

is one which is free from such as "romantic ruins" — San José has none; instead today it has a prim little Victorian Church, who's charming face is the *frontispiece* of the book. The writing deals with many yesterdays at the mission which have been lifted out of the dusty tomes to delight the historian. They are presented with a freshness which would deny that the original ink on these recordings dried more than a century ago.—*J. Thomas Owen.*

LONG JOHN DUNN OF TAOS, by Max Evans. A true life story of a famous character of Taos, New Mexico. (Vol. XV in the Westernlore Press *Great West and Indian Series*, Los Angeles, 1959.) Pp. 174; 5½" x 8"; cloth; 2-color illustrated jacket. \$5.75.

If the reader has ever had any curiosity about the life and habits of an early western professional gambler, card sharp, and escaped convict on the run, Long John Dunn's personal narrative to Max Evans will be quite enlightening. To add to the authenticity of the narrative, Author Evans received an affidavit from Long John, swearing to the truth of the whole story.

The narrative takes the reader along with Dunn from the time of his birth in Texas in 1857 until his death in New Mexico on May 22, 1953. Evans tells of two murders that his hero committed; he tells of his escape from the law and his incidental horse stealing escapades; he delves into experiences gained on cattle-drives from Texas to Kansas, Colorado, and Montana; and his experiences in Mexico, New Mexico, and nearly all the Western States when he was constantly on run from the law.

Dunn, who was "long" in every physical respect, was short-sighted only in his desire to settle down in Taos, buy a toll bridge and run a stage line. The capital needed for these ventures was considerable and he became a professional gambler and card-sharp to attain the required capital. The tools of his trade were nimble fingers, marked cards, sharp eyes, and a sawed-off, double-barrel shotgun which he wielded with as much dexterity as if it were a pistol.

How this man, with his early criminal record, escaped the law in the form of the Texas Rangers, and how he continued to live through his days as a shady professional gambler, makes this an unusual book. But more intriguing than his escapades outside the law is the manner in which he finally set himself up in business in Taos, operated the toll bridge, hotels, and engaged in mining ventures. He went broke at eighty, due to a long and protracted illness

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of his son. And he made a fast recovery by dealing Monte, his old standby gambling game, so that just before his death at past 94, he was able to have a friend dig into his cellar floor and recover \$7,500.00 which he had buried for an emergency.

If you want the story of one of the West's shady characters, this book should give it to you.—*Lorin L. Morrison.*

COUNTRY OF THE SUN, by Scott O'Dell. (The Cornwall Press, Inc., Cornwall, N.Y. — 1957) 310 pp.

Listed as "Southern California — An informal history and guide," Mr. O'Dell says it is "informal in the sense that things left out had been left out on purpose." The style in which the author writes is a combination of novelist, humorist, newspaper columnist and historian which, all in all, makes for enjoyable and informative reading.

"Country of the Sun" describes the origin and development of the nine Southern California counties: San Diego, Imperial, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Inyo, and Los Angeles. Not only does it contain a comprehensive history of each county but also gives interesting and often overlooked sidelights and legends. San Diego is covered from the beginning through the "Juan Jose" Warner episodes, and Horton and Kate Sessions periods. The Imperial County chapter includes the Patties, the Yuma Crossing difficulties and the fate of the "Topolo-bompo" in 1922. Orange County reiterates portions of the story of Richard Henry Dana. Scott O'Dell tells of how Joaquin Murietta came to the California gold fields where he was beaten, and Carmen, his pretty young wife, was murdered—thus he turned avenger. San Bernardino brings in the "Jed" Smith story, the Lugos, Wilsons, and the Mormon settlement. The chapter on Riverside tells the legends of the lost Spanish galleon and the White Camel — a descendant of one of Beale's animals. Ventura is about the Chumashans or the people of the red canoes and the lost woman of the San Nicholas Island. Santa Barbara chapter again quotes from Dana, tells of José Lobero and Milo Potter. Inyo County contains Death Valley, called "Tomesha" (Ground Afire) by the Indians, and so tells of the Jayhawkers and the mines, including the legendary Lost Gunsight. Of course, there was the borax twenty mule teams and Death Valley Scotty. The Los Angeles County chapter, last but by far not the least, tells of how Los Angeles is pronounced many ways but usually is referred to as just "L.A.": the Indian