



# The GILMAN RANCH FLYER

Issue No. 3

Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum

Spring 1999



## WESTWARD HO!

*The Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum has a new brochure containing information about the ranch and the museum. A brief history of the ranch contained in the brochure is reprinted below.*

Surrounded by cottonwoods and watered by three natural springs, the present Gilman Ranch site has attracted people throughout time. The superb location of this canyon with an exceptional food and water supply offered a prime habitation site for the Cahuilla Indians in this area. Later, under the Spanish government, this site was originally part of the San Gorgonio Rancho, the farthest outlying cattle ranch of Mission San Gabriel. The Rancho was later claimed by but never granted to three Anglo settlers, Isaac Williams, Powell Weaver and Wallace Woodruff.

The first permanent landmark in the Banning area was an adobe house constructed in 1854 on the present Gilman Ranch site by Jose Pope, Mayordomo (ranch foreman) for Isaac Hills. Pope raised cattle for a time and then sold his land to sheep rancher G.S. Chapin in 1862. A year later, Chapin sold his property to stageman and local entrepreneur Newton Noble, who lived in the adobe, converted it into a stage stop and opened the first post office in the San Gorgonio Pass in 1868.

Noble's property lay along the Bradshaw Trail, a heavily traveled route from Los Angeles to Arizona during the 1860s and 1870s. The trail was originally part of the network of Indian trails that William D. Bradshaw, miner and freight driver, learned from Cahuilla and Maricopa Indians. The Bradshaw Trail became an important communication route for federal troops as they expanded control over Arizona and New Mexico. During the last years of the Civil War, the trail was the only way in and out of southern California by stage. With the advent of the railroad, staging ceased in the 1880s, but the Bradshaw trail remained a freight route. A remnant of the trail can still be seen on the Gilman Ranch.

Originally from New Hampshire, James Marshall Gilman moved west during the early 1860s, operating a merchantile business in The Dalles, Oregon. In 1869 Gilman came to southern California looking for a cattle ranch to buy.

While staying in San Bernardino he heard about 160 acres for sale in the San Gorgonio Pass. Gilman met with Noble and purchased the land and about 200 head of horses and cattle and continued to operate the stage stop. In 1871 Gilman married Martha Benoist Smith, daughter of the first pioneer settler in the Pass, Dr. Isaac Smith. They lived in the adobe until 1879 when they began construction of the ranch house, later building on a two-story Eastlake-style addition, which was lost in a fire in 1977. The Gilmans eventually raised seven children. At its peak the Gilman Ranch consisted of 500 acres. During the 1880s, Gilman gradually shifted from cattle raising to dry farming barley, wheat and oats. He eventually emphasized fruit production, for which the ranch is best known, growing such crops as raisin grapes, figs, prunes, apricots, peaches, almonds and olives.

Although the Gilman Ranch was a successful ranching and agricultural enterprise, it is best known in connection with the last great western manhunt of Willie Boy, a Paiute Indian who wished to marry Lolita Boniface against her father's wishes. The young woman and her family were camped at the Gilman Ranch working on the fruit harvest when Willie Boy killed her father and escaped with Lolita. Although marriage by capture was an old Paiute custom, Willie Boy's actions outraged the Anglo community. A presidential visit to the Riverside area stoked the press into a frenzy, leading the public to believe that there was a danger to then President Taft. The manhunt received national press coverage. Willie Boy avoided the posse for three weeks before he died by his own hand.

Today the Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum preserves, celebrates and interprets the history of California, from the Cahuilla Indians to the exploration and settlement of southern California and the San Gorgonio Pass, including the homestead ranch of James Marshall Gilman. Come and explore your gateway to the western frontier. ★

## BOOK REVIEW

**Bacon, Beans, and Galantines: Food and Foodways on the Western Mining Frontier**  
by Joseph R. Conlin

Every once in a while, you read a book that gives you a tremendous urge to share with others. *Bacon, Beans, and Galantines* is one such book. I would like to recommend this



# PROCLAMATION

*from the Board of Supervisors*

TO HONOR

## THE GILMAN RANCH HANDS

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum**, a recognized County Landmark, State Point of Historic Interest (Riverside 004) and a National Register Site, was acquired by the Riverside County Parks Department in 1977 to restore and develop as a historic park; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Ranch Hands**, formed in 1975 to help establish the Gilman Ranch as a Riverside County Historic Park, have exhibited a deep dedication to the restoration and preservation of the Ranch as a valuable County historic resource; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Ranch Hands** have volunteered thousands of hours in the service of the Ranch providing funding, labor and materials for many projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Ranch Hands** have raised thousands of dollars for ranch projects, including the funding for the architectural designs of the Gilman family home in anticipation of its rebuilding, the landscape architectural design of the French Gilman California Native Garden and numerous other projects for the museum and site grounds; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Ranch Hands'** projects have included the rebuilding of many of the ranch's outbuildings, the design and implementation of an irrigation system utilizing the site's spring water source, the restoration of historic horse-drawn vehicles, the design and installation of museum exhibit furniture, and the design and implementation of the French Gilman California Native Garden, as well as many other viable projects on the ranch; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Gilman Ranch Hands** have promoted, and provided valuable participation in many special events at the ranch including the annual Mountain Man Rendezvous and Ranch Day, and work on the diverse museum projects, including collections inventory, artifact cleaning and research; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE KNOWN**, that the Board of Supervisors of Riverside County does hereby honor the **GILMAN RANCH HANDS** and expresses its profound feeling of gratitude to them for their years of dedicated service to the **Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum**, the County of Riverside and its people.

Signed by Supervisors

**Bob Buster, John Tavaglione, Jim Venable, Tom Mullen, and Roy Wilson, Chairman.**

*The above commendation was presented to Chuck Chappell, President of the Gilman Ranch Hands, at the April 15th dinner meeting by Elaine Johnson of Supervisor Venable's staff. This handsome and well deserved document will be framed and placed in a conspicuous location in the wagon museum.*



delightful and scholarly book, which examines the social history of the food found on the western mining frontier. If you are like me, when you think of the cuisine of the 49ers, you think of biscuits and beans, not of oysters, truffles, champagne and strawberries. However, this is what Conlin's research into the diaries kept by the miners and the menus from the mining towns seems to indicate. The highlight of a miner's day often appeared to be centered around savoring the smell and taste of some freshly delivered delicacies.

Conlin presents a fascinating tour through the mining country, with an emphasis on the California gold rush. He covers such diverse issues as vitamin deficiencies on the Overland Trail, and "how the peculiar conditions of the mining West modified familiar American food practices," and he places this in the larger context of the history of ordinary men and women in one of American history's most exciting periods. ★

—Cate Whitmore, *Curator of History*



## RANCH GETS BUCKET SEATS



Site interpreter Linda Pillow was telling Gilman Ranch Hand Bob Schley of the need for more benches for the kids to sit on when she and her crew were presenting their programs. Bob got an idea—use two-and-a-half and five gallon paint buckets as seats instead of benches. The kids could carry them with them as they toured the ranch and could use them to store handouts and whatever else they might collect at the ranch. Bob contacted Allen Morris at the Universal Paint Corporation's store in Hemet, and Allen graciously agreed to donate 30 buckets to the cause. We at the ranch thank Allen and the Universal Paint Corporation for their generous donation. Thanks too to Bob for the great idea. ★



## HISTORY ALIVE, ALIVE O!

Mark your calendar for May 20, 7:00PM, and come to the Banning City Council Chamber, Banning Civic Center, and meet Antonio Garra in a Chautauqua performance.

Antonio Garra was a Cupeño Indian who lived in what is now northern San Diego County. He led the 1851 Indian Tax Revolt in southern California against the United States for the same reasons that inspired the American colonists to revolt against England—taxation without representation. His passionate struggle to unite the Indians against the American intruders led to his one-day court martial and execution even though he was not present at the violent event that provoked his arrest and subsequent trial.

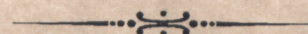
Garra is portrayed by Jose Rivera, an interpretive specialist and ranger for the California State Parks Service. Mr. Rivera's performance includes an unscripted monologue followed by interaction, both in and out of character, with the audience. **ADMISSION IS FREE** to this exciting event!



The Chautauqua is co-sponsored by the Malki Museum in partnership with the Museum of History and Art in Ontario. The Ontario Museum's newest project, "Distant Gold: inland Southern California 1848-1882," will include an exhibit (April 21st through August 1st) and a series of events partnered with 15 other historical and cultural sites in inland Southern California. "Distant Gold" is in celebration of California's Sesquicentennial, and is sponsored by the California Council for the Humanities. A special THANK YOU! to the City of Banning for providing a forum for Antonio Garra's impassioned pleas for justice.



The touring theatrical concept of the Chautauqua began in 1874 as a system of popular education—"infotainment" it was called by some. It takes its name from its birthplace on the shores of Chautauqua Lake, New York, where thousands of people would come for the summer presentations. Historically accurate monologues were performed by scholars with in-depth knowledge of the characters they would portray. The movement was wildly popular across America for more than a quarter of a century. At its peak in 1921 nearly 70 Chautauqua performing groups visited more than 10,000 communities during the 90- to 120-day season. The circuit quietly ground to a halt in the early 1930s—a victim of radio and talking pictures. ★



## I WISH I HAD SAID THAT...

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### THE GILMAN RANCH FLYER

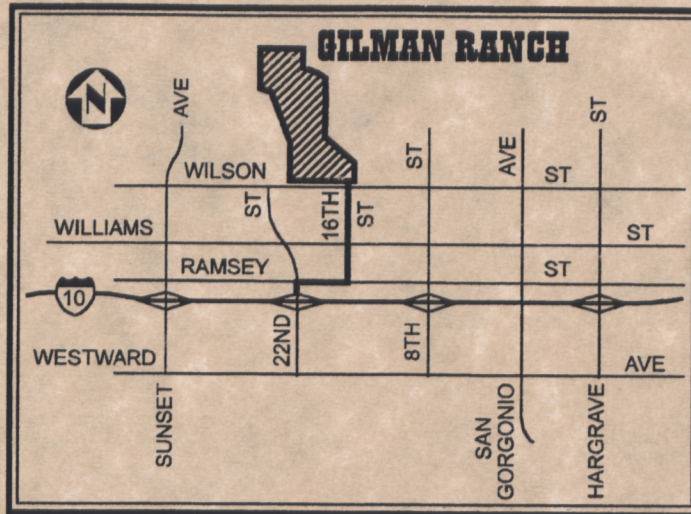


*Established 1998*

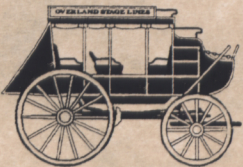
Cate Whitmore, Curator of History  
Linda Pillow, Site Interpreter  
Melinda Baxter, Collections Assistant  
Gordon Sisk & Son, Volunteer Editors

Published by  
Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum  
16th & Wilson Streets ★ Banning, CA 92220  
909-922-9200 ★ FAX 909-922-1841





The **Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum** is located at 16th and Wilson Streets in Banning, CA.



## **GILMAN HISTORIC RANCH AND WAGON MUSEUM**

16th and Wilson Streets ★ Banning, CA 92220

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK**  **AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

"To acquire, protect, develop, manage, and interpret for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of all people, a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreation, and historic importance."