

# Frank Norris Studies

✪ Edited by Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.

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ST DUNSTANS  
VAN NESS AVE AND SUTTER ST  
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA

Sep 13.

My Dear Mr. Sanders:

I have been thinking over your proposition to make the additions and improvements on the ranch and log cabin as agreed upon between us for five hundred and fifty dollars. (\$550.00)

I am willing to have you go ahead with the work at this figure, which however I understand to be an *outside* figure.

I have left a detailed list of these improvements additions etc. with Mrs Stevenson which she will give to you.

The point I wish to urge upon you however is that we are extremely anxious to have the work completed by February of the coming winter, as we will take possession then.

I think your suggestion as to clearing out the brush about the place, as a preventitive against fire, is good and would like to have this done at once.

If you hear of a sound steady horse, that can be ridden as well as driven, and that can be bought for twenty-five dollars, (25.<sup>00</sup>) or less, you might keep your eye on him for me.

Also I want to recall to you what you said about the cost of the work. —That it was quite possible you could come well under the (550.<sup>00</sup>) five hundred and fifty dollars of your first estimate.

I do hope you will be able to do so, and trust that you will keep the possibility in mind.

Please let me hear from you as soon as you can, about this matter in general. Also I should be very pleased if you could let me know when you have started work upon the place and from time to time how you are getting on.

In the mean time if I can do anything for you or Mrs Sanders in the city please let me know. I am glad to be able to tell you that my wife is much better. She wishes to be remembered to yourself and Mrs. Sanders and your brother in which wish I join

Very Sincerely Yours  
Frank Norris

Address St. Dunstan's  
Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street. San Francisco



## Frank Norris in California's Central Coast

Tracey Gifford

*San Jose State University*

Some undergraduate research projects seem to yield little, apart from the experience of learning how one goes about locating, assembling, and analyzing data pertaining to a particular subject. Others, however, give one a taste of "the real thing," as when they lead to the discovery of a previously unknown letter written by Frank Norris on 13 September 1902.<sup>1</sup> But, more about that later, after the context for its composition receives some attention.

In a 1998 California History course at San Jose State University I turned to things Norrisean for a term project for two reasons. I had discovered *The Octopus*, a fable-filled treatment of the California past that also drew upon actual, rather sensational historical events and gave serious attention to some of the prevailing socio-economic problems of Norris's time. As important was Kevin Starr's introduction to the Penguin reprinting of the first edition. What especially caught my attention was that, in 1899, Norris had studied wheat production at a ranch in San Benito County when preparing for the writing of his novel and, a few years later, purchased land and a cabin to the north, near Gilroy.<sup>2</sup> That a born-and-bred urbanite and cosmopolitan such as Norris was traipsing around in these parts in 1899 and 1902 intrigued me, and I set out to discover more about his connection with this distinctly rural region to the southeast of Santa Cruz and northeast of Monterey and Salinas.

This was my second and much more profitable sally south of San Francisco. Previously I had written a research paper on the early history of the wine industry in Santa Cruz county and had learned that there was a literary circle in the Summit area of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A neighbor of the viticulturist Emil Meyer was Josephine Clifford McCrackin, a writer for the *Overland Monthly*. Friends who visited her mountain hideaway included Ambrose Bierce and Joaquin Miller.<sup>3</sup> A property-owners map of the county dated 1889 identified plots owned by both men. It was my hunch that Norris,

a fan of Bierce, at some time became one of this select group and that I would find a record of his land purchase at the Summit. Wrong. Prompted by Starr and with an eye to Norris's correspondence, I headed farther south.

On 5 April 1899, Norris wrote to his old friend Harry M. Wright, telling him that he was "leaving for California Monday next to be gone, very likely until fall." To perform research for *The Octopus* was his purpose; the novel would be "all about the San-Joaquin wheat raisers and the Southern Pacific." He wanted to "get out to Cal. while the wheat is young." His plan was "to study the whole thing *on the ground*, and come back [to New York City] in the winter and make a novel out of it."<sup>4</sup> By 13 September 1900 *The Octopus* was "nearing conclusion," and Norris also informed St. Louis newspaperman Isaac F. Marcossion that "it is the hardest work I ever have done in my life, a solid year of writing and 4 months preparation. . . . You've no idea of the outside work on it." The outside work, or field-research, included helping to "run and work a harvester in the San Joaquin—that is I helped on the sacking-platform—but of course you don't know where that is."<sup>5</sup>

As Starr and previous commentators had pointed out, Norris obtained most of his first-hand experience with wheat not in the San Joaquin Valley but to the west at the Santa Anita Ranch near Hollister and the smaller town of Tres Pinos. Not very distant was the mission San Juan Bautista which also figured in a major way in his novel. Further contributing to the content of *The Octopus* were his hosts at the ranch, Gaston Ashe and his wife Dulce. As Starr observed, they were "just the sort of smart young modern couple Norris always admired"<sup>6</sup>—interesting individuals in their own right whose families figure significantly in Norris's treatment of California history and its multi-cultural traditions.

Gaston Ashe was not a run-of-the-mill rancher or anything like a man who was scratching a living from the soil. The city of Asheville, North Carolina, was named after his family, which could trace its



American lineage to the 1700s.<sup>7</sup> He was the son of Dr. Richard P. Ashe who came to California in 1856 to be the naval officer of the Port of San Francisco. The position enjoyed by Gaston's father was effectively that of a governor; his was the first official appointment of the kind made after the U.S. took over California. To marry the woman he did, he needed both financial resources and social standing, and this gentleman rancher who divided his time between San Francisco and life in the country possessed both.

His wife, Julia "Dulce" Bolado Ashe, was the only surviving child of Joaquin Bolado and Julia Abrego Bolado. Her father was a native of Spain who had a flourishing career in Mexico—involving trade between Mexico and Spanish California—before he passed through Monterey in 1849 to join the gold rush. Then he began ranching, after which he turned his attention to trade again. In 1860 he joined a firm in San Francisco that imported goods from Mexico and Central America. Thus did his wealth grow. Dulce's mother was Californian by birth. The niece of Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado, she was the daughter of the Mexican government's treasurer in Monterey. Her marriage to Joaquin Bolado ensured continuation of the life of comfort and high social status to which she was accustomed.

The story of how their daughter Dulce came into possession of the ranch at which Norris stayed takes one back to 1839, when Don Manuel Larios and his partner Don Juan Anzar received from Governor Alvarado the grant for the Santa Ana y Quien Sabe Rancho in what is now San Benito County. In 1848 they divided the property. Anzar took the upper portion, the Quien Sabe, inherited by his daughter Juanita. Her husband was Ramon Somavia, whose family history included yet another governor, Jose Arguello. The lower portion, the Santa Ana, was divided in 1865 when Larios died. In an oft-repeated story approaching tall-tale proportions, Dulce's father went to the sale in a heavily-guarded stage coach. He carried with him two bags of gold and was the highest bidder. Dulce's father named his land—on which the legendary bandit Tiburcion Vasquez was said to have changed his horses when in flight—the Santa Anita. It

was only one of Joaquin Bolado's properties, for his wife was as accustomed to city life as their daughter Dulce became.

Born in 1864, Dulce was reared in San Francisco where she figured in newspaper accounts of social life among the well-to-do. When at their ranch, the Ashes royally entertained their city friends, and that their casa grande was decorated by Gump's suggests how royally. It was into this stratum of society and cross-road of Old and New California at the Ashe ranch that Norris moved to find a model setting for *The Octopus*. His one-time fellow art-student in Paris, Ernest Peixotto, arranged the visit with Gaston, whom Norris very likely knew beforehand because of their membership in San Francisco's Bohemian Club. The company there was congenial, and Norris's stay lasted no less than two months. As he developed his notes into a scenario for the novel, he focused on the Southern Pacific's rail-line constructed in 1874, which ran from Gilroy through Hollister to Tres Pinos. (The town of San Juan Bautista was passed by because it voted against giving the land requested for the Southern Pacific's use.)<sup>8</sup> Hollister became the novel's Bonneville, Tres Pinos to the south became Guadalajara, and described as San Juan was the mission San Juan Bautista with its hundred-year-old pear trees.<sup>9</sup> The nearby D.M. Morse seed ranch associated with the Vanamee-Angel  subplot remains today in the same place, now a property of the Ferry Morse Company. While in *The Octopus* this locale was moved in its entirety eastward into the San Joaquin Valley, Norris used the names of local ranches and carefully drew the Hollister area for the map included in the novel.<sup>10</sup>

Norris as well used friends, acquaintances, and historical figures related to the region as models for his characters. Among them were past and present members of Dulce Ashe's family. In a letter to Norris's biographer Franklin Walker,<sup>11</sup> Dulce wrote that "while he was here we had a dance in our huge old barn my father built and has since burnt down. When he sent me a copy of *The Octopus* I found it replete with stories of early California anecdotes of my family which



I had recounted to him." This dance, of course, became an entire chapter in the novel. As to family anecdotes—the story set in Spanish California told Presley in Solotari's Restaurant in Guadalajara, concerning the don who was disappointed by the appearance of the woman he married, was that of Dulce's great-grandfather Alvarado. Dulce also related that her nurse, Rita Sande, was the original Angelé Varian.

Dulce explained to Walker that it was her duty as hostess to get the mail every day for Norris, who was anxious to hear from his fiancée Jeannette Black. The summer of 1899 was hot and dusty. It was the pre-automobile era, and Dulce took "many a tiresome ride to the then distant town of Tres Pinos to see [Norris's] pleasure when the mail arrived." Mrs. Ashe was in her mid-twenties, recently married, and especially sympathetic to the young lovers. Readers of Norris's novel will, however, appreciate an even more important service she performed for Norris. A properly educated and culturally refined Dulce explained to Walker that she was a fan of Robert Browning, and she had argued with Norris regarding the importance of style in literary art. Norris's expression of his point of view, and Presley's in the novel, was paraphrased by Dulce: "if a book had entrails it did not have to have style." That is, the literary values of the Annie Derrick in the novel were those of Dulce Ashe.

Gaston Ashe, too, was fond of Norris. He told Walker that "we were very close during the period he honored me with a visit at Tres Pinos. . . . he was a most delightful comrade and full of personality and magnetism."<sup>12</sup> Gaston not only facilitated Norris's study in wheat ranching; like Norris's fraternity brother Seymour Waterhouse, he served as a model for the cantankerous character Annixter.

Upon its publication, Norris sent the Ashes a copy of *The Octopus*. His inscription read: "In grateful remembrance of certain days passed in the Santa Anita Country where the scene of the following story has been laid."<sup>13</sup>

The pleasant ambiance of the Ashe household remembered by Norris changed, however, over the next few years. The happy young couple of 1899 divorced seven

years later. Dulce married again, becoming Mrs. Francis Davis in 1922; they lived in Santa Cruz until Davis's retirement from business, after which they moved to her ranch.

Norris came back to the region in which he delighted after he had finished writing *The Pit* in June 1902, but not—so far as is known—to the Santa Anita Ranch. His hostess this time was the widow of Robert Louis Stevenson, Fanny. In 1899, while waiting for the completion of the construction of her palatial house at the corner of Hyde and Lombard streets in San Francisco, she went on a camping trip outside Gilroy on the east side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Delighted with the area, she bought a ranch and built a summer home there.<sup>14</sup> Norris and his wife visited her there in the summer of 1902, became as enthusiastic as Fanny, and by fall had purchased ten acres of the Sanders Ranch adjoining the Stevenson property. On it was a one-bedroom log cabin. A newspaper article claimed that Norris built a second, two-bedroom cabin "with his own hands."<sup>15</sup> But, needless to say, he hardly possessed the skills necessary for that.

Instead, as the newly discovered letter indicates, he asked Douglas Sanders to make additions and improvements on the ranch and log cabin, giving Fanny a detailed description of the work to be done. And then he sent him from San Francisco the September 1902 letter cursorially written on hotel stationery, hoping that all might be finished by February 1903.

Norris named his ten acres *Quien Sabe* after Don Juan Anzar's ranch and Annixter's in *The Octopus*. He planned to use the cabin for both writing and relaxation until he could build a house there. The scene was exhilarating, featuring a stand of redwood trees behind the cabin, a fine view of the countryside, and a spring just below. To publisher Frank Nelson Doubleday Norris wrote with characteristic verve in October, "I can shoot deer from my front windows. The quails are pests. There's a trout stream just around the corner. We have the Stevensons for near neighbors. This beats a New York apartment."<sup>16</sup> He sent a similar letter to the one-time editor of San



Francisco's *The Wave* and present editor of *World's Work* monthly magazine, John O'Hara Cosgrave. This letter does not survive but Cosgrave's reply does. He wrote, "undoubtedly, you will make a great success as a rancher, but I thought the period of queer freaks had passed for you. Still if you turn out good, gay stories of adventure, the sojourn in the Santa Cruz mountains will be justified."<sup>17</sup> At approximately the same time that he wrote to Douglas Sanders, Norris informed Fanny that Jeannette and he had decided abbreviate a planned round-the-world trip to a "modest little excursion Samoa-wards and back, or mebbe we [will] get as far as Sydney"; they would not be going to France "but will come to Quien Sabe in February—FEBRUARY!"<sup>18</sup> That is, the anticipated return to the Gilroy area not only beat an apartment in Manhattan but the site of European culture that had most influenced Norris's literary concepts and style.

Fanny Stevenson was greatly saddened when Norris died on 25 October 1902. She had very much looked forward to his being a neighbor, she having made improvements on the ten acres at her own expense. The trail from her home to the cabin was a steep one, and she had had seats placed along the way for those climbing it. Now she contacted a mutual friend, writer and artist Gelett Burgess, who designed a memorial seat with a plaque reading "FRANK NORRIS | 1870-1902 | SIMPLENESS AND GENTLENESS AND HONOR | AND CLEAN MIRTH." Under the text is the glyph Norris often used when signing his name. Above the plaque is a large iron cross. Wrote Fannie to Charles Scribner in 1902:

I am building a memorial seat to poor Frank Norris. With the assistance of a couple of men I have gathered a lot of boulders from the bed of a stream and from these we have fashioned a bench to hold six or eight people, and set it where the view is glorious. I have helped lay the stones, and have dabbled in mortar until I can hardly use my hands to write.<sup>19</sup>

Her affection for Norris extended to his widow and the daughter also named Jeannette. The latter visited Fanny

as a youngster, and Norris's widow was especially close to Fanny's daughter Isobel. Jeannette spent some time with Norris's mother after his death, but then she went east with Fanny; later, Jeannette and Isobel lived together for years.

Norris's Quien Sabe was sold to the Stevensons; and many years later the cabin and stone memorial were designated U.S. historic landmarks.

Hollister, Gilroy, Coronado Beach, Stockton, Asti, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Iowa Hill—while working for *The Wave* in 1896-98 and at other intervals in his life, Frank Norris traveled about California searching for sensational "copy" and finding it. Today, his peregrinations promise to yield yet more stories than the ones he himself told. One has to wonder how many other locales like the Santa Anita Ranch and the hillside near Gilroy can be made to provide additional biographical detail and deepen our understanding of his personality and art. At the least, one has to assume that there are other letters like the one to Mr. Sanders tucked away here and there in California and elsewhere.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See the front page for this issue of *Frank Norris Studies*.

<sup>2</sup>Kevin Starr, "Introduction," *The Octopus* (New York: Penguin, 1986), x, xxiii.

<sup>3</sup>John V. Young, *Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains* (Santa Cruz: Western Tanager Press, 1984), 79-80.

<sup>4</sup>5 April 1899 to Harry Manville Wright, *Frank Norris: Collected Letters*, ed. Jesse S. Crisler (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1986), 75.

<sup>5</sup>13 September 1900 to Isaac Frederick Marcossou, *Collected Letters*, 123.

<sup>6</sup>Starr, x.

<sup>7</sup>Much of the information on Gaston and Dulce Bolado Ashe presented below is derived from Marjorie Pierce, *East of the Galibans* (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1977), 120-24.

<sup>8</sup>Pierce, 24.

<sup>9</sup>L.L. Paulson, *Handbook and Directory of San Benito County* (San Francisco: L.L. Paulson, 1873), 144.

<sup>10</sup>Norris's drawing survives in the Frank Norris Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>11</sup>12 June 1931 to Franklin Walker, Franklin D. Walker Collection, Bancroft Library.



<sup>12</sup>27 August 1930 to Franklin Walker, Franklin D. Walker Collection, Bancroft Library.

<sup>13</sup>*Collected Letters*, 225. The inscription is undated, but—despite his debt of gratitude—it is clear that Norris did not immediately send them a copy upon 1 April 1901 publication of *The Octopus*. The Ashe copy now in the Barrett Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, is from the fourth of seven American printings made by Doubleday, Page & Co. in 1901 (see Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., *Frank Norris: A Descriptive Bibliography* [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992], 71-82).

<sup>14</sup>Margaret Mackay, *The Violent Friend* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 81-100. See also Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, *The Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 265-75.

<sup>15</sup>Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping, Gilroy Historical Museum.

<sup>16</sup>October 1902 to Frank Nelson Doubleday, *Collected Letters*, 202.

<sup>17</sup>10 October 1902 to Norris, Frank Norris Collection, Bancroft Library.

<sup>18</sup>September 1902 to Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne Stevenson, *Collected Letters*, 201.

<sup>19</sup>Sanchez, 275-78.

## Frank Norris on the *Sommers N. Smith*

Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.

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The tracking of Frank Norris's movements during the Spanish-American War is especially challenging for several reasons. No letters written while he was in Key West, Tampa, and Cuba are known to be extant. Because he was neither a nationally visible magazine correspondent in 1898 nor a fellow-reporter representing a newspaper, his experiences—and even his presence in these three locales—received little mention from the journalists with whom he shared the stage as the "other" man from *McClure's Magazine*. Stephen Bonsal was the principal writer for that monthly—in which none of Norris's war writings ever appeared. That Bonsal went ashore at Aserraderos in Cuba on 20 June 1898, when General William Shafter parlayed with the Cuban

general, Calixto Garcia, was noted by many who wrote about the days preceding the landing of American soldiers at Daiquirí and Siboney; but the only reason we know Norris also went ashore is that James F.J. Archibald told Franklin Walker in 1930 that such was the case.<sup>1</sup> The four known pieces on the Cuban campaign that Norris wrote do not contain this datum; in fact, they offer the most minimal of records regarding where he was and how he spent his time from early May through early August when he returned to New York City. For the most part, it is only through close analysis of his references and allusions—in the context of newspaper and magazine articles, memoirs and diaries, and subsequent historical studies—that one can integrate the skimpy information he provided with that originated by others concerning what was happening at particular times and places.

This is not to say that it is difficult to go beyond Franklin Walker's description of the three-month period. Walker did not fully exploit the data gathered in interviews with or letters written to him by Norris's intimates and associates, much less survey turn-of-the-century periodicals and books for the sake of fixing and dating Norris's various positions on the maps of Cuba and the U.S. It is not difficult to identify errors as well. Research reveals as incorrect these claims: that Norris returned to New York City on a ship bound for Puerto Rico, that news of the signing of the peace protocol with Spain reached that ship in mid-course, that it then turned north toward to New York, that Norris was one of the two correspondents who were the sole passengers on the *Iroquois*, and that there was any sort of "welcome" for them at the Battery.<sup>2</sup> There are sequences of events, though, that resist both better definition and wholly satisfactory verification. One case in point not noted at all by Walker is that Norris was aboard the pressboat *Sommers N. Smith* when it circumnavigated Cuba between 24 May and 2 June 1898. This is a new datum meriting inclusion in Norris biography—or so I have concluded since 1998 when I initiated research on Norris's war experience. But, as is often the case in



historiography and biography, absolute certainty is a pleasure denied—until the one information source now lacking is finally unearthed.

About other events preceding the cruise initiated on 24 May, there is less reason for uneasiness. While Franklin Walker cites no dates whatsoever until Norris first touched Cuban soil at Aserraderos on 20 June,<sup>3</sup> I was able to determine that Norris arrived at Key West by 6 May and that S.S. McClure, the publisher of *McClure's Magazine* and head of the McClure newspaper syndicate, had arranged for him to board the pressboats with which at least one newspaper, the *New York Journal*, had contracts. Thus, on 8-9 May, he was off the northern Cuban coast aboard the *Three Friends* with *Journal* correspondents Sylvester Scovel and Stephen Crane; and by 6 June at the very latest he had left Key West for Port Tampa, whence he departed for Cuba on the 14th. Given the connections with which S.S. McClure had provided both Bonsal and Norris, Norris surely visited the Cuban coast again on press boats before going on to Port Tampa. But, what was he doing with the rest of his time from 9 May through the beginning of June?

In April 1998, I read an answer to this question. Joseph Pais of the Key West Art & Historical Society was advanced in his development of a chronologically arranged database dealing with the events leading up to and occurring during the war. While in Key West participating in a lecture program celebrating the "Centennial of the Spanish-American War in Key West, Florida," I asked him to search his log for references to Frank Norris, and the entry for 24 May 1898 (p. 232 of the printout he then had in hand) located Norris aboard the *Sommers N. Smith*, which departed from Key West on that date in search of Spain's "Phantom Fleet."

Given the degree to which the Spanish-American is one of the "forgotten" wars, this fleet that seemed so spectral in 1898 requires some explanation. On 29 April four armored cruisers and three torpedo boats were seen sailing westward and were understood to be on their way to Cuba, or perhaps Puerto Rico, or possibly the U.S. coast. Anxiety mounted as these Spanish warships disappeared in the Atlantic, destination unknown. Under

the command of Admiral Sampson, the U.S. Navy both maintained the blockade of Cuba begun earlier in April and searched for weeks for this "Phantom Fleet." Rumors abounded: the Spanish warships were still at sea, or had arrived at Santiago harbor, or were instead hidden in the harbor of Cienfuegos. Thus, reporters Sylvester Scovel, Charles M. Pepper, George Lynch, Walter Scott Meriwether joined photographer James Hare<sup>4</sup> and, according to Joseph Pais, Frank Norris in an unprecedented journalistic jaunt. Sailing eastward from Key West they began their own search. It was a cruise of over 1500 miles around Cuba—during which they saw nothing of the Spanish ships that had been concealed from sight in the Santiago harbor since 19 May 1898. They were finally discovered by the U.S. Navy on the 29th—one day after the *Smith* had sailed past Santiago toward Cienfuegos.

On 25 May, while still on the northern coast of Cuba, the *Smith* took aboard Scovel's colleague, Stephen Crane, who was returning to Key West on another pressboat, the *Three Friends*. That Crane came aboard in this manner will be news to Crane biographers, who have not described this particular event,<sup>5</sup> despite the treatment he gave another incident occurring during the cruise in a short story-like article entitled "Chased by a Big 'Spanish Man-o'-War.'"<sup>6</sup> That Norris was there when Crane came aboard the *Smith* is, as has been noted, as novel a notion, especially since he—like Crane—appears never to have written about this unlikely mid-seas transfer.

All that happened off the Cuban coast between 24 May and 2 June is the subject of one of four chapters on the Cuban campaign that I have now drafted. My purpose here is not to summarize that chapter but to solicit assistance in finding confirmation of Pais's log entry. The problem is that Pais did not document his information sources. For years he simply read widely and summarized, paraphrased, or quoted his sources. Still, I have viewed his 24 May 1898 as authoritative for two reasons, the first of which is negative and the second positive. The first is that Pais is the Associate Director of the Key West Art & Historical Society, i.e.,



not a literary historian. I found that he was not a Norris fan; indeed, it was clear that he was not even a Norris reader. In short, in the months before I made his acquaintance and posed my question he had no motivation for adding Norris's name to the roster of those aboard the *Smith*. That Norris was in his database, I had to conclude, was the result of his being named in an unrecorded source text.

The positive reason for viewing Pais's entry as authoritative is its phrasing, which is at points identical to that of Cecil Carnes in his biography *Jimmy Hare: News Photographer*. Pais's entry taking the reader from 24 to 28 May, when the *Smith* encountered the U.S. warship *St. Paul* at Santiago, reads:

The American tug *Sommers N. Smith*, chartered by the New York *World* and the *Herald*, carrying novelist Frank Norris, Stephen Crane and newsman Sylvester Scovel, is fired upon as it approached Santiago de Cuba. They had been fired upon by the *St. Paul* under the command of [Captain Charles G.] Sigsbee. They exchange greetings and the reporters warn him that the fleet is at Santiago. Sigsbee tells them: "Your information is wrong. I advise you to make yourself scarce, as Cervera [the admiral commanding the "Phantom Fleet"] might show up at any minute. You are in a very dangerous position."<sup>7</sup>

Unlike Pais's entry, the account given by Carnes does not name Norris when relating that aboard the *Smith* with "the team of Scovel and Hare, were ten or more correspondents, the élite of the newspaper fraternity. Stephen Crane was there, George Lynch, Charles M. Pepper, Walter Scott Meriwether—probably the finest group of poker-players afloat." But Carnes, like Pais, does relate that the *St. Paul* fired a warning shot and drew next to the *Smith*, whereupon Captain Sigsbee asked what the reporters wanted. They replied, "We've heard that Cervera is in Santiago harbor," and they explained that they were looking for Commodore Schley, who was in charge of the search on Cuba's southern coast.

"Your information is wrong," bellowed Captain Sigsbee, then laid aside the megaphone as no longer necessary. "Cervera is not there, and Schley has gone west. *I advise you to make yourself scarce, as Cervera may show up any minute. You are in a very dangerous position* [italics added]."<sup>8</sup>

The hypothesis suggested by the two undocumented narratives is that James H. Hare or another on the *Smith* was the unidentified source of both Pais's entry and Carnes's account of the incident. That is, both Pais and Carnes made use of an unnamed publication from which they derived their near identical descriptions of the interaction between Captain Sigsbee and the journalists he chided.

Norris's search was for the "Phantom Fleet." My question is, where is that more elusive entity, the source used by Pais and Carnes?

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Undated interview with James F.J. Archibald, Franklin D. Walker Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>2</sup>Franklin Walker, *Frank Norris: A Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1932), 200-201.

<sup>3</sup>Walker, 173-81.

<sup>4</sup>Cecil Carnes named these five and a sixth, Stephen Crane, in his *Jimmy Hare: News Photographer* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 53.

<sup>5</sup>Carnes as well does not relate how Crane boarded the *Smith*. *The Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), vol. 9, 124-28.

<sup>7</sup>"Spanish-American War Log," Unpublished database (Key West, Fla.: Key West Art & Historical Society, 1998), entry for 24 June 1898.

<sup>8</sup>Carnes, 54.



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