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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



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in Nevada

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Lincoln County, Nevada

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To His Daughter in Connecticut
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A LIFE OF FIFTY YEARS IN NEVADA

THE MEMOIRS OF PENROD OF THE COMSTOCK LODGE

Commentary, Notes, and Transcription

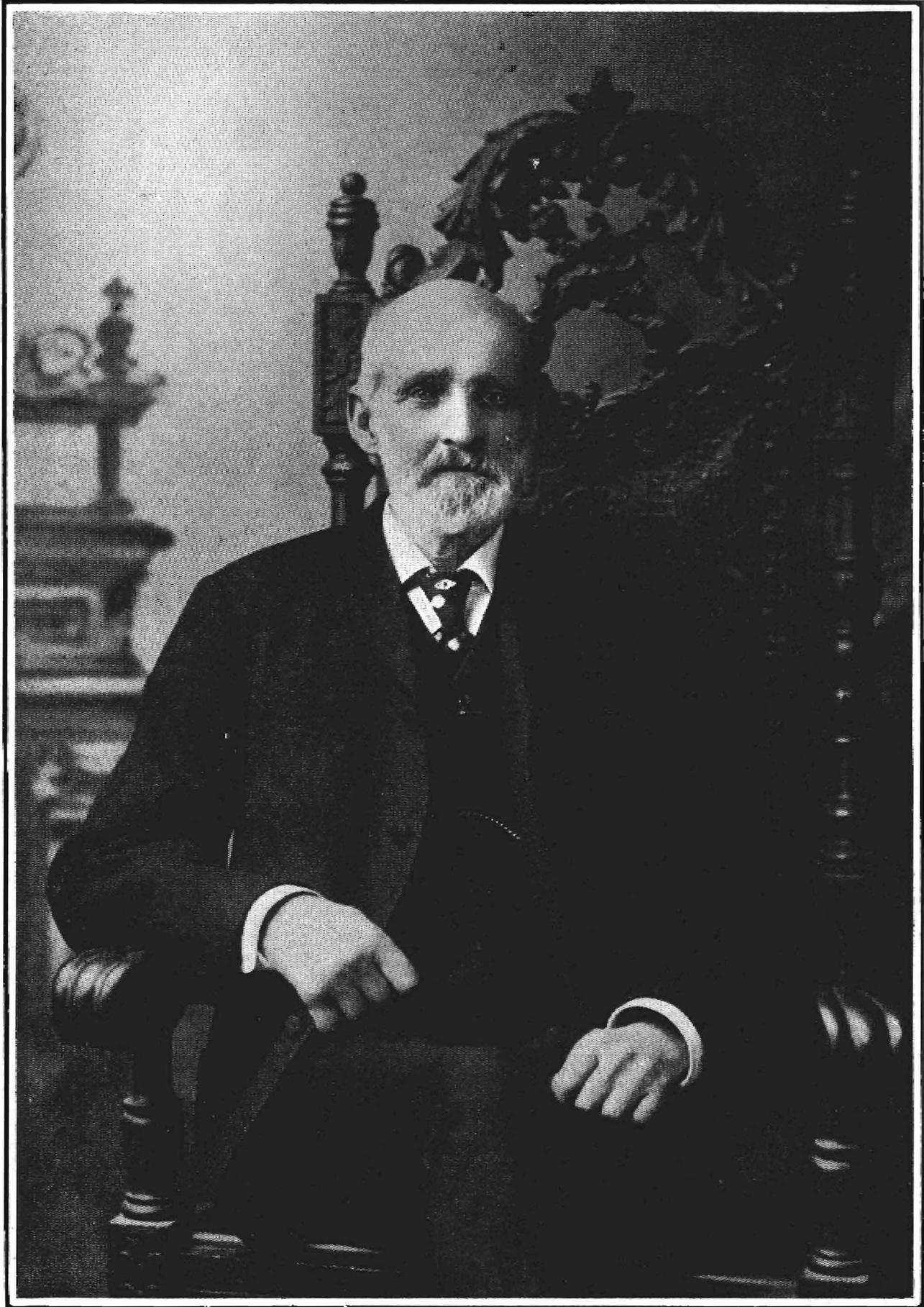
By AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON

Two documents—the notice of the discovery of the Comstock lode which is recorded in the Gold Hill Record Book “A”, and some memoirs which are on file at the Nevada Historical Society Library¹—bear the name of Emanuel Penrod.² Concerning the first document, it may be said that Penrod played an insignificant role in the discovery; indeed he was brought into the partnership solely, so historians would have us believe, because he was a partner of Comstock.³ The *Memoirs* take on significance at this point; written long after historians had pieced together a story of the discovery of the lode, the *Memoirs* quietly take exception to some of the findings of the historians and justify Penrod’s being brought into the partnership in the original claim on equal footing—no pun intended—for services rendered to the discoverers—O’Riley and McLaughlin. At other times Penrod speaks out as a witness of the early Washoe scene in a manner warranting our attention. All in all it is time that the *Memoirs* take their place along with other documents pertaining to early Nevada.

Some liberties have been taken in editing the *Memoirs*: some spelling has been changed; some remains untouched; some material relating reactions to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and scientific theories has been deleted. It remains for Penrod to tell his simple, unvarnished stories:

THE MEMOIRS

Being born in Union County Illinois, in that part called Egypt in the Year of our Lord, 1826, on the 3d Day of september, in Early Life Being a Farmers son and in a newly settled part of the Country see Nothing of life Outside of a farming Life, it Being a new or wild Part of the Country, With a thinly Populated Settlement, and Consequently, Moderately facilitated in Regards to Educational Qualifications i being healthy and Strong, (a survivel of the fittest, as Darwin would call it) Consequently, had to work on the Farm while Brothers and Sisters of weaker Physic was sent to School; and when My Father, John Penrod Died in 1844, i left home so as to help Mother in supporting the smaller Children, there being Four Younger than me. i tried it



EMANUEL PENROD

on the Mississippi River in various ways. Finely in Buying Chickens in Ills [Illinois], and Selling them in New Orleans, at this i done fairly well, and was in this Business when the Mexican War commenced, after failing to enlist in a Co, in New Orleans, went back to Ills, and enlisted in Co. H. First Illinois Regiment, Capt, Hamton, with John Logan at 2nd Lieutenant, Mustered into Service in Alton Ills, in 1847. i with two Brothers was left at Fort Levenworth on the Sick list; the Rest of the Regement went to SantaFee, one Brother Dying there and the other two of us Remained in the Hospital untel Peace was Declared, When we was given a discharge from the Fort. After Sixth Months of sickness, i being so weak i could not walk without assistence. But in a year after arriving home was as well as ever, and from then untel the spring of 1852, nothing outside of a Farmers Life occurred.

In April of 1852, i with two Brothers started for the Gold Fields of California and after six month travel with an Ox team, Reached the first Gold Diging i ever saw. It was in Gold Canyon,⁴ a Gulch or Canion that heads at Gold Hill, in now Nevada, and was no doubt fed by the Erosion of the Apex of the Famous Comstock Lode. After working a month in the mines there we went to spend the Winter in Cal [California], mining at Placerville (Hangtown) and Kelsey, where an incident Occurred that i will never forget, and made me a fast Friend of the Honorable Thomas Wren, then a Miner But Afterwards a Prominent Man in Nev [Nevada], Being at one time a Representative in Congress from Nev. The circumstance to which i allude is the killing of one of my Brothers By an Indian near Kelsey, and Wren, Heading a party, found the Indian and Arrested him, and when the Indian Broke and was likely to make his Escape, Mr. Wren shot and killed him, this being in the spring of 1853. i never met Mr. Wren after that untel i met Him in Carson City, in 1875, When we met as Representatives in the Nev. Assembly, he from Eureka co, and i from Elko Co. It is unnecessary to say that we was Friends, although he a Republican and i a Democrat, and have been friends ever since, as he Came Back to the Silver and Democratic Party. i will now go Back to 1853. It is amusing to see how little a Man who was raised in a western state, the estimate he would place on the Value of Land in the Valleys of Cal; after Mining untel Sept, 1853, we took a trip through Sacramento Valley and Suisun Valley, when everything was dried up, so we decided as a Farming Country, Cal. was a Failure, could

have taken Up land in either Valley as there was But Few setlers in either Valley.

But Now in 1904, this same land is so Valuable that a poor Man can only look at it. In the Fall of 1853, we went back to Gold Canon, where we worked in 1852, paying 25 cts. per foot for lumber with which to make sluice Boxes and packing it 25 miles, paying a high price for every thing we needed, put in the winter of 1853 very Profitable in the Mines, and in the spring of 1854, my Brother and i went home to Ills, by way of Panima and New Orlean. Remained in Ills, 18 Months; then with my Family and Motherinlaws Family re crossed the Plains and settled in Nev. (then Utah Territory) in 1856, have lived there ever since. Been in Swim Boath with and a gainst the current, interested in Mining and Farming, also Stock Raising. Was one of the four Men who discovered the Famous Comstock Lode at now Virginia City.

The Discovery was more of an accident then otherwise. To describe the whole incidence connected with it would take a vol-umn to contain it, but will give a few of the occurances as i remember them, for i wright from Memory a lone. Before giving an account of the discovery of the Famos Comstock Lode, let me set at Rest a piece of False History of Nevada, as what I here wright i was an Eye witness to, what i Refur to is tha hanging of William Thornton, Called Lucky Bill, "never worked nor never will," as he often said. It was in the Summer of 1857. He, Mr. Thornton, left Carson Valley, saying he was going to Salt Lake Valley to Buy some Good Blooded, or American Cows, as the most of the stock in the Valley, (ie) Carson Valley was a Mixture of American, Texas and Spanish. When Mr. Thornton returned, said he had changed his mind, and had only went to Honey Lake Valley, and had Bought 300 head of fine American Cattle, From a Frenchman By the Name of Hary Gardier, and sent His sone Jerome Thornton to drive the stock to Carson Valley. It was well known in Honey Lake Valley that Thornton was talking trade with Gardier, but in a few days after Thornton left the Valley, Gardier also was missed, and as the People was suspicious of Thornton, as the company he kept while in Lake Valley was not a bove suspicion, as one of the parties was a man called Bill Edwards, the same who killed Snelling, at or near Snellings Ranch in Cal. In early history Edwards partner's name was Mullin, or so called.

When Gardier Left the Valley without visiting or bidding good by to any of his many friends, it created a suspicion in the minds

of the people, and the Citizens Selected W. C. T. Eliot, known as Rufe Elliott, as a detective to go to Carson Valley and try to find what had become of Gardier. Elliott went to Genoa in Carson Valley where Thornton lived, made the acquaintance of, and played Billiards and Cards, drank whiskey; and under a general good feeling Thornton gave the whole thing a way, how he had planned and Edwards and Mullin was to kill Gardier, and he, Thornton, would prove that he had paid Gardier In Carson Valley and that Gardier had gone to Cal; and at a bout this time the Body of Gardier was found in Susan River. At the discovery of the murdered Man, Edwards and Mullin left. Mullin never heard from, but Edwards went to Carson Valley and hid out in the Mountains and Thornton sent his daily provisions. When Elliott had found out all he wanted, and as they kept a daily carrier between Carson and Honey Lake Valleys, which was a bout 100 Miles a part, Elliott sent for a posse to arrest all that was concerned or close friends of Thornton. There was five arrests, Thornton, Lute Olds, John McBride, Oren Grey and a man by the name of Austin. They were all taken to a Ranch house belonging to Dick Sides, J. M. Baldwin and L. B. Abernathie on Clear Creek. There being no officers, neither Government, State or Territory or County, Carson Valley then Being claimed as Carson County, Utah, but the people repudiated Utahs authority; so there was no legalised officers. And under the circumstances, the people selected a Chief Justice whoes name was John Cary, and an associate Justice, John Neal, and also chose as Marshal was a man by the name of Gilpen; he and Neal from Honey Lake Valley and Cary of Carson Valley. The two Justices issued a Venira and the Marshall Supoenied the jurors, the cort asking questions for the people, and the prisoners for themselves, no lawyer being allowed on either side. The trial lasted six days, when a verdict of accessory to the murder of Gardier was Rendered. And under instructions of the Cort, where a Crime less than for murder, the Jury was to impose a fine, as there was no prison then in Carson Valley, and the people would not Reconise Utah, and could not send a prisoner to California. And so Lute Olds was Fined \$1000, and Austin \$200, Olds being held for Austins fine. Olds had furnished Provisions on several occasions for Edwards, the real murderer. Austins fine was for accusations of horse stealing. Olds refused to pay these fines, and so the Marshall, by instructions of the Cort, Levied on stock, advertised by posting notices, and sold stock, cattle, enough to

bring \$1200. After the territory was organized, and even before the Organization when the US. Government sent John Cradellough to hold court in Carson Co. Utah, he, Olds tried to recover from the people, but was told by his Attorney, John Musser, That The Court by which he was adjudged was a Peoples court and from which there was no appeal, and so it dropped. As i stated, Thornton was convicted and Hung about four miles south of where Carson City now stands.

Edwards was taken, after the others were arrested, by Jerome Thornton acting under instructions of his Father, was decoyed to a certain place where he was Captured and taken to Honey Lake, tried and Hung.

The actions of this Court has been Called in all the Historys and writings of Nevada a Vigelants Comity, formed untel after these hangings, when there was a Comity Organised, but never had any work to do.

i must say in the work of bringing to Justices there Murderers, Rufe Elliott Did some of the best Detective work ever done; what ever Rufe was after this, he did a sharp piece of Detective work in this. He, Elliott, finaly Died in Kern Co. Cal. Elliott was fighting Indians, the Pit River Indians, for several years and lost considerable stock by the Indians, Prior to 1856 while in Honey Lake Valley, for which he never got a cent from the Government or otherwise. His enemys always accused him of taking underhanded means in his Detective work, but i think any detective would have done as he did. He brought to light a murder for gain in which a Rancher who thought he was selling for cash, when his Life was the price. i wright this only to show that the Hanging was not by a Vigalance Comitty as has been Reported.

(To be continued.)

NOTES

¹The *Memoirs* were given to the Nevada Historical Society by Penrod's daughter, Mrs. I. G. Sharpe, in 1913.

²Penrod was better known to old-timers as "Manny" Penrod.

³Historians may have been guided to this conclusion by Comstock himself; see Comstock's letter in De Quille's *Big Bonanza* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1876) pp. 82-87.

⁴Although writing from memory, Penrod is correct in his dates; see the *Penrod Letters* on file at the Nevada Historical Society Library. [The *Letters* are being edited for publication in an early edition of the *Quarterly*.]

BOOM AND BUST GOVERNMENT IN LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA 1866-1909

By JAMES W. HULSE

When silver ore was discovered in the Pahranaगत region of southeastern Nevada in 1865, that section of the nation was widely regarded as uninhabitable. Some of the maps described the area as unknown territory; it was on the fringe of a great stretch of desert which was sometimes called "Death Barren." It was the home of only a few—perhaps a hundred—poorly fed Indians.

But the lure of precious metals has ever been more potent than the inconveniences of distance and the desert. Ore was discovered on the slopes of Mt. Irish, about ten miles west of the north end of the Pahranaगत Valley, in March of 1865. In October, a permanent settlement had been established, and by early 1866, there may have been from one hundred to two hundred men in the region, according to state records.¹ The settlers established four tiny towns. Three—Logan City, Crescent, and Silver Canyon—were located in the vicinity of the mines near Mt. Irish. The fourth was Hiko, which was located in the valley ten miles to the east, where a supply of water was available for milling and agricultural purposes.

These settlers were about 250 miles by crude wagon-road from Ione, the county seat of sprawling Nye County which covered the entire southeastern corner of Nevada. Separated by 150 miles of forbidding desert from the seat of government, the residents of the Pahranaगत region began almost immediately to demand a county government. *The Reese River Reveille* recorded a desire for government as early as January 2, 1866, when it offered its first substantial report on the new ore discoveries. The people in this southeastern corner of the state wanted to create Stewart County from a portion of Nye County, the *Reville* said. It added:

A county organization is already maintained as far as people can act without the authority of legislation. The section proposed to be formed into the new county includes the Pahranaगत mining region and extends westward into the desert region. There are already about 500 inhabitants in the neighborhood.²

The estimate of population seems to have been high; evidence now available suggests that the population of the region never

reached this figure, and in January of 1866, the rush to Pahrana-gat had not started. It is not possible to determine, on the basis of present evidence, what specific efforts had been made toward government prior to 1866, since there are no extant records on this period. There are evidences that vigilante groups operated on occasion during 1866 and later, and the miners had formed a mining district along traditional lines, but other clues are scarce.

Exaggerated stories about the wealth of the mines began to work their way across the state in January; the *Reveille* carried stories about "extraordinarily rich and valuable" mines on January 30 and February 1, 1866. News of this kind apparently had reached Carson City on January 22, for on that day, an Ormsby County Assemblyman introduced a bill in the State Legislature to create Stewart County from the southeastern corner of Nye County.³ The bill passed the Assembly on February 7, 1866, after the name Stewart had been changed to Lincoln in the legislative in-fighting.⁴ In the Senate, the bill encountered formidable trouble; its leading opponent was Senator F. M. Proctor of Nye County, who said that at least another year was required before a government could be created in the remote region. He even expressed a doubt about the wisdom and feasibility of any government in such a place:

From my own actual knowledge of the country . . . it is almost entirely uninhabitable, and the settlements intended to be included in said county, as well as the place designated as the county seat, are in the Territory of Utah.⁵

Despite the Senator's objections, the bill passed in substantially its original form, and it was approved by Governor Henry G. Blasdel on February 26. In essence, it provided that Lincoln County included that portion of Nevada east of the thirty-ninth longitude west from Washington and south of the thirty-eighth parallel; that when 300 persons should file a petition with the Nye County clerk for a government, three persons would be appointed county commissioners and empowered to form the government; and that Crystal Springs, about three miles south of Hiko, should be the county seat.⁶

Governor Blasdel chose to make the creation of Lincoln County a personal project, and within a month after approving the bill, he was preparing for a trip to the new mines. At that time, there was no direct route from western Nevada to Hiko. The *Reveille* of February 6, 1866, testified to the impossibility of a direct route from Ione to Pahrana-gat:

No one—that is no paleface—has ever traveled over the desert

region, and if men have ever gone between the embryo county of Stewart and the town of Ione, as has been related, we suppose it must have been by balloons.⁷

The route between Pahranaगत and Austin at this time ran northward from Hiko to Egan Canyon, north of present-day Ely, and then westward along the Pony Express route. This is the route which the governor and his party probably should have followed, but they sought a new road to the south—through the heart of “Death Barren.”

By April 1, 1866, Governor Blasdel and his party were on their way. Soldiers from Fort Churchill accompanied the chief executive as far east as Silver Peak and then turned back, unwilling to continue into the desert without assurances of proper provisions for their animals.⁸ The story of the governor’s experience has frequently been told by Nevada historians. The party ran short of supplies in the Armagosa Desert. The governor and a companion left the party near Ash Meadows and went ahead to Logan City for supplies. When the supplies reached the stranded group, one man had died and the others were subsisting on lizards. Having overcome the crisis, the governor found that his efforts were to be unrewarded; there were not enough people to form the government under the statute.⁹

Even while Governor Blasdel was enroute and visiting in Pahranaगत, the glamour was beginning to fade. The *Territorial Enterprise* of April 6, 1866, said:

PAHRANAGAT.—The latest news from Pahranaगत is not of the most flattering nature. The leads are small and the pay streaks smaller . . . Townsites have been laid out everywhere and were all these inhabited it would be a very populous country.

On April 3, the *Reveille* offered the comments of a former resident of Austin who felt that he had been bilked by joining the rush to Pahranaगत:

Talk of crazy men and fools; there is the largest collection here that fate ever brought together in one place. We have been badly fooled, and I hope others will profit by our experience.

Even Governor Blasdel seemed to have been disillusioned by what he found. On his return to Carson City, he stopped in Austin, and stories in the *Reveille* appear to be based on information which he or his party supplied. The *Reveille* observed:

The regulations of the district are as bad and mischevous as the most perverse ingenuity could devise.¹⁰

Although the governor failed to create the government, there may have been a law enforcement agency in existence without

official status. The *Territorial Enterprise* of April 25, 1866, carried this item:

The body of George Rogers, the missing sheriff of Lincoln County, Nevada, has been found. He was murdered by Indians between the Pahrnagat settlements and Meadow Valley.

Other references to Rogers from this period do not identify him as sheriff.¹¹ However, there was a vigilante group—a crude form of governmental unit—which avenged his death. A kind of law enforcement was possible despite the failure of the formal processes.

The 1867 legislature passed another act creating a government for Lincoln County. This act eliminated the conditions and requirements which had caused the 1866 statute to fail. It designated the three county commissioners by name, and it gave them authority to create the government. Hiko was made the county seat, and the northwest corner of the county was changed to Red Bluff Springs, a development which added a small slice of land to the northern edge of the county and removed a slice from the western side.¹² The county commissioners held their first meeting at Logan on April 16, 1867, to take the oath of office. They adjourned their meeting to Hiko, where they reassembled on April 22 and designated the county officers.

Five months elapsed before the county board obtained a building to serve as a courthouse. On October 29, 1867, the commissioners

. . . this day leased the building known as Butler and Pearson's saloon . . . to be occupied for county purposes.¹³

The commissioners used this building for about six months, and then leased other property on which they planned to build a courthouse. On this occasion, in March of 1868, the board identified the property by saying it was "opposite the brewery now owned and operated by Thomas Hartle."¹⁴

The county records reflect not only the fact that the liquor establishments were landmarks in this remote mining society; they betray other features of the communities which were populated by transient, wealth-seeking miners. The mining population was not stable, and the men who were selected to fill county offices often left in the middle of their terms. At times the county commissioners did not meet for several weeks. In the election of 1868, the first in the county's history, the voters selected James Mee, Charles P. Ely, and J. Gilbert. When the time arrived for them to assume office, none were available for their jobs, and three

different men were appointed. A large number of resignations during the last few years of the sixties coincides with a disillusionment about the mining prospects in the vicinity of Irish Mountain.

Another problem which the infant county government inherited was a border conflict with Utah and the Mormons. When Congress moved the eastern Nevada boundary in 1866, establishing the eastern and southern boundaries of the state at their present location, Lincoln County's territorial limits were enlarged substantially. Although the enlargement put the Moapa region and the Meadow Valley area—with their growing communities of Mormons—within the county, it was impossible to collect taxes from these towns and farms. The problem was not resolved until a formal boundary survey was made in 1870. County Assessor George Ernst, in his report for 1868, wrote:

. . . excepting the immediate vicinity, the Pahrnagat mining district embraces the whole taxable property of Lincoln County. Our assessment roll will probably foot up nearly a quarter of a million of assessable property; and yet there is reason to believe that the taxable property of the county would exceed a half million if the eastern and southern boundary of the county were fully established. Along our eastern line lie the following Mormon settlements: Eagle Valley, Spring Valley, Meadow Valley, Clover Valley, St. Joseph and St. Thomas. They are all flourishing agricultural settlements and raise considerable stock. Callville and El Dorado Canon [sic] are in the Southern part of the county. Of the above, the first four places are paying taxes to Utah Territory, the other to Arizona. Your humble servant started in to assess the above places last year, but the belligerent attitude of the inhabitants compelled him to beat a retreat . . .¹⁵

Existing records of the county's tax levy on those properties which it could assess show that the government's anticipated tax revenue was only \$3,377 in 1868, \$4,182 in 1869, and \$8,602 in 1870—a feeble financial backbone for a county government.

There are other evidences of the county's governmental weakness. On more than one occasion, local citizens took the law into their own hands and hanged an accused offender before the legal processes could be observed. A notable case occurred in July, 1867, when a man who was suspected of murder was seized from the sheriff. S. B. Vail, who was said to have stolen horses, murdered a man named R. W. Knox, and slept on his grave, was taken by a crowd which gave him "a fair trial and hanged him the same day."¹⁶ Legend says his coffin was being built at the time the

trial was in progress, and the hammering could be heard in the court room.

On April 6, 1868, the commissioners acted upon a petition asking for the creation of a school district at Hiko. The petition, which was presented by the heads of ten families, was approved and the district was created.¹⁷ However, no report of any school operation found its way into the records of the State School Superintendent's Biennial Report until 1871. If Hiko had a school prior to 1871, which is doubtful, it apparently operated for only a short time.

If any further evidence is needed that the county government was born prematurely, the minutes make another quaint offering. There were 106 votes recorded by the county commissioners in the election of 1868. The names of more than thirty men were before the voters; about a third of the voters were seeking office.¹⁸

However feeble and inefficient the government may have been during the years when the county seat was at Hiko, they were better than the years that were to follow. After the government was moved to Pioche, new dimensions of corruption and inefficiency were discovered.

Excitement over the ore in the Pioche district—which at that time was officially known as the Ely District—began in 1869. By 1870, a considerable amount of the board's business was related to the new mining community, which was located fifty miles from Hiko. On July 25 and November 9, 1870, the commissioners rejected demands from the citizens of Pioche for the removal of the county seat to that town. These developments were premonitions of the legislative act which was approved on February 21, 1871, requiring an election on the question of whether to move the county seat.¹⁹ In the voting, Pioche received 501 votes as the new governmental seat. Panaca received 54 votes; Las Vegas had a single supporter and Meadow Valley had one. No votes were recorded to retain the county seat at Hiko.²⁰

Charles Gracey, an early mill superintendent in the Ely District, wrote reminiscent letters to the Nevada Historical Society in 1908 in which he recalled the general sentiment which existed in Pioche in the town's "palmy days":

. . . The story of Lincoln County and the removal of the county seat from Hiko to Pioche and the building of the Pioche courthouse I remember very well, but it would be a long story. I leave it to others to tell. It is not a story of which to be proud. It was steal, steal, early and late, and keep on stealing. That was the main point in Lincoln County affairs

. . . So far as the county stealing is concerned, I think that the men elected supposed that this was the way to play the game, for they seemed pleased at what they had done. All men at that time were trying to make a stake and get out of the country, and could you blame them? Times were not then as now, and the early day men must not be judged by the present conditions, neither must what they did be so judged. I did not blame the men at the time, or since. I have been in Nevada forty years, and I think we have as good men and women in Nevada as in any state in the Union . . .²¹

With this attitude prevailing, the county government was more an easy target for corruption than an instrument for the public welfare. The evidences of its impotence are legion. One of the most dramatic indications of this official ineptitude is in the incidence of homicide in Lincoln County in the early 1870's.

The Thompson and West *History of Nevada* lists 41 cases of homicide in Lincoln County from 1870 through 1873, and all except three of them occurred in the Pioche region. In these 41 cases, however, only five persons were punished for the killings; all others were either acquitted, relieved of responsibility by informal agreement, or unknown.²² The Thompson and West list does not include all the murders which are recorded in the local newspaper. All sources suggest evidence of the lack of adequate police action or judicial examination.

The minutes of the commissioners for the early 1870's indicate many instances when the board was seeking to collect county money or bonds from seemingly wayward county officers, occasions when the commissioners had to compromise with mining companies to get part of the county's tax revenue, and times when the board did not meet for several weeks. These troubles, however, were the lesser ones. The worst grief came about the time the county decided to build itself a courthouse.

The decision was reached during the summer of 1871. The board paid \$75 for the best set of plans, and on August 26, 1871, it awarded a \$16,400 contract to Edward Donahue to construct the courthouse.²³ Early in the financing of the courthouse project, they initiated a strange monetary procedure. On November 29, they issued \$25,000 worth of bonds to pay for construction, but they sold the bonds "for the sum of twenty thousand dollars in gold coin, said sum being the best and highest offer or bid made therefore."²⁴ On three occasions during the early part of 1872, additional money was allowed to the contractor for extra work done on the courthouse, and the minutes show that within the first

year of its use, repairs and changes were required on the native shale and red brick building on several occasions. A \$10,000 jail was authorized also. Thompspon and West summarizes the condition in this manner:

The Court House of Lincoln County is a two story brick building, 40x60, and was built in 1871, at a cost, including the jail, of \$75,000. . . . The history of the construction of these buildings is sufficiently remarkable to justify a relation of it here. The contract was let in August, 1871, to build the Court House for \$16,400 and the jail for \$10,000. Up to this time the finances of the county were in good condition. The revenue from the bullion tax, quarterly license tax, etc., kept a fund continually on hand to meet current expenses, and it was thought at the time that with the increasing wealth of the county this sum could be spared for county buildings, and, after a year or two would not be felt. But schemers, who saw their way to profit, determined to absorb this increasing revenue. By some unaccountable plan, after the work of building commenced, the contract was broken, and the work completed by the piece at the most extravagant price for each. Rude stone steps, leading from the Court House to the jail, cost several hundred dollars each. \$8,000 were allowed for water-closets, and the whole work was done in this extravagant way, till both the Court House and jail complete cost \$75,000; both of which could, under proper management, have been built of the same material, and quite as substantial, for at least \$30,000.²⁵

During the period of financing the courthouse, the commissioners began to expand a practice of issuing certificates of indebtedness, or scrip, in lieu of cash to pay claims and salaries. As the practice continued, the market value of the scrip fell below the face value, and to meet this situation, the commissioners issued larger amounts of scrip than the claims required.

This foolish policy was accompanied by another development which Thompson and West describes as the "Collectors' Fees Swindle." The sheriff of the county, John Kane, took advantage of his position as ex officio license fee collector for the county. He was entitled to receive a portion of each fee which he collected, but he also presented bills to the county for his normal share of those fees which he could not collect. This procedure became especially attractive when he began to assess fees to establishments which had long been quiet and from which there was no possibility of collection. Thompson and West indicates that this cost the county \$16,000 in a single year, and combined with the other extravagances, it created a substantial debt. Since scrip was being issued regularly without promise of redemption, its market value dropped to about thirty cents on the dollar.²⁶ The minutes of the commissioners during 1871 and 1872 record many

substantial claims from John Kane. Early in 1873, the commissioners became involved in a conflict with Kane when they attempted to collect some of his tax income, but he had already realized a substantial profit from his office.

The 1873 legislature created more trouble for the county. It passed an act which provided for the consolidation and funding of indebtedness of the county. It enabled and required the county officers to prepare bonds equal to the amount of the county debt. The bonds were to carry an interest rate of ten percent per year, and they were to mature on January 1, 1883. The county was to levy a tax of 45 cents on each \$100 of assessed valuation to pay interest on the bonds, and if the levy provided more money than was needed for interest, it could be used for bond redemption.²⁷ This legislation was based either upon ignorance of the size of the debt or upon a confidence that the county's tax revenue would increase, or both, because it was completely inadequate. It saddled Lincoln County with an impossible interest rate and without the means of paying either the principal or interest.

Pioche's mining boom hit its peak during the last months of 1872 and the early part of 1873. A list of the assessed valuation of the county during the early 1870's suggests what happened to the mining activity and the county's prosperity:

1870.....	\$521,388
1871.....	817,822
1872.....	1,197,646
1873.....	2,003,881
1874.....	1,195,208
1875.....	1,374,396
1876.....	1,045,165
1877.....	835,768

And the figures continued to get smaller for the next decade, reaching \$342,260 in 1886.²⁸

The county officers calculated the debt at about \$181,000, including the scrip and the courthouse bonds. In 1873, the bonds were issued, but the practice of issuing scrip was not stopped. In 1875, the legislature enacted a 35-cent tax levy in the county to redeem the scrip which had been issued since 1873.²⁹

By 1876, it was evident that the 45-cent levy would not pay the interest on the bonds. On January 3, County Treasurer Miles Quillen reported to the board that the annual 10 percent, or \$18,100, was due, but only \$5,707.90 was available in the interest fund. The board ordered him to make a pro rata distribution of

the interest money.³⁰ In the following year, the legislature authorized the county to issue scrip to pay the interest when there was not enough cash in the interest fund.³¹ This, like the other legislative enactments, only postponed and complicated the eventual solution of the problem. That solution was thirty years away in 1877, and sixty years were to pass before the blunders of these years would cease to haunt the government of Lincoln County.

The county government tried to divest itself of the debt obligations on several occasions. In 1875, the county became involved in a lawsuit against the Odd Fellows Saving and Commercial Bank, which held some of the bonds of 1873. The county attempted to avoid the payment of money in the interest fund, and the bank took the case to the Nevada Supreme Court, which ruled against the county in February, 1876. On learning of this ruling, the commissioners cancelled all contracts for the purchase of supplies and they notified all county employees "that all contracts and salaries cease from this date."³²

The financial condition of the county spilled over into school operations. Issues of the *Pioche Weekly Record* during the 1880's indicate several occasions on which school had to be suspended because of inadequate funds. On some occasions, school trustees conducted dances to raise funds for the schools. There was irregularity in school attendance, as records of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction demonstrate. In 1872, for example, there were 385 school-aged children in the county, with 269 on the registration rolls and 200 in average daily attendance.³³ In 1877, a typical year, there were 475 children in the county of school age. There were 458 on the school rolls, and only 298 in average daily attendance.³⁴

As the mining boom faded away, the violence and the schemers disappeared. Pioche had been criticized from Virginia City to St. Louis for its lawlessness in 1872 and 1873, but after the middle of the latter year, the law began to win its battle. On July 26, the *Pioche Daily Record* said the grand jury had indicted three men for murder. This signaled the change. In the last half of 1873, there were several murder convictions. The new assertion of authority and responsibility was a step forward in the evolution of Lincoln County's government, but it was also an apparent factor in increasing the county's financial burdens.

Pioche residents were increasingly aware of the financial state of the county, but the awareness prompted no action. Although many public meetings were held—on the subjects of schools, railroads, town problems, and politics—there seem to have been no

public meetings called specifically to consider the financial problem, despite the fact that, as the *Pioche Daily Record* said in the spring of 1876, the condition was making the property owners "mere instruments of earning and paying taxes for the benefit of certain classes of county creditors."³⁵

One additional factor which complicated the picture was that not all of the county's taxpayers were sharing the burden. During the thirty years after the debt began to feed upon itself and multiply, Lincoln County's delinquent tax list was often the largest in the state. Records of the state controller show that substantial amounts of the taxes remained unpaid; for several years during the last decade of the century, Lincoln County failed to collect one-fifth or one-fourth of its tax levy.³⁶

Thus the money woes accumulated. In 1881, the total debt had increased to nearly \$300,000 because the county had paid none of the principal and the interest was almost entirely unpaid. As the mining companies failed one by one during the 1870's and 1880's, some of their property was sold for overdue taxes, but this did not alter the trend.

Each year, after 1873, until 1886, the commissioners levied the 45 cent tax for interest payments, and after 1875, it made the annual 35 cent levy for scrip redemption. Although the county was falling ever deeper into debt as the years passed, the creditors did not present a crisis until 1886, when the county attempted to repudiate the debt. In March of that year, the commissioners failed to levy the 45 cent levy. Although this was contrary to the statute, the county took the position that the bonds had matured in 1883 and interest did not accumulate after that year. The county attorneys also contended that the statute of limitations relieved the county of any other financial obligations relating to the bonds. This position brought the county a series of lawsuits; it was challenged in federal courts by Charles Sutro, Nicholas Luning, and C. D. Vincent, who held most of the county bonds in the 1880's. Lincoln County lost all three suits in the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals and took them to the United States Supreme Court, basing its resistance to the bondholders largely on procedural arguments. On March 3, 1890, the Supreme Court ruled against the county, saying the statute of limitations did not apply until the county had made the bond money available and the creditors had failed to claim it within the statutory time limit. The existing situation gave the bond holders the right to collect interest and redemption money at any time that it became available.³⁷ On October 2, 1893, the county commissioners audited

their debt to these three parties and noted that they owed \$119,862.13 to Luning, \$147,337.07 to Sutro, and \$117,263.34 to Vincent.³⁸

A similar legal battle was fought against Samuel Davis, who sued to establish that the statute of limitations did not apply to scrip which had been outstanding for more than three years. This case was fought in the state courts, and Davis won his judgment in a ruling issued in July, 1896.³⁹ In 1897 and for several years afterward, the county commissioners levied a 45 cent tax for the payment of interest on the Davis judgment.

The first glimmer of light came in 1897. The legislature in that year passed a law designed to encourage the redemption of scrip at less than face value. It established a procedure which allowed the commissioners to advertise for the redemption of scrip whenever there were funds in the treasury, and it empowered the board to reject any and all offers from scrip holders.⁴⁰ Strengthened by the discovery of gold in Delamar in 1892, the county government began to redeem some of the scrip which was not covered by the judgments. The *Delamar Lode* of October 26, 1896, said there was about \$12,000 worth of scrip of this kind outstanding. During the last half of 1897, the commissioners attempted to persuade scrip holders to redeem their certificates at fifty cents on the dollar. The board was apparently subjected to much pressure, but it declined to yield during 1897.⁴¹ During the following months, however, the commissioners relaxed their policy, and the redemption rate fluctuated, with the scrip gradually being redeemed. The practice of seeking the best possible terms for the scrip involved the county in a lawsuit with A. S. Thompson, a local merchant, who apparently held a substantial amount. He attempted to get a court order requiring the commissioners to redeem scrip at face value when there was money available to do so. Thompson lost his case in 1898 when the case went before the Nevada Supreme Court.⁴² In 1899, the value of the scrip improved, as the county occasionally redeemed it for 95 percent of its face value. Minutes of the commissioners suggest that all scrip had been redeemed by 1901, and as the project neared the end, some was redeemed at face value. This was a reflection of the improved financial status of the county, an improvement wrought partly by the mining activity at Delamar and the beginnings of the construction of the Salt Lake-Los Angeles railroad through the county.

But the big problem, the bonded and scrip debts which had been converted into judgments, remained unchanged. In 1901,

State Senator Herman Freudenthal of Pioche introduced a bill in the legislature which intended a new refunding of the debt at a lower interest rate, and with a lower principal, if holders of their old claims would surrender their judgments and other claims against the county. By this time, the debt included the \$181,000 in principal and about \$425,000 in interest. Senator Freudenthal's plan would have allowed the county to refund the debt for \$225,000, with an interest rate of four percent per year.⁴³ The bill passed the senate but died in the assembly, where Lincoln County's assemblymen are said to have believed that any bill which could save that much money for the county "must have a steal in it somewhere."⁴⁴

Another attempt to refund the debt came during the 1903 legislative session. A complicated statute, giving the county commissioners the option of a \$300,000 bond issue with five percent interest or a \$600,000 bond issue without interest, was passed. It required a petition from a majority of the taxpayers to make it operative, and it provided that eighty percent of all revenue derived from the taxing of railroads would go into a sinking fund to pay for the bonds.⁴⁵ This feature of the bill created opposition and the act was never utilized.

In 1905, two bills aimed at the refunding of the debt passed in both houses of the legislature, and both were vetoed by Governor John Sparks. The first bill would have given the county commissioners broad powers to refund existing debts, and although its intent was to assist Lincoln County, the bill would have given extensive powers to all county commissioners in the state, and the governor vetoed it for this reason. The veto was unanimously sustained in the senate. The second bill, rushed through in the final days of the session, would have permitted the refunding of the debt at \$400,000. The governor vetoed this bill after the session ended, saying it did not provide adequate information on the existing debt. He said many Lincoln County residents had telegraphed him to oppose the bill.⁴⁶

In 1907, a successful and workable law was passed. It authorized the refunding of the debt at sixty-five percent of the outstanding obligation, which had been moving constantly upward as the years passed. Interest was to be four percent, and redemption of the bonds would begin ten years after they were issued. They would be redeemed in the following twenty years. Thus the act envisioned the complete payment of the debt in thirty years.⁴⁷

On May 6, 1907, the commissioners received a letter from the bond holders asking for the refunding as permitted by the law.

The total amount of the debt exceeded \$650,000, and on refunding, the commissioners decided they would set the new debt at \$428,063.28, plus a few incidentals which would be determined at a later date. On this basis, the commissioners ordered new bonds issued and established a tax levy for the first year.⁴⁸ This action was the basis for the eventual repayment of the 1873 debt.

Residents of Lincoln County came to know the debt as "the courthouse debt" because of the dubious financing of the old building and its relation to the financial trouble. Residents of Pioche came to call the old brick and shale structure the "million dollar" courthouse. It is impossible to say how much of the debt should be attributed to the courthouse "swindle," and it is difficult to determine how much the 1873 statute cost the taxpayers, but a reasonable guess would be about \$800,000. The 1907 debt was finally liquidated in 1938 along the lines drawn by the 1907 statute. In the same year, the county abandoned its old building for a new, gleaming white structure at the other end of town, as if to purge away the unsavory and costly past. The final payment on the new courthouse bonds was made in September, 1957; the county finally has accomplished what the 1871 commissioners hoped to accomplish.

The story of Lincoln County's boom and bust financing actually ends in 1907, with one exception. In 1909, the legislature created a new county from the southern portion of Lincoln. When Clark County came into existence south of the Third Standard Parallel South, it inherited some of the debt which had been created by the excesses of the 1870's in Pioche. The act which created the county provided that the assessed valuations of the two counties should be calculated together for the purpose of setting a tax rate for bond interest and redemption. The same tax was to be levied in each county.⁴⁹ Thus the early growth of Las Vegas helped to wipe out the debt. The only replica which Lincoln County has of the follies of its youth is a crumbling, condemned ghost of a building on Lacour Street in Pioche.

NOTES

¹*Annual Report of the State Mineralogist of the State of Nevada for 1866* (Carson City: State Printer, 1867) p. 64.

²*The Reese River Reveille*, January 2, 1866.

³*The Journal of the Assembly During the Second Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1866* (Carson City: State Printer, 1866) p. 100.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 155, 173.

⁵*The Journal of the Senate During the Second Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada, 1866* (Carson City: State Printer, 1866) p. 186. Despite

Senator Proctor's objections, Hiko was more than ten miles within Nevada even before the boundary change of 1866, which moved Nevada's eastern boundary one degree east. This change, approved by an act of Congress, also added the southern tip—the area which now includes Clark County and the southern parts of Lincoln and Nye Counties—to Nevada.

⁶*Nevada Statutes* (1866), Chapter 48, pp. 131–132.

⁷*Reveille*, February 6, 1866.

⁸*Ibid.*, April 21, 1866.

⁹Myron Angel, ed., *History of Nevada*, (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1881), p. 477. Mortimer Fuller, one of the early miners in the Pahranaगत Region and one of the county's first three commissioners, appears to have been largely responsible for information provided to Angel for his chapter on Lincoln County. Angel is generally reliable in the Lincoln County chapter, and internal evidence suggests Fuller's hand.

¹⁰*Reveille*, June 9, 1866. Letters in the Blasdel collection at the Nevada Historical Society suggest that the governor went to Pahranaगत partly because he was interested in the mines, and the letters suggest he was disillusioned. There is one letter written by the governor to John Ely, a mining property owner in Pahranaगत, on January 25, 1866. It says, in part: "If I think your offer reasonable we will doubtless visit Pahranaगत soon . . . I would be pleased to hear from you, at any time, about the mines, the country, and the prospects generally." He had expressed an interest in purchasing ground in the area. The second letter, written on August 23, 1866, to a James W. Gaff, reflects a different point of view. It said, "I trust you will consider what I wrote you about those Pahranaगत mines about which you telegraphed me as *confidential* as nothing would make me enemies as quickly as to say a man's mine was not good and for you to say, even in Cincinnati, that I said a mine was worthless or that it was gone. The same would be reported here as soon as the mail or express could bring it hence."

¹¹In 1873, a lawsuit between two mining companies in Pioche developed much testimony about the first activity in the county. This trial, between the Raymond and Ely Company and the Hermes Silver Mining Company, brought testimony from Stephen Sherwood and others on the killing of George Rogers. In the accounts of the trial published in the Pioche *Daily Record* in April, 1873, there is no indication that Rogers was sheriff. Chas. S. Cotton also mentions the Rogers incident but does not identify him as sheriff in his highly interesting pamphlet "Early Days in Nevada," published as *Side Lights on the Civil War; Early Days in Nevada* (Cowansville, Quebec: Cotton's Co-operative Publishing Co., Inc., April, 1912), pp. 38–39.

¹²*Nevada Statutes* (1867), Chapter 90, pp. 129–130.

¹³*County Commissioners' Records—1867–1876—Lincoln County, Nevada* (manuscript on file in the Lincoln County courthouse, Pioche), p. 18.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵*Biennial Report of the Surveyor General . . . for 1867 and 1868* (Carson City: State Printer, 1869), p. 147.

¹⁶*Reveille*, July 18, 1867.

¹⁷*County Commissioner' Record—1867–1876*, p. 29.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

¹⁹*Nevada Statutes*, (1871), Chapter 19, p. 64.

²⁰*County Commissioners' Records—1867–1876*, p. 119.

²¹Charles Gracey, "Early Days in Lincoln County," *First Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society, 1907–1908* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1909), pp. 113–114.

²²Angel, *op. cit.*, pp. 349–353.

²³*County Commissioners' Records—1867–1876*, p. 160.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 191–192. The interest rate was two percent per month.

²⁵Angel, *op. cit.*, p. 479. Mortimer Fuller was district judge in Pioche during

the boom years, and he probably provided this information. It is basically in agreement with data found in the *Pioche Daily Record* and the minutes of the county commissioners.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 480.

²⁷*Nevada Statutes* (1873), Chapter 13, pp. 54-59.

²⁸From the *Biennial Reports of the State Controller*.

²⁹*Nevada Statutes* (1875), Chapter 69, pp. 129-131.

³⁰*County Commissioners' Records—1867-1876*, p. 444.

³¹*Nevada Statutes* (1877), Chapter 2, p. 46.

³²*County Commissioner' Records—1867-1876*, p. 448. *Odd Fellows Savings and Commercial Bank, Respondent, v. Miles Quillen, County Treasurer of Lincoln County, Appellant*, 11 Nevada 109.

³³*Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction—1871-1872* (Carson City: State Printer, 1873), pp. 31, 34.

³⁴*Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction—1877-1878* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft Co., 1879), pp. 51, 53.

³⁵*Pioche Daily Record*, May 12, 1876.

³⁶This is indicated in the *Biennial Reports of the State Controllers*.

³⁷*Lincoln County v. Nicholas Luning* (1893), 133 U. S. 766.

³⁸*County Commissioners' Records—3—Lincoln County, Nevada, March, 1888 to April, 1903*, p. 195.

³⁹*State of Nevada, ex. rel., Samuel Davis, Appellant, v. the Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County, Respondent* (1896), 23 Nevada 262.

⁴⁰*Nevada Statutes* (1897), Chapter 45, pp. 47-49.

⁴¹*County Commissioners' Records—3—pp. 290-292, 300.*

⁴²*A. S. Thompson, Appellant, v. H. W. Turner, Auditor of Lincoln County, Respondent* (1898), 24 Nevada 292.

⁴³*Lincoln County Record*, March 8, 1901. This is the *Pioche Record* with a slightly altered name. Sen. Freudenthal's bill is printed in full.

⁴⁴A. L. Scott, "Lincoln County," in *The History of Nevada*, ed., by Sam P. Davis (Reno, Los Angeles: Elms Publishing Co., 1913), II, p. 947.

⁴⁵*Nevada Statutes* (1903), Chapter 77, pp. 102-107. At that time, the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, which was planned between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, had been partially built through the county, and its early completion was contemplated.

⁴⁶*Senate Journal*, 1905, pp. 177-178. *Senate Journal*, 1907, p. 6.

⁴⁷*Nevada Statutes* (1907), Chapter 40, pp. 64-69.

⁴⁸*County Commissioners' Records—4—Lincoln County, Nevada, April, 1903-November, 1907*, pp. 205-215.

⁴⁹*Nevada Statutes* (1909), Chapter 11, pp. 12-13.

LETTERS FROM A NEVADA DOCTOR TO HIS DAUGHTER IN CONNECTICUT (1881-1891)

PART 2

Commentary, Notes, and Transcription

By RUSSELL R. ELLIOTT

There is a gap in the Herrick letters from May 20, 1884 to November 21, 1889. The cause of the omission is not known: either Dr. Herrick did not write any letters during this period; or, more likely, he continued to write to his daughter, but the letters were lost or destroyed. The gap, however, is a particularly unfortunate one, for the years not covered by the letters were critical ones in the history of Hamilton and of White Pine County. In 1885 the County Courthouse was destroyed by fire and most of the old records lost, and two years later the County Seat was moved from Hamilton to Ely. Both of these events must have disturbed Dr. Herrick deeply, for they represented the final curtain in the drama enacted at Hamilton. Without the business that came from official County Seat transactions, Hamilton could no longer afford to keep up its pretensions of a former day; and so, reluctantly, but quietly, settled down after 1885 to seek its destiny among the ghost camps of Nevada.

Hamilton, Nov. 21, 1889.

Dear Daughter,

I am in receipt of your very welcome epistle of Nov. 12th, am pleased to learn that your mother and self are in health. I am still an inhabitant of these hills and mountains. I have been in very poor health for the last 8 months. I am about and attend, or at least, look to my affairs. I am very much debilitated in my limbs, especially the limb paralyzed. I sleep very well and eat heartily; but can't move about very actively. If I could walk more, I would be very much better. I am very nervous, at times, and am obliged to take nervines. You speak about warm weather in Ct [Connecticut], here it is quiet the reverse. Our hills and mountains are now in the garb of winter. Yet it has not been excessively cold Ther[mometer] only 2° to 3° below freezing. The streets and roads having snow makes it more difficult for me to walk, and when the snow is 6 or 7 inches I seldom go out. When in Cal[ifornia] I walk half the time. I was once a very muscular

man, but now I am to the contrary. Well it will soon be 18 years, since I was stricken down and during all these years I have never given up.¹ You speak about the study of modern languages. I recited in German during my last year in college but did not practice it after I left. After I came to Cal[ifornia] I took Spanish lessons and got so I could talk quite understandingly. After I came to Nev. in 1869 I did not have any opportunity to practice, as but few Spanish are here and these are Buckcharoos who only come in town to trade and they all speak English. The lower class of Mexican speak a Spanish dialect which I never cared about learning. My reading and reviewing the classics has been my study when I have had spare time outside of medical works. I was years in the classics and when I left college I made up my mind to not forget them, and by reviewing I know I am a better Latin and Greek student than when I graduated. I have kept well posted in English grammar and English literature. I was one of the State Board of examination a few years ago and did all the examinations in the grammar, rhetoric and logical department; many of the applicants could not understand my not being a teacher and yet being critical in every department. I stated therein I had kept in reading of all the modern improvements. The mathematical sciences never change, consequently if one learns these sciences to know them, they are always the same. But in literature and the natural sciences there is always new things to learn; the field is always open for exploration. You speak about sending a lecture given on Homeopathy, I did not receive it, to this date. I got a New Haven paper with this letter tonight, but dont find any lecture in it. I do not know of a single doctor of this system in Nev[ada]. There was one in Carson a few years ago, but starved out and went on a chicken ranch. The trouble with all this sort of so-styled Doctors, there is not enough of it to make a system; they have to fall back on the allopath system often as a final resort. I have read all about the journey of the Pan-American Congress. They have been well received in every city visited.² I think it will prove of great good to the mercantile part and manufacturing of the U. S. states. The Spanish American states are of large area. The whole of the U[nited] States is small compared to Central and South America. The resources of that region are immense, to sail along the coast from Patigonia to the northern point of Mexico is a long journey. Not half of Spanish America is settled, and where it is inhabited it is sparsely. Take all the inhabitants of Mexico and concentrate them in the eastern states and the area would

not amount to as great as N. Y. state. Through Central it is still less, I have traveled for 5 days on horseback and did not see 50 in the time. I dont fancy a greater part of Spanish America except Chile and the southern states of South America. The north and central states are not good climate for people born and raised in the temperate zones. I see by the papers the emperor of Brazil has been dethroned and Brazil declared a republic. It will probably be divided into states, the same as all the other South American republics. The Emperor of Brazil has long expected it would become a republic. He never did have as much power as the president of the U.S. states. There is now in session the Lead Convention at Salt Lake, a number went from H[amilton]. There is also to be a silver convention at St. Louis. Silver is now on the rise and it will go higher. The fact [is] that all the western states are in favor of its being remonetized and if it is, Nevada will again have a boom. The metals are the main industry of all Nevada, particularly silver. At present there are not half the inhabitants there were 10 years ago. Some went East, north and south. By silver being demonetized it really affected all the states west of the Mississippi river, and hurt the Pacific slope worse than all the rest. You speak about not securing a position in the schools, I suppose the positions are overrun with applicants. Even in Nevada there are 6 teachers to every position. I will average 10 letters weekly from applicants making inquiries about schools, and when they send stamps I answer them, if not they go into the stove. In the Bay City there are over 500 girls employed as clerks in telegraph, telephone [companies] and as type writers. In the schools there, there are 785 female teachers and 72 male. There [are] 376 male physicians and 62 females. One may go in any city of Cal[ifornia] or village and will find more females as clerks than men. There is one position in which there is a scarcity of help and that is in house work. This help commands a better price than any other. Since Chinamen were forbidden to come, the house girls are in demand. A good cook can get from \$40 to \$50 per month. In the early days of Cal[ifornia] men cooked and a professional cook commanded \$150 to \$200 monthly. After Chinamen arrived wages were reduced, and men went into other business. At present a professional man cook is not to be found outside of cities. Miners generally do their own cooking because they can do it after hours. There are but few miners, but can cook after their fashion. I suppose ere this letter arrives the old times of Thanksgiving will be past. I never knew much about it till after I went

to reside in the eastern states. I heard the boys talk about Thanksgiving and Turkey, I did not take any interest about the matter or feast. Well in Nevada some few have Thanksgiving dinners and I always have invitations but I don't go, for the reason I don't fancy them, secondly, I don't have to reciprocate. I am asked 50 times yearly to take dinner out, but my excuse is I am lame and can't leave my business. Well I have been writing for 2 hours, and it is 10 o'-p.m., my time for retiring so I will take to my blankets. I am not prepared to say at what time I will go to Cal[ifornia]. At present I am very busy and to save employing help I do all myself I can. Hope to hear from you soon again.

From your Nev[ada] F[ather] in love,

H. S. Herrick.

Hamilton, August 7, 1890

Dear Daughter,

I am in receipt of your long looked esteemed epistle of July 29th, I have not received a letter from you since May 24th. I am still here among the hills and mountains of Nevada. Have been in poor health during the entire season. Have not recuperated from my long confinement of last winter. I make out to attend to my daily routine of affairs. The silver bill has passed and goes into effect Aug. 14th. The mining men all feel encouraged. It will take some time to repair and start the mills and furnaces, some of the mills have been idle for the last 10 years. All mining that has been done independent of companies by miners shipping the ores to Salt Lake for reduction. When the furnaces start up here it will save about \$18 per ton freight, quite an item. I see by the Eastern papers, that a great many deaths have occurred from sunstroke. By all accounts it has been fearful hot. It has been warmer here than I ever saw it before, still not depressing; then the evenings are cool and invigorating, which recuperates what has been caused by prostration of heat. We do not use ice in drinks the water coming from mountain streams is cool enough for all purposes. I am no advocate of ice in constant use during warm weather. I have not been out of town this season only when called out in my practice. I don't like riding in the sun across the alkali flats and over the hills and mountains. There are some beautiful resorts in Nevada, where one can find everything of salubrity. I have never seen but one race of any kind. I went over to Eureka some ten years ago with a company partly on business. I was at the races the first day, the second I was in town. My company was to them, I could see

nothing interesting about the whole affair. The greater part of the crowd were sports and gamblers. Although I have traveled many miles, seen a great deal of this "mundane sphere" I never took any loss in sports of any kind. I have read all about the boat races and athletic sports of the East and West. I judge they are very exciting. I dont question but they are productive of good physical exercise, which is very essential to a sedentary life. My exercise when a student was repairing rooms and I had enough of it. It has been I see by the N.Y. papers a terrible drouth, corn, oats and potatoes are a short crop. Here farmers depend upon irrigation. We have had some light showers to day, just enough to lay the dust. It is the first rain since July 10th. It makes all the hills look verdant. We are now having all kinds of vegetables brought in from the ranches; food of this kind is a rarity after being 5 months without. As I have often told you all there is of this country a repetition would not be interesting. I may take a trip to Cal.[ifornia] if it comes good times this fall. I always find a change very beneficial. I was offered a good salary to go to Alaska in May to be the Doctor for a fishing fleet but could not leave my affairs here.

From your N[evada] F[ather] in love

H. S. Herrick

Hamilton, Sept. 29th 1890

Dear Daughter,

I am [in] receipt of your epistle of Sept. 22nd and noted. I am pleased to hear from you and know that you are in normal health. I have been in poor health all summer and fall. I calculated to have been in Cal.[ifornia] ere this date, but on account of my lameness I was a fraid to undertake it til I got more use of my limbs. Secondly, it was impossible to leave my business, for the reason I could not procure a qualified man in my drug store. I am trying to make arrangements to leave as soon as I can. I think a change will be the means of recuperating my system more than any medicine I can prescribe. We have had a beautiful autumn so far. There have been more showers than ever was known before in the fall. Today it is cold and damp and indications of autumn weather. We may soon expect a change in the mountain regions. I see you had quite a visit at the park. By your description, the scenery must be fine, I once was very well acquainted all around New York, and the environments. In fact, there was not much of Conn. and Rhode Island but I knew. I expect thing have changed very greatly in the last

40 years. The Statue of Liberty I know but little about except by reading. It has been erected since I was there. You speak about the fine ships at anchor of the Navy. To see and visit the large navy ships of the line is very interesting. If there is anything I am any way prodigal, it is in traveling and visiting different places. I thought when I first came to the mountains I could always be satisfied to live here, yet I find a change is often desirable. I suppose the fall term of colleges and schools are now in session. Old Yale always has her quota of students. It is an old institution and has always been successful in the management. The college and university being erected by Senator [Stanford] in Cal.[ifornia] will cap the climax of all colleges for beauty and magnificence. It is to be completed this fall, nothing has been spared that money could procure to complete the structure for all college persons. It is a magnificent donation. Well the Senator had no use for his immense wealth. He has no heirs of his own to leave it to. The Senator is now in Europe. He is there for his health but he is about gone, is now a real and complete wreck and to all appearances he will soon be no more. Senator Stanford was born and raised right opposite of Schaghticoke on the West side of Hudson river. Charles Crocker another of the railroad Kings was raised in Troy. He died a few years ago, his wife is dead also. He left over twenty millions to his nephews and nieces. He gave two hundred and twenty five thousand to erect a house for Old Peoples Home in San Francisco. The building is one of the most magnificent in that city. Any old man can go there or old lady and become a life member by paying \$1000 if sixty years and \$800 if over seventy, \$600 if over 80 years or past. They are boarded and find everything to make them comfortable as long as life lasts. Donations are increasing yearly, Cal has a great many magnificent institutions of learning and charity. The normal school at San Jose, is one of the finest buildings for a school I was ever in. Well silver went up to \$1.20 but is down again to \$1.12 per ounce, lead is up to a greater price than it has been for years. If silver and lead keeps up there will be a boom in Nevada. The immense loss in stock last winter has been very heavy on stock men, then the low price of the metals has caused hundreds to leave Nevada and I think not one in ten did any better by leaving. Many who left this region years ago are now returning. I suppose the political vessel is steaming up in old Conn[ecticut]. Here it is up to good heat. Both parties hold conventions this week. Then comes the try for election and only half can be

elected. Nevada is Republican anyway and what is better, a United States Senator is to be elected at the meeting of the legislature. John P. Jones, who has been already in two terms of six years is a candidate again for reelection. These big offices are filled by men who can spend twenty and fifty thousand and not feel it. This John P. Jones has an income from his stocks and mines of \$250,000 monthly besides he has as much more from other properties. He has been a fortunate man in mining and in fact in all his undertakings.

Well I will close, I have been alone nearly all the evening, had but few calls. There is a great party in town and most all are out in attendance. I have just sat here and wrote letters. This place is great for parties of all kinds. It is all they care about.

Hope soon to hear from you again,

From your Nev[ada] Father

H. S. Herrick

Hamilton, Nev.

Dec. 25, 1890

Dear Daughter,

I am in receipt of your long looked for epistle of Dec. 18th and noted. I am pleased to learn that you are still in health and able to be about. As to myself I have not been well since last spring. Still I am up and about and attend to my affairs, the best I can. I got ready to go to Cal.[ifornia] in Nov., but did not go, because I felt too weak & delapidated to ride to Eureka in the stage during the night. The stage goes from here at 9-0 p.m. and arrives in Eureka 8 hours later. From there we take the rail arriving the 3d day from here. I could stand the car ride & even the stage were it during the day. The weather has been one of sunshine for the last 2 months. No storms except a little shower of snow, ice has not been of an inch thick. The big 14 horse teams have not stopped to this date. The miners all hope the weather may continue all winter. Last year this time the snow was 10 feet in the roads & blockaded. If there should be sleighing I want to go to Cal[ifornia] for a month or so. I see you are well provided with lecturers. Here we never have anything of the kind. No churches and nothing but the gathering of miners. Yes, I see Conn.[ecticut] went Democratic. This Pacific Coast was all republican. Well Conn.[ecticut] has too many Catholics, secondly 1890 was an off year. All will come about rightly in 1892. Were it not for the solid south, the republican party would carry all the time. I can imagine how a rebel can be a democrat,

but I dont understand how a union man can be a democrat. The Farmers Alliance, Prohibitionist and other outside parties hurt the Republicans in many of the states. The Dems stick together better than the Republicans because they have Bosses & leaders, to make them do as they want them. Well this is Christmas, last night there was an assembly at the Courthouse Hall. I did not go. In fact, I never took any stock in these gatherings. There is no profit in them mentally or physically. There are always a lot of Hoodlums present to make a noise. I am in the same way about amusements as in reading papers, I read nothing of sensational. All I want, is something that is of mental problem. I have been to the Bay City a great times since I came to this coast, and I have never attended a theater 10 times. If I could attend scientific lectures I would enjoy them. A year ago, I attended a teachers institute. Two years ago the 12th of this month I was the attendant physician in the hanging of a man. This year on the same date of Dec.[ember] another was executed which makes 2 murderers executed in this county in 2 years. I have nothing of moment to recapitulate. Hope soon to hear from you again.

From your Nev. [ada] Father in Love,
H. S. Herrick.

Hamilton, Nev.
Jan. 6th 1891

Dear Daughter,

I am in receipt of your epistle of Dec. 30th and noted. I am here yet, but expect to be absent a few days in the mountains on a short time of professional business. I have been about as usual in health, since I last wrote. Well we are again on a new year. The 1890 is past & gone so time flies. I see you had a good time in Christmas festivities. Here there was a gathering of the children with the youth & some of the old people. The town hall was finely set in trees of balsam and in the centre was a large spruce tree on which were placed the Christmas gifts. All I understand were delighted. The affair wound up by a ball & supper. I was home as usual in attendance to my business. I took no part or lot in the affair. The miners were mostly in attendance. Most of them did not go to their mines til after Jan.[uary] 1st. These fellows work hard and when they come out they are great spend thrifts for the time. They have no restraint consequently let themselves "loose" in all carousing they can master. A miner will work from Chirstmas to Christmas again, getting his \$3.50 per day and think nothing of spending three or four hundred

dollars in a week. Most of the miners are below middle age, a man following mining is old at 40, as most men in other business at 60. It is terrible on the physical powers. It is nothing to see men at 40 completely broke down. Then their habits come in to let them down, not one miner in 20 ever saves anything for a wet day. If they get sick the county hospital is their resort. I see you have sleighing for the first in 3 years. Hear we never miss a winter without sleighing. So far but little snow has fallen and the weather is fine for Jan.[uary]. Last year at this date the roads were all blockaded, and continued so for 90 days. Only three mails in all that time and these were brought & packed by Norwegians on snow shoes. So far this winter it has not been over 5° below freezing point. Here among the mountains around H[amilton], 20° below freezing is about our coldest weather. It will snow day after day and yet not be severely cold. My store & office is a wooden building with siding, then lined & papered on the inside, yet it does not freeze water at any time. I have a cellar dug in the hill back of the store and til the present, it has been open daily in order to not have vegetables and fruits spoil from heat. The other stores did not take this precaution & have lost immensely. I laid in 3 tons of onions, 4 tons of cabbage, spread the onions out on scaffolds, the cabbage was hung up, so far they are all as good as when put up; fruits I do the same. I think I will do well in my sales, potatoes I keep in bins, apples also. The great object is a circulation. Meats of all kinds we hang up in a building and let the meet dry and for months keep good, not any salt used, till cooked. The climate, being dry no salt is needed. After 3 or 4 days a carcass of meat is dried on the outside, which protects the inner part from spoiling & getting dryer. I cut some venison, today, for boiling, which had been killed 2 months & it was just as good as at first. The germs, which get into meats in damp climates, do not come around here. I suppose you have read about the great discovery of Dr. Koch of Berlin in his remedy for and all forms of tuberculosis. It is the whole talk among the medical profession. We dont need it here because tuberculosis never comes here, unless brought here by some one. Have never known one to have the foundation laid here with tuberculosis. I hope all will prove true in Dr. Kochs' discovery. Consumption is a terrible disease to the greater part of mankind in most of climates. The victims go yearly by thousands. It is the greatest scourge of all diseases to the human race. In my hospital practice during the last 14 years I have had some dozen cases of consumption & all

were victims before coming here. I have cured several coming here in the first stage; but if the lungs have ulcers on them, they quickly succumb in this great altitude. In Rensselaer County, N.Y., The Troy Times, gives account of typhoid fever and diphtheria prevalent. I have never seen a case of either in Nev.[ada]. You speak about sending 2 magazines. I have got the one advertising Athnas Cordial. The one describing the decline of New England has not yet arrived. When ever you send any work of literature don't send anything on proprietary or patent medicines. I have dozens come daily and they go to start fires. I keep patent & proprietary nostrums in my drug store to sell, because ignorant people want them, but never use them myself. There are remedies known to the profession, without using nostrums. When ever you have any work of literature, a play, or works in the medical professions I will be pleased to receive them. You would be really astonished to see the advertising of nostrums in the shape of almanacs and pamphlets. The foreign population are great in taking medicines put up by these Frauds. I have a case on hand, of a man who sprained his back by lifting; he is a merchant & keeps patent nostrums. For a week he applied linements and took various preparations of what Tom, Dick, and old women prescribed. He finally got worse, could neither sleep or eat. I was sent for, I made a thorough diagnosis, informed his trouble was not in the kidneys, I gave him two hypodermic injections of morphine, which gave him instant relief, then applied a fly blister,³ all the pain he suffered was while the blister was acting and in a week he was around. I told him it was all caused by a strain. Since then all with strains & pains of rheumatism I have. This morning at 10-0 a.m. I attended a wedding, the parties were a widow & an old bachelor. The lady was one of my teachers in 1870. She married a man worth over \$20,000 dollars. He got to drinking and died of tremens about a year ago. She is now 45 & the lucky man is 50 years of age. I often have invitations to parties of all kinds, but don't attend, only when I can't avoid it. This lady was black raven hair 20 years ago, now she is white all over the head as chalk. I guess I will close.

Hoping to hear from you soon,

From your Nev.[ada] Father in love

H. S. Herrick

Hamilton

Feb. 15th 1891

Dear Daughter,

I have not received any reply to my last epistle. I have been very busy since I wrote last. Have been able to be about & attend to my affairs. Have had quite a good practice, in fact, more than I wanted. It was pleasant weather here til Feb. 5th then a foot of snow came down in great profusion. Three miles from H. [Hamilton] there is no snow. The 12 & 14 horse teams are still hauling ores, to the narrow guage railroad 45 miles from H. We had cold weather the 7th, 8th & ninth of Feb. 3° below zero, which was the coldest of the season. There is a great contrast between this & last winter. Last year at this time the roads were blockaded & no communication for 90 days except by telegraph. This winter has passed so far and it has not seemed like a winter. That was a sudden death of Secretary Windom. Truly no one knows when they will be called. I suppose you have read all about Dr. Koch's great cure for tuberculosis. A trial is being made in San Francisco City Hospital. Time must determine what will be the results. If it proves what is claimed, it will be one of the greatest discoveries of the 19th century. Consumption takes off thousands yearly. But few are exempt from its ravages. This region is freer from it than any place I ever was in. California has many every year. One would think that all ought to be free from it. But they go more by this disease than any other. I saw a New Haven paper, giving the growth of the place during the last 20 years. It is singular what should make it grow and all the farming country is going down. The description given in the popular science of the dilapidated condition of the farming part, is not very comfortable for all engaged in agriculture. By the way, I sent the numbers you sent me of the North American review back, so you will have the whole of 1890. I have taken this magazine for years. If consistent I will be pleased, to take, or have you send the Popular Science news. I take some daily papers during the sessions of Congress. My reading is mostly in therapeutical works. During the cold weather I read over my old text books of the classics for the purpose of keeping the classics ready. As you know Latin always comes in play to any Physician. Last fall having a good telescope, I was out every clear evening viewing the constellations, and planets. As I have been over the ground often I quickly pointed all out to those who were with me, four of them teachers and not one of them could select & point a constellation, much less the most prominent stars. And

all of these teachers were graduates of the Normal School. The normal schools are very good for public schools as far as they go. But as to a thorough education, one must go higher. During the past 3 years, I have at times been reviewing anatomy & physiology, having a manikin for reference. As I have my store & practice to engage my attention, it is only by chance that I get time to read my medical magazines. I go over them when they arrive, then keep them for reference. I am so isolated here among these mountains, that all I have for a pass away time is my books, which in reality are my companions, when alone. If I were in a place like New Haven, I would gladly improve the time in going to hear lectures. According to all accounts given there will be plenty of ice this season, and ice men will not have to ship as they did last year. Here we dont need any ice, the mountain streams give water better than can be made by ice. I am not an advocate of ice water as a daily beverage. More persons die by ice drinks than tepid. When I was up in the Alaska regions in 1857 I saw the Indians drink water from melted ice & snow. They wont let their dogs or reindeers eat snow or ice. They will eat seal oil or blubber with tea biscuit & warm water. I suppose you have read all about the new cities of Washington. In 1857, the places now known as the prominent cities of the Sound were then only lumbering camps, composed of log huts, now the largest kind of brick & stone buildings are erected. Four years ago there was a great boom in southern Cal.[ifornia]. Every train people were arriving from the East & paying fabulous prices for lots, and ranches. Now they cant be sold for $\frac{1}{4}$ of what they then cost. Salt Lake is now having a boom. Well any place may boom, but it must have real worth or it will have an end, in time. Mining camps are the greatest for booms, and the quickest to go down unless the mines are rich & hold out. Do you have or hear much of the Farmers Alliance in Conn.[ecticut]. In the Western & southern states, the party has become quite strong, but it will burst up in time for the reason it is not national. As it is now my bed time I will close. I have nothing to write very interesting because I have nothing of importance in all this region.

From your Nev. Father in love

H. S. Herrick

Hamilton, Nev.

Feb. 19th 1891

Dear Daughter,

I am in receipt of your welcome epistle Feb. 11th am glad to learn that you are in normal health. Wish I could say the same. During most of the past winter I have been able to keep about. About a week ago, a severe storm of winter & snow came on & for 4 days it was furious. Since then I have had to keep indoors because I can't wade through the snow on account of my lame limb. The weather here has been pleasant til Feb. 8th more like autumn, than winter. During the last 4 days it has been pleasant overhead, and it is pleasant to be out riding. The sleighs are not grandly made, yet they answer all purposes, for a wild country. In reference to the magazines both arrived, the Popular Science and the N. Review, as I informed you I have taken the review for years. At the time I received your letter informing that you had sent 2 magazines, I at that date got 2 patent medicine magazines and thought they were the ones you had sent. Some 7 days after, the 2 you sent arrived. Yes the Review & Popular Science are both of good literature & worth the time in reading. I take several magazines, I have several weekly & monthly works on medical science. I dont have much time to read only nights, as business is dull in trade at present. I have been alone most of the winter and shall not have a clerk til times are better. The winter is the dullest part of the year in mining towns. There is no hauling of ores, on account of the deep snows over the hills & mountains. If there were furnaces here for reduction of the ores there would be a great saving to the mining men. At present they have a loss of \$25 per ton in having to ship it to Salt Lake and San Francisco. Every place has its attractions. Here the great sight is the big teams during the time of hauling. Each team has from 12 to 20 animals, driven by one line. I have read all about the governor affair of Conn.[ecticut]. Well Conn [ecticut] is a curious state, differing in many respects from all the other Eastern states. When I was there, every town had its quota of foreigners. Since then it has increased. I see by an Eastern register that 4/5ths of all the ranchers are of foreign birth or of foreign extraction. The Catholic element seems to want the ascendancy. Here it is different. The Americans, are ahead yet, A Catholic priest came into my store last summer and requested to know why I allowed the testament to be read in the schools. I told him it was none of his dirty Irish business, and told him the door was there and the sooner he was out the

better. He got 5 or 6 Irishmen to come & see me, who had pupils in the school. I told them I should let every teacher in the schools have the pupils read in the testament if they were so disposed. Well this ended the matter. The priest found he was treeing the wrong coon. I did not know that any teacher was having the testament in any department till then. A lady from Virginia in one of the primary departments had been having some of the older pupils read in the testament, and said she had been so accustomed in the school in Virginia. I told her to keep on and I did so just to vex the priest. I dont approve of the Bible as a textbook in schools for reason it is not a book adapted to teaching reading. If a pupil is properly taught in reading, they can read in any book. The science of teaching reading, has greatly improved in the last 30 & 40 years. Reading is one of the most difficult branches to teach properly. I found more poor teachers in reading than any other branch in the schools. Some few years ago I was in a state institute, some 20 teachers, gave their views about teaching reading. Not one out of five could be called real scientific readers. There has been great strides made in all textbooks during the last decades. When I look back to the time when I went out teaching winters and think of the textbooks then in use, I am lost to know how the pupils made any progress.

You speak about Chicago & the University. It is a wide awake place. It has grown beyond all comprehension and is bound to be the great mart of all the West. It is not a place that I would fancy to reside in. It is different in many respects from any other in the whole U. S. states. The whole business class seems to be on the "qui vivé" (on the alert) to make the best of everything. The sanitary part of the city is not good and people are not as healthy as in many other large cities. The Worlds' Fair, will be a great institution for the whole of the great West. I doubt whether it will prove a financial success to Chicago. N. Y. City was the place for the accomodation of all foreigners to exhibit. The great expense in shipping to the city will debar many from exhibiting. According to reports N. Y. city made a financial success in 1853 of the Crystal Palace exhibition. At Philadelphia and New Orleans, it was a financial failure and I think it will prove so in Chicago. I want, if I am here & can leave to visit Chicago during the fair. The passage will be less than anything at present. You speak about the reading rooms of New Haven. It is a great privilege to have a time in good reading room. I have had no chance of such since I left the East. In San Francisco & Sacramento there are fine reading rooms, all I have for reading

is my own books. Well I am isolated, yet I have not the attentions of anything of city life, no attractions whatever. It is the same routine day after day. I am not enraged after city life. I suppose you have read all about the doings of Congress. As things look I dont think there will be anything done in reference to the double standard of coins. The President & Cabinet and the majority of Congress are opposed to free coinage. At the next presidential election, the man to win will have to be a silver president. I dont think Harrison or Cleveland will get the nomination of their party. Whoever is to be nominated will have to be a western man in favor of the double standard. Our senators from Nev.[ada] have been faithful workers for silver, but it has all been in vain. It is published in the papers that President Harrison & his Cabinet are going to visit the Pacific Coast next summer. His crowd & himself will find that the West is of greater importance than he imagines. Cleveland will have to do the same to get the nomination of the Democratic Party. That was a sudden death of Secretary Windom and it will not be easy to fill the place. Hope you will write soon. I do not get many letters from the East. My own relations are poor correspondents and if I get a letter once in 3 months from any of them think it is strange. I am out of letter paper except letter heads & I save these to use in my business. I did not order letter paper til it was too late.

From your Nev.[ada] Father,

H. S. Herrick

[The letter of February 19, 1891, was the last written by Herrick to his daughter; two days later he died. There are letters, however—one from the executor of Herrick's estate, the other from an attorney in Ely, Nevada—which must be included to bring the story to its pathetic conclusion. Their contents reveal that the old man, declining in health and in worldly goods—much like the town of Hamilton itself—had been unable to face the reality of unfulfilled promise; and so, to the last, continued to exhibit a "proper front" before the eyes of the world.—R.E.]

Hamilton, Nev.

March 1st, 1891

Cate E. Herrick

Dear Madam.

In answer to a letter received in Hamilton directed to H. S. Herrick found it to be from you headed as Dear Father which

took me by surprise—for I never heard him mention a word about his family. I also found another letter written [*sic*] to H. S. Herrick by a lady as far back as seventy-four head [*sic*] Dear Husband and signed Electa M. Herrick and at the same time in the contents of the letter speaking of Kate which I suppose you to be the same Young Lady. This letter I found from you was dated Dec. 29th 1890.

Now in answer to this letter I am sorry with regret to inform you that your Father as directed or Harman S. Herrick died on the twenty first 21st of Feb. last very suddenly with what is supposed to be paraltic [*sic*] stroke only sick about twenty four hours—and was concious [*sic*] to within an hour of his death. Now on his dying bed he ordered everything to be turned over to me. I was not present at the time of his death but got here twenty four hours after his death and took charge of the remains also the property. I give decease [*sic*] a decent burial.

Now I found the business at his death to be unsettled and in a bad shape with people & friends who trusted him with money & property and nothing to show what was done with it. There is no will to be found or anything in regard to his [heirs] or what was done with the money that he was trusted to by his friends. The old man was always supposed to have money by his friends before death—The little business that he carried on here did not amount to much and there is not much of anything left, little Drugs and very small amounts of Groceries which I have been selling what I could of everything in order to pay bills that is pressing and Funneral [*sic*] expenses for there is no money to pay anything. Now as his Daughter you are supposed to know if there ever was a will made and in who [*sic*] favor. This is all at present but if I find out anything or if anything turns up will let you know—hoping that you will reply to this as soon as possible [*sic*].

Yours truly

Archie Beaton
Hamilton Nevada

P. S. I received a letter from a lady signing her Name—Kansas—Sister.

The heading Junction City, Kansas.

hoping to hear from you soon.

Ely, Nev.
April 18th 1891

C. S. Bushnell, Esq.
New Haven
Conn.

Dear Sir :

Your favor of March 10th has just been read by me owing to my absence from this County. In reply to your favor would say that I am not sufficiently posted on W. [H.] Herricks' financial condition prior to his death to give you all the information you request. It was pretty generally thought that he was worth several thousand dollars, though many who had been intimate with him for years thought differently. For myself I am not capable of expressing any opinion. I knew the old gentlemen very well, but knew nothing about his business affairs, and, like almost every person in this county always considered him an unmarried man. The general impression throughout the County now is that he has very little money or property over and above his liabilities, as for W. Beaton would say that I have known him for some years. I believe him to be an honest and a trustworthy man, and such is the reputation he has always borne in this country. He has applied to the District Court of the State of Nevada in and for White Pine County, which Court is the Probate Court also for this District, for Letters of Administration on the Estate of said Herrick. Court will convene on the 4th day of May. As a general thing we only have two terms of court each year—one in the Spring and one in the Fall. This town, Ely, is the County Seat of White Pine County, and Terms of Court are all held here. I am not tied up in this matter in any way, and you have my permission to use this letter in any manner which you may deem proper to further your interests in the Herrick Estate.

Yours truly,

Frank X. Murphy
[Attorney at Law.]

NOTES

¹Herrick mentions this affliction many times in these letters; however, he makes no mention of the exact date the stroke occurred, nor the specific limb affected.

²The first Pan-American Congress met at Washington, D. C. on October 2, 1889. After the initial meeting and a formal reception by President Harrison at the White House, the delegates set forth in a special train for a tour of the East and middle West. It is to this trip Herrick refers.

³Medically, a blister preparation of dried beetles (especially the blister beetle or Spanish fly). Used externally as a counter-irritant.

THE PYRAMID LAKE INDIAN WAR OF 1860

PART 2

Commentary, Notes, and Transcription

By WILLIAM C. MILLER

The telegrams, dispatches, and letters out of Washoe at the time of the Indian War in 1860 clearly reveal that there were at least three reactions to the massacre at Williams' station, which event precipitated the war: There were those who heard the news, were frightened thereby, but went about their business. There were those who went to the site of the massacre and made an investigation; having convinced themselves that the "savage" was not a threat to their economy or settlement, this second group continued on out into the surrounding country on a prospecting trip, thereby giving the lie to the assertions that the Indian was intent upon driving the white man out of western Utah Territory. The third group—the "excitable parties"—seized the Williams' station massacre as an opportunity to engage in Indian hunting. That the actions of the last group did not meet with the approval of the other two groups is attested to, in part, by the correspondent to the San Francisco *Herald*; writing out of Genoa, Carson Valley, Utah Territory, on May 27, 1860, he said: ". . . The Pah-Ute war has been so far beneficial to this neighborhood as to take off a number of fellows we could well spare . . ." ¹ Indeed, the correspondent was unkind enough to imply that the foray into Indian territory was for no other purpose than to kill some Indians and thereby get their horses.¹ Whatever their purposes, the actions of the third group seem, at this late date, not justified; there were other means of settling the problems between white man and red man. Had those means been resorted to, troops need not have been sent to Pyramid to subdue the Indian. Unfortunately, however, the "excitable" seized control; the situation got out of hand, and there was a war near Pyramid Lake.



Woodcut from Dan DeQuille's *Big Bonanza*

PART III
SOBER REFLECTION

[The *Steamer Bulletin* for May 21, 1860, quotes the *Territorial Enterprise* of May 12th, published at Carson City, Washoe, as follows:]²

NEEDLESS ALARM AS TO THE INDIAN OUTRAGES—
NUMBER OF THE PAH-UTES

During the past week, the entire community has, we think, been needlessly alarmed by the reports which have been brought in of the massacre at Williams' station. We cannot see the sense or propriety of men who should act as if they were men, and living in communities like Virginia and Carson cities, which contain large populations and are safe from Indian depredations, running around and scaring every female in the country, and, by their acts, justly entitle themselves to the right to wear petticoats for the rest of their days.

We admit that three men have been killed at Williams' station, and when the authors of the outrage can be found they should be punished; and we further say, that *properly* organized companies should be sent out to ferret out the perpetrators of the deed. But will not admit that there is any use of men starting out with but a few boxes of sardines and a loaf or two of bread, to fight Indians who are likely one hundred miles from here at this time, and are to be reached only by toilsome marches. Neither are we willing to admit that excitable parties are justified in killing every Indian, man, woman and child, because an outrage has been committed probably by some renegades from some of our frontier tribes.

We are led to make these suggestions from the fact that there is a disposition manifested to fasten the blame of the late Indian massacre upon the Pah-Utes, when most likely they were not the real authors

How many Pah-Utes are there? We hear this question asked hourly by persons who have lately come over here. Their numbers are much over-rated. Two years since the band of Pah-Utes, under the control of Young Win-ne-muc-ca, was called upon to meet the whites and receive some presents. We kept an account of the blankets distributed among them—one to each male of the party—178 pair was all that was required. The chief said that was all the men he had control of. The headquarters of that band was at Pyramid Lake. The chief known as Old Win-ne-muc-ca has probably as many more warriors. His range of country

is from Smoke creek, on the Honey Lake emigrant road, to the Humboldt river. North of that section there are no Pah-Utes. From the Humboldt river, south and east to the Colorado river, is the portion of the country where the Pah-Utes most abound. The Indians in that section have never molested the people here and probably never will. Should a difficulty occur, the Pah-Utes proper cannot raise a force of more than 300 or 400 men in the entire scope of country, 200 miles to the east of Carson City.

These valiant warriors about whom we hear so much talk, are but poorly armed; and, instead of the fine steeds of which they are the reputed possessors, they own no kind of stock but the veriest scrubs of Indian ponies—one or two fine American horses which they have accidentally obtained excepted. . . .

The most singular part of the affair is that but very little Indian sign is discernible in the neighborhood, and the belief is becoming pretty general, that the Indians have some desperate white men with them, as no small party of Indians, unless so aided, would commit so daring an outrage.

LETTER FROM WASHOE.³

[From the *Bulletin's* own correspondent.]

VIRGINIA, U. T., MAY 13, 1860.

As I stated in the few hasty lines sent from Carson City on Wednesday morning last, we are in the midst of an Indian War excitement here, caused by the killing of three men at Williams' station, about 35 miles below this place, at the Big Bend of the Carson. It also turns out, as I then stated, as there was reason to apprehend would be the case, that the accounts received at the time were greatly exaggerated, if not in many essential particulars wholly unfounded. To what extent this is so, will appear as I go back and review the history of the affair from the beginning.

The place where this massacre occurred was owned and occupied by three brothers, named James, Oscar and Calvin Williams, and though called a station, as are most of the few settlements scattered along the immigrant road, was not such in reality. The oldest brother, James, who escaped, was absent looking after stock at the time of the murder, leaving but three persons in the house—the two brothers and a man named Samuel Sullivan. Sullivan had stopped there over night, being on his way up from the Sink with some cattle. These are all that are known, or that there is any good reason to believe have been killed, though there is a

rumor that another person is missing. After the murder, the house was set on fire and the bodies partially consumed. The bodies of these two Williamses have been identified by remnants of their clothing. There is no certainty of the other being that of Sullivan. It was supposed that he would be coming up about that time with some cattle; and a wagon standing at the door next morning is known to be his. The killing occurred on Monday night, the 7th May. On Tuesday, Williams returned, and finding what had been done, came up to Buckland's, seven miles this side, the station of the Pony Express, and sent the rider, Bartol, with the news to Virginia. He is the person who left Carson City with the Pony Express on Sunday last, being the rider between Woodford's and Buckland's. The Express, however, has gone on through and was not turned back nor molested, as the telegraphic dispatch from this place made me say in my last communication.

Bartol, on his first arrival at Virginia, reported that seven men had been killed at Williams' Station, the house burned, and the stock all driven off; that 500 Indians, mounted and well armed, supposed to belong to the Pah-Utes, Shoshone and Pitt river tribes, had been seen in the neighborhood, and were, doubtless, the perpetrators of the outrage. According to his statement, Williams had seen this number of savages. Indeed they pursued him to within six miles of Buckland's—that is to say, a mile or two, and then gave up the chase. He also discovered, on his way up, that the doors of several houses on the opposite side of the river were open, and, upon calling, received no answer; whence he concluded that the inmates had shared a like fate with his brothers—a supposition which, if well founded, would justify the belief that twelve or thirteen other whites had been killed. Accompanying the narrative of these supposed facts were divers rumors as to the belligerent disposition and general bad conduct of the Indians, for some time past, as well as their hostile movements subsequent to the murders. Thus, it was said, they had for a long time been purchasing arms and ammunition, preparatory to a general onslaught upon the whites—that they had manifested a very sullen and unfriendly spirit all winter—and finally, that they had sent off their women and children, a sure sign that they meditated an early attack upon our people. With these hostile intentions of the various tribes the settlers on the Lower Carson had been made acquainted by certain friendly Indians, who were desirous that they should escape the threatened slaughter. After the killing at Williams', it was further alleged that the combined tribes were moving up the river, slaughtering

the settlers, and hurrying on to attack this place and the towns above.

The statements and rumors above set forth having been telegraphed from Virginia to Carson City, and by other means spread over the country, caused a great excitement, not to say alarm, and became the basis of active measures, offensive and defensive. On Tuesday evening, and within an hour after the news was received, a small party left both Carson City and this place for the scene of the butchery. During the night companies were also formed at each of these places, and got in readiness to start early in the morning, which they did, numbering in all about 100 men. Picket-guards were also stationed about the towns, as a precautionary measure. During the night several families from Chinatown⁴ and one or two ranches below came into Carson City for safety. Meantime, stragglers also arrived from down the river with further reports, confirming the bloody tidings, as well as the threatened attack—the number of savages increasing, by daylight, to fully a thousand.

Immediately on the news being received at Carson City, a large dinner-bell was rung violently by an excited individual, who, with a great outcry, announced the same to the people, invoking them to meet and adopt measures for the speedy punishment of the Indians. On their gathering, a few impetuous men, without waiting to inquire at all into the affair or suffering those who counseled moderation to be heard, at once urged the raising of volunteer force, and the adoption of other violent measures. It was in vain that the more humane and considerate interposed, urging how little we knew of the matter; how apt these reports were to be exaggerated in the first instance, and that it would be both just and politic to select a few prudent men, acquainted with the Indian character and modes of operation, to first go and ascertain all about the affair, and then make their report the basis of future action. It was also shown that the Indians about here were, as a general thing, peaceful and friendly, and that a party sent out to attack them indiscriminately would be much more likely to kill the innocent than the guilty. Reason and remonstrance were alike unavailing. All night long volunteers kept mustering, and having possessed themselves of all the arms and horses they could lay hold of, went forth the following day to avenge themselves on the murderers of their white brethren.

This was on Wednesday; the same day, before night, a man came into Carson from Mono, declaring that the Indians there

were in a state of hostility, and further saying that those at the Sink of the Walker, to the number of 600 or 700, were also preparing to attack the town. For these assertions, whether made in the spirit of sport or of mischief, there was evidently no foundation. They served, however, to keep alive the feeling of alarm, and to render those favoring an Indian *foray* still more resolute in carrying out their purpose.

On Thursday I left Carson and came to this place, hoping to find less excitement—the large number of able-bodied men congregated here rendering the idea of an Indian attack perfectly preposterous. Fancy my surprise on finding the consternation had been even greater here than at the more feeble and exposed point I had left, and this without their having learned anything of the threatened outbreak at the South, an event that inspired an additional amount of terror upon its coming to their ears.

To increase the evil, certain parties—anxious to serve the California press—had at the outset hurried to the Telegraph office and transmitted over the mountains all these foolish rumors—an act, however well intended, exceedingly imprudent, and altogether premature. This was followed up by other messages still more mischievous in their tendency, calling, it is said, upon the military authorities for aid and arms, thus creating the impression abroad that we were really in imminent peril, and causing to those who had friends here a deal of unnecessary anxiety. Now, although the scene of these murders and the seat of this war in prospective was so near by, it was not until Friday that any definite reports reached us from the expeditionists, and these were to the following purport:

The avenging forces having made Williams' Station their place of rendezvous, proceeded to perform the rites of sepulture on the dead, having first held an inquest, whereat it was duly declared they had come to their deaths at the hands of the Indians. The place and vicinity was then carefully examined, when the following facts were brought to light: Three bodies only were found, as before related; the parties appear to have been killed while asleep, and the house afterwards to have been set on fire; the implement used was no doubt an ax, as one was found on the premises covered with blood; nothing appears to have been taken from the house except the money; the remains of the guns usually kept by Williams were found in the ashes; the storehouse, containing liquor, sugar, and other provisions, was not troubled; the stock had not been driven off, nor was any other property, so far as could be seen, taken away; no other place had been

attacked, nor had any persons besides these been molested. On observing these facts, several of the whites most conversant with the Indian wants and mode of warfare, satisfied that the killing was not their work, declined to prosecute the inquiry further. They then either returned, or went on to prospect in the country beyond. Perhaps others would have followed their example, had they not happened to find an Indian knife not far off, and been led to suspect these poor creatures were guilty from the fact that they saw none about in the neighborhood. The most of the scouting parties therefore determined to go over to Pyramid Lake, and make a more prolonged search after the offenders.

On Thursday they sent in for additional men and supplies to be forwarded them on the Truckee river. On Friday several animals were dispatched to that point loaded with provisions. Yesterday (Saturday, 12th May,) a number of the party came in, Judge Cradlebaugh amongst them, saying that they had seen no Indians in their entire route, except a few well known to be innocent, and giving it as their opinion that the three men were slain by whites, or if by Indians, they probably belonged to the Shoshones or other distant tribes, and had now fled beyond the reach of those pursuing. Meantime, it is much to be feared that the belligerent whites will fall in with inoffensive Indians, and get involved in difficulties that may hereafter awaken a spirit of retaliation and lead to serious troubles. They may even alarm the Indians now in considerable force at Pyramid Lake, and cause them to attack the whites, whom they regard as the invaders of their homes.

Thus it is likely to turn out that the Indians upon whom these atrocious murders have been charged, and against whom all these warlike measures have been taken, are really innocent of any crime, and that an entire community, taking counsel of inexperienced persons and their own fears, have been betrayed into a very unnecessary excitement and a very imprudent line of conduct. It is true, we cannot yet positively affirm that this killing is not the work of that race; yet, when we come to carefully examine the arguments going to connect them with the perpetration of the bloody act, they seem to rest upon a very slender foundation, while many things point to certain white men as being the guilty parties. The statement that the Pah-Utes had been buying more arms and ammunition of late than usual, if true, is explained by the fact that they were preparing to go to war with the Shoshones, a condition of things very unlikely to favor their joining that nation in a petty expedition against a single

white family. The Pah-Utes and the Washoes—the only tribes occupying the country for more than a hundred miles about the scene of the slaughter—are now, and with the exception of a few outlaws, have always been friendly towards the whites, showing no disposition to go to war with them when the latter were few in number; and hence being far less likely to desire it when they have increased to so many thousands. That deed was not perpetrated by the Shoshones, Pitt River, Pannacks or other northern tribes, as some have suggested, is clear, none of these people daring to come into the country of the Pah-Utes owing to the deadly feud existing between them. The Shoshones rarely ever venture farther down than Gravelly Ford, a point 200 miles east of here, on the Humboldt, unless they come in force and with hostile intent—a thing which it is well known has not happened of late. So bitter is this feeling, that if even one of these foreign tribes accompany the whites in their service, he is apt to fall a victim to the rage of the Pah-Utes and Washoes while passing through their territory.

There are other and minor reasons for believing the killing at Williams' ranch was not the work of the Indians. None of these people had been seen in the settlements of late, except a few well known and friendly Pah-Utes. The deed seems to have been perpetrated with an ax, whereas the Indians, all having good rifles, would be likely to use them for the purpose. None of the stock, of which there was a good deal about the place, had been driven off. The storehouse filled with provisions, and containing a quantity of powder, an article the Indians covet above all others, had not been molested, nor had the fire-arms in the house been taken. Of the money, however, in possession of those killed, no trace was found. The house was evidently set on fire to conceal, so far as might be, the manner of the killing. No perceptible trail or other Indian signs were to be found. None of the inhabitants either above or below Williams' had been troubled, nor had any attempts been made to run off their stock—facts strongly tending to show that the aborigines had nothing to do with this atrocious murder.

But the question still remains to be settled, who were the guilty parties? This, of course, has not been determined, but as rumor and conjecture pass current here in the attempted solution of this unfortunate affair, I will recount those now afloat going to establish who were

THE PROBABLE MURDERERS.

It is said, but upon what authority I do not know, that on the evening previous to the bloody deed, a well-known but disreputable and worthless fellow named "Yank," with perhaps one or two of his equally worthless companions, went to Williams' and engaged in gambling—a pastime that seems to have been much in vogue at that place. This fellow, it is related, lost all his money, and afterwards his animals, playing with those at the house. Rendered desperate by his bad luck, and enraged perhaps with the belief that he had been imposed upon, he is thought to have perpetrated the bloody act, for the double purpose of recovering his losses and concealing his crime. That this character went to the house on the previous evening, seems well established, and that no trace of either him or his animals has since been found, is also true, his being the only horses of a large band missing. These facts, if they be facts, are said to be derived through the surviving Williams, who it is alleged was not really absent looking after stock, but spent the night at no great distance from the house, in quite a different manner—a circumstance that accounts not only for his own escape from destruction, but also that of a certain Spanish woman, said to have been tarrying at his place, or lurking in the neighborhood. This version of the affair is beginning to be looked upon as probable, and is by many thought to contain the true clue to this tragedy. I do not relate it, or any portion of it, for a fact; but, as I have said, merely as a current rumor—believing that rumors one side should be given as well as upon the other, in a matter involving the guilt or innocence of so many parties, and possibly the issues of life and death.

While on this subject, I may also mention that it is reported that the grossest outrages imaginable had, not long since, been perpetrated upon some of the Indian women, at or near Williams' place; but whether by the occupants or not does not appear. These indignities, if really offered in the manner related, compelling husbands to witness the dishonor of their own wives, would justify almost any species of retaliation upon the guilty parties.

I have thus gone over the whole ground, giving both facts and rumors, so far as I could get them, in connection with this miserable and lamentable affair. And now to a review of the matter.

What do we find? I answer, a picture that should dye every American cheek red with the blush of shame, and fill every virtuous mind with indignation. Here we have 8,000 or 10,000 able-bodied men, living near each other, and tolerably well armed, thrown into a fever of excitement and alarm, [*sic*] and even going so far as to telegraph to California for aid, at the mere rumored uprising of a few feeble savages, who, if their entire force were concentrated, and they resolutely bent on mischief, ought not to give 100 white men any concern. And then came the exaggerations, or rather falsehoods, gotten up by the weak and wicked, and readily believed by the credulous, leading to hasty and ill-advised action, as little calculated to insure safety to themselves, had there been any real danger, as to bring the guilty to justice. How shall we excuse this? How humiliating to look back over the work of the past five days, and see what disaster to business, what disgrace to our national character, what wide-spread prejudice to our interests and honor, if not danger to our citizens, are sure to ensue when timid, untruthful and inexperienced men get control of, and give direction to public affairs!

But without stopping to animadvert on this precipitate action and mistaken policy, I may say many now perceive their error, and would be glad to recall what they have helped to do. Yet the proceeding has gone too far, and there is great danger that we shall be plunged into an Indian war growing out of this very movement itself. If, under the prevailing excitement, we shall be able to avoid this, it will be fortunate, and in that event it is to be hoped our people will learn hereafter to proceed with more deliberation, and not give way to undue excitement, nor make any idle rumor the foundation of warlike proceedings against the Indian tribes. If the savages have been guilty of this murder—as perhaps they were—and this act is to be received as an evidence of a generally hostile disposition, it was the height of folly to send off so small a number of half-armed men, many of them inexperienced, to fight such a superior and well-appointed force. Every way we look at it the business has, to say the least, been badly managed, and cannot but operate to our prejudice as a community, however these hostile measures may result. . . .⁵

PART IV
THE BATTLE
CARSON VALLEY CORRESPONDENCE.⁶

GENOA, CARSON VALLEY, U. T., May 18.

EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—It might reasonably have been expected of me in the performance of my duties, as the *Herald's* correspondent, to have sent ere this a history of the battle fought with the Pah-Ute Indians near Pyramid Lake, but the truth is that I have not until now had any reliable account of the transaction. Having to-day met several persons who were engaged in the fight, and having duly weighed and compared their various and conflicting accounts, I will now give you what I believe to be

THE FACTS OF THE BATTLE.

The Indians were traced from the scene of their first depredations on the immigrant road to the neighborhood of their headquarters at Pyramid Lake. They took no pains to conceal their route, but, on the contrary, left a plain trail, strown with many articles taken at Williams's station. Within four miles of Pyramid Lake their scouts were first perceived and chased to their main body by an advance guard of the whites. The Truckee river runs with a gentle but winding current through a meadow only a few hundred yards wide, opposite a rising ground upon which the Indians were drawn up in the form of a crescent, the horns of which were invisible, being concealed by a dense growth of sage brush; the whites drew up and formed in the valley between the stream and the mount occupied by the savages. Before the whites were ready for action, one of them fired at the Indians, the ball taking effect. The Indians then commenced firing and the whites charged the mount, gained its summit, the main body of the Indians falling back; but it seems that they purposely retreated in order to surround our men, for when the whites began to feel elated with success, a murderous fire was opened on both flanks, and, looking around, they found the wings of the Indian crescent rising from the sage bushes and closing behind them. They retreated to the valley, formed again, and an order was then given for a second charge, and about a dozen men obeyed the order, but were soon repulsed. A retreat was now ordered, but such an order was scarcely necessary, for all was confusion. Many of the whites lay dead on the field, and the survivors had determined, every man, to save himself by flight.

About a mile below the scene of the action the hills reached to the very banks of the river, and as the stream could not be forded this was the only avenue of escape. The Indians, in hot pursuit of the fugitives, perceived the importance of this pass, and many of them were seen advancing to seize it. It was then that Major Ormsby gave his last command. He turned to Captain R. G. Watkins, and remarking that he had received a mortal wound, ordered him at all hazards to gain the pass and protect the flying troops. Watkins succeeded in gaining the position, and for fifteen minutes held it against the savages, but as he was alone, wounded, and most of the men having escaped, he, too, took to his horse and fled. He last heard Ormsby imploring his men "for God's sake to rally around him and not to let his body fall into the hands of the savages;" but 'twas in vain, the first law in nature was obeyed, and Major Ormsby fell from his horse, covered with wounds, and doubtless soon expired. That he fought bravely on this occasion is admitted by all. He was well known in California and elsewhere, for good or evil. He was my enemy, but he has fallen in defending his country against a savage unrelenting foe, and "the grave shall extinguish every resentment."

The fight commenced about four o'clock in the afternoon and could not have lasted long, but such was the ardor of the Indians in the work of butchery that they kept up the pursuit till night, with horrid yells falling upon any of our men whose horses had given out, and putting them to death without mercy.

Night found the survivors scattered over a mountainous waste, nearly one hundred miles from any white settlement. Scarcely two of them were together, and none knew the way, but by day-break some of them had reached Virginia City, and they have been stalking in ever since. It is to be hoped that the loss will not be found so severe as at first expected. Dr. Tjader, a gentleman of Russian birth, was highly esteemed here, not only on account of his skill as a surgeon and physician, but also because of his kind and amiable disposition, was reported killed and scalped. Several of those who were in the battle have told me that they saw him fall in the very midst of the enemy, but after five days' wandering, without food or shelter, he reached Virginia City last night, only slightly wounded.

J. A. Thompson, the former indefatigable mountain expressman, fought like a tiger, and when he had lost his horse, was about to be tomahawked by the Indians, when a fine charger came galloping by, upon whose back he escaped unhurt.

Capt. Richard G. Watkins, formerly of San Francisco, is said to have conducted himself very creditably. In fact, it is conceded that had he been the general commander, the Indians would have been whipped.

Richard Snowden, Jr., son of Col. R. N. Snowden, fell early in the engagement.

Such was the battle of Pyramid Lake, the bloodiest that has taken place with the American aborigines since Braddock's defeat in 1755.

THE INDIAN CHIEFTAIN.

The man who most distinguished himself in this battle was unfortunately not of our race. Minnemocker, [*sic*] with his little band of six hundred Pah-Utes, decoyed his enemies nearly a hundred miles into his own territories. To his own position, and a better was never chosen, he drew up half his men in admirable form, reserving the other half to relieve the first in the fight, and during the whole engagement he gave his orders as coolly as he would eat his breakfast, and all his commands were instantly obeyed. He did not enter the battle himself, but stood upon an eminence a little way off. His commands were given by elevating, depressing and waving what some say was a battle axe, some say a spear. His aids were watching for those signals and in words communicated the orders to the warriors. As is usual with savages, they came to battle with a yell.

Observe the consummate generalship of this old chief: he displays a hundred horsemen in the centre, who provoke a charge and retreat only to expose his enemies to the deadly crossfire of his hidden infantry. Notice his reserve, with weapons in hand, ready to sustain any weak point. They say the old fellow was dressed in splendid style, with white cap and plume, a red and white sash flung over his shoulder, etc. He is apparently over seventy years old. I had the pleasure of an introduction to him last summer, by Major Dodge, the Indian Agent. I then described him in a letter to the *HERALD*. He is over six feet high, with grey hair, and withal the "mildest mannered man that ever cut a throat." He invited me down to Pyramid Lake, to pay him a visit, but I think I shall not go just now.

Captain Watkins is of the opinion that there were six hundred Indians in all, including the reserve. He thinks they lost about twenty-five. Of the whites, one hundred and five went into battle, about one half of whom are missing and probably killed.

CAUSES OF THE WAR.

Now of the causes of this war I have a few words to say. I lay it to those gentlemen whom I have heretofore mentioned in my letters to the *HERALD*, as the keepers of grog shops along the immigrant road. If these Pah-Utes had desired a general war, would they not have destroyed other stations besides that of Williams? There are many others within a few miles. To give you an idea of the character of these worthies, I will relate two circumstances which have occurred during the past week. There were three persons, brothers, of the name of Williams—two of whom were killed at the first massacre. The survivor made no effort to have the dead bodies of his brothers buried, and when some of the half-starved troops in their retreat killed a few of his chickens and hogs, he charged four dollars a piece for the chickens and a proportionate price for the hogs, at the same time saying the soldiers were worse than the Indians.

At another station, Judge Cradlebaugh, with fourteen men, called for supper, and although the proprietor of the ranch was terribly frightened, and glad to see persons come down for his protection, he nevertheless charged them a dollar a piece for a supper of bread and bacon—the Judge furnishing the bacon. These are the fellows who bring on Indian troubles, in which valuable lives are lost. What should be done with them?

Whatever the cause, it is certain that the Indians obtained a complete victory in the late fight; and it is also certain that this victory must be taken from them, or there will be no safety along the frontier. Guns and ammunition are coming over in abundance, and a strong force will soon take the field. Jack Hays will probably command the volunteers.

TENNESSEE.

NOTES

¹San Francisco *Herald*, June 2, 1860. The letter to the *Herald* is dated May 27, 1860, at Genoa, Utah Territory; it was written by "Tennessee." Credit must go to William Doyle Malloy for his original work with "Tennessee's" "LETTERS," which appear in Malloy's *Carson Valley, 1857-1860*, an unpublished Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1931. The present writer is indebted to Bancroft Library for furnishing photostatic copy of material out of the San Francisco *Herald*. In his account of the Indian War, De Quille in his *The Big Bonanza*, pp. 118-120, essentially agrees with the accounts as they appeared in the San Francisco papers of May, 1860. He, too, p. 119, agrees with "Tennessee" as to the purpose of many who went out to Pyramid; said De Quille: "They thought they should probably have a bit of a skirmish with the Indians, kill a few of them, capture a lot of their ponies, and on the whole have a rather good time."

²San Francisco *Steamer Bulletin*, May 21, 1860. Although files for the early years of the *Enterprise* are not available to researchers, California papers of the period were careful to quote from its columns whenever important events took place in Washoe; hence, as in the present instance, researchers have much from the reliable *Enterprise* available to them.

³*Ibid.*, the *Steamer Bulletin* is quoting a correspondent to the San Francisco *Daily Bulletin*.

⁴Now Dayton, Nevada.

⁵The results of the hostile measures are well recounted by De Quille, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-127. Future historians of the Washoe scene would do well to consider De Quille before turning to Angel and his school of historians for material.

⁶San Francisco *Herald*, May 24, 1860. The column is headed "Carson Valley Correspondence," and the letter, of course, is from "Tennessee." Credit is due Bancroft Library for photostatic copy.

CONTRIBUTORS

AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON, who brings us the *Penrod Memoirs*, is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Nevada where he has, for years, offered courses in *Western North America* and *Nevada History*. Invariably when a writer of Nevada history seeks a competent authority to express an opinion on his manuscript, the writer turns to Dr. Hutcheson, who has, himself, contributed to many quarterlies authoritative articles which have shed light on the early period of Nevada history.

JAMES W. HULSE, who writes of the scene he knows best: *Lincoln County*, is a member of the staff of the *Nevada State Journal* where he finds time to write featured historical articles along with his penetrating and highly objective reports of the current state-wide scene. The *Quarterly* and the Nevada Historical Society are pleased to have Mr. Hulse on the Editorial Advisory Board.

RUSSELL R. ELLIOTT—*Letters from a Nevada Doctor*—was introduced to our readers in the Summer Issue. Since that time, he has been made chairman of the Department of History at the University of Nevada.

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