

BOOK REVIEWS

Just Before Sunset. By Lora L. Cline. San Diego, CA: Sunbelt Publications, 1984. Third edition, 2008. Bibliography, illustrations, appendices, and index. xv + 146 pp. \$14.95 paper.

Reviewed by Brian I. Daniels, Departments of Anthropology and History, University of Pennsylvania.

Just Before Sunset is Lora L. Cline's account of the *Kwaaymii*, a sub-tribe of southern California's *Kumeyaay*. Originally published in 1984, this book is now in its third printing as the definitive account of the Native Americans from the Laguna Mountain region. However, the volume is not without its flaws.

Cline's account of the *Kwaaymii* comes from her conversations with Tom Lucas, a *Kwaaymii* man who lived between 1903 and 1989. This book is his story as much as Cline's. Lucas had a lifelong concern with preserving his culture, and worked with a number of anthropologists and local historians in the San Diego region. Readers interested in his life and views on the *Kwaaymii* should also consult Richard L. Carrico's interview, "A Brief Glimpse of the Kumeyaay Past: An Interview with Tom Lucas, *Kwaaymii*, of Laguna Ranch" in the second issue of this journal's 1983 volume.

Just Before Sunset is modeled upon the style of ethnography written by anthropologists at the beginning of the twentieth century. These conventions were popularized on the West Coast by Alfred L. Kroeber, the University of California, Berkeley anthropologist who authored the comprehensive *Handbook of California Indians* for the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1925. Cline provides a brief biographical sketch of Tom Lucas, and discusses, in turn, *Kwaaymii* economics, social customs, political organization, life events, legends, spirituality, and missionary contacts. These sections are highly idealized, abstract descriptions of what life might have been like for the *Kwaaymii* if they had remained untouched by a history that brought Spanish colonists, missionaries, Mexican settlers, and Americans into southern California.

However, the *Kwaaymii* have a history, and the world that Cline describes for the *Kwaaymii* in these pages is very different from the one lived by Tom Lucas. The eagle sacrifices, the *Karuk* dances, the seasonal migration into the high mountains, the *Taakaayp* puberty ceremony for boys, the council of headman, shaman, and elders: these were all things that Lucas had either heard about from others or remembered vaguely from his early childhood. The book is based upon *memory* culture – how Tom Lucas understood his tribe's culture to be before the colonization of Alta California. Native American lifeways in southern California were changing for generations before Lucas's birth, and in the twentieth century, Native Americans, like Lucas, made choices to cherish some cultural practices and forget others, as they began to participate in the American economic and political life of rural San Diego County. Lucas's life was emblematic of these changes: he learned the traditional ways as a youngster, but went to an English-language public school. He worked as a rancher near his home, and found full-time employment in the building industry with the Civilian Conservation Corps on the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base and for the Hazard contracting firm. The world Cline describes

as the reality of authentic *Kwaaymii* culture did not exist for Lucas. Yet no one would doubt Lucas's claim of having an authentic *Kwaaymii* identity.

Perhaps this book is most valuable for anyone searching for the treasured pieces of *Kwaaymii* culture that Lucas recounted to Cline. It should not be read literally for what it was like for Lucas to live as a *Kwaaymii*. What we do not get a sense of is how Lucas, or other *Kumeyaay* around him, actually survived as a Native American people. Absent are their struggles, their bureaucratic wrangling with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, their hopes of preserving a *Kwaaymii* cultural identity, and their experiences as indigenous people in American society. The photographs throughout the book reveal this contradiction. The images show Native Americans organizing for political rights in 1920, building and living in stone cabins, plowing on horseback, riding in the rodeo, grinding seeds in a stone mortar, and weaving baskets. What was life like for the *Kwaaymii* in these photographs? In recounting the way Cline imagines the *Kwaaymii* to have been, the book fails to tell the story of the way they actually were.

The book's title, *Just Before Sunset*, gives the impression it was written at the twilight of the *Kwaaymii*, implying an end for a unique culture and outlook upon the world. But Lucas's world had already changed; it was the task of his generation to preserve the notion of *Kwaaymii* identity and pass it on. Today, Lucas's daughter, Carmen, a member of the Laguna Band of Mission Indians, advocates for the preservation of sacred Native American sites and burial grounds throughout southern California. She may not live as her ancestors did, but it is through her efforts, and the efforts of others like her, that the sun has not set upon the *Kwaaymii*.

Juana Briones of 19th Century California. By Jeanne Farr McDonnell. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008. Bibliography, notes, index, maps, and photographs. 259 pp. \$50 cloth. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewed by Abraham Hoffman, Department of History, Los Angeles Valley College.

Teachers of California history now have the story of a second Mexican Californian woman whose life spanned most of the 19th century. Arcadia Bandini Stearns has long held a position of eminence in southern California: the city of Arcadia is named for her and her life story is included in numerous accounts of California's transition from Mexican province to American state. The story of Juana Briones offers a northern California analog. Although she was not politically involved, she exercised considerable influence in the development of the San Francisco Bay Area and was well acquainted with some of the most notable figures in California's history during her lifetime. While biographical details are scant, especially for Briones's early years, Jeanne Farr McDonnell has combed numerous archives for information about a remarkable, if unremarked, woman.

Born in 1802, Juana Briones grew up in Branciforte, now an appendage of Santa Cruz. She lived in an environment of missions, presidios, and ranchos. Her marriage to Apolinario Miranda produced numerous children and considerable grief, as her husband was abusive. Eventually the couple separated, and Juana demon-

strated she could function quite well without a husband. She acquired a reputation as a healer and midwife, successfully ran farms, dairies, and ranches, and participated fully in the early growth of San Francisco during the Gold Rush era. In fact, Juana Briones proved quite shrewd in her purchase and sale of strategically located real estate. She survived the challenges of land-hungry Anglos, and she lived to see her children and grandchildren become successful in the state's growing economy. Juana Briones continued to be active in her business endeavors until her death in 1889.

McDonnell succeeds in providing a fresh perspective on California history as seen from the viewpoint of a Californio woman who lived through war, Gold Rush, technological innovations, and personal difficulties. The paucity of primary sources dealing with Briones's life necessitated the writing of a book that is more about her life and times than purely biographical. McDonnell fills in the blanks with extended discussions of what was going on in California in Briones's life, so the perspective includes Native Americans, Californios, Anglo businessmen and prospectors, and events that range from major to trivial (as in reporting the size of a prize-winning pumpkin). McDonnell has to resort here and there to "probably," "possibly," "may have," and other conjectures, but she does so in a skillful style that keeps the narrative coherent. In telling the story of an ordinary woman who lived through extraordinary times, McDonnell has written a book that teachers and students of the state's history will find entertaining as well as informative.

The Cuyamacas: The Story of San Diego's High Country. By Leland Fetzer. San Diego: Sunbelt Publications, 2009. Bibliography, illustrations, index, endnotes, and chronology. xxviii + 354 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Raymond Starr, Professor Emeritus of History, San Diego State University.

San Diego State University language professor Leland Fetzer fell in love with the Cuyamacas soon after his arrival in San Diego in the 1960s. He hiked and visited the area and eventually built a cabin there. Inspired by his personal connection to the area, Fetzer started writing about the Cuyamacas, beginning with a very charming, very personal book, *A Year in the Cuyamacas* (1998). He later wrote *A Good Camp: Gold Mines of Julian and the Cuyamacas* (2002), as well as a detour away from the mountains, *San Diego County Place Names A to Z* (2005). Despite all this, he still had many questions about the Cuyamacas. As did many others, he saw the need for, as he put it, "a readable, documented history of the Cuyamacas, one arranged in chronological outline that traced a sequence of cause and effect, and one with enough details to give it heft" (p. xii). With *The Cuyamacas: The Story of San Diego's High Country*, Professor Fetzer has admirably met that need.

Fetzer begins the book with the requisite physical description of the mountains, explaining their altitude, climate, flora, and fauna. He also describes the Native Americans who lived there before whites arrived, and who still have a role in the Cuyamacas. With that foundation, the author proceeds with a narrative account of the human history of the mountains since the Spanish arrived.

Fetzer starts this narrative with a detailed description of the early travelers – Spanish, American, and others – who traversed the mountains, beginning in 1772 with Pedro Fages. Given the scarcity of reliable records, Fetzer must engage in speculation about the routes taken by the various travelers, but his judgments are reasonable and believable. Unfortunately, the presentation is severely hampered by the lack of a map (or maps) showing the features mentioned in the narrative. The casual reader will find these chapters tedious; the scholar will find them a useful record of early travel through the area.

The next section details the early white settlement of the region, most of which came after the American accession of the area in 1848. Important economic activities in this period included ranching and land speculation, as well as mining, which really brought the first significant settlements. This section details the origins of Julian and Banner City and includes the social history of the communities. Especially after the 1880s, agriculture and ranching became important, as did land development, and some of the towns matured into more permanent settlements. White settlement meant increased contact and conflict with the Native Americans, which eventually involved the creation of numerous small Indian reservations in the Cuyamacas. Fetzer also discusses the development of water resources. This section is well done, and is one of the most important insofar as the history of the Cuyamacas intersects with that of the city of San Diego and its suburbs.

After 1910, life in the Cuyamacas was dominated by the impact of the automobile, which brought a series of roads, more platting of subdivisions, and an increase in resorts, second homes, and permanent settlement in the region. It has also, in more recent times, brought issues of population density, quality of life, protection of the environment, and scarcity of water into the mainstream of San Diego County politics and public policy. One of the most important steps in preserving the natural endowments of the mountain range came with the establishment of Cuyamaca State Park, as well as some other parks. This story is well told, as is the story of the series of destructive fires that culminated in the 2004 conflagration, which Fetzer rightly calls a “holocaust.”

In examining a range of topics, Fetzer creates a readable narrative based on solid research. He is a good story teller, and his ability to capture effectively in just a few sentences the personalities of the people involved makes the story interesting to read, and also often helps explain motivation of those involved. The research for the book has been prodigious; I can think of few sources he could have examined but did not. The ten page bibliography is a fantastic research tool for future scholars, and is by itself worth the price of the book.

This is an admirable book in which Leland Fetzer meets his objective of providing a readable narrative history of the Cuyamacas that helps interpret the region and how it has developed over time. Every scholar of the Cuyamacas, of San Diego regional history, or of California history must have this volume in his or her library. The thousands of Southern Californians who love and visit San Diego’s high country will want to read the book, and possibly carry it in their car when they travel to the Cuyamacas.

Across the Plains: Sarah Royce's Western Narrative. By Sarah Royce. Edited by Jennifer Dawes Adkison. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2009. Bibliography, index, notes, and timeline. 136 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Deborah Lawrence, Associate Professor of English, Emeritus, California State University, Fullerton.

In the spring of 1849, Sarah Bayliss Royce traveled the California Trail to the goldfields of California with her husband and their two-year-old daughter. She kept a record of their overland journey and her early experiences in Gold Rush California. This diary was used as the basis for the memoir Royce wrote when she was sixty years old. Published posthumously in 1932 as *A Frontier Lady*, the narrative was written at the request of her son, the philosopher Josiah Royce, and not for publication. Jennifer Dawes Adkison's recent edition of Royce's narrative, entitled *Across the Plains: Sarah Royce's Western Narrative*, restores several passages that were omitted from the previous edition, providing a more thorough text. This new printing is thus a welcome arrival for the casual reader and scholar alike.

Scholars of overland trails have long celebrated Royce's narrative for its graphic descriptions of obstacles that overlanders faced – accidents, storms, Indian scares, cattle stampedes, and illness – as well as the difficulties of domestic life on the trail and the challenges of preserving a stable sense of family. Her text is also an invaluable source of information about life in early California: the Sacramento flood, one of San Francisco's great fires, and life in the mining camps. In addition to the social dynamic and domestic details, her account chronicles the scenery of the California Trail. On July 26, for example, Royce's group reached Independence Rock, and Royce was determined to ascend the landmark. Once atop the granite outcrop, she describes the landscape below with an enthusiastic eye and recalls how the view "fully paid for the labor" of the climb. Moreover, the western landscape Royce is passing through is a place for her to converse with God. In times of despair, she prays to God and believes she walks with him. At one point as she crosses the desert, Royce not only sees the biblical Hagar, but she imagines herself *as* Abraham's outcast slave, wandering alone in the barren wastes.

The personal writings of westering women such as Royce were largely overlooked until the 1970s, but the scholarly investigation of these narratives has increased over the last two decades. The research by historians like Lillian Schliessel, Sandra Myres, and Glenda Riley has drawn attention not only to women's presence on the frontier, but to the ways women's writings reveal a feminine perspective on the experience of western expansion. Indeed, as most recent trends in the field suggest, the attention currently being paid to the personal writings of frontier women has changed the way the history of the West is being written. Take Royce's account as an example. Although the stereotype of life on the frontier emphasizes the isolated individual, Royce's reminiscence serves to highlight the central role of women, not only as a part of the overland movement, but as players in the development of communities in frontier areas. Emphasizing a Christian woman's responsibility to maintain the morality in the community, Royce notes, for instance, how some of the "respectable" women in San Francisco formed the Benevolent Society to change the town's social atmosphere, especially its open acceptance of sexual immorality. According to Royce, the presence of "respectable"

women preserved the communal bonds of friendship and family in frontier areas.

Current scholarship is illuminating women's nineteenth-century letters, diaries, and journals from a *literary* perspective. As a result, while early research on Royce focused on her text as a historical artifact, recent scholars have considered how Royce uses literary strategies for a specific rhetorical purpose to construct her own persona, to configure the trail west, and to dramatize her struggle to adapt to life on the frontier. Thus, the new edition of *Across the Plains* is not only timely, but the five restored passages, which vary in length from several lines to several pages, give professional scholars and interested non-academics alike a text that is closer to Royce's original narrative. Additionally, the introduction offers an interesting discussion of Royce's self-conscious construction of her text and the ways she authorizes her own writing. And, for readers not familiar with Royce, Adkison's introduction places Royce in the context of her time and provides a discussion of Royce as a western writer. Unfortunately, however, Adkison provides very few explanatory notes for the memoir itself, forcing the inquisitive reader to look to outside sources. This is especially unfortunate for readers unfamiliar with the westward journey and Gold Rush California.

That flaw aside, this new edition of Royce's narrative, *Across the Plains*, is a valuable contribution to western studies. Its publication is certainly welcome.

Gold, Silk, Pioneers and Mail: The Story of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. By Robert J. Chandler and Stephen J. Potash. San Francisco, CA: Friends of the San Francisco Maritime Museum Library, 2007. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. xi +52 pp. \$25.00 paper.

Reviewed by Timothy G. Lynch, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Maritime Policy and Management, The California Maritime Academy, California State University.

The story of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company is an important tale in the maritime history of the West Coast. From its founding in 1848, through the tumultuous years of the Gold Rush, and from its role as pioneer in trans-Pacific service and in the immigrant trade, the venerable company provides a window into many of the major transitions that marked the maritime industry and the region in which it operated. Yet for many years the story of Pacific Mail (and its subsequent iterations—Dollar and American President Lines) has been told as one divorced from the realities of the days in which it operated. This is unfortunate, since the company was a witness to, and transformative force in, many of the most relevant events in the maritime history of the American West Coast and of the Pacific Rim. As maritime archaeologist James Delgado testifies, this slim volume offers "the first in-depth look at the venerable Pacific Mail Steamship Company in more than fifty years." While it is not the definitive treatment that one might expect, it is an enjoyable introduction to an important player in America's maritime history.

The book is the sixth and latest in a series of historical monographs published by the Friends of the San Francisco Maritime Library and is largely based on the collections housed there. Intended as a primer on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company,

the volume offers no overarching theme and at times reads a bit too hagiographic, where a more critical analysis would be appreciated. The book relates how the line secured a mail subsidy from the federal government, capitalized on the Gold Rush to reinvent itself as a passenger line, competed with startups that vied for Argonauts' business, and ultimately succumbed to the challenge of railroad transportation. At times, the volume reads less like a historical study and more like a technical manual: the reader learns of the size of various Pacific Mail vessels, the average speed, time of transit, cost of passage, and countless other details. At others, the authors (one a trained historian, the other an avid collector of Pacific Mail ephemera whose rich collections grace virtually every page of this contribution) provide tantalizing information about the role the line played in "Asiatic" immigration, or how maritime disasters involving the company led to important policy changes and increased federal regulations. Regrettably, these are left relatively undeveloped, and serve only to frustrate, rather than educate the reader. (Thankfully a more serious academic treatment of Pacific Mail can be found in Robert Eric Barde's *Immigration at the Golden Gate: Passenger Ships, Exclusion and Angel Island* (2008).) I suspect a more critical view of Pacific Mail, even when warranted, was not pursued out of a feeling that such a treatment would not find a receptive audience among the maritime enthusiasts for whom this book is intended.

Despite its shortcomings, the book is an important contribution, and should serve as a touchstone for future study. If nothing else the impressive visual imagery that accompanies the narrative—scarcely a page goes by without a lithograph, sketch, or other embellishment, and there are often multiple images per page—makes for a stunning appreciation of maritime art that grew up around Pacific Mail. Perhaps asking for a treatment of the historical controversy and significance that also followed the company would be beyond the scope of such a thin tome, but it is the hope of this reviewer that subsequent narratives will fill in these gaps and add to our understanding of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans. By Jean Pfaelzer. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. xxix + 402 pp. \$27.95 paper.

Reviewed by Joshua Paddison, Visiting Assistant Professor, American Cultures Studies Program, Loyola Marymount University.

"It is in the blood," explained California's U.S. Senator John F. Miller in 1880, joining a chorus of public figures who insisted that Chinese immigrants could never assimilate to white Christian society nor shed their essential foreignness. Marked as racially inferior and irredeemably pagan, Chinese Americans by the Civil War had replaced Native Americans as the most despised and marginalized group in California. In *Driven Out*, Jean Pfaelzer, a professor of English at the University of Delaware, shows how often xenophobic rhetoric exploded into anti-Chinese riots, lynchings, arson, and expulsions. Although it is strange to call the story of California's anti-Chinese movement "forgotten," given previous works on the subject by Elmer Sandmeyer, Gunther Barth, Stuart Creighton Miller, Alexan-

der Saxton, Sucheng Chan, Charles McClain, Judy Yung, George Anthony Pepper, Yong Chen, Susan Lee Johnson, and others, Pfaelzer provides a vividly written overview of the subject for a general audience.

Pfaelzer's eight chapters move chronologically from the Gold Rush to the turn of the twentieth century, showing how Chinese Californians struggled to overcome harsh discrimination, harassment, exploitation, and violence. Drawing on secondary sources as well as newspapers and government documents, Pfaelzer emphasizes Chinese Americans' attempts to improve their lives by sending petitions to the state legislature, issuing appeals, challenging unjust laws through the court system, going out on strike, and buying and using firearms against hostile white mobs. Such strategies usually yielded limited returns given the prevalence and brutality of anti-Chinese sentiment in the state. Pfaelzer's two best chapters shed new light on the forced expulsion of three hundred Chinese Americans from Eureka in 1885 and the use of anti-Chinese boycotts in Truckee in 1886, two incidents that were replicated throughout the American West. Pfaelzer does an admirable job of locating the anti-Chinese movement within the broader race relations of post-Civil-War America, devoting space to how the Chinese fared compared to Native Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans. She is attentive to how notions of gender and sexuality shaped anti-Chinese rhetoric, noting that the Chinese man was feminized "because he was short, because he wore his hair in a queue, because he had less body hair than Caucasian men did, [and] because he lived among men" (p. 139).

Yet the book also has many flaws. While it would be unfair to judge *Driven Out* by the scholarly standards of an academic monograph, even a book aimed at a popular audience should be consistent in its footnoting and rigorous in its interrogation of primary sources. Too often, Pfaelzer provides no documentation for her assertions and presents quoted material without analysis or consideration of the biases of the source. As in her book's subtitle, she tends towards exaggeration, claiming that the "entire purpose" of the 1878 Constitutional Convention was to give workingmen the "tools to purge the state of Chinese immigrants" (p. 145) and also that "history is still unaware" of court cases like *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (p. 250). She vastly underestimates the extent of pro-Chinese sympathy that existed in California before 1880—in fact, nearly half of the testimony at a Congressional hearing held in San Francisco in 1876 supported Chinese immigration. She notes that Congregationalist minister C. A. Huntington supported civil rights for the Chinese in Eureka but seems unaware that dozens of other white ministers similarly did so throughout the state, most prominently Presbyterian William Speer and Methodist Otis Gibson. Most seriously, in her attempt to portray the Chinese as heroic victims, she often de-emphasizes their own sometimes nasty cultural prejudices. For example, when she quotes a well-known plea for civil rights written by Chinese merchant Lai Chun-Chuen in 1855, Pfaelzer omits a passage where he objected to being lumped into the same class as Indians, who "know nothing about the relations of society; they know no mutual respect; they wear neither clothes nor shoes; they live in wild places and in caves.... Can it be possible that we are classed as equals with this uncivilized race of men?"

The media attention *Driven Out* has received—named a top book of 2007 by the *New York Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, featured on television and radio programs throughout the country, and now issued in paperback by the Univer-

sity of California Press – is a testament to the author’s fine writing skills and the compelling human drama of her subject. The attention also suggests that Pfaelzer’s story, largely known to historians, may still be generally unknown to the American public. For fighting racial amnesia, *Driven Out* deserves credit.

Under the Perfect Sun—Roundtable
Jason Araujo

“This is a delightful climate...”
-Upton Sinclair

I never thought I would see a roundtable discussion of the book, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See*.¹

The book seemed destined to remain a piece of fringe history, too critical of our beloved Xanadu to be taken seriously by San Diego’s mainstream history establishment. The traditional approach to San Diego’s history is more concerned with appeasing the public than challenging it. Hence its obscurity in contrast to better-known works published about cities such as San Francisco and Oakland (*American Babylon*, *Imperial San Francisco*, and *No There There*, among others).²

The Journal of San Diego History’s recent roundtable discussion of the book should inspire people to consider that San Diego’s history can be more than overwrought reflections on the beauty of the bay, romantic histories of the Park, and descriptions of its “quaint” Mexican past. As Rudy P. Guevarra expressed in his roundtable essay, this work was indeed a breath of fresh air and deserves serious attention and consideration by both local academics as well as by those in the larger field of Western American studies. Though we all know there is more to San Diego than meets the eye, few residents and onlookers know much about its past or its present. Kyle Ciani writes that as a young tourist visiting San Diego from Arizona, she and her family were completely unaware of the political, cultural, and social reality of the city. Residents may not be uninformed when it comes to local history and politics, but the facts that they do know are often slanted by a subtle ideological interpretation.

Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman’s review of the book in the *San Diego Union Tribune* criticized it for being just that: ideological.³ This type of reaction was not only predictable; it was prescribed. Criticisms of the book existed long before it was ever published, as the historical consciousness of “America’s Finest City” derives its most precious reflections and vehement reactions from historical approaches that are mostly narrow and benignly facile. The “Local Interest” section at any corporate bookstore turns up more tools for tourists than for locals, a sad fact that should disappoint all San Diegans. If we learned anything from *Under the Perfect Sun* it is that there exists little toleration for upsetting the status quo. It seems,

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though, that a discussion such as this one might change the face of local history for all stakeholders, for the public at large as well as for historians, and point towards its continued significance for the future.

Under the Perfect Sun is admittedly ideological. The authors do not pretend to be authoritative or holistic, stating unequivocally, "This is a *partisan book*" (italics mine).⁴ I was not at all disappointed by the fact that this remained to be true throughout the work. It is not surprising, then, that the discussion quickly split into predictable, and rather boring, camps: on the one side, advocates for a more socially aware interpretation of San Diego's diverse history; on the other, those who believe this sort of interpretation is unwarranted given that the authors ignored or distorted facts. Despite the bicameral nature of the academic debate it is clear from Mayhew's rich work that there are urgent situations in San Diego that are beyond dichotomization and equivocation. Her work is the culmination of the theses presented in the two previous essays: there exists, today, a large part of the San Diego population that remains marginalized and hidden due to both the whitewashing of the past as well as a contemporary need to see a false image in the mirror, not a real one.

Cobbs Hoffman wonders why people continue to immigrate to San Diego when Mike Davis seems to insist that San Diego is a "pretty wretched place to live."⁵ Are imbedded rhetorical questions really a form of criticism, cultural, academic, or otherwise? The contributors to *Under the Perfect Sun* hardly believe that San Diego is an undesirable place to live; in fact, they think that the city, beyond its professional tyrants and weak public servants, is brimming with hope. (I wonder if Cobbs Hoffman reached the final Percy Shelley quote in Miller's essay regarding hope and moral obligation.) Certain critics claim that the authors' attitude – perceived as cynical by more than one roundtable participant – towards San Diego can be used as criticism of both their work and their personal understanding of a city with which they are intimately familiar. If they truly were out to destroy San Diego's reputation (there might be other obvious candidates), why spend precious time and energy to research and write a book? All three authors have been residents of San Diego for some time and are highly concerned about its future. All three are avid educators who push for more civic involvement (read: "activism") in the city, not less.

Claims that such authors are radicals seeking to destroy the city's image are exhausted and predictable. This accusation also comes at an intellectual price. To equate Marxism with John Kenneth Galbraith's quote about communism, as quoted in Cobbs Hoffman's review, only seems to further promote political agendas over intellectual rigor. (Who is being ideological here?) All of these distractions may even be a red herring, as Miller suggests, that diverts people from looking at what is really important in *Under the Perfect Sun*. After all, their politics are not a secret, nor is their push to make San Diego a more self-aware place. They want people to understand that the histories of San Diego, from the nineteenth century to the present, are not the last word on the subject. They also suggest that an oft-ignored plurality could, with more study and work, push San Diego's intellectual and historical production to new prominence. Could San Diego be an imagined California archetype, a perfectly mellow blend of social and biological racism as well as a creeping anti-industrialism (real or imagined)? Does San Diego's racial history connect with the larger historical narrative of northern Kearneyism, for example? Does San Diego embody these constantly oppositional political ideologies, irreconcilable

it seems, as it seeks to be considered a Protestant Eden to the Exodusters of the twenty-first century? These questions, and many interesting others implicitly suggested in their work, are worth exploring and should not be brushed to the side as unrealistic or unwarranted. Other cities have confronted these questions with rigor and civility. Miller offers the following remedy to the stagnant state of local history: "We need to stop thinking like we live in a small town."⁶ This comment might also suggest an answer to Cobbs Hoffman's question about the success of Davis's essay being hinged on its ability to combat what she calls the "Los Angelization" of San Diego. It seems that all three authors wish to embrace, on some level, the cosmopolitanism of Los Angeles, not the inward retreat to a re-imagined idyll landscape. To ignore what the city is (the eighth largest in the United States) and opt for a romantic, "natural" return to the past is exactly what the authors attempt to argue against. This "grass-roots opposition" to preserve San Diego's "natural heritage" all too often results in environments that are static and sanitized, more akin to theme parks than to public squares, a topic that is discussed on the very first page of Miller's essay, "Just Another Day in Paradise?"

Under the Perfect Sun may be an imperfect work but its authors do not consider themselves to be above analysis and scrutiny. In fact, they actively sought to spark a healthy and much-needed discussion. Their work challenged many local and state historians (myself included) to come to terms with historical events and individuals that few consider important, even if their stories were familiar. Scandals beginning with Alonzo E. Horton and continuing to C. Arnholt Smith and beyond might teach us a great deal about the city and those people who call it home. Just because these scandals may be familiar doesn't mean that we critically understand them.

Davis, Mayhew, and Miller struggled to break the traditional narrative of San Diego's past and took the first steps towards providing a new approach and vocabulary. Despite the criticisms of the book we might look to the overwhelmingly positive results: a generative discussion about a topic that deserves more scrutiny both regionally and nationally. May the stories that we tell about San Diego become stronger and wiser as a result.

NOTES

1. Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew, and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* (New York: New Press, 2005).
2. Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Gary Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Chris Rhomberg, *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
3. Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, "Muffled Muckraking: 'Sun's' claims of wide-scale corruption and caustic criticisms of San Diego are perfectly unconvincing," [review of *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See*, by Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew, and Jim Miller], *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 28, 2003.
4. Davis, et al., *Under the Perfect Sun*, 4.
5. Cobbs Hoffman, "Muffled Muckraking."
6. "Roundtable Discussion of *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego that Tourists Never See*," *The Journal of San Diego History*, 55 no. 1 (2009): 74.

BOOK NOTES

Dividing Western Waters: Mark Wilmer and Arizona v. California. By Jack L. August, Jr. Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2007. xix + 172 pp. Illustrations, appendices, notes, selected bibliography, and index. \$32.95 cloth. Jack L. August, Jr. examines the role of Arizona attorney Mark Wilmer in the Supreme Court case that secured his state's allotment of Colorado River water and paved the way for the Central Arizona Project.

Historical Memories of the Japanese American Internment and the Struggle for Redress. By Alice Yang Murray. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008. xv + 590 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. \$65.00 cloth. This volume explores how various groups – including the War Relocation Authority, the Japanese American Citizens League, and those seeking Congressional redress – have offered competing interpretations of Japanese American internment since the 1940s.

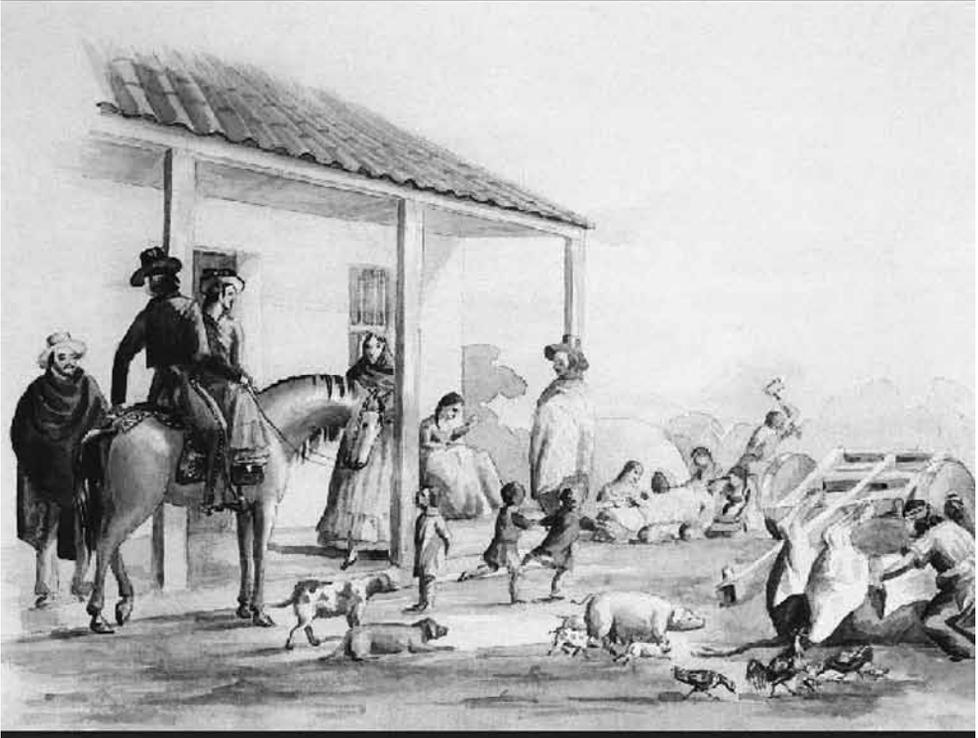
How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America. By Carl Abbott. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2008. x + 347 pp. Photographs, maps, and tables. \$34.95 cloth. Carl Abbott, a leading historian of western urbanization, explores the role of cities in the development of the American West. The book examines urban places in Canada and the United States and suggests that since the middle of the twentieth century western cities have become trendsetters rather than simply copies of their eastern counterparts.

Searching for Tamsen Donner. (American Lives Series.) By Gabrielle Burton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. xii + 314 pp. Illustrations, maps, and bibliography. \$26.95 cloth. Tamsen Donner was a member of the ill-fated Donner Party that set out for California from Springfield, Illinois in 1846. Although she was healthy enough to leave with a rescue party, Tamsen chose to remain at Truckee (now Donner) Lake with her husband and others too weak to travel. Her body was never found. In this book, Gabrielle Burton retraces Donner's voyage from Springfield to the lakeside winter camp.

Tuberculosis & the Politics of Exclusion: A History of Public Health & Migration to Los Angeles. By Emily K. Abel. Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007. xii + 189 pp. Illustrations, notes, and index. \$68 cloth. \$23.95 paper. This study investigates how Los Angeles public health officials frequently linked tuberculosis to "undesirable" groups like "Okies" and racial and ethnic minorities. These connections contributed to policies that limited the entry of such groups into California.

The West the Railroads Made. By Carlos A. Schwantes and James P. Ronda. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. xx + 229 pp. Illustrations, notes, and index. \$39.95 cloth. Schwantes and Ronda assess the ways railroads created the American West. Not only did railroads play a critical role in shaping the landscapes and economy of the West, but they also transformed the region in the popular imagination by helping create the notion that it was a place of natural abundance in which personal fortunes could be made.

Translated with introduction and commentary by
Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz



Testimonios

Early California through the
Eyes of Women, 1815–1848

An outstanding collection of thirteen essays edited and translated by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz from the originals as dictated in Spanish to Thomas Savage and Henry Cerruti in 1874. The manuscripts are in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The book is available at Heyday Books, Berkeley, California, copyright 2006. <http://www.heydaybooks.com>.