



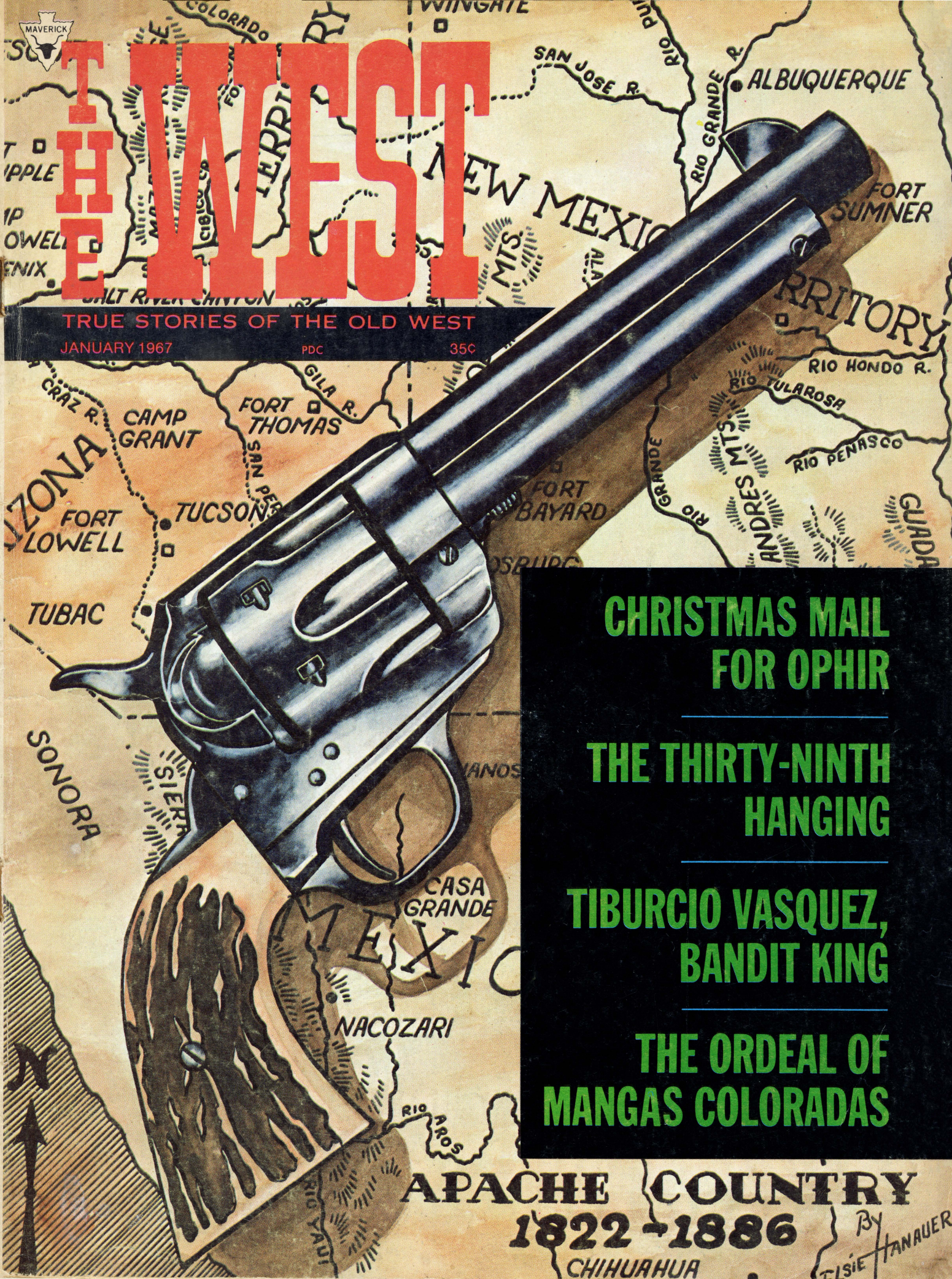
# THE WEST

TRUE STORIES OF THE OLD WEST

JANUARY 1967

PDC

35C



**CHRISTMAS MAIL  
FOR OPHIR**

**THE THIRTY-NINTH  
HANGING**

**TIBURCIO VASQUEZ,  
BANDIT KING**

**THE ORDEAL OF  
MANGAS COLORADAS**

**APACHE COUNTRY  
1822-1886**

CHIHUAHUA

By  
TISIE HANAUER

# Tiburcio Vasquez,

**Vasquez was a man of great appetites, much vanity and a propensity to regard himself as a Robin Hood avenging himself upon the gringo citizenry of early California**

Photo: San Jose Landmarks Commission.

The carpenters were finished. Inside the jail, the condemned prisoner stood near the barred window of his cell, looking out at the raw lumber gallows where he would die tomorrow. Then he turned away and stepped forward, under the watchful eyes of Sheriff Adams and the other men in the room.

A small, sparsely built Mexican, with a raven black beard covering his narrow face from his mustache line down, he stood less than five feet six inches tall and weighed less than one hundred thirty pounds. He looked quite unlike the imagined image of the fiery, ruthless bandit leader who had created a reign of terror from the mother lode country of Central California, south to the Mexican Border.

He leaned over the empty coffin that had been brought to him for his examination, and patted the soft white satin cushion where his head would rest after the execution the next day. His fingers brushed down lightly over the rich cloth lining that ran the length of the casket. Then he straightened, and speaking directly to the sheriff, said calmly, "I can sleep here forever very well."

The peace officer returned the bandit's steady gaze. As a lawman with a trained sixth sense, tuned to the passions of wild, lawless men, he was thinking of the rumors that were running rampant through the streets and alleys of San Jose. It was being said that this man, Tiburcio Vasquez, the bandit king, convicted of murder and sentenced to death by an authorized court of the state of California, would never hang.

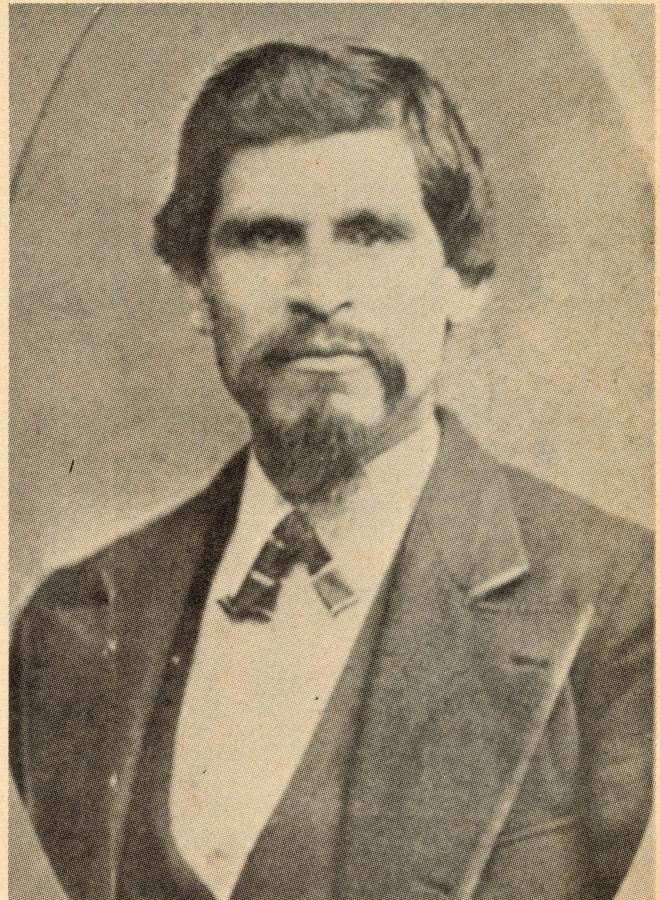
Sheriff Adams knew that a note had been found, conversations overheard and reported. The word was out that Cleovaro Chavez, the trusted lieutenant of the condemned desperado, would ride upon the jail and effect the release of his captain.

Now the sheriff asked himself whether the soft words of Vasquez and his easy manner were those of a man ready to accept his fate, or the equally lulling words of deception calculated to get him to reduce his guard, as a prelude to an escape attempt.

After all, Vasquez had escaped from San Quentin while serving his first sentence sixteen years before. And with Chavez, the fire-eating compadre of the doomed man still on the loose and threatening to burn the countryside if they didn't let his old friend go, it was a situation filled with tension.

And it had been so ever since the bandit's capture, before, during and after the trial. A few days after the death verdict had been reached a letter, signed by Chavez had been dropped into the Wells, Fargo & Company express box at Hollister, San Bonito County. He stated that he had committed all of the crimes for which Tiburcio Vasquez had been convicted. He said he would have made this fact known before this date, but he had been out of the area and had just returned. He further wrote in his letter that if Vasquez was executed he would raid and pillage the countryside as in the days of Joaquin Murietta, and to quote his exact words: "The just and the unjust alike will be reached by my revenge."

Shortly thereafter Chavez had started to make good his Threat with a raid on Scoby's Store on the south fork of the Kern River. Horses, much goods and \$800 in cash had been taken. And while Chavez had been driven off before having the chance to make good his threat to burn the town to the ground,



Tiburcio Vasquez awaiting trial at San Jose.

the posses had been unable to capture him.

The wily bandit had eluded all pursuit and fled to the safety of the mountains where it was hoped he would stay.

The lawman, Adams, was no beginner. He had been sheriff of Santa Clara County for enough years to know his business well. Every available man was on guard in the jail or in the streets surrounding the immediate area.

Some of the deputies, dressed as ordinary cowboys and miners, had been given orders to drift through the saloons and business houses with their ears open and their mouths shut. They would bring to him any reports that might indicate that either a lynch mob was forming or an escape attempt was about to be made.

Also Sheriff Adams had taken strong assurance from the words of the good padre, Father Serda. The Catholic priest had told him that whatever heinous crimes Vasquez had committed in his past, he now realized the error of his ways.

"He has made his peace with God," the old priest had told him. "Now he is ready to make his peace with man."

The sheriff's attention was now pulled back to the scene in

# Bandit King

by Bruno Coletti



Photo: Covert Martin.

Facsimile of souvenir composite photo sold after Vasquez' capture; center scene is of capture locale.

front of him in the cell. The undertaker, Mr. Woodson, had removed the casket and Vasquez was trying on the pantaloons that he would wear on the trap.

"They're too tight," he complained, tugging at them. Then, making a wry face and apologizing, he concluded, "But then I won't have to use them much."

The rest of the day passed uneventfully. After a late supper, Vasquez retired shortly before midnight, but soon arose, and talked with young Adams, the sheriff's son, before returning to his bunk to fall into a deep sleep.

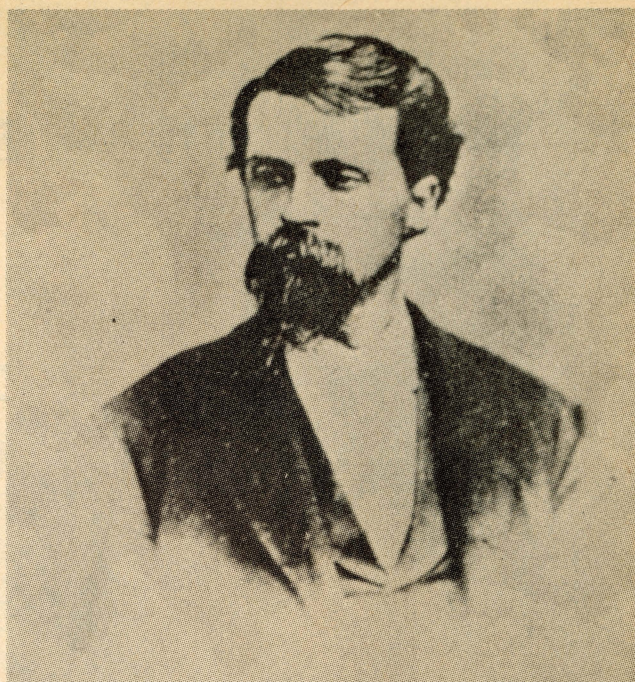
And young Adams, chosen for that last, long, lonely vigil, spent the night watching and waiting outside the cell. There was a cold white moon that washed through the window, spotlighting the slight figure on the narrow prison cot.

Adams later told of spending the entire night in conjecture as to what had brought the man in front of him to this date with the hangman's noose. What had changed him from one of a family of five laughing children, born and raised of respectable parents in a handsome adobe house in the city of Monterey, to a hunted killer brought to bay? Where had he taken the wrong turn? Why had he made the decision to leave his brothers and sisters forever, to roam the cold and lonely owl hoot trail?

Tiburcio Vasquez, a man of great appetites, much vanity, and a tendency to regard himself as a Robin Hood avenging himself upon the gringo citizenry of early California, was born in 1835 in the sunny, gentle city of Monterey.

Long before he reached the accepted age of manhood, he drenched himself in blood. Vasquez was barely seventeen when his name was linked with murder. He had fallen in with a villain of local notoriety, one Anastacias Garcia.

Tiburcio and Garcia, along with some other friends, attended a fandango in downtown Monterey. During the evening, wild tempers flashed in the angry night; knives followed a fist fight. And when Constable William Hardmont tried to make



**Newspaper reporter George Beers was member of posse.**

peace and establish order, he was slain.

The record does not show who actually killed the officer, but both Vasquez and Garcia fled to the hills that night. One of their companions, Jose Heiguerro was not so fortunate and the morning sun found him swaying at the end of vigilante hemp. Six months later, Garcia was to be captured and hanged by another vigilante group in Los Angeles.

This was the first of literally hundreds of crimes with which Vasquez was to be involved. First with the brash, devil-may-care attitude of youth and later with the cold blooded, revolting heartlessness of an experienced, callous killer. Vasquez was quickly to ride past the point of human redemption.

It may have been his Robin Hood complex that led him to his fate; at first he actually saw himself as an avenger of wrongs against the early Spanish Americans. But he soon adopted the opinion that any crime committed against the hated gringo was acceptable.

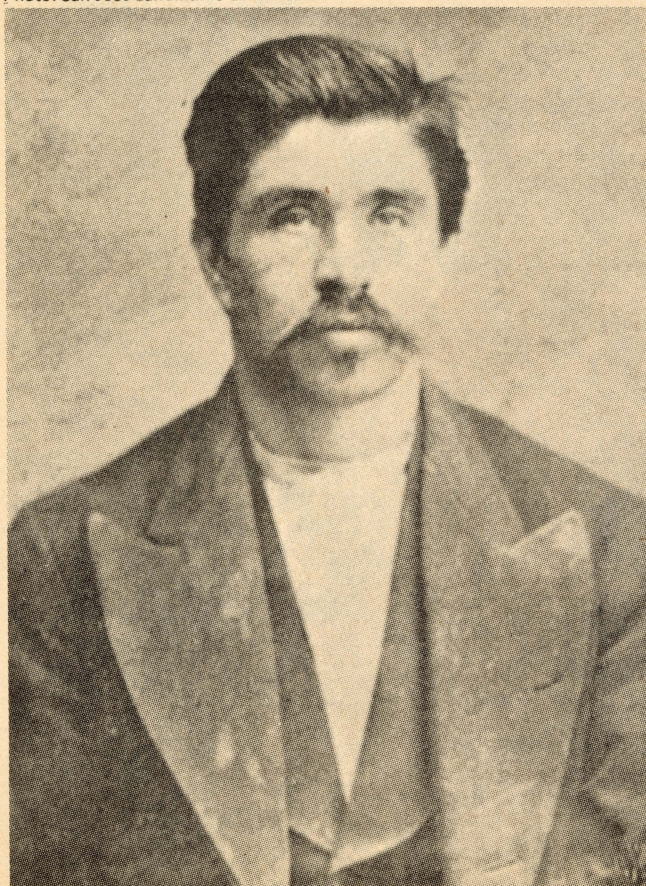
Indeed, when Vasquez was later captured, he told the editor of the Los Angeles Express that if he had had \$60,000, he could have recruited enough men and arms to take the State of California from the existing government. Many of the wonderfully warm, friendly, law-abiding Spanish Americans of the west were horrified by his criminality, which he insisted on associating with his racial background. They suffered from his image and they wanted his capture as strongly as the rest of the populace.

But it is also a well documented fact that as Vasquez ranged over the state of California, striking in widely scattered areas, that he was often helped by information from some of the local Mexican population. This intelligence enabled him to know many times where his pursuers were and when they would arrive so that he was able to escape ahead of them as though he had eyes in the back of his head.

On a grey morning in July of 1857, with a biting breeze drifting off the clumps of greasewood that sat out in the desert, Vasquez and one sole companion, Juan Soto, slipped into a remuda of horses on a ranch near the Santa Clara River. Tiburcio gentled himself up onto the back of a magnificent roan while Soto put a quiet loop on a chestnut mare that struck his fancy. Together they drove off a sizable herd which they took all the way to Los Angeles.

Here their luck ran out and they were caught with the horses in their first attempt to sell them. Vasquez pleaded guilty and was sentenced to five years in San Quentin. After serving two

Photo: San Jose Landmarks Commission.



**Ardon Leiva — turned State's evidence against leader.**

years, he broke out in a mass escape. Making his way back to the mother lode country, he decided he had been captured because of the stupidity of his accomplice. He was proved wrong when his second attempt at horse stealing ended as badly as the first. Once again he was caught red handed with stolen horses in his possession.

Convicted, he was returned to San Quentin in August of 1859. This time he served his full sentence, and when he was finally released in 1863 he retreated to the rugged mountains of the bonanza country of California.

Working for a living still hadn't occurred to Tiburcio, for now he decided to become a gambler. Here, also, he was a failure. So, at last, he turned to what was to be his major talent.

The record shows that in a small village of Enriquita, an Italian butcher was found dead and \$400 which the slain man was known to have been carrying was missing. Sheriff Adams, then a young captain, was assigned to investigate the murder. Ironically, the law officer, who could not speak Spanish, hired a young man named Tiburcio Vasquez to act as an interpreter and aide. Given authority to do so, Vasquez quickly returned a verdict which read, "The deceased came to his death from a pistol bullet fired by some person or persons unknown." This would have been fine, but right after the inquest, Vasquez disappeared. It was then that other men came forward and informed Adams that, actually, Vasquez and one Faustino Lorenzana had committed the murder and robbery. However, evidence was lacking and no attempt to pursue or make a later arrest occurred.

From 1864 to 1866 Vasquez branched out in his continual operation of crime. He became a journeyman at his trade. His rope was as busy as his gun. The wide loop and hot lead were constantly offered in easy trade for the gold that he needed to buy the pleasures of life. It was during these years that Vasquez' name was associated with the infamous, Thomas Redondo, alias Procopio, Alias Dick of the Red Hand and at least one other colorful individual named "One-eyed Jim." Riding with these scoundrels and alone, Vasquez plundered trail and highway, village and town.

How many men were robbed and killed, their bodies hidden, no one will ever know. Vasquez, himself, told the famous California historian, George Beers, that, he "had drawn the guns too many times to remember."

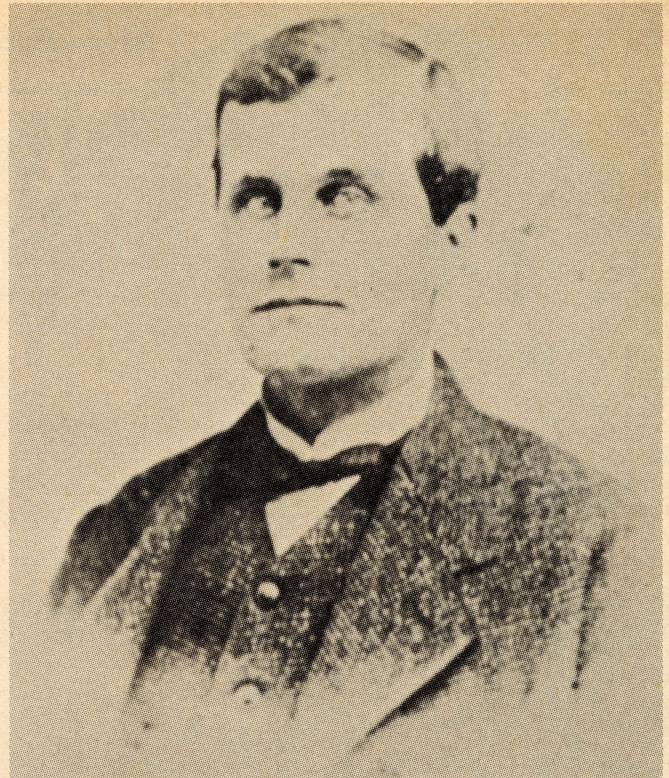
One thing was certain. The old tradition of Spanish American California, which had taught that the "American Government was that of a foreign nation," came to full flower in the heart of Tiburcio Vasquez. He came, during these years, to regard the killing of a gringo as a virtue to be practiced whenever it could be done without danger to himself. A Jewish merchant, robbed, later to be reported missing; Vasquez remembered this one.

Mountain men, found deep in the gorges and somber canyons dead, with their pockets turned out. Young and old, their purses empty, left rotting in the underbrush, denied even the shelter of a shallow grave from the mountain storms. And along with these, the so-called lesser crimes... cattle and stock disappearing with frustrating regularity.

Vasquez could not have done it all; but as he later recalled, what he had not had a hand in, he was aware of, for no other gang could operate in his area for long without his control.

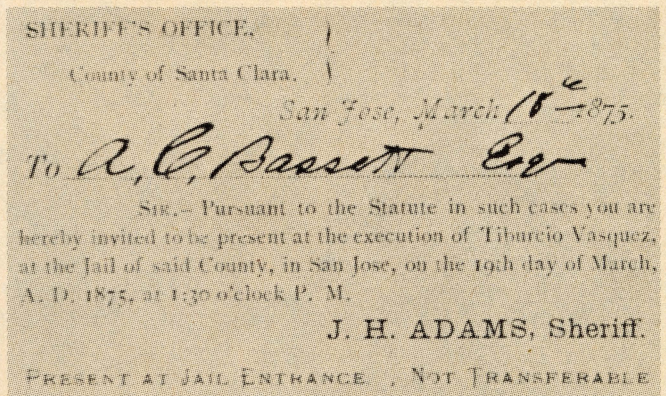
If it had not been for the nature of his other crimes, Vasquez' continual lack of success as a horse and cattle thief would have been comical. For example, in 1867 he left Monterey County and, for a very short time, operated in Sonoma County. Here, working by himself, he tried to run off a very large herd of stock. Once again he was captured the first time out by an alert posse. For the third time he entered San Quentin, where he served three years and six months and was released on June 4, 1870. The first thing he learned was that his old running mate, Juan Soto, known as the Mad Human Wildcat, had been killed in a gun fight by Sheriff Harry Morse, one of the truly great lawmen of the West.

Vasquez returned to Monterey County. Here, he added a



**Sheriff Harry Morse captured bandit Redondo after holdup.**

Author's Photo.



**Invitation to VIP's to attend hanging of Vasquez.**

new type of crime to his repertoire. Taken into the home of a Mr. Salazar, as a guest, Vasquez, fresh out of prison, repaid the friendship shown him by running away with the man's wife. The lady said she was "abducted." Vasquez soon tired of her company and left her to her own devices in the mountains of Natividad. The husband swore death to Vasquez. And, several nights later in the town of San Juan, when the two men met face to face in the street, hot words were quickly followed by gun fire. Vasquez pulled his gun first, but his weapon misfired. A slug from Salazar's gun found its mark and struck Vasquez in the neck, where the bullet drove down and came out below the shoulder.

Vasquez was taken to safety by his companions. (It should be noted here that Vasquez was wounded many times. That he should survive each shooting is testimony either to his hardy spirit or to the poor quality of gunpowder that was used by his opponents.)

Salazar later swore out a warrant for attempted murder and as Vasquez had pulled his gun and fired first, the jury found a true bill, but Vasquez was gone again, this time to the Pancho Mountains. (Continued on page 70)

was he out of sight around a bend in the rocky trail when soldiers moved from their hiding places in the brush to seize the giant chief and hustle him roughly into Shirland's camp.

There was, of course, no parlay with Captain Shirland. The Apache chieftain, naive as a child in the devious ways of the White Eyes for all of his great age and size, was slated for death. Stoically he lay down by the fire in the soldiers' camp and slept. He was bone-weary, and death was of no consequence.

Colonel J.R. West, C.O. at Fort McLean, informed of Mangas Coloradas' arrest, rode hurriedly into Shirland's camp to view the captive chief. He stared hard at the slumbering form of the dreaded Apache leader, then spoke tersely to Privates James Collyer and George Mead. These were his exact orders, as reported by Clark Stocking, a soldier who was present and heard them:

"Men, that old murderer has got away from every soldier command and has left a trail of blood five hundred miles on the old stage line. I want him dead or alive

tomorrow morning; do you understand?" The colonel paused, then added slowly and significantly: "I want him dead!" He stalked away.

The murder was carried out immediately, with the casual brutality of all such frontier "executions." One of the guards deliberately heated the point of his bayonet in the campfire's glowing coals and plunged it into the chief's leg, saying pleasantly, "Wake up, you old devil!"

Mangas Coloradas screamed in agony and leaped to his feet, clawing for the knife that had been taken from him. Both soldiers shot him simultaneously, the muzzle blast from their carbines scorching his chest. The chief fell at the edge of the fire. Mead and Collyer drew their service revolvers in a frenzy of blood lust and emptied them into the huge, twitching body.

Colonel West came running from his tent at the sound of the shooting, Colt in hand, but the foul deed was done and he was denied the honor of administering the coup-de-grace.

Later a military surgeon cut off the

murdered chief's shaggy head and removed the brain. The white men seemed to think it of great interest that the famed Apache leader's head measured larger than that of their famous statesman and orator, Daniel Webster, with the brain correspondingly larger. The skull is said now to be in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Captain John C. Cremony knew Mangas Coloradas better than any other white man ever did. Cremony, in his book *Life Among the Apaches*, writes of him: "He was the greatest and most talented Apache of the Nineteenth Century... His sagacious counsels partook more of the character of wide and enlarged statesmanship than those of any other Indian of modern times... He found means to collect and keep together, for weeks at a time, large bodies of savages, such as none of his predecessors could assemble and feed... and taught them to comprehend the value of unity and collective strength... Take him all in all, he exercised influence never equalled by any savage of our time." ●

## VASQUEZ, BANDIT KING

(Continued from Page 33)

As soon as he had recovered from his wounds at the hands of Salazar, Vasquez and some companions held up the stage coach at Visalia. There was pursuit and capture of some of the outlaws, but Vasquez escaped. He fled toward Santa Cruz, but the word had gone on ahead and Marshal L.T. Roberts was waiting. During a rapid exchange of gun fire, Vasquez was again wounded seriously. Shot in the chest, the bullet entered his body two inches beneath the nipple to range out his back through his right shoulder. But the bandit still managed to get back up on his horse and ride a distance of sixty miles back to La Cantua Canyon, his most secret and later, most often used hideaway. One of the other robbers in the Visalia Stage hold-up was captured immediately by Sheriff Harry Morse. He was Thomas Redondo, who was convicted and sentenced to fourteen years in prison.

While recovering from the wounds that he had suffered at the hands of Sheriff Marshal, Vasquez was joined by Cleovaro Chavez. Chavez was to become his trusted lieutenant and confidant. For, like his captain, Chavez possessed great talent and daring.

It was at this time that Vasquez' taste for other men's women brought him one step closer to his fate. He recruited Abdon Leiva, a Chilean by birth, who had a very nice ranch and a very pretty wife.

Leiva and his wife lived at the ranch that was located in the La Cantua Area. Tiburcio lost no time in developing an alliance with Leiva's wife. But he was very cautious in this affair, because he needed Leiva for a raid he was planning.

Vasquez had been told that Henry Miller, a famous cattle baron of that part of the country, had brought \$30,000 into the county to pay his ranch hands at the end of the cattle round-up. This money was to be deposited at Firebaughs' Ferry. Vasquez and his gang lost no time in preparing to raid the San Joaquin River village.

They rode into town and Vasquez fell into a rage of fury and frustration when he learned that the money had not been deposited. So he and his henchmen decided to rob the town's general store instead. All twelve people on the premises were tied and thrown to the floor, where they were relieved of their jewels and money. This type or style of operation was to mark every Vasquez robbery.

The outlaw and his gang now chose to operate from an area close to the New Idria quicksilver mines, and a peculiar series of events began to occur. Shortly afterward, the Vasquez gang held up the New Idria stagecoach. As was the fashion in such a holdup, the passengers were ordered out of the stage. It became apparent, as they stood alongside the road, that one of the passengers was the superintendent of the quicksilver mine, whereupon the bandits put all of the passengers back on the stage and sent them safely on their way.

About the same time any law officers who chanced to come into the New Idria area, in their quest for Vasquez or his men would be met with a surprising lack of information. It became clear that the mine management and the bandits were playing a game of mutual convenience and protection. Vasquez had agreed to leave the mine operation completely alone and in return the mine people knew nothing, saw nothing and heard nothing.

Two deputies who didn't believe this rode into the New Idria country and had to walk back to Gilroy when their horses were stolen during the night by Tiburcio Vasquez, who had been warned of their presence.

It was the summer of 1873. The mountains were molten with stored-up heat. Dust, like hot metal, swirled up around the horses hooves and scorched a man's lungs as he breathed. The money pouch that lay over the saddle of Tiburcio's big black stallion no longer clinked solidly. Vasquez watched his men grow irritable and more restless with each passing day. He knew that to hold them he would have to plan something big. And so to capture their imagination, he presented his daring plan to derail and rob the Southern Pacific payroll train that ran between San Jose and Gilroy.

Once again, circumstances changed the day. A chance rescheduling of the train made this impossible, so, once again, as he had done on the day of the raid of Firebaughs Ferry, Vasquez changed plans and decided to raid the Twenty

One Mile House, a hotel and restaurant on the railroad line. There were four men at the hotel. These luckless individuals were left trussed up and relieved of their cash. And, of course, they were left lying on the floor.

About this time, the newspapers started to beat the drum for some concerted effort to capture the outlaw and his band. Instead of lying low, Vasquez decided to strike again. He would leave central California and head south to Los Angeles. If it got too hot on this side of the border, he would jump over into old Mexico until it cooled down.

But he needed money. Vasquez talked Leiva into selling his ranch. Then the wife of Leiva was sent south with the money. They were to meet there after one grand coup, the robbery of the town of Tres Pinos.

Tres Pinos was a stage coach station set back in the gold summer hills of California. A small town without local law enforcement officers, it was little more than a watering station for travelers passing through. Vasquez had decided that this would be his target. It was out of the way. The store owners were prosperous and he had little doubt that he could convince them to open up their safes and secret hiding places.

On August 26, 1873, the raid was carried out. According to Vasquez' own story, he sent two of his men, Leiva and Romulo Gonzales, into the town ahead of the others. They rode into town at five o'clock in the early evening. A little while later Theodore Moreno, another bandit, followed them in. Then finally, just after dark, Vasquez and Chavez entered the little town.

The stage from New Idria had just arrived at Tres Pinos and the clerk, John Utzerath, was busy sorting the mail in the post office in Snyder's store. Andrew Snyder, a small boy, and several other men were standing idly about. As soon as Vasquez entered the door, he and his men drew their guns. Everyone, including the boy, was tied and pushed to the floor.

At this time, the first killing occurred. A shepherd named Bernal Berhuri appeared in the street outside the store. Moreno ordered him to halt. Either the man did not understand or he panicked. In any event he ran and the bandit fired his gun; Berhuri fell dead with a bullet in his brain. The little boy broke loose and ran for the rear of the store. He was chased by Chavez, who knocked him unconscious with a gun butt.

It was now time for the second killing. A teamster, named George Radford drove up in front of the store. He did not hear the bandit's challenge because he was deaf. However, sensing some danger, he started to run for the rear of the building. Before he took three steps he was shot dead by Vasquez. In the hotel next to Snyder's store the next and last

man marked by the grim reaper was frantically trying to get his door closed and latched tight.

Leander Davidson had heard the shooting and with his wife was trying to secure his building when Vasquez, noticing his activity, stood outside, and fired through the door. Davidson, hit with the first shot, fell back against his wife and died instantly.

Having quelled every vestige of resistance, Vasquez untied Andrew Snyder and forced him, upon the threat of death, to bring out his hidden money and jewels. This was done and much loot was gathered from all the other men present.

The bandits took all the merchandise they could carry from the store, plus eight horses and \$1,300 in cash. Then, under a dark, moonless sky, they rode away up Tres Pinos Creek leaving three corpses staring up at the black eternity of the sky. The people of Tres Pinos were so terrified that no effort was made to mount a posse.

By the next day, various law officers had taken up the trail. Sheriff Adams and Captain Tom Wasson of Monterey made up one group. They searched the La Cantua Region, not knowing that Vasquez had made good his escape toward southern California. After getting lost several times, the posse called it quits.

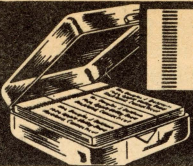
A few days later, acting on other information, Adams and some deputies were riding up Little Rock Canyon in the southern part of the state when suddenly Chavez on a fast mount streaked across the trail in front of them. Every gun in the posse barked loud, but in a second the bandit was gone. When pursued, Chavez and Vasquez together managed to hold off the lawmen while they made their plans. After leading the posse away from their horses, the two outlaws jumped on fresh mounts, hidden close by, and escaped.

Vasquez, Chavez and Leiva and his wife, Rosario, remained in the Little Rock Canyon area. It was following the episode of this chase, that an incident occurred that Vasquez, himself, related in an interview after his trial, to the editor of the Los Angeles Express.

"Tell me about the affair with Leiva's wife," invited the editor.

"A criminal intimacy had existed between myself and Leiva's wife long before I left Monterey County. At Rock Creek he, (Leiva) caught us together. It was then he turned against me and sought to have me captured..."

Learning of the affair between Vasquez and his wife, Leiva left the camp and rode to the sheriff. From facts gathered from his testimony, Romulo Moreno was captured and sentenced to life in prison. Although Vasquez was not actually captured at this time, Leiva's turning against him and the loss of Mo-



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reno meant that he had two less men to depend on and one less place to hide.

At the moment, it didn't seem to bother him at all. His answer to the whole problem was to "kidnap" the wife of Leiva and ride off with her to the mountains. He kept her there with him until she was four months pregnant and then he told her to get out.

Vasquez had run out of money again. With a new gang of four men behind him, he entered the town of Kingston, the day after Christmas in 1873. At the beginning, it looked like the same old script. Thirty citizens cowed by five guns. Everybody tied and on the floor in less than ten minutes. At the Reicharts Hotel hold-up, at Jacob and Epsteins, and at the Sweets General Store, it was apparently to be all the same.

But then courage and resistance entered the scene in the person of J.W. Southerland, who had come running with a gun in his hand from the opposite end of the town at the first sound of a shot. Others came from their hiding places now and joined this brave man and guns blazed in the street.

The incredible thing about it all is that no one was killed, proving, perhaps, that bandits do not shoot so straight either, when their target is shooting back. Chavez was hit in the leg as he rode out of town, but none of the other outlaws were hit. Because the raid was interrupted, the loss was held down, but not before Vasquez and his men had taken \$2,500 in cash and jewelry.

News of the sacking of Kingston swept over the state. Governor Booth offered a reward for Vasquez of \$3,000 alive and \$2,000 dead. Once again, such vigorous effort merely spurred him on to greater activity.

On February 25, 1874, Vasquez and Chavez committed a crime which, in audacity alone, probably has never been equalled. They rode into the Coyote Holes Stagecoach Station and the two of them took it over for the day. Waiting for each stage as it came in, to escort the passengers at the point of their guns over a nearby sand dune, where they each were tied, robbed and kicked off their feet.

Even Vasquez must have realized that by now he had gone too far. The citizens of California were, on the whole, a tolerant lot. A man could go to prison for taking a horse or butchering another man's beef and when he returned after serving his time, he would likely find that the offense was, for the most part, forgotten. A young vaquero might let his hot blade cut, in defense of his pride, and still find a place in the community when the furor died down.

Men could and did die over minor misunderstandings, and many times, no one outside of the town or the family involved would care to take the time to catch and return the culprit. But this

wholesale outlawry was too much. In defiance of the established order, Vasquez was striking at all of them. It was as though he stood alone, beyond the law. The reward tempted more than one man. It was just a question of time.

The spring of 1874 found Sheriff Harry Morse taking to the field with an expeditionary force financed by the state of California. Morse and his men spent 61 days and traveled over two thousand miles in their search. They were unsuccessful. Now the reward for Vasquez was raised to \$8,000 alive and \$6,000 dead!

Once again Vasquez struck. He and his men infiltrated the ranch of Alexander Repetto, a wealthy sheepherder. With Repetto under his guns, Vasquez demanded money. Repetto protested that he had none and then showed Vasquez his books to prove his point. Vasquez now suggested that Repetto should make him a loan which he promised to repay in thirty days. Not having much choice in the matter, Repetto agreed and sent his nephew into Los Angeles with a check for \$800.

Although the nephew had been warned not to advise the bank officials of the exact nature of his business, they became suspicious, and dawn found Sheriff Rowland, of Los Angeles, riding out to the ranch. Vasquez had spotters out and escaped again as the posse approached, stopping, however, to rob three hapless travelers he found on the road. He completed the transaction just as Sheriff Rowland and the posse appeared on a rise, a bare two miles away.

But the net had started to tighten. Vasquez was in unfamiliar territory. A guide he hired to lead his party up the Arroyo Secco disappeared on the second day, and Vasquez, not knowing the trail, found himself at an impenetrable place on the steep side of the mountain.

Tiburcio and his two remaining companions, Chavez and another bandit, hacked their way through the choked, heavy growth of trees and underbrush. Cutting their way a step at a time, they progressed painfully to the floor of the canyon. They split here with Chavez going in one direction and Vasquez and the other man seeking refuge at the small ranch of Greek George.

The last act in the saga of Tiburcio Vasquez had begun. Lawmen all over the state had been receiving reports on the bandit's whereabouts. The reward looked bigger and bigger. Sheriff Harry Morse received information that Vasquez was hiding at the ranch, and immediately took the stage to Los Angeles where he reported to Sheriff Rowland. Rowland disputed the information at first. But ten days later, he sent out a posse to search the area and the ranch, an action for which he received an \$8,000 check from the treasurer of the State of California when Tiburcio was captured.

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