



City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society

P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402

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By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

A WEBSITE FOR OUR SOCIETY IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Joe Fondy recently began working on a website for our Society. Right now we have three pages: 1) History Central, 2) Links to the Past, and 3) Mary Lewis Collection. Joe was born and raised locally, and came to our library in search of genealogical information on his family. The website was prepared using the Apple computer in our library, and the site shows well on Apple computers; however, there are some glitches for those of us who have PCs, so we (actually Joe) will be working on clearing them up. If there are any computer-savvy people out there, send me an email if you know how to resolve the Apple-to-PC conversion problem, and I'll forward it to Joe. In the meantime, go see what he has accomplished so far at this site: http://web.me.com/sbpioneers/Site_2/History_Central.html

Each of these pages is a work in progress, so you will probably notice some changes in style and data, plus typographical corrections, as we go along. The first page describes who we are and what we do, and it is modeled after the page on San Bernardino City's website that Tom Marek supervised in their IT Department. Since the text on the city's site was written by our president Steve Shaw, we did not think it would be a problem. The Links page is self-explanatory, but a description of the Mary Lewis page is in order.

Mary Lewis was an accomplished genealogist who specialized in early San Bernardino residents. She collected data from a wide variety of sources: birth, death, and marriage certificates; divorce records; early censuses; directories, and a host of others. She also corresponded extensively. Mary had a Mormon background, but she did research on everybody. She made a sheet for each family head, and after listing whatever she found on that person, she added information on the spouse and any children. Sometimes she would have a single piece of data, and sometime she would fill the page with her findings. She also listed her sources of information.

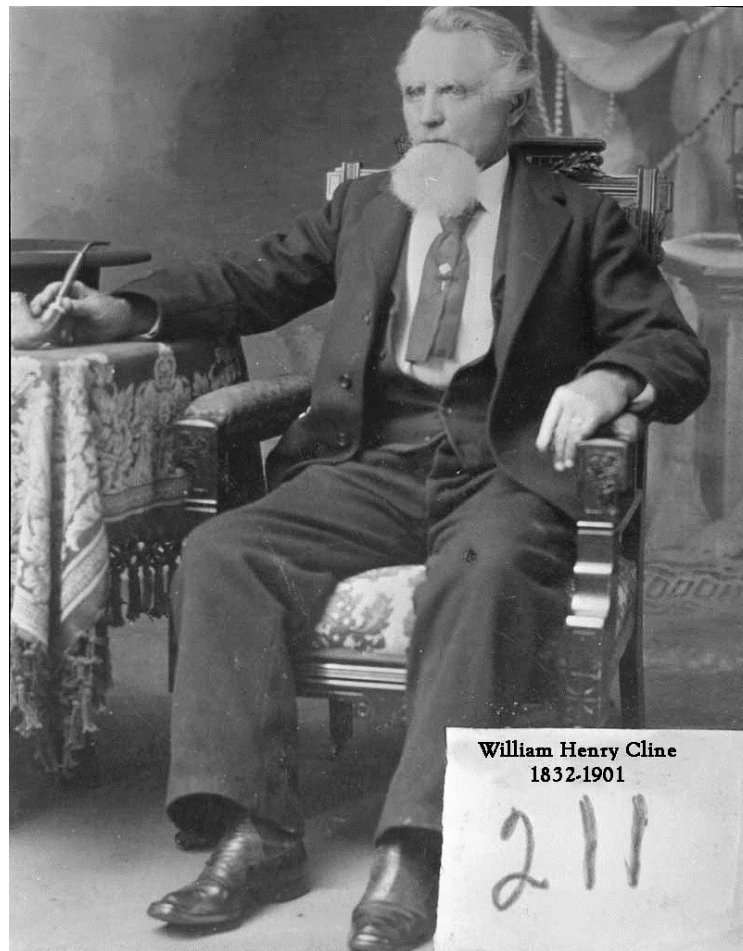
Mary worked on the project late into life, and by the time she finished, she had amassed records on perhaps 35,000 families. The records went into three-inch ring binders, and there are a total of 87 ring binders, each with 400-plus pages. There is only one set of originals, which is housed in the Arda M. Haenszel California Room at the Feldheim Library. The Mormons microfilmed the set, but it was felt our own backup copy should be made (an overhead water pipe burst a couple of years ago at the Feldheim, just a few feet from the collection, but no harm was done to Mary's records).

The Historical and Pioneer Society undertook to scan the entire collection, and the task was daunting. Gerry and Linda Brassfield came in once, sometimes twice, a week for months, and scanned each page. With our magical little ScanSnap, they were able to have each page scanned for OCR (Optical Character Recognition) readability. This is a very useful tool, because you can search the entire database for names other than the family head listed at the top of the page, and even search for place names. A PDF file for

each page was thus made, but the machine did not title them automatically, and each of the 35,000 pages has to be titled by hand. Sue Payne and I are in the process of doing that right now. We will then post on the web page all of the title headings, which will serve as an index. You can see that the surnames beginning with “Aa” through “Alv” already have been posted. When we have finished, people from all over the world can find a relative and make inquiries.

THE HANGMAN: WILLIAM HENRY CLINE

Recently a Ms. Beverly Phillips sent the Society a photo of William Henry Cline, who “hanged more murderers than any other man in the country,” according to a May 1897 story in the San Francisco *Examiner*. Our own Sheriff of San Bernardino hired Cline for his services.



Courtesy of Beverly Phillips

Cline lived in Chino and became a member of the San Bernardino Pioneer Society. He joined in 1892, possibly at the behest of his sister, Martha Hobbs. Martha was a well-known and well-respected hotelier, having run Hobbs House in San Bernardino for more than 30 years. Her brother, who went by his middle name “Henry,” was somewhat of a misanthrope, as can be seen by reading the San Francisco *Examiner* article below. The story states he shunned his fellow man and hated children, which was very unusual for a member of the Society, most of whom loved people and especially youngsters.

Henry provided his service for William McDowell, the last man hanged in the City of San Bernardino, and a picture of that event is on page 20 of M. David DeSoucy’s book on the Sheriff’s Department.

THIS MAN HAS HANGED MORE MURDERERS THAN ANY OTHER MAN IN THE COUNTRY

The Criminals

Cline Has Hanged.

Richard Colts.....	1850
The "Mexican Beauty".....	1851
Pedro Alvetros.....	1854
A Sacramento Indian.....	1855
Five Members of the Flores	
Gang.....	1857
Juan Flores.....	1857
Billy McDowell.....	1884
Silvas } Mexican	
Martinez } Desperadoes	1884
Bayenton.....	1885
Fritz Anschlagg.....	1888

THE above is a list of "lawful executions" that Henry Cline, the hangman of Hangtown, is very proud of. It is the ghastly record of his life's work, for in all the fifty years since his first hanging there has been nothing so glad some to the heart of this uncanny individual as a "necktie party." In the wilds of his mountain home near Rincon there is nothing he will read of but news of horrible crimes. He shuns society and its customs and hates children. He lives alone with his dog and horses, but though he loves the hangman's grewsome task, the State has robbed him of his pleasure, for the law has it that all hangings must take place within the foreboding walls at San Quentin, and "Cline, the hangman," is never invited to officiate there as he was formerly honored by the various sheriffs of the State. That is why he is living quietly in his mountain home with nothing to do but dream of the excitement of the days gone by.

It is a singular circumstance that Henry Cline, the hangman, was born at Murderer's Falls, Alleghany county, N. Y., April 16, 1833. With his father he landed in Hangtown, Placer county, Cal., in 1850. Only three months after he arrived, being a mechanic by trade, he was called upon to build a rough scaffold for the execution of Richard Colts, who shot and killed his mining partner in that town. Young Cline, who was then but eighteen years of age, exhibited a relish for his assignment, and when the

execution came off he was made an assistant on the scaffold. He obtained some notoriety by the nerve he showed at Colts' execution, and in June, 1851, was called upon to take charge of the hanging of the "Mexican Beauty" of Downieville, whose execution caused a great sensation as the first woman hanged in California.

The "Mexican Beauty" was a handsome young woman with dreamy dark eyes, luxuriant hair, black as the raven's wing, and an olive complexion. She had lovers by the score. One of them taunted her one night while she was lavishing her affections upon him with being a bad woman. In a twinkling her affection was changed into the ferocity of a tiger. Snatching a stiletto from her bosom she buried it in the man's heart. The fellow was very popular and his friends saw to it that the woman was promptly arrested, tried and convicted of murder.

Those who saw the execution will never forget the day the "Mexican Beauty" was hanged. It was a beautiful June morning. If there was ever a time when one would feel more than usual that life was worth living it was then. The whole population for a hundred miles around turned out to witness the hanging. The gallows had been built under Cline's instructions.

While Cline got the noose and black cap ready another man strapped her arms and tied her skirts closely about her. Without prompting, she bent her shapely neck forward to receive the noose, and when Cline had adjusted it under the left ear she nodded her head to indicate that it would do. When the black cap was brought forward one last look of hatred and defiance shot from her eyes of jet at the gaping crowd below. In a second the cap was arranged, the doomed woman was placed on the middle of the trap and it fell with a bang. The neck was instantly broken, and according to Cline's idea it was a neat and successful piece of work.

Mr. Cline does not recall readily all the services of this kind he has been called upon to perform, but he remembers many of them.

In 1854, when Jim Barton was Sheriff of Los Angeles county, he hanged Pedro Alvetros, whose cowardly murder of George Ellington, near Puente, will be remembered by many of the old residents now living. Later, he went to Sacramento to stretch the neck of an Indian for drowning a man at Benson's Ferry. In 1884 he was called upon by Sheriff J. B. Burkhart of San Bernardino county to hang Billy McDowell, whose



Continued
from: San Francisco
Examiner, May 23, 1897

crime was one of the most cold-blooded in local history. McDowell was intimate with Maggie O'Brien, a fallen woman of Los Angeles, who knew things about McDowell that would send him to San Quentin if they became known. He feared that she would expose him, and decided to do away with her. Inviting her to visit him, he planned a ride from Riverside to San Bernardino on horseback, across the hills, for his guest, his wife and himself. When the party was well out of civilization, McDowell strangled the girl and secreted her body in a ravine, assisted by his wife. Mrs. McDowell afterwards became suspicious of her husband's actions toward her and gave the story of the crime to the Sheriff. McDowell was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Henry Cline built the scaffold and adjusted the noose in this execution. He says McDowell was one of the nerviest men he ever hanged. The same scaffold was shortly afterward borrowed by the Sheriff of Los Angeles county for the execution of Silvas and Martinez, two Mexican desperadoes, who were hung by Henry Cline. Shortly afterwards he hung murderer Bayenton and Fritz Auschlagg at Los Angeles.

The most thrilling event of his life was the historical chase for the murderers of Sheriff John Barton and his posse of Los Angeles county in 1857. Barton and his men gave their lives heroically to preserve the peace of the country. A party of Jews, with several wagons loaded with goods, called upon the Sheriff to escort them through from San Bernardino to Los Angeles, knowing that bands of desperadoes then infested Southern California. The Sheriff responded and set out himself with a posse of five to protect the Jews. Just below Puente they encountered the famous Juan Flores and his gang. The plunderers came upon them rather unexpectedly, but Barton and his men were ready to fight, and they laid down their lives valiantly and at a heavy cost to the highwaymen. The officers were outnumbered and Barton was the last man who fell.

Several parties were made up to hunt down the Flores gang, and Henry Cline joined the one headed by Pio Pico, the old Spanish Governor of California. After being out twenty-one days a division of the Pico party came across seven of the desperadoes secluded in the mountains just north and a little east of San Juan. They were seated about a camp fire. Stealing noiselessly upon them, they covered the rascals with their guns at only twenty yards and two of the gang were shot dead and the other five surrendered without a struggle. One of the men killed was just leaning forward to light his cigarette and fell into the fire when a ball pierced his head just above the nose. The citizens were in no pleasant mood when the ruffians came into their possession, and immediately tried and convicted them. Cline took charge of the hanging, which was done without much ceremony.

A large sycamore, covering a huge boulder, was found upon the mountain side, which answered capitally for the execution. A lower limb, more than fourteen feet long, ran out above the boulder. The doomed men were taken upon this rock, securely bound, and each fastened to the limb by a stout hair rope. At a given signal, Cline pushed the five men from the rock, where, suspended in the air, they were left to expiate their murderous offenses.

Juan Flores, the leader of the gang, was captured at Santa Barbara shortly after the taking of his comrades, and was executed in Los Angeles. Cline hung him.

Speaking of how hanging is done, Cline says that to make the execution successful many things have to be taken into consideration. A man's nerve, weight and age count for a good deal. A drop of seven feet would sever one man's head from the body, while another would require a drop of fully seven feet to break the neck. The neck of a fleshy person can usually be broken by a drop of five or five and a half feet. A thin, sinewy person will sometimes require a drop of seven and a half feet. A person with strong nerves, even though he may be quite fleshy, may require a long drop to snap the bones of the neck. Briefly, hanging is an art, and requires a good deal of study and experience to attain success.

Mr. Cline says that a bungled hanging is about the only thing that does rasp upon his nerves and he always hates to read of such a case.

When a neck is broken right, the bones can be heard to separate with a sharp crack, and then the hangman knows that the job is done.

SAN BERNARDINO PHOTOGRAPHER ALFRED HORACE ROGERS

Whoever it was that posed photographer Alfred Rogers in the photograph below could have done a better job. Maybe it was a self-portrait. It looks as though he has something in his right hand—perhaps the control to the camera. The angle of the camera makes his left leg appear to be misshapen, the hat sits too far back on his head, and the cane is held awkwardly. It seems that a professional photographer would have situated his subject a little better.



Alfred Horace Rogers, 1865-1917

Alfred was an early photographer in San Bernardino. He was born in Australia, the oldest child of Frederick Horace Rogers and Mary Minton Long. Mary died in childbirth when Alfred was 10, and his father decided to move to the United States. Frederick was a photographer, and evidently his son Alfred learned enough of his father's trade to try to make it his profession.

Alfred was on his own at age 13. When he was 19 he married Lucy May Stephens, and the couple had two children, William Horace Rogers and Inez Rozelle Rogers, born in 1885 and 1887 respectively. It is unknown just when Alfred arrived in San Bernardino, but the Rogers photograph shown below is estimated by the Lake Oswego Library (which holds the photo) to have been taken circa 1891. The two subjects in the picture are the children of San Bernardino rancher William Kingkade. The daughter Edna was born in 1884 and Elmer in 1886, and would have been 7 and 5 years old in 1891, which is about the ages they look in the photo. Rogers advertised as a photographer in Milliken's City of San Bernardino Directory in 1893, '94 and '95, so he spent at least a few years in town.

From letters sent to his sister it is known that he was having trouble making a living as a photographer. In San Bernardino there were some excellent photographers and the competition must have been a

problem. The business simply did not provide a steady income. By 1900, according to the Federal Census, the Rogers family had moved to Santa Barbara, and the Kingkades to Lake Oswego, Oregon. In those days it was not unusual for families to frequently move about.

The Kingkade children, as you can see in the photograph, are dressed in their finery and nicely posed, although the leg cross is a bit much, and... hmm...doesn't that straw boater look familiar?



Elmer W. Kingkade and Edna Louise Kingkade (Bickner)

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