

RAMONA

1910



The Ramona Story . . .

THE RAMONA PLAY is more than just a beautiful love story of the Indian maiden and her lover; it is the saga of a people despoiled of their birthright; a hymn of hope foreshadowing a brighter day—a sweep of history.

The gifted pen of Helen Hunt Jackson brought the story to life more than half a century ago. She followed a factual outline but supplied the missing links with her sensitive imagination. The period of her novel centers around the 1850's, but the incidents on which she based her story actually took place around 1870. Speeches and scenes in the novel and autobiographies of the author indicate this, revealing her purpose as the description of the intolerable treatment of the Indians.

On the docket of the San Jacinto township court is an entry dated March 24, A.D., 1883, signed by Justice of the Peace S. V. Tripp. It begins:

"Personally appeared before me Samuel Temple and makes the following statement (namely) that he has this day committed justifiable homicide upon an Indian supposed to be one Juan Diego . . . "Another entry dated seven days later, concludes with these sentences, "Defendant's counsel makes motion that the defendant be discharged on the grounds of justifiable homicide, as no one has appeared to prosecute. Motion granted and the prisoner is discharged as it appears that no offense under the law has been committed."

These terse words are part of the documentary evidence of an incident which was to fire one of America's greatest writers to create her masterpiece. Only a few months after the killing of Juan Diego, Helen Hunt Jackson was a guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Jordan in old San Jacinto.

One day Mrs. Jackson said to her hostess, "Oh, Mrs. Jordan, if only I could present this (the condition of the Indians) in some way that the public would hear! If only I could write a story such as Mrs. Stowe wrote of Negro slavery!" Mrs. Jordan replied that she thought she knew of such a story, and recounted the history of Juan Diego and Ramona. The elements of this tale, molded by the genius of Mrs. Jackson, became the immortal novel "Ramona."

Intrigued by the beauty of the name, Ramona, Mrs. Jackson retained it for her heroine but Juan Diego was changed to Alessandro and Sam Temple became Jim Farrar. Mrs. Jordan, who actually had

found shelter for the luckless Indian couple and had torn boards from her barn to build a coffin for their infant, became the Aunt Ri of the novel and her husband was the original Jeff Hyer.

There is evidence from many sources of the shooting of Alessandro in the Hemet-San Jacinto Valley and of many other incidents in the book. It was in this valley that Ramona died in May, 1924, and her grave may be seen at the Cahuilla Indian reservation near that of Juan Diego.

Dr. H. G. Hewitt, member of a pioneer San Jacinto family, has described the death of Juan Diego as it was told to him by Temple. The latter claimed that he had fired in self defense as Juan came toward him with a knife.

A contrasting note was struck in the pathetic account of the killing given by the late Mrs. Cinciona Norte, niece of Juan Diego:

"Juan Diego was working in his garden. I was walking with one of the children a short distance away and observed a white man riding up on a horse. A moment later there was a shot, I turned and ran back toward the house. Juan was lying face down in the garden with Ramona bending over him. He was dead.

"We did not speak to the white man who committed the crime, in fact we had no opportunity to do so because he rode away immediately. Ramona accepted the death of Alessandro stoically. Her grief was too great for tears. We needed help, but our nearest neighbors were at Cahuilla village, eight miles away. With her youngest child strapped to her back, Ramona walked the entire distance to Cahuilla. I remained behind with the body. The burial took place in Cahuilla cemetery."

Whatever the facts behind the killing of the man whom posterity knew as Alessandro, the incident itself was symbolic of real and great wrongs done to a whole people.



Ramona Pageant Association, Inc.

JOHN BIGELOW, President

Presents

 **Ramona** 

California's Greatest Outdoor Play

1970



Dramatized by

Garnet Holme

from the novel by

Helen Hunt Jackson



Willard Councilman

General Manager

Maurice Jara

Director

... Given Each Spring by the People of Hemet and San Jacinto ...

A Community Enterprise . . .

The Ramona Outdoor Play, a non-profit enterprise is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished through cooperative community endeavor.

From a modest beginning in 1923 with a budget of \$2500 and an attendance of 3023, the residents of the Hemet - San Jacinto Valley have through their faith, enthusiasm and untiring efforts built what is widely acknowledged to be California's Greatest Outdoor Historical Pageant, requiring \$75,000 to produce and attended by over 36,000 annually.

Its board of ten directors who serve without remuneration are selected from the membership of the Chambers of Commerce of the twin cities of Hemet and San Jacinto. Through their frugal planning and sound financing the Ramona Pageant Association now holds in trust for the people of the two cities property consisting of 160 acres of land and improvements costing in excess of \$300,000. All this has been paid for from receipts of the past forty-two seasons of the play.

The story of this highly successful enterprise, now in its forty-third season, would not be complete without the mention of reverses experienced in some of the years of its existence.

Since 1923 there have been five years when the play was not given, due first to economic conditions and then the war. At the times of these emergencies the association either had no surplus or soon exhausted the small savings it did have; but in each case the people of the Hemet-San Jacinto Valley and friends of the Ramona Play elsewhere came to the rescue by providing emergency funds. Each time when the association got back on its feet every cent of the money advanced by the donors was repaid.

The Ramona Pageant association now has a surplus of \$75,000 in saving accounts which it is hoped will carry through any emergency that may arise, but in case it is not sufficient, past experience has proven that the loyal people of the valley will again come to the rescue.

When the chambers of commerce of Hemet and San Jacinto, out of a desire to preserve the traditions of California's early days, decided to dramatize the book "Ramona" it was a logical decision because this valley was the scene of many of the incidents of Helen Hunt Jackson's novel.

In a pocket of a canyon looking up toward Mt. San Jacinto they found a natural amphitheater with amazing acoustical properties.

For the first two seasons the spectators toiled up a steep path to vantage points amid the sage brush, using rocks, automobile cushions and opera chairs for seats.

The first major improvement was made in 1925 when an automobile road was constructed up the hill, with a turning area at the top. In 1926 a small block of concrete seats was installed and these have been added to from year to year and improved until the bowl now seats 6350.

An adequate water system has been provided, and in order to make available sufficient free paved parking space for nearly 3000 cars an entire hill had to be removed.

The original stage set of the Camulos ranch estancia of painted canvas and lath was replaced in 1936 with a permanent replica of the original ranch house of the story. A cast house for the 350 players and backstage personnel was acquired; rest rooms, two first aid stations, nursery, picnic grounds, museum, iced drinking fountains in the aisles, concession stands and other facilities for the comfort of patrons have been provided. The present administration building was built in 1941.

For the benefit of the general public an expensive lighting system was installed in 1948 and the Ramona Bowl is now used the year around for community events. These include the annual free summer concert series sponsored by the Ramona Bowl Music association; the Hemet high school baccalaureate and commencement exercises, the Kiwanis Easter sunrise service, and by Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups.

Some idea of the magnitude of the Ramona Play is shown by the fact that the cast numbers nearly 350 persons and that many more are engaged in costuming, make-up, supervision, ushering, transportation, parking and the hundred and one tasks that go with such an undertaking.

The enthusiasm and devotion of the people of Hemet and San Jacinto that have insured the success of the undertaking for 43 years is reflected by the fact that only the two leads, Ramona and Alessandro, in recent years have come from outside the valley. Participants come from all walks of life and it would be difficult indeed to find a local resident who has not contributed in some way to this auspicious production.

Characters of the Play . . .

(In order of appearance)

JUAN CANITO, overseer of Camulos Rancho	Watson Gilmore, Jr.
PABLO, servant of the Rancho	Raul Soto
INDIAN SERVANT GIRL	Estella Bautista
MARDA, an old servant	Donna Rahn
FATHER SALVEDIERRA, an aged Franciscan Friar	Robert Taylor
DOLORES, daughter of Marda	Belen Lozano
LUIGO, a young shepherd	Bill Priess
MARGARITA, a maid servant and daughter of Marda	Frances Hicks
SENORA MORENO, head of the Rancho	Doni McMullen
ALESSANDRO, captain of the sheepshearers	Frank Sorell
RAMONA, (later called Majella)	Dorothy Bailey Vosburg
JOSE, Indian shepherder	Curt Faucett
MANUEL, Horseman	Paul Reimers
FRANCISCO, Horseman	Tom McCorkle
FELIPE MORENO, son of Senora Moreno	Dennis Anderson
MARIA, child of the Rancho	Anne McCauley
SERAPHINA, child of the Rancho	Carol Tuller
CARLOS, child of the Rancho	Mike Sieben
LUPE, child of the Rancho	Letitia Ladbury
PEDRO, Horseman	Don Royle
MUSICIANS OF THE RANCHO	Arias Troupe
SOLOISTS	Rosa Ramirez, Maurice Jara
MARA, an aged Indian woman	Mary Lozano
ED HAYTON, a settler	Sid Jeffcoat
YSIDRO, an Indian farmer	John LaChappa
JIM FARRAR, Horseman	Dusty Bowen
JAKE MORONG, Horseman	Kermit French
FATHER GASPARA, a priest	Fred Ewen
YANK CARTER, Horseman	Larry Snell
JOE, son of Aunt Ri	Blake Wallis
AUNT RI HYER, a settler	Pat Van Da Walker
MERRILL, the sheriff	Ed Pringle
SETTLER'S WIFE	Ruby Hodous
SETTLER'S CHILDREN	Edith Pringle, Randy Rekoske
INDIAN SOLOIST "The Sunrise Call"	Dale K. Brusewitz
ALTAR BOYS (Alternates:—Mike Lopez, Randy Miller.)	Mike Bateman, Bill Croft, Mark Kouma, Randy Kreidell, Bill Madrigal, Paul Scott
UNDERSTUDIES	Yvonne Shubert, John Bigelow Jr. Richard Acker, Bob Sands, Juanita Encell Shields

Setting of the Play . . .

In the Ramona Play, only that part of Helen Hunt Jackson's great story which uses this area as a locale has been dramatized. This is in no way a reflection on the other sections of California, which also were intimately associated with the story of Ramona.

Synopsis of the Play . . .

ACT ONE

EPISODE ONE: It is an unhappy time at the rancho of Senora Moreno. Felipe, her only son is critically ill, and Juan Canito overseer of the rancho, is helpless with a broken leg. Father Salvedierra, aged padre, is about to leave after what must be his last visit.

A ray of light breaks through when Alessandro, chief of the Indian sheepshearers, is persuaded to remain longer at the ranch. This he agrees to do because he has developed a secret love for the beautiful, unattainable Senorita Ramona.

The episode ends as Father Salvedierra and the sheep-shearers, departing from the rancho, disappear over the hill.

EPISODE TWO: Happier times have arrived. Felipe is recovering. Alessandro is in charge of the ranch workers. In an unguarded moment Juan Canito tells Alessandro that Ramona's mother was an Indian. Ramona discovers Margarita, flirtatious maid-servant, attempting to win the attention of Alessandro, and she reveals her own feelings for the Indian by her concern over the discovery.

The Senora, who has never liked Ramona, insults her in the presence of Alessandro and the convalescent Felipe as she is attempting to help the latter. Later Alessandro finds Ramona weeping and he comforts her.

EPISODE THREE: Months later as preparations are being made for a fiesta to celebrate Felipe's recovery, Ramona tells Alessandro of the Senora's unkindness to her. In an emotional moment he declares his love for her, and they embrace. Thus the Senora discovers them. Raging, she sends Alessandro from the rancho and tells Ramona that she will be sent to a convent unless she gives up her Indian lover. She forces Felipe into sudden acquiescence to her plans.

ACT TWO

EPISODE ONE: A Fiesta is held to celebrate the recovery of Don Felipe Moreno.

EPISODE TWO: Alessandro secretly returns to tell Ramona that his home at Temecula has been destroyed and his father killed by desperados. Although he has returned to say farewell, Ramona, who knows about her Indian blood, insists that he take her with him to live among his own people. At last he consents and the two lovers depart together from the Rancho.

EPISODE THREE: Two years have passed. After their marriage at San Diego, Ramona and Alessandro have settled among the Indians and they are happy and prosperous. An Indian fiesta is held in honor of the christening of their baby girl.



"My story begins over 100 years ago"
Juan—Watson Gilmore. Pablo—Raul Soto



THE FIESTA

Synopsis of the Play . . .

ACT THREE

EPISODE ONE. Suddenly, however, white men appear, dispossess them of their land and drive them from their home.

EPISODE TWO: With the help of Aunt Ri, Ramona and Alessandro have found peace and comfort again. But tragedy strikes swiftly as their child falls ill and dies. Grief over his child and fear of his wife's safety unhinge the mind of Alessandro, and he leads her away into the far recesses of the mountains.

EPISODE THREE: Living in poverty, Ramona is constantly in dread that her husband will get into trouble with the white men. One day, her fears come true. Because he has taken another man's horse by mistake during a period of mental illness, Alessandro is shot down without warning.



"Father, these men come to claim my land." Ysidro—John LaChappa.
Farrar—Dusty Bowen. Father Gaspara—Fred Ewen
Jake—Kermit French



Ramona (Dorothy Bailey Vosburg) meets Felipe (Dennis Anderson) on the return trip to Mexico

EPILOGUE

Meanwhile, the Senora has died. As the epilogue opens, Felipe and the entire household gather in front of the old home, ready to leave for Mexico. The young Spaniard, always secretly in love with Ramona, speaks sorrowfully of the tragedy which has befallen her. He then announces the good news that she has at last been persuaded to meet them on the trail and accompany them to their new home in Mexico, where everything possible will be done to bring her happiness.

Finally, his eyes upon the horizon Felipe leads his people away from the rancho. As they go, they sing a song of farewell; and the aging Juan Canito, with sad and heavy heart locks for all time the great doors of the old ranch house.



Dorothy Bailey Vosburg returns to the Ramona Pageant this season after an absence of several years. She first played the role of Ramona while still a student at the University of California at Los Angeles. She continued in the role for seven consecutive seasons, during which time she married William Vosburg, owner of the pioneer Vosburg Hotel in San Jacinto and is now the mother of five lovely daughters. 1970 will be the tenth year in which she has portrayed Ramona, and she has also been the major female understudy several times.



Frank Sorell is playing the role of the ill-fated Indian hero, Alessandro, for his fourth consecutive year. He is well known in the entertainment field for his beautiful Operatic bass-baritone voice, and has played in films, on television and radio, and appeared in night clubs on the west coast and Hawaii. He is a native Californian now living in Reseda with his wife and two children.



"It serves you right for coming outside." Juan, with Dolores—Belen Lozano,
and Margarita—Frances Hicks

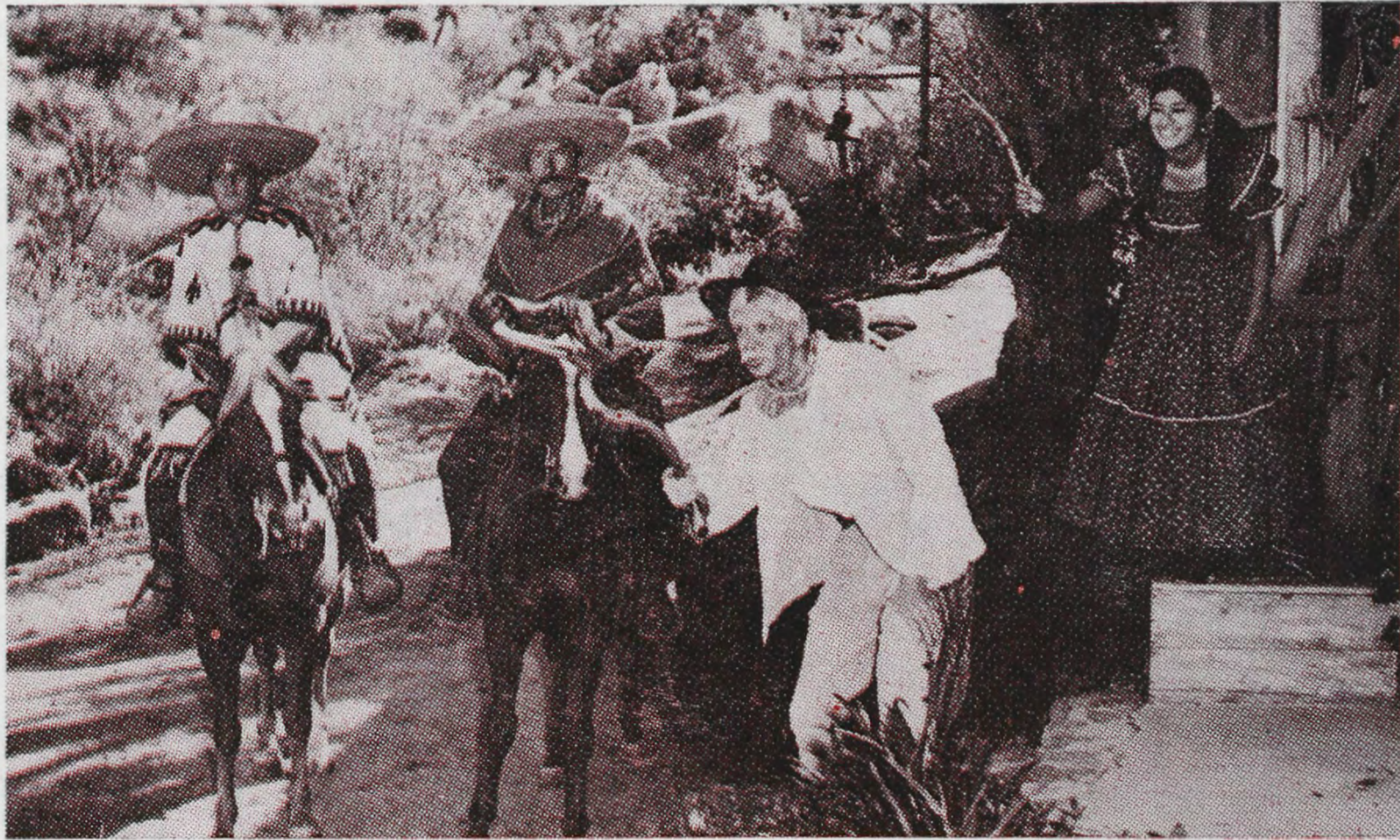
The Players...



"You will dance with me, won't you?" Alessandro—Frank Sorell
Margarita—Frances Hicks



"Come, Senora, and pray with me." Senora—Doni McMullen
Father Salvedierra—Robert Taylor



"Ride to the Rubidoux Rancho and invite them to the Fiesta." Francisco—Tom McCorkle, Manuel—Paul Reimers, Juan—Watson Gilmore, Dolores—Belen Lozano

The Players...



"Why must I always carry everything?" Seraphina—Carol Tuller
Carlos—Mike Sieben, Maria—Anne McCauley, Lupe—
Letitia Ladbury, Dolores—Belen Lozano



"Caramba!" (Marda—Donna Rahn, Juan—Watson Gilmore,
Luigo—Bill Priess).



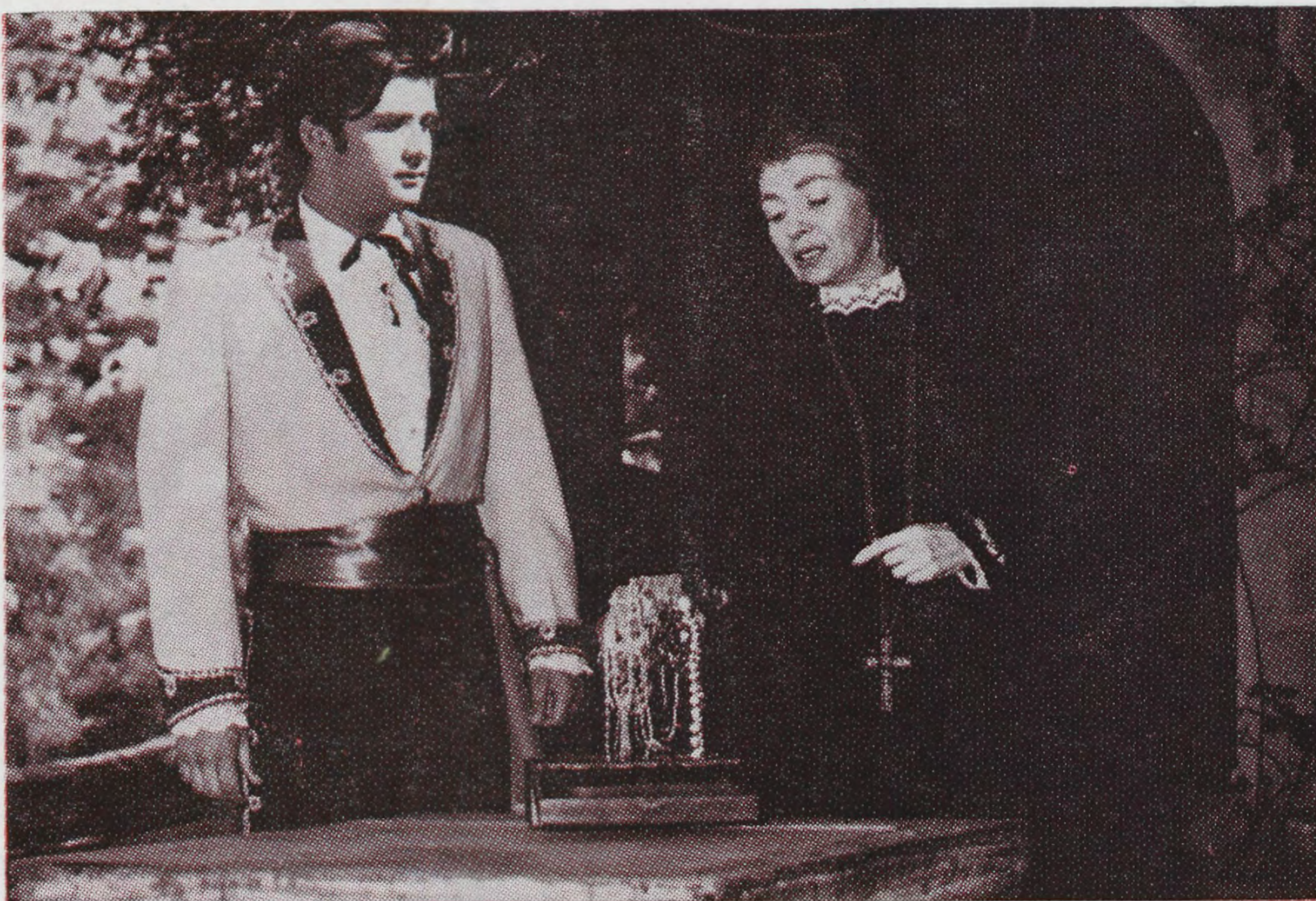
Scenes from



Father Salvedierra (Robert Taylor) blesses Ramona (Dorothy Vosburg) and Alessandro (Frank Sorell)



"Don't let these women take up all your time, Alessandro"
Juan—Watson Gilmore, Alessandro—Frank Sorell



"These jewels were left to Ramona provided she marries worthily"
Felipe—Dennis Anderson, Senora—Doni McMullen



the Play...



"Get to work you lazy girl." Marda—Donna Rahn, Margarita—Frances Hicks, Dolores—Belen Lozano



"I wish Margarita could see me now." Luigo—Bill Priess



"This paper does not tell me what I wish most to know . . . Who was my mother?" Senora—Doni McMullen, Ramona—Dorothy Vosburg

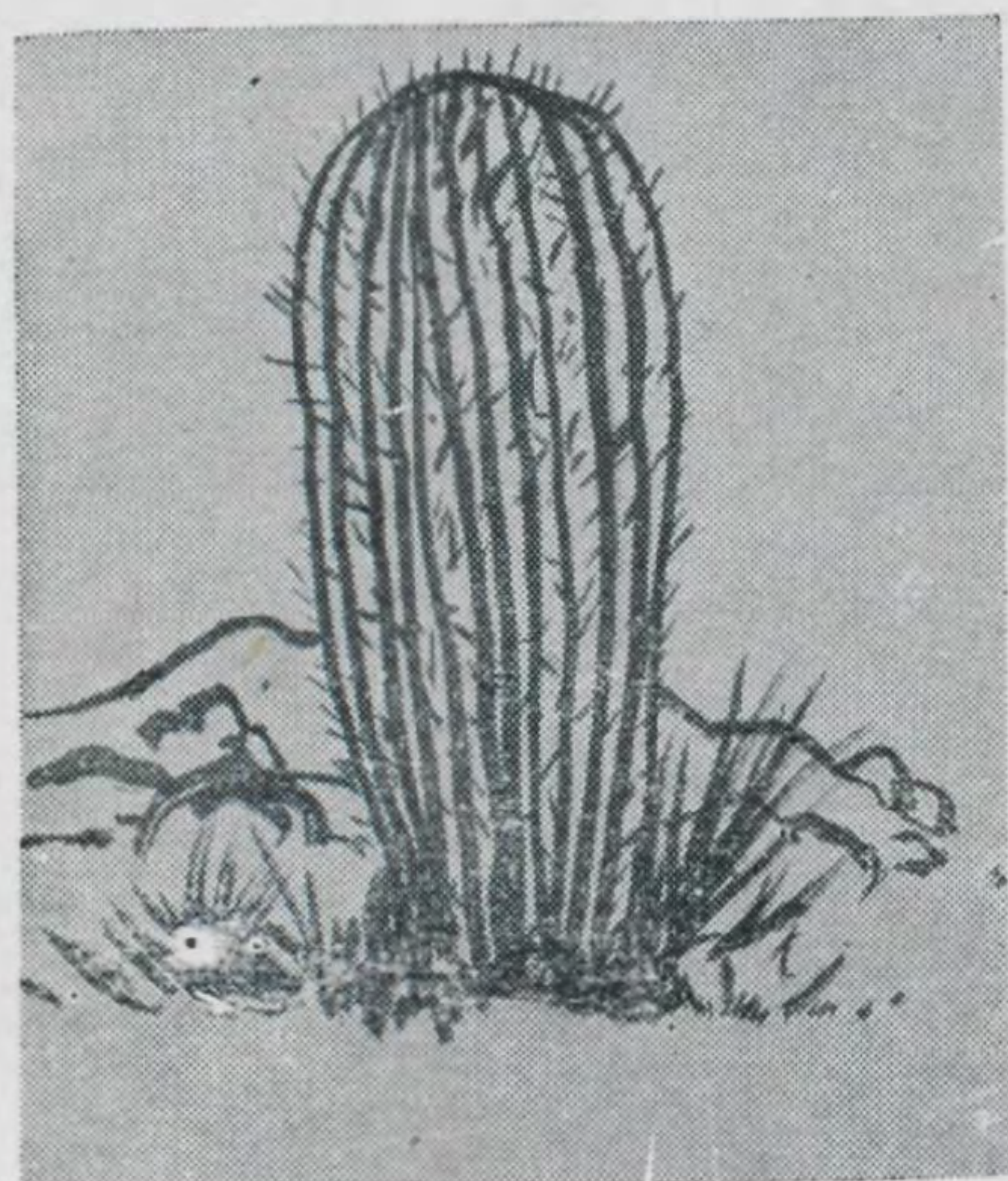
The Players...



"See Alessandro, the child is smiling." Ramona—Dorothy Vosburg,
Alessandro—Frank Sorell



"Now the child shall have the blessing of my people." Ramona and
Alessandro with the aged Mara—Mary Lozano



"You've got four days to clear out." Hayton—Sid Jeffcoat,
Alessandro—Frank Sorell

The Players...



"You and the kids wait here." Hayton—Sid Jeffcoat, His wife—Ruby Hodous, His son—Randy Rekoske. His daughter—Edith Pringle



"Don't go and hurt yourself, just when we're gettin' started"
Aunt Ri—Pat Van Da Walker, Joe—Blake Wallis



"I'll learn you damned Indians to steal our horses." Alessandro—Frank Sorell, Farrar—Dusty Bowen

Board of Directors..



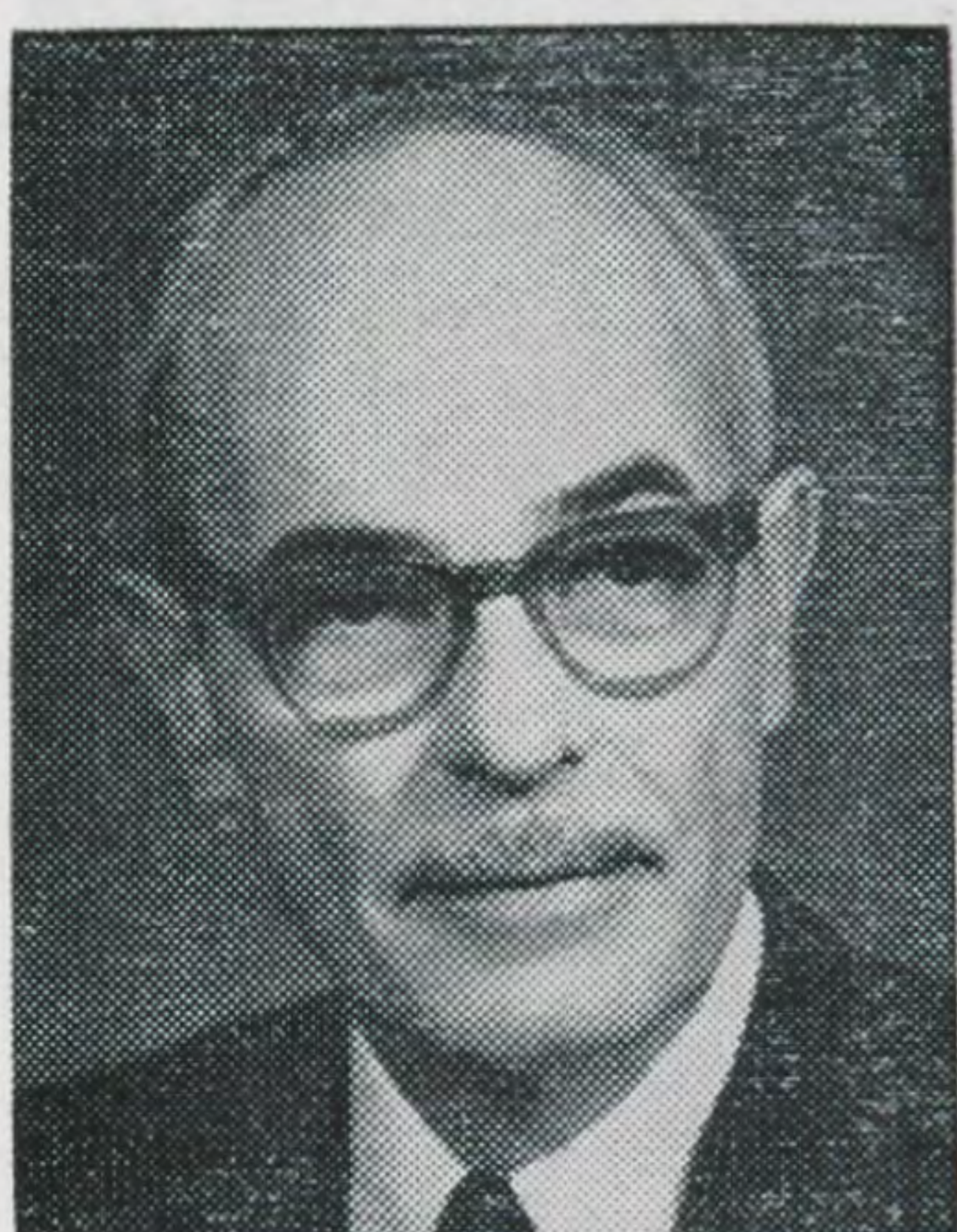
JOHN BIGELOW
President

JOHN BIGELOW, President, is past president of the Hemet Valley Chamber of Commerce, an ardent civic worker and is a local leading furniture store owner.

RICHARD A. KROKER, Vice President, is a general contractor in San Jacinto where he also is a member of the San Jacinto Unified School Board of Trustees, and is serving his fourth year on the board.



RICHARD A. KROKER
Vice President



JAMES W. GILL, JR.
Treasurer

JAMES W. GILL, JR., Treasurer is a past president of the association, Hemet Kiwanis and Chamber of Commerce, and is president of Hemet Hospital District. Publisher of The Hemet News, he has been a member of the board for several year.

H. E. "JEFF" DIVINE, Secretary, is a past president of the association, the San Jacinto Rotary Club, the San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce and Realty Board. He is in the real estate and insurance business and very active in community affairs.



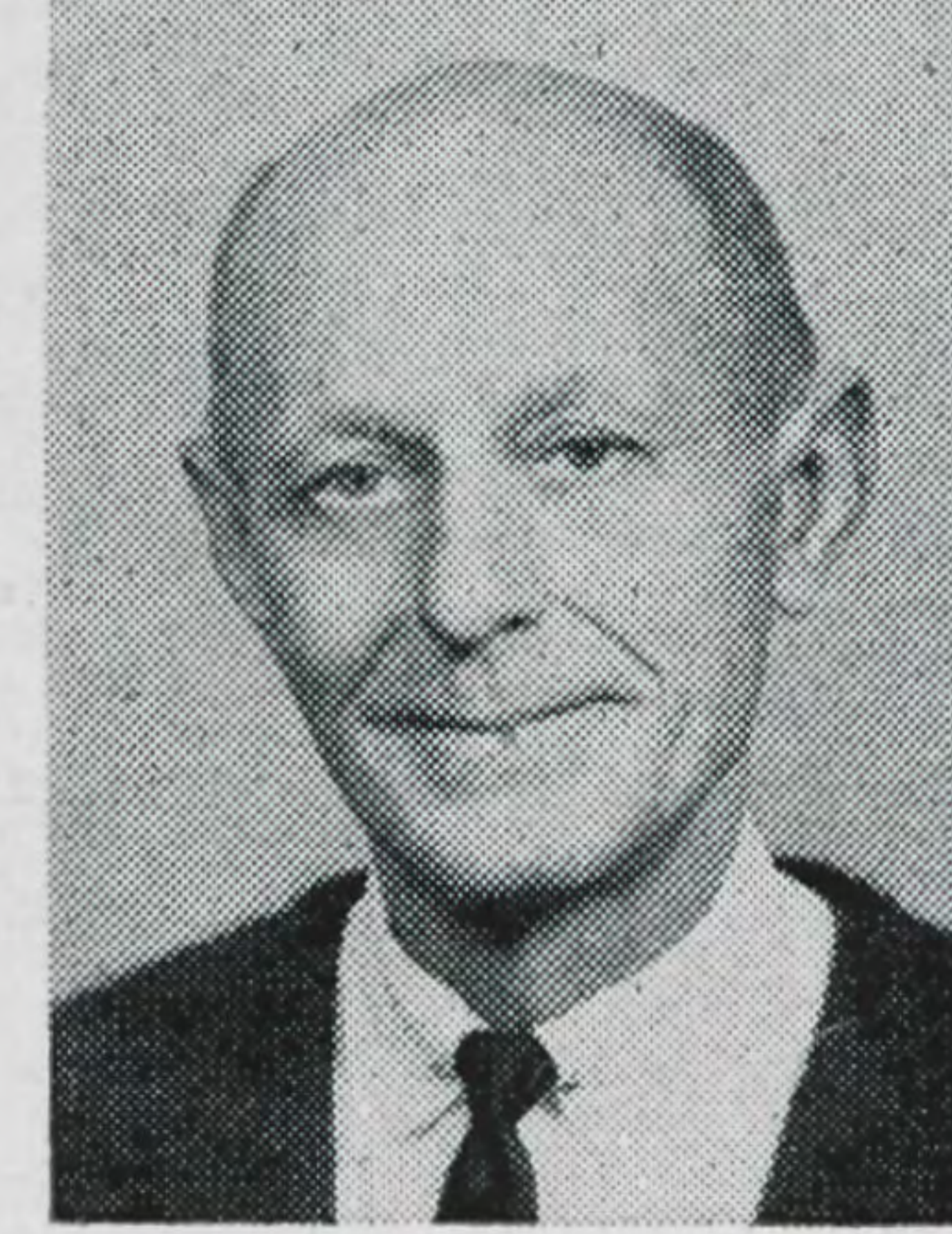
H. E. DIVINE
Secretary



EDWARD B. WESTALL
Director

EDWARD B. WESTALL, a chemical engineer and manager of the valley Nutrilite plants, a past president of San Jacinto Valley Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club, is the immediate past president of the association.

ARTHUR K. WILLIAMSON, past president and past Lieutenant Governor of Kiwanis, and past president of Hemet Chamber of Commerce, has been most active for many years in the civic development of the valley.



A. K. WILLIAMSON
Director



FRANK REGUR
Director

FRANK REGUR, a past president of Kiwanis and a charter member of the Elks Club, has been owner-operator of a local hardware store for twenty-six years. He started service in the Pageant at the age of 12 as a Boy Scout, has served as a Bowl Supervisor since 1940, and has been chairman of that committee for the past sixteen years.

LAURIS T. BOYER, local general contractor, past president of Hemet Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club, has served for several years on various committees in the Play.



LAURIS BOYER
Director



FRED E. WAGNER
Director

FRED E. WAGNER, manager of the Hemet Branch of United California Bank, a past president of Hemet Chamber of Commerce and member of its board, has been in the Play in some capacity since a boy when he attended San Jacinto schools.

DALE LEONARD is the manager of the United California Bank in San Jacinto. He is a past president of the San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce, and has been active in community affairs during the six years he has resided here. In addition to his bank background, he has had considerable musical training and experience and is the director of the "Cancioneros" musical group, which greets the visitors to the Ramona Bowl on show days.



DALE LEONARD
Director

Music and Dancing...



MUSICIANS: The Arias Troubadours are a group of entertainers who have been in the Ramona Pageant every year since Jose Arias first started in 1924, and are now led by his sons, Alfonso and Antonio.



LOS CACIONEROS—"The Singers"—Carol Schlange, Diane Arnsmeier, Brian Bradbery, Phyllis Babbitt, Jan Bissell, Randy Spencer, Josephine Garcia, Shawn Schrum, Patsy Kennedy, Manuel Reyes, Diana Mapes, Susie Severns, Dennis Callin.

Inspired Leadership . . .

The first manager and leader in the origination of the Ramona Outdoor Play, the late Burdette Raynor, compiled in 1935 an account of the origin of what has become California's Greatest Pageant-Drama, which is as follows:

On December 6, 1920, at a meeting of the directors of the Hemet Valley Chamber of Commerce, I was chosen as secretary of that organization.

About 45 years ago, or soon after coming to Hemet, I read Helen Hunt Jackson's story, "Ramona." I was so much impressed with the book that I read some parts of it several times, and read the entire book through twice. The book became very real to me because of its relationship to this, our San Jacinto Valley. Aunt Ri's house was in a fairly well preserved condition and still standing was the old store, behind which was the corral where Alessandro took the horse, resulting in the fatal shooting.

It seemed to me that if Hemet could put on some outdoor performance that would draw a large number of people to our valley at least once a year it would be a fine thing. To accomplish this end, nothing presented itself so favorably to my mind as the Ramona story.

It was in the latter part of the year 1921 that I consulted with the directors of the chamber of commerce respecting this plan, having previously discussed the proposition with the late J. O. Percival and Mrs. Joseph Henck, president and vice president of the organization.

The plan met with the approval of the board, but at that time there was in evidence no great amount of interest as compared with the interest and wonderful support given later, with the exception of Mr. Percival and Mrs. Henck, who were both enthusiastic and ardent supporters of the movement from the very first. In fact, it is well known that much credit is due the former for his splendid work as president of the chamber of commerce while we were pioneering the Ramona Pageant.

The plan having been accepted, the first thing that seemed necessary was to find someone to write the play or adapt the story to our need. The writer consulted with Prof. Paul G. Ward of our high school, who suggested that I enlist the help of Miss Irene Muller, also a teacher in the high school. Miss Muller recommended that Miss Helen S. Sturges, now Mrs. Jerome B. Walden, be asked to write the play, as some of her work in the school showed marked ability along that line. Miss Sturges immediately began on this work, but about that time I received literature through the mail of the Desert Play at Palm Springs, a production by Garnet Holme. I suggested to Mr. Percival that we go to Palm Springs and witness this play.

The following Saturday, November 4, 1922, we set out for Palm Springs, having invited Miss Muller and Miss Sturges to accompany us, because of their active interest and because of the special work Miss Sturges was doing for us at that time. I believe there was little thought of considering the employment of Mr. Holme; we were simply out to learn from observation all we could about outdoor plays. However, as we saw the play through we became so impressed with the production that we agreed that we must see Mr. Holme, the author.

Mr. Percival and I found Mr. Holme of a very genial and kindly disposition. We introduced ourselves and immediately made known to him our ambition for Hemet. In brief, we made arrangements with Mr. Holme to visit us, which he seemed very willing to do.

When Mr. Holme arrived in Hemet he said one of the first and important things to do was locate a suitable place in the hills for the production. So on this particular morning, Mr. Percival, John E. King and myself, with Mr. Holme and his two friends, set out on the search. Mr. Percival suggested that there was a sort of

canyon south of Hemet, back of his old home, which he would like for us to see before we went elsewhere. We drove our car as far as we could and with much difficulty worked our way through the dense sagebrush and thickets to the exact spot that is now the Ramona bowl. After trying the acoustic properties of this particular place, Mr. Holme became enthusiastic over its surroundings and possibilities. I confess I could see but little of the beauty and loveliness for which Mr. Holme was so enthused, but Mr. Holme was a great lover of nature and what was commonplace to some would become a thing of beauty to him.

Mr. Holme signed a contract with us.

He immediately discussed with me some of the problems that would have to be settled before we could proceed. Miss Virginia Calhoun of Los Angeles was owner of the exclusive dramatic rights to the Ramona story for California, and rights to produce a play would have to be secured direct from her. After learning her address at Los Angeles, it was with much enthusiasm I called on Miss Calhoun, but about two hours later I left that lady with much of my enthusiasm gone and my disposition considerably ruffled and upset. I suggested to Mr. Holme that he visit Miss Calhoun and try to arrange terms, but this was the one thing Mr. Holme always refused to do.

It is not my thought to discredit Miss Calhoun, who was an accomplished lady and capable actress, and had played the part of Ramona in one of her own productions, but her ideas and visions of the tremendous possibilities of dramatizing this story of Helen Hunt Jackson's carried her so far away from points of reasoning that it seemed next to impossible ever to reach satisfactory arrangement. I do not recall how many times I went to see this lady and each time I went away baffled and disappointed. One day I was introduced to a friend of Mr. Holme, the proprietor of a large book store in Los Angeles, who knowing my difficulties, suggested that I drop negotiations with Miss Calhoun and ask Mr. Holme to write a play on some subject other than Ramona.

It was also about that time I called on Miss Adelaide Wilson of Little Lake (now Mrs. Arnold of Twentynine Palms) and she, too, advised some other theme, suggesting an Indian legend familiar to her, which had a relationship with the valley which she felt would produce a play of much interest.

But somehow I could never get away from the possibilities in this story of Ramona, its relationship to this valley and its established advertising value because of its great popularity. So I continued my negotiations for the privilege or permit for Mr. Holme to write a play and a right to produce the play in this valley. About all my time was given to this for several weeks. Little, Brown & Company, Boston publishers who owned the copyright on the story, also had to be reckoned with.

Finally, in desperation, I set about to draw up a contract myself, thinking it best not to employ an attorney. This contract



ORIGINAL RAMONA PLAY CAMULOS HOUSE

Inspired Leadership . . .

when completed was fearfully and wonderfully made, for I used all the diplomacy and skill that I as an amateur could command for the occasion. I then presented it to Attorney Oliver P. Ensley, one of our directors, who said it would do without alterations. Then I presented it to the board for their ratification, went to see Mr. Holme and told him it was now or never, that this would be my last call on Miss Calhoun, and if she refused to sign the contract I was authorized to return to his office and ask him to write a play for the valley on some theme he might think best.

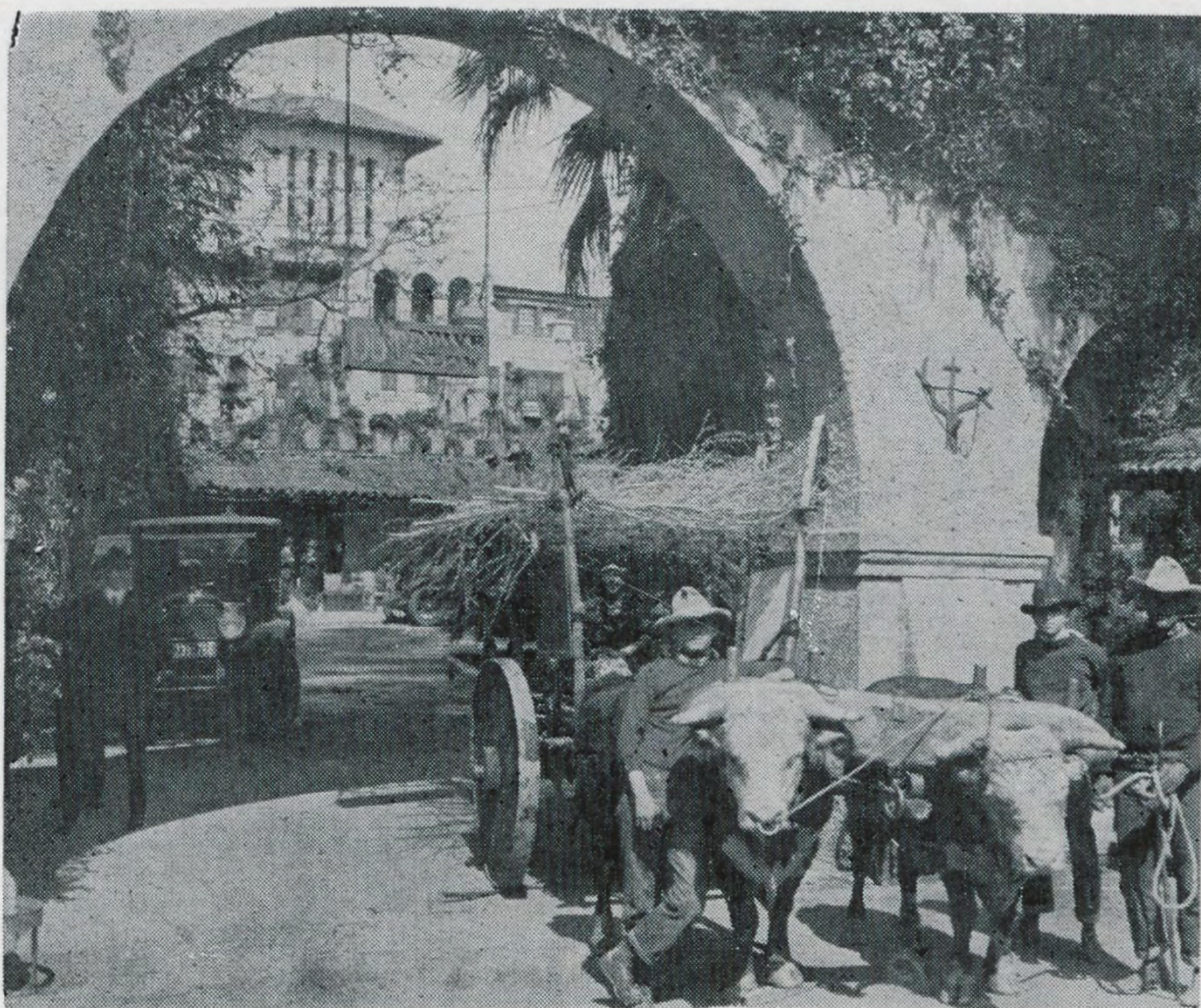
With grim determination I set out for what I fully expected would be my last and unsuccessful visit. I rushed my proposition with all the argument I could muster and finished up by saying, "This document becomes a contract when you and I attach our names. Will you sign it, Miss Calhoun?" To my everlasting surprise and gratification Miss Calhoun signed the contract without question or argument.

The following minutes taken from the records of the Hemet Valley Chamber of Commerce are of much interest, as they record not only the contract which was one of the important steps in producing the Ramona Pageant, but also gives the officers and directors who figured in the early history:

January 22, 1923—A special meeting of the board of directors of the Hemet Valley Chamber of Commerce met at 4 p.m. in the director's room. Those present were: J. O. Percival, O. P. Ensley, John W. Isle, C. C. Kuykendall, E. O. Eggen and John E. King. Those absent were Mrs. J. E. Henck, Dr. John B. Weston, M. B. Rideout, C. E. Goodhue and W. H. Pawson, Jr.

A discussion as to the advisability of signing a contract with Miss Virginia Calhoun for the use of the Ramona story in writing or producing a pageant at Hemet was considered. After considerable discussion, a motion was made and seconded that the following resolution be adopted:

"The Hemet Valley Chamber of Commerce wishes to extend its thanks and appreciation to Miss Virginia Calhoun for her consent to use the story of Ramona as written by Helen Hunt Jackson, and it feels that a reasonable compensation should be granted Miss Calhoun for the dramatic rights as acquired by her from the publishers, Little, Brown & Company of Boston."



OXEN AND CARRETA ON PARADE

Agitation for the pageant had now been going on for over a year, for the minutes show as far back as May 24, 1922, Mrs. Henck discussed before the board the advantages and possibilities of a Ramona Pageant for Hemet.

We entered into a one-year contract with Mr. Holme to direct this first performance, and we paid him a flat sum of \$200 for his writing the play. From the \$1500 production cost, he was also to receive \$500.

It was just after this that I first suggested to Mr. Holme that we should make provision for the people of the valley to inherit the rights to this production, if in the course of time he should be taken away. A little over a year before his death, I again reminded him about the matter, suggesting that he make provision in his will for Hemet and San Jacinto to have full rights to his production, when he was through with it.

Getting back to the early period, employing Mr. Holme and putting on an outdoor play meant considerable cost. Some money had to be in sight right away. It was suggested by Mr. Holme that we get the business men of Hemet to guarantee the finances, and I set out and secured the names of 50 men on a guarantee to the extent of \$25 each. On the strength of this guarantee we were able to secure funds from one of the banks.

Advertising the pageant was another expense which would require consideration. Someone suggested that we get a team of oxen, (I believe that Frank Felt should have credit as the originator of this idea), hitch them to an old Spanish carreta and drive through the towns and villages, distributing handbills and advertising the play. That seemed a good idea, but where was the team of oxen and where the carreta? We advertised for them through one of the Los Angeles papers. Word came to us of a team of oxen at a logging camp in the San Bernardino mountains. The directors appointed a committee composed of Dr. J. W. Caldwell and President J. O. Percival to visit the logging camp, examine the animals, find out the price and report.

Afterward the committee was informed that this team of oxen were out at pasture at Victorville. So on to Victorville the committee went. Satisfying themselves that they were all right, a recommendation came to the board that the team be purchased for \$150.

The board approved the recommendation and ordered me to buy the oxen, paying for them when delivered to us in good order.

The usefulness of the ox team closed with the advent of the hoof and mouth disease in our second year, but it was the general opinion of the chamber of commerce that the plan worked well and was worth the expense of maintenance.

My thought was, especially the first year, that we could never make the thing a success and pay our bills unless we succeeded in getting sufficient people to attend the performances, and I devoted much of my time to that work.

Prior to starting the advertising campaign, it became imperative to have added help in the office, someone to aid and assist Mr. Holme in his work and take care of the main details that had to be handled. Mrs. S. C. Miller, after much persuasion, finally consented to undertake this job and was appointed chairman of the pageant committee. Great credit is due Mrs. Miller for the successful way in which she managed the affair.

One of the things I remember in connection with Mr. Holme was the inquiry he made of an old friend he had in San Jacinto by the name of Ed Poorman. When Mr. Holme came to Hemet, one of the first things he did was to look for "Eddie, old dear," as he often affectionately called him. Mr. Poorman was the principal advisor to Mr. Holme in selecting the cast for the first play, and the good judgment as evidenced by the success of these players is very commendable. Mr. Poorman later became general manager and president of the pageant.

Phil Whiting was another one of the pioneers who participated in the first year's arrangements. Mr. Holme introduced Phil to me one day when in Los Angeles, suggesting that we employ him

Inspired Leadership . . .

"for with Phil's help," said Mr. Holme, "all our problems would be solved." Since Mr. Holme felt the help of Mr. Whiting was such an absolute necessity, and Phil's agreement to come the first year with such a meager sum to get the thing started, it seemed as though I could really do nothing else but consent to Mr. Holme's wishes, and time proved the wisdom of this act.

The splendid support of the entire board of directors of the chamber of commerce was always an impelling force for me to do my best. The way the business men of Hemet and San Jacinto Valley supported it, 50 men pledging their credit to the extent of \$25 each on an untried plan, was quite remarkable.

From the very start there was a combination of workers from both Hemet and San Jacinto, for it was the plan to make this Ramona Pageant a union between the two towns.

About a month before staging the first pageant a movement was made to combine the chambers of commerce of Hemet and San Jacinto, thinking that such a merger would not only facilitate and aid a successful production, but would be of mutual benefit to both towns. The first public movement in that direction was brought about in the Kiwanis club at Hotel Vosburg when M. S. Glasser moved the club favor such a merger. After the plan had been discussed in special meetings at Hemet and San Jacinto and through the Hemet-San Jacinto Kiwanis club, it was adopted, and the new organization took on the name of Hemet-San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce.

It was on April 9, 1923, that Meyer S. Glasser, Edward Poorman and Howard Warren were elected as directors of the Hemet-San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce to represent the San Jacinto section.

It had been the original plan to hold the pageant on week days only, but on further consideration of the matter by the board of directors, shortly before the pageant the dates were changed, putting on the play Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This led to considerable friction for a time but it was the contention of the majority of the directors that the play was to be of such a high character that its influence for good would outweigh the objections to a Sunday performance.

Rapidly the date drew near for the great event. The Camulos ranch house had been erected at a point designated by Mr. Holme. The lumber was hauled to the spot by J. G. West, gratis. Phil Whiting with his assistants, covered the framework with sheeting and kalsomine. Additional trees and shrubs were planted or arranged to produce certain effects in the bowl. Garnet Holme was each day rehearsing the participants. Rain insurance had been taken out as a matter of protection to the guarantors. Accident insurance was provided covering all participants and everything was made ready for the supreme moment. The ox team with its retinue of attendants spent their last two days of activity before the play in parading the streets of Hemet and San Jacinto.

The success of the first pageant performance is still remembered.

There had been high hopes as to the outcome but the actual results were above and beyond any of our expectations. Reporters from some of the larger city newspapers were in attendance, perhaps as much a matter of curiosity as anything else, but their reports and praise through the press were most gratifying. An editor of a popular daily in one of our nearby cities afterwards said to me:

"I came the first day because I wanted to see what you people of Hemet and San Jacinto could do. I came the second day because I wanted my wife and children to see it. We all came the third day because we all wanted to see it again."

A lady tourist stated: "I came all the way from Chicago to see your beautiful California. Had I seen nothing else but this wonderful pageant I would have felt repaid for the trip."

At the close of the second day's performance a man came to

me and said he was so pleased with the pageant he wanted to add a little more to the price of his ticket and handed me \$10. This is the \$10 noted in the financial report as "pageant donation," and the man was the late C. B. Woodhead, father of Mrs. Howard Warren, well known in Hemet and San Jacinto, and Mrs. Laura Woodhead Steere, noted Sculptress, who has a studio at Idyllwild.

Not only did the pageant play grip and enthuse the audiences, but there was something that gripped and held those who participated in its performance. Well do I remember the feeling expressed by those who gathered around the stage at the end of the performance that last day, regretting that a thing which they had helped produce should suddenly come to a close.

The financial report, which gave a small surplus over expenses was most gratifying. It was a modest beginning but an augury of the greater success to come in the future years.

Perhaps we will never fully appreciate the service of John E. King, not only for the support given that first year through The Hemet News, but his influence with the press all over Southern California which aided us so much in receiving consideration during the ox team campaign of advertising.

I doubt if we can realize the value of the work of Mrs. S. C. Miller, who was chairman of the first Ramona Pageant committee, and J. O. Percival, president of the chamber of commerce, who never failed to function in the highest capacity in any demands that were made on him in furthering the work.

We must not forget that the Boy Scouts of Hemet and San Jacinto, under the supervision of C. S. Cox and Charles Van Fleet, built the first trail to the bowl and rendered other service.

The boys of the American Legion erected the cross above the bowl on March 15, 1923, and that was no easy task.

C. L. Emerson supplied the riding horses gratis the first year, and E. O. Ingalls of San Jacinto very kindly gave us the use of the riding horse, Black Baba, which fitted so perfectly in the play.

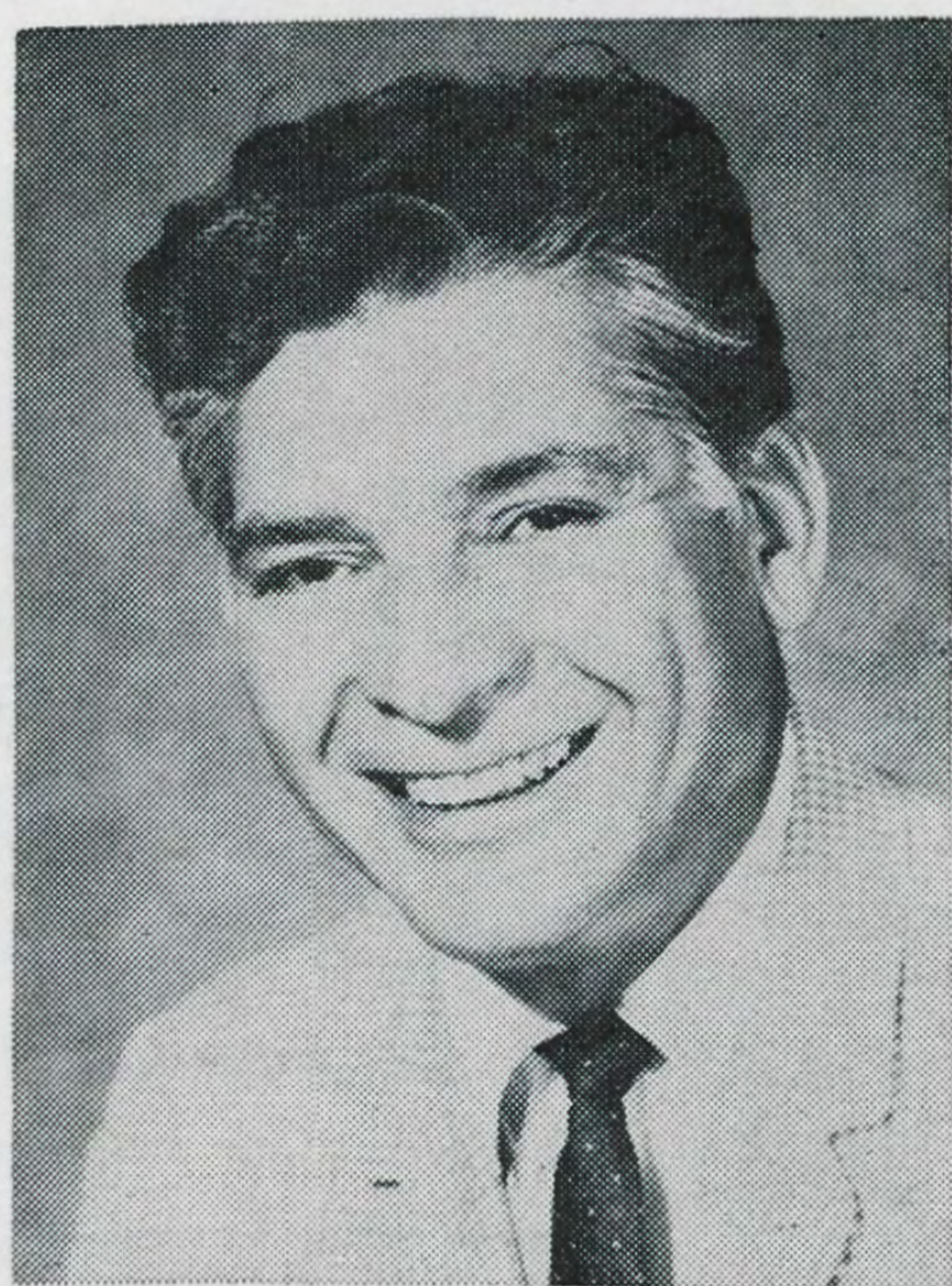
Miss Irene Muller of the high school not only from the very start arranged and provided those beautiful costumes for the dancing girls but was of valuable service in many ways.

You will recall that Charlie Randall's orchestra provided the music and headed the parade up the trail. Ray Brant trained the boys and girls for the Indian dance.

Mrs. Lewis H. Warren had charge of the properties. Mrs. S. C. Miller and ladies of the Hemet Woman's club, designed and made many costumes for the performance, also 1000 pennants completed for street decoration. The club, under the leadership of Mrs. H. B. Jones, performed other valuable services that first year.



FIRST PERFORMANCE AUDIENCE IN 1923



MAURICE JARA
Director

Directorial Staff . . .



HILDA JARA
Co-Director

For the forty-third season of the Ramona Outdoor Play, as Director, we have the actor-singer who turned in an outstanding performance for fifteen years as the Alessandro of the Play. Maurice Jara, prior to coming to the valley to make his home, played in many movie and television shows in Hollywood.

As Co-Director, he is assisted by his wife Hilda, a fifth-generation Californian who has taken part as a dancer, actress, and director of many productions at the Padua Hills Theater. She also assisted the Victor Jory's during the last two years that they directed "Ramona."

Organization . . .

WILLARD S. COUNCILMAN, the general manager, has been associated with the play for 22 years. This is his seventh year in his present capacity. Mr. Councilman, a local businessman, has served on the board of directors, and is a past president of the association. He is a former member of the Hemet City Council, was a Director of the Hemet Chamber of Commerce for six years, and is a past president of the Hemet Lion's Club, and is presently a member of the Hemet-San Jacinto Exchange Club.



WILLARD COUNCILMAN



HELEN MURDOCK

HELEN MURDOCK is Executive Secretary of the Ramona Pageant Association. She has been active in the Play for 23 years, serving as properties chairman and then in the chorus before becoming secretary. Her husband serves on the parking committee, and their four children, Marla, Ann, Jay and Melinda have also been active in the cast.

BETH WEST, in her second year as Ticket Controller, comes to the Pageant with considerable experience in the accounting field. She is the mother of four children who have all attended or are still attending the Hemet Schools. She is the wife of Norman West, popular Coach of Hemet's winning baseball teams, and Director of Athletics at Hemet High School.



BETH WEST

MARY JOHNSON, of Los Angeles, who with her late husband, J. Howard Johnson have been directors of radio and television publicity for Ramona since 1936, also the same capacity for the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera and many other organizations.

Production Staff . . .



MABEL HIGHT

MRS. MABEL HIGHT is serving her twenty-third year on the costume committee her 13th year as chairman. A long time resident of the valley, she is a professional judge of domestic arts, judging at many county and district fairs in Southern California.

MELBA GILMORE—Mrs. Watson Gilmore, Jr., wife of Juan Canito of the Play is serving her 8th year as stage manager. She has played several parts in the Play over a period of years and this is her 24th year. She is very active in the local players group as well as many other community organizations.



MELBA GILMORE



JUSTINE DUGAN

MRS. JUSTINE DUGAN is serving as director of the children of the Rancho. She has been active in the Play for 7 years and with the children for 6 of them.

MRS. NORMA GIBBEL, wife of the late Harvey Gibbel, a past president of the association is chairman of the all-important properties committee. 1970 is her 18th year.



NORMA GIBBEL



GRACE WIEST

GRACE WIEST serves as Chairman of the Makeup Committee for the second time this year, has worked with the Makeup Committee for 16 years.

CLARA WILHELM, Director of Indian Braves, is serving her 8th year as chairman of the committee this year. She has served in the Play for the past 13 years.



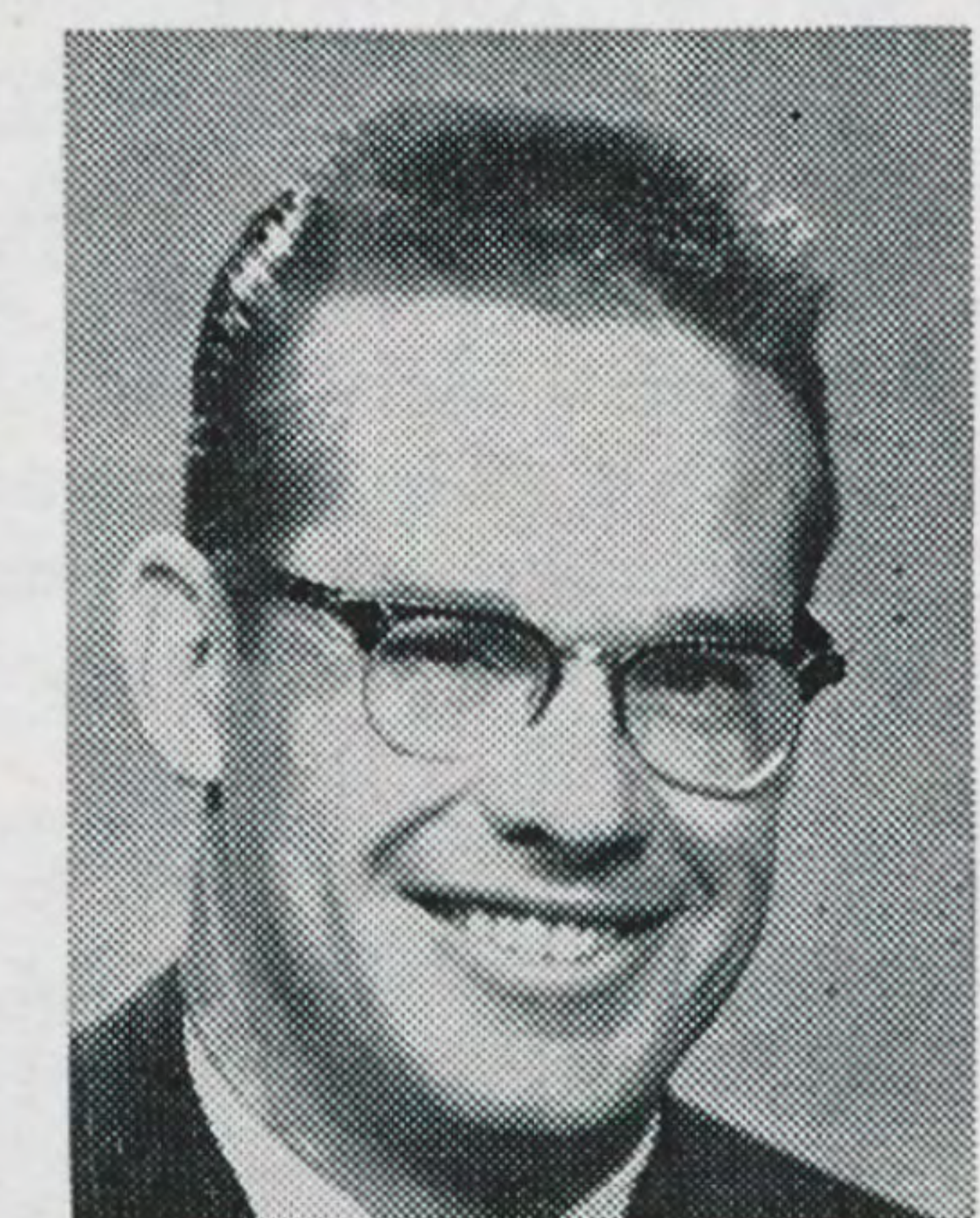
CLARA WILHELM



R. L. (Dusty) BOWEN

R. L. (Dusty) BOWEN, well known valley horseman is director of the posse and portrays the part of Farrar again this year. This is his 20th year in the Play.

EDWIN CULTON has taken part in the Play for 16 years, 14 of which has been with the Indian dancers, the group which he is directing in this year's performance.

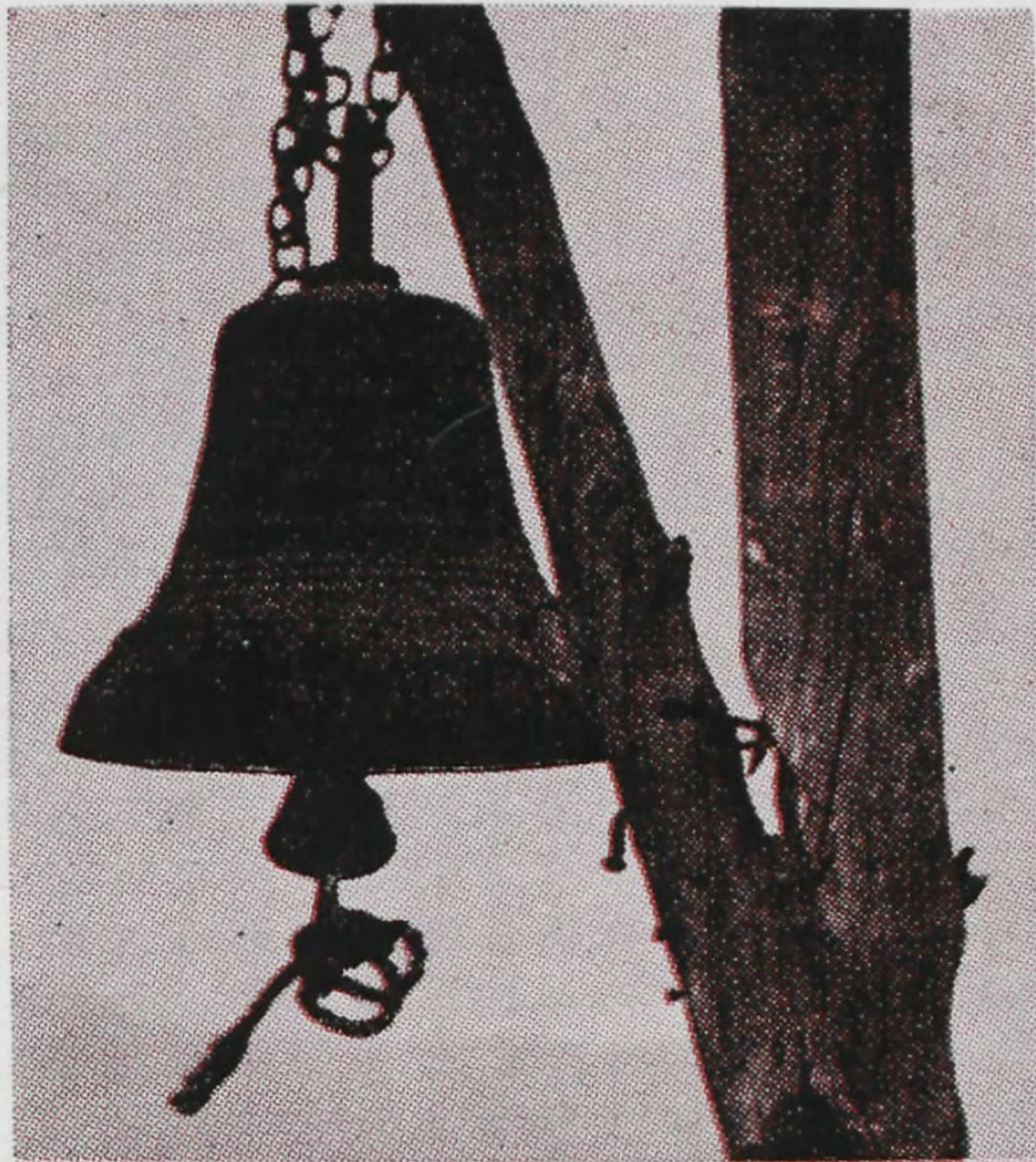


EDWIN CULTON

A Community Non-Profit Corporation . . .

Affairs of the Ramona Outdoor Play are administered through a non-profit community corporation, the Ramona Pageant Association, which has been formed through a coalition of the Hemet and San Jacinto Chambers of Commerce . . . a desire expressed by the late Garnet Holme in leaving the rights of the play to the two communities.

Just as the cast is composed of farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors and housewives, the board of directors of the association is truly a cross section of the two communities. Board members are selected by the two valley chambers of commerce. Many of the board members have portrayed parts in the play and all devote much of their spare time to the development of this community project without remuneration.



This beautiful bell was presented by Richard P. Benton in memory of the late Garnet Holme.



Garnet Holme . . .

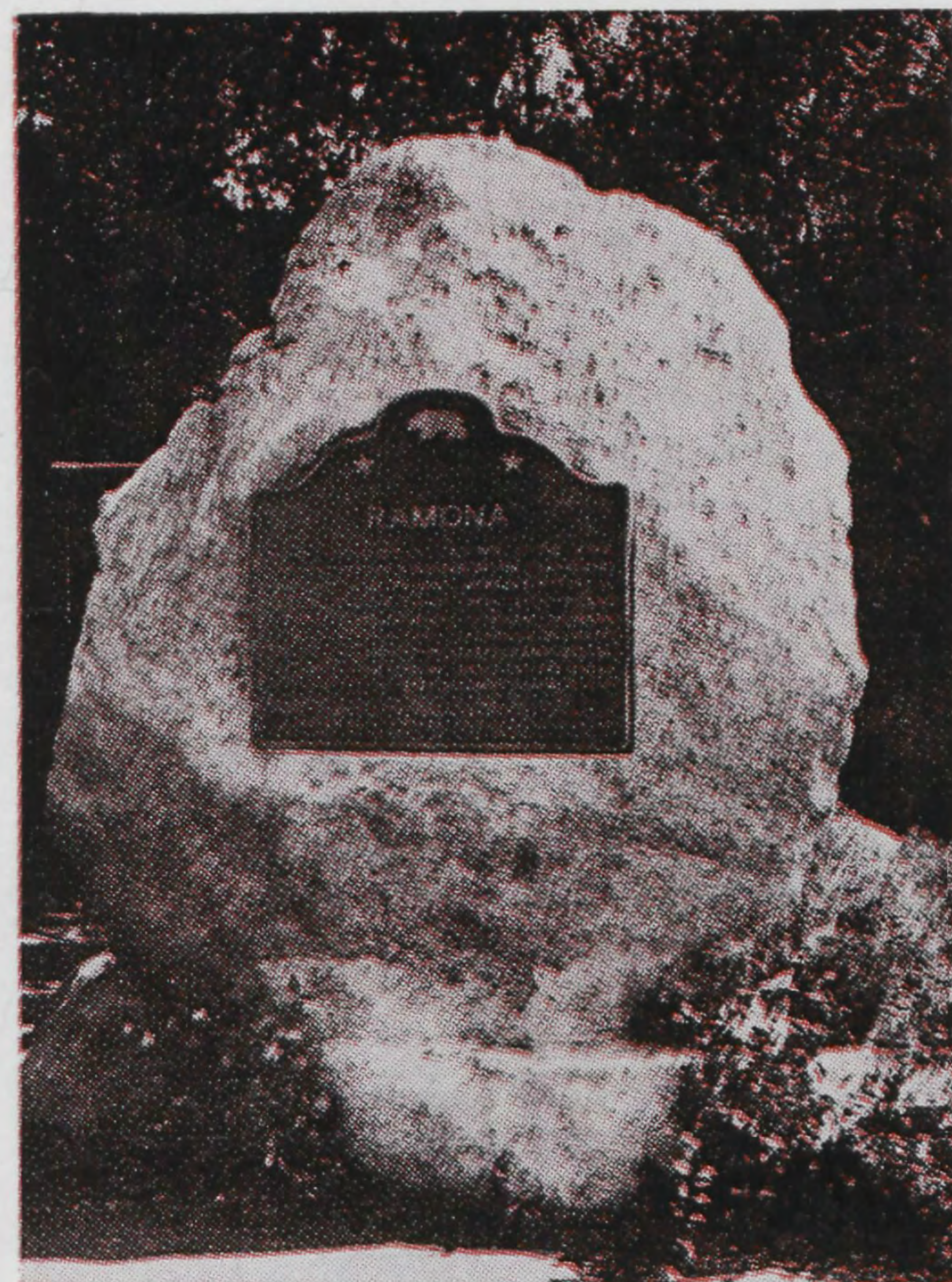
"The play of 'Ramona' and all its royalties and fees, I should like to be given to the people of Hemet and San Jacinto, because they are my friends." Extract from the last will and testament of Garnet Holme.

Garnet Holme, author and original director of the Ramona Pageant, lives in the hearts of the people of Hemet and San Jacinto. His accidental death, at his home near Larkspur on February 12, 1929, was a severe blow to his legion of friends throughout California, his state of adoption.

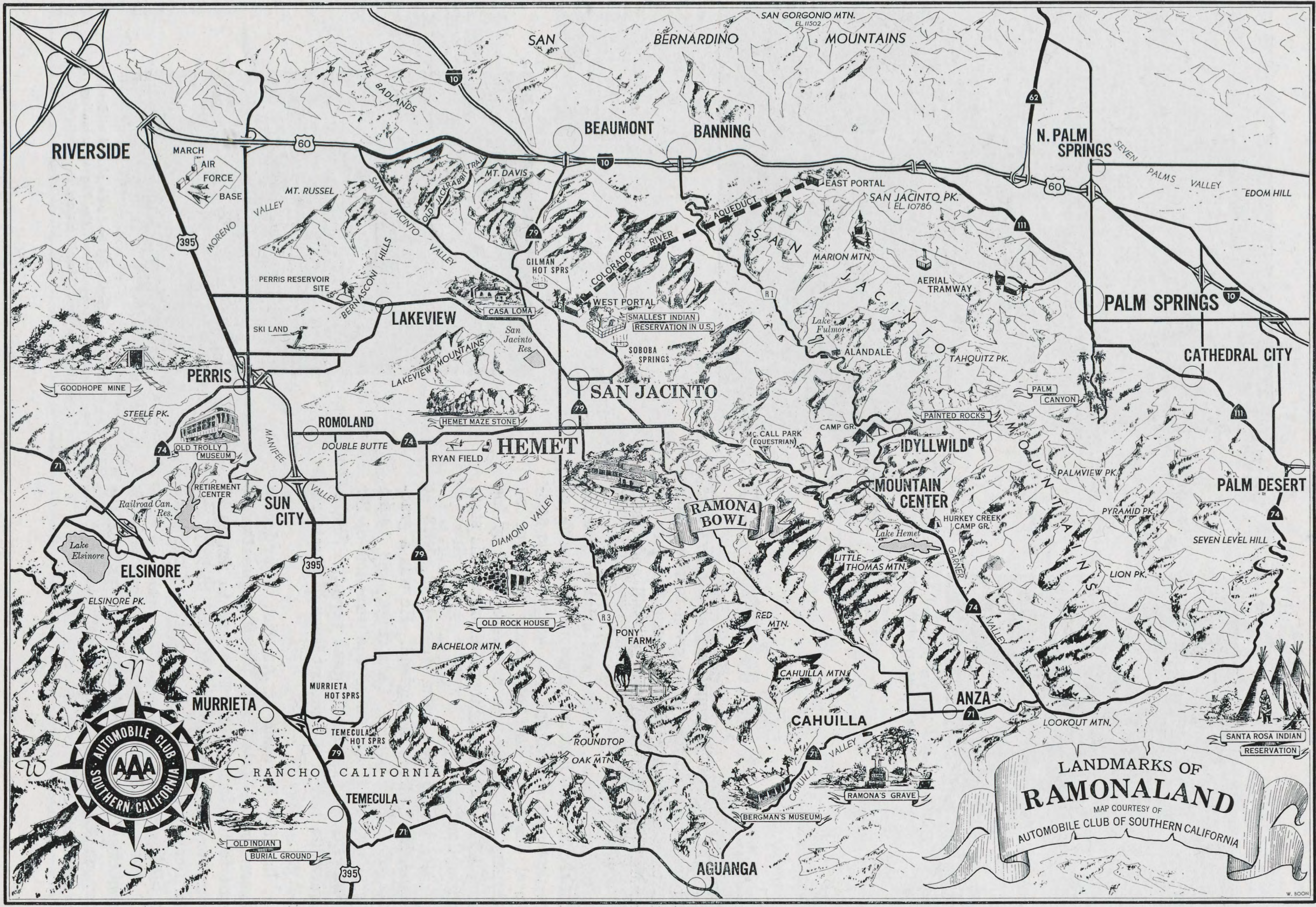
Mr. Holme was born August 11, 1873 at Hemel, Hempstead, in England. He was a graduate of Christ College, Cambridge, and began the study of his art under the direction of Sir Frank Benson, England's most versatile Shakespearean actor, in the ancient town of Stratford-on-Avon.

In 1904 he came to America to produce a pageant in the Yale Bowl. Shortly thereafter he came to California, where he was to devote 25 years to the preservation of the history and glorification of the simple romances of the Golden State.

His greatest fame, however, came with his production of a score of outdoor plays, but the Ramona Pageant was his finest play and his greatest success.



California Centennial landmark placed at Bowl entrance in recognition of the Pageant's ranking significance in California history.



**LANDMARKS OF
 RAMONALAND**
 MAP COURTESY OF
 AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA