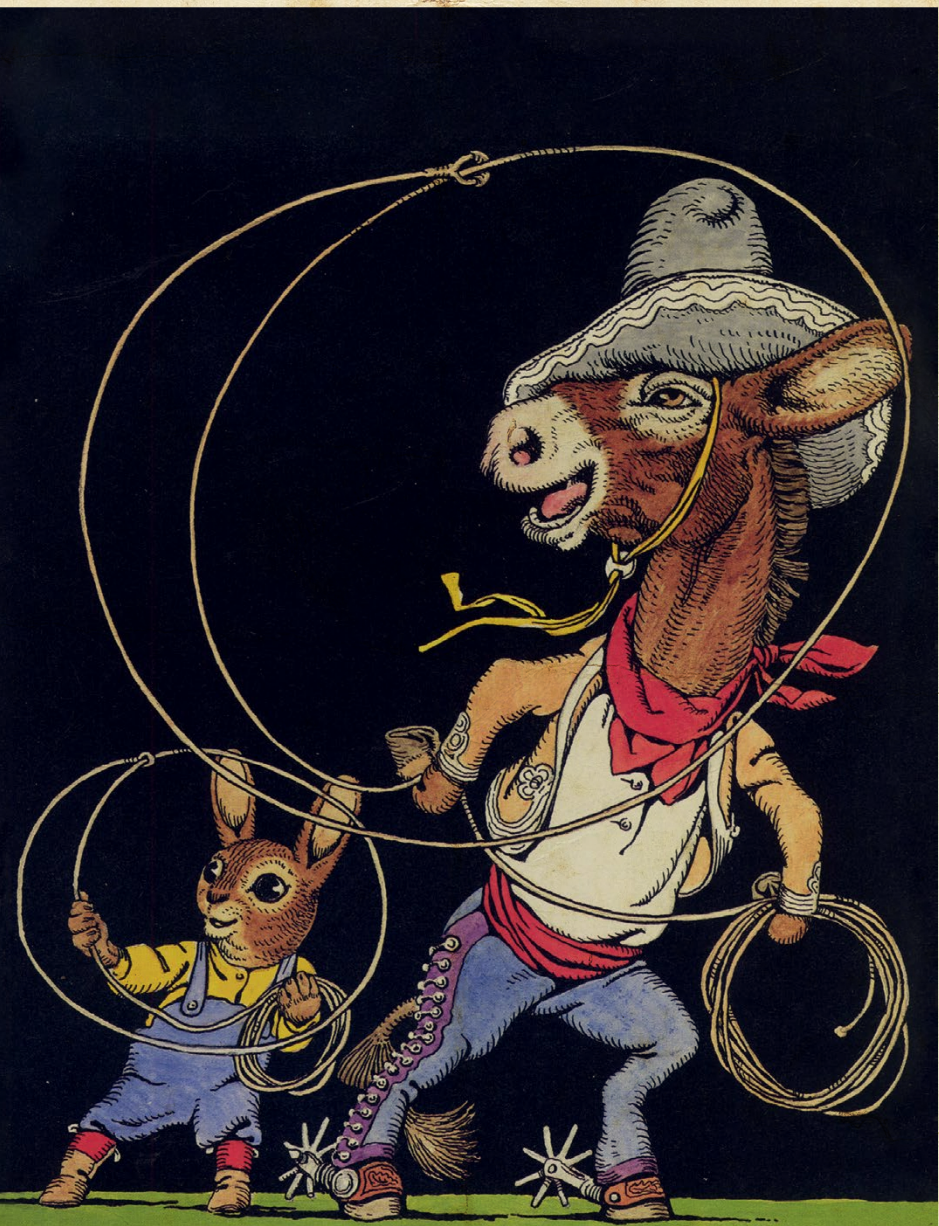




LIVING A LIFE engrossed in the visual arts has allowed author Peter Hiller to express his creativity through his own art, and to share that experience with students during a teaching career of almost forty years. His discovery of the world of Jo Mora opened new doors of interest as he endeavored to uncover Mora's seemingly endless creative abilities and accomplishments. This biography is the culmination of more than twenty-five years of striving to understand and appreciate this important artist. Since 1981, Hiller has been fortunate to live on the Monterey Peninsula with his wife of forty-eight years. He is the proud father of two grown sons.

PETER HILLER is available for select speaking engagements. Please contact PR@Gibbs-Smith.com for more information.



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The Life and Times of

J O M O R A

Peter Hiller



The Life and Times of
J O M O R A
Iconic Artist of the American West
PETER HILLER



IMAGINE A MAN fascinated with the history and cultures of the world, who spoke multiple languages, and who could express his passion in virtually any artistic manner necessary to convey his ideas. Then imagine this gifted man as a loving husband and father, unpretentious in manner and dress, with the laid-back insight and humor of an old friend. This only begins to tell the story of artist Joseph Jacinto "Jo" Mora (1876-1947).

With a list of abilities as long as a well-thrown reata, Mora served as illustrator, painter, sculptor, printmaker, writer, photographer, architect, pictorial cartographer, cartoonist, and cowboy—all of which enabled him to express his love of Western history. He explored California missions, the natural glories of Yosemite, California's ranch life, and eventually the culture of the Hopi and Navajo in Arizona. During his travels, Mora documented observations that became the source material and inspiration for much of his later artwork.

An essential addition to any collection of Western art and Americana, *The Life and Times of Jo Mora* provides an in-depth and engaging portrait of this gifted illustrator, painter, writer, cartographer, and sculptor.

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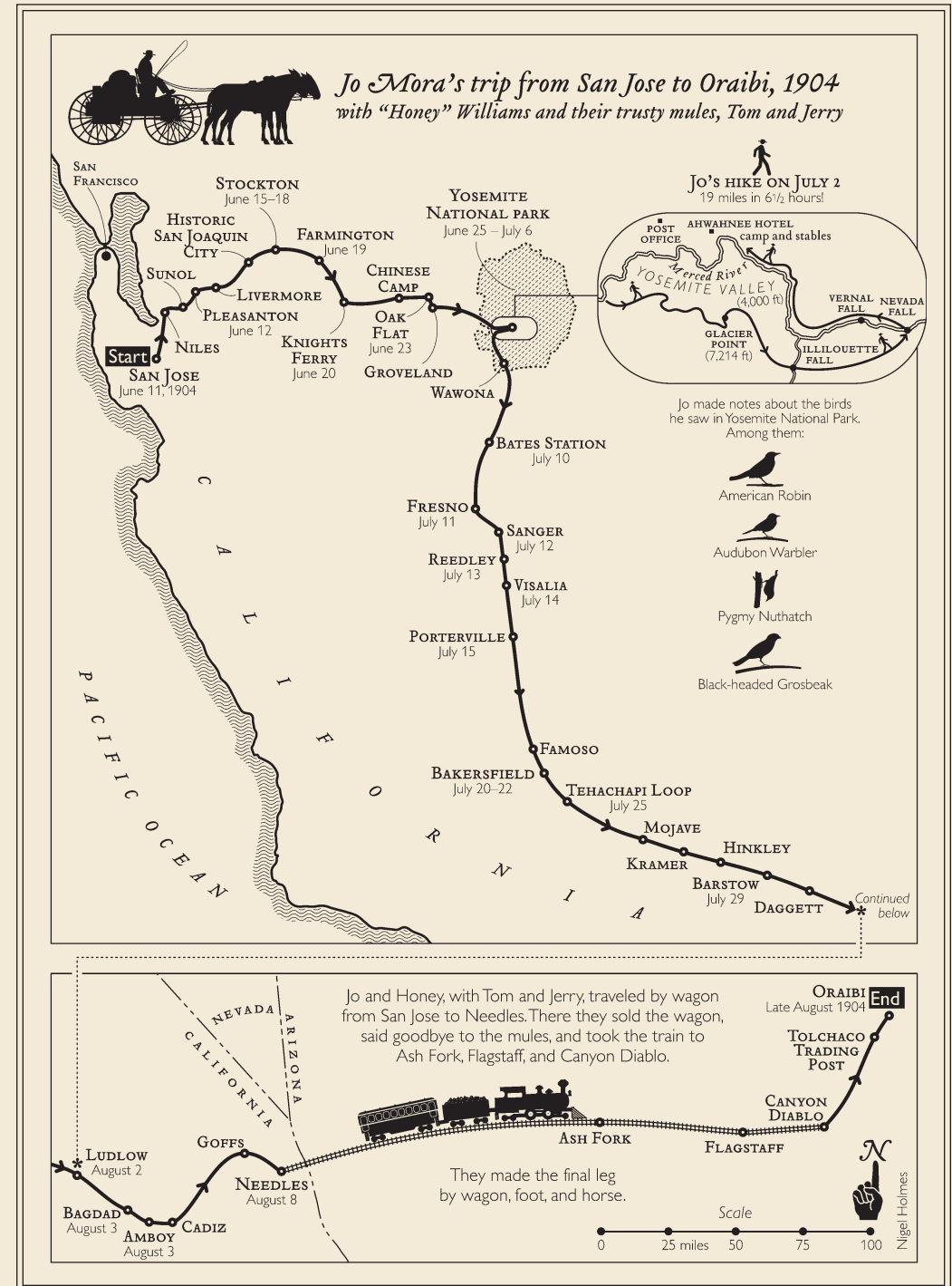
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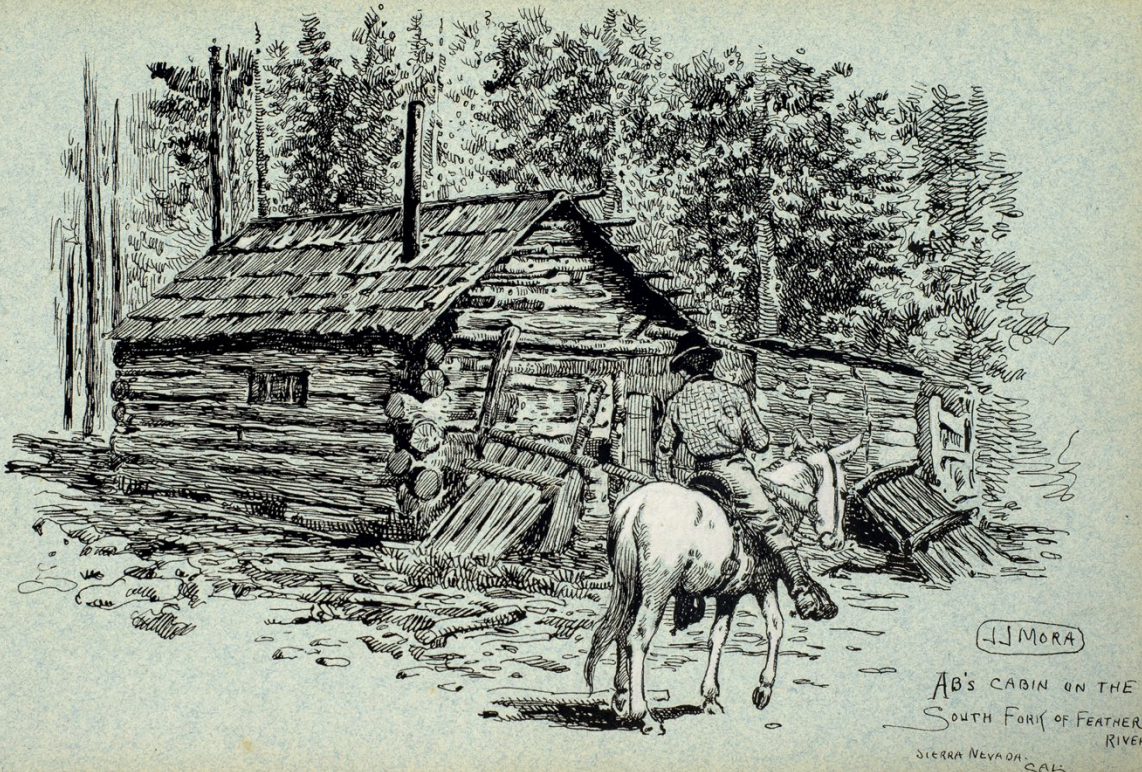
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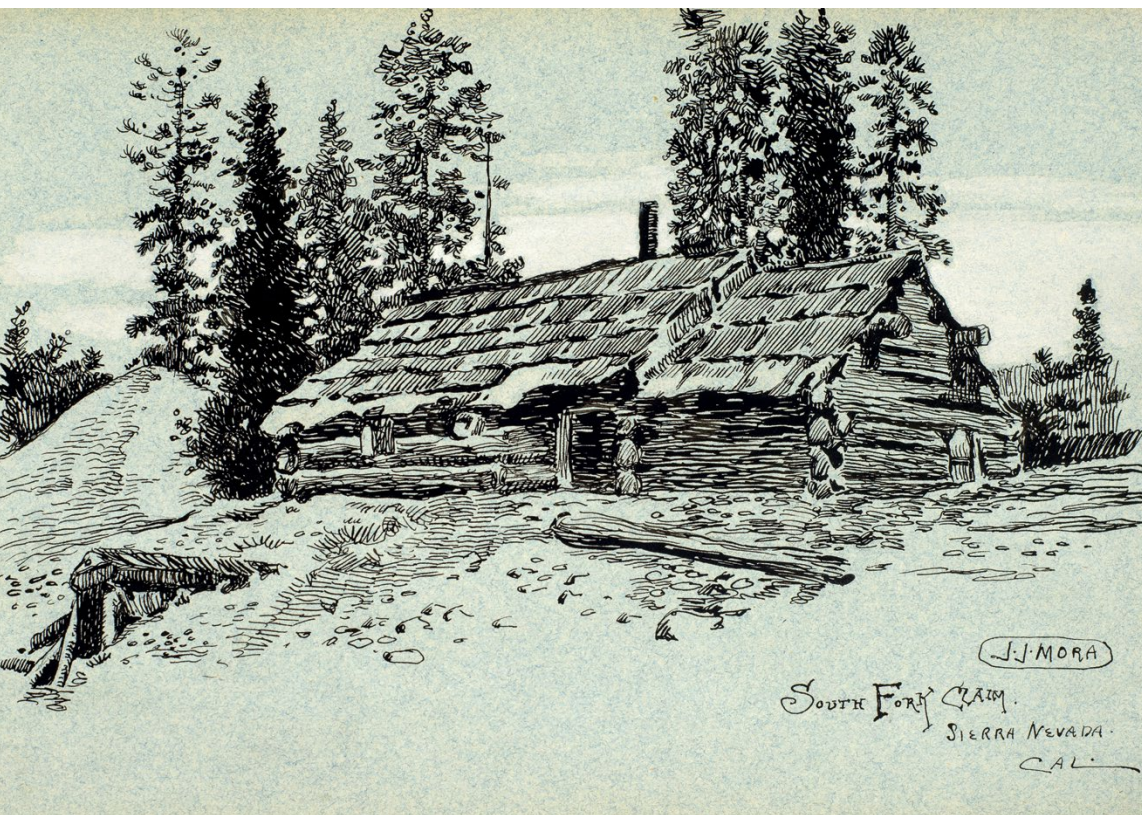
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OPEN-AND-INKDRAWINGOFABGOULD'SCABIN,
1903.

OPPOSITE: AB GOULD'S CABIN ON THE SOUTH
FORK OF THE FEATHER RIVER, 1903.



CHAPTER 3

OFF to the SIERRA

ON AUGUST 30, 1903, HAVING JUST TRAVERSED MOST OF CALIFORNIA on his horse, Lady, Jo Mora wrote to his parents:

Here I am once again in the Garden City of San Jose. I chattered into town yesterday at early noon after having made a very quick trip from Santa Ynez. I had, as usual, a dandy time, and had absolutely no adventures of an annoying character. My little mare was as game as ever and carried me along like a real lady. Just think how many many miles I've gone on her! Besides all the wild riding around Santa Ynez, which mounts up into the hundreds, I've traveled about 700 miles on her from the Southern bountly of California to San Jose. About 2/3 of the whole state, it has all been fine.

But here I am back again in the city—and with a collar and shirt on! I've had one on but once since I left. I'm dark as an Indian and really look like one. Today I had dinner at the Eaton's and have been driving around. The plans have been changed and we do not expect to go up to the Sierras till sometime next week. Of course I'll let you know. I was sorry to leave Santa Ynez, for I had a fine time there, and they seemed also sorry to have me go—at least the girls there!

I am feeling very very fine, with my usual one meal. At Santa Ynez they made cocoa for me in the a.m. but while traveling I didn't even have that and really I scarcely knew I had a stomach. I think I'm going to cure myself. Now today I had a fine dinner at the Eaton's but good God it was no fun, for I had to go on the double quick to finish my one helping while they had two, and they are not of the fastest. But when I'm alone—ah, then I eat!

so far will go for naught; and it's out of the question to drop it now with the idea of resuming it at some future time. These conditions now existing will not last long.

Turning down this opportunity to see his family, coupled with hearing news from home about the death of a relative ("Tia Pepa"), may have left Mora too sad to continue his letter, as he breaks off there.

Some days later Mora resumes writing and relates that, en route to catching the train to California, he encountered "young Hubbell" (Lorenzo

Hubbell, Jr.), who ran the Tusayan Trading Post at Keams Canyon. Located between First Mesa and Antelope Mesa, the Tusayan Trading Post was founded by Thomas Keam in 1875 and later acquired in 1902 by John Lorenzo Hubbell (young Lorenzo's father, known as J. L. Hubbell or Don Lorenzo). After "two days enjoying the most charming hospitality imaginable," a life-long friendship began between the two men, and Hubbell Jr. ultimately loaned Mora a horse to enable him to continue his journey to California.

Mora describes riding sixty miles through the snow to the trading post J. L. Hubbell had established in 1876 at Ganado, and then traveling thirty miles farther to the Franciscan mission at St. Michael's, where Father Leopold Ostermann welcomed him with a "cordial handshake." Mora once again proved his ability to be at home with people of all social and intellectual ranks. Upon being shown the mission's work on a Navajo grammar textbook, Mora's knowledge of Latin, Greek, Spanish, and French enabled him to argue some fine points about the project, of which the mission fathers "seemed mightily pleased."

After a hearty meal, wine, cigars, and the inevitable storytelling, Mora showed his artwork, presenting his hosts with a portrait sketch of a Hopi chief in red conte crayon—a style of drawing he had most likely learned from Burbank. After his long ride and the late hour, sleep came easily. The next day he rode to Gallup, New Mexico. Before boarding the Limited Express to California, and dressed in his blue flannel shirt, riding pants, and high-heeled boots, Mora enjoyed a shave and a haircut.⁹

Upon his return from California, Mora discovered that Hubbell had paid for keeping Mora's horse at the stable while he was gone. "That's the way they do business out here," Mora observed in his journal. He was glad he had purchased a gift for Hubbell in San Jose: the finest silver-mounted Spanish bit he could find.

After riding out from Gallup on a muddy road, Mora enjoyed another evening at the Mission St. Michael's, listening to the tales of Navajo scouts during the war with the Apache. Upon departing the next day, he left a few dollars as charity and then continued on regardless of a snowstorm in the mountains. In spite of losing the trail several times and getting wet and cold, he made it to Ganado in "grand style."

Mora again enjoyed the hospitality of Senior Hubbell and was convinced to stay an extra night.

I wish you could meet old man Hubbell. He's Mexican, ¾ or so I guess and one of the very Princes of Arizona. He's got a fine place out there & the hospitality he gives can't be beat. His daughter (a young woman of 23 or so) who is married lives there & and runs the horse part.

ONE OF MORA'S CONTE CRAYON
PORTRAITS IN THE STYLE OF E. A.
BURBANK, CA. 1905.

WAH-ZHEE -
SICHUMOVI - ARIZ.



collection and reside at the Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

IN MONTEREY WITH S. F. B. MORSE

Mora's membership in the exclusive Bohemian Club furthered his career by providing him with commissions as well as friendships—foremost among them his relationship with S. F. B. Morse, a fellow Bohemian and successful businessman.

Soon after his arrival in California, Morse became a manager for the Pacific Improvement Company, the construction company of the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1919, after Morse purchased the holdings of the Pacific Improvement Company, he became the owner of the Del Monte Forest (later known as Pebble Beach) and the properties of the Hotel Del Monte Company.

In 1927, Morse's *Game and Gossip* magazine advertised a Monterey Peninsula map, created by Mora and commissioned by the Del Monte Properties Company, for the price of one dollar. (Today, collectors will pay \$3,000 or more for a mint copy of Mora's first published carte, which inaugurated the series of drawings for which he is most famous.) This charming, detailed, and colorful pictorial map showcased points of local interest, particularly Del Monte properties. Its pictorial border traced the history of the peninsula from the arrival of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542, up to the establishment of Monterey's Hotel Del Monte (now known as Herrmann Hall, part of the Naval Postgraduate School). The success of the first map led to a second depicting what is today Pebble Beach's famed 17-Mile Drive, which Morse had converted to a loop road contained within the Del Monte Forest.

ONE OF NINE HISTORY OF FASHION AND DANCE PAINTINGS. THEY REVEAL BOTH MORAS SKILL AT PAINTING THE HUMAN FORM AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORICAL DETAIL, AS SEEN IN THE COLORFUL CLOTHING, CA. 1935.



Over the years, Mora created numerous illustrated items for Morse and Del Monte Properties, including menus, invitations, a risqué cocktail recipe booklet, and a series of twelve illustrations with text about the Monterey Peninsula.

The necessity of providing for his family and the difficulty of making a living as an artist led Mora to accept virtually all commissions he believed himself capable of completing. These projects varied in size and content, and in some cases gave Mora an opportunity to combine his drawing and writing abilities.

Such was the case in 1933, when Morse hired Mora to contribute his talents to a national advertising campaign costing \$30,000 (close to half a million dollars today) in which he used Mora's twelve Monterey Peninsula illustrations and copy to entice East Coast travelers to the area. The ads appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *Town & Country*, and *Fortune*. They ran monthly from December 1933 through November 1934 as a series of striking black-and-white ads showcasing Monterey's "history and romance." The accompanying text was written with Mora's characteristic flair, which complements his drawings perfectly:

In the pastoral period from 1781 to 1821, Monterey's people lived the most romantic chapter in California history. Guitars strummed for gallant Caballeros and dark-eyed Senoritas at fandango and fiesta. The Spanish government sent from Mexico found this new life altogether to their liking. 'This is a great country, neither hot nor cold. To live long and without care, one must come to Monterey,' wrote Governor Borica in 1794.



THIS FANDANGO SCENE IS THE SEVENTH IN A SERIES OF TWELVE HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS RUN IN A NATIONAL AD CAMPAIGN PROMOTING TRAVEL TO THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, 1934. (© PEBBLE BEACH COMPANY.)

Mora's 1933 book *A Log of the Spanish Main* features numerous small cartes rendered in black ink. Much of the book is devoted to describing the ports of call on the voyage along the coasts of North and Central America, and for visitors disembarking to explore the towns, Mora provides his own helpful hand-drawn maps, and in some cases drawings of the local sights. These maps were augmented by a written history of each town, along with Mora's personal reflections of his visits to those locations.

One of the most decorative of the cartes, Mora's 1942 interpretation of the city of Los Angeles, celebrates the history and dynamic growth of that legendary metropolis. He dedicated this carte to his close friend and writer Charles F. Lummis—a librarian, explorer, and proponent of all that Los Angeles would become. Mora characterized the Los Angeles area as a blend of cultures and ethnicities that was home to the American film industry, renowned universities, manufacturing businesses, and abundant recreational opportunities, including surfing. The Los Angeles carte also introduced subtle, engaging style changes and a maturity of design. Its decorative border was the most elaborate and colorful to date, and the overall colors are brighter and more striking than in any of his previous efforts. As was always his intention with his cartes, Mora found a way to make learning fun.

Mora's approach to this art form is revealed in his written dedication for the 1942 Los Angeles carte:

TWO DETAILS FROM THE LOS ANGELES CARTE, SHOWN ON THE LEFT AS PENCIL SKETCHES AND ON THE RIGHT AS FINAL PRINTS, 1942.

OPPOSITE: THE LOS ANGELES CARTE, 1942.





This carte I dedicate to the memory of a loyal Angelino and a buen amigo—the late Charles F. Lummis. In 1903 his prophetic vision outlined to me a spectacular growth for the old Pueblo into a gay Metropolis as exotic, in its way, as was his own personality. Manana flor de sus ayeres. I render my message in the humorous manner as I'd rather find you with a smile of understanding than a frown of research. Jo Mora.

The 1945 version of the California carte was the second map Mora created to celebrate his adopted state, the first having been produced in 1927. Drawn with a focus on California history and using the same pictorial wit as his previous cartes, this new design was smaller and brighter in color and reflected many of the changes that had occurred in the state since 1927. Although the Del Monte Canning Company had considered commissioning this carte as a promotional giveaway, Jo Jr. decided to print and distribute it himself. As it turned out, this was the last carte Mora would complete.

Each of the cartes took on a life of its own; reproduction rights to some were sold, while others remained with the Mora family. Not long after the Yellowstone carte was created, Mora and his son sold it to the Haynes Picture Shop. That sale included the original drawings from June 1935, the printing plates, the remaining stock of prints, and the transfer of copyright. The Moras also promised “not to get out another map of Yellowstone Park for the next few years in order that we can close out this edition satisfactorily.” Perhaps the distance between Yellowstone and Carmel caused the Moras to cut their ties with the publishing activity to avoid being caught up in long-distance marketing and accounting.

As noted, several of Mora’s cartes were commissions, in which cases the reproduction rights remained with the paying parties. The carte of San Diego was one such project, having been commissioned by the San Diego department store magnate and philanthropist George W. Marston. Another commission, this one for the Grace Line shipping company, was the carte referred to as “Ye Olde Spanish Main.” The Mora family traveled on Grace Line ships, and Mora bartered services to help offset the expenses of passage.

In 1933, Mora created the first version of “Evolution of the Cowboy,” his memorable carte for the Salinas rodeo. Today this map remains the single most publicly recognized piece of Mora artwork. Sometimes known by the name “Sweetheart of the Rodeo,” the poster traces the entire history of Western horsemanship in a single composition. Using his playful animation

style of illustration, Mora combines drawings of horseback riders from various regional historical periods, with depictions of different types of

MORA’S “EVOLUTION OF THE COWBOY” CARTE, ALSO KNOWN AS “SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO,” SECOND EDITION, 1933.