

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

On the Trail of a
Renegade Pahute

Old "4" & "9" of
the V. & T.

A Life of Fifty Years
in Nevada
(Part II)



Winter Issue
March 1958

Volume 1
Number 3

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The Society believes that it can best serve the State by arousing in the people an historical consciousness which it hopes will be carried to succeeding generations. Thus, through its Director, the Society sponsors an educational program which carries the history of Nevada to the schools and organizations throughout the State.

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The Society publishes the **NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY** which publishes articles of interest to readers in the social, cultural, economic, and political history of the Great Basin area: Nevada, eastern California, eastern and southern Oregon, Idaho, and Utah.

The Society's membership is open to the public; application for membership should be made to the Secretary of the Society, State Building, Reno, Nevada.

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The late GEORGE E. PERKINS, whose *Renegade Pahute* appeared in a slightly different form in *Desert Magazine*, vol. 3: 1, November, 1939, pp. 22-25, was of the Perkins family which played such a notable part in the discovery of the Lost City. An offspring of pioneers in southern Nevada, Perkins wrote frequently and authoritatively of that area. The *Quarterly* is indebted to the Perkins family of Overton, Nevada, for their permission to re-print the article; it is likewise indebted to *Desert Magazine*.

EVERETT W. HARRIS, commentator on *Old "4" & "9,"* like Perkins, is an offspring of Nevada pioneers. Dr. Harris is a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Nevada. His interests are varied, and he is looked upon as the authority on emigrant trails in Nevada and as an authority on some of her short line railroads—the V. & T., in particular. Invariably Dr. Harris serves on committees guiding theses related to Nevada history.

AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON—*Penrod's Memoirs*—has recently been made Professor of History at the University of Nevada. His *Before the Comstock, 1857-1858*, and *Early Mining Districts of Nevada's Comstock* are significant contributions to the history of early days in Nevada.

ON THE TRAIL OF A RENEGADE PAHUTE¹

(A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE)

By GEORGE E. PERKINS

It was the winter of 1898; I was working at Bonelli's Ferry on the Colorado River at the junction of the Virgin and Colorado Rivers in southern Nevada. Daniel Bonelli, who ran the ferry at this point, had an alfalfa ranch from which he supplied hay to the mining camps of White Hills, Arizona, and Eldorado Canyon, Nevada, as well as supplying the general public who traveled the old trail, now obliterated and abandoned. (The Arrowhead Trail and the Union Pacific Railroad have since built routes across the desert stretches of southern Nevada.) At this ferry and on this ranch, Bonelli hired several men to do ranch work and run the ferry boat as it was on the main line of travel between Arizona and Mexico on the south, and Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Oregon on the north. There was considerable travel on this old trail at that time. Bonelli met and hired all classes of people with no questions asked regarding their past or what their business had been. As long as they could do the work asked of them, was all that was necessary.

Among these workmen Mr. Bonelli also hired several of the native Indians of this section, as some of them were very good hands with the ferry boat and understood the river. They also were good hands in the hay fields, as they were acclimated to the heat of the long dry summers which would register 120 degrees for days at a stretch.

Among these Pahute Indians who worked for Bonelli was one named Mouse, so called because of the fact that he was very sly and keen. Although he was a good workman, the other Indians feared and hated him as he had made threats that he would kill someone.

A characteristic of the sullen Pahute was to brood for days at a time on some certain subject or fancied wrong. Then some night he would "break loose" and, with the lust to kill, would kill anyone he met while in this mood. Sometimes he would kill as high as four or five men in one night, many times even his best friends, before he could be stopped or brought to justice. As a

¹Permission to re-print this personal experience of the late George E. Perkins has been granted by the editors of *Desert Magazine* and by the heirs of Mr. Perkins.

rule, a posse would take the trail after one of these killings. No court ever had to prosecute one of these cases as the killer would be dealt with according to the custom of the country at that time, and would be buried at the end of the trail.

Mouse was a Pahute of the sullen type. One evening, after work, the Indians got to drinking some wine that one of their number had obtained somewhere. When Mouse got a few drinks of this wine, he went berserk and wanted to kill someone. He had an old .45 Colt six-shooter which he started shooting, scaring the other Indians out of their camp. They came running to the ranch house for protection. We went to the Indian camp and asked Mouse what he meant by shooting around and threatening the other Indians. He was very surly and sullen, wouldn't talk much; said it was his business and he would do as he pleased. We took his gun from him and had no further trouble with him that night, but we could not get the other Indians to go back to the camp and sleep.

The next morning Bonelli discharged Mouse, and we took him across the Colorado River into Arizona. He went from there to the mining camp of White Hills, thirty-five miles south, where he worked for a while as chore boy and freight rustler at the mining company's store. He worked there for some time and seemed to be getting along all right until one evening he went berserk again, stole a rifle and cartridges from the store, and a horse from a man who was running a freight team, and started back for Nevada.

He didn't come back by way of Bonelli's Ferry, but started through the mountains for Las Vegas and the Charleston Mountain country, as he had lived in that section most of his life and knew every waterhole and hideout in southern Nevada. He struck the Colorado River opposite the mouth of the Las Vegas Wash, about five miles upstream from the Boulder Dam, and swam his horse across the river. The horse got into the quicksands on the Nevada side of the river, and he left him there to die a slow death. He then started up the river towards Bonelli's Ferry, a distance of twenty-five miles.

About a mile upstream from where he struck the river, three prospectors were camped on the Arizona side. They had been testing the different bars up and down the river with a view to placer mining. There were two young men of this camp, a Mr. Stearns and a Mr. Davis, and an old man nearly eighty years old, whose name was Major Greenowat. Mouse, on coming opposite this camp, espied it and hailed them to come over and get

him. They came over in their boat, took him back to their camp, and gave him food and a bed to sleep in for the night. On the morrow he had agreed to show them a rich gold mine about ten miles up the river in the Boulder Canyon range, a very precipitous, rough range of mountains which crosses the river north and south, through which the turbulent Colorado has cut a deep gorge on its mad downward rush to the Pacific Ocean. Leaving the old Major in camp, Davis and Stearns left the next morning in company with Mouse to find the rich gold mine, of which he had told them, little dreaming of the fate which awaited them or the treachery of Mouse, the Renegade.

Some two days later at Bonelli's Ferry, the hired men, upon coming out to harness their teams for the day's work, noticed one horse from a matched span of greys was missing. Not much attention was paid to it at that time, as quite frequently one of the horses, upon getting loose, would stray off on a nearby mesa, browsing the green weeds and spring flowers which were just coming up. After deciding to let the horse go for the time being, and work another in its place, we harnessed them and found one of the bridles missing. The Indians at once sensed something wrong and started looking for tracks. We finally found where the horse had been led from the stable down to the banks of the Virgin River, where the party had mounted him, riding him into the river.

We were two hours or more finding where he had come out of the river, about a mile upstream, thereby using considerable tact and cunning in stealing the horse.

Joe F. Perkins and one of the Indians saddled their horses and took the trail, following it up the Virgin River some twelve miles where the trail left the river, leading off up a dry wash that empties into the Virgin from the west, known as Bitter Spring Wash. They trailed the horse to the head of this wash and got into very rough country near Muddy Peak, where they were forced to turn back on account of darkness. They came back to the ferry and reported the tracks of the stolen horse were bearing towards the Las Vegas valley. The following morning an Indian by the name of "Red Eye" (so called by the Indians because the whites of his eyes were always bloodshot) and I started through the mountains for the Las Vegas Ranch, a distance of fifty miles, to see if the horse had been brought in there. Since we had a late start and since the trail for the first twenty-five miles was very rough and slow traveling, night overtook us some fifteen miles before we reached the Las Vegas Ranch.

It was very dark and we decided to camp until morning. We unsaddled our horses and tied them to a mesquite tree, and rolled up in our saddle blankets. But as we had stopped in a marshy, swampy place at the bottom of the wash, and the ground was cold and damp, we got little sleep, and as soon as it was light enough, we started on.

By sunrise we had traveled some six or eight miles when we saw, a short distance ahead, smoke from a campfire lazily drifting up through the mesquites. Thinking we might get a clue, or perhaps the party who had stolen the horse, we circled this camp, coming in from a different direction than which the trail went in. The Indian with me asked what he should do in the event it was the thief, and I told him if it happened to be our horse, and the party showed signs of fight, to shoot and shoot to kill.

After maneuvering around to where we could see this camp without being seen, we found it to be only a prospector with two burrows; so we rode into camp and passed the time of day with him and told him what we were looking for. As he had seen no rider or horse of this description, we rode on in to the Stewart Ranch at Las Vegas, and made inquiries about the horse and rider. They told us there had been no rider or horse of that description seen at their ranch. We then went on to Ed Kyle's ranch, a mile or two north, and asked Ed if he had seen this horse or a strange man come into his ranch. He told us he had seen no horse or rider, but two days before the Indian, Mouse, had come to his place to borrow a knife, saying he wanted to mend his shoes. He had said his horse had gotten tired and given out some twenty-five miles back near Dry Lake. He had shot the horse and walked in. Kyle said he did not talk long with Mouse as he had seemed nervous, and when Mouse had left his place, he had gone on the run and had not been seen since. I could see at once that in all probability it was Mouse who had stolen the horse at Bonelli's Ferry.

We stayed at Las Vegas until the next day, trying to pick up the trail again, but were unable to get any tracks that could be followed. We started back for Bonelli's about one o'clock in the afternoon, and it was getting late when we reached the Colorado River. We decided to tie our horses to a willow tree and stay all night with the prospectors, Stearns and Davis and the old Major, so that we would not have to ride twenty-five more miles to Bonelli's Ferry, as the trail was rough enough in daylight but almost impassable at night.

When we got opposite the prospectors' camp, I hailed them

and shot my six-shooter several times to attract their attention. After a half-hour's wait, the old Major came over in the boat for us, and when I asked him where Stearns and Davis were, he told us they had left camp five days before with an Indian named Mouse, who was going to show them a rich gold mine. He had supposed they had gone on up the river to Bonelli's Ferry, as they frequently stopped there. I knew at once that Mouse had killed them, as they had never made their appearance at the ferry, but did not tell the old Major of my suspicions, as I did not want to worry him. We stayed with him that night and got him to row us back across the river to our horses the next morning. We saddled them and went on up the river to Bonelli's, where I reported what we had found in regard to the stolen horse and who had stolen him. Also, that Davis and Stearns had been missing for five days after they had left their camp with Mouse.

We knew at once that all was not as it should be and that we would have to go back down the river to the prospectors' camp and take their trail and see if we could find them. There were two trappers named Richmond and Galloway staying at Bonelli's at this time. They had started out at Green River City, Wyoming, with two small boats decked with canvas, and had trapped all the way down the river. They had come through the Grand Canyon, catching beaver in the river, coyote, foxes and other animals along the banks, and had gotten this far down the river, intending to go as far down the river as Needles, California.

With these two trappers, two white men from the ranch, and an Indian to help track, we started down the river in boats to the prospectors' camp. After staying there that night, we started out the next morning on the trail of Stearns, Davis, and Mouse, and followed their tracks up into the Boulder Canyon Range on the Arizona side of the River. (The Colorado River is the boundary line between Nevada and Arizona from about ten miles below the mouth of the Grand Canyon to a point just above Needles, California.) After tracking most of the day across canyons, up and down and over ledges that were almost perpendicular, we finally found them, Davis and Stearns, lying under a ledge where Mouse had killed them. They apparently had been climbing up over this bluff with Mouse in the lead, Davis next and Stearns below him. Mouse had evidently caught Davis unawares and shot him first, afterwards shooting Stearns. They had fallen twenty or thirty feet over the ledge after being shot. Davis carried at all times a bone-handled .45 Colt six-shooter. Mouse had taken Davis' six-shooter off him and had taken Stearns' high-top hiking

boots, not bothering \$55.00 in currency which Stearns had in his pocket.

We were almost two days in getting the bodies back to camp, as the country was so rough we had to lower the bodies over ledges with ropes in many places. After getting them back to the river, we got Richmond and Galloway to take the old Major and the bodies down the river to Needles, California, there to get in touch with relatives of the two men, who came and took charge of the bodies.

After Mouse had murdered these men, he came on up the river and crossed by the help of a drift log, as we afterwards found out, and he had stolen the horse which was his method of getting even for being fired from the ranch some time before.

A year went by and no one heard or saw anything of Mouse. He finally showed up near Indian Springs on the north end of the Charleston range some forty miles north of Las Vegas. Charlie Towner, who lived at Indian Springs, had seen him at a distance a time or two. On one occasion he had conversed with Mouse at a distance, but he would not let Towner get near him. He was now a lone wolf, with a price on his head and hid out in the mountains alone. At times he would loot some lone prospector's camp for a little food and occasionally he would kill a mustang horse or a range steer, making the meat into jerky on which he lived.

The following spring, J. M. Thomas, who was running a sawmill in the Sheep Mountain range, lost one of his horses. Thomas and Jess Wallace started to trail the horse, found where he had been cornered, caught and ridden off. They followed him out of Sheep Mountain, across the Las Vegas valley, going by way of Corn Creek, Springs, and back into the Charleston range. At one time they got close enough to see someone on a horse crossing the desert miles away. They finally had to give up the chase near where the Charleston Mountain Resort now is, as night overtook them there. They had left the sawmill in Sheep Mountain hurriedly, taking little or no provisions in the line of food and water, and were not prepared to make a long chase. At different points on the trail, they could see where the horse thief had hidden behind ledges of rock waiting to ambush them as they came by, and had lost his nerve and decided differently. They felt sure the man they were trailing was the Indian, Mouse, and as he knew the country so much better than they, and as it would be impossible to overtake him, they turned back. About a month later the horse came back to his old range showing signs of hard

treatment and abuse. He evidently had not liked the treatment the Indian gave him and left him the first time he got loose.

No more was heard of the renegade, Mouse, until the fifth day of July, a year and a half after he had killed Stearns and Davis on the Colorado River. He then appeared in the Moapa Valley, during a Fourth of July celebration. The Indians would attend these celebrations as well as the whites, as it was one of the few days during the year in this isolated district that was out of the ordinary, and the Indians and whites would all get together for a day of celebration and sports, such as horse racing, foot racing, wrestling and others. Upon going back to the camp the evening of the Fourth, an old Indian looked over a little patch of garden and found that a head of cabbage had been taken while he had been at the celebration. He and others immediately started to track the thief who had stolen the cabbage, and followed him out of the garden on into the foothills toward the Valley of Fire.

The next morning they notified the white people that Mouse was in the country, as they knew his tracks. A posse was organized of white men and Indians, and we took up his trail, determined to get him this time. We followed him through the Valley of Fire, at times for great distances with no tracks, other than a little pebble being overturned here and there, as we were tracking over bare rock most of the time. After following him through the Valley of Fire we found where he had come out at St. Thomas, Nevada, and had gone into a corn field, stealing some corn, then doubled back into the Valley of Fire, eluding the trackers. The Indians were especially determined to get Mouse this time, as they feared him and wanted him killed. We trailed him back through the Valley of Fire, north, coming out in the upper Moapa Valley near where the Union Pacific Railroad now crosses the valley.

From here he left the Moapa Valley going north up the Meadow Valley Wash to Cane Springs (now Rox), Nevada, with the posse still hot on his trail. We crowded him so hard at Rox, we could feel, and see by his tracks, that we were not far behind him. He then started doubling back to Warm Springs in the upper Moapa Valley. The Indian trailers were getting wild by this time, and it was impossible to slow them down, though we had been on the trail steady for ten days and were tired and worn out. They were afraid Mouse would get away again, as he had many times before. We finally sighted him crossing a big clay flat about four miles north of Warm Springs. The Indians started shooting at

him, and he at us; as he ran, he would turn and fire a couple of times and then run on, trying to get to some low hills or behind a bank for protection. We finally dropped him, and when we got to him he was dead. He had been hit three times, once through the head and twice through the body. The Indians shot him several times after we had come up to him. It was almost impossible to make them stop shooting, as first one and then another would take a crack at him. He still had the rifle he had stolen from the mining company's store at White Hills, also the .45 six-shooter taken from Davis when he killed him, and the high-topped boots taken from Stearns that he had made into moccasins. He formerly grew a heavy mustache which he had pulled out clean, trying to disguise himself. We put him on a pack horse and carried him into a ranch in the Moapa Valley owned by a couple of squaw men by the name of Harris and Pickett.

Mohave County, Arizona, and Lincoln County, Nevada, had previously offered rewards of several hundred dollars for Mouse, dead or alive. We held an inquest for identification purposes, as we had to make affidavits, sworn to before a Notary Public, that the party killed was Mouse, before we could collect the reward. After collecting the money and paying the expenses of the posse, while on the trail, we divided the balance equally among the Indians who had done such excellent work in tracking.

After the inquest, we asked Harris where he would like to have us bury Mouse. He said, "Take him down the road a half a mile and dump him out where he can yell at me when I pass that spot at night." So we loaded him in an old buckboard, hauled him down the road a short distance below the ranch, and in a little side arroya about a hundred feet from the roadside, we scooped out a shallow grave; and putting a lasso rope on his feet, we jerked him out of the buckboard with a saddle horse into this hole. Mouse had reached the end of the trail.

OLD "4" AND "9" OF THE V. & T.

Commentary and Notes

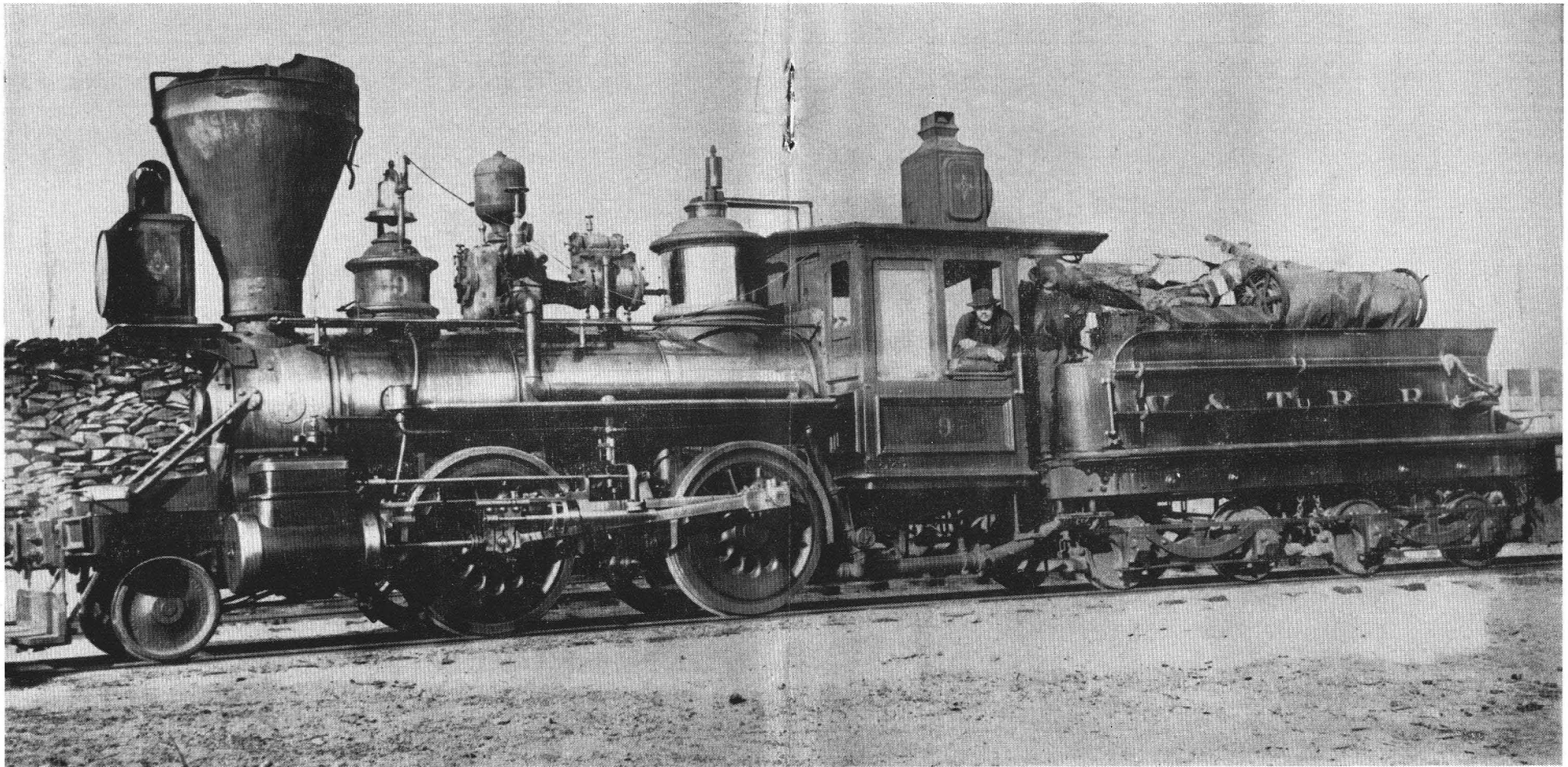
By EVERETT W. HARRIS

So that they may take their place among the known and published photographs of Nevada's most famous and colorful short line railroad—a railroad inextricably woven into the history of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode—the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* publishes, herewith, two valuable photographs of locomotives of the VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE RAILROAD.

Older than No. 9 and possessing a slightly more colorful history, the *Virginia*,¹ No. 4 on the V. & T. roster, was manufactured by the Baldwin Locomotive Works at the order of William Sharon, Comstock financial wizard and father of the V. & T., in 1869. Shipped to Reno at the start of the construction of "the crookedest railroad in the world," the *Virginia*—with her tender disconnected, her rods removed, and with steel tires attached to her drivers in order to protect the flanges—was hauled up the old and very steep Geiger grade to Virginia City so that construction might begin simultaneously at several points. Although her arrival on the Comstock was hailed as a symbol of the continued greatness of the city whose name she bore, nevertheless the *Virginia* must have suffered under the ignominy of being hauled into the city by thirty-six head of oxen.

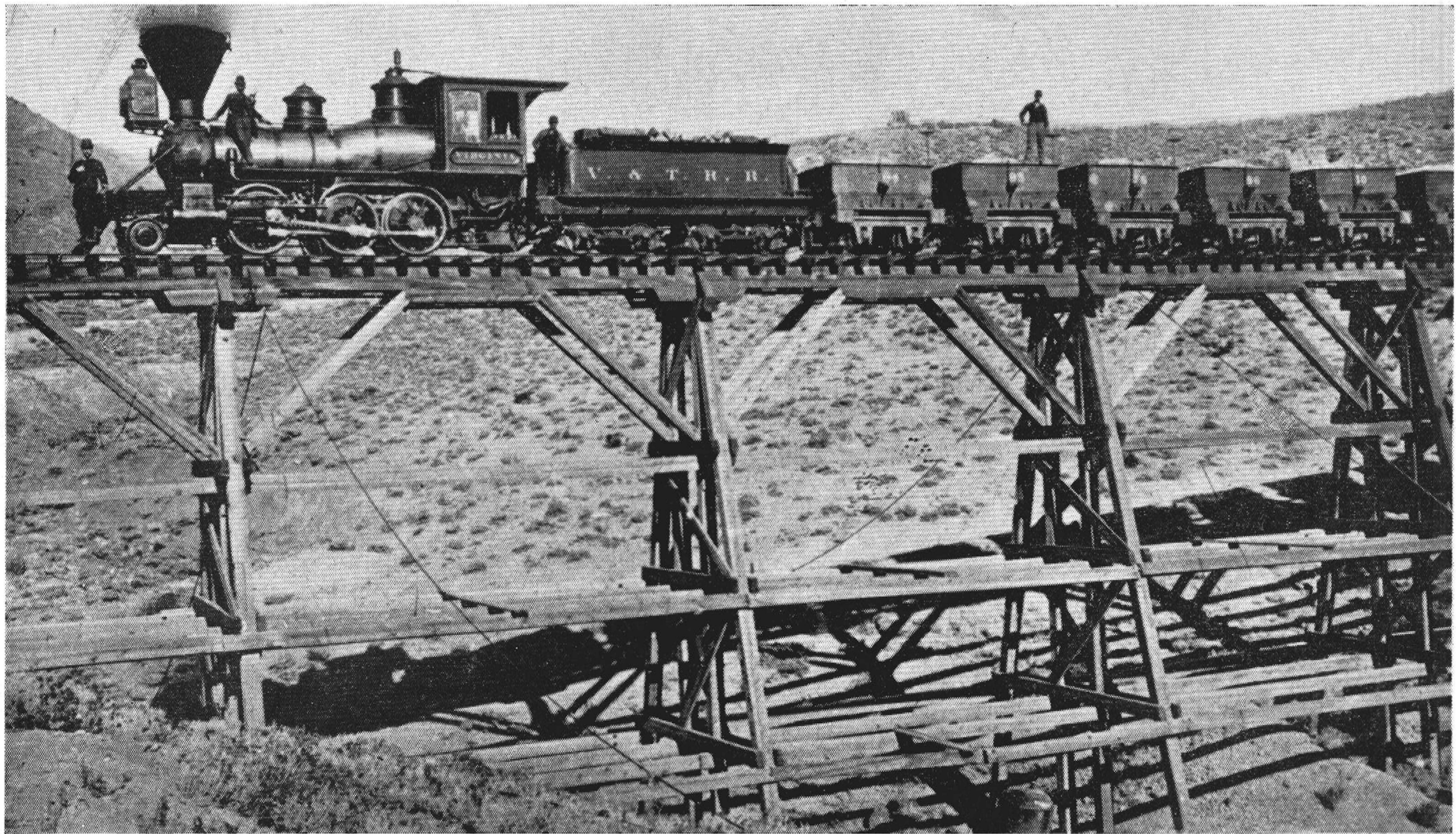
Although No. 9 played no part in the construction of the road, she served to perpetuate, for a time at least, the name of the engineer and surveyor who laid out the route of the railroad from Virginia to Carson City—I. E. James. His was a formidable engineering project. Faced with an elevation drop of 1575 feet between Virginia City and the Carson River—a distance of approximately thirteen miles—James wound the line downward like a spiral staircase, executing a total of seventeen full circles in its descent of the grade which averaged 2%. But the *James*² was seldom seen on the spiral; she served as a switcher in the Carson yards, unless she was sent out to fight fires which the old wood burners frequently started.

Both the *Virginia* and the *I. E. James* were eventually scrapped; the *James* lived to a ripe old age—76. Indeed, she was active almost as long as the V. & T. itself.³



THE I. E. JAMES²

This beautifully clear portrait of the old switcher was recently found in the bottom of a trunk belonging to the late Mrs. Nellie Treasure Zeigler (nee Parker), the first white child born in Treasure Hill, White Pine County, Nevada, and reared in Virginia City. The picture was graciously loaned to the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly by Mrs. Zeigler's granddaughter, Mrs. William V. Van Tassel of Reno, Nevada.



The handsome picture of the "Virginia" posed with her ore cars on the Crown Point Trestle at Gold Hill, is the property of Mr. Chester Elliott of Reno, Nevada. The picture is published with his permission.

NOTES

¹The *Virginia*, a 2-6-0 type with 48-inch drivers and 16-inch x 24-inch cylinders, was the fourth of twenty-nine locomotives owned by the V. & T. R. R. [Numbers "5" and "25" were each assigned to two different locomotives.] Mr. Chester Elliott received the picture of the *Virginia* from the late Peter Gordon of Carson City. Permission to re-print the picture of the *Virginia* must be secured from Mr. Elliott.

²The *I. E. James*, a 2-4-0 type with 48-inch drivers and 14-inch x 22-inch cylinders, like the *Virginia*, was a wood burner. Built by Baldwin in 1870, the *James* was purchased by the V. & T. in 1875. Between the domes of her boiler was mounted a steam pressure operated Hooker fire engine, as may be seen in the photo. The tender of the *James* appears to carry a fire hose coiled around a drum. Sold to Willett and Burt, contractors, in 1907, the *James* was scrapped in 1946.

³SOURCES: Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, *Virginia & Truckee*, Grahame H. Hardy publisher, 1949.

....., *Steamcars to the Comstock*, Howell-North, 1957.
Dan De Quille (William Wright), *The Big Bonanza*, American Publishing Co., 1876.

Gilbert H. Kneiss, *Bonanza Railroads*, Stanford University Press, 1941.

A LIFE OF FIFTY YEARS IN NEVADA

THE MEMOIRS OF PENROD OF THE COMSTOCK LODGE

Commentary, Notes, and Transcription

By AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON

(PART 2)

The significance of the role "Manny" Penrod played in the discovery of the Comstock is, without question, of relative unimportance. His role as a narrator of the early Nevada scene is, at this late date, the significant thing. Too few memoirs of the men in and around Gold Canyon before the Comstock have been preserved—or, rather, been brought to light. Unfortunately, even Penrod focuses his attention on the one thing that has given his name to posterity: the discovery of the Comstock; minimized almost to nothingness are the years 1852–1858, during which period Penrod was a resident of western Utah Territory. Instead, he mentions only those events in which he participated that historians have incorporated in their writings; hence the need to publish the numerous pages of the *Memoirs* is unwarranted, for little beyond what has been extracted, is worthy of note.

THE MEMOIRS

PART II

In 1858, a new find of Gold in a Ravine Called Cedar Ravine, at a point about half mile east of where the discovery of the Comstock Lode, was made. The Ravine was discovered in the summer of 1857, and the ravine being a short one was worked out that season. I and a brother-in-law, Bill Sides, [got] one seventh of the Ravine for furnishing lumber to make V flume to carry water from a spring, carrying water half mile to the Ravine, the Ground paying 20–40 dollars per day to the Man, with a Rocker. In 1858 it was found that from the head of the Ravine the Gold was scattered or deposited over a sloping flat of 20 to 40 acres, paying from 10 to 20 dollars per day to the man with a rocker. This was worked up towards Mount Davidson to where there was so much clay the Gold could not be saved, the uppermost Claims belonging to James Finney (Old Virginia), Joc Curby, White and Hart. The placer Ground being only a foot or so deep it was all worked out during 1858. In the spring of 1859, Patric Mc macklaughlin conceived an idea that back of

this Clay was another deposit of Gold and started a Cut through this clay bed. In a few days they came to pay under the clay. Comstock chanced to be there when they found the pay, and advised them to Buy the claims of Virginia, Curby, White and Hart, as, if they found out there was pay, they would likely claim their old locations; after considering the matter, they requested Comstock to bring me to consult. When i arrived they told me of the difficulty and wanted my advice. i advised the same as Comstock had. They said if i would buy the ground, i and Comstock should be equal Partners.¹ i prospected the ground and found it paid a bout a doller to the pan. It would never do for me to propose to buy, for they would mistrust that there was something good in it, but as i and Comstock ware Partners in a claim at Gold Hill, of which i will speak further on, and Comstock being a wild and vishionary man who would buy any thing that was for sale, would pay for it if [he] had the money or could get it on credit, and so i gave him \$35, and he baught all the four claims, but got the signature of but three to the bill of sale. Afterwards Jos. Winters found the fourth party and secured his one fourth interest, and so we took him in as a partner. When we had worked a bout a week strippin off the surface and rocking, the pay gravel, which when first found was only a bout an inch thick, gradually thickened as we advanced up the hill, untel it was a bout a foot thick when we had advanced 20 or 30 ft, and finally turned down the creves, being a bout four feet wide. The rock all being a decomposed quarts, i suggested to the partners that it was a quarts Lode, and when i proposed Locating it as such, they all opposed me; and when [i got] material to wright a notice, claiming it as such they all threw their tools down and said if i was such a fool that i couldnot tell a quarts lode from a regular washed channel, that i had not sense enough to feed a monkey. But i paid no attention to their Jibes and wrote the notice: 300 ft, for each man and 300 for a discovery claim as the mining distric laws allowed. At this time there was but four in the Co. The character of the pay grit as the old time Miners call it, was black with white quarts and Blue quarts, the black being from the decomposition of the black Sulphurets of Silver, but of which we was as ignorant as could be, for not one of us had ever seen Silver oar in any form. Gold was what we wanted, and was running three Rockers taking out near a thousand dollers per day. We then took a fifth man in the Company, he to build two Arrastras and [furnish] two good mules to run them with. By the arastras we ground the screenings from the rockers. This

partners name was Osbern, called Kantuck. At this time Jos. Winters interest was recognised. When the first Arastra was completed, we had a mexican to run it; we would occasionally find a piece of rich sulpheret of silver which was also rich in gold and break it in small pieces for the mexican to work. When he would say, "no good per arastra, Mucha Platta," or something like that, Pat McLaughlin would say, "dam your Platta we want the gold in it." When we had got down 8 or 10 feet, the boys, Pat and Peter, was so well pleased that it had been located as a Lode, and as Comstock had give in and helped me mesure the ground off, that they gave us 50 feet each which was later called the MEXICAN, as Comstock and I sold to Meldonado a mexican, or Spaniard. We called the Lode the Comstock, in honoring H. T. P. Comstock.

In a very short time, say three weeks, the news of the find had attracted hundreds of people from Cal[ifornia], when the people held a meeting and was going to cut down the size of our claim as they said we had no right to a discovery claim; and in order to save it from the Jumpers three hundred feet, i selected Dick Sides, my brotherin law, and others selected such as they liked. Some of the origional owners Got their interests back, but i considered my sale final, and in that fraction was called the Sides. i also located for Dick Sides, J. M. Baldwin, and L. B. Abernathie what in later years was called the Virginia, and finally became the Consolidated Virginia and California. Sides, Baldwin and Abernathie spent considerable Money in development work and found only low Grade Oar, untel Mackey, Fair, (Wm Sharon, in after years was US Senator from Nev.) T. H. Williams, Flood & OBrine got a hold of it when it became the Greatest Bullion Producer of all the mines. With all its Millions Produced from Oars, the raise and fall of stocks Made more money for certain holders of Stocks then was produced from Oars taken from the Mine, and the 700,000,000 of dollers produced from the Comstock, more then three times that amount has been made by Some, and lost by others.

Some incidents in the Early find of the Comstock may not be out of place to show the generosity and liberality of the Miners. For instance, it was customary [when] Ladies came to see the Rich Mines, most all the Miners would give a pan of dirt or gravel, and someone would wash it for them. i saw Comstock on Two or Three Occasions take from his purse, slyly of course, at sometimes as much as a hundred dollers and slip it in the pan, and others with smaller a mounts; so often some favorite Lady

would receive a hundred dollars, and none less than forty, and this at every visit.

On one occasion a Man and wife from the East, on their way to Cal[ifornia] stopped over for a rest. The wife wanted to stay and the Man wanted to go on to Cal. A quarrel and a separation was the result. The Man was poor, had nothing but a poor team and Comstock Gave him three hundred dollars to help him as long as he said, and found a situation as cook for the woman, and in after times married the woman. And it is in the History of Nev[ada]² that Comstock Bought his Wife. It all occurred through Comstock's liberality and big heartedness.

But Comstock soon run through his 20,000 dollars and he and his wife separated in Placerville. I never heard of her since. Comstock went to Montana and after one trip back to Virginia, went back to Montana and committed suicide by shooting himself.

I will go back to the discovery of the mine; when we found that the mine was valuable, we all agreed for none to sell without all selling, but in a short time I found that four had sold, and the Co. proposed to build a \$200,000 mill, and as I had other business that required my attention I sold at a sacrifice. McLaughlin was the first to sell; he soon run through a great part of his money, and went to Angels Camp, Cal[ifornia] and died there. Peter O'Reilly, after going through with his 40,000 dollars, a good part to his priest, he being a Catholic, he finally died in Stockton Asylum. Jos. Winter and Osborn, I have lost track of. R. D. Sides, J. M. Baldwin, L. B. Abernathie have all passed Beyond. Baldwin and Abernathie died in Suisun Valley. Abernathie and I were boys raised together in Union Co. Ills, and in all our lives from boy hood, commencing in 1844 until his death in 1904, there never existed any thing but Friendship. J. M. Baldwin died a few years before Abernathie. Both lived in Suisun Valley. Baldwin was a true gentleman, a solid and firm Believer in the rights of all Men, and while he, Abernathie and Dick Sides and I lived on adjoining Farms in Carson Valley, was always close Friends.

An incident [which] while not instructive, is nevertheless a musing: it will be remembered that the discovery of the Comstock was the discovery of Silver in the U. S! while at the discovery of the Comstock we were all as ignorant as a Monkey of What constituted Silver ores, or in what form silver was found; yet we knew there was 50 cents of silver in each ounce of Gold, as I had my share of the gold assayed. At any rate, the claim adjoining us on the south belonged to James Cory and others,

in which was found Native Silver, one piece weighing an ounce. The owners of that claim secretly showed it to us of the Ophir and requested us to say nothing of it, as it might injure the sale of their mine as a Gold Mine. i had some little knowledge of the existence of Silver in the country, through the Grosh Brothers, two young Men from one of the Eastern States with whom i was associated in a claim near Silver City. They had a little furnace, and finding pebbles in the Gulch would melt them and showed me silver they represented had come out of those pebbles. i furnished them provisions while they done the rest.

Not finding it profitable, one of them started to Cal. and Frose so badly he finally died in Cal. The other stuck a pick in his foot and [since there was] no Dr. in the Country finally died. Their names was Hosea and Allen Grosh. In after years a Co. got up a claim a gainst the owners of some of the richest claim owners on the Comstock, but as i was a partner with them and our claim was two miles to the south of the pretended location, it all fell through, (ie) the Grosh Claim.

In 1857 some parties had found a prospect of Gold where Bridge Port, the County seat of Mono Co. [California] now is, and with a ox tean i hauled some Miners and their outfit a distance of 100 miles through the mountains, no road of any kind, fourteen days going to the promised Eldorado, but they failed to make it pay, and so i got nothing for the trip. This shows what a fool will go through for Gold, particular in a new find, but the life of a pioneer is made up of hardships. In the spring of 1860 Ross Lewers moved a saw mill from Honey Lake Valley to Washoe Valley. T. H. Epely, his Engineer, assisted, with many hardships, the worst was in Crossing the Truckee River. When it arrived in Washoe Valley, i baught one half interest in the Mill, and as i owned the timber on which it was placed, i gave it to the Co. We started to saw lumber in May, 1860. The Boom from the discovery of the Comstock made lumber worth in Virginia City \$250 per thousand. We begin by selling at \$50 at the Mill and as Mr. T. H. Epely was the engineer, it was worthy to note how Mr. Epely took his life in his own hands. The Mill was run by a Eight Horse Power Engine; so with a bottom and top saw, by the time the saws would run through, the steam was all gone, and so as to save a little more steam Epely Run the Pee on the safety Valve out to the end and hung a 16 lb. hammer on the end of the beam, and by the time the saw would start a gain we could actually see the Boiler swell. It was remarkable but true. After running the Mill six months, Mr. Epely rented it

at \$1000 Per month; he run it six months, doing well. He afterwards went to Honey Lake Valley, and drifted around, and for the first time from the time his Lease was out, i never saw him untel i met him in Vallejo this spring (1904), when we had to rehash and compare notes. He is in the Mercantile Business on Georgia Street, in Vallejo.

Now i go back to 18[58] in that year i believe the first Constitutional Convention was held at Genoa, now the Co. seat of Douglas co., it might have been in 1859, as i said in the start i wrote from memory a lone. At any rate the Territory was Organised and we had a Representative in Congress, and J. W. Nye appointed Govner; law and order was observed. John Cradelbough judge, and strictly enforced the law. He being appointed by the US. Government, he had some trouble in the first holding Court as the People had been humbugged with a pretense of the Utah authorities pretending to hold Court in Carson Valley, when it all proved a grand Humbug. And so when Cradelbaugh issued a Venira for Jurors, but few appeared, and i, for one, thinking it was a farce, but the Marshal John Blackburn came to me and said this was no humbug. He said if i would go and give the judge my excuse, he, the judge, would excuse me. Blackburn had a subphoeny for me but never showed it. The consiquence was i went to see if it was a court or a humbug; the Judge asked my excuse; i said my only excuse was that i had plenty of work on the farm which i thought would pay me better then attending a court that i did not know was a court. He fined me \$20. i pulled out the money and was on the point of saying that would do for whiskey money, but stopped before saying it; the judge said pass it to the Clerk; i did so and saw there was something real a bout this Court and so walked out. In after years i have heard the judge tell the circumstance of fining me and said he did not intend to fine me, [but] as i could not find an excuse for non appearence, he could find no excuse for not fining me. There was a number of others treated as i was, and in one case, John D. Winters, when he appeared (as i was told) was drinking and with a Revolver in hand, ordered the Judge to vacate his seat which the Judge did. Winters then ordered him from one seat to an other, all of which the Judge Obeyed. Winters got tired and finally left the court room, and after Winters got sober, friends advised Winters, and a subphoeny was served on him, and the consequence Mr. Winters was fined 600 dollers which he paid. After this occurrence there was no more trouble; it was not the lawlessness of the people, but having been humbugged, thought

it the same medicine; and as a rule the people—the early settlers of what afterwards become Nev[ada]—was a law abiding people, after the three thimble and three card monte games of (Luckey Bill) Wm. Thornton—his favorite games. But there is or was one redeeming quality in Luckey Bills favor, he was good to the poor and needy; he would always help a poor Emigrant and steal from all that would bite at his games; i say steal, for i think it nothing but stealing to play the thimble game; but the victim thinks he is only robbing the player, and so i dont know which is the worst, the man who plays the game or the man who thinks he is robbing the man who manipulates the thimbles and wax balls. For fear all do not understand i will explain: the operator has three thimbles and one small wax ball; he places them, to guess under which thimble the ball is, and he gave them a fair sight to see under which he left it, and the unwary thinks he has a sure thing and bets his money, being shure he knows. But alas when he raises the thimble it is not there; but when the manipulator raises an other thimble and releases the wax ball from his fingernail, lo and behold the victim has guessed the wrong thimble. But for all Thornton would always have a sure thing; he was always ready to help the needy; and when he would win all that a poor fellow had, he would give him some of his winnings back if he was an emigrant to help him a long as he would call it, but after the emigration got slack he had to raise money and so it was when he planned to kill Harry Gardier, and of the jury that found him guilty there is only two living that i know of, one is Jos Frey who lives on an adjoining ranch with Govner Sparks, a well to do Farmer and rancher—a straight forward man who has raised a large family of Respected children. The other is my Self and we boath served at the request of the prisoner, and i believe it was through Frey and myself that the lives of four others was saved and only by consenting to a heavy fine.³ At this time, 1857, there was a bout 150 inhabitants in what is now Nevada, a bout 100 Mormons, the early settlers of the valley, [having been] called to Salt Lake. . .

NOTES

¹cf., Dan De Quille, *The Big Bonanza*, American Publishing Co., 1876, pp. 47-60; 82-88.

Myron Angel, editor, *History of Nevada*, Thompson and West, 1881, pp. 49-61. The careful reader is urged to compare the details of Penrod's statements in Angel's *History* with the details of the *Memoirs*.

²cf., De Quille, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-80.

³cf., Angel, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

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