

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Any study of Rancho Los Alamitos will be enriched by familiarity with the history of the state and region of which it is a part. In this connection West of the West: Witnesses to the California Experience, 1542-1906 by Robert Kirsh and William S. Murphy (New York, 1967) is valuable for the way firsthand accounts are woven into the text. There is no comparable book for the twentieth century.

Carey McWilliams' classic if somewhat outdated Southern California Country (New York, 1946) narrows the historical focus to the region of which Rancho Los Alamitos is a part. More recently, Kevin Starr's ambitious work, Inventing the Dream: California Through Progressive Era (New York, 1985) focuses on the turn-of-the-century years and the emergence of Southern California culture. Harris Newmark's Sixty Years in Southern California (Los Angeles, 1919) is an ill-organized but monumental gathering of data by a Los Angeles merchant of the latter part of the nineteenth century. A third edition was published in New York in 1930.

The dominant city of the region has been treated in many books. For obvious reasons I used David Lavender's Los Angeles Two Hundred (Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1980). A twin volume by the same publisher and also amply illustrated is Larry Meyer and Patricia L. Kalayjian's Long Beach: Fortune's Harbor (Tulsa, 1983). Much of Long Beach spreads across lands that once belonged to members of the Bixby family. The story of that development is touched on in Walter H. Case's detailed, two-volume History of Long Beach and Vicinity (Chicago, 1927). Case was also the writer and editor of three other editions of this work (1935, 1942, and 1948), as well the editor of Community Book (Long Beach, 1948). For a contemporary journalist's overview, Dan Walters' work The New California: Facing the 21st Century (Sacramento, 1986) analyzes the current socio-economic changes altering California counties.

Books that present slices of time rather than of geography include Susanna Bryant Dakin's (she was one of Fred Bixby's nieces) A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's Life in California, 1855-1932 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1939). An early-day immigrant, Reid married Victoria, a Gabrielino Indian of the Mission San Gabriel. Through Victoria's eyes we glimpse something of her people and, in not always a savory detail, a sense of the mission's operations. Balancing that account are two other views of Indian life in the missions: Fray Zephyryn Engelhardt's tedious San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles (San Gabriel, California, 1952) and Edith Webb's, at times rosy, Indian Life in the Old Missions (Los Angeles, 1952). The myth of Chinigchinich, the man-god of the Gabrielinos, was recorded at Mission San Juan Capistrano by Padre Geronimo Boscana; later the story was translated by Alfred Robinson and used as an appendix in his Life in California During a Residence of Several Years (issued first in New York in 1846 and reprinted at various times since then). For a larger view of California Indian/White relations, James Rawls' Indians of California: The Changing Image (Norman, Oklahoma, 1985) surveys changing perceptions of California Indians from first white contact to the close of the 19th century.

The first (1840) and still the best-known account of the hide trade is Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast (splendidly edited by John H. Kemble, Los Angeles, 1964). Gertrude Atherton has given us a rainbow-hued picture of life on the ranchos in The Splendid Idle Forties: Stories of Old California (New York, 1902). A more realistic, better, and broader history is Leonard Pitt's The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966). Other good additions to rancho field are Robert Glass Cleland's duo, Cattle on a Thousand Hills (San Marino, California, 1954) and The Irvine Ranch of Orange County (rev. edition, San Marino, 1966). Another redoubtable laborer in the vineyard is W. W. Robinson's Land in California (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945); and Ranchos Become Cities (Pasadena, 1939).

Specialized studies that include relevant passages about the Bixbys are Charles Outland, Stagecoaching on El Camino Real, Los Angeles to San Francisco (Glendale, California, 1973), which touches on Flint, Bixby and Company's ownership of the Coast Line Stages, and Lee W. Lenz's Beaton's account of Susanna Bixby Bryant's fabulous Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, which mentions the similar garden endeavors by Susanna's mother, Susan Bixby and sister-in-law, Florence Bixby. Two studies of the oil discoveries that changed the history of Long Beach and the Bixbys are Walter A Tompkins, The Little Giant of Signal Hill (Englewood, New Jersey, 1964) and Kenneth Beaton's Enterprises in Oil: A History of Shell in the United States (New York, 1957).

Some members of the Bixby family have contributed charming memoirs of life on the ranch during the early years of the twentieth century. Two come from the pen of Fred's oldest daughter, Katharine Bixby Hotchkis Christmas Eve at Rancho Los Alamitos (San Francisco, 1957, revised edition 1971) and Trip with Father (San Francisco 1971, 2nd edition). Her mother Florence Bixby, published two volumes: Is There a Thing Called Spring (Pasadena, 1936) and Verses (1914). Sarah Bixby Smith beguiles us with Adobe Days: A Book of California Memories (Fresno, California, 1974, 4th edition, somewhat revised). Susanna Bixby Dakin, author of the biography of Hugo Reid mentioned above, adds her memories in A Scent of Violets (San Francisco, 1986). Family genealogist, A. Maxon Smith provides the Hathaway-Bixby Quick Reference Guide (Long Beach, 1964).

A wealth of unpublished material dealing with the financial and personal affairs of the Bixby family, most of it gathered by Joan Hotchkis, is on deposit in the Collection of Bixby Family Papers, Department of Special Collections, the Library, California State University, Long Beach. The bulk of the material relates to the twentieth century. Included are books, business ledgers and other financial records, real estate maps, some family letters, diaries (particularly those of Fred Bixby's daughter, Katharine Bixby Hotchkis), pictures, tapes of oral history interviews with Rancho Los Alamitos workers and associates. (Considerable material about Rancho Los Cerritos is inevitably included.)

Valuable to the research are the family chronologies as well as essays on the house, gardens, and barns that Katharine Hotchkis provided for the use of the docents at Alamitos, and the materials she wrote in connection with various talks and presentations. Joan Hotchkis has contributed many tapes of interviews she conducted; some have been transcribed. Notable are those with her mother, Katharine, and her aunt, Elizabeth Janeway (Sister). One memorable interview bears the title "Old-Timers." Readable, too, is Joan Hotchkis' unpublished story of the Rancho, "The Enchanted Ranch." This extensive collection has been organized by Dr. Kay Briegel at CSULB. Both Rancho Los Cerritos and Los Alamitos contain small collections.

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