NEVADA Historical Society Quarterly

Winter · 1977

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The Nevada Historical Society *Quarterly* publishes articles, interpretive essays, and documents which deal with the history of Nevada and of the Great Basin area. Particularly welcome are manuscripts which examne the political, economic, cultural, and constitutional aspects of the history of this region. Material submitted for publication should be sent to the N.H.S. *Quarterly*, 4582 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109. Footnotes should be placed at the end of the manuscript, which should be typed double spaced. The evaluation process will take approximately six to ten weeks.

NEVADA
Historical Society Quarterly

WINTER • 1977

VOLUME XX
NUMBER 4

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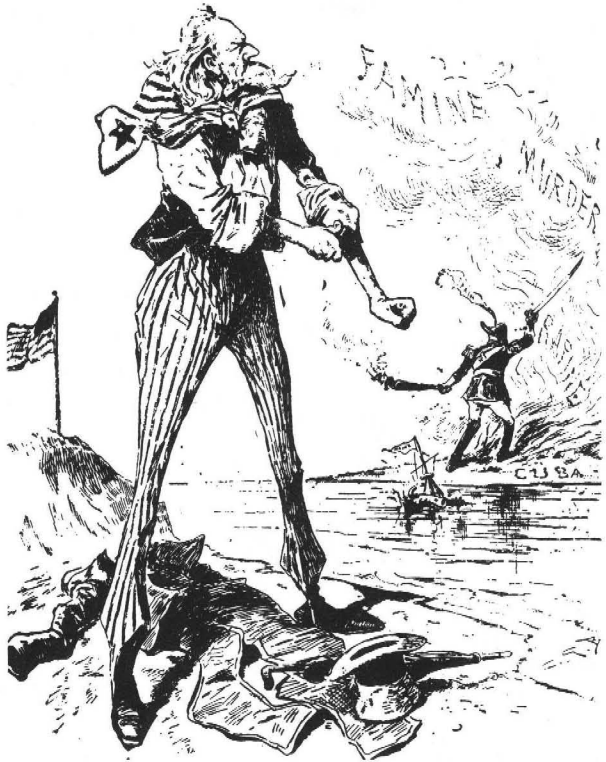
THE COVER

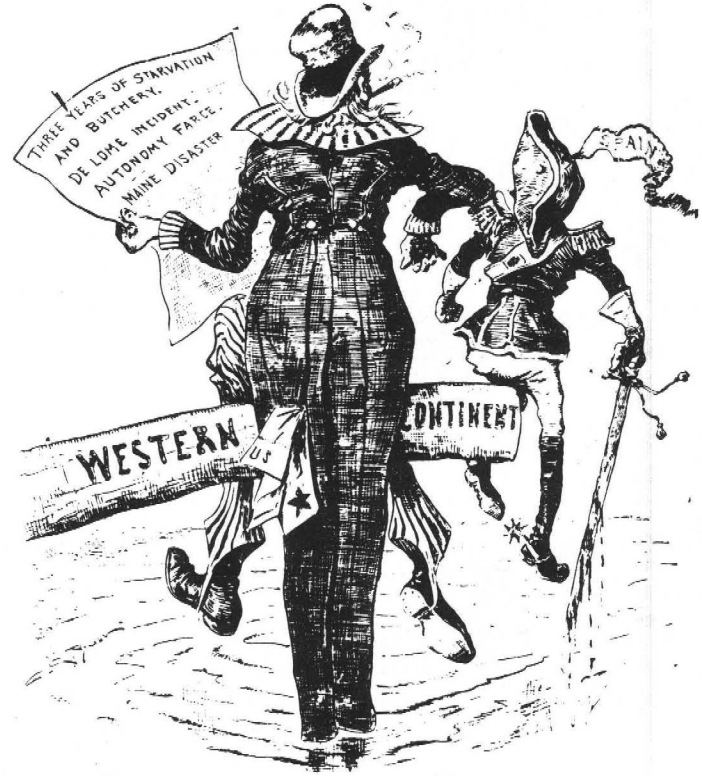
Allen C. Brag, left, of the *Reno Evening Gazette* and George S. Nixon of the *Silver State*, Winnemucca, prominent Nevada editors of the Spanish-American War period.

The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* is published by the Nevada Historical Society, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503. It is distributed without charge to members of the Society; single issues, when available, may be purchased for $2.00. Orders for changes of address should be addressed to the Society.

Second class postage paid at Reno, Nevada.



"PEACE, BY JINGO, IF I HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT."



UNCLE SAM: "Enough of this get off."

Political cartoonists' views of the conflict over Cuba, April, 1898

Silver and Sentiment: The Nevada Press and the Coming of the Spanish-American War

by Joseph A. Fry

NUMEROUS SCHOLARS have emphasized the nation's mood in explaining the United States entry into the Spanish-American War; and several specialized studies have focused on the formative influence of newspapers in creating this mood.[1] However, those concentrating on the press have reached conflicting conclusions. Some have argued that the sensationalistic, "yellow" journals of New York City set the "standards of national journalism" and were primarily responsible for stimulating an irresistible "public demand" for war.[2] After examining forty leading midwestern papers, George W. Auxier agreed that the press contributed to the popular clamor for war, but concluded that midwestern journals did so by emphasizing jeopardized American interests rather than sensationalism.[3] Harold J. Sylwester characterized the Kansas press as even more moderate and restrained: "...the Kansas press alerted its readers to Cuba's need but it hardly led them to demand war..."[4] Finally, at the most conservative end of the spectrum, William J. Schellings discovered that "Florida presented the unique picture of being the only state in which all important newspapers were united in opposition to war."[5]

While these studies provide useful material on the eastern, metropolitan press and midwestern journals, no systematic attention has yet been given to western, free silver states. Just how bellicose was the pro-silver West?[6] Did the western press contribute to a public mood that promoted war? Or were bellicose journals countered and neutralized by more restrained ones? Although more definite conclusions must await broader investigation, this examination of Nevada editorial opinion from January through April 1898 provides some tentative answers to these questions. A reading of twenty-five Nevada newspapers has revealed that the Nevada press clearly contributed to a public atmosphere favorable to war. Although there were distinct differences of emphasis and interpretation

Joseph A. Fry is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He holds the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Virginia, and his primary areas of interest are American diplomacy and late nineteenth-century American history.

among Nevada papers, the areas of agreement were much more important. From the welter of conflicting opinions there emerged a consensus on several points. All segments of the press agreed that Spain was barbaric and degenerate, that she was responsible for the destruction of the *Maine,* that the United States should intervene in Cuba and would easily defeat Spain in war, and that war would produce beneficial by-products for Nevada and the nation.

Before beginning this examination, it is necessary to emphasize that editorial opinion and public opinion cannot be automatically equated. Historians often cite a series of editorials and either explicitly or implicitly conclude that they have felt the nation's pulse. In fact, public opinion is much too diverse and elusive to be so easily captured or compartmentalized.[7]

Still, this note of caution should not convey the notion that editorial and public opinion are completely unrelated. Ernest R. May has estimated that the segment of the public actively interested in foreign policy issues has been dramatically smaller than the public at large. When education, social status, geographic location, and political involvement were considered, less than ten per cent of the voting public has comprised the "foreign policy public." Of this ten percent, an even smaller group has functioned as "opinion leaders." These opinion leaders established positions ultimately adopted by the remainder of those interested in diplomatic policy. May numbers individual newspaper editors among this "primary set of opinion-formers."[8]

The influence of editors as individuals was probably even more pervasive in Nevada than nationally. One study of Nevada in the 1890s characterizes the state's editors as "persons of stature in every locality."[9] Since Nevada's localities were relatively small, these "persons of stature" very likely exercised a much greater personal influence than they could have in larger urban areas.[10] This was certainly true of George Nixon and Samuel P. Davis, editors of the Winnemucca *Silver State* and the Carson City *Morning Appeal* respectively. Both men were among the organizers of Nevada's first silver clubs in 1892, and each played an important role in the silver politics of the subsequent decade. On the Republican side, Allen Bragg, of the *Reno Evening Gazette,* was an active political participant; and C. H. Sproule, editor of the Elko *Free Press* was the Republican National Committeeman for Nevada.

Even where the editors' direct influence was minimal, May contends that they often mirrored and reinforced "drifts of opinion within a community... In other words, editorials served as expressions of opinion developing within and circulating out from leadership groups."[11] Again, given the size of Nevada's population, it seems quite likely that editors would have accurately interpreted evolving public sentiment.

Nevada's economic and political experience over the previous twenty years had conditioned the state's response to the Cuban crisis. In contrast to the improving national economy, Nevada was mired in a depres-

sion that reached back to the 1870s.[12] With the decline of the Comstock in the late-1870s, the bonanza period of Nevada mining abruptly ended. Neither the mining of lower grade ores nor an embryonic open range livestock industry compensated for this precipitous decline. By 1894, the state's mining production had plummeted to a record low; and the following year livestock prices also plunged dramatically.[13]

Virtually from the depression's beginning, Nevadans had championed the free coinage of silver as the remedy for their economic woes. During the last twenty-five years of the century, Nevada's congressmen enthusiastically promoted bimetallism, and in 1896 the state overwhelmingly supported William Jennings Bryan for president. Within the state, the Silver Party dominated all areas of government in the 1890s. These efforts produced only frustration. No substantive aid for Nevada's economy was forthcoming on either the national or state level. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 had a negligible impact, Bryan was defeated in 1896, and both the 1895 and 1897 sessions of the Nevada legislature were devoid of accomplishment.[14]

Against this background, the great majority of Nevada's newspapers in the 1890s were political supporters of the Democratic, Populist, or Silver parties and economic supporters of free silver.[15] Their tone was one of frustration, bitterness, partisanship, and suspicion bordering on paranoia. Since support of free silver and opposition to the McKinley administration were their principal areas of agreement, this segment of the Nevada press will be subsequently referred to as "silver" or "anti-McKinley" papers.

These journals enthusiastically subscribed to the concepts of Spanish degeneracy and cruelty propagated by the New York press. They condemned Spain's reconcentration policy as one of desperation and purposeful "extermination," and reiterated the most scathing allegations of Spanish barbarity.[16] The Winnemucca *Silver State* set the tone by graphically characterizing Spain as "The old she wolf... showing her fangs red with blood and the bits of flesh torn from the bodies of struggling Cubans..."[17] The Elko *Daily Argonaut* summarized this line of thought: "The sick and helpless in hospitals have been mercilessly massacred, women and girls outraged, and the entire population herded into the most loathsome prison pens doomed to slow but sure death by starvation and by disease..."[18]

Based on these images, the silver press stridently denounced the Spanish character and proposed possible United States responses. In his Washington mouthpiece, the *Silver Knight-Watchman*, William Stewart, Nevada's junior senator, contended that Spanish conduct surpassed in "fiendish cruelty and heartless barbarity, the horrors of the Inquisition..."[19] The *Daily Elko Independent* dismissed Spain as hopelessly reactionary: "If Spain ever took one step forward it was to... get within gunshot of some friend of the human race."[20] Revealing rural America's anti-Catholic strain, the Ely *White Pine News* questioned whether Spain

could be treated as a Christian nation. "Christian methods" would not suffice; rather the United States should proceed in a more typically frontier fashion—much as Westerners "would ferret out and hang a gang of outlaws, or deal vengeance to a band of Apaches who had stolen up in the darkness upon the home of some unsuspecting rancher and with torch and gun wrought their work of fiendish crime . . ."[21]

As a corollary to this negative characterization of Spain, there was the implication that the United States would easily win any conflict of arms. The *Silver Knight-Watchman* was confident that we would "make an awful example of the decaying, barbarous" Spaniards.[22] "A nation of free, intelligent people, such as America is," concluded the Elko *Daily Argonaut* "need have no fear of the outcome of a war against a monarchy such as Spain."[23]

Alleged Spanish inhumanity and reputed insurgent victories provided the basis for demands that the United States should recognize Cuban belligerency. Voicing the indignation of the anti-McKinley press, the Elko *Daily Argonaut* declared that, "Although the revolution has been in progress three years, and has cost something like 600,000 lives, our wooden headed administration declines to be convinced that a state of war exists in Cuba."[24] Both the *Nevada State Journal,* the Reno mouthpiece of Congressman Francis Newlands, and the *Tuscarora Times-Review* agreed that the Republican administration was ignoring public opinion. The *Journal* believed that there was "general unanimity" favoring recognition, and the *Times-Review* translated this as "ninety-nine one-hundredths" of the people.[25] The *Silver Knight-Watchman* argued that United States recognition would have stimulated a Cuban victory within ninety days; however, instead of aiding the gallant insurgents, the United States had prolonged the struggle by taking advantage of "our neutrality laws to cooperate with Spain in her cruel warfare for the extermination of the people of Cuba."[26]

The publication of the de Lôme letter with its disparaging references to President McKinley provided the free silver press with additional opportunities to criticize Spain and urge recognition of Cuba. From Wells in eastern Nevada, the *Nevada State Herald* characterized the letter as "villainous" and stigmatized Dupuy de Lôme as a "veneered gentleman" and a "hypocrite."[27] These taunts paled in comparison to the *Nevada State Journal's* slurring reference to de Lôme as a "cigarette smoking greaser."[28] The Carson City *Morning Appeal* registered the most extreme response when it speculated that the letter might be regarded as a "happy accident" if it were to produce a war for the "liberation of Cuba."[29] The *Nevada State Journal,* the *Nevada State Herald,* and the Elko *Daily Argonaut* were more restrained, confining themselves to the suggestion that the indiscretion should surely result in recognition.[30] Those papers most alienated from the McKinley administration added a final interesting dimension by describing de Lôme's appraisal of McKinley as one of "discernment,"[31] as "amazingly frank,"[32] and as the Spanish minister's "only truthful utterance."[33]

Although the anti-McKinley press ultimately judged the destruction of the *Maine* as an act so dastardly that it could be atoned for only by war, their initial reaction was moderate and restrained. Virtually without exception, this segment of the press urged caution and suspension of judgement in the immediate aftermath of the explosion.[34] The *Daily Elko Independent* typified this sentiment when it editorialized under the title "WAIT": the United States could "afford to go slow in this *Maine* disaster without involving the national honor and pride."[35]

Several of the free silver papers reinforced this initial conservatism by harshly castigating the yellow journals of New York and San Francisco. Upon receiving news of the tragedy, the Winnemucca *Silver State* suggested that suspicion should be directed not at Spain, but at the "*Journal-Examiner* conspirators, who would not hesitate to take such a terrible step in the struggle to keep at the head of yellow journalism."[36] When the *Journal-Examiner* announced a reward of $50,000 for identification of the culprits, the *Silver State* "respectfully" suggested that the "yellow journals follow the example of California murderers, confess and claim the reward."[37] Although less derisive, the *Virginia Chronicle* was no less pronounced in its denunciation of the "sensationalism and mendacity" of the yellow journals.[38] The *Nevada State Herald* dismissed the "wild rumors of war" as "pure lies," and the *Tuscarora Times-Review* opined that the editorials of the *New York World* and *New York Journal* "might as well emanate from a lunatic asylum."[39]

As the crisis in Spanish-American relations intensified, the silver journals grew increasingly bellicose. Suspicious from the beginning, these papers were easily convinced of Spanish guilt following the special board of inquiry's report that an external explosion had destroyed the *Maine*. The *Silver Knight-Watchman* condemned Spain for committing "the most flagrant, cowardly, and dastardly act of war that the genius of fiends could invent."[40] The Austin *Reese River Reveille* agreed that it was clearly a "black deed of treachery."[41] Maintenance of American honor and prestige demanded retribution; and the *Daily Elko Independent* screamed that the "sinking of the *Maine* should be paid for in Spanish blood."[42] The *Independent's* primary competitor, the *Daily Argonaut,* agreed that "vengeance" should replace "forebearance."[43] According to the Carson City *Morning Appeal,* United States self respect depended on a vigorous reaction: "A flag that will not defend its defenders and protect its protecters is unfit to encumber the earth."[44]

Even the *Virginia Chronicle,* the most restrained of the pro-silver papers, had concluded by early March that the United States would have to intervene. Conditions in Cuba rather than the *Maine* constituted the question of "primary importance." Spain had proved utterly incapable of restoring order, relieving the pervasive suffering, or protecting American interests. "Sooner, or later, if Spain cannot govern Cuba, we must intervene."[45]

Not only did the anti-McKinley papers advocate war, but several envisioned potentially beneficial by-products from a clash with Spain.

The *Silver Knight-Watchman* contended that a war necessitating the free coinage of silver could only be positive in its overall impact. The accomplishment of bimetallism would outweigh the "evil of any war."[46] In its featured reports from Washington, the Winnemucca *Silver State* reached equally materialistic conclusions. War would "produce prosperity."[47] Quoting from an alleged conversation with an old man, the Elko *Daily Argonaut* favored a war "to reawaken the manhood and the patriotism of the people, and to turn the thoughts of men away from the accursed worship of gold."[48]

As the silver press became more belligerent, it simultaneously became increasingly hostile toward McKinley's foreign policy. These journals expressed consistent consternation at the administration's reluctance either to recognize the insurgents or to intervene. Starting from their conspiratoral preconceptions on financial influences, the silver editors easily constructed an explanation of McKinley's policies. In their opinion, the owners of Spanish bonds and the international "gold syndicate" held the key to American foreign policy. Spain had issued bonds worth millions of dollars with Cuba as the principal collateral. Cuban independence threatened to reduce their value substantially. In an editorial carried verbatim by several papers this analysis was succinctly summarized. "The Rothschilds own Spanish bonds and the recognition of Cuba will materially depreciate these securities. The Rothschilds own Wall street. Wall street owns the Republican party..."[49] Similar anti-Semitic and conspiratorial implications appear in the Elko *Daily Argonaut's* explanation of Republican inertia: "Spain owes John Bull $400,000,000, and London bond holders own the men who own the administration." This left United States policy at the mercy of a greedy band of "Anglo-Saxon Shylocks."[50] Deprived of its independence, the McKinley administration dutifully refused to aid the Cuban insurgents.

The *Silver Knight-Watchman* maintained that a "bond deal" had precluded an earlier resolution of the Cuban problem. "It was manifestly necessary to prolong the war to give time for bond negotiations."[51] Holders of Spanish bonds had pressured Spain to pursue a war of "extermination" designed to retain Cuba at all costs. These same ubiquitous financiers had also worked through the "money powers of London and New York to control the chief Executive of the United States."[52] The *Nevada State Journal* agreed that the "gold syndicate" controlled both the Spanish and American "Governments."[53] Only "after all the bond holders get together and reach a conclusion," will the "common people know whether or not there will be a war."[54] Alas, despaired the *Daily Elko Independent,* "Patriotism does not dwell in Wall street...The United States must act with regard for the interests of Mammon not of mankind..."[55]

Organic to this thesis of bondholder domination were a series of violent attacks upon President William McKinley. The President was disparagingly portrayed as the obsequious "puppet"[56] of Mark Hanna and the

nation's conservative financial groups. "Prosperity Willie" could, in the opinion of the Populist Reno *Plaindealer,* always be depended on to obey "his owners."[57] Expanding on these assumptions, the silver press systematically impugned McKinley's courage and integrity. He was variously referred to as "Circumlocution Bill,"[58] "Our Weakling President,"[59] and "Poor, weak McKinley.."[60] The President was simply not equal to the challenge. He was afflicted by a chronic case of "cerebo spinal wobbletitis [sic]."[61] When confronted "with the opportunity of a life time, this human mole turns to his burrow and creeps out of sight."[62]

These journals were exceedingly impatient with McKinley's cautious movement toward a confrontation with Spain. On March 28, McKinley made public the board of inquiry's conclusion that an external explosion had destroyed the *Maine*. However, in his accompanying message, he neither accused Spain nor called for immediate retribution. The *Nevada State Journal* judged his address the "weakest State paper ever sent to Congress," and subsequently termed it a "namby-pamby affair."[63] The Carson City *Morning Appeal* wondered sarcastically if the "assassination of Consul General Lee and the shelling of New York would wake McKinley from his sleep."[64] "No people," raged the Winnemucca *Silver State,* could respect a nation whose leaders were "cowards."[65]

Even when McKinley intensified the pressure on Spain, the anti-administration press remained harshly critical. In a series of telegrams in late March, Acting Secretary of State William R. Day conveyed the administration's final demands to Madrid. Among these were an immediate armistice, the option for McKinley to mediate the dispute, and eventual independence for Cuba. Its paranoia blatantly apparent, the silver press expressed great apprehension that an armistice would purposefully aid Spain, and that McKinley might even intervene to crush the insurgents. The *Silver Knight-Watchman* warned that an armistice would enable Spain to avoid campaigning during the rainy season. This would save Spain millions of dollars and preclude the Cuban guerrillas from taking advantage of the inclement conditions. The *Silver Knight* suspected that the armistice would likely end on the eve of the November Congressional elections, and McKinley would declare war in time to insure a Republican Congress. It was, in short, a "barefaced political trick."[66]

On April 11, following Spain's refusal to accede to all of his demands, McKinley dispatched his war message to Congress. Rather than a rousing call for action, the message simply requested Presidential authority to end the hostilities in Cuba. McKinley justified this request on grounds of humanity, the need to protect American lives, property, and commerce, and the obligation to safeguard America's strategic interests. Significantly, the embattled President continued to withhold recognition of Cuban independence.

From this lackluster address, the silver press immediately conjured up a fearsome two-headed bogey. The *Silver Knight* set the tone. Senator

Stewart editorially warned that McKinley might use United States armed forces to restrain both the insurgents and the Spanish. This, like an armistice, would aid Spain by allowing her time to regroup during the rainy season.[67] The *Daily Elko Independent* feared that the President's primary objective was "to hold the Cuban patriots by the neck while Spain rivets anew the manacles upon their limbs."[68]

These journals judged McKinley's continued refusal to recognize Cuba as even more significant. They interpreted this refusal as the ultimate confirmation of their theory of a bondholders conspiracy. The *Silver Knight* feared that retention of Cuba would obligate the United States to redeem the Spanish bonds. However, "If the belligerent rights of the patriots of Cuba had been or should now be acknowledged, the mortgage which the Spanish bondholders have taken... would be destroyed."[69] This warning, together with the corollary that McKinley remained the "puppet of organized capital,"[70] was echoed throughout Nevada's silver press.[71] Thus the silver press ended the period much as it had begun—graphically denouncing Spanish conduct, strongly favoring recognition of the insurgents, vocally advocating forceful intervention on their behalf, and exceedingly suspicious and critical of the McKinley administration.[72]

The silver newspapers did not have the field completely to themselves. Nevada's Republican papers provided a strong minority perspective. These Republican journals were not so exclusively pro-silver and did not analyze diplomatic policy from the presumption of a bond-holders conspiracy. Since their party had fared relatively well over the previous twenty years, these papers were much less bitter and frustrated. Still, a surprising number of their general arguments and conclusions were strikingly similar to those of their competitors. This was certainly true regarding their perception of Spanish conduct in Cuba and its implications for Spanish character. They too ascribed to the concepts of Spanish barbarity and degeneracy. The *Carson City News* was appalled at the "immensity of the slaughter" in Cuba.[73] It was only the latest chapter in the "sad Story of Spain." "During the four hundred years of its rise and fall its invariable record has been one of cruelty, of persecution, of bigotry, of hostility to every sentiment of human freedom, common justice and enlightenment."[74] The Virginia City *Daily Territorial Enterprise* concurred in the indictment of Spanish conduct. In commenting on the possibility of Spanish treachery in the *Maine* explosion, the *Territorial Enterprise* rhetorically asked, "In view of the slaughter, starvation and cruelty Spain has inflicted on her own people, the Cubans, is anything too dastardly, too cruel, too cowardly and inhuman for a Spaniard to do?"[75]

Since Spain had unquestionably "entered the twilight of her day,"[76] The Republican press also concluded that the United States would easily dispose of her in an armed conflict. The *Teritorial Enterprise* observed that Spain was a "bankrupt nation" devoid of a navy;[77] and the *Reno Evening Gazette* approvingly reprinted the *London Mail's* presumptuous

prediction that the "Anglo-Saxon will always defeat the Latin."[78] "There would not," summarized the *Evening Gazette,* "be more than one real battle... Spain is no longer, save in the line of a few individual families, a fighting power."[79]

In contrast to the silver press, Republican journals did not interpret Spanish inhumanity as a rationale for the recognition of Cuban belligerency or independence. The *Territorial Enterprise* warned in late January that "intervention" might "become necessary" to protect "American interests;" and the Carson City *News* hoped that this intervention might take the form of several American warships "roar[ing] a few times" in Havana harbor.[80] In a policy consistent with the Republican administration, neither of these two journals nor any of the other pro-McKinley papers defined this potential intervention in terms of recognition.

For Nevada's Republican press, intervention implied direct, forceful action. This implication became increasingly explicit in the wake of the *Maine's* destruction. Like the pro-silver journals, the GOP sheets followed initial restraint by gradually adopting the conviction of Spanish guilt. Through February, the Carson City *News* carried conservative, factual accounts and abstained from editorial judgment.[81] The *Reno Evening Gazette* was hopeful that the investigation would exonerate Spain, and the *Territorial Enterprise* speculated that the explosion was most likely "engendered by spontaneous combustion."[82]

The pro-McKinley editors joined their Nevada adversaries in sharply attacking the yellow press. The *Reno Evening Gazette* snidely applied General William T. Sherman's Civil War comment to the "jingo journalists:" " 'It is impossible to restrain the fury of these noncombatants.' "[83] The Carson City *News* sarcastically agreed with Cuba's refusal to permit *New York World* divers to examine the *Maine's* wreckage: "...if Spain isn't afraid of publicity it ought to be. It is horrifying to think what discoveries the *World's* divers might have made in Havana's harbor. In their presence even the [San Francisco]*Call* and the [San Francisco] *Examiner* would have stood appalled."[84]

Despite this initial caution, the Republican papers soon concluded that the Cuban situation dictated intervention and war. Revenge for the destruction of the *Maine* constituted a key element in this decision. Since Spanish authorities had directed the *Maine* where to anchor, the Carson City *News* pronounced Spain ultimately responsible for the tragedy. If the board of inquiry detected that the explosion was external or "by design, the duty of this Nation will be plain."[85] The *Territorial Enterprise* concurred that an external explosion would demonstrate that "over 250 of our sailors were assassinated and our ship destroyed by some person or persons acting either in behalf of Spain or in sympathy with it."[86] Equally convinced of Spanish guilt, the *Wadsworth Dispatch* feared that failure to obtain "ample reparation" would permanently disgrace the American flag.[87] Summarizing this evolving sentiment, the Elko *Free Press* deplored the "diplomatic quibbling" and declared that the Ameri-

can people would not tolerate "the awful slaughter of our sailors" redounding to Spanish advantage.[88]

While the *Maine's* destruction was an integral concern, the Republican press also justified their decision for war on broader grounds. The *Reno Evening Gazette* contended that Spain's inability to maintain order and alleviate suffering in Cuba constituted the "really essential question."[89] The United States needed "to manfully face the fact that something has got to be done for Cuba in the name of humanity. The republic . . . can afford to interfere in such a cause, war or no war."[90] The Carson City *News* also believed that the persistent unrest rendered it America's "duty" to intervene.[91] Both the *News* and the *Daily Territorial Enterprise* catalogued other concrete considerations. Among these were loss of trade, protection of American citizens and property, and self-defense.[92] "The Bloody Remedy" was for the *Territorial Enterprise* the only solution to the dilemma in Spanish-American relations.[93]

In still another area of substantial agreement with the silver press, the pro-McKinley journals anticipated positive benefits from the approaching war. Both the Carson City *News* and the *Reno Evening Gazette* lamented the growing preference of Americans for the "worship of gold" at the expense of the "religion of patriotism."[94] A war shocking the American people "back to their early ideas" could hardly be considered a calamity.[95] Moreover, the *Evening Gazette* assured its readers that war would be "beneficial to the business interests of Nevada, for it will create a demand for everything we produce."[96]

Although the GOP press agreed with the Silverites on the necessity of intervention, the Republican editors rejected the charges of a bondholders conspiracy. The Carson City *News* lectured those who contended that the administration was "bought up by the bond speculators"; they should instead remember that recognition of Cuba would likely enhance bond values.[97] Injecting a note of levity into the gloom surrounding the *Maine's* destruction, the *Reno Evening Gazette* noted that "Mr. Bryan has not been heard from on the *Maine* disaster as yet, but when he gets around to it he will explain that the true cause of the disaster was the crime of '73."[98]

Nevada's Republican press also strongly endorsed President McKinley's handling of the Cuban crisis. Rather than a man distinguished by weakness and indecision, McKinley was portrayed as a leader of "great energy and intelligence,"[99] whose conduct was "conservative yet firm."[100] Rather than a cringing coward, McKinley was a man of unquestionable "Americanism,"[101] whose "sufficiency" of backbone was obvious.[102] Rather than leading an unprepared country to war, McKinley had followed a policy "of making haste slowly." He had prepared the nation militarily and forestalled possible European intervention.[103]

In contrast to his "jingo" political adversaries, McKinley acted not to obtain selfish personal goals, but out of concern for the national interest. In an identical editorial the *Territorial Enterprise* and the Carson City

News agreed that had expediency been McKinley's guide he would have opted for war long before mid-April. "Surely if the President's ambition had the mastery of him, he would have precipitated a war long ago."[104]

The Republican press was effusive in its praise of the President's message of April 11. The Carson City *News* believed that the message bore the "marks of the most conservative statesmanship and will be ranked by the historians... as one of the notable papers of the nineteenth century."[105] The *Reno Evening Gazette* was even more laudatory: "President McKinley will go down in history as a 'bigger man than Grant,' for his clear headed course on the Spanish question... His 'weak' message shows him to be a man who cannot be trifled with, firm as Gibraltar and as kind as a child."[106]

This analysis of the Nevada press substantiates the thesis that western pro-silver areas were among the most vocal supporters of intervention and war.[107] The Nevada press did not evidence the sensationalism that characterized many of the nation's metropolitan journals. There were no scare headlines, no pictures, no cartoons, no Sunday supplements, virtually no front page coverage, and no evidence that the Cuban situation was being exploited for increased circulation. Unlike the sensational journals, Nevada papers devoted little space other than editorials to the Cuban crisis. However, there were similarities. Nevada papers did agree with the yellow journals on several key issues, such as Spanish degeneracy, intense and intolerable Cuban suffering, Spanish guilt in the destruction of the *Maine*, the necessity for United States intervention, and the assurance of a United States victory over Spain.

Partisan politics was the crucial determinant of the respective positions of Nevada papers. This was also true for the New York City and midwestern press. In all three areas, the papers most pro-Cuban and most anti-McKinley were supporters of the Democratic, Populist, or pro-Silver parties. Significantly, the New York *World* and *Journal* were both affiliated with the Democratic Party; and the *Journal*, which had supported Bryan and free silver in 1896 and whose editor, William Randolph Hearst, was the owner of several silver mines, explained McKinley's actions through the theory of a bondholders conspiracy. Nevada's Republican press resembled Republican journals in both the East and Midwest in defending McKinley; but Nevada's Republican journals were more bellicose than the nation's Republican press as a whole. The silver state's GOP papers simultaneously supported McKinley and called for war.

Like the midwestern journals, the Nevada press discussed jeopardized American interests; but in so doing Nevada papers gave much greater emphasis to humanitarianism than to national economic or strategic considerations. Upon turning to these more concrete areas, Nevada's papers tended to stress that war would stimulate the state's prosperity and possibly result in the remonetization of silver. This greater relative emphasis on Spanish inhumanity and treachery made the Nevada papers more inflammatory than their midwestern counterparts.

Nevada's silver editors clearly revealed the bitterness and frustration born of twenty years of economic depression and political impotency. These frustrations were simultaneously vented upon the Spanish and President McKinley. The silver papers did not approach the sensationalism of New York's yellow press; however, they were distinctly more graphic than their Republican counterparts in describing alleged atrocities and suffering in Cuba. A much greater sense of moral outrage pervaded the responses of these anti-McKinley journals, and they consistently and vehemently demanded recognition of Cuban belligerency and independence. When McKinley withheld recognition and approached intervention with the utmost caution, the silver editors violently attacked his character, courage, and integrity. His timorous behavior was attributed to a bondholders conspiracy. Owners of Spanish bonds and their financial allies had influenced the "puppet" President to pursue a pro-Spanish policy. Since the silver newspapers invariably linked the Cuban crisis with the alleged conspiracy, it is very likely that they were employing the insurgents' plight as a popular vehicle for attacking McKinley and his domestic financial programs.[108] Editorial evidence indicates that other domestic considerations also motivated the silver journals. They anticipated that war would lead to the remonetization of silver and stimulate Nevada's economy. Regardless of motivation, their enthusiastically pro-Cuban, anti-Spanish tone and their attacks upon McKinley for failing to rapidly remedy the Cuban problem certainly helped create a mood that favored war.

This majority voice in the Nevada press was challenged by the Republican minority. The GOP papers dismissed the charges of a bondholders conspiracy as absurd and portrayed McKinley's policies as judicious and effective. When compared to the silver press, the Republican journals were much more subdued and restrained in their treatment of Cuban suffering; and they, like McKinley, said little about recognizing Cuban belligerence or independence.

However, the areas of similarity between the two wings of the Nevada press were more significant than the differences. Although the Republican press was much less inflammatory, it joined the Silverites in denouncing Spanish actions in Cuba. Both concluded that Spanish conduct was barbarous and reflected the declining strength and character of the Spanish nation. To describe Spain in these terms could only produce the belief that the United States had nothing to fear from war with so desperate and degenerate a foe. Following the destruction of the *Maine*, both wings of the press gradually concluded that Spanish treachery was responsible; and by late March and early April, both had begun advocating forceful intervention. In arguing for intervention (and hence war), the silver press gave primary emphasis to Cuban suffering and American honor, as it related to the *Maine*. The pro-McKinley journals did not neglect these factors, but they broadened the rationale by giving attention to Spanish inability to maintain order, the question of United States

self defense, American trade losses, and attacks upon American citizens and property. Finally, both sections of the press suggested that a war would benefit the nation's moral fiber and Nevada's economy. War with Spain in April 1898 simply would not be an unmitigated evil.

Thus, there were significant differences between the Silverites and the Republicans. The silver press was more inflammatory, more enthusiastically pro-Cuban, more critical of McKinley, and more impatient for armed conflict. To the extent that it formed or reflected majority opionion in Nevada, this wing of the press certainly contributed to the mood that welcomed war. By contrast the Republican papers were more subdued in their support of the Cuban insurgents, more restrained in their description of Cuban suffering, and more supportive of McKinley and his cautious policies. However, their relative conservatism in these areas was offset by their pronouncements on Spanish degeneracy, their allegations of Spanish guilt in the *Maine's* destruction, their calls for intervention, and their arguments that the war would be both easily won and beneficial. On balance, the Republican press also contributed, albeit to a lesser degree, to the mood that carried the nation into the "splendid little war."

Notes

1. Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit: A Study of Our War With Spain* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 33, 39, 140; Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands* (Glouchester, Mass., 1959, reprint of 1936 ed.), 224; Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York, 1973, reprint of 1961 ed.), 82, 142–143, 147; Richard Hofstadter, "Cuba, The Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," in Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York, 1967), 148, 150, 158–161; Paul S. Holbo, "The Convergence of Moods and the Cuban Bond 'Conspiracy' of 1898," *Journal of American History,* LV (1968), 54–72; Louis J. Halle, *Dream and Reality: Aspects of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1958), 145, 181; Norman A. Graebner, ed., *An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1961), 16.

2. Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis As Reflected In The New York Press,* (1895–1898) (New York, 1934), 6, 459, *et. passim.*; Marcus M. Wilerson, *Public Opinion and The Spanish American War: A Study in War Propaganda* (New York, 1967, reprint of 1932 ed.); W. A. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst* (New York, 1961), 101–145: W. A. Swanberg, *Pultizer* (New York, 1967), 222–250.

3. George W. Auxier, "Middle Western Newspapers and the Spanish-American War, 1895–1898," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXVI (1940), 523–534.

4. Harold J. Sylwester, "The Kansas Press and The Coming of the Spanish-American War," *Historian,* XXXI (1969), 267.

5. William J. Schellings, "Florida and The Cuban Revolution, 1895–1898," *Florida Historical Quarterly,* XXXIX (1960), 175.

6. Historians have suggested that southern and western silverites were, together with the yellow press, the strongest advocates of war. *See* Hofstadter, "Cuba, The Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," 159–161; Millis, *The Martial Spirit,* 62, 77; May, *Imperial Democracy,* 75.

7. George F. Peace, "Assessing Public Opinion: Editorial Comment and the Annexation of Hawaii—A Case Study," *Pacific Historical Review,* XLIII (1974), 325–327; Melvin Small, "Historians Look at Public Opinion," in Small, ed., *Public Opinion and Historians: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Detroit, 1970), 16–18.

8. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay.* (New York, 1968), 17–39.

9. Mary Ellen Glass, *Silver and Politics In Nevada: 1892–1902* (Reno, 1968), 28.

10. Nevada's total population was only 47,355 in 1890 and had declined to 42,355 in 1900. In 1900, Virginia City's population was 2,695, Reno's 4,500, and Carson City's 2,100. *See, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken In The Year 1910, Volume I; Population* (Washington, 1913), 74, 80.

11. May, *American Imperialism,* 37–39. For additional comments on the foreign policy public and the amount of space devoted to foreign policy news, see Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, 1963), 251–259.

12. Oblivious to Nevada's condition, the *Wall Street Journal* observed on December 23, 1897, that, "Throughout the west, southwest and on the Pacific coast business has never been better, nor the people more hopeful." (Quoted in Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898,* 238.)

13. Russell R. Elliott, *History of Nevada* (Lincoln, Nb., 1973), 170–172; Gilman M. Ostrander, *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough,* 1849–1964 (New York, 1966), 76–86; Glass, *Silver and Politics In Nevada,* 29–30.

14. Glass, *Silver and Politics In Nevada,* 32–123; Elliott, *History of Nevada,* 182–200; Ostrander, *Nevada,* 100–115.

15. In preparing this study I read ten daily papers, three bi- or tri-weeklies, and twelve weeklies. In addition to the papers cited in the notes, I consulted the Battle Mountain *Central Nevadan,* the *Mountain City News,* the *Genoa Weekly Courier,* the *Pioche Weekly Record,* and the *Yerrington Rustler.* All were weeklies and none carried any editorial comments on the Cuban crisis. Of the twenty papers that revealed an editorial opinion, fourteen were silver-Democratic, Pro-Silver Party, or independent, pro-silver; and one was Populist. The remaining five were Republican.

16. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* March 24, 1898. Although it was published in Washington, I have included this paper because the editor, Senator William Stewart, was clearly an "opinion former" in Nevada, and this journal was widely quoted by Nevada papers.

17. Winnemucca *Silver State,* February 5, 1898. Unless otherwise indicated, all newspaper citations will be for the year 1898.

18. Elko *Daily Argonaut,* April 13.

19. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* March 24.

20. *Daily Elko Independent,* March 26.

21. *White Pine News* (Ely), April 2. (Reprinted from the *Atlanta Dictator.*) See also, *Silver Knight-Watchman,* April 7; Carson City *Morning Appeal,* March 12, 29, April 2; Elko *Daily Argonaut,* January 10, March 4, April 1; *Daily Elko Independent,* January 26, April 5; *Virginia Chronicle,* February 15, March 8, 15; Winnemucca *Silver State,* January 3, March 24, 31; *Nevada State Journal* (Reno), March 4, 11, 30; *Tuscarora Times-Review,* April 14; *Reese River Reveille* (Austin), April 2; *White Pine News,* April 2. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune*).

22. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* March 10. See also, Elko *Daily Argonaut,* April 25; *Nevada State Journal,* February 19, March 1; *Eureka Weekly Sentinel,* April 9; *Virginia Chronicle,* March 31.

23. Elko *Daily Argonaut,* April 25.

24. *Ibid.,* February 18. See also, *Virginia Chronicle,* February 15.

25. *Nevada State Journal,* February 19; *Tuscarora Times-Review,* March 12. (Reprinted from *Stockton Mail.*)

26. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* March 10, 17, April 7, 14. Quote from April 7.

27. *Nevada State Herald* (Wells), February 18.

28. *Nevada State Journal,* February 12.

29. Carson City *Morning Appeal,* February 11.

30. *Nevada State Journal,* February 11; *Nevada State Herald,* February 25; Elko *Daily Argonaut,* February 11.

31. Reno *Plaindealer*, February 16. The *Plaindealer* was the only truly Populist paper encountered in this research.

32. *Eureka Weekly Sentinel*, February 19.

33. Winnemucca *Silver State*, February 11.

34. Elko *Daily Argonaut*, February 17; *Daily Elko Independent*, February 25, March 4; *Virginia Chronicle*, February 17; Winnemucca *Silver State*, February 17; *Nevada State Journal*, February 17, 19; *Reese River Reveille*, March 5; *Tuscarora Times-Review*, February 19; *Walker Lake Bulletin*, February 23. Three journals were more hostile. While editorially urging caution, the Carson City *Morning Appeal* ran several inflammatory headlines. Both the *White Pine News* and the *Nevada State Herald* accused Spain from the beginning. (*Morning Appeal*, February 17, 18, 19, 20; *White Pine News*, February 19, 26; *Nevada State Herald*, February 25, March 5.)

35. *Daily Elko Independent*, February 25.

36. Winnemucca *Silver State*, February 17.

37. *Ibid.*, February 18.

38. *Virginia Chronicle*, February 28.

39. *Nevada State Herald*, March 11; *Tuscarora Times-Review*, March 26. See also, *White Pine News*, [March] 5, 1898; *Nevada State Journal*, February 25; *Reese River Reveille*, March 12.

40. *Silver Knight-Watchman*, April 14.

41. *Reese River Reveille*, April 20. See also, Carson City *Morning Appeal*, March 20; *Nevada State Journal*, March 30; *Nevada State Herald*, April 15; *Walker Lake Bulletin*, April 6.

42. *Daily Elko Independent*, April 12. See also Virginia City *Evening Report*, April 21.

43. Elko *Daily Argonaut*, April 1.

44. Carson City *Morning Appeal*, April 14. *See also*, Winnemucca *Silver State*, April 4.

45. *Virginia Chronicle*, March 9, 11, 15. *See also*, Elko *Daily Argonaut*, February 23.

46. *Silver Knight-Watchman*, March 3. *See also*, Elko *Daily Argonaut*, March 26; *White Pine News*, April 2.

47. C. C. Van Duzer, "The Fifty-Fifth Congress: Personal Observations On the Undercurrent of National Legislation," Winnemucca *Silver State*, February 19. *See also*, *Walker Lake Bulletin*, May 4.

48. Elko *Daily Argonaut*, March 8. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune*.)

49. *Eureka Weekly Sentinel*, January 29; Carson City *Morning Appeal*, January 23; *Walker Lake Bulletin*, January 26; Winnemucca *Silver State*, January 24. On the issue of the alleged conspiracy, see Holbo, "The Convergence of Moods and The Cuban Bond 'Conspiracy' of 1898."

50. Elko *Daily Argonaut*, February 18.

51. *Silver Knight-Watchman*, March 17.

52. *Ibid.*, March 24.

53. *Nevada State Journal*, March 6.

54. Carson City *Morning Appeal*, March 13.

55. *Daily Elko Independent*, February 5. (Reprinted from the *Philadelphia American*. This editorial was also reprinted in the *Virginia Chronicle*, February 4.)

56. Virginia City *Evening Report*, April 12; *Nevada State Journal*, March 27; Reno *Plaindealer*, February 16.

57. Reno *Plaindealer*, February 16.

58. Carson City *Morning Appeal*, March 31.

59. Winnemucca *Silver State*, March 31.

60. *Reese River Reveille*, March 30.

61. *Tuscarora Times-Review,* March 12. (Reprinted from *Stockton Mail.*)

62. Virginia City *Evening Report,* April 12.

63. *Nevada State Journal,* April 1, 3.

64. Carson City *Morning Appeal,* March 31.

65. Winnemucca *Silver State,* March 31.

66. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* March 31.

67. *Ibid.,* April 21.

68. *Daily Elko Independent,* April 13. *See also, Nevada State Journal,* April 12, 13; Virginia City *Evening Report,* April 12.

69. *Silver Knight-Watchman,* April 14, 21.

70. *Tuscarora Times-Review,* April 14.

71. Carson City *Morning Appeal,* April 26; Elko *Daily Argonaut,* April 21; *Nevada State Journal,* April 13.

72. Two silver journals, the *Virginia Chronicle* and the *Nevada State Herald,* were much less critical of McKinley and at times even supported him. However, they agreed with the silver press on all the other issues discussed above. (*Virginia Chronicle,* March 15, April 7, 11; *Nevada State Herald,* April 8.)

73. Carson City *News,* February 8.

74. *Ibid.,* January 4, 12, February 23, March 16. Quote from March 16.

75. *Daily Territorial Enterprise* (Virginia City), February 22. See also, *Reno Evening Gazette,* January 4, February 26, March 3, 11.

76. *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* January 25.

77. *Ibid.,* February 20, 26, March 3.

78. *Reno Evening Gazette,* March 23.

79. *Ibid.,* March 12. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune.*) *See also, Reno Evening Gazette,* March 26, April 15; Elko *Free Press,* January 22.

80. *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* January 22; Carson City *News,* January 17. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune.*)

81. Carson City *News,* February 16, 17, 21.

82. *Reno Evening Gazette,* February 17; *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* February 20.

83. *Reno Evening Gazette,* March 2.

84. Carson City *News,* February 26. (Reprinted from *Sacramento Bee*). See also, Carson City *News,* February 28, March 5; *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* March 6.

85. Carson City *News,* March 2. See also, *Reno Evening Gazette,* April 11.

86. *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* March 8.

87. *Wadsworth Dispatch,* April 23.

88. Elko *Free Press,* March 12.

89. *Reno Evening Gazette,* March 26.

90. *Ibid.,* February 26.

91. Carson City *News,* March 5.

92. Carson City *News,* April 21; *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* March 8, 17, 27, April 2. See also, *Reno Evening Gazette,* March 18.

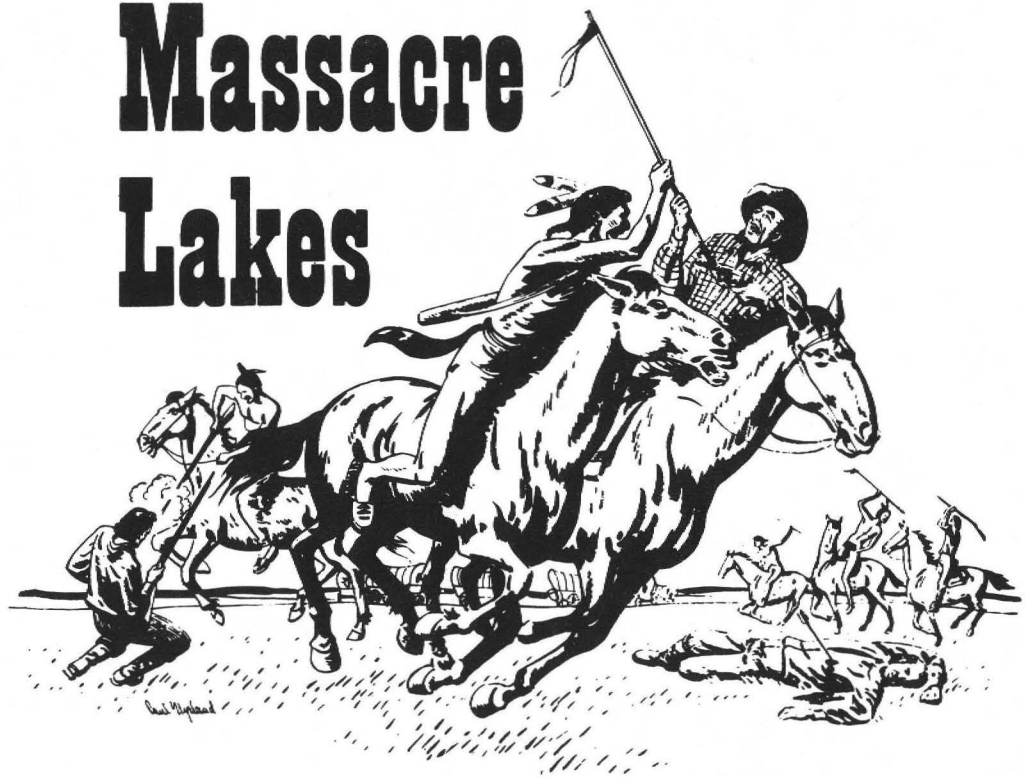
93. *Daily Territorial Enterprise,* March 27. (Reprinted from *Charleston News and Courier.*)

94. Carson City *News,* April 21. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune*); *Ibid.,* March 8; *Reno Evening Gazette,* April 16.

95. *Reno Evening Gazette,* April 16.

96. *Ibid.,* April 18.

97. Carson City *News*, April 20.
98. *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 2.
99. Carson City *News*, April 2.
100. *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 3. See also, *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, April 9.
101. Carson City *News*, March 3.
102. *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, April 12.
103. *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 22.
104. *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, April 6; Carson City *News*, April 5. (Reprinted from *Salt Lake Tribune*.)
105. Carson City *News*, April 14.
106. *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 20.
107. See note 5 above.
108. For a similar conclusion regarding potential Silverite political motivations, see May, *Imperial Democracy*, 75, 145.



This portrayal of the 1850 Massacre was drawn by Paul Nyland as one of a series of historically oriented newspaper advertisements for Harold's Club of Reno.

Massacre! What Massacre? An Inquiry into the Massacre of 1850

by Thomas N. Layton

> MASSACRE LAKE (Washoe County, Nevada)
> Some small lakes, or dry sinks, also called Massacre Lakes, east of Vya in the northern portion of the county.... A large and well equipped wagon train was attacked near here in 1850 by Indians of the High Rock Canyon country. Forty men of the emigrant party were killed in the battle and interred in a common grave.... A creek which empties into the south end of the lake and a ranch on the creek are also named "Massacre" for the lake.[1]

GEOGRAPHIC PLACE-NAMES, when subjected to systematic study, are often found to preserve a wealth of historical information. In England, current place-names of Celtic, Roman, Danish, Saxon and Norman French origin constitute a record of recurring conquest and rule that can stand independently of historical documentation. Likewise, philological investigation of European place-names has provided much of the documentation for prehistoric European population movements.

As an anthropologist engaged in ethnohistoric investigations in the High Rock Country of the extreme northwestern corner of Nevada, I

Thomas N. Layton received his undergraduate education at the University of California, Davis, and his Ph.D. in anthropology from Harvard University in 1971. He has directed archaeological investigations throughout the Great Basin since 1965. He was formerly Director of the Nevada State Museum and Coordinator of the Nevada Archaeological Survey. Currently he is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

The research reported herein is a contribution of the Last Supper Cave Expedition, a project funded by the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation and administered by the Nevada State Museum. I would like to thank Sessions S. Wheeler, Nevada historian-naturalist; Kenneth Carpenter, Director of Special Collections at the University of Nevada Library in Reno; J. S. Holliday, Director of the California State Historical Society; Phillip I. Earl, Curator of Exhibits, Nevada State Historical Society; and Vincent P. Gianella, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geology, University of Nevada, Reno for suggestions and information incorporated into this paper. Harold's Club has generously allowed me to reproduce the Paul Nyland drawing of the "Massacre of 1850" in Figure 1. Sessions S. Wheeler has likewise allowed me to reproduce Inez Johnson's photograph of the "Mass Grave" in Figure 2.

have found important and obvious clues to past human activities preserved in such place-names as Forty-nine Pass, Soldier Meadows, and Hog Ranch Mountain. These derive from the California Gold Rush of 1849, U.S. Army activities of the 1860s, and the subsequent 1880–1920 homesteading period. In my research I have been particularly interested in place-names reflecting Indian demography and Indian-Caucasian interaction. Here success has been meagre, for most Indian-related place-names in the High Rock Country are so generalized that they provide very little useful information and no leads (e.g., Indian Spring and Paiute Peak).

On the other hand, a few Indian-related place-names, especially those relating to locations in the vicinity of the central portions of the High Rock Country, have heretofore been accepted as compelling evidence for violent Indian-White interactions. It must be remembered that a fundamental step in the preparation of accurate ethnohistory is the cold reappraisal of so-called "facts," and the separation of facts from conjectures. In this essay it will be argued that the Massacre place-names and their accompanying story are the product of attempts during the 1870s to explain rationally certain archaeological features of the area that date to the 1849–1852 period.

At the present time, there exist a number of published accounts which describe in lurid detail the massacre of forty emigrants by Indians near Massacre Lake in 1850; oddly enough, however, there are no contemporary accounts of the event.[2] A major purpose of this article is to trace the development of the acceptance of the massacre story. Helen Carlson, one of Nevada's foremost students of place-names, credits a publication of the W.P.A. Federal Writers Project as her source for the massacre.[3] In turn, the W.P.A. account can be traced to a version published by Nevada historian Effie Mona Mack in 1936.[4] She credits a 1931 travel article featured in the *Sacramento Bee,* and written by William S. Brown.[5] But there the trail ends abruptly, for Brown does not identify the source of his story. He simply informs the reader that little record of the tragedy has been preserved. He relates that a large wagon train with poor leadership had been followed and constantly menaced by Indians throughout its passage through the High Rock Canyon country, and several members of the party had been killed:

> Finally after days of a slow running fight, an organized drive was made on the Indians and they were driven far back behind the train. The white forces returned to their main encampment not knowing that the Indians were almost at their heels again. The savage attack fell on the camp at a moment when it was ill prepared to withstand assault, and before the emigrants finally gained the victory, over forty white men had been killed fighting desperately to save their womenfolks and children from the Indians.

Although Brown's is the oldest known written version of the massacre, the tale obviously has a much longer history. The Massacre Lake desig-

nation appears as early as 1906 on United States Geological Survey maps.[6] But, to date, the earliest record of the Massacre place-name is in the *History of Nevada* edited by Myron Angel in 1881.[7] In that work the name appears in a section describing the principal features of Roop (now Washoe) County:

> Still farther south is Massacre Valley, a fine tract of land six by twelve miles in extent. Two thousand head of cattle are kept here, and there is a small tract of meadow land. South of Massacre Valley is High Rock Canyon running diagonally across three townships.

Because this historical work was conceived, researched, and published in a period of sixteen months, the Massacre Valley designation must have been in current usage as early as 1879. But at this point the record ends without leads, for written records of the High Rock Country are sparse for the three decades between the date of the alleged massacre in 1850 and the first official use of the place name in 1879–80. It will be necessary to examine the history of the High Rock Country in greater detail to learn how the massacre story developed during this period.

The earliest written record of passage through the High Rock Country is John Frémont's 1843 journal of exploration.[8] Frémont was followed by Jesse Applegate in 1846. Applegate's intent was to blaze a wagon road escape route for Americans in Oregon should war break out with the British over possession of the Oregon Territory.[9] On his arrival in Idaho, Applegate advertised the new road and encouraged some of the Oregon-bound emigrants of 1846 to leave the Oregon Trail and follow the Humboldt River route across Nevada toward California. Applegate directed these adventurers to leave the Humboldt River at its great bend near present-day Imlay and to proceed northwest along the new Applegate Cutoff.

The Applegate Cutoff became far more traveled after Peter Lassen extended it southward into central California via the Pitt River to the Sacramento Valley. Lassen established a trading post along this route and actively encouraged the emigrants of 1849 to take what became known as the Lassen Cutoff. The Applegate-Lassen road proceeded from the great bend of the Humboldt River across the Black Rock Desert to Soldier Meadows, thence through High Rock Canyon to Forty-nine Pass and into Surprise Valley, California. Emigrants often broke the twenty-five mile trek between High Rock Canyon and Forty-nine Pass with a stopover at Emigrant Spring near the present-day Massacre Ranch.

The emigration of 1849 following the Applegate Cutoff included both California-bound gold seekers and Oregon-bound settlers. It is estimated that 7000–9000 people traveled this route in 1849.[10] Of 132 known diaries recording crossings of Nevada in 1849, forty describe the Applegate-Lassen road.[11] These emigrants found it to be rugged and indirect. Word spread rapidly and the 1850 emigration was probably less than 500 persons.[12] Apparently few, if any, passed over the Applegate-Lassen road in 1851.

After 1850 there was little traffic through the High Rock Country until 1862 when silver was discovered in southwestern Idaho. By 1865 a well traveled mail and freight route from Chico, California to Silver City, Idaho (near present-day Boise) passed northward through the High Rock Country via Granite Creek, Soldier Meadows and Summit Lake.[13] It was during the mid-1860s that some Nevada Indians, having acquired horses, organized into mobile, mounted predator bands.[14] These bands threatened commerce along much of the length of the Idaho Road. As a result, U.S. Army Camp McGarry was temporarily established at Summit Lake in 1865 and manned until it was abandoned in 1868.[15]

By the late 1860s these groups of raiding Indians had been destroyed and the Chico-Idaho road had fallen into disuse, superseded by other routes. Thus, following the brief flurry of the mid-1860s, written records concerning the High Rock Country again became sparse. Following pacification, cattlemen started to move into the High Rock Country with the growth of that industry during the early 1870s. The cattle industry was well established there by 1879–80, and at this time the massacre place-name is mentioned in the *History of Nevada* edited by Myron Angel.

When it is subjected to critical review, several aspects of the 1850 massacre story appear extremely suspicious. First, from what is known of the Indians of the High Rock Country, an organized, large-scale attack on a wagon train is entirely out of character. A careful reading of seventeen emigrant diaries which record passage through the High Rock Country between 1846 and 1849 has revealed nine Indian-perpetrated incidents along the Applegate Road between the Black Rock Desert and Forty-nine Pass. All of these incidents involved the shooting or stealing of emigrants' cows or horses; and all occurred at night.[16] Throughout this literature there is but one recorded instance of an Indian shooting a Caucasian anywhere in the High Rock Country, and this incident was precipitated by the Caucasian himself. It occurred in late August of 1849 in the hills between Soldier Meadows and the Black Rock Desert. It is described as follows in the diary of Burrell Whalen Evans:

> ... her we met some U.S. Troops from Oregon who was on their rout to Fort Hall they were encamped two miles of us their guide thought he could pilot them a nearer way to the head of Maryes River got permission from the Commander and started on this rout with three other men they traveled some fifteen miles that day and the next day early in the morning they saw some indians in the hills They made signs for the Indians to come to them Two of the Indians approached the Guide and a man by name of Garrison the other men being over a hill from them The indians was afraid of the Whites and Garrison seeing it though he would have some fun snatched his gun from off his shoulder and in the act of presenting at the Indians the Indian drew his bow Garrison fired at him but missed him the Indian shot him throu the body with an arrow and killed him amediateley the Guid killed one of the Indians and they came back to camp bringing Garrison with them where I saw him.[17]

The 1846–49 pattern of Indian activity along the Applegate Road through the High Rock Country was clearly one of persistent but small-scale nocturnal action against emigrants' draft animals by small, dispersed groups of Indians. There seems to have been no organized effort directed against the emigrants themselves. Indians often only attempted to shoot and injure an ox or horse so that it could be recovered and eaten after the emigrants had been forced to abandon it. This pattern of scattered, small-scale Indian predation against draft animals, as recorded in emigrants' diaries, fits well with ethnographic descriptions of small foraging pedestrian bands of the northern Great Basin.[18]

In contrast, specialized, mounted predatory Indians did exist further north in the Warner Valley of south central Oregon as early as 1827, and they were active as late as September 26, 1849, when Captain William H. Warner of the U.S. Army Topographical Engineers was ambushed and killed by a party of twenty-five Indians.[19] These Indians made at least one raid south into the Massacre-Long Valley area during the summer of 1849, but this raid was nocturnal and directed only against livestock.[20] The group was again recorded in August, 1850 by U.S. Army Captain N. Lyon, who had been sent to Warner Valley to search for Captain Warner's remains. Lyon remained in the valley until approximately August 26; however, on September 26, after returning to California, he told Goldsborough Bruff that on August 24, in Warner Valley:

> While camped in the valley at the foot of a Pass, a band of about 50 Indians came down from the opposite range of high hills and formed a line flanked by 2 horsemen. One of them fired a rifle several times, with some precision and in good time.[21]

This predator band from Warner Valley is perhaps the only remotely reasonable group to have carried out an emigrant massacre in 1850, but Captain Lyon's report on his Warner Valley trip records no massacres of emigrants anywhere in the area.[22] This would indicate that the 1850 massacre had to have taken place during September or later, but before the end of the year's emigration.

Westward-bound emigrants always scheduled their movements to allow crossing the Sierra well before the onset of winter at higher elevations. Of the thirty-three known diarists of 1849 who took the Applegate route, the slowest and last of the group had departed the Humboldt River and embarked on the cutoff by September 21.[23] Allowing for adequate rest time, this last wagon train should have completed its transit of the High Rock Country by the end of the first week of October and passed into Surprise Valley, California. Assuming a similar scheduling for the reduced number of wagon trains in 1850, it can be safely predicted that the emigration of 1850 along the Applegate road through the High Rock Country was likewise near its completion by the end of the first week of October. For all practical purposes, then, the Massacre of 1850 can only have occurred after Captain Lyon's departure from Warner Valley on August 26, and before the end of the 1850 emigration through Massacre Valley about October 7.

This rock concentration, located on the Applegate Trail near Massacre Ranch, has sometimes been interpreted as the mass grave of the emigrants killed in the 1850 Massacre.
(Photo courtesy of Inez Johnson.)

Captain Lyon's Warner Valley report was handwritten in Benicia, California, and dated November 1, 1850, approximately three weeks after the end of the 1850 emigration through the Massacre Valley. Since he makes no mention of an emigrant massacre, it can be argued that word of a massacre might not have reached him in three weeks, but no other known military document records a massacre in 1850, either. It is highly unlikely that both the U.S. Army and the people in the area could totally overlook a massacre of forty persons. The killing of Phinney Garrison in 1849, discussed above, is recorded independently by seven different contemporary diarists.[24] Rumor of massacre and murder has a life of its own. It spreads rapidly, is long remembered, and gains momentum with retelling. Its hideous aspect is its greatest appeal. That the Massacre of 1850 was not recorded in the 1850s when it would have been sensational news poses a serious question concerning its historical authenticity.

Systematic compilation of all known records of murders of Caucasians by Indians in Oregon and northern California was begun in 1854, only four years after the alleged massacre, by order of the Secretary of the Oregon Territory.[25] The purpose of this compilation was to document the Indian menace that necessitated establishing a force of volunteer soldiers from the Oregon and Washington Territories to protect the overland emigration, particularly along the Southern or Applegate Road. In 1858, in an effort to secure an appropriation from the U.S. Congress to repay the Oregon Volunteers, the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oregon sent a collection of sworn and notarized documents to President James Buchanan describing in detail both the original need for the Volunteers and their subsequent field activities. The authors of these documents attempted to list all known murders of Caucasians by Indians and succeeded in recording a total of 242 for the period between 1834 and 1857. Their summary chart listed six murders for 1850. It borders on the impossible that they could have overlooked the murder of forty emigrants on the Applegate Road. The killing of forty persons would have been, by far, the largest massacre reported. These economically-motivated authors were grabbing at straws to dramatize the need for the Oregon Volunteers. Had there even been a rumor of a massacre in 1850, they would have recorded it in lurid detail. That they did not list a massacre in 1850 is strong evidence that there was no massacre in 1850.

Negative evidence is extremely difficult to work with. It is generally easier to prove that something did happen than to prove that something did not. To debunk convincingly the Massacre of 1850, it is not enough to build a logical argument by accumulating circumstantial evidence. It is essential, in addition, to provide an alternative model to explain the existence of the massacre place-names and the tenacity of the massacre story.

This review of the literature has shown that the massacre place-names did not appear until the late 1870s concurrent with the opening of the High Rock Country to its first heavy use by the rapidly-developing cattle

industry. The 1870s thus mark the beginning of the first steady and consistent occupation of the High Rock Country by Caucasians, ending what was effectively a twenty-five year hiatus of records since the westward emigration of 1849–50. It was during the 1870s that many of the geographic features of the High Rock Country were named. Cowboys became intimately acquainted with topographic features in the process of keeping track of cattle, and information transfer among cowboys required names for canyons, valleys, mountains and water sources. In the course of their work, cowboys came upon a variety of artifacts surviving from the Gold Rush thirty years earlier. These artifacts included abandoned wagons and baggage, autographs carved on canyon walls, and graves marked with rock cairns. In the Massacre Valley near the present-day Massacre Ranch there are two rock structures which have been interpreted as graves. One of them (Fig. 2) measuring 8 by 13 feet has been interpreted as a mass grave because of its size.[26] In reality, this structure may be associated and contemporary with the Massacre Ranch, or it may date from the 1849–52 period. At present, this is not known. However, this structure has been listed by several scholars as a possible grave site of the emigrants killed in the Massacre of 1850.[27]

Recognition and interpretation of graves dating from 1849 to 1852 in the High Rock Country requires an understanding that during the period there were commonly two kinds of graves. The first kind of grave was for dead people, the sort into which Phinney Garrison was placed.[28] Such graves were generally dug in the middle of the road and left unmarked so that subsequent traffic would erase any trace and thereby prevent exhumation by Indians. The second kind of grave was somewhat more common, particularly in the vicinity of the Applegate Road through the High Rock Country. This type was usually large and clearly marked, generally with a cairn of rocks, and it formed a cache for personal belongings and equipment which the excavator hoped to recover at a later date. Caches were frequent along the Applegate Road through the High Rock Country because emaciated draft animals, already reduced to exhaustion in crossing the Black Rock Desert, were incapable of pulling heavily loaded wagons through the rough and broken lava terrain. Moreover, many disheartened emigrants, on learning that they were still hundreds of miles from the California gold fields, cached their belongings in anticipation of the long haul ahead.

A contemporary description of the cache-making process was written by Dr. Joseph Middleton on October 5, 1849, while he was camped on the Applegate Trail near the site of the present Massacre Ranch and "mass grave." Middleton recorded in his diary that near the campsite a grave was found marked "Daniel Wheeler, a colored man Died September 23, 1849." Middleton relates that in actuality the grave was

> what in this wilderness is called a cache. It contains hidden articles of an entire wagon, taken to pieces and carefully packed away, besides many other things the owners could not take along

> with them . . . about a quarter mile ahead the same operation was going on . . . by another wagon party. . . . Many of the larger graves we have passed are doubtless caches.[29]

It is highly likely that the "mass grave" near Massacre Ranch is in fact a cache, as were most other such structures. The cache was likely looted by subsequent travelers soon after it was constructed, leaving a conspicuous pile of rocks to be found by cowboys thirty years later.[30] Cowboys, unaware of the cache-making process, interpreted this or some other prominant cairn as a mass grave and logically explained it as the result of a massacre. This bit of folk interpretation of an archaeological feature is probably the complete basis of the so-called "Massacre of 1850."

The deception of the cache-making Forty-niner may not have fooled his contemporaries; but the deception was not without some small success. It has fooled generations of cowboys and historians, and has provided Nevada with a series of colorful place-names which dramatize the history of the High Rock Country, even if they do not contribute to its accuracy.

Notes

1. Helen S. Carlson, *Nevada Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), p. 164.

2. Perhaps the most imaginative account of the Massacre of 1850 was prepared by the Thomas C. Wilson Advertising Agency as one of a series of historically oriented newspaper advertisements for Harold's Club. The advertisement featured pen and ink drawings by a commercial artist, Paul Nyland, a detailed account of the Massacre, and an erroneous description and dating of the killing of Phinney Garrison in 1849. This advertisement was reissued by Harold's Club in *Pioneer Nevada* (Reno, 1951), p. 25.

3. This description of the Massacre of 1850 may be found in a reissue of the original W.P.A Nevada publication entitled *Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State* (Portland: Binfords and Mort Publishers, 1957), p. 216.

4. Effie Mona Mack, *Nevada: A History of the State from Earliest Times to the Civil War* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), p. 323.

5. William S. Brown, "Northwestern Nevada: Land of Enchantment," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 11, 1931.

6. United States Geological Survey Map, Nevada-Long Valley Quadrangle #1, 1906, Washington, D.C.

7. Myron Angel (ed.), *History of Nevada* (Oakland: Thompson and West Publishers, 1881). Facsimile reprint (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1958), p. 564.

8. John C. Frémont, *Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon and California* (Buffalo: George H. Derby Co., 1849).

9. The report of the 1846 Applegate Road exploring expedition was written from memory many years later by Lindsay Applegate. See Lindsay Applegate, "Notes and Reminiscences of Laying Out and Establishing the Old Emigrant Road into Southern Oregon in the Year 1846," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXII (1921), pp. 13–45. Page 30 of this report is the source of a widely quoted, inaccurate description of the year and circumstances in which Phinney Garrison was killed in the High Rock Country. A corrected version from contemporary accounts is provided in the present article.

10. Devere Helfich, "The Applegate Trail," *Klamath Echoes* (Klamath Falls, Oregon: The Klamath County Historical Society, No. 9, 1971), p. 10. Helfrich, an amateur historian, has devoted many years to the study of the Applegate-Lassen Road. His estimates of the number of persons traveling the road between 1849 and 1851 are based on contemporary counts of wagon trains and estimates of numbers of passengers. These estimates are unverified.

11. Dale L. Morgan (ed.), *The Overland Journey of James A. Pritchard from Kentucky to California in 1849* (Denver: The Old West Publishing Co., 1959). See the foldout chart in the rear pocket.

12. Helfrich, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

13. Robert Amesbury, *Nobles' Emigrant Trail* (Susanville, California: 1967), p. 29.

14. Black Rock Tom was the leader of one such mounted predatory band operating in the country surrounding the Black Rock Desert. For a description of the activities of this group see Sessions S. Wheeler, *The Nevada Desert* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1972), pp. 73–92.

15. George Ruhlen, "Early Nevada Forts," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly,* Vol. 7:3–4 (1964), pp. 44–45.

16. I collected these statistics in preparing an article to be published in a forthcoming issue of the NHS *Quarterly*: "From Pottage to Portage: A Perspective on Aboriginal Horse Use in the Northern Great Basin Prior to 1850."

17. Burrell Whalen Evans, "Diary of 1849: Missouri to California"; a microfilm copy of the original manuscript is in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley.

18. For a description of the structure and activities of traditional Great Basin Indian groups see: Julian H. Steward, *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 120, 1938).

19. Peter S. Ogden, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal: 1826–27,* edited by K. G. Davies (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. 23, 1961), p. 125.

20. This information comes from Alonzo Delano, *Across the Plains and Among the Diggings* (New York: Wilson-Erickson Inc., 1936), p. 92. I discuss this and other activities of the Warner Valley predatory band in "From Pottage to Portage: A Perspective on Aboriginal Horse Use in the Northern Great Basin Prior to 1850." *See* footnote 16.

21. Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines (editors), *Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 837–838.

22. Captain N. Lyon, "Report on the Operations of the Command Sent in Search of the Remains of Captain Warner and of the Property Left by General Wilson on the Emigrant Trail," dated Benicia, California, Nov. 1, 1850. Read and Gaines (*Ibid.*, p. 1288) refer to this document as Lyon's second report and describe it as an unpublished report in the files of the War Department, Washington, D.C.

23. Dale L. Morgan, *op. cit.*, See the foldout chart in the rear pocket for the calendar dates in 1849 on which each of these thirty-three diarists left the Humboldt River and embarked on the Applegate Cutoff.

24. The seven diarists recording the killing of Phinney Garrison are as follows: P. F. Castleman, Overland Journal, May 2, 1849–May 1851, photocopy of typed transcript in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley. See the journal entry for Sept. 9, 1849. Burrell Whalen Evans, "Diary of 1849: Missouri to California," microfilm copy of the original manuscript in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley. Elijah Bryan Farnham, "1849 Overland Journal," edited by Merrill J. Mattes and J. K. Esley, *Indiana Magazine of History,* Vol. 46 (September–December, 1950). See the journal entry for September 26, 1849. Isaac Foster, "A Journal of the Route to Alta California," Typescript HM16995, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. See the journal entry for September 1, 1849. Israel Foote Hale, Overland Journal, May 5–September 14, 1849, no formal title, *Quarterly of the Society of California Pioneers,* Vol. 2 (June, 1925), pp. 59–130. See the Journal entries for August 26–28, 1849.

Elijah Preston Howell, Overland Journal, May 6–September 25, 1849, photocopy of original manuscript in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley. See the journal entry for August 28, 1849. Joseph Sedgeley, *Overland to California in 1849* (Oakland, California: privately printed, 1877). See the journal entry for August 27, 1849.

25. U.S. Congress, House, *Papers Transmitted by the Secretary of the Oregon Territory Relative to the Protection Afforded by the Volunteers of Oregon and Washington Territories to Overland Emigrants in 1854,* 35th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1859, Miscellaneous Document 47, p. 17.

26. For a map showing the exact locations of the Massacre Lakes, Ranch, Mass Grave, and the Applegate Trail, see Helfrich, *op. cit.,* p. 46. This is one of a series of detailed overlapping maps in which Helfrich plots historically important locations for the entire length of the trail.

27. For example, see the plate on page 62 of Sessions S. Wheeler, *op. cit.*

28. Elijah Bryan Farnham, "1849 Overland Journal," Edited by Merrill J. Mattes and J. K. Esley, *Indiana Magazine of History,* Vol. 46 (September–December, 1950). See the journal entry for September 26, 1849.

29. Dr. Joseph Middleton, "Diary of May 26, 1849 to April 5, 1851." This unpublished manuscript is held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Division, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

30. Plundering of caches was commonplace along the emigrant road. In 1850, Captain N. Lyon found that the large cache left by General Wilson in the Fandango Valley the previous year had been looted "long before." The relevant passages from Lyon's report are quoted in Read and Gaines, *op. cit.,* p. 1078.

Teaching the Constitution

by Wilbur S. Shepperson

In 1976 Professor Albert C. Johns of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas reissued his *Nevada Politics* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Dubuque, Iowa), and in 1977 Professor Eleanore Bushnell of the University of Nevada, Reno reissued her *The Nevada Constitution: Origin and Growth* (University of Nevada Press, Reno). The two works touch on government and political theory and in part are designed for university students, but they also include a broad popular spectrum of political and social issues within the state. In a historical sense the books are not isolated publications; rather, they fit into a fifty-year tradition—a half century in which the teaching of government and politics in Nevada's schools has been both emphasized and required.

It was in March, 1923, that the Nevada legislature passed an act mandating the teaching of the federal and state constitutions "including the origin and history of said Constitutions and the study of and devotion to American institutions and ideals." Instruction was to take place "in all the public and private schools, colleges, and universities" within the state. The law of 1923 became the stimulus and underlying authority for many educational requirements, regulations, directives, and publications.

In attempting to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the legislation, the University of Nevada promptly initiated courses which offered instruction in both the federal and the state constitution. Attorney (later judge) A. J. Maestretti and Professor Charles Roger Hicks prepared a lengthy student guide to the Nevada Constitution. In 1933 the guide was published as a 125 page pamphlet in the University of Nevada Bulletin series. After several reprintings it was revised and republished in 1940 and again in 1947. When the third edition was prepared in 1951, Professor Claude C. Smith provided many of the changes and was added as a co-author. Further editions appeared during the fifties. In 1960 Professor Don W. Driggs completely rewrote the study and in 1961

Wilbur S. Shepperson is a Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Reno. The author of *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters*, and a number of other books and articles, Dr. Shepperson is noted as a specialist in the areas of European emigration to the United States, and the cultural patterns and life-styles of Nevada's immigrants.

published it as item number one in the Nevada Studies in History and Political Science series. The eighty-six page pamphlet became the first publication of the newly-established University of Nevada Press. Driggs' work elicited a broad response which reached well beyond the University of Nevada classrooms.

In 1965 Professor Eleanore Bushnell researched, rewrote and expanded the survey into a book-length publication. It became item number eight in the History and Political Science series. Over the last twelve years the study has passed through four editions, many printings and constant revision; however, the title and the number eight listing in the History and Political Science series have remained unchanged. Building upon the same traditions and legal requirements as those used by Maestretti, Hicks, Smith, Driggs, and Bushnell, Professor Albert C. Johns of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas published a work on Nevada government in 1971 and republished it as *Nevada Politics* in 1976. While designed to attract readers outside of the teaching profession, Professor Johns' book also follows the instructional pattern which has grown from the 1923 law.

In order to meet the constitutional demands of the state's elementary and secondary schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction has for many years issued pamphlets on the constitution. Such works have assisted teachers to learn about the basic document, and at the same time they have provided material for courses in Nevada government and politics. A third set of publications which sometimes has been used to meet the teaching needs growing from the 1923 law are the political histories of Nevada issued by the Secretary of State. While the first brief pamphlet compiled by a Secretary was in 1910, it was in 1940 that Secretary Malcolm McEachin expanded the idea by listing members of the territorial legislatures, state legislatures, returns of the general elections, and similar data. Numerous printings and editions have followed, and the 1940 type booklet has become a standard publication used widely in public schools, the universities, and throughout state agencies.

Passage of the 1923 Nevada law no doubt grew from a mounting public concern over unionization and radicalism, a broad fear of communism, and a general disillusionment following World War I. For many Americans the "shadow of Moscow" and the "red revolution" seemed to be sweeping across the land. Consequently labor militancy, syndicalism, and even agrarian insurgency triggered an aggresive political response. The new nationalism helped to foster the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and an appeal for "undivided Americanism." Super-patriotism became a force not only directed against political and economic radicals, but also against Negroes, Jews, Catholics, foreigners, and others. Nordic and Anglo-Saxon superiority and the old Puritan virtues were favorably contrasted with the poverty and questionable life style of the newer immigrant groups; and works like Madison Grant's pseudo-scientific tract *The Passing of a Great Race* were widely read and generally applauded.

In Nevada as throughout the country, American virtues were emphasized during the early twenties. As early as 1921 legislation was recommended which would bar the Japanese from acquiring real property in the state; and in 1924 after a popular vote on the issue, section sixteen of the state's original constitution was repealed. That section had given bona fide residents of the state "the same rights in respect to the possession, enjoyment and inheritance of property as native born citizens." Such rights were now withdrawn. Numerous racial, alien, and immigrant laws were proposed during the period, but perhaps the most long-lasting and sophisticated response to Americanism was Assembly Bill No. 163 introduced by the young and politically active Marguerite Gosse of Reno.

Miss Gosse, although elected as a Republican, had in September 1922 founded the Nevada Womans' Party. The daughter of Harry Gosse, owner of the Riverside Hotel, she had traveled throughout the world and had become a gourmet cook, a student of horticulture, an exponent of nursing, and an active supporter of the Y.W.C.A. Although Miss Gosse introduced A.B. 163 requiring the teaching of the constitution in Nevada schools, she was not associated with the education profession and listed her occupation as "Club Woman." Miss Gosse, who lived until 1972, seems to have been in the tradition of the young, accomplished, feminine activist. One of her mother's sisters, Anne Mudd Warren, was an early Nevada attorney, admitted to the bar in 1899, and another aunt, Lizzie Mudd, was an officer in a Nevada bank. Before introducing A.B. 163 the unmarried Miss Gosse had proposed a measure to tax all bachelors within the state. Although dynamic and versatile, Miss Gosse was not successful in politics and served only one term in the Nevada Assembly.

The requirement for teaching the constitution was introduced on February 28; the rules were suspended for both the first and the second reading of the measure. On March 7 the bill emerged from the Education Committee with a "do pass," and on March 8 in a roll-call vote it received thirty-four yeas and no nays, with two persons absent. Assemblymen from Washoe, Ormsby, White Pine, and Nye counties enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. On March 15, the sixtieth and last day of the session, the Senate passed the bill 15 to 0 with two Senators being absent. Clearly there was general support for the measure in 1923, and there has been no serious public question of the legislation during the nearly fifty-five years that the law has been operative.

For most persons declarations and revolutions are more exciting and historically colorful than constitutions and legal documents. The individual or the specific is easier to revere or idolize than the group or a principle. Thus Americans think of John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, and the fourth of July more readily than they recall the Constitutional Convention and the long hot summer of 1787. And in Nevada we remember John Mackay and Comstock silver more easily than we do our constitutional origins. In times of emergency, sacrifice, or great emo-

tional stress few of us turn to the constitution. George M. Cohan made our hearts beat true with the old red, white, and blue, and an emotional sadness comes over us as we think of poppies growing between the crosses row on row, but neither national crisis nor local calamity brings most of us to reflect on the constitution. And yet, even in our age of depleted energy, expanding nuclear hardware, and highly technical machines, our basic political system is viewed as a bedrock which needs little change. We still place this "sacred" document, along with the Bible and the local newspaper, in cornerstones and steel boxes which are not to be opened for a thousand years.

Of course, a constitution is by no means self-explanatory. It must be taught and studied. Fundamentally it is a statement of principles raised to become a body of law—a superior embodiment of reason and an underlying bulwark for all institutions. Unfortunately, in many contemporary societies constitutions are not regarded seriously. In some countries the document is little more than a propaganda device which is echoed internally over the state-controlled radio or quoted self-righteously at the United Nations. In Nevada, as throughout the United States, we have often seemed contradictory in observing and interpreting the constitution. Many puzzling legal predicaments have led a segment of society to question the reasoning of courts. During the past twenty-five years a rather large group within the body politic has argued that the courts have confused, not clarified, the values implicit within the constitution.

In an attempt to make the constitution and political system within Nevada more meaningful, Bushnell and Johns have focused much of their attention on contemporary politics, political leaders, economic forces, racial minorities, demographic trends, geographical phenomena, individual governmental agencies, and local tax structures. The rights and duties of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches are extensively developed in both books. Bushnell finds significance in historical origins, the territorial era, and the formative period in Nevada government while Johns tends to emphasize the "bureaucratic maze," special interests, and local politics. Both would agree that law has been designed by man for the uses of man. Therefore, any fundamental authority must include not only legal documents, but also practices and customs. The authors also suggest that in Nevada as elsewhere, the practical needs of human society have brought about a constant, and at times almost nomadic, shifting in political and social conditions. Constitutions like customs must therefore undergo constant interpretation and thoughtful revision.

Although often laudatory of individual politicians, Johns' work sometimes conveys a sense of investigative reporting. He stresses the informality, the rugged aggression, and the extravagance to be found within the state. Boldface subheadings like "Gangster Era," "Legalized Prostitution," "Howard Hughes," "Las Vegas Image," and "More Big Names," tend to emphasize Nevada's boisterous behavior, canny oppor-

tunism, and colorful entrepreneurs. Nevada is viewed as a last frontier where action is as important as justice, where upward mobility supersedes quiet reflection, and where quick success or a thrill is the "name of the game." But for Johns, Nevada success is not the result of the Puritan work ethic, or of Horatio Alger capitalism, or even of merit. Those who get ahead are "owners of the critical pieces of the action"; they are in "the power structure." (p. 144) Many of the book's broad developing sentences and phrases, while setting an exciting and even flamboyant tone, are not completely accurate or explanatory. For example, "temperatures [in Las Vegas] exceed 100 degrees each day from mid-May through August," (p. 9) "there are no oil or coal deposits [in Nevada] that have been found to this date," (p. 9) "this is the first comprehensive book written for adults about Nevada politics," (p. vii) "prostitution...is permitted within brothels by fourteen of the state's seventeen counties." (p. 5) Such sweeping generalizations and unqualified comments tend to reflect the same exaggeration and over-statement that Johns finds in Nevada life.

The extensive use of the passive voice, hearsay evidence, and undocumented authority reduces some paragraphs to idle speculation. "It has been said," "tourists mention," "arguments abound," "according to some political leaders," "it is the statement most frequently made," and "it is reported that," are phrases which do not lend themselves to exacting constitutional and legal history. Nor is the author always precise in his writing. In a section entitled "Getting Here First" he notes:

> It is an economic fact of life that people who are seeking fortunes have not made it in their home towns. Perhaps it should be stated differently. Every community, to be such, must have people. If there are people, they have certain economic needs. Basically, they need water, food, housing, tools, and a means to make a living. Enterprising people who get to a community that is destined to grow grab up the basic economic elements which other people will require. They sell their commodity to less enterprising or different enterprising citizens, and to newcomers.(pp. 143–144)

Perhaps *Nevada Politics* is less a constitutional or legal discussion and more of a socio-political and journalistic commentary. In evaluating law enforcement and legalized prostitution the author tries to be brutally frank:

> It has been reported that some 1,500 prostitutes ply their trade in Clark County and another 600 in the Reno-Sparks area of Washoe County.... It is a widely held point of view that payoffs are made to protect these women and male prostitutes in the same category from arrest. This is speculation for which proof has not been substantiated. On the other hand, so-called street walkers or whores who work with pimps, are frequently in trouble with police. It is believed that from these women and their efforts, money is acquired to carry on traffic in dope.

> Furthermore, some of the street-walking types engage in robbery, armed or otherwise, often 'rolling' their clients, or subjecting them to acts of violence. A victim may be 'given a mickey,' which means putting some drug in a drink to induce slumber, so he can be robbed while asleep.... These whores are often found to be infected with gonorrhea, syphilis, and in some cases, with both. Some prostitutes serve as aids in burglarizing the hotel or motel room of their clients, thereby, bringing unhappiness to visitors and degrading their Nevada experience." (pp. 5–6)

While emphasizing Nevada's unique institutions like prostitution and gambling, Johns also gives attention to more traditional political and governmental issues. Numerous boards and commissions, the powers of various state officials, budgets and tax structure, rural and urban governments, and legislative functions are noted and evaluated. However, neither the constitution nor the historical background for the document's many amendments is presented, and Johns seems to be suggesting that constitutional history and the law are not total realities. Bribes, favors, pressure groups, and individual foibles all play their part in a political and social system. We are left to wonder how much the constitution really has to do with justice or injustice, success or failure, or the general well-being of the body politic.

Nevada Politics approaches the state on the basis of what is, rather than on the basis of what is supposed to be. The author has attempted to sort out the notions and practices of the present political society, and he has tried to define the day-to-day application and meaning of such practices. And yet, while Johns is telling us how things are, we sometimes gain the impression that he is also suggesting how they should be. In a theoretical sense, therefore, the book might be termed utilitarian. From the nineteenth century reformer J. S. Mill down to many contemporary politicians, economists, and public officials there has been a theory that political institutions should respond to the public welfare and nothing more. Utilitarianism is a philosophy which has subscribed to human needs; it holds that legal institutions should serve the general well-being of society. The theory is reflected daily in decisions on education, social services, and minority rights. Utilitarians would have the political system provide both justice and a fuller life for all citizens.

In short, despite literary weaknesses and a strained informality, *Nevada Politics* presents a candid and pithy survey of contemporary political action in the state. The work is neither a myth exploder nor a myth creator; rather it uses and evaluates, and even seems to confirm, the popular myths.

If *Nevada Politics* can be classified as utilitarian then perhaps *The Nevada Constitution* by Eleanore Bushnell can be classified as legal positivism. Professor Bushnell would tend to require explicit political decisions or practices in the establishment of constitutional rights and governmental procedures. From eighteenth century rationalists down to Oliver Wendell Holmes and Felix Frankfurter it has been argued that

rights are formally created and specified through political and social action. Therefore, the constitution and judicial decisions are and must be a significant part of our society's basic set of rules. Bushnell not only includes the constitution in her work but she uses it in her discussion and explanations. She is more formal and ordered than Johns in observing and evaluating the various branches of government, and while she notes Nevada's unique institutions, the approach is restrained and structured.

Bushnell is one of the few scholars who has read and examined all of the formal debates leading to the adoption of the Nevada constitution. She has studied the membership in both the first and second constitutional conventions, observed the delegates' political interests, and noted the commonplace as well as the unusual qualities of the final document. Almost half of the Bushnell book is devoted to a historical and constitutional survey and analysis. There is of course notice taken of voting patterns, reapportionment, the legislature, powers of the executive, and the structure of the state court system. Taxation, population, the ballot, and intergovernment comparisons are also investigated.

The author is particularly concerned by the present reluctance of the people of the state to consider a restructuring of the constitution. She believes that a plethora of constitutional amendments are in a somewhat piecemeal fashion transforming the basic document into a "wasp's nest" of cross purposes and confusion. In time the constitution might well cease to be the more or less abstract superstructure which was intended. If the document is an embodiment of reason with guidelines sifted from the contingencies of experience, both purpose and principles must be restated or both will be lost in the detail and jumble of amendments. Since Bushnell's original publication on the constitution in 1965 she has greatly increased her coverage of gambling and her development of voter behavior. And she sees reapportionment and the death of the old Nevada order as significantly altering political life in the state and introducing a "real political revolution."

The Nevada Constitution provides a brief but balanced historical summary of Nevada up to statehood and the formation of the constitution in 1864. A chapter sketching the state's political history for the one hundred years after 1864 would have been helpful. Also, more hard questions about the governmental system could have been asked; and the confusion, the political indifference, and the superficiality of a highly migrant population could have been explored in greater depth. The study is, however, reflective, free of factual errors, well organized, and grammatically polished. The fifty-eight page appendix devoted to the constitution as amended to 1977 supplies a worthwhile teaching aid. Both Bushnell and Johns provide excellent and informative statistical comparisons, tables, charts, and selected bibliographies. Both are controlled in their predictions, informative rather than philosophical, descriptive rather than theoretical.

Justice and order require that every social organization have a generally accepted network of authority. In our society, the constitution and law through political action have been endowed with this supreme power. But the authority must have a moral basis in our heritage, our traditions, and our shared convictions; and it must be restricted and carefully controlled by man so as to prevent the creation of a superman. Clearly the many delicate political balances found in a democracy deserve to be wisely taught and seriously studied in all of our schools.

Clarissa Church, a southern-born black who grew up in Carson Valley in the 1850s and 1860s.
(Photo courtesy of Miss Grace Dangberg, Carson Valley Historical Society)

Nevada blacks protesting the defeat of a Civil Rights bill in the Nevada Legislature, Carson City, March 27, 1961.
(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Bertha Woodard, Sparks, Nevada)

Nevada's Black Heritage: A Review of "Good Time Coming?"

by Warren L. d'Azevedo

"Good Time Coming?": Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century. By Elmer R. Rusco. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. 230 pp., illus., bibliography, notes, index)

FOR THOSE INTERESTED in the history of the American West or in the special experience of minority populations, Elmer Rusco, Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada in Reno, has provided a work of outstanding scholarly value. It is a detailed account of events and conditions affecting the small black population of Nevada from the earliest period of exploration in the 1820s to the turn of the twentieth century.

In a Forward to the book, the noted student of black history, Kenneth Wiggins Porter, comments that "until now, not a single western state has possessed an adequate study of its Negro population," and, in his view, Elmer Rusco's book "is not only interesting and valuable in itself but, also, as a pioneering work, is immensely suggestive and stimulating for further historical study." Historians of black history have tended to concentrate their attention on the larger black population areas of the South and the northeastern urban centers of major distribution. Western states like Nevada, where the black population totaled 44 in 1860 and was never higher than a peak of 396 in the late nineteenth century, were considered to be negligible resources for black history. However, as Porter points out, the lack of concern for the history of blacks in the West extends even to those western states in which they were and remain numerically important.

Elmer Rusco prefaces his work with the candid observation that none of the histories of the territory and the state of Nevada have treated adequately the life of nonwhite peoples. He attributes this neglect of the achievements, and often even the existence, of nonwhite groups to a general pattern of white racism "which needs to be recognized and then rejected." He also underscores a fact, the potency of which the reader will be reminded throughout the work, that "once a pattern of subordina-

Warren L. d'Azevedo is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno. His major research interests are in the fields of African and North American Indian ethnology, Afro-American studies and ethnic relations.

tion becomes well established, it can perpetuate itself without conscious adherence to the values that originally led to its establishment."

"*Good Time Coming?*" is a book which takes a long stride toward the goal of understanding the social roles of those black Americans who participated in the opening of the western frontier and whose contribution has been virtually ignored. Few Nevadans are aware, for example, that there were black members in most of the major exploring parties which entered the region between 1820 and 1840. Some of them were among the most skilled guides and horsemen in the West, and there were others who operated ranches and way-stations along the routes to California. Among the more famous of these early pioneers was the mountain man James P. Beckwourth, who discovered Beckwourth Pass through which he guided numerous immigrant parties and where he maintained a ranch and station for many years in the mid-1800s.

A particularly interesting aspect of the early period uncovered by Rusco was the apparently friendly relationship that obtained between blacks and Indians. Not only is James Beckwourth reported to have lived for years as an honored man among the Crow, but there were instances of black traders living and married among the Indian tribes. In her autobiography, for example, Sarah Winnemucca notes that Indians objected to white mistreatment of blacks.

Though Rusco does not specifically discuss the implications of this material, it raises intriguing questions concerning the changing relations between white and nonwhite sectors of the frontier population. During and following the Civil War there were black landowners and ranchers in Nevada, and one was reported to be the heaviest taxpayer in Douglas County in 1867. Black ranchers hired white as well as Indian laborers and, like their white counterparts, often sired children by Indian women, passing their names on to Indian descendants. Black cowboys and ranch foremen were not uncommon, and some maintained close associations with the local Indian peoples with whom they worked. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, racist feelings intensified among the whites, a phenomenon which Rusco attributes in part to the economic decline of the 1890s. Hostility against blacks became extreme and many Nevada communities excluded them by force while local newspapers regularly referred to them in derogatory terms. The black population dropped by almost fifty percent and strong anti-black attitudes prevailed through the early twentieth century. These developments coincided with the growing white animosity toward Chinese and other Asians; this at times assumed the proportion of pogroms. A fruitful line of research is suggested in this regard which might shed some light on the emergence of Indian identification with white attitudes about blacks and Asians in the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most important contribution of Rusco's book is its exposition of the significant social role played by blacks in Nevada, an historical factor which has been virtually ignored or forgotten. His painstaking

research reveals that, contrary to the general view, the majority of blacks in Nevada in the 1860s and 1870s were skilled workers and, though the proportion of menial and unskilled laborers increased later, a substantial number were in skilled occupations, in the professions, and in business. Thus, as Rusco points out, there were a sufficient number of persons in the black community with the financial means to support the development of black churches, fraternal orders, as well as charitable and political organizations.

Far from being a silent or apathetic minority in the face of white prejudice, the early Nevada black community was actively involved in the political life of the territory and then the new state. Many black Nevadans and organizations worked vigorously to change the state constitutional provisions that denied them the right to vote, hold office, serve on juries or attend public schools. In response to white discrimination, blacks formed their own churches and even attempted in a number of instances to conduct their own schools because of the exclusion of their children.

By the 1870s the status of blacks had so much improved that a general optimism prevailed in the black community. It was believed that the Emancipation Proclamation and the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment had at last defeated racism and ushered in an era of equal rights. But, as Rusco reminds the reader, this conclusion was very premature, for there were to be serious setbacks in the twentieth century and "in the 1960s blacks, in Nevada and elsewhere, once more had to demand that the government protect their rights."

Most Nevada history has been written since the turn of the twentieth century during the decades which witnessed a considerable decline in the status of black people, and during which many of the great advances in social justice precipitated by the Civil War eroded away. In this process white historians, either consciously or unconsciously, have tended to overlook the existence of nonwhite groups, leaving a severe gap in our knowledge of the real history of the diverse peoples making up the population of the state. It would be interesting to learn, for example, how many white Nevadans are aware that the first Baptist Church in the state was built by blacks in 1863, that black cowboys contributed to the lore of the West, or that black ranchers, clergymen and businessmen were among the early civic leaders. Few, if any, would have heard of Dr. W. H. C. Stephenson, the black physician who practiced medicine in Virginia City during the 1860s; of the remarkable black writer and spokesman, Thomas Detter; of William H. Hall, the discoverer and owner of the famous Elevator Mine at Treasure Hill; or of James M. Whitfield, a nationally recognized black poet, publisher, and leader who had earned his living as a barber in Nevada and other western states. Myriads of white figures of lesser accomplishment crowd the standard histories of the West while these and many other noteworthy black pioneers are scarcely mentioned, if at all. The historical contribution of American

Indian, Asian and other minorities has sometimes fared little better.

It would be impossible in a short review to do justice to the rich detail and insights which Elmer Rusco has provided the reader in this truly remarkable book. All those who seek a fuller picture of the history of Nevada and the West, and who wish to learn more of the dramatic struggle of a people who have become the largest minority group in Nevada despite enormous difficulties, should read this work and pass it on to others. The author is to be commended for his diligent scholarship and independent mind which have created an unprecedented and much needed resource in western American history and black studies.

Notes and Documents

Tom Fitch's "Sage-Brush Sketches": Sidelights on the Legal Profession in Frontier Nevada

Introduction and notes by Eric N. Moody

In 1878, when he was practicing law in Prescott, Arizona Territory, Thomas Fitch penned a series of "Sage-Brush Sketches" for the San Francisco *Argonaut*.[1] Dealing with the legal profession in Nevada during the early years of the Comstock period, the articles ranged in content from caustic criticism of the territorial judiciary to humorous accounts of bombastic attorneys and their difficult clients. As a whole, they not only contributed additional color to the story of frontier Nevada's bench and bar, but also spotlighted the human element in the legal history of the state.

Thomas Fitch, who was known in his day as the "Silver Tongued Orator of the Pacific," was well qualified to write about the Nevada courts and their officers. He had come to Virginia City in 1863, after having been a newspaper editor and state legislator in California, and had gone to work as an editorialist for the *Virginia Daily Union*. Following the *Union* job, which brought him acquaintance with Mark Twain as well as a pistol duel with *Territorial Enterprise* editor Joseph Goodman, he served as a delegate to the constitutional convention of 1864, was employed as a supreme court reporter, and then began to practice law. After some unsuccessful attempts to win a seat in Congress, he moved to Washoe City in 1865 and was soon appointed district attorney for Washoe County. Two years and an unsuccessful U.S. Senate campaign later, he changed his residence to Belmont in Nye County. From that booming mining camp, in 1868, he was elected to Congress. He served only one term, being defeated for re-election in 1870.

After his repudiation by the voters, Fitch cut his ties with Nevada. Although he briefly lived again in the state on several occasions over the next four decades (notably in 1889–90 when, as a resident of Reno, he was the vice chairman of the National Silver Committee), he became a wanderer, practicing law and following various other professions in Utah, California, Arizona, New York, Hawaii, and half a dozen other states and territories. As an attorney, his clients included Brigham Young, Wyatt

Earp and former Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii. He died in Decoto, California, on November 12, 1923, at the age of eighty-five.

Toward the end of his life Fitch produced a number of autobiographical works, but he had begun his reminiscences long before with the "Sage-Brush Sketches." These early articles were, at the time of their composition, lively remembrances of a Comstock era which had not quite disappeared. Today, with the great Comstock mines shut down and the "bonanza times" long gone, the pieces retain their lively character, readability, and even some instructiveness. Along with only a handful of similar first-hand accounts, Fitch's sketches do much to breathe life into that brilliant, rambunctious, and near legendary institution known in the 1860's as the "Washoe Bar."

SAGE-BRUSH SKETCHES.—I.

By Thomas Fitch.

THE "FLUSH TIMES" of the Southwest and the days of "forty-nine" furnish no parallel to the history of Nevada during her Territorial career. Like California, in that the report of rich mineral discoveries, with their glittering promises of sudden wealth, allured the industrious, the adventurous, the unsettled, the hopeful, along with the desperate, the vile, the fugitive, and the pariah to her sterile mountains, Nevada was yet unlike California, in that capital, daring the presence of its hereditary foes, crossed the Sierra hot on the trail of the pioneer, and lavishly sowed itself in the hope of multiplied harvests. It was not only those who had successively journeyed to Gold Lake, Kern River, Fraser River, and Gold Bluff, who had successively followed every shining phantom that the cupidity of speculators or the credibility of adventurers danced before their eyes, that thronged in unsifted masses the roads to the new Dorado, for the accumulated capital of San Francisco caught the infectious "Washoe fever," and its owners, becoming satisfied of the existence of great wealth under the arid slopes of Mount Davidson, poured treasure upon them more freely and more potently than Hannibal of old poured vinegar in his efforts to melt the Alps.

Then came the era of flush times and loose morals. "Wild cats" were created with a fecundity never equaled by their feline prototypes; and the most prosperous owners of wild cats were not those who located granite and called it quartz; who held up mica and pronounced it gold; who, seizing on hornblende, looked through the spectacles of speculation and denominated it sulphurets; but they were those who, succeeding in establishing some sort of jumping claim to a mine of known value, incorporated their fighting titles ten deep, and went to develop—not their mine, but their lawsuit. A bar more learned, more active, and perhaps more unscrupulous, than any metropolitan capital contained, flocked in the streets and huddled in the attics of Virginia City. Money was plentiful, moral restraints were loosened or altogether untied, society was a chaos.

Unprincipled men were ready to violate, for a consideration, the oath of a witness or the solemn obligations of a juror. An attorney who had his wits about him knew that he would probably be called upon to encounter at every step a mine of perjured witnesses, or a masked battery of purchased jurors, or a bribed judge. He who relied merely upon the equity and strong presentation of his cause leaned often upon a broken reed. He who depended solely upon legal precedents was guided by a compass from which the magnetic current of integrity had departed, and which veered to the four corners of space. Nevada was a whirl of excitement, a chaos of corruption, a very hades of dishonesty; and yet cases involving millions were weekly decided by the courts—and such courts!

Nevada was organized as a territory in the spring of 1861. The framework of our National Territorial system, then as now, provided that the executive and judicial officers of a Territory should be appointed by the President of the United States, and, then as now, a practice prevailed—a practice pernicious in theory, and resulting disastrously in practice—of not appointing such officers from among the residents of a Territory, but of sending men from distant communities to fill them. If there was ever a time when the President of the United States should have selected officers, and especially judicial officers, with extremest care, it was when the community called Nevada was begotten by labor and enterprise out of weird deserts and barren hills, and thrown suddenly into the lap of dazzling affluence. If there was ever a time when a President was poorly prepared to exercise such care, it was when the Territorial offices of Nevada were chosen. The President was unused to public life, and he was elected by a party then strange to political dominion. With the cloud of war settling rapidly over every speck of light upon the shortening horizon, with the air full of mighty threats of battle, and the Presidential presence filled with petty clamors for office, there was neither time nor opportunity to properly consider the condition of remote territories. Most feebly were the wants of Nevada portrayed, or the necessities of Nevada understood, by those who represented California at Washington. Those Senators and Representatives to whom a President might ordinarily have looked for advice were of opposite political faith, and were far more diligent in securing supposed party advantages by permitting the President to make mistakes, than in serving a remote people by helping him to make wise selections. Interested advisers, on the other hand, wishing to serve a party friend, or get rid of a party rival, were plentiful, and so the East sent to Nevada her lazzaroni, and not her laborers, her pettifoggers and not her jurists, her weak men rather than her best men, and with the people of Nevada it was Hobson's choice—these or none.

What could be expected of briefless barristers and broken-down politicians, unable to make a living or gain public confidence at home, shipped off, as England used to send her rusty spinsters around the Cape of Good Hope—for India and a market? What could be expected of such men, placed in positions supposed to be trifling, but suddenly discovered to be of the gravest importance and the most weighty responsibility? It was

because of their Territorial judges that the people of Nevada accepted the responsibilities of Statehood—perhaps somewhat prematurely. "Anything to get out of the judicial deadfall" was the popular thought, and after the people had escaped from Judge Log to Judge Stork, from gay to grave, from draw-poker to a quartz-mill—after they had forced from the bench a Judge who would not try causes at all, to find his place supplied by a Judge who was bought by both litigants, and was protected out of the country by an armed guard of the party in whose favor he finally decided[2] at last they reluctantly, but almost unanimously, shouldered the cost of self-government, and the State of Nevada was born into the American family.

II.

Among the old-time members of the Washoe bar, few possessed a readier wit than Tom C—,[3] and none were more unsparing of an opponent. Tom lacked both the learning and the energy necessary to achieve rank among the foremost lawyers, but he had a tongue of rarest malice, and he never lost an opportunity of using it to the discomfiture of his more successful brethren.

There once came up for trial an action in which an honest woodsman was plaintiff, and the Ophir Mining Company was defendant. The case, which was commenced during the early days of the Territory, had been continued from term to term, and the original counsel of record on both sides had passed to other fields of effort than the law, leaving Tom sole representative of the plaintiff, and Judge W—[4] alone for the defendant. The Judge was then, as he is now, a leading and prosperous member of the Nevada bar, a keen and careful lawyer, a plausible and powerful speaker, and a genial and entertaining companion. His one weakness is a personal vanity, so overwhelming and complete that it renders him incapable of appreciating the fun of any joke of which he may be the objective point. Tom was neither slow to perceive nor loth to assail the soft spot of his adversary, and in his final address to the "twelve good men and true," the "great Washoe cocktail exterminator," as he sometimes called himself, thus assaulted his wincing adversary:

"Gentlemen," said Tom, "this cause has been on the calendar for a long time. When it was commenced, the Ophir Company was a great corporation. From its plethoric coffers was constructed, across the Ophir Slough, a causeway more costly than the Appian Way. Around its mill and residence property was erected a fence eighteen feet high, to exclude the gaze of the vulgar herd. Within that inclosure was built a mansion, wherein the trustees were accustomed to partake of wine dinners on Saturday afternoons. This great corporation had a United States District Judge and a United States Senator for its lawyers; its stock sold for four thousand dollars a foot; its dividends were one hundred and fifty dollars per month, and its shareholders walked along snuffing the stars. But now,

gentlemen, alas! *tempora mutantur*; the decayed bridge across the slough is useful only as a shelter for young wild ducks while their pin feathers are growing. The eighteen-foot fence has fallen to the ground, and its once erect palings are the sport of every Washoe zephyr. The mansion is denuded, weather-beaten, and tenantless. Only the gurgle of Ophir Creek is heard, where once the pop and fizzle of champagne made musical the night. No more wine dinners, no more jubilant trustees, no more happy stockholders, no more dividends, no more high-toned and costly counsel. The stock has fallen to a hundred dollars a foot, they have struck hot water and desert sand in the mine, and have come down to W—for a lawyer."

Of another sort than the last speaker was Judge H—,[5] of Austin. He was a lawyer ranking with the foremost, and carrying a tongue of rarest eloquence and wit; but when in his cups he was altogether oblivious of his surroundings, and very much inclined to be disputatious. While in this condition he visited the theatre, where Boucicault's play of *The Long Strike* was in process of presentation. The hero was on trial for murder, and the dramatist had perpetrated some startling anachronism in the way of a "ruling" of the judge presiding, that brought H—to his feet in the *parquette* with an "objection," which he proceeded to state and argue, to the discomfiture of the actors and the prolonged merriment of the audience.

"May it please the court," said Judge H—, on another occasion, "I do not wish to intimate that the learned counsel who has just taken his seat is devoid of a proper share of intelligence. But I must remark that if the learned counsel had been a contemporary of Thompson's colt, Thompson's colt would have lost its notoriety."

Who that has ever been compelled to litigate for the possession of a silver mine but has prayed in his secret heart for deliverance from the "professional mining expert?" To hear one of these gentry swear, it would seem as if the Mosaic account of the creation was imperfect, in that it failed to chronicle the presence of Professor—as consulting engineer. Occasionally a mining man could be found who added scientific acquirements to practical knowledge, and such were never over positive as to the "course of the vain," while to the professor it was as plain as a highway. Often some empirical theorist assumed the title of professor, and demanded and received large sums for testifying to a mass of technical terms and unsupported conclusions. On the trial of the Eberhart and Richmond case, in White Pine County, one of these professors went down very suddenly, after a cross-examination, which was something as follows:

"What are you professor of?"

"Metallurgy, geology, and mathematics."

"Where did you study these sciences?"

"At the Royal College of Mexico."

"What text-books did you use in mathematics?"

"Daboll and Euclid."

"Can you square the circle?"

"I can."

"Indeed, you are advanced further than most of us. Please square it for us right here."

"I have not my instruments with me."

"Where are your instruments?"

"At the hotel."

"If that is the case, I will ask the court to take a recess, and send the sheriff to the hotel for your instruments, that we may not miss the opportunity of having the circle squared."

But His Honor spoiled the fun by ordering the witness to stand down, and suggesting to the attorney for the other side that the testimony of the expert who offered to square the circle had better be blotted from the record.

If there were curious professors, there were also singular jurors, in those days. A citizen, who was not anxious to escape from duty, answered the district attorney's question as to his opinions regarding capital punishment as follows:

"Have you any conscientious scruples?"

JUROR [interrupting]—"No, sir, none whatever."

D.A.—"Not on any subject?"

JUROR—"None whatever." He was permitted to depart.

III.

Mark Twain's story of the interview between the Virginia City rough and the young clergyman, whom he called upon to bury his friend, is a very good burlesque of the slang dialect of the pioneer fire-boys. But truth is stranger than fiction, and the verity of the incident we are about to relate will be substantiated by many a sage-brusher. It was in the winter of 1860–61 that there arrived in Virginia a pioneer clergyman of the Episcopal denomination. He had scarce-installed himself in his lodging house when there was a "shooting scrape" in a neighboring saloon, and the hours of one of the participants therein were numbered. A friend, who was more familiar with cards than theology, volunteered to procure the new clergyman to visit the dying man. In performance of his mission the messenger visited the clergyman, and informed him that his friend had been accidentally shot, and lay dying in the saloon below. With some hesitation the man of God said to the messenger, "Do you think that your friend would like to have the eucharist administered to him before he passes away?" At this suggestion, coming from such an unexpected source, the puzzled sport looked grave, and replied: "Well, it seems to me a queer time for that sort of thing. Howsumever, you know your business, and it ain't for me to interfere; and if you choose to take your deck along, I reckon it will be all right."

An emigrant from Missouri was indicted for taking a horse not "his'n." Having neither a lawyer nor money to procure one, the court assigned S— as his counsel. S— did his best, but the jury found the defendant guilty. Being asked in due time if he had anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced, the culprit replied: "No, your Honor, only this: I am much obliged to you for the lawyer you gave me; I have nothing to say against him, for I reckon he did his level best. I find no fault with him, but if ever I get out of this scrape, I propose to make it awful hot for the judge that admitted him to practice law."

Once upon a time, when Belmont, Nevada, was a flourishing mining camp, there lived within its precincts a North of Ireland Irishman, by the name of Patrick Flanagan. He was lean, he was long, he was intelligent, he was of a morose disposition, he had Gothic eyebrows, a Roman nose, and a suspicious nature, and his calling was that of a whisky dealer. Some miles below Belmont, on the Austin stage road, resided a character by the name of "Missouri" Brown. Brown kept the stage station, and dealt out whisky to wayfarers, but being of a thriftless habit, he was never able to accumulate sufficient capital to buy his liquor at Austin by the barrel. And so it fell out that Brown became a customer of Flanagan's, purchasing his supplies of that person two and three gallons at a time. After some months' dealing, Brown became delinquent to Flanagan in the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, balance due on purchases. Not receiving his pay, the vindictive Irishman had the Missourian arrested for selling liquor without a retail liquor dealer's license. Brown retorted by procuring the arrest of Flanagan for vending spirits in quantities over a quart without a wholesale liquor dealer's license. Flanagan thereupon commenced suit against Brown for the balance of one hundred and fifty dollars. Brown defended on the ground that the liquor having been sold him without a proper license, the contract was contrary to public policy, and the vendor could not recover. The justice gave judgment for Flanagan, and Brown appealed to the District Court. The clerk of the court, who was a friend of the saturnine plaintiff, advised him to obtain a change of venue, as the judge of this district,[6] was prejudiced against him. Flanagan accepted the clerk's advice, and as a change of venue was not practicable, he requested a change of judges. The newly appointed judge of the Pahranagat country[7] had not yet departed for the scene of his new labors, and he was not unwilling to air his young ermine in the community where he had been practicing. By the request of the regular judge of that district, the Pahranagatter mounted the bench, and the case of Flanagan *vs.* Brown was called. Under the Nevada practice, all trials in the District Court of appeals from justices' courts were *de novo* and final, and the parties were allowed to amend their papers *ad libitum*. It occurred to Brown's lawyer that his client had already paid Flanagan nearly two hundred dollars in cash for whisky, before the account now sued upon commenced to run. If the fact that Flanagan sold the liquor without a license was a valid reason

why Flanagan could not collect the purchase money, why, by an equally tenable chain of logic, ought not Brown to recover from Flanagan the two hundred dollars paid for whisky illegally sold? He therefore requested and obtained leave to amend his answer, so as to claim this money. Business was dull in Belmont at the time, and some hundreds of idle miners thronged the court room to hear the great case of Flanagan *vs.* Brown, and betting was about even on the result. We do not need to tell the legal reader that the plea of Brown's lawyer was utterly absurd under the Nevada law. But he quoted from a decision of the Supreme Court of the State of Maine, a ruling exactly in point, to the effect that money due for liquor could not be recovered. Flanagan's lawyer failed to know, and the court failed to observe, that the Maine decision was made under the "Maine liquor law," which made the case a crime, and that the case was essentially different under the Nevada law, which was simply a revenue statute. Flanagan evidently observed that the tide was going against him, and, although he was not lawyer enough to point out the fallacy, his strong Irish sense convinced him that something was wrong. He closed his whisky bar, and for two days sat behind the bar of the court, glowering at the judge and all the lawyers, and confident that his supposed friend, the clerk, who had persuaded him to a change of judges, had therein vilely betrayed him.

The last witness was sworn, and the last argument made, and the judge, who, by consent of the parties, tried the case without a jury, solemnly announced his decision. "He regretted that upon this, his first accession to the bench, he was compelled to render a decision that, to his mind, was at variance with the elementary principles of justice; but the law was very plain. It made him who should sell goods without a proper license guilty of a misdemeanor. It was held by the ample authorities cited—authorities that the court felt compelled to respect—that where the transaction of selling was a crime, the vendor could not recover. By the same train of reasoning, it was evident that money paid for goods, the vending of which was a crime, was illegally paid, and the person paying it was entitled to recover back the sums so paid. Therefore the court was reluctantly compelled to reverse the judgment of the justice of the peace, and order. instead, a judgment in favor of Brown, the defendant, and against Flanagan, the plaintiff, for two hundred dollars and costs."

Up rose Flanagan in his wrath. He had remained silent for two days, but at this blow his wounded spirit asserted itself. "Ah!" said he, "what between the clerk of this court, which is cross-capping me, and the d—d fool I hired for a lawyer, and the bloody rascal of a lawyer that fought the case for Brown, and this long-eared ass of a judge, I am the worst outraged man in Nye County."

The "coort" ordered Flanagan to jail for contempt.

"Contempt, is it?" says he. "Sure, you're right. I can find a Shoshone Indian that knows more law than you. Sure, if I wanted to get a patent for a thundering fool, I'd file you for a model."

But he was removed by the sheriff, who did not confine him, as the judge departed for Pahranagat that night.

Notes

1. *Argonaut,* February 16, 23, March 2, 1878.

2. References are to supreme court Justice Gordon N. Mott, who was "getting on in years and had grown to enjoy a seat at a faro table more than one on the bench" (Sam Davis, *History of Nevada,* p. 392), and his successor, John W. North, the owner of a mill in Washoe Valley, whose ruling for the Potosi Mining Company in its dispute with the Chollar Mining Company in May, 1864, roused the ire of the Chollar's attorney, William M. Stewart, and eventually resulted in North's resignation.

3. Thomas Cox, at one time Fitch's law partner in Washoe City.

4. Bernard C. Whitman, justice of the state supreme court, 1868–75. Despite his statement that Whitman was the sole defense attorney, Fitch appears to have been associated with the judge in this 1865 case.

5. F. H. Harmon, justice of the peace.

6. Benjamin Curler, district judge for Nye County, 1867–75.

7. Charles G. Hubbard, district judge for Lincoln County, 1869–71.

From Our Library Collection

BLM Photographs—Goldfield

In May, 1976, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) donated sixty-seven photographs to the Society, fifty-five of which related to the Vera Lode mining claim litigation in Goldfield. At that time the full significance and value of the photographs was not really known. But after researching the court case, and organizing the photographs, it has been discovered that a photographer working for the federal government systematically photographed all the buildings, lots, and streets associated with the Vera Lode mining claim.

On June 17, 1907, the prosecution's photographer travelled the streets of Goldfield photographing both sides of the 200, 300, and 400 blocks of Columbia Avenue, Fifth Avenue from the 100 through the 500 block, the 100 and 200 blocks of East Hall and East Ramsey Avenues, and the 200 block of East Crook. Four of the photographs depict the soon-to-be-famous Goldfield Hotel, then under construction. Other shots show the Goldfield News Building under construction, the recently completed Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Building and First Presbyterian Church, and practically every business and residence located on the Vera Lode claim.

It is no wonder there was so much litigation. The Dr. White Wolf Mining Company, the corporation that owned the Vera Lode claim, was arguing that it owned the greater part of Goldfield's business district.

As perhaps should have been expected, the federal government eventually won the case. Although the suit is long forgotten, the photographs are mute testimony to Goldfield's heyday as a mining camp, the period that ushered in the twentieth-century in Nevada. The Society extends its gratitude to the BLM, and especially to Ed Rowland, state director.

Mildred Breedlove Collection

Mildred Franklin was born in Coal Hill, Arkansas, on May 27, 1904. After her father died in 1908, Mildred moved with her mother to Prowers, Colorado, and then to Braggs, Oklahoma, in 1911, where she received her formal education. There she married Crongy P. Breedlove in September, 1920. After receiving a teacher's certificate, she taught school in Braggs, and later became a columnist for the *Muskogee Times Democrat* and *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*.

In 1939 Mildred and her family, which now included a son, Crongy Jr., and a daughter, Barbara, moved to Pomona, California. The children graduated from Pomona High School, and Barbara later graduated from Scripps College in Claremont; Crongy Jr. from Harvard. Mildred qualified for a real estate license in 1941, and with her husband opened a realty business in 1943.

The family, excluding Barbara who had recently married, in 1949 again moved, this time to Las Vegas. In the year 1950 Mildred began her serious study of poetry. In 1953 she sold her first poem, a year later the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW) officially recognized her work as a poet, and in 1955 and 1957 the Las Vegas branch of the NLAPW gave her its coveted achievement award.

Although Mildred's personal life was shaken by the loss of her husband in 1957, her career as a poet was on the upswing. On July 15, 1957, Governor Charles Russell appointed Mrs. Breedlove Nevada's poet laureate, and Governor Grant Sawyer reappointed her to that position two years later. Active in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Mildred organized the Nevada Poetry Society in 1961. At the same time, she received numerous awards from professional organizations, various city and state officials, and even a golden laurel wreath from President Marcos of the Philippines. Mildred served as state poet laureate until she resigned on August 11, 1966.

Mrs. Breedlove's major works include *Those Desert Hills and Other Poems* (1959), *A Study of Rhyme and Rhythm in Creative Expression* (1959), and *Nevada: A Poem Commemorating Nevada's One Hundredth Anniversary as a State* (1963). She now resides in Sparks.

The Mildred Breedlove manuscript collection consists of one box of correspondence (1940–1976), and includes both personal and business letters. She has also donated a large number of physical artifacts. The Society wishes to thank Mrs. Breedlove for her generous bequest.

Dayton Photographs

THE SOCIETY THANKS Dutch Knott's Express Antiques of Dayton for allowing the NHS to make prints from its large collection of negatives. New additions to our files include photographs of Dayton's Southern Pacific Railroad station and water tower in 1914, a number of early twentieth-century street scenes, and photographs of the town's Chinese and American Indian residents.

Manhattan Silver Mining Company—Austin

THE SOCIETY HAS ACQUIRED a large volume of manuscript materials from John Astlund of Torrance, California; the greatest portion of the collection relates to the operations of the Manhattan Silver Mining Company of Austin. The mining company, originally incorporated in

New York and primarily financed by New York capital, bought out the Oregon Milling and Mining Company in June 1865. The ten-stamp Oregon Mill became the twenty stamp Manhattan Mill, and was one of the first mills around Austin to introduce reverberatory roasting. Between 1865 and 1887, when the mines were closed, the Manhattan properties produced over half of the silver bullion shipped from the Reese River District. The Stokes interests, and then the Austin-Manhattan Consolidated Mining Company, later controlled the properties.

The collection consists of over one hundred and ten pieces, and includes the Adelberg & Raymond property report written in 1865, correspondence, both business and private, of Allan A. Curtis, Superintendent and General Agent of the Manhattan Company, and miscellaneous checks, correspondence, bills of sale, leases, and stock certificates associated with the mining operation. Also included in the donation are papers related to John M. Duncan & Co., hardware merchants in Austin. The Duncan brothers, William and John, were close friends of Curtis, and transacted business with the Manhattan Silver Mining Company. The Society wishes to thank Mr. Astlund.

Frank O'Bryan Book Collection

FRANK O'BRYAN, a senior citizen volunteer at the Society's Reno Office, has recently donated a forty-five volume collection of Western books to the library. A retired service station operator, Mr. O'Bryan has worked with the Society for the past two years. In addition to compiling a preliminary index to the Society's collection of topographical maps, he has done work on the Chorpenning overland mail route. His current project involves the creation of a bibliography of the diaries of immigrants passing across the Great Basin in the mid-Nineteenth Century. Mr. O'Bryan's dedication to history is appreciated by our staff and our patrons.

Reno Photos

THE SOCIETY IS FORTUNATE to have received a collection of photographs, a gift from Harold's Club donated by Press Relations Manager Terry Oliver.

Included are a large number of gambling photos during the tenure of the Smith Family, which depict the colorful decor and activities of the Club. There are also construction photos of I-80. Of special interest in these is the travel congestion of old Highway 40 and the problems of snow removal. In addition there are nineteen aerial views of Reno during the 1960s.

Mr. Oliver's interest in the Society began when he was a student of journalism at the University of Nevada. This fine collection of photographs is an outstanding addition to our Library.

Bert L. Smith Photograph Collection

MR. SMITH HAS RECENTLY donated ninety-three photographs to the Society. The collection once belonged to his father, and it reflects the Smith family's years in Nevada during the first two decades of the twentieth-century. Included in the photograph collection are rare shots of Bullfrog shortly after the initial locations in late 1904, of Pioneer before the devastating fire of May 7, 1909, and of mining properties near Pioche, circa 1915. Five stock certificates associated with mining and oil properties in southern Nevada are also part of the gift. The Society thanks Mr. Smith for his generosity.

Book Reviews

The West in the Life of the Nation. By Arrell M. Gibson. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1976. 640 pages. Maps, illustrations, index. $10.95)

THIS IS THE MOST comprehensive history of the American West to appear since Ray Allen Billington published *Westward Expansion* in 1949. As one might expect from the book's length, it is virtually a compendium of Western history. Consequently, the reader looking for a new synthesis or fresh interpretation may be disappointed and the specialist will learn little new about "the West" or its relationship to the nation. However, the teacher will be impressed by the book's scope and should find it useful for reference as well as for use in upper division history courses on the West.

Gibson's thesis is that "...the West has been the prime determinant of national economic direction and development and the principal source of national wealth and strength." On the other hand, he denies that "...Western pioneering experiences were the principal determinants of a distinctly American character or of our peculiar political and cultural institutions." Still, if Gibson's thesis seems inconsistent with Frederick Jackson Turner's claim that the frontier deeply influenced the development of distinctly American institutions and values, he builds on Turner in several ways. Not only does he emphasize the importance of sectionalism in American history; he also accepts Turner's argument that the West was not settled haphazardly by diverse bands of pioneers but rather as a series of successive, discrete frontiers characterized by Indians, fur traders, missionaries, miners, stockmen and farmers. "Each successive group created an identifiable frontier or community in which its members established increasingly the American presence." Furthermore, Gibson echoes Turner in arguing that the West's "greatest political legacy" to the nation was "...its role in suffusing democracy into the bastions of privilege, oligarchy, and limited franchise." Hence, he accepts the notion that Jacksonian Democracy was a by-product of the pioneering experience. Leaders were no longer drawn from "the elite" but rather "...from the community of the common man." Such ideas are not well supported by facts, and many historians would challenge Gibson's basic assumptions. Most recent scholarship suggests that the Jacksonian Period was far less "democratic" than historians once believed, and critics of the "frontier thesis" pointed out long ago that settlement of the frontier did not occur in neat, orderly stages.

Still, such criticisms may be beside the point. Gibson does not promise a radical reinterpretation of the Western experience. Instead, *The West in the Life of the Nation* tries to plug holes in earlier narrative works. Consequently, the author expands his definition of "the West" to include the region between the Appalachians and the Missouri River as well as the West beyond the 100th Meridian. Moreover, although his discussion of the twentieth century West comprises less than ten percent of the book, Gibson does try to carry his story up to the present. He looks beyond the Anglo-American frontier to consider the Spanish and French experiences in North America, and he includes brief histories of Alaska and Hawaii. In addition, he discusses the much neglected part racial and ethnic minorities played in Western history.

The author divides the trans-Appalachian West into the "Old West" and "New West" and argues that the two regions played distinctly different roles in "the life of the nation." The Old West included the "Old Southwest" and "Old Northeast," an area encompassing the present-day states from Indiana to Western New York in the North and from Louisiana to Western Georgis in the South. Although the Old West was politically weak in 1800, by 1828 a flood of new states made it strong enough to challenge the power of the original thirteen. And, even more important according to Gibson, "the interactions between the national government and the West during the first quarter of the nineteenth century in large measure determined the stream of major [national] legislation and was the principal determinant of American diplomacy." Few historians would disagree that such sectional issues as the tariff, Missouri Compromise, internal improvements, disposal of the public domain and Indian removal dominated national politics in the early nineteenth century. However, most would consider the effort of the United States to establish trade with Europe and remain aloof from the conflict between France and Great Britain far more important than negotiations with Spain over the cession of Florida or with Great Britain over abandonment of that nation's military posts in the Old Northwest.

Gibson is on sounder ground when he argues that "the New West's influence on national affairs was minimal before 1900." The trans-Missouri West's reputation as a "Great American Desert" died hard and generally the national government ignored the New West's repeated pleas for federal aid. The sectional conflict of the 1850s and the Civil War diverted national attention from the needs of mining communities scattered from California to Colorado. Hence, Congress did not authorize a transcontinental railroad until more than a decade after California entered the Union, and it was just as slow to tackle such problems as the regulation of mining on the public domain. But the New West suffered from neglect for decades after Appomatox. The federal government had no coherent "Western policy," and protest groups like the Populists clamored for reforms that would give them greater political and economic power in Washington.

The New West's political and economic power increased substantially in the twentieth century, particularly after World War II. Since 1900 the region has grown twice as fast as the nation as a whole. By 1970 about twenty-six percent of the population of the United States lived in the West even though a majority of Westerners lived in either California or Texas. New technology, government defense contracts, growing numbers of military installations, an increasing pool of capital, and industrial diversification transformed the West's economy. For most of its history, the West had been little more than a storehouse of raw materials for Eastern industry. But by the 1970s, the West produced many, if not most, of its own industrial and consumer goods. Oddly enough, however, Gibson pays scant attention to the divisions within the West itself. Obviously, only a few Western states can claim diversified industrial economies. The Great Plains states remain almost entirely dependent on agriculture; and the economic life of such states as Wyoming, Idaho and Montana still depends heavily on such "traditional" economic activities as mining, lumbering and stock-raising. Consequently, many historians would argue that except for its climate, California has more in common with New York than with Utah or Kansas.

Gibson manages to cover an extraordinary range of topics, but many subjects receive only superficial attention. For example, he covers twentieth century water projects in less than two pages despite their enormous importance in the development of Western cities, factories and farms. Similarly, the impact of Progressivism and the New Deal on the West receive only a few paragraphs. Gibson defines the significance of Western history largely in economic terms—"the prime determinant of national economic direction and development"—and devotes considerably less space to politics and society. There are brief chapters on each of these subjects, but they don't analyze or develop any major ideas in a systematic fashion. Hence the body of the book, however broad in scope, does not rest firmly on the book's introduction. If the West promoted democracy in the East as Gibson claims in his opening chapter, we need to know precisely how. And if the West permitted Americans to achieve a "national identity apart from Europe," we need to see how Easterners viewed the West and how their attitudes changed through time. We need to know more than simply what political issues interested Westerners and affected national politics. We also must understand how the frontier altered the structure of Western politics, and how Western politics differed from state to state. And, at an even different level, we could profit from an analysis of how politics differed between the "urban frontier" and rural community as well as between the state capitol and hinterland.

The West in the Life of the Nation contains a wealth of information and ranges comfortably over several hundred years. Many topics, especially the history of American Indians, are very well done. But, as is perhaps

inevitable in a book this size, far more questions are raised than answered.

DONALD J. PISANI
San Diego State University

The Gun in America. By Lee Kennett and James La Verne Anderson. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. 313 pp., illus., notes, bibliography, index)

THE GUN IN AMERICA is a significant book because it is the first scholarly attempt to synthesize the place of the gun in the American experience from an historical perspective. Based primarily upon secondary literature on violence and the gun in American history, this volume reflects the fragmentary nature of the scholarship on the subject. If Kennett and Anderson have not written a work which is destined to become the standard work on the role of the gun in America, it is more attributable to the lack of adequate scholarship on the multifarious specific dimensions of the more general phenomenon which the authors have attempted to pull together in this study than a result of any inherent weaknesses in the volume itself.

It is difficult to explain why historians have done so little with a phenomenon which has been so central to the American experience. The incomplete historiography has forced the authors to settle for a superficial treatment of significant aspects of the larger picture such as: the relationship between male chauvinism and the gun; the place of the gun in the more general violence in American history; the assumptions and values involved in the "gun-mindedness" of American culture; the relationship between the frontier experience and the American love affair with the gun; the connections between the belief in the need for an armed citizenry and fears generated by urban violence, racism, and nativism; and the influence of war upon the proliferation of guns. This attempt at synthesis highlights the need for additional research on America's favorite instrument of violence.

In spite of the gaps in the secondary literature on the subject, Kennett and Anderson have successfully pulled the disconnected literature into a readable synthesis. After a comparison of the European and American experience with firearms, the authors examine the second amendment in its historical setting, the emergence of the arms industry, the gun's role in the conquest of the West and the impact of the urbanization of American society upon the American's growing attachment to the gun. Contrary to what has been commonly assumed to be true, Americans did not become any less attached to their guns as a result of the closing of the frontier. In

the last three chapters Professor Kennett traces the numerous relatively unsuccessful attempts at the state and federal levels to legislate the control of firearms. Not only do the authors avoid any attempt to solve the "gun problem" but they avoid siding with either the pro-gun or anti-gun crusaders. Professor Kennett depicts the National Rifle Association as far less successful in its lobbying efforts then either the Association itself or its critics would lead one to believe.

The most obvious weakness of the book relates to its misleading subtitle, "The Origins of a National Dilemma." The dilemma is never made clear or analyzed; therefore, the volume lacks a unifying theme. The closest thing to a thesis is identified as the "gun problem," (p. 165), but since it is interpreted as having "appeared only with the twentieth century" (p. 165) and is dealt with only in the last three chapters of the book, it does not serve as a central thesis. In the introduction the reader is given a general idea about what the dilemma might be: "We have tried to measure the gun as an ingredient in our national experience, and to determine why and in what ways it has become both a fixture and a shibboleth in American life." (p. ix). But in the book itself this approach is neither consistently followed nor adequately developed to analyze the dilemma referred to in the title. Thus the title is much more provocative than the book itself.

Although the authors' work leaves something to be desired in both breadth and originality, their decision to survey the field rather than break new ground is both timely and useful.

VERNON E. MATTSON
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Inside Nevada Schools: A Challenge for the Future. (Carson City: Nevada State Retired Teachers Association, 1976. 309 pp., illus., bibliography)

THIS VOLUME COMPRISES a unique collection of mini-stories and anecdotes written by retired teachers and administrators. The time element covered by the text is from the middle 1800s, when the first mission schools were established, followed by the founding of private schools, and continuing through to the modern educational programs that are administered by the seventeen County School Districts of Nevada. Also, there is mention of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Clark County Community College. However, there is no parallel discussion of the northern part of the state.

The majority of the stories included in the book deal with the individual contributor's assignment and experiences in the sparsely populated areas of Nevada; hence the focus is on the one or two room school as it existed during the early 1900s. However remote the setting, the consensus of

opinion of these teachers seems unanimous: the rewards far outweighed the inconveniences of teaching in rural Nevada. This attitude is summed up by Alice Marsh, who taught in Currie, Nevada, circa 1914: "I shall always look back with nostalgia to the everyday adventure and life with the delightfully genuine and sincere folks I met there...."

Woven in these tales is a thread of Nevada history not hitherto revealed: the relationships existing between teacher and pupils, teacher and parents, and the teacher and other members of the small towns or isolated ranch communities in which he or she was assigned. There are firsthand descriptions and observations of places now faded from the desert surface. Within the telling are recognized names of individuals who later became successful business, educational and political leaders in the state of Nevada.

The reader soon realizes that the range of subjects covered is highly diversified. The founding of the early kindergartens is described. The elementary grades and high school years, whether taught under one roof in isolated areas or in separate buildings in larger towns, are well covered. Programs in the areas of home economics and vocational training are also described. Mentioned throughout the narrations are such topics as the scarcity of textbooks, lack of library materials, the art of improvisation on the part of the young teacher, the lack of adequate funding, and the need for state support of education. Three short biographies of women who contributed much to Nevada education are also included: Hannah Clapp, who established the Sierra Seminary in Carson City, and who later served on the faculty of the University of Nevada in Reno; Maude Frazier, who taught in many Nevada boom towns, later becoming a principal and then a superintendent, and at eighty-one appointed by Governor Grant Sawyer to the position of Lieutenant Governor; and Mary S. Doten, who was one of the forces behind the establishment of Reno's first high school.

During 1964, Nevada's Centennial Year, the Washoe Association of Retired Teachers began taping and compiling histories as related by those who had retired from the teaching profession. This project was under the direction of Evangeline Grant and Byrd Sawyer. Subsequently, this material was donated to the Nevada Historical Society. More information became available as more counties joined the Nevada State Retired Teachers' Association. The collection, which appears within the pages of *Inside Nevada Schools: A Challenge for the Future*, is the result of the effort of this state-wide group and has been published as a Nevada contribution to the Bicentennial celebration.

The main portion of the book is the section on County Histories, followed by a shorter section on the histories of state educational associations, including the organization of the Nevada State Department of Education, the histories of the Nevada State School Boards Association, the Nevada State Education Association, the Nevada State Retired Teachers Association and the National Congress of Parent Teachers'

Association. Each of these chapters was authored by a member of the respective group. The bibliography, limited to less than one page, is a section important to any publication which offers resource materials.

The entire text is enhanced by the reproduction of interesting photographs from the files of the Nevada Historical Society, The Nevada State Museum, and contributions from a few personal collections. Unfortunately, many of these photos are placed on pages other than the subject they illustrate, thus destroying any meaningful reinforcement to the reader. Some pictures have been included that are not related to any of the stories, and although they are interesting in themselves, they have no bearing on the text.

Although *Inside Nevada Schools: A Challenge for the Future* cannot be considered a work of great literary stature, its personal approach to the subject and its homespun overtones make it delightful reading. It is the first attempt to include a variety of educationally oriented materials under one cover; and the book should fill a need for those searching for first-hand information on Nevada's educational background.

VALERIE SNELL BERRY
Reno, Nevada

Thorn Apple. Edited by Bonita Bowman, Louise Crevelt, and Carol Ann Fogliani. (Las Vegas, Nevada, 1977. $2.00)

THE FIRST ISSUE OF *Thorn Apple*—named for the hawthorn's fruit—is admirably devoted to writings about people in a natural world. An exception is the reprinted poem of William Stafford, borrowed apparently as a devotional gesture. Sparing that, we have 35 poems or short prose pieces, one of which, "La Culebra de Cascabel," is notable in this collection for its prosodic excellence. Bonita Bowman's translation is a welcome assistance.

"Night Nest," of Billie Jean James, is for the most part rhythmic and pleasant, but it presents impenetrable lines: "Above the waves' drink down shadow," "Through a lake's father door a stilt,/black-necked, lands beside an avocet." A. Wilber Stevens' "The Tray" might almost be a domestic rendering of Emerson's "Days." Unlike Emerson, notable for his colloquial rhythms, Stevens, like many contemporary poets, capriciously breaks the beat, as in "Surly among the damask or the humble/ Paper and there is a hiss in the radiator." But I like the vitality of "Tray" and suppose Emerson would too.

Several of these poems that give me pleasure successfully combine a sense of setting and person: Janet Taylor's "Lost Fisherman," Charles Elwer's "Silverhair," Carol Ann Fogliani's "Concurrent." Others, focusing on landscape and creature, succeed largely through happily found words and images, like Fran Haraway's "Autumn Haiku," Mary

Manning's "The Lizard" ("A lizard spoke under her breath,/the gossip of the desert"), and particularly Scott Blackmer's "Mohave Journal" ("All green things, limp or spined,,/are faded and futureless at noon./A cloud boding nothing skirts the sky;/the sands are monochrome and mute").

This issue is most desirable, I believe, for two pairs of poems—or what pass as poems nowadays: Stephen Shu Ning Liu's "By the Valley of Fire, Nevada" and "I Walk Into Death Valley," and D. R. McBride's "Burro Creek North" and "Burro Creek South." Each of these writers moves his speaker through a landscape that means to him profound human relationships, and there are good lines: "Burro Creek breathes shallow,/sandy throat sings through boulders/minnows on its tongue."

But not enough lines in this collection zap the listener. This old reader wishes for greater attention to sound, especially since we are largely denied rhythm; and for fewer poems so narrowly rationed of articles and commas, as if the speakers were short of breath. For all that, *Thorn Apple* has made a congenial beginning, finding its poets and their subjects far removed from takes and tokes, the obligatory and disobliging uglinesses.

GEORGE HERMAN
University of Nevada, Reno

Mustang. By Anthony Amaral. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1977. 148 pp., illus., photos, notes. $9.00)

AS THE FRONTISPIECE INDICATES, this book deals entirely with the horses of Nevada, both wild and domesticated. It is an excellent portrayal of the existence of these horses whose lives have been destroyed and still are being threatened more than in any other western state. This is largely due to big cattle interests.

The author gives the little Spanish horses brought over by Cortez their just due. However, many of the animals he describes in spine-chilling episodes were cross bred stallions and pure-bred Percherons allowed to run with wild herds. Those who are working for the preservation of the original wild horses like to feel that those whose lives are being saved from the meat canners are mostly offspring of the original horses that came from Spain as well as the Mustangs developed from them.

Amaral states that it is no wonder Nevada's wild horses, many of which were formerly domesticated, were most difficult to capture, and much more so than those on other Western ranges. They have changed in blood type because of Percherons, Clydesdales, French Coach Horses, thoroughbreds, and even Curley horses brought from the Ural Mountains in Russia; and there are hearsay tales that even the camels that were brought over from Egypt had cross-bred with the horses, though this is not an established fact.

The very authenticity of Mr. Amaral's book makes it terribly upsetting for the admirers of these horses. The brutal methods of killing thousands upon thousands of horses is most depressing. The greed and ruthlessness of certain types of men is made very evident. Consolation comes when one runs across a character such as Pete Barnum, who was considered king of the mustangers in Nevada. But when horses were no longer to be used under the saddle and were ground up for chicken feed, he quietly left Nevada. There is much in the book about Barnum. One episode endearing him to the reader involves his encountering the body of another mustanger, Hank Connors, and a fine stallion, El Rio Rey, that he had needlessly shot. His mount had stumbled and tripped a second bullet, which killed him. When one of the riders muttered, "poor Hank," Barnum retorted, "poor horse." When Barnum had his own crew, he would not allow them to carry guns while in pursuit of wild horses. During the course of his mustanging, Barnum contrived a corral made of canvas which could be carried from one location to another. He had been aware of the many horses that had been impaled or had their necks broken from trying to escape from pole corrals, and his corral prevented this.

And then there is the story of Old Whitey, the living relic. He was captured in the early 1960s, running with a band of wild horses. He had been a pack mule for the Union Pacific as far back as 1915. His teeth indicated that he was fifty-three years to fifty-five years old. Just to determine who he was, a group of mustangers captured him, noted his brand and his age, and then turned him loose. Because of his fame, they kept a watch on him, and when in 1968 a white animal was spotted lying dead, they investigated. A bullet had ended his life. "I don't understand it," said one of the men. "Who could do a thing like that?"

The reading of this book brings warm surges of admiration for the *good* men involved, and reassurance that despite the many money-hungry human predators there are great men who appreciate God's precious gifts. These men guarded with tenderness those animals who had no words to speak for themselves.

HELEN A. REILLY
Reno, Nevada

Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons. By Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976; 364 pages; illustrations, notes, appendix, index)

THE MORMON CHURCH throughout the West has long been known for "taking care of its own" in providing for not only the spiritual sustenance of its flock, but also for its material well-being. The church's founder,

Joseph Smith, was profoundly interested in the material welfare of the Mormon Community to the extent that as early as 1831 he called for the faithful to consecrate their property to the church in his doctrines of Consecration and Stewardship. Such attempts by the early church to pool the material resources of its members for the common support of all reflect the communitarian impulse of Smith, as well as the era in which the church was being organized. The church's successes and failures in this enterprise form the basis for this work's discussion of the history of the Church of the Latter-day Saints from 1831 to 1976.

As explained in the preface, the present book is a reshaping by church historians Leonard J. Arrington and Dean L. May of Feramorz Y. Fox's original but unpublished manuscript, "Experiments in Cooperation and Social Security Among the Mormons: A Study of Joseph Smith's Order of Stewardships, Cooperation, and Brigham Young's United Order" that was completed in 1937. Combined with the revisions and additions of Arrington and May, and the superb publishing task of the Deseret Book Company, it makes both a thorough and a handsome study of "Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons" that goes beyond earlier and more narrow studies such as Nelson Lowry's *The Mormon Village* (1952). One misprint of a date, however, in the first sentence of the first chapter unfortunately mars an otherwise excellent publishing accomplishment. The sinking of Elizabethan explorer Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ship is dated some three centures incorrectly as 1853.

The Mormon ideal of cooperation and ultimately of a sharing society without want and greed in the "City of God" is constantly viewed in light of the historical setting and forces out of which this vision developed. The authors demonstrate, and somewhat apologetically, the secular orientation of their history when they write: "If we were to search for the underlying causes of the oft-noticed Mormon habit of cooperation, we would be forced to conclude that ultimately it is historical experience more than a conscious response to exhortations of the church leaders that accounts for their success in such undertakings." (p. 10) The book, as the authors indicate, is "designed for non-Mormon scholars as well as for Latter-day Saints" (p. x); and they have followed the style of secular scholars. Their conclusions, however, are that after observing other communitarian movements in America both in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, "... in the degree of their social achievements as well as in the scope of their design, the Mormons remain the most accomplished of all the communitarians America has produced." (p. 14)

Although the Mormon Church has never approached the ideals of Consecration and Stewardship pronounced by Joseph Smith, and although their achievement was abandoned by Smith himself very early, the ideal remains an inspiration to any successes and efforts toward cooperative economic enterprises the Mormons choose to promote. Such examples include Brigham Young's United Orders, the nationally

applauded Church Security program during the 1930s, and the present Church Welfare program.

WILLIAM D. ROWLEY
University of Nevada, Reno

The Peoples of Utah. Edited by Helen Z. Papanikolas. (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976; introduction + 468 pp., index, $7.50)

AS A SPECIAL PROJECT, the Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission authorized the publication of a series of essays focusing on the people of Utah. The finished volume is more than an immigration history, or an ethnic history, or a history of racial minorities. Indeed, it is an attempt to be nearly all inclusive, for whether the inhabitants were Japanese, Native Americans, English, German, or Lebanese, there is at least part of a chapter devoted to them.

Helen Z. Papanikolas has done an excellent job not only in editing, but also in selecting authors who represent the various "people of Utah." Although the authors' professional training varies, most of the writers have personal investments in their assigned tasks. As examples, Philip Notarianni on the Utah Italians; Joseph Stipanovich on the Yugoslavs; Ronald Coleman on Black Utahns; and Ms. Papanikolas on the Greeks are involved in autobiography as well as history. Since the essays are basically narratives and not designed as critical analyses, there is little problem with objectivity by the use of in-group representatives. However, the concept of touching on everyone might be bothersome to many scholars and to some readers.

This attempt to exclude no single group creates a scholarly unevenness that weakens the total impact of a genuine contribution. The potential difficulty is exemplified by attempts to categorize mainstream, easily assimilated Northwestern European emigrants to Utah as a group. The experiences of tens of thousands of Mormon converts from the British Isles or a like number from Scandanavia are much different than the few Armenian converts or the Greeks who did not convert. In fact, the Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish immigrants confronted numerous internal difficulties, and this makes it hard to regard them as separate entities. The articles that attempt to discuss the more populous groups are noble efforts, but they lack the directness, interest, and power of the sections on the more exceptional peoples such as the East Europeans, Black Americans, Native Americans, or Orientals. The essay on the Canadians in Utah is a fine article, but most of the Canadians who came into Utah seem to be descendents of Utahns who emigrated to Canada. Their roots are found in the British Isles or Scandanavia, just like most of the other Utahns. If the volume were reorganized, it might help the reader keep the various groups in perspective. A section on the pre-

dominant European groups, followed by the racial minorities, and concluding with the South Eastern ethnics might assist in creating a more balanced approach to the varied people who constitute Utah.

These suggestions, however, are minor when compared to the positive achievements throughout the volume. Most of the articles are well documented, thoroughly researched, and accurate summations. To this reviewer, there are numerous definite historical contributions of note. The aforementioned articles are excellent, as well as the Jack Goodman "Jews in Zion"; Don C. Conley's "The Pioneer Chinese of Utah"; and Robert Zeidner's "Immigration from the Middle East." Due to its relevance, the Vicente V. Mayer article, "After Escalante: The Spanish-Speaking People of Utah," is the most hard hitting. These are the migrant people who now bear the brunt of local prejudice and terrible conditions. All of the chapters should excite members of the ethnic groups, as well as scholars, toward more research and publication.

The book is illustrated beautifully, and physically it is a handsome volume. Carefully selected photographs are utilized in each chapter. They constitute an accompanying photo essay for each nationality. Considering the numerous photographs, the attractive binding, and the length of the finished product, it is amazing that this book costs so little. It serves as an example for other states and for a nation wedded to its immigrant experience.

F. Ross Petterson
Utah State University

Voices from Wah'kon-tah. Edited by Robert K. Dodge and Joseph B. McCullough with a foreward by Vine Deloria, Jr. (New York: International Publishers, Inc., 1976, second edition. 144 pp. cloth: $7.50; paper: 1.75)

Voices from Wah'kon-tah is an anthology of contemporary American Indian poetry with about twenty tribes being represented. Half of the thirty-four poets attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a Bureau of Indian Affairs School, during a portion of their high school years.

When selections from the works of a large number of ethnic poets are gathered together, the reader is naturally led to inquire whether the poems are chosen because they are artistically of high quality or because they are authored by members of the ethnic group. In this volume, lines of delicacy and feeling, such as these:

> in the lonely silence
> of a single raindrop
> bending a leaf downward.

from "Death Takes Only a Minute" by Agnes Pratt, mingle with the frankly awkward:

His name will be on the cornerstone
He will find it proper to loan
Proper to forget the ones who groan

from "The Man of Property" by Charles G. Ballard.

Many of the less-than-pretty poems are intentionally so, however; they are cries of outrage against the loss of the Indians' ancestral lands and customs. The poets celebrate rightness of place:

only the creature who leaves his own place
only the creature who walks another's way
will be killed will be eaten

as expressed in "The World Has Many Places Many Ways" by Norman H. Russell. In "Clerk's Song II," the same poet asks: what does the forest do monday through friday? and goes on ironically to envision his damnation in terms of his present occupation:

i am going to a white hell there will be
typewriters typing file cases standing
secretaries with spread legs
all my dreams are dying

The poets resent the white man's customs—wearing shoes, eating with knife and fork, praying to the Catholic God, his language, and most of all, his ways of thinking. Change—relocation, displacement—forced on the Indians leads to frustration, shame, and anger:

i seem walking in sleep
down streets down streets grey with cement
and glaring glass and oily wind
armed with a pint of wine
i cheated the children to buy

The final lines of this poem, "Relocation" by Simon Ortiz, aptly summarize the citified Indian's plea:

i am lonely for hills
i am lonely for myself

Sometimes the poet chooses to present an insider's view of tribal ritual: the sweat lodge, the rain dance, the eagle feather fan. More than these, it is harmony with his surroundings and the stillness at dawn—which brings wisdom, purification, regeneration—that are celebrated. At such times, the lone Indian is blessed because he is attuned to hear:

Within my tepee
I cannot remain on robes and blankets.
Far out into the still of night,
My heart goes forth.

Raising yearning arms, he responds to the coming of dawn:

Devotion surges in me
Overflows my littleness
And I must praise
In song and dance.

And he receives, in Phil George's words, "Night Blessing."

As Charles C. Long explains in "Yei-ei's Child," the Indian mourns the lost beauty of animals, plants, and climatic forces with which he used to be familiar when living with them as brothers:

> The bears, the deer, and the birds are a part of me and I am a part of them.
> As brothers, the clouds are our long, sleek hair.
> The winds are sour pure breath.
> As brothers, the rivers are our blood.
> The mountains are our own selves.

At this point, the white reader can well join in his Indian friend's lament, as more and more animals join their brethren on the Endangered Species List and truly wild places become fewer and more distant. Alonzo Lopez in "The Lavender Kitten" shows an extraordinary dazzle of color:

> Its fur glinted from an oscillating ray of pink.
> Quivered gently at the touch of a swirling blue breeze.
> Its emerald eyes glittered
> And gazed blindly at the lighting and fading sky of hazy red,
> Yellow, white, and blue.

describing an animal out of a white man's fantasy, priceless but unattainable, and therefore valueless.

A subject not represented as frequently here as it would be in a corresponding volume of white poetry is love. Agnes Pratt declares:

> Our glances spin silver threads,
> Weaving a web of closeness;
> Catching, holding
> A love too tenuous for words.

and calls it "Empathy." For Soge Track in "Indian Love Letter." the beloved is the "lady of the crescent moon." She appears to be angry, and he feels obliged to explain that the majority of his people have changed, saying

> if you were taken to
> the mission school,
> not because you wanted,
> but someone thought it best for you
> you too would change.

He promises to live by the old ways and hopes she will meet him:

> Tonight—my prayer plumes in hand
> with the white shell things—
> to the silent place I will go
> (it is for you I go, please be there.)

This is not the love of a living woman, but rather the love of a spirit. Even sexual relationships are tainted by the white man's meddling, as Marnie Walsh recounts in "Vickie, Fort Yates, No. Dak. 1970:"

> aunt nettie come back
> to reservation
> been to college

right away cecil dog-heart
give her baby
when she drunk
saturday nights
all the men get on her

Poetry in the form of the chant or song has for the Indians a long native tradition. The poems in this volume, composed in the acquired English language, tend to imitate either the native chant tradition or the borrowed English poetics, the former being the more effective. In most cases the poet is "I" and the reader is "you." There is little self-consciousness about the making of poems; indeed, Bruce Severy's expression, titled "Poems," is unique:

my poems
are the sounds
of pigeons
feathering the moonlight.

Many of the poems in this volume make interesting reading: interesting for their attitudes, which are educational for white people to read about. Some of the poems are worth re-reading for their poetic value, and the poets would compete well in any group of contemporaries. Best of all, the poems are encouraging indications of the Indian's ability to assimilate the old and the new: the very existence of such a body of literature—the Indian voice in the English language—bodes well for the future of a rightfully proud people.

NORMA J. ENGBERG
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The Harrowing of Eden: White Attitudes Toward Native Americans. By J. E. Chamberlain. (New York: Seabury Press, 1975. 204 pp., notes, index. $8.95)

THE HARROWING OF EDEN purports to be a history of white attitudes toward native Americans with a focus on attitudes toward land as providing continuing sources of conflict. If I read Chamberlain correctly, the white concept that ownership confers the obligation to cultivate land conflicted with an Indian notion that fused religious and civil beliefs in some undefined way.

The author's potentially useful evaluations of white attitudes seem to derive from an anarchist perspective. Unfortunately, although he makes severe evaluations of United States and Canadian political systems, he never explicitly defines his political theory. His evaluations are only potentially useful because he obscures exciting insights and impressive historical knowledge in disorganized chapters, impenetrable monologues, distracting polemics and numerous throw-away lines. The

following passage illustrates both his political stance and his writing style:

> The idea of a usufructuary right (or a right of use and occupancy) of land, an idea which had been brought over from England with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, was obliterated not so much by treaties, though they were a crucial factor in the process, as by one of the most misunderstood of the engines of progress—the modern governmental state, with its righteous conviction and inordinate power to do anything at all, to anybody, if it is convinced or convinces itself that this is for the common good. Such a sinister machine was the product of the political thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and its awesome consequence is just beginning to be felt by the non-native citizens of Canada and the United States. (page 8)

At points the rhetoric shades into purple as in the following admittedly humorous passage: "The tentacles of the welfare system slowly encircled the Indian nations, at the same time as the octopus was being put (by Congress) on shorter and shorter rations." (page 40). At other times, the exposition is too abstract, with vague antecedents of descriptive subject nouns.

Next to convoluted sentences, numerous disturbing thematic shifts create the greatest problem for the reader. Chapter One shifts from the analysis of attitudes to the analysis of the state as a sinister machine. Chapter Three begins with an examination of the changing political status of Indians and shifts to the problem of the amelioration of Indian health. At times the author appears to be re-writing *Our Brother's Keeper* with more chronological depth.

Additional confusion is created as the author shifts back and forth between Canadian and United States history. International comparisons of Indian policy are potentially useful, but they must be more systematic than the comparisons offered in the *Harrowing of Eden*. More explicit comparisons and a superb summary of Indian history are offered in a more sympathetic review of the same work by J. E. Guillemin in *Society* 14 (3):100–103.

GARY B. PALMER
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska. By Everett Dick. (Nebraska State Historical Society Publications XXVII. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1975. xiii + 456 pp., illus., biblio., index, $10.95)

UNTIL THE 1870s most Americans commonly considered the Great Plains to be the "Great American Desert." Lewis and Clark, Pike, Long, and a host of trappers and traders were responsible for creating and

perpetuating that myth. Their reports characterized the region as an arid wasteland almost devoid of trees and entirely unfit for cultivation and human habitation. The prevalent belief then was that the Plains could support only nomadic life based on herding. When settlers crossed the Missouri River into the Nebraska Territory, Americans residing in the east believed these emigrants were placing their lives in jeopardy.

The passage of the Homestead Act and the end of the Civil War lured thousands of settlers onto the Plains. Homesteaders, along with the earlier settlers along the Missouri River, found that eastern Nebraska was far from being the desert many people assumed it to be. Rather, it was a garden-like land waiting for exploitation, and by 1880 settlers were pushing beyond the 100th Meridian into the short grass country—an area of limited and unpredictable rainfall. A boomer spirit prevailed. Settlers generally supposed that farming would reduce the number of prairie fires which would in turn encourage tree growth and thereby increase rainfall in the Plains. Several scientists also contributed to this belief by proclaiming that rain followed the plow.

Although Nebraska and the Great Plains in general experienced above normal rainfall in the late 1870s and early 1880s, drought prevailed across the region from 1887 to 1897 and forced the inhabitants to reassess their positions as they tried to adapt to an increasingly hostile environment. Everett Dick, Research Professor of American History at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, traces this process of adaptation and elaborates on the problems early Nebraska settlers faced as they overcame the region's desert image and their own boomer optimism. Dick, using a geographical and social approach, deals primarily with agriculturally-related aspects of Nebraska life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rather than with urban and industrial concerns. Little emphasis is placed on the present except when it is necessary to stress that the desert has indeed been conquered.

This study is arranged topically and covers, in part, railroad building, grasshoppers, storms, ranching, fencing, dry-land farming, agricultural mechanization, irrigation, and the use of sod for construction. Dick has made excellent use of local histories and not only presents a detailed record of the past but also provides a methodological lesson for anyone interested in writing state or local history. The book is well illustrated, but the tendency to use long quotes does not create the sense of immediacy for which Dick perhaps hoped. Although the details apply almost entirely to Nebraska, the essential principles involving adaptation, survival, and prosperity can be applied to the entire Great Plains. The reader, however, is largely left to do this for himself.

Mastering the environment of the Great Plains was no small task, nor was the writing of this history. Dick has written a major synthesis of Nebraska's frontier and agricultural history, and in so doing he has made a substantial contribution to the history of the Great Plains.

R. Douglas Hurt
Smithsonian Institution

NHS News and Developments

Truckee River Historic Study

Beginning in October, the Society undertakes the second project on Nevada water resources authorized by the Desert Research Institute. This one-year study will concentrate on the origins of the Orr Ditch Decree of 1944, which adjudicated water rights on the Truckee River. The principal researcher is Robert Nyland, graduate student in history at UNR, who is compiling a thesis on land ownership patterns on the Newlands Project.

New Roof for the Society's Building

The 1977 legislature authorized a complete reroofing and guttering job on the Reno facility. The contract will correct a growing problem with seepage along walls and eliminate the threat of damage to collections, archival or library materials. Work will be complete by October, 1977.

Index to the Nevada State Journal

A long-needed finding aid to western Nevada has been initiated recently. Phillip Earl, Curator of Exhibits, will prepare an index to the *Nevada State Journal* and its predecessor newspapers. When completed, the index will comprehensively outline residents, events and geographical locations in western Nevada from 1863 to the present. This long-term project will require many years for accomplishment, but should serve as the core for a history of Reno and the surrounding area. Further indexes of the *Territorial Enterprise* and a Las Vegas newspaper are planned.

New Resource Materials

Dickinson Library, UNLV

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS, Special Collections Department of Dickinson Library has received additions to its menu, photographic and manuscript collections.

Menus from the Las Vegas area include the Mt. Charleston Ski-Bar Ranch, 1944; a Last Frontier dinner menu, June 30, 1944; the Old Ranch Restaurant, circa 1957; and the Boulder Dam Cafe.

Additions to the photographic collection include a colored composite of the construction of Hoover (Boulder) Dam, 1931–35; photographs of campsites on Las Vegas Creek occupied prior to the sale of lots in the Clark Townsite, 1905; and scenes from southern Nevada mining camps.

Personal papers and memorabilia from present and former Nevada assemblymen include materials from John Vergiels, Zelvin Lowman, Jean Ford, and Paul May. Lilly Fong, of Las Vegas, active in state and local chapters of the American Association of University Women and who presently serves as a regent for the University of Nevada, has deposited papers and memorabilia documenting her activities in AAUW and with the University.

ANNA DEAN KEPPER
SUSAN ANDERL

Getchell Library, UNR

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, Library Special Collections Department has received some records of the Nevada Copper Belt Railway. The collection includes monthly reports, way-bills, daily reports, freight bills, and other materials. The papers amount to four boxes and encompass the years 1933–1947.

The Department has received a gift of historical records from the Reno First Baptist Church. This collection, spanning one hundred years of the church's history, includes minutes of meetings, photographs, manuscript histories of the church prepared by various ministers and members, building records, and membership rolls.

The Department has acquired two maps of Humboldt County, Nevada, in the 1860s, during the Territorial period. One map shows the planned

Humboldt Canal, and the other displays the proposed Mill City site at its terminus.

Five oral history memoirs are newly-deposited in the Department. The interviews were conducted by students in the Summer Session class, "Oral History: Method and Technique." A reminiscence of the 1977 Nevada Women's Conference by Frankie Sue Del Papa, Vice Chair of the Conference, is supplemented by papers from her files. An oral history containing recollections of early days in Gerlach, Nevada, (1910–1916) by Louise Schmidt is supported by photos of Winnemucca Lake before it evaporated to become an alkali flat and the early gypsum mine which is now U.S. Gypsum Co. in Empire. A memoir by Hale Crosby Thornton about the Nevada Daughters of the American Revolution is supplemented by a history of the state organization. Two other oral histories are by Rodney J. Reynolds on his service as a state legislator, and by Cora Sayre about her recollections of Smith Valley.

MARY ELLEN GLASS
CARRIE TOWNLEY