

FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson

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Wildflower Report— Flowers in boom are: sunflowers, Jimson weed, tumbleweed, camphor weed, Turkey mullein, horseweed, and goldenbush (Alkali?). Coyote melon has finished blooming and has formed the gourds, ragweed has the male flowers starting to bloom and the California buckwheat has gone to seed.



Turkey mullein



Coyote melon



Tumbleweed



Goldenbush

Horseweed

Erigeron canadensis



Horseweed is a native plant of North American grasslands, and can be found in pastures, meadows, cultivated fields, along roadsides and in waste areas. This plant originated in North America but has become widespread and now inhabits Central America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. It can grow from 1 to 5 feet tall with small inconspicuous white ray flowers with a yellow disk. The seeds are dispersed by the wind and is a prolific seed producer with approximately 700,000 seeds per pound.

This plant goes by many names such as: horse's tail, fleabane, coltstail, marestail, and butterweed.

The Zuni people would insert the crusted flowers into the nostrils to cause sneezing. Other Native Americans used a preparation of the plant's leaves to treat a sore throat and dysentery. It is a diuretic and can make one sweat and it was boiled to make steam for sweat lodges. Young leaves can be eaten after boiling, dried leaves can be used as a seasoning with a flavor similar to tarragon. American Indians pulverized the young tops and leaves, eating them raw, similar to using an onion.

Horseweed has also been called Fleabane because the leaves were put in pet and human beds to keep away fleas.

In 2001 a plot survey of a portion of Rancho La Liebre located at the northern edge of the Antelope Valley in the 1850's was presented to Mrs. Del Troy, long time Tehachapi Heritage League member and Tomo Kahni State Park Volunteer. Reportedly, the map was authored by Edward F. Beale who became owner of the rancho and was at one point Surveyor General of the State of California and Nevada Territory. Mrs. Troy thought it proper to present the map to the Tomo Kahni group and in turn that group thought it proper to present it to Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Interpretive Association (PRMDIA). PRMDIA voted for Tomo Kahni to retain it. Presently the map is being kept with Tomo Kahni volunteer property in state storage.

In preparation for presentation of the map to PRMDIA Ernie Lostaunau was asked to write a brief biography of Beale, which follows.

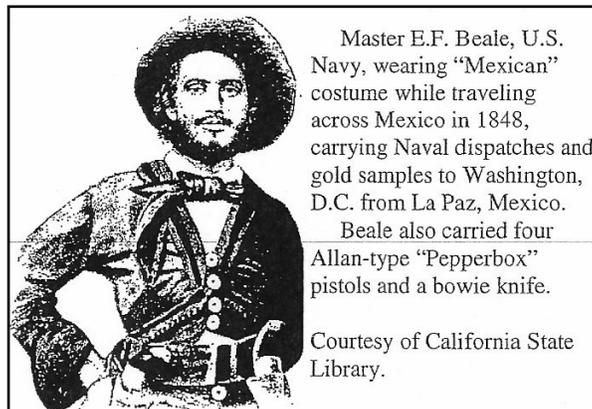
EDWARD FITZGERALD BEALE
“Mover and Shaker” in California History and An American Hero
By Ernie Lostaunau

Edward F. “Ned” Beale was born in the outskirts of Washington, D.C. on February 4, 1822, to a wealthy family. His formative years were typical of members of his social class and in December, 1836, he was appointed a midshipman in the Navy by President Andrew Jackson. During the next ten years he sailed over all parts of the world as a naval officer. The year 1846 found him in San Diego as part of Commodore Stockton’s forces during the war with Mexico.

Battle of San Pasqual, December 6, 1846: Beale, now a Navy Lieutenant, was part of a group of 39 men under Captain Archibald Gillespie, U.S.M.C., that had been sent by Commodore Stockton to join with General. S. W. Kearney near Warner’s ranch and warn him of Mexican forces in the area. (Following the bloodless conquest of New Mexico, Kearney, with a command of 200 men with Kit Carson as guide was sent to assist with the Conquest of California.) Gillespie successfully joined Kearney and while proceeding to San Diego, the Americans came upon a force of 150 Mexicans led by General Andres Pico near the Indian village of San Pascual. Though Kearney’s troops were somewhat jaded by the long winter journey from New Mexico, Kit Carson urged an attack, advising that the Mexicans would not fight. Kearney ordered an attack on the out-numbered enemy and the Mexican lancers engaged the Americans killing 19 and wounding 17 others, of whom three later died. The Mexicans lost one man with 11 wounded. Among the Americans wounded were Kearney, seriously, Gillespie, and Beale. Despite overwhelming losses, Kearney claimed victory.

Kearney's forces were now cut off from San Diego and volunteers were sought to reach Commodore Stockton in San Diego for help. Though suffering badly from his wounds and the cold weather, Beale, and Carson, volunteered and made it to San Diego where a relief party to rescue Kearney was formed and later rescued his army which was suffering badly from their wounds, hunger and the elements. A month later, on January 13, 1847, Pico capitulated to John C. Fremont at Cahuenga, formally ending hostilities in California.

Gold in California: Perhaps Beale is best known for his role in bringing word of the discovery of gold in California to the East. In July 1848, while serving aboard the flagship Ohio in the port of La Paz, Mexico, Lieutenant Beale volunteered as a courier to carry dispatches and placer gold samples to Washington. Selecting a route through Mexico, he first went by boat to Mazatlan and San Blas. Then, dressed as a Mexican carrying four revolvers and a Bowie knife he went by horseback with his Mexican guide to Guadalajara, harried by bandits all the way. Reaching Mexico City he rested several days, hosted by the American Minister to Mexico. There Beale met U.S. Grant and formed a lifelong friendship with him. Continuing to Veracruz, he caught an American steamer to Mobile, Alabama. Beale was first to reach the East with concrete proof of the discovery of gold in California. Word of his trip and news of gold made him an overnight hero. The account of his two-month trip is truly exciting reading for anyone interested in California and western history.



Master E.F. Beale, U.S. Navy, wearing "Mexican" costume while traveling across Mexico in 1848, carrying Naval dispatches and gold samples to Washington, D.C. from La Paz, Mexico.

Beale also carried four Allan-type "Pepperbox" pistols and a bowie knife.

Courtesy of California State Library.

Superintendent of Indian Affairs: In 1852 Beale resigned his commission in the Navy and returned to California to make his fortune. By then, Beale had established the reputation of a competent person who could get things done. President Fillmore then appointed him as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada. His mandate was to establish five reserves in the southern half of the state for the benefit of the Indians. He established only one, the Sebastian Reserve, near the Tejon Pass, considered a poor choice as it was situated on private lands, a Mexican Land Grant. Beale spent "lavishly" on improvements from which he later benefited when he purchased the Rancho El Tejon, on which the reserve was located. Many accusations were made against Beale as he received funds for the maintenance of 2,500 Indians, when reports showed there were never more than 1,200. In 1854, his successor found only 700 Indians living at Sebastian. Beale was later cleared of charges of malfeasance.

Brigadier General, State Militia: In 1855 the California Governor appointed Beale to this position to quell hostilities between whites and Indians in the Visalia area. After successfully establishing peace through negotiation, he resigned two months later. He returned to San Francisco where he had been living and played a role in limiting the depredations of the vigilante groups active in the city at the time. Beale liked the title of "General" and used it the rest of his life, confusing many who knew of his 16 years of service in the Navy achieving the rank of Lieutenant.

Surveyor General, California and Nevada: Wishing to serve in the Civil War, Beale applied to President Lincoln for a military commission, but was appointed Survey General instead. Among his accomplishments he established a road to Taos, New Mexico and surveyed other routes that are in use today. Accusations were made that much of his survey work was benefiting him and his friends. Lincoln is to have remarked, “Well, I appointed him Survey General out there, and I understand that he is monarch of all he has surveyed.” (It has been suggested that Lincoln kept Beale in California to monitor southern sympathy in the west during the Civil War.)

Ranchero: As noted earlier, Beale purchased Rancho El Tejon, a Mexican land grant of 97,617 acres. He added to his holding by purchasing three other ranchos, contiguous to El Tejon. One Rancho, La Liebre, at the northern edge of the Antelope Valley was purchased at 3-cents per acre. Combined with other lands, Beale’s vast Tejon Ranch then consisted of 270,000 acres.

Camels?: There are many who are of the opinion that Beale was responsible for the War Department’s experiment with the use of camels in the far west. Though the experiment lasted for several years, Beale’s role was limited to the use of 25 camels while on a contract survey along the 35th parallel. He was extremely reluctant to use them, but acquiesced to contract terms and learned that they could be of value as pack animals under certain conditions.

As most of his holdings were in Kern County, Beale spent a lot of his time in and around Bakersfield, making many contributions to the aesthetic and cultural development of the city. In his honor, one will find in Bakersfield: Beale Avenue, Beale Park, Beale Memorial Library, Beale Clock Tower, and General Beale Road, off the freeway to Tehachapi. Truxtun Avenue in Bakersfield was named after his son and his maternal grandfather.

Beale was appointed Minister to Austria–Hungary in 1876 by his old friend, U.S. Grant. In his later years he split his time between California and Washington, where he owned the now famous Decatur House, adjacent to the White House.

Edward F. Beale was married and had three children. He died in Pennsylvania on April 22, 1893, at the age of 71 and was buried at Washington, D.C. There are not many persons who played so many roles in the development of California and the West during the American Period.

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Ernie Lostaunau is a Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Interpretative Association (PRMDIA) Board Member and is a volunteer, training coordinator and tour guide for the Tomo-Kahni State Historic Park. Thank you Ernie for this very informative report.