

**NEVADA**  
**Historical**  
**Society**  
**Quarterly**



**Summer - 1976**

**DIRECTOR**  
**JOHN M. TOWNLEY**



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The Nevada Historical Society was founded in 1904 for the purpose of investigating topics pertaining to the early history of Nevada and of collecting relics for a museum. The Society maintains a library and museum at its Reno facility where historical materials of many kinds are on display to the public and are available to students and scholars.

Membership dues are: annual, \$7.50; student, \$3; sustaining, \$25; life, \$100; and patron, \$250. Membership applications and dues should be sent to the director.

Correspondence concerning articles in the *Quarterly* and manuscripts to be considered for publication should be addressed to the editor. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

# NEVADA Historical Society Quarterly

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EDITOR

JOHN M. TOWNLEY

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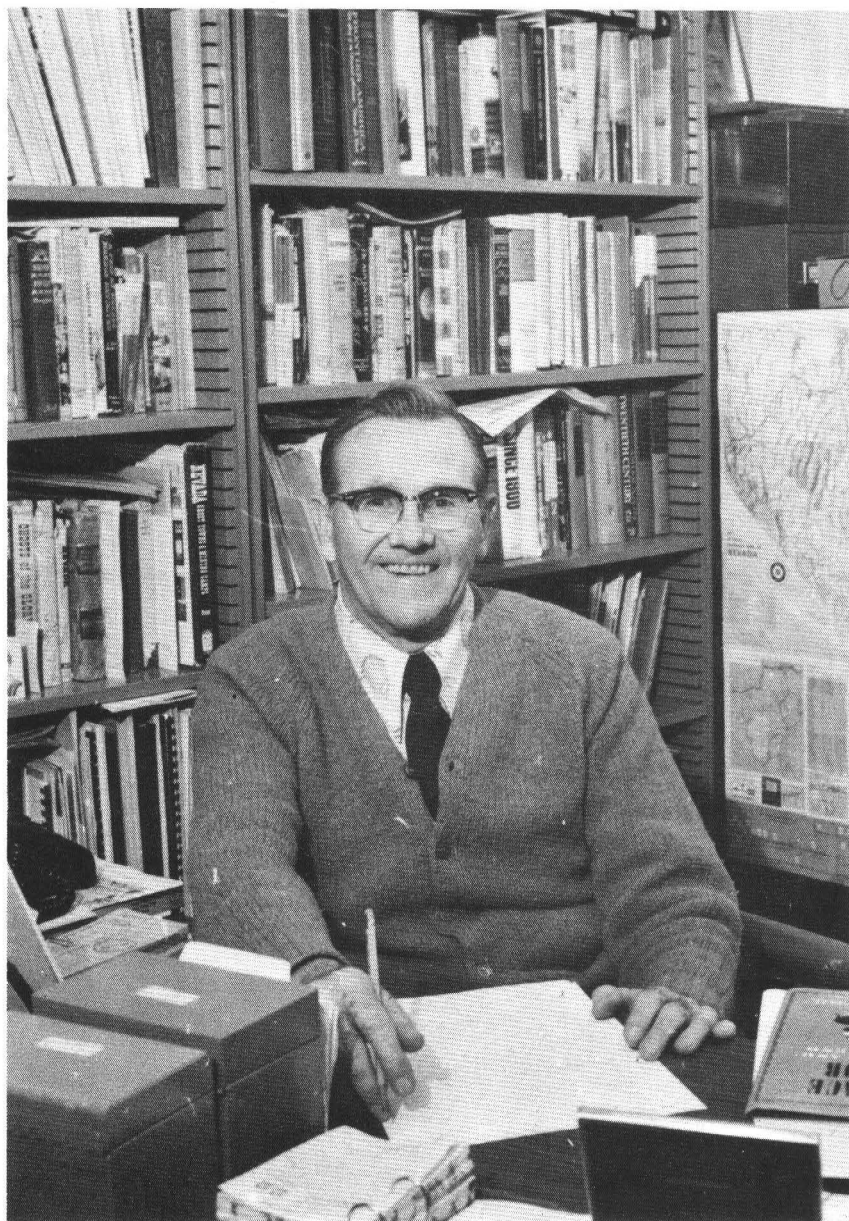
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## THE COVER

'08 Auto Race  
Goldfield, Nevada

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*Russell Elliott*



## ***Elliott and Wright Retire***

RUSSELL R. ELLIOTT

Russell R. Elliott is retiring from the University of Nevada after twenty-seven years on its faculty. A native son of Nevada, Professor Elliott was born in McGill, and attended public schools in White Pine County. He received his B.A. from the University of Nevada, his M.A. from the University of Washington, and, after serving in the Army Air Force during World War II, his Ph.D. from the University of California in Berkeley in 1946. He began his teaching career at Southern Oregon College of Education in Ashland, and came to the University of Nevada in 1949, attaining the rank of Professor in 1959.

Professor Elliott has written and coauthored many books and articles, most notably, **Writings on Nevada**; a **Selected Bibliography** (1963) with Helen Poulton; **Nevada's Twentieth Century Mining Boom** (1966); and **History of Nevada** (1973) which won an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History. He is presently working on a biography of United States Senator William M. Stewart.

But Professor Elliott's contribution to the University and community goes well beyond his writings. He has served as a member of the Nevada Historical Society Board of Trustees for many years and is now its chairman. He has been a member of the Virginia City Restoration Commission, and was for eight years chairman of the University of Nevada Department of History.

His knowledge of and love for Nevada and its heritage have been generously imparted to colleagues and students alike. Russ is well known for his devotion to teaching and to student advising. He has over the years carried one of the heaviest teaching loads in the Department, and has built the "History of Nevada" course to the point that it now averages 150 to 200 students each semester. As the Department pre-legal adviser he has shared a heavy burden of the student advisement load. Within the University, Russ is especially respected for his integrity, his deep interest in the History Department, and his unfailing helpfulness to his colleagues and students. And if all this seems a bit solemn, he has a lively and quick sense of humor. Fortunately, Russ will continue to remain active in his professional and scholarly work.

—Dr. Jerome Edwards



John Wright

## JOHN S. WRIGHT

**Dr. John S. Wright, a member** of the Nevada Historical Society's Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Board in 1974-1975, was recently honored on the occasion of his retirement from the faculty of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. On May 15, students, friends, and admirers of Dr. Wright sponsored a reception and banquet in recognition of his manifold contributions to the state, his community, and to the University which he helped to develop since its inception.

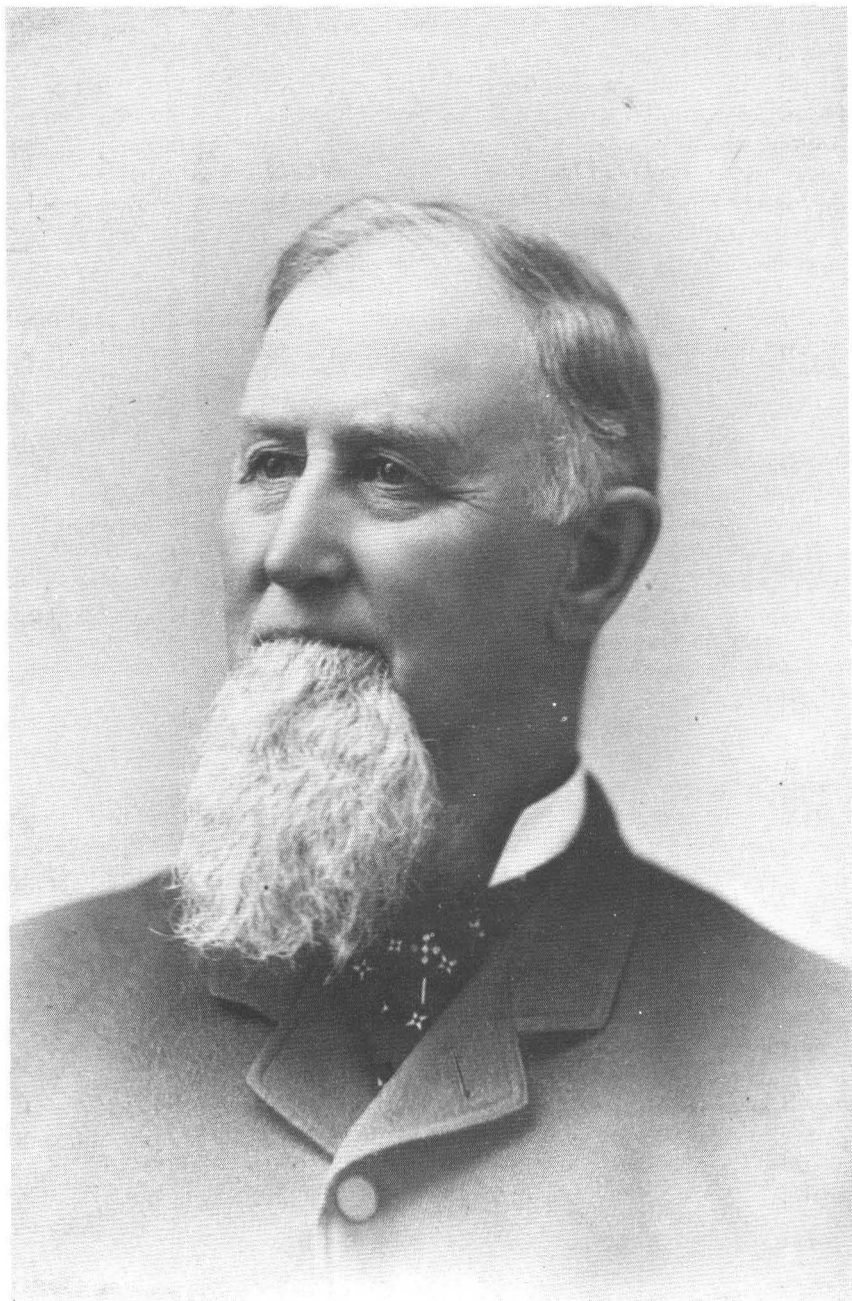
After serving in World War II and being awarded the Bronze Star, Dr. Wright completed his doctorate in history at the University of Chicago in 1946. He taught for ten years at Illinois College, moved to Las Vegas in 1956, and became the first Professor of History and Chairman of the Social Science Division during the vital developmental years of UNLV. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, Dr. Wright served on several of the key committees which worked on plans for the emergence of UNLV as an increasingly autonomous institution. His patient and skilled negotiating stances often served to lessen the tensions between the growing southern institution and its allied University in Reno.

In addition, Dr. Wright remained active as a research scholar, and the University of Nevada Press published his monograph, **Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery** in 1970.

As one of his colleagues has remarked, "In describing John Wright, the great problem is that it is difficult to avoid sounding like an insincere panegyricist when one is merely noting a few of his obvious qualities." As a teacher, he has been noted for his thorough preparation and deep knowledge of American History, for his patience and fairness, and for his firm belief that students should not be treated as numbers, but rather as individuals. Dr. Wright's administrative approach is widely—even fondly—remembered, for he pursued his tasks with a sense of humanity, and not with a proclivity for bureaucratic manipulation and insensitivity. A quiet and self-effacing man, he provided leadership and inspiration for his colleagues purely by the moral force of his example as a Christian gentleman.

One cannot easily summarize the character or the influence of John Wright. Those who have known him and who have been privileged to have been his colleagues will agree that there is an intangible, ineffable quality to the man—a compound of gentleness, tolerance, patience, and good-will. The final tribute, then, must be to John Wright the man—a fine teacher, a devoted scholar, and a gentleman of dignity and great worth.

—Gary K. Roberts



*C.C. Stevenson, Centennial Commissioner for Nevada, 1876*

# ***The Centennial in Nevada***

*By John S. Wright*

In 1876, when the nation observed the hundredth birthday of the republic, Nevada had attained but twelve years as a state and a mere twenty odd years as a settled area. Indeed, much of the state was still very sparsely populated even in Nevada terms. It was a society with very little common history both in terms of years and in terms of a common past experience. In a sense, the Nevada of 1876 was without a clearly marked out future for already some of the early mining areas were on their way to becoming ghost towns. The boom and bust cycle of mining was well established. One might expect little in the way of celebration of the Centennial in a historyless desert.

Furthermore there is a parallel between the United States of 1976 and the Nevada of 1876. There are reservations about the public response to official initiatives which call for elaborate Bicentennial activities, because of the doubt and gloom pervading the contemporary scene—the uncertainties produced by Watergate and the recession. Three major calamities had shaken the Nevada of 1876. The failure of the Bank of California in 1875 had cast a pall of gloom over the state. Nevada's largest city, Virginia City, had suffered a devastating fire which had required an enormous voluntary effort to sustain life for the homeless and the jobless. Finally, and perhaps more in anticipation than in reality in 1876, the threat to mining interests posed by the demonetization of silver (the Crime of '73) was beginning to be appreciated.

Contrary to the indications, however, Nevada did celebrate and celebrated with gusto. The state followed the lead of sister states in appropriating \$20,000 to finance participation in the Philadelphia Exposition, the national demonstration of the progress of the past century. Nevada provided a mineral display and the appropriation contemplated setting up a quartz mill to operate one day a week. Preparations for this display were not without problems and hints of political infighting. Indeed, the Justices of the Supreme Court were called in to render an informal decision that the executive committee of the Centennial Commissioners could not expend appropriated funds, with the effect that the whole Commission was required to authorize expenditures. There was a hint that political ambition on the part of C.C.Stevenson, one of the commissioners, was causing strife in the commission. Whether his exposure to the public as Centennial

Commissioner had anything to do with it or not, Stevenson became Governor of Nevada eleven years later. In any case, the exhibit was set up and judged, *ex parte*, by Stevenson to have been "much the best" mineral exhibit. The educational aspect of the Centennial was not entirely forgotten: State Superintendent of Schools Kelly proposed that essays on local topics by Nevada students be passed upon by the Committee of Education of the Centennial. If the proposal bore any fruit, the essays received little or no publicity.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from those officially involved, there seem to have been few Nevadans sufficiently wealthy and interested to have visited the Philadelphia exhibition. An exception was a publisher of the **Carson Daily Appeal**. However, his report to the **Appeal** was written from Washington and impressions of the Centennial Exposition were obviously less important to him than drinking at the Washington fountainhead of politics.<sup>2</sup> A Mr. Kellogg of Table Mountain started for Philadelphia on horseback accompanied by a wagon and expected to make it in forty days.<sup>3</sup> Some Mahomets came to the Nevada mountains, however. Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil and the most publicized foreign dignitary at the opening stages of the Exposition, traveled to San Francisco before the opening. Alf Doten, the publisher of the **Gold Hill News**, sent his editor to board a train at Winnemucca to interview the emperor.<sup>4</sup> Of great interest to Nevadans along the line of the Central Pacific was the Jarrett and Palmer train, which made a run from New York City to San Francisco in eighty-two hours, fifteen minutes in honor of the Centennial, and in keeping with its emphasis on transportation progress.<sup>5</sup>

Then as now the Centennial was not just an exaggerated Independence Day: the whole year was to be something special. Nevada welcomed the hundredth year with *eclat*. At Carlin, the New Year's dance was augmented by opening wide the locomotive whistles. A masked ball at Winnemucca had overtones of the Centennial with a Goddess of Liberty and a Brother Jonathan (Uncle Sam before he grew up). A contemporary note was introduced with a Boss Tweed, perhaps one of the reasons evangelists Moody and Sankey held an all-night prayer meeting in Minneapolis. The future was not omitted: a champion of Women's Rights, presumably distinguished by bloomers, was among the characters represented.<sup>6</sup> A few "Chinese bombs" were exploded in "upper town." Virginia City, appropriately, outdid the lesser Nevada towns in hailing the Centennial year. Its activities were described by a participant as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Evening at 10 went up to Miners Union Hall, to a great citizens centennial New Years meeting—Col. J.H.Mills presided—brass band—singing, speechmaking, cheering and great enthusiasm—Maj E.A.Sherman addressed the meeting, among others—At midnight the bells and whistles were turned loose, making a fearful din—Bonfires in the street and on Ft. Homestead—Sarsfield Guard



fired a couple of volleys of musketry from in front of their armory, and the new year 1876 was ushered in very noisily and patriotically—The meeting adjourned at about 12½ o'clock.

Flags were flown at Virginia City from May 1 to 10 in honor of the opening of the Centennial Exposition.<sup>8</sup>

The basic pattern of Centennial Day celebrations had been established in times long past by the Fourth of July practices. The heart of the event was the parade, whether the anniversary were being celebrated in New York City or in Paradise Valley, Nevada. It is not clear at what point in population towns could afford processions. White Rock (Bull Run Valley) and Paradise Valley (whose participants were referred to as "Saints, Sinners, and Grangers") seem to have been large enough, while Belmont, Barcelona, Halleck's Station, Cornucopia, and Tuscarora made do without a parade. One editor excused his constituency's rather tame affair on the grounds that Belmonsters were "too busy among (their) bonanzas." Perhaps Halleck Station residents felt marching too ordinary: they were mostly connected with the military at Fort Halleck which furnished a contingent for the Elko parade.<sup>9</sup>

Even without the regulars available at Elko, there was a military cast to the parades in the larger places. Mexican and Civil War veterans formed sizable groups only eleven years after the end of the latter war. As we shall see, one of the themes of the Centennial was reunion of a divided nation. What would be more natural than to have the blue and the gray mingled or "arm-in-arm" as a symbol that the curtain had been rung down on an unpleasant aspect of the past.<sup>10</sup> Demonstrating the readiness for future wars were the militia companies in several of the parades. The fire companies, too, were invariably in the line of march. The miners' union at Virginia City was unusual as was an emphasis on ethnicity: the Italians honored Columbus in their entry in the same parade. Bands were essential, but the Comstock improved on some others by having a marching choral society also. One amenity which illustrated the problem of matching San Francisco's activities in the scorching desert was the placing of a barrel of ice water on each block along the line of march in Virginia City. What was more appropriate than the Reno gesture honoring the only local past by incorporating a unit of pioneers in its procession? Or the decision of Austin to bring up its parade with a group of mounted Paiute and Shoshone Indians?<sup>11</sup> Would that decision have been made, or would the result have been different, had the news of the disaster to General Custer and his command reached Austin before instead of a couple of days after the Centennial Day?

The symbolism was traditional. The car of state was a large wagon or wheeled platform with a tableau of children in costume representing the states. A variation at Carson City saw thirteen ladies on horseback representing the original states while the others were represented by

children of nearby Empire. Most had a goddess of liberty. At Austin, ladies in red, white, and blue dresses marched in the parade. In general the parades went off without an editorially noted hitch except at Austin where a brief free-for-all erupted. An enterprising Comstock publisher mounted a hand press on a large wagon and struck off 3500 copies of a centennial edition and distributed them along the line of march, thus making and preserving history at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

No commemorative occasion was complete without an oration. Usually prepared and delivered by lawyer-politicians, they tended to be long and replete with ringing phrases and stilted tributes to the military and civil leaders of the Revolutionary Age. One was timed at fifty-three minutes and most were reported *verbatim* in the local papers. One wonders whether outdoor oratory, usually prefaced by a reading of the Declaration of Independence and sometimes by a home-constructed poem read by the poet, was not wasted on the desert air in the literal sense of not being audible over the sounds of hot winds and firecrackers.<sup>13</sup> Editors availed themselves of the occasion to express, often in similar language, similar ideas.

It will be remembered that the Centennial fell just a little over eleven years after Appomatox and the closing of our greatest war, with its bitter legacy of "empty chairs," of empty sleeves, and of "bloody shirt" politics. It was still a year away from the definitive end of Reconstruction. Clearly, a timely theme was the need for national unity and reconciliation. In a Nevada population derived from both North and South, reaching back beyond sectional strife to the great common cause of the Revolution had enormous appeal. The *Pioche Daily Record* perhaps stated it most boldly in editorializing that "whatever embers of sectional spite or jarring jealousy, whatever of bitter memory or smouldering wrong exists should turn to ashes before the glare of the Centennial Noontide."<sup>14</sup> The test of the success of this appeal and many others like it came soon after the Centennial observance when the Tilden-Hayes contest got underway. "Bloody shirt," the campaign tactic which identified Democrats with secession and treason, was not dead. It had not been dead. One of the publishers of the *Carson Appeal*, fresh from visiting the Exposition opening, could not resist referring to the House of Representatives, controlled by Democrats, as the "Confederate Congress."<sup>15</sup>

There was also an emphasis on unity in another sense—the unity of people of different national origins. This was evident in the gesture of someone in Pioche who raised the munificent sum of twelve dollars to assist the Mexican population in joining in the Centennial (a gesture rejected by the Mexicans, incidentally), and by the glorification of immigration and assimilation. But as B.C. Whitman, the orator at the state capital, very plainly stated, there was one exception—the Chinese, "not homogeneous, nor can they ever become so." Indeed, like people in 1776 and today, Nevadans of 1876 could believe firmly in two

contradictory absolutes: that all men are created equal and that Chinese were "a swarm of Asiatic serfs" to be driven "back to the seclusion they have so long coveted." There is more than a touch of irony in the laying down of the Centennial Fourth of July as the deadline for employers to discharge their Chinese workers or suffer boycott by the Anti-Asiatic Circle of Carson City. Nor did the 1776 protest against the English violation of colonial procedural legal rights prevent vigilance committees of Carson City and Eureka from warning unwanted citizens out of town.<sup>16</sup>

The principal theme of the Philadelphia Exposition is often judged to have been mechanical progress. This is a fairly accurate assessment of the overriding interest of the American people as they entered their second century of independence, particularly if Nevadans were representative of Americans generally, and if one can rely on the judgments of Nevada's editors and orators.

True, most broadened the definition of progress to express amazement at the growth of population and the territorial expansion of the United States. B.C. Whitman emphasized the growth of the railway system, agricultural production, and, oddly enough considering the inland setting, even the merchant marine. The editor of the **Belmont Courier** perhaps reflected a newsman's special concerns when he singled out "the common school, the steam engine (a steam press may have been a gauge of success in the Nevada newspaper field), and the telegraph" as the "great incentives to progress."

So awed were editors at the past century of technological progress that imaginations were permitted to take flight across the next century:<sup>18</sup>

What fancy can paint what the coming century will bring? Will palace (Pullman) cars be thrown aside, as stage coaches are now? Will the daily report come in this fashion: The passenger balloon Great Western was delayed fifteen minutes by head winds in crossing the Rocky Mountains today . . . Will the fields be tilled by machinery while the honest Granger sits under a tree . . . ? And, more than all, will men of the next centennial, as now, have perfect reverence for women who are pure and true, and will mothers who watch their babes, as the next centennial dawns, be the same grand women that alike a hundred years ago today, and today, sanctify this land?

In another flight of both fancy and pride, the writer speculated on the possibility of newspapers being published every hour, and hoped that "by the time the next Centennial dawns, the people of this Union will have become so cultured that half of the large cities of the Union will be blessed by such journals as the **Territorial Enterprise** is."<sup>19</sup>

"Behold," proclaimed the **Reese River Reveille**, our free institutions have "existed a century," sufficient time to prove "that man is capable of self-government." The sound of the Liberty Bell was "powerful enough to strike terror into the heart of despotism and give hope and courage to the

oppressed of earth," thought W.W.Bishop of Pioche, assemblyman, president of the hook and ladder company, and attorney for the Pioche and Bullionville R.R. Thus in the nooks and corners of the land reverberated the grand theme of America as the example for the world.

Indeed, we would provide a better example as progress toward the goals implied in the Declaration of Independence would accelerate. "Patriotism will supplant partisanism," predicted the editor of the Winnemucca *Silver State* and, it is comforting to know now in 1976, "corruption in high places . . . will (have) passed away."<sup>20</sup>

Centennials and history have a mutual affinity. Nevada experience confirmed that compatibility. Orators and editors not only dispensed considerable quantities of history about the American Revolution but there was a tendency to recall the shorter Nevada past. The Pioche orator outlined a complete history of Pioche and Meadow Valley. At Paradise Valley, a history of the settlement formed a separate part of the program. Pioneers were recognized in a number of the parades.<sup>21</sup>

Noise and illumination were elements in the Independence Day tradition which were escalated for this special occasion. The day was welcomed as the clocks struck midnight or at dawn with a salute of artillery or the firing of rifles. At practical Reno, barbecue pits were fired at midnight. The Virginia and Truckee Railroad shops at Carson City produced a 3000 pound cannon especially for this historic occasion. The villages, in addition to fireworks, resorted to the time honored "anvil chorus." Fireworks were augmented by bonfires on the surrounding peaks at Virginia City. The train of eight camels, barred from the Carson parade, rendered less conspicuous service by hauling the wood for the Mt. Davidson bonfire. Flags, bunting, lanterns, and streamers gave the larger places a festive appearance. One decorative activity reached back to the revolutionary generation: "liberty trees" were erected—one seventy-two feet high in Tuscarora.<sup>22</sup>

One of the unusual if not unique characteristics of the Nevada celebrations in the larger places was the comic counter-celebration. Organizations of fun-lovers, in Virginia City and Austin called the Horribles, in Carson City, the Fantastics, the Pelicans of Winnemucca, and the Knights of the Sagebrush of Elko, burlesqued the serious business of the occasion. The standard oration was parodied by one compounded of humorous nonsense. So much interest was expressed in this aspect of the occasion that at Winnemucca the *Silver State* merely commended the serious oration but published the Pelican oration in full. Non-partisan fun was poked at the politicians by proposing a Pelican ticket for the fall campaign with Democrat Boss Tweed for President and Republican Belknap for Vice-President.<sup>23</sup>

Feasting, dancing, and athletic events also had a place in the Centennial festivities. Simple picnics, church-served luncheons and dinners, barbecues, and elaborate dinners such as that of the Austin Sazerac Lying Club at the "Pest House," provided food for hungry

bodies while special church services took care of sustenance for souls. Climaxing the celebration were balls or grand balls, in many cases masked. Halleck Station provided the most athletic diversity—foot and horse racing, cock fighting, and pigeon shooting as well as the (as advertised) least pretentious dance, a "social hop."<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps no more sincere and intensely personal appreciation of liberty was expressed than at the commemorative services in the state prison at Carson City. The inmates requested the festival which was held in the beflagged dining room. Their own grand marshal presided over a program of their own devising. Perhaps the alternatives raised their tolerance of oratory to a very high level. In any case there were three: the traditional Centennial oration plus an essay on how independence was gained and another on progress. The verbal monotony was relieved by songs and selections by an orchestra.<sup>25</sup>

The festivities were not without their cost. There was an accident in firing the V. and T. cannon at Carson City which left one dead and three wounded. In a separate accident a preacher's son received burns which proved not to be serious. At Austin a lad "trying" some powder he had found lost eyebrows and lashes. It is possible to explain the relative lack of accidents in Nevada by the fact that miners knew and respected explosives; but in Pioche giant powder (used in the mines) exploded at a main intersection, and left nearby mercantile establishments with a mass of broken crockery and windows. Other evidence of over-enthusiasm at Pioche was the cracking of the fire alarm bell which, by coincidence, occurred on the 38th peal, the last planned, for it symbolized Colorado, the last state admitted to the Union. The Episcopal Church bell was quickly pressed into service for the essential fire alarm requirement.<sup>26</sup>

One cannot fail to be impressed by the tone of exuberance and optimism which pervaded the Nevada Centennial. It was not a bit behind the festivities of the great cities which were reported in some of the Nevada papers. Whether communities were based on fresh discoveries or already had peaked out as had Pioche, there was enthusiasm, good humor, and cooperation. A little touchiness sometimes intruded as when Reno, after it was understood in Carson City that it would share in the capital's grand occasion, set about planning its own.<sup>27</sup> This unfortunate misunderstanding was the exception.

One may even more appreciate the "spirit of '76" in Nevada by a casual glance through the Nevada newspapers of 1926 when the Sesqui-Centennial was celebrated on a national scale.<sup>28</sup> A Reno editor was of the opinion that the local Sesqui-Centennial Fourth of July was the quietest Independence Day in nineteen years. The Veterans of Foreign Wars were hosts at a party for Reno youngsters and there was a ball at the Bower's Mansion. Tahoe was overcrowded. Austin provided the program most reminiscent of 1876—a sunrise salute, music, a reading of the Declaration, and an oration. Free ice cream and athletic competition for the young and races and baseball for all rounded out the two day

festival. Carson City advertised a two day festival at Truckee. The *Goldfield Daily Tribune* copied an editorial on the Sesqui-Centennial from Liberty Magazine.

Whether the cause was the low state of the Nevada economy, the dulling poison of "normalcy," the cynicism of the twenties, or a lower interest in half centuries, Nevada's response, so sharply in contrast to the Centennial, was a dull "ho hum."

#### NOTES:

1. *Belmont Courier*, Nov. 30 and Dec. 10, 1875; *Carson Daily Appeal*, Nov. 14 and 21, 1875; *Ibid.*, May 14, 31, June 11, 13, 18, 21, 1876.
2. May 21, 1876.
3. *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 1, 1876. This quote attributed to the *Reese River Reveille* of unknown date is somewhat suspect in that I found no other reference to the journey.
4. Walter Van Tilburg Clark, ed., *The Journals of Alfred Doten, 1849-1903* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1973), Vol. II, p. 1272.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1276; *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 5, 1876.
6. *Daily Silver State* (Winnemucca), Jan. 3, 1876; William Peirce Randel, *Centennial: American Life in 1876* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1969), p.1.
7. *Journals of Alfred Doten*, Vol. II, p. 1266.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1273.
9. *Belmont Courier*, July 7, 1876; *Daily Silver State*, June 21 and July 3, 7, 1876; *Weekly Elko Independent*, July 2, 7, 1876.
10. As early as 1866 President Johnson had attempted a demonstration on the forgive and forget there in the "arm-in-arm" convention, as it was called, in Philadelphia. It was not a great success. For an example of the planning for veteran participation see the *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 1, 1876.
11. *Territorial Enterprise* (Virginia City), July 4, 1876; *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 6, 1876; *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 5, 1876; *Reese River Reveille* (Austin), June 29, 1876.
12. *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 6, 1876; *Reese River Reveille*, July 5, 1876; *Journals of Alfred Doten*, Vol. II, pp. 1278-79.
13. *Reese River Reveille*, July 5, 1876; *Territorial Enterprise*, July 4, 1876.
14. July 4, 1876.
15. *Carson Daily Appeal*, May 21, 1876.
16. *Pioche Daily Record*, July 1, 1876; *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 6, 1876; *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 5, 1876; *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 1, 1876 and Jan. 1, 1876.
17. *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 6, 1876; *Belmont Courier*, June 30, 1876.
18. *Territorial Enterprise*, July 2, 1876.
19. *Ibid.*, July 4, 1876.
20. July 3, 1876; *Pioche Daily Record*, July 6, 1876, *Daily Silver State*, Dec. 30, 1876.
21. *Pioche Daily Record*, July 6, 1876; *Daily Silver State*, July 7, 1876; *Ibid.*, June 30, 1876.



22. *Reese River Reveille*, July 5, 1876; *Weekly Elko Independent*, July 9, 1876; *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 5, 1876; *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 1 and June 29, 1876; *Belmont Courier*, July 7, 1876; *Territorial Enterprise*, July 6 and July 4, 1876.

23. July 7, 1876. Belknap had just resigned as Secretary of War in the Grant cabinet to escape impeachment for corruption.

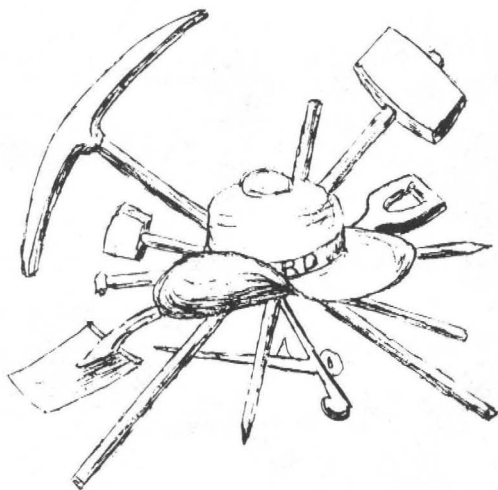
24. *Weekly Elko Independent*, July 9 and July 2, 1876; *Territorial Enterprise*, July 4, 1876, *Reese River Reveille*, June 26 and July 1, 1876; *Reno Evening Gazette*, July 5, 1876; *Daily Silver State*, June 30, 1876.

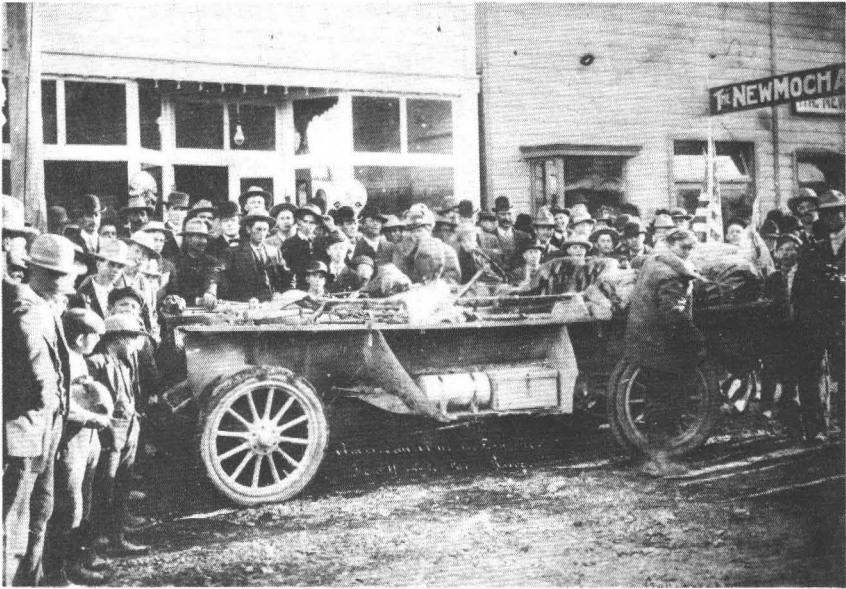
25. *Carson Daily Appeal*, July 7, 1876, clipped from the *Gold Hill News*.

26. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1876; *Reese River Reveille*, June 24, 1876; *Pioche Daily Record*, July 6, 1876.

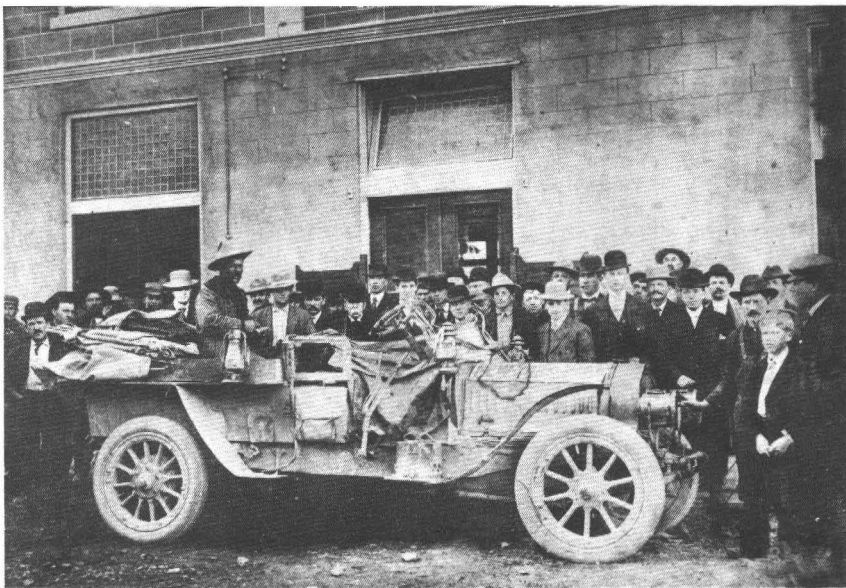
27. *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 3, 1876.

28. The *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, *Carson City News*, *Nevada State Journal* and the *Reese River Reveille* were used.





*The American Thomas Flyer at Ely, Nevada, March 18, 1908*



*The French DeDion at Ely, March 29, 1908*

## ***New York-to-Paris via Nevada: The Great Auto Race of '08***

*by Phillip I. Earl*

### **Early Automobiling in America**

At the turn of the century, the automobile was considered a plaything of the wealthy, but the mass production techniques introduced by Henry Ford soon put the vehicles within the price range of the average American. Track and road racing became popular diversions, and in 1904 the American Automobile Association began to sponsor reliability runs between various eastern cities.<sup>1</sup> In 1904 the famed racer Barney Oldfield made a cross-country tour which unleashed a virtual auto-mania in America,<sup>2</sup> and in 1907 racing teams from France, the Netherlands, Italy and England took part in the Great Pekin-to-Paris Race, an encounter of some 10,000 miles.<sup>3</sup> Stupendous as this feat was for the times, it was topped in every dimension by the New York-to-Paris Race of 1908, a journey of some 23,000 miles by land and sea across the wildest stretches of Earth's uncharted realms.

### **Organizing The New York-to-Paris Race**

American auto enthusiasts had been considering a competitive foray from New York to San Francisco, but their backers, the publishers of the French newspaper *Le Matin*, who had previously sponsored the Pekin-to-Paris Race, insisted that the competition be international and that Paris be the terminal point. Such a journey would take the competitors across the United States, thence to Valdez, Alaska by ship, over the snow and down the Tanana and Yukon Rivers to Kaltag, Unalakleet and Nome, and across the ice of the Bering Strait to Russian Siberia.<sup>4</sup>

The whole idea seemed preposterous to many because no car of any kind had ever crossed the United States in the dead of winter. Out in the hinterlands there were neither snowplows, filling stations, road signs or, in much of the country, roads. Those Americans familiar with Alaska

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and Siberia claimed that gasoline would freeze in the tanks and warned that the Bering Strait was never completely frozen over.<sup>5</sup> Interest in the race mounted, however, and the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* became co-sponsors. L.L. Whitman and Percival Megargel, two of nine men who had driven across the United States, were employed to lay out a practical route and they charted a course west from Chicago through Omaha, Cheyenne, Ogden, Reno, Carson City, Goldfield, Dagget, Mohave, Sagus, Santa Barbara and San Francisco.<sup>6</sup>

### Cars, Crews and Drivers

Thirteen cars from four nations, the United States, France, Germany and Italy, were scheduled to take part in the race, but only six were on the line in Times Square on February 12, 1908, the day set for the start.<sup>7</sup> The American entry was a four-cylinder, sixty-horsepower Thomas Flyer sedan which had been modified to carry additional cargo and passengers. Montague Roberts, a young racer and a demonstrator for the Thomas Company, was selected as the driver and George Schuster, a company mechanic, was chosen to be second in command.<sup>8</sup> The French entered three cars, but only a DeDion captained by Georges Bourcier de St. Chaffray, an aristocratic Frenchman who was *La Matin's* official representative, finished the trip across the United States. The French mechanic, M. Autran, a DeDion factory man and a Pekin-to-Paris veteran, was the second man in the car, and Captain Hans Hendrick Hansen, a famed Norwegian Arctic explorer was the third. Italy was represented by a Braxia-Zust captained by Antonio Scarfoglio, a noted poet, writer and amateur driver, and Giulio Sirtori. Hans Haga, a German mechanic, completed the crew. A massive Protos driven by Hans Knappe represented Germany. Ernest Maas served as the mechanic and alternate driver, but the vehicle was under the command of Lieutenant Hans Koeppen, a handsome, sports-loving unit commander from the 15th Prussian Infantry who was on special leave.<sup>9</sup>

Each vehicle was also laden with spare tires, chains, axes, shovels, flanged rims, clothing, provisions and guns. The crew of the DeDion also carried a mast and a sail so the vehicle could be converted into a land yacht. An American flag was presented to each driver by an official of the Automobile Club of America who promised \$1,000 to those who carried it all the way to Paris.<sup>10</sup>

### Off For Paris

February 12, Lincoln's Birthday, was chosen as the starting date because mid-winter was the proper time to depart in order to reach Alaska before the rivers melted and the ice broke up in the Bering Strait. Some 25,000 New Yorkers were on hand that morning and the engines were started at precisely 11:00 a.m. Photographers were snapping their shutters as bands played the national anthems of the nations represented.

The cars lined up headed north on Seventh Avenue and at exactly 11:14, Colgate Hoyt of the Automobile Club of America fired a shot from a gold-plated .22 pistol to start the race.<sup>11</sup>

As a matter of national courtesy, the American Flyer was the last to pull out of Times Square, but Roberts and his crew, which now included newsman T. Walter Williams of the *New York Times*, had passed the Germans and two French vehicles before the city limits were reached. Thawing snow made the roads into quagmires and one French vehicle, a Sizaire-Naudin driven by Auguste Pons, dropped out in Red Hook, New York with axle trouble. The second French crew, driving a Motobloc, got as far as Iowa before giving up and shipping their vehicle to San Francisco by rail, a move which disqualified their entry.<sup>12</sup>

Roberts and Schuster stopped in Poughkeepsie for a spark plug change and for the next several days the Americans, the French and the Italians took turns bucking the snowdrifts which impeded their progress. At Buffalo the American Flyer was overhauled and another crewman, George Miller, was taken aboard. The DeDion was repaired and lightened at the Pierce-Arrow plant in Buffalo, but the Italians sped on in the lead. The Germans had fallen far behind and never caught up until they reached Seattle.<sup>13</sup>

A Thomas pilot car bucked the snow from Buffalo to Chicago and considerably speeded the journey, but Iowa roads were pure hell. American farmers were only too glad to pull their countrymen out of the mud, but they either refused this service to the foreigners or charged an exorbitant fee. The foreign competitors were also denied the privilege of using railway tunnels and rights-of-way in crossing the Rocky Mountains on the pretext that the Americans, the first to reach the area, had damaged the gradings and ballasts.<sup>14</sup>

Charles Duprez, another *Times* newsman, replaced Williams in Missouri Valley, Iowa, and Captain Hansen, who had left the DeDion in Chicago, joined Roberts and his crew in Logan, Iowa after convincing the owner of the Thomas Company that he could be of use in Alaska and Siberia.<sup>15</sup>

Montague Roberts left the crew in Cheyenne, Wyoming and E. Linn Mattheson, a Thomas dealer from Denver, became the driver as far as Ogden, Utah. Another driver, one Harold Brinker, was to take over in the Utah rail center, but Schuster became the captain from that point on. Both he and Duprez had armed themselves in Cheyenne, Schuster exchanging a small .32 revolver for a .38 Colt with a six-inch barrel, and the newsman purchasing a small Iver Johnson revolver.<sup>16</sup>

At the time Roberts left, the Americans had a four-day lead on the Italians, their nearest rival. The DeDion was further behind and the Germans were somewhere in the Midwest. Lieutenant Koeppen's overbearing manner was resented by his crew and the Protos had severe mechanical problems.<sup>17</sup>

In Denver a team of newsmen driving a Reo Rabbit attached

themselves to the Americans and in Utah they picked up a second group from the **Salt Lake Tribune**. A severe sandstorm hit the caravan west of Corinne, Utah, and the men were forced to make masks of their handkerchiefs to protect their faces.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Americans in Nevada**

About 5:00 p.m. on March 17, thirty-five days out of New York, the Americans crossed the Nevada line at Montello accompanied by the newsmen in their Reo Rabbit. The original plan had been to push on west along the route of the Southern Pacific, but permission to use the flanged wheels on its tracks could not be secured. A telegram to Reno brought back the intelligence that there was as much as twenty feet of snow in the passes of the Sierras and so the decision was made to go on to Cobre and move south along the route of the Nevada Northern Railroad. The stop at Montello was only long enough for the telegram, gas and a meal before they were off for Cobre where they arrived about 8:00 p.m. The Flyer's radiator was drained and it was put in a corral for the night. The crew and the newsmen took rooms in a local hotel, but their sleep was fitful at best because of the commotion stirred up by several cowboys in the barroom.<sup>19</sup>

A local resident, James Pierce, was hired to guide them south to Ely and they departed at 8:15 a.m. They followed the right-of-way, but lost forty-five minutes in negotiating the twenty-foot grade on the Western Pacific Crossing at Bews. Three miles north of Currie in southern Elko County, the Reo blew two tires and it remained behind while spares were shipped from Salt Lake. At Currie the Americans met their first crowd of Nevada auto enthusiasts. Schuster tooled the Flyer to a local park where a luncheon and a reception had been planned. One teenage girl in the crowd begged to be allowed to tie her hair ribbon to the steering column to be carried on to Paris, and Schuster chivalrously declared that it would be done, although he remarked at the time that it would very likely be a sorry sight by the time they were across the Mojave Desert.<sup>20</sup>

As the party moved on south toward Ely, a band of Indians caught the eye of photographer Duprez near the Cherry Creek Indian Reservation, and a short stop was made to catch them on glass plate negatives for posterity. The Flyer was the first automobile they had ever seen, and they regarded it warily before consenting to climb aboard to have their pictures taken. The remainder of the run to Ely was uneventful, save for several bands of wild horses stampeded by the racer and an occasional coyote sent scurrying up a dry wash by the roar and clank of the engine.<sup>21</sup>

Telegraph operators along the way passed the word on the progress of the Americans to the Ely operator and that afternoon a party of four prominent citizens, George Stevens of the Northern Hotel, A.B. Witcher of the First National Bank, William Fletcher, and P.J. McCracken, set out



in Tex Richard's Doris roadster to meet the men and escort them into town. The meeting took place about ten miles north and the parties arrived in Ely at 4:50 p.m. The crew posed for pictures on Altman Avenue and had dinner at the Northern while the Flyer was being gassed and serviced at the Graham Merchantile Company.<sup>22</sup>

The editor of the *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, J.W. Connella, secured the services of Dave McLean as a guide for the trip to Tonopah and the men were off within an hour. The plan was to leave Ely via the Ruth mine up Robinson Canyon and spend the night at Preston, but the machine hit a muddy stretch near Lane City and had to be extricated by a six-mule team hitched to a freight wagon which happened by. A couple of hours later, as they were nearing the Veteran Mine, they again became stuck in the mud. Dog-tired and despirited, they walked on to the mine and were able to secure bunks in the quarters of the night crew.<sup>23</sup>

A team from the mine pulled them out next morning and they were on their way up White River Canyon for Preston by 7:45 a.m. A half-century later George Schuster remembered the run to Twin Springs as follows:

The trail now led southwestward—the route that has become Highway 6—and we crossed range after range of steep ridges with no sign of any ranch or human habitation. The only excitement came when we startled a long-legged jackrabbit who would go out of sight in great leaps. Our efforts to drop one with a shot were unavailing. They were too fast, and the moving automobile affected our aim. A low-roofed adobe shack—the occupants Indians or half-breeds—where we got water for the radiator of the car, was the only human habitation seen during the day's run of more than a hundred miles.<sup>24</sup>

By 6:00 p.m. they had arrived at the Twin Springs Ranch, and a cowhand warned them of a quicksand crossing ahead where huge boulders had been placed to aid wagons in getting across. Before arriving at the crossing, the Flyer mired in up to the hubs in an alkali flat, but the crew managed to dig out. They came to grief at the stream however. The Flyer had gotten partly across, but the steep, uneven footing on the opposite bank caused a terrific strain on the drive shaft. When they got up on the opposite bank, they found that six teeth had been stripped off the drive pinion and that a large crack had been opened in the transmission case.<sup>25</sup>

It was dark by the time the extent of the damage was assessed and Schuster returned to Twin Springs where he was able to rent a horse. Prior arrangements had been made to ship a crate of spare parts to Goldfield and he knew that several Flyers had been delivered to both Tonopah and Goldfield in the past year. The rancher gave him directions to Tonopah some seventy-five miles distant and he set off into the night. He was soon unable to follow the instructions, however, and gave the horse his head. Several hours later he came upon a party of campers who

were able to steer him straight, and still later a lonely adobe ranch house.<sup>26</sup>

There was some concern in Tonopah when the Americans did not arrive at the expected hour. About midnight Sam Haas of the Butler Theatre, Colonel W.W.Booth of the **Tonopah Bonanza** and Grant Crumley of the Nevada Club decided that they could wait no longer and set off east in a large Simplex driven by "Shorty" Kulzkuir. At this point in the story there are two versions of what happened next. George Schuster, recalling the events a half-century later, maintained that there was only a single woman at the ranch. She refused to allow him in however, and he bedded down in a lean-to near the stable. He had hardly closed his eyes, he remembered, before being awakened by a shadowy figure stumbling around in his make-shift abode. Thinking that some Nevada desperado had taken up his trail with the intention of robbing and killing him, he drew his revolver and prepared for the worst. The intruder cursed a few times and mumbled something about looking for "that automobile racer," whereupon Schuster introduced himself and discovered that the specter was Grant Crumley. Contemporary reports in the Tonopah newspapers had it that the rescuers found Schuster on horseback some fifty miles out, near Stone Cabin.<sup>27</sup>

After introductions all around, they set off for Tonopah in the Simplex and were back in town by 5:00 a.m. Booth roused the local Thomas dealer from his slumbers while other members of the party raided private vehicles to secure parts he did not have in stock. They were off again within an hour and arrived at the stranded vehicle about noon. Schuster and Miller immediately set to work and by 6:00 p.m. they were ready to roll.<sup>28</sup>

Escorted by the Simplex, the Americans passed the Rescue Mine shortly before 11:00 p.m. where pickets were stationed to send up rockets signaling the arrival of the desert voyagers. A long blast on the Tonopah Extension whistle heralded their entrance into town and a large enthusiastic crowd gathered about the vehicle as it rolled to a stop in front of Crumley's Nevada Club. A virtual regiment of schoolboys was on hand, as was a Negro band under the direction of drum major Bert Gibbons. The youngsters' fireworks and rockets roiled the night air as the scream of mine whistles and the clang of fire bells punctuated the rousing strains of the black bandsmen. Several souvenir hunters snipped off bits of the American flag carried by the Flyer while others scratched their initials into the fenders and doors and into the paneled woodwork of the driver's compartment. The tired crew stayed the night at the Belvada Hotel and the Flyer was gassed and stored at Malcolm McDonald's Garage. Several dozen auto enthusiasts were on hand at daybreak to see the vehicle fired up.<sup>29</sup>

The people of Goldfield had been making even more extensive plans to welcome the Americans. The town's newspapers had followed the

progress of the racers closely and on March 17, the day they crossed into Nevada, a meeting was held at which several committees were appointed. Henry Webber, C.S. Sprague, Richard L. Colbarn, Charles F. Kapp, W.B. Hamilton and H.C. Clapp were selected as the reception committee, and John C. Martin, editor of the **Goldfield Tribune**, was chosen to serve as the chairman of the publicity committee of the Chamber of Commerce. There was also a committee on decorations and souvenirs and a road committee. Dwight McKenzie's big red Flyer sedan was to lead the auto escort. The vehicle was to be decorated with a large steamer bearing the legend "Goldfield Tribune Pilot Car" and was to be manned by McKenzie, financier George Wingfield, Frank Oliver, C. Walter Geddes, Delos A. Chapelle and J.C. McCormack. Several Goldfield matrons were also scheduled to go out in a second escort car to "lend an air of graciousness to the occasion," and five or six other auto owners indicated an interest in taking part, as did the members of the Goldfield Hunt and Country Club who planned to meet the reception caravan at Columbia and engage the Flyer in a race to town.<sup>30</sup>

As the time for the arrival of the Americans neared, there were several false alarms. The auto escort traveled all the way to Tonopah on March 19, only to learn that the racers had not yet arrived. Meanwhile arrangements were made to let out the schools, and Charles Kapp provided 200 American flags for the occasion. Goldfield's saloons had been ringing for several days to tunes and choruses about automobiles, and one local musician, Arthur Collings, composed a verse for the racers and set it to the tune of "Yankee Sailor Boy," a popular ditty then making the rounds in Western music halls:

"Now your car can't be far from here,  
My Yankee Boy.  
I am waiting dear,  
Now I know you'll win the race.  
You are always in the lead,  
My Yankee Boy.  
But you know I never feared;  
Don't stay away another day;  
They say you left Tonopah  
In your Brand new Thomas car;  
Now I know you can't be far  
My Yankee Boy.

Chorus

Yankee Boy, 'round the world you are racing;  
The Yankee car the other cars are chasing.  
Now your car is riding-riding very nice,  
But up north you'll hit some ice.  
If you had waited awhile,  
You could have crossed the Strait;

But now you'll have to take your car  
across as freight.  
If you win the race,  
You'll fill our hearts with joy,  
For we are cheering for our good old  
Yankee Boy."<sup>31</sup>

The Goldfield escort party arrived in Tonopah at 8:00 a.m. on the morning of March 21, led by McKenzie in his Flyer. The racing machine had already been fired up and the procession left for the south at 8:30. As they approached Goldfield about an hour later, they picked up the escort from the Goldfield Country Club. A rousing cheer from hundreds of flag-waving Goldfielders went up as they reached the city limits, and several dozen cowboys and miners unholstered their pistols and fired into the air. After a short stop at the *Tribune* office, Schuster proceeded to the Western Union Telegraph Office and reported their presence in Goldfield as the rules of the race required. J.F.Douglas of the Goldfield Hotel had arranged a reception for the intrepid wanderers which included a fine mid-morning repast and the presentation to each man of a specimen of high-grade ore from the Mohawk Mine by George Wingfield. Editor Martin also presented them with a new 5x7 foot American flag to replace the tattered shred remaining from the ravages of souvenir hunters across the country.<sup>32</sup>

Trailing their new banner in the br  ze, the Americans left Goldfield about 11:30 accompanied by an escort led by McKenzie's Flyer. He had intended to continue as far as Beatty, but a rock stripped the water cock from his radiator at Culpriete and he returned to Goldfield after making repairs at Indian Springs. Grant Crumley and several Tonapaites were still with the party and accompanied the racers on to Beatty and Rhyolite in Kulzkuir's Simplex, as did the Denver and Salt Lake newsmen who had rejoined the party in Tonopah.<sup>33</sup>

Beatty was reached about 1:30 and the racers were in Rhyolite by 3:15, escorted the last few miles in by Earl Clemens and Guy Keene, the publishers of the *Rhyolite Herald*. Virtually the entire population of the small mining hamlet turned out to welcome the visitors and inspect the Flyer, but Schuster elected to remain only a half hour, long enough to take on as and supplies. Peter Busch, a local auto enthusiast, accompanied them in his own Flyer touring car for several miles across the Amargosa Desert and said a final farewell at Stovepipe Wells.<sup>34</sup>

Shortly after the Americans left Goldfield, the editor of the *Goldfield Daily Tribune* gave vent to a rumor that they would drop out of the race at San Francisco. The editor wrote that the Thomas Company's purpose was only to advertise their cars and, since their market was in the United States rather than Europe, going on to Paris would serve no purpose. As it turned out, there was no substance to the story.<sup>35</sup>

### The Italians

On March 24, the day the Americans arrived in San Francisco, the Italians had just reached Kelton, Utah. The DeDion was somewhere in Nebraska, and the French Motobloc, whose crew had given up in Carroll, Iowa on March 17, was enroute to the coast aboard a freight train. The German Protos was garaged at Lexington, Nebraska.<sup>36</sup>

The refusal of Union Pacific officials to allow the Italians to use the Aspen Tunnel in Colorado had slowed their pace somewhat, and they ran out of fuel deep in the Wasatch Mountains. They were but a mile out of Kelton, Utah when they broke a main frame crossing a railroad track and had to ship the Züst back to Ogden for repairs.<sup>37</sup>

Scarfoglio and his crew crossed the Nevada line on the morning of March 26 and continued on to Cobre where they picked up James Pierce to guide them on into Ely. Like the Americans, they lost time at Bews Crossing, and the 141 miles from Cobre to Ely took them some ten hours. The telegrapher at Montello had wired the Ely operator of their coming and the editor of the *Expositor*, J.W. Connella, himself an Italian, drove Rickard's Doris out to meet them a few miles north of town. They reached Ely at precisely 7:05 p.m. and drove up Altman Avenue to the shouts and applause of several hundred spectators who had gathered. Sirtori, the driver, parked in front of the Northern Hotel for a few minutes before driving the Züst to Rickard's Garage, where it was to be serviced and put up for the night. It was the first foreign vehicle that most Elyites had seen and they were full of questions. Several local residents of Italian descent acted as interpreters for their countrymen and Sirtori spoke English well enough to field most questions about the mechanical workings of the Züst. He also told of the many delays they had had in the Midwest, and complained of their treatment by farmers and railroad officials.<sup>38</sup>

The crew spent the night at the Northern and were on their way south via Murray Creek Canyon by 8:00 a.m. the next morning. At Barnes they took the same route as the Americans who preceded them. Pierce's knowledge of the country did not save them from getting stuck in the mud near Lane City, however, now could he foresee a tree stump which damaged the drive shaft. These minor disasters hindered the Italians only long enough to leave them in open country near Twin Springs when night fell rather than safe and secure in a Tonopah hotel as they had planned. In a lengthy cable to the *London Mail*, for whom he was a correspondent, Scarfoglio later described the journey thus far as follows.

There is no road that would bring one to happiness. The road to Goldfield is very long and hard, and runs through high mountains and steep valleys. There is not a single house in the 300 miles dividing Ely from Goldfield; always the desert, extremely wide, shining with the white sand.

The solitude is not broken—not even by a flying bird, or by a

lonely rabbit, but the road is fair, and is not hard on our pneumatic tires. The road is quite level, and our car, the Zust, is running at a fast gait. But it is a run without life and without enjoyment, as the air that is coaxing our faces is mild, but there is nothing to put one in good humors—not a tree, not a man, not a telegraph pole.

Also the railroad, which has been our friend during this trip, has left us, and with it the high telegraph poles, which were marking the way for us, have disappeared. Now there is nothing but big pyramids of stones. We must have gone about 150 miles in this horrible land, but nobody could tell us clearly the distance.<sup>39</sup>

Although the Zust, like the other machines, was equipped with carbide headlamps, Sirtori and Scarfoglio decided not to risk a night run into Tonopah. They thus were forced to seek shelter nearby. They considered spending the night in the Zust, but there was not room as the rear seat had been removed at Ogden and a large fuel tank put in its place. They were also fearful of coyotes, having encountered the beasts earlier in Wyoming. Haaga and Pierce set out on foot and soon came upon a hand-lettered sign reading "to Troy three miles" where a narrow path led off the main road. The pair followed it and soon came upon a small hut with lights in the windows. They returned to their companions and led the Zust up the path with an acetylene lamp. In his later cable to the London newspaper, Scarfoglio described subsequent events as follows:

. . . we find a house, a very small and low house on the top of a rock, and with only one window, and there is a light in it. We knock one, two, three times at the door and an old man, with a sweet face and long white beard, comes and opens the door. He is surprised to see us at such a late hour, and in such a place.

### **The Lonely Miner**

Finally he is sure that we are not barbarian pirates, up there to insult him and to steal his property, and he lets us into the room where a kerosene lamp is lit and the walls are covered with paper flowers. This room is full of books; also in a wash stand there are books, and books up to the roof. On the bed are also flowers.

The bedsheets are open as though to invite rest, and an immense number of unknown instruments are under a glass globe. On the table, open, there is a book—Tennyson's "Idyls of the King"—and this is the book he was reading when we knocked at this door. This man is alone. He is a Frenchman, a gold miner, and he tells us all his life after a cup of wine.

We are sitting on the floor, on blankets that he had lent us to sleep on during the night. The light of the kerosene lamp falls across his beautiful face, which is full of darkness, and gives him the appearance of a tragedy when he is talking. Here is his life:

He was ten years old when he left a happy place in his native country, and now he has lost both his country and his happiness



trying to realize his dreams. He had friends and a small fortune which he lost to the winds of the sky. He had a father, a mother, a wife and children, but all have forgotten him. They went to another place looking for what he could not give them.

Now he is alone in the desert, and has lost all trying to rebuild what he has himself destroyed. For thirty-seven years he has worn his fingers to the bone digging in the sand trying to realize his shining dream, but in the thirty-seven years he has not proceeded one step, so that he could regain what he had lost, and he is just as lonely now as the day he left his country with a pack on his shoulder, and took the main road.<sup>40</sup>

Scarfoglio then went on to describe more of the old man's adventures as a miner, his eventual retirement to Nevada three years before and something of his taste in literature—Homer, Plutarch, Schiller, Tennyson, Shelley—and his only companion, an old French poodle. "He spoke in this way for two hours, and at 1 o'clock he was still talking . . . He called us this morning very early and put us on the road," Scarfoglio concluded. "A very mild wind is blowing now, and the air is very fresh. He remained a long time watching us from the top of a rock, saluting us in the name of France, which he calls 'le vieux pays, and then he disappeared into his small house."<sup>41</sup>

Before they had traveled many miles, Scarfoglio began to notice a change in the terrain. As he confided to his log book that day as they traveled along:

. . . it was no longer the enormous vacuity of yesterday, the plateau without end and without obstacle. Today there were plains enclosed by strange, irregular mountains, naked as the palm of the hand, mountains of iron. They are enormous blocks of iron, inaccessible rocks, placed one on the other, as though an army of giants had been throwing up defenses. Their brown colour gives them a terrible aspect. At first they were isolated, but then became more frequent, forming groups and chains stretching across the plain towards the west.<sup>42</sup>

Within a few hours they arrived at Stone Cabin fifty miles east of Tonopah. "It is an old broken-down house," Scarfoglio wrote, "which shelters a family of honest American speculators, a dog, and a servant—a redskin, a superb creature, who obstinately refused to pose before our cameras." The man, his wife and two children did stand still for a photograph, however.<sup>43</sup>

Within a few minutes Scarfoglio once again took to his typewriter to describe the passing scene:

Further along the mountains of iron cease and those of gold begin. These are vulgar mountains, covered with earth and stones, on which some meagre shrubs pine away. They have no appearance of magnificence or grandeur, and the wealth which is contained in their bowels is not betrayed on the surface. They keep it hidden away,

and clothe themselves as it were in the garb of poverty. They are jealous of their treasure, and guard it carefully against robbers. It is the guide who tells us about these immense storehouses in which repose all the wealth and grandeur of America, who estimates their worth in thousands and thousands of millions, and enables us to appreciate this cruel desert in terms of money. For otherwise we should not have thought that we were trampling under foot so much wealth, and at the end of our day's journey we should have had less respect for the dust which had accumulated on our wheels.

The greater part of these mountains of gold are not exploited; the hand of man has not yet driven a pick into them. Only on three or four of them have men come to set up mining works. And round the latter, naturally, towns have arisen, constructed in six months, flourishing in a year, grown to enormous and populous centres in three years. These towns are scattered at a great distance from each other, and are united only by a telegraph wire and the railway line. They are noisy, vivacious oases, not beautiful, certainly, nor diverting, but reposeful for one who comes from the east with his eyelids puffed and tongue swollen by the burning heat of the desert. They are accepted as restingplaces which appear to be marvelous on this evening of our arrival, but which are horrible seen by daylight on the morning of our departure.

Tonopah, Troy, Goldfield, Rawhide—strange and fantastic are the names which these towns bear. They have been given casually by men drunken with sudden fortune. This faculty enjoyed by modern man of baptising a town at this caprice has a curious effect. In our land we are accustomed to trace names back from generation to generation across hundreds and thousands of years. We find the roots of our names hidden in the Greek characters; they come to us crusted with age and history. Here it is not so. Two men find a stone at the foot of a mountain and build huts around it, which they afterwards baptise. It will become a town in accordance with the well-known American genesis. It will increase, become colossal, but will always bear the nickname with which it pleased the first miners to salute their newly found riches.<sup>44</sup>

The journey on into Tonopah was without incident and they arrived unheralded and unescorted. Sirtori parked in front of Butler Hall while he transacted some business in the telegraph office. A small band of curious men and boys milled about the vehicle during his absence, but the Züst was once again on its way in a few minutes.<sup>45</sup>

Goldfield's Italians had meanwhile been planning a reception for their countrymen which would rival that accorded the Americans, as had been suggested by the editor of the **Daily Tribune** previously. He noted that many citizens of Italian, French and German nationalities lived in Goldfield and would undoubtedly want to welcome the cars of their

country. He further suggested that the town did not want to appear narrow or selfish. "It is little things like this that help to spread the fame of this district," he asserted, "and leave a good taste in the mouth."<sup>46</sup>

A meeting had been held to discuss the matter shortly after the Americans had departed for the south and a reception committee consisting of Guelarmo Berautto, Frank Mariano, Julian Lasunta, James Gioga and James V. Larson selected. It was decided that the racers should be met and escorted into town and that a reception should be held for them. Several Italian housewives were put to making red, white and green Italian flags and arrangements were made for Dwight Mackenzie to escort them in his Flyer sedan. The committee also reserved the Montezuma Club for the reception and dinner they were planning.<sup>47</sup>

At 3:00 p.m. on March 28, the reception committee received word that the Zust and its crew had left Tonopah. A few minutes later a caravan bedecked with Italian flags departed for Columbus. The reception committee remained at the crossroads while scout cars went out both roads. McKenzie's Flyer carrying the representative of the *Daily Tribune* took the road to the west and a half hour later met the racers coming south. They escorted them back to Columbus where a short stop was made for introductions and then continued on into Goldfield, arriving about 4:20 in the afternoon. A large crowd of flag-waving spectators cheered their entrance and waved frantically as they passed through town and parked in front of the Hotel Carey. Sirtori and Scarfoglio shook hands all around and then repaired to the telegraph office to send the required wire to the Racing Committee in New York. The Zust was then taken on to a lower Main Street garage for an overhaul.<sup>48</sup>

The wine and champagne flowed freely that night and every Italian housewife in town contributed her favorite dish. As the evening progressed, the crewmembers joined their immigrant countrymen in song, and it was not until the early hours of the morning that they took to their beds in the Goldfield Hotel. Haaga, the German mechanic, left early to supervise the work on the Zust, thoughts of the impending rigors of Death Valley outweighing his normal convivial instincts.<sup>49</sup>

Scarfoglio later described their Goldfield visit as follows:

Goldfield, where we stopped, greeted us with bands and banners and cheers. Naturally the town contains some Italians, as is always the case where there is a blow of the pick to be given and some wealth to be acquired. They prepared festivities for us. They offered us a banquet in one of the hotels of Goldfield, a marvellous hotel all built of marble, which must have been transported hither at great cost. I have rarely seen so much scintillating luxury, so much splendour and ostentation gathered together in the dining-room of a European hotel. Never have I seen so many diamonds and precious stones as were poured out from full hands on the bosoms and heads of the ladies, or on the rings of the men. It was a crude display,

which ended by inspiring disgust!<sup>50</sup>

A representative from the Italian Consulate in San Francisco was supposed to meet the racers in Goldfield to lead them on into the bay city, but there was some mixup in plans and he did not arrive. They thus kept Pierce as their guide and plotted a course which would take them through Las Vegas and on to the coast by way of Bakersfield. There was a change of plans at Beatty, however, and they decided to follow the route taken by the Americans. Their arrival in Rhyolite about 12:45 p.m. was heralded by several dozen of their countrymen, and they were taken in hand by Joe Gardino of the Central Bar who escorted them to the Rhyolite Restaurant for a hastily prepared banquet. They remained in town less than an hour, and took on "Shorty" Vidi, a former chauffeur for Death Valley Scotty, as a guide to replace Pierce. Gardino loaded them up with a supply of wine and champagne to see them across the wilds of California, and they departed for Greenwater and Death Valley at 1:30. At that time they were some six days behind the Americans who were already on a ship bound for Seattle and Alaska.<sup>51</sup>

### The French

The crew driving the DeDion, the sole French vehicle left in the race, reached Montello at 10:00 p.m. on March 28, two days behind the Italians, who arrived in Goldfield that day, and six days behind the Americans. They spent the night in the small railroad town, and were off for Ely shortly after noon, having made arrangements with H.W.Kelley of Cobre to guide them on in. The trip was uneventful for the most part, save for an errant falling rock which crushed the racer's hood near Cobre. Several bands of coyotes were spotted south of Currie, and Autran, the mechanic, broke out his rifle and picked off half a dozen or so at random from the rear seat as the Frenchmen sped onward.<sup>52</sup>

Although they lost an hour at Bews Crossing, the DeDion seemed to run particularly well in the high desert air and St. Chaffray had time to meditate upon the passing scene. In a later cable to the *New York Times*, he described Nevada as a "magnificent spectacle" and pictured her mountain ranges as resembling a fleet of mighty battleships passing in review. Her vast valleys were depicted as gigantic hippodromes capable of accommodating a hundred million spectators.<sup>53</sup>

The run from Cobre was made in eight and one-half hours and the DeDion was parked in front of the Northern at 9:15 p.m. The crew checked into the hotel for the night, and after a late supper, St. Chaffray held forth in the lobby on their adventures in America. Like the Italians, the Frenchmen had troubles with eastern and midwestern farmers. The French captain also told of being loaded down with scrap iron on one occasion and of having tacks, nails and glass shoved beneath tires on another.<sup>54</sup>

In his cable to the *Times*, St. Chaffray described Ely as "an unknown

town, born one year ago," and noted that all the homes were of wooden construction and seemed to have been thrown up in a rather hasty manner. For the benefit of interested Easterners, he observed that "a good copper mine has been started in the neighborhood." The accommodations of the Northern pleased the Frenchmen immensely and St. Chaffray declared it to be the finest lodging they had had since leaving Cedar Rapids, Iowa.<sup>55</sup>

Thomas Wildon was taken on as a guide to replace Kelley for the trip to Tonopah, and he provided the foreigners with some of their most memorable experiences. St. Chaffray later wired from Tonopah that Autran thought the man to be crazy and that the whole crew feared for their lives throughout the journey. As he cabled the *Times*:

This pilot of ours had a revolver with heavy cartridges. He was ugly and dangerous. Each second he was trying his revolver on an antelope, jack rabbits or cows. He was red with excitement and the pleasure of a trip in an automobile. He did not shoot the Frenchmen; he is their best friend. He is more red than Hensen, the artic explorer, and bigger. But he says nothing. He has known the desert some twenty years, at first on foot.<sup>56</sup>

The crew had trouble ascending a rocky grade and were aided by a man out riding with his wife, as Wildon generally conducted the racer by the shortest possible route, regardless of the terrain. Autran claimed to have counted 1,200 cuts and 6,000 ditches crossed in the course of the 248 mile trek, but St. Chaffray discounted the claim because of the blinding sandstorm which chased them for the last 150 miles in.<sup>57</sup>

Attorney Key Pittman, bound north for Ely and the Granite Mining District, met the racers 150 miles out of Tonopah and somehow got the idea that they were either out of gas or on the verge of a breakdown. Upon arriving at his destination, he wired Grant Crumley in Tonopah to get a rescue party together and head out to render whatever assistance might be necessary. Preparations were just getting under way when the DeDion came roaring down Malin Avenue about 10:00 p.m. The 248 mile journey was made in thirteen hours, a record for the distance, but the DeDion had sprung a rear axle and was conducted to the MacDonald Garage shortly after the Frenchmen arrived in town. Crumley and his nephew, Newton, Colonel Booth and Sam Haas entertained the foreigners at the Montana Cafe that evening, and they took rooms at the Belvada Hotel for the night. The repairs to the axle took up most of the next day and they did not get away until 6:00 in the evening.<sup>58</sup>

Goldfield's French community had been preparing their own reception for several days and had wide support throughout the town. Even the Italians contributed to the fund. Walter St. Pierre, the chairman of the reception committee, had telegraphed an invitation to St. Chaffray in Ely and the French aristocrat accepted immediately. "The mere matter of racing is always subject to social amenities," he mused in his return wire.<sup>59</sup>

French tri-colors were made to bedeck the seven vehicles going out to meet the racers, and arrangements were made for an elegant reception at the Hotel Carey. When the racers left Tonopah, the telegrapher passed the word to the Goldfield operator. A few minutes later, three long blasts on the fire whistle sounded, and the escort party began to assemble in front of the Del Monte Restaurant. They departed for Columbia shortly thereafter and met up with their countrymen about an hour later. As they entered Goldfield, a mighty cheer when up from the flag-waving crowd on hand to greet them. St. Chaffray continued on to the telegraph office while curious well-wishers crowded around the car. A few minutes later Autran drove it to a local garage for additional repairs. The reception committee wanted to keep it on display for several hours, but he insisted that there was work to be done before they could go on.<sup>60</sup>

The reception for the foreign visitors began within an hour of their arrival. With Mrs. Casey McDaniel as hostess, it was an elegant affair by any measure. The ladies of Goldfield sported their finest ballroom gowns, and a fine local orchestra provided music for dancing. Speechmaking and toasts were also the order of the day, with former State Assemblyman William Moorehead serving as master of ceremonies. Attorney C.C. Ward delivered an opening welcome in his best French, and Judge Charles S. Hayes presented the men with ore samples on behalf of the Rogers Syndicate and delivered the major oration of the evening. He spoke of the manner in which France had aided the American cause during the fight for independence and ended with the following poem:

We are happy to meet, we are sorry  
to part.  
And when we say this, we speak from  
the heart.  
In this wonderful race of the  
automobilers,  
Each and all are true sportsmen,  
none of them squealers.  
While encircling the earth, may your  
pathways be clear.  
May your troubles be few from without  
and within.  
May the race be a fair one;  
May the best man win.<sup>61</sup>

St. Chaffray later described the evening as "one of the most sleepless nights that the New York to Paris racers had encountered in their abnormal trip" and pictured Goldfield as the "Wonder of the West" in his dispatch to the *Times* in New York. "Nothing compares with it except Tonopah," he wrote. "We drink everywhere champagne offered by these gold cities. It is, I suppose, because the people want us to know that labor can make of a desert a paradise and that sand and snowstorms are

nothing if men are willing." He was also fascinated by his conversations with vagrant prospectors he met in Goldfield who filled him in on the finer points of finding and filing mining claims, high-grading and stock gambling, all of which he included in lengthy cables to the eastern newspaper.<sup>62</sup>

St. Chaffray signed Charles O. Mallegan as a guide for the Goldfield-to-Rhyolite segment of their journey and they departed at 6:00 a.m. Four hours later they arrived in the southern mining metropolis and were greeted by a few local Frenchmen. St. Chaffray was anxious to be on his way, however, and they remained only long enough to take on two new guides, Guy Horton and Charles Howard, and to send telegrams of thanks back to Mrs. McDaniel and the French reception committee.<sup>63</sup>

The California segment of the race got off to a bad start for the Frenchmen. A fierce sandstorm struck between Skidoo and Emigrant Pass in Death Valley, and the DeDion somehow got off the road. The crew tried for several hours to extricate the vehicle from the sand before giving up and sending a messenger twenty miles back to Skidoo. There was no team for hire, however, and a telephone call had to be made to Rhyolite. Frank Hartigan, a Rhyolite liveryman, started out with a team, but an hour later the horses wandered back to town by themselves. A party of men ventured out to see what had happened and found him dead of a broken neck. From all indications, he had fallen from his wagon. A second rescue party under the leadership of E.C.Schelling was dispatched, and it took them six hours to get the DeDion back on the road. Food and water had been brought from Skidoo to the men who remained with the vehicle, but the French team lost twenty-two hours because of the incident.<sup>64</sup>

### The Germans

Of those who remained in the race, the Germans had perhaps the worst luck of all. Mechanical problems and dissensions between Lieutenant Koeppen and his drivers marked their passage across the country. They finally arrived at Ogden, Utah, on April 2. The *New York Times* reported that C.O.Wheat had been hired to guide them to Cobre where he would be relieved by James Pierce, the pilot to Goldfield. At Kelton, Utah, the Protos broke its differential in crossing a railroad track. The mechanics were able to repair it, but twenty miles further on they again broke down and had to ship the vehicle back to the Union Pacific shops in Ogden. This was the last straw for Mass and Knappe who quit on the spot and returned east. Koeppen had to make a run to Seattle by rail for parts and upon his return he learned of his crew's defection. He was determined to go on, however, and hired O.W.Schneider to drive the rest of the way. A German Army veteran himself, Schneider proved to be a competent and adept chauffeur. Koeppen had also decided to take his vehicle directly to Washington via



Idaho and Oregon, but an accident just outside Pocatello disabled it to the extent that further repairs would have been necessary if it were to proceed under its own power. They then decided to ship the Protos on to the coast by rail and finish the race through Siberia and Europe as tourists rather than competitors.<sup>65</sup>

Goldfield's German community had been formulating plans for a reception at the same time as the Italians and the French. The head of the committee was George F. Von Polenz, a Goldfielder who had known Koeppen during his own days of service in the German Army. A Dr. Von Wedelstaedt was also active in the planning of the reception, as were other local residents of German descent. Reports concerning the progress of the racers were confusing and contradictory, and it was rumored at one time that the Germans had passed through Cobre on the way to San Francisco. It was not for some weeks that the mining camp's Germans learned that Koeppen and his crew had bypassed Nevada entirely.<sup>66</sup>

### To Alaska and Siberia

The Americans had arrived in San Francisco on March 24, three days after leaving Nevada, and sailed for Seattle two days later. Their ship, the *City of Puebla*, reached the Washington port on March 29. Another *Times* correspondent, George MacAdam, replaced DuPrez, and the crew bought heavy fur coats, extra spare parts, spare tires and more guns. On April 1 they set sail aboard the *Santa Clara* for Valdez, Alaska, the Flyer chained to the deck. After several stops along the way, the ship reached its destination on April 8. Once there, Schuster learned of the impossibility of driving across Alaska from the operator of the Valdez-Fairbanks mail stage who claimed that the crust of the snow would not support a car. A sleigh ride a few miles up the trail to Fairbanks convinced him, and he wired the Race Committee in New York of the situation. A few hours later he received word that they were to return to Seattle and sail to Vladivostok by steamer.<sup>67</sup>

As it happened, the steamer *Bertha* had just arrived and the Americans were able to get the Flyer aboard for an immediate return trip, having spent only twenty-four hours in Alaska. Upon arriving back in Seattle on April 16, they learned that the French and the Italians had been informed of the change and had set sail for Japan two days previously, hoping perhaps that a trip across the islands would make up for the extra time Schuster and the Americans had taken going to Alaska and back. Lieutenant Koeppen was also in port waiting for his damaged auto to arrive before following them. Schuster wired the Race Committee of these developments and was granted credit for fifteen days of lapsed time for the Alaska detour.<sup>68</sup>

The Germans left for Russia on April 19 and the Americans left for Japan two days later aboard the *S.S. Shawmut*. Lieutenant Koeppen had previously arranged for two factory mechanics to meet the ship in the

Russian port, and he had two weeks to completely overhaul the Protos while the other competitors crossed Japan. The Race Committee had meanwhile been informed of the manner in which he had finished his journey across the western United States and of the fact that he omitted the 350 mile jaunt across Japan. After deliberating a short while, the members penalized him an additional fifteen days in lapsed time, an action which placed his car thirty days behind the Americans.<sup>69</sup>

Schuster and the other two teams arrived in the Czarist homeland on May 18. Shortly after their arrival, St. Chaffray was informed that the Marquis DeDion was pulling his entry from the race. He protested but to no avail, for the French nobleman had already sold the racer to a wealthy Chinese merchant in Peking.<sup>70</sup>

The crews of the Flyer and the Züst were meanwhile planning their route across Siberia and arranging for supplies and gasoline. On May 22 the Americans and the Germans set off, but the Italians were held up for repairs and did not depart until June 6. The race thus became a contest between the Americans and the Germans, the latter pinning their hopes upon a breakdown by the former as the only means by which to salvage a victory. Both crews underwent endless miseries in crossing Siberia and European Russia, but the Germans were the first to reach western Europe. They sped into Paris on July 26, four days before the Americans, and Koeppen claimed a victory. The Race Committee figured up the lapsed time, however, and declared the Americans the victors by twenty-six days. The Italians were reported to have dropped out at Tomsk in eastern Russia on July 22, but Scarfoglio's poetic soul and his sense of Italian pride would not let him quit. He and his men dogged on, reaching Paris on September 16, some forty-nine days after the arrival of the Americans.<sup>71</sup>

### Aftermath

Captain Hansen returned to his home in Siberia following the race, and the remainder of the crew sailed for home. On August 16 Schuster drove the victorious Flyer in a Broadway parade, and a few days later he took the vehicle to President Theodore Roosevelt's home at Sagamore Hill in upstate New York at the request of the President himself.<sup>72</sup>

The Thomas Flyer had a checkered career in later years. It was the pilot car for a New York-to-Seattle race in 1909 and later went through a succession of owners. In 1948 it ended up as the property of Henry Austin Clark Jr. of the Long Island Automotive Museum, Southampton, New York. By that time the vehicle had deteriorated to the point that even George Schuster could not believe it was the same car he had driven into Paris, and he refused to either authenticate it or appear with it in photographs.<sup>73</sup>

George Schuster continued to work in the automotive industry and in 1946 he retired from Cutter-Davis, a manufacturer of gear reduction equipment, at the age of seventy-three.<sup>74</sup> In 1963 he wrote an account

of the race for the **Reader's Digest** and appeared upon the television program "I've Got a Secret." Interest in the old Flyer was rekindled and it was purchased by William Harrah of Reno for his own collection. Schuster was induced to fly to Reno in March of 1964, but refused to authenticate the vehicle until mechanics at Harrah's Automobile Collection turned up evidence that it was the original. During the next three months, the Flyer was completely restored and George Schuster returned to Reno on June 7, 1964. Harrah met him at the airport with the racer in running order, even to barking out exhaust explosions, just as it had done in Paris. Schuster and Harrah took a few turns around Reno and June 12 flew to Tonopah. The Flyer had gone down on a trailer the night before. The people of the old mining camp accorded them a grand reception and the fire siren sounded as Harrah drove it around the streets. Both men were feted at a luncheon at which W.H. Thomas and Ed Michaels were present, both of whom had been in Tonopah at the time of Schuster's first visit fifty-six years before.<sup>75</sup>

George Schuster passed away in Springville, New York, on July 4, 1972. His mechanic, George Miller, died in the Thirties, and Williams, the first **Times** newsman, died in 1942. Charles Duprez, the reporter who came across Nevada, was still alive in 1966 when Schuster co-authored a book-length account of the race, and so was Antonio Scarfoglio, the captain of the Italian Zust. Lieutenant Koeppen was killed on the eastern front in World War I, but the chassis of the Protos has survived the years and is on display at the Deutsches Museum in Munich. Both Scarfoglio and Koeppen wrote book-length accounts of their part in the race, but the booklet put out by the Thomas Company was called "utterly misleading" by Schuster because it made no mention of the mechanical troubles they had with the Flyer.<sup>76</sup>

In 1965 Warner Brothers released **The Great Race**, a motion picture starring Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, Natalie Wood and Keenan Wynn. While highly entertaining, it is, at best, a highly-fictionalized version of what actually happened. At the time of this writing (April, 1976) plans are being made to rerun the race as a Bicentennial event. In keeping with many another such activity, the Great Race is being run backwards—from Paris to New York. A Boeing 747 will airlift the cars and drivers across the Pacific, but attempts are being made to approximate the original route.<sup>77</sup> The actual conditions under which the 1908 race was made cannot be simulated; but, all things considered, such a race is still an audacious undertaking, and the chances are that Schuster, Koeppen, Scarfoglio, St. Chaffray and the others would heartily approve of this curious latter-day blend of nostalgia and technology.

## NOTES

1. Among the better recent works on the automobile in America are the following: Editors of *Automobile Quarterly*, *The American Car Since 1775*, New York: Automobile Quarterly Inc., 1971; Anthony Bird, *The Motor Car, 1765-1914*, New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1961; and Floyd Clymer, *Treasury of Early American Automobiles, 1877-1925*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950.
2. Phillip I. Earl, "Barnstorming With Barney Oldfield," *Nevada Highways and Parks Magazine*, Vol. 32, No. II (Summer, 1972), pp. 14-15, 38-41.
3. Allen Andrews, *The Mad Motorists: The Great Peking-Paris Race of '07*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lipincott Co., 1965.
4. George Schuster with Tom Mahoney, *The Longest Auto Race*, New York: the John Day Company, 1966, pp. 11-18; "The Automobile Race from New York to Paris," *Current Literature*, XLIV (April, 1908), pp. 359-62.
5. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; "The New York to Paris Race Around the World," *Overland Monthly*, li (April, 1908), pp. 367-68.
6. Schuster and Mahoney, *op.cit.*, p. 17.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 18.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22-24, 28, 29; "The New York to Paris Race . . .," *Overland Overland Monthly*, p. 371.
10. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20
11. *Ibid.*, p.19.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-26; "The Automobile Race . . .," *Current Literature*, p. 359.
13. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32, 46.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 49, *New York Times*, March 22, 1908, 1:1.
15. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 49, 52.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47, 52-54.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 61; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 19, 1908, 1:3-4.
19. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 61; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 19, 1908, 1:3-4, 5:1; *New York Times*, March 16, 1908, 2:4, March 19, 1908, 1:1.
20. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 61; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 19, 1908, 1:3-4; *New York Times*, March 19, 1908, 1:1.
21. *New York Times*, March 19, 1908, 1:1.
22. *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 19, 1908, 1:3-4.
23. Schuster and Mahoney, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-63; *New York Times*, March 19, 1908, 1:1, 1:3-4, March 24, 1908, 1:1, 2:5; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 26, 1908, 6:4.
24. *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 26, 1908, 7:2; Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
25. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 63; *New York Times*, March 24, 1908, 1:1, 2:5.
26. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 66.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 66; *Tonopah Miner*, March 21, 1908, 10:2; *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 21, 1908, 1:1-4; *Tonopah Times Bonanza and Goldfield Review*, June 19, 1964, 1:3-5, 7:1-2.
28. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 66; *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 21, 1908, 1:-4; *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 21, 1908, 1:2-5, 4:1; March 22, 1908, 1:6-7, 4:1.
29. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 20, 1908, 4:1; March 22, 1908, 1:6-7; *Tonopah Sun*, March 21, 1908, 4:3; *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 21, 1908, 1:1-4; *New York Times*, March 29, 1908, 1:1, 5:1.
30. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 18, 1908, 1:4-5; March 19, 1908, 1:4-5, 4:3; March 20, 1908, 4:1.
31. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1908, 1:4-5; March 20, 1908, 1:1-6, 4:1; March 21, 1908, 1:2-5, 4:1.
32. *Ibid.*, March 19, 1908, 1:4-5, 4:3; March 22, 1908, 1:6-7, 4:1; *New York Times*, March 24, 1908, 1:1, 2:5; March 29, 1908, 1:1, 5:1.
33. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 22, 1908, 1:6-7, 4:1; *Rhyolite Herald*, March 25, 1908, 8:3-4.
34. *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*, March 21, 1908, 1:1-2; March 27, 1908, 1:1; *Rhyolite Herald*, March 25, 1908, 8:3-4; *The Bullfrog Miner*, March 28, 1908, 5:1.
35. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 22, 1908, 1:6-7, 4:1; March 25, 1908, 2:1-2.
36. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p. 71; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 26, 1908, 5:4.
37. *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 21, 1908, 1:1-4; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 26, 1908, 5:4; *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 24, 1908, 1:2-4; *New York Times*, March 21, 1908, 1:1.
38. *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, April 2, 1908, 6:1; *New York Times*, March 21, 1908, 1:1; March 22, 1908, 1:1; March 23, 1908, 1:1.
39. *New York Times*, April 7, 1908, 2:4-5; Antonio Scarfoglio, *Round The World in a Motor-Car* (Translated by J. Parker Heyes), New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1909, p. 130.
40. Scarfoglio, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-35; *New York Times*, April 7, 1908, 2:4-5.
41. *New York Times*, April 7, 1908, 2:4-5; Scarfoglio, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
42. Scarfoglio, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.
45. *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 29, 1908, 2:1.
46. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 22, 1908, 2:1-2.
47. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1908, 1:2-4; March 28, 1908, 1:5-6; March 29, 1908, 1:5-7.
48. *Ibid.*, March 29, 1908, 1:5-7, 4:2; *New York Times*, March 29, 1908, 5:1.
49. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1908, 1:5-7, 4:2; *New York Times*, March 29, 1908, 5:1.
50. Scarfoglio, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
51. *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, March 29, 1908, 1:5-7; April 2, 1908, 6:1; *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1908, 1:5-7; *The Bullfrog Miner*, April

- 4, 1908, 8:3-4; *Rhyolite Herald*, April 1, 1908, 8:6; *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*, March 30, 1908, 1:1, 4:3; *New York Times*, March 29, 1908, 5:1.
52. *New York Times*, March 29, 1908, 1:1; March 30, 1908, 5:2-3; March 31, 1908, 4:2; *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, April 2, 1908, 3:6.
53. *New York Times*, March 31, 1908, 4:2.
54. *Ely Weekly Mining Expositor*, April 2, 1908, 3:6.
55. *New York Times*, March 31, 1908, 4:2.
56. *Ibid.*, April 1, 1908, 2:5-6.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*, April 1, 1908, 2:5-6; *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, March 31, 1908, 4:3; April 2, 1908, 2:5; *Tonopah Miner*, April 4, 1908, 8:2; *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1908, 1:2-5, 4:1; April 1, 1908, 1:1-3, 4:4.
59. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1908, 1:2-5, 4:1.
60. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1908, 1:2-5, 4:1; April 1, 1908, 4:4; *New York Times*, April 1, 1908, 2:5-6.
61. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1908, 4:1; April 1, 1908, 4:4; April 2, 1908, 4:1; *New York Times*, April 2, 1908, 2:5.
62. *New York Times*, April 1, 1908, 2:5-6; April 2, 1908, 2:5.
63. *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, April 2, 1908, 4:1; *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*, April 1, 1908, 1:3; *Rhyolite Herald*, April 1, 1908, 8:5; *The Bullfrog Miner*, April 4, 1908, 8:3-4.
64. *New York Times*, April 3, 1908, 2:3; *Tonopah Sun*, April 6, 1908, 3:4; *The Bullfrog Miner*, April 4, 1908, 8:3-4; *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*, April 2, 1908, 1:3.
65. Schuster and Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54, 82-83; *New York Times*, April 3, 1908, 2:3; April 4, 1908, 2:4; April 6, 1908, 3:5; April 8, 1908, 2:4; April 10, 1908, 1:1; April 15, 1908, 3:2; April 16, 1908, 1:3.
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70. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-132.
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73. *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 142, 148-50.
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75. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 149-58; *Nevada State Journal*, June 14, 1964, 20:1-3; *Tonopah Times-Bonanza and Goldfield News*, June 5, 1964, 1:1-2, 8:3; June 12, 1964, 1:3-5; June 19, 1964, 1:3-5, 7:1-2.
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*Francis Smith, Mayor of Reno; Governor Charles Russell; and Senator George Malone*



# ***Nevada in the Fifties — A Glance at State Politics and Economics***

*by Mary Ellen Glass*

Carson City, Nevada, election night, 1950. The incumbent governor, Vail Pittman, entertained a few friends at the governor's mansion and expectantly listened to ballot tallies on the radio. All present fully believed that the governor would be easily reelected, so the talk was pleasant and relaxed. The Democrats had been in power in the state capital for some fifteen years, through much of the Great Depression, through the Second World War, and through the turbulent postwar recovery period. The two United States senators were likewise Democrats, while the state's lone congressman had been a Democrat since 1933 except for a single term served by Republican Charles H. Russell. Russell was now in 1950 running for governor against heavy odds, and having been out of the state for some two years after his defeat for reelection to Congress. Governor Pittman was just finishing his first elected term; he and his friends felt confident. After all, they might have reasoned, the state's voters registered about two to one Democratic, and organized labor supported Pittman because, as a congressman, Russell had voted for the Taft-Hartley Act. Then, as the statistics came in on the radio, visitors at the mansion were "stunned" to find that Russell was elected. An old feud between the Democratic Senator Patrick A. McCarran and Governor Pittman had caused the upset, for the powerful McCarran threw his support to Russell.<sup>1</sup>

Few political analysts held great expectations for Governor Russell's term, many regarding it as a mere electoral anomaly to be remedied at the next election. In fact, some recalled the time a decade later as a "do-nothing" administration.<sup>2</sup> This perhaps was because the new governor, youngish, charming, and with a beautiful wife and five handsome children, was a quiet, seemingly simple man, lacking most of the noisy and flamboyant characteristics usually attributed to successful politicians.

If they expected nothing, the political analysts were dead wrong.

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Governor Russell would not deserve all the credit or all the blame for the stormy eight years that followed his election, but no historian could correctly assign "do-nothing" to his tenure. During the decade of the 1950's, Nevada's school system underwent the most radical change in its history, the tax base widened dramatically, mining began a boom that extended into the next twenty years, the assets of the state's largest financial institution more than doubled, gambling came under organized and professional government control, organized labor suffered four crushing defeats at the polls, the University of Nevada expanded to include a campus at Las Vegas while surviving a boiling conflict, and the population grew by more than three quarters over the 1940's. Literally dozens of political, educational, and economic problems contended for the citizens' and politicians' attention and involvement during this quiet, conservative era.

The state's educational system, for example, had limped along for three quarters of a century, inadequately organized and underfinanced. The state legislature had rather consistently refused to accede to demands by teachers and parents for better-financed schools, facilities, and instruction. Through the decade of the 1940's, some people—Parent-Teacher Association leaders and others—had spoken of the need for improved education, and educational administrators had warned of a crisis in the offing. The legislature's most consistent (and logical) response to these admonishments and demands was to point out that the tax base was too narrow to allow heavy increases in appropriations for schools. Two or three times, the lawmakers considered new taxes in the light of school needs, only to draw back at a crucial stage.

In 1953, the crisis arrived with the opening of the fall school term. The postwar "baby boom" began to have an impact on the school systems of Nevada; many of the state's more than 230 school districts, especially in the urban areas, found their facilities overcrowded, understaffed, and lacking in finances. With limited resources spread thinly, no relief could be expected short of revolutionary changes in the entire structure. Citizen groups statewide began a clamor for modernization and progress. Responding to these demands for quick action, the governor called a special session of the legislature—the first special session since 1928—to meet in January, 1954.

The legislators this time heeded the call for educational revolution by asking for a professional survey of the state's schools and appropriating money for the study to be conducted by the Peabody College for Teachers in Tennessee. By the end of the next regular legislative session, Nevada had only seventeen school districts instead of 230, and a formula for support that ensured an adequate basic education for the state's schoolchildren. With the so-called "Peabody formula" came a new state sales tax and a forced statewide equalization in property tax assessments. The sales tax, extremely controversial then and later, was affirmed in a referendum election in 1956. The same tax would continue as the basis for support of the Nevada school systems.<sup>3</sup> Nevadans thus had reason

to be proud of their state's educational progress; the roots of that pride lay in the efforts of parents, teachers, school administrators, legislators, the governor, and many ordinary citizens during the decade of the 1950's.

A second major feature of Nevada political and economic life in the last half of the twentieth century was perhaps the most obvious—legalized gambling. Gaming in Nevada was legal from the time of statehood (although not with the status it later attained) until 1909. In that year, a reformist legislature outlawed gambling and tried to clean up the state's reputation as a low den of sin. This action fitted well with the times; the Progressive Era was marked by many such impulses. But gambling was in the western tradition, and Nevada enjoyed status as a western state. So subsequent legislatures continually weakened the anti-gambling statutes by permitting slot machines, first that gave only prizes and then those that gave money, and card games on the same basis, first for cigars and then for money. By 1931, with the state hard-hit by declining revenues from mining, the early stages of the Great Depression, and soon to see the failure of its largest banking firm, the legislature opted for the tourist trade; lawmakers legalized table games, slots, and other forms of play-for-cash.

No spectacular results came at first, probably because gambling held little novelty. The local sheriff or police chief performed the perfunctory chores of law enforcement in the embryonic gambling palaces for the next several years. Then in the 1940's, the war and its aftermath seemed to put people in the mood to travel, to look for new entertainments. By then, Nevadans had begun to be ready as well. In Elko, an imaginative hotelman, Newton Crumley, decided to initiate some "big name" floor shows, and hired Ted Lewis to entertain the customers in his establishment. In Reno, Raymond I. Smith of Harolds (*sic*) Club and William Harrah began to expand their operations, which until then had been mainly in the bingo or "wheel of fortune" categories. Las Vegas had begun to attract more tourists, too, as the Strip hotels came into being, starting in the 1940's. The legislators then felt the need to act, and they did; the regulation of gambling—consisting mainly of issuing licenses, carrying out routine investigations, and collecting fees—was placed in the state Tax Commission.

Within only a few years, the situation had become vastly more complex. Tax Commission agents who tried to collect the fees or conduct rudimentary investigations found many strange and interesting varieties of gambling—including transient roadside casinos disguised as zoos or tent shows—under their supervision. By that time, the increase of population and mobility after the war had brought to Nevada a complicated problem involving both honest and dishonest gamblers, probably some racketeers, and undoubtedly some people with inadequate experience or financing. The state and its agents soon realized that they had a larger responsibility than they had initially believed.

The inexperienced tax agents came to realize that they often needed professional assistance in order to know the differences between and among members of the new crowd of gamblers. With gross revenues from gambling more than doubling from 1950 to 1955, and to quadruple before 1959, Governor Russell asked the legislature to give the state more police powers and a regulatory staff. The lawmakers responded with the creation of a full-fledged gaming control agency within the Tax Commission, in 1955. Nevada was moving into the regulation business. The control agency began to put together a professional staff of highly paid, competent, independent investigators and tax agents to attack the burgeoning problems. Some of the agents did their tasks in plain view, others employed undercover tactics. The pattern thus established endured through various administrative and political changes, and through subsequent strengthening of the gaming control act.<sup>4</sup>

The road to "tough" regulation had bumps. In the legislature of 1957, a few gaming operators who had run afoul of the Tax Commission's gaming control staff lobbied through a bill that would effectively have destroyed the state's ability to act promptly on gambling violations by making actions subject to court challenge. This, the notorious Senate Bill 92, came to the governor's desk after a quick, middle-of-the-night passage through the lawmaking chambers. One legislator who opposed the bill from introduction to passage discussed it later:

Well, we knew perfectly well that when anything is being tried before court, . . . lawyers can delay it and delay it. It might mean that a . . . gambling establishment was cheating and violating rules of the Gaming Commission, but could still stay in business.<sup>5</sup>

Governor Russell, alerted to these dangers in a seemingly innocuous bill, vetoed Senate Bill 92.

Some legislators, the sponsors and supporters of the bill, various newspapers, and private citizens roared disapproval of this apparently arbitrary action. The law looked adequate to certain segments of the state's population, since it seemed only to require due process for gamblers accused of cheating, merely to protect them from summary closing of their establishments on the fiat of some obscure state gaming control agent. Thus when the state senate began to vote on a possible override of the governor's veto, few people remained unaware. By a single, last-minute change of vote by Ralph Lattin of Churchill County, the veto stood, undoubtedly literally saving Nevada's legal gaming.<sup>6</sup> The incident was probably the most dramatic in Nevada's political history; the courage (or foolhardiness) of Governor Russell and Senator Lattin was widely discussed then and later. In fact, Charles Russell's luckless attempt to win a third term may well have had its roots in his veto of Senate Bill 92.

Mining, after gaming and tourism the second most important sector of Nevada's economy, following years of *borrasca* underwent remarkable expansion during the decade of the 1950's. This industry,

often portrayed as the epitome of small private enterprise, with the picturesque prospector leading a trusty burro, was a constant source of interest from Nevada's earliest days. The Comstock era brought fame and statehood to the Silver State, while the Tonopah-Goldfield developments brought a measure of respectability to the industry. But the business inevitably declined as rich precious metal ores played out. After 1950, however, the industrial factors of mining as well as the financial aspects became a stable part of the state's total economy.

Specimen figures illustrate the new increase. From 1859, the year of effective discovery at Virginia City, to 1971, the gross proceeds of mines in Nevada amounted to about 3.9 billion dollars. Of that total, over 2.1 billion—**more than half**—was produced **after 1950**. In the decade of the 1950's, production reached over 780 million dollars, more than double the output of the Comstock era—and more than the combined output of the Comstock and the twentieth century boom camps at Tonopah and Goldfield. Nonmetallics (gypsum, perlite, and others) represented about a quarter of the production of the 1950's, and none of the production of the Comstock period.<sup>7</sup>

The boom of the 1950's was traceable partly to the Korean War, just as the Comstock boom had some of its roots in the Civil War; wartime usually creates demand for metals. Iron ore was first produced commercially in Nevada in the 1950's, reaching an early peak in 1954.<sup>8</sup> And the year 1956 was a mineral industries' record by any standard: \$126 million produced, mainly copper, gold, and silver. While inflation distorts such figures, 1956 still marked a post-discovery high point even in **constant dollars**, exceeding real production for any previous year.<sup>9</sup>

The mining activity of the 1950's had important effects. Dependent on mining, for example, were the towns of Empire in northern Washoe County, Ely in White Pine County, and to a lesser extent Yerington in Lyon County (there, the Anaconda Company built its company town at Weed Heights). In addition to economic factors, there was a vital impact on the environment of the twentieth century mining town. For instance, a health department inspector found a frightening situation at Henderson in southern Nevada, where emissions from mineral processing plants caused concern:

I personally know of one instance where an exposure of less than twenty-four hours resulted in the removal of a poor paint job off the license plates of an automobile. By now, efforts beginning in 1951, '52, have resulted in improved plant processes . . . <sup>10</sup>

And similarly at McGill in White Pine County:

(A problem) of almost herculean magnitude (is) that of dust at Kennecott Corporation at McGill. Now (1966) the tailings (from copper smelting) have started to be deposited west of town at McGill and have become of such magnitude as to extend far beyond

the (railroad) tracks on the west slopes of Steptoe Valley, tailings have covered the old McGill ranch, and are almost to the main street of the community.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the copper and smelting operations gave dramatic evidence of their financial, environmental, and political importance. The copper industry continued to be Nevada's most prominent mineral development, and the mining industry as a whole the second largest source of income to the state.<sup>12</sup> The huge amounts of capital involved in the copper industry, and the dying out of gold and silver prospects, eliminated forever the sordough prospector.

Warehousing came to represent another valuable sector of the Nevada economy. The economic and political background of the huge, sprawling, even handsome buildings, mainly around Reno's airport section, made an engrossing activity for several years. During the 1950's, a group of businessmen saw and understood the importance of so-called clean industry for northern Nevada, and also the problems in the lack of electrical energy in the same area. What, they asked, could be cleaner and less consuming of power than manufactured goods that remained in warehouses? The group of business leaders wrote what was called the Free Port law. The statute gave tax-free status to manufactured goods in transit—no inventory or property taxes were charged if the items were not to be sold in Nevada. The law proved a boon to retailers and wholesalers in nearby states who had previously been subject to various kinds of inventory taxes on goods stored for sale.

The election of 1960 marked a culmination in a drive to provide this clean and stable business to the state; the people voted in that year to approve the Free Port law as a constitutional amendment. By that time, and afterwards, manufacturers, jobbers, wholesalers, and retailers built enormous holding facilities, especially in northern Nevada. The buildings provided an important asset to the economy, the property tax rolls were enlarged with buildings added on formerly unused ground, and Nevada thus acquired a stable business quite unrelated to what was sometimes regarded as an unsteady or uncertain tourist economy.

Participants in events leading to the election of 1960 occasionally have discussed their activities. A lobbyist for the Free Port bill recalled:

(The Free Port law) would generate income in the way of new buildings, and . . . it wouldn't be costing the people of the state of Nevada anything. Because if you didn't have it, they wouldn't be here. It had a lot of natural appeal. However, the small counties couldn't see that it would help them particularly, so they were more or less lukewarm on the Free Port law for two or three sessions . . . We couldn't see where it would hurt anybody. And it helped a lot of people.

We really worked hard on it. It wasn't a matter of pressuring any of these senators. It was showing them that if dollars fall into the state

of Nevada, although they might happen to fall into Washoe instead of Pershing (County), well, people from Washoe will go out to Pershing and maybe they'll buy a farm. They'll spend some money.<sup>13</sup>

The law, as a constitutional provision, continued to help people, causing the spending of considerable sums in the state. In fact, probably a good deal more money and talent went into the building of the Reno area's warehouses than was expended on any of a hundred of the decaying ghost towns of the previous century.

Somewhat ironically, as capital gained through enactment of the Free Port law, labor suffered painfully through other actions. Organized labor had long been recognized as an important force in Nevada. Virginia City's hard rock miners had been paid the handsome wage of four dollars a day, largely as a result of negotiations roughly on a labor-management model. The Tonopah and Goldfield era had witnessed most virulent struggles, some of which ended in bloodshed or death for representatives of both sides, and federal troops were dispatched. Indeed, the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) had tested their revolutionary labor theories in Goldfield's boom days.<sup>14</sup> In the years that followed, organized unions acquired increasing political and economic power. By the early 1950's, the president of the Nevada State Federation of Labor received the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor. Many trades and crafts were fully organized in what virtually amounted to a closed shop situation.

The labor unions, however, misjudged their support. In 1949, at the height of the summer tourist season in Reno, the Culinary Workers and Bartenders called a strike for higher pay. No food and drink service meant that the town would close down—and on the Fourth of July, that was an intolerable situation for the city's businessmen. The hotel, restaurant, and bar owners, along with some advisors, held a council of war, locked their establishments, and then held a huge public picnic; food and liquor free or at nominal cost were available in a downtown Reno park. The waiters, cooks, and bartenders at the picnic could be recognized as some of the most powerful political leaders in the state. And their rage could be felt all the way to the capital. Labor claimed victory from the ultimate strike settlement,<sup>15</sup> but management had the last word.

In the months following the strike-lockout, through 1950, representatives of the tourist industries circulated and presented to the legislature an initiative petition for a "right-to-work" law, to outlaw the closed shop. The representatives of organized labor, dubbing the proposal a "yellow dog" law, quickly mounted a campaign to oppose the initiative, expecting that their widespread membership and support in the state would result in the defeat of the proposition, first in the legislature and then at the polls. The hotel and restaurant owners, however, proved too strong; the right-to-work initiative passed by a fairly close vote in



the election of 1952.

The labor leaders redoubled their efforts and put together a huge campaign to repeal the right-to-work law by referendum. They were pushed back again in the 1954 election, this time by a wider margin than in 1952. And at the same time, the president of the State Federation of Labor lost his bid to become lieutenant governor by a big majority to a political neophyte. In 1956 the representatives of organized labor moved again to repeal the hated law. This time, the petition for repeal was accompanied by a second initiative that would in effect have outlawed right-to-work laws in the state by constitutional amendment. The third effort suffered a worse defeat than the previous two.

The *coup de grace* to labor's aspirations came in 1958, when a constitutional amendment passed handily, making it much more difficult to put initiatives and referendums on the ballot; during the campaign, voters understood that if they passed this amendment, the right-to-work fight would end.<sup>16</sup> By the 1960's, spokesmen for management claimed that two special statutes made Nevada attractive to prospective new industry, the Free Port law and the right-to-work act.<sup>17</sup> Nevada thus, for better or worse, became an open shop state where union and nonunion labor competed on a more-or-less equal basis. The effectiveness of strike tactics was somewhat diluted by the open shop provisions of the right-to-work law.

While public education underwent dramatic changes during the 1950's, higher education provided equal excitement. Until the 1950's, the University of Nevada consisted only of the campus at Reno, where the site was established in 1886. Extension courses offered off-campus began to have such large enrollments in Las Vegas that a new building was constructed there. Before long, the Las Vegas campus acquired more buildings and more students, until, by the end of the decade, it became obvious that degree-granting status was nearly at hand. Nevada Southern University, as it was called initially, began granting degrees in 1963.

Prior to those developments, a wracking controversy on the Reno campus gained an American Association of University Professors investigation and censure, some intense court and legislative action, and national exposure for the state's problems. A new president of the University, Minard Stout, was appointed in 1952. He managed at the outset to antagonize a substantial, and then an increasing segment of the faculty with what they regarded as dictatorial behavior. One former faculty member recalled "evil machinations," "harsh tongue-lashings," and "shocking tirades" by President Stout;<sup>18</sup> while members of the Board of Regents took the view that faculty members were largely to blame for the uproar,<sup>19</sup> or declared that Stout's actions gave "great impetus" to the University.<sup>20</sup>

Dr. Stout attempted to give effect to his attitudes by dismissing five faculty members with whom he disagreed on educational principles. All

ultimately won reinstatement, one as the result of court action. In this atmosphere, the legislature ordered an investigation by an outside consultant. That inquiry resulted in Dr. Stout's own dismissal in 1958, and a change in both structure and direction of the Board of Regents.<sup>21</sup>

The six or so Stout years at the University in Reno probably numbered among the most interesting and exciting on record. The political and educational atmosphere changed markedly, and attitudes within and toward the Univesity formed at that time shaped the course of higher education in Nevada for years afterward.

As in other political and economic areas, vast changes came about in the financial field in Nevada during the 1950's. For example, the First National Bank had been, since the 1930's, the state's largest financial institution, carrying more than half of all the banking assets in Nevada. In 1952, First National filed a report giving assets as \$145 million; by 1961, assets were declared at \$337 million—more than double in the decade. At the same time, personal income for Nevadans also more than doubled, from \$314 million to \$819 million, while the population increased by more than seventy-five percent over the previous ten years.<sup>22</sup>

As the 1950's ended, a new regime composed of young Democratic chieftains took power. They built on the foundations laid during the "quiet" decade, when some said that little happened, and which people recalled in later years as providing a sort of rest-stop on the frantic political and economic highway through Nevada.

#### NOTES

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*Comstock era:*

Lyon County (Silver City, Dayton)	Through 1920: \$23 million
Storey County (Virginia City, Gold Hill)	Through 1920: 365 million
Total Comstock era	\$388 million

*Twentieth century boom camps:*

Esmeralda County (Goldfield)	Through 1940: \$109 million
Nye County (Tonopah)	Through 1940: 187 million
Total 20th century boom	\$296 million
Total famous boom camps:	\$684 million

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# ***An Essay on Amerikanuak***

*by Wilbur Shepperson*

During the first three decades of the twentieth century the subject of foreign migration to America was approached from several divergent and often contradictory positions. At least three broad and clearly opposing points of view can be identified. First, there were the rather self-conscious articles and books published by the children and grandchildren of the "new" immigrants. These filiopietistic writers often exaggerated the talents and contributions of their particular national group, and sometimes aggressively argued that the culture and labor of their people were not only unique and valuable but indeed basic to the well-being of America. Throughout the same era, governmental reports, congressional committees and many self-styled investigators found that the new wave of foreigners was debasing American manhood and turning the proud Anglo-Saxon race into a motley mix of criminals, drunkards, and morons. During the 1920's, Congress "closed the gates" to most foreign migration. Finally, a third attitude was presented by writers and novelists. They detailed the economic and social hardships, the human cleavages, and the fragmentation of spirit suffered by the thousands who poured into the urban slums and out onto the country's desolate prairies. The literary observers, perhaps more than either of the two other groups, provided sustained and meaningful insight into America's immigrant heritage.

Since the 1930's immigration has tended to fade as a heated public issue and almost simultaneously it has emerged as a significant topic for study by several academic disciplines. (The current excitement over Mexican immigration has rekindled some of the earlier discord and concern and has again tended to bring the subject into the public arena.)

Over the years Nevada has rather consistently mirrored and sometimes led the national response to immigration. As on the national scene, a few of the state's foreign born or their sons arose to plead the case for immigrants in general and for their specific nationality in particular. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the state legislature placed restrictions on certain groups while journalists

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and other critics bitterly attacked the character, ability, and adaptability of the new arrivals. And the third position was well represented in Nevada by works of fiction which used foreigners in major roles. More recently the state has continued to reflect the national picture through the books, articles, and lectures of its scholarly community. Indeed, despite a small population and limited resources, Nevada has come to play a significant role in immigration studies. It is fitting, therefore, that a new book utilizing a fresh and imaginative approach to the subject has been written by two Nevadans and published by the University of Nevada Press. (William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, **Amerikanuak: Basques in the New World.**)

The authors introduce **Amerikanuak** by noting Basque history, society, trade, ethnic peculiarities and attitudes over hundreds of years. Even a lengthy introductory chapter is devoted to the pre-Columbian era. During the half of a millenium since Columbus, the Basques have graphically pointed up the problems and paradoxes faced by people in many small European societies. On the one hand they fought desperately for the survival of their homeland, and on the other hand, they readily deserted their homes for life in the New World. With the coming of the Renaissance and the gradual collapse of community isolation and regionalism, European peoples were slowly drawn together under major nationally unified governments. The expanding states sometimes unconsciously absorbed and sometimes forcefully eliminated many of the smaller social and cultural entities. In the rush for greater national viability and power, little attention was given to the diverse local and ethnic cultures which collapsed before the onslaught of centralization and political conformity.

European history has often seemed to revolve around the machinations of these powerful states rather than around the more mundane activities of seaports, market towns, and agricultural communities. In the historian's fascination for kings and queens and capital cities it has been particularly easy to overlook the scores of small linguistically and culturally distinctive societies which have long provided Europe with its colorful and exciting diversity. These societies have also provided America with many of her immigrants. Some of the smaller ethnic groups like the Circassians, the Slovenes, the Ruthenians, the Cornish, and the Bretons have been almost absorbed into larger and more dynamic states. A few of the more strategically situated or more tenacious peoples like the Armenians, the Flemish, the Scots, the Welsh, and the Basques, although severely weakened, have managed to survive.

During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries most European leaders accepted the goal of unification and the desirability of absorbing diverse peoples. This philosophy often led to an exodus from the minority states. For students of immigration, therefore, it is as valid to study attitudes and movements from the vantage point of Rennes, Ghent, Cardiff, or Bilbao as from Paris, Brussels, London, or Madrid.

National flags have often blinded the observer and national history is too often myopic. The story of life in a Basque village is as valuable as the story of power politics. Furthermore, the citizens of many of the small ethnic communities were as cosmopolitan and diversified in their pursuits and perspectives as the representatives of major national cultures. For five hundred years the Basques worked and traveled and migrated throughout the world. And today many villages in the Basque country have sent some of their citizens to South America, Mexico, Australia, the Philippines, and the American West.

As emigration continued, more and more Basque families found themselves romantically tied to the Americas. Long before the political power of any overseas state became significant, a human and very personal bond had been extended across the Atlantic. In short, a vital force in Basque history during the past several centuries has been the exodus of her people and the peculiar hope for survival induced by the New World.

For over three hundred years Basques participated in the exploration, governing, and economic development of every major region of Latin America. Douglass and Bilbao are almost halfway through their narrative before their Basque migrants reach California. While providing a wealth of detail and noting scores of individuals, the authors tend to paint on a broad canvas. It is the diversity of Basque activities and the magnitude of their movements, from Iceland and Spitzbergen to the Amazon and Columbia rivers, which captures the imagination. In these earlier chapters, the authors do not dwell on the emotions of a last good-bye, on the personal risks of the long sea voyage, on the loneliness and homesickness, or upon the death and disease. Rather, the work never loses sight of the distinct ethnic character of the Basques, and perhaps most significant, it unifies and integrates the people into both their European and their Latin American environment.

We can only understand the complexities of a Basque emigration that eventually touched every corner of the New World, albeit in differing degrees, by first considering the historical backdrop of shifting political, social, and economic conditions that influenced the Old and New World over the course of several centuries. To understand the nature of Basque emigration to any one area of the world at a particular time, it is necessary to understand the nature of the alternatives and the emigrant's perception of them. (p.176)

By the mid-nineteenth century sizeable numbers of Basques from Mexico, South America, and the Pyrenees had discovered the many attractions of California. And by the late 1860's the first Basque sheepmen and cattlemen began to move over the Sierra into Nevada. Of course, the Basques were only one of many foreign groups that was to turn Nevada and other communities of the Far West into an ethnic

polyglot.

During the first sixty years after Nevada became a state, the mineral discoveries, the railroad construction booms, the reclamation projects, and the livestock ranges brought wave after wave of foreigners to the area. The Irish, Cornish, Germans, French-Canadians, Chinese, Greeks, Slavs, Italians, Japanese, and Basques were each drawn by the magnetism of opportunity. In 1870, only six years after Nevada was admitted to the Union, 44.2 percent of the state's population was foreign-born. On a percentage basis, the new land of sagebrush had already become the largest immigrant state in America; almost seven percent more of its inhabitants were foreign born than that of second-place California. Only fourteen percent of the population of the United States was foreign born in 1870. Furthermore, the Bureau of the Census has estimated that during the following ten years the net foreign migration into Nevada was ten times that of the American-born influx. Although Nevada's population increased by twenty thousand between 1870 and 1880, the census figures suggest that only eight hundred of the new residents were American-born migrants. In 1880, with a foreign-born population of 41.2 percent, Nevada still had seven percent more foreign-born inhabitants than any other American state. Nevada long maintained its immigrant character and was on a percentage basis one of the top ten foreign-born states in America for more than seventy-five years.

Starting in the 1860's with J. Ross Browne and Mark Twain, Nevada's novelists and writers seized upon the state's ethnic diversity as a useful feature for their stories. The interest in immigrants continued and by the second one-third of the twentieth century the Basques had emerged as the most written about foreign group in the Great Basin. Since World War II over a score of fictionalized works have helped to popularize the "inscrutable people from the Pyrenees." Authors have exploited the group to give authenticity and drama to their Nevada themes, to lean their events upon, to emphasize the particularity of the region, and to provide subtlety and urgency for their plots. Almost uniformly the literature has cultivated the image of a free, independent, and perplexing Basque shepherd. But, in general, the image seekers have not pushed their Basque theme too far. The corrosive relationships growing out of a feeling of ethnic inferiority and the personal pique stemming from emotional tensions have not been overly magnified. More recent writers have praised the Basques. Sherwood Anderson argued that they supplied an attitude of mind and followed a physical routine which had helped Nevada to become the "repository of nature's greatest and most rugged values."

Certainly physical ruggedness and muscular energy were distinctive Basque characteristics. Whether alone on the distant range or performing at a community festival, strength and stamina seemed basic to their self-esteem. The European peasant traditions of manliness and hard work



blended easily into the frontier emphasis on persistence and physical prowess. Being strong and able to endure the hard life and being dogged and able to perform under adversity were goals which most rural Basques sought to obtain. Of course, along with the raw physical strength went an emotional strength of character and the need to constantly demonstrate that they were men who could match the mountains. The outside observers came to sense this blending of Old World and frontier values and formulated it into a Basque mythology. They quickly transformed the Basque stereotype from "that of the despised itinerant herder of the days when men fought for use of the open range to that of the romantic hero, the humble worker, or the established hotelkeeper. Basques are now one of the most highly respected ethnic groups in the American West." (p. 394)

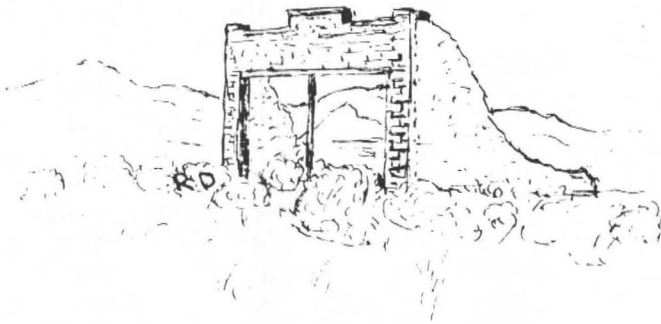
**Amerikanuak** points up many of the paradoxes and some of the reasons for the popular mystery surrounding the Basques. Not only were their migratory patterns distinctive, but their experiences, occupations, and outlook varied substantially from that of most immigrant minorities. Their early entry into the United States was from Mexico and South America. In the Latin countries, Basques were administrators, mariners, religious leaders, and financial magnates. Their long traditions and close family ties allowed them to become power brokers within the Latin bureaucracies. But within a few decades in the Far West, they had become almost exclusively associated in the public mind with the sheep industry. It was the uneducated, the young, and the rural who seemed to be ever present in the United States; whereas it was the skilled, the professional, and the intellectual who seemed to dominate in South America. And yet the unobtrusive sheepmen because of their activities on the open range and their influence in sparsely populated western states prompted more special federal legislation than all the other immigrant groups in the history of the United States combined. During the last half-century the Basque country has waged an almost constant battle for political and cultural independence; yet the sons and daughters in America have been almost totally indifferent to the struggle. Although the Basques often seem obsessed by the need for their European homeland and consciously attempt to preserve their society and customs, the cries of the Old World for assistance in opposing the Spanish political centralization or the French cultural oppression have generally gone unheeded in the United States. Whereas Latin American Basques have actively participated in the homeland's freedom movements.

Although the American Basques maintain contact with the Pyrenees they have developed their own ethnic brand of Americanism.

Taken as a whole, they provide a fascinating example of an ethnic group elaborating on a series of institutions that reinforce a sense of ethnic cohesiveness among a population that is small and lightly sprinkled over an enormous territory. Through its regional festivals,

the network of Basque hotels, preferential endogamy, the kinship system, sense of funerary obligations, social clubs, dance groups, the travels of Basque chaplains, and Basque-language radio broadcasts, the Basque community has been able to create and to project one of the most viable ethnic heritages in the American West. (p. 394)

**Amerikanuak** is a study of a people who for 700 years have been buffeted by the military, nationalistic, and cultural pressures of powerful neighbors. It is a study of a migration which for 500 years has flowed to two continents through an elaborate network of economic and kinship ties. It is a story of sheepmen who for 125 years have survived adversity and isolation in the remote corners of the American West. It is a story of an ethnic minority's political opposition to 75 years of steadily increasing federal restrictions on grazing. It is a social commentary and a scholarly analysis of a peoples' hopes and failures, ambitions and successes. The book **Amerikanuak** is much like the real America. It encompasses mankind from the grandest grandee to the humblest sheepcamp drifter.



## *What's Being Written*

**Here is Our Valley.** By Molly Flagg Knudsen. (Helen Marye Thomas Memorial Series, No. 1, College of Agriculture, University of Nevada, Reno, 1975. 120 pp., illustrations, \$3.00)

Spawned by a love of Nevada, and a desire to establish a grant to enable a series of agricultural histories to be written memorializing her parents, George T. and Marie D. Marye, Helen Marye gave her SBarS ranch to the University of Nevada upon her death, March 24, 1970. The first book of this set of publications, **Here Is Our Valley**, is a record authored by Molly Flagg Knudsen.

Mrs. Knudsen writes from personal experience and incidents related to her by present and past residents of Grass Valley. It is a nearly complete story of this Central Nevada valley, and the reader is provided with a text that rings with authenticity. A remarkable aspect of the book is the simplicity and poetic quality of prose used to describe the land and its people. The first portion of the book is a masterpiece in this category. In the latter parts, the quality of writing somewhat lags, but still a book emerges which relates the outpouring of the simple life of Grass Valley. People come alive as she tells with humor and understanding the problems and solutions of her neighbors to the enigmas they faced.

The principal and largest holding of the area is the Grass Valley Ranch, which Mrs. Knudsen owns. She paints a well-drawn picture of past and present life on this large Nevada holding.

The book includes a chapter devoted to the archeology of the region. Some of the biographical sketches go beyond the boundaries of Grass Valley and include personages of adjacent areas. The reestablishment of the University of Nevada purebred cattle herd, made possible in part by Mrs. Knudsen's diligence and generosity, is related in detail especially with respect to the role she played in this endeavor. The changing role of women on ranches is also discussed. Both contemporary and professional photographs add to the book.

The volume is somewhat diminished by the omission of a map of the area and an index, the lack of which will plague scholars and researchers throughout the years; however, the wealth of material included in the edition compensates for these shortcomings.

As the first published volume of the ranch series, it has set a high standard of excellence. If forthcoming editions live up to this work, the

accounts will become standard works for agriculturists, archeologists, historians and casual readers seeking Nevada lore. The book is a happy combination of historical probity and good reading.

EDNA B. PATTERSON

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**Wilderness and the American Mind.** By Roderick Nash. (New Haven, Yale University Press, revised ed., 1973. xvi + 273 pp., notes, index, \$10.00)

**This monograph** is a masterful study of the evolutionary development of American attitudes toward wilderness from colonial times to the decade of the 1970's. Although the entire work is a study in the dynamic, ever-changing definition of wilderness, Professor Nash tackles the problem of the definition early in his approach to his illusive subject. After rejecting the apparent concreteness of the concept because Americans have more often used the word as an adjective than a noun, he explores throughout this work the subjective dimensions of the concept. "The emphasis . . . is not so much what wilderness is but what men **think** it is." (p.5)

According to Nash, Americans have always viewed civilization and wilderness as "antipodal influences." In their early history Americans viewed wilderness as alien to civilized man. Wilderness was at once their major challenge (for they were commissioned by God to tame it by whipping the wild out of it), and their major obstacle blocking the path of civilization's expansion. Americans believed that they had to conquer nature and thereby gain control over it or eliminate it entirely. Until the late nineteenth century Americans assumed that in this clashing encounter between civilization and wilderness, one could measure progress in terms of civilization's ability to convert the raw stuff of wilderness into conditions of existence more satisfying to civilized man. Surveying their past from the vantage point of the mid-nineteenth century, Americans believed they saw self-evident proof that they had been impressively successful in their expanding mastery over the wilderness. They had transformed a "howling wilderness" into an advanced civilization. And by the nineteenth century, as Leo Marx has documented so convincingly in his work **Machine in the Garden**, applied science had placed in man's hands a new, awesome ability to conquer nature. Even George Perkins Marsh, one of the first Americans to warn his countrymen in his famous **Man and Nature** (1864) that man was one of the most destructive agents of geological change, equated the conquest of wilderness by technology with progress. "Advances in scientific knowledge open a prospect of vast addition to the power hitherto wielded by man. It is too soon even to conjecture by what limits these

powers are conditioned, but it would seem . . . that man's most splendid achievements hitherto, in the conquest of nature, will soon be eclipsed by new and more brilliant victories of mind over matter." (*Man and Nature*, p. 98) This is the same man who also warned: "Man is everywhere a disturbing agent. Wherever he plants his foot, the harmonies of nature are turned to discords. The proportions and accommodations which insure stability in nature of existing arrangements are overthrown." (*Man and Nature*, p. 34) This pioneer champion of the idea that a proper balance between the forces of man and nature was an imperative agreed with the mid-nineteenth century assumption that machines were welcome equalizers in man's struggle with nature. Not until the twentieth century did Americans view men and machines in combination as a real threat to nature. According to Nash, this ambivalence regarding wilderness and civilization has always been typically American.

Prior to the twentieth century, Americans never had too much difficulty agreeing with Andrew Jackson when he asked in his Second Inaugural: "What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute . . .?" (p. 41) But at the same time they have been inclined to agree with those who have argued that the most admirable aspects of American civilization have been derived from the frontier wilderness. By taking this position Americans have made wilderness a raw, basic source of American character.

Nash sees the closing of the frontier and the emergence of urban America as the basic reason that American thinking about wilderness underwent a major transformation in the twentieth century. The underlying theme of this book is that those frontiersmen and agrarians who were directly involved in the struggle to conquer and exploit wilderness were almost totally disinterested in the protection of wilderness, while urban dwellers who were most removed from it have been more inclined to champion its preservation. Nash's urban preservationists viewed wilderness as a cure for modern men. "Before the 1890's," Nash theorized, "it was generally assumed that because the frontiersman was good, the wilderness, as his primary adversary, was bad—the villain of the national drama. But the growing perception that the frontier era was over prompted a reevaluation of primitive conditions . . . The villain, it appeared, was as vital to the play as the hero." (p. 145) After 1900 urban wilderness preservationists began to argue that if the individualism of the frontier were to be preserved some of the original wilderness conditions also had to be preserved. Above all, champions of wilderness were somewhat successful in convincing political leaders that twentieth-century Americans needed to jettison their historically-conditioned conquest mentality and take steps to protect wilderness.

The American ambivalence regarding wilderness and civilization is emphasized throughout this book. But the author underscores the fact that this ambivalence has generally taken the "form of ambivalence in a single mind rather than conflict with the minds of others." (p. 240) Americans never could be neatly divided into those who favored wilderness preservation and those who favored economic development at the expense of wilderness. Especially since the closing of the frontier, Americans have tried to affirm their mutual commitment to both industrial civilization and wilderness. This commitment has offered no solution when twentieth-century Americans have repeatedly had to choose between a new dam such as the one in the Hetch Hetchy Valley near San Francisco or the preservation of that same valley in its wilderness condition. For both the developers and preservationists those choices have been painful because they have been between two goods rather than between good and evil. In Nash's words, "Looking at their national past, Americans can understand wild country as both an asset and an enemy. National pride stems from both **having** and **destroying** wilderness." (p. 242.)

It is fitting that this work which underscores and analyzes American ambivalence regarding wilderness should end on a note of heightened ambivalence. On the one hand Nash concludes optimistically that "by the 1970's the United States had formally accepted as policy the desirability of keeping wilderness a permanent feature of the American environment." (p. 236) As a result the author believed that "the scales were clearly tilting in the direction of the wild." (p. 237) On the other hand his concluding pages focus upon a paradox. The friends of wilderness preservation had by the early 1970's nearly "loved it out of existence." (p. 264) The very increased appreciation for wilderness which had made possible the political victories like the establishment of the Natural Wilderness Preservation System (1964) and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (1968) was producing such an alarming increase in trips to the wilderness that it was nearly as threatened by its admirers as by the economic developers. "For the devotee of wilderness . . . a campground full of Boy Scouts, or even of people like himself, is just as destructive of the essence of wilderness as a highway." (p. 264)

Nash's monograph is the most definitive work available on this subject and must be considered one of the four or five most important works on how Americans have viewed their physical environment.

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**Crimson Desert: Indian Wars of the American Southwest.** By Odie B. Faulk. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974. 237 pages;

illustrations, map, bibliography, index; \$8.95).

The story of conflict between Indians and whites in the American West has been told and retold in tribal histories, accounts of specific campaigns, biographies of military officers and Native American leaders, and other forms. Professor Odie Faulk, author of a long list of books on Western history, has chosen a regional approach to narrate the history of warfare between Indians and whites during the American period in the Southwest. In slightly more than 200 pages Faulk describes military campaigns against three major groups—Navajos, Comanches, and Apaches of southern New Mexico and Arizona, although the Comanches are more closely tied to the great plains by both culture and history.

Faulk's goal is a summary and synthesis of the wars of the Southwest. He blames both sides for the bloodshed and describes his book as "a chronicle of man's inhumanity to man." Two chapters are devoted to each of the three Indian groups, and Faulk gives a brief account of their relations with whites during the Spanish and Mexican periods before recounting Anglo-Indian contacts and the campaigns that led to Indian defeat.

Faulk presents a readable survey of a topic that has been treated in greater detail in other books, including his own history of the Geronimo campaign, Dan Thrapp's several excellent books on the Apaches, and Frank McNitt's recent *Navajo Wars*. There are several minor errors, including confusion regarding the location of agencies for the Mimbres Apaches. Also several useful books, such as Lawrence Kelly's *Navajo Roundup* were excluded from the bibliography.

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**Nothing Seemed Impossible: William C. Ralston and Early San Francisco.** By David Lavender. (Palo Alto, Calif.: American West Publishing Co., 1975. 415 pages; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index; \$12.95)

As part of the nation's centennial celebration in 1876, Ned Barry sang a ballad at Buckley's Varieties in San Francisco which noted the important events there of the preceding year. The chorus had this tribute to the city's most prominent citizen:

"In Ralston's death we lost a man,  
While living we loved dearly,  
His useful life is over now,  
We mourn his loss sincerely."

Despite this sentiment, San Franciscans were not of one mind about William Chapman Ralston at the time of his death—by accidental



drowning or suicide—in August, 1875. To some, particularly the San Francisco **Bulletin** and **Call**, the founder of the Bank of California and financial titan of the Pacific Coast was a robber baron who had played fast and loose with the bank's money and had taken advantage of the public's ignorance and gullibility in matters financial. But to most Ralston was, as one biographer described him, a daring, unselfish, "courageous builder" who became caught in a web of self-serving associates and circumstances beyond his control, which caused his downfall. Despite one's views on this saint-or-sinner issue, none could deny that the genial financial leader had been a driving force in the affairs of California and Nevada since the 1850s and that things would never be the same without him. Fifty thousand mourners marched in his funeral procession. Billy Ralston, already a legend, became a folk hero.

Thanks to Charles de Bretteville, board chairman of the Bank of California, a collection of Ralston letters and papers was made available to David Lavender, whose interest in Western history goes back some fifty years and who has authored eighteen books. This led to **Nothing Seemed Impossible**, a colorful, carefully researched biography of the controversial entrepreneur—the first to appear in forty years. It is the fifth in the American West Publishing Company's Western Biography Series and features an introduction by J. E. Wallace Sterling.

With his new sources Lavender skillfully presents a fuller, more intimate, more detailed picture of Ralston, his family, and numerous financial dealings than did earlier writers. Chief among these were Charles G. Tilton, an economics professor at Connecticut State College, whose scholarly business biography, **William Chapman Ralston: Courageous Builder**, appeared in 1935; and George D. Lyman, whose **Ralston's Ring: California Plunders the Comstock** (New York, 1937) is a popular study of a portion of Ralston's career. Lavender also gives a better picture of banking practices in California in the period 1850-1875 than did the earlier writers.

Lavender's Ralston evolved as a product of his time and a leader of chance-taking entrepreneurs. From humble beginnings as a farm boy in Ohio, who left school at fourteen, and later as a clerk on Mississippi River steamboats, he acted out the Horatio Alger myth. There were opportunities then for enterprising young men like Ralston, and he gained valuable experience from each one that came his way. He served an apprenticeship of three and one half years in business and finance in Panama and Nicaragua, where he demonstrated a flair for moving people and freight bound for California in the Gold Rush. Lavender's description of this portion of Ralston's career, which included dealings with Commodore Vanderbilt, is particularly good. He gives a detailed description of the isthmian crossings and the shipping business in which Ralston, still in his early twenties, became an important figure.

As an outgrowth of his contacts and coastal shipping activities, he became involved in early San Francisco banking and was instrumental in

founding the bank of Garrison, Morgan, Fretz and Ralston in 1855. Economically and socially San Francisco was new, unstructured and isolated. Ralston appeared on the scene at the right time. There were opportunities aplenty for men with capital, and as a banker Ralston early exhibited a flair for plunging into risky but promising ventures.

Billy Ralston was also a leader. He was an active vigilante and played a leading role in whipping up support for the Union in San Francisco at the start of the Civil War. He had an impulsive, flamboyant style; and as his fortune improved, he endeared himself to many by generous gifts to charity.

His style resulted in one of the strangest honeymoons on record. When he married Elizabeth Fry in 1858 Ralston invited about a score of friends and a newspaperman to accompany them on the honeymoon—a backpacking trip to Yosemite and the Calaveras trees. The marriage, Lavender reveals, turned out to be a rather unhappy one for Mrs. Ralston. Despite their increasing wealth, social prominence, and four children, Lizzie did not take kindly to her hard-driving, Presbyterian husband's dalliances with a mistress or two.

Ralston's most fortuitous opportunities came with the Comstock mining discoveries. He was part of a three-man syndicate that bought the Ophir mine in 1860, and for the next fifteen years Comstock mines, milling, and the Virginia and Truckee Railroad were the prime sources of his wealth and power. In 1864 Ralston founded the Bank of California, which became the chief money source on the Comstock, with the crafty William Sharon as the bank's representative in Virginia City. This was the first commercial bank in California, and it was the prototype for another two dozen established by the end of 1873. Banks were essential to mining, and they prospered when picks struck pay dirt.

Ralston and his associates in the bank, known as Ralston's Ring, were much criticized for their efforts to monopolize Comstock profits, but it can be argued, as Lavender does, that the bank rendered real service by providing needed capital for exploration in depression periods. Ralston and his "ring" had faith in new finds, and they were willing—at least Ralston and Sharon were willing—to chance deeper plunges to find new bonanzas when others were discouraged. They were also accused of manipulating mining stocks in the market to artificially inflate values to recoup their losses at the expense of others. This was especially true of Sharon. He was a valuable partner but, at times, a problem for Ralston. They also had a staunch and vocal critic in Adolph Sutro, owing to their vigorous efforts to block Sutro's tunnel and town from becoming reality because of the threat they posed to the mining and railroad interests of Ralston and his associates.

With the Comstock as a basis of wealth, Ralston branched into a number of enterprises. He founded factories, including a woolen mill, grew tobacco at Gilroy, and attempted unsuccessfully to enter the Alaskan fur trade and to become the owner of a major railroad. Most of

his "fliers," like a diamond mine hoax in which he invested, proved unprofitable. But like the Mormons in Utah at this time, Ralston seemed willing to try most anything. Something was bound to pay, and losses could always be recouped, or so it seemed, by new enterprises, a bonanza on the Comstock, or in the mining stock market—with or without pay dirt.

The bank also made money refining most of the gold that went to the San Francisco mint, and Ralston favored legislation benefitting gold producers. He supported the California law rejecting "greenbacks" and also the national demonetization of silver in 1873. Along with others, he feared the inflation that would result from too much silver in circulation, but he played a leading role in the creation of the silver trade dollar. Lavender points to the irony in his not sensing that "the sirens of almost unlimited silver were simultaneously tempting him into riskier personal investments than he had embraced before." (p. 321).

By the early 1870s Ralston had won respect internationally for his financial leadership and acumen. At "Belmont," their magnificent estate on the San Francisco peninsula, the Ralstons entertained lavishly, and he was responsible for such improvements to the city as the California Theater and the Palace Hotel. Unfortunately, Ralston met his death while swimming in August, 1875, and never saw the hotel, his crowning achievement, completed. On the day he died he had been forced out of the bank and into bankruptcy. He had run out of bonanzas and was more than \$9,500,000 in debt. His personal bank account was greatly overdrawn. Whether or not Sharon plotted his downfall we do not know, but he and the other bank directors did nothing to help the man who had helped to make them wealthy and who needed them in his hours of travail. And Sharon assumed most of Ralston's assets, including "Belmont." Fortunately, the bank survived.

Lavender maintains, and quite rightly, that the greatest weakness in the financial structure of the Far West was the failure of men like Ralston to see how precarious their situation was. Good fortune during much of this period caused them to assume that recessions, even on the Comstock, were nothing to be concerned about. They were temporary set-backs. They failed to realize that over-expansion and growing unemployment, especially among newcomers, were causing potentially explosive problems. In Ralston's case, he continued to take bigger and bigger chances with the bank's money, and when he couldn't cover his losses, he was in trouble.

It appears that Ralston was neither saint nor sinner but something in between. Along with other Gilded Age entrepreneurs, he used sharp tactics, bribed public officials, watered stock, and worked to eliminate competition when it posed a real threat. But most of all, as his biographers agree, Ralston was a builder. Behind his exploits there was a sincere desire to develop the California economy for the public betterment. The fact that this could be accomplished only at great

expense to Nevada was, of course, a sore point with Nevadans for many years.

Lavender's book is well illustrated, and the footnotes and bibliography are helpful to scholars. Occasional typographical errors mar the text. Aside from that, scholars and "buffs" alike should find this entertaining book a welcome addition to the historiography of the Far West.

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**Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude Toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests.** By Susan L. Flader. (Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1974. xxv + 284 pp. \$12.50)

Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is capable, under science, of contributing to culture.

That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. That land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known, but latterly often forgotten.\*

So wrote Aldo Leopold in March of 1948, not two months before his death. Leopold had not always thought this way. It took him nearly all of his adult life, a life spent in intense study of biota, to come to a full ecological understanding of the world around him.

Susan L. Flader's **Thinking Like a Mountain** is an explanation of how Aldo Leopold developed his understanding of the dynamic relationships between deer, wolves and forests. It is, in this sense, an intellectual biography of one of the twentieth century's earliest and most respected ecologists. Leopold's conservation work with deer began in the Southwest in 1913 and remained a constant and major preoccupation until his death. Not only was this a life-long interest, but it served to focus the development of his ideas regarding ethical attitudes toward the land and wildlife. As much as this interest aided his development, it also served at times to hinder his scientific work and obscured the clarity of his thought by involving him in bitter political controversy. The book is thus both an intellectual biography and, additionally, the intriguing story of Leopold's attempts to educate the public to perceive wilderness ecologically. This last effort must have been doubly frustrating because,

as a young man, Leopold had been eminently successful in gaining public support for conservation efforts, as they were then understood. Yet, later in his life, with a much fuller understanding of forest relationships, he continually ran athwart of public opinion with only meagre success.

The study begins with a chapter that presents the intellectual problem of deer, wolf and forest relationships, then offers a brief sketch of Leopold's professional career and the development of his philosophy in the context of the historical development of ecology. Chapters two and three deal with his experiences in the national forests of the American Southwest. Leopold had an abiding interest in the Southwest and much of what he wrote concerned semi-arid forests somewhat similar to what covers portions of Nevada. Born in Iowa, his first field experience (1909-1924) upon leaving the Yale forestry school was in the national forests of Arizona and New Mexico. He acquired a deep love for the Southwest and returned many times both for scientific study and for recreation. In chapter four, the focus is on Leopold's increasing emphasis on environmental management, the need for basic research and the difficulties of forming rational and acceptable public policies. Leopold's 1935 trip to Europe to study German forest and wildlife management practices profoundly changed his perception of forest ecology. He had begun his conservation career dominated by the idea that it was his job to produce as many deer as possible and eliminate the species that preyed upon them, especially the wolf and the puma. After the shock of having seen the results of an almost totally artificial ecosystem, his overwhelming concern became the development of valid criteria for land health, a philosophy which emphasized the desirability of self-regulating systems and the restoration, insofar as it was possible, of a natural system consisting of balanced ratios of many species, including predators, to achieve a stable population in a diverse environment. The last two chapters shift largely to the story of Leopold's attempts to stimulate the development of similar attitudes and values in the public mind, and examine his conception of the public responsibility of the scientist.

Even though *Thinking Like a Mountain* was written as a scholarly book, with all of the apparatus and paraphernalia of scholarship, it is also engagingly and clearly written, even when describing the byzantine politics of Wisconsin conservation commission meetings. Anyone who has read his *Sand County Almanac* or who is concerned in any capacity with wildlife appreciation, ecology or natural resources management will almost certainly find it an exciting and thought-provoking book.

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University of Nevada  
Las Vegas

\*Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. ix.

**The Great American Desert: Then and Now.** By W. Eugene Hollon. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books series, 1975. xxvi, 253 pages; addendum, bibliography, illustrations, index; \$3.95)

In 1966, Eugene Hollon's *The Great American Desert* (New York: Oxford University Press) received critical acceptance as a perceptive and useful survey of the desert region's history and geography, and its contemporary problems and challenges. In his addendum to this reprint, Hollon covers the last decade, and qualifies some of his earlier observations. While he retains his original interpretation of the arid West, which includes the premises that the Rockies unite rather than divide the region, and, that water will continue to be the crucial factor in the development of that region, his perspective has changed. In 1966, Hollon realized the seriousness of the problems of development facing the West, but his attitude reflected optimism and a faith in the efficacy of technology. Now, however, he presents a more pessimistic forecast of the future, including constant and growing water shortages, increased pollution, and spreading urban blight.

The problem of providing an adequate water supply illustrates Hollon's new pessimism. In 1966, although well aware of the rapidly increasing demand for water for agriculture, industry, the power companies, and the growing cities, he stated, "The technical problems are largely conquered, or at least modern tools have brought them within sight of solution." Now, however, he reveals that most of the plans of the 1960's have proven either illusory or impractical. In 1965, for example, government planners were developing a project designed to bring in fresh water from Alaska. Hollon now calls this a "pipe dream." Other such grandiose schemes have likewise run afoul of reality. As a result, the Western water crisis has not been solved or even abated; it has become more acute.

In the addendum Hollon also describes how several of the other adverse developments he discussed in 1966 have intensified, and, in some cases, how solutions to old problems have created new ones. The Interstate Highway system, for instance, has provided an esthetic improvement over the older roads, facilitated commercial transportation, and helped to end the virtual isolation of many desert communities. On the other hand, it has been a significant factor in increasing air pollution, population pressures, and urban sprawl. The increasing economic development of the desert cities has created huge new demands upon the already short supply of water. As a result of all of these pressures, Westerners are having to face the same problems that have plagued the country's more populous regions.

The nation's energy crisis has had an especially severe impact upon the residents of the desert states. Because of the rising value of the West's vast coal, natural gas, and oil shale deposits, the large fuel and power conglomerates have begun massive strip mining and construction

projects. Besides destroying the natural beauty of large parts of the desert states, particularly Wyoming and Montana, these operations have created sudden and drastic population increases in previously sparsely settled areas. The thousands of new residents have placed severe strains upon local resources and services. Some of the affected states have begun to enact laws to regulate such activities, but Hollon doubts that the current trends can be reversed. Western congressmen are greatly outnumbered by those from states urgently in need of the West's energy resources. In addition, he contends, the energy companies are too powerful to be effectively restrained by either state or federal regulations.

For the most part, Hollon's original text still reads quite well. His 1966 projections about the problems faced by the desert states have largely been born out. Indeed, if he erred at all, he underestimated their gravity in some cases. His contention that the desert region includes the Rocky Mountain and Western plains states, as well as those of the Great Basin, has taken on more credence with the droughts of 1974 and, apparently, 1976. More research is needed on the political impact of the region's rapid population growth, but Hollon's belief that it has caused a leftward shift toward the center seems well founded.

The only chapter which now seems dated deals with the warfare between the U.S. Army and the Indians. While Hollon's treatment of the Indians might have been considered liberal in 1966, it now seems, at best, patronizing. He uses a discriminatory verb pattern to the disadvantage of the Indians. They seem to have committed their terrible deeds largely in the active voice. On the other hand, destruction and resettlement were usually perpetrated upon them in the passive voice, often by unnamed parties. For example at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890, " . . . approximately 150 women, children, and Sioux warriors **were shot down** with rapid firing Hotchkiss guns as **they resisted arrest**" (reviewer's emphasis).

Hollon's original interpretations of the character and problems of the West have admirably withstood the past ten years. His new addendum, with its pessimistic evaluation of the consequences of progress over the past decade, succeeds in bringing **The Great American Desert** up to date.

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Athens



## ***What's Going On***

### **CECILY GOLDIE RECOGNIZED**

Mrs. Cecily Goldie was recently awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Society's Director, John M. Townley, for her dedicated volunteer assistance. During the past year, Mrs. Goldie has made significant headway in the indexing of the 1875 **Census of the State of Nevada** which will make that work more usable for genealogists and social historians. She has also launched a survey of serial publications in search of articles on Nevada's history and organized and cataloged the Society's large collection of 19th Century and early 20th Century retail merchant catalogs. Mrs. Goldie has generously given of her own time toward more effective maintenance of the Society's library.

### **SHARON PERRY MEMORIAL FUND**

A memorial fund has been set up for the Conestoga Club in honor of Sharon Perry. The Conestoga Club, a Junior Historical Society, holds charter number two, and is dedicated to excellence in youth. Families who wish to direct memorial contributions to the Sharon Perry Memorial Fund may do so through Union Federal in Reno, Nevada. For further information, contact the Nevada Historical Society.

### **RENO GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY**

The Reno Gem and Mineral Society's annual show, "Jackpot of Gems," will be held at the Centennial Coliseum, Reno, on Saturday and Sunday, August 14 and 15. Hours: Sat., 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### **CAMP NEVADA MONOGRAPHS**

Nevada is a vast land encompassing more than 110,000 square miles, and it is diverse in terrain and in both plant and animal life. Yet very little has been written about the state's geography and natural history. Camp Nevada Monographs will help fill these gaps. The first publication, **Pyramid Lake—A Bibliography**, by Alvin R. McLane, was published last September; and the second, Mary B. Ansari's **Nevada Collections of Maps and Aerial Photographs**, in April, 1976. Soon to be published is

**Nevada Mountain Ranges**, all 313 of them; and also in the works is **Cartobibliography of Early Nevada** through 1900, which will feature a description of some 500 maps with annotation. It is anticipated that relatively unknown, important historical essays written several decades ago will be facsimile reprinted. Alvin McLane is the owner of this new publication venture. Address inquiries to Camp Nevada, Box 13798, Reno, NV 89507.

#### NORTHERN NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

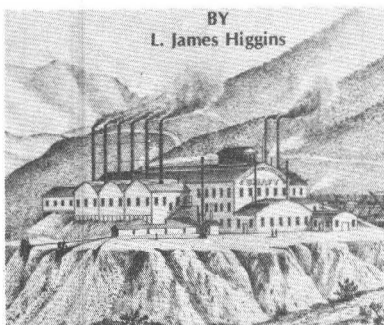
Interest in native plants unites the members of this Society, and the organization is open to anyone who shares that interest. A major undertaking is a plant inventory from which rare and endangered species can be determined. This knowledge will be shared with the public and with those governmental bodies charged with the preservation of the state's heritage. Information and application forms may be obtained by writing the NNNPS, Box 8965, Reno, NV 89507.

#### NEW NHS AUDIOVISUAL PROGRAMS

As part of the continuing series of audiovisual presentations of Nevada's history, the staff of the Society has recently completed two more sound-slide shows, "Reno: The West's Biggest Little City" and "The V&T: Nevada's Bonanza Shortline." The addition of these programs brings the series to a total of sixteen. These programs are available to schools, civic groups, and other organizations without charge, and can be reproduced at a cost of \$65.00 each. Information on viewing or purchase may be obtained by contacting the Society.

**A GUIDE TO THE  
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS  
AT THE  
NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Now, after more than seventy years of collecting, the Nevada Historical Society offers its first complete Guide to the Society's manuscript collections. Supplemented by a large "name, place, thing" index and a date index, this work is certain to interest individuals and institutions studying the history of the American West. 1975. 305 pages, \$7.50, plus 50c postage and handling.



**NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
GUIDE BOOK SERIES**

The Nevada Historical Society announces the publication of *Western Nevada*, a guide to the Reno, Lake Tahoe and Emigrant Trail portions of the state. Written by Al and Mary Ellen Glass, the guide provides five day-trips filled with exciting visits to Nevada's most fascinating historic sites and early settlements. It can be found at your bookstore or ordered from the Society at \$1.95, plus postage.

