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Forward

Welcome to the 17th edition of the Journal of the Riverside Historical Society. Through this journal, it is the hope of the Society to bring to the public the latest in research/writing about the history of Riverside. This edition continues the tradition, and I think you'll be greatly informed by the articles before you.

Our lead article is a first for the journal - a contribution all the way from Surrey, England! Sara Goodwins, publisher of Loaghtan Books, relates the story of a British military force that came through Southern California - and Riverside - during 1943 to drum up support for the war effort both here and abroad. The article is taken from the remembrances of Clifford Cole, one of the men involved in the effort.

Next, the father-daughter team of Aaron and Allison Maggs takes us back to 1908 when the famous (or infamous) elephant stampede occurred throughout downtown Riverside. Several pictures are included of the event, many of which have never been published before.

Judith Auth gives us an insider history of the Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop on the city's eastside. This article delves into a part of Riverside's more recent history, and is a fantastic look at story behind one of the eastside's artistic traditions.

Finally, Joan Hall, one of Riverside's most prolific local history writers, relates the story of Little Sam. Little Sam, whose real name was Hom Kip, was employed by the Bettner family of Riverside for more than 40 years in what became the city's Heritage House. The article tells of the life of one of Riverside's often forgotten figures.

I hope you enjoy this latest incarnation of the journal, and will look forward to many others.

Steve Lech
President, Riverside Historical Society

About the Authors

Judith Auth retired in 2006 from the Riverside Public Library where she was employed since 1971. She served as Secretary for Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop & Gallery for twenty years and is presently the keeper of the archive. She is also a trustee of the Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery and the Mission Inn Foundation.

Sara Goodwins is a freelance writer based in Surrey, England. For more than twenty years, she has written on a number of topics including business, education, heritage and the countryside. Much of her work is commissioned for the national and international press and various of her articles have been syndicated in North America and the Far East. A regular contributor to British magazines and newspapers, Sara is also a partner in small publishing house, Loaghtan Books, which publishes high-quality non-fiction, mostly based on original documentation and experiences. Sara is a noted cartoonist, illustrator and photographer and has had several books, short stories and poems published.

Joan Herrick Hall has authored and co-authored several local history books and articles, including *Adobes, Bungalows, and Mansions of Riverside, Through the Doors of the Mission Inn* (Volumes 1 and 2), and most recently *Riverside's Invisible Past*. Mrs. Hall has also been chair of the Riverside Cultural Heritage Board, the Riverside Municipal Museum Board, and president of the Riverside Historical Society.

Aaron Maggs lives in Jurupa Valley with his wife, Janis and their three children, Kimberly, Allison and Nathaniel. While he is fascinated with researching local history, what he most enjoys is sharing his research with others. **Allison Maggs** is a freshman at Norte Vista High School where she is enrolled in that school's International Baccalaureate program. After finishing school, she hopes to become a sign language interpreter.

The British Invade Riverside, 1943

by Sara Goodwins

The year was 1943; two thirds of the way through the Second World War. In January Hitler had been defeated at Stalingrad; US troops had taken Guadalcanal in February; and Operation Chastise, better known as the Dam Busters raid, had taken place in May. It all seemed a very long way from California. So what was an anti-aircraft Battery of front-line British troops doing in Riverside in October?

America had been at war for about eighteen months, and many Americans, untouched by the conflict, questioned their country's involvement. President Roosevelt wanted to show the American people what the fighting was like and what was needed to win. He also wanted to give the British and American allies chance to get to know each other. To help the US President in his PR campaign, British Prime Minister Churchill, at Roosevelt's request, sent to the US a Battery of British Royal Artillery gunners, complete with their equipment. Their brief was simple but comprehensive: talk to the American people and show them how the allies are working together to win the war.

The 1st Composite Anti-Aircraft Demonstration Battery Royal Artillery was unique. It included heavy and light AA guns, searchlights, and highly technical specialist equipment such as radar, which was barely off the drawing board. After six weeks intensive training, the 346 officers and men boarded the *Ile de France* at the end of June *en route* to a country familiar from the movies, but which none of them had had the faintest chance of visiting before. In his book *Invading America, 1943*, Clifford Cole, radar expert with the Battery, explains:

I was preparing to visit a country I had heard so much of, read so much about, yet knew so little of that I felt a peculiar nervousness as to how I was going to react to it all. If I were given to nightmares, I feel sure that I should have a nightmare that would have a predominancy of men chewing gum,



Troop movements in the Mojave Desert. This picture alone shows the international nature of the war. The trucks and drivers were American, the equipment came from Canada and the troops were British. (Photo courtesy Loaghtan Books).

bootleggers, gangsters, film stars, divorce, skyscrapers, vast machines and vast production, Southern hospitality, tobacco and cotton. [In the interests of security] it wasn't as though I could ask people to give me their ideas on what I should be likely to meet.

Once on US soil the pace was gruelling. The Battery toured through more than thirty states of the union giving demonstrations of firing, raising funds, parading through city streets, and broadcasting on US radio. On Friday 8 October 1943, when they had been in the States for around four months, they arrived in Riverside.

Camp Haan had been developed as a base for anti-aircraft training, so it made sense for the British ack ack troops to be based there. Captain Cole's diary entry for Saturday 9 October reads:

A parade today in Riverside so out came the shorts and shirt. I went into Riverside with the colonel after first dashing around inspecting equipment. The drive into Riverside, reminded me of the film country one sees on Technicolor



Parade through Riverside. The British Battery (far left) is led by an American band. (Photo courtesy Loaghtan Books).

films. The sun just blazed down in a clear blue sky, on country browned with continual sun. The mountains edging the plain on which Camp Haan and Riverside are situated, are of brown rock, sandy type, with the mountains (which are reputed to be 10,000 feet but look only 3-4,000 feet) rising sheer out of the plain. There was no gentle rise, it was just as though they had been pushed up from underneath by a mighty hand. Riverside's entry is lined with the type of palm that looks just like an oversized Brussel sprout stalk. Nearing Riverside, we ran into rain, the first in this area since 10 April we were told. The rivers are dry, just riverbeds running under bridges. Irrigation is a necessity and seems very capably carried out. The rain was measured by someone and we were told that 100th of an inch had fallen.

One of the things which caused almost more comment than anything else among their American colleagues was the British Tommies' clothing. In hot countries British troops often worked in bush shirts, shorts, puttees and boots and it had been decided, before they left England, that such would be the preferred kit for parades. Cole writes earlier in the tour:

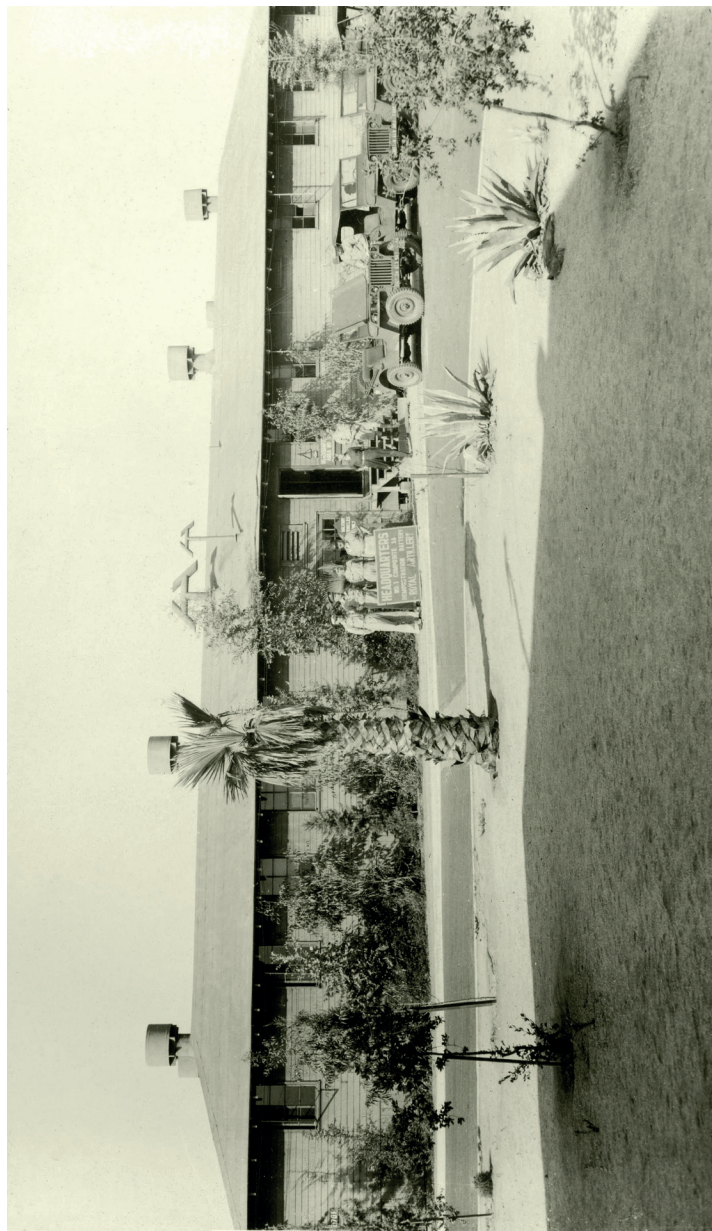
Tropical shorts caused great consternation when we first wore them in camp. There was a distinct feeling prevalent amongst the Americans that they were next door to being indecent.

After a parade in Boston he went further:

Photographers were everywhere, but the thing that struck me most was that with that huge parade of navy, army, air force,



*The British Battery assembling before the Riverside parade.
(Photo courtesy Loaghtan Books).*



The British Battery headquarters at Camp Haan. Four members of the British team pose, with their noticeboard outside Headquarters Area No. 3 at Camp Haan. They are probably the two senior officers and two sergeant majors. (Photo courtesy Loughnan Books).

WACS, WAVES, SPARS, bands and civilian services, etc., the only things that attracted any attention at all were the film stars and the shorts of the British Tommies.

The inhabitants of Riverside seemed to be just as startled by the British working uniform as the rest of their countrymen. Cole says:

the parade was well received by quite a sizeable crowd, who displayed the same interest in the arm swing, shorts and decisive step that has been observed elsewhere.

After the parade the British officers were mobbed by autograph hunters, including a Native American called Henry Jumping Eagle.

One of the things Cole noticed throughout the US tour, he comments about particularly during his stay in Riverside. Not infrequently the British officers were called on to advise, or at least give an opinion on local civil defence. In *Invading America* Cole writes:

Plans had been laid for civil defence in Los Angeles and Riverside, but apparently Mr Cash [head of civil defence] was not happy that they bore any relation to fact and reality, so he asked me to vet them for him. First he gave me an outline of the situation, and from that I could see immediately that his main trouble was convincing citizens that there was a war on; they wouldn't display interest in civil defence because they didn't understand the meaning of the word... For example, when I pointed out the important role the fire fighting services played, and when I mentioned that one of our greatest troubles had been water supply and that we had got over that by erecting static water tanks, he retaliated by saying that the reorganisation of the fire fighting services to meet the type of blitz we had had would need far more authority than he had. The only thing he could do would be to recommend it and then, when the first bombing occurred, say "well, I told you so". He had a very difficult job, but I believed that he did want to have his organisation at least



The British Battery's officers and sergeants. Captain Cole is centre front; as his two senior officers were elsewhere at the time, he was the ranking officer. The photograph was taken in a baseball stadium in San Francisco. (Photo courtesy Loaghtan Books).

set, so that if and when it was needed, he could put it into operation backed by the clamour of the public for protection. It was a heartbreaking job though, for a keen young man who really did want to protect the people if he could.

The British Battery didn't remain at Riverside for more than a few days, but on Sunday, Cole found time to visit Glendale to catch up with Englishwoman Yvonne Glew. Miss Glew used to live near Cole's sister and had become Mrs. Mitchell when she married an American airman. Cole's diary describes his return journey:

Back to Riverside in a very fast ride on a four-lane road, a different way to the one we came in on. The roads around here are good; I shall be thoroughly spoiled when I get back to the usual two-lane traffic routes of England. Had a spot of dinner on my own in the Mission Inn. I felt desperately tired

and would have gone home after dinner, but I'd dismissed the driver until 10:30 so that he could have an hour or two off. Two Air Corps boys and the wife of one of them asked me to join them, which I did and we went around to La Casita restaurant and club, which was the only place open on Sunday.

The British troops were certainly kept very busy, but was the tour worth all the effort? Colonel Tom Metcalf, in charge of the Demonstration Battery, was in no doubt:

Support for the British created not only by our gunnery, but also by our mixing afterwards, was worth more than what those men by themselves could have done for their cause in England.' As Winston Churchill said, when he addressed the US Congress on 19 May that same year: "We have certainly a most encouraging example here of what can be achieved by British and Americans working together heart and hand."

Largely forgotten today, the British Battery's demonstration tour was a vital contribution towards encouraging American support. As Cole explains:

The American people were so eager for news and so eager to learn, that I was amazed at the work our government had done to increase relations.

His visit to Riverside merely confirmed Cole's opinion of the warmth of his American hosts' welcome, and the kindness of their hospitality.

NOTE: *Invading America, 1943*, written by Clifford Cole, is an eyewitness account of the British Battery's US tour illustrated with 200 period photographs. It is published by Loaghtan Books. For further details, please visit www.loaghtanbooks.com.

Fire, Wind, and the Sells-Floto Circus

by Aaron Maggs and Allison Maggs

At the turn of the twentieth century, the traveling circus was at the height of its popularity. Virtually every American town with a railroad running through it could expect an annual visit from a performing troupe. In the spring of 1908, the Sells-Floto Circus, one of the largest of its kind at the time, rolled into the citrus growing community of Riverside, California. That year's visit, however, would prove to be far from routine.

On the morning of April 16, the circus train pulled into town and began setting up about a half mile from the heart of the "Mile Square," on the northeast corner where Third Street and the Southern Pacific (now Union Pacific) tracks met. Today, the Blue Banner fruit packing company occupies that space; in 1908 the Sells-Floto Circus raised its tents there. By around 10 a.m., the circus parade was ready to begin. Students were released from school so that they could position themselves at the curbsides along the parade route.¹ Animals, performers and a steam calliope made their way through downtown. The parade passed in front of Lincoln School at Sixth Street where Josephine Van De Grift, a student at the school, saw an elephant carrying an advertisement for her father's practice, "*Jacob Van De Grift Real Estate and Insurance.*" Elephants carried banners for other local businesses as well, including one for a "*Dr. Smith's Painless Dentistry.*"²

After the parade, the troupe returned to the grounds at Third Street. While the circus prepared for the afternoon show and locals admired the menagerie, the rest of working Riverside carried on as usual. The Standard Oil Company storage yard sat at the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Pachappa Street (now Commerce), just a block south and a little west of the circus grounds.

There, deliveryman Leonidas J. Worsley was preparing his delivery wagon when tragedy struck. Worsley, a 62-year-old³ Civil War veteran originally from Illinois,⁴ was refilling his delivery tank with distillate when, for reasons unknown, the main tank erupted into flames. The

man affectionately known by some as “Dad”⁵ was sprayed with the fuel and his wagon was ignited. The blast from the explosion threw him about twenty feet. Passersby rushed to his aid, rolling him in the dirt to extinguish the flames.⁶

Eyewitnesses reported that Worsley asked repeatedly, “How did it happen?”⁷ Some speculated that Worsley had been careless and was smoking a cigarette or pipe while handling the volatile fuel. Others defended “Dad,” saying that he did not smoke, but chewed tobacco.⁸ A formal investigation into the incident wasn’t conducted by the Standard Oil Company until years later, by which time records were no longer available and no definitive cause could be established.⁹ In 1968 the widow of Worsley’s grandson, Clarence, said that static electricity was to blame, but this was only the family’s theory of the cause.¹⁰

However the fire started, it was now quickly spreading to the warehouse buildings and a neighboring residence, and Worsley lay in grave condition in the dirt.

One potential crisis was averted not long after the fire began. When Worsley’s wagon caught fire, his team was still hitched to it. The panicked horses ran from the storage yard and headed southeast, all the while pulling the blazing wagon behind them. Citizens were finally able to head off the team near the corner of Seventh Street (now Mission Inn Avenue) and Park Avenue about three blocks from the fire. The horses were unhitched and led to safety, and the wagon burned to the ground before causing any further damage.¹¹

Back at the oil yard a passing carriage belonging to Stewart & Carrigan’s Palace Livery was hailed; its driver was instructed to take Worsley to the county hospital. It was later communicated that while en route to the hospital, Worsley begged over and over again to be killed, “so intense was his misery.” The Riverside *Enterprise* reported that his hands were burned “nearly to a crisp.” His face and chest also were severely injured by the flames, and his clothes had been burned almost completely off.¹²

Although he would occasionally rally giving friends and family hope for his survival, Worsley’s misery ended three days after it started. He died on April 19, 1908.¹³ His body was sent to a Los Angeles crematorium and his ashes returned to Riverside for interment at Evergreen Cemetery.¹⁴



(Top) Standard Oil Company Fire - The oil storage yard ablaze at Pachappa and Fourth, April 16, 1908. Flags from the circus tent tops can be seen to the left.

(Bottom) The Fight of the Fire Boys - The Standard Oil Company yard at Pachappa and Fourth Streets threatened at least one home and resulted in the death of deliveryman Leonidas J. Worsley.

Both photos courtesy Riverside Metropolitan Museum, Riverside, California.



Tragedy may have been content with remaining at Fourth and Pachappa that day but for the intervention of fate. The weather on April 16 was warm and fairly typical for a spring afternoon with one exception - the wind, which usually came in from the north, was blowing in from the southwest.¹⁵ In other words, the wind blew across the Standard Oil Company fire and straight toward the circus grounds.

Back at the tents many spectators had come early to watch the preparations for the afternoon show.¹⁶ Some were out viewing the menagerie while others were taking their seats in the tent. Windbourne embers from the oil company fire were deposited on the canvas tents, starting a number of small fires.¹⁷ Of the six elephants with the show that day only two, Old Mom and Trilby, were “level headed” enough to be put to work in clearing gear from the tent. The other four, Floto, Snyder, Alice, and Frieda, were staked to the ground in a picket line.¹⁸ The menagerie superintendent was doing his best to keep the herd calm.

According to some accounts, circus folk and towners alike scurried about extinguishing small fires around the circus grounds.¹⁹ The animals, sensing both the panic and smoke in the air began bellowing and wailing.²⁰ The four elephants on the picket line were becoming increasingly agitated, but menagerie superintendent Fred Alispaw may still have been able to subdue them had a thick pall of smoke from the fire not blown over them. The elephants could take no more.

Trumpeting, twirling and pulling, one by one Floto, Snyder, Alice and Frieda pulled their stakes from the ground and fled to the east down Third Street, far clear of the topsy-turvy scene which the circus grounds had become.²¹ Old Mom and Trilby, though anxious from the madness around them, submitted to their handler’s commands and did not break away.²²

Alispaw and the bullmen (the circus term for elephant handlers) briefly gave chase on foot, but gave it up after a short distance.²³ The order was given to have Old Mom and Trilby taken along on the pursuit in hopes that when the runaways were found a calming affect would result from mingling them with the more sedate elephants. Alispaw acquired a horse from the circus lot and resumed the hunt.²⁴ The rest of the bullmen continued on foot with Old Mom and Trilby in tow.²⁵

A young man named Volney Phifer was an 18-year-old menagerie hand with the Sells-Floto Circus in 1908.²⁶ In later years he would go on to some degree of acclaim as the man who trained Leo the Lion, the roaring figurehead at the center of the MGM logo. He also worked on a number of Hollywood projects as an animal trainer. In 1958, fifty years after the Riverside incident, Phifer spoke with *Press-Enterprise* reporter Tom Patterson and gave his account of the search. "We had hardly got off the lot when we found Frieda and chained her to either a tree or a telephone pole," he explained.²⁷

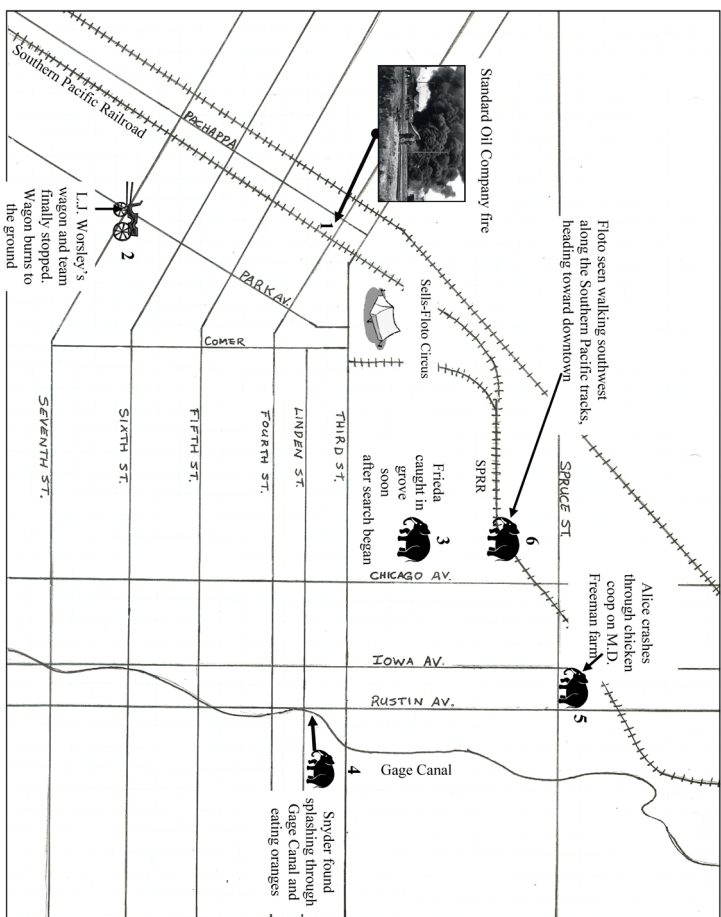
The 1928 autobiography of Lucia Zora, wife of Fred Alispaw and a performer with the circus herself, gave a similar account. According to Zora, Alispaw followed the elephant tracks in a straight course for about a half mile along an orange grove on the north side of Third Street. After a further half mile, to Alispaw's dismay, "the tracks diverged in all directions." The herd had split up. She continued, "Far at one side a tremendous runaway squealed and scrambled as she tried to climb a clay embankment which bordered the grove... Frieda had been found."²⁸

Zora further claimed that her husband waited with Frieda until the bullmen arrived with Old Mom and Trilby, and while this differs slightly from Phifer's telling, the end result was that Frieda was no longer on the run.²⁹

Alispaw resumed his search for the remaining three runaways, heading further east and south of Third Street, in the direction of present-day John W. North High School. He next came upon a runaway taking a leisurely stroll through the Gage Canal, near Linden Street.³⁰ According to the accounts of Zora and Phifer, who worked closely with the creatures, this elephant was Snyder, who was found splashing about and eating the finest oranges Riverside had to offer.³¹ Alispaw reportedly shouted out to the creature who, recognizing his master's voice, lazily allowed himself to be led back to the other elephants.³²

Two elephants had now been captured, leaving two yet to be found. Assuming that the identities of the first two as related by Phifer and Zora are correct, we are left with Floto and Alice still wandering the city's east countryside. These remaining elephants had now journeyed more than a mile from the circus grounds, making it well to the north of Third Street,

The Events East of Downtown



and as far east as Iowa Avenue. There, one elephant reportedly charged a wagon causing it to overturn and spill its load of orange crates. The terrified horses that had been pulling the wagon broke free and fled.³³

According to Zora, her husband learned that one elephant had torn through a chicken yard destroying a coop and generally making a mess. He followed the path of destruction to find Alice running amuck in another yard. Zora wrote that in an attempt to clear her path, Alice knocked a chicken coop into the air and managed somehow to get it “hooked over the bony protuberances above her ear.” In Zora’s words, Alice then “careened away like a kittenish fat woman.”³⁴ While it is possible that this was an example of embellishment on the part of Zora, Alice had nonetheless caused considerable damage to personal property while on her excursion. Now her fun was ended. From here she was led back to her herd.

Remaining free now was a lone elephant following the railroad tracks into the populated downtown district. In 1958 Ned Pickett, a boy of six at the time of the stampede, told what he saw from the porch roof of his grandfather’s Chicago Avenue home. He claimed to have seen an elephant walking down the Southern Pacific tracks, coming from the northeast and heading toward town. A small train approached the elephant from behind and tooted its whistle at the creature. The elephant turned, trumpeted and then continued on its way to town. The train, we are told, decided to stay put.³⁵

Some controversy surrounds the identity of this remaining elephant. Both the *Riverside Daily Press* and the *Riverside Enterprise* reported the animal as being Snyder - the *Press* spelling it “Schneider,” the *Enterprise* spelling it “Snider.” One out-of-town paper, the *Los Angeles Examiner*, ran an article identifying the elephant in question as Alice. Locals likely wouldn’t have known one elephant from another and would have deferred to the name used by their hometown newspapers. Those who knew the animals well, however, gave a different name to this last elephant: Floto.

Both Zora and Phifer agreed that Frieda, Snyder and Alice were captured before the elephant’s downtown destruction began. With these three accounted for and Old Mom and Trilby well under control and being put to work, the only remaining elephant would have been Floto.

A second debated point concerns where exactly Floto had come from before starting into the downtown area. Some locals claimed that

Floto had been captured along with all of the other elephants but broke away a second time when the herd reached the circus grounds. This too is contested by Zora's account which claims that Floto had never been captured prior to his downtown rampage. Regardless of whether Floto was loose for the first or second time, he was now west of the circus lot and heading toward Mulberry Street where the second tragedy of the day was soon to take place.

Floto had sauntered through several yards, breaking through fences, despoiling gardens and causing panic along the way. Earlier, well-intentioned locals had armed themselves and had fired several shots into the creature in an attempt to bring him under control. According to Phifer, "Had it not been for the shooting, [Alispaw] would have had him in a very short time."³⁶ By the time Floto reached Mulberry Street, however, the excitement and gunfire had him maddened beyond reason. He made a number of advances towards locals who were able to seek shelter in doors or hide themselves by other means. One woman was not as lucky.

Ella Gibbs, a 49-year old deaconess with the First Congregational Church, lived with her sister, Frilletta, and brother-in-law Clayton Brennemman in a large home on Main Street.³⁷ At the time of the circus' visit to Riverside, another big to-do was going on in Southern California. The U. S. Naval Fleet was in San Diego making its first major visit to the west coast. Many Riversiders, including the Brennemens, had made the trip south to see the sixteen ships anchored in the harbor.³⁸ While they were out of town, Gibbs stayed at the Mulberry Street home of W. E. Johnson.

After crashing through a fence to emerge at the corner of Fourth and Mulberry Streets, Floto spied the terrified Gibbs. Finding no place in which to hide and with Floto now in pursuit, Gibbs ran for the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Merryfield, but the door was locked. As she turned from the door, Gibbs found Floto bearing down on her as he made his way onto the porch. Floto pinned the frightened woman against the house with his long tusks, then seized her with his trunk, lifting her in the air before dropping her to the porch. The great beast then butted his head against the helpless woman before bringing his large drum-like forefoot down upon her chest.³⁹ He then backed down the porch steps and continued on his way southwest toward Fifth Street.

City Electrician F. A. Worthley was the first to reach Gibbs as she lay motionless on the porch. In the account that he gave the *Riverside Daily Press* the following day, Worthley said that he carried the unconscious woman into a home, and then called for an ambulance. He further stated that Gibbs regained consciousness at one point and asked “for some member of her family.” Shortly after this, Gibbs slipped back into unconsciousness. She never again awoke, and died in the county hospital around 9 p.m. that evening.⁴⁰

The home where Ella Gibbs was brutally attacked still stands at the southeast corner of Fourth and Mulberry Streets. For some time after the attack, a crude patch to the left of the door marked the spot where one of Floto’s tusks had apparently left a hole when he pinned Gibbs to the wall. A window has since been installed in its place, but serves as a chilling reminder of the tragic events that took place more than a hundred years ago.⁴¹



The Scene of the Attack

Ella Amelia Gibbs, age 49, was attacked and killed by the maddened Floto on the porch of the Frank Merryfield home on Mulberry Street. The window to the left of the door was installed later to cover a hole left by the elephant's tusks.

Photo courtesy Allison Maggs

After walking south down Mulberry Street for about half a block Floto came upon another would-be victim. Mrs. C. F. Elder was on the sidewalk in front of her home when she caught the attention of Floto, who then gave chase. The woman frantically ran into her home and slammed the door shut behind her, only just avoiding being caught by the crazed elephant.⁴²

Floto now cut diagonally through the northwest corner near Fifth and Mulberry Streets, pushing down fences and ripping posts from the ground. He continued his southwest heading until he came to Lemon Street. There, about midway between Fifth and Sixth Streets, Floto spied a junk dealer and got it in his head to run him down.⁴³ Reporters at the time failed to get the junk man's name, but the story of his escape was related in the newspaper the following day.

The junk man first tried to find refuge in a nearby home, but, like Ella Gibbs moments earlier, he found the door to be locked. With Floto almost upon him, the junk man turned from the door and leaped nearly five feet from the porch to the ground. Floto followed. The man now headed for a high fence which, as luck would have it, had a trio of boxes lined up against it in a stair-like formation. The junk man scurried up the boxes and vaulted over the fence.

Having lost his prey, Floto gave up the chase and went back to breaking through fences and causing destruction. He soon came to a stable to the rear of the Methodist parsonage which fronted Sixth Street.⁴⁴ Floto entered the stable through a large door, injured a horse there and broke out through a smaller door on the opposite end, taking a good-sized portion of the wall with him as he went.⁴⁵

Back at the circus the five recaptured elephants were being kept under control while Alispaw, not knowing of the mayhem taking place downtown, continued his search for Floto east of the railroad tracks.⁴⁶ Word soon reached circus claim adjuster Barney Shea of the mad elephant running amuck through the streets of Riverside. Although Shea was not trained as an elephant handler, he stepped up to the task of bringing Floto in. Unable to find a bull hook, a long metal apparatus used in steering and controlling elephants, Shea borrowed a pistol from Deputy Sheriff Nelson and together the two men drove into town in search of the elephant.⁴⁷

After freeing himself from the parsonage stable, Floto crossed Sixth Street and cut across the lawn near the Carnegie Library.⁴⁸ Just before coming to Orange Street he came upon a man later identified as Gin Ung, a former Mission Inn laundryman.⁴⁹ Floto tossed the man aside with tremendous force, breaking one of his ribs.⁵⁰ He then charged across Orange Street to the Glenwood Mission Inn. A small alcove room of writing desks came off of the hotel's parlor near the present Orange Street entrance. Here actor Wilton Lackaye was sitting writing letters. Whether he was aware of the loose elephants before this point or not is unknown, but Floto was heading straight for him. Floto ran up to the window in the alcove next to which Lackaye was sitting.⁵¹ He then butted his shoulder against the window pushing out one half and sending it down onto the actor. The 22-inch thick wall gave Floto enough resistance that he backed off and returned to the street.⁵²

Barney Shea had caught up with the animal at Seventh and Orange Streets, and was just in time to prevent Floto from killing again. Frank Berg,⁵³ also reported as "Berd"⁵⁴ or "Bird,"⁵⁵ was crossing Seventh Street when he was spotted by Floto, who promptly started after the man. Although Shea shouted to Berg to remain still, this command went unheeded. Berg tried to escape across the street but Floto caught up and knocked him to the ground.⁵⁶ Just as Floto started to bring his head down to crush his victim, Shea drew his borrowed pistol and fired a shot into the elephant's neck.⁵⁷ This effectively diverted Floto away from the helpless man, but also fed his rage.

The hospitality of the Mission Inn was now to be put to the test. The series of arches that line the hotel's Seventh Street frontage were not yet in place at the time of the stampede.⁵⁸ Floto headed straight for the inviting grounds, passed through the arched campanile and into the courtyard of the famed hotel.⁵⁹ Barney Shea remained close behind.

A local man named Deloraine Chapman had been sitting near the lobby reading a newspaper when Floto entered the courtyard. Some accounts claim that Chapman tried shooing Floto away with a cane, a newspaper, or an umbrella.⁶⁰ Other reports said that Chapman, paralyzed from fear, froze in place.⁶¹ At any rate, Chapman stood in Floto's path and Floto wasn't about to go around. When he reached Chapman, Floto

toppled him to the ground with his powerful trunk. Just as he had with his other victims, Floto prepared to bring his head down upon the prostrate man.⁶² Again, Shea fired into the elephant, which, in response, turned away from Chapman and headed west along the hotel's pergola. With the help of a bystander, Shea pulled Chapman to safety.

Apart from some heavy bruising, Chapman sustained no real injuries during his encounter. His daughter was at a nearby shop when she heard the gunfire that diverted Floto away from her father. She rushed to the Inn and after seeing her father being picked up off the ground, feared that he had been shot. According to the *Riverside Enterprise*, upon hearing that her father had been attacked by a wild elephant, Miss Chapman, "concluded that either she or her informant had lost their minds."⁶³ She had no knowledge it seems of an elephant loose at the Inn, and by the time Miss Chapman reached her father, Floto had moved on. The thoroughly rattled Mr. Chapman fainted later that night from the stress and shock of his ordeal.

Floto continued west following the lobby and the dining area. At one point, he peered into the window of the "arts and crafts room" where he met eyes with Frank Miller, who was arranging artifacts that he had recently brought back from Europe.⁶⁴ Floto continued moving west.

Eva Howe was a guest at the hotel when Floto stopped in for his visit. As he was roughing up Chapman, Ms. Howe was sitting in one of the Inn's swings.⁶⁵ Floto was now heading in her direction. She had witnessed the confrontation between Floto and Chapman a moment earlier and decided to flee before Floto got to her. Before she could move, however, Shea yelled to her to remain perfectly still. Unlike Berg out on Seventh Street, Ms. Howe obeyed Shea's command.⁶⁶ Floto brushed past her, leaving the petrified woman unmolested. Floto then saw what must have seemed like the path to freedom when barber Emery West opened the door to the Mission Inn barbershop.⁶⁷ Upon seeing the charging elephant, West slammed the door closed and sought cover. Floto may have been feeling trapped as he came to the northwest corner of the courtyard, and by this point he was beyond letting something as minor as a closed door stand in his way. He ran straight through the door sending bits of frame flying,⁶⁸ and he continued across the shop and past customers and barbers.

As with so many of the chapters in the elephant stampede story, the events at the barbershop became the stuff of local lore, sometimes blurring the lines between fact and legend. Newspapers reported that those inside the shop at the time came spilling out onto Main Street, followed closely by Floto who took much of the door frame with him as he went.⁶⁹ Some versions of the story claim that a fully-lathered customer went running out from the shop with a razor-wielding barber not far behind.⁷⁰ One witness to the happenings, Floyd Clayton, was a boy in the shop at the time, and could offer little in the way of confirming or debunking the lathered-man version of the story, but he shared his recollections.

"I was scared stiff," he told the *Press-Enterprise* in 1968, "and I remember only the elephant and my dad and the barber."

According to Clayton, he had just gotten a haircut and was waiting for his father who was sitting down for a shave. He explained that his father was seated in the rear chair with a hot towel over his face. "There were carpenters in the inn patio doing some work and when the elephant crashed through the back door he said, 'Those carpenters are sure making a lot of noise.'" Owing to the towel on his face, Clayton's father never saw the elephant. The son on the other hand saw things very clearly and recalled the barber ducking behind one of the chairs, and Floto, "swaying from side to side" as he crossed the room. A piece of the door frame hit the younger Clayton as Floto ran past and out through the front door and onto Main Street.

After exiting the barbershop, Floto made a beeline for the Riverside Music Company across Main Street. There he came to a plate glass window. He unrolled his trunk and smashed the window to bits sending shards of glass falling onto a piano that was on display just inside the shop.⁷¹

Turning north now Floto followed Main Street up to Sixth Street where he spotted mail carrier Charles P. Clarke, who had just secured his rig and horse to a sturdy metal rail. Floto advanced. According to the *Riverside Enterprise*, Clarke first tried to turn the elephant's course but then barely escaped being trampled by ducking under the railing which Floto, said the *Enterprise*, bent "down to the ground as easily as if it were a straw fence."⁷² Floto pushed into Mr. Clarke's horse roughly enough to break the horse's leg. Later, when the circus was settling for the damages

done during Floto's rampage, the horse was purchased and turned over to a local veterinarian who treated the broken leg.⁷³

Fences were razed and all manner of movable things were tossed about indiscriminately as Floto made his way south along an alley toward the open back door of the Glenwood Stables.⁷⁴ Floto tried bullying another horse here, but it was able to break away before being seriously injured. The stable door was closed in an attempt to cage Floto in but, as the *Riverside Enterprise* put it, "in a jiffy the elephant pushed through the door as if it were kindling wood and ambled peacefully out on to Seventh Street."

Once back on the streets Floto walked southwest, cutting through the Southern Pacific depot area at the southeast corner of Seventh and Market Streets. He then headed west across the tracks that ran through Market Street. He entered the front door of James C. Little's Club Stable near the southeast corner of Market and Seventh Streets.⁷⁵ The doors were quickly closed behind him. Floto paced anxiously back and forth in the stables and wandered occasionally into the enclosed yard in the rear of the livery where a high, ten-foot fence kept him at bay. With no way out and nothing better to do, Floto busied himself by tearing apart buggies and tossing boxes over the fence.

By this point a large crowd had assembled in the streets around the livery and on the rooftops of neighboring buildings. One of the locals positioned on a roof overlooking the spectacle was local camera shop owner Fred Twogood.

Earlier in the week Twogood had run advertisements urging folks to pick up one of the fine Kodak cameras available in his shop in preparation for the naval fleet visit, declaring, "A Kodak will help you to remember this most remarkable sight you will perhaps ever see."⁷⁶ Now he was recording one of the most remarkable sights Riverside had ever seen.

Twogood snapped his camera as Floto sauntered through the livery yard. Some of the spectators who lined the rooftops were treated to an unexpected shower when the great elephant drew a trunk full of water from a drinking trough and sprayed it at anyone within range.⁷⁷ It was now late afternoon, around 4 or 4:30 p.m. Firefighters were finally beginning to make progress on fighting the oil yard fire, and the last of the mad elephants seemed, at last, to be contained.



Trapped At Last

Local Kodak camera shop owner Fred Twogood captured this image of “Floto” in the rear yard of Little’s Palace Livery at Market and Seventh Streets.

Photo courtesy Riverside Metropolitan Museum, Riverside, California

Fred Alispaw had been alerted as to Floto’s whereabouts and arrived at the scene, bull hook in hand, ready to put an end to the madness. While Alispaw and his associates were hoping for a peaceful resolution to the day’s tragic events, the *Riverside Daily Press*, which was preparing its evening edition, apparently felt that things may go quite another way. They reported, “At 4:30 the keepers have been unable to gain control of the elephant, and it is believed the animal will have to be shot. Riflemen are in waiting at the Club Stables, where the elephant is now locked in for any emergency.”⁷⁸

Alispaw was determined to prevent any further tragedy that day and worked for over an hour to subdue the wild elephant so that he might be brought in peacefully. Local authorities, along with assorted circus folk, worked to keep the growing crowd at a safe distance. Meanwhile, Alispaw, according to his wife, worked alone to calm and restrain Floto. Four of the elephants were brought up from the circus lot to aid in bringing Floto back once he had been pacified.

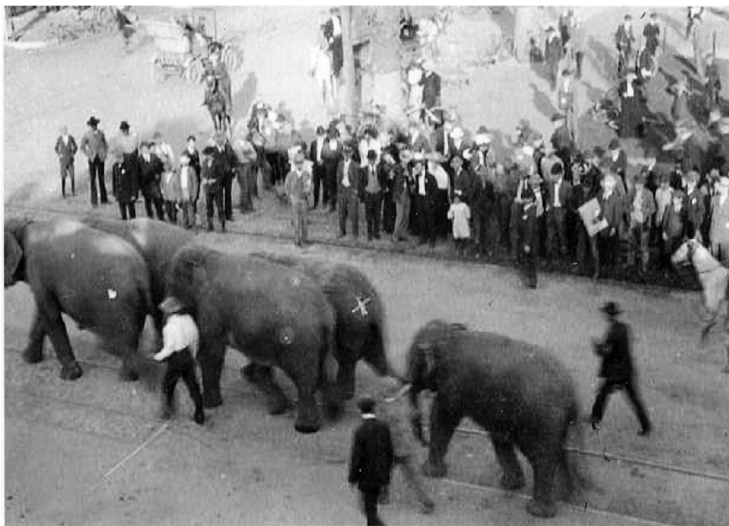
Zora and Phifer give somewhat different accounts as to exactly how Alispaw dealt with Floto. Phifer explained that when he arrived at the stable, Floto was in the rear of the stable and still extremely angry.⁷⁹ Whenever Floto tried to leave, Phifer explained, Alispaw beat him back until, finally, Floto calmed and submitted to being chained to Old Mom and Trilby. Zora paints a slightly romanticized picture in her telling of the event. In her version Alispaw was, “one daring man against a maddened elephant,” who dodged in and out of the shadows, lassoing Floto’s legs with chain until, at last, he was secured and stood motionless in the darkness of the stable.⁸⁰ Her husband then led the herd inside.

Some locals claimed to have seen a man fitting Alispaw’s description ride into the stable on the back of an elephant. This larger elephant, the locals insisted, was given a large tent stake and commanded to beat Floto with it until he saw the error of his ways and once again became docile.⁸¹ This was never reported in any of the local papers at the time, but was related to Tom Patterson in 1958. However Alispaw brought the elephant under control, Floto was now calm, and the herd was reintroduced to its wayward mate, ending the chaos and destruction.

As Alispaw and the herd calmly walked out of the Club Stables, the crowd, it seems, was let down. The Riverside *Enterprise* reported that the herd came peacefully out on to the street, “thus destroying the tragic climax that the surrounding crowd had waited for two hours to witness.” Zora and Phifer, as well as the Riverside Daily *Press*, reported that the elephants were chained together before heading back to the circus; however, in the photographs taken by Fred Twogood as the herd made its way down Market Street, no chains were apparent.

Escorted by a host of bull men and menagerie superintendent Fred Alispaw, the herd moved north on Market past Seventh Street and past dozens of spectators who were gathered on the rooftops like pigeons. The exact route back is uncertain, but the herd was turned east toward the circus somewhere between Fourth and First Streets and soon the elephants were back at the tents.

By around 6 p.m. the fire at the Standard Oil Co. lot was extinguished and all of the elephants were back together with their handlers. Surprisingly, the evening performance went on as planned with one exception; Lucia



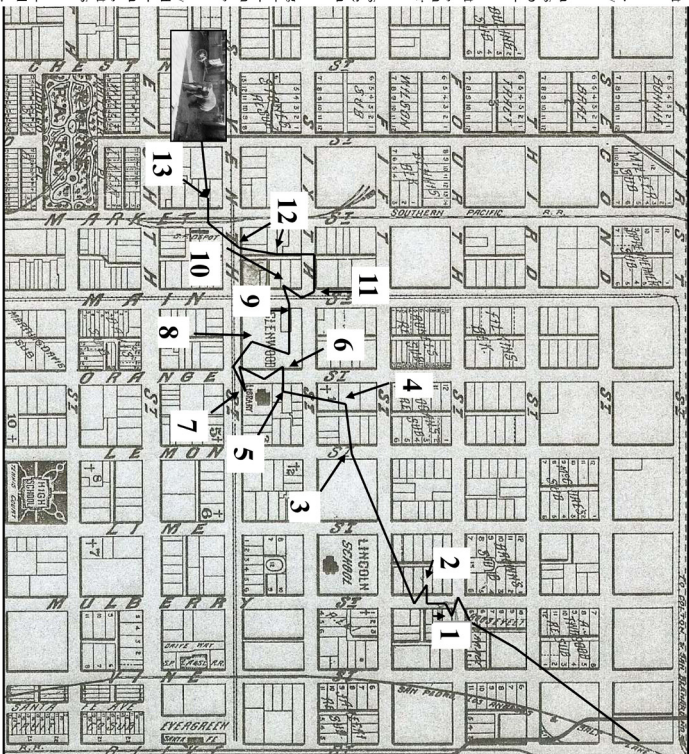
(Top) Fred Twogood snapped this image of the elephants being led down Market Street past scores of bystanders. While the white "X" was meant to identify the offending elephant which ran through town, Volney Phifer later declared that the distinction belonged to one of the two lead elephants in this procession.

(Bottom) The herd heads back to the circus grounds via Market Street, past dozens of spectators stationed along side and on top of what is now the Stalder Building. Both photos courtesy Riverside Metropolitan Museum, Riverside, California



Floto's Charge Through Downtown April 16, 1908

- 1- Floto attacks Ella Gibbs at Fourth and Mainberry. She dies later that night of her injuries.
- 2- Charges Mrs. C.F. Elder, who escapes by running into her home.
- 3- Floto runs after a "junk man" who makes his escape by climbing up a stack of boxes and leaping over a fence.
- 4- Breaks into Methodist Church parsonage stable, injures one horse, then breaks out on the other side.
- 5- Man identified later as Gin Ling is tossed aside by Floto and suffers a broken rib.
- 6- Floto tries breaking into the Glenwood Mission Inn, breaking a window and sending it down onto a guest of the hotel, actor Wilson Lackaye.
- 7- Frank Berg narrowly avoids being crushed when circus clown adjuster Barney Shea tries a shot into Floto's neck, distracting the elephant and facilitating Berg's escape.
- 8- Floto enters the courtyard of the famed hotel where he roughs up D.P. Chapman before being fired upon again by Barney Shea.

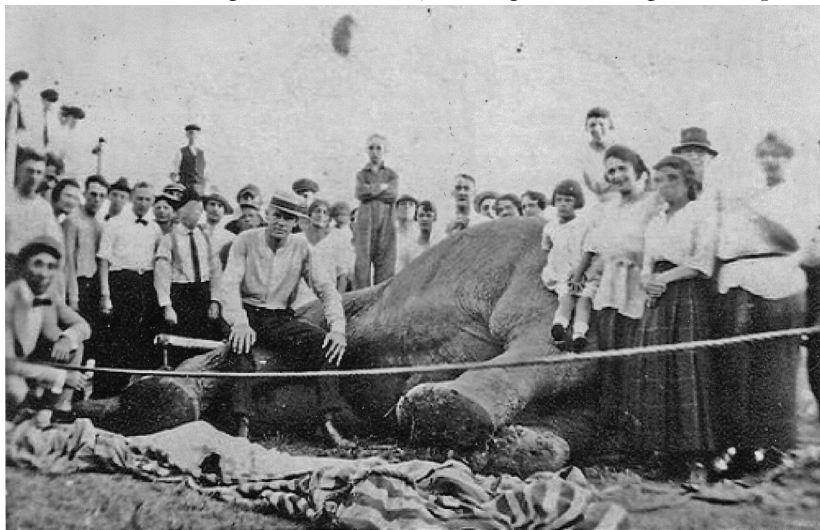


- 9- Floto charges through the Mission Inn Barbershop, breaking out onto Main Street.
- 10- Floto breaks a window at the Riverside Music Company.
- 11- Attacks mail carrier Charles Clarke. Clarke escapes unharmed, but his horse suffers a broken leg.
- 12- Locals try to trap Floto after he enters the rear of the Greenwood Stables. The massive elephant easily pushes through the Seventh Street door and ambles back out on to the street.
- 13- After several hours on the run, Floto is finally penned in at Little's Club Stables near the southwest corner of Market and Seventh Streets. He is eventually calmed and led out of the stable and back to rejoin his herd.

Zora and the “double herd of performing elephants” made no appearance that night.⁸²

Frederick Gilmer Bonfils, who co-owned the *Denver Post* and the Sells-Floto Circus with partner Harry Tammen, was in Los Angeles when he heard of the trouble with the circus, and immediately departed for Riverside. Upon his arrival, Bonfils checked himself into the Glenwood Mission Inn and secured the representation of city attorney Miguel Estudillo to aid in settling all claims resulting from the stampede. Bonfils expressed his regrets and assured the people of Riverside that the circus would not “evade any honest claim.”⁸³

Neither the *Daily Press* nor the *Enterprise* reported a final dollar amount paid by the circus, but according to Zora’s autobiography, the damage “cost exactly \$17,000.” This works out to approximately \$407,000 in 2011 figures. The city seemed generally pleased with the conduct of the circus, and all damages were settled by midnight following the stampede.



Snyder's Last Stand

Curious locals gathered around and on top of the body of Snyder, slain after he went on the run in Salina, Kansas, September 13, 1920. Snyder was gunned down after attempts to bring the bull elephant down with cyanide had failed.

Photo courtesy Pfening Archives

As the *Enterprise* put it, “the only thing that remains unadjusted is that unadjustable loss which resulted in the death of Miss Ella Gibbs.”

In a statement to the *Enterprise*, claim adjuster Barney Shea explained that while the circus was “often called upon to make reparation for property damage,” there was no reparation for “the snuffing out of a human life.” Attempts to reach Miss Gibbs’ sister and brother-in-law in San Diego proved unsuccessful. It wasn’t until April 21 that the *Riverside Daily Press* reported that Bonfils had settled with the Brennemans. Hospital and funeral expenses were paid for, as was the cost of transporting Miss Gibbs’ body to her home town of Bunker Hill, Illinois. Bonfils also paid \$225 “incidental expenses” for Mr. and Mrs. Brenneman.⁸⁴

The circus fiasco warranted front-page coverage locally, and even made the pages of newspapers from Los Angeles to as far away as St. Louis. In time, however, the story faded from newsprint leaving only the legend to live on.

Aside from the tragedy of the affair, the incident made for entertaining discussion among locals for decades. Frank Miller even paid homage to the great bull elephant that visited the Inn when he dubbed the hotel’s barbershop the “elephant barbershop.”⁸⁵

The presence of an elephant running freely through the streets was a unique experience, to say the least, for the people of Riverside, but circus breakaways, unfortunately, were all too common.

Less than a year after the Riverside episode, San Bernardino got its own taste of circus madness. Nero, an elephant with the Greater Norris & Rowe Circus, broke away from its handlers late in the evening on March 26, 1909 as it was being loaded onto a train car. For a little more than eight hours the elephant ran through town destroying fences, porches and small shacks and generally terrifying the public. By 7 a.m. the next morning, Nero was recaptured and loaded onto the train. No injuries were reported, and the circus settled for all damages.⁸⁶

In this case, as in the Riverside incident, the runaways were brought in unharmed. This was not always the case.

On September 28, 1920 the *Riverside Daily Press* reported on a story involving Snyder, the elephant that they had identified as being responsible for the death of Ella Gibbs.

“Schneider, the elephant which went on a rampage in Riverside April 16, 1908, injured one woman so badly that she died the following day and caused considerable property damage throughout the city, is dead.”

According to the report, the Sells-Floto circus was in Salina, Kansas when, just before the afternoon show, Snyder got loose and ran amuck for three hours, charging anyone who got near him. Attempts to bring the elephant down with poisons failed, “even after he had eaten candy with a large amount of cyanide.”⁸⁷ Snyder was eventually shot to death, and a large group of men, women and children posed for a photograph around his body.

The following year saw the death of another member of the Sells-Floto Circus’ “giant herd of performing elephants” when Floto himself went on the run in Orange, Texas. He was ultimately tracked down a few miles outside of town where he too was shot and killed.⁸⁸

Alice, “the excitable one,” was sold to the Hogle Zoo in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1917. The zoo, which took great pride in housing “Princess Alice,” had a relief sculpture added to the main building depicting its prized elephant.⁸⁹ According to Tom Patterson’s 1958 *Press-Enterprise* article, Alice was euthanized in the early 1950s after an incident involving a child. The zoo itself reports that in 1953 Alice, “at an approximate age of 69” became ill and had to be painlessly “put to sleep.”

Frieda was sold to the American Circus Company, and later sold to the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in 1940. The zoo held an elephant naming contest, and despite having been called by Frieda for more than 30 years, her name was changed to Osa. She never responded to this name. Years later, a former trainer of hers visited the zoo and recognized the elephant that he knew as Frieda. When he called out to her, she immediately began responding. The zoo decided to change her name back to Frieda. She lived happily at the zoo for many years, dying in 1956.⁹⁰

Old Mom, Phifer told Patterson in 1958, was retired to Nyack, New York where she later died of natural causes. The fate of Trilby is not certain.

Exciting, humorous, tragic - all words that fittingly describe the 1908 visit by the Sells-Floto Circus to the city of Riverside. However one chooses to describe the events that took place on a warm and windy spring afternoon more than a hundred years ago, the story lives on as one of the most unique chapters in Riverside history.

Notes

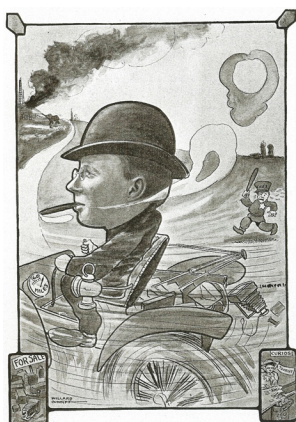
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FRED W. TWOGOOD
EGGARS AND SOUVENIRS

*Fred Twogood Cartoon. In his 1908 book, "Who's Who in Riverside California," Willard Cundiff depicted Fred Twogood, camera shop owner and photographer, rushing to the scene of "the big story." Notice the fire in the upper left being extinguished by a water-spraying elephant.
Photo courtesy Riverside Public Library*

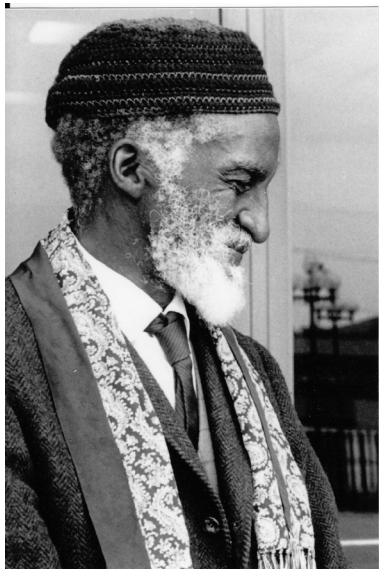
US/TOGETHER: A History of Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop

By Judith Auth

In 2008, the Kawa Market was demolished. It had been located on the southeast corner of Magnolia Avenue and Bandini Avenue. A 1908 bungalow that the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Riverside had purchased and moved from 2791 University Avenue, and renovated for private sale, replaced it. With that move and sale, the City erased the last remnant on the Eastside of the social institution created in the 1960s to provide opportunities for art exploration to low-income youth and their families. Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop & Gallery, Inc. had been located in the bungalow from 1983-1990. This was the fourth location Nosotros had on University Avenue.

In the late 1960s, many parts of University Avenue were derelict. Originally “8th Street,” University Avenue had been the gateway to the Riverside International Raceway, and its edges were built-up with motels and restaurants. When the Raceway closed, the avenue went downhill. On either side of University Avenue were old established neighborhoods. To the north were large, spacious homes that had been turned into rooming houses. To the south was Green Hollow, where small Black and Hispanic-owned businesses and homes on smaller subdivided lots rubbed up against one another.

In the 60s there was not enough student housing at UCR, so many students lived in the big old houses north of University Avenue. These students, some married with families, lived side by side with Spanish-speaking and Asian immigrants, some with their families, who came into the area to work. The students and the workers created an alliance. The students provided leadership and initiated things such as tenants’ associations and literacy tutoring. They would help the newcomers access the cultural services that were available, and in turn they enjoyed the ethnic music and food, and the friendships. When the University built more housing, it pulled the students to the campus and there was a dramatic downturn in the vitality of the area.



Leer Larkins, founder and director of Nosotros, c. 1974. (Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)

Leer Larkins, the founder of Nosotros, came into Riverside fresh from Civil Rights demonstrations in the South. He came to teach in a Freedom School that was set up in the old Riverside Girls High School at Ninth and Lime Street. He began Nosotros as a storefront art gallery and clay workshop. He saw Nosotros as a kind of “bulwark” against the encroachment of development on the disenfranchised families that made up the bulk of residents on the Eastside.

By 1971, the organization had moved to 2243 University Avenue. This two-story frame house, across from the Mac Donald’s restaurant, backed up against the playground of Longfellow Elementary School. An alley separated the house and barn from the playground. There was a pottery shop in the barn with several wheels and drying racks. In the open yard between the barn and house there was a kiln.

Nosotros programs blossomed in 1970s with *Messmakers*, a hands-on art activity program for young children. In 1971 there was *Art as a Social Dynamic* with a grant from California Arts Council *Artists in the Schools*. Nosotros sponsored an annual poetry contest in the elementary schools. UCR students used Nosotros for poetry readings; and readers’ theater productions involved all ages.

When the incorporation papers for Nosotros were filed, the first board of directors was made up of Gerald Katz, William Medina, Judith Auth, Robert Harrell, James Barnes, Jesse Ybarra, Tyree Ellison, Hank Culpepper, Reggie Strickland, McCoy Williams, James Ponder, and Sandra McWhorter. The organization applied for support from the City, first through the Cultural Arts Council, then through Community Development.

On April 4, 1976, Nosotros received its first citywide publicity in an article in *The Riverside Press-Enterprise* captioned: “Eastside group’s fund plea sparks controversy.” The article by Lanie Jones began, “Is art a commodity—its effectiveness to be gauged by ticket sales, the size of its audience and whether the group behind it can prove ‘the highest return on investment’? Or is art something less easily defined by business criteria—a mode of expression whose worth cannot be measured in the language of finance but rather in the creativity it awakens in the community?”

These differing concepts surfaced when representatives of Nosotros appeared before the Municipal Arts Commission to seek

its recommendation that the Riverside City Council fund Nosotros in the coming fiscal year. Then Arts Commission chair Dottie Smith urged the commission to not recommend Nosotros for a city grant until it met at least some of the commission’s new and stringent criteria. The new criteria included the following:

- That city grants not be given to “esoteric programs which primarily benefit small specialized groups” and that the arts commission direct its subsidy program “towards audiences rather than self-serving art groups.”
- That the arts group applying for city funds must have been operating three years and incorporated as a non-profit corporation for at least two of the three years.



*Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop, 1979.
(Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)*



Messmakers Theater: The Emperor's New Clothes, 1981.

(Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)

- That the arts groups must demonstrate in detailed reports their ability to sell tickets to raise local money, must “document and certify attendance figures,” and must accompany their application for city funds with “an audited financial statement.” All grants should “achieve the highest return on investment for taxpayers of the city.”
- That the eligible arts group must, whenever it is away from Riverside, “promote the city and its image,” including “the promotion of conventions and tourism.”
- That eligible arts groups are limited to the following two categories: groups that “perform regularly in city buildings” or groups that “have previously received subsidies from the City of Riverside.”

Nosotros had received city money for the past three years--\$5,800 in 1973, \$6,000 in 1974, and \$5,000 in 1975. When Nosotros was not recommended for funding by the Arts Commission in 1976, Nosotros

members protested saying, “Most of the arts organizations in Riverside are for the support of audiences. The symphony wants people to enjoy good music; the opera guild wants people to enjoy opera; and even the arts center wants people to buy art to enjoy in their homes. Nosotros doesn’t view its supporters as art consumers. In Nosotros, the emphasis is on the creator.”

On April 20, 1976, Nosotros Board President James Barnes wrote to the editor of *The Press-Enterprise*: “When the Riverside Arts Commission with puritanical zeal defended its new found criteria by striking down support for Nosotros, it served notice on the poor people of Riverside that the principle of the right of affluence was once again invoked.”

City funding in the amount of \$3,750 was eventually made available in July 1976 to Nosotros, but it was not for an “arts” organization. The contract between the City of Riverside and Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop specified that the funds were “to advance the general good of the community.”

After 1978 nearly all City funding for the arts was lost because of Proposition 13. But through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Nosotros received funding to keep a program for teens active during the summer. It was called *Folk Ways & Research*. This program involved 6-10 students each summer for four summers. Documenting their neighborhoods, the students learned to photograph houses and churches, met elected officials, and visited Fairmont Park and Evergreen Cemetery.

In 1978, the new owner of 2243 University Avenue raised the rent. The organization moved to 2905 University Avenue, near Park Avenue. Running perpendicular to the grocery store on the corner was a strip of small shops. The Zacatecas Café was there. It was just an open grill with a counter and a couple of booths, but proprietors Oscar and Josie Medina welcomed everyone, including Leer Larkins and the Nosotros Gallery.

Nosotros had begun reaching out to seniors in a program called *Celebrations*. In 1983, the Community Action Agency of Riverside County funded a proposal for a sheltered workshop for seniors. It was called *Craftsman’s Workshop*. The women did needlework by hand and sewed on two borrowed sewing machines. With fabric remnants, they



Nosotros Fine Art Workshop, 1979. (Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)

made colorful banners. Some of the men made sundials, and the others just enjoyed working with the tools and wood. Conrado Gomez played his guitar and sang while others sewed and carved.

In 1985 the landlord Bernie Siegel decided that he was going to demolish those shops on the corner of University and Park because they were so deteriorated. He told *The Press-Enterprise*, "It isn't economically feasible to rehabilitate such an old building with structural problems." The Medinas moved Zacatecas Café to its current site on the corner of University and Sedgewick. Nosotros moved to 2791 University Avenue, and operated out of the one-story bungalow with a big front porch until 1990.

The second year of *Craftsman's Workshop* focused on the printing press. Participant Rovutter Valentine composed the program's "Credo," that began: "Never say I can not do it." Jesse Ybarra, the printer, was very concerned with helping young people stay on the straight and narrow, so he printed broadsides with verses from Proverbs that were exhibited with artwork from others. There was an open house with tasty food and a tour of the newly planted drought-tolerant garden.

Following the *Craftsman's Workshop* there was an exhibit of prints by Jeannette Ouellette, Program Director for the *Craftsman's Workshop*, and printmaker Sharon Zorn. Leer Larkins began to photograph the standing gravestones in Evergreen Cemetery. The photography project was an outgrowth of the Summer Youth Employment programs. It resulted in *Evergreen Cemetery: A Self-Guided Walking Tour*, funded in part by a grant from the Riverside Arts Foundation.

The Evergreen Cemetery Project began as Leer Larkins took young people to the cemetery to show them the grave of Judge John W. North, for whom North High School was named. He helped the students find other family names from their neighborhood, including Prince Edwards, a veteran of Company A of the 136th Regiment of the Colored Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. This was a way of expanding their experience, showing them that they and their families were part of this community.

Nosotros championed access to art for all people, as a strong and vigorous activity that expanded our human capacity. Nosotros had a strong



*Conrado Casteneda Gomez, guitarist, at the Nosotros Senior Celebration, 1981.
(Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)*



Jesse Ybarra, printer, in the Nosotros Craftsman's Workshop, 1983.

(Photo courtesy Nosotros archives)

commitment to social justice. Art was celebrated as a human dynamic. Because Leer Larkins was himself an artist, everything was oriented toward shaping expression with material and form such that it communicated more effectively. He taught those who worked with him to use art as a voice to document the tumultuous changes they were living through. The task of Nosotros was to provide tools and opportunities for art exploration, especially to the disadvantaged.

Nosotros involved a unique mix of people from the University, the community and the working poor. Among the many participants were Ed Beardsley (founding director of the California Museum of Photography at UCR), Michael Elderman, Ralph Andrews, Don Chotro, Melba Suel, Laura & John Klure, Ken Dunn, Ed Rimbaugh, Margie Akin, and Elvira Gomez. Nosotros means "Us," Together. The organization refused to be identified with any particular group. It was an "Art" Center. There were many ethnic celebrations -- Black History, Cinco de Mayo, Rosh Hashanah -- and no one was excluded. An announcement board in front of one of the buildings was once decorated for a Jewish high holy day with the word

“Shalom.” Soon after its appearance, Nosotros received a warning from the City that the organization did not have a permit to sell “shaloms.”

In 1990 Nosotros moved one last time, to another craftsman bungalow on 10th and Locust Street. There in 1992, Leer Larkins died. That house was sold, moved to Mulberry Street, and is now occupied as a single-family dwelling. The final Nosotros site is now a parking lot for the Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church across the street.

The Nosotros programs are fondly remembered by the many participants, young and old, especially those from Riverside’s Eastside.

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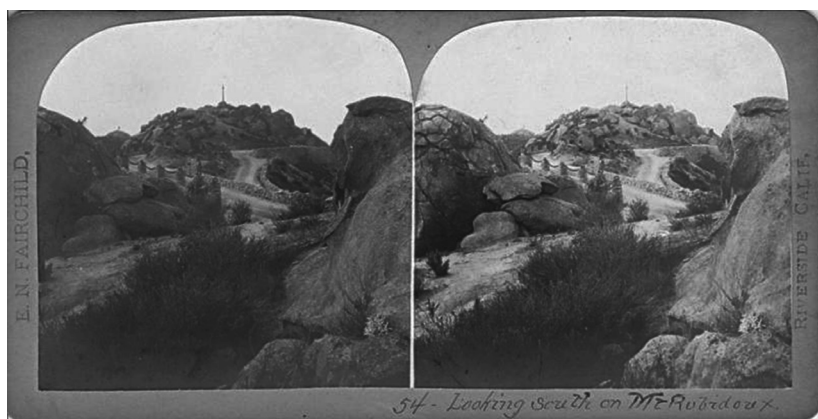
N Never say, I can not do it,
O Only press forward and stick to it.
S Set your goal a little higher each time,
O Onward and upward make the climb,
T Trying harder than the day before
R Reaching out for a better score.
O Out loud thinking, I must do it
S Sacrifice your self and stick to it.
I In due time you can proclaim,
N Now I’ve won and played a fair game,
C Courageously, I fought the battle in Nosotros name.

APPENDIX

Nosotros Fine Arts Workshop & Gallery: A Chronology

Year	Program	Presenters	Partners
		Jim Barnes, President	
1970	Tools & Materials Directed Arts Messmakers	Leer Larkins, Artist in Residence	
1971	Poetry Readings	Ed Rimbaugh Velva Maguire Jane Hixon	Inland Writers Workshop
	RCC Poets	Don Chotro Michael Clark Carolyn Anderson	Riverside Community College
	San Francisco Poets	Jane Falk Stephanie Mines	
	Two Poets, One Guitar	Gerald Haslam Alain Lee	
1973	Cinco de Mayo Parade		North High School
	The Long Journey		
	The Lost Zoo	Leer, Larkins, Sculptor	Riverside Public Library
1974	Art as Social Dynamic		Cultural Arts Council
1975	Artist in the Schools The Scarab The Mask	Leer Larkins, Printmaker and Ceramicist	California Art Council
		Gerald Katz, President	
1976	Gallery Exhibition	Oscar Cartin, Painter	Riverside Arts Foundation
1978	Folkways & Research Craftsman Houses Evergreen Cemetery Fairmont Park Bells of Mission Inn Churches Ballet Folklorico	Suzanna Medina Melba Suel Bill Medina, Photographer Elvira Gomez, Dancer	Inland Manpower Assoc. CETA/SYEP
1979	Poetry Contest for Children	Judith Auth Tyree Ellison	Riverside Unified School District
1980	Florida Trio	Ralph Andrews, Flute Frances Scoggins, Oboe Charles Dodgen, Clarinet	
	Gallery Exhibition	Marina Robin Walker, Painter	
1981	Celebrations	Conrado Gomez, Guitarist	Riverside County Office on Aging
	Print Shop	Jesse Ybarra Bill Medina	
	Gallery Exhibition	Brian May, Painter Ernie Simpson, Painter Reggie Strickland, Musician	
1982	Gallery Exhibition	Pat Hanner, Painter	Project Re-Do
	Book Signing	Lee Rutledge, Grandfather	
	Emperor's New Clothes	Messmakers' Theatre	
1984	Long Beach Poets	Ray Zepeda Chuck Stetler Bob Austin Susan Baker	
1986	Gallery Exhibition	Sharon Zorn, Printmaker Jeannette Ouellette, Printmaker	
1989	Some Fine Stones	Leer Larkins, Photographer	Riverside Arts Foundation

Stereo Views from Our Area



Two stereo views of Mt. Rubidoux:

*(Top) Looking south on Summit of Mt. Rubidoux towards cross
E. N. Fairchild photo. c. 1910*

*(Bottom) Second Annual Easter Service on Mt. Rubidoux, March 27, 1910.
E. N. Fairchild photo*



Little Sam - 1848-1939

by Joan H. Hall

In the late 1870s, James and Catharine Bettner, of New York, purchased ranch property located in Riverside, California, near the corner of Indiana Avenue and Jefferson Street. They moved west as health seekers anticipating that the milder southern California climate would improve their health. The 1880 United States Census recorded James as 36 years old, Catharine 34, and their sons were 13 and 15 years old.

Two of their four children had previously died; James had been one and a half years old and Katie was three and a half years old. Thirteen year old Louis suffered from consumption and his father, James Bettner, was not healthy. A complete change of climate was recommended by eastern physicians and Riverside, California, became their new home.

Their ranch property consisted of forty acres and the first improvement was the installment of a windmill in order to obtain water. In 1880, the Bettners built an impressive, two story house with the lower floor consisting of adobe and the upper story of timber. The thick adobe walls were coated on the outside with cement impervious to water. Local residents claimed adobe building materials kept a house an even temperature throughout the winter and summer. Extended wings protruded from the main structure in order to obtain the greatest sunlight and fresh air.

The \$8,000 Queen Anne style house included a covered veranda along three sides, a full basement, and an attic with Dormer windows. Shutters over the windows were known as Plantation windows which extended outwards to exclude direct sunlight but allowed fresh air to enter the house. The Bettner property was improved with the addition of a large barn, tank house, and windmill. On October 16, 1880 the Bettner family moved into their new house that eventually became known as one of the most elegant properties in Riverside.¹

James Bettner first planted most of his land in raisin grape vines and later, he became interested in the local navel orange industry. Aided by Chinese workers, he became an accomplished citrus grower with his

excellent fruit winning many prizes. He hired a ranch foreman, who lived on the property, and Catharine Bettner hired a Chinese house boy to help her maintain the large house. He was Hom Kip, a most faithful Chinese helper, who was also known as Lew Yut and by several other names. He remained in Mrs. Bettner's employment for over forty years.

Chinese names were puzzling to pronounce and were frequently altered or completely changed. John, a common name, was given to many Chinese men and an additional name was often added to denote appearance. Hom Kip became commonly known as Little Sam because he stood less than five feet and weighted only about ninety pounds.

Little Sam had been born in China in 1848 and little was known about his immigration status. There were approximately 20 Chinese workers living in Riverside during the early 1880s² and he probably worked in a laundry located on the north side of Seventh Street (Mission Inn Avenue) between Main and Market streets.

He was 32 years old when he began his employment with the Bettners in their Jefferson ranch house. He cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, and



HOME OF THE LATE JAMES BETTNER, RIVERSIDE, CAL.

James Bettner House, 1880

tended a vegetable garden. Where and how Little Sam, and other Chinese cooks, learned to cook remains unknown although they were most likely learned some of the skills from the lady of the house where they worked.

During the 1880s and 1890s many well to do matrons were somewhat helpless in the kitchen. There seemed to have been a certain social status of remaining dependent on others to do domestic work. Servants and household help were readily available and even meager households hired housekeepers and Chinese laundrymen.

The Bettner family entertained frequently and visiting relatives and local friends watched Louis and Robert mature into fine young men. James Bettner became involved in local politics and between his citrus grove and real estate transactions he became financially wealthy.

Little Sam carried out his household duties willingly assisting family members whenever necessary. Mrs. Bettner filled her days overseeing the needs of her family and on occasion she entertained local dignitaries. James often traveled on business and in the spring of 1883 he accompanied his youngest son Louis to New York. Congressman Summer of San Bernardino had appointed the 16-year-old to attend West Point. In spite of this distinguished honor however, the eastern climate proved detrimental to Louis and later he returned to Riverside a sick young man.³

Catharine Bettner and Little Sam nursed Louis through his periods of hemorrhaging and bouts of choking. During these episodes, the little Chinese man and the dignified lady of the house worked together to make Louis comfortable. Little Sam developed a special allegiance with all members of the Bettner family, and a deepening admiration for his boss lady.

Little Sam worked six and a half days a week, had sparse living quarters in the attic, and received a dollar a day wage. His free time was Sunday afternoons after completing the mid-day main meal. Then he dressed in his best clothes and rode his bicycle to Riverside's downtown Chinatown located near Ninth and Orange streets. Here he joined his fellow countrymen as they chattered in Chinese conveying the latest gossip and news. During these early days in Chinatown there were no Chinese women in town and the men entertained themselves playing games and perhaps an occasional puff of opium.

On Sunday afternoons the men played Fan Tan and Pi Gow, a form of dominoes. They bought tickets in the frequent lottery games with a pay-off at the end of each game. They bought items from Chinese stores and their customary purchases included canned goods from China and dried duck and chicken were regular acquisitions.⁴

They patronized a Chinese barber who was an expert in braiding long hair into tight queues. They bought clothes from a store that featured silk and felt hats and long shirts to be worn outside trousers. Cloth shoes with straw soles were essential attire for house servants who could work quietly throughout the house without disturbing the occupants.

These Sunday gatherings were also frightening times for Chinese men. In 1883 they learned of the anti-Chinese movement of the United States government to exclude Chinese immigration for ten years. Agitation against the Chinese was primarily due to their employment for it was presumed that they filled jobs that could be filled by unemployed citizens.

In September 1885, downtown property owners initiated a movement to eliminate Chinatown. Merchants claimed bad odors and loud noise kept customers from the area. They contended that drying laundry hanging outside Chinatown buildings was not only unsightly but it was also unsanitary. City officials passed two ordinances in order to remove the Chinese from downtown; first, no new wooden structures were to be built within the city of Riverside and the second ordinance gave health officers the authority to condemn any building and authority to arrest its residents. In addition, all the merchants in Chinatown were informed that their rent had been immediately increased to \$500 per month.⁵

In November three important Chinese business men negotiated an agreement with Amanda and John Cottrell to establish a new Chinatown on their property in Tequesquite Arroyo west of Brockton Avenue. The six acre parcel was first leased and later, Wong Nim and Wong Ying purchased the property. The Cottrells received \$10,000 cash and their \$3,000 mortgage was paid.⁶

The new Chinatown had one broad street, which was lined with plain, attached wooden buildings. City officials overlooked the ordinance against wooden buildings once the Chinese moved from downtown. The main street, first known as the Avenue or Mongol Street, later became

known as an extension of Brockton Avenue.⁷ This early settlement resembled a Chinese village with its simple framed buildings surrounded by tall trees which welcomed flocks of birds. During economic good times in the late 1880s, Chinese merchants flourished as an increasing number of townspeople visited Chinatown and purchased their merchandise.

James Bettner had become more prosperous, a wealthy man with several investment properties located on Main Street plus his thriving citrus grove. In January 1888, he surprisingly began disposing of his downtown properties

and, at the same time, he reduced his citrus grove by nine acres, receiving \$18,300, more than \$2,000 per acre. While most investors were buying real estate at inflated prices, James Bettner may have been providing for his family's future due to his failing health.⁸

James Bettner had Bright's disease, a debilitating kidney disease. There were five practicing physicians in town but not one could cure his disease. For five months he was troubled with back pains, vomiting, and high fevers. Catharine Bettner and Little Sam nursed him night and day to make him comfortable. They gave him warm baths and laxatives to help remove kidney stones. The most difficult chore for the little Chinese man, and for the lady of the house, was the procedure of blood-letting to reduce his blood pressure.



Hop Kim or Lew Yut or Little Sam

Regardless of constant, loyal attention, James Bettner died in May 1888. He was 44 years old, a well educated gentleman with degrees in both law and engineering. He left his family financially secure whereby they could continue to live comfortably. No funeral services were held although many Riversiders silently mourned his passing, especially Little Sam.

Catharine Bettner, and her eldest son Robert, accompanied the embalmed body to Yonkers, New York to be buried in the Bettner family cemetery plot at St. Johns Church. Twenty one year old Louis was too ill to make the trip and Little Sam remained in the house to care for him.

Robert, a handsome athletic young man, had the young Riverside ladies eager for his attention. In July 1889, an attractive English lady, Lucy Gilliland, and 24 year old Robert Bettner were privately married in a quiet ceremony in Riverside's All Saints Episcopal Church. Immediately following the wedding, the couple headed east to New York where they planned to make their future home. The absence of Catharine Bettner and Lucy Gilliland, mothers of the couple, was duly noted.⁹

Catharine Bettner, her son Louis, and Little Sam continued to live comfortably in the Jefferson Street house. On Sundays Little Sam visited Chinatown where he was regularly updated on the dreaded Geary Act "whereby every Chinese person without proper registration papers would be deported to China for good." The Six Companies in San Francisco served as spokesperson and guardian for the Chinese and their rights. This group demonstrated great power throughout California. Six Companies determined the Geary Act's registration requirement was illegal and they advised all to resist signing any papers. Little Sam obeyed the Six Companies directive and reasoned that "Ms" Bettner and Louis would look after him if necessary.¹⁰

In December 1890, Catharine Bettner sold the remaining Main Street property, then occupied by the Western Union Office, for \$6,000,. Louis's health continued declining and additional medical expenses increased.

On a bleak day in January 1891, 23 year old Louis Bettner died of consumption. This disease is better known today as tuberculosis. Mrs. Bettner arranged a small funeral at the family residence with the Reverend B. W. R. Taylor, of the Episcopal Church, officiating. Louis had attended a

private school in Riverside where he made many friends who were saddened by his passing. Once again Mrs. Bettner accompanied a casket to Yonkers where Louis was interred next to his father in the family cemetery.

Little Sam and family friends were concerned about Catherine's future without her husband and children. However, Catharine Bettner remained in the east for several months and persuaded her son Robert and his family to move back to Riverside. In March, local newspapers announced "Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bettner and baby returned from New York yesterday with Mrs. James Bettner."

Three weeks later, Catharine Bettner deeded the Jefferson Street house, and ten acres of land, to her son Robert. In April she purchased property with a frontage of 150 feet on Magnolia Avenue for \$2,500. Magnolia Avenue had become a fashionable address and Catharine Bettner decided that was where she wished to reside.

She had a three story, Queen Anne style house built with Palladian windows and a gabled shingle roof. She made special concessions to accommodate Little Sam, her constant companion and helper. The kitchen stove was installed without legs to compensate for his short stature and she installed a bell system in order to easily summon him. Little Sam's second floor room included sets of windows for fresh air and light. Mrs. Bettner and Sam moved into their new home where they remained congenial companions for many years.¹¹

In May 1892, George Crawford, who lived on Magnolia and Adams Street, built a huge barn like building and leased it to a Chinese manager for seven years. It was located not far from the Bettner house. This Adams Street shelter became Riverside's second existing Chinatown. It never attained the population of the Tequesquite Arroyo Chinatown which burned in 1893. Duey Wo Lung rebuilt the Tequesquite Chinatown with brick and wooden structures and then leased the buildings to his fellow countrymen.

Little Sam joined the Adams Street Chinese gatherings where he was highly respected. People throughout Arlington knew that he worked for "Ms Bettner" and they were impressed by his attentive devotion. He was her faithful friend and companion until the day she died in March 1928.¹²

After her death Little Sam worked part time for several of Mrs. Bettner's friends. Mrs. Bacon left him a small remittance, three dollars

for three months. He returned to Chinatown where he lived in a small house at 4558 Brockton Avenue. Here he lived out his days and died in January 1939 at the age of 91.

He was buried at Olivewood Cemetery but did not receive a traditional Chinese funeral. Since he was the oldest remaining man in Chinatown there was no one left to conduct the traditional ceremonial procession. There were no roast pigs, decorated strips of bright paper, nor any music. The time honored burial would have included all these trappings “to help the deceased on his journey to the spirit world.”

Reverend Henry Clark Smith of All Saints Episcopal Church conducted the simple funeral service. Dorothy Bettner Fullerton, granddaughter of Catharine Bettner, declared Little Sam to be the “world’s best attendant” for he not only assisted her grandmother for over 40 years but he was also her faithful companion.¹³

Notes

1. *Riverside Press & Horticulturist*, October 16, 1880.
2. 1880 Federal Census Records.
3. *Riverside Press & Horticulturist*, June 9, 1883.
4. *Riverside Daily Enterprise*, February 2-13, 1959.
5. *Riverside Press & Horticulturist*, October 3, 1885.
6. *Riverside Daily Enterprise*, Harry Lawton Series.
7. Little Sam’s address was 4558 Brockton according to Won Ho Leun vol. 1, pages 284-5.
8. *Riverside Daily Press*, January 7, 1888.
9. *Riverside Press & Horticulturist*, July 6, 1889.
10. *Riverside Enterprise*, March 11, 1891.
11. *Adobes, Bungalows, and Mansions of Riverside*, Klotz & Hall.
12. *Arlington Times*, January 6, 1939.
13. *Riverside Daily Press*, January 4, 1939.

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