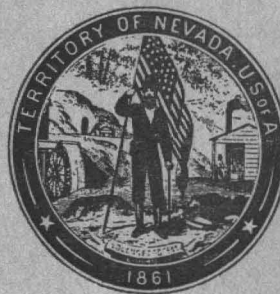


NEVADA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY QUARTERLY

●

LETTER—
ORION CLEMENS TO
WILLIAM HEMPHILL JONES,
ACTING COMPTROLLER OF
TREASURY, WASHINGTON, D. C.
APRIL 29, 1863



Spring Issue
January-April 1963

Volume VI
Number 1

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MILES N. PIKE
Chairman

CHET CHRISTENSEN
1st Vice Chairman

A. E. MACKENZIE
2nd Vice Chairman

Mrs. CLARA S. BEATTY
Secretary

Mrs. FLORENCE BOVETT
DAVID MYRICK

THOMAS A. COOKE

BISHOP ROBERT J. DWYER

VAIL M. PITTMAN

VINCENT P. GIANELLA

EXECUTIVE STAFF AT THE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Mrs. CLARA S. BEATTY
Director

Mrs. ANDY WELLIVER
Assistant to the Director

Founded in 1904 for the purpose of investigating topics pertaining to the early history of Nevada and of collecting relics for a museum, the **NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** has dedicated itself to the continuing purpose of preserving the rich heritage of the peoples—past and present—who have inhabited the land of Nevada.

The Society believes that it can best serve the state by arousing in the people a 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.

The Society maintains a library and museum where historical materials of many kinds are on display to the public and are available to students and scholars.

The Society publishes the **NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 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.

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Volume 6

Spring Issue
January-April 1963

Number 1

CONTENTS

LETTER

ORION CLEMENS TO
WILLIAM HEMPHILL JONES,
ACTING COMPTROLLER, TREASURY,
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 29, 1863

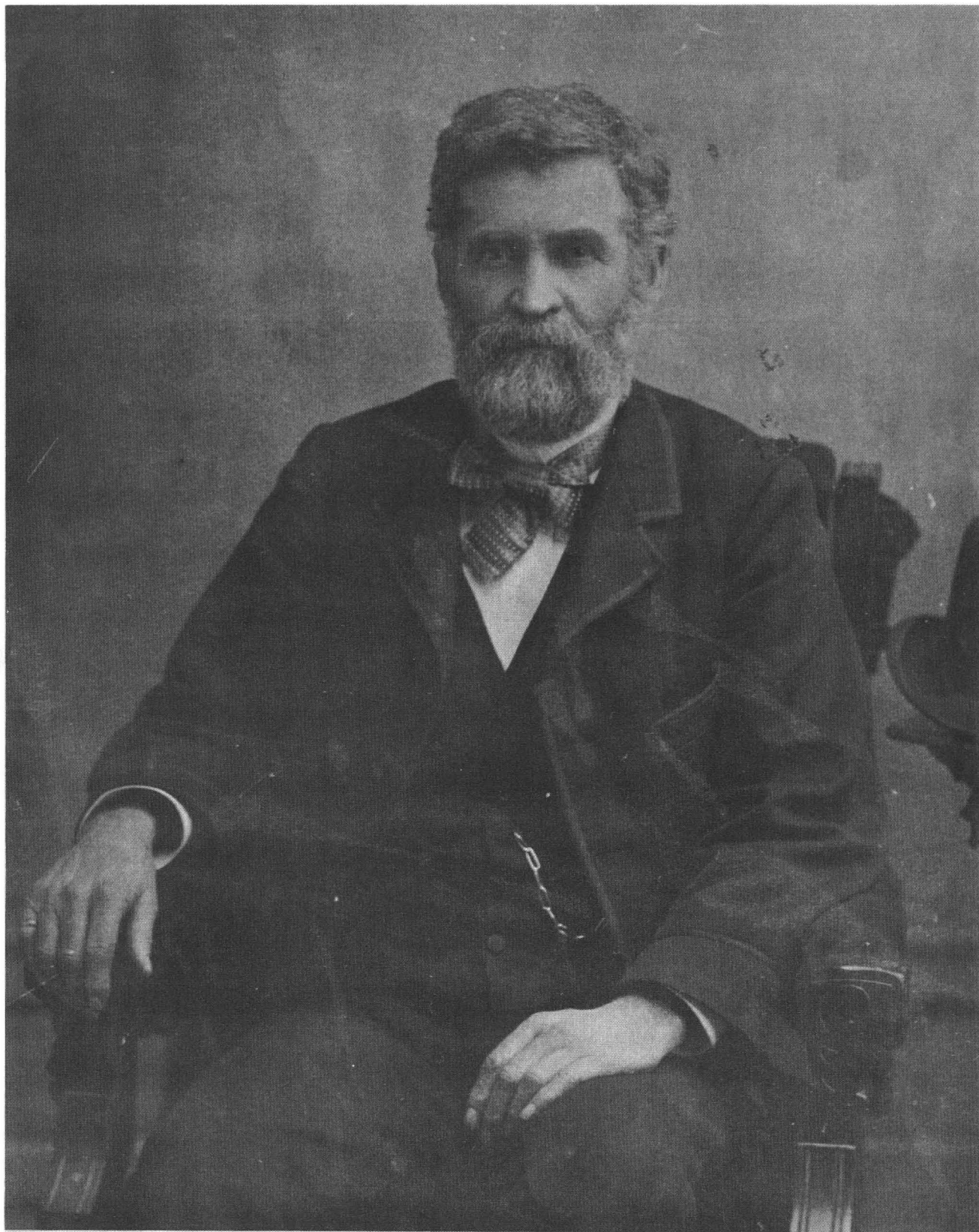
EDITOR (For This Issue): Mrs. Andy Welliver

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD: Mrs. Clara S. Beatty, Mrs. John Patterson,
Dr. Milan J. Webster, Mr. David F. Myrick, Dr. James W. Hulse, Dr. Vincent
P. Gianella.

Membership subscriptions are \$5.00 per year. New subscriptions will begin with the issue following the date of order. Back issues are unavailable.

The NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S QUARTERLY is published by the Nevada Historical Society, P. O. Box 1129, Reno, Nevada. Orders for memberships, change of address notices, and undeliverable copies should be addressed to the Society.

Second class mailing privileges authorized at Reno, Nevada.



ORION CLEMENS
Secretary of Nevada Territory, 1861-1864

(Permission necessary for reproduction)

Dr. Effie Mona Mack collection.

Secretary's Office, Nevada Territory,
Carson City, April 29, 1863.

Hon. W^m Hemphill Jones,
Acting Comptroller of the Treasury,
Washington, D. C.

Sir: -

I have received
Vouchers Nos. 40, 60, 61 and 62, for printing,
with the findings of your office thereon, and
also your letter fixing the prices to be paid
for printing, all of which I forwarded to
J. T. Goodman & Co., informing them that I
was ready to pay the balance on the above
vouchers whenever they wanted the money.

I will now answer your
statement of adjustment of my accounts,
enclosed in your letter of March 19th.
~~There are~~ items in that account which you
have disallowed under a misapprehension. For
instance, the items amounting in the aggregate to \$452
for canopies for presiding officers' stands, are
disallowed partly on the ground that the same

Halls might never be used again, and
The conclusion is drawn that the same
canopies might never be used again. But
the canopies are movable and so arranged
that they can be taken down without
injury and put up anywhere. With care
these canopies will last four sessions.
There are other matters on which I trust
I shall be able to show you that you
have formed erroneous impressions, as you
might be expected to do at such an immense
distance, and having a Territory of the
anomalous character of this to deal with.

I will now explain, as I hope
satisfactorily to you, the matters on which
you ask explanation.

Bou. Cro. 15. I cannot answer certainly,
as the person who did the work had left
the Territory. I suppose about \$5⁰⁰ was
for sewing shades, and about \$3⁰⁰ for sewing
curtains.

Bou. Cro. 17. I never had any furniture
before for my office. The tables, chairs,
desks and spittoons in my office were brought

into it after the first session of the Legislature adjourned, and had to be given up when the second session met. I charged the bedstead and mattress because I have thought it necessary to sleep in or adjoining my office, on account of danger of fire, the houses being mostly light pine frames, and frequently furious winds prevail.

I have now charged to myself as objected to in this adjustment, the following articles, and credited the United States with the amount:

1 Bedstead,	\$45;	1 mattress,	\$28;	=	\$73.00
1 Table,	15;	10 chairs,	85	=	100.00
1 washstand	25;	1 mirror,	26.50	=	51.50
Silk damask window curtains for my office,					196.75
Sewing " " " " " "				✓	3.00
Cornices for " " " " " "				✓	<u>15.00</u>
					<u>\$339.25</u>

It was not my design to furnish my office or the Legislative Halls in an extravagant or unusual manner; but I never held an office before, except that I once had the honor

to be clerk of an election, was never in Washington, never saw a Legislature in session, and never saw any office at the Capital of any State or Territory. My instructions did not and could not cover every thing. I fancied, perhaps causelessly, that my extreme economy, as manifested in my first reports, was not favorably considered at Washington.

Bow. No. 27. I bought a good deal of enrolling paper. Some of it was used. The rest was taken or disappeared from the Committee rooms.

Bow. No. 50. The 16 pocket knives were disposed of as follows: I and my clerk had one each. There were six extra clerks employed by the Legislature, and I gave knives to five of them. The Legislature employed two pages. I gave one to each. Some of the members lost their knives and I replaced them; and several members who were not present when the session opened came afterwards, and I gave them knives.

Bow. No. 51. The findings of the Comptroller are herewith returned.

Bow. No. 52. I furnished only 18

chairs for the first session of the Legislature. These were common wooden horse shoe chairs. By the time the Legislature met again these had dwindled to about half a dozen. In this dry climate furniture easily separates and breaks down, unless of excellent quality. The members of the House of Representatives of the first session sat on borrowed pine benches until two ladies of this place bought and presented them with chairs which they instructed them to take home with them. Long desks were obtained for the first session, too much crowded for comfort, and before that session closed I had to order two tables made to relieve the members of the Council. The members of the first session complained of my strained economy. They said ~~they~~ were put up to long desks like so many school boys. More furniture was needed for the late session in the Committee Rooms and the long desks could be and were used in them and in my office, except one or two

dilapidated ones. There never were but four desks in the House and three in the Council for the members. The railing used at the first session was light and cheap and fell to pieces before the next session met. I bought no carpets for the first session — not even for the presiding officers' stands; but covered the floor with saw dust. The gavel and some other things were found to have been lost, stolen or destroyed, at the close of the first session. The clerks and presiding officers used the same desks during both sessions — I mean no new ones were made for them. By law enacted at the first session, the number of members in the last session was fifteen more than in the first. There must be new desks made for the additional members under any circumstances. The question was whether I should make more long desks and fit up the old ones, or make a new lot, and make them single after the pattern of those used in the California Legislature. When I set about renting Legislative Halls I was

asked one thousand five hundred dollars rent for forty days. Not a cent less would the owner take, and there were no other Halls suitable. I said, I am authorized to pay rent, but I can't pay this rent and put in decent furniture. If the citizens will pay this \$1500 rent for this session I will put in new furniture for the Legislative Halls; fit them up nicely, and give each member a respectable desk. The owner of the building, Abraham Curry, a member of the Legislature, told me, after seeing a number of citizens of Carson City, - he could make that arrangement, and that I could safely go on and procure new furniture. He subsequently sold the building to Ormsby County, but contracted with the County Commissioners to carry out the agreement with me. The building was not "tendered" in the sense you seem to suppose. As you will see from this statement of the case, that the citizens indirectly furnished

the Legislative Halls, I trust you will reconsider your disallowance of the Canopies for presiding officers' stands, or other other portion of Legislative furniture, which compels me to pay for furniture so furnished. If I had paid the rent and made the necessary additions to the old furniture, I suppose the cost would have been about the same, perhaps more than the present cost, while the appearance of the Halls would have been extremely unsatisfactory to the class of people we have here, as, throughout the Territory, a dollar is spent with as much indifference as people in the States - or "America", as they call it here - spend five cents. I will make proof of the truth of the history I have given of this matter, if desired by the Department.

In my first instructions I was directed to furnish my office with a desk with pigeon holes, for the systematic filing away of papers. I got none for my office till I had this desk made for \$175, which is called a desk and book case in the voucher -

that is, it has places for record and account books as well as pigeon holes. The rotary chair was \$25. The desk and chair are cheap enough for this Territory. Mr. Boyd, while making my desk, made a duplicate of it, and sold it and a duplicate of the chair to my neighbor, J. Keely Johnson, ex-Governor of California, for his law office, for \$200 in gold - after I had taken choice of the desks. It is a well made desk, and I am informed could not have been bought in San Francisco for less money in coin. Boyd paid five and a half cents per pound freight for bringing the material over the mountains. All wood used here except pine is sold in this Territory by the pound.

Vou. No. 54. I enclose evidence of Administrators.

Vou. No. 54. John S. Fox, Capt, says there were 41 copies of the Sacramento Union, and it was continued 45 days,

and the Virginia Union 43 days, instead of 40 days. The Sergeant at arms of each House had a Sacramento Union. He continued these papers over the time at the request of members, to enable them to obtain full published reports of their proceedings. Thinking he would not be allowed for over 39 papers, or over 40 days, he so put down the numbers, but carried out the figures in such an amount as would enable him to get pay for all the papers delivered, which he still insists is his right. I did not know this state of facts till I made inquiry after receiving your adjustment, but told him I would ascertain what you would say to his explanation. Shall I in future allow the officers to have papers, and the members to receive them till they get reports of their proceedings in full? There being no paper published at the Capital, causes delay in obtaining full newspaper reports.

Nov. 10, 63. Three of the members of the Legislature lived at Humboldt and used the express because there was then

no regular mail running. Others used the express because it goes about three times as often as the mail; leaves at regular hours; and the letters are immediately delivered on arrival at their destination, to the person to whom they may be directed. Besides, if you are not at the Post Office an hour or more before the mail starts your letter is liable to lay over a day; while if you reach the express office any time before the express leaves, or even while it is just leaving, your letter goes. I tried to prevent so much use of express envelopes; but the habit of using the express is too deeply fixed. I wrote to a gentleman in Virginia, and though there is a daily mail to that town, he did not receive the letter till I notified him by express that it was in the post office, and then he directed me never to write to him by mail, for he never went to the post office. I receive daily from

one to half a dozen business letters and letter packages from various parts of the Territory, and frequently from California, but rarely otherwise than by express. The result of this custom is that if a man is writing upon any business matter, he generally uses the express. All the express envelopes of course have the Government postage stamps on them.

Bou. No. 64. This letter to San Francisco, for which one dollar was charged, was not an ordinary 3 Cent letter; but a heavy letter package. Sometimes when great haste is required the pony stamps are used. There was a voucher allowed for express charges in my first returns.

Bou. No. 6. My office has two rooms and a bed room. The two office rooms are, the front room, 12×17 feet; the back room 11×17 feet, requiring five breadths each of 17 feet in length, of Brussels carpet, 27 inches wide. The bed room is $12 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, requiring $3\frac{1}{2}$ breadths of the same, 12 feet in length. The amount required for the two front rooms, after allowing

for waste in matching, was 63 yards of carpeting at \$1.90 per yard, making \$119.90; leaving 12 yards for the bed room at \$1.90, amounting to \$22.80. There was a fourth room larger than the bed room, but that was nearly filled by the Stone Vault.

you. no. 13. For the first three or four months, I paid my office rent out of my salary, although I had been instructed that the Government would pay it. This I found left me too little to live on. Then I rented an office at fifty dollars a month, a little frame situated on the north side of the Plaza. It had one room with a little bed room back. The wind had blown in a large quantity of dust which had settled on the cloth ceiling, and was always sifting down, so that a sheet of paper left a little while on a desk would soon be covered with dust. The snow sometimes blew in and settled on the ceiling, and melted and dripped. I was advised to pay a hundred dollars a month and get a decent office. Instead of that I

moved. I found similar annoyances in my new office, with the addition of a Smoking Stone, so that sometimes after making a fire in the morning I could not for awhile see from one end of the office to the other. For each of these offices I paid fifty dollars a month. Finding an opportunity to rent the respectable office I now occupy, by paying more, I embraced the opportunity. There is more room; it is in a better part of town; is plastered overhead; and does not face the South west winds.

Bou. No. 27. I had these shears purchased in San Francisco for the Legislature, but, on arrival, proving to be larger and finer than I intended, I took them for my office and sent mine to one of the Clerks of the Legislature. They are 16 inches in length. you say \$8.50 a dozen is an extravagant price for ivory paper folders. I do not know what they ought to be. People here generally pay in coin from three to five times the currency prices in the States.

Bou. No. 50. The gold envelop paper

was yellow wrapping paper suitable for the covers of enrolled bills. The same observations made on the dozen ivory paper folders apply to the extra ivory folder and pen racks. Hand clips were in my bill of Stationery furnished the first session, and not being otherwise instructed, I supposed it was my duty to furnish them, but in future, will omit them.

— Bon. No. 53. I have two stones in my office because I have two rooms, both in every day constant necessary use and occupation connected directly with my duties as Secretary of the Territory, under the Organic Act and Territorial Laws.

— Bon. No. 55. I bought these six chairs because those purchased of Boyd were so long delayed in coming from San Francisco.

— Bon. No. 56. These were blank books purchased for the use of the clerks of the Legislature and the various committees, for minutes and memoranda. Besides the four clerks paid by the Government the Legisla-

There employed six extra clerks.

I will now reply to the remarks in your letter. You say in comparing this account with mine previously rendered, there is great discrepancy in the prices of many items of a similar nature, on which no explanation is given. My account embraced stationery, furniture, merchandise and printing.

1. As to Stationery. I am informed by Mr. Gallaher, of the firm of Small & Gallaher, that his firm would have been better off if they had never sold me that bill of goods; that from the time I bought in San Francisco in the Fall of 1861 till I bought in Carson City of his firm in the Fall of 1862, stationery went up all over the country one hundred and fifty per cent; and further says that at the time I bought the Legislative supplies of stationery from his firm, last Fall, I could not have bought in San Francisco for gold the same articles and paid freight on them and had them delivered here at

the same cost that he sold them to me for legal tender notes.

2. ~~cost~~ to furniture. The quality was better. Mr. Boyd charged for his work the same as at the first session, six dollars a day, though in preparing for the second session he himself paid seven dollars a day for work done in making the railing; and on other work paid in one case fourteen dollars for one man's work a day and a half. He says every item in his bill is charged at fair rates.

3. ~~cost~~ to merchandise. I am informed by Mr. Klauber, of the firm of Mandelbaum & Klauber, that from the time I bought my first bill in the Fall of 1861, till I bought my second bill in the Fall of 1862, the prices of goods had risen, on some goods 25 per cent., on some 50 per cent., and some 100 per cent. He says his firm sold to me at cheaper rates than I could have purchased elsewhere, cheaper "in proportion," or considering locality and cir-

circumstances, than New York prices; and that I could not now get for gold at the same prices, some large items which I purchased of him for legal tender notes - the silk damask for instance.

4. As to printing. Paper is higher. Besides, the expenses of the first session were paid in coin - of the last mostly in legal tender notes. These latter are here merchandise (we have no bank notes in circulation) and gold and silver coin is the currency, while in the States the reverse is the case - Treasury and bank notes being the currency, and gold and silver coin merchandise. Any man in this Territory having a legal tender note must sell it for its market price in coin, or submit to an equivalent advance in price, before he can buy his breakfast, dinner or supper, or a night's lodging, or any article of food or clothing or merchandise, or pay for freight or printing material or hire of hands. It is impracticable here, as I suppose it would be in Washington or elsewhere, after ascertaining the lowest prices payable in gold and

Silver Coin, to make purchases or employ labor at the same prices in legal tender notes, making payment therefor contemporaneously with the delivery of the goods or performance of the services. The difference between Atlantic and Pacific Coast currency is daily telegraphed from New York to San Francisco, and thence to Nevada Territory, and contracts to be immediately performed may be based on either currency, though if not in particular cases otherwise specified, the presumption by common understanding is, that all contracts are made on the Pacific Coast currency basis. The printers may have intended to obtain the same profit as the printers of the first session, after reducing their receipts to Pacific Coast currency — i. e., gold and Silver Coin. As it is they express the opinion that they will do "pretty well" if they realize expenses from what the Department allows them. To show more clearly the difficulty the printer has to contend

with in this respect, I enclose some advertisements-clipped from a daily (loyal) paper published in the town of Virginia in this Territory. I do not see that there is any practicable remedy, but it will serve to throw further light on the probable cause of the high prices asked by the printers. They have sent me bills for the remainder of the incidental work done for the last session, to amount of about fifteen hundred dollars, on which they ask for some money. On this account I will be pleased to have you forward to the Assistant Treasurer at San Francisco, directions to have placed to my credit the remaining five thousand dollars of this year's appropriation. I say San Francisco because it costs a heavy per cent. to get a New York draft changed into legal tender notes—27.
Louis still worse. You compare this Territory with others, and say prices are higher, and instance \$8 a day paid my clerk, and \$900 a year paid for rent. I do not suppose there is any other Territory of the U. S. comparable with

This. The Legislature at its last session voted out of the Territorial Treasury ten dollars a day to each of the Clerks of the two Houses, making their whole per diem thirteen dollars per day. Utah frequently sends us flour and eggs from Salt Lake, over 500 miles, and undersells our market. From what I heard of rents at Salt Lake on my way out I suppose them about one-third as high as ours. When I first arrived here people were surprised and incredulous when I talked of making the appropriation answer the purposes it was intended for in this Territory - they said it ought to be three times as much. I have managed to work along with it, by getting my safe, copying and seal presses, the first session; and getting my furniture and that for the Legislative Halls the next session; by saving on rent and printing the first session, getting Legislative Halls free, and substituting copying for incidental printing, and having a small number of laws printed. At the

last session a member of the Council who was angry because more laws of the first session were not printed, gave me notice that he was going to make all the expense he could, and would have five papers, and started and carried through the idea of subscribing for a large number of papers; but I got from the citizens indirect aid in obtaining furniture, as herein before set forth; and got the clerks to insist on the Legislature providing for paying for enrolling and engrossing, which cost the Government at the first session one thousand and fifty dollars. Now all I have that should be of a permanent character is good and neat, and will not have to be renewed. The appropriation for the year commencing July 1, 1863, will answer all its purposes, and pay what the appropriation for this fiscal year falls short, if it falls short any.

Very Respectfully,
Orion Clements,
Secretary of Nevada Territory.

