in California’s fertile political soil. Radicals were not outside the working class looking in but were part of it. The overwhelming majority of Communists were workers.\textsuperscript{70}

For a time in 1944 and 1945 the national Communist Party under the influence of Earl Browder, who was the party’s general secretary from 1934 to 1945, liquidated itself and became a left-wing adjunct to the Democratic Party. But, according to Milt, the party did not liquidate itself in San Diego and continued as usual.\textsuperscript{71} He feels the attempted change at the national level from being an independent political party to that of an “association” was disruptive and he calls it a “sellout.”\textsuperscript{72} He speculates that Browder felt obligated to Franklin Roosevelt because the president granted him a pardon for a prison term he started to serve at the beginning of the war.

Milt, taking to heart the admonition “workers of the world unite,” married Irma F. Tompkins, a San Diegan born in 1911. At the time she was living in Los Angeles and working at the union-friendly Los Angeles Herald-Examiner in the advertising department. Older than Milt, she had already been married and divorced twice. Her father worked as the chief detective at Convair, the aircraft manufacturing company, during the war.\textsuperscript{73} He was aware of Milt’s politics, but accepted the marriage. She was his only daughter.\textsuperscript{74} Irma was artistic and had endearing qualities. She became politically active after meeting Milt.\textsuperscript{75} They lived in the Los Altos public housing project at 1153 Tourmaline Street in Pacific

Beach while Milt was employed there. From this union came two children, a son in 1941 and a daughter in 1943.

**Post-war Years 1946-1953**

Until 1953, the party carried on as it had during the war. This contrasted with the national party, which went underground after 12 members of the national board were indicted under the Smith Act in 1948. William Schneiderman, who was the party’s general secretary at the time, opposed the decision to go underground. He was a Californian. He came home and kept the state party above ground. The local activities centered around club meetings, engagement in the labor and civil rights movement, leafleting, fund raising, distribution of the *People’s World*, picnics, and educational and social events.

Milt and others associated with the party, including Alva Chester “A.C.” Rogers (1896-1976), helped defend the public housing program from dismantlement after the Republicans won both Houses of Congress in 1946. The Chamber of Commerce did not want the expansion of public housing, thinking that it had helped empower the working class in Europe and subverted usury-based special interests. San Diego’s newly elected Republican congressman Charles Fletcher (1902-1985) was involved in the local dismantling. A manager and president of Home Federal Savings and Loan since 1934, he had opposed public housing from the start. To help discredit the program, he chaired Congressional Hearings in San Diego in 1947 and 1948. They were similar to hearings held all over the country.

Rogers, chair of the local chapter of Progressive Citizens of American, testified at the hearings. He maintained the city needed more, not less, public housing. Pointing out that 7,000 people in San Diego sought public housing, including 3,000 families of veterans who were living in single rooms or doubled-up with other families, he commented:

> These are the kind of facts which make insistence upon private enterprise’s ability to solve the problem impossible to understand or to condone, and which force us to the conclusion that the only real solution to America’s housing problem lies in a combination of public and private housing with federal government taking the responsibility for housing those of its citizenry who are inadequately housed due primarily to their inability to pay the exorbitant costs demanded by private housing interests.

By the late 1940s, Milt had joined a “professional” group within the party, as
opposed to a trade union or neighborhood club. The professional club had a city-wide constituency composed of white collar workers, teachers, social workers, and nurses. Other comrades and friends were organized in ten neighborhood and trade union units in places like North Park, Normal Heights, South Park, Pacific Beach, and La Jolla. As always, a steady stream of people came into and went out of the organization. A few stayed a lifetime; others never joined but became supporters and friends.

Journalist Charles H. Garrigues (1902-1974) was one of the few San Diego party members who eventually publicly identified himself as such. In his autobiography, he described the attraction of the organization. Some members hated capitalism and wanted a revolutionary party that would overthrow the government. Others came because they sought to reform the capitalist system. They were not against co-existence with capitalism but wanted something better than the Democratic and Republican parties, which did not represent workers and made concessions only begrudgingly and out of fear of the Communist Party. For them the Communist Party was effective not directly in politics but indirectly, in coercing the other parties and politicians and in showing them, as in the Soviet Union, that health care, social security, housing, and a full-employment economy were possible. There was also a third group who joined the party or were friendly to it from only a desire to obtain a job, either directly because the party provided jobs as organizers or because being part of its network, they looked out for each other. This aspect attracted the ambitious, job conscious professionals who saw and
used the party as an employment agency.84

Milt observes that, over a period of time, most individuals embodied a mix of the motivations discussed by Garrigues; this sometimes gave rise to inter-party difficulties. Illustrative of mixed motivations around the party’s political activism was the 1948 campaign of Henry A. Wallace (1888-1965) for U.S. president. The San Diego party gained the support of many reformist-minded Democrats who disliked Truman. Milt and the other comrades worked hard for Wallace and the local Independent Progressive Party (IPP) candidates who were on the ballot with him.85 The chair of the IPP in San Diego was party ally “A.C.” Rogers. He worked as a bookkeeper for a stucco company. In the mid-1930s he had been the secretary-treasurer of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council and a founder of the Office Employees Union. Richard Henriksen chaired the local Young Progressives, which was the IPP’s youth group. He, too, was close to the communists.86

At the national level, the communists were similarly reformist and did not field a presidential candidate; instead, they endorsed Wallace. Milt viewed the IPP as the peace party of the post-war era. Its platform advocated friendly relations
with the Soviet Union, an end to the Cold War, an end to segregation, full voting rights for blacks, and universal government health insurance. Milt found I.F. Stone’s (1907-89) views about Wallace and anti-Sovietism to be persuasive. A disappointment to Milt was that Wallace did not come to San Diego during the campaign. Milt had no use for Truman and felt his use of the nuclear bomb in Japan was unforgivable.

Besides the Wallace campaign Milt put much of his political activity into the peace movement during the post-war era. As part of the IPP, he supported its fight against American involvement in the Korean War. Illustrative of an event he subsidized was a lecture on August 9, 1950 at the Pickwick Hotel located at First and Broadway. Joseph Starobin (1913-1976), the foreign affairs editor of the Daily Worker, spoke to an audience of 68 people. In addition to the speech, there was a discussion and singing of folks songs. One of their songs went to the tune of the black spiritual, “Oh Mary, Don’t You Weep” and referred to the fact that the Korean communists were beating the American Army:

Truman’s army getting grounded—O, Margaret [Truman] don’t you weep; people’s army getting stronger—O, people, don’t you weep.

Around this time, Milt started an automobile retail seat cover and carpeting business called Superior Fabrics that lasted for thirty-five years, into the 1980s. He was introduced into the business by his younger brother, Gene, who had returned to Los Angeles to stay with Bessie, his mother, after his discharge from the army. She was renting an apartment from a Mr. Jackson who manufactured auto seat covers. Gene and Jackson liked each other. Jackson offered to help Gene start a retail seat cover store. In turn, Gene helped Milt.

Milt commented on the circumstances surrounding the favorable origins of the business:

Never has there been a time like it. People had come to San Diego to work in industry during the war. Both husbands and wives worked at Convair making planes. They could not buy clothing, furniture or cars because of the rationing and shortages. So they accumulated money. With the war’s end, they all had good bank accounts.

Milt’s seat covers were able to patch old cars that were still running. His first dealings took place when he was still working with Travelers’ Aid and the USO. He obtained from Jackson several seat covers and brought them back to San
Diego. Then he and Irma took the noon hour off and sold the covers. During one lunch period he went to a still-existing Chevrolet dealer in San Diego. The dealer gave him an order worth $1,500 on the spot. He wanted to dress-up and renovate used cars for resale. Milt commented, “I was able to make more money there in five minutes than in a whole month of working for Travelers Aid.”95 Within a year he and Irma had landed an account at Sears and Roebuck as well as business with a number of local auto upholsterers. In time they were doing a million dollars per year in sales, all without investing any capital. Milt summarized, “It was all about being in the right place at the right time.”96


For Milt, the prosperity of the war and post-war period ended when the U.S. government began to persecute Communists in the 1950s. Fighting back, Milt became chair of the local section of the National Committee to Secure Justice for the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell. The Rosenbergs were executed on June 19, 1953, while Sobell received a thirty-year sentence for espionage. The committee organized educational events and vigils.

One of the memorable events in Milt’s life occurred on April 21, 1954. On that date, because of FBI informers and collaborators, twelve local residents, including Milt, were subpoenaed to appear before a hearing at the San Diego Civic Center. The hearing was conducted by a Sub-Committee of the U.S. Congress’s House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).97 The FBI informers were a crippled Pacific Beach photographer and Mildred Berman, a heavy-set woman who had taken many party jobs. It turned out she was being paid by the government to do party work. According to Milt, she was more “political” than many of the comrades.98 As noted previously, most of those subpoenaed before HUAC were not party members, but only sustainers who attended meetings and helped with the work.99

At the hearing, which was broadcast to San Diego on radio and TV, Milt refused
to answer the questioning but he gave the Congressmen a lecture on the U.S. Constitution and thought control. He told them:

First, this hearing, as I see it, is unlawful, essentially because it is a denial of the due process of law. For example, there is no cross-examination of stool pigeons and informers when these things are brought up.

Secondly, this is an unlawful attempt to search into my conscience, and I would like at this point to quote from the declaration of conscience, as spoken by Senator Margaret Smith before the House and Senate, in which she said:

“I think it is high time that we remember that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution. I think it is high time that we remember that the Constitution, as amended, speaks not only for the freedom of speech but also of the trial by jury instead of the trial by accusation. Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism and making character assassinations are all too frequently those who by our own words and actions ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism, the right to criticize, the right to hold unpopular beliefs, the right to protest, the right of independent thought.

The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. Who of us does not; otherwise none of us could call our souls our own; otherwise thought control would upset him.”

Thirdly, according to the Constitution, I have a right to my own beliefs, a right to associate with those that I prefer to associate with, and this is guaranteed me, and this committee has undertaken to invade my conscience.

Fourthly, as a businessman, many of my customers have the impression that this is a court, and that I am being tried on criminal charges, and that it is up to this particular court to determine whether I am innocent or guilty. I want to make it known now that this hearing is unlawful, that you are not a judge, jury, prosecutor, and that you cannot try me or punish me.
Another local comrade who equally stood his ground before the HUAC sub-committee was Lee Major (1924-2004), a black, former Navy cook. He was active in the Congress of Racial Equality and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. At the time he was the proprietor of a Southern-style restaurant at 40th and Market Street where Milt, his family, and friends liked to eat. Milt comments that, at the HUAC hearing, those subpoenaed were fearful because of the government pressure and invoked the Fifth Amendment. Looking back at the hearings and publicity, Milt summarizes, “We fought back and came through without too much damage.”

The worst of it was that several comrades lost their jobs and their children were attacked at school and on the streets as traitors to the American cause. As Milt puts it, “They were questioned about why they did not accept the life here as the only way.”

Milt remembers that many of those associated with the party were not too damaged by the persecution and considered it as the price one paid for associating with an organization that was effective in resisting the established order. The community and trade union clubs, however, met less often and some not at all. Large numbers drifted away from the party, including Lee Major who became a Catholic. A few of the comrades had mental breakdowns, including a young black female about 22-years old, who succumbed under government questioning and became an informer.

At the time, Milt’s Superior Fabrics business was located at 4421 Park Boulevard. The FBI occasionally would come into the store and attempt to induce the employees to be informers, asking them if they were communists or knew any communists. One of the employees quit because of the harassment. Some of Milt’s suppliers refused to sell him merchandise or extend him credit. An insurance company man would not deal with him and a number of customers said they would not buy from a communist. Others, however, were what Milt calls “progressive.” Among those who went out of their way to support him were members of the Community Unitarian Fellowship at 4561 North Avenue where Milt sometimes led discussions. On April 7, 1956, he spoke on the subject, “Near East Value Clashes.” While Milt was Jewish, he was not a Zionist. His talk focused on the unity of interests between working class Arab and Jews. He argued that...
nationalism was the ideology of capitalism, used to divide working people and prevent them from uniting against the real enemy.\textsuperscript{107}

Unfortunately, the 1950s was a difficult period for Milt’s marriage. Irma was unsteady and tended to have what he called a borderline personality disorder.\textsuperscript{108}

In looking back, Milt, who was later a licensed psychologist, commented that this illness is characterized by black-and-white thinking, marked impulsivity, and chaotic interpersonal relationships.\textsuperscript{109} After some ten years of marriage, she was attracted to a group led by George Adamski (1891-1965) that ran a farm and restaurant on Palomar Mountain from the 1940s to the 1960s. They claimed to be in communication with aliens from outer space.\textsuperscript{110}

Irma left Milt and filed for a divorce on April 21, 1954, the day he appeared before the HUAC committee.\textsuperscript{111} The children stayed with Milt for about a year. Then, Irma kidnapped their daughter and told the divorce judge that Milt was a communist. Milt felt that if his children felt an affinity for their mother, he would not stand in the way of them going with her. Later Irma died in her mid-50s from the complications of alcohol abuse.\textsuperscript{112}

\section*{Vietnam and After, 1960s-1991}

For Milt, World War II and the post-war period was the most prosperous period for the San Diego Communist party. It was never the same after the McCarthy era. In his view, however, the persecution was only part of—and not the most important reason for—the decline of the movement. He reflects:

The party is a product of the times. Communism will only come when a majority of the workers are conscious of their class and see the need for it. In the 1930s the party had a large following because many working people including myself were convinced that capitalism was failing their economic needs and the party was effective at addressing their demands. Within a year of the demonstrations and marches led by the unemployed councils the federal government expanded its relief programs and funded giant projects under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In the summer of 1935, Congress passed the Social Security Act. This bill incorporated the party’s main goal of unemployment compensation as well as a pension system.\textsuperscript{113}

From Mill’s perspective, the post-World War II economic prosperity made workers identify with capitalism. In those circumstances, the party was reduced to a program of reformism and limited achievement. The party could not obtain
full employment, a slow-down in evictions, decent schooling, health care for everyone, or an end to the arms race and aggression in Central America. But that did not stop Milt from thinking that communism is better than capitalism.

By the beginning of the 1960s, Milt’s neighborhood club and the communist community was down to a handful of people. Six or eight of them met in Milt’s store at night. Among those who remained steady were Lolita Gibson and Ted Prager (1912-1984). He was a Spanish Civil War veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and active in Local 333 of the Painters Union. In later years he owned an interior house painting business. His wife was not a party member but did not object to his activities. Milt speculates that some continued in the movement as much for social and psychological reasons as for employment opportunities. Communism was a way of life as well as an ideology. At club meetings, they caught up with the news of each other’s families, served as a sounding board, and assisted one other in times of difficulty.

They were reassured by the fact that the movement was international and strong elsewhere. In July 1962, Milt went to the Soviet Union as a delegate of the U.S. Peace Council to the World Peace Council’s World Congress for Peace and Disarmament. There were 1,500 people from all over the world, including Spain, Germany and England. Nikita Khrushchev and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) spoke. Milt shook hands with Spanish Civil War heroine Delores Ibarruri (1895-1989) and he obtained the autograph of Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968), the first man in space. A negative part of his trip was that, shortly after returning home, the government brought a bogus charge against him of filing false tax returns for the period 1958 to 1961. After a four day trial in 1965, the government admitted that it had used an incorrect accounting method and that Milt overpaid his taxes. U.S. Judge Fred Kunzel dismissed the case, but Milt was still out $75,000 in attorney’s fees.

Milt views his difficulties as bottoming out with the tax case. The civil rights and antiwar movements brought new members into the party. Others, who had earlier drifted away, came back. There were also older comrades from the east and north who, in their retirement or in job transfers, came to San Diego. At a meeting in 1970, some twenty people crowded together on a long bench for a meeting in Milt’s store where they heard district organizer, Bill Taylor. Carl (b. 1947), a younger member there, joined in 1967, his parents having been involved in the party. By way of contrast, neither of Milt’s children was attracted to the party. They knew he was a member but never looked into its ideology. Milt remarks, “It was a different generation
and communism for them was not important.”

On the other hand, young recruit Carl, for whom Milt has a high regard, was a political activist while still in school. He was the student body president of a local college in 1968-69 and served as an officer of the National Student Association. After school, he became an industrial electrician and eventually ran as a California state assembly candidate on the Peace and Freedom ticket, gaining 3,500 votes. He now serves as the chief officer of his union local, representing 2,000 workers.

By the late 1960s and continuing until 1991, San Diego had two party units. One was called the Workers Club. While Milt was not a member of this club, he knew many of the fifteen-or-so members and friends who met monthly in the evenings, most of whom were younger people and trade unionists. A routine part of their agenda at club meetings was discussion of the work being carried out in the San Diego-Imperial County Labor Council. The council had some 103 local union affiliates and represented 108,000 members. For many years they promoted “Jobs or Income Now” (JOIN), a type of unemployment council. They also worked in the electoral campaigns of those who were favorable to labor. A few had weekly paper routes where they distributed the party’s newspaper, the *Daily World* (New York), and ran a small bookstore.

A second unit was called the Daytime Club. After Southern California district organizer William Taylor died in 1978, it renamed itself the “Bill Taylor” club in his honor. Milt belonged to it. It, too, held monthly meetings in the homes of various comrades and consisted of roughly fifteen members, most of them either older, retired people or those who had jobs that allowed them the freedom...
to attend meetings and activities during the day.\textsuperscript{129} Milt observes that for these comrades, politics was their life. They were engaged in political activities on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{130} Most had been involved in the party since the 1930s, and a few since the 1920s.\textsuperscript{131}

Milt had a particular regard for John Porter (1915-1996), a member of the Daytime Club. A Harvard-educated lawyer, he lived in La Mesa. Before coming to town in the 1950s, he worked for the New Deal in Washington, D.C., as one of Felix Frankfurter’s Wiz Kids.\textsuperscript{132} Philip Honor (1904-1986) was another of Milt’s well-regarded comrades. His history in the movement dated back to 1926.\textsuperscript{133} Before coming to San Diego in 1967, he had spent thirty-five years as the city editor of the Yiddish-language \textit{Freiheit} newspaper under Moyshe Olgin (1878-1939) in New York City. Honor continued his journalism in retirement. There was also Ted Prager, who, as noted, was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War.\textsuperscript{134}

The flamboyant Dorothy Healey (1914-2006) served as the link between the local units and the organization’s national leadership until her resignation in 1968. She headed the party’s Southern California District.\textsuperscript{135} Milt remembers her coming to town only one time in the Vietnam period to settle a dispute. She acted as the judge in a trial of a married couple who had, in Milt’s words, “acted up.”\textsuperscript{136} During the trial, which Milt feels was a mistake, the couple became loud and hysterical. They were expelled.

Healey was not popular with many of the comrades. She rarely came to town because she was not welcome. According to Milt, the dissatisfaction went back to the 1950s rift between those who sided with William Foster’s class-struggle-revolutionary line and those who sided with Gil Green’s reformist-liberal line.\textsuperscript{137} The main link between San Diego and the national party was William “Bill” C. Taylor (1910-1978), a black comrade. He was the district’s second in command. Describing Taylor, Milt summarizes, “Bill was a good leader, even tempered, hard to get aroused and influential, a close friend to Henry Winston. He and his wife, Shirley, a white comrade, came to town frequently and were well regarded.”\textsuperscript{138} Taylor was a big man, standing 6 feet, 4 inches. He was obese toward the end of his life, because of what Milt calls Shirley’s “good cooking.”\textsuperscript{139} After Healey resigned as the district organizer in 1968, Taylor took over until his death. He
soon made the local news. On May 3, 1968 officials at Grossmont Junior College refused to let him speak to a student group that had invited him.140

Along with visits from Bill Taylor, the local units held periodic county-wide conferences on weekends, when the workers and daytime clubs met jointly. These meetings included reports about the activities of the party at the California and national level. In preparation for the state and national conventions held every four years, the clubs would discuss the issues, draft resolutions and elect delegates.

A well-publicized event in which Milt and both the daytime and workers club played a role during the early 1970s was the campaign to free Angela Davis (b. 1944). In the late 1960s she had been a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego.141 However, she did not meet in a San Diego unit. Her political activity took place in Los Angeles, where she had friends. Nevertheless she was admired by Milt because she helped make attractive the party to those of her generation. This brought in some recruits, especially among the African-Americans.

At this time, Milt also took an active role in San Diego’s peace movement. He observes that the party was unique in American society in combating anti-Sovietism. This was done through support for the local chapter of the US Soviet Friendship Society, of which Rose Sparer (1912-2005) was the chairperson for many years.142 This group had a mailing list of 300 people and regularly drew 150 to the monthly meetings at its hall at 3011 Beech Street in Golden Hill.143 There, they celebrated seasonal and national holidays, such as Christmas, May Day, and the Fourth of July, viewed films and heard invited speakers. The lectures dealt with the Soviet Union and international and local politics. Among those who regularly lectured at the Society

was Floyd Morrow, a deputy city attorney, a Democratic member of the city council from 1965 to 1978, and later a candidate for judge. Through the Friendship Society, Milt helped sponsor and entertain delegations of Soviet visitors to San Diego and took part in sending delegations of local residents to the USSR. Milt raised money for the visitors’ hotel and food bill. He himself was part of a 1982 delegation to the USSR. Milt’s peace work also involved support of coalitions such as the Peace Resource Center, which was located at 30th and Grape Street. For a $5 admission fee, music-lovers heard folksinger-and-sometime-comrade Pete Seeger on February 25, 1983.

Milt took on the role of financial benefactor after becoming the administrator of a million-dollar trust between 1984 and 2009. The trust originated with Wilmer Breeden (1901-1986) who, for fifty years, was close to the communists. Milt summarized Breeden’s philosophy:

> He believed that exploitation of man by man had to be replaced by a system that eliminated profit and greed, and consequently, he concluded that only through the education of the mass majority of people would it be possible to make fundamental changes in our political and economical arena. He discussed with me, from time to time, his conviction that only through the advocacy of socialistic principles would it be possible to improve the standard of living of the many.

Breeden had served as a Naval chief petty officer during and, for a period, after World War I. While at sea, he studied law by a correspondence course, took the bar exam, and became a San Diego lawyer. His courtroom style was not polished. In the 1930s he defended groups such as the Cannery and Agricultural Worker Industrial Union. This was dangerous. In 1934 at Brawley in the Imperial Valley, he was beaten and his car destroyed near the courthouse by vigilantes employed by the growers and shippers.

Breeden never married, lived frugally, and accumulated a sizable estate. He also inherited some apartments from his uncle Edward Schmidt (1886-1972) who had requested that the proceeds be devoted to the spread of socialism. In his will, Breeden gave both his uncle’s money and his own to Milt “to be used for socialist purposes.” Milt established the Schmidt-Breeden Foundation, invested in stocks through Merrill Lynch, and gave the proceeds to various San Diego groups such as the United Farm Workers local and other local unions; the Sandinistas; candidates for political office; the People’s World Party; and the Communist Party.
After twenty years, the progressive lawyer, Irwin, who drew up the foundation incorporation papers and helped manage it, began to lose sight of his fiduciary duties. In Milt’s words, “he became greedy.” He bought thoroughbred horses, moved to Las Vegas in 2002, and attempted to liquidate the foundation for his own benefit. Milt cut short the lawyer by contacting the Communist Party’s national chair. With a stoke of his pen, Milt signed over a million dollars to an educational trust in Chicago that is close to the party.

Milt’s coalition work includes the entertainment of progressives, including party leaders such as Sam Web who vacationed in the city. Milt particularly enjoyed the regular visits of Scott Nearing (1883-1983) and his wife Helen, vegetarians with a broad outlook. They had already lived long, progressive lives when they began coming to San Diego in the 1950s. From 1928 to 1930, Scott Nearing had been on the staff of the Daily Worker.

Milt remarried in the early 1960s to Anna M. Rda. They had no children together, but he helped raise the children she had by a previous marriage. This marriage only lasted until 1969. In 1971 Milt again embarked upon marriage, this one proving to be long-lasting, ending only with his wife’s death in 2011. His new wife, Johanna, was Jewish and had migrated to America from Vienna with her family in 1938. She operated a family counseling service center and was not politically active, though she did serve a term as president of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. In all, Milt helped raise ten children and now has a multitude of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

About the time Milt married Johanna, he went back to school and did something he had started to do in the 1930s. He obtained a PhD in psychology from the United States International University in San Diego. He then opened a counseling center that continues in operation to the present. One of his services is to do assessments and written evaluations of those who enter assisted living facilities and nursing homes to determine the level of care they will need. Each assessment takes several days. In doing his work he still drives his car, cooks for himself, and lives in the home he bought in the 1960s. His wife was an invalid during the last ten years of her life; Milt took care of her.

Post-Soviet Era: 1991-2000s

The collapse of the Soviet Union was an unwelcome development for Milt and members of the local Communist community. He points out that, for seventy years, the Soviets had in their planned economy what Communists around the world hope for: full employment, trade unionism for all, free or inexpensive housing, free education at all levels, free health care, and a cultural, psychological and
spiritual life free from the coercion of profit-making and envy.\textsuperscript{159}

A debate was set off among Communists throughout the world, echoed by Milt and local San Diego Communists and by the national party. At the American party’s national convention in 1991, a large group which called itself the Committees of Correspondence split off and established an independent organization. In San Diego, about twenty comrades and sustainers, including all the African-Americans, sided with the Committees and withdrew.\textsuperscript{160} By 2014 the local party is, in terms of numbers, back to where it was in the early 1960s. A party club meets monthly around Milt’s dining room table, but with only six or eight comrades and friends. They include a college teacher, trade unionists, students, and retirees. Party leaders from the East Coast or northern California also occasionally attend to report on national developments.\textsuperscript{161} The reduction in size reflects similar shrinkage nationally. Even the print edition of the party’s newspaper and theoretical journal are defunct because of financial considerations.

\section*{Conclusion}

Milt, at age 100, comments that he is reaching the limits of his biological existence. He states that “if you live a good life, you die a happy death.” In his view the party during his lifetime has voiced the aspiration of the city’s unprivileged and backed every great social advance—it has not been wholly a failure.
NOTES


2. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 5. His birth certificate listed him as Moses, but he always went by the name of Milton or Milt.

3. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7; and Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, p. 4. Henry, whose father was a merchant, was born in 1889 in Starodub, a village on the Babinets River in the lower Dnieper basin. This was a Ukrainian Cossack (East Slavic) region, not far from the Polish and Lithuanian border and under Russian control. Henry migrated to the United States in 1906, where he met and married Bessie Kozakoff (1889-1967). She was born near the Ukrainian town of Yekaterinoslave, which was later renamed Dnipropetrovsk. Her parents were farmers. She was one of thirteen children. At age 19 she migrated in 1907 with a sister, aged 17. They joined a brother, Harry H. Kozakoff, born in 1886, who came earlier.


5. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 12.


7. Ibid.


9. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7. Milt notes that eventually the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), which had John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers behind it, gave its support to the struggle. But there were still multiple killings before the steel industry finally started to bargain collectively with the United Steel Workers in the 1940s.


12. Ibid., p. 19; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 16. Joe regularly read the New York city-based Morgen Freiheit (English: Morning Freedom), which was a daily Yiddish language newspaper close to the Communist Party during much of its existence. Founded in 1922, it folded in 1988.


17. John Gates, The Story of an American Communist (New York: Nelson, 1958). Later Gates served with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and the American armed forces in World War II. He was imprisoned for five years in the 1950s and was the last editor of the Daily Worker.


19. Ibid., p. 4. Milt's mentor at Ohio State was Henry Goddard (1866-1957), who was the first to translate the Binet intelligence test into English in 1908 and then led in advocating that


24. Ibid., 4.

25. Joe Kozakoff continued to be politically active in Los Angeles. He was a long-time member of the Communist Party’s Venice-Santa Monica Club. They held a memorial service for him when he died on April 26, 1960. He was struck by a car and killed while aiding a woman friend. He had gone to a grocery store on her behalf on a rainy night. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 8.

26. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 9. When Bessie was sixty years old, in the early 1950s, she decided to become a naturalized citizen. It was a dangerous time for non-citizens, some of whom were being deported because of their beliefs. In processing Bessie’s application, Milt was called by the government and asked why he could adhere to communism. He answered that his mother’s request for citizenship had nothing to do with his communism. He had paid taxes and was a good citizen. She obtained her citizenship on March 10, 1950.

27. Ibid., 8. Herb had played the violin and base violin in high school, but took up the base horn to be in a band and later a dance orchestra. He performed in upscale venues, such as the Beverley Hills Hotel. One of the bands in which he played was led by Rudy Vallée (1901–86). During World War II Herb was in the NBC orchestra, which was hired to entertain the troops. Because of his politics, he was ostracized during the McCarthy era.

28. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 1. Milt commented that some mass meetings had 10,000 people in attendance. Party leaders Clarence “Charlie” Hathaway (1892-1963) and Earl Browder (1891-1973) were among those who came to speak.

29. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 7, 10. Philip M. “Slim” Connolly (1904-1981) worked in the 1920s as a reporter in Los Angeles for the *Examiner* and *Herald-Express*. In 1936 he became the first president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Newspaper Guild and a fulltime union organizer. By 1952 he was editor of the West Coast communist paper, *The People’s World*. At that time he and thirteen others were convicted after a six month trial under the Smith Act of 1940. He received a five year sentence and a $10,000 fine. See Wolfgang Saxon, “Obituary: Philip (Slim) Connolly” *New York Times*, June 3, 1981. Max Silver was a fulltime party worker originally from Philadelphia, having joined in 1929. He concentrated on press distribution, such as the *Daily Worker*. Transferred to Los Angeles in 1934, he was the organization director working under the county chair, Pettis Perry by 1938. The latter was a former migrant farm worker. See Richard Boyer, *Pettis Perry: The Story of a Working Class Leader* (New York: Self-Defense Committee of the 17 Smith Act Victims, 1952).


32. Robert Sherrill, *First Amendment Felon: The Story of Frank Wilkerson, His 132,000-Page FBI File*,

172

34. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11.
36. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 8.
40. “Small Nations Outlook,” San Diego Union (July 8, 1945), 32; Philip Paneth, Eduard Beneš: A Leader of Democracy (London: Alliance Press, 1945), 5. Beneš maintained Poland and England had betrayed his country in making a 1938 deal with the Nazis to give his country to Germany. He stated that, in order to survive, small countries had to align themselves with larger countries. In 1943 the Czech government in exile allied itself with the Soviets. It rejected an alliance with London.
42. Milt worked under Arthur Flakoll and earned $225 per month as an assistant probation officer. “Appointment as Assistant Probation Officer,” San Diego Union, February 4, 1945, 20.
46. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11, 15.
49. Ibid., 348.
51. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 15. The SCMWA originated in 1937 after a number of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) local unions, composed mainly of caseworkers, disaffiliated from that union and joined the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO). They were sympathetic to the communist program and grew to 48,000 members by 1946, when they merged with the United Public Workers of America (UPWA). See Sterling Spero and Albert Blum, Government as Employer (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972); Walter Galenson, The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1960).
52. Iris Engstrand and Paul Campuzano, Harley Knox: San Diego’s Mayor for the People: 1943-1951
54. Ibid.
56. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12.
57. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 15. Lolita and her husband Howard, lived in the 6800 block of Delaware Avenue, La Mesa.
61. “Friendly and Hostile Witnesses Before House Red Probers,” The San Diego Union, April 21, 1954, lists the names of seventy-five purported San Diego party members during the war period that were publicized at the Jackson Subcommittee Hearing of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which was held in San Diego at the Civic Center. See also, Castanien Collection, Subject files, Communist, Jackson Hearing, 1954, Box 7, file 17, San Diego History Center. Milt maintains that most of those named were merely party sustainers who attended meetings, not members.
62. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 3. According to Steve Nelson, the Southern California District organizer for the party, there were 7,000 party members in the state at that time. See Nelson and Barrett, Steve Nelson American Radical, 254.
64. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 18; Anonymous, Report, Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California to California Legislature (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1943), 73. Hermine Hilkowitz lived to be 92 years old.
65. Daisy Worcester, Grim the Battles, 344.
66. Ibid., 23; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11, comments that of the two, Daisy talked for both. She was “wonderful, bright and knowledgeable.” Woodie was “repressed and avoidant.” She had a problem with alcohol.
68. Ibid.
Such was also the opinion of the district organizer. See Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 254.


Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 11.

Browder had been convicted of using a false name on a passport, a charge instigated by the anti-communist Congressman Martin Dies. Steve Nelson was more favorable to the association idea than Milt. Nelson felt it was realistic to expect that the Soviet-American, communist-capitalist unity expressed at the Teheran Conference in December 1943 would continue after the war. Stalin's remarks at the time seemed to indicate this. Because of Germany's military aggression, Stalin was desperate and willing to compromise his politics. Indicative of this was that the Comintern, which had been the chief international weapon against capitalism, was disbanded at this time. Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 270-271.

Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15.

Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 7.

Ibid., 9.

Ibid., 11.


Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12.


Garrigues grew up in San Diego and in 1937 was a Newspaper Guild member and editor of the *San Diego Labor Leader* when he joined the party. The *Labor Leader*, with a circulation of 10,000, was the organ of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council. See George Garrigues, *He Usually Lived with a Female: The Life of a California Newspaperman* (Los Angeles: Quail Creek Press, 2006), 158.

Garrigues also wrote for the party press using the name Vincent Sutherland. His greatest opus
was a political treatise titled *You’re Paying for It: A Guide to Graft* (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1936), 8, 39, 189. In it he explained in class terms the political science of capitalist politics. In his analysis, the system from top to bottom was the product of petroleum, military, bank, public utility, insurance, agricultural and other special interests whose vote-graft paid to elect politicians in order to obtain special privileges. The three branches of government and both mainline parties were bought off. The real government was corporations and by eliminating them and establishing a planned economy, communism would end graft.

85. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15-16. Wallace had served Franklin D. Roosevelt as Secretary of Agriculture, Vice President, and Secretary of Commerce. He was fired by President Harry S. Truman because he denounced Truman’s foreign policy regarding the Cold War.

86. Ibid., 15-16. The following year on June 6, 1949, Bernadette Doyle, who attended college at Berkeley from 1938 to 1944 during the period when Milt was there, and who was the San Diego party’s full-time paid county organizer in the late 1940s, received 376,000 votes in her IPP campaign for governor. See “Communist File: 1932-1959,” manuscript in Castanien Collection, Box 7, file 16, SDHC; Toby Terrar, “Castanien Collection Notes: December 18, 2012,” manuscript in the possession of the author, 7.

87. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16. He pointed out that the Wallace campaign was unusual for the time in that it included African American candidates campaigning alongside white candidates in the American South. During the campaign its candidates refused to appear before segregated audiences or eat or stay in segregated establishments. It also refused to expel those close to the communist party who were running as IPP candidates for local offices or those who were in the IPP leadership such as screen actor Paul Robeson.


89. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16.

90. Ibid., 15-16.


92. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 9. Gene was in his third year in college when he dropped out to enlist in the Army. He served in the artillery under General Eisenhower. During the European invasion in June 1944, Gene was assigned to be a spotter in an airplane. He was always close to the party, but not a member. He did not complete college.

93. Ibid., 10.


95. Ibid., p 14.

96. Ibid.


98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

Milt quoted above, was a Republican U.S. Senator from Maine when on June 1, 1950 she made her fifteen-minute speech on the Senate floor condemning McCarthyism without naming McCarthy directly. Titled “Declaration of Conscience,” six other Senators, all Republicans, signed on to it. They were Wayne Morse, George Aiken, Edward Thye, Irving Ives, Charles Tobey and Robert C. Hendrickson. In response to the speech McCarthy, who chaired the Permanent Committee on Investigations, removed Smith as a member and gave the seat to Richard Nixon. See Patricia Wallace, Politics of Conscience: A Biography of Margaret Chase Smith (New York: Praegar Publishers, 1955).


102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., 4.

106. Ibid., 3-4; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 13-14.


114. Ibid., 2.

115. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12, 16. Philip, whose time in the party was even longer than Milt’s, agreed with this view. The younger generation, however, who came into the party in the Vietnam period, such as Carl, who perhaps did not have the benefit of the earlier history, took a different view. See Philip, “Interviews: February 11, 1983,” manuscript in possession of Toby Terrar, 6 (P-1723, Bx 3.3, pt. 1).


117. Kathleen A. Brown, “The ‘Savagely Fathered and Un-Mothered World’ of the Communist Party, U.S.A.: Feminism, Maternalism, and “Mother Bloor,” Feminist Studies 25 (Autumn, 1999), 522, 547. Brown writes that the reason rank and filelers stay loyal despite oppression is that they view their fellow workers as an extended family. Efforts at resisting McCarthyism or, in other times at halting evictions and foreclosures, conducting rent strikes, restoring utilities and demanding relief, not to mention jobs, peace and anti-racism are family issues. Along with family, for some comrades, allegiance to the party is part of their religion. Milt Felsen in his biography, The Anti-Warrior: A Memoir (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 137, comments simply that the Ten Commandments are communism and breaking them is capitalism. Felsen is Jewish. The Catholic comrade Philip Bonosky in “In the Mainstream,” Mainstream (New York: January 1962), 15:9, gives a New Testament (Acts 5:1-11) version of his beliefs, “The founder of Christianity was a Communist with eleven faithful Apostles, chief of whom struck a man [Aninias] and his wife [Sapphira] dead for keeping back their money from the common pool instead of sharing it.” Bonosky finds a parallel between Peter’s leveling and that of Stalin against the Kulaks.

119. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 10.

120. Carl’s sister, Roberta, in Judy Kaplan and Linn Shapiro (eds.), Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 299-301, discusses the family history. She was in the minority among those studied, in that she felt positive about her upbringing. For the majority, the persecution suffered by their parents gave them a negative view of the party.


123. Ibid., 8-9; Toby Terrar, “Miscellaneous Letters,” September 25, 1984, manuscript in possession of author, Bx 1.8.5.3.1, pt. 1; Toby Terrar, “Diary,” August 1-September 9, 1983, manuscript in possession of author, 16:981; Ibid., December 9, 1983, 993; Toby Terrar, “Diary-Notes: 1983,” September 28, 1983, manuscript in possession of author, 2, 7. Unions in which these party members held membership were the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Utilities Workers Union of America (UWUA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA). Those in the club included Florence in Pacific Beach, Helen in Chula Vista, Paul (a teacher) and his wife Aurora, Danny, who was of Puerto Rican heritage from New York and worked at the ship yard, Paul, who headed the city’s 100-member International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) local, Lolita and her husband Henry, Sam and Sara, Jerry and Rita.


126. Terrar, “Miscellaneous Letters,” May 1, 1983. The club’s political work sometimes meant going with the “lesser evil,” as in the special election for mayor held on May 3, 1983. This election was to fill the position vacated by Pete Wilson, who had been elected to the U.S. Senate the previous fall. The comrades worked for the Democrat Maureen O’Connor since she was endorsed by labor. However, she lost to Roger Hedgecock by 10,000 votes.


130. Terrar, “Diary-Notes: 1983,” 3-5. Milt observed that Club meetings were a place where one could gain a broad understanding of the city’s working class politics. Some of their organizations about which they regularly talked at club meetings were: Concerned Unionists of San Diego (CUSED), Gray Panthers, Jobs or Income Now (JOIN), Labor-Community Coalition, San Diego Labor Council, San Diego Tenants Union, Senior Center at Broadway & 10th Street, where comrade Rita worked and Urban League.


132. Talking about his motivation for joining the party, Porter commented, “I saw in the early 1930s the Depression, people unemployed, and the best way to fight it was to join the Communist Party. It was as simple as that. I had no blueprints or plans.” John Porter, interviewed by author, December 23, 1982,” P-1803, 1/ , Box 3.1, pt. 2, December 23, 1982, 1.6.

133. Philip Honor, interviewed by author, February 11, 1983, P-1723, Bx 3.3, pt. 1, p. 6. Philip initially belonged to one of the foreign language (Yiddish-Lithuanian) federations in New York that were part of the communist movement. He was self-educated with no college experience. He first worked as the cultural director of the International Workers Organization (IWO), which was an umbrella insurance organization, composed of local fraternal social and cultural clubs.
134. Terrar, “Diary-Notes: 1983,” 2. At the time of his death, Ted Prager was living in the 5800 block of Malvern Court.


139. Ibid.


142. The history of the Friendship Society in America and in San Diego went back to the 1920s. It grew out of the American-Soviet Friendship Council and its predecessor, the Friends of Soviet Russia, an organization set up immediately after the 1917 Revolution to foster goodwill between the American and Soviet people. See Nelson and Barrett, Steve Nelson American Radical, 440, n9.


144. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16; Terrar, “Diary-Notes: 1983,” 3. Among those whom Milt helped sponsor for a tour of the Soviet Union in the 1970s was Lee Major’s wife. He also helped Lee’s daughter attend a youth conference in East Germany. The daughter had no political inclinations but Milt felt that the travel might open her eyes. But this did not happen. She did not see the trip as a privilege but acted as if she was doing the Friendship Society a favor. During the McCarthy period Lee stopped his party membership and much of his political activity. But he remained personally close to the communist community.

145. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Terrar, “Miscellaneous Letters,” December 27, 1982. Illustrative in the summer of 1982 was the visit of a Soviet theatrical delegation to the Old Globe Theater in Balboa Park at which Mayor Pete Wilson spoke. On another occasion the Society held a reception at its hall for fifteen Soviet musicians on February 27, 1983. The following day it hosted a dinner for the group. Southern California was an attractive travel destination to the Soviets, who as many others liked its beaches, parks, zoo, weather and hospitality. See Terrar, “Miscellaneous Letters,” February 22, 1983.

146. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 16.


151. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 21-23.

152. Ibid.

153. The history of comrades visiting San Diego is as old as the party itself. In 1922 Ella Reeve Bloor (“Mother Bloor”) an organizer for the new party, had the good sense to spend the winter in town and help with recruitment and the holding of instructional classes. See Frederick Ryan, The Labor Movement in SD: Problems and Development from 1887 to 1957 (San Diego: San Diego

154. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 6. See Scott Nearing, *The Making of a Radical: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). Scott Nearing grew up in Pennsylvania and earned a Bachelor’s and PhD degree from the University of Pennsylvania in the early part of the century. He then taught economics there until 1915 when he was fired because of his support of the Socialist Party. He authored a series of pamphlets and spoke out against America’s participation in World War I. For this he was prosecuted under the Espionage Act for “obstruction to the recruiting and enlistment of service.” A jury refused to convict him.

155. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 6. In the 1920s Scott Nearing had taught at the Socialist Party-affiliated Rand School of Social Science but, like many others, switched his allegiance to the newly formed Workers Party which became the Communist Party.

156. Nearing, *The Making of a Radical*, 142. The Nearings were not party members in the later years but rather independent socialists who were friends to the party. In the early 1960s the party’s New Century Publishers produced their pamphlets on Cuba and Eastern Europe. When Scott was nearly 100 years old he became dysfunctional and committed suicide from malnourishment. Milt feels this was wrong. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7.


159. Ibid., 16.

160. Ibid.

161. The discussion at the October 2013 meeting was about the national convention of the AFL-CIO, which is held every four years. The most recent convention had taken place the previous month in Los Angeles. Two club trade unionists attended, one a veteran electrician in his 60s and the other a grocery clerk in his 20s. Their report summarized the philosophy and history of American trade unionism going back to the 19th century. Among the positive developments they noted that the AFL is back to organizing along industrial and global, that is, class lines, rather than craft and national lines. The leadership is more class conscious compared to the 1950s and 1960s. Some such as United Steel Workers president Leo Gerard, born in 1947, come from communist families. Leo’s father, Wilfred, was an organizer for the International Mine Mill and Smelter Workers’ Union. He was fired in the 1950s for being a communist. Such activist leadership makes labor a political force for public education, universal health care, emigration reform and resistance to neo-liberal foreign trade and military policy. In making his report, the younger trade unionist felt that increased militancy was needed. The centenarian agreed, and went on to discuss the problem which class differences make for reformism. Toby Terrar, “Notes: Oct. 10, 2013,” manuscript in possession of author.
“Their Souls Are Equally Precious”: Edward Harvey Davis, Benevolence, Race, and the Colonization of Indigeneity

By Christian Gonzales

... but put these men in the middle of a waterless desert and see how they compare. The Indian will never die for he will find food and water while the man of culture and refinement would surely perish, for his primitive instincts have been atrophied by disuse. The Indian in this is far superior to the man of intellect. Therefore, intelligence is only a matter of comparison or degree. In the eyes of the deity which man would stand first and have precedence? I would say both stand on even ground – Their souls are equally precious.1 – Edward Harvey Davis, c.1924

In August 1903 a band of Diegueño Indians celebrated a toloache festival in the backcountry of San Diego County. Religious ritual governed and mediated the use of toloache, a narcotic whose hallucinogenic properties provided users with access to the power of the spiritual world.2 In attendance at the festival was a white man who recorded the day’s celebrations of singing, gambling, and drinking. He paid particular attention to what he called “an old time war dance,” explaining that the “older Indians indulged...with a great deal of enthusiasm and vigor.” Yet, he came

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Christian Gonzales received his Ph.D. in United States History at the University California San Diego. His research has included Anglo-Indian Antiremoval Collaboration, 1819-1859. He was a Gest Fellow at Haverford College, Philadelphia, in 2009 to investigate Native and Anglo-American groups that opposed the removal of Indians from the Eastern United States.
to the conclusion that the dance had somehow lost its luster. With an air of nostalgia he lamented that “the old picturesqueness has departed.”

The author of these words was Edward Harvey Davis. His comments, which reveal a belief that turn of the century Indian practices were but echoes of a more glorious (and presumably a more authentic) past, put him in the company of many Anglo-Americans of his era who likewise believed Native Americans and their cultures were moribund. For Edward Davis, the notion that Indians were “dying out” drove him to pursue a life as a collector of Native American material culture. Worried that knowledge of native southwestern cultures would be lost without concerted action, Davis spent decades acquiring Indian artifacts. At the heart of his passion was Davis’ belief that natives represented repositories of unique understandings of the world that offered white Americans access to primitive, pre-modern knowledge attuned to survival in harsh natural environments. For Davis, such knowledge was extraordinarily valuable as it held the potential to counteract the corrosive effects of modernity, which were epitomized by erosion of self-reliance and resourcefulness that had led Americans to become “soft.”

Davis has received scant scholarly attention, yet he is an important figure. Most significantly, he is representative of a cadre of Anglo Americans who, despite residing outside the professional ranks of science and the academy, contributed to the transfer of Native-American material culture from Indians to the display halls of American museums and universities. This element of settler colonialism—unlike Indian dispossession from ancestral lands for instance—did not derive from Anglo-American avarice or malevolence. Rather, Davis and those of like mind were motivated by sympathy for natives, revulsion at their mistreatment by Anglo-Americans, and the belief that indigenous cultures were valuable. These sympathies led them to establish partnerships with Indian groups in efforts
to prevent the obliteration of native cultures. The fact that one by-product of those efforts was Anglo acquisition of objects of indigenous material culture complicates our understanding of American imperialism. It shows that colonial processes could be set in motion not only by Anglo greed and violence but also by Anglos who humanized natives and who shaped their relations with Indians upon benevolent intentions. Finally, Davis exemplifies and complicates some of the recent and most important insights offered by historians. For example, Davis “played Indian” in order to produce a particular American identity and to acquire the authority to define “Indianness.” An examination of his life allows us to build upon Tomas Almaguer’s argument about white supremacy in California. Davis reveals that Anglo supremacy arose not only out of the interplay of race and white material interests, but also out of the intersections of race and Anglo production of knowledge.

The life of Edward Davis is also significant because it illuminates historical processes that shape contentious contemporary political struggles. Davis began collecting in the late 1880s and, by World War I, had amassed such a large number of artifacts that he quickly filled a storehouse he had built on land behind his home in San Diego. He would continue to collect native goods until his death in 1951. As I alluded to above, Davis’ life-long work as a collector reflects an important colonial process that gained steam after the close of the western frontier. While colonialism during the nineteenth century had focused most conspicuously on land acquisition, by the century’s close it had evolved to encompass the gathering and institutionalization of Indian material culture. The proclivity to collect and display Indian artifacts had its heyday in the early twentieth century, but its impacts reverberate to the present. The passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act on November 16, 1990, laid a legal foundation for ongoing efforts to repatriate Indian goods. Though NAGPRA applies to grave and funerary objects, it nonetheless leads us to ask questions about the repatriation of other objects of native material culture. Many objects migrated from native into...
Anglo hands through individuals like Davis who, along with his native partners, was attempting to mitigate the effects of settler colonialism. Given this context, which was not looting and not quite salvage ethnology or salvage archaeology, how do we in the twenty-first century approach repatriation? What rules, regulations, and laws should museums, universities, historical societies, and other institutions use to guide repatriation? When is it permissible not to repatriate objects?

The life Edward Harvey Davis would lead in San Diego began nineteen years before he attended the Diegueno toloache festival. Davis was a native of New York, but in 1884, at the age of twenty-two, he boarded a ship in New York City and headed to California in the hopes of benefiting his health. En route, Davis’ vessel stopped in Panama and at various ports along the west coast of Mexico before ultimately dropping anchor in San Diego Bay in January 1885.

Race figures prominently in the journal Davis kept on his voyage to San Diego. Born in 1862, Davis grew up adhering to the dominant racial beliefs held by nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans. As a young man, he was seemingly uncritical of white racial superiority, scientific racism, and its claim that racial hierarchies were a permanent fixture of the natural order. He, for example, often conflated non-whites with moral degeneracy. In his description of Panama City he wrote, “the inhabitants are nearly all negroes…and dress very scantily, as do the women also.” Such descriptions reflect nineteenth-century Anglo stereotypes about the active sexual appetites of black men and women. Davis also perceived Panamanian blacks in alignment with Anglo notions of black indolence and their potential for violence. “The negroes for the most part are very vicious looking…They are a lazy, impoverished race and what money they do get goes mostly for rum and whiskey.” Such views of black degeneracy were a central element of the late nineteenth-century racial order that placed Anglos in a position of social superiority—a position that Davis followed in Panama. “We gave our bags to a couple of little niggers and told them to lead the way to the hotel.” Davis’ use of the racial epithet “nigger” and the alacrity with which he commanded black labor, make clear his adherence to the racial hierarchy of his time. As he did with Panamanians, Davis racialized the Mexicans he encountered on his trip. “These, or most of these Mexicans,” wrote Davis, “wear a countenance so dark as to be almost like negroes.”

Though Davis arrived in San Diego holding many of the dominant racial attitudes of his era, he would go on to challenge those ideas. In fact, his attitudes would radically transform as he established himself in California and began his life-long work among Indians. He moved away from the racial determinism of his youth and embraced a racial ideology that included “culture” as an explanation for racial difference. Indeed, Davis would eventually contend that natives possessed
the same capabilities for intellectual and spiritual development as whites. It was only different cultural backgrounds that made it appear as if natives were inferior to Anglos. Therefore, as Davis grew older, his racial attitudes became more sophisticated and reflected his humanization of Native Americans.

Yet at the same time, Davis continued to place importance on physiognomy, and persisted in citing differences within the body to explain the racial divide between Native Americans and Anglos. In 1945, for example, he explained that the Seri of northern Mexico “lacked tool sense in the extreme,” but that “their clumsy brains had devised a harpoon for use against the turtle.”18 “Clumsy brains” and a lack of “tool sense,” with their implications of biological difference, seem glaringly at odds with Davis’ use of culture to explain racial divides. Nonetheless, Davis’ seemingly inconsistent understandings of race were not so incoherent as they first appear, for they served a larger consistent purpose. I argue that Davis used conceptions of race to help him appropriate Indian material culture. Though his racial ideology at times appeared to contain glaring contradictions, it always worked to support the acquisition of Indian goods. Davis’s employment of racial thinking demonstrates the potential as well as limits that interpersonal cross-cultural relationships between Anglo and Native Americans had in muddying and reshaping the dominant racial attitudes of early twentieth century America. More specifically, Anglo-Americans like Davis, who humanized and held benevolent intentions towards Indians, helped soften notions that natives were innately inferior, even if they did not advocate for a thorough dismantling of racial hierarchies.

Shortly after his arrival in San Diego, Davis became deeply interested not in blacks or Mexicans, but in Native Americans. A chance encounter as he was “walking up 5th Street” in downtown San Diego sparked his curiosity. In front of a butcher shop, Davis spied “several broad faced Indian men and women sitting on the edge of the board walk.”19 Behind the Indians hung freshly killed sides of beef which dripped blood that collected into “small dark pools” upon wooden planks of the walkway. Davis paused to observe this scene. “These belles of the sagebrush,” he recalled, “in order to heighten their charms and become more attractive, would dip their fingers in the blood and draw them across their countenances.” Shocked yet Intrigued by the scene, Davis remembered that the dried blood gave the Indians “a rather gruesome and foreboding aspect,” but was “interesting nonetheless.” Indeed, so enthralled was Davis with the Indians’ behavior that for the remainder of the day he followed them. After shadowing their every move, Davis’ escapade ended when the Indians finally returned to their “wickiups.” “Eventually I trailed them to their domiciles,” he reported.20

Davis, however, would have to place his interest in Native Americans on the
back burner as he went about the task of establishing himself in his new and unfamiliar surroundings in San Diego. Davis liked San Diego and presumably found the drier climate of southern California beneficial to his health. It did not take him long to decide that San Diego would be his new home—a decision reflected by a brief return to New York in October 1885 when Davis collected his fiancée, Anna May, in order to bring her out West. The couple married on October 20, 1885. After the wedding, Davis set out to make a living in San Diego. Having only “a little money,” he spent his first years in San Diego struggling as he worked on a railroad survey project and in a variety of odd jobs. By 1887, however, his financial prospects brightened. San Diego’s city engineer hired him to produce a map of the city. After completion of this project, he was commissioned to work on the architectural design plans for the Hotel del Coronado. With money earned from these positions, Davis bought a plot of land which he quickly resold at a substantial profit. Davis and Anna May subsequently decided to settle in San Diego’s backcountry and bought six hundred acres in Mesa Grande.21

The move to Mesa Grande gave Davis the opportunity to rediscover Native Americans who, along with a few hearty whites, comprised the population surrounding Davis’ home. As he described it, “this country was pretty much in
the raw. Most of our neighbors were Tookamuck Indians.” This suited Davis as he was eager to better understand the Indians and explore their culture. “I became very much interested in the Indians,” wrote Davis. “Every object of Indian culture fascinated me,” he added. Davis pursued his interest in natives by traveling to Indian rancherías (villages) and by trading with those whom he encountered. Soon, he started taking numerous trips throughout San Diego County to visit Indians, and eventually went farther afield to Arizona and Mexico. During his travels, he collected any object associated with Native Americans—blankets, pots, baskets, and textiles.

During these early trips, Davis’ racial perceptions of Indians shaped how he conducted his work. For example, he believed that Indians had limited potential for intellectual development. “As a rule, Indians can learn up to the age of 14 or 15, but after that, after advancing just so far, they cannot go a step further, and it is a waste of time and money to try and force them,” wrote Davis. On a 1906 collecting trip to Arizona he exploited this perceived deficiency to his advantage. Desirous to take photos, but knowing that many natives would resist, Davis wrote, “I had bought $1 worth of tobacco, candy and nuts for men, women and children, to use as bait to catch photos.” Davis exploited what he saw as a childlike and impulsive Indian nature in order to distract them with treats so that he could snap photos.

Davis also racialized native bodies in order to justify his ethnographic work. He cast Indians as important objects of study who required scientific investigation. Native bodies, particularly those that revealed distance from modern America through adornment with “traditional” clothing, the wearing of long hair, and painting or tattooing, were especially prized. Davis was excited by reports of an “un-Americanized” Yuma Indian living in “traditional” fashion. He subsequently traveled to the backcountry to catalogue, and extract knowledge from, what he viewed as a living relic.
The Indian was named Qut-A-Qus, or “Yellow Sky.” Writing shortly before leaving to meet him, Davis explained that “to photograph this specimen and interview him was our object.”25 Nor was Davis disappointed upon meeting Yellow Sky, whose appearances met with his expectations. Yellow Sky possessed long and tangled hair, and his body was gaunt, sinewy, and wrinkled—evidence of the wear a body experiences through living a pre-modern life. Davis’ objectification of Yellow Sky as a “specimen” stemmed from his belief that the appearance of Yellow Sky’s body reflected a supposedly unadulterated native way of life. Yellow Sky’s body merged with Davis’ racial notion of “Indian,” leading him to see Yellow Sky as a “real” Indian, and therefore, of significant ethnographic value.

The racialized notions Davis held of Indians were deeply entrenched in his psyche, yet by the second decade of the twentieth century, his views of natives would shift dramatically. Rather than simple, primitive, exotic, and inferior peoples, Davis painted Indians in ways that recognized and extolled the similarities between Anglos and Indians. He humanized Indians by identifying the commonalities that tied natives and non-natives together. For example, instead of perceiving Indian cultural practices as primitive and reflective of an immature state of social development, he expatiated on how native practices, though different
from those of Anglos, both resonated with and moved non-natives. Commenting on a funerary ceremony he witnessed, Davis wrote, “Wrapped in the sable garments of night, the solemnity, the sincerity, the reverence, the marvelous beauty and sentiment, reach deep into the heart, and touch responsive chords in each of us.” This comment reached across cultural and racial divides. In the need to contend with death, people, regardless of race and ethnicity, made common cause in the shared human experiences of solemnity, sincerity, and reverence that arise out of the need to make sense of mortality.

Davis’ growing penchant for perceiving the shared humanity of Anglos and Native Americans manifested itself in other arenas. By the late 1910s Davis would assert that natives possessed “natural human rights” that should not be transgressed. For instance, he contended that Anglos should not undermine the bond between native parents and their children. He specifically argued that the United States government should not force Indians to send children to distant boarding schools. Instead, parents should have the right to educate their children in local day schools. “Have the parents no rights that the most sacred ties must be unduly severed and trampled under foot?” asked Davis, who answered his own question in the affirmative. Moreover, he justified Indian possession of those rights by citing the common emotional bonds shared by white and Indian mothers for their children. “Indian mothers love their children the same as white mothers.”

That the races belonged to the same human family was evident not only from shared natural rights, but also from their possession of equal intellectual capabilities. Departing sharply from his earlier ideas about the “natural” deficiencies of the Indian intellect, Davis by the 1920s would make explicit efforts to contradict racist stereotypes that cast natives as mental inferiors to whites. In evaluating the Seri of northwest Mexico, he wrote:

I disagree most heartily with those who believe the Seris possessed a low order.
of intelligence. There is no end of evidence to the contrary. They are skilled mechanics and artisans in many lines…and will fashion…useful things from almost nothing. They will for instance make a boat out of driftwood…The finished boat is a very creditable article that the white man would have a hard time duplicating.28

Rather than people possessed of permanent mental deficiencies, the Seri were capable and intelligent people who expressed their intellect through cultural norms that served their needs. In this case, their intelligence yielded a boat made from driftwood. Davis hammered home his point by claiming that whites could not replicate Seri technology.

Finally, Davis humanized natives by contending that they were the spiritual equals of whites. He again chose the Seri to make his point, perhaps because he considered the Seri to be fairly “untouched” by civilization. A claim of spiritual egalitarianism between natives and civilized peoples made the point of shared humanity between the races all the more forceful. “For many years,” wrote Davis, “I had read every scrap of information regarding these people reputed to be cannibals and of the lowest grade of culture.” While many conflated the Seris’ “lowest grade” of culture with putative racial inferiority, Davis was quick to point out the fallacy of this association.

Here was this poor, ignorant Indian man who had never seen the inside of a school, could neither read or write, knew nothing of world events, or the names of great men, in short whose intelligence was limited to supplying his bodily and domestic wants. How does he compare with a highly intellectual and cultured man? They are as wide apart as the stars, but put these men in the middle of a waterless desert and see how they compare…. I would say both stand on even ground—Their souls are equally precious.29

The cultural differences between “the Indian” and “cultured” peoples did not signal clear racial inferiority. Rather, the cultural differences cited to categorize people as either Indian or cultured were environmentally determined; culture evolved to contend with the demands of one’s surroundings. Humans expressed their intelligence in ways designed to help them survive and thrive in whatever environment they found themselves. This, not biological difference, explained the gulf between Indian and cultured. Armed with such knowledge, “the deity” or God would perceive Davis’ “ignorant Indian” and “cultured man” as equal not only in their mental capacities, but also in their intrinsic spiritual worth.
Such a claim is a remarkable departure from Davis’ earlier views of Indians and begs the obvious question of what accounts for the change. On one level Davis’ changing perceptions of Indians derived from his discomfort with modernity. In this respect Davis was similar to other Anglos who became enamored with native peoples and cultures because they saw modernity as corrosive to primitive but laudable values connected to self-reliance and personal fortitude. As Davis wrote, his “cultured man” had had his “primitive instincts atrophied by disuse.” Indians consequently had something to teach modern Americans; they were reserves of primitiveness that could be mined for knowledge of life outside of the confines of the urban landscape. Nevertheless, the beliefs (particularly those that conflated primitiveness with a biologically determined inferiority) that Davis had seemingly held as a younger man did not reconcile well with his desire that white Americans learn from natives. After all, how could whites admit that they had something to learn from an inferior race? In large part, the change in Davis’ racial attitudes derived from his desire that Americans place value in native epistemologies and practices.

Antimodernism, however, cannot completely account for Davis’ shift in racial ideology. Mostly, this is because it cannot explain the inconsistencies in his racial thought. Even after Davis began to adopt attitudes that called forth the shared humanity of natives and Anglos, he never entirely abandoned all of the central components of his earlier racial ideology. Most notably, he continued to define native peoples through reference to their physical characteristics. Indeed, Davis often used both physiognomy and culture simultaneously to define race. For example, Davis described a Pima Indian named Coi-a-ma-au (Rattlesnake Head) as a “fine and benevolent [and] intelligent looking Pima Indian” because he was “kindly, gentle, honest, and accommodating” [sic]. Yet in the next sentence Davis switched his description from the behavioral to the physical writing “his hair was white as snow which contrasted greatly with his dark complexion.” Davis employed this mix of behavior and bodily characteristics repeatedly to describe Indians. For instance, of a group of Seri he wrote, “The women and children certainly did look wild….Their hair was frowsy and unkempt, their skirts…a patchwork of dirty rags….their features seemed hard and cruel. Their complexion was very dark.” As this and other descriptions suggest, Davis still linked phenotype with race.

Davis’ racial logic only makes sense when we view it as a tool to facilitate his work as a collector and ethnographer. The complexity, and seeming inconsistency, of his racial attitudes helped him to gather artifacts and to acquire knowledge of native cultures. In a 1931 article on his work as a collector, Davis directly tied his success as a collector and ethnographer to his attitudes towards Native peoples.
He explained that it was necessary to adopt tolerance towards people and their practices and to embrace the understanding that cultural differences resulted from divergent lived experiences.

In order to get along well with primitive people among whom one is a stranger one must cast aside all personal egotism, cultivate a friendly, tolerant attitude toward all mankind, respect religious beliefs, and grant to others the inalienable right to live and think according to psychological processes that are the result of historical and ancestral backgrounds.32

Davis’ work attuned him to a relativistic or comparative understanding of cultural difference. In working with a variety of native peoples, he came to the conclusion that difference was environmentally determined—a result of history and background as Davis put it.

This conclusion made Davis both a better collector and a better ethnographer. For one, by respecting native cultural practices, Davis placed himself in a stronger position to trade with Indians. For example, he acted according to native strictures of reciprocity and gift giving when he traded for artifacts, often giving gifts as part of the deal. When among the Seri on Tiburon Island (located in the Sea of Cortez) in 1922, he conducted a trade of “three fine-tooth combs” for “native hair brushes” with three Seri women. After the exchange, he wrote that he also “gave each woman a little round mirror and they were greatly pleased.” Like many
native peoples, trade was both an economic and social affair. “Gift-giving” was a common native practice that linked trade partners in social relationships – a practice meant to ensure that both parties would view their trade relations as beneficial. Davis further acted his part by specifically referring to himself and the Seri as friends. “Before leaving the Seri Chief I told him that whenever he saw this sign—Circle Bar D and left hand below it, it was me—their friend, and not to shoot at me.” Having established friendship through ritualized trade, Davis became included in a kinship group that linked the Seri. As such, he was in a much better position to conduct his ethnographic work. After the conclusion of an occasion of trading, he explained that he used the occasion to observe Seri music and dance. “We asked for a dance, and the Seris, using the bow and striking sticks for music, the slender girl jumped up and down on a flat piece of tin.”

Indeed, Davis’ ability to establish good rapport with the Seri provided him with numerous opportunities to observe and record their practices. He, for example, “witnessed the operation of a Seri beauty parlor.” Sitting with the Seri at an encampment Davis watched and made notes as a “mother brushed the hair of her thirteen-year old daughter.” He explained this mundane practice in detail, how the mother plucked lice from the girl’s hair, and how the finished result was “neatly brushed” hair. With the hair styled, Davis explained that the mother then “mixed paint” in order to decorate her daughter’s face. She “painted a bright blue design under the eyes…and then she added narrow white stripes.” Nor was such face painting an unusual practice. Davis concluded his description by writing that “the women often paint and remove three different face designs in one day.” Through trade relations and by following Seri customs that called for social connections between trade partners, Davis
acquired intimate ethnographic knowledge of the Seri’s quotidian practices. He later explained that face painting was not an empty or vain practice. Rather, facial markings identified the wearer’s clan affiliation.

Like his sensitivity to cultural difference, Davis’ focus on phenotype, which continued to contribute much to his understanding of race, worked to facilitate his ethnographic endeavors. More specifically, Davis used native physical attributes to establish himself as an expert on native cultures. Davis believed that “authentic” (by which he meant “pure-blooded”) Indians possessed the most accurate knowledge and understandings of native cultures. Moreover, such individuals were rare and difficult to find. After one collecting trip he wrote, “After a diligent search, we only saw possibly two pure blooded native Indians in our 1400 miles…. This search should have been made 100 or at the most 50 years ago, when a few of the older Indians...might have...handed down some of the language and customs of their tribes.”

Historian Jean O’Brien has recently explained that Anglos in the nineteenth century focused on blood quantum to claim that Indians of mixed ancestry were inauthentic. Davis employed a similar logic, arguing that only the rare pure-blooded Indian held true knowledge of native practices. Predictably, Davis claimed that his native informants were real Indians whose knowledge of their own cultures had not been lost or adulterated by racial intermixing or by cultural change. His expertise derived from his access to these authentic Indian informants.

To substantiate his claim that his informants were indeed real Indians, Davis turned to physical attributes he believed reflected “pure-blooded” Indians. This strategy is clear in a recently published piece entitled “The Vanished Tribes of Lower California” in which Davis reported on a Baja California expedition tasked with the purpose of cataloging the cultural traits of the region’s Indians. “Anastasia Velásquez, we can positively assert, has all the characteristics of a pure blooded Indian woman. She is stout...[has] intensely black hair, & eyes, dark chocolate brown in color, rather thick sensuous lips, nose with rather wide nostrils and low forehead,” wrote Davis who then concluded that Anastasia was “undoubtedly” a “Guayacura.” In the same report, Davis goes to extraordinary pains to authenticate the Indianness of another informant. The report outlines the physical and cultural traits of the Cochimi tribe, based on a Cochimi informant named Jose Jerardo Iberri who was “an old man...of pure Indian blood.” However, Iberri “was light in color,” and even though Davis thought Iberri had “features...more of a Spaniard than an Indian,” he explained that Iberri’s “parents were Indian” nonetheless. The anomaly of Iberri’s lighter skin tone was explained by the fact that “some Indians were much lighter than others.” So intent was Davis on using phenotype to authenticate the race of his source that he was willing to invert
“Their Souls Are Equally Precious”

his own assumption that linked Indianness to dark skin. To be sure that there was no confusion, Davis reiterated the variation in skin color of the Cochimi. “Those living in [the] interior were lighter than those on the Coast,” he wrote.  

Davis also exploited Anglo-American fascination with race to drum up interest in Indians and their cultures. More specifically, he leveraged, exoticized, and racialized Anglo perceptions of Indians to spark curiosity in his work among a broader Anglo-American audience. Davis, who published a few articles about his work with Indians, often purposefully highlighted native barbarity, characterizing it as a racial trait in the hopes of hooking Anglo readers. In two articles entitled “The Savage Seri of Sonora I” and “The Savage Seri of Sonora II,” both published in Scientific Monthly, Davis took great care to illustrate Seri primitivism and to locate this trait within their racial constitution. “Living in animal-like savagery, without commerce or industry, the Seri’s every bodily character and function were directed toward the provision, day by day, of the food and water necessary for life.” The Seri possessed bodies uniquely shaped by quotidian struggles for survival in a pre-modern and non-urban world. Davis followed such assertions with sensationalistic descriptions of Seri cultural practices. For instance, in describing Seri sea turtle hunting, he likened the Indians to animals pouncing on a kill. “No sooner was the quarry landed than the soft undershell was crushed and broken loose…and then torn off by the tribespeople with the impetuous fury of blood-crazed carnivorous beasts.”  

Presumably, this depiction of the Seri would stimulate Anglo interest by suggesting that the Seri people had not lost touch with animalistic emotions, leaving them to exist in some strange and fascinating intermediary space between animal and human.  

Despite his employment of such sensationalism, Davis made it clear that Anglo Americans should be interested in natives because they as peoples possessed
specific knowledge that white Americans did not. Davis repeatedly pointed out—often in explicitly racial terms—the special knowledge and abilities of native peoples. “They are the most perfect type of human being adapted to desert conditions that exist today,” wrote Davis of the Seri. Their adaptation to the desert environment endowed the Seri with special abilities that other races lacked. “Convey them blindfolded many miles into the heart of the desert, empty-handed, remove their blinders, and they will find both food and water where others would perish.” By “others” Davis meant whites, for other native peoples possessed similar gifts as the Seri.

“The Papagos and Yaquis do almost as well” in a desert, explained Davis.41 In addition to their ability to survive, the Seri possessed other abilities unique to their race. For instance, they held traditional knowledge (what scholars today refer to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge) that allowed them to use natural resources to create technology. “These people are splendid mechanics with the crudest of tools—rocks, fire, bones, knives. For instance, the pole of the harpoon was composed of five pieces of driftwood.”42 Unlike others who relied on manufactured tools, the Seri were more self-reliant and could fashion tools from the natural landscape around them. In sum, the Seri were emblematic of the unique knowledge possessed by the Indian race. So while Davis humanized the Seri and other Indians by forcefully arguing that they possessed knowledge vital to white Americans, he continually racialized natives as pre-modern because it was necessary that they be ensconced in pre-modernity to validate their possession of the pre-modern knowledge Davis extolled in them.

Nonetheless, Indians’ possession of special knowledge meant that it was incumbent on Anglos to research Native Americans. Davis justified his own position as a collector and ethnographer by arguing that white Americans could learn from the traditional knowledge natives held. It was this desire to teach which Davis identified as his primary motivation for his life’s work as a collector and ethnographer. Referencing his work he explained that “it has utilized these remote and little known places, and a vanishing race of the world’s most primitive people in a purpose that is purely educational.” Davis’ role then was to serve as the medium through which the knowledge held by Indians could flow to Anglos. Davis reinforced his educational role by explicitly denying other motivations for his work, refuting for example that he was some sort of “adventurer.” “I am sometimes spoken of as an adventurer. I don’t consider myself an adventurer, and I rather dislike having the term applied to me.... Adventures...have no place in a well planned scientific expedition.”43

This need to acquire Indian knowledge was made all the more urgent by another central element of Davis’ racial logic—the belief that natives were a
disappearing people. Davis, like others of his time, believed in the “disappearing Indian” myth, and asserted that Indians were either gone or would soon be gone. He recalled that his first encounter with Indians upon his arrival in San Diego was all the more special because natives would soon vanish. He wrote “These fat women were the last remnants of the Co-me-yi [Kumeyaay] or Coast Indians, who have since completely disappeared.” And though the Seri had some time left, they too would soon suffer the same fate as the Kumeyaay. “Their numbers dwindle and their extinction is in sight…yet for a little while these strange people will continue…a handful of Nature’s primitive creatures, through whose veins flows the blood of thoroughbred American aborigines.” “Pure blooded” Indians were either dead or moribund. Their collective wisdom was therefore in danger of passing into oblivion as the Indian race neared extinction. Davis saw his work as a collector and ethnographer as a means to prevent this tragic outcome.

While Davis clearly leveraged conceptions of race to support his work, it is impossible to definitively state to what degree this strategy succeeded. It is clear, however, that Davis gathered (at the minimum) hundreds of items of Indian material culture, and that he produced a substantial number of documents. He took over seven thousand photographs, filled fifty-seven journals with notes, and published several periodical articles that described Indian languages, beliefs, and practices. The prodigious amounts of goods he collected places Davis within the stream of a larger colonial process centered on Anglo acquisition of Indian material culture. Principally, this process involved the transfer of native goods from Indians to universities, museums, curio shops, and personal collections. In the first years after Davis moved to California, his work with Indians led him to amass a large personal collection of Indian goods. In 1915, however, his role in the transfer of Indian goods to white Americans grew when he opened an inn on his Mesa Grande property. He named this boarding house “Powam Lodge,” which translates to “place of rest.” Powam Lodge was decorated both with artifacts Davis had collected, and with handicrafts produced by local Indians.

Visible are Indian rugs, woven baskets, and pottery. At Powam Lodge Anglos readily saw Indian artifacts on display, but the lodge’s most important function was not curatorial. Rather, it was to encourage economic exchange between whites and Indians. Davis routinely invited local Indians to come to the Lodge and sell baskets, blankets, and other objects to his guests. Davis hoped to provide Indians with a market and a source of income that would help preserve native handicraft arts. Powam Lodge remained in operation until 1930 when it accidently caught on fire and burned to the ground. Powam Lodge was simultaneously a pseudo-museum, as well as curio shop which commodified and distributed
Indian material culture. Indeed, the lodge’s exterior décor, with its wood hewn log letters and large arrow, blatantly advertised both of these functions. The name the letters spelled (Powam) connected the inn to the indigenous, while the arrow linked it to native artifacts.

Though it was an institution that abetted a colonial process—the acquisition of native material culture by Anglo-Americans—Powam Lodge was substantively and substantially different than other institutionalized facilitators of colonization like the Dawes Act. Unlike the Dawes Act that sought to appropriate Indian lands while simultaneously destroying native cultures, Powam Lodge sought to preserve native cultures through the Indians selling native goods to Anglos. The motivations underlying Powam Lodge were consequently benevolent as they extolled the value of native material culture, but that impulse and those motivations nonetheless contributed to appropriation by Anglos of native material culture.

Davis’ largest role in colonial processes that appropriated Indian material culture stemmed from his relationship with George Heye (1874-1957). Like Davis, Heye became deeply interested in Native Americans and spent his adult life collecting Native American artifacts. Heye spread his wings over a larger geographic expanse than did Davis, sponsoring expeditions in not only North America, but also Central and South America. Heye is well known for founding the Museum of the American Indian in 1908. The museum amassed a large collection due both to Heye’s personal efforts, and to the fact that he hired people like Davis to collect for the museum. The Museum of the American Indian became part
of the Smithsonian Institution in 1989, and has since evolved into the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), now located in Maryland. The NMAI is an important research center on Native America, and has become an important political institution which Native Americans have used to reclaim and represent their past. So it, like Powam Lodge, reflects the ambiguity that results from a colonial process that derived much of its impetus from finding value in Indigenous cultures.

Davis came to the attention of George Heye in 1915. In that year, Heye bought Davis’ collection for display in the Museum of the American Indian and then in 1916 decided to put Davis on his payroll as a “field collector” charged with the duty to acquire more artifacts. Davis worked for Heye from 1916 until his death in 1951. Over those years, he sent hundreds of items to Heye. It is impossible to know the exact number Davis sent, but the NMAI’s website currently lists 292 items (with 7 additional items that most likely came from Davis) sent by Davis to Heye. This number is surely lower than the actual number of items Davis sent, as the NMAI does not list any articles that have since passed out of its collection or that are deemed “culturally sensitive.” The articles Davis sent are diverse and include pottery, baskets, moccasins, bows and arrows, stone tools, child’s toys, baby carriers, fishing nets, and clothing. The cultural affiliations of these articles are also diverse, with goods coming from the Kumeyaay (and other Diegueno bands), Cahuilla, Cupeño, Luiseño, Serrano, Quechan (Yuma), Tohono O’odham (Papago), Akimel O’odham (Pima), Yavapai, Yaqui, Dilzhe’e (Apache), Chemehuevi, Cocopa, Cora, Wixarika, Kiliwa, Seri, Cochimi, Modoc, Paiute, and Guaycura. Davis supplemented the material goods he sent Heye with photographs. Over
his career Davis took over 7,000 photographs relating to Native America. Many came to Heye. For example, between January 16 and April 1, 1948, Davis sent eleven shipments of photographs, totaling 1,453 negatives, to Heye.\textsuperscript{51} 

Davis’ employment with the Museum of the American Indian both encouraged and enhanced his ability to collect native goods. As Davis explained, Heye’s offer gave him the opportunity to get paid for work he loved to do.\textsuperscript{52} More specifically, Heye financed virtually all the costs Davis incurred as a collector, including personal expenses and travel expenses.\textsuperscript{53} Heye also paid substantial amounts to ship items from California to the Museum of the American Indian in New York. For example, on April 6, 1921, Davis sent “3 Boxes [of] Indian wares” by rail freight to Heye. The bill of $500 was to be paid “collect” upon arrival in New York City.\textsuperscript{54} 

Davis’ employment with Heye also led him to more vigorously seek out persons from whom he could buy Indian goods. At times, people readily sold him artifacts. For instance, in July 1930, Davis purchased a “steatite tube” from Richard Early Stensreed. The latter had found the tube in the bed of Poway Creek just two months prior to selling it to Davis. As Davis noted, he acquired the tube specifically “for the museum.”\textsuperscript{55} Davis also obviously purchased goods directly from Native Americans. To his credit, Davis most often respected the fact that the items he sought held significant value to the peoples who produced them, and would not aggressively seek to persuade reluctant natives to part with goods. For instance, in 1913 he tried to purchase a “chahon” (a sacred stone), but was told by its possessor that it “belonged to the tribe” and that he “could not sell it without their consent.” Davis left without the stone.\textsuperscript{56} Despite his sensitivity in this case, Davis nonetheless used his long standing employment with Heye to procure numerous other items from Indians willing to sell. In Davis’ case, Anglo appropriation of native goods was done in partnership with natives who found the selling of their wares as a way to contend with the economic realities natives faced in the early twentieth-century United States. 

By his death, Edward Davis had spent more than half a century as a collector and amateur ethnographer, throughout which time his shifting ideas about race supported his work. But Davis’ racial views also shaped his understanding of the relationship between non-Indians, modernity, and indigeneity. More specifically, he believed that because Indians were a “dying race,” Anglos would need to act as caretakers of indigeneity in the modern age. It would be up to white Americans to work in partnership with willing natives to record Indigenous values, beliefs, and practices. Davis responded to this perceived responsibility by working to ensconde native artifacts in institutions like museums, and by creating written records of Indian practices that would keep alive the epistemologies of what he and many others of his time viewed as a moribund race. For Davis, this role
generated a new form of what scholar Shari Huhndorf has called “Going Native”—or the assumption of an indigenous identity by a non-indigenous person. In Davis’ case, he donned native clothing for a photograph that accompanied a 1931 article in which he narrated a synopsis of his life as a collector to journalist John Hogg. The photo shows Davis in native garb—he wears leather pants and a leather shirt both of which are decorated with quintessential southwestern beadwork displaying native motifs. In addition, his clothing is lined with Indian fringes, and Davis wears necklaces presumably made by the dexterous hands of some native artisan. The photo, with a caption that reads “Edward H. Davis has devoted many years to the study of the life of native races,” suggests the paternal relationship Davis envisioned between the races. Davis had become an expert on an exotic race, with the authority and duty to expatiate on native cultures, practices, histories, and worldviews. Davis’ racial logic not only abetted his efforts to collect Indian artifacts, but also provided a moral imperative to understand and preserve native epistemologies.

A deep respect for indigenous cultures, sympathy for natives who suffered under settler colonialism, a genuine belief in the values of native knowledge and indigenous practices, and the notion that indigenous knowledge might help ameliorate the ills of modern America led Davis to work with Native Americans for much of his long life. This work sprouted in a variety of forms including as a collector, as proprietor of Powam Lodge, and as an employee of George Heye. Though driven by the human and humane connections he developed with natives, one effect of Davis’ work was that it contributed to a colonial process that emerged in full force broadly throughout the United States during the late nineteenth century. Indigenous peoples found themselves both voluntarily and involuntarily subjected to a process in which non-Indians took substantive control over native material culture and assumed the authority to
delineate the place of indigeneity in the modern age.

Edward Harvey Davis and his life reveal that this process was not often driven by greed or racialized violence. Rather, Anglo benevolence and well-meaning efforts to place a human face on the multitude of natives who had been victimized by racial animosity ultimately helped contribute to the weakening of native control over the preservation of Indian material culture. If the hope that preserving the epistemologies of perceived pre-modern peoples might help combat the ills of modern America motivated Davis in his work, he is in no way unique.

As historian Sherry Lynn Smith has explained, anti-modernism prompted many “middlebrow” Americans (people Smith has termed “popularizers” of Indians, and who include writers like Charles Fletcher Lummis and Mabel Dodge) to “reimagine” Indians as people who had valuable knowledge to contribute to American society. Consequently, “popularizers” often worked to preserve, honor, and disseminate knowledge of natives. This impulse had ambiguous ramifications on the past and continues to generate ambiguous consequences in the present. In the past, it indeed helped preserve Indian material culture, but it also separated natives from possession and care of many objects of those cultures. In the present, one effect of the benevolent impulses that drove many, including Davis, to become deeply involved with Indians has been to lay the foundation for native/non-native collaboration in using objects housed in institutions like museums and historical societies to narrate our shared past.

Another effect, though, is found in a deepened distrust of Anglo science and scientists carried by some contemporary native peoples. This in turn has set the stage for contests between natives and non-natives over authority to govern
Indian material remains and histories. These contests continue today and are most evident through highly publicized debates such as that over Kennewick man, or arguments over NAGPRA compliance.

NOTES

1. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 3, Folder 29, n.d., Edward H. Davis Papers, San Diego History Center (hereafter SDHC). The document must date after 1922 as it describes a trip Davis took to Tiburon Island in 1922.


3. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Envelope 7, August 4, 1903, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


5. Davis once used the Indian past to illustrate their superior ability to contend with nature. He wrote, “Their whole history has been a story of …wresting a livelihood from a land in which the white man would be absolutely unable to maintain himself.” This quotation can be found in Edward H. Davis as told to John Edwin Hogg, “The Pursuits of a Museum Collector” in *Touring Topics* (Los Angeles, 1931) 18. Box 3, Folder 2, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.

6. Scholars have identified “antimodernism” as the central factor that shaped Anglo perceptions of Natives during this period. Historian Sherry L. Smith has argued that Anglos “reimagined” Natives during the first part of the twentieth century. Anglos saw in Indians both an escape from, and also an antidote to, the ills of urbanization and industrialization. Because they viewed Indians from this perspective, many “middlebrow” Anglos wrote extensively about Indians in order to popularize and preserve for posterity Indian cultural practices and beliefs. This cadre of Anglo authors entered the political realm and fought for Native rights, argued that Native cultures were different rather than simply inferior to that of Anglo America, and crafted images of Indians that emphasized Native humanity rather than debasement. See Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880-1940* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), introduction, 6-7.

7. There are no recent scholarly writings on Davis. The SDHC has two texts in its collection. The first is Charles R. Quinn *Edward H. Davis and the Indians of the Southwest United States and Northwest Mexico: A Harvest of Photographs, Sketches, and Unpublished Manuscripts of the Indefatigable Collector of Artifacts of These Border Indians* (Downey, CA: 1965). Its call number is 970 QUI. There is also a copy of this work in the Special Collections, Geisel Library, University of California, San Diego. The other text is Charles M. Hudgins, “Edward H. Davis: A Study in Practical Anthropology,” which is located in the SDHC’s Institute of History Collection, 1986/4.


9. Philip Deloria has argued that white Americans have impersonated Indians as an ongoing


11. The Southwest Museum of Los Angeles founded in 1907 amassed an extensive collection of Native American artifacts including rare Kachina dolls from New Mexico and Gabrielino baskets from the local area.

12. Edward H. Davis as told to John Edwin Hogg, “The Pursuits of a Museum Collector” in Touring Topics (Los Angeles, 1931) 16, Box 3, Folder 2, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


14. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Envelope 1, November 10, 1884, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Notebook 1, November 20, 1884, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


19. Edward Harvey Davis, “Fragment about Comeyi Indians,” Box 3, Folder 8, n.d., Edward Harvey Davis Papers, SDHC. Although there is no date given on this fragment, it must have been produced after 1915 as it is written on Powam Lodge letterhead. Powam Lodge was constructed in 1915.

20. Ibid.


22. Ibid.

23. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Envelope 4, 1896, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.

24. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Envelope 11, 1906, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC..

25. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 1, Envelope 15, 1912, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC..

26. Edward Harvey Davis, Fragment about the Day of the Dead, Box 3, Folder 9, no date, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.

27. Edward Harvey Davis, Girls’ Schooling, Box 3, Folder 25, no date, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


29. Edward Harvey Davis, Box 3, Folder 29, n.d., Edward H. Davis Papers, San Diego Historical Society. The document must date after 1922 as it describes a trip Davis took to Tiburon Island in 1922.


"Their Souls Are Equally Precious"

of Artifacts of These Border Indians (Downey, CA, 1965) 160, Special Collections, Geisel Library, University of California, San Diego.


33. Quinn, Edward H. Davis and the Indians of the Southwest, 187.

34. Ibid., 160.

35. Edward Harvey Davis, “The Vanished Tribes of Lower California,” Box 3, Folder 24, May 14, 1926, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


40. Ibid., 199.

41. Quinn, Edward H. Davis and the Indians of the Southwest United States and Northwest Mexico, 160.

42. Ibid., 171.


46. This information can be found on the website of the SDHC at www.sandiegohistory.org.


48. Davis accepted Heye’s offer to work as a “field collector of ethnological specimens.” This story is detailed in Edward Harvey Davis as told to John Edwin Hogg, “The Pursuits of a Museum Collector,” 17.

49. For a list of 292 items the NMAI identifies as coming from Edward H. Davis see the museum’s website at www.si.edu/searchcollections/results.aspx?partyid=406&src=1-2. To access this page go to the NMAI website, and do a collections search. Search by “artists/individuals” and type in Edward Harvey Davis. A link to Davis will appear within a list of several persons whose last name begins with D. Click on the link to Davis.

50. For the cultural affiliation of the items Davis sent to George Heye, see the website cited in the preceding footnote.

51. Edward Harvey Davis, “Acomita Tract,” Box 6, Envelope 35, Notebook 31, 1929, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.


53. Davis lists various expenses he billed to Heye in the Acomita Tract notebook (see note 43). These include payments for “haircut & shave,” “groceries,” “postage,” and “laundry.”
54. Bill of Lading for Shipment of Indian Artifacts shipped by E.H. Davis to museum of Amer. Indian, N.Y. NY, April 6, 1921. Box 11, Folder 46, Edward H. Davis Papers, San Diego Historical Society.
55. Sketch of Steatite tube, July 31, 1930, Box 2, Folder 36, 1908 & 1930, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.
56. “Chahon from Cris,” August 9, 1913, Box 2, Folder 36, 1908 & 1930, Edward H. Davis Papers, SDHC.
“Born of Horses:” Missionaries, Indigenous Vaqueros, and Ecological Expansion during the Spanish Colonization of California

By Paul Albert Lacson

Introduction

In June 1774, Evangelista, a Costanoan Indian boy, explained to Father Junípero Serra the reaction of his people to the arrival of Spanish horses in 1769. Costanoans, who considered horses and mules to be the same animal, believed that mules had given birth to Spanish colonists.1 Evangelista theorized that missionaries, soldiers, and settlers “were the sons of the mules on which they rode.” He also supposed that the Spaniards were not quite newcomers, surmising that the people-born-of-mules were actually returning souls of Indians from “surrounding countries, who have come back this way,” only this time as the offspring of strange animals.2

A graduate of Castle Park High School in Chula Vista, Albert Lacson earned his Ph.D. in History from UC Davis and currently holds the position of Assistant Professor of History at Grinnell College, Iowa. The histories of race and ethnicity in the United States are central to his teaching and research, especially the experiences of Native Americans.
In 1769, Spanish colonists initiated a revolution in the relationship of California Indians to their environment when they introduced new crops, domesticated animals, and agriculture. Horses proved especially influential in transforming the economies, social hierarchies, political structures, and inter-tribal relationships of Native Californians. This article examines the key factors that led California Indians to embrace horses and caused Spanish colonists to entrust Indians with the powerful creatures—animals that could facilitate Indian rebellions against mission, presidio, or pueblo settlements. At the center of both processes were the Indian vaqueros who seized the opportunity to work with the new animals and who displayed the traits necessary for Spanish missionaries to give them access to the animals.

Given the thriving horse cultures that developed among Indian peoples throughout North America by the nineteenth century, especially in the Southwest and Great Plains, it may seem natural that California Indian peoples should welcome horses. Their embrace, however, of the horse, first introduced by the Spaniards, is complicated by the fact that other biological introductions wreaked havoc on the native population of the region. Historians of American Indian history have produced a healthy spate of scholarship that drives home the point that North America’s native peoples readily adopted European goods, ideas, and practices that benefited them—a necessary corrective to the view of American Indians as primitive peoples left behind by history. They have given the impression, however, that American Indians did not welcome the introduction of new biota in the same way that they greeted metal tools or woven cloth shirts. Following the lead of the renowned environmental historian, Alfred Crosby, scholars have stressed the destructive impact of European-introduced biota. They have emphasized that European colonies depended on the biological success of non-human migrants, like plants, animals, and microbes. In other words, it took more than an enterprising spirit and providential grace to wrest control of North America from the continent’s native peoples.

By including plants, animals, and diseases as “allies” of Europeans, historians have advanced our understanding of the processes by which native peoples...
The Spaniards distributed horses and other livestock throughout the territory of San Diego County native Indian bands.

were dispossessed of their land. Pekka Hämäläinen, however, has convincingly identified a problem with the emphasis on the destructive impact of European-introduced biota, pointing out that the story is dangerously close to biological determinism. It represents what he calls “the biological turn of American colonial history” in which “all the conquerors often had to do was to show up and somehow stay alive; their microbes did the rest.” No longer stressing the benevolence of God
or superior technology, the new narrative gives the impression that humans, whether European or indigenous, had less agency in determining the outcomes of European-Indian contact than previous generations of scholars had recognized. While such a view has gone a long way towards de-emphasizing an exaggerated degree of control held by Europeans, this spate of scholarship minimizes the extent to which American Indians readily incorporated certain aspects of European-introduced biota for their benefit.

This article builds on the study of Hämäläinen’s Comanche incorporation of horses by stressing that indigenous peoples did not just passively accept or endure the introduction of European biota, especially horses. By examining the experiences of California Indian vaqueros (cowboys), it argues that Native Californians sought to take advantage of horses and other livestock in the same way that they incorporated metal tools and woven cloth; they put the new creatures and their newly acquired equestrian skills and knowledge to use in ways that furthered native goals. By integrating new animals into California Indian societies, Indian vaqueros aided the Spanish in their initial colonizing efforts, especially in the creation of mission communities based on agriculture and livestock raising. Indian access to horses, however, also created obstacles to the Spanish colonization project, especially as envisioned by Franciscan missionaries. Throughout the Spanish period, missionaries found it difficult to maintain a geographical divide between “civilization” and “savagery,” between the coastal communities of Christian neophytes and the inland communities of Indians who chose not to join missions. Vaqueros developed the knowledge and equestrian skills necessary to challenge the spatial arrangement envisioned by Franciscan missionaries in which “civilized” communities existed along the coast while “savagery” was limited to the interior regions of California’s Central Valley (the modern San Joaquin Valley).5
Unlike other parts of North America, where the dearth of records does not allow historians to identify the specific Indian individuals who played the most influential roles in incorporating horses into their societies, the meticulous record keeping of Franciscan missionaries in Alta California makes it possible to explore the histories of specific Indian individuals crucial to the spread of horse knowledge and skills among California Indians, mission and non-mission Indians alike. For example, an examination of an 1835 census of the Kumeyaay Indian pueblo in San Pascual, situated along the San Dieguito River between the modern cities of Escondido and Poway, illustrates the penetrating changes in Kumeyaay society wrought by the Spanish introduction of horses. Among the thirty-four men listed in the census, many pursued “trades or pursuits” connected in some way to the new culture of horses: seven vaqueros, ten muleteers, one blacksmith, two weavers, two millers, one carder of wool, five farmers, and one cheesemaker. Some worked directly with horses (the vaqueros and muleteers); others supported the ability of people to ride horses (blacksmiths); some made items like cheese and woven cloth products that required the work of horses to herd cattle and sheep (the cheesemaker, weavers, and carder); and others worked with agricultural products that depended on horses and oxen to plow the soil that nourished agricultural products (millers).

By 1835, inhabitants of San Pascual took for granted the consumption of woven cloth and dairy products, as well as the sight of Indian vaqueros taming horses and herding the sheep and cattle necessary to produce such goods. An 1827 report by Franciscan missionaries passing through San Pascual described a scene that had come to seem quite natural along other parts of Alta California’s west coast: “In these districts pasture the horses and mules and the sheep of this [San Diego] Mission.” While nothing could seem more natural than horses eating grass or weavers making cloth out of the wool from sheep that vaqueros had herded, these animals were not native to Alta California. Their existence—and the human effort necessary to ensure their survival—requires an explanation.

This article illustrates the emergence of California Indian vaqueros in spreading a new relationship with the land—a relationship in which domesticated animals, especially horses, radically reshaped the lives of California’s indigenous peoples.

Reactions

Knowledge of sheep, cows, pigs, chicken, and horses may not have made its way to Alta California until 1769, despite the fact that the Spaniards had introduced domesticated livestock to northwestern New Spain in the mid-seventeenth century. The Costanoan boy’s belief that mules gave birth to Spanish colonists suggests
that the animals from the exploratory expeditions of 1769 may have been the first domesticated livestock that he or his neighbors had encountered. Evangelista’s views may not have been representative of every Costanoan, and certainly should not necessarily be taken to reflect a theory held by every California Indian, but his assessment of horses does illustrate a lack of experience with domesticated livestock among all Native Californians.

From the perspective of Indians, regardless of their knowledge about horses, one thing was clear: Native Californians associated horses and other livestock with the Spanish newcomers. While a seemingly obvious point, the association is worth emphasizing since Indian peoples resistant to Spanish colonization violently targeted animals in efforts to expel the Spanish. For instance, when Kumeyaay Indians attacked Mission San Diego in 1775, in addition to burning buildings and killing a Franciscan missionary, they also targeted livestock. According to Father Vicente Fuster, who survived the attack, “[O]ur enemies fired arrows at all the livestock both large and small and at the horses. They had not even overlooked the hogs.”

In 1785, Tongva Indians rebelled against missionaries at Mission San Gabriel and killed several sheep and goats as part of the rebellion. Along with mission buildings and people, the new animals symbolized an unwelcome presence that became targets of violence during Indian rebellions against Spanish colonization.

Over time, however, whether California’s native peoples approved of Spanish colonization or not, most willingly incorporated livestock, especially horses, into their lives. Relatively soon after the arrival of Spanish newcomers, California Indians became the primary caretakers of horses, mules, cattle, oxen, and other Spanish-introduced livestock. Less than a decade after the establishment of Mission San Diego, Father Fermín Francisco de Lasúen reported Indians from that mission rounding up livestock in his 1778 annual report to New Spain’s viceroy. At the end of the nineteenth century, Kitsepawit, a Chumash Indian from Mission San Buenaventura, bragged that Native Californians had become the best horse riders in the region. By the early twentieth century, it was common to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Indian Vaqueros</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>25</td>
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*Number of Indian Vaqueros at Mission San Buenaventura. Source: Libro de la Ropa, Vaqueros, Santa Barbara Mission Archive/Library*

find mounted California Indians working as cowboys on the ranches and farms that dotted the coast.
Beginning with a seed population of fewer than 1,000 animals in 1769, the number of Spanish-introduced livestock in what would become the state of California grew precipitously in less than a century. In 1850, there were approximately 295,000 such animals in the state (approximately 254,000 cattle, 18,000 sheep, and 23,000 horses and mules). By 1860, the numbers rose even more dramatically: 1,000,000 cattle, 1,100,000 sheep, and 170,000 horses and mules.\(^\text{12}\) At Mission San Diego, there were 102 cattle, 304 sheep, and 54 horses in 1776. At the end of the Spanish period in 1821, the growth of the livestock population mirrored the increase in population throughout Alta California; missionaries reported 8,436 cattle, 17,000 sheep, and 1,060 horses.\(^\text{13}\) Of course, no biological population, whether human or animal, arrives at a particular population size “naturally.” Like the fields of wheat, barley, and beans that depended on the hard labor of the natives, California’s livestock population would not have flourished without the work of California Indian vaqueros.

By learning equestrian skills, neophyte Indians could contribute immeasurably to the creation of agricultural communities that would form the centerpiece of the civilizing program of Franciscan missionaries. Military leaders worried, however, that mounted Indians might use their new skills and access to horses against the Spaniards. In 1787, Alta California’s governor accused Franciscan missionaries of ignoring a 1786 decree by the Viceroy of New Spain Bernardo de Gálvez that prohibited the “use and management of horses” by Indians. Father-President of the Franciscan missions Father Lasuén acknowledged that neophyte Indians did indeed have access to horses, but assured the governor that a scarcity of labor gave missionaries little choice in the matter:

No one is more concerned or more interested than the missionaries that the Indian should continue in his native ignorance of horsemanship. But Your Lordship is well aware of the cattle and horses which, with the King’s pleasure, every one of the missions possesses, and that horsemen are needed to look after them. And these have to be Indians, for there are no others.\(^\text{14}\)
Father Lasuén explained to the governor that it was no different from equipping Indians with farm implements to sow and harvest crops. Just as Indian neophytes had to be “entrusted with axes, sickles, [and] machetes”—implements that could easily be used as weapons against the Spaniards—the labor shortage forced missionaries to give Indians access to horses. Ignoring the objections of military officials who worried that mounted Indians posed a security threat, missionaries facilitated the equestrian education of Indian neophytes. If the number of vaqueros at Mission San Buenaventura was representative, then Indian vaqueros were a minority among mission neophytes (Table 1). Between the mission’s founding year of 1782 and the end of the Spanish period in 1821, missionaries baptized over 3,500 men at Mission San Buenaventura. Despite the small number of vaqueros, however, military authorities worried that the knowledge they gained might be easily taught to Indians who might threaten Spanish settlements.

Military officials were prescient. Neophytes did use horses in ways that threatened mission communities. For instance, Christian Indians fled on horseback from mission compounds to native communities in California’s Central Valley. In November 1815, Sergeant Juan Ortega probed the region surrounding Tulare Lake in search of Indian fugitives from Missions San Miguel, San Juan Bautista, and Soledad. After two days, Ortega spotted two Indians on horseback and gave chase, but “they abandoned horses and saddle and crossed the [Kings] river by swimming,” noted the sergeant. Unable to cross the river, Ortega’s party stopped to retrieve the horses and saddles that the Indians had abandoned. Martín Olvera, one of Ortega’s soldiers, inspected one saddle and concluded that it belonged to Antonio, a neophyte Indian who recently left Mission Soledad. As it turned out, Antonio had stolen three horses from Mission Soledad.

Reminiscing about his experiences as a soldier, Felipe Santiago Garcia remembered the seemingly insatiable appetite for horses among Yokuts Indians from California’s Central Valley: “[W]e had to keep constant watch that the Indians
The Spanish Colonization of California

did not steal our horses; they were everywhere.”\textsuperscript{18} In an 1815 expedition into the San Joaquin Valley, Sergeant José Dolores Pico spotted approximately five hundred dead animals, including horses.\textsuperscript{19} During forays into the Central Valley, soldiers had come to expect either stolen horses or the remnants of horses that Indians had eaten. After a probe into the Central Valley in 1815, a soldier reported surprise that his expedition did not encounter any horse carcasses: “In all the journey described [of an 1815 expedition along the Kings River and around Tulare Lake] no slaughter of horses has been observed.”\textsuperscript{20}

Just as military officials had feared, knowledge of horses spread from neophyte vaqueros to other Indians, including non-mission Indians in inland communities. With their newly acquired equestrian knowledge, Indians from the interior raided Spanish communities for horses to supplement their food supplies. In 1819, Father Mariano Payeras reported that “the best horses” were “being stolen; that in the Tulares all ride, even the women; and that regular fairs for the sale of horses are held there.”\textsuperscript{21} The fact that Indians were stealing the “best horses” implies that they had learned to discern the qualities of better horses over lesser ones. Vaquero equestrian knowledge and skills had spread at the expense of Spanish missions. The knowledge and use of horses among California Indians in the early-nineteenth century represented radical changes from 1769, when Evangelista assumed that Spanish colonists were born of horses.

\textbf{Vaqueros}

It is possible to identify key factors that led to the initial emergence of Indian vaqueros by focusing on the Chumash Indians of Mission San Buenaventura. Only a small fraction of the 3,500 baptized men gained ready access to horses. The emergence of a cadre of Chumash vaqueros represented a convergence of interests between Spanish colonists and Chumash Indians. Given that Indian vaqueros facilitated the integration of horses into California Indian societies, and given that
Spanish military leaders in Alta California opposed providing Indians with the opportunity to develop equestrian knowledge and skills, the convergence of Spanish and Chumash interests must be analyzed rather than assumed. An examination of vaquero baptismal and marriage records yields biographical clues suggesting the traits that made a particular Indian trustworthy enough to be taught equestrian skills and to be given easy access to horses and other livestock. In turn, the same records hint at how the position of vaquero made sense from the perspective of Chumash Indians.

Father José Señán, one of two missionaries stationed at Mission San Buenaventura during the early nineteenth century, left behind a remarkable document entitled, Libro de Ropa, (literally, “Book of Clothing”). Señán tracked clothing distributed to any baptized Indian at Mission San Buenaventura; he also recorded the names of Indian vaqueros, the type of equipment distributed (saddles, cowboy hats, riding bags, and other equestrian equipment), and the dates that he provided each item. By analyzing the list of vaqueros and their baptismal, death, and marriage records, it is possible to identify key characteristics of Chumash vaqueros.22

Vaqueros were fairly young. In 1805, the average age was twenty-three years old. Some, like Juan Martín, started at a particularly young age. According to his baptismal record, Martín was no more than seventeen years old in 1809, the year that he received his first piece of vaquero equipment. It is possible that he became a vaquero at an even younger age, before Señán recorded his acquisition of a saddle. Another vaquero, Juan Pablo, had been brought by parents, Olegario Jose Sayeguit and Leonarda María, to the Mission San Buenaventura at the age of five months to be baptized. Thirteen years later, Father Señán listed him as a vaquero who received his first set of saddlebags and vaquero boots on May 25, 1805. A thirteen-year-old vaquero! The oldest vaquero listed among those who received supplies and clothing in 1805 was Eustaquio Nimumiachet at thirty-six years of age.
The average age at baptism among vaqueros in 1805 was nine-years-old. Young vaqueros appealed to colonists for at least three reasons: first, they seemed more likely to be open to new technology (broadly defined to include animals, like horses, that could enhance their transportation and communication); second, younger vaqueros had the potential to give them longer terms of service; and finally, they were in the prime of their physical development, which meant that they had the physical strength and stamina required of the job. Missionaries targeted younger people because they believed that younger Indians were more willing to incorporate various aspects of Spanish culture. Going back to the Spanish conquest of sixteenth-century Mexico, missionaries saw something natural about the willingness of young boys to change and include Spanish ways into their daily lives and identity.

From a variety of mission sites in Alta California, missionaries shared stories of the willingness of young boys to take on radically new practices, institutions, and ideas. Two years after their arrival in Alta California, in 1771, Father Junípero Serra reported from Mission San Carlos on the progress of neophytes in learning Spanish: “[T]here are four big boys who not only are able to say their prayers well, but are making much progress in the Castilian tongue.” In the same letter, Serra informed his superiors of “two young Christians,” both boys, who seemed to be making progress “as interpreters to the gentiles.” From farther north, missionaries at Mission San Juan Bautista reported progress in teaching writing to
young boys. According to an 1814 missionary report, “The Indian youths especially realize very well the utility of reading and writing.” Given that missionaries viewed young boys as the most amenable and able faction among Indians to learn the Spanish language, embrace Catholicism, and learn to read and write, it is not surprising to find that they offered the position of vaqueros to boys and young men.

While missionaries seemed to assume that adults were slower to accept Christianity than children, the profiles of San Buenaventura’s vaqueros reflect a mixed response among adults. Some parents of vaqueros did indeed seem more reluctant than their children to become Christian, as reflected in the timing of their baptisms. Out of thirty parents of vaqueros for whom I was able to obtain biographical information, seventeen were baptized after their children. Most of the parents in this sample (13 out of 17), agreed to baptism at least five years after their son had been baptized, suggesting that their son’s experiences as a baptized Indian with the responsibility of caring for livestock, may have influenced a parent’s decision to become Catholic. Baltazar Atiquiuze’s parents waited nine years after their son had been baptized, suggesting that their son’s baptism to get baptized themselves. Others waited much longer. The parents of Tiburcio Guepiachu, for instance, underwent the ritual of baptism in 1807, twenty-two years after their son was baptized at the age of six. From the perspective of missionaries, this may have served as evidence of the lack of enthusiasm among older people to adopt Spanish ways.

Some vaqueros followed the lead of their parents in becoming Christians. A range of years existed for parents who underwent baptism prior to their vaquero sons. On one end of the spectrum, the parents of Pedro Regalado Aguiguinchat agreed to baptism less than two months before having Aguiguinchat baptized in April 1785. Other parents, like those of Simpliciano Maria, were baptized eight years before their son. In between, there were parents like Lázaro Sulusquiet who was baptized one year before the baptism of
his two-day-old son Manuel de Jesús Achuniamamahit in 1785. Among the vaqueros for whom I have found biographical information in the Franciscan baptismal and marriage registers, slightly less than half (11 of 30) came from families in which their parents agreed to Catholic baptism before their vaquero sons. While more vaqueros seemed to be the ones teaching their parents about Catholicism and trying to convince them to at least take the time to be baptized, a significant number of vaqueros were introduced to Catholicism by their parents, as evidenced by the fact that their parents were baptized first and brought their sons to be baptized at a very young age.

Whether a vaquero paved the way to Catholicism for his parents or vice versa, missionaries trying to identify potential vaqueros required more evidence of loyalty than just baptism. In addition to baptism, familiarity with particular families over time helped missionaries determine the viability of a young man to hold the position of vaquero. Felipe Neri’s parents were among the first cohorts of Chumash Indians to agree to baptism at Mission San Buenaventura. Named after the second Father-President of Alta California missions, Father Lasuén, Neri’s father Fermín was the ninth Chumash Indian to be baptized at the mission. From the coastal town of Sucu, Fermín was baptized at age eleven on April 28, 1783, a little over a year after the mission’s official founding. And, in May 1789, Fermín brought his one-day-old son Felipe to Father Francisco Dumetz to be baptized. By 1805, the first year that Father Señán listed Felipe Neri as a vaquero, missionaries at San Buenaventura had known his father for over 22 years, and his mother for at least 20 years. While Felipe Neri’s family had a particularly long relationship with Mission San Buenaventura, his situation was not anomalous. Of the eleven vaqueros whose parents underwent baptism before them, only one was baptized just prior to the baptism of the vaquero. Pedro Regalado Aguiguinchát’s father was baptized seven days before his baptism and his mother was baptized less than two
months before Aguiguinchát’s baptism. The rest of the parents who introduced their children to Catholicism, rather than vice versa, were baptized more than a year before they brought their future vaqueros to be baptized.

While Franciscan missionaries had to assess which Indians were most suitable to gain knowledge of and access to horses, Chumash Indians (and other coastal California Indian peoples) had to determine what to make of the new animals in their midst. Far from forcing the animals upon Indians, based on missionary reports, it seems that California Indians enthusiastically embraced horses. Fathers Luís Gil y Taboado and Father José María de Zalvidea highlighted the enjoyment that Tongva Indians derived from riding horses: “The one activity they engage in is to go about horseback from one ranch to another.” If the Tongva Indians surrounding Mission San Gabriel are any indication, Native Californians welcomed the introduction of horses and the opportunities to gain the knowledge and skill required to ride them.

The fundamental commonality among the Indians who held the position of vaquero was that they were all men. Limiting key leadership positions to men seemed to represent continuity with pre-colonial Chumash leadership patterns. By the time of Spanish colonization, only men represented themselves to Spanish colonists as leaders. Men, not women, had the opportunity to engage in polygyny as a means of enhancing their connections and power among different villages. Anthropologist John Johnson convincingly demonstrates that polygyny was limited to men listed as capitanes (captains) by Franciscan missionaries in the marriage registers. That the position of vaquero was limited to men suggests continuity in another way: Chumash men continued their work with animals while women tended and harvested plants that Indians consumed as food and medicine. In addition to providing protein for their diet, the hunt for animals had contributed to a man’s sense of masculinity in the years before Spanish
The Spanish Colonization of California

colonization. Serving as a vaquero gave a select number of men an opportunity to actively participate in the new Spanish agricultural economy while simultaneously promoting a traditional sense of Chumash masculinity. In contrast, the men who worked the agricultural fields engaged in work that represented a break from the past as growing crops long had been associated with the work of women.

For most vaqueros, however, one’s sex as a male was not enough: their Chumash town of origin mattered. One of the most striking characteristics of Mission San Buenaventura vaqueros was the dominance of men from key towns in the Chumash economic network. Most vaqueros on Señán’s cloth distribution list came from major trade centers, especially coastal and river towns. Out of the forty-seven Chumash vaqueros for whom I have been able to determine villages of origin, twenty-two came from coastal communities and thirteen came from inland river towns. While twelve came from inland villages that were not directly on waterways, the majority came from major trade centers on key transportation routes. For instance, both Benito de Palmero and Antonio Victorio came from the southernmost Chumash coastal town of Humaliwo (the modern city of Malibu). Malnapaachót came from Misosbno, a maritime community north of Mission San Buenaventura. Seven vaqueros came from Sisolop, the coastal community closest to Mission San Buenaventura.

By the late eighteenth century, all California Indian peoples had developed economies centered around towns that acted simultaneously as political, economic and ritual centers. Like other California Indian groups, the Chumash economy depended on an exchange network among groups from different ecological zones: the Channel Islands, inland valleys, foothill regions, mountains, and coastal communities. According to anthropologist Lowell John Bean, “Formal or informal trade feasts were set up between groups living in different ecological areas, so that goods from the mutually advantageous but politically separate areas were exchanged from those of others.”

Thus, the emergence of Mission San Buenaventura’s cadre of mission Indian vaqueros represented a convergence of expectations between Spanish colonists and Chumash Indians. Once introduced to equestrian knowledge and skills, Chumash Indians, like the Dakota and Lakota Indians of the Great Plains and the Comanche of the Southwest, readily incorporated horses into their world. While the animal was initially introduced as a means of promoting Spanish colonization, by the end of the Spanish period (1821), Chumash Indians had begun to use horses in ways that challenged the hope of Franciscan missionaries to create a stark geographical divide between the “civilized” coast and “barbarous” inland communities.
Geographies of Power

Just as consumption patterns and work shaped identity, so too did place. Christian neophytes lived along the coast with their tutors of “civility,” the Franciscan missionaries. Non-Christian Indians who clung to their “savage” ways isolated themselves from the influence of Spanish culture in exclusively native communities throughout Los Tulares, the name used by Spanish colonists to refer to the interior regions of Alta California, the modern Central Valley.32 Until all California Indians could be converted to Catholicism, Franciscan missionaries sought to segregate baptized from non-baptized Indians. Until the early nineteenth century, “savage” villages and regions could be found in close proximity to coastal Franciscan missions. By 1820, because of the huge number of baptized coastal Indians, missionaries had come to view Alta California’s coastline, between Mission San Diego and Mission San Francisco, as an exclusively Christian and “civilized” place. Mission Santa Clara missionaries explained that there were “no more Indians in the area to conquer except toward the east.”33 On February 2, 1820, Mariano Payeras, Father-President of California’s Franciscan missions, declared, “We have happily baptized all the heathens found in the chain of 220 leagues [from Mission San Diego to Mission San Francisco]...and we can truthfully say that there is hardly one gentile from the coast to the interior.”34 Franciscans
believed that they had created a coastal landscape of “civilization,” defined by agricultural communities of Christian Indians loyal to the Spanish crown. In the minds of missionaries, the eastern interior region known as Los Tulares was a region where non-baptized Indians continued to live in “darkness” and “mystery.”

Franciscan missionaries may have wanted to create insular mission communities that “protected” neophytes from surrounding non-Christian Indians, but aided by their access to and knowledge of horses, Native Californians frustrated the efforts of missionaries to establish a clear boundary between “light” and “darkness.” Indian-Spanish relations in mission communities along the coast did not develop in isolation from the interior regions of Alta California. In fact, the Spanish introduction of the horse intensified connections between coastal and interior communities, between baptized Indians and non-baptized Indians, between Indian vaqueros with equestrian knowledge and interior Indians eager to learn about horses.

The relationship between the Yokuts Indian village of Tulami and Chumash Indians from Mission La Purísima illustrates the connection between coastal communities and interior communities made possible by horses. By 1817, Tulami, a Yokuts village on the northwestern shores of Buena Vista Lake, had developed a reputation among the Chumash neophyte Indians of Mission La Purísima as a refuge away from Spanish settlements. In the winter of 1817, Father Mariano Payeras discovered that six neophytes left Mission La Purísima and headed east to Tulami without informing him or the other missionaries. Because the neophytes neglected to ask the missionaries for permission to leave La Purísima, Father Payeras categorized the Indians as “fugitives.” He asked the commandant of the Santa Barbara presidio to organize a search party to capture and return the “fugitives” to the mission. Owing to his previous successes in the conversion of children, Payeras was especially hopeful of retrieving the youngest Indian, a thirteen-year old boy named Sebastián Viquiét.

The geographical knowledge among Tulami Indian leaders made it difficult for Spanish military expeditions to find runaways. Faciats, a Yokuts Indian leader from Tulami, had become well-known among Spanish colonists and Indians alike as a powerful leader. Keenly aware of the surrounding natural environment, Faciats had developed a reputation as someone who knew how to keep former neophytes safe from Spanish search parties. Faciats had proven adept at making use of the Kern River and Buena Vista Lake as a means of evading capture, as he did for the neophytes who fled Mission La Purísima. According to Odórico, a trusted Chumash neophyte among Spanish colonists, “Faciats, fearing the entrance of the troop, left Tulami and crossed, not to any island, but rather to the mainland on the other bank of the [Kern] river.”35
The Tulami were one of approximately fifteen Yokuts-speaking groups to live in the Southern Valley. Approximately forty different groups comprised the Yokuts people of California’s Central Valley. The majority of Yokuts in this part of the valley inhabited the region to the north of Tulami, with most of them surrounding Tulare Lake. Tulami could be found to the southeast of Tulare Lake on the northwestern edge of Buena Vista Lake. Anthropologists estimate that approximately 1,300 Yokuts inhabited the region around Buena Vista Lake, including the Chuxoxi and Hometwoli peoples. Most of the 15,700 Yokuts in the Southern Valley lived north of Tulami around Tulare Lake, with many other tribes living in the sloughs that connected Tulare Lake, Buena Vista Lake, and Kern Lake. The Yokuts also inhabited the lower parts of Kings, Kaweah, Tule, and Kern rivers.

If Faciats guided the six runaway neophytes from Mission La Purísima back to Tulami, the Indians would have joined a thriving community of non-baptized Yokuts Indians and “many Christians from all the missions of this jurisdiction,” including neophytes from missions San Miguel and San Luis Obispo, according to Alta California’s Father-President, Mariano Payeras. The neophytes who lived at Tulami were Indians “determined not to recognize their destiny,” complained Payeras.

While Tulami had become a safe refuge for neophyte Indians, many of the neophytes who fled the missions did not arrive as weak and helpless refugees. They arrived with horses, which meant that they arrived with a valuable commodity that gave them leverage in their dealings with the Tulami people. Even if they arrived without horses, neophyte runaways represented an important source of information when planning horse raids on mission sites. The emergence of a mixed community where non-baptized Indians mingled and conducted business with baptized Indians who had access to horses proved to be profoundly disturbing to Payeras. “They are establishing in the interior a republic of Hell,” he wrote.

Tulami, a burgeoning community comprised of a combination of baptized Indians from the coast and non-baptized Tulareño Indians, was one of the most well-known and powerful interior Indian communities that emerged out of the mixing of coastal and interior Indians and the incorporation of horses. It was a place that coastal neophytes could turn to if they decided to completely renounce their association with Spaniards and later, Mexican settlements. When Indian neophytes faced east towards Los Tulares, they saw an opportunity to forge a future in an exclusively native community.

Coastal neophytes were not the only Native Californians to initiate meaningful connections between Spanish communities and interior regions. Native Californians from Los Tulares, especially the Yokuts, looked west and sought to
forge ties with coastal Indians. The Yokuts peoples, like other California Indians, had traded for centuries with groups from different ecological zones to obtain resources not readily available in their territory. Yokuts in the Central Valley established settlements along rivers and sloughs, which provided an abundance of fish and mussels. They also depended on tule elk and pronghorn antelope for protein. Prior to the American transformation of the San Joaquin Valley into industrial farmland, herds of elk and antelope roamed California’s Central Valley. With the exception of the wetlands areas that produced thriving communities of tules and marsh grass, the vegetation in Yokuts territory was rather sparse, with oak trees being limited to stream courses and other well-watered areas. To obtain food like acorns that could be stored for long periods, Valley Yokuts without ready access to oak trees traded with coastal Indian groups and foothill Yokuts who did have a greater abundance of acorns. After the arrival of Spanish colonists and their horses, Yokuts intensified their connections with coastal Indian communities. By the early nineteenth century, Yokuts Indians had incorporated Spanish-introduced livestock into their subsistence system, either by obtaining horses from mission vaqueros who herded them to the Central Valley or by raiding the missions themselves.

Conclusion

By 1840, Mexican leaders found Indian horse raids so detrimental to the economy that California’s governor Juan Bautista de Alvarado issued an edict meant to “prevent in any way the continual robberies committed in the country by the Indian barbarians…causing the ruin of ranch owners and threatening the lives of defenseless families.” To prevent the continued raids by Los Tulares Indians on the ranchos of Mexican California, this edict charged a force of twenty men with the responsibility of assisting “all private property and ranch owners who shall request their protection.” Despite the new law and procedures for enforcing the law, Los Tulares Indians continued to acquire horses from Mexican settlements on the coast throughout the entire Mexican period. In fact, the intensity of horse raiding increased over time into the beginning of the American period. Historians have depicted the period from the 1820s through the 1860s as the beginning of the end for Native Californians. According to this narrative, the greatest blow to California Indians was delivered by the secularization of the missions in 1834. No longer able to rely on mission-produced goods, California Indians faced harsh economic times and were compelled to seek work in new communities, like the emerging towns of San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara. Indians who did not live near emerging cities had an even
more difficult time. Without a mission to serve as the center of their community life, Native California Indian culture began to disappear, or so the argument goes. While there is no doubt that secularization led to many significant and negative changes in the lives of Native Californians, some native peoples found a way to benefit from the breakup of the Franciscan monopoly on land. Los Tulares Indians managed to expand their influence and to profit from first the hide and tallow trade during the Spanish and Mexican periods, and then the cattle boom in California at the beginning of the American period. With both the hide and tallow trade and the cattle boom, Los Tulares Indians capitalized on the dependence of the industries on horses.

In thinking about Alta California during the Spanish and Mexican period, three kinds of settlements dominate the historical imagination: missions, presidios, and pueblos. In future work, scholars would do well to focus on Native Californian village settlements. The development of communities like San Pascual, situated between coastal settlements and far interior settlements, deserves more attention, especially since it represented a community of mixed mission and non-mission Indians in close proximity to the former Spanish missions of San Luis Rey and San Diego in San Diego County. By better understanding the emergence of Los Tulares Indian communities and places like San Pascual, the long-term consequences of the native incorporation of horses can be better understood.
NOTES

1. Two major Indian peoples lived in the Monterey Bay region during the period of Spanish colonization: the Costanoan Indians who resided to the east and north of the Salinas River and the Esselen people who lived west of the Salinas River. Combined both societies had a population of between 2,500 and 3,000 people. For a brief overview of Native Californians from the Monterey Bay regions, see Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 16–26.


15. Ibid.


17. Entries November 9 and November 19, 1815, Juan de Ortega, “Diario, Nov. 4-15, 1815,” Robert Ernest Cowan Collection (hereafter, RECC), Bancroft Library (hereafter, BL).


19. November 28, 1815, José Dolores Pico, “Diario, 1815,” REEC, BL.

20. November 19, 1815, Juan de Ortega, “Diario, Nov. 4-15, 1815,” RECC, BL.


23. For dates of baptism and deaths of Juan Pablo, Olegario Jose Sayeguit, Leonarda Maria, and Eustaquio Nimmuchietch, see *The Huntington Library, Early California Population Project Database*, 2006. For dates of clothing distribution, see *Libro de Ropa, Misión de San Buenaventura*, SBMAL.


27. The Huntington Library, Early California Population Project Database, 2006; *Libro de Ropa*, Mission de San Buenaventura, SBMAL.


32. Spanish colonists referred to the Central Valley as *Los Tulares* because of the abundance of tules that inhabited the valley.

33. Fray Magín Catalá and Fray José Viader, Mission Santa Clara, November 4, 1814, in Geiger and Meighan, eds., *As the Padres Saw Them*, 17.
34. Father Mariano Payeras to the Reverend Father Guardian of the Apostolic College of San Fernando in Mexico, Mission La Purísima, February 2, 1820, in Donald Cutter, ed., *Writings of Mariano Payeras* (Santa Barbara: Bellerophon Books, 1995), 225.

35. List of neophytes who have fled from Mission La Purísima, 1818, in Cutter, ed., *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 143-44.


37. Father Mariano Payeras to José de la Guerra, Commandant of Santa Barbara Presidio, Mission La Purísima, December 24, 1817; List of neophytes who have fled from Mission La Purísima, 1818; and Father Payeras to José de la Guerra, Mission La Purísima, May 4, 1818, in Cutter, ed., *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 141, 43-44, 49.


39. Juan B. Alvarado, San Juan de Castro, July 4, 1840, California Archives, Departmental State Papers, Monterey, Tomo IV, 43:172-177, BL.

In Memoriam

Donna Knox Sefton 1927-2014

The San Diego History Center owes a great debt of gratitude to Donna Knox Sefton. Throughout her education at San Diego State College, where she majored in history, Donna was always fascinated with San Diego’s beginnings. She wrote a lively article entitled “Justice in Old Town” for the 1956 issue of the San Diego Historical Society Quarterly as it was then called. Starting as a volunteer, Donna became the San Diego History Center’s all-time most generous donor. In addition, as the daughter of former Mayor Harley Knox, she left all of her father’s papers and photographs to the San Diego Research Archives.

Born on October 5, 1927, Donna Marilyn Knox was the second of three daughters of dairy farmer Harley Knox and his wife, Bessie. Donna grew up on the farm in southeast San Diego during the Depression, and remembered how her parents would provide work in exchange for meals for those in need. She attended San Diego High School and graduated with honors. A member of Tri-Delta Sorority, she graduated Cum Laude from San Diego State with a BA in History and a minor in Spanish. Donna then joined American Airlines in Chicago and served as a bi-lingual flight attendant.

Donna married the late Thomas W. Sefton, president of former San Diego Trust & Savings Bank, on April 15, 1951. Together they had daughter Laurie Jo and son Harley Knox, and four grandchildren. Harley followed in her footsteps as a history major at the University of San Diego. The Sefton family has contributed
widely to San Diego and funded numerous civic projects including the Sefton Room at the Serra Museum and the Sefton Board Room at the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Donna always took an active role in the San Diego community. Her interests included numerous local groups and institutions, such as the ZLAC Rowing Club, Ltd., and the Wednesday Club. She served as president of The Junior League of San Diego, in which she was a sustaining member. Donna was also a Trustee Emerita of the San Diego Natural History Museum and a former board member of the Timken Museum of Art. She was instrumental in having a history written of her father’s life as both a successful dairy farmer and respected politician during the difficult times of World War II and its aftermath. The book was published in 2002 under the title of *Harley Eugene Knox: San Diego’s Mayor for the People 1943-1951*.

As president of the J.W. Sefton Foundation, Donna supported many San Diego organizations including the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA, Boy Scouts of America San Diego-Imperial Council, Mercy Hospital Foundation, The San Diego Museum of Art, the Presidio Little League, the Zoological Society of San Diego, the San Diego History Center and especially its *Journal of San Diego History*. According to her family, of all her interests and accomplishments, Donna’s greatest love was trail riding in the peaceful and beautiful mountains of the Pecos Wilderness in New Mexico. This is where she truly felt at home.

Donna Sefton was fun-loving, kind, and full of adventure. She will be greatly missed by her family and her legion of friends. Her sparkling smile, generosity of spirit, and warm sense of humor will be forever remembered by all those who knew her.
In Memoriam
Ray Brandes 1924 - 2014

Dr. Raymond S. Brandes, director of the San Diego Historical Society and editor of its journal *Times Gone By* from 1965 to 1967, passed away on April 16, 2014, at his home in San Diego. Born in Coronado on January 2, 1924, he was baptized at the Cathedral in San Diego and was a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan. Brandes attended local grade and high schools, graduating in the class of June 1941. He joined the U.S. Army during WWII and served six years in the infantry, including combat in five European countries.

Brandes attended the University of Arizona from 1958 to 1965, obtaining his BA and PhD degrees in historic site archaeology and Western American history. He served as Arizona’s second State Historian and as Assistant Director of the Arizona Historical Society, where he helped to develop one of the major historical institutions in the West and founded their journal of history.

Brandes began his teaching career at the University of San Diego’s College for Men in 1967 and, after the merger with the College for Women in 1972, continued as Professor and Dean of the Graduate School for 31 years. During that time he directed over 125 Master’s theses at USD on subjects related to the American West and San Diego. Brandes is listed in *Who’s Who in America* and *Outstanding Hispanic Scholars*. He published 21 books and over 300 reports on historic buildings in San Diego, as well as numerous articles. Books include *Frontier Military Posts of Arizona* (1960 and 2012); *San Diego: an Illustrated History* (1981); and *Coronado: The Enchanted Island* (with Katherine Carlin, 1998). He also edited *Brand Book Number One* of the San Diego Corral of the Westerners in 1968.

A direct descendant of the Machado family, founders of Old Town, Brandes translated and edited the diary of Juana Machado Wrightington. In 1965, he directed archaeological and historical research at the Spanish Royal Presidio of San Diego, and in 1967, began archaeological work at Mission San Diego de Alcalá. He was the founder of the San Diego Congress of History in 1966, and a founder of the San Diego Baseball Historical Society.

In 1989 Brandes was awarded the “Distinguished Historian Medal” by the University of Arizona. He was awarded the Medal of San Diego de Alcalá in 1996 for distinguished service to the University of San Diego when he retired as
a professor emeritus and a member of Phi Alpha Theta. Ray Brandes has left a lasting legacy of historical inquiry for the people of San Diego. He is survived by his wife Irma Dolores Montijo, seven children, ten grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

In Memoriam

Neil Morgan 1924 - 2014

Neil Morgan, a member of the Editorial Board of The Journal of San Diego History since 1974, died Saturday, February 1, 2014, at his home in La Jolla after a long illness. He was 89. Morgan, a noted journalist, author and civic force in San Diego for more than six decades, will be well remembered by San Diegans and all those keeping an eye on the city’s progress.

Neil Bowen Morgan was born February 27, 1924, in Smithfield, North Carolina. His father was a Baptist minister and part-time journalist. Morgan graduated from Wake Forest College in 1943 and joined the Navy as an officer during World War II, which brought him to San Diego. He fell in love with the city and devoted his career to furthering its future.

Morgan worked from 1950 until 1992 for the The San Diego Union-Tribune in positions including columnist and editor. After serving as the newspaper’s travel editor and associate editor, Morgan was named editor of the Evening Tribune in 1981 and remained in that position until the newspaper merged with The San Diego Union in 1992. He continued writing at the newspaper created from the merger of The San Diego Union and the Tribune in 1992 as Senior Columnist until 2004. He continued his writing for the nonprofit Voice of San Diego, a news and opinion website that he helped start. After being forced out of the merged Union-Tribune, Morgan helped investor Ralph B. Woolley Jr. found the Voice of San Diego website devoted to investigative journalism and commentary.

“San Diego ranks as the Western city most transformed by its waves of settlers,” he wrote in the 1963 edition of his book Neil Morgan’s San Diego. He also wrote Yesterday’s San Diego (with Tom Blair, 1976); Above San Diego (with Robert Cameron, 1990); Dr. Seuss & Mr. Geisel: A Biography (with Judith Morgan, 1996); San Diego’s Navy: An Illustrated History (with Bruce Linder, 2001). Additional books include
The California Syndrome and Westward Tilt, a social history of migration into the American West that has become a standard reference.

Morgan began working for the San Diego Daily Journal in 1946 and became a city columnist in 1948. When the Journal was absorbed by the Evening Tribune in 1950, he continued his Crosstown column and became one of the most respected and visionary voices in the region. Among other timely topics, he encouraged the founding and community support of UC San Diego. Morgan’s ideas were always on the cutting edge. He predicted Torrey Pines Mesa as an emerging hub of international research and biotechnology. In 1981 he proposed the inclusion of the contiguous Mexican community as part of the San Diego region.

In 1988 he was given San Diego State University’s Fourth Estate Award as an outstanding figure in journalism, and the keynote speaker was his friend Walter Cronkite, the former CBS TV news anchor.

In November 2000, he was recognized with the first Chancellor’s Medal awarded by UC San Diego. Through the years Morgan’s columns earned many honors, including the prestigious Ernie Pyle Award for human interest writing.

“Neil has taught us that, when you live in a region blessed by nature and circumstance, you have a duty to safeguard those blessings,” said Robert C. Dynes, who was UCSD chancellor at the time. “In my view, he was the best journalist San Diego ever had,” said his longtime friend Bob Witty, former director of the San Diego History Center and the Copley News Service.

Neil Morgan’s wit and insights will be missed by all those who followed his career and writings about San Diego and its residents. He was a true media icon—controversial—but well loved by his legions of followers in his community. Morgan is survived by his wife, travel writer Judith Morgan; his daughter, Jill Morgan; and grandson Adam Morgan Berey.

In Memoriam
Donald C. Cutter 1922-2014

Dr. Donald Cutter, a member of the Board of Editorial Consultants for The Journal of San Diego History since 1974, died on April 4, 2014. Cutter was an expert in the history of the Spanish and Mexican periods in California and assumed the role of Father Junípero Serra for a Chautauqua program that toured the state in August 1992. He encouraged his former students Dr. David Weber
(San Diego State University) and Dr. Iris Engstrand (University of San Diego) to become part of the San Diego Historical Society in the early 1970s and serve as editors for this Journal.

Born in Chico, California on January 9, 1922, Cutter grew up in Oakland and received his AB degree in Spanish (1945) and his MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley (1950) during the era of Herbert E. Bolton’s influence on the history of the Americas. Cutter began his teaching career at San Diego State College (1950-1951) and then moved to the University of Southern California (1951-1962). After a year in Spain, he accepted a position at the University of New Mexico (1962-1982), where he retired as Professor of History Emeritus. From there he held the O’Connor Chair for the History of Hispanic Texas and the Southwest at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio (1982-1989).

Cutter wrote numerous scholarly works on Spanish California, including *Malaspina in California* (1960); *California in 1792: a Spanish Naval Visit* (1990); *Malaspina and Galiano: Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast, 1791 & 1792* (1991); *The Writings of Mariano Payeras* (1995), for which he received the Norman Neuerburg Award for Distinguished Research and Writing in Early California History; and *Quest for Empire: Spanish Settlement in the Southwest* (co-authored with Iris Engstrand, 1996.) Cutter lectured widely in Spain and Mexico in both English and Spanish, and served as a translator and editor of *Diary of Ensign Gabriel Moraga’s expedition of discovery in the Sacramento Valley, 1808* (1957); and in Spanish, *Tadeo Haenke y el Final de una Vieja Polémica* (with Laurio H. Destéfani, 1966).

Always a proponent of a fair settlement for land lost by Native Americans, Cutter served as chief historical consultant for the Council of California Indians in one of the first cases heard before the California Land Claims Commission (1950-1960), as historical consultant for the Jicarilla Apache Tribe (1964-65); and as Director of the American Indian Historical Research Project (1967-1970). His legions of students learned a balanced perspective about the role of Franciscan missionaries in California and their interactions with the natives they encountered.

Cutter, who continued his archival research and writing career until a recent illness, is survived by his wife, Charlotte Lazear Cutter, nine children—several of whom have continued in the history profession—fifteen grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren,
BOOK REVIEWS


Reviewed by Robert M. Senkewicz, Professor, Department of History, Santa Clara University.

The year 2013 marked the 300th anniversary of the birth of Father Junípero Serra, OFM. Both of these books were occasioned by that anniversary, and both offer important insights into the life of this early California missionary.

Steven W. Hackel’s biography builds upon the research he has been conducting for a number of years. It shares the strengths of Hackel’s earlier work, Children of Coyote, Missionaries of St. Francis, in that it rests upon deep archival research in repositories in the United States, Mexico, and Spain, and pays special attention to the experiences of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The book begins with a brief chapter summarizing the history of Serra’s home island of Mallorca. It then moves chronologically through Serra’s youth in Petra and his career as a Franciscan student and professor in Palma. Serra moved to the New World in 1749 and Hackel follows his experiences in the Sierra Gorda (1750-1758). Serra then resided at the Colegio de San Fernando in Mexico City and during that time also preached a series of domestic missions in various regions of New Spain (1758-1767). Serra entered Baja California in 1768 and Hackel details his term as president of the Alta California missions (1769-1784).

This volume is especially strong on the social context of Serra’s missionary activities. Hackel’s chapter on the Sierra Gorda is especially fine, since he perceptively and persuasively places the Sierra Gorda missions within the context of the colonization of New Spain, changing ideas in Spain and Mexico City about the proper scope of missionary activity, including conflicts among missionaries, settlers, and soldiers over access to Indian labor. Hackel argues that the missionary attempt to congregate the indigenous Pame inhabitants so that they could practice European-style agriculture was only a marginal success. He also maintains that missionization did not have a lasting effect upon the local culture.

Hackel’s treatment of Serra’s experiences in Alta California constitute by far
the best short account of his time in that region. Hackel argues that Serra expected much in Alta California. He thought that the region represented “a promised land” that offered “‘poor’ and ‘naked’ peoples who could be remade according to Catholic teachings.” (p. 162). Hackel analyzes Serra’s founding of various missions, his incessant quarrels with every military commander the government sent to Alta California, and his ambivalent relationship with the native peoples. He thought that they were ready for evangelization, yet their responses to his efforts often frustrated his expectations.

The volume is especially strong on social issues, but perhaps less so on the religious context and ideas that formed the backbone of Serra’s own perception of himself and his missions. Indeed, Hackel at times tends to treat the Franciscans in a one-dimensional fashion, saying that the Franciscan intellectual tradition was “a system that put the highest value on intellectual conformity” (p. 41). He characterizes the Colegio de San Fernando as “an insular community of ardent and almost desperate believers.” These descriptions underplay the tremendous vitality and diversity that had been present in the Franciscan missionary efforts in the New World since the sixteenth century and mask the individual manner in which Serra was able to articulate his missionary activity. Also, Serra as a man tends to be less present towards the end of the volume than he was in the beginning. On the very last page of the book, Hackel writes that Serra was “bereft of an individual self” (p. 242), which might lead one to wonder why so many biographies have been written about him.

In contrast, Gregory Orfalea’s volume focuses almost exclusively on Serra’s “individual self.” While Hackel’s approach is solidly historical, Orfalea’s approach is more speculative and literary. Indeed, the two books are almost mirror images of each other. Orfalea focuses on Serra as an individual and tries to enter into Serra’s mind and heart. He quotes, for instance, almost in its entirety, Serra’s first extant letter, written to the parish priest of his home town of Petra after he himself had already left Mallorca. He encouraged the priest to try to console his parents, who were very disappointed that he was leaving his home island forever and would never see them again.

In Orfalea’s reading, Serra was profoundly influenced by the more open and tolerant form of Christianity represented by Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure, and Mallorcan missionary Ramón Llull. This gave him a respect for different ways of approaching the divine. As a missionary, it meant that he was very interested in creating a form of Christianity that would reflect both Spanish and indigenous cultures. Orfalea believes that Serra was able to move significantly in this direction during his labors in the Sierra Gorda and that this approach characterized his evangelization efforts in Alta California. Orfalea also argues that the indigenous
cultures also affected Serra himself. He maintains, for instance, that Serra, during his early years in Alta California, was “disoriented by the lack of ordered time and news.” (p. 215).

Orfalea is not an uncritical admirer of Serra. For instance, even though he acknowledges that flogging was a standard form of punishment in the Spanish Empire during the eighteenth century, he does not excuse Serra’s approval of this method of disciplining what he regarded as recalcitrant Indians. He acknowledges that Serra could be plagued by a “nagging perfectionism” that could sour his relationships with his fellow missionaries and others (p. 201), and by a “zeal” that “trumped his sizable brain.” (p. 236).

While Orfalea’s tight focus on Serra as a man gives the book an overarching unity, the volume as it is conceived inevitably suffers from the chronological and thematic distribution of Serra’s extant writings that have survived. The overwhelming majority of Serra’s correspondence comes from only the last quarter of his life, while he was in Alta California. And, as Hackel noted, many of Serra’s Alta California writings are bureaucratic reports, which do not touch very significantly on matters of spirituality or values. Accordingly, Orfalea admits, “I have taken some liberties in reconstructing Serra’s thoughts and feelings.” (p. 367). Given the kind of book he wanted to write, this was inevitable. But too often the result is that Orfalea, as a twenty-first-century writer, projects twenty-first-century concerns onto Serra. Thus Serra is presented as aware of things that we take for granted, such as the ambiguities of Spanish colonialism and the intrinsic value of indigenous cultures. Unfortunately, there is very little in Serra’s writing to support such an interpretation. Serra definitely comes alive in these pages, and there are many important contributions in this volume. But I fear that, too often, the Serra who lives in these pages is a Serra of our time, not of his own.

Hackel’s volume sets a new scholarly standard and should be read by anyone interested in the early history of California. Orfalea’s volume offers some excellent insights into the manner in which different understandings of religion helped shape that early history.


Reviewed by Andrea S. Johnson, Visiting Lecturer, Department of History, California State University, Fresno.
Frank Barajas, professor of history at California State University, Channel Islands, and scholar of Southern California history, has provided readers with an enjoyable, easy-to-absorb narrative that discusses the rise of labor movements and resistance in the Mexican American community of Oxnard, California.

The major strength of this work is Barajas’s ability to place this resistance in the context of Oxnard’s multi-racial labor force. Even though his focus is on Mexican American workers, Barajas does not neglect the role of Chinese, Japanese, East Indian, and bracero workers. Instead, as Barajas explains, these multi-ethnic efforts are often what comprised such “curious unions,” as Mexican American workers in Oxnard often allied with other groups while trying to make gains for labor. In addition, in explaining the interactions of white and minority groups, Barajas is able to discern ways in which the white population of Oxnard was not homogenous.

A second strength of this work is the way in which the author reconstructs life in Oxnard, particularly in Chapters 2 and 3. Using a variety of sources such as fire maps, newspaper accounts, oral histories, and census records, Barajas is able to re-create the town, explaining the rise of neighborhoods, housing styles, entertainment districts, and the role of churches, schools, and athletic opportunities (particularly baseball and boxing) in the community. Through these descriptions, Barajas convinces the reader that his subjects managed to create identities that were both ethnic and American through an Americanization process which occasionally meant that the workers were able to demand changes from the political leadership in Oxnard. In later chapters, Barajas continues to examine changes in the town, even explaining generational differences among workers. This last argument is particularly compelling in the author’s discussion of the zoot-suit conflicts of the World War II era. Barajas shows that the older generation was more likely to disapprove of zoot-suits, while the younger generation was more likely to embrace the style as a protest method.

The author is also to be commended for his work in the last chapter, which explains the roles of the Community Service Organization and Cesar Chavez in worker resistance. This period of Chavez’s work is often passed over by scholars who are typically eager to write instead about the grape or lettuce strikes. Barajas does well in providing not only an explanation of Chavez’s work, but also an argument that the workers in Oxnard were able to contribute successfully to the end of the bracero program. From this chapter and the preceding one, the reader gains an understanding of the ways the existing bracero population influenced the Mexican American community. While scholars have long understood the economic impact of the bracero program on domestic workers, Barajas is able to touch on identity formation and how the existence of a bracero community,
somewhat removed both physically and culturally from the Mexican American
one, forced permanent residents in Oxnard to embrace an identity that was both
Mexican and American.

The major weakness of the book is the first chapter, which is somewhat
distracting for the reader, as Barajas attempts to recount the entire early economic
history of the Oxnard region. Some of this work, such as the section on the
Chumash, although interesting, is not tied into the broader story. While Barajas
describes Chumash intermarriages and the tendency of outsiders to mistake the
Chumash for Mexicans, the reader is still left with many questions about the
connection of Chumash culture to that of the workers in the era under study. The
information on the Californios is similarly disconnected, seemingly relevant mostly
in terms of their development of large farms and ranches and the legal challenges
to their possession of the land. What seems to be missing from this section is
the economic history not of the landowners and merchants, but of those in early
California who were of Mexican heritage but who were not labeled Californios and
whose labor was often co-opted by others. This history would have provided the
reader with a better picture of the long-term change over time for the working
class in the region. Throughout the rest of the work, the reader would have also
been better served with more frequent examinations of trends in the state as a
whole. For instance, while Barajas acknowledges that there were other strikes in
the state in 1933, the local sugar beet strike seems relatively disconnected from
those labor actions, which were significant.

These minor criticisms aside, the book is worth reading for those interested
in labor history, Chicano history, or the history of the Ventura County region.

Reviewed by William Deverell, Professor of History, University of Southern California and Director, Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

Robert Price has written an insightful and often touching biography of his father, an entrepreneur of remarkable talent and impact. Born in 1916, Solomon “Sol” Price came to California from New York as a teenager just before the Great Depression. He studied philosophy at the University of Southern California and graduated from the USC law school in 1938. Price then practiced law in San Diego and quickly established a reputation as an attorney with a commitment to charitable and pro bono work, especially for Jewish clients and institutions. Robert Price traces his father’s early career with appropriate reference to names, dates, and events, and he notes as well that Sol Price sought out and benefitted from superb mentoring by more senior attorneys and members of the legal profession. Such mentoring, coupled with Price’s obvious intellectual talents and drive, helped make the young attorney successful and widely respected. He rose in legal and political circles, and his ties to the Democratic Party grew up and out from Southern California across the state and the nation.

In the mid-1950s, Price and his partners started FedMart in San Diego. A not-for-profit retail corporation, built on warehoused commodities and memberships, FedMart was the sister to the for-profit Loma Supply Corporation. The idea had been borrowed from Fedco, a non-profit membership store for federal workers (which had turned down Price’s idea of partnership). FedMart took off. It is hard today to understand just how innovative the membership/warehouse retail idea (coupled with the non-profit and for-profit partnership) was at the time. And that’s entirely due to Price’s success at expanding the model through FedMart stores, on to Price Club twenty years later, and from there to other enterprises that kept true to the membership and warehouse model. What had begun as an experiment in the immediate aftermath of World War II had, by the end of the century, become a retail staple that had expanded well beyond the boundaries of not only California but of the United States. Price invented and then perfected the model.

Price kept to simple business maxims, and his vision and ideas were often copied (most famously and most successfully by the Walton family through Walmart and its retail progeny). He insisted on strict attention to customer service, he negotiated business deals with vigor, he compensated employees well, and
his life was marked by civic and community service ideals and philanthropy.

Robert Price has done more here than offer a business school case study of remarkable success. He has carefully portrayed his father’s life in stories and pictures, and, in so doing, has illuminated more than a half century of business opportunity and acumen intricately coupled with civic awareness and altruism.


Reviewed by Rodolfo J. Alaniz, Doctoral Candidate, History, University of California, San Diego.

During the 1960s, a group of renowned scientists gathered in La Jolla, California, to create an institute for biological research. The gathering was inspired by Jonas Salk, the developer of the polio vaccine, and his vision for a premier site for science. The institute would conduct pure research on the biological and ethical problems besieging humanity. Its vision was bold and no small task—even given Salk’s renown. It was a vision born of a generation of great people shaped by the terrors and triumphs of World War II. Suzanne Bourgeois provides something similar to an autobiographical, institutional account of the conception, birth, and trials of the Salk Institute.

The author has a distinct advantage when it comes to the writing of this book. Bourgeois was a scientific researcher at the Salk Institute from an early stage. That “insider perspective” lends a distinctly warm and personal style to the author’s narrative. Early in the book, she provides a number of biographical sketches to explain the major players involved with the Salk Institute. These biographies are rooted in the founding members’ experiences during World War II. Many of the founding scientist’s lives were altered by wartime circumstances. For example, Francis Crick changed his graduate research topic because the apparatus he needed to complete his project was destroyed by German explosives (p. xxxii). Bourgeois’s sources include remembered accounts balanced with substantial archival research. The miniature biographies demonstrate a deep knowledge of each scientist’s quirks and some of the interpersonal conflicts that developed at the Institute. The personalities involved with the Salk Institute’s founding were larger than life, in most cases. Their trials and conflicts were no less grand; the author was right to use the word “epic” in her subtitle.

Telling the story of a large network of individuals is a difficult task. Bourgeois
manages to follow an astounding number of scientists, though the large cast of subjects can be a little disorienting to a reader unfamiliar with the history of biology. Still, the author’s connection to the subject allows her to give a complex and insightful account of the Institute’s early years.

The book is not only an insightful science drama; it is also an invaluable primary source document for future historians, containing as it does the reflections of a witness of and participant in the early years of the Institute. At times, the author’s personal feelings about the actors surface, though she acknowledges that her account of events may be somewhat biased. Yet the supplementing of archival research with Bourgeois’s own reminiscences results in a more intimate rendering of the Institute’s early years than would otherwise have been possible. The rich narrative often left me feeling as though I was having a cup of coffee with the author as I was given a first-hand recollection of the Institute. Another advantage of Bourgeois’s own involvement in the history she relates is her ability to cover periods of the Institute’s history that have been relatively unexplored and have fewer archival records, such as the delicate period between the 1960 vote of the San Diego citizenry to give land to the Salk Institute and the erecting of the physical building itself. After the gift of land, the Salk Fellows moved to San Diego but had no laboratory to occupy. This period was characterized by intense conflict, a frantic search for money, and institutional politics. Bourgeois also provides a history of the tense, divided years under Frederic de Hoffmann, a director of the Salk Institute who ordered the destruction of his administrative records upon his departure (p. 179).

The historian of science will also find a rare gem in Bourgeois’s account: a vision of science “before major support of medical research by [United States] government agencies became available” (p. 5). The Salk Institute, much like the Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard that inspired the Salk Institute’s structure, represented an alternative to the federal funding model that many scientists are familiar with today. The era following World War II saw a shift in government support for scientific research. The author captures the story of how the Salk group envisioned supporting science for the betterment of humanity during this era and the changes and challenges that helped shape science funding in the twenty-first century.

*Genesis of the Salk Institute*, overall, is a well-researched, personal account of the Salk Institute’s founding. Bourgeois has written the inspiring story of scientists that had incredible goals; one scientist had even sought to eliminate a terrible disease from the world and succeeded. Bourgeois recounts their tale, the Institute they were bold enough to imagine, and the sequence of events that gave us the Institute sitting upon the La Jolla bluffs today.
EXHIBIT REVIEW

Remember the childhood riddle “What is Black and White and Red [Read] all over?” Well, forget the old answer and come visit “Sin Diego: The Stingaree’s Transformation from Vice to Nice,” San Diego History Center’s newest exhibit at their Balboa Park museum. Here is an opportunity, at your discretion, to explore San Diego’s sordid and scandalous past, and its modern day rescue, the Gaslamp Quarter Historic District.

“Sin Diego” honestly and graphically offers up the conflicts and tensions created by this “new” town: The multilayering of society, its laws, its people and its attempts to solve social and economic challenges. The introductory quote by Senator James Mills, author and former Curator of the Serra Museum, sets the tone of legitimacy for this presentation of the seamy side of our past.

Walking into the “Sin Diego” gallery you are assailed by vibrant red walls, red fabric floor to ceiling panels and giant black and white photo murals bringing us the Stingaree—San Diego’s red light history. Take your time: No streets to cross, no noisy traffic, no sidewalk cafés or hucksters, just the air-conditioned quiet.

Wandering through these 800 square feet of exhibit space presents the visitor with choices depending on how deep one wishes to examine the subjects and objects displayed. One will notice that the size and color of the information panels are themed. Perhaps a key could be offered to assist the visitor in deciphering these themes. For example, the pink panels are set lowest on the walls specifically for children, although it was suggested that the print font may too small for them to read comfortably. An accompanying workbook for school programs will be available. [Children, preferably with adult guidance, may view this exhibit]. In reviewing the various panels, the font size also created an extended effort to read all that was written. Another concern is the wall with the Chinese story seems to lack focus plus an awkward placement of the exhibit case.

As one strolls through the bright orange half walls, one leaps 70 years into modern Gaslamp Quarter, the revitalization of the old Stingaree. The color photos of ‘shabby not sheik’ downtown San Diego demonstrates the continuation of social and economic challenges.

Time travel! Sit on the recreated bench, a favorite place for remembering the many stories about downtown and recall all the storms of controversy. Marvel at the composite photo mural of Fifth Avenue then and now. Walk around the Horton Plaza Shopping Center model with the corresponding aerial photo showcasing developer Ernie Hahn and architect Jon Jerde’s keystone of modern redevelopment. Look at the photo plaques. Read about a few of the people who had the vision, the heart and the drive to change out skid row for a new Horton Plaza and historic
Gaslamp. So many pioneers are still here and many are now gone. Heroes and heroines all.

Exiting the Stingaree, there is an added bonus to marvel at--the “almost famous” Sun Cafe model built to scale by Lois Wittner plus information and photos of members of the Japanese community.

Linda S. Harshberger

Maybe

This presentation is particularly delightful to me because I was witness to this transformation. As children we never went South Of Broadway “SOB”, but as an adult I would bargain hunt at the Goodwill & Volunteers of America thrift stores, and wander through San Diego Hardware looking at the past. In 1979 while driving up 5th Avenue I slammed on the brakes, stopped my car in the middle of the street and stared at the Yuma Building nearly restored to it’s 1880’s glory.

Sin Diego: The Stingaree’s Transformation from Vice to Nice.
BOOK NOTES

California Cuisine and Just Food. By Sally K. Fairfax, Louise Nelson Dyble, Greig Tor Guthey, Lauren Gwin, Monica Moore, and Jennifer Sokolove. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. 376 pp. $45 cloth. $25 paper. In California Cuisine and Just Food, the authors (a collection of academics and activists) come together to examine the social justice issues that have informed many of the innovations in San Francisco Bay Area cuisine. The book charts the evolution of food democracy – a term that suggests concerns about sustainability, the rights of laborers in the agricultural and food production industries, and the affordability of quality food – while noting some of the challenges that lay ahead for its advocates.

Church and State in the City: Catholics and Politics in Twentieth-Century San Francisco. By William Issel. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. Illustrations, map, notes, and index. x + 325 pp. $29.95 paper. William Issel’s book examines the influence of the Catholic Church in San Francisco, suggesting that the city’s Catholic population, through its involvement in the labor movement, civil rights reform, and other social issues, played a significant role in the development of the city’s progressive political tradition.

The Colorado Doctrine: Water Rights, Corporations, and Distributive Justice on the American Frontier. By David Schorr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. Illustrations, notes, and index. xiv + 235 pp. $65 cloth. David Schorr of Tel Aviv University explores the emergence of the Colorado Doctrine in water rights. He argues that the miners, farmers, and attorneys who developed this doctrine (also known as prior appropriation) viewed it as a way to check the power of large-scale landowners, who threatened to monopolize traditional riparian water rights by virtue of their control of the land through which streams and rivers flowed.

Creating an Orange Utopia: Eliza Lovell Tibbets and the Birth of California’s Citrus Industry. By Patricia Ortlieb and Peter Economy. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Press, 2011. 136 pp. $12.95 paper. Eliza Lovell Tibbets is commonly acknowledged as a founding figure in the California citrus industry; Carey McWilliams and later scholars have noted her planting of the first two Washington navel orange trees in Riverside in the 1870s. Tibbets’s scion, Patricia Ortlieb, examines her great-great-grandmother’s journey from her Midwestern roots, through her involvement in various branches of nineteenth-century social reform, and to the fruition of her life’s work in Riverside.
Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940-1990. Edited by Wim de Wit and Christopher James Alexander. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013. Foreword, drawings, photographs, and index. 320 pp. $59.95 cloth. This volume, based on a 2013 exhibit at the J. Paul Getty Center, explores architectural trends in Los Angeles during a half-century in which the region emerged as a leading site of modernist design. Fifteen essays by leading scholars including Becky Nicolaides, Philip Ethington, and William Deverell are followed by a collection of sketches, photographs, and plans of iconic structures.

Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writing on Luiseño Language and Colonial History, c.1840. Lisbeth Haas with art by James Luna. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Foreword, illustrations, and index. 288 pp. $49.95 cloth. Historians of the California missions know Pablo Tac as the Christian Luiseño author of one of the only primary source documents written by an indigenous Californian. Lisbeth Haas has performed the invaluable work of presenting Tac’s entire manuscript, completed when he was in Rome studying for the priesthood, which contains fascinating accounts of early Spanish-indigenous encounters, life at Mission San Luis Rey, and pre- as well as post-contact Luiseño spirituality.

Coast to Crest and Beyond: Across San Diego County by car along the San Dieguito River. By Wolf Berger. San Diego: University of California and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, 2013. Color Maps, Photographs, Tables, Appendices, References and Guidebooks, Index, 146 pp. $12.95 paper. An excellent guide to the fauna and flora of the San Dieguito River Valley featuring the geology of the area, lakes along the way, and descriptions with illustrations of birds and plants from the Pacific Coast to Volcan Mountain.
Throughout its existence, San Diego has been impacted in some way by the military’s presence and has benefitted from its proximity as well.

Presidio to Pacific Powerhouse:

How the Military Shaped San Diego tells the story of San Diego’s relationship with our military.

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