

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Early Transportation

The Book Club of California in 1954 published an interesting series of seven folders telling of the history of early transportation in Southern California. The series was edited by authorities on the subjects about which the author was writing and printed by Grant Dahlstrom of Pasadena. Among the text writers were Archie D. Mitchell, Arthur Woodward, Carey S. Bliss, Dr. Davis W. Davies, Don Meadows, and C. D. Rudkin. j'

As a member of the Book Club of California, I was not too greatly impressed with the series. They did not seem to be up to the standard of the previous collection of the past number of years but looking over the completed series—nine instead of a dozen as was usual.

I feel that they have more merit than I had first thought and are worthy of commendation even though not Grabhorn printed and short in number. Eventually they all will be collectors' items, as the former series already are.

Number one in the Early Transportation in Southern California series is "The Mule Car" by Archie Michell. The illustration accompanying the text is from the collection of Judge Archie D. Mitchell of San Bernardino County. It shows the mule car at the southern or lower terminus of Old Baldy (Mount San Antonio) streetcar line, with the motive power on the platform after the downhill ride.

Archie D. Mitchell writes: "Down the long plain that extends from the foothills of the base of Old Baldy to the basin of the Santa Ana River, runs beautiful Euclid avenue, a tree-lined double highway with a lovely parkway in the middle. This avenue remains a monument to the Chaffey brothers, George and Andrew, who laid out and developed the Ontario colony in 1882 which now includes Ontario, Upland, and San Antonio Heights. Six years later the Ontario and San Antonio Heights Railroad Company started operating a streetcar line for a distance of six miles along the length of the parkway. The operating power was a pair of mules which pulled the car up the long grade. On the return trip, down grade, these mules became passengers on a small, wheeled platform attached to the rear of the car. It was in 1895 that the mules gave way to electricity."

The Ontario City Hall bears a bronze plaque commemorating the site of this early day railway.

No. 2 in the series of the early day transportation in Southern California deals with military camels. Arthur Woodward, formerly a member of the staff of the Los Angeles County Museum, is the author of the text and the Title Insurance and Trust Company of Los Angeles supplied the only known picture showing a camel in Southern California. The picture was made about 1865 at Camp Drum, Wilmington.

We learn from the text that the military of the United States headed by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and ably seconded by Major Henry Constantine Wayne, were the first to push the introduction and use of camels in the west, 1856-1857. Forty-five camels were landed in San Francisco between 1860 and 1862.

The camels destined for military use, arrived in California in care of General Edward Fitzgerald Beale in the fall of 1857 and were quartered at Fort Tejon until the first abandonment of that post in the spring of 1861, after which they were quartered in various places in Los Angeles and at Camp Drum.

One of their boarding places was in the abandoned Overland Mail corral, Second and Spring streets, adjacent to the first brick school. During recess the older children visited them and begged rides from the camels' caretaker, Philip Tedrow (Teadrop) alias Hadji Ali, more familiarly known as Hi Jolly, and his companion, Greek George.

November 4, 1935, the Philatelic Club of California ran a camel over the Fort Tejon-Los Angeles route as a final salute to the Camel Express of 1858.