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# **Camels in California**

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PLATE IX OF VISCHER'S MAMMOTH TREE GROVE PORTFOLIO  
(See article, "Camels in the Sketches of Edward Vischer," on p. 332.)

# Quarterly of the California Historical Society

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## CAMELS IN CALIFORNIA\*

By A. A. GRAY

At the close of the Mexican War in 1848, the United States added 529,000 square miles to its territory. The acquisition of this area created many new and difficult problems for the national government, of which the most important was the establishment and the maintenance of an adequate transportation system. The newly acquired territory contained no railroads, and there was little prospect in 1850 that a railroad would reach California from the East within the next half century. The importance of binding California closer to the East, economically and politically, was early recognized by the federal government, and when Congress was called upon to increase its appropriations to care for the frontier conditions that existed in the new country, great interest was manifested in providing a cheaper and a more rapid communication to the Coast. The Secretary of War complained of the mounting costs of transportation, which he attributed to the "well known dangerous character of the maritime frontier" in the West.<sup>1</sup>

The ever-increasing appropriations needed to provide transportation from the Missouri River to the Coast more than any other consideration probably influenced Congress to import camels. The entire sum expended by the Quartermaster's department of the Army in 1844 was \$871,000; six years later it was five times this amount, though the size of the Army had increased only one-half. This enormous increase was caused "by the vast extension of our territory."<sup>2</sup> The Army used nearly ten times as many mules, horses, and oxen in 1851 as it had in 1845.<sup>3</sup> To maintain a better system of transportation and communication in the Coast country, the Pacific Coast Division of the Army, among the numerous items of equipment requested in 1850, asked for 8,000 horse shoes and 10,000 mule shoes.<sup>4</sup> To support the additional military posts,

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\* Much has been written on the subject of the camel caravans of the early West, but the material on this important subject has remained scattered through many books and more ephemeral publications. It is therefore with particular gratification that we publish the series of articles which follow. Mr. Gray has outlined the story of the camels and their introduction into California, and his researches have brought to light for the first time the records of the importation of Asiatic camels on the Bark *Dollart* in 1861-62, from the records of the District Court of the United States, in whose files they have lain undisturbed for almost seventy years. Mr. Farquhar has added a word respecting Vischer's important contemporary camel sketches and descriptions, and Mr. Lewis has contributed a valuable bibliography, to which Messrs. Gray and Farquhar have added certain items discovered by them during their research on this subject. — Carl I. Wheat.

<sup>1</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 29 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 32 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Secretary of War, Dec. 2, 1850, p. 269.

to protect the emigrant from Indian attacks, to establish new roads, to insure a safe and rapid transit of the mails and to explore and survey the country obtained from Mexico called for a continual outlay of large sums of money to purchase animals and equipment. The Secretary of War said in 1850 that more than 10,000 horses and mules would be required solely for transportation purposes, for mounting guides, for escorts, and for spies in covering the South-west and California.<sup>5</sup> The cost of hay, grain, and fodder for each animal used in the Army rose from \$3.51 per month in 1845 to nearly ten dollars in 1851, and the total amount spent in caring for all animals that were used for military activities in 1850 was more than twelve times what it was in 1845.<sup>6</sup>

To those heavy expenditures must be added the cost of carrying the mails westward. The government paid \$100,000 in 1852 to send the mail once a month by water from New York to San Francisco.<sup>7</sup> A monthly overland mail service from Independence, Missouri, to Stockton, California, cost \$80,000 for nine months. Considerable money was used also in rescuing stranded emigrants en route to California. In 1850, the government paid \$100,000 to rescue one party, exclusive of the money spent to purchase animals and wagons for the undertaking.<sup>8</sup> In the same year, \$50,000 was spent to save another overland party.

#### PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE QUESTION

These costly and difficult frontier conditions brought many suggestions from various sources that camels should be used on the far western plains for travel, for carrying freight and mail, for protection against the Indians, and for military purposes. Those best acquainted with the camel thought that its use would reduce the high cost of transportation and hasten the settlement of the West. It was believed that much of the country west of Utah and New Mexico would never be developed without the use of camels, and the newspapers of the late forties often mentioned the possibilities of using camels as a means of quick and economical travel in the isolated West.<sup>9</sup> But it was not until the country obtained from Mexico was being rapidly settled that the idea of using camels for commercial and military purposes received any serious consideration from government officials. One of the first suggestions about introducing camels to the West came from Major Henry C. Wayne.<sup>10</sup> He had served as an officer in

<sup>5</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 32 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 218.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Doc. 50, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 1, p. 258.

<sup>9</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1903, p. 392.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne was a southerner, and was graduated from West Point in 1838. For the next three years, he served as a lieutenant in the United States Army on the northwest frontier. He was assistant quartermaster in the Mexican War, and at the close of the war was appointed to a position in the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington, D. C., where he remained until 1855. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he joined the Southern forces. Wayne said in 1857 that he had never entertained the idea that the benefits to be derived from the introduction of camels in America could be realized in his day. He regarded the military advantages of using camels of little moment as compared to the great gains in using them in trade and commerce throughout the interior of the continent. See Sen. Ex. Doc., 34 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 62, p. 196.

the Mexican War and was well acquainted with the frontier conditions of the Southwest. In 1848 he recommended to the War Department that camels be imported to be used in transportation in the West and in the military units of the Southwest, presenting his plan to members of Congress. He continued to study the habits and the nature of the camel, with special reference to its fitness in America, and in a letter to Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, dated November 21, 1853, he discussed the qualities of the camel and urged the Secretary to give the animal a trial in the western section of the United States.<sup>11</sup>

More than two years prior to this time Davis, then a Senator and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, had recommended the appropriation of \$30,000 to purchase and import fifty camels, and while the subject was before Congress, he had been strongly supported in his belief respecting the utility of the camel by several influential government officials and by public discussion of the subject. The Commissioner of Patents, Charles Mason, in writing about the value of domestic animals, under the subject of agriculture, in 1853, gave his approval regarding the importation of camels. In speaking of the possible use of them in the far western portions of the United States, he wrote that the question "has long been viewed as a matter of much national importance, particularly since the establishment of the overland routes, requiring mingled mountain and desert service between the Atlantic States and California or Oregon."<sup>12</sup> He also thought that from the nature of the country and from the necessity of extensive communications with the coast country, the demand for camels would be increased rather than decreased by the construction of a possible transcontinental railroad. John Russell Bartlett, who was commissioned in 1848 by President Polk to survey the boundary between the United States and Mexico, was also convinced, from his wide and varied experience in the Southwest, that satisfactory communication would never be established in that section without the use of camels. After working more than three years in the deserts of New Mexico, Arizona and California, he became an ardent advocate of the introduction of these animals to establish a safe and rapid transit from California to the East, and was sure that horses and mules could never be used to any practical advantage in the desert because foliage was so scarce, and because they would not drink brackish water. Camels would eat any kind of desert vegetation and thrive on brackish water, which was the only kind found in certain portions of the Southwest. Bartlett concluded his remarks relative to using camels in the country so recently acquired from Mexico by saying that, "the entire route from the Mississippi to California, particularly that south of Santa Fe by the Gila, where there are no mountains to cross; and also, the great highways over the tablelands of Mexico, are well adapted to his habits."<sup>13</sup>

A noteworthy lecture, delivered by George P. Marsh in 1854, before the

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<sup>11</sup> Rowland, Dunbar: *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist; His Letters, Papers and Speeches*. Vol. II, p. 288.

<sup>12</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 33 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 27, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Bartlett, John Russell: *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, [etc.]* Vol. II, p. 576-584.

Smithsonian Institute, created widespread interest in the possibility of using camels in the country. Marsh discussed fully the breeding and raising of camels and pointed out their use in domestic and commercial life. He explained how they were used in foreign countries, and said that those who knew best their habits and endurance and who were the most familiar with the country beyond the Mississippi were of one mind as to the possible success of working them in the West.<sup>14</sup> All such persons were agreed that this ugly, docile, shambling, sleepy brute would solve all the difficulties of transportation in America.

Public discussion of the question and various reports from officials of the government kept the subject before Congress and the President and stimulated private enterprise to consider the importation of camels. Some capitalists of New York formed a company for the purpose of importing camels and developing trade and travel in the West. They were granted a liberal charter by the state of New York and were incorporated under the name of "The American Camel Company." The continual clamor from the citizens of California for a quicker and cheaper means of transportation, the interest taken by many officers of the Army, the activities of private concerns considering the importation of camels and the renewed efforts of Secretary Davis finally bore fruit in the passage of a bill in Congress in March, 1855, carrying an appropriation of \$30,000 to be used by the War Department for "the purchase and importation of camels and dromedaries to be employed for military purposes."

#### THE ARRIVAL OF THE CAMELS

No time was lost in arranging for the novel experiment. On April 2, Davis appointed Major R. Delafield, Major A. Mordecai and Captain George B. McClellan, who led the Northern Army a few years later against the Confederate forces, to make a study of the military practices as found in European countries. They were instructed to give careful attention to the places where camels were used for transportation, in military activities, and in "cold and mountainous countries." Davis was very careful to select the most competent men to carry out his project. He commissioned Major Wayne, who had been in Egypt, to purchase the animals. The Navy Department furnished Wayne with a ship, under the command of Lieutenant David D. Porter, who also distinguished himself later in the Civil War.

These young officers set sail for their curious cargo in May, 1855.<sup>15</sup> They left Egypt on February 15, 1856, with thirty-five camels, having purchased them at an average price of \$250 each. The storeship *Supply* landed at Indianola, Texas, on May 14, with the animals as strong and healthy as when they left Egypt. Another trip was made, and this time forty-one camels were safely landed in Texas on February 10, 1857, after a stormy voyage of eighty-eight days from Egypt. The animals were kept near San Antonio, Texas, and for a while were used in carrying supplies and equipment between army posts, in

<sup>14</sup> Ninth Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1855, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 34 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 62, p. 148-163, gives the official correspondence concerning the purchase and importation of the camels.

making short scouting trips about the country and in doing some heavy hauling in the construction of roads. After the camels had become accustomed to the climate and after the Army officers had learned how to pack and to manage them, the Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, commissioned Edward Fitzgerald Beale to open up a wagon road from Fort Defiance, New Mexico, to southern California and to use camels in the expedition.<sup>16</sup> Floyd selected the time of year when there is least moisture and vegetation in the arid regions and when the heat is most intense and the streams driest. He wanted the camels put through the most gruelling test.

Beale left San Antonio June 25, 1857, with twenty-eight camels. He arrived at the Colorado River, by way of El Paso, October 14. The animals were in as good condition as when they left. The trip to the Colorado had been a very testing one, but Beale's greatest trial was ahead of him — how to get the camels across the Colorado. He followed the bank of the turbulent river for several days until he came to the Mohave Indian villages, where he decided to attempt a crossing. He had worried about this during his entire trip. All his reading about the camel told him that the animal was no swimmer. He carried in his pocket a book by Father Huc, describing his travels in the Orient, in which he explains his frequent delays while crossing China by the fact that camels refused to swim rivers.<sup>17</sup> How to get beyond this treacherous stream taxed all of Beale's ingenuity. Being a man of wide practical experience, he first tried the easiest and simplest way. He led one of the animals to the edge of the muddy stream. It refused to go further, gazing stupidly into the water. Beale then tried a second camel, "one of the largest and finest." With a little coaxing, it took to

<sup>16</sup> Beale deserves to be classed with Kit Carson and others as a pathfinder of the West. He went to sea at fourteen and later joined the Navy. He resigned from the Navy in 1851 with a splendid record. In 1852, he was appointed by President Buchanan as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California and Nevada. From 1853 to 1861, he was conducting expeditions across the Southwest to California and opening up wagon roads through New Mexico, Arizona and California. President Lincoln appointed him in 1861 Surveyor-General of California and Nevada, which position he resigned in 1865. He then lived in retirement, spending much of his time on his rancho in the Tejon Mountains near Bakersfield, California. President Grant made him Minister Plenipotentiary to Austria-Hungary. He died January 20, 1893, in Washington, D. C. Beale was a man of unquestionable courage and deep convictions. When the draft proclamation from President Lincoln reached California during the Civil War, Beale took full responsibility for suppressing it. He dispatched a forcible message to Lincoln, explaining why he had taken such unauthorized and extraordinary action. President Lincoln returned the letter, writing upon the back of it, "Draft suspended in California until General Beale shall indicate that the times are more auspicious." Stephen Bonal: *Edward Fitzgerald Beale*, p. 258.

<sup>17</sup> Huc, E. R. M.: *Recollections of a Journey through Tartary, Thibet and China* 1844-46. Huc was a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic missionary priest of St. Lazarus. He made a long journey through China into Thibet and returned to Pekin. In describing graphically a camel market which he saw, he wrote, "to the cries of the buyers and the sellers who are quarrelling or talking, as people talk when a revolt is at its height, are joined the long groans of the poor camels whose noses are incessantly tweaked to try their address in kneeling or rising." Vol. I, p. 113. When approaching the Yellow River, he said, "We loaded our camels and repaired to the bank, foreseeing a day full of trouble and difficulties of all kinds. Camels have such a terror for water, that it is sometimes found impossible to get them into a boat. They are beaten till they are quite bruised — their noses torn — to no purpose. You might kill them without inducing them to advance a step." Vol. I, p. 143. A new edition of this interesting work was published in 1925, edited by H. D'Ardenne de Tizac, Paris.

the water quickly and swam "boldly across the rapidly flowing river." One can imagine Beale's great delight. He then tied the others together in gangs of five and swam them all across without any trouble.<sup>18</sup>

Thus to Beale belongs the credit of bringing to California the first camels. His expedition was a most successful one. He had driven his camels more than twelve hundred miles, in the heat of the summer, through a barren country where feed and water were scarce, and over high mountains where roads had to be made in the most dangerous places. No accident had occurred to them, and he had proved that camels could swim. He had accomplished what most of his closest associates said could not be done. His assistants believed that the camels would drop by the wayside before Fort Davis could be reached.<sup>19</sup> Beale was told "by the highest authority" on leaving San Antonio that not even one of the animals would ever see El Paso.<sup>20</sup> The endurance of the camels, their great strength and speed and their ability to take care of themselves on the rough trails and to grow fat on "grease-wood and other worthless shrubs," elicited from Beale his greatest praise and admiration. After passing down a fork of the Bill Williams River where mules could not go until the camels made a road, he wrote "they are the salt of the party and the noblest brute alive."<sup>21</sup> He was so impressed by their achievement that he said, "I look forward to the day when every mail route across the continent will be conducted and worked together with this economical and noble brute."<sup>22</sup>

The time required to make the trip to California was nearly five months. It could have been made in considerably less time if the imported camel drivers had been efficient and if Beale's men had known more about the care and the management of camels. Few persons had any faith in their endurance. Some of the men did not like to work with camels. They had heard that the "kick of the camel was soft," but "it took away the life."<sup>23</sup> The men had always been accustomed to working mules in the army, and they were not familiar with the nature and the habits of the camel. The treatment given mules did not apply to camels. Much time was lost because no one knew how to pack them securely. Beale apologized to the Secretary of War in one communication for remarking so frequently that it was necessary to stop the train and pick up the supplies that had been scattered along the way by the constant swaying of the animals.

After crossing the Colorado the camels were driven directly to Fort Tejon, an army post situated in the mountains near the site of the present city of

<sup>18</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 43, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> This was a frontier army post located 420 miles northwest of San Antonio, Texas, and about 200 miles east of El Paso.

<sup>20</sup> San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 11, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> H. Ex. Doc., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 124, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> For an account of this journey see the recently published volume, *Uncle Sam's Camels*, which contains the Journal of May Humphreys Stacey, edited by Lewis Burt Lesley, and supplemented by the report of Edward Fitzgerald Beale, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.

<sup>23</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1903, p. 401.



Bakersfield. Near San Bernardino the caravan was divided, and two camels were sent to Los Angeles, arriving there January 9, 1857.<sup>24</sup> They left San Bernardino at seven o'clock in the morning and reach Los Angeles at three in the afternoon, the distance traveled being sixty-five miles. Great excitement prevailed when the two camels entered the small village. On the largest one was mounted the Turkish attendant, Higaller [Hadji Ali?], dressed in his native costume, rich in color and decorated with small bells to attract the people. The two camels "created great curiosity, and scared all the horses, mules and children. When the docility of the animals was proved to the wonder-stricken senses of the natives, they were all anxious to take a ride upon the humps of those awkward locomotives, and as long as they remained in town, throngs of boys and men followed their motions."<sup>25</sup> The animals were first placed in the Circus Pavillion on the Plaza of the village, but the "tremendous rush" to see them was so great that it became necessary to move them from the street to insure safety to the people and to the animals. They were housed in a small stable owned by George Allen.<sup>26</sup> They were kept only two days in Los Angeles, and were then taken north to join the others at Fort Tejon.

A week later, General Beale arrived in Los Angeles from Fort Tejon on his way to the Colorado, with fourteen camels carrying supplies and equipment for a surveying party at work in Arizona.<sup>27</sup> His caravan created more curiosity than the appearance of the first two camels a week before. His coming was announced, and those who had failed to see the first camels were on hand to welcome Beale and his party. The following description of the event was widely copied in the newspapers throughout the state, giving the impression that these were the first camels to enter Los Angeles:

General Beale and about fourteen camels stalked into town last Friday week and gave our streets quite an Oriental aspect. It looked oddly enough to see outside of a menagerie, a herd of huge, ungainly awkward but docile animals move about in our midst with people riding them like horses and bringing up weird and far-off associations to the Eastern traveler, whether by book or otherwise of the land of the mosque, crescent or turban, of the pilgrim mufti and dervish with visions of the great shrines of the world, Mecca and Jerusalem, and the toiling throngs that have for centuries wended thither, of the burning sands of Arabia and Sahara where the desert is boundless as the ocean and the camel is the ship thereof.

These camels under the charge of General Beale are all grown and serviceable and most of them are well broken to the saddle and are very gentle. All belong to the one hump species, except one which is a cross between the one and two hump. This fellow is much larger and more powerful than either sire or dam. He is a grizzly-looking hybrid, a camel of colossal proportions. These animals are admirably adapted to travel across our continent and their introduction was a brilliant idea, the result of which is beginning most happily. At first General Beale thought the animals were going to fail; they appeared likely to give out; their backs got sore, but he resolved to know whether they would or not. He loaded them heavily with provisions, which they were soon able to carry with ease, and hence came through to Fort Tejon, living upon bushes, prickly pears and whatever they could pick up on the route. They went without water from six to ten days and even packed it a long distance for mules. When crossing the desert, they were found capable of packing one thousand pounds weight apiece and of travelling with their loads from thirty to forty miles per day all the while finding their own feed over

<sup>24</sup> *Alta California*, Nov. 26, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 25, 1857, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1858, p. 3.

an almost barren country. Their drivers say they will get fat where a jackass would starve to death. The "mule," as they called the cross between the camel and the dromedary, will pack twenty-two hundred pounds.<sup>28</sup>

#### FAILURE OF THE EXPERIMENT

For more than a year the camels were kept at Fort Tejon and at other places in the southern part of the state. They were used by the army officers to carry supplies from one army post to another and for messenger work. Experiments were made in trying to establish express lines connecting with points in Arizona and New Mexico. In March, 1859, S. A. Bishop of Los Angeles conducted a camel train, loaded with supplies, to the Colorado River. Some of the goods were sent to a party of men who were constructing a road from Arizona to California. The camels carried from 600 to 1,000 pounds each.<sup>29</sup> Captain Hancock of the Army arranged, in 1860, to establish a camel express from Los Angeles to Fort Mohave, a distance of nearly three hundred miles. It took about sixteen or eighteen days for mules and wagons to make the trip one way. At that time, goods, sent from San Francisco to Fort Mohave, went down to the Gulf of California, up the Gulf to the mouth of the Colorado, hence up the river by steamer to Fort Yuma. Hancock thought that he could deliver goods from Los Angeles to points eastward much cheaper by means of camels, and thus save the government money. He had conducted a mule train between Los Angeles and Fort Mohave during 1859.<sup>30</sup> He dispatched to Fort Mohave, October 21, 1859, ten eight mule teams and wagons with freight under the charge of one named I. Winston.<sup>31</sup> From his experience, Hancock thought that camels would prove very superior to mules for this work. His camel express was known as the "Dromedary Line." It was started September 21, 1860, and soon was well advertised.<sup>32</sup> The first trip was made by a Greek and a lone camel,<sup>33</sup> but after a few trips the line was discontinued.

Sketches can be found in the newspapers of this time reporting the failure of using camels in the desert. A driver of a mule express, arriving in Los Angeles from the Colorado in October, 1860, spoke of seeing a camel "craft" at Lane Crossing in the Mohave, one hundred miles out from Los Angeles. It had been on the road two and one-half days, and was making no better time than the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1858, p. 3.

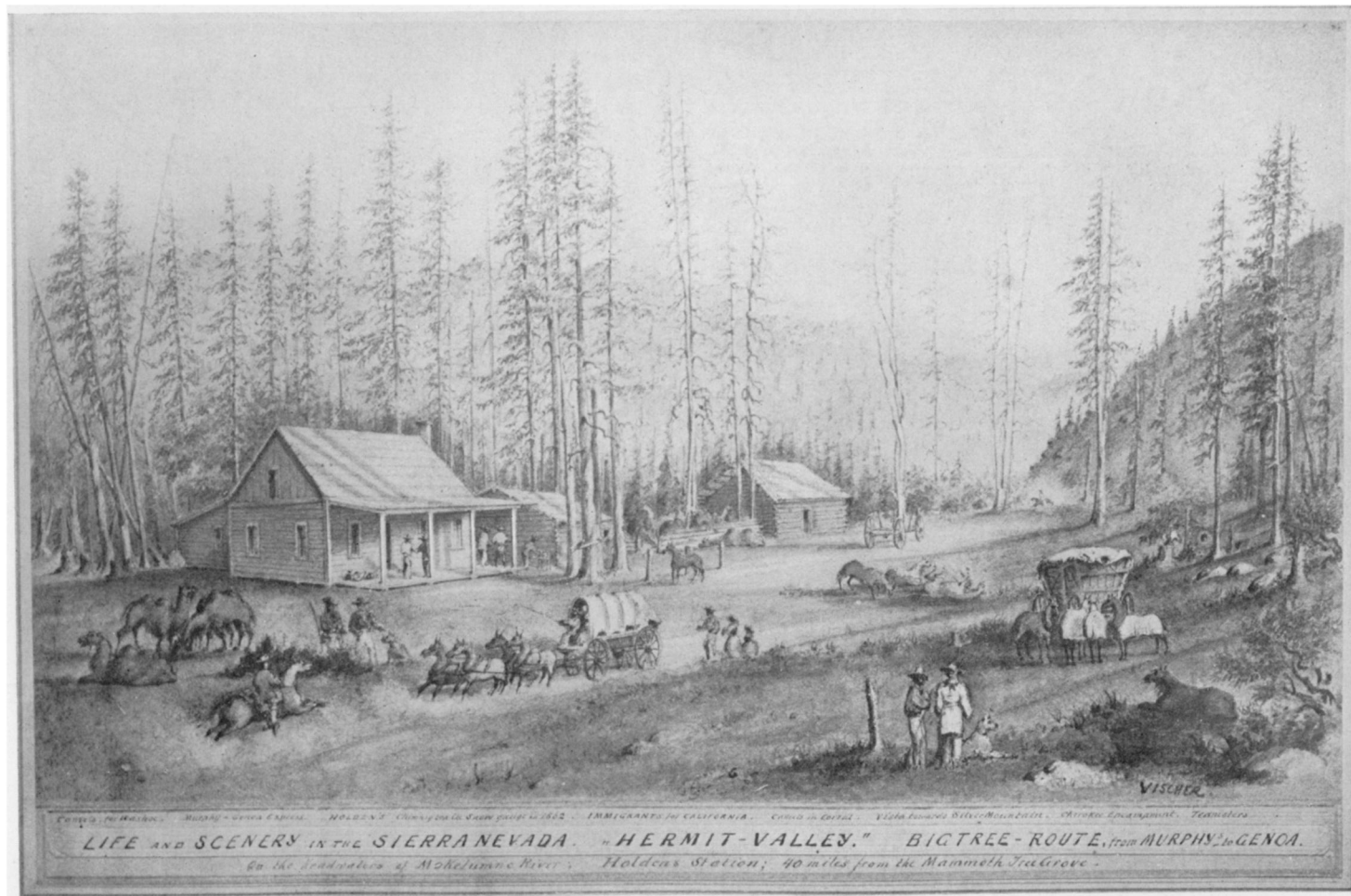
<sup>29</sup> Los Angeles *Star*, March 5, 1859. Three months later Bishop took another pack train from Los Angeles into Arizona. It was reported in the Los Angeles *Semi-Weekly Vineyard* for June 14, 1859, that: "S. A. Bishop, Esq., left here yesterday for the Central wagon road. He takes a party of men, which, with the men now on the road, will be engaged in working the road from the Colorado river. He will be joined by Lieut. Beale on the Mojave river. It is anticipated by Mr. Bishop that they will be able to complete the work on the road and reach Albuquerque by the 1st of August. Mr. Bishop took a pack train of twenty mules and ten camels loaded with supplies. He also has in his train nine camels native of California. These native camels are of much less size than the Asiatic camel, but it is believed that by care and attention in breeding and raising, they will become equal to the imported." (Hayes Collection, Los Angeles, Vol. 59, Doc. 82.)

<sup>30</sup> Los Angeles *Star*, Sept. 17, 1859.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 22, 1859.

<sup>32</sup> Hayes Collection, Los Angeles, 1857-60. Interesting advertisements of the Dromedary Line may be found in Ford's *Legal Exchange*, 1860.

<sup>33</sup> Sacramento *Daily Union*, Sept. 29, 1860, p. 1.



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mules employed for such service.<sup>34</sup> Another report, in referring to a freight line from Los Angeles eastward, said: "We regret to say that the camel experiment so far has proved a failure. This 'ship of the desert' foundered 'at sea' last week, going down all hands." Comment is made on the death of a camel, used in the express service, from mere exhaustion in the heart of the Mohave. The writer adds, after remarking that the "great experiment" came to "an unexpected end," that "the old mules still keep in favor."<sup>35</sup>

Other tests were made of the camels in trying to establish and maintain freight and passenger lines into Arizona, but all ended in failure. A few animals were sent from the California camps to Fort Yuma to be used in carrying supplies to the army posts in Arizona and New Mexico. The acquisition of the territory from Mexico brought under the War Department twenty-three new army posts. They were widely scattered in a country where communication was slow and uncertain. It was the hope of the officers assigned to the various forts that the camel would greatly reduce the time required to pass from one fort to another and that the many difficulties of such trips would be largely overcome.

However, within a year after the coming of the camels to the state, it became clear that the experiment was doomed to failure. The Los Angeles *Star* for June 22, 1861, stated that the camp at Fort Tejon, where the camels had been stationed since their arrival in the state, had been broken up, and all the animals, thirty-one in number, taken to Los Angeles. They were scattered about the southern part of the state and were often mismanaged and neglected. General Beale recognized the situation in 1861 and, as United States Surveyor-General for California and Nevada, he asked the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, to turn over all the camels to him, as he wished to use them in his surveying work. Stanton did not care to do this, and the camels continued to remain at the army posts. They were idle; the cost of keeping them was increasing, and some of the army officers had no sympathy with them, preferring to work with mules. Later Beale wrote to Stanton that the camels "were of no earthly use either to the Government or any one else," and that the cost to keep them amounted to \$500 a month.<sup>36</sup> Wide differences of opinion arose among the army officers relative to the value of the animals. Some officers reported that the efforts to use them had ended in complete failure; others

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1860, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 15, 1860, p. 1. Some of the experiments were not failures. Three camels were taken from Fort Tejon in February, 1860, by Lieutenant Mowry of the Army, who was in charge of the California Boundary Survey, and sent to Dr. J. R. N. Owen stationed at Fort Mohave. Owen, with fourteen men, was to establish a number of depots in which to store supplies for his surveying parties, from Fort Mohave to Lake Bigler (Tahoe), in "the terrific desert country between the 35th and the 37th parallels." These camels, as well as the mules, were used to carry water, forage, food, and supplies for the first surveying parties going through this desolate land. On leaving Mohave, the three camels were loaded with fourteen hundred pounds. Haga [Hadji?] Ali, who came over with the camels when the first shipment was brought from Egypt, was taken along by Dr. Owen to load the camels and to take proper care of them. (Hayes Collection, Southern California, 1860-63, Vol. VIII, Doc. 159. See also Southern California and San Diego County, Vol. II, Doc. 161.)

<sup>36</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1903, p. 406.

maintained that camels could be successfully used to establish mail routes in the most remote sections of the country, and that any failure was due to the men, who did not know how to handle them, and not to the camels themselves.

At the very time that Beale and others were urging the War Department to sell the camels, plans were worked out to use the animals extensively in conjunction with the Post Office Department, in conducting mail routes from California to eastern points. E. B. Babbitt, a quartermaster in the army, stationed at San Francisco, tried to obtain enough camels to carry the mail regularly from San Pedro to Fort Mohave. He did not succeed in convincing the Secretary of War that this could be done. At the same time, Clarence Bennett, Major of the First Cavalry, California Volunteers, stationed at Camp Drum, California, wrote to Colonel R. C. Drum, Assistant Adjutant-General of the Pacific Coast Division, in San Francisco, May 21, 1863, and reported that thirty-six camels had been kept for a long time at Camp Drum. They were not used for anything. They had been subsisting on forage, which increased the expense of the camp, while good pasture was available within one hundred miles. Bennett recommended that the camels be sent to Fort Mohave to be used in transportation of goods to and from Tucson, Arizona. He wished to establish a through line between these settlements, sending out groups of camels each way several days apart.<sup>37</sup> Permission was not given by the War Department to start such a service. Secretary Stanton had little time, in the throes of the Civil War, to consider the conflicting reports submitted concerning the success of using camels in distant California. He issued an order to Quartermaster Babbitt September 9, 1863, to sell, at public auction, all the government camels in California. At that time there were thirty-five camels in the different army camps in the southern part of the state.

#### THE DISPOSAL OF THE CAMELS

The order to sell the camels was immediately carried out. Captain Dempfill was assigned the task of driving them from Benicia where they were to be sold. With six men, he first drove the herd to Santa Barbara, arriving December 30, 1863.<sup>38</sup> From there, he followed up the coast route. As the queer caravan ambled its way up the coast, the wildest excitement prevailed among the rancheros and the townfolk. The natives often ran from the villages when they saw the camels appearing. As these oriental strangers passed through the towns, the streets were filled with confusion; the horses of the vaqueros, scenting and sighting these strange creatures, bucked; the cattle stampeded. The herd reached Benicia in February, 1864. All the animals were in splendid condition, and for several weeks before the date of sale the newspapers carried an advertisement to the effect that they would be sold for "Cash in Legal Tender Notes."

The entire herd was sold on February 28, 1864, to Samuel McLenaghan who had helped to care for them for several years.<sup>39</sup> McLenaghan later sold

<sup>37</sup> *Official Record of the Rebellion*, Series I, Part II, Vol. 50, p. 453.

<sup>38</sup> *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, Jan. 8, 1864.

<sup>39</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union*, April 2, 1864, p. 3.

three to a rancher, named Riley, who kept them for a while on his ranch near Sacramento. The remaining animals were taken by McLenaghan to a large ranch in Sonoma County where some of them were sold within a few weeks to different parties. Ten of the best animals were selected by McLenaghan to constitute a train to carry freight from Sacramento to the Nevada territory.<sup>40</sup> On March 31, these ten arrived in Sacramento en route to Nevada. The state fair was to open within a few days, and McLenaghan thought that he might collect some money to pay his expenses on the way by exhibiting them to the public and by arranging to race them on the racetrack at the state fair grounds. Of the ten animals, seven were native born, from two to four years old. "Old Tule" was thirty-five years old, and had been used by General Beale to carry water and supplies to his surveying parties in Arizona, sometimes for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. Another of the older ones, named "Mary," was said to be one of those presented to the government by the Sultan of Turkey when the first shipment was brought over.

The camels were prepared for the racetrack after being exhibited for a few days to the curious public. The day before the race took place, an advertisement, "Great Dromedary Race," appeared in a newspaper, announcing that ten dromedaries would take part in a fast race, and that O. W. Dealing, the beneficiary, would ride the fastest animal.<sup>41</sup> The race took place April 7. One of the dromedaries, "Old Tule," was first placed upon the track, being led by the owner, who rode a horse, followed by Dealing also on horseback. They decided to run Tule around the track once to measure his gait and to incite the other camels which were soon to enter the race. They started off, McLenaghan ahead on his horse, and Dealing in the rear applying a huge whip to Tule "with great vigor." The trio raced around the half mile track before a delighted crowd, Tule coming in "with mouth and nose covered with white foam." Then six of the camels were driven by some horsemen once around the track, preparatory to the race. Satisfied that the performance would be a success, McLenaghan now placed all the ten animals on the track. He kept to his horse, but Dealing rode a camel, which was the "striking feature of the exhibition." When the animals were going at full speed, and one-half around the track, McLenaghan became alarmed, fearing that Dealing would fall off, and rushed ahead and stopped the race. Dealing dismounted and "came in on the homestretch on a mule."<sup>42</sup>

About one thousand people attended the race, the price of admission being fifty cents. McLenaghan and Dealing helped to collect the money at the gate, but turned it over to some one to count. The receipts were only \$180, which would indicate that about two-thirds of the people paid no admittance or that some one levied a heavy commission for collecting and caring for the gate receipts, while the two men were trying to entertain the restless crowd.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, April 4, 1864, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, April 8, 1864, p. 3.

The next day, greatly disappointed over the lack of financial gains from the race, McLenaghan started on. He drove his camels up the west side of the Sacramento River to Red Bluff, and from there, across the mountains into Nevada. He never established a freight or passenger line from Sacramento to Nevada, as he planned originally, but sold his camels when he reached his destination. They were used for several years to carry supplies to the mines, and to take salt from central Nevada to the silver mines near Austin. Edwin Franklin Morse, who spent many years in the mining sections, said, "I have often seen trains of half a dozen camels coming into Austin with their loads."<sup>43</sup>

Those camels which remained in California after the auction at Benicia were disposed of to different persons. Some were sold to circuses, some to zoological parks, and others to General Beale, who still retained his great admiration for them. Beale took his camels to his large rancho ("El Tejon") in the mountains near Bakersfield, and kept them there until they died. He used them to construct roads and to make trips about the country. For years one might have seen Beale working camels about his rancho, and making pleasure trips with them, accompanied by his family. He would drive from his rancho to Los Angeles, a distance of more than one hundred miles, "in a sulky behind a tandem of camels," to whom he enjoyed talking "in Syrian which he had with characteristic energy taught himself for this purpose."<sup>44</sup>

#### CAMELS IMPORTED FROM CHINA

The early experiments of the government in testing out camels in California stimulated the organization of private companies to import camels. They looked to China as a source of supply rather than to Egypt. In the spring of 1860, Otto Esche, a merchant of San Francisco, went to China to purchase a shipment of camels to be used in California. He believed that they would be in great demand in the mining sections of the Sierra Nevada once they were introduced. If the camels proved to be satisfactory in this work, Esche planned to establish a through express route from San Bernardino to El Paso. It was his immediate intention to organize a camel express between San Francisco and Salt Lake City. If this were patronized, he expected to extend the express to Missouri.

Esche thought that camels coming from the interior of the Orient would be better fitted for travel in all parts of California than those from Egypt. He penetrated into the heart of China and bought thirty-two camels in the Amur country at Nicolaessky, Mongolia. He went into the mountains to purchase them because they were to be used first in crossing the Sierra, and later, on the plateaus of Nevada and Utah. In driving the camels through the Mongolian desert to the seaport, seventeen of them died from the scarcity of food.

On July 25, 1860, the schooner, *Caroline E. Foote*, landed fifteen full grown camels at San Francisco.<sup>45</sup> They were consigned to M. Frisius and Company

<sup>43</sup> *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. VI, p. 347.

<sup>44</sup> Bonsal, Stephen: *Edward Fitzgerald Beale, a Pioneer in the Path of Empire 1822-1903*, p. 207. S. A. Bishop was part owner of this ranch. It was splendidly located and consisted of eleven leagues. Upon it ranged several thousand head of cattle in 1856. It was known as the Liebre grant. (*Los Angeles Star*, June 23, 1856.)

<sup>45</sup> *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, July 26, 1860, p. 3.

of San Francisco. The camels were in very bad condition when they arrived. Some were sick when they were loaded on the boat in China, and the accommodations for them on the ship were inadequate. Esche did not return with them, and those in charge did not know how to care for them or how to feed them. They arrived "lean, meagre and with their double humps shrivelled down to mere skinny sacks, which hung in flabby ugliness over their sides."<sup>46</sup> In order that they might quickly regain their strength they were turned loose on the fine pasture near Mission Dolores.

Advertisements appeared in the newspapers shortly after these camels arrived, informing the public that these remarkable animals were to be seen on exhibition.<sup>47</sup> A few days later, as soon as the camels had recuperated, it was announced through an attractive advertisement that they would be placed on display to raise money for the benefit of the German Benevolent Society of San Francisco.<sup>48</sup> They were to be seen in all colors, gray, tawny, yellowish and even black. A native camel trainer, who accompanied the camels from "The Great Desert of Cobi," was to manage the exhibition. It was advertised that under his direction "these intelligent animals will be made to kneel, rise or move at the word of command, and go through their interesting performances."<sup>49</sup> The exhibition of the camels took place in a large tent erected on the floor of the old Music Hall on Bush street. They could be seen from 11 A.M. until 10 P.M., and the place was open for almost two weeks, the price of admission being fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children. The public was reminded on the last day that after August 11 there would be no opportunity to see the camels, and that the price of admission had been reduced to twenty-five cents.<sup>50</sup>

A peremptory sale of the thirteen Bactrian camels was announced in the newspapers of September 11. They were to be sold on October 10 at auction for cash and in lots to suit the purchaser. The advertisement ran until the day of the sale, and emphasized that all the animals were "from a cold and mountainous country," and that they were "in fine condition and health."<sup>51</sup> When the day arrived for the sale of the animals, only a small crowd appeared. The auction was delayed in the hope that more people would attend the sale. Only two camels were sold the first day. One of them sold for \$425, and the other brought \$475.<sup>52</sup> The sale continued the next day, but the bidding was so low

<sup>46</sup> Hutchings *California Magazine*, Nov. 2, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, July 27, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, August 2, 1860, p. 1. This Society was organized January 7, 1854, with 105 members. It was located at Third and Brannan streets. The membership had grown to 1,030 by 1860, two-thirds of whom resided in and around San Francisco; the remainder came from the interior of the state. Dues were one dollar per month. Only Germans and those speaking the German language could become members. Each member could demand sick benefits and medical attention from the Society. It also gave aid regularly to Germans who were not members, if they were in need or in distress. In 1860 the hospital was a two story structure 50 by 70 feet. When the United States entered the World War, the institution changed its name to Franklin Hospital. (*San Francisco Directory*, 1860, p. 441.)

<sup>49</sup> *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, July 27, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, August 11, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1860, p. 3.



that the animals were withdrawn from sale. The auctioneer was instructed by the agents to sell none for less than \$1,200.<sup>53</sup> It was not until a year later that all the camels were sold. Failing to get what he thought the camels were worth, Mr. Frisius finally sold the whole lot — four males and six females — to Julius Bandmann.<sup>54</sup> They were by this time in perfect condition. During July, 1861, the ten animals were kept in the pasture fields of an old resident, named McDonald, "on Pacific street, beyond Larkin." They grazed over the vacant lands and were driven regularly over the sand hills to the Presidio to feed upon the thistle, their favorite food. Bandmann studied carefully their habits and disposition and tested them at work in various ways. He would load them with as much as 650 pounds of sand each and drive them over the sand hills and down the cliffs to test their strength and agility. He thought this would be good training for the difficult travel which they were expected to do in the mountain country.

These camels and some of those purchased from the government by McLeneghan were taken to Nevada and used by mining companies for several years. They were used to carry salt and other supplies to the mines in the Washoe country.<sup>55</sup> In 1876, the Board of Aldermen of Virginia City, Nevada, was asked to give \$1,000 to aid the Horrible Club<sup>56</sup> in obtaining and decorating camels which were to be used in the parade in that city in commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Permission was given to use the camels, but it was decided that their appearance on the streets would be too dangerous because "these animals frighten horses and mules terribly."<sup>57</sup> Eight camels were used by a mining company in Nevada for several days to carry wood to the top of Mount Davidson, near Virginia City, at an altitude of over 9,000 feet. A huge bonfire was made from the wood for the celebration on July 4, 1876. Each animal carried one-third of a cord of wood each trip. Enough wood was taken up to the top of the mountain to make a pile sixteen feet high, and at night the fire was "plainly seen from all parts of the Washoe Valley and other places within a radius of many miles."<sup>58</sup>

As the camels in Nevada became old and worn out, they were often allowed to run loose about the country. The farmers became aroused because the ugly creatures scared their horses and caused delay and much trouble on the roads.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1860, p. 3.

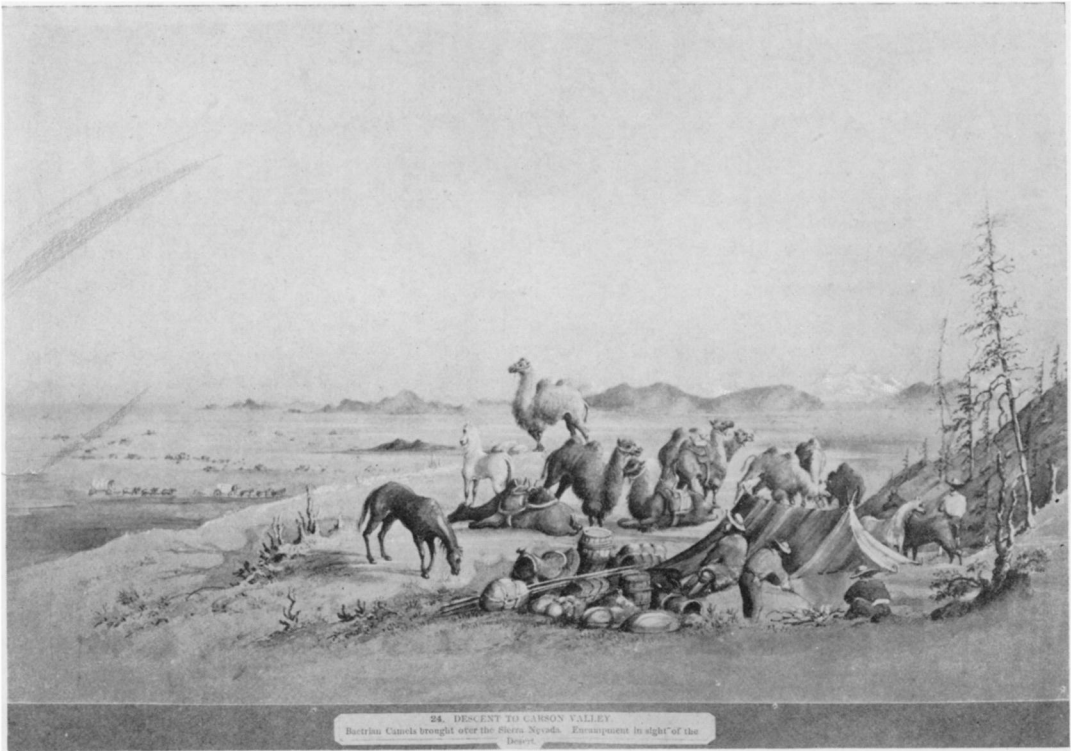
<sup>54</sup> *Alta California*, July 25, 1861. Bandmann was a commission merchant. He was the agent for the two shipments of camels sent over by Esche.

<sup>55</sup> An interesting picture of camels being driven to Nevada, September, 1861, may be found in Edward Vischer's *Pictorial of California* (No. 6). They are resting in the Mammoth Grove of Big Trees in Calaveras County. The *Daily Territorial Enterprise* of Virginia City, Nevada, for May 10, 1862, notes the arrival in that town of two tons of salt by camel train for the Central Mill, about 150 miles away. The camels were driven by Mexicans "who seem not to know the difference between a mule and a camel." Each animal carried 550 pounds of salt.

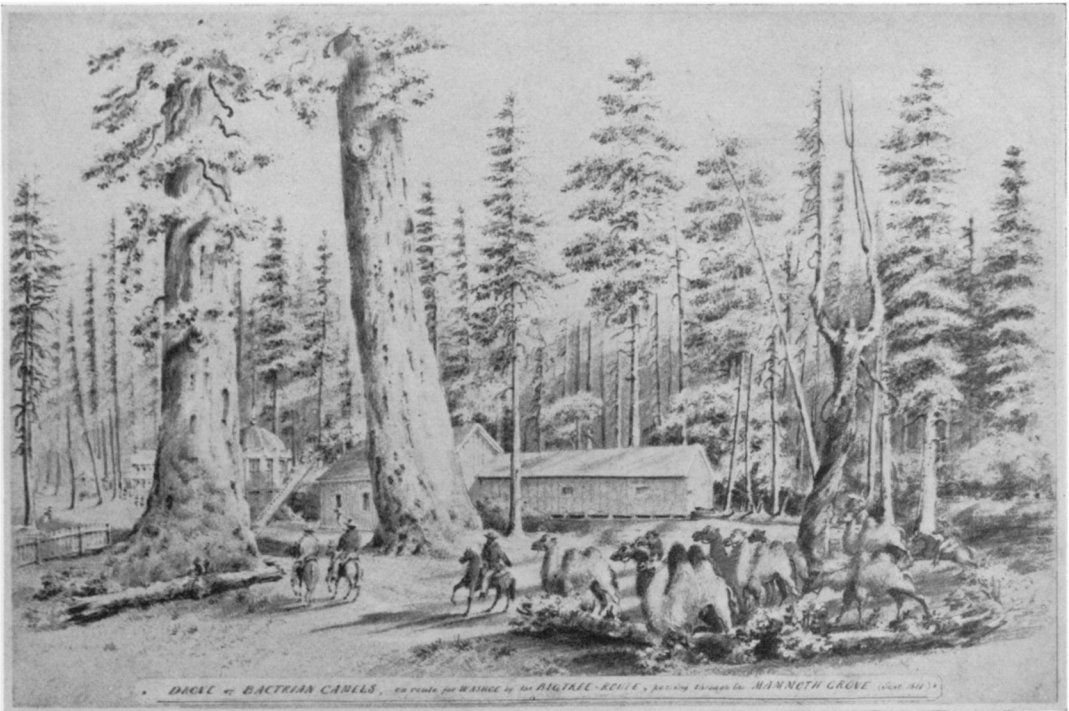
<sup>56</sup> A local organization which prided itself in patriotic pageantry and in grotesque performances. It was interested chiefly in preserving the early traditions of the pioneer days of Nevada.

<sup>57</sup> *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, June 29, 1876, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, July 6, 1876, p. 3.



VIEW NO. 47 OF VISCHER'S PICTORIAL OF CALIFORNIA



VIEW NO. 6 OF VISCHER'S PICTORIAL OF CALIFORNIA

Hugh Carling of Lyon County introduced a bill in the Nevada legislature January 19, 1875, to prohibit camels and dromedaries from traveling upon the highways of the state.<sup>59</sup> The bill was modified to apply only to camels running at large, and it became a law February 9, 1875.<sup>60</sup> Anyone found guilty of allowing his camels to go astray was to be fined not less than \$25 or more than \$100, or he was to be put in jail for not less than thirty days.

Encouraged by his successful importation of camels in 1860, Otto Esche sent over two more shipments from the Amur. One shipment of ten Bactrian camels was landed at San Francisco November 15, 1861, by the *Caroline E. Foote*, under the command of Captain Andrew I. Worth, who brought over the cargo of camels in July, 1860.<sup>61</sup> This second voyage was made in thirty-three days, with the loss of four camels, one having died before Worth left Siberia. The other shipment of camels was landed in San Francisco by the bark *Dollart* January 26, 1862. The circumstances and incidents pertaining to this last and largest importation of camels into California from the Orient are described elsewhere.

Most of the camels brought in by the *Caroline E. Foote* in November, 1861, and by the *Dollart* were shipped to British Columbia. The Cariboo country was experiencing a gold rush at that time, and it was believed that camels would be of great assistance in providing a rapid means of communication between the seaports and the mines. In the spring of 1862 Mr. Callbreath of Victoria came to San Francisco, to inquire into the usefulness of the camels and to see how they might be worked. He purchased twenty-three camels from Julius Bandmann and Company for \$6,000. (See Exhibit "F." Statement by Bandmann.) The San Francisco newspapers noted that in April, 1862, this company shipped to Esquimault, Canada, twenty-two camels by the steamer *Hermann* bound for Hailey, Victoria, with George S. Wright as captain.<sup>62</sup> A correspondent from Victoria, writing to the *Alta California* on May 7, 1862, says: "The Bactrian camels have left for British Columbia. Many are anxious to know whether the experiment of using them will succeed or not in that climate."<sup>63</sup> Their service in the distant north was disappointing; they were soon disbanded and widely scattered.<sup>64</sup>

#### THE CAMEL CONDUCTORS

Perhaps the most amusing feature of the camel fiasco was the importation of the "expert" camel drivers. When Wayne and Porter brought over the first camels, three Arabs and two Turks were employed to act as interpreters and assistants in caring for the animals. Porter wrote, concerning the selection of

<sup>59</sup> Journal of the Assembly, Nevada Legislature, 1875, p. 61.

<sup>60</sup> Statutes of Nevada, 1875, Chapter XII.

<sup>61</sup> San Francisco *Herald*, Nov. 16, 1861, p. 1. Later, this schooner was used as a whaling vessel for several years.

<sup>62</sup> *Alta California*, April 8, 1862, p. 1. Also San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*, April 10, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Alta California*, May 13, 1862, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> For an account of the camels in the Northwest see an article by W. S. Lewis, in the *Washington Historical Quarterly*, Oct., 1929.

the camel conductors: "They were well recommended, and are represented as skillful in the management of camels and in making and in repairing the pack saddles and other apparatus."<sup>65</sup> The drivers had not been in Texas very long until it was discovered that five were not sufficient and that greater care should have been exercised in selecting them. When the second cargo of camels arrived, ten Turks, one of whom was a boy, were brought over. All these drivers decided to remain in Texas when Beale was ready to start for California with his twenty-eight camels. Two Turks, Hassan and Siuliman, who "knew all about camels," refused to accompany the expedition.<sup>66</sup> The others, having great faith in the judgment of their competent countrymen, also refused to start. They thought the trip to California would be too long and too dangerous, and they alleged that they had not been paid anything by the government since arriving in the country.<sup>67</sup> Beale was forced to start on his long trip without the assistance of the imported drivers. But sometime after the caravan left San Antonio, some of them overtook the party. They hindered more than they promoted the progress of the expedition. In his disgust and disappointment over the failure of the drivers, Beale wrote to the Secretary of War from El Paso, July 24, 1857, saying, "The Greeks and Turks who are with us know no more of camels than any American in New York knows of buffalo."<sup>68</sup>

These drivers were a source of constant trouble. Beale had difficulty in keeping them sober. They also quarrelled with the mule drivers. When the expedition reached Albuquerque, the natives gave the party a royal welcome. They gathered "at a convenient rancho, and amused themselves by dancing, music and drinking a miserable liquor."<sup>69</sup> To induce some of his men to abstain from imbibing the "Spanish wine," Beale said, when at Albuquerque, that he was "obliged to administer a copious supply of the oil of boots to several, especially to my Turks and Greeks, with the camels."<sup>70</sup> Billy Considine, a member of the party, testified that to move a stubborn, half-drunk Turk, one needed to use on him "a good tough piece of wagon spoke, *aimed* tolerably high."<sup>71</sup> The camel conductors were imported to teach Americans how to manage camels and how to restore confidence in those trying to work them when they displayed their teeth "with a roar rivalling that of the royal Bengal tiger."<sup>72</sup> The drivers often created dissention among the members of the party, and destroyed confidence rather than restored it. From the reports written by Beale and others, it would appear that Major Wayne selected the right kind of camels, but not the most competent drivers.

It is difficult to determine how many of the drivers came to California with the government camels. It seems that not more than a half dozen ever reached

<sup>65</sup> Sen. Ex. Doc., 34 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 62, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 11, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> H. Ex. Doc., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 124, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 11, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> From a diary of a member of the party. *Alta California*, Nov. 26, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> H. Ex. Doc., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Doc. 124, p. 23.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 11, 1857, p. 1.

California. After the camels passed from government ownership, some of the drivers went into Nevada, and later drifted down into Arizona and Texas. One of them, Hiogo Alli, remained in the employment of the government until 1870.<sup>73</sup> Another driver, Greek George, killed a white man in New Mexico some ten years after coming to America, and was later found dead on the plains. Some said that he committed suicide rather than be captured, while others reported that he was killed by the Apaches.<sup>74</sup> Probably the best known of all the camel drivers was Hadji Ali, or Hi Jolly, as he was commonly called. As a boy, he had served in the French army in Algiers. As an employee of the government and later as a conductor of camel trains in the Southwest, he endeared himself to those who knew him by his quiet, unassuming manner. Most of his time in this country was spent in Arizona. He died December 18, 1902, at Tyson's Wells, Arizona, in the heart of the desert that he loved so well, about one hundred miles west of Wickenburg.

#### STATE INTEREST ON THE QUESTION

During the time that the question of the importation of camels was before Congress, little interest in the subject was taken by the newspapers of California or by the state legislature. The San Francisco Herald in its issue of October 3, 1852, devotes a column to the debate then in Congress as to whether camels or elephants should be imported to establish transportation lines in the Far West. In 1856, the Stockton *Argus* advocated the introduction of camels into the state. It said: "The next move in our progress of improvement should be the introduction of camels in California. Its introduction into our state would produce a revolution in our mineral development and internal trade. It is capable of traveling over one hundred miles per day — is known to live to a green old age, as long as seventy or eighty years — to go without eating or drinking for four or five days — to be able to carry twice the load of our largest and most hardy mules."<sup>75</sup> The editor continues by pointing out the value of the camel in a state like California. He thought the animal's ability to climb "rocky slopes of forty-five degrees," while carrying five or six hundred pounds, would change quickly the inconveniences and dangers attending mountain travel. But this attitude was exceptional, for even after camels were brought to the state, few editors showed any enthusiasm for them.

The state legislature did nothing to encourage the use of camels within the state. It considered their possibilities but once. Shortly after the bill providing for the importation of camels was passed by Congress, Senator Flint presented in the state legislature a memorial from William E. Walton to encourage overland immigration to California and to facilitate inter-ocean communication.<sup>76</sup> In his memorial, Walton asked the state to donate to him in fee simple five quarter sections of land from the eastern boundary of the state to the Pacific

<sup>73</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1903, p. 403.

<sup>74</sup> *Out West*, Vol. 26, p. 311.

<sup>75</sup> San Francisco *Herald*, Dec. 13, 1856, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Senate Journal, California Legislature, 1855, p. 678, 704.

Ocean, to be used as stations where camels could be kept and used in maintaining a regular passenger and express route. He promised that within twelve months after obtaining the land, he would "place trains of camels and dromedaries on a route from a point or station on the Atlantic coast to a point or station on the Pacific coast for the purpose of expediting inter-oceanic communication in a speedy and secure manner."<sup>77</sup> Walton also promised, with the aid of ample capital which he claimed was at his disposal for the prosecution of the project, to place another train of animals, within a few months after getting the land, "on the southern route, that will make the distance from Texas or New Orleans to the Gila River, thence to San Diego or Los Angeles, *in from eight to ten days*, an almost incredible short time, but nevertheless true."<sup>78</sup>

Walton's memorial and bill introduced in the state senate by Senator Flint on April 27, to establish a camel train, were sent to the Committee on Internal Improvements. The Committee reported on the subject May 3. It approved the memorial, and said that "the bill is one which eminently merits the fostering care of the Legislature."<sup>79</sup> But the Committee submitted to the Senate a substitute bill. It provided for granting five quarter sections of state land to establish a dromedary line to carry letters, express matter and passengers from the Pacific to the Atlantic seaboard.<sup>80</sup> The legislature adjourned three days later without considering the bill. Thus ended the first and only attempt to obtain legislative aid in promoting transportation by means of camels.

The prospect of using camels in transportation throughout the state also seems to have made little appeal to private concerns. About a year after the first camels were brought to the state, a company was formed at Downieville, Sierra County, for the purpose of importing and using camels on the Pacific Coast. The company was organized and incorporated on May 13, 1859. It was known as the "California and Utah Camel Association." Its charter, as filed with the Secretary of State in Sacramento, May 23, was as follows:<sup>81</sup>

We the undersigned Citizens of the United States of America, do hereby certify that we have formed ourselves into a Corporation under the name and style of "The California and Utah Camel Association," which is to be the corporate name of the company, and that the object for which the corporation is formed is the introduction, and employment of the Camel on the Pacific Coast:

The amount of the Capital Stock of the Corporation is twelve thousand /12,000/ dollars, divided into one hundred and twenty shares of one hundred dollars each.

The duration of the Corporation shall be twenty /20/ years.

The number of Trustees of the Corporation /and those who shall manage its concern for the first three months/ is three, and their names are John E. Ager, Edmund G. Bryant and John I. Cooper, all of whom are citizens of the United

<sup>77</sup> Appendix to Senate Journal, California Legislature, 1855, Doc. 24, Appendix "A," p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. Walton had been a resident of California for five years prior to this time. He was an enthusiastic promoter of such schemes. To influence the legislature to consider favorably his memorial, he said that he was sure to obtain "the necessary quarter sections" of land in New Mexico from the national government to establish a camel train there, and that a "most liberal appropriation from the National Treasury" would have been made to convey mails across the continent by camels, had not the Post Office laws prevented it. He informed the legislature that a similar memorial to obtain land for camel stations was to be presented to the legislature of Texas.

<sup>79</sup> Senate Journal, California Legislature, 1855, p. 807.

<sup>80</sup> San Francisco *Herald*, May 4, 1855, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> State Archives, office of Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

States of America, and residents of California; and the principal place of business of the Corporation is

Downieville in Sierra County

Dated at Downieville in Sierra County

May 13th A D 1859

This charter was signed by ten men, including the three who were named as trustees, the others being Q. A. Clements, William R. Tennent, C. L. Shales, James Kane, Samuel W. Langton and E. M. Gates. The writer has failed to find any account that the Association ever imported camels. The charter was forfeited December 13, 1905, for failure to pay the state license tax for the year ending June, 1906, the state, in 1905, having levied a license tax of ten dollars on all corporations within the state, the charters of those corporations which had become defunct being cancelled when this tax was not paid.

#### CONCLUSION

No attempt has been made in this study other than to sketch briefly some of the more interesting features of the camel episode. The experiment of using camels was a complete failure, except Beale's trip to California. But the undertaking in the state would certainly have been more successful if the Civil War had not opened in 1861. The army officers entrusted with the camels had little inclination or time during the war to train them for war duty or to use them in the place of mules. Lincoln signed the bill, in 1862, to construct a transcontinental railroad, and the people of California were assured then, for the first time, that the state would be connected with the East by rail. By this time, telegraph lines had been set up in many parts of the state, some excellent roads had been built, and the overland stage and express service had become safer and more dependable. Several short railroads had also been built. These changes in communication came so rapidly that the former faith in camel transportation was soon destroyed. The only physical evidence remaining today of the camels brought to California, is the skeleton of one of the animals in the Smithsonian Institution. When the camels were stationed at Fort Tejon, two of them engaged, one night, in a deadly combat, and clubbed each other so fiercely with their ponderous forefeet that one of them was killed before the soldiers could get them under control. Lieutenant Sylvester Mowry, wishing to preserve the evidence that these noble brutes were once domiciled in California, sent the skeleton to Washington, D.C.