

CORRAL DUST

POTOMAC CORRAL OF
WESTERNERS INTERNATIONAL

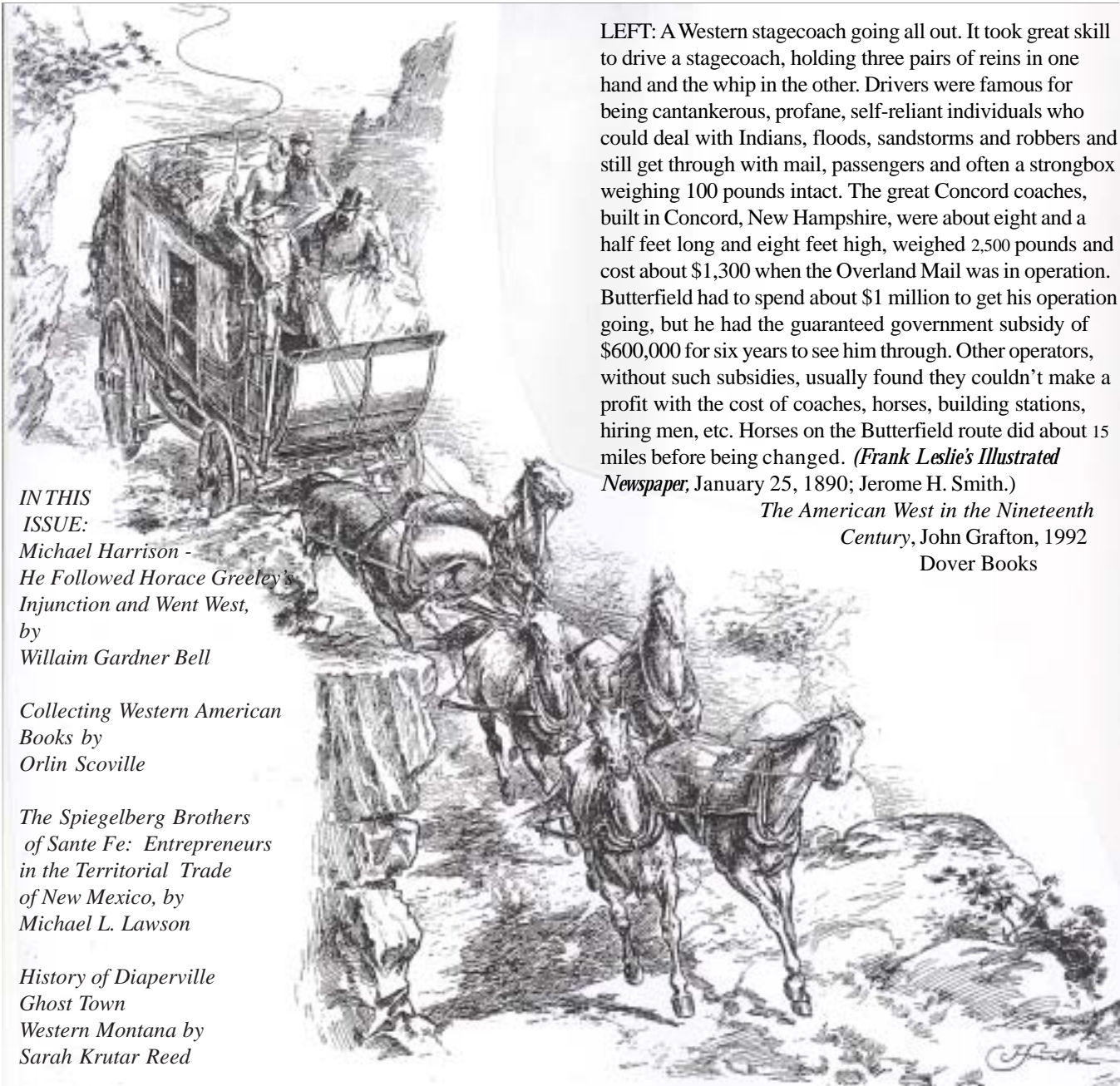
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LEFT: A Western stagecoach going all out. It took great skill to drive a stagecoach, holding three pairs of reins in one hand and the whip in the other. Drivers were famous for being cantankerous, profane, self-reliant individuals who could deal with Indians, floods, sandstorms and robbers and still get through with mail, passengers and often a strongbox weighing 100 pounds intact. The great Concord coaches, built in Concord, New Hampshire, were about eight and a half feet long and eight feet high, weighed 2,500 pounds and cost about \$1,300 when the Overland Mail was in operation. Butterfield had to spend about \$1 million to get his operation going, but he had the guaranteed government subsidy of \$600,000 for six years to see him through. Other operators, without such subsidies, usually found they couldn't make a profit with the cost of coaches, horses, building stations, hiring men, etc. Horses on the Butterfield route did about 15 miles before being changed. (*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 25, 1890; Jerome H. Smith.)

*The American West in the Nineteenth
Century*, John Grafton, 1992
Dover Books



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2005 - The Potomac Corral Had an Interesting Year

The Potomac Corral began the year with a "Bangup" presentation at Pier 7 by Jon G. James National Park Service on the Battle of Big Hole that ended the Nez Perce War. He discussed a film titled "Weet U Cikliituck" narrated by Nez Perce tribal member Hattie Kauffman, CBS correspondent. In March we met at a restaurant in Vienna, Virginia. Lowell E. Baier, corral member and collector of western memorabilia along with co-presenter Jim Pepper Henry, a member of the Kaw Nation of Oklahoma and Assistant Director for Community Services at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of the American Indian spoke on the history of Vice president Charles Curtis' historic throne chair, 1929-1832. Curtis is the only person to hold executive office in the United States of Indian heritage.

JEFF DYKES AWARD

In May 2005, the Jeff Dykes Memorial Award was presented to Professor Peter Iverson, Regent's Professor of History at Arizona State University, where he teaches about American Indian History and the history of the American West. His presentation was entitled "About Schmitt: Stories About My Grandfather; the Navahos, and Me." This meeting was held at the Cosmos Club. The Jeff Dykes Award was established in 1990 by the Potomac Corral in honor of Jefferson Chenoweth Dykes, a prominent western history figure and one of the founders of the Potomac Corral.



Professor Peter Iverson

The Corral met in October 2005 at Pier 7 a water front restaurant in Washington DC. Dr. Rudy Krutar, a native Montanian spoke on his Montana experiences and especially discussed a short monograph he discovered in the National Archives that illuminates early conditions in Montana Territory. It was published in 1900 by Oliver Wendell Holmes titled "James A. Garfield's Diary of a Trip to Montana in 1872." He then displayed a number of artifacts from early Montana.

January 25, 2006 corral member George C. Chalou spoke at Pier 7 on "Lieutenant James Simpson, Discoverer of the Anasazi."

In the fall of 2005 the Corral elected Jon G. James sheriff, however Jon subsequently resigned due to pressures of his job.. The Corral has continued under the direction of our three Deputy Sheriffs.

We continue to receive royalties for our Corral book, Great Western Indian Fights. Like the Energizer Bunny it just keeps going.

In an attempt to find a location and a time acceptable to most members, the Corral is trying different locations and times for its meetings. Also we are reducing the frequency of our meetings. We do not want the Potomac Corral to become a "dry camp", but we are having difficulty finding interested younger members.

If you are planning a trip to Washington D.C. and have a tale to tell with a western theme, contact us and we'll schedule you to present it at the POTOMAC CORRAL.

Call: Mike Lawson 703-503-5531 or Dale Anderson 301-292-1970.

Lawrence. 1971; John Graves, Hardscrabble. Knopf, New York. 1974.

3. Miners and Prospectors. There are numerous books on this subject. For an excellent overview, *see* Chapters VII and VIII in Hawgood's The American West (op. cit.) pp. 163-226 and his Bibliographical Note (pp. 381-384). One may also read Rodman Paul: Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York, 1963) for information on early day mining in the West and a good bibliography.

4. The Fur Trade. An outstanding book on this subject is Bernard DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1947. Other books include, H. M. Chittendon, The American Fur Trade in the Far West (New York, 1935); and Robert Glass Cleveland, This Reckless Breed of Men, the Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest (New York, 1950) and many others.

5. Early explorers and famous trails. An awesome list of books may be found under this heading. The earliest explorers were from Spain; by way of Mexico, which was then under Spanish control.

In 1536, a Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca, brought word to Mexico City of a fabulous place along the present-day border between Arizona and New Mexico, where the floors of houses were made of gold, and all the houses were ornamented with precious stones and gold. They were the "cities of gold." Francesco Vasquez de Coronado was commissioned to form a large company of soldiers and explorers to proceed northward in search of the seven cities of Cibola. In 1540 they entered what is now the southern border of Arizona, proceeded northeastward toward Santa Fe, did not find the fabulous seven cities of Cibola, and continued onward into present-day Kansas. They crossed the Arkansas River at a point that later became known as the lower crossing on the Santa Fe Trail. It is described by Margaret Whittemore in Historic Kansas, University Press of Kansas. (Lawrence, KS, 7th printing, 1969.) It is thought that Coronado's party reached the vicinity of Junction City, Kansas, before it turned back in disappointment. For a good account of Coronado, see H. E. Bolton, Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains. Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, 1964.

Shortly after the beginning of the 19th Century the exploration and settlement of the Northwest began, reaching a peak with the California Gold rush of 1849. Some

famous trails became established including the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the Mormon Trail. Numerous journals, government reports and books have been published on these trails. Perhaps the best known, is California and the Oregon Trail by Francis Parkman, first published in 1849 and republished in Boston, 1937. Another interesting book is The Winning of the West, by Theodore Roosevelt, written when he was a young man traversing the country in search of his health. A most significant source of information on the Northwest is in the journals of Lewis and Clark. They were sent on an exploratory mission from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River in 1805-06 and returned in 1806-1810. Their journals can be found in a book edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, The Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. (New York, Dodd Meade & Co., 1904-05.) A more compact version edited by Bernard DeVoto is entitled The Journals of Lewis and Clark. (Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston, 1953.) In 1983 and 1985, Dayton Duncan traversed most of the Lewis and Clark trail by automobile, and wrote up his trip in Out West. (Viking, New York. 1987.)

6. Railroads. The transcontinental railroads had an important role in the settlement of the West. They had received large grants of public land. They had various schemes of disposing of this land to raise money, and to encourage settlers to come in and create farms and towns, thereby generating traffic and freight for the railroad. The land program of a major transcontinental road is well explained in Burlington West, by Richard C. Overton, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1941. 583 pp. The book covers the years 1850-1940. According to Overton, the amount of land given the railroads in the east and south was equal to more than three times the area of New England.

7. Ranching and Settling the West. The three great technical developments that made settlement of the West possible were the sixshooter; the windmill, and barbed wire. The gun to establish control and order, the windmill to provide water for man and beast, and the fence to separate free-ranging livestock from crops. One can get a good understanding of the rise of the livestock and crop-farming enterprises in Hawgood's book, The American West.

Farming systems varied with rainfall, natural resources and markets, so most writers confined themselves to a particular region, such as the Great Plains.

The public lands were open and free to all. For grazing, one did not need to own any of it except a small place for headquarters, some crude shelters, and corrals for holding and sorting animals. Some Spanish colonists brought cattle or sheep with them when they were exploring the southwest and the coastal and central valleys of California. On these small plots, they would grow a few vegetables, and have space for building stacks of the wild hay they could cut from marshy areas.

For a wealth of information on the early days in cattle and sheep ranching, one may read Chapter XI in The American West, The Cowman's Frontier; and the books by Charles Towne and Edward Wentworth, Shepherd's Empire, (1945); and Cattle and Men, (1955), both published by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK. A classic book about the cattle industry is Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest by Joseph G. McCoy published in 1874, and re-issued in 1951 by Long's College Book Co., Columbus, OH. For the sheep industry, the most authoritative book may be Edward N. Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, History and Personalities, Iowa State College Press, Ames, Iowa, 1948.

8. Land Settlement. A delightful book on the settlement of the West is The Settler's West, by Martin F. Schmitt and Dee Brown, Bonanza Books, New York, 1955. This book covers an amazing array of subjects, from homesteading, prospecting, ranching, small country towns, women farmers, and rural schools. Reflecting the state of technology of the 1890's, the pictures are not crisply sharp but adequate to recall the period. The limited text is supplemented by short paragraphs about most pictures. The book should be given high priority for any collector of Western books. More detailed information of many subjects may be found in Frederick Merk's History of the Westward Movement. Other interesting and informative books on the Great Plains region of the West, include Jim Hoy and Tom Isern, Plain Folk, Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman, 1987, and a scholarly treatise, Agriculture on the Great Plains, Agricultural History Society, Washington, DC 1977, by Thomas R. Wessel, Ed. Another book worthy of reading and collecting is Gilbert C. Fite: The Farmer's Frontier, 1865-1890, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1987.

For a good understanding of the grasslands and the early years of the range cattle industry in the United States, one can do no better than read the report of the

Western Range Cattle Industry Study, conducted by the University of Colorado with support of the Rockefeller Foundation. A small group of historians conducted the study over a period of about 10 years, beginning in 1944. Findings of the study are reported in When in Grass Was King, by Maurice Frink, W. Turrentine Jackson, and Agnes Wright Spring, published by the University of Colorado Press, Boulder, CO 1956 (465 pp.). It is well illustrated, with extensive bibliographies.

Turning to novels about the West, the cowboys and stockmen and gunfighters, almost every American has heard of Zane Grey, who in a lifetime produced 78 books, mostly about the West. An earlier writer, less well-known, but perhaps a better novelist was Andy Adams, who wrote early in this century. His best book is thought to be The Log of a Cowboy, Houghton Mifflin, Boston (1903). He also produced a children's book, The Ranch on the Beaver, Houghton Mifflin, Boston (1937).

The United States made early and ingenious efforts to encourage citizens to acquire land and develop productive farms on it. The acreages were so small that stockmen were not interested, or if they were, only to acquire the home base for their operations, depending on the free public range for the raising of cattle and sheep. The laws to make land available to farmers included the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Pre-emption Act of 1841, the Homestead Act of 1862, and others. There are dozens of books on farming in the West. Most writers concentrate on one particular region. Some of these are personal accounts of being born in a sod house, attending a country school, fighting grasshoppers and prairie fires, and surviving years of drought. An excellent general work on the development of farming in the West is Wallace Stegner's Beyond the Hundredth Meridian, Houghton Mifflin, Cambridge, MA, 1954. It bears the subtitle John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West. This is one of Stegner's most scholarly works, and includes about 60 pages of notes, 'including frequent references to Powell's writings when he was in charge of geographical and geological surveys of the Rocky Mountain Region, and especially his Report on the Lands of the Arid Regions, 1878.

After several years of scholarly labor, Prof. Everett Dick wrote The Sod-House Frontier, 1854-1890. (Appleton-Century Co., NY, 1937.) He states that his intention was to "...depict the life of the common man on

the cutting edge of the frontier immediately following the date when it leaped across the Missouri River into Kansas and Nebraska and across the Red River into the vast domain now known as North and South Dakota.”

The Sod-House Frontier is carefully written and well documented. Not an easy book to read but invaluable to have at hand as a reference work. Every collector of Western American books should have a copy.

As settlers moved westward they came into regions of low rainfall. They had to learn new ways to store water in the soil by summer-fallowing, and adopt other moisture conserving practices.

A useful reference on farming practices on arid lands is John A. Widtsoe, Dry Farming, MacMillan, NY, 1921. Widtsoe was associated with the University of Utah and drew heavily upon work at the Experiment Station there, and the experience of Mormon pioneer farmers. The preface to his book concludes with this statement: “We stand before an undiscovered land,—. With striving eyes the desert is seen covered with blossoming fields, with churches and homes and schools, and in the distance, with the vision is heard the laughter of happy children.

The desert will be conquered.”

In addition to the above scholarly works are a host of personal memoirs and novels pertaining to settlement in the West. Two of these are suggested for delightful reading, and to be added to one’s library. The first of these was written by a man from a Norwegian immigrant family that settled on a farm in South Dakota. He later became a professor at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN.

Professor O. E. Rolvaag, published his distinguished novel Giants in the Earth in 1929, Harpers, NY. In this novel we get a realistic account of the way a Norwegian immigrant couple, Per Hansa and Beret, live out their dreary lives on a 160-acre farm on the prairies of South Dakota.

John Ise has given us a more lively novel, Sod and Stubble, based on the experiences of his parents when farming on a small acreage in western Kansas. This is a most realistic tale of the years of drought, grasshoppers, tornadoes, and dust storms that people lived through on the Great Plains of western Kansas and similar places west of the hundredth meridian. John Ise was a professor at the University of Kansas when he wrote the book.

As one goes westward from the hundredth meridian, the rainfall becomes less and less, the settlers have

tried in various ways to divert streams and lakes to the watering of crops. In the United States, there are about 20 million acres irrigated, approximately 4% of cropland area. But in Nevada, 94% of cropland is irrigated and in Utah, 80%. The proportion is high in all western states.

Anyone wishing to understand the development of irrigated agriculture in the West, and what it has meant for society, might read Donald Worster’s book, Rivers of Empire, Pantheon, NY, 1985, 402 pp. This sociopolitical tome explains how man has sought to control and manage western rivers to irrigate and in making this effort has found ways to cooperate and mobilize capital, and has written new laws.

Sugar beets were an attractive crop for many western irrigated districts in the late 19th Century. The sunny days and length of growing season were suitable, and they had a heavy demand for water. But beet-raising also had a heavy demand for hard work and much of it bent over, plucking weeds, thinning the beets and hoeing around the plants. American farmers needed a horde of stoop laborers who would work for low wages. There was much unrest and turmoil in Central Europe at that time, and soon German-Russians were arriving in droves. These immigrants were thrifty and industrious, and after a few years, some of them began to acquire land and become sugar-beet farmers. That posed a problem. Where could a new supply of beet stoop-labor be found? Trouble in Mexico created an answer, and little beet-shacks began to appear on farms to house these families of willing workers. In recent years, demand for beet workers had been reduced somewhat by mechanization and plant genetics.

Those interested in irrigated agriculture and beet-growing will enjoy reading Second Hoeing by Hope Williams Sykes, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1982, 309 pp. This is a novel about a family of German-Russians who settled in northeastern Colorado.

American women had an important role to play in the settling of the West. Their adventures, and contributions are perhaps not as well documented as they deserve. But several good books address the subject, some of the best of them written by women, building in reminiscences of their own lives. Classics include Willa Cather, My Antonia, (1918), and O Pioneers!, (1913); Mari Sandoz, Old Jules, (1935); Mary Austin, Earth Horizon, (1932); No Life for a Lady by Anges Morley

Cleaveland (1941); and Anne Ellis, the Life of an Ordinary Woman (1990). Both of Cather's novels are placed in the central, high plains and sandhills regions of Nebraska and recount the lives of immigrant farmers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Sandoz's book is an autobiography of growing up with her father in the same region and time. Cleaveland writes of growing up with her family in northeastern New Mexico. Anyone interested in the American West should read My Antonia and Old Jules at a minimum. For a more general survey of the writings of Mari Sandoz, one might read Old Jules Country, (1965). this is a selection from her writings.

Mary Austin's autobiography, Earth Horizon, has much of mysticism. It details a life of creative writing, and living with a somewhat difficult and not entirely successful man. It will not appeal to everyone.

Anne Ellis writes the story of her life, moving by covered wagon as a young girl with her family, from Missouri to the gold-mining towns of western Colorado. Both her father and later her husband were gold prospectors and miners, always looking for a bonanza but never finding it. Sometimes they worked for wages of \$3.00 a day. Both mother and daughter were shrewd, hard-working women, stretching out their meager living by taking in washing, sewing, tending to gardens and milk cows, patching and mending.

How Anne came to write her memoirs is explained in the introduction to the book, written by Lucy Fitch Perkins. The Life of an Ordinary Woman is informative and pleasant reading, although the details of the art of dressmaking may appeal mostly to the domesticated reader. Anne lived from 1875 to 1938. Her book was first published in 1929. A recent edition was published in 1990. Anne Ellis, The Life of an Ordinary Woman, Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Two other informative books about Western women include a picture book, Women of the West, by Cathy Luchetti and Carol Olwel, (Orion Books, NY. 1992.) This is one in a series at The Library of the American West and contains a wealth of pictures well backed up with an explanation or interpretation of the lives and work of the women shown. Extracts from diaries and letters are presented. Another highly informative work is Lillian Schlissel, Women's Diaries of Westward Journey, Schocken, NY. 1922. These diaries cover the years from 1841 to 1867. Four diaries are presented in full, and 96 diaries are summarized and excerpted. The dia-

ries are mainly concerned with travelling westward on the Oregon trail.

Whether one is a collector of old books or not, he or she is likely, in mature years, to accumulate a considerable number of memoirs and local histories of the place from which one came. We keep these around because we get a sense of warmth from them and sometimes we glean a bit of history that can be useful. Thus, in a booklet compiled by a literature class at Ft. Morgan, CO High School, (Preston Printing, Ft. Morgan, CO 1984.) we read of Life in the Sod House wherein Linda Wetzig tells of living in a sod house near Akron, CO in about 1912.

The Loblolly Book was published by the Texas Monthly Press, Austin, TX in 1983 and edited by Thad Sitton. This material was gathered from journals written in six Texas High Schools. Students had been encouraged to make interviews, and write their stories. The project drew its inspiration from an earlier publishing venture in Rabun Gap, Georgia, called Foxfire. Students were encouraged to write about Texas people, their folklore, folkcrafts, and folk history. Contents of the book include water witching, wild hog hunting, home remedies, grandma's moral tales and other affairs of plain Texas living.

A serious book about western settlement was written by Prof. H. Clyde Filley, entitled: Their Hopes Were High, (Johnsen Publishing Co., Lincoln, NE 1969). It is about experiences of early settlers in southeastern Nebraska, late in the nineteenth century.

Treat your old books with respect. Keep them in a place of low humidity and moderate temperature. Avoid sunlight. It is probably better to store them on metal shelves. Worn books should be properly repaired. Torn pages can be mended using an archival tissue. Never use Scotch tape. Tattered dust jackets can be mended and enclosed in acid-free dust jacket protectors that come in a variety of sizes. These protect both jacket and book. Useful sources of information on archival materials can be obtained from a number of specialized firms, including University Products, 517 Main St., Box 101, Holyoke, MA 01041-0101, and Light Impressions, 439 Monroe Ave., P.O. Box 940, Rochester, NY-14603-4940. Write for their catalogues for archival supplies.

A useful book for the collector of books or almost anything else is Caring for Your Collections, prepared

by the National Committee to Save America's Cultural Collections. The committee was established by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in 1987. This book was published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in 1992. It contains 218 pages and covers all collectibles from books to paintings, furniture, ceramics, glass, stamps, photographs, musical instruments, textiles and metal and stone objects. The Publisher's price for this book is. \$37.50, plus postage.

As with any set of fine things, the collector needs to set down his favorites. An interesting list of the top ten western books was made by noted collector and dealer, Jeff Dykes in his book, Western High Spots. 1977. His list includes:

1. Dana. Two Years Before the Mast. NY, 1840.
2. Duval. The Adventures of Big Foot Wallace. Philadelphia, 1871.
3. Gillett. Six Years with the Texas Rangers. Austin, 1921.
4. Siringo. A Texas Cowboy. Chicago, 1885.
5. Dearing. (Ed.) The Best Novels and Stories of Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Boston 1945.
6. Fisher. Children of God. NY 1939.
7. Jennings. A Texas Ranger. NY 1899.
8. Dobie. A Vaquero of the Brush Country. Dallas, 1929.
9. Adams. The Log of a Cowboy. Boston, 1903.
10. Russell. Trails Plowed Under. NY, 1927.

The Scoville Selection of six. Two of these are valuable historical books. One is a good background history, one an excellent present day survey of the western scene, and two are novels.

1. Randolph Marcy. The Prairie Traveller.
2. Walter Prescott Webb. The Great Plains.
3. Wallace Stegner. Beyond the Hundredth Meridian.
4. John Hawgood. The American West.
5. John Ise. Sod and Stubble.
6. E. Rolvaag. Giants in the Earth.

The bottom line of book collecting is made up one half in the personal satisfaction of living among a gathering of friendly old books. The other half has to do with the financial aspects. This can well be a project that pays for itself, or if one is shrewd, he might turn a modest profit. One can keep track of current values of many of his books by consulting American Book Prices Current, and Bookman's Price Index, both issued annually. They

are available in most good libraries. Another source of information is the classified advertising section of the Antiquarian Bookman, in which book sellers publish their lists of books wanted. This periodical will furnish a list of guidelines for describing the condition of used books. Catalogs of used book dealers are another source of information about book values.

Investing in rare first editions of old books can be quite profitable. According to Marguerite Beunner, the collection of rare books dealing with Americana, and especially the American West, is a very attractive field. Her book, How to Sell Your Collectibles, Antiques and Crafts at a Profit, is well worth reading. (Rawson Associates Publishers, Inc. NY. 1977.)

One may easily take books to any book dealer. They give useful advice on condition and potential value, but a book dealer will expect a commission of about half the selling price. If making money is not an object, one may give his Western American collection to the local library, or offer it to a state historical society, or to the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071. The Center has 4,500 manuscript and book collections, and over 70,000 photographs of Wyoming and the West. If you want to make a gift of your books, make a definite plan, file it with your will, and keep these old treasures around as long as you enjoy them.

In the forward to Seumas Stuart's Book Collecting (Dutton, NY, 1979), it is noted that "In most sports one gets burned out but in the pursuit of books you are left exhilarated, not exhausted, in body and spirit." It is also asserted that there is a long record of longevity among book collectors. So, build more shelves in the study, get an easy chair and enjoy your treasures: But remember that, in the words of Seumas Stewart, "...nobody is ever the absolute owner of a good book: he is merely its guardian during his lifetime, or until he transfers the responsibility by sale or gift." (Book Collecting, p. 247.)



Orlin Scoville

About the Author

Orlin James Scoville was born in western Nebraska in 1911 and grew up on a farm near Ft. Morgan, Colorado. He was the product of a one-room school. He earned B.S. and M.S. degrees from Colorado State University and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from

Harvard.

Scoville spent twenty-five years in farm management research with the United States Department of Agriculture, first in Amarillo, Texas, during the dust bowl years, and later in Albuquerque and in Washington D.C. He left Agriculture to serve as a rural development officer with the Agency for International Development in Bangkok for four years and then became a professor of agricultural economics at Kansas State University where he taught and did research on rural economic development.

He lived with his wife, Carol, in Arlington, Virginia, where he participated in volunteer activities and a writing workshop that produced a small literary magazine, *Encore! Encore!*, written by senior citizens. Scoville was on the editorial board. He had a long interest in the history of development and pioneer settlement in the semi-arid West and collected books on the subject. He was a member of the Potomac Corral of the Westerners, the Agricultural History Society, the Associates of the National Agricultural Library, and former member of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society of Canyon, Texas, and of the Prairie Walkers of Manhattan, Kansas.

He produced one booklet in the Potomac Corral Great Western Series, No. 16, *Remittance Men, Second Sons, and Other Gentlemen of the West*, 1990.

Orlin Scoville died on September 18, 2000 at age 89.



At the October meeting Dr. Rudy Krutar gave an interesting presentation on his early life in Montana and displayed a number of artifacts from his family in the Montana Territory.

He also presented and discussed a short monograph he discovered in the National Archives titled "James A. Garfield's Diary of a Trip to Montana in 1872." It was published in 1900 as a notebook consisting of a journal or diary of this significant trip by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The book drawing was won (appropriately) by the speaker: The book was *A Tenderfoot in Montana: Reminiscences of the Gold Rush, the Vigilantes, and the Birth of the Montana Territory*, by Frank Thompson.

The Spiegelberg Brothers of Santa Fe:
Entrepreneurs in the Territorial Trade of New Mexico

by
Michael L. Lawson*



The Spiegelberg brothers [per note on back of photograph] Emanuel, Lehman (or Willi), Solomon Jacob, Levi, and Willie (or Lehman). Elias was already deceased when the photograph was taken.

The United States' acquisition of New Mexico in 1848, a prize of the Mexican War, provided attractive opportunities for Euro-American traders. Local demand for merchandise from the East, which had led in part to the creation and success of the Santa Fe Trail more than two decades earlier, grew even stronger in the wake of increased Anglo or non-Hispanic settlement. The necessity of a continuing military presence in the turbulent new American territory and the eventual settlement of the region's native tribes on reserved lands, also created a demand for private contractors who could adequately procure supplies for the Government's new forts and Indian agencies. Among the most successful of the entrepreneurs who were able to take advantage of this emerging economic environment were the Spiegelberg brothers, six young Jewish immigrants from Germany. Starting with a meager investment on the part of their eldest sibling, the brothers, interacting in various forms of partnership, were able to greatly expand their roles as Santa Fe merchants and sutlers and successfully diversify their business interests over the course of a half-century. Then, having secured their personal fortunes, the remaining brothers decided to liquidate their assets, abandon their considerable social and political capital in the Land of Enchantment, and emigrate to Manhattan.

The emergence of a greater interest in the Southwestern frontier in the early 1840's coincided with a wave of immigration from Germany to the American shores. Increasingly unfavorable conditions caused Germans to

leave their homeland in unprecedented numbers. This was particularly true for Jews who in areas such as Bavaria were increasingly burdened by specific social and economic restrictions and subjected to outbursts of anti-Semitism. This peculiar loss of optimism in the land of one's birth and culture and renewal of hope in a far different place came together in the person of young Solomon Jacob Spiegelberg. Jacob, as he was better known, was the eldest son of the Baron von Spiegelberg's commercial agent in Natzungen, Prussia. The Baron had bestowed his family name on Jacob's father for his long and faithful service after the German government, following the Code Napoleon in France, permitted Jews to take surnames.

In 1844, at age seventeen, Jacob, having decided to find his future in America, took passage to New York City. It was probably through networking with other *lansmen* or fellow Jewish countrymen in Manhattan that he learned that St. Louis might be an excellent place to make his start. Not only was the burgeoning Missouri town a gateway to the West, it also had a large German population. St. Louis likewise served as the financial hub of the Santa Fe Trail and whether it was by plan or circumstance Jacob arrived to find opportunity in the establishment of Eugene Leitensdorfer, who had been involved in the Santa Fe trade since 1830. Leitensdorfer, the son of a Tyrolean immigrant, grew up in Carondelet, Missouri and later became auditor for New Mexico's territorial government.

Before long, Jacob found himself on one of Leitendorfer's wagons bound for Santa Fe. The caravan started from Independence, Missouri following a variation of the famous trail established in 1823. It crossed the Arkansas River and the desolate Cimmaron Desert, where Comanche and Kiowa raiders sometimes threatened, before descending through a narrow canyon at the end of which Jacob caught his first glimpse of the adobe village that served as Mexico's northern provincial capital.

It is not known how many other treks Jacob may have made over the Santa Fe Trail prior to the outbreak of the Mexican War in May 1846. At that time, however, he became affiliated, as a merchant or sutler or both, with the "Army of the West" under the command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny. This hastily assembled unit of 2,700 men, which included the Mormon Brigade, was assigned the task of taking New Mexico and southern California. After Governor Manuel Armijo and his troops abandoned Santa Fe in August and allowed Kearny's army to take over and establish a transitional government, Jacob joined the 300 Missouri volunteers under Colonel A. W. Doniphan who eventually captured the Mexican city of Chihuahua.

Returning to Santa Fe later in 1846, Jacob, on the

basis of his connection with Colonel Doniphan, was granted a government permit to open a general merchandise store. He was also appointed sutler for Fort Marcy, the newly established military post at Santa Fe. With an investment of \$356, and before his 20th birthday, Jacob Spiegelberg thus became one of the first resident Jewish merchants in territorial New Mexico. He quickly learned Spanish and the commercial needs of the Territory and by 1850, after a brisk business supplying the American occupation forces; his investment was worth more than \$5,000. Jacob gradually brought his five younger brothers into the business and by 1890 he amassed a personal fortune of over \$5,000,000.

After 18-year old Levi came from Germany to become Jacob's partner in 1848, their business became known as the House of Spiegelberg Brothers, or more popularly as "Spiegelberg Hermanos." What started as a small retail grocery and dry goods store in Santa Fe, soon became one of the largest wholesale operations in the Southwest, with branch stores in several territorial towns and buying agents in both the Eastern and European markets.

The brother's main store was on the south side of the plaza in Santa Fe, directly across from the Palace of the Governors. The store was described by a local newspaper as having "superb show windows" with female models, selling everything "from a pin to a piano".

The bachelor brothers readily found acceptance in the emerging Anglo social and cultural community in Santa Fe and fostered important political connections through their membership in the local Masonic order. Jacob was among the first members of the Montezuma Lodge, chartered in 1851, whose membership included such prominent New Mexicans as Kit Carson, Charles Bent, and Ceran St. Vrain. When the Territorial legislature had difficulty meeting its payroll in 1852, Jacob provided the government a \$4,000 emergency loan, which was repaid the following year. The ability of the brothers to obtain both merchandise and credit from Eastern suppliers and bankers was one of the keys to their success.

Jacob and Levi brought younger brothers Elias and Emanuel into the firm in 1850 and 1853 respectively. In 1854 Jacob returned to Europe, where he continued to play an active role in steadily expanding the business he had established. Tragedy marred the brothers' American success story in 1855 when 23-year old Elias was killed when an adobe ceiling collapsed onto a bed in which he was sleeping. This left only Levi and Emanuel to conduct the day-to-day business of the firm until 1857 when they were joined by brother Lehman. Youngest brother Wolf or Willi came to Santa Fe in 1861 after working for a year in a New York clothing firm. The 16-year old barely escaped death at the hands of Kiowa raiders in that same year as he accompanied the com-

pany caravan on the Santa Fe Trail.

Together the brothers formed an effective mercantile establishment that sparked a commercial revolution in New Mexico by replacing the old traveling peddlers. They were able to permeate the Territory with their economic influence by developing a reputation for honesty, by advertising widely in both the English and Spanish language newspapers, and by establishing a liberal credit system utilizing their own scrip. A purchasing system initiated by the brothers permitted Hispanic farmers from the region to exchange their produce for the company scrip. The produce was then either sold to Anglos for cash or delivered to government facilities under contract. As previously noted, the brothers maintained buyers both in Europe and on the East Coast. They set a record in 1868 by delivering goods from New York City to Santa Fe in 40 days.

The Spiegelbergs served as sutlers to the New Mexico Volunteers during the Civil War, but suffered a setback when their store and merchandise were confiscated by the Confederate Army under the command of General Henry H. Sibley, which occupied Santa Fe for a few weeks beginning in March 1862. The brothers lost \$50,000 in merchandise during the occupation, for which they were never reimbursed. Reveling Rebel soldiers also posed a threat to their well being. On one occasion, a drunken soldier entered their store and demanded Levi to furnish him with clothing. While Levi was gathering the items requested by the belligerent soldier, the Confederate brandished a pistol, aimed it at Levi's head and yelled. "Be quick or I'll blow your brains out." Fortunately, the quick-thinking and nimble Willi was nearby. He knocked the soldier's arm up just as he pulled the trigger and the bullet lodged in the ceiling, saving Levi's life.

During the war, Willi took on patrol and scouting duties for the Union Army, while Levi was once captured by Confederate soldiers while enroute to Chihuahua, Mexico with a load of company merchandise. He was accused of being a spy, but was soon recognized and released.

After the Civil War the two older Spiegelberg brothers decided to leave New Mexico. Both Levi and Emanuel, who had been in the Territory for 17 and 15 years respectively, moved to New York City. Emanuel married into the prominent Seligman banking family and enjoyed a lucrative career with his inlaws. Levi became the New York purchasing agent for the House of Spiegelberg Brothers. In the 1870s, however, he started a textile manufacturing company with his six sons and became one of the leaders of Manhattan's Temple Emanuel, that great bastion of Reform Judaism on Fifth Avenue that became the spiritual center for New York's wealthy German Jews.

The brothers's business in the Southwest expanded rapidly following the Civil War as a result of their involvement in the Indian trade. Treaties that established Navajo and Apache reservations in what is now New Mexico and Arizona stipulated that the Government would provide certain goods and services to the tribes. To encourage farming, individual tribal members were provided with seeds and implements and to supplement subsistence they were given food staples, clothing, blankets, and other necessities. It became the role of private traders to furnish these supplies under Government contract and the Spiegelberg brothers were among the first merchants to move into this market. After the Navajo moved to their reservation in 1868, Lehman obtained the first trading license issued at Fort Defiance, which is just inside the eastern border of Arizona, and Willi the first license at Fort Wingate, near present Gallup, New Mexico.

The brothers were well positioned to dominate this trade because of their extensive contacts. They could easily secure the capital necessary to purchase bulk supplies of commodities such as beef, cattle, coffee, flour, hardware, matches, and medicine to supply the Indian agencies as well as the military posts attached to them. They also secured government contracts to provide general transportation and mail services. In addition to the Navajo agency, the brothers received contracts for the Cimarron, Mescalero, San Carlos, and Southern agencies for various bands of Apache, as well as the Abiquiu agency for certain Ute Indians.

The volume of their business was impressive and so too the margin of profit. Their working capital was estimated to be approximately \$2 million in 1872 and their volume of business in 1874 at about \$700,000. In 1876, their orders for the Mescalero Agency alone included 3.5 million pounds of beef cattle and 250,000 pounds of flour.

As a consequence of their supply operations, the brothers became fluent in several Indian dialects and familiar with many of the leading Indians, Indian agents, and Indian fighters of the territory. As a clerk in the family store at Fort Wingate, for example, Willi became good friends with both Kit Carson and Navajo chief Manuelito in the early 1860's. While on a buying trip to the East, Willi won the eternal favor of the Navajos by presenting one of their beautifully woven blankets to President Abraham Lincoln. He brought back to the tribe a personal message from the President and later admitted that he had conceived of the idea of presenting the blanket in order to save face after declining to accept one of the chief's daughters as his bride.

The House of Spiegelberg Brothers also diversified its investments in the years following the Civil War. Taking advantage of New Mexico's expanding economy,

the brothers spread their commercial interests into banking, insurance, real estate, and mining.

New Mexico had no banks prior to 1870. The Spiegelberg brothers and other merchants often functioned as informal bankers, allowing customers to secure large sums of cash in their company safes, for which they also served as trustees and advisors. The brothers likewise became mortgage bankers, because large transactions frequently involved the assignment of real property to secure the deal. At various times the brothers also came to hold a number of properties in Santa Fe, although their preference for more liquid investments kept them from getting heavily involved in land acquisitions.

In 1872, the brothers decided to charter their own bank, the Second National Bank of New Mexico, in order to protect their own credit and exchange business after Santa Fe's wealthiest resident, Lucien B. Maxwell, and other investors chartered the First National Bank of New Mexico in 1870. In 1873, the year after the founding of the bank in which he was a principal shareholder, Lehman Spiegelberg also became a general agent for the New York Life Insurance Co. He likewise represented the family's interest in mining, serving on the board of directors of the Willison Silver Mining Co. The brothers owned several mining claims, including the Bourbon gold mine in Los Cerrillos, New Mexico.

The success of the Spiegelbergs in New Mexico attracted other ambitious Jews to the territory over the years. The young men who came to work in the Spiegelberg firm formed the nucleus of New Mexico's first openly Jewish community. Several of the friends and relatives who got their start with the brothers went on to open their own stores and become their leading competitors. Cousins Aaron and Louis Zeckendorf, for example, established a Spiegelberg Brothers outlet in Albuquerque in the 1850's before setting up their own independent business there in the 1860's. Former company clerks Ernest and Albert Grunsfeld also started their own firm in Albuquerque. Albert Grunsfeld, after whom the first synagogue in Albuquerque was named (Temple Albert), was married to the Spiegelberg's sister Minna.

Among the more interesting former employees were the Bibo brothers, who had been friends of the Spiegelberg family in Germany. The Bibos also became prosperous trading with the Indians and established stores in various New Mexico locations. Solomon Bibo, the son of a Westphalian rabbi, married Juana, daughter of a Pueblo chief, and eventually became the governor of Acoma Pueblo, the equivalent of chief of the tribe. In 1898, Solomon and Juana moved to San Francisco so that their children could receive a Jewish education. The Town of Bibo in Valencia County, New Mexico, north of Laguna Pueblo, was named after the family and brother Ben Bibo operated a trading post and post of-

fice there until 1920.

Economic freedom brought social freedom to the Spiegelberg family in New Mexico. Once their mercantile talents were recognized throughout the territory, they found that less emphasis was placed on their cultural and religious differences. Unlike Jews in many parts of America, they suffered few social restrictions. In Santa Fe they were respected for maintaining the integrity of their own beliefs while being tolerant of others. The dominant Catholic Hispanos often referred to them in the following vein: *Los Hermanos Jacobos estan la misma gente que nuestro Redentor Jesus Christos*, meaning "The Jacobs Brothers [as they were popularly known] are of the same people as our Savior Jesus Christ." As fluent in Spanish, English, and Indian dialects as they were in their native tongue, the Spiegelbergs participated fully in the distinctive tricultural environment of New Mexico, and as economic, political and social leaders, they contributed a great deal to it as well.

While the merchant families did not attempt to hide or abandon their Jewish identity, neither did they try to establish a congregation during the early years or display any open signs of observance, such as closing their stores on the Sabbath.

Most of the early German-Jewish traders who married, married Hispanic women. Not so the Spiegelberg brothers, who were prosperous enough to return to Europe to find mates. There is no public evidence of the brother's religious observance prior to 1860, but this changed in that year following the arrival of Levi's teen-aged German-born wife Betty. She opened their home for what is ascribed as being Santa Fe's first Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) services, which probably included many if not most of the other Jewish families attracted to New Mexico by economic opportunity. As more of the young traders married other German Jews, the number of Jewish children increased and their parents became more concerned about rearing them as observant Jews. This necessitated the little community to seek religious sources outside of their own isolated area. It was reported in 1872 that a rabbi from Denver, certified as a *mohel* to perform circumcisions, was summoned to New Mexico to perform a *bris* for several boys of "advanced age." In 1876, the first Bar Mitzvah ceremony held in New Mexico was conducted to honor the coming of age of Alfred Grunsfeld, a nephew of the Spiegelberg brothers. Money was donated at this ceremony to erect a synagogue in Santa Fe, but it never developed. Instead, the first synagogue in New Mexico was established in the prospering town of Las Vegas in 1888 under the auspices of Charles Ilfeld, another pioneering merchant. Albuquerque had a temple by 1900, but Santa Fe had no synagogue until 1953.

Flora Langermann Spiegelberg's arrival in Santa

Fe in 1875 brought a new style to New Mexico. Born in New York City, she grew up in San Francisco and was educated in Germany before marrying youngest brother Willi Spiegelberg in Nuremberg and returning with him to Santa Fe. Flora's reputation for charm and hospitality grew in proportion to the Spiegelberg's increasing role in the affairs of New Mexico. Although she came in contact with people in all walks of life, including some of the crudest elements of territorial society (she once met the notorious Billy the Kid, who stop-



Solomon Jacob Spiegelberg; Betty (Mrs. Levi) Speigelberg, ca. 1855-60 from reverse painting under photograph on glass.

-ped in the Spiegelberg store to purchase a new cowboy outfit), she continued to reflect the manners, tastes and life style of middle class Europe.

Among Flora's guests were members of the prominent local families including the *ricos* or *patrons* (those wealthy New Mexicans who claimed direct Spanish ancestry). She also entertained the officers of the Santa Fe garrison and their wives, as well as the archbishop, the governor, the commanding general, and other dignitaries. She received her callers at weekly afternoon teas, at formal dinners served in several courses on valuable china by uniformed maids, and at gala banquets which abounded with German cuisine, fine European wines, champagne, and frequent toasts. An accomplished pianist, Flora entertained her guests after dinner by playing her favorite selections from Mendelssohn and Chopin, by displaying her collection of paintings, or by showing off the exquisite furnishings of her home. Outside of the home, Flora enjoyed the fiestas, anniversaries, jubilees, and religious holidays that Santa Feans were so traditionally fond of. She played a leading role in the small literary and dramatic clubs of the city, took part in the

local theatrical productions as both an actress and musician, and was also active in civic work, particularly in the area of education. In 1879, she helped organize the Santa Fe Academy, the city's first non-sectarian school, where she also gave instruction in gardening, nature study, needlework and sewing.

The Spiegelberg's connections brought the family many opportunities to meet some of the most important people of the day. One of the most frequent and best loved of their guests was Jean Baptiste Lamy. This famous Catholic clergyman, the protagonist of Willa Cather's *Death Comes to the Archbishop*, had already endeared himself to the Spiegelberg brothers by saving Levi's life in 1852 after he had been stricken with severe dysentery and left by his employees on the Santa Fe Trail. As the years passed, the friendship which had blossomed out of this incident became formally symbolized in gifts of wine, fruit and flowers which Lamy brought to the Spiegelberg family on the major Jewish holidays, and in the generous donations the brothers contributed toward the construction of Lamy's pet project the St. Francis Cathedral and the celebration of his ordination

as Archbishop of Santa Fe.

The appointment of General Lew Wallace as territorial governor of New Mexico in 1878 marked the beginning of a new era of high official social life in Santa Fe. As a well-known author and Civil War leader, the flamboyant Wallace seemed to enjoy the social trappings of his office more than his official duties. During his term, Santa Fe entertained many of the leading military officers and politicians of the day.

It seemed only natural that Lew Wallace and Flora Spiegelberg would become good friends. One day as Flora passed by the Governor's office in *El Palacio Real*, he beckoned to her through the large window by which he liked to do his literary work. "I have just wrapped up my manuscript of *Ben Hur* to forward to my publishers," he told her as she entered the office. "Do, you think it is worth the expressage?" After pondering the question for a moment, Flora quickly replied, "I will gladly pay half of the expressage if you will agree to divide the royalties with me." Wallace chuckled and said, "I will consider the offer." As the years passed and the royalties from the book made Wallace a near mil-



Willi Spiegelberg family photograph. Top row: Harry Frank, Betty Speigelberg Frank, Wedin Blun Eising. and Rose Speigelberg Eising; Flora Speigelberg and Willi Speigelberg; children: Edna Eising (Kriegsman), Florence Eising (Stern Naumburg), Ethel Frank (Rayner); bottom: Dorothy Frank (Strouck, Cowen). Photo 1906 New York City

lionaire, Flora often kidded him about her offer and how wise he had been in not accepting it.

Because of the family's close connections with the Army, the Spiegelbergs were invited to the lavish receptions held in honor of military and political leaders, and they in turn opened their homes to many distinguished guests. Generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Phillip Sheridan, for example, were entertained by the Spiegelbergs and the other Jewish residents of Santa Fe at The Germania, their private social club. Flora Spiegelberg once arranged for General John Logan to attend a local children's party, and also held formal receptions in her home for Generals John Pope and Nelson Miles.

"One of the greatest holidays Santa Fe ever knew," was how Flora described the visit of President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Accompanied by General Sherman, the presidential party was entertained for both dinner and supper in the home of Lehman Spiegelberg, after which the family took them on a tour of the nearby Indian pueblos.

During the 1880's the Spiegelberg family reached the height of its influence and prosperity in New Mexico. After receiving the support of the city's prominent Catholics, Willi was elected Mayor of Santa Fe by a large majority in 1880. In 1884 he was elected Probate Judge for Santa Fe County over J. Bradford Prince, who later served as Chief Justice and Governor of New Mexico. Willi was also chosen as President of the Santa Fe Board of Trade as well as Grand Treasurer of New Mexico Masonry. In 1885 he reportedly turned down an offer from President Grover Cleveland to serve as Territorial Governor of New Mexico.

The Spiegelberg brothers also expanded their business facilities in Santa Fe in the 1880's. They moved the bank and company offices into a new building on the Plaza that became known as "Spiegelberg Block," and they also constructed two new warehouses. Willi and Flora's lavish new 14-room residence on Palace Avenue became the first house in Santa Fe to have both running water and gas appliances. Designed to reflect their own European tastes, the new house was also one of the first in the city to feature non-Hispanic architecture. To honor Willi as Mayor, Santa Fe's first gas lamp-post was installed in front of his home.

Lehman and Willi continued to direct the family's interests in New Mexico until 1893. In 1886, the brothers liquidated their retail business and became jobbers and wholesalers exclusively. Willi and Flora and their two daughters left New Mexico for New York City in 1888 and they were followed by Lehman and his family in 1890. The family's Second National Bank of New Mexico continued to exist until 1893, when it too was liquidated. Stock certificates issued upon termination of the Bank's charter reveal that its shareholders were paid

substantial sums. Although the bank had grown stagnant in the wake of the financial panic of 1893, the decision of the brothers to withdraw from New Mexico was apparently not motivated by economic factors. The remaining brothers desired to live in a more cultured environment and one in which they could ensure a Jewish life for their children; a place where they could more readily receive higher education and have the opportunity to find marriage partners of their own culture and faith.

In New York, Lehman started a lace importing business with his two sons and Willi also became involved in the lace industry. Willi and Flora took up residence on Riverside Drive and Flora became well known as both a municipal reformer in New York and an author of children's literature.

The Spiegelberg brothers, in common with many other Jewish merchants in the West, became a significant catalyst for economic growth on the frontier. The abundant mercantile opportunities allowed them to make a fortune, but they also contributed greatly to the social, cultural, and political development of Santa Fe through their charitable and civic efforts. Perhaps more important was the sense of home and the range of opportunities they provided for other Jews, many of whose descendants continued to contribute to the further development of a Jewish presence in the Southwest.*

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Museum Exhibit:

In October 2000, an exhibit was opened at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe entitled "Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico." It was on exhibit until 2005. The principal donors and guest curators of this exhibit were Felix and Susan Warburg of New York City. Susan is the great-granddaughter of Willi and Flora Spiegelberg.



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Thompson's sojourn was relatively brief—he returned east after only two and a half years. But in that time he hunted for gold, ran a Bannack mercantile business, traveled to the Pacific Coast and back, served in Montana's first territorial legislature, and became a speculator in mining properties.

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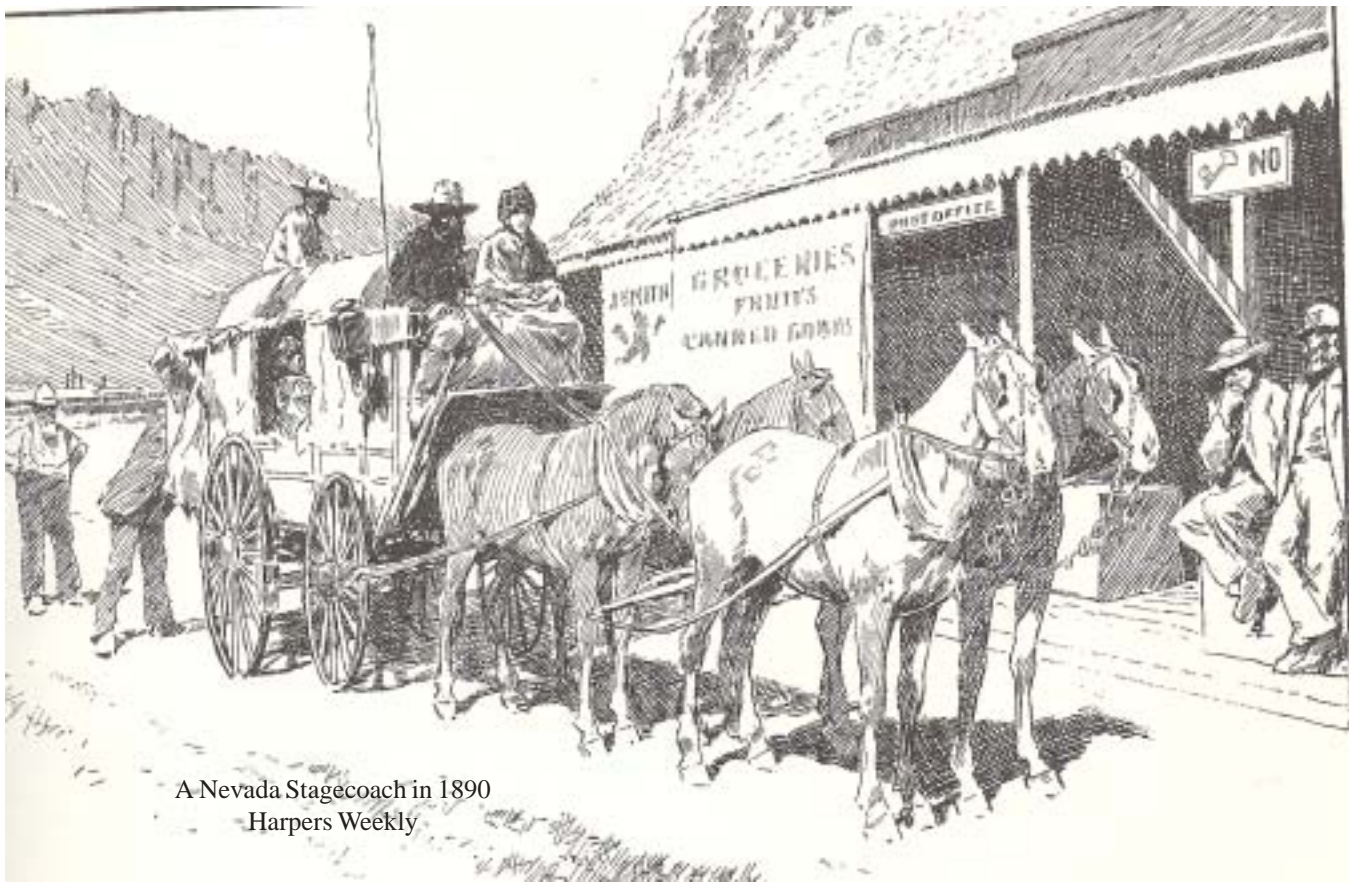
Ken Owens is the editor of *Perilous Passage: A Narrative of the Montana Gold Rush* by Edwin Ruthven Purple (Montana Historical Society Press) and a frequent contributor to *Montana The Magazine of Western History*.

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