



JOURNAL
of the
Riverside
Historical Society

Number Two February 1998

**Mission
of the
Journal of the Riverside Historical Society**

- To publish carefully researched and documented articles of broad popular appeal relating to Riverside personalities, events, and institutions of the past.
- To publish personal accounts by witnesses of or participants in significant past events. These are to be derived both from manuscripts and from planned oral history interviews.
- To encourage both established and new historians to research and publish articles on previously unexplored aspects of Riverside's history.
- To foster among Riverside's newer residents a lively interest in Riverside's history and an active concern for Riverside's historic resources.
- To increase participation in Riverside Historical Society membership and activities among the publication's readers.

Adopted by
Historical Society Board
March 1996

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS:

The *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* is currently an annual publication devoted to the history of the City of Riverside. It is the stated intention of the Board of the Society to increase the frequency of the *Journal*.

Contributions of articles, edited documents, and book reviews are welcome on a continuous basis. They should be submitted (at the owner's risk) to: Publications Committee, Riverside Historical Society, P.O. Box 246, Riverside, CA 92502. The *Journal's* Publications Committee will also announce a specific period of solicitation for each issue.

The authority for matters of style will be the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to return accepted manuscripts to authors for required changes. An author whose article is accepted for publication will receive ten gratis copies of the issue in which his or her article appears. Statements and opinions expressed in articles are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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Editorial Committee

William G. Dougall
John G. Gabbert
Darline Miller
William Swafford, *ex officio*

This issue of the Journal is dedicated to
Ronald J. Baker without whose stalwart efforts this
publication would not be.

Riverside, California

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About the Authors

Christina Cicchetti holds a Bachelor of Art degree in Humanities from Walla Walla College and a Master of Information Science degree from Drexel University. She has been employed as a reference librarian at the La Sierra University Library in Riverside since 1987.

While Michael J. Marlatt was born in Los Angeles and raised in Pasadena, he traces his family history in this region to his great grandfather, Robert Byron Marlatt, who was the owner of a dry goods store at the turn of the century in Riverside County. Machael Marlatt graduated from Pepperdine University Law School with a Juris Doctor in 1984 and moved to Riverside in the same year to begin employment at Thompson & Colegate (founded in 1915) where he is currently a partner. Since moving to Riverside, he has become involved in a variety of civic and community activities, including serving as Executive Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Mission Inn Foundation and serving as a radio basketball commentator and President of the Athletic Association of the University of California at Riverside. Mr. Marlatt has an extensive collection of books and documents related to the history of Riverside, California, and the United States.

Alan Curl was born, raised, and educated in Riverside. He holds the position of Administrative Curator at the Riverside Municipal Museum, where he began as a graduate student intern in 1977.

Robert J. Fitch was for seven years, 1977 to 1984, chief administrative officer of Riverside County. Throughout those years he was attentive to historians in their search for information and supportive of historical restoration projects. He was born in Nebraska in 1923. He entered Riverside Junior College in 1941. He flew P-38 planes in a fighter ferrying squadron in Europe during World War II. He graduated from the University of Redlands in 1948 and in 1950 began his government

Foreword to the Second Issue

Welcome to the second issue of The Journal of the Riverside Historical Society. This issue is perhaps even greater cause for celebration than its predecessor. While our first effort demonstrated a will and an ability to produce a local history publication, the sales of that number – along with the production of this one and work started toward a third – prove that we have embarked upon a sustainable enterprise.

Continued success will lie with our local historians . . . and we are blessed with several. These are people who understand how to get to the truth of our past and how to tell that truth in the form of a good story. You will find three such stories in this issue, stories which are not only interesting but which also tell us a little more about who we are as a community.

New stories by new authors are always solicited. Your research, or even remembrances, may have a place among these pages. We expect to be around for many issues and truly welcome our readers to become contributors.

Alan Curl, President
Riverside Historical Society

career as deputy probation officer. Through night study he earned a master's degree from the University of Southern California in 1955. Throughout his public career and in subsequent years he has been active in civic, church and historical matters, including music. He was chairman of the City-County committees celebrating the U.S. Bicentennial and the County's hundredth anniversary. His article on Roman Warren is preliminary to publication of a full length book on the remarkable character. Earlier he was author of a book giving brief biographies of the hundreds who have served as elected officers or department heads of Riverside County Government.

El Doctór

by Christina Cicchetti

Dr. Iner Ritchie practiced medicine in Southern California from 1915-1949, many of those years in Riverside. As a doctor, he occupied a prominent position in society, but this had not always been the case. In fact, he was placed in an orphanage at a young age, and spent the later years of his childhood working as a cowboy. From Orphans Home to physician, his is a classic tale of poor boy makes good.

Dr. Ritchie was born Einar Sköld on October 6, 1885 in Varburg, Sweden, to Eva and Leander Johansson Sköld¹. When Iner was three, the family emigrated to the United States, making their way from New York to Leander's brother Otto's blacksmith shop in Burbank, California. Leander secured a position shoeing the ponies and maintaining the racing buggies at Richard Gird's Rancho Santa Ana del Chino. The family translated Sköld to the sound-alike name "Sheld." According to family tradition, Iner was put to work helping on the ranch at an early age. At five years of age, he rode horseback to herd cows on the ranch. At seven, he was milking the cows².



Iner & Inelda's wedding, 1914

In May 1893³, when Iner was seven, his mother died, an event which had a profound influence on the future direction of his life. Following his wife's death, Leander sent his two daughters to live with Swedish families. Iner and his two brothers, Stin and Dan, were placed in the Los Angeles Orphans Home located

on the corner of Yale and Alpine streets. While living at the orphanage, they attended the Castelar St. Elementary School. Records show Iner enrolled from September 11, 1894 through February 2, 1896⁴. After leaving the orphanage, Iner went to live with the Sholandars on their ranch near Chino⁵. This was not as a member of the family, however; he slept in the barn and did chores on the ranch. The stories Iner told his family were of growing up, along with his brothers, working as a milker and cowboy around Chino, Prado and Corona.

In 1903, Iner was working on the Fuller Rancho near Corona; he started a sideline apiary in Rincon and bought honey to feed his bees from William Shannon Ritchie. This was his first meeting with the Ritchies who were to become such an important part of his life. William Ritchie and his wife, Lula Joseph Ritchie, had a business selling honey, olives, and olive oil from their ranch. They were also Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and held Sabbath services in their home in Corona. In 1904, Iner attended evangelistic meetings sponsored by the SDA Church. He was baptized into the SDA Church in late 1905 or early 1906.

Iner began attending church at the Ritchie home in Corona. According to family accounts, weekdays Iner wore a red cotton bandana, but on Saturdays he dressed up with a fine black silk neckerchief to attend church services. The Ritchies had adopted a daughter, Inelda Ruth, in 1900, an orphan from the gold fields at Angel's Camp. She was now 9 years old and was very impressed with Iner's fine neckerchief!

We don't have many details of Iner's relationship with the Ritchies at this time, but clearly the Ritchies treated him as a son and Iner responded in kind. To a young man who had lost his mother, been abandoned by his father, and grown up in cowboy bunkhouses, to have the Ritchies invite him to meals in their home and treat him as one of the family must have filled an intense need to belong. On January 26, 1909⁶, Iner formally took the Ritchie name, adding it to his own to become Iner Sheld-Ritchie⁷. Formal announcements presented Iner to family and friends as the Ritchie's newly adopted son.

The Ritchies consulted a phrenologist who, from studying the shape of Iner's skull, decided he should become a doctor. Iner later

attributed this decision to his early experience with the death of his mother.

This tragic scene of the country doctor struggling through the long hours of that fateful night to save my Mother's life left an imperishable impression upon my young mind, and unconsciously a seed was sown, for there was born within me a growing desire as I grew older to join the ranks of the men whom he represented – men whose lives are dedicated to the unselfish service and self-sacrifice of the medical ministry to suffering humanity⁸

The Ritchies paid his tuition to Pacific College of Osteopathy in Los Angeles, but in the fall of 1908⁹, Iner transferred to the Loma Linda College of Evangelists. This became the College of Medical Evangelists (CME) (now Loma Linda University) in 1909 when the College began offering a degree in medicine. Iner started with the first class, the graduating class of 1914. However, when fall classes began in 1910, he was ill with typhoid fever, and was forced to take the year off; thus he graduated with the class of 1915. When he was well enough, he spent the year working at the Fuller Rancho and at the Goetting Ranch near Beaumont. He also had an apiary in Cajon Pass where he and his roommate Owen Parrett earned tuition money selling honey.

During the summers of 1913 and 1914 Iner was the first medical student from CME to intern at Riverside County Hospital¹⁰. Apparently the matron and superintendent at the hospital were not fond of interns, and his was a cold reception. By the end of his first summer, however, he was well enough respected that he was left in charge of the hospital while the superintendent and matron were both on vacation.

When Iner had returned to college in 1911 following his illness, he had taken with him a budding romance with the Ritchie's daughter, Inelda Ruth, who was then 14 years of age. The first love letter is dated October 16, 1911¹¹ and these continued back and forth until their marriage three years later on November 24, 1914. Over the years they had four children: Iner William, Anna Virginia, Inelda May, and Robert Lorraine.

Iner graduated from medical school with the class of 1915 and the Sheld-Ritchies moved to Burbank where Iner practiced with Dr. Elmer Thompson. In 1916, the family moved back to Arlington where Iner practiced with Dr. E. H. Woods, who had supervised his internship at the Riverside County Hospital.

Iner had many patients among Riverside's Chinese population. Carloads of Chinese would sometimes come out from Los Angeles to be treated by him because he took patients of any color in turn; other doctors frequently made them wait until all the white patients had been seen.

Between 1919 and 1926, Iner taught anatomy at CME. The senior Ritchies sold their home in Corona and bought Snug Harbor, a home on East Prospect Street in Loma Linda. They gave the Sheld-Ritchies a lot out on Prospect where they built a redwood bungalow and planted a number of avocado trees.

In 1926 Iner bought the practice of his good friend Ralph Smith at Calexico, California, a move which marks the beginning of his contacts with Mexican officials and opened the way for his later work in Mexico. Soon after his arrival, Iner established the first hospital in Caliexico. He treated the Mexicali gambling house girls on a regular schedule. The Chief of Police for Baja California was also a patient.

Iner enjoyed teaching and wanted to hold home nursing classes in Mexicali, but the Mexican doctors were jealous and blocked his efforts



*Iner with daughter Inelda May (r.)
And daughter-in-law Marion
Hester Ritchie (l.) On the steps of
Monterey Medical Clinic*

to find a location. He soon met Governor Abelardo Rodriguez of Baja California, who would later be President of Mexico. He was called to the Governor's Palace when, as he used to say, "the angel pinched the baby." The governor's wife was frantic because the baby had been crying all day and the other doctors could do nothing. Iner found nothing wrong with the baby and soon calmed it with water treatments. The grateful governor invited Iner into his office to offer his congratulations and his best whiskey. Being a Seventh-day Adventist, Iner neither drank nor smoked. When the whiskey was declined, the governor offered Havana cigars. Turned down again, he asked, "What can I offer you?" The answer was a place to hold the home nursing classes. "No problem," replied the governor, "how about the High School Auditorium?"

In 1929, Iner sold the Calexico Hospital to two young CME graduates. They had trouble making a go of the hospital, and between 1929 and 1934 the Sheld-Ritchies moved several times between the Calexico and Loma Linda areas.

In July of 1933 the Mexican Union Mission Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted to call Dr. Ritchie to Mexico City¹². Mexico, at this time, granted a license to practice medicine only to native-born citizens who had graduated from a Mexican university. Iner was one of the few American doctors to have been granted a license to practice in Mexico. Iner had received this in 1929¹³ through his connection with Governor Rodriguez.

Due to Mexico's stringent immigration laws, the move was delayed, but on May 1, 1934 the family left from Snug Harbor. There were six persons in the black Oldsmobile; a rack on the back held a trunk and they pulled a small trailer. It was a hectic trip. Inelda May was left behind briefly at a stop in Benson, Arizona. She was soon retrieved for the trip down through Laredo and Monterrey. Further down, the Pan-American Highway was still under construction. They crossed rivers on small ferries. One night it rained so hard they couldn't see the road, so they decided to pull over until daylight. When they could see in the morning, they discovered they had stopped just in time to avoid going into a river.

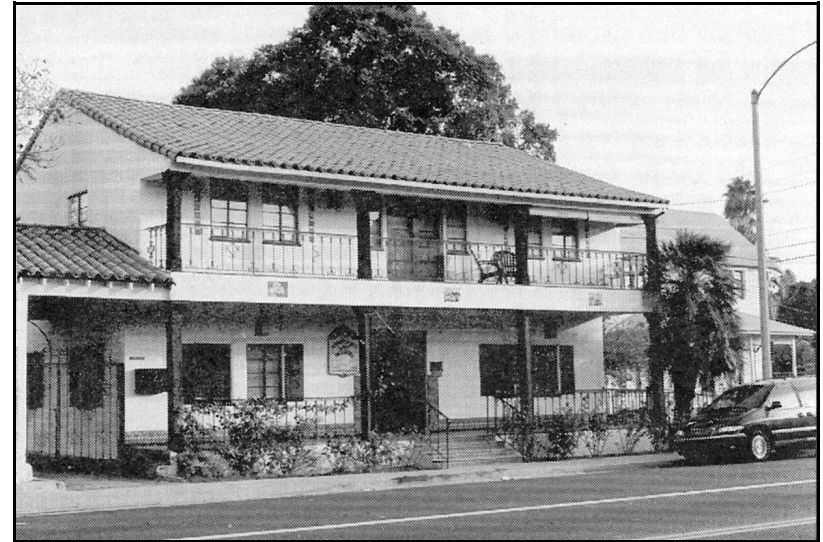
Iner was stationed at the Tacubaya Clinic in Mexico City. He had barely arrived in Mexico when he began making trips into the tropical areas of southern Mexico, traveling by horseback and dugout canoe to treat Indians who had no access to medical care. He took along a photographer on a summer trip in 1934 to the Totonaca Indian country to secure some pictures with which he hoped to enlist government support for the church's medical work¹⁴.

In 1936 Iner suffered a heart attack; Inelda, missing her parents and the two older children who had stayed in California to attend college, took the opportunity to move her family back to California. She packed the household and personal medical equipment and had it shipped to California, and drove the two younger children to their grandparents in Loma Linda. Iner spent the Spring and Summer recuperating with Dr. T. Gordon Reynolds at his hospital and nursing school at Cajeme, Sonora.

In the fall of 1936, the family returned to Riverside. Iner began a practice out of the family home on Seventh Street. There were advantages and disadvantages to having the office in the same building as the home. The central hallway lead to the living room on the right and the office suite on the left. Daughter Inelda recalls that one day a band of gypsies came to see the doctor. . . they were all over the house, and when they finally left, Pancho, the family dog, and Inelda Ruth's mink neckpiece were missing. The gypsies paid their bill and still came out ahead!

Later Iner built the Monterey Medical Clinic on what was then Walnut Street, now Brockton Avenue. Iner always had many Spanish speaking patients. George Wong, the last occupant of Riverside's Chinatown was also a patient. During this time, Iner also received a framed letter of appreciation from the Japanese Association. This was later confiscated by two FBI agents after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Iner made one trip during World War II to Manzanar to treat patients interned there.

Although Iner lived in Mexico for only two years, he never forgot the lack of medical care he had seen among the Indians in remote areas of the country. He continued to make trips into the back country of Mexico after his return to Riverside. The need he encountered on these trips led him to establish in 1947 an organization he named Liga



The Monterey Medical Clinic building now serves as law offices

Mexico-Pan-Americana Medico Educational, a non-profit corporation of doctors, nurses, public health and educational workers. He named himself General Manager, Jerry L. Pettis¹⁵, Assistant General Manager, and Harold F. House, General Manager, Republic of Mexico. The Liga sponsored the Montemorelos hospital in Nuevo Leon and schools and clinics in Sonora and Baja California.

On October 24, 1949, Iner suffered a second heart attack, this one fatal. While Iner's life had ended, his influence lives on. The Liga he founded continues to operate, now known as "The Flying Doctors of Mercy." Planes have replaced the horses Iner used on his early trips. Private planes fly volunteers from California,

Nevada and Arizona down to several Mexican states the first weekend of each month. Clinics are located in remote areas where medical care is still largely unavailable. These clinics are the living legacy to a man who, remembering his own mother's untimely death, determined to do what he could to improve the lives of his fellow men and women.

Notes

¹Certificate of Emigration, June 8, 1888, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, La Sierra University Stahl Center for World Service (LSUSC).

²Material which is not otherwise documented comes from conversations between 1991 and 1997 with Inelda Ritchie Christianson, Iner's youngest daughter. I am deeply indebted to her for assistance with this article.

³Mary C. Swank, *Pomona Cemeteries*, Pomona, 1973, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁴Los Angeles Unified School District, June 11, 1993, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁵Deposition of Jennie Sholander, June 4, 1947, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁶Deposition of William and Anna Ritchie, July 28, 1947, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁷Announcement, no date, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁸"Preface," Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

⁹Account Book, College of Medical Evangelists, Oct. 31, 1908, Loma Linda University Archives.

¹⁰Iner Sheld-Ritchie, "But by my Spirit' Zech. 4:6", *The Youth's Instructor*, 62, no. 19: 5-8.

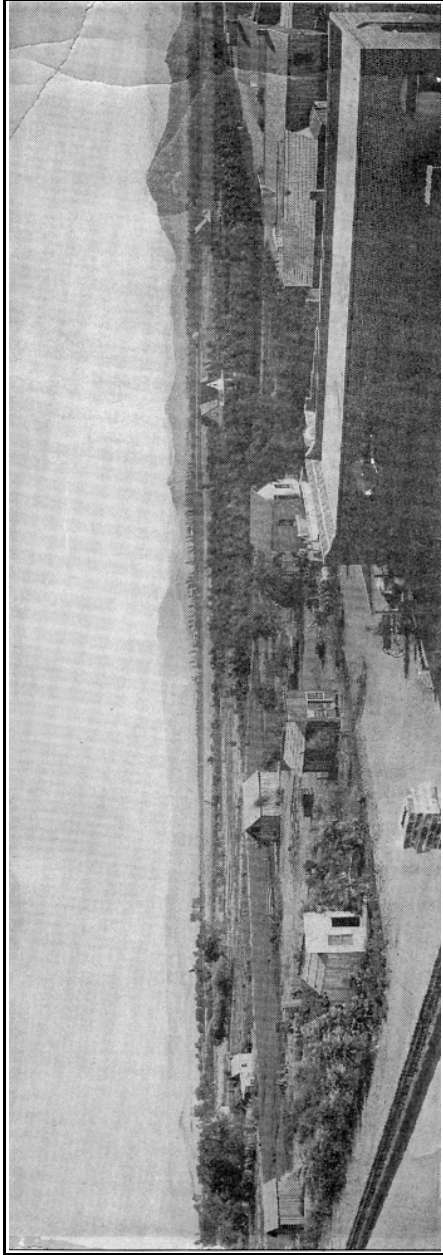
¹¹Iner Sheld-Ritchie to Inelda Ruth Ritchie, 1911-1914, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

¹²Mexican Union Mission Committee minutes, July 5, 1933, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

¹³License, La Universidad Nacional de Mexico, 22 de abril de 1929, Sheld-Ritchie Papers, LSUSC.

¹⁴This trip is described in Clarence Wood's book *In the Land of the Aztecs*, Washington DC, Review and Herald, 1939.

¹⁵Jerry Pettis later became a congressman, and the Veterans hospital in Loma Linda is named for him.



A panorama of Riverside looking Southeast from 8th and Main Streets, 1875

Letter From Southern California, 1874

contributed by Michael J. Marlatt
introduction by Alan Curl

I 869 was a low period for John Wesley North. He had purchased a foundry in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1866, striving to engage in a profitable industry which would help to rebuild the war-torn South¹. Almost immediately, he was hampered by local distrust as a northern capitalist exploiting a defeated region, by the early exhaustion of his working capital, by a strike for higher wages by his workers, and by construction of a competing foundry which offered 20% more in pay. Further, North's efforts for the public good (promoting free schools, organizing a Unitarian church, and representing a new Knoxville chamber of commerce in attracting northern capital) frequently removed him from Knoxville and his attention from business affairs².

In the spring, North sold the foundry, not realizing enough to cover his debts. Wife Ann took part of the family to stay with her father in DeWitt, New York, while North remained in Knoxville to ponder his future³.

On July 3, North wrote to Ann, asking her to investigate upstate New York's Oneida Community. "Whatever errors they may have, as to their social system, their financial policy embodies a living truth. Any system that can secure a whole community from evils of Poverty . . . has elements of truth in it somewhere."⁴

The 300-member Oneida Community is widely regarded as nineteenth-century America's most successful experiment in utopian living. North's comments about the "errors" in their social system probably relate to the idea of "complex marriage", which considered every woman to be wedded to every man and which allowed women to have sexual relations with any partner of their choosing. Men were responsible for birth control and children were raised communally⁵.

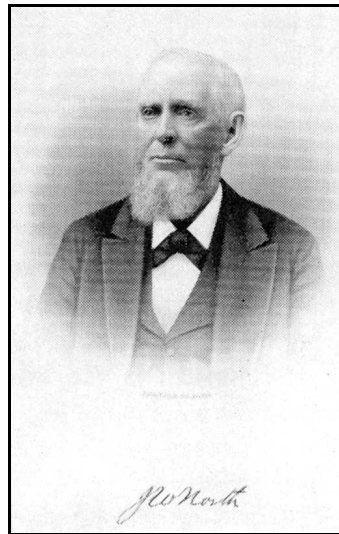
The "financial policy" which interested North involved a variety of successful collectively owned and operated industries and farms⁶.

That North would be intrigued by such economic success while suffering his own ruination is not surprising.

In the following year, while organizing the Riverside colony, North envisioned a largely communitarian effort, with irrigation works commonly owned and operated. Such an Oneidan solution was not practical, however, where irrigation required extensive capitalization and where the available capital required a commensurate profit⁷. Nevertheless, North remained interested in the Oneida experiment and submitted the following letter about the young Riverside colony for the September 7, 1874 issue of the Oneida Circular, “a weekly journal of home, science and general intelligence” published by the Oneida Community.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Each portion of our country has its attractions, and of late much interest is excited in regard to Southern California. Invalids and fruit growers are especially charmed by our genial climate, and wonderful advantages for the production of fruit. All who visit this part of the State are very quickly made acquainted with prominent advantages for the coast towns, and the lands adjacent. The fine atmosphere of Santa Barbara; and its single grapevine, that bears twelve thousand pounds of grapes a year; the salubrious climate of Los Angeles, with a surrounding country fit for “the abode of angels;” and San Diego, with its charming bay,



John Wesley North

and climate superlatively delightful; become at once, familiar to every traveler. But the interior is less known, and consequently, but imperfectly understood.

I write you from Riverside, in the county of San Bernardino, and in the valley of the Santa Ana; a valley having the best supply of water in all Southern California. This valley being about forty miles in length and from twenty to thirty in breadth, lies back of the Coast Range of mountains, and south and west of the San Bernardino, and San Jacinto mountains; and is thus surrounded by scenery, varied, picturesque and grand. On your side of the continent, thousands of people travel thousands of miles yearly, to visit Mount Washington a wonderful mountain, six thousand feet high! Here I can lay down my pen and step out of the door, and before me are mountains in plain view, one on my left, 8,000 feet high, near it another 8,800 feet, near that another 10,000 feet, and by turning to the right I see San Bernardino mountain (the initial point for the U. S. land survey in this part of the State), 11,600 feet high. To the right of that the San Jacinto rises 8,000 feet, and looking toward the coast, we see some peaks of the Coast Range, four thousand feet high.

We are about fifty miles east of Los Angeles, with a valley road all the way to the coast. The opening in the Coast Range, through which the river passes, lets into this valley a daily sea breeze, fresh and invigorating; but freed from its damp and chilling qualities by passing over fifty miles of intervening land. Here we have one of the best climates in the world for invalids with delicate lungs. Hundreds who die in the fogs and chilling winds of the coast, might prolong life very greatly, by trying this climate back of the Coast Range.

The Riverside Colony is located on the sloping bench lands east of the Santa Ana, where, with fine soil, abundance of water, and a climate where flowers bloom and fruits ripen through the winter, there is one of the best opportunities for raising fruit in the world. Add to all your Eastern fruits, all the semi-tropical fruits, and then

add to all your Eastern grains and vegetables, all the semi-tropical vegetables and products, and you have the list of what is cultivated here.

This settlement is now three years and a-half old, and many of the places seem as though they had been cultivated at least ten years. Every thing seems to have a rapid growth. The fruits already in bearing are the following, *viz*: Strawberries, Raspberries, Blackberries, Currants, Plums, Nectarines, Apricots, Peaches, Pears, Apples, Lemons, Limes, Grapes, Figs, Olives, and Bananas. The Orange and Sicily Lemon we shall expect next year.

The Southern Pacific Railroad is surveyed through our lands, and is already running within twenty-seven miles of us. It will probably be extended to our vicinity the present year.

A mail and stage line connects us with the Railroad terminus, and the telegraph connects us with the rest of the world. This is emphatically the country for pleasant homes. It is also a Scriptural country, abounding in "corn and wine," "milk and honey," "vines and fig trees," "olives and pomegranates."

Yet in many places, above our irrigating ditches, it is "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." And in traveling over it you would appreciate "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

In winter, we sometimes have ice as thick as a window glass, and in summer, the mercury rises in some instances to 107°, yet never producing sunstroke, or the debility you experience in New York at 96°. Our nights are always cool, so that a blanket is comfortable. Wine is cheaper than milk and good grapes can be bought at one cent per pound. For drying and canning fruit it is the most inviting field I ever saw.

The cultivation of oranges is the greatest attraction to most persons. An orange grove can be brought to bearing in five years from the planting of three-year-old trees, and when they are fifteen years old, they produce in many instances, over one thousand dollars an acre net profit annually. Limes, lemons, figs and English

walnuts, are equally profitable. Limes come to bearing in five years from the seed; figs and grapes in two years from the cutting.

But to look at the country with your Eastern notions, you would call it barren and sterile in aspect. To judge of it correctly, you should come and see, and stay long enough to appreciate it.

Yours very truly
J. W. North.

Riverside Ca., Aug. 16, 1874.

Notes

¹Merlin Stonehouse, John Wesley North and the Reform Frontier (University of Minnesota Press, 1965), 181.

²*Ibid.*, 193-195.

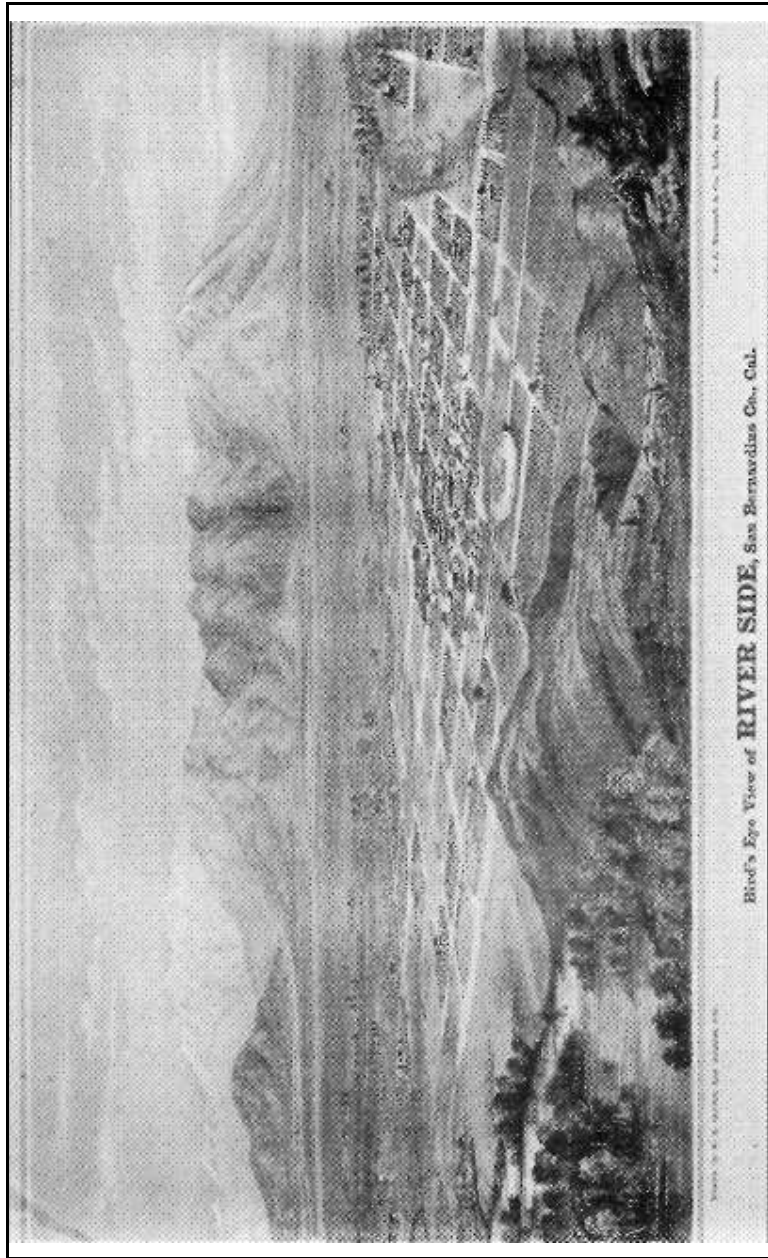
³*Ibid.*, 198-199.

⁴*Ibid.*, 199.

⁵Spencer Klaw, Without Sin: The Life and Death of the Oneida Community (New York: The Penguin Press, 1993), 7.

⁶*Ibid.*, 99-107.

⁷Stonehouse, John Wesley North, 213.



The Southern California Fair

A Brief History

Featuring one of its Star Performers, Roman C. Warren

by Robert J. Fitch

The history of the development of the Southern California Fair in Riverside is chronicled by local historian, Tom Patterson in his Out of the Country's Past article printed in the March 29, 1981 edition of the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*.

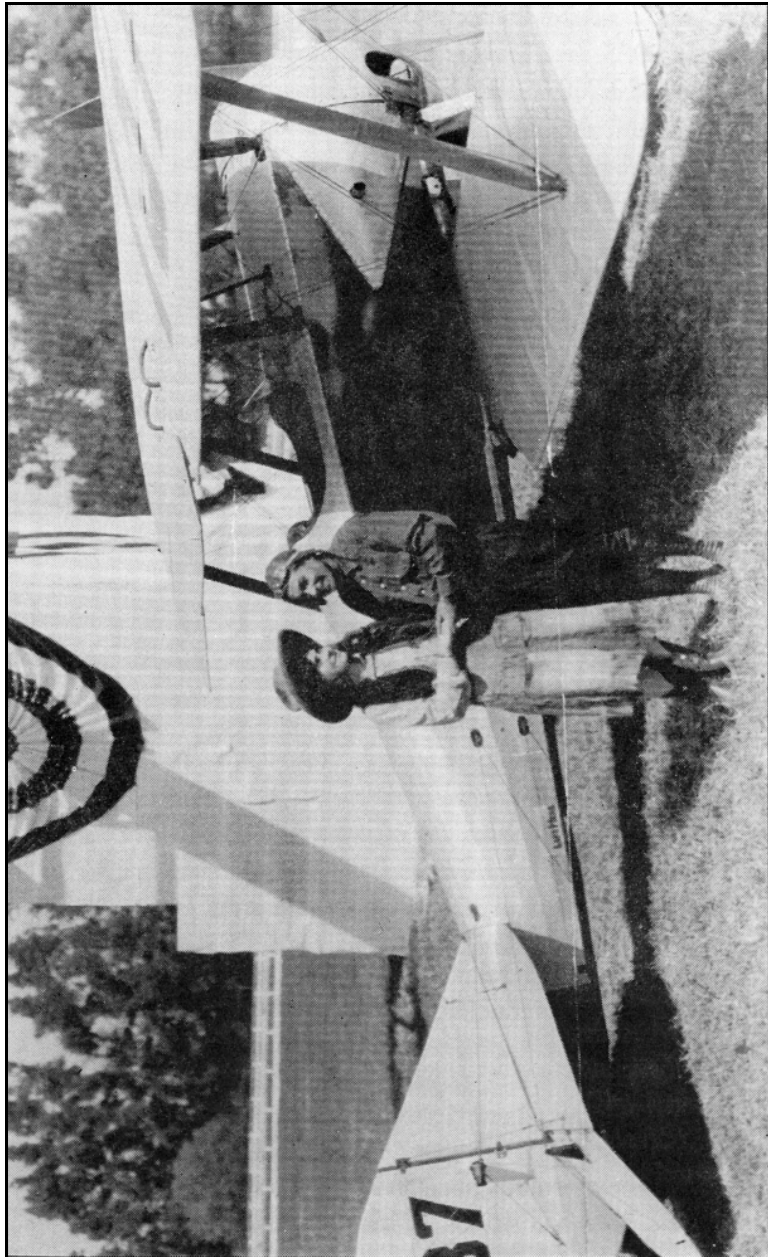
A little dead-end street runs west of Fairmount Boulevard along the north side of the Pomona Freeway in Riverside and its name is *Fairgrounds*. What fairgrounds? Could the name be a reference to Fairmount Park?

There was, in fact, a real old country fair with grandstand, racetrack, cows, chickens and the like, plus some newer urban interests like automobiles and airplanes.

Its site has been vacant for these many years. The freeway cut it into two pieces, most of it being vacant land on the north side. A smaller piece, between the freeway and Fairmount Park, served as a heliport before the helicopter gave up competing for shuttle service to L.A. Airport.

It was called the Southern California Fair for the 15 years it functioned on this site, 1915 through 1930. It was started two years earlier, in 1913, at Chemawa Park (site of the present Chemawa Middle School) as the Riverside County Fair.

In 1925, a number of Riverside leaders travelled to Sacramento to pressure the California State Legislature to pass a bill to create the 46th Agricultural District Fair, thereby establishing the Southern California Fair as the official fair for the region.



Eithel and Roman Warren, 1926

Introduced by Assemblyman Chester M. Kline, the bill was signed on May 10, 1925, by Governor C. C. Young. A companion bill appropriated \$20,000 in state funds for fair premiums.

For the first year under state sponsorship, the fair organizers planned an extravaganza. The September 29, 1925, issue of the *Riverside Enterprise* carried an advertisement with the headline:

ATTEND THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FAIR,
RIVERSIDE, SEPT, 30-OCT, 6

Included in the ad was a description of La Fiesta de Anza: “A spectacular pageantry of California’s colorful history, vividly portrayed by hundreds of players, in eleven magnificent episodes . . . nightly, beginning October 1.”

Horse races were held every afternoon with a total of \$10,000 in purse money.

“Cowboy-Aviator” Roman Warren First Performed in 1925

During this 1925 run of the Southern California Fair, Roman Warren participated in several events. The following press report from the 2 October 1925 *Riverside Daily Press* gives a colorful description of his activities at the fair:

Bring me my cayuse [horse] – this thing’s too tame for me!” and Roman C. Warren climbed out of the small scout plane which the popular birdman used to thrill the patrons of the fair yesterday evening.

After a series of spins, rolls and Immelmann turns concluded with a hair-raising nose dive to the race track infield, where he landed the small craft, Warren pulled off his helmet and goggles, donned his ten gallon hat, and climbed from his plane in full cowboy regalia, chaps and

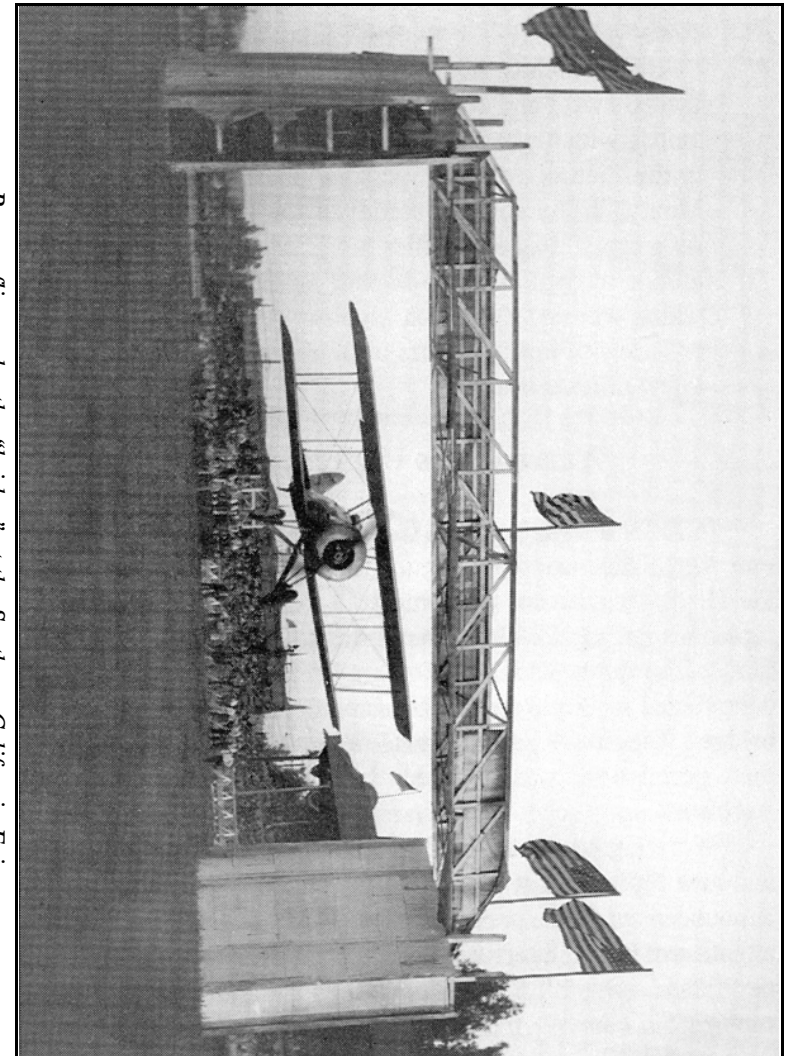
all, none the worse for his thrilling experiences in defying the laws of gravity. Leaping aboard his faithful steed, he rode at breakneck speed across the field to the grandstand, followed by a company of strictly land cowboys.

Warren has taken part in rodeos throughout the United States and on several occasions has run into prize money with his horsemanship. He takes two active parts in the "Fiesta de Anza" pageant, riding his own horse, Monty, in the cowboy scenes of the elaborate pageant. As a concluding act he flies his T. M. Scout plane under a flood of light from the 50,000 candlepower searchlight which will endeavor each night to keep his little ship in full view of the spectators until he reaches his own field a few miles distant.

Warren Flies Under a "Bridge"

In 1927, the Aeronautical Committee of the Southern California Fair Association and the Riverside Chamber of Commerce petitioned the U. S. Department of Commerce to permit Roman Warren to repeat his famed 1926 Rubidoux bridge flight each afternoon of the fair. The plan was for Roman to fly under a wood bridge constructed to duplicate the clearance under the Santa Ana River bridge. The *Riverside Enterprise* reported on September 10, 1927, that permission was granted by the U. S. Department of Aeronautics.

Warren gave a preview flight for the benefit of new cameramen and new reporters a week before the fair, on September 22nd. The announcement of the preview in the *Los Angeles Times* attracted the attention of Pathe, International Newsreel and Metro-Goldwin-Mayer newsmen. On 22 September 1927, the *Riverside Daily Press* reported:



Roman flies under the "bridge" at the Southern California Fair

Before a battery of motion picture cameramen sent here by the newsreel companies, scores of amateur "movie" machines, innumerable "stills" and a hundred newspapermen and a few "civilians," Roman C. Warren, "cowboy aviator," flew at the rate of 120 miles an hour under a specially constructed bridge before the grandstand on the Southern California Fair grounds this morning.

Cameramen began focusing their machines on the bridge as early as 9 o'clock this morning. By 10 o'clock the race track enclosure swarmed with newsreel and other cameramen. At 10:30 the zoom of Warren's plane was heard, and next his tiny plane shimmered in the sunlight a mile in the air.

The cowboy flyer swooped toward the bridge, nosing downward at terrific speed. The cameramen began to grind. Warren "pulled up" 10 feet from the enclosure and signaled from the cockpit for the movie men to spread out. They were too close. Then the birdman soared to the heights again, almost disappearing from sight. Then his motor began to roar loudly again.

"Here he comes," went up the cry, and the movie men began cranking again [in those days, movie cameras were operated by hand crank]. This time Warren, engine roaring with everything it had, dived toward the field again. He flattened at about 200 feet, checking the downward race of the plane.

Despite the fact that Warren had his pilot "stick" pulled far back, and the wings and tail were straining to check the drop, the ship dropped, dropped – just enough to get under the bridge without touching the ground. [The vertical clearance under the "bridge" was 16 feet, allowing less than 4 feet above and below the aircraft.

The fifty feet of horizontal clearance was 14 feet wider than the plane.]

The plane roared under the structure on a dead level and clearing equi-distant on all sides, Warren soared heavenward again, did a loop, zoomed off for a second start at the bridge.

"He's coming again," was cried around the field . . . Warren zoomed once again straight at the bridge. About 200 feet from it, however, he "pulled up" the plane neatly skimming the top of the bridge. Warren laughed and waved over the side of the cockpit at the crowd below. Then the birdman looped, spiraled and put his ship through other stunts. The moviemen rushed to the center of the field and the "cowboy aviator" was filmed getting out of his ship.

Warren's feature act on the fair program is not regarded as a "stunt". Rather, it is an exhibition of perfect plane control and precision flying. No low-flying "stunts" are permitted by the government bureau of aeronautics.

The preview flight gave credence to local newspaper advertisements which read:

Roman Warren. Cowboy Aviator of the Riverside Airport, Inc. at the Southern California Fair. He will defy fate in flying under an exact duplicate of the famous Rubidoux Bridge every day at 5:00 P.M. at the terrific speed of 125 miles per hour.

The speed of 125 miles per hour was necessary to execute a quick pull up to avoid a row of trees on the other side of the bridge. The first flight was on September 27, 1927. It was described by the *Riverside Daily Press* as a "Zoom for Life."



Roman Warren, 1934

During the 1927 flights, Roman's fiancée, Ethel Berry, stood on top of the bridge at the fair waving an American flag. When asked by newsmen if she were afraid to perform this feat she replied that she had the utmost faith in Roman's ability to pilot the plane just where he wished. After they were married in December, 1927, Roman would not allow Ethel to stand on the bridge.

During the fairs of 1927 and 1928, Roman flew 13 times under the arch. His last flight was on September 30, 1928. In an interview with reporter George Ringwald appearing in the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* on 12 November 1965, Roman spoke of this last episode:

The last year I did it, on the final night of the fair, the north wind was blowing a hurricane here, but the people were in the grandstands for the act to go on. ["Stomping their feet," he later told this author.]

It was so rough, the ship almost got out of control but, by golly, I flew under that bridge. That's what they asked for. Just like the days of the gladiators, you know – thumbs down. They wanted to see blood.

I was disgusted with human nature. I didn't want to satisfy a morbid crowd again. I realized they didn't come to see a successful flight – they came to see a disaster.

The Southern California Fair continued as one of Southern California's finest. The *Arlington Times* reported in its September 27, 1929 issue:

There has [sic] been many successful Southern California fairs held at Riverside, but the one in progress surpasses anything given before by a wide margin and will go down in history as the greatest event of its kind held in the Southland.

Ever since the gates opened to the public at 10 o'clock Tuesday morning, the grounds have been swarming with thousands of visitors, many of whom came hundreds of miles to see the glory of Southern California displayed in the thousands of exhibits which have taxed the capacity of the fair to the limit. Much interest is centered around the huge agricultural show and the livestock show which of course are the main features of the big celebration. More than 100,000 exhibits are on display throughout all divisions of the fair, it is said, which is the greatest number ever seen at a Southern California fair.

Even though Roman Warren discontinued his air show at the fair, his influence kept aviation alive. In the same issue the *Arlington Times* reported: "The aviation show, with its airplanes of every description and its complete exhibit from March Field has been crowded to capacity all during the fair, as evidence that this great industry is claiming the attention of ranchers and livestock breeders as well as city people."

Roman and Ethel Warren continued to perform with their horses at the Southern California Fair. One year Roman groomed two teams of horses to drive chariots for the fair's Roman chariot races. The fairgrounds were frequently used for horse shows other than at fair time. On at least one occasion, the Riverside post of the American Legion sponsored a horse show which featured chariot races (the feature race was won by Ethel Warren); horse exhibitions; a costume race and balloon battle; and a polo exhibition.

Automobile Races at the Fairgrounds

Automobile races were popular at Memorial Day and Fourth of July events at the Southern California Fairgrounds. Using the half-mile dirt oval, racers from throughout Southern California competed

as "Knights of the Roaring Road." The *Riverside Enterprise* noted that these knights "paid tribute to the reckless god of speed."

The July 4, 1925 races were marred by several accidents, including one which claimed the life of driver Leo Grijalva of Los Angeles. The same race program included a race between Riversider Johnny Vickers in his race car and Roman Warren in his Thomas-Morse airplane. The plan was for Roman to take off from the infield of the fairgrounds and fly above the race track at an altitude of approximately 15 feet for six laps (3 miles). The following day the *Riverside Enterprise* reported the results: "Roman Warren, piloting a La Rhone scout plane [actually his Morse-Thomas plane with a La Rhone engine] beat Vickers to the wire by several yards in the much advertised airplane-racer match. Warren found it impossible to fly as low as he wanted to as adverse winds blew him off his course every time he hit the west air curve. In spite of that, the event was a big success."

The Fair Comes to an End

In Tom Patterson's *Press-Enterprise* March 29, 1981 article he wrote about the demise of the Southern California Fair:

It died, some said unnecessarily, for the ostensible reason that the Great Depression [the early 1930's] had begun and so had the Los Angeles County Fair at Pomona – and Pomona was a fearsome competitor with the advantage of being nearer the center of Southern California population.



Autos races at the Southern California fair

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