

Buckskin Bulletin

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NEWSLETTER OF WESTERNERS INTERNATIONAL
<http://www.westerners-international.org>

ISSUE 3, 2008

Scenes of WI at WHA



The Home Ranch Bunch says "Thank You" to Val Reeves, left, upper left photo, and Cheryl McInnis for going to Salt Lake City to help man the WI Booth when their husbands, Kent McInnis, WI Chairman, and Don Reeves, WI Secretary, were busy with other duties.

Joseph B. Herring, above, displays his first place plaque for winning in the Coke Wood Award category.

Presiding over the annual Westerners International Fall Board Meeting, held during the Western History Association meeting, is Kent McInnis, left in left photo, while Don Reeves takes notes. Also shown are J'Nell Pate and T.Lindsey Baker.

(Photos by Kent & Cheryl McInnis)

Your Financial Support Still Needed

Two people should be considered Living Legends. They are the two ladies who today run the Home Ranch for very little compensation. When I took over the reins in January as chairman of WI, I asked Burnis Argo, editor of *Buckskin Bulletin*, and Mary Marvel, assistant treasurer, WI bookkeeper and records wrangler, if they had already picked out their replacements. They had previously dismissed a suggestion that they were under-compensated, but they had not realized that no one would ever accept their jobs at the low pay scales they found acceptable.

The sad fact is that we are all getting up in years here at the Home Ranch. We do our work out of love for the cause of promoting western history. But love for a cause does not pay the bills. That is why I recognized a pressing need to increase our endowment in such a way that we could be financially viable in the future. Any responsible group studying history must look as much to the future as they look at the past.

We will come very close to our goal of receiving \$5000 this year from fellow Westerners, which will be matched by generous citizens here in Oklahoma City. Our need will be ongoing. There will be similar matching opportunities in 2009. I would ask that you continue your support of the Home Ranch of Westerners International above and beyond the current year. Our Living Legends here at the Home Ranch cannot be replaced, unless we receive the operating funds to carry on in the next decades. The future of our Westerners International is in our hands and our pocket books. Please continue to help.

You may contact us, if you would like to help, at 1-800-541-4650 or WIHomeRanch@gmail.com

Kent McInnis
Chairman of the Board

Corrals Publishing

From the Editor

In reading through the meeting notices which arrived in the **Home Ranch** office in recent months your Editor noticed several corrals are polling their members about the possibility of sending out meeting notices by e-mail because of the expense of sending them regular mail. Also about receiving meeting reservations the same way. Your Editor's corral, the **Chisholm Trail**, is now sending all meeting notices by e-mail and most reservations are sent back that way, too. It is both a time and money saver. How is this working for your group? Let us know and we will put together an article listing both the "pros" and the "cons" as a guide for other corrals who might be considering the same thing.

Incidentally—the Home Ranch already receives meeting notices by e-mail from a few corrals and we welcome that. We also print them out and add them to the corral folder as a record. Send to: **wihomeranch@gmail.com**

Burnis Argo

Sixty Years of the Branding Iron is the lead article of the Winter 07/Spring 08 issue of the **The Branding Iron**, publication of the **Los Angeles Corral**. According to the article, the LA Corral produced five issues of what was then called the **Brand Book** during 1947, the first full year of the corral. In March of 1948 the group began their new series of publications, *The Branding Iron*. There was no set number of issues a year at first but the group soon settled into a quarterly printing schedule. To date they have produced around 233 issues plus several Keepsakes.

The original masthead, still used, was the work of charter member **John Goodman**. Others at the organizational meeting, December 3, 1946, were **Homer Britzman, Robert J. Wood, Glen Dawson, Paul Galleher, W.W. Robinson, Lindley Bynum, Jim Williams, Jack Harden** and **Clarence Ellsworth**.

The anniversary issue is filled with reminiscences including an article on all the places the corral has dined and another on the past sheriffs.

The summer issue of **The War Chief**, published quarterly by the **Indian Territory Posse**, Oklahoma City, has a feature article by member **John D. Frizzell** who for a number of years operated, with his late father John D. Frizzell, Sr., the Frizzell Coach and Wheel Works in Oklahoma City. The article concerns the company's recreation of an Egyptian Chariot, first built in about 1500 B.C. and later buried in the tomb of its owner. The project, which involved countless hours of research, a trip half-way around the world and lots of improvising, took a year to complete. The chariot was built to be included in an exhibit at the Kentucky Horse Park Museum, Lexington.

The Roundup of the **Denver Westerners** featured an article by **Mike Moore**, "**The Quintessential Mountain Man**" concerning Tom Fitzpatrick whom Moore calls "the most written about of the mountain men in core journals and diaries."

Though Moore says most early West enthusiasts don't associate Tom as being special in any way, his article proves them wrong.

Hello Joe, You Old Buffalo

Skulls, Brand Books, and Westerners

(Editor's Note: Our immediate past president, Jo Tice Bloom, wrote a wonderful article about Westerners International for the Summer, 2008, Issue of the Western Historical Quarterly, publication of the Western History Association. She has given us permission to run it here. This is Part 2 of the article. Part 1 was in the last bulletin. A copy can be found on our website: www.westerners-international.org

By Jo Tice Bloom

(Part 2)

WI Meetings open in different ways. The Chicago and Scottsdale Corrals begin with the unveiling of the buffalo skull, Old Joe. Others simply start. Some are gaveled open. Some open with a Pledge of Allegiance. In the same respect, closing ceremonies may exist or not as the corral decides.

Programs and speakers vary. Some corrals specialize in local history; others in the broader subject of state or history. The English Society, the Potomac Corral, and the Chicago Corral, especially, have a broader range encompassing all of the American West. Some corrals prefer to hear about and discuss the 19th century West with occasional excursions into the 20th century. Others look equally at the 19th and excursions into the 20th century. Others look equally at the 19th and 20th centuries. Some even go back to the earlier frontier of the Trans-Appalachian West and the 18th century. The Czech corrals especially enjoy 19th century western history. Some corrals insist that members give talks on their research. Others prefer outside speakers. Recent topics have in-

cluded the Walnut Creek Dam in Arizona, a woman prospector in the Pike's Peak area; the Spiegelberg Brothers of Santa Fe; Confederate Army handguns used in the West; Judge Roy Bean; kitsinas; Charles Russell; Hamlin Garland and the Middle Border; a history of the Cowden ranches in West Texas and New Mexico; and Buffalo soldiers t Ft. Bliss, Texas.

For many corrals, one of the most important activities is publication. The English Society, in addition to books, publishes *The Tally Sheet*, a journal that contains articles and book reviews. *The Smoke Signal* comes from the Tucson Corral. The Huntington Corral publishes the *Western Journal* on a regular basis. Denver, Chicago, San Diego, and Los Angeles publish Brand Books with lengthy essays. For many years the Potomac Corral published a series of booklets in the Great Western Series, usually by members. Many corrals place strong emphasis on publications, others do not.

Often there are "get-ways" or special events. For years the Sacramento Corral had a get-away to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada for a barbecue at a member's home. The San Francisco and Stockton corrals take a journey in May or June to visit an historic place. The Adobe Corral (Tucson) visited Silver City, New Mexico, one spring and explored its early history. The Czech corrals have an annual summer pow-wow with Indian teepees, trappers' tents, and the whole works in costume. The Oklahoma Corrals have begun a tradition of meeting together in May for a barbecue on the grounds of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum where the Home Ranch is located. A recent get-away for the Rio Bravo del Norte

Corral (Las Cruces, New Mexico) was a tour of prehistoric sites and old ranch ruins followed by a buffalo barbecue on the nearby Jornada Experimental Range.

A memorable special event for me was the 25th anniversary of the Potomac Corral which also celebrated the 80th birthday of member Jefferson Sykes, the renowned book collector and dealer. A buffalo barbecue was held on the patio of a suburban church with samples of Indian trade whisky, Chimayo whisky, and Tennessee moonshine. The appetizers included grilled Rocky Mountain oysters. Speaker Emmett Essin talked about Army mules. A grand time was had by all!

Westerners include notable history buffs, such as Boyd Finch, Fred Egdorf, Leland Case, Joe Rosa, Al Josephy, David Dary; university professors Ray Billington, Duane Smith, Patty Limerick, Tom Alexander, Eugene Hollon; public historians Ross Toole, Bob Utley, Britt Storey, Harry Myers, Melody Webb, congressmen, senators, librarians, archaeologists, restaurateurs, physicians, and many others. Jefferson Dykes, Arthur Clark, Jr., Bob Clark, and many other "bookmen" have added color.

Back in the late 1950s, a number of Westerners who were also professional historians (who earn their livelihood in history as opposed to buffs who read and write history for fun) felt a need for an association that would have regular conferences to discuss the wide variety of subjects in the history of the American West. A small group of Westerners and academics met in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1960, to consider the matter. Included were Ray Billington, Bob Utley,

(continued on Page 4)

Hello Joe You Old Buffalo

(Continued from Page 3)

John A. Carroll, and John Bloom. The result of their discussion led to the establishment of the Western History Association to 1961 in Denver. Ray Billington was the first president and John Porter Bloom, the first secretary-treasurer. Both were Westerners. Bob Utley, John Bloom, and Glenda Riley have served as WHA and WI presidents. Westerners Al Josephy, Jr., Patty Limerick, Peter Iverson, and Eugene Hallon were presidents of the WHA.

Convened to discuss and explore topics in the American West, the WHA historical and hysterical meetings in October each year are renowned for great stories and events. Westerners have been a vital part of every conference. One of my best memories is sitting at the banquet in El Paso (1966) talking with an American Tobacco Company executive, a Westerner, who was fascinated with western rivers. Samuel P. Arnold, Denver Posse, was best known for his restaurant, The Fort, in Morrison, Colorado. With Westerner Peter Olch, M.D., Sam wrote the "Mountain Man Toast," which has been standard at the WHA banquet for years. Sam has also welcomed new WHA presidents with a Green River Knife.

The annual meeting of Westerners International is held at the WHA, along with Saturday morning breakfast and book auction. At the breakfast, prizes for outstanding books, papers, and activities of Westerners are made. Usually there is also a session at the WHA sponsored by the Westerners. One year in Fort Worth, the subject was women in the cattle industry, with an all-woman panel. The speakers, a former professional rodeo cowgirl and two women currently operating a cattle ranch near Fort Worth, kept the audience laughing and learning.

In 1978, Ray Billington wrote about Westerners in *The American West*, a journal published for the

WHA. "They share, too, a dislike for stuffed shirtism, over-seriousness, shiftless thinking and above all ignorance. Westerners meetings are designed to be enjoyed, but they make no compromises with inaccuracy as the members unleash their questions and criticisms on the evening's speaker. Woe unto the victim if he has not prepared his subject properly or has been guilty or slip of the tongue. Most Westerners know a great deal about the segment of the past that interests them particularly, but rare is the speaker at a corral meeting who does not find one or two others who know as much as he does. They are there, ready to pounce at the slightest slip. The annals of every corral record instances of triumphs by such inquisitors."

Ray Allen Billington, "An Informal Chronicle of the Westerners," *The American West* 15, no. 3 (no year); 59, added, "The annals of every corral record instances of triumphs by such inquisitors. On one occasion, the speaker at a Los Angeles meeting for a hour advanced hypothesis after hypothesis to explain a row of stakes across the Mojave Desert, only to have a fellow member demolish his theories by citing evidence that they marked the initial survey of an un-built railroad. Another time an expert on the Mexican War stated that a messenger had brought \$40,000 in bribe money to Colonel Stephen W. Kearny in Santa Fe in the form of double eagles carried in his saddle bags; after scribbling rapidly on a napkin one of his hearers pointed out that the double eagle was not minted until 1849 and that \$40,000 in single eagles would have weighed 147 1/2 pounds and could not have been carried in saddle bags."

Westerners International is the formal entity that charges new corrals, publishes a newsletter, awards prizes, but the real Westerners are in the corrals, one hundred of them around the world,

where buffs and professionals together enjoy excellent history a camaraderie. A corral meeting enlivens my life. A mechanic, a retired military officer, a range specialist, archaeologists, ranchers and farmers, a computer specialist, a county public affairs officer, a college dean, and a couple of historians gather over dinner to discuss the latest happenings in local history and historic preservation. A speaker adds to our knowledge and understanding, sharing wonderful stories of the men and women, the cultures, animals, places, and events that make up western history. Questions open up discussions, all of this accompanied by laughter and good humor. And then the evening ends. For me this is Westerners—a chance to share my knowledge with and gain more information from those who love and enjoy history. As Ray Billington said, "So long as the frontier heritage of the United States continues to stir the blood of men and women, [the Westerners] will continue to offer delight and learning."

Next Bulletin Only Online

The executive board of Westerners International has made the decision to publish the **Winter Issue** of the **Buckskin Bulletin** only on our **web page** for the foreseeable future. At the 2006 Fall Board Meeting in St. Louis, it was voted to allow us to publish only 3 issues of the BB a year if this was needed because of the rise in printing and mailing costs.

However, since we say we publish four times a year we believe we should do so. We just won't be printing and mailing the 4th issue. It will only be available at:

www.westerners-international.org
Look for Issue 4, 2008, on the web site in January. Other 2007/08 BBs are there now.

By Richard Dillon

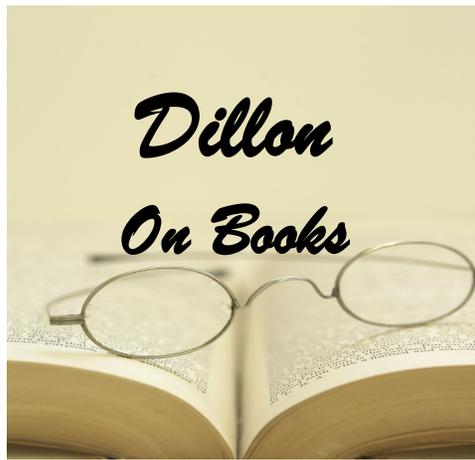
Subtitled "Virginia For the Union," **George Thomas** by **Christopher J. Einolf** for the **University of Oklahoma Press** (\$29.95), is the biography of the North's most "Southern" general in the Civil War. Thomas came to be called The Rock of Chickamauga for his sterling defense in that battle.

Very much in the shadow of Grant, Sherman and Sheridan, Thomas was an effective soldier, a victor in the Battle of Nashville as well as Chickamauga. Einolf sketches Thomas's early career in the Seminole and Mexican Wars and extends his study of the Virginian to include his "conversion" from a slave holder to a defender of the civil rights of Negroes and an opponent of the Ku Klux Klan in Tennessee.

A Separate Star, edited for **Heyday Books** in Berkeley, California, by **Michelle Burnham** (\$21.95) is a mighty welcome collection of the writings of **Helen Hunt Jackson**, once widely known, even as a poet, but remembered only for her melodramatic novel, Ramona, about the plight of California's mission Indians. It was likened to Uncle Tom's Cabin as well-meaning propaganda. Her nonfiction polemic, A Century of Dishonor, was an appeal for fair treatment of all U.S. Indians.

But Ms. Burnham shows us the diversity of Helen Hunt Jackson's work. She wrote short stories (including children's) as well as poems, and essays on parenting. Best is her travel writing, especially on Yosemite.

Greta Gaard's The Nature of Home, published by the **University of Arizona Press** (\$17.95), is about what she terms ecopsychology, a high-faluting synonym for the strange, and powerful, sense of place. This is especially the case if one's home—or place—is in the wilderness of California's



Sierra Nevada, Washington's Cascades, or the Southern California desert. The author's essays suggest the powerful inter-play between place (home) and personal identity.

If you missed the **University of Arizona's Edward Abbey: A Life** when it first appeared (2001), it is still available (\$27.95/19.95 paper). **James M. Cahalan's** book is a "warts and all" biography of the wild environmentalist. Although he wrote powerfully of mountains and desert, he disliked being labeled a naturalist. Sensitive about his lack of academic training, he preferred to be called just a writer.

In **Legend and Lore of the Guadalupe Mountains**, by **W.C. Jameson**, from the **University of New Mexico Press** (\$16.95), we have an entertaining J. Frank Dobie-like collection of tales drawn from both history and legend of the mountains between the Pecos River and the Rio Grande. The Guadalupe Range, south of Carlsbad Caverns, contains the tallest peak in Texas and also one of the most dramatic ones, El Capitan, a sheer wall towering over the Chihuahuan Desert.

The Guadalupe Mountains comprise one of the jewels of Texas natural history, but Jameson has also dug up very interesting yarns on the Sierra's human history. Here are tales of U.S. Army tussles with Mescalero Apaches; of

stolen Army rifles buried in fake graves; lost gold mines (although this ancient limestone reef should have none); also Wells Fargo treasure boxes hidden in caves.

Yep, **Landforms of Southern Utah**, by **Richard L. Orndorff** and **David G. Futey**, is just a "picture book" from Montana's Mountain Press (\$15), but it is a nifty one, a photographic exploration of the country around Bryce, Zion and Canyonlands, with special attention being paid to details of the region's geology, not just mountains, canyons and cliffs; the but natural bridges and arches, mushroom rocks and hoodoos—those odd freestanding pillars of resistant caprock—for which southern Utah is famous. Nor do the authors forget the area's lava flows and dikes, and the playas or glacial lake beds, of this colorful (in every sense of the word) region. Very brief mini-essays join captions accompanying the strikingly beautiful color photos of the desert landscape.

Texas Natural History, subtitled "A century of Change," by **David J. Schmidly**, is from Lubbock's **Texas Tech University Press** (\$39.95) It is an exhaustive (534-page) survey of the natural world of the Lone Star State, with a focus on its mammals. It incorporates a reprinting of Vernon Bailey's similar U.S. Geological Survey volume of 1905, nicely annotated here, in order to compare the status of the Texas landscape and animal life today with that of 100 years back. Changes have been dynamic, thanks to climatic cycles and shifts in land usage. The latter often leads to a decline in surface and ground water, also over-grazing. But, surprisingly, much of the land is actually better off today than it was a century ago, thanks to conservation by Texas landholders.

Award Winners

Co-Founders Best Book Award

1st Place: **Robert W. Larson, Denver Posse**
Gall: Lakota War Chief

University of Oklahoma Press

2nd Place: **Andrew Wallace, Prescott Corral**
with Richard H. Hevly

From Texas to San Diego in 1851: The Overland Journal
of Dr. S.W. Woodhouse, Surgeon-Naturalist of the
Seagraves Expedition

Texas Tech University Press

3rd Place: **Gregory Michno, Fort Collins Corral**

The Deadliest Indian War in the West: The Snake Conflict
1864-1868

Caxton Press

Coke Wood Award for Monographs and Articles

1st Place: **Joseph B. Herring, Potomac Corral**

2nd Place: **Stan Brown, Tucson Corral**

3rd Place: **Kevin J. Mullen, San Francisco Corral**

Philip A. Danielson Award for Best Programs

1st Place: **Anthony Romero, Silver City Corral**

2nd Place: **Francis Flavin, Potomac Corral**

3rd Place Tie: **Christopher Johnson, Fort Abraham
Lincoln Corral**

Dick Bowerman, Prescott Corral

Fred Olds Western Poetry Award

1st Place: **Bernice Landers, Jedediah Smith Corral**

2nd Place: **Gary Turner, Los Angeles Corral**

Heads Up Award

For Corrals organized prior to 1973
Potomac Corral, Washington, D.C.
Francis Flavin, Sheriff

For Corrals organized 1973 and later
Abraham Lincoln Corral, Bismarck, North Dakota
Darrell Pittman, Sheriff

Overseas Corrals

Texas Rangers Corral, Czech Republic
Jiri "Danny" Dvorak, Sheriff

Two Corrals Share Press Clippings

Sara Tubbs McKee, sheriff of the **Llano Estacado Corral** kindly sent the Home Ranch copies of the *Lubbock Avalanche Journal* which recently singled out two members of this Texas corral.

Member **Alvin Davis**, who was a 2002 WI Living Legend, was honored with a nice article concerning his "brainchild and labor of love," the National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration. The 20th anniversary of this event was held this past July. Davis also is chairman of the American Cowboy Culture Association.

Dr. Richard W. Slatta, history professor at North Carolina State University, who is writing a book on the history of the Symposium calls Davis "an American original. Artist, entrepreneur, organizer, promoter, he can do and does anything he sets his mind to."

The second corral member honored with an article, in October, was Vestal "Pappy" Yeats who "has a rare distinction for a West Texan—a glacier in Antarctica bearing his name."

Vestal was exploring at the South Pole in 1962, 1964 and 1968. Until his retirement he was a geosciences teacher at Texas Tech University.

A front page article in the *San Marino Tribune* told of a luncheon meeting of the **Huntington Westerners**. Speaker was **Michael Crosby** who talked about Los Encinos, pioneer ranch of the San Fernando Valley settlement in 1849. The program was one in a series of presentations of early California ranch history.

If the Crosby name seems familiar it should as the speaker's grandfather, Larry Crosby, was the oldest brother of entertainers Bing and Bob Crosby.

John G. Neihardt Corral, Columbia, Missouri, held its Spring Buffalo Barbecue in June at the home of **Jim and Phyllis Boillot**. "Please, will some of you bring your own folding chair, tray or card table, or you may have to sit on the patio floor," read the meeting announcement. "And please let us know if you are coming. We have to know how many buffalo to run over the cliff."

Monterey County (California) Corral is a group that meets for a potluck with members assigned to bring a hot dish, salad, dessert, ice cream [two desserts! Wow!] First time visitors are not expected to bring food. To help with the cost of the meeting place and other expenses members bring \$2 each and \$1 for each guest.

In May the **Boulder (Colorado) County Corral** heard a program by **Bob Larson**, retired professor of history at the University of Northern Colorado. Subject of his talk was "Gall, Jay Cooke and the Northern Pacific Railroad." The author of many articles and books, Larson, a member of the **Denver Posse** was presented the WI "Best Book" first place award for his latest book, Gall: Lakota War Chief, published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

The **San Dimas (California) Corral** met in June for a slide show and talk by **Bob Ihsen**. Titled "An African Experience," the program was about his 2004 trip to southern Algeria and Niger. Read the meeting notice, "With summer approaching and gas prices as extreme as they are, Bob provides all of us with a chance to take a summer vacation to remote locations unknown to many of us, without worrying about our finances. What a wonderful Treat!"

Santa Barbara Corral met in Serra Chapel of the Santa Barbara Mission December 4 for a special Christmas program. Dinner was served in the Friar's Room. Giving

Corral Roundup

the special musical program was Cal Poly professor **Craig Russell**, historian, musician and composer, who has devoted much of his career to the study of the music of the California Missions. Assisting in the program was **Kathleen Lenski**, renowned violinist and founding member of the Angeles String Quartet.

The Westerners, Durango, Colorado, met for dinner December 4 at the historic Strater Hotel. "Watering Hole begins at 6:15, dinner at 7, the menu turkey with all the trimmings" read the meeting notice. The program, "Excavating the San Diego Presidio; the First European Settlement on the West Coast," was given by **Brad Bartel**.

Thank You!

Thanks to the following people and groups we are getting closer to our goal of being able to fund our Annual Awards and Scholarship through a special endowment fund. Each of these amounts will be matched by the Oklahoma Community Foundation.

- Indian Territory Posse/Leon & Marcene Nelson: \$1,000**
- Chisholm Trail Corral: \$2,000**
- Fort Collins Corral: \$100**
- Prescott Corral: \$100**
- Fort Abraham Lincoln: \$100**
- Klaus & Edeltraut Stoehr, Chicago Corral: \$20**

- Santa Catalina Corral: \$100**
- Nevada Corral: \$100**
- Kent & Cheryl McInnis: \$100**

Others who may wish to contribute may do so until December 30. Checks must be made out to the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

Also meeting December 4 was the **Last Chance Gulch Corral**, Helena, Montana. The group heard a program by **Zoe Ann Stoltz**, Reference Historian for the Montana Historical Society, entitled "Toys, More Than Just Fond Memories." Members were asked to bring a special toy or an old toy to share a memory.

The **Scottsdale Corral** has a unique way to fund the speaker's dinner. They sell raffle tickets for books donated by members, a dollar a ticket or \$3 for 6 tickets.

Speaker at the group's October meeting was **Deborah Williams** who presented a paper she gave at the fall Arizona Historical Society convention entitled "Carlos Montezuma, 1866-1923: Yavapai Indian, Chicago Physician, National Indian Rights Activist and Assimilationist." Members may sign up if they plan to attend every meeting. If they can't come and forget to cancel their reservation—they get a bill for the meal they missed.

BUCKSKIN BULLETIN

Issued quarterly by Westerners International, a Foundation to stimulate interest and research in frontier history. The Westerners was founded February 24, 1944, in a Chicago suburb by Leland D. Case and Elmo Scott Watson.

All correspondence regarding the bulletin should be sent to:

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WI Home Ranch Bunch

Kent McInnis, Don Reeves, John Marshall, Leon Nelson, Bill Deupree, Mary Marvel, Cheryl McInnis, Noel Kruger, John & Melvena Heisch, Jerry Burson, Ed Kelsay, Bob Buford, Burnis Argo.

Meetings Special In December

Members of the **Pahaska Corral** met for their annual "Book Fandango" December 22. Members brought a wrapped book. Rules for the distribution of the gifts was up to the sheriff.

"History of Civil War Music" was the topic of the December 16 meeting of the **Southwest Vaqueros**. Presenting the program was musician **Hank Harrison**.

Tom Buecker, curator of the Nebraska State Historical Society's Fort Robinson Museum, presented "Christmas at the Fort" for the **Pine Ridge Corral's** December 9 meeting.

"This month we will celebrate an early Christmas with dinner music," read the meeting notice of the **Last Chance Gulch Corral**. Members were asked to bring any musical instruments to display on the table.

"Also, if you or your family have a favorite historical Christmas treasure to share, please bring it."

The program for the December meeting of the **Prescott Corral** included a musical presentation by the Prescott High School Show Time Chorus. A collection was taken up resulting in a donation of \$250 to benefit the music department at the school.

The **Scottsdale Corral** holiday party included good food and the

playing of a new Arizona trivia game. Members also brought unwrapped toys to donate to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots drive.

A white elephant gift exchange was held at the December 18 meeting of the **Albuquerque Corral**. The gifts were to be something valued at \$10 and be something fun—a used item from home or a "gag" gift.

Dakota Midlands Corral met December 5 for the annual auction. Members were urged to "clean out your closets, start your ovens and fill your covered wagons with treasures and good food." Money raised is used to help the group "pay the bills and to help others through 2009."

Westerners International

c/o National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
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