

SIXTY YEARS
IN
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

1853-1913

CONTAINING THE REMINISCENCES OF

HARRIS NEWMARK

EDITED BY

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Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise.—MACAULAY.

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CHAPTER XXX

THE WOOL CRAZE

1872-1873

AS already stated, the price of wool in 1871 was exceedingly high and continued advancing until in 1872 when, as a result, great prosperity in Southern California was predicted. Enough wool had been bought by us to make what at that time was considered a very handsome fortune.¹ We commenced purchasing on the sheep's back in November, and continued buying everything that was offered until April, 1872, when we made the first shipment, the product being sold at forty-five cents per pound. As far as I am aware, the price of wool had never reached fifty cents anywhere in the world, it being ordinarily worth from ten to twelve cents; and without going into technicalities, which would be of no interest to the average reader, I will merely say that forty-five cents was a tremendously high figure for dirty, burry, California wool in the grease.² When the information arrived that this sale had been effected, I became wool-crazy, the more so since I knew that the particular shipment referred to was of very poor quality.

Colonel R. S. Baker, who was living on his ranch in Kern County, came to Los Angeles about that time, and we offered him fifty cents a pound for Beale & Baker's clip amounting to one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. His reply was that it would be impossible to sell without consulting Beale; but Beale proved as wool-crazy as I, and would not sell. It transpired that Beale & Baker did not succeed in effecting

a sale in San Francisco, where they soon offered their product, and that they concluded to ship it to Boston; the New England metropolis then, as now, being the most important wool-center in the United States. Upon its arrival, the wool was stored; and there it remained until, as Fate would have it, the entire shipment was later destroyed in the great Boston fire of 1872. As a result of this tremendous conflagration, the insurance company which carried their policy failed and Beale & Baker met with a great loss.

The brothers Philip, Eugène and Camille Garnier of the Encino Ranch—who, while generally operating separately, clubbed together at that time in disposing of their product—had a clip of wool somewhat exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The spokesman for the three was Eugène, and on the same day that I made Colonel Baker the offer of fifty cents, I told Eugène that I would allow him forty-eight and a half cents for the Garnier product. This offer he disdainfully refused, returning immediately to his ranch; and now, as I look back upon the matter, I do not believe that in my entire commercial experience I ever witnessed anything demonstrating so thoroughly, as did these wool transactions, the monstrous greed of man. The sequel, however, points the moral. My offer to the Garnier Brothers was made on a Friday. During that day and the next, we received several telegrams indicating that the crest of the craze had been reached, and that buyers refused to take hold. On Monday following the first visit of Eugène Garnier, he again came to town and wanted me to buy their wool at the price which I had quoted him on Friday; but by that time we had withdrawn from the market. My brother wired that San Francisco buyers would not touch it; hence the Garnier Brothers also shipped their product East and, after holding it practically a full year, finally sold it for sixteen and a half cents a pound in currency, which was then worth eighty-five cents on the dollar. The year 1872 is on record as the most disastrous wool season in our history, when millions were lost; and H. Newmark & Company suffered their share in the disaster.

It was in March that we purchased from Louis Wolfskill, through the instrumentality of L. J. Rose, the Santa Anita *rancho*, consisting of something over eight thousand acres, paying him eighty-five thousand dollars for this beautiful domain. The terms agreed upon were twenty thousand dollars down and four equal quarterly payments for the balance. In the light of the aftermath, the statement that our expectations of prospective wool profits inspired this purchase seems ludicrous, but it was far from laughable at the time; for it took less than sixty days for H. Newmark & Company to discover that buying ranches on any such basis was not a very safe policy to follow and would, if continued, result in disaster. Indeed, the outcome was so different from our calculations, that it pinched us somewhat to meet our obligations to Wolfskill. This purchase, as I shall soon show, proved a lucky one, and compensated for the earlier nervous and financial strain. John Simmons, who drove H. Newmark & Company's truck and slept in a barn in my back yard on Main Street, was so reliable a man that we made him overseer of the ranch. When we sold the property, Simmons was engaged by Lazard Frères, the San Francisco bankers, to do special service that involved the carrying of large sums of money.

When we bought the Santa Anita, there were five eucalyptus or blue gum trees growing near the house. I understood at the time that these had been planted by William Wolfskill from seed sent to him by a friend in Australia; and that they were the first eucalyptus trees cultivated in Southern California. Sometime early in 1875, the Forest Grove Association started the first extensive tract of eucalyptus trees seen in Los Angeles, and in a decade or two the eucalyptus had become a familiar object; one tree, belonging to Howard & Smith, florists at the corner of Olive and Ninth streets, attaining,* after a growth of nineteen years, a height of one hundred and thirty-four feet.

On the morning of March 26th, Los Angeles was visited by an earthquake of sufficient force to throw people out of bed,

*Blown down, in a wind-storm, on the night of April 13th, 1915.

many men, women and children seeking safety by running out in their night-clothes. A day or two afterward excited riders came in from the Owens River Valley bringing reports which showed the quake to have been the worst, so far as loss of life was concerned, that had afflicted California since the memorable catastrophe of 1812.

Intending thereby to encourage the building of railroads, the Legislature, on April 4th, 1870, authorized the various Boards of Supervisors to grant aid whenever the qualified voters so elected. This seemed a great step forward, but anti-railroad sentiment, as in the case of Banning's line, again manifested itself here. The Southern Pacific, just incorporated as a subsidiary of the Central Pacific, was laying its tracks down the San Joaquín Valley; yet there was grave doubt whether it would include Los Angeles or not. It contemplated a line through Teháchepi Pass; but from that point two separate surveys had been made, one by way of Soledad Pass *via* Los Angeles, through costly tunnels and over heavy grades; the other, straight to the Needles, over an almost level plain along the Thirty-fifth parallel, as anticipated by William H. Seward in his Los Angeles speech. At the very time when every obstacle should have been removed, the opposition so crystallized in the Legislature that a successful effort was made to repeal the subsidy law; but thanks to our representatives, the measure was made ineffective in Los Angeles County, should the voters specifically endorse the project of a railroad.

In April, 1872, Tom Mott and B. D. Wilson wrote Leland Stanford that a meeting of the taxpayers, soon to be called, would name a committee to confer with the railroad officials; and Stanford replied that he would send down E. W. Hyde to speak for the company. About the first of May, however, a few citizens gathered for consultation at the Board of Trade room; and at that meeting it was decided unanimously to send to San Francisco a committee of two, consisting of Governor Downey and myself, there to convey to the Southern Pacific Company the overtures of the City. We accordingly visited Collis P. Huntington, whose headquarters were at the Grand

Hotel; and during our interview we canvassed the entire situation. In the course of this interesting discussion, Huntington displayed some engineer's maps and showed us how, in his judgment, the railroad, if constructed to Los Angeles at all, would have to enter the city. When the time for action arrived, the Southern Pacific built into Los Angeles along the lines indicated in our interview with Huntington.

On Saturday afternoon, May 18th, 1872, a public meeting was held in the Los Angeles Court-house. Governor Downey called the assembly to order; whereupon H. K. S. O'Melveny was elected President and Major Ben C. Truman, Secretary. Speeches were made by Downey, Phineas Banning, B. D. Wilson, E. J. C. Kewen and C. H. Larrabee; and resolutions were adopted pledging financial assistance from the County, provided the road was constructed within a given time. A Committee was then appointed to seek general information concerning railroads likely to extend their lines to Los Angeles; and on that Committee I had the honor of serving with F. P. F. Temple, A. F. Coronel, H. K. S. O'Melveny, J. G. Downey, S. B. Caswell, J. M. Griffith, Henry Dalton, Andrés Pico, L. J. Rose, General George Stoneman and D. W. Alexander. A few days later, Wilson, Rose and W. R. Olden of Anaheim were sent to San Francisco to discuss terms with the Southern Pacific; and when they returned, they brought with them Stanford's representative, Hyde. Temple, O'Melveny and I were made a special committee to confer with Hyde in drawing up ordinances for the County; and these statutes were immediately passed by the Supervisors. The Southern Pacific agreed to build fifty miles of its main trunk line through the County, with a branch line to Anaheim; and the County, among other conditions, was to dispose of its stock in the Los Angeles & San Pedro Railroad to the Southern Pacific Company.

When all this matter was presented to the people, the opposition was even greater than in the campaign of 1868. One newspaper—the *Evening Express*—while declaring that “railway companies are soulless corporations, invariably selfish, with a love for money,” even maintained that “because they

are rich, they have no more right to build to us than has Governor Downey to build our schoolhouses." Public addresses were made to excited, demonstrative audiences by Henry T. Hazard, R. M. Widney and others who favored the Southern Pacific. On the evening of November 4th, or the night before the election, the Southern Pacific adherents held a torchlight procession and a mass-meeting, at the same time illuminating the pueblo with the customary bonfires. When the vote was finally counted, it was found that the Southern Pacific had won by a big majority; and thus was made the first concession to the railroad which has been of such paramount importance in the development of this section of the State.¹

In 1872, Nathaniel C. Carter, who boasted that he made for the Government the first American flag woven by machinery, purchased and settled upon a part of the Flores *rancho* near San Gabriel. Through wide advertising, Carter attracted his Massachusetts friends to this section; and in 1874 he started the Carter excursions and brought train-loads of people to Los Angeles.

Terminating a series of wanderings by sea and by land, during which he had visited California in 1849, John Lang, father of Gustav J. (once a Police Commissioner), came to Los Angeles for permanent residence in 1872, bringing a neat little pile of gold. With part of his savings he purchased the five acres since known as the Laurel Tract on Sixteenth Street, where he planted an orchard, and some of the balance he put into a loan for which, against his will, he had to take over the lot on Spring Street between Second and Third where the Lang Building now stands. Soon after his advent here, Lang found himself one of four persons of the same name, which brought about such confusion between him, the pioneer at Lang's Station and two others, that the bank always labelled him "Lang No. 1," while it called the station master "Lang No. 2." In 1866, Lang had married, in Victoria, Mrs. Rosine Eberhardt,² a sister of Mrs. Kiln Messer; and his wife refusing to live at the lonesome ranch, Lang bought, for four hundred dollars, the lot on Fort

Spring streets, where the Federal Building now stands, and where the *Times*, then the youngest newspaper in Los Angeles, was later housed; and there J. C. Littlefield acted as the first Librarian. In 1874, the State Legislature passed an enabling act for a Public Library in Los Angeles, and from that time on public funds contributed to the support of the worthy undertaking.

On January 1st, 1873, M. A. Newmark, who had come to Los Angeles eight years before, was admitted into partnership with H. Newmark & Company; and three years later, on February 27th, he married Miss Harriet,^r daughter of J. P. Newmark. Samuel Cohn having died, the associates then were: Kaspere Cohn, M. J. Newmark, M. A. Newmark and myself.

On February 1st, 1873, two job printers, Yarnell & Caystile, who had opened a little shop at 14 Commercial Street, began to issue a diminutive paper called the *Weekly Mirror*, with four pages but ten by thirteen inches in size and three columns to the page; and this miniature news-sheet, falling wet from the press every Saturday, was distributed free. Success greeted the advertising venture and the journal was known as the smallest newspaper on the Coast. A month later, William M. Brown joined the firm, thenceforth called Yarnell, Caystile & Brown. On March 19th, the publishers added a column to each page, announcing, rather prophetically perhaps, their intention of attaining a greatness that should know no obstacle or limit. In November, the *Mirror* was transferred to a building on Temple Street, near the Downey Block, erected for its special needs; and there it continued to be published until, in 1887, it was housed with the *Times*.

Nels Williamson, to whom I have referred, married a native Californian, and their eldest daughter, Mariana, in 1873 became the wife of António Franco Coronel, the gay couple settling in one of the old pueblo adobes on the present site of Bishop & Company's factory; and there they were visited by Helen Hunt Jackson when she came here in the early eighties. In 1886, they moved opposite to the home that Coronel built on the southwest corner of Seventh Street and Central Avenue.

Educated here at the public and the Sisters' schools, Mrs. Coronel was a recognized leader in local society, proving very serviceable in the preparation of *Ramona* and receiving, in return, due acknowledgment from the distinguished authoress who presented her with the first copy¹ of the book published.

Daniel Freeman, a Canadian who came in 1873, was one of many to be attracted to California through Nordhoff's famous book. After looking at many ranches, Freeman inspected the Centinela with Sir Robert Burnett, the Scotch owner then living there. Burnett insisted that the ranch was too dry for farming and cited his own necessity of buying hay at thirty dollars a ton; but Freeman purchased the twenty-five thousand acres, stocked them with sheep and continued long in that business, facing many a difficulty attendant upon the dry seasons, notably in 1875-76, when he lost fully twenty-two thousand head.

L. H. Titus, who bought from J. D. Woodworth the land in his San Gabriel orchard and vineyard, early used iron water-pipes for irrigation. A bold venture of the same year was the laying of iron water-pipes throughout East Los Angeles, at great expense, by Dr. John S. Griffin and Governor John G. Downey. About the same time, the directors of the Orange Grove Association which as we shall later see founded Pasadena, used iron pipe for conducting water, first to a good reservoir and then to their lands, for irrigating. In 1873 also, the Alhambra Tract, then beginning to be settled as a fashionable suburb of Los Angeles, obtained its water supply through the efforts of B. D. Wilson and his son-in-law, J. De Barth Shorb, who constructed large reservoirs near the San Gabriel Mission, piped water to the tract and sold it to local consumers.

James R. Toberman, destined to be twice rechosen Mayor of Los Angeles, was first elected in 1873, defeating Cristóbal Aguilar, an honored citizen of early days, who had thrice been Mayor and was again a candidate. Toberman made a record for fiscal reform by reducing the City's indebtedness over thirty thousand dollars and leaving a balance of about twenty-five thousand in the Treasury; while, at the same time, he caused

the tax-rate during his administration to dwindle, from one dollar and sixty cents per hundred to one dollar. Toberman Street bears this Mayor's name.

In 1873, President Grant appointed Henry Kirke White Bent, who had arrived in 1868, Postmaster of Los Angeles.

The several agitations for protection against fire had, for a long time no tangible results—due most probably to the lack of water facilities; but after the incorporation of the Los Angeles Water Company and the introduction of two or three hydrants, thirty-eight loyal citizens of the town in April organized themselves into the first volunteer fire company, popularly termed the 38's, imposing a fee of a dollar a month. Some of the yeomen who thus set the ball a-rolling were Major Ben C. Truman, Tom Rowan, W. J. Brodrick, Jake Kuhrts, Charley Miles, George Tiffany, Aaron Smith, Henry T. Hazard, Cameron E. Thom, Fred Eaton, Matthew Keller, Dr. J. S. Crawford, Sidney Lacey, John Cashin and George P. McLain; and such was their devotion to the duty of both allaying and producing excitement, that it was a treat to stand by the side of the dusty street and watch the boys, bowling along, answer the fire-bell—the fat as well as the lean hitched to their one hose-cart. This cart, pulled by men, was known as the *jumper*—a name widely used among early volunteer firemen and so applied because, when the puffing and blowing enthusiasts drew the cart after them, by means of ropes, the two-wheeled vehicle jumped from point to point along the uneven surface of the road. The first engine of the 38's, known as Fire Engine No. 1, was housed, I think, back of the Pico House, but was soon moved to a building on Spring Street near Franklin and close to the City Hall.

About 1873, or possibly 1874, shrimps first appeared in the local market.

In 1873, the Los Angeles *Daily News* suspended publication. A. J. King had retired on the first of January, 1870, to be succeeded by Charles E. Beane; on October 10th, 1872, Alonzo Waite had sold his interest and Beane alone was at the helm when the ship foundered.

To resume the narrative of the *Daily Star*. In July, Henry

Hamilton sold both the paper and the job-printing office for six thousand dollars to Major Ben C. Truman, and the latter conducted the *Star* for three or four years, filling it brimful of good things just as his more fiery predecessor had done.

John Lang—"number two"—the cultivator of fruit on what was afterward Washington Gardens, who established Lang's Station and managed the sulphur springs and the hotel there, in July killed a bear said to have been one of the grizzliest grizzlies ever seen on the Coast. Lang started after M. Bruin and, during an encounter in the San Fernando range that nearly cost his life, finally shot him. The bear tipped the beam—forbid it that anyone should question the reading of the scales!—at two thousand, three hundred and fifty pounds; and later, as gossip had it, the pelt was sold to a museum in Liverpool, England. This adventure, which will doubtless bear investigation, recalls another hunt, by Colonel William Butts, later editor of the *Southern Californian*, in which the doughty Colonel, while rolling over and over with the infuriated beast, plunged a sharp blade into the animal's vitals; but only after Butts's face, arms and legs had been horribly lacerated. Butts's bear, a hundred hunters in San Luis Obispo County might have told you, weighed twenty-one hundred pounds—or more.

Dismissing these bear stories, some persons may yet be interested to learn of the presence here, in earlier days, of the ferocious wild boar. These were met with, for a long time, in the wooded districts of certain mountainous land-tracts owned by the Ábilas, and there wild swine were hunted as late as 1873.

In the summer, D. M. Berry, General Nathan Kimball, Calvin Fletcher and J. H. Baker came to Los Angeles from Indianapolis, representing the California Colony of Indiana, a coöperative association which proposed to secure land for Hoosiers who wished to found a settlement in Southern California. This scheme originated with Dr. Thomas Balch Elliott of Indianapolis, Berry's brother-in-law and an army surgeon who had established the first grain elevator in Indiana and

whose wife, now ill, could no longer brave the severe winters of the middle West.

Soon after their arrival, Wall Street's crash brought ruin to many subscribers and the members of the committee found themselves stranded in Los Angeles. Berry opened a real estate office on Main Street near Arcadia, for himself and the absent Elliott; and one day, at the suggestion of Judge B. S. Eaton, Baker visited the San Pasqual *rancho*, then in almost primeval glory, and was so pleased with what he saw that he persuaded Fletcher to join Dr. Elliott, Thomas H. Croft of Indianapolis and himself in incorporating the San Gabriel Orange Grove Association, with one hundred shares at two hundred and fifty dollars each. The Association then bought out Dr. J. S. Griffin's interest, or some four thousand acres in the ranch, paying about twelve dollars and a half per acre, after which some fifteen hundred of the choicest acres were subdivided into tracts of from fifteen to sixty acres each.

The San Pasqual settlement was thus called for a while the Indiana Colony, though but a handful of Hoosiers had actually joined the movement; and Dr. and Mrs. Elliott, reaching Los Angeles on December 1st, 1874, immediately took possession of their grant on the banks of the Arroyo Seco near the Frémont Trail. On April 22d, 1875, The Indiana Colony was discontinued as the name of the settlement; it being seen that a more attractive title should be selected. Dr. Elliott wrote to a college-mate in the East for an appropriate Indian name; and *Pasadena* was adopted as Chippewa for "Crown of the Valley." Linguists, I am informed, do not endorse the word as Indian of any kind, but it is a musical name, and now famous and satisfactory. Dr. Elliott threw all his energy into the cultivation of oranges, but it was not long before he saw, with a certain prophetic vision, that not the fruit itself, but the health-giving and charming qualities of the San Pasqual climate were likely to prove the real asset of the colonists and the foundation of their prosperity. Pasadena and South Pasadena, therefore, owe their existence largely to the longing of a frail Indiana woman for a less rigorous climate and her dream that

in the sunny Southland along the Pacific she should find health and happiness.

M. J. Newmark¹ was really instrumental, more than anyone else, in first persuading D. M. Berry to come to California. He had met Berry in New York and talked to him of the possibility of buying the Santa Anita *rancho*, which we were then holding for sale; and on his return he traveled homeward by way of Indiana, stopping off at Indianapolis in order to bring Berry out here to see the property. Owing to the high price asked, however, Berry and his associates could not negotiate the purchase, and so the matter was dropped.

Lawson D. Hollingsworth and his wife, Lucinda, Quakers from Indiana, opened the first grocery at the crossroads in the new settlement, and for many years were popularly spoken of as Grandpa and Grandma Hollingsworth. Dr. H. T. Hollingsworth, their son, now of Los Angeles, kept the Post Office in the grocery, receiving from the Government for his services the munificent sum of—twenty-five cents a week.

The summer of 1873 was marked by the organization of a corporation designed to advance the general business interests of Los Angeles and vicinity. This was the Chamber of Commerce or, as it was at first called, the Board of Trade²; and had its origin in a meeting held on August 1st in the old Court-House on the site of the present Bullard Block. Ex-Governor John G. Downey was called to the chair; and J. M. Griffith was made Secretary *pro tem*. Before the next meeting, over one hundred representative merchants registered for membership, and on August 9th, a constitution and by-laws were adopted, a board of eleven Directors elected and an admission fee of five dollars agreed upon. Two days later, the organization was incorporated, with J. G. Downey, S. Lazard, M. J. Newmark, H. W. Hellman, P. Beaudry, S. B. Caswell, Dr. J. S. Griffin, R. M. Widney, C. C. Lips, J. M. Griffith and I. W. Lord, as Directors; and these officers chose Solomon Lazard as the first President and I. W. Lord as the first Secretary. Judge Widney's office in the Temple Block was the meeting-place. The Chamber unitedly and enthusiastically set to work to

push forward the commercial interests of Southern California; and the first appropriation by Congress for the survey and improvement of San Pedro Harbor was effected mainly through the new society's efforts. Descriptive pamphlets setting forth the advantages of our locality were distributed throughout the East; and steps were taken to build up the trade with Arizona and the surrounding territory. In this way the Chamber of Commerce labored through the two or three succeeding years, until bank failures, droughts and other disasters, of which I shall speak, threw the cold blanket of discouragement over even so commendable an enterprise and for the time being its activities ceased.

On October 3d, C. A. Storke founded the *Daily and Weekly Herald*, editing the paper until August, 1874 when J. M. Bassett became its editor. In a few months he retired and John M. Baldwin took up the quill.

In the autumn of 1873, Barnard Brothers set in operation the first woolen mill here, built in 1868 or 1869 by George Hansen and his associates in the Canal and Reservoir Company. It was located on the ditch along the *cañon* of the Arroyo de Los Reyes—now Figueroa Street; and for fifteen years or more was operated by the Barnards and the Coulters, after which it was turned into an ice factory.

In March of the preceding year, I sent my son Maurice to New York, expecting him there to finish his education. It was thought best, however, to allow him, in 1873, to proceed across the ocean and on to Paris where he might also learn the French language, at that time an especially valuable acquisition in Los Angeles. To this latter decision I was led when Zadoc Kahn, Grand Rabbi of Paris and afterward Grand Rabbi of France, and a brother-in-law of Eugene Meyer, signified his willingness to take charge of the lad; and for three years the Grand Rabbi and his excellent wife well fulfilled their every obligation as temporary guardians. How great an advantage, indeed, this was will be readily recognized by all familiar with the published life of Zadoc Kahn and his reputation as a scholar and pulpit orator. He was a man

of the highest ideals, as was proved in his unflinching activity, with Émile Zola, in the defense and liberation of the long-persecuted Dreyfus.

Sometime in December, L. C. Tibbetts, one of the early colonists at Riverside, received a small package from a friend at Washington, D. C., after having driven sixty-five miles to Los Angeles to get it; and he took it out of the little express office without attracting any more attention than to call forth the observation of the clerk that some one must care a lot about farming to make so much fuss about two young trees. "'Tis nothing, says the fool!" The package in question contained two small orange trees from Bahia, Brazil, brought to the United States by the Agricultural Department and destined to bestow upon Tibbetts the honor of having originated the navel orange industry of California.

It was in the early seventies that Professor O. S. Fowler visited Los Angeles to lecture upon phrenology, and to examine the youthful craniums of the Pueblo, characterizing their major and minor features, and prophesying for many an offspring a brilliant future.

In 1873, Drum Barracks at Wilmington were offered by the Government at public auction; and what had cost a million dollars or so to install, was knocked down for less than ten thousand dollars to B. D. Wilson, who donated it for educational purposes.

During the winter of 1873-74, the Southern Pacific commenced the construction of its Anaheim branch; and the first train from Los Angeles to the thriving, expectant German settlement made the run in January, 1875.

Max Cohn, a nephew, arrived in Los Angeles in 1873 and clerked for H. Newmark & Company for a number of years. In December, 1885, when I retired from the wholesale grocery business, Max became a full partner. In 1888, failing health compelled him, although a young man, to seek European medical advice; and he entered a sanatorium at Falkenstein, in the Taunus Mountains where, in 1889, he died.