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ON THE COVERS
Portraiture delights the visual senses in chronicling family history, both of subject and artist. Complementing and enfolding the family memoirs within these pages are the costumed portraits of Isabella Ethel (Mellus) Schwartz and her husband, the artist Davis Francis Schwartz. Over many decades, the portraits hung in close proximity to one another on Davis and Isabella’s living room walls. They were donated in 1971 to the CHS Collection (see “A Family History through Portraiture,” pages 62–63).
MEMORY SPEAKS

Just about all of us wonder, at one time or another, about our origins. Who am I? What is my past? Where do I come from? How did I get here?

Some people make a particular point of searching for answers. Some resolve their questioning by recalling elders’ conversations and oft-repeated stories from long ago, probing the smiling faces on old photos pulled out of disheveled boxes and overloaded scrapbooks, and pondering haunting phrases written in an elegant hand—or scratched hurriedly—in frayed letters and ragged diaries.

Such searchers construct their family history—the biography of a family over time—amassing social, economic, professional, and cultural morsels, erecting a structure for each life, and backfilling their forebears’ context and color. A family’s homes, workplaces, and travels; its successes and failures; its hard work and resilience; and also its shortcomings and failures are both quest and reward for grueling and exhilarating efforts.

Like moments recollected, places rebuilt, and events relived in Speak, Memory, Vladimir Nabokov’s brilliant and artful autobiography, the three family memoirs in this issue show that the smallest details and the strongest emotions create the keenest memories. Each account is written by a highly accomplished, former California resident whose family moved to the Golden State seeking secure and salubrious surroundings as well as career and business opportunities. All three families thrived, encountering and achieving one or more facets of their California dreams and making their marks on the land.

In “Boes in Facultate: The Short, Creative Life of Franz Rickaby,” Gretchen Dykstra uncovers the story of her unknown grandfather, mined from letters, diaries, and other family treasures, declaring, “I fell in love with my grandfather during this process, happily saw him clearly in my own father, and sobbed as if I were present on the day he died.” In “Love Among the Redwoods: The Story of Margaret and David Paddock,” Daimar Paddock Robinson proclaims her mother’s romance with San Francisco, from her journey across the Pacific in 1916, to the 1930s—when she was “embracing life with the zest of someone discovering the power of simply being alive, young, and happy in the freewheeling City by the Bay”—to the loving warmth of her husband and family. And in “We Dye for the Stars: Los Angeles Remembered,” Alan B. Sielen’s “excavations of the mind” reveal his family’s interactions with one another and with their carpet-dyeing business, “a working man’s ballet punctuated with the dirt and grime of small industry,” during Hollywood’s golden age.

For these searchers—and perhaps for you—memory speaks.

Janet Fireman
The “Smiles of God”

Travel brochures promoting California enjoy wide interest among students of graphic design, historians, geographers, and others researching the history and evolution of natural and built environments. In the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, these booster materials, primarily idealistic in nature, were designed to attract tourists and home seekers to the Golden State.

CHS’s California Ephemera Collection is rich in tourist and travel materials, especially of the 1910s–20s, when each county produced beautifully illustrated multipage brochures. This 1928 booklet for Modoc County, in the state’s far northeast corner, maintains the artistic appeal of such memorabilia (note the pristine California countryside with its farms and orchard), but its allure is
grounded in reality. Having completed a railway line connecting with the Southern Pacific, the county Board of Supervisors sought not “to urge people to come to Modoc County on the wings of a boom, but rather to make a plain statement of facts as they exist.”

Extolling the region’s climate, fertile soil, and dependable underground supply of water, county officials offered the home seeker “who knows how to raise cattle, sheep, or hogs” viable and increasing business opportunities “as this last frontier of California is developed.” In fact, they touted the region as “so well favored by Nature that it was known to the Indian tribes inhabiting it as ‘the Smiles of God.’”

In addition to chambers of commerce, the railroads were a major publisher of travel brochures. Like those booklets describing the qualities of destination points served by the railroad lines, Modoc County’s Board of Supervisors, “rooting for Modoc County, California,” provided a strong sense of place throughout the pages of their brochure, with numerous photographs and this map identifying the county’s forests, lakes, valleys, lava beds, ice caves, and scenic areas, as well as hunting, fishing, and camping sites.
After suffering from rheumatic fever for many years, Franz Lee Rickaby, a professor of English and drama at Pomona College in Claremont, California, died at nearby Loma Linda Hospital on May 18, 1925. He was thirty-six years old. On the day of his funeral, the college halted all classes so that professors and students alike could attend and several years later dedicated its memorial sundial to him, an apt monument to an optimist with a restless curiosity who was loved by his students.

A month after Rickaby’s death, Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, from which both Franz and his wife, the former Lillian Katar, had graduated, held a memorial service. In addition to numerous tributes, the congregants sang one of Rickaby’s own compositions, the exuberant “Whoop ‘Er Up Knox.”

In a long written tribute, the poet Nicholas Vachel Lindsay described a group of young people who had gravitated toward Lindsay in Springfield, Illinois. Rickaby, then in his late boyhood, was among them. “Franz was the leader of my gang and the real shepherd,” Lindsay wrote. “We read everything from Shaw to Pshaw, and shouted until midnight, being some of us still high school sophomores and very smart-alecky, all but the gigantic and magnificent Franz who dominated the scene . . . [and] who might have been a statesman in United States art, had he lived.”

On June 27, 1925, the managing director of Walter H. Baker, the Boston-based publisher of dramatic works, wrote Lillian a condolence letter. He did not think Franz’s one-act play The Haven would produce much income for her, as “it is much too good for the ordinary run of short play performances,” but he believed The Christmas Spirit: A Poetic Fantasy in Two Acts, which Franz and Lillian had written together, would be a consistent, albeit small, source of royalties.

The Junior Playmakers of North Dakota established the Franz Rickaby Prize for the best student-written one-act play, honoring the former University of North Dakota professor’s introduction of drama into public schools throughout the rural state.

Several months after his death, Harvard University Press released Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy, the first collection ever of the music and lyrics of the songs of the Midwest lumberjacks, which Franz had begun to collect during his long walk from Charlevoix, Michigan, to Grand Forks, North Dakota, in 1919. Carl Sandburg, one of several reviewers, wrote: “In a memorial record of Franz Rickaby there should be, perhaps, some statement that he had besides attainments in scholarship, the gifts of an artist. In his Shanty-Boy Ballads there is more than fact and chronicle—there is arrangement, vision, the handling of materials by a rare human spirit.”

In 1941, the ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, comparing Rickaby to his pioneering folklorist father, John Avery Lomax, urged Archibald...
Franz Rickaby (1889–1925)—folklorist, poet, musician, playwright—faces west from his perch on a rock in Illinois circa 1917, perhaps toward his next adventure as professor at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. This photograph illustrates his theatrical flair, his wonderful whimsy, and his restless curiosity—qualities that no doubt enhanced his poetic sensibilities and literary bent.

Courtesy of Gretchen Dykstra
Franz’s climbs were probably as much about reaching the sky as they were about fighting the branches—expressions of an optimism that would last a lifetime.

MacLeish, the head of the Library of Congress, to acquire Rickaby’s papers: He “was the collector of the lumberjack songs in almost the same sense that Father was the collector of cowboy songs . . . it would be a feather in our caps.”

And upon hearing that his beloved third and last surviving son had died, Franz’s father, Thomas, wrote in his journal, “All that he could do was to moan from the depths of his broken heart, ‘Oh, my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son.’”

Franz Rickaby was my grandfather, a man whom my father barely remembered. I grew up knowing only bits and pieces of his short life: his walk through the Midwest, his book of ballads, his friendship with Vachel Lindsay, his short tenure at Pomona. But Lillian, decidedly unsentimental but respectful of history, left a trunk full of papers and letters, and as I dipped into it after her death, Franz climbed out. He lived during a period of dramatic change in our nation about which I have learned a great deal by looking closely at the particulars of his life. I fell in love with my grandfather during this process, happily saw him clearly in my own father, and sobbed as if I were present on the day he died.

**WANDERING AND ADVENTURING**

In 1923, when Franz and Lillian moved to Claremont from Grand Forks, North Dakota, they joined thousands of other Midwesterners who wanted—or needed—to escape the brutal winters of those rural states. But, perhaps unlike others, Franz was at heart a wanderer anyway.

He was born in Rogers, Arkansas, a town his musician father described as “a slow Southern village with a few sleepy stores . . . and pigs and cows fighting pedestrians for the use of . . . loose board walks.” Encouraging the child’s curiosity and bolstering his confidence, Thomas Rickaby would urge young Franz to climb the apple trees that gave Rogers its fame and its intoxicating pungency in the spring. Franz’s climbs were probably as much about reaching the sky as they were about fighting the branches—expressions of an optimism that would last a lifetime.

In 1896, when Franz was seven, the family moved to Taylorville, Illinois, and then twenty-four miles southeast to Springfield around 1904. When fifteen and bored with high school, Franz dropped out after his sophomore year and in 1906 returned to Rogers with his violin and cornet in hand. He wrote his father, “Which is worse? To do practically nothing or to do nothing practically? I need to learn to do for myself.”

And he did. For more than two years, he wandered. He found work in the robust apple industry and on small family farms. He hauled wood in winter, fixed fences in the spring, cut blackberry bushes in the summer, and played his fiddle at dances. Sometimes he slept in farmers’ barns, sometimes in local boardinghouses, and often outdoors alone, content under the stars. And then one Christmas Eve, he surprised his parents in Springfield and returned to high school. In 1912, with $50 in his pocket, he talked himself into matriculating at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois.
Situated on fertile plains between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, Galesburg had been founded as a college town in 1857 by a small group of religious abolitionists from upstate New York with egalitarian and intellectual goals. When Franz arrived, those educational and populist fibers still wove Galesburg together. Seven railroad lines crisscrossed the town, dairy farms and cornfields flourished, a central post office served as a hub for communications, and daily newspapers and monthly literary journals satisfied the intellectually curious. Galesburg had attracted many foreign-born residents and Knox had become a nationally known and respected college. It was a cosmopolitan center in the heartlands.  

Maintaining a schedule that could exhaust a roadrunner, Franz carried a full load of classes, soaking up English literature, rhetoric, and composition; studying German, Greek, and Latin; and throwing himself into endless student activities, some of which he initiated. He played second violin in the Knox-Galesburg orchestra, sang second bass in the choir at the large Central Church, and directed the newly established Knox band, playing the cornet. He compiled and published a collection of all Knox songs, including five that he wrote. He was part of a small group that lobbied for the establishment of a campus literary magazine, and he occasionally appeared in college plays. He wrote poems and sonnets, having published his first poetry collection as a teenager in a tiny, self-published giveaway in Springfield. He organized evenings in the Beecher Chapel, including one in October 1913 with his old friend Vachel Lindsay, who thrilled the audience when he belted out in his high, shrill, emphatic voice, “Booth led boldly with his big brass drum, / Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

To earn money, Franz played his fiddle at school dances and waited tables at Rowan’s Horseshoe Café, writing, “Many lads have come to Knox, no silver or gold had they. / By mowing lawns and sawing wood, they slowly pined away / Until happy day! They copped a job ‘mid hash, goulash and stew, / They worked for three square meals a day, / Slung hash at the old Horseshoe.”

In an afterword to young Rickaby’s self-published book of poetry in 1910, the poet Nicholas Vachel Lindsay welcomed his friend to the world of letters, dubbing him the Weaver of Dreams. In a later collection of Franz’s poems and songs, Vachel Lindsay wrote another introduction, observing: “Mr. Rickaby lives the artist’s life, and is responsive to all the high natural forces. He makes his way through the world cheerfully, and puts on record with sincerity and careful art the tunes that are played on him by the breath of God.”

Courtesy of Gretchen Dykstra

He attended as many free events as time allowed, including a performance of Negro spirituals by the famous Fisk Jubilee chorus. It is possible that night planted a seed which blossomed into Franz’s own song-preservation work. Lillian would later nickname him Frenzy.

Sometime during that first frantic year he got sick, worn down from too many activities and too
little sleep. A raw sore throat stayed with him for several days, followed by a high fever that sent him reluctantly to bed. Several weeks later, his joints began to ache, a condition that would last the rest of his short life. Lillian noticed a limp the night of their first date in 1915, when they went to a dance at the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house. Franz made light of it, citing too much walking and too much dancing.

In 1916, after his graduation, Franz received the Harvard Club of Chicago’s scholarship and left for Cambridge to study English. Lonely at first, he was unable to find people at Harvard who responded to his easygoing, positive Midwestern style. In her letters to Franz, Lillian called his classmates the “la-ti-das.” But Vachel Lindsay came to his rescue and introduced Franz to his old friend the poet Amy Lowell, who included Franz among a small group of would-be poets that met with her regularly. They maintained a friendly correspondence for several years after Franz left Cambridge, swapping views on poetry, Middle English, and the American frontier.14

Franz and Lillian, then a senior, devoted “yards and yards of typewriter ribbon” to discussing what they would do to aid the inevitable war effort. Franz was intent on joining the Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which carried wounded soldiers on the frontlines in trucks and jeeps back to base camps or hospitals. “It’s an honorable way for us adventurers to serve as few adventurers are suited to the discipline of the military,” he wrote.15

The corps was popular among college and university students. Harvard eventually sent 325 young men to join, but not Franz. The Volunteer Ambulance Corps rejected him; this was the first
definitive acknowledgment that he suffered from rheumatic fever. “I am sorely disappointed,” he wrote Lillian, “but we shall be happy, little partner. Wherever we are we will do the best we can and look for more to do.” He added, “There’s a persistent and energetic professor in North Dakota, who keeps writing me. What would you say to Grand Forks, Angel?”

TEACHING AND PLAYMAKING

Franz and Lillian married in Galesburg on June 19, 1917, at 5:30 a.m. They caught the train to Chicago and then the overnight boat to Charlevoix, Michigan, where the literary Franz was the popular caddie master at the local golf course. He had begun this unlikely job in the summer of 1913 and would continue every summer for seven years, producing a series of articles in Golf Magazine about the wonders of boys and their mischievous habits and causing quite a stir when he integrated girl caddies into the large squad.

In August, on a warm day with breezes so refreshing and invigorating it was as if the wind had blown over stretches of ocean, not miles of prairie, Franz and Lillian arrived in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on the western banks of the Red River. They saw craggy cooks in overalls feeding dozens of farmhands from the backs of horse-drawn wagons in wheat fields carved from six-foot-high prairie grasses, streaked with colorful wildflowers, under a huge cloudless sky. It was love at first sight. They rented a furnished house above the English coulee, looking west over miles of treeless prairie.

A political storm was then battering the state with the Red River Valley at its epicenter. The Nonpartisan League (NPL), a socialist/farmer’s movement led by a charismatic farmer from Beach, North Dakota, fueled class warfare, exhorting farmers to rise up and defeat rapacious out-of-town bankers and railroad tycoons, who, allegedly, were exploiting the wheat farm-

ers and driving down their prices. In short order, the NPL controlled the legislature and the governor’s office.

The league soon turned its attention to the university, trying—with the support of some professors—to force the president and dean out of their jobs. NPL members wanted Franz to join their efforts. Somewhat sympathetic to their populist goals but appalled by their tactics, Franz responded, “Absolutely not,” which became a campus cry, a verbal handshake among the outraged students. When Lillian, who always loved the “splendid indignation of students,” attended some of their raucous meetings, the NPL accused her of inciting riots. “Perfectly ridiculous,” she wrote her mother. “They have to pick on someone and it might as well be me.”

Franz and Lillian were married in Galesburg, Illinois, two days after posing for this photograph on June 17, 1917, in Springfield, where they had traveled to visit Franz’s parents.

Courtesy of Gretchen Dykstra
The entertainer in him was well established and the wanderer bred in the bone, and in the late summer of 1919, he began walking from Charlevoix, Michigan, back to Grand Forks... seeking the songs of the quickly disappearing lumberjacks—the shanty-boys—of the north pine country.

But it was not politics that inspired Franz. It was Frederick Henry Koch, the “persistent and energetic professor” at the University of North Dakota who had convinced Franz to come to Grand Forks. Leading theatre critics have credited Koch with starting the American folk drama movement, which culminated in such famous plays as Edith Wharton’s Ethan Frome and Thornton Wilder’s Our Town.19

Born in Illinois and schooled in Ohio, Koch took a job at the university as an instructor in English in 1905.20 That June, he formed a company of university actors, which evolved into an active dramatic society named the Dakota Playmakers, “expressing a deep love for the land of Dakota, and the continuing efforts of the group toward translating the life of the North-West into fresh dramatic forms,” he wrote.21 The group started a brush fire that spread nationwide and when Koch resigned in 1918 to go to the University of North Carolina, he asked Franz to direct the Dakota Playmakers. He had sensed a kindred spirit.

For the next five years, Franz taught Chaucer, English composition, dramatic composition, and a general English survey course and led the Dakota Playmakers. Intent on introducing young people to theatre, he also established the Junior Playmakers group in nine high schools around the state, which he modeled on the university group, traveling to small towns and bringing plays to local teachers. He also plumbed his own love of the vernacular by writing one-act plays. Over time, the Walter H. Baker Company in Boston published four of them.22

**BALLADRY AND HOBO-ING**

Franz volunteered, as he had in Galesburg, to teach Sunday school. He wrote a reader on composition, played second violin in the Grand Forks Philharmonic, penned “It’s for You, North Dakota U,” the university’s fight song (still sung), and often invited students over to “hear Lillian and me eat.”23 Franz was still Frenzy.

On February 4, 1919, he recorded in his diary his passion for balladry—“I have become enamored of the ballad!”—and received permission to teach a ballads course.24 Although Franz had been thinking about collecting ballads for only a short time, the entertainer in him was well established and the wanderer bred in the bone, and in the late summer of 1919, he picked up a well-worn staff, strapped a violin case across his back, and began walking from Charlevoix, Michigan, back to Grand Forks, starting a journey that would engage him the rest of his life. He was seeking the songs of the quickly disappearing lumberjacks—the shanty-boys—of the north pine country.

continued on p. 16
In 1918, Rickaby was named director of the Dakota Playmakers at the University of North Dakota. He succeeded Professor Frederick H. Koch, who had founded the student and faculty theatre group as the Sock and Buskin Society. In this photograph of a 1916 rehearsal scene in Woodworth Auditorium, the group’s first indoor space, Koch plays the clown in William Shakespeare’s As You Like It.

The following year saw the production of Franz and Lillian’s 1917 play, The Christmas Spirit. The performance was a watershed for the campus thespians: they received a new name, the Dakota Playmakers, and officially dedicated the auditorium as the Play-Stage. By 1918, they were performing in local venues, including the Metropolitan Theatre, where theatre-goers enjoyed the April 3 production of Nathan Hale: A Play in Four Acts by Clyde Fitche.
Franz’s principal contribution to the field of ethnomusicology was the posthumously published *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy*, which he began to compile during a 917-mile walk through the northern regions of Wisconsin and Minnesota, searching for lumber camp songs and singers.

In early September 1917, as folklorist James P. Leary describes, Rickaby checked into the Northern Hotel in Mercer, Wisconsin, “a rough logging town . . . where hotels often served as taverns, gambling dens, and whorehouses. . . . September was a month of relative leisure for erstwhile sawmill and farm hands who, awaiting plunging temperatures that would summon them into the woods, thronged to places like the Northern Hotel. And so it was that Rickaby, as he set down in his journal, ‘stalked in a side door to where ten or twelve loafers, in all states of intoxication, were holding forth, drinking, spitting, singing foul songs, telling fouler stories, and giving character to the place generally.’”

Though Rickaby did not include the songs he heard at the Northern Hotel in his book, he did break new ground by providing the music as well as the lyrics of fifty-one ballads sung by the lumberjacks of Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in seventy-five versions.3

“To those who knew Professor Rickaby,” a 1928 reviewer wrote in *Modern Language Notes*, “the book will bring a feeling of melancholy that he did not live to see it published. They know with what exuberant delight he would have turned the leaves and chanted the songs he knew so well, the quiet satisfaction he would have felt in long labors so brilliantly brought to an end. And they would have rejoiced to bring to an unpretentious scholar the praise he had so abundantly earned, and would hardly know how to receive.”

—Editors
These were the early years of American ballad collecting, and Franz’s collection, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy*, was the first to memorialize the songs sung by the men who spent their winters in crude lumber camps throughout the forests of northern Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. Franz was a member of a small and informal group of academics and amateurs who captured forever the lives of Americans in particular regions or in specific occupations through the songs they sang.25

Franz’s route took him north from Charlevoix along Lake Michigan, across the Straits of Mackinac into Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, and down the western side of the lake, entering the pineries of northern Wisconsin and northern Minnesota. From August 30 to September 18, he traveled 917 miles, including almost 175 on foot, 420 in vehicles, and 322 on trains. After returning home, his wandering did not stop. Over the next three years, he booked himself into small towns and performed songs in order to find songs, running down leads of lumberjacks and their songs all around the Midwest. Local newspapers covered his walk, dubbing him the Wandering Minstrel and, in a further reference to the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *The Mikado*, the Nanki-Poo of the Midwest.26

This photograph of the town of Claremont nestled at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains circa 1900 captures the charm of the small New England-like enclave where Franz taught at Pomona College until his death in 1925. Visible among the college’s early buildings are two structures with spires: Sumner Hall (left of center) and Holmes Hall (far left).

*California Historical Society, CHS2011.525.tif*
But Franz would not finish his book in Grand Forks. His “infernal headaches” had returned and the exclusive milk diet administered at a Rochester, Minnesota, sanatorium had helped only temporarily. On the advice of his doctor to escape the brutal Grand Forks winters, Franz, Lil- lian, and their baby son, Franz Jr., affectionately known as Wunk, took the train west, stopping in Colorado Springs, where Lillian’s mother and stepfather now lived, and then moving on to Claremont, California, where Franz had accepted a job at Pomona College.  

Named for the Roman goddess of fruit trees, Pomona College was founded in 1887 in a town that was a real estate dream gone bust but that proved an ideal location for a college—with tidy rows of orange trees stretching along the foothills of the snow-capped, rough-faced San Gabriel Mountains; small Victorian houses, Spanish haciendas, Arts and Crafts bungalows, and gabled cottages on neatly plotted streets; and elm and oak trees standing alongside exotic palm and bony eucalyptus trees. The Rickabys rented a small, one-story stucco house covered in leafy vines, with two messy eucalyptus trees in front, a backyard for Wunk, and a view of Mount Baldy. Franz and Lillian knew immediately that they would like Pomona College. It had the intimacy and values of Galesburg and Knox, the intellectual rigor of Harvard, and James Blaisdell as its president. A kind man with a great imagination, Blaisdell, also a Midwesterner, believed that a broad liberal arts program produced mature and productive adults; consequently, he stressed arts and culture as key components of the Pomona experience. Blaisdell, who had already begun to conceive of the unique Claremont consortium of small colleges (of which Pomona College would become part) modeled after Oxford and Cambridge in England, sought professors with broad interests, deep passions, and high standards. Wanting to resuscitate the college’s floundering drama program, he hired Franz to teach dramatic composition and the history of drama and to lead the school’s drama program. He also encouraged Franz to finish his book.

His North Dakota drama experiences notwithstanding, Franz had his work cut out for him. For a while, no serious theatre had been produced on campus. The handsome outdoor amphitheater, built with Greek tragedy in mind, was used for unsophisticated productions, such as the annual “Plug Ugly,” a revue by seniors poking fun at underclassmen. A fashion show was mired by shoddy staging and costumes.

By the end of November, Franz had directed his first play, with Lillian as his production assistant. Lillian had never studied drama, but she had worked alongside Franz in Grand Forks and had directed some young women’s productions herself there. Franz then hit a home run with the Women’s Vaudeville Show, featuring original settings and music and providing impersonal entertainment, not personal mockery.

He moved to resuscitate the Masquer Society, once a well-respected drama club that had become a generator of college silliness, taking its members to plays in Los Angeles to expose them to better drama. Soon the group was presenting well-known plays, sometimes directed by Lillian, and writing one-act plays based on their own experiences. Franz instituted annual cash prizes for the best ones, judged by the drama critic from the Los Angeles Times, a local playwright, and the high school drama coach.

Always the folklorist, Franz began a student writers’ group that met weekly outside of class to read and critique each other’s descriptions of everyday occurrences on campus. He planned to submit their collective memoir to the college. And ever the adventurer, he became the first faculty member—’boes in facultate’—of the Hobo Club. The members of this “most exclusive organization on campus” had to have “bummed” at least one thousand miles to be eligible to join.
Periodically, they sat around a campfire in the center of campus, cooking beef, singing songs, and telling tall tales about their travels. Still Frenzy, one issue of the student newspaper featured three front-page articles about what Franz had accomplished that week alone.

By the middle of January 1924, Franz had almost completed the “great book,” with only one short section left “to typewrite,” but the fierce headaches had returned, his knees, ankles, and elbows ached like never before, and he was often exhausted and short of breath. His doctor offered aspirin for the pain and rest for the fatigue, and then suggested that he go to the Seventh-day Adventists’ Hospital in Loma Linda.

Neither Franz nor Lillian had ever met a Seventh-day Adventist, and what little they knew about the religion was strange to them: a full-body baptism, Sabbath on Saturday, the Second Coming, a belief in prophecy, the washing of feet. The idea of going to a hospital run by Adventists undoubtedly amused them at their best moments and worried them at their worst, but Loma Linda was the only medical school in southern California that had received a Class A rating from the American Medical Association, so they decided that if Franz had to go somewhere, best that he went there.

Only thirty miles due east from Claremont, an hour on the Southern Pacific Railroad, Loma

**TREATMENT AND DECLINE**

Franz (far left) was the first faculty member to join Pomona College’s Hobo Club, an acknowledgment of the sense of adventure and love of storytelling that his students also embraced. Although he tried to maintain a healthy diet, often avoiding meat, he may have found it difficult to avoid a carnivore’s feast over an open campfire with his fellow hoboes.

Special Collections, Honnold/Mudd Library, Claremont University Consortium
Linda was a sloping hill, 35 acres big, 125 feet above the barren San Bernardino Valley, with a breathtaking view of the mountains beyond. Like Claremont, it was a failed dream along a railroad line. In 1887, speculators had built a three-story wooden hotel, complete with a two-story cupola and turrets and painted white. A grand staircase led directly from the tiny rail depot up the hill to a welcoming lobby. But guests rarely came, and after several attempts at redefining itself, the hotel went under.

It is said that Ellen White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventists, who was living in northern California, had a vision of a hotel for sale in southern California and urged the church leaders to find and buy it, along with all the surrounding buildings and fields. She envisioned an ideal place to train medical missionaries on real patients in the holistic approach that the Adventists espoused. In 1905, they bought the hotel on the hill and 40 acres below it, with a tiny town, hay fields, fruit trees, vegetable gardens, cows, and barns.

The day the Rickabys arrived at Loma Linda, a driver in a brand new seven-seat Studebaker would have met them at the depot and ferried them up the hill. The patients and the guests—the Rickabys soon learned there were both—lived simply and comfortably in single rooms overlooking the mountains. Friendly doctors, all general practitioners, and nurses, both men and women, were everywhere; hot and cold water therapies that went way beyond footbaths were routine; and vegetarian diets with fresh fruit and vegetables, all grown in the surrounding fields, were required. Franz had his meals delivered to his room, as strict bed rest was ordered initially for him.

There was some diversion for patients. An orchestra and a band—composed of doctors, nurses, blacksmiths, welders, cooks, and farmhands—played periodically outdoors; Franz could hear them from his room. Although the Adventists did not believe in reading novels or plays, they served up platters of poetry, trays of natural history, and morsels of music books that would have richly nourished him. The chaplain, a short and skinny man with a large barrel chest, would have visited him every once in a while.

The Franz Rickaby Memorial Sundial, dedicated at a convocation on May 28, 1929, stands east of Bridges Hall of Music in Pomona College’s Memorial Court—a monument to Rickaby’s short-lived but inspirational tenure of seventeen months. The event’s program noted his interests in drama and ballads but recognized his broader reach: “The influence of Franz Rickaby . . . had a wider horizon than that of scholarship or the classroom. He was interested in people, particularly in young people, so that pupils were drawn to him with the bonds of a personal interest. All respected his scholarship, but even more all loved him.”

Lillian and Wunk visited regularly, walking to the Claremont station, taking the train to Loma Linda, and climbing the 119 stairs that led to the lobby. They invariably would have found Franz in his room, lying quietly, sometimes sleeping and sometimes reading. The weeks passed slowly and Lillian worried. The doctors ordered complete bed rest and gave Franz high doses of aspirin for his joint pain and digitalis for his shortness of breath.

In early May, believing that Franz was improving, the doctors removed his tonsils and sent him home, but within three days he was back at Loma Linda.
Linda, where he died on May 18. Lillian, a free thinker like her husband, had him cremated—one of only 16,000 people cremated that year in the United States.

Lillian after Franz

Although she was a fourth-generation Galesburgian who loved her hometown and shared its values and history, Lillian chose to stay in California. Her beloved grandfather had died in Galesburg a decade before. Her father, a Russian Jew, had long since abandoned her and her mother, and her stepfather had never really embraced her. Sadly, Lillian had become accustomed to loss, mastering self-reliance along the way. Armed with a teaching certificate and previous experience in an East Galesburg school, she found a teaching job and began to build a life as a single mother with her four-year-old son, Wunk, my father.

Lillian enjoyed the loyal friendship of Walter Hartley, Pomona’s organist and music director, and his wife, Edith Dykstra, a voice teacher. The Hartleys had befriended Franz and Lillian when the young couple first arrived in Claremont, and two years later, Walter played the organ at Franz’s funeral in Pomona’s elegant Bridges Hall.

In 1926, the Hartleys moved to Occidental College in northeastern Los Angeles, but they kept Lillian under their wings and introduced her to Edith’s widowed brother, Clarence Dykstra, a professor of government at University of California at Los Angeles. On Christmas Eve, 1927, they married. Clarence adopted Wunk, changing his name from Rickaby to Dykstra, and Lillian began the next chapter of her full and productive life at the side of a genial and talented man.

The Dykstras moved to Cincinnati, where Clarence served as the nation’s first city manager and Lillian became president of the Ohio League of Women Voters. Later they lived in Madison, Wisconsin, where Clarence was president of the University of Wisconsin. There they hosted monthly open houses for hundreds of professors and students, a variation on Franz’s “come on over and hear us eat.” In 1950, Clarence, now the provost of the University of California, Los Angeles campus, died watering their garden, leaving Lillian a widow again, less than sixty miles from where Franz had died. She was only fifty-six.

Peripatetic and independent, Lillian moved back to her beloved Midwest and to the dairy farm that she and Clarence had bought in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, in 1941. Following that purchase, she had enrolled in classes at the University of Wisconsin’s agricultural school, telling a reporter, “I want to learn to be a practical farmer, a real Wisconsin farmer, not a gentleman farmer.”

Franz Lee Rickaby Jr. (Wunk) was four and a half when his father died at Loma Linda. Adopted by Clarence Dykstra when he and Lillian married, he became Franz Rickaby Dykstra, better known as Dyke.

Courtesy of Gretchen Dykstra

Lilliam after Franz
After Clarence’s death, she returned and raised dairy cows (trademarking her Holsteins as Domini), pigs, and chickens for five years. She began to spend time on Cape Cod to be closer to Wunk, now living in Philadelphia, while maintaining her legal residence in Wisconsin for a time. “I want to lend a hand in relegating McCarthy to the limbo of forgotten things,” she explained.

In 1956, she moved permanently to Cape Cod and, known as Mrs. D., worked in a secondhand bookshop, befriending the curious, the intellectual, and the woebegone. She spent her final years at a Quaker retirement community outside Philadelphia, where she volunteered in the library, tracked down her long-lost Jewish cousins in Israel, and challenged her three granddaughters to question assumptions and take risks. In 1978, she suffered a stroke while watching PBS’s *Washington Week in Review* and died at the age of eighty-four. She willed her body to science.

Gretchen Dykstra lives in Brooklyn, New York. A consultant to not-for-profit institutions and a writer, she was founding president of the Times Square Alliance and the 9/11 National Memorial Foundation and Commissioner of the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs under Mayor Michael Bloomberg. She is currently writing a memoir about her years in China.
very so often, I go back home to San Francisco, where I was born. When I was a child, every religion on earth had a home there. Riding the trolley, I heard different languages. At rush hour, weary passengers gave up their seats to the elderly or the poor. How nice, I thought. It is good that people are kind enough to do that.

San Francisco is much like other “gateway” cities: noisy, crowded, perhaps our best West Coast counterpart to Manhattan. As I mark three-quarters of a century in age, I still feel deeply connected to its beating heart. In the daylight, I would feel safe today walking its streets or looking for shells on the sand across its sprawling ocean beach.

The chance of earthquakes and an extraordinary tolerance for lifestyle diversity still play arbiter to San Francisco’s destiny. No stranger to crime, Chinatown still parades its New Year dragon down Grant Avenue, while the Mission District’s Latino community welcomes sunshine that almost always emerges after Twin Peaks melts the ocean fog.

This is the story of a woman and a man who found each other there as our nation caught its breath between the world wars. The city, the redwoods, and the meadows of lupine and Indian paintbrush smiled at them. Today they might have discovered their passion through social networks, but then, ah, then all they needed were the free gifts of fresh air, time, sunshine, and rain.

A NEW HOMELAND

Margaret Emma Lydia Heyde loved to walk in the park in Tiflis, the capital of the Republic of Georgia, where she lived with her parents, Theodore and Ida, and her older sister, Gertrude Emma Catherine. After church on Sundays, the family visited the city park, where peacocks strutted past them, flaunting their feathers, and swans swam in the lake. Then they hastened home, where Margaret and Gertrude helped Ida in the kitchen while Theodore retreated to the library to smoke.
his pipe. By the late afternoon, the Sunday feast was ready: leg of lamb with mint jelly, cabbage rolls with sweet potatoes and sour cream, cranberries and pomegranates, fig jam with chestnuts and apricots, and always toasts to thank God for the feast. It was rare that a neighbor did not drop by.

To Margaret, the routine was reassuring. With her open, trusting, childlike mind, she rejoiced in the pure, sweet pleasure of being alive, in the certainty reinforced each day that she was loved by her family, and in the delicate fragrance of the lilac and honeysuckle bushes that grew near the birdbath in her garden.

During the first few years of the twentieth century, the Russian Republic of Georgia still seemed like the fairytale kingdom Margaret thought it was, glowing with a cultural and historical heritage all its own. But the revolutionary years between 1905 and 1916 brought civil unrest to the region, as the lower classes struggled to oppose communist political rule. A successful businessman and former tugboat captain on the Baltic Sea, Theodore had learned to trust his instincts and feared for the safety of his family.

In early September 1916, the Heydes packed their most precious belongings—books, clothes, sheet music, art, Margaret’s Russian nesting dolls, Ida’s hand-sewn Russian costumes, and Theodore’s silk hat—in as many trunks and satchels as they could carry and journeyed on the trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok, and from there by sea to Shanghai. There they boarded the steamship Ecuador, one of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company fleet, and sailed for nearly six weeks across the Pacific Ocean to San Francisco. In her diary, twelve-year-old Margaret anticipated their arrival: “The day after tomorrow we will arrive. . . . Father asked me to stand on the deck beside him to watch the sun go down. The sky was all pink and purple. The ship was rocking back and forth again. That always seems to happen when the sun is setting. I feel like a prisoner in a cage that is moving toward the light and to freedom. I am thirsty for my new homeland.”

**THE JOURNEY ENDS**

On the morning of November 14, 1916, Margaret awoke to find the Ecuador safely docked at San Francisco’s Pier One. These diary entries record her new experiences.

“Our heavy suitcases were taken to a shed and we got into a car that drove us to the Hotel Altamont and then we went to a vegetarian restaurant that we had got an address for in Shanghai. While we were walking, I looked around. At last we found the eating place where we were going and sat down. A lot of the people looked like they were Chinese. Then we understood that we had to take a tray, knife, fork, spoon, and napkin, and push the tray down a path and take what we wanted . . . .

“I liked San Francisco the first moment I saw it. Sometimes it is emotional for me when I think how far away the place is where we lived and where my old friends and relatives are. But to think about that now is not good, and I must start to learn English. Mother and father came back today from looking for a place for us to live, but they did not find anywhere that was suitable and had enough space . . . .

“Today is Sunday, and . . . we went for a walk in a park. It is called the Golden Gate Park. I think it is the biggest park in the whole world. It is much bigger than the park in Tiflis, and we could not see it all. It was very good to be there. We saw lots of bushes with pink and red and purple flowers and lots of birds and squirrels. There was a big lake with ducks swimming in it and lots of pigeons and little boats and some big windmills that turn around when the wind blows . . . .
California Bound

(Above) The Heydes—Theodore, Ida, Gertrude, and Margaret (far left)—posed for this family portrait in 1914, two years before Russia’s revolutionary turmoil precipitated Theodore’s decision to leave Tiflis, capital city of the Russian Republic of Georgia, for the long voyage to America. Fleeing in haste, the Heydes abandoned their elegant home and garden on Slolaki Street, near downtown Tiflis, taking only their clothes, books, sheet music, and the peasant costumes Ida had sewn for her daughters.

Courtesy of Daimar Paddock Robinson

(Above right) From October 8, 1916, to November 14, 1916, the S.S. Ecuador was home to an impressionable twelve-year-old Margaret Heyde. Leaving Shanghai, she wrote in her diary: “Today we boarded the ship that is going to America. The name of our ship is the Ecuador. Father says it is part of the fleet of ships that belong to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. I think I will always remember these days. The deck floor of the ship never stops bouncing up and down.”

Courtesy of San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (1848–1925) was a major participant in Gold Rush transportation and Pacific Basin trade and migrations. Its shipboard logo adorns this page from Margaret’s diary. In one entry describing the voyage, she wrote: “The ocean has become very quiet and smooth like a carpet of silk. The full moon is shining on the water. I like to stand at the very tip of the boat where I can see the waves flowing past on both sides. The boat sways and it is fun to watch how it cuts through the waves. I feel like I am on a swing, and I have to hold on very tightly or the wind could blow me over the edge.”

Courtesy of Daimar Paddock Robinson
“Today we went to Russian Hill, the place in San Francisco where many people go to live when they come here from Russia. I walked up and down the street there and listened to the old women speak Russian to each other. I think it must be a comfort to them to speak to each other that way and to tell each other the things they remember. I will try not to forget my Russian and German, but I think that may be difficult because everybody in school is speaking in English . . . .

“Not long ago Father read in the newspaper that there is a revolution going on in Russia. Father says it is much better for us to be here in America. Trude and I are doing much better in school now. We understand almost all the words of English, and most new words make sense if I take a moment to figure out what the person who is speaking is meaning to say, and what the person is thinking . . . .

“Today was Easter. We went to Golden Gate Park for all day. We took food with us and ate lunch in the park. Some children were searching for colored eggs in the grass. Then we climbed on a streetcar which took us to the ocean. How beautiful the ocean was. It makes great big waves that have white edges and roll up onto the sand and then slide back again. I tried to imagine our ship coming there from so far away. The ocean is so big that if I look out where our ship came from, I cannot see any land at all. We ate lunch on the sand and Trude drew a picture of the ocean. Father got a job as a night watchman at a furniture store near by which is a good job for him.

Meanwhile, back in Tiflis, life could not have been more tumultuous. The persistent voice of danger that had tormented Theodore was now firmly rooted. In June 1917, less than twelve months after the Heydes had departed, the Bolsheviks began to wage a cultural coup. In May 1918, a new national flag of Georgia declared the land an independent state. But the dream of a free, independent Georgia was short-lived: in 1936, it became one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union, and its capital city was renamed Tbilisi.

**A FARMHOUSE BIRTH**

Three years before the 1896 coronation of the ill-fated Russian czar Nicholas II, a birth occurred in America. On a cloudy and windy Midwestern day in January, David Anthony Paddock was delivered on the kitchen table in his parents’ farmhouse next to the meager winter warmth of the wood-burning stove. His parents, Hosea and Janette Paddock, were frugal, humble, god-fearing souls devoted to hard work. Hosea was a tenth-generation descendant of Richard Warren, who had sailed to America on the Mayflower in 1620; his bloodline reached back to the royal Stuarts of Scotland.

A farmer, Hosea was a strong, tough, driven individual of the kind most likely to survive the bleak realities of life on an Illinois farm in the early 1900s. He adopted the lifestyle shaped by the demands of the church: formal service on Sunday, prayer meeting on Wednesday, covenant meeting on Saturday afternoon, and supper afterward. By the time he met Janette Styles, he also had built a business for himself as editor of the Lake County Independent in the rural hamlet of Libertyville, Illinois. He later purchased the Enterprise newspaper franchise in nearby Palatine. Soon he was printing newspapers for six local communities, including several pages of news in German for immigrant families struggling to learn the English language. He bought a German typeface and hired a German typesetter to make sure that the writing was meaningful and easy to understand.

By 1900, Hosea had acquired six rural franchises and purchased the Cook County Herald’s independent printing plant in Arlington Heights, Illinois. He and Janette would have seven children: Stuart, Charles, Lucile, Daisy, Jeannette, David, and
Elizabeth, who did not survive. David ran errands for the printing plant, but a life limited to work and the church was not for him. In 1917, soon after he turned twenty-three, he left home for the nearby urban center of Chicago and joined the United States Navy. In 1922, having completed his tour of duty and scaled Mount Rainier, he headed to the fabled city of San Francisco to explore his prospects in that liberal, multicultural metropolis.

For better or worse, the Paddock family printer’s ink was still flowing through his veins, and David was hired by the highly regarded San Francisco Chronicle. He rented a room at the downtown YMCA, as he had done in Chicago, and every evening walked down to the huge Chronicle printing plant. His task was to place each lead letter of each word in each sentence of type in the correct order, plus all the proper punctuation marks and spaces, for the printing press.

The work required intense concentration, and eye strain and headaches were a fact of David’s life. He fought back with plenty of fresh air and exercise on the weekends, when he enjoyed his well-deserved night off and took Sunday hikes with the local Sierra Club. Sighing with relief in

David A. Paddock (1893–1961) found opportunity for adventure during his years in the United States Navy in support of the Allies in World War I. In September and October 1917, he was stationed at the Navy Yard on League Island, Pennsylvania, where, he wrote, he had “plenty to eat” and “good training for health and improved morals.” By February 1918, he had joined the thousands of troops overseas, returning to New York in March 1918, just prior to Allied victory. When his shore leave was over, he began the 5,000-mile Navy trip to the Hawaiian Islands in July 1919 aboard the New Mexico, the flagship of the Pacific Fleet. By the mid-1920s, he had begun a new civilian life in San Francisco.

Courtesy of Daimar Paddock Robinson

The composing room of this Chico, California, newspaper, circa 1921, gives an idea of the setting at San Francisco’s Chronicle, where David operated the Linotype machines that produced the daily paper. One day a hot-lead machine handle sliced off the end of one of his fingers, a common hazard of the task. The weight and clamor of these mammoth contraptions, which cast molten lead into one-line “slugs” of type, surely fed his appetite for a change of scenery on the weekends to the peaceful beauty of Muir Woods.

California Historical Society, CHS2011.521.tif
1931 as stock market stress faded away, California’s north coast residents had glanced around and seized upon something only their beloved Golden State could promote as its own and gave it a name, the Redwood Empire.

This glorious, pure, elegant environment of unique beauty existed nowhere else on earth. Marking the years with rings clearly visible in a cross section of its trunk, the coast redwood is naturally resistant to fire and decay, living for thousands of years if it is in a protected environment. Seizing the moment, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad promoted the benefits of hiking. “To all who walk as an avocation,” the railroad’s brochure declared, “there is one ideal region which is visited and revisited yet always retains its enticement, the County of Marin with the bay on one side and the ocean on the other. Coastland trails skirt the Pacific, revealing sudden glimpses of mesas and cliffs, lanes among madrone, Manzanita, bay leaves and azaleas, and redwoods that follow the courses of upland streams and circle lakes and lagoons that flash in the sun.”

Few centuries in modern history have embraced more bloodshed than the twentieth. Yet San Francisco kept its eye steadily on the here and now. The City by the Bay clung to its hills at the Pacific shore, secure in its trust that the very diversity of its people would act as glue for the spirit, making them stronger and more resilient than they might otherwise have been.
MARGARET FINDS LOVE

Meanwhile, Margaret Heyde was grasping a new sense of who she was and embracing life with the zest of someone discovering the power of simply being alive, young, and happy in the freewheeling City by the Bay, whose geography and history had made it a unique “melting pot” of races, languages, religions, and cultures unmatched by any other community on the West Coast.

Gertrude was attending nursing school, a practical and sensible career choice for a young woman in the 1920s, but the family could not afford to pay for their younger daughter to train for a career as well. After completing high school, Margaret found work as an errand runner and office helper at the Parmelee Art Company, where she used her talent as a writer of elegant handwritten script to pen homilies that were framed and sold.

She soon discovered that the Sierra Club sponsored hikes across the bay. One Sunday morning she boarded a cable car and caught the ferry boat at the Hyde Street Pier. It was a beautiful spring day typical of the season, with a gentle breeze that played with the waves separating the city from the hills to the north. Seagulls riding the strong waves swooped in from the powerful ocean current, and sunshine washed the highlights on Margaret’s brown hair with gold. She sat on the upper deck of the ferry boat, oblivious to the wind, a young woman smiling because she was simply happy to be alive. David saw her there, and by the end of that day they were already falling in love.

In a gesture suggesting today’s ecology mindset, the Northwestern Pacific in the early 1930s embraced the spirit of treading gently on the environment and leaving campgrounds as clean, or cleaner, than how one found them. Special fares for hikers were established so that it was possible to travel roundtrip from San Francisco to fifteen different hiking hubs and home again for less than one dollar.

Cool and mild and moist, the temperature remained between 40 and 75 degrees all year long. On the eastern slope, the Ocean View Trail took hikers to the road above Muir Woods, where the Alpine Lodge offered cots, blankets, a fireplace, and a kitchen to hikers seeking a sleepover. Before long, Margaret would rise before the sun on Sunday mornings, steam four artichokes on her kitchen stove, patiently scrape the soft inner heart meat from each leaf into a mixing bowl, add a few drops of lemon juice, and make artichoke sandwiches for her hiking outings with David.

Margaret and David were caught up in the sweet spirit of a love nurtured by genuine affection for each other and their deep love of nature. On any given weekend, they could choose from such delights as an excursion to Lake Lagunitas, a stroll in the Mount Diablo hills east of Oakland, rope and rock climbing at Wildcat Caves east of The City by the Bay clung to its hills at the Pacific shore, secure in its trust that the very diversity of its people would act as glue for the spirit, making them stronger and more resilient than they might otherwise have been.
Lure of the Redwoods

Accessibility to the natural wonders north of San Francisco—whose counties comprised the Redwood Empire—was highlighted in the abundant booster publications designed to attract tourists and new residents to the state.

A guide published by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad offered trail maps and ferry routes to hikers of Muir Woods, and windshield stickers were popular souvenirs for motorists visiting Mount Tamalpais. In a 1929 brochure, the Redwood Empire Association expanded the allure to “the most kaleidoscopic succession of wondrously enchanting vistas” of the Redwood Empire, boasting “a land where travel dreams come true”—including 2,000 miles of fishing streams and other popular sports; 97 percent of the world’s redwoods; and mountains, lakes, caves, and other “natural wonders.”

A Sierra Club booklet promoted a trip led by David Paddock to Lone Tree Spring on February 12, 1933. The site was a favorite of David and Margaret and the natural location for their marriage on January 10, 1935.
Berkeley, a stroll to Azalea Spring near Fairfax, or simply a walk on the ocean beach from the Cliff House to Fleishhacker Zoo. There was no question of their devotion, and on January 10, 1935, Margaret and David were married at Lone Tree on the top of Mount Tamalpais, wearing their hiking boots, climbing pants, and suede jackets. It would be difficult to imagine a happier or prouder married couple. Most Sunday mornings, rain or shine, David and Margaret took the Hyde Street cable car to the ferry boat that took them to Mill Valley, where they strolled, hand in hand, up the steps to the ridge above town and down to Muir Woods. It was as if nature itself led them there, seducing them with a sound only they could hear. With the music of Redwood Creek to delight them, the two would find a spot to share among the ferns and lichens in the shade of a redwood tree.

When they realized a baby was coming, they found a big wood-and-plaster home on Noe Street, one block east of Castro Street on a hill above Noe Valley on the eastern side of Twin Peaks. The building was sturdy and did not shake at all during frequent mild earthquakes because it was firmly anchored on solid rock. As a rule, the fog that often drifted inland off the ocean in the early mornings melted away by the time...
it reached them, and sunshine bathed the Paddocks' small backyard in sunshine more often than not. Since everyone used the trolley cars or buses, there was no need for a garage.

The home had an apartment in the basement with a separate entrance for Theodore and Ida. There were three bedrooms on the upper floor so that Gertrude could complete her training as a registered nurse, a pantry where the iceman brought big blocks of ice once a week, and a cellar where Margaret stored the fruits and vegetables she canned.

With David working the night shift at the Chronicle and Margaret her day job at the Parmelee Art Company, the couple communicated a great deal via written messages. “Dear Dave,” wrote Margaret one morning before she left for work, “My mother told me she heard you sneeze when you came home before sunrise. I surely hope you have not caught a cold. You have worked so hard and slept so little that you are probably wearing yourself out! Please dear, for me, take a sun bath in the back yard and rest today.”

She penned a prayer “that I hope will keep you safe,” in another letter. “Whene’re thou be away from me, this little prayer I pray for thee: God keep thee ever day and night, face to the light, thine armour bright. That no despite thine honor smite, God keep thee ever, my heart’s delight, and guard thee whole sweet body and soul, my perfect knight.”

“Dearest,” wrote David to Margaret soon after they discovered she was pregnant, “your doctor said it was time for you to quit your job at Parmeele’s and get all the rest, sunshine, and fresh air possible. Don’t feel bad. Very few women would have continued to work as long as you have.” Later, he pointed out, “I am always trying to find something you would enjoy as you are surely bored waiting at home for the baby to be born. I enjoyed very much our good rest together on Saturday. If you should decide to deny me any physical embrace, I would still love you forever although, of course, it would add to our love to have both the rest and the embrace. I will always be your lover as well as your friend.”

In the early morning hours of January 31, 1936, David wrote, “Dear Marge, Walking up the street at 4 a.m. this morning, I saw a light on in your room. I hope no one is sick. I just now stopped writing to climb the stairs and I could hear you gasping for breath. Then you were quiet and I decided not to disturb you. I know you need as much rest as possible for the sake of the baby.”
Two hours later, he and Margaret, now thirty-two, took a taxi to Stanford Hospital, a full-service city facility. After a siege of prolonged labor pains, their daughter was born. They named her Daimar (“Da” for David, “mar” for Margaret, and “i” in the middle for herself) and added a middle name, Fern, for the ferns that grew amid the trunks of their beloved redwood trees. No one who knew them was surprised to receive a birth announcement picturing a baby hanging in a redwood tree, as if the child had somehow burst into being right there amid its sheltering branches.

**FAMILY LIFE**

Pride filled the new parents. David placed his daughter in her stroller and was among the first in line to push a child so young across the Golden Gate Bridge when it opened on May 27, 1937 to foot traffic only. Margaret and David confided to their closest friends that they lamented the spoiling of the natural beauty of the Golden Gate before the bridge was built. “However,” wrote Margaret to her in-laws in Illinois, “we must acknowledge the wonderful achievement of man in building such a magnificent structure, and though we personally hate it, David and I cannot stand in the way of progress.”

No baby could have been blessed with more patient, honest love than little Daimar. No need or wish of hers went unmet for long. Her grandma Ida played the piano for her every day on the heavy mahogany instrument they had bought soon after they purchased the house. On Saturday evenings after dinner—almost always a leg of lamb with cabbage, reminiscent of the family’s traditional Sunday feast in Tiflis—Ida would play some of the tunes she remembered on the piano and reminisce. Before she could walk, let alone talk, Daimar enjoyed rides on her father’s strong shoulders—at the zoo, on donkeys, on the merry-go-round in Golden Gate Park, and along the beach.

The Chronicle found a fill-in Linotype operator for David in the summer of 1938, and he and Margaret celebrated their third wedding anniversary, albeit a little late, in Yosemite National Park. They climbed the 3.4 miles of the famous John Muir Trail from Happy Isles past Vernal Falls to Nevada Falls. Refreshed by the mist and the warmth of the sun, they crossed the Merced River just above the waterfall and continued to climb, stopping to touch the granite boulders that had been polished by glaciers for centuries as if a sculptor had shaped them from marble slabs.
It was too late to hike back to the valley, so they cheerfully wrapped themselves in the blanket David had brought in his knapsack and let the river’s music lull them to sleep in each other’s arms. It never occurred to them to fear danger, for they were in the place in the world where they felt most secure. The next morning, awakened by the sunlight, they returned by the same path they had climbed. By 1939, David had enrolled both his wife and daughter as life members of the Sierra Club and as members of the Tamalpais Conservation Club.

Despite the trauma of the encroaching world war, a world’s fair was held in the middle of the bay separating San Francisco and Oakland on Treasure Island, later a launching pad for the United States Navy. Determined to celebrate the simple joy of being alive, David fetched Margaret, placed three-year-old Daimar in her stroller, as he had when the Golden Gate Bridge had opened, and took them on a ferry to the fair. The Golden Gate International Exposition and its theme “Pageant of the Pacific” were heralded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a radio address: “San Francisco stands at the doorway to the sea that roars upon the shores of all these nations. . . . May this, America’s World Fair on the Pacific in 1939, truly serve all nations in symbolizing their achievements of all the ages past—and in amalgamating their destinies, one with every other, through the ages to come.”

For David especially, sunshine was the elixir of health. John Muir himself had sensed its power when he herded sheep at Yosemite in the summer of 1869. As he watched the sun rise, Muir wrote: “The pale rose and purple sky changing softly to daffodil yellow and white, sunbeams pouring through the passes between the peaks and over the Yosemite domes, making their edges burn; the silver firs in the middle ground catch the glow on their spiry tops, and our camp grove fills and thrills with the glorious light.”
A PATCHWORK OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Cradled by its two vast oceans, the United States imparted the bloodshed of World War II to its homebound citizens through the filter of distance. With space limitations experienced by its more powerful East Coast counterpart, San Francisco had established close-knit cultural neighborhoods, each with its own churches, grocery stores, clothing shops, and restaurants, so that a person could usually meet most of his immediate needs within a few blocks from home, and differing races, religions, and languages could coexist.

January 1940 was a particularly joyous time for the Paddocks. With their daughter old enough to enjoy being cared for by her grandparents and another baby not yet under way, the couple felt free to indulge themselves in Sierra Club activities. On Saturday, December 30, 1939, they enjoyed a dinner at Myrtledale Hot Springs. The next day they climbed the hills near St. Helena in the morning, played croquet in the afternoon, and celebrated New Year’s Eve at a banquet. The following weekend found the happy couple at Redwood Canyon Regional Park and Deer Park.

The early years of the 1940s were among the happiest for the little family. In November 1941, just a few weeks prior to Pearl Harbor, a son was born. They named him Stuart, as every first-born Paddock son had been named, in honor of their Stuart bloodline. Margaret loved being a mother to her daughter and son, and often, when the family needed to stock up on health food, David took Daimar shopping with him all the way down to Mission Street to give his wife some time alone to rest and give little Stuart Roy her undivided attention.

Time was sweet, pure, and warmed by the affection between Daimar and her parents in their magical city. David and Daimar continued their outings to the zoo, the library, and Golden Gate Park. On Saturday mornings, there were lessons for children by Rudolph Ganz, conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Projecting a picture of Beethoven on a giant screen on stage, Ganz would describe how a terrified young Ludwig van Beethoven would hide in the attic of his house till his drunken father fell asleep. To Daimar, the chandelier in the opera house ceiling was a giant star of gleaming golden and purple jewels.

After Pearl Harbor, it was feared that Japan might expand its offensive and target San Francisco. In response, every house had plywood boards for each window; when a siren sounded at night,
they were placed over each window to extinguish all lights, reducing the city’s visibility. Although an attack never occurred, San Franciscans probably slept better for their efforts.

During daytime air-raid drills, Daimar crawled underneath her desk at school and wore a dog tag indicating her type O blood. Then in September 1943, Theodore, who had been so proud to become a naturalized citizen in 1924, succumbed to stress and illnesses incident to age and died, leaving Ida as a sometime cook and a gentle grandmother. More changes loomed ahead.

In 1948, David resigned as a typesetter. He had begun to notice a trembling in his hands that made it impossible to operate the Linotype efficiently. Sometimes several days passed with no “shakes” at all, but then without warning they resumed. In an effort to control them, he would grab one hand with the other, but to no avail until his body calmed down on its own.

David still left the house on Noe Street to go grocery shopping, for his role was to provide for his family, but once outside, he found he could not manage his walking. Gathering speed, he would lunge desperately to grab hold of a telephone pole or fence post to stop his headlong thrust down the hill. Desperate, Margaret would send Stuart Roy, now scarcely ten years old, to...
stop his father from falling. Stuart, of course, could do little to help and developed a deep sense of shame and low self-esteem of his own that impacted upon his future self-confidence.

THE SUTRO LIBRARY

Margaret knew that she needed a challenge to preserve her confidence during this difficult time. Caring for her husband all day long, every day, was a burden that ate away at her hunger for the beauty of nature that had nurtured her spirit. She needed a job that took her away from the house long enough to heal her sagging spirit, one that, however insignificant, filled a genuine, meaningful need and ultimately made a contribution toward something of lasting value. In 1953, she finally found it at the Sutro Library.

Adolph Sutro, San Francisco’s twenty-fourth mayor, had made millions of dollars as a mining magnate during the legendary California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. In addition to his estate and other properties, he had acquired a collection of almost 250,000 valuable old books and virtually priceless manuscripts—among the largest and finest private libraries in the nineteenth century. In 1913, the holdings that survived the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire were given to the state of California.

Sutro’s Sir Joseph Banks collection specialized in English and Mexican history, the Spanish conquest of the West, voyages and travels, and the history of science, technology, botany, medicine, and religion. In addition, it housed the second largest collection on the West Coast for local genealogy and California history. In the library were copies of first folios of Shakespeare’s plays, many ancient Hebrew scrolls, and a collection of sixteenth-century antiphonals, huge volumes with beautifully illuminated lettering large enough so that the whole congregation could read together.

From 1953 to 1969, Margaret Paddock worked for the Sutro Library Branch of the California State Library, whose approximately 100,000 volumes—some dating to the twelfth century—she helped preserve. In 1957, State Librarian Carma Zimmerman praised her efforts: “It is excellent that after all the years of neglect of the book bindings in the collection you have been able to clean so many of the bindings and restore and preserve them through special treatment . . . . [Y]our work . . . is of great permanent value to the State Library and the State as a whole.” This photograph shows Margaret at the library in 1963, six years before her retirement, with rare antiphonals in the foreground.

Courtesy of Daimar Paddock Robinson
Coaxing ancient, frayed bindings and crumbling parchment back to life with the meticulous care of a surgeon healing a sick human being, Margaret waged patient, tireless war on the nefarious bookworm and the debilitating harm of dust, sunlight, and mildew. Her freehand script had precisely the ornate elegance of which so many old publications were fond. Margaret worked twice as hard at her job as she needed to. Hired as a clerk to ship interlibrary loans by public request, she struggled to restore and preserve the old books while handling the mailing, earning a personal letter of commendation from Carma R. Zimmerman, the state librarian in Sacramento.¹¹

In September 1960, the Sutro Library was given a new home on the campus of the University of San Francisco near Golden Gate Park, and a new director, Richard Dillon, who was keen on research and publication of historical memorabilia of the western United States. Margaret’s diligence freed up his time to produce a full-length, meticulously researched biography of the explorer Meriwether Lewis who, together with William Clark, had been sent to establish a route across the northwestern United States to the Pacific Coast in 1802–4 and to explore the lands of the Far West.

DECLINING HEALTH

Meanwhile, David’s physical condition grew steadily worse. Margaret sought out David’s military benefits from the Veterans Administration and the Typographical Union to which he had faithfully paid dues during the twenty-six years of his employment at the Chronicle. It was difficult to convince officials that David indeed had a handicap. She wrote letter after letter explaining why the “shaking palsy” made it impossible for her to care for him at home. Frantic, exhausted, and overwhelmed with sadness, Margaret wept.

In winter 1960, David’s condition was finally diagnosed as Parkinson’s disease, a nerve-based “shaking palsy” that grows increasingly severe over time. As a former Navy man, David was...
taken to the Nelson Holdeman Hospital in Yountville, a veterans’ home northeast of San Francisco, in what is now the famous wine-growing region of Napa Valley. Every Saturday during the spring of 1961, Margaret, often with Daimar, boarded a Greyhound bus for the two-and-a-half-hour journey to the hospital.

“It is a pitiful sight to see David literally dragged between two orderlies as if he were a piece of driftwood,” Margaret wrote to her husband’s oldest brother, Stuart, who was now running the newspaper empire in Arlington Heights, Illinois.12 Alas, there were no medicines yet at that time to stem the tide of Parkinson’s disease, and on July 30, 1961, David passed away at age sixty-eight.

The Veterans Administration provided for David’s burial at the Golden Gate National Cemetery, just south of San Francisco, with space reserved next to him for Margaret when her time came. Shortly after his burial, Margaret found a note scribbled in David’s shaky script. He had written, “If I should die, do not mourn . . . remember me instead as a redwood tree, growing straight and tall in the sunshine.”13 This thought gave Margaret much needed comfort as she faced the future.

Ida was growing feeble as well. Margaret and Gertrude had taken her to a small, independent rest home near a small town in the foothills of the Sierra that provided personal care and fresh air for just six elderly residents. Heartsick and weary when her mother lapsed into unconsciousness on August 19, 1961, Margaret sat alone, weeping in the small rural hospital’s foyer when she heard a familiar voice ask, “Don’t you know me?” It was the doctor who had delivered both of her own two children. He had chosen to end his medical career in the calmer atmosphere of the small-town medical facility.

That fall, Daimar found a teaching job in northern California and left home to establish her own life, but Stuart had decided to remain in the family home and establish a career there in computer technology. For a month or so, Margaret considered selling the house but ultimately decided against it. There was too much history inside those walls. By 1969, she was ready to retire from the physical demands of the library.

There was nothing unusual about the evening of January 26, 1986. In fact, Margaret had been feeling so well that Stuart had helped her down the stairs from her bedroom into the dining room next to the kitchen. He fixed her a warm cup of soup and established her in a comfortable chair with pillows behind her head and a warm afghan tucked around her legs. He turned on the television, reassured that his tender care might help to make his mother feel better. But sadly, it was not to be. Suddenly, without warning, a sound emanating from her frightened him. It began as a quiet sort of moan, and then became a loud, agonizing cry that seemed to rise from the deepest core of her being.

Alarmed, Stuart was by Margaret’s side in a flash, one hand on her brow and the other at her wrist, feeling for a pulse. Her forehead was cold. He could feel no pulse, nor movement coming from her chest. Frantically, he pried open her mouth and placed his ear there, hoping somehow to catch the sound of her breathing. Lifting her head, he saw on Margaret’s face not the agonizing grimace of pain but a peaceful smile of contentment. In her final moments of life, he believed, she no doubt was remembering the redwood trees, imagining she was walking there, arm in arm, next to the man she loved.

Daimar Paddock Robinson has been a writer, photographer, symphony and opera critic, and volunteer English teacher in Namibia, Africa. She lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Or millennia, man has been intrigued by changes in the human and natural landscapes that surround him. Though time and circumstance may vary the object of our wonder, no generation is immune from the allure of the past. Who among us is not enthralled by Heinrich Schliemann’s quest 140 years ago for the historic foundations of ancient Troy, or the discovery within living memory of King Tutankhamen’s tomb? Los Angeles, our own city of dreams, is no exception, though its unique bounty is measured in decades rather than centuries. Far removed from a time when archaeologists could luxuriate in the certainty that the secrets of yesterday awaited discovery, our frenzied push into the future is now more likely to obliterate than build upon the rubble of past ages.

Fortunately, the City of Angels has been blessed in recent years with a growing appreciation of its rich history. Many worthwhile efforts are under way to preserve its heritage, from the geographic (the banks of the Los Angeles River), to the cultural (music of local native peoples), to the architectural (domestic palaces that rival any in the country).

Despite these efforts, much of our precious southern California heritage has, indeed, been lost—priceless threads of the social fabric that once defined our communities. As the physical evidence of the city’s past disappears, there is all the more reason to record the excavations of the mind: the simple stories that inhabit the hearts and minds of Angelenos past and present—a gift to the future preserved with no less felicity than the protective sands of time entombing ancient civilizations.1

PROLOGUE

My great-uncle John Knipscheer (Johnny Owens to his business associates) used to say, “We dye for the stars.” And that is exactly what he did at Owens Master Carpet Dyers on the northwest corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Lillian Way during Hollywood’s golden age. “The shop,” as it was affectionately known by family, was headquarters for the cleaning, dyeing, and installation (laying to old-timers) of what was considered the height of domestic luxury: wall-to-wall wool woven carpeting in strikingly beautiful colors and shades. Among the shop’s clientele were
the movie studios and Hollywood stars from the late 1930s to the early 1960s.

Knipscheer was typical of many of his generation in his quest for the good life and his conviction that no better place existed to pursue one’s dreams than Los Angeles. Born in Oxnard, California, in 1901, the oldest son of nine children, he was blessed with a close-knit family and loving parents who knew the value of hard work. His mother Jane Delia Roussey’s family—the Roussesys and Petits—had left the Haute-Saône region of eastern France in the early nineteenth century. Upon landing in Philadelphia in 1830, Jane’s paternal grandfather, Nicolas Roussey, and his family walked over 200 miles to Frenchville in central Pennsylvania, where they were among the area’s first settlers. The Petits followed, joining this community of farmers, hunters of bears, wolves, and panthers, and expert woodsmen and raftsmen.

Jane’s parents, Jean Baptiste Roussey and Henrietta Petit, left Frenchville in 1866 to farm in Wellsville, Kansas, where Jane was born in 1873. Her maternal grandfather, Jean Baptiste Petit, continued the journey west in 1874 to what is now Ventura County, then a relatively unsettled part of the state. Jane remained in Kansas, teaching school. In 1899, she married Robert Bruce Knipscheer, who had worked on the Roussy farm. Robert’s father, Theodore, had arrived in the United States from Prussia in the 1850s, worked as a saddle and harness maker in Illinois,
and in 1863 married Anna Sophia Bruce, whose family had roots in Barbados and Hartford, Connecticut.

Soon after their marriage, Jane and Robert (my great-grandparents) left Kansas to join Jane’s family in California. By that time, the Petits and Roussesys were well-established farmers and ranchers in Oxnard. In 1903, Jane, Robert, and their growing family moved sixty-five miles south to Los Angeles. Though her family felt that their daughter had married beneath herself, Jane remained close to her Oxnard relatives throughout her life while also thriving in Los Angeles with her hardworking husband and nine children.

**EARLY YEARS IN LOS ANGELES**

In their first years in Los Angeles, Jane and Robert lived at 712 West 18th Street (now lost under the Santa Monica Freeway interchange with the Harbor Freeway in central Los Angeles). For a time, Robert worked for a laundry company, keeping a horse and delivery wagon in the backyard. Alarmed at the living conditions there for Jane and her family, Jane’s brothers and sisters in Oxnard bought them a house in East Los Angeles at 3521 Manitou Avenue in Lincoln Heights, still very modest but apparently an improvement. From the neighborhood Catholic school and convent, Sacred Heart, Robert procured an old music room, which he transported and placed at the back of his new property as sleeping quarters for the children. The family remained there until 1928, when the youngest child, Jane Marie, was ready to enter high school, at which time they moved across town to a house at 5342 9th Avenue, near the Crenshaw district.

During the First World War, Robert would take his young sons with him to work at the San Pedro shipyards. They would drive early in the morning in Robert’s Model T Ford to the train stations at Aliso Street—a major hub for the

Most of Jane Delia Roussey’s family headed west to southern California in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Jane stayed behind to teach school in Wellsville, Kansas. In 1899, she married Robert Bruce Knipscheer in Baldwin City, Kansas. The maternal side of Robert’s family had fled during the English Civil War (1642–51) to Barbados, where they became major protagonists in the political turmoil of the times; one ancestor, the wealthy and swashbuckling royalist Colonel Humphrey Walrond, served as deputy governor from 1660 to 1663.

*Courtesy of Alan Sielen*
Robert held a variety of jobs to support his growing family. For a time, he made deliveries for a laundry company in Los Angeles in a horse-drawn wagon, as illustrated in this 1907 photograph of Robert with six of his nine children. His chief line of work, however, was as a blacksmith for the Southern Pacific Railroad until 1911 and for the City of Los Angeles Shops. He died in 1939; Jane would live until 1965.

Courtesy of Alan Sielen

Robert and Jane Knipscheer moved their family to Lincoln Heights in 1913. By the early 1900s, the area, then known as East Los Angeles, hosted major tourist attractions in and around Eastlake Park (later Lincoln Park), including the California Alligator Farm, the Los Angeles Ostrich Farm, and the Selig Zoo and Movie Studio. Its early streets were named after prominent citizens, including John S. Griffith, John Gately Downey, and Mayor William Henry Workman.

California Historical Society/USC Special Collections
northern district of the Pacific Electric Railway—and then take the Salt Lake Line to Terminal Island. The train often was loaded to capacity, and Robert would hide a couple of the kids under the seats to avoid paying the fare. The fact that the boys were only in their early teens did not appear an impediment to employment at a time when extra hands at the shipyard were as welcome as extra money at home.

At the shipyard, John, the oldest son, worked at the end of a line of rivet “heaters” and “passers,” which included his younger brothers Joe (“Red”) and Robert Justin (Bob, my grandfather). As a “bucker-up,” John would hold a weight on one end of a rivet as it was driven into place. Working on a freighter, Joe was hit in the face by a piece of hot flying metal, which left him blind in one eye for the rest of his life (but which did not prevent him from driving army trucks in California during the Second World War).

For pleasure, Robert, a blacksmith known for his great strength, visited the home of an African American friend on Vernon Avenue to arm wrestle. In later years, he occasionally brought along his young granddaughter Beverly (my mother), who was given lunch on a checkered tablecloth while the two men wrestled. Robert also enjoyed taking drives with his family up the coast and marching with the Knights of Columbus drill team at Sacred Heart Church in Lincoln Heights, participating once in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. His sons Bob and Leo would follow in his footsteps, taking an active part in their local KCs.

Jane’s grandchildren would remember visits to their grandparents’ house on 9th Avenue as a special time in their lives—running wild with their many cousins, picking figs from an old tree in the backyard and selling them to the neighbors, a garage full of “good” junk, marathon sessions on the player piano, fried squash blossoms, molasses cookies with butter frosting, the fam-

_Beverly Knipscheer on the day of her graduation from Lincoln High School in 1946. As a teenager, she worked at the Lincoln Park boat house and sold refreshments at the park’s annual “state picnics,” which brought together Los Angeles residents from different parts of the country, mainly the Midwest. The first of Jane and Robert Knipscheer’s grandchildren to graduate from college in 1952, she worked her entire career as an elementary schoolteacher in East Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Unified School District played an important part in the author’s immediate family. His father, Eugene Sielen, was an elementary school principal, and the author himself worked two summers during college for the Multnomah Street and Rowan Avenue schools._

_Courtesy of Alan Sielen_
ily production line for making sauerkraut, and Jane’s recitation of the rosary in bed after a long day. The family matriarch also knew where to draw the line: Fed-up with the unremitting hostility of a favorite pet goose whenever Jane’s pregnant, and terrified, granddaughter Beverly would step into the backyard, Jane cooked the goose for dinner one night.

A story about Jane and Robert’s youngest son, Paul, famous within the family for his green thumb (and for having been bitten on the backside by a wolf while working at the Los Angeles Zoo in Griffith Park), goes some way in describing the esteem felt for Jane. Paul, always a bit daffy, would enjoy asking people if they’d like to see a picture of his mother, at which point he would pull out of his wallet a postage stamp with the august visage of our nation’s first president. The portrait did, in fact, bear a striking resemblance to Jane in her later years.

OFF TO WORK

Only the Knipscheer family’s four daughters attended high school. Upon graduation from the eighth grade, each of Robert’s five sons received a pair of long pants, an old bike for transportation, and help finding work. John left home in his teens, landing a job at City Dye Works and Laundry Co. on Central Avenue, at the time the largest establishment of its kind in Los Angeles, specializing in the cleaning and dyeing of a variety of products.

In the mid-1930s, John opened his own carpet cleaning and dyeing business at 1111 Lillian Way in Hollywood. The shop grew from a somewhat primitive, mainly outdoor operation to a larger enterprise with an office and buildings by the 1950s, when its address was officially changed to 6331 Santa Monica Boulevard. Despite the rough economic conditions of the 1930s, the shop in its first years was able to survive by tapping into

The shop in its first years was able to survive by tapping into a niche market of relatively well-off clients in the movie industry, whose studios and stars never relinquished a taste for luxury.

The portrait did, in fact, bear a striking resemblance to Jane in her later years.

a niche market of relatively well-off clients in the movie industry, whose studios and stars never relinquished a taste for luxury. Among its early clients was legendary revivalist Aimee Semple McPherson (Sister Aimee) who established the evangelical Angeles Temple of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Los Angeles in 1923.

To John’s great fortune, his brother Bob—a splendid man remembered by all who knew him for his kindness and generosity—went to work for him as chief carpet layer in the early 1940s, adding a welcome element of solidity to John’s sometimes quixotic ways. Bob had a special talent for making friends and was readily embraced by a wide range of people, from business associates to the nuns at Sacred Heart. He was also very fortunate in finding his wife and lifelong partner, Queenie Fraser, an exceptionally loving and intelligent woman. Bob would defy doctor’s orders to visit her and their young son, Bob Jr. (my uncle), while they were quarantined at Los Angeles General Hospital during the polio epidemic that swept the city in 1934 (they both recovered).
As the historic center of the motion-picture industry, Hollywood was a principal source of business for Owens Master Carpet Dyers.

In 1920, the northwest corner of Lillian Way and Eleanor Avenue was the Hollywood location for various structures and offices of Metro Studios. By 1923, the studio had moved to Romaine Street and Cahuenga Avenue. In 1924, it joined two other studios in establishing Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in Culver City, the industry’s leading studio from 1931 to 1941.

Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

With the introduction of sound to moviemaking, the studios erected sound stages as enclosed and soundproof structures. The onset of America’s involvement in World War II also brought a proliferation of movie-making to Hollywood, an example of which is memorialized in this photograph of a 1940s film shoot.

California Historical Society/USC Special Collections
Another brother, Leo, owned an auto body shop in nearby Temple City. He and his wife, Leoan, had the first television in the family, and friends and relatives gathered at their home to watch the *The Spade Cooley Show* and Wednesday night wrestling “live” from the Olympic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles. To this day, wrestling at the Olympic Auditorium is closely associated with legendary KTLA television announcer Dick Lane, who, beginning in 1946, punctuated his broadcasts with the memorable “Whooah, Nellie!” at particularly dramatic moments. Lane also broadcasted the Roller Derby from the Olympic in the early days of Los Angeles television.

Brother Joe worked for the post office, eventually joining his cousins in Oxnard to escape the big-city hubbub of Los Angeles. Sisters Frances, Mary, Adeline, and Jane worked at various jobs—banks, the telephone company, a chocolate factory, the switchboard at Broadway department store—and married and raised families in the Los Angeles area.

Frances’ son Bobby Brice, the oldest of Robert and Jane’s twenty-three grandchildren and the first to attend college, was killed during the Second World War rescuing two soldiers from a battlefield in Luxembourg. Such tragic news was part of the daily lives of many Los Angeles families at the time. Aircraft production, war bonds, blackout curtains, and rationing of food, gasoline, women’s nylon stockings, and may other items were constant reminders of a nation at war.

All of John’s siblings settled in the Los Angeles area. Their generally modest upward mobility meant moving to better parts of the city or nearby communities. Their children would expand their horizons to Eagle Rock, Pasadena, Altadena, and Orange County. Education, marriage, and employment would conspire to spread the next generation—Jane and Robert’s baby-boomer great-grandchildren (including me)—across the country to Colorado, Washington, Virginia, West Virginia, and Georgia.

DOMESTIC LUXURY

Today, fine woven floor covering is often synonymous with Persian and Turkish rugs of exquisite design and craftsmanship. (Rugs are placed free standing in a room; carpets are installed wall-to-wall using wooden tack-strips secured around the edge of the room to hold the carpet in place. Padding is usually placed underneath carpet and large rugs.) There was a time, however, when such rugs were rivaled by the finest American-made, wall-to-wall loomed wool carpeting, which
often covered most of a home’s floors. Until the early 1960s, carpet of the highest quality materials and construction was considered an epitome of domestic luxury and refinement. In Beverly Hills and other affluent parts of Los Angeles, there was a demand for the very best.

During the shop’s heyday, these carpets were loomed in the mills of Massachusetts, northern Georgia, and the Carolinas, continuing a tradition of fine American woven carpets dating to the late eighteenth century in Philadelphia and New England. With the introduction in 1839 of the power loom for weaving carpets, mechanization reshaped the industry, and by 1850, carpet production had tripled. Twenty-five years later, the broadloom made possible the production of much larger carpets. Incremental improvements in the looming process over the next hundred years in the United States, England, and Europe added to the popularity of carpet as floor covering. By 1929, a New York company had become the largest manufacturer of carpets and rugs in the world.6

After the Second World War, a burgeoning middle class was increasingly able to afford various accoutrements of the “good life.” To meet demand and lower costs, carpet manufacturers increased production, abandoning quality materials and painstaking construction for mass production. The use of synthetic fibers, especially nylon, was introduced in the late 1940s. The high-quality backing of loomed wool carpet, which locked each tuft of yarn securely in place with closely spaced threads perpendicular to one another (warp and woof), was replaced by much less expensive products. Tufted carpets, which injected the pile into a backing material, became increasingly popular. Often, the yarn was simply punched into a rubberized and glued backing. Such carpets were much less durable than woven products and could not withstand the rigors of good cleaning and dyeing.

The Second World War brought challenges to the nation in which all families shared. Though a pacifist, Bobby Brice—Jane and Robert Knipscheer’s oldest grandchild—felt compelled to serve his country. He volunteered for the U.S. Army and worked with the Red Cross evacuating soldiers in Europe. Brice was wounded in Germany in September 1944 and again in November. He had just recovered from his last wound and returned to active duty when on December 18 he was killed while rescuing two men on a battlefield in Luxembourg. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal for “gallantry in action against the enemy.”

Courtesy of Alan Sielen
The Post-War House of Los Angeles real estate developer Fritz B. Burns was a model of home building. This 1948 photograph of his ranch-house laboratory of technology and design innovations, located on the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Highland Avenue, depicts the entertainment area. Some of the new features displayed to the thousands of visitors who marveled at the home’s inventions were the electric garbage disposal, the large-screen television, an electronic air purifier, inter-room radio control, closets with sliding doors, and, as captioned in a 1946 photograph, an “exciting red carpet” that stretched from wall to wall.

California Historical Society/USC Special Collections; photograph by Dick Whittington
To the less-discerning eye, these cheaper carpets actually looked pretty good. As high-quality wool carpet became more expensive and difficult to find, it made perfect sense for those who appreciated the finest quality to breathe new life into their worn existing carpet—woven in exquisite colors and shades that the newer manufacturers could not duplicate—than to replace it with an inferior new product, rather like refusing to let go of a pair of old, handmade brogues. Dyeing quality woven carpet also made good economic sense: With wool carpet costing around ten to twenty dollars a square yard, cleaning and dyeing an old carpet for two dollars a yard was a good deal, especially if you could change the color to indulge the latest fashion or personal whim.

A WORKING MAN’S BALLET

Owens Master Carpet Dyers understood that carpet cannot be cleaned to the highest standards in place—try cleaning a suit while it is still on your back—and that dyeing carpet on the ground is even more of a problem. They insisted on getting it right.

Removing, transporting, cleaning, dyeing, and installing large carpets required a degree of hard physical labor and technical virtuosity. At its height, the effort that went into carpet dyeing had a rhythm, even grace at times, of its own—a working man’s ballet punctuated with the dirt and grime of small industry. Once a carpet was removed from a home or other location and brought to the shop, it was “made up” in preparation for dyeing. The carpet was placed on a big, wooden open-air platform (staging area) a foot off the ground, where it was unrolled and made to a uniform width by hand-sewing carpet scraps (later removed) in the gaps conforming to the configuration of the room where the carpet had been. Carpet from adjacent rooms in a house was sewn together so they could be dyed in one continuous batch, since it was impossible to duplicate the same exact color in different dye lots. Now rectangular in shape and much easier to work with, the carpet was rolled up, put on a cart, and pushed to the dye area. Larger carpets could be 150 feet or more in length.

Owens Master Carpet Dyers had two large cylindrical dye wheels, twenty feet wide and about two feet in diameter. Another station with a twelve-foot wheel was available for smaller jobs. At the foot of each dye wheel was a vat (tub) four feet deep that extended horizontally the entire length of the wheel. The dye wheel and vat were framed on either side by I-beam steel girders about twenty feet high. At ground level were a large motor, transmission, and gearbox, which drove the cables that raised and lowered the dye wheel. Another large electric motor at one end of the dye wheel rotated it in either direction.

On arrival at the dye vat, the carpet was loaded onto the dye wheel, a cumbersome process in itself. Once on the wheel, the ends of the carpet temporarily were sewn together to provide one continuous loop as the carpet rolled through the vat. To ensure that the carpet did not move around (bunch up) during the cleaning and dyeing operation, a two-by-four was fastened to the horizontal edge of the carpet using a sail needle and heavy cotton twine stitched into the carpet every few inches. The dye wheel was set at a fixed height according to the size of the carpet, which was lowered into the dye vat on one side of the wheel and lifted out of the vat on the other. Rugs and small carpets were cleaned in six-foot washing machines and cast-iron extractors to remove water. For small rugs, the washers could also be rigged as a dyeing machine.

Lowered into the vat, the carpet was first “stripped” with bleach and other chemicals to remove dirt and color before dyeing. Once the cleaning was completed, the vat was drained, cleaned, and refilled. Bob’s neighbor on Sichel Street, Otis Fess (“Otie”), would walk along a platform evenly pouring powdered Swiss dye into
the vat from a large pitcher. Getting the color right was not easy. A jumble of copper pipes running beneath the dye vat, valves, and steam were needed to heat and “cook” the dye into shape. What emerged often was striking, the endless possibilities of mixing colors far exceeding what was available for new carpets. John told customers (often with a wink) that he had “studied” colors in Paris. Eventually, new carpet dealers who were impressed with the range and subtlety of color that the shop could provide sent Owens their new uncolored carpets to dye so that they could meet the specifications of a particular customer.

In something of a reversal of the usual process of selecting a color from swatches shown them, prospective clients could present John or Bob with their own example (or “sample”) of their chosen color. The opportunity to deviate from the usual run of colors commercially available was part of the attraction, and customers would exercise their imaginations to the fullest. Samples included everything from a fresh daisy, to a favorite undergarment, to a can of tomato soup.

The carpet was on the dye wheel an hour or two in continuous motion to ensure an even application of the dye. When the dyeing operation was completed, a large carpet usually was left to drip and air out for a while before being taken to a sealed room with piped-in heat. In the dry room, the carpet was hoisted onto large four-by-six planks (timbers) to dry. A system of block-and-tackle pulleys could raise, lower, or adjust the position of the carpets, which were unfurled across the dry room like a giant roller coaster or swells crossing the ocean. Raising the carpet to a particular height was an especially difficult job that required two men on each end of a large roll to avoid being pulled skyward by the enormous weight of the wet carpet. When dry, the carpet was taken down, brushed, given finishing touches, rolled up, and stored on shelves in a lean-to, where it awaited delivery and installation.

Extra help usually was needed for heavy lifting, loading, and moving carpet from one part of the shop to another. Over the years, John could count on a number of friends and acquaintances: John “Soup” Campbell, who would take time off from his duties servicing Coast Guard blimps at Mines Field, now Los Angeles International Airport; Paul Soderberg, a tall minor-league ballplayer who was known in the late 1930s and early 1940s for a sizzling fastball; and longtime friend Artie, who kept the books and performed a variety of clerical tasks.
It was tough and at times dangerous work. Lifting and juggling heavy, shifting, wet carpets high off the ground could be dicey, and moving them was a constant struggle. As a boy in the early 1940s, Bob Jr. once was helping dye a large canvas ship sail for a movie when, while trying to steady it high off the ground, he accidentally stepped into a steaming dye vat, badly burning his foot. Stressed to the maximum by an arduous operation, the dye-wheel motor sometimes popped its mounting bolts, which would fly around like stray bullets. Hot, bubbling chemicals would eat away at the concrete floor before they could get to the storm drain. On rare occasion, a rope in the dry room snapped or an old timber cracked from high above, bringing a large, wet carpet down on the head of anyone unable to move away quickly enough.

For the carpet layers, there was the constant moving of pianos and other heavy furniture, gingerly carrying large and unwieldy rolls of carpet up and down stairs, and long sessions of painstaking hand-sewing of seams through thick carpet (a process now replaced by a seaming iron and tape). To ensure the highest-quality installation, Owens used a then state-of-the-art manual “power stretcher” with metal tubes placed across the room to the opposite wall. Fine-tuning the installation, or laying carpet in a small area, also required a good amount of time pounding a “kicker” with a knee to remove any wrinkles and ensure that the carpet was tightly in place.

Most of the specialized equipment and processes used by the shop were not available “off the shelf.” While drawing on long-standing cleaning and dyeing practices, the application of these methods to the highly specialized carpet-dyeing business was very much a matter of trial and error, especially in the early years. It required a certain inventiveness and entrepreneurial spirit, not just in the shop’s original conception but in the day-to-day and often moment-to-moment decisions and adaptations required to simply get things right. A loyal, affluent customer base testified to the shop’s willingness to regularly attend to such detail, and the difficulty in consistently producing a high-quality product went far toward discouraging competition.

**THE GOOD LIFE**

For a time, the growing carpet-dyeing business gave John and his family a shot at the good life. He and his first wife Lillian moved in the early 1940s with their children from their first house at 1061 North Serrano Avenue to a larger place on Odin Street. The close-knit group of neighbors on Odin Street, now part of the Hollywood Bowl parking lot, included the director John Ford, whose backyard was a favorite place for a relaxed weekend afternoon. Visiting family recall a short walk up the hill in the summer of 1943 to a vantage point high above the back end of the large outdoor theater, where they looked down on the performance below and listened to a young Frank Sinatra sing “Old Man River.”

At the height of the shop’s success following the war, John built a new house in Nichols Canyon in the Hollywood hills across a ravine from 1920s crooner Rudy Vallee. The new house was quite a showpiece, with an entire room devoted to electric trains and a secret hideaway off the dining room, entered through mysterious panel doors, which provided an endless source of fascination for children and guests.

For entertainment, John flew his refurbished Lockheed twin-engine plane (seating fifteen, with bright red carpet) over the Pacific Ocean and up and down the coast. Other amusements included a 63-foot air-sea rescue boat (crashboat) with two monster gasoline engines that was built on the same light, fast, and highly maneuverable plywood hull as the PT boats of World War II. The...
boat was docked at the old Henry Ford Bridge leading to Terminal Island. John’s stepson, Richard (Dick) Meeker, who married the young actress Mary Tyler Moore in 1955, was especially fond of racing it to Catalina Island and back. He later served aboard the Navy destroyer USS Bradford during the Korean War. Testimony by the ship’s crew indicates he may have been responsible for sinking a North Korean submarine on June 12, 1951, in the Sea of Japan—a rare occurrence during that conflict.

John also bought what he named the Puddle, an old abandoned rock quarry in the San Fernando Valley (long since filled and now the corner of Victory and Vineland in North Hollywood), where visitors drove down a couple hundred feet to the water level for a day of swimming and boating. The kids especially liked going for rides in John’s war surplus amphibious jeep. Typically, the day would end at this “working man’s Tahoe,” with John barbecuing a goat on the spit for all to enjoy.

Of course, cars also were a big part of the picture. Everything from hot rods to woody station wagons to an endless assortment of “fixer-up-ers” pulled in and out of the shop. In the early years, pride of place was enjoyed first by a yellow La Salle convertible, followed by a Cadillac, Lincoln Zephyr, and 1941 long-stroke V-12 Lincoln

*John Knipscheer entertained friends and family at the Puddle, a defunct rock quarry which he purchased in the San Fernando Valley. Swimming, diving, and boating in John’s amphibious jeep were popular pastimes. Imported sand and a little grass shack added to the beachlike atmosphere.*

*Courtesy of Alan Sielen*
The immediate neighborhood surrounding the shop was an active, bustling area that reflected Hollywood’s diverse commercial profile, as well as the network of friendships and camaraderie that added a welcome leavening to the daily grind of work.

Continental. Eventually, John would replace the Lincoln’s silky V-12 engine with the more powerful Oldsmobile Rocket V-8.

Once Bob Jr. was old enough to drive, his father bought a 1931 Packard from a neighbor, the actress Diana Lynn’s grandfather, who had kept it sitting up on blocks in his garage for years. When they finally were able to get the car working, they towed it behind the family Willys Americar to the top of a hill, where it was set loose to start up and roared down the street with Bob behind the wheel. The distinctive orange, green, and tan vehicle (now a classic), with plush upholstery, tassels, and a self-lubricating chassis, joined the fleet of other interesting cars at the shop for the short time they kept it. Keeping watch over this spirited collection of vehicles was a 1941 red Chevy fire truck, stripped of its flashing lights, pumps, hoses, and ladders, leaving a big open bed in the back to carry rolls of carpets and padding. Bob often drove the somewhat comical yet majestic truck home to Lincoln Heights, taking a shortcut through the winding back roads of Elysian Hills, past the old Barlow Sanitarium, to get an early start on the next day’s job.

In what became a welcome tradition, John kept on hand a station wagon for family to use for an occasional getaway, especially for visiting aunts, uncles, and cousins scattered across the state and beyond. In the summer of 1947, Bob, his sister Jane, and their families took a whirlwind trip east to visit cousins in Kansas City in John’s new Pontiac Streamliner woody station wagon with triple chrome strips on its pontoon fenders. John put four new mud and snow tires with suction-cup treads on the car to ensure a safe trip. The tires were nothing but trouble in the Arizona desert—overheating, killing gas mileage, and slowing things down to a glacial pace. Finally, the radiator blew, resulting in a 60-mph tow to a distant town, with all nine passengers pulled by an 18-wheeler whose driver had stopped by the roadside to offer assistance. Eventually arriving in Kansas City, they were taken out for a real Kansas City steak dinner (still talked about today) by Aunt Cora and cousin John Spence, which proved salubrious in helping to leave behind the memory of their harrowing journey.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The immediate neighborhood surrounding the shop was an active, bustling area that reflected Hollywood’s diverse commercial profile, as well as the network of friendships and camaraderie that added a welcome leavening to the daily grind of work. John’s buddy Bill “Wild Bill” Robertson, a pioneer in establishing the first Honda franchise (then, only motorcycles) in the United States in 1959, was next door on Lillian Way. Another friend close by, Ward James, manufactured neon signs and pursued a brisk business with the movie studios reconfiguring an assortment of cars and trucks to save the studios the
trouble and expense of finding an original model. The sky was the limit to his imagination and tinkering, one day slapping a jeep body onto a Model A, the next installing double rear wheels on an old Mercedes for use as a German army staff car.

Nearby was an antique record store, with its inventory of albums from the early days of recording (opera, popular tunes, and early classical performances), abandoned in the late 1930s, when such items were considered junk rather than treasures. Bob Jr. took the entire lot of shellac discs home one day for target practice with his BB gun.

As a special treat, John took his young son Dick for apple pie and vanilla ice cream at The Shack (“If You Ain’t Eatin at The Shack You Ain’t Eatin”) on Cole Avenue. As a teenager, Dick, who would go on to a successful career as a television executive in Sacramento, worked at the Technicolor lab near the shop. One summer, he and a friend were wandering around a strange conglomeration of stage sets, equipment, and animals gathered under a big circuslike tent on Cahuenga Boulevard around the corner from the shop. One summer, he and a friend were wandering around a strange conglomeration of stage sets, equipment, and animals gathered under a big circuslike tent on Cahuenga Boulevard around the corner from the shop. To their astonishment, Orson Welles appeared and offered them a job helping with the sets and keeping the animals under control for the actor/director’s The Mercury Wonder Show, a carnival, magic, and humor extravaganza for servicemen. The show opened in August 1943 featuring Orson the Magnificent, The Witches’ Farmyard, the Girl with the X-Ray Eyes (played briefly by Rita Hayworth, then Marlene Dietrich), and other acts. Dick worked all summer for Welles, who considered the show one of his proudest achievements.

Most of the shop’s business came by word of mouth through Hollywood friends and connections. John’s association with the Coast Guard Auxiliary broadened his network of contacts. The Sertoma Club (“Service to Mankind”) was a good place to meet, as was John’s hangout, the Melrose Grotto, just around the corner from Paramount Studios on Melrose Avenue and Gower Street. The restaurant was a favorite of many movie stars, and it was not unusual, while enjoying the house specialty, Hungarian goulash, to see John Barrymore at the bar studying a script or to hear Bing Crosby’s voice across the room.

In between jobs, the carpet crew occasionally peeked into the auditorium at Hollywood High School to see the famous conductor Leopold Stokowski rehearsing Disney’s Fantasia or other performances. As formidable in appearance as in musical talent, Stokowski was central casting’s...
ideal for the perfect conductor. The beach at Santa Monica also provided a good place for a break; there Bob would sit with his lunch in that day’s clean pair of heavy-duty khaki work pants meticulously starched, stretched, and ironed by Queenie.

**HOMES OF THE STARS**

Working at the homes of Hollywood stars added another dimension to the hard labor of wrestling carpets. In the early days, Bob brought home autographed photographs for Beverly and Bob Jr., often with personal greetings. Bev was the envy of her friends, with a fine collection of 1930s and 1940s celebrities. Years later, my grandfather did the same for me. As a boy, I proudly displayed a personally inscribed photo of *Sea Hunt* (1958–61) television star Lloyd Bridges (who played Mike Nelson) in full diving gear. As it turned out, Bridges’s greeting—“Good diving, Alan! And Good Luck!”—was a serendipitous auguring of a future career in ocean protection.

Hollywood connections could serve as a conduit to other interests close to the heart of a young boy. In 1962, Bob worked at the home of actress Patricia Barry (known especially for Gene Autry westerns, *Playhouse 90*, and *The Twilight Zone*), shortly after she had completed the movie *Safe at Home* with William Frawley (also known for his television role in *I Love Lucy* as Lucy and Ricky Ricardo’s cranky neighbor, Fred Mertz). The movie also featured New York Yankee greats Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris playing themselves. Bob brought back a large photo of the stars with a personal note to me. Though always wishing that the mug of Fred Mertz was not nestled into an otherwise killer photo of Mantle and Maris, it remained a favorite for many years.

The carpet workers were careful to respect their clients’ privacy and generally were treated very well. Their reception could range from the rare case of condescension (David Niven) to kindness,
good humor, and friendship (Alan Ladd). Bing Crosby was a delight, as was the effervescent Zsa Zsa Gabor, who enjoyed Bob’s magic tricks and lavished personal mementos—all pink—on Bob for his grandchildren. In a strange twist of fate, years later, Bob Jr., now working with the Los Angeles City Fire Department, fought to save Gabor’s house during the November 1961 Bel Air wildfires—at the time the worst fire in the city’s history. Pop singer and civil rights activist Frankie Laine also kept the shop busy: Whenever Laine had a new hit (he had over twenty gold records), he redecorated his house, including the carpet.

The back lots and sound stages of the movie studios opened up a whole new world. At Paramount Studios one day, a young Bob Jr.—with a roll of carpet over his shoulder—walked in accidentally on Bob Hope and Jane Russell shooting a scene for the 1948 comic western The Paleface, prompting a retake by the bewildered but gracious actors. For one rising starlet, the shop combed out the leaves and bird droppings from the luxurious pink cashmere cover of her new 1957 Thunderbird, which she parked under a tree at her Beverly Hills home. Actress Lana Turner’s carpet was dyed black to match the décor of her house at the time.

Some jobs were strange—even macabre. There are famous crime scene photographs of the murder of gangster Bugsy Siegel, “founder” of modern-day Las Vegas, shot through the head at close range by a high-powered rifle at the Beverly Hills home of his girlfriend, Virginia Hill. Owens Master Carpet Dyers was called in to clean and dye the surrounding carpet—a tribute to the company’s consummate skill and to a contemporary ethic disinclined to waste a good wool carpet.

Though customers were usually pleased, there were occasional disappointments. Film star Danny Kaye’s favorite small, multicolored braided oval rug—his pride and joy—was dyed burgundy. The rug took the new color beautifully, but the process left its naturally distorted weave lumpy. Unhappy with the result but ever the optimist, Kaye kept sending the rug back for another try, each attempt resulting in even more unsightly waves and wrinkles. John kept telling the actor to “walk on it, walk on it!” in the hope of smoothing out the rug. A last attempt at redemption left the actor with what looked more like a Mexican sombrero than a fine, braided oval.

**REDISCOVERY**

After John died in 1963, Peva, his second wife, kept the shop going for a while. However, business had already been declining for some time, prompting John, Peva, and their sons, John Bruce (JB) and Mike, to move into an apartment on the second floor of the shop. Though for a time the carpet-dyeing business enjoyed white-hot success, it did not last. John’s generosity and old-school ways went against the grain of many cultural and commercial changes. The old methods of carpet cleaning and dyeing were becoming obsolete, perhaps for some of the same reasons that the “jeweled perfection” of the twelfth-century stained glass at Chartres, Le Mans, and Canterbury would not be duplicated even a hundred years later, let alone in modern times. Moreover, John really didn’t have the hardheaded instincts needed to run and sustain a business. Never one to deny work to any member of the family, he was always ready to share with others what he considered his good fortune, favoring his relationships with family and friends over business success.

Years later, a rare drive-by revealed the boarded-up walls of a formerly vibrant business, an urban ruin whose monotony was relieved only by the remains of a once-dazzling neon sign out front. Finally, on a trip to southern California in early 1997, I decided to find out what, if anything, remained inside. Finding the shop’s walls still
The stained carpet from the June 20, 1947, murder of Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel in the living room of his girlfriend’s Beverly Hills home found its way to Owens’s expert carpet workers. A stretch of the imagination conjures up a connection with carpets in Siegel’s life as well as in his death: East Coast Mob mastermind Meyer Lansky, Siegel’s boss, ran a number of “carpet joints” in Florida. These, however, had nothing to do with actual carpets; they were small casinos that operated on the fringe of the law.

Herald Examiner Collection, Los Angeles Public Library
A rare drive-by revealed the boarded-up walls of a formerly vibrant business, an urban ruin whose monotony was relieved only by the remains of a once-dazzling neon sign out front.

A fast and helpful communication with the Los Angeles county assessor in March provided the necessary information and set the stage for a final “assault” on what by now was a personal summit of nagging curiosity.

On a return trip in early summer, I sat down with my uncle Bob Jr. to try to get a better idea what I might expect to find inside. Bob, by virtue of his own experience and vivid memories of his father and his uncle John, was able to provide a wealth of information, especially concerning the technical and commercial aspects of the carpet business past and present. His recollections of working in the homes of the stars confirmed much of what I had heard over the years and added even greater interest to a colorful story.

Meanwhile, the anticipation of discovery continued to grow. What awaited me could be no more than an empty tomb—perhaps raided by thieves looking for a pre-code boiler or a well-worn oak vat. On the other hand, entry might produce the delight of a Broadway department store Christmas window displaying the mechanical regimen of an old-time carpet-dyeing business.

A look behind the curtain revealed neither. Strewn about, corner to corner, under the open air, was what first appeared to be a random, twisted field of pipes, gears, wood frames, and other rotted, rusted detritus exposed to the ravages of time. Indeed, during the intervening thirty-five years since I last had set foot in the shop, fire, earthquake, and flood all contributed to the wreck that now unfolded.

However, a careful walk through this industrial war zone turned up virtually all the major pieces of the carpet-dyeing business, including boilers, vats, dye wheels, motors, and I-beam girders. Even the block-and-tackle pulleys set up in the dry room, whose dilapidated roof was now open to the sky, were still in place.

But despite many familiar features, something was not right. While on close inspection much of the industrial debris fit a familiar pattern, certain reference points seemed to have been violated by an additional layer of alien equipment. Even allowing for the disturbance caused by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, which I later discovered had bounced a two-ton compressor several yards from its station, there was still something of the feel of crayons filling in the lines of a Dürer.

Further picking through the rubble and closely examining one strange-looking contraption, propped three feet off the ground with hungry jaws beckoning, revealed an interesting and entirely benign explanation for what now lay at my feet. Another business enterprise had moved into (or rather on top of) the original space, apparently taking very little trouble to first remove any evidence of the family carpet business.

The carpet-staging area had been converted into a record-manufacturing operation. The strange device with the gaping mouth was a record press, used for the production of vinyl records for hi-fis and stereos. The press was sitting on top of a
An Urban Ruin

Returning to the shop in 1997 after more than thirty years produced some surprises as well as familiar territory.

(Top) What was left of the neon sign on the corner of the building highlighted the shop’s reputation as “color specialists.” The entrance on Santa Monica Boulevard admitted visitors to an office and showroom and led to the work area in the back along Lillian Way.

(Middle) Looking to the back of the shop from what had been the carpet-staging area, what appears to be a large cage at left was the superstructure needed to support the two large 20-foot dye wheels. The building to the right was the dry room, with block-and-tackle pulleys and timbers high overhead on which to hang large wet carpets.

(Bottom) After the shop closed down, fire, earthquake, and flood all contributed to the disarray. Amid the jumble was the welcome sight on the ground of a large dye wheel motor and gear.

 Courtesy of Alan Sielen
metal drum left over from the carpet business, bringing it up to a comfortable working level. Making use of an old boiler, pipes, and other shop leftovers, the proprietors simply ignored any equipment that was of no practical value to them—a study in benign neglect sustaining the mingling of two faded cultural touchstones.

Cultural anthropologists have suggested that ours is the first civilization in history that does not rebuild its communities, preferring rather to simply knock down and pave over the past. The seamless transformation from carpet dyeing to record manufacturing over the course of a decade or two—a mere nano-event compared to the evolution of great landmarks of the past—seemed to want, at least for a moment, to belie that grim observation.

Nearing the end of the visit and savoring my discoveries, I learned that the epiphany was not yet complete. On the way out of this relic-turned-house of mirrors, I noticed inside the boarded-up driveway entrance on Lillian Way a heap of not easily identifiable rubble piled shoulder high. Stopping for a second, a faint metallic glimmer caught my eye. Buried beneath the rubble, apparently undisturbed for over thirty years, was Peva’s dark blue 1965 Ford Mustang. Like a bird hiding in the brush, the car’s weathered exterior blended nicely with its surroundings, sheltered securely from an encroaching world. Continuing to the street, I walked back to the present, suffused with the glow of one contemplating no less a treasure for our time than the golden mask of Agamemnon uncovered long ago on a rocky citadel overlooking the Peloponnese.

**EPILOGUE**

In the shop’s last years, Bob Knipscheer continued to lay carpet for a small number of associates and clients with whom he had established close personal ties. One large job was replacing all the 1920s-era padding and carpet at the dormitories and buildings for the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy for girls in La Cañada, formerly the Flintridge Hotel. Bob had developed friendships with several of the nuns over the years and was happy to help them out. The project also provided good summer employment for me and my younger brothers (who could not believe that someone would actually pay them to work in a girl’s high school dormitory). The shop’s big red truck was traded for a Ford Econoline van, which my grandfather let me take on surfing trips up and down the California coast. In 1982, Bob Jr. retired from the Los Angeles City Fire Department as fire captain.

Several months after my adventure, I returned to the shop, hoping to make arrangements to remove Peva’s Mustang and what was left of the neon sign out front. To my disappointment, everything was gone and the space was cleared out, apparently in the throes of another transition after a long slumber.

The area once comprising Owens Master Carpet Dyers is now a parking lot.

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Kentucky-born Davis Francis Schwartz captured the playful spirit of his wife, Isabella Ethel Mellus (1889–1980), whom he called Bella, in this portrait. Her shy pose in a post-Victorian costume exhibits a flair for theatrics begun during her childhood. Bella, the descendant of prominent California pioneer families, recalled in 1971, “My father, Frederick Mellus, was a natural comedian and actor. He'd have us do shows and plays, and taught us theatrical things to keep ourselves amused.”

Bella’s paternal grandfather, Henry Mellus of Boston, arrived in Alta California in 1835 and in 1845 established a store in Yerba Buena, renamed San Francisco two years later. About 1846 in Los Angeles, he married Anita Johnson—daughter of the English captain James (Santiago) Johnson and Maria del Carmen Guirado—who had immigrated from Mexico with her family in 1833. Henry traveled to and from Boston, settling his family there in the 1850s. In 1858, they moved permanently to Los Angeles, where Henry was elected the city’s thirteenth mayor in 1860.

There in 1881, Henry and Anita’s son Frederick married Esmila Francisca Ballestero, a Spanish beauty born on the Plaza, once Los Angeles’s commercial and social center. The couple had four daughters. The temperament of their youngest, Isabella, many years later was described as leaning “more toward mantillas and lace than biscuits and tea.” Bella must have enjoyed watching Davis incorporate Spanish motifs in his work on Hollywood movie sets and in the décor of the villa of famed Hollywood western-film director Thomas Ince.

Following Anita’s death in 1884, Frederick inherited a share of her family’s property, the Rancho de los Palos Verdes land grant (today the San Pedro, Redondo Beach, and Hermosa Beach areas), which included three natural salt lakes that he established as a salt works. Shortly afterward, he sold the business and moved back to Los Angeles so that the homesick Esmila could live near her family.

In 1971, Bella donated her portrait and that of her husband (facing page) to the California Historical Society.
Adam Sherriff Scott painted his friend Davis Francis Schwartz (1879–1969) in Canada in 1912. Schwartz’s affinity for western attire dates to his first years in southern California in the early 1900s, when he purchased a coal-black pony to explore the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena. On New Year’s Day 1904, he and three friends led the Rose Parade through the city on their ponies. As his wife, Bella, remembered, he wore western garb “whenever and wherever he could.”

Schwartz had moved from Ohio in 1903 to southern California, where he worked for the Los Angeles Times as a commercial illustrator and for landscape artist/businessman Gibson Catlett, painting elaborate, birds-eye aerial maps of land tracts for subdivisions in Los Angeles, Portland, Calgary, Montreal, and Toronto. While living in Calgary around 1910 for his work with Catlett, he met Scott, who became his close friend and teacher. Today Scott is recognized for his broad subject matter, including still life, figurative works, portraiture, buildings, and land- and seascapes.

In 1915, Schwartz began a full-time career in the fine arts. While maintaining the map’s installation, Schwartz became the map’s custodian, a position he held for thirty years. From 1924 to 1962, the map was displayed on the second floor of the Ferry Building. It is currently stored in 230 crates on the city’s waterfront.

While maintaining the map, Davis kept a studio in the Ferry Building, where he also worked on publicity materials for the California Changer of Commerce. During the 1920s–50s, he and Bella formed the nucleus of a close group of fellow civic workers and their families, affectionately known as the State Chamber Gang. A member of the Carmel Art Association, Oakland Art Association, Santa Cruz Art League, and Society of Western Artists, Davis was renowned for his colorful and poetic watercolors and oils of northern California landscapes and the missions.

—the Editors
NOTES

‘BOES IN FACULTATE: THE SHORT, CREATIVE LIFE OF FRANZ RICKABY, BY CRETCHEN DYKSTRA, PP 6–21

Caption sources: Franz Lee Rickaby, A Set of Sonnets (Springfield, IL: privately printed, 1910); Lillian Katur Dykstra’s papers, author’s collection (hereafter cited as LKD papers).

1 Unpublished tribute by Vachel Lindsay, LKD papers.

2 LKD papers.

3 From Franz Lee Rickaby’s journal of his walk from Charlevoix to Grand Forks is housed at Wisconsin’s Historical Society Library, Microforms Room (Micro 877), Madison, WI (hereafter cited as FLR journal). He also wrote about his walk in his posthumously published book, Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).


5 Courtesy of the American Folklife Center Archive, Library of Congress.

6 Thomas Rickaby, Idle Hour Impressions, journal, collection of Carol Schindler Brand (Franz Rickaby’s niece).

7 LKD papers; much of the information about Galesburg and Knox is drawn from biweekly letters that Lillian wrote to the author from 1935 to 1977 describing her early years in Galesburg and elsewhere. From 1957 through 1923, Lillian wrote weekly letters to her mother, Rose, describing Franz, their relationship, and their life together. These letters were saved in a trunk—known as Granny’s Trunk—along with other letters, snippets of journals, copies of Franz’s poems, songs, plays, published articles, and diaries. The author also is indebted to archivists in the states of Arkansas, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and at Knox College, the University of North Dakota, the Eau Claire Historical Society, the Virginia Area Historical Society in Minnesota, the Mayo Clinic, Loma Linda University, Pomona College, the Library of Congress, and the New York Public Library.

8 Rickaby, Idle Hour Impressions.


10 LKD papers.

11 Log City Days—Two Narratives on the Settlement of Galesburg (Galesburg, IL: Knox College, Centenary Publications, 1937); Earnest Elmo Calkins, They Broke the Prairies (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1937); Hermann R. Muelder, Missionaries and Hucksters: The First 100 Years of Knox College (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Carl Sandburg, Always the Young Strangers (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1952). The extensive collection of college newspapers, yearbooks, academic directories, alumni files, and other materials that Knox College keeps in its impressive archives were all helpful in understanding Knox, Galesburg, and Rickaby. Special thanks to Carley Robison.

12 Vachel Lindsay’s General William Booth Enters into Heaven was to be sung to the tune of the traditional song The Blood of the Lamb (Elisha A. Hoffman, 1878), accompanied by bass drum, banjos, tambourines, and other instruments; Vachel Lindsay, General William Booth Enters Into Heaven, and Other Poems (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913).

13 Song by Franz Rickaby, LKD papers.

14 Correspondence between FLR and Amy Lowell, 1917–1920, MS Lowell 19, 19.1, Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Boston.

15 LKD papers.

16 Ibid.

17 Rickaby wrote seven articles for Golf Magazine. For the story of the integration of girls in the summer of 1918, see Edith Gilbert, Summer Resort: Tango, Tea and All (Petersky, MI: Crooked Tree Arts Council, 1976).

18 LKD papers.


20 Koch worried that he would flounder on the frontier as one of only two English professors, but he soon realized that he could bring theatre to the outer edge of the nation. He set out to prove that the best way to build audiences for theatre would be to take those living in isolated, rural towns and show them their own lives. His students, including Maxwell Anderson, wrote, produced, cast, directed, designed, acted, and then toured their own one-act plays that told of harsh North Dakota winters, the pioneers and their simple sod shanties, and the wildness and glory of springtime.

21 Frederick Henry Koch, “The Dakota Playmakers: An Historical Sketch,” The Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota 9, no. 1 (Oct. 1918): 14. The author is grateful to Michael Swanson at the University of North Dakota for providing access to the university’s extensive records about the Dakota Playmakers, academic directories, student newspapers, and clippings.


23 LKD papers.

24 FLR journal.

25 The early folklorists who collected in the field were few in number when Franz was busy, and even fewer collected the music as well as the lyrics. Roland Palmer Gray, for example, a collector of Maine lumberjack songs, published his collection in 1924 (much to Lillian’s consternation), but it had no music attached to its 62 songs. Franz’s collection had 75 songs and music for 55. See D. K. Wilgus, Anglo-American Folk Song Scholarship Since 1898 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1959).

26 Shortly after beginning his walk, in 1919, the Grand Forks Herald reported that “Like the immortal Nanki Poo, disguised as a wandering minstrel, Franz Rickaby, instructor in English at the state university, has begun his 800 mile walk.”

27 Franz to Dorothea Rickaby (his mother), Oct. 21, 1923, LKD papers; Frank P. Brackett, Granite and Sagebrush: Reminiscence of the First 50 Years of Pomona College (Los
was generous with his time and knowledge.

Historian Richard Schaefer

Medical Center

(Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University & Loma Linda University

Impossible Dream: Railway to the Moon; Loma Linda Historical Commission 2005); and Ken McFarland,

(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005). It was not

Linda University, 2007); and Ken McFarland, The Impossible Dream: Railway to the Moon; Loma Linda University & Loma Linda University Medical Center (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing, 2005). Historian Richard Schaefer was generous with his time and knowledge.

30 LKD papers.

31 Peter C. English, Rheumatic Fever in America and Britain (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999). It was not until later in the century that the connection between strep throat and rheumatic fever was made, but at that time some doctors thought that removing a patient’s tonsils would stave off recurrences. Dr. English provided essential information on rheumatic fever. He kindly answered many questions about its symptoms and care at that time. Interestingly and sadly, he describes how rheumatic fever mutated over time and how, around 1925, the year Rickaby died, it turned from an acute condition to a chronic one before being almost entirely eliminated in the United States by better diagnosis and antibiotics.

32 Capital Times, Nov. 19, 1941.

33 Ibid., ca. 1955.

BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE SHANTY-BOY, PP 14–15


2 Ibid., 56.


4 Ibid., 54.

LOVE AMONG THE REDWOODS: THE STORY OF MARGARET AND DAVID Paddock, BY DAIMAR Paddock ROBINSON, PP 22–39

For my daughters, Kay Emma and Ola Margaret.


1 Diary entry Nov. 13, 1916. All diary entries are from Margaret Heyde’s travel diary from 1916 to 1918, in the author’s collection.

2 Hiking in Marin (San Francisco: Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company, 1925, rev. 1931). The promotional brochure included a trail map and ferry routes.

3 Margaret Paddock to David Paddock, July 1935. All letters are in the author’s collection.

4 Margaret to David, October 1935.

5 David to Margaret, December 1935.

6 David to Margaret, January 31, 1936.

7 Margaret to Paddock family, June 1937.

8 Franklin D. Roosevelt radio address during the fair’s opening ceremonies, www.sfimages.com.


11 Carma Zimmerman to Margaret, Apr. 29, 1937.

12 Margaret to Stuart Paddock, Spring 1961.

13 David to Margaret, December 1960.

“WE DYE FOR THE STARS”: LOS ANGELES REMEMBERED, BY ALAN B. SIELEN, PP 40–61

I wish to thank my mother, Beverly (Knipscheer Sielen) Farsing, and my uncle Bob Knipscheer for their reminescences of “the shop” and its times—and my Knipscheer aunts, uncles, and cousins for sharing their family stories. Also, my immersion in family history would likely never have occurred without the initial spark provided by my wife, Virginia Sielen, and her subsequent extensive research.


1 In addition to interviews and conversations with family members over many years, including oral histories conducted in Lincoln Heights and neighboring areas, I have drawn from research at several places. These include the Clearfield County, Pennsylvania Historical Society and Museum; the Library of Congress and National Archives in Washington, DC; the Museum of Ventura County Library and Archive; Los Angeles Public Library’s main and Lincoln Heights branches; various genealogical libraries and repositories.

2 Today, Frenchville struggles to hold on to what is left of its ancient forest of towering hemlocks and its strong French cultural traditions, which only a generation ago brought linguists to the village to study the distinctively “pure” form of classical French spoken by many residents.

3 Ventura County was officially established in 1873. By the late 1870s, its population had reached 7,500, an explosion of settlers drawn by inexpensive and fertile land (the population of the region in the 1860s was less than 1,000). Newspaper accounts during these years chronicle the county’s farms and farmers and provide glimpses of everyday life. Steve Chawkins, ““Quest Reaps a Glimpse of 1870s, “Los Angeles Times, July 14, 2002.
On the other hand, the family scrapbook contains a 1924 article from a Philadelphia newspaper in which a Roussey made headlines: “Fined for Eating Too Many Peanuts: Frenchville Man Had Pile of Shells Almost to His Knees.” According to the article, “A Frenchville man named Roussey is the first man arrested in this section of the state for eating too many peanuts, and when he was compelled to pay a fine of $1 for violation of a borough ordinance he remarked that, a town which kicks on a man eating all the peanuts he wants is a hell of a place. Roussey ate so many peanuts during a two hour stand on a business thoroughfare, that the shells made a pile a foot and a half high. When the chief of police found the man, the shells were nearly to his knees.”

Lincoln Heights is also noted for its fine Italian renaissance-style public library at the corner of Workman Street and Avenue 26. It was modeled after the Villa Papa Guilia in Rome and is the second oldest branch library in Los Angeles. Built in 1916, it was one of the Carnegie Libraries, developed by funds provided by the wealthy East Coast philanthropist. The building is designated a Los Angeles City Historic Cultural Monument and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

According to the Carpet and Rug Institute website: “In 1950, only 10 percent of all carpet and rug products were tufted, and ninety percent woven. However, about 1950, it was as if someone opened a magic trunk. Out of that trunk came man-made fibers and new techniques and processes. Today, tufted products are more than 90 percent of the total, followed by less than 2 percent that are woven; http://www.carpet-rug.org/about-cri/the-history-of-carpet.cfm.


Henry Adams, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), 137. Adams describes how the earliest stained glass windows are the best, “because the glass-makers were new at the work and spent on it an infinite amount of trouble and money which they found to be unnecessary as they gained experience. Even in 1200 the value of these windows was so well understood, relatively to new ones, that they were preserved with the greatest care. The effort to make such windows was never repeated.” The architect John James, in his fascinating stone-by-stone analysis of Chartres cathedral, makes a similar point concerning the high standards used by the earliest building contractors and work crews. The building was constructed in layers, each the work of a separate contractor. According to James, the anonymous first contractor he calls “Scarlet” employed the highest standards of the nine contractors used to complete the cathedral. “Periods of high endeavor are hard to attain and even more difficult to maintain.” John James, The Master Masons of Chartres (Sydney, London, New York, Chartres: West Grinstead Publishing, 1990), 78.

In his later years working with my brother Ken at the home of Edgar Bergen, Bob persuaded the ventriloquist to take his dummy, Charlie McCarthy, out of the suitcase and give his young grandson a performance.
HOBOS, HUSTLERS, AND BACKSLIDERS: HOMELESS IN SAN FRANCISCO

By Teresa Gowan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, 368 pp., $75 cloth, $24.95 paper)

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM ISSEL, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY EMERITUS, SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY, EDITOR OF THE CONTEMPORARY USA BOOK SERIES AND AUTHOR OF THE FORTHCOMING SAN FRANCISCO LIBERAL: POLITICAL AND SOCIETY IN “THE CITY” FROM THE GREAT DEPRESSION THROUGH THE COLD WAR

Teresa Gowan, an English sociologist who graduated in American Studies at Manchester University, completed graduate work at UC Berkeley, and now teaches at the University of Minnesota, tackles one of San Francisco’s most controversial public policy issues in this well-informed and thought-provoking study. The book is not an abstract academic dissection of “the homeless problem” but is, instead, a close empathetic narrative account of the daily lives of a sample of the city’s homeless population from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s.

Gowan devoted some 1,700 hours to sustained personal interaction (and in some cases friendship) with (mostly) homeless men in the city’s Tenderloin and Dogpatch neighborhoods. Collecting aluminum cans with “pro recyclers” in Dogpatch and hanging out with “hustlers” in the Tenderloin, she developed personal relationships that allowed her, a self-described “small, white English woman,” to gain the trust of the people whose stories fill the pages of this marvelous book. The collective biographical portrait that emerges is a complex one, reflecting both the individuality and the variety that Gowan found on the streets of San Francisco.

Compassionate engagement with the city’s homeless population pervades the book, and Gowan identifies a spectrum of behaviors among her informants, from cynical thievery and boastful drug addiction at one extreme to pride in hard work and determined self-improvement at the other. One of the many strengths of this illuminating work is Gowan’s determination to acknowledge the self-awareness and rational decision-making capability of those among her informants who themselves attribute their marginal social existence to personal weaknesses. She also gives voice to others who, while admitting that they chose to remain petty criminals (and heroin or crack addicts), also realized the degree to which their African American or Asian American (or Mexican or lower-class White) persona had made them targets for stereotyping and discrimination that originated outside their control and limited their options in society.

Gowan analyzes these complexities in the course of developing a critique of local and national attitudes toward, and institutions designed to serve, the homeless. If her approach to fieldwork comes out of the venerable tradition of sympathetic “participant observation” dating to the nineteenth century, her unsympathetic assessment of San Francisco’s (and the nation’s) response to homelessness partakes of a more recent, three-decades-old neo-Marxist tradition of assigning responsibility for a whole litany of urban problems, including homelessness, to an international system of post–industrial capitalist globalization.

That argument is developed here with close attention to urban studies theorizing, but it is not analyzed with the attention to historical specificity and social complexity of her compelling ethnographic descriptions. The thesis that the policy reformers and paid workers who operate San Francisco’s homeless “industry” are engaged in (lower) “class cleansing” of the city remains an assertion—provocative but unproven. This criticism does not, however, detract from the overall excellence of this insightful work, which is a highly original contribution to the literature of San Francisco history and is a “must read” for anyone interested in the city’s future.
EARLY WOMEN ARCHITECTS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: THE LIVES AND WORK OF FIFTY PROFESSIONALS, 1890–1951


REVIEWED BY VOLKER M. WELTER, PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA BARBARA, AND AUTHOR OF THE FORTHCOMING ERNST L. FREUD AND THE CASE OF THE MODERN BOURGEOIS HOME

Schaefer Horton’s book aims to discover “pioneering women in architecture, everyday architects as well as outstanding leaders” who have been overlooked by “conventional architectural history that is based on tracing the influence of outstanding buildings and saluting their star architects and their prominent, mostly wealthy, clients.”

In Part 1, A Collective Portrait, she describes the obstacles faced by women who wanted to become architects. The barriers were manifold—colleges refused to admit them, families were unwilling to let them live away from home, and office owners (male and female) declined to employ them—but proved no lasting match for the numerous strategies employed to overcome them. Schaefer Horton emphasizes the importance of female solidarity in challenging the attitudes that once excluded women from many fields of modern society.

In Part 2, The Design Legacy of Pioneer Women Architects, organized by building types, she argues that women worked successfully in all areas of contemporary building tasks, from residential (individual and speculative) to institutional, commercial, and industrial commissions.

Part 3, Individual Portraits, not only constitutes the bulk of the book but also is its most important section. From Elizabeth M. Austin (1883–1958) to Elizabeth “Betty” Ord Hillier Witk (Tarris) (1913–1972), Schaefer Horton has compiled an excellent dictionary of women architects. A short biography and a list of works, some with up to about 100 positions, accompany each entry. Appendices (female architecture students at Berkeley, licenses issued to women architects, etc.) and detailed endnotes complement the text.

Why, then, have the works of female architects, designers, and other women practicing in the broad field of architecture found such little attention? Schaefer Horton stresses mainly the discrimination that made studying, setting up office, and acquiring clients and commissions so hard, if not impossible. At the same time, she struggles to explain why, for example, women’s clubs did not always ask available female architects to design their clubhouses or why some male architects employed female colleagues without hesitation. She also repeatedly states that both sexes faced comparable, even identical, difficulties, especially at the start of their careers. Finally, she occasionally describes as characteristic of the work of women architects what any architect would have claimed for a modern design, for example that a house should be planned from the inside out.

Overall, Schaefer Horton’s arguments would have benefited from both a clearer defined methodology and a better clarification of the type of history the book offers. Methodologically, equal opportunities and equality in outcome could have been more sharply distinguished; both are subject to discriminatory attitudes, but the latter is strongly, if not primarily, determined by individual skills, abilities, and, most important, artistic creativity. Contrary to social history, architectural history continues to emphasize qualities based on artistic skills. Accordingly, it “overlooked” the vast majority of all architects, female and male alike. However, as a contribution to the social history of both women and architecture in California, this book and the wealth of information its author has researched are superb.
Charles Lindbergh became a household name after making the first solo nonstop flight from New York to Paris in 1927. He married Anne Morrow to much fanfare, and in 1932 young Charles Jr. was kidnapped from their New Jersey home and brutally murdered, shocking the nation. The case became the “trial of the century.” It is against this backdrop that Smith and Rogers convincingly position The California Snatch Racket, painting a grim picture of a nation in the economic turmoil leading up to the Second World War.

The book begins with the 1933 kidnapping of Brooke Hart in San Jose. The authors have done an eloquent job consolidating all the information of the case, the subject of much scholarship, into a fast-paced narrative. In an effort to avoid the problem of returning the victim, the two amateur kidnappers decided to kill Hart before demanding the ransom. After bungling several attempts to collect the money, they were captured, arrested, and brutally lynched in San Jose by a mob estimated to have been in the thousands.

The second case details the earlier kidnapping in 1921 of Gladys Witherell, the wife of a manager at the Financial Loan and Investment Company in Los Angeles. The kidnappers initially asked for $50,000, reduced it to $30,000, and were caught through the efforts of four “hello girls,” or telephone operators, who managed to trace the kidnappers’ phone call. Their hideout was surrounded within hours, and the two men were quickly arraigned and sentenced the following day. Like many of the others, the Witherell case demonstrates how advances in criminology helped to bring an end to the kidnapping frenzy that swept the country in the 1920s and 1930s.

The book also includes more gruesome cases, such as the kidnapping and murder of twelve-year-old Marion Parker in 1927. The kidnapper, William Edward Hickman, collected the $1,500 ransom and then left the disemboweled remains of the girl on the front lawn of a nearby home. Hickman fled California but was captured in Oregon through the tracing of the ransom bills’ serial numbers. He was found guilty and sentenced to be executed. He fainted just before the gallows fell.

One of the most spectacular cases involved the alleged kidnapping in 1926 of Aimee Semple McPherson, or Sister Aimee. She was the founder of the Foursquare Church and built the Angelus Temple near downtown Los Angeles. Her kidnapping is now regarded as a hoax, but Smith and Rogers delightfully detail the case in such a manner as to eloquently demonstrate the rise and fall of the snatch racket in California. Some academics may be disappointed that the many quotations included in this book are not fully cited, but true-crime aficionados will marvel at the seamless integration of numerous newspaper accounts and sources in retelling fifteen of California’s best- and least-known kidnappings.
REVIEWS

THE LOST BOYS OF ZETA PSI: A HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF MASCULINITY AT A UNIVERSITY FRATERNITY

By Laurie A. Wilkie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, 360 pp., $60 cloth, $24.95 paper)

REVIEWED BY BRENT FORTENBERRY, PHD CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Laurie A. Wilkie’s The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi is a multidisciplinary study of fraternal life at the University of California, Berkeley. The volume scrutinizes a period of dramatic change in the social life of the United States as notions of masculinity, often viewed as monolithic, shifted from Victorian to “modern” ideals during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Taking a diachronic approach, Wilkie charts the changing structure and landscape of Zeta Psi—from its organizational construct, to its chapter house, to its place within the university’s dynamic social and physical landscapes. She provides metaphorical context with J. M. Barrie’s Peter Pan, whose characters linger throughout the study, also enriching the reader’s understanding of the fraternity’s social framework.

What sets Wilkie’s approach apart is her blending of differing data sets, interpretive themes, and scalar perspectives. Drawing on UC Berkeley’s rich archives—its newspaper, The Blue and Gold, and graduation and administrative records—and the archaeological and standing architectural remains of the fraternity house itself, she com-

ines the very personal accounts of life in the house with the props of fraternal ritual and campus social life (e.g., beer bottles and pledge paddles).

What is most profound about Wilkie’s work is that while her primary argument features the development of the twentieth-century’s new masculinity, she portrays the social landscape as a liminal space in which gender roles were often temporarily refashioned in rituals (e.g., the Channing Way Derby and the Running of the Skull and Keys). As Wilkie argues, what is ironic about these liminal moments is that only those men who championed the ideals of twentieth-century masculinity could be “trusted” to briefly reject their “male-ness” in favor of a temporarily refashioned gender identity.

This book transcends categorization. At times it reads like a social history, at others like a work of archaeological material life or a Geertzian “thick description.” Rather than being tied to specific interpretive classifications, the reader is instead drawn into a complex and beautifully relayed world of secret rituals, festive drinking, and fraternal brotherhood.

ANGEL ISLAND: IMMIGRANT GATEWAY TO AMERICA

By Erika Lee and Judy Yung (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 432 pp., $27.95 cloth)

REVIEWED BY SUE FAWN CHUNG, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS, AND AUTHOR OF IN PURSUIT OF GOLD: CHINESE AMERICAN MINERS AND MERCHANTS IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Angel Island often mistakenly is called the Ellis Island of the West, but the experiences of the immigrants were very different. When people think of Angel Island, located near San Francisco, its stereotypical image as the entry point of Asian immigrants comes to mind. But as Erika Lee and Judy Yung have so carefully researched and documented, in addition to Chinese and Japanese immigrants, Angel Island Immigration Station, which operated between 1910 and 1940, processed Korean refugee students, South Asian political activists, Russian and Jewish refugees, Mexican families, and Filipino repatriates.

Using government documents, thousands of immigration records, oral histories, and archival materials, Lee and Yung demonstrate that race was a determining factor in how immigration officials treated the new arrivals. They evaluated the different policies of the immigration officials, many of whom were determined to keep the Asians out of the United States. An estimated 70 percent of all passengers arriving in San Francisco were brought to Angel Island, and nearly 60 percent were confined in the detention barracks for up to three days. This was in
sharp contrast to Ellis Island, where 80 percent passed through with few problems.

The two immigrant groups that suffered the most were the Japanese and Chinese, and their stories and experiences stand in sharp contrast to those of other immigrant groups. Because of federal, state, and local attempts to exclude them, the Chinese had the hardest time and were detained much longer than other groups, some remaining at Angel Island for years. One hundred seventy-eight thousand Chinese men, women, and children underwent a process of intense questioning, medical examinations, crowded conditions, and terrible food. Many of their complaints and sadness were expressed in poems written on the walls of the barracks, some of which have been preserved. The Japanese also had difficulties passing through Angel Island, but their stays were much shorter and they left neither poetry on the walls nor stories about their experiences.

When a fire damaged the immigration station in 1940, it was closed down and reverted to the United States Army. Community activists and preservationists worked to save the station and success was achieved when it was given National Historic Landmark status in 1997. Eventually, a restoration project began that led to the public opening of the site in 2009.

The book is very engaging in telling immigrants’ stories against the background of immigration policies and restrictive codes. With the arrival of new immigrants in the early twenty-first century—some 37.5 million foreign-born residents in 2007, comprising 12.5 percent of the nation’s population—it becomes important to know something about the history of immigration policies and treatment of new arrivals. This book provides that information.

VINEYARDS & VAQUEROS: INDIAN LABOR AND THE ECONOMIC EXPANSION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 1771–1877

By George Harwood Phillips

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM BAUER JR., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA–LAS VEGAS, AND AUTHOR OF “WE WERE ALL LIKE MIGRANT WORKERS HERE”: LABOR, COMMUNITY AND MEMORY ON CALIFORNIA’S ROUND VALLEY RESERVATION, 1850–1941

For nearly forty years, historian George Harwood Phillips has been a leading scholar in California Indian studies. Beginning with Chiefs and Challengers: Indian Resistance and Cooperation in Southern California and continuing with the book under review here, he has applied ethnohistorical methods to the study of southern California Indians. In Vineyards & Vaqueros, the first volume of Before Gold: California Under Spain & Mexico, he examines the role of southern California Indians as workers in the region’s economic development. “If Indians are perceived first as workers and then as victims,” he writes, “their economic importance becomes more apparent and appreciated.”

For Phillips, institutions shaped the labor history of southern California Indians. First, of course, he places Indian workers at the center of the California mission system. Rejecting comparisons with southern chattel slavery, he details the labor system that Spanish priests created at Mission San Gabriel and identifies the types of work that California Indians performed at the missions. Further, he urges scholars to pay more attention to how labor arrangements changed over time at the missions and to consider the ways in which California Indians adapted to developments at the missions and
how they chose to work there. Similar analysis applies to the Mexican rancho system. Instead of brutal institutions of unfree labor, Phillips sees southern California ranchos as not “terribly oppressive” like their northern counterparts and as providing Native Californians the opportunity to retain autonomy and culture.

Finally, Phillips brings the reader’s attention to the role of southern California Indians in the development of towns and pueblos, namely Los Angeles. Southern California Indians flocked to Los Angeles in order to find work and assisted in the development of the region’s vineyard and pastoral economies. Yet, the town of Los Angeles was also the site of antisocial Indian behavior, such as homicide, drinking, and gambling. By 1870, Los Angeles farmers and ranchers no longer relied on a resident Indian labor force, as the smallpox epidemics in the 1860s had drastically reduced their number. Instead, Los Angeles businessmen imported Indian workers from outlying areas.

Too often, the book reads more like a narrative of southern California development rather than a rich and deep investigation of southern California Indian labor relations, and more like a series of job descriptions than an interpretation of what work and labor meant to southern California Indians. For instance, regarding his suggestion that Native Californians created community hubs in Los Angeles to “reestablish friendships, strengthen kinship ties, and maintain reciprocity arrangements,” he places the reader on the outside of these communities, looking at them, without knowing what is occurring within them. Additionally, in his conclusion—“By not belonging to an institution where discipline was enforced and some security provided [such as a mission or rancho], they had little protection from blatant exploitation”—he appears to argue that southern California Indians required paternalism in order to survive. Still, Phillips continues to enlighten readers about the lives of California Indians and the institutions with which they were engaged during the nineteenth century. California Indian scholars are indebted to his work.

FUR, FORTUNE, AND EMPIRE: THE EPIC HISTORY OF THE FUR TRADE IN AMERICA


SO RUGGED AND MOUNTAINOUS: BLAZING THE TRAILS TO OREGON AND CALIFORNIA, 1812–1848

By Will Bagley (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010, 480 pp., $45 cloth)

These excellent books offer updated summaries of two epic stories in United States and western American history: the fur trade and the overland trails eras. Each presents in lively prose a robust synthesis of the current state of scholarship in these fields for the first time in decades. And both books ought to please readers, as they serve up stirring narratives based upon solid evidence and sound scholarship.

Eric Jay Dolin favorably impressed reviewers with his book Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America (2007). Fur, Fortune, and Empire represents the first comprehensive summary of the American fur trade to appear since Paul C. Phillips’s nearly completed two-volume work was posthumously published some five decades ago (1967), though it and Hiram M. Chittenden’s American Fur Trade of the Far West (1906) will remain cornerstones of fur trade scholarship.

Dolin’s work differs from that of fur trade history scholars who seem mostly interested in the brief, often overly dramatized era of the Rocky Mountain fur trade (ca. 1820–40). Indeed, one of several strengths of his book is his detailed attention to the colonial era fur
trade. In the first of three sections, he treats the natural history of the beaver and summarizes seventeenth-century Dutch, French, and English fur trade operations. Part 2 reviews the development of the late-eighteenth-century fur trade west of the Appalachians and its imperial implications, as well as the Pacific sea-otter trade. The third section summarizes the nineteenth-century trade in western North America and its many legacies. Dolin brings his sweeping narrative to a close with a brief narrative of the near-extermination of bison by 1887 and the consequent dawn of the early conservation movement in the early twentieth century.

Will Bagley’s new book, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812–1848*, is the first of three proposed volumes of *Overland West: The Story of the Oregon and California Trails*. A prolific writer and one of the pre-eminent historians of the American West, Bagley is a veteran researcher. His preliminary studies on this topic began a decade ago under the auspices of the National Park Service (NPS), and this book reflects an enormous amount of research and thoughtful reconstruction of the past. Following in the footsteps of his distinguished NPS predecessors, such as Merrill J. Mattes, or Oregon Trail historians Dale L. Morgan and Gregory Franzwa, Bagley has culled details from hundreds of trail diaries, news reports, overland guidebooks, and official correspondence, all of which find their way into this hefty volume.

No comparably broad-ranging treatment of this topic has appeared since the late John D. Unruh’s copiously annotated and influential *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West* (1979). Bagley sets out to tell a story that involves, and gives credit to, all the players. This is no hagiographic paean to providentially inspired and heroic “pioneers” whose excursions are too often celebrated in ways that blur or eclipse the stories of other important characters in the drama, such as Indians, African Americans, Hispanos, Chinese, or Hawaiians.

Appropriately, Bagley begins with a summary of the many Native nations west of the Mississippi, whose populations had sharply declined long before the Overland Trails epic began. Following a review of the fur traders who developed the nascent trail by 1825 and a summary of the famed Bidwell-Bartleson party of 1841, Bagley’s chapter “Jumping Off” discusses wagons, provisions, and gear, and the painful “partings” of family members who left kinfolk behind when they set out for Oregon or California.

Other chapters address how the trails and the travelers changed over the first decade and what trail life was like for men, women, and children. Social organization, conflict, and community on the trail also receive attention, and Bagley delivers many fine vignettes of trail history along the way. The book’s final chapters provide the results of the Mexican-American War for California and for emigrants; the Mormon exodus to Salt Lake Valley; and the story of the ill-fated Donner Party. Closing the book is a summary of the bloody demise of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman’s doomed mission station at Waiilatpu and the dawn of the Gold Rush, which within a decade would radically transform California and the West.

**THE FRONTIER OF LEISURE: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND THE SHAPING OF MODERN AMERICA**

*By Lawrence Culver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 336 pp., $29.95 cloth)*

REVIEWED BY THEODORE A. STRATHMAN, LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

In *The Frontier of Leisure*, Lawrence Culver explores southern California’s contribution to a national culture of recreation, outdoor living, and suburbanization. His central premise is that the Los Angeles region played a pivotal role in the “democratization of American leisure,” as local boosters remade leisure from a decadent occupation of the affluent to a key component of middle-class culture offer-
ing a beneficial antidote to urban life. Culver’s investigation of leisure, based especially on case studies of Santa Catalina Island and Palm Springs, provides a fascinating account of how promoters sold southern California in a range of ways, from an idyllic escape to the embodiment of American modernism.

Culver begins his study by exploring how figures such as Charles Fletcher Lummis advocated outdoor living and painted the region as a tourist destination whose romanticized Hispanic heritage and reconstructed missions and ranchos suggested a “precapitalist Eden” offering eastern visitors relief from an emerging urban-industrial environment. Catalina’s promoters, creating a resort, built on Lummis’s work, highlighting the island’s mild climate, scenic beauty, and opportunities for outdoor sport. Culver argues that the Wrigley family, which purchased the island in 1919, “themed” their resort as part “Old Spanish” California, part Wild West, and part tropical paradise, thus anticipating Disneyland’s elaborately constructed environments.

Palm Springs eclipsed Catalina as a leading resort after the Second World War, and more significantly, according to Culver, the former came to embody innovations in leisure and residence in southern California and the emergence of conservative politics in the Sun Belt.

The book’s main shortcoming might be its ambitious scope. Culver promises to explain both the development of leisure in southern California and its reception as a way of life by the nation as a whole. Most of the discussion of the latter issue comes in the book’s final chapter, which focuses on Phoenix to suggest the “Californization” of the nation after the Second World War. While this chapter provides a thought-provoking discussion, some readers may wish for more discussion of the influence of southern California–style leisure culture outside the Sun Belt.

Furthermore, Culver cites only a handful of tourists in this book; though he does an admirable job revealing the way southern California remade national ideas about leisure, their voices might have strengthened this aspect of his argument. Nevertheless, The Frontier of Leisure is a welcome addition to the historiography of tourism and recreation and provides valuable insights for students of California history.

BEYOND THE AMERICAN PALE: THE IRISH IN THE WEST, 1845–1910

By David M. Emmons (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010, 480 pp., $34.95 cloth)

REVIEWED BY ROSE MURPHY, LECTURER AND WRITER IN IRISH STUDIES, SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE AND SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND AUTHOR OF ELLA YOUNG: IRISH MYSTIC AND REBEL

In his exhaustive study, David M. Emmons captures a key aspect of the Irish immigrant’s place in westward expansion with this telling sentence: “They [Irish immigrants] had left Ireland without ever leaving it behind or displacing it in their affections.” Irish Catholic immigrants made a significant impact on the development of the American West, Emmons notes in this thoughtful and meticulously researched book. But in many ways, they were accidental adventurers in America’s ambitious and largely Protestant industrial enterprise: development of a vast area beyond the settled enclaves of the eastern United States.

Emmons’s title includes the familiar expression “beyond the pale,” used in Ireland among Anglo residents of Dublin’s environs in late medieval times. People in this largely Protestant
imperial class saw themselves as a civilized, virtuous society, as opposed to the “other,” the presumably wild, backward, Irish Catholic peasants who lived beyond the pale, into Ireland’s western reaches.

The Pale in America during Emmons’s time frame (1845–1910) comprised parts of the country usually viewed as the Midwest. But it was a cultural, rather than geographic, border. Protestant white males of the eastern establishment claimed the role of pragmatic, forward-looking Americans and saw their push beyond the Pale and into the West as a grand destiny. The dynamic West of this sweeping, heroic myth had no room for what Protestant Americans perceived as superstitious, past-bound, Rome-ruled, Irish Catholic immigrants who poured into America after the Irish famine.

But there was one problem with this dismissive view of the Irish: their muscle and cheap labor were needed to build the railroads, dig in the copper mines, and perform all the grubby tasks that many Protestant Americans eschewed. Still, according to the Protestant code, the Irish were never quite American and never quite “white” enough. Emmons notes striking connections among the Irish, African Americans, and Native Americans—all seen as the “other” at various times.

continued on p. 76
While the image of the striving, westward-bound American always focused on the future and on leaving the past behind, Emmons stresses that most Irish immigrants held a different worldview: “Worlds in perpetual motion, constantly in the process of becoming, were not a congenial idea to a people who received their traditions from dead generations.”

Essentially, these “most unlikely Westerners” transplanted their native townlands into wherever they lived in the American West, creating their own communities, unions, fraternities, Catholic churches, and schools. Most Irish saw themselves as exiles looking to Ireland for identity. Many sent hard-earned money back to Ireland to support the struggle for independence from the British, as Emmons effectively illustrates in a six-page appendix listing communities who donated to the cause of Irish nationalism.

It is not surprising that Irish involvement in the development of the American West was a largely male enterprise. Still, in Emmons’s discussion of prominent Irish in the union movement, the name of Kate Kennedy, a San Francisco immigrant, teacher, and champion of workers’ rights, would have been an appropriate inclusion.

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